Israel vs. Judah: The Socio-Political Aspects of Biblical Archaeology in Contemporary Israel

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Abstract

The article traces the sociopolitical and rhetorical aspects of the discourse in biblical archaeology in contemporary Israel. Through the article I will show that research and theoretical interpretations cannot be separated from identities and socio-political biases. Generally, Zionist archaeologists are much less skeptical towards the bible than Palestinian archaeologists, pro-Palestinian *minimalists* or Israeli post-Zionists. Since the 1990s, a new school from Tel Aviv University has been developing and promoting a new paradigm of Low Chronology, which denies the existence of a United Monarchy in the days of the Judahite Kings David and Solomon. Despite the success of the new paradigm, a conservative school, whose prominent representatives come from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, challenges the new paradigm and tries to protect or update the old paradigm of High Chronology. The most controversial excavation sites today are the City of David site and the ancient city excavated at Khirbet Qeiyafa. The article analyzes the struggle between the schools about the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, as it reflects in articles, books, lectures, presentations, interviews and heated debates in the media.

Zionism and Biblical Archaeology

I will start with a brief review of the development of biblical archaeology against the background of the Judeo-Christian faith and the Zionist identity. Biblical studies, embodied by Julius Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (2013 [1878]), was a direct threat to the Judeo-Christian traditions and to the belief that the Pentateuch was written by Moses. Wellhausen formulated the documentary hypothesis, according to which the Pentateuch is a composition of four different sources from different eras. One notable apologetic response against Wellhausen was the work of Rabbi David Zvi Hoffmann, who tried to protect the belief in the divine origin of the Pentateuch and the bible (Hoffmann, 1902). From the start, modern academic research was not only a critique of the roots of the Judeo-Christian identity but also an expression of personal, social and cultural values towards this identity. Wellhausen's work was influenced by his Protestant background (Wellhausen was a professor of theology, but he resigned in 1882 because he felt that he cannot instruct future ministers) and expressed 19th century German Romanticism and Idealism. He saw Judaism that developed by the Priestly establishment during the Second Temple period as a dogmatic system of commandments and rituals or as a degeneration of the more *natural* Israelite and Judahite religion and monarchy (the *state*). In this respect, he tried to show that Judaism as manifested in the Priestly Code "separates itself in the first instance from daily life, and then absorbs the latter by becoming, strictly speaking, its proper business" (Wellhausen, 2013 [1878]: 81). The debate whether Wellhausen's approach was anti-religious or pro-Christian, anti-Jewish or even anti-Semitic, and how much his work was an expression of German Romanticism and Idealism, continues to this day (Kratz, 2009).

Since the end of the 19th century, Christian archaeologists had made excavations with a bible in one hand and spade in the other. They assumed that the sacred texts cannot be doubted. Their aim was to affirm the biblical narrative using archaeological finds, while interpreting these finds according to the biblical narrative. For the leading archaeologist, William Foxwell Albright, son of evangelical missionaries, archaeology served as a scientific tool that proved the historical accuracy and reliability of the bible. Albright accused Wellhausen of Hegelianism. He was convinced that, in light of the archaeological finds, the theory of Wellhausen's school became "an historical anachronism" (Albright, 1968: 1-2). The agenda of the Christian archaeologists was clearly expressed by the archaeologist Roland de Vaux, who was a French Dominican priest: "If the historical faith of Israel is not in a certain way founded in history, this faith is erroneous and cannot command my assent" (Vaux, 1965: 16).

The national mold of writing Jewish history was shaped by the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz. In the mid 19th century, Graetz published the *History of the Jews from the Oldest Times to the Present*. His work was the first attempt to produce a grand historical narrative of the *Jewish people* not just as a religious group but, at least partially, as a modern nation. The new program included a modern interpretation of the bible as a reliable historical source while omitting miraculous aspects. When Wellhausen published his work, Graetz claimed that Wellhausen "pours his hatred for the Jewish nose on Abraham, Moses and Ezra". Graetz's critique of Wellhausen focused on the assertion that a large part of the Pentateuch was written only after the

return from the Babylonian exile. In other words, Wellhausen's work undermined the credibility of the most important document that describes the origin of the Jewish nation and its heroic past. Graetz's work became a kind of a national history textbook of the Hovevei Zion organization whose members were the forerunners of the Zionist movement. Moses Hess, one of the founders of Zionism, and other Jewish intellectuals, as well as the leaders of the Zionist settlers in Palestine, were influenced by the book. Simon Dubnow was one of the intellectuals who followed Graetz's path. His work anticipated the Zionist approach which, on the one hand, promoted secularism and rejected the orthodox faith, and, on the other hand, used religion as the *national culture* that unites the Jews around the world. In this framework, the biblical stories were interpreted as depicting historical events and processes although many of them did so metaphorically and symbolically (Sand, 2009: 78-109).[1]

David Ben-Gurion, the leader of the Zionist movement and the first Prime Minister of Israel, saw the bible as the founding document of the Jewish nation in the Land of Israel. The bible was a key element in shaping the national ethos by Ben-Gurion and the vaguely secular Israeli establishment. For Ben-Gurion, the bible provided a direct connection between ancient Israel and the new state of Israel, while skipping the Diaspora and the religious orthodox tradition. As Ben-Gurion put it: "...what we have done in the land is 'a jump over Jewish history.' There is a jump in time and there is a jump in space. Here we have done both of them".[2] He clarified that the life in the new Jewish State is not a continuation of the life of Krakow or Warsaw, but a new beginning which is directly connected to the distant past of Joshua, David and the Hasmonean dynasty (Ben-Gurion, 1957).

The ideological construction of the idea of the Jewish nation continued to evolve by Zionist historians and archaeologists before and after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Historian Ben-Zion Dinur from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was one of the most important intellectuals who contributed to this process. In his work, Dinur abstracted the bible from theology almost entirely and used it to create a national-historical manifest, which is supported by few documents from the Near East discovered in archaeological excavations. Dinur was a member of the first Knesset (the Israeli parliament) and in 1951 he became Minister of Education. During the 1950s, Dinur and other intellectuals, such as the leading biblical archaeologist Benjamin Mazar and biblical scholar Yehezkel Kaufmann, along with senior politicians, participated in the Bible circle at the house of Ben-Gurion. For Ben-Gurion, Dinur and the entire establishment, the bible was an important tool in molding the society of immigrants into a unified people and tying the younger generation to the land. The bible was an integral part of the political discourse. When the IDF captured the Sinai peninsula during the 1956 war, Ben-Gurion addressed the troops and said: "We can once more sing the song of Moses and the Children of Ancient Israel...With the mighty impetus of all the IDF divisions you have extended a hand to King Solomon..." The establishment encouraged archaeological excavations, although, as Ben-Gurion explained, in case of contradiction between the bible and an extra-biblical source, the biblical narrative was preferred: "From a purely scientific standpoint I'm free to accept the testimony of the Bible, even if challenged by an external source, provided the testimony contains no inner contradictions and is not obviously flawed" (Sand, 2009: 105-115; see also: Silberman and Small (eds), 1997; Abu El-Haj, 2002).

Archaeology was part of politics and politics was part of archaeology. The biblical narrative of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the great kingdom of David and Solomon were reflected in the modern national ethos. The Zionist archaeologists who followed Albright and the Christian archaeologists adopted the practice of bible in one hand and spade in the other. Their view was based on a national historiography developed by the above mentioned Jewish intellectuals and their aim was to reinforce this view. In fact, they were part of the ruling elite.

Yigael Yadin, a disciple of Albright, was not just an archaeologist and the son of Eleazar Lipa Sukenik - the founder of the Department of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, but also Head of Operations during the 1948 war, the second Chief of Staff of the IDF and a Minister. The finds in the excavations of Yadin at Hazor and Megiddo during the 1960s, along with the finds in the excavations at Gezer, were interpreted by him as confirming the great building activity of King Solomon that had been described in the bible. Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer are mentioned in the bible as part of the cities that were established by Solomon (1 Kings 9:15). Thus the excavated gates, palaces and cities seemed to belong to the great Kingdom of Solomon in the 10th century B.C.E. (Yadin, 1975). Benjamin Mazar, who together with Yadin shaped the Zionist paradigm of archaeology, was the president of the Hebrew University. Also, he was the brother-in-law of the second President of Israel Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and had close relations with Ben Gurion. As a representative of the Zionist elite, his commitment to the biblical narrative was not in doubt. In his work, Mazar tried, for example, to settle archaeology with the anachronistic depiction

of the patriarchs in the bible. The Philistines and Arameans are mentioned in the stories of the patriarchs although they appeared only hundreds of years later than the period in which the patriarchs allegedly lived. The solution of Mazar was to argue that these stories reliably describe the era before the period of the kings (Mazar, 1974). During his career, Moshe Dayan, who was one of the most charismatic leaders in Israel, served as the fourth Chief of Staff of the IDF, Defense Minister and Foreign Minister. As an amateur archaeologist (Dayan was an antiquities thief), he published the book *Living with the Bible*, in which ancient and modern Israel were merged (Dayan, 1978).

One of Yadin's associates, Yohanan Aharoni, founded the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University. Aharoni and Yadin parted ways and became rivals. If Yadin supported the view that the Israelites had taken over Canaan through a military conquest as described in the Book of Joshua, Aharoni (1957) supported the view that the Israelites did that through a gradual process of settlement as described in the Book of Judges. The rivalry between the departments of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University, which is described below, had begun here. According to Neil Silberman, the differences between the views of Yadin and Aharoni reflected their worldviews regarding modern Israel. For General Yadin, the conquest narrative resonated with the 1948 war (The War of Independence) and the establishment of the state of Israel. Aharoni, on the other hand, belonged to the kibbutz movement (the left wing of labor Zionism) and preferred the Zionist ethos of settlement (Silberman, 1993; Abu El-Haj, 2002: 99-105). Yet, despite the rivalry, both Yadin and Aharoni were determined to protect the biblical narrative, i.e. the foundation of the national ethos. In this sense, they represented the entire generation.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Danger of Biblical Minimalism

Christian archaeology and Zionist archaeology were characterized by *Biblical maximalism*, that is, by the acceptance of the biblical narrative as a reliable and fundamental historical source to which all other evidence must be adjusted. This approach was challenged by the rise of a new paradigm in Europe of biblical scholars known as the *biblical minimalists*. The reaction of the *minimalists* was directed against noted biblical scholars, such as Albrecht Alt (1966) and Martin Noth (1960). Liberation Theology (i.e., the rejection of the bible as a *privileged* text that justifies colonialism and imperialism) and the radical intellectual-political currents in the academy of the late 1960s were the background in which biblical minimalism appeared. The representatives of biblical minimalism, Niels Peter Lemche (1988; 2008: 316-317) and Thomas Thompson (1992; 1999) of the University of Copenhagen, along with Philip Davies (1992) and Keith Whitelam (1996) of the University of Sheffield, are very skeptical about the biblical narrative and criticize the commitment of biblical scholars and archaeologists to the Judeo-Christian faith and to the Zionist identity. The minimalists separate the *mythical* Israel as depicted in the bible from the *historical* Israel. They argue that the biblical narrative was shaped only after the Destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian exile (6^{th} century B.C.E.), i.e. during the Persian Period (circa 5^{th}-4^{th} centuries B.C.E.) and even during the Hellenistic Period (circa 3^{rd}-2^{nd} centuries B.C.E.).

The attack of the biblical minimalists against the Judeo-Christian and Zionist biases of biblical archaeology and biblical studies caused an academic stir and the biblical minimalists were accused of anti-Semitism and anti-Israeli agenda. Thompson claimed that he was persecuted and left without employment already after the publication of his dissertation in 1976. In two essays he describes the course of events until he joined the University of Copenhagen in 1993 with the help of Lemche. For instance, in 1985 he was awarded an annual professorship from the École Biblique, but many were not satisfied with the decision. Biblical scholar Sara Japhet of the Hebrew University even accused Thompson of anti-Semitism. In a review of Thompson's book, published on December 24th, 1999 in *The Jerusalem Post*, a leading Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi wrote: "A mutual acquaintance told me that Thompson confided in him that he is a staunch believer in The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." At a conference in October, 1999 American archaeologist William Dever defined Thompson's work as *anti-Israeli*, *anti-Biblical* and *nihilistic* (Thompson 2011; 2001). According to Dever, Whitelam's work "borders on anti-Semitism", due to the generalizations that characterize his accusations against Israeli, Jewish and Christian scholars. Whitelam wrote, for example: "Biblical studies is, thereby, implicated in an act of dispossession which has its modern political counterpart in the Zionist possession of the land and dispossession of its Palestinian inhabitants." In sentences such as this, claims Dever, Whitelam identifies an illegitimate Jewish *conspiracy* (Dever, 2003; Whitelam, 1996: 46). Gary Rendsburg of Cornell University summarized the political accusations against the minimalists as follows:

To answer my second question, who are these people, these revisionists, these nihilists? What drives them? To give you the names of the four best known among them, they are Thomas Thompson, Philip

Davies, Niels Lemche, and Keith Whitelam. Some of them are driven, as I indicated above, by Marxism and leftist politics. Some of them are former evangelical Christians who now see the evils of their former ways. Some of them are counterculture people, left over from the 60s and 70s, whose personality includes the questioning of authority in all aspects of their lives (Rendsburg, 1999).

