

Date



9th
Century
BC

Archaeologists and epigraphers put the earliest possible date at about 870 BC, while the latest possible date is 750. The language of the inscription is a dialect of Aramaic. The scholarly consensus is that the progenitor of the stele is Hazael of Damascus (c. 842 - 806 BC).

The Tel Dan Stele is one of four known inscriptions made during the roughly 400 year period (1200-800 BC) containing the name "Israel", the other being the Merneptah Stele, the Mesha Stele, and the Kurkh Monolith.

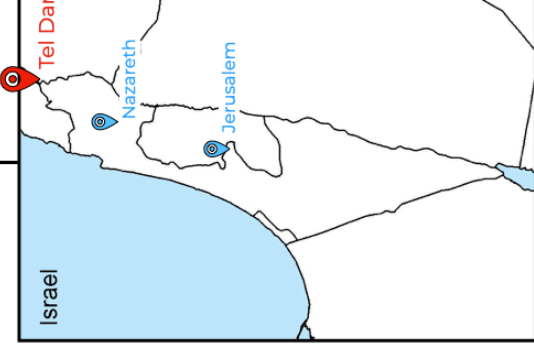
The stele (a Latin derivative simply meaning a monument stone or wooden slab) contains a Canaanite inscription discovered in the northern Israelite site of Tel Dan, Discovered in 1993.

Tel Dan Stele

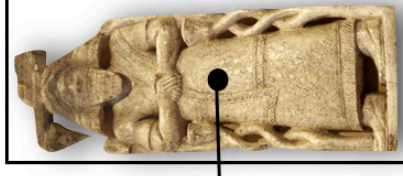


The Tel Dan stele consists of several fragments making up part of a triumphal inscription in Aramaic, left potentially by Hazael of Aram-Damascus, an important regional figure in the late 9th century BC.

The beginning of the Tel Dan Stele is missing, and unfortunately, that is where the name of the king who commissioned the memorial would have been recorded. With the discovery of a second piece of the artifact (known as Fragment B) the names of two kings are preserved: Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel from 852 to 841 BC, and Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, king of Judah (the House of David) in 841 BC. With this information it is possible with a decent level of certainty to assign the stela to Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus, who undoubtedly set it up in Dan to commemorate his victory over Joram and Ahaziah at Ramoth-Gilead in ca. 841 BC (2 Kgs 8:28-29).



Ivory carving most likely of Hazael. Originally discovered at Arslan Tash, Syria. This artifact is housed today in the Louvre Museum, Paris.



"אָאָ תַּדַּן"

The unnamed king of the Tel Dan Stele boasts victory over the "House of David." It is considered the earliest widely accepted reference to theme of David as the founder of the Israelite polity outside of the Hebrew Bible.