



**BIBLICAL AND  
ANCIENT NEAR  
EASTERN STUDIES IN  
HONOR OF P. KYLE  
MCCARTER JR.**

Edited by  
**Christopher Rollston,  
Susanna Garfein,  
and Neal H. Walls**

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Society of Biblical Literature  
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BIBLICAL AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN  
STUDIES IN HONOR OF  
P. KYLE MCCARTER JR.



# ANCIENT NEAR EAST MONOGRAPHS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABL	Harper, Robert F., ed. <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum</i> . 14 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1892–1914.
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ABSA	Annual of the British School at Athens
ACOR	American Center of Oriental Research
ADAJ	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan</i>
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AHw	von Soden, W., B. Meissner, and M. P. Streck. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch: unter Benutzung des lexikalischen Nachlasses von Bruno Meissner (1868–1947)</i> . Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1965–1981.
AION	<i>Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> . 2nd ed. Edited by James B. Pritchard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement
ANET	Pritchard, James B., ed. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AO	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
AzTh	Arbeiten zur Theologie
BaM	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BARI	BAR International Series

BATSH	Berichte der Ausbragung Tall Šēḥ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
<i>BBRSupp</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research, Supplements</i>
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
<i>BDAG</i>	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich).
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1907.
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>BHQ</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BO</i>	<i>Bibbia e Oriente</i>
BM	British Museum
<i>BMMA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
<i>BTZ</i>	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	<i>Chicago Assyrian Dictionary</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Covenant Code
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
<i>COS</i>	Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds. <i>The Context of Scripture</i> . 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2017.
CRAI	Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
D	Deuteronomistic Source (of the Pentateuch)
D stem	<i>Dubbelstamm</i> or Hebrew Pi‘‘ēl stem
<i>DDD</i>	van der Toorn, Karel, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, eds. <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . Leiden: Brill, 1995. 2nd rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DN	Deity Name
<i>DNWSI</i>	Hoftijzer, Jacob, and Karen Jongeling. <i>Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions</i> . 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
Dp	Dp or Pu‘‘al Stem
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls

Dt	Dt or Hitpa‘‘el Stem
DtrG	Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk
DULAT <sup>3</sup>	del Olmo Lete, Gregorio, and Joaquín Sanmartín. <i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition</i> . 3rd ed. 2 vols. Translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson. HdO 1.112. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
E	Elohism Source (of the Pentateuch)
EA	El Amarna
EBib	<i>Études bibliques</i>
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
ErIsr	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
ETCSL	<i>Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Altentestament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
G	<i>Grundstamm</i> or Qal
GAG	<i>Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik</i> . Wolfram von Soden. 2nd ed. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969.
GKC	Kautzsch, Emil, ed. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
GMD	Meyer, Rudolf, and Herbert Donner. <i>Wilhelm Gesenius' hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament</i> . 18th ed. Berlin: Springer, 2013.
GN	Geographic Name
Gt	<i>Grundstamm</i> with Infixes t
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
HBCE	The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
IBHS	Waltke, Bruce K., and Michael O'Connor. <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IJNA	<i>The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</i>
ILN	<i>Illustrated London News</i>
IO	Indirect Object
J	Jahwist Source (of the Pentateuch)

- JAEI* *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*  
*JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society*  
 Jastrow Jastrow, Morris, comp. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature with an Index of Scriptural Quotations*. London: Luzac; New York: Putnam's Sons, 1903.
- JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*  
*JBQ* *Jewish Bible Quarterly*  
*JCS* *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*  
*JESHO* *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*  
 JM Jouon-Muraoka  
*JMFA* *Journal of the Museum of Fine Arts*  
*JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*  
 Joüon Joüon, P., and T. Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 2nd ed. Rome: Gregorian Biblical Press, 2013.
- JQR* *Jewish Quarterly Review*  
*JRH* *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*  
*JSOT* *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*  
 JSOTSup Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series  
 Jub. Jubilees  
 KA Kuntillet 'Ajrud Plaster Inscription  
*KAHAL* Dietrich, Walter, and Samuel Arnet. *Konzise und aktualisierte Ausgabe des Hebräischen und Aramäischen Lexikon zum Alten Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- KAI* Donner, H., and W. Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–1964.
- Koya tablets in the Museum of the Directorate of Antiquities in Koya  
 KTU Dietrich, Manfred, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, eds. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. 3rd enl. ed. of Dietrich, Manfred, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, eds. *KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995 (= CTU)
- LAI Library of Ancient Israel  
 Lane Lane, Edward W. *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. 8 vols. London: Williams & Norgate, 1863. Repr., Beirut: Libr. du Liban, 1980.
- LHBOTS The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies  
 LXX Septuagint  
*MARI* *Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires*  
 MARV 1 Freydank, H. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*. VAS 19. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1976.  
 MARV 2 Freydank, H. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte II*. VAS 21. Berlin: Akademie, 1982.

- MARV 4 Freydank, H., and C. Fischer. *Tafeln aus Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta*. Vol. 4 of *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur. E, Inschriften 7. Keilschrifttexte aus mittelassyrischer Zeit 2. WVDOG 99. Berlin: Saarbrücker, 2001.
- MARV 5 Freydank, H., and B. Feller. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte V*. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur. E, Inschriften 7. Keilschrifttexte aus mittelassyrischer Zeit 3. WVDOG 106. Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker, 2004.
- MARV 6 Freydank, H., and B. Feller. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte VI*. WVDOG 109. Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker, 2005.
- MARV 7 Freydank, H., and B. Feller. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte VII*. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur, E. Inschriften 7. Keilschrifttexte aus mittelassyrischer Zeit 5. WVDOG 111. Saarwellingen: Saarländische, 2006.
- MARV 10 Prechel, D., H. Freydank, and B. Feller. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte X*. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur. E, Inschriften 7. Keilschrifttexte aus mittelassyrischer Zeit 9. WVDOG 134. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011.
- MC Mesopotamian Civilizations
- MEE Materiali epigrafici de Ebla
- MET Metropolitan Museum of Art
- MMJ *Metropolitan Museum Journal*
- MSL *Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon/Materials for the Sumerian Lexikon*. 17 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1937–2004.
- MT Masoretic Text
- N Nip‘al Stem
- NABU *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires*
- NASB New American Standard Bible
- NEA *Near Eastern Archaeology*
- NEAEHL *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. 5 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993–2008.
- NET New English Translation
- NICOT New International Commentary on the Old Testament
- NIDOTTE VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- NIV New International Version
- NKJV New King James Version

NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
<i>OED</i>	Oxford English Dictionary
OG	Old Greek
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia (NS)</i>
<i>OrAn</i>	<i>Oriens Antiquus</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
P	Priestly Source (of the Pentateuch)
P.Beatty	Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri
P.Harr.	The Rendel Harris Papyri of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publication of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
PN	Personal Name
<i>PNA</i>	Parpola, Simo, ed. <i>The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire</i> . 3 vols. in 6. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998–2011.
PPG <sup>3</sup>	Friedrich, J., W. Röllig, and M. G. Amadasi Guzzo. <i>Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik</i> . 3rd ed. AO 55. Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1999.
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique publié par la Commission du Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum. Paris, 1900–.</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RGTC	Répertoire géographique des textes cuneiforms
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RIMA 2	Grayson, A. K. <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC (1114–859 BC)</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
RIMA 3	Grayson, A. K. <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC)</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
RINAP 1	Tadmor, H., and S. Yamada, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglathpileser III (744–727 BC), and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria</i> . RINAP 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

- RINAP 3.1 Grayson, A. K., and J. Novotny. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1*. RINAP 3.1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012
- RIA Ebeling, Erich, et al. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–.
- RSV Revised Standard Version
- SAA 1 Parpola, Simo. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West*. SAA 1. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1987.
- SAA 2 Parpola, Simo, and Kazuko Watanabe, eds. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*, State Archives of Assyria 2. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988.
- SAA 5 Lanfranchi, G. B., and S. Parpola. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II. Letters from the Northeastern Provinces*. SAA 5. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1990.
- SAA 10 Parpola, S. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. SAA 10. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993.
- SAA 11 Fales, F. M., and J. N. Postgate. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II. Provincial and Military Administration*. SAA 11. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1995.
- SAA 19 Luukko, M. *The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II from Calah/Nimrud*. SAA 19. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2012.
- SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
- SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
- SBLSPS Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
- SEL *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici*
- SHAJ Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan
- SHCANE Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
- SM tablets in the Suleimaniya Museum
- Sokoloff Sokoloff, Michael. *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990.
- SP Samaritan Pentateuch
- SPCK Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
- SQ Tell Satu Qala
- Sub. Subject
- SSI 2 Gibson, J. C. L. *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Volume 2: Aramaic Inscriptions including inscriptions in the dialect of Zinjirli*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.
- StAT Studien zu den Assur Texten
- SWBA Social World of Biblical Antiquity
- Sym. Symmachus
- Syr. Syriac
- TA *Tel Aviv*



<i>TAD</i>	Porten, Bezalel, and Ada Yardeni. <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i> . 4 vols. (= A–D). Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986–1999.
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
<i>TDOT</i>	Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Helmer Ringgren, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 17 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2021.
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
Tg.	Targum
TN	Topographic Name
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TWAT</i>	<i>Theologische Wörterbuch</i>
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UPMM	University of Pennsylvania Museum Monographs
Vg.	Vulgate
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAW	Writing from the Ancient World
WAWSup	Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
Zorell	Zorell, Franz. <i>Lexicon Hebraicum et Aramaicum Veteris Testamenti</i> . Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968.

## P. Kyle McCarter Jr. as Teacher: Musings from Grateful Students

Christopher A. Rollston, Susanna Garfein, and Neal Walls

The breadth of P. Kyle McCarter Jr.'s teaching is particularly impressive. For example, as part of the three-year history cycle (a year of Mesopotamian history, a year of Egyptian history, and a year of Syro-Palestinian history) at Johns Hopkins University, Kyle consistently taught the Syro-Palestinian history course. This course was a foundational course for all graduate students in the program. Kyle would cover not only the history of the Levant, but he would also integrate much of Mesopotamian and Egyptian history because of the many ways in which the history of the entire region intersected at so many levels. He also often taught the Dead Sea Scrolls, historical Hebrew grammar, Ugaritic, textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible (with emphasis not just on variant readings in the Masoretic Text, but also the textual evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, LXX, and the Vulgate), Northwest Semitic Epigraphy (with a full repertoire, for example, of Phoenician, Hebrew, Aramaic, Moabite, Ammonite texts), the Canaanite of the Amarna Letters, and, of course, various biblical text courses in the original languages. On occasion, upon first arriving at Hopkins from the University of Virginia, he even taught Akkadian. This was not all, of course—he also taught a course in the history of medicine, a course which was especially in demand among pre-meds. For many years, he even taught a master's course in the Arthurian legends. Although he never taught a course in the writings of Mark Twain, he certainly could have, since he would often regale us with apt quotes from Twain. Indeed, the breadth of Kyle's knowledge knows no bounds.

Kyle is a truly gifted lecturer and absolutely sterling in graduate seminars as well. This is perhaps the case because in addition to having full control of the field, he is a raconteur. And since much of ancient history is narrative in nature, Kyle's deft retellings are often just plain scintillating. Of course, some of Kyle's courses were for graduate students only, but a number of his courses were open to graduate students and undergraduate students (e.g., History of Syria-Palestine, Dead Sea Scrolls, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible). The classes with graduate

and undergraduate populations were frequently quite large, with sixty, eighty, or even one hundred students. Kyle's courses were always very heavy laden with content. We learned so much from him about the field. But there is something else that he modeled in the courses with undergraduate populations: good pedagogy. For example, the syllabus for a McCarter course with undergraduate populations was masterful and detailed, and yet accessible. In addition, Kyle always gave a study-guide prior to the mid-term and final exams. On top of that, he held a review session an evening or two before the exams. Naturally, graduate students benefited from these measures, but we also learned something else (something that was "caught, not taught"): namely, various measures that could be taken to ensure that complicated aspects of ancient Near Eastern history could be made palatable and comprehensible for undergraduates.

The methodology of his graduate courses also deserves particular emphasis. As has been noted, Kyle is a marvelous teacher across the board. In graduate courses, the details of the text were foregrounded: the readings, the variant readings, proper vocalizations of epigraphic texts (for which the vowels needed to be reconstructed), nuances of philology and syntax, and the socio-historical implications of the text. Sometimes we would cover twenty or thirty lines in a complicated text, but when necessity demanded, we might just do four or five lines of an especially difficult text. In short, his teaching was a reflection of his own particularly careful scholarship. We are the beneficiaries of a master teacher.

The culminating piece of a graduate program is the dissertation, and in this too Kyle was superb. His approach was much like that of his own teacher, Frank Moore Cross. That is, Kyle would work with a student in the selection of a topic, but he normally wished for the student to take the lead in this. Normally a few topics would be bandied about during the course of a meeting or two or three with Kyle, and then a topic would be settled on. The prospectus was then written and approved. And then at that point the hard work really began. Kyle would guide gently. He would make astute observations in conversations, as we progressed. He would make suggestions for us to probe, to consider. He would suggest corrections in the angle or approach, and he would wait patiently as we produced a compelling, well-documented, piece of original research.

Finally, a few words should be said about Kyle as fulfilling the *Vater* part of the term *Doktorvater*. Life and career for a newly minted PhD is rarely a simple, straight line. There can be tumult, ups and downs. And sometimes these sorts of things can continue for many years. Kyle as *Doktorvater* is always there, willing to talk, willing to provide wise counsel, the sort of person who can provide encouragement, exhortation, and perspective. For all of these aspects of our beloved teacher, we are most grateful. We shall always be in your debt. You have our respect, our appreciation, and our admiration. Thank you, Kyle!

# Brilliance Fulfilled: P. Kyle McCarter Jr. and His Contribution to Near Eastern Scholarship and Scholars

Jonathan Rosenbaum

A *Festschrift* stands as the quintessential tribute to professorial achievement. Reserved for those rare scholars who represent the epitome of the academy's ideals, it brings together the research of colleagues, students, and those whom the honoree has deeply influenced. By those standards, P. Kyle McCarter Jr. is most deserving of the present, august volume. His accomplishments span the full range of academic attainment and have set a standard worthy of both honor and emulation.

From the beginning, Kyle's profound erudition, control of difficult, disparate sources, and striking originality of thought were evident. I first met him in 1972 when we were both part of a cohort of graduate students who had been drawn to Harvard's program in Biblical and Near Eastern studies by a renowned faculty at the center of which were Frank Moore Cross Jr. and G. Ernest Wright. Many of those students would go on to shape the fields of Biblical studies and ancient Near Eastern history, language, and archaeology. The group included such later luminaries as Richard E. Friedman, Leonard J. Greenspoon, Baruch Halpern, Larry Herr, Jon D. Levenson, Robert A. Oden, Eugene Ulrich, and James VanderKam, to name a few.

The pinnacle course in our program possessed the inappropriately innocent name of Hebrew 200. It was a graduate seminar devoted to research in which students presented papers that were disseminated in advance and formally critiqued by a student and a faculty critic. All students in the program were normally required to enroll or attend until they had completed their coursework. Faculty members were typically present *en masse*.

Kyle's paper dealt with a word that had long vexed Biblical scholars, especially because it stands in plain sight, first appearing in the opening of the Garden of Eden story (Gen 2:6). The word is  $\text{מַיִם}$  or with the *yod mater*  $\text{מַיִם}$ , variously translated  $\text{\pi\eta\gamma\gamma\eta}$ , "source" (LXX), "mist" (KJV), "moisture" (RSV), or "flow" (JPS). An additional prominent appearance is in 2 Sam 22:19 (= Ps 18:19),

traditionally translated as “calamity” or “grief” (Septuagint: θλίψεως). In other words, the real meaning of the word was unknown.

Starting with a 1907 scholarly proposal that the word **ṭṣ** is related to the Sumerian *id*, the cosmic river, Kyle showed that the word relates to the river ordeal in Mesopotamia and developed an Israelite interpretation of its own. He then applied it to virtually every Biblical occurrence, and it fit.

His systematic, convincing solution to a problem that had baffled scholars and translators for centuries created a memorable reaction at the seminar. The term “brilliant” was rarely used by the faculty. It was reserved as the ultimate accolade and normally accorded to the work of senior scholars, but that day it was applied to Kyle’s presentation. At a time when graduate student papers were rarely published in major refereed journals, Kyle’s quickly appeared.<sup>1</sup>

That accomplishment was a harbinger of scholarly renown. By the time Kyle completed his dissertation in 1974, he had published two coauthored articles that demonstrated his prowess as an epigrapher and paleographer.<sup>2</sup> The publication of his dissertation<sup>3</sup> amplified that status as he entered the scholarly debate on when the Greeks borrowed the Phoenician alphabet<sup>4</sup> and convincingly addressed the competing proposals of Hellenists and Semitists. Reviews of the dissertation buttressed the importance of his contribution.<sup>5</sup>

Kyle’s initial academic appointment was at the University of Virginia where in eight years (1974–1982) he rose to full professor. During that period, he published a two-volume work that constituted the first of his *magna opera*. His Anchor Bible commentary on I and II Samuel (1980 and 1984, respectively)<sup>6</sup> established a format that included a lucid, extensive introduction, an original translation, and discrete scholarly and popular notes. It enhanced the knowledge of both the specialist and the lay reader. Academic reviewers acknowledged Kyle’s achievement of this central, dual goal of the Anchor Bible series.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the Samuel volumes went further. The original translation was eclectic, based on the

<sup>1</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” *HTR* 60:4 (1973): 403–12.

<sup>2</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr. and Frank Moore Cross, “Two Archaic Inscriptions on Clay Objects from Byblus,” *Rivista di Studi Fenici* 1 (1973): 3–8; P. Kyle McCarter Jr. and Robert B. Coote, “The Spatula Inscription from Byblus,” *BASOR* 212 (1973): 16–21.

<sup>3</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *The Antiquity of the Greek Alphabet and the Early Phoenician Scripts*, HSM 9 (Missoula, MT: Scholars; Harvard Semitic Museum, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> P. K. McCarter Jr., *The Antiquity of the Greek Alphabet and the Early Phoenician Scripts in CBQ* 41 (1979): 138–39.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., William C. West III, Review of *The Antiquity of the Greek Alphabet and the Early Phoenician Scripts*, by P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *JAOS* 98 (1978): 346–47.

<sup>6</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980); McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Dennis Pardee, Review of *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, by P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *JNES* 42 (1983): 238–40.

MT and its variants, a reconstructed OG utilizing the various Septuagint families, and the Samuel texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The work also proposed a three-stage development of the literary history of Samuel, which identified earlier narrative sources and supplied key data for further discussions of the historicity of the text.

In 1984, philanthropists Harvey and Lyn Meyerhoff established the W. F. Albright Chair in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Kyle became its inaugural occupant, a particularly fitting and serendipitous combination of scholarly meritocracy and symbolism.<sup>8</sup> Albright, of course, had studied and taught at Hopkins and had trained a coterie of biblical scholars including perhaps his most distinguished student, Kyle's *Doktorvater*, Frank M. Cross. Albright's methodological approach to biblical studies applied critical reasoning and scientific method to archaeology without a commitment for or against the historicity of the biblical text. Albright and his students developed ceramic and palaeographical typologies and helped refine stratigraphy. They contributed abundantly to understanding the history, literature, and religion of ancient Israel, doing so by assessing the Bible based on the history, literature, and archaeology of the ancient Near East. Kyle, Albright's "grandstudent," exemplified this ideal.

As Albright Professor, Kyle's publications earned him recognition as one of the world's leading epigraphers and paleographers as well as a celebrated biblical scholar. Directors of major excavations such as Beth-Shemesh and Ashkelon turned to him as the primary interpreter of their epigraphic discoveries. When the *editio princeps* of the Tel Zayit abecedarium—one of the earliest examples of the complete Paleo-Hebrew or early Phoenician alphabet appeared<sup>9</sup>—Kyle's analysis and subsequent paleographical notes in the fuller publication<sup>10</sup> confirmed its significance. His conclusion that the inscription (and the earlier 'Izbet Şarṭah abecedarium) "already exhibits characteristics that anticipate the distinctive features of the Hebrew national script"<sup>11</sup> informed the scholarly debate. Kyle published influential paleographic studies on the Deir 'Alla Plaster<sup>12</sup> texts along with other

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<sup>8</sup> The chair is now occupied by Kyle's successor, Alice H. Mandell, a formidable scholar and an asset to the field.

<sup>9</sup> Ron E. Tappy, P. Kyle McCarter Jr., Marilyn J. Lundberg, and Bruce Zuckerman, "An Abecedarium of the Mid-Tenth Century B.C.E. from the Judaean Shephelah," *BASOR* 334 (2006): 5–46.

<sup>10</sup> McCarter, Peter Kyle, "Paleographic Notes on the Tel Zayit Abecedarium," in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedarium in Context*, ed. Ron E. Tappy and Peter Kyle McCarter (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 45–60.

<sup>11</sup> Tappy and McCarter, *Literate Culture*, 56.

<sup>12</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "The Balaam Texts from Deir Alla: The First Combination," *BASOR* 239 (1980): 49–60. See also "The Dialect of the Deir 'Alla Texts," in *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla Re-evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Leiden August 21–24, 1989*, ed. J. Hoftijzer (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 87–99.

epigraphic discoveries, including those from Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom.<sup>13</sup>

He also advanced our understanding of the religion of ancient Israel.<sup>14</sup> Withal, his analysis of the el-Hol inscriptions is particularly noteworthy. It documented the earliest date for the alphabet to the nineteenth century BCE and placed such writing, at least partially, in Egypt during the late Middle Kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

Teaching is of course a regular duty of most faculty members in higher education, but, for Kyle, teaching did not end in the classroom. His book on textual criticism was an early example of his commitment to translating the fruits of academic scholarship into language and concepts accessible to students and learned lay people. In it he shared his mastery of text criticism in an elegant methodological handbook that made a complex and technical subject broadly comprehensible.<sup>16</sup> He thus built on his rigorous scholarship to contribute pedagogically. While producing pivotal, scholarly studies in epigraphy, paleography, and biblical literature and history, he authored engaging books and articles that enlightened the public while remaining faithful to scholarship. His chapter on the patriarchal period in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, his book on ancient inscriptions, the published symposium on the rise of ancient Israel, and a dozen articles in the *Biblical Archaeology Review*—all aimed at the nonspecialist—illustrate Kyle's commitment to sharing the methods and products of scholarly research with a wider audience.<sup>17</sup>

Beyond his scholarly and public contributions, Kyle became an academic builder. When he arrived at Hopkins, he joined a small but respected faculty in ancient Near Eastern studies consisting of four full-time faculty and an associated scholar from a sister Institution. Kyle took on the chairmanship of the department and, with the support of the university administration, systematically expanded its

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<sup>13</sup> See numerous articles in *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, vol. 2 of *The Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. P. D. Hanson, S. D. McBride, and P. D. Miller Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 137–55. See also McCarter, "The Origins of Israelite Religion," in *The Rise of Ancient Israel: Symposium at the Smithsonian Institution October 26, 1991*, ed. Hershel Shanks, William G. Dever, Baruch Halpern, and P. Kyle McCarter (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1992), 118–41.

<sup>15</sup> J. C. Darnell et al., *Two Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from the Wadi el-Hol*, ASOR Annual 59.2 (2006): 64–124, esp. 90.

<sup>16</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Guides (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

<sup>17</sup> See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., revised by Ron S. Hendel, "The Patriarchal Age: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, ed. Hershel Shanks, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2011), 1–31; P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996); Shanks, Dever, Halpern, and McCarter, *Rise of Ancient Israel*.



offerings and recruited faculty. He also raised funds for a new endowed chair. As of this writing, there are nine full-time faculty (three archaeologists, two Egyptologists, two Assyriologists, and two biblical scholars), in addition to five others: two emeriti (one of whom is Kyle himself) and three other associated scholars. This feat is particularly remarkable in light of the many leading academic departments in Near Eastern studies that have witnessed marked decreases in faculty over the same period. At a time when the humanities as a whole have been reduced by attrition, exigency, or administrative decisions, Kyle's success in developing an august faculty is especially profound.

Great research faculties attract gifted students whom they immerse in the field's methodologies and literature with the goal of creating the next generation of pathbreaking researchers. Amid his many other successes, Kyle personifies such mentors, directing some twenty-five dissertations. His students have erected new scholarly structures on the solid foundation that Kyle has laid. Many have risen to senior academic positions. Their participation in this *Festschrift* demonstrates their appreciation of Kyle. The lead editor, Christopher A. Rollston, and his two associate editors received their doctorates from Kyle. In addition, his students have authored a quarter of the articles.

The other articles come from colleagues who are among the foremost scholars of the Bible and the ancient Near East. In a tribute to Frank Cross, Kyle observed that "many who never studied formally with him also consider themselves his students."<sup>18</sup> It is clear that this observation applies now to Kyle as well.

As previously noted, the full publication of the Tel Zayit abecedary included a paleographical debate between Kyle's conclusion that the script reflected early elements of the later Hebrew national script and a competing proposal that it was "written in a good Phoenician script of the late 10th or very early 9th century BCE." The proponent of the opposing position was the lead editor of this *Festschrift*, Christopher Rollston.<sup>19</sup> His respectful but forceful disagreement exemplifies precisely the pedagogic principle that both Cross and Kyle espoused and proffered: independence of thought among their students is paramount, even when—no, especially when—such thinking challenges their own positions.

For almost half a century, I have had the privilege of knowing Kyle as a colleague and a friend. He served on my dissertation committee (it was to him that Frank Cross turned to certify that my work contained all the pertinent inscriptions). Later, I wrote a review of his published dissertation<sup>20</sup> and turned to him to present at a colloquium and the annual meeting of a learned society. Beyond his

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<sup>18</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "Frank Moore Cross, Scholar and Teacher," *EI* 26 (1999): x–xi.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher A. Rollston, "The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedary and Putative Evidence for Israelite Literacy," in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context*, ed. Ron E. Tappy and P. Kyle McCarter (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 61–96, esp. 90–96.

<sup>20</sup> McCarter, "Antiquity of the Greek Alphabet," 138–39.

greatness as a scholar, teacher, administrator, academic fundraiser, and builder, Kyle radiates kindness, graciousness, humility, elegance, and eloquence. His continuing impact on his discipline, on those who studied with him directly, and those who have done so through his meticulous publications bodes well for a future benefited by him and his academic heirs. His commitment to sharing scholarly discoveries with the broader community serves as a vibrant inspiration to current and future scholars of the Bible and the ancient Near East and of the humanities generally. P. Kyle McCarter Jr. has earned the admiration of his colleagues and the appreciation of society and thus richly deserves this *Festschrift*, the ultimate academic honor.

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# Introduction

Christopher A. Rollston

The breadth of P. Kyle McCarter Jr.'s knowledge and scholarly emphases are truly vast; it has often seemed to me that his ken knows no bounds. Indeed, I have long considered Kyle to be a veritable polymath, with knowledge and interests spanning the humanities, social sciences, hard sciences, and even mathematics. As for his control of the fields of biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies, it seems to me to be boundless, with his peerless knowledge of the primary sources and his profound knowledge of the secondary literature as well. Thus, in keeping with this, it is predictable that this *Festschrift* honoring him would range broadly across the field.

A core component of Kyle's focus has been the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Septuagint. Therefore, the first section of Kyle's volume focuses on these very subjects, with articles from all three of the major components of the Hebrew Bible: the law, the former and latter prophets, and the writings. Moreover, in keeping with Kyle's own scholarly interests, a number of the articles focus on comparative analyses of readings in the Masoretic Text, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and beyond.

Of course, someone might suggest that Kyle's first love is Northwest Semitic epigraphy, from early alphabetic inscriptions, the rise of the Phoenician script, the early history of the Greek script, and the origins and development of the Hebrew script and the Aramaic series during the first millennium BCE. There would be some truth in that statement, although my own sense is that his interests and emphases are so broad that ranking them might be difficult indeed. Furthermore, as for epigraphy, it is also important to emphasize that Kyle's interests are certainly not only in aspects of the morphology, stance, and ductus of the scripts themselves, but also in the language, syntax, phonology, and content of these inscriptions (including aspects of history and religion built into the fabric of such inscriptions). In short, epigraphy, defined broadly, has certainly been a strong emphasis of Kyle's throughout his long and illustrious career. Therefore, it will not be surprising that the second major component of the *Festschrift* is epigraphy.

The final section of this volume honoring Kyle is on archaeology. This too is most natural, since he is often in the Middle East—especially Israel—has often spent time on site at excavations, and knows the field of archaeology particularly well. The articles in this section of Kyle's volume focus on aspects of archaeology that intersect a number of his varied interests, from major sites to art-historical aspects of the field. In short, this section is a reflection of Kyle's enduring interest in the field of archaeology and the innumerable contributions archaeology has made to the field of biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies.

It is also important to mention something about the broad range of contributors to this volume. Some are friends and colleagues from his graduate school days, some are institutional colleagues with whom he has taught at various points in his career, some are his former students, and some are friends and colleagues whom Kyle has come to know because of an intersection of his work and theirs. To be sure, there are certainly various sorts of measures of a scholar's impact on the field, but one such measure, and a particularly enduring one at that, is the esteem in which colleagues, former students, and friends hold that scholar. This volume itself is evidence of Kyle's gravitas in the field and a reflection of the great appreciation his colleagues, former students, and friends feel for him, for his scholarly contributions in years past and for his continuing contributions to the field in the years to come. Thank you so very much, Kyle, for all you do.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a word of thanks. First and foremost, I would like to thank all of the contributors to this volume. It is a marvelous tribute to Kyle, and I am so grateful for your significant contributions to the volume. Kyle will be so pleased. Moreover, I am also so very grateful to Alan Lenzi and Jeffrey Stackert, the former and current editors of the series in which this volume is published, for the diligence and professionalism they have consistently brought to the table. It has been tremendous to work with them on this labor of love. Similarly, I am grateful to Nicole L. Tilford of SBL Press for all of her consistent and sterling work on this volume. And perhaps most importantly of all, I would like to thank Nathaniel Greene, a former student of mine and a distinguished young scholar in his own right, for all of his peerless labors on this volume, from corresponding with authors, to editing, typesetting, and layout. My thanks to each and every one of you!

## PART 1: BIBLE AND SCROLLS





# Yahweh the Destroyer: On the Meaning of יהוה

Heath D. Dewrell

The etymology of יהוה,<sup>1</sup> the name of the national god of ancient Israel and Judah, has been a topic of perennial interest. Indeed, the meaning of Yahweh's name appears to have been a problem in search of an explanation even during the time when the Hebrew Bible was still being composed. In one of the more well-known stories in the Bible, when Moses asks for God's name, God replies: אהיה אשר אהיה "I am/will be who I am/will be" (Exod 3:14)—a response that apparently assumes that יהוה is connected to the verb יהיה "to be." While a few modern scholars have followed Exodus's lead and linked Yahweh's name with "being" or "existence,"<sup>2</sup> the majority of scholars today adopt one of two suggestions—either that יהוה is a causative stem (i.e., *hiphil*) prefix conjugation of יהיה "to be," thus "he causes to be" (i.e., "he creates"); or that the name is connected to the Arabic verb هوي "to blow," thus "he blows."<sup>3</sup> While impressive arguments have been

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<sup>1</sup> In the hope of preempting what is probably inevitable criticism, I would like to make explicit that I do not believe that the etymology of Yahweh's name, or of any word for that matter, necessarily reveals anything about the intrinsic character of the being denoted thereby. It has been some time now since James Barr rightly warned biblicalists against the etymological fallacy (*The Semantics of Biblical Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961], esp. 107–36; on the etymological fallacy specifically in relation to "Yahweh," see Austin Surls, *Making Sense of the Divine Name in Exodus: From Etymology to Literary Onomastics*, BBRSup 17 [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017], 1–24), and I make no claim that the arguments put forward here concerning the etymology of Yahweh's name necessarily have any bearing on how Yahweh was conceived by those who venerated him, especially in the generations after the original meaning of the name had been forgotten. As I will argue below, however, the original meaning of Yahweh's name does likely provide some evidence for the way in which the deity was imagined by his earliest worshippers.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Jean Kinyongo, *Origine et signification du nom divin Yahvé à la lumière de récents travaux et de traditions sémitico-bibliques (Ex 3,13–15 et 6,2–8)*, BBB 35 (Bonn: Hanstein, 1970); Trygve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names*, trans. Frederick H. Cryer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 14–49; John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, JSOTSup 265 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 14.

<sup>3</sup> While these two suggestions will be treated at length below, and several others will be outlined in less detail, I do not pretend to cover all of the many suggestions put forward by previous scholars

made on behalf of each of these suggestions, serious difficulties remain for both. Before suggesting a new solution to the problem—or technically, as will become clear below, re-suggesting a rather old but generally rejected one—I will lay out the difficulties with the two suggestions that currently dominate scholarly discussion. As a preliminary matter, however, we must first establish the oldest form of the name, before attempting to determine its meaning.

#### YAHWE, YAHU, YAW, OR YAH?

The majority of scholars today hold that *yhwh* (*yahwē*) represents the original form of the name of Israel's god and argue that both *yh* (*yah*), which frequently appears in biblical poetry,<sup>4</sup> and the forms *yhw* (*yahû*- > MT *yěhō/yāhû*) and *yw* (*yaw* > MT *yō*), commonly found as theophoric elements in personal names in both the biblical and Hebrew inscriptional corpora,<sup>5</sup> as well as occasionally independently in Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions,<sup>6</sup> represent abbreviated forms of the name. Indeed, Freedman and O'Connor flatly assert, "The longer form is obviously original."<sup>7</sup> This view has not always been the consensus, however.<sup>8</sup> Driver made perhaps the most forceful argument in favor of *yahwē* representing a secondary expansion of *yā(w)yā(h)*, rather than the latter representing an

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here. For a more exhaustive overview of proposals, from antiquity to the present, see Robert K. Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton: Western Christians and the Hebrew Name of God: From the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–37. Wilkinson himself concludes his overview of what he describes as "exhausting etymologies" (sic—as if one could tire of etymologies! *Tetragrammaton*, 37) by pleading ignorance and noting that the etymology of "Yahweh" is not of great importance for his own project.

<sup>4</sup> Exod 15:2; 17:16; Isa 12:2; 26:4; 38:11; Ps 68:5, 18 [Eng. 68:4, 19]; 89:9 [Eng. 89:8]; 94:7, 12; 102:19 [Eng. 102:18]; 104:35; 105:45; 106:1, 48; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1, 9; 115:17, 18; 116:19; 117:2; 118:5, 14, 17, 18, 19; 122:4; 130:3; 135:1, 3, 4; 135:21; 146:1, 10; 147:1, 20; 148:1, 14; 149:1, 9; 150:1, 6.

<sup>5</sup> For a convenient collection of onomastic evidence from Hebrew inscriptions, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, J. J. M. Roberts, C. L. Seow, and R. E. Whitaker, *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 583–622.

<sup>6</sup> יהו and the less common יהה are the normal forms in the Jewish Elephantine Papyri. For a list of attestations, see Bezalel Porten and Jerome A. Lund, *Aramaic Documents from Egypt: A Key-Word-in-Context Concordance*, The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project Texts and Studies 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 426–27. Both יהוה and יהו appear in the Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions. For a discussion of these attestations, see Shmuel Ahituv, Esther Eshel, and Ze'ev Meshel, "Chapter 5: The Inscriptions," in *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*, ed. Liora Freud (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2013), 129–30. For a convenient overview of the epigraphic evidence in chart form, see Surls, *Making Sense of the Divine Name*, 73, 80–82.

<sup>7</sup> David Noel Freedman and Michael P. O'Connor, "יהוה YHWH," *TDOT* 5:501.

<sup>8</sup> For a recent overview of the evidence for the original form of the name, without coming to any definitive conclusions on the matter (or on the original meaning of the name itself) but providing a convenient summary of the relevant evidence, see Surls, *Making Sense of the Divine Name*, 61–82.

abbreviation of the former. After a thorough survey of the onomastic evidence,<sup>9</sup> he concludes that the shorter form is the older one. His reasons are as follows:

(1) no other Semitic race abbreviates the names of its gods, either when used independently or when compounded with other elements in proper names, although they not infrequently leave the name of the god to be supplied; (2) it is hard to believe that a name so sacred as יהוה would be commonly abbreviated, and the reason indeed why the shorter forms were alone used in proper names may be that they, not having the theological import of יהוה, were held less sacred and so more suitable for profane use; (3) the primitive names given to gods tend to be short and hard to explain, and their origin and meaning are hidden in the mists of antiquity; (4) endeavours to explain these primitive names are usually the work of a later and more reflective age like those of the Greeks to explain the name Ἀπόλλων as ἀπολόων ‘destroying’ or ἀπολούων ‘purifying’ and so on.<sup>10</sup>

Driver then posits that the name was originally “ejaculatory in origin,” and further that “exclamations and ejaculations tend everywhere to be prolonged when cried aloud or shouted in moments of excitement or ecstasy; so the primitive cry or name, whichever it is designated, may easily have been prolonged to *ya(h)wá(h)*, *ya(h)wá(h)y*, or the like.” The extended form of the name, in Driver’s view, was then reanalyzed as related to the verb of “predicating being” or “bringing into being” during the Israelites’ bondage in Egypt.<sup>11</sup> In a similar vein, Dussaud points to Ugaritic *bht* for common Semitic *bt* “house,” the alternate form *elō(a)h* for *’ēl*, and the change of Abram’s name to Abraham in Genesis as possibly analogous examples, in which a Semitic word is expanded by the insertion of a *h*. In Dussaud’s view, *yw* > *yhw* is merely another example of this phenomenon.<sup>12</sup> A weakness for both Driver’s and Dussaud’s arguments, however, is that the earliest attested appearance of the divine name in the epigraphic record is in the Mesha Stele (*KAI* 181.18), where it appears as *yhw*. Thus, the argument that *yhw* represents a secondary expansion of an earlier shorter form must assume that this secondary expansion had already occurred prior to its earliest attestation. Of course, one would be on much stronger footing if one could point to evidence for the shorter form that predates the Mesha Stele (ca. 850 BCE).

<sup>9</sup> Godfrey R. Driver, “The Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh’: Evidence and Conclusions,” *ZAW* 46 (1928): 7–19. For a similar argument appealing to the same sort of evidence, see Karl Georg Kuhn, “יהו, יהוה, יהוה über die Entstehung des Namens Jahwe,” in *Orientalische Studien Enno Littmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag am 16. September 1935: Überreicht von Schülern aus seiner Bonner und Tübinger Zeit*, ed. Rudi Paret (Leiden: Brill, 1935), 25–42.

<sup>10</sup> Driver, “Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh,’” 23–24.

<sup>11</sup> Driver, “Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh,’” 24–25.

<sup>12</sup> René Dussaud, “Yahwé,” *CRAI* 84 (1940): 369.

To this end, Nicholas Wyatt points to allegedly early attestations of a deity named *Yaw* in texts from both Mesopotamia and Ugarit,<sup>13</sup> but his three primary items of evidence are all problematic to varying degrees. First, he points to an instance in the lexical series Aa A = *nāqu* in which Sumerian [an AN] (restored, but with confidence) corresponds to Akkadian *ia-ʿu* (CT 12, 4:1 = MSL 14 8.6.ii:1). Wyatt, following Murtonen,<sup>14</sup> understands the AN here as representing the divine determinative (i.e., the DINGIR sign) and thus takes *ia-ʿu* as the name of a deity “Yaw,” who in turn is to be identified with Israelite Yahweh. But his reading of the text is obviously erroneous. Here *ia-ʿu* must be read as the Akkadian possessive pronoun *jāʿu* “mine,” indicating that Sumerian AN has been understood by the scribe as a Sumerian 1cs genitive marker (apparently erroneously so; the scribe’s knowledge of Sumerian appears to have been imperfect and limited<sup>15</sup>). Indeed, the conclusion that Sumerian AN should be read phonetically here, rather than as the Sumerogram DINGIR “god,” is confirmed by the other items that are included under the same “AN” rubric immediately following *jāʿu*:<sup>16</sup> *jāti* (“me, my”), *kātu ḥamtu* KI.<TA> (“Second person [lit., “you” in Akkadian] *ḥamtu* [= Sumerian preterite/perfective conjugation] suffix”), *šaḳū ša GI.GUR.ḪÚB* (“to be tall, [said] of a *ḥuppu*-basket”<sup>17</sup>), and *antum ša šeʿim* (= “an ear of barley”). This section thus presents Akkadian words or phrases that the Sumerian syllable “an” may represent (or at least what the scribe believed it may represent). In contrast, the section that immediately follows this one in Aa A = *nāqu* includes entries under the rubric “di-gi-ir AN,” a heading that indicates instances in which the cuneiform sign AN represents the Sumerian word DINGIR “god.” Under this rubric, the following Akkadian words appear: *ilum* “god,” *iltum* “goddess,” *bēlum* “lord,” *bēltum* “lady,” and *ellu* “holy.”<sup>18</sup> In contrast to the preceding section where Akkadian equivalents to the Sumerian phonetic syllable

<sup>13</sup> He further concludes that this deity was cognate to the Indo-Aryan god *Dyāus* [= Zeus/Jove] (Nicholas Wyatt, “Near Eastern Echoes of Āryan Tradition,” *SMSR* 55 (1989): 21–25). In linking Yahweh to Zeus/Jove, Wyatt follows in the footsteps of Cornelis Petrus Tiele, *Vergelijkende geschiedenis van de Egyptische en Mesopotamische Godsdiens* (Amsterdam: van Kampen, 1872), 558–61; and Enno Littmann, review of *Le Iscrizioni Antico-Ebraiche Palestinesi, raccolte e illustrate*, by David Diringer, *AJO* 11 (1936): 162. The hypothetical Indo-Aryan origin of Yahweh has not found wide acceptance, but Wyatt’s arguments concerning the original form of the name are worth observing nonetheless.

<sup>14</sup> Antti Murtonen, *A Philological and Literary Treatise on the Old Testament Divine Names* אֱלֹהִים, אֱלֹהִים, and יְהוָה, StOr 18.1 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1952), 48.

<sup>15</sup> See also the Neo-Babylonian grammatical text *ù = anāku* (RA 32.90, 92.i.54–58 = MSL 4:3 1.i.54–58), in which the Sumerian particles un, an, in, en, and mu all are equated (again, apparently erroneously) with *jāti* AN.TA KI.TA MŪRU.TA (= “[Akkadian] ‘me’ [when appearing] at the beginning, or end [of a Sumerian verb chain]”). So also *CAD* 7, s.v. “*jāti*.”

<sup>16</sup> CT 12 4:2–5 = MSL 14 8.6.ii:2–5.

<sup>17</sup> See *CAD* 6, s.v. “*ḥuppu* A.”

<sup>18</sup> CT 12 4:6–10 = MSL 14 8.6.ii:6–10.

“an” appear, it is in this section that Sumerian AN = DINGIR “god” is treated. If the scribe intended to indicate a “Yaw” deity, it is in this second section that it should appear, rather than the preceding one. Thus, contra Wyatt and Murtonen, *ia-’u* does not refer to a deity in this text at all; it is simply the Akkadian pronoun *jā’u* “mine.”

Wyatt’s next alleged attestation of a “Yaw” deity is found in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, where the following description of a feast convened by El, the head of the Ugaritic pantheon, appears:

<i>krpn . b kl'at yd . x</i>	[	]
<i>k mll . k ḥṣ . tusp</i>	[	]
<i>tgr . il . bnh . ṯr .</i>	[	]
<i>w y'n . lṯ&lt;p&gt;n . il . d p[’id</i>	[	]
<i>šm . bny . yw . ilt</i>	[	]
<i>w p'r . šm . ym</i>	[	]

A goblet in both hands	[	]
like pulp(?); like gravel(?) it is gathered	[	]
And El appoints(?) his son; the Bull	[	]
And Benevolent El the Kindhearted answers	[	]
The name of my son is YW, O Ilat	[	]
And he pronounces the name of Yamm	[	] <sup>19</sup>

The relevant section is the mention of a deity named “YW” in line 14. It is not at all clear, however, that this “Yaw” is in any way related to the Iron Age Israelite deity “Yahweh.” As several others have noted,<sup>20</sup> the (admittedly broken) context makes it almost certain that “Yaw” represents another name or epithet of the sea-god Yamm, and whatever sort of deity Yahweh was, he was certainly not a sea-god (often quite the opposite, actually<sup>21</sup>). Thus, here again it is unlikely that we are dealing with an authentic early attestation of Yahweh in the form “Yaw.”

<sup>19</sup> *KTU* 1.1.iv.10–15. Both the reading and translation of the section here in most respects follow Mark S. Smith, *Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2*, vol. 1 of *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 132, 147–52. For a discussion of its difficulties and for a survey of alternative readings, see the discussion there.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Freedman and O’Connor, “יהוה YHWH,” 510; Smith, *Introduction*, 151–52; Richard S. Hess, “The Divine Name Yahweh in Late Bronze Age Sources?,” *UF* 23 (1991): 182–83.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Hab 3:15; Ps 18:16 [Eng. 18:15]; 74:13–15; 89:10–11 [Eng. 89:9–10]; Job 9:8; 26:12–13.

Finally, Wyatt points to “Yau-bidi,” a king of Hamath mentioned in inscriptions of Sargon II.<sup>22</sup> The king’s name appears as <sup>m</sup>*I-lu-bi-i’-di* = <sup>m</sup>*Ilu-bi’di*,<sup>23</sup> as well as the ambiguous <sup>m</sup>*DINGIR-ya-ú-bi-’i-di*, which may either be read <sup>md</sup>*Yau-bi’di* or <sup>m</sup>*Ilu-yau-bi’di*.<sup>24</sup> The interpretation of the latter form of the name depends upon whether one reads the DINGIR sign as a Sumerogram for the word *ilu* or as a divine determinative marking “Yau” as the name of a deity. While it is common for scholars to understand this form of the name as <sup>md</sup>*Yau-bi’di*, “[The god] Yaw as my witness,”<sup>25</sup> Mahmud El-Amin observed some time ago that the phonetic spelling of *Ilu* in other attestations of this name would indicate that the alternate form should be read <sup>m</sup>*Ilu-yau-bi’di*.<sup>26</sup> In El-Amin’s view, *yau* represents the verbal form *yahu* “he will be/appear.” Thus, *Ilu-yau-bi’di* would represent something like *’Ilu-yahu-bi-’idī* “God/Il will appear as my witness,” while the alternate form *Ilu-bi’di* would represent a shortened form *Ilu-bi-’idī* “God/Il as my witness.”<sup>27</sup> According to this reading, not only would “Yaw” here not represent a form of the name “Yahweh,” but it would not represent a divine name at all. Even if one were to argue, however, that the correct reading is in fact <sup>md</sup>*Yau-bi’di* and thus that it does contain “Yaw” as its theophoric element, and if one were further to argue that this “Yaw” is a form of the name of the Israelite god “Yahweh,” then it still would provide no real evidence that Yaw represents the original form of Yahweh’s name. Sargon’s inscriptions date to the end of the eighth century, well after

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<sup>22</sup> Text and line numbering here follows Andreas Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier, 1994); Arthur Gottfried Lie, *The Inscriptions of Sargon II, King of Assyria: Part I: The Annals* (Paris: Geuthner, 1929); and Hugo Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons, nach den Papierabklatschen und Originalen*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1889). For hand copies, see those of Ludwig Abel in Hugo Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons, nach den Papierabklatschen und Originalen*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1889); those of Eugène Flandin in Paul-Émile Botta and Eugène Flandin, *Monument de Ninive*, vol. 4 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1849); and David Gordon Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargon’s Königs von Assyrien (722–705 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1883).

<sup>23</sup> Zyl. 25; Ann. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Prunk. 33; Reliefbeschrift VIII:25; as well as Winckler, *Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, 1:170:8. Driver incorrectly claims that the last of these reads <sup>m</sup>*Yau-bi’di*, without the DINGIR sign (“Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh,’” 9). The error seems to have been occasioned by Winckler’s failure to include it in his transliteration. The sign clearly appears, however, in Abel’s hand copy (Winckler, *Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, 2:48:8).

<sup>25</sup> So already Driver, “Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh,’” 9; and Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1931), 2.2:433.

<sup>26</sup> Mahmud El-Amin, “Die Reliefs mit Beischriften von Sargon II. in Dûr-Sharrukîn. Aburteilung der gefangenen Könige. (Saal VIII),” *Sumer* 10 (1954): 27; followed by Edward Lipiński, “An Israelite King of Hamath?,” *VT* 21 (1971): 371–72. But cf. Abraham Malamat, “Aspects of the Foreign Policies of David and Solomon,” *JNES* 22 (1963): 7; and J. David Hawkins, “Jau-bi’di,” *RLA* 5:272–73. Lipiński seems to have later changed his opinion to accord with the majority view, although the reason for the change of opinion is unclear (*The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* [Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 316).

<sup>27</sup> Edward Lipiński, “An Israelite King of Hamath?,” *VT* 21 (1971): 372–73.

the forms *yw/yhw* appear as theophoric elements in Israelite personal names, as attested both in the Hebrew Bible and in Iron Age inscriptions.<sup>28</sup> This Aramaic name would thus provide no more evidence for the antiquity of the shorter form of the name than the ample corpus of Israelite personal names already provides.

From a linguistic perspective, shortening original *yahwe* to *yahû/yaw/yô* would be unsurprising. Both the shift *wV > û* (i.e., *yahwe > yahû*) and the loss of intervocalic *h* (i.e., *yahwe/yahû > yaw [yô]*) are well-attested phonological developments even within the (pre)history of the Hebrew language itself (see, e.g., *wV > û / #\_* {labial, *Cē*} [i.e., the form of the conjunction pronounced *û-* in Tiberian Hebrew]; and *h > ø / {IV-, bV-, kV-\_a}* [i.e., the loss of the *h* of the definite article following prefixed prepositions]<sup>29</sup>). Thus, a shift *yahwe > yahû > yaw (> yô)* would be unsurprising phonologically speaking. Such a development would be especially unsurprising in a name made up entirely of glides, vowels, and a glottal fricative—all phones generally susceptible to reduction and lenition. On the other hand, there is no obvious mechanism that would account for the expansion of *yaw/yah/yahû* to *yahwe*. Although Driver is correct that it is unusual for divine names and titles to be abbreviated (although the phenomenon is not entirely without parallel; see Phoenician *mlqrt* for *mlk-qrt* “King of the City”), it is also unusual for a divine name to be formed entirely out of “weak” phones.

Finally, as observed above, our earliest unambiguous attestation for Yahweh’s name is the Mesha Stele, which exhibits the longer form *yhw* (*KAI* 181.18). Therefore, both our earliest evidence for the name and what one would expect historico-linguistically point to the longer form as having been the older one and the shorter forms as being secondary. Freedman and O’Connor’s assertion that “the longer form is obviously original,”<sup>30</sup> thus remains persuasive.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Again, see Dobbs-Allsopp et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 583–622.

<sup>29</sup> One may also point to the frequent *#wa- > #u-* in I-*w* fientic verbal forms in Assyrian (*GAG* §103k), as well as to the loss of PNSW intervocalic *h* in prefix-conjugation Hiphil forms in Hebrew (i.e., *yvhaqtîl > yaqtîl*; *GKC* §53a; *Joüon* §54a).

<sup>30</sup> Freedman and O’Connor, “יהוה, YHWH,” 501.

<sup>31</sup> Equally problematic is the suggestion of Magne Sæbø, who argues that the original form of the name was *\*wāhu*, which then shifted to *\*yāhu* due to the palatalization of initial *w* in PNWS, with *Yahwah* (the “basic form of the Tetragrammaton” according to Sæbø) representing an intensification via doubling. In Sæbø’s view, the second “*wah*” would have retained its original *w* due to its not occupying an initial position in the reduplicated form (*On the Way to Canon: Creative Tradition History in the Old Testament*, JSOTSup 191 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998], 83–89). This solution, while undoubtedly clever, creates more philological difficulties than it solves, since in order for the *w* to shift to *y* in the first *wah* but not in the second, the doubled form would need to have originated prior to the PNWS *#w > #y* merger, i.e., during the middle of the second millennium BCE at the latest, which would push the origin of this hypothetical *wah* deity earlier still, despite his not being attested in any form until the Iron Age.



## YAHWEH AS “HE CAUSES TO BE”

Having established that the long form of Yahweh’s name was likely the original one, we can now ask what it may have meant. One dominant theory is that Hebrew יהוה means “he causes to be,” a suggestion most closely associated with William F. Albright and his students Frank Moore Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman. While the consonants יהוה could conceivably represent either a G-stem or a C-stem (or any number of other stems, for that matter) prefix-conjugation verbal form from the root הוה/היה/√ “to be,” Albright finds a C-stem more likely because<sup>32</sup>: (1) “in those days of emergent theological reasoning, a rendering such as ‘(He) is’ or ‘(He) will be’ makes no sense”; that is, during early periods of Israelite history, the rational capacities of the Israelites would have been insufficiently developed to grapple with complex theological issues such as the existence or non-existence of God, but they would have been perfectly capable of conceiving of a God who creates<sup>33</sup>; (2) the Barth-Ginsberg law, attested as in effect as early as the Late Bronze Age, would have resulted in the pronunciation of the G-stem first syllable as *yi-*, since the second syllable originally contained an *a*-class vowel (i.e., \**yihwayu* > *yihwē*), but all evidence points to the initial syllable of Yahweh’s name as having been pronounced *yah-*, not *yih-*. A C-stem, on the other hand, would have retained the *a* vowel in the initial syllable and would thus explain the vocalization of the name suggested in abbreviated forms such as *yah* and *yahū*; (3) there are cross-cultural parallels for liturgical formulae that refer to a god’s creative capacities. Citing the Egyptian liturgical formulae *shpr wnn.t* (“he creates what exists”) and *qm3 wnn.t* (“he who creates what exists”),<sup>34</sup> Albright suggests that “Yahweh” would have been the first element of a variety of liturgically derived epithets, including יהוה צבאות.

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<sup>32</sup> The most complete, and most often cited, presentation of Albright’s thesis is found in his *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*, Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion (London: Athlone Press, 1968), 146–49. Albright had already made the argument in its essential details, however, as early as his “Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology,” *JBL* 43 (1924): 370–78.

<sup>33</sup> The reader who wishes to peruse at greater length Albright’s assessment of the intellectual abilities of the ancients vis-à-vis abstract theology may consult his *History, Archaeology, and Christian Humanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 83–100, where he refers to the thought exhibited by the Hebrew Bible, which he dubs “empirico-logical,” as lying between the “proto-logical thinking” exhibited by the (mostly earlier) literature of Egypt, Mesopotamia, etc., on the one hand, and the “logical and philosophical reasoning” of the Greeks, on the other.

<sup>34</sup> See also Albright, “Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology,” 378. For a list of *shpr* epithets, including *shpr wnn.t*, see Christian Leitz, ed. *Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, OLA 115 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 6:504–23. For a list of *qm3* epithets, including *qm3 wnn.t*, see Leitz, *Lexikon*, 7:187–213.

Albright's thesis was further developed by David Noel Freedman,<sup>35</sup> who argues that the original force of יהוה צבאות in particular is to be found in its association with the Ark of the Covenant. The extended and, in Freedman's view, full form of the epithet is: "The One Enthroned upon the Cherubim creates the hosts (of Israel)."<sup>36</sup> Freedman further argues that the god referred to by this epithet was El. Here he points especially to Exod 34:6, where יהוה יהוה appears in parallel with אל רחום וחנון "a compassionate and gracious God/El," and Exod 34:14, where יהוה is said to be אל קנא "a jealous God/El." Thus the subject of the verb *yahwê*, "he creates," was El. Building on the work of Freedman and Albright, Frank Moore Cross Jr. would make the final step in what would come to be the classical form of the "he causes to be" hypothesis.<sup>37</sup> Cross points to the various "El" epithets used for Yahweh in the patriarchal narratives—אל עולם (Gen 21:33), אל עליון (Gen 14:18–22), אל שדי (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3), אל אלהי ישראל (Gen 33:20), אל בית אל (Gen 31:13; 35:7)—and argues that the original "God of the Fathers" was none other than El, the father of the gods and head of the pantheon, well attested in the literature from Ugarit. "Yahweh" is thus yet another epithet of El like those commonly attested in the patriarchal narratives. Cross reconstructs the history of this *yhwh* epithet in particular by suggesting that the original liturgical formula that lies behind אהיה אשר אהיה (Exod 3:14) is *yahwī du yahwī*, with *du* representing the more archaic relative particle that אשר later came to replace.<sup>38</sup> Cross further posits that *du yahwī* was originally an epithet of El, parallel to El epithets attested in Ugaritic literature such as 'il dū yaqniyu "El who creates" (KTU 1.19.iv.57–58) and 'il malk dū yakāninhū (KTU 1.3.iv.46; 1.4.iv.47; etc.) "King El who created him." Noting that in these Ugaritic epithets the verb "create" typically takes an object, Cross suggests that צבאות "hosts" originally served as this object in El's *yhwh* epithet—thus *du yahwī šaba 'ōt* "He who creates (heavenly) armies." Since Cross had already identified Yahweh, El, and the God of the Fathers, he could then suggest that this epithet would have originally followed the name of El. In this way, he arrives at the hypothetical full form of the epithet 'il dū yahwī šaba 'ōt "El who creates (heavenly)

<sup>35</sup> David Noel Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *JBL* 79 (1960): 156.

<sup>36</sup> In this Freedman was anticipated by William F. Albright, review of *L'épithète divine Jahwê Seba'ōt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*, by B. N. Wambacq, *JBL* 67 (1948): 378–79.

<sup>37</sup> Cross first presented his thesis in his "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," *HTR* 55 (1962): 225–59. The popularity of the suggestion, however, is primarily due to his re-presentation and elaboration of the argument in his seminal *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 13–75.

<sup>38</sup> In reconstructing the original form of the clause in Exod 3:14 with a third person rather than a first-person subject, Cross follows Paul Haupt, "Der Name Jahwe," *OLZ* 12 (1909): 211–13. Haupt, who also took the (originally Edomite in his view) name as a causative form of a "to be" verb, only reconstructed the second of the verbs as originally third person, however. Further, in Haupt's view, the first of these verbs was a C-stem form while the second was a G-stem form; thus Haupt's *ahwê āšār ihwê* or *ahjê āšār ihje* "Ich rufe ins Dasein, was da ist."

armies.” This identification is strengthened, in Cross’s view, by the use of the epithet *יֹשֵׁב כְּרֻבִים* “who is enthroned on the cherubim” in conjunction with *יהוה* *צְבָאוֹת* in 1 Sam 4:4 (MT, LXX<sup>L</sup>)<sup>39</sup> and 2 Sam 6:2,<sup>40</sup> since El is depicted as seated on a cherub throne in both Ugaritic and Punic iconography.<sup>41</sup> Thus the name “Yahweh” was originally the verbal element of the epithet *du yahwī šaba’ōt*, which was originally linked to El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon, both of which were in turn linked to the cherub throne.<sup>42</sup>

While Cross has brought an impressive array of evidence to bear on the question, his suggestion does suffer from a few shortcomings. First, the epithet *du yahwī šaba’ōt* is not actually attested anywhere.<sup>43</sup> It must be reconstructed on the basis of a combination of the title *יהוה צְבָאוֹת* and the syntax of the phrase *אֱהִי אֲשֶׁר אֱהִי* in Exod 3:14 (or, more precisely, the syntax allegedly underlying this phrase), all on the basis of potentially analogous epithets in Ugaritic literature. While *’il du yahwī šaba’ōt* is certainly possible as a divine title, there is no actual evidence that this title ever existed. Second, Cross’s argument relies on the assumption that Yahweh was originally a creator deity, specifically the Canaanite god El. It seems unlikely, however, that Yahweh was originally a deity in the mold of El as depicted in the literature from Ugarit. The depictions of Yahweh in the so-called “archaic biblical Hebrew” poetry (esp. Exod 15; Judg 5; Hab 3), which appear to be among the oldest material preserved in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>44</sup> “say

<sup>39</sup> But cf. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 103, who rightly reads with LXX<sup>B</sup>, which lacks *צְבָאוֹת*.

<sup>40</sup> But cf. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, AB 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 163, who observes that 4QSam<sup>a</sup> only allows enough space for *יהוה*, and thus lacked *צְבָאוֹת* (see also the Chronicles parallel [1 Chron 13:6], which also lacks *צְבָאוֹת*). One might also point to Isa 37:16, where *יהוה צְבָאוֹת* appears in conjunction with *יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים*, but *צְבָאוֹת* is absent in the Kings parallel (2 Kgs 19:15), suggesting that it may be secondary in Isa 37:16 as well.

<sup>41</sup> For a convenient collection of the relevant material, see the drawings by Andrzej Szlagor in Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, “YHWH SABAOTH—The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne,” in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5–7 December, 1979*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982), esp. 132–33, figs. 5 and 6.

<sup>42</sup> In his own discussion of *יהוה צְבָאוֹת*, McCarter presents Cross’s thesis without explicitly either endorsing or rejecting it: “Quite possibly *yahweh šēbā’ōt* meant ‘He who creates the (heavenly) armies,’ an ancient cultic epithet of the high god ‘El in his aspects as warrior and creator; see the discussion of Cross, *CMHE*, 68–71. Whatever its original significance . . .” (*I Samuel*, 59).

<sup>43</sup> This objection was forcefully made by Arthur Gibson, *Biblical Semantic Logic: A Preliminary Analysis*, BibSem 75 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2001) 71–74. I thank Mark S. Smith for bringing Gibson’s criticisms to my attention.

<sup>44</sup> The many publications of Albright, Cross, and Freedman served to establish on linguistic grounds a general consensus that certain poetic portions of the Hebrew Bible date to an early period relative to the majority of biblical material. See e.g., William Foxwell Albright, “The Oracles of Balaam,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 207–33; Albright, “The Psalm of Habakkuk,” in *Studies in Old Testament*

most consistently that he is a warrior. He marches to battle against his enemies on behalf of his people, and when he marches he comes from the southeast.”<sup>45</sup> Canaanite El, on the other hand, serves as the patriarch of the pantheon and is never

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*Prophecy Presented to Theodore H. Robinson on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday, August 9th, 1946*, ed. Harold H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1950), 1–18; Albright, “A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm 68),” *HUCA* 23 (1950–51): 1–39; Albright, “The Old Testament and the Canaanite Language and Literature,” *CBO* 7 (1945): 5–31; Albright, “Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII,” *VT* 9 (1959): 339–46; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 112–46; David N. Freedman, “Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,” *ZAW* 72 (1960): 101–7; Cross, “Some Observations on Early Hebrew,” *Bib* 53 (1972): 413–20; F. M. Cross and David Noel Freedman, “The Blessing of Moses,” *JBL* 67 (1948): 191–210; Cross and Freedman, “A Royal Song of Thanksgiving: II Samuel 22=Psalm 18,” *JBL* 72 (1953): 15–34; Cross and Freedman, “The Song of Miriam,” *JNES* 14 (1955): 237–50; Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975). That the linguistic idiosyncrasies of this material are due to its antiquity was thoroughly argued in David A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry*, SBLDS 3 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972). See also Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Histoire de la langue Hébraïque: Des origines à l'époque de la Mishna*, Collection de la Revue des études juives 21 (Paris: Publications orientalistes de France, 1981), 62–66; Edward Yechezkel Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 79–80; Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, trans. John Elwolde (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 56–62; Gary A. Rendsburg, “Hurvitz Redux: On the Continued Scholarly Inattention to a Simple Principle of Hebrew Philology,” in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, ed. I. Young, JSOTSup 369 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 104–28 (esp. 122–26); Yigal Bloch, “The Prefixed Perfective in the Construction יָצַקְתָּ and Its Later Replacement by the Long Prefixed Verbal Form: A Syntactic and Text-Critical Analysis,” *JNSL* 36 (2010): 49–74; Tania Notarius, “The Active Predicative Participle in Archaic and Classical Biblical Poetry: A Typological and Historical Investigation,” *ANES* 47 (2010): 240–68; Notarius, “The Archaic System of Verbal Tenses in ‘Archaic’ Biblical Poetry,” in *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*, ed. Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit, LSAWS 8 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 193–207; Mark S. Smith, “Why Was Old Poetry Used in Hebrew Narrative? Historical and Cultural Considerations about Judges 5,” in *Puzzling Out the Past: Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Bruce Zuckerman*, ed. Marilyn J. Lundberg, Steven Fine, and Wayne T. Pitard, CHANE 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 197–212; and Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 211–66. In recent decades, however, this consensus has been challenged; see Ian Young, *Diversity in Pre-exilic Hebrew*, FAT 5 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), esp. 122–30; Ian Young, “Biblical Texts Cannot Be Dated Linguistically,” *HS* 46 (2005): 342–43; Ian Young and Robert Rezetko, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (London: Equinox, 2008), 1:312–40; and especially the monograph-length treatment by Robyn C. Vern, *Dating Archaic Biblical Hebrew Poetry: Critique of the Linguistic Arguments*, PHSC 10 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011). For a thorough and convincing rebuttal to these challenges, especially as formulated by Vern, see Na’ama Pat-El and Aren Wilson-Wright, “Features of Archaic Biblical Hebrew and the Linguistic Dating Debate,” review of *Dating Archaic Biblical Hebrew Poetry: Critique of the Linguistic Arguments*, by Robyn C. Vern, *HS* 54 (2013): 387–410. While I would not attempt to date archaic biblical poetry in an absolute sense, the evidence does indicate that this material is old in a relative sense and thus should preserve our earliest depictions of the character of Yahweh.

<sup>45</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “The Origins of Israelite Religion,” in *The Rise of Ancient Israel: Symposium at the Smithsonian Institution, October 26, 1991* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 125.

depicted as a militaristic deity.<sup>46</sup> While there can be no doubt that Yahweh and El were identified fairly early by (at least some) Israelite Yahwists, the depiction of Yahweh's character in our earliest sources suggests that Yahweh and El were originally different deities with different characteristics.<sup>47</sup> Thus, *pace* Cross,

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<sup>46</sup> Patrick D. Miller Jr. has labored mightily to gather together snippets of material from a variety of sources that would provide evidence for El's martial nature (e.g., the fact that he is called a "bull" in Ugaritic literature or that Philo says that Kronos had attained his throne by defeating Uranos in battle; "El the Warrior," *HTR* 60 [1967]: 411–31). El's only battles, however, are those of the primeval past. In the mythic present, he is a god who *has* conquered but who no longer engages in militaristic endeavors.

<sup>47</sup> So, for instance, Mark S. Smith, citing especially Deut 32:8–9: "Early on, Yahweh is understood as Israel's god in distinction to El ... Yahweh, originally a warrior-god from Sinai/Paran/Edom/Teiman, was known separately from El at an early point in early Israel" (*The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002], 32; John Day: "El and Yahweh were originally distinct deities that became amalgamated" (*Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 14); Rainer Albertz: "Yahweh is older than Israel; he was a southern Palestinian mountain god before he became the god of liberation for the Moses group"; early on, however: "Yahweh became fused with El" (*A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, trans. J. Bowden, OTL [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994], 1:77); Trygve N. D. Mettinger, "The most archaic features of YHWH were linked with imagery associated with deities of the Hadad/Baal type"; the conflation of Yahweh with El, on the other hand, took place as the result of a "process of merging" ("The Elusive Essence: YHWH, El and Baal and the Distinctiveness of Israelite Faith," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Erhard Blum, Christian Macholz, and Ekkehard W. Stegemann [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Nerkirchener Verlag, 1990], 410–11). For an earlier presentation of a similar argument, see already Otto Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," *JSS* 1 (1956): 25–37. Recent work has wisely tended to avoid drawing firm lines defining deities as if they were each envisioned as conforming to some sort of ideal type. For instance, Jason Bembry: "I want to avoid the assumption, however, that El and Baal are absolute types that are antithetical to one another.... The purpose of these comparisons is to provide a broader context in which divine imagery used of Yahweh in the Bible can be seen in El and Baal" (*Yahweh's Coming of Age* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 94). Nonetheless, seeing Yahweh as a deity who has characteristics that overlap with those of both El and Baal makes a simple equation of Yahweh with El problematic. On the other hand, somewhat sympathetic to Miller's arguments (see n. 47 above), R. Scott Chalmers is ambivalent concerning whether "we are discussing two gods who have amalgamated or one who has developed into two" (*The Struggle of Yahweh and El for Hosea's Israel*, HBM 11 [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008], 11). Alberto R. W. Green follows Miller's arguments even more closely and argues that Yahweh's militaristic characteristics are due to his connection to the creator god El (*The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, BJSUCSD 8 [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 231–80). It is difficult to determine exactly how Green understands this relationship, however, since in some places he refers to an "identification" of Yahweh/Shaddai/El, approvingly cites Cross's "El who causes hosts to be" derivation of Yahweh's name (244), and even outright asserts, "Simply put: the Canaanite El, under the name of Yahweh, was the original god of Israel; Yahweh was an 'El' figure" (246). Elsewhere, however, he uses the language of "synthesis" to describe the relationship of Yahweh to El (246) or phraseology such as "El, subsequently identified with Yahweh" (250). His summary conclusion—"the attributes of the god El became the characteristics of Yahweh for the earliest Yahweh-warrior groups around Canaan. El, the ancient god of the patriarchal tribal league, became Yahweh/El of the warrior groups toward the end of the Late Bronze Age" (253)—would seem to indicate that Green intends that

Yahweh does not appear originally to have been linked to Canaanite El, which makes it unlikely that the origin of Yahweh's name is to be found in an El epithet.

Finally, the form *yahwē* itself is problematic for "he causes to be." While the root *hwy/hyy* does mean "to be" in several Semitic languages, the form *hwy*, as opposed to *hyy*, is a distinctively Aramaic form. The use of the Hebrew root הוה meaning "to be" is only attested a handful of times in Hebrew (Gen 27:29; Isa 16:4; Qoh 2:22; 11:3 [perhaps]; Neh 6:6), versus over 3,500 attestations for the root היה. One suspects that we are dealing with Aramaic influence on the part of either the original writer or a later copyist in each of the few exceptional cases, since *hwy* is the normal Aramaic form but is anomalous for Hebrew.<sup>48</sup> The Akkadian cognate *ewū(m)* "to change, turn into"<sup>49</sup> may confirm that *hwy* is the more archaic form, but nevertheless it is poorly attested in Canaanite. Interestingly, *hwy* may be attested in Amorite personal names, specifically as the verbal element *yawi-*, although this remains uncertain.<sup>50</sup> Even so, if one assumes that Yahweh was understood as storming forth from the south because he was originally venerated there (on which see below), then it would be surprising to find a grammatical form more at home in the opposite direction, in Syria. Admittedly, the absence of  $\sqrt{hwy}$  "to be" in Canaanite may simply be due to a paucity of evidence for earlier periods of Canaanite languages, but the form of the name itself nonetheless offers yet another difficulty for the thesis that Yahweh was originally an epithet of El meaning "he causes to be."

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El at some point took the title Yahweh, and El as Yahweh served as the primary warrior god for warrior groups in the Late Bronze Age. Despite these arguments, I continue to find the claim that Canaanite El was envisioned primarily as a warrior deity to be unconvincing.

<sup>48</sup> See *DNWSI* 271–74. It is true that the root הוה is common in some conjugations of the verb in Mishnaic Hebrew (see Moshe H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927], §212), but it is not regularly attested until the Roman-era Wadi Murabba'at scrolls (see Józef T. Milik, *Les grottes de Muraba'at*, DJD 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1961], XIX, 12; XLII, 7; XLIV, 8; XLVIII, 6).

<sup>49</sup> *CAD* 4, s.v. "ewū."

<sup>50</sup> See *Yawi*-<sup>d</sup>IM, *Yawi*-AN, *Yawi*-Ila, *Yawi*-<sup>d</sup>D[agan], *Yahwi*-Ili, and perhaps [Y]awi-ūm(?), *Yawi*-ya(?), *Yawi*-e(?), and *Lawi*-AN (= *La-yawi*-AN?) in Herbert B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 39, 50, 160 and the discussion on 71–73. These forms, as well as names with the apparent verbal element *Yahwi*- (see Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names*, 40), are discussed as potentially relevant in Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 62–63; and Freedman and O'Connor, "יהוה YHWH," 5:511–12. As Freedman and O'Connor note, however, these names are problematic, because the *Yahwi* names are more likely derived from *hwy/hyy* "to live." So also Ernst A. Knauf, who would trace both *Yawi*- and *Yahwi*- elements to *hwy/hyy* ("Yahwe," *VT* 34 [1984]: 467), a possibility also raised by Huffmon (*Amorite Personal Names*, 72).



## YAHWEH AS “HE BLOWS”

The difficulties for linking יהוה with הוה/היה/√ “to be,” outlined above, led Ernst A. Knauf to propose another solution. In a short but seminal article,<sup>51</sup> he notes that divine names and epithets formed via prefix-conjugation verbal forms are attested in ancient north Arabia. *Yağūt* (“He Helps”)<sup>52</sup> and *Ya’ūq* (“He Prevents/Protects”) both appear in the Qur’an as deities whom Noah’s contemporaries refused to abandon (71:23), as well as in Hisham ibn al-Kalbi’s *Book of Idols*<sup>53</sup> (*Kitāb al-Aṣnām* 10, 13, 27, 51, 57). In addition, Knauf points to another deity in al-Kalbi’s *Book of Idols* named *al-Ya’būb* (“He Runs”[?]; *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* 63), Lihyanite evidence for *yḥr* (“He Glows”),<sup>54</sup> and the Safaitic god names *ymt* (“He Kills”)<sup>55</sup> and *yğd* (“He is in Bloom”).<sup>56</sup> Knauf then suggests that “Yahweh,” also a prefix-conjugation verbal form, may well have had north Arabian roots, a suggestion that may be further supported by the widely held view that Yahweh’s original home was in the region of Midian.

The so-called Midianite-Kenite hypothesis suggests that Yahweh, who came to be the national god of Israel and Judah, was in actuality first venerated in the land of Midian.<sup>57</sup> This idea can be traced at least as far back as Friedrich W. Ghil-lany, who under the pseudonym “Richard von der Alm” posited that the god of

<sup>51</sup> Ernst A. Knauf, “Yahwe,” *VT* 34 (1984): 467–72.

<sup>52</sup> Also attested as a theophoric element in the Nabatean name *mr’-y’wt* (Jean Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen* [Paris: Leroux, 1932], 2:64; and Avraham Negev, *Personal Names in the Nabatean Realm*, Quedem 32 [Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1991], 13), the Safaitic name *mr’-yğt* (Franz Altheim and Ruth Stiehl, *Christentum am Roten Meer* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971], 1:59, no. 50), and the Ancient North Arabian name *tm-yğt* (Enno Littmann, *Zur Entzifferung der thamudenscher Inschriften: Eine Untersuchung des Alphabets und des Inhalts der thamudenschen Inschriften auf Grund der Kopieen von Professor J. Euting und unter Benutzung der Vorarbeiten von Professor D. H. Müller, nebst einem Anhang über die arabischen Stammeszeichen*, MVAG 9 [Berlin: Peiser, 1904], 27, Eu. 433 and 32, Eu. 663). Note, however, that Gerald R. Hawting is skeptical of some of the epigraphic evidence for *yğt* (*The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 113).

<sup>53</sup> Ibn al-Kalbi, *Le livre des idoles* (*Kitab el asnam*): *Texte arabe*, ed. Ahmed Zéki Pacha (Cairo: Imprimerie nationale, 1914). For a convenient English translation, see Ibn al-Kalbi, *The Book of the Idols*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris, Princeton Oriental Studies 14 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952). The numbers cited above refer to the page numbers of the Arabic edition, represented by marginal brackets in Faris’s English translation.

<sup>54</sup> In the personal name *mr’-yḥr*. Antonin Jaussen and Raphaël Savignac, *Mission Archéologique en Arabie* (Paris: Leroux), 2:494, N° 240.

<sup>55</sup> *CIS* 5:4351.

<sup>56</sup> Ernst A. Knauf, “Eine Gruppe safaitischer Inschriften aus der Ḥesmā,” *ZDPV* 96 (1980): 171, Nr. 2. Note that there Knauf had read the relevant name *mr’-ykd* rather than *mr’-yğd* as he later came to understand it.

<sup>57</sup> The brief sketch of the history of the hypothesis presented here draws especially on Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah,” *JSOT* 33 (2008): 131–33.

Moses represents a conflation of the Egyptian sun-god worshipped at On and a Midianite sun-god whose character was especially connected with the negative, “typhonic” aspects of the solar deity. Moses would have encountered this deity during his time in Jethro’s household in Midian. Interestingly, however, Ghillany does not connect the god of Moses to the name “Yahweh” (Ghillany: “Jehova”); instead he suggests that “Yahweh” was of Phoenician origin and did not appear in Israel until the time of David and Solomon. Moses’s god was “El,” in Ghillany’s view.<sup>58</sup> Not long after Ghillany’s work, and apparently independently, Cornelius Petrus Tiele suggested, primarily based on the biblical depiction of the Kenites—especially the Kenite Rechabites (1 Chr 2:55)—and, in Tiele’s view, the closely related Kenizzites as defenders of unadulterated Yahwism (e.g., Jethro/Reul/Hobab [Judg 1:16]; Caleb [Num 32:12; Josh 14:6, 14]; Jael [Judg 4:11, 17; 5:24–27]), that Yahweh was originally a Kenite deity whom Moses had introduced to the Israelites.<sup>59</sup> While scholars generally do not follow either Ghillany or Tiele in the details of their arguments, the idea that Yahweh was originally venerated among the Kenites, Midianites, and/or Edomites to Israel’s south has nonetheless found wide support.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Richard von der Alm, *Theologische Briefe an die Gebildeten der deutschen Nation* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1862), 1:320–22, 480–83.

<sup>59</sup> As observed in n. 14 above, Tiele traces the deity even further back than this and ponders whether Yahweh may have originally been an Aryan(!) deity, cognate to Dyu, Jupiter, and Zeus (*Vergelijkende geschiedenis*, 1:558–61). A few decades later Littman likewise argued that *yaw* (there *Jay*—the original form of Yahweh’s name, in Littman’s view) is cognate to Indo-European *\*deywós* (there *\*Dyāu-s*; review of *Le Iscrizioni Antico-Ebraiche Palestinesi* [by Diringier], 162), as did Wyatt (“Near Eastern Echoes of Āryan Tradition,” 21–25). This suggestion has not found wide acceptance.

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 2nd ed. [Berlin: Reimer, 1883], 364 = *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and C. Black [Edinburgh: Black, 1885], 343–44; Bernhard Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. 1.6 of *Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen* (Berlin: Grote, 1887), 1:130–31; Karl Budde, *The Religion of Israel to the Exile*, *American Lectures on the History of Religions* 4 (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1899), 17–25; George Aaron Barton, *A Sketch of Semitic Origins, Social and Religious* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 275–87; Eduard Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme: Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1906), 60–71; Paul Haupt, “Midian und Sinai,” *ZDMG* 63 (1909): 506–30; Hugo Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit: Ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 37, 434–45; Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948), 150–55 = *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. Bernhard W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 136–41; Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser, 1958), 1:22–25 = *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 1:8–11; Lars Eric Axelsson, *The Lord Rose Up from Seir: Studies in the History and Traditions of the Negev and Southern Judah*, *ConBOT* 25 (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), 58–65; Mettinger, “The Elusive Essence,” 404–409; McCarter, “The Origins of Israelite Religion,” 125–29; Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 281–86; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145–46; Blenkinsopp, “The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis



In current scholarly discussion, there are four major arguments typically offered in favor of the Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis<sup>61</sup>: (1) Moses is depicted as having originally encountered Yahweh in Midian while living among his Midianite in-laws, including his father-in-law who was a Midianite priest (Exod 3); (2) in the early Yahwistic poetry, Yahweh comes marching up from the Edomite Mount Seir/Paran/Teman, which lies in the general direction of Midian (Judg 5; Deut 33; Hab 3); (3) a toponym mentioned in Late-Bronze Egyptian texts, *t3 šsw yhw(z)* “Land of the Shasu, YHW(’),”<sup>62</sup> which may (or may not<sup>63</sup>) be in the region

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Revisited and the Origins of Judah,” 131–53; Nissim Amzallag, “Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?,” *JSOT* 33 (2009): 389–94; Justin Kelley, “Toward a New Synthesis of the God of Edom and Yahweh,” *Antiquo Oriente* 7 (2009): 255–80; and Thomas Römer, *The Invention of God*, trans. Raymond Geuss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 51–70. Mark S. Smith has suggested something of a hybrid between the view that Yahweh was originally at home among the Midianites and the view that he was originally connected with the Shasu (see below). In Smith’s view, the Midianites served as an intermediate link between the Shasu and the Israelites (“God in Israel’s Bible: Divinity between the World and Israel, between the Old and the New,” *CBQ* 74 [2012]: 8–10).

<sup>61</sup> Helpfully summarized by Blenkinsopp, “The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited,” 133–44.

<sup>62</sup> The toponym appears both at the temple of Amun at Soleb dating to the reign of Amenhotep III (Soleb IV N4a2; see Michela Schiff Giorgini, Clément Robichon, and Jean Leclant, *Soleb V: le temple: bas-reliefs et inscriptions*, ed. Nathalie Beaux, Bibliothèque générale 19 [Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1998], pl. 221; and Raphael Giveon, *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens*, *Documenta et monumenta Orientis antiqui* 18 [Leiden: Brill, 1971], 26–27) and in a list of Levantine regions that submitted to Ramesses II, found in his temple at Amara West, Sudan (see Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1979], 2:217 text 56:96; translation in Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated: Translations* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1996], 2:75). In addition, Michael C. Astour argues that the toponym *yh(z)* that appears in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu (see Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* 5:96 text 27.c.iii:115; translation in Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Translated & Annotated: Translations* 5:74) should likewise be identified with the *yhw(z)* mentioned in Soleb and Amara West (“Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Lists,” in *Festschrift Elmar Edel*: 12. März 1979, ed. Manfred Görg and Edgar Pusch, *ÄAT* 1 [Bamberg: Görg, 1979], 19).

<sup>63</sup> The connection between this toponym and the deity Yahweh was first suggested by Bernhard Grdseloff, who pointed to another toponym in the Amara West list, *t3 šsw s’rr*, which he understood as referring to Seir. He thus pointed both locations in the region of Edom (“Édom, d’après les sources égyptiennes,” *Revue de l’histoire juive en Égypte* 1 [1947]: 80–81). It should be noted that he supported this move by assuming the Kenite-Midianite hypothesis, and thus the argument is a bit circular. It should also be noted that Grdseloff’s conclusions, while followed by many (see especially Raphael Giveon, “Toponymes ouest-asiatiques à Soleb,” *VT* 14 [1964]: 239–55; Manfred Görg, “Jahwe – ein Toponym?,” *BN* 1 [1976]: 7–14; Shmuel Ahituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents* [Jerusalem: Magnes; Leiden: Brill, 1984], 121–22), have not gone uncontested. Astour places all of the locations, including *t3 šsw yhwz*, in Lebanon and Syria (“Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Lists,” 17–34). Likewise, Kitchen considers both the connection between *t3 šsw yhwz* with the south Transjordan and the connection of either to the divine name Yahweh to be “just a tissue of unsupported speculation.” In his view, to use this toponym to support the Kenite hypothesis is to “pile one gossamer hypothesis upon another” (*Ramesseid Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1999], 2:129). Likewise, in their convenient survey of the evidence, Faried Adrom and Matthias Müller conclude that, although there may be some connection between the toponym

of Edom; and (4) ostensible connections among the biblical character Cain, the Kenites, and devotion to Yahweh, which may suggest that Gen 4 is a sort of etymology for the way of life of the Yahweh-worshipping Kenites.<sup>64</sup> While none of these pieces of evidence is conclusive, the fact that several independent bits of circumstantial evidence all point to the idea that Yahweh was somehow associated with the area south of Israel may indicate a cultural memory with possible roots in historical reality.

Assuming the Midianite hypothesis and pointing to Yahweh's ostensible original home in the region of Midian and/or Edom, Knauf suggests that one might find the origin of his name in Arabic, specifically in *هوي* "to blow." Thus *yahwē* would mean "he blows," referring to Yahweh's activity as a storm god.<sup>65</sup> Knauf argues that this would have been a perfectly suitable name of "eines Wettergottes vom Hadad-Typ."<sup>66</sup> In this way, Knauf avoids the difficulties with the Albright/Cross/Freedman hypothesis: the name both suits what we can tell of Yahweh's early character and contains the consonants that one would expect (i.e., middle *w*, not *y*). Given how nicely all the pieces fit together, it is unsurprising that Knauf's explanation has found its share of supporters.<sup>67</sup>

Knauf's suggestion is not without its problems either, however. First, one must assume both that Yahweh was originally associated with storms, hence the name "he blows," and that his original homeland was northwest Arabia, hence the Arabic etymology of the name.<sup>68</sup> The problem with combining these two

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*yhw(z)* and the deity *yhwh*, there is nothing in the Egyptian evidence that links the toponym to the region south of Palestine ("Das Tetragramm in ägyptischen Quellen: Eine Bestandsaufnahme," *BTZ* 30 [2013]: 120–41).

<sup>64</sup> Blenkinsopp, "Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited," 140–44.

<sup>65</sup> Although he has made the argument in the most thorough manner, Knauf was not the first to trace Yahweh's name to Arabic *هوي* "to blow." Wellhausen had already raised the possibility in his *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (Berlin: Reimer, 1894), 18 n. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Knauf, "Yahwe," 469.

<sup>67</sup> So, e.g., Karel van der Toorn, "YHWH יהוה," *DDD* 916; Blenkinsopp, "the Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited," 151; Kelley, *Toward a New Synthesis*, 262–63; and Römer, *Invention of God*, 34.

<sup>68</sup> The root is a specifically Arabic one. While Baruch Margalit has suggested that Ugaritic *hwt* "word," may literally mean "exhaled breath" and that a handful of instances of biblical הוה may be best rendered "wind" (Mic 7:3; Ps 5:10; 38:13; 52:4; 91:3; Prov 17:4; Job 6:30), in addition to the divine name יהוה, which he also believes can be linked to *hwy* "to blow" ("Ugaritic Contributions to Hebrew Lexicography," *ZAW* 99 [1987]: 394; Baruch Margalit, "Ugaritic Lexicography III," *RB* 91 [1984]: 113–15; followed by *DCH* 2:503, which adds Ezek 7:26; Ps 52:9; 55:12; 57:2; 94:20; Prov 10:3; 19:13; Job 6:2 Q; and 30:13 to Margalit's list of potential examples), the etymological connection between Ugaritic *hwt* "word" (as well as the obviously cognate Akkadian *amatu/awatu*) and Arabic *هوي* is speculative at best. Further, none of the alleged biblical examples unambiguously means "wind" either. Each can be taken either as הוה "desire" (so Mic 7:3; Prov 10:3) or as הוה "destruction/calamity" (Ezek 7:26; Ps 5:10; 38:13; 52:4, 12; 57:2; 91:3; 94:20; Prov 17:4; 19:13; Job 6:2 Q; 6:30; 30:13). בהוה in Ps 52:9 probably should be emended to בהוה "in his wealth" (see *BHS*), but

arguments is that northwest Arabia is notable for its extraordinarily dry climate. In comparison with Mount Saphon, the mythical home of the storm-god Baal Saphon, with average annual precipitation levels of over 1400 mm,<sup>69</sup> northwest Arabia receives around 20 mm of precipitation per year,<sup>70</sup> making it among the driest areas of the already arid Arabian Peninsula.<sup>71</sup> One must further assume that during the Late Bronze and early Iron Age the inhabitants of Midian/Edom spoke some variety of Arabic, but it is just as likely that they would have spoken something like Edomite, which is so closely related to Hebrew that the language of Edomite inscriptions is indistinguishable from Hebrew.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, neither language is clearly attested until relatively late—Edomite only as early as the seventh century BCE<sup>73</sup> and Old North Arabian as early as the eighth century BCE<sup>74</sup>—so it is difficult to determine which (if either) would have been the language of the Midianites, even assuming that Yahweh was originally a Midianite deity.

In sum, Knauf's thesis is cogent so long as one accepts that Yahweh was originally a Midianite deity, that the Midianites would have spoken an Arabian language, and that Yahweh was originally a storm deity at home in a not particularly stormy region. As with the thesis of Albright, Freedman, and Cross, there is no evidence to disprove this reconstruction. It does, however, rely on several

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even without the emendation, “destruction” suits the context at least as well as “wind, bluster.” In no instance does understanding biblical הוה as “wind” lead to an obviously superior reading. Thus, there is no solid evidence either in Ugaritic or in Hebrew for a Northwest Semitic  $\sqrt{hwy}$  “to blow” cognate to Arabic  $\sqrt{hwy}$ .

<sup>69</sup> For an overview of the geography and climate of Mount Saphon, see P. N. Hunt, “Mount Saphon in Myth and Fact,” in *Phoenicia and the Bible: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Leuven on the 15th and 16th of March 1990*, ed. E. Lipiński, *Studia Phoenicia* 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 1991), 109–14.

<sup>70</sup> Research Applications Laboratory of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, “2008 Lab Annual Report,” [http://www.nar.ucar.edu/2008/RAL/goal\\_1/priority\\_2.php](http://www.nar.ucar.edu/2008/RAL/goal_1/priority_2.php)

<sup>71</sup> This difficulty has already been noted by Mark S. Smith, who observes that the region of Midian “does not seem propitious as a home for a storm-god.” He suggests, however, that Yahweh may have originally “approximated the profile of Athtar, a warrior- and precipitation-producing god associated with inland desert sites with less rainfall.” Despite acknowledging the difficulty, Smith does not see the arid climate of Yahweh’s alleged homeland as excluding Knauf’s derivation of his name from Arabic  $\sqrt{hwy}$  “to blow” (*Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 146, 276 n. 75).

<sup>72</sup> See David S. Vanderhoof: “Based on present evidence, there are no significant linguistic differences between texts that are demonstrably Edomite and texts written in the contemporary Hebrew of Cisjordan” (“The Edomite Dialect and Script: A Review of the Evidence,” in *You Shall Not Abhor and Edomite for He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, ed. Diana Vikander Edelman, ABS 3 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995], 157). So also, Holger Gzella, “Northwest Semitic in General,” in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger, *Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft* 36 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 431.

<sup>73</sup> Vanderhoof, “Edomite Dialect and Script,” 137; Gzella, “Northwest Semitic in General,” 431.

<sup>74</sup> Hani Hayajneh, “Ancient North Arabian,” in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger, *Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft* 36 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 758–59.

suppositions for which we have no real evidence. If one were able to produce a cogent explanation that required fewer unverifiable assumptions, then one might appeal to Occam's razor and prefer it to those that require more involved reconstructions. Here I will attempt to provide such a solution.

#### YAHWEH THE DESTROYER

I begin with three basic assumptions: (1) that Yahweh was a deity who was worshipped, primarily if not exclusively,<sup>75</sup> by people who spoke Hebrew, (2) that the earliest literature<sup>76</sup> concerning this deity presents him as a warrior god, and (3) that the most natural place to begin one's search for an etymology of a given deity's name is in the language of the people who are known to have venerated her or him and among lexemes that correspond to that deity's attributes. If such an approach fails to produce a satisfying solution, then one would of course be justified in searching further afield, but there is no reason to begin by assuming that a deity was originally foreign to the only group known to have venerated him or her.

The question then is whether Hebrew provides a sensible etymology for Yahweh's name. In the standard lexica, under the root  $\sqrt{\text{הוה}}$  one first finds  $\text{הוה}$  I "desire."<sup>77</sup> This lexeme, along with the possible Arabic cognate  $\text{هوئ}$  "to love," led Shelomo Dov Goitein to suggest that the name means "He who acts passionately, the Passionate."<sup>78</sup> In support of this interpretation, Goitein points to Exod 3's  $\text{אהיה אשר אהיה}$ , which he believes "must be understood as  $\text{אהוה אשר אהוה}$ , and means: 'I shall passionately love whom I love.'<sup>79</sup> In his view, the name reflects Yahweh's intense love for his people, whom he would soon redeem from their Egyptian oppressors. Goitein further posits that the short form, *yaw* or *yah*, was the original form of the name. Similar to Driver's suggestion that the name was originally "ejaculatory in origin,"<sup>80</sup> Goitein asserts, "Obviously, these are primordial words, exclamations expressing outmost [sic] excitement after a divine apparition had been experienced."<sup>81</sup> The name was then lengthened via a prophetic revelation, probably to Moses:

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<sup>75</sup> Depending on how one interprets the name of "Yau-bidi" the king of Hamath, on which see above.

<sup>76</sup> See n. 45 above.

<sup>77</sup> *HALOT* 1:242. BDB 217 includes *HALOT*'s  $\text{הוה}$  I and II under a single entry with two distinct but related meanings. Aside from this difference in categorization, the two lexica agree in all essentials.

<sup>78</sup> Shelomo Dov Goitein, "YHWH the Passionate: The Monotheistic Meaning and Origin of the Name *YHWH*," *VT* 6 (1956):1–9.

<sup>79</sup> Goitein, "YHWH the Passionate," 4.

<sup>80</sup> Driver, "Original Form of the Name 'Yahweh,'" 24. On Driver's thesis, see above.

<sup>81</sup> Goitein, "YHWH the Passionate," 6.

For many nights the Prophet had groaned: “*Yāh, Yāh*”. Suddenly, when the echo of his ejaculations came back to him, he understood: not *Yāh-yāh*, but *yahwā* (or however the imperfect of the root *hwy* was pronounced in those days)—that is the name and the true nature of the God of your people: One who loves and redeems, but also demands for himself exclusive adherence. Thus the name YHWH came into being as the interpretation of a prophetic audition in a primitive monotheistic sense, and—may I add—Biblical monotheism never abandoned entirely the notions expressed by that root *hwy*.<sup>82</sup>

Goitein thus suggests that the form *yahwē* was originally the result of Moses’s meditation on and interpretation of his echoing ejaculations—meditations which ultimately served to reveal the true nature of Israel’s god.

Without going too far afield into questions concerning the historicity of Moses and the exodus or the concept of monotheism as expressed in the Hebrew Bible, the idea that יהוה can be traced to Hebrew הנה in reference to Yahweh’s “desire” = “love” for his people is problematic given the normal use of הנה “desire.”<sup>83</sup> There are three clear cases in which Hebrew הנה appears to mean “desire” (Mic 7:3; Prov 10:3; 11:6).<sup>84</sup> In all three instances, however, this “desire” bears a distinctly negative connotation. In Mic 7:3, חות נפשו refers to the voracious greed of the powerful that motivates them to pervert justice. Likewise, in Prov 10:3 חות רשעים refers to the “craving” (so NRSV) of the wicked, contrasted with the hunger of the righteous. Finally, Prov 11:6, once again contrasting the righteous with the wicked, declares ובהות בגדים ילכדו “and by the desire of the treacherous they are

<sup>82</sup> Goitein, “YHWH the Passionate,” 7.

<sup>83</sup> The following criticism applies equally well to the earlier thesis of W. R. W. Gardner, who argues on similar grounds but in less detail that Yahweh’s name means “He loves, the Loving God” (“The Name ‘Yahweh,’” *ExpTim* 20 [1908]: 91–92), as well as to the suggestion of George Aaron Barton, who argues that Yahweh was a god of fertility whose name means “He who causes to love passionately” (*Semitic and Hamitic Origins: Social and Religious* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1934], 337–38).

<sup>84</sup> One might also point to Ps 52:9 if one prefers not to emend הונו to הונו. In addition,  $\sqrt{hwy}$  “to want” may appear in the Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.92.36, as argued by Meindert Dijkstra, “The Myth of Astarte, the Huntress (*KTU* 1.92),” *UF* 26 (1994): 122; followed by Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson, 3rd ed., *Handbook of Oriental Studies/Handbuch der Orientalistik: Section 1 The Near and Middle East* 112 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1:345. This reading is not universally accepted, however; cf. Dennis Pardee, “Deux tablettes ougaritiques de la main d’un même scribe, trouvées sur deux sites distincts: RS 19.039 et RIH 98/02,” *Semitica et classica* 1 (2008): 30. Likewise, Edward L. Greenstein reads *thw* in *KTU* 1.5.i.15 and 1.133.4 as derived from  $\sqrt{hwy}$  “to desire” (“Another Attestation of Initial *h > ’* in West Semitic,” *JANES* 5 [1973]: 158–59), but this too is disputed (cf. del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 851). If one follows Greenstein’s suggestion that both הנה “desire” and אנה “desire” derive from an original Semitic root  $\sqrt{hwy}$  (“Another Attestation of Initial *h > ’* in West Semitic,” 157–64), then one might also include instances of the latter in one’s list of biblical attestations. I thank Mark S. Smith for bringing this article to my attention. Here, however, I confine my attention to the more immediately relevant occurrences of הנה.

seized.” Thus, in each biblical occurrence of הָיָה “desire,” the context implies that the term bore negative connotations; Goitein himself acknowledges that Hebrew only preserves the root in a “pejorative sense.”<sup>85</sup> One would have to assume then that the term once bore positive, or at least neutral, connotations to argue that the root served as the origin of Yahweh’s name in reference to his love for his people, but there is no evidence for such a meaning for the term.

This etymological difficulty is not the only one. As observed above, the oldest depictions of Yahweh’s character present him as a warrior god. While there is certainly the occasional mention of Yahweh’s affection for his people in the corpus of archaic biblical poetry (see, e.g., Exod 15:13; Hab 3:13), its overarching depiction of Yahweh is as an agent of destruction. The annihilation of the enemies of Yahweh/the Israelites is a much more pronounced theme than the affection of Yahweh for his people. Thus, not only does the lexical range of Hebrew הָיָה “desire” make it difficult to support the claim that *yahwē* would have meant “he loves,” but such a meaning does not fit well with the character of Yahweh as presented in the oldest texts about him.

Turning to another הוה, however—Hebrew הָיָה II “destruction,”<sup>86</sup> as well as the cognate form הָיָה “disaster”—one finds a more promising possibility. First, the root is better attested, with הָיָה appearing around a dozen times<sup>87</sup> and הָיָה appearing another three.<sup>88</sup> The terms consistently appear in the context of calamity and woe<sup>89</sup>—appearing in parallel to things such as “open graves” (קבר פתוח; Ps 5:10 [Eng 5:9]), “treacheries” (מרמות; Ps 38:13 [Eng 38:12]), “oppression and treachery” (תך ומרמה; Ps 55:12 [Eng 55:11]), “my vexation” (בעשי; Job 6:2 Q), “injustice” (עולה; Job 6:30), and “iniquity/disaster” (און; Prov 17:4). Thus, both the root and its lexical range are well established in Hebrew. In addition, tracing Yahweh’s name to a root meaning “destruction” fits well with what we can discern concerning his character as presented in archaic biblical poetry. To give just a few examples, in this corpus Yahweh is presented as a god who “shattered the enemy” and “consumed them like stubble” (Exod 15:5–6); when he marches “ancient mountains are shattered” (Hab 3:6; see also Judg 5:5 and Ps 18:8 [Eng. 18:7] // 2 Sam 22:8); he “crushes the head of the wicked house” (Hab 3:13); his nostrils smoke and fire comes from his mouth (Ps 18:9 [Eng. 18:8] // 2 Sam 22:9). In sum,

<sup>85</sup> Goitein, “YHWH the Passionate,” 2.

<sup>86</sup> HALOT 1:242; BDB 217; DCH 2:502–3.

<sup>87</sup> Ps 5:10; 38:13; 52:4; 55:12; 57:2; 91:3; 94:20; Prov 17:4; 19:13; Job 6:2 Q; 6:30. In addition, in Ps 74:19, לְהַיָּת should probably be read לְהַחֲוֹת (so Peshitta; cf. BHS).

<sup>88</sup> Isa 47:11; Ezek 7:26 (2×). One may also point to the proposed verbal from הוה “to fall (upon)” (G-stem) “to cause to fall” (D-stem) as more evidence for the root (so HALOT 1:241; DCH 2:502), but the alleged attestations (1 Sam 1:18; 2 Sam 11:23; 1 Kgs 11:15; Job 37:6) all require some degree of emendation.

<sup>89</sup> For a discussion of the words’ full semantic range in the Hebrew Bible, see Seth Erlandsson, “הָיָה *havvāh*; הָיָה *hōvāh*,” TDOT 3:356–58.

Yahweh's primary activity in this early literature is to terrify and destroy his enemies. Therefore both the meaning of הוהו II and the character of Yahweh as presented in our earliest sources both support tracing the etymology of Yahweh's name to "destruction." The arguments of Albright and others that a C-stem best explains the evidence concerning the name's vocalization remains convincing, and one may suggest that the verbal form may have been derived from the noun as a C-stem denominative verb.<sup>90</sup>

I should acknowledge, however, that I am not the first to make this suggestion. Long ago, H. Holzinger suggested that the name of Yahweh was originally linked to "Verderben."<sup>91</sup> He was tentatively followed by Hugo Gressmann,<sup>92</sup> but the suggestion has not been generally accepted in more recent scholarship. Indeed, it is not even mentioned in the entry for "Yahweh" in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*,<sup>93</sup> the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*,<sup>94</sup> or the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*.<sup>95</sup> It receives a single sentence in the lengthy overview of proposals in Wilkinson's *Tetragrammaton*,<sup>96</sup> as well as in the entry for "Yahweh" in the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. The latter is worth quoting, as it may reveal one reason that scholars often overlook or ignore the suggestion: "Though some have suggested a link with the root ḤWY, resulting in the translation 'the Destroyer' (e.g., Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit* [Göttingen, 1913] 37), it is generally held that the name should be connected with the Semitic root HWY."<sup>97</sup> Likewise, in *The Invention of God*, Thomas Römer notes, "Some scholars have postulated a link with the Semitic root ḥ-w-y ('destroy')—Yahweh would then be a god of destruction."<sup>98</sup> These sentences may appear puzzling, since the Hebrew root meaning "destruction" is HWY; no ḤWY root meaning "destruction" exists. The misunderstanding appears to have been occasioned by Gressmann (or perhaps his editor), who summarizes the view of Holzinger as follows: "Vgl. die Lehrbücher und Kommentare, besonders Holzinger; Ex. S. 12 f.

<sup>90</sup> The C-stem is often used denominatively (Jouon §162d; GKC §53g).

<sup>91</sup> H. Holzinger, *Einleitung in den Hexateuch* (Freiburg und Leipzig: Mohr [Siebeck, 1893], 204–05. Holzinger, *Exodus: Erklärt* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1900), 12–13. In the latter, the interested reader can find a convenient summary of positions held by various scholars of the nineteenth century, including the once popular suggestion that Hebrew הוהו originally meant "to fall" (see Arabic هوي "to fall"), and that Yahweh meant something like "to cause (rain, lightning, etc.) to fall" (so Paul de Lagarde, "Erklärung hebräischer Wörter," in *Orientalia* [Göttingen: Dieterich, 1880], 2:29; W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* [New York: Appleton, 1881], 423; and Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 1:429 n. 1).

<sup>92</sup> Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit*, 37.

<sup>93</sup> Henry O. Thompson, "Yahweh," *ABD* 6:1011–12.

<sup>94</sup> Freedman and O'Connor, "יהוה," *YHWH*."

<sup>95</sup> Manfred Weippert, "Jahwe," *RIA* 5:246–53.

<sup>96</sup> Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton*, 35

<sup>97</sup> van der Toorn, "Yahweh," 915.

<sup>98</sup> Römer, *Invention of God*, 34.



der an הַחַיִּיבִי erinnert, ‘das Verderben.’”<sup>99</sup> That is, the footnote contains a typographical error—ח for ה—which makes Holzinger’s suggestion appear much less convincing. Anyone encountering Holzinger’s thesis via Gressmann would quite understandably dismiss it as implausible, as van der Toorn did in his *DDD* entry and Römer did in his recent monograph. It thus appears that a minor typographical error is responsible for the proposal’s having lain in obscurity ever since!

Nonetheless, the fact that this derivation both makes sense of the name of Yahweh in the language of the only people known to have venerated him and that it fits with what can be discerned about Yahweh’s character in our earliest sources makes it less problematic than other suggestions that typically go further afield and rely upon speculative reconstructions of the (pre-)history of the god Yahweh. Additionally, such a derivation fits well with the apparent etymologies of the names of other Late Bronze and Iron Age Northwest Semitic deities, which also often have to do with conquest and destruction. One may note, for instance Anat ( $\sqrt{mw}$  “to be violent/to subdue”<sup>100</sup>), Chemosh, ( $\sqrt{kmš}$  “to conquer/to subdue”<sup>101</sup>), Resheph ( $\sqrt{ršp}$  “to burn”<sup>102</sup>), and Deber ( $\sqrt{dbr}$  “plague”<sup>103</sup>). Indeed, the last two deities appear alongside Yahweh in the archaic hymn that concludes the book of Habakkuk. There Yahweh marches up from Teman while “Deber goes before him, and Resheph goes out at his heels” (3:5).<sup>104</sup> If one follows the proposal offered here, then one would see three deities all linked—both conceptually and etymologically—to conquest and destruction taking the battlefield and bringing disaster in their wake. “Yahweh the Destroyer” would naturally be right at home alongside “Resheph the Pestilent” and “Deber the Plague.”<sup>105</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit*, 37 n. 2.

<sup>100</sup> So John Gray, “The Blood Bath of the Goddess Anat in the Ras Shamra Texts,” *UF* 11 (1979): 321. For a convenient survey of other (less persuasive in my opinion) proposals for the etymology of the name, see Peggy L. Day, “Anat עַנַת,” *DDD* 36.

<sup>101</sup> So Hans-Peter Müller, “Chemosh בְּמוֹשׁ,” *DDD* 186–87.

<sup>102</sup> Although this etymology is not certain; see P. Xella, “Resheph רֶשֶׁף,” *DDD* 700–01.

<sup>103</sup> So Gregorio del Olmo Lete, “Deber דְּבֵר,” *DDD* 231–32.

<sup>104</sup> On the relationship between Yahweh and Resheph in particular, see Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, “JHWH und Ræšæp—Zu JHWHs Umgang mit einem syrischen Pestgott,” *VT* 65 (2015): 247–64.

<sup>105</sup> To anticipate a likely question that is not strictly germane to the present discussion, I believe that the simplest explanation for longer form יהוה צבאות is that it represents a construct relationship, “Yahweh of Hosts/Armies.” While it has often been asserted that proper names cannot serve as the *nomen regens* of a construct chain (Jouon §131o; GKC §125d; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 70), this assertion is belied by the commonly acknowledged exception in the form of the so-called “DN of GN” construction, in which a local manifestation of a deity is denoted via a construct chain with the deity’s name serving as the *nomen regens* and the location serving as the *nomen rectum*; thus, e.g., יהוה תמן “Yahweh of Teman” and יהוה שֶׁמֶרֶן “Yahweh of Samaria” in the Kuntillet ‘Ajrud inscriptions. See the seminal treatment of such names in P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 137–43. In addition, John H. Choi points to divine epithets such as *ršp sprm*



## CONCLUSION

There has been no shortage of proposals for the original meaning of the name “Yahweh.” The two suggestions that currently dominate scholarly discussion suggest that the name meant either “he creates/brings into being,” in reference to his creative capacities, or “he blows,” due to his activity as a storm deity. As demonstrated above, however, both of these suggestions remain problematic despite their wide acceptance. Hoping to offer a more satisfactory solution, I have argued that one should first look both for an etymology that fits what can be discerned about the character of Yahweh in our earliest sources (i.e., the so-called “archaic Hebrew poetry”) and for one that derives from the language of those who venerated him (i.e., Hebrew). The Hebrew root  $\sqrt{\text{הרה}}$  “to destroy” offers a satisfactory solution in both regards, and thus the simplest solution is that “Yahweh” originally meant “he destroys.” Only later did Yahweh absorb attributes previously associated with other deities, and in this way a god of destruction came to be understood as a benevolent creator.

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“Resheph of Birds/He-Goats(?)” (*KAI* 26.A.ii:10–11), *ršp gn* “Resheph of the Garden” (*KTU* 4.219), *ršp ḥš* “Resheph of Lightning/the Arrow” (*KAI* 32.3), *ršp ḥgb* “Resheph of the Grasshopper(?)” (*KTU* 1.90.2), and the highly suggestive *ršp šb i* “Resheph of the Host/Army” (*KTU* 1.91.15). In such cases Resheph stands in construct not to a geographical name but to a noun that reveals something about the character of the deity. Thus, in Choi’s view, יהוה צבאות “Yahweh of Hosts/Armies” would refer to Yahweh’s martial aspects (“Resheph and *YHWH ŠĒBĀ’ŌT*,” *VT* 54 [2004]: 17–28). Mettinger comes to a similar conclusion, albeit without reference to these Resheph epithets (“Yahweh Zebaoth יהוה צבאות,” *DDD* 920).

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# For the Love of Words in The(ir) World(s): Theorizing Biblical Philology

F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp

In what follows I offer the beginnings of a theoretical brief on behalf of a philological program of “slow” reading of the Hebrew Bible. My warrants are of several kinds—historical, pragmatic, ethical, aesthetic—and are thought through to a variety of ends. Along the way I elaborate some of the practices and dispositions that typify such a manner of reading. These reflections have biblical poems chiefly in view as the principal site of textual encounter, though they are also consequential for a more ambitious recuperation of “biblical philology” in the field. Of course, biblical studies is a field with a history of philology, both good and bad, and thus any brief on behalf of philology’s ongoing relevance to a mode of reading the Bible will need to be ever mindful (philologically) of this history. This, too, I try here and there to gesture towards. My recuperation of philologies (biblical and otherwise) past and present and their practices is thus ultimately in service of a rejuvenated and reanimated biblical philology for the future, a future biblical philology able to make possible a readable text while also being equipped to engage contemporary criticism’s “most vibrant conversations.”<sup>1</sup>

## LOWTH AND RHETORICAL-EVALUATIVE PHILOLOGY

Historically, the whole literary-critical paradigm (broadly conceived) is itself an outgrowth of philology. This fact has been underscored to good effect recently in James Turner’s wide-ranging *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern*

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase is Michelle R. Warren’s from her “Introduction: Relating Philology, Practicing Humanism,” *PMLA* 125 (2010): 283. For the importance of providing warrants for philological practice, something philologists of all stripes (including especially biblical philologists) have been reluctant to do on a regular basis, see Sheldon Pollock, “Liberating Philology,” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 1 (2015): 16–21, esp. 18–19.

*Humanities*.<sup>2</sup> As Turner notes, “the discipline of ‘literature’ did not quite exist in the English-speaking world in 1860.”<sup>3</sup> Those practices that would comprise the new discipline—above all comparative language study, literary history, textual editing, evaluative criticism—developed from the confluence of philology’s two historically dominant modalities, the textual-linguistic and the rhetorical-evaluative. The latter has not always been appreciated for its centrality to philological analysis, but Turner well emphasizes, “assessing the literary qualities of a passage formed as much a part of the philologist’s task as deciphering its meaning.”<sup>4</sup> It was Robert Lowth who was the first in the early modern period to (re)innovate in this direction, anticipating and in part influencing the broader (re)turn to the evaluative study of literature that took hold in earnest over the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Lowth, while retaining the by then well-tested practices of

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<sup>2</sup> James Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). Earlier versions of this essay were presented: in the Philology in Hebrew Studies unit at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (San Diego, 2014; “A Making Out of Words: Philology and Biblical Poetry”); as a lecture (“Rejuvenating Biblical Philology”) at Yale Divinity School (April 7, 2016); and as the author’s inaugural lecture (“Theorizing Biblical Philology”) as Professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary (October 5, 2016). Thanks to the organizers of these events for their invitations to speak and for the feedback from participants which has enhanced my thinking on this topic. Also, thanks to colleagues who have read and commented on the manuscript at various points, especially Blake Couey, Chris Hooker, Paul Kurtz, Kathleen McVey, Dan Pioske, and Mark Taylor. It is a pleasure to offer this essay in celebration of the career of P. Kyle McCarter Jr., one of my own teachers of philology.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, *Philology*, 254.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, *Philology*, 11; cf. 4, 13; Roberta Frank’s assessment of the interests of the first generation of Germanic philologists (“literary history, criticism, and aesthetics”) in “The Unbearable Lightness of Being a Philologist,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 96 (1997): 489; Michael Holquist, “Forgetting Our Nature, Remembering Our Mother,” *PMLA* 115 (2000): 1976 (“for thousands of years, the study of language and literature was called philology”).

<sup>5</sup> Turner, *Philology*, 156–62. As Turner’s genealogy makes clear, the philological study of texts has a long history and has had a tendency to emerge and reemerge in waves. I sample some of this rich tradition as it bears on the study of the Bible, but nowhere do I attempt the kind of thick historiographical study of biblical philology our field deserves—Turner’s focus is limited (primarily) to philology in the English-speaking world, especially from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Turner, like some others (e.g., Frank, “Unbearable Lightness,” 488; Sean Gurd, “Introduction,” in *Philology and Its Histories*, ed. Sean Gurd [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010], 15), begins his story of philology not inappropriately with Eratosthenes of Cyrene, the third-century BCE scholar to first call himself *philologos*, a “philologist” (*Philology*, 3). It is at least worth remembering that by that late date philology—though not by that name nor overtly theorized as such—had been around for millennia. The “first philologists,” as Michael Holquist well recognizes (“The Place of Philology in an Age of World Literature,” *Neohelicon* 38 [2011]: 269–70; cf. Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” 8), date back to the beginning of the second millennium BCE and the Akkadian speaking Babylonian and Assyrian scholars who maintained knowledge of Sumerian (by that time no longer spoken) through the continuous copying of Sumerian texts and the creation of Akkadian-Sumerian bilingual editions and wordlists (cf. Jerald S. Cooper, “Sumerian and Akkadian,” in *The World’s Writing Systems*, ed. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 37–

textual philology—for example, paying close attention to the words of a text, situating the text within its historical context(s), establishing meaning through comparison with other texts—explicitly borrowed from classical and neoclassical rhetoric in his field-founding study of biblical poetry.<sup>6</sup> In that study the emphasis on the sublime, the very idea of parallelism itself (viz. composing “in balanced clauses parallel in length, syntax, and structure”), the discussions of imagery, figurative language and poetic genres (e.g., lyric, elegiac, dramatic), and his scrutiny of different poetic styles all are inspired and warranted by the then “current neo-classical categories of literary criticism.”<sup>7</sup>

This emphasis on the rhetorical-evaluative capacities of philology would eventually be severely muted in the field, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the heyday of a biblical philology that prized above all comparative language study, historical contextualization, and textual criticism. In this the study of biblical literature was a part of a broader trend. As the various disciplines that would come to form the humanities emerged during this period, “philology,” writes Turner, “came to mean mere[ly] ‘study of words’ or ‘linguistic science’ in *opposition* to study of the forms of literary works, to literary history, and to exploration of the ‘spiritual and aesthetic’ meanings of poetry and fiction.”<sup>8</sup> These latter would become the preserve of a new styled “literary criticism,” with a decidedly anti-philological pose. The rebirth of (evaluative-)literary interests in the study of the Bible beginning in the late 1960s tended to oppose itself to the historical-critical and textual-philological frameworks that then dominated the field, both under the broader influence of the now well-established, anti-philological literary “criticism” and because biblical philologists themselves were mostly disinterested in such questions.<sup>9</sup> The possibility of a more holistic, Lowthian philological paradigm seems generally to have been occluded, perhaps given that the principal textual focus of these new “literary critics” was predominantly biblical prose and not biblical poetry.<sup>10</sup> I recall Lowth here at the outset as a reminder that

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72). Gurd underscores the need for philology to be philologically attentive to the “history of philology”—indeed, he maintains that there is no philology without that history (“Introduction,” 1–19, esp. 6; cf. Werner Hamacher in his “95 Theses on Philology,” *diacritics* 39 [2009]: 33). Such a history is inherently pluralistic and multifocal, depending on the site of textuality primarily in view.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Lowth, *Robert Lowth (1710–1787): The Major Works*, vols. 1–2, ed. D. A. Reibel (London: Routledge, 1995); repr. of *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 2 vols, trans. G. Gregory (London: J. Johnson, 1787). Cf. Turner, *Philology*, 79.

<sup>7</sup> Turner, *Philology*, 79.

<sup>8</sup> Turner, *Philology*, 272; cf. Sheldon Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” *Philological Encounters* 1 (2016): 12–13.

<sup>9</sup> This turn back toward the literary in the study of the Hebrew Bible may be conveniently marked by James Muilenburg’s presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968, published as “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 1–18.

<sup>10</sup> I note this mainly practically since these “new” literary critics would not have been reading Lowth who wrote specifically on biblical poetry. But the genre is not neutral. Interestingly, Werner

philology, and biblical philology in particular, need not be devoid of evaluative literary interests. In fact, in ignoring questions of style, form, quality, aesthetics and the like philologists risk misapprehending the very textual and linguistic phenomena that is their avowed principal subject matter, and this on good philological grounds, as these (viz. style, form and the like) are themselves artifactual, material, historical in nature. How words mean, for example, will depend as much on the form, sound, style, and uses to which they are put in the larger literary work in which they are deployed as on etymology and semantics. Consider two brief examples. First, the closing of the so-called Song of the Vineyard in Isa 5:7, which exhibits what is perhaps the Bible's most celebrated bit of rhyming:

*wayqaw*<sup>11</sup> *lēmīšpāḥ wēhinnē mišpāḥ*  
*lišdāqā*<sup>12</sup> *wēhinnē šē'āqā*

He hoped for justice but instead there was bloodshed,  
 for righteousness but instead there was outrage.

Whatever semantic specificity might accompany the terms *mišpāḥ* and *šē'āqā*—the first is a *hapax legomenon* whose etymology has yet to be fully (satisfactorily) unraveled<sup>13</sup> and the second a general cry of despair or suffering (e.g., Gen 18:21; Exod 3:9; Ps 9:12; Job 27:9; Lam 2:18)—the prophet's play with sound and form here is crucial to how these lines are experienced, how they finally mean. The missed expectations—namely, the failure to live out (lit. “to do” [‘-ś-h], esp. Gen

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Hamacher in his “95 Theses” (27) emphasizes poetry as “*prima philologia*” (thesis no. 14) and philology as “founded in poetry” (thesis no. 15). Note also S. Lerer's own (elegiac) call for philologists to “return to the poetry itself,” to “pass in and out of philological inquiry in order to return to literature” (*Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2002], 101).

<sup>11</sup> Contrary to the third person form of MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, which must be original, all the versions revert to the first person, assimilating to the voice used in the middle sections of the song (vv. 3–6; and in LXX and Tg., in v. 2 as well).

<sup>12</sup> The presence of an added conjunction in LXX, Vg., and Syr. is likely interpretive in nature (esp. in LXX and Syr.). As for the unexpected negative particle *ou* in LXX, it is unclear whether it reflects a misreading of the preposition *l-* as a negative particle or whether it is a part of LXX's periphrastic rendering of the last two lines of the song.

<sup>13</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> mistakenly adds the preposition *l-*, “to, for” (*lmšpḥ*) under the influence of the preceding *lmšpt*. The word *mišpāḥ* (often glossed as “bloodshed”) is another *hapax legomenon* (cf. Ar. *safāḥa*, “to spill, pour out, shed”; *saffāḥ*, “shedder of blood, murder”; H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, trans. T. H. Trapp [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 185), which the versions, not recognizing, gloss from context: LXX (*ἀνομίαν* “lawlessness”), Vg. (iniquitas, “iniquity”), Syr. (*ḥṭṭpy*’, “violence”), Tg. (*‘ānōsīn* “robbers”). As with *bē'ūsīm* in verses 2 and 4, *mišpāḥ* here may be another made-up rhyme word (cf. J. S. Lewis, “‘The Earth Was Higgledy-Piggledy’: A Proposal for *tōhū wābōhū* as Rhyming Reduplication” [unpublished]). Indeed, if the root derives originally from \**s-p-h* (cf. *mispaḥat* “skin rash,” *sappahat* “scab”; cf. *šippah* in Isa 3:17), then perhaps even the spelling has been altered. The spelling with a *sin* graphically enhances and underscores the aural play—which also implies an anticipation of readers (and not just listeners) for this text.

18:19; Jer 22:3; Ps 99:4; 119:121; Prov 21:3; 2 Chr 9:8)<sup>14</sup> the traditional norms of “justice” and “righteousness,” *mišpāt* and *šēdāqā*—are mimed sonically and formally in the consonantal mismatches in the pairs *mišpāt* // *mišpāh* and *šēdāqā* // *šē’āqā*—the rhyming holds the pairs together so that auditors can hear the mismatch. In fact, the song does not so much explicate the wrongs that have generated *mišpāh* and *šē’āqā* as expose and name them (especially here at poem’s end) for what everybody already knows them to be, namely, not *mišpāt* and not *šēdāqā*. Who better to appreciate the potential meaningfulness of the orchestration of sound and form in poems than the philologist for whom the study of phonology and morphology, for example, has long been central to his or her care-full attention to the minutia of language and texts? Getting the words right in this text—deciphering what they are and how they mean—involves (among other things) appreciating how they play with sound and form.<sup>15</sup>

The opening of Job’s curse of his birthday in Job 3:3 offers another illustration—given here in the translation of NRSV: “Let the day perish in which I was born, / and the night that said, ‘A man-child is conceived.’” There is nothing particularly challenging here lexically or even text critically.<sup>16</sup> The language is quite simple, for example, *’b-d* (Qal) “to perish”, *yōm* “day,” *’y-l-d* (Niphal) “to be born,” *laylā* “night,” *’-m-r* (Qal) “to say,” *h-r-h* (Qal passive) “to be conceived,”<sup>17</sup> *geber* “man, humankind.” But it’s how these simple words are used: the reversal of the normal sequence of conception and birth (*hrh* + *yld*, 81x in the Hebrew Bible), the personification of “Night” (i.e., through the attribution of speech, cf. Ps 19:3; Job 32:7),<sup>18</sup> the otherwise anomalous “conception” of a full-grown *geber*

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<sup>14</sup> LXX (ποιῆσαι κρίσιν), Vg. (faceret iudicium), and Tg. (*dy’bdwn dyn*) resort to periphrastic renderings that supply the expected idiom that MT (and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) so artfully resists, thus ramifying the erasure itself and the damning critique it reveals, viz. the very absence of doing “justice” and “righteousness.” This well exemplifies the kind of “active” philology that Edward Said advocates, a philology, that is, capable of disclosing “what may be hidden or incomplete or masked or distorted in any text we may have before us” (“The Return to Philology” in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004], 59).

<sup>15</sup> In fact, sound turns out to be critical to this song’s larger prosody. While Isa 5:1–7, like almost all other biblical poems, does not systematically orchestrate one kind of sound effect to any specific end, nonetheless the periodicity of some kind of sound play is sufficient to rival the rhythmic norm of unscripted sounds and to create the anticipation (however non-predictive) of yet further sonic flourishes. So, when the rhyming does come in the poem’s final couplet auditors are not at all surprised but well satisfied.

<sup>16</sup> For a recent philological discussion of the verse, see C. L. Seow, *Job 1–21*, Illuminations (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), esp. 338–40.

<sup>17</sup> The *qal* passive (*\*huraya* > *hōrā*; so GKC §52e; Seow, *Job 1–21*, 340), of course, is a discovery of modern philology, a form that was unknown to the ancient and medieval commentators (e.g., LXX simply reads Ἴδοὺ “Behold!”; cf. Sym ἐκλήθη).

<sup>18</sup> Only Tg. among the versions catches the personification (even Rashi misses it, assuming an allusion to an unmentioned man, see Seow, *Job 1–21*, 339).

(cf. Job 38:3; 40:7),<sup>19</sup> and the cosmological elaboration of the following lines (vv. 4–10) that makes clear Job’s intent through his malediction to uncreate the world, the day of his birth and the day of creation. NRSV, along with many other translations (and many commentaries, too), badly botches things (e.g., “man-child”) precisely because it fails in its literary appreciation of this poem, and thus gets something fundamentally *philological* wrong. Good philology requires good (evaluative) literary criticism.<sup>20</sup>

#### FOUND IN PHILOLOGY

I turn now to the textual-linguistic modality of philology with its prizing of historical contextualization, comparison, attentiveness to (original) language, and scrutiny of material textuality. I need not elaborate in great detail as this is a paradigm of study well-known to the field both because “philology” in its atrophied sense since the turn of the twentieth century has been generally understood to have just these kinds of interests in view and because Biblical Studies has long been a chief sponsor of (textual-)philological method and practice. In fact, the very birth of the (modern) critical study of the Bible with the likes of Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon is crucially intertwined with an increasingly philological and historical orientation to the understanding of textual meaning.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Johann G. Eichhorn’s *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* from roughly a century later (the late eighteenth century) not only serves as an important watershed for the modern philological study of the Bible but also helped usher in the philological turn in other

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<sup>19</sup> Vg. (conceptus est homo) and Tg. (*’tbr’ gbr*) catch the cosmological allusions throughout the first third of the poem; hence, Seow’s “mortality is conceived” (*Job 1–21*, 339).

<sup>20</sup> Max Leopold Margolis’s “The Scope and Methodology of Biblical Philology” (*JQR* 1 [1910]: 5–41) well exemplifies the tendency to narrow philology mainly to linguistic-textual concerns in Biblical Studies at the turn of the twentieth century. Margolis uses Job 3:3 throughout his essay (esp. 9–35) as the one worked example to illustrate the various “technical devices” and “operations” of biblical philology. Not surprisingly, he does not include evaluative-rhetorical considerations in his reflections, and consequently, is unable to fully appreciate and situate the language of Job 3:3. This is most evident in his treatment (17–24) of *hōrā gāber*—which, “of course, is not easy” (17)—in which the philological tools at his disposal (e.g., grammatical analysis, text criticism, traditional exegesis) are not capacious enough to fully illuminate the text, which nicely underscores the need to reintegrate literary critical/evaluative concerns into the heart of biblical philology. I hasten to add that there is much to admire in Margolis’s article, not the least that it is one of the very few pieces of metareflection on philology by a biblical scholar (see now David A. Lambert, “Refreshing Philology: James Barr, Supersessionism, and the State of Biblical Words,” *BibInt* 24 [2016]: 332–56) and that it unfolds traditional Jewish exegetical practices into philology’s purview, something that seems to have almost wholly been occluded in the recent returns to philology and their histories of reception.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcom (Oxford: Clarendon, 2012 [1651]); Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, trans. S. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 1989 [1670]); Richard Simon, *Historie critique du Vieux Testament* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1685 [1677]); translated into English as *A Critical History of the Old Testament* [London: Walter Davis, 1682].

(emerging) disciplines, such as classics.<sup>22</sup> As such, philology represents a modality of knowing that is originary to our discipline, and thus provides strong historical warrant for extending S. Pollock's call for a "future philology" to biblical studies, a call for us to go back, if you will, to the future, a future of philology.<sup>23</sup>

#### ANTI-FOUNDATIONALIST PHILOLOGY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CRITIQUE

However, any such return to philology, while reclaiming tried and tested practices and habits of mind from a revered past, will need to continually submit these latter to critical scrutiny, to be ready to revise them or even eliminate them when they no longer measure up. A hugely debilitating consequence of the synonymy of philology and biblical study for so much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular has been the evolution of philology not only as "mere 'study of words,'" and thus absent an interest in the verbal art those words enact, but as empirical practice exempt from the need to theorize and motivate.<sup>24</sup> In fact,

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<sup>22</sup> Johann G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1803 [1780–1783]); partial translation into English as *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament*, trans. G. T. Gallop (London, 1888)—this is the first such introduction to the field of its kind. For Eichhorn's influence on Friedrich A. Wolf, see Anthony Grafton's introduction in *Prolegomena to Homer (1795)*, ed. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and James E. G. Zetzel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 18–26; cf. Turner, *Philology*, 118. It has become something of a commonplace to date the modern (re)birth of philology to a very specific time and place, 8 April 1777, when Friedrich A. Wolf matriculated as *studiosus philologiae* at Göttingen University (e.g., Holquist, "Place of Philology," 271; G. Crane, "Rediscovering Philology" [2013], <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19omKQJxOV51mJyka8q5quZJvXs02FKsU72OR17cIJZQ/edit>; Pollock, "Philology and Freedom," 5). Still, Eichhorn's early influence on Wolf should suffice to recall the place of biblical philology in philology's modern lineage, though this has been far less appreciated than the contributions of classical and comparative philologists, in part because biblicists simply have not written much about these matters (given the field's deep antipathy for metareflection generally) and in part because of how the discipline emerged in the modern academy, becoming ever more isolated (especially in North America) in schools of theology, divinity schools, and seminaries, and thus effectively cut off from productive intellectual intercourse with other philologically oriented disciplines (e.g., classics, comparative literature, Medieval studies). There is a pronounced transhistorical trajectory to much recent philological thinking (perhaps best expressed in the founding of the new, nonarea specific journal, *Philological Encounters*), and in my view biblical philologists need to reinsert themselves into this broader discussion about philology. My own leveraging of philological ideas and thinking across the humanities is intended to gesture toward this, to show both how we Bible types can benefit from the rich thinking of other humanists and what we can contribute from our own angles of vision.

<sup>23</sup> Sheldon Pollock, "Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 931–61.

<sup>24</sup> For example, Margolis ("Biblical Philology," 7): "philological instruction means largely the teaching of a sum of technical devices." Similarly, Peter Szondi, writing originally in 1962 on "philological knowledge" (*philologische Erkenntnis*), observes that the neglect of hermeneutical problems in literary scholarship (inclusive of philology) "seems to result from its tendency to consider itself a 'science' (*Wissenschaft*) and to see its defining characteristic as the accumulation of (factual) knowledge (*Wissen*)" ("On Textual Understanding," in *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays*,



historically, philology's dominant strain was (and often still is) strongly positivistic and foundationalist in conceptualization—the very epitome of science during philology's Golden Age in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>25</sup> “This is the notion of philology,” observes Jonathan Culler, “as basic or foundational, a kind of first knowledge that serves as the precondition of any further literary criticism or historical and interpretive work.”<sup>26</sup> And it is a notion that Culler and many recent theorists of philology resist—indeed, such “an idea,” Culler continues, “philology itself, in principle as well as in practice, provides us with the tools for questioning.”<sup>27</sup> No way of knowing is given, beyond or above the need to situate

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trans. H. Mendelsohn [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986], 4—the German original of the title essay is “*Über philologische Erkenntnis*,” which is perhaps more accurately rendered into English as “On Philological Knowledge” (see Thomas Schestag, “Philology, Knowledge,” *Telos* 140 [2007]: 28–44, 28).

<sup>25</sup> In fact, philology led the way in the late eighteenth century in the founding of the very paradigm of the research university, see esp. Holquist, “Place of Philology,” 267–87; Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most, “History of Science and History of Philologies,” *Isis* 106 (2015): 378–90 (“philology not only counted as *a* science; it was *the* science, the model of the highest form of knowledge”). Margolis gives expression to the “scientific” orientation of biblical philology at the outset of the twentieth century: “philology is a science to be sure” (“Biblical Philology,” 7). This appeal to natural science is already present in Spinoza (see esp. Sheldon Pollock, “Philology in Three Dimensions,” *Postmedieval* 5 [2014]: 403), and thus deeply ingrained in the originary conceptualization of biblical philology. Studies like that of Daston and Most (“History”) or Ottmar Ette and Vera M. Kutzinski (“Literature as Knowledge for Living, Literary Studies as Science for Living,” *PMLA* 125 [2010]: 977–93) show that there is benefit to thinking philology through alongside the sciences (e.g., Daston and Most emphasize the “epistemic virtues” of “impartiality, certainty, and precision” shared by philology and science, “History”). However, the sciences (natural or otherwise) need not be staged positivistically and philology need not be glossed as science. Modern philology itself emerged initially at a point “prior to the divorce into natural sciences and humanities” (viz. Spinoza) and thus philology *qua* philology cannot really “take place in the name of *science*,” at least in English (Schestag, “Philology, Knowledge,” 31). Erich Auerbach similarly resists staging philology as science, remarking that though philology (here emphasizing the latter’s historical domain) is not without “an exact side” it is “more comparable to an art than a modern science”—it “should be termed learned rather than scientific” (“Introduction: Purpose and Method,” in *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. R. Manhrim [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965], 8).

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Culler, “Anti-Foundational Philology,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 27 (1990): 50. Curiously, this is precisely the variety of philology that Paul de Man appeals to in his (in)famous essay, “The Return to Philology,” in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University Press of Minnesota, 1986), 21–26, esp. 25; cf. Geoffrey G. Harpham, “Roots, Races, and the Return to Philology,” *Representations* 106 (2009): 36.

<sup>27</sup> Culler, “Anti-Foundational Philology,” 52; cf. Hamacher, “95 Theses,” 38: “Philology is already, in its first impulse, philology of philology. It distances itself from the myths of philological praxis, does not tolerate any trans-historical constants” (thesis no. 75); Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 10–11; Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” 14; Gurd, “Introduction,” 8. For other examples of nonfoundational conceptions of philology, see esp. Barbara Johnson, “Philology: What Is at Stake,” in *On Philology*, ed. Jan Ziolkowski (University Press Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 26–30; Lee Patterson, “The Return to Philology,” in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. John H. Van Engen (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1994), 231–

itself historically, culturally, theoretically—“to bring unconscious activity to the level of consciousness,” as August Boeckh remonstrates in his *Encyclopaedie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften*.<sup>28</sup> My citation here of Boeckh, one of the giants of nineteenth-century classical philology, means to make clear that there have also always been moments and voices within philology’s long history of practice that were less stridently foundationalist, more heuristic, fallibilistic, aware of the inevitability of interpretation and imagination at the heart of empiricism—Schleiermacher after all was one of Boeckh’s teachers. That is, not only does philology by dint of its long habituated practices and sensibilities have within it the means for interrogating its organizing conceptualizations but also within its history there have been examples of practitioners who have done just this. Friedrich Nietzsche heads a long list of more theoretically hospitable and nimble philologists—indeed, he sees philology very much as a style of hermeneutics:

the art of reading with profit—the capacity of absorbing facts *without* interpreting them falsely, and *without* losing caution, patience and subtlety in the effort to understand them ... whether one be dealing with books, with newspaper reports, with the most fateful events or with weather statistics—not to mention the “salvation of the soul.”<sup>29</sup>

And Pollock’s “future philology” is an avowedly “critical—or hermeneutical or reflexive—philology,” a mode of thinking able “to produce not just theoretically informed intellectual practices but practices that are themselves capable of generating new higher-order generalizations.”<sup>30</sup> This last bit needs underscoring. In

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44; Said, “Return to Philology”; Pollock, “Future Philology”; Warren, “Relating Philology,” 283–88; J. McGann, “Philology in a New Key,” *Critical Inquiry* 39 (2013): 327–46.

<sup>28</sup> August Boeckh, *Encyclopaedie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877). Partial translation as *On Interpretation and Criticism*, trans. J. P. Pritchard (Norman: University Press of Oklahoma, 1968), 44.

<sup>29</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, trans. H. L. Mencken (New York: Knopf, 1918 [1895]), 148 (from section 52 where Nietzsche is critiquing a certain strongly pietistic form of Christianity, and especially tweaking theologians in their “*unfitness*” for the form of philology he here describes [esp. the last bit in quotes—“salvation of the soul”—which is a not so subtle jab at the biblical philology of Nietzsche’s day]; Erasmus similarly critiques the theologians of his own day but from the perspective of an avowedly humanistic form of Christianity, see “The *Paraclesis*,” in *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*, ed. John C. Olin, 3rd ed. [New York: Fordham University Press, 1987], 97–108). James I. Porter notes well the Nietzschean horizon of Erich Auerbach’s “world philology,” which he glosses as performing “engaged intellectual work” and thinking “about the implications of literature and ideas for cultures, individuals, and for life itself” (“Erich Auerbach’s Earthly (Counter-) Philology,” *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* 2 [2013]: 246; cf. 257). Also see Porter’s broader study of Nietzsche, *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Pollock, “Future Philology,” 948; cf. Pollock, “Liberating Philology,” 20.

theorizing biblical philology my ambition is not solely to motivate and resource good practice—though that is sorely needed and a good end in view—but to situate biblical philology itself as well as a mode of “immanent critique,” a critique “based on” slow, patient, empathetic “reading,” on an “insistence on the rigorous consideration of the documentary, textual, or linguistic bases for higher-order claims.”<sup>31</sup> A signal example of such critique is John Hamilton’s recent *Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care* in which he harnesses philology’s insistence on considering language and texts “within particular historical, linguistic, and cultural contexts” and its Nietzschean program of slow and patient reading that is never quite finalizable to submit the term “security” to a series of episodic philological incursions as a means

for holding determinations at bay, for perpetuating community and its constitutive communication, not by fixing [this] word’s properties conceptually, with sovereign authority, disciplinary control, or tired complacency, but rather by pursuing its transit through time and across cultures and thereby allowing it to be translated, over and over again, on the basis of its very untranslatability.<sup>32</sup>

The result is a stunning intervention into current intellectual debates about security. It also invites readers to extend such philology of care to other domains, textual and worldly. Biblical philologists through our custody and care for a still highly influential cultural text, the Bible, the manner(s) in which we exercise these custodial privileges and responsibilities, and the intellectual entailments that may derive from either (or both) have good warrants to enter similarly into contemporary intellectual conversations, and perhaps even the ethical obligation to do so (see below).<sup>33</sup> Philology, then, is well disposed toward critique and the generation of ideas, whether in its traditional capacity as helpmate or ally to other modalities of intellection (e.g., philosophy, theology) or in its own right as a set of practices and theories that are consequential for how, why, and what is thought.

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<sup>31</sup> The language here is Gurd’s (“Introduction,” 15).

<sup>32</sup> John Hamilton, *Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 19–36, 24, 34. Cf. Jeffrey Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare’s Time* (Philadelphia: University Press of Pennsylvania, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> Epistemology matters, of course, for what is thought. For example, Markus Messling notes well how the essentialism at the heart of much nineteenth-century European philology contributed to the formation of racist thinking: “The contribution of philology to modern racism can be very precisely and in large part located in the fact that it essentialized (supposed) cultural characteristics in a way that then enabled them to enter into organicist theories. Philology thus provided racist theory with the argument that thought is determined by its forms” (“Philology and Racism: On Historicity in the Sciences of Language and Text,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 2012 [67th Year]: 163).

## ORIGINAL LANGUAGE STUDY AND COMPARISON

Phenomenologically, biblical poetry is an art of language, a literal making out of words (Valéry), and philology (the hyper-literal “love of words”)<sup>34</sup> is, as Edward Said has argued most eloquently in his own belated “Return to Philology,” our principal disciplinary means for fixing and thus accessing poems (and other verbal artifacts) through their words and worlds. Words, like the very rare verb *rāḥaš* in the line from Ps 45:2, *rāḥaš libbī dābār ṭōb*, must mean something, but as languages are limited to what they are and do and where they come from it cannot mean just anything.<sup>35</sup> Philology through its various practices of knowing is precisely the only means available to us for locating a text and its words in time and for coming to know that text—philology as prototypically “the set of activities that concern themselves systematically with human language, and in particular with works of art composed in language.”<sup>36</sup> In the case of *rāḥaš* in Ps 45:2, all the versions appear befuddled and resort to that foundational practice of philology, comparison.<sup>37</sup> In this case, the comparison is made with the immediately following lines in the psalm’s opening triplet, which NRSV glosses, “I address my verses to the king; / my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.” These lines foreground vocality, an act of speaking. Hence LXX’s ἐξηρεύξατο lit. “to vomit” boiled honey, or “to break out” in tumors, and also said of “rivers emptying themselves,” here presumably used metaphorically of speech production.<sup>38</sup> LXX is followed closely by Vg.’s *eructo* “to belch, vomit forth, throw up” and by Syr., which uses the Afel of *nba* “to pour forth, eject, utter” (cf. Ps 119:171; 145:7). Tg. uses the verb *b’a* “to ask, seek, desire, search for, require,” perhaps intuiting

<sup>34</sup> See esp. Hamacher’s emphasis on *philia* as “affection for, friendship with, inclination to” *logos* (“95 Theses,” 26), an aesthetic bent I return to below.

<sup>35</sup> The only other possible occurrence of the verbal root in the Bible is *yaḥārīs*, presumably a Hiphil, in the difficult Zeph 3:17 (cf. J. J. M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, OTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991], 220, n. 4—“he will bring to silence,” and hence, “soothe in his love”). Cf. also *marḥešet* “pan” (Lev 2:7; 7:9; NRSV).

<sup>36</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Introduction aux études de philologie romane* (Vittorio Klostermann, 1949), 9 (as translated in Suzanne Fleischman, “Medieval Vernaculars and the Myth of Monoglossia: A Conspiracy of Linguistics and Philology,” in *Literary History and the Challenge of Philology: The Legacy of Erich Auerbach*, ed. Seth Lerer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 92); cf. Boeckh, *On Interpretation*, 48. Original language work features prominently in most philological projects, e.g., Margolis, “Biblical Philology,” 11–14; Fleischman, “Medieval Vernaculars,” 92–104; Frank, “Unbearable Lightness,” 492, 499; Holquist, “Forgetting our Name,” 1977; Hamacher, “95 Theses,” 25, 28, 33; Mikhail L. Gasparov, “The Ethics of Philology,” in Mikhail L. Gasparov and Michael Wachtel, “On Bakhtin, Philosophy, and Philology: Two Essays,” *PMLA* 130 (2015): 137, 138; Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” 10.

<sup>37</sup> Turner, *Philology*, x; cf. Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” 14–15.

<sup>38</sup> So LS 591; see Ps 119:171, where the *hiphil* of *nb* is used of lips pouring forth praise, cf. Ps 145:7.

a state in preparation for vocal performance, that is, “my heart seeks, desires, searches for a good word.”

Another of philology’s prototypical acts of comparison involves situating the language of a text within the larger understanding of that language as well as other related languages.<sup>39</sup> In the case of a rare verb like *rāḥaš* reference to cognate languages is mandatory. The verb *rḥeš* is well attested in Syriac and other Aramaic dialects (esp. JBA) as a verb of motion, meaning “to creep, move slowly, deliberately; to start to grow.” It is most often used of the movement of vermin, insects, reptiles—literally “creeping things.”<sup>40</sup> But the verb is also used of the movement of the *napšā*’ or *rūhā*’ in the body or the lack of feeling (lit. “movement”) in the benumbed fingers of a hand, and in JBA (in Pael) and other late Jewish Aramaic dialects (Tg. Lam 1:18, in Peal),<sup>41</sup> of the specific movement of the lips when speaking. This suggests that the psalmist may have in mind the movement of mind (“thought”)<sup>42</sup> required by the production of (poetic) speech, which in a primar(il)y oral culture like that of ancient Israel or Judah would have also been explicitly vocal (with lips moving)—hence the image of literal internal eruption, belching or spewing forth of words in the versions is perhaps not far off after all. Note also KJB’s “inditing”—“to put into words” (*OED*, meaning 3aβ) or the Geneva Bible’s “Mine heart will vtter forth.”<sup>43</sup>

#### THE CLAIMS OF HISTORY

The “heart” in ancient Israelite anthropology was one site of intellection<sup>44</sup> and the literal “good word” in view here in Ps 45 may not have the “boxed-off” and “isolated” shape of the individual, spatialized “word” that the “old Hebrew” script’s use of word division will make possible, but rather the uttered, protean “word” of oral performance (e.g., Jer 33:14; Isa 1:10; Amos 4:1; 5:1; Ps 103:20; *Silm* 1.1;

<sup>39</sup> Esp. Hamacher, “95 Theses,” 25; cf. Margolis, “Biblical Philology,” 12–13. Colleagues in comparative literature, in particular, in recent years have been doing lots of (re)thinking about what constitutes comparison, see esp. Rita Felski and Susan S. Friedman, *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Thomas Claviez, et al., “What Does the Comparative Do?,” *PMLA* 128.3 (2013): 608–97.

<sup>40</sup> Syr. *raḥšā*’ and Tg. *rḥiš* are used to translate MT’s *remeš* in Gen 1:24 and LXX’s ἐξερύξεται is used to translate BH *šāraš* “to swarm” in Exod 7:28.

<sup>41</sup> Jastrow, s. v. “שׁוּחַ, שׁוּחַ”; Jastrow also reports the *qal* and *hiphil* are used for the same in Mishnaic Hebrew (1469–70).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Midr. Till. on Ps 45:2 (which opposes the idea to literal “speech”).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, Word Bible Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 339 (“the creative process was an oral one”).

<sup>44</sup> BDB, s. v. “לֵב 3.” Cf. Robert North, “Brain and Nerve in the Biblical Outlook,” *Biblica* 74 (1993): 592–97. The heart is also a site of emotion in biblical anthropology, see Mark S. Smith, “The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expression: Notes from Anthropology and Psychobiology,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 427–36, esp. 429.

cf. Ps 78:1–4), which may easily encompass the verbiage of the whole poem—Buber’s “guten Rede” may not be far off.<sup>45</sup> The spokenness of the performance is made explicit in the language of the succeeding two lines, *’ōmēr ’ānī* “I speak” and *lēšōnī* “my tongue.” The image in the opening line of the psalm, then, is likely that of the active movement of language production implicit in oral performance—a human mind actively and vocally producing good poetry. These latter intimations, viz. the cultural significance of certain figures of speech, the place of orality and writing in a culture, move beyond (just) the meaning of words into the world those words presume, and in doing so exhibit yet another of philology’s founding dispositions, its hyper awareness of the claims of history in any act of knowing, the need, as Lowth reminds us with regard to biblical poetry in particular, to strive (as best we can) to “see all things with their eyes, estimate all things by their opinions; we must endeavour as much as possible to read Hebrew as the Hebrews would have read it.”<sup>46</sup> Such “historical perspectivism” also animates E. Auerbach’s Vician brand of philology some two hundred years later: the conviction “that a man’s work stems from his existence and that consequently everything we can find out about his life serves to interpret the work.”<sup>47</sup> It is also the case

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. NJV: “gracious words”; Robert Alter: “goodly word” (*The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* [New York: Norton, 2009], 158).

<sup>46</sup> Lowth, *Lectures*, 1:113; cf. Pollock, “Future Philology,” 954: “Here what has primacy is ‘seeing things their way’”; Said, “Return to Philology,” 62. This is what Margolis refers to as “*interpretatio rerum*” (“Biblical Philology,” 25)—“placing a literary production in its proper *milieu*” (26). Indeed, the very emergence of modern philology, as Mikhail L. Gasparov notes, “began when people started to feel the historical distance between themselves and the ancient world” (“Ethics of Philology,” 136).

<sup>47</sup> Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public*, 12. For other expressions of the historicism that stands at the center of Auerbach’s philology, see especially “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” *The Centennial Review* 13 (1969): 1–17 (trans. M and E. Said) and “Vico and Aesthetic Historicism” in *Time, History, and Literature: Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach*, ed. James I. Porter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 36. For Vico’s *New Science*, see Giambattista Vico, *New Science: Principles of the New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations*, trans. D. Marsh (London: Penguin Books, 1999). Such historical knowledge, of course, includes knowledge about the culture beyond that which is inscribed in texts and language: “the wealth of events in human life which unfold in earthly time constitutes a totality, a coherent development or meaningful whole, in which each individual event is embedded in a variety of ways and through which it can be interpreted” (E. Auerbach, “Vico and Herder,” in *Time, History, and Literature*, 11; cf. Herbert Grabes, “Philology and the Cultural Turn,” in *Changing Philologies*, ed. Hans Lauge Hansen [Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2002], 51–62; Porter, “Earthly [Counter-] Philology,” 243–65). In fact, on Porter’s reading of Auerbach (a Jew) the incarnational center of Christian thought is in part responsible for the earthly, this-worldly, historical thrust of Auerbach’s philology (Troeltsch was one of his teachers; see Porter, “Earthly (Counter-) Philology,” esp. 247–54). It is worth stressing that access to the earthly, material world of texts from antiquity assumes a robust engagement with archeology as an important coefficient in any recovery of the historical past (e.g., Daniel Pioske, *David’s Jerusalem: Between Memory and History* [New York: Routledge, 2015], esp. 42–52). Indeed, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Albrightian school of (American) biblical philology is precisely the prizing of the archaeological for philological knowledge.

that philology's habitual scrutiny of words in their worlds exposes those worlds to further elucidation. So Raimo Anttila distinguishes philology precisely as the study of "language"—in "written documents"—that "serves as a means toward the understanding of a particular culture"; "language as used by a people or an individual in a given historical environment, the ultimate goal being the understanding of the human aspects."<sup>48</sup> This is to emphasize philology's indispensability for historical knowledge, that however contested and uncertain this knowledge may be philologists are actively engaged in historical reconstructive work through the generation of historical knowledge by way of their findings. In the striking image of the Russian philologist Mikhail L. Gasparov, as that which "teaches us to set the binoculars of our knowledge at the necessary [historical] distance."<sup>49</sup> Indeed, as Pollock emphasizes, "only once we have acquired the means, through the cultivation of philology, to access the textuality of the past can we proceed to dispute the value of knowing it."<sup>50</sup> An aspiration "to recover the past," thus, is a "fundamental criteria" of philological practice and technique.<sup>51</sup>

#### (EMERGENT) TEXTUALITY

A final, long habituated preoccupation of textual philology is textuality itself—a "relentless focus on text as text."<sup>52</sup> Pollock's working definition of philology, "the discipline of making sense of texts," presumes a "theory of textuality,"<sup>53</sup> which in Bible has been cashed out mostly within the domain of "textual criticism."<sup>54</sup> In fact, there was a time when biblical scholars were very much at the forefront of editorial theory. Erasmus's originary critical edition of the Greek New Testament, the *Novum Instrumentum* of 1516, launched the modern enterprise of textual criticism.<sup>55</sup> That time, however, has passed, especially as it regards the

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<sup>48</sup> Raimo Anttila, *Historical and Comparative Linguistics* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989), 323.

<sup>49</sup> Gasparov, "Ethics of Philology," 137.

<sup>50</sup> Pollock, "Future Philology," 950.

<sup>51</sup> Gurd, "Introduction," 4.

<sup>52</sup> For the latter phrase, see Frank, "Unbearable Lightness," 491; cf. Gurd, "Introduction," 7.

<sup>53</sup> Pollock, "Future Philology," 934; see also Pollock's further elaboration on what textuality consists in in "Philology and Freedom": "Texts, their history, their mode of existence, their very textuality, to say nothing of their content and, above all, as *primum movens*, the language itself in which they are composed" (16).

