

Nations/Peoples Surrounding Judah and Israel

(from Wikipedia)



Ammon: Ammon was an Iron Age Semitic-speaking nation occupying the east of the Jordan River, between the torrent valleys of Arnon and Jabbok, in present-day Jordan. They were existent from the second millennia BC to the middle of the First Century BC. The chief city of the country was Rabbah or Rabbath Ammon, site of the modern city of Amman, Jordan's capital. Milcom and Molech (who may be one and the same) are named in the Hebrew Bible as the gods of Ammon. The people of this kingdom are called "Children of Ammon" or "Ammonites".

The first mention of the Ammonites in the Bible is in Genesis 19:37-38. It is stated there that they descended from Ben-Ammi, a son of Lot through incest with his younger daughter. Bén'ammî, literally means "son of my people". After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the daughters of Lot had sexual relations with their father, resulting in Ammon and his half-brother, Moab, being conceived and born. Throughout the Bible, the Ammonites and Israelites are portrayed as mutual antagonists throughout their entire history. This is because they were competing over the same area of the trans-Jordan.

Arabia: There is evidence that human habitation in the Arabian Peninsula dates back to about 106,000 to 130,000 years ago. However, the harsh climate historically prevented much settlement in pre-Islamic Saudi Arabia, apart from a small number of urban trading settlements, such as Mecca and Medina, located in the Hejaz in the west of the peninsula.

Aram-Damascus: was an Aramaean state around Damascus in Syria, from the late 12th century BCE to 732 BCE. Aramaean royal inscriptions are rare, and only one royal stele from Aram-Damascus

proper has been identified — the Tel Dan Stele. Other sources in Aramaic that shed light on the history of Aram-Damascus include two "booty inscriptions" from Eretria and Samos, and the Zakkur stele of the king Zakkur.

The Hebrew Bible gives more detailed accounts of Aram-Damascus' history, mainly in its interaction with Israel. For instance, there are texts of the Bible mentioning David's battles against Aramaeans in southern Syria in the 10th century BCE. (2 Samuel 10:6-19) In contrast, the sources for the early history of Aram-Damascus are almost nonexistent. In an annal dating to Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE), we learn that Aramaean people have begun settling in the southern half of Syria.

The first reliable data can be found in the 9th century BCE when Aramaean, Assyrian, and Hebrew texts all mention a state with its capital in Damascus. The state seems to have reached its peak in the late 9th century BCE under Hazael, who, according to Assyrian texts, fought against the Assyrians, and according to Aramaean texts, had some influence over the north Syrian state Unqi, and according to Hebrew texts, conquered all of Israel. (2 Kings 13:3)

To the southwest, Aram-Damascus reached over most of Golan to the Sea of Galilee.

In the 8th century BCE, Rezin had been a tributary of Tiglath-Pileser III, the king of Assyria. In c. 732 BCE, he allied himself with Pekah, the king of Israel, to attack Ahaz, the king of Judah. However, Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-Pileser III for help. This the Assyrian king obliged, after Judah paid tribute to the Assyrian king. (2 Kings 16:7-9) As a result, Tiglath-Pileser III sacked Damascus and annexed Aram. According to 2 Kings 16:9, the population was deported and Rezin executed. Tiglath-Pileser also records this act in one of his inscriptions.

Canaan: Canaan was a Semitic-speaking region in the Ancient Near East during the late 2nd millennium BC. In the Bible it corresponds to the Levant, in particular to the areas of the Southern Levant that provide the main setting of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible, i.e., the area of Israel, Philistia, Phoenicia, and other nations.

The name Canaan occurs commonly in the Hebrew Bible, with particular definition in references Genesis 10 and Numbers 34, where the "Land of Canaan" extends from Lebanon southward to the "Brook of Egypt" and eastward to the Jordan River Valley. References to Canaan in the Bible are usually backward-looking, referring to a region that had become something else (i.e., the Land of Israel).

The term Canaanites serves as an ethnic catch-all term covering various indigenous populations—both settled and nomadic-pastoral groups—throughout the regions of the southern Levant or Canaan. It is by far the most frequently used ethnic term in the Bible, which commonly describes Canaanites as a people which, in the Book of Joshua are marked down on a list as one of the nations to be exterminated, and later as a group which the Israelites had annihilated.

Archaeological attestation of the name Canaan in Ancient Near Eastern sources relates almost exclusively to the period in which the region operated as a colony of the New Kingdom of Egypt (16th–11th centuries BC), with usage of the name almost disappearing following the Late Bronze Age collapse (ca. 1206–1150 BC). The references suggest that during this period the term was

familiar to the region's neighbors on all sides, although scholars have disputed to what extent such references provide a coherent description of its location and boundaries, and regarding whether the inhabitants used the term to describe themselves. The Amarna Letters and other cuneiform documents use *Kinaḥḥu* [Kinakh'khu], while other sources of the Egyptian New Kingdom mention numerous military campaigns conducted in Ka-na-na.