The above mentioned biblical scholars are not *anti-Semitic*, as some of their opponents claim. Yet their critique and rejection of biblical maximalism and Zionist archaeology are intertwined with their critique of the Zionist ethos and their pro-Palestinian views. In this respect, none of the opponents can claim to be *unbiased*. Research and theoretical assumptions cannot be separated from socio-political views and cultural identity. Thompson's view and work are clearly pro-Palestinians:

At the end of my tenure at the École, I was appointed as director for the École Biblique's UNESCO-sponsored project: *Toponomie Palestinienne*, which dealt with the integrity of ancient place names in modern Palestinian toponomy and, among other things in a work which was primarily one of historical geography, criticized the Israelis for de-Arabicizing Palestinian toponomy and doing damage to this region's cultural heritage. When the project was accused of "anti-Semitism", UNESCO dropped their support after Saudi funding was withdrawn (Thompson, 2011).

Similarly, in his reply to Dever and others, Davies openly presents a pro-Palestinian agenda:

The danger is thus that biblical scholarship is "Zionist" and that it participates in the elimination of the Palestinian identity, as if over a thousand years of Muslim occupation of this land has meant nothing. Our focus on a short period of history a long time ago participates in a kind of retrospective colonizing of the past. It tends to regard modern Palestinians as trespassers or "resident aliens" in someone else's territory. I do not mean this as an accusation; it is, I think, just an inevitable outcome of our obsession with the Bible. It becomes wrong only when ignored or denied (Davies, 2002).

Whitelam's work, as well, is explicitly pro-Palestinian, as appears from the subtitle of his book *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (1996). Following Edward Said, Whitelam argues that the discourse of biblical studies is "part of the complex network of scholarly work which Said identified as 'Orientalist discourse.' The history of ancient Palestine has been ignored and silenced by biblical studies because its object of interest has been an ancient Israel conceived and presented as the taproot of Western civilization." Whitelam defines his work as an attempt to show that "ancient Palestinian history is a separate subject in its own right and needs to be freed from the Grasp of biblical studies", i.e. from the grasp of the study of the Hebrew Bible and from the Jewish and Christian perspectives. He complains that while the minimalist discourse is presented as political and ideological, the dominant discourse is presented as objective and unbiased. Moreover, Whitelam and others accuse biblical archaeologists, such as Israel Finkelstein, that they are biased towards "the search for the national entity 'Israel' in the Late Bronze-Iron Age transition", thus marginalizing and dismissing Canaanite areas which they do not see as important and relevant to the understanding of Israelite Settlement (Whitelam, 1996: 1-18).

Biblical archaeology is part of the war of narratives between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Zionist-Israeli and Arab-Palestinian identities play a major role in the construction of expectations, assumptions, theoretical biases and interpretation of data. The Palestinian side, of course, is biased towards biblical minimalism. *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archaeology and Post-Colonialism in Palestine-Israel* (2007), of Nur Masalha, an Arab-Palestinian historian and professor of religion and politics who was born in Israel (about 20% of Israeli citizens are Arabs), is the

mirror image of the Zionist view. In other words, it is a Palestinian manifesto. His work is influenced by intellectuals such as Edward Said and Ilan Pappé, a left wing, post-Zionist activist and one of the New Historians in Israel who challenge the Zionist narrative. The framework in which Masalha developed his approach to the bible is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If, the Palestinian Nakba is a "mini-holocaust" and "the exiling of hundreds of thousands of indigenous people which took place with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 – established in the name of the bible – is one of the great war crimes of the twentieth century" (Masalha, 2007: 1), then it is very tempting to reach the following Minimalist conclusion: "on the basis of recent archaeological and scientific evidence, the historicity of the Old Testament is completely demolished" (Masalha, 2007: 10).

The clash between Zionist and Palestinian archaeologies and the clash between the two national narratives are interrelated. Palestinian archaeologist Hani Nur el-Din of Al-Quds University told the *New York Time* that he and his colleagues consider biblical archaeology to be an Israeli effort "to fit historical evidence into a biblical context. The link between the historical evidence and the biblical narration, written much later, is largely missing. There's a kind of fiction about the 10th century. They try to link whatever they find to the biblical narration. They have a button, and they want to make a suit out of it" (Erlanger, 2005). Nur el-Din explained the Palestinian perspective to the *National Geographic*: "When I see Palestinian women making the traditional pottery from the early Bronze Age, when I smell the *taboon* bread baked in the same tradition as the fourth or fifth millennium B.C., this is the cultural DNA. In

Palestine there's no written document, no historicity—but still, it's history" (Draper, 2010).

The Palestinian denial of the Biblical and Zionist narratives is accompanied by the assertion that the Palestinians themselves are the decedents of the Canaanites or other ancient inhabitants of the land. In 1988, Jalal Kazzouh, head of the archaeology department at the Palestinian An-Najah University, uncovered the remains of houses related to the Canaanite city of Tel Sofer west of Nablus. The evidence, claimed Kazzouh, shows the continuity between Canaanite and Palestinian history. Not all Palestinian archaeologists agreed with Kazzouh's theory. Hamed Salem, professor of archaeology at Birzeit University, commented: "It's just not serious archaeology to trace the continuity of a people back 5000 years". Hamden Taha, director general of the Palestinian Department for Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in Ramallah, explained the socio-political motives behind the archaeological interpretation of Kazzouh: "If some Palestinians are trying to identify themselves with ancient Canaanites, I believe this is part of an unconscious reflexive archeology, and a direct response to the Israeli practice of archeology" (Eltahawy and Klein, 1998; Wallace, 2013). In 2000, archaeologist Khaled Nashef of Birzeit University established the *Journal of Palestinian Archaeology*, which challenges biblical archaeology in the name of the *silenced* and *deprived* narrative of the Palestinians.

A New Phase in Biblical Archaeology

The disintegration of the *engaged* society, or the *enlisted* society as it is called in Israel, and the decline of socialist-Zionist collectivism during the late 1970s, enabled the rise of different narratives and discourses. For instance, the New Historians, some of them post-Zionists, challenged the Zionist narrative regarding the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the 1948 war and the Palestinian refugee problem. The work of the New Historians, such as Benny Morris (Morris, 1987), began outside the Israeli academy and created a stir. As Morris describes: "I was treated like an enemy of the state. This image stuck. I was ostracized. I wasn't invited to conferences and, of course, I wasn't offered a university position" (Morris in Ben-Simhon, 2012).

During the 1990s and in the early 21st century, a new current in biblical archaeology became dominant. A new school from Tel Aviv University, led by Israel Finkelstein, Ze'ev Herzog and Nadav Na'aman, rejected the circular reasoning of traditional archaeology and presented a more mature and critical approach. In 1999, Herzog (today professor emeritus) published an article in Haaretz, the newspaper of the intellectual elite in Israel, which initiated a fierce debate (Herzog, 1999). The debates over the new approach in biblical archaeology relate in many respects to debates over the work of the new historians, since both dispute the national ethos and myths and endanger the Zionist identity and the Jewish identity. In his article, Herzog summarized the conclusions of the Tel Aviv School and attacked the approach that was shaped by the previous generation of archaeologists. According to Herzog, archaeological and epigraphic evidence disconfirms the stories of the Patriarchs and

the Exodus, the Conquest of Canaan and the existence of the United Monarchy in the days of David and Solomon. Additionally, monotheism developed only during the late Monarchic period. Biblical historiography was one of the cornerstones in the construction of national identity of the Jewish-Israeli society, and therefore Herzog admitted that as a son of the Jewish people and a disciple of the biblical school, he feels the frustration on his "own flesh". In this context, he indirectly related to the work of the new historians and estimated that the Israeli society is ready to recognize the injustice that was done to the Palestinians, but is not strong enough to accept the archaeological facts that shatter the biblical myth. Based on the theory of Thomas Kuhn, Herzog presented the occurrences as a paradigm shift: the old paradigm of biblical archaeology collapsed due to accumulation of anomalies and from the crisis phase rises the new paradigm of the Tel Aviv School.

At this point, it should be noted that towards the end of the 20th century archaeology changed not only in its approach to the bible, but also in its practice. Influenced by the natural sciences, biblical archaeology became a Big Science. As Finkelstein observed (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lecture 1), even in 1970, when he began his studies, archaeology was still not connected to the natural sciences. Since then the connections had evolved significantly. If at the beginning of the 20th century excavation reports were signed by a single archaeologist like Robert Macalister, today excavation reports in Finkelstein's expeditions are signed by dozens of experts from different fields, such as physics, geology, metallurgy, archaeobotany and zooarchaeology.

Finkelstein and the School of Tel Aviv undermined the traditional chronology of biblical archaeology and replaced it with the theory of Low Chronology. Finkelstein lowered the date of 11th century B.C.E. assemblages to the early-to-mid 10th century and 10th century B.C.E. assemblages to the early 9th century. According to this view, the transition from late Iron I to early Iron IIA took place in the late 10th century B.C.E., i.e. after the days of David and Solomon. The great United Monarchy did not exist. In the days of David, Judah was a small, unfortified tribal kingdom and Jerusalem was a small "village". There were only about 500 adult males in Judah of the 10th century B.C.E. At most, the population of Judah was no more than few thousand people (Finkelstein, 1996; Finkelstein, 2005; Finkelstein, 2006-2007; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2001: 142).

A rival group of conservative archaeologists, whose prominent representatives come from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, still sees the bible as a reliable historical source for the Monarchic period and defends the theory of High Chronology. In comparison to the Tel Aviv School, the Jerusalem School is much closer to the previous generation of Zionist archaeologists. A collection of essays which presents the different views in this debate was published in 2001 (Levine and Mazar (eds), 2001).

In this section, and in the following sections, I will focus on the socio-political aspects of the debate between the supporters of Low Chronology and High Chronology. Amihai Mazar, a prominent archaeologist from the Hebrew University (professor emeritus) and the nephew of Benjamin Mazar, who defines himself as a *moderate*

conservative, tries to downplay the influence of sociopolitical aspects on the work of his colleagues from both schools: "All those involved are mainly secular folk who come from similar educational frameworks and hold similar political views which are not extreme. You will not find people from the extreme right or from the extreme left, but people situated somewhere in the middle. I don't think that considerations of political outlook are decisive." On the other hand, Aharon Meir from Bar-Ilan University claimed that "One of the problems is politics-related motivations." In relation to Eilat Mazar, an archeologist from the conservative School of Jerusalem and the granddaughter of Benjamin Mazar, Meir said: "She will say that the work she is doing is not politically motivated, but you see where she gets her money [in part from the nationalist Elad association] and you see her worldview." Afterward he retracted his remarks and said that Eilat Mazar does not, after all, have a political agenda (Shtull-Trauring, 2011).

Indeed, most Israeli archaeologists belong to the mainstream of Zionism. However, this does not mean that their work is not influenced by socio-political and cultural aspects. Contemporary Zionist archaeologists are much less skeptical towards the bible, in comparison to the pro-Palestinian non-Jewish minimalists in Europe, to the Palestinians themselves and to Israeli post-Zionists. Moreover, even between the Schools of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem there are differences that relate to sociopolitical issues, as Meir reluctantly admitted. Ze'ev Herzog is on one side: he identifies with the new historians and is more skeptical towards the bible than the previous generation of Zionist archaeologists. Eilat Mazar is on the other side: her work reflects the nationalistic view and she carries on the legacy of the previous generation, as I will show below.

Sociopolitical views, theoretical assumptions and interpretation of evidence are interrelated. It can be seen by comparing Zionist and post-Zionist views. A prominent example is the work of Shlomo Sand, a secular, left wing, post-Zionist intellectual and a professor of history at Tel Aviv University. His controversial book *The Invention of the Jewish People* (2009) became a bestseller in Israel. Following the success of the first book, Sand published two sequels: *The Invention of the Land of Israel* (Sand, 2012) and *How and When I Stopped Being Jewish* (Sand, 2013). Sand was heavily criticized by the representatives of the Zionist elite, e.g. historians Anita Shapira, Israel Bartal and Yoav Gelber (Shapira, 2009; Karpel, 2012; *Haaretz*, 2012; Gelber, 2012). The question about the boundaries of scientific fields and the tension between different specialties are part of the debate. Sand's rivals claim that he has no authority to rule on these issues, since he specializes in the intellectual history of France and the relationship between film and history.

It is important to note that in this debate a clear distinction cannot be found between the following aspects: (a) the Zionist or post-Zionist worldviews of the different rivals and (b) their approach to history, to the appearance and development of nationality, to the bible and biblical archaeology and to the question of whether the Jews today are the direct descendants of the Jews from the Second Temple period or whether the Palestinians are, partially, their descendants. All these issues and aspects are an integral part of the same debate. The goal of Sand, for example, is to expose how "adherents of Jewish nationalism" moved the bible from the theological shelf to the

historical shelf and "began to read it as if it were reliable testimony to processes and events" (Sand, 2009: 127).

