House of David, true or false?

Prof. Dr. Zaidan Abdel Kafi Kafafi
Faculty of Archeology and Anthropology
Al-Yarmouk University
Irbed, Jordan

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Introduction

Torah researchers over ages offered various interpretations of the Torah stories. Some of them took all that mentioned in the Torah for granted. Others said that they can not accept it all. A third group of researchers refused all that mentioned in it. In fact, the literary studies of the content of the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Genesis and the Book of Exodus resulted in interpretations and theories that outnumbered those who wrote these studies. As I am not one of them, I try in my study to be scientific and to depend on the original historical texts and discovered monuments. I would also like to say that I shall not opine on the topics of the Old Testament, but rather focus on what has been said in the recent years that there are written evidence and proofs of the "House of David", i.e. King David and his offspring.

I am mainly concerned here with the offspring of David and their relation to the Israelites, given that today's Zionists' attempts connect their descent to Jacob, son of Isaac son of Abraham. It is noteworthy that none of them was mentioned outside heavenly books. Abraham was mentioned in more than a verse and chapter of the Old Testament. The Book of Genesis (11:27) says "Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot". In another place, the Book of Genesis says "5Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. 6Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. 7The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him".

Many researchers link between Abraham's movement from the Land of Canaan to Egypt and the arrival of Asian peoples to it, whether for trade or settlement. Some of those researchers think that the leader of the Donkeys Convoy, depicted on the walls of one of "Beni Hassan" tombs that date back to the 19th century BC, is Abraham who was mentioned in the Torah. Then, we jump to the pursuit of a lot of researchers to link between the story of Joseph and his stay in Egypt and the high status he reached in the 17th and 16th centuries BC. They added that those who left Egypt with Moses, may be in the time of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramsis II, i.e. in the 13th century BC, were among the grandsons of Joseph.

I believe that the chronic sequence in the Old Testament Books is self-contradictory. One cannot say that the person who leads the Donkey Convoy was Abraham as his name in the Egyptian texts was "Abishai". The other thing is that if the suggestion that Exodus from Egypt took place 400 years after Joseph came to it is correct, does it stand to reason that the race of Joseph's grandsons had not mixed, or melted, with the indigenous Egyptians? I would like also to add that there had been a number of Asian persons, or even tribes, who were brought to Egypt as prisoners of war, a matter confirmed by the records of the Egyptian military campaigns on Levant, especially at the time of the 18th and 19th dynasties (about 1550-1200 BC). Moreover, one cannot deny that there had been Asian slaves from different races and origins in Egypt, who constituted a part of slave
workers in erecting huge buildings at the time of the strong pharaohs in Egypt. It was normal for a group of them, regardless of their races, to flee the tyranny of the pharaoh.

Depending on written texts and results of archeological excavations, one can confirm that for persons or groups from Levant to come to Egypt or to leave it, whether for trade or other reasons, had been a common matter in ancient times. Thus, one does not exclude that what the Torah mentioned about Exodus from Egypt was no more than a part of the unwritten tribal history of a group that belonged to the early Israelite.

Books of the Old Testament extensively narrate the story of Exodus from Egypt. A big number of researchers provided interpretations of the information of the story. Father Ronald de Vaux said Exodus was through two different paths; the first was along the edge of the southeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea, and the second was the path that Moses had taken to the south toward the fringes of Sinai Peninsula before going north to the east of Jordan River to enter Palestine. The group that took the second path returned to lead a Bedouin life of unsettlement and moved slowly till they reached Palestine. In fact, this interpretation depends mostly on linking between Bedouin life in the past and the present. However, archeological studies conducted in south Jordan so far do not indicate that there were any traces of those traveling nomad groups. Latter on, De Vaux admitted that there was no path and it is futile to search for one. Moreover, one has to be guided by the results of the anthropological studies as they confirmed that in the 2nd millennium BC, it was rare for man to exceed 50 years of age. Accordingly, the real period of wilderness in Sinai must be reconsidered (Canion 1990:46). Up till now, archeologists could not find the actual site where the Ark of the Covenant was built to commemorate their crossing of the River Gilgal.