<sup>54</sup> E.g., Margolis, "Biblical Philology," 19–24. For readable contemporary overviews of textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, see P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum* (Basel: J. Froben, 1516). The name was changed to *Novum Testamentum* with the second edition (1519), <http://www.archive.org/stream/novumtestamentum00eras#page/n0/mode/2up>. There were five lifetime editions in total (1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, 1535). Without a critical apparatus (introduced by Robert Estienne [known as Stephanus] in his own



study of the texts of the Hebrew Bible, in no small part, I suspect, because currently there are no extant manuscripts of these traditional texts prior to the Hellenistic period, and most practicing Bible scholars use the diplomatic edition of the Leningrad Codex (B19a), a medieval manuscript, as presented in *BHS* (and now *BHQ*). As a practical consequence, textuality is rarely made an issue in many acts of biblical interpretation. Not surprisingly, then, the so-called “new philology” of the 1990s, especially prominent in Medieval Studies,<sup>56</sup> with its clarion call to rethink and reengage the material realia of extant textuality,<sup>57</sup> made almost no impact on the study of the Hebrew Bible. And even when scholars scrutinize MT text critically (chiefly when there are obvious textual problems),<sup>58</sup> comparing it to the textual remains from Qumran, if there are any, and to the Hebrew *Vorlagen* reconstructed for the various versions (e.g., Tg., Syr., LXX, Vg.), this is done by necessity at some remove from the biblical text’s presumed point of origin and as often as not absent any robust engagement with editorial theory itself.<sup>59</sup> As E. Tov well emphasizes, textual criticism as traditionally practiced in Bible can at best only point toward a textuality immediately prior to our earliest witnesses—the so-called *Urtext*. It cannot get us back to any putative text of origin. And indeed it is quickly becoming apparent that even the working concept of an *Urtext* (with its attendant notions of singularity, writerly orientation, stable authorial archetype, orderly descent of manuscripts, and the like), itself mostly a construct of high literacy, needs radical rethinking in light of the predominantly oral and aural world of the pre-Hellenistic Levant. In fact, most of the poetic verbal art preserved *in writing* in the Bible still bears the deep impress of this pervasive orality, appears, that is, as Michael O’Connor has observed, “comparably close to the oral

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third edition of the Greek New Testament of 1850), Erasmus unravels his text critical observations (e.g., identification of variants, supporting rationale) discursively in a series of “annotations” (which comprised 783 large folio pages by his last edition), where, for example, he gives early expression to still leading text critical rules of thumb, such as *lectio difficilior* and the preference for the variant that best explains all the variants. From a philological perspective, it also is interesting to note that Erasmus’s project was inspired by his discovery in 1504 (near Louvain) of a manuscript of Lorenzo Valla’s *Collatio Novi Testamenti* (from 1453–1457; a series of philological notes on the New Testament), an edition of which he (Erasmus) published in 1505 (see Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity* [Toronto: University Press of Toronto, 2013], 55–59).

<sup>56</sup> See esp. the special issue of *Speculum* (65 [1990]: 1–108) dedicated to “The New Philology” (and for an assessment of the impact of the “New Philology,” see Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Reflections on *The New Philology*,” in *Rethinking The New Medievalism*, ed. R. Howard Bloch et al [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2014], 39–50).

<sup>57</sup> Esp. Stephne G. Nichols, “Philology in a Manuscript Culture,” *Speculum* 65 (1990): 1–10.

<sup>58</sup> So, typically Margolis, viz. “when our exegetical skill is taxed to the utmost and we are (actually or seemingly) confronted by non-sense” (“Biblical Philology,” 19).

<sup>59</sup> On the theoretical motivation of all editorial work, see Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. B. Wing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 13–32. Cerquiglini’s French original was published a decade earlier (1989) and served as an important stimulus for the 1990 *Speculum* issue dedicated to “The New Philology.”



poetic situation.”<sup>60</sup> And the kinds of textuality that can be sighted (and in part traced) are nascent and emergent, formed at the interface with orality and therefore not yet anything like the high literary textuality presumed of our post-Gutenberg world. This new (and not so new) understanding of biblical culture challenges the informing literate bias built into many of our field’s most cherished paradigms of criticism, “perhaps,” as Walter J. Ong stresses, “more than any other field of learning”<sup>61</sup>—Ong’s critique here appears to have been little noticed by biblical scholars.

Even without specifying a more precise chronological horizon for Ps 45 beyond the the *terminus ante quem* provided by the psalm’s belated inscription at Qumran (4QPs<sup>c</sup>, 50–68 CE; 11QPs<sup>d</sup>, mid-first century CE), for example, aspects of this different textuality are readily apparent. The “new” Jewish script at Qumran, like the “old” Hebrew script known from epigraphic remains of the first half of the first millennium, was consonantal, with word division (old Hebrew: word dividers; Qumran: spacing) and an incipient use of *matres lectionis* as the only deference made to would-be readers. That is, this is a manner of writing that requires active vocalization and interpretation in order to render the spoken language and perform the psalm. For example, every written lexeme requires on the part of a reader literal vocalization—providing the appropriate vowels—in order for the graphic symbols on a leather scroll (in these instances) to be translated into a Hebrew word—to turn *hmlk* (11QPs<sup>d</sup> 8.1) into a linguistically meaningful word, *hammelek* (<\*-*malk*-) “the king” (Ps 45:6) and not, for example, *homlak* “to be made a king” (Dan 9:1). The advent of *matres lectionis* begins to provide some minimal readerly cues for vocalization. So, there is *myšwr* with the *waw* written in super-linearly in 11QPs<sup>d</sup> (8.2) for MT’s more defective *mīšōr* (“uprightness, equity”) without the *waw* (Ps 45:7) and distinct, for example, from *mēyūššār* (Pual Ptc. ms abs of *y-š-r* “to be straight,” 1 Kgs 6:35). Word division spatially isolates the consonantal components of a grammatical word (group), but otherwise the running format that prevails in 11QPs<sup>d</sup>, for example—and would have likely prevailed for writing Hebrew poetry in all pre-Hellenistic manuscripts, whether in the “old Hebrew” script or the Aramaic script used after the fall of Jerusalem (cf. *KA* 4.2; *KAI* 269; *TAD* C1.1.6)—is virtually devoid of any other kind of punctuation or meta-script convention as an aid in navigating the larger discourse structures of the psalm, for example, line, stanza or poem boundaries. The advent at Qumran of the use of extra spacing for the delineation of lineal

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<sup>60</sup> Michael O’Connor, “Parallelism,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and Terry V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 878. For my own elaboration on O’Connor’s insight, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “An Informing Orality: Biblical Poetic Style,” in *On Biblical Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 233–325.

<sup>61</sup> Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), 173.

units, for example as in some of the psalms preserved in 4QPs<sup>c</sup>, which are written with two poetic lines (or cola) per columnar line separated by spacing (e.g. II, 16.25=Ps 50:19), is a huge boon for readers. Lines of biblical verse, engineered (initially) to accommodate human memory constraints and vocal capacities, routinely uncoil in clausal or sentential wholes, and therefore to signify these junctures textually, graphically is to provide information about verse units and syntactic rhythms and structures that in a running format could only be supplied by active oralization from a reader already familiar with the aural patterns of the poem and prepared to interpret them for a listening audience. Extra spacing is also used (sometimes) in 4QPs<sup>c</sup> (e.g., end of II, 16.29=Ps 50:23) to indicate psalm boundaries. Yet even such special formatting remains relatively spare (and inconsistent)<sup>62</sup> in the information conveyed ocularly, far from that required for the autoreferentiality characteristic of fully written and literate poetic discourse.

The requirement of active vocalization demanded by the very writtleness of biblical poems—a writing that stubbornly requires extra-textual investment, input from outside the text, to make sense of what is written in the text—resolves a crucial dimension of the orality that informs so much biblical poetry. The very vocality of these poems' writtleness helps us to see that the “informing orality” of biblical poetry is not only the trace of something in the past, bits of performative contexts that have migrated into a written residue, though to be sure it is this, too; but such signs of orality also point ineluctably to the ongoing relevance of oral semiotics even for the written versions of the poetic texts that have survived in the Bible. That is, the informing orality of biblical poetry is there both because it is a poetry, and thus a style, that emerges out of a primar(ily) oral environment and because oral tradition (with all that this phrase connotes) remains vital to the production and successful vocal and aural reception of this poetry, even once exteXted (such as at Qumran).<sup>63</sup>

The large point to be underscored here, then, is that whatever interest there may be in an object of verbal art (like Ps 45), literary and otherwise, that interest must be prepared to countenance the linguistic and textual medium of the object, its very materiality, which at every turn is enmeshed in history, as is our own coming to know such an object, our learning to read it. Texts (from the past and otherwise) are hopelessly embedded in a multitudinous web of sociocultural-historical forces which constitute and are constituted by a particular historical epoch; they are a “nexus of various concrete social determinations.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Not all the psalms in 4QPs<sup>c</sup> seem to be specially formatted (Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 34; Patrick W. Skehan, Eugene Ulrich, and Peter W. Flint, “Psalms,” in *Qumran Cave 4. XI. Psalms to Chronicles*, ed. Emanuel Tov, et al., 7–170, DJD XVI [Oxford: Clarendon, 2000], 50–51), for example, lineation in I., 12.4=Ps 45:10, which follows LXX, Masoretic pointing; I, 14.22–23(=Ps 49:10) seems unformatted.

<sup>63</sup> In detail, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 298–325.

<sup>64</sup> Jerome McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and*

Consequently, any interpretation of such a socially determined text is “in need of as detailed a historical contextualization as possible.”<sup>65</sup> Philology, especially in its textual-linguistic modality, is our principal means for effecting such thick, detailed historical contextualizations. Hence Said’s (belated) idea of the philological as “a detailed, patient scrutiny of and a lifelong attentiveness to the words and rhetorics by which language is used by human beings who exist in history.”<sup>66</sup> Indeed, even Paul de Man, in his own return to philology at his life’s end, recognized the inability to confound the messy materiality of verbal art, to pass straight through to the literary heart of the matter, as it were, meaning somehow magically untrammelled by medium and mediation.<sup>67</sup> And this, too, in the name of (high) theory: “the turn to theory occurred as a return to philology, to an examination of the structure of language prior to the meaning it produces.”<sup>68</sup> Literary criticism, however high its theoretical inflection, at bottom requires reading, a “prominent” and inescapably “philological activity.”<sup>69</sup>

#### THE ETHICS OF PHILOLOGY

But beyond the impress of history and the philological modes of knowing that history both sponsors and requires, G. Spivak reminds us that philology also has strong ethical warrants. For if we are to recognize the trace of the other manifested in a biblical poem, for example, to catch a glimpse of a “literarity and textuality and sensuality” of verbal art that is not our own, “it is crucial to learn” that other’s language (and culture and history—indeed, everything we can about the other), to “surrender” to the “linguistic rhetoricity of the original text” and to “be able to discriminate on the terrain of the original” (all this a pastiche of Spivak’s

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*Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>65</sup> Lee Patterson, “Introduction: Critical Historicism and Medieval Studies,” in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530*, ed. Lee Patterson (Berkeley: University Press of California, 1990), 4; cf. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Rethinking Historical Criticism,” *Biblical Interpretation* 7 (1999): 241–42.

<sup>66</sup> Said, “Return to Philology,” 61.

<sup>67</sup> de Man, “Return to Philology,” 21–26.

<sup>68</sup> de Man, “Return to Philology,” 24; cf. 25: “Literary theory raises the unavoidable question whether aesthetic values can be compatible with the linguistic structures that make up the entities from which these values are derived.” Plainly, de Man glosses philology chiefly with an emphasis on its textual-linguistic modality (“the philological or rhetorical devices of language”), cf. Jan M. Ziolkowski, “Metaphilology,” *Journal of English and German Philology* 104 (2005): 240–43, esp. 242. For a similarly generous reading of de Man’s “return to philology,” see Patterson, “Return to Philology,” esp. 235–37.

<sup>69</sup> Boeckh, *On Interpretation and Criticism*, 14. This is de Man’s “mere reading” (“Return to Philology,” 24), which as Patterson emphasizes (“Return to Philology,” 236) is not opposed to theory but is “its central, constitutive element.”

language).<sup>70</sup> Ethical intercourse requires philological rigor and intimacy. It is perhaps of chief interest for biblicists that Spivak makes these points in an essay on translation since the Bible has been received mostly in translation. For Spivak translation is the most intimate act of close reading and with it comes an unbreachable responsibility to the other. Speed reading is eschewed in favor of a Nietzschean program of “slow” and “close” reading that “teaches to read well . . . , to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers.”<sup>71</sup> Such a pose is the antithesis of the “dry as dust” caricature of philology. Getting words in their worlds as right as we can philologically is ultimately in deference to the other whose words they were (and are) in the first place.<sup>72</sup> That the Bible has factored prominently in the history of philology should not be of surprise. Given the Bible’s scriptural heritage, it too often has been wielded—mostly in translation in the West—to deleterious and even dehumanizing ends. Spinoza’s advocacy of a democratic polity in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) specifically leverages his idea of an immanent biblical philology that above all insisted on close attention being paid to “the nature and properties of the language in which the biblical books were composed.”<sup>73</sup> In this way Spinoza meant both to deconstruct the ideological hold of church and synagogue on biblical interpretation in the name of a supernatural deity (in translation) and to construct an alternative political vision for the future. At the heart of Spinoza’s project, Pollock sums, “is the conviction that good reading makes good polity: that, in this particular case, learning a philological method for reading the Bible can transform relations of knowledge and power in the commonwealth and produce an egalitarian and just republic.”<sup>74</sup> If respect for the other morally compels us to strive philologically for a just estimation of the past (and its products) on its own terms, then the salvific benefits which can devolve to us in the present when we undertake such strivings should appeal to our more preservative and existential instincts.<sup>75</sup> As Boeckh emphasized from a slightly later period than Spinoza, “the past can still instruct us”; indeed, “the ideas of the past can and must be employed with vital reference to, and exert a purifying effect

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<sup>70</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, “The Politics of Translation,” in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 179–200, 189, 192. Cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Rethinking Historical Criticism,” 265–68.

<sup>71</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter; trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Johnson, “Philology,” 26–30, esp. 29 (“What is at stake, then, is . . . how to read . . . in order to encounter the other”).

<sup>73</sup> Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, 100. For a listing of the main components of Spinoza’s philological method of good reading, which is “nothing less than the basic methodology of modern philology,” see Pollock, “Philology in Three Dimensions,” 402–3.

<sup>74</sup> Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” 18.

<sup>75</sup> Dobbs-Allsopp, “Rethinking Historical Criticism,” 268–69.

upon, the present.”<sup>76</sup> In recognizing the difference of the past, and indeed cultivating it through the philological, we make palpable for ourselves the lived experience of “historical multiplicity” and human contingency, and thus construct a place from which to measure and critique the present in an effort to shape a more humane future—a future, that is, in which we might accept our historical fate “with more equanimity so that we will not hate whoever opposes us—even when we are forced into a posture of antagonism.”<sup>77</sup> This is Auerbach, for whom “humanism” was “the true purpose of philology.”<sup>78</sup>

#### THE POLITICAL

It is perhaps not surprising that the likes of Auerbach, who was displaced by Nazism, Gasparov, whose life and work emerged (initially) under the press of Soviet tyranny, and Said and Spivak, for whom the unmasking and unmaking of the colonial was and is always in view, would insist on thinking philology through the ethical—philology for the other. And no doubt many of philology’s leading practices, sensibilities, and values do dispose philology toward the ethical. But this is not inevitable. There are no guarantees. Good practice need not lead to good polity. And good ideas may always be wielded to hurtful ends. The history of philology is itself littered with what can only be described as ugly and evil—here I have in mind especially the latent and not so latent—and at times even blatant—racism that so often attended philological practice and thinking during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>79</sup> The goods of philology ultimately require active

<sup>76</sup> Boeckh, *On Interpretation ad Criticism*, 25, 24.

<sup>77</sup> Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” 1–17, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” 4. Gasparov closes his short essay, “The Ethics of Philology” with a very similar thought: “Philology studies the egocentrism of other cultures and thus forces us not to give in to our own egocentrism, not to delude ourselves into thinking that cultures of the past were created for us but to think about how we ourselves should be creating a new culture” (Gasparov and Wachtel, “On Bakhtin, Philosophy, and Philology,” 138). Cf. Patterson, “Return to Philology,” 240; Dobbs-Allsopp, “Rethinking Historical Criticism,” 269–71; Said, “Return to Philology,” 57–84; Markus Messling, “Disziplinäres (Über-) Lebenswissen: Zum Sinn einer kritischen Geschichte der Philologie,” *Lendemains. Études comparées sur la France* 129 (2008): 102–10; Warren, “Relating Philology,” 283–88. There are other avenues open to philology and philologists for confronting the past and appreciating the plurality that such confrontations reveal, especially in disciplines like ours where the textuality under scrutiny also has a long history of reception. Pollock calls this the “second dimension” (or “plane”) of his “future philology”—the dimension inhabited by the “long generations” of a text’s “previous readers” (Pollock, “Philology in Three Dimensions,” esp. 402–7).

<sup>79</sup> Some of this comes in for critique by Edward Said in his *Orientalism* (2nd ed. [New York: Vintage, 1994], 130–48) and in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* ([Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983], 268–89). (I note especially his comments on the French biblical scholar, Ernest Renan.) See also Maurice Olender, *Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Markus Messling and Ottmar Ette, eds., *Wort Macht Stamm: Rassismus und Determinismus in der Philologie* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2013);

cultivation and implementation by particular people (philologists) in particular situations if they are to be realized.<sup>80</sup> They will not devolve on their own or as a necessary consequence of “good” practice and “sound” method. That is, philology requires an active politics.<sup>81</sup> This begins for me, first, with resisting the very pull of political quietism that the pose of methodological neutrality and the aspiration towards (a certain) scientism that has haunted so many of philology’s modern inflections, including much (most) biblical philology, seem to authorize and, then, with elaborating the political impulses that (can) inhere in philological practice itself, such as a propensity for patience and tolerance and fallibilistic thinking that gets inculcated in philology’s habit of “reading in slow motion” and perseverance in the perpetual deferment of its work and findings—that “willingness” of philology “to defer interpretation,” as Lee Patterson notices, which “has always been one of the things that has most irritated its critics.”<sup>82</sup> In fact, given my own non-foundationalist and highly pragmatic epistemological orientation politics floods into my (biblical) philology from the outset even though it is not always possible, as Pollock reminds us, “to draw a perfectly straight-line between a philological method and a critical theory of culture and power.”<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, philology has political projects to achieve, one of which is the very cultivation of (in my case) a (biblical) philology awake to the ethical and the political that authorize, motivate, shape, and result from its practices, theories, and leading ideas.

#### BEING A PHILOLOGIST OTHERWISE

At its best and when actively cultivated and acted upon, philology can be liberating, “a way of life” that aims toward the Rortarian ideal of “the possibility of, or

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Harpham’s sobering review in “Roots, Races, and the Return to Philology” (here, too, biblicists come in for comment); Messling, “Philology and Racism,” 151–80; Messling, “Text and Determination: On Racism in Nineteenth Century European Philology,” *Philological Encounters* 1 (2016): 79–104. Stephanie H. Jed also reveals the gendered bias of much philology (*Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989], esp. ch. 1).

<sup>80</sup> The allusion is to Auerbach’s closing remark about his writing of *Mimesis* in “Epilegomena to *Mimesis*” (trans. Jan M. Ziolkowski; included as an appendix in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature Fiftieth anniversary Edition*, trans. W. R. Trask [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013], 559–74, 574): “*Mimesis* is quite consciously a book that a particular person, in a particular situation, wrote at the beginning of the 1940s.” Here, too, recall Said’s emphasis on an “active” and ideological invested notion of philology (“Return to Philology,” esp. 59, 70–83).

<sup>81</sup> E.g., Jed, “*Tum Brutus castigat lacrimarum*: The Cruelty of Brutus and the Politics of Philology,” in *Chaste Thinking*; Said, “Return to Philology,” esp. 70–83; Sheldon Pollock, “Towards a Political Philology: D. D. Kosambi and Sanskrit,” *Economical and Political Weekly* (July 26, 2008), 52–59; Hamilton, *Security*; cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Rethinking Historical Criticism,” 254–59.

<sup>82</sup> Patterson, “Return to Philology,” 236; cf. Szondi, “On Textual Understanding,” 5; Schestag, “Philology, Knowledge,” 43.

<sup>83</sup> Pollock, “Towards a Political Philology,” 52.

the obligation to construct, a planet-wide inclusivist community”<sup>84</sup> (i.e., a liberation philology). Philology also needs in turn, as Pollock stresses, to be liberated from itself and at times from its past (i.e., a “liberated philology”).<sup>85</sup> The caricature of the dry-as-dust philologist is easily conjured. Perhaps its most famous poetic rendering is by W. B. Yeats in his 1916 poem “The Scholars”:

BALD heads forgetful of their sins,  
 Old, learned, respectable bald heads  
 Edit and annotate the lines  
 That young men, tossing on their beds,  
 Rhymed out in love’s despair  
 To flatter beauty’s ignorant ear.

They’ll cough in the ink to the world’s end;  
 Wear out the carpet with their shoes  
 Earning respect; have no strange friend;  
 If they have sinned nobody knows:  
 Lord, what would they say  
 Should their Catullus walk that way!<sup>86</sup>

The portrait, though a hundred years old, remains strikingly familiar, so much so that many can fill out the image with ease from Yeats’s various cues, viz. “Old, learned, respectable bald heads” (l. 2), editing and annotating “lines” (l. 3), coughing in “ink” (l. 7), “earning respect” (l. 9), having no “friend,” “strange” or otherwise (l. 9). The *OED*’s main entry for “philologist” reads as follows: “A person devoted to learning or literature; a scholar, esp. of literature or classics. Now *rare*.” The editorial comment—“Now *rare*”—refers to contemporary usage of the term, but may be *misread* just as productively as noting the scarcity nowadays of self-identified, practicing philologists. And with good reason, for who would aspire to the “scholars” Yeats evokes, philologists who now as then remain “generally untheoretical, unmodern, un-*trans*, and uncool”?<sup>87</sup> I want to oppose this patently unflattering (if well-earned) image of a philologist with the one that emerges in a breathtaking article, “The Unbearable Lightness of Being a

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<sup>84</sup> Pollock, “Philology and Freedom,” 19, 27. The quote is taken from Robert Brandom, *Rorty and His Critics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 1 (as cited by Pollock).

<sup>85</sup> Pollock, “Liberating Philology,” 20.

<sup>86</sup> Here given as originally published in *Poetry* 7 (Feb, 1916), 226, <https://archive.org/details/jstor-20570690>; and then included in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1919 [1917]), 25, <https://archive.org/details/wildswansatcoole00yeat>. The second stanza is significantly revised in the *Collected Poems, 1889–1939*, <https://archive.org/details/WBYeats-CollectedPoems1889-1939>: “All shuffle there; all cough in ink; / All wear the carpet with their shoes; / All think what other people think; / All know the man their neighbour knows. / Lord, what would they say / Did their Catullus walk that way?”

<sup>87</sup> The latter quotation is from Pollock, “Liberating Philology,” 18.



Philologist,” which the medieval philologist Roberta Frank authored in celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the *Journal of English and German Philology* (in 1997).<sup>88</sup> I cannot do the essay full justice as its portraiture is enacted on a much larger canvas than Yeats’s short poem, twenty-seven pages of philological analysis, interpretation, and critique. I confine myself to just a few threads to give a flavor of Frank’s conception of a working philologist, one that I find far more congenial to my own experience of philology. Her second paragraph sets out the aims for the essay by contrasting the worry over a journal produced (certainly originally) for Yeats’s “old, learned ... bald heads” with a striking, countervailing image:

The rhetoric of crisis is predictable and easy to master: denunciations and discriminations, admonitions and exhortations, opaque Latin stems larded with thick syllables back and front, vagueness masking our helplessness. But this celebration calls for lightness—low-cal, low-cost, with wings to soar. The pages that follow try to sketch the subtlety and fine detail at the heart of philological study, the attentiveness to minutiae that only love allows. I begin by tracking, among other things, the nimbleness and quickness of early alliterative verse, its words in perpetual pursuit of things and each other. I end with an attempt to capture and interrogate a few key emblems of weightlessness running through northern poetry, images like that of the swan, silent until lifted by wind and plumage above the heaviness of the world. Philology herself lurks resolutely below in her cluttered den, tirelessly recording with all the craft she can muster the metamorphoses of her light and airborne spouse Mercury.<sup>89</sup>

This is not quite Yeats, not poetry. Yet there is language and passion here that soar, an artfulness that Nietzsche would approve. That is, already in Frank’s very manner of writing there is a noticeably different kind of philological staging. One that is light, sophisticated, imaginative, humble, fun. Her essay, nonetheless, is replete with deep learning, rich philological detail (e.g., a scrupulous analysis of examples of Old English and Old Norse alliterative verse). She is no less “learned” than Yeats’s “old” baldies. And, importantly, she and (personified) Philology, too, are shes. Gender matters. Race and ethnicity matter. Philology has long been the preserve of men, mostly caucasian, mostly Euro-American. So, we should not be surprised to find gender (“phalology”<sup>90</sup>) and racial-ethnic biases embedded deeply within some of our most cherished philological practices and self-conceptions. Yet as philology in this newly wired world begins to move

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<sup>88</sup> Frank, “Unbearable Lightness,” 486–513.

<sup>89</sup> Frank, “Unbearable Lightness,” 486.

<sup>90</sup> Carla Freccero, “Practicing Queer Philology with Marguerite de Navarre: Nationalism and the Castigation of Desire,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 120. To a similar end, see Mieke Bal’s provocatively titled “Virginité: Toward a Feminist Philology” (*Dispositio* 12 [1987]: 65–82).



beyond print and beyond its familiar stomping grounds in Bible, Classics, and Indo-European languages and literature it makes possible a more inclusive, diverse, and pluralistic future. The new journal *Philological Encounters* was established explicitly in dedication “to the study of philology from a global and comparative perspective,” as a means of supporting “research in marginalized and undocumented textual practices and literary cultures” and “integrating texts and scholarly traditions from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as from Europe itself, through a critical recuperation of the craft of philology.”<sup>91</sup> Biblical philology stands to gain much from this shift toward a more “transhistorical perspective,” not least in availing itself of the rich metatheoretical thinking about philology that has taken place outside the bounds of Bible over the last quarter of a century (in particular).<sup>92</sup> Collaboration becomes the new watchword<sup>93</sup> and a potentially powerful antidote to the “ethic of mastery” that has haunted large swaths of philological study since the early nineteenth century,<sup>94</sup> the old “arrogance” of “claiming to know the text better than it knows itself,” which as Frank remarks, “can kill the very knowledge [philology] seek[s]”<sup>95</sup>—and not just knowledge but people, too. And without surrendering the place and space for language- and text-specific expertise—the very knowledge-base that “underlies everyone’s experience of readable texts”<sup>96</sup>—collaboration beyond the borders of parochial expertise

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<sup>91</sup> Islam Dayeh, “Introducing *Philological Encounters*,” *Philological Encounters* 1 (2016): 1. Cf. Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman, and Ku-ming Kevin Chang, eds., *World Philology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>92</sup> One of the more deleterious effects of the rise of the modern academy, on Turner’s telling (also see Pollock, “Liberating Philology”), is the ghettoization of philology within discrete area studies (e.g., classics, Bible, Germanic studies) such as to greatly hinder interdisciplinary conversation and cross-pollination on matters of common interest, theory, and practice—a situation that is exacerbated for biblical philology in North America by the additional sequestering of so much of biblical studies within seminaries and divinity schools. In littering the body of this essay (and even more so in the notes) with the names of nonbiblicists I mean to draw attention to these broader discussions of philology. Indeed, the study of the Bible in most respects is not unique, and thus in my view always needs to be embedded within the wider canons of humanistic learning. We biblical philologists certainly have much to learn from our fellow philologists in other disciplines.

<sup>93</sup> Here we might still learn from our scientific colleagues who have long mounted large-scale, collaborative research projects and embraced multi-authored publications, see Daston and Most, “History of Science.” Writing in 1878, Lucian Müller emphasizes (and indeed valorizes) the strong disinclination in philology to collaborate: “It is, from time to time, bemoaned that philologists so rarely join together in common labor.... Now it seems to me that very weighty considerations stand against such a collaboration....” (*Gedanken über das Studium der classischen Philologie* [Berlin, 1878], 81–82 as cited in James Whitman, “Nietzsche in the Magisterial Tradition of German Classical Philology,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 47 [1986]: 464–65).

<sup>94</sup> For example, Whitman (“Nietzsche in the Magisterial Tradition,” 453–68, 457) names this ethic and contrasts it with what he calls the “magisterial” tradition of philology (to which Nietzsche is heir), a tradition that is less chauvinistic (less arrogant in Frank’s terminology) and more hermeneutically nimble.

<sup>95</sup> Frank, “Unbearable Lightness,” 492.

<sup>96</sup> Warren, “Relating Philology,” 283.

decenters that expertise and simultaneously animates non-expert knowledge and insight, whether of a co-lateral philology or even of the non-philological. The Bible has far, far more nonphilological than philological readers. One of the chiefest benefits of the digital revolution is increasingly wider and easier access to expert knowledge of all sorts, philological and otherwise. This presents biblical philologists with an opportunity to reconceptualize how we exercise our custodial care of and for the Bible. We, I think, can afford to be more welcoming and less arrogant with respect to the large, non-philological readership of the Bible, confident of their desire for a more informed reading experience, and, then, in return, the opportunity for us to hear our expertise digested and filtered back through their own expertise—theological, ideological, historical, homiletic, literary critical, anthropological, lay—which in turn becomes yet further fodder for our ongoing philological work. To emphasize, however crucial parochial philological knowledge (viz. language-, history-, culture-specific knowledge) is to making texts readable that knowledge in light of the plurality that defines our world's lived realities can no longer afford to be enacted only parochially. Auerbach's critique of such parochialism (already in 1952) leveled specifically against Provençal philology may be extended to all philological practice, including biblical philology: "To be a Provençal specialist in our day and age, for example, and to command only the immediately relevant linguistic, paleological and historical facts, is hardly enough to be a good specialist."<sup>97</sup> My aim, then, is nothing less than to re-embed biblical philology (which *is* the general study of biblical literature) within the larger philological study of the literatures of the world, as a philology of and for the world (ethically, politically, ideologically), and thus beyond the strictly parochial.

#### CONCLUSION

As I indicated at the outset, this is only a start to the kind of theorizing biblical philology deserves and requires if it is to continue to fund the art of reading texts in our field. More topics are worthy of critical attention, but consideration of these will need to be deferred till another time—theorizing (biblical) philology like all philological work is ultimately always accomplished in deferral.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*," 9.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. D. B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 129–50. The hitherside of philological theory is the act of reading such theory makes possible. For some examples of my own work that seeks to illustrate different possibilities for reading that the kind of unhurried, close philological reasoning about texts and textuality that I have been gesturing towards in this essay opens onto, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "R(az/ais)ing Zion in Lamentations 2," in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 21–68; Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Way of Poetry in Psalm 133," in *On*

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## Joseph and His Allies in Genesis 29–30

Daniel E. Fleming

For readers of the Bible whose priority is to understand the collection in its varied ancient settings, historical distinctions are essential, as is the ever-present problem of how to read the collected efforts of scribal generations against real place and time. This problem has been the preoccupation of literary history, which Julius Wellhausen cast as “prolegomena” to the history of Israel.<sup>1</sup> No matter what processes are proposed to explain individual compositions, literary-historical study offers the opportunity both to understand better the work and intent of connected wholes and to read their contributing parts without the guiding hand of those later scribes. One historical interest underlying such work has been religion, to recognize the difference between systematic effort toward something like monotheism and underlying attitudes that lack such concern.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the historical interest that this endeavor takes for granted, we are constantly in danger of letting the perspectives of later biblical contributors govern our interpretation simply because it has not occurred to us to imagine different realities below the surface of their work. In ongoing collaborative research, Lauren Monroe and I have set about probing some of the basic names that define the peoples of the Bible, especially those of the highland center: Isra-

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I offer this study of history and biblical writing in appreciation for P. Kyle McCarter Jr., who has been occupied long and fruitfully with similar concerns.

<sup>1</sup> The still-powerful idea comes from the title of Wellhausen’s classic work, translated into English by W. Robertson Smith: *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1885). “Literary history” has maintained this expectation that it matters not just to reconstruct a relative chronology of textual change for biblical writing but that the actual settings for such writing matter. In seeking to identify layers in such classic texts, the practitioners of literary history do not fail to appreciate the beauty and impact of the whole but rather drive to understand voices below the final one that have given shape to what later writers may have reimagined.

<sup>2</sup> The distinction of historical change can have obvious and overwhelming impact on understanding biblical religion and the realities that lie behind and within it. This has been the ongoing labor of Mark Smith, who began the task with his *Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).



el itself; the groups eventually regarded as the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; and in a new project launched by Monroe, the mysterious people of Joseph.<sup>3</sup> Our method presses to identify uses of these names that contrast with their more familiar biblical applications, and we propose that such contrasts often indicate older notions, unless they can be explained by demonstrably later conceptions.

The book of Genesis assembles lore associated with Israel's founding past, reaching back to a time when peoples could be identified by individuals who carried their names, related in familial terms.<sup>4</sup> Israel itself is defined as a family of half-brothers under a single father, detailed in a birth narrative with four mothers in 29:31–30:24.<sup>5</sup> Certain oddities attach to this family account, especially when read against various biblical lists of Israel's twelve tribes. First of all, while the finished narrative eventually introduces the name Israel in 32:29, the main story of the father and his wives identifies him as Jacob, and chapter 33 goes on to recount the reunion of Jacob and Esau. In the birth narrative itself, the three most prominent peoples of the central highlands are missing: Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Finally, the focal point of the birth narrative is not one of the peoples of Israel at all, or only so by combining Ephraim and Manasseh as a further generation: Joseph, as the lone son of the beloved Rachel.<sup>6</sup>

Without intent to reconstruct a full literary history of the Jacob material in Genesis, my interest is instead the particular oddity of Joseph as the culmination of the birth sequence.<sup>7</sup> I propose that we must reconsider the assumed identifica-

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<sup>3</sup> Monroe is working toward a book tentatively titled, *Joseph the Hebrew and the Genesis of Ancient Israel*.

<sup>4</sup> This is implicit in the essential notion of ancestral narrative in any terms, not requiring genealogical linkage between different figures. We should distinguish characters who are not directly identified with peoples or polities, such as Abraham and Isaac, from Joseph or Judah, who represent particular group identities. Jacob is a special case, profoundly connected to Israel and yet not equivalent to it.

<sup>5</sup> The tribes are the sons of Leah and Rachel as wives, and of Zilpah and Bilhah, their servants: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun for Leah; Joseph for Rachel; Gad and Asher for Zilpah; and Dan and Naphtali for Bilhah. Benjamin is only born with Rachel's death in Gen 35:16–18.

<sup>6</sup> The births of Manasseh and Ephraim to Joseph are announced before the arrival of Jacob's other sons in Egypt (Gen 41:51–52). In Gen 48, Jacob reverses the order of their priority as peoples, in favor of Ephraim over his older brother.

<sup>7</sup> There is, of course, an enormous literature on the composition and transmission history of the Jacob materials in Genesis. See in particular Albert de Pury, *Promesse divine et légende culturelle dans le cycle de Jacob: Genèse 28 et les traditions patriarcales* (Paris: Gabalda, 1975); de Pury, "Situer le cycle de Jacob: Quelques réflexions vingt-cinq ans plus tard," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, ed. André Wénin (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 213–41; Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984); Blum, "The Jacob Tradition," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 181–211; David Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*:

tion of Jacob with Israel that is provided later in the finished text and is shared by Hos 12:13, “Jacob fled to the countryside of Aram; Israel served for a wife; for a wife he kept watch.” Certain features separate the chapters 29 and 30, with their focus on Jacob’s wives, from the account of return in chapters 31–33, and the birth narrative leaves us with a political geography for the wife sequence sharply at odds with ordinary readings that are informed by the later equation of Jacob with Israel.<sup>8</sup> On their own, chapters 29 and 30 present Joseph as the people with whom the audience identifies, the long-awaited son of Rachel, and Jacob is the father who explains a variety of relationships with half-brothers most naturally understood as Joseph’s allies.

#### JOSEPH IN THE BIRTH NARRATIVE<sup>9</sup>

I begin with the birth narrative itself, which may be taken as an insertion based on features such as the introduction of Zilpah and Bilhah as servants for Leah and Rachel in 29:24 and 29, only to anticipate their role in what follows.<sup>10</sup> However we account for the combination of the marriage to two sisters in chapter 29 with the competition to be mothers, this material together provides the point of reference for the Rachel-Leah motif in Genesis. As we have it, the birth narra-

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*Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); Harald-Martin Wahl, *Die Jakoberzählungen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997); Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer eds., *Jacob: Commentaire à plusieurs voix de Gen 25–36* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001); Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer, “Comments on the Historical Background of the Jacob Narrative in Genesis,” *ZAW* 126 (2014): 317–38; Nadav Na’aman, “The Jacob Story and the Formation of Biblical Israel,” *TA* 41 (2014): 95–125; Marvin Sweeney, “The Jacob Narratives: An Ephraimite Text?,” *CBQ* 78 (2016): 236–55.

<sup>8</sup> It is common to treat Gen 29–31 as a unit without recognizing the degree to which chapter 31 stands apart, even as the last chapter is dependent on either this or another version of the story about Jacob, Laban, and Laban’s daughters. This is partly because the allusions to the Jacob story in Hos 12 are mostly concerned with Jacob and Laban and show awareness of narrative from all three chapters (Finkelstein and Römer, “Comments on the Historical Background,” 322; after de Pury, “Situer le cycle,” 227–37). See also the commentary discussions of the pre-Priestly Jacob narrative in Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985 [German 1981]), 407–8; and Horst Seebass, *Genesis II: Vätergeschichte II (23,1–36,43)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1999), 325, 371–73. The divergent character of chapter 31 will be addressed further below.

<sup>9</sup> I addressed the birth narrative in previous work on the Israelite setting for a core Jacob story in Genesis, with attention to its approach to Israel as an association of tribes (Daniel E. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 74–81). The analysis offered here examines what I now conclude to be a contrasting set of assumptions that underlie the fully formed Jacob narrative.

<sup>10</sup> Westermann states that “it is an insertion into an insertion. It consists of genealogical notes tacked together and elaborated in narrative style, all independent of the Jacob-Laban conflict.” Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 408. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 467 for 29:24 and 29 added, to prepare for the birth narrative. Cf. Blum, “Jacob Tradition,” 207 n. 79.

tive in Gen 29–30 is entirely occupied with the celebration of Joseph as Rachel's only son until the awkward hint of Benjamin at the end, necessary to yield the sum of twelve. Benjamin only arrives with the separate account of Rachel's death in 35:16–18. This awkwardness is embodied in the double etiology for Joseph, first by Elohim (“God has removed my disgrace,” 30:23) and then by Yahweh (“May Yahweh add for me another son,” v. 24). The second of these looks outside the narrative to Benjamin and inserts Yahweh into a rivalry that had been adjudicated by Elohim (30:2, 6, 17–18, 20, 22).<sup>11</sup>

The Joseph-centered birth sequence must have lacked concern for the number twelve, and it is likely that some of the eleven now present in the text were added to yield the requisite tally.<sup>12</sup> Comparison of the birth narrative with the blessings of Jacob in Gen 49 suggests that the six sons of Bilhah, Zilpah, and finally Leah in 30:1–20 belong to a core account. Through this sequence we follow the competition between rival wives, and the repeated births give dramatic effect to Joseph's appearance at the end. Moreover, the collection of northern and eastern groups outside the central highlands matches, in different order, the six groups identified by Jean-Daniel Macchi as the core sayings of Gen 49: Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, and Zebulun.<sup>13</sup> Reuben, the first son born to Leah in 29:32, helps his mother bear Issachar in the later narrative and is therefore most easily left in the older account. Simeon, Levi, and Judah, however, present three groups not part of the northern kingdom's geography.<sup>14</sup> Joshua 19 considers Simeon to be situated within the southern extent of Judah; Levi is the sacred class without land; and Judah provides a first culmination for Leah's children that claims an important place for the eventual southern kingdom as a tribal son of Jacob. This would yield a total of eight peoples in the

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<sup>11</sup> See the analysis of Tzemah Yoreh, “How Many Sons Did Jacob Have according to E?,” *ZAW* 118 (2006): 264–68. Yoreh forces compelling observations about contrasting elements within the birth narrative into a documentary framework that requires distribution of two types of material between an older E text and a later J revision. For the failure of J/E sources to account for the contents of the birth narrative, see Blum, *Die Komposition*, 106–7.

<sup>12</sup> The discussion here begins from the reasoning in Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, and points of divergence between the present article and that earlier work will be pointed out as they arise.

<sup>13</sup> See my interaction with Macchi on Gen 49 in Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 85–90; cf. Jean-Daniel Macchi, *Israël et ses tribus selon Genèse 49* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> For a careful argument that all four of Leah's first sons were added secondarily, see Ulrike Schorn, *Ruben und das System des zwölf Stämme Israels: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des Erstgeborenen Jakobs* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 63–79. As throughout her project, the effort to remove Reuben from all early material (including the Song of Deborah in Judg 5) remains insufficient.

basic narrative of competing mothers and the resulting half-brothers: Joseph from Rachel and seven from the other three women.<sup>15</sup>

While the Genesis birth narrative revolves around Leah and Rachel as Jacob's wives, the servants Zilpah and Bilhah do more than just retard the action: they give the resulting family a variety and balance of relationship by descent, so that the sons of Jacob are not simply divided into two groups. The tribal geography of Joshua cannot be understood as an absolute reference, but these lists do offer at least one notion of how the traditional peoples of Israel related to the land. As in the story, Reuben stands strangely apart from his full siblings, across the Jordan in what ought to belong to Moab. Otherwise, Leah's sons Issachar and Zebulun combine as the nearest northern neighbors to the central highlands, separated only by the Jezreel Valley.<sup>16</sup> Leah's servant Zilpah is responsible for Dan and Naphtali, both reaching further north from Issachar and Zebulun, with Dan a particularly slippery geographical problem.<sup>17</sup> Gad and Asher, the sons of Rachel's servant Bilhah, are not contiguous and lie to the east and northwest of the central highlands. In the Song of Deborah, both Asher and the eastern Gilead decline to join forces against "the kings of Canaan" in the Jezreel Valley, along with Reuben and Dan (Judg 5:16–17).

On this regional map, the central highlands that remained the abiding political hub of the northern kingdom are represented only by Joseph, the son of Jacob's favored wife. All the other peoples in the birth narrative are only half-brothers to Joseph, so that the central highlands are bounded on the north and east by groups both identified with and yet deeply separate from Joseph, as seen by accounts of sons by different mothers in the royal households of David and his descendants.<sup>18</sup> Taken on its own, Israel is never mentioned in Gen 29–30. We have here the family of Jacob. Within that family, Joseph stands alone as the

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<sup>15</sup> Yoreh removes Zilpah and her two sons, Gad and Asher, without convincing argument. Yoreh, "How Many Sons," 206. His reading of 30:8, however, which I had not known when writing previously, would confirm the inclusion of Reuben: when Rachel declares with satisfaction, "I have grappled with my sister and won," her count of two sons through Bilhah (Dan and Naphtali) would just surpass that of Leah if her sister has only Reuben.

<sup>16</sup> The implied relationship between Joseph south of the Jezreel Valley and the two sons of Leah to its immediate north recalls the alliance of Zebulun and Issachar with Ephraim and Benjamin as peoples from the Central Highlands in the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:14–15); see the new analysis by Lauren Monroe in her "On the Origins and Development of 'Greater Israel,'" *HBAI* (forthcoming).

<sup>17</sup> Judges 18 envisions a full-scale migration of Dan from Zorah and Eshtaol (v. 2), which the Samson narrative considers the home of his father Manoah (13:25; 16:31), and the Joshua territorial allotments assign first to Judah (15:33) and then to Dan (19:41) in an apparent acknowledgement of Judg 18.

<sup>18</sup> The importance of half versus full sibling relationship is crucial to Absalom's defense of his sister Tamar against their half-brother Amnon in 2 Sam 13; and the jockeying for succession to David recounted in 1 Kgs 1 pits Adonijah against Solomon, with the latter supported by his mother Bathsheba.

long-awaited son of Rachel, Jacob's favored wife, and all the other sons stand at some remove. This is a Joseph text, and we must reconsider the significance of his defining centrality.

#### JACOB AND HIS WIVES IN GENESIS 29–30

In the sweep of the finished Jacob story, the patriarch is born as the younger twin of Esau, whom he robs first of birthright and then of blessing, the second crime compounded by manipulation of their aged father Isaac. This last event becomes the impetus for Jacob's trip to foreign parts, given two preparatory explanations that may both be secondary to the journey account in itself. The characterization of the journey as flight from Esau's anger is accomplished in 27:41–45, where Rebekah tells Jacob to go to her brother Laban at Haran, with hope of return when Esau's wrath subsides. A Priestly comment in 27:46–28:9 then names the destination as Paddan-Aram and casts the voyage not as flight but as acquisition of a wife within the extended family, in contrast to Esau's marriage to Canaanite women.<sup>19</sup> Laban and Haran in the initial bridge (27:43) reflect Jacob's destination as recounted when Rachel sweeps him off his feet in chapter 29.

The reference to Jacob's return in 27:45 anticipates the narrative arc that reaches through chapters 31–33, where he sets about the complicated task of disentangling himself from Laban and dodging potential difficulties with Esau, a storyline that embraces both Jacob's offense in chapter 27 and his time away in chapters 28–30. The reverse cannot be said of the main journey narrative, which makes no reference to Esau and what supposedly sent Jacob to a foreign land. In 28:10, Jacob leaves Beersheba for Haran, picking up the location of Isaac in 26:33 and looking toward the shepherds' place of origin in 29:4. While the composition history of what follows is debated, it is clear that the story serves especially to link Jacob to Bethel, where he sets up a sacred stone in response to an encounter there with God.<sup>20</sup> The prospect of Jacob's return comes up twice, both in sections that may be elaborations: first with Yahweh's blessing in verses

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<sup>19</sup> For examination of the entire Priestly rendition of Jacob, which would take particular interest in explaining Jacob's flight, see de Pury, "Situier le cycle," 221–27.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 28:10–22 has been a key source for proving the reality of parallel J and E documents, and Blum (*Die Komposition*) makes it a point of departure in his proposal that the ancestor narratives in Genesis cannot be explained adequately by documentary divisions. He proposes instead that originally shorter texts were expanded or combined based on fresh definition of their bounds, sometimes leaving hints of new reasoning in redactional comments. Blum proposes that the Jacob narrative took its first full form from the contents of Gen 25B\*, 27\*, and \*29–31 only; chapters 28 and 32 were added to this secondarily, though still in the kingdom of Israel (before 720); see more recently, Blum, "Jacob Tradition." Notice that the Bethel episode is already assumed in Hos 12:5, and this chapter takes for granted a story that includes some version of Jacob's return in Gen 31–33.

13–15 and then in verses 20–22 with Jacob’s vow to make Yahweh his god on the moment of return to his father’s house.<sup>21</sup> Some version of this cycle of flight and return is already presupposed in the allusions of Hos 12, which mention Jacob’s struggle with his brother in the womb (v. 4), his “flight” (verb ברח) to Aram (v. 13), the encounter at Bethel (v. 5), service to gain a wife (v. 13), and wrestling with an “angel” (v. 5). So far as a cycle that parallels Gen 27–32/33 was already in place by the late eighth century, individual contributing parts would have to be even older.<sup>22</sup>

In the journey narrative, Jacob’s destination is not Aram but rather “the land of the Easterners,” the ארץ בני־קדם (29:1). After meeting Rachel and identifying her as Laban’s daughter, Jacob greets her as family, and the Genesis theme of ancestral marriage within lines of descent may begin here.<sup>23</sup> Jacob is blocked from marrying Rachel, who has an older sister Leah, and the account of Jacob’s negotiation with Laban lays the foundation for the rivalry played out in the birth

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<sup>21</sup> For most of verses 13–15 as additions focused on the bestowal of divine promises, see Carr, *Reading the Fractures*, 205–8; cf. Finkelstein and Römer, “Comments on the Historical Background,” 323. Carr locates verses 20–22 among cross-referencing material in chapters 25–31 that would reflect a “prepromise Jacob composition,” older than a combination with non-Jacob narrative but added to a Bethel narrative that originally served only to legitimate that site’s sanctuary; see also Blum, “Jacob Tradition,” 197. Seebass prefers the older identification of 28:20–22 as part of an E document, while observing recent suggestions to identify the vow as redactional. Seebass, *Genesis II*, 322.

<sup>22</sup> There has been much discussion of Hos 12’s significance for defining the Jacob cycle in the eighth century: see de Pury, “Situier le cycle,” 227–37; Macchi and Römer, *Jacob*, 150–52; Erhard Blum, “Hosea 12 und die Pentateuchüberlieferungen,” in *Die Erzväter in der biblischen Tradition: Festschrift für Matthias Köckert*, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn and Henrik Pfeiffer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 291–321; and Finkelstein and Römer, “Comments on the Historical Background,” 321–23. Macchi observes that Hos 12 shows no awareness of the theological justification binding the “composition-stratum” of the Genesis text. This valuable observation still leaves open the question of whether Genesis had not yet been put together with this rationale or whether the Hosea poetry was composed from a version equally complete in narrative terms but with distinct religious reasoning (cf. Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 75 n. 7).

<sup>23</sup> In narrative sequence, the first instance of this motif is in Gen 24, where Abraham sends a servant to Aram-naharaim to find a wife for Isaac. Though once included in a relatively early J document, this text is now widely considered quite late, even to the point of displaying features of Late Biblical Hebrew as observed by Ron Hendel. See Ron Hendel, “Historical Context,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 54–55; cf. Alexander Rofé, “An Enquiry into the Betrothal of Rebekah,” in *Die hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Erhard Blum, et al. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 27–39. In the Priestly bridge into the story of Jacob stealing Esau’s blessing, Isaac and Rebekah are said to lament their son’s marriage to local Hittites (26:34–35), an aggravation recalled by Rebekah in the Priestly follow-up in 27:46–28:9, where the main point of Jacob’s departure becomes marriage to a woman from the extended family. For the Priestly concern for marriage within the circle of the circumcised, see de Pury, “Situier le cycle,” 226–27. The theme in Gen 29 shows no religious or ethnic anxiety, and it seems rather that Jacob is simply looking for a friendly reception from Laban as kinsman.

sequence of chapter 30. Together, chapters 29–30, and more specifically 29:1–30:24, explain how Joseph and his half-brothers are all the products of marriage with eastern herding peoples, all understood to belong to a single larger lineage.

In Gen 29:1–30:24, Jacob's point of departure is not stated, and he could as easily have come from Syria as Palestine. My goal is not to speculate, but it is worth recognizing how much the current narrative framework governs our reading of the Jacob-Laban exchange in chapter 29. We take for granted the "cycle" of flight to Haran in 27:41–45 and return to Palestine in chapter 31, recalling Jacob's vow at Bethel in verse 13. The background in chapter 27 assumes preparation in Jacob's rivalry with Esau, which never comes up in the time with Laban.<sup>24</sup> Many interpreters consider the initial Bethel episode in 28:10–22 to have a separate origin, however old, and only to have been added secondarily to the Jacob-Laban story.<sup>25</sup> The Jacob-Laban narrative on its own terms begins in 29:1, and it is at least not certain that we can read Jacob's journey as having a stated place of origin.<sup>26</sup> Read without prior introduction, Jacob goes to "the land of the Sons of the East" and meets men from Haran, which prompts him to ask whether they know Laban. We are given no clue about distance traveled, and the story evidently unfolds among these inland Easterners, who thus provide the regional origin for all the sons of Jacob—not Syria as Aram and not Haran. One could read this question as inspired not by reference to Haran as his destination but either because he himself came from there or he knows of the place and is pleased to meet kinsmen so far from home. Without the Bethel introduction, we simply cannot tell whether Jacob is from Palestine. Notice that Hos 12:13 conceives of Jacob's destination as Aram, the comprehensible definition of Syria for writers from Israel or Judah and the one employed in Gen 31. Far from illuminating the setting for Jacob's journey to Laban, the introduction of Haran obscures it; it is not the recognizable work of a later editorial hand.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Finkelstein and Römer treat the Esau narrative as a separate contribution, whether associated with Edom conflicts in the late seventh and early sixth centuries or relevant to Israel as suggested by the southern connection seen in the inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud. Finkelstein and Römer, "Comments on the Historical Background," 331–32.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 408; Blum, *Die Komposition*, 168–85; Blum, "Jacob Tradition," 207, cited cautiously by Carr, *Reading the Fractures*, 270–71.

<sup>26</sup> The Jewish Publication Society translates Gen 29:1, "Jacob resumed his journey," acknowledging the literal, "Jacob lifted his feet and went"—a unique idiom for "setting out" to travel. There is no notion of continuation of a journey already begun.

<sup>27</sup> Haran has presented a conundrum to interpreters of the Jacob material. It was long considered part of the basic J narrative in 27:43; 28:10; and 29:4, without imagining that the city reference requires a late date (still, e.g., Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 443, 453–54, 465). With the collapse of early dates for a J source, interpreters such as John Van Seters ("Divine Encounter at Bethel [Gen 28:10–22] in Recent Literary-Critical Study of Genesis," *ZAW* 110 [1998]: 505) and Wahl (*Die Jakobberzählungen*, 271) have maintained the integral place of Haran in all three contexts and argue that the city's prominence at the end of the Assyrian Empire in the late seventh century confirms a



With Gen 28 included, the combination of Bethel, the land of the Easterners, and Haran provides the setting for the remaining account of Jacob far from home.<sup>28</sup> Neither Jacob's labor for Laban (29:1–30) nor the birth narrative (29:31–30:24) adds any further geographical reference. The same applies to the peculiar tale of the magical fraud by which Jacob becomes rich (30:25–43), though this episode belongs to the larger account of flight and return, since it is introduced by Jacob's request to go home (30:26) and explains Laban's accusation of robbery in chapter 31, a theme familiar from Jacob's life with Esau.

Chapter 31 offers a geography in striking contrast to that of Jacob's journey. Above all, it introduces into the larger Jacob narrative an elaborate eastern interest that is embodied first of all in the treaty between Jacob and Laban, envisioned to separate the Hebrew-speaking Jacob from the Aramaic-speaking Laban, reflected in the cairn called both Gal-ed and Yegar-sahadutha (v. 47).<sup>29</sup> Jacob crosses "the River" (Euphrates) and heads for "the Gilead highlands" (v. 21; cf. v. 23), where both Jacob and Laban set up camp (v. 25). Earlier, Laban is "the Aramean" (vv. 20, 24), an identification foreign to the journey narrative of chapters 28–30. This terminology only appears otherwise in Genesis associated with the Priestly rendition of Syria as Paddan-Aram: "Rebekah daughter of Be-

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late monarchic or postmonarchic date for the Jacob narrative in Genesis. In his first work on the ancestor narratives, Blum (*Die Komposition*, 164–66) identifies an older and Israelite (vs. Judahite) text while agreeing that Haran must reflect a later perspective, which he attributes to editorial elaboration (see also Finkelstein and Römer, "Comments on the Historical Background," 322). Although Haran did play a brief role as political center as the Assyrian Empire collapsed in the last decade of the seventh century, nothing in the Bible indicates any connection between the city and the deportees of Israel or Judah, so that its link to Laban in the Genesis Jacob narrative remains mysterious. Based on the importance of Haran (Harran) to the second-millennium BCE landscape of tribal associations attested in the Mari archives, I propose as an alternative that the name had come into the Jacob story from its roots in an older social landscape, carried with that matrix into Israelite writing with no good sense of its location or significance. See Daniel E. Fleming, "Mari and the Possibilities of Biblical Memory," *RA* 92 (1998): 41–78; Fleming, "Genesis in History and Tradition: The Syrian Background of Israel's Ancestors, Reprise," in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 193–232. In evaluating the surprising appearance of Haran in Gen 27–29, interpreters can too easily overestimate its familiarity to writers from Judah in the eighth to sixth centuries (e.g., Finkelstein and Römer, "Comments on the Historical Background," 322; Na'aman, "Jacob Story," 99, 104).

<sup>28</sup> This leaves open the question of whether Bethel was Jacob's point of departure without reference to his offense against Esau in chapter 27. Blum (recently, "The Jacob Tradition") reconstructs an original Jacob cycle that ends in chapter 31 but includes elements of the Esau story in chapter 27. Finkelstein and Römer ("Comments on the Historical Background," 322 and n. 21) observe that Hos 12 lacks reference to either episode of Jacob's cheating Esau (in 25:27–34; chapter 27), and this may suggest that the Jacob-Laban narrative was older than what Genesis offers for Jacob and Esau.

<sup>29</sup> Westermann (*Genesis 12–36*, 498) treats the distinction of the separate Aramaic name as a "scholarly gloss"; Seebass (*Genesis II*, 370–71) places the Aramaic text solidly in his core narrative, which includes most of the treaty arrangement in 31:43–54.



thuel the Aramean from Paddan-Aram, sister of Laban the Aramean” (25:20); and “(Jacob) went to Paddan-Aram, to Laban, son of Bethuel, the Aramean, brother of Rebekah” (28:5). While the shared gentilic could indicate late elaboration of Gen 31, inspired by the Priestly identification of Bethuel and Laban, 31:20 and 24 lack any pedantic elaboration and identify Laban lightly by the simple name.<sup>30</sup> Verse 24 explains that God appeared to “Laban the Aramean” with instructions not to harm Jacob, repeated in verse 29. It is possible that the Priestly account of Laban’s particular genealogy derives from these texts rather than the reverse.<sup>31</sup> Laban’s “Aramean” identity is essential to the treaty with Jacob in 31:43–54, which demarcates a line of separation between Aramaic and Hebrew speakers in Gilead, east of the Jordan River, evoking political tensions between the kingdoms of Aram-Damascus and Israel in the late ninth and early eighth centuries.<sup>32</sup> It is no accident that Laban is “Aramean” in a text that culminates in a boundary marker with an Aramaic name.

The eastern interest launched in Gen 31 continues in the material that follows, which picks up on the Gilead location. In chapter 32, the eastern sites of Mahanaim and Peniel are linked to Jacob by divine encounters, and Jacob ends up in 33:17 at Succoth, after finally persuading Esau to leave him alone and go home to Seir. Another geographical tension between chapter 31 and the material culminating in the birth narrative of chapters 29–30 involves conceptions of distance. According to Gen 31:22–23, Jacob and his crew, with livestock in tow, took ten days to reach Gilead, a trip that Laban managed in seven, starting from beyond the Euphrates. Jacob’s trip to the land of the Easterners is given no time horizon at all, and the one from chapter 31 should not be read back onto chapter 29.

While it is the geography of Gen 31 that provokes reevaluation of its original relationship with Jacob’s journey to the east in 29:1–30:24, the following account of how Jacob got rich in Laban’s service (30:25–43) also belongs to that account of return to Palestine. After Joseph’s birth, this next episode opens with Jacob’s request to return “to my place and to my land” (v. 25), anticipating the

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<sup>30</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 493–94. Without comment on the “Aramean” label, Jean-Daniel Macchi regards verse 24 as part of a revision to the chapter that derives from the same hand as Jacob’s speech to his wives in 31:5–13 (“Genèse 31,24–42: La dernière rencontre de Jacob et de Laban,” in *Jacob: Commentaire à plusieurs voix de Gen 25–36*, ed. Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer [Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001], 147).

<sup>31</sup> Note the comment in 31:18 on the livestock Jacob had gotten in Paddan-Aram, which he planned to bring back with him “to his father Isaac, in the land of Canaan”—joining typical terms from Priestly geography. It is thought-provoking that the account of Jacob’s rival wives and their sons in 29:1–30:24 includes not a single line of Priestly comment (Blum, *Die Komposition*, 190).

<sup>32</sup> This is the level of the Jacob narrative relevant to Marvin Sweeney’s analysis of this material in light of international relations involving Israel, Aram, and the expanding Assyrian power (“Jacob Narratives,” 247–51).

dream-triggered decision to break away in chapter 31. Jacob complains to his wives only about the arrangement with Laban's flocks and takes satisfaction in how God has enriched him at his father-in-law's expense (31:6–9). Through both 30:25–43 and chapter 31, Jacob simply has wives and children, with concern for neither rivalry between Leah and Rachel nor his years of service to compensate their father. Genesis 29:1–30:24 never envisions that Jacob wanted anything from Laban but Rachel, and Laban's interest to the story is limited to resisting that wish, foisting Leah on Jacob and thus setting up the competition between the unfortunate sisters.

If Gen 31 provides Jacob with a “return” from Syria to Palestine that was never a concern for the story of how he got his children in chapters 29–30, we must account for his journey to the East as something other than a cycle of flight and restoration. With or without the Bethel point of departure in 28:10–22, the account of Jacob and the daughters of Laban has as its first destination the sons who came from these marriages, with the women's rivalry played out in the standing of the offspring who represent known peoples. Chapter 31, with Jacob's return to the land of his birth (v. 13, cf. v. 3),<sup>33</sup> the national boundary between Aram and Israel under the gods of Abraham and Nahor (vv. 43–54), and a focus on the eastern region of Gilead, builds on that journey and recasts it. The older Jacob-Laban narrative, leading to Joseph as the long-awaited son among a cast of half-brothers, lacks this political interest in Syria.<sup>34</sup> This reading may be adapted to different reconstructions of compositional history in the book as a whole. However an early Jacob cycle is imagined to have taken form, whether or not with extended J and E documents, this narrative would have contributed one key part. Before it was embedded in the cycle of flight and return, the account of Jacob's journey would have unfolded according to its own logic, and this raises the question of how the sequence of sons would have been understood without reference to what follows. In particular, Jacob has not yet been identified with Israel and even in its current position the reader would not know to read all his sons as Israelite tribes without knowledge from elsewhere. On its own terms, how would an audience have understood a tale that culminates in Joseph as the long-desired only son of Jacob's preferred wife?

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<sup>33</sup> Genesis 31:3 is widely seen as an elaboration, with its references to Yahweh and to “the land of your fathers” (e.g., Westermann [*Genesis 12–36*, 486, 490]; Seebass [*Genesis II*, 371]).

<sup>34</sup> This conclusion also means that the political relations between the kingdoms of Aram-Damascus and Israel in the ninth and eighth centuries cannot date the Joseph-oriented tale about Jacob's journey in 29:1–30:24 (against Finkelstein and Römer, “Comments on the Historical Background,” 323–24, though I agree with the application to the larger unit).

## JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

In his 2015 Cornell dissertation, Dustin Nash reevaluates the language of brotherhood between peoples in biblical use as illuminated by Near Eastern patterns, on view especially in the correspondence found at early second-millennium Mari.<sup>35</sup> He concludes that in standard use, peoples and polities call each other “brother” not to identify themselves as components of the same larger entity but rather to affirm kinship as allies. Ancient “brothers” are separate peoples who have joined in common cause. One example is the exhortation in Deut 23:8, “Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother.” Against the backdrop of this positive conclusion, Nash observes that the family of tribal brothers in Genesis represents an anomaly. In light of ordinary usage, it makes no sense to identify the peoples of a single land called Israel as “brothers” from the same father.

My proposed reconstruction of an independent story of Jacob’s journey would explain Nash’s anomaly. If we do not assume that Jacob equals Israel in the original narrative, there is no reason to identify any “Jacob” people any more than there is an “Isaac” people, based on their roles in Genesis. Just as Isaac supplies the genealogical bridge between groups descended from Jacob and from Esau, Jacob would account for close connections understood to exist between the peoples defined as his sons.<sup>36</sup> In Nash’s terms, the half-brothers are thus envisioned as allies, with their more precise relationships delineated by their four different mothers. Joseph is most closely related to Issachar and Zebulun, born just before him to Rachel’s sister Leah and located just north of the Jezreel Valley. Leah’s older son Reuben, separated from the other three offspring of wives by four sons of servants, receives notable respect by this parentage, and my interpretation of the original birth narrative as older than Hos 12’s eighth-century allusions would help account for this figure’s position as Jacob’s firstborn.<sup>37</sup>

This conception of the Genesis brothers as allies rather than segments within a single people is no mere play with words, if we do not equate Jacob with Israel at this level of composition and reading. The anomalous reversal of normal “brother” usage would have occurred only when Israel was reconceived to embrace all the sons of Jacob, an association that would have reached east of

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<sup>35</sup> Dustin Nash, “‘Your Brothers, the Children of Israel’: Ancient Near Eastern Political Discourse and the Process of Biblical Composition” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> This is the best explanation for the earliest function of Isaac in the Genesis narrative, linking Jacob and Esau (Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 81–85).

<sup>37</sup> The problem is that Reuben seems to have disappeared from the landscape by the time of most biblical writing. Rather than force his removal from old texts that give him an essential place, as does Schorn (*Ruben und das System*) in her carefully argued monograph, we must somehow contend with the memory of a defunct population (so, F. M. Cross, “Reuben, the Firstborn of Jacob: Sacral Traditions and Early Israelite History,” *ZAW* 100 [1988]: 46–66).

the Jordan River and far north of the Jezreel Valley, which Lauren Monroe and I call Greater Israel, in contrast to an older Little Israel, confined to the highlands between Jerusalem and the Jezreel Valley.<sup>38</sup>

Within the tale of Jacob's journey, the birth narrative offers an alternative object with which the audience could identify: the people of Joseph. As already observed, Joseph is the only son elsewhere associated with the Central Highlands, roughly defined as the high country between Jerusalem and the Jezreel Valley, and the story omits the peoples otherwise located in this area: Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. The separate genealogical explanation of Ephraim and Manasseh as sons of Joseph, and the idea that Benjamin was a second son of Rachel, both find ways to make sense of these familiar groups in relation to a story that ignored them. Here, the one name that matters in the Central Highlands is Joseph, and this text alone could inspire the kind of extended reevaluation of the Bet Yosef that Monroe has now undertaken. Certain texts even align Israel with Joseph rather than Jacob. Psalm 80 begins:

- (2) Shepherd of Israel, listen,  
 who drives Joseph like a flock,  
 O one seated on the cherubim, blaze forth  
 (3) in the presence of Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,  
 rouse your strength to come save us.

The "house of Joseph" in Amos 5:6 corresponds to "the house of Israel" in verse 4, which has gone to "seek Bethel."

This is not to equate Joseph with Israel in Gen 30. Rather, we see how Joseph can name the particular people of a biblical audience, still visible beneath these texts' adaptation to other schemes. One attraction to concluding that Jacob's encounter at Bethel was added in front of the wife and children story before the notion of a return is the particular association of Joseph with that site, including the condemnation in Amos 5:4–6, just mentioned. In Judg 1:22–26, "the house of Joseph" is said to lay special claim to Bethel as its urban center. After a long paean to Judah, which I take as revision of an older list that now follows it, Joseph and Bethel stand apart as the single success before a litany of losses, beginning with the failures of Manasseh in the Jezreel Valley and Ephraim at Gezer. Both Manasseh and Ephraim are presented as peoples separate from Joseph.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See Monroe, "Origins and Development" (forthcoming); and Daniel E. Fleming, "The Bible's Little Israel: Textual Inclusions in a Later Matrix," *HBAI* (forthcoming).

<sup>39</sup> See Fleming (*Legacy of Israel*, 71); the analysis of Judg 1:1–20 as a Judah-oriented "revision through introduction" to this earlier list reflects a section of Sara Milstein's dissertation that is not incorporated in her eventual book ("Expanding Ancient Narratives: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Texts" [PhD diss., New York University, 2010], 146–61).

Nothing in Gen 29:1–30:24 offers a clear geographical setting for its composition and transmission as a separate tale and text. The Joseph interest would place it in the Central Highlands, but the action takes place outside the land, so that all these peoples have their origin in connection with herdsmen who frequent the inland back country, with a special link to Laban and through him to Haran. Only the introduction of the birth narrative by Jacob's dream at Bethel narrows the location to a single settlement with strong connections to biblical writing.<sup>40</sup> The remarkable set of references to a Jacob narrative in Hos 12 adds to the plausibility of Bethel interest, with their salute to Bethel itself (cf. Hos 10:15). It may be that the Joseph-centered text now lodged in Gen 29:1–30:24 found caretakers among Bethel scribes, perhaps in the eighth century.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to the Bethel orientation of the Genesis story about Jacob's journey and how Joseph was finally born to him, the cycle of flight and return combines various other geographical interests. As seen in the opening that now embeds the journey in the longer narrative, Jacob travels from Beersheba (28:10), a site picked up from Isaac's location at the end of Gen 26 (v. 33). After his various pauses in territory east of the Jordan River, Jacob ends up at Shechem in 33:18–20, where he builds the altar called El Elohe Yisrael, "El, the god of Israel." He only finds his way back to Bethel in 35:1–8, which picks up on the primary reference in chapter 28. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin on the way south, in Ephrathah (35:16).

Whatever the precise evolution of the Jacob narrative, we can see various lines of transformation as the shorter account of Jacob's journey was extended into a drama of flight and return, perhaps evoking later experience of exile to far-northern lands. This is most easily imagined in terms of Judah's defeat, deportation, and partial return, yet the longer text remains remarkably free of southern interests, which only appear in the largest geographical connections to Isaac at Beersheba in chapter 26 and the journey south from Bethel in chapter 35. I have wondered, with Clémence Bouloque, of later Jewish thought at Columbia University, whether the exile in question could rather be that of Israelites

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<sup>40</sup> The importance of Bethel for biblical writing is certain, though the date and particular assignments are much debated. Ernst Axel Knauf has proposed a major role in the Persian period (Ernst Axel Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 291–349; a possibility disputed by Israel Finkelstein and Lily Singer-Avitz on the basis of the ceramic remains from the site (Israel Finkelstein and Lily Singer-Avitz, "Reevaluating Bethel," *ZDPV* 125 [2009]: 33–48).

<sup>41</sup> Finkelstein and Römer ("Comments on the Historical Background," 323) also think of eighth-century Bethel for an early rendition of the Jacob narrative. For them, Jacob's dream vision, with its steps climbing to heaven, depends on Mesopotamian notions of a gate of heaven and the ziggurat as point of contact, influences that could be transmitted with the force of Assyrian arrival in the region in the mid-eighth century.

after 720.<sup>42</sup> The vision driving the combined composition may be traced more clearly against the silhouette of the older material incorporated into it.

As for the Jacob journey itself, the story surely comes from the central highlands and would have had to reach us by way of scribes in the northern kingdom of Israel. At the same time, its perspective is archaic, preceding the incorporation of these “brother” peoples into a larger, or “Greater,” Israel, evident at least by the time of the Omrides in the ninth century. This is not to say that the story as we have it predates the ninth century; it could have kept its form with maintenance of the narrative as such, only reinterpreted at the unknown moment of combination with other material. Nevertheless, with Hos 12 attesting to a full rendition of Jacob’s journey cast as “flight” to Aram and back, equating Jacob with Israel (v. 13) and recalling in verse 5 the tussle that gave him the name Israel in Gen 32:29, the background for Gen 29:1–30:24 would reach back into time before Assyrian intrusion. The text even shows no awareness of the 9th century tensions with Damascus as the local Aramean kingdom, and it thus suggests an archaic conception of how “Joseph” related to peoples who were eventually subsumed into the Omrides’ ambitious Israel. Such brotherhood would have belonged to a time when “Israel” itself did not incorporate groups by names such as Zebulun and Issachar, Dan and Naphtali. It is of no use to measure an account of ancestral genealogy by the category of “history” in the terms that occupied so many fifty years ago and more. Yet this is a text with deep historical interest and deep roots in the Bible’s past. Genesis 29–30 provides one biblical clue to the web of names and political alignments that underlay what finally coalesced as the ambitious kingdom of Israel, with a lesser Israel just one of those identities.

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## Lovesickness, Love Poetry, and Sexual Violence: Intertextuality and Inversion in 2 Samuel 13:1–22

Erin E. Fleming

Among P. Kyle McCarter Jr.'s many contributions to biblical studies are his magnificent commentaries on 1–2 Samuel.<sup>1</sup> Not only did McCarter untangle many textual knots and offer a compelling compositional history with understanding the earliest accounts of David as royal apologetic, but he also accomplished these feats while situating 1–2 Samuel within its ancient Near Eastern context and highlighting the literary artistry within the text. McCarter's commentaries have influenced two generations of scholars and continue to remain invaluable to students of the books of Samuel.

Within his commentary discussion of the story of Amnon's rape of Tamar in 2 Sam 13:1–22, McCarter notes that both Egyptian and Hebrew love poetry include the theme of lovesickness, which he connects to the narrative description of a young prince lovesick for his sister.<sup>2</sup> Here I will add to McCarter's observations by examining several potential connections between the narrative of Amnon's rape of Tamar in 2 Sam 13:1–22 and ancient Near Eastern love poetry, particularly the biblical Song of Songs. I will argue that the 2 Sam 13:1–22 distorts language and motifs found in love poetry, giving them a sinister twist that emphasizes the horror of the impending sexual violence. This twist on the tropes of love songs not only signals that the story will not end well, but also heightens the horror of the imminent sexual violence and betrayal.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980); McCarter, *II Samuel*, AB 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 320–21.

## METHOD

Such a study necessarily involves a discussion of potential intertextual connections between the Song of Songs and 1–2 Samuel as well as broader links with ancient Near Eastern love poetry. Technically, the term intertextuality refers to any influence on a particular text, but when dealing with ancient literature many, if not most, of these influences cannot be traced.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, discussions of intertextuality in biblical scholarship have tended to focus on literary dependence and/or allusion.<sup>4</sup> Here I seek a middle ground position by pointing out potential influences from ancient Near Eastern love poetry on the narrative account of 2 Sam 13:1–22 without going as far as arguing for direct dependence or allusion. Aside from the biblical Song of Songs, the examples of love poetry from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia unearthed by archaeological discovery date to much earlier periods than the earliest dates posited for the composition of 2 Sam 13:1–22.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See discussion in David M. Carr, “The Many Uses of Intertextuality in Biblical Studies: Actual and Potential,” *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010*, VTSup 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 505–35, esp. 509–17. The idea of intertextuality in literary studies was developed by Julia Kristeva, who first coined the term but later discarded it in favor of “transposition.” See Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66, cf. 36, 69, 86–87; Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 59–60.

<sup>4</sup> The classic study of inner-biblical allusion is Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), but the bibliography is extensive, especially since discussions of influence, dependency, and allusion also appear in many source-critical works. For further publications on inner-biblical allusion, see Lyle Eslinger, “Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category,” *VT* 42 (1992): 47–58; Benjamin D. Sommer, “Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Lyle Eslinger,” *VT* 46 (1996): 479–89; Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*, *Contraversions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Yair Zakovitch, *Introduction to Inner-Biblical Interpretation* (Even Yehuda: Reches, 1993); Konrad Schmid, “Innerbiblische Schriftauslegung: Aspekte der Forschungsgeschichte,” *Schriftauslegung in der Schrift: Festschrift für Odil Hannes Steck*, ed. Reinhard Gregor Kratz, Thomas Krüger, and Konrad Schmid, BZAW 300 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 1–22; Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, eds., *Bringing Out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14* (London: T&T Clark, 2003); Jeremy M. Hutton, “Isaiah 51:9–11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 271–303; Jeffrey M. Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *JBL* (2008): 241–65.

<sup>5</sup> The manuscripts of Egyptian love songs date from the nineteenth–early twentieth dynasties (ca. 1305–1105 BCE), and are written in literary late Egyptian, a non-spoken language. The Sumerian love poems date even earlier, to the third–early second millennium BCE, and Sumerian was written long after it died out as a spoken language.

The dating of Song of Songs is usually considered to be relatively late based on aspects of the language, but some scholars argue that the Song could be situated in a variety of different times and could have easily been composed at various dates before its final compilation. For further discussion, see Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 186–87; Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs*, Kindle edition, NICOT

However, certain motifs, such as love sickness or sibling terminology, which are also found in 2 Sam 13:1–22, appear in love poetry from various periods and cultures and suggest that particular tropes could have a fairly wide range within the genre. Rather than argue for direct dependence with specific love poems, then, I would suggest that the scribe/s responsible for the composition of 2 Sam 13:1–22 drew upon known literary tropes from a range of love poetry.

Recent studies of scribal culture have increasingly focused on the role of memory in the production and preservation of ancient texts. For instance, David Carr has effectively shown that memorization was a major component of ancient scribal education, which focused on “the oral-written mastery of a body of texts,”

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(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), ch. 1.5; Richard S. Hess, *Song of Songs*, Kindle edition, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), ch. 1.1.

Following the work of McCarter, a number of scholars date the David story in 1 Sam 16–1 Kgs 2 to the tenth century BCE, shortly after David’s lifetime. See McCarter, *I Samuel*, esp. 27–30; McCarter, “Apology of David,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 489–504; McCarter, “‘Plots, True or False’: The Succession Narrative as Court Apologetic,” *Interpretation* 35 (1981): 355–367; McCarter, *II Samuel*, esp. 9–16; “The Historical David,” *Interpretation* 40 (1986): 117–29; Stefan Seiler, *Geschichte von der Thronfolge Davids (2 Sam 9–20; 1 Kön 1–2): Untersuchungen zur Literaturkritik und Tendenz*, BZAW 267 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 299–313; Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 25–46; Baruch Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), esp. 57–72; Michael B. Dick, “The ‘History of David’s Rise to Power’ and the Neo-Babylonian Succession Apologies,” in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 3–19; Jeremy Hutton, *Transjordanian Palimpsest*, esp. 184–86; Erhard Blum, “Ein Anfang der Geschichtsschreibung? Anmerkungen zur sog. Thronfolgegeschichte und zum Umgang mit Geschichte im alten Israel,” in *Die sogenannte Thronfolgegeschichte Davids: Neue Einsichten und Anfragen*, ed. Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 4–37; Andrew Knapp, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, WAWSup 73 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015).

However, there continues to be spirited debate surrounding the composition history and date of 1–2 Samuel. For some examples of recent literary-historical studies, see Jacques Vermeylen, *La loi du plus fort: Histoire de la rédaction des récits davidiques de 1 Samuel à 1 Rois 2*, BETL 154 (Leuven: University Press, 2000); Reinhard G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London: T&T Clark, 2005); trans. of *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Alexander A. Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Erzählung von König David in II Sam 1–5*, BZAW 335 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical, and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible’s Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition* (New York: Free Press, 2006); Jeremy Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest: The Overwritten Texts of Personal Exile and Transformation in the Deuteronomistic History* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009); John Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009); Jacob L. Wright, *David, King of Israel, and Caleb in Biblical Memory* (New York: Cambridge, 2014); Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, *The House of David: Between Political Formation and Literary Revision* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016).

and involved the “scribal masters’ highly fluid use of preceding textual materials.”<sup>6</sup> Regarding interconnections between various texts, he writes that “Israelite scribes most likely would have drawn on their verbatim memory of other texts in quoting, borrowing from, or significantly revising them.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Karel van der Toorn has written about the significance of understanding the world of the Bible as a primarily oral culture, with writing used to support oral performance. About the generation of new written material, he writes that an ancient scribe “practices the craft of literary composition using the tools and techniques he acquired during his scribal education. The predilection for traditional terminology, formal language, citation, allusion, and a display of learning is characteristic of the spirit of the scribal workshop.”<sup>8</sup> The memorization model for scribal education significantly impacts our understanding not only of how texts were preserved, but also how they were created.<sup>9</sup> Any literary composition would have been influenced inevitably by the existing textual tradition memorized by the scribe as part of the educational process, but a scribe could also creatively interact with this learned material in generating a new text.

This understanding of orality and memorization in scribal culture should complicate the ways in which scholars often discuss questions of intertextuality and literary dependence in biblical texts. For example, in discussing Carr’s memorization model for scribal education, Sara Milstein remarks:

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<sup>6</sup> David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13, 292. Also see Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 161–62.

<sup>8</sup> Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, Kindle edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 5.2.

<sup>9</sup> The number of studies on scribal education in the ancient Near East is vast, but examples include: Andre Lemaire, *Les ecoles et la formation de la Bible dans l’ancien Israel*, OBO 39 (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981); Susan Niditch, *Oral Text, Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010); Adrian Schenker, *Anfänge der Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments: Studien zu Entstehung und Verhältnis der frühesten Textformen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011); Juha Pakkala, *God’s Word Omitted: Omissions in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); Erin E. Fleming and Heather D. D. Parker, “Education: Ancient Near East,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*, ed. Julia O’Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Daniel Pioske, “The Scribe of David: A Portrait of a Life,” *Maarav* 20 (2013): 163–88; Pioske, “Prose Writing in an Age of Orality: A Study of 2 Sam 5:6–9,” *VT* 66 (2016): 261–79.

If we take this to be true, this necessarily affects how we evaluate cases in the Bible of what appear to be allusions, type-scenes, or inner-biblical exegesis. Rather than assume that all of the parallels and/or subtle differences between two texts are purposeful and therefore require interpretation, it is possible that at least in some cases, these details are better explained by the memorization model: scribes drew on storehouses of memorized material as building blocks for expanding texts and producing new ones.<sup>10</sup>

If we understand scribes and their memories as veritable storehouses of the textual tradition, intertextual connections should perhaps be expected in virtually any literary composition and might appear in subtler ways than often expected.

In the ancient Near East, love poetry comes from a scholarly, nonpolitical literary genre, as well as traditional oral compositions. The story of Amnon's rape of Tamar in 2 Sam 13:1–22, on the other hand, is a historical narrative, and, as part of the larger David story within the Deuteronomistic history, it is also a politically-oriented tale. There is also the difference of narrative prose in 2 Sam 13:1–22 versus the poetic verse used in love poetry. Of course, modern distinctions between literary genres, and even poetry versus prose, would not necessarily have fit ancient categories.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as part of the memorization-enculturation model of scribal education, scribes copied and memorized texts from various genres, and they would then have these texts stored in their memories where they could be reshaped and applied in various compositions. The narrative of 2 Sam 13:1–22, which has been noted for its highly literary techniques,<sup>12</sup> would have been as much a product of scribal circles as love poems and composed by a high-level scribe who would have presumably known various love songs and utilized

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<sup>10</sup> Sara Milstein, "Rewriting Ancient Texts: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature" (PhD diss., New York University, 2010), 14. Cf. her discussion of Carr in Milstein, *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (New York: Oxford, 2016), 29–30.

<sup>11</sup> See Molly M. Zahn, "Genre and Rewritten Scripture: A Reassessment," *JBL* 131 (2012): 271–88, esp. 276–81; Carol A. Newsom, "Pairing Research Questions and Theories of Genre: A Case Study of the Hodayot," *DSD* 17 (2010): 241–59.

<sup>12</sup> A number of literary-critical works have featured 2 Sam 13:1–22 in their discussions. Shimeon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art and the Bible*, trans. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), 239–82; Charles Conroy, *Absalom! Absalom! Narrative and Language in 2 Sam 13–20* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); J. P. Fokkelman, *King David (II Sam 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2)*, vol. 1 of *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 99–124; Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 37–63; Fokkeli van Dijk-Hemmes, "Tamar and the Limits of Patriarchy: Between Rape and Seduction," in *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Mieke Bal, LHBOTS 81 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1989), 135–56; Ken Stone, *Sex, Honor, and Power in the Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSUP 234 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 106; Susanne Scholz, *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 38–42.

them in this account of a “love” story gone very wrong. Below, I will examine three themes from Hebrew and ancient Near Eastern love poetry that appear within the story in 2 Sam 13:1–22: lovesickness, puns on words like “heart” or “love” ( $\sqrt{lb}$ ,  $\sqrt{dwd}$ ); and sibling terminology.

#### LOVESICKNESS

When Amnon’s lust for Tamar goes unmet, he becomes depressed. Amnon is described in 2 Sam 13:2 as “frustrated to the point of making himself ill” (*wayyēšer lə’ammôn ləhithallôt*).<sup>13</sup> The situation looks dire enough that Amnon’s cousin and “wise” (*hākām*) friend Jonadab inquires as to why he is so “downcast” (*dal*) in 2 Sam 13:4.<sup>14</sup> The basic meaning of the adjective *dal* is “low” or “poor,” but here Jonadab is describing Amnon’s appearance and demeanor. When Amnon tells Jonadab of his obsession with Tamar, he says, “I desire Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom” (*’et-tāmār ’āhôt ’absālōm ’āhī ’ānī ’ōhēb*). As noted by McCarter, the effect of alliteration with the guttural aleph followed by –o and –a sounds makes Amnon’s response to Jonadab “a series of gasping sighs,” giving the response a rather dramatic effect, especially if read aloud.<sup>15</sup> The opening verses of 2 Sam 13:1–22 thus paint a rather vivid description of the infatuated Amnon sulking in his unrequited obsession over Tamar. We might even say colloquially that, at least in the beginning of the story, Amnon appears to be lovesick.

Descriptions of lovesickness appear in both ancient Hebrew and Egyptian love poetry. In these love songs, the speakers’ descriptions of lovesickness bear a resemblance to the description of Amnon’s despondence over Tamar at the beginning of the narrative in 2 Sam 13:1–22. Two similar examples can be found in Song 2:5 and 5:8 where the female speaker describes herself as “lovesick” (*hōlat ’ahābā*).

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<sup>13</sup> The basic meaning of the root  $\sqrt{sr}$  is “tie” or “bind,” but it can also have an intransitive meaning of “cramped” or “restricted,” applied both literally and figuratively. There are a few other instances where the term has a psychological component, two of which are part of the David story: 2 Sam 1:26, David’s lament over Saul and Jonathan, and 2 Sam 24:14, David’s distress over the plague sent as a result of his census. Other examples include Pss 31:10; 69:18; Lam 1:20; and 1 Chr 21:13.

<sup>14</sup> Jonadab is the son of David’s brother Shimeah (2 Sam 13:3) and so is cousin to both Amnon and Tamar. Like Amnon, Jonadab should also value protecting the sexual honor of his female relatives, but instead he knowingly places her in a vulnerable situation by developing a plan that results in her sexual violation, an additional betrayal of Tamar by one of her kinsmen. It seems that Jonadab values cultivating Amnon’s favor more highly than he values Tamar or fears possible retribution from Absalom or David.

<sup>15</sup> See McCarter, *II Samuel*, 321. Cf. Conroy, *Absalom, Absalom!*, 29; and Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 40.

*sammākūnī bā`āšīšōt*  
*rappədūnī battappūhīm*  
*kī-hōlat`ahābā`ānī*

Sustain me with raisin cakes,  
 Refresh me with quinces,  
 For I am sick with love.  
 Song 2:5

*hišba`it`etkem bānōt yārūšālāim*  
*`im-timšə`ū`et-dōdī mah-taggidū lō*  
*šehōlat`ahābā`ānī*

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem:  
 If you find my beloved  
 What will you tell him?  
 That I am sick with love!<sup>16</sup>  
 Song 5:8

The stanza in Song 2:5 occurs in the midst of the girl praising her beloved and refers to her need to lie down and eat sustaining food as a result of being lovesick. The Hebrew noun *hōlā* ( $\sqrt{hlh}$ ) conveys the loss of physical strength, often with illness. In this context, the phrase can be translated “sick with love” or “faint with love,” or even “in a swoon of love.”<sup>17</sup> In his commentary on the Song of Songs, Tremper Longman writes that the girl in the Song “is overwhelmed emotionally and physically by her love.... The emotion of love can overwhelm a person psychologically, and the physical rigors of lovemaking can wear a person out. The context does not make it clear whether one or the other, or perhaps more likely both, is meant.”<sup>18</sup> Amnon’s description as “making himself ill” (*hithallot*) and “downcast” (*dal*) is similar to the physical languishing applied to the girl in the Song who is “lovesick” in the sense that she is overwhelmed with love. The girl’s need for delicacies as she swoons also has connections to Amnon’s later request for sustaining food from Tamar.

Amnon’s lovesickness, however, is caused by Tamar’s absence rather than her presence, as in Song 5:8 when the girl goes in search of her beloved at night and is punished by the authorities. Unable to find her beloved, she then appeals to the daughters of Jerusalem to tell him of her lovesickness. Richard Hess writes, “As with his presence, so with his absence, her longing desire drives from her all sense of well-being.... His absence may alter the way in which the love is expressed, but it does not affect its power.”<sup>19</sup> Both Amnon in 2 Sam 13 and the girl

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<sup>16</sup> Tremper Longman compares the use of *hōlat`ahābā* in Song 2:5 and 5:8: “In chapter 2, she was physically spent from the exercise of love. She needed the sustenance of food, of aphrodisiacs, to carry on. In other words, he is present in the poem in chapter 2. Here, however, he is absent, and so here the translation “sick” rather than “faint” is appropriate. She pines for him. She needs him desperately. Her message is an exclamation of desire and a plea for union.” Longman, *Song of Songs*, ch. 5, poem 14. McCarter also quotes Song 5:8 as a comparative example to 2 Sam 13:2–3, *II Samuel*, 321.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Alter, *Strong as Death Is Love: The Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Jonah, and Daniel*, Kindle edition (New York: Norton, 2015), ch. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Longman, *Song of Songs*, ch. 2, poem 7. See also the discussion in Richard S. Hess, *Song of Songs*, ch. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Hess, *Song of Songs*, ch. 5.



in the Song debase themselves to a degree as a result of their unrequited infatuation—Amnon by acting *dal*, the girl in the Song by going out at night unescorted, which results in her being beaten. Also, in both Song 5:8 and 2 Sam 13 the lovesick protagonists tell their peer/s of the same gender about pining after their love interests.

References to lovesickness also appear in ancient Egyptian love poetry. In the Papyrus Chester Beatty “Song of Entertainment” both male and female speakers describe themselves as taken ill as a result of being in love. In one stanza, the female speaker says:

My beloved (lit. “brother”) confuses my heart with his voice,  
He caused (love) sickness to seize me.<sup>20</sup>  
P.Beatty 1.1.2.1–4

The term *ḥꜣy.t*, rendered here as lovesickness, usually “refers to stomach and vein problems,” but since it appears in several love songs in these instances it should be understood as lovesickness.<sup>21</sup> In another stanza, the female speaker gives a description of her inability to perform typical tasks, especially preparing her *toilette*:

My heart rushes wildly  
When I think of (my) love of you.  
It does not let me behave properly,  
It has abandoned its place.  
It does not let me put on a tunic,  
I no longer wear my cloak.

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<sup>20</sup> Translation after Renata Landgráfová and Hana Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I: Ancient Egyptian Love Songs in Context* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2009), 103. For further discussions of ancient Egyptian love poetry generally, see Alfred Hermann, *Altägyptische Liebesdichtung* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959); John L. Foster, *Love Songs of the New Kingdom* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1974); John B. White, *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry*, SBLDS 38 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1978); John Gwyn Griffiths, “Love as a Disease,” in *Studies in Egyptology: Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, ed. Sarah Israelit-Groll, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), 349–64; Pascal Vernus, *Chants d’amour de l’Égypte antique: présentation, traduction et notes* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1992); Barbara Hughes Fowler, *Love Lyrics of Ancient Egypt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Bernard Mathieu, *La Poésie Amoureuse de L’Égypte Ancienne: Recherches sur un genre littéraire au Nouvel Empire* (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1997); John C. Darnell, “A Midsummer Night’s Succubus: The Herdsman’s Encounters in P. Berlin 3024, the Pleasures of Fishing and Fowling, the Songs of the Drinking Place, and the Ancient Egyptian Love Poetry,” in *Opening the Tablet Box: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Benjamin R. Foster*, ed. Sarah C. Melville and Alice L. Slotsky (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 99–140; Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess II: World of the Love Songs* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I*, 103.

I do not apply black paint to my eyes,  
 And I do not anoint myself at all.<sup>22</sup>  
 P.Beatty 1.1.4

Here the confusion caused by lovesickness is “compared to state of personal disarray,”<sup>23</sup> in which the speaker cannot even attend to normal dressing habits. Jonadab’s description of Amnon as *dal* could indicate that he has even begun to neglect his physical appearance like the girl in this song.

It is not only women who suffer from lovesickness in ancient Near Eastern love poems. Also, in Papyrus Chester Beatty, a male speaker gives an extended description of lovesickness:

For seven days until yesterday I have not seen my beloved (lit. sister),  
 Illness has possessed me.  
 My limbs have become heavy,  
 And I have lost all control over myself.  
 If the greatest of physicians come to me,  
 My heart would not be satisfied with their remedies.  
 Even the lector priests cannot find the way,  
 My illness is not recognized.<sup>24</sup>  
 P. Beatty 1.1.7

As the reader can guess, the cure to the speaker’s illness is his beloved, which is why his “sickness” is beyond the healing powers of the doctor or religious specialist. In the poem, the speaker only becomes well again when he beholds her once more. The pining of the speaker for his beloved to return in the poem has echoes in Amnon’s initial despondency about Tamar, as well as the important plot element of Amnon appearing physically ill.

As a remedy to Amnon’s “lovesickness,” Jonadab suggests a scheme whereby Amnon can be in close physical proximity to Tamar. Jonadab advises Amnon to feign illness and then, when David checks on him, to request that Tamar attend to him while he is sick.<sup>25</sup> This is a particularly appropriate deception since

<sup>22</sup> Translation after Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I*, 108–9.

<sup>23</sup> Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I*, 109. Translated literally, the girl is unable to “go about like a human being” (109).

<sup>24</sup> Translation after Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I*, 155. McCarter includes this poem in his commentary and writes “the original audience of the story of Amnon and Tamar may have known the poetic malady of lovesickness in its Egyptian expression and recognized its symptoms here in a young man who is love-sick for his actual sister” (*II Samuel*, 320–21).

<sup>25</sup> The Dt stem is used both when Amnon pretends to be ill in 2 Sam 13:6 and when he “makes himself sick” in his sexual frustration over Tamar in 2 Sam 13:2. As is well known, the Dt often has a reflexive meaning, as seen nicely in 2 Sam 13:2, since Amnon is essentially making himself sick from psychological distress. However, in 2 Sam 13:6 the Dt stem has different nuance since Amnon is only

Amnon has already seemed ill by his languishing over Tamar. The idea of faking an illness as a means of coming in contact with one's beloved, presents yet another connection to ancient Egyptian love poetry. In the Egyptian Papyrus Harris, a male speaker says:

I will lie inside,  
 And I will feign illness.  
 My neighbors will then come to see me,  
 And (my) beloved will come with them.  
 She will put the doctors to shame,  
 For she knows my illness.<sup>26</sup>  
 P.Harr. 500.1.7

This poem is similar to the poem cited above pertaining to the lovesick boy who can only be cured by the return of his beloved, but in this poem the young man is merely pretending to be ill so as to engender a visit from his beloved. However, instead of a tacit tryst for two lovers, the spurious sickness described in 2 Sam 13:1–22 results in rape. The speaker in Papyrus Harris deceives his neighbors, not his beloved, whereas the deception in 2 Sam 13:1–22 is directed at Tamar. Moreover, the Egyptian love poem's speaker imagines his beloved as surmising the situation immediately and knowing exactly how to "cure" him, but in 2 Sam 13:1–22, Tamar, obeying an order from her father, the king, assumes her visit to Amnon is innocent because it is her brother making the request.

As can be seen from the above examples, the connections between 2 Sam 13 and ancient Hebrew and Egyptian love songs regarding the motif of lovesickness do not rely upon overlapping language or specific terminology but a shared idea of the theme of lovesickness. I do not wish to argue that 2 Sam 13 directly alludes to the love poems quoted above, but rather that the story draws upon known literary motifs surrounding romantic love and inverts these motifs in order to highlight the horror of the sexual violation in the narrative. These descriptions of lovesickness might seem natural enough to anyone who has ever been in love, and one assumes that there would have been no lack of hormonal young people in the ancient Near East acting in ways similar to those described in the poems. However, tropes pertaining to erotic love are culturally construed, particularly in their

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giving the appearance of illness. A reflexive component can still be implied here, as Amnon is still "making himself sick," if by appearance only.

<sup>26</sup> Translation after Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I*, 157. See also Fox, *Song of Songs*, 13.

literary representations of, and they vary across time and space.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, despite the familiarity of lovesickness to modern readers, the motif holds specific cultural significance in these works.

Given that 2 Sam 13:1–22 is ultimately about rape, not love, the writer of 2 Sam 13:1–22 inverts the lovesickness motif as it unfolds, showing that it is a love story gone completely awry. Already in verse 2 the statement explaining Amnon’s lovesickness—that it was because he could not see a way to “do anything” to Tamar (*la ʾāsôt lāh mē ʾumā*)—is telling, for this certainly does not sound like love poetry.<sup>28</sup> Although certainly sensual, ancient Near Eastern love poetry is generally reticent about describing intercourse itself,<sup>29</sup> and, by comparison this statement about Amnon’s sexual frustration seems rather blunt and non-emotional. Thus, even though Amnon seemingly pines away for Tamar like the speakers in love poems, the reason given for his dejection indicates that his goal is solely sexual satisfaction.

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<sup>27</sup> Following the influential works of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, the attitudes and meanings associated with eroticism, sexuality, and sexual activity that were once thought to be relatively static over time are now generally understood as varying diachronically as well as between contemporaneous cultures. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1978, 1985, 1988); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990, 1999). Following the larger academic trend, sex has also become an increasingly discussed topic within biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholarship, particularly as it relates to issues of gender and power. Some key examples include Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Trible, *Texts of Terror*; Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God’s Phallus and other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston: Beacon, 1994); Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994); Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting, *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2–6, 2001*, 2 vols. (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002); David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hilary B. Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006); Carolyn Graves-Brown, *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: ‘Don Your Wig for a Joyful Hour’* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2008); and Renata Landgráfová and Hana Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I and II*; Michael Coogan, *God and Sex: What the Bible Really Says* (New York: Twelve, 2010); Susanne Scholz, *Sacred Witness*; Jennifer Wright Knust, *Unprotected Texts: The Bible’s Surprising Contradictions about Sex and Desire* (New York: HarperOne, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> The expression “to do” could be a more crude way of referring to sex, as opposed to euphemistic “be” (*ʾhyh*) in 2 Sam 13:20. Judges 19:24 also uses the verb *ʾšh* in the context of sex when the Gibeonite host offers the mob his virgin daughter and the Levite’s concubine and tells the men that they can “debase them and do what you want to them” (*ʾannū ʾōtam wa ʾāšū lāhem haṭṭōb bē ʾēnekem*), which certainly indicates rape, since the crowd wants to “know” (*ʾyḏ*) the Levite and they “abuse” (*ʾʾll*) and “violate” (*ʾnh*) his *pīlegeš* (Judg 19:25; 20:5). Likewise, the use of the verb *ʾšh* in 2 Sam 13:2 could be the narrator’s hint about the coming violation.

<sup>29</sup> See Jerrold Cooper, “Gendered Sexuality in Sumerian Love Poetry,” in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations*, ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 85–97; cf. Carr, *Erotic Word*, 109–38.

## “HEART”Y PUNS

When Jonadab suggests that Amnon should pretend to be ill and request that Tamar prepare food for him, the narrative describes Amnon’s actions as fitting Jonadab’s suggestion almost exactly, except for the wording of Amnon’s request to David. In 2 Sam 13:5 Jonadab instructs Amnon to request of David that Tamar make food for him using the general term *leḥem*, but Amnon specifically requests that “Tamar should prepare (*ṭalabbēb*) two *lābibôt*” (2 Sam 13:6). The noun and verb both come from  $\sqrt{lbb}$ , related to the frequently-attested terms *lēb* or *lēbāb* “heart.” The term *lābibôt* is unknown elsewhere, but the relationship of the noun to  $\sqrt{lbb}$  could refer to the shape of the food or function in “strengthening the heart” as sustaining fare. The denominative piel verb  $\sqrt{lbb}$  has erotic connotations, as in Song 4:9:

*libbabūnī ’āḥōtī kallā*  
*libbabtīnī bə’āḥad mē’ēnayik*  
*bə’āḥad ’ānāq miššawwəronāyik*

You arouse me, my sister, my bride,  
 You arouse me with one [glance] of your eyes,  
 With a single strand of your necklace.

In this section of the Song the male speaker is praising the girl and here he “expresses the strength of his desire” for her.<sup>30</sup> Other translations include “ravish,”<sup>31</sup> “capture my heart,”<sup>32</sup> “enhearten,”<sup>33</sup> or “drive me crazy.”<sup>34</sup> Based on the connection of the verb  $\sqrt{lbb}$  and the noun *lābibôt* to *lēb/lēbāb* “heart,” Amnon employs an erotic double entendre in his request.<sup>35</sup> Whether heart-shaped or sustaining fare, the connotation is apparent to the reader, especially given the Amnon’s “lovesick” state.

Additionally, Amnon, as instructed by Jonadab, specifically requests to eat from Tamar’s hand (*wə’ebreh miyyādāh*). This stipulation ensures that Tamar herself must attend Amnon rather than merely sending food to him, but it also contains another erotic double entendre also present in the Song of Songs. In Song 4:10 the male speaker exclaims:

<sup>30</sup> Longman, *Song of Songs*, ch. 4, poem 12.

<sup>31</sup> NRSV; NKJV; ASV; Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs*, AB 7C (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 478–80.

<sup>32</sup> JPS.

<sup>33</sup> Graeme Auld, *I and II Samuel*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 479.

<sup>34</sup> Longman *Song of Songs*, ch. 4, poem 12.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 322; Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, 105–6; A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC 11 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1989), 174; Auld, *I and II Samuel*, 478.

*mah-yāpū dōdayik 'āhōtī kallā*  
*mah-ṭōbū dōdayik miyyayin*  
*wəreāh šəmānayik mikkol-bāšāmim*

How delightful is your lovemaking, my sister, my bride!  
 How much better your lovemaking than wine,  
 The scent of your ointments than all the spices!<sup>36</sup>

An erotic nuance associated with *yād* is the root  $\sqrt{ydd}$ , which means “love,” including sexual love.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Song 4:1 could be referring to Song 1:2, where the girl says that the boy’s “lovemaking is better than wine” (*kī ṭōbīm dōdek miyyayin*), particularly mentioning the “kisses of his mouth” (*minnāšiqōt pihū*). Amnon again uses the term *yād* in 2 Sam 13:10 when he commands Tamar to come into his inner chamber so he can “eat from[her] hand,” (*'ebreh miyyādēk*). When Tamar obeys, Amnon immediately grabs her and demands sex instead of food. The repetition of the phrase “eat ( $\sqrt{brh}$ ) from one’s hand (*yād*)” at key points in the narrative lends support to a secondary sexual meaning in both instances.

Graeme Auld points out that *dōdayik* “your love” in Song 4:10 picks up on the *dwd/ydyd* relationship between David’s name and Solomon’s possible throne name *Yādīdyāh* “beloved of Yahweh” in 2 Sam 12:25.<sup>38</sup> He further suggests that, in addition to the piel  $\sqrt{lbb}$  and its denominative noun *lābibōt*, Song 4:9–10 contains several other word links to the immediate context in 2 Sam 13:1–22: “sister,” “eyes,” and “beautiful.”<sup>39</sup> Commenting on the intertextual similarities between the beginning of 2 Sam 13:1–22 and Song 4:9–10, Auld writes,

The emphases on Tamar as Amnon’s (and not just Absalom’s) sister (vv. 5, 6) and on Amnon seeing her with his eyes as she prepared what would hearten him constitute a remarkable echo of the words of the lover in the Song. It is not easy to suppose that writer and readers of the story of Amnon and Tamar were ignorant of these lines of the Song, or possibly of the traditional love poetry on which the classic Song drew.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hess, *Song of Songs*, ch. 4.

<sup>37</sup> This root is also attested in Ugaritic, Aramaic and Arabic (for examples see *HALOT*, s. v. “דד”). See discussion in Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 220.

<sup>38</sup> Auld, *I and II Samuel*, 470, 479.

<sup>39</sup> Auld, *I and II Samuel*, 479.

<sup>40</sup> Auld, *I and II Samuel*, 479. However, Auld continues, “if our author knows the Song, then at least this part of Samuel may be from quite late in the biblical period.” Although this dating could be possible, and the interconnections between 2 Sam 13:1–22 and Song 4:9–10 are certainly suggestive, arguments for the dating of both 1–2 Samuel and the Song of Songs range from early monarchic to post-exilic. Moreover, even if the case could unquestionably be made for 2 Sam 13:1–22 directly alluding to Song of Songs, this would only mean portions of the Song predate the story of 2 Sam 13:1–22 and could be used to argue either a relatively early or late date. Given the presence of love poetry

This section focuses on examples of intertextual connections between 2 Sam 13 and Song of Songs, specifically Song 4:9–10. This section does discuss the overlap in usage of particular terms; however, all of these words are either common words (*yad*) or derive from roots frequently attested ( $\sqrt{libb}$ ;  $\sqrt{dwd}$ ) in biblical Hebrew. Therefore, although I regard the similarities between 2 Sam 13:6 and Song 4:9–10 as suggestive, I still prefer to distance my overall argument from any claim of allusion or direct dependence in favor of a more generalized intertextual discussion. Second Samuel 13:6 has Amnon using three terms associated with sexuality—the verb *talabbēb*, *lābibôt* and *yad*—in his seemingly innocent request to David, imparting a secondary sexual nuance to his entire statement in 2 Sam 13:6. On one level, Amnon requests that Tamar feed him by hand to nourish him during his illness, but on another level, he expresses his desire for Tamar to revive him from his lovesick state through sexual gratification. The wordplay involved in Amnon’s request heightens the dramatic tension of the narrative.

#### SIBLING TERMINOLOGY

The narrative of 2 Sam 13:1–22 highlights the sibling relationship between Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom by repeatedly referring to these characters as “brother” or “sister.”<sup>41</sup> A form of the basic term for sibling (*’āh/’āhôt*) occurs twenty-one times in the narrative. The greatest concentration of sibling terms occurs before Tamar’s refusal of Amnon in 2 Sam 13:1–12, but sibling terminology is entirely absent when Amnon rapes Tamar and the rupture of the sibling relationship occurs in 2 Sam 13:13–19. Sibling language reappears when Absalom enters the narrative in 2 Sam 13:20. This single verse employs terms for brother and sister five times, emphasizing Absalom’s position as Tamar’s full brother and future avenger.<sup>42</sup> At first glance, sibling terms make sense in a story about two brothers and a sister. However, given the other evidence of connections to love poetry, the repeated use of sibling terminology in 2 Sam 13:1–22 should be viewed in light of sibling terminology in ancient Near Eastern love poetry.

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motifs throughout different periods and cultures, it would be difficult to date 2 Sam 13 on this basis alone.

Auld also makes a case for 2 Sam 13:1–22 influencing parts of Genesis, particularly the Joseph story. See Graeme Auld, “Tamar between David, Judah, and Joseph,” in *Samuel at the Threshold: Selected Works of Graeme Auld*, SOTSMS (New York: Routledge, 2016), 213–24. On the written connection between the garment Tamar rips after being raped and Joseph’s famous “coat of many colors,” see Heath Dewrell, “How Tamar’s Veil Became Joseph’s Coat,” *Biblica* 97 (2016): 161–74.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 328.

<sup>42</sup> Bar-Efrat (*Narrative Art*, 272) discusses the concentric arrangement of sibling terms. Cf. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, 112.

Sibling terminology, so prevalent in 2 Sam 13:1–22, was a convention of ancient Near Eastern love lyrics as terms of endearment.<sup>43</sup> For instance, in the Song of Songs the male speaker refers to his beloved several times as *’āhōtī kallā* “my sister, my bride” (Song 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1). In these instances, the term “sister” is parallel with “bride,” but, neither should be taken literally. Rather, these terms signify affection and intimacy. Other terms of endearment in the Song, such as *ra ’yā* “darling” or *dōd* “beloved” likewise derive from kinship or social circles.<sup>44</sup> On the use of sibling terminology in love poetry, Richard Hess writes that a sibling relationship:

is not one legally created nor one that could be dissolved as in a divorce. Instead, a sister, like a brother, represents the closest of peer relationships, wherein one is prepared to share intimacies and every part of life. The reference to the female’s role as sister and bride is intended to convey both the closeness of the brother/ sister relationship and the commitment of the marriage.<sup>45</sup>

Some examples from Song of Songs make it clear that the speakers in the poems are not related. The speakers do not appear to live together and there appear to be obstacles to the lovers meeting (Song 1:6; 3:1–5; 5:1–8; 8:8–10). The clearest example that the speakers in the Song are not kin appears in Song 8:1–2, where the female speaker wishes that her beloved could be like a brother to her, for then they could show public affection and she could bring him to her “mother’s house.”

The use of sibling terminology occurs frequently in Egyptian love poetry, with the majority of the poems containing a reference to the beloved as “brother” or “sister.” The following represents a few examples:

1. “I’ll say to Ptah, the Lord of Truth: ‘Give me (my) sister tonight’<sup>46</sup>
2. “I found my brother in his bedroom, and my heart was exceedingly joyful”<sup>47</sup>
3. “To the outer door I set my face: my brother is coming to me”<sup>48</sup>
4. “One alone is (my) sister, having no peer, more gracious than all other women”<sup>49</sup>
5. “How skilled is she, my sister, at casting the lasso, yet she’ll [draw in] no cattle”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Besides Song of Songs, sibling language is also used in this way in Job 17:14 and Prov 7:4. Cf. Hess, *Song of Songs*, ch. 4.

<sup>44</sup> The word *dōd* “beloved” derives from *√dwd* meaning “uncle” and *ra ’yā* from *rē ’ā* “neighbor, friend.”

<sup>45</sup> Hess, *Song of Songs*, ch. 4.

<sup>46</sup> P.Harr. 500.1.6. Translation after Fox, *Song of Songs*, 11. Here I follow Fox’s translations since he translates the sibling terms literally.

<sup>47</sup> P.Harr. 500.2.6. Translation after Fox, *Song of Songs*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> P.Harr. 500.2.7. Translation after Fox, *Song of Songs*, 24.

<sup>49</sup> P. Beatty 1.1. Translation after Fox, *Song of Songs*, 52.

<sup>50</sup> P.Beatty 3.3. Translation after Fox, *Song of Songs*, 73.



It seems clear within Egyptian poetry as well that the sibling terminology is not to be taken literally. For example, in Papyrus Chester Beatty the male and female speakers seem to have interacted no more than by exchanging glances, and there are familial and social obstacles to their love being consummated.<sup>51</sup> Fox notes that usage of sibling terminology as term of affection “probably arose because of siblings are the closest blood relations.”<sup>52</sup> Indeed, as noted by Renata Landgráfová and Hana Navrátilová, the word *sn.t* conveys a broader relationship than the English “sister” and could be applied to any close female person around the same age as the speaker.<sup>53</sup>

Sibling terminology as a term of affection also appears in Sumerian love songs, although not as frequently as in the Egyptian material. One Sumerian love poem speaks of the eyes and mouth of the woman delighting the male speaker with the refrain “come, my beloved sister.”

The gazing of your eyes is pleasant to me; come my beloved sister.  
 The speaking of your mouth is pleasant to me, my honey-mouthed of her mother.  
 The kissing of your lips is pleasant to me; come my beloved sister.<sup>54</sup>

The “sister,” for her part, makes the “brother” take an oath of devotion to her alone:

For as long as you live, as long as you live, you shall take an oath for me, brother  
 of the countryside, for as long as you live you shall take an oath for me.

You shall take an oath for me that you will not touch another.  
 You shall take an oath for me that you will not . . . . your head on anyone else.<sup>55</sup>

Other examples of sibling terminology as a term of endearment between two lovers occur in the poems Dumuzi-Inana C, D, and G. However, in the Sumerian Dumuzi-Inana love songs, there is sometimes an intermediary role played by an actual sibling, whether Inana’s brother Utu or Dumuzi’s sister Geshtinanna, which can impede clarity regarding the identity of the sibling in the poem.

At first glance, the appearance of sibling terms in a story about siblings seems rather straightforward. However, the examples of love poetry elements within 2 Sam 13:1–22 gives a secondary nuance to the sibling terminology in the narrative. As the above examples show, the use of “brother” or “sister” as terms of affection occurred in extant examples of ancient Near Eastern love poetry regardless of

<sup>51</sup> See Fox, *Song of*, 63.

<sup>52</sup> Fox, *Song of Songs*, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Landgráfová and Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I*, 93.

<sup>54</sup> Dumuzid-Inana B, ETCSL 4.08.02, 4–6.

<sup>55</sup> Dumuzid-Inana B, ETCSL 4.08.02, 13–16.

differences in time, space, languages, and cultures. The repetition of sibling language in 2 Sam 13:1–22 is the utilization of a known literary trope with a sardonic undertone since Amnon’s love interest is in fact his actual sister. The repetition of “brother” and “sister” throughout the narrative in 2 Sam 13:1–22 underlines the familial relations of the main characters and serves as a reminder of the incestuous nature of the rape.<sup>56</sup>

### CONCLUSION

As the above examples demonstrate, the scribe who wrote 2 Sam 13:1–22 drew on classic motifs found in ancient love poetry. Broadening the comparison beyond the biblical Song of Songs to include ancient Near Eastern love poems shows that certain love poetry tropes could be wide-ranging, which moves the discussion from one of dependency or allusion to one about intertextuality more generally. The application of recent discussions of scribal culture brings new insights into the narrative in 2 Sam 13:1–22 and reinforces the orality/memorization model of scribal education in ancient Israel.

A later corroborating example can be seen in the medieval Hebrew poem by Solomon Ibn Gabriol (eleventh century CE) that offers a parody of the biblical story 2 Sam 13:1–22 while also utilizing standard elements of medieval Arabic love poetry:

Like Amnon sick am I, so call Tamar  
 And tell her one who loves her is snared by death.  
 Quick, friends, companions, bring her here to me.  
 The only thing I ask of you is this:  
 Adorn her head with jewels, bedeck her well,  
 And send along with her a cup of wine.  
 If she would pour for me she might put out  
 The burning pain wasting my throbbing flesh.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Biblical legal texts generally condemn incest of any kind and specifically forbid sexual contact between brothers and sisters, including half siblings (Deut 27:22; Lev 18: 9, 11; Ezek 22:11). However, it is not known to what extent these texts reflect actual practice, particularly for the royal family. For an argument that prohibitions against incest are not universal, see Paul Frandsen, *Incestuous and Close-Kin Marriage in Ancient Egypt and Persia: An Examination of the Evidence* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2009). Although sibling marriage might have been attested, it is clear that the narrative regards Amnon’s rape of Tamar as *nabelā*, as Tamar herself warns Amnon in 2 Sam 13:12. Bar-Efrat (*Narrative Art*, 239–40), Fokkelman (*Narrative Art and Poetry*, 103), Hertzberg (*I and II Samuel*, 322–23), Anderson (*II Samuel*, 172, 175, 177), and Stone (*Sex, Honor, and Power*, 114) view Amnon’s crime as the rape of an unbetrothed virgin; however, McCarter (*II Samuel*, 323–24, 327–28) regards incest as the main offense.

<sup>57</sup> Text and translation in Raymond P. Scheindlin, *Wine, Women, and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1986), 110–11. I would like to thank to Robert Harris of Jewish Theological Seminary for pointing out this poem to me.

In this poem, Solomon Ibn Gabriol interacts directly with the biblical narrative of 2 Sam 13:1–22, and with tropes from a poetic corpus rather than allusions to specific poems. According to the translator Raymond Scheindlin, “the result of superimposing Arabic love poetry on the story of Amnon and Tamar is an ironic piece with a point to make”—there is no deceptive ruse, and the “speaker does not want to overcome his sickness but prefers to cultivate it.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Solomon Ibn Gabriol twists an abysmal story of incestuous rape into a more characteristic poem of erotic desire, resulting in a poem rather similar to the ancient Egyptian love song about a lovesick boy (P.Beatty 1.1.7) written two millennia previously.

The story in 2 Sam 13:1–22 is an intertextual example in which ancient literature can be compared across, time, space, and genres. However, the presence of these love poetry motifs in 2 Sam 13:1–22 do not constitute a mere echo but an ironic distortion that underscores the horror of the rape and of the depravity of Amnon’s character. The scribe who wrote this story was indeed a master, whether transcribing oral tradition or inventing a new text. Drawing out the reader/hearer’s sympathy in the initial depiction of Amnon as a lovesick youth pining away for Tamar intensifies their shock and revulsion when an apparent “love story” becomes an appalling rape narrative. In a plot revolving around deception of family members, the master scribe who wrote this material effectively tricks the reader with the distortion of love poetry motifs in a horrific story of sexual violence.

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<sup>58</sup> Scheindlin, *Wine, Women, and Death*, 111.

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# Exodus, Conquest, and the Alchemy of Memory

Ronald Hendel

In his first book, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, William Foxwell Albright articulated his program to integrate archaeology and the study of the ancient Near East into biblical scholarship. With customary flair, he described how these fields had transformed the modern understanding of the Bible and would continue to illuminate it in the future:

Archaeological research in Palestine and neighboring lands during the past century has completely transformed our knowledge of the historical and literary background of the Bible. It no longer appears as an absolutely isolated monument of the past, as a phenomenon without relation to its environment. It now takes its place in a context which is becoming better known every year. Seen against the background of the ancient Near East, innumerable obscurities become clear, and we begin to comprehend the organic development of Hebrew society and culture.<sup>1</sup>

In a general sense, Albright's statement is correct, and his vision—which builds on the work of many predecessors—has become entrenched in our field. Our understanding of the Bible in its ancient religious, literary, and historical dimensions continues to be shaped by research in archaeology and the ancient Near East. In this respect, as Albright notes, “The Bible ... invariably requires archaeological elucidation before it becomes completely intelligible.”<sup>2</sup>

Although this vision still holds true, it is clear in retrospect that Albright's method for elucidating the Bible in its ancient context was flawed. He sought to

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I am delighted to dedicate this essay to P. Kyle McCarter Jr., a dear friend and colleague, from whom I have learned so much. It was given as the 2017 William Foxwell Albright Lecture at Johns Hopkins University, in celebration of Kyle's career as the Albright Professor.

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* (New York: Revell, 1932), 127.

<sup>2</sup> Albright, *Archaeology*, 17.



rehabilitate “the value of the Bible as a source of history”<sup>3</sup> in reaction to the historiography of mainstream German scholarship. His search for history in the Bible focused particularly on the traditions about Israel’s origins, including the narratives about the patriarchs, Moses, and the conquest of Canaan. But his position that the biblical accounts of Israel’s origins constitute “a source of history” has a number of problems, which obscure rather than illuminate their relationship to history.

Albright based his position on two strategic moves. First, he isolated the historical content of the biblical traditions by stripping away the motifs and patterns that derive from folklore and oral tradition. His premise was that history and folklore are stratified, like the layers of an archaeological tell, and easily separated. He writes, “Oral tradition inevitably implies the accretion of elements from folklore, as illustrated by the earliest historical memories of every ancient people.... [H]istorical saga is invariably composed of nuclei of fact clad in garments of folklore.”<sup>4</sup> The historian’s first task is to peel back the “garments of folklore” in order to reveal the inner body, the “nuclei of fact.” Albright’s second move was to correlate this reconstituted biblical history with details from archaeology and ancient Near Eastern history, focusing primarily on personal names, customs, comparative religion, and occupation and destruction layers. These details, which Albright marshaled with erudition, were presented as evidence for the close fit between a biblical tradition and a particular historical period.

Both of these strategic moves are flawed. I will address the second move first, since it comprises the bulk of Albright’s efforts. His arguments for the historicity of biblical traditions focused on empirical data, consonant with his self-conception as a scholar who “follow[s] the general principles of logical empiricism.”<sup>5</sup> However, in the late 1960’s and 1970’s scholars began to point out flaws in his arguments in the light of the discovery of further data and the refinement of scholarly interpretations.<sup>6</sup> Many of the details that Albright adduced from archaeology and Near Eastern texts turned out to be irrelevant for the historicity of biblical traditions. Some were typical of long stretches of Near Eastern history, not just one period, and therefore useless for determining the date of the biblical traditions. Other details were incompletely or wrongly understood. In sum, the relationships between text and context turned out to be more complicated than Albright envisioned.

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<sup>3</sup> Albright, *Archaeology*, 128.

<sup>4</sup> Albright, *Archaeology*, 150.

<sup>5</sup> W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957), 2.

<sup>6</sup> See the review of scholarship in Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel’s Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 77–112.

The first move in Albright's method—the disaggregation of history from folklore in the biblical text—has received less attention, but its flaws are also notable, particularly since it continues to be an acceptable strategy in some circles of biblical scholarship. The procedure of stripping away the accretion of miracle and folklore from the biblical traditions to expose the “nuclei of fact” derives from the rationalizing scholarship of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.<sup>7</sup> These scholars and savants sought to rehabilitate the reasonableness of biblical religion by subtracting the dross of superstition. In a famous example, Thomas Jefferson constructed a modern edition of the New Testament by omitting all traces of miracle and the supernatural.<sup>8</sup> His aims differed from Albright's, but the underlying commitment of his procedure is the same: the truth of the Bible—including its religious and historical facts—is exposed once one removes these accretions.

There is a deep flaw in this strategy. It assumes that folklore consists only of miraculous or supernatural features and that this narrative layer can be easily peeled away, revealing a prior core. The remaining history-like narrative, it assumes, is historical. There are several problems here. First, stories are not stratified in this way. Folklore, ideology, and history interpenetrate in ancient narratives, even in historical genres, as we know from Kings and Chronicles. Second, the realism of the reconstituted story is not evidence for historicity. In the eyes of Jefferson and Albright—and many others in between and since—the vivid realism of the stories entailed their historical accuracy. As Albright writes about the patriarchs: “The figures of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph appear before us as real personalities.”<sup>9</sup> But the inference that the realistic representational style of biblical narrative entails historical accuracy relies on a category mistake. A lack of mythological or supernatural features in a realistic narrative—or one in which the miracles have been airbrushed away—does not mean that the narrative depicts actual persons and events. A realist narrative *might* depict historical events, but it is unwarranted to infer that it does so necessarily.

As Hans Frei cogently emphasizes, the history-like realism of biblical narrative is a literary style, not a distinctive feature of historicity. He describes the consequence of this conceptual error as follows:

The confusion of history-likeness (literal meaning) and history (ostensive reference), and the hermeneutic reduction of the former to an aspect of the latter,

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<sup>7</sup> Specifically, from the moderate wing, which sought to rehabilitate the Bible in the age of reason; see Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Note the title of John Locke's influential book, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth Extracted Textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French and English* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Albright, *Stone Age*, 241

meant that one lacked the distinctive category and the appropriate interpretive procedure for understanding what one had actually recognized: the high significance of the literal, narrative shape of the stories for their meaning.<sup>10</sup>

Albright conflated the literary realism of his reconstituted Bible with historical referentiality. This is a category mistake for the biblical traditions, as it would be for other traditional narratives written in a style of literary realism (or perhaps more precisely, magical realism) such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As Erich Auerbach and Roland Barthes observe in different ways, realism is a representational style that communicates an effect of the real (*effet de réel*), but it does not necessarily disclose actual events.<sup>11</sup> The vivid realism of biblical prose is a matter of the representation of reality, not reality in itself.

What we require, to use Frei's terms, is a better category and interpretive procedure for understanding the form and meanings of the biblical narratives about the origins of Israel, including their possible relationships to historical *realia* and contexts. A simple opposition of history and folklore, with the latter easily separated from the former, will not do. We need a model that adequately attends to the complicated interactions of narrative style, historical reference, and cultural self-fashioning in biblical narrative.

In a series of studies, I have argued that the modern study of cultural memory provides an appropriate conceptual framework for investigating the traditions about Israel's ancestral past.<sup>12</sup> The study of collective memory was founded by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who was building on Émile Durkheim's theory of collective representations.<sup>13</sup> This area of scholarship was brought into ancient Near Eastern studies in the 1990's by Jan Assmann, and it has burgeoned since.<sup>14</sup> By cultural memory I mean a group's (or its authoritative interpreter's)

<sup>10</sup> Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 3–23; Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1986), 141–48.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., Ronald Hendel, "The Exodus in Biblical Memory," *JBL* 120 (2001): 601–22; Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Hendel, "Culture, Memory, and History: Reflections on Method in Biblical Studies," in *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future*, ed. Thomas E. Levy (London: Equinox, 2010), 250–61.

<sup>13</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Y. Ditter, with introduction by Mary Douglas (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). For a selection of other important contributions, see Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, trans. David H. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University

representation of the past with present relevance. This concept has several entailments, which I describe under the rubrics of social frameworks, mnemohistory, and the poetics of memory.<sup>15</sup>

*Social Frameworks.* Halbwachs focused on the social forms or frameworks (*cadres sociaux*) of memory, by which he meant the ways that social groups continually reshape their representations of the past in accord with present interests and practices. Each individual is nested in several intersecting groups—including family, class, occupation, religion, region, and nation—each of which has its own shared archive of cultural memories, transmitted within that group by various means of instruction and initiation. The interactions within and between groups means that cultural memories are always being contested, negotiated, and revised. The revisions go both ways—the memories *and* the social frameworks can be reconfigured according to present imperatives. Geographical sites of memory (*lieux de memoire*) are part of a group's social framework in another sense, since they are places where the key memories of the group's past are experienced in pilgrimage and commemorative ritual.

*Mnemohistory.* Assmann developed the concept of mnemohistory, which “is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered. It surveys the story-lines of tradition, the webs of intertextuality, the diachronic continuities and discontinuities of reading the past.”<sup>16</sup> It traces the wandering paths (*Wanderstrassen*) by which cultural memories crystallize and change. It brings into conversation a host of historical inquiries: the history of tradition, literature, religion, politics, institutions, and mentalities. The diachronic focus of mnemohistory complements the synchronic and sociological focus of the frameworks of memory.

*Poetics of memory.* What I have called the poetics of memory attends to the ways that texts and other media construct and focalize cultural memory by a variety of rhetorical strategies. The poetics of memory involves many features of biblical discourse, including intertextual allusions, *Leitwort* patterns, and linguistic (deictic and pragmatic) features that actualize or commemorate the represented scene. Since our object of study is literary (i.e., the Bible), it is essential to bring

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Press, 2011); Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). In biblical studies, see, for example, Marc Brettler, “Memory in Ancient Israel,” in *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism*, ed. Michael A. Signer (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 1–17; Daniel E. Fleming, “Mari and the Possibilities of Biblical Memory,” *RA* 92 (1998): 41–78; Ehud Ben Zvi, “Memory and Political Thought in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah: Some Observations,” in *Leadership, Social Memory and Judean Discourse in the Fifth–Second Centuries BCE*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (London: Equinox, 2016), 9–26.

<sup>15</sup> See Ronald Hendel, “Cultural Memory,” in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*, ed. Ronald Hendel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29–33.

<sup>16</sup> Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*, 8–9.

literary criticism into conversation with the other forms of inquiry. The poetics of memory blends the synchronic and the diachronic, since it attends to literary features in an array of biblical texts, some of which are contemporary, and others linked in a temporal chain.

Each of these layers of inquiry—sociological, historical, and literary—is complementary and interleaved. Together they illuminate how a group's representation of the past creates and sustains cultural identity in the present. The creation and circulation of cultural memory is part of the process by which a group constitutes itself as an imagined community.<sup>17</sup> As P. Kyle McCarter Jr. observes, following the work of Fredrik Barth and others, the emergence of ancient Israel was predicated on such processes of cultural self-fashioning and boundary-marking:

In a variety of ways ethnic groups draw boundaries around themselves. They may do this with religion or languages or accents or codes of dress or diet or a combination of these and other things. But in one way or another they draw boundaries around themselves. And this boundary-marking is what creates ethnicity. A process went on in the Iron I period where a large population who had not previously been Israelite identified themselves with a small group that had previously been Israelite by a process of ethnic boundary-marking.... It was that tradition that created Israel in the first place.<sup>18</sup>

The approach to the biblical representations of the ancestral past as cultural memory helps to elucidate how this process of ethnic boundary-marking began in the Iron Age, and how it has continued in various memory practices up to the present day.

In the following I will explore some of the features of the exodus and conquest as cultural memory. Although there are many gaps in my analysis, I hope to show that this way of proceeding offers a more adequate understanding of the biblical texts and their contexts. With respect to the archaeological and Near Eastern background, I will argue that biblical traditions of exodus and conquest emerged in the context of the crystallization of Israel as a polity in the wake of the collapse of the Egyptian Empire in Canaan. In historical terms, Israel was a successor state to Egyptian colonial rule. The exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan are a diptych of reconfigured memories of Egyptian bondage and deliverance, a transformation of the people from the abjection of slavery to a new political-theological identity as the people of Yahweh. As we will see, there is no

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<sup>17</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991); see also Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "The Origins of Israelite Religion," in *The Rise of Ancient Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 133.

easy separation of folklore and history in the narratives; the historical *realia* are transmuted in the wandering paths of memory and in the social alchemy that yielded a distinctive people.

#### THE POETICS OF MEMORY

I will address two texts, one from the exodus narrative (Exod 10:1–2) and one from the beginning of the conquest (Josh 2:9–11) to illustrate the literary features of the poetics of memory. These texts are from different literary sources, but both are engaged in the project of framing and thematizing the stories as cultural memory. In their intertextual relationship, they show how the two complexes of tradition are conceptually linked.

##### *1. Hardening the Heart: A Meta-Discourse*

Yahweh said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants in order that I may set these signs of mine in their midst, and in order that you may tell in the ears of your children and your children’s children how I toyed with Egypt and set my signs among them, that you may know that I am Yahweh.” (Exod 10:1–2)

This divine speech, from what I would identify as the J source or a redactional supplement in the style of J,<sup>19</sup> brings together several themes of the exodus narrative and reveals Yahweh’s multilayered motives for “toying with Egypt” with the sequence of plagues. Notably, this text occurs in the midst of the plagues, well before the narrative is completed. The two motive clauses, introduced by לְמַעַן (“in order that”) provide internal commentary on the purpose of the story, given from a God’s-eye point of view. This meta-discourse, invoking the future retelling of the story, momentarily lifts the reader’s perspective beyond the narrative’s internal time to the reader’s time, when the story is a central feature of Israelite cultural memory. Then, after this temporal swerve, the story resumes.

This divine speech explains to Moses why he must “go to Pharaoh” yet again. At this point, Moses—and the reader—might think that the previous plagues

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<sup>19</sup> Note the use of כָּבַד for hardening the heart (found elsewhere in J, but with Pharaoh as subject) and the concept that Yahweh sends the plagues “in order that (לְמַעַן) my fame be told in all the earth” (Exod 9:16 [J]; see below). On the source-critical issues, see, e.g., Moshe Greenberg, “The Redaction of the Plague Narrative in Exodus,” in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 249–50; Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 13–16; Jan C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch*, FRLANT 186 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 152–59; Christoph Berner, *Die Exoduserzählung: Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels*, FAT 73 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 229–32.

should have been sufficient to change Pharaoh's mind. Yahweh explains that he has caused a complication to delay this result: "I have hardened his heart." This motif of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart has long posed a theological and philosophical problem for commentators, who tend to regard this tactic as beneath the dignity of an all-powerful god.<sup>20</sup> Yahweh's rationale for doing so is presented explicitly in this verse. His motives frame the events as the stuff of cultural memory.

Yahweh's reasons are given in two successive motive clauses. The first is "in order that I may set these signs of mine in their midst." This seems to mean that the reason for hardening Pharaoh's heart is so that Yahweh can send a whole sequence of plagues. Elsewhere one plague suffices, as, for instance, in the ark narrative in 1 Sam 4–6, where a plague compels the Philistines to return the ark to Israel. Yahweh suggests that a bigger display of signs is called for here.

The deeper reason is given in the second motive clause, which has two parts: "in order that you may tell in the ears of your children and your children's children how I toyed with Egypt and set my signs among them, that you may know that I am Yahweh." The verbs תספר ("you may tell") and וידעתם ("and you may know") are in sequence in this motive clause, the second logically following from the first. Telling one's descendants about how Yahweh "toyed with Egypt and set my signs among them" has the consequence of knowing Yahweh. Yahweh's deep motive for the dramatic sequence of plagues, enabled by his repeated hardening of Pharaoh's heart, is to produce the material for a great story of deliverance from Egypt, which will become a cultural memory for all the generations of Israel.

The future reference in this second motive clause has a doubled resonance, referring simultaneously to the Israelites at the time of the events and to all future generations. This resonance is characteristic of the poetics of cultural memory. The "you" of "you may tell" (an implied collective plural) and "you may know" (an explicit plural) implicates both the internal time of the narrative—Moses and the contemporary Israelites—and the external time of the reader and extends to all future generations who will tell and know.

By framing the events as the stuff of cultural memory, Yahweh's speech lifts the temporal perspective to the *longue durée* of Israelite history, providing a contemporary and retrospective view of the events. This divine commentary defines the ongoing story as a construction of cultural memory, which will be central to Israel's future collective self-consciousness.

Yahweh's ultimate motive is instilling in Israel the knowledge of God. This activates a motif that has circulated throughout the J plagues narrative. The motif of knowledge of God begins in Exod 5:2, when Pharaoh replies to Moses and Aaron, "Who is Yahweh that I should heed his voice to let Israel go? I do not

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<sup>20</sup> On the exegetical issues, see Robert R. Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," *CBQ* 41 (1979): 18–36.



know Yahweh, nor will I let Israel go.” From this point onwards, as William Propp observes, “knowledge of Yahweh becomes the *Leitmotif* of the plagues narrative: God repeatedly afflicts Pharaoh and his people so that they may “know” Israel’s god (7:5, 17; 8:6, 18; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 14:4, 18).”<sup>21</sup> In our verse, a new ingredient is introduced: through this story Israel shall know Yahweh. The force of knowledge of God is different for Egypt and Israel. For Egypt to know God is primarily to fear him. For Israel, this knowledge also involves its identity as the people of Yahweh.

The *Leitmotif* of the knowledge of God extends beyond Egypt and Israel in Exod 9:16, where Yahweh explains his motives to Pharaoh: “Because of this I have spared you: in order to show you my power, and in order that (למען) my fame be told in all the earth.” The story of Yahweh’s fame and wonders will be told not only by Israelites and Egyptians, but also by other peoples. The extension of Yahweh’s fame to other peoples will pay dividends in the conquest narrative when we learn that the Canaanites already know about Yahweh’s victory over Egypt.

## 2. What Rahab Knew: Memory and Intertextuality

She said to the men, “I know that Yahweh has given you the land and that your terror has fallen upon us.... For we have heard how Yahweh dried the water of the Red Sea before you when you went out of Egypt, and what you did to the two Amorite kings across the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you destroyed utterly. When we heard, our heart melted, and there was no spirit left in any man. (Josh 2:9–11)

This speech, from a pre-Deuteronomistic source, is addressed by the wise prostitute Rahab to the Israelite spies, whom she is sheltering in her house inside the walls of Jericho.<sup>22</sup> In it she acknowledges Yahweh’s fame in the exodus and explains the Canaanites’ resulting fear. Rahab not only knows about the exodus and other victories, but her speech seems to know the diction of the Song of the Sea in Exod 15. The Canaanites’ collective response to the exodus and the intertextual quality of Rahab’s speech are striking features of the poetics of memory.

Rahab’s words, “your terror has fallen upon us” (נפלה אימתכם עלינו), are a clear echo of the diction of Exod 15:16: “terror fell upon them” (תפל עליהם) (אימתה). The sequence, “when we heard, our hearts melted” (ונשמע וימס לבבנו),

<sup>21</sup> William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 252.

<sup>22</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 7–8; cf. Thomas B. Dozeman, *Joshua 1–12*, AB 6B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 243–46; Erhard Blum, “Überlegungen zur Kompositionsgeschichte des Josuabuches,” in *The Book of Joshua*, ed. Ed Noort, BETL 250 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 141–43; Klaus Bieberstein, *Josua—Jordan—Jericho: Archäologie, Geschichte und Theologie der Landnahmeerzählungen Josua 1–6*, OBO 143 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1995), 128–30.



echoes less precisely Exod 15:14–15, “when the people heard ... all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away” (שמעו עמים ... נמגו כל ישרי כנען), using different verbs for “melt.” The broader context for these descriptions is the widespread ancient Near Eastern motif that the enemies are incapacitated by the appearance of the mighty warrior-king in battle.<sup>23</sup>

In her speech, Rahab not only explains her knowledge of Yahweh, activating the motif of the knowledge of God, but she also seems to know the Song of the Sea. This intertextual allusion is resumed at the end of the story, when the spies report back to Joshua: “They said to Joshua, “Truly Yahweh has given all the land into our hand, and surely all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us” (נמגו כל ישרי הארץ מפנינו) (Josh 2:24). Their report mingles Rahab’s words with the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:16, see above). In a later scribal expansion, the quotation of exodus from their report was added to Rahab’s speech, which harmonizes the two speeches. (This expansion is where I have ellipses in the translation above).<sup>24</sup> In MT, Rahab and the spies both quote the same passage from the Song of the Sea.

As Rahab perceives, Yahweh’s victory at the Red Sea will be recapitulated in the conquest of Canaan. As William Moran observes, “She testifies to the mystery of the Sea of Reeds as a sign of and operative in the salvation of the future; it has already taken place in Canaan, for ‘no sooner did we hear and our heart melted.’ And in the crossing of the Jordan this mystery will be renewed, re-presented and extended with identical effect, when they hear of it, upon all the kings of Canaan (5:1).”<sup>25</sup> After the Israelites cross the Jordan River, an event that recapitulates the crossing of the Red Sea, the Canaanite kings reexperience this trauma, confirming Rahab’s diagnosis:

When all the kings of the Amorites ... and all the kings of the Canaanites ... heard how Yahweh had dried the waters of the Jordan before the people of Israel until they crossed, their hearts melted and there was no spirit left in them because of the people of Israel. (Josh 5:1)

As Rahab rightly perceives, the victory at the Red Sea will be replicated in the conquest, since she knows that “Yahweh has given you this land” and that the Canaanites are incapacitated by Yahweh’s famous victory. Their knowledge of

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<sup>23</sup> Propp, *Exodus*, 533.

<sup>24</sup> The harmonizing plus in MT is lacking in LXX; see Nelson, *Joshua*, 37–38.

<sup>25</sup> William L. Moran, “The Repose of Rahab’s Israelite Guests,” in *The Most Magic Word: Essays on Babylonian and Biblical Literature*, ed. Ronald Hendel, CBQMS 35 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2002), 169.

God induces utter fear. The Canaanite memory of the exodus has a doubled temporality, turned toward the past and the future.<sup>26</sup> It is a collective memory whose fearsome power effects its own renewal and re-presentation in the events of the conquest. Here the poetics of memory works its temporal doubling within the narrative, binding together exodus and conquest as a cohesive and inevitable story of deliverance.

#### MNEMOHISTORY: THE EGYPTIAN HOUSE OF BONDAGE

Mnemohistory, as Assmann emphasizes, explores the diachronic tracks of memory, attending to the relationships between historical *realia* and the wandering paths of memory. We seek to trace the processes by which representations of the past reflect upon the materials of history and to reconstitute the connective tissue linking texts and contexts. Groups construct their own collective memories, but they do not invent them *ex nihilo*. The task of mnemohistory takes its bearings from Marx's historiographical insight: "Men make their own history ... under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."<sup>27</sup> Our focus is on the "circumstances directly encountered" that made the exodus and conquest memories thinkable as memories of Israel's ancestral past.

As scholars often note, the exodus memory is odd, since the nation's origins in slavery attribute shame to Israel's ancestors. As Moshe Greenberg comments: "The gross features of the Exodus story ... [are] unflattering."<sup>28</sup> Some explanation is required for a cultural memory of mass slavery. Yet archaeologists, Egyptologists, and biblical historians agree that the exodus and conquest narratives are not consonant or reconcilable with actual historical events. From Egyptology, William Ward's states the matter plainly: "From the Egyptian viewpoint, the Old Testament narrative records a series of earthshaking episodes that never happened."<sup>29</sup> From archeology, Israel Finkelstein and Neil Silberman are equally blunt: "There was no mass Exodus from Egypt. There was no violent conquest of Canaan. Most of the people who formed early Israel were local people."<sup>30</sup> From biblical scholarship, McCarter describes the *status quaestionis*:

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<sup>26</sup> This doubled temporality is also found in the Song of the Sea, which is oriented toward the narrative present in Exod 15:1–12 and toward the future in Exod 15: 13–18; see Mark S. Smith, "The Poetics of Exodus 15 and Its Position in the Book," in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald*, ed. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith, CBQMS 32 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2001), 23–34.

<sup>27</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, with Explanatory Notes* (New York: International, 1963), 15.

<sup>28</sup> Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (New York: Behrman, 1960), 204.

<sup>29</sup> William A. Ward, "Summary and Conclusions," in *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*, ed. Ernest S. Frerichs and Leonard H. Lesko (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 105.

<sup>30</sup> Israel Finkelstein and Neil A. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 118.

We now see the emergence of Israel as a complex phenomenon involving, first, the arrival of new peoples in the central hills from a variety of sources, including especially the collapsing cities of the Egypto-Canaanite empire, and, second, the gradual process of ethnic self-identification that generated an elaborate genealogy linking the highlanders to each other.<sup>31</sup>

Early Israel is now seen as a highland frontier society, settled by local Canaanites in the context of regional socioeconomic collapse. The early Israelites were not a mass of escaped slaves from Egypt, but local peoples, including peasants from the Canaanite lowlands, transhumant pastoralists, and other marginal groups. Since the highlands were sparsely settled during the preceding centuries, there was no need for a conquest. Since the early Israelites were mostly Canaanites, as Ward comments, “there is no need for the Exodus.”<sup>32</sup>

The task of mnemohistory becomes salient at this point. We ask the question: What circumstances made these stories imaginable, such that they become a central part of the cultural memory of ancient Israel? Obviously, they did become central memories. Mnemohistory investigates how and why this memory-complex emerged, crystallized, and became accepted as the autobiography of a people.

Let us clarify the chronological framework. The time represented in the stories is immediately prior to the formation of Israel as a polity in Canaan. This internal narrative time corresponds to the historical time of the Late Bronze Age and the transition to the Iron Age (ca. 1500–1200 BCE). This is the era of the Egyptian Empire of the New Kingdom, when Egypt ruled Canaan as its northern province.<sup>33</sup> The collapse of Egyptian rule in Canaan was contemporary with the formation of Israel in the highlands of Canaan. I suggest that this correspondence is not fortuitous. The biblical account of the Egyptian house of bondage arguably derives, through the wandering paths of cultural memory, from the historical circumstances of Egyptian domination of Canaan during the Late Bronze Age. It is perhaps not coincidental that biblical texts recall a 400 or 430-year period of Egyptian enslavement (Gen 15:13; Exod 12:40). 400 years is probably a formulaic number for a long period of time, but it roughly corresponds to the duration of the Egyptian Empire in Canaan (ca. 1450 to 1125 BCE, around 325 years).

But this number points to a problem. The biblical texts were written hundreds of years after the collapse of the Egyptian Empire. And there are no clear biblical references to the Egyptian Empire. If the period of imperial Egyptian bondage

<sup>31</sup> McCarter, “Origins,” 131–32.

<sup>32</sup> Ward, “Summary,” 106.

<sup>33</sup> See generally, Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 192–237; Carolyn R. Higgenbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine: Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Ellen F. Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt’s New Kingdom* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

was remembered in some form, major aspects were forgotten. I suggest that this was a strategic forgetting, which limits the Egyptian oppression to the Israelites and excludes their immediate neighbors (see below). Cultural memory, as we will see, requires that some aspects of the past be forgotten in order to construct a coherent collective identity within clearly marked ethnic boundaries.

The texts addressed above establish a *terminus ante quem* for the formation of the exodus-conquest traditions. According to the criteria of historical linguistics, these texts—from the J source, a pre-Deuteronomistic source in Joshua, and the Song of the Sea—were composed in the preexilic period, arguably during the Neo-Assyrian era (ninth–seventh centuries BCE), and the poem may be earlier.<sup>34</sup> The cultural memories of the exodus and conquest were in circulation by this time, a conclusion corroborated by the references to the exodus and conquest in early strata of the prophetic books of Hosea, Amos, and Micah. I note that these texts stem from Israel and Judah, and hence there is no reason to assume that these traditions circulated only among one subgroup of tribes.<sup>35</sup>

As Bernd Schipper has recently emphasized, extensive cultural contact with Egypt occurred primarily during two periods: the Egyptian Empire in Canaan and the brief hegemony of Egypt over Judah in the late seventh century BCE (ca. 615–605).<sup>36</sup> While some details of the exodus narrative may reflect the latter period (e.g., the place-names and corvée labor mentioned in Exod 1:11),<sup>37</sup> the textual and linguistic evidence noted above justifies an examination of the period of the Egyptian Empire as the background for the exodus memory.

Even if the exodus is an event that never happened, I submit that the Egyptian Empire in Canaan is the mnemohistorical background for the biblical depiction of the Egyptian house of bondage. If we grant that the early Israelites were local

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<sup>34</sup> See Ronald Hendel and Jan Joosten, *How Old Is the Hebrew Bible? A Linguistic, Textual, and Historical Study*, ABRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Pace the northern locus argued by Yair Hoffmann, “A North Israelite Typological Myth and a Judaean Historical Tradition: The Exodus in Hosea and Amos,” *VT* 39 (1989): 169–82, followed by many others. Most scholars concur that the mountain on which Yahweh builds his sanctuary and plants Israel in the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:17) refers to Jerusalem; see recently Stephen C. Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature: Cisjordan-Israelite, Transjordan-Israelite, and Judahite Portrayals*, BZAW 403 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 147–48. On the reference to the exodus in Mic 6:3–4, see Ronald Hendel, “The Exodus and the Poetics of Memory,” in *Reading a Tendentious Bible: Essays in Honor of Robert B. Coote*, ed. Marvin L. Chaney, Uriah Y. Kim, and Annette Schellenberg (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), 95–96.

<sup>36</sup> Bernd U. Schipper, “Egypt and Israel: The Ways of Cultural Contacts in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age (Twentieth–Twenty-Sixth Dynasty),” *JAIE* 4 (2012): 30–47; see also Schipper, “Egyptian Imperialism after the New Kingdom: The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty and the Southern Levant,” in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature*, ed. Shay Bar, Daniel Kahn, and J. J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 268–90.

<sup>37</sup> Bernd U. Schipper, “Raamses, Pithom, and the Exodus: A Critical Evaluation of Ex 1:11,” *VT* 65 (2015): 265–88.

Canaanites who settled in the highland frontier, then a memory of Egyptian servitude and deliverance would serve as a unifying template for a newly fashioned cultural identity. The people of Israel arguably imagined themselves into existence as a consequence of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, a miracle in their memory.

There is general agreement among historians that the last phase of Egyptian rule in Canaan, the Ramesside period (nineteenth and twentieth dynasties) was harsher than the earlier phases. In an important study, James Weinstein marshalled evidence for the administrative and military changes in Egyptian rule during this period:

Whereas in prior centuries Asiatic revolts had been suppressed by Egyptian troops who then either returned home or went back to one of a handful of garrisons situated at certain strategic points in the region, in the 13th and early 12th centuries B.C. the Egyptians stayed in Palestine in much larger numbers than ever before, and one can hardly doubt that Egyptian control in Palestine became more repressive than it had been in earlier times.<sup>38</sup>

Although the evidence is incomplete, the general picture of the heavy hand of Egyptian rule in Canaan during the latter phase of the empire seems clear. As Betsy Bryan concludes, “the new Egyptian reliance on military forts staffed by Egyptian officers” during this period “may well indicate the repressive attitude of the 13th-century pharaohs.”<sup>39</sup> This historical circumstance arguably forms a rich storehouse for the construction of a collective memory of Egyptian oppression.

In addition to this historical context, the ideology and rhetoric of imperial rule in Canaan provides a rich backdrop to the memories of Egyptian bondage. The correspondence between Pharaoh and his Canaanite vassal kings in the Amarna letters (fourteenth century BCE) allows access to this imperial discourse in Canaan. The kings present themselves, as required, as “loyal slaves” (*arad kittu*) of Pharaoh. The king is, in Moran’s description, “the perfect slave, the pure instrument, one devoid of all personal autonomy in his relations with his master.”<sup>40</sup> The language of servitude and self-abnegation in this diplomatic formulary illustrates the general ideology of imperial rule, in which, as Raymond Westbrook

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<sup>38</sup> James M. Weinstein, “The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment,” *BASOR* (1981): 18.

<sup>39</sup> Betsy M. Bryan, “Art, Empire, and the End of the Late Bronze Age,” in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, ed. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 77.

<sup>40</sup> William L. Moran, “Some Reflections on Amarna Politics,” in *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings*, ed. John Huehnergard and Shlomo Izre’el, HSS 54 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 332.

comments, “a vassal king . . . and his household, that is, the population of his country, were all slaves of the emperor.”<sup>41</sup> According to the Egyptian imperial ideology, all Canaanites—from king to peasant—were abject slaves of Pharaoh.

Snippets from the Amarna Letters amplify this concept. Pharaoh’s letter to the king of Gezer ends with a self-glorification formula: “Amun has indeed put the Upper Land, the Lower Land, where the sun rises, where the sun sets, under the feet of the king” (EA 369).<sup>42</sup> This description of Pharaoh standing on his Upper and Lower Lands (the northern province of Canaan and the southern province of Nubia) is a metaphorical trope of imperial domination. The trope is echoed by the Canaanite kings, as when Adda-dannu of Gezer says, “I fall at the feet of the king, my lord. . . . I will not move under the feet of the king, my lord” (EA 292).<sup>43</sup> The vassal king is, in the words of Biryawaza of Damascus, “your slave, the dirt at your feet and the ground you tread on, the chair you sit on and the footstool at your feet” (EA 195).<sup>44</sup>

This trope is strikingly actualized in material form in images of bound Canaanite and Nubian captives on Pharaonic sandals, footstools, and floors. As these artifacts show, whenever the Pharaoh walks or rests his feet, he treads on his foreign captives in the Upper and Lower Lands.



Fig. 1. Sandals from the tomb of King Tutankhamun with Canaanite and Nubian captives. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Westbrook, “International Law in the Amarna Age,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Religions*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 29.

<sup>42</sup> William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 366.

<sup>43</sup> Moran, *Amarna*, 335

<sup>44</sup> Adapted from Moran, *Amarna*, 273





Fig. 2. Footstool from tomb of King Tutankhamun with Canaanite and Nubian captives.  
© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

The subaltern position of the Canaanite, immobilized under the feet of the king, is also represented in sculpture, as in the following fragmentary piece, where the Canaanite is being crushed under a reed dais on which the Pharaoh stands:<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 3. Canaanite captive under royal dais, New Kingdom (Ramesside).  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1990.232.

It is reasonable to presume that these ideological motifs circulated not only in Canaanite royal circles but in Canaanite culture generally. In the light of the heavy yoke of the Egyptian Empire, particularly in its waning years, all Canaanites might have considered themselves slaves to Pharaoh.

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<sup>45</sup> Dorothea Arnold, "Fragment of a Sculptured Statue Base," in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 49 (Fall 1991): 6.



Another circumstance described in an Amarna letter may link directly to an early biblical memory of forced labor. The fertile lands of the Jezreel valley were Pharaonic property during the Egyptian Empire and may be called “the fields of the king.”<sup>46</sup> In EA 365, Biridiya of Megiddo, complains to Pharaoh that only he is providing corvée laborers for Pharaoh’s fields in Shunem, in the heart of the Jezreel valley.