Is it surprising, then, that Sand is more skeptical about the biblical narratives than the Zionist intellectuals, including the Tel Aviv School, and supports the biblical minimalists? Sand thinks that the work of "the pioneers of the Tel Aviv school", Na'aman, Finkelstein, and Herzog, "offers attractive conclusions". Their arguments that explain why the bible could not have been written before the end of the 8th century B.C.E. are described by Sand as "fairly persuasive". However, he rejects the main theme in their works, according to which the stories of the bible were shaped and edited, to a large extent, by the interests and views of the kingdom of Judah at the days of King Josiah (7th century B.C.E.). Sand argues that their explanations are anachronistic. Although *The Bible Unearthed* of Finkelstein and Silberman (2001) is "rich and stimulating", Sand observes that the book "depicts a fairly modern national society whose sovereign, the king of Judah, seeks to unify his people and the refugees from the defeated kingdom of Israel by inventing the Torah". Finkelstein, Silberman and their colleagues, according to Sand, project modern society and techno-culture on the illiterate peasant society of the 7th century B.C.E., although the kingdom of Judah had no educational system, standard common language and advanced means of communication. For illiterate people "the Torah might have been a fetish but could not have served as an ideological campfire". Moreover, in ancient times the king did not depend on the goodwill of the people or the *political* opinions of the masses, but on ensuring a loose ideological dynastic consensus among the administrative class and a narrow stratum of landed aristocracy (Sand, 2009: 123-124). Sand concludes:

> Explaining the origin of the first monotheism in the context of widespread propaganda conducted by a small, marginal kingdom seeking to annex the land to the north is a very unconvincing historiographic argument. However, it might be indicative of an anti-annexationist mood in early twenty-first-century Israel. It is a strange theory that the bureaucratic and centralistic needs of the government of little Jerusalem before its fall gave birth to the monotheistic cult of "YHWH-alone" and the composition of a retrospective theological work in the form of the historical parts of the Bible. Surely Josiah's contemporaries, reading the narratives describing Solomon's mighty palaces, would have expected to witness remnants of past grandeur in their city streets. But since those vast ancient palaces had never existed, as archaeology has shown, how could they have been described prior to their imaginary destruction? (Sand, 2009: 124)

Thus, according to Sand, it is more probable that only administrative chronicles and vainglorious victory inscriptions composed by court scribes, e.g. Shaphan the scribe of Josiah, preserved in the archives of kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. "We don't know, and never will know, what those chronicles contained", admits Sand. In the vast expanse of theoretical interpretation, Sand prefers to side with the biblical minimalists, or the *Copenhagen-Sheffield school*, whose theory "is more convincing" although one does not have to accept the entire assumptions and conclusions of this theory. He argues that the chronicles and inscriptions were used in the composition of the bible only after the fall of the kingdom of Judah, under the influence of parables, legends and myths from the Near East as well as the exile from Judah and the return during the 6^{th} century B.C.E. Monotheism and the bible were created as a result of the encounter between the Judean intellectual elites and abstract Persian religion. The absence of the monarchy freed the scribes and priests and enabled them not only to praise but to criticize even the founder of the dynasty-David (Sand, 2009: 124-128).

Finkelstein's Apology and the Scapegoats from Sheinkin Street

In a lecture to students and professors at Tel Aviv University, Finkelstein quoted the concern of Christian archaeologist Roland de Vaux for the Judeo-Christian faith. Finkelstein asked rhetorically whether he is committed to this view. He immediately clarified that he is not committed to this view neither in terms of identity and faith nor in terms of research (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lecture 1). In a similar way, Finkelstein empathized with the previous generation of Zionist archaeologists, but at the same time drew the line between them and the new generation:

> There was a deep need here to create a culture and to give roots to people of different nationalities who came from many different places, and archaeology was a potent tool for that purpose. Everyone was mobilized in the effort on the basis of a deep inner conviction, and there is nothing wrong with that. Yadin saw history repeating itself: the conquest of the land then and now, and the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon then and now, this time taking the form of a democracy in the Middle East. The archaeologists played between past and present, and they cannot be criticized for that (Finkelstein in Shtull-Trauring, 2011).

When Finkelstein was asked by a journalist about the concern that his theory will serve those who deny the Zionist argument, he presented a more mature and critical version of Zionism than his predecessors:

> The debate over our right to the land is ridiculous. As though there is some international committee in Geneva that considers the history of peoples. Two peoples come and one says, `I have been here since the 10th century BCE,' and the other says, `No, he's lying, he has only been here since the ninth century BCE.' What will they do - evict him? Tell him to start packing? In any event, our cultural heritage goes back to these periods, so this whole story is nonsense. Jerusalem existed and it had a temple that

symbolized the longings of the Judahites who lived here, and afterward, in the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, of the Jews. Isn't that enough? How many peoples go back to the ninth or 10th centuries BCE? And let's say that there was no exodus from Egypt and that there was no great and magnificent united monarchy, and that we are actually Canaanites. So in terms of rights, we are okay, aren't we? (Finkelstein in Lori, 2005).

In his books, lectures and interviews Finkelstein always emphasizes that he strongly believes in the "complete separation" between faith, tradition and archaeological research. Finkelstein does not rule out the theology of the bible which is incredibly *exciting* to him. It is important to Finkelstein that his Israeli audience would know how much he is proud of the Jewish tradition and does not try to undermine it. The inhabitants of Judah at the late Monarchic period did not build a straight wall or produced pottery worth putting in a museum, but through an extraordinary outburst of creativity, as in Athens and Florence, they produced the founding document of Judaism and Christianity. Since identity is a threat to objectivity and research is a threat to identity, Finkelstein's solution is to insist on the above separation which "releases the tension" (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lecture 13).

Yet, despite Finkelstein's claims, the sociopolitical dimension did not disappear from biblical archaeology. The separation of the identity of the researcher from his field of study is impossible. Finkelstein and his rivals continue to blame each other for being affected by sociopolitical views. On the one hand, as we saw before, minimalists, like Whitelam, accuse Finkelstein of magnifying the Israelite settlement in the search for the national entity 'Israel', while marginalizing the Canaanite areas. On the other hand, as we will see below, conservative Zionists accuse Finkelstein and the Tel Aviv

School of conspiring with the minimalists. Finkelstein and his conservative rivals present their own work as *objective* and *unbiased*, but the debate between them exposes sociopolitical views and cultural values.

Finkelstein repeatedly clarifies that his work poses no threat to Zionism or Judaism. Rhetorically, he presents himself to the Israeli audience as one of the people who shares the same values and concerns. In the Hebrew introduction to *The Bible Unearthed* (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2001), Finkelstein and Silberman explain to the reader that the identification of the Jewish reader with the biblical text must be separated from the scientific study of the text: faith, tradition and research exist in parallel dimensions. According to the authors, the Israeli society has matured. The idea that the legitimacy of Israel depends on the accuracy of the biblical depictions is childish. It does not matter whether in the 10th century B.C.E. Solomon ruled a large kingdom or a small village and few territories. There is no doubt that the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel existed already in the 9th century B.C.E. Moreover, the political use of ancient history may become a double-edged sword. The assertion that the Israelites are descendants of the Canaanites may sound as heresy, but Finkelstein and Silberman believe that it pulls the rug out from under the assertion that the roots of another group can be found in the Canaanites world.

This rhetorical move of Finkelstein and Silberman is politically aimed at minimalist arguments, such as the *silencing* argument of Whitelam, and the Palestinian narrative. Finkelstein and Silberman add that as a democratic, liberal and open society, Israel must deal with its past and support the freedom of research which is far more

important than magnificent palaces from the 10th century B.C.E. The book was written, according to the authors, out of deep respect to the biblical "truth", which deals with the reality, needs and difficulties of the people of Judah at the end of the Monarchic period and during the Persian Period.

One of the main themes in Finkelstein's theory is that the biblical narrative is largely shaped by apologies, i.e. the apology for King David's behavior or the apology of the *second Deuteronomist* who had to explain the destruction of the First Temple and the Kingdom of Judah and the Babylonian exile (Finkelstein, 2006-2007; Finkelstein and Silberman, 2001). At times, Finkelstein finds a connection between now and then: "'The kings of Israel were scoundrels,' the people of Judah said, 'but as for the people there, we have no problem with them, they are all right.' They said about Israel what an ultra-Orthodox person would say about you or me: 'Israel, though he has sinned, is still Israel'" (Finkelstein in Lori, 2005).

Ironically, when Finkelstein talks about the biblical apology, he creates his own apology. His mother's family came to Palestine in 1860, his father's family nine decades ago. In an interview to Haaretz he clarifies that he is not a secular yuppie nihilist from Tel Aviv or a post-Zionist leftist, using exactly the same accusations that ultra-orthodox Rabbis, politicians from religious parties, right wing politicians or old puritan Zionists, use against Sheinkin Street, its culture and people (*Sheinkinaim* plural of *Sheinkinai*), which have become the symbol of secular Tel Aviv:

What didn't they say about us? That we are nihilists, that we are savaging Western culture, undermining Israel's right of existence. One person used the expression 'Bible deniers'... I am not some

kind of gentile nihilist Sheinkinai... So what will I do, leave? Where am I supposed to go? To Grodno? I don't want to go there... Maybe it's more quiet and pleasant in Boston or Paris, but if you live here, then you at least have to be part of the ongoing historical experience and understand its power. If you live here only for the parties on the beach on Thursday night, then it would be better if you didn't live here, because this is a dangerous place. Anyone who thinks that Tel Aviv is a type of Goa has missed the point completely (Finkelstein in Lori, 2005).[3]

Already Ben-Gurion, who was a puritan Zionist, called Tel Aviv and Haifa, "the contemporary Sodom and Gomorrah", in a letter he sent in 1955 (Sima, 2012). Anyone familiar with the Israeli discourse can notice that the only thing Finkelstein forgot to say about his scapegoats from Sheinkin Street is that they eat Sushi. Usually, when ultra-orthodox Jews use the term "gentile" in this context, their next move is to send the opponent to convert to Christianity. Finkelstein is far from orthodoxy, but, as a patriot, who is committed to the Jewish tradition and whose work does not undermine Judaism or Zionism, he does have to give an account to real and imaginary others. One of them is Adam Zertal, a professor emeritus from the University of Haifa who represents the old generation of Zionist archaeologists. It was Zertal who counted Finkelstein, Herzog and their school among the *bible deniers*, a term that has connotations of *holocaust denial* (Zertal, 1999; Zertal 2000).

The indirect reply of the Sheinkinaim can be found in the hit comedy *This is Sodom*, a feature film directed by Muli Segev and Adam Sanderson (2010). The movie was created by the team of *Eretz Nehederet*, one of the most successful TV shows in Israel in the last decade. *Eretz Nehederet* is a satirical show in a format similar to *Saturday Night Live*. The socio-political identity of the show is clear. The writers of the show

are center-left wing, liberal, secular, Ashkenazi men from Tel Aviv. Often the show gets into conflict with religious and right wing politicians. Segev, the creator and chief editor of the program, defines himself as a typical voter of the Labor party although in the 2013 elections he voted for the left wing party Meretz, that presents a stronger stand on the two states solution and the dismantling of settlements as well as on the separation of religion and state, religious legislation and the orthodox establishment. In media interviews (Halutz, 2013) Segev expresses the fear from the destruction of the liberal democratic vision in Israel by the nationalistic theocratic vision.

This is Sodom of Segev and his colleagues is an allegory on the conflict between, on the one hand, Tel Aviv and secular Israelism, and on the other hand, Zionist nationalism and religious Judaism. God, as depicted in the movie, is a slick salesman who eventually tricks Abraham, the opportunist cynical client, to sign a contract with him. Abraham embodies Jewish orthodoxy. King Bera, the evil dictator of Sodom, embodies the mayor of Tel Aviv and the entire system of government in Israel. God sends to Sodom the two archangels Raphael and Michael dressed as motorcycle police officers. In this context, it is important to note that Israelis and Palestinians often relate to themselves as *cousins*, i.e. the descendants of the biblical patriarchs Isaac and Ishmael. In the movie, when Hagar and her son Ishmael meet the angles on the way to Sodom, Hagar files a complaint against Abraham who expelled them to the desert. She and the boy were left with nothing: "What future does the child have?... Out of despair, he will do something radical. He will take his camel, enter inside a tent and blow up to the sky with everyone, Allah have mercy!" The surprised Ishmael asks "What?!", and Hagar whispers "Just go with it". At the last scene of the movie,

Sodom is not destroyed and Lot becomes the king of the city-state / the mayor of Sodom. The shot moves from an overview of ancient Sodom to an overview of modern Tel Aviv and the caption explains: "The city of Sodom remained a thriving metropolis. Later its residents moved to a better real estate location". Bera, who escaped with money from Sodom disguised as Lot, joins Abraham's family. The caption explains that "Abraham and Bera established a magnificent dynasty and lived as good neighbors with the peoples of the region", while in the background Abraham and Bera sit in the desert and Hagar is vacuuming under their feet. The autonomy of new Sodom is excused from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Another indirect reply of the Sheinkinaim connects to the topic of the following section: the excavations near the Temple Mount and Finkelstein's accusations against the excavators from the School of Jerusalem. *Cain & Abel 90210* is a Metal band, whose members define themselves as Sheinkinaim.[4] The title of their song "Nefila Hofshit (Hafirot)", or in English: "Free Fall (Excavations)", is a word play in which the word *free* in Hebrew is misspelled and turns into the word *shit*:

Excavations in my skull mount

Excavations in my skull mount

Machines are ready to run over, destroy

Not a bad time to feel it

Judgment Day...

