Research article
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‘United Monarchy’ and ‘Divided Monarchy’
Personal Names Compared

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Abstract: This study reviews characteristics of biblical personal names of the ‘United Monarchy’, and compares them with those of the ‘Divided Monarchy’. The comparison reveals that, while ‘Divided Monarchy’ names have similar characteristics in both Kings and Chronicles, the characteristics of ‘United Monarchy’ names differ, suggesting different sources for much of the ‘United Monarchy’ onomastica. Both sources, however, show the same remarkable onomastic evolution from the ‘United Monarchy’ to the ‘Divided Monarchy’, which may reflect the spread of Yahwism in the biblical narratives. This evolution is similar to that attested in the epigraphic evidence from a later period – from the 9th and 8th centuries to the 7th and early 6th centuries BCE.

Keywords: Personal names, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Yahwism, United Monarchy, Divided Monarchy, Israel, Judah, Iron Age II

1 Introduction
While the existence of David as king and founder of a dynasty is attested in extra-biblical sources – the well-known Tel Dan stela and probably also the Mesha stela – scholars question the existence of the ‘United Monarchy’ (about the 10th century BCE), and how much historical information, if any, is embedded in biblical descriptions of this period.1 These scholars assert that the biblical text describing the ‘United Monarchy’ is a late ideological work and cannot therefore be regarded as a source of real historical data.2 Other scholars argue that the Bible accounts do contain historical evidence.3 For the period starting in the 9th century, the archaeological and epigraphic evidence supports the historical


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accounts embedded in the biblical description of the Northern Israelite state. However, the emergence and formation of the state of Judah is still a subject of debate.

The biblical account of the 'United Monarchy' can be examined through the personal names mentioned in it. This 'United Monarchy' onomasticon is exceptionally large: although it covers a period spanning about 100 years, it is larger than the 'Divided Monarchy' onomasticon spanning over 300 years. Nevertheless, the study of the 'United Monarchy' names in light of the archaeological evidence is limited. Only two biblical figures appearing in the 'United Monarchy' narratives have been confirmed in authenticated inscriptions: King David and Shishak (1 Kgs 11:40), known as Shoshenq I – a Pharaoh who reigned between 945 and 924 BCE. Few alphabetic inscriptions with names from the Land of Israel are dated to the 10th century. The small number of names from these artifacts limits our ability to draw significant conclusions.

In contrast, names found in the context of the 'Divided Monarchy' have been studied in light of the more substantial corpus of names in epigraphic artifacts from the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. The study reveals similar distributions of theophoric elements among Judean names in the Bible and the archaeological record, but an entirely different distribution among Israelite names.

This study has two aims: to explore the characteristics of names found in the 'United Monarchy' narratives, and to compare them with those of names found in the biblical narratives of the following period – the 'Divided Monarchy' (9th–8th centuries BCE). Achieving these goals will enable us to answer the question: Are the 'United Monarchy' names similar to those from the 'Divided Monarchy', creating one homogeneous onomasticon; or does each period present a unique onomasticon?

2 Methodology

2.1 Collecting the names

The biblical names were collected from the narratives of the 'United Monarchy' and the 'Divided Monarchy' found in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles (the Masoretic text). However, dating the names according to the period in which they are mentioned – that is, the historiography of the Judean and Israelite kings – should be carried out with caution. Names may not belong to the period for which they are first mentioned.

This study reveals similar distributions of theophoric elements among Judean names in the Bible and the more substantial corpus of names in epigraphic artifacts from the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. The study of the 'United Monarchy' names in light of the archaeological evidence spanning about 100 years, it is larger than the 'Divided Monarchy' onomasticon spanning over 300 years. Nevertheless, the study of the 'United Monarchy' names in light of the archaeological evidence is limited. Only two biblical figures appearing in the 'United Monarchy' narratives have been confirmed in authenticated inscriptions: King David and Shishak (1 Kgs 11:40), known as Shoshenq I – a Pharaoh who reigned between 945 and 924 BCE. Few alphabetic inscriptions with names from the Land of Israel are dated to the 10th century. The small number of names from these artifacts limits our ability to draw significant conclusions.