In fact, religion played a key role in the Zionist thought. It was the base on which the racist state of Israel was established, given that this base was founded on a false Torah history. As we know, the one who studies Torah texts can conclude that the religion of Moses was a kind of Lord worshipping (Lord, my father, your father, his father) based on worshipping God "El", who promised them to enter the Land of Canaan. Accordingly, the scrutinizing reader can discover that there is a link between the Book of Genesis and the Books that followed it, especially those mentioned in the Book of Exodus and the Book of Joshua. That religion brought by the new comers (traveling Bedouins) was totally different from the multi-god religion of the settled indigenous people of the Land of Canaan. We can say that knowing the religion of the Israelites depends on what the Torah texts mentioned. On the other hand, we get our information on the religion of the Canaanite cities and villages from the material ruins discovered by archeological excavations, such as temple buildings in sites like Tel Waqqass, Tel Ad-Dweir, Tel Al-Motasalem, Balatah and Beesan. So, we discover a fundamental contradiction between the "House of God" as seen by the Canaanites and that of the Israelite tribes, who turned from worshipping God "El" to God "Yahweh", who lived in a tent and had not settled in a place, according to the Torah, till Solomon built his temple in the 10th century BC. It is also worth noting that the Canaanite religion was deeply influenced by the religions of neighboring nations in the valley of Tigris and Euphrates and in Egypt. For instance, small statues of Gods Hathor and Horus were found in Beesan temples.

According to the Old Testament, Israelite tribes settled in the Canaanite cities and villages in Palestine after they entered it forcibly, i.e. by war. Nevertheless, archeological excavations conducted so far do not support this
claim. However, Torah scholars claim that there had been archeological debris that proves Israelite tribes settlement in Palestinian sites in the end of the 11th century BC. The Torah story says that in that period, Saul went in a short battle against the Palestinians and was defeated in Gilboa. David, who was a mercenary in the Palestinians lines, took over after him. He was far famed in the Israelite tribes.

We can say that the Torah text, which stated that David joined the Palestinians and tried to launch attacks on the neighboring areas, shows us the dream of that person to control a vast area on which he can establish his dynasty. Some archaeologists, who conducted excavations in Beer Sheba area, in Kherbat El-Mashash for instance, argue that a number of sites had been destroyed in about 1000 BC and attribute that destruction to David's activities at the area (Fritz and Kempinski 1983: 230). Others believe that the reason behind that destruction may have been climate changes that caused drought that forced the people to leave the area and destroy the sites there, including Kherbat El-Mashash. Moreover, reference should be made to the fact that there is no historical text other than that of the Torah (Samuel II 2:1-4) that mentions the coronation of David a King of Hebron and its environs, i.e. the area located to the south of Bethlehem.

Who is King David?

The Torah does not give a lot of information on the descent of King David. It mentions that he was the son of a person called "Jesse" from Bethlehem (Samuel I 16:1) and that Jesse was of a Moabite origin. That was proved by the fact that he asked the King of Moab to protect his parents during his revolution against King Saul (Samuel I 22:3-4). However, some researchers (Ahstrom 1980: 285-287; 1993: 455) do not agree with this opinion and argue that the site of Bethlehem in an area very close to Jerusalem made it affiliate to the Jebusites in Jerusalem. As David was born in Bethlehem, then he was a Jebusite. It is why those researchers consider him neither a Jew nor even an Israelite, but a Canaanite who found that there was an opportunity to improve his standard of living if he joined the army of Saul. He did, but he revolted against his commander (Howard 1992: 41; Ahstrom 1993: 456). They added that the inhabitants of Bethlehem neighboring areas had not supported David in his revolt against Saul and roaming with his gang in Bethlehem, so he moved to serve the Palestinians. Texts of the Old Testament (Samuel I 27:1-4) affirmed that David and 600 of his men fled in the face of Saul to the Philistine King of Gaith, who gave David the city of Ziklag from where he launched his attacks on the neighboring areas (Howard 1992:42-43; Ahlstrom 1993:458). Some researchers believe that the location of "Ziklag" is either today's "Tel Al-Khawailifah", about 48 km to northeast of Beer Sheba (Seger 1983:15) or Tel Al-Sharia' at the same distance but to the northwest of Beer Sheba (Aharoni 1968: 291; 443).