Face the nightmare

Fight for the Temple Mount or Die

Do not worry about your wife

Because dying is a duty and also a privilege...

Archaeological memories take place on the timeline

Pictures in chronological order leading me where?...

This is a free fall [Nefila Hofshit]!

Shit! Shit! Shit!...

(*Cain & Abel 90210*, "Free Fall (Excavations)", Album*:* "Cain & Able Bogus Journey", 2010)

The Excavations at the City of David

Eilat Mazar, an archaeologist from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Shalem Center, is a follower of the Zionist-maximalist approach which was shaped by her grandfather Benjamin Mazar: "One of the many things I learned from my grandfather was how to relate to the Biblical text: Pore over it again and again, for it contains within it descriptions of genuine historical reality" (Mazar, 2006b: 20). Mazar is guided by a maximalist reading of the bible. Her Jewish-Zionist identity shaped her theoretical assumptions, expectations and the importance she gives to the finding of the great kingdom of two national and international mythical heroes - David and Solomon. In the session *Patriotism and National Security in Israel*, at the sixth Herzliya Conference, Mazar said that her work reveals "the importance of the Bible as a marvelous historical source that embodies a wealth of authentic historical accounts." For her, both the bible and the remains of the construction in Jerusalem "are engraved

in the root of our existence and from them we suckle our national strength." She defines her archaeological work as "a personal umbilical cord between me and the ancient history of the people of Israel in the Land of Israel. You can call it, if you wish, national strength from a personal aspect" (Mazar, 2006a).

The excavations at the old city of Jerusalem, and the City of David site south of the Temple Mount, are directly connected to national and international politics and they are in the focus of the media. Even a simple discovery can trigger the national propaganda machine. For instance, in September 2013 Mazar published that her expedition at the Ophel, a site located between the Temple Mount and the City of David, had found a gold treasure from the late Byzantine period (around the 7th century CE). The treasure includes a gold medallion with images of a menorah (the national symbol of the state of Israel), a shofar, and a Torah scroll, and it immediately became a major topic in the news (Reinstein, 2013; Hasson, 2013b). The news reports on the discovery were followed by the usual talkbacks about the *Jewish right* on the land and the Palestinian *fiction*. Right wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Mazar and congratulated her. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the discovery, as it usually does in cases of archaeological finds that relate to Jewish history in Israel. According to the publication, Netanyahu said to Mazar:

> This is a magnificent discovery. Nationally, it attests to the ancient Jewish presence and to the sanctity of the place; this is as clear as the sun and it is tremendous... This is historic testimony, of the highest order, to the Jewish people's link to Jerusalem, to its land and to its heritage. This is very moving. This find is the essence of our heritage – menorah, shofar, Torah scroll. The essence of the Jewish people could not be any more succinct and clear (Netanyahu; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

In December 2013, Netanyahu told the audience of a convection of the Likud party about his meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister a few hours earlier:

I took him to my office, showed him the seal there, from the Second Temple period [should be the First Temple period], from the time of King Hezekiah. From 2,700 years ago, almost 3,000 years ago … I show him the seal of an official of King Hezekiah, a seal that is found next to the Western Wall … and I say to him, "Look, there is a name on this. It is written in Hebrew, and it's a name you know - Netanyahu!" And I tell him, "This is from almost 3,000 years ago, but you know my first name dates back almost 4,000 years." (Netanyahu in Verter, 2013)

Netanyahu did not tell the visitor that the surname Netanyahu was chosen by his father, the right-wing Zionist historian Benzion Netanyahu, who was born in Warsaw as Benzion Mileikowsky. In fact, Hebraization of surnames is a key element in the construction of the national identity since the early days of Zionism. On November 17, 2013, Naftali Bennett, Economy Minister and leader of The Jewish Home party that represents the religious right wing and the settlers, gave an interview to the CNN. When asked about the settlements in the occupied territories, he waved an ancient coin and told Christiane Amanpour: "this coin, which says 'Freedom of Zion' in Hebrew, was used by Jews 2,000 years ago in the state of Israel, in what you call occupied. One cannot occupy his own home." [5] However, a month later, Bennett attacked the use of archaeology. When archaeology does not coincide with his political-religious agenda, it becomes a threat to Bennett's identity:

In recent months, there is an organized, consistent and scheduled campaign to erase the Jewish identity of the State of Israel. Different organizations, along with Haaretz Newspaper, are leading this campaign. Once [through] articles [claiming] that in fact there is no historical/archaeological basis to the connection between the Jewish people and its land. Once [through] an assault on students visiting

Jewish heritage sites in Israel. And now [through] a concentrated campaign against circumcision (Naftali Bennett, Facebook, 26 December, 2013). [6]

The situation in the Palestinian side is not very different. At a conference in January 2014, in front of his Israeli colleague, Minister Tzipi Livni, the chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, told the audience that he is a descendant of the Canaanites who lived in the land thousands of years before Joshua and the sons of Israel destroyed Jericho (Beck, 2014; Yaakov, 2014). The media and pro-Israeli bloggers claimed that Erekat is actually a Bedouin, a descendant of the Huwaitat tribe from the Arabian Peninsula.[7]

Sarcasm characterizes some of the responses from the left wing to this kind of arguments. In one of his satirical columns, author Sayed Kashua, whose writing reflects the tension between his Arab-Palestinian identity and his Israeli citizenship and identity, describes how he helped his daughter with a school project on roots. After his daughter asked him about the meaning of her name, Kashua said to his wife: "We have to go a lot deeper with the roots - 3,000 years deeper. You know them - they go all the way back to the burial plot the patriarch Abraham bought in Hebron, or wherever it was." He decided to tell his daughter that her name "is a musical instrument which was especially beloved by the Canaanites." "Is that with a C or a K?", asked his daughter. "With a C", Kashua shouted, "and watch your step with me! We're talking about your forefathers here, God damn it!" (Kashua, 2012).

A Jewish colleague of Kashua, Benny Ziffer, author and literary editor of Haaretz newspaper, responded in a similar way to the finding of the gold medallion by Mazar and Netanyahu's use of the discovery. Ziffer complains that the "enlisted" archaeology has become a caricature "tainting pure science with the dust of national-religious ideology." He defines it as "a form of therapeutic compensation for nations suffering from a problem of low self-esteem in the present", which can be compared to obsession of the Romanians in the days of Ceaucescu to prove that they are the descendants of the Dacians or the obsession of the Turks to prove that they are the descendants of the Hittites. Finally, Ziffer observes that other leaders can use the same argument as Netanyahu when Ottoman, Byzantine or Arab treasure is found in Jerusalem (Ziffer, 2013).

Let us return to the excavations of Mazar. Based on previous excavations, and the bible (2 Samuel 5), Mazar believes that King David's Palace is found at the City of David site. She claims that David's palace was built beyond Jerusalem's fortified walls due to the lack of space inside the city. When Jerusalem was attacked, David could have descended to the near Jebusite stronghold, i.e. the Fortress of Zion, as described in the bible. The archaeological community rejected her views and Mazar was unable to raise the funds for the excavations at the site. Eventually, Mazar became a senior fellow at Shalem Center, and the president of the center, Daniel Polisar, helped her to raise the required funds from the chairman of the center's board, Roger Hertog. The excavations of Mazar, in cooperation with Elad, began in 2005, under the academic auspices of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Mazar, 2007; Mazar, 2006b).

The political-religious agenda of the two organizations that funded and supported Mazar's work, Shalem Center and Elad, are clear. Elad is a religious, ultra right-wing association that promotes the Jewish Settlement in the area (Rapoport, 2006). Doron Spielman, a director at Elad, admits: "When we raise money for a dig, what inspires us is to uncover the Bible—and that's indelibly linked with sovereignty in Israel" (Draper, 2010). The Shalem Center is a conservative, right-wing research institute with a strong religious agenda. Hertog, the chairman of Shalem center's board who personally funded the excavations, told *The New York Times* that is aim was to show "that the Bible reflects Jewish history" (Erlanger, 2005). Or, as Polisar, the president of the center, explained the agenda to the *National Geographic*: "Our claim to being one of the senior nations in the world, to being a real player in civilization's realm of ideas, is that we wrote this book of books, the Bible. You take David and his kingdom out of the book, and you have a different book. The narrative is no longer a historical work, but a work of fiction. And then the rest of the Bible is just a propagandistic effort to create something that never was. And if you can't find the evidence for it, then it probably didn't happen. That's why the stakes are so high" (Draper, 2010).

As young students, Polisar, Yoram Hazony and Joshua Weinstein, the founders and directors of Shalem Center, were influenced by Rabbi Meir Kahane and became orthodox. Kahane was the leader of the ultra right-wing and in 1988 his party, Kach, was barred from running for the Knesset on the grounds of racism (in 1994 the Israeli government declared that Kach is a terrorist organization). Despite his influence on them, the directors of the center reject the violent agenda of Kahane. They are close to

Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Likud party. Hazony worked for Netanyahu. Donors of the center are also the donors of Netanyahu. Moshe Ya'alon, former Chief of Staff of the IDF and current Defense Minister, worked at Shalem Center. With the help of Former Education Minister, Gideon Sa'ar, the center was recognized as an academic institution (Lanski and Berman, 2007; Nesher, 2013).

The expedition at the City of David uncovered a Large Stone Structure which Mazar identified as King David's palace. Below the large structure there is a stepped-stone structure on a slope which was uncovered in previous excavations (the stepped-stone structure is the largest Iron Age structure in Israel). Mazar believes that the stepped-stone structure supported the palace. The stones of the palace were placed on an earthen landfill (the site was an open flat area, before the palace was built). Mazar dates the majority of the pottery found on the landfill to Iron Age I, or to the 12^{th}-11^{th} centuries B.C.E., the period before the conquest of Jerusalem from the Jebusites by David. The large stone structure, according to Mazar, was built later. A second phase of construction was discovered in two rooms in the northern section of the large stone structure. On the northeast edge of the building there may have been a third phase of construction. Pottery related to these phases was dated to Iron Age IIa, that is, 10^{th}-9^{th} centuries B.C.E. Hence the first phase of construction can be dated to "the beginning of Iron Age IIa, probably around the middle of the tenth century B.C.E., when the Bible says King David ruled the United Kingdom of Israel". Pottery from Iron Age IIb (8^{th}-6^{th} centuries B.C.E.) was found in the northeastern corner of the building, indicating that the building remained in use until the end of the First Temple period. In addition, the excavators have found a seal of Jehucal son of Shelemiah, son of

Shovi, a man who is mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah as official in King Zedekiah's court (597-586 B.C.E.) (Mazar, 2007; Mazar, 2006b).

Mazar's conclusions are constantly under attack for being political. Robert Draper, a correspondent for *National Geographic*, who interviewed Mazar, Finkelstein and other colleagues from the rival schools, describes an incident in which Mazar noticed a tour guide, a former student of hers, who brings tourists to the site and explains to them that Mazar did not find King David's palace and that the excavations at the City of David are part of a right-wing agenda to promote the settlements and displace the Palestinians. Mazar confronted him. She got upset and angry. Following the incident, Draper observed that "In no other part of the world does archaeology so closely resemble a contact sport" (Draper, 2010).

When Mazar announced that she had found King David's Palace at the City of David site, Finkelstein defined it as a "messianic outburst": "Once every few years, they find something in Jerusalem that seems to confirm the biblical description of the magnitude of the kingdom in the time of David. After a while, it turns out that there is no real substance to the findings, and the excitement subsides, until the next outburst" (Finkelstein in Shapira, 2005). The theoretical bias of the Jerusalem School in general and of Mazar in particular towards the maximalist position is depicted by Finkelstein as a "messianic outburst", with a wink to the religious psychosis known as the *Jerusalem syndrome*. In the case of Mazar this accusation directly relates to the Israeli political discourse and to the agenda of the religious right-wing organizations that supported her work: Shalem Center and Elad.