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posed in the reign of Josiah or in the exile, some of its parts are from the post-exilic period.\cite{9} 2 Samuel 21–24, which includes a long list of David’s warriors, is an example of a later addition. Chronicles was written after the post-exilic period.\cite{10} Even though Chronicles uses the books of Samuel and Kings as its primary source, it presents long lists of names in the context of the ‘United Monarchy’ which are absent from Samuel–Kings. This may indicate later sources for the names. Chronicles also relies on other biblical books. For the genealogies it also draws from Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, and perhaps Ruth.\cite{11} The list of the residents of Jerusalem (1 Chr 9:2–17a // Neh 11:3–19) is taken from Ezra–Nehemiah.\cite{12} Furthermore, Chronicles almost certainly uses non-canonical sources without acknowledgement. The contents of genealogies, census records and lists of temple personnel suggest external sources. We can deduce that the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1–9 probably originated in various sources on the basis of their different forms, the different numbers and specificity for the different tribes, and the references to events not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. Little is known about the nature of these sources. The names may be genuine, but the settings are probably anachronistic. Some lists may come from pre-exilic sources, but most are probably post-exilic.\cite{13} In addition, scholars argue over the identification and sources of redactional layers in Chronicles.\cite{14} The possibility of 1 Chronicles 23–27 being additional to the original work of the Chronicler is supported by many scholars.\cite{15} In light of the above, names mentioned in chapters or verses of uncertain context were excluded from this study, as well as names associated with periods earlier or later than the monarchies. Examples of excluded names are: the pre-monarchical names of Elkanah’s antecedents (1 Sam 1:1) and the antecedents of Abiel (Saul’s grandfather) (1 Sam 9:1), and the names found in 1 Chronicles 1 and 1 Chr 9:2–34.\cite{16} However, the study may still include names which belong to the exilic and post-exilic periods or were invented by the biblical authors/redactors. It is important to note that the goal of this study is not to determine which names indeed originated in the period they are mentioned. Rather, it is to examine and compare characteristics of names clearly associated by the text either with the ‘United Monarchy’ or with the ‘Divided Monarchy’.

This study distinguishes between names from Samuel–Kings and those from Chronicles. Names are counted in relation to people, that is, a name belonging to several people is counted as many times as the number of people who bore it. This number measures the popularity of the name, and is significant in the quantitative analyses of the different types of names and theophoric elements. Similarly, two names belonging to the same person, such as יְהֵעָלִי, יֵלָעָל (2 Sam 5:14; 12:25) appear together as one entry in the onomasticon. In the quantitative analyses, however, the relative weight of each name is taken into account. For example, יָלֵע and יֵלָע are each considered as half a sample. Consequently, the theophoric element יְהִי in יֵלָעָל is also considered as half a sample. It should be noted that the names collected in this study represent people belonging to high social strata: many of the names are of kings, high officials, priests, officers, and their genealogy.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
  \bibitem{11} Ibid, 35.
  \bibitem{13} McKenzie, \textit{1–2 Chronicle}, 41–43
  \bibitem{14} Ibid, 27–29.
  \bibitem{16} These names are probably post-exilic: some names have parallels in Neh 11 and verse 1 refers explicitly to the exile of Judah. See De Vries, \textit{1 and 2 Chronicles}, 88 and McKenzie, \textit{1–2 Chronicles}, 109–113.
\end{thebibliography}
2.2 Analysing and comparing the names according to different categories

Many personal names from the Iron Age II /Monarchy period are theophoric. These are sentence names, in which the subject is a divine name or a divine appellative, prefixed or suffixed to the predicate (verb or noun). Some theophoric personal names are hypocoristic, that is, abbreviated names where the theophoric element has been dropped. Thus, it is possible to analyse names from each period quantitatively according to their type (theophoric, hypocoristic theophoric, or other); their theophoric elements (YHWH, El, Baal, divine appellatives, and other divine names); their political affiliation (Judah or Israel); and chronology (date by century). The date by century for the kings and their contemporaries used in this paper follows Galil’s chronology (Galil 1996: 147). The ‘Divided Monarchy’ onomasticon comprises names from the 9th–8th centuries. As noted in the Introduction, biblical names associated with the 7th–early 6th centuries have previously been studied and compared with those from the ‘Divided Monarchy’.17

Names with divine names other than YHWH, El, and Baal are grouped together, since very few were found. Similarly, all names with divine appellatives – אב, אדן, אח, חם, מלך, עם – are classified as one group, since few were found in the ‘Divided Monarchy’ context.18 Names with Baal or El are classified separately from those with divine names, since Baal and El are ambiguous: they may be interpreted as a divine name (a Canaanite deity) or a divine appellative (a general term for God).