Whereas all information related to David is basically taken from the Old Testament, whose authenticity is doubted, Zionist Israelis today seek historical and archeological written evidence that prove the correctness of this information. Zionist Israel was able, through war, to occupy the land of Palestine from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. Israel now is trying to find a cultural and an ethnic identity to justify for itself before the whole world the reasons of its establishment. Therefore, Israel claims that the cultural heritage of the people of Palestine with its various components, especially the monuments of the Iron Age (about 1200-539 BC) belongs to it. It is also seeking descent that links it to the early people of Palestine. It found what it was looking for in the old writings even if they were falsified, as many researchers think. Israeli as well as foreign researchers spread texts inscribed on stones which they claimed that they found in Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. Yet, the most important of these was an obstacle with Aramaic inscriptions at the site of Tel El-Qadi, or "Tel Dan", in Palestine. The inscriptions were written by an Aramaic king who defeated the Israelites. The House of David was mentioned in those inscriptions and the Zionist Israelis considered this reference a proof that there had been kings who were basically descendants of King David, whom they consider the founder of the Unified
Kingdom of Israel (about 1000-923 BC). To put the matter in its right course and discuss it scientifically and objectively, we have to study and discuss this text and other texts the Israelis consider significant sources when talking about their descent from the House of David. These sources are:

1- Obelisk of the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah
2- Stele of Tel El-Qadi (known in foreign sources as the Stele of Dan)
3- Stele of Moabite King Mesha
4- Assyrian Obelisk, known as the Black Obelisk

Fig. 1: A map illustrating the sites where Obelisk of Merneptah, Stele of Tel El-Qadi, Stele of Mesha and the Black Obelisk were found.

Following are studies of these four sources in chronological order.

1- Obelisk of the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah

Over old and modern ages, it is well-known that Palestine had strong relations with Egypt, particularly in trade, as its geographic location has always been the connection between Egypt and Asia. Therefore, Palestine had been under the rule of the pharaohs for long periods of time. In the late Bronze Age (about 1550-1200 BC), Palestine constituted a part of the New Kingdom in Egypt. Therefore, many names of peoples and places in Palestine were mentioned in the Egyptian documents of that period. However, we find that these sources, dated in about 1200-923 BC, did not contain any reference neither to Israel, Judea or even Jerusalem (Ahlström 1993: 46). Torah researchers think that the name "Israel" inscribed on the granite Obelisk of Merneptah (1213-1204 BC), found in Thebes in 1896 AC (fig. 1), that commemorates his victory over the Libyan tribes is the oldest reference to Israel as a people not a land (Wilson 1969: 378).

Fig. 2: Merneptah Obelisk (see Fig. 34, Isserlin 1998)

This obelisk (Fig. 2) was discovered by the British archeologist Flinders Petrie in 1896 AC. It is now on display in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. It is worth mentioning that another part of the obelisk was discovered in Karnak (Redmount 1999: 97). It is 3,18 m tall and 1,63 m wide and it documents the fifth year of the rule of Merneptah (about 2009-2008 BC).