May the king, my lord, take cognizance of his slave and his city. In fact, only I am cultivating in Šunama, and only I am furnishing corvée workers. But consider the mayors that are near me. They do not act as I do. They do not cultivate in Šunama, and they do not furnish corvée workers. Only I (by myself) furnish corvée workers. From Yapu [Jaffa] they come, from [my] resources here, (and) from Nuribta. And may the king, my lord, take cognizance of his city.<sup>47</sup>

As this letter shows, Canaanite peasants were impressed into forced labor on Pharaoh’s fields in Canaan. Notably, Albrecht Alt argued that this historical circumstance is recalled in the blessing of Issachar in Gen 49:15: “He bowed his shoulder to the burden, and became a slave of corvée labor.”<sup>48</sup> The description of Issachar as a *מַס עֶבֶד* (“slave of corvée labor”) uses the same language as the Amarna letter (*massu*, “corvée worker”). Shunem and the Jezreel Valley are in the territory of Issachar. The tribal blessing explains the origin of the tribal name Issachar (*אִישׁ שָׁכַר*, “man of day labor”), and it also arguably preserves a memory of corvée labor in the Egyptian Empire.

In sum, the memory of the Egyptian house of bondage was widely available in Canaan. There also were many Canaanite slaves in Egypt; Thomas Schneider estimates that “tens of thousands of prisoners and other immigrants entered the Egyptian social system” from the imperial provinces of Canaan and Nubia.<sup>49</sup> But perhaps more importantly for early Israelite cultural memory, all the Canaanites in Canaan could have regarded themselves as Egyptian slaves. Egyptian bondage was heavy in the land of Canaan in the last phase of the empire.

The period of the gradual collapse of Egyptian rule is contemporary with the emergence of Israel. The former is characterized by abandoned garrisons and forts, often with fiery destruction layers. The destruction of the main Egyptian fort

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<sup>46</sup> Nadav Na’aman, “Pharaonic Lands in the Jezreel Valley in the Late Bronze Age,” in *Canaan in the Second Millennium B.C.E.: Collected Essays*, vol. 2 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 232–41. The partially restored phrase “the fi[el]ds (*u[gā]ri*) of the king” occurs in EA 250.47; Moran, *Amarna*, 303–4.

<sup>47</sup> Moran, *Amarna*, 363.

<sup>48</sup> Albrecht Alt, “Neues über Palästina aus dem Archiv Amenophis’ IV,” in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: Beck, 1953–59), 3:174.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Schneider, “Foreigners in Egypt: Archaeological Evidence and Cultural Context,” in *Egyptian Archaeology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 154.

at Jaffa presents what Aaron Burke describes as “archaeological evidence of resistance” by local Canaanites. He writes, “Broader patterns of resistance to Egyptian domination may also be identified at other sites, permitting us to further examine how narratives of resistance can be integrated with traditional understandings of Egyptian control of Canaan during the New Kingdom.”<sup>50</sup> One such narrative of resistance, I suggest, involves centuries of Egyptian bondage and a miraculous deliverance, leading to a new life and a new polity in the promised land. Such a story could become central to this people’s collective self-consciousness, a script of the birth of a nation.

## MNEMOHISTORY II: LANDSCAPES OF MEMORY

As we have seen above, the conquest in the book of Joshua is portrayed as a sequel and re-presentation of the exodus. This is particularly noticeable in the intertextual echoes of the Song of the Sea (esp. Josh 2:9–11, 24; and 5:1). A second distinctive layer of conquest memories informs the Joshua account and other biblical texts, although it is in tension with the dominant conquest account. In this other cultural memory, the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan are recalled as mighty giants, whom Yahweh, Joshua, and others slew. The giants—called Anakim, Rephaim, Nephilim, and other ethnonyms—are ancient peoples, at least some of whom descend from the offspring of the Sons of God and the daughters of men in antediluvian times (Gen 6:1–4).<sup>51</sup>

Notably, the emotional tone of the conquest is reversed in this complex of memories. Rather than highlighting Canaanite fear and immobility in the face of Yahweh’s victory at the Red Sea, this tradition highlights the Israelite fear of the Canaanites, which stirs rebellion among the people. The report of the spies in Num 13:33 is the cause of this change of heart. They announce: “All the people that we saw in it are people of great height. There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakim are from the Nephilim), and we seemed in our eyes like grasshoppers, and so we must have seemed in their eyes.”<sup>52</sup> As a consequence of this news about the giant Canaanites, the Israelites “murmur” against Yahweh and disaster ensues, including a punishment of forty years of wandering in the wilderness (Num 14:33–34).

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<sup>50</sup> Aaron A. Burke, et al., “Excavation of the New Kingdom Fortress in Jaffa, 2011–2014: Traces of Resistance to Egyptian Rule in Canaan,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 121 (2017): 128.

<sup>51</sup> See Ronald Hendel, “The Nephilim Were On the Earth: Genesis 6:1–4 and Its Ancient Near Eastern Context,” in *The Fall of the Angels*, ed. Christoph Auffarth and Loren Stuckenbruck (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 11–34; Brian R. Doak, *The Last of the Rephaim: Conquest and Cataclysm in the Heroic Ages of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>52</sup> The aside about the Anakim is lacking in the LXX and is arguably a harmonization with the mention of the Anakim earlier in the chapter (Num 13:22, 28); see Reinhard Müller, Juha Pakkala, and Bas ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 35–38.

Traces of this tradition are also found in Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, and Amos.<sup>53</sup> According to Josh 11:21–22:

Joshua came at that time and he cut off the Anakim from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir, Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah and all the hill country of Israel. No Anakim remained in the land of the Israelites, only in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod did they remain.

One of the last groups of giants, living in Gath, are dispatched by David and his men. According to 2 Sam 21:22, “These four were born to the Rephaim in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his servants.” One of these giants is named Goliath, whom David also kills in battle in 1 Sam 17.<sup>54</sup> In these different layers of tradition we see the multiple pathways of the memories of the mighty giants in the land.

As commentators have long noted, traditions of indigenous giants seem to be linked to the landscape of Israel and the Transjordan. As G. Ernest Wright wrote in 1938, “Hebrews viewing some of the cities of Canaan which we now know to have possessed walls as thick as eighteen feet, and often built of cyclopean masonry, might well have thought in terms of giants, just as did the Greeks.”<sup>55</sup> These sites include the massive ruins of cyclopean walls at Jericho and Ai, which are the first two stories of the conquest in Joshua. The destruction of Ai concludes with a reference to the contemporary ruins: “Joshua burned Ai and made it into an everlasting heap of ruins until this day” (Josh 8:28). The ruins, which explain the word Ai (“ruin”), are a contemporary site of memory, a physical testament to Joshua’s—and Yahweh’s—victory.

In addition to the ruins of cyclopean walls, the landscape of Israel and particularly Transjordan is dotted with megalithic structures, mostly burial chambers from Early Bronze Age (fourth–third millennium BCE).<sup>56</sup> These stone structures provided the backdrop for stories of indigenous giants. As Wright observes, “The

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<sup>53</sup> Deut 1:28; 2:10–12, 20–23; etc.; see, for example, Lothar Peritt, “Reisen im Alten Testament: Ein literarisches Motiv im Wirkungsfeld des Deuteronomismus,” in *Deuteronomium-Studien*, FAT 8 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 205–46. On Deut 3:11 and Amos 2:9, see below.

<sup>54</sup> In 2 Sam 21:19, it is Elhanan, one of David’s men from Bethlehem, who slays Goliath. This tradition may have drifted from the lesser-known to the greater-known hero; see P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel*, AB 9 (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 450–51.

<sup>55</sup> G. Ernest Wright, “Troglodytes and Giants in Palestine,” *JBL* 57 (1938): 308. The term “cyclopean” walls derives from the Greek tradition that the giant Cyclopes built the towers of ancient Mycenaean cities. Notably, Wright does not refer to the indigenous giants in his later treatments of the conquest. Like Albright, he reconstituted the historical conquest by stripping supernatural features from the text. See the apt criticisms of the resulting contradictions in Wright’s theology by Langdon B. Gilkey, “Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language,” *JR* 41 (1961): 194–205.

<sup>56</sup> Tara Steimer-Herbet, *Classification des sépultures à superstructure lithique dans le Levant e l’Arabie occidentale (IVe et IIIe millénaires avant J.-C.)* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004).

Israelite tradition of the giant Rephaim undoubtedly arose in part from the contemplation of megalithic structures especially in Transjordan.”<sup>57</sup> A notable example is the report in Deut 3:11 of King Og’s massive bed, over thirteen feet long and six feet wide, which could still be seen in Ammon:<sup>58</sup>

Only Og, the king of Bashan, was left from the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold his bed, his iron bed—is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the common cubit.

In this report of Og’s bed, we see again the rhetoric of the poetics of memory. The deictic הנה (“behold”) invites us to view Og’s bed in our mind’s eye as well as in its geographical locale. The contemporary presence of the material object functions the same way as the formula עד היום הזה (“until this day”) in the reference to Ai and elsewhere in Josh 1–12. These brush-strokes of the poetics of memory link major events of the conquest with prominent features of the landscape.

Biblical scholars tend to refer to this narrative linkage of past and present as etiological (from Greek *αιτιολογία*), that is, a causal explanation of current facts. As Alt describes such notices in Josh 1–12, they “derive the cause of striking facts in the present from their origin in events of the past.”<sup>59</sup> This focus on causal explanation is warranted, but in my view places the emphasis in the wrong place. I would rather emphasize the ways that the landscape generates and actualizes Israelite cultural memory.

The ruins of Ai and Jericho, the megalithic dolmen at Rabbah of Ammon, the standing stones at Gilgal, and other striking features of the lived landscape are best described as sites of memory (*lieux de memoire*), places that materially embody cultural memories and make them tangible in the present. In his study of the legendary topography (*topographie légendaire*) of the Holy Land, Halbwachs describes the doubled aspect of these places of memory: each is simultaneously “a

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<sup>57</sup> Wright, “Giants,” 307; see earlier Paul Karge, *Rephaim: Die vorgeschichtliche Kultur Palästinas und Phöniziens. Archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Paderborn, Schöningh, 1917), 612: “Ich behaupte, daß die als riesenhaft vorgestellte Urbevölkerung der Rephaim in Volksglauben durch eine Ausdeutung der Megalithgräber entstanden ist, die man allenthalben im Lande als Zeugen einer uralten Vergangenheit sah.”

<sup>58</sup> On the interpretive debates about this passage, see recently Maria Lindquist (Metzler), “King Og’s Iron Bed,” *CBQ* 73 (2011): 477–92, with references. Megalithic dolmens are not made of iron, but in Israel are commonly made of basalt, an igneous rock with a high concentration of iron. A recently discovered large dolmen in the Galilee has a basalt capstone roughly thirteen feet long, eleven and a half feet wide, and four feet thick, weighing over 50 tons, arguably illustrating what Deut 3:11 had in mind; see Gonen Sharon, et al., “Monumental Megalithic Burial and Rock Art Tell a New Story About the Levant Intermediate Bronze ‘Dark Ages,’” *PLoS One* 12 (2017): doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0172969.

<sup>59</sup> Albrecht Alt, “Josua,” in *Kleine Schriften*, 1:182.

place in space, and also a symbol, or something of spiritual significance, something shared by the group that adheres to and is superimposed on this physical reality.”<sup>60</sup> Sites of memory are, in Halbwach’s terms, “visible facts that are the symbols of invisible truths.”<sup>61</sup>

These invisible truths bind together the authority of the past with the obligations of memory. For instance, when Amos invokes the conquest as Yahweh’s destruction of the giants, he is making a claim on Israel’s ethical responsibilities. He writes, in Yahweh’s voice:

It was I who destroyed the Amorites before them,  
     whose height is like the height of cedar trees,  
     and their strength like oak trees.  
 I destroyed their fruit above,  
     and their root below.  
 It was I who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
     and led you in the wilderness for forty years  
     to inherit the land of the Amorites.  
 (Amos 2:9–10)

In this passage (arguably from the eighth century BCE), the conquest, described as Yahweh’s destruction of the indigenous giants, is linked with the exodus as memories of Yahweh’s past beneficence to Israel. Due to these deeds of deliverance, Israel is bound to Yahweh in a reciprocity of blessing and obligations. But, according to Amos, Israel has reneged on their duties, and hence Yahweh will exact punishment on Israel. This reciprocity of past deeds and present obligations is clear in the contrastive parallelism of Amos 3:2: “Only you have I known from all the families of the earth, / therefore I will visit upon you all your transgressions.” The connective tissue between cultural memory and ethical obligation elucidates the invisible truths that adhere to the visible facts of stones, ruins, and megaliths. The biblical landscape is a memory-scape, made of recollection as much as earth and rock.

#### SOCIAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE ALCHEMY OF MEMORY

Pierre Bourdieu coined the term “social alchemy” to refer to the transformative effects of social reciprocity. He writes: “The fundamental operation of social alchemy [is] the transformation of arbitrary relations into legitimate relations.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, “The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land,” in *On Collective Memory*, 204.

<sup>61</sup> Halbwachs, “Legendary Topography,” 224.

<sup>62</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 195.

Like the alchemy that transforms worthless metal into gold, it is a work of the imagination, creating a social collectivity out of a motley group of individuals. Similarly, the exodus-conquest story tells how a “mixed multitude” (ערב רב, Exod 12:38) was transformed into a new community, with lasting bonds of reciprocity to Yahweh and each other. This memory of social alchemy entails multiple transformations: from slavery to freedom, from Egypt to Israel, from Pharaoh’s law to Yahweh’s, from chaos to order. Through the alchemy of memory, these stories not only describe a transformation, but in a real sense also cause that transformation. The narrative memories of the exodus-conquest arguably functioned—and still function—as a discursive catalyst of ethnoreligious identity, what Anthony Smith calls an ethnic *mythomoteur*.<sup>63</sup> Along with other traits and practices, including language, foodways, material culture, law, bodily behaviors, and ritual, the stories articulate and sustain the collective identity of the people of Israel.

Although there are large gaps in the textual record, such that we cannot know that the crystallization of the exodus and conquest stories was contemporary with the emergence of Israel, we can say that it is one of the ways that ancient Israel constituted its ethnic boundaries and fashioned itself as the people of Yahweh. Israelites were those who remembered the exodus as the narrative *par excellence* of their formation as a people and a polity. It is, in Clifford Geertz’s phrase, “a story they tell themselves about themselves.”<sup>64</sup> It is simultaneously a story and an interpretation, a model of the past and a template for life in the present.

These stories, as we have seen, also include a critique of themselves, pointing to the murmurings and rebellions, the resistance to freedom that characterizes the people’s inconstant behavior from the time of Moses’s call throughout the period of exodus, wanderings, and conquest. The prophetic critique of Israel’s faults is already anticipated in the stories of their formative past, a stiff-necked people who are at the same time Yahweh’s treasured possession. The social alchemy of the stories includes the people’s mix of honor and shame—extending even to Moses’s faults—and perhaps thereby yields a deeper resonance as a conflicted spiritual autobiography.

A key aspect of the alchemy of memory is the capacity to forget. As Ernest Renan observed, the formation of national identity depends on the ability to forget and reinvent the past: “Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation.”<sup>65</sup> In the biblical memories of the exodus and conquest, much has been forgotten and reinvented. There is no clear memory of the Egyptian Empire in Canaan in any biblical text, even though the

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<sup>63</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 57–68.

<sup>64</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 448.

<sup>65</sup> Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 11.

last years of the empire were contemporaneous with the emergence of Israel (first attested in the Merenptah stele in 1207 BCE). This is, I suggest, a strategic forgetting, which opens the imaginative space for all of Israel's forebears to be slaves in Egypt.

Egypt was no longer a presence in Canaan after 1125 BCE; its hegemony was limited to the land of Egypt. By positioning the Egyptian house of bondage in Egypt, the story not only updates the memory, but it allows for Israel's ethnic boundaries to be in place before the conquest. Hence, when Israel is constituted inside the land, its ethnic boundaries are already secure, creating strong boundaries between Israel and the other peoples of Canaan. By situating the crystallization of Israel outside the land, the internal ethnic boundaries between Israelite and Canaanite is made more thinkable and tangible. As Peter Machinist suggests, "A story of outside entrance into Palestine ... would have served as an important pole around which a collective identity could be segregated and consolidated."<sup>66</sup>

In the cultural memories of exodus-conquest, the Israelites enter the land together, already a cohesive polity. The strategic forgetting and reconfiguration of the past enables Israel's cultural memory to compensate for its relatively uneventful historical origins. By a mixture of forgetting and self-fashioning, the representation of the past becomes an epic drama, filled with signs and wonders, worthy of recounting to one's children and children's children.

A new people constituted mostly by local Canaanites could become Israel more readily in the imagined space of the exodus-conquest than by remembering that they were indigenous people. The narrative of a journey from Egypt to Israel was fitting, since many of them emigrated from the lowlands, where the imperial grip was greatest, to the highlands. Some may even have journeyed from Egypt, former slaves returning home to Canaan as the empire collapsed. By the magic of social alchemy, all of Israel had been slaves in Egypt, and from there, through the wilderness, Sinai, and conquest, were constituted as a new people in the promised land. The biblical memory of the exodus-conquest describes and effects a transformation.

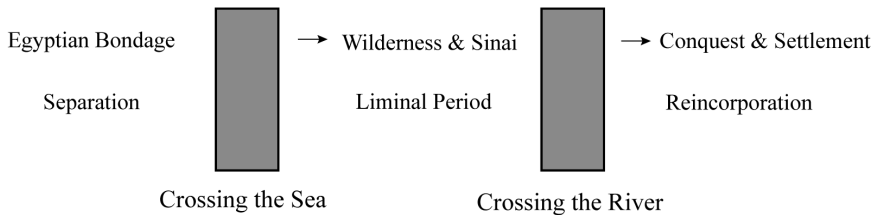
The ethnic boundary-marking and social transformation that these memories entail were transmitted not only by narrative and commemorative rites, but also by general habits and practices. The exodus memory was connected to legal practices, for instance, the law protecting the resident alien in the Covenant Code: "You shall not mistreat or oppress the stranger (גר), for you were strangers (גרים) in the land of Egypt" (Exod 22:20; cf. Exod 23:9). The divisions of time were connected with the exodus memory, as in the Sabbath, which is first instituted in

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<sup>66</sup> Peter Machinist, "Outsiders or Insiders: The Biblical View of Emergent Israel and Its Contexts," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Culture and Identity*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 152.

the story of the manna following the exodus, when Moses says: “This is what Yahweh spoke: Tomorrow is a day of rest, a holy Sabbath of Yahweh” (Exod 16:23; cf. Deut 5:15). The commemorative rites of the Passover ceremony are the most obvious time when the exodus memories are brought to consciousness, enlivened by special food, song, and even bodily posture: “This is how you shall eat it: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staffs in your hands, and you shall eat it in a hurry” (Exod 12:11). Practices of the body, food, time, law, and ethics are all enmeshed with the exodus memory. It is a set of collective practices as well as a story told across the generations (Exod 10:1–2). As Bourdieu observes, “social alchemy is, like magic, a collective undertaking.”<sup>67</sup> It works its magic by daily habits as well as by ceremonies and story.

The transformation of identity effected by the memories of exodus and conquest can be described as a symbolic rite of passage. According to Arnold van Gennep’s classic analysis, a rite of passage has three phases: separation from a previous identity, initiation into a new identity, and reincorporation.<sup>68</sup> The initiatory phase usually occurs in a liminal place or time that is “betwixt and between” the old and the new orders. The transformative movements in the exodus-conquest memories can be mapped as follows, moving temporally from left to right:



As we saw in the conceptual links between the exodus and conquest, the crossing of the Red Sea is re-presented in the crossing of the Jordan River. The plot-structure of the exodus-conquest as a symbolic rite of passage is, in this respect, essential to the story.<sup>69</sup> The liminal transformation in the desert wanderings and at Sinai (or Horeb) makes the escaped slaves into a new people, with all the legal and ethnic boundaries of a new people and polity.<sup>70</sup> Through this generation-long

<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline*, 195.

<sup>68</sup> Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

<sup>69</sup> On the symbolism of *rites de passage* in the Song of the Sea and Egyptian reliefs, see Ronald Hendel, “The Exodus as Cultural Memory: Egyptian Bondage and the Song of the Sea,” in *Israel’s Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective: Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience*, ed. Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider, and William H. C. Propp (New York: Springer, 2015), 74–76.

<sup>70</sup> The J source does not have a law-giving as such at Sinai, but in Exod 33:5–7 Yahweh reveals to Moses his lawlike intentions, described as a dialectic of compassion and justice; see Ronald Hendel,



rite of passage, the story describes the “transformation of arbitrary relations into legitimate relations,” crystallizing a new collective identity as the people of Israel. This symbolic plot also influences the selective work of cultural memory, drawing some traditions into the foreground while relegating others to the margins and still others to oblivion.

This structure as a symbolic rite of passage is a part of the work of the alchemy of memory. The story’s manifest content and internal logic transforms a mixed multitude into the people of Yahweh. In the represented time of the narrative, this transformation occurred in the punctual past. In its repetition in practice and cognition, this transformation is re-presented and reactivated in the durative present. In so doing, the ethnic group—the Israelites and their descendants—tell a story that creates and sustains their identity. These memories have arguably been working their social alchemy from the early Iron Age to the present day.

The concept of cultural memory, as Steven Weitzman has observed, offers “a way to reformulate the relationship between texts and historical context.”<sup>71</sup> It allows us to see how biblical memories respond “to real circumstances, places and events, but through the prism of imagination and group identity.”<sup>72</sup> The biblical representations of the exodus and conquest, if we make use of this prism, illuminate the wandering paths of memory, the poetics of the epic past, and the collective fashioning of ancient Israel. This approach offers a possibility, if we wish, to resume a close engagement with the intersections of the biblical text, archaeology, and history—the dialectic between biblical representation and the world—in a post-Albrightian age.

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<sup>71</sup> Steven Weitzman, “Text and Context in Biblical Studies: A Brief History of a Troubled Relationship,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel*, ed. Susan Niditch (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 80.

<sup>72</sup> Weitzman, “Text and Context.”

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## The Etymology of Hebrew *bāḥûr*

John Huehnergard

In most dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew, the noun *bāḥûr* “young man” is listed as a derivative of the verb *bāḥar*, “to choose,” that is, a passive participle, thus originally meaning “chosen.”<sup>1</sup> The plural of *bāḥûr* is *baḥûrîm* (construct *baḥûrê*, with 1cs suffix *baḥûray*, etc.), in which the *pataḥ* in the initial syllable indicates that the *ḥ* was originally doubled; the pattern *qattûl* is rare in Hebrew,<sup>2</sup> but it is not a passive participle, a fact that should already give us pause about the usual derivation as “chosen (one).”

The customary etymology is also suspect semantically, however. In many of its occurrences, *bāḥûr* appears with *bātûlā*, “young woman,” and with terms for life stages such as *zāqēn*, “old” and *ṭap*, “child”; some examples:

*mi-ḥûṣ təšakkel-ḥereb û-mē-ḥādārîm ʔēmā gam-bāḥûr gam-bātûlā yônēq ʕim-ʔiṣ šēbā*

“The sword will bereave from outside, and terror from inside, both young man and young woman, suckling together with elder,” Deut 32:25

*kî yibʕal bāḥûr bātûlā*

“as a young man marries a young woman,” Isa 62:5

*ʔāz tišmaḥ bātûlā bə-māḥôl û-baḥûrîm û-zqēnîm yaḥdāw*

“then a young woman will rejoice in dancing, and young men and old men together,” Jer 31:13

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It is an honor to dedicate this study to P. Kyle McCarter Jr., a good friend since we were *baḥûrîm*. I wish to thank Jo Ann Hackett and Aaron Rubin for discussing various aspects of this paper with me; they are not responsible for any errors or oversights.

<sup>1</sup> E.g., BDB, s.v. “בַּחַר”; HALOT, s.v. “בָּחוּר”; GMD 136a; KAHAL, s.v. “בָּחוּר”. Similarly, H. Seebass, “בָּחוּר,” TDOT 2:74.

<sup>2</sup> John Huehnergard, “Biblical Hebrew Nominal Patterns,” in *Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible: Methodological Perspectives on Philological and Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Jo Ann Hackett*, ed. Jeremy M. Hutton and Aaron D. Rubin, ANEM 12 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 55.

*zāqēn bāhūr ū-btūlā wə-ṭap wə-nāšīm tahargū*

“you may kill an old man, a young man, a young woman, a child, and women,”  
Ezek 9:6

*bahūrīm wə-gam-bətūlōt zəqēnīm šim-nəšārīm,*

“young men and also young women, old and young people,” Ps 148:12

*way-yahārōg bahūrēhem ba-ḥereb bə-bēt miqdāšām wə-lō? ḥāmal šal-bāhūr ū-  
bətūlā zāqēn wə-yāšēš*

“he killed their young men by the sword in their sanctuary, and spared no young  
man, young woman, old or aged man,” 2 Chr 36:17

Thus, *bāhūr* normally denotes a life stage,<sup>3</sup> namely, a sexually mature young man,<sup>4</sup> and a semantic path to that meaning from “chosen” is quite unlikely.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 173. In 1 Sam 9:2, Saul is described as *bāhūr wā-ṭōb*, which McCarter renders “a handsome young man,” commenting that the Hebrew suggests “that Saul at the time was a young man about to enter upon adult life (*bāhūr*),” and that “Saul has attained his majority and is ready to assume adult responsibilities.”

Note also the forms *bāhūrīm* and *bāhūrōt*, “adolescence” (always with suffixes: *bāhūrāyw* in Num 11:28 and *bāhūrōteykā* in Eccl 11:9, 12:1), which parallel other plural abstracts denoting life stages, such as *nəšūrīm* ‘youth’ and *zəqūnīm*, “old age,” and which, unlike *bahūrīm* “young men,” show reduction of the first vowel; see Lazar Gulkowitsch, *Die Bildung von Abstraktbegriffen in der hebräischen Sprachgeschichte* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), 27–29.

<sup>4</sup> Note *wat-tašgab šal-məʾahābeyhā ... bāhūrē ḥemed kullām*, “she lusted after her lovers ..., all of them handsome young men” in Ezek 23:6 (cf. also vv. 12, 23).

<sup>5</sup> E.g., BDB’s explanation, “choice, in the prime of manhood” (BDB, s.v. “בָּחַר”), is obviously forced. Others have also doubted the connection between *bāhūr* and “to choose.” For example, Gesenius suggested an alternative derivation, from *b-k-r* as in Arabic *bikr*, “virgin” (which is not phonetically possible); Guilielmus Gesenius, *Thesaurus philologicus criticus linguae hebraeae et chaldaee veteris testamenti*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Vogel, 1835–1853), s.v. “בָּחַר.” Robinson preserved this alternative etymology in his translation of Gesenius: Edward Robinson, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament including the Chaldee: Translated from the Latin of William Gesenius* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1836), s.v. “בָּחַר.” Barth compared *bāhūr* instead to Akkadian *baḥūlātu*, “soldiers,” which is, however, a late Neo-Assyrian neologism based on *baʾūlātu*, “subjects” (see *CAD* 2, s.v. “baʾūlātu”); Jakob Barth, “Verschiebung der Liquidae im Assyrischen,” *ZA* 3 (1886): 59. Joüon wondered whether the primary sense of *bāhūr* was “tall,” noting that, uniquely at 1 Sam 9:2, the LXX translates the word with εὐμεγέθης, “of good size, large”; Paul Joüon, “Notes de lexicographie hébraïque,” *Biblica* 6 (1925): 314. Joüon’s suggestion was adopted (“grandi statura”) in Zorell, s.v. “בָּחַר.”

The plural *bahūrīm* occasionally denotes “troops, soldiers,” especially in poetic texts (e.g., Isa 31:8; Jer 49:26, 50:30, 51:3), and it might be suggested that this reflects a meaning “elite,” i.e., “chosen,” as in the Akkadian phrase *šabum beʾrum/bērum*, “elite troops”; see *CAD* 2, s.v. “bēru”; Michael P. Streck, *Die Amurriter, Die onomastische Forschung, Orthographie und Phonologie, Nominalmorphologie*, vol. 1 of *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000), 86. But since there is no indication in the biblical texts that special troops are meant, it is much more likely that *bahūrīm* simply refers to “young men” as warriors (*pace* Hayim ben Yosef Tawil, *An*



The form *bāḥûr* does also occur as the passive participle of *bāḥar* “to choose,”<sup>6</sup> but its use is quite distinct from that of the substantive *bāḥûr* “young man”; for example,

*way-yiqqaḥ šēš-mē?ôit rekeb bāḥûr*  
 “he took six hundred choice chariots,” Exod 14:7

*way-yiqqaḥ šā?ûl šəlōšet ?ālāpîm ?iš bāḥûr mik-kol-yiśrā?ēl*  
 “Saul took three thousand men chosen from all Israel,” 1 Sam 24:37

Since it is semantically difficult to derive the meaning “young man” from “chosen,” another etymology may be sought. The Hebrew root *bḥr* “to choose” reflects earlier Semitic *\*bḥr*, with medial *\*ḥ*; but Hebrew *ḥ* may also reflect earlier Semitic *\*ḥ*, and so perhaps *bāḥûr* derives from a root *\*bḥr*. In Ugaritic, there is indeed a word *bḥr*, which appears once, in the Kirta epic; the text is unfortunately damaged:

*ʕrb . špš . lymġ / krt .*  
*šbā . špš / bʕlmy .*  
*wymk / [y]sb ʕln*  
*wy[ʕ]ny? / [kr]t ʕf .*  
*ʕln . bḥr / [ym]k*  
 KTU 1.15 v.18–23

Kirta has indeed reached the sunset,  
 Our lord, the sunrise.  
 So let Yaṣṣib rule over us;  
 as noble Kirta would ...,  
 over us let the young man [ru]l[e].

Most scholars, not unreasonably, leave the last line untranslated.<sup>8</sup> But the meaning “young man” for *bḥr* fits the context nicely, where Kirta’s son Yaṣṣib is encouraged to take over his father’s throne,<sup>9</sup> and accordingly this is the gloss

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*Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew. Etymological–Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalents with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic* [Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2009], 47–48); indeed, for “elite troops” we find the phrase *mibḥar baḥûrāyw*, “the choicest of his young men” in Jer 48:15.

<sup>6</sup> Note also the poetic passive form *bāḥûr*, “elect, chosen (of God).”

<sup>7</sup> In a few instances the meaning of *bāḥûr* is ambiguous; e.g., *way-yibḥar mik-kōl baḥûrê bə-yiśrā?ēl*, which McCarter translates “[Joab] made a selection from all the elite troops in Israel”; P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 267. But it is possible that simply “chose from all the young men” is intended.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Edward L. Greenstein, “Kirta,” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon Parker, WAW 9 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 29; N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and His Colleagues* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 218; Wyatt, “The Kirta Epic,” trans. Dennis Pardee, *COS* 1.102: iv 14–vi; Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 86.

<sup>9</sup> So Anton Jirku, *Kanaanäische Mythen und Epen aus Ras Schamra–Ugarit* (Gerd Mohn: Gütersloh, 1962), 102 (“über uns ein Jüngling”); Jirku was followed by André Caquot, Maurice Sznycer, and Andrée Herdner, *Mythes et légendes*, vol. 1 of *Textes ougaritiques* (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 547 (“Sur nous un jeune homme”). In *The Krt Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra: A Social Myth of Ancient Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 21, John Gray rendered *bḥr* “incense,” presumably on the basis



assigned to *bḥr* in the standard Ugaritic dictionary.<sup>10</sup> That such a word for “young man” existed in Ugaritic is shown by a quadrilingual vocabulary text written in syllabic cuneiform, in which Akkadian *eḫlu*, “young man” is equated with Ugaritic <sup>1</sup>*ba<sup>1</sup>-aḫ-ḫu-ru*.<sup>11</sup> If alphabetic *bḥr* does indeed mean “young man,” then the syllabic writing represents /baḫḫuru/.<sup>12</sup> The Ugaritic form has the pattern *qattul*, with short *u*,<sup>13</sup> versus the Hebrew singular *qatūl* and plural *qattūl*, with long *ū*. But, as will be argued below, these forms for “young man” were originally adjectival, and the alternation of short and long vowels in adjectival patterns is well known, even within a language, as in Hebrew *yāšēš*/*yāšīš*, “old,” *pālēt*/*pālīt*, “fugitive.”<sup>14</sup> The Ugaritic form also has a doubled middle radical, like the ancestor of the Hebrew plural, *bahūrīm*. It is likely that both *\*baḫūr* and *\*bahūr* originally existed as variant forms.<sup>15</sup> Ugaritic preserved the longer form in the singular, whereas Hebrew preserved the shorter form in the singular and the longer form as a suppletive plural.<sup>16</sup>

The root *bḥr* is not otherwise attested in Ugaritic, nor is there a verbal root in Hebrew related to *bāḫūr*, “young man” (assuming that it does not derive from “to choose”). But the root *bḥr* is attested elsewhere in Semitic. In Akkadian, the adjective *bahru* means “hot,” of liquids, and there is a factitive D verb *buhḫuru* “to

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of Arabic, for which see further below.

<sup>10</sup> *DULAT*<sup>3</sup>, s.v. “bḥr.” The biblical place name *bahūrīm* (in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings) is consistently rendered Βαουρ(ε)τι in the LXX, and the nonindication of *h* indicates an original *\*h* rather than *\*ḥ* in the name; see Joshua Blau, “On Polyphony in Biblical Hebrew,” *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 6.2 (1982): 105–83. If our proposal to derive *bāḫūr* from a root *bḥr* is correct, then presumably that place name would not mean “young men’s village,” as some have conjectured (e.g., BDB, s.v. “בחר”).

<sup>11</sup> There is no other certain evidence elsewhere in Semitic of a related form with the meaning “young man.” A word *bḥrw*, “youth” was listed by Michael Sokoloff in Sokoloff, s.v. “בחרר,” but he deleted it in the addendum (p. 827), presumably considering it to be a Hebraism. There is an Amorite personal name *ba-ḫu-ra*, which could mean either “chosen” or “young man”; Streck, *Die Amurriter, Die onomastische Forschung*, 330, opts for the former.

<sup>12</sup> See John Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription*, rev. ed., HSS 32 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 84, 113. The writing <sup>1</sup>*ba<sup>1</sup>-aḫ-ḫu-ru* can also represent /baḫḫuru/.

<sup>13</sup> Josef Tropper (*Ugaritische Grammatik*, 2nd ed. [Münster: Ugarit, 2012], 174, 264) assumes that the syllabic Ugaritic form is /baḫḫūru/, with long *ū* as in the Hebrew plural, but in Ugaritic that would have become *\*/buḫḫūru/* by two different sound rules; see Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary*, 270, 271.

<sup>14</sup> See John Huehnergard, “*qātīl* and *qatīl* Nouns in Biblical Hebrew,” in *Sha’arei Lashon: Studies in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Jewish Languages Presented to Moshe Bar-Asher*, ed. Aharon Maman, Steven E. Fassberg, and Yochanan Breuer, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2007), 1:\*10–\*13.

<sup>15</sup> In Hebrew, for example, note both *ʔābīr* and *ʔabbīr*, “mighty,” *ʔāsīr* and *ʔassīr*, “captive”; further, cf. pairs such as Hebrew *yāmin* and Aramaic *\*yammīn*, “right.” See Joshua Fox, *Semitic Noun Patterns*, HSS 52 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 245–47.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. the occasional use in Akkadian of *parras* forms as plurals of *parVs* singulars, e.g., *arraku*, “long, tall”; see *CAD* 1.2, s.v. “arraku.”

heat, keep hot,” also of liquids, as well as a number of other derivatives such as adverbial *baḥra*, *buhra*, “hot,” and several nouns denoting hot dishes; most of these words appear in Standard Babylonian medical texts, in recipes for remedies.<sup>17</sup> Related to the Akkadian root is Classical Arabic *baḥara*, “to emit vapor, fumes,” as in *baḥarat-i l-qidru*, “the cooking-pot sent up fume, vapour, steam,”<sup>18</sup> and the derived noun *buhār*, “vapor, fume”; because of the association with fumes, the Arabic root also has to do with fumigation, as in *baḥūr*, “fumigatory, incense” and the D verb *baḥḥara*, “to fumigate, perfume with incense” (also “to evaporate something”). Causative forms of *bḥr* in the Modern South Arabian languages also mean “to fumigate”: Mehri *həbhāwr*, Ḥarsūsi and Hobyōt *abhōr*, and Jibbāli *ōḥər*;<sup>19</sup> it is possible that these are borrowed from Arabic.<sup>20</sup>

The Akkadian and Arabic meanings suggest the general sense “hot, steaming, fuming” for Semitic *bḥr*. It is at least conceivable that a noun denoting a sexually mature young man might derive from such a root. In English, of course, *hot* has for centuries included the sense “sexually aroused, sexually available.”<sup>21</sup> In Semitic, too, associations of “hot” or “burn,” youth, and sexuality are not hard to find. In Akkadian, *bašlu*, “cooked” may also mean “mature” of both plants and (rarely) of animals.<sup>22</sup> In Arabic, a verb *ḡalama*, “to be(come) excited or overcome by lust, vehemently affected with lust” is related to nouns such as *ḡulām*, “young

<sup>17</sup> CAD 2, s.v. “baḥru,” “baḥrūtu,” and “buḥru”; AHW, s.v. “baḥru,” “buḥru.”

<sup>18</sup> Lane, s.v. “بخر.”

<sup>19</sup> See T. M. Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon and English–Mehri Word-List* (London: School of Oriental & African Studies, 1987), s.v. “bxr”; Johnstone, *Ḥarsūsi Lexicon and English–Ḥarsūsi Word-List* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), s.v. “bxr”; Johnstone, *Jibbāli Lexicon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), s.v. “bxr”; Aki’o Nakano, *Hobyōt (Oman) Vocabulary: With Example Texts*, ed. Robert Ratcliffe (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 2013), 32. Note also Soqotri *bōḥor*, “incense,” in Vitaly Naumkin and Leonid Kogan, *Corpus of Soqotri Oral Literature*, vol. 1, *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* 76 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 512.

<sup>20</sup> Note also probably Sabaic (Ancient South Arabian) *bḥr*, “incense”; see Peter Stein, *Die Inschriften der mittel- und spätsabäischen Periode*, vol. 1 of *Die altsüdarabischen Minuskelinschriften auf Holzstäbchen aus der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München* (Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 2010), 456 text 130.8, and p. 459.

<sup>21</sup> Since the fourteenth century, according to Jonathon Green, *Cassell’s Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell, 1998), s.v. “hot.” Note also phrases such as *hot and heavy*, for “passionate, lustful,” and *in heat*, of female mammals “in a state of sexual excitement just before ovulation” (from the seventeenth century); see Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), s.v. “hot and heavy,” “in heat.” And cf. any number of popular song lyrics (e.g., the song “Hot Blooded,” by Foreigner, 1978). Note also Latin *cupere*, “to desire, long for,” from Indo-European *\*kwēp*, “to smoke, cook, move violently, be agitated emotionally” (e.g., Old Church Slavonic *kypěti*, “to boil,” Latvian *kūpēt*, “smoke, steam”); see Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Tübingen: Francke, 2002), 1:596–97; Calvert Watkins, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 45b.

<sup>22</sup> Note *urīšu lā bašlu* which the editors of CAD translate ‘immature goat’ (CAD 2, s.v. “bašlu”; 20, s.v. “urīšu”), although von Soden (AHW, s.v. “bašlu”) listed this reference under the meaning “cooked, simmered (of flesh).”

man,” *ḡulāma*, “young woman,” *ḡaylam*, “beautiful woman.”<sup>23</sup> And Arabic *šabb/šābb*, “young man” may be derived from the verb *šabba* “to burn, blaze,”<sup>24</sup> a root also attested in Akkadian (*šabābu*, “to burn, roast”) and Jibbāli (*šab*, “to flare up,” of fire).<sup>25</sup> Perhaps, therefore, *bāhūr*, “young man” derives from *bḥr*, “to be(come) hot, to steam, to fume” via a similar association.<sup>26</sup>

Another etymology of *bāhūr* is suggested by the Arabic quadriradical verb (*ta*)*baḥtara*, “to walk proudly, strut” and the associated adjective *baḥtarī*, “elegant, beautiful in gait and in body.”<sup>27</sup> It is admittedly often difficult to connect a given quadriradical root with a semantically related triradical root, but K. Boeckels points to several other examples of Arabic quadriradicals with third radical *t* that may be related to triradical roots without the *t*.<sup>28</sup> Boeckels connects

<sup>23</sup> Lane, s.v. “ḡم.” Cf. \**ḡalm(at)*, “young man/woman” elsewhere in Semitic; see *DULAT*<sup>3</sup>, s.v. “ḡlm.” See also Leonid Kogan, *Genealogical Classification of Semitic: The Lexical Isoglosses* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), 186–87, who notes as well Jibbāli *ḡélam*, “to run wild (after summer, of camels).”

<sup>24</sup> Lane, s.v. “شب”; Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Arabic–English)*, 4th ed., trans. J Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979), s.v. “شب.” Note also the Yemeni Arabic word *šabba*, which “refers to the maturing growth of a crop as the ears develop”; Daniel Martin Varisco, *Medieval Agriculture and Islamic Science: The Almanac of a Yemeni Sultan* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1994), 173. The rare Sabaic word *sʿbm* may also refer to a type of grain; see Stein, *Die Inschriften der mittel- und spätsabäischen Periode*, 95.

<sup>25</sup> Jibbāli also has the noun *šeb*, “youth”; Johnstone, *Jibbāli Lexicon*, s.v., “šb.” The Akkadian, Arabic, and Jibbāli forms point to a proto-Semitic root *šbb*, with *š*. Thus, Aramaic *šabībā*, “spark” must derive from an unrelated root (or be a loan of an unattested Akkadian word); Hebrew \**šābīb* is generally recognized to be a loan from Aramaic; see, e.g., Theodor Nöldeke, review of *Die Aramaismen im Alten Testament*, E. Kautzsch, *ZDMG* 57 (1903): 417.

Another relevant comparison may be Gəṣəz *wārezā*, “young man” and *warzawa*, “to mature, become a young man,” the etymology of which is uncertain, but cf. perhaps Amharic *wārāzza*, “to sweat, become damp, begin to ripen” and *wārāzāt*, “steam, vapor, sweat,” for which see Thomas L. Kane, *Amharic–English Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990), s.v. “ወረዛ,” “ወረዛት.”

Finally, in this connection, Jo Ann Hackett reminds me (personal communication) that when King David was very old, a beautiful young woman was brought, *wə-šākābā bə-ḥēqekā wə-ḥam la-ḏōnī ham-melek*, “that she might lie in your bosom, and my lord the king be warm” (1 Kgs 1:2).

<sup>26</sup> In some of the Modern South Arabian languages, the root *bḥr* also denotes wellness: Mehri Gt *bāthər*, “to become healthy and sleek” (of animals); Jibbāli *baḥār*, G “to become fit, well,” Gt *ebteḥər*, “to become better on growing older” (Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon*, s.v., “bxr”); Johnstone, *Jibbāli Lexicon*, s.v., “bxr”). Similarly, in Yemeni Arabic, *buḥur* and *tabāḥar* mean “to recuperate, be healthy,” for which see Carlo Landberg, *Glossaire Daḡinois*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1920–1942), s.v. “بخر”; Moshe Pianta, *Dictionary of Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1990), s.v., “بخر.” As both Landberg and Pianta note, these forms derive from the phrase *bi-ḥayr*, “well, in good health,” and so that root *bḥr* is a secondary creation in those languages. My thanks to Aaron Rubin for reminding me of Landberg’s *Glossaire*.

<sup>27</sup> Lane, s.v., “بختر”; Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, s.v., “بختر”. Note also *baḥtara*, “a beautiful gait” (“incessus pulcher”), in Georg Wilhelm Freytag, *Lexicon arabico-latinum*, 4 vols. (Halle: Schwetschke, 1830–1837), s.v. بَخْتَرَةٌ; Freytag (*Lexicon arabico-latinum*) also listed *biḥtīr* as a synonym of *baḥtarī*.

<sup>28</sup> Klaus Boeckels, *Quadriradikalia in den semitischen Sprachen* (Inaugural-Dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin, 1990), 160.

*baḥtara* with the verb *faḥara*, “to be proud,”<sup>29</sup> to which Mehri *əftəḥáwr* and Jibbāli *fəṯḥər*, “to be proud” are clearly related.<sup>30</sup> If Arabic *baḥtara*, “to walk proudly” and *faḥara*, “to be proud” do indeed reflect the same root, we may suggest that it is the former that preserves the original first radical, *b*, and that *f* in *faḥara* is the result of assimilation to the unvoiced second radical (in prefix-conjugation forms such as *yafḥar*). The same assimilation may be seen in the verbs *baqara*, “to slit, split” and *faqara*, “to dig, pierce, cleave,” which reflect a single original root, *bqr*.<sup>31</sup> Thus, there may have been a Central Semitic root *\*bḥr* meaning “to be proud, act proudly,” with a derived adjective *\*baḥūr*, “proud, boastful” (the meaning, in fact, of Arabic *faḥūr*).

As a final possibility for the etymology of Hebrew *bāḥūr*, we may mention Gəʕəz *faḥara*, “to betroth, espouse” (where, again, we would have to assume *f* < *b*); note especially the adjective *fəḥur* < *\*paḥūr*, “betrothed, fiancé.” But it seems more likely that this Gəʕəz root is cognate with *\*pḥr*, “to gather” elsewhere in Semitic (i.e., “to gather a spouse to oneself”).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> As evidence of the difficulty of etymologizing quadriradicals, we may note that Murad Kamil derives *tabaḥtara* not from *faḥara* but from *taḥattara* ‘to become languid, sluggish,’ with a preformative *b-*. Murad Kamil, *Beiträge zur Entstehung der vierradikaligen Verben in den gesprochenen semitischen Sprachen* (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1963), 41.

<sup>30</sup> Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon*, s.v. “fḥr”; Johnstone, *Jibbāli Lexicon*, s.v. “fḥr.” These Mehri and Jibbāli verbs may be loans from Arabic.

<sup>31</sup> John Huehnergard, “The Semitic Background of Arabic *faḥūr* ‘poor,’” in *No Tapping around Philology: Festschrift in Honor of Wheeler McIntosh Thackston’s Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Alireza Korangy and Daniel J. Sheffield (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 243–54. Note that there is a distinct common Semitic root *\*pḥr*, meaning “to gather,” which is found in Akkadian, Ancient South Arabian, Modern South Arabian, Ugaritic, and Phoenician.

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# First-Person Reference by Name in Biblical Hebrew

Yoo-ki Kim

In Biblical Hebrew dialogue, the speaker refers to him-/herself using different means of reference. The most frequently used elements are personal pronouns (אני, אנכי), pronominal suffixes (-י, -ני), and verbal affixes (-תי, -א). In addition to these first-person grammatical forms, nominal forms are also used. Some nominal forms indicate the speaker's deference toward the addressee. These are deferential expressions such as עבדך, אמתך, and שפחתך ("your servant").<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are other forms of first-person reference whose sociolinguistic status cannot easily be determined: the speaker's own name.<sup>2</sup> Unlike deferential expressions, personal names do not have any pronominal element referring to the speaker or addressee. In natural languages, this type of reference is most often attested in children's talk. Against the tendency to associate it with the children's lack of self-awareness, Kasia M. Jaszczolt quotes the example below, where the adult speaker uses his own name for first-person reference.<sup>3</sup>

Johnny to a friend: Johnny the car mechanic will fix it.

Here Johnny speaks to a friend whose car happened to break down. The speaker's name "Johnny" is employed in apposition with the description "the car mechanic" to emphasize the speaker's capacity to fix the car. For what purposes

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<sup>1</sup> The use of deferential expressions instead of pronouns or pronominal suffixes is a means of marking the speaker's subordinate status vis-à-vis the addressee as well as his/her intention to lower him-/herself before the addressee in a particular discourse situation. See Yoo-ki Kim, "Deferential Self-Reference in the Book of Samuel," *VT* 65 (2015): 588–605.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, I deal with only the speaker's first-person reference by name, leaving aside the cases where the speaker reports a third party's mention of the speaker's name, such as those in Gen 14:23 (where Abraham quotes a hypothetical statement which he wants not to be made in the future: "so that you will not say 'I have made Abraham rich'") and Gen 21:7 (where Sarah quotes an imaginary prediction which she deems impossible to have been made in the past: "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?").

<sup>3</sup> Kasia M. Jaszczolt, "First-Person Reference in Discourse: Aims and Strategies," *Journal of Pragmatics* (2013): 60.



does the speaker in the Hebrew Bible use his/her own name as first-person reference? What is the difference between referring to oneself as “your servant” and as one’s own name? Irene Lande, citing only three cases in which the speaker refers to himself with his own name (2 Sam 3:9; 7:20; and 24:23), notes that they are all related with solemn statements in that they are uttered in a promise to the king, in a prayer, and in a self-cursing respectively.<sup>4</sup> She argues that, since the name represents the existence of its bearer, “The use of the proper name ... could be regarded as an expression of the full personal commitment.”<sup>5</sup> E. J. Revell relates first-person reference by name to “public aspects of a speaker.” He considers a subordinate’s self-reference by name as “a reference more personal than that of a deferential term, but less intimate than that of a pronoun,” while taking a nonsubordinate’s self-reference by name as providing “a weightier, more impressive support for an important declaration” than pronominal forms.<sup>6</sup> The validity of this dichotomy according to the social status of interlocutors should be put into question. While a title such as “king” may signify a high status, a personal name by itself does not encode a specific social status. Since first-person reference by name can be used either by a subordinate or a superior, it can hardly be taken to denote a level of deference. Furthermore, even if it is used as a marker of deference, the name would have different functions depending on the context in which it is used. Even deferential language can be used derogatorily.<sup>7</sup>

This article will examine the cases of first-person reference by name in reported speech of the Hebrew Bible to see how the name functions in each case. It will limit itself to cases in which the speaker is a human being (including a personified being) since they better reflect human interactions in real life. It will first look at the examples where the speaker is in a nondeferential environment, that is, neither in a lower status with respect to the addressee nor in a situation to use deferential expressions. Then it will deal with other cases of first-person reference by name in which the speaker expresses deference to the addressee. This article will show that first-person reference by name places formal, official, or public aspects of the speech in focus instead of expressing the level of deference of the utterance.

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<sup>4</sup> Irene Lande, *Formelhafte Wendungen der Umgangssprache im alten Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1949), 73–74.

<sup>5</sup> Lande, *Formelhafte Wendungen*, 74. Original German: “Die Nennung des Eigennamens ... dürfte also als Ausdruck des vollen persönlichen Einsatzes betrachtet werden.”

<sup>6</sup> E. J. Revell, *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 350. Here, Revell’s argument includes first-person reference by title as well as by name.

<sup>7</sup> Cynthia L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis*, HSM 55 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 274.

## FIRST-PERSON REFERENCE BY NAME IN NONDEFERENTIAL CONTEXTS

## 1. Oath Formula

Let us consider the cases of first-person reference by name in oaths. An oath consists of two elements: the part that guarantees the sincerity and authenticity of the oath and the oath itself. In a recent study on oath formulas, B. Conklin names the former an “authenticating element” and the latter the “content of the oath.”<sup>8</sup> When the speaker’s name appears in an oath formula it is always in the authenticating element.

(1) 1 Sam 20:13

Thus will Yahweh do to Jonathan and thus will he do more. (I swear) that if my father deems it good to do the evil against you I will uncover your ear and send you away. You will go in peace and Yahweh will be with you as he has been with my father.

כה־יעשה יהוה ליהונתן וכה יסיף  
כִּי־יֵטֵב אֶל־אָבִי אֶת־הָרַעָה עֲלֶיךָ  
וּגְלִיתִי אֶת־אָזְנוֹךָ וּשְׁלַחְתִּיךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ  
לְשָׁלוֹם וַיְהִי יְהוָה עִמָּךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה  
עִם־אָבִי:

This is a part of Jonathan’s speech to David recorded in 1 Sam 20:12–16. Jonathan promises David that he will sound out his father Saul and inform him of the result, whether good or bad. Jonathan in return requests from David future protection of his household and his descendants. Jonathan refers to himself as “Jonathan” in the authenticating element of the oath in verse 13 quoted in (1) above. According to David Toshio Tsumura, Jonathan uses the third-person reference “in order to distance himself psychologically” from the scene, placing himself under a curse in his promise for protection of David from Saul’s plan to harm him.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, in the content of the oath Jonathan invariably refers to himself using a pronominal suffix or a verbal affix: “my father [אָבִי],” “I will uncover [וּגְלִיתִי],” and “I will send you away [וּשְׁלַחְתִּיךָ].” Interestingly, Jonathan occasionally refers to his friend by his personal name “David”: “if it is good for David [טוֹב אֶל־דָּוִד וְהָנָה]” (v. 12), “when Yahweh cuts off the enemies of David [וְאֶת־אֵיבֵי דָוִד בַּהֲכַרְתָּ יְהוָה]” (v. 15), and “May Yahweh seek it from the hands of David’s enemies [וּבִקֵּשׁ יְהוָה מִיַּד אֵיבֵי דָוִד]” (v. 16). In all these cases, “David” appears in a clause in which the speaker is not present in any form. Jonathan distances himself from Saul’s attitude (v. 12) and Yahweh’s actions (vv. 15 and 16) toward David. Likewise, Jonathan treats himself as if he were a third person

<sup>8</sup> Blane Conklin, *Oath Formulas in Biblical Hebrew*, LSAWS 5 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 4.

<sup>9</sup> David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 508.

by using his own name in verse 13. The speaker is virtually absent from the oath, which becomes a matter between Yahweh and Jonathan instead of Yahweh and “me.” By presenting himself as a third party, Jonathan adds to the solemnity and sacredness of the oath.

In a sense, the use of the name of the speaker “Jonathan” in (1) above acknowledges Yahweh’s freedom to do what he wants by presenting the speaker as being virtually absent at the scene of the oath. However, there is nothing that indicates deferential connotations in the name. Moreover, Jonathan is not in a situation to use deferential terms before David. Rather, David once employs the expression “your servant” to refer to himself before Jonathan (1 Sam 20:8).<sup>10</sup>

(2) 1 Sam 25:22

Thus will God do to the enemies of David and thus will he do more. (I swear that) if I leave alive one male (lit., a piss-er on the wall) of all who belong to him.

כה־יעשה אלהים לאיבי דוד וכה יסוף  
אם־אשאיר מכל־אשר־לו עדה־בקר  
משתין בקיר:

In 1 Sam 25:21–22, the narrator reports David’s monologue in which he reveals his resentment against Nabal. David is furious because he feels that Nabal returned evil for his favor.<sup>11</sup> David’s attitude in this passage contrasts with his unwillingness to take revenge on Saul for his evil in the previous chapter (1 Sam 24:7). The expression “a piss-er on the wall,” which is always used in the context of killing all of the male members of a group, also shows that he is out of control.<sup>12</sup> David mentions his own name in the authenticating element. Here he invokes a curse upon “the enemies of David,” of which the original wording must have been “David.”<sup>13</sup> However, in the oath itself he speaks with a first-person imperfect verb (אשאיר). The third-person reference in the authenticating element transforms the speaker into a third party who would suffer the punishment in case the oath is not carried out properly, thereby giving more credence to the speaker’s commitment to the oath. It also contributes to describing the

<sup>10</sup> For discussion about the use of deferential first-person reference here, see Kim, “Deferential Self-Reference,” 599–600.

<sup>11</sup> According to Tsumura (*First Book of Samuel*, 585), David “seems to have lost control over his feelings and behavior.”

<sup>12</sup> The expression appears in 1 Kgs 14:10; 16:11; 21:21; and 2 Kgs 9:8. See Tsumura, *First Book of Samuel*, 586.

<sup>13</sup> Commentators generally agree that David is the target of the curse and the expression “enemies” is a later addition. According to P. Kyle McCarter Jr. (*1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, AYB 8 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980], 394), “a scribe has changed David’s words to protect him (or his descendants!) from the consequences of the oath.” Ralph W. Klein (*1 Samuel*, WBC 10 [Dallas: Word, 1983], 245) thinks that the addition is “an attempt to avoid having David invoke a curse on himself.” Tsumura (*First Book of Samuel*, 586) also characterizes it as “the *euphemistic addition* by the author” (italics in the original), which is attested in 2 Sam 12:14 as well as in various ancient Near Eastern documents.

intensity of the speaker's fury and resoluteness but has nothing to do with deference.

(3) 2 Sam 3:9–10

Thus will God do to Abner and thus will he do more to him. (I swear) that just as Yahweh has sworn to David I will do for him, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul to set up David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beer-sheba.

כה־יעשה אלהים לַאֲבֹנֶר וְכֵן יִסִּף  
לוֹ כִּי כַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְדָוִד  
כִּי־כֵן אֶעֱשֶׂה־לוֹ לְהַעֲבִיר הַמַּמְלָכָה  
מִבֵּית שָׁאוּל וְלִהְיוֹת דָּוִד  
עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־יְהוּדָה מִדָּן  
עַד־בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע:

Here Abner is furious with Ishbosheth, who charges him with having slept with one of his father's concubines. In the authenticating element, Abner invokes a curse upon himself to show his resoluteness. In the content of the oath, he expresses his determination to transfer Ishbosheth's kingdom to David. The context is very similar to (2) above: Abner is enraged because he feels that Ishbosheth has returned evil for his favor, that is, protection from the hand of David (2 Sam 3:8). However, unlike the authenticating elements in (1) and (2) above, the recipient of the punishment is referred to not only as a personal name (אַבְנֶר) but also as a pronominal suffix (-) coreferential to the name.<sup>14</sup> The third-person suffix in reference to the speaker further removes the speaker from the scene, thereby rendering the curse more official than personal. In the oath itself, however, the first-person imperfect verb (אֶעֱשֶׂה) is used.

First-person reference by name is found only in the authenticating element, which consists of self-cursing, but not in the content of the oath. The speakers volunteer to become the recipient of punishment in case they do not fulfill their promise or carry out their plan. Revell argues that the names are used because the three oaths "support highly unusual undertakings."<sup>15</sup> However, it is hard to prove that other oaths are not dealing with "highly unusual undertakings."

Use of names for first-person reference is an exception rather than a rule in the authenticating element of the oath. In six cases, the first-person target of the curse appears in the form of a pronominal suffix: Thus will Yahweh/God/gods do *to me* and thus will he/they do more (Ruth 1:17; 2 Sam 3:35; 19:4; 1 Kgs 2:23; 20:10; 2 Kgs 6:31).<sup>16</sup> Only one (2 Sam 3:35) of these six cases is followed by a first-person verb in the content of oaths, unlike the authenticating elements

<sup>14</sup> According to Conklin (*Oath Formulas in Biblical Hebrew*, 22), this additional prepositional phrase (לִּי) occurs only here among the twelve instances of the formula "Thus Will X Do to Y" in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>15</sup> Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 352.

<sup>16</sup> In two other cases (1 Sam 14:44; 1 Kgs 19:2), the speaker even omits reference to him-/herself "to me."

in (1)–(3) above, which are all followed by a first-person verb. The self-reference by name as the recipient of the possible curse in the authenticating element alongside the first-person verbs in the content of the oath indicates the speaker's strong sense of responsibility and commitment to his oath.

Since (1)–(3) above are not far from one another in the narrative, they may reflect the author's or the editor's literary style. Timo Veijola sees the use of names instead of pronominal forms in (1)–(3) above as a peculiarity of the redactor's style, pointing out that it is attested only in DtrG.<sup>17</sup> However, it should be noted that in all three examples each speaker, taking responsibility as a public figure, uses his own name as a reference to himself to express his determination to take action, either out of a friend's love in the case of Jonathan or out of fury and resentment in the cases of David and Abner.

## 2. Other Cases in Nondeferential Contexts

In this section, we will examine the use of names for self-reference by a non-subordinate speaker outside of the oath formula. The examples will show that in various contexts the speaker's public nature is put in focus through reference by name.

### (4) Judg 11:15

He said to him, "Thus says Jephthah, Israel has not seized the land of Moab and the land of the Ammonites."

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה אָמַר יִפְתָּח לֹא־לָקַח  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ  
בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:

Jephthah speaks through his messengers to the king of Ammonites in an answer to the latter's demand for a peaceful return of the land. The words quoted here are the opening formula of a relatively long message (Judg 11:15–27). Therefore, the name "Jephthah" is used to identify the person sending the message at its beginning, as is common in the epistolary style used throughout the ancient Near East.<sup>18</sup> But here Jephthah's name stands alone without modifying expressions such as "your brother."<sup>19</sup> The lack of a kinship term is understandable since the message is delivered in a hostile confrontation. While the first-person reference by name follows a formal epistolary style, the omission of a conventional kin-

<sup>17</sup> Timo Veijola, *Die ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der deuteronomistischen Darstellung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1975), 84.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Mari letters open with the formula "Say to PN<sub>1</sub>, thus says PN<sub>2</sub>," where PN<sub>1</sub> and PN<sub>2</sub> represent the personal names of the receiver and the sender respectively. Nele Ziegler, "Correspondance," in *Dictionnaire de la civilisation Mésopotamienne*, ed. Francis Joannès (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2001), 203.

<sup>19</sup> In ancient Near Eastern letters, the sender's name is frequently followed by an epithet that describes the sender's relationship with the receiver, such as "your friend," "your brother," "your son," "your lord," or "your servant." See Ziegler, "Correspondance," 203.

ship term reflects the confrontational nature of the utterance. Furthermore, by resorting to this “standard ambassadorial language,” Jephthah asserts his authority over the Ammonite king, whom he treats as his inferior.<sup>20</sup>

(5) Gen 4:23–24

Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice. Wives of Lamech, listen to my word, for I have killed a man for wounding me and a boy for striking me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

ויאמר למך לנשיו עדה וצלה שמען  
קולי נשי למך האזנה אמרתי כי  
איש הרגתי לפעעי וילד לחברתי כי  
שבעתים יקס־קין ולמך שבעים  
ושבעה:

Quoted in (5) above is a speech by Lamech to his wives.<sup>21</sup> He begins by calling his wives by name. Their names “Adah and Zillah” are paralleled in the next line as “wives of Lamech,” of which an unmarked form would be “my wives.” Then, stating that he has slain a man in a disproportionate act of revenge, Lamech requests for himself more protection than what Cain was promised by Yahweh. By using his own name and associating it with Cain’s, Lamech demonstrates strong desire for protection. In this context, Lamech’s first-person reference by name functions as a justification for his egoistic attitude.<sup>22</sup>

(6) 1 Kgs 2:45

But king Solomon will be blessed, and David’s throne will be established before Yahweh forever.

והמלך שלמה ברוך וכסא דוד יהיה  
נכון לפני יהוה עד־עולם:

This is the last part of Solomon’s words condemning Shimei to death (1 Kgs 2:42–45). After pronouncing that Yahweh will repay Shimei what he has done to David (1 Kgs 2:44), Solomon here blesses himself and wishes that the Davidic line of kingship be firmly established. Through parallelism, he presents himself as the legitimate successor to David’s throne. Solomon’s self-blessing contrasts with his cursing of Shimei that immediately precedes it.<sup>23</sup> The name “Solomon” is preceded by the title “the king [המלך],” which is intended to assert his authori-

<sup>20</sup> Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 318.

<sup>21</sup> Gerhard von Rad (*Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed., OTL [London: SCM, 1972], 111) sees in this poem “a very ancient song of revenge,” later incorporated into the narrative. Though its poetic nature may have influenced the first-person references, we include the passage in our discussion because in its final form it reports a speech in a specific situation to actual addressees.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon J. Wenham (*Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 [Dallas: Word, 1987], 114) points out that many words with the vowel *i* (“my, me”) in this passage emphasize “Lamek’s cruel egotism.”

<sup>23</sup> According to Mordechai Cogan (*1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 10 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 179), this self-benediction aims at averting the baleful effect of Shimei’s curse on David.

ty. The first-person reference by name contributes to portraying Shimei's punishment as official retribution by Yahweh rather than an act of personal revenge.

(7) 2 Kgs 10:18

Jehu assembled all the people and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much."

ויקבץ יהוא את־כל־העם ויאמר אליהם  
אחאב עבד את־הבעל מעט יהוא יעבדנו  
הרבה:

Jehu's proclamation that he will serve Baal more fervently contrasts with his assertion that Ahab served Baal a little. Here Jehu speaks from the perspective of the audience "all the people." By employing his own name as well as Ahab's, Jehu gives his audience a false impression that he will encourage the worship of Baal in a manner that far exceeds that of the notorious worshiper of Baal. In this context, Jehu's first-person reference by name renders his speech more persuasive to his audience.

(8) 1 Sam 12:11

Yahweh sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you from the hand of your enemies on every side; and you lived safely.

וישלח יהוה את־ירבעל ואת־בדן  
ואת־יפתח ואת־שמואל ויצל אתכם  
מיד איביכם מסביב ותשבבו בטח:

In his farewell address (1 Sam 12:1–25), Samuel refers to himself as "Samuel" in a list of judges that Yahweh has sent to the Israelites in response to their cry for deliverance from foreign powers. In the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint and Syriac, the name is replaced by "Samson."<sup>24</sup> This reading must have been triggered by the somewhat unexpected mention of the speaker's own name.<sup>25</sup> Yet Samuel's name is not totally out of the line, since Samuel could have considered himself the last of the judges. According to Hans W. Hertzberg, "The whole period of the judges *including* the time of Samuel is under review here" (italics in the original).<sup>26</sup> Samuel mentions his own name instead of the unmarked first-person pronoun to underline his official status as one of the deliverers that Yahweh has sent to his people. In the following verse (v. 12), Samuel recalls the time when people requested a king to rule over them. The use

<sup>24</sup> Klein, *I Samuel*, 111.

<sup>25</sup> Klein, *I Samuel*, 117. McCarter (*I Samuel*, 211) notes that many critics consider Samuel as original, assuming that it was replaced by "Samson" in some versions to preserve Samuel's modesty. As Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch (*Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel* [repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 118) argue, "there is no critical ground for rejecting Samuel, the more especially as the objection raised to it, viz. that Samuel would not have mentioned himself, is far too trivial to overthrow the reading supported by the most ancient versions."

<sup>26</sup> Hans W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, trans. John Bowden, OTL (London: SCM, 1964), 99.

of his name justifies his official status as a traditional judge sent by Yahweh in contrast to a king chosen and asked for by the people.<sup>27</sup>

(9) Judg 9:15

The bramble said to the trees, “If indeed you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade. If not, fire will come out of the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon.”

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֵטֶד אֶל־הָעֵצִים אִם בְּאִמַּת  
אַתֶּם מְשַׁחִים אֹתִי לְמֶלֶךְ עֲלֵיכֶם בְּאוֹ  
חֶסֶד בְּצִלִי וְאִם־אֵין תִּצַּא אֵשׁ  
מִן־הָאֵטֶד וְתֹאכַל אֶת־אֲרָזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן:

This speech belongs to Jotham’s fable (Judg 9:8–15), in which the trees go to the olive, fig, and vine in turn, asking each one of them to be king over them. The olive, fig, and vine, however, reject their request one after another on different grounds. In stating the reason for refusal, they refer to themselves with a pronominal suffix or verbal affix. The trees then invite the bramble to reign over them. The bramble’s answer (v. 15) is comprised of two sentences. In the first sentence, the bramble refers to itself twice with a pronominal suffix (אתי, בצלי). But in the second sentence, which is at the end of the whole fable, the bramble refers to itself with the noun phrase “the bramble (האטד),” which is a common noun with an article but in this case can be construed as the speaker’s name.<sup>28</sup> This first-person reference by name occurs in the context in which the bramble threatens the trees. By using the name that gives the bramble’s threat an official nuance, the narrator warns the readers against setting an unworthy king like the bramble on a throne. In the bramble’s speech, there is no room for any deference on the part of the speaker. Rather, the bramble boasts of its own power to destroy even the cedars of Lebanon, “far to the northeast and far too extensive to fear what little heat the bramble can generate.”<sup>29</sup> The first-person reference by “the bramble” instead of the expected “I” explicitly puts the bramble, a representative of the unworthy, in contrast with the cedars of Lebanon, a representative of the worthy.

In (5)–(9) above, the name used for first-person reference is in comparison or contrast with other names. Lamech gives himself the same standing as Cain in (5), “King Solomon” is paralleled by “David” in (6), Jehu pronounces that he will take over and expand Ahab’s religious policy in (7), Samuel places himself in a list of figures whom Yahweh sent to deliver Israel from the enemies in (8),

<sup>27</sup> McCarter (*I Samuel*, 217–19) finds here a contrast between the prophet, who rules in fairness and intimate relation with Yahweh, and the king, who rules selfishly and cruelly.

<sup>28</sup> The Septuagint has ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, “from me.” The first-person pronoun is a less difficult reading than the noun phrase “the bramble.”

<sup>29</sup> Trent C. Butler, *Judges*, WBC 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 241. Webb (*Book of Judges*, 276), drawing on the symbolism in Isa 2:12–13, takes the expression “the cedars of Lebanon” symbolically as referring to “the proud rulers of Shechem to whom Jotham is speaking.”



and “the bramble” portrays itself as a source of fire that will consume “the cedars of Lebanon” in (9). The speakers use names instead of pronominal forms to express their intention to make a formal connection or comparison with other well-known figures.

### *First-Person Reference by Name in Deferential Contexts*

Now we will turn to the cases of self-reference by name in deferential contexts. The examination of the cases will reveal that the deferential nuances do not derive from the name but other sources such as deferential forms or contextual information regarding the social status of the interlocutors. Here also, first-person reference by name signals the public nature of the utterance.

(10) Gen 32:5

He commanded them, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau, ‘Thus says your servant Jacob. I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now.’”

ויצו אתם לאמר כה תאמרו לאדני  
לעשו כה אמר עבדך יעקב עם-לבן  
גרתי ואחר עדי-עתה:

In a typical epistolary formula at the beginning of a message to his brother Esau in (10) above, Jacob refers to himself as “your servant Jacob (עבדך יעקב).”<sup>30</sup> He employs obsequious languages in his dealing with his enraged brother (Gen 32–33).<sup>31</sup> Unlike (4) above, where Jephthah makes use of only his name, Jacob refers to himself using the combination of a deferential expression and his name. In a normal situation, Jacob would have added the kinship term “your brother.” Thus, in an introductory formula of his message to his father (Gen 45:9–11), Joseph supplements his name with a kinship term (“your son Joseph”). Supplementary designations such as deferential or kinship terms that accompany names mitigate the bluntness of the expression in the introductory formula. The use of the name “Jacob” does not contribute to a deferential character of the utterance but signals the official aspect of what he is to say.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See notes 18 and 19 above. According to Robert Davidson (*Genesis 12–50: A Commentary*, CBC [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979], 182), this passage is “an excellent example of the typical ancient Near Eastern equivalent of a letter.”

<sup>31</sup> Though Jacob is equal with Esau in social status, he creates a social identity of being inferior to his twin brother to obtain what he wants from the meeting in ch. 33. See Edward J. Bridge, “The ‘Slave’ Is the ‘Master’: Jacob’s Servile Language to Esau in Genesis 33.1–17,” *JSOT* 38 (2014): 263–78.

<sup>32</sup> Revell (*Designation of the Individual*, 350) states that “self-reference by name or title presents the public aspect of a speaker.”

(11) 2 Sam 7:20

What can David add to say to you? You know your servant, Lord Yahweh.

ומהיוסיף דָּוִד עוד לדבר אליך ואתה ידעת את־עבדך אדני יהוה:

(12) 2 Sam 7:26

May your name be great forever, by saying, “Yahweh of Hosts is God over Israel”; and may the house of your servant David be established before you.

ויגדל שמך עד־עולם לאמר יהוה צבאות אלהים על־ישראל ובית עבדך דָּוִד יהיה נכון לפניך:

Yahweh promises to establish an everlasting dynasty for David in response to his plan to build a house for Yahweh (2 Sam 7:1–17). Responding to this unconditional promise, David expresses his gratitude and appeals for the fulfillment of the promise (2 Sam 7:18–29). David, not only thankful for Yahweh’s promise but also worried about the future, presents “fervent appeals to Yahweh” for the fulfillment of his promise.<sup>33</sup> Here David refers to himself as “your servant” ten times, two of which are quoted as (11) and (12) above. In (11) David uses the deferential expression and his own name in separate sentences, while in (12) the two elements are in apposition in one sentence.

In (11) above, David employs his own name to refer to himself without any title such as “the king.” He then lowers himself before Yahweh by referring to himself as “your servant,” the expression already used in the previous verse (v. 19). It is unlikely that the name is meant for self-assertion. Rather, it endows the prayer with an official character while the lack of the title and the use of a deferential term can be attributed to the speaker’s humble attitude.

The passage in (12) above features the final request in David’s prayer (2 Sam 7:18–29): establishing a dynasty (lit., “house”) as a fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise. The speaker’s name “David” is immediately preceded by the deferential term “your servant.” David’s request that his dynasty be established before Yahweh would be an audacious move. The next verse (v. 27) explains how he could have courage to say this: Yahweh has promised to build a “house” for him. In (12) above, the use of a deferential expression demonstrates David’s humbleness before Yahweh while David’s personal name assigns an official nature to his request based upon Yahweh’s promise.

(13) 2 Sam 24:23

“Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king.” And Araunah said to the king, “May Yahweh your God accept you.”

הכל נתן אֲרֹנָה המלך למלך ויאמר אֲרֹנָה אֶל־המלך יהוה אלהיך ירצך:

<sup>33</sup> Arnold A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC 11 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 126; Kim, “Deferential Self-Reference,” 597–98.

To stop a plague caused by the census, David goes to Araunah's threshing floor with his officials to buy it and build an altar to Yahweh there. David reveals his intention by talking to Araunah in 2 Sam 24:21. In response, Araunah willingly offers whatever is needed for the sacrifice (v. 22). Then in verse 23 quoted in (13) above, Araunah makes his offer official by pronouncing that "Araunah" gives to David all that is needed to offer sacrifices to Yahweh, using his own name in reference to himself. He mentions "the king" twice, once as a vocative and once as a complement to a preposition. Araunah's mention of his own name as well as the perfective form of the verb suggests that by uttering this speech he is at the same time giving up his legal rights over his properties mentioned in verse 22, that is, the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes.<sup>34</sup> Since Araunah modifies the king's suggestion to "buy" his properties and offers to give them as a free gift, he then has to save David's face. He achieves this goal by using his name and thus rendering his speech an official rather than personal statement. In verse 21, Araunah began his conversation with David: "Why has my lord the king come to his servant [עבדו]?"<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the use of the name in verse 23 should also be understood in this deferential context. In the same verse, the double use of the title "the king," once as a form of address and once as a reference to the addressee, adds to this deferential strategy.<sup>36</sup> However, the use of the name does not mean that Araunah "is bargaining as an equal," as Revell suggests.<sup>37</sup> It hardly affects the level of deference in Araunah's utterance but contributes to the official nature of his proposal.

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<sup>34</sup> The speaker Araunah is not describing an action but doing it by pronouncing words. This type of utterance has been called "performative" by John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. James O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 6. In Biblical Hebrew, the performative is characteristically expressed by the first-person perfective verbal conjugation. Delbert R. Hillers ("Some Performative Utterances in the Bible," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995], 757–66) gives examples of the verbal forms in Hebrew that mark the utterance as performative. One of them is נתתי which occurs in Gen 9:13; 41:41; and Jer 1:9. Though נתן in 2 Sam 24:23 is morphologically in the third person instead of the first, it still marks the utterance as performative.

<sup>35</sup> The third-person suffix combined with "servant" (עבדו) can be considered a more deferential form than the usual form with a second-person suffix (עבדך) because it could psychologically distance the speaker farther away from the dialogue. But the forms with a third-person suffix are too small in number to confirm this hypothesis. This form appears in Gen 33:14; Josh 5:14; 1 Sam 22:15; 25:39; 26:18, 19; 2 Sam 9:11; 14:22 (*Ketiv*); and 24:21. See Kim, "Deferential Self Reference," 599.

<sup>36</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr. (*II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, AYB 9 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984], 508) dismisses the possibility that המלך refers to Araunah himself and argues that from the single occurrence of המלך in the primitive reading *hmlk* arose in correction of *hmlk*. In any case, we have at least one deferential expression here.

<sup>37</sup> Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 351.

(14) 1 Sam 25:8

Ask your young men and they will tell you. Let the young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a good day. Please give whatever your hand finds to your servants and to your son David.

שאל את-נערך ויגידו לך וימצאו  
הנערים חן בעיניך כִּי-עלִיִּים טוב  
בנו תנהיג את אשר תמצא ידך  
לעבדיך ולבנך לְדָוִד:

Dispatching his young men to Nabal to obtain provisions, David gives them a message to convey to him (1 Sam 25:5–8). The request quoted in (14) above is found at the end of the message and constitutes its main point. David refers to his young men carrying the message as “your servants” and to himself as “your son David.” David’s use of his name in this context not only reflects an epistolary style which we have seen in (4) and (10) above but also shows his strategy to give his request an official nuance. The narrator then states that David’s young men spoke to Nabal “in the name of David” (1 Sam 25:9), as they have been ordered to greet him “in my name” (1 Sam 25:5).

David’s use of the kinship term is a strategy to elicit a favorable response from Nabal. The phrase “my son” is frequently used by a superior to an inferior between nonfamily members.<sup>38</sup> Revell argues that the designation “your son David” communicates an intermediate level of deference more intimate than deferential forms but less assertive than the first-person pronoun.<sup>39</sup> However, “your son” without the personal name is enough to show this. The name “David” rather contributes to an official nature of the negotiation. Tsumura characterizes the kinship term here as “the language of negotiation.”<sup>40</sup> Since David has never met Nabal, “your son” signals that David officially invites Nabal to a covenant relationship. Surprisingly, Nabal begins his response by questioning David’s very identity: “Who is David?” (1 Sam 25:10), which triggers David’s aggressive action against Nabal. The question is not a real inquiry but an expression of contempt.<sup>41</sup> It reveals Nabal’s displeasure at David’s use of the kinship term as we realize by reading Nabal’s following comments: he describes David as “son of Jesse” and one of the many servants who break away from their masters (1 Sam 25:10).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Miller, *Representation of Speech*, 270–71; H. Haag, “בֶּן,” *TDOT* 2:152. Notably, David does not use the more often used expression “your servant” (עֶבֶדְךָ). Keil and Delitzsch (*Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel*, 240) state that here “David claims Nabal’s fatherly goodwill.”

<sup>39</sup> Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 351.

<sup>40</sup> Tsumura, *First Book of Samuel*, 580.

<sup>41</sup> According to Donald J. Wiseman (“‘Is It Peace?’: Covenant and Diplomacy,” *VT* 32 [1982]: 318), the question is not a simple information-seeking question but “a formal rejection” of “an invitation to Nabal to enter into a regulated covenant with David.”

<sup>42</sup> The patronymic “son of Jesse” without the personal name “David” is often used by the adversaries of David or his descendants in a pejorative sense (1 Sam 20:27, 30, 31; 22:7, 8, 9; 22:13; 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kgs 12:16; 2 Chr 10:16).

In (10)–(14) above, the deferential character of the utterance does not originate in first-person reference by name, but rather in deferential expressions. First-person reference by name is accompanied by the deferential term “your servant” in (10), (11), and (12). In Araunah’s proposal to offer his belongings for the sacrifice in (13), the self-referring name co-occurs with deferential expressions “O king” and “the king.” In David’s request for provisions in (14), the name is in apposition with the deferential expression “your son.” The speaker’s names that appear in these passages contribute to the official and public nature of the utterance. But self-deferential terms are already there as a mitigating device in appeasing his brother in (10), in expressing thanksgiving in (11), in offering a favor in (13), and in making a request in (12) and (14).<sup>43</sup> The existence of devices denoting deference or intimacy in these cases suggests that first-person reference by name alone is not to be interpreted in terms of level of deference.

#### CONCLUSION

The speaker’s use of their own name in a dialogue cannot be explained simply in terms of difference in status between the interlocutors. The speaker’s first-person reference by name does not communicate an intermediate level of deference between deferential expressions and pronominal forms. Examination of the cases in their contexts reveals that we cannot construe first-person reference by name in terms of deference. Speaker’s names as first-person reference are formally neutral with respect to deference in that they contain no lexical marker of social status. The deferential characteristics found in some cases originate from other deferential devices such as the first-person deferential expression “your servant” (עבדך). Rather, a first-person reference by name signals formal, official, or public characteristics of the speech by psychologically distancing the speaker from the dialogue or by placing the speaker as a third party. In sum, first-person reference by name shares the function of distancing but not that of deferential nuances with first-person deferential expressions.

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<sup>43</sup> According to Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (*Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 66), both requests and offers threaten the face of the addressee, since in the former “S indicates that he wants H to do, or refrain from doing, some act A,” while in the latter “S indicates that he wants H to commit himself to whether or not he wants S to do some act for H, with H thereby incurring a possible debt.”

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## דויד הנגיד: The Political Theory behind David's Rise

Andrew Knapp

### EVALUATING THE HISTORICAL DAVID

*There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing.  
I never seen anybody but lied one time or another. —Huckleberry Finn*

While pursuing my master's degree in Hebrew Bible at Notre Dame, I stumbled across an article entitled "The Apology of David," by a certain P. Kyle McCarter Jr.<sup>1</sup> I would say that the article blew my mind, but I fear that the jubilant would be both embarrassed and disappointed in my use of such a cliché. So suffice it to say that I was enthralled,<sup>2</sup> to the point that I shortly thereafter applied to study under him at Johns Hopkins. Not until a few years later, however, did I realize that this article would inspire my choice of not only where to study but also what to study; "The Apology of David" served as a major impetus for my own dissertation, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*.<sup>3</sup> While I do not share every nuance of McCarter's treatment of the biblical David narrative, I continue to support his fundamental understanding of the text as having developed in some way from an original apology, issued to combat allegations of malfeasance during David's rise to the throne. In this minor contribution to his legacy, however, I want to reexamine one point regarding the historical David in which I have come to see things differently. I know that such a discussion would be more interesting to McCarter than parroting his views on some subject, so I hope this piques his interest.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "The Apology of David," *JBL* 99 (1980): 489–504.

<sup>2</sup> The close reader may suspect a double entendre with the choice of this verb given my ensuing position as a doctoral student of McCarter. *החליטה לי!* McCarter was the farthest thing from the dreaded *Doktorvater* taskmaster, rather a generous advisor always conscientious not to overburden me with auxiliary duties. For one particular instance of this I remain exceedingly grateful.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Knapp, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins 2012); now published as a monograph of the same title in the WAWSup series of SBL Press (2015).



Near the conclusion of McCarter's seminal article, he assesses not just the origins of the biblical narrative but also the character of David. He writes,

The modern historian, who must try to adjudicate in this ancient controversy, is in a difficult position. He has only David's side of the story. The circumstantial evidence against David is extremely strong; yet the apology is an effective piece of rhetoric, and most of its claims are credible. It seems unlikely that David set out from the beginning to seize Saul's kingship for himself. It is difficult to believe, however, that he did not at least close his eyes to the political assassinations that in the end placed him on the throne.<sup>4</sup>

McCarter's fairly generous evaluation of David contrasts with those of most other scholars of the historical David who followed in his wake. Consider, for example, these assessments:

Anthropologists have also noticed that the steps by which David gained power according to the Bible were similar to the careers of other Middle Eastern despots. One scholar has compared David's ascent to power with that of Ibn Saud, the founding king of Saudi Arabia. He could also be compared to other, more recent and more infamous Middle Eastern dictators, like Saddam Hussein. Both were clever politicians and military commanders. Both led outlaw bands that rivaled the ruling family. Both eventually replaced their rivals, leaving a trail of dead bodies behind. Both gained and retained power through military force.<sup>5</sup>

The real David was not someone whom it would be wise to invite to dinner. And you certainly would not be happy to discover he was marrying your daughter, or even a casual acquaintance.... But the myth [of David's legacy] was made necessary, though not by his glory, by his gore.<sup>6</sup>

[David] was not kind or generous. He was not loving. He was not faithful or fair. He was not honorable or trustworthy. He was not decent by almost any definition. What he was, was ambitious and willing to abandon all of these positive qualities to achieve that ambition. David was a successful monarch, but he was a vile human being.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> McCarter, "Apology of David," 502 n. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 479–80. Halpern, of course, does not refer to the entire person of David as a myth; on the contrary, his entire book is an elaborate reconstruction of the historical David.

<sup>7</sup> Joel Baden, *The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), 259.

In my own book on ancient Near Eastern apologetic, I mostly refrained from casting judgment on the historical David,<sup>8</sup> eschewing this controversial subject in order to focus on the rhetorical aspects of 1–2 Samuel. Here, however, I will admit that my view of David aligns more with those scholars who convict David as guilty of numerous crimes, including serving the Philistines as a mercenary warlord and being the accessory to several murders, likely including that of Saul and his offspring. Although this verdict is entirely inferential, the preponderance of circumstantial evidence suffices to quench any doubts I consider reasonable.

My purpose here is to illustrate why I have come to this conclusion. But I do not wish to provide yet another litany of misdeeds David likely committed or to recount the convenience and farfetchedness of his alibis; for that I refer the reader to any of the aforementioned monographs. I will approach the subject from a different angle. In the last assessment of David provided above, Joel Baden contends that David's most salient characteristic was ambition—David was willing to forsake any upstanding, ethical impulses he had in order to gain power. Encountering such a description, today's reader immediately thinks of the paragon of amoral political theory, Niccolò Machiavelli, and his famous treatise, *The Prince*. Unsurprisingly, much of the secondary literature explicitly labels David a Machiavellian figure. In the following I will explore this connection, showing that the reconstructions of David's rise do in fact cohere remarkably well with Machiavelli's strategizing. Viewed through this lens, David's rise does seem calculated and carefully orchestrated from the outset. *Contra* McCarter, then, I do not find it "unlikely that David set out from the beginning to seize Saul's kingship for himself"—no, it seems quite likely indeed. So let us turn to take a careful look at Machiavelli and his work.

#### MACHIAVELLI AND *THE PRINCE*

*But you must play your part, for God does not want to do everything, in order not to deprive us of our freedom and the glory that belong to us. —Niccolò Machiavelli*<sup>9</sup>

*The Prince* is a straightforward work, and one familiar with Machiavelli's reputation will encounter few surprises in its twenty-six short chapters. Machiavelli describes different types of "principalities"—by this he seems to mean any polity

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<sup>8</sup> One exception comes in my analysis of the allegation that David was responsible for the death of Ish-Baal: "As another notch is added to the count of David's enemies who shed their mortal coil at times extremely convenient for David, one cannot help but wonder at the convenience of it all" (Knapp, *Royal Apologetic*, 236).

<sup>9</sup> All quotations follow the edition in Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price, trans. Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

ruled by a single individual, as opposed to “republics”—and advises how to expand one’s territory, achieve and maintain power, and perform other aspects of ruling. What stands out in *The Prince* is its sheer utilitarianism—Machiavelli ignores ethical considerations almost entirely. It is not that he raises moral concerns but then rationalizes that political stability overrides them; rather it is as if no issue beyond keeping power even exists. Thus the axiom most commonly associated with Machiavelli—“the end justifies the means”—is actually somewhat misleading. In *The Prince*, we see no indication that the means require justification. One simply behaves how one will. A brief detour to examine Machiavelli the man, to see what sort of life led up to him composing this treatise, will help explain his work before we turn to the matter of seeing how it relates to David’s rise.

Niccolò Machiavelli was born in Florence in 1469 in an educated family.<sup>10</sup> We know little about his upbringing, but he would have experienced much political turmoil during his first few decades. Lorenzo the Magnificent, of the Medici family, ruled Florence in the late fifteenth century. Although his rule was mostly stable, a conspiracy hatched in April 1478 and resulted in the assassination of Giuliano de’ Medici, Lorenzo’s brother, and Lorenzo’s own narrow escape. Many conspirators were publicly mutilated and hanged, an event that must have made an impression on the young Machiavelli. Fourteen years later, a few months before Columbus sailed the ocean blue, Lorenzo passed away. After two more years of various parties jockeying for power, in 1494 a Dominican priest, Girolamo Savonarola, ushered in an era of religious revolution. Savonarola’s ascendancy over Florence involved apocalyptic preaching, public burnings of scandalous books and works of art, and general zealotry. Eventually a number of voices rose up against Savonarola, however, and in 1498 he was defrocked and hanged. After this a member of Florence’s traditional elite, Piero Soderini, took power as the head of a burgeoning republic. It was during Soderini’s tenure that Machiavelli emerged onto the scene as a remarkably able diplomat and political and military advisor. The first decade of the sixteenth century saw a Machiavelli whose advice was regularly sought and generally followed, and he helped Soderini navigate the troubled waters of Florentine politics for almost fifteen years. The tides turned, however, in 1512, and a Medici-led group overthrew Soderini’s government and installed a new aristocratic regime. The new group stripped Machiavelli of his offices. A few months later Machiavelli was accused of conspiring against the Medici—whether there was any truth to this charge is impossible to tell—and he was arrested, jailed for three weeks, and tortured with “the *strappado*, where one’s hands are tied behind the back, one is raised by rope to the ceiling and then dropped, with the rope held just before one hits the ground so that the arms are

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<sup>10</sup> For this brief biography I consulted Christopher S. Celenza, *Machiavelli: A Portrait* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

jerked up, sometimes out of their sockets.”<sup>11</sup> He was eventually allowed to remove himself to a family farm, where he spent the next several years spending his mornings visiting the workers and walking in the woods before retiring to his study in the evening. There, to quote his own description, “I step into the ancient courts of ancient men.... There I am unashamed to talk with them and ask them the reasons for their actions, and they, with their humanity, answer me.”<sup>12</sup> He spent four hours each evening reading and writing, and in this setting he composed *The Prince*. Machiavelli created *The Prince* as an attempt to demonstrate his political prowess to the new rulers of Florence and thereby regain a position at court. He dedicated the work to the younger Lorenzo de’ Medici (grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent), concluding in an obsequious fashion: “And if Your Magnificence, from the heights of your exalted position, should sometimes deign to glance down towards these lowly places, you will see how much I am unjustly oppressed by great and cruel misfortune.”<sup>13</sup>

One can see from this biography that Machiavelli’s work is well informed. When he composed it he had already lived through four different governments, witnessed both successful and unsuccessful conspiracies, witnessed an extremist religious revolution, advised a ruler, and been persecuted for political ties. To this personal experience he adds a wealth of vicarious experience as well, being an avid student of the classics—alongside writing *The Prince* he authored an extensive treatment of Livy’s *History* (the *Discourses on Livy*), and *The Prince* is peppered throughout with examples of his thinking from various episodes in world history. Given this background, one can easily grasp Machiavelli’s approach to politics. He is not a conscienceless psychopath, nor does he lack all compassion. He is simply a pragmatist. For Machiavelli, stability matters more than integrity, and realism always trumps idealism. As his biographer Christopher Celenza notes, “Machiavelli reveals a tendency that runs through all of his work: the propensity to observe human beings and their behavior like an anthropologist *avant la lettre*. He is much less concerned with observing what should be the case. He concentrates rather on what is the case.”<sup>14</sup> This focus on the reality behind the

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<sup>11</sup> Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 54.

<sup>12</sup> This letter is quoted in Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 59.

<sup>13</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, dedicatory letter, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 48. For this reason, I disagree with those who read *The Prince* as satire. Machiavelli’s reasoning throughout the treatise is purely utilitarian. Although he advocates some things that most readers find immoral, such as removing political dissidents and breaking promises when convenient, these are always situational and, from the standpoint of political expediency, defensible: “He was addressing himself to people who wanted and needed nothing more than an analysis of how to rule based on concrete examples and stripped of all idealism” (Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 74). There is an enormous difference in tone between reading *The Prince* and something like *Candide*. On reading *The Prince* as satire, see Garrett Mattingly, “*The Prince*: Political Science or Political Satire?,” *The American Scholar* 27 (1958): 482–91.

idealism makes Machiavelli's work a fascinating lens through which to view David. David's biographers argue that one need only penetrate the textual veil (to borrow a phrase from Baruch Halpern) to understand David the man. The biblical text, being the residue of Davidic propaganda, shows what he presented to be the case, but historians work to remove this residue to get at what really was the case historically.

Before highlighting David's numerous points of contact with *The Prince*, however, I want to provide a caveat concerning one area in which I do not presume similarity between the reasoning of David and Machiavelli: religion. The popes of Machiavelli's day regularly sought to expand their power in blatantly self-serving ways, something which was not at all lost on him. He includes a chapter in *The Prince* on "ecclesiastical principalities," a thinly veiled cipher for the papacy. One can detect more than a little cynicism when he writes that "since they are controlled by a higher power, which the human mind cannot comprehend, I shall refrain from discussing them; since they are raised up and maintained by God, only a presumptuous and rash man would examine them."<sup>15</sup> But he follows this up with a "nevertheless" and then discusses "ecclesiastical principalities" much like any other sort. In sum, the "political role [of the papacy] can be discussed and understood in purely human terms."<sup>16</sup> Consequently, to Machiavelli, "religion is one thing, primarily: instrumental. It points toward no greater truths, though it makes people believe there are such truths, and it possesses utility only in so far as it contributes to political order. It is especially important to use religion when proposing something new politically—a new political order, a change in government, and so on."<sup>17</sup> Many biographers of David would see a significant parallel here, claiming that he brought the ark to Jerusalem and established it as a cult center as a calculated, expedient move. Others see his regular invocation of Yahweh as insincere and manipulative. Allan Massie has his David say, "I hate to say this, but like Samuel, most of my life, I have had no difficulty in persuading myself that my will is, by a stroke of great good fortune, the Almighty's. And it may have been. I can't be sure it wasn't. The successes I've had, my recoveries from the depths, they make me believe, at the right moment, that I am indeed the

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<sup>15</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XI, 40.

<sup>16</sup> Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 79.

<sup>17</sup> Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 125. Incidentally, although Machiavelli illustrates nearly every point in *The Prince* with one or more examples, he draws nearly all from western civilization and rarely utilizes the Bible. One exception to this, however, involves David. His point is somewhat random but given the nature of this essay, I will include his one mention of David here. In his discussion of auxiliary troops he includes this aside: "I want also to recall a relevant example from the Old Testament. When David offered to Saul to go and fight Goliath, the Philistine champion, Saul gave him his own weapons and armour in order to imbue him with courage. But after David had put them on he rejected them, saying that he could not fight well with them, and he therefore wanted to confront the enemy with his own sling and knife. In short, weapons and armour belonging to others fall off you or weigh you down or constrict your movements" (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XIII, 50).

Chosen of the Lord, here to enact His will. Which I can only interpret as my own.”<sup>18</sup> Although cleverly put, I find this too cynical. David’s world is simply too different from ours, and our sources too laden with propaganda, to make any confident judgments about his personal religious feeling. It is entirely possible that he was a cynic who, like Machiavelli, viewed religion only for its political use, but it may well be that he was an ardent Yahwist who sought to obey the deity’s will. There are occasional instances when Yahweh’s alleged will was remarkably convenient and one cannot help but question David’s motives (see #9 in the section “Machiavelli and David” below), but I hesitate to extrapolate from this to judge David’s entire theology.

PRINCIPE, נגיד, נשיא

*And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. —Ezekiel 34:24 (KJV)*

A brief aside on the terminology in *The Prince* and in the Hebrew Bible. Although when contemporary western readers see the word *prince* we typically think of a son of a king, this is in fact a secondary definition. Prince derives ultimately from the Latin *princeps*; the English word historically and etymologically signifies an autocrat more generally, specifically one who rules on the basis of hereditary right rather than by election. The Italian title of Machiavelli’s treatise, *Il Principe*, bears this meaning.<sup>19</sup> The opening sentence of *The Prince* reads, “All the states, all the dominions that have held sway over men, have been either republics or principalities.”<sup>20</sup> Thus Machiavelli’s work is written not to a future king, but to a present ruler.

Conveniently for this comparison, the Hebrew Bible—which lacks any single word to refer to a king’s son—contains a few words that could reasonably be translated “prince” in certain contexts, with this understanding of the term. The most common is מלך, virtually always translated “king.” This Hebrew term is understood well enough and does not require much discussion here. A king is, essentially, a prince who rules a kingdom, which is a certain type of autocracy. Two other candidates for prince are of interest, though. First is נגיד, often translated “ruler.” During the monarchic period, נגיד means something like “exalted one” and embodies “[divine] election, appointment, exaltation, and anointing.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Allan Massie, *King David* (London: Sceptre, 1995), 57.

<sup>19</sup> Machiavelli’s own manuscript of *The Prince* has not survived. The earliest extant manuscripts contain the Latin title *De principatibus*, “On Principalities,” which is also how Machiavelli referred to it in a 1513 letter to his friend Francesco Vettori.

<sup>20</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §1, 5.

<sup>21</sup> G. F. Hasel, “נגיד,” *TDOT* 9:199. Jeong Bong Kim and D. J. Human argue that although *nāgid* came to be more or less synonymous with *melek*, it originally carried the nuance of divine appointment

David is referred to as נגיד seven times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>22</sup> The second, נשיא, is often translated “prince” or “ruler” but again literally means something like “exalted one” as it derives from the root נשא, “lift up, raise.” Interestingly, this term appears frequently in the Hebrew Bible but in two main groups of texts, first, preexilic (for example, it appears in the Covenant Code in Exod 22:27[28]) and second, the P traditions and Ezekiel. The נשיא appears to be a tribal leader in the preexilic period, and although the term fell out of use in the monarchic period and does not refer to David in Samuel or Kings, the term was appropriated in later traditions to refer to the Davidic messiah (including, for example, Ezek 34:24 quoted above).<sup>23</sup> Although the sacral aspects of נגיד and נשיא (at least in its later contexts) differentiate them both somewhat from Machiavelli’s *principe*, the coincidence is interesting. Moreover, the religious and political spheres were inseparable in the ancient world (and to a large extent in Machiavelli’s Italy as well), so I do not mean to overstate this difference. In any event, David did indeed qualify as a prince. But was he an effective prince by Machiavelli’s standards? To answer that we turn to compare the biblical story of his life to Machiavelli’s treatise.

#### MACHIAVELLI AND DAVID

*But foxiness should be well concealed: one must be a great feigner and dissembler. And men are so naive, and so much dominated by immediate needs, that a skilful deceiver always finds plenty of people who will let themselves be deceived.*  
—Niccolò Machiavelli

It is now time to return to our original question about the character of the historical David. Did he care more about power than righteousness? More about pragmatism than piety? Was he a scheming upstart rather than a passive vessel yielding to Yahweh’s will? Was he willing to orchestrate odious crimes to satisfy his ambition? In sum, was the historical David truly “Machiavellian”? I suspect that the answer to all of these is yes.

The clearest way to illustrate David’s Machiavellian nature is to demonstrate how many scenes from David’s life align not just with the general principles of *The Prince*, but with explicit advice given therein. In the following I will discuss his interactions with nine different parties both en route to becoming king and

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as mediated through the prophets: “Thus, the term designated the combination of political and religious ideologies in kingship” (“Nagid: A Re-examination in the Light of the Royal Ideology in the Ancient Near East,” *HTS* 64 [2009]: 1493).

<sup>22</sup> 1 Sam 13:14; 25:30; 2 Sam 5:2; 6:21; 7:8; 1 Chr 11:2; 17:7.

<sup>23</sup> “The relationship between the two textual complexes is such that the נשיא as a leadership figure within the tribal system served as a literary model for the נשיא in Ezk. 40–48” (H. Niehr, “נשיא,” in *TDOT* 10:47). Sunwoo Hwang provides an excellent discussion of the trajectory of this term in “נשיא in Ezekiel 40–48,” *SJOT* 23 (2009): 183–94.

after he had gained power. In each case, David deals with the interlocutor(s) precisely how Machiavelli would have encouraged him to. After working through these, in the final section I will examine the ramifications of this for evaluating the historical David.

*1. Anyone who enables another to become powerful, brings about his own ruin.*<sup>24</sup>  
[the Philistines]

Moving chronologically through the Samuel narrative, the first party we encounter who fit neatly into Machiavelli's strategy is the Philistines. Unlike the following episodes, in this case the advice we are examining is illustrative less of how David acted than of how his enemy failed to act—that is, if the Philistines had been more attuned to Machiavellian thinking, they might have avoided erring so badly in their handling of David.

The nature of David's relationship with the Philistines remains one of the most intriguing questions surrounding the historical David. That David had some early connection with them is admitted in the biblical text, and the amount of space in 1 Samuel devoted to denying or explaining the charge that David served the Philistines demonstrates its significance.<sup>25</sup> McCarter summarizes, "The public knowledge that David had served in the army of a king of the Philistines, Israel's most hated foe, would certainly have provoked objections. Again, this must have been too widely known to be denied."<sup>26</sup> One explanation given for this in the biblical text (1 Sam 27–29) is that although David served Achish, the king of Gath, and even mustered with the Philistines for battle against Israel—the very battle in which Saul was killed—he was faithful to Israel all along. He tricked Achish into thinking that he was raiding in Israel and Judah, but he never did, and he planned all along to turn against the Philistines at the appropriate moment (1 Sam 28:2). So far as I am aware, with the potential exception of McCarter, no scholar who accepts the basic thesis of the David narratives being in some way apologetic accepts this explanation, and the skepticism seems well justified. The implausibility of anyone pulling off such a stunt of duplicity, combined with the convenience of the explanation, and the fact that the biblical writers cannot even agree on a response to the accusation in the first place, militates against taking the narrative at face value.

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<sup>24</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §III, 14.

<sup>25</sup> I write "denying or explaining" because the present biblical text contains two entirely different, indeed contradictory, responses to the charge of David's service to the Philistines. I describe the longer and better-known explanation (in 1 Sam 27–29) below; in 1 Sam 21, on the other hand, David is reported to have fled to the Philistines but been turned away immediately, denying that he ever fought for them at all. For more on this, see Knapp, *Royal Apologetic*, 230–31.

<sup>26</sup> McCarter, "Apology of David," 500.



There is uncertainty on what happened between David and the Philistines after David became king of Israel. David is reported to have conquered the Philistines in 2 Sam 5:17–25, and 2 Sam 8:1 also records that he “smote Philistines.” Halpern provides an ingenious—I would say too ingenious—reading of these texts that somehow manages to argue that David never actually fought against the Philistines but also to uphold the author’s technical accuracy.<sup>27</sup> I am more inclined to follow those scholars who accept that while David grew in stature during his time as a Philistine vassal, after developing his own power base he threw off these shackles and did indeed skirmish against his former masters. Baden writes, “[The Philistines] recognized David’s enthronement over Israel as an act of aggression. It is one thing for a vassal to rule over a backwater region. It is equally fine for that vassal to cause trouble for the longtime enemy to the north. But when David became king over Judah and Israel, he crossed the line from useful mercenary to potential threat, and the Philistines were less than pleased.”<sup>28</sup> It is difficult to say the extent to which David truly did defeat the Philistines<sup>29</sup>—and it would certainly go too far to say that David brought about their “ruin”—but the Philistines did give the young David too much rope, to their detriment. Of course, David nearly fell victim to the same miscalculation when he allowed Absalom to build a power base—but he was (barely) saved by having prudently spread the military power in the land to people with differing loyalties.<sup>30</sup>

*2. Either you are already an established ruler or you are trying to become a ruler. In the first case, open-handedness is harmful; in the second, it is certainly necessary to be thought open-handed.*<sup>31</sup> [the Judahite elders]

This straightforward advice from Machiavelli requires no particular insight on his part, neither does one require special genius to connect it to David’s rise. While conducting raids with his Philistine-backed posse, David “shared some of the

<sup>27</sup> Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons*, 144–59.

<sup>28</sup> Baden, *The Historical David*, 141.

<sup>29</sup> McKenzie is probably correct when he writes that “David’s victories were likely over individual city-states or settlements or even raiding parties rather than a nation” (*King David*, 147).

<sup>30</sup> Machiavelli dedicates §§XII–XIII to discussing what sort of troops a ruler should use. But these chapters are not very applicable to the David narrative because he focuses primarily on defending a state from external powers, while the main problems described in the Davidic state were endemic. If biblical scholars correctly use terms such as “mercenaries” to describe David’s guard of Cherethites and Pelethites, then he sagely ignored one bit of advice from Machiavelli: “Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous; and anyone who relies upon mercenaries to defend his territories will never have a stable or secure rule. For they are disunited, ambitious, undisciplined and treacherous; they are powerful when among those who are not hostile, but weak and cowardly when confronted by determined enemies; they have no fear of God, and do not maintain commitments with men. One’s ruin is only postponed until the time comes when they are required to fight” (*The Prince*, §XII, 43).

<sup>31</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVI, 57.

plunder with the elders of Judah (and) with his friends, saying, ‘This is a gift for you from the plunder of the enemies of Yahweh’” (1 Sam 30:26). The episode illustrates well why so many modern historians view David as a Machiavellian figure. While the narrator depicts this generous bestowal of plunder as driven entirely by David’s love of Judah, this is the classic maneuver of an upstart: lavish wealth on potential allies to suggest what benefits await if they help you overthrow the existing power.<sup>32</sup> It is far likelier that David was attempting to purchase allegiance through these “gifts” than that he was overcome by altruism.<sup>33</sup> David knew that the goodwill of the elders of Judah might someday prove useful, so he laid the groundwork by showing them what benefits he could provide.

This applies to David’s treatment of his own troops as well. Shortly after the previous remark, Machiavelli prescribes generosity with those who follow to battle: “A ruler who accompanies his army, supporting it by looting, sacking and extortions, disposes of what belongs to others; he must be open-handed, for if he is not, his soldiers will desert.”<sup>34</sup> Reading between the lines of the David narrative reveals an exceedingly ambitious individual, whose ambition led him to commit some heinous deeds. But it also uncovers a tremendous bravery and shrewdness. David understood how to lead by example and command men. His liberality with plunder, remembered especially in the episode after the Ziklag skirmish when he shared with those who did not accompany him as well as with those who did (if the story is not entirely etiological; 1 Sam 30:21–25), was prudent business practice for a mercenary leader developing a base of support. Much later in his career David anticipated yet another of Machiavelli’s recommendations regarding generosity, which we will examine shortly.

*3. Everyone knows how praiseworthy it is for a ruler to keep his promises, and live uprightly and not by trickery. Nevertheless, experience shows that in our times the rulers who have done great things are those who have set little store by*

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<sup>32</sup> There are numerous examples of this from various historical periods. Of course, the problem with such a method of gaining support is that it tends to lead to the decentralization of power and general instability. To cite just one example, during succession struggles, the Marathas of India in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries notoriously divided and distributed property and titles to purchase support, with deleterious long-term consequences: “In gaining support, the hopeful monarch had to offer rewards. Quite naturally, when given a choice, chiefs would support whoever offered the most in return. The king might be able to divide the land and wealth of defeated rivals or enemies among his own supporters, but these most desirable of rewards were always in limited supply.... With each successive reign, the pieces from which the kingdom was built tended to become a bit less tightly joined together” (Robbins Burling, *The Passage of Power: Studies in Political Succession*, Studies in Anthropology [New York: Academic, 1974], 71).

<sup>33</sup> History has witnessed few bona fide Robin Hoods but countless Jayne Cobbs. Sorry, mudders.

<sup>34</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVI, 57.

*keeping their word, being skilful rather in cunningly deceiving men; they have got the better of those who have relied on being trustworthy.*<sup>35</sup> [Abner]

One can be forgiven if one's mind immediately leaps to contemporary politics when encountering Machiavelli's exhortation to value calculated duplicity over ineffective integrity. But the skeptical reader of the David narrative will recall the Abner episode in 2 Sam 3. Here the narrator asserts that Saul's general parleyed with David and agreed to deliver Israel to him; he then left in peace only to be murdered by David's general, Joab, on account of an obscure and unrelated personal vendetta. Questioning this account, Halpern writes, "It is very easy to imagine ... that a crafty and unctuous David lured Abner to Hebron for a peace conference. Offering Abner traditional hospitality, safe conduct, promises of accommodation, or even submission, David turned on him and killed him. This is the technique later employed by Absalom against Amnon—the forgive-and-forget banquet followed by homicide."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, Halpern's alternative explanation of events seems far more plausible than the narrator's, especially in light of both the bizarre explanation for Abner's murder and its consistency with the pattern of David's rise to power being smoothed by the convenient demise of so many enemies. (One might also point out that Joab's punishment for the alleged treachery was a stern rebuke by David; I suspect Joab's feelings were not too hurt.)

Machiavelli's blithe disregard for honesty in this chapter, entitled "How Rulers Should Keep Their Promises," is characteristic of his overarching view that the leader of a stable state is unlikely to be impugned, even if circumstances look suspicious. Thus, the titular prince should keep his promise only when he lacks a good reason not to; expedient governance trumps any ethical consideration every time. This general point has another interesting echo in the biblical description of the aftermath of the Abner incident. After David lamented Abner, the narrator reports that "all the people noticed and it pleased them, for everything that the king did pleased all the people" (2 Sam 3:36). This could, of course, be nothing more than a rhetorical flourish in a text that clearly developed as Davidic propaganda. But consider Machiavelli's insightful words: "Everyone can see what you appear to be, whereas few have direct experience of what you really are; and those few will not dare to challenge the popular view, sustained as it is by the majesty of the ruler's position."<sup>37</sup> David likely intuited early on that especially when things are going well, subjects are unlikely to question their sovereign's character. Thus,

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<sup>35</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVIII, 61. He expresses similar sentiments elsewhere, for example: "A ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary" (*The Prince*, §XV, 55).

<sup>36</sup> Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*, 83–84.

<sup>37</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVIII, 63.

if any narrative is provided that reinforces the unimpeachable conduct of the ruler, it is likely to gain traction, however implausible it may seem.<sup>38</sup>

*4. To hold [conquered territories] securely, it is enough to wipe out the family of the ruler who held sway over them, because as far as other things are concerned, the inhabitants will continue to live quietly, provided their old way of life is not disturbed and there is no difference in customs.*<sup>39</sup> [Ish-Baal]

As discussed in “Machiavelli and *The Prince*” above, Machiavelli dedicated *The Prince* to the younger Lorenzo de’ Medici. Despite some turbulent patches in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the Medici was the most powerful house in Italy at this time; Lorenzo’s uncle was elected Pope Leo X around the same time that Lorenzo took control of Florence (though Leo’s tenure as pope—which included catalyzing Luther’s 95 Theses—was not particularly impressive). Because of the addressee’s background and firm control of Florence, in *The Prince* Machiavelli focuses more on holding power than gaining power. Machiavelli thus shows little concern for advising a would-be usurper, as many regard David in his early career. Some of his remarks on how to handle conquered territories readily apply to David’s actions after gaining control of Israel, however, specifically regarding David’s treatment of Saul’s progeny. For Machiavelli’s comments on wiping out the family of the former ruler, we turn to the events recounted in 2 Sam 4. There we read of the death of Ish-Baal, Saul’s son and successor. The narrator tells us that after Abner’s murder, with the downfall of the House of Saul all but assured, two assassins murdered Ish-Baal while he lay down in the afternoon. They delivered his head to David in an attempt to curry favor, but he promptly executed them because they “slew a righteous man in his house” (2 Sam 4:11). David, as usual, was unaware of the incident until the miscalculating assassins arrived at his doorstep.

David’s accusers—definitely modern and presumably ancient as well—see this as yet another cover-up. Again, the pattern of convenient demise outside David’s purview is too great to ignore, and the fact that the story reveals that David ended up in possession of Ish-Baal’s head adds to the suspiciousness. Moreover, ordering such an assassination would have required no special aptitude on David’s

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<sup>38</sup> I recall one conversation with McCarter as I struggled with Darius’s apology. I pointed out that Darius’s account of the death of Gaumata was so ludicrous that none of his followers would have believed it. He responded, “Maybe the story didn’t need to be believable. Maybe they just needed some party line to repeat.” Machiavelli himself addressed a similar issue: “Consequently, all armed prophets succeed whereas unarmed ones fail. This happens because, apart from the factors already mentioned, the people are fickle; it is easy to persuade them about something, but difficult to keep them persuaded. Hence, when they no longer believe in you and your schemes, you must be able to force them to believe” (*The Prince*, §VI, 21).

<sup>39</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §III, 8.

part. Usurpers throughout world history have resorted to exterminating their predecessor's seed in order to secure their rule. As McKenzie notes, "Even though [Ish-Baal] wielded no power and posed no real threat, he was Saul's heir and therefore would always be a source of concern for the usurper, David."<sup>40</sup> David need not have consulted *The Prince* for this advice; *The Idiot's Guide to Usurpation* would serve just fine. Yet however strategic such a move might be, it remains immoral by almost any standard and as such typifies the thinking for which Machiavelli's work is famous. Of course, the selection from *The Prince* here dedicated to Ish-Baal could serve just as well for David's extermination of the rest of the Saulides, but another passage will serve there, as we will see below.

*5. When a ruler is with his army, and commands a large force, he must not worry about being considered harsh, because armies are never kept united and prepared for military action unless their leader is thought to be harsh.*<sup>41</sup> [the Moabites]

Machiavelli encourages harshness throughout *The Prince*; the chapter in which this passage appears is entitled "Cruelty and Mercifulness; and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved or Feared." (Answer: Feared. Although Machiavelli does cagily insist that the ruler should strive "to avoid incurring hatred" as well.<sup>42</sup> It should be noted, though, that the chapter titles were later additions to the book.) Here again David anticipated the medieval strategist, his traditional reputation as a meek, ruddy boy playing his harp beside the still waters notwithstanding. To demonstrate this, we need not read between the lines and attempt to uncover guilt beneath a dubious alibi. Rather we can turn to the plain meaning of the text, albeit one that is often overlooked. David's military prowess is recounted in 2 Samuel 8. Many conquests are related, but one stands out: David "smote Moab. And he measured them with a line, having them lie down on the ground. And he measured two lines to kill and one full line to let live. And the Moabites became servants for David, bearers of tribute" (2 Sam 8:2).

Many readers who focus on 1–2 Samuel as literature conclude that David was a flawed individual, but one whose sins were lapses of judgment in which his desire to serve Yahweh succumbed to human frailty. For example, the rabbi David Wolpe admiringly cites Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who posited that Yahweh removed Saul but forgave David because "God more readily forgives sins of weakness than sins of strength."<sup>43</sup> But such a view is entirely at odds with the calculating, ambitious usurper reconstructed by many recent historians. Interestingly, Machiavelli

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<sup>40</sup> McKenzie, *King David*, 125.

<sup>41</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVII, 60.

<sup>42</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVII, 61.

<sup>43</sup> David Wolpe, *David: The Divided Heart*, Jewish Lives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 138.

follows the preceding passage with an anecdote about Hannibal, noting that he never faced any dissension despite having a diverse army which faced tremendous adversity. “This could be accounted for,” Machiavelli explains, “only by his inhuman cruelty which, together with his many good qualities, made him always respected and greatly feared by his troops. And if he had not been so cruel, his other qualities would not have been sufficient to achieve that effect. Thoughtless writers admire this achievement of his, yet condemn the main reason for it.”<sup>44</sup> David did eventually face rebellion as king, but as a war leader he seems always to have commanded the respect of his troops, and while readers tend to assume that he was a charismatic leader—which he may well have been—his brutality doubtless contributed. When he marauded the southern Levant under the auspices of Achish, “neither man nor woman would David leave alive” (1 Sam 27:11). Yet again, we see tremendous consistency with the teachings of Machiavelli.

6. *Giving away what belongs to others in no way damages your reputation; rather, it enhances it. It is only giving away what belongs to yourself that harms you.*<sup>45</sup> [Merib-Baal and Ziba]

One of David’s savviest moves regarding the House of Saul lay in his treatment of Merib-Baal, a son or grandson of Saul.<sup>46</sup> The canonical text of Samuel presents the following: First, in 2 Sam 9, David seeks out a descendant of Saul to honor because of his earlier promise to Jonathan. Merib-Baal is found and graciously invited to reside with David; the former’s estate remains his possession but is entrusted to a certain Ziba to steward. Then, in 2 Sam 16:1–4 and 19:25–31[24–30], Ziba follows David when he flees Absalom but Merib-Baal does not, a move that could signal disloyalty. In response, David strips Merib-Baal of half of his estate and gives it to Ziba. Merib-Baal, however, voluntarily forswears even the half that remains to him, on account of his gratitude at how mercifully David treated him and his elation at the latter’s safe return after the Absalom revolt.

<sup>44</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVII, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVI, 57.

<sup>46</sup> For my use of the name Merib-Baal for the traditionally monickered Mephibosheth, see Knapp, *Royal Apologetic*, 165 n. 16. In sum, there are many open questions about this character: what his name was, who his father was (Saul? Jonathan?), what texts in Samuel belonged to the same original literary stratum (the episodes about Merib-Baal and Ziba from 2 Sam 16 and 19 undoubtedly belong together, but their relationship to 2 Sam 9 and the mention of him in 2 Sam 21:7 is less obvious), and even whether only one historical figure lies behind these stories or whether multiple similarly named figures were conflated in Samuel (the latter is suggested in P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 9 [New York: Doubleday, 1984], 124–25). While certain answers to these questions could help sharpen the analysis here, the inconsistent stories still provide enough information to reconstruct a basic plan of how David acted with regard to the Saulide estate.

These passages beg to be questioned by the suspicious reader. With David's mercy and respect for the House of Saul praised at every turn, the final known Saulide scion loses his entire estate and is brought into David's palace where he can be constantly surveilled. It is all but certain that David in fact dispossessed Merib-Baal, awarded the estate as a gift to a supporter, and somehow manipulated the story to reflect his magnanimity. Machiavelli must weep with joy at how David pulled off this master stroke. David indeed enhanced his reputation by giving away what belonged to others—and not the belongings of just anyone else, but those of the descendant of his archnemesis.

*7. A wise ruler will follow another way, and choose shrewd men for his service, permitting them alone to speak freely. ... Apart from those he has chosen, he should refuse to listen to anyone, but pursue his aims steadfastly and not waver about decisions he has taken. Any ruler who does not act in this way either comes to grief among flatterers or changes his decisions often because of conflicting advice he receives.*<sup>47</sup> [Absalom]

This guidance is not acutely “Machiavellian” in that it is not particularly amoral, trading ethics for efficacy; moreover, the parallel involves parts of the David narrative for which the historical kernel may be covered by a particularly thick veneer of literary blandishments. But the admonition finds a startling analog in the Absalom revolt narrative in 2 Sam 15–19. As David flees, he commands Hushai, his “friend” (רעה; 2 Sam 15:37) and adviser, to return to the city and provide poor advice for Absalom. He does so, and 2 Sam 17 relays a fascinating story in which Absalom, unsure how to proceed in the war against his father, wavers between the wise counsel offered by Ahithophel and the deliberately subversive counsel offered by Hushai, David's loyal servant. Although Ahithophel's “word pleased Absalom, and all the elders of Israel” (17:4), Absalom ultimately followed the latter's strategy and led his men away from the city in an attempt to quickly destroy David's forces.<sup>48</sup> Absalom indeed changed his decisions because of conflicting advice and, as Machiavelli predicted, his lack of steadfastness doomed his coup attempt.

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<sup>47</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XXIII, 81–82.

<sup>48</sup> Here another bit of Machiavelli's advice plays in: The ruler should “always be concerned with military matters.... With regard to exercises, besides keeping his troops well disciplined and trained, he should very frequently engage in hunting, thus hardening his body and, at the same time, becoming familiar with the terrain: how mountains rise, how valleys open out and plains spread out, as well as with the characteristics of rivers and swamps; he should concern himself very much with all these matters” (*The Prince*, §XIV, 52–53). The narrator makes clear that David, having himself emerged as a war leader in the wilderness, understood the landscape better than his foes, enabling him to fend off Absalom's superior numbers. “And the forest consumed many of the people; it consumed more than the sword that day” (2 Sam 18:8).

This vacillation is immediately contrasted with David's resolve to weep over the death of his wayward son (2 Sam 19:1), but a resolve that is open to direction from his closest advisers. David was not easily swayed by others—for example, he censured his men who encouraged him to murder Saul in the cave (1 Sam 24:3–7) and he ignored Michal's chastisement of his dancing (2 Sam 6:20–22). But the trusty Joab had undoubtedly gained David's confidence, to the point that he could approach the king and rebuke him for his behavior. Joab did so in this case, pointing out that David's failure to respond appropriately to the victory was demoralizing those men who had just risked everything to support him (2 Sam 19:6–8). David heeded the sage advice and acted accordingly, returning to Jerusalem and reclaiming his throne.

8. *[Severus] decided to ... trick Albinus. Accordingly, he wrote to Albinus, saying that the senate had chosen him emperor, and that he wanted to share the office. And he sent Albinus the title of Caesar, saying that by decision of the senate Albinus should join him as co-emperor. Albinus thought all of this was true. But when Severus had defeated and killed Nigrinus, and the eastern part of the Empire was calm, he ... attacked Albinus in France, where he deprived him at once of his position and his life.*<sup>49</sup> [Amasa]

Reading Machiavelli's account of the crafty exploits of Lucius Septimius Severus on his way to becoming emperor of Rome, one is reminded of the briefly contested commandship of Joab and Amasa for David's troops. The analogy is far from perfect—Severus tricked Albinus into thinking he had been chosen as coemperor, on the same level of himself, while David appointed Amasa over the army. Of course, the biblical narrator does not attribute any duplicity to David here. Rather, David magnanimously appointed Amasa—Absalom's general and David's erstwhile foe—to be “commander of the army before me henceforth, in place of Joab” (2 Sam 19:14[13]). Shortly thereafter Joab met Amasa on the road and murdered him, entirely on his own initiative of course (2 Sam 20:7–10). The cynical reader notes several dubious details of this account. First, Joab has already taken the initiative, against David's orders, to dispatch two parties whose deaths proved convenient for David (Abner and Absalom). So the Amasa incident conforms to an established pattern. Second, just as Joab escaped punishment in both previous cases even as David professed horror at both of the crimes, here, too, Joab avoids any disciplinary action despite assassinating David's newly established righthand man—indeed, Joab steps in and resumes his old duties. Third, although David appointed Amasa commander of the “army” (צבא, 2 Sam 19:14[13]), Joab approached him accompanied by “the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the mighty men” (הגבריים וכל הפלתי והכרתי, 2 Sam 20:7). So Joab retained a faithful cohort

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<sup>49</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XIX, 69.



and remained in a position to attend to Amasa when the opportunity arose. In light of all this, it seems most likely that David pretended to offer Amasa an olive branch in order to pacify the pro-Absalom contingent, all the while intending to remove him and reinstall Joab over the army after the immediate threat had passed. Such is what happened, in any event.

Machiavelli presents the similar example of Severus's wiliness as something to emulate. Severus also forestalled open conflict with an opponent by feigning a truce of sorts and pretending to join forces, then disposing of the opponent at a more opportune time. "If Severus's deeds are examined closely," Machiavelli explains, "it must be concluded that he was a very fierce lion and a very cunning fox."<sup>50</sup> The eponymous prince would be wise to follow suit. David, meanwhile, had already anticipated Severus's strategy by over a millennium.

*9. If it is necessary to execute anyone, this should be done only if there is a proper justification and obvious reason.*<sup>51</sup> [the Saulide Seven]

When Machiavelli advocates the time-honored maneuver of wiping out one's predecessor's offspring early in his treatise, he is mostly unconcerned with the political ramifications—it must be done, so one must deal with the fallout as best one can. Rather, he only encourages "those who become rulers through wicked means"<sup>52</sup> to get all of the nasty business out of the way swiftly: "I believe that this [whether a ruler maintains power] depends upon whether cruel deeds are committed well or badly. They may be called well committed (if one may use the word 'well' of that which is evil) when they are all committed at once, because they are necessary for establishing one's power, and are not afterwards persisted in."<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere, however, Machiavelli discusses disposing of one's enemies later, after one has secured power, and he advises to refrain from execution unless there is "proper justification." This coheres well with the account of the execution of the Saulide Seven, a septet of Saul's sons and grandsons sacrificed "on the mountain before Yahweh" (2 Sam 21:9).<sup>54</sup> The biblical story appears in 2 Sam 21, wherein David inquires of Yahweh why the people had suffered through three years of famine. The source of the famine, Yahweh responds, is that Saul had tried to annihilate the Gibeonites, a people whom the Israelites had sworn to spare. (The

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<sup>50</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XIX, 69.

<sup>51</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §XVII, 59.

<sup>52</sup> The title of §VIII in *The Prince*.

<sup>53</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §VIII, 33. Of course, when reading Machiavelli in the context of biblical apologies, here one thinks of the commencement of Solomon's rule and the accompanying murders of Adonijah, Benaiah, and Shimei, as well as the exile of Abiathar (1 Kgs 2).

<sup>54</sup> I borrow the handy phrase "Saulide Seven" from Cephas T. A. Tushima, *The Fate of Saul's Progeny in the Reign of David* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2011), 18 and *passim*. On this execution as human sacrifice, see Tushima, *Fate of Saul's Progeny*, 215.

backstory of the Gibeonites gaining safe haven in Israel appears in Joshua 9; no account of Saul attempting to exterminate them is preserved in the biblical text.) David then asks the Gibeonites how he can remedy this wrong and they respond to his solicitousness by requesting that seven of Saul's descendants be executed. David promptly complies.

The reason that this incident fits so well with Machiavelli's admonishment is that it is the only murder of a threat to David's rule to which David is explicitly linked. In each other case the apologist employs a reformative rhetorical strategy, as opposed to the transformative strategy here. That is, whereas in the other incidents the apologist attempts to persuade the audience that they have the facts wrong—David did not murder Nabal, Saul, Abner, Ish-Baal, et cetera—here he acknowledges David's hand in the deed but provides "proper justification." But recent historians of David are not at all convinced that all this happened on the level, because everything works out with the utmost convenience.<sup>55</sup> David not only manages to transfer culpability for the present dilemma to Saul but also to eliminate seven potential threats to his reign through Yahweh's demand for expiation.<sup>56</sup> David's actions here seem cavalier, like a preening blue jay—he would sooner shed the crimson blood of the Saulide Seven than afford them a chance to rebel. Cephas Tushima aptly summarizes, "The tragedies that befell the Saulides were not pure happenstance, neither is there any warrant to attribute them to divine retribution. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to suggest that they were the victims of the combined forces of such human vices as unfettered political ambition, crass opportunism, and barefaced avarice."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> As discussed above ("Machiavelli and *The Prince*"), a young Machiavelli would, coincidentally, have witnessed a similar event in Florence. In 1478, when he was eight or nine, a group of dissenters launched an unsuccessful coup against the ruling Medici family. Supporters of the Medici quelled the coup and those responsible were savagely and publicly murdered. "Soon after the event Florence was troubled by what seemed like unseasonable rains. People wound up blaming it on the fact that Jacopo Pazzi, another conspirator and member of the notorious family [responsible for the coup], was buried within the walls. The Florentines dug him up and buried him outside the walls" (Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 21). Here, too, a disenfranchised opponent of the ruling party is scapegoated for a damaging climatic event. In this and many other ways, Machiavelli's Florence was closer to David's Israel than to today's society.

<sup>56</sup> David's skill in blaming present societal ills on the previous administration here suggests that he would be an excellent American politician as well.

<sup>57</sup> Tushima, *Fate of Saul's Progeny*, 322. Strangely, though, while I concur with Tushima about the underlying historical event here—namely that David fabricated an excuse to exterminate the Saulide Seven by blaming Saul for the famine—I read 2 Sam 21 far differently from a literary perspective. Whereas I read the received text as coming from an apologetic tradition in which David justified the execution of the Saulide Seven on the basis of atoning for Saul's famine-bringing sin, Tushima contends that the author of the account deliberately narrated in a way to make David look guilty (*Fate of Saul's Progeny*, 205–21). If the purpose were to indict David, however, why provide any justification at all, however unlikely?

## DAVID, THE PRINCE

*Se non è vero, è ben trovato*

The parallels adduced above should demonstrate that a certain reconstruction of David's career resonates closely with the political theory put forward in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. This, of course, proves absolutely nothing. Although a few of the parallels drawn above result from surface readings of the biblical text, most result from a critical, against-the-grain (to borrow a phrase from Steven McKenzie) reading, one which trades on the idea that the Samuel narrative stems from Davidic propaganda. Others may not accept this theory about the text's development and therefore read the text less skeptically; still others may consider the whole enterprise of historical reconstruction so fraught with peril that it should be avoided completely. I argue, though, that the sources do allow for historical reconstruction—David is no King Arthur or Loch Ness monster whose origins are so shrouded in mystery that the reality behind them is forever lost—and that the reconstruction on which these parallels lie is the most persuasive way of piecing together David's life. But it is not my objective in this essay to convince anyone of this reading (for that I would direct the reader to any of the sources discussed in "Evaluating the Historical David" above). Rather, taking such a reading as a premise, I have attempted to illustrate why such a reading almost inevitably leads to viewing David as an ambitious, calculating, Machiavellian figure—David, the prince.

One might respond that David's legacy and place in the canon militate against this understanding.<sup>58</sup> Coincidentally, one of Machiavelli's comments in *The Prince* addresses this as well. When discussing the problems attendant to making changes within a principality, Machiavelli writes, "The length and continuity of [the prince's] family's rule extinguishes the memories of the causes of innovations."<sup>59</sup> The length and continuity of the house of David is nearly unsurpassed in world history, providing ample time to extinguish any unpleasantness. The Hebrew Bible traces David's dynasty through many generations, spanning four centuries of rule.<sup>60</sup> By the end of this period David had become a founding father

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<sup>58</sup> My conclusions about the historical David notwithstanding, I do not wish to cast aspersions on his place in the canon or in any way diminish the value of the David traditions in Jewish and Christian thought. Instead, I think that work on the historical David is further evidence of the incapacity of historical-critical readings of Scripture to contribute in confessional settings—at least not on their own. I hope to explore the consequences of historical David research for theology in a future study.

<sup>59</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, §II, 6.

<sup>60</sup> The critical historian might question whether this single line really did continue unbroken—\*cough\* Joash \*cough\*—but whatever interruptions may have occurred were apparently not significant enough to derail the tradition.

of hazy memory, inspiring legendary retellings of battles with giants and a movement waiting for a messiah to come from his line.

May Kyle McCarter's academic legacy—founded not on Machiavellian hunger for power but on an incomparable intellect—prove to be so perdurable and generative. May his house and his scholarship endure.

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## The Priority of the MT Chronology in Kings

Steven L. McKenzie

In the first volume of the Harvard Semitic Monographs, published in 1968, James Donald Shenkel advanced an argument for the priority of the Old Greek chronological data for the period of the Omri dynasty in the book of Kings.<sup>1</sup> After describing the separate chronological systems in the Masoretic Text (MT) and Old Greek (OG) witnesses and meticulously detailing the differences between them,<sup>2</sup> Shenkel located the reason for their variation in their respective identifications of the king of Judah in the story of the Moabite war in 2 Kgs 3.<sup>3</sup> The kings in prophetic stories like the one in 2 Kgs 3 were originally anonymous. Despite his anonymity, the king of Israel in 2 Kgs 3 had to be Joram, son of Ahab. The identity of the king of Judah, however, was not so obvious and occasioned different identifications in the MT and OG. The MT identified him as Jehoshaphat because of his purported righteousness and his similarity with the king of Judah in 1 Kgs 22. The OG, in contrast, identified him as Ahaziah, who accompanied Joram on the campaign in 2 Kgs 8:28. The identification with Jehoshaphat was at odds with other biblical data that precluded an overlap between him and other figures who play a role in 2 Kgs 3.<sup>4</sup> Shenkel privileged those data and assumed the MT's chronology to be secondary. He concluded that the introduction of Jehoshaphat into 2

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I am pleased to be able to offer this brief, but I hope important, study of a text-critical nature in tribute to P. Kyle McCarter Jr., who first taught me textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. In my first semester in the ThD program in Old Testament at Harvard Divinity School in the fall of 1978, I took a course on the textual criticism of Samuel taught by Kyle, who was the sabbatical replacement for Frank Cross. I therefore claim the distinction of being one of his first doctoral students.

<sup>1</sup> James Donald Shenkel, *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings*, HSM 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> Shenkel, *Chronology*, 1–86.

<sup>3</sup> Shenkel, *Chronology*, 87–108.

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, (1) 2 Chr 21:12–15 assumes that Elijah, rather than Elisha as in 2 Kgs 3, was still the leading prophet in Israel during the time that Jehoshaphat was on the throne in Judah and (2) the elements in the regnal formulae of Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:48 // LXX 16:28e) and Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:20 // 2 Chr 21:8) indicate the absence of a king in Edom during Jehoshaphat's reign.

Kgs 3 induced a gradual process of scribal adjustment of the chronology in the MT so as to accommodate it.

Shenkel's thesis was revolutionary. It offered an equally complex but less arbitrary solution to the chronological difficulties in Kings than the harmonistic reconstructions by Edwin Thiele of coregencies and the like.<sup>5</sup> It also exploited the new value attributed to the LXX as a witness to the text of the HB in the wake of the discoveries at Qumran. For these reasons, the theory became instantly popular and its influence has continued for decades, especially among scholars trained, like Shenkel, in the Harvard stream.<sup>6</sup> Thus, when Ron Hendel in a recent article reaches a conclusion opposed to Shenkel's—namely, that the MT chronology represents the older of the two and the OG's is derivative—he writes of doing so wistfully, though compelled by the text-critical evidence.<sup>7</sup> I share Hendel's wistfulness, for I find myself compelled by the evidence—and after considerable resistance—to share his conclusion.

Hendel criticizes previous treatments of the chronological problem in Kings, including Shenkel's, for relying primarily on redactional and historical reconstruction, and he advances a solution that is, in contrast, based on text-critical considerations. Hendel argues that the OG chronology arose from a misconstrual of the (admittedly idiosyncratic) statement in 1 Kgs 16:23 MT about the beginning point of Omri's reign. In the MT Omri's regnal clock started with the civil war between him and Tibni, while the OG construed his reign to begin with Tibni's death, as is clear from the OG plus *after Tibni* at the end of 16:22. This led to (hyper)correction by a Second Temple scribe of the chronology in the OG from Omri to Jehu. Jehu's assassination of the kings of both Israel and Judah reset the tabulation. In addition to providing a text-critical solution, Hendel's explanation is much more economical than Shenkel's in that adjustment of the chronology is

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<sup>5</sup> Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965).

<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that the thesis has not been criticized. See especially D. W. Gooding, "Review of *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings*" by J. D. Shenkel, *JTS* 21 (1970): 118–31 and the competing chronology of Gershon Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden; Boston: 1996). For other bibliography see Ronald S. Hendel, "The Two Editions of the Royal Chronology in Kings," in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls: Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera*, ed. Andrés Piquer Otero and Pablo A. Torijano Morales (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 100 n. 3. To the works Hendel cites add William H. Barnes, *Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel*, HSM 48 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991). Shenkel's conclusion was anticipated by J. Maxwell Miller, "The Omride Dynasty in the Light of Recent Literary and Archaeological Research" (PhD diss., Emory University, 1964). See also J. Maxwell Miller, "The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars," *JBL* 85 (1966): 441–54; Miller, "Another Look at the Chronology of the Early Divided Monarchy," *JBL* 86 (1967): 276–88. Miller's work focused on history and archaeology and did not analyze the textual witnesses with the same detail as Shenkel's.

<sup>7</sup> Hendel, "The Two Editions," 99–114.

reconstructed as a systematic endeavor by a single scribe rather than a gradual process involving many hands over time.

I wish to add another argument for the priority of MT's chronology—one that complements Hendel's by also drawing on textual criticism alone. The passage in consideration is 2 Kgs 8:16–24, which recounts the reign of King Jehoram of Judah. The MT version of Jehoram's reign dates his accession to the fifth year of Joram of Israel and credits Jehoram with a reign of eight years.<sup>8</sup> These data accord with the MT chronology. The OG figures are not extant here. Shenkel reconstructs them for Jehoram based on the previous figures in its chronology.<sup>9</sup> According to his reconstruction, the OG had Jehoram of Judah take the throne in the second year of Ahaziah of Israel and reign for eleven years. But there is a bigger problem. In the OG the reign of Ahaziah of Israel, brief though it is (two years), overlaps with the reigns of two kings of Judah, spanning the end of Jehoshaphat's reign and the beginning of Jehoram's. Thus, the opening formulae for Jehoram according to the OG chronology should have been located immediately before the beginning of the account of Joram of Israel, specifically after 1:18, as Shenkel acknowledges.<sup>10</sup> However, there is no evidence in the entire Greek tradition for the account of Jehoram ever having been present here.<sup>11</sup> Shenkel does not place the OG account of Jehoram's opening formulae at 1:18 in his reconstruction because of the occurrence of the historical present—a distinguishing feature of the OG—in the account of his reign in 8:22, 24.<sup>12</sup> In essence, this means that the OG numbers for Jehoram are at odds with the OG placement of his regnal account. The numbers for Jehoram's accession fit with the OG chronology; but the OG account of Jehoram's reign is in the wrong place according to the compositional conventions exhibited elsewhere in Kings.

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<sup>8</sup> *Joram* and *Jehoram* are shorter and longer variants of the same name. For convenience, in this article I will use *Joram* for the king of Israel and *Jehoram* for the king of Judah.


<sup>9</sup> Shenkel, *Chronology*, 37–38, 68–82.

<sup>10</sup> Shenkel, *Chronology*, 69.

<sup>11</sup> The OG supplies the opening formulae for Joram of Israel in 1:18a–d (// MT 3:1–3), but the only reference to Jehoram of Judah in the context is in a plus in the MT at 1:17. The plus unexpectedly dates the accession of Joram of Israel to the second year of Jehoram of Judah in accord with the OG chronology. It is likely a late, hexaplaric addition, as Shenkel (*Chronology*, 74) points out. Shenkel considers this indirect evidence of the original location of the OG formulae for Jehoram. However, the plus in v. 17 precedes the source citation for Ahaziah of Israel in v. 18 and therefore is still not in its proper location.

<sup>12</sup> Shenkel, *Chronology*, 76–77.



MT		OG	
Israel	Judah	Israel	Judah
<p><b>Ahaziah</b> (17th of Jehoshaphat; reigned 2 yrs) <b>1 Kgs 22:52–54</b></p> <p><b>Joram</b> (18th of Jehoshaphat; reigned 12 yrs) <b>2 Kgs 3:1–3</b></p> <p><b>Jehu</b> (2 Kgs 9–10)</p>	<p><b>Jehoshaphat</b> (25 yrs) <b>1 Kgs 22:41–44</b></p> <p><b>Jehoram</b> (5th of Joram; reigned 8 yrs) <b>2 Kgs 8:16–18</b></p> <p><b>Ahaziah</b> (12th of Joram; reigned 1 yr) <b>2 Kgs 8:25–27</b></p> <p><b>Jehu</b> (2 Kgs 9–10)</p>	<p><b>Ahaziah</b> (24th of Jehoshaphat; reigned 2 yrs) <b>1 Kgs 22:52–54</b></p> <p><b>Joram</b> (2nd of Jehoram; reigned 12 yrs) <b>2 Kgs 1:18a–d</b></p> <p><b>Jehu</b> (2 Kgs 9–10)</p>	<p><b>Jehoshaphat</b> (25 yrs) <b>1 Kgs 16:28a–b</b></p> <p><b>Jehoram</b> (2nd of Ahaziah; reigned 11 yrs)  <b>2 Kgs 8:16–18</b></p> <p><b>Ahaziah</b> (11th of Joram; 1 yr) <b>2 Kgs 8:25–27</b></p> <p><b>Jehu</b> (2 Kgs 9–10)</p>

Shenkel argues that the location of Jehoram's opening formulae after those of Joram is explained by analogy to the chronological data for Jehu and Athaliah.<sup>13</sup> While Jehu and Athaliah began their reigns at essentially the same time, the OG synchronism at 10:36+ dates the beginning of Jehu's reign to Athaliah's second year by the antedating method of calculation. Similarly, Joram and Jehoram must have begun their reigns at about the same time, yet Joram came to be dated to Jehoram's second year using antedating. Furthermore, the accounts of Joram's and Jehu's reigns are given essentially in full before Jehoram and Athaliah, respectively, are mentioned.

The analogy, though, is imperfect. Jehu and Athaliah begin their reigns at the same time because of Jehu's assassination of both of their predecessors. That is not the case for Joram and Jehoram. The text nowhere indicates that their predecessors, Ahaziah of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah, died at the same time. To the contrary, the OG is explicit in continuing the uneven alternation of synchronisms when it states that Ahaziah acceded to power the year before Jehoshaphat died and continued his reign into that of Jehoshaphat's successor Jehoram (1 Kgs 22:52, ET 51). The OG placement of Jehoram's regnal formulae after those of Joram remains anomalous in its chronological system. The MT's placement, on the other hand, is internally consistent. It has the account of Jehoram in 8:16–24 because according to its chronology Jehoram's reign took place entirely within

<sup>13</sup> Shenkel, *Chronology*, 77–80.

that of Joram of Israel. The historical presents in this pericope indicate that the OG account of Jehoram was also here, which in turn means that the OG was following the MT order before the revision that differentiated their chronologies. This must mean that the MT chronology was the older of the two. The figures were revised in the OG, but Jehoram's account was not moved to accommodate the change. This further explains why the OG chronology is not extant in any Greek witnesses. In short, the only reason for the OG to have the opening regnal formulae for Jehoram where it does is that this is where the MT had them. The MT's chronology, therefore, is primary; the OG's is derivative.

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# The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition and a Sample Edition of Daniel 1

Eugene Ulrich

The Dead Sea Scrolls have now provided the crucial factor whose absence has been preventing the production of a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible. Most other widely used ancient texts, such as the Greek and Latin classics, the Greek Old Testament (LXX), and the New Testament have long enjoyed a critical edition produced to offer the best possible text. Now for the Hebrew Bible, utilizing the scrolls and our enriched understanding of the LXX, Ronald Hendel is proposing to offer the same possibility with *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (HBCE).<sup>1</sup>

The classics, the LXX, and the New Testament have the benefit of a large number of manuscripts, every one of which has errors and other complicating problems. But a critical text is able, word-by-word, to select from the array of manuscripts the reading most likely to have been the original or preferred reading and thus present a pure, error-free, readable text. The term *original text* is problematic and means, not the *ipsissima verba* of the original author, but usually the earliest form that a critical, comparative analysis of the variant readings in the available manuscripts can offer.

In contrast to those critically edited texts, the situation of the Hebrew Bible had been quite different; there was a lack of manuscript evidence available on which to base a critical text. There was only one complete text in Hebrew: the Masoretic Text (MT). Though there were a number of Hebrew manuscripts known, they were all medieval, all close family members of the MT, often sharing the same errors and distinctive features. The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) and LXX

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It is a pleasure to dedicate this study in honor of P. Kyle McCarter Jr., whose breadth and depth in biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholarship—inscriptions, philology, textual criticism, literary criticism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls—make him truly worthy of the William Foxwell Albright chair.

<sup>1</sup> Ronald Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, TCS 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016).

were available, but the SP contained only the first five books, and its text was generally considered secondarily developed from the MT. The LXX and the other versions were considered important, but their texts often varied from the MT and their retroversion into Hebrew was viewed with varying degrees of skepticism. Thus, there was insufficient reliable evidence beyond the MT to warrant a critical edition.

Thanks, however, to the more than two hundred biblical manuscripts discovered near the Dead Sea and published in the twentieth century, that situation has changed. The scrolls were copied between ca. 250 BCE and 135 CE, roughly a millennium closer to the original than the medieval MT, and they supply an enormous quantity and a very reliable source of manuscript evidence from which to produce a critical edition.<sup>2</sup>

Before proceeding, we should be aware of some well-established major conclusions concerning the MT, the SP, and the LXX by which the scrolls have revolutionized our knowledge of the biblical text:

- The MT is not *the* Hebrew Bible text; it is *one* of the witnesses to the Hebrew Bible text.<sup>3</sup>
- Therefore, to get closer to the Hebrew Bible text, *all* available witnesses must be examined.<sup>4</sup>
- There was no specifically *Samaritan* Pentateuch; rather, there was a joint Judean-Samaritan Pentateuch, used by southern as well as northern Yahwists, with a few debatable variants.<sup>5</sup>
- The Old Greek (OG) is generally a faithful translation of its Hebrew *Vorlage*, which frequently was not the MT but was simply an alternate Hebrew manuscript. Thus, the OG is a valuable witness to an otherwise-lost Hebrew tradition, of considerable use for a critical edition.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Eugene Ulrich, "The Text of the Hebrew Scriptures at the Time of Hillel and Jesus," in *Congress Volume Basel 2001*, ed. André Lemaire, VTSup 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 85–108.

<sup>3</sup> Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 365.

<sup>4</sup> Emanuel Tov: "MT is no more reliable than LXX or certain Qumran texts," and "all ancient readings have an equal status, without relation to the text or translation in which they are found," in Tov and Eugene Ulrich, "1.1.1 Introduction: Textual History of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Hebrew Bible: Overview Articles*, vol. 1A of *Textual History of the Bible*, ed. Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 3–35, esp. 33.

<sup>5</sup> There are three major SP variants against MT, concerning Mount Gerizim: the "Samaritan" tenth commandment; the repeated past "has chosen" [Mount Gerizim] vs. future "will choose" [Jerusalem]; and the first altar on Mount Gerizim vs. Mount Ebal. But there are strong reasons to argue that the three are not sectarian variants; see Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Developmental Composition of the Bible*, VTSup 169 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 215–27. There were, to be sure, variant editions of some books (e.g., 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup>, 4QNum<sup>b</sup>), but they were used in the north as well as the south.

<sup>6</sup> Emanuel Tov, "1.3.1.1 Septuagint," in *Textual History of the Bible*, 1A:201; Ulrich, *Developmental Composition*, 152.

- The subsequent recensional history of the LXX has been clarified as successive Jewish attempts at revising the OG (which had been a translation of an alternate, variant Hebrew *Vorlage*) to conform lexically and syntactically to the ascendant rabbinic Hebrew text.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, with these widely-accepted clarifications of our understanding of the Hebrew and faithfully translated sources, we are able to produce a critical edition. Several factors argue in favor of attempting such an edition. First, most textual critics, though they may deem it impractical, agree at least theoretically that a critically established text is the proper desideratum.<sup>8</sup> Second, all serious study of the Hebrew Bible requires a sound textual basis, and diplomatic editions pose a problem, insofar as they contain errors and additions.<sup>9</sup> So, scholars either simply use the diplomatic MT with its errors or form their own corrected text.

But, third, who should produce that corrected, sound text? Bible translators and authors of commentaries in fact make their own virtual critical text, probably verse-by-verse as they progress, even though they may have little experience in textual criticism.<sup>10</sup> Bible translators are often chosen because of their theological or confessional affiliation, and commentary authors are often chosen because of their expertise in areas such as ancient Near Eastern literature or history, linguistic specialization, literary prowess, or other competencies. Would it not be better for an experienced text critic to produce a comprehensively studied text that the Bible translator or the commentary author could then confidently use? Finally, a number of books have two (or more) editions; a diplomatic edition prints only the edition found in its manuscript, whereas a critical edition can present and explain both (or all) of the editions.

In order to design a critical edition it is necessary to determine the goal of text criticism. Is the goal of text criticism, as customarily viewed, a corrected MT? I suggest that the object of textual criticism is not the static MT, that is, the collection of books inherited by rabbinic Judaism, but the original and its developments. The general project labeled “textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible”

must focus on the text of the ancient Hebrew Bible as it was, namely, diachronic and pluriform.... The purpose or function of textual criticism is to reconstruct

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<sup>7</sup> Emanuel Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr)*, DJD 8 (Clarendon: Oxford, 1990), and Ulrich, *Developmental Composition*, 157–58.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Rudolph Kittel, discussed in Hendel, *Steps*, 28; see also Alan England Brooke and Norman McLean, eds., *The Old Testament in Greek: According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus*, vol. 1.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), i. The theoretical dream of Brooke and McLean has been convincingly realized in the Göttingen critical Greek series.

<sup>9</sup> It is well known that the MT contains errors (e.g., Isa 53:11; Amos 6:12), additions (Lev 20:10; 2 Sam 6:3–4), losses (Gen 4:8; 1 Sam 14:41), and revisions (Deut 32:43; 1 Sam 1:23).

<sup>10</sup> A welcome exception to this is the textual expertise displayed by P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel and II Samuel*, AB 8, 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980, 1984).

the history of the texts that eventually became the biblical collection in both its [documentable] literary growth and its scribal transmission; it is not just to judge individual variants in order to determine which were “superior” or “original.”... Late layers or additions often have as much claim to being important tesserae in the biblical mosaic as do “original” or “early” elements of the developed text, since this cumulative aspect characterizes the nature of the biblical text from its very beginnings.<sup>11</sup>

To be sure, the various books in the MT collection were copied over the centuries with a high degree of accuracy. But they attest to only *one* of the pluriform texts that existed in antiquity. That is, the Qumran scriptural manuscripts exhibit not only many individual textual variants from the MT as well as from each other, but also variant *editions* of entire books. The MT collection of books comprises a variety of text-forms—sometimes an older edition, closer to the original of the book, and sometimes a later edition, more developed than other preserved editions. In the turmoil following the destruction of the Second Temple and the Revolts, the Rabbis kept one form of each of their sacred books and continued to copy only that form from then on. They did not compare and critically select those texts to ensure the best form, but they simply inherited one form of each book.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, focusing simply on the rabbinic collection excludes many other valuable witnesses to the Hebrew Bible text. In contrast, a critical edition makes use of all witnesses. But, since all witnesses are removed by several centuries from their true original and are the products of their transmission processes, they are all “layered”—that is, the result of the accumulation of errors and additions. Therefore, the task is to differentiate the layers: the original layer and the various accretions or changes, with an explanation of the nature of each change.

In light of the cornucopia of biblical manuscripts discovered at Qumran and nearby sites, Ronald Hendel has envisioned the possibility of a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible and described in detail its rationale, its practical goals, and its

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<sup>11</sup> Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 114–15. For a somewhat different view see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 1–2, 263–65; for a composite view, see Tov and Ulrich, “1.1.1 Introduction: Textual History,” 1A:3–35, esp. 3.

<sup>12</sup> That is the conclusion of Shemaryahu Talmon, “Aspects of the Textual Transmission of the Bible in the Light of Qumran Manuscripts,” in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 263; Talmon, “The Old Testament Text,” in *Qumran and the History*, 21; Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 179; Talmon, “The Coincidental Textual Nature of the Collections of Ancient Scriptures,” in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007*, ed. André Lemaire, VTSup 133 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 153–69; and Ulrich, *Developmental Composition*, 24–25.

methods of achieving it.<sup>13</sup> The goal of each volume of the HBCE is to produce a corrected *archetype* of a given book, that is, “the latest common ancestor of the extant manuscripts.”<sup>14</sup> Some clarifications are immediately required. The goal is not to construct the *original* text of that book as produced by its author; that is a non-attainable chimera. Rather, it is to construct an error-free text that presents the earliest recoverable form of each word. The process involves comparing all divergent readings in the scrolls, the MT, the SP, the LXX, and the versions word-by-word, and selecting what is judged to be the earliest reading that gave rise to the other variants, whether errors or subsequent developments.