However, in practice the political criticism of Finkelstein on the research in the City of David site is relatively mild (Finkelstein, 2011). His critique comes from the political center in Israel today. First, claims Finkelstein, the Palestinian accusations regarding the City of David are sometimes uncritically accepted by the international media. The City of David site is not part of the Palestinian village of Silwan and tunnels are not being dug under the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Furthermore, the fieldwork in the City of David is carried out according to law and according to the standards of modern archaeology under the supervision of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Finkelstein complains that the village of Silwan in the east is built over unique, monumental Judahite rock-cut tombs from the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.E. He adds that the tombs are flooded with sewage and filled with garbage from Silwan, although he chooses not to refer to the state of the Palestinian villages and neighborhoods in East Jerusalem/Al-Quds. As the title of his op-ed promises, it deals with issues which are "beyond the politics". Like Mazar and many others, he asserts that the greatest destruction to the archaeological heritage at the Temple Mount/ Haram al-Sharif is being caused by the underground construction project of the Muslim Waqf. Yet Finkelstein is not satisfied either that the City of David and the visitor center of the site are ran by "a nongovernmental organization with a decidedly right-wing political orientation". He urges state organizations, such as the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Israel National Parks Authority, to find a way to supervise the management of the site (Finkelstein, 2011).

As I will show below, personally and epistemologically it is very important to Finkelstein to be at the center, and indeed his views reflect the Israeli political center. Eilat Mazar and Elad association are on his right; Shlomo Sand and Emek Shaveh association are on his left. Unlike the op-ed of Finkelstein, the reports of the left wing association Emek Shaveh, define the excavations at East Jerusalem/Al-Quds "as means to control the village of Silwan and the Old City of Jerusalem". Emek Shaveh also claims that some of the archaeological activities in the region are supervised by Elad and do not meet the scientific standards, especially the sifting project of the debris which were removed from the Temple Mount during the construction work of the Muslim Waqf (Emek Shaveh Association, 2013; 2012).

The entire work of Eilat Mazar is aimed at protecting the biblical narrative from biblical minimalism as well as from the more moderate theory of Low Chronology (this, of course, does not mean that her work is *unprofessional*, just as the work of Albright or the work of other archaeologists from the previous generations). Thus, the response of the colleagues from Tel Aviv, who developed the theory of Low Chronology, was expected: "The ostensible importance of this discovery and the media frenzy that has accompanied the excavation demand immediate discussion", wrote Finkelstein, Herzog and others (Finkelstein et al., 2007).

They rejected Mazar's interpretation of the finds at the City of David and her conclusions. Their alternative interpretation is based on three assertions: (1) the walls unearthed by Mazar do not belong to the same building (2) the more elaborate walls may be associated with elements uncovered in the 1920s and can possibly be dated to

the Hellenistic period (3) there are at least two phases in the construction of the stepped-stone structure that supports the slope: the lower part is earlier possibly dating to the Iron IIA in the 9th century B.C.E., while the upper part, which connects to the Hasmonaean First Wall upslope, can be dated to the Hellenistic period.

The entire interpretations of the finds in the City of David site by Finkelstein and his colleagues are aimed at protecting the theory of Low Chronology. According to Low Chronology, the latest pottery found on the landfill should be dated to the 10th/9th century B.C.E. Moreover, the Iron IIA pottery that was found in the large stone structure cannot be used to date the surrounding walls, because there is no floor in the locus. Even Mazar herself doubts whether the pottery was found *in situ*. Finkelstein et al. (2007) point out that there is no physical connection between the large stone structure and the stepped-stone structure and question the possibility of such a connection, since the present top of the stepped-stone structure seems to be a restoration from the Hellenistic period. Generally, Finkelstein et al. try to show that some or all parts of the large stone structure were built after Iron IIA. They determine that the walls were built before the Herodian-Roman period and after the latest pottery found on the landfill had been created (late Iron I/early Iron IIA). Nonetheless, they emphasize that the walls of the structure cannot be accurately dated due the missing floors, the construction during Roman and Byzantine periods, and the activity in the site during previous archaeological excavations.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel vs. the Kingdom of Judah

It is more than ironic that the controversy between the School of Tel Aviv (the city that represents secular Israelism) and the School of Jerusalem (the city that represents conservative Judaism) retrieves in a new form the rivalry and struggle between the two ancient kingdoms: the northern Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. In general, the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is much more conservative than the Faculty of Humanities at Tel Aviv University. Intellectual trends of new history, postmodernism and post-Zionism are much more common in Tel Aviv rather than Jerusalem. It was not an accident, then, that the new current in biblical archaeology developed in the biblical archaeology department at Tel Aviv University, while the biblical archaeology department at the Hebrew University is dominated by a more conservative current. In the ancient world the Kingdom of Judah, which was destroyed after the Kingdom of Israel, eventually had the upper hand in the writing of *history*. Today there is a renewed struggle over the rewriting of history. The biblical struggle is retrieved on a new ground which is made of carbon-14. Finkelstein speaks in the name of the Forgotten Kingdom of Israel: "Here is the dilemma: How can one diminish the stature of the 'good guys' and let the 'bad guys' prevail?" (Finkelstein, 2005: 39; Finkelstein, 2013). Yosef Garfinkel, on the other hand, tries to protect the "achievements of the Kingdom of Judah" (Garfinkel, 2012-2013).

Over the last few years, the focus of the debate is on Khirbet Qeiyafa**,** a site overlooking the Valley of Elah, twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem. Excavations at

the site exposed a small fortified city from the early Iron Age. The expedition that worked in Qeiyafa between 2007 and 2013 was directed by Yosef Garfinkel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Saar Ganor of the Israel Antiquities Authority**.** Garfinkel believes that Qeiyafa was one of three centers of the kingdom of David and Solomon, in addition to Jerusalem and Hebron. Did the United Monarchy exist? Garfinkel argues that the question will be decided through sites in Northern Israel. He rejects the Low Chronology of Finkelstein in Judah by identifying Qeiyafa as a Judahite city and questions the analysis of Finkelstein, who lowered the date of finds in the northern sites from the time of David and Solomon to the end of the 10th century B.C.E.- the beginning of the 9th century B.C.E., i.e. to the rise of the northern kingdom of Israel and the Omride Dynasty (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2008a; Garfinkel, 2011; Garfinkel, 2012-2013). Other suggestions have been made regarding the identity of Qeiyafa. Na'aman (2008) suggested that Qeiyafa is a Philistine site. Later Na'aman (2012) suggested that Qeiyafa is a Canaanite site. Finkelstein and Fantalkin (2012), as well as Levin (2012), suggested that Qeiyafa is an Israelite site.

Despite the differences between the biblical scholars from Copenhagen and Sheffield and the archaeologists from Tel Aviv, Garfinkel puts all his rivals together and defines them as developers of *Minimalist Strategies*. First they suggested the "Mythological" Paradigm and questioned the existence of David. Yet, according to Garfinkel, this paradigm collapsed after the discovery of the Tel Dan stela in 1993-1994, since the inscription mentions the "House of David" only 100–120 years after the reign of David. Garfinkel rejects other interpretations to the text, which he defines as "paradigm-collapse trauma," as well as the claim that the existence of the Davidic dynasty does not prove the existence of David. After the collapse of the first

paradigm, "a new strategy was developed by the minimalists", the "Low Chronology" Paradigm which, according to Garfinkel, was disconfirmed by the dating of Khirbet Qeiyafa. Instead of giving up, the minimalists adopted another strategy: the "Ethnographic" Paradigm. According to this strategy, the inhabitants of Qeiyafa were not Judahites but Philistines, Canaanites or Israelites from the Kingdom of Saul (Garfinkel, 2011; Garfinkel, 2012-2013).

Biblical archaeology is a discipline in which the political, cultural and religious aspects are clearly evident. In a lecture to students, Garfinkel put things on the table:

> What does it matter whether or not Qeiyafa is Philistine? Right? So it is Philistine; it does not affect us. Suppose that [in] Qeiyafa there was Canaanite population; it does not affect us either. Right? What does it matter? Even if it is the northern Kingdom of Israel; it had been destroyed; it does not affect [us]. Judah, with the Bible, with monotheism, with all these things - they actually continue to this day. Therefore, this issue, which is actually the most important and the main contribution of the Land of Israel to the world history and culture, is always under attack. Because why should anybody care about the Canaanites [or] Philistines? All of these things had already passed. Interesting. Notice, then, that it is not an accident that the disputes focus on the kingdom of Judah because it is actually the most important thing that happened in this place throughout human history (Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lecture 11).

Rhetorically, each side of this debate presents its own work as a proper scientific work, while claiming that the other side is biased by *extra-scientific* factors and interests and driven by improper ideological considerations. Members of the Tel Aviv School portray members of the Jerusalem School as *maximalists-fundamentalists*, while members of the Jerusalem School portray members of the Tel Aviv School as

minimalists-deconstructivists. Israel Finkelstein, the leading archaeologist from the Tel Aviv School, defines the work of his group as "view from the center" – "a balanced look" at the issues. Personally and epistemologically, it is very important to Finkelstein to be part of the mainstream: "Everyone wants to be at the center. How do you know you're truly at the center? When you are getting kicked from both sides...when you are getting kicked from both sides, you should be satisfied. It is a good place, when you are getting it from both sides" (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lectures 1& 13). The implicit assumption of Finkelstein is that the center is unbiased and always remains as it is. Politically, the mainstream and the hegemonic discourse tend to be transparent. To expose their political bias one has to confront them with local and foreign alternatives.

Finkelstein places himself between minimalism which is beyond its peak and Zionist maximalism whose adherents refuse to admit that the archaeological data do not coincides with the biblical depictions of the First Temple period. Two of his main rivals from Jerusalem are Yosef Garfinkel and Eilat Mazar. About Garfinkel's interpretations of the finds at Khirbet Qeiyafa, Finkelstein wrote: "This uncritical attitude to the text expresses a 21st century relic of the pre-Spinoza approach to the Hebrew Bible" (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 48). About the conclusions of Eilat Mazar from her work in the City of David, he wrote that they are "based on literal, simplistic readings of the biblical text and are not supported by archaeological facts" (Finkelstein, 2011). Mazar, as I explained above, continues the tradition of Zionist archaeology of the previous generation. Finkelstein and his colleagues accuse her of ignoring the entire evidence of biblical archaeology and biblical studies: "The biblical text dominates this field operation, not archaeology." Her analysis of the 10th century

B.C.E. is based, for example, even on the Book of Chronicles which was composed circa the 4th century B.C.E. Similarly, they complain that Mazar ignore "30 years of research on the Book of Genesis and the patriarchal narratives", while interpreting "Genesis as reflecting Middle Bronze Age realities." Concerning Mazar's work at the Ophel, the area located between the Temple Mount and the City of David, they complain that although she admits that the wall discovered in this area was in use during the 8th-7th centuries B.C.E., she insists, despite the lack of data, that this is the Solomonic wall described in the biblical texts (Finkelstein et al., 2007: 160-162).

Power, authority, academic politics and budgets also play a role in the struggle between the schools of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. These aspects are embodied in the following incident from 2011. Two groups of archaeologists, one of Yuval Goren and Oded Lipschits from Tel Aviv University and the other of Garfinkel and his American colleague Michael Hasel, submitted applications to the Israel Antiquities Authority, in order to carry out excavations at Tel Socoh, a mound near Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Elah Valley. Like Garfinkel, Goren and Lipschits conduct excavations at the Elah Valley, but they do not accept his thesis that Qeiyafa was Judahite. According to their thesis, Qeiyafa belonged to a small Canaanite entity.

Both groups were granted a permit to carry out surveys, but in a letter Lipschits sent to the Antiquities Authority he accused Garfinkel of digging at the site without a permit. Garfinkel denied the accusations and claimed that Lipschits is unable to distinguish between antiquities thefts and initiated excavations. Gideon Avni from the Antiquities Authority rejected Lipschits' complaint, and in response Lipschits

complained that the relations between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Antiquities Authority are irregular and unclear: Avni teaches with Garfinkel at the Hebrew University and Ganor who works with Garfinkel in Qeiyafa is the head of the unit in the Antiquities Authority for the prevention of antiquities thefts (Ganor is also a former student of Garfinkel). In response Garfinkel claimed that ever since he destroyed the *minimalist* theories of the Tel Aviv School by finding a fortified city in Qeiyafa, the archaeologists of this school are trying to harass him and "instead of having scientific debate they use dirty tricks". Garfinkel described Finkelstein as a dictator and claimed that he is behind this persecution: "The Tel Aviv school is trying to obstruct us. Don't think that they have scientific freedom there. Finkelstein organizes them. Where does Yuval Goren have a budget for a dig if not from Finkelstein's budgets?" Similar accusations were made by Gabriel Barkai, another member of the conservative group of archaeologists, who said that a "conceptual collectivism" was imposed by Finkelstein, on the department in Tel Aviv, which lead Barkai leave Tel Aviv University in 1997. Finkelstein replied that he has nothing to do with the debate between Garfinkel and the group of Goren and Lipschits and his research budgets are used only for his own work (Hasson, 2011; Shtull-Trauring, 2011). Still, the four-million-dollar research grant that Finkelstein received was used by Garfinkel in the rhetorical battle: "He doesn't even use science—that's the irony. It's like giving Saddam Hussein the Nobel Peace Prize" (Garfinkel cited in Draper, 2010). Eventually, Garfinkel continued to work in Qeiyafa and Goren's group was granted the permit to carry out the excavations at Tel Socoh.