Edom: Edom is the name of a country and a people located initially in Transjordan, between Ammon to the north, the Dead Sea and the Arabah to the west, and the Arabian desert to the south and east.

Edom and Idumea are two related but distinct terms relating to a historically contiguous population, but two separate, if adjacent, territories occupied at different periods of their history by the Edomites/Idumeans. The Edomites first established a kingdom ("Edom") in the southern area of modern Jordan, and later migrated into southern parts of the Kingdom of Judah ("Idumea", or modern southern Israel/Negev) when Judah was first weakened, then destroyed by the Babylonians in the 6th century BC.

Edom is a term used in written sources relating to the late Bronze Age and to the entire Iron Age in the Levant, such as the Hebrew Bible and Egyptian and Mesopotamian records. In classical antiquity the cognate name Idumea was used to refer to a smaller area in the same general region.

Edom is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but also in a list of the Egyptian pharaoh Seti I from c. 1215 BC, and in the chronicle of a campaign by Ramses III (r. 1186–1155 BC).[3] The Edomites, who have been identified archaeologically, were a Semitic people who probably arrived in the region around the 14th century BC.[3] Archaeological investigation showed that the country flourished between the 13th and 8th centuries BC, and was destroyed after a period of decline in the 6th century BC by the Babylonians.[3] After the loss of the kingdom, the Edomites were pushed westward towards southern Judah by nomadic tribes coming from the east; among these were the Nabateans, who first appear in the historical annals of the 4th century BC and already establish their own kingdom in what used to be Edom by the first half of the 2nd century BC.[3] More recent excavations show that the process of Edomite settlement in the southern parts of the Kingdom of Judah and parts of the Negev desert down to Timna had started already before the destruction of the kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar II in 587/86, both by peaceful penetration and by military means, taking advantage of the already weakened state of Judah.[4][5]

Once pushed out of their territory, the Edomites settled during the Persian period in an area comprising the southern hills of Judea down to the area north of Be'er Sheva. Here the people appear under the Hellenized form of their old name, as Idumeans or Idumaeans, and their new territory is called Idumea or Idumaea a term used in New Testament times.

The nature of Edomite religion is largely unknown before their conversion to Judaism by the Hasmoneans. Epigraphical evidence suggests that the national god of Edom was Qaus (קֹאֻס) (also known as 'Qaush', 'Kaush', 'Kaus', 'Kos' or 'Qaws'), since Qaus is invoked in the blessing formula in letters and appear in personal names found in ancient Edom. As close relatives of other Levantine Semites, they may have worshiped such gods as El, Baal, Qaus and Asherah. The

oldest biblical traditions place Yahweh as the deity of southern Edom, and may have originated in "Edom/Seir/Teman/Sinai" before being adopted in Israel and Judah.

Moab: Moab is the historical name for a mountainous tract of land in Jordan. The land lies alongside much of the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. The existence of the Kingdom of Moab is attested to by numerous archaeological findings, most notably the Mesha Stele, which describes the Moabite victory over an unnamed son of King Omri of Israel.[1] The Moabite capital was Dibon. According to the Hebrew Bible, Moab was often in conflict with its Israelite neighbors to the west. Despite a scarcity of archaeological evidence, the existence of Moab prior to the rise of the Israelite state has been deduced from a colossal statue erected at Luxor by pharaoh Ramesses II, in the 13th century BCE, which lists Mu'ab among a series of nations conquered during a campaign. They were in constant war with Israel and Judah, again over the land.

Philistines: The Philistines were an ancient people primarily known for their conflict with the Israelites described in the Bible. The primary source about the Philistines is the Hebrew Bible, but they are first attested in reliefs at the Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, where they are called Peleset, accepted as cognate with Hebrew P'léšet. Assyrian sources also refer to Pilišti and Palaštu, also believed to be cognate with P'léšet.

The first reference to Philistines in the Hebrew Bible canon is in the Table of Nations, where they are said to descend from Casluhim son of Mizraim (Egypt). However, the Philistines of Genesis who are friendly to Abraham are identified by Rabbinic sources as distinct from the warlike people described in Deuteronomistic history. Deuteronomist sources describe the land of the Philistines as a pentapolis in southwestern Levant comprising the five city-states of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, from Wadi Gaza in the south to the Yarkon River in the north. This description portrays them at one period of time as among the Kingdom of Israel's most dangerous enemies. In contrast, the canon of Eastern Christianity, the LXX, uses the term "allophuloi" (Greek: ἀλλόφυλοι) instead of "philistines", which means simply "other nations".

There are several theories about the origins of the Philistines. Several Biblical passages connect the Philistines to other biblical groups such as Caphtorim and the Cherethites and Pelethites, which have both been identified with Crete and which has led to the tradition of an Aegean origin, although this theory has been disputed, with other scholars claiming a Luwian origin in western Asia Minor.[8][9][10] In 2016, the discovery of a huge Philistine cemetery, containing more than 150 burials, seems to point toward an Aegean origin of the Philistines. Genetic testing of the human remains will provide further information.