German researcher Wilhelm Spiegelberg read and interpreted the inspections on the obelisk. He said that the inscriptions commemorate the victory of the pharaoh over the Libyans and their allied from the Mediterranean peoples. He added that the last two lines of the inscriptions refer to the campaign of the pharaoh on the Land of Canaan and his victory over the people of Ashkelon, Tel El-Gazar and Yonaam (Spiegelberg 1896). Spiegelberg mentioned that he was confused about reading the name "Li.si.ra.ar" until Petrie suggested that the name would be "Israel". Some researchers argue that it is important to revise the conclusions of Spiegelberg's study since the information about the pharaoh campaign on the Land of Canaan was inscribed as a footnote at the end of the 28-line text. This made some researchers doubt the launching of an Egyptian military campaign on the Land of Canaan at that time. They believe that this information was later added to the original text (Lemche 1998:36-37).
In addition, Gösta Ahlström (Ahlström 1993:45) preferred that the names mentioned in the footnotes (Ashkelon, Tel Al-Gazar, Yonaem, Israel, Canaan and Huro) are names of places not peoples. Niels Peter Lemche agreed with this opinion (Lemche 1998:37) and suggested that the name is "Yizre'el", meaning Plain of Ibn Amer Meadow (the north part of the middle mountainous heights). We would like also to add that the results of archeological excavations in the abovementioned sites do not refer to any destruction at the time of the Egyptian pharaoh Meneptah, except what William Dever mentioned about Tel Al-Gazar that Meneptah was the pharaoh who destroyed layer XIV at the site (Dever 1996:398).

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Fig. 3: The name Israel as written in Hieroglyphics on Meneptah Obelisk

(Wikipedia, Meneptah Stele)

As we do not want to look at one side of the coin, we mention hereunder other opinions on the word "Israel/Yizre'el" mentioned in the text. Michael Hasel, for example, sees that the word Grains "pr.t" in the text, which is related to the word Israel/ Yizre'el, indicates the people not the land (Hasel 1994: 52-54). The sentence that mentions Israel can be translated as "... Israelites and their grain warehouses".

This means that they could not seed in the following year, so it was a year of drought. It also indicates that those Israelites formed a pastoral tribe that lived in the late 13 century BC and practiced farming without being settled in a specific land. Others were the Shaso Bedouin tribes that were mentioned in the Egyptian records (Redford 1992). However, other archeologists deny this link between the word Israel in the text and the Shaso Bedouin tribes that lived in south Levant. They suggest that the word refers to a group of people who lived in the middle mountainous heights area in the Land of Canaan in the end of late Bronze Age, i.e. the same area where the Kingdom of Israel was established later on (Steger 2001).

Based on the abovementioned information on the interpretations of the word "Israel/Yizre'el" in the inscriptions of Meneptah Obelisk, archeologists doubt their authenticity and had not agreed on a unified interpretation of the word.

2- Tel Al-Qadi Stele
Tel Al-Qadi is located at the foot of the south slope of Mount Al-Sheikh in an area linking the Golan Heights in Syria, Shibaa farms in Lebanon and north of Al-Hula plain in Palestine (Fig. 1). An Israeli archeological mission, under the supervision of Avraham Biran, started excavations there in 1966 (Biran 1994). The most significant discoveries at the site were three parts of a broken basalt obelisk. The largest part was used to reconstruct the exterior of one of the city's walls near the south gate that dates back to the mid 9th century BC. That part of stone is 32 cm tall and 22 cm wide (Fig. 4).

The large part was found in 1993 and another two small parts were discovered in 1994 (Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995). Archeologists still argue whether or not these parts belong to one stone obelisk. Some archeologists believe that these three parts were originally two steles (Lemche 1998:39). The Aramaic text on the obelisk consists of 13 lines inscribed with a sharp-head metal tool with a dot separating every two words. Excavators think that the obelisk belongs to one of the Kings of Aramaic Damascus, may be King "Hazael" or one of his sons, who fought and defeated Israel's alliance and the House of David (Judah) in the 9th century BC. The stele is very important as it mentions the House of David, which Torah archeologists considered the first reference to David and his offspring.