The Little Dutch Boy who Put his Finger in the Leaking Dike

There are world wars on Qeiyafa, says Garfinkel to students, while comparing himself to the little boy who put his finger in the leaking dike to prevent the flood (Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lecture 1). Garfinkel identifies biblical minimalism as a byproduct of postmodernism and deconstructivism. The problems started, according to Garfinkel, when intellectuals such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida developed the idea that there are no absolute truths. Different theories can exist at the same time. Consequently, there is no normal science in humanities today. The aim today changed from research to the destruction of old paradigms. Everyone wants to create a new paradigm. Garfinkel blames Thomas Kuhn for that. Furthermore, he notes, due to the explosion of knowledge and academic pressure, everyone needs to innovate and publish between two to four articles each year. On the other hand, he says to students from the faculty of mathematics and natural sciences, in the natural sciences it is not like that at all: 1 plus 1 always equals 2. Although he heard from a philosopher of mathematics that it is not always so and it encouraged him. The myth of natural sciences slightly cracked (Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lecture 1). Since Finkelstein is identified by Garfinkel as a minimalist, he uses against him the same accusations:

> The problem with Finkelstein is that he never agrees with what anyone else says. He always has to be original. And he always has to have a different paradigm. If I say that your coat is gray, he will say it is dark brown [Garfinkel laughs]. If I had said this was a Philistine city he would say it is Judahite (Garfinkel in Shtull-Trauring, 2011).

Finkelstein is not exactly a minimalist, and he is certainly not a postmodernist-deconstructivist intellectual, but when Garfinkel portrays Finkelstein as a *radical*

nihilist he puts himself in the *balanced unbiased center*. In response to the above quote, Finkelstein claims that Garfinkel presents a "paranoid attitude" and as always he tries to portray Garfinkel as a *maximalist-fundamentalist*: "There is no difference between Garfinkel and Yadin and Albright. The situation has only gotten worse" (Finkelstein in Shtull-Trauring, 2011).

Garfinkel is rushing to blame everyone else for trying to stand out, to be unique and original, by destroying old and dominant paradigms and inventing new ones. But this is exactly what Garfinkel himself is doing.[8] Through his work in Qeiyafa, Garfinkel is trying to destroy what he calls *the paradigms of minimalism*, especially the current paradigm of Low Chronology that Finkelstein and his colleagues developed. If Garfinkel is not doing this for the sake of the old maximalist position that is no longer valid[9], then he is doing this in order to promote a new paradigm which presents a soft modified version of the maximalist position. In a presentation on Qeiyafa, Garfinkel and Ganor used a photomontage of an old cemetery followed by the title: "Low chronology is now officially dead and buried" (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2008b). Similarly, in an article titled *The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism*, Garfinkel asserted that "Finkelstein is not only the founding father of Low Chronology, but also its undertaker" (Garfinkel, 2011: 50). In their article on Qeiyafa, Finkelstein and Fantalkin linked the "morbid language" of Garfinkel with eschatological motives. One can say that the article is an attempt to resolve the anomalous data from Qeiyafa in the framework of normal science. In fact, Finkelstein and Fantalkin clarify that a single anomaly cannot destroy the existing paradigm:

We cannot close this article without a comment on the sensational way in which the finds of Khirbet Qeiyafa have been communicated to both the scholarly community and the public. The idea that a single, spectacular finding can reverse the course of modern research and save the literal reading of the biblical text regarding the history of ancient Israel from critical scholarship is an old one. Its roots can be found in W.F. Albright's assault on the Wellhausen School in the early 20th century, an assault that biased archaeological, biblical and historical research for decades. This trend—in different guises—has resurfaced sporadically in recent years, with archaeology serving as a weapon to quell progress in critical scholarship. Khirbet Qeiyafa is the latest case in this genre of craving a cataclysmic defeat of critical modern scholarship by a miraculous archaeological discovery (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 58).

Summer 2013 was the final excavation season of Garfinkel and Ganor in Qeiyafa. During the press conference, Garfinkel and Ganor announced that they had found King David's Palace. More precisely, they have found two or three rows of stones stretching across 30 meters. According to their estimations, the palace was about 1,000 square meters in size and at least two stories high. Garfinkel asserts that "There is no question that the ruler of the city sat here, and when King David came to visit the hills he slept here." The palace was destroyed due to the construction of a large Byzantine building in the same location 1,400 years after the palace was built. Garfinkel's rivals doubted the dating of the palace, its connection to King David and the identification of Qeiyafa as a Judahite city. Finkelstein indirectly referred to Mazar, who claimed several years before that she had found King David's palace in Jerusalem: "This reminds me of the fairy tale of the little girl who cried wolf. Yesterday they found King David's Palace in Jerusalem, today it's in Qeiyafa, tomorrow they'll find it ... who knows where. Such statements exhaust the public's attention." Jacob L. Wright from Emory University responded in a similar way: "The

most certain way to create a buzz is to claim that you've found something related to the reign of King David." He added that there were other local kings and warlords in the 10th century B.C.E. highlands (that only later became part of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah). For him, the automatic attribution of finds to King David is a kind of "an impoverishment of the historical imagination" (Garfinkel, 2013a; Hasson, 2013a; Fridman, 2013).

Nonetheless, the issue cannot be reduced to questions about the immediate benefit from headlines in the media, fame, academic status and funding of research. Garfinkel is not a classical maximalist, but he is still biased towards the maximalist reading of the bible. Historically and archaeologically, we know little about King David. Yet, through a series of theoretical leaps, Garfinkel comes to the conclusion that Qeiyafa is not only Judahite city from the 10th century B.C.E., but the city of Sha'arayim. The following step of Garfinkel is to contend that if there is a palace in the city, it must belong to King David and now it is clear that "when King David came to visit the hills he slept here".

The theoretical lenses through which Garfinkel interprets data and finds were designed by the School of Jerusalem and its research tradition. Garfinkel's academic education and career revolves around the Hebrew University's institute of archaeology. His initial research project focused on prehistory, but when Amihai Mazar and other biblical archaeologists retired, Garfinkel was called to duty. In 2004 he was appointed head of the Biblical Archaeology department.

As I noted before, Garfinkel admits that the kingdom of Judah is very important and controversial, since it affects us today. Indeed, if "Judah, with the Bible, with monotheism...[that] actually continue to this day" affects us, then in Garfinkel's case his Zionist-Jewish identity and patriotism influence his aspirations to find certain things and interpret finds in a certain way. Garfinkel is committed to confirm and protect what he calls in his lectures "the material and intellectual achievements of the kingdom of Judah". He speaks passionately against the minimalists who try to "erase" these achievements. Finkelstein, of course, is identified as one of them. Garfinkel mocks the Low Chronology paradigm by claiming that, according to Finkelstein, Kings David and Solomon were just Bedouin Sheikhs who ruled over a small village. He lists some examples of the minimalist attempts to "strip the kingdom of Judah of its material and intellectual achievements": (a) the United Monarchy of Judah and Israel during the days of Kings David and Solomon did not exist (b) urbanization and the establishment of the kingdom of Judah occurred only at the end of the 8th century B.C.E., or according to the new model of Finkelstein, at the end of the 9th century B.C.E. (c) the unique city plan of the Judahite cities was copied from Qeiyafa which is Philistine, Canaanite or Israelite city (d) Jerusalem became a central city only due to a large population that had fled from the Kingdom of Israel to Judah after the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel (e) the Hebrew script developed only during the 8th century B.C.E. (f) monotheism developed only during the Persian or Hellenistic eras. Garfinkel is willing to admit that each individual claim sounds reasonable, but all of them together, plus many other claims, create an "odd trend" (Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lectures 11 & 12). In this respect, Garfinkel really is, as he defined it, the little boy who put his finger in the leaking dike.

The War on Khirbet Qeiyafa and the Reciprocal Interaction of Theories and Data

As Bruno Latour observed, when controversies in science flare up, the literature becomes technical (Latour, 1987: 30-44). In the case of the debate between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem over Qeiyafa it can be seen, for example, in Finkelstein and Fantalkin's remarks on the "methodological flaws" and "hasty operation" of the expedition at Qeiyafa (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 39-41), or in radiocarbon dating and other aspects.

The reciprocal interaction of theories and data:

(1) Radiocarbon dating

According to the conservative theory of High Chronology, Iron Age IIA began around 1000 B.C.E. and ended around 925/900 B.C.E., i.e. during the days of Kings David and Solomon / the United Monarchy. Finkelstein, who denies the existence of the United Monarchy and promotes the theory of Low Chronology, proposed in 1996 that Iron Age IIA began around 900 B.C.E. (Finkelstein, 1996). During the last years, Finkelstein has been trying to show that Iron Age IIA began around 930/920 B.C.E. and ended during the second half of the 9th century B.C.E. (Finkelstein and Piasetzky, 2011; Toffolo et al., 2014). Sharon et al. (2007) conducted a comprehensive study that

supports the theory of Low Chronology and the assertion that Iron Age IIA began around 900 B.C.E.

Amihai Mazar, a prominent representative of the Jerusalem School who became a *moderate conservative*, suggested a modified version to the theory of High Chronology. According to his updated view, Iron Age IIA began around 980 and ended around 840/830 B.C.E. Mazar takes exception to Finkelstein's use of ^{14}C Bayesian models. He points out that even Bronk Ramsey, who developed the models, "doubted if the Bayesian models are sensitive enough when so many samples from various sites are being investigated and when there are suspected gaps in the sequence of available dates" (Mazar, 2011).

During recent years, Finkelstein has been trying to show that the gap between the chronologies is narrowing and the difference today between the positions is about 50 years or even less: 985–935 B.C.E., or even ~970–940 B.C.E (Finkelstein and Piasetzky, 2011; Toffolo et al., 2014). Garfinkel is not mentioned in these articles. As we will see below, Finkelstein deals with Garfinkel's interpretation of the ^{14}C data in Qeiyafa in other articles. Garfinkel himself claims that the new ^{14}C data heralds the *death* of Low Chronology. Together with Ganor, Garfinkel dated the Iron Age layer at Qeiyafa to circa 1026–975 B.C.E. They noted that these dates fit the estimated time of the Kingdom of David (circa 1000-965 B.C.E.) and are too early for the estimated time of the Kingdom of Solomon (circa 965-930 B.C.E.). According to Garfinkel and Ganor, the site existed for only few decades and was destroyed no later than 969 B.C.E. (77.8% probability). It is unlikely that the site existed until 940 B.C.E. (6.2% probability). Thus, the theory of High Chronology is correct in regard to Judah: the

transition from late Iron I to early Iron IIA in Judah took place around 1000 B.C.E. (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009: 4, 8; Garfinkel, 2011: 51; Garfinkel et al., 2012: 364). See a summary of the different views in Table 1.

TABLE 1

High Chronology vs. Low Chronology and the Beginning of Iron IIA

Archaeologist	Theory	The beginning of Iron IIA
Israel Finkelstein	Low Chronology	Circa 900 B.C.E.
	Low Chronology	Updated view: Circa 940-920 B.C.E.
Ilan Sharon	Low Chronology	Circa 900 B.C.E.
Amihai Mazar	High Chronology	Circa 1000 B.C.E.
	Modified High Chronology	Updated view: circa 980 B.C.E.
Yosef Garfinkel	High Chronology	Circa 1000 B.C.E., at least in Judah. A "**?**" regarding the existence of the United Monarchy and the beginning of the northern Kingdom of Israel

The radiocarbon dating in Qeiyafa is not a separate question but part of the great debate between the theories of Low and High Chronology. Basically, one of the research objectives is to find a match between *absolute* and *relative* chronology, that

is, between radiocarbon dating and products of material culture, such as pottery. The Iron Age layer at Qeiyafa was dated by Garfinkel and Ganor to circa 1026–975 B.C.E. (58% probability), using ^{14}C samples. The final result was achieved by averaging radiocarbon dating results of four olive pits that were found in different locations at the site. Unsurprisingly, the dating was interpreted as a confirmation of High Chronology that, together with the rest of the evidence from Qeiyafa, disproves Finkelstein's Low Chronology: "...the transition from Iron Age I to Iron Age II took place at the very end of the eleventh century B.C.E., thereby providing clear evidence against low chronology dating." Garfinkel and Ganor identified two main methodological problems regarding the radiometric results that support Low Chronology. First, geographically, samples of the Iron Age IIA were taken mainly from sites in the northern Kingdom of Israel and not from sites in the Kingdom of Judah. Second, the samples were taken from later Iron Age IIA strata and not from the beginning of the period (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009: 4, 8, 15, 35-38).

Moreover, in his article on *The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism*, Garfinkel accused Finkelstein and his colleague, the physicist Eli Piasetzky, that they hesitated to publish several results of radiocarbon dating from the northern Kingdom of Israel, since the results (circa 1000 B.C.E.) are consistent with traditional High Chronology. Based on these results, Garfinkel did not hesitate to proclaim that Finkelstein is not only the founding father of Low Chronology, but also its undertaker (Garfinkel, 2011: 50).