3 Results

As explained above (see Methodology), the following comparisons distinguish between personal names from Samuel–Kings and those from Chronicles. Within each source, the distribution of names from the ‘United Monarchy’ (10th century) is compared with that of the ‘Divided Monarchy’ (9th–8th centuries) in Judah and Israel. In these periods, more names are found in Chronicles than in Samuel–Kings: 471 against 332. In particular, Chronicles mentions four times more Judean names in the ‘Divided Monarchy’ period than Samuel–Kings: 146 against 35. It is noteworthy that 116 ‘United Monarchy’ names (48% in Chronicles and 57% in Samuel–Kings) are common to both sources. However, only 48 ‘Divided Monarchy’ names (27% in Chronicles and 56% in Samuel–Kings) are common to both sources.

3.1 Distribution of the three main groups of names

Table 1 presents the chronological distributions of the three main groups in the two sources: theophoric names, hypocoristic theophoric names, and other names. The distribution of ‘United Monarchy’ names differs in the two sources. In Samuel–Kings, the largest group is other names (42%), followed closely by theophoric names (36%): in Chronicles, however, the largest group is theophoric names (56%), with markedly fewer other names (26%). In both distributions, however, the group of hypocoristic theophoric names is the smallest, and is similar in size (22% in Samuel–Kings and 18% in Chronicles).

Table 1 reveals a clear evolution from the ‘United Monarchy’ names to the ‘Divided Monarchy’ Judean names in Samuel–Kings. The results show a considerable increase in the number of theophoric names (36% to 60%), and a significant decrease in the number of other names (42% to 17%). However, Israelite names in the ‘Divided Monarchy’ do not show an onomastic evolution, and their distribution is quite similar to that of the ‘United Monarchy’ names. In Chronicles, the table presents a less marked but similar type of onomastic evolution from the ‘United Monarchy’ names to ‘Divided

18 Golub, “Israelite and Judean Theophoric Names.”
19 Defining each divine appellative as a separate group would create groups too small for comparison purposes.
Monarchy’ Judean names; such as in Samuel–Kings, with an increase in the number of theophoric names (56% to 67%) and a decrease in the number of other names (26% to 14%). In both sources, the number of hypocoristic theophoric names remained almost the same (22% to 23% in Samuel–Kings, 18% to 19% in Chronicles), and the distribution of Israelite names is quite similar to that of the ‘United Monarchy’ names, and does not show an onomastic evolution.

In summary, the distributions of name types from the ‘United Monarchy’ in Samuel–Kings and Chronicles are different. Samuel–Kings also reveals a more marked onomastic evolution from the ‘United Monarchy’ names to Judean names in the ‘Divided Monarchy’ period than does Chronicles.

Table 1: Chronological distribution of the three main groups in the ‘United Monarchy’ compared with that of the ‘Divided Monarchy’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theophoric names</th>
<th>Hypocoristic theophoric names</th>
<th>Other names</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Monarchy</td>
<td>36% (73.25)²⁰</td>
<td>22% (45.5)</td>
<td>42% (86.24)</td>
<td>100% (205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel–Kings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Monarchy: Israel</td>
<td>44% (22)</td>
<td>18% (9)</td>
<td>38% (19)</td>
<td>100% (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Monarchy: Judah</td>
<td>60% (21)</td>
<td>23% (8)</td>
<td>17% (6)</td>
<td>100% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronicles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Monarchy</td>
<td>56% (134)</td>
<td>18% (42.5)</td>
<td>26% (63.5)</td>
<td>100% (240)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Monarchy: Israel</td>
<td>51% (16.66)</td>
<td>16% (5.33)</td>
<td>33% (11)</td>
<td>100% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Monarchy: Judah</td>
<td>67% (98)</td>
<td>19% (28)</td>
<td>14% (20)</td>
<td>100% (146)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Distribution of the five groups of theophoric elements

Table 2 shows the chronological distributions of the five groups of theophoric elements (YHWH, El, Baal, divine appellatives, and other divine names) in both sources. We can see that the distributions of theophoric elements in the ‘United Monarchy’ names in each source are different. In Samuel–Kings, the largest group is that of divine appellatives (38%), followed by El (29%). In Chronicles, however, the largest group is YHWH (45%), and the divine appellatives group is much smaller (14%). The element Baal appears only in Chronicles and only in the ‘United Monarchy’ (2%). Nevertheless, both Samuel–Kings and Chronicles have one detail in common: the group of other divine names is small and similar in size (2% and 3%, respectively).