Fig. 4: Stele of Tel Al-Qadi (Tel Dan) (Isserlin 1998: Fig. 36)

After discovering and studying this stele, excavators said that it dates back to either the 9th century BC or the 8th Century BC. It was found under the ruins that resulted from the Assyrian attack on Tel Al-Qadi in 733/732 BC or it may have been broken by the inhabitants of the site who used its parts in establishing a building. Nevertheless, other archeologists (Athas 2003) suggest that it dates back to the early 8th century BC and belonged to the Aramaic King Bin Hadad Bin Hazael. In spite of the attempts of Biran and his colleagues to date the inscription back to the middle 9th century BC, some researchers cast doubt on the date of the inscription and even believe that it is faked (Lemche 1998: 41.181). Some inscriptions and old texts experts are of the opinion that the form of calligraphy and language are of the early Aramaic language, i.e. 9th century BC. Lemche added that what we have are two steles with two inscriptions found 8 km away from each other (Lemche 1998:39) as the lines in the two large parts are not identical, not to mention different writing styles. He suggested that they were written at the same period of time.

Another matter that supports doubt of the authenticity of Tel Al-Qadi Stele is that it was not found in its original place. This means that it was moved from the place where the Aramaic King erected it. We would like also to add that contemporary writings have not referred to the killing of the King of Judea (Ahaziah) at the hands of the Aramaic King of Damascus. Lemche said that the attempts of Israeli archeologists to date Tel Al-Qadi Stele back to the mid 9th century BC aimed at making it coinciding with the Stele of the Moabite King Mesha that mentioned Israel and to argue that it was older than other Aramaic steles in the late 9th century BC and the 8th century. The Stele consists of 13 lines, to which archeologists have different interpretations. We depend on the interpretation by Lemche of the inscription on the large part of the Stele as it mentions the House of David (Lemche 1998: 39-40) as follows:

Line 1: ( ....... (}
Line 2: (         ) ... my father ... (s
Line 3: and my father died and he went to (s
Line 4: Rael entered the land of my father ()
Line 5: I, and Hadad went before me (       )
Line 6: ... My King and I killed ... ( riders
Line 7: Chariots and thousands of horsemen
Line 8: The King of Israel, and I killed (       )
Line 9: House of David and put (       )
Line 10: It became their country (       )
Line 11: and others and ... (       )
Line 12: ... on ... (       )
Line 13: Siege on (       )

Anyway, researchers find that the inscription mentions the Aramaic King's victory over two kingdoms; Israel (Line 8) and the House of David (Line 9), i.e., they allied against one enemy. This matter, if proved true, fills the gap in the historical sources. This is what Israel seeks to prove nowadays. We would like here to say that the reference in the first case was to the King of Israel. However, the inscription in the second case had not referred to the King of the House of David but to the House of David. This is what Axel Knauf previously referred to (Knauf 1994).

In fact, this stele was thoroughly studied and archeologists have increasing interest in it. In fact, it contains the oldest written reference to "Israel" and "House of David" outside the Old Testament (Rainey 1994; Davies 1994; Rendsburg 1995; Lemche 1998). Archeologist Philip Davies believes that the phrase "House of David", on the stele, consists of 6 letters and 2 words. The first word "House" has several meanings such as "Bet, i.e. residence", as in "Bethlehem", meaning the "house of bread". This means that the two parts "Beth" and "Lehem" are one word, i.e., "Bethlehem". This may apply to the words "Beth David" (House of David). He added that the word "Bethlehem" can be read with the meaning of the House of God "Lehmu". The meaning of the word Beth (house) here is a place of worship or a temple. In any case, Davies prefers to suggest that this phrase "House of David" refers to a place not to David and his offspring (Davies 1994). Some researchers (Athas 2003) claimed that the "House of David" mentioned in Tel Al-Qadi Stele means Jerusalem. Others think that the "House of David" just refers to a site located in the area surrounding Tel Al-Qadi (Lemche 1998: 43).

3- Stele of Mesha

The Stele of the Moabite King Mesha, found in the town of Dibon (now Dhiban, Jordan) in 1868, is the third historical documents that refers to "Israel", either with the name of the "King of Israel" or as a political unity.
The stele is made of basalt. It is 124 cm high and 71 cm wide and is rounded at the top (Fig. 5). The inscriptions on the stele document the time of the Moabite King Mesha in almost 840 BC.