Besides calibration, accuracy, the effective resolution of the dating method, the type of material from which the sample is made and the selection of calculation procedures and statistical models (e.g., averaging of results and Bayesian models), there are other factors and considerations that influence radiocarbon dating. The desired result that supports High Chronology, according to Garfinkel and Ganor, is the first half of the 10^{th} century B.C.E. Garfinkel and Ganor submitted for dating two sets of four burnt olive pits (one of the seven olive pits was used in both sets of samples). The first set of samples, which was collected from the casemate wall of the city, failed to produce the desired results. One sample did not yield ^{14}C at all, but it was used again in the second set. Two samples from another olive pit were dated to the Middle Bronze Age, a result which corresponds to pottery that was found in the site. The following sample was dated to Iron Age I (1130–1046 B.C.E., 59.6% probability), a result which "is a bit high, even for the high chronology." The last sample was from the Hellenistic period. According to the explanation of Garfinkel and Ganor, there are large holes between the megalithic stones of the casemate wall and the problem is the migration of organic materials due to the activity of animals and plants. In general, about 10%-30% of the samples may be *contaminated* as a result of the movement of organic materials between layers. Thereafter, Garfinkel and Ganor submitted the second set of samples for dating. As noted above, the final result was calculated by averaging the results of the four samples, an operation that enabled Garfinkel and Ganor to reduce the date range to the time of King David or earlier (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009: 35-38; Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lecture 8).

Calculations influence the validity of theories, but they are also influenced by them. In the present case, radiocarbon dating influences the theories of Low and High

Chronology, but it is also influenced by them. The response to Garfinkel and Ganor was quick: In 2010 Finkelstein and Piasetzky published an article in which they attacked the dating method of Garfinkel and Ganor (Finkelstein and Piasetzky, 2010). They argued that averaging is a legitimate procedure only when all samples are exactly from the same age. These conditions are achieved, for example, when destruction as a result of fire is identified or when the samples are taken under a thick collapse from the same destruction layer. Otherwise the samples can represent different stages in the life of the settlement the duration of which is unknown. In the present case, the samples were taken from different loci and they do not represent a single event in the history of Qeiyafa. Based on the following aspects, Finkelstein and Piasetzky estimated that the samples represent the duration of activity at the site, which started ca. 1050 B.C.E. and ended sometime during the 10^{th} century, no later than 915 B.C.E.: (1) the data published by their rivals (2) an analysis showing that the pottery assemblage in Qeiyafa belongs to the ceramic phase of the late Iron I (3) additional data on pottery assemblages and radiocarbon results from the early and middle Iron I. Unsurprisingly, they came to a conclusion that "The Khirbet Qeiyafa ^{14}C determinations line up with the large number of measurements from late Iron I sites in both the north and south of Israel and support the Low Chronology." Finally, Finkelstein and Piasetzky accuse Garfinkel and Ganor that they "err and mislead" in claiming that (a) past results were based on samples taken only from the north (b) the dating of the transition from Iron Age I to Iron Age II was based on samples from later Iron Age IIA strata and not on samples from the beginning of the period. There are 107 measurements from eight late Iron I strata and 32 measurements from five early Iron IIA strata. Finkelstein and Piasetzky think that the measurements adequately represent both the north and south of the country.

The story, of course, does not end here. First, Garfinkel replied that the averaging process was legitimate, because the city existed for a short period before it was completely destroyed. Second, in 2012 Garfinkel's team found a broken pottery that contained twenty olive pits. Since all the olive pits were found in the same place and in the same context they meet the criteria of averaging, although the samples can provide the estimated date of the destruction of the city and not the date of its establishment (Garfinkel, 2012-2013a: Lecture 8).

In any case, it is important to emphasize again that the issue of radiocarbon dating cannot be separated from other aspects of the debate between Low and High Chronology and from the question whether or not the ancient city in Qeiyafa was Judahite at all. In other words, the question whether the researcher expects to find a fortified Judahite city from the time of King David, influences the way he selects and interprets the data, the way he determines if data and results are relevant and if averaging and other calculations are legitimate under certain conditions. Radiocarbon dating in Qeiyafa depends not only on radiocarbon measurements in other sites, but on the rest of the evidence, e.g. pottery assemblages, as well as on the theory to which the researcher is committed. When Finkelstein confesses that "There is a certain distance in archaeology between finds and interpretation" (Finkelstein in Fridman, 2013; Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lectures 1), he actually depicts the predicament of the entire sciences, as the history and philosophy of science teach us. The scientific enterprise is characterized by unavoidable theoretical leaps. In the present case, the entire evidence and finds in Qeiyafa is perceived and interpreted according to

theoretical frameworks of the different rivals. As Finkelstein and Piasetzky summarize their position and considerations:

> For the beginning of the Iron IIA (the Iron I/II transition), the differences between the debating camps have now narrowed to a few decades—a gap that is beyond the resolution of radiocarbon results, even when a large number of determinations are deployed. Introducing historical considerations as well as observations related to the pace of change of pottery traditions, the Iron I/II transition could have taken a decade or two and should be put shortly after the mid-tenth century B.C.E. (Finkelstein and Piasetzky, 2011: 52).

Let us continue to examine the way in which the finds from Qeiyafa are interpreted according to the different theoretical frameworks of High and Low Chronology:

(2) Urban planning.

Garfinkel and Ganor assert that the urban planning of Qeiyafa is a unique Judahite characteristic: a casemate city wall and a belt of houses in which the casemates are used as backrooms. Garfinkel and Ganor claim that the city had two gates and they identify the city as Shaarayim (in Hebrew: Two Gates), which, according to the bible, is in the list of towns of Judah (Josh 15:36) and located at the Valley of Elah in which the story of David and Goliath took place (1 Sam 17:52). According to Garfinkel and Ganor, Qeiyafa is the only site in Judah and Israel with two gates and the main entrance to the city faces Jerusalem. Much larger cities, such as Lachish and Megiddo, had only a single gate. Qeiyafa was the fortress of Judah on its border with Philistia (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2008a; Garfinkel et al., 2012).

As I will explain below, Finkelstein denies that there were two gates in Qeiyafa. In any case, Finkelstein and others reject the identification of Qeiyafa with Shaarayim. According to their interpretation, the depiction of Shaarayim in the bible does not represent the reality in Judah of 10th century B.C.E., but the reality in Judah of late Iron II age, especially Josh 15 which depicts the administrative organization of Judah in the late 7th century B.C.E. In addition, Shaarayimm, according to the biblical description, cannot be located at Qeiyafa. Here, too, Finkelstein does not miss the opportunity to accuse Garfinkel of literal, uncritical reading of the bible (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 46-48; Dagan, 2009).

Finkelstein argues that sites similar to Qeiyafa with casemate city walls, from Iron I–early Iron IIA age, were found not just in Judah. These sites are located at the highlands in the following geographical areas: the inland parts of the Levant, Ammon, Moab, the Negev highlands and the highlands north of Jerusalem. Finkelstein prefers to attribute the site to the early north Israelite Gibeon/Gibeah entity for the following reasons: (a) Indeed the city is near Jerusalem, but a significant building activity at this age in Jerusalem and other Judahite sites was not discovered. The Judahite highlands were sparsely settled and demographically depleted. Thus it is not clear how David and his people could have built and ruled Qeiyafa. On the other hand, the Gibeon/Gibeah entity was densely inhabited and had no manpower problem (b) A dense system of contemporaneous casemate walls were found at the Gibeon-Bethel plateau (c) The bible speaks of the presence of Saul, the first King of Israel, in the Valley of Elah where the battle between the Israelites and Philistines had taken place (d) If Qeiyafa was an Israelite city, its destruction during the Sheshonq I campaign can be easily explained (Finkelstein, 2013: 56-59; Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012).

In conclusion, what is considered by Garfinkel and Ganor as strong evidence for the existence of fortified cities in the Kingdom of David, its magnitude, and the correctness of High Chronology, is interpreted by Finkelstein as evidence for the magnitude of the Kingdom of Israel since it is more compatible with the theory of Low Chronology.

(3) Pig Bones and pottery assemblage.

The lack of pig bones in Qeiyafa is interpreted by Garfinkel and Ganor as evidence that the city was Judahite and not Philistine. The pottery assemblage, as well, is different from the Philistine pottery in Gath. The petrographic analysis shows that the pottery is local, i.e. from the Valley of Elah. About 600 handles of storage jars with finger impressions have been found in Qeiyafa. Handles with finger impressions have also been found in Jerusalem. There was an administrative tradition in Judah of manufacturing jars with stamped handles for tax purposes (Garfinkel et al., 2012; Garfinkel, 2013b).

Finkelstein admits that until recent years the lack of pigs in different sites was interpreted as indicating that the inhabitants were Israelites/Judahites, but in recent years it was discovered that pig bones are also rare at non-Israelite inland Iron I sites in the lowlands and even at rural sites in the heartland of Philistia. The pottery assemblage, as well, is typical to the region and therefore the specific identity of the inhabitants of Qeiyafa cannot be determined according to these finds. Moreover,

Finkelstein emphasizes that identify of the inhabitants of Qeiyafa cannot be determined even based on the entire known data from this site and from other sites (Finkelstein, 2013: 55).

(4) Inscriptions.

The expedition has found in Qeiyafa several ostracons. The inscription on one of the ostracons was analyzed by several experts and sparked a debate. The ostracon is written in proto-Canaanite script from which the Phoenician alphabet developed. Ancient Hebrew script, as well as other native scripts, developed from the Phoenician alphabet. Many letters in the inscription faded, but the researchers tried to decipher the ostracon using imaging techniques.[10] Several articles suggest that the inscription on the ostracon may be one of the earliest Hebrew inscriptions and it represents the stage before the proto-Canaanite script transformed into the standardized Phoenician script. This idea was suggested by the epigraphist Haggai Misgav, Garfinkel and Ganor. Misgav claims, for example, that the phrase "Do not do" in Hebrew appears in the inscription (in Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009: 243-257; Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lectures 11 & 12). Gershon Galil, one of the proponents of this view, had tried to reconstruct the text and suggested that the inscription is similar to biblical texts. According to Galil, this is a strong indication that complex literary texts in Hebrew were composed as early as the beginning of the 10th century B.C.E. Galil identifies Qeiyafa with Neta'im which, according to the bible, was an administrative fortified centre built by King David on the border between his kingdom and Philistia (Galil, 2009). According to other articles, there are no indications that the inscription was written in ancient Hebrew (Rollston, 2011; Millard, 2011).

The positions in this debate are derived from the greater debate between the paradigms of Low and High Chronology. When Garfinkel, Ganor and Misgav try to identity the language of the inhabitants of Qeiyafa as ancient Hebrew, they do so as part of the inclusive pattern of High Chronology. For Garfinkel, the assertion that the Hebrew script developed only during the 8th century B.C.E. is part of the minimalist trend to erase "the material and intellectual achievements of the kingdom of Judah" (Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lectures 11 & 12).

The identity of the researcher influences the analysis and interpretation of the text. Religious Zionist researchers, such as Misgav, tend to be more conservative and reject the minimalist position, although today the *maximalist* position itself is far from the orthodox dogmas. The religious researcher has to deal with serious conflicts, as Misgav himself described in a lecture on the *Contradictions between Archeology and the Bible*, delivered at the religious academic institution - Herzog College (Misgav, 2010). During the lecture Misgav related to his correspondence with Galil concerning the ostracon. Misgav does not agree with the strong maximalist assertions of Galil on this issue. In this context, he wrote to Galil that if he (Misgav), with the Kippah on his head, had suggested the same interpretation as Galil, he would have been accused of fundamentalism.

Finkelstein and Fantalkin support the view that the inscription on the ostracon was not written in Hebrew. They emphasize that almost all late proto-Canaanite inscriptions

were found in the Shephelah and the southern coastal plain, especially near the Philistine city Gath. Egyptian hieratic inscriptions from the Late Bronze III were also found in the same region, especially around Lachish. The region was the center of the Egyptian administration in Canaan in the Late Bronze Age. Hence the late proto-Canaanite inscriptions may reflect the influence of an older administrative and cultural tradition. When Finkelstein and Fantalkin adopt the position that the inscription from Qeiyafa was not written in Hebrew, they do so as part of the inclusive pattern of Low Chronology. Thus they accuse Galil, for example, of taking the maximalist stand (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 50-51; Finkelstein, 2013: 55).

Finkelstein and his colleagues do not deny that ostracons with short inscriptions were made in the early days of the Kingdom of Judah. Also, they do not deny that the bible preserves old memories. However, the assertion that complex literary texts did not exist in Judah before the end of the 8th century B.C.E. is a key element in the theory of Low Chronology: growth of the kingdom, bureaucracy, writing, economic prosperity, international relations - all come together. According to Finkelstein's theory, ideologically, theologically and historically the bible was composed, shaped and edited mainly since the 7th century B.C.E., as part of the Deuteronomic reform of King Josiah (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2001; Finkelstein, 2006-2007).

(5) Cult.