Table 2 shows a striking onomastic evolution in Samuel–Kings, from the theophoric elements present in the ‘United Monarchy’ to those seen in the ‘Divided Monarchy’: that is, a dramatic increase in YHWH (31% to 86% [Israel] and 90% [Judah]), and a dramatic decrease in divine appellatives (38% to 5%) and El (29% to 9% [Israel] and 5% [Judah]). A less striking, but parallel, onomastic evolution is seen in Chronicles in the theophoric elements in the ‘United Monarchy’ and the ‘Divided Monarchy’: a substantial increase in YHWH (45% to 94% [Israel] and 74% [Judah]), and a sharp decrease in divine appellatives (14% to 0% [Israel] and 2% [Judah]), and in El (35% to 6% [Israel] and 22% [Judah]). The element Baal is absent in the ‘Divided Monarchy’ in both Samuel–Kings and Chronicles.

In summary, the distribution of theophoric elements from the ‘United Monarchy’ in Samuel–Kings differs from that in Chronicles. Samuel–Kings also reveals a more distinct evolution of theophoric elements from the ‘United Monarchy’ to the ‘Divided Monarchy’ than Chronicles.

²⁰ The number includes a decimal point since individuals may have more than one name and the relative weight of each such name is a fraction.
Table 2: Chronological distribution of the five groups of theophoric elements in the ‘United Monarchy’ compared with that of the ‘Divided Monarchy’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YHWH</th>
<th>Baal</th>
<th>Divine appellatives</th>
<th>Other divine names</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Monarchy</td>
<td>31% (22.75)</td>
<td>29% (21.5)</td>
<td>38% (27.5)</td>
<td>2% (1.5)</td>
<td>100% (73.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Monarchy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>86% (19)</td>
<td>9% (2)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>90% (19)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronicles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Monarchy</td>
<td>45% (60.5)</td>
<td>2% (3)</td>
<td>35% (47.5)</td>
<td>14% (19)</td>
<td>100% (134)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Monarchy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>94% (15.66)</td>
<td>6% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (16.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>74% (72)</td>
<td>22% (22)</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Discussion and conclusions

Since Samuel–Kings is the prime source for Chronicles, one would expect to find similar ‘United Monarchy’ onomastica. The study reveals, however, that the distribution of the theophoric content – an important aspect in names from the Iron Age II/Monarchy period – differs in the two onomastica.22 In Chronicles, more theophoric names and fewer other names are present; while in Samuel–Kings there are fewer theophoric names and more other names (Table 1). In Chronicles, more theophoric names include YHWH, and fewer include divine appellatives; while in Samuel–Kings more theophoric names include divine appellatives, and fewer include YHWH (Table 2). In addition, names with YHWH and El are more common in Chronicles than in Samuel–Kings (Table 2). These differences are remarkable, since approximately half of the ‘United Monarchy’ names in each source are common to both sources (see above: the first paragraph in Results), suggesting that the authors of Chronicles and Samuel–Kings used different sources for a considerable part of their ‘United Monarchy’ onomasticon. In contrast, fewer ‘Divided Monarchy’ names are common to both sources (approximately a quarter of the names in Chronicles and half in Samuel–Kings), but their distribution is similar: the theophoric names are the largest group and YHWH is the dominant theophoric element.

The higher percentage of names with YHWH and El in Chronicles than in Samuel–Kings reflects their historical onomastic evolution in the Bible. As demonstrated by Norin, the percentage of these names increases successively from Samuel, through Kings and Ezra-Nehemiah, to Chronicles.23 The increasing percentage of Yahwistic names probably indicates the growth of Yahwism in the biblical text. While many more YHWH-names than El-names appear in both Samuel–Kings and Chronicles, there is also a slight increase in the use of El-names and the divine name Elohim.24 It is worth noting that the divine name YHWH is sometimes replaced by Elohim in the biblical Qumran text compared with the Masoretic text. In addition, unlike the Bible, the non-biblical Qumran text uses Elohim

21 See footnote 20.
24 Ibid, 277.
nearly as frequently as YHWH.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, the slight increase in the use of El-names in Chronicles reflects later periods.