In August 1868, Rev. Frederick Augustus Klein, a German missionary, found the stele with a villager from Dibon. In 1888, a squeeze (a papier-mâché impression) had been obtained by Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau, the then French consul in Jerusalem. The squeeze and the reassembled stele are now on display in the Louvre Museum.

King Mesha erected this memorial in his capital Dibon to commemorate his victory over the King of Israel "Ahab Bin Omri" (Touqan 1970). The stele is highly significant for Torah researchers for many reasons, including that it mentions the name "Omri the King of Israel" (lines 4-18, 10,5) and his son "Ahab" as well as the Israelites gods "Eil" (line 12) and "Yahweh (YHWH)" (line 18). It is the most ancient stele ever recovered that refers to Israel as a political unit (the "House of Omri" in other sources, especially the Assyrian) (Dealman 1989; Lemche 1998: 44). In addition, French scholar André Lemaire published that he could read the name "House of David" on the stele (Lemaire 1994: 36).

Fig. 5: Mesha Stele (Dealman 1994)

Therefore, we see that the Stele of Mesha indicates that Israel in the 9th century BC was a kingdom ruled by a dynasty called "House of Omri", according to Assyrian sources. More importantly was line 12 of the stele, which reads "h q r r i t f o r k e m o s h a n d f o r M o a b m s h m a t a r a l d w d h w a ' s", Fawwaz Touqan (1970: 39-40) translated this line as "the city rit. For Kemosh and Moab and I replied (responded). From there, ariel (?) its god (i.e. God of the city). wa's ...". Many researchers translated the word "ariel" as the "altar-hearth" since a similar word was mentioned in the Old Testament (Hazqael 43: 15-16). It is well known that the root "arr" in hebrew is related to igniting and fire whereas "Eil" is derived from the Semetic word God "Eil". Accordingly, the meaning becomes "Eil hearth". As for the word "dwdh", many researchers (Touqan 1970: 40) said that its common meaning in the Semetic languages is "uncle" and in Hebrew is "beloved". However, Lemche believes that the word "dwdh" in Mesha Stele may be a caption for something that may be related to the temple in "Atarot", an adjective that means "beloved (woman)" or a name of a Moabite god called "Daudo" (Lemche 1998: 45-46).

In 1994, Lemaire re-read the stele's inscription on the original impression made by Claire Mont-Ghanu in 1888. He reported that line 31 of the Mesha Stele bears the phrase the "House of David" (Lemaire 1994: 30-37). For this linguistic structure to be correct, Lemaire had to supply one destroyed letter, the first "D" in [D]VDH, "of [Dauid," to construct the wording. He added other letters that made the meaning totally different from what was published by other researchers such as Fawwaz Touqan. While Lemaire interpreted line 31 to be "As for Horonen, there lived in it the house of [Dauid," (Dorbreuil 2001: 162-163 pp. 158-167 pp.158-167).

4- The Black Obelisk

It is noteworthy that historical Assyrian and Babylon sources and documents found in Iraq had not referred to the state of Israel as the "Kingdom of Israel". When they mentioned Judah, they only said "Kingdom of Judah"
not the "House of David". Assyrian inscriptions described Israel as the "House of Omri" or Samaria. There is only one text dating back to the time of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III (about 858-823 BC) describing the victory of the King over the alliance of the kings of Syria and Palestine, among whom was Ahab, the King of Israel, who donated 2000 chariots and deployed 10000 infantrymen (ANET: 278-279). The Black Obelisk that dates back to 830 BC, found in Nimrod in north Iraq, mentions the name of King "Yahweh Bin Omri" among Jezya payers to King Shalmaneser III (ANET: 280-281). This shows the collapse of Levant kingdoms alliance in the face of the Assyrian power after the death of King Ahab.