Garfinkel and Ganor did not find figurines or signs of iconic cult in Qeiyafa. For them it is a confirmation that the site was Judahite. They did find two boxes, or "shrine models", one made of stone the other of clay. Similar boxes from other excavations contained symbols or icons of Gods, but in this case the boxes were broken and no symbols, iconic or abstract, were found. Figures of birds on the top of the clay box and lions on the bottom can be interpreted as a sign of fertility goddesses. On the stone box there is a doorway decorated with three recessed frames and roof beams with triglyphs. According to the interpretation of Garfinkel and Ganor, the architectural model on the stone box is similar to the architecture in Solomon's Palace and Temple as they are described in the biblical texts. In addition, the proportions of the door in the model are similar to the proportions of the doors in the Second Temple as described in the Mishnah. Garfinkel sees it as a continuity of cult in Judah. Finally, the ritual of the inhabitants of Qeiyafa was conducted in worship rooms inside private homes. This unusual practice does not appear in Canaanite or Philistine cultures, but it coincides with the biblical description of the period before the establishment of Solomon's Temple (Garfinkel et al., 2012; Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lectures 10 & 11; Garfinkel, 2013b).

Finkelstein is not impressed with the fact that the excavators did not find figurines at the site: "Is Garfinkel saying that zealous monotheists lived in Khirbet Qeiyafa in the 10th century B.C.E.? Is that what happened? I dug at a certain site and did not find ritual objects, but it never occurred to me that the inhabitants were zealous monotheists" (Finkelstein in Shtull-Trauring, 2011). Again, this specific debate relates

to the greater debate. Garfinkel takes exception to the idea that monotheism developed only after the First Temple period, a claim which he identifies as an example of erasing the intellectual achievements of the Kingdom of Judah. Yet, he accepts the idea that the reception of monotheism was gradual, as described in the bible itself. Finkelstein, on the other hand, emphasizes that Syncretism dominated Judah during the First Temple period. According to the bible, paganism was common in Judah even in the days of King Solomon. Archaeological evidence shows that the Deuteronomic reform, which allowed to worship only one god and centralized the worship at Solomon's Temple, did occur at the days of Josiah (7^{th} century B.C.E.), although in their homes (even in houses near the Temple) the people of the kingdom still used figurines. According to the bible, after the days of Josiah, who was killed by Necho II, Syncretism appeared again (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lectures 11 & 12).

Notice that monotheism, or the belief in the *existence* of one God, is not necessarily equivalent to the Deuteronomic theology of the First Temple period. As Moses and the children of Israel sang: "Who among the gods is like you, Yahweh" (Exodus 15:11). In any case, the conservative patriotic lenses through which Garfinkel sees this subject conflicts even with the biblical description of the First Temple period. Garfinkel relies on the bible and the prophets who condemned those who worship other gods as *sinners*, but he ignores the fact that the bible depicts the dominance of paganism/syncretism during the First Temple period. He argues that until now archaeological evidence dealt with the later period of the kingdom of Judah, but now Qeiyafa provides new evidence on the early days of the kingdom (Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lectures 10 & 11).

The problem is that in 2012 an ancient pagan temple, dated to the 9th century B.C.E., was uncovered at Tel Motza, 5 kilometers from the Temple Mount. The findings include figurines of men and animals. It was easy for Finkelstein to explain it: first there were other similar sites in Judah up to the end of the 8th century B.C.E., and second since there were many ritual sites in Israel and Judah the bible itself repeatedly demanded that the Judahites and Israelites get rid of all other sites besides Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. But for Garfinkel it was more difficult: "I assume that the population in the Negev needed a site for their ritual, but Motza is five kilometers from Jerusalem. Why did they need another temple?" He admits that the temple in Tel Motza cannot be ignored, but he promises that the discourse on the subject will be changed after the publications of new articles with evidence from Qeiyafa (Hasson, 2012; Garfinkel, 2012-2013: Lecture 11).

Theory Ladenness of Observation

Garfinkel, Ganor and Michael Hasel explain to their readers that data are like mosaic stones: the stones/data can be assembled in different forms to create different images/paradigms, but the stones/data remain the same (Garfinkel et al., 2012: 45). However, as Thomas Kuhn (1970) and others have shown, data/observations/evidence are not extra-paradigmatic. On the contrary, they depend on paradigms.

The theory ladenness of observation is clearly evident in the debate between Finkelstein and Garfinkel, who perceive and interpret data and finds through different theoretical lenses. While Garfinkel and Ganor see and identify a southern four-chamber gate at the Casemate wall of the city (Qeiyafa), Finkelstein and Fantalkin do not. The existence of the gate is suggested by (a) two monumental boulders, weighing about ten tons each, on both sides of the gate – at the front of the gate (b) the orientation of the casemates on both sides of the gate: the entrances to the casemates change orientation at this spot. According to Garfinkel and Ganor, the gate is from the 10th century B.C.E. During the Hellenistic period the gate was blocked and damaged as a result of building activities (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009: 108-111; Garfinkel et al., 2009: 218; Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 45-47).

In 2011 Finkelstein told a journalist: "There are not two gates there. There is one gate, the western gate. Ninety percent of what you see in the southern gate is a reconstruction. I intend to publish a photograph from the end of the dig and a photograph taken after the reconstruction, and every sensible person will see that

there was no gate there" (Finkelstein in Shtull-Trauring, 2011). In their article, Finkelstein and Fantalkin compare two photos: one of the *southern gate* before restoration (see Figure 1) and the other of the *southern gate* after restoration (see Figure 2). First, they claim, the restoration is loosely based on the finds: in the eastern wing of the gate the central pier is restored from a wall that blocks the gate's entryway, and in the western wing the inner (northern) pier does not exist and the central pier is restored from a short stub. Secondly, according to their interpretation of the finds, the existence of a four-chamber gate in this location requires us to assume that it was built over rock-cut and built installations that should be dated to the Middle Bronze Age or to an early phase of the late Iron I settlement. In the southeastern *chamber*, near the passageway of the restored gate, there are rock-cut cup-marks. Finkelstein and Fantalkin point out that from the comparison of the photos it can be seen that the northwestern sector of the restored gate is built over installations and cup-marks, most of which do not appear in the restored gate. The central pier of the eastern wing also seems to have been built over an installation (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 45-47).

Observation and interpretation are always intertwined. The question whether or not there were two city gates in Qeiyafa does not stand on its own. Each side of this debate comes with different set of assumptions, expectations and theoretical commitments. The identification of the two gates in Qeiyafa is important to the big picture that Garfinkel tries to paint. If the city that was excavated in Qeiyafa can be identified as the Judahite city of Shaarayim ("Two Gates"), then the existence of fortified cities in 10th century B.C.E. Judah is confirmed. In other words, the identification of Shaarayim is a confirmation of Garfinkel's thesis on the antiquity,

magnitude and importance of the Kingdom of Judah, which is motivated by the will to protect the "achievements of the Kingdom of Judah". Finkelstein, on the other hand, wants to protect the paradigm that he developed, Low Chronology, from the work of Garfinkel which is biased towards the conservative High Chronology. Thus the identification of the city that was excavated in Qeiyafa as Shaarayim may disconfirm a significant part of Finkelstein's thesis.

FIGURE 1 The *southern gate* at Qeiyafa before restoration (Garfinkel et al., 2009: 219).

FIGURE 2 The *southern gate* at Qeiyafa after restoration (Finkelstein and Fantalkin, 2012: 47;

Photo by Yosef Garfinkel).

Conclusion: The Separation of Research from Identity

Let us examine again Finkelstein's argument about the separation between research, tradition and belief: "I am a great believer in a total separation between tradition and research. I myself have a warm spot in my heart for the Bible and its splendid stories. During our Pesach seder, my two girls, who are 11 and 7, didn't hear a word about the fact that there was no exodus from Egypt. When they are 25, we will tell them a different story. Belief, tradition and research are three parallel lines that can exist simultaneously. I don't see that as a gross contradiction" (Finkelstein in Lori, 2005). Finkelstein, of course, exaggerates, but if there is a complete separation between research, tradition and belief, why wouldn't he tell his daughters that there was no exodus from Egypt? Because research is a threat to identity. In this case, Finkelstein's theory is a direct threat to conservative Zionist and Jewish identities. In fact, the threat is mutual: research is a danger to identity and identity is a danger to objectivity. Therefore Finkelstein's solution is to insist on a separation which "releases the tension" (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lecture 13).

As I have tried to show, Finkelstein's insistence on the separation is a rhetorical tool used in his apology to calm fears of the Israeli-Jewish public as well as a rhetorical tool used against his rivals in the heated debates about Low and High Chronology. What Finkelstein actually says is that he was able to reconcile his research and theories with his socio-political and cultural views as a secular/traditionalist Jewish Zionist. He states, for example, "I have very strong views concerning identity and

historical background. I do not panic" (Finkelstein in Feldman, 2006). In other words, Finkelstein does not panic because his views and theories - which epistemologically and socially are guided by a "view from the center" (Finkelstein, 2006-2007: Lectures 1& 13; Finkelstein, 2011) - are in harmony with each other. It does not mean that his theories do not put in danger the identities of others, e.g. the views of conservative Zionists, dominant conservative currents among orthodox Jews and, of course, ultra-orthodox Jews.

Why is it so important to Finkelstein to close the "growing and intolerable gap between what is taking place in archeology today and what the public knows" (Finkelstein in Feldman, 2006)? Because archaeology is not only shaped by identities, but it is also a formative force that shapes identities. The books Finkelstein writes to the general public, his lectures and interviews, are part of struggle on the identity of Israel. In his vision, the development of the Zionist-Jewish identity must continue in a liberal-democratic course: "Israel's strength is determined, first and foremost, from being an open, liberal, democratic society, which can deal with its recent and distant past. In this respect, a free, dynamic and vibrant research today is much more important than magnificent palaces from the 10^{th} century B.C.E." (Hebrew introduction from 2002 to Finkelstein and Silberman, 2001).

In a similar way, Finkelstein's work and his scientific authority as reflected in TV programs are used by atheist activists in the struggle on the identity of Israel:

(a) See, for example, the Youtube videos of ScienceReasonIsrael, especially the following video on the exodus from Egypt:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTxBNVVxXd0 (8 September 2013).

(b) See also the following publication:

http://www.daatemet.org.il/articles/article.cfm?article_id=10 , of *Daatemet*, an atheist organization whose aim is to undermine the orthodox interpretation of the Scriptures, which have "become a political tool in the hands of self-interested fundamentalists who lay claim to having exclusive ownership of this legacy" http://www.daatemet.org/aboutus.cfm.

In conclusion, Finkelstein emphasizes the separation again and again just because in practice it does not exist. No one can really separate his identity from questions about his identify. To be truly critical one has to acknowledge that his identity and theories are interrelated rather than proclaiming to be *objective* and *unbiased*. The pretense of objectivity should be replaced with intersubjectivity.

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Endnotes

[1] The story about Abraham, for example, symbolized the separation of the Hebrews from the nomadic Semites, and the stories about Isaac and Jacob symbolized the separation of the "people of Israel" from the other Hebrew peoples. Dubnow, and the Zionist historians after him, tried to reconcile the bible with archaeological evidence and modern research, e.g. the biblical stories of the Exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan in relation to the extra-biblical evidence on the rule of Egypt over Canaan at the estimated time in which these events occurred.

[2] Translations from Hebrew are mine, although in many citations below I have fully or partially used the English translations that appear in the news websites.

[3] Finkelstein says in Hebrew "gentile nihilist Sheinkinai", although in the English version of the interview it was translated into "yuppie nihilist", a phrase which is much more subtle and intelligible to the non-Israeli reader.

[4] Interview with *Cain and & 90210* on KZRadio, 12 January 2015: http://pod.icast.co.il/bfcc402e-cdc4-4fc1-b964-94d2bcbacc67.icast.mp3 ; see also: Penn, 2011.

[5] See the end of the interview with Bennett: http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/523/195.html.

[6] https://www.facebook.com/NaftaliBennett/posts/671099339578404.

[7] See, for example:

http://elderofziyon.blogspot.co.il/2014/02/erekats-latest-lie-my-family-was-in.html#.VSz9V_mUftt

http://elderofziyon.blogspot.co.il/2014/02/saeb-erekat-admits-he-is-jordanian.html#.UxY2LWDNvyc

http://www.assawsana.com/portal/pages.php?newsid=167478.

[8] Garfinkel enjoys what he sees as defeating the *deconstructivists* in their own game. See, for example, his tireless correspondence with Philip Davies: http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/scholars-study/the-great-minimalist-debate/. Yoav Karny (2010), who interviewed Garfinkel, pointed out that he enjoys very much the fuss about him and he is eager to fight.

[9] Garfinkel compares the bible to the *Bag of Lies*, a famous collection of tall stories that describes the days of the Palmach (the elite fighting force of the Jewish community before the establishment of the State of Israel). One should not take the stories in the *Bag of Lies* literally, but they contain a grain of truth about geographical locations and the relations between the Jews, Arabs and the British. In a similar way, claims Garfinkel, the bible can be used as a guide in the search for facts and clues about facts (Karny, 2010).

[10] See the Qeiyafa Ostracon Chronicle: http://qeiyafa.huji.ac.il/ostracon.asp.