The epigraphic evidence from 10th century Israelite and Judean sites provides only 11 names, too few for comparison with the ‘United Monarchy’ onomasticon.\textsuperscript{26} However, none of these names include a Yahwistic element, while 31% of names in Samuel–Kings and 45% in Chronicles do (Table 2). The earliest epigraphic evidence of Yahwistic personal names from Israelite sites is dated to the end of the 9th–beginning of the 8th century.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, the limited 10th century epigraphic evidence, the differences between the two ‘United Monarchy’ onomastica noted in the previous paragraph, and the larger number of names from Chronicles than from Samuel–Kings, probably indicate that both sources include names which originated in later periods or were invented; Chronicles more so than Samuel–Kings. In contrast, biblical names in both sources associated with the 9th to early 6th centuries (that is, the ‘Divided Monarchy’ and Judah after the destruction of Israel) present similar distributions of theophoric elements to that of names in Judean (but not Israelite) epigraphic artifacts from the same period.\textsuperscript{28}

The study also shows that in Samuel–Kings, as well as Chronicles, the ‘United Monarchy’ names differ from the ‘Divided Monarchy’ names, revealing the same remarkable type of onomastic evolution from the ‘United Monarchy’ to the ‘Divided Monarchy.’ This evolution is characterised by a substantial increase of names with YHWH, and a decrease of names with divine appellatives or El. A less distinct onomastic evolution of name types from the ‘United Monarchy’ to Judah (but not Israel) in the ‘Divided Monarchy’ period is found in both sources: an increase in theophoric names, and a decrease in other names. The onomastic evolution of name types and theophoric elements is stronger in Samuel–Kings than in Chronicles. The weaker onomastic evolution and the higher percentage of Yahwistic ‘United Monarchy’ names in Chronicles than in Samuel–Kings indicate that more ‘United Monarchy’ names in Chronicles reflect later periods than in Samuel–Kings. At any rate, the onomastic evolution in both sources may reflect the spread of Yahwism in the biblical narratives, amid numerous references to idolatrous practices. Specifically, the absence of names with the element Baal in Samuel–Kings and their disappearance in Chronicles during the ‘Divided Monarchy’ suggest that the worship of Baal was limited.\textsuperscript{29} The high percentage of names with El in the ‘United Monarchy’ and their decrease in the ‘Divided Monarchy’, especially in Samuel–Kings, may be interpreted to indicate the gradual shift from the worship of El (the head of the Canaanite pantheon) to the worship of YHWH.\textsuperscript{30} This onomastic evolution from the ‘United Monarchy’ to the ‘Divided Monarchy’ corresponds to Sanders’ view of the first two phases of Yahwism, from the 8th to the end of the 7th century BCE.\textsuperscript{31}

A similar evolution is attested in the epigraphic evidence from the 9th and 8th centuries to the 7th and early 6th centuries. Names on artifacts found in Judean sites display the same type of onomastic evolution: a substantially increased use of names with YHWH, with a decrease in the use of other theophoric elements.\textsuperscript{32} No onomastic evolution is found in the Bible during the equivalent period.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} See footnote 7 for the list of these names.
\textsuperscript{28} Golub, “Israelite and Judean Theophoric Names,” 42–43.
\textsuperscript{29} In the entire Bible only 11 personal names include Baal. In three of these names, the author/editor of Samuel replaced Baal with the word Bosheth: Gideon ( Judges 6:32 / 1 Samuel 11:21)), Saul’s son (1 Chronicles 18:23 / 2 Samuel 2:10), and Jonathan’s son (1 Chronicles 8:34 / 2 Samuel 5:10) (Norin, Personennamen und Religion, 250–261, 275).
\textsuperscript{30} Norin, Personennamen und Religion, 279.
\textsuperscript{32} Golub, “Israelite and Judean Theophoric Names.”
that is, from the ‘Divided Monarchy’ to the end of the monarchy period.

33 From the onomastic perspective, the biblical narratives depicting this 300-year period are homogeneous.