Fig. 6: Obelisk of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III, known as the "Black Obelisk" that shows his victory over a number of kings, including the King of Israel "Yahweh" (Isserlin 2001: Fig. 23)

The Black Obelisk (Fig. 6) was found in 1864 AC at Nimrod site (old name "Kalkhu"), which was one of the Assyrians capitals. It is a black limestone obelisk that was constructed by the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III (who ruled from 858 to 824 BC). It looks like Egyptian obelisks in shape. It is displayed in the British Museum in London. This Obelisk commemorates the victory of the King over his enemies. The Black Obelisk is highly significant because it is the most ancient depiction of an Israelite person. One of the strips inscribed on the Obelisk shows the Israelite King of the Kingdom of the House of Omri, "Yahweh" paying Jezya and kneeling under the feet of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III (Fig. 7).

In addition, Assyrian King Adad-Nirari III (810-783 BC) mentioned in his annuals the name of the "House of Omri" as part of his kingdom that included the kingdoms of Sur, Sidon, Edom and Palestine (Miller and Hayes 1986:299). Samaria and the House of Omri were frequently mentioned in the records of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BC). After Sargon II took over (721-705 BC), the north kingdom was named Samaria. There is also a differentiation between the Kingdom of Samaria and the House of Omri (ANET 284-285). Here we can see that the Assyrians had not named the North Kingdom "Israel" but the land of the "House of Omri", with its capital "Samaria" (Lemche 1998:53). We have to point out that this differs from what was mentioned on the Stele of the Moabite King Mesha, who gave the Kingdom of Ahab Bin Omri the name "Israel".

Fig. 7: The scene on the Black Obelisk of King Yahweh Bin Omri kneeling under the feet of the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III (Wikipedia)

As for the Kingdom of Judah, it was mentioned in the official Assyrian records by the name "Judah" and the names of its kings were mentioned among the names of other kingdoms and kings in Syria, Qalqilyah, Phoenicia, Palestine and Jordan. We cite an example from the time of the Assyrian King Senharib, who laid siege on Jerusalem in 701 BC. He described his siege of King Hezekiah in his capital "Ur-Salimmu" as a "Bird in its cage" (ANET 282). The Kingdom of Judah was frequently mentioned in the Assyrian sources as a Jezya payer and its king was treated on equal footing with the kings of other neighboring kingdoms. During the rule of the Neo-Babylon Kingdom, the "Chaldean", we find that King Nebuchadnezzar mentions in his records that he surrounded the city of Judah, conquered and looted it and installed a king affiliate to him (ANET 564).

Accordingly, we can say that the Assyrians had not paid any attention to the Kingdom of Judah before the rule of King Tiglath-Pileser III. This can be attributed to its weakness and inability to keep abreast of the developments in the region, contrary to Samaria. We can conclude that modern Assyrian and Babylonian documents and writings do not help much in studying the conditions of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judea.
Unfortunately, these documents had not referred to the demographic structure and races that formed the populations of those two kingdoms. Therefore, there is no reference in these records to the so-called "House of David".
Conclusion

This study shows the attempts by some of the Torah scholars to find the family tree or descent of King David. As they had no extra-biblical information on that king, they were clinching to any reference to the House of David. This was evident from the attempt of the French scholar André Lemaire, who completed the missing letters in Mesha Stele, by adding a letter (D) and completing a word (David). Accordingly, we believe that Arab researchers must re-read these stelae and translate them from a neutral scientific viewpoint.

It is noteworthy here that three of those historical documents were written in the late period of the rule of King David and his son Solomon. As for the inscriptions on the obelisk of the Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah, which dates back to the late 13th century BC, some archeologists said that the word "Israel" in the last two lines was added to the original texts in a later period. Accordingly, we still believe that finding the House of David is a dream of Zionist Torah scholars; a dream they will never realize.
Acronyms


Sources:

The Holy Book, i.e. the Old Testament and the New Testament, translated from original languages, the Hebrew, Chaldean and Greek languages. Cairo, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Moqaddass (formerly Holy Book Association)