Due to the fragmentary nature of the scrolls, the only Hebrew available for a large portion of most books is the MT. So, the MT is used as a “copy-text,” that is, a default text when no other variants appear preferable.<sup>15</sup> But it will be a *corrected* archetype,<sup>16</sup> that is, if the reading in MT is erroneous or secondary, then the critical edition will supply the reading of another manuscript which has the correct reading. In the case where no reading in any manuscript is convincing, a conjectural emendation may be supplied, based on the form most likely to have given rise to the different variants preserved in the manuscripts and on the text-critical experience of the editor. For books that have two or more variant editions, the editions will be presented side by side.

The critical text will be vocalized. The editorial team decided to include the vocalization and cantillation according to the MT, despite the anachronistic aspect of an ancient consonantal text with a medieval system of vocalization.<sup>17</sup> Students and most users of the editions will profit from the vocalization while scholars can ignore it.

Supplementing the critical text, an apparatus will list the variants in each witness and add a label specifying each secondary development, explaining why the variant arose—by error, clarification, theological revision, and so forth. Thus, the critical text will present the earliest documentable form of the book, and the apparatus will show the history of how and why the text developed. The apparatus thus presents a dynamic picture of the text history of the book. Following the apparatus, a brief textual commentary will discuss the more salient variants, explaining both the rationale for choosing the reading in the archetype and the causes

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<sup>13</sup> Hendel, *Steps*. The first volume has been published and may be examined for methodology and practical result: Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary*, HBCE (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Hendel, *Steps*, 21–23.

<sup>15</sup> W. W. Greg, “The Rationale of Copy-Text,” *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950–1951): 19–36. Greg distinguishes between “substantive readings” (words or readings important for using in the copy-text) and “accidentals” (e.g., spelling, which can be ignored); see Hendel, *Steps*, 29.

<sup>16</sup> I.e., “the earliest inferable textual state,” Hendel, *Steps*, 28.

<sup>17</sup> Of course, the MT shares this anachronism of an ancient consonantal text with medieval vocalization.



or motivations of the secondary readings. Because all manuscripts have accumulated errors and additions from diverse times, places, and scribes, the critical edition reverses that “eclectic agglomeration.”<sup>18</sup>

A detailed introduction will discuss an overview of the book and describe the character of the major witnesses, especially the LXX, the history of the development of the text, and other major learnings.

Several scholars have seen problems with the proposal of a critical edition.<sup>19</sup> A fundamental objection posits that there never was an original text but rather several pristine texts; thus, the idea of a critical edition should simply be abandoned. Shemaryahu Talmon proposed this view, and George Brooke has recently argued it again.<sup>20</sup> While that view could possibly be correct, and whereas there may well have been different versions of a text in oral performances, the manuscript evidence proves otherwise. The two hundred biblical scrolls show that all manuscript variants for each book are genetically related. No matter how large the variation, they are not simply “different pristine texts”; rather, the variants can be explained as developments of a single tradition, usually classifiable as variant editions, isolated scribal insertions, or well-known types of individual variants. The SP can serve as a clear illustration: it is clearly a substantially expanded edition derived from a text like the MT, expanded by adding biblical text to biblical text; virtually every major addition or variant in the SP is from text already in the MT or another biblical scroll.<sup>21</sup> Again, the wide diversion between the MT and the OG of Dan 4–6 could be argued as so wide as to exhibit pristine variant texts, but they can be demonstrated to be two separate parallel editions developing an earlier single story, each amplified in characteristic ways but genealogically related.<sup>22</sup>

Hugh Williamson offers a thoughtful critique, including that the HBCE presents “a purported critical text which cannot have ever been in existence.”<sup>23</sup> To a certain extent that is true, but that claim is probably true for every critical edition of the classics, the OG, and the New Testament; yet it is generally agreed that the

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Hendel, “The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition,” *VT* 58 (2008): 324–51, esp. 335. The project was originally planned to be published by Oxford Press but now will be published both in print and electronically by SBL.

<sup>19</sup> For full discussion of the problems, see Hendel, *Steps*, 41–63.

<sup>20</sup> Shemaryahu Talmon, “Textual Criticism: The Ancient Versions,” in *Text and Canon of the Hebrew Bible: Collected Studies* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 392–97; George J. Brooke, “The Qumran Scrolls and the Demise of the Distinction between Higher and Lower Criticism,” in *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method*, *EJL* 39 (Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 1–17, esp. 13–14.

<sup>21</sup> Ulrich, *Developmental Composition*, 30–40.

<sup>22</sup> Ulrich, *Developmental Composition*, 236–48.

<sup>23</sup> Hugh G. M. Williamson, “Do We Need a New Bible? Reflections on the Proposed Oxford Hebrew Bible,” *Biblica* 90 (2009): 153–75, esp. 169. The argument that a critical text never existed, however, philosophically betrays a nominalist view (i.e., the view that only particulars, such as manuscripts, exist) vs. a realist view (i.e., the view that not only particulars but also general abstractions exist, thus legitimizing the idea of an archetype for a critical edition); see Hendel, *Steps*, 182–83.

critical editions are preferable to any particular manuscript. What the critical edition attempts to present is the earliest non-erroneous text word-by-word of the book, thus the best possible text. No diplomatic edition presents an error free text. A further advantage of the HBCE is that its apparatus also presents a dynamic portrayal of the history of the book's development. In sum, since diplomatic editions contain both errors and later accretions, a critical text is noticeably closer to the intended "original."

Another problem raised by both Emanuel Tov and Williamson is the shakiness of retroversion into Hebrew of an LXX edition.<sup>24</sup> This is, of course, a problem in varying degrees. Some Hebrew retroversions, however, that were earlier conjectured as the Hebrew underlying LXX readings have now been solidly documented in the newly discovered Hebrew scrolls.<sup>25</sup> Toward the other end of the spectrum, the LXX of Proverbs does present a serious challenge, but such challenges and limitations can be explored and judiciously described.<sup>26</sup> The past century has seen a great deal of detailed study of LXX translation technique, and the possibilities and limitations are now fairly well controlled.<sup>27</sup> For example, the LXX of Jeremiah has provided a substantial amount of data, since its Hebrew *Vorlage* is mostly matched in the non-expanded parts of the MT.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Brandon Bruning has produced a persuasive solution to the problem of the earlier OG and the later, expanded and reorganized MT of Exod 35–40.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, though there are questions about the validity of the HBCE, and though earlier the dream of a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible was judged impractical, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls brings that dream possibly within our grasp. But "the dream of a perfect text is simply that, a dream. None of our texts are perfect, and textual criticism is not an inquiry that yields perfect results."<sup>30</sup> The editors have no illusion that the HBCE will be a final, perfect

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<sup>24</sup> Emanuel Tov, "Hebrew Scripture Editions: Philosophy and Praxis," in idem, *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran: Collected Essays*, ed. Emanuel Tov, TSAJ 121 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 247–70, esp. 266; Williamson, "Do We Need a New Bible?," 167.

<sup>25</sup> Eugene Ulrich, "Empirical Evidence for Scribal and Editorial Transmission of Second Temple Religious Literature," in *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala, CBET 84 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 41–57, esp. 54.

<sup>26</sup> As Michael Fox has done in his *Proverbs*, 3, 38–61.

<sup>27</sup> See especially Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 3rd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Sidnie White Crawford, Jan Joosten, and Eugene Ulrich, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible: Deut 32:1–9, 1 Kings 11:1–8, and Jeremiah 27:1–10 (34 G)," *VT* 58 (2008): 352–66; Emanuel Tov, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint*, VTSup 72 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 315–31.

<sup>29</sup> Brandon Bruning, "The Making of the Mishkan: The Old Greek Text of Exodus 35–40 and the Literary History of the Pentateuch" (PhD diss, University of Notre Dame, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Hendel, *Steps*, 294.

product, but it hopes to be a serious basis that future scholars can build on and improve. Critical editions of classical texts and the New Testament had tortuous paths toward their present well-used editions.<sup>31</sup> The classicist Robert Browning admits that regarding the limits of knowledge in classics: “our ignorance of the history of most Greek texts, in particular prose texts, is still abysmal.”<sup>32</sup> And the very first textual note in the Loeb Classical Library of Homer’s *Iliad* reveals that there were three totally different forms of the poem’s first line in various manuscripts.<sup>33</sup> Even though “a perfect text” will never be achieved, the much-appreciated critical editions of the classics, the LXX, and the New Testament augur well for the HBCE.

The volumes of the HBCE will take somewhat different forms, depending on the nature of a given book’s textual character. To illustrate one of the forms, I offer the following preliminary edition of Dan 1. The critical edition is followed by the apparatus and a selection from the commentary on the readings.

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<sup>31</sup> For the New Testament, see Ernest C. Colwell, *What Is the Best New Testament?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952); and Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 95–146.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Browning, “Recentiores non deteriores,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 7 (1960): 11; quoted in Hendel, *Steps*, 59.

<sup>33</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, trans. A. T. Murray, rev. William F. Wyatt, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 1:12–13.

## HBCE Daniel 1

- <sup>1</sup>בשנת שלוש שלמלכות יהויקים מלך־יהודה בא נבוכדנאצר מלך־בבל ירושלם ויצר עליה:
- <sup>2</sup>ויתן אדני בידו את־יהויקים מלך־יהודה וְאֶת־כָּל־בְּנֵי־בֵית־הָאֱלֹהִים וְיִבְיִאֵם אֶרְצ־שֹנְעַר וְיִבְיִאֵם בֵּית אוֹצֵר אֱלֹהִיו:
- <sup>3</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַשְׁפַּנּוּ רַב־סְרִיסֵי־וְהַבִּי־אִתְּכֶם מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִזֶּרַע הַמְּלוּכָה וּמִזֶּה־הַפְּרָתָמִים:
- <sup>4</sup>וְהַלְדִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־בָּהֶם מוֹם וְטוֹבֵי־מְרָאָה וּמְשֻׁכְּלִים בְּכָל־חֻקֵּי־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְיִדְעוּ דַעַת וּמִבְּנֵי־מִדְּעָה וְאֲשֶׁר כָּח בָּהֶם לַעֲמֹד בַּהֵיכָל הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלִלְמַדְם סֵפֶר וּלְשׁוֹן כְּשָׂדִים:
- <sup>5</sup>וַיִּמְרוּ לָהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ מִפְּתִיגַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וּמִיָּמִן מִשְׁתִּיּוֹ וּלְגַדְלָם שָׁנִים שְׁלוֹשׁ וּמִקְצֹתָם יַעֲמְדוּ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:
- <sup>6</sup>וַיְהִי בָהֶם מִבְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה דְּנִיָּאל מִיִּשְׂאֵל וְעֲזַרְיָה:
- <sup>7</sup>וַיֵּשֶׁם לָהֶם שְׁר הַסְּרִיסִים שְׁמוֹת <sup>1</sup>לְדְנִיָּאל בְּלִטְשַׁאצֶּר וְלְחַנְנִיָּה שְׁדֻרְדָּה וְלִמְיִשָׁאֵל מִיִּשְׂדָּה וְלְעֲזַרְיָה עֶבֶד נְגוּ:
- <sup>8</sup>וַיֵּשֶׁם דְּנִיָּאל עַל־לְבוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִתְגַּאֲלַת בְּפִתְבֹּגַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵינָם מִשְׁתִּיּוֹ וַיִּבְקֶשׂ מִשֶׁר הַסְּרִיסִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִתְגַּאֲלַת:
- <sup>9</sup>וַיִּתֵּן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־דְּנִיָּאל לְחֹסֵד וְלַרְחֻמִּים לִפְנֵי שְׁר הַסְּרִיסִים:
- <sup>10</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁר הַסְּרִיסִים לְדְנִיָּאל יֵרָא אֲנִי אֶת־אֲדֹנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר מִנָּה אֶת־מַאֲכַלְכֶם וְאֶת־מִשְׁתִּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לָמָּה יֵרָאָה אֶת־פְּנֵיכֶם וְעִפִּים מִן־הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר כָּגִילְכֶם וְחִיבְתֶם אֶת־רֵאשֵׁי לְמֶלֶךְ:
- <sup>11</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר דְּנִיָּאל אֶל הַמְּלַצֵּר אֲשֶׁר מִנָּה שְׁר הַסְּרִיסִים עַל־דְּנִיָּאל חַנְנִיָּה מִיִּשְׂאֵל וְעֲזַרְיָה:
- <sup>12</sup>נִסְגָּא אֶת־עֲבָדֶיךָ יָמִים עֲשָׂרָה וַיִּתְּנוּ־לָנוּ מִן־הַזֵּרְעִים וְנִאֲכָלָה וּמִים וְנִשְׁתָּה:
- <sup>13</sup>וַיִּרְאוּ לִפְנֵיךְ מִרְאִינוֹ וּמִרְאָה הַיְלָדִים הָאֲכָלִים אֶת פִּתְבֹּגַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכֹאֲשֶׁר תִּרְאָה עֲשֵׂה עִם־עֲבָדֶיךָ:
- <sup>14</sup>וַיִּשְׁמַע לָהֶם <sup>1</sup>וַיִּנְסֶם יָמִים עֲשָׂרָה:
- <sup>15</sup>וּמִקְצֹת יָמִים עֲשָׂרָה נִרְאָה מִרְאִיהֶם טוֹב וּבְרִיאֵי בָשָׂר מִן־הַיְלָדִים הָאֲכָלִים אֶת פִּתְבֹּגַת הַמֶּלֶךְ:
- <sup>16</sup>וַיְהִי הַמְּלַצֵּר נִשְׂאָ אֶת־פִּתְבֹּגַתָּם וַיִּין מִשְׁתִּיהֶם וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם זֵרְעִים:
- <sup>17</sup>וְהַיְלָדִים הָאֵלֶּה <sup>1</sup>נָתַן לָהֶם הָאֱלֹהִים מִדְּעָה וְהִשְׁכֵּל בְּכָל־סֵפֶר וְחֻקֵּי־דְנִיָּאל הַבַּיִן בְּכָל־חֻזּוֹן וְחֻלְמוֹת:
- <sup>18</sup>וּלְמִקְצֹת הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַבִּיאֵם וַיִּבְיִאֵם שְׁר הַסְּרִיסִים לִפְנֵי נְבֻכַדְנֶצַּר:
- <sup>19</sup>וַיִּדְבֵּר אִתָּם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא נִמְצָא מִכֵּלָם כְּדְנִיָּאל חַנְנִיָּה מִיִּשְׂאֵל וְעֲזַרְיָה וַיַּעֲמְדוּ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:
- <sup>20</sup>וְכָל דְּבַר חֻקֵּיהֶם וּבִינָה אֲשֶׁר־בִּקֶּשׂ מֵהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּמְצָאֵם עֲשָׂר יָדוֹת עַל כָּל־הַחֲרָטְמִים וְהָאֲשָׁפִים אֲשֶׁר בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ:
- <sup>21</sup>וַיְהִי דְנִיָּאל עַד־שְׁנַת אַחַת לְכוֹרֶשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ:

## HBCE Dan 1 Apparatus

- 1:2 את־היוקים ... ויתן M θ' V ] και παρέδωκεν αὐτήν ... και Ιωακίμ G S (exeg)  
 1:2 \*וכלי S (כִּלִּים) ] ומקצת כלי M G (και μέρος τι τῶν ἱερῶν σκευῶν) (exeg)  
 1:2 האלהים M G ] + אלהים מִלְּפָנֶיךָ S (dbl)  
 1:2 \*ויביאם<sup>2</sup> G (ἀπήρειατο) ] + בית אלהיו ואת־הכלים הביא M S (add; cf. BHS n. 2<sup>b-b</sup>)  
 1:3 לאשפנו M 967 ] Αβιεσδρι G SyrH (Heb substitute); אשפ S (translit err? near-haplo u→ו?; see vv. 11, 16)  
 1:3 מבני ישראל M 967 ] ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν τῶν μεγιστάνων τοῦ Ἰσραηλ G; ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας Ἰσραηλ θ' (explics)  
 1:4 מום G (ἀμώμους) θ' (μῶμος) S (גַּמְלוֹת) ] כל מום M<sup>Q</sup>mss; כל מאום M<sup>K</sup> (add)  
 1:4 \*בחכמה S (בְּחָכְמָה) ] בכל־חכמה M G (add)  
 1:6 יהודה M ] ויהי בהם מבני יהודה M ] και ἦσαν ἐκ τοῦ γένους τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραηλ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας G (add); ויהי בהם מבני יהודה M ] + אלהים מִלְּפָנֶיךָ S (add)  
 1:7 שמות G θ' V ] + וישם 2<sup>o</sup> M; + שמות S (add)  
 1:10 זעפים M S ] διατετραμμένον και ἀσθενές G (add)  
 1:10 כגילכם M ] + τῶν ἀλλογενῶν G (explic)  
 1:11 אשר מנה<sup>ה</sup> G (אֲשֶׁר מִנָּה) ] + אמלסאד θ' (Αμελσαδ θ') המלצר M θ'<sup>mss</sup> ] Αβιεσδρι τῷ ἀποδειχθέντι (מִנָּה\*) G (gram; see vv. 3, 16)  
 1:12 הזרענים M<sup>mss</sup> ] הזרעים M<sup>L</sup> (norm; see HALOT 283, BHS n. 12<sup>a</sup>, v. 16)  
 1:14 להם θ' ] + לדבר הזה M 1QDan<sup>a</sup> G θ'<sup>mss</sup> (explic)  
 1:15 טוב M 1QDan<sup>a</sup> G (χρείσσω) ] ... טוב S (add)  
 1:15 הילדים G (τῶν ἄλλων νεανίσκων) θ' (τὰ παιδάρια) ] +pre כל M θ'<sup>mss</sup> S (add)  
 1:16 (אֲשֶׁר מִנָּה) S; אמלסאד θ' (Αμελσαδ θ') המלצר M 1QDan<sup>a</sup> θ'<sup>mss</sup> ] Αβιεσδρι G (cf. vv. 3, 11)  
 1:16 ויין M ] ויין 4QDan<sup>af</sup> (gram)  
 1:16 זרענים M ] זרעים 1QDan<sup>a</sup>; + זרענים מִלְּפָנֶיךָ S (rep v. 12)  
 1:17 האלה G V ] + ארבעתם M S (explic)  
 1:17 וחכמה M ] και ἐν πάσῃ σοφία post וחלמות G (transp)  
 1:18 נבכדנצר M ] +pre τὸν βασιλέα G; + נבכד S (add)  
 1:19 מכלם M S ] ἐν τοῖς σοφοῖς G (explic)  
 1:20 חכמה ובינה\* G (και συνέσει και παιδεία); θ' (σοφίας και ἐπιστήμης); S (σοφία και βίαια); V (sapientiae et intellectus) ] חכמת בינה M; [חכמה] ב[ינה]; 4QDan<sup>af</sup> (cf. BHS n. 20<sup>a-a</sup>)  
 1:20 על ... ומצאם M ] + σοφωτέρους ... ὑπερφέροντας G; + על ... מצאם S (expan)  
 1:20 והאשפים M<sup>mss</sup> G (και φιλόλογων) S (אֲשֶׁר מִלְּפָנֶיךָ) ] האשפים M<sup>L</sup> (± conj)  
 1:20 \*במלכותו S (בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ) ] בכל מלכותו M G (add)  
 1:20<sup>fin</sup> M S ] + [ ... ] במלכותו [ ... ] 4QDan<sup>af</sup>; + και ἐδόξασεν αὐτοὺς ὁ βασιλεὺς και ἀπέδειξεν ἐν πράγμασιν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἐαυτοῦ βασιλείᾳ G (add? or M haplog?)

## Commentary on Readings

1:2 אַתְּ־הוּיָקִים ... וַיִּתֵּן M θ' V ] καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτὴν ... καὶ Ἰωακίμ G S (exeg).

M simply says that the king was handed over, but apparently the *Vorlage* of G and S considered that the loss of Jerusalem (αὐτήν) should also be mentioned.

1:11 אֲשֶׁר מִנְּהָ (لَحْصَى S; Αμελσαδ θ') המלצר M θ' <sup>mss</sup> ] Αβιεσδρι τῷ ἀποδειχθέντι (הַמְנָז\*) G.

The chief eunuch was the person assigned in charge of the students' food (1:5); so G, apparently not understanding המלצר, identified him with the chief eunuch and interpreted the unvocalized מנה as *pu'al* (cf. *pu'al* in 1 Chr 9:29 and especially in Job 7:3, where G interprets מנה as passive against the active in M).

1:20<sup>fm</sup> M S ] + [ ... ] מלכותו[ ... ] 4QDan<sup>af</sup>; + καὶ ἐδόξασεν αὐτοὺς ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἀπέδειξεν ἐν πράγμασιν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἐαυτοῦ βασιλείᾳ G.

4QDan<sup>a</sup> shows that there was a longer Hebrew text. G is quite likely translating from a Hebrew manuscript which had a reading such as *ויכבדו המלך וימנם בדברים בכל מלכותו*.

DJD 16:242–43 explains that the exact placement of the small fragment with this reading, though generally close, cannot be exactly determined. But it had a longer reading which included or concluded with *מלכותו* [= τῇ ἐαυτοῦ βασιλείᾳ]. Thus, there was a longer Hebrew variant here. It is difficult to judge, however, whether the reading is a secondary insertion or the original conclusion similar to 3:30 celebrating the youths' promotion.

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# Early Developments in Levi Traditions: Malachi and Jubilees

James C. VanderKam

Levi traditions or points along their trajectories in early Judaism have attracted considerable scholarly attention. If one reads the references to the third son of Jacob and Leah in Genesis and compares them with the status he attains in Second Temple period texts such as the Aramaic Levi Document, Jubilees, and the Testament of Levi, the development is dramatic. The Levi of Genesis and his brother Simeon slaughtered the men of Shechem (Gen 34) and thereby incurred the wrath of their father Jacob who cursed them (Gen 49:5–7). Levi, a figure who in Genesis is a minor, even a negative character, becomes not only the ancestor of the priestly tribe but also himself an active priest who experiences heavenly visions and communes with angels.<sup>1</sup>

## LEVI AND LEVITES IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

As experts have noticed, a series of passages in the Hebrew Bible itself in some way prepares for the elevated position Levi occupies in later texts. The ones usually mentioned are, in their canonical order, Exod 32:25–29; Num 18:21–32; 25:1–13; Deut 10:8–9; 33:8–11; Jer 33:21–22; and Mal 2:4–9. A quick glance at these texts will uncover their contributions to a developing portrait of Levi and especially of his descendants.

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<sup>1</sup> Surveys of Levi in these and other sources may be found in, e.g., James Kugel, “Levi’s Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings,” *HTR* 86 (1993): 1–64; Robert A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi*, EJL 9 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996); and Matthijs de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, “Jacob’s Son Levi in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Related Literature,” in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. Michael Stone and Theodore Bergren (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 203–36. For a different focus, see Anders Hultgård, “The Ideal ‘Levite’, the Davidic Messiah, and the Saviour Priest in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*, ed. John J. Collins and George W. E. Nickelsburg, SCS 12 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1980), 93–110.

*Texts Mentioning Levites and/or Priests*

Levi himself may appear in none of the following sections of the Hebrew Bible, but each of them is instructive regarding one or more aspects of the Levites and priests.

*Exodus 32:25–29.* The sons of Levi, responding to Moses’s invitation to stand with him on the Lord’s side against those who worshiped the golden calf, followed his orders to execute their idolatrous kin. As a reward for killing some 3000 fellow Israelites, the sons of Levi gained ordination to the service of the Lord. The passage clearly deals with a time after the life of the third son of Jacob and Leah, but his offspring display a level of violent zeal (this time officially sanctioned) that could recall the actions of their ancestor as described in Gen 34.

*Numbers 18:21–32.* The chapter in a way denigrates the Levites because it subordinates them to the priests, the sons of Aaron, to whom it assigns various categories of gifts from the Israelites (vv. 1–20). Nevertheless, Numbers grants Israel’s tithes to the Levites: “To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for a possession in return for the service that they perform, the service in the tent of meeting” (v. 21; see all of vv. 21–32).<sup>2</sup> The priests, despite their status, receive only a tenth of the Levitical tithe. Again, the passage relates to the descendants of Levi, not Levi himself, but it does provide them with a special form of income.

*Numbers 25:1–13.* The unit deals with the social mingling of Israelites and Midianites and the idolatrous consequences it had for Israel. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron and the leading priest at the time, executed an Israelite man and a Midianite woman, apparently as they were having sex. His violent deed gained him strong commendation: the Lord declared that Phinehas “has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal<sup>3</sup> among them on my behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites. Therefore say, ‘I hereby grant him my covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for his descendants after him a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the Israelites’” (vv. 11–13). There is no mention of Levi here or even of his tribe, but an act of zealous violence won for Phinehas and his progeny an eternal covenant. This is the first mention of a priestly covenant in the Hebrew Bible.

*Deuteronomy 10:8–9 (cf. 18:1–8).* Not long after Aaron’s death, “the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to him, and to bless in his name, to this day. Therefore, Levi has no allotment or inheritance with his kindred; the LORD is his inheritance, as

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<sup>2</sup> English translations of biblical passages are from the NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> This is the first time the term “zeal” (הַזָּאֵר) is employed in reference to priestly violence.

the LORD your God promised him.” The tribe of Levi is under consideration, and their special place is emphasized along with their role of blessing Israel. In the second occurrence of *Levi* in the passage, the name clearly stands for the tribe, not the individual.

*Deuteronomy 33:8–11*. In Moses’s blessing of the Israelites, the third name he treats is Levi. A number of intriguing lines populate the section. For instance, in verse 8 “your loyal one” (אִישׁ חֲסִידֶךָ) parallels *Levi* in the previous line; it implies that the poetic section begins as if it were addressing one person. In the sequel, however, plural forms are used, suggesting that the tribe is under consideration (e.g., v. 9 where “they observed your word and kept your covenant”). Among the tasks that the tribe performs is giving instruction—“They teach Jacob your ordinances, and Israel your law” (v. 10)—and offering sacrifice. There are puzzling features in the short section such as testing him/them at Massah and Meribah (v. 8), since Levites are not mentioned in the stories involving these place names (Exod 17:1–7; Num 20:1–13).<sup>4</sup> The first lines of verse 9 (e.g., “he ignored his kin”) could be read as an echo of the story in Exod 32:25–29.

*Jeremiah 33:21–22*. The larger unit, verses 14–26, deals at some length with a future ruler and an eternal covenant with David, but in verses 21–22 there is an implied mention of “(my covenant)<sup>5</sup> with my ministers the Levites” that, like the agreement with David, will not come to an end. The word “Levites” is plural here, and they are joined to the Lord by a lasting pact.<sup>6</sup>

All of these texts speak about Levites or priests—who are also from the tribe of Levi—and refer to matters such as their zeal for the Lord, their special ministries and perquisites, and a covenant. But if one were looking for evidence in them of a growing appreciation for the man Levi, one would be disappointed. None of the passages refers to him specifically, with only Deut 33:8 being a possible exception. For that reason, the remaining Hebrew Bible passage listed at the beginning of the essay, Mal 2:4–9, is of special interest.

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<sup>4</sup> For those who have suggested that Moses is “your loyal one” and the problem raised by the mention of Massah and Meribah, see Samuel R. Driver, *An Exegetical and Critical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1902), 399–401.

<sup>5</sup> The words “my covenant” are not actually in the text, though the NRSV supplies them; they are clearly implied in the context. The NRSV translator has left out “the priests” where the text speaks of “the Levites, the priests.”

<sup>6</sup> The covenant is often related to the one in Num 25:11–13 (e.g., Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21B [New York: Doubleday, 2004], 544–46). See also Neh 13:29 (“the covenant of the priests [literally, the priesthood] and the Levites”).

*A Text Mentioning Levi?*

Following upon a few exchanges between the deity and the clergy that are highly critical of the priests, the Lord proclaims these words to them in Mal 2:4–9:

Know [pl.], then, that I have sent this commandment to you [pl.], that my covenant with Levi [לוי] may hold, says the LORD of hosts. My covenant with him was a covenant of life and well-being, which I gave him; this called for reverence, and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in integrity and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you [pl.]<sup>7</sup> have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi [הלוי], says the Lord of hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in your instruction.

The first (v. 2:4a) and last (vv. 8–9) statements are directed to the priests as a group, but in the verses between these envelope lines (4b–7) the deity seems to reference a single person Levi and offers a laudatory description of him.<sup>8</sup>

The paragraph in Mal 2:4–9 provides an opportunity to contrast more recent ways of reading the text with ancient ones. Modern commentators regularly understand the entire unit to be dealing with the Levites, the priests or, more broadly, both the Levites and the priests, and they have good reasons for doing so. For one, the priests have been the center of attention in almost every verse of the book to this point, and for another the Lord speaks to them at the beginning and end of 2:4–9. Moreover, there is no reference to a covenant with Levi elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible nor does anything said about Levi here match with material in Genesis. Finally, the name *Levi* alone can designate the collective Levites (as, for example, in Deut 10:9 cited above; cf. “the sons of Levi” in Mal 3:3).<sup>9</sup> As a result, it seems sensible to interpret *Levi* and the singular pronouns in Mal 2:4b–7 as referring to a group, not an individual, and to explain the covenant language as somehow related to the passages studied above, particularly Num 25:1–13 and Jer 33:21–22.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Plural forms continue to the end of the cited passage.

<sup>8</sup> For the two parts of the section, see, for example, Julia M. O’Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, SBLDS 121 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 39–44.

<sup>9</sup> See BDB, s.v. “לוי” where Mal 2:4 is listed as an example of this usage.

<sup>10</sup> This is the approach followed in commentaries such as David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 189–93; and Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 25D (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 203–18, 220–21. It is also the case in studies of the passage itself, of covenant in Malachi, or of the priests and Levites in the book, e.g., Elie Assis, “The Reproach of the Priests (Malachi 1:6–2:9) within

The Second Temple authors who wrote about Levi saw the matter differently. They interpreted *Levi* in 2:4b as designating the character known from Genesis and believed that the singular forms that follow in verses 5–7 referred to him as well. An assumption of theirs may have been: if nothing in Mal 2:4b–7 agrees with what Genesis seems to be saying about Levi, one should look more carefully at Genesis for clues that might have been overlooked. The verses in Malachi so read proved to be most suggestive to early readers who were concerned about the rather negative picture of Levi in Genesis. Those who have studied the Levi of texts outside the Hebrew Bible have regularly noted the influence of the Malachi pericope on his improved reputation and behavior as depicted in these works. Here are some examples of how parts of the passage appear to have influenced them.

1. “That my covenant with Levi may hold, says the LORD of hosts. My covenant with him was a covenant of life and well-being, which I gave him.”

These lines speak of a personal covenant with Levi, not of one with his descendants, and in this way imply that he became a priest already in his lifetime.<sup>11</sup> Also, the words “which I gave him” could point to an occasion when God made this arrangement with him. James Kugel explains what might have been the exegetical thinking of an ancient commentator (or commentators) dealing with the passage:

perhaps, in particular, the words “and I gave them to him” refer to a specific event, the time when God granted Levi this special covenant and its benefits, life and peace (compare Num 25:12). If so, then it was a momentous happening, according to this passage: Levi was filled with fear, “he feared me; he stood in awe of my name.” “True instruction,” the text continues, “was in his mouth”; again, this might mean that *at the time of the making of this covenant* God filled Levi’s mouth with true instruction. Might not this whole section therefore seem to refer to some kind of great revelation, a particular occasion on which Levi actually entered into God’s presence and received divine instruction? Moreover, “he walked with me in peace and uprightness” might, by the same logic, refer to this

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Malachi’s Conception of Covenant,” in *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*, ed. Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 271–90, especially 281–82. See also Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*, SBLDS 98 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 77–80; and O’Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, 104–6. Compare as well the studies of Alwin Renker, *Die Tora bei Maleachi: Ein Beitrag zur Bedeutungsgeschichte von tôrâ im Alten Testament*, Freiburger theologische Studien 112 (Freiburg: Herder, 1979), 101–22; and Theodor Lescow, *Das Buch Maleachi: Texttheorie-Auslegung-Kanontheorie mit einem Exkurs über Jeremia 8, 8–9, AzTh 75* (Stuttgart: Kalwer, 1993), 35–38, 70–96. This is in no way meant as a criticism of such studies, since the concerns of their authors are historical-critical in nature, not the ancient reuses of the passage.

<sup>11</sup> The word *priest* in its context in Mal 2:7 could have led to the inference that Levi was meant and that therefore he had served as a priest.

same incident, a time when Levi actually *walked with* God and stood in God's presence.<sup>12</sup>

In dealing with the sentence "He walked with me in integrity and uprightness" it is worth noting (perhaps Kugel was implying this) that "walking" with the deity could have reminded readers of Enoch's walk with God (Gen 5:22, 24), a phrase widely understood in antiquity to mean that he spent time in angelic company. If the "walk" in Mal 2:6 was understood in this fashion (a different form of הלך is used), it could have given rise to the reports about Levi's visions in which he was with angels (see Aramaic Levi Document 4; T. Levi 2–5 and 8).<sup>13</sup> The book of Jubilees associates Levi with angels in a different way: the priestly service offered by him and his sons is likened to that performed in heaven by the highest ranking angels (30.18; 31.14).<sup>14</sup>

## 2. "And he turned many from iniquity"

R. Kugler argues that the line could have been interpreted with reference to Levi's actions at Shechem. It would therefore express God's approval of what he had done on that occasion. According to Gen 34, the prince Shechem, after violating Jacob's daughter Dinah, wanted to marry her, and he and his father Hamor proposed—and Jacob and his sons may have considered—more marriages between the people of Shechem and Jacob's clan (34:8–17). By killing the residents of Shechem, Levi (and Simeon) prevented intermarriage—that is, he turned them away from evil.<sup>15</sup>

Most of these connections between the developing Levi traditions and Mal 2:4–9 have been documented before, but in the remainder of this paper I would like to reflect on how the author of the book of Jubilees employed the passage because there may be more to it than the earlier studies suggest.

### MALACHI AND JUBILEES

The short prophecy of Malachi may have seemed almost too good to be true for the author of Jubilees. In it he found not only several characters from Genesis but also some of his favorite subjects.

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<sup>12</sup> Kugel, "Levi's Elevation," 31–32 (he is here speaking about what he calls the Levi Apocalypse, a source that he thinks was incorporated into the Aramaic Levi Document). Kugel also suggests ("Levi's Elevation," 33) that the verb נחת in Mal 2:5 ("stood in awe [of my name]") may have been read as the verb "go down" and שמי ("my name") as "my heavens," so that the phrase pointed to his descent from the divine presence.

<sup>13</sup> First Samuel 2:35 speaks about a future faithful priest (unlike Eli's sons) for whom the Lord will build a sure house "and he shall go in and out [והתהלך] before my anointed one forever."

<sup>14</sup> The nearest Levi comes to having a vision in Jubilees is in 32.1 where he has a dream about being appointed priest, but there is no mention of angels.

<sup>15</sup> Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest*, 20–21.

*Appealing Topics in Malachi*

(1) The pictures of Esau and Jacob: After the superscription to Malachi (1:1), the Lord makes exceptionally strong statements about the brothers. “Is not Esau Jacob’s brother? says the LORD. Yet I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau” (1:2–3a). The writer of Jubilees would have appreciated those words, and he certainly echoed their sentiments. In his book Esau has a difficult time doing anything right, while Jacob does nothing wrong.<sup>16</sup> There are many examples, but the point comes to very clear expression in chapter 35 where Rebekah (on the last day of her life) and Isaac speak about their two sons (35.9–17). His own mother says of Esau “he has been malicious since his youth and . . . is devoid of virtue” (v. 9);<sup>17</sup> Isaac seconds her verdict. In contrast, Jacob is their “perfect and true son” (v. 12). By this time, both parents, not just Rebekah, love him much more than Esau (35.13).

Malachi next quotes the Lord as saying: “I have made his [Esau’s] hill country a desolation and his heritage a desert for jackals” (v. 3b). If Edom decided to rebuild, the Lord declares, he “will tear down, until they are called the wicked country, the people with whom the LORD is angry forever” (v. 4). In Jubilees, Isaac predicts that Esau and his descendants would be eradicated from the earth (35.14). Jacob and his sons eventually kill Esau and his sons when the latter attacks; they then subjugate Edom (chs. 37–38).

(2) In Mal 1, just after the Esau-Jacob lines, the Lord reminds the priests that a son honors his father and a servant his master; they, however, have not honored their heavenly Father and Master (1:6). For the author of Jubilees, Esau and Jacob paradigmatically illustrated disobedience and obedience to the basic law in family life. One of the issues raised by Rebekah and Isaac in Jub. 35 is the contrasting behavior of their two sons towards them. Esau stole his parents’ possessions and abandoned them (35.11), while Jacob of course honored them spectacularly (v. 12–13; see 29.15–20 for how the two brothers treated their parents).

(3) After the continuation of the disputation between the Lord and the priests in Malachi, the Lord refers to Levi as a model priest and documents how far his current descendants have fallen short of the standards he set (2:4–9). This is the section that, as noted above, is recognized as being an important source for the Levi traditions in later texts, including Jubilees. In Jubilees he and his sons gain the priesthood eternally because of his zeal at Shechem (ch. 30), he and his sons are blessed with the eternal priesthood by his grandfather Isaac (31.13–17), he dreams that he and his sons were appointed and ordained to the eternal priesthood

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<sup>16</sup> John C. Endres entitles his lengthy analysis of Jub 26.1–29.20 “Jacob: The Model Patriarch” (*Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees*, CBQMS 18 [Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1987], 85–119). The same could be said about the presentation of Jacob throughout the book.

<sup>17</sup> Translations taken from James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees 2: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees Chapters 22–50*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018).



(32.1), and he is ordained priest by his father Jacob who gives a tithe to him (32.2–10).

(4) Immediately after the Levi section, the writer of Malachi takes up marriage issues (2:10–16). Verse 11 reads: “Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.” Scholars have debated what marriage to the daughter of a foreign god might mean,<sup>18</sup> but Targum Jonathan articulates an early reading of the passage by rendering the latter part of it as “for *the people of the house of Judah* have profaned *their soul which was holy before the Lord, and they have chosen to marry wives from the daughters of the nations.*”<sup>19</sup> A central teaching in Jubilees is that one is not to marry women from the nations (see, for example, 20.3–5; 25.1–10; 27.8–10; and especially ch. 30). In 30.15 the writer says that marriage with a foreigner defiles the sanctuary, just as Mal 2:11 claims.

(5) At a later point in the prophecy of Malachi the Lord indicts the people for robbing God by not bringing their tithes and offerings (3.8–9). “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house” (v. 10). Jubilees places teachings about tithes in the places where Genesis locates them—the Abram-Melchizedek encounter (Gen 14:20; Jub. 13.25–27) and Jacob’s vow at Bethel (Gen 28:18–22; Jub. 27.27; 32.5–15). In each case Jubilees expands the section beyond the brief mentions in Genesis (see below).

### *The Sequence of the Appealing Topics*

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the writer of Jubilees would turn to the prophecy of Malachi as one resource for his views as he retold Genesis.<sup>20</sup> But he did more: one can make a case that he not only used Malachi but drew exegetical conclusions from the sequence in which the topics listed in section A above figure. That is, one reason he felt justified in understanding Mal 2:4b–7 as referring to the man Levi was the contextual order in which it appears in Malachi. He may have considered Mal 1–3 as a kind of guide to or a reflection on Gen 31–35, the material he reworks in chapters 29–32, since Mal 1–3 treats topics in the same order as in Genesis (and Jubilees). The evidence is as follows.

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<sup>18</sup> For the cultic view—worship of Asherah that involved taking part in sexual rituals—see Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi*, 198–200; for the theory that intermarriage with non-Judeans is meant, see Hill, *Malachi*, 224–33.

<sup>19</sup> The translation is by Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, ArBib 14 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), 233 (see n. 17 for other references). In the Aramaic Bible series words not in MT are printed in italics.

<sup>20</sup> For some of the uses of Malachi made by the author of Jubilees in chaps. 30–32, see James C. VanderKam, “Jubilees and the Priestly Messiah of Qumran,” *RevQ* 13 (1988): 360–62.

(1) Malachi sections about Jacob/Esau and honoring one's father (Mal 1:2–6)

Jubilees speaks about Jacob's return to Canaan from Laban's house in chapter 29 (compare Gen 31–33). In that chapter the writer devotes a part of a single verse to the meeting between Jacob and Esau (29.13) that is described at such length and with so much drama in Gen 32:3–33:17. At the end of chapter 29, he depicts the ways in which the brothers treated their parents, a subject not addressed in Genesis at this point.<sup>21</sup> He claims that Esau stole their property, including their flocks, and then moved far away from them to Edom. They had to beg for anything they got from him, and in the end they relocated so as to put more distance between themselves and their son (vv. 17–19; cf. 35:10–11).<sup>22</sup> Jacob, however, honored them by happily sending them abundant supplies every season (29.15–16, 20; cf. 35:12; he would soon visit them [ch. 31; 33:1] and finally move next door to them [33:21]).

(2) Malachi sections about Levi and marriage with foreign women (Mal 2:4–16)

The next passage in Jubilees, as it follows the order in Genesis, is its retelling of the story of Dinah (Gen 34 // Jub 30) in which Levi is a major actor. In Jubilees, because of his zeal in slaughtering the Shechemites, he and his descendants are awarded the priesthood forever. As noted above, it is possible that the writer interpreted the phrase from Mal 2:6 “he turned many from iniquity” as referring to the results of Levi's zeal at Shechem—by killing the Shechemites he prevented the possibility of intermarriage between them and the family of Jacob and was commended for it, as in Malachi.

(3) Tithing (Mal 3:8–12)

The subject of tithing proved crucial in this very section of Genesis as it was re-read by early expositors, including the author of Jubilees. At the beginning of Gen 35 Jacob returns to Bethel where he had made a vow to God on his initial visit to that place: “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you” (28:20–22). By the time the story reaches Gen 35 the conditions

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<sup>21</sup> It would not be a difficult inference, however, from Gen 33:17–18 that Jacob, who settled in Succoth, was in a better position to assist his parents than Esau who returned to Seir after their encounter.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 36:6–8 presents the situation differently: the flocks owned by Esau and Jacob were so large that they, like Abram and Lot, were unable to live in the same place. Therefore, Esau and his family moved away to Edom.

seem ripe for Jacob to make good on his vow. He had returned to the land and, one would think, he certainly could have returned to his father's house though he seems not to have done so. At any rate, in Gen 35:1 God orders Jacob to settle in Bethel and to construct an altar there "to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau" (v. 1). When Jacob passes the command to his household he says, "let us go up to Bethel, that I may make an altar there to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone" (v. 3). Genesis reports nothing, either here or in any other place, about Jacob's paying what he had pledged to give, though he admits that the Lord had been with him (note that he at last returns to his father's house in 35:27).

Jacob's failure to fulfill his vow by tithing his possessions did not go unnoticed by early interpreters, including the writer of Jubilees, and they used various means to rectify the omission.<sup>23</sup> In Jub. 31.1, where his return to Bethel is under consideration, Jacob refers to the vow he had made, and in chapter 32, after a visit to his parents (31.5–30), he carries it out in ways that involved Levi. Once he was back at Bethel, "Jacob got up early in the morning on the fourteenth day of this [the seventh] month and gave a tithe of all that had come with him—from people to animals, from money to all utensils and clothing. He gave a tithe of all" (32.2). In addition to that payment of what he had vowed, Jacob, as it were, tithed his sons. "At that time Rachel was pregnant with her son Benjamin. Jacob counted his sons from him. He went up (the list), and it came down on Levi in the Lord's share. His father put priestly clothes on him and ordained him" (32.3). He then presented tithes to Levi (vv. 4–5; see also vv. 8–10). The writer of Jubilees supplements Jacob's actions with a short section regarding the law of the second tithe (vv. 10–15).

All of these topics surface in Malachi in the same order as they do in Jubilees. An implication of the sequence is that the section about Levi in Mal 2:4b–7 would correspond to the material Jubilees covers in chs. 30–32 (Gen 34–35)—the passages about Levi becoming a priest and receiving the full tithe from his father. This could have provided the author with confirmation that the prophetic section was dealing with the time when Levi (with Simeon) avenged the rape of their full sister Dinah and when he became priest. In that context Jubilees presents a picture rather different from the one in Genesis. According to Gen 34:30, Jacob was displeased with his sons and worried about the consequences of their actions for the welfare of the clan. Simeon and Levi then responded to their father in a rather testy way (v. 35). In Jubilees Levi receives an amazing reward for his zeal in dispatching the aching men of Shechem and thus making intermarriage impossible: he and his sons receive the priesthood forever—something that is confirmed three times in chapters 31–32.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For the sources and a discussion, see Kugel, "Levi's Elevation," 2–5, 13–17.

<sup>24</sup> This is not to suggest that the writer of Jubilees used only the book of Malachi in fashioning his image of Levi, as he clearly used additional resources, including several of the passages treated in

The author of Jubilees, then, made ample use of the content and sequence of material in Mal 1–3, but a comparison of the two works shows that he did not borrow all that the prophet wrote about Levi. Most prominent among the items he—with the writers of the Aramaic Levi Document and the Testament of Levi—passed over is a covenant between the Lord and Levi (Mal 2:4–5). In his view there was just one covenant that bound God and Israel in an eternal relationship (see Jub. 6); that covenant was renewed annually and supplemented from time to time. Levi and his descendants played a large part in the covenantal relationship between God and his people, but they did not have a separate agreement with him.

The ways in which the author of Jubilees employed material from the prophecy of Malachi serves as an excellent illustration of how someone who composed a parade example of Rewritten Bible/Scripture focused not only on the text he was re-presenting (Genesis in this case) but also on the wider context of sacred writings. For him all of them potentially contributed to the elucidation of a text and all of them gave voice to a harmonious meaning.<sup>25</sup>

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part I.A. of the paper. See, for example, James C. VanderKam, “Jubilees’ Exegetical Creation of Levi the Priest,” *RevQ* 17 (1996): 359–73.

<sup>25</sup> His indebtedness to Malachi is an instance of the third of four assumptions that, on Kugel’s view, all ancient interpreters shared—“Scripture is perfect and perfectly harmonious.” As he explains the assumption, interpreters “sought to discover the basic harmony underlying apparently discordant words, since all of Scripture, in their view, must speak with one voice. By the same logic, any biblical text might illuminate any other” (*Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998], 17).

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# Biblical *Qin'â* as a Social Phenomenon: A Case Study of Genesis 26 and Ezekiel

Erin Guinn-Villareal

In the Hebrew Bible, the noun *qin'â* and its related verbal and adjectival forms are used as expressions for both divine and nondivine subjects.<sup>1</sup> Etymological investigations of this term have proven difficult as there exists limited unambiguous evidence to clarify its origins and linguistic and semantic development.<sup>2</sup> Numerous translations and interpretations have been proposed for the term based on contextual considerations, though most of these renderings are dominated by emotion language related to expressions of jealousy, including envy and zeal.<sup>3</sup> Adding

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I am honored to have the opportunity to present this manuscript to my dissertation adviser and friend, P. Kyle McCarter Jr., who met with me over coffee and empanadas to unravel the complexities of the *qin'â* expression. I feel it is only appropriate to submit this piece in acknowledgment of his life's work as both a teacher and scholar. If it were not for him, my fundamental understanding of Biblical Hebrew *qin'â* would have remained unformulated. Through our discussions, I have learned to communicate with purpose and clarity, even if we did get sidetracked by the occasional conversation about the linguistics of emojis, the superiority of German roadsters, and our mutual appreciation of Mark Twain. His impact on my personal and professional development has been profound and invaluable.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the root *qn'* occurs a total of eighty-five times. Among these attestations, it is explicitly attributed to Yahweh forty-one times, while the remainder are attributed to non-divine and human subjects. The verb *qn'* occurs twenty-eight times in the D-stem and four times in the C-stem. The noun *qin'â* is attested forty-three times, while the adjective *qannâ' / qannô'* is attested eight times only as a divine attribute commonly translated "Yahweh, a jealous God." See below, n. 23 for bibliography. In this paper, I will refer to *qn'* in its nominal form *qin'â* based on the assumption that the verbal forms are denominative (following BDB, 888).

<sup>2</sup> E. Reuter asserts that "Die Etymologolgie der Wurzel *qn'* ist unergiebig" ("QN'," *TWAT* 7:51). So also, Friedrich Küchler, "Der Gedanke des Eifers Jahwes im Alten Testament," *ZAW* 28 (1908): 42–43.

<sup>3</sup> In many modern readings of *qin'â*, jealousy and envy are casually used as synonyms while zeal is treated separately. See, for e.g., BDB, s.v. "קנא"; and *HALOT*, s.v. "קנא." For a fuller treatment on the various translations of *qin'â* in the Hebrew bible, see Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*:

to the complexity are questions surrounding the relationship between religious and secular expressions of *qin'â*. Many interpretive treatments of the word avoid understanding divine expressions of *qin'â* through the lens of human jealousy.<sup>4</sup> In these investigations, nondivine expressions of *qin'â* are understood as internal psychological states that largely correspond to our modern notions of jealousy or related feelings. These nondivine expressions are considered incongruent with divine or religious expressions of *qin'â* as they reflect internal states that are thought to be inappropriate as divine attributes.<sup>5</sup> There is, however, one characteristic uniting these various attestations. The *qin'â* expression is often used in situations that reflect social conflict between groups or individuals, whether it be between sisters (Gen 30:1), brothers (Gen 37:11), a husband and wife (Num 5:11–31; cf. Prov 6:32–35), rival countries (Isa 11:13), or a religious community and their god (e.g., Deut 32:16, 21).

What this study proposes is a view that gives close attention to the social significance of the emotion concept *qin'â* that will be informed by the social constructionist approach, which proposes that emotions play a meaningful cultural role. This analysis will raise the possibility that the aims and motivations of both the divine and nondivine expressions of *qin'â* are not as incongruent as was once believed. By demonstrating a sensitivity to the social implications of the term, we will discover how the *qin'â* expression served as a kind of discourse to communicate ancient Israelite views concerning beliefs, values, and social expectations. Instead of being entirely a private experience on the part of individuals, *qin'â* is an expression used to contribute to the maintenance of a society and the ordering of social relationships, a process which may at times involve individual concerns but also has ramifications for the welfare of society as a whole. What this suggests is that giving primary attention to *qin'â* as an internal or private state risks overlooking and misrepresenting important characteristics and consequences of the expression. By exploring a few case studies in which expressions of *qin'â* are attested and by placing its use in its social context, a more complete interpretation of the term emerges that deepens our understanding of ancient Israelite social organization and its impact on the construction of fundamental religious concepts.

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*The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–1* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1994), 8–20. For a critique on the inconsistencies in the translations of *qin'â* in biblical scholarship and the laxity of usage of envy and jealousy in American English, see John H. Elliot, “God—Zealous or Jealous but Never Envious: The Theological Consequences of the Linguistic and Social Distinctions,” in *The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation*, ed. Dietmar Neufeld (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 79–96.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Bernard Renaud, *Je suis un Dieu jaloux* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1963), 17, 25. For a summary of the history of scholarship on this issue, see Nissim Amzallag, “Furnace Remelting as the Expression of YHWH’s Holiness: Evidence from the Meaning of *qannâ’* [*qn*] in the Divine Context,” *JBL* 134 (2015): 233–37.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Amzallag, “Furnace Remelting as the Expression of YHWH’s Holiness,” 234.

## THE SOCIAL WORLD OF EMOTIONS

The methodological framework that will structure my discussion is based on the work of scholars whose ethnographic studies on emotion vocabularies demonstrate that emotions are part of a culture's social, legal, and economic world. This approach, identified as "social constructionism," reevaluates the popular Euro-American understanding of emotions as universal personal states in opposition to thought and rationality.<sup>6</sup> In her ethnopsychological study on the Micronesian Ifaluk, Catherine Lutz cautions against privileging the private nature of emotions.<sup>7</sup> While emotions may be experienced within the boundary of our bodies, emotions also involve evaluative and behavioral processes embedded in our social world. She states, "emotion can be viewed as a cultural and interpersonal process of naming, justifying, and persuading by people in relationship to each other ... serving complex communicative, moral, and cultural purposes rather than simply as labels for internal states whose nature or essence is presumed to be universal."<sup>8</sup> The way emotion is viewed and understood is structured by people, and the meaning ascribed to an emotion is dependent upon the cultural system of which it is a part.<sup>9</sup>

Understanding the social significance of emotion is particularly relevant when translating emotion concepts. Lutz notes that rather than translate what we assume the other "feels," we should "translate emotional communications from one idiom, context, language, or sociohistorical mode of understanding into another."<sup>10</sup> For example, while the Ifaluk emotion *song* may have broad similarities with "anger," among the Ifaluk *song* evokes a "more vivid and unambiguous scene of moral transgression on the part of one person and of moral condemnation of that violation by the person who is *song*."<sup>11</sup> *Song* is expressed in a specific social context in order to negotiate aspects of a social reality by identifying potentially harmful behavior that threatens moral order.<sup>12</sup> While translating *song* as "anger" may be useful and appropriate in providing the target audience with a

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<sup>6</sup> Ethnopsychological approaches to emotion concepts have led to the development of the social constructionist approach to emotion and emotion behavior, which holds that emotions are determined to a large extent by cultural factors. For a review of social constructionism, see Claire Armon-Jones, "The Thesis of Constructionism," in *The Social Construction of Emotions*, ed. Rom Harré (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 32–56 and Charles Lindholm, "An Anthropology of Emotion," in *A Companion to Psychological Anthropology: Modernity and Psychocultural Change*, ed. Conerly Casey and Robert Edgerton (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 30–47.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge Challenges to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> For the cognitive and behavioral aspects of emotions, see also Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions*, 156–57.



means of relating to a foreign emotion concept, concluding all interpretive work here risks oversimplifying and overlooking important social and cultural aspects of the Ifaluk.

Relevant for our examination of *qin'ā* is the influence this sociological approach to emotion has had on examinations of jealousy type emotions and behaviors. Research conducted by Ralph Hupka on cross-cultural expressions of jealousy demonstrates that social, economic, and legal values determine the extent to which a jealousy situation is identified as well as the character and severity of the jealousy response.<sup>13</sup> According to his findings, in its most basic sense jealousy is some kind of response (emotional, behavioral, cognitive, etc.) triggered by an event that potentially threatens culturally determined values maintained by a relationship or community; the expression of jealousy in these situations aims to protect those values.<sup>14</sup> Hupka notes, "Although the capacity to experience jealousy is [genetically] inherited, that capacity is actualized through social structures."<sup>15</sup> Historical data on the synchronic development of jealousy concepts support this statement. Peter Stearns traces the changing perceptions of Euro-American jealousy in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, noting that as attitudes towards sex, marriage, and property relationships changed the understanding of jealousy as being a potentially beneficial expression for relational unity was abandoned.<sup>16</sup> Increasing its reputation as an offensive emotion was the relatively recent phenomena of using jealousy as a synonym for envy.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, jealousy and zeal, despite sharing the same etymological background,

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<sup>13</sup> Ralph Hupka, "Cultural Determinants of Jealousy," *Alternative Lifestyles* 4 (1981): 311. For example, the cultural values that determine expressions of romantic jealousy involve attitudes towards pair bonding, property, personal descendants, and sex.

<sup>14</sup> Ralph Hupka, "The Motive for the Arousal of Romantic Jealousy," in *The Psychology of Jealousy*, ed. Peter Salovey (New York: Guilford, 1992), 263–65. However, unlike Hupka, who focuses solely on romantic jealousy, I would apply this definition to both romantic (e.g., marriage) and non-romantic (e.g., sibling) relationship scenarios, which we see more clearly with Classical Greek *zelos*, Arabic *ḡayrah*, and as we will soon discover Biblical Hebrew *qin'ā*. For similar sociological approaches to jealousy, see Gordon Clanton, "Jealousy and Envy," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, ed. Jan E. Stets and Jonathan H. Turner (New York: Springer, 2006), 410–42.

<sup>15</sup> Hupka, *Motive for the Arousal of Romantic Jealousy*, 255.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Stearns, *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 192.

<sup>17</sup> Stearns, *Jealousy*, 12–13. More precise definitions of envy and jealousy acknowledge that the two expressions involve responses to different social situations. Envy is experienced when one desires something another person possesses and may involve feelings of resentment. The motivation of envy is not to protect a valued relationship or to assert a personal right; it is a negative emotion that aims to malign. For the distinction between envy and jealousy, see Clanton, *Jealousy and Envy*, 411, 421 and George M. Foster, "The Anatomy of Envy: A Study in Symbolic Behavior," *Current Anthropology* 13 (1972): 167–68; Martin P. East and Fraser N. Watts, "Jealousy and Envy," in *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, ed. Tim Dalgleish and Mick J. Power (Chichester: Jon Wiley & Son, 1999), 569–88.

were differentiated. Until the eighteenth century, the two were used interchangeably but as attitudes towards jealousy changed, zeal was understood as a more productive and legitimate emotion concept than jealousy.<sup>18</sup> Based on this research, we may conclude that whether or not the emotion concept of jealousy is perceived as an appropriate or sanctioned expression is dependent upon social and behavioral norms of a given society.<sup>19</sup>

If emotions are culturally dependent social phenomena, then it is important to be aware of the numerous cultural assumptions that are embedded in our understanding of emotions. There has been a great amount of progress made in biblical studies concerning the social and behavioral aspects of emotion concepts, but a comprehensive evaluation of the emotion concept of *qin'â* in Biblical Hebrew has yet to be done.<sup>20</sup> The understanding of emotions as preeminently cultural will inform and structure my interpretation of the *qin'â* expression in Biblical Hebrew. The point of this approach is not to ignore the internal implications of emotions, but to avoid prioritizing them. The benefits of this approach are twofold. Contextualizing the use of *qin'â* in Biblical Hebrew will greatly improve our current interpretation of this emotion concept, and once a comprehensive understanding of the larger social context is obtained, we will also improve our interpretation of the passages in which this expression is attested.

#### THE EXPRESSION OF NONDIVINE *QIN'Â*: THE CASE OF GENESIS 26

Considerable attention has been paid to the use of *qin'â* as a divine or religious expression that is incited by apostasy, idolatry, or foreign usurpation.<sup>21</sup> Clarifying

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<sup>18</sup> Stearns, *Jealousy*, 1, 15.

<sup>19</sup> In many European and American courts in the eighteenth century, jealousy received “institutional legitimization” for its expression as a legal outlet, implying that jealousy, in certain forms, was seen as a legitimate response to interlopers (Stearns, *Jealousy*, 16–17). Similarly, sociologist George Clanton argues that “the recent history of jealousy in the United States reveals that jealousy changes as society changes” (Clanton, George, “A Sociology of Jealousy,” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 16 [1996]: 172).

<sup>20</sup> Studies exploring the social world of biblical emotions include Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Yochanan Muffs, *Love and Joy: Law, Language, and Religion in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Robert D. Branson, “The polyvalent ŠN’: An Emotional, Performative, and Covenantal Term,” *Biblical Research* 52 (2007): 5–15; Ellen von Wolde, “Sentiments as Socially Constructed Emotions: Anger and Love in the Hebrew Bible,” *BibInt* 16 (2008): 1–24; Thomas Kazen, *Issues of Impurity in Early Judaism* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010); Ari Mermelstein, “Love and Hate at Qumran: The Social Construction of Sectarian Emotion,” *DSD* 20 (2013): 237–63; T. M. Lemos, “The Apotheosis of Rage: Divine Anger and the Psychology of Israelite Trauma,” *BibInt* 23 (2015): 101–21.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Josh 24:19; Nah 1:2; cf. Num 25:13; 1 Kgs 19:10, 14.

what it means to be an *'el qannā'*, a god who embodies *qin'ā*, has occupied biblical scholarship for more than a hundred years.<sup>22</sup> It is through Yahweh's expression of *qin'ā* that many understand the obligation of exclusivity in the divine-human relationship; this religious exclusivity is traditionally viewed as one of the main, unique features of ancient Israelite religion.<sup>23</sup> Due to its significance as a fundamental divine attribute, the focus on *qin'ā* in religious contexts is warranted. At the same time, the paucity of literature on its use in nondivine contexts reveals that our understanding of the term is incomplete. Studies have demonstrated that religious knowledge and terminology often derives its meaning from social and/or legal concepts.<sup>24</sup> The tendency to omit discussions of the nondivine use of *qin'ā* and isolate it from its religious counterparts prevents us from constructing an authentic representation of the expression.

While there are numerous examples of *qin'ā* as a human expression, one example in particular serves as a constructive case study: The expression of *qin'ā* by the Philistines of Gerar towards Isaac in Gen 26:14. This passage contains features that make it exceptionally suitable for analyzing the social context of this emotion concept and its articulation. These features include information on the origins of the conflict between two social groups, the motivations of the aggrieved

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<sup>22</sup> E.g., Küchler, *Der Gedanke des Eifers Jahwes im Alten Testament*; Renaud, *Je Suis un Dieu Jaloux*; Elliot; Amzallag, "Furnace Remelting as the Expression of YHWH's Holiness"; Karl H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild: ein Beitrag zur Begründung und Deutung des Bilderverbotes im Alten Testament* (Berlin: Evang. Verlag-Anst., 1956), 86–96; H. A. Brongers, "Der Eifer des Herrn Zebaoth," *VT* 13 (1963): 269–84; Christoph Dohmen, "'Eifersüchtiger ist sein Name' (Ex 34, 14): Ursprung und Bedeutung der alttestamentlichen Rede von Gottes Eifersucht," *TZ* 46 (1990): 289–304; Brittany Kim, "Yhwh as Jealous Husband: Abusive Authoritarian or Passionate Protector? A Reexamination of a Prophetic Image," in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*, ed. Mark Boda, Carol Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Fleisher (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 127–47.

<sup>23</sup> See Gerhard von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, 2 vols. (Louisville: John Knox, 2001), 1:208.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the studies on expressions of love in Deuteronomy by William Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77–87; the divine marriage metaphor in Hosea by Ehud Ben Zvi, "Observations on the Marital Metaphor of YHWH and Israel in Its Ancient Israelite Context: General Considerations and Particular Images in Hosea 1.2," *JSOT* 28 (2004): 363–84; the use of sexual and relational metaphors in prophetic works by Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); the relationship between treaties and religious covenant by Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981); and the use of juridical terminology to convey religious concepts by George E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper, 1962), 26–67. See also Yitzhaq Feder's approach to concepts of impurity in ancient Near Eastern thought in "Defilement, Disgust, and Disease: The Experiential Basis of Hittite and Akkadian Terms for Impurity," *JAOS* (2016): 99–116.

party, the social roles of those involved, and the actions required to resolve the dispute.<sup>25</sup>

In the narrative, Isaac comes into conflict with the Philistines three different times while residing in Gerar as a resident alien (*gēr*). The first involves Isaac deliberately misrepresenting his wife as his sister to the Philistines. After discovering the truth, Abimelech, king of Gerar, orders the Philistines to refrain from molesting (*ng'*) the patriarch under pain of death (vv. 10–11). The second conflict arises after Isaac accumulates more wealth and prosperity than anyone else in the land. Isaac's immense success arouses *qin'â* among the Philistines, which subsequently provokes them to sabotage his wells (vv. 14, 15). The third disagreement happens shortly after Isaac's expulsion from Gerar proper. On the fringes of the royal domain, the shepherds of Gerar enter into a dispute (*rib*) with him concerning the proper ownership of the wells he is currently using (vv. 20–22).

The Philistine's perspective of Isaac and the nature of their relationship is determined by the patriarch's social and legal status as a *gēr* in Philistine territory.<sup>26</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the *gēr* are often portrayed as destitute and poor due to their lack of kinship relations, and provisions such as tithe and charity are made to ensure their survival.<sup>27</sup> With these considerations in mind, it would be most unusual for a *gēr* to become more successful than his neighbors.<sup>28</sup> Confirming this point is a curse in Deut 28:43–44 threatening to privilege the *gēr* with wealth and prestige over the native residents. The passage elaborates on this reversal by stating, “(The *gēr*) will become the head, while you (the Israelites) will become the tail” (*hû' yihyeh lārō'š wə'attâ tihyeh ləzānāb*). This suggests that the situation depicted in Gen 26 would not only have been undesirable for the native residents, but perhaps even disruptive to their social order. Since the context of the narrative is set during a period of severe famine (v. 1), Isaac, being legally vulnerable, could

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<sup>25</sup> This passage has a long history of interpretation with regard to corresponding accounts within Genesis (12:10–20; 20:1–18 and 21:22–34). For a history of scholarship on the relationship between these passages, see James K. Hoffmeier, “The Wives' Tale of Genesis 12, 20 and 26 and the Covenants at Beer-Sheba,” *TynB* 43 (1992): 83–87. For whatever reason, *qin'â* does not occur in the parallel passage describing Abraham's conflict with the Philistines (Gen 20:1–18). It is not the intention of this paper to stake a claim in this debate nor to resolve it, but merely to provide some interpretive comments on the Gen 26 passage as a whole.

<sup>26</sup> For studies focusing on the legal and social aspects of this term, see Christiana van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, JSOTSup 107 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991); José E. Ramirez Kidd, *Alterity and Identity in Israel: The Gēr in the Old Testament*, BZAW 283 (New York: de Gruyter, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Lev 19:10, 33; 23:22; Deut 1:16; 14:29; 24:14, 19–21; 26:12; 27:19.

<sup>28</sup> It matters little about whether the historical Philistines had the concept of *gēr* with its social parameters. Rather, in his literary creation, our Judean author addresses the social context such that readers expect the Philistines to have a *gēr*—sensitive social understanding. For a similar situation in which *gēr* laws are applied to an Israelite living in a foreign country, see the narrative of Elimelech's sojourn to Moab in the book of Ruth (1:1–3).

have easily provoked suspicions of wrongdoing with his rapid and disproportionate accumulation of wealth.

The passage implies that the Philistines' behavior towards Isaac is motivated by their *qin'â* against the patriarch (v. 14). It may be tempting to understand the *qin'â* expressed here according to notions of petty envy/jealousy and assume that it primarily represents the malicious, personal sentiments of the Philistines who resent Isaac's wealth.<sup>29</sup> However, in light of the previous discussion underscoring the economic and juridical implications of the passage I would argue that such an interpretation would misrepresent the broader concerns depicted in the narrative. The Philistines' actions against the patriarch are not motivated by simple feelings of malice, but by the concern that the balance in their community has been disrupted by the rapid accumulation of wealth by a resident alien. In fact, the text implies by Abimelech's official expulsion of Isaac after the second dispute (v. 16) that the Philistine king was similarly concerned. The Philistine reaction is not considered the kind of harassment against Isaac that would warrant punishment in the form of execution (v. 11); rather, it is a legitimate reaction to a perceived threat that requires immediate intervention.

Consider, for example, the use of *šānē'* by Isaac to characterize the Philistine behavior towards him during his time as a sojourner in Gerar (v. 27). Rather than solely viewing this "hatred" as an internal state or sentiment, we should consider the widely acknowledged social and juridical undertones of the term.<sup>30</sup> The expression represents Isaac's expectation that the Philistines, by their previous actions, were actively severing all relational obligations and associations towards him, thus no longer recognizing him as a legitimate *gēr* in their lands. The contentious nature of this dispute is further emphasized by the use of the root *ryb*, a term known to have juridical connotations, to characterize Philistine hostility towards Isaac (vv. 20–21).<sup>31</sup> After placing the passage in its proper context and clarifying the broader concerns of the Philistines, I would argue that the traditional interpretation of *qin'â* in this passage as envy undermines our understanding of the motivation of the Philistines in the narrative. The primary concern is not about Isaac's wealth provoking feelings of animosity or resentment, but how this seemingly disproportionate share in prosperity by a resident alien impacts the Philistine community.

I am not suggesting that there is a complete absence of negative feelings towards Isaac. On the contrary, personal reactions like anger or feelings of hostility are a natural accompaniment when rights or values are threatened. This personal

<sup>29</sup> For "envy," see NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV. For "jealousy," see NET and NLT.

<sup>30</sup> The polyvalent character of *šānē'* has long been recognized. Although the term may reflect a personal sentiment, it is also found in contexts where its meaning is primarily juridical in character, expressing the termination of a social arrangement and of any obligations expected from one party to another (Branson, "Polyvalent ŠN'," 13).

<sup>31</sup> E.g., Exod 23:2; Isa 3:13; 50:8; 57:16; Hos 4:4; Prov 25:8; Jer 2:9.

reaction, however, does not encompass the totality of the emotion expressed by the Philistines, and these personal concerns are secondary to what is primarily at stake in the passage. From the perspective of the Philistines, Isaac is not integrating into the social expectations of a sojourner in a foreign land. The statement made by Abimelech justifying Isaac's expulsion, "you have become too big for us" (*'āšamtā–mimmennū mē'ōd*) in verse 16 illustrates this concern. The Philistine self-assessment of their actions in verse 29—they did not molest Isaac (*lō nāga 'ānūkā*), did only good (*'āšínū 'immākā raq–tōb*), and sent Isaac away in peace (*nāšallēhākā bāšālōm*)—suggests that they view their actions as within their legal rights. Clearly what is at stake in the passage is not simply personal reactions on the part of the Philistines, but rather issues concerning property and water rights that have legal and social ramifications for the Philistines living in the region.

The dispute between Isaac and the Philistines is resolved when Abimelech and his retinue travel to meet Isaac in Beersheba, securing a nonaggression pact with Isaac that is concluded with a feast. Once their suspicions are tested and Isaac is proven to be successful even outside the boundaries of Gerar, Abimelech and the Philistines rationalize that his previous successes resulted from Yahweh's divine blessing (vv. 28–29).<sup>32</sup> Their treaty with Isaac seeks to resolve the *qin'á* issues that had previously motivated their "hatred" against Isaac, thus redefining the boundaries of their social arrangement and repairing their relationship. In sum, the *qin'á* reaction in this passage seems concerned with exclusive rights to property, possessions, and their potential loss or misuse. In this particular context, *qin'á* should be identified as an expression grounded in practical and justifiable social and economic concerns relating to the legal rights of members of a community.<sup>33</sup>

#### THE EXPRESSION OF DIVINE *QIN'Á*: THE CASE OF EZEKIEL

Our discussion of the Gen 26 passage demonstrates the advantages of a more complex understanding of the *qin'á* expression; by illustrating the social significance of this emotion concept, we clarified the broader implications of both the

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<sup>32</sup> In the narrative, Yahweh bestows his blessing upon Isaac prior to his arrival in the lands of Gerar (26:1).

<sup>33</sup> While I suspect the *qin'á* concern in general deals with legal issues, I cannot outright identify *qin'á* as a "legal term" as it never explicitly occurs in a legal passage outside of the *tōrat haqqanā' ōt* in Num 5:11–31. What is evident, however, is that in most passages *qin'á* deals with concerns of property and ownership and/or the disruption of proper social expectations. Consider, for example, the *qin'á* expressed by the elder brothers of Joseph (Gen 37:11). While spiteful feelings may be involved, it is also possible that there is more at stake. As the eldest in the family, there are social and legally sanctioned rules concerning first-born rights of inheritance, and these are being disrupted by Joseph.

term and the passage. It also establishes the need for interpreters to be sensitive to the social context and cultural system in which emotion concepts are embedded and implies the dangers of readers projecting their own culturally-framed understandings of emotions onto interpretations of ancient emotion vocabularies. A lack of such sensitivity has led to certain assumptions concerning the use of *qin 'a* in religious contexts. As stated previously, common understandings of jealousy portray it as a negative sentiment, expressing pettiness or apprehension; although these characteristics may be appropriate for a human agent, these characteristics, some argue, should not be ascribed to the Israelite deity.<sup>34</sup> As a result, studies often separate divine and nondivine uses of *qin 'a* and propose two different meanings.<sup>35</sup> These readings, however, fail to recognize the social nature of these expressions and in doing so miss an opportunity to uncover common ground.

In the book of Ezekiel, *qin 'a* prominently appears as a divine expression. Ezekiel offers one of the best entry points for our discussion since the historical milieu of this work is fairly well understood, allowing us to place the use of *qin 'a* in a secure social context. Living in exile, the author would have had an acute concern over the relationship between the land, the patron deity Yahweh, and the people.<sup>36</sup> Divine *qin 'a* is expressed eleven times in Ezekiel as both a verb and a noun.<sup>37</sup> Among these attestations, Yahweh directs his *qin 'a* against the Israelites and against foreign threats.

Divine expressions of *qin 'a* against the Israelites are provoked by their illicit behavior, which specifically involves the practice of foreign worship and idolatry within the divine sanctuary (5:13; 8:3, 5) and religious and political associations with foreign powers (16:38, 42; 23:25). Ezekiel emphasizes the *ma 'al* (“betrayal”) the Israelites have been committing against Yahweh, which creates *hāmās* (“disorder”) within Yahweh’s land (Ezek 7:11, 23; 8:17; 12:19).<sup>38</sup> The *hāmās* disrupts

<sup>34</sup> Amzallag, “Furnace Remelting as the Expression of YHWH’s Holiness,” 234.

<sup>35</sup> Amzallag, “Furnace Remelting as the Expression of YHWH’s Holiness,” 234, 237; Brongers, “Der Eifer des Herrn Zebaoth,” 284; Renaud, *Je Suis un Dieu Jaloux* 17, 25; Peels, “QN,” *NIDOTTE* 3:939.

<sup>36</sup> In particular, Ezekiel focuses on the suitability of the temple for the purposes of divine habitation. Julie Galambush writes, “The book of Ezekiel is dominated by Ezekiel’s concern for the state of the temple, and with the question of whether Yahweh can have a dwelling among the people without risking defilement as a result of their sins” (*Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1992], 78).

<sup>37</sup> For verbal attestations, see 8:3 (C-stem) and 39:25 (D-stem). For the nominal form *qin 'a*, see 5:13; 8:3, 5; 16:38, 42; 23:25; 36:5, 6; 38:19. For the form of the C-stem participle, see GKC §75 qq.

<sup>38</sup> The term *ma 'al* occurs elsewhere in Ezekiel (14:13; 15:8; 17:20; 18:24; 20:27; 39:23–26). In this context, committing *ma 'al* is understood as a breach in the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel and is therefore an oath violation. See Jacob Milgrom, “The Concept of Ma’al in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *JAOS* 96 (1976): 236–47.



the integrity of the land and its appropriateness as a divine habitation.<sup>39</sup> These cultic and religious violations have significant implications for ancient Israelite society and its overall well-being, and the absence of the deity puts the community at risk for invasion and conquest. The disharmony stemming from the actions of the people risks the proper world order, and the appropriate divine response involves immediate punishment. In the legal and priestly material of the Hebrew Bible, the promised land is bequeathed to the Israelites to serve as their residence and the repository of their future wealth, but only on the condition that they maintain the integrity of the land and the divine sanctuary through the observance of the law and in particular the obligation of exclusivity.<sup>40</sup> Having failed to meet these expectations, Yahweh responds with *qin'â*. Yahweh is not simply expressing personal feelings but is instead appropriately responding to a social breach that risks alienating the land and community from its god. At the same time, Yahweh is responding to threats to his status as the sole divine patron of Israel; the presence of foreign gods and abominations in his land directly threatens his sovereignty and goes against the terms of exclusivity in the divine-human arrangement developed in the legal material.

The divine marriage metaphor in Ezek 16 and 23 clarifies the application of *qin'â* to describe divine behavior in response to the people's failure to uphold their obligations.<sup>41</sup> In these passages, Yahweh is portrayed as the bridegroom who has bestowed various gifts upon his bride, Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup> Yahweh's *qin'â* is provoked when his bride is lured into committing adultery with various "lovers," who represent the various gods, idols, and foreign countries with whom the people were associating. The use of *qin'â* is well known in the oath procedure in Num 5:11–31 to describe a husband's reaction to suspected adultery.<sup>43</sup> Although at first we

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Gen 6:11, which reflects a similar ideology. When the domain of Yahweh is corrupted and filled with *hāmās*, the Israelite deity cleanses the earth with a flood and wipes out the perverse generations. On the priestly recasting of the flood story, see Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary On the Book of Genesis: Translated From the Hebrew by Israel Abrahams*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 51–58 and David Wright, "Profane Versus Sacrificial Slaughter: The Priestly Recasting of the Yahwist Flood Story," in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*, ed. by Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 125–54.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the different conceptions of land in the Hebrew Bible and the tension between views of the land as an unconditional (Genesis) versus conditional (Deuteronomy) grant, see David Frankel, *The Land of Canaan and the Destiny of Israel: Theologies of Territory in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011). The understanding of Yahweh as the divine proprietor of the land of Israel is emphasized in Lev 25:23 (cf. Lev 18:24–30). On the inseparable connection between the land, the people, and Yahweh, see Daniel I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: A Study in Ancient Near East National Theology* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1988).

<sup>41</sup> For a study on the application of the marriage metaphor in Ezek 16 and 23, see Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel*.

<sup>42</sup> Ezekiel 16 represents the adulterous wife as Jerusalem, while the adulterous sisters Oholah and Oholibah in Ezek 23 represent Samaria and Jerusalem respectively.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Prov 6:32–35.



might be tempted to allow current perceptions of marriage and romantic jealousy to color our interpretation of these texts, if we demonstrate a sensitivity to the ancient context of these passages we avoid misrepresentation.<sup>44</sup> Here, the husband demonstrates *qin'â* as a result of a perceived threat towards a relationship that has social and economic ramifications.

In the ancient Near East, the primary importance of marriage was that it represented a legal and economic relationship.<sup>45</sup> The marriage metaphor works so well in Ezekiel to describe the divine-human relationship because both types of relationships involve some kind of conditional arrangement. The Israelites are given the right to settle in Yahweh's land if they take measures to maintain their relationship with him and, most importantly, preserve the integrity of the land and his sanctuary. In the traditional relationship between a husband and wife as represented in biblical sources, the wife has an obligation to her husband to maintain the integrity of the family and her marital relationship.<sup>46</sup> The principal economic unit in ancient Israel was the family, and any threat to its integrity would have been met with a strong response.<sup>47</sup> Taking a lover had the potential to disrupt the

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<sup>44</sup> For example, studies on the use of *qin'â* in Num 5:11–31 overlook the social nature of *qin'â* and overstate the psychological state of the “irate,” “furious,” and “anxious” husband. See Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 37 and Baruch Levine, *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 194. Levine understands the *rûaḥ qin'â* as a “fit of envious possessiveness” (*Numbers 1–20*, 11). Similarly, Milgrom translates *rûaḥ qin'â* as a “fit of jealousy” (*Numbers*, 38). Although, see Michael Fishbane, “Accusations of Adultery: A Study of Law and Scribal Practice in Numbers 5: 11–31,” *HUCA* 45 (1974): 35, who astutely notes that jealousy to the translators of King James was primarily concerned with prerogatives or possessions.

<sup>45</sup> E.g., LH 128; 137–140; LU 9–10; 21; 24–26; LE 59; and MAL A39 in Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, WAW 6 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1995). In these texts, marriage is viewed as a contract with significant economic consequences. Victor H. Matthews notes that biblical legal codes concerning women and sexuality are “far more concerned with property than with gender and sexual contact” and that marriage “ratified an important political and economic covenant between the bride's household and the household of her husband” (“Honor and Shame in Gender-Related Legal Situations in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor H. Matthews et al., JSOTSup 262 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 97).

<sup>46</sup> This is established in the Num 5:11–31 ritual, where the woman, even in cases of suspected adultery, is held accountable, and in the absence of mundane evidence, divine mediation is required to resolve the conflict within the household. This ritual demonstrates that even the suspicion of infidelity was believed to have dangerous consequences for the household and community in ancient Israelite society (Matthews, *Honor and Shame*, 104). As Milgrom notes, adultery is both a legal and religious offense in the Hebrew Bible (*Numbers*, 349). While in other ancient Near Eastern juridical sources it is possible for the husband to be compensated monetarily, in the Hebrew Bible death is the preferred penalty (Lev 20:10; cf. Exod 20:14, Lev 18:20; Deut 5:18, 22:13–22).

<sup>47</sup> Raymond Westbrook, *Property and the Family in Biblical Law* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 11. According to Matthews, the members of a household in ancient Israelite society were expected to fulfill social roles and uphold the cohesion and honor of the household through their behavior (*Honor*

family since a child resulting from such a situation could potentially estrange the marital property by threatening any legitimate heirs and disrupting the social cohesion of the family. The *qin'â* expressed in both the divine-human relationship concerning the land of Israel and the husband-wife relationship concerning marital property thus share a similar motivation.

However, it is not only an issue of property that is at the heart of Yahweh's *qin'â*. The irreducible crux of divine *qin'â* involves the protection of Yahweh's honor or status as divine patron of Israel. In the Hebrew Bible, honor and its counterpart shame communicate relative social status and value.<sup>48</sup> Honor may be claimed, but in order for the claim to be legitimate the right to that honor must be publicly acknowledged by the social group of the individuals making the claim.<sup>49</sup> Honor is generally understood as a commodity of value that can be conferred to increase social status or revoked to diminish social status. When honor that is deemed to be legitimate and rightfully gained is threatened, there is often an attempt to vindicate the honor through immediate action.<sup>50</sup> In ancient Israel, honor as a commodity of value is ascribed in the public sphere to Yahweh and humans alike, and representations of honor in the Hebrew Bible are evident across different kinds of social relationships (familial, political, religious, etc.).<sup>51</sup> Public rituals, such as sacrifices, offerings, and/or presentation of gifts recognize the beneficiary as worthy of honor and value. Since honor is a claim to worth that is publicly recognized, then denial to confer honor is a public conferral of shame

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and Shame, 98). In other ancient near Eastern legal traditions, when the wife threatens the integrity of the household there are serious repercussions. See, for e.g., LH 13–16; 131–133ab; 141–143; MAL A24.

<sup>48</sup> Saul M. Olyan, "Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its Environment," *JBL* 115 (1992): 204. For studies on honor and shame in the divine-human relationship, see Lyn M. Bechtel, "Shame as a Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political, and Social Shaming," *JSOT* 49 (1991): 47–76; Raymond T. Hobbs, "Reflections on Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations," *JBL* 116 (1997): 501–20; David A. Glatt-Gilad, "Yahweh's Honor at Stake: A Divine Conundrum," *JSOT* 98 (2002): 63–74; Joshua Moon, "Honor and Shame in Hosea Marriages," *JSOT* 39 (2015): 335–51, Daniel Y. Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016).

<sup>49</sup> For honor as a social or group value that is acclaimed and ascribed to a group or individuals, see Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J.G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 19–78 and John K. Chance, "The Anthropology of Honor and Shame: Culture, Values, and Practice," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 139–51.

<sup>50</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *Honour and Social Status*, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Honor can be gained through military feats (Exod 14:4, 17–18; 2 Kgs 14:10) and lost and replaced with shame through military defeat and exile (Isa 33:9; Nah 3:10; Lam 1:8). Public conferrals of honor may include rituals such as sacrifice, presentation of gifts, and communal demonstrations of loyalty through prayer or treaty ceremonies. For more biblical examples as well as ancient Near Eastern cases of honor conferral, see Olyan, *Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations*, 203–4.

and communicates a loss of social value.<sup>52</sup> In the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, mutual honor is dependent upon acknowledgment of Yahweh as sovereign deity of Israel and recognition of the Israelites as the selected people of Yahweh.<sup>53</sup> The nature of their relationship brings with it certain benefits and rights, but this bond is strictly guided through certain regulations and expectations. On the one hand, the honor of Yahweh is dependent upon the visible allegiance of the Israelites, who demonstrate their loyalty by maintaining the cult of Yahweh through daily offerings and sacrifices. On the other hand, the Israelites' claim to honor is its special relationship with Yahweh, a claim which is dependent on Yahweh's continued support of Israel.<sup>54</sup> In the context of the divine-human relationship, it follows that Yahweh's *qin'ā* is provoked when his legitimate claim to honor is publicly denied through the worship of other gods and idols or threatened through foreign usurpation. Indeed, throughout the Hebrew Bible divine expressions of *qin'ā* are clearly demonstrated when there is suspicion that the terms of exclusivity in the divine-human relationship are violated or threatened.<sup>55</sup> When this expression appears in Ezekiel, it is also accompanied by a reaction or behavior that seeks to recover lost honor through divine judgment. In Ezek 16, for example, Yahweh's status as divine patron has been publicly disregarded and in response Yahweh seeks to punish the disloyal through public humiliation (16:44–58).<sup>56</sup>

This returns us to the arguments made by Hupka concerning the socially conditioned nature of jealousy expressions. In societies where the value of a relationship is based on emotional fulfillment, jealousy might be more concerned with the potential loss of affection or attention. The Euro-American view of jealousy is often understood in this way.<sup>57</sup> But societies that place more emphasis on the economic, social, and legal implications of relationships will have different values. In these societies, expressions of jealousy are driven by the desire to protect certain values that fulfill or maintain honor, but what exactly these values are and the way those values are protected will depend on established social norms. In light of this, it is not difficult to understand the practical concerns behind the

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<sup>52</sup> Olyan, *Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relation*, 204; cf. Isa 16:14; 23:9; Jer 46:12; Hos 4:7; Lam 1:6, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Olyan argues that honor, like love and covenant loyalty, is reciprocal in the divine-human contract between Yahweh and Israel even if the reciprocal nature of this relationship is not always made explicit (Olyan, *Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations*, 205).

<sup>54</sup> When Yahweh abandons Israel, he also shames them (cf. Ps 44:13–16). At the same time, when Yahweh punishes Israel's adversaries, he confers honor (cf. Pss 35:4; 69; 70:2; 71:13; 83:15–17).

<sup>55</sup> The 'ēl *qannā'* passages in the cultic-legal material are acutely concerned with this topic. See Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Josh 24:19.

<sup>56</sup> For a comprehensive study on the role of honor and shame in Ezekiel, see Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt*.

<sup>57</sup> Foster, *Anatomy of Envy*, 167–68; Leila Tov-Ruach, "Jealousy, Attention, and Loss," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 465–88.

obligation of exclusivity in the divine-human relationship commanded in the Decalogue and elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> One of the most prominent themes in the biblical text is that the maintenance of the divine-human relationship is dependent upon the status or well-being of Yahweh's personal estate. If anything is done to diminish the land or to threaten it, there will be a response. But this response is not simply an effect of anger—when anger is expressed by Yahweh it is a symptom of the *qin'â*. Anger might result from a range of different situations, but *qin'â* results from a particular set of social circumstances and can only be resolved by addressing its primary concern or the event that triggered its manifestation. More specifically, the response communicates the concern that this behavior risks estranging and dishonoring the divine patron and comes with the expectation that action is required in order to rectify this disruption. In Ezekiel, resolution is achieved by the removal of the people from the land through exile, which is similar, in fact, to the way the Philistines sought to resolve the threat that Isaac posed by driving him from their lands in Gen 26. In Ezek 5:13, Yahweh states that by taking action against the sinners and venting all anger through death, war, and exile he will be “compensated” or “consoled” (*wāhinnehāmtī*) through his vengeance and thereby will have spoken through his *qin'â*.

When Yahweh expresses *qin'â* against non-Israelite adversaries, it is provoked by the threat of enemy invasion and foreign attempts to appropriate the land and disrupt divine honor (Ezek 36:5–6; 38:19). In these passages, the issue is not about the betrayal of obligations within an exclusive relationship. Instead, the *qin'â* is directed against someone outside the sanctioned relationship. We should not assume that because of this there has been a transformation of meaning of the *qin'â* expression.<sup>59</sup> In Ezekiel, the same language is used to describe the *qin'â* directed towards the people of Israel and the *qin'â* directed towards foreign threats; Yahweh will have “spoken” (*ḏbr*) through his *qin'â* upon the fulfillment of the prophecies (5:13 and 36:5–6). The main difference is that the focus has shifted from the effect of iniquity on the divine estate to the effect of direct foreign usurpation on the land during restoration. In the previous passages, recompense is achieved through the Babylonian invasion. The Babylonians, however, are not the object of Yahweh's *qin'â*. These foreign powers are considered tools of divine judgment and are a means for Yahweh to resolve his *qin'â* against the people of the land. The fall of Judah and the ensuing destruction and exile have now cleansed the land, leading up to the establishment of a new relationship between Yahweh and his people. The narrative context of these later chapters of Ezekiel involves the rebequeathal of the land to Israel, and the focus is now on potential threats that could disrupt this new social reality. This suggests that the motivation

<sup>58</sup> Exod 20:5 // Deut 5:9; cf. Exod 34:14; Deut 4:24; 6:15; Josh. 24:19.

<sup>59</sup> See Renaud, *Je Suis un Dieu Jaloux*, 25, 87 and Reuter, *TWAT* 7:62 for proposals concerning the semantic development of this expression. Although see Kim, *Yhwh as Jealous Husband*, 137.

of Yahweh's expression of *qin'ā* remains consistent throughout the passages of Ezekiel: The protection of Yahweh's rights as divine patron of both land and community.

Consider, for example, the *qin'ā* expressed by Edom in Ezek 35:11, which also provides the context of Yahweh's expression of *qin'ā* against the nations in 36:5–6. In the passage, Mount Seir (Edom) expresses *qin'ā* against the nations of Israel and Judah, provoking Yahweh's own *qin'ā*. According to the text, Edom claimed right of possession over the lands of Israel and Judah after their fall. This prompts Yahweh to give an oracle against Mount Seir, declaring "I will handle you according to your anger ('*ap*) and your *qin'ā* by which you acted from your hatred against (the Israelites)." Similar to the Philistine's expression of *qin'ā*, the emotion concept expressed here is perhaps more complex than malicious envy. Instead, it implies that what drives Edom's desire to conquer and possess Israel and Judah is the belief that Edom has legitimate claim to the land. The "eternal enmity" ('*ēbat 'ōlām*) Edom is described to have for Israel recalls the rivalry reflected in the ancestral traditions concerning the birthrights of Esau and Jacob.<sup>60</sup> From the author's perspective, however, Edom's claims to the land are unsubstantiated. Attempts to possess the lands of Israel and Judah contradicts the traditional allotments of land portioned by Yahweh.<sup>61</sup> Based on this understanding, Edom lacks any claim to land outside of its proper portion. Most importantly, however, the passage elaborates that Yahweh has remained an occupant in the land (35:10) and therefore maintains his status as its rightful proprietor. When faced with the threat of unlawful, foreign appropriation by various nations—including Edom—Yahweh again communicates his *qin'ā*, which motivates him to shame and remove the foreign nations from his personal estate, reestablish the House of Israel, and restore prosperity to the land (36:5–12).<sup>62</sup>

Finally, we can observe a connection between Yahweh's expression of *qin'ā* and the safeguarding of his holy presence in the prophetic depiction of the eschatological battle between Israel and an archetypal enemy known as Gog of Magog (Ezek 38–39). Yahweh's judgment against Gog involves demonstrating his *qin'ā*, which results in both Magog's subjugation and the sanctification of his presence (38:23). The vision elaborates that by defeating these enemy forces, Yahweh will

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<sup>60</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the rivalry between Edom and Israel is understood to be embedded in ancestral tradition concerning the birthright conflict between Esau and Jacob, resulting in Esau's loss of his firstborn status and his right to his father's property (Gen 27:41–45; 32:4–22; 33:1–20). This old tradition becomes especially relevant during the Babylonian threat and exile, when Edom, due to its close proximity to Judah, had ample opportunity to take advantage of its rival territory. For a discussion on this topic, see Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 318–19. On Edom's desire for the property of Judah, see also Obad 11–14.

<sup>61</sup> See Deut 2:1–7; cf. Ezek 28:25; 37:25.

<sup>62</sup> For other instances where Yahweh's *qin'ā* is provoked by a foreign threat, see Isa 37:32 (2 Kgs 19:31); 42:13; 59:17; 63:15; Joel 1:2; Zech 8:2.

reveal his “holy name” among his people and his status as “Holy One in Israel” among the nations (39:7). Similarly, the final attestation of divine *qin'â* in the book of Ezekiel explicitly connects Yahweh’s *qin'â* with the preservation of his holy name (39:25).<sup>63</sup> Within the narrative context, this proclamation of *qin'â* follows Yahweh’s eschatological battle with Gog, which is understood by the author as a turning point in the nation’s history.<sup>64</sup> Gog’s defeat will establish Yahweh’s status and lend credence to the idea that the exile was divinely ordained in response to the nation’s failure to uphold their obligations to Yahweh (39:23–24). Nevertheless, in the following verse the prophet reassures his contemporary audience that the fortunes of the house of Jacob will be restored and the House of Israel will be shown mercy,<sup>65</sup> explaining that Yahweh’s restoration efforts are motivated by his *qin'â* for his holy name (*wəqinnē'tī ləšēm qodšī*).<sup>66</sup> That is, by restoring the people to the land he will have vindicated his reputation and forced the nations and his people to recognize him as the patron deity of Israel. The association between *qin'â* and divine intervention is also attested in Joel 2:18. When faced with the threat of a hostile horde of enemies in the form of locusts, the people sanctify the sanctuary and display various behaviors of remorse and shame in order to provoke an appropriate response from the deity and manifest his presence (2:12–17). Yahweh responds to their pleas with *qin'â* for his land and compassion (*hml*) for his people, restoring their ruined crops and driving the enemy out of his territory, thereby demonstrating his continual presence in the midst of Israel and his status as its one true god (2:27). Based on these considerations, we can conclude that divine expressions of *qin'â* in the book of Ezekiel are provoked by actions that risk estranging Yahweh from the land and his community through the potential usurpation of land by a foreign enemy or its defilement by the Israelites. The *qin'â* response seeks to eliminate or defend against such threats, demonstrating a concern for the exclusive rights of Yahweh as divine patron.

#### CONCLUSION: RECONSIDERING *QIN'Â* IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Returning to our discussion on the cross-cultural expressions of jealousy, we noted that there may be several cognitive, behavioral, and physiological reactions to a jealousy provoking event, but the existence and severity of these reactions, or

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<sup>63</sup> For a review of the scholarship on Ezek 38–39 and its redactional history, see Daniel Block, “Gog and the Pouring Out of the Spirit: Reflections on Ezekiel 39:21–9,” *VT* 37 (1987): 458–61 and “Gog in Prophetic Tradition: A New Look at Ezekiel 38:17,” *VT* 42 (1992): 154–72.

<sup>64</sup> See Block, “Gog in Prophetic Tradition,” 482.

<sup>65</sup> See the proclamation of “now” (*attâ*) in 39:25, indicating that the divine speech has returned to the present time of the author.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Josh 24:19.

the jealousy behavior, is culturally dependent.<sup>67</sup> According to Hupka, jealousy is an “umbrella concept” for a “class of subjective responses and processes of coping, interpreting, and constructing motives, modifiers of our reactions,” and it is therefore impossible to assume that there is “one global jealousy that can account for all possible reactions.”<sup>68</sup> Not only will the situation that prompts jealousy vary cross-culturally, the way people express it and evaluate the meaning of the event will also differ depending on cultural values. Based on the evidence presented in this paper, we should regard expressions of *qin'â* in a similar way. This understanding of *qin'â* does not preclude the potential physiological aspects of the emotional experience of *qin'â*. Instead, my approach aims to understand the neglected social and cultural motivations that comprise this emotion concept. Examining the term through this lens provides a better understanding of what is really at stake in the passages in which the emotion is attested and avoids underestimating the cultural significance of the *qin'â* phenomenon.

With this in mind, when comparing the divine expressions of *qin'â* in Ezekiel with the Philistine expression of *qin'â* in Gen 26, we begin to see a larger pattern emerge. Far from being disparate, these expressions of *qin'â* share a similar motivation. Both involve scenarios in which status and honor are threatened by the disruption of a social relationship that is perceived to be exclusive. Genesis 26 represents issues between local residents of Gerar and a resident alien who is thought to disrupt the balance in the community. The Philistines, as proper residents of the land, feel threatened by what they believe to be misappropriation of wealth during a period of drought. The Philistines' social position and the hierarchy of relations in their community (honor) are disrupted by an outsider and so the community responds with *qin'â*. Similarly, Yahweh expresses *qin'â* when his exclusive status as divine patron of Israel is threatened, whether through the presence of competitive cults in his territory or the potential appropriation of his status by foreign adversaries.

Based on this preliminary study, I propose that *qin'â* communicates a concern that status and honor acquired through an exclusive right or relationship are being threatened by the violation of social or religious obligations and expectations. It also conveys the expectation that the conflict must be immediately addressed and not remain unresolved since these violations have potential legal and social ramifications. The examples presented in this paper raise the possibility that this expression was part of ancient Israelite social structures that determined the principles upon which behavior was organized, paving the way for a more systematic study of divine and nondivine expressions of *qin'â* in the Hebrew Bible.

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<sup>67</sup> For jealousy as an event, see Ralph Hupka, “Cultural Determinants of Jealousy,” *Alternative Lifestyles* 4 (1981): 313–19 and Hupka, “Jealousy: Compound Emotion or Label for a Particular Situation?,” *Motivation and Emotion* 8 (1984): 141–55.

<sup>68</sup> Hupka, “Cultural Determinants of Jealousy,” 318.



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# On Goliath, Alyattes, Indo-European Wolves, and Lydian Lions: A Reexamination of 1 Sam 17:1–11, 32–40

Roger D. Woodard

The name *Goliath* is non-Semitic and arguments have long been made for identifying it as Anatolian Indo-European: William F. Albright,<sup>1</sup> for example (though neither earliest, nor most recently<sup>2</sup>), advanced the idea that the Lydian sovereign name *Alyattes* (Ἀλυάττης) is a form homologous to *Goliath* (LXX Γολιάθ). By this analysis, Lydian *Alyattes* developed from an earlier \*Walwatta. Albright attributes the form attested by Hebrew *Golyat* to a process of reciprocal dissimilation, a securely documented phenomenon of phonological change whereby each of two sound segments, in turns, conditions the other to undergo dissimilatory modification.<sup>3</sup> In the case of \*Walwatta, one can infer that Al-

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<sup>1</sup> William F. Albright, "Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia," in *The Middle East and the Aegean Region, c.1380–1000 BC*, ed. Iorwerth E. S. Edwards, Cyril J. Gadd, Nicholas G. L. Hammond, and Edmond Sollberger, CAH 2.2, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 507–36.

<sup>2</sup> See, *inter alia*, W. Caspari, *Die Samuelbücher* (Leipzig: Deichert-Scholl, 1926), 100; Johannes Hempel, "Westliche Kultureinflüsse auf das älteste Palästina," *Palästina Jahrbuch* 23 (1927): 65; Ferdinand Bork, "Philistäische Namen und Vokabeln," *AfO* 13 (1939–41): 227; Itamar Singer, "Egyptians, Canaanites, and Philistines in the Period of the Emergence of Israel," in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1994), 336–37; John Pairman Brown, *Israel and Hellas* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), 164.

<sup>3</sup> For general discussion of dissimilation, including mention of reciprocal dissimilation, see John D. Alderete and Stefan A. Frisch, "Dissimilation in Grammar and the Lexicon," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Phonology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 379–98 and bibliography there. Aren Maeir et al. misunderstand the phonological concept of reciprocal dissimilation and, at least to that extent, have perhaps not realized the potential significance of one of the names on which they are reporting, which they read as *'alwt* (found on a sherd at the Philistine site of Gath), for the etymology of *Golyat* vis-à-vis southwest Anatolian. See Aren M. Maeir, Stefan J. Wimmer, Alexander Zukerman, and Aaron Demsky, "A Late Iron Age I/Early Iron Age II Old Canaanite Inscription from Tell eṣ-Şāfi/Gath, Israel: Palaeography, Dating, and Historical-Cultural Significance," *BASOR* 351 (2008): 57–58. Mariona Vernet Pons has pointed to some of the same

bright envisions that the second of the two labiovelar glides (i.e. the second in the sequence [#w ... w ... #]) dissimilates in *place* of articulation to become a palatal glide (i.e. \*[#w ... w ... #] → \*[#w ... y ... #]). The new palatal glide then conditions the remaining labiovelar glide to dissimilate in *manner* of articulation—becoming a stop (i.e., \*[#w ... y ... #] → [#g ... y ... #]): as Hebrew has no labiovelar stop phoneme /g<sup>w</sup>/, the default outcome of the dissimilation is a velar stop phoneme /g/.<sup>4</sup> This word-initial dissimilation was doubtless augmented by a heavy morphophonemic restriction on word-initial /w-/ in Hebrew (secondary to the change of Proto-Semitic /w-/ to Northwest Semitic /y-/ at the beginning of a word<sup>5</sup>). Hebrew word-initial /w-/ does occur, and commonly enough, owing to the clitic conjunction w-, but it is otherwise rare: thus, aside from *wāw*, “hook, peg,” also used to name the sixth letter of the Hebrew script, and *wāzār*, “criminal, guilty,” perusal of BDB<sup>6</sup> reveals that words beginning with /w-/ are limited to proper names, and only seven of these occur. Dissimilation is notoriously unpredictable and widely recognized to depart from the Neogrammarian notion of the regularity of sound change: one would need find no other examples of this specific dissimilation in Hebrew in order to confirm the derivation of Golyat from \*Walwatta. Albright’s reciprocal-dissimilation analysis is an elegant and reasonable solution.

#### PHILISTINE \*WARKA-DARA AND LYCIAN AMISODARUS

The affiliation of Philistine language with Anatolian Indo-European has been otherwise proposed. Albright had earlier argued<sup>7</sup> that what he viewed as three Sea-Peoples’ or Philistine names—*Wr/lktr/l*, *Wr/lt*, and *Mkmr/l*—appearing in the Report of Wen-Amon (an 11th century BCE Egyptian account of a temple official from Karnak who traveled to Byblos to obtain cedar for a barge to be

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articulatory features invoked in the discussion of reciprocal dissimilation just above, but her analysis is rather different. Mariona Vernet Pons, “The Etymology of Goliath in the Light of Carian PN *Wljat/Wliat*: A New Proposal,” *Kadmos* 51 (2012): 154.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Albright (“The Etymology of Sp. *Adobe*, ‘Sundried Brick,’” *The Johns Hopkins University Circular* 37 [1917–1918]: 569) in which he analyzes Ethiopic *genfal* ‘brick’ as arising from \*gembal (Semitic \*gbl ‘mold; cf. Arabic *gabala* “mold brick”) by reciprocal dissimilation. In other words (most probably), \*[# ... mb ... #] gives \*[# ... nb ... #] (dissimilation in place of articulation) gives [# ... nf ... #] (dissimilation in manner of articulation [i.e. with \*[b] losing the feature of oral cavity occlusion that it shares with [n]).

<sup>5</sup> See John Huehnergard, “Afro-Asiatic,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World’s Ancient Languages*, ed. Roger D. Woodard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 144.

<sup>6</sup> BDB, 251–55.

<sup>7</sup> See William F. Albright, “Some Oriental Glosses on the Homeric Problem,” *AJA* 54 (1950): 174; and idem, “The Eastern Mediterranean about 1060 B.C.,” in *Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. George Emmanuel Mylonas, 2 vols. (Saint Louis: Washington University, 1951), 1:228–29.

built for the god Amon-Re)<sup>8</sup> may well be linked to a southwestern Anatolian language. Albright also proposed that the first two of these “may reflect \*Warka-dara and \*Warda” and compares with the former names such as Ἀμισωδάρος, that name which Homer (*Il.* 16.317–29) gives to the Lycian king whose sons Atymnius and Maris (also Anatolian names<sup>9</sup>) were slain by Antilochus and Thrasymedes respectively (two of the sons of Nestor).<sup>10</sup>

The poet of the *Iliad* identifies this Lycian king Amisodaros as he who raised the monstrous trisome called the Chimaera—a creature who was at the anterior a lion, at the posterior a snake, and a goat in between. For the historian Xenomedes of Ceus (fr. 2; ca. fifth century BCE) Amisodaros was a Carian ruler who gave his daughter in marriage to the Greek hero Bellerophon, that warrior who is credited with having slain the Chimaera (as earliest elaborated in Homer *Il.* 6.179–183). Xenomedes’s island home of Ceus (i.e., Keos) was said to have been settled by Carians, and also by the Leleges, whom we will encounter again, and perhaps Xenomedes’s identification of Amisodaros is drawn from local lore.<sup>11</sup>

Amisodaros’s affiliation with the Chimaera is of course attested elsewhere in Greek mythographic tradition. Palaephatus (ca. fourth century BCE paradoxographer) records in his rationalizing treatment of Bellerophon (*De incredibilibus* 28): δέ φασι καὶ τὴν Ἀμισωδάρου Χίμαιραν ἀνελεῖν “and they also say that he slew the Chimaera of Amisodaros,” whom he identifies as a king that dwelt on high a mountain near the river Xanthus. In the *Bibliotheca* (2.31) attributed to Apollodorus, one reads that Amisodaros raised the Chimaera. Aelian, in his *De natura animalium* (9.23), describes the Chimaera as belonging to Amisodaros, “a king of Lycia,” possessed ἐπὶ λύμῃ πολλῶν “for the undoing of many.” The *Etymologicum Genuinum* (A 654) similarly identifies Amisodaros as he who nurtured the Chimaera—likewise Eustathius, in his commentary on the *Iliad* (2.284) and the Homeric scholia.<sup>12</sup>

Particularly interesting are comments offered by Plutarch in his *Mulierum virtutes* (247f–48a) who, in another rationalizing treatment of the monster, writes that Amisodaros (whom, he says, the Lycians also call *Isaras* [Ἰσάρας]) sailed to Lycia from a Lycian colony located near Zeleia—presumably the Zeleia situated in the vicinity of Troy, near the river Aesepus (see, for example,

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<sup>8</sup> See John A. Wilson, “Egyptian Myths, Tales, and Mortuary Texts,” in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James B. Pritchard, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 25–29.

<sup>9</sup> Anton Scherer, “Nichtgriechische Personennamen der *Ilias*,” in *Studien zum antiken Epos*, ed. Herwig Görgemanns and Ernst A. Schmitt (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1976), 41–43.

<sup>10</sup> Albright, “Eastern Mediterranean,” 229.

<sup>11</sup> On onomastic and cult evidence possibly suggestive of a Carian presence, see George Huxley, “Xenomedes of Keos,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 6 (1965): 239.

<sup>12</sup> *Scholia in Iliadem (scholia vetera)* 6.170c; 16.328–29.

Homer, *Il.* 2.824–26).<sup>13</sup> Plutarch here preserves an account that makes the fabulous Chimaera (Χίμαιρα) to be merely a man—one Chimarrus (Χίμαρρος), leader of a band of pirates who sailed with Amisodarus, characterizing this Chimarrus as *πολεμιστῆς μὲν ἀνὴρ ὤμῶς δὲ καὶ θηριώδης* “a man who was a warrior but also savage and beast-like” and describing the boat in which he sailed as having the image of a lion on its prow and that of a serpent on its stern. Plutarch is here clearly airing a folk-etymological tradition in which the operative components are Χίμαιρα (Chimaera) and a (Hellenized) Lycian name Χίμαρρος (with this latter should we compare Albright’s Philistine *Mkmr*?)—one in which the Greek common noun χίμαιρα, denoting a female goat, is an unspoken element.<sup>14</sup> In parallel with traditional mythic accounts in which Bellerophon is slayer of the trisomatic Chimaera, for Plutarch it is Bellerophon who slays the beast-like brigand Chimarrus.

#### PANDARUS, SON OF THE WOLF, AND A SEA PEOPLE

With Amisodarus, one having a name reminiscent of a proposed Philistine \**Warka-dara*, our attention is directed to a central feature with which this study is concerned: the wolf—that is, the wolfish warrior of Indo-European tradition. We should note that the place from which Amisodarus and Chimarrus sailed, Zeleia, is identified—as by Homer, *Il.* 2.824–27—as the home of the famed archer Pandarus, son of Lycaon (Λυκάων)—who is by name essentially the “Wolf-Man” (from Greek λύκος ‘wolf’). Pandarus’s great warrior deed in the *Iliad* (4.100–03, 118–26) is the shooting of Menelaus, which he accomplished having made a vow Ἀπόλλωνι Λυκηγενεῖ “to wolf-born Apollo” (from whom Pandarus received his bow). While Pandarus is leader of the Trojan-ally contingent from Zeleia, at *Il.* 5.104–05 and 171–173 he is curiously said to have come from Lycia. Trevor Bryce has proposed that this bifurcation of the locale of Pandarus’s homeland—Zeleia, on the one hand, and Lycia, on the other—arose through a transference of local tradition from north to south within western Anatolia; this transference of oral tradition accompanied the southward movement of a population towards the end of the Bronze Age.<sup>15</sup> For supporting evidence of

<sup>13</sup> See the comments of Trevor Bryce, *The Trojans and Their Neighbors* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 137, 149.

<sup>14</sup> The traditional etymology of χίμαιρα associates the term with χειμῶν “winter,” as a χίμαιρα is said to be a she-goat that was born in the preceding winter (see *Etymologicum Magnum* 811). On uncertainties regarding the derivation see Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1968), 1260–61.

<sup>15</sup> Bryce, *The Trojans*, 137, 149–50. See also Trevor R. Bryce and Jan Zahle, *The Lycians in Literary and Epigraphic Sources* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1986), 14, 17, 31, 35–37. For a rather different view of the significance of a reported Lycian homeland for Pandarus, see G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 65–

such a movement Bryce offers the tradition of the Leleges whom Strabo (7.7.2; 13.1.59) describes as having been driven from the Troad into southwestern coastal Anatolia after the Trojan War. But, Bryce notes, this is also the very sort of movement preserved in the tradition of Amisodaros and his pirate leader Chimarrus, whom, as we have just seen, are said to have sailed south from the Troad to Lycia, where, records Plutarch (*Mulierum virtutes* 248A), Chimarrus perpetrated “many deplorable acts” (πολλὰ κακά) against the Lycians. For Bryce the tradition of marauding pirates moving southward along the western Anatolian coast may preserve an expression of “Lycia’s own version of the Sea Peoples.” Whatever historical attributes one may be inclined to assign to the Sea Peoples, Goliath’s Philistines have found themselves right at home in the conversation, and in “Lycia’s own version” their southward advance is, seductively, from a point of origin that Homer knows as a wolfish place.

#### BELLEROPHON, THE LYCIAN KING, AND THE BEAST-LIKE WARRIOR

Bellerophon is a central figure in the epic tradition of the Chimaera (/Chimarrus) associated with Lycian Amisodaros. Let us pause for a moment and review, succinctly, the Homeric mythic narrative. When Bellerophon was present in the household of the Argive king Proetus, Anteia, the wife of Proetus, began to lust madly for the young warrior; but he refused her advances. Having been rejected by Bellerophon, Anteia falsely reported to Proetus that Bellerophon had attempted to seduce her.<sup>16</sup> Proetus secretly determined to kill Bellerophon and sent him away to Lycia, to the court of his father-in-law, a Lycian king. In Homer’s only mention of writing, the poet sings that Proetus gave to Bellerophon a folding tablet to present to the Lycian king in which Proetus had written instructions that the king was to slay Bellerophon. Rather than do so outright, the Lycian king—typically identified as Iobates (though not named in the *Iliad*)—set by turns three tasks for Bellerophon in an effort to destroy the warrior: to slay the Chimaera, to fight the warriors called Solymi, and to do battle with the Amazons. When Bellerophon was victorious in each instance, Iobates then chose the

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66. This would of course mean that both narratives made their way into the Greek oral poetic tradition that finds expression in our *Iliad*. Within an Aeolian and Ionian geographic context of such a tradition, this particular duality would be completely plausible.

<sup>16</sup> On the similarity of the Greek tradition to the Biblical account of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife and to other Near Eastern accounts, see Roger D. Woodard, “Bellérophon et l’agressivité féminine: diachronie et synchronie dans les mythes et la pratique rituelle,” in *Du récit au rituel par le forme esthétique: Pragmatique culturelle des formes discursives et des images en Grèce ancienne*, ed. Claude Calame and Pierre Ellinger (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2017), 305–36. This is treated more fully in a work in progress.



“best men out of wide Lycia” to slay Bellerophon in an ambush.<sup>17</sup> When Bellerophon destroyed these all, Homer’s Lycian king decided that Bellerophon must be the son of a god, marrying the warrior to his daughter and lavishing wealth upon him.

In the tradition preserved by Plutarch in his *Mulierum virtutes*, however, Iobates (initially?) fails to compensate Bellerophon adequately for slaying the marauding and raging pirate Chimarrus (and for driving away the Amazons). Bellerophon thus waded into the sea and prayed to Poseidon to make Lycia barren, and this earnest prayerful act resulted in the land being flooded by a monstrous wave. The terrified Lycian men implored Bellerophon to stop the inundation, but he ignored their pleas. The Lycian women then took action: they exposed their genitalia to Bellerophon, who withdrew before them and the wave receded. What we find in the tradition preserved by Plutarch is a particular Greek expression of a far older Indo-European myth of the warrior who poses a danger to society and who must be ritually robbed of his warrior rage for society’s wellbeing.<sup>18</sup> As we go forward let us bear in mind this primitive Indo-European conception of the warrior who rages like a beast.

#### AMISODARUS IN ITS ANATOLIAN CONTEXT

In Richard Janko’s discussion of *Il.* 16.317–29, that passage in which the name Ἀμισώδαρος occurs (and those of his sons), he draws attention to various Anatolian names of similar form:

Ισεμενδαρος (Caria), Πιξεδαρος (Lycia), Πιξωδαρος (both areas), Ουαδαρος (Pisidia), names in *-da-ro* in the Knossos [Mycenaean Greek] tablets, and perhaps Pandaros and the town Amisos on the Euxine.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In the work in progress mentioned in the preceding note I propose that the poet of the *Iliad* has wedded to the three trials an available ambush trope. As others have noted also, the account of the ambush is reminiscent of the ambush of Tydeus by 50 Cadmeans in *Iliad* 4. Comparison may also be made to the converse scenario of Judg 15:9–17 in which Sampson is willingly delivered as a captive to the Philistines, only to break free and “ambush” 1,000 of his assailants with the jawbone of an ass.

<sup>18</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Bellerophon episode vis-à-vis the broadly-attested Indo-European tradition, see Woodard, “Bellérophon et l’agressivité féminine.” The ancestral myth (and, undoubtedly, an accompanying ritual at some sufficiently early moment) consists of several distinct components, such as immersion of the warrior in water and exposure of nude women to his gaze. On the Indo-European tradition see Roger D. Woodard, *Myth, Ritual, and the Warrior in Roman and Indo-European Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). On the survival of the tradition among the Hittites, see Woodard, “The Disappearance of Telipinu in the Context of Indo-European Myth,” in *Hronzý and Hittite: The First Hundred Years*, ed. Ronald I. Kim, Jana Mynářová, and Peter Pavúk (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 583–602.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4, 358.

In his 1951 study Albright also notes certain of these, as well as Ὀρκαομανειτης (vis-à-vis the initial portion of *Wr/lktr/l*), an epithet of Zeus (Phrygia<sup>20</sup>), and Ὀρδος (Caria and Pisidia, in regard to *Wr/lt*).<sup>21</sup> Albright “tentatively” interprets the consonantal Egyptian spellings of these names of “Philistine chieftains or merchant princes” as *Warkat|dara*, *Ward|ta*, (as in 1951) and *Mag|kamola*,<sup>22</sup> adding “all with excellent equivalents in the daughter dialects of Luvian,” which he would identify as “Lycian, Carian, Pisidian, Pamphylian and Cilician, etc.”<sup>23</sup>

\**WALWATTA* AND *WALWET*; LUVIAN \**WALWA-* AND LYDIAN *WALWE-* ‘LION’

All of these southwest Anatolian onomastic considerations bring us back to \**Walwatta*, the proposed reconstruction of the form ancestral to both Hebrew *Golyat* and Lydian *Alyattes* with which this investigation began. Luvian proper names formed from \**walwa-* ‘lion’ are relevant here, such as *Walwi-zitti-* (= *Walwa-LÚ-iš*), *Piha-walwi-* (= *Piha-UR.MAḪ* and Hieroglyphic Luvian *Piha-LEO*), *Mula-walwi-*, *Takiti-walwa-*.<sup>24</sup> The same can be said of Lydian *walwe-* ‘lion’ which appears in the name *Walwet* on lion-head electrum coins of Lydian origin and which Wallace has cogently argued to be a Lydian spelling of Al-

<sup>20</sup> On the cult locale see E. Varinlioglu, “Zeus Orkamaneites and the Expiatory Inscriptions,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 1 (1983): 75–76.

<sup>21</sup> Albright, “Eastern Mediterranean,” 229. Relative to *Mkmr/l*, Albright adds “Cilician *mu(n)k* in *Mukallu*, Μογδατης, Μονγλαρις, Μογγος” and “*mura* in Παδαμουρις [and] Αζαμορα,” citing Johannes Sundwall, *Die einheimischen Namen der Lykier nebst einem Verzeichnisse kleinasiatischer Namenstämme* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1913), 152, 155–57.

<sup>22</sup> Albright, “Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia,” 513. See also Albrecht Goetze, “Cilicians,” *JCS* 16 (1962): 50 n. 25. Goetze writes concerning the three names, “*Wr/lktr/l*, *Wrt/Wlt*, *Mkmr/Mkml*—comparative Anatolian material might be quoted.”

<sup>23</sup> On the linguistic relationship of Lycian, Carian, and Pisidian (as well as Sidetic) to Luvian, see H. Craig Melchert, “Prehistory,” in *The Luwians*, ed. H. Craig Melchert (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 10, 14–15; and H. Craig Melchert, “Lycian,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World’s Ancient Languages*, ed. Roger D. Woodard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 591.

<sup>24</sup> See Alexander Lehrman, “Essays in Anatolian Onomastics,” *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 26 (1978): 228–30; and Lehrman, “Anatolian Cognates of the Proto-Indo-European Word for ‘Wolf,’” *Die Sprache* 33 (1987): 13–18. Lehrman cites Laroche (Emmanuel Laroche, *Les noms des Hittites* [Paris: Klincksieck, 1966]) for the names. See also H. Craig Melchert, *Anatolian Historical Phonology* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 127, 360.

yattes.<sup>25</sup> Hence, *Walwet* “Lion” would be of common origin with the name of Goliath—and Goliath, too, a “lion-man.”<sup>26</sup>

Luvian *\*walwa-* and Lydian *walwe-*, though used to denote “lion,” are descended from Proto-Indo-European *\*wĺkʷo-*, the word for “wolf,” having reflexes widespread across the Indo-European speech area, such as Greek *λύκος*, Sanskrit *vrka-*, Avestan *vəhrka-*, Old Church Slavic *vlikŭ*, Albanian *ul’k*, Gothic *wulfs*, Old Norse *ulfr*, Old High German *wolf*, Old English *wulf*, and so on. Already in a primitive Indo-European period the term was subject to taboo deformation, with the result that a variant common root *\*wĺp-* must also be reconstructed; this is the source of Hittite *ulip(pa)na-*, “wolf” and, *inter alia*, perhaps Latin *lupus*, “wolf,” though it is also possible that Latin *lupus* may have been borrowed from a Sabellian Italic language, in which the Proto-Indo-European labiovelar *\*kʷ* would have developed the bilabial reflex *p* by regular sound change. That the reflex of *\*wĺp-*, or some modification of it as well, in the various relevant descendant languages often denotes “fox” (Greek *άλώπηξ*; Armenian *aluēs*; Avestan *raōpis*; Sanskrit *lōpāśa-* [‘jackal or fox’]; Old Breton and Old Cornish *louuern*; Latin *volpēs*; Lithuanian *lāpė*) may of course suggest that the meaning of *\*wĺp-* had shifted to “fox” in a common Indo-European period, but after the separation of the Anatolian subfamily. The referential shift of reflexes of *\*wĺkʷo-* from “wolf” to “lion” seen in Luvian and Lydian could conceivably itself be bound up with matters of taboo but is perhaps more likely to be simply a semantic appropriation driven by the absence of a word for “lion” in primitive Indo-European. The choice of the term for “wolf” in this regard, rather than some other predatory animal name, may seem odd, but it likely

<sup>25</sup> For philological and numismatic discussion with bibliography, see Robert W. Wallace, “Walwe. and .Kali,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988): 203–7; and Wallace, “KUKALIM, WALWET, and the Artemision Deposit: Problems in Early Anatolian Electrum Coinage,” in *Agonomnia: Studies in Money and Exchange Presented to John H. Kroll*, ed. Peter van Alfen (New York: American Numismatic Society, 2006), 37–48. For the identification with Alyattes II, see Wallace, “KUKALIM.”

<sup>26</sup> A Carian graffito from Egypt (E.Th 7) preserves the name *Wliat* (which may also appear in E.Mu 1, but if so has a deviant spelling); another (E.xx 2) preserves *Wliat*; compare the Carian name transcribed in Greek as *Ολιατος* or *Υλιατος*, which Ignacio Adiego contends to be the same name, also identifying the form *šarwliat* (E.Me 3) as a compound of *wliat*. Ignacio J. Adiego, *The Carian Language* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 36, 417, 428. The name *wliat* he sees as from an earlier *\*wliat-*. Adiego, *Carian Language*, 242. He connects these forms with Hittite *walliwalli-*, “mighty,” adding in a comparison with Carian *Οαλοαλος*. Adiego, *Carian Language*, 338–39, 428; Adiego, “Sobre OAAOAAON SGDI 5727.d30,” *Kadmos* 32 (1993): 173–74. He remarks, however, that *wliat* should perhaps instead be linked to Hittite *walli-*, “glory” and Luvian *walli(ya)-*, “to raise,” Hieroglyphic Luvian *wa/iliya-*, “to exalt” (see H. Craig Melchert, ed., *The Luwians* [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 252). Vernet Pons would see in Carian *Wliat* a form having common origin with *Golyat* (Vernet Pons, “The Etymology of Goliath”); if this were so, then Carian *Wliat* would then surely have to be understood (contra Vernet Pons’ analysis) as linked to Lydian *\*Walwatta-*, from *\*walwa-*, “lion.”

reflects the particular ferocity associated with the wolf in primitive Indo-European thought.

#### GOLIATH THE LION-MAN

It is in 1 Sam 17 that we encounter David's duel with Goliath. As the armies of the Philistines and of Saul face one another across a valley, Goliath of Gath (or, at 2 Sam 21:19 and 1 Chr 20:5, Goliath the Gittite) steps forward into the intervening space and issues a battle-challenge to the Israelites. Goliath is here (17:4) identified as an *'iš habbēnayim*, literally the "man in-between," the only occurrence of the term in the Hebrew Bible<sup>27</sup> (though duplicated at 17:23 in the long addition to the text).<sup>28</sup> Though *'iš habbēnayim* later acquires the more general sense of "foot soldier," to judge by its use in the Qumran War Scroll,<sup>29</sup> in the present Iron-Age context the term appears to identify the warrior who ranges ahead of the horde in order to engage in personal combat, as de Vaux argues.<sup>30</sup> There is good cross-cultural support for this interpretation provided by lexical encoding of a comparable warrior practice in an Indo-European setting among the Hittites and Greeks.<sup>31</sup>

#### DAVID THE LION-SLAYER

It will be a youthful David armed with a shepherd's stick and sling who will confront the heavily-armored, over-large Philistine warrior. David justifies his entry into the homicidal duel, over the objections of Saul, by rehearsing his victories over wild beasts—particular wild beasts: whenever *h'ry whdwb*, "the lion or the bear" would take a sheep from his flock, David would "strike down" (*nkh*) the beast and snatch the sheep from its mouth (17:34–35); if the beast at-

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<sup>27</sup> See the comments of P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *1 Samuel*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 290–91. See also Harry Angier Hoffner, "A Hittite Analogue to the David and Goliath Contest of Champions?," *CBQ* 30 (1968): 224.

<sup>28</sup> On the addition, see McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 299–309 and bibliography there.

<sup>29</sup> On which document see the recent collection of studies in Kipp Davis, Kyung S. Baek, Peter W. Flint, and Dorothy M. Peters, eds., *The War Scroll, Violence, War, and Peace in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays in Honour of Martin Abegg on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Roland de Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, trans. Damian McHugh (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), 124–25. Albright draws attention to the formally comparable Ugaritic *bnš bnny*, denoting something like a "middle man," "intermediary," crediting Charles Virolleaud with the observation. W. F. Albright, "Specimens of Late Ugaritic Prose," *BASOR* 150 (1958): 38 n. 12; Charles Virolleaud, "Textes en cunéiformes alphabétiques des archives est, ouest, et centrales," in *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, vol. 2, ed. Claude F.-A. Schaeffer (Paris: Klincksieck, 1957), 1–241. Hoffner also noted the Ugaritic comparand. Hoffner, "Hittite Analogue," 224.

<sup>31</sup> See Hoffner, "Hittite Analogue."

tacked David he would kill it—"the lion and the bear alike" (17:36). David likens his victory over these beasts to his fight with the Philistine: "Yahweh, who protected me from the lion and the bear, will protect me from the Philistine!" (17:37; P. Kyle McCarter Jr.'s translation<sup>32</sup>). When Goliath, the *'iš habbēnayim*, sees that David will be the warrior who confronts him, he taunts David: "Am I a dog?" (rather than a lion or a bear, the audience of the narrative must surely understand), he demands. Goliath then curses David "by his god" (17:43). David replies that *Yahweh* will deliver Goliath to him, and he will "strike down" (*nkh*) the Philistine warrior (17:45–46).<sup>33</sup>

The composer or redactor of the narrative is unmistakably aligning on the one side David's past confrontations with "the lion and/or the bear" and on the other his impending confrontation with the Philistine warrior. The conjoining of lion and bear occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, but not often, to judge on the basis of the survey reported by A. Labahn.<sup>34</sup> The prophet Amos (5:19a) combines the two in a couplet to describe inescapable fate: "As if a man fled from a lion, / and a bear met him" (RSV). In lines reminiscent of Hesiod's admonitions concerning unjust rulers (*Works and Days* 220–73), Prov 29:15 declares that "like a roaring lion or a charging bear | is a wicked ruler over a poor people" (RSV). The conjoining of lion and bear is similarly used in similes describing the anger of Yahweh in Lam 3:10 and Hos 13:8.<sup>35</sup> While we must clearly be dealing with a stock simile of Hebrew poetic and prophetic speech, its relative rarity suggests its application (repeated application) to the comparison of beasts and Goliath in 1 Sam 17 is of conspicuous significance and intentionality. That conspicuous application is consistent with the meaning of Lydian *Walwet* (Alyattes), derived from *walwe-*, "lion," and with the hypothesis that *Walwet* and Hebrew *Golyat*, naming the warrior, are terms of common origin. Clearly indicated, I would suggest, is that the oral tradition behind the 1 Samuel narrative was one whose composer was aware of the meaning of the Philistine warrior's name; in other words, for this reason the composer utilized the motif of lion and bear in giving expression to David's declaration of his intention to do combat with the giant.

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<sup>32</sup> McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 285.

<sup>33</sup> On the recurrence of the verb *nkh* in these lines, see Benjamin J. M. Johnson, (*Reading David and Goliath in Greek and Hebrew: A Literary Approach* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 213–14) who provides a discussion set within the context of examining Saul's attempt to kill David in 1 Sam 18.

<sup>34</sup> A. Labahn, "Wild Animals and Chasing Shadows. Animal Metaphors in Lamentations as Indicators for Individual Threat," in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Pierre van Hecke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 89. Labahn cites Otto Kaiser, "Klagelieder," in *Das Hohelied, Klagelieder, Das Buch Esther*, ed. Otto Kaiser, Hans-Peter Müller, and James Alfred Loader, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 162.

<sup>35</sup> Compare the contrastive usage of 2 Sam 17:8 and 10.

## THE INDO-EUROPEAN WARRIOR AS WOLF AND BEAR

Underlying this proposal is, of course, the hypothesis that we encountered at the very outset of this investigation—that the language of the Philistines is an Indo-European language similar to those attested in southwest Anatolia. Fundamental to Indo-European tradition is the notion of Indo-European warrior as raging beast, one who, when possessed by warrior madness, may prove to be a danger to his own society—hence the need for a mechanism by which the warrior can be robbed of his madness, as encountered above in our discussion of Bellerophon. The warrior, so enraged, is, across Indo-European cultures, commonly likened to a wolf, or to a bear—and is even presented as undergoing lycanthropy (i.e., morphing into a wolf), or at times taking on the form of a bear, especially in Germanic tradition (*berserker-gang*). Consistent with the warrior's beastlike nature is the practice of Indo-European warriors assembling themselves into warrior packs (*Männerbünde*).<sup>36</sup>

But it is also possible in Indo-European tradition for society to declare, through ritual and legal enunciation, a vicious and dangerous man “to be a wolf.”<sup>37</sup> As an example consider the Hittite practice recorded in the Hittite Law Code §37 (KBo 6.2):<sup>38</sup>

ták-ku MUNUS-na-an ku-iš-ki pít-ti-nu-uz-zi n[u-kán šar-d]i-i-eš a-ap-pa-an-  
an-da pa-a-a[n]-z[i]  
ták-ku 3 LÚ.MEŠ na-aš-ma 2 LÚ.MEŠ ak-[kán-zi] šar-ni-ik-zi-il NU.GÁL  
zi-ik-wa UR.BAR.RA-aš ki-iš-ta-at

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<sup>36</sup> On the wolfish nature of Indo-European warriors, see *inter alia*, Georges Dumézil, *The Destiny of the Warrior*, trans. Alf Hiltebeitel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 139–47; Kim McCone, “Aided Cheltchair Maic Uthechair: Hounds, Heroes and Hospitallers in Early Irish Myth and Story,” *Ériu* 35 (1984): 1–30; McCone, “Varia II,” *Ériu* 36 (1985): 171–76; McCone, “Hund, Wolf und Krieger bei den Indogermanen,” in *Studien zum Indogermanischen Wortschatz*, ed. Wolfgang Meid (Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1987), 101–54; McCone, “Wolfsbesessenheit, Nacktheit, Einäugigkeit und verwandte Aspekte des atlantischen Männerbundes,” in *Geregeltes Ungestüm. Bruderschaften und Jugendbünde bei indogermanischen Völkern*, ed. Rahul Peter Das and Gerhard Meiser (Bremen: Hempen, 2002), 43–67; Michael Speidel, “Berserks: A History of Indo-European Mad Warriors,” *Journal of World History* 13 (2002): 253–90; Bernard Sergent, “Les troupes de jeunes hommes et l’expansion indo-européenne,” *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* 29 (2003): 9–27, see especially the bibliography of 21 n. 49, with accompanying remarks in the text; and Roger D. Woodard, “The Erotic Feminine and the Wolf: Dialectic in Primitive Indo-European Myth and Cult and Its Reflex in the Anglo-Saxon *Maxims I* and the Icelandic *Eyrbyggja Saga*,” forthcoming.

<sup>37</sup> For discussion with bibliography of earlier work, see Woodard, “Erotic Feminine and the Wolf.”

<sup>38</sup> Harry Angier Hoffner, *The Laws of the Hittites: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 44.

If someone abducts a woman a[nd ... help]ers go after them, if three men or two men are killed, there shall be no compensation; “You have become a wolf.”

Those who have stolen a woman are placed outside of the protection of the law by ritual and legal enunciation—enunciation marked by the particle *-wa* as recorded speech: *zi-ik-wa UR.BAR.RA-aš ki-iš-ta-at*. The behavior of such a one is not different than that of the raging warrior who threatens his own society.

Note that in the recording of the Hittite enunciation, ‘wolf’ is written with the Sumerogram UR.BAR.RA.<sup>39</sup> We have seen that Hittite attests a reflex of Proto-Indo-European \*w<sub>l</sub>p- having the meaning “wolf.” Proto-Indo-European \*w<sub>l</sub>k<sup>w</sup>o-, source of Luvian \**walwa-* and Lydian *walwe-*, “lion,” is attested in Hittite phonetic spelling only in the form *walkuwa-* with the apparent meaning “monstrosity,” or the comparable adjectival sense (an apt descriptor of Goliath), and which occurs also in a few proper names: *Walkuwa-*, *Walkui-*, and the Luvian-Hittite hybridized name *Ura-walkui-*,<sup>40</sup> with which can be compared the Hieroglyphic Luvian name MAGNUS-LEO-, suggestive of the sense ‘lion’ in the Luvian-Hittite hybridized name.<sup>41</sup>

While the composer of the Goliath narrative of 1 Sam 17:1–11, 32–40 may have understood that the sense ‘lion’ is attached to the name of Goliath, what—presumably—the composer would not have known is that the name diachronically encodes nuances of the raging Indo-European warrior—the warrior who is beast-like—who is a wolf. The combat behavior that the composer attributes to the Philistine Goliath, a giant—a warrior of Indo-European tradition, we have hypothesized—is consistent with the behavior of the raging warriors of other Indo-European traditions. They are wolves; Goliath is a lion—thanks to a semantic shift of southwest Anatolian. He is a single raging warrior who puts fear into the entire army of Saul (v. 11; reminding us of Horatius Cocles in Roman tradition). He has been a warrior since his youth (v. 33; reminding us of Cú-Chulainn in Irish tradition). This is not to say that such raging ferocity is unique

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<sup>39</sup> As in other Indo-European cultures, so in Anatolian the wolf has cult significance; for the broader Indo-European picture, see Woodard, “The Erotic Feminine and the Wolf,” with bibliography of earlier work. There are, for example, Hittite cult functionaries called the <sup>LU.MEŠ</sup>UR.BAR.RA ‘wolf men’; see Liane Jakob-Rost, “Zu einigen hehritischen Kultfunktionären,” *Orientalia* 35 (1966): 418–20. On the <sup>LU.MEŠ</sup>UR.BAR.RA ‘wolf men,’ see recently Ian Rutherford, “The Dance of the Wolf-Men of Ankuwa. Networks, Amphictionies and Pilgrimage,” in *Acts of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Hittitology*, ed. Aygüel Sül (Ankara: Nokta Ofset, 2005), 623–40.

<sup>40</sup> See Lehrman, “Essays in Anatolian Onomastics,” 229; Lehrman, “Anatolian Cognates,” 16–17. Though see Melchert’s concerns regarding the etymology. Melchert, *Anatolian Historical Phonology*, 127.

<sup>41</sup> See Norbert Oettinger, who cites a handout by Melchert presented at an Oxford event. Norbert Oettinger, “Zum anatolischen und indogermanischen Kollektivum,” in *Studies on the Collective and Feminine in Indo-European from a Diachronic and Typological Perspective*, ed. Sergio Neri and Roland Schuhmann (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 312–13.



to the Indo-European warrior in antiquity, but it is to say that it is consistent with the image of the beast-like, raging warrior of widely-attested Indo-European tradition. He is a wolf—or a lion.

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## PART 2: EPIGRAPHY



# Hypothesis on The Suffixed Pronouns Used in The Phoenician Text of Pyrgi

Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo

More than fifty years have elapsed since the discovery at Santa Severa (ancient Pyrgi), on July 1964, of the famous Etruscan and Phoenician texts inscribed on three golden sheets (called commonly A, B, C–A and B being in Etruscan, C in Phoenician) commemorating a dedication to Uni-Astarte worshipped in temple B of the harbour of the ancient city of Caere.<sup>1</sup> The three sheets were discovered during regular works conducted by the then Istituto di Etruscologia e Antichità Italiche directed by Massimo Pallottino.<sup>2</sup>

## FIRST INTERPRETATION

The Phoenician text, from its first publication—the *editio princeps* was provided by Giovanni Garbini<sup>3</sup>—was quite clear in its reading, although some important questions remained open regarding its interpretation. Moreover, since the first publication of the three inscriptions, it appeared that the Phoenician was probably a shorter version of the Etruscan ones, though a correspondence between the three texts is approximate (in particular A is longer than C); consequently, the Phoenician text has not been of real help in understanding the Etruscan inscrip-

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion on the discovery, see Maria Paola Baglione and Laura Maria Michetti, eds., “Le lamine d’oro a cinquant’anni dalla scoperta: Dati archeologici su Pyrgi nell’epoca di Thefarie Velianas e rapporti con altre realtà del Mediterraneo,” *Giornata di studio Sapienza Università di Roma, Odeion del Museo dell’Arte Classica* 30 gennaio 2015, *Scienze dell’Antichità* 21.2 (2015); Vincenzo Bellelli and Paolo Xella, eds., *Nuovi studi sulle iscrizioni in etrusco e in fenicio nel cinquantenario della scoperta. SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016). For the Phoenician text, see *KAI* 277; John C. L. Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions Including Inscriptions in the Dialect of Arslan Tash*, vol. 3 of *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), no. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Colonna, Massimo Pallottino, and Licia Vlad Borrelli, “Scavi nel santuario etrusco di Pyrgi: Relazione preliminare della settima campagna, 1964, e scoperta di tre lamine iscritte in etrusco e in punico,” *Archeologia Classica* 16 (1964): 49–117.

<sup>3</sup> Giovanni Garbini, “L’iscrizione punica,” *Archeologia Classica* 16 (1964): 66–76.

tions. Text A is a commemoration of the same event described in C (the dedication by the chief of Caere, Thefarie Velianas, of a sacred space, temple B according to G. Colonna);<sup>4</sup> B also refers to the dedication by Thefarie but with reference to other, slightly later, rituals.<sup>5</sup>

The text of the Phoenician inscription is:

1. LRBT L'ŠTRT 'ŠR QDŠ
2. 'Z 'Š . P'L W'Š YTN
3. TBRY' . WLNŠ MLK 'L
4. KYŠRY' . BYRH . ZBH
5. ŠMŠ . BMTN' .<sup>6</sup> BBT WBN
6. TW . K'ŠTRT . 'RŠ . BDY
7. LMLKY ŠNT ŠLŠ 3 BY
8. RH KRR BYM QBR
9. 'LM WŠNT LM'Š 'LM
10. BBTY ŠNT KM HKKBM
11. 'L

The translation proposed by Giovanni Garbini was:

Alla signora Astarte. Questo è il luogo sacro che ha fatto e che ha dato Thefarie Velianas re su Chaisrie,<sup>7</sup> nel mese di *zbh šmš*, in dono nel tempio e nel suo recinto (?),<sup>8</sup> poiché Astarte ha innalzato con la sua mano (?) al suo regno per tre 3 anni, nel mese di *krr* nel giorno del seppellimento della divinità. E gli anni della statua della divinità nel suo tempio (sono tanti) anni come queste stelle.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. in particular Giovanni Colonna, “‘Tempio’ e ‘santuario’ nel lessico delle lamine di Pyrgi,” *Scienze dell’Antichità* 3–4 (1991): 197–216; different hypothesis in M. Cristofani, “Ripensando Pyrgi,” *Miscellanea Ceretana* 1 (1989): 85.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Giovanni Colonna, “Ancora sulle lamine di Pyrgi,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 157–71; tentative translation of texts A and B without taking into consideration the Phoenician inscription: Ignasi-Xavier Adiego, “The Etruscan Text of the Pyrgi Golden Tablets: Certainties and Uncertainties,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 135–56; Differently, M. Cristofani (“Sulla dedica di Pyrgi,” in *Alle soglie della classicità: Il Mediterraneo tra tradizione e innovazione. Studi in onore di Sabatino Moscati*, ed. Sabatino Moscati and Enrico Acquaro, vol. 3 [Pisa-Roma: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1996], 1117–26) proposes two parallel translations of texts A and C.

<sup>6</sup> A short stroke was engraved between ‘*aleph* and *bet*, however the division between the words proposed is *bmtn* ‘*bbt* “as a gift in the temple,” with the use of prosthetic ‘*aleph* before the preposition.

<sup>7</sup> On the form of the name cf. C. de Simone, “Kaiseri: in che forma il nome di Caere più antico?,” *AION sezione linguistica* 21 (1999): 211–22.

<sup>8</sup> The reading was then *wbmtw*.

<sup>9</sup> Reproduced by Giovanni Garbini, “La bilingue di Tiberio,” in *Nuovi studi sulle iscrizioni in etrusco e in fenicio nel cinquantenario della scoperta*, ed. Vincenzo Bellelli and Paolo Xella (Verona: SEL, 2016), 22.

## CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS

After many years of analysis and debates,<sup>10</sup> progress has been made, mainly concerning the Etruscan texts. On the contrary, some of the problems posed from the very start by the Phoenician inscription have still not been satisfactorily solved.<sup>11</sup> They concern mainly the precise explanation of the dating formulas (lines 4–5, 7–9), the object(s) of the dedication, associated with the meaning of *ʾrš bdy*, expressing the reason of the gift, and the objects referred to by the words *hkkbm ʾl* “these stars” (lines 10–11) tied to the interpretation of the last sentence as a wish or a chronological indication that might refer to the ceremony of the *clavi annales*.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the question of the origin of the Phoenician text is still the object of debate, attesting to Caere having relations with the east—perhaps with Cyprus—or with Carthage.<sup>13</sup>

Summarizing the proposed interpretations, the structure of the first five lines conform, on the whole, to other well-known Phoenician dedications and are unanimously translated as follows: “To the Lady Astarte, this is the holy place, which Thefarie Velianas,<sup>14</sup> king of/reigning over Caere, has made and given, in the month of the sacrifice(s) to the sun, as a gift in the temple.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For the texts and philological questions, see bibliography in Vincenzo Belevi, “The Pyrgi Golden Tablets: A Selected Bibliography,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 241–45. On the history of the discovery and the progress of the interpretation, see Giovanni Colonna, “Le lamine di Pyrgi a cinquant’anni dalla scoperta,” *Scienze dell’Antichità* 21.2 (2015): 39–74.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. José Ángel Zamora, “The Pyrgi Tablet Revisited: An Analysis of the Structure and Formulae of the Phoenician Text of Pyrgi,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 69–79. New translations, still hypothetical, have been proposed by Philip C. Schmitz in: “The Phoenician Text from the Etruscan Sanctuary at Pyrgi,” *JAOS* 115 (1995): 559–75; Schmitz, “Adonis in the Phoenician Text from Pyrgi? A New Reading of KAI 277.5,” *Etruscan News* 8 (2007): 9, 13; and Schmitz, “Sempre Pyrgi: A Retraction and Reassessment of the Phoenician Text,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 33–43.

<sup>12</sup> According to Colonna’s interpretation, the first sentence of the Phoenician text refers to the actual offering, the second to the *votum*, the last sentence to the ritual of the *clavifixio*, the chronology of the gift being counted by driving nails into the doorpost of the temple. Colonna, “Ancora sulle lamine di Pyrgi,” 157–71, esp 158–61; and Colonna, “Le lamine di Pyrgi,” 60–63. (The nails were preserved with the golden sheets). Different proposals for the end of the Phoenician inscription have been proposed by Schmitz, “Sempre Pyrgi,” 34, 39–40.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Christopher Smith, “The Pyrgi Tablets and the View from Rome,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 206–7. From the Phoenician point of view, see also Schmitz, “The Phoenician Text” (a Mediterranean milieu); M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, “Sull’ambientazione della lamina fenicia di Pyrgi,” *SEL* 32–33 (2016): 241–45, a Carthaginian milieu. Here Phoenician is a general label given to the North-West Semitic language of the eastern city-states and their western settlements during every phase from roughly 1000 BCE. Punic is the language, with some specific phonological and morphological characteristics and its own script that characterizing the western inscriptions from about the late sixth–early fifth centuries BCE and onwards.

<sup>14</sup> The vocalization in the Etruscan texts is *Velianas* and *Veliumas*; however the Phoenician orthography of this name, *wlnš*, and the discovery by Colonna of an inscription naming *Larice Velinas*, perhaps Thefarie’s father, has led Garbini to reconstruct the “spoken” shape of Thefarie’s



Regarding the second portion of the inscription, there is a consensus on identifying the reason for the gift as a request made by Astarte, perhaps expressed by means of an oracle, in the month of *Krr*.<sup>16</sup> Consequently the commonly accepted translation of lines 5–9 is: “And he built a chamber because Astarte requested (it) of him, in the year three of his reign, in the month of *Krr*, on the day of the burial of the deity.”<sup>17</sup> Still accepted by some scholars is the proposal advanced first by Garbini, that the donation was a reward by Thefarie to Astarte who had conceded three years of rule to him.<sup>18</sup>

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family name as *Velinus*; cf. Garbini, “La bilingue di Tiberio,” 23. For the Etruscan orthography; cf. Colonna, “Le lamine di Pyrgi,” 66–67: “*Velianas* e *Velianas* sono scritte ‘storiche’ conservate per motivi di prestigio, quando la pronuncia reale, rivelata dalla lamina fenicia, era già affetta dalla sincope delle vocali brevi interne.” Here the base of the Phoenician was perhaps *Velinas*. See also Valentina Belfiore, “Nuovi spunti di riflessione sulle lamine di Pyrgi in etrusco,” *SEL* 32–33 (2015–2016): 107–8, reconstructing a form *Velienas*. I thank Valentina Belfiore for her help and remarks regarding this issue.

<sup>15</sup> One has to recall that the positions of the researchers differ (and are not always clear) concerning the identification of the *šr qdš*, the *tw* and the *bt*. See note 4 above, citing Colonna, “Tempio’ e ‘santuario,’” who proposed that the expression “holy place” (*šr qdš*) referred to the whole temple B, of which the “cella” (*tw*) was the inner part (in his view Thefarie dedicated the temple, which comprised a cella). The *bt*, instead, consisted of the whole sacred space (the *temenos* of classical tradition): cf. particularly Colonna, “Tempio’ e ‘santuario,’” fig. 9 p. 212. Note a different opinion in M. Cristofani, “Ripensando Pyrgi.” *Miscellanea Ceretana* 1 (1989): 85–93, already criticized by Colonna in “Tempio’ e ‘santuario,’” 215–16). Cf. also *KAI* 277.2.231, however, where the translation is ambiguous. Clearer in this regard (“e costrui anche una cella”) is Manfred Kropp (“Versioni indipendenti o traduzione? Rilettura delle lamine d’oro di Pyrgi,” in *Circolazioni Culturali nel Mediterraneo Antico: Atti della Sesta giornata Camito-Semita e Indoeuropea*, ed. Convegno Internazionale di Linguistica dell’area Mediterranea, Sassari 24–27 aprile 1991 [Cagliari, 1994], 195) who accepted Garbini’s proposal concerning the reason for the gift. Xella agrees with Colonna’s interpretation (Paolo Xella, “Fenicio m(‘)š “statua” [Matériaux pour le lexique phénicien—II],” in *Punica, Lybica, Ptolemaica: Festschrift für Werner Huss zum 65. Geburtstag dargebracht von Schülern, Freunden und Kollegen*, ed. Klaus Geus and Klaus Zimmermann, OLA 104, Studia Phoenicia XVI [Leuven: Peeters, 2002], 35). Concerning the meaning of *šr*, cf. *DNWSI*, s.v. *šr*, which does not help determine what was concretely meant by the expression “holy place.”

<sup>16</sup> Vocalized as *Kirar*, on the basis of its vocalization at Alalakh; it corresponds with July according to R. Stieglitz, “The Phoenician-Punic Calendar,” in *Actas del IV Congreso Internacional de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos*, ed. Manuela Barthélemy and María Eugenia Aubet Semmler (Cádiz: Servicio de Publicaciones Universidad de Cádiz, 2000), 692; however Garbini (“La bilingue di Tiberio,” 25) proposes May–June. Neither proposal has any truly sound bases; *zbh šmš* is June according to Stieglitz; May–June according to Garbini.

<sup>17</sup> The deity is either a male god of the type of Melqart or the goddess Astarte.

<sup>18</sup> Garbini translates: “Alla Signora Astarte. Questo è l’edificio sacro che ha fatto e che ha donato Tiberio Velinus re su Cere nel mese del ‘Sacrificio del sole’ [giugno-luglio] come dono nel tempio. Egli ha costruito la cella perché Astarte ha dato nella sua mano di regnare tre 3 anni nel mese di KRR [maggio-giugno] nel giorno del seppellimento della divinità [Calende di giugno].” Garbini, “La bilingue di Tiberio,” 25. From this translation it is deduced that he identifies the “holy place” with the “chapel.”

The allusion to a dying god (lines 8–9)—perhaps Melqart—has been abandoned by most commentators, though the reference to a day of a “burial of the deity”—*qbr 'lm*—has not been clarified.<sup>19</sup> The last sentence, lines 9–11, has been interpreted by most scholars not as a wish (“May the years ... be ...”), but as referring to the ceremony of the *clavi annales*.<sup>20</sup> So the proposed translations are: (1) “May the years of the statue of/gift<sup>21</sup> to the deity in his/her temple be like these stars”; or (2) “And the years of the statue of /gift to the deity in his/her temple are like these stars.”

#### THE SUFFIXED PRONOUNS

The current state of research concerning the Phoenician text briefly reported above is well expounded in the 2016 volume edited by Vincenzo Belevi and Paolo Xella, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of the golden sheets.<sup>22</sup> Among the new examinations presented there, the contribution by José Ángel Zamora, is the first since the last decades of the nineteenth century to cast doubts on the existence in Phoenician of a noun *tw*, not attested elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> and identified by Johannes Friedrich on line 6, with the meaning of “Innenraum,” “cella.”<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding the remarks by Röllig, comparing *tw* with Akkadian, Aramaic and Hebrew words,<sup>25</sup> Zamora remarks that it is not easy to include such a word in the Phoenician lexicon (presumably because of a diphthong not reduced). Furthermore, according to Zamora, as in the case of *ʕr qdš*, the word *tw*, if present, should have been accompanied by a demonstrative (however, not obligatory if the tablet was not nearby) or, at least, by the article.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The word *qbr* can be analyzed either as a noun or as an infinitive.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., with bibliography, Colonna, “Ancora sulle lamine di Pyrgi,” 158–62.

<sup>21</sup> For the meaning of *m ʕ*, “gift” or “statue,” see n. 50 below.

<sup>22</sup> See Belevi and Xella, eds., *Le lamine di Pyrgi*. The volume contains contributions concerning tablet C by myself (mainly palaeographic), Garbini (philological and historical), Schmitz, Xella, and Zamora (interpretation of the text).

<sup>23</sup> *DNWSI*, s.v. *tw*<sub>1</sub>. Interesting exchanges of views with Zamora concerning the possible word *tw* in Phoenician led me to the present proposal.

<sup>24</sup> Johannes Friedrich, “Nochmals die phönizische Inschrift von Pyrgi,” in *Beiträge zu alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben. Festschrift für F. Altheim zum 6.10.1968*, ed. Ruth Stiehl and Hans Erich Stier (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), 205–9.

<sup>25</sup> Wolfgang Röllig, “Akkadisch *tu'um*, *di'um*, phönizisch *tw*, aramäisch *tw*<sub>1</sub>: Versuch einer Klärung,” in *Alle soglie della classicità. Il Mediterraneo Tra Tradizione e Innovazione, Studi in onore di Sabatino Moscati*, ed. Enrico Acquaro, vol. 3 (Pisa-Roma: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1996), 417–18; and *KAI 277* (commentary); cf. also *DNWSI*, s.v. *tw*<sub>1</sub> (with different explanations and bibliography).

<sup>26</sup> See Zamora, “Pyrgi Tablet,” 75–76: “At most, we might accept that the scribe, seeking to introduce a variation and making use of some kind of parallel, resumed the main construction (the ‘holy place’) and specified it (calling it ‘chapel’ or the like). But the term presumably specifying it (a *hapax* in Phoenician, with a rare spelling) is not introduced by any kind of determinant; the presence

For these reasons he returns to a solution already adopted in 1964 and in 1965 by Garbini<sup>27</sup> and accepted by subsequent editors,<sup>28</sup> which explains the *-w* as the suffix of the 3rd person masculine singular affixed to *bnt*—a form analyzed as the 1st person singular of *bny* (so *bntw* = “I built it”)—having the same orthography as in the Byblian inscriptions and in the inscription of Larnaca tis Lapithou 2 (Cyprus, *KAI* 43.11). Accepting this proposal, as in previous explanations, we must suppose that in the second part of his inscription Thefarie expressed himself in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, using a change in the syntax (anacoluthon) elsewhere attested in Phoenician.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, the suffixes *-y*, attested in lines 6–9, have to be analyzed as suffixes of the 1st person singular and not, as commonly accepted, of the 3rd person singular. The translation proposed by Zamora for this section (end of l. 5 to l. 9) of the inscription is: “And I have constructed it, because Astarte has asked me to, (in the) third year of my reign in the month of Kirar, in the day of ‘the burial of the divinity.’”<sup>30</sup>

According to Zamora, however, a difficulty exists concerning the suffix appended to the word *bt* “temple” in the last sentence (l. 10: *bbty*).<sup>31</sup> He notes (p. 76, n. 35): “Later in the text, the suffix *-y* could also indicate that *bty* may be translated ‘my temple’, i.e. the temple of the dedicator, but instead it seems to mean ‘his temple’, i.e. ‘the temple of the deity’. A possessive form *-y* of the third person masculine would thus appear together with the pronominal form *-w*. Moreover, as the temple referred to seems to belong to the goddess, *bty* is frequently understood as ‘her temple’ (a serious issue if translated literally, as it is not easy to explain *-y* as a form of the third feminine together with a *-w* of the third person masculine).” Therefore, he tentatively proposes considering *tw* as an abbreviation of the name of Thefarie Velianas.<sup>32</sup>

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of an article or at least of a postponed pronoun ... would be expected.” A necessary remark is that the previous interpreters do not unanimously identify the “holy place” with the “chapel” but presume that they could have been two different offerings, see n. 15 above.

<sup>27</sup> Translating *bmtw* (read instead of *bntw*) “il suo recinto.” Compare, however, Giovanni Garbini and G. Levi Della Vida, “Considerazioni sull’iscrizione punica di Pyrgi,” *OrAn* 4 (1965): 41, where he reads *wbntw*, proposing a change in the syntax and translating “and I built it.” In 2016, however, as in his previous articles, Garbini divides *wbn tw*, translating “Egli ha costruito la cella.” Garbini, “La bilingue di Tiberio,” 25.

<sup>28</sup> See Gibson, *Textbook*, 156. Gibson notes: “*bntw* is the *crux interpretum* of the inscription.”

<sup>29</sup> For this analysis cf. already clearly Garbini and Della Vida, “Considerazioni,” and Gibson, *Textbook*, 154 (not so *KAI*). Parallels can be found in *KAI* 14 (Eshmun’azor) and *KAI* 18 (Umm el-‘Amed), already quoted by Garbini, in Garbini and Levi Della Vida “Considerazioni,” 41.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. already Gibson, *Textbook*, 154.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. already Schmitz, “The Phoenician Text,” 565–66.

<sup>32</sup> Zamora, “Pyrgi Tablet,” 77: “Whether incidental or not, *tw* actually corresponds to the initials of the Phoenician name of the king of Caere, *tbry’ . wlnš*, the certain subject of the sentence; *tw* standing for Thefarie Velianas would be quite in harmony with the common way of abbreviating personal names in Phoenician-Punic inscriptions.” However, in his translation, Zamora does not accept this hypothesis, which appears syntactically odd.

A correct grammatical explanation of the difference between the two variants of the suffixes of the 3rd person singular *-w* and *-y* possibly attested in the present inscription had already been proposed by Gibson, noting: “*y* in *bbt<sub>y</sub>* is the 3 fem. suffix ([*-yā*] after a genit. noun) and is the Tyro-Sidonian form against the Byblian *w* of the masc. in *bnt<sub>w</sub>*; this mixing of forms seems significantly to occur also in the Lapethos dialect.”<sup>33</sup>

#### THE LARNACA 2 INSCRIPTION

“Lapethos dialect” is the name that has been given to the language attested by three inscriptions dated between the last quarter of the fourth and the first quarter of the third century found near the modern village of Larnax-tis-Lapithou, on the northern coast of Cyprus. They consist of three texts, called conventionally Larnaca 1–3, the first one (Larnaca 1) already published in the *CIS* (*CIS* 1.95) still *in situ*, the two others known, Larnaka 2, since the end of the nineteenth century, Larnaca 3, discovered in 1937 by Mitford, both having been the object of specific studies by A. M. Honeyman in the years 1938–1940.<sup>34</sup> The so-called Larnaca 2 inscription,<sup>35</sup> dated to 275–274 BCE, has often been associated with Byblos because of the identification of a suffix of the 3rd person masculine singular written *-w* in the expression *l’štw* “for his wife” (l.11), a morpheme typical of the Byblos dialect; *l’štw* is followed by the expression *wl’dmy* debated as regards its meaning and the analysis of the suffix *-y*.<sup>36</sup> The *-w*, expressing the

<sup>33</sup> Gibson, *Textbook*, 158.

<sup>34</sup> For Larnaca 1 (*CIS* 1.95) see, with bibliography, M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, “Encore *CIS* 1.95 et les divinités guerrières à Chypre,” *Or* 84 (2015): 29–40. Larnaca 2, discovered in 1853 and now in the Louvre, has been restudied by A. M. Honeyman in “Observations on a Phoenician Inscription of Ptolemaic Date,” *JEA* 16 (1940): 57–67. Larnaca 3, in the Cyprus Museum, was published by Honeyman (“Larnax tēs Lapēthou, a third Phoenician inscription,” *Le Muséon* 51 [1938]: 285–98) and, later, Jonas C. Greenfield (“Larnax tēs Lapethou III Revisited,” in *Phoenician and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.*, OLA 22, *Studia Phoenicia* V [Leuven: Peeters, 1987], 392–401). See also, Maurice Sznycer, “Nouvelle lecture d’un mot à la première ligne de l’inscription phénicienne de Larnaka-tis-Lapithou,” in *Conservée au Musée de Nicosie, Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1988), 59–61; and Philippa M. Steele, *A Linguistic History of Ancient Cyprus: Non-Greek languages and Their Relations with Greek, c. 1600–300 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 190–95, pl. 9. On the site and the discoveries, see O. Masson, “Kypriaka XI: Remarques sur Larnaka-tis-Lapithou,” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 101 (1977): 323–27.

<sup>35</sup> *KAI* 43; Gibson, *Textbook*, no. 36, 134–41; Maurice Sznycer, “Nouvelle lecture d’un mot dans l’inscription phénicienne de Larnaka-tis-Lapithou,” in *Cahiers du Centre d’études Chypriotes* 27 (1997): 149–56. See also Steele, *Linguistic History*, 189–90, pl. 8.

<sup>36</sup> The link with Byblos was—according to the editors—demonstrated by the inscription Larnaca 3. See Honeyman (“Larnax tēs Lapēthou”) where in line 9 the “gods of Byblos who are in Lapethos” have been identified. Compare W. R. Lane, “The Phoenician Dialect of Larnax La-

suffix of the 3rd person masculine singular, is attested in this inscription only in this example. In the remaining portion of the text, counting sixteen lines, all the suffixes are written *-y* and can be explained as suffixes of the 1st person singular, with the exception of the already cited expression *l'dmy*, where *-y* is explained either as the suffix of the 3rd person singular (*KAI*) or again as the suffix of the 1st person, to avoid the presence of two orthographic variants of the same suffix to nouns which are both in the genitive case. The sentence of line 11 is inserted in a context of gifts dedicated, in two different years of Ptolemy's II reign, to Melqart by Yatonba'l, bearing the title of *rb 'rṣ*, lit. "chief of the country,"<sup>37</sup> accompanied by a request of blessings for himself and for his stock. The context in which the two suffixed expressions are inserted is (following Gibson's reading, letters underlined are doubtful):

10. ... P 'LT QMT 'M<sup>38</sup> WMZBHT L 'DN 'Ṣ LY LMLQRT  
 11. 'L ḤYY W'L HY ZR 'Y YM MD YM WLṢMḤ ṢDQ WL 'ṢTW WL'DMY  
 12. [BHD]ṢM WB WB<sup>39</sup>S'M YRḤ MD YRḤ ...

The translation proposed by Gibson is as follows: "... I did ... altars for the lord who is mine, for Melqart // (to be serviced) on behalf of my life and on behalf of the life of my seed, day by day, and (altars) for the legitimate shoot and for his wife and for my folk // [(to be serviced) on the new-]moons, and of the full moons, month by month."<sup>39</sup>

The reading of *-w* and of *-y* in the aforementioned expressions is certain,<sup>40</sup> even though some letters in this passage are of uncertain identification. The advantage of Gibson's translation in comparison to the one in *KAI* is that it avoids assuming the use of two different morphemes of the suffix for the 3rd person singular. The preceding translations were still more dubious:<sup>41</sup> one specific diffi-

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pethou," *BASOR* 194 (1969): 39–45. A commentary is in Steele, *Linguistic History*, 193–201 (also on a specific Phoenician dialect of Cyprus). However, the expression 'l gbl ṣ[bl]pṣ can be interpreted as "the god(s) of the territory (gbl = 'border') of Lapethos" (gbl as "border" is used again in Larnaca 2, *KAI* 43.9). See Charles R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary*, OLA 90, Studia Phoenicia XV (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 51.

<sup>37</sup> *KAI* translates "Grosses des Landes" (2.60) and Gibson "chief magistrate" (*Textbook*, 136)—both scholars supposing that this title is probably the translation of Greek χωράρχος or τοπάρχος.

<sup>38</sup> According to Szyner ("Nouvelle lecture") the correct reading is: QMTYM, explained as a dual "J'ai fait deux objets dresses." However, in this period we have no other Phoenician example of a dual, which is indicated by the number two, cf. *PPG*<sup>3</sup> §218.

<sup>39</sup> Differently, concerning the suffixes, Röllig, in *KAI* 2.60–61 (not reading *p'lt*, "I made," confirmed by Szyner, after inspection of the original stone): "(11) für mein Leben und das Leben meiner Nachkommenschaft Tag für Tag, und dem legitimen Spross und seinen Frauen und seinem Blute..." (*dm* is interpreted as the word "blood" with prothetic 'aleph).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. pl. XI in Honeyman, "Observations on a Phoenician Inscription of Ptolemaic Date"; and pl. VII in Gibson, *Textbook* (squeeze).

<sup>41</sup> Krahmalkov (*Phoenician-Punic Dictionary*) consequently does not cite these passages.

culty consists of interpreting the reference to “the legitimate shoot and to his wife,” preceded by the preposition *l-*, a construct differing from the previous mention of the dedicator and of his offspring which are both preceded by the expression *ʾl hy* “for the life of.” Whereas some editors of the text have proposed, following Clermont Ganneau,<sup>42</sup> modifying the reading of the some words,<sup>43</sup> Gibson maintains the reading resulting from an examination of the inscription’s squeeze (*wlšmh šdq wlʾštw wlʾdmy*), accepted already by Honeyman, and points out that the reference here should be not to the dedicator’s legitimate offspring, but to the reigning Ptolemy II “the youngest son of his father, whose claim to the throne cannot, therefore, have been undisputed.” His wife (*ʾštw*) was, according to Gibson, Arsinoë, quoted also in a later inscription from Umm el-ʿAmed (*KAI* 19, Gibson 1982 no. 31, dated to 222 BCE). Although these identifications may be debated, the readings are certain, as is the analysis of the suffix *-w*. As already noticed, the question remains open concerning the suffix *-y* in *lʾdmy*, referred to Yatonbaʿl in Gibson’s interpretation (“my folk”). However, after having cited the young king and his wife, it is not clear why the text should come back to refer to Yatonbaʿl’s folk (moreover, the reference to the dedicator and to his family in the previous line is preceded by the expression *ʾl hy*, not by *l-*, as here). Therefore, it might be possible to interpret the suffix *-y* as feminine, referring to “his wife” (Arsinoë) and to “her people/entourage” or to “her blood”<sup>44</sup> (in the meaning of future (?) descent). If this explanation is accepted, the suffixes of the 3rd person singular in this inscription have to be explained as follows:

1. 3rd person masculine (after a genitive): \*-i-hū > [i-w(ū)], written *w*, as in Byblos.
2. 3rd person feminine (after a genitive): \*-i-hā > [i-yā], written *y*, as in Standard Phoenician,<sup>45</sup> differing from Byblos, where the *h* was preserved in the feminine suffix.

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<sup>42</sup> Charles Clermont-Ganneau dated the inscription to 176 BCE in “L’inscription phénicienne de Narnaka,” in *Études d’archéologie orientale*, II (Paris: Librairie Émile Bouillon Éditeur, 1897), 170–72.

<sup>43</sup> Compare with George Albert Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), no. 29. Cooke suggests the possibility of reading instead of *lʾštw*, *kl ptr* and instead of *lʾdmy*, *lʾdny* (“and to the legitimate offspring (lit. shoot of righteousness) of Cleopatra and to my lord”) the same reading and interpretation is proposed in *RÉS* 1211 (with preceding bibliography). Cooke, *A Text-Book*, 86.

<sup>44</sup> The noun *dm* “blood” with prothetic *ʾaleph*, as in *KAI*.

<sup>45</sup> The expression Standard Phoenician was introduced by W. Randall Garr, *Dialect-Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000–586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) in contrast to Byblian.

## CONCLUSION

As in Larnaca 2, the same morphemes of the 3rd singular suffix, masculine and feminine, after a noun in the genitive case, may be observed at Pyrgi, as Gibson had already noted, linking tablet C with Larnaca 2 without having recognised, however, the possible presence of the feminine suffix in both inscriptions. If the explanation here exposed is correct, it is worth stressing again the peculiarities of the language and of the formularies present in tablet C text: the use of the prothetic *'aleph*, the presence of the relative *'š* before the second verb,<sup>46</sup> the use of *mtn* instead of *mnt*,<sup>47</sup> the “irregular” syntax in the dating formula, which distinguish this inscription from the usual Phoenician and Punic dedications. Taking these remarks into account, the “generic” translation of the text could be as follows (similar to the one proposed by Gibson and, most recently, by Zamora). The last sentence is here interpreted as a dating formula and not as a wish because in nominal phrases with an optative/jussive meaning the verb “to be” (*kn*) is always expressed.<sup>48</sup>

To the Lady Astarte, this holy place (is that), which Thefarie Velianas, king/reigning over Caere, has made and has given, in the month of the sacrifice(s) to the sun as a gift in the temple. And I built it because Astarte has requested from me,<sup>49</sup> in the year three, 3, of my reign, in the month of *Krr*, on the day of the burial of the deity. And the years of the effigy (?)<sup>50</sup> of the deity in her temple are like these stars.

Adopting this interpretation, further problems arise. What is the origin of the orthography of the suffixes attested in Larnaca 2 and at Pyrgi and is it possible to posit a link between the dialect used in the Melqart sanctuary of Larnaca and

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<sup>46</sup> Note that the two words *p'l* and *ytn* never occur together in votive inscriptions; however, the presence of two verbs in dedications is not particularly frequent, so that new formularies are not surprising.

<sup>47</sup> *Mtn*, as noted by all the editors, is used only in personal names; consequently, Schmitz since 1995 (“The Phoenician Text,” 562–63) has supposed that it is a month name already attested in the Larnax-tis-Lapithou 3 inscription (line 3). Later he changed his interpretation. See Schmitz, “Sempre Pyrgi,” 35–36 and bibliography in note 20 above.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *PPG*<sup>3</sup>, §316, in particular Karatepe, *KAI* 26.A.iv.1–2 (*'ps šm 'ztwd ykn l'lm km šm šmš wyrh*, “Only, may the name of Azatiwata be for ever like the name of the sun and the moon!”).

<sup>49</sup> The presence of a suffix after the verb is not necessary in Phoenician, as already—seldom—observed: cf. for ex. Karatepe, *KAI* 26.A.ii.9–10: WBN 'NK HQRT Z WŠT // 'NK ŠM'ZTWDY K B'L WRŠP ... ŠLHN LBNT “And I built this city, I called its name Azatiwataya for Ba'l and Reshep ... commissioned me to build” (not to build it). Cf. Schmitz, “Phoenician Text,” 566.

<sup>50</sup> The exact meaning (and etymology) of *m()*š and the difference between this noun and *sml* (fem. *smlt*) “statue, image” and *šlm*—also “statue, image”—are still unclear. For *m()*š = statue see especially Xella, “Fenicio *m()*š “statua”; and again Xella, “Il testo fenicio di Pyrgi,” 53–63.



that employed at Pyrgi in temple B? In other words, was the Pyrgi scribe linked in some ways to Cyprus?<sup>51</sup>

The Phoenician inscription of Pyrgi can be dated to around 500 BCE. Its formulary is typical of the west-Phoenician votive inscriptions, and the letters, although not Punic, show shapes that would become typically Punic: cf. for example the letter *taw*, whose horizontal bar cuts to the link the vertical shaft. Moreover, the shaft exhibits in some examples an upper tick, according to a shape that would become typical of the Punic script.<sup>52</sup> Regarding the historical situation of the central Mediterranean at the end of the sixth century, close relationships between the Etruscan city-states and Carthage have been reconstructed that can explain a Phoenician presence at Pyrgi.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, the inscription is most probably tied to the Carthaginian world, even though its orthography is not in complete agreement with Standard Phoenician and early Punic, as attested by contemporary western inscriptions, as the stelae found in Motya (Sicily).<sup>54</sup> We can assign the Motya inscribed stelae, nearly contemporary to Pyrgi, to an historical western milieu similar to the one testified by the Pyrgi text.<sup>55</sup> The de-

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<sup>51</sup> This link was first stressed by Levi Della Vida in Garbini and Della Vida, “Considerazioni,” (thinking of Paphos); see also Schmitz, “Phoenician Text,” 571 (dividing *bn tw*) proposing a “Mediterranean dialect,” common to Phoenician speakers of the central Mediterranean, including the Lebanese coast, Cyprus and some regions in the west (but not Carthage).

<sup>52</sup> On the shape of *taw* at Pyrgi, see J. B. Peckham, *The Development of the Late Phoenician Scripts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 171 n. 91. Peckham classifies the script as Punic on 191 n. 1. See also Amadasi Guzzo, “Sull’ambientazione,” 7; and M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, “The Punic Scripts,” in “*An Eye for Form: Epigraphic Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Jo Ann Hackett and Walter Emanuel Aufrecht (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 314–33.

<sup>53</sup> On the historical context see, for example, M. Gras, “La battaglia del mare Sardonio,” in *Máxy: La battaglia del Mare Sardonio. Studi e ricerche*, ed. Paolo Bernardini, Pier Giorgio Spanu, and Raimondo Zucca (Oristano: La memoria storica, 2000), 37–46; Gras, “Il Tirreno dopo la battaglia del Mare Sardonio,” *Scienze dell’Antichità* 21.2 (2015): 21–37; and Colonna, “A proposito del primo trattato,” and bibliography there.

<sup>54</sup> Compare the remarks in Schmitz, “The Phoenician Text.”

<sup>55</sup> On the Motya inscriptions, see M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, *Scavi a Mozia—Le iscrizioni*, Collezione di studi fenici 22 (Roma: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche, 1986). On the language, see M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, “Il fenicio di Mozia,” in *Atti delle quarte giornate internazionali di studi sull’areaElima*, vol. 1, Symposium in Erice, 1–4 dicembre 2000 (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore 2003), 29–36. Concerning the archaeology of the *tophet*, see mainly M. Ciasca, “Uno sguardo d’insieme sul tofet,” *Vicino Oriente* 8 (1992): 113–55. On Mozia between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, see L. Nigro, “Mozia tra VI e V secolo a.C. Monumentalizzazione e organizzazione socio-politica: un nuovo modello,” *Scienze dell’Antichità* 21.2 (2015): 225–345 (and bibliography there). For the presence of Carthage in Sicily, see S. F. Bondi, “Siciliae partem domuerunt: Malco e la politica siciliana di Cartagine nel VI secolo a.C.,” in *Alle soglie della classicità: Il Mediterraneo tra tradizione e innovazione. Studi in onore di Sabatino Moscati*, ed. Enrico Acquaro, vol. 1 (Pisa-Roma: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1996), 21–28. With preceding studies, see also Salvatore De Vincenzo, *Tra Cartagine e Rom. I centri urbani dell’eparchia punica di Sicilia tra VI e I sec. A.C.* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013).



velopment of the letters on tablet C is similar to that of the Motya stela (levels IV–III). Furthermore, the dedicatory formulary present at Motya is the same—excepting the second part of the inscription of tablet C—as the one used at Pyrgi and typical of Punic dedications, naming the deity in the first place (not at the end of the text as in contemporary Phoenician texts).<sup>56</sup> However, regarding the suffix of the 3rd person singular, it is attested in Motya<sup>57</sup> only in the closing sentence of some dedications in the expression *kšm' ql dbry* “because he (Baʿl Hamon) listened to the voice of his words,” written -y as in Standard Phoenician (\*-ē-hū > [-ēyū]), an orthography preserved later even in the Late-Punic phase, contemporarily with a new morpheme -m [-im].<sup>58</sup>

To justify this late morpheme, John Huehnergard has supposed that the “al-lomorph /-yū/ preceded by the genitive vowel -i, would have been phonetically either identical or at least very close to a pronunciation [-iw]; the pronunciation [-im] probably simply reflects a nasalization of the word-final [w].”<sup>59</sup> This possible pronunciation might justify the supposition that in the city of Carthage in the 6th century the orthography, particularly for the suffixed personal pronouns, was not yet unified as in Standard Phoenician: the *h* in the masculine suffix, originally -*hū*, after an *i* (original [-i-hū]) or a long vowel and before an *u* vowel, pronounced [i/ī/ēw(u)],<sup>60</sup> might have been written in some cases as -*w* perhaps by a specific group of inhabitants. On the contrary, the *h* in the feminine suffix, originally -*hā* after an *i* (original [-i-hā]) or a long vowel and before an *a* vowel might have been palatalized and written -*y*. Therefore, at Pyrgi, if the explanation of *bntw* as “I built it” can be accepted, one has to posit a rendering in the writing as *w* of a pronounced form \*-ī-hū > [-ī-w(u)] > /*baniīw(u)*/ “I built it” (masc.), and a rendering in the writing as *y* of a pronounced form \*-i-hā > [-i-ya] > /*bibētiya*/ (fem.). The masculine suffix, no longer written as *w*—but perhaps pronounced [-iw] according to speakers—was, as supposed by Huehnergard at the origin of the Late Punic, written with a new morpheme -*m*.

Although Carthage was founded by Tyre,<sup>61</sup> it is probable that groups from different origins, having different traditions, settled there, as different types of

<sup>56</sup> M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, “Per una classificazione delle iscrizioni fenicie di dono,” *Scienze dell'Antichità* 3–4 (1991): 831–43.

<sup>57</sup> The suffix, written -y, is attested in the same context (*k šm' ql dbry*) in all of the few western inscriptions prior to the fourth century BCE.

<sup>58</sup> *PPG*<sup>3</sup>, §112. For a 1st person singular perfect with suffix of the 3rd masculine singular, compare *šty* “I placed him” and *ksy* “it (byssus) covered him” (?) in Kulamuwa, *KAI* 24.11–12.

<sup>59</sup> John Huehnergard, “The Development of the Third Person Suffixes in Phoenician,” *Maarav* 7 (1991): 190.

<sup>60</sup> The preserved length of final -u is not completely certain, so I do not mark it when reporting the Punic pronunciation.

<sup>61</sup> Where we suppose that already in the ninth–eighth centuries BCE the orthography of the masculine suffix of the 3rd person singular after *i* or a long vowel was written *y* on the basis of inscriptions from outside, the earliest one being Kulamuwa (*KAI* 24); however, we have no early

burial rites, for example, had suggested.<sup>62</sup> Regarding orthographic rules, it is possible to posit that a unified orthography was established by a central bureaucracy only when Carthage became, also administratively, organized as the central, hegemonic power of the western Phoenician zone. It could be that, during this period, Standard Phoenician orthography of the masculine suffix after *i* and long vowels, perhaps not the only one used since the beginning, was generalized; at the same time the 3rd person singular vocalic suffix was marked by *'aleph* and became “the rule,” spreading in the whole of the west (with some few exceptions of unmarked vocalic suffix), whereas in the east it remained unmarked. The actual documents do not enable us to determine a precise date for the establishment of a unified orthography, or a specific script (exhibiting local variants, according to place, time and cultural\_level of execution) that we could call Punic:<sup>63</sup> we have no Carthaginian inscriptions preceding the end of the fifth century giving a possible example of the suffix written -'; thus the earlier situation remains unknown.

However, even with the paucity of our data, some different orthographic rules and morphological specificities have enabled us to reconstruct different dialects for the Phoenician area, only that of Byblos being clearly documented, the others not having been unanimously recognized precisely due to the scarce data available.<sup>64</sup> The hypothesis of the presence at the same time in the west of more than one tradition, prior to the “Punic” standardization, is not impossible. The Phoenician text of the Pyrgi tablet has more than one feature that does not agree either with standard Phoenician or with later Punic in formulary and orthography, features that cannot all be explained by the need to adhere to an Etruscan original: I refer again to the use of the prothetic *'aleph*, of the word *mnt*

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inscription from that city attesting this before the Hellenistic period. For a general list, see François Briquel-Chatonnet, “Tyr et les inscriptions phéniciennes d'époque hellénistique,” in *Sources de l'histoire de Tyr: Textes de l'Antiquité et du Moyen-Âge*, ed. Pierre-Louis Gatier, Julien Aliquot, and Lévon Nord (Beyrouth: Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph et Presses de l'Ifpo, 2011), 19–32.

<sup>62</sup> Compare, for example, Serge Lancel, *Carthage* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 66–68; see also B. Maraoui Telmini, et al., “Defining Punic Carthage,” in *The Punic Mediterranean: Identities and Identification from Phoenician Settlement to Roman Rule*, ed. Josephine Crawley Quinn and Nicholas C. Vella (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), esp. 117. However, after the discovery of the cremation necropolis at Bir-Massouda, it is supposed that, as elsewhere in the Phoenician West, cremation preceded inhumation. For the development of Carthage as a “Punic” centre, see the interesting contribution by Boutheina Maraoui Telmini, et al., where once again it is observed that “Carthage was not founded solely by settlers of Tyre.” Maraoui Telmini, “Defining Punic Carthage,” 117.

<sup>63</sup> For the script, tied to a “western language” (Punic), see Amadasi Guzzo, “The Punic Scripts.”

<sup>64</sup> If truly Phoenician (its script is Aramaic), the Arslan Tash tablets (attesting a so called “mixed dialect”) give an example of an orthography in some cases differing from the “canonical” Phoenician one. See *KAI 27*, first tablet; and Gibson, *Textbook*, nos. 23 and 24; see also Dennis Pardee, “Les documents d'Arslan Tash: authentiques ou faux?,” *Syria* 75 (1998): 15–54.

and perhaps of the dating formulary.<sup>65</sup> The orthography of the suffix pronouns of the 3rd person singular could be one of these features, agreeing with Byblos for the masculine, but not for the feminine.

It is more difficult to explain the similarities between the Larnaca and Pyrgi texts: beside the suffixes of the 3rd singular, both texts make extensive use of the prothetic *'aleph* (cf. *'z* “this” in Pyrgi, l. 2, *'bbt* “in the temple”, line 5; *'bmqdš* “in the sanctuary” in Larnaca 2, line 3; *'bh'y* “during my life,” line 7),<sup>66</sup> both use similar dating formularies and perform ceremonies in the month *zbh šmš*; Larnaca 2 mentions the cult of Melqart only, but Larnaca 3 mentions also that of Astarte. Relations between Cyprus and the west have a long tradition: regarding Carthage, its oft repeated founding legend, the redaction of which, as it came down to us,<sup>67</sup> is certainly late, emphasizes the links with that island. Limiting ourselves to the epigraphic field, the famous inscribed gold pendant from the so called Yada‘milk tomb (*KAI 73*)<sup>68</sup> with the mention of *pgmlyn* (Pygmalion), around 700 BCE, points again to Cyprus. However, chronology, kind of formulary (even though both inscriptions contain similar date formularies),<sup>69</sup> the shape of the letters and the historical situation all separate these texts, so that we do not have sufficient material to draw sound conclusions. Even the possibility of linking the Pyrgi and the Larnaca inscriptions with Byblos seems unconvincing. However, in my opinion, the features that in Pyrgi point to Cyprus (or an area comprising Cyprus, as Schmitz has noted)<sup>70</sup> are not accidental. The Larnaca 2 text possibly preserves, in a region of Cyprus peripheral with respect to the Phoenician territory led by Kition, writing traditions not yet unified and no longer surviving in the east but attested more than two centuries earlier by a scribe working in the west.

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<sup>65</sup> Compare the analysis by Schmitz, “Phoenician Text.”

<sup>66</sup> However, the same expressions, *bmqdš* and *bh'y* without prothetic *'aleph* are used in other passages of the Larnaca text (lines 7, 8); the demonstrative is *z* and not *'z* as in Pyrgi and frequently in the Phoenician of Cyprus.

<sup>67</sup> See, amongst many other contributions, John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro, “Byrsa: La ruse d’Élissa et la fondation de Carthage,” *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 40 (1985): 328–42; S. Ribichini, “Didone l’errante e la pelle di bue,” in *Miti mediterranei: Atti del convegno internazionale*, ed. Ignazio E. Buttitta (Palermo: Fondazione Ignazio Buttitta, 2008), 102–14 (with sources and main bibliography).

<sup>68</sup> Gibson, *Textbook*, no. 18 and commentary on the name *pgmlyn* on p. 70.

<sup>69</sup> Larnaca 1 (*CIS 1.95*) is a dedication beginning with the name of the divinity: it is however a bilingual Greek and Phoenician, partially reproducing a Greek dedication to Athena.

<sup>70</sup> Schmitz, “Phoenician Text;” although the data cited are not enough to define a “Mediterranean dialect.”

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# A Curse of the Division of Land: A New Reading of the Bukān Aramaic Inscription Lines 9–10

Adam L. Bean

Since its initial publication in 1996, the Bukān Aramaic Inscription has been re-analyzed and assessed in over twenty publications.<sup>1</sup> These discussions have for

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It is a great pleasure to submit this article in honor of my professor and advisor, P. Kyle McCarter Jr., with utmost gratitude for his magisterial instruction and patient advising throughout my doctoral studies at Johns Hopkins University. Special thanks are also due here to Theodore J. Lewis; this project began in his Old Aramaic seminar at JHU and has benefited substantially from his evaluation and collaboration. I am also most grateful to my colleague Hossein Badamchi of the University of Tehran for coordinating the acquisition of new photographs of the inscription, and we collectively thank Sedigheh Piran (Head and Keeper of the Inscriptions Department) and Mahboubeh Ghelich Khani (Photographer) at the National Museum of Iran in Tehran for producing and sharing new photographs used for this study.

<sup>1</sup> Rasoul-e Bashash Kanzaq, "Lecture complète de l'inscription de Bukān," in *Recueil d'Articles du 1er colloque: Langues, inscriptions et textes anciens, Shirza 12–14 Esfand 1370 (2–4 mars 1991)* (Téhéran, 1996), 25–39; André Lemaire, "Jérémie XXV 10B et la stèle araméenne de Bukān," *VT* 47 (1997): 543–45; Kanzaq, "Une inscription araméenne du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C. trouvée à Bukān (Azerbaïdjan Iranien)," *Studia Iranica* 27 (1998): 15–30; Kanzaq, "L'inscription araméenne de Bukān et son intérêt historique," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 142 (1998): 293–300; Kanzaq, "La stèle araméenne de Bukān: Mise au point épigraphique," *NABU* 1999 (1999): 57–58; Javier Teixidor, "Antiquités Sémitiques," *Annuaire du Collège de France* 98 (1997–1998): 713–36; Teixidor, "L'inscription Araméenne de Bukān, Relecture," *Semitica* 49 (1999): 117–21; Josef Tropper, "Orthographische und linguistische Anmerkungen zur aramäischen Inschrift von Bukān," *NABU* 1998.4 (1998): 97–98; Israel Eph'al, "The Bukān Aramaic Inscription: Historical Considerations," *IEJ* 49 (1999): 116–21; Michael Sokoloff, "The Old Aramaic Inscription from Bukan: A Revised Interpretation," *IEJ* 49 (1999): 105–15; Richard C. Steiner, "Three Grievous Curses from the Aramaic Inscription from Bukān," *Lešonenu* 63 (2000–2001): 239–46; Alexander Sima, "Zu Formular und Syntax der alt-aramäischen Inschrift aus Bukān (um 700 v. Chr.)," *Mediterranean Language Review* 14 (2002): 113–24; G. Wilhelm Nebe, "Bemerkung zur alt-aramäischen Inschrift aus Bukān," *Mediterranean Language Review* 15 (2003): 181–83; Francesco Aspesi, "Uno specifico tipo di formula di maledizione in epigrafi antico-aramaiche," *ACME* 54 (2003): 25–34; Frederick Mario Fales, "Evidence for West-East Contacts in the Eighth Century BC: The Bukan Stele," in *Continuity of Empires: Assyria, Media, Persia*, History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 5 (Padova, Italy:



the most part produced plausible readings for all components of the inscription. However, one sentence spanning lines nine and ten has eluded consensus. The identification of several of its letters are debated, and none of the interpretations previously offered have been entirely convincing. Here I propose a new reading and interpretation of this sentence which is more epigraphically and philologically defensible, and more logical within the surrounding context. This new interpretation demonstrates that the much-debated sentence corresponds to a widely-attested Semitic maledictory idiom, the curse of the division of land, and enables new suggestions regarding the literary structure of the entire curse passage preserved in the Bukān Inscription.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE INSCRIPTION

The Bukān Inscription is comprised of two stone stela fragments; the first was excavated in 1985 at Tapeh Qalāychi in Iranian Azerbaijan, the second adjoining piece came from the antiquities market in Tehran in 1990. Below its broken top edge are preserved 13 lines of mostly-complete text. The considerable unused space below these lines confirms that they preserve the end of the inscription. Its script suggests a date around the end of the eighth century BCE, with the Nerab Stela Si'-gabbar providing the closest paleographic comparandum.<sup>2</sup> The inscription's contents are a series of curses against another king who would vandalize the monument, a common component of monumental inscriptions. I read the text of the inscription, with minor reconstructions, as follows:

1. zy.yhns.'yt.nšb['] .]žňh[.]mň[.]'šrh]
2. blħmh.'w.bšlm.[k]l.mh.mwtn'.[k]
3. zy.hwh.bkl.'rq'.yšmwh.'lhn.b[m]
4. t.mlk[']'.hw'.włš.h'.l' lhn.włš.
5. h'.lħlđy.zy.bz'tr.šb'.šwrh.
6. yhynqn.'gl.ħd.w'l.ýšb'.wšb

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S.a.r.g.o.n. Editrice e Libreria, 2003), 131–48; Fales, “Aramaic Stela Fragment: The Bukān Inscription,” trans. K. Lawson Younger Jr., *COS* 3.89:219; Mario Liverani, “Shamshi-ilu, Ruler of Hatti and Guti, and the Sefire and Bukan Steles,” in *Scritti in onore di Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti*, ed. Daniela Bredi, Leonardo Capezzone, Wasim Dahmash, Lucia Rostagno (Roma: 2008), 2:751–62; Krzysztof J. Baranowski, “The Old Aramaic and Biblical Curses,” *Liber Annuus* 62 (2012): 173–201; Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 91–93; Edward Lipiński, “Inscription from Tepe Qalaichi,” in *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics IV* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 19–28; Frederick Mario Fales and Giulia Francesca Grassi, *L'aramaico antico: Storia, grammatica, testi commentati* (Udine: Forum, 2016), 144–50.

<sup>2</sup> Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 27. The dating of the Nerab Stela of Si'-Gabbar to ca. 700 BCE is possibly supported by a reference to an individual of this name in a letter from the reign of Sargon II. See Stephen Kaufman, “Si' Gabbar, Priest of Sahr in Nerab,” *JAOS* 90 (1970): 270–71; SAA 1:149, 189.

7. 'nšn.y'pw.btnr.ħd[.]w'l.yml'
8. why.wy'bd.mn.mth.tnn.'šh.wql.
9. rhyn.w'rqh.thwy.mmlh[h].w'ytmd
10. dh.pr'.r'š.wmlk'.h'.zy[.ykt]b.
11. 'l.nšb'.zn[h].krs'h.yhpkh.ħd[d.]
12. whldy.wšb'.šnn.'l.ytn.ħdd.q[lh.]
13. bmth.wymh'hy.kl.lwš.nš[b']znh.

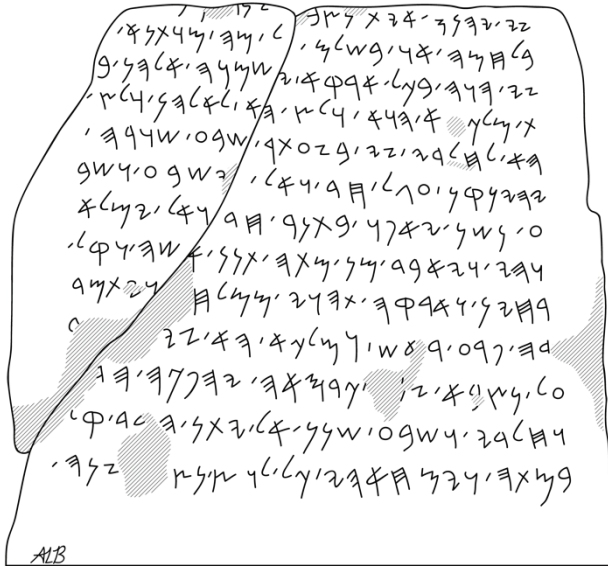


Fig. 1. Drawing of the Bukān Inscription by Adam L. Bean.

To contextualize a new proposed reading for lines 9–10, I will briefly present my understanding of the preceding lines of the inscription, which aggregates proposals from previous treatments. In this discussion I will emphasize parallel expressions to the curses in the Bukān Inscription, and then offer a similar set of close verbal parallels for the new reading of lines 9–10, something previous proposals for this sentence had been lacking.

LINES 1–5: WARNING AGAINST VANDALISM AND GENERAL CURSE

The beginning of the surviving portion of the inscription opens a typical type of passage found in monumental inscriptions warning against vandalism of the monument by another ruler:

...who<sup>3</sup> upsets this stela [from its place]<sup>4</sup>, in war<sup>5</sup> or in peace, every sort of curse [the like of<sup>6</sup>] which is in all the earth—may the gods put it<sup>7</sup> in the [land<sup>8</sup>] of that king.<sup>9</sup> And cursed<sup>10</sup> be he by the gods, and cursed be he by Ḥaldi who is in Z<sup>TR</sup>.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In view of *wmlk' h' zy* in line 10, it is likely that the *zy* which begins the surviving portion of this inscription was likewise preceded by an antecedent, presumably also the hypothetical *mlk* who remains the target of the entire curse passage. Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 110.

<sup>4</sup> After the partially-preserved letters of *znh*, the downstrokes of two letters are visible. Their length and curvature strongly favor *mem* and *nun*. I follow a suggestion first proposed by Sima to reconstruct *mn 'srh*, “from its place,” based on the strong parallels in the Zakkur (*KAI* 202.B.20–21) and Nerab I (*KAI* 225.6) inscriptions. Sima, “Zu Formular und Syntax der alt-aramäischen Inschrift aus Bukân,” 114.

<sup>5</sup> In parallel with *bšlm*, *lḥmh* must be a previously unattested noun derivative of the root *lḥm* relating to war (e.g., Hebrew *lḥm* I, noun *milḥāmā*), not of the root *lḥm* relating to food and nourishment (e.g., Hebrew *lḥm* II, noun *leḥem*; attested in Old Aramaic as *lḥmh*, “his food,” in the Tell Fekheriye Inscription, line 17). This usage of the root *lḥm* I in Old Aramaic is joined only by an apparent Gt verbal form in the Tel Dan Inscription, line 2 (*[bh]tlḥmh*, “when he fought him”). Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 19; Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 108–9.

<sup>6</sup> Sokoloff proposed the restoration of *k* in the break at the left edge where space allows for one letter, producing *kzy*, “like which, as much as,” an expression attested in later Aramaic. Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 109.

<sup>7</sup> This interpretation follows the proposal of Sokoloff and Teixidor to understand *yšmwh* as a form of the verb *šym* and the main verb of the first sentence (Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 110; Teixidor, “L'inscription araméenne de Bukân,” 118). Lemaire had instead understood it as a form of *šmm*, “to destroy,” and the beginning of a new sentence. Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 20.

<sup>8</sup> Based on the occurrence of *mt*, “land,” in lines 8 and 13 of the inscription, Sokoloff proposed restoring a *mem* at the broken left edge of the line, and thus read *mt* here as well. Compared to the following lines, the margin seems a bit tight, but there appears to be just enough room for one letter. While there are other possibilities, this reconstruction seems the most likely. Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 110 n. 31.

<sup>9</sup> The inscription at this point contains an enigma. Line 10 seems to confirm that the primary referent of pronouns throughout this inscription is *mlk' h(w)'*, “that king.” Yet here between the *k* and *'* there is a circular depression in the stone which occupies enough space for a single letter. While the restoration of a *taw* has been suggested, producing *mlkt'*, “kingdom,” this obscures the referent of the pronouns which follow and clashes with the preserved reference to *mlk' h'* in line 10. There also does not seem to be enough vertical space for a *taw* to have been lost; the vertical stroke ought to be visible above or below the damaged area. Thus, it may be that the damage to the surface was present when the text was inscribed and the scribe worked around it, or alternatively that the circular depression is a deliberate effacing of the stone to remove an error. There also appears to be a sudden jump in the vertical alignment of the line between the *kap* and *'alef*, as if the scribe was correcting an errant drift of the line.

<sup>10</sup> This sentence was greatly clarified by Sokoloff's suggestion that the word *lš* here is a passive participle of a verbal root *\*lwz*, attested in Biblical Hebrew as *lw/yš* with the meaning “to boast, scoff, deride,” but in later Aramaic as *lwṭ*, “curse” (Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 110–11). The connection between these Aramaic and Hebrew roots had not been clearly understood previously. Reconstruction of the original form of the root as *lwz*, and its association with curses, is possibly further supported by the occurrence in Ugaritic of the noun *lztm* in *KTU*<sup>3</sup> 1.169:11, an incantation against sorcery.

<sup>11</sup> The final word of this line must be a toponym, but its reading and identification have been much debated. There is not an exact Old Aramaic parallel for the format DN *zy b*-GN, with both the

This prohibition of vandalism of the inscription, an action indicated by the verb *yhns*, is closely paralleled in the roughly contemporary Zakkur (*KAI* 202.B.20) and Nerab 1 (*KAI* 225.6) inscriptions.<sup>12</sup> This opening warning prefaces the direct pronouncement of a general curse and specific maledictions listed thereafter. The general curse invokes first “the gods,” and then the prominent Urartian deity of the region, Ḫaldi. The final sentence of this section formally pronounces a curse with the passive participle *lš*, matching the syntax of curse formulae found elsewhere with the more common verbal root *ʿrr*, such as Hebrew inscriptions from Khirbet el-Qôm which have the format *ʿrr* PN *lyhwh*, “cursed be PN by Yahweh.”<sup>13</sup>

#### LINES 5B–9A: THREE CURSES OF THE LOSS OF FERTILITY

Following these first two sentences that threaten curses if another ruler should vandalize the stela and then formally pronounce a general curse, a series of specific maledictions are recited, each one corresponding closely to idioms attested in other Northwest Semitic texts. The first two are examples of “maximal effort, minimal gain” curses,<sup>14</sup> and the third continues the theme of fertility vanishing from the land:

*May seven cows nurse one calf and it not be sated, and may seven women bake in one oven and not fill it, and may the smoke of fire and the sound of millstones vanish from his land.*

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relative pronoun and the preposition *b*, but similar constructions using either of these elements (DN *zy* GN or DN *b*-GN) are common in Northwest Semitic. The Elephantine Aramaic texts do have the formulation *yhw ʿlh ʿzy byb*, “Yahu, the god who is in Yeb,” and variant forms of the same basic expression. See: Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited, and Translated into Hebrew and English* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Eisenbrauns, 1986), 2:60–63.

<sup>12</sup> These have been understood as either G forms of an otherwise unattested root *hns* (*DNWSI*, s. v. “hns.”), as unparalleled C forms of the common root *nws*, or as Sokoloff suggests, as C forms of the root *nss*, attested in later Aramaic (Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 108).

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Naveh, “Hebrew Graffiti from the First Temple Period,” *IEJ* 51 (2001): 194–207; see also 1 Sam 26:19, *ʿrwym hm lpny yhwh*. The same sentence structure is frequently attested for analogous blessing formulae as well. See Ruth 2:20, *brk hw ʿlyhwh*, and multiple inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Khirbet el-Qôm (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004], 283–84, 290, 293, 409).

<sup>14</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West-East Contacts in the Eighth Century BC,” 137–38.

The first curse closely matches passages from the Sefire<sup>15</sup> and Tell Fekheriye<sup>16</sup> inscriptions:

Text	Number: 7/100	Subject: cows	Verb: nurse	Object: calf	Result: not be sated
Bukān 5–6	šb'	šwrh	yhynqn	'gl ḥd	w'l yšb'
Sefire 1.A.22–23	[wšb' <sup>17</sup> ]	šwrh	yhynqn	'gl	w'l yšb'
Fekheriye 20–21	wm'h	swr	lhynqn	'gl	w'l yrwyh

Table 1: Curses against Cows Nursing

The Bukān and Sefire versions are nearly identical, only differing in Bukān's added *ḥd*, “one.” The Fekheriye inscription names one hundred cows instead of seven, uses its idiosyncratic orthography of *s* for *t* in *swr*, has the precative *lamed* form of the verb *lhynqn*, and employs a different verb *yrwyh* in place of *yšb'*.<sup>18</sup> It nonetheless clearly reflects the same idiom.

The next curse closely corresponds with another from the Tell Fekheriye inscription, and possibly, following the suggestions of Kaufman and Zuckerman,<sup>19</sup> with a much-debated passage in Sefire 1.A.24. To these three Aramaic texts can be added a threat of divine punishment in Leviticus which shares all of the same elements:

<sup>15</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, rev. ed. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Ali Abou-Assaf, Pierre Bordreuil, and Alan R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekheriye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne*, Études Assyriologiques 7 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> The number seven is restored for this line in Sefire, but extant in the preceding and subsequent curses.

<sup>18</sup> The consonance between *šb'* and *yšb'* (\**yšb'*) in the Bukān and Sefire curses has a certain attractiveness that might suggest these represent the more standard wording of the curse. In the Sefire inscription, this exists in four consecutive curses, expressing the same sentiment directed toward nursing women, mares, cows, and ewes. The Tell Fekheriye curses include three of the same statements, but in each *šb'* and *yšb'* are replaced with *m'h* and *yrwy*.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen A. Kaufman, “Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh,” *Maarav* 3 (1982): 137–75; Bruce Zuckerman, “On Being ‘Damned Certain’: The Story of a Curse in the Sefire Inscription and Its Interpretation,” in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Astrid B. Beck, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 422–35.

Text	Number: 7/100/10	Subject: women	Verb: bake	Location: oven	Object: bread	Result: not fill/not be satisfied
Bukān 6–8	wšb'	nšn	y'pw	btnr ḥd		w'l yml' why <sup>20</sup>
Sefire I.A 24	wšb'	bñth	yḥpn	bšt	lḥm	w'l yḥḥgn <sup>21</sup>
Fekheriye 22	wm'h	nšwn	l'pn	btnwr	lḥm	w'l yml' nh
Lev 26:26 <sup>22</sup>	'sr	nšym	w'pw	btnwr 'ḥd	lḥmkm	whšybw lḥmkm bmšql w'klm wl' tšb'w <sup>23</sup>

Table 2: Curses against Women Baking

For this curse, Bukān accords with Fekheriye and Leviticus on the subject, “women,” while Sefire has the debated reading *bñth*, “his daughters.” All seem to use the verbal root *'py/h*, although Sefire’s *yḥpn* remains difficult for its unexpected causative form and loss of *'alef*.<sup>24</sup> Alongside *btn(w)r* in the other three, Sefire’s *bšt* is perplexing, but Zuckerman has suggested an interpretation of “oven, burner,” comparing the Syriac root *swt*, “to burn, consume.”<sup>25</sup> As in the previous curse, Bukān adds *ḥd*, which happens to be paralleled by *'ḥd* in Leviticus. Bukān is peculiar in omitting any reference to *lḥm* as the object of the baking;

<sup>20</sup> The apparent masculine form of the verbs *y'pw* and *yml' why* in the Bukān inscription, in contrast to the preceding feminine *yḥynqn*, has been much discussed. Sokoloff attributes it to an errant stone-carver, given the similarity of the two letters in this script (Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 111–12), while Lemaire considers it a grammatical error (Lemaire, “La stèle araméenne de Bukān,” 58). Tropper suggests that *nšn* actually denotes “men,” a plural of *nš* with apheresis of initial *'alef* (Tropper, “Orthographische und Linguistische Anmerkungen,” 97), but the parallel forms of the curse, which all have women as the subject, weigh against this.

<sup>21</sup> Kaufman read *yml' n* here, certainly the expected reading in view of the parallel texts, but this appears difficult to defend based on the best images now available from the West Semitic Research Project. The initial *y* and final *n* are both clear; the first root letter is more faint, but certainly looks like a *h*; portions of what appears to be an *r* next are obscured by damage, but there is certainly nothing to suggest an *l*; and the shape of a *g* for the final root consonant is reasonably clear as well. Despite Zuckerman’s statements that the photographic evidence for this word was neutral, it appears that the reading *yml' n* is not epigraphically defensible. The best solution may be Lemaire’s suggestion that *yḥrgn* be understood as a causative form of *rgg* (“to desire”), meaning “to appease, satisfy.” André Lemaire and Jean-Marie Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l’Assyrie de Shamshi-Ilu* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1984), 121.

<sup>22</sup> Actual word order: *w'pw 'sr nšym lḥmkm btnwr 'ḥd whšybw lḥmkm bmšql w'klm wl' tšb'w*.

<sup>23</sup> Leviticus 26:26 differs considerably in the description of the outcome of this curse, but it does happen to employ the same verb *šb'* that features in the previous group of curses.

<sup>24</sup> But, as Zuckerman notes, there appears to be one other case of the loss of initial *'alef* with a causative prefixed verb in the Sefire inscriptions. Zuckerman, “On Being ‘Damned Certain,’” 433.

<sup>25</sup> Zuckerman, “On Being ‘Damned Certain,’” 434.

but, it agrees with Fekheriye in the wording of the result of the curse.

The final curse of this section has an approximate parallel in Sefire (Fekheriye lacks any corresponding expression for this curse), and a stronger one in the book of Jeremiah<sup>26</sup>:

Text	Verb: vanish/not be heard	Location	Subject/Object: smoke/fire	Subject/Object: sound of X
Bukān 8–9	wy'bd	mn mth	tnn <sup>27</sup> 'šh	wql rhyn
Jer 25:10 <sup>28</sup>	wh'bdt	mhm	w'wr nr	qwl ššwn wqwl šmhh qwl htn wqwl klh qwl rhym
Sefire 1.A.29 <sup>29</sup>	w'l ytšm'	b' rpd		ql knr

Table 3: Curses of Fire and Sound Vanishing

The Sefire curse expresses a similar statement of “the sound of X” not being heard in the land, but its only precise verbal correspondence to the Bukān curse is the word *ql*. The curse from Jeremiah uses the same verb *'bd*, and among its series of “sound of X” objects is *qwl rhym*, matching Bukān’s *ql rhyn*. The final object of the Jeremiah curse, *'wr nr*, “light of the lamp,” is loosely analogous to Bukān’s *tnn 'šh*, “smoke of the fire.”

#### LINES 9B–10A: TWO CURSES OF DEVASTATION DIRECTED AT THE LAND (’RQ)

The pair of curses which follow in Bukān lines 9 and 10 appear to share a focus on *'rqh*, “his land,”<sup>30</sup> which is stated in emphatic position at the beginning of the

<sup>26</sup> Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 23–24; Lemaire, “Jérémie XXV 10B et la stèle araméenne de Bukān,” 543–45. Lemaire also notes the echo of Jer 15:1–14 in Rev 18:21–23. In fact, the φωνή κιθαρῶδων (“sound of the harpists”) of Rev 18:22 is even more reminiscent of Sefire’s *ql knr* (the Septuagint translates *kinnōr* most often with κιθάρα). Both are also comparable to Ezek 26:13b: *wqwl knwryk l' yšm' 'wd* and Isa 24:8 *šbt mšwš knwr*.

<sup>27</sup> Lemaire suggested that this is the word *tnn*, “smoke,” first attested in Qumran Aramaic and common in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 23 n. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Actual word order: *wh'bdt mhm qwl ššwn wqwl šmhh qwl htn wqwl klh qwl rhym w'wr nr*.

<sup>29</sup> Actual word order: *w'l ytšm' ql knr b' rpd*.

<sup>30</sup> The variation between *mt*, “land” and *'rq* in this inscription is fascinating. In line 3, *kl 'rq'* is perhaps “all the earth,” and the *mt mlk'* which follows denotes the king’s specific political territory. Such a distinction is clearer in the Tell Fekheriye inscription, where *'rq* is paired with *šmyn*, while *mt* refers to a specific territory. In line 8 of Bukān, *mth*, “his land,” is mentioned again as the locus for the curse. But then the next two curses of lines 9–10, as I understand them, are both directed against *'rqh*. If there is a distinction from *mt* intended with *'rq* here, it seems not to be the same one typically

first curse. It further supplies the subject for its main verb and is the apparent antecedent of the suffixed object pronoun of the verb which begins the second curse.<sup>31</sup> Interpretation of the first statement has been uncontested:

*And his land: may it become salted...*

This “curse of salt” has a conceptual parallel in Sefire 1.A.36, *wyẓr' bhn hdd mlh wšhlyn*, “And may Hadad sow in them salt and weeds,” and in the similar statement in Judg 9:45, *wyẓr'h mlh*, “and he sowed it with salt.” Various other references in biblical and Near Eastern texts show that the sowing of salt was a ritual act aimed at rendering the soil infertile, and as in Judg 9:45, could be a punitive action taken by a victor against a conquered city.<sup>32</sup>

The second of this pair of curses has remained the most enigmatic portion of the inscription. Here I propose a new solution that, like each of the previous sentences, finds strong verbal parallels in other Semitic curse expressions. First, I will review the epigraphic and philological problems with previous proposals.



Fig. 1. Line 9b, *wytmdd*. Image courtesy of the National Museum of Iran in Tehran.

suggested for *'rq'* in line 3. Sokoloff suggests that, based on the curse of line 9, *'rq* here refers specifically to soil (Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 112). This specific explanation makes less sense in my reading of the subsequent curse, however. The sense of *'rq* here seems to be more generally “real estate” or even specifically arable land. The distinction between *mt* and *'rq* here thus seems a bit subtler: *mt* is used when the writer wishes to indicate the sense of “within the discrete political territory that the king rules,” while *'rq* in this case refers to the land itself as a physical commodity which can be spoiled (salted) or divided up (see below).

<sup>31</sup> Such fronting of the referent of multiple pronominal elements that follow seems to occur three times in the surviving text of the inscription. The king in question in lines 1–5, most likely first referenced in the line which preceded the surviving line 1 and referenced again with *mlk' hw'* in line 4, is the referent of two pronouns *h'* in lines 4 and 5. Then after the first three curses, *'rqh* is fronted in line 9, supplying the subject of the following verb *thwy* and the referent of the object pronoun of *wytmddh*. Then in line 10 *mlk' h'* is fronted again, supplying the referent of the possessive suffixes of *krs' h* and *mth* and the object suffix of *wymh' hy*. This important detail has been mostly ignored in previous discussions of the second curse from lines 9–10.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., Deut 29:23, Job 39:6, Jer 17:6, Zeph 2:9. F. C. Fensham, “Salt as Curse in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East,” *BA* 25 (1962): 48–50.



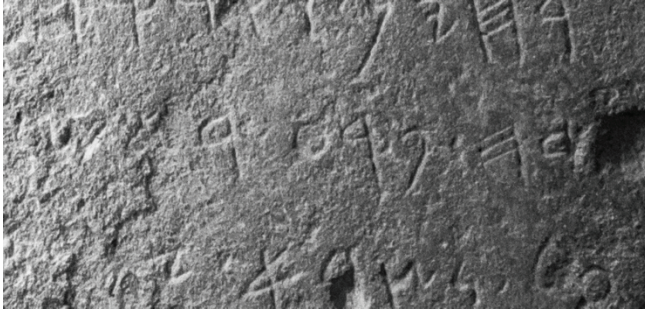


Fig. 2. Line 10a, *dh . pr ' r 'š*. Image courtesy of the National Museum of Iran in Tehran.

Lemaire, following the *editio princeps*, read this sequence as *myt mr 'h pr ' r 'š*, translating “(que) mort (soit) son maître, échevelant la tête.”<sup>33</sup> The text this produces is dubiously intelligible, and seems ill-situated in the context of the other curses in the inscription. Moreover, it has multiple epigraphical problems. While the initial letter is partly obscured by the break, the surviving portion has the characteristic curved head stroke and upright stance of a *waw*. Every curse within this section of the inscription begins with a *waw*, so this is certainly the expected reading here as well. Lemaire also reads no word divider between the proposed words *myt* and *mr 'h*—there is indeed no space at all for one—despite the use of word dividers without exception in the rest of the inscription. The final letter of line 9 is debatable between *dalet* and *resh*, and I will return to this issue below. Especially difficult is Lemaire’s reading of the *'alef* to begin line 10. The shape of the head of this letter quite rounded like that of a *resh* or a *dalet*, and its short vertical stroke favors the latter, a possibility Lemaire did acknowledge. Although some *'alefs* in the inscription do have a more rounded point instead of a sharp angle, there is also no trace here of any extension of the horizontal strokes to the right of the vertical. Even with the damage present the top horizontal stroke’s extension ought be visible, but it clearly ends at the vertical stroke. The vertical stroke is also far too short below the head of the letter for an *'alef*. The reading of *pr ' r 'š* after this is mostly undisputed, but Lemaire’s translation strains to make sense of the context produced by the reading of the first half. I will return to the interpretation of these words below after establishing the reading of the verb.

Teixidor’s proposed reading of *wytmrdh pr ' r 'š*, “et que se rebelle contre lui

<sup>33</sup> Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 25.

le commandant en chef,"<sup>34</sup> is stronger overall, and has gained more acceptance.<sup>35</sup> He identifies the initial *waw* and reads the initial letter of line 10 as a *dalet*. The malediction Teixidor's reading produces however is rather vague, lacks close parallels within curse contexts, and lacks logical flow in the sequence of curses. Also, in this reading the referent of the object suffix abruptly redirects the curse back to a distant "him," that is the king, despite the fact that the king himself has not previously been the direct object of any of the specific curses, and that the previous curse with which this one is paired is explicitly directed at *'rqh*, "his land." Thus, Teixidor's proposal still has various difficulties which invite the consideration of alternative readings.

Sokoloff subsequently proposed the reading, *wytmrrh pr' r'š*, translating "may it make him/it bitter from poisonous weeds."<sup>36</sup> As noted previously, reading the first letter of line 10 as a *resh* is quite difficult; the vertical stroke is far too short. Additionally, Sokoloff's interpretation requires an emendation of the text. Although he reads the letters *wytmrrh*, he then suggests, "The *yod* is superfluous and should be considered an error of the stone cutter, who may have confused 3rd masc. sing. and 3rd fem. sing. verbal forms."<sup>37</sup> Sokoloff prefers the emended reading *wtmrrh* to make the verb agree in gender with *'rqh*, which he proposes to be the subject. This appeal to emendation is not ideal and making *'rqh* the subject leaves the referent of the object pronoun murky, as illustrated by Sokoloff's equivocation "him/it." This further leaves *pr' r'š* dangling with no preposition as an apparent instrumental dative. The translation "bitter weeds" disregards the common meanings of the roots *pr'* and *r'š* in favor of two rarer homophonous roots, Syriac *per'ā'*, "sprout," and Biblical Hebrew *rō'š* II, "poison, poisonous plant," which are nowhere attested in such a combination.<sup>38</sup> The problems with Sokoloff's interpretation of this sentence are thus numerous and substantial.

Lipiński recently added a new proposal to read *wytmdbh pq' r'š*, "and may sway back and forth in it the crack of earthquake."<sup>39</sup> While Lipiński is the first to adopt in publication the reading of *dalet* at the end of line 9, with which I concur, his other divergences from previous readings are difficult to defend. The proposed reading of *bet* at the beginning of line 10 is impossible; there is no trace of a long curving down stroke. Further, if *wytmdbh* is a complete word, the line should end

<sup>34</sup> For explanation of the translation "commandant en chef," Teixidor says only "cf. *tm' mhnt'* in the Ahiram inscription from Byblos, a vague and unexplained comparison (Teixidor, "Antiquités Sémitiques," 734). See further discussion below.

<sup>35</sup> Teixidor, "Antiquités Sémitiques," 734; Fales "Evidence for West-East Contacts," 134–35; Fales and Grassi, *L'aramaico antico*, 144–45; Sima, "Zu Formular und Syntax der alt-aramäischen Inschrift aus Bukān," 121.

<sup>36</sup> Sokoloff, "Old Aramaic Inscription," 113–14.

<sup>37</sup> Sokoloff, "Old Aramaic Inscription," 113 n. 48.

<sup>38</sup> Sokoloff, "Old Aramaic Inscription," 113–14.

<sup>39</sup> Lipiński, "Inscription from Tepe Qalaichi," 23.

with a word divider, as all previous line-ending words do, but none is present. The *qof* in his proposed *pq*ʿ is not defensible. The *resh* is quite clear in photographs; only a small spot of damage is present to the right of the vertical stroke, which must have caught his eye. The same is true of the proposed ʿ*ayin* in *r*ʿš. Lipiński’s drawing shows an ʿ*ayin* surrounded by surface damage here, but the top portion of an ʿ*alef* is unmistakable in photographs. The resulting “and may sway back and forth in it the crack of earthquake,” also seems an improbable construction. He appeals to Jer 51:29 as another earthquake imprecation, but the only verbal correspondence between Lipiński’s reading of the Bukān inscription and Jer 51:29 would be the putative noun *r*ʿš, “earthquake” (to be rejected epigraphically) in the former and the verbal form of *r*ʿš, “to quake” in the latter.<sup>40</sup>

The epigraphic and philological difficulties with each of the previous proposals are evident. First, the verb must be read as *wytmddh*. Although each of these individual letter identifications has been endorsed in previous proposals, none has adopted this specific combination. While the letter at the end of line 9 has been read by most as a *resh*, comparison with other examples of both letters from the inscription shows that it is more easily identified as a *dalet*. Only one *resh* in the inscription approaches the shortness of the vertical stroke in this letter (in the word *krs*ʿh in line 11), but the relative size of its head to the vertical stroke is still smaller. All other examples of *resh* in the inscription are considerably taller, and even one or two examples of securely-identified *dalets* appear slightly taller than the form in question here. The first letter of line 10 is likewise best read as a *dalet*, as Teixidor proposed. The main peculiarity of this form is the extension of the vertical stroke above the head of the letter, but this feature is also present on the *dalet* in line 5.



Fig. 4. Comparison of Dalet and Resh in the Inscription.

<sup>40</sup> Lipiński, “Inscription from Tepe Qalaichi,” 23–24.

In this proposed reading, the verb *ytmddh* must be a prefixed tD form of the root *mdd* with an object suffix.<sup>41</sup> The primary semantic range of the verbal root *mdd* in Semitic languages has to do with measuring and, by extension, dividing and apportioning, often with reference to food commodities or land.<sup>42</sup> Although at first glance this might not seem a likely verb of choice in a cursing context, in fact it is part of a widely attested curse idiom for the hostile division and apportionment of land. The idiom appears to be an old one in the Semitic-speaking Near East. The concluding curse section of the fifteenth-century Akkadian Idrimi inscription from Alalakh includes the following pronouncement against anyone who removes the statue: *ilānu ša šamē u eršeti šarrūšu u māišu limdudūšu*, “May the gods of heaven and earth *measure out* his kingdom and his land.”<sup>43</sup> This statement, cited in the *CAD* entry for *madādu* under the heading “uncertain meaning,”<sup>44</sup> has long seemed unusual, prompting readers of the text to look for comparanda in Northwest Semitic,<sup>45</sup> including a possible connection to expressions in the Hebrew Bible indicating the division of land.<sup>46</sup> These inquiries were at least partly on the right track, as there are in fact multiple analogous expressions found in the Hebrew Bible using the verb *mdd*, along with the verb *hlq* that appears in synonymous parallelism with *mdd*. The newly-proposed reading of Bukān lines 9–10 now joins this group and allows for clearer appreciation of the idiom. The most relevant examples are presented in table 4.

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<sup>41</sup> The careful reader may notice that twice in this inscription masculine singular object suffixes on verbs are spelled *-hy* (*yml why* in line 8 and *wymh hy* in line 13). This spelling and the pronunciation it implies (*-hī*) may be specific to certain forms, or a free variation. In line 2, *yšmwh* also has the suffix as simple *-h*. In *ytmddh* I take the suffix *-h* to be feminine singular, referring to *ʾrqh*.

<sup>42</sup> See *HALOT*, s. v. “מדד.”

<sup>43</sup> Normalized from: DINGIR.MEŠ ša AN u KI LUGAL-ut-šu u<sub>3</sub> ma-at-šu<sup>KI</sup> lim-du-du-šu. For the original publication see Sidney Smith, *The Statue of Idrimi-Mi* (London: British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara, 1949), 22; for more updated versions and discussions of alternative readings of this line, see: Gary Howard Oller, “The Autobiography of Idrimi: A New Text Edition with Philological and Historical Commentary” (PhD diss.; University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 120, 125; Manfred Dietrich and Oswald Loretz, “Die Inschrift der Statue des Königs Idrimi von Alalakh,” *UF* 13 (1981): 201–68; Jacob Lauinger, “The Electronic Idrimi,” *Oracc*, <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/aemw/alalakh/idrimi/corpus/>.

<sup>44</sup> *CAD* 10.1, s. v. “madādu A.2.”

<sup>45</sup> Greenstein and Marcus suggested re-reading *ebla* (EŠ) *limdudūšu*, “let them have him executed” (lit. “measure him by a rope”), appealing to 2 Sam 8:2, where David “measures” (*waymaddādēm*) his Moabite captives with a rope to determine which of them will be executed (Edward L. Greenstein and David Marcus, “The Akkadian Inscription of Idrimi,” *JANES* 8 [1976]: 94–95). Although 2 Sam 8:2 is fascinating for illustrating the range of uses of *mdd*, a precise connection of that passage with the use of the verb in Idrimi is forced, and this alternative reading of the cuneiform has not been retained in more recent editions of the text. See Jacob Lauinger, “The Electronic Idrimi” (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/aemw/alalakh/idrimi/corpus/>).

<sup>46</sup> Matitiahū Tsevat, “Alalakhiana,” *HUCA* 29 (1958): 124.

Text	Verb: apportion/ divide	Subject: deity	Subject/ Indirect Obj.: enemy	Object: land/ polity	Instrument: string
Bukān 9–10	wytmddh		pr' r' š	(' rqh)	
Idrimi 95	limdudūšu	ilānu ša šamê u eršetī		šarrūtšu u mātšu	
Mic 2:4a <sup>47</sup>	ymd* <sup>48</sup>	(yhwh)		hlq 'my	
Mic 2:4b <sup>49</sup>	yhlq	(yhwh)	lšbb	šdynw	
Ps 60:8a // 108:8a	'hlqh	(deity in first person)		škm	
Ps 60:8b // 108:8b <sup>50</sup>	'mdd	(deity in first person)		w' m'q skwt	
Amos 7:17	thlq			'dmtk	bḥbl
Isa 34:17	hlqth	ydw (Yahweh's hand)	(wild animals)	(' ršh, 34:9)	bqw

Table 4: Curses of Division of Land

Bukān 9–10 and Idrimi 95 are most similar in using *mdd* in the context of curses against would-be vandals in monumental inscriptions, but the parallels from the Hebrew bible envision similar actions. Micah 2 condemns wealthy citizens in Israel who consolidate land holdings, predicting that their real estate will soon be divided up. Psalms 60 // 108 repeat an oracle promising that Yahweh would conquer and divide up the lands of Shechem and the Valley of Succoth for the benefit of his people. Promises of victory over other territories surrounding Israel and Judah follow. Amos 7:17 includes a hostile division of land threat among a litany of disasters promised to Amaziah, priest of Bethel, by Amos:

*Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword; your land will be apportioned with a line, and you shall die in an unclean land; Israel will surely go into exile from its land.*

<sup>47</sup> Actual word order: *hlq 'my ymd\**.

<sup>48</sup> MT has this verb as *ymyr* (a Hiphil of *mwr*), “changed.” As has been proposed before, this should be emended to a form of *mdd* in view of the parallelism of *mdd* and *hlq*, and the fact that the Greek and Syriac versions appear to have read the verb as a form of *mdd*. This argument for emendation of the text is unfortunately ignored in the recent *BHQ*. The Greek and Syriac renderings are dismissed, and the textual commentary omits such data as the parallelism of *hlq* and *mdd* in Psalm 60:8 // 108:8 and idiomatic uses of *mdd*, appealing only to the assonance between the Masoretic Text’s *yāmīr* and the subsequent verb *yāmīš* for support of the Masoretic Text. Anthony Gelston, ed., *Biblia Hebraica, Fascicle 13: The Twelve Minor Prophets* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010), 98\*.

<sup>49</sup> Actual word order: *lšbb šdynw yhlq*.

<sup>50</sup> Actual word order: *w' m'q skwt 'mdd*.

Isaiah 34 declares that Edom will be destroyed and become the home of only wild animals, ending with the statement that Yahweh's hand has "apportioned it to them (the animals) with the line."

Each of these texts<sup>51</sup> uses a form of either the verb *mdd* or the verb *hlq*. The approximate synonymy of these verbs is confirmed in their parallel use in Ps 60:8 // 108:8 and, as emended, in Mic 2:4. Each has a specified geographical entity as the object: in Bukān "his land" (understanding *'rqh* as the antecedent of the suffixed pronoun); in Idrimi "his kingdom and his land"; in Micah "the portion of my people" and "our fields"; in Psalms "Shechem" and "the Valley of Succoth"; in Amos "your land"; in Isaiah the land of Edom (the apparent referent of pronouns from 34:9–17). While in Amos the verb is passive, in the other biblical expressions the subject is the Israelite deity, and in Idrimi it is "the gods of heaven and earth." Thus, the subject of the verb in these expressions is most often a divine actor, while the Bukān curse reflects a different convention that I discuss below.

The nuance of *mdd* in this context seems to be an extension from the physical act of measurement (clearly its meaning elsewhere in Hebrew), to the actions of apportionment (as with "six measures of grain" in Ruth 3:15), and the "dividing up"/allotment of land, which the verb *hlq* more often directly denotes. The verb *hlq* is prominent in the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel after the conquest in Joshua, for example (e.g., Josh 14:5, 18:2), and also indicates the division of spoils after a battle (e.g., 1 Sam 30:24) or the dividing of an inheritance (2 Sam 19:30). In the division of land curse idiom, the semantic range of *mdd* seems to fully overlap with the more common *hlq* to connote the hostile division of land.<sup>52</sup> The inclusion of the string used for measurement in Amos 7:17 (*hbl*) and Isa 34:17 (*qw*) draws attention to the literal act of measuring the land, but the expressions still reflect the full implications of the idiom. Such reference to measurement with a string can be included with both the verbs *hlq* (Amos 7:17, Isa 34:17) and *mdd* (2 Sam 2:8).

Comparison with this general curse idiom for the hostile apportionment of land makes the best sense of the reading *wymddh* in the Bukān inscription. The clearest examples of the use of the verb *mdd* in this expression (Idrimi 95, Ps 60:8b // 108:8b) all use D stem forms, as must be the case in Bukān. This preference for D stem forms may be related to the extended meaning of *mdd* to indicate

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<sup>51</sup> Habakkuk 3:6 might reflect another comparable use of *mdd*, but this is more debatable. There the verb *wymdd* has been explained as a hapax related to Arabic *myd*, "to cause to shudder," based on its parallelism with a Hiphil of *ntr* "to cause to jump" (a comparably obscure word). The object of this verb is *'rs*, however, would parallel the uses of *mdd* elsewhere, and it is possible that both verbs in this line have been misunderstood.

<sup>52</sup> As a divine action, even the basic act of measurement itself can be an ominous portent of impending judgment, as in 2 Kgs 21:12–13: "See, I am bringing evil upon Jerusalem and Judah.... I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line, and the plumb over the house of Ahab."

the division/apportionment of land in this idiom; in biblical Hebrew usage basic actions of measuring employ the verb in *qal* or *niphal* forms instead.<sup>53</sup>

The form of the verb with an infix *taw* in the Bukān inscription might seem unexpected. Most of the few extant *-t-* stems in Old Aramaic appear to indicate passive voice,<sup>54</sup> but the form *[bh]tlh̄mh* in the Tel Dan inscription suggests that a wider range of functions was present.<sup>55</sup> Other phases of Aramaic show *-t-* forms reflecting such nuances as ingressive/inchoative aspect or reflexive voice.<sup>56</sup> Since *wymddh* clearly has a suffixed object pronoun *-h*, a simple passive is ruled out. The reflexive seems to be the simplest explanation. In Biblical Hebrew, reflexive Hitpael forms regularly take direct objects.<sup>57</sup> Two examples with the verb *nhl* are especially relevant: Num 33:54: *w<sup>h</sup>hitnahaltem 'et-hā'āreš b'gōrāl*, “You shall apportion (for yourselves) the land by lot”; Isa 14:2: *w<sup>h</sup>itnahāllūm bêt yiśrā'ēl*, “And Israel shall possess them for themselves.” The D stem sense of the verb *nhl*, “to apportion as an inheritance,” overlaps with the semantic ranges of *hlq* and *mdd* when their object is land or property, and these two examples correspond to the grammatical structure of the Bukān curse. The subject (*pr' r'š*) apportions the land (the referent of the object suffix *-h*) for himself (indicated by the tD form).

The last piece of this puzzle is the subject of the verb *mdd* in the Bukān inscription, the enigmatic *pr' r'š*. In discussion of these two words, Fales pointed to a pair of obscure biblical passages, both in archaic Hebrew poetry, that appear to be of relevance.<sup>58</sup> In Deut 32:42b, *mr'š pr' t' yb*, has been understood as something like “from the long-haired enemy,” reflecting either some association between warriors and long hair, or perhaps a pejorative designation of enemies as ungroomed and uncivilized.<sup>59</sup> In Judg 5:2, *bpr' pr' t' bysr' l* may be related, but is even more difficult, conventionally translated “when locks were long in Israel.”<sup>60</sup> Whatever this latter example means, the pairing of the words *r'š* and *pr' t* in Deut 32:42b with *yb*, enemy, suggests that *pr' t* and *r'š* used together somehow describe an adversary. The context of curses using *mdd* and analogous verbs now further

<sup>53</sup> A tD form of *mdd* is also attested in 1 Kgs 17:21, when Elijah “stretched himself” (*way-yitmōdēd*) three times over a deceased child, but here the context is much different. It should also be noted that Mic 2:4a might be emended to a Niphal, further complicating the evidence.

<sup>54</sup> Rainer Degen, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Inschriften des 10.–8. Jh. v. Chr* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1969), 67, §56d.

<sup>55</sup> Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, “The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment,” *IEJ* 45 (1995): 13.

<sup>56</sup> Takamitsu Muraoka and Bezalel Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), §49g.

<sup>57</sup> GKC, 369, §117w; Joüon, 413 §125c.

<sup>58</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West-East Contacts,” 135.

<sup>59</sup> For summary and bibliography on this question, see Duane L Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, WBC 6B (Dallas: Word Books, 2002), 819–820.

<sup>60</sup> See e.g., J. Gerald Janzen, “The Root Pr' in Judges 5:2 and Deuteronomy 32:42,” *VT* 39 (1989): 393–406.



supports this. In the other division of land curses cited above, the subject of the verb when explicitly stated is always divine, but Mic 2:4d does add *lšbb*, apparently meaning “to the traitor/enemy,” which supports the notion that what is being suggested in all these curses is that one’s land will be divided up and allotted to an enemy (in Isaiah 34 the wild animals serve as the hostile recipients of the land of Edom). If *pr’ r’š* can indicate an enemy in the Bukān curse by analogy with Deut 32:42b, then it fits the logic of the imprecatory idiom. In fact, a different curse expression for the hostile division of physical property found in Assyrian treaty texts has just such a subject. In the Esarhaddon Succession Treaty one curse states, “May your sons not take possession of your house, but a foreign enemy (*nakru ahu*) divide<sup>61</sup> your goods.”<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Esarhaddon’s treaty with King Baal of Tyre includes, after a curse of defeat in battle, “May a foreign enemy (*nakru ahu*) divide your belongings.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, in this Assyrian conceptual analog to the Northwest Semitic curse of division of land, the subject of the division verb is explicitly a foreign enemy.

The word *pr’* in these apparent expressions denoting an enemy can be understood in at least two ways. One is a derivation from the verbal root *pr’*, “to let loose/free,” used in the Hebrew Bible several times with the object *r’š* to indicate allowing hair to hang loose or be disheveled, specifically in a state of mourning or contrition (e.g., Lev 10:6, 13:45, 21:10; Num 5:18). Thus, *pr’ r’š* could be analyzed as *pr’* being a G passive participle in construct with *r’š*, literally “one unbound of head,”<sup>64</sup> or as an active participle “one who unbinds the head.” Alternatively, *pr’* here can be compared to the Hebrew substantive *pera’* that denotes long or loose-hanging hair in descriptions of vows prohibiting the cutting of one’s hair (Num 6:5; Ezek 44:20). This might also derive from the verb *pr’*, although Akkadian has a noun *pirtu/pertu* that simply means “hair,” suggesting the possibility of an etymology separate from the verb *pr’*. So, the expression may mean either “one unbound of head,” that is having loose-hanging hair, or “one hairy of head,” that is one with long hair. In either case, this is apparently an expression for an archetypal foreign enemy, the last sort of person a king would want to see divide up his kingdom.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The verb for division in both these curses is *zāzu*, which is widely used in Akkadian for the kinds of actions of division of property and allotment of land that the verbs *mdd* and *hlq* indicate in Northwest Semitic. This may further support the notion that use of *mdd* in the Idrimi inscription reflects an idiom native to its West Semitic environs, rather than standard Akkadian usage.

<sup>62</sup> SAA 2:460, 6.430.

<sup>63</sup> SAA 2:27, 5.iv.19’.

<sup>64</sup> An analogous expression in format to this can be seen in Isa 3:3, where *n’šú’ pānīm*, “one lifted of face,” apparently denotes rank and importance.

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that the rationale for this association is not explicitly stated in any of these passages, although readers may intuitively find the association of long or wild hair with a “barbarian” characterization of foreign enemies to be plausible. The only further hint from the usage of these terms themselves might be the references to unbinding the head in contexts of mourning or contrition, which



Thus, following the lengthy argument just presented, I propose that the pair of curses in lines 9 and 10 now be translated:

*And his land—may it become salted, and may one unbound of head<sup>66</sup> (an enemy) divide it up for himself.*

This new interpretation also allows for new reflection on the logic and structure of the entire sequence of curses in the Bukān Inscription. Just as the previous group of curses in lines 5–9 had a thematic unity, each illustrating the vanishing of productivity and fertility from the land, this pair of curses in lines 9–10 seems logically grouped. In both Judg 9:45 and Sefire 1.A.36, the sowing of salt follows the defeat and destruction of cities.<sup>67</sup> The division and apportionment of land by an enemy also typically takes place after a conquest. This is prominently so in the book of Joshua, is reflected in the sequencing of the analogous curse from Esarhaddon’s treaty with King Baal of Tyre, and is implied with varying levels of explicitness in all the biblical attestations of the division of land curse idiom. Thus, both the curses in lines 9–10 of the Bukān Inscription evoke a vision of ruin following defeat. It seems at least plausible to take this analysis one step further and correlate these two main groups of curses with the two circumstances noted at the outset of the inscription in which vandalism of the monument might occur and provoke retribution: “in war or in peace.” The first three curses envision widespread infertility in the land, a feared peacetime disaster. The two curses which follow describe two typical actions of devastation and dispossession that would follow a wartime defeat.

#### LINES 10B–13: TWO CURSES AGAINST REINSCRIBING THE MONUMENT AND SUMMARY CURSE

The final section of the inscription (lines 10–13) returns the focus to a hypothetical king, warning against writing on the stela (presumably to add his own name). Although there are some difficulties in the readings, I follow previous proposals<sup>68</sup> and translate:

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imply that the physical appearance described with these terms was something outside the norms of everyday life.

<sup>66</sup> Or: “a long-haired one.”

<sup>67</sup> In Sefire 1.A.35–36, the sowing of salt is preceded by the curse “Just as this wax is burned by fire, so may Arpad be burned and [her gr]eat [daughter-cities],” and its verbal object is these same cities.

<sup>68</sup> In this section I agree entirely with Sokoloff’s adopted readings and interpretations. See Sokoloff, “Old Aramaic Inscription,” 114.

*And that king who writes<sup>69</sup> on this stela, may Hadad and Haldi overturn his throne, and for seven years may Hadad<sup>70</sup> not give his voice<sup>71</sup> in his land, and may the entire curse<sup>72</sup> of this stela strike him.*

These final curses once again evoke the two major categories suggested for the previous maledictions: military defeat (the throne being overturned) and infertility in the land (the consequence of Hadad withholding rain). Understood in this way, the subtle literary artistry of this text is striking. A general pronouncement of curse is declared for vandalizing the monument, “whether in war or in peace.” Continuing with those categories but inverting the order, peacetime curses of infertility and then wartime curses of devastation and dispossession are pronounced. After a second offending act (re-inscribing the stela) is referenced, the categories invert order again, and a wartime curse of defeat is followed by a peacetime curse of drought. A final declaration of a comprehensive curse ends the inscription much as it began, rounding out a tightly structured passage of warnings and maledictions.<sup>73</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

This paper defends a new reading of lines 9–10 of the Bukān Inscription as an example of the division of land curse idiom employing the verb *md*. The payoff of this new reading is at least fourfold. First, it more plausibly explains this persistently enigmatic passage both epigraphically and philologically than any previous reading. Second, it adds an important new example to the dataset of the division of land curse idiom, as well as to an apparent expression for an enemy using the words *pr* ‘*r* š. Third, it bolsters the already ample evidence of the conversancy of the Bukān Inscription’s author with an impressive range of Northwest Semitic literary expressions of imprecation by demonstrating that the curse in lines 9–10 is also closely paralleled elsewhere like those that precede it. Finally, this new understanding of the curse and the circumstance of military conquest it

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<sup>69</sup> Only the top portion of the *bet* from this word is preserved. Lemaire proposed the widely-accepted reconstruction *yktb*, which is imminently reasonable in view of the context and conceptual parallels in other inscriptions (“Une inscription araméenne,” 26).

<sup>70</sup> All three letters here are partly obscured by damage, but the reading *hdd* can just be discerned.

<sup>71</sup> I.e., thunder, and thus the effect is drought. The lower curve of the *lamed* of *ql* is just perceptible at the edge of the break.

<sup>72</sup> Corresponding to the passive participle *lš* (“cursed”) earlier in the inscription, here the word for curse is a nominal form of this root, *hwš*.

<sup>73</sup> There may be yet further subtlety in this text’s structure. Just as seven cows nurse and seven women bake, and drought is threatened for seven years, between the general statements of curse which begin and end the text exactly seven specific maledictions are pronounced. Of course, the incomplete preservation of the inscription mandates skepticism on this point; it is possible that other sections of curses preceded the preserved text.

implies allows for the new suggestion of a logical and stylistic structure for the sequence of curses in the text based on the alternating categories of war and peace.

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# The Persistence of El in Iron Age Israel and Ammon

Joel S. Burnett

The West Semitic god El figures prominently as head of the pantheon in Late Bronze Age texts from Ugarit, but scholars debate whether the deity continued to play any significant role in Iron Age religion of Syria-Palestine.<sup>1</sup> El's importance for early Israel is reflected in its very name,<sup>2</sup> and a range of biblical texts indicate El's abiding significance for religious conceptions of Israel and Judah well into the first millennium BCE.<sup>3</sup> A concentration of textual evidence points to El's importance in central Transjordan during Iron Age II, especially Ammonite personal names, the Dayr 'Alla (Deir 'Alla) Plaster Inscriptions, and the poetic oracles of Balaam in Num 23–24.<sup>4</sup> El's prominence in these traditions potentially stands in

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I offer this essay with honor, respect, and deep gratitude for my teacher and *Doktorvater*, P. Kyle McCarter Jr.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, W. Herrmann, "El 𐎇𐎏," *DDD*, 274–80; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 135–45. Classic treatments include Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, VTSup 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1955); Pope, "The Status of El at Ugarit," in *Probative Pontificating in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature: Collected Essays*, ed. Mark S. Smith (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 47–61; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 13–75, 177–90.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Ahlström, "Where Did the Israelites Live?," *JNES* 41 (1982): 134; Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed., Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 32.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Gen 14:18–22; 33:20; 46:3; 49:25; Deut 32:8, 43; 2 Sam 23:5; Isa 14:13–14; Ezek 10:5; 28:2; Pss 74:8; 78:35; 82:1; 89:8. See F. M. Cross, "𐎇𐎏 'ēl," *TDOT* 1: 242–61.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bordreuil, "Les Noms Propres Transjordanien de l'ostracon de Nimroud," *RHPR* 59 (1979): 313–17; Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 341–42, 510; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions*, HSS 31 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 19–29 and n. 60; Mitka Golub, "The Distribution of Personal Names in the Land of Israel and Transjordan during the Iron II Period," *JAOS* 134 (2014): 621–42; Baruch A. Levine, "The Balaam Inscription from Deir 'Alla: Historical Aspects," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 328, 333–38; Stephen C. Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature:*

tension with the leading place of Yahweh and Milcom as leading deities of Israel and Ammon, respectively, as indicated by other evidence.<sup>5</sup> The existing data have spurred discussion regarding El's ongoing significance as the original God of Israel, the original God of the exodus tradition, and the national god of Ammon during Iron Age II.<sup>6</sup> Foundational to these questions is the apparent affinity for El shared by Iron Age Israel and Ammon, a matter deserving a discussion of its own.

Until now overlooked in this connection is another factor distinguishing Israel and Ammon from their Iron Age neighbors, namely, their identification by kin-based formulations as "sons of Israel" and "sons of Ammon."<sup>7</sup> These and other designations signal the importance of unilineal descent for Israelite and Ammonite identity and society. As this discussion will show, this aspect of identity formation and social organization correlates with an intensive investment in landed agriculture over the *longue durée* in the heartland territories of both kingdoms. Not only do these longstanding societal dynamics favor the likelihood of general cultural conservatism among those populations, preserving religious conceptions from earlier times, such as El's preeminence in certain LB traditions. But they also mean that El's specific roles as the head of the divine family and as giver

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*Cisjordan-Israelite, Transjordan-Israelite, and Judahite Portrayals*, BZAW 403 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 113–19. For the text of the Dayr 'Alla plaster inscriptions, see E. Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift von Tell Deir 'Alla: Vorschläge zur Rekonstruktion mit Historisch-kritischen Anmerkungen," in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, AOAT 350 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 573–601; Erhard Blum, "'Verstehst du dich nicht auf die Schreibkunst ...?' Ein weisheitlicher Dialog über Vergänglichkeit und Verantwortung: Kombination II der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir 'Alla," in *Was ist der Mensch, dass du seiner gedenkst? (Psalm 8,5). Festschrift für Bernd Janowski zum 65. Geburtstag* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 33–53; Blum, "Die aramäischen Wandinschriften von Tell Deir 'Alla," in *Weisheitstexte, Mythen und Epen*, Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Neue Folge 8 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2015), 459–74.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Claude F. A. Schaeffer, "Nouveaux témoignages du culte de El et de Baal à Ras Shamra-Ugarit et ailleurs en Syrie-Palestine," *Syria* 43 (1966): 16; Walter E. Aufrecht, "The Religion of the Ammonites," in *Ancient Ammon*, ed. Burton MacDonald, Randall W. Younker, and Walter E. Aufrecht, SHCANE 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 159; P. M. Michèle Daviau and Paul E. Dion, "El, the God of the Ammonites? The Atef-Crowned Head from Tell Jawa, Jordan," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 110 (1994): 158–67; Jeremy M. Hutton, "Southern, Northern and Transjordanian Perspectives," in *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, ed. Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 164–67; Collin Cornell, "A Moratorium on God Mergers? The Case of El and Milkom in the Ammonite Onomasticon," *UF* 46 (2015): 49–99.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 142–48; Joel S. Burnett, "Iron Age Deities in Word, Image, and Name: Correlating Epigraphic, Iconographic, and Onomastic Evidence for the Ammonite God," *SHAJ* 10 (2009): 153–64; Craig W. Tyson, *The Ammonites: Elites, Empires, and Sociopolitical Change (1000–500 BCE)*, LHBOTS 585 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 227–29; Tyson, "The Religion of the Ammonites: A Specimen of Levantine Religion from the Iron Age II (ca. 1000–500 BCE)," *Religions* 10 (2019): doi:10.3390/rel10030153.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel I. Block, "Bny 'mwn: The Sons of Ammon," *AUSS* 22 (1984): 197–212; Block, "'Israel—Sons of Israel': A Study in Hebrew Eponymic Usage," *Studies in Religion* 13 (1984): 301–26.

of human offspring and male descendants as emphasized in Ugaritic mythic texts made him the divine embodiment of ideals essential to a long-term investment in plow agriculture. In short, the landed agrarian societies foundational for the Israelite and Ammonite kingdoms provided fertile ground for El's continuing importance into Iron Age times. Furthermore, El's role as senior leader of the pantheon provided an ideological framework conducive to political alliances and agreements among tribal groups and, later, kingdoms identifying with different warrior deities (for example, Yahweh, Baal, or Milcom), who could thus be brought into parity relationships among the younger generation of gods as the "sons of El."

The place to begin is with a reminder of El's basic character and roles in the abundant textual evidence from the Late Bronze Age before considering the Iron Age II setting of El's appearance in the Israelite and Ammonite texts noted and the more characteristic role of national deities like Yahweh and Milcom that defines this period. Then the remaining portions of the discussion consider social factors setting Israel and Ammon apart and their relevance to El's persistence over the period of Iron Age I, along with a brief look at the key Israelite and Ammonite textual evidence in light of these insights.

#### THE FAMILY OF EL: THE WEST SEMITIC PANTHEON DURING THE LATE BRONZE AGE

While the frequent scholarly caveat against simply equating the culture and religion of Ugarit with those of other peoples of Syria-Palestine bears heeding, the Bronze Age sources from Ugarit and elsewhere in Syria present relevant background for religion of the Iron Age southern Levant.<sup>8</sup> For instance, prior to becoming the god of Iron Age Moab, Chemosh was prominent in the religion of third-millennium Ebla in Syria and in the city name Carchemish, and Ammonite Milcom can be traced to *mlkm* in Ugaritic god lists, albeit with some difficulty.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Dennis Pardee, "Background to the Bible: Ugarit," in *Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria*, ed. Harvey Weiss (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1985), 252–60; and, from *CANE* 3, Mark S. Smith, "Myth-Making in Canaan and Ancient Israel" (2031–41); Karel van der Toorn, "Theology, Priests, and Worship in Canaan and Ancient Israel" (2043–58); Paolo Xella, "Death and the Afterlife in Canaanite and Hebrew Thought" (2059–70).

<sup>9</sup> Hans-Peter Müller, "Chemosh במוש," *DDD*: 187; Ulrich Hübner, *Die Ammoniter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion eines transjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins 16 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 255–56 and n. 34; Emile Puech, "Milcom מלכום," *DDD*: 575. Israelite Yahweh's origins, on the other hand, are widely recognized to lie to the south in the broader region variously labeled Edom, Paran, Midian, and Teman. See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "The Origins of Israelite Religion," in *The Rise of Ancient Israel: Symposium at the Smithsonian Institution, October 26, 1991* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 125–29; Mark S. Smith, "YHWH's Original Character: Questions about an Unknown God," in *The Origins of Yahwism*, ed. Jürgen van Oorschot and Markus Witte, BZAW 484 (Berlin: de



The god El is among other deities (Baal, Asherah, and Anat) mentioned both in the Ugaritic texts and in LB and Iron I inscriptions from Palestine.<sup>10</sup> And the notion of El as head of the divine assembly presents a common thread between these two most extensive textual corpora representing West Semitic religion, namely, the Ugaritic texts and the Hebrew Bible (see, for example, Deut 32:8–9; Isa 14:13–14; Pss 82:1; 89:8), with the Ugaritic texts offering the most extensive textual evidence pertaining to El. A consideration of that deity’s importance for Iron Age Israel and Ammon finds an appropriate starting point in considering El at Ugarit.

In Ugaritic myth and ritual, El ranks as the undisputed ruler of the gods.<sup>11</sup> El is sometimes referred to as “king” (*mlk*, *KTU* 1.1 iii.23 [restored]; 1.2 iii.5; 1.3 v.8, 36; 1.4 i.5; iv.24, 38, 48; 1.5 vi.2 [restored]; 1.6 i.36; 1.17 v.49; 1.117.2–3; cf. 1.14 i.41). El’s senior status among the gods is indicated by his title “father of years” (*āb šnm*, *KTU* 1.4 iv.24).<sup>12</sup> Among the younger generation of deities, the storm god Baal-Haddu figures as the most dynamic, especially in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.1–6). When Baal succeeds in combat against the powers of chaos embodied by Yamm (“Sea”), El commissions the craftsman god *Kotharwa-Hasis* to construct a palace for Baal, and El appoints Baal as king (*KTU* 1.3 v.36; 1.4 iv.48; 1.10 iii.6). A ritual text primarily honoring “Baal of Ugarit” at his temple (*KTU* 1.119: 3, 9–10, 12, 21’–22’) and involving the human king (lines 4, 5, 13, 24’) also includes an offering in “the sanctuary of El” (*qdš il*, line 6). Attached to this ritual is a prayer invoking Baal as the divine defender of the city against an attacking enemy (lines 26’–36’).<sup>13</sup> Thus, El ranks as senior head of the pantheon and Baal remains under El’s authorization, even as the god most directly identified with royal achievements and prerogatives at Ugarit.<sup>14</sup> El’s decisions and authority in the divine realm are decisive, and El’s frequent epithets “father” and “bull” (*KTU* 1.1 iii.26, iv.12, v.22; 1.2 i.16, 33, 36, etc.; 1.3 iv.54, v.10, 35; 1.4 i.4, etc.) connote his surpassing strength, status, and procreative power.<sup>15</sup>

Not surprisingly, given the kin-based structure of West Semitic society, the Ugaritic texts describe the LB pantheon not simply as a royal court but as a royal divine family, “the sons of El” (*bn il*) and “the seventy sons of Athirat” (*KTU* 1.4

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Gruyter, 2017), 23–44; Martin Leuenberger, “YHWH’s Provenance from the South: A New Evaluation of the Arguments pro and Contra,” in *The Origins of Yahwism*, ed. Jürgen van Oorschot and Markus Witte, BZAW 484 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 157–80.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, *Early History of God*, 28–29.

<sup>11</sup> On this particular point and the following summary broadly speaking, I am indebted to Herrmann, “El”; Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 135–37.

<sup>12</sup> On the meaning of *āb šnm*, “father of years,” as eldest among the gods, see Herrmann, “El,” 276.

<sup>13</sup> See the text, translation, and notes in Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, WAW 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 50–53, 149–50.

<sup>14</sup> Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3–1.4*, vol. 2 of *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, VTSup 114 (Boston: Brill, 2009), 2:55–67.

<sup>15</sup> For the textual references, see Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 32.

vi:46), the goddess Athirat being El's spouse and definitive for his household.<sup>16</sup> El thus figures as progenitor of the chief gods and goddesses in Ugaritic myth. This family structure figures integrally to the mythic texts and occasionally to god lists relating to sacrificial offerings. Perhaps the clearest example among the god lists is *KTU* 1.65, which mentions the divine couple immediately following the identification of the chief god and his offspring in the opening lines as "El, the sons of El, the circle of the sons of El, the assembly of the sons of El" (*KTU* 1.65.1–5).<sup>17</sup> Next follow five epithets emphasizing El's kindly and attentive character: "the grace of El, the solidity of El, the well-being of El, solicitous El, active El" (lines 6–9). Here, the god list matches the mythic texts in highlighting El's persona as a beneficent, even indulgent, paternal figure to the other gods. Also integrated within the family structure of "the sons of El" defining this god list is Baal's role as champion of the divine assembly. Only after the enumeration of El's beneficent attributes (lines 6–9) and preceding a list of seven creative implements of El (lines 12–18), the storm god receives mention by his titles "Baal of Šapunu, Baal of Ugarit" (lines 10–11). Like the mythic texts, this ritual text from Ugarit indicates Baal's subordination to El along with "the sons of El."

As Mark Smith has emphasized, an astral character seems integral at some level to the collective makeup of the divine family of El at Ugarit.<sup>18</sup> For example, although in a broken context, *KTU* 1.10 i.3–5 parallels "the sons of El" (*bn il*) with "the assembly of the stars" (*phr kbbm*) and "the circle of those of heaven" (*dr dt šmm*), and a number of members of El's household are primarily astral figures: Shahar, "Dawn," and Shalim, "Dusk"; the moon god Yarih, the solar goddess Shapshu, and Athtar and Athtart, in their aspects as the morning and

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<sup>16</sup> On the patrimonial household as the irreducible basis for Bronze and Iron Age society of Syria-Palestine, see J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*, Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001); Elaborating on Schloen's insight, with specific reference to the pantheon as the divine, royal household at Ugarit, see Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 54–66. As Smith points out (42, 44), the "the sons of El" (*bn il*) are a more specific group of higher deities within the larger pantheon, "the divine sons" (*bn ilm*). For the "house of the mother" as an even more specific unit defining Israelite and broader West Semitic society, see Cynthia R. Chapman, *The House of the Mother: The Social Roles of Maternal Kin in Biblical Hebrew Narrative and Poetry*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 1–74.

<sup>17</sup> For the text and for this translation (with slight modifications), see Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, 21–24. See Smith's discussion of this text, including the specific point made here, see Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 43–44.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 61–66; Smith, "When the Heavens Darkened: Yahweh, El, and the Divine Astral Family in Iron Age II Judah," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 268–70.

evening “star” (Venus).<sup>19</sup> Infrequent though these indications may be in the Ugaritic texts, they anticipate the biblical reference to the divine assembly as “the stars of El” (*kôkêbê-’ēl*, Isa 14:13). As Smith suggests, this shared aspect among El’s children likely figures into the apparent outsider status of the storm god Baal-Haddu in Ugaritic myth, who bears the distinct epithet “son of Dagan” (*KTU* 1.2 i.19; 1.5 v.23–24).<sup>20</sup> The integration of Baal into the astral divine family shows both the growing importance of the storm god as divine warrior during the second millennium and the amenability of the West Semitic pantheon to assimilating Baal-Haddu as a leading figure.<sup>21</sup> The warrior god’s acceptance into the family of El would set a precedent by which other male deities during the Iron Age could step into a role similar to that of Baal-Haddu. Through the flexible structure of the divine family, the warrior god of any given place and population might be analogously integrated into the pantheon of “the sons of El” and celebrated as its champion and most visible member.

El’s procreative and governing roles as patrimonial head of the pantheon extend to the human realm in Ugaritic myth. Thus, El is known by the epithet “Father of Humankind” (*āb ādm*), and in the Kirta and Aqhat narratives El comes to the aid of male household heads seeking the deity’s assistance in producing offspring and heirs (*KTU* 1.15 ii.16–28; 1.17 i.25, 42). El thus figures as a divine patron of human procreation and of patrimonial authority and legacy. El’s embodiment of the patrimonial ideal of West Semitic society is well summarized in the following explanation from Smith and Pitard:

The patriarch functions to mediate internal, domestic conflict, as well as to protect against external threat. The goal of the patriarch is to preserve the family line, its prosperity, land and honor (reputation). It is El’s patriarchal position that explains much of his role within the Baal Cycle.<sup>22</sup>

In Ugaritic myth, including also Kirta and Aqhat, El’s importance to the divine family extends to the human family.

This span of roles for El in both the divine and human realms may lie behind his epithet in mythic texts, *bny bnwt* (*KTU* 1.17 i.23) often interpreted to mean

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<sup>19</sup> As translated by Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 61–62; Smith, “When the Heavens Darkened,” 269–70.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 64; Smith, “When the Heavens Darkened,” 271–72.

<sup>21</sup> For the increasing prominence of divine warrior in LB, see O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and the Images of God in Ancient Israel*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Edinburgh: Clark, 2008), 49–97.

<sup>22</sup> Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2:47.

“he who builds progeny.”<sup>23</sup> El’s role as creator of the earth is not clearly articulated at Ugarit, and some Ugaritic god lists consistently name El following the primordial powers “heaven and earth.”<sup>24</sup> Even so, in other places El is recognized as “creator of the earth,” an epithet occurring in a LB Hittite text (Elkunirsha <sup>d</sup>*El-ku-ni-ir-ša*) and persisting much later in the eighth-century BCE Karatepe inscription (*l qn rš*, *KAI* 26.A.3.18) and in Gen 14:19 (*’ēl ’elyōn qōnē šāmayim wā’āreš*). In any case, a cosmic framework prevails for El, with the whole of the world constituting the extended household of El on a cosmic scale, subsuming the nations of earth and their gods under El’s ultimate authority.<sup>25</sup>

To summarize, the organizing metaphor of the family at LB Ugarit shows the divine realm to mirror the human realm in West Semitic conceptualization of the pantheon. El’s preeminence as the patrimonial head of the pantheon correlates with the foundational importance of kinship bonds in West Semitic society broadly speaking. Far from being alternatives to one another as leading gods, El and Baal belong to successive generations of the divine family, El being the senior pantheon head sanctioning the warrior god’s dynamic exercise of martial power and his ruling status on behalf of the gods, “the sons of El.” El authorizes Baal’s embodiment of kingship at Ugarit in accordance with the generational hierarchy among the gods and goddesses. Having considered this LB conception of the pantheon as the divine family under El’s authority, we now turn to the political context and pattern of competing national deities that comes to define the Iron Age religious landscape of Israel and Ammon.

#### ISRAEL AND AMMON: IRON AGE KINGDOMS WITH NATIONAL DEITIES.

The textual evidence for El in Israel and Ammon providing the point of departure for this discussion originated in Iron Age II (ca. 1000–550 BCE), amidst the contiguous territorial kingdoms that emerged to shape the inland southern Levant as the region’s largest independent polities.<sup>26</sup> As the following comments illustrate,

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<sup>23</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, 22; Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*, rev. ed., BETL 91 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 71. Though scholars debate the meaning of this phrase (see Herrmann, “El 𐎇𐎍,” 275–76).

<sup>24</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*.

<sup>25</sup> Schloen, *House of the Father*. With emphasis on the architectural structure of the house, see Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. Richard J. Clifford (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 67–90. And for discussion of the house and household as interrelating aspects of the reduplicating basis for the social and cosmic order, see Chapman, *House of the Mother*, 20–50.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, the following articles in *The Oxford Handbook of The Archaeology of the Levant, c. 8000–332 BCE*, ed. Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): Margreet L. Steiner, “Introduction to the Levant during the Iron Age II period,” 677–82; Steiner, “Moab during the Iron Age II Period,” 770–81; Stefania Mazzoni, “The Aramean States during the Iron Age II–III Periods,” 683–705; Maria Eugenia Aubet, “Phoenicia during the Iron Age II

warrior deities were among the cultural resources these kingdoms appropriated in projecting and cultivating distinct national identities.<sup>27</sup>

Already by the mid-ninth century BCE, archaeological remains, lapidary alphabetic inscriptions, and Assyrian sources substantiate well-established political kingdoms of the southern Levant.<sup>28</sup> Monumental architecture at Iron Age cities like Megiddo, Jezreel, Samaria, Hazor, and Dan date at the latest to the ninth century BCE, contemporary with King Mesha of Moab's admission of longstanding subordination to Israel under King Omri and "his son(s)" in the Mesha Stele Inscription (lines 4–8).<sup>29</sup> In Shalmaneser III's Kurkh Monolith Inscription (ii.91–92; ca. 853 BCE), Israel under Ahab figures as an established regional power comparable in military prowess to Hadadezer's Damascus.<sup>30</sup> On and surrounding Amman Citadel (Jebel al-Qal'a), the site of the Ammonite capital *rabbat bēnē*

Period," 706–16; David Ben-Shlomo, "Philistia during the Iron Age II Period," 717–29; Ann E. Killebrew, "Israel during the Iron Age II Period," 730–42; James W. Hardin, "Judah during the Iron Age II Period," 743–56; Randall W. Younker, "Ammon during the Iron Age II Period," 757–69; and Piotr Bienkowski, "Edom during the Iron Age II Period," 782–94.

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion of Bruce E. Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology*, Archaeology, Culture, and Society (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 154–83.

<sup>28</sup> John S. Holladay, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah: Political and Economic Centralization in the Iron IIA–B (ca. 1000–750 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Thomas E. Levy (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 371–75; Øystein S. LaBianca and Randall W. Younker, "The Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom: The Archaeology of Society in Late Bronze/Iron Age Transjordan (ca. 1400–500 BCE)," in *Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Thomas E. Levy (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 399–415; K. Lawson Younger, *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Polities*, ABS 13 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 549–653; Aubet, "Phoenicia;" Ben-Shlomo, "Philistia."

<sup>29</sup> Israel Finkelstein, "A Great United Monarchy? Archaeological and Historical Perspectives," in *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*, ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann, BZAW 405 (Göttingen: de Gruyter, 2010), 3–28; Amihai Mazar, "Archaeology and the Biblical Narrative: The Case of the United Monarchy," in *One God—One Cult—One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*, ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann, BZAW 405 (Göttingen: de Gruyter, 2010), 29–58; Killebrew, "Israel," especially 731–36. For the Mesha Inscription, see Kent P. Jackson and J. Andrew Dearman, "The Text of the Mesha' Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. Andrew Dearman, ABS 2 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 93–130; "The Inscription of King Mesha," trans. K. A. D. Smelik (*COS* 2.23:137–38); Erasmus Gass, *Die Moabiter—Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im I. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, ADPV 38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 5–65.

<sup>30</sup> A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC, II (858–745 BC)*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Periods 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996), 11–24; "Kurkh Monolith," trans. K. Lawson Younger Jr. (*COS* 2.113A). The inscription attributes to Ahab's army 2,000 chariots and 10,000 troops, as compared with 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalry, and 20,000 troops attributed to Hadadezer of Damascus, and scholars have debated the accuracy of these numbers. See "Kurkh Monolith," trans. K. Lawson Younger Jr. (*COS* 2.113A: 263 n. 25); Christian Frevel, *Geschichte Israels*, Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie 2 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2016), 202–3.

'*ammōn* ("the Great [city] of the sons of Ammon"; 2 Sam 12:26), Iron Age archaeological remains include portions of a monumental building running beneath the Hellenistic-Roman temple to Heracles, a royal lapidary inscription dating to ninth century BCE (the Amman Citadel Inscription), and numerous examples of a distinctly Ammonite tradition of stone statuary.<sup>31</sup> Integral to that distinctly Ammonite sculpture series is a colossal basalt statue of a human king resembling stone statues of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) and Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE) of Assyria and of "Neo-Hittite" and Aramaean rulers of the early first millennium BCE.<sup>32</sup> The ninth-century BCE kingdom of Moab is represented by the Mesha Stele Inscription and the stone monument bearing it, and by a much smaller fragment of a similar monumental inscription of Mesha from Karak that was likely engraved on a stone statue.<sup>33</sup> An inscription of Adad-Nirari III (810–783 BCE) recognizes Edom as a tribute-paying political entity ca. 800 BCE,<sup>34</sup> and Ammon, Moab, and Edom appear together consistently in Assyrian inscriptions starting with Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE).<sup>35</sup>

By the end of the eighth century BCE, distinct script forms and pottery styles appear among the territories of the southern Levant's regional kingdoms, though scholars debate the degree to which those cultural forms align with political boundaries and national identities.<sup>36</sup> Even so, in line with the ninth-century Assyrian sources, the monumental royal artifacts from the southern Levant of that

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<sup>31</sup> P. E. Dion, "The Ammonites: A Historical Sketch," in *Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan. Volume 1. The Iron Age Town*, ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, CHANE 11 (Boston: Brill, 2003), 484–86; A. Momani and A. Koutsoukou, "The 1993 Excavations," in *The Great Temple of Amman: The Excavations* (Amman: ACOR, 1997), 157–71; Ali Abou-Assaf, "Untersuchungen zur ammonitischen Rundbildkunst," *UF* 12 (1980): 7–102; Abdel-Jalil 'Amr, "Four Ammonite Sculptures from Jordan," *ZDPV* 106 (1990): 114–18; Joel S. Burnett, "Egyptianizing Elements in Ammonite Stone Statuary: The Atef Crown and Lotus," in *Traveling Images*, vol. 1 of 9 *ICAANE: Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (June 9–13, 2014, University of Basel)*, ed. Oskar Kaelin, Rolf A. Stucky, Hans-Peter Mathys (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 57–71.

<sup>32</sup> Joel S. Burnett and Romel Gharib, "An Iron Age Basalt Statue from the Amman Theatre Area," *ADAJ* 58 (2014): 413–21.

<sup>33</sup> Heather Dana Davis Parker and A. Fiutko Arico, "A Moabite-Inscribed Statue Fragment from Kerak: Egyptian Parallels," *BASOR* 373 (2015): 105–20.

<sup>34</sup> Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers*, 212–13; "Calah Orthostat Slab," trans. K. Lawson Younger Jr. (*COS* 2.114G).

<sup>35</sup> Tiglath-Pileser III (*ANET*, 282), Sennacherib (*ANET*, 287), Esarhaddon (*ANET*, 291), Assurbanipal (*ANET*, 294).

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*, ABS 11 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 19–46; and the following articles in Jo Ann Hackett and Walter E. Aufrecht, eds., "*An Eye for Form*": *Epigraphic Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014): Rollston, "The Iron Age Phoenician Script," 72–99; Rollston, "Northwest Semitic Cursive Scripts of Iron II," 202–34; Walter E. Aufrecht, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Old Aramaic and Ammonite Lapidary Inscriptions," 100–7; David S. Vanderhooft, "Iron Age Moabite, Hebrew, and Edomite Monumental Scripts," 107–26; Philip C. Schmitz, "Phoenician Seal Script," 141–74; Larry G. Herr, "Aramaic and Ammonite

period abundantly represent what Bruce Routledge refers to as “kingly things”<sup>37</sup> demonstrating the existence of contiguous rival kingdoms. Through these cultural forms and their varying styles, the southern Levant’s kingdoms, though sometimes cooperating against a common foe (e.g., Assyria in 853 BCE), distinguished themselves from one another.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the clearest expression of national identity formation and differentiation in this context is each kingdom’s identification with its own leading god, as articulated in royal lapidary inscriptions from the ninth century BCE.<sup>39</sup> The Mesha Inscription, the most extensively preserved example of these monumental epigraphs, offers the most elaborate articulation of national gods as decisive differentiations of identity among these geographically contiguous kingdoms. As Routledge has explained, King Mesha of Moab credits his achievements not only in building projects and public works but also in warfare to his god Chemosh within an ideological framework aligning Mesha, Moab, and Chemosh together over against Omri (and “his son[s]”), Israel, and Yahweh in binomial opposition of comparable but mutually exclusive entities. As Routledge has shown, those irreconcilable national identities are resolved at the geographic boundaries through warfare and the execution of conquered populations through the “ban” (Moabite *ḥrm*).<sup>40</sup> Though without any preserved reference to that particular practice of ritual warfare, a corresponding identification of gods and kingdoms underlies the

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Seal Scripts,” 175–86; Herr, “Hebrew, Moabite, and Edomite Seal Scripts,” 187–201. For pottery see, for example, P. M. Michèle Daviau, “Moab’s Northern Border: Khirbat al-Mudayna on the Wadi ath-Thamad,” *BA* 60 (1997): 225–27; Daviau and Paul E. Dion, “Independent and Well-Connected: The Ammonite Territorial Kingdom in Iron Age II,” in *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, ed. Thomas E. Levy, et al. (London: Equinox, 2007), 301–4; Larry G. Herr, “Iron Age II A–B: Transjordan,” in *The Ancient Pottery of Israel and Its Neighbors from the Iron Age through the Hellenistic Period*, ed. Seymour Gitin, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2015), 281–99, 723; cf. Steiner, “Moab during the Iron II Period,” 771–72.

<sup>37</sup> Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, for example, 154–55 and Routledge’s important discussion of the importance of cultural symbols for perpetuating the notion of “the ‘thingness’ of the state,” on 1–26.

<sup>38</sup> As Routledge states, with a focus on Moab, “The kingdom of Moab begins to take shape prior to its direct contact with Assyria, as part of a wider trend of Levantine kingdom formation that cannot be wholly credited to Assyrian intervention.” Bruce E. Routledge, “Conditions of State Formation at the Edges of Empires: The Case of Iron Age Moab,” in *State Formation and State Decline in the Near and Middle East*, ed. Rainer Kessler, Walter Sommerfeld, and Leslie Tramontini (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 92.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, André Lemaire, “Déesses et dieux de Syrie-Palestine d’après les inscriptions (c 1000–500 av. n. è.),” in *Ein Gott allein? JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Monotheismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalische Religionsgeschichte* (Fribourg: University Press, 1994), 127–58; Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 651; Joel S. Burnett, “Transjordan: The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites,” in *The World Around the Old Testament*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Brent A. Strawn (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 346–50.

<sup>40</sup> Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 145–51.



Tel Dan inscription's crediting the god Hadad with the military success of the king of Aram-Damascus (most likely Hazael) in defeating kings of Israel and the "House of David," at least one of whom (and likely both) bears a Yahwistic name.<sup>41</sup> In the likewise fragmentary Amman Citadel inscription, the oversight of royal prerogatives like building and military defense of the Ammonite capital appears to be the role of Milcom, whose name is partially reconstructed in the inscription's opening words, followed by the first-person speech of a royal or divine voice.<sup>42</sup> These royal lapidary inscriptions show that, already during the ninth century BCE, the southern Levant's territorial kingdoms each identified with its own warrior god, who was credited with military victories, territorial expansion, and other royal achievements, and who embodied each kingdom's distinct identity over against the others.

For Israel and Ammon, that national god was not El but rather Yahweh and Milcom, respectively. Yet, as noted at the start of this discussion, other textual evidence shows that El figures significantly for both. With possible relevance to this shared affinity for El, another aspect of national identity sets Israel and Ammon apart from their closest neighbors.

#### IRON AGE IDENTITY FORMULATIONS: ISRAEL AND AMMON AS TRIBAL KINGDOMS

Notwithstanding the monumental projections of centralized power buttressing the royal claims of Israel and its Transjordanian neighbors, scholars recognize that each of these royal constructions was integrated with a given kin-based society built on reputed common descent.<sup>43</sup> To the extent that tribal social organization was a constant for Near Eastern society from the Middle Bronze Age to early modern times, the classification of Israel, Judah, Ammon, Moab, and Edom all as "tribal kingdoms" in modern scholarship is valid.<sup>44</sup> Yet the ancient sources themselves differ in their ways of designating these various political entities of the Iron Age southern Levant.

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<sup>41</sup> For the Tel Dan Stele Inscription, see Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, "An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan," *IEJ* 43 (1993): 81–98; Biran and Naveh, "The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 1–18; "The Tell Dan Stele," trans. Alan Millard (*COS* 2.39).

<sup>42</sup> For the Amman Citadel Inscription, see Walter E. Aufrecht, *Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2019), no. 59 and bibliography there; "The Tell Sirān Inscription," trans. Walter E. Aufrecht (*COS* 2.25).

<sup>43</sup> LaBianca and Younker, "Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom," 406, 409–10; Ø. LaBianca, "Excursus: Salient Features of Iron Age Tribal Kingdoms," in *Ancient Ammon*, SHCANE 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 19–30; Piotr Bienkowski, "'Tribalism' and 'Segmentary Society' in Iron Age Transjordan," in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau*, ed. Piotr Bienkowski, ANESSup 29 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 7–26.

<sup>44</sup> Eveline J. van der Steen, "Tribes and Power Structures in Palestine and the Transjordan," *NEA* 69 (2006): 27–36; LaBianca, "Excursus: Salient Features"; Piotr Bienkowski and Eveline J. van der Steen, "Tribes, Trade, and Towns: A New Framework for the Late Iron Age in Southern Jordan and



Scholarship has largely undervalued the extent to which Israel and Ammon stand apart from their closest neighbors by their usual designation in kin-based terms.<sup>45</sup> The notion of common descent figures into their designation in biblical texts as *bēnē yiśrā'ēl*, “sons of Israel,” and *bēnē 'ammōn*, “sons of Ammon,” with this form of identification even occurring more frequently for Ammon, proportionally speaking, than for Israel.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the apparent etymology of

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the Negev,” *BASOR* 323 (2001): 21–47; van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition: The Central East Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age: A Study of the Sources*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 130 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004); Bienkowski, “‘Tribalism’ and ‘Segmentary Society.’” Though typically posed as competing models (see, for example, Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 114–28; Bienkowski, “‘Tribalism’ and ‘Segmentary Society,’” 10–16), the patrimonial (Lawrence E. Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel,” *BASOR* 260 [1985]: 1–35; Stager, “The Patrimonial Kingdom of Solomon,” in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 63–74; Daniel M. Master, “State Formation Theory and the Kingdom of Ancient Israel,” *JNES* 60 [2001]: 117–31; Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 44, 135–83) and segmentary (Bruce Routledge, “The Politics of Mesha: Segmented Identities and State Formation in Iron Age Moab,” *JESHO* 43 [2000]: 221–56; Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 133–53; Benjamin W. Porter, “Authority, Polity, and Tenuous Elites in Iron Age Edom (Jordan),” *OJA* 23 [2004]: 373–95) models of Levantine societies and kingdoms are not inherently incompatible with each other and with the tribal model. Rather they highlight different aspects of ancient Levantine society based on the available evidence for a given kingdom, as providing the key metaphor for conceiving and organizing political structures among those peoples. See, for example, Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 130–32.

<sup>45</sup> This distinction is sometimes made with reference only to Ammon over against Moab and Edom. See Ulrich Hübner, *Die Ammoniter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion eines transjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins 16 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 243–45; Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 124–26; Bienkowski, “‘Tribalism’ and ‘Segmentary Society,’” 19; Burnett, “Transjordan,” 316–17. As Daniel Block correctly observes from his thorough discussion of the biblical evidence, there are some differences in usage between *bēnē yiśrā'ēl*, “sons of Israel,” and *bēnē 'ammōn*, “sons of Ammon,” but he overstates the implications of these differences when he concludes that the biblical use of these name forms are “governed by fundamentally different considerations” (Block, “Sons of Ammon,” 206). In his discussion, which predated the discovery of the Tel Dan inscription and its reference to the “House of David,” Block recognized neither the interrelationship between “House of X” and “children of X” as kin-based social and political designations in Assyrian and West Semitic sources of the Iron Age and the fact that “X” can refer primarily to a dynasty founder or eponymous ancestor, as explained subsequently by Paul Dion and as followed in the present discussion. See Block, “The Sons of Ammon,” 207–8; Paul E. Dion, *Les Araméens à l'âge du fer: Histoire politique et structures sociales*, EBib 34 (Paris: Gabalda, 1997), 225–31; Dion, “Ammonites,” 482–84, 495; compare Hélène S. Sader, *Les États araméens de Syrie depuis leur fondation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes*, Beirut Texts and Studies 36 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1987), 272–73. More recently, see the thorough discussion of these designation types in Assyrian, Aramaic, and biblical evidence by Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, *The House of David: Between Political Formation and Literary Revision* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 5–8, 15–23, 41–105, 213–23, 232–40, 253–54.

<sup>46</sup> According to Block's tabulation and excluding the gentilic forms *'ammōnī*, *yiśrē'ēlī*, and related plural and feminine forms, which are rare in both instances, references to Ammon or Ammonites

'*ammōn* (WS \*'*amm-* "people," "kinsman") itself suggests a claimed descent of the "sons of Ammon" from a common, primordial "kindred" or ancestor, as recognized with polemical intent in Gen 19:38.<sup>47</sup> This form of kingdom designation occurs as an Ammonite self-identification in the Tell Sirān Inscription's repeated use of the expression "the king of the sons of Ammon" (*mlk bn 'mn*; ca. 600 BCE).<sup>48</sup> By contrast, Moab and Edom never appear in this name form in epigraphic texts and virtually never in biblical texts,<sup>49</sup> the difference in formulation being salient in Jer 27:3 in reference to "the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the sons of Ammon (*melek bēnē 'ammōn*)."<sup>50</sup> The same contrast appears in an Assyrian text dated to the reign of Sargon II (ca. 722–705 BCE) in reference to military envoys from countries including "(the land of) Moab" (<sup>KUR</sup>*ma-'a-ba-a-a*), "(the land of) Edom" (<sup>KUR</sup>*ú-du-mu-a-a*), and "(the land of) Judah" (<sup>KUR</sup>*ia-ú-du-a-a*) but "(the land of) the sons of Ammon" (<sup>KUR</sup>*ba-an-am-ma-na-a-a*).<sup>51</sup> Through this form of identification by claimed descent from a reputed common ancestor, Israel and Ammon set themselves apart from their closest neighbors in their self-understanding and, for Ammon, in contemporary recognition by others as what modern scholars would call tribal kingdoms, in the fullest sense of the term. This "sons of" name formulation implies family lineage across generations as vital in defining Israelite and Ammonite identity.

In another frequently occurring form of identification, Israel, (less often) Judah, and, most consistently, Ammon, like other tribal kingdoms of Syria-Palestine, can be named in Assyrian and Aramaic texts by a recognized dynasty or lineage ruling the declared kin-based population, according to the formula "House of X."<sup>52</sup> Like the "sons of" formulation of identity, the "house of" formulation implies unilineal descent, in that the household figures as a self-perpetuating unit through generations. Among self-perpetuating households, a lateral dimension of declared kinship complements the lineal definition of society from a single ancestor through lineage.<sup>53</sup> Although the Tel Dan inscription (ca.

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in the Hebrew Bible employ the term *bēnē 'ammōn* in 98.1 percent of the instances (104 of 108 references), whereas references to Israel or Israelites use the term *bēnē yiśrā'el* only 25.3 percent of the time. Block, "The Sons of Ammon," 198–201. See Leonard-Fleckman's attention to differences of literary type and relative dating of biblical texts featuring the phrase *bēnē yiśrā'el* in *House of David*, 18–20.

<sup>47</sup> Burnett, "Transjordan," 316; compare Hübner, *Die Ammoniter*, 243; Dion, "Ammonites," 485.

<sup>48</sup> See Aufrecht, *Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions*, no. 78; "The Tell Sirān Inscription," trans. Walter E. Aufrecht (*COS* 2.25).

<sup>49</sup> The only exceptions occur in a few instances in exilic or postexilic texts: *bēnē mō'āb* only in 2 Chr 20:1, 10, 22, 23; *bēnē 'ēdōm* only in Ps 137:7. See Hübner, *Die Ammoniter*, 243.

<sup>50</sup> For other examples of similar contrasts, see Block, "Sons of Ammon," 204–5.

<sup>51</sup> On the back of Nimrud Letter no. 16 (ND 2765), cited in Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 124.

<sup>52</sup> Dion, *Les Araméens à l'âge du fer*, 225–31; Leonard-Fleckman, *House of David*, 41–105.

<sup>53</sup> For an up to date discussion drawing on a range of secondary literature in anthropology, sociology, archaeology, and biblical studies, see Chapman, *House of the Mother*, 20–50.

840 BCE) speaks simply of “Israel,” it refers to Judah as “House of David.”<sup>54</sup> In similar fashion, Assyrian royal inscriptions refer to the Israelite kingdom in one instance simply as “Israel” (ca. 853 BCE, the Kurkh Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III)<sup>55</sup> but most often as “House of Omri.”<sup>56</sup> Ammon appears almost invariably as “the house of Ammon” (*bīl Am-ma-na-a-a*), and often with a similar contrast to the naming of other nearby kingdoms as that noted for the “Sons of X” name form (see above). For example, a list of tribute-paying kings most likely dating to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III mentions among others:

<i>ʾsa-ni-pu</i> <sup>URU</sup> É.am-ma-na-a-a	Shanip of the House of Ammon
<i>ʾsa-la-ma-nu</i> <sup>KUR</sup> ma-ʾa-ba-a-a	Salaman of Moab
<i>ʾia-ú-ḥa-zi</i> <sup>KUR</sup> ia-ú-da-a-a	Jehoahaz (= Ahaz) of Judah
.....	.....
<i>ʾqa-uš-ma-la-ka</i> <sup>KUR</sup> ú-du-mu-a-a	Qausmalka of Edom. <sup>57</sup>

Regarding the name forms of the southern Levant’s Iron Age kingdoms, a meaningful pattern emerges across the Assyrian and West Semitic references: (1) Israel and Judah can be named simply as “Israel” or “Judah” but also in kin-based terms

<sup>54</sup> Biran and Naveh, “Tel Dan Inscription”; cf. the nuanced formulation by Leonard-Fleckman in *House of David*, 223, 254.

<sup>55</sup> As with most Assyrian references to the kingdoms discussed here, Shalmaneser III’s mention of Israel takes a gentilic form, thus in direct reference to *a-ḥa-ab-bu* <sup>KUR</sup>sir-ʾi-la-a-a (<sup>KUR</sup>sirʾilayya), “Ahab the Israelite”. See Luckenbill, *AR I*: no. 610.

<sup>56</sup> Assyrian non-literary texts refer to the Israelite kingdom by the term “(the) Samarian(s).” For an overview of the Assyrian references to all three of these designations, see Israel Eph’al, “The Samarian(s) in the Assyrian Sources,” in *Ah, Assyria ... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph’al, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 33 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 36–45. As Eph’al explains, Assyrian texts typically avoid the otherwise prevalent gentilic form when referring to kingdoms by the pattern <sup>KUR/LU</sup>bīl ʾPN (“House of PN”), preferring instead the form *mār ʾPN* (“Son of PN”). Thus, Shalmaneser III reports receiving tribute from *ʾia-ú-a mār ʾḤu-um-ri-i*, which, as Eph’al explains, does not indicate that Jehu is necessarily a biological descendant of Omri but rather that he is a member of the kingdom the Assyrians recognize as “House of Omri.” See Eph’al, “The Samarian(S),” 37 notes 6 and 7. Although Eph’al was inclined to translate the referent of each designation in primarily geographic terms, it is now clear that both the “Son of X” and “House of X” forms express kin-based definitions of these kingdoms, now thanks to further reflection prompted in part by the discovery of the Tel Dan Inscription. See, most importantly, Dion, *Les Araméens à l’âge du fer*, 225–31. Prior to these developments, McCarter suggested another brilliant solution to the reference in Shalmaneser. See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “Yaw, Son of ‘Omri’: A Philological Note on Israelite Chronology,” *BASOR* 216 (1974): 5–7.

<sup>57</sup> K 3751, cited in Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 116–17. The same differentiation occurs among these three kingdoms in additional tributary lists of Sargon II (K 1295 = ABL 632, cited in Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 126) and Sennacherib (Chicago and Taylor Prisms, see Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 127–28). And lists of Esarhaddon (Nineveh Prism A 1, 56, 62, Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 129–30) and Ashurbanipal (Prism C II.40–41, 48; Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 131) name kings of <sup>URU</sup>ú-du-me, <sup>URU</sup>ma-ʾa-ab, and <sup>URU</sup>É.am-ma-na. For other texts with similar references to all or some of these kingdoms, see Gass, *Die Moabiter*, 115–34.

(“sons of Israel,” “House of Omri,” and, for Judah, “House of David”); (2) Ammon is *always* designated in kin-based terms (“sons of” or “House of Ammon”);<sup>58</sup> and (3) Moab and Edom appear frequently but *never* by kin-based designations.

For the kingdoms of Moab and Edom, the difference in identity formulation likely owes to the established recognition of Moab and Edom as named territories in texts going back to the Late Bronze Age.<sup>59</sup> As Routledge discusses, this identification by geographical place relates to kingdoms identified by a leading city, for example Iron Age kingdoms of northern Syria or, we might add, Iron Age Tyre or Sidon on the Phoenician coast or the Philistine city-states of the southern coastal plain.<sup>60</sup> In the Mesha Inscription, the notion of Moab as the “land” of Chemosh provides a basis for national unity. Yet Mesha never uses the term “Moabite,” referring to himself rather as a “Daybonite,” and defines his kingdom as comprising territorial segments and their accompanying populations. Given the perennial importance of kin-based social organization for ancient Syria-Palestine, those tribal structures were certainly operative among ancient Moab’s population in Mesha’s day. For instance, the people group known as Gad, which eventually appears as the name of an Israelite tribe in various biblical texts (Gen 49:19; Num 1:14; etc.), nonetheless is framed in the Mesha Inscription as a territorially defined population segment, “the men of Gad” (ʾš *gd*, Mesha Inscription line 10), comparable to “the men of Sharon” (ʾš *šrn*, line 13), “men of Maharat” (ʾš *mhr̄t*, lines 13–14), and “[m]en of Dibon” (*[ʾ]š dybn*, line 28). The conceptual force of the land of Moab (and its god) as a unifying symbol of cultural heritage determined Mesha’s definition of these segmented social affiliations in territorially based terms. Given Edom’s similar legacy as an internationally recognized land going back to second-millennium Egyptian texts, the indication of a similar conception of its Iron Age kingdom based on geography is not surprising.

While the other Iron Age kingdoms of the southern Levant formulated their identity primarily in terms of territory (Moab and likely Edom) or a main city (the Phoenician and Philistine city-states), Israel and Ammon set themselves apart as kingdoms with explicitly kin-based identity formulations invoking shared descent

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<sup>58</sup> The apparent exception, the reference in Shalmaneser III’s Kurkh Monolith Inscription to a certain *Ba-ʾa-sa* son of Ruhubi of *A-ma-na-a-a*, named as a member of the coalition opposing him at Qarqar in 853 BCE does not match the otherwise consistent spelling of Assyrian references to Ammon and more likely refers to a kingdom in the Anti-Lebanon region. See Dion, “Ammonites,” 482–83. For bibliography on this debate, see “Kurkh Monolith,” *COS* 2.113A:264 n. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 143–53; Routledge, “Conditions of State Formation,” 80; Burnett, “Transjordan,” 322, 329–30. For the Egyptian textual evidence, Kenneth A. Kitchen, “The Egyptian Evidence on Ancient Jordan,” in *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan* (Sheffield: Collins, 1992), 21–34; cf. Na’aman’s objections to the usual recognition of Transjordanian Moab in the Egyptian sources in favor of a proposed and otherwise unknown “Moab” in another location. Nadav Na’aman, “Did Ramesses II Wage Campaign against the Land of Moab?,” *GM* 209 (2006): 63–69.

<sup>60</sup> Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 124–27.

from a named ancestor. One might ask why this should be the case, if other kingdoms, especially their close neighbors Moab and Edom, also arose from kin-based societies. Is there something more specific to the social or cultural makeup of Israel and Ammon distinguishing them from the others? Could this distinction relate in any way to their special affinity for the god El?

Beyond the generally kin-based nature of society thought to prevail across Bronze and Iron Age Syria-Palestine, were there particular factors distinguishing the “sons of Israel” and “Sons of Ammon” that might have resonated with the notion of the divine realm as the “sons of El?” On a surface level, it seems reasonable to suppose that El’s traditional roles of divine patrimonial authority and giver of human offspring would have held special relevance for Israel and Ammon, as populations identifying themselves by lineal family descent. One might consider further whether these kin-based identity formulations signal genuine social or cultural realities correlating with ancient Israel and Ammon’s shared affinity for El. As the following section reveals, this distinction in identity formulation aligns with key insights from the archaeology of Jordan.

#### FOOD, KINSHIP, AND THE TERRITORIES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL AND AMMON

The recognition that ancient Israel and Ammon’s identifications by unilineal descent set them apart from neighboring Iron Age kingdoms aligns with the results of food systems theory as applied to the archaeology of Jordan by Øystein LaBianca and Randall Younker. Over the *longue durée* in ancient Transjordan, as LaBianca and Younker explain, populations coordinated food production and interrelated modes of sedentary and mobile existence through tribalism, “strong in-group loyalty based on variously fluid notions of common unilineal descent.”<sup>61</sup> This tribal, or kin-based, social organization enabled affiliated households to negotiate and coordinate workable balances in food production between land-tied agriculture and range-tied herding, in keeping with various factors, especially regional variance in reliable rainfall from north to south across Transjordan. Areas of ample reliable rainfall (a minimum of 200 mm annually) could support a sustained balance toward plow agriculture, with the accompanying risks of land ownership or maintenance, extensive labor investments (e.g., clearing, terracing, plowing, and harvesting), securing crop yields, and potential loss through drought or raiding.

This circumstance favored rigid kinship bonds emphasizing unilineal descent, thus protecting those investments and stabilizing land use over generations. By contrast, areas of decreasing and less reliable rainfall justified a greater balance toward range-tied herding and mobile lifeways, which favored proportionally looser and more flexible kinship bonds allowing for processes of “telescoping,”

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<sup>61</sup> LaBianca and Younker, “Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom,” 403–6.

“fusioning,” and “grafting” in kin relations, thereby facilitating secure movement among distant locations and access to grazing areas, water sources, camp sites, storage depots, and burial grounds.

As LaBianca and Younker demonstrate, the north-south falloff in rain levels correlates with LB–Iron I settlement densities resulting from sedentary habitation among the territories giving rise to Iron II kingdoms. The highest settlement density across those periods occurs on the Transjordanian plateau surrounding Amman (with 500 mm annual rainfall), including a number of walled settlements spanning the LB–Iron I transition. Moab (with 300–350 mm annual rainfall) shows comparatively less settlement density and no sites showing LB–Iron I continuity, and Edom (with 100–200 mm annual rainfall) yields by far the least evidence of settlement. Most critically, the plateau around Amman is the only region of these three yielding the necessary minimum of 200 mm rainfall even in dry years and reliable rainfall at the right time of year. Accordingly, as LaBianca and Younker conclude, the LB–Iron I walled settlements appearing only in the eventual territory of Ammon reflect “more sedentary occupation with more permanent ties to their surrounding ploughland,” in turn implying a greater rigidity of kinship bonds by claimed unilineal descent.<sup>62</sup>

While LaBianca and Younker do not mention the correlating differences in identity formulations discussed in the previous section, those differences align impressively with the theorized expectation of highest rigidity in kinship bonds in the area of Ammon and less for Moab and Edom. As well, one can point to additional archaeological and epigraphic evidence further bearing out their thesis.

In the eventual territory of Ammon, the LB–Iron I sites LaBianca and Younker mention lie along a line of some 20 km connecting Amman Citadel (Jabal al-Qal‘a) with Khirbat Umm ad-Dananir to its northwest, in the agriculturally rich Baq‘ah Valley. In conjunction with Dananir, nearby burial caves show continual use and suggest essentially unchanging burial practices over this span, with grave goods of pottery, metal jewelry, and silicate beads indicating continuity even along with technological development within a cohesive regional network, in keeping with the breakdown of the LB international system.<sup>63</sup> Khirbat

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<sup>62</sup> LaBianca and Younker, “Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom,” 407. Against the possible objection of environmental determinism, LaBianca and Younker point out that no comparable Iron Age kingdoms seem to develop in Transjordan north of Amman, where even higher rainfall levels would favor settlement and dynamics of social cohesion. On social and political formation in that region, see Zeidan A. Kafafi, “North Jordan during the Early Iron Age: An Historic and Archaeological Synthesis,” in *Walking through Jordan: Essays in Honour of Burton MacDonal*, ed. Michael P. Neeley, Geoffrey A. Clark, and P. M. Michèle Daviau (Sheffield: Equinox, 2017), 63–78.

<sup>63</sup> Patrick E. McGovern, *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Central Transjordan: The Baq‘ah Valley Project, 1977–1981*, University Museum Monograph 65 (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1986), 32–63, 339–41.

Umm ad-Dananir continues into early Iron II, and one tomb dates to that period.<sup>64</sup> This archaeological picture of sustained agricultural investment, family solidarity across generations, and a self-contained economic framework along this line of towns transecting the plateau area encircled by the Wadi Zarqa (biblical Jabbok) thus forms the immediate background of the Iron II kingdom of Ammon. The LB–Iron I archaeological evidence reflects a degree of societal and economic integration along the interconnected wadi systems of the north-central plateau that might have endured intervening political shifts, leading to the notion of shared affiliation among this region’s population during Iron Age II as “the sons of Ammon (the Primordial ‘Ancestor’).”

The eventual kingdom taking that name, as discussed above, leaves behind archaeologically attested “kingly things” such as the ninth-century BCE Amman Citadel Inscription, abundant royal statuary, and Iron Age architecture on Amman Citadel (Jabal al-Qal’ a), known during the Iron Age as *rabbâ*, “The Great (City)” (2 Sam 11:1; 12:27, 29; etc.) and *rabbat benê ‘ammon*, “the Great (City) of the Sons of Ammon” (2 Sam 12:26). Among those royal artifacts is the key epigraphic witness to this Ammonite self-identification, the Tell Sirân Bottle Inscription.<sup>65</sup> It is incised on a small, metal container (10 cm long) excavated in 1972 at an archaeological site on the University of Jordan campus ca. 8 km miles northwest of Amman Citadel, along what was once the wadi route connecting to the Baq’ ah Valley. The inscription employs the title “king of the sons of Ammon” (*mlk bn ‘mn*, lines 1–3) three times in identifying as many generations of an Ammonite royal lineage. Among the “works” (*m’bd*, line 1) of the contemporary ruler so honored, the text names “vineyards and gardens” (*hkrm.wh{.}g{.}nt*, line 4), and the sealed bottle contained barley and wheat grains with other plant remains, ostensibly deposited as an emblematic token of agricultural produce foundational to the kin-based kingdom’s identity.<sup>66</sup> In keeping with LaBianca and Younker’s food systems analysis, this royal artifact accords with the larger pattern of archaeological and epigraphic evidence showing that the Ammonite kingdom’s self-identification by unilineal descent invokes longstanding ties to the land as a unifying basis for the population of the north-central Transjordanian plateau.

By contrast, in the land of Moab, as LaBianca and Younker note, only sparse Late Bronze Age settlement preceded a dramatic increase during Iron Age I likely resulting from sedentarization among the region’s largely mobile population. The establishment of Lehun and Balua overlooking the Wadi Mujib system (biblical Arnon) and Khirbat al-Mummariyya at its floor, along with the Balua Stele relief’s

<sup>64</sup> McGovern, *Late Bronze and Early Iron*, 338–39.

<sup>65</sup> Aufrecht, *Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions*, no. 78; P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996), 98–99.

<sup>66</sup> For discussion of the scientific testing of the bottles material and contents, and other suggestions regarding purpose and contents of the bottle, see Henry O. Thompson, *Archaeology in Jordan*, American University Studies, Series IX, History vol. 55 (New York: Lang, 1989), 195–99.



scene of divine investiture of a human ruler, suggest efforts at political authority, even of ephemeral ones, centering on control of the Mujib passage and its water resources already during Iron I and perhaps earlier.<sup>67</sup> Some measure of agricultural investment occasioned the single-phase, fortified agropastoralist sites along the Mujib's tributaries that sprang up quickly during the later Iron I. Yet the architectural layout and town plans of those sites and their gradual abandonment reflect what Bruce Routledge characterizes as "friable" social bonds among autonomous, mobile households with a lack of regional integration.<sup>68</sup> In contrast to the Amman Citadel hinterland, this archaeological picture for Iron I Moab indicates no enduring investment in landed agriculture and instead of kin-based solidarity over generations (as reflected in LB–Iron I Baq'ah; see above) relatively flexible kinship bonds accompanying continued mobility and shifting affiliations. Similarly, during early Iron Age II, kin-based social identity in Moab never exceeded a localized formulation, as reflected in the Mesha Inscription's portrayal of geographic segmentation of Moab's population ca. 840 BCE as "men of Sharon," "men of Dibon," et cetera (see above). Even after continued net settlement increases in Moab during early Iron Age II, when Mesha declares himself "King of Moab," he nonetheless identifies himself as a "Daybonite," after his hometown, Daybon (biblical Dibon), and terms such as "Moabite" or "sons of Moab" never occur throughout the royal inscription.<sup>69</sup> A unified kin-based identity encompassing the whole of Moab's territory and population does not appear to have been a cultural resource for Mesha to exploit in kingdom building.

Moving still further south to Edom, archaeological survey shows virtually no evidence of settlement from the Wadi Hasa south during LB and Iron I and these settlement data agree with contemporary Egyptian textual references to encounters with mobile pastoralist Shasu populations from Edom and Seir during LB–early Iron I times.<sup>70</sup> In the Wadi Faynan district (off the northeast Arabah) the substantial copper industry (dated 12th–9th centuries BCE) and a vast cemetery (known as Wadi Fidan 40) suggest a non-sedentary, kin-based population with connections to metal working. Thomas Levy proposes a seasonal pattern for a mobile population engaged in the metal industry during the cooler fall to winter

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<sup>67</sup> Burnett, "Transjordan," 322–23; cf. Israel Finkelstein and Oded Lipschits, "The Genesis of Moab," *Levant* 43 (2011): 139–52. On social and political discontinuity between LB and Iron II Moab, see Routledge, "Conditions of State Formation," 82–83. For Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya, see Friedbert Ninow, "The 2005 Soundings at Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya in the Greater Wādi al-Mūjib Area," *ADAJ* 50 (2006): 147–55.

<sup>68</sup> Routledge, "Moab in the Iron Age," 87–113; Bruce Routledge, "Thinking 'Globally' and Analysing 'Locally': South-Central Jordan in Transition," in *Israel in Transition: From Late Bronze II to Iron IIA (c. 1250–850 B.C.E.) I: The Archaeology*, ed. Lester Grabbe, LHBOTS 491 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 170–73.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Eveline J. van der Steen and K. A. D. Smelik, "King Mesha and the Tribe of Dibon," *JSOT* 32 (2007): 139–62.

<sup>70</sup> LaBianca and Younker, "Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom," 407.



months and herding in Edom's highland areas during the summer, with some involvement in trade passing through the region, all regulated and negotiated among regional tribal authorities and affiliations.<sup>71</sup> The scenario and the supporting archaeological evidence are in keeping with highly flexible kinship bonds LaBianca and Younker posit for the region.

To summarize at this point, all three contiguous kingdoms of Iron Age Transjordan arose among tribal societies, but the claim of unilineal descent functioned more centrally and stringently for Ammon within its homeland on the north-central plateau, where conditions had existed for intensified agriculture over the *longue durée*. Corroborating this distinction is a range of archaeological and epigraphic evidence of a population integrated around agricultural production and distribution along the Amman-Baq'ah corridor as a longstanding phenomenon eventuating in the Iron II claim of identity as the "Sons of Ammon."

The cultural continuity implicit for an enduringly agrarian society might be sufficient to explain El's persistence from LB times to Iron II religious expressions such as Ammonite personal names. More precisely, El's embodiment of patrimonial authority and descent, as known in the Ugaritic sources, would have held special relevance to the Ammonite self-understanding and to its social definition built around those ideals. There is more to say on this point in connection with Israel, but only after considering Israel from this theoretical perspective.

Indeed, the pattern described for Transjordan's tribal kingdoms freely extends to the Cisjordanian heartland of ancient Israel,<sup>72</sup> where the central hills receive a comparable level of reliable rainfall even exceeding that of Amman's vicinity (300–700 mm annually and well above 200 mm in the driest years, with as much 1,100 mm for Upper Galilee).<sup>73</sup> Well established in the archaeological record of the Iron I central hills is a dramatic increase of agricultural villages with pillared-house architecture reflecting kin-based cohesion among clustered households.<sup>74</sup> While this pronounced shift from the preceding LB settlement pattern might not match the longstanding social continuity apparent in the LB–Iron I

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas E. Levy, et al., *New Insights into the Iron Age Archaeology of Edom, Southern Jordan*, 2 vols. (Los Angeles: The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, University of California, 2014), 1:977–94.

<sup>72</sup> In a subsequent discussion, LaBianca in passing includes ancient Israel along with Ammon, Moab, and Edom as tribal kingdoms relating to the phenomena described here but without discussing factors specific to Israel. LaBianca, "Excursus: Salient Features," 20.

<sup>73</sup> Efraim Orni and Elisha Efrat, *Geography of Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Program for Scientific Translations, 1964), 113; Frank S. Frick, "Palestine, Climate Of," *ABD* 5:122–23 and figures PAL.07 and PAL.08. On the point of basic continuity in the climate of the southern Levant between ancient historical and modern times, see Frick, "Palestine," 123 and David C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in the Early Iron Age*, SWBA 3 (Sheffield, England: Almond, 1985), 107.

<sup>74</sup> Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988); Stager, "Archaeology of the Family"; Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000–586 B.C.E* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 334–45.

Baq'ah Valley archaeological evidence of Ammon's background, intensified agricultural investment throughout the Iron I central hills clearly comes with its own heightened stringency of kinship bonds emphasizing unilineal descent. In comparison with Transjordan, the more thoroughly documented archaeological evidence for the Cisjordanian central hills indicates social organization by firm kinship bonds supporting agricultural investment as the backdrop for the "sons of Israel," a pattern quite comparable to that observed for "the sons of Ammon," and likewise contrasting with the picture for Moab and Edom.

To conclude this section, archaeological survey and excavation evidence for the early Iron Age shows the predominate role of landed agriculture for the central hills of Cisjordan and north-central plateau of Transjordan over against the regions of Moab and Edom. In keeping with the food systems perspective of LaBianca and Younker, that difference favored the development of comparatively stringent kinship bonds within the societies giving rise to the Iron II kingdoms of Israel and Ammon, as reflected in additional archaeological and epigraphic evidence (especially, the Mesha Stele Inscription and Tell Sirān Inscription). That social distinction in turn correlates with the kin-based identity formulations for these two kingdoms as examined in the previous section. In sum, the kingdoms of both Israel and Ammon emerged from Iron I settings where the archaeological and epigraphic data substantiate longstanding investment in landed agriculture, *longue durée* circumstances favoring an emphasis on patrimonial descent and perpetuation of the household as embodied in mythic form by the god El.

As noted above, the correlating kin-based identity formulations occur more consistently for Ammon than for Israel, and, as noted in this section, the LB-Iron I precursor to Ammon reflects a longstanding social continuity surpassing that for Cisjordan's central hills where the Iron I agricultural pattern represents an abrupt shift from the LB profile of sparse urban settlements. The difference in stringency of kinship bonds reflected in Israel and Ammon's identity formulation patterns suggests more precise differences in their Iron I prehistory leading to the consideration of important written evidence for early Israel.

#### EARLY ISRAEL AS A PEOPLE OF EL

Chronologically bracketing the Iron I setting so pivotal to this discussion are the earliest secure epigraphic attestations of the name "Israel" in the Merneptah Stele (ca. 1208 BCE) and the mid-ninth-century sources including Shalmaneser III's Kurkh Monolith Inscription (ca. 853 BCE) and the Tel Dan and Mesha Stele inscriptions. In the first instance, "Israel" appears as a political entity lacking a city center, in the second a substantial regional kingdom (see above). As Daniel Fleming has stressed, the name "Israel's" endurance through this chronological span

necessitates some form of continuity even amidst political development.<sup>75</sup> Israel's intervening formation was in some way interwoven with the Iron I pattern of intensified agricultural investment described for the Cisjordanian central hills. Some insight into the region's social and political organization during this period as the formative setting for premonarchic Israel comes through a careful examination of literary traditions embedded within the biblical book of Judges.

The Song of Deborah (Judg 5) sounds an invocation of Israel's tribal origins. Scholars variously recognize the poem's final composition (heavily represented in vv. 2–13) from preexisting literary traditions (concentrated mainly in vv. 14–30).<sup>76</sup> As many scholars recognize, the overall contents place the completed form of the poem in the tenth or early-ninth century BCE, and both content and language support Iron I origins for its earlier components.<sup>77</sup> Those older materials include the description of a military alliance comprising ten population groups with names largely overlapping those found among varying enumerations of Israel's twelve tribes (or their eponymous ancestors) in other biblical texts (e.g., Gen 29–30; 35; 49; Deut 33). Most noticeably, these group names do not include Judah, Simeon, or Levi, and thus reflect a northern Israelite orientation.<sup>78</sup> As commentators note, the names Israel and Yahweh are concentrated within the poem's opening verses (vv. 2–13), with Israel completely absent from the body of the

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<sup>75</sup> Fleming discusses the persistence of the name "Israel" in these sources with emphasis on Israel ultimately as a political designation even for Merneptah. Daniel Fleming, *Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 240–46.

<sup>76</sup> See the discussions by Fleming and Smith, and the history of scholarship on which each builds, as well as the same general approach by Gross. W. Gross, *Richter*, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2009), 337–41; Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 64–66, 68–69; Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 242–51. Less persuasive is Wright's approach positing two strands running throughout the poem, "one that is symbolic and mythical, and another that is concrete and realistic" in that it does not account for the coinciding patterns in references to Israel and Yahweh, on the one hand, and arguably older elements in the body of the poem as identified in a long line of scholarship. Jacob L. Wright, "Deborah's War Memorial: The Composition of Judges 4–5 and the Politics of War Commemoration," *ZAW* 123 (2011): 519. Both Pfeiffer's proposal of a ninth- or eighth-century core with subsequent redactions and Levin's understanding of the poem as a late composition based on the prose of Judg 4 takes proper account of the points of linguistic dating discussed by Smith (see below). Christoph Levin, *Fortschreibungen: Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, BZAW 316 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 124–41; Henrik Pfeiffer, *Jahwes Kommen von Süden: Jdc 5, Hab 3, Dtn 33, und Ps 68 in ihrem Literatur- und Theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*, FRLANT 211 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 58–69.

<sup>77</sup> On the first point of dating, see Ernst A. Knauf, "Deborah's Language: Judges Ch. 5 in Its Hebrew and Semitic Context," in *Studia Semitica et Semito-hamitica: Festschrift für Rainer Voigt*, ed. Bogdan Burtea, Josef Tropper, and Helen Younansardaroud, AOAT 317 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005), 167–82; Gross, *Richter*, 82–83. On both points, see Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 211–51.

<sup>78</sup> Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 59.

poem (vv. 14–30) and Yahweh appearing in only in verse 23.<sup>79</sup> The poem's introduction (vv. 2–13) largely serves to recast the Iron I coalition described (vv. 14–18) in terms of the early monarchic definition of Israel as a single "people (Heb. *'am*) of Yahweh" (vv. 11, 13).<sup>80</sup> The poem thus presents a collection of groups belonging to Israel, at least from the perspective of the tenth- or early ninth-century Israelite monarchy.

The association of territorial and population units described in vv. 14–18 is recognizable as a tribal collective, one extending from Benjamin and Ephraim to the north and to east of the Jordan (v. 17), among named groups comprising smaller family divisions, as reflected in the references to "the clans (*plgwt*) of Reuben," Judg 5:15, 16) and perhaps "the leaders (*šry*) of Issachar."<sup>81</sup> Even while centering on the agriculturally fertile central hills, this tribal collective also includes groups associated chiefly with herding in Transjordan (Judg 5:16a), with shipping on the Mediterranean coast (v. 17aβ–b), and doubtlessly with overland trade across its adjoining territories in between.<sup>82</sup> This variety of economic pursuits over an extended territory spanning the Jordan and reaching other lowland areas exceeds in complexity the agricultural hinterland persisting northwest of Amman throughout Iron I. Even if that network extended at times to include considerable herding and trade activity among other sites within a 20 km. radius of Amman Citadel—sites later representing the Iron II kingdom's farthest extent prior to seventh-century expansion (e.g., Sahab, Tall al-Umayri, Tall Jawa)—it still represents a circumscribed territory and landlocked population. By comparison, the tribal collective anticipating Iron II Israel in Judges 5 would have necessitated some degree of more flexible kinship bonds than those evident for Ammon's Iron I background.

Ongoing flexibility of tribal bonds would be the implication of Manasseh's appearance in place of Machir (Judg 5:14) in apparently subsequent traditions

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<sup>79</sup> Yahweh occurs seven times in the poem's introduction (seven times in vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13) and once in the clearly secondary addition in verse 31, and Israel occurs eight times in verses 2–3, 5, 7 (twice), 8–9, and 11.

<sup>80</sup> Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 64–66, 68–69; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 242–51.

<sup>81</sup> For the characterization of a tribal collective in this text, see Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 64–66, 68–69. The poem and its immediate literary context do not use the term "tribes" to characterize these groups (as do Gen 49:1–2, 48; Deut 33:5).

<sup>82</sup> In comparing similar language in Gen 48 and Deut 33, Cross suggested that some of these descriptions of economic pursuits may represent "stock oral formulae." See Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 140. But Smith identifies shifts in nuance in those passages, suggesting Judg 5:14–18 reflects original language describing these groups' connections to their home territories. Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 238.

naming Israel's tribes (e.g., Gen 29–30; Deut 33:17),<sup>83</sup> likewise Gad's replacement of Gilead (Gen 49:19; Deut 33:20; cf. Judg 5:17).<sup>84</sup> Although Gad is not named among the apparently Iron I coalition of Judg 5, the Mesha Inscription attests Gad's affiliation with Israel during the ninth century BCE along with the people group's purported location in "the land of 'Aṭarot forever" (*m'lm*, lines 10–11). Mesha's claimed execution of 'Aṭarot's population "for Chemosh and for Moab" (*lkmš wlm'b*, line 12) and pillaging of an apparent worship symbol (*'r'l dwdh*) to be placed "before Chemosh in Qiryat" (lines 12–13) though not employing the term *hrm* indicates a similar notion of an irreconcilable relationship between "the men of Gad" and their Moabite conquerors (see above). While flexibility in kin relations might have facilitated Gad's incorporation to Israel sometime after Iron I, by the mid-ninth century BCE those bonds had become too fixed to allow Gad's shift in affiliation to Mesha's Moab. As noted in the first section of this discussion, the corresponding element of that irreconcilable opposition was these kingdoms' identification with rival national deities, Israelite Yahweh and Chemosh of Moab.

As noted, the divine name Yahweh, much like the people name Israel, appears abundantly in the introductory sections of the poem in Judg 5 (seven times in vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13), but is nearly absent in verses 14–30, appearing only in verse 23. As Smith argues, verse 23 and verses 4–5 stand as Yahwistic traditions appearing among the early portions of the poem.<sup>85</sup> Yet the overall pattern suggests that during Iron I times the tribal collective described in verses 14–18 could not be characterized in its entirety as the "people [Heb. *'am*] of Yahweh" (vv. 11, 13), as it is later reframed by the early monarchic poetic introduction. Iron I origins are also consistently recognized for the section of the text describing a battle against "the kings of Canaan" (vv. 19–22). The scene's description of divine assistance in the battle includes no reference to Yahweh but rather the statement, "the stars fought from heaven" (Judg 5:20), with astral imagery reminiscent of the gods under El's authority at Ugarit and the related expression "the stars of El" (*kōkēbē-'ēl*, Isa 14:13). While not a direct reference to El, the language and imagery are consistent with the astral character of various gods under El's authority.

The Song of Deborah, like the very name of Israel, suggests that, before becoming "the people of Yahweh," Israel was a people of El.<sup>86</sup> The late-thirteenth-

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<sup>83</sup> Machir is subsumed within Manasseh (Num 32:39–40; Deut 3:12–15), and in these texts, Machir, Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben are variously associated with Gilead. In keeping with Gen 48:8–22, Deut 33:13–17 associates Manasseh, and Ephraim closely with Joseph, and Gen 49 names only Joseph among the three (vv. 22, 26).

<sup>84</sup> See also, the eventual appearance of other tribes absent in Judg 5 (Simeon, Gen 49:5; Levi, Gen 49:5; Deut 33:8; and Judah, Gen 49:8, 9).

<sup>85</sup> Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 250.

<sup>86</sup> For the point that Israel's name suggests El was its original deity, see Ahlström, "Where Did the Israelites Live," 134; Smith, *Early History of God*, 32.

century Merneptah Stele (ca. 1208 BCE), and possibly another Egyptian text dating earlier in the century, places something called “Israel” within the vicinity of the Cisjordanian central hills already prior to the thoroughgoing proliferation of agricultural settlement that defines the region during Iron I.<sup>87</sup> In other words, “Israel” in its earliest known form emerges from a Late Bronze Age historical and theological frame of reference nearly contemporary with the writing of the tablets of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle.<sup>88</sup> In that context El, as a god defined by his roles as divine patriarch and chief of the gods (as discussed in the first section of this discussion), implied a pantheon of deities ordered under El’s patrimonial authority. The LB invocation of El in the name Israel signals a conceptual structure for relating various deities within the same divine family, a structure with political ramifications different from those that come to prevail during Iron II with its focus on competing national warrior gods.

Within the intervening Iron I setting of the central hills of Cisjordan, this religious framework of El’s pantheon would have proven politically advantageous, offering a basis for unity among distinct population groups like those named in Judg 5:14–18, groups possibly worshiping different deities of their own. El’s capacity for guaranteeing kin-based political alliances, thanks to his interrelating roles as head of the divine family and ruler of the pantheon, comes to expression in the divine title, “El-Berit” (*ʾl bryt*, Judg 9:46) and indirectly in the surrounding narrative of Judg 9.<sup>89</sup> The collocation of various leading gods, including rival warrior deities (such as Yahweh and Baal), within the divine household of El would mirror on the divine level the alignment on the human social level of kinship lineages among separate tribal groups. For earliest Israel, carrying forward the LB conception of the pantheon under El provided a readymade framework for locating various gods among the family of El, thereby facilitating the ordering of various tribal identities according to claimed descent from a common ancestor Israel.

To conclude this section, the Song of Deborah reflects relatively looser tribal bonds in Israel’s Iron I past than those indicated in the archaeology and geography of Ammon’s Iron I background. This difference facilitated the more expansive and economically variegated tribal collective approximating Israel’s territorial reach by the mid-ninth century BCE, as reflected in royal inscriptions from the latter period discussed here (namely, Mesha and Tel Dan; see above). Already in

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<sup>87</sup> Peter van der Veen, Christoffer Theis, and Manfred Görg, “Israel in Canaan (Long) before Pharaoh Merneptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687,” *JAEL* 2 (2010).

<sup>88</sup> On the fourteenth- or thirteenth-century BCE date of the tablets’ writing, Smith and Pitard, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 2:7–8.

<sup>89</sup> On the literary and historical complexities of this text, see Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 61–62. On *ʾl bryt* and the parallel divine epithet *bʾl bryt* in Judg 8:33; 9:4, see Theodore J. Lewis, “The Identity and Function of El/Baal Berith,” *JBL* 115 (1996): 401–23.

Israel's earliest affiliation with El by the late thirteenth century BCE, the accompanying notion of the West Semitic pantheon served as a potential mechanism for political unity even among groups worshiping different gods. El's roles as head of the divine family and ruler of the pantheon were vital to his character in LB times and likely important to earliest "Israel's" social formation even before the degree of intensive and ongoing agricultural investment that prevailed during Iron I. The LB–Iron I settlement continuity evident for Amman Citadel and more fully for its agricultural hinterland in the Baq'ah Valley of the central plateau of Transjordan indicate a similar path of tradition continuity by which El perdured in importance from LB times but one oriented more thoroughly around agricultural production within a limited, more isolated territory than that evidenced in early Israel's development. In keeping with that circumstance, a heightened degree of emphasis on unilineal descent and patrimonial heirs would correspond to both the more consistent identification of Iron II Ammon by kin-based designations and the much greater attention to El evident in Ammonite personal names.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EL TEXTS IN QUESTION

A territorially contiguous affinity for El by Iron II Israel and Ammon as reflected especially in the Dayr 'Alla Plaster Texts (DAPT), the Poetic Oracles of Balaam in Num 22–24, and Ammonite personal names, proves relevant to the kin-based identity formulations of both kingdoms (i.e., by "sons of" and "House of" kingdom names). The common formative basis was the emergence of both Iron II kingdoms in territories where landed agriculture thrived during Iron Age I. In keeping with the kin-based organization of ancient West Semitic society, the risks and investments required for landed agriculture encouraged a population's long-term ties to the land through perpetuation of the patrimonial household and relatively rigid kinship bonds with a heightened emphasis on unilineal descent among the broader population. El's traditional roles as patrimonial head of the divine household and giver of human offspring, particularly male descendants, made him the divine embodiment of ideals integral to these agrarian societies anticipating Iron II Israel and Amman.

Even before the Iron I period's formative effect for rigidly kin-based social definitions in connection with El, an early form of Israel appears as a political entity within the vicinity of the central hills during the thirteenth century BCE, the name itself indicating an affiliation with El during the Late Bronze Age. An agricultural basis may well have been part of "Israel's" makeup in this LB setting, along with the accompanying appeal of El as a patrimonial god. In any case, El's role as head of the pantheon and the divine family would have figured decisively for an LB political entity focusing on this deity. El's function as guarantor of a kin-based political alliance is reflected in the divine epithet *'l bryt* (Judg 9:47) and more obliquely in Iron I poetic traditions embedded within the Song of Deborah



(Judg 5). Those premonarchic traditions include the description of a tribal collective anticipating the Israelite kingdom (Judg 5:14–18). The geographic extent and economic variegation among those people groups and territories imply a certain flexibility of kin-based social and political bonds and yet a sufficient rigidity of bonds to hold together this far-ranging association built around agricultural societies of highland territories on either side of the Jordan.

By comparison and also in keeping with the food systems theory of LaBianca and Younker, the Ammonite kingdom is anticipated by a more homogeneous focus on agricultural production within a more limited and isolated territory on the central plateau near Amman, implying more rigid societal bonds. This difference in social and economic makeup over against Israel's Iron I background is one of degrees, explaining the greater consistency of kin-based identifiers for Ammon. It also provides some explanation for the dominance of 'l as the most frequent divine element in Ammonite personal names.<sup>90</sup> El's character as giver of human offspring would have a special relevance in connection with the accentuation on unilineal descent most evident for Ammonite society.

These insights also bear on the understanding of the other El texts providing this discussion's point of departure. The potential of El's pantheon as a religious framework for harmonizing loyalties to rival deities apparent for the LB–Iron I southern Levant remains viable and visible in the DAPT's portrayal of the divine in terms of the old pantheon of El and the Ilahin (“the Gods”) and the Shaddayin (“Those of the Mountain”).<sup>91</sup> The concept remains vital for this the east Jordan Valley site's role in trade among surrounding kingdoms of Israel, Ammon, and Aram-Damascus, likely under Damascene hegemony during the time of the inscription (ca. 800 BCE).<sup>92</sup> With well-known parallels to the DAPT, the poetic oracles of Balaam (Num 23:5–10, 18–26; 24:3–9, 15–24) fit the circumstances of the northern Israelite kingdom's strong presence in the area of the Madaba plains by the mid-ninth century BCE, as attested in the Mesha Stele Inscription (see above). Those poetic biblical texts show a restricted pantheon of deities under El to favor Israel and its national god Yahweh in territorial conflicts in Transjordan.<sup>93</sup> This convergence of textual and archaeological evidence shows the path by which El persisted on both sides of the Jordan to appear in Iron II religious traditions.

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<sup>90</sup> On this point, see, for example, Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods*, 19–29; Burnett, “Iron Age Deities.” For Ammonite personal names, see Aufrecht, *Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions*; Albertz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 510, 534–609.

<sup>91</sup> On these designations for the divine, see P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “The Balaam Texts from Deir ‘Allā: The First Combination,” *BASOR* 239 (1980): 57.

<sup>92</sup> Blum, “Die aramäischen Wandinschriften von Tell Deir ‘Allā”; Joel S. Burnett, “Prophecy in Transjordan: Balaam Son of Beor,” in *Enemies and Friends of the State: Ancient Prophecy in Context*, ed. Christopher A. Rollston (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 135–204.

<sup>93</sup> Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 218–24.



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# The First Arslan Tash Incantation and The Sphinx

Aaron Demsky

P. Kyle McCarter Jr. has made important contributions to the understanding of the cross-cultural contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Iron Age, especially in the adoption and spread of the Canaanite alphabet.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I revisit the first Phoenician incantation from Arslan Tash, which he has studied,<sup>2</sup> and argue for its authenticity based on an unnoticed connection with the Greek world.

The Assyrian conquest of the Ancient Near East in the mid-eighth century BCE and their ruthless methods of subjugation forcibly brought together different peoples creating the first great syncretistic world culture. An important aspect of the conquest was the adoption of the Aramaic language and the alphabetic script as instruments of Assyrian dominion.<sup>3</sup> The new world order reached out as far as Greece and beyond, particularly through the agency of their Phoenician subjects.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "The Early Diffusion of the Alphabet," *BA* 37 (1974): 54–68; McCarter, *The Antiquity of the Greek Alphabet and the Early Phoenician Scripts*, HSM 9 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); McCarter, *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington DC: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1996), 82–84. For my own treatment of the subject and proposed earlier date of the transition of the Canaanite alphabet to the Greek world, see Aaron Demsky, *Literacy in Ancient Israel* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 2012), 40–51.

<sup>2</sup> "An Amulet from Arslan Tash," trans. P. Kyle McCarter Jr. (*COS* 2.86:222–23).

<sup>3</sup> Hayim Tadmor, "The Aramaization of Assyria: Aspects of Western Impact," in *With My Many Chariots I Have Gone up the Heights of Mountains*—*Historical and Literary Studies on Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. Mordechai Cogan (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2011), 179–203.

<sup>4</sup> Noteworthy among the west Semitic inscriptions that found their way into the Greek world are the inscribed ninth-century BCE trapezoidal frontlet and horse blinder that were found in Samos and in Erethreia in Euboia respectively, see Israel Eph'al and Joseph Naveh, "Hazaël's Booty Inscriptions" [Hebrew], *Shnaton—An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 10 (1989): 37–46. One should note that these artifacts have a biblical parallel in Zech 14:20: "In that day, even the ornaments on the horses shall be inscribed 'Holy to the Lord.'"



## ARSLAN TASH INCANTATIONS

An illuminating example of this cultural syncretism are the two small limestone tablets from Arslan Tash (Syria) that were composed in a Phoenician dialect, seemingly Tyrian, with some Aramaisms, and written in the emerging Aramaic script dated paleographically to the mid-seventh century BCE.<sup>5</sup> Both tablets have bored holes at the top as though for hanging on the doorpost.<sup>6</sup>

The tablets, which were not found in situ, were purchased in 1933 in Arslan Tash. The first one (fig. 1) was published in 1939<sup>7</sup> and the second in 1971.<sup>8</sup> The former has been the object of much scholarly discussion over the past eighty years.<sup>9</sup> In the mid-eighth century BCE, Arslan Tash was the seat of the Assyrian provincial governor in the fertile area, known today as el-Jezirah, which was formally part of the territory of the minor Aramean kingdoms, conquered and depopulated by Ashurnasirpal a hundred years earlier. Tiglath Pileser III (745–724 BCE) repopulated it with West-Semitic exiles and called the site appropriately *Ḥadattu*, that is, “Newtown.”

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 5 (Jerusalem, 1970), 17; Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 114.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Moore Cross identified the word *mzrt* inscribed on the first tablet which certainly recalls Deut 6:9. Frank Moore Cross and Richard J. Saley, “Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century BCE from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria,” in *Leaves from an Epigrapher’s Notebook* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 268.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Mesnil du Buisson, “Une tablette magique de la région du Moyen Euphrate,” *Mélanges Syriens offerts M. René Dussaud*, 1 (1939): 421–34.

<sup>8</sup> André Caquot and Robert du Mesnil du Buisson, “La seconde tablette ou ‘petite amulette’ d’Arslan Tash,” *Syria* 48 (1971): 391–406; Yitzhak Avishur, “The Second Amulet Incantation from Arslan Tash,” *UF* 10 (1978): 29–36.

<sup>9</sup> André Dupont-Sommer, “L’Inscription de l’amulette d’Arslan Tash,” *RHR* 120 (1939): 133–59; William F. Albright, “An Aramaean Magical Text in Hebrew from the Seventh Century B.C.,” *BASOR* 76 (1939): 5–11; Theodor H. Gaster, “The Magical Inscription from Arslan Tash,” *JNES* 6 (1947): 186–88; H. Torczyner, “A Hebrew Incantation against Night-Demons from Biblical Times,” *JNES* 6 (1947): 18–29; Albert van den Branden, “La tavolette magica di Arslan Tash,” *BO* 3 (1961): 41–47; *KAI* 27.43–47; André Caquot, “Observation sur la Première Tablette Magique d’Arslan Tash,” *JANES* 5 (1973): 45–51; Wolfgang Röllig, “Die Amulette von Arslan Tash,” in *Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1974), 2:17–36, pl. 1; Yitzhak Avishur, *Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: A. Rubenstein, 1979), 2:243–59; Ziony Zevit, “A Phoenician Inscription and Biblical Covenant Theology,” *IEJ* 27 (1977): 110–18; Giovanni Garbini, “Gli incantesimi fenici de Arslan Tash,” *OrAn* 20 (1981): 277–94; Cross and Saley, “Phoenician Incantations,” 265–69; S. David Sperling, *Ve-Eileh Divrei David: Essays in Semitics, Hebrew Bible and Inscriptions of Biblical Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 60–69; J. van Dijk, “The Authenticity of the Arslan Tash Amulets,” *Iraq* 54 (1992): 65–68; Dennis Pardee, “Les documents d’Arslan Tash: Authentiques ou faux?,” *Syria* 75 (1998): 15–54; José-Angel Zamora, “Textos Mágicos y Trasfondo Mitológico: Arslan Tash,” *SEL* 20 (2003): 9–23; Blane W. Conklin, “Arslan Tash I and Other Vestiges of a Particular Syrian Incantatory Thread,” *Biblica* 84 (2003): 89–101; Kevin J. Cathcart, “The Phoenician inscriptions from Arslan Tash and Some Old Testament Texts (Exodus 12; Micah 5:4–5 [5–6]; Psalms 91),” in *On Stone and Scroll. Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, ed. James K. Aitken, Katharine J. Dell, and Brian A. Mastin, BZAW 420 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 87–99.

The literary form of this text is poetry as known to us from Ugarit and from the Bible and characterized by parallelism. The text gives voice to the otherwise silent exiles caught up in the cultural upheaval in the wake of the Assyrian conquest. It provides an inside view of some of the religious and social conflicts facing a displaced polytheistic community afflicted by what they believe to be local chthonic demons. These Phoenician exiles were loyal to their own Canaanite deities, namely Ba'al and Hauron, as well as to the patron of the Assyrian empire, the god Ashur. This cultural and religious symbiosis is expected to ward off the local demons. The incantation is in the form of a covenant between the individual householder and the protective deities.<sup>10</sup> The terms *'alah*, meaning "oath, "curse" (Num 5:21) and "covenant/treaty," and *krt* "to cut, that is, make (a treaty)" are repeated.<sup>11</sup> This form of a religious covenant against harm is found in similar situations recorded in 2 Kgs 17:35–39 (when the new exiles settled in Samaria faced voracious lions)<sup>12</sup> and in Isa 28:14–15, 18.

This incantation is an important text for it also illustrates the multimodality of literacy in antiquity showing how an oral genre, that is, an *incantation*, that is, a whispered spell (*laḥṣat*), was inscribed as a protective talisman attached to the doorpost, and then adopts yet another medium of visual expression, namely iconography. I find in this tablet the bridging process of literate magicians transmitting an oral text, that is, a Phoenician poem based on structured parallelism, in an illustrated written form to a lay audience.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See Demsky, *Literacy in Ancient Israel*, 232–37.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the term for making a covenant is *krt* 'lt, that is, "cutting a covenant," "an oath," which Hayim Tadmor has shown reflects the West Semitic terminology as opposed to Mesopotamian usage. This observation adds further support to those who maintain the tablet's authenticity, see Hayim Tadmor, "Treaty and Oath in the Ancient Near East: A Historian's Approach," in *With My Many Chariots I Have Gone up the Heights of Mountains*—*Historical and Literary Studies on Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. Mordechai Cogan (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2011), 217.

<sup>12</sup> The author of Kings has put into the mouth of the restored priest of Bethel the terminology of the Sinai theology of the divine collective covenant with the people of Israel in his attempt to assimilate, if not convert, these gentile exiles who were settled in Samaria. Their described syncretistic reaction indicates that they did not understand the implications of the monotheistic Israelite covenant theology. They might have accepted the idea of an individual noncommunal covenant with a local protective god as their contemporaries did at Arslan Tash. Contra Zevit, "Phoenician Inscription," 116.

<sup>13</sup> Over the years, I have tried to show that studying literacy must take into account the social context as well as the writing surface and its message. Demsky, *Literacy in Ancient Israel*, 232 n. 69, 248, 262; Demsky, "Reading Northwest Semitic Inscriptions," *NEA* 70 (2007): 68–74; Demsky, "Researching Literacy in Ancient Israel—New Approaches and Recent Developments," in *See, I Will Bring a Scroll Recounting What Befell Me* (Ps 40:8): *Epigraphy and Daily Life—From the Bible to the Talmud—Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Hanan Eshel*, ed. Esther Eshel and Yigal Levin, JAJSup 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 89–104. This approach has been aptly enhanced by Alice Mandell and Jeremy Smoak, "Reading and Writing in the Dark at Khirbet el Qom: The Literacies of Ancient Subterranean Judah," *NEA* 80 (2017): 188–95, esp. 189: "An understanding of a text is more dependent upon its audience's expectations, which are determined by its placement and the context of its production and display.... We have to consider how people engaged these texts

Initially, the first incantation engendered great scholarly interest. William F. Albright, Frank Moore Cross and Richard J. Saley, and S. David Sperling emphasized the poetic structure of this text which led to a better reading. For a period in the 1980s, the tablet was considered a fake by several eminent scholars.<sup>14</sup> Since then, it has been recognized as an authentic<sup>15</sup> Phoenician<sup>16</sup> text with some minor dialectical and orthographic variations the result of Aramaic influence upon this Phoenician community living along the upper Euphrates. Scholars have found literary evidence of similar terms or mythic threads that support its authenticity.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Text*

I read and scan this poetic composition:

לחשת לע-פ>תא  
אלת ססם בן פדר<ש>

שא אלה ולחנקת אמר  
בת אבא בל תבאן וחצר אדרך בל תדרכן  
ככרת לן אלת עלם  
אשר כרת לן וכל בן אלם ורב דר כל קדשן  
באלת שמם וארץ עלם באלת בעל [א] דן ארץ  
באל[ת] [א] שת חורן אש תם פי  
ושבע צרתי ושמנה, אשת בעל

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who were not necessarily scribes or literate officials or part of the royal entourage"; Mandell and Smoak, "Reading Beyond Literacy, Writing Beyond Epigraphy: Multimodality and the Monumental Inscriptions at Ekron and Tel Dan," *Maarav* 22 (2018): 79–112.

<sup>14</sup> Javier Teixidor, "Les tablettes d'Arslan Tash au musée d'Alep," *AO 1* (1983): 105–8; Pierre Amiet, "Observations sur les 'Tablettes magiques' d'Arslan Tash," *AO 1* (1983): 109.

<sup>15</sup> Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet* [Hebrew translation 1989], 111 n. 95; van Dijk, "Authenticity"; Pardee, "Les documents"; Cross, *Leaves*, 269 Addendum.

<sup>16</sup> See H. L. Ginsberg, "Ugaritico-Phoenicia," *JANES* 5 (1973): 145 ("Standard Phoenician") and esp. Sperling, "Arlan Tash Incantation." Despite his reliance on Cross and Saley, J. B. Peckham identified this inscription as "(North) Israelite"(!). See J. Brian Peckham, *Phoenicia: Episodes and Anecdotes from the Ancient Mediterranean* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 191, 198 n. 100.

<sup>17</sup> See above Zamora, "Textos Magicos," and Conklin, "Arslan Tash I."

## Translation:

An incantation regarding The Flyer(s)<sup>18</sup>  
A (binding) oath of SSM ben PDR<š><sup>19</sup>

Raise up (your voice pronouncing) an oath<sup>20</sup>  
And to the Stranglers say:

“The house<sup>21</sup> I will enter—do not enter  
The court I will tread—do not tread.<sup>22</sup>

For he has made an everlasting covenant with us  
Ashur made a covenant with us, and all the divine beings  
The Lord and court of all holy ones.<sup>23</sup>

In an oath of heaven and earth eternal  
In an oath with Baal the Lord of the earth  
In an oath with the Wife of Hauron  
Whose mouth is pure

<sup>18</sup> The letter *pe* has been inserted as it appears on the secondary inscription on the sphinx-like figure.

<sup>19</sup> I accept Sperling’s suggestion that the name is *Ssm ben Pdr*, and the final *shin* is a dittography. *Pdr* is known from Ugarit as the first daughter of Ba’al and from a later Aramaic magical text in Demotic script as Pdiray from Raphia. Cf. William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), 128, 145; “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” trans. Richard C. Steiner (*COS* 1.99:312–27). In the context of this incantation where so many female demons and deities appear, it is significant that it is attributed to the son of *Pdr*, the daughter of Ba’al. In the Demotic text she appears in the company of his other manifestations as Ba’al Zaphon (col. VII) and Ba’al Shamem (col. XV) hinting that she might have become his consort. Note the geographic proximity of Ba’al Zaphon and Rafiah on the northern coast of Sinai. Is it possible then that she might be the anonymous “*eshet Ba’al*” mentioned at the end of this incantation?

<sup>20</sup> For the parallelism *אמר* // *קול* // *נשא*, see Num 23:7: *וישא משלו ויאמר* “He uttered his oracle and said...”; Isa 14:4: *ונשאת המשל הזה על מלך בבל ואמרת איד* “And you shall recite this lamentation upon the King of Babylon saying ‘How ...’” There should be no doubt that this command: “raise up (your voice) ... and say” introduces the oral oath to be said out loud, see Lev 5:1: *ונפש בי תחטא ושמעה קול* “When he has heard a public imprecation ...”; Num. 5:21; esp. 1 Kgs 8:31: *ונשא בו אלה*; and 2 Chr 6:22; or *נשאת תפלה* in 2 Kgs 19:4; *HALOT*, s.v. “נשא (אלה)”—“to impose an oath or to pronounce a curse”; also, b. Shevu. 35a.

<sup>21</sup> The parallel pair *חצר* // *בת*, that is, “house” and “courtyard,” appears in the Kirta legend from Ugarit and in Zech 3:7: *ונשמרתה תשמר וגם אתה תדין את ביתי*: “גם תשמר את חצרי ונתתי לך מהלכים בין העמדים האלה:”

<sup>22</sup> For the parallel verbs of “entering” and “treading,” see Mic 5:4–5:  
והיה זה שלום אשור *כי יבוא בארצנו וכי ידרך בארמנתינו והקמנו עליו שבעת רעים ושמנת נסיכי אדם*  
ורעו את ארץ אשור בחרב ואת ארץ נמרד בפתחיה והציל מאשור *כי יבוא בארצנו וכי ידרך בגבולנו*:  
In this passage, Micah also employs the stepped numbers seven and eight that we find below. See Ibn Ezra on this passage who said the numbers “seven” and “eight” are in parallel and do not add up to fifteen although they refer to plural nouns.

<sup>23</sup> Reading *קדשן* an Aramaism for *קדשם*.

And her seven co-wives<sup>24</sup>  
Even eight,<sup>25</sup> Baal's consort."<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 1. The first Arslan Tash incantation. Source: National Museum of Aleppo.

Very similar to psalmodic structure, the incantation has a heading stating the genre “*LHŠT* (a whisper spell) against the demon ‘*A* > *f* < *ata* (“The Flying One”), An oath composed by SSM ben PDR,” most probably a renowned magician.<sup>27</sup> The poem now addresses the local exorcist instructing him to pronounce this oath against unspecified demons (*hnqt* in the plural), who are afflicting the Phoenician householders. The oath admonishes these demons from entering the house and even from stepping into the courtyard.

As said above, this text echoes the oath formula in Isaiah’s admonishment (28:14–15, 18–19) of local adjurers whom he calls *ba’alei lašōn*, “purveyors of

<sup>24</sup> The Canaanite/Hebrew term צרה refers to the woman’s rival-wives in a polygamous household (1 Sam 1: 6; cf. m. Yevam. 1:1) and not to the husband’s other spouses. Compare Assyrian: *šerrutu*; Arabic: ضرة.

<sup>25</sup> Following Canaanite rhetorical style, the author of the incantation employs the stepped number:  $X+1$ , that is,  $7+1 = 8$ . I read שמנה (orthographically an Aramaism) as a cardinal number “eight” parallel to “seven,” but implying the ordinal “eighth” representing the climax. On this “stair-case” structure, see already Ibn Ezra (Mic 5:4). If so, there would be no need to understand אשת בעל as an unattested plural, that is, “the wives of Ba’al.” See the summary discussion and literature on this numerical scheme in Shalom M. Paul, *Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 22–24. Furthermore, this aggrandized number of assisting Canaanite divinities parallels the many unspecified divines accompanying Ashur in the preceding stanza.

<sup>26</sup> Note the chiasmus: (a) Ba’al / (b) Hauron’s wife (b’) / Her rival-wives / (a’) Ba’al’s wife.

<sup>27</sup> Contra Gaster, “Magical Inscription from Arslan Tash”: “A bellicose and rampant demon,” and Cross and Saley, “Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque,” 268: “An evil genius.” It seems to me that Ssm was the magician who formulated the incantation. He might have been a divine himself, that would strengthen the effectiveness of his words. He was known by the matronymic *Pdr*, and not by a generic as were the demons.

foolishness,” a play on *ba‘alei lašon* “masters of language,” that is, sorcerers, who pronounce oaths against the chthonic demons as well as write incantations<sup>28</sup> to guard the doorways against their entry:

לכן שמעו דבר יהוה אנשי לצון משלי העם הזה אשר בירושלם:  
 כי אמרתם כרתנו ברית את מות ועם שאול עשינו חזה שיט [שוט] שוטף כי עבר [יעבר]  
 לא יבואנו כי שמנו כזב מחסנו ובשקר נסתרנו:

וכפר בריתכם את מות וחזותכם את שאול לא תקום שוט שוטף כי יעבר והייתם לו  
 למרמס: מדי עברו יקח אתכם כי בבקר בבקר יעבר ביום ובלילה והיה רק זועה הבין  
 שמועה:

Hear now the word to the Lord, You men of mockery  
 Who govern<sup>29</sup> that people in Jerusalem!  
 For you have said,  
 “We have made a covenant with Môt,  
 Concluded a pact with Sheol.  
 When the sweeping flood passes through,  
 It shall not reach us;  
 For we have made falsehood our refuge,  
 Taken shelter in treachery.”

Your covenant with Môt shall be annulled  
 Your pact with Sheol shall not endure;  
 When the sweeping flood passes through, you shall be its victims.  
 It shall catch you  
 Every time it passes through;  
 It shall pass through every morning,  
 Every day and every night.  
 And it shall be sheer horror  
 To grasp the message.

### The Plural *ḥnqt*

There is no doubt that the term *ḥnqt* in line 4 has generated the most scholarly discussion. It is a hapax in the limited dictionary of Phoenician that we possess. From the context of this inscription and the same root in Hebrew and other Semitic languages, supported by the iconography, it is assumed that they were stranglers presumably swallowing their victims.

<sup>28</sup> Note the term *ḥzot* / *ḥzā*, derived from the root *ḥzā*, “to see,” implying a visible document like a tablet on the door posts.

<sup>29</sup> The parallel *ḥzā* *ḥzā* *ḥzā* may also be a double entendre: “who govern” or “who are bards or soothsayers” (Num 21:27).

In this light there is a recurrent explanation based on the reading of the two consecutive words אַמְר וְלַחֲנוּקָת אֲמֵר as referring to the demons as “stranglers of children.” This was first suggested by Robert du Mesnil as a parallel to a disease found in Syrian spoken Arabic *ḥanuq al ḥamal*, where *ḥamal* is “sheep,” that is a translation of the putative word אַמְר (א). This explanation was accepted by Albright, André Dupont-Sommer, Theodor Gaster, followed by Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig (*KAI 44: Wuergerin des Lammes*, “chokers of lambs”), Cross and Saley and particularly by Yitzhak Avishur.<sup>30</sup>

Cross wrote emphatically, “The *ḥnqt*, ‘Stranglers’, cannot be separated from Ugaritic *’ltm ḥnqtm*, ‘the (two) strangler goddesses’ [*CAT* 1.39.18]. Du Mesnil’s combination with Arabic *ḥānūq el-ḥamal*, ‘Strangler of the lamb’, is evidently correct. Whether the appellation in our text is to be read singular or plural is not clear. At all events, the survival of the demonic epithet illustrates the fantastic conservatism of magical themes.”<sup>31</sup>

Avishur added support for this theory by noting the Akkadian magical material where a disease called *ḥiniq immeri*—“Sheep stricture”—is mentioned (see *CAD* 6, s.v. “ḥinqu”). While Avishur accepts this interpretation, he notes correctly that both in spoken Arabic as well as in the Akkadian terms these are *names of diseases* and not of demons.

However, in the light of the obvious parallelism אַמְר // נִשָּׂא קוֹל and the need to pronounce the formula out loud, the reading “and to the Stranglers *say*,” first proposed by Tur-Sinai,<sup>32</sup> seems certain. We can now put to rest the above line of interpretation of strangling sheep.

#### THE ICONOGRAPHY

Actually, this text spoke to people in three media: song, script and image. The metered incantation was probably recited aloud with musical accompaniment, and we assume was simultaneously inscribed on a limestone tablet which was to be hung on the door post, explaining the drilled hole at the top of the tablet. In addition, it was illustrated with three figures, two of whom were apparently the demons, while the third on the reverse, dressed as an Assyrian Warrior, represented the protective deity who is identified as Ashur (so Gaster, Sperling, Pardee). The two crouching demons are generally identified as a wolf<sup>33</sup> and a *sphinx-like* helmeted creature<sup>34</sup> in a subdued position.

<sup>30</sup> Avishur, “Second Amulet Incantation,” 250–51.

<sup>31</sup> Cross, *Leaves*, 268.

<sup>32</sup> Torczyner (Tur-Sinai), “A Hebrew Incantation.”

<sup>33</sup> McCarter identifies her as the *ḥnqt*. “An Amulet from Arslan Tash,” *COS* 2.86:222–23.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Conklin, “Arslan Tash I,” 89: “Though the term ‘sphinx’ has been used for the sake of convenience to refer to the upper figure, this is not certain identification, and art historians have yet to pronounce definitively on the character of all these figures.”

The wolf is consuming a small person—a child—having just swallowed its head and torso that would probably lead to death by asphyxiation or choking. This iconographic motif<sup>35</sup> found also in the one-eyed monster of Arslan Tash II is reminiscent of the much later rabbinic source TB Nedarim 32a:

[ר' שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: לא למשה רבינו בקש שטן להרוג אלא לאותו תינוק שנאמר 'חתן דמים אתה לי', צא וראה מי קרוי חתן הוי אומר זה התינוק.]. **דרש רבי יהודה בר ביזנא בשעה שנתרשל משה רבינו מן המילה באו אף וחימה ובלעוהו ולא שיירו ממנו [מהילד] אלא רגליו, מיד ותקח צפורה צור ותכרות את ערלת בנה מיד וירף ממנו.**

Rabbi Yehuda bar Bizna expounded: At the time when Our Teacher Moses became lax regarding the circumcision [of his infant son Eliezer], Anger and Fury came and swallowed him [the child] so nothing of him was left except his legs.

#### THE SPHINX

In order to appreciate the importance of this Phoenician inscription and its iconography, we should take a closer look at the upper figure—identified as “a sphinx-like demon.” This *Mischwesen* has a long history extending from the early Second Millennium BCE into the classical and Roman periods. It already appears in glyptic art engraved on cylinder seals from Northern Syria (1800–1600 BCE) as well as the well-known ivory objects from Megiddo (thirteenth–eleventh centuries BCE).<sup>36</sup> They were prominent in Hittite architecture and glyptic art where there was both a bearded male and beardless female counterpart. Four monumental stone figures stood guard at the southern entrance (“Sphinx Gate”) to Hattusha, the capital of the Late Bronze Age Hittite empire, as well as in the fortifications of another major city at Alaca-Hüyük. Textual references in Hittite records that allude to what might be the generic name of this leonine hybrid use the term *awiti* or the feminine *damnaššara*. However, since there is no direct correlation between text and depiction there is no certainty that these terms refer to this monster.<sup>37</sup> This hybrid is found in Minoan and Mycenaean art where its character and function

<sup>35</sup> Zamora (“Textos Magicos,” 12) seems to have more to say about this motif but leaves the reader hanging by saying, “No tenemos tiempo aqui para ocuparnos de una interesante cuestion paralela” regarding the relationship of the iconographic motifs and the text in this and in other inscriptions.

<sup>36</sup> Joan Goodnick Westenholz, ed., *Dragons, Monsters, and Fabulous Beasts* (Jerusalem Rubin Mass, 2004), 129–61, esp. 129–35; Alessandra Gilbert, “Die nordsyrische Sphinx,” in *Die Wege der Sphinx. Ein Monster zwischen Orient und Okzident*, ed. Lorenz Winkler-Horaček (Rahden: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2011), 79–97.

<sup>37</sup> Kay Kohlmeyer, “Anatolian Architectural Decorations, Statuary, and Stelae,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson Publishers, 2000): 2639–60, esp. 2645–47; Alessandra Gilbert, “Die anatolische Sphinx,” in Winkler-Horaček, *Die Wege der Sphinx*, 39–49. I thank Ilan Peled of the University of Amsterdam and Noga Ayali-Darshan of Bar-Ilan University for discussing these matters with me.



remain uncertain. Further complicating its history and message is that scholars have identified, or superficially compared, it to other hybrid creatures.<sup>38</sup> The fact that we do not really know how this creature was called in this early period only adds to the enigma.

It was the Greeks, who for some unapparent reason, coined the name Σφίγγξ, “Sphinx,” that is, “Choker,” which became the generic term for a female (occasionally male) human-headed leonine winged creature with a significant headdress.<sup>39</sup> This noun is derived from the Greek verb σφίγγειν, “to bind tight.” It is also the root of *sphincter* “that which binds tight,” a ring like muscle that normally maintains constriction of a bodily passage.<sup>40</sup>

The Sphinx is a well-known homicidal demon that has been immortalized in Greek literature<sup>41</sup> and art where she has a dual interconnected role of riddle poser and snatcher of men in her talons. There is no indication that she swallowed her victims.<sup>42</sup> The solving of her riddle is a prominent motif in Sophocles’s *Oedipus Rex*,<sup>43</sup> where she guards the entrance to Greek Thebes. It was Hesiod (*Theogony* 326<sup>44</sup>), who, in the Archaic period, gave her the proper name Φίξ (Φίξα) thereby providing her with a mythic persona as the offspring of a monstrous union of Ortos the dog<sup>45</sup> and presumably Chimaera. The connection to Thebes is further enhanced by Hesiod who says that the lofty Mount Phicion near Thebes took its name from the Sphinx. This semantic point was taken up in Plato’s *Cratylus* (414d), where Socrates says that “sphinx” is an aberration of the original personal name Φίξ! It is noteworthy that Kadmus, that is, “the Easterner,” from Tyre (Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.49), is associated with the founding of Thebes.<sup>46</sup> It was he who according to legend introduced the Kadmean letters, that is, the Phoenician alphabet, into Greece (Herodotus, *Hist.* 5.58). The implication, therefore, is that the Sphinx too had a strong association if not direct tie with the foreign Phoenician

<sup>38</sup> See Note Kourou, “Following the Sphinx: Tradition and Innovation in Early Iron Age Crete,” in *Identità Culturale, Etnicità, Processi di Trasformazione a Creta fra Dark Age e Arcaismo*, ed. Giovanni Rizzo (Catania: University of Crete, 2011), 165–77, and bibliography there.

<sup>39</sup> The iconographic element of a headdress of different sorts found in all the assemblages depicting the sphinx throughout the ancient Near East is worthy of an independent study. See Kourou, “Following the Sphinx,” 173–74.

<sup>40</sup> Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue grecque: Histoire des mots* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2009), 1040–41, s.v. “σφίγγω.”

<sup>41</sup> Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 541; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1251; Euripides, *Phoenissae* 32.

<sup>42</sup> For a wide-ranging study of the sphinx in Greek literature and iconography, see Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth—A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 494–98; see also Carolina López-Ruiz, “A Phoenician Answer for the Greek Sphinx” (forthcoming).

<sup>43</sup> There seems to be an implicit connection, like *nomen est omen*, between the motif of the riddle of what walks on four, two, and three feet and its solution by the “club-footed” Oedipus.

<sup>44</sup> See also Hesiod, *The Shield* 33.

<sup>45</sup> It is worth noting that the slim leonine body of the Sphinx can be mistaken for that of a canine.

<sup>46</sup> Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, 467–73.

presence in Greece.<sup>47</sup> It is quite plausible then that the Greek term is an early translation of Canaanite *honeqet*, the malevolent composite creature depicted in the First Incantation from Arslan Tash! I suggest therefore that Hesiod might have been motivated to give the creature a personal name based on local provenance to counter the idea that the Sphinx was imported from the East.

In fact, the Sphinx, as we have come to know, has two manifestations and dispositions. Besides this Greek female monster, the other is the so-called wingless male Great Sphinx at Giza, probably representing Pharaoh Khephren (ca. 2570 BCE). Though referring to another statue at Sais, Herodotus (*Hist.* 2.175) identified it as an ἀνδρόσφιγξ, that is, a male sphinx.<sup>48</sup> This important gender distinction has not always been clear. Egyptologists identify this majestic figure as that of a benevolent Pharaoh, the protector of the Pyramids. “It represents the king, not only as a being of superhuman physical power, but of a quality of power which is, in Egypt, characteristic of the gods.”<sup>49</sup> Its Egyptian name was šspw (*sh-s-pw*), derived from šsp, “image,” translated “image (of Pharaoh),” which should not be confused with the Greek term.<sup>50</sup> This positive symbol of Egyptian kingship was adopted by later rulers.<sup>51</sup> In particular, see Pharaoh Akhenaton (fig. 2) who adapted it to his own iconographic motif of reaching out to receive the hand-like rays of Aten, his patron deity.<sup>52</sup>

I would add one more point of distinction: It seems that when a major deity is portrayed as a hybrid, it is generally with either a human head or body combined with a significant animal whose attributes become part of his/her persona, for example, Pharaoh the lion or Anubis the jackal, whereas if the hybrid is a demon or protective genii lacking individual identity (anonymous), for example, a sphinx, then it will probably be a composite creature with more than one human, animal or fantastic physical feature like wings, horns or a venomous snake tail.

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<sup>47</sup> Note that Kassite cylinder seals discovered at Thebes, support an early historic connection with the Levant. Edith Porada, *Edith Porada: zum 100. Geburtstag*, ed. Erika Bleibtreu and Hans Ulrich Steymans (Zurich: University of Zurich, 2014), 299–308; Joan Aruz, “Seals and Interconnections,” in Bleibtreu and Steymans, *Edith Porada*, 256–67.

<sup>48</sup> Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Herodotus—The Histories*, trans. A. L. Purvis (New York: Pantheon, 2007), 199.

<sup>49</sup> Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 11.

<sup>50</sup> See Susan Wise Bauer, *The History of the Ancient World* (New York: Norton, 2007), 110–12, esp. 112: “The name *sphinx* is a Greek corruption; the original Egyptian name of the figure was probably *shesepankh* or ‘living image.’” But, see now López-Ruiz, “Phoenician Answer for the Greek Sphinx.”

<sup>51</sup> Cf. the statue of King Amenemhet III. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, fig. 16 for the sphinx with Hatshepsut’s head in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<sup>52</sup> It is on display at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

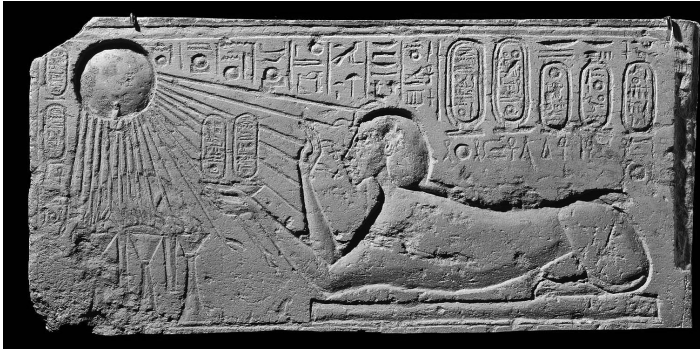


Fig. 2. Relief of Akhenaton as Sphinx. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 64.1944. Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Akhenaten 1349–1336 BCE. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The leonine sphinx has been identified by many scholars with the winged cherubim mentioned only in the Bible.<sup>53</sup> It seems to me, however, that the cherubim were a bovine hybrid creature. They are described as an aspect of the *hayyot haqqodesh*, that is, the celestial beings described in detail in Ezekiel’s *merkavah* revelation, where שׁוּר is replaced by כְּרוּב (Ezek 1:10 and 10:14). Note that they have a calf-like hoof (1:7).<sup>54</sup> Moreover, it seems that the (golden) calves that appear in heterodox Israelite ritual (Exod 32:1–6; 1 Kgs 12:28–33) were a substitute for the cherub in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and temple.<sup>55</sup>

They were guardians of the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:24; cf. Ezek 28:14) who served also as a divine vehicle in biblical poetry (2 Sam 22:11; Ps 18:11) or as a throne symbolizing God’s invisible presence in the Holy of Holies (Exod 25:18–22; 37:7–9; 1 Kgs 8:6–7).

However, there might be some functional overlapping since in Canaan it is the leonine figure that is depicted on the sides of the royal thrones in the Megiddo

<sup>53</sup> See Elie Borowski, “Cherubim: God’s Throne,” *BAR* 21/4 (1995): 36–41; Rachel Hachlili, “Cherubs, Sphinx and Tetrad in Ancient Art,” in *In the Hill-Country, and in the Shephelah, and in the Arabah (Josh 12,8)*, ed. Shay Bar (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 2008), 25\*–47\*. Methodologically, in this case, I would caution against synthesizing the two media of text and image. For a summary of opinions, Raanan Eichler, “Cherub: A History of Interpretation,” *Biblica* 96 (2015): 26–38. He rejects identifying the cherub with both the four-footed leonine sphinx and the bovine hybrid, preferring to see the cherub as an upright figure.

<sup>54</sup> כְּרוּב does not have a Hebrew etymology, but perhaps is related to the Aramaic: כָּרַב “to plow.” However, most scholars derive it from Akk: *karāba* meaning “to pray” “to bless” “to be an intercessor.” *HALOT*, s.v. “כְּרוּב.”

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Demsky, *Literacy in Ancient Israel*, 241–42.

ivory from the Late Bronze Age as well as on the Ahiram sarcophagus from the tenth century BCE.

Defining the nature of the “sphinx” is therefore complex especially when we look at the medium of the ivory inlays.<sup>56</sup> These luxury items were meant for household use in decorating table, chair and bed (Amos 3:15; 6:4), which leads me to assume that this Levantine sphinx-type was a benevolent creature brought into the home as opposed to the demonic *honeqet* of the Arslan Tash inscription who was adjured not to enter house or courtyard. Furthermore, the strong Egyptian influence on the Phoenician artisans working on this imported African medium is obvious.<sup>57</sup> Noteworthy for its aesthetic artistry is the lady sphinx on a Nimrud ivory inlay with the “Mona Lisa smile” who is depicted enface in Egyptian style.<sup>58</sup> If we are to learn anything from this review of similar fantastic creatures, classified generically as the sphinx, it is that while they may be alike in form, they bear different messages, especially when depicted on different surfaces from different social and cultural spheres.

#### CONCLUSION

In summary, after discussing the First Arslan Tash Incantation, I suggest that the Canaanite/Phoenician term *hinqt* “the strangler,” referring to one or more of the demons depicted here, reached the Greek world, probably before Hesiod’s time. The term was translated literally into Greek as Σφίγξ “The Choker” and is identified as the malevolent female Sphinx who will resound in Greek literature and art. Her abode is at Thebes which seems to have been the portal for Levantine influence. According to Greek legend, Thebes was the home of the Kadmeans out of Tyre. Ultimately the sphinx became the generic term for any leonine hybrid good or bad, male or female, Egyptian or Greek. The sphinx is then another case of cultural borrowing by the Greeks from the ancient Near East.<sup>59</sup> Not only that, but this unnoticed Phoenician—Greek connection, documented in the First Arslan Tash Incantation, adds further support to those who claim the authenticity of this tablet.

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<sup>56</sup> Noteworthy is the significant hoard that was discovered in the provincial governor’s palace in Arslan Tash, see Richard D. Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East* (Jerusalem: The Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1982), 48–49.

<sup>57</sup> The reference to a house (or workshop) of ivory build by King Ahab (1 Kgs 22:39) seems to support the theory of locally produced ivory inlay. Liat Naeh, “In Search of Identity: The Contribution of Recent Finds to Our Understanding of Iron Age Ivory Objects in the Material Culture of the Southern Levant,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 42 (2015): 80–96. On royal Israelite workshops, see Aaron Demsky, “‘The Houses of Achzib’ (A Critical Note on Micah 1:14b),” *IEJ* 16 (1966): 211–15.

<sup>58</sup> Barnett, *Ancient Ivories*, pl. 51; see also “The Human-headed lion The Sphinx,” in Westenholz, *Dragons*, 35–36; Borowski, “Cherubim,” *passim*.

<sup>59</sup> But note Hanan Eshel and Deborah Cassuto, “Additional Evidence of Greek influence on Phoenician Art in Cyprus in the Seventh Cent BCE” [Hebrew], *ErIsr* 29 (2009): 35–42.

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## The Carthaginian Deity Tinit

Jo Ann Hackett

Archaeologists have found hundreds of inscriptions from North Africa that have to do with child sacrifice. A typical inscription from Carthage<sup>1</sup> reads this way:

1. <i>l-rabbot l-tnt panê ba'l</i>	To the lady, TNT, Face of Baal,
2. <i>w-l- 'adôn l-ba'l ḥamōn</i>	and to the lord, Baal Ḥamon,
3. <i>'aš nadara 'arišot bitt</i>	that which Arišot daughter of
4. <i>bod 'aštart molk</i>	Bodaštart vowed, a <i>mulk</i> -sacrifice
5. <i>'omor</i>	of a lamb.

And there are many, many more. Most of them date to the third–second century BCE. Carthage was settled by Tyrians, and so we assume that the religion they brought with them should look something like what we know from the Phoenician homeland. One of the things that is not known about these inscriptions, however, is whom precisely these deities represent among the deities we know from the Levant from the second millennium on. We assume that TNT, Face of Baal, is not a deity distinct from the female deities we have known for over 1000 years in the Phoenician homeland: 'Asherah, 'Ashtart, and 'Anat. Many theories have been advanced to explain how the name TNT came to be. Most people will argue that she is a form of 'Ashtart, both because 'Ashtart was important to the Phoenician

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I am delighted to dedicate this essay to P. Kyle McCarter Jr., who was probably the first person with whom I discussed the inscriptions in question. I hope that the many possibilities and final judgments herein will in some way conform to the elegance of his own proofs as a scholar. I would like to thank Aren Wilson-Wright and Benjamin Kantor for discussing the details of this essay with me and especially John Huehnergard, for his sharp eye and even sharper intellect. Without him, these arguments would be far different and far less accurate. As always, remaining mistakes are my own.

<sup>1</sup> *CIS* 1.307. The vocalization and translation are the author's. The spelling *mulk* in the translation for the name of the sacrifice refers, of course, to the work of Otto Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1935).



coastal cities<sup>2</sup> and because since 1978 we have known of a seventh–sixth century inscription from Sarepta that is dedicated to TNT ‘Ashtart.<sup>3</sup>

1. <i>hsml . ’z p’</i>	The statue which
2. <i>l šlm . bn m</i>	Šillem, son of M
3. <i>p l bn ’zy . l</i>	P’L son of ‘ZY made for
4. <i>tnt ’šrt</i>	TNT ‘Aštart

We are not certain whether TNT ‘Ashtart is meant to be a double name for the same deity, but it seems clear that TNT and ‘Ashtart have a special relationship of some kind. The discovery of the ivory plaque in Sarepta seemed to resolve another issue about this deity: since she was known to us up to that time primarily from North Africa, many scholars believed that she was originally a North African deity, especially because of a pan-Berber feature of feminine nouns, that is, they often begin with “t” (or “ta” or “t” with some other vowel) and end with “t,” as does our deity TNT.<sup>4</sup> Her name looks exactly like one that follows this T/T pattern. The Sarepta inscription’s early use of her name in the Phoenician homeland, however, suggested that she was actually a Levantine goddess under a different name.<sup>5</sup> I would like to suggest that both views are true.

We also have from Carthage, again in the third–second century, an inscription which begins this way: *l-rabbot l-’aštart w-l-TNT b-libanōn miqdašim ḥadašim*: “For the ladies, for ‘Ashtart and for TNT in Lebanon, new sanctuaries ... [are being dedicated].”<sup>6</sup> It is not clear whether the phrase “in Lebanon” is meant to apply to ‘Ashtart, but TNT, at least, is definitely referred to as “in Lebanon,” and this later inscription could be lined up with the Sarepta inscription as another piece of evidence that TNT was the Phoenician deity ‘Ashtart. Because the word “and” is in the inscription, however, between ‘Ashtart’s and TNT’s names, and because *l-* ‘for’ is repeated, it seems more logical to suggest that the inscription has in mind two *different* deities. Also, according to the inscription, *plural* sanctuaries

<sup>2</sup> James Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta, An Ancient Phoenician City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), photograph p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Moshe Dothan gives several early examples of suggestions of TNT’s identity: “A Sign of Tanit from Tel ‘Akko,” *IEJ* 24 (1974): 44–49, especially n. 3. Frank M. Cross cites both Giovanni Garbini and Sabatino Moscati as convinced by evidence from Malta that TNT and Ashtart are the same: *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 29. Eliezer Oren early on stressed their identity: “The Caves of the Palestinian Shephelah,” *Archaeology* 18 (1965): 218–24. See also Lawrence Stager, “Carthage 1977: The Punic and Roman Harbors,” *Archaeology* 30 (1977): 198–200.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Ernest T. Abdel-Massih, *A Reference Grammar of Tamazight (Middle Atlas Berber)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies, 1971), 95.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, *KAI* II, 90.

<sup>6</sup> *KAI* 81.

are being dedicated. Still, however, because ʿAshtart is the only female deity with whom TNT is associated in our Phoenician and Punic inscriptions, most scholars who have dealt with this issue have seen TNT as a particular form of ʿAshtart who, for the most part, is the recipient of child sacrifice in Carthage and occasionally in Constantine/El-Hofra, among other sites, during Punic times.<sup>7</sup>

Frank M. Cross bucked the trend by asserting that TNT was a form of the deity ʿAsherah. He asserted that the Ugaritic name ʿ*Aθiratu Yammi*, usually translated the ʿAsherah “of Yamm” was instead a deity that had *overcome* Yamm, the sea, and therefore could be imagined as a sea monster, *tannin*. A feminine *-t* ending, into which the final “n” of *tannin* assimilated, would leave us with *\*tannitt*, which simplified to *tannit*, with one final *-t*, as words with doubled final letters tend to do.<sup>8</sup> Then the name would be Tannit with a doubled “n” or Tanit reduced to a single “n,” and we do have evidence in Greek transcriptions of both single “n” and double “n” in this name (see further below). This deity is, in fact, usually called Tanit by scholars, although there is actually no evidence for the pronunciation [Tanit], with *-a-* in the first syllable, in any ancient text. Cross’s explanation was never really picked up in scholarship, although I have followed it until recently for the same reason Cross did: ʿAsherah seems to disappear at some point in the first millennium and TNT shows up, so the equation seems plausible.

I have recently concluded, however, that although there is indeed a Levantine deity who was the inspiration for TNT, for linguistic reasons, that deity has to be not ʿAsherah and not ʿAshtart, but ʿAnat. Although several scholars, especially Finn O. Hvidberg-Hansen, who wrote an entire book about TNT,<sup>9</sup> have suggested ʿAnat as the deity behind TNT, I would like in this essay to set out more possibilities than have been before, especially with the help of Greek phonology of the late first millennium.

One obvious question about this theory is exactly how ʿAnat came to be worshipped in the North African world, and at quite an early stage, since she had already been (re-)introduced to the Phoenician world as TNT by the seventh–sixth century. The answer is that we already know, actually, that ʿAnat was a deity in North Africa much earlier even than the first millennium—in Egypt. ʿAnat seems to have been brought south to Egypt by the Hyksos, in the seventeenth century, although our only evidence that she was a Hyksos import is seals that incorporate

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<sup>7</sup> See, conveniently, Heath Dewrell, *Child Sacrifice in Ancient Israel*, EANECS 5 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 31–33.

<sup>9</sup> Finn O. Hvidberg-Hansen, *La déesse TNT: Une étude sur la religion cananéenne-punique*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: Gad’s Verlag, 1979). W. F. Albright also championed ʿAnat as the background to TNT: W. F. Albright *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: An Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 130–35.

‘Anat as the theophoric element of the seal-owners’ names.<sup>10</sup> There is a stronger case to be made for the New Kingdom, however. ‘Anat is mentioned in Egyptian myths that accept her as a member of the Egyptian pantheon. Ramesses II, who ruled for much of the thirteenth century, even named his sword, his horse, and his daughter (/future wife<sup>11</sup>) after ‘Anat. Most important of the three is his daughter, named Bint-‘Anat ‘Daughter of ‘Anat’, which might suggest that Ramesses II considered her mother and his wife to be some kind of avatar of ‘Anat. On the other hand, “daughter of” and “son of” are also common ways to name a worshiper of a particular deity, like the Aramean king Bir-Hadad in the 9th century.<sup>12</sup> So Ramesses II’s daughter may very well have been named after ‘Anat because her father was somewhat obsessed with ‘Anat and would raise Bint-‘Anat as a fellow worshiper of the deity.

Archaeologists have in fact found an earlier mention of ‘Anat as a deity in Egypt, from a few decades before the Ramessides, during the reign of Horemheb ca. 1300 BCE. For instance, Donald Redford has described an inscription on an unprovenanced votive stone bowl, dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Horemheb, in which ‘Anat is mentioned as one of the several deities, both Egyptian and Asiatic, to whom the bowl is dedicated.<sup>13</sup> We know that New Kingdom (and earlier) pharaohs had to contend with the various North African peoples they called Libyans, and that “Lybians” were both enemies and immigrants, especially to the Delta, during the New Kingdom (during which both Horemheb and the Ramessides reigned). Ramesses II clearly thought of ‘Anat as a protective deity for him during his wars,<sup>14</sup> and knowledge of her in that guise could have spread westward during his reign precisely because of his belief in her as the source of his prowess during war, or through captured Libyan soldiers or victorious Egyptian soldiers stationed

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<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, W. F. Albright, “The Evolution of the West-Semitic Divinity An-Anat-Attâ,” *AJSL* 41 (1925): 83.

<sup>11</sup> Richard C. Steiner, “The Practices of the Land of Egypt (Leviticus 18:3): Incest, ‘Anat, and Israel in the Egypt of Ramesses the Great,” in “*Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?*”: *Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier, Alan R. Millard, and Gary A. Rendsburg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 79–92.

<sup>12</sup> For a recent discussion of this inscription, see Jo Ann Hackett and Aren Wilson-Wright, “A Revised Interpretation of the Melqart Stela (*KAI* 201),” in “*Like ‘Ilu Are You Wise?*”: *Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Dennis G. Pardee*, ed. H. H. Hardy II, Joseph Lam, and Eric D. Raymond (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago), forthcoming.

<sup>13</sup> Donald B. Redford, “New Light on the Asiatic Campaigning of Horemheb,” *BASOR* 211 (1973): 36–49. It is his opinion that the bowl originated in the Memphis area.

<sup>14</sup> In one of the few mentions of ‘Anat in Phoenician epigraphy, *KAI* 42 refers to her as *m’z h̄ym* “refuge of the living,” which can be seen to describe a protective side of ‘Anat rarely known otherwise.

in the west, or as a well-known fact about Ramesses that would have been common knowledge among the westerners who settled in the Delta.<sup>15</sup>

There remains the question of the changes in ‘Anat’s name, from her Northwest Semitic form(s) to the forms we know from Phoenician inscriptions written in Greek script. In Greek transcriptions of the deity’s name, in *KAI* 175 and 176, from Constantine/El-Hofra, second century BCE, she is called  $\theta\iota\nu\iota\theta$  and  $\theta\epsilon\nu\nu\epsilon\iota\theta$ .  $\theta$  is used to represent Phoenician *taw*, “t,” and *iota*, *epsilon*, and *iota epsilon* could all interchange in this period.<sup>16</sup> So the people who wrote the name in Greek heard something like “Tinit,” “Tenet,” Tinnit,” or “Tennet.”

There is, however, some confusion about the original length of the second vowel in ‘Anat’s name: some scholars believe it was originally short (\**a*) and some believe it was originally long (\**ā*). Although one can make the argument that ‘Anat’s name came to be pronounced Tinit, et cetera, in either case, it is still worth gathering the evidence here. William Hallo and Hayim Tadmor found very early evidence of the Canaanite shift in their analysis of an Old Babylonian tablet found at Ḥaṣor.<sup>17</sup> They proposed that the syllables *ḥa-nu-ta*, in the names DUMU-*ḥa-nu-ta* and *Su-um-ḥa-nu-ta* represent the Akkadian writing of the name of the deity ‘Anat, the second syllable written with “u” to represent [ō] as is common in Akkadian texts. The [ō] would be evidence of an original \**ā* in ‘Anat, which would have already become [ō] by the Canaanite shift in the period of the tablet—Old Babylonian, dated to eighteenth–sixteenth centuries. They compare the name of the location Ḥaṣor, written <sup>URU</sup>*ḥa-ṣú-ra* in line 5 of the tablet. On the other hand, both Nadav Na’aman and Anne Draffkorn Kilmer have written without comment that *ḥa-nu-ta* represents a Hurrian word.<sup>18</sup> If they are correct, these Old Babylonian writings have no bearing on the pronunciation of ‘Anat.

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<sup>15</sup> I intend here to give a nuanced reason for the adoption of ‘Anat from the Egyptians by North Africans from west of Egypt, along the lines of Aren M. Wilson-Wright’s fresh explanations for adoptions of the deity ‘Ashtart (Aren Wilson-Wright, *Ahtart: The Transmission and Transformation of a Goddess in the Late Bronze Age*, FAT 2/90 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016]).

<sup>16</sup> This information was confirmed to me by Benjamin Kantor, a former graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, in his dissertation on the *Secunda* of Origen: “The Second Column (Secunda) of Origen’s Hexapla in Light of Greek Pronunciation” (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2017). His fourth chapter concerns precisely the pronunciation of ancient Greek during various periods, including the one that concerns us here.

<sup>17</sup> William Hallo and Hayim Tadmor, “A Lawsuit from Hazor,” *IEJ* 27 (1977): 1–11.

<sup>18</sup> Nadav Na’aman, “The Hurrians and the End of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine,” *Levant* 26 (1994): 175–87, especially 176b; Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, “The Cult Song with Music from Ancient Ugarit: Another Interpretation,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale* 68 (1974): 69–82, especially 73.

In defense of an original short vowel are the several writings of *an-tu* in settings that would suggest a divine name,<sup>19</sup> including the Akkadian-language treaty between Mursili II of Hatti and Niqmepa<sup>c</sup> of Ugarit, in which the god list toward the end of the treaty lists the trio Anu, Alalu, and Antu.<sup>20</sup> One might argue that Antu's location, merely two words away from the well-known Akkadian primeval deity Anu, would suggest that she was simply the feminine form of that deity, were it not for the god list *Ugaritica V*, 18, where <sup>d</sup>*a-na-tu<sub>4</sub>*, with no Anu in sight, is followed by <sup>d</sup>*šamaš* and then <sup>d</sup>*al-la-tu<sub>4</sub>*, a name similar to Alalu in the treaty, which represents the Ugaritic deity ʾAršay. That Antu/<sup>d</sup>*a-na-tu<sub>4</sub>* occur in the same relative positions as Alalu/<sup>d</sup>*al-la-tu<sub>4</sub>* means taking a second look at Antu, which might be, instead of the feminine version of Anu, in fact the deity ʾAnatu, with the typical Akkadian syncope of the middle vowel, necessarily a short vowel. Yet another possibility, however, is that the name AN-*tu<sub>4</sub>*, here represents the use of AN as West-Semitic ʾIl, and the name in question is in fact simply ʾIltu, 'the goddess.'<sup>21</sup>

The Biblical Hebrew place name and personal names, עֲנַתוֹת, suggest a pluralization of ʾAnat by people who interpreted the "t" at the end of the name as part of the root of the word. This situation too would require an originally short vowel in the second syllable, as the form עֲנַתוֹת can be the plural of \*ʾanat, but not \*ʾanāt. As if the situation were not yet complicated enough, the Hebrew Bible witnesses both בֵּית עֲנַת in Judah (Josh 15:59) and בֵּית עֲנַת in Naphtali (Josh 19:38), both unknown outside of town-lists, except for the unhelpful notice in Judg 1:33 that the people of Naphtali could not drive out the inhabitants of בֵּית עֲנַת. If the two place names indicate temples of ʾAnat, we would have biblical evidence for versions of her name that either did or did not undergo the Canaanite shift, or, on the other hand, either did or did not undergo the later Phoenician shift, where *á* > *o*. In other words, the evidence can be used to support both \**ā* and short \**a*. The name of the judge Shamgar (שָׁמְגַר בֶּן-עֲנַת, Judg 3:31) would also suggest \**a* in ʾAnat's name, but since Shamgar itself is not a Hebrew name, it is unclear where the name's form of ʾAnat originated, and whether one could even expect the Canaanite shift to operate in such a name, leaving the evidence for \**a* meaningless.

<sup>19</sup> See Daniel Sivan, *Grammatical Analysis and Glossary of the Northwest Semitic Vocables in Akkadian Texts of the Fifteenth–Thirteenth C.B.C. from Canaan and Syria* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 204, under ʾAN(A)TU.

<sup>20</sup> See Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., WAW 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 64.

<sup>21</sup> Wilfred van Soldt, *Studies in the Akkadian of Ugarit: Dating and Grammar* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 19, n. 168. Sivan, *Grammatical Analysis*, 204, under ʾANU, lists the names as though AN represents a deity ʾAnu.

Whatever the length of the second vowel in 'Anat's name, I see the progression from that name to the Greek writings as something like the following, beginning with the assumption that the vowel was short:

1. At some point, 'Anat was accepted into the Numidian (Berber) pantheon, and Numidian feminine names, as has been explained, can begin with a "t/ta" and end with a "t."

2. There was no 'ayin in Numidian,<sup>22</sup> so the series would be something like this: \*T/Ta + 'Anat > \*Ta'anat > \*Tanat. Since we know that in Poenulus and Latino-Punic, \*'a/a' > e in Phoenician,<sup>23</sup> it is possible that such a change had already happened in the form of the name that was transmitted to the Numidians, so that the progression could be: \*Ta'anat > \*Tænat or \*Tenat. We know from Latin, Greek, and even quite early Akkadian transcriptions, that vowel harmony operated in Phoenician/Punic, and regressive vowel harmony would have resulted in Tenet/Tennet/Tinit, which again is much like the Greek writing for our deity's name.<sup>24</sup>

3. In fact, according to the same section *PPG*<sup>3</sup> 75b, occasionally "a" in Phoenician simply becomes "e" in Greek and Latin. Examples they give are: δέλτα for \*dalti; Ἡμο/ουνοσ for original Ḥamōn, the divine name (and ḥ, of course, is a guttural, as is ' in 'Anat); the divine name Gedde for original gadd- 'luck'; and perhaps νεε for naša'. If the a-vowel in the first syllable of 'Anat had simply become e, then the divine name that the Numidians took as their own would have become T + (')enat or Tenat. In this case, again, vowel harmony would result in the Greek versions of the name. So Tenat could become Tenet.

4. Finally, according to *PPG*<sup>3</sup> §97, we find both doubled consonants written in Latin and Greek as single consonants, and, on the other hand, single consonants occasionally occurring doubled. For instance, for 'adōnī 'my lord', we get donni in Poenulus; for the name Balyaton, we get Balliathonis. The vowel harmony and sporadic doubling could account for the Greek θεωνεθ. By the first century BCE, epsilon and epsilon-iota were essentially the same vowel, and in fact, iotacism had already begun to push several classical Greek vowels toward iota. Thus, the pronunciation θεωνεθ that we find in *KAI* 176 would have sounded

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<sup>22</sup> See Michael P. O'Connor, "The Berber Scripts," in *The World's Writing Systems*, ed. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 112–19, especially 114.

<sup>23</sup> Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Röllig, and Anna Maria Amadasi Guzzo, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*, 3rd ed. (Rome: PBI, 1999): §75b. There is, of course, a similar occurrence in most dialects of Akkadian, where \*a becomes e in the environment of 'ayin. See John Huehnergard, "Akkadian e and Semitic Root Integrity," *Babel und Bibel* 7 (2014): 445–75.

<sup>24</sup> *PPG*<sup>3</sup> §93 bis.

much the same as θινιθ, which we find in *KAI* 175, both from Constantine/El-Hofra and dating between the third and first centuries BCE.<sup>25</sup>

Two other forms follow from this one: we find the un-Semitic writing of the doubled consonant “n” as two *n*’s in late Punic names, so תננת for our deity, Tinit or Tennet. This final form corresponds to two other late Punic writings of Tinit/Tinnit: *tynt* and *tnyt*, which taken together suggest an *i*-vowel in each syllable.<sup>26</sup>

The second suggestion assumes \**ā* as the name’s second vowel. If we again turn to *PPG*<sup>3</sup>, this time to §79 bis, we find that for unknown reasons, *o/ō* sometimes becomes “e” in Punic. The best example comes from Poenulus: for ‘I’, *’anōk(ī)*, Poenulus has *anec*. Here, the Latin vowel *e* clearly corresponds to the Canaanite shift vowel *ō* from \**ā*. We might then suggest a process for TNT as follows: \*T/Ta + (‘)anōt > \*Tenōt > Tenet, which with the same occasional doubling, gives us Ten(n)et, θεννειθ in Greek, also written θινιθ. (Admittedly, my choice of Tinit in the title of this essay is meant to suggest the non-existent but ubiquitous Tanit.)

To sum up, I am proposing that sometime before the Phoenician settlements in North Africa, the deity ‘Anat was known to the Numidian/Berber people who lived there, and she had been adopted by them; they added a “t” or “ta” at the front of her name and dropped the initial ‘*ayin*. She was also known to the Punic peoples in North Africa under this modified name, and her name went through the phonetic changes that occurred through the centuries to all Punic words, giving us the Ten(n)et/Tin(n)it we know from Greek and Latin transcriptions in late Punic times.

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<sup>25</sup> Again, both the sporadic doubling and the iotacization in the period have been confirmed to me by Benjamin Kantor’s dissertation. See above, n. 16.

<sup>26</sup> *PPG*<sup>3</sup> §107, 1 (for *tynt*, *KAI* 164, 1).

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# The A9 Aramaic Manuscript from Ancient Bactria Revisited

André Lemaire

In their magnificent *editio princeps*, Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked were well aware that they “cannot claim to have solved all the problems of reading, interpretation or historical and topographical background in these rather complicated documents.”<sup>1</sup> One of them, A9 seemed particularly strange: they translated the lines 1–4:

1. This is: drugs that Bagavant himself
2. [re]ceived from his wife
3. [in Za]rtan, which is in the presence of the judge (?). This drug
4. (is) the third kind, of his wife ...

and lines 11–12 (*verso*):

11. This is the drug which Bagavant received
12. from his wife ...

The editors noted in their presentation: “The text is difficult to interpret and the following restoration and translation should be regarded as tentative”<sup>2</sup> while, in the introduction, they wrote: “One of them (A9) seems to record a transaction between Bagavant and his wife, a highly unusual situation in the ancient world, but the details of the text are too obscure to allow a precise interpretation.”<sup>3</sup> Using

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It is a pleasure and an honor to offer this modest epigraphic note to our excellent colleague P. Kyle McCarter Jr., who has made such great contributions to the interpretation of the early West Semitic inscriptions.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria (Fourth Century BCE.) from the Khalili Collection* (London, The Khalili Family trust, 2012), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 124.

<sup>3</sup> Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 16.

a few photographs taken in 2000 (fig. 1–4), before the manuscript was in the Khalili Collection, I shall try to show that the strangeness and the unusual situation of this manuscript do not come from the fact that it presents a transaction between Bagavant and his wife, but from erroneously reading the word *smyn*, “drugs.”

PALEOGRAPHICAL AND PHILOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

Actually while the word for “woman, wife, wife(hood?)” is clearly attested three times on the recto (lines 2 and 4: *'nth*, “his wife,” line 7: *'ntt*’, “the wife(hood?)”) and probably once on the verso (line 12: *'nth*, “his wife”), the reading of the word *smyn*, “drugs,” or *sm*’, “the drug,” is far from certain:

At line 1, the first letter of the second word, read *smyn* by the *editio princeps*, is damaged but the fragmentary square head and the strait vertical tail fit much better a *dalet* or a *resh* than a *samek*.

At the end of line 3, the first letter of the last word can be interpreted as a simplified *samek* but *dalet* or *resh* seems at least as possible.

At the verso, line 11, the second word is very damaged and the *editio princeps* only proposed to read an uncertain *samek* followed by a restoration of two letters. At a careful exam of the ancient photograph, the tail is not curved (as it may seem at first view with a trace in the leather) but clearly straight and vertical as in line 1 of the *recto*. We propose therefore reading the phrase: *znh d/r[m]*’ *zy*.

With the reading *d/rmyn*, that seems clear enough at line 1 of the *recto*, and *d/r[m]*’ possible for the traces of line 11 of the *verso*, one is tempted to choose the reading with an initial *dalet* because of the well-known Aramaic word *dmyn*, “price, value, amount,” that appears in many contracts among the Elephantine<sup>4</sup> and Samaria<sup>5</sup> papyri.

At the beginning of line 2, the *editio princeps* read [*l*]*qh*, “[re]ceived” and [*bz*]*rtn*, “[in Za]rtan” at the beginning of line 3. On the ancient photographs, it is possible to distinguish some trace of the *lamed* at the beginning of line 2 (*lqh*) and there is also some trace of one (but not of two) letter, perhaps a *waw*, at the beginning of line 3: *wrtn*. Furthermore, at the end of line 12, except for the second letter that could also be read *samek*, the reading *wr/stn* fits very well the traces and lines 11–12 practically present the same formula as lines 1–2 and beginning of line 3. At the beginning of line 3, the *editio princeps* already noted that “...*rtn* could be the ending of the wife’s name;”<sup>6</sup> actually, WRTN could be an orthographic variant of *wrtyn*, “Vartaina,” mentioned as a sender on the palimpsest *verso* of the manuscript B1 (line 10). In Elephantine, *'nth* generally follows the

<sup>4</sup> *TAD* 2, xxii.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samarie vers 450–332 av. J.-C.*, CHANE 30 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 613.

<sup>6</sup> Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 125.

personal name but a change in order (*'ntth* + PN) seems possible in this “Bactrian” Aramaic.<sup>7</sup>

The last two words of line 3 are enigmatic: the first one can be *d/r/kt* and the second *d/r/sm*'. The first word could be read *rt* and interpreted as “judge,” as proposed by the *editio princeps*, and the second could be *dm*', “the price, the amount, the estimation,” or eventually *rm*', which could be an Iranian personal name.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the interpretation of this phrase is uncertain.

At the beginning of line 4, the *editio princeps* read [*zn*]*h*: The H is visible and certain with the place for two letters before the *h*. One could therefore propose many other restitutions,<sup>9</sup> among them, for instance, [*mn*]*h*, “[*min*]*a*.” The *editio princeps* interpreted the following letters and signs (*zn*' III) as “the third kind” but III does not mean “third” but “3” and this cipher could be the misplaced indication of an amount: “3 (minas).” Before the cipher “3,” *zn*' is difficult to explain: it could correspond to *z(w)n*, “provisions,” as a name (*TAD* B3.1.10, 17; D7.57<sup>10</sup>) or “to feed”<sup>11</sup> as a verb. Alternatively, it could be compared to *znyhwm*, “their weapons/their equipment,” in *TAD* A4.8.8.

At the beginning of line 5, the *editio princeps* read: [...] *kl* without translation and commented: “a restoration [*lm*]' *kl* is tempting, but is excluded by the visible traces of letters.”<sup>12</sup> At the exam of the ancient photographs, this exclusion does not seem justified and the traces of the first visible letter could well be the left part of a M that would be preceded by another letter, for instance *l* or *w*. Actually, a reading/restitution [*l*]*m* or [*w*]*m* would fit the length of the lacuna and it is possible to translate [*w*]*m*' *kl* “[*and*] food.” The end of the following word is clearly *ln*. It is preceded by the traces of one or two letters. If there are two letters, as proposed by the *editio princeps*, one could think of *w/d/r* followed by a *d/r* or *z*. Yet, the tilt

<sup>7</sup> Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 52–53, especially: “a number of omissions and transpositions” ... “In some cases agreement of number is not observed” ... “lack of consistency between plene and defective writing.”

<sup>8</sup> Philippe Gignoux, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch, Band II. Mitteliranische Personennamen. Faszikel 2. Noms propres sassanides en moyen perse épigraphique* (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie des Wissenschaften, 1986), 791–94.

<sup>9</sup> *m*'*h*, “*obolos*,” would probably be too small; *s*'*h*, “*seah*,” is a measure of capacity used in connection with grain and would not fit very well *dmy*n.

<sup>10</sup> *zyn*' is translated: “Implement” by *TAD* but this translation is considered as uncertain and “provision” would fit better the context.

<sup>11</sup> See *mtzn*, “to be nourished.” Józef T. Milik, “Textes hébreux et araméens,” in *Les grottes de Murabba'at*, DJD 2, ed. P. Benoît, Józef T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 67–205, esp. 109–14: no. 20:10; and 116–17: no. 21:11, 15; Yigael Yadin, Jonas C. Greenfield, Ada Yardeni, and Baruch A. Levine, eds., *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabatean-Aramaic Papyri* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2002), 126–27: P. Yadin 10:14, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 125.

of the right trace would not fit well a *w/d/r* and the two letters would be crowded. It seems also possible to think of only one large letter such as *m* or *q* and the tilt of the right trace would fit well a *q* or an *m*. In this case, we could think of a word such as *mln*, “lodging.” It is followed by *hwr* that, with the *editio princeps*, could mean “white,” perhaps “white (flour)” or “white (bread).” Above the line, a word of three letters has been added and read *znh* by the *editio princeps*; yet, the shape of the first letter is very unusual: it could be an abbreviated *yod* at least as well as a *zayin*: this addition remains enigmatic. At the end of line 5, *m'kl* can be interpreted as a name: “food” or as an infinitive verb: “to eat/eating” or “to consume.”

At the beginning of line 6, the *editio princeps* read *[z]y* but the traces of the second letter fit better a *dlr* and one could think of the uncertain reading *[ ]D*, “[*un*]til.” The *editio princeps* proposed to understand the following word *ynk'* as a verb (*nky*) and translates: “it is deducted,” which is possible. The second part of the line, *nd/ry znty 'hd/rn*, is enigmatic. It was translated with three question marks: “remove (?), *znty* (?) are taken (?)” by the *editio princeps*. The reading and meaning of these three words is very uncertain, especially if we take into account the alternative reading D/R.

The *editio princeps* read line 7 *[-]mn zy 'ntt' 'kl 'mt*, “... from that of the wife. Eat when,” but the readings *[d]mn zy 'ntt' 'kl 'mt*, “[The a]mount that the wife ate ...” or “*z]mn zy 'ntt' 'kl 'mt*, “[*(the) ti]me* that the wife ate ...” (with a disagreement in gender) are also possible. The verb *'kl* could have here the meaning “eating” or “consuming” (cf. *TAD B2.7.4*). The reading of the last word of line 7 seems certain: *'mt* but its interpretation is not clear. The *editio princeps* proposed to understand “when,” probably an Akkadian loanword,<sup>13</sup> but this meaning does not seem to fit the context since *'mt* would be followed by *ZY* at the beginning of the following line.

Line 8 is written vertically on the right part of the *recto*. The *editio princeps* read *[z]y mn[... ..]n* and did not propose any translation. On the ancient photograph, it is possible to propose the reading: *zy mn yd/r/wḥštn*, “this is from the hand of *ḥštn*,” some trace of the lower part of the Y being visible on the ancient photographs. The personal name *ḥštn* could be compared to *ḥšyt*, *xšaita*, “bright luminous,” in the manuscript C9:4.<sup>14</sup>

The first word of line 9 was read *ḤŠ[.]DT* and left untranslated by the *editio princeps*. It seems that the traces of the letter after *Š* fits those of a T: hence, the

<sup>13</sup> Stephen A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, Assyriological Studies 19 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 58.

<sup>14</sup> Manfred Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana. Das altiranische Namengut der Persepolis Täfelchen* (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973), 228 (no 8.1470), 232 (no 8.1530); Walther Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenlieferungen*, Göttinger Orient 3, Reihe, Band I (Wiesbaden, Harrassovitz, 1975), 134; Manfred Hutter, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch VII: Iranische Namen in semitischen Nebenüberlieferungen*, Faszikel 2 (Wien, Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), 31.

proposed reading: *hštdt*, a possible patronym of the previous personal name, which could again be compared to *hšyt* in the manuscript C9:4. After this word, the *editio princeps* read ‘*d [m]tnh yhw*’, “so that it may be [a pre]sent,” but the reading of a *m* is very uncertain: at a detailed exam, what could be the left part of an *m* is rather only a straight vertical line the top of which nearly touches the bottom of the tail of the preceding line’s *t*. Thus, a *h* seems better to fit the traces: *ḥtnh* could mean “marriage”<sup>15</sup> but it could also be a name with a personal suffix: “her bridegroom.”

As well seen by the *editio princeps*, this document is a palimpsest and, written on the *verso* along the wide side, a line has been rubbed off; it might be the address on the *verso* of a previous letter. Unfortunately, the photographs do not seem to allow any coherent reading.

Thus, we can propose the tentative reading and translation:

### Recto

1. *znh dmyn zy bgwnt bnpšh*
2. *lqh mn `ntth*
3. *wrtn zy qdm k/rt d/r/sm`*
4. *[mn?]h zn` iii zy `ntth*
5. *[w?]m`kl mln<sup>2</sup>/ynh<sup>h</sup>wr zy lm`kl*
6. *[`]d ynk` nd/ry znty` hd/rn*
7. *[d]mn zy `ntt` `kl`mt*
8. *zy mn yd hštn*                      *written vertically*
9. *hšw/td/rt` d ḥtnh*
10. *yhw*

### Verso

11. *znh d[m]` zy bgwnt lqh*
12. *mn `ntth wr/stn*

### Recto

1. This is the *amount* that Bagavant himself
2. *received* from his wife
3. [*Va*]rtan in the presence of *the judge of estimation*?
4. 3 [*min*]as? (as) *provisions/equipment* of his wife
5. [*and*] food, *lodging?* <sup>that</sup> (is) the white (*flour?/bread?*) to eat
6. [*un*]til is deducted .....
7. [*amo*]unt of the wife(hood?) *he ate/consumed* ...

<sup>15</sup> For the verb 𐤇𐤒𐤍 in Aramaic in the Arebsun inscriptions, see André Lemaire, “Les pierres et inscriptions araméennes d’Arebsun, nouvel examen,” *Irano-Judaica* 5 (2003): 138–64, esp. 155.

8. *That is from the hand of ḥštn*                      *written vertically*  
 9. (son of?) ḥšwʾtd/rt, *until/as long as he is*  
 10. her bridegroom

*Verso*

11. *This is the am[ou]nt that Bagavant received*  
 12. *from his wife Vartan*

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

There are many uncertainties of reading and philological interpretation, but several points can be emphasized:

1. This document records a transaction between Bagavant and his wife, apparently called *wrtn*, “Vartan.”
2. Bagavant apparently took or received something from his wife.
3. What he received could be counted (“3” at line 3) and apparently estimated (*dmyn/dmn*).
4. In this document, the verb *ʾkl*, “eat/consume,” and the word *mʾkl*, “food,” seem to play an important role.
5. With a very small change (*dmyn/dmʾ*), the initial formula of the document (lines 1–3) apparently appears again vertically on the reverse (lines 11–12) as a kind of title/endorsement of the manuscript<sup>16</sup>.
6. The three lines written vertically on the *recto* could be interpreted as the indication of the name of the scribe who wrote the document.

It does not seem that we have an exact parallel to this Aramaic document but the fact that a man receives something from his wife is well known in several marriage contracts in Elephantine. Actually, the wife comes with her dowry in the husband’s house. This dowry is apparently placed under the responsibility of the husband but, in case of divorce, the wife takes it out.<sup>17</sup> That is the reason why the contract specifies in detail this dowry as well as its value (*TAD* B2.6; 3.3, 8; 6.1–4). The special legal status of the dowry and its role in case of inheritance have been emphasized by several studies on ancient Near Eastern Law codes.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> It is unlikely that it is a wrong beginning of the inscription since it is written on the rough side of the leather. For “the practice of noting the subject matter of a document on the outside in order to facilitate the quick identification of a document in an archive where many documents are kept,” see Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Hélène Nutkowitz, *Destins de femmes à Éléphantine au I<sup>er</sup> siècle avant notre ère*, Collection Kubaba, Série Antiquité (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2015), 82–93.

<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, Joseph Fleishman, “Inheritance of the Dowry in Ancient Near Eastern Law Codes,” *Zeitschrift für altorientalische and biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 10 (2004): 232–48, esp. 248: “In practice, the dowry became part of the woman’s husband’s possessions: that is, he managed the

Actually, likely under Aramaic influence, the late Neo Babylonian marriage deeds also specify the summary of the “long and detailed dowry list and records the receipt of the dowry by the groom (*mahir*) and in some cases also his quittance (*etir*).”<sup>19</sup>

The amount of the dowry was different in each marriage: according to B. Porten, at Elephantine, the highest amount of the dowry was that of Yehoyishma': 78.5 shekels.<sup>20</sup> Yet it could be higher: on the Aramaic ostrakon of an Idumean marriage contract from Maresha, lines 9–11,<sup>21</sup> the dowry contains “provisions (*zwd*), clothing (*lbwš*) and utensils (*mn 'yn*)” with a general value of “300 silver *zuzim*,” that is, apparently 150 shekels or 3 minas. As noted by E. Eshel and A. Kloner, this “is a fairly large sum.”<sup>22</sup> In proposing the restitution of *[mn]h*, “[*min*]a,” at the beginning of line 4, we get the same amount that was received by Bagavant from his wife. This “fairly large sum” would not be surprising since Bagavant was “the governor (*pht*) in Khulmi” (A2:8).<sup>23</sup>

The interpretation of the amount received by Bagavant as a dowry explains the main points of this document, but several other aspects are still obscure, mainly in lines 5–7. Why mention food and perhaps lodging? Are they part of the dowry or are they a reference to an “annuity contract” as it is known in Demotic documents (*sh n s 'nh*). This type of contract became “the most common form of marriage document in the Ptolemaic period: the groom receives money for the maintenance of the wife from the woman herself, and his property functions as a security for meeting this obligation.”<sup>24</sup> The indication of line 5: “food” and probably “lodging,” as well as the specification: “white (bread?) (as) food” would make sense in this context but it is conjectural. It could also be compared to the later Babatha's *Ketubba*: P. Yadin 10:4–5, 9–10: “as a wife (or: in wifehood) ...

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property his wife brought from her father's house, and he benefited from it during their married life as well as after her death. Nevertheless, he was not the legal owner of this property. The dowry had an autonomous legal status.”

<sup>19</sup> Kathleen Abraham, “The Dowry Clause in Marriage Documents from the First Millennium B.C.E.,” in *La circulation des biens, des personnes et des idées dans le Proche-Orient ancien. Actes de la XXXVIII<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Paris, 8–10 juillet 1991)*, ed. Dominique Charpin and F. Joannès (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1992), 311–20, esp. 311.

<sup>20</sup> Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), 221 and table 1: “Value of Bridal Gifts and Dowries,” 74. See also Annalisa Azzoni, *The Private Lives of Women in Persian Egypt* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 53.

<sup>21</sup> Esther Eshel and Amos Kloner, “An Aramaic Ostrakon of an Edomite Marriage Contract from Maresha, Dated 176 B.C.E.,” *IEJ* 46 (1996): 1–22.

<sup>22</sup> Eshel and Kloner, “Aramaic Ostrakon,” 20 n. 16.

<sup>23</sup> See also Lisbeth S. Fried, “The Role of the Governor in Persian Imperial Administrative,” in *In the Shadow of Bezalel. Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, ed. Alejandro F. Botta, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 319–31, esp. 319–23.

<sup>24</sup> Azzoni, *The Private Lives of Women*, 25; Nutkovicz, *Destins de femmes*, 93–100.



I will [feed] you and cl[othe] you ... and pursuant to your *ketubba*, I will bring you into (my house). And you have a binding claim on me (for) silver (in the amount of) four hundred denarii (*zūzīn*) ... Whatever you may wish to take and to ...[...from (the) *dow*]ry together with the right(ful allocation) of your [food], and your *bed*, and your clothing as (is fitting) for a free (= married) woman.”<sup>25</sup>

More generally, this document is not a marriage contract—that would be much longer, with the indication of the date and of the witnesses. It might be a draft noting the main points of the marriage contract before writing the official marriage contract or rather (since there is an endorsement) a kind of “memorandum” (*zkrn*: *TAD* A4.9; C3.13: 1, 10, 24, 44, 46, 48, 50, 55; D3.19.2; 3.21:1; cf. *dkrwn* in the Idumean ostraca<sup>26</sup>) extracting the main points of the marriage contract. In this case, it was probably classified among the archives of Bagavant rather than in the documents of his wife.

#### CONSEQUENCES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE LOT

We do not know the archaeological context and the original place of these documents bought on the antiquities market. In the introduction, the *editio princeps* tried to identify and locate the lot of documents that they published. For the authors, practically all letters of the Bagavant group are “rough drafts, meant to be copied later in a neat hand, and in most cases traces of older writing can be seen.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, they noted that “all the letters addressed to Bagavant were however written by a single person: Akhvamazda.” They concluded: “the letters in our collection come not from the archive of Bagavant but from that of Akhvamazda.”<sup>28</sup>

These two arguments do not seem very strong: the fact that most of the documents are palimpsests is easily explainable by the price of the leather used in writing these manuscripts<sup>29</sup>. If these documents are the archives of Akhvamazda, why have we only letters sent to Bagavant? Bagavant was probably not the only subordinate of Akhvamazda: why should he only keep the drafts of the letters sent to Bagavant? Conversely, Bagavant had only one superior, Akhvamazda, and it is understandable that he kept his letters that could eventually be used as justifications of his actions. The interpretation of this lot as the archive of Akhvamazda is all the more improbable since it includes A9, a receipt of a transaction between

<sup>25</sup> Yadin, et al., *The Documents*, 127.

<sup>26</sup> André Lemaire, *Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gabalda, 2002), 141–42: no. 267:1.

<sup>27</sup> Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 17.

<sup>28</sup> See also, Margaretha Folmer, “Bactria and Egypt,” in *Die Verwaltung im Achämenidenreich/Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, ed. Bruno Jacobs, Wouter F. M. Henkelman, and Matthew W. Stolper (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 413–54.

<sup>29</sup> This is recognized by the *editio princeps*: “Animal skin prepared for writing was an expansive commodity.” Naveh and Shaked, *Aramaic Documents*, 17.

Bagavant and his wife. Why would such a document be found in the archives of Akhvamazda? If A9 was an indication of the amount of Bagavant's dowry, its natural place would be within Bagavant's archives. All that probably means that all these documents are part of Bagavant's archives.

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## A Holy Warrior at Kuntillet 'Ajrud? Kuntillet 'Ajrud Plaster Inscription 4.2

Theodore J. Lewis

The recent publication of the final report of the excavations at Kuntillet 'Ajrud<sup>1</sup> has occasioned dramatically new understandings of this remote site on the Darb el-Ghazza caravan route, likely under the control of the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II.<sup>2</sup> Epigraphically, scholars now have a treasure trove of new data especially with the first publication of numerous photographs that have also produced dramatically different analyses. This is particularly true of the plaster inscriptions written for the most part in a Phoenician script and, some would now assert, in the Phoenician language, not Hebrew.

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It is with delight that I join many colleagues and former students in celebrating P. Kyle McCarter, my Johns Hopkins colleague of many years. As a tribute, I combine here two of his passions, epigraphy and ancient Israelite religion. On Kyle's early and perceptive analysis of KA 4.2, see n. 95 below. I owe deep appreciation to Bruce Zuckerman, Marilyn Lundberg, and Marina Escolano-Poveda for their epigraphic assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Ze'ev Meshel et al., *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012). The present manuscript was completed prior to (and thus does not address) the publications of Ahituv and Eshel (2015) and Smoak and Schniedewind (2019).

<sup>2</sup> The consistent use of Northern theophoric names (-yw as opposed to -yhw) as well as the reference to "Yahweh of Samaria" in KA 3.1 would buttress the view that Kuntillet 'Ajrud was closely associated with the northern Kingdom of Israel. Based on epigraphy, pottery and C14 dates, a common (consensus?) view is that the findings of Kuntillet 'Ajrud, a single period site, should be dated to the end of the ninth century BCE or first half of the eighth century BCE and correlated with the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 787–748 BCE) or perhaps Jehoash (ca. 801–787 BCE).

In response to the consensus, Schniedewind has recently argued that a case can be made that Kuntillet 'Ajrud is a multigenerational site "ranging from the late 10th century through the late eighth century BCE." See William Schniedewind, "An Early Iron Age Phase to Kuntillet 'Ajrud?," in *Le-ma'an Ziony: Essays in Honor of Ziony Zevit*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn and Gary A. Rendsberg (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 134–46.

Of the plaster inscriptions, Kuntillet 'Ajrud Plaster Inscription 4.2 (hereafter KA 4.2) stands out as truly remarkable.<sup>3</sup> It represents a militaristic wilderness theophany couched within what has been called “the oldest known Hebrew poem” outside of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>4</sup> Now with the final report—published nearly four decades after the excavations—scholars for the first time are presented with a much fuller (and surprisingly different) set of readings. What may be a second fragment of the inscription putatively mentioning [Ya]hw[eh] has also been published for the first time. Na'aman is certainly correct that the new dataset published in the final report “calls for a thorough re-investigation of this unique desert site and its findings.”<sup>5</sup> The present analysis, after securing the text, will reinvestigate the portrayal of divinity in KA 4.2, and particularly the mention of a deity who has not drawn the attention of historians of Israelite religion using the remarkable finds at Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

#### DIVINITY AT KUNTILLET 'AJRUD

When one thinks of the divinity associated with Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman), the pair of “Yahweh and his asherah/Asherah” (*yhwh ... wl 'srth*) occurring on the pithoi inscriptions (written using a Hebrew script and Hebrew language) comes immediately to mind. The amount of secondary literature debating whether we have here a god and his consort (“Yahweh and his Asherah”) or, more likely, a god and a cultic object of some sort (“Yahweh and his asherah”) is staggering. Scholars also regularly comment on the geographic significance of the divine names “Yahweh of Teman/the south” (*yhwh tmn*; *yhwh htmn*) and “Yahweh of Samaria” (*yhwh šmrn*). Less attention has been devoted to the presence of the gods El (*'l*) and Ba'al (*b'l*) who are mentioned in KA 4.2, though here too considerable debate has ensued about the nature of these two divine names. Do they represent independent Canaanite deities worshipped by travelers at a caravan site known for its varied religious expressions or are they indicators of the syncretistic worship of Yahweh?

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<sup>3</sup> I am following the numbering of the inscriptions found in the 2012 final report. See Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman)*, 110–14, 133. The text dealt with here (KA 4.2) comes from Building A Locus 14a; Reg. No. 57/30. For Locus 14a, see Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman)*, xxiv; 22–24, 74; figs. 2.21–24; 5.1. In a personal letter to Ze'ev Meshel (dated August 10, 1981), Frank Moore Cross remarks: “The plaster ‘mountain theophany’ is perhaps the most important of all [the inscriptions].” I owe thanks to our Festschrift honoree for sharing this letter with me.

<sup>4</sup> Shmuel Ahituv, “Notes on the Kuntillet 'Ajrud Inscriptions,” in “*See, I Will Bring a Scroll Recounting What Befell Me*” (*Ps 40:8*): Epigraphy and Daily Life from the Bible to the Talmud; Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Hanan Eshel, ed. Eshter Eshel and Yigal Levin (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 36–37.

<sup>5</sup> Nadav Na'aman, “The Inscriptions of Kuntillet 'Ajrud through the Lens of Historical Research,” *UF* 43 (2011): 319.

The least amount of attention regards a putative deity known as “the Holy One” addressed in the present paper, and understandably so as the deity only materializes if one posits a scribal mistake! And yet, there is substantial evidence documenting this deity elsewhere, even in a similar context—such that there is a better than average likelihood that this deity was known at Kuntillet 'Ajrud too.

#### KUNTILLET 'AJRUD PLASTER INSCRIPTION 4.2: INTRODUCTION

The final report of the excavations at Kuntillet 'Ajrud allows researchers to reevaluate nearly four decades of scholarship that was based on preliminary publications that were often incomplete. This is especially true for the most significant inscription written on plaster, KA 4.2.

The authors of the final report are to be thanked for providing epigraphists with four different photographs to examine. As one would expect from the different lighting and exposures that were used, each photograph provides unique information not available in the others. For a clear example, compare the end of line 4 where four distinct letters are visible in two of the photos (see Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs. 5.55a and 5.55b) while absent in the other two photographs (see Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs. 5.53 and 5.54).

#### KUNTILLET 'AJRUD INSCRIPTION 4.2: THE HISTORY OF ITS PUBLICATION

The final report is presented as the work of Aḥituv and Eshel in consultation with Meshel.<sup>6</sup> It presents six lines in contrast to the early prepublication presentation of the material that consisted of only three lines that Meshel originally read and translated as follows:<sup>7</sup>

... and in the (just) ways of God/El ...	... <i>wb`rh. 'lb ...</i>
... blessed be Ba'al in the day of ...	... <i>brk.b'l.bym.ml ...</i>
... the name of God/El in the day of ...	... <i>šm. 'l.bym.ml ...</i>

A decade and a half after its initial publication, Meshel and Aḥituv (separately) presented many more readings including what now constitutes line 4, though they chose at the time to leave it untranslated.<sup>8</sup> Meshel and Aḥituv offered the first publication of the full five lines on the fragment yet regrettably without

<sup>6</sup> See Meshel *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman)*, 73–74.

<sup>7</sup> Ze'ev Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud: A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judaean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1978), cat. no. 175; no page number. Meshel, “Did Yahweh Have a Consort: The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai,” *BAR* 5 (1979): 30.

<sup>8</sup> Ze'ev Meshel, “Kuntillet 'Ajrud,” *ABD* 4:107; Meshel, “Teman, Ḥorvat,” *NEAEHL* 4:1462; Shmuel Aḥituv, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1992), 160.

any photographs for verification. Meshel's considerably different readings and revised translations were as follows:

... and when EL rose up ...	... <i>wbʒr(w)t. 'l. br</i> ...
... and hills melted	... <i>wyms(w)n. hr(y)m</i>
and peaks were pounded ...	<i>wyd(w)k(w)n. gbn(wny)m</i> ...
	... <i>wšdš 'ly</i> ...
... bless BA'AL in day of war ...	... <i>lbrk.b 'l.by(w)m mlh[mh]</i> ...
... the name of EL in day of ...	... <i>lšm(.) 'l.by(w)m mlh[mh]</i> ...

Aḥituv's analysis is similar for the most part, yet a notable difference is his reading of the first word as *wbʒrh*, a reading first noted by Weinfeld and the one that will come to be preferred in the final report.<sup>9</sup>

Another twenty years would pass before we would have Meshel's final revision of his earlier readings, appearing in the final 2012 report that resulted from a collaboration with Shmuel Aḥituv and Esther Eshel. Most noticeable is the addition of a second smaller fragment that, according to the authors, "seems to be physically connected to the larger piece."<sup>10</sup> The final report presented the following (now) six-line inscription with additional readings that are at times (esp. lines 2 and 4) quite different than all previous readings and even more remarkable.

- (1) ... second time/years ...
- (2) ... in earthquake. And when God shines forth in the [heights. Y]HW[H ...
- (3) ... R The mountains will melt, the hills will crush ...
- (4) ... earth. The Holy One over the gods ...
- (5) ... prepare (yourself) [to] bless Ba'al on a day of war ...
- (6) ... to the name of El on a day of wa[r] ...

- (1) ... *šnt* ...
- (2) ... *br š.wbʒrh. 'l br[m y]hw[h]* ...
- (3) ... *r.wymsn. hrm. wydkn. [g]bnm* ...
- (4) ... *'rš. q{š}dš. 'ly. 'lm* ...
- (5) ... *° hkn [l]brk. b 'l. bym. mlh[mh]* ...
- (6) ... *lšm 'l. bym. mlh[mh]* ...

As a part of their epigraphic analysis, the authors of the final report included a detailed study of the letter forms of this fragment juxtaposed next to the letter forms of the other plaster fragments (4.1–4.6), the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions incised in stone (1.1–1.4), those incised in pottery (2.1–2.9), and those written on ink on pottery (3.1–3.16). They determined the language of all of the plaster

<sup>9</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud Inscriptions and Their Significance," *SEL* 1 (1984): 126.

<sup>10</sup> Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 110–11. There is only one published photograph of the smaller fragment (fig. 5.53). Lemaire doubts the placement of this fragment (see below, n. 94).

inscriptions to be Hebrew, yet with the script of the majority of the plaster texts (4.1–4.5) being Phoenician (with only 4.6 being Hebrew).<sup>11</sup> They also included a lengthy description of how all the inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrud contribute to the study of Israelite religion with special attention to questions of divinity.<sup>12</sup>

The final report of KA 4.2 has already occasioned several responses by (in chronological order) Na'aman, Blum, Lemaire, LeMon and Strawn, Niehr, Puech, and Schmidt. Some of these articles have quite different analyses especially due to reading line 4 differently.<sup>13</sup> Thus prior to addressing larger questions presented in the final report and these newer studies, it is necessary to undertake a close epigraphic analysis of line 4.

#### KUNTILLET 'AJRUD INSCRIPTION 4.2: THE HISTORY OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE READINGS OF LINE 4

In Meshel's two preliminary publications, there is no mention of any readings of what we now have as line 4. The situation changed in 1992–1993 when Meshel and Aḥituv presented their preliminary understandings of all five lines of the main fragment including reading *wšdš* 'ly for line 4. Regrettably, no photographs were published for evaluation and neither scholar provided a translation of this enigmatic reading. The only scholar to attempt a translation of the enigmatic *šdš* was Zevit who posited that we have the ordinal numeral "sixth" here (cf. Ugr *tdt*).<sup>14</sup> Such a numerical writing would be difficult for a Hebrew (or Phoenician) inscription (where we would expect *šš/ššy*) and contextually makes little sense.

In 2005 the epigraphic collection by Dobbs-Allsopp, Roberts, Seow, and Whitaker posited a new reading to make sense of line 4.<sup>15</sup> Based on the graphic similarity between the letters *d* and *r* they posited: *wšrš* 'ly[n] "and the most high (?) uprooted." The authors admitted the provisional nature of their reading as they were making their conjecture without any access to photographs. Another conjecture is found in Rainey's 2006 translation ("And the sun (?) rises") though Rainey

<sup>11</sup> Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 105.

<sup>12</sup> Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 129, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Na'aman, "The Inscriptions," 307–10; Erhard Blum, "Die Wandinschriften 4.2 und 4.6 sowie die Pithos-Inschrift 3.9 aus Kuntillet 'Aḡrūd," *ZDPV* 129 (2013): 21–54; André Lemaire, "Remarques sur les inscriptions phéniciennes de Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *Semitica* 55 (2013) 83–99; Joel M. LeMon and Brent A. Strawn, "Once More, YHWH and Company at Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *Maarav* 20 (2013): 90–95, 112 n. 107; Herbert Niehr, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Networks of Phoenician Trade," *Maarav* 20 (2013): 36–37; Émile Puech, "Les inscriptions hébraïques de Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Sinaï)," *RB* 121 (2014): 161–94; Brian B. Schmidt, *The Materiality of Power* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 90–94.

<sup>14</sup> Zevit perceptively notes: "contextually, it could also be a divine name." See Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel* (London: Continuum, 2001), 373.

<sup>15</sup> F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, J. J. M. Roberts, C. L. Seow, and R. E. Whitaker, *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven: Yale University, 2005), 287–88.



regrettably did not provide the text he was reconstructing. (Perhaps he read *wšdš* as a scribal mistake for *wšmš*, though the letters *d* and *m* are in no way similar.)<sup>16</sup>

This same time period would see a fresh, breakthrough study by Aḥituv that presented an entirely new set of readings (and the addition of the smaller fragment) that are essentially the same as what would appear in the 2012 final report that he co-authored with Eshel.<sup>17</sup> Regrettably, scholars would have to wait another seven years to have access to photographs to evaluate these dramatically new readings. Aḥituv's 2005/2008 analysis of line 4 reads:

... 'rš. q{š}dš. 'ly. 'lm ...  
... earth. The Holy one over the gods ...

Commenting on his and Meshel's earlier reading of *wšdš*, Aḥituv writes: "the first letter is certainly a *q*, not *w*."<sup>18</sup> In answer to the conjectured *wšrš* of Dobbs-Allsopp et al., Aḥituv adds that the third letter is a *d* and not an *r*.<sup>19</sup> In elaborating on the reading of *q* rather than *w*, the final report reads:

There is no basis, however, for the previously published reading: *wšdš*.... The remaining part of the right half of the head of the *q* is joined to the leg of the *m* from the former line. However it is possible to see that the head of the *q* is thicker than the tip of the leg of the *m*. The leg of the *q* is thick and does not look like the legs of the *ws*. The left half of the head of the *q* is unlike most heads of the *ws*.<sup>20</sup>

#### RESPONSES TO THE FINAL REPORT

Since the appearance of KA 4.2 in the 2012 final report, nine scholars have weighed in on the readings of line 4. As for what Aḥituv and Eshel read as *qšdš*, of the nine, seven scholars read the initial letter as *q* (Blum, Niehr, LeMon, and Strawn, Parker, Puech, Schmidt).<sup>21</sup> Lemaire vigorously retains the earlier reading of *w* though without providing a translation of the enigmatic *wšdš*.<sup>22</sup> Na'aman

<sup>16</sup> Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 224.

<sup>17</sup> Shmuel Aḥituv, *HaKetav VeHaMiktav: Handbook of Ancient Inscriptions from the Land of Israel and the Kingdoms beyond the Jordan from the Period of the First Commonwealth* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik, 2005), 242–45; Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 324–29.

<sup>18</sup> Aḥituv, *HaKetav VeHaMiktav*, 243; Aḥituv, *Echoes*, 326.

<sup>19</sup> Aḥituv, *HaKetav VeHaMiktav*, 243.

<sup>20</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 135 n. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 28, 32–34; Niehr, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Networks," 37; LeMon and Strawn, "Once More," 90 n. 29; Heather Dana Davis Parker, "The Levant Comes of Age: The Ninth Century BCE through Script Traditions" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2013) [Reissued on academia.edu with a new introduction and some edits in May 2018], 112; Puech, "Les inscriptions," 180–81; Schmidt, *Materiality*, 91.

<sup>22</sup> Lemaire, "Remarques," 90–91.

favors reading a *d* and translating “he treaded on earth” with “*dīšdēš* ... probably a Pilpēl from the verb *dwš* ‘to tread, trample.’”<sup>23</sup>

## PRESENT ASSESSMENT

It is clear from figure 1 (taken from Meshel *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.53) that Na'aman's reading of *dšdš* is incorrect. There is no similarity between the first letter in question and the third letter that is a certain *d*.



Fig. 1. The second preserved word in line 4 with the reading *qšdš*. Image taken from Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.53. Permission courtesy of Ze'ev Meshel.

Lemaire's challenge is more serious. He writes: “En fait, malgré l'éditio princeps, la première lettre est clairement un W et non un Q car le petit trait à droite du sommet de la hampe n'est que l'extrémité inférieure de la queue du M de la ligne précédente (fig. 5.53). On lit donc WŠDŠ.”<sup>24</sup>

Ahituv and Eshel had anticipated such a challenge with their three remarks stated above. They are indeed correct that the thick vertical stroke of the letter in question as well as its head do not resemble those of the *w*'s elsewhere in our inscription. To examine these phenomena, the letter in question (see figs. 2–3)—that we agree is a *q*—can be compared with two undisputed *w*s, both coming from line 3 in the words *wymśn* (see figs. 4–5) and *wydkn* (see figs. 6–7). The letter in question is formed using two strokes with both the oval head (and the thick tapering vertical shaft that bisects it) slightly slanting counterclockwise as is known from other ninth century BCE Phoenician examples of *q*. In contrast, the *w* is upright and *not* rotating counter clockwise, again a feature known from other ninth century BCE Phoenician examples of *w*.<sup>25</sup> The varying degrees of thickness of the *q*'s oval (occasioned by the lack of consistent pressure by a stylus moving in a circle) contrasts with the consistent thickness of the *w*. In short, based on scribal

<sup>23</sup> Na'aman, “The Inscriptions,” 309.

<sup>24</sup> Lemaire, “Remarques,” 90–91.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed description of the ways in which the *q* and the *w* were written in Phoenician from the tenth to the eighth centuries BCE, see Parker, “Levant Comes of Age,” 86–87, 100–101, 114–15; figs 2–4.

ductus, the consensus of scholars that we have the reading *qšdš* here is well founded. That does not mean that the resulting word easily understood.



Figs. 2–7. From left to right. Fig. 2. The letter in question from an unpublished photograph courtesy of the West Semitic Research Project and Bruce Zuckerman. Fig. 3. Line drawing by the author interpreting the letter as a *q* agreeing with the final report. Fig. 4. The letter *w* from the word *wmysn* of line 3 from an unpublished photograph courtesy of the West Semitic Research Project and Bruce Zuckerman. Fig. 5. Line drawing of Fig. 4 by the author. Fig. 6. The letter *w* from the word *wyrkn* of line 3. Image taken from Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.54. Used with permission, courtesy of Ze'ev Meshel. Fig. 7. Line drawing of fig. 6 by the author.

#### THE PROPOSED MEANINGS OF QŠDŠ: “THE HOLY ONE”

Ahituv and Eshel note how the text as written (*qšdš*) represents “a meaningless combination” of letters.<sup>26</sup> They argue that the first *š* is a scribal mistake: “the scribe skipped ahead to *š* before writing *d* and did not bother to erase the first *š* (or the erasure wore out over time).” Thus they conclude by reconstructing *qdš* “the Holy One” (< *q{š}dš*) whom they take to be Yahweh.

As support, the authors note the mistake of duplicating a letter in Samaria Ostrakon 37 where “the scribe did not bother to erase the erroneous letter.”<sup>27</sup> While such visual eye mistakes can indeed occur, another rationale may be that the scribe unconsciously started writing *q-š* as an abbreviation for *qdš* such as attested in two offering dishes from Arad.<sup>28</sup> The use of such an abbreviation would provide the perfect text critical solution to how the scribe of KA 4.2 could have mistakenly written an abbreviation for “holy” (*qš*) when he meant to write the full word (*qdš*)—which he then immediately corrected resulting in the text as we have it: *qš(!)dš*. Interestingly—in view of the Phoenician script of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud plaster inscriptions—Cross notes how abbreviations using a first and last letter of a word “is not infrequent in Phoenician.”<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ahituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 112, 133. So too Ahituv, *Echoes*, 326.

<sup>27</sup> Ahituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 135 n. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Frank Moore Cross, “Two Offering Dishes with Phoenician Inscriptions from the Sanctuary of 'Arad,” *BASOR* 235 (1979): 75–78. Cross asserts that “there can be little doubt that the *qš* is an abbreviation of *qdš*, an indication of the cultic function.”

<sup>29</sup> See Cross, “Two Offering Dishes, 77 and n. 9 for a partial list of such abbreviations.

If then the reading of *qdš* can be defended, Ahituv and Eshel's suggestion that it refers to a deity "The Holy One" makes perfect sense given the theophanic nature of our text. Their assertion that the deity is Yahweh is an altogether different question that will be addressed below.

#### THE PROPOSED MEANINGS OF QŠDŠ: A TOPONYM

Since the publication of the final report, an alternative understanding has been to see *qšdš* as representing a toponym. Blum, followed by Niehr, reconstructs  $[m] 'r\mathfrak{s}$  *qšdš* and translates "[aus dem] Land KŠDŠ."<sup>30</sup> That such a toponym is attested nowhere else makes such a possibility less likely. A much better alternative is Puech's suggestion that once again there is a scribal dittography here with the scribe meaning to write *qdš* "Qadesh-(Barnea)."<sup>31</sup> Significantly, where Blum reservedly reconstructs the previous word as  $[m] 'r\mathfrak{s}$ , Puech's *m 'r\mathfrak{s}* without brackets is based on his seeing "traces possibles de *mem*."<sup>32</sup> If the reading of the preposition *m* could be secured, it would tip the balance in favor of reading a toponym: "from the land of Qadesh." Yet while there is enough ink preserved to reconstruct 'r'š° with confidence (see esp. Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.53), there is no clear evidence of the *m* in any of the four photographs. Thus, there is no way to know whether the word 'rš ends the previous sentence (as the authors of the final report have it) or whether it is a part of the sentence that would include the word *qšdš* (as in Blum, Niehr and Puech).

If we are dealing with Qadesh as a toponym, then Qadesh-Barnea (Tell el-Qudeirat) obviously comes to mind first as it is another site on the Darb el-Ghazza caravan route that lies 50 km to the north of Kuntillet 'Ajrud.<sup>33</sup> Even without its long pedigree in biblical tradition (cf. Gen 14:7; Num 13–14; Num 20:1; Num 20:2–13; Josh 15:1–3), Qadesh-Barnea was surely known by the scribe who authored KA 4.2 as he resided nearby. If the second word following *qšdš* is to be read as 'tn (see below), then we could have a reference to Qadesh-Barnea being

<sup>30</sup> Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 32–34; Niehr, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Networks," 37.

<sup>31</sup> Puech, "Les inscriptions," 179–80.

<sup>32</sup> Puech also inks in the full letter *m* on his reconstructed drawing (fig. 8). Puech, "Les inscriptions," 179 n. 41, 180. See Blum's comments about how the remainder of the ink on the following line 5 may be the remains of an extending letter from line 4. Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 26. As easily, what little ink remains could be of a regular letter on line 5 (cf. Puech's reading of *l*). Even if we do have an extending tail of a letter from line 4, as Blum notes, there would be several possibilities for the putative letter.

<sup>33</sup> Qadesh-Barnea was also known simply as Qadesh or Qedesh (e.g., Num 13:26; Josh 15:23). Many other sites of a cultic nature could be termed *qdš*, "sacred," as easily seen with Kedesh Naphtali (Tel Kedesh) in the upper Galilee (northwest of Lake Huleh) with archaeological remains as early as the Early Bronze Age, and Tal Abu Qudeis in the Jezreel valley between Megiddo and Taanach. The GN *qedeš* is the location of numerous biblical traditions (e.g., Josh 12:22; 19:37; 20:7; 21:32; Judg 4:6, 9–11; 2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 6:61 [Eng 6:76]).

known as a well-watered site located near ‘Ain el-Qudeirat in the Wadi el-‘Ain.<sup>34</sup> Compare *‘ētān* referring to a constant water source, especially in wadi locations (Amos 5:24; Deut 21:4; Ps 74:15; Sir 40:13).

KUNTILLET ‘AJRUD INSCRIPTION 4.2: LINE 4

Before proceeding further with choosing between these two alternatives for *qdš* (i.e., a theonym or toponym), we need to secure the readings of the entire line that can then be analyzed for context and syntax. The current proposals for reading line 4 include:

... earth. The Holy One over the gods ...  
... *’rṣ. q{š}dš. ‘ly. ‘lm* (Ahituv and Eshel)

... aus dem] Land KŠDŠ zogen herauf nach ‘TN. Sie sahen KR ...[---  
... *m]’rṣ.qšdš. ‘ly. ‘tm. ḥz.kr* [Blum]

...ea[r]th...  
... *’?š. qšdš. ‘ly. ‘l??.* *’?nw* (Parker)

... depuis le/du pays Qadèš (?) Il est monté continuellement, alors le trô[ne de (?)]  
... *m’rṣ.q{š}dš. ‘ly. ‘tm. ‘z.ks* [ ] (Puech)

The reading of *‘ly* following the enigmatic *qdš* is clear even though the *l* is partly abraded. The next word (the fourth word in the line) is difficult. The first letter is agreed upon as an *’*. If the second letter is to be read as a *l*, (so Ahituv and Eshel; cf. Parker) it would have to be fully reconstructed [l]. Under the spot where this middle letter should be, there is a bit of ink that looks like it could be the extended tail of a letter slanting right to left (see enclosed circle in fig. 8).

<sup>34</sup> On Qadesh-Barnea, see Rudolph Cohen and Hannah Bernick-Greenberg, *Excavations at Kadesh Barnea (Tell el-Qudeirat) 1976–1982* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2007); Dale W. Manor, “Kadesh-Barnea,” *ABD* 4:1–3. Manor, following Dothan, notes how “this area is now the largest oasis in the N Sinai and has a spring that produces about 40 m<sup>3</sup> of water per hour.” Several biblical traditions regarding Qadesh-Barnea are linked to water, from its being called “En-mishpat” (“the spring of adjudication”) in Gen 14:7 to Moses bringing water from the rock in Num 20:2–13.

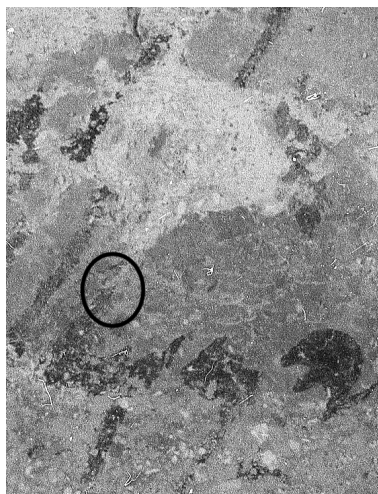


Fig. 8. The fourth preserved word in line 4 read by some as 'lm and by others as 'tn. Below the middle letter is a bit of ink (circled) that may represent the bottom of a letter or the upper part of the *m* of the word *mlh*- in line 5. Photograph courtesy of the West Semitic Research Project and Bruce Zuckerman.

Both Blum and Puech read a *t*. Other letters also have an extension with this slant that could fit this space (e.g., *k*, *n*, *p*) but the result would be an atypically large gap after the '. Only the reading of a *t* adequately fills this space as seen in Puech's drawing in his figure 8. (See here fig. 9.)



Fig. 9. Puech's drawing of the word in question.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, *if* this bit of ink represents a letter (and not the upper part of the *m* of the next line), then the reading of a *t* makes the most sense. The remains of the last (third) letter of this word should (most typically) be read as a *n* and not a *m* [again cf. Puech's reconstructed drawing], as our scribe regularly makes his *m*'s with a wider head. Yet as can be seen by the *m* of the word *ym* on the very next line (see

<sup>35</sup> Puech, "Les inscriptions," 180, fig. 8.

fig. 8), our scribe can indeed write a *m* with a much more narrow head. In short, our preference for the fourth word in this line would be to read  $\text{'t}^{\circ}\text{n}^{\circ}$ , yet we do not have sufficient data to rule out the reading of  $\text{'[l]m}$  advocated by the final report.

Curiously, the authors of the final report present no additional readings for the end of line four when in fact four letters are indeed represented in two of their photos (see figs. 5.55a and 5.55b in the final report and fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Final letters from the end of line 4. Used with permission, courtesy of Ze'ev Meshel.<sup>36</sup>

Epigraphically the next word presents its own conundrum. Blum reads a *h* where Parker and Puech read an  $\text{'}$ . We side with Blum for there is a second vertical stroke on the right side that makes an  $\text{'}$  hard to imagine. Having said that, we acknowledge that what remains of the putative *h* here is *not* the same as what remains of the *h*'s in line 1 and line 5 both of which have the longer right leg. The next letter is read as *z* by both Blum and Puech. As such, it would represent the only occurrence of the letter in the plaster inscriptions unless one also finds it in the smudged ink of the second word in line 2 (see below).<sup>37</sup>

Only two letters of the last word have been preserved. To judge from the two other *k*'s and *w*'s in the inscription, the letter here is more likely a *k* than a *w* (i.e., reading with Blum and Puech, contra Parker). The stance of the last letter could favor either the *r* that Blum reconstructs or the *s* that Puech reconstructs. Nothing more can be determined.

Concluding is difficult due to the above uncertainty. Our best guess would favor the following two readings with preference for the former:

$\text{[ ] 'r\check{s}.q\check{s}d\check{s}. 'l'y. 't^{\circ}n^{\circ}/m^{\circ}. \check{h}z.kr/s[}$

or

$\text{[ ] 'r\check{s}.q\check{s}d\check{s}. 'l'y. '[l]n^{\circ}/m^{\circ}. \check{h}z.kr/s[}$

<sup>36</sup> Image taken from Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.55a.

<sup>37</sup> The letter *z* in Phoenician inscriptions of the tenth–ninth centuries BCE is written with the so-called “I” shape, only becoming the more cursive “z” shape in the eighth century BCE as seen in the Karatepe inscriptions and the Kition Bowl inscription. See Parker, “Levant Comes of Age,” 87–89 and figs. 2–4.

## REVISITING THE MEANINGS OF QŠDŠ IN CONTEXT

What sense can be made out of the last four words of line 4 that might prove helpful for understanding the preceding *qšdš*—assuming (for the sake of discussion) that the correct reading is in fact *qdš*? Regarding the final word, a mere two letters (*kr/s*) does not allow us to reconstruct any reading with any certainty (e.g. Puech's *ks[']* "le trô[ne de] (?) ..."). For the penultimate word, if the reading *hz* is secure, then one could posit that the subject is gazing or looking upon something (with favor). The lack of context bids us to speculate no further other than to suggest, given the overall context, that the subject (*hz* = 3 m. sg.) is divine. As for interpreting the preceding words in line 4, there are at least five options:

*Option 1: God as the Holy Warrior over/against the Gods ('lm)*

If *'ly* constitutes a preposition, then one can certainly appreciate the conclusion of the authors of the final report: "the only sensible reading of the last word is *'elim* 'gods'"—and hence their vocalized reading and translation: *qādōš 'ālē 'elim* "The Holy One over the gods ...."<sup>38</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel astutely point out three aged biblical traditions where Yahweh is described as fearfully holy and preeminent over the gods (e.g., Exod 15:11; Ps 29:1–2; 89:7 [Eng 89:6]). Just as Exod 15:11 and Ps 89:6–8, 19 (Eng 89:5–7, 18) explicitly remark about how a Holy Yahweh is incomparable "among the gods" (*bā 'elim/ bibēnē 'elim*), so this plaster inscription could be making a similar profession. Aḥituv and Eshel expand on this notion of divine supremacy one step further by assuming that the war context of KA 4.2 (note esp. *milhāmā* in both lines 5 and 6) may also refer "to the defeat of the gods by YHWH."<sup>39</sup>

*Option 2: God as the Holy One over/against Waters ('tn)*

Yet if the reading is *'tn* and not *'lm*, then one could sensibly translate either "The Holy One over the ever-flowing waters" or "The Holy One against the ever-flowing waters."<sup>40</sup> The first of these translations could be beneficent, designating the deity's provisions of water for thirsty caravans at this strategic site (again see the positive use of *naḥal 'ētān* in Amos 5:24 and Deut 21:4). The latter translation

<sup>38</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 112.

<sup>39</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel refer to the defeat of the gods in Zeph 2:11. Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 133. One could also add Ps 82.

<sup>40</sup> One might object that *'ētān* often occurs as an adjective, yet there are clear signs that the word could also be used as a substantive such as "a month of flowing streams" in both Hebrew (*yeraḥ hā 'ētānīm*; 1 Kgs 8:2) and Phoenician (*yryh 'tnm*; *KAI* 37.1, 2; 41.4). A man can also be named *'ētān* designating that he is a person who has (or hopes to have) a long life similar to how a nation can also be an enduring entity (Jer 5.15).



could refer to the deity's defeat of cosmic waters, especially if the overall context of this military and storm theophany is understood within *Chaoskampf* traditions. Here Ps 74:12–17 (though an early exilic composition) is instructive as it celebrates Yahweh's drying up of the “overflowing rivers” (*nahārôt 'ētān*) alongside dividing the Sea (*yām*), smashing the heads of the dragons in the waters (*rā 'šē tannînim 'al-hammāyîm*), and crushing the heads of Leviathan (*rā 'šē liwyātān*) in the wilderness. Habakkuk 3:6–8 tells of Yahweh's wrath being against the (cosmic) waters juxtaposed with the crumbling of mountains and hills as we have in our text in the previous line (i.e., line 3). Within this imagery, Hab 3:6a describes how the warrior deity's gazing (*rā 'ā*) makes the nations tremble which is interesting for speculating about the verb of seeing (*hʒ*) that immediately follows in line 4 of our text.

*Option 3: God as the Holy One Going up to ('ly) the Gods ('lm) or the Waters ('tm)*

As noted by Blum, 'ly could perhaps be understood as a 3 ms sg Pf verb (\*'alaya) based on 'ly attested elsewhere in early Phoenician (*KAI* 1.2).<sup>41</sup> If the reading *qdš* refers to “the Holy One,” then our text would be mentioning how the holy deity went up to the gods (if reading 'lm) or to the water source (if reading 'tm)<sup>42</sup>—with his rationale for so doing stated in the missing section of our text that follows. Yet as Blum goes on to note, the reading of a third-weak verb here is orthographically difficult, as one would expect the scribe who preserved the y in 'ly would also have preserved the y in the third-weak verb *hʒ* that immediately follows.

*Option 4: Once Again: 'rʒ qdš as the Land of Qadesh*

As noted at the outset, alternatively *qšdš* (corrected to *qdš*) could be a toponym and likely referring to Qadesh-Barnea. Though the final report separates the first word of the line ('rʒ, “land”) from what follows, reading the first two words together ('rʒ *qšdš/qdš*) has obvious advantages. As mentioned above, we prefer Puech's “the Land of Qadesh” ('rʒ *qdš*) resulting from a scribal error to Blum's unknown toponym *KŠDŠ* ('rʒ *qšdš*). The meaning of the rest of the line would depend on whether the word 'ly is interpreted (a) as a verb or (b) as a preposition.

<sup>41</sup> Blum (“Die Wandinschriften,” 32–33) also notes the preservation of y in third weak verbs elsewhere in Phoenician (cf. *bny* and *hwy* in *KAI* 4.1–2) as well as in the Hebrew Bible and the Deir 'Alla inscription.

<sup>42</sup> Or 'tm could be used adverbially. Cf. Puech (“Les inscriptions,” 180) who translates “Il est monté continuellement.”

## Option 4a: Reading 'ly as a Verb

Acknowledging the orthographic difficulty just mentioned, if 'ly is a verb, then one could translate [ ] rš.qdš 'ly 'tn ḥz as "[From/At] the land of Qadesh he went up to an everflowing stream. He looked upon (x with favor)." Associating what we know of the well-watered Qadesh Barnea on the Darb el-Ghazza trade route with the word 'ētān (designating a constant water source as noted above) is irresistible. Qadesh Barnea's supply of water for caravans slaking their thirst is a perfect choice for an author residing at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, another caravan site owing its existence to its water supply located 50 km down the road.

Alternatively (though less likely in our opinion), Blum (followed by Niehr) suggests that 'tn could also be a toponym, with the subject of the verb 'ly going from the land of (unknown) qšdš to the city of 'tn. As possible locations for 'tn, Blum lists Atinnu (in Hamath, west of Aleppo) and Atuna (north of the Taurus mountains).<sup>43</sup> Part of Blum's rationale is based on correlating these two cities with what he reads to be Sam'al (šm'l) in line 6 of our inscription. In contrast to the consensus (that reads šm'l as a [hypostatic?] reference to "the Name of El"), Blum sees here a reference to the small independent Syro-Hittite kingdom located at modern Zincirli alongside the eastern foothills of the Amanus mountains near the Syrian border in southeastern Turkey.<sup>44</sup> Though the use of Phoenician in facilitating trade was considerable, one must question whether the presence of Phoenician both at Kuntillet 'Ajrud (in script and perhaps language) and at the Syro-Hittite city of Sam'al (i.e., in the ninth century BCE Kulamuwa Inscription) is enough to assert that the scribe at this site in the Negev Highlands would make reference to a distant Aramean kingdom in describing his militaristic theophany. Even more unlikely is Blum's suggestion that author of Kuntillet 'Ajrud 4.2 was from Sam'al.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 34; Niehr, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Networks," 37.

<sup>44</sup> Blum's reading šm'l in line 6 as the polity Sam'al is certainly an innovative suggestion in light of the Phoenician presence at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and at Zincirli (i.e., the Kulamuwa Inscription; *KAI* 24) at approximately the same time (the ninth century BCE).

Yet one should question the toponym that a scribe at Kuntillet 'Ajrud would have used to refer to this Syro-Hittite polity. As well detailed by K. Lawson Younger Jr. (*A Political History of the Arameans* [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016], 378–84), three different toponyms were used by different parties based on their relation to the city-state especially with its hybrid Luwian-Aramean character.

Local Aramaic speakers likely referred to the polity as Bīt-Gabbāri. According to Younger, a second indigenous name, Yādiya, was the Luwian derived name for the city-state.

The name Sam'al is the preferred name in Akkadian sources (Younger, *A Political History*, 379) as well as in Old Aramaic sources that reflect Neo-Assyrian influence (Zakkur *KAI* 202.A7; Bar Rakib1 *KAI* 216:2–3, 17; Bar Rakib 2 *KAI* 217:1). What name then would a scribe writing in Phoenician script at Kuntillet 'Ajrud use? The contemporaneous Phoenician Kulamuwa inscription actually found at Zincirli refers to the polity as Y'dy.

<sup>45</sup> Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 39.

It is hard to disagree with Blum, for of all the literature on KA 4.2 published after the final report, his treatment is indeed the most thorough. And yet, in balance, rather than Blum's (a) KŠDŠ referencing an unknown GN, (b) *'tn* referencing sites in Syria near Aleppo or the Taurus mountains, and (c) a military theophany related to the Syro-Hittite polity of Sam'al, it is more sensible to choose (a) *qdš* as a reference to Qadesh-Barnea in the Negev Highlands (just 50 km nearby), (b) *'tn* referencing a constant water source which Qadesh-Barnea indeed is, and (c) *šm 'l* as a designation ("the Name of El") referring to the presence of a deity who is already mentioned (line 2) in a text that is clearly theophanic. I have argued elsewhere that divine names were often used in the context of war and as weapons.<sup>46</sup>

While Option 4a's translation ("[At] the land of Qadesh he went up to an everflowing stream") is easily understood, the difficulty that remains is obvious: How would going up to a water course (and by whom?) relate to the overall context that clearly depicts a divine theophany with nature responding set against a backdrop of "a/the day of wa[r]" (*ym mlḥ[mh]*)? A solution presents itself if we again view the waters here as negative protagonists as we saw above with the "everflowing rivers" (*nahārôt 'ētān*) mentioned in the *Chaoskampf* of Ps 74:12–17 (cf. Hab 3:3–7). In this case, the subject would be clarified to be that of the war deity: "[From/At] the land of Qadesh he (the deity) went up against the everflowing stream."<sup>47</sup>

#### *Option 4b: Reading 'ly as a Preposition*

If the difficulty of interpreting the orthography of *'ly* as a verb (esp. in light of the following *ḥz*) is too much of a hurdle, then the easiest solution is to see *'ly* as a preposition. If one assumes that the verb that follows is joined to what precedes, then a natural translation would be: "[From/In] the land of Qadesh at the flowing stream he looked upon (with favor) ..."<sup>48</sup>

Admittedly, the subject of *ḥz* is unclear. The only other preceding subject in our broken text is the god El in line 2. In contrast to the warrior deity's gaze in Hab 3:6a noted above, we are reminded of the biblical tradition of El-Roi in Genesis 16:7–14. Using a different verb of (*r'h*, not *ḥzh*), the story describes how a "god of seeing" (*'ēl rō'î*) saw Hagar's plight at "a spring of water in the wilderness" named Beer-lahai-roi located near Qadesh (*qādēš*). Numerous personal names

<sup>46</sup> See Theodore J. Lewis "'Athartu's Incantations and the Use of Divine Names as Weapons,'" *JNES* 71 (2011): 219–24.

<sup>47</sup> As documented by Hans F. Fuhs ("*ālā*" *TDOT* 11:84), in Hebrew, the verb *'lh* can regularly mean "to go up against" or "to go up (to attack)" or "to go up (to position oneself to attack)" in a wide variety of military passages.

<sup>48</sup> For the spatial/location use of *'l* ("at"), see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 216. Cf. 2 Kgs 2:7; Ps 1:3.

such as *ḥzā'el*, *ḥzāh'el*, *ḥzāyāh*, *yahzāi'el*, *yahzēyāh*, *yḥzyhw*, *yḥzb'l*, and *yḥz'* in epigraphic and biblical Hebrew have been interpreted as a plea for Yahweh to look upon the distressed supplicant with favor.<sup>49</sup>

At first glance, it is hard to fit such a protective “seeing” of the disadvantaged into the militaristic theophany of KA 4.2. And yet, Ps 68:8–11 [Eng 68:7–10; cf. Judg 5:4–5] juxtaposes Yahweh’s march (*š'd*) through the wilderness—complete with earth quaking (cf. *'eres rā'āšā* in Ps 68:9 with *r'š* in KA 4.2.2–3)—with his provision of abundant rain for the needy (*'ānī*; Ps 68:11 [Eng 68:10]).

#### THE CONTEXT OF KUNTILLET 'AJRUD INSCRIPTION 4.2 AS A WHOLE: A MILITARISTIC WILDERNESS THEOPHANY

To decide between the various options presented above, the overall context needs to be fleshed out. There is some unanimity on key points. Every translator of KA 4.2 translates line 3 to refer to the melting of mountains (*ymsn hrm*) followed by either the crushing (*vdkn*) or, less likely, weakening (*yrkn*) of a hilly entity (either *pbnm* or, less likely *gbnm*) in juxtaposition to a divine presence (*'l*) in line 2.<sup>50</sup> From this distinctive language, scholars conclude that the context is one of a theophany where nature responds to the deity’s presence. Should the first word in line 2 be read as *r'š* “quaking” (or even *rgš*, “shaking”; cf. Arm),<sup>51</sup> we would have

<sup>49</sup> See Dobbs-Allsopp et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 602–3 and Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 536.

<sup>50</sup> In line 3, *vdkn* is read by the majority of scholars. *yrkn* is read by McCarter and Parker. See P. Kyle McCarter, “Kuntillet 'Ajrud: Plaster Wall Inscription,” in *COS 2* (2000), 173 and Parker, “Levant Comes of Age,” 111. While the black and white photographs (Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs. 5.53 and 5.55b) could be construed to see the ghostly remnant of a lengthier downstroke (and thus an *r*), the color photograph (fig. 5.54) does not support such an abraded text. Thus, with its short stem, a *d* (*vdkn*) should be preferred.

The final report reads [g]bnm, “[h]ills.” In contrast, Parker, Blum, and Lemaire read “peaks” (*pbnm*; first read by McCarter in 2000: “Kuntillet 'Ajrud,” 173 n. 2). While the letter in question cannot be seen in figs. 5.53 and 5.54, the other two photos (figs. 5.55a and 5.55b) clearly show a cursive rounded *p* with its elongated downstroke. Thus, *pbnm* must be preferred even if one must look to a rare loanword (again see McCarter) rather than a Hebrew word, even one found in archaic poetry that resonates with our text (i.e., *gabnunnim* in Ps 68:16 [Eng 68:15]).

<sup>51</sup> The majority of scholars read the first word of line 2 as *r'š*. In contrast Blum (“Die Wandinschriften,” 25, 28, 31) reads *r'š* and Puech (“Les inscriptions,” 180) reads *rgš*. If taken all together, the different photographs present different information that cannot be reconciled. Judging from photograph fig. 5.53 (that seems to provide the most data), an *'ayin* can indeed be read (contra Blum) and one which is quite similar to the *'ayin* in line 4 in the same photograph (cf. too the *'ayin* in line 5). I do not see any remnants of the thick vertical shaft that is typical of the *alephs* in our inscription in order to support Blum’s *r'š*. As for Puech’s reading of *rgš*, there are no other *g*’s in any of the KA plaster inscriptions to use for comparison. Examples of *g*’s elsewhere in formal Phoenician script from the ninth–eighth century BCE (cf. Parker “Levant Comes of Age,” figs 3–4) would lead us to expect a much longer downstroke than what is represented in photograph fig. 5.53. Regrettably, we do not have any data for Phoenician cursive ink inscriptions of the letter *g* from this time period. Thus, we

even stronger confirmation when set aside similar language of mountainous collapse and quakes occasioned by a theophany elsewhere (e.g., Judg 5:4–5; Ps 68:8–9–18 [Eng 68:7–8,17]; Hab 3:3–7; Ps 18:8 [Eng 18:7] = 2 Sam 22:8; Ps 29:6; Ps 97:5; Jer 10:10; Mic 1:4; Joel 4:16 [Eng 3:16]; Hag 2:6). It goes without saying that real earthquakes in the Jordan Rift Valley esp. in the mid-eighth century BCE (cf. Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5) certainly heightened the dramatic appeal of this imagery as such events were interpreted as divine visitation.

Scholars are also unified in reading lines 5 and 6 as containing two (partially reconstructed) mentions of “a/the day of war” (*bym. mlḥ[mh]*) along with the mention of blessing (*brk*) and two divine names (*bʿl, šm ʿl*)—apart from Blum’s reading of Sam’al discussed above. If we are dealing with synonymously parallel poetic lines, as seems likely, then reconstructing [*lhl*] *šm ʿl. bym. mlḥ[mh]*, “[to praise] the name of El on a day of wa[r],” in line 6 would form a fitting parallel to *lʿbrk. bʿl. bym. mlḥ[mh]*, “to bless Baʿal on a day of war,” in line 5.<sup>52</sup> Compare *brk/hll* in the Psalter, esp. Ps 145:2 that includes the exact parallel of blessing a deity on every day in parallel to praising his name: *bēkol-yôm ʿābārākekā waʿāhalēlā šimkā lēʿōlām wāʿed*.<sup>53</sup> In short, the theophany in KA 4.2 has a militaristic flavor and thus falling within well-known divine warrior traditions. Scholars are of divided opinion about the nature of divinity (on which see below).

Epigraphically, there is now less of a consensus with regard to the verb associated with the deity’s action in line 2. The final report reads: “when God shines forth” (*bzrh ʿl*) and this reading is also adopted by Naʿaman, Schiedewind and Schmidt.<sup>54</sup> As noted in the final report and elsewhere, should the reading be *bzrh ʿl*, it would line up quite nicely with an archaic poem in Deut 33:2 that uses the same verb to describe how Yahweh comes from the Sinai, “dawning from Seʿir” (*yhwḥ missīnay bāʿ // zārah miššē ʿir*). That the general location of Seʿir (in the Arabah) borders the location of Kuntillet ʿAjrud would be icing on the cake.

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would follow the consensus in reading *r š*.

<sup>52</sup> Our reconstruction of [*lhl*] was independent of Puech who also reads this likely parallel verb. Yet we reconstruct the first three letters of [*lhl*] unlike Puech who reads *lhl* without reconstruction together with a preceding *lbrk*. See Puech, “Les inscriptions,” 179 and 178 n. 41

<sup>53</sup> The occurrence of *ʿāhalēlā šimkā* in Ps 145:2 as well as *ʿābārākā šimkā* in Ps 145:1 suggests that *šm ʿl* in our text need not designate a hypostasis.

<sup>54</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud*, 110; Naʿaman, “The Inscriptions,” 309; Schmidt (*Materiality*, 76); Schniedewind (“Understanding Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: A View from Kuntillet ʿAjrud,” *Maarav* 21.1–2 [2014]: 291). I list only these three scholars who have had access to the new photographs in the final report. Of those publications prior to the final report, apart from Meshel’s earlier readings of *rḥ* and *zr(w)t*, the reading of *zrḥ* was the consensus among all scholars (Weinfeld, Davies, Aḥituv, Renz, McCarter, Zevit, Dobbs-Allsopp et al., Rainey, etc.).

Yet the reading of the first letter of *zrh* in line 2 is not at all clear. At first glance the preserved ink in the best photos (fig. 11 = Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs. 5.55a, 5.55b) seems a poor fit with the only other possible *z* in our text (in the supposed *hz* in line 4 [cf. fig. 12]).

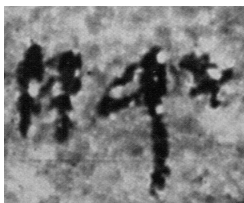


Fig. 11. The second preserved word in line 2 read by some as *zrh* and by others as *yrh*. Image taken from Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.55a. Used with permission, courtesy of Ze'ev Meshel.



Fig. 12. The other possible *z* in our text if the reading of *hz* in line 4 is correct. Image taken from Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.55b. Used with permission, courtesy of Ze'ev Meshel.

Yet superimposing the latter on to the former reveals that it can be somewhat comparable. Alternatively, one can posit *yrh* as preferred by Blum (“Und als der Gott roch [den angenehmen Duft]”) and Puech (“Et quand Dieu soufflera dans les hauteurs”).<sup>55</sup> Once again, the preserved ink does not resemble the letter *y* as it appears elsewhere in our inscription [cf. fig. 13]. Should the reading be *byrh* rather than *bzrh*, it would necessitate seeing the infinitive construct as a Phoenician Yiphi'1 form<sup>56</sup> rather than a Hebrew infinitive (in either a G or C stem) that would provide no explanation for the *y*.

<sup>55</sup> Blum, “Die Wandinschriften,” 25, 28, 31; Puech, “Les inscriptions,” 179 n. 41; 180

<sup>56</sup> So Blum, “Die Wandinschriften,” 29, 31.

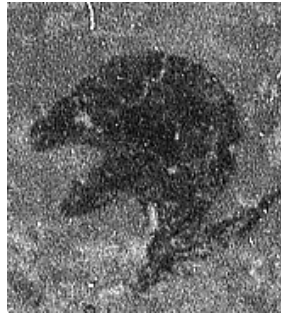


Fig. 13. An example of the letter *y* in our text taken from the word *ym* in line 5. Photograph courtesy of the West Semitic Research Project and Bruce Zuckerman.

Should the reading be *byrḥ ḥ*, our text would seem to be referencing a storm god using wind as a weapon. It is indeed problematic that we have no example of the verb *rwḥ* being used elsewhere of a deity blowing though the notion of God using the *ruaḥ* “wind” is ubiquitous.<sup>57</sup> The alternative—less likely in our opinion—would be Blum’s restoration (*wbyrḥ. ḥ br[h.] n[hḥ]*; “Und als der Gott roch [den angenehmen Duft]”). In biblical tradition, the notion of a deity smelling “a pleasing/soothing aroma” (*rēyah nīḥōaḥ*) is typically sacrificial in nature (cf. especially its use by P, H, and Ezekiel) and thus problematic for our context of a militaristic theophany unless here we have a deity smelling the scent of fire (i.e. the scent of war).<sup>58</sup>

The notions of storm gods using wind as a weapon has a long pedigree with Marduk using the winds in his defeat of the watery Tiamat in tablet IV of Enuma Elish or Yahweh’s wind driving back and dividing the waters in the Exodus narrative (Exod 14:21; 15:8–10). Yahweh expresses his wrath against his enemies with the language of thunder, earthquake, stormy wind, rain and hail (e.g., Isa 29:6; Ezek 13:13; Jer 23:19–20; Ps 148:7). The juxtaposition of wind, earthquake, (perhaps fire) and mountainous collapse that we read in lines 2–3 of KA 4.2 resonates with similar (Yahwistic) imagery in 1 Kgs 19:11–12 (*ruaḥ gēdōlā, ra’aš, ’ēš, mēpārēq hārīm ūmēšabbēr sēlā ’īm*), also set within a *midbār*/mountain theophanic tradition (cf. 1 Kgs 19:4,8).

The word that follows has been read as: *br[m]/br[m]m* “heights” (Aḥituv and Eshel, Puech), *br[’š]* “summit” (Na’aman), and *br[h]* “scent” (Blum, discussed

<sup>57</sup> On the root *rwḥ* used verbally, see *HALOT* 1195–96. The best examples of the verb *rwḥ* designating the movement of wind/spirit are 1 Sam 16:23 and Job 32:20 (cf. too Exod 8:11 [Eng 8:15]; Ps 66:12). Each of these represents an extended meaning where “to give vent to one’s spirit” (Job 32:20) or “to have an evil spirit blow away from someone” (1 Sam 16:23) represent “to find relief.”

<sup>58</sup> In addition to Yahweh smelling the pleasing odor of Noah’s burnt offerings (Gen 8:21), compare especially the use of *rēyah nīḥōaḥ* by P, H, and Ezekiel.

above). Yet the reading of *r* is not definite. All we have is the bottom half of a partial downward stroke rotated counterclockwise (visible in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs 5.55a and 5.55b but not 5.53 and 5.54). As Parker notes, the letter could conceivably be *ʿ*, *g*, *h*, *w*, *s*, *ṣ*, *q* or *r*.<sup>59</sup> Due to the use of fire alongside earthquakes (e.g., 1 Kgs 19:12; Isa 29:6; Ezek 38:19; cf. Ps 29:7–8), storm theophanies (Ps 18 // 2 Sam 22)<sup>60</sup> and judgment oracles using smelting imagery of fanning fire (Isa 54:16; Ezek 22:20; Job 20:26), one could suggest that the deity here “along with an earthquake, buffets [with fire?] *br ʿš.wbyrh. ʿl b[ ʿ ṣ ]*]. In light of the end of our inscription with its double mention of “a/the day of war” (*bym. mlh[mh]*), we should also mention Amos 1:4 that has Yahweh kindling fire against his enemies along with stormy wind on a day of war (*bēyôm milhāmā bēsa ʿar bēyôm sūpā*).<sup>61</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: INTERPRETING LINE 4 IN CONTEXT

The overall context of our inscription is a militaristic theophany where nature responds to the presence of the deity (*ʿl*) mentioned in line 2. Thus if the reading *qdš* (<*q*{*ṣ*}*dš*) in line 4 is correct, our first preference would be to see the same deity—called The Holy One—in action. Due to the geographical location of Kuntillet 'Ajrud, our second (close) preference would be to see the deity of line 2 (*ʿl*) in action either in the land of Qadesh or coming from the land of Qadesh. As noted above, associating the well-watered Qadesh Barnea on the Darb el-Ghazza trade route with the word *ʿētān* (designating a constant water source) that follows is irresistible. One need not draw a strict division between these two preferences as we have examples of deities and their land sharing the same name (e.g., the theonym and toponym Assur as well as the theonym and toponym *yh(w)/yhw3* associated with the Shasu bedouin). Certainly the land of Qadesh could be so named due to the presence of a deity known as The Holy One (*qdš*).

#### THE IDENTITY OF THE HOLY WARRIOR AT KUNTILLET 'AJRUD: PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

The broken nature of the inscription is frustrating for deciding the identity of the Holy Warrior at Kuntillet 'Ajrud. In addition, a key factor is the nature of the script and the language of the plaster inscriptions.

<sup>59</sup> Parker, “Levant Comes of Age,” 111 n. 494.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. T. J. Lewis, “Divine Fire in Deuteronomy 33:2,” *JBL* 132.4 (2013): 791–803.

<sup>61</sup> Francis Anderson and David Noel Freedman (*Amos* [New York: Doubleday 1989], 283) remark that wind, earthquake and fire “are God’s most available agents.”



*The Script of the Plaster Inscriptions*

As noted by Parker, the plaster inscriptions are paleographically important as they constitute our fullest dataset for understanding Phoenician cursive at this time.<sup>62</sup> Epigraphists universally agree that the script of Kuntillet 'Ajrud Inscriptions 4.1–4.5 is Phoenician in contrast to the Hebrew script of all the other inscriptions at the site. As noted by Parker, the specific features that mark the script of these five texts as Phoenician rather than Hebrew are the shapes of the letters *w*, *k*, *m*, *n*, *p*, *q*, and possibly *y*.<sup>63</sup> Schniedewind uses the distinctly different letters *h* and *t* from plaster inscriptions 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 to argue that we have a least three different scribal hands.<sup>64</sup> That kings of the northern kingdom of Israel would have scribes trained in the Phoenician script occasions no surprise due to pragmatic political and economic reasons (cf. the Samaria Ostraca from the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II<sup>65</sup>). Moreover, from the same time period (ca. 825 BCE) we have evidence of Phoenician being used elsewhere by royalty due to its status as a prestige language, namely its use by the Luwian named King Kulamuwa at Sam'al (KAI 24) where other later royal inscriptions at the site used the local Sam'alian Aramaic (cf. KAI 214, 215).

*The Language of the Plaster Inscriptions*

According to the final report (and reflecting the consensus of scholarship at the time including the views of our honoree), the majority of the plaster inscriptions (4.1–4.5 but not 4.6) were written in Phoenician script and yet using the Hebrew language and a Judean orthography.<sup>66</sup> Such a conclusion was based on the preservation of *matres lectionis* (*tymn*, *hyṭb* in KA 4.1), the use of the so-called paragogic *nun* and *waw* consecutive (*wymsn*, *wydkn* in KA 4.2), and known Hebrew vocabulary (*hyṭb* as a Hiphil stem from *ṭwb/yṭb* as opposed to Phoenician *n'm* and seemingly the writing of *mlḥmh* [= Hebrew] rather than *mlḥmt* [= Phoenician] in KA 4.2).

Since the publication of the final report, Blum and Lemaire have raised objections to Aḥituv and Eshel's assessment, arguing instead for the language of KA 4.2 being Phoenician. They have countered the above features at every turn and added in their own distinct Phoenician terminology that would ill fit a Hebrew inscription. Niehr adds that the authors of the final report "underestimated the

<sup>62</sup> Parker, "Levant Comes of Age," 113.

<sup>63</sup> Parker, "Levant Comes of Age," 113.

<sup>64</sup> Schniedewind, "Early Iron Age Phase," 138.

<sup>65</sup> See Aḥituv, *Echoes*, 258–310.

<sup>66</sup> For the final report's overall discussion of script, orthography and language, see Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 122–27 with specific attention to the plaster inscriptions on pages 126–27.

Phoenician influence at Kuntillet 'Ajrud," yet later admits that "little is revealed about the Phoenicians by the Phoenician inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud."<sup>67</sup>

To evaluate these opposing positions, it is necessary (a) to secure a strong epigraphic foundation for any claim, (b) to discuss which orthographic and linguistic features are truly telling, and (c) to weigh the likelihood of interpretive decisions that have been used for support.

### (a) Epigraphic Difficulties

From our epigraphic analysis, two of the arguments must be set aside. (1) The fourth word in line 5 has been interpreted as decisively Hebrew (*mlḥmh* or *mlḥm.*) and as decisively Phoenician (*mlḥmt*) based on its ending.<sup>68</sup> The photographic evidence (Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs. 5.53 and 5.54) yields nothing to support either position. Only the first three letters are clear (*mlḥ*). (2) Niehr argues for a reading 'brk. b'l at the beginning of line 5 that "hints at the North" because we have what he considers to be a parallel expression (*hbrk b'l* "majordomo") in the Phoenician-Luwian Karatepe inscription (*KAI* 26.1; cf. too the appearance of *hbrk b'l* in the Phoenician-Luwian bilingual from Çineköy).<sup>69</sup> Again, nothing in the photographic evidence supports the reading of the letter in question as an 'aleph. What evidence we do have suggests an *l*- but even this is not certain (see Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, figs. 5.55a and 5.55b).

### (b) Telling Orthographic and Linguistic Features

In advocating for the Phoenician language of the plaster inscriptions, Lemaire critiques the final report's discussion of Phoenician being written without *matres lectionis* (and hence forms like *tymn* and *hyṭb* in KA 4.1 pointing toward Hebrew) as being outdated, and arguing that Phoenician scribal tradition occasionally does use *matres lectionis*.<sup>70</sup> Yet the occasional and selective use of such a practice still allows Aḥituv and Eshel (and others) to press their case based on the bulk of the data.<sup>71</sup>

A similar evaluation can be applied to the word *hyṭb* used twice in KA 4.1.1. Lemaire counters the position of the final report (and the previous consensus) that

<sup>67</sup> See Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 29–30, 32–36, 39; Lemaire, "Remarques," 94–99. Cf. Niehr, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Networks," 27–29, 37.

<sup>68</sup> See Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 126 and McCarter, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud," 173 n. 5 for the former (cf. Puech "Les inscriptions," 179n. 41). See Blum, "Die Wandinschriften," 27–29, 34 and Lemaire, "Remarques," 98 for the latter.

<sup>69</sup> Niehr, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud and the Networks," 37.

<sup>70</sup> See A. Lemaire, "Remarques," 95–96; Lemaire, "Les *matres lectionis* en phénicien: Nouvelles orientations," *Res Antiquae* 5 (2008): 455–63.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. C. R. Krahmalkov, *A Phoenician-Punic Grammar* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 16–17.

the use of the root *ṭwb/yṭb* and the Hiphil verbal stem necessitates the scribe writing in Hebrew and not Phoenician. Lemaire argues that the root does occur at least once in a Cypriot personal name, and that the Phoenician Yiphil can be written with the preformant H- or HY- in late Punic.<sup>72</sup> Once again, such rare (and late) usage still allows Aḥituv and Eshel (and others) to press their case based on the bulk of the data.<sup>73</sup>

The use of the so-called paragogic *nun* and *waw* consecutive (*wymśn*, *wydkn* in KA 4.2.3; cf. *wyśb ʿw* in KA 4.1.1) is addressed briefly by Lemaire and extensively by Blum.<sup>74</sup> Understanding the final *-n* on these two third person plural forms is complicated by the varying terminology used in scholarly analysis, terminology tied to quite involved reconstructions of the Northwest Semitic verbal system. Using Ugaritic, Amarna Canaanite, Hebrew, and Aramaic (cf. too Arabic), it is clear that Northwest Semitic expressed the *yaqtulu* durative/indicative/imperfective 3 masculine plural as *yqtl̄n* (\**yaqtulūna*) in contrast to the *yaqtul* preterite/jussive that expressed the 3 masculine plural as *yqtl* (\**yaqtulū*). Complicating the picture is the final *-n* on *yqtl̄n* verbal forms that has been labeled “energetic” (vocalized \**yaqtulanna?*) though there is no consensus as to its function. This “energetic” *n* also seems to appear before accusative pronominal suffixes as seen especially in the doubled *n* of Hebrew verbs with suffixes (e.g., *yiqtlēnnū* < \**yaqtul-un-hu*).

When scholars refer to the *paragogic nun* in Biblical Hebrew (typically using Jacob Hoftijzer’s data) they are referring to 304 prefixal verbal forms (primarily 3 m pl and 2 m pl forms with a few 2 f sg forms) that end in a *-n* “extension.” While these forms overwhelmingly occur with the indicative imperfect, there are a handful of forms where they occur with *waw* consecutive (or consecutive preterite) forms. These include *wattiqrēbūn* (Deut 1:22), *wattiqrēbūn watta ʿamdūn* (Deut 4:11), *wattiqrēbūn* (Deut 5:23); *wayēribūn* (Judg 8:1); *wayyahānūn* (Judg 11:18); *wayye ʿētāyūn* (Isa 41:5); *wattēšmūn* (Ezek 44:8); and *wattaggīšūn* (Amos 6:3).

Turning to the scholarly treatments of *wymśn* and *wydkn* in KA 4.2, Aḥituv and Eshel are correct about the “very common” use of verbal forms with *paragogic nun* in Biblical Hebrew in contrast to the few occurrences in Phoenician.<sup>75</sup> Yet they minimize the presence of such a prefixal form ending in *-n* in Phoenician as only occurring in late inscriptions. This statement should be nuanced due to the likelihood of such a form (*ytlkn*) occurring in the Phoenician Kulamuwa

<sup>72</sup> Lemaire, “Remarques,” 97.

<sup>73</sup> On the morphology of the Yiphil suffixal form, see Charles R. Krahmalkov, *A Phoenician-Punic Grammar* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 16–17.

<sup>74</sup> See Blum, “Die Wandinschriften,” 29–30; Lemaire, “Remarques,” 97–98.

<sup>75</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud*, 126. See too McCarter, “Kuntillet ʿAjrud,” 173 n. 3.

Inscription (*KAI* 24.10) dated to ca. 825 BCE that is roughly contemporaneous with our inscription. Moreover, reconstructing \**yqtln* in Proto-Phoenician makes perfect sense. For his part, Blum's assessment ("sind die Verbformen *wymšn* und *wydkn* im vorexilischen Hebraisch weder morphologisch noch syntaktisch möglich") is overstated. The two Kuntillet 'Ajrud forms could indeed be preexilic Hebrew forms similar to *wattaggîšûn* in Amos 6:3 as could the various forms in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History noted above depending on how one dates these texts.

As for an overall evaluation, as noted by Stephen Kaufmann and many others, verbal forms with *paragogic nun* "occur most frequently in older texts."<sup>76</sup> For example, in synoptic verses, verbal forms with *paragogic nuns* in Kings are not found in Chronicles (e.g., *yēdē'ûn* 1 Kgs 8:43 // *yēdē'û* 2 Chr 6:33). Set against the backdrop of Aramaic (that continuously used *yqtln* forms), Rainey finds "in poetry a few true survivals of the Old Canaanite linguistic tradition" (cf. *yirgāzûn* in Exod 15:14) as well as "a revival of forms with *nun paragogicum* perhaps in the late eighth century, but especially in the late seventh century B.C.E." as "intentional archaisms."<sup>77</sup>

### (c) Interpretive Difficulties

I have argued above that Blum's analysis of *šm 'l* in line 6 as Syro-Hittite kingdom of Sam'al is unlikely as is reading *'tn* in line 4 as referring to Syrian sites near Aleppo or the Taurus mountains. His thesis linking a putative local Phoenician scribe at Kuntillet 'Ajrud to these distant locations (even on known caravan routes) is hard to sustain. Two of Blum's other interpretations for our text being written in Phoenician are more reasonable. They are: (a) Phoenician *kn l-* at the beginning of line 5, and (b) *byrh*, as a Phoenician Yiphi'1 form on line 2.

Regrettably, neither of these instances is definitive due to the broken nature of our text. (a) We cannot be certain that we have the well-known Phoenician expression *kn l-* ("he was/became") in line 5 (as opposed to the Hebrew *hyh l-*). The letters *kn* could easily be a part of a Hebrew verb (cf. the final report's *hkn* [= *hikkōn*] "Prepare") or could designate the ubiquitous adverb *kēn* in one of its many meanings (e.g., "thus," "thereupon," "in the same manner") or even [*lā*]*kēn* or [*al-*]*kēn* "therefore." (b) As noted above, if the reading of *byrh* in line 2 was certain, then it would be extremely likely that we would have a Phoenician Yiphi'1

<sup>76</sup> Stephen A. Kaufmann, "Paragogic *nun* in Biblical Hebrew: Hypercorrection as a Clue to a Lost Scribal Practice," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots. Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, ed. Z. Zevit, S. Gitin and M. Sokoloff (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 95; cf. Hoftijzer, *Function*, 21, 94.

<sup>77</sup> Anson F. Rainey, Review of Hoftijzer, *The Function in Hebrew Studies* 31 (1990): 175. Rainey (pp. 173–74) also notes "the frequency [of verbal forms with *paragogic nun*] in the D and related material (e.g., Jeremiah) and their absence in P."

verbal stem. Yet the *y* here is not at all certain and one should not risk defining the language of the entire text based on the smudge of ink of a single questionable letter.

### *The Language of the Plaster Inscriptions: Conclusion*

Given the nature of our evidence, one cannot conclude that the plaster inscriptions are written in the Phoenician language. Statistically, the bulk of the data regarding the three items analyzed above (the use of *matres lectionis*, the Hiphil verbal form of the word *hyṭb*, and the two *wyqtln* verbal forms *wymśn* and *wydkn*) argues more for the language being Hebrew rather than Phoenician. If one can argue from silence, it may also be relevant to note too that the two verbs in line 4 ( $\sqrt{mss}$ ;  $\sqrt{dkh/dk}$ ) occur commonly in Hebrew but never in Phoenician. (See too the putative reading [Ya]hwe[h] discussed below.) Should the reading of *byrh* in line 2 be correct (rather than *bzrh*), one could posit Phoenician influence in this case without having to declare the language of the entire inscription to be Phoenician.

### *The Identity of the Putative Holy Warrior at Kuntillet 'Ajrud*

Assuming the reconstructed reading of *qdš* can be sustained (as no other solution has arisen for the enigmatic *qšdš*), the obvious question pertains to the identity of The Holy One (unless again we are dealing with a GN Qadesh). The overall context mentions two distinct Canaanite gods (El in line 2 and Baal in line 5)—that is, if the words *'l* and *b'l* are not regular nouns “god” and “lord”—to which one can add the presence of El via his (hypostatic?) name (*šm 'l*) mentioned in line 6.

### *Setting Two Controls*

For control, initially we must consider KA 4.2 on its own merits prior to any discussion of how it relates to the other plaster inscriptions and to the other inscriptions at the site as a whole. This makes methodological sense especially if Schniedewind is correct that we have at least three different scribal hands producing the plaster inscriptions and that the site may have had a longer occupational history than previously imagined.<sup>78</sup> For control, we should also initially set aside Aḥituv and Eshel's restoration of “[Ya]hw[eh]” [y]hw[h] in line 2 as it is conjectural and assumes that the smaller fragment (only pictured in Meshel *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.53) is related to the larger fragment.<sup>79</sup> (We will return to both of these topics below.)

<sup>78</sup> Schniedewind, “Early Iron Age Phase,” 138.

<sup>79</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 110–11.

As noted at the outset of this article, scholarly opinion is divided as to whether the mention of El and Baal in our text refers to independent Canaanite deities worshipped at Kuntillet 'Ajrud or whether these two terms are indicators of the syncretistic nature of worship at Kuntillet 'Ajrud where overall a single deity Yahweh was prominent.<sup>80</sup> LeMon and Strawn state well the “unresolvable” nature of our text that results in “an impasse” when it comes to deciding between these two options.<sup>81</sup> Yet *if* the reading of *qdš* is secure and refers to a deity known as The Holy One,<sup>82</sup> we have a new (and decisive?) variable to help resolve the impasse.

### *Which Deities Are Called “The Holy One” in the Southern Levant at This Time?*

When it comes finding a Southern Levantine male deity in the Iron Age who is accorded the title “The Holy One” (*qdš*), there are only two: El and Yahweh, both known from biblical traditions. As far as I know, in the Southern Levant in the Iron Age, no other male deity such as Athtar, Baal, Chemosh, Dagan, Eshmun, Hadad, Horon, Melqart, Mot, Qaus, Reshep, Yam, or Yarikh is ever given the title “The Holy One” in text or onomastica. The deities El and Yahweh would of course be ideal candidates for the holy deity of KA 4.2 if our text is written in the Hebrew language as seems most likely. It is not that Canaanite, Edomite, Moabite and other deities are unattested within Israelite traditions (far from it), but rather that Yahweh would be a poor (heretofore unattested) fit for a text written in the Phoenician language and El would be possible but rare (cf. *ʾl qn ʾarš* in the late eighth-early seventh century BCE Azatiwada inscription; *KAI* 26.A.3.18).

Of the two deities that are so-titled, statistically there is an overwhelming number of attestations of Yahweh being called “The Holy One”—as one could have guessed knowing how El traditions were fully blended with Yahweh traditions in the Hebrew Bible. As we sketch the biblical data, two questions should be kept in mind: (1) Can one extrapolate from the numerous biblical attestations that we have a similar situation in KA 4.2 where Yahweh is being referred to as The Holy One?; (2) Or does KA 4.2 preserve an authentic El tradition without the overlay of Yahwistic editing that we see in many biblical texts?

### *Divine Holiness in Biblical Traditions*

Holiness in the Hebrew Bible is typically analyzed by privileging the cultic traditions about purity (as well as the social rank of priests) that have come down to

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<sup>80</sup> Schmidt’s treatment is nicely representative of the former view while Ahituv and Eshel (in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 129–133) well represent the latter view. See Schmidt, *Materiality*, 90–94.

<sup>81</sup> LeMon and Strawn, “Once More,” 95–96.

<sup>82</sup> Though LeMon and Strawn (“Once More,” 90 n. 29) did interpret line 4 as referring to “the Holy One (*qdš*),” they failed to see this datum as a crucial factor due to minimizing this deity to an afterthought, one only deserving of “perhaps” an “honorable mention.”

us especially in the P and H tradents but also in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, the book of Ezekiel and the books of Chronicles. Yet there are numerous non-cultic understandings of divine holiness that resonate with what we find in KA 4.2. In noncultic biblical texts, holiness, rather than being about cultic purity (i.e., cleanness void of moral, social and/or ritual pollution), equals a type of incomparable power known only to the realm of the gods. Holy gods are powerful gods. Theirs is a lethal power appropriately feared and dreaded.

### *Holiness as Indicator of Awesome Power and Hierarchy*

The notion of Yahweh being holy is found in our earliest biblical traditions.<sup>83</sup> Yahweh, proclaims the poet of Exod 15, is “feared in holiness” (*ne ’dār baqqōdeš*; Exod 15:11), a god who creates holy space (*nēwēh qodeš*; *miqdāš*) to which he guides his people (Exod 15:13, 17). The poet employs a startling number of different words to depict how Yahweh’s holy power and fury (*’oz*, *zimrā*, *kōah*, *yāmīn*, *hārōn*, *qōdeš*, *zērō ’a*) is of such magnitude that it occasions fear, terror and dread (*ne ’dār* [2x], *nōrā*, *rgz*, *hīl*, *bhl*, *rā ’ad*, *mwg*, *’ēmātā*, *paḥad*). The poet also uses holiness as an indicator of Yahweh’s supremacy over the gods in Exod 15:11 (analogous to how holiness can serve as an indicator of rank among cultic personnel):

Who is like you among the gods, Yahweh?  
Who is like you, feared in holiness?

*mī-kāmōkā bā ’ēlim yhw*  
*mī kāmōkā ne ’dār baqqōdeš*

Psalm 68 celebrates the military side of Yahweh—“riding through desert lands” (*rōkēb bā ’ārābōt*; Ps 68:5 [Eng 68:4]) and “marching through the wilderness: (*bēša ’dēkā bīšīmōn*; Ps 68:8 [Eng 68:7])—while repeatedly mentioning the holiness of his residences (*mē ’ōn qodšō*; *baqqōdeš*; *mimmiqdāšēkā*; Ps 68:6, 18, 25, 36 [Eng 68:5, 17, 24, 35]).<sup>84</sup> Psalm 89 describes Yahweh as being “held in awe” (*nōrā*), greatly praised and “greatly dreaded in the council of holy beings” (*biqhal qēdōšim ... ’ēl na ’ārāš bēsōd-qēdōšim*) such that he is incomparable when

<sup>83</sup> The authors of the final report (in Meshel, *Kuntillet ’Ajrud*, 110, 112, 133) briefly referenced Exod 15:11; Deut 32:2; Ps 29:1, Ps 89:7 and Hab 3:3.

<sup>84</sup> Even those who date Ps 68 late acknowledge early elements that have been redacted (e.g. the reference to Mount Bashan in Ps 68:16–17 [Eng 68:15–16] as God’s dwelling woven into later Zion traditions). Portions of Ps 68 are regularly placed within the corpus of archaic Hebrew poetry. Of note is the extremely close wording of Ps 68:8–11 (Eng 68:7–10) and the archaic Judges 5:4–5 (cf. Deut 33:2–3). That the Judges parallel (Judg 5:4–5) twice has Yahweh where Ps 68:8–11 reads *’ēlōhīm* underscores how the latter secondarily came to replace the former consistently in the Elohist Psalter.

compared to the gods (*kī mī ... yidmeh layhwh bibnē 'ēlīm*; Ps 89:6–8 [Eng 89:5–7]). Similarly, twice the composer of the Song of Hannah praises Yahweh's holy nature as she proclaims his incomparability: “There is no Holy One like Yahweh” (*'ēn qādōš ka-yhwh*) ... “Who is holy like Yahweh?” (*mī qādōš ka-yhwh*) (1 Sam 2:2,10).<sup>85</sup>

### *Deuteronomy 33:2 and Habakkuk 3*

Of particular note are two archaic (or archaizing in the case of Hab 3) passages that proclaim Yahweh's holy power at geographic locations (*tēmān, šē'ir*) that resonate with other texts from Kuntillet 'Ajrud that mention Teman (*tymn/tmn*)/the south (*htymn/htmn*).<sup>86</sup> Deuteronomy 33:2 presents a fiery Yahweh coming from the south with “holy ones” accompanying him as combatants:

Yahweh came from Sinai	<i>yhwh missīnay bā'</i>
He dawned from Seir ...	<i>zārah miššē'ir ...</i>
He beamed forth from Mt. Paran.	<i>hōpia' mēhar pā'rān</i>
With him were myriads of holy ones	<i>'ittō-m<sup>87</sup> ribēbōt qōdeš</i>
At/From his right hand, fire flies forth	<i>mīmīnō 'ēš dāt ...</i>

As noted by many, should the reading of *zrḥ* in KA 4.2.2 be secure (but see the discussion above), then Deut 33:2 would present a similar picture of a deity “dawning” from a southern location (*zārah miššē'ir*) along with the presence of holy attendants.

The poet of Hab 3 (vv. 2a, 3a, 5, 6b, 9b–10a) describes the divine warrior marching from the south as follows:

<sup>85</sup> The reconstruction of “Who is holy like Yahweh?” (*mī qādōš ka-yhwh*) in 1 Sam 2:10 is based on *kurios hagios* in Codex Vaticanus (B) and on *my q[dwš kyhwh]* in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> These two passages were noted by the authors of the final report, yet without fleshing out the implications. The location of Seir has long tantalized scholars exploring the origin of Yahweh due to the mention of the “the Shasu(-nomads?) of Seir,” *ššsw s'rr* alongside “the land of the Shasu(-nomads?) of Yhw,” *t3 ššsw yh(w)/yhwh3* in Egyptian geographical lists from the time of Amenophis III (first half of the fourteenth century BCE) and Ramses II (thirteenth century BCE). In addition to Deut 33:2, Yahweh is described as marching from Seir (*šē'ir*) in Judg 5:4 where it occurs in parallel to the steppe of Edom and within a theophany that resonates with KA 4.2.

<sup>87</sup> We follow most scholars who read the preposition “with” plus enclitic *-m* (*'ittō-m*) based on the LXX, Targums and the Vulgate rather than the MT's Aramaic-influenced pointing of *'ātā* (“he came”). On the translation of the enigmatic *'ēš dāt*, see Lewis “Divine Fire,” 791–803.



O Yahweh, I heard of your fame, I was frightened, Yahweh, by your deeds ...	<i>yhw h šāma 'tī šim 'ākā yārē 'tī yhw h pā 'ālēkā ...</i>
Eloah came from Teman, Qadosh (The Holy One) from Mount Paran ...	<i>'ēlōah mittēmān yābō' qādōš mēhar-pā 'rān ...</i>
Before him went Pestilence, Plague marched at his feet ...	<i>lēpānāyw yēlek dāber yēšē' rešep lēraglāyw ...</i>
Ancient mountains crumbled Age-old hills collapsed. His were the ancient routes ...	<i>yitpōššēšū harērē-'ad šahū gib 'ōt 'ōlām hālikōt 'ōlām lō...</i>
You split the earth/riders. The mountains saw you and writhed; A torrent of water swept by ...	<i>nēhārōt tēbaqqa '-'āreš rā 'ūkā yāhīlū hārīm zerem mayim 'ābār ...</i>

Like KA 4.2, this passage mentions a theophany together with the collapse of mountains and hills in response. Where KA 4.2's militaristic tenor comes from the double mention of "a day of war" (KA 4.2.5–6), Hab 3 describes its battle by mentioning the deity riding on horse and chariot (Hab 3:8b, 15) and brandishing bow, arrows and spear (Hab 3:9, 11; cf. 3:14).

If the reading of *'tn* ("ever-flowing stream") in KA 4.2.4 is secure, then the mention of water in Hab 3:8–10, 15 could be another point of contact. And perhaps the mention of the earth splitting in Hab 3:9b (*tēbaqqa* '-'āreš) refers to an earthquake as we have with *r'š* in KA 4.2.2. Yet what most catches the eye is the mention of Eloah in parallel to Qadosh ("The Holy One") in Hab 3:3 that is similar to the mention of El in KA 4.2.2 soon to be followed by the deity *qdš* ("The Holy One").

In Hab 3 we have a syncretistic text that focuses on the preeminence of Yahweh's military might. With good reason, one could posit that Hab 3:2 hints at an underlying tradition where El was seen as The Holy One who came from Teman dressed in battle array. Mythopoeically, for Hab 3:5 one could further suggest that El's entourage was once thought to include divine attendants, as the Hebrew noun *rešep* ("plague") is a well attested deity (Rashpu/Reshep) elsewhere, and the Hebrew noun *deber* ("pestilence") likely refers to a personified disease/demon (Ps 91:3,6; Hos 13:14). Yet Hab 3 overall is thoroughly Yahwistic. As elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the author of this poem has blended this El tradition into Yahwistic lore. The poem starts out with a double mention of Yahweh as the deity who causes him fright (*yārē 'tī*) and then thrice refers to Yahweh (and not El) in the rest of the poem as the divine warrior fighting the Sea and the one who brings deliverance to his people (Hab 3: 8,18,19). The author of Hab 3 would certainly agree with the words of the psalmist: "For who is Eloah but Yahweh?" (*kī mī*

'ēlōah mibbal'ādē yhwḥ; Ps 18:32 [Eng 18:31] // “For who is El but Yahweh?” (kī mī-’ēl mibbal'ādē yhwḥ; 2 Sam 22:32).

Returning to defining the divinity of KA 4.2 (standing alone), our understanding is inconclusive, though the two mentions of the god El (i.e., 'l in line 2 and the [hypostatic?] šm 'l in line 6) make it more likely that we have an El-centric text where lines 5 and 6 are in parallel:

... to (?) bless the (war-)lord [El?] on a day of wa[r] ...	... l <sup>o</sup> brk. b'l. bym. mlḥ[mh] ...
... [to prai]se the name of El on a day of wa[r] ...	... [lh]l šm 'l. bym. mlḥ[mh] ...

#### *Removing the First Control Set Above: Incorporating Data from the Other Inscriptions*

If the plaster inscriptions are taken as a whole, another divine profile emerges. Aḥituv and Eshel reconstructed the presence of Ba'al in a small plaster fragment (KA 4.4.1; see fig. 14).



Fig. 14. Kuntillet 'Ajrud Inscription 4.4.1 that contains the reading *p'l* and not *b'l*. The mistaken reading of *b'l* has led some to reconstruct the deity Ba'al at Kuntillet 'Ajrud. Image taken from Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, Fig. 5.59. Used with permission, courtesy of Ze'ev Meshel.

The text was thought also to mention the word for thunder/voice (*ql*)—though the putative *l* is hardly visible—and thus Aḥituv and Eshel could not resist reconstructing “Ba'al [thundered] in voice” ([wyr 'm] *b'l bql*) similar to Yahweh doing so in 1 Sam 7:10.<sup>88</sup> If this reading is secure, it would complement the theophanic context of KA 4.2.

<sup>88</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 117. Cf. too Puech, “Les inscriptions,” 183–84.

Yet as Lemaire has astutely noted, what Aḥituv and Eshel read as a *b* (of *b' l*) is *certainly* a *p* with *p' l* likely referring to “making” or “work” of some sort.<sup>89</sup> What remains of the letter in question reveals an open head and longer curving tail both characteristic of *p* as opposed to the closed head and bent tail of *b* (as seen three letters down). As Cross has noted while commenting on the name *šmp' l* on the Old Canaanite Qubūr el-Walaydah sherd, “the [verbal] element *pa' al*, is well known in biblical and Phoenician names construed with a divine name or epithet: [Phoenician] *'lp' l*, *b'lp' l*, biblical *'elpa' al*.”<sup>90</sup> It is likely that a similar usage is represented by *p' l* in KA 4.4.1. For our present concern, we can conclude that apart from KA 4.2.5, *b' l* is found no where else at Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

Elsewhere the plaster inscriptions attest to a single male deity only. KA 4.1.1 twice refers to “Yahweh of Teman/the south” ([*y*] *hwh tymn*; *yhwh hty[mn]*) together with three third masculine singular verbs remarking on the god’s lengthening of days ([*y*] *rk ymm*) and making things go well (*hytb*; 2x) for the worshipper.

If one broadens the scope to include all of the inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrud—those incised in stone (KA 1.1–1.4) and in pottery (KA 2.1–2.9), and those written with ink on pottery (KA 3.1–3.16)—an even fuller divine profile emerges. *As for male divinity, apart from KA 4.2, Yahweh only occurs, both as an independent proper name as well as a theophoric element in personal names.* The full DN *yhwh* occurs five times (in KA 3.1; 3.6; 3.9, 4.1.1 (2x)) with the shortened DN *yhw* occurring two times (in KA 1.2; 3.9). Of some twenty-six personal names, thirteen contain theophoric elements of which 100 percent are Yahwistic: *'lyw*, *'mryw*, *hlyw*, *yw' sh*, *yw[ ]*, *'bdyw*, *'bd[yw]*, *'zyw*, *r'y[w]*, *šknym*, *sm'yw*, *sm'y[w]*, *šmryw*.<sup>91</sup> Though the Yahwism at the site was ubiquitous, it was nonetheless nuanced geographically—distinguishing between (a) the local god Yahweh known indigenously as “Yahweh of Teman” (*yhwh tmn*; [*y*] *hwh tymn*) and “Yahweh of the Southlands” (*yhwh htmn*; *yhwh hty[mn]*), and (b) the god of the Northern Kingdom, known as “Yahweh of Samaria” (*yhwh šmrn*). This latter name reflecting the capital city, together with Northern theophoric names (-*yw* as opposed to -*yhw*) throughout the site, make it likely that this Yahweh was perceived (sociologically and politically) as a part of the northern royal cult who exercised control over the site.

If we situate KA 4.2’s mention of *' l*, *šm' l* and *b' l* within this profile, a striking observation is apparent: Apart from KA 4.2, neither El or Ba'al are attested

<sup>89</sup> Lemaire, “Remarques,” 92–93.

<sup>90</sup> Frank Moore Cross, “Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts,” *BASOR* 238 (1980): 3. For an updated analysis using RTI imaging, see Nathaniel E. Greene, “The Qubur al-Walaydah Bowl: New Images and Old Readings,” *BASOR* 377 (2017): 39–47.

<sup>91</sup> Granted, four of these thirteen are reconstructed (*yw[ ]*, *'bd[yw]*, *r'y[w]*, *šm'y[w]*) yet such reconstruction are likely. If they are not included, the 100 percent remains the same. For the onomastica, see Ahituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 128–29.

anywhere else with independent divine names. As for onomastica, Baal never occurs as a theophoric element. This seems striking. For his part, El does occur in a single instance ('lyw), and yet, it likely represents what Albertz calls an “equating name” meaning “El is Yahweh.”<sup>92</sup>

What then are we to make of the divine profile in KA 4.2 when situated within the other textual references at the site? Without any other attestation of Baal (either in KA 4.4.1 or the onomastica) it is preferable—as noted above due to synonymous parallelism—to see *b'l* in line 6 as a reference to El as (war-)lord. At this juncture, the two above options remain: Either KA 4.2 is an El-centric text that represents an additional, more pluralistic, viewpoint at the site alongside of Yahwism, or KA 4.2, like all other inscriptions at the site, refers to Yahweh as god ('l) and lord (*b'l*).

*Removing the Second Control Set Above: The Speculative Reading of [Ya]hwe[h] in Line 2*

As the reader has likely gathered to this point, I have been quite uncomfortable with Aḥituv and Eshel's reconstruction of [Ya]we[h] in line 2. There are three objections: (1) Unless a fuller explanation can be given, their comment that the smaller fragment containing this word “seems to be physically connected to the larger piece” is nonsensical, for the two fragments are clearly not connected in the only known photo (Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.53). (2) Secondly, if we grant that the two fragments are related, how does one justify the placement of the fragment in its current location? (3) Third, certainly there are other alternatives for reconstructing the extant letters [ ]hw[ ] other than [Ya]hwe[h] despite Aḥituv and Eshel's comment that “no other restoration seems probable.”<sup>93</sup>

Upon further consideration, surprisingly, only the second of these objections remains. As for the first objection, according to the location map showing the find spots of the various inscriptions (Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig. 5.1), there is no other inscription in the vicinity to which the smaller fragment could have belonged. KA 4.3 would be a strong potential contender (it too comes from Location 14a as does KA 4.2), yet it was discovered *in situ* and none of its missing pieces of plaster (to judge from the published photographs) matches the shape and orientation of the small fragment. See Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, fig 2.25, 5.56, 5.57,

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<sup>92</sup> Dobbs-Allsopp et al. (*Hebrew Inscriptions*, 287) state succinctly: “YHWH is 'ēl at Kuntillet 'Ajrūd.” Alternatively, 'lyw could mean “The god is Yahweh” or “Yahweh is [my] god” and these too would underscore the above point about the universal occurrence of Yahweh as the male deity at the site apart from 'l and *b'l* in KA 4.2. For Albertz's study of equating names, see Albertz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 348–50 and appendix B4.

<sup>93</sup> Aḥituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 110–11. Aḥituv (*Echoes*, 325) had previously commented that he did “not see another possible reconstruction.”

5.58. In addition, as noted by Schniedewind, KA 4.3 and KA 4.2 represent two different scribal hands (cf. the distinctly different ways of forming the *t* and *h*).<sup>94</sup>

The second objection remains as there is no precise way of telling from the photographic evidence where the small fragment should be situated vis-à-vis the larger fragment. It seems that Aḥituv and Eshel located the fragment in its current position (i.e., as a part of line 2) based on the shape of the larger fragment (with its upper left missing) and based on reading Yahweh as a formulaic pair in a poetic B line in parallel to El in the poetic A line. These are reasonable (even likely) conclusions, but not provable.

As for the third objection, as far as I know, there is almost no other possible reconstruction for a word containing *-hw-* other than [Ya]hwe[h] when one factors in that: (a) the two letters are contiguous due to no intervening word divider, (b) the *h* is almost certainly not the definite article as this would necessitate a I-*w* noun which is extremely rare in Hebrew (cf. *wālād* in Gen 11:30), (c) our text has no *matres lectionis* and thus the *w* must be consonantal, and (d) all of the personal names at the site are written with the northern theophoric element *yw* and never *yhw*.

Of all known words in the Hebrew Bible with a *-hw-* combination, apart from Yahweh (and verbal forms of  $\sqrt{hwh}$ ), the *waw* overwhelmingly marks a *mater lectionis* (e.g., *gabhūt*, *hū*, *hōd*, *hōy*, *hōn*, *ṭāhōr*, *mēhūmā*, *nēgōhōt*, *tēhōm*, *timhōn*, and *tōhū wā bōhū*) including in names (e.g., *ʾābihū*, *ʾēhūd*, *ʾāhīhūd*, *ʾēlihū*, *hōšēa*, *yēhū*, *yēhūdā*, *yēhūdīt*, *ammīhūd*). The only other viable alternative for a *-hw-* combination with a consonantal *waw* is the noun *hawwā/hōvā* designating deceit and ruin (due to evil desires, appetites and malicious thoughts; cf. *hawwat nepeš* in Mic 7:3). While such a meaning might seem to be appropriate for our text at first glance, the word *hawwā* is never used in contexts of war or theophanies as we have in our present context (*bym. mlh[mh]*).

If it is true then that our text reads [Ya]hwe[h], we have a “game changer” for defining the divine profile of KA 4.2. Rather than leaning toward our first pluralistic option (i.e., KA 4.2 as an El-centric text in contrast to the Yahwism documented elsewhere at the site), it seems best to lean toward the second option that prefers seeing KA 4.2 as also incorporating Yahweh in a way that complements the Yahwism elsewhere at the site. If our text is poetic, and if the placement

<sup>94</sup> Schniedewind, “An Early Iron Age Phase,” 138. One might also consider that the smaller fragment belongs with KA 4.1.1—as indeed Lemaire does. See Lemaire, “Remarques,” 88–89. Yet 4.1.1 [Locus 6] was found in the northern wing of the bench-room complex (Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud*, 105) whose opening is demarcated from the “entranceway” where 4.2 was found [Locus 14a] by a raised threshold. According to Schniedewind, KA 4.1.1 is also to be distinguished from KA 4.2 as having a different (third) scribal hand.

of the fragment is correct, then [Ya]hwe[h] in the B line, may form a poetic couplet with El in the A line as suggested by Ahituv and Eshel.<sup>95</sup>

### Conclusion

What can we conclude from the scribe of KA 4.2's decision to incorporate the name Yahweh alongside of the divine names/titles 'l, qdš, and b'/? For one thing, the presence of Yahweh would cement the above inclination that the language of our text is indeed Hebrew as the god Yahweh never appears in a Phoenician inscription.

To say more, it seems wise to borrow the words of our Festschrift honoree and then to take yet another look at Hab 3. In addition, traditions about northern (Israelite) "holy divinity" from roughly the same time period in the books of Hosea and Isaiah may prove insightful.

P. Kyle McCarter Jr. was an early advisor to Ze'ev Meshel on the epigraphy of Kuntillet 'Ajrud.<sup>96</sup> As it happened, Meshel was a visiting scholar at Harvard University in 1978–1979 at the same time that McCarter was at Harvard filling in for Frank Cross who was on sabbatical. Meshel provided McCarter access to photographs at this early stage though with restrictions on publication. Thus it was that as Meshel started publishing the epigraphic finds, McCarter was able to be one of the earliest commentators on KA 4.2 who was informed on a first hand basis having studied the photographic evidence that would not be seen by the broader academic community until 2012.

As for the divine profile of KA 4.2, McCarter has written insightfully long before the publication of [Ya]hwe[h] in the smaller fragment.

In view of the distinctly Israelite literary character of this fragmentary poem [and the] distinctively Heb[raic] language and poetic style of this poem, in all probability, then, 'El should be understood here as the god of Israel rather than a non-Israelite deity [and] it seems probable that Ba'1 ('Lord') should be understood as

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<sup>95</sup> Ahituv and Eshel in Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 133. See too LeMon and Strawn ("Once More," 90, 92–93), quoting Clines, who suggest that we may have here an example of "the parallelism of greater precision."

<sup>96</sup> See Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud*, 73. P. Kyle McCarter Jr.'s treatments of KA 4.2 can be found in "The Origins of Israelite Religion," in *The Rise of Ancient Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks, William G. Dever, B. Halpern and P. Kyle McCarter Jr. (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1992), 125; in his *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996), 105–106, in "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. P. D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson and S. D. McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 137–55 and in "Kuntillet 'Ajrud: Plaster Wall Inscription," in *CoS 2* (2000), 173.

an epithet of the god of Israel here rather than the name of a Canaanite or Phoen[ician] god.<sup>97</sup>

As for the latter, McCarter noted elsewhere: “it is also probable that the divine names are used as epithets of Yahweh, as suggested for the use of ‘Baal’ in the Samaria ostraca.”<sup>98</sup> To this one can now also add the Qeiyafa Ishbaʿl inscription dated radiometrically to ca. 1020–980 BCE. As others have pointed out, the DN *bʿl* in the personal name Ishbaʿl (“man of *bʿl*; ʿšbʿl) can attest to the presence of Yahweh worship as easily as that of the Canaanite god Baal.<sup>99</sup> Once again one thinks of Albertz’s study of “equating names” such as *baʿalyāh* (“Baal is Yah[weh]”/“Yah[weh] is Baal/lord”) that show the overlap of the two deities as does Hosea 2:18 [Eng 2:16].<sup>100</sup>

The northern perspective in the eighth century BCE book of Hosea also includes two other pertinent details.<sup>101</sup> Hosea speaks of what happens “on the day of battle” (*bēyôm milhāmā*; Hos 10:14) as does the eighth century BCE Judean Amos (1:14) using the very expression we find twice in KA 4.2.5–6 (*bym. mlh[mh]*). The book of Hosea also speaks of Yahweh as “the Holy One” (*qādōš*) in the context of God relating to the northern kingdom Ephraim/Israel (Hosea 11:9). Some scholars (e.g. Gammie) have suggested that the northern Hosea was “probably the source of inspiration” behind Isaiah’s coining of the title “The Holy One of Israel” (*qēdōš yiśrāʿēl*) for Yahweh.<sup>102</sup>

It is curious that the biblical traditions that speak most often of Yahweh as “the Holy One of *Israel*” are the *Judean* Isaianic traditions. According to the thorough studies of Williamson, the phrase “the Holy One of Israel” (*qēdōš yiśrāʿēl*) occurs some 25 times in the Isaianic corpus.<sup>103</sup> As for the eighth century BCE (First) Isaiah, Williamson focuses his attention on four key passages (Isa 30:11,12,15; 31:1) associated with Sennacherib’s well-known western campaign in 701 BCE (that included his receiving tribute from Edom).<sup>104</sup>

<sup>97</sup> McCarter, “Kuntillet ‘Ajrud: Plaster Wall Inscription,” 173 n. 1 and 4. I have taken the liberty of combining phrases from these two footnotes into a single narrative.

<sup>98</sup> McCarter, *Ancient Inscriptions*, 106.

<sup>99</sup> E.g. Christopher A. Rollston, “The Incised ʿIšbaʿl Inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa: Palaeographic, Onomastic and Historical Notes,” (fc).

<sup>100</sup> Albertz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 348–59, 576–81.

<sup>101</sup> The book of Hosea is often thought to focus on the northern kingdom during the time of Jeroboam II and the immediate aftermath but prior to the coming of Tiglath-Pileser III (cf. Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Hosea* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1980], 33–39). This time period is the same as has been suggested for the site of Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

<sup>102</sup> John G. Gammie, *Holiness in Israel* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1989), 74–76.

<sup>103</sup> Hugh Williamson, “Isaiah and the Holy One of Israel” in *Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Texts: Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman*, ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert and Gillian Greenberg (London: JSOT, 2001), 22–38; Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, ICC (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 43–46.

<sup>104</sup> Williamson, “Isaiah and the Holy One of Israel,” 27–31.

It is clear that for Isaiah, “The Holy One of Israel” was thought to be a God who could be trusted to intervene militarily. Isaiah 31:1 aptly summarizes the prophet’s view against relying upon political alliances rather than upon Yahweh as divine warrior:

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,  
 Who rely on horses—  
 They trust in chariots due to their vast number,  
 In horsemen due to their incredible strength,  
 But do not look to the Holy One of Israel  
 Nor search out Yahweh.

Once again, we note that holiness here has to do with divine power rather than cultic, ritual, social or ethical holiness. To say that Yahweh is the Holy One of Israel is to say that Yahweh is the military deliverer and redeemer of his people. Such a portrayal fits perfectly with KA 4.2 where we have The Holy One as a divine military figure who receives the blessing (and [prai]ses) of his adherents on a day of war. As the eighth century BCE Judean Isaiah blended his southern understandings of Yahweh with the Holy One of northern Israel, so too adherents at eighth century BCE Kuntillet 'Ajrud blended Yahweh of Teman/the South with Yahweh of Samaria with the Holy One. And as Hab 3 could weave Yahweh, El of Teman, and Qadosh traditions within a singular military theophany (cf. Ps 68:20–22, 36 [Eng 68:19–21,35]; Ps 89:8–9 [Eng 89:7–8]), so too the author of KA 4.2 had no problem weaving El, [Ya]hwe[h], and Qadosh traditions to describe his military theophany.

All of this seems quite reasonable, *if* the probable reading of *qds̄* < *qšdš̄* is correct, and *if* the likely epigraphic readings of *qšdš̄* (as opposed to *wšdš̄*) and [Ya]hwe[h] are secure.

#### CONCLUSION

The presence of a deity known as “the Holy One” at Kuntillet 'Ajrud is only possible if we posit a scribal mistake. At first glance, reconstructing this deity here based on the sole foundation of textual criticism seems overly speculative. Yet there is substantial and widespread evidence documenting Yahweh as “The Holy One” (*qds̄*) elsewhere—in similar contexts of military theophanies, in similar blended El-Yahweh traditions, in similar blended northern-southern traditions, and during similar chronological periods (eighth century BCE). Thus with the usual cautions, one can assert that there is a better than average likelihood that Yahweh was portrayed as “The Holy One” (*qds̄*) at Kuntillet 'Ajrud too.



## Appendix: Text and Translation

**Line 1**

... *šnt*\* ...  
 ... second time/years ...

**Line 2**

## Option A

... *br š.wbzrh. 'l b['] š[y]hw[h]*...<sup>105</sup>  
 ... with/during the earthquake, when El shines forth [with fire?]; [Ya]hwe[h] ...

## Option B

... *br š.wbyrh. 'l b['] š [y]hw[h]\** ...  
 ... with/during an earthquake, when El buffets [with fire?]; [Ya]hwe[h] [ ... ]

**Line 3**

... *r.wymšn. hrm. wydkn. pbnm*  
 The mountains melt, the hills are crushed ...<sup>106</sup>

**Line 4**

## (Preferred 1)

[ ] *'rš.qšdš. 'l y. 't n°/m°. hz.kr/s/*  
 ... earth. The Holy One at/over/against the ever-flowing waters. He gazes like...

## (Preferred 2)

[*m/b*] *'rš.qšdš. 'l y. 't n°/m°. hz.kr/s*  
 [From/In] the land of Qadesh at the ever-flowing stream he looked upon (with favor) ...

## (Acceptable Alternative)

[ ] *'rš.qšdš. 'ly. '[l]n°/m°. hz.kr/s/*  
 ... earth. The Holy One over the gods. He gazes like ...

**Line 5**

... ° *kn l°brk. b l. bym. mlh[mh]* ...  
 ... ??to bless the (war-)lord [El? Yahweh?] on a day of war ...

**Line 6**

... [*lh*] *l šm 'l. bym. mlh[mh]* ...  
 ... [to prai]se the name of El on a day of wa[r] ...

<sup>105</sup> The readings *šnt* and [y]hw[h] are from the small fragment that may not be positioned correctly.

<sup>106</sup> The theophany can also be cast into the future: The mountains will melt, the hills will be crushed ...

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# The Yeša‘yah[û] (“Isaiah”) Bulla and the Putative Connection with the Biblical Prophet: A Case Study in Propospography and the Necessity of Methodological Caution

Christopher A. Rollston

In February 2018, Eilat Mazar published in *Biblical Archaeology Review* the *editio princeps* of an Iron Age Old Hebrew bulla (i.e., a lump of clay which had been impressed by a stamp seal, when the clay was still wet enough to be malleable), one which was excavated in 2009 as part of excavations in the Ophel (Jerusalem). Note, however, that the bulla was not actually noticed (i.e., “discovered”) until later, namely, during the wet-sifting process.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the wet-sifting was not conducted on site but at a facility in ‘Emek Zurim, a sifting project directed by Gabriel Barkay and Zachi Dvira, under the auspices of the Nature and Parks Authority and the ‘Ir David Foundation. Within the article, Mazar states that she consulted with Shmuel Aḥituv and Haggai Misgav, and she conveyed her views

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<sup>1</sup> Eilat Mazar, “Is This the Prophet Isaiah’s Signature?,” *BAR* 44 (2018): 64–73, 92. The article itself appeared during the late evening of 21 February 2018. National Geographic had requested comment from me earlier that day, and my comments (stating some of my concerns) appeared in an article by Kristin Romey, “Has the ‘Signature’ of Biblical Prophet Been Discovered?” (21 February 2018), <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/02/prophet-isaiah-jerusalem-seal-archaeology-bible/>. The following morning (22 February 2018), I posted my concerns about the assumption that this was an inscription from the prophet Isaiah (the same concerns that I had earlier sent to National Geographic) in a blog entitled “The Putative Bulla of Isaiah the Prophet: Not So Fast” (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=796>), and a day later I elaborated further on those concerns (on 23 February 2018) in a blog post entitled “The Isaiah Bulla from Jerusalem 2.0” (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=801>), and then in a final blog post I posted some final considerations (on 26 February 2018), namely, “The ‘Isaiah Bulla’ and the Putative Connection with Biblical Isaiah 3.0” (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=833>).

about the bulla to them.”<sup>2</sup> Mazar’s article is semi-popular in nature, but with substantive archaeological, epigraphic, and historical detail.

The Yeša’yah[û]<sup>3</sup> Bulla is both epigraphic and iconographic. It consists of three registers. In terms of condition, the bulla is broken, with the much of the first register no longer extant. But on the preserved portion of the first register (on the right side), some fragmentary iconography is present. In the second register the following letters are extant: *Lyš ’yh*. In the third register, the following letters are extant: *Nby*. About these readings (i.e., which letters are extant), there is no real debate. Moreover, Mazar read these letters correctly, as demonstrated by the *editio princeps*, and this is laudatory. About this bulla, Mazar states that “the obvious initial translation, as surprising as it might seem, suggests that this belonged to the prophet Isaiah.”<sup>4</sup>

#### FOUNDATIONAL MATTERS<sup>5</sup>

Prior to discussing certain components (including the problematic ones) of the *editio princeps*, it is useful to make some notations so as to set the stage for the remainder of the discussion: (1) In terms of the broader context of seals and sealings, it is useful to emphasize that epigraphic personal stamp seals in Northwest Semitic normally consisted of a PN, followed (most frequently) by a patronymic (that is, the name of the father of the owner of the seal). (2) This first PN would normally be preceded by a prepositional *lamed* to indicate ownership (i.e., “belonging to), and normally, the word *bn* (son of) is present after the first PN. But the usage of the word “son of” (or “daughter of”) is not absolutely necessary, and so it was sometimes absent (since it was normally understood in antiquity to be the case that the second name on a seal was the name of the father of the owner of the seal, that is, the patronymic). (3) Furthermore, sometimes, there is no patronymic (i.e., the name of the father of the seal-owner is not given), while sometimes there are multiple patronymics (i.e., son of X, son of Y). (4) Moreover, sometimes a seal includes a title, that is, the vocation of the seal-owner. (5) In sum, seals normally follow a standard pattern, but some variation is certainly attested in the provenanced Iron Age Northwest Semitic epigraphic corpus (e.g., Hebrew, Aramaic, Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite).

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<sup>2</sup> Mazar, “Isaiah Bulla,” 92 nn. 6 and 9.

<sup>3</sup> Note that in my own reference to this Hebrew personal name, I shall normally use a standard transliteration of the Hebrew name, that is, Yeša’yahû, rather than the anglicized version, “Isaiah.” But in all of the quotations of that name in Mazar’s article, I shall retain her usage of the anglicized version of the name.

<sup>4</sup> Mazar, “Isaiah Bulla,” 69.

<sup>5</sup> For a succinct discussion and some additional detail, see Christopher A. Rollston, “Seals and Scarabs,” *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009), 5:141–46.

(6) The letters of the Yeša‘yah[û] bulla are nicely preserved, and the morphology and stance of these letters reflects the fact that this seal was incised by a trained seal-maker, a professional. (7) The script of this bulla falls nicely into the Old Hebrew series of the Iron IIB Period. (8) Because of the conservative nature of the Old Hebrew script used on seals (arguably a result, at least in part, of the standard medium for seals: stone), the plus or minus (i.e., in dating) is greater for the seal-script than for the Old Hebrew script, for example, on ostraca (i.e., inscriptions written in ink on broken pottery, using a reed pen), or ink jar-inscriptions (also written in ink, using a reed pen), or inscriptions incised in wet clay (e.g., on a pot which was incised before firing). Thus, although a trained palaeographer should be capable of dating the script of an Old Hebrew ostrakon or jar inscription within a fifty-year range (i.e.,  $\pm 25$  years), the script of seals will often only be able to be palaeographically dated within a 75–80 year range (e.g.,  $\pm 40$  years). Thus, as for the Old Hebrew script of this bulla (made from a seal, of course), I consider dates from ca. 750–675 BCE to all be viable. (9) Furthermore, the archaeological context is not such that much more precision than this can be ascertained. Along those lines, it should be emphasized that even C14 dates (e.g., of any associated carbonized remains from the same archaeological context) must be calibrated and there is also a plus/minus range with C14 as well. In short, dates in the second half of the eighth century and the first quarter of the seventh century are all plausible for the Yeša‘yah[û] bulla.

(10) Because the most common Judahite (terminal) form of the Yahwistic theophoric element is *yhw* (i.e., -yahû), it is reasonable to posit that a *waw* should be restored after the *he* of the second register (i.e., as the final letter of the second register). And this is indeed posited in the *editio princeps*. However, it must be remembered that *even this* is a restoration (and it is not a necessary restoration, based on the Old-Hebrew onomastic evidence), probable, but not certain (on this, see further below). Thus, because no *waw* is extant, the personal name of this register could readily be understood, for example, as Yeša‘yah. (11) In this connection, P. Kyle McCarter Jr. (personal communication) has accurately noted, at least as a theoretical possibility, that someone could read the letters *Yš‘y* (of the second register) as the totality of the first personal name (e.g., *Yiš‘î*) and then understand the *he* (i.e., the last visible letter of the second register) as a letter to be connected with the letters of the third register). Neither McCarter nor I consider this to be the most compelling understanding of these two registers, but it is something that is at least worth noting as a possibility, especially since words (including names) will sometimes begin on one line and end on the next line. (12) There have been some epigraphic remains recovered from the Ophel excavations



that can be connected with known biblical personalities, including a bulla of King Hezekiah of Judah.<sup>6</sup>

SUMMARY OF SALIENT ASPECTS OF THE *EDITIO PRINCEPS*<sup>7</sup>

Much of the focus of the beginning of Mazar's article is on King Hezekiah of Judah (r. ca. 715–687 BCE), and his father and predecessor King Ahaz (r. ca. 735–715 BCE). Of course, both of these kings loom large in the history of Judah as well as in the nexus of local and ancient Near Eastern geopolitics of the late 8th and early seventh centuries BCE. Among other things, Ahaz is prominent in narratives about the Syro-Ephraimite War (735–732 BCE), and Hezekiah is prominent in narratives about his religious reforms and in narratives about his rebellion against Neo-Assyrian hegemony (resulting in Sennacherib's punitive campaign of 701 BCE). Moreover, reference is made in the *editio princeps* to some thirty-four bullae, most with Hebrew names, recovered during Mazar's excavations. It is noted that the bulla of Yeša'yah[û] was found in the vicinity of the Hezekiah bulla.

As already noted, Mazar believes that reading a *waw* after the *he* on the first register is most likely. Moreover, she also states that after the *Nby* of the third register there may have been “no additional letters,” but she then adds that “it also may have had an additional letter, such as an *'aleph*, which would render the word *nby'*, ‘prophet.’”<sup>8</sup> She also accurately states that “the defective spelling of the same word, *nb'* (without the vowel *yod*), is present on an ostrakon from the Judahite site of Lachish.” She concedes that “whether or not the *'aleph* was added at the end of the lower register is speculative, as meticulous examinations of that damaged part of the bulla could not identify any remnants of additional letters.” But in the next sentence she continues: “finding a seal impression of the prophet Isaiah next to that of King Hezekiah should not be unexpected. It would not be the first time that seal impressions of two Biblical personas, mentioned in the same verse in the Bible, were found in an archaeological context.” She then continues with a question: “Is it alternatively possible for this seal NOT to belong to the prophet Isaiah, but instead to one of the king's officials named Isaiah with the surname *Nby*?”

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<sup>6</sup> Eilat Mazar, “A Seal Impression of King Hezekiah from the Ophel Excavations,” in *The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount, 2009–2013*, ed. Eilat Mazar (Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication, 2015), 629–40.

<sup>7</sup> All of the quotations from Mazar's *BAR* article which are quoted or summarized in this section of my article (i.e., “Summary of Salient Aspects of the *Editio Princeps*”) are from pages 65–71 of her article.

<sup>8</sup> It is perhaps useful for me to mention that Mazar normally writes *nvy* (i.e., the spirantized form of the *bet*), rather than *nby*. This is entirely acceptable, but for the sake of consistency (e.g., with Historical Hebrew Grammar), I have normalized this to *nby* (i.e., the stop rather than the spirant).

At that point, she mentions some “major obstacles,” among them the fact that “without an *'aleph* at the end, the word *nby* is most likely just a personal name.” In this connection, she also correctly notes that *Nby* is actually attested in the epigraphic Old Hebrew corpus (namely, two bullae, made from the same seal and found in a juglet from Lachish Stratum II). In addition, Mazar notes that Nahman Avigad suggested that *Nby* of the Lachish bullae is derived from the toponym Nob (Hebrew: *nb*), a known town of priests (see 1 Sam 21:1; 22:11, 19; Neh 11:32; Isa 10:32). But she also states that “if our inscription indeed records a toponym derived from the site of Nob, it would still be missing the definite article ... as seen in the Bible when a toponym is added to a name.” She then notes that “the completion of the existing writing of *'nby* with an *'aleph* at the end—then reading *nby*’ also faces the problem of the lack of the Hebrew definite article ... at the beginning of the word.” At that juncture, however, she states that “Reut Livyatan Ben-Arie, who studied the bullae from the Ophel with me, suggests that there is enough space for two more letters at the end of the second register: a *'vav*,’ the last letter in the name Yesha’yahu, and an *'h*,’ the definite article ‘the’ for the word *navy*’ (‘prophet’), rendering it *'hanavy*’ (‘the prophet’).” Thus, the article assumes that the third register might read: Yš‘yh[wh].

After discussing the fact that sometimes the Hebrew (definite) article is, and sometimes is not, present with the word *nb*’ (prophet) in the Bible, Mazar concludes by stating that:

This seal impression of Isaiah, therefore, is unique and questions still remain about what it actually says. However, the close relationship between Isaiah and King Hezekiah, as described in the Bible, and the fact the bulla was found next to one bearing the name of Hezekiah seem to leave open the possibility that, despite the difficulties presented by the bulla’s damaged area, this may have been a seal impression of Isaiah the prophet, adviser to Hezekiah. The discovery of the royal structure and finds from the time of King Hezekiah at the Ophel is a rare opportunity to reveal vividly this specific time in the history of Jerusalem. This find leads us to an almost personal “encounter” with some of the key players who took part in the life of the Ophel’s Royal Quarter, including King Hezekiah and perhaps, also the prophet Isaiah.

I would suggest that if this were indeed a bulla made by the seal of Isaiah the Prophet, it would be particularly sensational. After all, Isaiah looms especially large in biblical and postbiblical literature. Moreover, Isaiah the Prophet was active during the reigns of both Ahaz and Hezekiah (e.g., Isa 7; Isa 36–39; 2 Kgs 15:29–16:20; 2 Kgs 18–20; cf. 2 Chr 28:1–27; 32). *But a truly sensational discovery (in pretty much all fields of inquiry) is the exception not the rule.* Long ago, I contended that “scholars must always remember that epigraphic finds are rarely as ‘dramatically important,’ ‘sensational,’ or ‘stunning’ as they might seem at first

blush.”<sup>9</sup> I stand firmly by that sentiment. And along those lines, a lot of the sensational discussion about a “bulla of Isaiah the Prophet” has felt to me quite similar to the contention of some scholars in the past that an Iron Age Hebrew seal with the letters *Yzbl* was that of Queen Jezebel’s (even though there was no patronymic, no title, and those proposing this needed to restore a particular letter at the beginning of that seal to get the name Jezebel, namely, the letter *’aleph*).<sup>10</sup>

#### A SOBER DISCUSSION OF THE YEŠA‘YAH[Ū] BULLA

Ultimately, there are a number of striking features of the *editio princeps*. In a number of respects, the article is quite good, with the inclusion of some important and relevant archaeological, historical, biblical, and epigraphic data. And Mazar does include some caveats and some cautious language regarding the assumption that this bulla was made by the seal of Yeša‘yahû the Prophet. Nevertheless, the thrust of the totality of her article (based on what is present in it and what is absent from it) is certainly to suggest that understanding this bulla as having been made by the seal of Yeša‘yahû the Prophet, though not without problems, is reasonable and even preferable (hence the preponderance of references in Mazar’s article to Hezekiah and Isaiah the Prophet). At some level, someone might indeed contend (as seems Mazar to do on a number of occasions) that the proximity of the Yeša‘yah[Ū] bulla to the Hezekiah bulla is strong evidence for a case for this being the bulla of Yeša‘yahû the Prophet. But, as is often the case, the devil is in the details, and it is to a consideration of some of the salient details that I shall now turn.

#### *Ancient Hebrew Names Based on the Root yš‘: An Abundance of Riches*

Mazar’s article *does not discuss the fact that there were many people in the Hebrew Bible and in the epigraphic Old Hebrew corpus with names based on the same root as that of Yeša‘yahû the Prophet*. This is a serious omission because (as in Semitic in general) Hebrew names are based on roots, and in the case of the personal name “Yeša‘yahû,” the root is *yš‘* and this root is particularly productive with regard to personal names. That is, there were many people with the name Yeša‘yahû (“Isaiah”) or a variant thereof, in ancient Israel and Judah. True, at one point (as cited above), Mazar does pose the question: “Is it alternatively possible for this seal NOT to belong to the prophet Isaiah, but instead to one of the king’s

<sup>9</sup> Christopher A. Rollston, “An Ancient Medium in the Modern Media: Sagas of Semitic Inscriptions,” in *Archaeology, Bible, Politics, and the Media: Proceedings of the Duke University Conference, April 23–24, 2009*, ed. Eric M. Meyers and Carol Meyers (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 133.

<sup>10</sup> For references and discussion, see Christopher A. Rollston, “Prosopography and the YZBL Seal,” *IEJ* 59 (2009): 86–91.

officials named Isaiah...?"<sup>11</sup> But outside of this reference, every single reference in the article is to "Isaiah" the Prophet. This seems to me to prejudice the discussion in a particular fashion (i.e., in leading the reader to conclude that this is probably a bulla from the seal of Isaiah the Prophet).

So as to demonstrate just how productive this root was for personal names, it is instructive to list some of the Hebrew onomastic evidence,<sup>12</sup> that is, names based on the same root as the Prophet *Yeša'yahû*, with numerous of these even having a Yahwistic theophoric. Furthermore, it is useful to reiterate at this point the fact that the preserved form of the name on the bulla is *Yš'yh*: the *waw* is a restoration. For this reason, of course, someone could contend (for example) that the name on the second register of the bulla is *Yeša'yah*, or one could contend that the name on the bulla is *Yeša'yahû*, or one could even contend that the name on the bulla is *Yiš'î* (i.e., if the *he* were to be read as the initial letter of the word that follows on the third register). In any case, at this juncture the onomastic evidence from the Hebrew Bible will be listed first, followed by some additional attestations in the Old Hebrew epigraphic record. (1) *Yiš'î* (one of the line of Jerahmeel, 1 Chr 2:31), (2) *Yiš'î* (a chief of Manasseh, 1 Chr 5:24); (3) *Yiš'î* (a chief of Judah, 1 Chr 4:20); (4) *Yiš'î* (a chief of Simeon, 1 Chr 4:42); (5) *Yeša'yahû* (Isaiah the Prophet, son of 'Amōš, Isa 1:1 et passim, 2 Kgs 19:2 et passim, and 2 Chr 26:22 et passim); (6) *Yeša'yahû* (one of the children of Jeduthun, 1 Chr 25:3); (7) *Yeša'yahû* (a Levitical ancestor of one of David's treasurers, 1 Chr 26:25); (8) *Yeša'yah* (grandson of Zerubbabel, 1 Chr 3:21), (9) *Yeša'yah* (chief of the sons of Elam, Ezra 8:7); (10) *Yeša'yah* (chief of the sons of Merari, Ezra 8:19); (11) *Yeša'yah* (a Benjaminite, Neh 11:7); (12) *Hôšēa'* (original name of Joshua, Num 13:8; cf. no. 19 below);<sup>13</sup> (13) *Hôšēa'* (the last king of Israel, 2 Kgs 15:30); (14) *Hôšēa'* (the Prophet Hosea, Hos 1:1 et passim), (15) *Hôšēa'* (an Ephraimite chief under David, 1 Chr 27:20); (16) *Hôšēa'* (a chief under Nehemiah, Neh 10:24); (17) *Hôša'aya* (a prince of Judah, Neh 12:32); (18) *Hôša'aya* (a chief in the time of Jeremiah, Jer 42:1; 43:2); (19) *Yehôšûa'* (Moses's successor, son of Nun, Deut 3:21 et passim; cf. no. 12 above); (20) *Yehôšûa'* (a Bathshemite, 1 Sam 6:14); (21) *Yehôšûa'* (the first high priest of the Second Temple, Hag 1:1, Zech 3:1, et passim); (22) *Yehôšûa'* (governor of Jerusalem under Josiah, 2 Kgs 23:8); (23) *Yēšûa'* (head of one of the classes of priests, 1 Chr 24:11); (24) *Yēšûa'* (a Levitical family name of frequent occurrence, including Ezra 2:40; 2 Chr 31:15); (25) *Yēšûa'* (father of a builder of the wall, Neh 3:19); (26) *Yēšûa'* (a Judahite family name, Ezra 2:6); (27) *Mēša'* (Mesha, king of Moab, 2 Kgs 3:4, and the Mesha

<sup>11</sup> Mazar, "Is This the Prophet Isaiah's Signature?," 70.

<sup>12</sup> The biblical references were largely gathered from BDB.

<sup>13</sup> Note that the Northwest Semitic (and thus Hebrew) root *yš'* comes from an original *prima-waw* root, that is, *wš'* (as the standard pattern in Northwest Semitic is *prima-waw* > *prima-yod*), hence, the forms of the personal name with *waw* rather than *yod*.

Stele, *KAI* 181); (28) Mēša‘ (son of Caleb, 1 Chr 2:42). Thus, based on the onomastic evidence in the Hebrew Bible, it is readily apparent that yš‘ was a very productive root with regard to personal names in the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, the tradition of usage continues well into the late Second Temple Period and the early postbiblical period (note also the personal names based on this root in the Greek New Testament).<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the root yš‘ is also nicely attested in personal names in the provenanced epigraphic corpus of Old Hebrew. This corpus continues to grow (through continuing excavations) and so an exhaustive list is not feasible, but it is useful to list some of the people in the epigraphic record with personal names based on this root (note that attestations in inscriptions from the antiquities market will not be listed, as at least a few of these are suspicious). For example, there is a certain (1) *Hwš‘* mentioned in the Wadi Muraba‘ at Palimpsest Papyrus;<sup>15</sup> (2) and there is also someone named *Hwš‘* on a Hebrew seal (of which multiple impressions have been found at sites such as Lachish and Tell el-Judeideh);<sup>16</sup> (3) someone named *Hwš‘ yhw* (i.e., the root with the Yahwistic theophoric) is named in Lachish 3.1 (i.e., Letter 3, line 1);<sup>17</sup> (4) and likewise, someone named *Hwš‘ yhw* is also referenced in the large ostrakon from Yavneh Yam;<sup>18</sup> (5) in addition, *Hwš‘ yhw ben Nwy* is mentioned on an ostrakon from Ḥorvat ‘Uza;<sup>19</sup> (6) from the City of David epigraphic corpus, there is reference to a certain *Hwš‘ y[hw]*;<sup>20</sup> (7) as well as someone named *Hwš‘ yhw*, the father of *Dly[hw]*;<sup>21</sup> (8) and a figure named *Hwš‘ yhw*, the father of *Bnyhw*;<sup>22</sup> (9) and from Israelite

<sup>14</sup> For some of these references, see especially Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I, Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 88, 126–33; 180–81. (Note that in excess of 125 names are listed.) For the New Testament, see especially *BDAG*, s. v., “Ἰησους.”

<sup>15</sup> For photo showing this personal name in the first line of the overwritten text, see Joseph Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987), plate 6c. The *editio princeps* is J. T. Milik, *Les grottes de Muraba‘at*, DJD II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 93–100 and plate XXVIII.

<sup>16</sup> See Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), 245–46 [#667–68].

<sup>17</sup> H. Torczyner, *Lachish I: The Lachish Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 46–51.

<sup>18</sup> Reading with Frank Moore Cross, “Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth–Sixth Centuries B.C.: II. The Murabba‘at Papyrus and the Letter Found Near Yabneh-Yam,” *BASOR* 165 (1962): 34–46.

<sup>19</sup> Itzaq Beit-Arieh, “Epigraphic Finds,” *Ḥorvat ‘Uza and Ḥorvat Radum: Two Fortresses in the Biblical Negev*, Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 25 (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2007), 139–43 [# 10].

<sup>20</sup> Yair Shoham, “The Bullae,” in *The City of David Excavations: Final Report VI* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000), 37 [#11].

<sup>21</sup> Shoham, “Bullae,” 42 [#25].

<sup>22</sup> Shoham, “Bullae,” 45 [#31].

Samaria, the name *Ywys* ' (with the standard Northern Israelite form of the Yahwistic theophoric, that is, *yw*) is attested;<sup>23</sup> (10) and on a jar inscription from Jerusalem, the name *Yš [y]hw* is preserved.<sup>24</sup> Naturally, it is useful to emphasize that this root is used for personal names, for example, in Phoenician and Moabite as well.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, it should also be emphasized that the onomastic evidence from the Hebrew Bible and Old Hebrew inscriptions is just a small fragment of the total onomastic data set from the First Temple period. That is, there were certainly plenty of people with the name "Isaiah" (or a variant thereof) about whom we know absolutely nothing. The seal from which this bulla was made could come from any of these as well. *But the reader of Mazar's article would not have deduced the popularity of such names, nor the relevant biblical and epigraphic evidence about this.* I should have liked to have seen that evidence included in her article so that readers might have had more data upon which to base their conclusions.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Reading with Ivan Tracy Kaufman, "The Samaria Ostraca: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Palaeography (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1966), 143 (a reading that has largely been followed), rather than with the *editio princeps* of George Andrew A. Reisner, Clarence Stanley Fisher, and D. G. Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria: 1908–1910* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 236.

<sup>24</sup> Yonatan Nadelman, "Hebrew Inscriptions, Seal Impressions, and Markings of the Iron Age II," in *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount: The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem*, ed. Eilat Mazar and Benjamin Mazar, QEDM 29 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989), 128, plate 27:5; photos 132–133.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 129; and, for this root in Moabite, see conveniently A. Dearman, ed., *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> Since someone might attempt to contend that the *placement* (i.e., *preceding or following the accompanying root word*) of the Yahwistic theophoric is some sort of a decisive aspect of a personal name (and so that person might wish to discard some of the onomastic evidence I have provided because some of the theophoric elements precede, rather than follow, the verbal element), it is useful to emphasize certain aspects of the variations possible in ancient usage of the Yahwistic theophoric element (as well as variation in the verbal forms), using a concrete example from the Hebrew Bible: Judean King Jehoiachin (r. 598/7 for ca. three months).<sup>26</sup> (1) This king is referred to in the Bible as *Yhwyk(y)n* (2 Kgs 24:6, 8, 12, 15; 25:27; Jer 52:31; 2 Chr 36:8; cf. also *Ywkykn* of Ezek 1:2). In the case of *Yhwkykn*, the Yahwistic theophoric is *Yhw*, and it *precedes* the verbal root (and the verb is a C-stem prefixed form, hence, the performative *yod*). (2) This same king is referred to in the Bible as *Yknyhw* (Jer 24:1; 29:2; Est 2:6; 1 Chr 3:16; cf. also *Yknyh* in Jer 27:20 (Q); 28:4). In the case of *Yknyhw*, the Yahwistic theophoric is *yhw*, and it *follows* the verbal root (and the verb is the C-stem prefixed form, hence the performative *yod*). (3) And this same king is referred to in the Bible as *Knyhw* (Jer 22:24, 28; 37:1; cf. also Lachish 3.15 and 2 Kgs 24:8; Jer 26:22 36:12 [25]). In the case of *Knyhw*, the Yahwistic theophoric element is *Yhw* and it follows the verbal root. In his discussion of the epigraphic form of this personal name (about a certain son of 'Elnathan), Cross contended that the form *Knyhw* "is a haplogical reduction of yakun-yahū, biblical yekōnyahū" ("A Literate Soldier: Lachish Letter III," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry*, ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985], 47).

*Multiple Consonantal Restorations Are Plausible, Not Just the Consonant ʾaleph*

As for the third register, the fact that an *aleph* is not present, or preserved, after the *yod* is of critical importance. Without it, we do not have the word for prophet.<sup>27</sup> With it, there would not be much doubt that this was a bulla made from the seal of the biblical prophet Yešaʾyahû (although without the patronymic ʾAmōš [Isa 1:1], even this would not be absolutely definitive).<sup>28</sup> As has been noted in my summary of the *editio princeps*, Mazar concedes that the absence of the ʾaleph is concerning, but the only restoration that she discusses is that of an ʾaleph. This is problematic, since the absence of a discussion of various additional possible restorations prejudices the discussion in a particular direction. That is, omitting discussion of other restorations tacitly suggests to readers of her article that the only plausible restoration is that of an *aleph*. But the fact of the matter is that using Mazar's own logic (i.e., understanding the *yod* as an internal *mater lectionis* and assuming that there is space enough for an additional letter after the *yod*), several other (and thus, competing) restorations are also plausible.

(1) For example, the name *Nbyṭ* (i.e., with the final letter restored as a *taw*) is potentially quite attractive. Significantly, this is an attested personal name in the Hebrew Bible (sometimes understood as an original gentilic of sorts), with occurrences in Isaiah (60:7), Genesis (25:13; 28:9; 36:3), and 1 Chronicles (1:29).<sup>29</sup> In this case, the word *Nbyṭ* would arguably be a patronymic, with the word *bn* ("son of") omitted, as is sometimes the case in the epigraphic record. Moreover, since patronymics are much more common than titles, statistics would also augment the plausibility of this restoration (as it yields a patronymic), rather than a restoration that yields a title (since titles are much less common). Someone might contend that the orthography of this name in the Hebrew Bible (i.e., with an *ô* as well as an *î*) would require the presence of a *waw* on the bulla (in addition to the *yod*). But the fact of the matter is that it would not (e.g., note Gen 25:13 without the *waw*).

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<sup>27</sup> Note also in this connection that in the Shakkanakku OB Terqa and in Mari the spelling clearly indicates a pronounced ʾaleph (Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015], 278 n. 123). Moreover, although ʾaleph does become quiescent during the course of the Second Temple Period and so may be lost (P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 53–55), I would contend that this phenomenon was particularly rare in the First Temple Period. For these reasons, I would find it difficult to embrace the assertion that the aleph is not present because it was not necessary (even more so because the ʾaleph is certainly written in Lachish 3.20).

<sup>28</sup> In this connection, with regard to identifications (i.e., of those people attested in the epigraphic record and in the Bible), I should like to note that the sterling work of Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, as it is arguably the most systematic, sophisticated, and compelling, beginning with his work entitled *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 BCE*, AcBib 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2004) and continuing with all of his numerous subsequent publications.

<sup>29</sup> See also the discussion in Ilan, *Jewish Names*, 196 (s.v., Nbywt).



(2) The personal name *Nbt* (i.e., restoring the final consonant as a *ṭet*) is also plausible. Significantly, a personal name based on this root is nicely attested in the Hebrew Bible, as the personal name of the father of Jeroboam I (e.g., 1 Kgs 11:26; 12:2, 15; 15:1; 16:3, 26, 31; 2 Chr 9:29; 10:2, 15, et passim). Furthermore, this root is also attested, for example, in Nabataean personal names.<sup>30</sup> The name is based on a Semitic root that means “to look upon,” or “to look upon with favor,” or “to shine forth,” or (passive) “looked upon” (by God). Someone proposing this root as the basis for a personal name could contend that the *yod* is an internal *mater lectionis*. In this case (to account for a *yod* as a *mater lectionis*), one could posit, among other things, a *qattil* (and thus adjectival), or a *qātil* (and thus substantival) formation.<sup>31</sup> Compare also in this connection the biblical Hebrew *Ydyd*, *Ydydh*, as well as the epithet of Solomon: *Ydydyh* (2 Sam 12:25). The word would arguably be a patronymic, although one could also envision it as an appositional descriptor of the owner of the seal, that is, a “nickname” of sorts. Moreover, I suppose that someone could also propose that the *he* at the end of the second register is to be paired with the letters *nby* of the third register, and that a *ṭet* is to be restored at the end of the third register, in which case one would have a personal name *Hnbyṭ*, that is, a Hiphil perfect formation, with God understood as being the referent of the verb.<sup>32</sup> Finally, it is also useful to note that there are also additional personal names and appellatives (e.g., of God) connected with “seeing,” including *Peqaḥ* (2 Kgs 15:25–37), *Peqaḥyah* (2 Kgs 15:22–23), *’El-Ro’i* (Gen 16:13).<sup>33</sup> In short, personal names based on roots with this sort of semantic domain are not rare.

(3) The name *Nabil* is also something that is plausible, a name that arguably has a core semantic domain of meanings such as “noble,” “wise,” “light,” or “flame.” Note that there is, of course, a very famous pun (cf. the phenomenon of nominal pejorative equivoces) in the Bible (1 Sam 25:25) on the personal name “Nabal.”<sup>34</sup> Moreover, a personal name from this root (i.e., *nbl*) is also attested in Phoenician (e.g., *KAI* 105.3, “*bn Nbl*”); it should be emphasized that Iron Age Phoenician avoided the use of *matres lectionis*). In this case, the name on the bulla

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namenbeugung*, BZWANT 46 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1928), 36, 186.

<sup>31</sup> For these formations, see *IBHS* §5.4. Obviously, this is a different formation from the biblical personal name, but the fact that this root is the basis for a biblical personal name demonstrates that the ancients considered it an acceptable root for personal names. For the *qattil* pattern, see Joshua Fox, *Semitic Noun Patterns*, HSS 52 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 267–69. For the *qātil* pattern see Fox, *Semitic Noun Patterns*, 187–96.

<sup>32</sup> In this connection, see the discussion in Noth regarding the Hiphil and the personal name based on this root: *Die israelitischen Personennamen*, 36, 186.

<sup>33</sup> On personal names based on the root *pqh*, see Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen*, 186.

<sup>34</sup> On this personal name, see Christopher A. Rollston, “Ad Nomen Argumenta: Personal Names as Pejorative Puns in Ancient Texts,” in *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, ed. Alejandro F. Botta (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 367–86. I there follow James Barr’s understanding of the operative roots (i.e., equivoco-roots).



could arguably be the *qattil* formation or the *qātil* formulation, thus accounting for a *yod* as an internal *mater lectionis*.<sup>35</sup> It is worth emphasizing that this personal name is very widely attested in Arabic. Based on this restoration, the word Nabil would arguably be a patronymic.

(4) Although more difficult, the root *Nbz* is also something that is at least theoretically possible. This word is attested in Imperial Aramaic and arguably means something such as “document,” “receipt.”<sup>36</sup> In the case of this word, it could be contended that the *yod* would be understood as a *mater lectionis*, and the word itself could be understood as a title, something such as “recorder” (cf. the biblical title *šōṭer*, arguably a loanword into biblical Hebrew from Akkadian, a loan meaning: “writing official,” “document recorder”). Note in this connection that there are a number of titles that entered biblical Hebrew from Akkadian (sometimes through Aramaic), thus, a loan meaning “recorder” would not be *sui generis*.<sup>37</sup> Naturally, I would have preferred for the definite article to have been present on the *bullā* (i.e., in the case of a title) since we often get the article with titles, but since Mazar is willing to propose that the article is not necessary before the word “prophet,” it is also fair to state that a title based on the root *Nbz* need not have an article either. Moreover, again, it could be contended that the *he* at the end of the second register is not part of the personal name of the second register but rather that it is an article or a marker of the C-stem and so is to be connected with the word on the third register.

In sum, restoring an *ʾaleph* is certainly a particularly sensational restoration. And it is the only restoration that Mazar discusses, a revealing aspect of her article. But the fact of the matter is that it cannot be said that an *ʾaleph* is the only possible restoration. To be sure, not all of the restorations discussed in the preceding paragraphs are equally compelling, but the fact remains that ruling all of them

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<sup>35</sup> In this case, see again *IBHS*, §5.4.

<sup>36</sup> See *DNWSI*, s.v. *nbz*.

<sup>37</sup> On the subject of foreign words and loan words (including titles) in Northwest Semitic, including Hebrew, see works such as Stephen A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, Assyriological Studies 19 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Paul V. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, HSS 47 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000); Max Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch*, BZAW 96 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966). Note that of the possible Akkadian loanwords in Biblical Hebrew, a number of them are indeed titles. Mankowski’s discussion (of Akkadian loanwords in Hebrew, in general, not just titles) is the most detailed and cogent. Of the words (including various titles) discussed in his volume, he argues that some are, and some are not, from Akkadian. In any case, among the titles he considered worthy of discussion are the following: “store-room manager” (p. 15), “plowman” (p. 32), “craftsman” (p. 33), “military officer” (p. 60), “temple official” (p. 80), “prophetess” (p. 90), “sailor” (p. 93), “guardian” (p. 95), “sheep-breeder” (p. 103), “governor, prefect” (p. 106), “a [castrated] official” (p. 123), “governor” (p. 128), “envoy” (p. 132), “military official” (p. 134), “chief cup bearer” (p. 135), “woman of the palace” (p. 137), “document recorder” (p. 142, and referenced above, in the body of this article), “field marshal” (p. 151).

out is not something that can be done on philological or onomastic grounds. In fact, I consider a couple of the possible restorations discussed in the preceding paragraphs to be reasonably attractive (if one were to embrace Mazar's assumption that the *yod* is a *mater lectionis* and if one embraces her assumption that there is sufficient space to restore a letter after the *yod*).

However, at this juncture, it is important also to emphasize at least as strongly that there may have never been an additional letter after the *yod*. And in a number of respects, that would be the most compelling way to understand the letters of the third register. Mazar considers this possibility, as has already been noted, but she devotes very little attention to that possibility. After all, reading only the letters that are extant on the bulla, that is, not restoring a letter that would yield the word "prophet," would mean that this bulla is fairly mundane.

*An Elegant, Compelling Rendering that Requires No Restorations or Special Pleading: Nby as the Actual Reading*<sup>38</sup>

The GN "Nob" comes readily to mind, and this famous biblical GN (e.g., 1 Sam 21:2, et passim) is one of those I had in mind in my initial post with my reference to proper-noun possibilities (hence the choice of the term proper "noun" rather than "personal name" in my initial post).<sup>39</sup> In this case, it might be possible to

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<sup>38</sup> It is useful in this connection to emphasize that it would seem to me to be very difficult, although perhaps not entirely impossible, to understand the *nun-bet* sequence as the theophoric element *Nabu*. Of course, there are a number of personal names (in various languages, including Hebrew) that use this theophoric element in personal names (see, for example, those listed in *HALOT*, s. v., "נְבוּ"; for Akkadian especially, see especially, Heather D. Baker, *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire: Volume 2, Part II: L-N* [Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001], 787–914). But space constraints would probably militate against this (as the non-theophoric component would require at least two or three letters and there is not sufficient space for that), as might also a putative Judean having such a name in the late eighth century or early seventh century. Moreover, and most importantly, the spelling of this DN would normally include a *waw* (but if it was followed by a *yod*, it would be an internal *mater*, not word-final, and so might not be written). Also, although double names are a well-known phenomenon in the Semitic world as well as later in the Greco-Roman world (e.g., Joseph = Zaphenath-Paneah; Hadassah = Esther; Daniel = Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah = Shadrack, Meshach, Abednego [Abednebo]; Saul = Paul, etc.), and so someone could conceivably argue that the first name on the bulla is the Hebrew name and the second name is that same person's Akkadian name with a *Nabu*-theophoric, I would find this very difficult to accept (for the spatial and contextual reasons mentioned above).

<sup>39</sup> It is worth noting that a final *yod* (or '*aleph*, of course) can function as a hypocoristic element in personal names (with the hypocoristic signifying a DN). So, for example, *ʕzy* (Reisner Samaria Ostrakon 25.3; meaning something such as "DN has seized"; for the 1910 inscriptions from Samaria, see Reisner), *m šy* (Arad 22.4; meaning something such as "work of DN"; for the Arad inscriptions, see Y. Aharoni, *Arad Inscriptions* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981]), *šby* (Yavneh Yam 1, end of line 7 and beginning of 8, meaning something such as "DN has returned"). In addition, reference can also be made to *hgy* (Gen 46:16; Numb 26:15; and with epigraphic attestations, for example, in Hebrew, Phoenician, Old South Arabic, as well as later Arabic, and often understood to

contend that the word *Nby* of the bulla was originally a gentilic, meaning something such as “Nobite.” Quite important is the fact that Mazar actually mentions the epigraphic attestation of *Nby* in the Old Hebrew epigraphic corpus, and she even mentions that Avigad had suggested that in this case, *Nby* was a gentilic.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, after reading my initial blog post about this bulla, Nadav Na’aman rapidly wrote me and indicated that he embraces this understanding (i.e., the name on third register of the Yeša’yah[û] bulla is just *Nby*). In this connection, Na’aman has also emphasized the importance of the name Nobay in Neh 10:20 (cf. Qere; cf. also LXX).<sup>41</sup> Of course, one might naturally presuppose that the article would be present in the case of a gentilic (thus yielding: “the Nobite”), but McCarter has sagely emphasized (personal communication) that sometimes an original gentilic can effectively come to be a full-blown personal name, as in the case of Zephaniah’s father “Kušî” (Zeph 1:1). Similarly, it is quite reasonable to contend that that the name Buzî, the father of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3) is also reflective of the same phenomenon (i.e., a gentilic which became a full-blown personal name).<sup>42</sup> Also quite useful to emphasize is the fact that in this case the *yod* is a final mater. This

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be a way of referring to someone who was born on a festal day), and also *yš y* (1 Chr 2:31, et passim; this being arguably a shortened form of *yš yhw*, but note also the Phoenician form of this personal name with an *aleph* hyporistic and thus certainly not a Yahwistic theophoric). With that evidence in mind, and now as for the bulla’s third-register reading of *nby*, it is useful to note that there is a Northwest Semitic geminate root *nbb* (also attested in the Bible, but with an etymology that might not necessarily yield a great personal name), a Northwest Semitic middle *waw* root (attested in the Bible and the epigraphic corpus with the meaning “prosper,” or “rain abundantly,” and so something that would yield a good personal name), and a Northwest Semitic middle *yod* root meaning “fruit,” “give fruit” (and thus something that would yield a good personal name; cf. Isa 57:19, et passim; cf. also Mal 1:12). Furthermore, if one were to contend that the middle *waw* or middle *yod* root above is the operative one in this name, one could also argue (if someone believed that there was room after the *yod* for an additional letter) that the *yod* of the bulla is actually followed by a *hey* (although that would not necessarily be required) and that this is a PN (based on the middle *waw* or middle *yod* roots) and it is to be understood as something such as “Yahweh has given fruit” or “Yahweh has granted abundantly.” Although more remote, there are also additional options as well, including the possibility that we have the *p > b* phenomenon (broadly attested in Northwest Semitic, including Old Hebrew inscriptions (e.g., Arad 24.3, with *bqd* for *pqd*, and Arad 24.18, with *nbs* for *nps*) could also suggest additional possibilities. Again, I do not think that this phenomenon is operative in the case of the bulla, but it would open additional linguistic possibilities (including various personal names, such as biblical *npys*, Gen 25:15; 1 Chr 1:31, 5:19; cf. also middle weak *mwp*).

<sup>40</sup> Mazar, “Isaiah Bulla,” 71–73, 92 (and notes 15 and 16). For photos of these two bullae from Lachish (made from the same seal), see Avigad and Sass, *Corpus*, 207 [# 530]; and Yohanan Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachish V)* (Tel Aviv: Gateway, 1975), 21–22 and plate 20 nos. 6–7. Nathaniel Greene, Lawson Younger, and Nadav Na’aman have also drawn attention to glyptic materials from the antiquities market with *nby* as well, namely, #379, #227, #693 in the Avigad and Sass volume. Na’aman has also drawn my attention to Hans Rechenmacher’s *Althebräische Personennamen* (Munster: Ugarit Verlag, 2012), 179.

<sup>41</sup> It would be plausible to contend that, in this case, this was an original gentilic which subsequently became a personal name.

<sup>42</sup> In this connection, see also Rechenmacher, *Althebräische Personennamen*, 179.

is particularly important because *matres lectionis* marking final long vowels are nicely attested in epigraphic Old Hebrew many decades prior to the late eighth century BCE).<sup>43</sup>

In this connection, it is important to emphasize two additional problematic aspects of Mazar's article, both of which I also emphasized in my initial blog posts.<sup>44</sup> Namely, the majority of the occurrences of the word for "prophet" in the Hebrew Bible are definite (either via the usage of the article, or via the presence of a pronominal suffix, or in a construct chain in which the *nomen rectum* is definite).<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, it is also worth emphasizing that the epigraphic occurrence of the word prophet (Lachish 3.20) conforms to this predominant pattern. That is, *hnb'* is the attested epigraphic form. The absence of the article on the bulla does not mean that this word cannot be the word for prophet, but the fact remains that it is most common for the word "prophet" to be definite. Mazar is cognizant of the fact that the absence of the article is a problem (and devotes some time to this issue), but she takes consolation in the fact that this word is not always definite in the Bible.<sup>46</sup> But there is a second, and an even more serious, concern: Mazar's understanding of the *yod* of the bulla's third register as an internal *mater lectionis*. And, alas, Mazar does not seem to sense the gravity of her assumption. After all, her comment about this aspect of the putative orthography is confined to this statement: "The defective spelling of the same word, *nb'* (without the vowel *yod*), is present on an ostrakon from the Judahite site of Lachish." But this is actually a more serious concern than Mazar's statement would suggest. Here are the essential details: internal *matres lectionis* are very rarely attested in epigraphic Old Hebrew prior to the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE; therefore, presupposing the usage of an internal *mater lectionis* in an inscription from the late eighth or very early seventh century BCE is not the most elegant or cogent of assumptions.<sup>47</sup> That is, internal *matres lectionis* are a late development in Old

<sup>43</sup> Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence," *BA-SOR* 344 (2006): 61–63 and references there.

<sup>44</sup> See Christopher A. Rollston, "The Putative Bulla of Isaiah the Prophet: Not So Fast" (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=796>); Rollston, "The Isaiah Bulla from Jerusalem 2.0" (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=801>); Rollston, "The 'Isaiah Bulla' and the Putative Connection with Biblical Isaiah 3.0" (<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=833>).

<sup>45</sup> For all of the references, see Avraham Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1989), 733–34.

<sup>46</sup> Mazar, "Isaiah Bulla," 72–73. Note also that Mazar's article suggests (e.g., even in the accompanying drawing) that the article (i.e., the *he*) could be reconstructed (after her restored *waw!*) at the end of the preceding line (i.e., *Yš 'yh[wh]*), I would emphasize that I find that very, very difficult to accept. There is simply no room at the end of the previous line for that letter as well (note that the Old Hebrew letter *he* normally takes up a fair amount of horizontal space). Anat Mendel-Geberovich has indicated to me that she also believes that there is not sufficient space for the letter *he* at the end of the preceding line.

<sup>47</sup> For discussion and references, see Rollston, "Scribal Education," 61–65, esp. 63–64.

Hebrew orthography, not an early development. And, of course, on top of this is the fact that the word “prophet” is attested in a sixth century ostrakon from Lachish (3.20), and even there, in an inscription from a century after the Yeša‘yah[û] bulla (!), *there is no yod mater lectionis*. That is, the word for prophet is spelled *nb*’, thus, with no *yod* as a *mater lectionis*. In sum, Mazar is ultimately in the difficult position of arguing that the *yod* as an internal *matres lectionis* is present in the word *nb*[ ] in an inscription she dates to the late eighth century BCE, but it is not present in the word *nb*’ in an inscription that hails from the sixth century BCE. Mazar’s article contains no discussion of, or even reference to, the chronological component that is an essential feature of the scribal usage of internal *matres lectionis* in Old Hebrew inscriptions from the First Temple Period. This is a concerning omission.

#### CONCLUSIONS: OCCAM’S RAZOR AND ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS

Ultimately, the thrust of Mazar’s article leads the reader along a particular path, but that path is laden with many assumptions and hypotheticals. Namely, Mazar’s article emphasizes the prominence and importance of Hezekiah the King and Isaiah the Prophet, but not mentioned are the large number of other people in ancient Israel and Judah with the name “Isaiah” (or a variant thereof). Moreover, Mazar discusses the restoration of an *aleph* after the *yod*, but not mentioned are some of the contending restorations that yield attested or plausible personal names (e.g., *taw*, or *ṭet*, *lamed*). In addition, Mazar discusses the problem of the absence of the article, but she fails to discuss the serious orthographic problem that follows from her desire to understand the *yod* as an internal *mater lectionis*.

Ultimately, from my perspective, the most convincing conclusions are these: the name of the first register is Yš‘yh[w], and the second register only ever contained the letters *Nby*. (1) As for the restoration of the *waw* of the second register, this is the most straightforward understanding, as it is the most common form of the Yahwistic theophoric (appended at the end of a name) in Judean Old Hebrew, but as noted one could make a good case that this personal name was just *Yš‘yh* (or even a case for *Yš‘y*). (2) As for understanding *Nby* of the third register as the totality of the seal’s third register, this is the most straightforward, since (a) no traces of a letter after the *yod* are present, (b) the seal (from which this bulla was made) does not seem to have had space for an additional letter after the *yod*, (c) particularly significantly, *Nby* is attested in the provenanced Old Hebrew epigraphic record (i.e., *bn nby* in the bullae from the Lachish juglet) and so this understanding of this register does not require a restoration, (d) there is no need to posit that the *yod* is an internal *mater lectionis*, (e) and no article is needed (on the bullae from the Lachish juglet or the Yeša‘yahû bulla) since, as McCarter has sagely emphasized, gentilics sometimes evolved into full-blown personal names, as in the case of the Prophet Zephaniah’s father, among others. (f) And, of course,

it should at least be restated that we do know the name of the Prophet Isaiah's father, it was 'Amōš (Isa 1:1), and it is not on this bulla.

In essence, I would contend, therefore, that the simplest and most compelling conclusion is that this is a bulla from someone named Yš 'yh[w], the son of someone named Nby. This is someone whom we do not know from the Bible. And it is the first Old Hebrew epigraphic reference to this person. To say more than this is to say too much. Of course, this is not very sensational, I'm afraid, but that is the way that things usually are.

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# Traces of Proto-Canaanite Letters in LB Strata at Tell Halif

Joe D. Seger

Excavations at Tell Halif during its Phases 1 and 2 (1976–1987) recovered a plethora of pot sherds bearing inscribed marks. While these were collected from fields all across the mound, the majority were recovered from strata in Field I.<sup>1</sup> All but a handful of these sherds came from, or could be easily diagnosed, as deriving from Early Bronze period levels. However, a smaller subset came from Late Bronze Age strata, and these bear markings that suggest clear affinities with Proto-Canaanite letter forms.

Tell Halif is a modest, 3-acre mound site in southern Israel, just north of Beersheba. The Field I excavations, located in a long sondage down the eastern slope of the mound, were directed by Paul F. Jacobs. This work provided evidence of fifteen occupation strata (Strata XV–I) ranging in date from 2600 BCE to modern times.

Following a robust era of settlement and mound development in the Early Bronze III era (Strata XV–XII, 2600–2200 BCE) the site lay fallow till the mid-second millennium BCE. At that time, as the Middle Bronze age cities of the Hyksos Empire collapsed before the onslaught of the New Kingdom Egyptian Pharaohs, Halif was resettled. First, in Stratum XI (LB IA, ca. 1600 BCE), by squatters who nested into and retrofitted some of the remnant EB III structures. Then in Stratum X (LB IB, 1475–1400 BCE) the site underwent major rejuvenation, emerging as an emporium and way station for commerce moving through the southern Palestinian area. A principal feature of the Stratum X architecture

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<sup>1</sup> See Paul F. Jacobs and Joe D. Seger, *Lahav VI: The Early Bronze III to Late Arabic Strata at Tell Halif: Excavations in Field I, 1976–1999* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), esp. reference to digital report on “Potter’s Marks,” xx. The conventions for pottery descriptions throughout this article follow those of the author outlined in chapter 5 of William G. Dever and H. Darrell Lance, *A Manual of Field Excavation* (New York: Hebrew Union College, 1978). All scale bar references are in centimeters.



was a large clerestory house, with a raised central courtyard. This was flanked by surrounding rooms, similar in design to structures found at el-Amarna in Egypt. Evidence preserved on the floors of this building indicated that it was destroyed by fire. Whether this was part of a more general attack on the site, or just a local event, could not be discerned.

Irrespective of the uncertain scope of the Stratum X demise, the hiatus it caused in the site's occupation seems to have been relatively brief. Its recovery by ca. 1400 BCE, in Stratum IX (LB IIA), provided additional traces of Amarna period type evidence. But this Stratum IX occupation was more modest, featuring architectural remains suggestive of more ordinary domestic and agrarian use.

However, structural modifications in Stratum VIII (LB IIB, 1300–1200 BCE) were again more ambitious, perhaps indicating an influx of new immigrant peoples. New developments included the covering of the upslope Stratum IX remains with a deep fill, at points reaching more than 1m in depth. This created a broad earthen platform. Into this platform, through the succeeding years, a sequence of stone lined storage bins was built and rebuilt. Within room structures flanking this storage complex five sub-phases of floor repair and resurfacing were distinguished. This indicated a protracted era of active occupation and building use.<sup>2</sup> This period of intensive occupation and use continued on into Stratum VII, during the early Iron I period in the twelfth century BCE.

Among the artifacts collected from these LB to early Iron I levels were sixteen potsherds with inscribed markings distributed stratigraphically as follows:

Stratum XI (three)

Jar sherd. I.10.559a from Locus 10076 (fig. 1.1)<sup>3</sup>

Cooking Pot sherd. I.B10.482 No. 5 from Locus B10119 (fig. 1.2)<sup>4</sup>

Jar sherd. I.9.220 No. 1 from Locus 9028 (fig. 1.3)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Paul F. Jacobs and Joe D. Seger, "Glimpses of the Iron I Age at Tell Halif," in *Up to the Gates of Ekron: Essays on the Archaeology and History of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honor of Seymour Gitin*, ed. Sidnie W. Crawford, Amnon Ben-Tor, J. P. Dessel, William G. Dever, Amihai Mazar, and Joseph Aviram (Jerusalem: The W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and the Israel Exploration Society, 2007), 146–65.

<sup>3</sup> Jar sherd. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 7/4 "pink"; some large lime; no core; hard. Surface: (Int.) 7.5YR 6/6 "reddish yellow;" (Ext.) 5YR 7/4 "pink;" incised mark (*mem*) around shoulder.

<sup>4</sup> Cooking pot body and rim. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 5YR 7/6 "reddish yellow"; some to many large lime; light gray core; hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*mem*).

<sup>5</sup> Jar body sherd. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 6/4 "light brown"; many very small lime; few medium lime; light grey core, hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*harm*).

## Stratum X (six)

Jar sherd. I.A9.104 No.1 from Locus A9012.1 (fig. 2.1)<sup>6</sup>

Carinated bowl. I.A9.157 from Locus A9019.P (fig. 2.2)<sup>7</sup>

Jar sherd. I.B9.89 No. 2 from Locus B9014.P (fig. 3.1)<sup>8</sup>

Storejar (handle). I.10.301 from Locus 10042.P (fig. 3.2)<sup>9</sup>

Storejar (handle). I.10/A10.303 No.1 from Locus 10042.P (fig. 4.1)<sup>10</sup>

Jug (handle). I.10/A10.304 No.1 from Locus 10052.P (fig. 5.1)<sup>11</sup>

## Stratum X/IX (two)

Bowl sherd. I.B10.463 No. 8 from Locus B10110.P (fig. 6.1)<sup>12</sup>

Jar sherd. I.B10.505 Object 1501 from Locus B10060 (fig. 6.2)<sup>13</sup>

## Stratum IX/Pre-VIII (two)

Jar handle. I.10.200 No.1 from Locus 10041 (fig. 6.3)<sup>14</sup>

Jar sherd. I.10/A10.238 Object 613 from Locus 10025 (fig. 6.4)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Jug upper shoulder sherd. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 7/4 “pink,” many medium to large lime and sand; no core; hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised markings (*la-med?*, *ayin?*, or *reš?*).

<sup>7</sup> Carinated bowl. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 5YR 6/6 “reddish yellow”; finely levigated; no core; hard. Surface: (Int.) 5YR 7/4 “pink” with incised mark (*mem*); (Ext.) 2.5YR 6/6 “reddish yellow.”

<sup>8</sup> Jar body sherd. Technique: handmade? Paste: 2.5YR 5/8 “red”; some medium sand; grey core, hard. Surface: (Int.) 2.5YR 5/0 “black”; (Ext.) 2.5YR 6/4 “light reddish brown” with wash 5YR 8/1 “white” and incised mark (*kap*).

<sup>9</sup> Storejar. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 5YR 6/6 “reddish yellow”; some very small crystal; few very small to medium ceramic; grey core; hard. Surface: (Int.) 10YR 7/6 “yellow,” (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*taw*) on handle.

<sup>10</sup> Storejar. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 6/6 “reddish yellow”; few very small to large lime; few very small to large sand; few very small crystal; few small to very large organic; grey core, hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*taw*) on handle.

<sup>11</sup> Jug (handle). Technique: handmade. Paste: 5YR 7/6 “reddish yellow”; few small to large organic; few small to large, some very small sand; few very small to large lime; core not visible; hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*kap*) on handle.

<sup>12</sup> Bowl sherd. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 7/4 “pink”; few medium sand; few small to large lime; few small ceram; light gray core, hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste with incised mark (*mem*); (Ext.) as paste.

<sup>13</sup> Jar sherd. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7YR 7/4 “pink”; some medium to large lime; some medium sand and ceram; light grey core; hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*taw*).

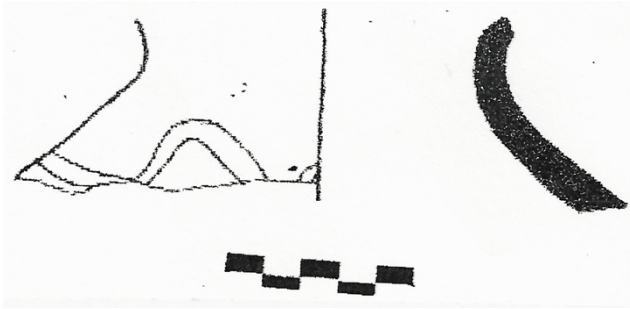
<sup>14</sup> Jar (handle). Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 7/4 pink; some large lime; no core; hard. Surface: (Interior) 7.5YR 6/6 reddish yellow; (Exterior) 5YR 7/4 pink; incised mark (*taw*) on handle.

<sup>15</sup> Jar sherd. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 7.5YR 7/4 “pink,” many large lime, some medium ceram and sand; grey core, hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) as paste with incised mark (*bêt*).

## Stratum VIII (two)

Jar handle. I.11.176 No. 1 from Locus 11044 (fig. 6.5)<sup>16</sup>Jar handle. I.11.176 No. 2 from Locus 11044 (fig. 6.6)<sup>17</sup>

## Stratum VII (one)

Storejar handle. I.11.91 Object 52 from Locus 11024 (Figs. 7.1–2)<sup>18</sup>COMMENTARY AND COMPARANDA<sup>19</sup>Fig. 1.1. *mem* (water)

This sherd fragment is from the upper shoulder of a jar. Its mark, incised in the pre-fired clay, most probably represents a *mem* like those found on the store jars from Gezer.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Jar handle. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 5YR 6/4 “light reddish brown”; some very small and small lime; grey core, hard. Surface: (Int.) 7.5YR 6/0 “gray/ light gray”; (Ext.) as interior with incised mark (*taw*) on handle.

<sup>17</sup> Jug handle. Technique: wheel-made. Paste: 5YR 6/2 “pinkish gray”; some small and medium sand, some small organic; gray core; hard. Surface: (Int.) as paste; (Ext.) slip 2.5YR 6/4 “light reddish brown,” with paint 10R 3/6 “dark red” mark (*taw*) on handle and décor around shoulder.

<sup>18</sup> Storejar handle. Technique: wheelmade. Paste: 10YR 8/4 “very pale brown”; some medium to very large lime; some large to very large ceram; grey core, hard. Surface: (Int.) 10YR 6/3 “pale brown”; (Ext.) as paste with incised marks (*lamed*, *dag*, and *taw*).

<sup>19</sup> In researching the letter identifications for these materials, I have relied extensively on Gordon Hamilton’s *The Origins of the West Semitic Alphabet in Egyptian Scripts*. I am thankful for this compendious work. It provides a most useful avenue of access and insight into the second millennium B.C.E. origins of the alphabet. Gordon J. Hamilton, *The Origins of the West Semitic Alphabet in Egyptian Scripts*, CBQ Monograph Series 40 (Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> See Joe D. Seger, “The Gezer Jar Signs: New Evidence of the Earliest Alphabet,” in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth, Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and Michael Patrick O’Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 447–95; Seger, “Chapter V.K: Signs, Marks, and Letterforms,” in *Gezer VII: The Middle Bronze and Later Fortifications in Fields II, IV, and VIII*, ed. Joes D. Seger and James W. Hardin (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 182–96; see also, Hamilton, *Origins*, 140, fig. 3:41.

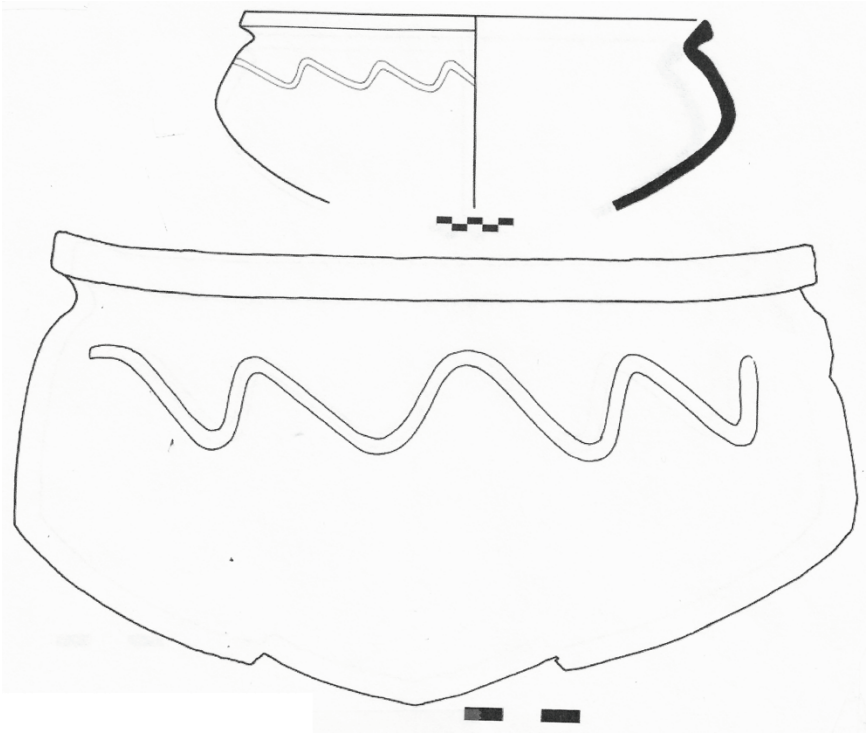


Fig. 1.2. *mem* (water)

This large sherd is from a typical Late-MBII/LB I cooking pot. Incised in its pre-fired clay is a complete *mem* again closely paralleling those from Gezer. (See fig. 1.1 and references.)



Fig. 1.3. *ħarm* (twisted wick)

This mark was incised with a brush like reed stylus in the pre-fired clay on a large storage jar. It most reasonably reconstructs as a *ħarm* with parallels from Serabit el-Khadim.<sup>21</sup>

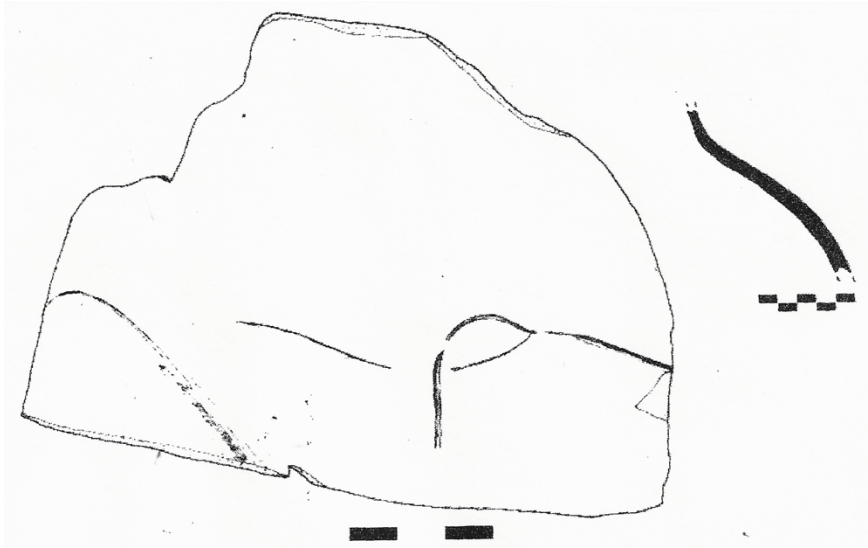


Fig. 2.1. *lamed?* (rope coil), *'ayin ?* (eye), or *reš?* (head)

<sup>21</sup> See Sinai 165 in Hamilton, *Origins*, 58, fig 2.13.

The narrow markings on the shoulder of this store jar were etched in the pre-fired clay. They are overall enigmatic. Only the central sign is complete enough to allow for some speculation on its identification. The most probably suggestions are as follows:

*lamed*: (most likely) Appearing as an almost closed rope coil.<sup>22</sup>

*'ayin*: (likely) Appearing as several Sinai examples without pupils.<sup>23</sup> However, it has an extended down stroke to the left which is not seen in any of those Sinai signs. But among the Sinai examples see the closed sign 365a with a longer down stroke to the right.

*reš*: (least likely) Appearing as an idiosyncratic form such as on the 'Izbet Šarḥah Abecedarly.<sup>24</sup>

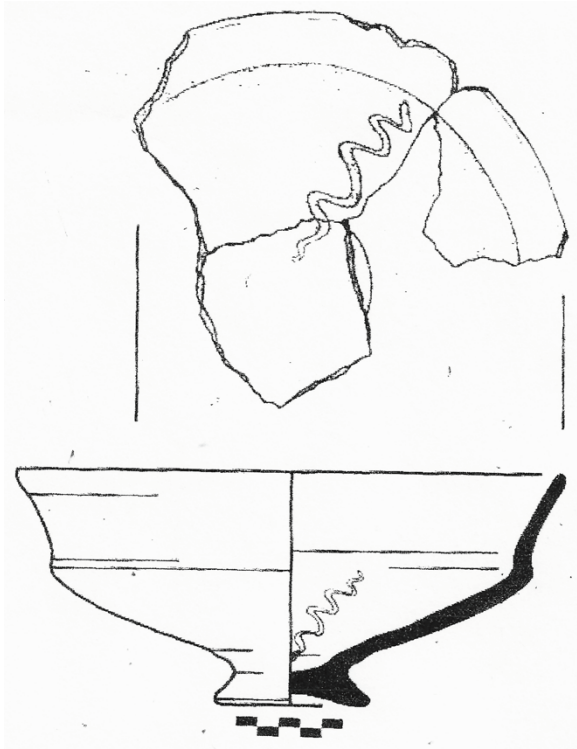


Fig. 2.2. *mem* (water)

<sup>22</sup> See the Lachish Bowl in Hamilton, *Origins*, 129, fig. 2:38.

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 183, fig. 2:56.

<sup>24</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 224, fig. 2:70.

This sign is incised in the pre-fired clay down the inside of a typical early LB age Carinated Bowl. It is clearly a *mem* like those from Gezer. (See n. 4 above.)

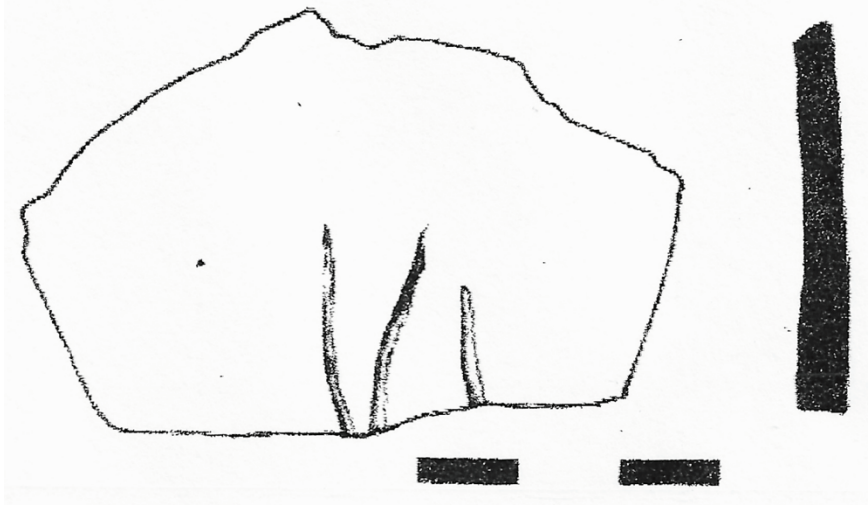


Fig. 3.1. *kap* (hand/palm)

This sherd fragment derives from the side or shoulder of a small jar or jug. The three vertical strokes etched into its pre-fired clay are best interpreted as fingers of a *kap* as on Sinai 358 or 349.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 118, figs. 2:32 and 2:33.

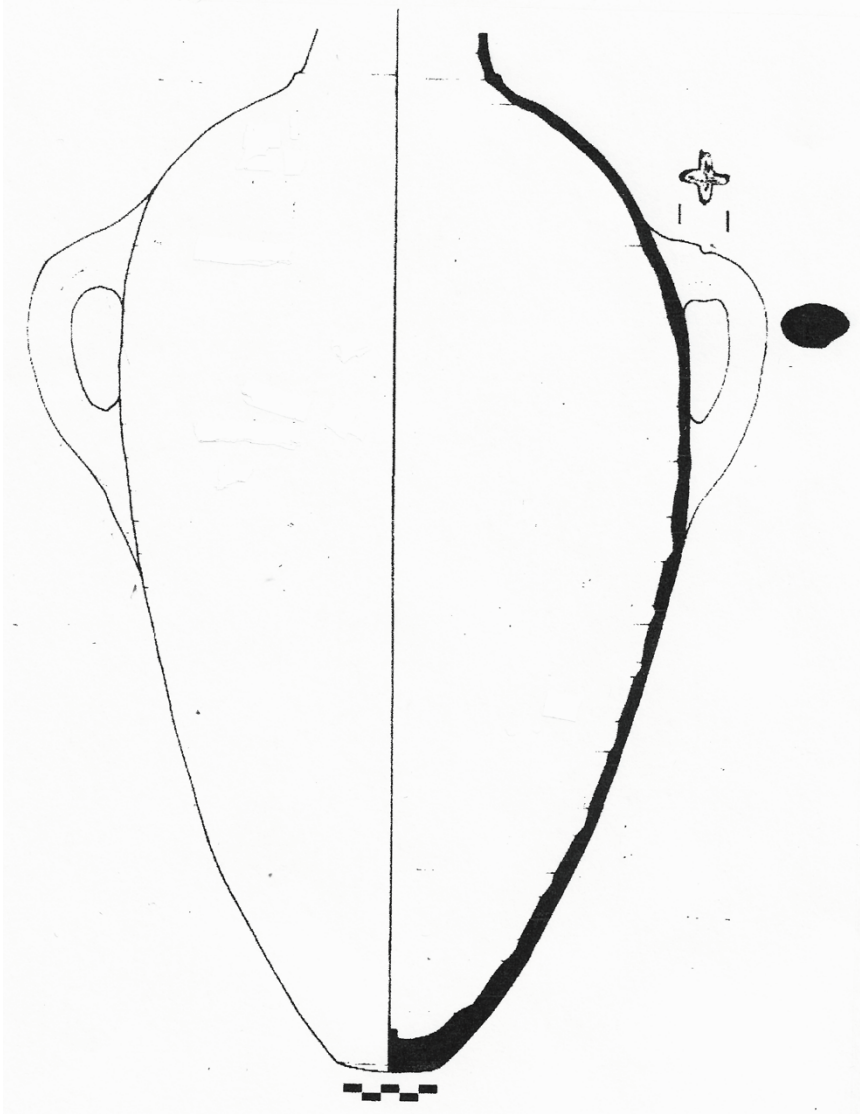


Fig 3.2. *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

This mark, incised in the pre-fired clay on the handle of a large storage jar is unequivocally a *taw*.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 118, figs. 2:32 and 2:33.



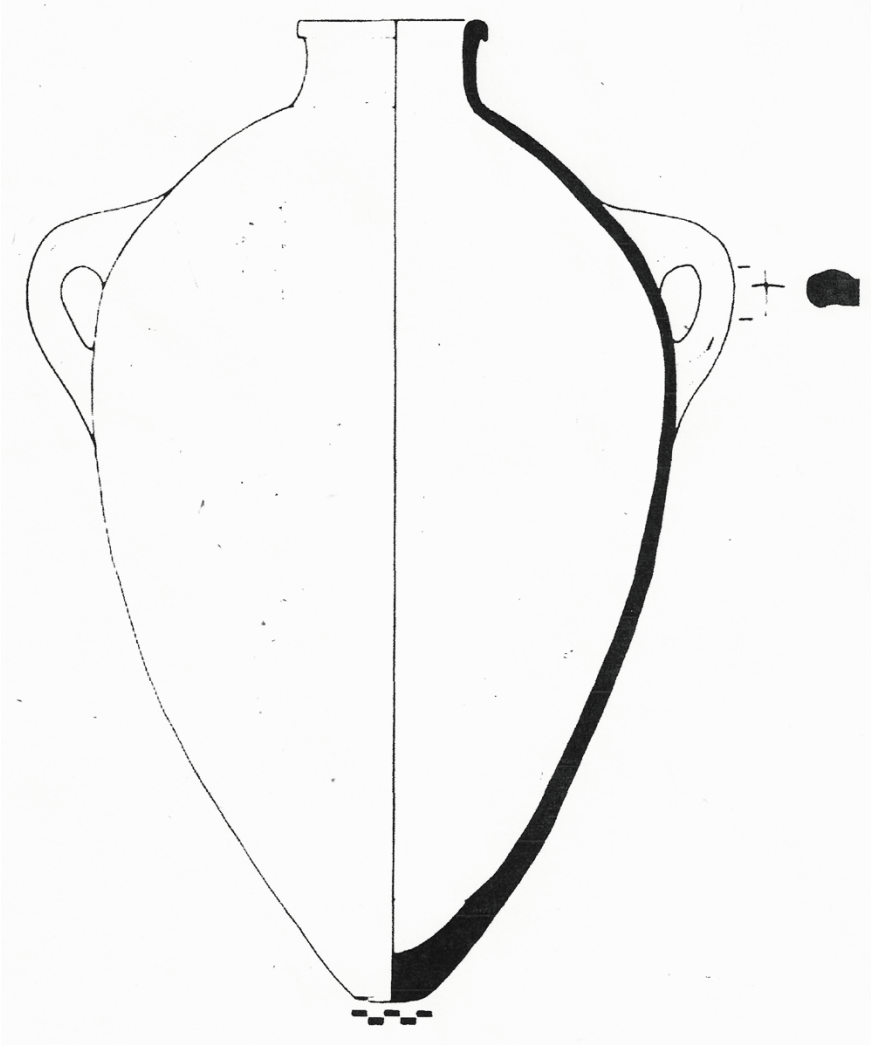


Fig. 4.1. *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

This clear *taw* form was thinly etched in the wet clay on the handle of a storage jar. Its longer down-stroke better emulates the ancestral Hieroglyphic Z11 forms from Egypt and Sinai.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> These forms are illustrated in Hamilton, *Origins*, 248, fig. 2:74.

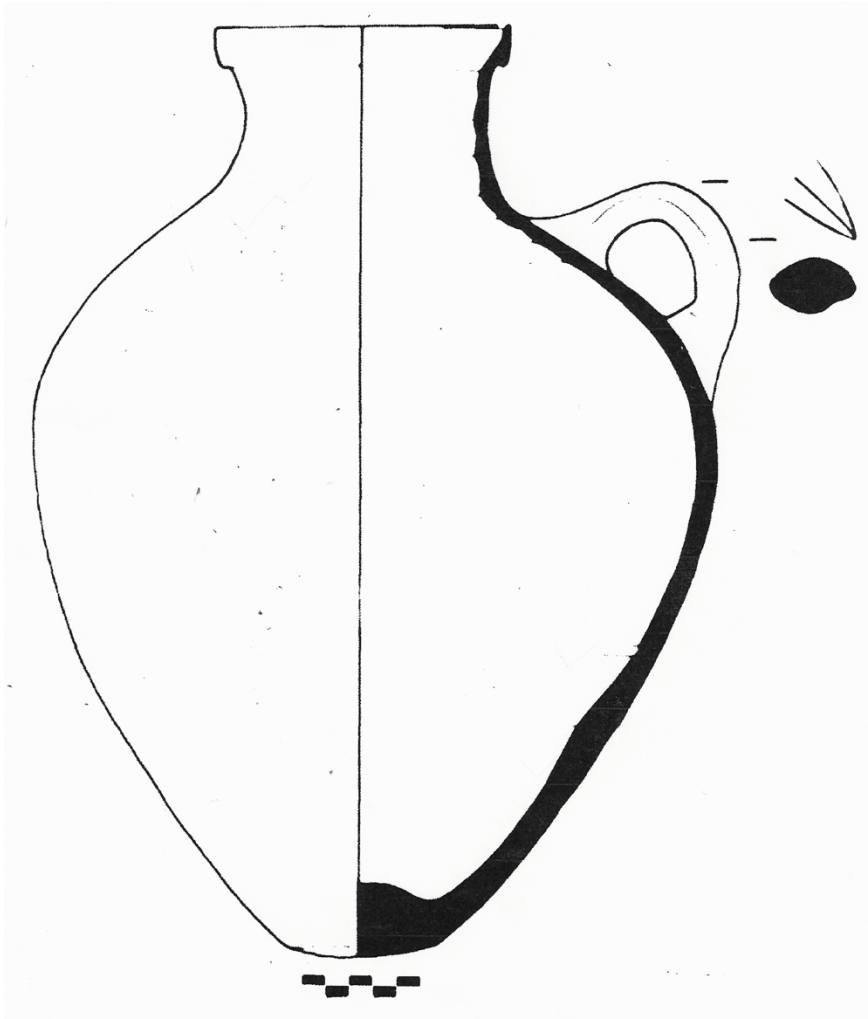


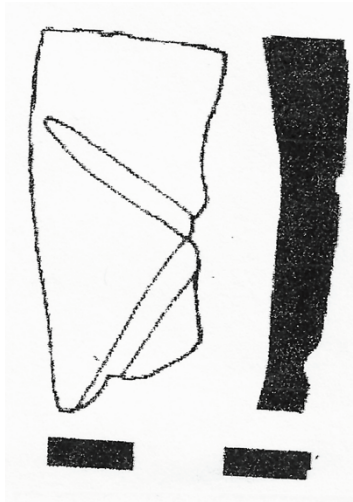
Fig. 5.1. *kap* (hand/palm)

This sign, etched into the wet clay of the handle of a medium sized MB/LB jug, is a complete, three finger *kap* form. It relates to forms from Sinai (e.g. Sinai 357), but best emulates a parallel from 'Ajjul.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 118, fig. 2:32.

Fig. 6.1. *mem* (water)

This fragmentary mark is incised in the pre-fired clay on inner face of a sherd from a bowl (as with fig. 2.3). It is clearly part of a *mem*.<sup>29</sup>

Fig 6.2. *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

<sup>29</sup> See Seger, "Gezer Jar Signs"; Seger, "Signs, Marks, and Letterforms"; also, Hamilton, *Origins*, 140, fig. 3:41.

This fragmentary mark was incised in the pre-fired clay on the side of a jar or large bowl. It can most reasonably be reconstructed as a *taw*<sup>30</sup>.

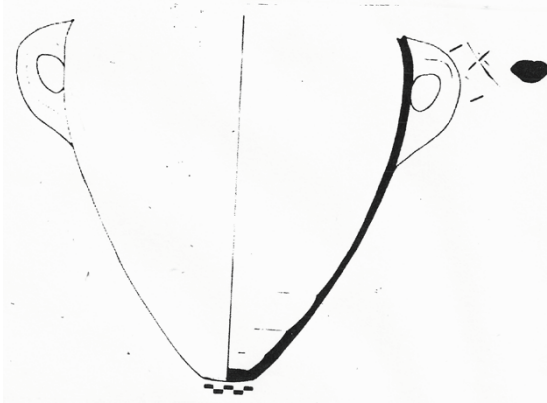


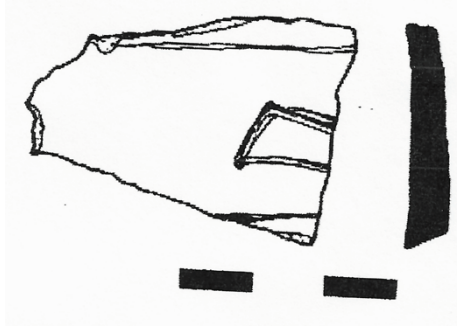
Fig. 6.3. *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

This mark is incised with two vertical strokes and one cross stroke down the handle of a medium sized storejar. It is a *taw*. The form is ancestral from Hieratic Z11 in second millennium BCE Egypt. It has parallels, most notably, on the Lachish Dagger as well as quite likely in Sinai 376.<sup>31</sup> The three-stroke *taw* example on this handle lends support to Hamilton's reconstruction of the poorly preserved form on Sinai 376.<sup>32</sup>

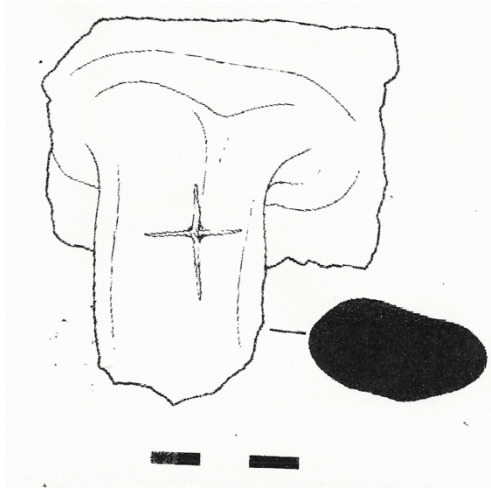
<sup>30</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 118, figs. 2:32 and 2:33. These forms are illustrated in Hamilton, *The Origins*, 248, fig. 2:74.

<sup>31</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 248; fig. 2:75.

<sup>32</sup> Contra A. F. Rainy, "Notes on Some Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions," *IEJ* 25 (1975): fig. 1, and Benjamin Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet and Its Development in the Second Millennium B.C. Ägypten und Altes Testament* 13 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), fig. 91.

Fig. 6.4. *bêt* (house)

This mark is incised in the pre-fired clay of a sherd from the side of a jar or krater. It is best reconstructed as a *bêt*.<sup>33</sup>

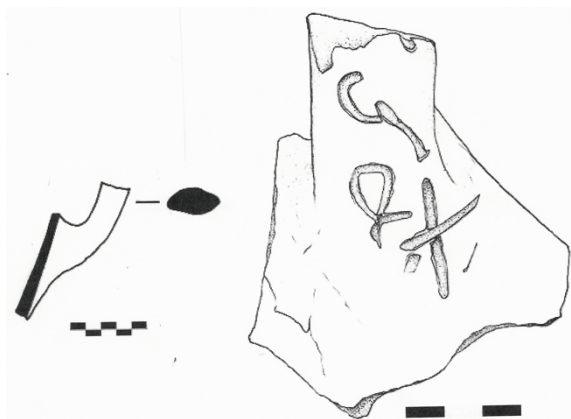
Fig 6.5. *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

<sup>33</sup> See parallels from the Wadi el-Hol in Hamilton, *Origins*, 45, fig 2:8 and 51, fig. 2:10; see also Sinai 380 in Hamilton, *Origins*, 48, fig 2:9.

Fig. 6.6. *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

The sign in fig. 6.5 is clearly a *taw*. It is applied with red organic paint to the upper handle/shoulder transition of a large jar or jug.<sup>34</sup>

This sign in fig. 6.6 is also clearly a *taw*. It is incised in the prefired clay of a jar handle.<sup>35</sup>

Figs. 7.1. Drawing of fig. 7.2. *Lamed* (rope coil), *dag* (fish), and *taw* (crossed planks/mark)

<sup>34</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 118, figs. 2:32 and 2:33. These forms are illustrated in Hamilton, *Origins*, 248, fig. 2:74.

<sup>35</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 248, figs. 2:74, 2:75.



Fig. 7.2. Incised Storage Jar Handle

The marks on this storage jar handle were incised in its pre-fired clay. Three letter signs are quite clear, and the bare hint of another can be observed at the break on its upper right. The handle fragment is from the bottom side of its attachment to the jar, so one may conclude that the three signs represent the end of the inscription. These signs can rather confidently be read from top down, as *lamed*, *dag*, and *taw*.

The *lamed* is quite clear, probably a rope coil, although the attachment of the upper curl with the tail is somewhat crude.<sup>36</sup>

The *dag* has parallels in examples from Sinai<sup>37</sup> and among the Gezer jar sign corpus.<sup>38</sup> As Gordon observes it “stems from an elliptical form of Hieratic K1 with a splayed tail and no external markings.”<sup>39</sup>

The *taw* is straight forward with good parallels in the several “developed *taws*” from Sinai.<sup>40</sup> A short oblique stroke, observed by our graphics illustrator just below the left end of the *taw*’s horizontal bar, could be a word division marker. But it may just represent some random pitting in the handle’s clay body.

<sup>36</sup> See “coils with angular beginnings” in Hamilton, *Origins*, 129, fig. 2:37.

<sup>37</sup> See 346a and 353 in Hamilton, *Origins*, 68, fig. 2:18.

<sup>38</sup> Seger, “Gezer Jar Signs”; Seger, “Signs, Marks, and Letterforms.”

<sup>39</sup> Hamilton, *Origins*, 73–74.

<sup>40</sup> See 345, 363, 380, 527 in Hamilton, *Origins*, 249, fig. 2:76.

While no finally acceptable reading of the handle's inscription can be affirmed, some form of the Semitic root *yld* might be proposed, designating a personal name or otherwise indicating the vessel's ownership.

#### SUMMARY

Clearly of most interest among these inscribed sherds is the multi-lettered jar handle (figs. 7:1 and 7:2). It was found among a collection of smashed storage jars in a Stratum VIIA storage bin, that is, Silo 11029.<sup>41</sup> Being from Strata VIIA, late in the stratigraphic sequence, it adds to the corpus of documented Iron I appearances of multi-lettered Proto-Canaanite inscribed artifacts. The jar handle thus helps to affirm that the alphabet was gaining greater currency in usage at that time.

Alone, none of the other fifteen inscribed sherds is individually of special historical note. However, they are present at a small, semi-rural site in the Judean hinterland, and they appear in strata representing each of the four plus centuries of the Late Bronze occupation at Tell Halif. Accordingly, they do bear testimony to the increasing spread and use of the Proto-Canaanite alphabet in the southern Levant during the late second millennium BCE. In addition, they also provide some modest assistance in helping us more fully understand the course of letter form development through this nascent period of experimentation with alphabetic use.

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<sup>41</sup> See Jacobs and Seger, "Glimpses of the Iron I Age at Tell Halif," 568 and 578–92, figs 4.A.19–33.



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# Heroes of Lost Memory: The Times and Places of the *rpū'm* in the Ugaritic Texts

Mark S. Smith

I here offer a contribution on the topic of *rpū'm*<sup>1</sup> in the Ugaritic texts under the inspiration of the engaging 2012 work by Brian R. Doak, entitled *The Last of the Rephaim: Conquest and Cataclysm in the Heroic Ages of Ancient Israel*.<sup>2</sup> Doak's book explores literary traditions about heroes of old from Greece, the Levant and Mesopotamia. Doak focuses on the relative antiquity and giant size of these heroic figures, not the least of which are the biblical Rephaim. He identifies three periods for these types of figures in biblical sources<sup>3</sup>: (1) stories recounting the origins of giants around the time of the flood (e.g., Gen 6:1–4)<sup>4</sup>; (2) giant peoples in the land in the period of the so-called "Conquest" (Num 13:22, 28–32; Deut 2:9–15, 20–21; Josh 11:19–22, 14:12–15, 15:12–14, 21:11–12; Judg 1:20; Amos 2:9–10; cf. Gen 14:5), including the Rephaim,<sup>5</sup> and particularly Og of Bashan, "the last of the

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I am very grateful for the invitation to contribute to this volume in honor of P. Kyle McCarter Jr., whom I first encountered in a course that he gave on the history of Syria-Palestine at Harvard in the spring term of 1979. I cherish him as a teacher and also as a dear colleague, especially thanks to our time spent together mostly at professional meetings but also on my occasional visits to my alma mater, The Johns Hopkins University. One of Kyle's greatest legacies at Hopkins lies in his success in reinvigorating its storied doctoral program. All the while he has also been a leader in several important areas of biblical studies, including textual criticism, exegesis, Dead Sea Scrolls, epigraphy, and Israelite religion. Many of his studies have become standard works in the field, and his work continues to influence my research.

<sup>1</sup> This essay uses the masculine plural nominative form for these figures (cf. form in the oblique case spelled *rp'im*). Ugaritic *rpū'm* has been vocalized as *\*rapī'ūma* or *\*rapa'ūma*. Some scholars thus refer to these figures as "the Rapi'uma" or "the Rapa'uma." Other scholars refer to them as "the Rephaim," based on the Biblical Hebrew form, *rēpā'im*.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Doak, *The Last of the Rephaim: Conquest and Cataclysm in the Heroic Ages of Ancient Israel*, Ilex Foundation Series 7 (Boston: Ilex Foundation; Washington: The Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 51.

<sup>4</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 18, 40–41, 53–67, 70–71, 78–79, 117–18, 139–44, 188–89, 216–17.

<sup>5</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 70–98.

Rephaim,” in the words of the book’s main title (cf. Deut 3:11; Josh 12:4, 13:12)<sup>6</sup>; and (3) giant warriors in the early monarchic age, such as Goliath (1 Samuel 17),<sup>7</sup> as well as the figures called “the Rapah” (2 Sam 21:16 and 18, 20 and 22 // 1 Chr 20:6, 8).<sup>8</sup>

Doak suggests that these traditions belong to a “pan-Mediterranean religious *koine* on the broadest level,”<sup>9</sup> which he defines in this way: “By ‘koine,’ I mean a common, base-level, shared language of symbol, material artifacts, custom, and religious practice.... This recognition of a Mediterranean *koine* does not imply homogenous expressions between any two regions or among any particular aspects of language, culture, or society as a rule, but represents an invitation to explore the often under-emphasized elements that bound Mediterranean religions—including those of ancient Israel—together.” For Doak, this *koine* included “the heroic generation as conceived by archaic and classical Greece authors,”<sup>10</sup> in particular giants and titans.<sup>11</sup> Traditions of ancient heroes at the time of the flood and conquest particularly inform both biblical and Greek traditions, and here Doak’s book makes a fine contribution. To these sources he adds the somewhat parallel traditions of the flood hero in Atrahasis as well as the figure of Gilgamesh.<sup>12</sup> The notion of this *koine* would be further applicable to the Rephaim if Greek Meropes were a reflection of the West Semitic Rephaim and if the word for the Titans were a reflection of West Semitic *dn/ddn* (discussed below), as Amar Annus has noted.<sup>13</sup>

Doak himself sees two interrelated sides of ancient heroes, in what he calls “heroes in epic” and “heroes in cult.”<sup>14</sup> Doak suggests that there is more evidence for heroes in epic in the Levantine material than in cult. Yet epic is a problematic

<sup>6</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 19, 81–85. For a proposal that “the bulls of Bashan” (Ps 22:12; Ezek 39:18; cf. Jer 50:19) include the Rephaim, see Robert D. Miller II, O.F.S., “Baals of Bashan,” *RB* 121 (2014): 506–15.

<sup>7</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 101–9, 113–14.

<sup>8</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 99, 109–12. For these figures, see also Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes: The Literary Commemoration of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 314–17, 562–63. Doak’s discussion of the Goliath story places more emphasis on this later, recycled version of the heroic early monarchic age, compared with what look like older traditions in these shorter notices.

<sup>9</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 45.

<sup>10</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 119.

<sup>11</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 119–34.

<sup>12</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 134–39; 163.

<sup>13</sup> Amar Annus, “Are There Greek Rephaim? On the Etymology of Greek Meropes and Titanes,” *UF* 31 (1999): 13–30. Note also Paolo Merlo and Paolo Xella, “Da Erwin Rohde ai Rapiuma ugaritici: antecedent vicino-orientali degli eoi greci?” in *La questione delle influenze Vicino-Orientali sulla Religione Greca: Stato degli Studi e Prospettive della Ricerca. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale Roma, 20–22 maggio 1999*, ed. Sergio Ribichini, Maria Rocchi and Paolo Xella (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 2001), 281–97.

<sup>14</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 153–99.

term, given the difficulty of identifying it in biblical material, a problem recognized by its proponent, Frank Moore Cross, on whom Doak deliberately depends.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the three types of heroes that Doak identifies in the biblical material appear in prose material, unlike Greek epic, much less the Ugaritic or Mesopotamian poetic narrative. For the discussion of the Ugaritic material below, Doak's terms, "heroes in epic" and "heroes in cult," will be helpful in referring to the *rp'um* in literary narratives as opposed to ritual texts, but their representation is hardly the same on the biblical front. By contrast to the biblical material, Greek heroic tradition is well represented in both literature and cult. Still this asymmetry in Israel represents an important consideration. Given the lack of this sort of "hero cult"<sup>16</sup> (as far as the sources provide, apart from the "warrior culture" represented by Israel's so-called "old poetry"),<sup>17</sup> it would appear that in the period of the monarchy, ancient Israel manifests an attitude what I (followed by Doak) call a "social disidentification"<sup>18</sup> from this sort of heroic culture constituted by the ancient giants. This brief discussion of Doak's work hardly does it justice, but I hope it indicates its importance as well as my appreciation for it.

With this backdrop in mind, I would like to turn to the *rp'um* in the Ugaritic texts. Doak's book addresses evidence from ancient Ugarit and specifically the *rp'um*.<sup>19</sup> Doak reads these figures as "deceased and quasi-deified ancestors who have acquired some military connotations."<sup>20</sup> He concludes that *rp'um* were considered dead warriors of old that played an important role in funerary ritual as markers of monarchic legitimation and heroic identification.<sup>21</sup> While there little objectionable in Doak's discussion of the Ugaritic evidence, perhaps it could go farther. For example, it is notable that Doak includes *KTU* 1.161 in his discussion of "heroes in cult," noting their role in "blessing, prosperity and legitimation."<sup>22</sup> Below I will attempt to build further on this observation by teasing out the text's details. He also notes that this text evokes a heroic past,<sup>23</sup> a point deserving of further reflection in connection with the geographies in "*rp'um* texts." Indeed,

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<sup>15</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 37–44. For a critique of Cross on this score, see Simon B. Parker, "Some Methodological Principles," *Maarav* 2 (1979): 31–33. For an appreciation and assessment of Cross's work, see Mark S. Smith, "The Contribution of Frank Moore Cross to Ugaritic Studies," *BA-SOR* 372 (2014): 189–202.

<sup>16</sup> So Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 172–75, esp. 175.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 211–322.

<sup>18</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69, cited in Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 212 n. 58.

<sup>19</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 164–71.

<sup>20</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 165.

<sup>21</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 171, on the point about legitimation and identification largely following Smith, *Origins*, 69.

<sup>22</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 166.

<sup>23</sup> Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 166; 171.

Doak rightly notes the lack of epic devoted to the *rp'um* that would locate the age when these figures were thought to have been great heroes in the past.

Building off from Doak's work, this presentation attempts a synthesis for the available information about the *rp'um*, specifically in reflecting on the structures of historiography and memory in the texts about them. I will begin by noting the distribution of these figures in the Ugaritic texts and their features that seem to be consistent across the corpus. Then I will mention the multiple types of relationships that they have with the central institution of the monarchy. The last and major part of this essay attends to the multiple sorts of time associated with the *rp'um* as well as their different geographies, which are largely located peripherally relative to the Ugaritic monarchy.

#### DISTRIBUTION AND CONSISTENT FEATURES

The distribution of these figures in the Ugaritic texts is notable. They are basically a ritual and literary phenomenon. The root *\*rp'* appear in administrative documents only in PNs (*KTU* 4.82.24, 4.141.ii.14, 4.194.12, 4.232.8). It is not found in scribal texts or letters. The ritual contexts entail (1) multiple references in the substantial ritual, *KTU* 1.161; (2) *KTU* 1.108, involving a single *rp'u* (cf. *rp'i yqr* in *KTU* 1.166.13?) and perhaps the *rp'um* in the form of a description (see below); (3) and an enigmatic reference, *lql rp' i[m]*, "at the sound of the *rpi'[m]*" in a broken incantational context in *KTU* 1.82.32.<sup>24</sup>

As for the literary texts, the rather fragmentary *KTU* 1.20–1.22 is the only one presently known that centers on the *rp'um*.<sup>25</sup> In addition, these figures appear in several different contexts within other literary texts. The amount of attention devoted to them in these contexts is relatively minor. At the same time, the wide distribution of such passages across the Ugaritic literary corpus suggests that they constitute a significant part of its cultural backdrop (the same might be said of the biblical material devoted to the Rephaim). In most if not all of these passages, the *rp'um* appear only by way of allusion and do not appear in the form of a whole

<sup>24</sup> The phrase is translated "at the cry of the Rapa'uma," by Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Incantations and Anti-Witchcraft Texts from Ugarit*, SANER 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 112. See also del Olmo Lete, *Incantations*, 126, for his explication of these figures as "divine protecting entities against this danger."

<sup>25</sup> For editions of these tablets with readings, see Wayne Pitard, "A New Edition of the 'Rāpi'ūma' Texts: *KTU* 1.20–22," *BASOR* 285 (1992): 33–77; Dennis Pardee, "Nouvelle étude épigraphique et littéraire des textes fragmentaires en langue ougaritique dits «Les Rephāim» (CTA 20–22)," *Or* 80 (2011): 1–65. For discussion, see Theodore J. Lewis, "Toward a Literary Translation of the Rapiuma Texts," in *Ugarit: Religion and Culture. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture, Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of John C. L. Gibson*, ed. Nick Wyatt, Wilfred G. E. Watson, and Jeffrey B. Lloyd, UBL 12 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 115–49; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 141–53.

mythology. Instead, their “mythology” (or “mythologies”) is refracted in these allusions in different ways.

Despite this literary landscape, there are three consistent features to be noted about the *rp'um* across the texts.<sup>26</sup> First, they are called “divinities.” In *KTU* 1.20–1.22 they are called *'ilnym*, “divinities” (1.20.i.2, 1.21.ii.4, 12, 1.22.ii.26), and *'ilm*, “gods” (1.20.ii.2, 9).<sup>27</sup> The *rp'u* at the head of *KTU* 1.108.1 is likewise called *'il*. At the end of the Baal Cycle, the poetic parallelism likewise seems to presuppose the *rp'um* as “divinities”: “Shapshu rules the *rp'um*/Shapshu rules the divinities (*'ilnym*)/Your company are the gods (*'ilm*)/See, the dead are your company” (*KTU* 1.6.vi.45–49).<sup>28</sup> These passages comport with one of Dennis Pardee’s fine insights about *KTU* 1.161 as well as other poetic texts: “The poetic form of the text appears, therefore, to reflect the perception that talk about the gods was to be poetic in form.”<sup>29</sup> By implication, the poetic form of *KTU* 1.161 shows the understanding that both *rp'um* and the deceased kings in this ritual belong to “talk about the gods.” Second, they appear to be understood as a collective. They called *sd*, “assembly,” in 1.20.i.4 and *qbs* in both 1.161.3 and 10, which Pardee translates as “assembly.”<sup>30</sup> Third, these figures are identified with the dead. We have noted already their poetic parallelism with *mtm* at the end of the Baal Cycle. Apparently in 1.20.i.3 they are compared *kmtmtm*, “the ancient dead” in Lewis’s translation (comparative *k-*, plus superlative expression). It would seem that they themselves are not living but dead.<sup>31</sup>

### *rp'um and Kings*

The Ugaritic texts represent the *rp'um* in three types of relations with kings. The first appears in the one example of Doak’s “heroes in cult” in Ugaritic, namely, *KTU* 1.161.<sup>32</sup> This text is labeled in line 1 (written on the top of the tablet) as “the

<sup>26</sup> See Nicolas Wyatt, “The Religious Role of the King,” *UF* 37 (2005): 715–21.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, FAT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 82–83.

<sup>28</sup> Correctly in Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, HSM 39 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 36; Christopher B. Hays, *A Covenant with Death: Death in the Iron Age II and Its Rhetorical Uses in Proto-Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 107. Cf. Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 83, 88, apparently disregarding the oblique case ending on *rp'im*.

<sup>29</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, ed. Theodore J. Lewis, WAW 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 86.

<sup>30</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 87.

<sup>31</sup> I see no evidence for *rp'u* or the *Rp'um* in Ugaritic as living, as suggested in Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 81, 88–91. See the careful discussion of James Nathan Ford, “The ‘Living Rephaim’ of Ugarit: Quick or Defunct?” *UF* 24 (1992): 73–101; Wyatt, “The Religious Role of the King,” 721.

<sup>32</sup> For *KTU* 1.161, see Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic*, LSAWS 3 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 215–18; Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 85–88; Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, *Les textes en cunéiformes alphabétiques. Une bibliothèque au sud de la ville: Les*

document of the sacrifice(s) of the shades.” These include the collectivity called “the *rp’um* of the Earth” poetically parallel with “the assembly of Didanu.” These parallel expressions occur twice, in lines 2–3 and 9–10, and they frame a series of four individuals each listed by name plus the title *rp’u* in lines 4–8, denoting their status among “the *rp’um* of the Earth” and “the assembly of Didanu.”<sup>33</sup> They are not kings, to judge from the four king lists now known. At the same time, this collectivity is recalled in connection with the Ugaritic dynasty, as evidenced by the figures that are invoked in lines 11–12, two of the kings of the Ugaritic dynasty. In other words, this collectivity of “the *rp’um* of the Earth” is distinguished from the Ugaritic kings, as demarcated by the frame of lines 2–3 and 9–10, but they are placed before these kings, in effect as their predecessors, and together these heroes and kings are invoked (*\*qr’*). Moreover, just as each of the individual *rp’um* of the Earth is given the title *rp’u*, so the two individual monarchs are each given the title of *mlk*. While the two sets of leaders are differentiated by title, they are also construed in tandem. Thus, it is both these *rp’um* in lines 2–10 and the two kings in lines 11–12 that would appear to be the referent of “Shades” in the superscription.<sup>34</sup> Both the collectivity of the *rp’um* and the two kings are deceased, which would work with “Shades” as a reference to the deceased. In sum, in *KTU* 1.161, the *rp’um* are both distinguished from the dead kings of Ugarit and construed with them as antecedent.<sup>35</sup>

In the story of Kirta, the *rp’um* appear in a manner that parallels *KTU* 1.161 yet differs in one rather crucial way. As is well-known, El offers a blessing of King Kirta: “May you be greatly exalted, Kirta,/Among the *rp’um* of the Earth,/In

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*textes de la 34e campagne* (1973), Ras Shamra-Ugarit 7 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1991), 151–63; David T. Tsumura, “The Interpretation of the Ugaritic Funerary Text *KTU* 1.161,” in *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the First Colloquium on the Ancient Near East—The City and its Life held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo) March 20–22 1992*, ed. Eiko Matsushima (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1993), 40–55; Matthew Suriano, “Dynasty Building at Ugarit: The Ritual and Political Context of *KTU* 1.161/Construcción de la Dinastía en Ugarit. El contexto ritual y político de *KTU* 1.161,” *AO* 27 (2009): 105–23; Hays, *Death*, 108–10; Doak, *Last of the Rephaim*, 166–69; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 154–61, 457–64. Cf. Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 19–20.

<sup>33</sup> They are perhaps considered as standing in the line of *rp’u* known from *KTU* 1.108.1, discussed below. Cf. Danil’s title, “man of *rp’i*” in the story of Aqhat (*KTU* 1.17.i.17, 35, 37, 42, ii.28, v.5, 14, 34, 52; and 1.19.i.20, 37, 39, 47, ii.41, iv.13, 17, 18, 36). Pardee (“The ‘Aqhatu Legend,” *COS* 1.103:343 n. 1) connects the biblical title *hārāpā’*, used of warriors (2 Sam 21:16, 18 and 2 Sam 21:20, 22 // 1 Chr 20:6, 8), and *rp’u*, the eponymous ancestor of the *rp’um* in *KTU* 1.108.1 (see below). In view of the singular attestations of *\*rp’* in *KTU* 1.161, “man of *rp’i*” perhaps marks Danil as a devotee of this *rp’u*, as suggested by PNs such as *mtb’l*, “man of Baal” (*KTU* 4.75.v.21) and *šb’l*, “man of Baal” (*KTU* 4.617.ii.34, 4.623.8, 4.785.18, 4.807 I 23). See Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 137.

<sup>34</sup> Pardee (*Ritual and Cult*, 113 n. 123) takes the designation of “Shades” in line 1 as a general term for the *\*rp’um*.

<sup>35</sup> According to Valérie Matoïan, kings after their death join the *rp’um*. See Matoïan, “Hōron et Shed à Ugarit: textes et images,” *UF* 46 (2015): 270, 275–76.

the council of Ditanu's assembly (*qbš dtn*)" (*KTU* 1.15.iii.2–4 // 13–15).<sup>36</sup> The characterization of the *rp'um* here corresponds closely to the phrase *qbš ddn* used in *KTU* 1.161.3 and 10. Many scholars have noted further that "the assembly of Ditanu" seems to refer to the same distant ancestor *di-ta-na* that the Hammurabi dynasty included in its own genealogy (he also appears as a apparently eponymous divine ancestor, *dtn*, consulted for a ruling in *KTU* 1.124).<sup>37</sup> The relationship between the monarchy and the *rp'um* in Kirta differs from what is represented in *KTU* 1.161. In his story, it is hoped or assumed that upon his death, Kirta will join—in other words become one of—the *rp'um*. In this case, kingship is viewed not so much as a second stage following the *rp'um* but as a continuation of their line.

A third and rather different picture emerges in *KTU* 1.108.<sup>38</sup> Here a single *rp'u* heads up the text. As noted above he is labeled as *'il* and he is the initial focus of this text. What is notable for this discussion is that he himself is called *mlk*, "king," in line 1, and he is the figure requested to give blessing to the Ugaritic king in lines 18–27. In between these sections, other deities come into view: Anat in lines 6–10, some lesser known deities in lines 11–14, Rashaph in line 15, and Baal in line 18, and the *rp'um* of the earth (*r[p] 'i 'arš*) in lines 23–24 (see below). In short, *rp'u* is a single divine figure himself construed as monarch. This presentation is perhaps consonant with the reference to the *rp'um* more broadly as *zbl mlk*, "royal princes" in 1.22.i.10 (cf. 1.22.i.17 and 18). In sum, three rather different pictures of the *rp'um* appear with respect to the Ugaritic monarchy: *KTU* 1.161 constructs the *rp'um* as a stage of leadership parallel and prior to kings; the story of Kirta presents the aspiration for this king to join the *rp'um*; and *KTU* 1.108 represents a single *rp'u* as a king who can give blessing to a human king.

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<sup>36</sup> For various translations, see Edward L. Greenstein, "Kirta," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon B. Parker, WAW 9 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 26; Dennis Pardee, "The Kirta Epic," in *COS* 1.102:338; Simon B. Parker, "Some Methodological Principles," 29; Parker, *The Pre-Biblical Narrative Tradition: Essays on the Ugaritic Poems Keret and Aqhat*, RBS 24 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 89. The person is ambiguous (second person in the translation of Greenstein, but third person in the translations of Pardee and Parker), especially if the form *rm* in the first line is an adjective. Correspondingly, it is also unclear as to whether Kirta is addressed in the vocative (so Greenstein) or represented as the subject of the first line (so Pardee and Parker).

<sup>37</sup> For recent studies of this text, see Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt, "KTU 1.124 Revisited: A Second Opinion," *Journal des médecines cunéiformes* 24 (2014): 41–48; Watson and Wyatt, "KTU 1.124 Again: Further Reflexions," *UF* 45 (2015): 305–11. See also Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 72–82; Matoian, "Horon et Shed à Ugarit," 273; Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Incantations and Anti-Witchcraft Texts from Ugarit*, SANER 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 97–98.

<sup>38</sup> For a still unsurpassed treatment, see Dennis Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24<sup>e</sup> Campagne (1961)*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit IV (Mémoire no 77; Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988), 75–118. Cf. Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 192–95.



*The rp'um and Time*

Doak's study discusses the notion of "a heroic age" for the biblical Rephaim and other giant figures. By contrast, there is no description for "the heroic age" evoked by the mention of "the *rp'um* of the Earth." No specified period, such as the flood or the conquest, is provided as background for these figures in any of the Ugaritic texts. Still, from their position prior to the two named kings in *KTU* 1.161 it may be inferred that they were located in Ugaritic royal memory in the period preceding the kings. As known now from lists of Ugarit's kings, this period would have belonged to the distant past relative to the king sponsoring *KTU* 1.161. *KTU* 1.113 attests to twenty-six royal names<sup>39</sup> (it has been suggested by Pardee that perhaps double this number is indicated by the listing represented in four syllabic exemplars).<sup>40</sup> In either case, twenty-six kings at a minimum would place their heroic predecessors in a rather distant era. In other words, any putative "heroic age" from the perspective of the living king would have extended backwards through the royal line of known named kings, beginning with those belonging to living memory and back further to monarchs in times beyond living memory. They were known only by name (or, at least some of them were recalled in *KTU* 1.161 by their names). Recalled as a larger collective of "the *rp'um* of the Earth" (presumably the underworld) and "the Assembly of Ditanu," their names belonged to a distant past. As noted by Doak, the characterization of these figures as "the assembly of Didanu" as well as their further label as *rp'im qdmym*, "the ancient *rp'um*" in line 8 also extends a temporal horizon back in time. For these figures, if there was an imagined "heroic age," this would have been it, and yet it is never described. It does not survive as a recalled time; in other words, before such older kings there were heroes of "lost memory." We may contrast this with biblical historiography that does narrate a distant past time for the Rephaim, which was probably no less lost but was "imaginatively remembered."

Time is also a significant category for the characterization of *rp'u* in *KTU* 1.108, specifically as *rp'u mlk 'lm*.<sup>41</sup> The *rp'u* in this context, presumably the

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<sup>39</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 202, paralleled by the syllabic text, RS 94.2518, in Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 203–4.

<sup>40</sup> See Daniel Arnaud, "Prolégomènes à la rédaction d'une histoire d'Ougarit II: les bordereaux de rois divisés," *SMEA* 41 (1998): 153–73. See also Jordi Vidal, "The Origins of the Last Ugaritic Dynasty," *AJO* 33 (2006): 168–75. Vidal notes an Old Babylonian votive text from Nippur that relates an Ammistamar, a name attested for one of the "kings" of Ugarit, as "of Didanum, sheik of the Amorites." By implication, the earlier figures as named for the Ugaritic dynasty may not have been "kings" of Ugarit.

<sup>41</sup> This figure has been identified variously with El, Baal, Resheph, and *mlk*. None of these proposals is entirely persuasive; *mlk* may be the best suggestion. For reviews, see Mark S. Smith, "Kothar wa-Hasis, the Ugaritic Craftsman-God" (PhD diss, Yale University, 1985), 385–95; and H. Rouillard, "Rephaim," *DDD* 692–700.

imagined head of the *rp'um*, seems construed as a king (here *mlk* may be understood as king or less likely as the divine name *mlk*, with a possible an evocation or allusion of the meaning, “king”). More specifically, he is called *mlk 'lm*, either “*mlk*, the eternal one,” or as “king of eternity.” Either way, this figure is expressive of eternity.<sup>42</sup> Time is no less a feature at the end of this text, but there it involves future time. The blessing invoked at the end of the text is to extend into the indefinite future. The wish for the figure of *rp'u* to provide blessing is named explicitly in lines 19b–23, and lines 23b–27 project this wish for future blessing into the distant future<sup>43</sup>:

“From the *rp'um* of the Earth may your strength,  
Your power, your might,  
Your paternity, your splendor, be  
In the midst of Ugarit,  
For the days of Sun and Moon,  
And the goodly years of El.”<sup>44</sup>

The syntax and thus the precise involvement of the *rp'um* in this blessing are not entirely clear. They are mentioned in this text at lines 23b–24a according to the reading of *KTU* and Pardee.<sup>45</sup> More specifically, preceding the nouns in this formula quoted above is *lrp'i 'ars*, which for Pardee is the nominal predicate of the blessing (“Your strength will be that of the *Rapa'ūma* of the earth”<sup>46</sup>). The translation above stands closer to James Nathan Ford’s rendering: “To the *r[p]u ars* (may) your strength... (Be accorded)...”<sup>47</sup> This seems to entail less syntactical difficulty. At the same time, thematically it does not work well. It seems more likely that the blessing involving the *rp'um* of the Earth may parallel that of *rp'* in the immediately preceding lines 21–23: the blessing is in tandem from both *rp'u* and the *rp'um*. Both may be sources of blessing invoked for the king of Ugarit. Hence, I have taken *l-* as “from.” In any case, what is clear is the mention of

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 205 n. 6: “a reference to the atemporality of the afterlife.”

<sup>43</sup> *KAI* 10.8–10, 26.A.3.2–7; and Pss 21:5, and 72:15 has been compared by Michael L. Barré, “An Analysis of the Royal Blessing in the Karatepe Inscription,” *Maarav* 3 (1982): 177–94; Jonas C. Greenfield, *‘Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, ed. Shalom M. Paul, Michael E. Stone and Avital Pinnick, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2001), 2:716–19. For the blessing formula in the last two lines in comparison with *KTU* 1.179.38b–39a, see Johannes C. de Moor, “How Ilmilku Lost His Master (RS 92.2016),” *UF* 40 (2008): 185.

<sup>44</sup> See Ford, ““Living Rephaim,”” 77–80.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the older reading/reconstruction, *lr[mm]*, “to e[xalt],” in Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 21–22; Marvin H. Pope, *Probative Pontificating in Ugaritic and Biblical Studies: Collected Essays*, ed. Mark S. Smith, UBL 10 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 221–22.

<sup>46</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 195. Pope (*Probative Pontificating*, 221) assumes that this phrase belongs to the preceding colon.

<sup>47</sup> Ford, ““Living Rephaim,”” 77.

the *rp'um*. Together in *KTU* 1.108 *rp'u* and the *rp'um* may echo a distant, heroic past, but their named function here entails blessing for a heroic eternity stretching indefinitely into the future. They express a hope for the future of the past.

### *The rp'um and Space/Place*

As noted above, the “heroes in cult” in *KTU* 1.161 are present with deceased kings and at the performance of the ritual lamentation and offering on behalf of Ugarit and its central human agent, the living king. Invoked at the very head of the ritual in lines 2–9, the “heroes in cult” are represented as made present before any named kings. They also serve with the two kings in lines 22–26 as the objects of ritual lamentation as directed by Shapshu in lines 19–22. Thus “the heroes in cult” play a role in two major parts of this ritual text. In being invoked in lines 2–9 and in being part of the goal of the action in lines 19–26, these “heroes in cult” are the embodiment of a ritual “channel” opened between the ritual locus above and below in the “earth” or “underworld” (*'ars*) below, as captured further in the title, “*rp'um* of the Earth.” Thus, these figures mark two directions in time and space, not only time back into the distant past and into the distant future that we have already noted, but also space linking the world above on earth and the world below. The spatial dimension extends further outward in *KTU* 1.161, from the place of ritual involving the royal family out to the city of Ugarit and its walls as marked in the closing lines. It is the *rp'um*, along with the kings deceased and living, that gives to this ritual its core energy and power at the center of Ugaritic political life and imagination.

A very different representation appears in the only narrative devoted to the *rp'um*, namely in *KTU* 1.20–1.22. This text includes an invitation to these figures to journey for a seven-day feast involving eating and drinking at the threshing floor in the summer. The location is apparently a “house” (*bt*), said to be “in the heart of the Lebanon” (*b'irt lbnn*, 1.22.i.25–26). Perhaps most famous for the cedars that it supplied for building projects across the ancient Near East, the Lebanon bears a reputation for great fertility,<sup>48</sup> a place cultivated by the gods (*KTU* 1.22.i.19–20; cf. 1.17.vi.21). This resonance about the Lebanon appears also in the Hebrew Bible, for example in “the cedars of Lebanon” in parallelism with “the trees of God” in Ps 104:16 (cf. Ps 92:13), while the name of Solomon’s palace is “Lebanon Forest House” (NJPS, 1 Kgs 7:2, 10:17; cf. 2 Chr 9:16 and 20). Lebanon is sometimes imagined also as a dwelling of the gods, and it is the home of deities (cf. *'il lbnn*, “the gods of Lebanon,” in 1.148.3). Papyrus Amherst 63 (11.12) likewise expresses Lebanon as the center of cosmos: “From the

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<sup>48</sup> I am grateful to P. Kyle McCarter Jr. for drawing my attention to this point in an unpublished paper presented to the Colloquium for Biblical Research.

Lebanon, O Lord, ... you beat (?) the earth, you stretch the heavens.”<sup>49</sup> In Gilgamesh, the Lebanon is the home of the divine council.<sup>50</sup> Lebanon in *KTU* 1.22.i represents a periphery compared with Ugarit in *KTU* 1.161, and it also represents an ideal celebration as opposed to the royal lamentation as seen in *KTU* 1.161. Perhaps Lebanon represents the ideal after life, an ideal destiny. Furthermore, the association of the *rp’um* with the Lebanon was perhaps not a primary association for them. In a sense, this secondary association provided an Ugaritic perspective on the positive destiny awaiting the *rp’um*.

By contrast, the geography associated with the *rp’um* in *KTU* 1.108 evokes their origins. More specifically, lines 4–5 of this text name Ashtarot<sup>51</sup> and Edrei<sup>52</sup> as the places of the king *rp’u*: “the god who dwells (*yṯ b-*) in ‘Athtartu, The god who rules in (*ṯpṯ b-*) Hadra‘yi.”<sup>53</sup> It is to be noted that the first location is the place where *rp’u* dwells, or perhaps more accurately, is enthroned. The latter sense is more in keeping with DN + *yṯ b-* + GNs, one of four expressions for deities in

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<sup>49</sup> S. P. Vleeming and J. W. Wesseliuss, *Studies in Papyrus Amherst 63: Essays on the Aramaic Text in Aramaic/Demotic Papyrus Amherst 63*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Juda Palache Instituut, 1990), 55–56, followed largely by Karel van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, AOAT 448 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018), 152. I wish to thank Karel van der Toorn for bringing this reference to my attention. Cf. “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” trans. Richard C. Steiner, *COS* 1.99:316. See Mark S. Smith, *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*, Anchor Yale Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 89, and 175 n. 194. For further discussion of the Lebanon in association with deities, see Smith, *Where the Gods Are*, 89–90.

<sup>50</sup> Gilgamesh OB IM (Baghdad) 17–18 // OB Ishchali 38', and SBV V:6. See A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.268–69, 602–3, and 822 n. 6.

<sup>51</sup> For the form of the GN in BH as a “pseudo-plural,” see Frank Moore Cross, “Inscribed Arrowheads from the Period of the Judges,” in *Leaves from an Epigrapher’s Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy*, HSS 51 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 304 n. 12. This place name in Ugaritic is attested also in *KTU* 1.107.41, 1.107.42 and 4.790.17. It is suggested that *KTU* 4.790 may relate to Urtenu’s trade caravan; for this theory, see Kevin M. McGeough, *Ugaritic Economic Tablets: Text, Translation and Notes*, ed. Mark S. Smith, ANESSup 32 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 527. In this case, was this place on one of the routes? Later it was on the route of Tiglath-Pileser’s campaigns; see Mordechai Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Carta, 2015), 65. Note also the palace relief depicting the siege of Astartu, in Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 70; cf. *ANEP* {128, 293}, #366 (with a question-mark). For the place-name, see also Ashtarti in EA 197:10, 256:21, and ‘Astarat in Egyptian toponym lists (e.g., *ANET* 242). It may be only coincidental that rations for horses of the god *mlk* of this place is the topic of *KTU* 4.790.17, while loss of chariots are the issue named in EA 256:21.

<sup>52</sup> See *be-el id-ri* in Emar 158:6, noted in Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed., The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans: Dove Booksellers, 2002), 140 n. 14; see also Egyptian toponym lists (e.g., *ANET* 242).

<sup>53</sup> See Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 194. Credit for this observation goes to Baruch Margalit, “A Ugaritic Psalm (RS 24.252),” *JBL* 89 (1970): 292–304. See also Pope, *Probative Pontificating*, 198.

association with specific places. In this usage such figures are characterized like kings enthroned in particular locales.<sup>54</sup>

It has been noted how difficult it is to understand the biblical figure of Og in relation to the Ugaritic evidence for the Rephaim.<sup>55</sup> Og may be compared and contrasted on four points with the Ugaritic representations of *rp'u*. First, Og is said to have “reigned [*\*mlk*],” while *rp'u* is arguably enthroned, as noted above. Second, both figures are based in Ashtarot and Edrei. The geographical places for Og appear to be of a legendary sort as in Josh 12:4 and 13:12 and 31 (cf. Josh 21:27 as well as Deut 1:4, 3:1, 10). In Deut 4:10 these locales are called “royal cities.” Third, both figures appear to be associated more broadly with the collective as known in their respective traditions. For *rp'u* this consists of the figures described in *KTU* 1.108.5 as *hbr ktr t̄bm*, translated either as “the goodly companions of Kothar”<sup>56</sup> or possibly “the good ones divined by Kothar,”<sup>57</sup> which may be the *rp'um* themselves. In the case of Og, he is called “the last of the Rephaim.” Fourth and related, the place of *rp'u* and Og as represented in their lines or lineages is a point for both traditions: Og is the last of the Rephaim, while *rp'u* looks like an origins figure, perhaps an eponymous ancestor, of the *rp'um*. Finally, both Og, perhaps “man” *par excellence*,<sup>58</sup> and *rp'u*, an eponymous figure, may represent transformations of generic terms into mythic personages.

For all these shared or parallel features, there are important differences. There is no known tradition for a figure of Og at Ugarit,<sup>59</sup> and his name might reflect a local tradition in the northern Transjordan. Og also retains the tradition of being gigantic in scale (the scale of the *rp'um* at Ugarit is unknown). In view of their putative giant size represented by the tradition of Og, it is tempting to connect his tradition to the giant dolmens in the northern Transjordan, which might have suggested giant inhabitants in this region.<sup>60</sup> This would make this difference locally

<sup>54</sup> For DN + *\*yṯb b-* + GNs, see Smith, *Where the Gods Are*, 75–77.

<sup>55</sup> So Gregorio del Olmo Lete, “Og,” *DDD* 639.

<sup>56</sup> Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 194.

<sup>57</sup> Mark S. Smith, “The Magic of Kothar wa-Hasis, the Ugaritic Craftsman God, in *KTU* 1.6 VI 49–50,” *RB* 91 (1984): 377–80, followed by Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 36–37 n. 158.

<sup>58</sup> So Gregorio del Olmo Lete additionally notes the Ugaritic PN *bn 'gy*, in del Olmo Lete, “Og,” 639. The name of Og is compared with South Arabian *gaig/j* and Soqotri *'aig*, “husband,” by *HALOT* 794, citing Wolf Leslau, *Lexique Soqotri (subarabique modern)* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1938), 307, who translates the noun as “homme” (with the plural also referring to “garçon”). See also Chaim Rabin, “Og” [Hebrew], *ErIsr* 8 (1967): 25–54. Del Olmo Lete (“Og,” 638) additionally notes the Ugaritic PN *bn 'gy*.

<sup>59</sup> See Scott Noegel, “The Aegean Ogygos of Boeotia and the Biblical Og of Bashan: Reflections of the Same Myth,” *ZAW* 110 (1998): 411–26.

<sup>60</sup> For the dolmens in this region (with further references), see Ronald Hendel’s contribution to this volume, “Exodus, Conquest, and the Alchemy of Memory,” 103–32. Og’s “bed” in Deut 3:11 has been interpreted in a number of ways, famously as a bed of iron (a bed with metal pieces) or a “dolmen of basalt.” For surveys, see Alan R. Millard, “King Og’s Bed and Other Ancient Ironmongery,” in

inspired. In any case, *KTU* 1.108.15 represents a different geographical horizon for *rp'u* (and perhaps the *rp'um*), compared with either Ugarit as in *KTU* 1.161 or the Lebanon in 1.22. We not only see increasingly widening geographical horizons with the *rp'um*. Perhaps we gain a glimpse into the cultural sense of their legendary origins. The biblical tradition shows a constructed historiography for Og, while for *rp'u* there is no historiography as such.

The disparate geographies of *rp'u* and the *rp'um* offer a broader perspective on their place at Ugarit. It would seem that the Lebanon and the Transjordan represent strong traditions of specific places that made their way into larger literary traditions of Ugarit.<sup>61</sup> It may be surmised that these geographical traditions for these figures were associated with Ugarit secondarily. Thus, it would be unsurprising that narrative about their heroic past was not preserved. Although scholars lack access to an older heroic age of these figures in the Ugaritic texts, they do have access to two different geographical traditions located outside of Ugarit, one suggestive of heroic and perhaps giant origins and the other evocative of paradisaical destiny.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The concerns represented by *rp'um* that have been surveyed here are tied to the monarchy and the so-called major deities. The blessing speech at the end of *KTU* 1.108 includes both major deities and divinized dead who belong within the same royal scope of divine feasting and blessing. It shows the monarchic interest in the major gods, such as Anat, Baal and El, in tandem with *rp'u*, the divinized eponymous ancestor of the *rp'um*, and the *rp'um* themselves. At Ugarit, these deceased divinities and the major gods converge in the royal expression of concern for the

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*Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, JSOTSup 67 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 481–92; Timo Veijola, “King Og’s Iron Bed (Deut 3:11)—Once Again,” in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich*, ed. Peter Flint et al., VTSup 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 60–76; and Maria Lindquist, “‘King Og’s Iron Bed,” *CBQ* 73 (2011): 477–92. Lindquist proposes that the bed was a war-trophy the same size as Marduk’s bed (nine cubits long, four cubits wide), and that the author of Deut 3:11 knew this Mesopotamian information. For a Phoenician coffin inscription putatively understood to refer to Og, see Wolfgang Röllig, “Eine neue phönizische Inschrift aus Byblos,” in *Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphie*, ed. Rainer Degen, Walter W. Müller, and Wolfgang Röllig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974), 2:2; see also *HALOT* 795; and del Olmo Lete, “Og.” However, the pertinent line has been read differently by Cross, *Leaves*, 282–83; and *DNWSI* 824. See also Laura Quick, “Laying Og to Rest: Deuteronomy 3 and the Making of a Myth,” *Bib* 98 (2017): 161–72. For rabbinic traditions about Og, see Zvi Ron, “The Bed of Og,” *JBQ* 40 (2012): 29–34.

<sup>61</sup> Although *ddn/dtn* (noted above) seems to be associated with northern Syria, it is not provided with a geographical referent and so it is not included in this discussion of the geography of the *rp'um*. See Ford, “‘Living Rephaim’ of Ugarit,” 84.

kingdom's wellbeing and prosperity and also in the monarchy's concern for its place in the scheme of reality as mediator between the divine realms above and below and the human realm in-between.<sup>62</sup> The wide scope in the times and places associated with the *rp'um* expressed a range of important meanings and associations for the Ugaritic dynasty.

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<sup>62</sup> For this issue as it applies to the *rp'um* texts, see Gregorio del Olmo Lete, "Littérature et pouvoir royal à Ougarit. Sens politique de la littérature d'Ougarit," in *Études ougaritiques II*, ed. Valérie Matoïan, Michel Al-Maqdissi and Yves Calvet, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 20 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 247–48.



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## Dagan and the Ritualization of First Fruits at Emar

John Tracy Thames Jr.

The *zukru* Festival was a large-scale seven-day ritual event (with preparatory ceremonies occurring as far as a year in advance) that was observed at the Late Bronze Age city of Emar once every seven years. The festival is described as an offering to the god Dagan: the citizens of the city “give the *zukru* festival to Dagan” (Emar 373:169–170). That Dagan was the chosen recipient of this unparalleled ritual offering is unsurprising, since, after all, he was the traditional chief god of Middle Euphrates region and the *zukru* festival was Emar’s premier religious event. But what is peculiar about Dagan in the *zukru* festival is that he plays his role in a specific manifestation—that is, with the distinct title—as *bēl bukkari*, “the Lord of *bukkaru*.” That epithet is found only in texts related to the *zukru* in its festival version.<sup>1</sup> A shorter ritual—lacking the designation of “festival” (EZEN)—also exists (Emar 375+), perhaps for annual performance in between the septennial celebration years. In that version, Dagan does not appear as *bēl bukkari*. The manifestation of Dagan as *bēl bukkari* in the festival text is an

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It is my pleasure to offer this work to my teacher and mentor, P. Kyle McCarter Jr. As advisor to my dissertation on Emar’s *zukru* rituals, he was deeply involved in untangling the knots of Emar’s divinity and ritual practices. He argued that divinity must be understood within a deep matrix of cultural knowledge—a reflection of the influence of his own teacher, Thorkild Jacobsen. In the broadest sense, commitment to such depth and precision is characteristic of all of McCarter’s work. I am grateful for the generosity and patience with which he modeled these standards for his students. This chapter is an adapted version of work now published in John Tracy Thames Jr., *The Politics of Ritual Change: The *zukru* Festival in the Political History of Late Bronze Age Emar*, HSM 65 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 134–50, with thanks to Brill for allowing its inclusion in the present volume.

<sup>1</sup> The title occurs eleven times in Emar 373+ (one instance of which is confidently reconstructed and two of which occur in the indirectly joined portion of Emar 374) and twice in the sacrificial list Emar 378, though the text is partially broken in both cases. It is possible that the Emarite PN *BU-QA-ru* could be connected to the lemma under consideration, though there is no evidence with which to adjudicate. See RE 11:4, Emar 129:4 and possibly *BU-UK-[KA-ru(?)]* in Emar 114:12. The latter, however, may be more likely to correspond with the PN *Buqmu*, written *bu-uq-<sup>l</sup>me<sup>1</sup>* in Emar 65:23 and *bu-uq-mi* in 337:16.

innovation, either by the creation of an entirely new aspect of the god or by incorporating a preexisting manifestation into the *zuku* festival format. In either case, this aspect of the god is at the core of *zuku* festival practice, so much that we should think of Emar's *zuku* in its festival version as inextricably related to the *bukkaru* aspect of Dagan. The interpretation of other elements of the ritual, which are only tersely described, will necessarily follow from the primary issue of the god's nature. In this way, understanding Dagan *bēl bukkari* is the key to understanding the significance of the *zuku* festival for its participants.

Dagan *bēl bukkari* is the first deity to be named on the most important days of both the festival event, itself, and the prior-year preparatory rites.<sup>2</sup> His residence must have been within the city, since, like the other gods, he was brought out from there in order to process to the extramural Gate of *sikkānu*-stones, though whether he enjoyed his own permanent temple or shrine in the city is unknown. In accordance with his primacy in the ritual, which was, after all, "given" to him, his offering portions easily outweighed those of even the other highly exalted gods. Dagan *bēl bukkari* was also the most active divine participant in the ritual. He took part in rites of veiling and unveiling his face, perambulated the *sikkānu*-stones in his vehicle, and directed his movements towards the god <sup>d</sup>NIN.URTA, whom he welcomed into his vehicle for the return to the city.

For all his fundamental importance to the core nature of the festival, the actual meaning of Dagan's title in this manifestation has been a matter of uncertainty. The first editor of the Emar texts, Daniel Arnaud, read the word as a West Semitic form, *buqaru*, translating the epithet, "seigneur des bovins."<sup>3</sup> Refuting such an

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<sup>2</sup> On the 25th of Niqalu in the preparatory year, the god is called, rather, Dagan *bēl* SIG4. This variation is discussed below.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the West Semitic words for "cattle," Hebrew *bāqār*, Aramaic *baqrā*, Arabic *baqar*. This interpretation has been followed by a number of subsequent readers of the text. Eugene Pentiuć, *West Semitic Vocabulary in the Akkadian Texts from Emar*, HSS 49 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 36–37; Mark Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1993), 346; Ran Zadok, "Notes on the West Semitic Material from Emar," *AION* 51 (1991): 116; Volkert Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*, HdO I.15 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 571–72; Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 561. Though no lemma *buqaru* exists in standard Akkadian, such a word is used once in the Akkadian of Mari (ARM 2 131:39, *bu-qa-ru*). This case helps to alleviate the problem of the *u::a* vowel pattern, which stands against the unanimous *qatal* pattern attested in the cognates. However, in the sole instance in which *vbqr* is used to designate cattle at Emar, the vocalization is *baqara* (Emar 327:9). Note the *a::a* vowel pattern, which is expected based on the cognate data, and the orthography using the QA-sign (*/qa/*) rather than KA (*/qà/*), as Emar 373+ would demand. There is some evidence for variation between *a* and *u* in Emar noun patterns that could allow both lemmata to exist, designating the same idea; cf. Stefano Seminara, *L'accadico di Emar*, Materiali per il vocabolario sumero 6 (Rome: Università degli studi di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di studi orientali, 1998), 136–38. Jean-Marie Durand denies the presence of the word in Emar 327, reading *ša<sup>m</sup>Ma-qa-ra* for Daniel Arnaud's *ša ina ba-qa-ra* in the editio princeps (Review of Daniel Arnaud, *Recherches au Pays d'Aštata*, Emar

understanding on orthographic grounds<sup>4</sup>, Daniel Fleming—the most prolific writer on Emar ritual to date—and, independently, Lluís Feliu, who sought to profile Dagan cross-culturally and diachronically, saw the term as derived from the Akkadian noun *bukru*, “child,” yielding an aspect of Dagan as “Lord of the Offspring.”<sup>5</sup> The “offspring” referenced in the title would be lower gods and “lord” implies Dagan’s role as their father. Thus, a picture of Dagan as progenitor of the gods was developed for the *zukru* festival,<sup>6</sup> leading Fleming to formulate an interpretation of the *zukru* complex as celebrating Dagan’s “highest calling as the head of the pantheon, the father of the gods.”<sup>7</sup>

A “Lord of the Offspring” is plausible, at least on formal grounds. Certainly, in some instances in Bronze Age Syria, Dagan was thought of as a kind of father-god.<sup>8</sup> But it is less than clear that a “lord of the offspring” should be seen as semantically equivalent to “father of the gods.” The expression of paternity through

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VI, *Textes sumériens et accadiens*, vol. 1, 2 et 3, RA 84 [1990]: 84). For the PN *Maqara*, see Emar 336:65. Durand does not explain, however, how *ina* (= AŠ) is to be interpreted as the *personenkeil* (= DIŠ). Contra Durand, see also Pentiuć, *West Semitic Vocabulary*, 36.

<sup>4</sup> The writing of *bu-KA-ru* to spell */buqaru/* requires that KA = *qā*, which is an extremely rare sign value in Emar Akkadian, probably to be read only nine times in the entire corpus: Emar 274:7, where */qa/* is suggested by 452:15; 91:36 (PN), where */qa/* is suggested by comparison to AuOrS 1 44:18; RE 60:8, 12 (PN), where */qa/* is suggested by comparison to Emar 118:1, 16; 446:42; 537:42, 175. Pentiuć, with reference to Jun Ikeda, “A Linguistic Analysis of the Akkadian Texts from Emar: Administrative Texts” (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 1995), 284, notes that the value *qā* is an acceptable reading for KA at Emar, but fails to consider the extreme paucity of evidence (*West Semitic Vocabulary*, 37). In the text of Emar 373+, itself, the KA-sign is in all other cases to be read */ka/*. This caution has not deterred Mark Cohen, who has recently revived the notion that this Dagan was a Lord of the Cattle (*Festivals and Calendars of the Ancient Near East* [Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2015], 333). These considerations argue in favor of a *II-k* root.

<sup>5</sup> Fleming, *Time at Emar: The Cultic Calendar and the Rituals from the Diviner’s Archive*, MC 11 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 89, 235, et passim. Lluís Feliu, *The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria*, CHANE 19 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 239. See also, Lluís Feliu “Lord of the Offspring” *AuOr* 17–18 (1999–2000): 197–200. The form of the noun in this case would be based on standard Akkadian *bukru*, with the insertion of an anaptyctic vowel. Anaptyxis, when it occurs in Emar Akkadian, almost always occurs in the environment of the consonant *r*, which gives a good explanation for its presence here (Seminar, *L’accadico di Emar*, 153–54; GAG §12b). Fleming’s translation of Emar 373 (*Time at Emar*), however, contains some alternation between “Lord of the Offspring” (lines 12, 45, 78, 170, 171, 180, 187) and the more West Semitic-looking “Dagan Lord of the Firstborn” (lines 41, 77).

<sup>6</sup> The divinely paternal nature of Dagan is putatively reinforced by his designation elsewhere in Emar 373+ as Dagan *abumma*, which both Fleming and Feliu translate as “the very father” (Emar 373:190). I contest this understanding of the phrase in 373:190 (see below).

<sup>7</sup> Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 91.

<sup>8</sup> Fleming and Feliu point to Old Babylonian Mari, where Dagan is called “Father of the great gods” (a-a dingir gal-gal-e-ne / *a-bi* DINGIR<sup>[mes]</sup> *ra-bu-tim*) and “Begetter of the gods” (a-a ugu dingir-e-[ne] / *a-bu-tum mu-[wa-lid]* DINIGR<sup>[mes]</sup>) A. 1258+:9, 10. Dominique Charpin, “Les malheurs d’un scribe ou de l’inutilité de sumérien loin de Nippur” in *Nippur at the Centennial*, ed. Maria de Jong Ellis, CRAI 35 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1992), 9. They additionally reference an early second millennium inscription from Aleppo, which calls Dagan “Father of the gods”

the noun *bēlu*, “lord, master,” would be an irregular use of the term, which properly implies ownership and, when given as a title to a deity, suggests his/her management of or responsibility for a named phenomenon, place, or thing.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the noun *bukru* is not elsewhere used in the Emar texts as a reference to the gods<sup>10</sup> and in only one case—in a canonical literary text inherited from Mesopotamia—does the noun clearly have the meaning “offspring” in Emar, at all.<sup>11</sup>

Still, there has been an additional source of support for the idea that Dagan was viewed as a father-god in the *zukru*, derived from line 190 in the festival text (Emar 373): <sup>4</sup>KUR *a-BU-ma* ... *ú-še-šu-ú<sup>1</sup>*, “they will bring out Dagan *a-BU-ma*.” Fleming and Feliu’s understanding of this line indicates that the participants will bring out “Dagan, the very father (*abumma*)” in procession. In such an understanding, this moment is something of an apex for the festival, where the core concern of the ritual—Dagan’s supremacy among the gods—is revealed.

But for reasons I have described in depth elsewhere, “the very father” is a phantom aspect of Dagan.<sup>12</sup> The word *a-BU-ma* is not a title of Dagan nor a reference to the character of the god at all. It is a much more quotidian note that pertains to the instructions for the veiling and unveiling of Dagan’s face—a rite that is meticulously recorded throughout the text. Line 190 instructs that the participants should bring forth Dagan “visible” (reading *a-pu-ma*, /*apûma*/), since during his departure earlier that day, his face was veiled (*kuttumû*, line 189) and since, later that day, they will again veil (*ukattamû*) his face (line 192).

The actual events of the festival and the symbols that they employ further fail to reflect upon themes such as Dagan’s paternal nature or the ascendancy of Dagan over the other gods, which is rather taken for granted. Nothing indicates an enthronement ritual for Dagan or emphasizes his role as progenitor of gods.<sup>13</sup>

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(*a-bi* DINGIR<sup>bi.a</sup>). Daniel Fleming, “Baal and Dagan in Ancient Syria,” *ZA* 83 (1993): 88 n. 5; Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 90, esp. n. 178; Feliu, “Lord of the Offspring,” 198–99.

<sup>9</sup> Thorkild Jacobsen, “Mesopotamian Gods and Pantheons,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* 2 (1963): 972–78; repr. in *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William Moran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 18.

<sup>10</sup> The noun *bukru* can be used in standard Akkadian to describe divine figures when questions of their parentage arise, though it does not, in itself, imply a reference to divinity. The only other attestation of *bukru* (vocalized as such) with the meaning “offspring” in Emar documentation (Emar 378, see next note) refers to *human* offspring.

<sup>11</sup> The text is Emar 378:6, the composition known as *šimâ milka*, discovered also at Ugarit (*Ugaritica* 5 163) and Boghazköy (KUB 4.3 + KBo 12.70). Though it is assumed to stem from a core-Mesopotamian original version, the text is presently known only in peripheral Akkadian contexts.

<sup>12</sup> For a much fuller discussion of the implausibility of “Dagan, the very father,” see Thames, *Politics of Ritual Change*, 142–44.

<sup>13</sup> For detailed analyses of individual festival rites and the significance of their performances in the *zukru* complex, see Thames, *Politics of Ritual Change*.

Thus, we are left with no compelling reason to see the ritual as especially celebrating Dagan's divine parenthood or kingship or to read a statement of divine paternity in his festival title *bēl bukkari*.

Dagan *bēl bukkari*, rather, represents something local. The native language of Emar was a West Semitic dialect. "Dagan *bēl bukkari*" is a proper name with a proper title for a West Semitic god. Even though the text is written in Akkadian, proper nouns should not be expected to take on Akkadianized meanings when they carry a distinct nuance in the substrate dialect. The root  $\sqrt{bkr}$ , in fact, is a well-known lemma with a unique meaning in West Semitic for designating primogeniture—the state of being born or produced first.<sup>14</sup> It should be considered a matter of course that it is this meaning that would be fundamental to the designation of a West Semitic god. Dagan *bēl bukkari* is a uniquely Emarite (indeed, uniquely *zukru*) god and should accordingly reflect ideas that would be epistemically appropriate for Emar's West Semitic population. The interpretation of *bukkaru* must find its center in the nexus of ideas about primogeniture.

This etymological expectation is supported by the descriptions of Dagan in the *zukru* festival text, which offer insights into the character of Dagan that have previously gone unrecognized. Dagan's title, *bēl bukkari*, can be connected with another epithet, *bēl SIG<sub>4</sub>*. The latter title occurs only once in the text (line 18), in the description of rites for the 25th of Nīqalu in the year preceding the primary *zukru* events. Dagan *bēl SIG<sub>4</sub>* is brought out in procession, his face veiled, in a parade of sacrificial animals that leads him to a kind of outdoor shrine. The title *bēl SIG<sub>4</sub>* also appears in some sacrificial offering lists, the divine population of which show affinities with the longer *zukru* text.<sup>15</sup>

The logogram *SIG<sub>4</sub>* represents the Akkadian word *libittu*, "brick." Hence translates Arnaud, "seigneur des briques," and Fleming, "The Lord of Brickwork"—the latter speculating that this Dagan was responsible for renovations to the city in preparation for the following year's festival event.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The use of the term for designating primogeniture is attested at Emar in the personal name <sup>m</sup>*Bu-kur-ŠEŠ-šú* ("His Brother is the Firstborn"; *ASJ* 13:29), here for designating a firstborn child. Fleming seems to have recognized the possibility of this implication in *bukkaru*: twice in his edition of Emar 373+ he translates the title "Lord of the Firstborn" (lines 41 and 77; cf. the seven times he translates "Lord of the Offspring," lines 12, 45, 78, 170, 171, 180, and 187). His discussion clearly depends on an understanding based on "Offspring," so what he envisioned a "Lord of the Firstborn" to be is unclear. "Firstborn," a term which implies social statuses associated with human birth order, seems not to be at stake in the interests of this ritual.

<sup>15</sup> Emar 380:3; 381:6.

<sup>16</sup> Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 67 n. 66. Cf. also Feliu, who suggests that this Dagan was concerned with the success of urbanism, pointing also to Dagan's title "Lord of Inhabited Regions" later in the text (*God Dagan*, 242). There is no precedent for a "Lord of the Brick" elsewhere, though a brick-god, Kulla, existed in southern Mesopotamia. It was only the molding of bricks that fell under Kulla's purview, however, as the task of laying bricks for building foundations was assigned to the builder-god, Mušdamma, according to the composition "Enki and the World Order," ETCSL 1.1.3, 335–357.



When evaluating Dagan *bēl* SIG<sub>4</sub>, it is essential to note that Emar 373+ recounts the instructions for the festival twice: once with a focus on the distribution of sacrifices and again with a focus on ritual actions.<sup>17</sup> Because of this format, most of the days of the festival are named twice and some of the content described for each is repeated. When the repetitive structure of the text is taken into account and the same days that are covered in parts 1 and 2 are read together, a revelation about the god occurs: Dagan *bēl* SIG<sub>4</sub> is Dagan *bēl bukkari*.

<p><sup>17</sup>[On the next day,] on the 25th [day], all the gods and the <i>šašabēnānu</i></p> <p><sup>18</sup>[will go out...] <u>Dagan <i>bēl</i> SIG<sub>4</sub></u> will process out, his face veiled.</p>	<p><sup>180</sup>In the month of Niqalu [on the 25th day <u>Dagan <i>bēl</i> bukkari</u> and all the gods</p> <p><sup>181</sup>they will bring out to the Gate of the <i>sikkānu</i>-stones, [his fa]ce veiled for his departure <sup>182</sup>and his return.</p>
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In part 2 of the text, it becomes clear that the god who is brought out in procession to the outdoor shrine with his face veiled, previously called Dagan *bēl* SIG<sub>4</sub>, is the same individual as Dagan *bēl bukkari*. These two names refer to the same title of the same god, but only in different writings. This equation is upheld also by the Emarite sacrificial lists, which contain either Dagan *bēl bukkari* or Dagan *bēl* SIG<sub>4</sub>, but never both since they are, in fact, the same deity.<sup>18</sup>

We should not infer, however, that SIG<sub>4</sub> actually stands for the word *bukkaru* in this text. In the first place, there is no evidence of SIG<sub>4</sub> ever designating anything other than the Akkadian word *libittu* (or perhaps a local synonym). In the second place, were we to suppose the Emarite scribe innovated a non-standard logographic value for SIG<sub>4</sub>, to my knowledge, there is no Semitic word with  $\sqrt{bkr}$  that could conceivably correspond to the semantic range of that logogram. Thus, we can only conclude that the same manifestation of the god is referenced by written forms whose terms correspond inexactly.

To understand the connection of an ostensible “Lord of Brick” with *bēl bukkari*, which relates to primogeniture, it must be clarified that the “brick” (SIG<sub>4</sub>) need not refer to an architectural block of clay.<sup>19</sup> In fact, in texts of local authorship, SIG<sub>4</sub> never actually refers to a brick in that sense.<sup>20</sup> When all the uses of SIG<sub>4</sub> in local texts are considered together, it becomes clear that SIG<sub>4</sub>, in local

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There is no evidence for cultic worship of Kulla in any period; see Wilfred Lambert, “The Sumero-Babylonian Brick-God Kulla,” *JNES* 46 (1987): 203–4.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, the document is a three-part text, though the final section is too broken to be adequately understood. The third section begins in line 205 and is supplemented by Emar 374:14–20.

<sup>18</sup> Compare Emar 380 and 381 with Emar 378.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Emar 545:268–69; 610:22, 42.

<sup>20</sup> SIG<sub>4</sub> can be found in the Emar texts referring to mudbricks, but these uses are confined to the canonical Mesopotamian lexical series and omen compendia.

parlance, is a bit of ritual terminology. Outside of its three occurrences in the divine title Dagan *bēl* SIG<sub>4</sub>, the term is always used to describe a ritual offering: SIG<sub>4</sub> PĒŠ, which renders Akkadian *libitti titti*, “a ‘brick’ of fig(s).”

This use of Akkadian *libittu* is not novel. Although it is most frequently used in core-Akkadian to designate building material, the term can be used to refer to any unit of commodity in the shape of a rectangular prism—what might be described as a “slab.”<sup>21</sup> The “brick” in this divine title refers to a flat-sided, quadrilateral container for measuring, storing, and transporting fruit—at Emar, it seems, for the express purpose of ritually offering produce to the gods. The most precise translation of *bēl* SIG<sub>4</sub> would be “Lord of the Flat.” Flats are especially useful for packaging fragile produce in such a way that provides protection while also allowing compact storage.

If the “Lord of the Flat (of produce)” and the “Lord of *bukkaru*” are the same god, but *bukkaru* is not the name of the “flat” itself then it must be the case that *bukkaru* designates the contents of the flat—the produce. That proposition can be confirmed etymologically. The root  $\sqrt{bkr}$  is characterized by the idea of primogeniture in the most literal sense of the word: “that which is generated first”—a concept that is not limited to human “firstborns.” The  $\sqrt{bkr}$  nouns fundamentally mean “early things, firstlings,” from which secondary attachments to particular types of firstlings arise. One of the best-known uses of  $\sqrt{bkr}$  in a nominal form is the designation of the ritual offering in Biblical Hebrew called *bikkûrîm*, “first fruits,” also reflected in Arabic *bākûrat*, “early fruit.”<sup>22</sup> Closer to the Middle Euphrates, the same may be reflected in Eblaite *ba-ga-ru*<sub>12</sub>(LU),<sup>23</sup> a lexical correspondent to Sumerian NE.SAG, which, difficult as that term is, may suggest a connotation of “first fruits.”<sup>24</sup> The Dagan of the *zukru* festival is the “Lord of

<sup>21</sup> CAD 9, s. v. “libittu C.” For the currency of such use in Late Bronze Peripheral Akkadian, see EA 19:38.

<sup>22</sup> Lane, s. v. “بَاكُورَةٌ.”

<sup>23</sup> MEE 4.243. See Manfred Krebernik, “Zu Syllabar und Orthographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla. Teil 2 (Glossar),” ZA 73 (1983): 13.

<sup>24</sup> The first fruits connotation of NE.SAG was established by J. van Dijk, “Une insurrection generale au pays le Larša avant l’avenement de Nūr-Adad,” JCS 19 (1965): 18–24. For further discussion of the meaning of the term, see Wolfgang Heimpel, “The Nanshe Hymn,” JCS 33 (1981): 104–5; Gebhard Selz, “ne-saḡ, bur-saḡ und gú-ne(-saḡ-ḡa): Zu zwei Gefässbezeichnungen, ihren Bedeutungs-entwicklungen und einem sumerischen Wort für (Gefäß)schrank,” SEL 13 (1996): 3–8. In his short note, “ne-saḡ,” NABU (1994): 72–73, Heimpel eschewed the reading of *bu-ga-ru*<sub>12</sub> for MEE 4.243, preferring to see *pa-ga-lu*, a libation vessel, as the Eblaite parallel to NE.SAG. However, that reading does not take into account line 270 with a similar orthography *bū-ga-ru*<sub>12</sub>, parallel to DUMU.SAG with the clear implication of a  $\sqrt{bkr}$  root. That consideration, of course, does not necessitate the same root for the NE.SAG entry, though it provides an orthographic precedent in a seemingly related semantic field.

First Fruits” or the “Lord of the Flat (of First Fruits)” — a variant title in which the “flat” stands metonymically for the collected harvest of first fruits.<sup>25</sup>

The most abundant source of data for ritualizing with first fruits is the Hebrew Bible, where rituals of first produce stand in the broader context of primogenitary offerings that also includes the sacrifice of firstborn animals and humans.<sup>26</sup> The Hebrew term *bikkûrîm* refers to the first yield issued by all manner of plants and trees.<sup>27</sup> As a ritual good, they must be offered to the deity. Deuteronomy requires this donation continuously for every type of crop as its first harvest occurs.<sup>28</sup> In Priestly writings, first fruits are particularly associated with grain harvests, both barley and wheat, which must be offered in the sanctuary upon first harvest.<sup>29</sup> But the occasion of the wheat harvest, which provides the setting for the Feast of Weeks, has a special attachment to first fruits. It is the event that is called *yôm*

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<sup>25</sup> Considering the uniqueness of SIG<sub>4</sub> to the offering of PÈŠ “figs” elsewhere in Emarite ritual, it is also possible to understand *bukkaru* as designating a specific type of fruit: the early fig. Biblical Hebrew would also provide cognate evidence for that understanding with the word *bikkûrâ*, the “early fig” (cf. Isa 28:4; Jer 24:2; Hos 9:10; Mic 7:1). The same meaning was, at some point, attached to Arabic *bākûrat*, as well, since that word was borrowed into Portuguese and Spanish (with the Arabic definite article) as a term designating an early ripening fig, *albacora*. There is much to commend an interpretation of Dagan’s festival title relating to figs. That fig harvests were a landmark calendrical event is demonstrated by the Old Assyrian month name, *te’inātum*, “(month of) figs.” Moreover, the remarkable process of fig horticulture, which was facilitated by the ancient discovery of caprifigation, provides a powerful metaphor for humanity’s intervention in nature under divine aegis for the creation of a superior environment—a theme that might be reflected elsewhere in *zukru* ideology. However, I do not advocate for this understanding here since no other element in the festival suggests attention specifically to figs. The broader interpretation in the context of first fruits, from which the “early fig” terms, after all, derive, better aligns with the more general agricultural interests of the event.

<sup>26</sup> Four legal expressions are given to the demand on human and animal firstlings, found in the Book of the Covenant (Exod 22:28–29), the Priestly codes (Lev 27:26–27; Num 18:15–17), Deuteronomy (15:19–23), and the laws of Exod 13 (vv. 11–16). The Covenant Code states the requirement categorically: “You will give to me [Yahweh] your firstborn (*b’kôr*) sons. So also will you do concerning the ox and the herd. He will be with his mother seven days; on the eighth day you must give him to me” (Exod 22:28–29). Exodus 13 preserves a less rigid requirement, acknowledging the special status of all firstlings but allowing human and donkey firstlings, apparently the two most valuable classes, to be redeemed. Other formulations of the law of the firstborn place an emphasis only on non-human animals, apparently excluding humans from the requirement entirely. In Priestly reckoning, firstborns are innately consecrated and so they belong to God from birth. Deuteronomy requires the consecration of firstborns, showing that it does *not* perceive them as innately consecrated, although they are still owed to Yahweh. In both cases, the requirement for firstborn sacrifice is self-evident: Yahweh is a god who requires first progeny.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Num 18:13, *bikkûrê kol ’ăser b’e’aršām*; Neh 10:36, *bikkûrê ’admātēnū ūbikkûrê kol p’rî kol ’eš*; grapes in Num 13:20, *bikkûrê ’anābîm*; wheat in Exod 34:22, *bikkûrê q’šîr ḥittîm*.

<sup>28</sup> “You will take some of the first fruit of the ground which you harvest from the land... and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place which the Lord your god will choose” (Deut 26:2).

<sup>29</sup> This understanding stems from the festival calendar in the Holiness Code, Lev 23. For the identification of the crop in each case, which is unspecified in Lev 23, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1982.

*habbikkûrîm* in the Priestly source. The same occasion is celebrated as a pilgrimage festival in Deuteronomy, the *ḥag šābū'ôt*, and in the Second Temple period becomes the *ḥag habbikkûrîm*.<sup>30</sup> In this way, *bikkûrîm* denotes not only a ritual good, but also gives a title for the fixed, annualized ritual offering of agricultural first-fruits before the god, the primary purpose of which was to effect the bestowal of divine blessing<sup>31</sup> and “to beseech the Deity for a bountiful harvest.”<sup>32</sup>

The *zukru* festival, itself, does not seem to have been a first fruits ritual. There is no evidence that offerings of first fruits were presented to the deities in the course of the event and no special attention to any one crop that might have been harvested at the time. Moreover, the timing of the event at the first month of the year, which would correspond with the time of the autumn planting, does not suggest a harvest setting.<sup>33</sup> Rather than waiting until harvest time, this ritual seeks the blessing of the god of first fruits at the time of planting, when the crops will become established for success at harvest. It seeks this favor not through the offering of first fruits, but through ritual appeasement of the god at the outset of the growing season. The offering of first-fruits outside of coordination with the seasonal harvest is otherwise known from late antique Judaism

These are not the only reasons to understand the *zukru* as specially related to the agricultural cycle. Certain designated actors in the *zukru* material, such as the *zirāti*-men (Emar 373:40), whose name connects them to the activity of sowing, and another group called “the cultivators of the land” (Emar 375+:48), underscore this connection not just through their agricultural connections but through specific emphasis on the preparatory stages of farming. The shorter *zukru* text may contain a ritual requirement to abstain from plowing during the sacred events (Emar 375+:46, partially broken), which would demonstrate that the act of agricultural preparation was not incidental to the backdrop of the festival, but rather an integral concern of its execution.<sup>34</sup>

Even as the *zukru* festival itself was probably not an occasion upon which first fruits offerings would have been made, this aspect of Dagan apparently relates to a broader network of ritual ideas at Emar. It is likely that first fruits offerings did occur in other Emarite ritual events. In Emar 446, the archaic six-month ritual calendar, and event called *bu-GA-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>* is prescribed, which should

<sup>30</sup> See 11QT 19:9.

<sup>31</sup> See Ezek 40:30 for an illustration of this goal.

<sup>32</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1992. Abstinence from consuming portions of produce at prescribed times is described explicitly as a method of increasing agricultural yield in Lev 19:23–25. Here, the Israelites abstain from eating the harvest three years, consecrate the crop of the fourth year for Yahweh, and finally eat the produce of the fifth year, when the yield will be greater by the god’s intervention.

<sup>33</sup> For the likelihood that the Emarite year began with the autumnal equinox, see Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 132; 211–13. The same was true in Upper Mesopotamia at least in the Old Assyrian period; see Dominique Charpin, “Les archives d’époque ‘assyrienne’ dans le palais de Mari,” *M.A.R.I.* 4 (1985): 246.

<sup>34</sup> For this reading of Emar 375+:46, see Fleming, *Time at Emar*, 265.

now be read *bu-kà-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>*. The text relates no details about the ritual, only stating this word—the name of the event—and providing a date for its observance.<sup>35</sup> Another textual fragment, which records the donation of ritual goods to a deity whose name is not preserved, appears to call for an offering of *bu-uk-ku-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>*.<sup>36</sup> The precise meaning of these ritual terms, *bu-kà-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>* and *bu-uk-ku-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>*, is unclear and the contexts of their appearances are vague.<sup>37</sup> Yet we can recognize that they exist in a nexus with the epithet of Dagan *bēl bukkari* and, by virtue of this recognition, we may see that *bukkaru* is a ritual concept deeply woven into Emarite ritual practice. In addition to giving Dagan his festival title, this idea bequeaths the proper name of a ritual event (*bu-kà-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>*) and characterizes a type of ritual offering (*bu-uk-ku-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>*). The impact is to see that primogeniture was an important ritual concept in Emar and that Dagan, in his manifestation as *bēl bukkari*, had a unique connection with the ritualization of the first fruits of agriculture.

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<sup>35</sup> Emar 446:85. The event is dated for the 15<sup>th</sup> of Marzahānu, month V of the calendar. As a winter month, agricultural first fruits would be unexpected here, unless the people of Emar kept such offerings in storage for the appropriate times, as the Talmud describes for ancient Israel (see m. Bikk. 1:9). Even for Israel, however, it is not clear that offerings were kept for especially long periods before being brought to the temple. Some other type of primogenitary offering or rite might, rather, be at stake at Emar. Arnaud understands *bu-GA-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>* as another term for “bovins.” Fleming leaves the word untranslated (*Time at Emar*, 275), a strategy followed more recently by Bryan Babcock, *Sacred Ritual: A Study of the West Semitic Ritual Calendars in Leviticus 23 and the Akkadian Text Emar 446*, BBR Supp. 9 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 165 and n. 111. Babcock, however, mistakes Fleming’s discussion of the term’s orthography for arguments about its meaning.

<sup>36</sup> Emar 406:5. The offering is given by a group called *munabbiātu*, evidently a class of female divine invocation specialists. See further, Jonathan Stökl, “The מתבבאות in Ezekiel 13 Reconsidered” *JBL* 132 (2013): 61–76.

<sup>37</sup> It is certainly possible that both should be translated simply as “first fruits,” only in feminized forms for the designation of the event and offering, themselves. Quite likely, *bu-uk-ku-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>* is even morphologically related to the Biblical Hebrew term *bikkûrîm*. The *qattûl* nominal pattern of *bu-uk-ku-ra-tu<sub>4</sub>*, which makes explicit the geminated middle radicle that should be read in all of the *√bkr* words in question, first of all, shows that the word is West Semitic, since there is no *qattûl* in standard Akkadian. *bukkûr-* at Emar likely reflects the common West Semitic form of the same word that evolves into *bikkûr-* in Iron Age Hebrew through the expected phonological change known as back-vowel dissimilation. See Joshua Fox, *Semitic Noun Patterns*, HSS 59 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 275–76; GKC §84<sup>b</sup>.

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## Arameans in the Zagros: The Cuneiform and Aramaic Evidence

K. Lawson Younger Jr.

Between 1979 and 1985, the site of Qalaichi Tappeh, located on a hilltop seven km north of the modern city of Bukān (southeast of Lake Urmia in Azerbaijan, Iran) saw widespread illegal excavations.<sup>1</sup> In 1985, an archaeological team under the direction of E. Yaghmaei<sup>2</sup> carried out rescue excavations at the site. They discovered, along with a large quantity of fragmentary glazed tiles, the major piece of an Old Aramaic inscription. A smaller piece was recovered on the antiquities market in 1990. Together the fragments (.8 m [height] × 1.5 m [width]) preserve only the last thirteen lines of the inscription. The translation and interpretation of this text—called now the Bukān Inscription—has attracted the interest of many scholars.<sup>3</sup>

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In great appreciation of his long-time friendship, his incredibly diligent scholarship, and his many other contributions, I offer with great pleasure this modest essay in honor of P. Kyle McCarter Jr. An earlier version of this essay was read at the 62nd *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* in Philadelphia, July, 2016. I greatly appreciate the constructive comments and suggestions made by the participants. Any errors that remain are mine.

<sup>1</sup> Y. Hassanzadeh and H. Mollasalehi, “New Evidence for Mannean Art: An Assessment of Three Glazed Tiles from Qalaichi (Izirtu),” in *Elam and Persia*, ed. Javier Álvarez-Mon and Mark B. Garrison (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 404–17, esp. p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> I. Yaghmaei, “Discovery of a Three Thousand Years Old Temple at Bukān” [Persian], *Keyhan News Paper*, Thursday, 21st Isfānd: 6, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> K. R. Bashash, “Decipherment of the Bukān Inscription” [Persian], in *The Proceedings of the First Symposium on Inscriptions and Ancient Texts, Shiraz, 12–14 Isfānd 1370 (March 2–4, 1991)* (Teheran, 1375/1996), 25–39; Javier Teixidor, “Séminaire: documents d’histoire araméenne,” *Annuaire du Collège de France* (1997–1998): 732–34; Teixidor, “L’inscription araméenne de Bukān lecture,” *Semitica* 49 (1999): 117–21; André Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne du VIII<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C. trouvée à Bukān,” *Studia Iranica* 27 (1998): 15–30, photo p. 17; Lemaire, “L’inscription araméenne de Bukān et son intérêt historique,” *CRAI* (1998): 293–99; Lemaire, “La stèle araméenne de Bukān: Mise au point épigraphique,” *NABU* (1999): 57–58, no. 57; Lemaire, “Aramaic Script and Its Role in Creating Cultural Links,” in *History of Script and Writing: Collected Essays of International Seminar of Tablet to Tablet (From Clay Tablet to Electronic Compact Disk)* (Ministry of Culture and



The text appears to date palaeographically to ca. 725–700 BCE.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is the oldest excavated Aramaic document found East of the Zagros range. Unfortunately, all of the original text that was above the two fragments which would have given the explanation of the situation/event/occasion behind the writing and setting up of the stela, is missing. Qalaichi Tappeh (which a few scholars have erroneously identified as ancient Izirtu) was located in what was, during this time period, the land of Mannea. The inscription is generally understood to be the work of a local ruler of this land, whose native language<sup>5</sup> was likely not Aramaic. Thus “the riddle” of the Bukān Inscription (as Frederick Mario Fales has dubbed it<sup>6</sup>) is the use of Aramaic in a place this far east of the Zagros. The purpose of this essay is to reassess this in light of more recent discoveries.

On a fragment of an orthostat, Tiglath-pileser III claims that in his campaign of 745 BCE in Babylonia:

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Islamic Guidance; Tehran: Chameh, 2006), 73–96; Josef Tropper, “Orthographische und linguistische Anmerkungen zur aramäischen Inschrift von Bukān,” *NABU* (1998): 97–98; Israel Eph'al, “The Bukān Aramaic Inscription: Historical Considerations,” *IEJ* 49 (1999): 116–21; Michael Sokoloff, “The Old Aramaic Inscription from Bukān: A Revised Interpretation,” *IEJ* 49 (1999): 105–15; Stephen A. Kaufman, “Recent Contributions of Aramaic Studies to Biblical Hebrew Philology and the Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Congress Volume Basel 2001*, ed. André Lemaire, VTSup 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 43–54; K. Lawson Younger Jr., “The Bukān Inscription,” *COS* 3.89:219; Frederick Mario Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts in the Eighth Century BC: The Bukan Stele,” in *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia*, ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, and Robert Rollinger (Padova: Sargon, 2003), 131–47. Lemaire (“Une inscription araméenne”) is a true *editio princeps* (photo, copy and transliteration). It is now listed as *KAI* 320. See now: Dīshad A. Marf, “Aramean Presence in the Northern Zagros During the Neo-Assyrian Period,” in *Aramaean Borders: Defining Aramaean Territories in the Tenth–Eighth Centuries B.C.E.*, ed. Jan Dušek and Jana Mynářová, CHANE 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 78–91; Adam L. Bean, “A Curse of the Division of Land: A New Reading of the Bukān Aramaic Inscription Lines 9–10,” in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 27. Fales dates to “the late 8th century BC.” See Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 133.

<sup>5</sup> The words of J. N. Postgate are still accurate: “nothing is known of the language(s) spoken in Mannaea. There is no consensus among scholars on the language(s) to which the names of the Mannaeans rulers mentioned in Assyrian texts should be assigned. Some (e.g. Bagdatti, Aḥšēri) look Iranian, but others have variously been identified as Hurrian(Urartian) or ‘Qutian’; they are not Kassite or Elamite. There are of course no compelling reasons to assume that all social strata or geographical sectors of Mannaea were of common ethnic stock.” See J. N. Postgate, “Mannäer,” *RIA* 7 (1987–90): 340–42, esp. p. 340. Two texts witness to the Mannean language: (1) SAA 11:29, 31.6–8 (= ADD 865: 6–8) mentions “Giki, interpreter of Mannean (LÜ.tar-gu-ma-nu ša KUR.ma-nu-a-a); and (2) SAA 5:154–55, 217.16–r.5: “The king, my lord, knows Kubaba-ilāya; he is a master of the {Mannean} language (EN li-šá-ni šu-ú). I sent him to Tikriš (a Mannean town), and he gave us this detailed report. We are sending it to the king, my lord.”

<sup>6</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 143.

[From] those [Ara]means that I deported, [I distribu]ted (and) settled [... thousand to the province of] the Commander-in-Chief (*turtānu*), 10,000 (to) the province of the Palace Herald (NAM LÚ.NÍMGIR É.GAL, [...] thousand (to) the province of the chief cupbearer, [... thousand (to) the province of the land of] Barḥa(l)zi,<sup>7</sup> (and) 5,000 (to) the province of the land of Mazamua (NAM KUR.ma-za-mu-a). I united them; [I counted them] as people of [Assyria]; the yoke of Aššur, my lord, [I imposed on them] as Assyrians.<sup>8</sup>

The mention of the provinces of the Palace Herald (*paḥūt nagir ekalli*)<sup>9</sup> and Mazamua<sup>10</sup> is particularly important. The discovery and publication of a Neo-Assyrian tablet (a contract for the sale of a slave woman, dated to 725 BCE) from the site of Qalat-i Dinka,<sup>11</sup> along with evidence from the initial excavations of this site, have brought forth evidence concerning the location of the province of the Palace Herald. It seems clear that the modern Peshdar Plain, with its center at ancient Anisu(s) (probably the modern mound of Qaladze), was a part of this province.<sup>12</sup> Thus, both the province of the Palace Herald and the province of Mazamua were border provinces abutting the political entities of the Zagros. Hence, the presence of people with Aramaic names as found mentioned in the cuneiform tablet from Qalat-i Dinka may very well reflect some of the 10,000 Arameans deported to the province of the Palace Herald, along with the 5,000 deported to the province of Mazamua.

However, while this certainly would account for increased usage of the Aramaic language in the region, the fact that these are Neo-Assyrian cuneiform documents underscores the point made by Fales that the Bukān Inscription lacks

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<sup>7</sup> For the province of Barḥalzu (also Barḥazzu), a localization north of the Jebel Maqlūb, in the area between the Rubar Atruš River and Ḥosr River, would be plausible. See Karen Radner, "Provinz C," *RIA* 11 (2006): 42–68, esp. p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> RINAP 1:27, 5:9b–12a.

<sup>9</sup> Radner, "Provinz C," 49.

<sup>10</sup> Radner, "Provinz C," 51–52.

<sup>11</sup> Karen Radner, "A Neo-Assyrian slave sale contract of 725 BC from the Peshdar Plain and the location of the Palace Herald's Province," *ZA* 105 (2015): 192–97. The cuneiform tablet discovered during excavations at Tell Sitak (perhaps the ancient city of Yeri) adds to the record of Neo-Assyrian documents from the general region. For the tablet, see Karen Radner, "A Neo-Assyrian Legal Document from Tell Sitak," in *At the Dawn of History. Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of J. N. Postgate*, ed. Yağmur Heffron, Adam Stone, and Martin Worthington (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 423–30; for the excavations, see S. A. Saber, H. Hamza, and M. Altaweel, "Report on the Excavations at Tell Sitak: The 2010 Season," *Iraq* 76 (2014): 205–29.

<sup>12</sup> Karen Radner, "The Peshdar Plain in the Neo-Assyrian Period: The Border March of the Palace Herald," in *Exploring the Neo-Assyrian Frontier with Western Iran: The 2015 Season at Gird-i Bazar and Qalat-i Dinka*, ed. Karen Radner, F. Janoscha Kreppner, and Andrea Squitieri, Peshdar Plain Project Publications 1 (Gladbeck: PeWe-Verlag, 2016), 17–22, esp. 18.

any real evidence of Assyrian influence.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, another explanation must be offered to solve this problem.

#### THE BUKĀN INSCRIPTION

In order to address this “riddle” more fully, the text of the Bukān Inscription will first be presented (fig. 1).

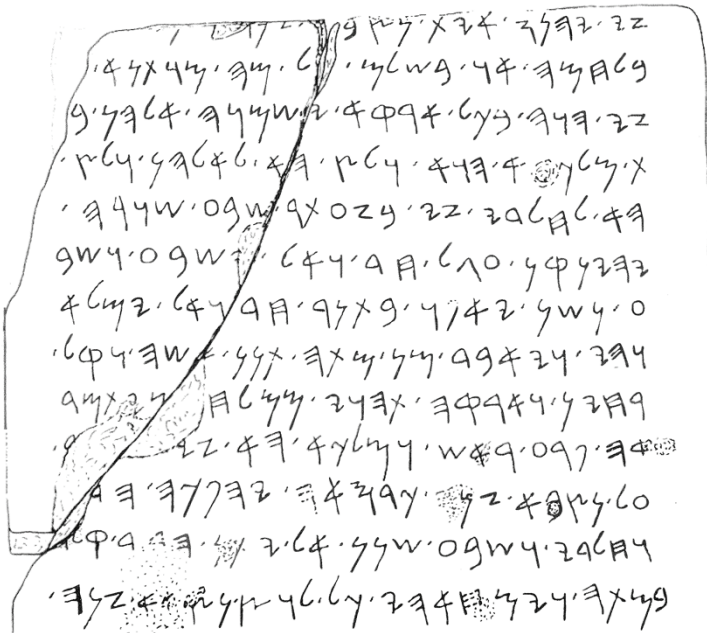


Fig. 1. Drawing of the Bukān Inscription (courtesy A. Lemaire)

(<sup>1</sup>) *zy . yhns . 'yt . nšb['] . znh [ 'w ]* (<sup>2</sup>) *blhnh . 'w . bšlm .*

*[k]l . mh . mwtn' . [k?]* (<sup>3</sup>) *zy . hwh . bkl . 'rq' .*

*yšmwh . 'lhn . b[m]* (<sup>4</sup>) *t . mlk' . hw' .*

*wlš . h' . l' lhn .*

*wlš .* (<sup>5</sup>) *h' . lhldy . zy . bz/s' tr .*

(<sup>1</sup>) Whoever will remove this stela, [whether] (<sup>2</sup>) in war or in peace, whatever the plague, [as] (<sup>3</sup>) much as is in the whole world,

<sup>13</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 142–43.

may the gods impose it on the [coun]try<sup>14</sup> (4<sup>th</sup>) of that king.  
 And may he be accursed to the gods,  
 and may he be accursed (5<sup>th</sup>) to Ḫaldi of *bz/s' tr*.<sup>15</sup>

*šb' . šwrh . (6<sup>th</sup>) yhynqn . 'gl . hd*  
*w'l . yšb' .*  
*wšb(7<sup>th</sup>) . nšn . y'pw . btr . hd [.]*  
*w'l . yml'(8<sup>th</sup>)why*

May seven (6<sup>th</sup>) cows<sup>16</sup> nurse a single calf,<sup>17</sup>  
 but may it not be sated.  
 And may seven (7<sup>th</sup>) women bake<sup>18</sup> (bread) in a single oven,  
 but may they not fill (8<sup>th</sup>) it.

*wy'bd . mn . mth . tnn . 'šh . wql . (9<sup>th</sup>) rhyn .*  
*w'rqh . thwy . mmlh[h?]*  
*wytmr(10<sup>th</sup>)r/dh . pr' . r'š*

<sup>14</sup> Sokoloff (“Old Aramaic Inscription from Bukān,” 107) reads *b[m]t*. The *b* is the prep. which goes with *šym*. Cf. Exod 15:26. This *b* is evident in the Panamuwa Inscription (KAI 215:4). Teixidor (“L’inscription araméenne de Bukān relecture,” 119–20) reads *mlkt'*. Fales reads *b[b]t mlkt'* and translates: “on this palace.” However, the photo shows a pock mark between the *k* and the *'* where the *t* in this reading is being inserted (“Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 134”). Sima notes the possibility that this hole was already present before the incising of the inscription so that the place was simply skipped by the stone mason, yielding the reading: *mlk\_'*. See Alexander Sima, “Zu Formular und Syntax der alt-Aramäischen Inschrift aus Bukān (um 700 v. Chr.),” *Mediterranean Language Review* 14 (2002): 113–24, esp. p. 115, n. 8. Contextually, I prefer *mt* instead of *bt* and *mlk'* instead of *mlkt'*.

<sup>15</sup> Fales (“Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 137) observes that the letter read as a *zayin* may, in fact, be a *samek*. I am inclined to see it as a *zayin*. While in the photos (Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne”; Teixidor, “L’inscription araméenne de Bukān relecture”) there seems to be a bit of a tail (which led Teixidor to posit a *mem*), the overall size of the “z” shape seems too large to be a *samek* when compared to the *sameks* in the inscription (their “z” shape parts are smaller). However, if there is truly a tail—and this is not an extraneous mark or a problem with the photos, then the letter may well be a *samek*. Only new collation by a good epigrapher can decide.

<sup>16</sup> Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic. From the Beginning to the Advent of Islam*, HdO 114 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 92, n. 259.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Tel Fekheriye 20–21. See COS 2.34.

<sup>18</sup> The verbal form *y'pw* is 3mp while *nšn* is feminine plural. Tropper proposes to understand *nšn* as the masculine plural form of the lexeme *nš* “man, human” (with aphaeresis of the *'*). See Tropper, “Orthographische und linguistische Anmerkungen,” 97. However, Tell Fekheriye has: *wm'h . nšwn . l'pn . btrwr . lhm . w'l . yml'nh* (the Akkadian reads: *āpīate* “female bakers,” written: *a-pi-a-te*, the female form *āpītu*, CAD E 248, note SAL.GĪM É.GAL *e-pi-a-tum* JCS 8 11 no. 159:7 (MB Alalah) + the D dur 3fp verb form *ú-<ma>-la-a*). Sima (“Zu Formular und Syntax,” 117) suggests that the stone mason erred, writing *w* when he should have written *n* (also in the case of the next verb *yml'why*, instead of *wml'why*). But this means that he had to make the same error twice and he only confuses *w* and *n* in these two places and nowhere else in the inscription. This seems doubtful. This problem is not that serious, since sporadic comparable instances are known in Old Aramaic. See Takamitsu Mu-raoka and Bezalel Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 102–4.

wmlk' . h' . zy . [kt]b<sup>(11)</sup> 'l . nšb' . znh  
 krs' h . yhpkh . hd[d]<sup>(12)</sup> whldy  
 wšb' . šnn . 'l . ytn . hdd . qlh [.]<sup>(13)</sup> bmt h .  
 wymh' hy . kl . lwš . nš[b]' . znh .

And may the smoke of its (the oven's) fire and the sound of<sup>(9)</sup> a mill vanish from his country.

And may his soil be salted;

and<sup>(10)</sup> may it make him bitter from poisonous weeds /or  
 and against him may the commander-in-chief(?) revolt /or  
 and lawless behavior abound(?) in it / or  
 and may it sway back and forth in it the crack of an earthquake.<sup>19</sup>

And that king who [writes?<sup>20</sup>] <sup>(11)</sup> on this stela,  
 may Hadad and Ḥaldi overturn his throne.

<sup>(12)</sup> And seven years may Hadad not give his thunder (lit. "voice")<sup>21</sup> <sup>(13)</sup> in his country,

and may the entire curse of this stela smite him.

<sup>19</sup> A very difficult sentence. Sokoloff ("Old Aramaic Inscription from Bukān," 107) reads: *mmlh[h] . wytmrh . pr' . r'š* (from *mrr*); Lemaire ("Une inscription araméenne," 24–25) reads: *myt mr' h pr' r'š* "et mort, le prince, le subordonné, le chef." Teixidor ("L'inscription araméenne de Bukān relecture," 119) and Fales ("Evidence for West–East Contacts," 134) read: *wytmrh* (from *mrd*); it appears that Kaufman ("Recent Contributions of Aramaic Studies," 48) also reads *wytmrh*, although he only gives his translation without comment. A fourth reading has recently been proposed by Lipiński who reads: *wytmd . bh pq' r'š* and translates "and may it sway back and forth in it the crack of an earthquake." See Edward Lipiński, "Inscription from Tepe Qalaichi," in *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics IV*, OLA 250 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 19–27, esp. 21–23.

The four different translations above reflect these scholars' understandings. There are difficulties with all four. While paleographically the words *pr' r'š* are clear (notwithstanding Lipiński's ' instead of '), their meaning is not. Furthermore, the correct reading of the sentence's verb is dependent on whether the third root letter is a *r* or a *d*. As appealing as Teixidor's interpretation of *pr' r'š* as "commandant en chef" is, there is no real justification in the Old Aramaic vocabulary for it (*DNWSI*, 942–43; however, see Hebrew *pera'* "leader, prince"). Sima ("Zu Formular und Syntax," 121, n. 35) suggests that the words may involve an Aramaic loan-translation of a native title. I am not convinced by any of these proposals, though I cannot offer a solution.

<sup>20</sup> [y]d = G (Pe'al) imperf. 3ms (*wd* or *ld*) "efface, remove" Tell Fekheriye 11 (Kaufman, "Recent Contributions of Aramaic Studies," 46: "defaces"?); [kt]b "writes" (Teixidor, "L'inscription araméenne de Bukān relecture"; Fales, "Evidence for West–East Contacts"). Note the 'l (Tell Fekheriye does not have 'l); so *ktb* is preferred here.

<sup>21</sup> Lemaire ("Une inscription araméenne," 26–27) and Sokoloff ("The Old Aramaic Inscription from Bukān") read: 'l . ytn . hdd . qlh [.] "and may Hadad not give his voice" (i.e. the thunder, the sign of beginning of rainfall). The reading is extremely problematic. Sima ("Zu Formular und Syntax," 122) notes: "The sign after the *h* is unreadable, followed by *d/r*, a word divider and a *q*. The following two letters are completely unclear. Very unlikely is the suggested reading of Teixidor, "L'inscription araméenne de Bukān relecture," 121: *hšr qrb[t]*, and even less his interpretation." However, Fales ("Evidence for West–East Contacts," 134) reads *hšr qrb[t]* "the grass of pasture."

Paleographically, as André Lemaire has pointed out, the similarity of letter shapes with the Sefire Treaties is striking.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps most diagnostic is the *samek* (lines 1, 11). This along with the use of the Western Aramaic direct object marker *'yt* in line 1 has led Holger Gzella in his recent book to conclude that the Bukān Inscription should be associated with his “Central Syrian Aramaic.”<sup>23</sup> The extant text bears curse-formulae similar to those of Sefire and Tell Fekheriye.

There are minimal Assyrian or Urartian influences in the inscription. Two Assyrian loanwords (*mt* and *mwtm*) are used.<sup>24</sup> Alongside the Aramean storm-god, Hadad, the war deity, Ḫaldi (*ḫlḏy*),<sup>25</sup> is invoked to inflict the curses on the land of the king who would remove the stela. Before Ḫaldi was elevated to the head of the Urartian pantheon (perhaps from the reign of Išpuini), he had been an important deity in this region. Therefore, his mention in the inscription is not surprising, nor should it be understood as due to Urartian influence *per se*.<sup>26</sup>

The problem of the location to which Ḫaldi is to be connected is difficult: firstly because of the reading of the text, and secondly because of no clear-cut conversion of the Aramaic spelling to a known toponym. The initial reading *bz' tr* (with *b* being understood as a preposition) yielded *Z' tr*, which was equated with Izirtu/Zirtu,<sup>27</sup> the main urban and regional capital center of the land of Mannea,

<sup>22</sup> Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 27.

<sup>23</sup> Gzella, *Cultural History of Aramaic*, 91–93.

<sup>24</sup> See the discussion of Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 135, n. 12. The word *mt* (> *mātu*) “land” is found in other Aramaic inscriptions. The noun *mwtm* (> *mūtānu*) “plague, pestilence” (line 2) finds a parallel at Tell Fekheriye; but, as noted by Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 20, it is not totally certain whether we should view this noun as a straightforward derivation from Akkadian, or not (see *DNWSI*, s.v. “mwtm”). Although the two Akkadian loanwords are important for the reconstruction of the intellectual background of the Bukān Inscription, “they do not in themselves constitute any sort of direct proof of an Assyrian ‘hand’ authoring our text behind the cover of the Aramaic script and language” (Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 143).

<sup>25</sup> Zimansky comments: “The god Ḫaldi is mentioned in every moderately well-preserved inscription speaking of military conquest, which suggests that he had some specific association with war.” See Paul E. Zimansky, *Ecology and Empire: The Structure of the Urartian State*, SAOC 41 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1985), 116, n. 52.

<sup>26</sup> Lemaire, “Une inscription araméenne,” 21–22. Ḫaldi headed the Urartian pantheon in spite of the fact that his most important shrine was in Muşaşir which was not part of the kingdom of Urartu, but remained a separate polity. At one of the Ḫaldi temples at the Upper Anzaf fortress, a shield was excavated showing Ḫaldi leading the other Urartian gods into battle. He is depicted as a warrior with bow and spear (*šuri?*) and surrounded by an aura of flames (*kuruni?*)—an “awe-inspiring splendor” like the Assyrian notion of *melammu*. See S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf, and P. E. Zimansky, *Bianili-Urartu: The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich 12–14 October 2007*, *Acta Iranica* 51 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 28–30, drawing of the shield (p. 30). Radner has drawn attention to some similarities between Ḫaldi and Mithra. See Karen Radner, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Muşaşir, Kumme, Ukku, and Šubria—the Buffer States between Assyria and Urartu,” in Kroll et al., *Bianili-Urartu*, 243–64, esp. 253.

<sup>27</sup> The writings for the Mannean capital are: *i-zi-ir-ti/tu* and *i-zir-te/ti/tu/tú*, and only once *zi-ir-tu* (Parpola 1970:181, s.v. Izirtu). See also Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans*

by seeing a metathesis of *tr* for *rt*.<sup>28</sup> Israel Eph'al raised doubts about a metathesis of *tr/rt*,<sup>29</sup> as too have other scholars. Kaufman raised doubts about it and questioned the use of Semitic 'ayin in a non-Semitic name.<sup>30</sup> These objections are significant. The metathesis *tr/rt* is improbable, and as Fales has pointed out, "the intermediate 'ayin finds no justification in the cuneiform renderings, where the presence of a sign bearing *ḥ*, or minimally an "aleph-sign," would have, in case, been expected as its correspondence."<sup>31</sup>

Another reading and interpretation was proposed by Javier Teixidor.<sup>32</sup> Also understanding *b* as a preposition, he read *mḫtr*, and suggested a correspondence with cuneiform Muṣaṣir. He has been followed by Baranowski.<sup>33</sup> However, the fourth-to-last sign in line 5 cannot be a *mem*, and the next letter is an /'/, not a /ḫ/. In addition, Teixidor's proposal is phonologically impossible. The name of the city of Muṣaṣir is always spelled with two *šades* in Neo-Assyrian sources; the Aramaic /ḫ/ is never used to transcribe Neo-Assyrian /s/; and the suggested dissimilation *ḫḫ* > *tt* cannot work in West Semitic epigraphy.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the location of Muṣaṣir is, in all probability, to be localized at the modern site of Mudjesir (7 km west of Topzawa),<sup>35</sup> and not at the site of Qalaichi Tappeh. Finally, *Muṣaṣir* is a Neo-Assyrian transformation of Middle Assyrian *Muṣru*—a development that may, in fact, reflect a type of folk etymology (combination of *mūṣu* and *ṣīru*).<sup>36</sup> Hence, Teixidor's proposal would be an impossible reflection of the Neo-Assyrian development of the name (in Urartian sources, the city is called Ardini "The City").<sup>37</sup>

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*in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia*, Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute 151 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002), 64–66; Andreas Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 1994), 447–49.

<sup>28</sup> The identification of *Z'tr* with the Mannean capital city Izirtu/Zirtu was apparently already proposed by R. B. Kanzaq (1996), assuming a metathesis of *tr/rt*, according to Lipiński, "Inscription from Tepe Qalaichi," 22. I do not have access to Kanzaq's publication.

<sup>29</sup> Eph'al, "Bukān Aramaic Inscription," 120.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Sokoloff, "Old Aramaic Inscription from Bukān," 111, n. 36.

<sup>31</sup> Fales, "Evidence for West–East Contacts," 137, n. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Teixidor, "L'inscription araméenne de Bukān relecture," 119–120.

<sup>33</sup> Krzysztof J. Baranowski, "The Old Aramaic and Biblical Curses," *Liber Annus* 62 (2012): 173–201, esp. 183–84.

<sup>34</sup> Fales, "Evidence for West–East Contacts," 137.

<sup>35</sup> Jörg Fassbinder, "Appendix: Looking for Muṣaṣir: The 2014 Magnetometer Survey at Mujesir," in *Exploring the Neo-Assyrian Frontier with Western Iran: The 2015 Season at Gird-i Bazar and Qalat-i Dinka*, ed. Karen Radner, F. Janoscha Kreppner, and Andrea Squitieri, Peshdar Plain Project Publications 1 (Gladbeck: PeWe-Verlag, 2016), 112–19. For the earlier proposal, see Rainer Maria Boehmer, "Zur Lage von Muṣaṣir," *BaM* 6 (1973): 39; Boehmer, "Muṣaṣir B," *RLA* 8.5/6 (1995): 446–50.

<sup>36</sup> For the details, see Radner, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," 245–48.

<sup>37</sup> Radner, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," 245.

A third proposal has recently been made by Edward Lipiński, who reads *lhldy . zy . bz'tr* and translates “to Ḫaldi who is in Za'ter.”<sup>38</sup> He equates *Z'tr* with the toponym Šattera found in a Neo-Assyrian letter and argues that these are dialectal variants of the actual name. He also argues that *Izirtu* is an artificial form in which the Akkadian ending *-irtu/-irta* has been attached (this explains the *tr/rt* metathesis problem). He feels that the mention of *Z'tr* in the Bukān Inscription indicates that this is the site of the Mannean capital. However, in the context of the letter referenced by Lipiński,<sup>39</sup> nine governors of the Urartian king are said to have been killed. The text then lists these with the last one being the LÚ\*.EN.NAM ša KUR.šá-at'-te-ra “the governor of the land of Šattera.” The determinative is KUR “land,” not URU “city”; and so, there is no basis for equating Šattera, a province of Urartu,<sup>40</sup> with Izirtu, which is always written with the determinative URU<sup>41</sup> and is the capital of Mannea.

Fales rightly noted a syntactic problem with understanding the *zy b* as meaning “who is/resides in ...,” since the construction “Divine Name + *zy b* + Toponym” is not attested in Old Aramaic.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, it seems very likely that *zy* forms a construct relationship and should be translated simply “of,” with the *beth* forming part of the proper name. While Fales suggests *bz/s'tr* may be a personal name vocalized as *\*Bi/us/za'/ḫtar*,<sup>43</sup> it seems more likely that it is a toponym that is presently unknown.

There is one more issue. Hassanzadeh and Mollasalehi assume that Qalaichi Tappeh is Izirtu. But, in addition to the philological discussion above, this is problematic for another reason. They describe the site as follows:

Further archaeological excavations at Qalaichi Tappeh conducted by B. Kargar from 1999 to 2006 have revealed a settlement of close to one acre in size. The excavations also uncovered a columned hall measuring 19.0 m × 35.0 m and a monumental building of probable religious significance. The inner walls of the latter were lined with red mud plaster, and its outer walls were decorated with glazed tiles (Kargar 2004). There is no absolute certainty that this structure is the temple of Haldi and Adad mentioned in the Aramaic inscription.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Lipiński, “Inscription from Tepe Qalaichi,” 21–23.

<sup>39</sup> SAA 5:73, 90.5–15e.

<sup>40</sup> Simo Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, AOAT 6 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchener-Verlag, 1970), 333, s.v. Šattera.

<sup>41</sup> Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, 181, s.v. Izirtu.

<sup>42</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 137. The Akkadian construction is “Divine Name + *ša āšib ina* + Toponym.”

<sup>43</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 137.

<sup>44</sup> Hassanzadeh and Mollasalehi, “New Evidence for Mannean Art,” 409. On the pottery from the site, see Kazem Mollazadeh, “The Pottery from the Mannean Site of Qalaichi, Bukan (NW-Iran),” *Iranica Antiqua* 43 (2008): 107–25.



If the site is only one acre in size, can this really be Izirtu? It seems more likely that the site was the location of a temple of Ḫaldi than the major city of a kingdom. Qalaichi Tappēh was probably the location of another temple to Ḫaldi in the land of Mannea, with its ancient name being *Bz/s'tr*. Other temples to Ḫaldi besides the one in Muṣaṣir did exist.<sup>45</sup> Finally, although the location of the city of Izirtu is unknown, a few scholars have suggested an identification with Saqqez.<sup>46</sup>

The formulaic curse section is unified by the three-fold usage of the term “seven”: seven cows, seven women, and seven years. Two of the curses (lines 5'–8') are particularly significant. They are of the well-known “Maximum-Effort → Minimum-Yield” type,<sup>47</sup> demonstrating a great correspondence with passages from a cluster of important texts.<sup>48</sup> A closer look at the one that involves the “baking of bread in an oven” will be sufficient to make my point:

(1) Tell Leilan Treaty (ca. 1750 BCE)<sup>49</sup>

*24b mti-la-ab-nu-ù ÌR-di-šu 25ù ma-a-at ḫa-na ka-[l]u-šu 26ti-nu-ra-am ù ú-tu-na-am 27li-ip-ḫu-ru-ma  
i-na pu-uḫ-ri-šu-nu 28NINDA-a ú-ma-al-lu-ú*

May Till-Abnû, his servants, and al[l] his country of Ḫana assemble (before) a clay oven or a ceramic furnace, but among their assembly may they not fill (it) with bread!

(2) Tell Fekheriye Inscription (ca. 850–825 BCE)<sup>50</sup>

*Aramaic*

*(22)wm'h . nšwn . l'pn . btmwr . lḫm .  
w'l . yml'nh*

<sup>45</sup> In gratitude for Ḫaldi's support, the Urartian kings built many standard or *susi* temples for Ḫaldi in all of their main centers (Kroll et al., *Bianili-Urartu*, 29–32).

<sup>46</sup> Simo Parpola and Michael Porter, *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Helsinki: The Casco Bay Assyriological Institute and the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), map 5; Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II*, 448.

<sup>47</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 132.

<sup>48</sup> For earlier comments, see K. Lawson Younger Jr., “‘The Contextual Method’: Some West Semitic Reflections,” *COS* 3:xxxv–xlii, esp. pp. xxxvii–xxxix. See recently, L. Quick, *Deuteronomy 28 and the Aramaic Curse Tradition*, Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 138–51; Melissa Ramos, “A Northwest Semitic Curse Formula: The Sefire Treaty and Deuteronomy 28,” *ZAW* 128 (2016): 205–20. However, neither scholar was aware of the Tell Leilan treaty and did not include it in their discussions.

<sup>49</sup> Jasper Eidem, *The Royal Archives from Tell Leilan: Old Babylonian Letters and Treaties from the Eastern Lower Town Palace East*, archaeological introduction by Lauren Ristvet and Harvey Weiss, PIHANS 117 (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten; Yale University Press, 2011), 395 (v.24b'–28'); see also p. 403.

<sup>50</sup> *COS* 2.34.

(22) And may one hundred women<sup>51</sup> bake bread in an oven,  
but may they not fill it.

*Akkadian*

(35) 1 ME *a-pi-a-te la-a ú-<ma>-la-a* (36)NINDU

May one hundred women bakers not be able to fill an oven.

(3) Sefire Treaty (1.A.24) (c. 760-740 BCE)<sup>52</sup>

*wšb' bñth y'pn b<sup>o</sup>ṭ lḥm*  
*w'l yml'n*

And may his seven daughters bake bread in an oven(?),  
But may they not fill (it).<sup>53</sup>

(4) Bukān Inscription (c. 725-700 BCE)

*wšb<sup>(7)</sup> . nšn . y'pw . bñr . ḥd [.]*  
*w'l . yml<sup>(8)</sup> why .*

And may seven<sup>(7)</sup> women bake (bread) in a single oven,  
but may they not fill<sup>(8)</sup> it.

(5) Leviticus 26:26

*b<sup>e</sup>šibri lākem maṭṭēh leḥem*  
*w<sup>e</sup> 'āpū 'ešer nāšim laḥm<sup>e</sup>kem b<sup>e</sup>tannūr 'eḥād*  
*w<sup>e</sup>hēšibū laḥm<sup>e</sup>kem bammišqāl*  
*wa<sup>a</sup>kaltem*  
*w<sup>e</sup>lō' tišbā'ū*

When I break your staff of bread,  
then ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven,  
and they shall dole out your bread by weight,  
and you will eat,  
but not be satisfied.

<sup>51</sup> Stephen A. Kaufman, "Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell-Fakhariyeh," *Maarav* 3 (1982):137–75, esp. 169.

<sup>52</sup> *COS* 2.82; *KAI* 2:238–274, 342; *SSI* 2:18–25; Kaufman, "Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh," 169; Lemaire and Durand 1984; André Lemaire and Jean-Marie Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshi-ilu*, Hautes études orientales 20 (Geneva: Droz, 1984); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, *Biblica et Orientalia* 19a, rev. ed. (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1995).

<sup>53</sup> The reading of Fitzmyer (see previous note, repeated in *COS* 2.82): *wšb' bkth yhkn bšṭ lḥm w'l yhrgn* "and should seven hens(?) go looking for food, may they not kill(?) (anything)!" should be completely discarded in light of Zuckerman's discussion (incorporating the Tell Fekheriye Inscription and new photos of Sefire) and the discoveries of the Bukān Inscription and the Tell Leilan Treaty. No more killer-chicken curses! See Bruce Zuckerman, "On Being 'Damned Certain': The Story of a Curse in the Sefire Inscription and Its Implications," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, ed. Astrid B. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 422–35.

What becomes obvious from a contextual analysis is that this is a long-lived curse formula that derives culturally from the Upper Mesopotamian region, perhaps as Biggs has suggested of West Semitic origin.<sup>54</sup> It appears that there were some stock West Semitic curse formulae that could be drawn from in the composition of curse passages and that these could be adapted to the particular needs of the ancient writers. In the Old Aramaic texts, the result is that the women baking bread in a single oven may not fill it (in spite of all their efforts to do so). This, in turn, implies a resultant hunger.

Moreover, the other Bukān curses bring to mind clauses occurring in other North Syrian inscriptions. Therefore, Eph'al was on target when he stated: "the literary expressions and metaphors clearly indicate that the [Bukān] inscription is deeply rooted in the West-Semitic cultural milieu, that it was originally composed in Aramaic."<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the stela did not bear "an Aramaic translated version of a bilingual inscription whose linguistic and literary origins were Assyrian or Urartian." Lexically, while there are two Assyrian loanwords in the Bukān text which certainly point to some contact, the overwhelming evidence points to a real lack of Assyrian influence in the inscription.<sup>56</sup> So, although it is true that Aramaic was most certainly the second official language of the Assyrian state, neither the contents nor the literary elements used in the Bukān Inscription point in any way to the Assyrian state as being involved in the conception and realization of the stela.<sup>57</sup>

In addition, while deportations should undoubtedly be considered a crucial factor in the diffusion of Aramaic, Fales has rightly noted that it cannot solve the riddle of the usage of this language in this case.<sup>58</sup> The fact is that it is not just the usage of the Aramaic language *per se*, it is the abundant use of the figures and metaphors that are deep rooted in the cultural milieu of the West Semitic world.

Eph'al has suggested that there was a small group (comprised of scribes, officials and members of the state leadership) "who adopted Aramaic for writing and as a language of culture (as French was adopted in Russia and Germany in

<sup>54</sup> Dennis Pardee and R. D. Biggs, "Review of Abou Assaf, Bordreuil and Millard 1982," *JNES* 43 (1984): 253–57, esp. 255. For a discussion of the Old Aramaic curses in these inscriptions (except for the Bukān inscription), see Kevin J. Cathcart, "The Curses in Old Aramaic Inscriptions," in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, ed. Kevin Cathcart and Michael Maher, *JSOTSup* 230 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 140–52. See now, Quick, *Deuteronomy 28 and the Aramaic Curse Tradition*, 138–51.

<sup>55</sup> Eph'al, "Bukān Aramaic Inscription," 116.

<sup>56</sup> Fales ("Evidence for West–East Contacts," 145–46) notes the contrast with the significant number of loans in the Aramaic texts found in Northern Mesopotamia from the ninth century to the seventh centuries.

<sup>57</sup> Fales, "Evidence for West–East Contacts," 145–46. Thus, the use of Aramaic was certainly not the result of Neo-Assyrian "linguistic imperialism" (contra Ramos, "A Northwest Semitic Curse Formula," 217).

<sup>58</sup> Fales, "Evidence for West–East Contacts," 142.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).”<sup>59</sup> Alternatively, Fales has suggested that the stela could have been written to sanction good relations between a Syrian Aramean state (most likely Arpad) and a Mannean state, presumably dependent on Urartu or one of its allies.<sup>60</sup> Finally, Mario Liverani has suggested that the Bukān Inscription could have derived from a bilingual (Assyrian and Aramaic) milieu, such as the one reconstructed at Sefire for Šamšī-ilu, who moreover conducted expeditions against Urartu.<sup>61</sup> All these explanations are creative and possible. However, there is no real evidence to cause an endorsement of one over the others.

#### A NEW PROPOSAL

I would like to suggest that there is another way forward in solving this “riddle.” I would like to propose that there were earlier Aramean penetrations into the Zagros region via the Lower Zab River. There are five lines of evidence that may point to this.

##### *(1) Aramean penetration to Īdu in the last years of the reign of Tiglath-pileser I*

The newly discovered evidence from Sātu Qala on the Lower Zab (southeast of modern Erbil) demonstrates the existence of a local independent polity that apparently was loyal to Assyria.<sup>62</sup> Several inscribed bricks are written in the Middle Assyrian dialect and mention the names of seven kings who ruled over an entity called Īdu. For example, a three-line building inscription is preserved on three bricks:

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<sup>59</sup> Eph’al, “Bukān Aramaic Inscription,” 118.

<sup>60</sup> Fales, “Evidence for West–East Contacts,” 146; Fales, “Old Aramaic,” in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, Handbuch zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 555–73. Fales’s theory (“Evidence for West–East Contacts”) is very dependent on the Bukān Inscription being a treaty. But this is not in any way assured. Fales seems convinced that the inscription is a treaty. But I do not find this necessary and certainly not compelling. But even if true, there still had to be some kind of Aramean readership in the region; otherwise, the use of the language would have been pointless.

<sup>61</sup> Mario Liverani, “Shamshi-ilu, Ruler of Hatti and Guti, and the Sefire and Bukan Steles,” in *Scritti in onore di Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti*, ed. Daniela Bredi, Leonardo Capezzone, Wasim Dahmash, and Lucia Rostagno, 3 vols. (Rome: Edizioni Q, 2008), 2:751–62.

<sup>62</sup> Cinzia Pappi, “Satu Qala: An Assessment of the Stratigraphy of the Site,” in *The Archaeology of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Adjacent Regions*, ed. Konstantinos Kopanias and John MacGinnis (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2016), 297–307.

Palace of Abbi-zēri (<sup>m</sup>*ab-bi-ze-ri*), king of the land of the city of Īdu (MAN KUR URU.i-dī), son of Šara[... ]ni, also king of the land of the city of Īdu. The embankment wall of the palace of Abbi-zēri.<sup>63</sup>

Importantly, considering these new data, this “land of the city of Īdu” should be distinguished from that of Īd(a) on the Euphrates River.<sup>64</sup> During the Middle Assyrian period, the region in which Īdu was located came under direct Assyrian control.<sup>65</sup> The first attestation of the city is probably in connection with the payment of taxes during the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta I,<sup>66</sup> though it is not qualified as a province (*pāḫutu*). It appears as a province for the first time in the tabular lists of regular offerings of the twelfth century and other documents from the archive of the administrator of the offerings.<sup>67</sup> The last known governor of the province (*bēl pāḫete*) of Īdu was Aššur-abuk-aḫḫē from early in the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.<sup>68</sup> Īdu is mentioned for the last time as a province in the regular offerings around

<sup>63</sup> SQ 10-3, SM 1068, and Koya 3. See Wilfred H. van Soldt, “The Location of Idu,” *NABU* (2008): 72–74, esp. 73, no. 55; Wilfred H. van Soldt et al., “Satu Qala: A Preliminary Report on the Seasons 2010–2011,” *Anatolica* 39 (2013): 197–239, esp. 210.

<sup>64</sup> Some scholars have understood there to be only one Īdu, which is usually located at Ḫīt (see, e.g., J. N. Postgate, “Review of Nashef 1982,” *AJO* 32 [1985]: 95–101, esp. 97–98). Other scholars have suggested another Īdu was located “in the north.” See Khaled Nashef, *Die Orts und Gewässernamen der mittelbabylonischen und mittelassyrischen Zeit*, RGTC 5, BTAVO B/7.5 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982, 135–36); Nadav Na’aman, “Assyrian Chronicle Fragment 4 and the Location of Idu,” *RA* 88 (1994): 33–35. Van Soldt’s study (“Location of Idu,” 73) demonstrates slightly different spellings of the names. Also, he notes the river access to Assur from Sātu Qala (which may be an additional line of argument). With the discovery of the inscriptions of “the land of Īdu” and its kings, it seems best to posit two places with similar type names, one on the Euphrates, the other on the Lower Zab.

<sup>65</sup> Perhaps as early as the reign of Adad-nērārī I. In general, see Aline Tenu, *L’expansion médioassyrienne: Approche archéologique*, BARI 1906 (Oxford: John and Erica Hedges, British Archaeological Reports, 2009), 170–72; Cinzia Pappi, “Assyrians at the Lower Zab,” in *Leggo! Studies Presented to Frederick Mario Fales on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, Cinzia Pappi, and Simonetta Ponchia (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 597–611, esp. 603; Jaume Llop-Raduà, “The Creation of the Middle Assyrian Provinces,” *JAO* 131 (2011): 591–603; van Soldt et al., “Satu Qala: A Preliminary Report,” 217–18.

<sup>66</sup> MARV 4, 127:12 and MARV 10, 61:6; Īdueans are present in MARV 2, 17:64. The question is whether the Īdu in the tablets of Tukulti-Ninurta I is the Euphratic Īdu (Ḫīt) or Īdu (Sātu Qala) on the Lower Zab; campaigns against Sūḫu along the Euphrates by Tukulti-Ninurta are attested. Because of its position in the lists, the second option seems more probable (Llop-Raduà, “The Creation of the Middle Assyrian Provinces,” 104).

<sup>67</sup> MARV 7, 27:6 (eponym Adad-rība, reign of Enlil-kudurri-ušur, 1192–1182); MARV 5, 1:8 (eponym [Saggiu], reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur, 1191–1179); MARV 5, 2:9 (eponym Aššur-zēra-id-dina, reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur); MARV 1, 21; MARV 2, 21; MARV 6, 3–21, 22–70; MARV 7, 22–58; MARV 7, 13 (reign of Tiglath-pileser I, 1114–1076).

<sup>68</sup> MARV 6, 22:7’ (eponym Aššur-šallimšunu, around the accession year of Tiglath-pileser I). See van Soldt, “The Location of Idu,” 72–74.

the twentieth year of Tiglath-pileser I.<sup>69</sup> Finally, and importantly, the Assyrian Chronicle 4, the so-called Tiglath-pileser I Chronicle (lines 10–12) documents Aramean incursions into the land of Assyria on the east side of the Tigris, sometime after the thirty-second year of Tiglath-pileser I. The text reads:

(2) [In the eponymy of ... great starvation(?) ...] The peopl[e] (the Assyrians) ate one another's flesh [...] (3) [...] the houses of the Arameans (É.MEŠ KUR.*Arma-a-ia*.ME[Š]) (4) [increased(?)] they plundered [the harvest of Assyria]; they seized the roads; (5) they captured (and) took [many districts of] Assyria. (6) [The people (the Assyrians) (7) fled] (6) [t]o the mountains of Ḥabrūri for (their) lives. (7) Their [gold], their silver, (and) their possessions they (the Arameans) took. (8) [Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē, king of] Karduniaš (Babylonia), passed away; Marduk-[šāpik]-zēri (9) ascended hi[s father's throne]. Eighteen regnal years of Marduk-[nādin-a]ḥḥē.

(10) [In the eponymy ...] the harvest of the land of Assyria, all of it, [was flood]ed. (11) [The houses of the Arameans] increased; they proceeded along (lit. "took") the b[ank of the Tig]ris. (12) [They plundered] [the land of GN<sub>1</sub>, the land of GN<sub>2</sub>, the land of] Īdu, the district of Nineveh, (and) the land of Kili[zi]. (13) [In that year Tiglath-pil]eser (I), the king of Assyria, [marched] to Katmuḥu.<sup>70</sup>

Although the Chronicle is not as well-preserved as one would like, it gives clear evidence of a tremendous struggle. The extent of the Assyrian loss is not entirely clear, but from the Arameans' actions on the Tigris, it is clear that the Aramean penetrations were east of the Tigris—this is now abundantly clear since Īdu must now be equated with Sātu Qala—and that at a minimum these districts mentioned in the last lines of the Chronicle were plundered, though not necessarily lost.

Based on the paleographic dating of the brick inscriptions from Sātu Qala (Īdu), it appears that a group of local kings probably came to the throne at the very end of Tiglath-pileser I's reign or perhaps after Aššur-bēl-kala.<sup>71</sup> The political situation in Īdu was likely the same as with two lands in the Ḥābūr region: "the land

<sup>69</sup> MARV 1, 25:16 (eponym Ninurta-aḥa-iddina). See Helmut Freydank, *Beiträge zur mittelassyrischen Chronologie und Geschichte*, Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients 21 (Berlin: Akademie, 1991), 157.

<sup>70</sup> Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Sources (Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975), 189; Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, WAW 19 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 188–91; K. Lawson Younger Jr., *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Politics*, ABS 13 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 174–75.

<sup>71</sup> Van Soldt et al. ("Sātu Qala: A Preliminary Report," 219) prefer the end of the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.

of Māri” and “the land of Šadikanni.”<sup>72</sup> While nothing is known about the history of this kingdom beyond the names of these kings, this “dynasty must have been stable enough to allow at least seven successive kings, most likely from the same dynasty, six of whom were able to undertake construction work on the site.”<sup>73</sup> Apparently, the kings of Īdu maintained political independence from Assyria over at least seven generations. However, the palaeography, as well as the styles of the decorations discovered at Sātu Qala/Īdu, “reflect contemporary developments in Assyria, hinting at continued ties to the informal empire of Assyrian cultural dominance.”<sup>74</sup>

The title, “king of the land of the city of Īdu,” indicates regional control beyond the immediate city environs. However, nothing is known of the extent of the kingdom’s control. In this regard, it is important to note that at Hasanlu Tepe, south of Lake Urmia, an inscription on a stone bowl that reads “Palace of Ba’auri, king of the land of Īdu,” was discovered in the excavations of level IV.<sup>75</sup> This is none other than the last king attested at Sātu Qala: “Ba’auri, king of the land of Īdu.” The bowl is palaeographically similar to the glazed brick inscription of Ba’auri of Īdu.<sup>76</sup> How and why this inscribed object arrived at Hasanlu remains unknown. It may suggest some sort of relationship between Īdu and the Zagros (hardly a surprise). In any case, in the early Neo-Assyrian period, this polity lost its independence, being once again absorbed into the Assyrian domain.<sup>77</sup>

What can be suggested is that some Aramean socially constructed groups may have penetrated the Zagros through this region much like they did in the Ḫābūr region.<sup>78</sup> I am not arguing that the exact route of the Aramean migration into the Zagros went through Īdu. Rather, I am suggesting that the Assyrian Chronicle 4 is a witness to early Transtigridian Aramean penetrations, and that one of these led to the movement of Arameans into Zamua, and then into Mannea.

In her publication of the tablet from Qalat-i Dinka, Radner notes that Qalat-i Dinka and the nearby Neo-Assyrian site of Gird-i Bazar are situated only about 37 km, as the crow flies, from the Mannean site of Rabat Tepe; and that if one follows the course of the Lower Zab, one reaches a pass at an altitude of merely 923 m (36° 1' 52" N, 45° 21' 8" E) that conveniently leads across the Zagros into

<sup>72</sup> Younger, *Political History of the Arameans*, 185–90.

<sup>73</sup> Van Soldt et al., “Sātu Qala: A Preliminary Report,” 219.

<sup>74</sup> Van Soldt et al., “Sātu Qala: A Preliminary Report,” 219.

<sup>75</sup> See Mirjo Salvini, “Sui documenti scritti di Hasanlu,” in *Tra lo Zagros e l’Urmia: Ricerche storiche ed archeologiche nell’Azerbaigian Iraniano*, ed. Paolo E. Pecorella and Mirjo Salvini (Rome: Edizioni Dell’Ateneo, 1984), 55–56. The bowl is dated to the ninth century.

<sup>76</sup> Van Soldt et al., “Sātu Qala: A Preliminary Report,” 213.

<sup>77</sup> For discussion, see van Soldt et al., “Sātu Qala: A Preliminary Report,” 219–21.

<sup>78</sup> Younger, *Political History of the Arameans*, 185–90.

Mannean territory.<sup>79</sup> Since the finds from Qalat-i Dinka and Gird-i Bazar demonstrate that the Peshdar Plain was under Assyrian control beginning in the late eighth century, it would make good sense to protect this exposed region by turning it into a heavily militarized border march.

(2) *Migration of some of the Yaḥānu Tribe to escape Aššur-dān II's attacks.*

During his reign, Aššur-dān II (934–912) carried out a series of attacks on the Aramean tribes to the southeast of the city of Assur in an attempt to begin the recovery of Assyrian lands seized by the Arameans. Regarding the Yaḥānu tribe,<sup>80</sup> he stated:

[Y]aḥānu ([KUR.]a-ḥa-a-nu), the land of Aram (KUR.a-ru-mu), which is behind the land of Pi/Ya(?) [ ], [which from the time of Aššur-ra]bi (II), king of Assyria, my forefather, the cities of the district of [my land, ...] they captured for their [own]; [I mustered] chariots (and) troops. [I plundered...] I massacred many of them. [I destroyed], ravaged, (and) burned their [cities]. [I pursued the rest of their troops which] had fled from my weapons [from ...] to the city Ḥalḥalauš of the land Sa[...]zi. I massacred many of them. [I carried off their booty (and) possessions]. The rest of them I uprooted; [I settled them??] in [...]; I counted them [within] the borders of Assyria.<sup>81</sup>

The mention of the city of Ḥalḥalauš as the place that the “remainder” of the Aramean Yaḥānu tribe fled is important. This city is mentioned again in another text of Aššur-dān II<sup>82</sup> and in the “White Obelisk” of Aššurnaširpal.<sup>83</sup> While there is debate about whether the White Obelisk belongs to Aššurnaširpal I or II, this inscription clearly demands a location of the city of Ḥalḥalauš in the Zagros region, perhaps in the area of Zamua.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Karen Radner, “A Neo-Assyrian slave sale contract of 725 BC from the Peshdar Plain and the location of the Palace Herald’s Province,” *ZA* 105 (2015): 192–97, esp. p. 196.

<sup>80</sup> For a full discussion concerning this text and the Yaḥānu tribe, see Younger, *Political History of the Arameans*, 229–30.

<sup>81</sup> RIMA 2:131–35, A.0.98.1, 23–32.

<sup>82</sup> RIMA 2:136, A.0.98.2, 13’: URU.Ḥal-ḥa-[la-uš].

<sup>83</sup> RIMA 2:255, A.0.101.18, 6’: URU.Ḥal-ḥa-la-uš.

<sup>84</sup> Reade notes that while the land of Gilzānu sent its tribute of horses, the cities of Ḥarira and Ḥalḥalauš failed to send their quota, resulting in an Assyrian attack. Thus, Ḥalḥalauš must have been located in the Zagros regions where horses were bred. See J. E. Reade, “Aššurnaširpal I and the White Obelisk,” *Iraq* 37 (1975): 129–50, esp. p. 136.



(3) *Aššurnaširpal II's campaigns of 881 and 880 were directed against Zamua in the East.*

Aššurnaširpal II reported the campaign as follows:

In the eponymy of Aššur-iddin, a report was brought back to me: “Nūr-Adad the sheikh of the land of Dagara has rebelled; the entire land Zamua have banded together; they have built a wall in the pass at the city of Babitu.”

They have risen against me to wage war and battle. With the support of Aššur, the great lord, my lord, and Nergal/the divine standard which goes before me, (and) with the fierce weapons which Aššur, (my) lord, gave to me I mustered (my) weapons (and) troops; I marched to the pass of the city of Babitu. The troops trusted in the mass of their army, and they did battle.

With the supreme might of Nergal/the divine standard which goes before me I fought with them; I decisively defeated them. I broke up their group. I slew 1,460 of their fighting troops in the pass.

I conquered the cities Uze, Berutu, (and) Lagalaga, their fortified cities, together with 100 cities in their environs. I carried off captives, property, oxen, (and) sheep from them. Nūr-Adad, to save his life, climbed up a rugged mountain. I uprooted 1,200 of their troops. I departed from the land of Dagara.<sup>85</sup>

The initial part of these campaigns was against a certain Nūr-Adad, the sheikh of the land of Dagara (<sup>m</sup>ZÁLAG-<sup>d</sup>IŠKUR LÚ.na-si-ku šá KUR.da-ga-ra), who was able to get the entire land Zamua (KUR.za-mu-a) to band together against the Assyrians. The Assyrian king defeated Nūr-Adad at the Babitu Pass where the enemy had attempted to build a wall to block the pass.<sup>86</sup>

Some scholars understand the name Nūr-Adad as Akkadian.<sup>87</sup> Others have suggested that this sheikh (*naštku*) was an Aramean.<sup>88</sup> Recently, Ran Zadok has

<sup>85</sup> RIMA 2:203–4, A.O.101.1, ii.23b–31a.

<sup>86</sup> RIMA 2:203–4, A.O.101.1, ii.23b–31a.

<sup>87</sup> John A. Brinkman, “Nūr-Adad,” *PNA* 2.2 (2001): 967; Edward Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, OLA 100 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 495: “he is probably no Semite and bears the Assyro-Babylonian name.”

<sup>88</sup> Paul-Eugène Dion, *Les Araméens à l'âge du fer: Histoire politique et structures sociales*, EBib NS 34 (Paris: Gabalda, 1997), 35 n. 46; Ran Zadok, “The Onomastics of the Chaldean, Aramean, and Arabian Tribes in Babylonia during the First Millennium,” in *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millennium B.C.*, ed. Angelika Berlejung and Michael P. Streck, *Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien* 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 263–336, esp. 312; Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods: An Onomastic Study*, rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Wanaata; Tel Aviv University, 1978), 267. Note the name of a Temanite sheikh:

once again suggested that the Neo-Assyrian writings of KUR/URU.*da-ga-ra* may derive from the Aramaic verbal root *dgr* “to heap, gather together,”<sup>89</sup> just as similarly Neo-Assyrian URU.*di-gi-ri-na* in a letter from the reign of Sargon<sup>90</sup> would be the root plus the Aramaic plural *-m*. The fact that Arameans penetrated Īdu (modern Sātu Qala), upstream on the Lower Zab, not all that far from the Babitu Pass,<sup>91</sup> means that some Arameans may have come into the region of Zamua, at least in its westernmost areas. In addition, it is noteworthy that Tukultī-Ninurta II (890–884), Aššurnasirpal II’s father, appears to have engaged Arameans in the region. His inscription reads: “I approached the cities of the land of Ladānu which the A[rameans] (KUR.*a-[ru-mu]*) [and] the Lullu held.”<sup>92</sup> In light of Assyrian Chronicle 4 and the location of Īdu, Grayson’s restoration of this passage is probably correct. Thus, Arameans and the Aramean language may have penetrated this zone much earlier than might have been expected.

Liverani has suggested that the political status of Zamua is likely analogous to that of Nairi: that is, a series of local kingdoms loosely tied together.<sup>93</sup> In 882 BCE, Aššurnasirpal II focused his third campaign<sup>94</sup> on the geopolitical entity of Nairi.<sup>95</sup> Nairi seems to have been comprised of a group of four autonomous polities that included: Bīt-Zamāni, Šubru, Nirdun, and Urumu/Nirbu, that is, all the countries around the upper Tigris, on the north and south sides of the river. Only Bīt-Zamāni appears to have been an Aramean tribal polity among the four, led by a number of *nasikū* with Aramaic personal names. As yet, no Aramaic inscription from Bīt-Zamāni has been found. Knowledge of its Aramean composition is known only through the Assyrian texts. Thus, it seems, that like Nairi which had different entities with at least one being Aramean, Zamua had multiple polities with perhaps one being Aramean led by a *nasiku* with an Aramaic personal name.

#### (4) The Yaqīmānu Tribe

The Yaqīmānu (KUR.*ia-qī-ma-nu*) tribe was an Aramean tribe associated with Mannea. It is mentioned in a letter of Bēl-ušēzib to Esarhaddon that is concerned

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Nūr-Adad (see 232–33, 240–41). For the name at Dūr-Katlimmu, see Wolfgang Röllig, *Die aramäischen Texte aus Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu/Magdalu*, BATSH 17 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 220 (D 3\*:4) and 222 (D 8\*:8).

<sup>89</sup> Zadok, “Onomastics of the Chaldean, Aramean, and Arabian Tribes,” 312; see also Jastrow, s.v. “דגר”; *HALOT*, s.v. “דגר.” Cf. also the noun *dgwr* “heap, pile.”

<sup>90</sup> SAA 19:124, 123.11; see earlier Saggs 2001: 95–96, and pl. 20 (ND 2786), line 11.

<sup>91</sup> Identified with the Bazian Pass. See Mario Liverani, *Topographical Analysis*, vol. 2 of *Studies on the Annals of Ashurnasirpal II*, *Quaderni di Geografica Storica* 4 (Rome: Università di Roma “La Sapienza,” 1992), 46.

<sup>92</sup> RIMA 2:172, A.0.100.5, 34b–35a. See now Pappi 2012, 606.

<sup>93</sup> Liverani, *Topographical Analysis*, 90.

<sup>94</sup> RIMA 2:200–203, i.99b/101b–ii.23a.

<sup>95</sup> Liverani, *Topographical Analysis*, 41, 89.

with political matters in the land of Mannea in the Zagros (adjacent to Zamua).<sup>96</sup>  
This letter reads:

(6) [u]m<sup>1</sup>-ma šá ina UGU?-hi še-ma-ku  
LÚ.[xx] UGU a-mat a-ga-a (7) ša m<sup>m</sup>mar-di-ia il-te-me  
[m<sup>m</sup>xxx] u LÚ.na-si-ku (8) m<sup>m</sup>ia-di-i' LÚ.na-si-ku ù LÚ.na-si-ka-tu (9) šá KUR.ia-qi-  
ma-nu gab-bi ina IGI LÚ.GAL-SAG ina KUR.man-nu-a-a (10) uk-tin-nu-šú  
u en-na i-qab-bu-ú um-ma  
EN-da-me šá EN-i-nu ina UGU-i-nu (11) ul i-rab-bi  
EN LUGAL.ME LU.GAL-SAG.ME liš-al  
šá-lam LUGAL liš-me

“I have heard what it is about.”

The [...] heard this word of Mardīya;

[PN] and the sheikh, Yadi', the sheikh, and all the sheikhs of the Yaqīmānu testified for him (Mardīya) before the chief eunuch in Mannea.

Now, however, they are saying:

“The mortal enemy of our lord must not become greater than we.”

Let the lord of kings ask the chief eunuch;

let the king hear the whole story.

Zadok rightly points out that the Yaqīmānu tribe is not Mannean.<sup>97</sup> The tribal name ends in *-ān* and appears to be a *yaqtil* form (*yaqīm*) derived from the Semitic root *qwm*. In any case, the name should not be understood as a Mannean tribal name. The letter states that “the sheikh Yadi' and all the sheikhs of the Yaqīmānu testified for him before the chief eunuch in Mannea” (LÚ.na-si-ku m<sup>m</sup>ia-di-i' LÚ.na-si-ku ù LÚ.na-si-ka-tu šá KUR.ia-qi-ma-nu gab-bi ina IGI LÚ.GAL.SAG ina KUR.ma-nu-a-a uk-tin-nu-šú).<sup>98</sup> The tribe's main sheikh (*nasīku*), Yadi', bore an Aramaic name,<sup>99</sup> and presumably gave his testimony in Aramaic. It seems highly unlikely that a Mannean-speaking tribe would have a sheikh bearing an Aramaic name. In addition, KUR.Ia-qi-ma-nu is homonymous with the settlement URU.Ia-qi-mu-na of Bīt-Dakkūri.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>96</sup> SAA 10:94, 113.r.7b-r.10a (= ABL 1109+).

<sup>97</sup> Zadok, “Onomastics of the Chaldean, Aramean, and Arabian Tribes,” 312. Contra Parpola 1993: 377a (SAA 10), index s.v. Yakīmanu; followed by Lipiński, *Aramaicans*, 484–85.

<sup>98</sup> SAA 10:94, 113.r.7b–10a.

<sup>99</sup> Zadok, “Onomastics of the Chaldean, Aramean, and Arabian Tribes,” 312. While the root *yd'* occurs in Hebrew and Phoenician, the likelihood that the *nasīku* of this tribe has a name derived from either of these is out of the question.

<sup>100</sup> RINAP 3.1:35, 1, 38. The Neo-Assyrian spelling with *ā > ō* is Aramaic. See Ran Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods: An Onomastic Study* (Jerusalem: Wanaata and Tel Aviv University, 1977), 138, 267; Lipiński, *Aramaicans*, 484–85.

## (5) Other Aramaic Inscriptions from the Zagros Region

There are three bronze objects inscribed with Old Aramaic inscriptions that come from the region. Although these have come from the antiquities market, they have been assessed as authentic and thus comprise additional evidence for the early use of Aramaic in this area.<sup>101</sup>

(a) The first is a bronze juglet with an inscription on its neck published by André Dupont-Sommer in 1964 (fig. 2). Its script belongs to ca. 750 BCE or even earlier.<sup>102</sup> The epigraph must date somewhat earlier than the Bukān Inscription. The shape of the *samek* on this bronze juglet is the older form. The Bukān inscription's *samek* is like that in the Nerab 2 Inscription (line 9), although it is clearly developing towards the cursive *samek* seen in the Nimrud Ostrakon and the Assur Ostrakon (line 15). These latter two are non-lapidary, but nonetheless the point is still valid. The text reads:

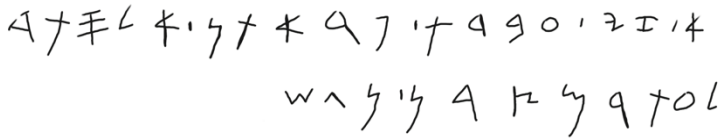


Fig. 2. Bronze juglet inscription<sup>103</sup>

(1)[x x]'. zy. 'bdt . pr'tn . 'lstr . (2)'l' trmšrn . ngš

The (juglet) which PR'TN, (daughter of) 'El-sitr, had made for 'TRMŠRN, (son of) NGŠ.

<sup>101</sup> The discovery of the Old Aramaic Bukān Inscription during regular excavations confirms the probable origin of the three vases with Aramaic inscriptions and clearly attests to the official use of Aramaic writing in this region, at least from the second half of the eighth century, two centuries before its diffusion during the Achaemenid empire.

<sup>102</sup> André Dupont-Sommer, "Trois inscriptions araméennes inédites sur des bronzes du Luristan, Collection de M. Foroughi," *Iranica Antiqua* 4 (1964): 108–18; Joseph Naveh, "Old Aramaic Inscriptions (1960–64)," *AION* 16 (1966): 19–36; Giovanni Garbini, "Appunti di epigrafia aramaica," *AION* 17 (1967): 89–96; *SSI* 2: 58; Lipiński, *Arameans*, 612–13; Dirk Schwiderski, *Texte und Bibliographie*, vol. 2: *Die alt- und reichsaramäischen Inschriften* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 293.

<sup>103</sup> Dupont-Sommer, "Trois inscriptions araméennes," 109, fig. 1.

(b) The second inscription is found on the outside edge of a bronze bowl also published by Dupont-Sommer.<sup>104</sup> Its script seems to date to the last quarter of the eighth century.<sup>105</sup> The inscription reads:

Fig. 3. Bronze bowl inscription<sup>106</sup>

*lkmr' 'Th . br . 'lsmk . 'bd . 'zr*

Belonging to Kumr-'elāh, son of 'El-sumkī, servant of 'Ezra.

(c) Finally, the third object is a swallow bronze bowl with a schematic astral scene with tiny Aramaic epigraphs.<sup>107</sup> The bowl dates artistically and paleographically to the mid–eighth century BCE.<sup>108</sup>

Since these inscriptions appear to predate the expansion of the Assyrian empire under Tiglath-pileser III and his successors and the resultant mass deportations, it seems reasonable to conclude that these belonged to a group of Arameans who had migrated to the Zagros at some prior time. A scarab decoration on the inside base of the bowl on which inscription (b) is engraved shows an Egyptian influence, which was probably mediated through contacts with Arameans of Syria and/or Babylonia (before this Aramean group's migration took place).

## CONCLUSION

The evidence presented here suggests that the beginning of the spread of Aramaic may have begun earlier than what we have envisioned. As various Aramean tribal entities migrated, especially in the latter part of, and at the end of, the Middle Assyrian period, they brought about an early diffusion of the Aramaic language

<sup>104</sup> Dupont-Sommer, "Trois inscriptions araméennes," 108–18; Naveh, "Old Aramaic Inscriptions (1960–64)," 19–36; Garbini, "Appunti di epigrafia aramaica," 89–96; *SSI* 2: 58–59; Lipiński, *Aramaicans*, 506–7; Schwiderski, *Texte und Bibliographie*, 2:294.

<sup>105</sup> Gibson states: "about the same period as the Nineveh weights and the Nerab inscriptions." See Joseph Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 5.1 (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1970), 12–13.

<sup>106</sup> Dupont-Sommer, "Trois inscriptions araméennes," 113, fig. 2.

<sup>107</sup> Richard D. Barnett, "Homme masqué ou dieu-ibex?," *Syria* 43 (1966): 259–76; André Lemaire, "Coupe astrale inscrite et astronomie araméenne," in *Michael: Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical Studies in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer*, ed. Yitzhak Avishur and Robert Deutsch (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 1999), 195–211; K. Lawson Younger Jr., "Another Look at an Aramaic Astral Bowl," *JNES* 71 (2012): 209–30.

<sup>108</sup> For the art historical dating, see Barnett, "Homme masqué ou dieu-ibex?," 272–74; for the paleographic dating, Lemaire, "Coupe astrale," 195–96.

with its various dialects. In my opinion, this must be factored into the story of the diffusion of the Aramaic language, including its penetration into the Zagros, resulting in these inscriptions, in particular the Bukān Inscription. Certainly, some published tablets may point to the “Zagric” linguistic make-up in the region, perhaps being writing in the Mannean language.<sup>109</sup> At present, the evidence presented seems to argue for a linguistic complexity in this region of the Zagros similar to that of the Nairi lands: Hurro-Urartian tongues, alongside Iranian dialects, with finally and importantly, some Aramaic.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Liane Jakob-Rost, Karen Radner, and Veysel Donbaz, *Neuassyrische Rechtsurkunden II*, WVDOG 98 (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 2000), 9 and 67–69, nos. 62–65; Radner 1999: 197–205. Karen Radner, *Die neuassyrisches Privatarhiv der Tempelgoldschmiede von Assur*, StAT 1 (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1999).

<sup>110</sup> Jaime MacGinnis, “Cuneiform Tablet ZTT 30,” in *Anatolica* 37 (2011): 73–74; MacGinnis, “Evidence for a Peripheral Language in a Neo-Assyrian Tablet from the Governor’s Palace in Tušhan,” *JNES* 71 (2012): 13–20.

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## PART 3: ARCHAEOLOGY



## Lachish in the Context of Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Yosef Garfinkel

Lachish has a rather interesting modern history, probably no less interesting than its ancient one, as for two centuries it has attracted the attention of laymen and scholars alike. As a matter of fact, I will argue that there is no other extinct city in the entire Near East that reflects in such a vivid way all the main stages of the history of ancient Near Eastern studies. After this very short introduction to Lachish, I have organized the relevant data in sequential order from early to late.

Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir) was a major Canaanite city in the second millennium BCE, the second most important city (after Jerusalem) in the Judean Kingdom, and a major city in the Persian and Early Hellenistic eras. The city guards one of the routes from the coastal plain to Hebron and Jerusalem in the central hill country. It is situated on the south bank of the Lachish Brook (Wadi Ghafr) at a protected spot where the brook bends and encircles the site on the east and north. The top of the large mound covers 7.5 hectares. Today the site is part of a national park and is open to the public.

Lachish is mentioned for the first time in fourteenth-century BCE Egypt in a papyrus from the reign of Amenhotep II and in five letters from the Amarna archive, together with a similar letter uncovered at Tell el-Hesi.<sup>1</sup> Lachish is mentioned twenty-four times in the Bible in the following contexts: its capture by Joshua at the end of the Late Bronze Age (Josh 10:3–35; 12:11; 15:39); its fortification by Rehoboam in the late tenth century BCE (2 Chr 11:9); its conquest by Sennacherib in 701 BCE during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:14, 17; 19:8; 2 Chr 32:9; Isa 36:2; 37:8); its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 BCE (Jer 34:7); and its reoccupation after the Babylonian exile in the fifth century BCE (Neh 11:30).

Tell ed-Duweir has been excavated so far by six different expeditions:

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion of Lachish in the Late Bronze Age, see David Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 2004), 58–60.

- (1) A British expedition headed by James Lesley Starkey that excavated large parts of the site (1932–1938).<sup>2</sup>
- (2) A small-scale project directed by Yohanan Aharoni of Tel Aviv University (1966 and 1968).<sup>3</sup>
- (3) A large-scale project directed by David Ussishkin of Tel Aviv University (1974–1994).<sup>4</sup>
- (4) The Fourth Expedition to Lachish. This five-year project (2013–2017) was initiated by Yosef Garfinkel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Michael G. Hasel and Martin G. Klingbeil of the Southern Adventist University.<sup>5</sup> It focuses on the early Iron Age levels at the site.
- (5) The Israel Antiquities Authority. In 2014–2016, as part of the development of the site as a national park, Saar Ganor of the Israel Antiquities Authority conducted excavations in the gate area. As recently announced, a gate shrine was found in Level III, the city destroyed by Sennacherib.<sup>6</sup>
- (6) Since 2017, an Austrian expedition has been concentrating on the Middle Bronze and Late Bronze levels at the site.<sup>7</sup>

The modern history of Lachish, however, begins much earlier than the excavations at the ancient site. It already attracted attention some 120 years earlier and has done so almost constantly since then.

#### 1815: BYRON'S POEM ON THE ASSYRIAN

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824), is one of the best-known and beloved English poets. Despite the many scandals relating to his financial debts and love affairs, he was a leading figure in the artistic development known as the Romantic Movement. This movement deeply influenced literature, painting, and music, and one of its major themes was the glorification of a heroic past. Within this intellectual environment, he wrote a number of poems relating to the Old Testament. In

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<sup>2</sup> Harry Torczyner, *Lachish I: The Lachish Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938); Olga Tufnell, Charles Inge, and G. L. Harding, *Lachish II: The Fosse Temple* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940); Olga Tufnell, *Lachish III: The Iron Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953); Olga Tufnell, *Lachish IV: The Bronze Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

<sup>3</sup> Yohanan Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachish V)* (Tel Aviv: Gateway Publishers, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Ussishkin, *Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish*.

<sup>5</sup> Yosef Garfinkel, Michael G. Hasel, and Martin G. Klingbeil, "An Ending and a Beginning: Why We're Leaving Qeiyafa and Going to Lachish," *BAR* 39.6 (2013): 44–51.

<sup>6</sup> S. Ganor and I. Kreimerman, "An Eighth Century BCE Gate Shrine at Tel Lachish," *BASOR* 381 (2019): 211–36.

<sup>7</sup> K. Streit, L. Webster, V. Becker, A.-K. Jeske, H. Misgav, and F. Höflmayer, "Between Destruction and Diplomacy in Canaan: The Austrian-Israeli Expedition to Tel Lachish," *NEA* 81 (2018): 259–68.

1815 he published his famous poem “The Destruction of Sennacherib,” relating to the Assyrian invasion of ancient Israel.

But what could Lord Byron possibly know about Sennacherib in 1815? At the time no archaeological excavations had yet been carried out in Mesopotamia or the Holy Land, and his only source of information was the biblical tradition. The various Assyrian attacks on the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah are well documented in the Bible, particularly in relation to Sennacherib’s campaign to Lachish and Jerusalem, mentioned in the books of Kings, Chronicles, and Isaiah. True, Lachish is not mentioned specifically in Byron’s poem, but the city is mentioned in the biblical account that relates to Sennacherib.

The Romantic Movement dominated the intellectual atmosphere in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century and eventually led to deeper interest in the history and cultures of the ancient Near East. As a result Egyptian hieroglyphs and Mesopotamian cuneiform were deciphered and European explorers began to document and excavate monumental sites in Egypt and Mesopotamia—the beginning of scientific research of the ancient Near East.

#### 1838: ROBINSON AND SMITH AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF LACHISH

The beginning of the historical geography of the Holy Land and the identification of biblical place names with local sites is marked by the pioneering work of Edward Robinson and Eli Smith. In 1838 they traveled intensively in various part of the land, drafted detailed maps, and documented thousands of local Arabic place names.<sup>8</sup> Based on similarities between biblical and Arabic names, they made numerous suggestions about the location of biblical cities. In this way, for example, they correctly identified the biblical city of Socoh with Khirbet Shuweikeh in the Valley of Elah.<sup>9</sup> They also noted that a site called Umm Lakis, located a few kilometers west of today’s city of Qiryat Gat, could perhaps be biblical Lachish. While they generally dedicate only a few sentences to each place name, the discussion of Lachish occupies more than a page, and it is very clear that they were unhappy with the identification of Umm Lakis as biblical Lachish: “These remains are certainly not those of a ancient fortified city, which could for a time at least brave the assaults of an Assyrian army. Nor indeed does either the name or the position of this spot correspond to those of Lachish.”<sup>10</sup> As the Sennacherib relief had not yet been uncovered, the source that they used for the image of a fortified city that braved the Assyrian army was the biblical tradition of 2 Kgs 18:14 and 19:8. They also noted that Lachish should be located in the hills to the

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Robinson and Eli Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838* (London: John Murray, 1841).

<sup>9</sup> Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches*, 348–50; Michael G. Hasel, Yosef Garfinkel, and Shifra Weiss, *Socoh of the Judean Shephelah: The 2010 Survey* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches*, 388–89.



south of Beth Jebrin, while Umm Lakis is located in the plain to the west. Nevertheless, for almost a century after that it was commonly believed that Robinson and Smith had identified biblical Lachish with Umm Lakis.

#### 1847: LAYARD AND THE LACHISH RELIEF

The beginning of archaeological excavations in Mesopotamia was in 1846, when Paul-Émile Botta, the French consul in Mosul, excavated the ruins of the Assyrian city of Khorsabad and discovered monumental statues and reliefs. A year later the British explorer Austin Henry Layard excavated at the Assyrian city of Nineveh and uncovered the palace of Sennacherib, with the famous relief that depicts the Assyrian attack on Lachish.<sup>11</sup> An inscription on the relief, which was deciphered soon afterward, clearly connects the depiction to Sennacherib and Lachish. As the same historical event was documented in three books of the Bible, the discovery had a tremendous effect on Victorian England and opened new horizons for exploration and research in Mesopotamia and the Holy Land.<sup>12</sup>

#### 1870S: THE SURVEY OF WESTERN PALESTINE

In the years 1872–1877 the Palestine Exploration Fund organized a systematic survey of western Palestine. They published detailed maps and meticulous documentation of ancient sites and their Arabic names. This was a major contribution to the study of the land and its ancient toponyms. During this survey, and its publications, the question of the identification of Lachish was raised by Claude Reignier Conder and Horatio Herbert Kitchener. They recognized that the ruins of Umm Lakis could not be those of a large biblical city and suggested that the largest nearby site, Tell el-Hesi, was biblical Lachish. This identification was based on a linguistic argument as well: “Ten English miles from Beth Jebrin is the important site of Tell el-Hesi, the name of which approaches that of Lachish, with the substitution of a guttural for the Hebrew *Caf*, as in the case of Michmash.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Austin H. Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains* (London: Murray, 1849); Layard, *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: Harper & Bros., 1853).

<sup>12</sup> Gordon Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh* (London: J. Murray, 1963); Hayim Tadmor, “Nineveh, Calah and Israel: On Assyriology and the Origins of Biblical Archaeology,” in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology*, ed. Avraham Biran (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 260–68; Shawn Malley, “Austin Henry Layard and the Periodical Press: Middle Eastern Archaeology and the Excavation of Cultural Identity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Britain,” *Victorian Review* 22 (1996): 152–70; Timothy Larsen, “Austin Henry Layard’s Nineveh: The Bible and Archaeology in Victorian Britain,” *JRH* 33 (2009): 66–81.

<sup>13</sup> Claude R. Conder and Horatio H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine*. Vol. 3 of *Judaea* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1883), 261.

## 1890: PETRIE AT TELL EL-ḤESI (“LACHISH”)

Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie is rightly considered the founder of modern archaeology in the Near East.<sup>14</sup> Archaeological investigations in the region had indeed started before him, but Petrie initiated the two basic archaeological methods: typology (the study of the shapes of objects) and stratigraphy (the study of the deposition of layers in archaeological sites). In his work in Egypt in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Petrie was the first to recognize that the shapes of pottery vessels, as well as other objects, changed over time, and hence that the shape of an object encoded its age. This was a breakthrough in the ability to date archaeological discoveries.

In 1887 the Palestine Exploration Fund applied to the Turkish government through the British ambassador in Istanbul for an excavation permit to work at Umm Lakis. In 1889 the Fund approached Petrie and asked him to conduct the excavations. In 1890 the permit was finally approved and Petrie came from Egypt to Jerusalem in March of that year to start the excavations. First he had to wait three more weeks due to “verbal error,” and when he finally arrived at the site he still had to wait ten more days for the “needful Turkish official” whose job was “to watch the excavations and to take for the government all antiquities that might be found.” The excavations at Umm Lakis were very brief, as “but three day’s work there were amply enough to prove its late date.”<sup>15</sup>

During the ten days of waiting for the needful Turkish official, Petrie visited a number of other sites in the region and found interest in Tell el-Ḥesi, which impressed him by its height and pottery in pre-Greek style. Apparently, this rather humble mound, located some 5 km southeast of Umm Lakis, looked attractive as there was nothing better in that area. In this way, the above mentioned identification of the Survey of Western Palestine had been accepted, without much hesitation.

Petrie’s excavations lasted only six weeks, as the laborers deserted the excavations and went to harvest their fields in the early summer.<sup>16</sup> Further analysis of these excavations has been presented by the latest expedition to the site.<sup>17</sup>

Petrie started his work at Umm Lakis in the hope of finding the biblical city of Lachish, clearly disregarding the objections made by Robinson and Smith or the Survey of Western Palestine. So how did Tell el-Ḥesi become Lachish? It

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<sup>14</sup> Margaret S. Drower, *Flinders Petrie: A Life in Archaeology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Tell el Hesi (Lachish)* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1891), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Petrie, *Tell el Hesi*, 9–11.

<sup>17</sup> J. M. Matthers, “Excavation by the Palestine Exploration Fund at Tell el-Hesi 1890–1892,” in *Tell el-Hesi: The Site and the Expedition*, ed. Bruce T. Dahlberg, Kevin G. O’Connell, John Wilson Betlyon, and Harry Thomas Frank, ASOR Excavation Reports (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 37–67.

seems to me that this identification was motivated by Petrie's overwhelming desire to uncover the biblical city. Both the Palestine Exploration Fund and Petrie were well acquainted with the Sennacherib relief at the British Museum and the Assyrian siege at Lachish.<sup>18</sup> Petrie even identified the Assyrian siege ramp at Tell el-Ḥesi and made the following comment on the relief: "This testing of a sculpture excavated in Assyria, hundreds of miles distant from the place, is of great interest, as it shows that some sketches and notes were actually made, probably by a royal designer attached to the court, one of the secretaries."<sup>19</sup> About ninety years later exactly the same idea was proposed, but this time for the real site of Lachish.<sup>20</sup>

Another discovery that strengthened the identification of Tell el-Ḥesi with ancient Lachish was made by Frederick Jones Bliss, Petrie's student, who excavated there for two more seasons in 1891 and 1892. These excavations uncovered a Late Bronze Age Akkadian letter in el-Amarna style that mentions a king of Lachish.<sup>21</sup>

During his short time at Tell el-Ḥesi, Petrie recognized two basic archaeological principles. The first is that a mound is created by the accumulation of a number of settlement episodes, built one on top of the other, a principle acknowledged in the title of the book that Bliss published on his excavations at Tell el-Ḥesi.<sup>22</sup> Second, Petrie recognized that each level in the mound is characterized by a different type of pottery. Tell el-Ḥesi was the first mound in the Near East in which these basic principles were recognized. In this way, the quest for biblical Lachish, which combined pottery typology and stratigraphic analysis, created the standard methodology for archaeological research worldwide.

#### 1907, 1915: KNUDTZON PUBLISHES THE EL-AMARNA ARCHIVE

Around 1887, excavations by local farmers in the ancient site of el-Amarna in the Nile Valley in Egypt uncovered some 350 clay tablets written in Akkadian. This was part of an archive dated to the fourteenth century BCE containing international correspondence from large parts of the Near East to the New Kingdom pharaoh in Egypt. Most of the letters came from the southern Levant, sent by rulers of various Late Bronze Age Canaanite city-states. After the initial discovery, the letters were dispersed between various museums, mainly in Europe, and were partly published. The Assyriologist Jørgen Alexander Knudtzon was the first

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<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey A. Blakely and Fred L. Horton Jr., "On Site Identifications Old and New: The Example of Tell el-Ḥesi," *NEA* 64 (2001): 24–36.

<sup>19</sup> Petrie, *Tell el Hesi*, 37–38.

<sup>20</sup> David Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 1982).

<sup>21</sup> Frederick J. Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities: or, Tell El Hesi Excavated* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1898); Ussishkin, *Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish*, 60.

<sup>22</sup> Bliss, *Mound of Many Cities*.

scholar to organize the entire assemblage in sequential order, and he published the complete archive in two volumes in 1907 and 1915.<sup>23</sup> Five of the letters in the archive were sent by three different kings of Lachish, and the above-mentioned letter from Tell el-Ḥesi is the sixth letter of this type of correspondence to mention Lachish. The el-Amarna archive is the major historical source for Late Bronze Age Canaan, and Lachish was clearly one of the most important Canaanite cities.

#### 1929: ALBRIGHT IDENTIFIES LACHISH

W. F. Albright was a prominent American archaeologist who laid the foundation for systematic research of the Chalcolithic period, Bronze Age, and Iron Age in the Levant. His broad knowledge of archaeology, biblical studies, and various ancient Near Eastern languages and civilizations was unique, and he is considered the founding father of biblical archaeology.<sup>24</sup>

Albright was the first scholar to identify Tell ed-Duweir as Lachish.<sup>25</sup> This identification was suggested on the basis of information presented by the Church Father Eusebius that Lachish is located seven miles from Beth Jebrin. Tell ed-Duweir is indeed located about seven miles south of Beth Jebrin. Apart from marginal reservations, this identification is universally accepted today.<sup>26</sup>

However, Albright made a serious error in the dating of Level III at Lachish when it was excavated in the early 1930s. He attributed the end of the last city at Tell Beit Mirsim, together with Levels III and II at Lachish, to Babylonian destructions. At Lachish he placed Level II at 586 BCE (the final destruction of Judah) and Level III at 597 BCE (an alleged earlier destruction). Today we know that the last city at Tell Beit Mirsim, together with Level III at Lachish, were actually destroyed by the Assyrians in 701 BCE.

Elsewhere I have described in detail how this error happened in the first place.<sup>27</sup> It is all based on two seal impressions bearing the inscription *ʾlyqym n ʾr*

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<sup>23</sup> Jørgen A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafel: mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907).

<sup>24</sup> F. M. Cross. "W. F. Albright's View of Biblical Archaeology and Its Methodology," *BA* 36 (1973): 2–5; Leona G. Running and David N. Friedman, *William Foxwell Albright: A Twentieth Century Genius* (New York: Morgan, 1975).

<sup>25</sup> This was a two-phase process. First, he refuted the identification of Tell el-Ḥesi as Lachish: William F. Albright, "Researches of the School in Western Judaea," *BASOR* 15 (1924): 7–8. He then suggested locating Lachish at Tell ed-Duweir: W. F. Albright, "The American Excavations at Tell Beit Mirsim," *ZAW* 47 (1929): 1–17.

<sup>26</sup> After Albright's identification and the excavations of the 1930s, the identification of Lachish with Tell ed-Duweir seemed firmly established. Suddenly, in the 1980s, the issue was raised once again; see Graham I. Davies, "Tell ed-Duweir: Not Libnah but Lachish," *PEQ* 117(2) (1985): 92–96. Today, the identification of Lachish at Tell ed-Duweir is unquestionable.

<sup>27</sup> Yosef Garfinkel, "The Eliakim Na'ar Yokan Seal Impressions: Sixty Years of Confusion in Biblical Archaeological Research," *BA* 53 (1990): 74–79.

*ywkn* (Eliakim servant of Yokan) found together with royal (*lmlk*) Judean storage jars at Tell Beit Mirsim. Albright understood *ywkn* as King Jehoiakim, the penultimate king of Judah. At his excavations at Tell Beit Mirsim he dated the layer that contained *lmlk* storage jars to 586 BCE. At Lachish, however, Level II was destroyed in 586 BCE, and so Level III with its *lmlk* storage jars could not be dated to the same year. A new historical event was artificially created to place Level III as well in the time of King Jehoiakim, in the last years of the kingdom of Judah. Only in 1953 was this false date first questioned, and only in 1977 was it was finally proven to be wrong.<sup>28</sup>

The case of Lachish encapsulates all that was good and all that was bad about Albright's scholarship. His vast knowledge enabled him to suggest the correct identification of Lachish, but his approach to dating archaeological layers based on historical considerations misled generations of scholars.

#### 1932: STARKEY'S EXPEDITION TO LACHISH

In November 1932 large-scale excavations started at the site of Tell ed-Duweir under the directorship of James Lesley Starkey. The expedition included two other prominent scholars, Olga Tufnell and Gerald Lankester Harding. These three archaeologists had all been trained by Petrie in Egypt and at Tell el-Far'ah South and Tell el-'Ajjul in Palestine and were known by the nickname "Petrie's Puffs."<sup>29</sup> They were well versed in the basic principles of stratigraphy, typology, and Egyptian chronology. Starkey himself had excavated at the site of Badari and identified the Badarian Culture of predynastic Egypt.

The relationships between these three young scholars and their old mentor Flinders Petrie were not good. In a personal letter sent on June 6th, 1932, Starkey wrote: "The real reason that Petrie is now working in Palestine is that he has so embarrassed himself with the Department of Antiquities in Egypt it is impossible for him to put in for a concession" (Correspondence File 76, Lachish Archive, British Museum). Further reading in the expedition records and the publications reveal that they originally wished to excavate at Tel Erani, a site identified at that time as the Philistine city of Gath. Just a few months before the field work started, however, they decided to excavate at Tell ed-Duweir. One cannot escape the feeling that by choosing this site they were also expressing their disapproval of Petrie's misinterpretation of Tell el-Ḥesi.

In the very first season the expedition discovered the Fosse Temple, a Late Bronze Age cult structure located outside the city. In this building three levels

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<sup>28</sup> Tufnell, *Lachish III*; David Ussishkin, "The Destruction of Lachish by Sennacherib and the Dating of the Royal Judean Storage Jars," *TA* 4 (1977): 28–60.

<sup>29</sup> Olga Tufnell, "'Reminiscences of Excavations at Lachish': An Address Delivered by Olga Tufnell at Lachish on July 6, 1983," *TA* 12 (1985): 4.

were discerned, each containing local Canaanite pottery, Egyptian artifacts and scarabs, and pottery imported from Cyprus and Greece. The excavators' wide knowledge of Egyptian archaeology enabled them to date the various levels of the Fosse Temple and to create a connecting point between Egypt, the Levant, and the Aegean or, in other words, between the archaeology of Africa, Asia, and Europe. The relatively well-established chronology of Egypt provided anchors for the chronology of the Levant, Cyprus, and the Aegean.

Another major discovery of the expedition is the Lachish letters, uncovered in the third season of 1935. This is a group of eighteen inscriptions written in ink on potsherds (ostraca). They were found in the city gate of Level II and were announced as letters from the time of Prophet Jeremiah. These are among the most important epigraphic discoveries ever made in the southern Levant. The name Lachish occurs in ostrakon 4, and hence Lachish joins the rare cases in which a site's ancient name appears on an inscription unearthed at the site.

On January 10th, 1938, Starkey was murdered near Hebron on his way from Lachish to the opening ceremony of the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> The Rockefellers were deeply interested in the archaeology of the Holy Land and in the 1920s and 1930s were the main sponsors of the expedition of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago to Megiddo. At the same time, they donated the funds needed for the construction of the Rockefeller Museum, one of the most monumental buildings ever built in Jerusalem.

#### 1953: TUFNELL AND LEVEL III AT LACHISH

After Starkey's murder, Olga Tufnell took on the responsibility for the analysis and publication of three final excavation reports: *Lachish II* in 1940, *Lachish III* in 1953, and *Lachish IV* in 1958. In the report on the Iron Age levels she made the claim that Level III was destroyed by the Assyrian Sennacherib in 701 BCE and not by the Babylonians in 597 BCE, as had been generally accepted up to then. Tufnell needed great courage to come out with such a far-reaching conclusion. Her new date was immediately rejected by all the major figures in the archaeology of the region at the time, such as Albright, Wright, and Kenyon. The debate lasted twenty-five years until it was finally put to rest by new excavations carried out in the 1970s. The firm dating of Level III to 701 BCE enabled the archaeology and history of the kingdom of Judah to be placed on a solid foundation.

#### 1960S–1990S: THE EXCAVATIONS OF AHARONI AND USSISHKIN

The intensive archaeological research in the Holy Land between the two world wars was carried out almost entirely by foreign expeditions. This situation

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<sup>30</sup> Yosef Garfinkel, "The Murder of James Lesley Starkey near Lachish," *PEQ* 148 (2016): 84–109.

changed with the establishment of the state of Israel. From the 1950s onward the archaeological activity was now carried out by local Israeli scholars. The end of the colonial era enabled the development of local archaeological research in all the countries of the Near East, a change reflected at Lachish, which was excavated in the second half of the twentieth century by expeditions headed by two different scholars from Tel Aviv University: Yohanan Aharoni in 1966 and 1968 and David Ussishkin from 1974 to 1994. Aharoni was a prominent scholar who dedicated most of his field work to sites in the biblical Kingdom of Judah: Ramat Rahel, Arad, Lachish, and Beersheba. His interest in Lachish, however, was limited, and he concluded his field work after just two seasons.<sup>31</sup>

Ussishkin's extensive excavations lasted twenty years, with fourteen seasons in the field.<sup>32</sup> This expedition made major contributions with respect to Level III:

- (1) Final verification of Tufnell's dating of Level III to the Assyrian destruction of 701 BCE.
- (2) Dating of the *lmk* jars to the eighth century BCE.
- (3) Location and excavation of the Assyrian siege ramp in the southwest corner of the site, to the right of the city gate.
- (4) Analysis of the distribution of arrowheads, indicating that the Assyrians broke into the city through the city gate in the southwest corner of the site.<sup>33</sup>

#### 1984: YADIN AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL LACHISH

Yigael Yadin was the leading Israeli archaeologist of the second half of the twentieth century. He conducted large-scale excavations at the sites of Hazor and Masada and played a prominent part in the research of the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, before starting his academic career as an archaeologist, he was a leading commander in the 1948 War of Independence and shortly afterward become Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Force.<sup>34</sup> This military background gave him a special interest in ancient warfare and over the years he published extensively on military aspects of the biblical tradition and the ancient Near East. Accordingly, the two studies that he devoted to Lachish dealt with military aspects.

His first article dealt with the famous Lachish letters and specifically with ostrakon 4, which mentioned the "fire signals of Lachish." In antiquity messages were commonly sent by fire signals during military conflicts. By analyzing the

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<sup>31</sup> Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish*.

<sup>32</sup> Ussishkin, *Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish*.

<sup>33</sup> Yulia Gottlieb, "The Weaponry of the Assyrian Attack. Section A: The Arrowheads and Selected Aspects of the Siege Battle," in Ussishkin, *Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish*, 1907–1969.

<sup>34</sup> Neil A. Silberman, *A Prophet from Amongst You: The Life of Yigael Yadin, Soldier, Scholar, and Mythmaker of Modern Israel* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993).

Hebrew word *'at*, Yadin proposed that the letters were sent from and not to Lachish.<sup>35</sup>

Yadin's second article on Lachish suggests an explanation for a mysterious iron chain discovered by Ussishkin on top of the Assyrian siege ramp in Area R. Based on Assyrian depictions of sieges, Yadin suggested that the chain was used by the defenders to deflect the battering ram. He concluded his article with the words: "Here is a rare case of ancient reliefs and archaeological discoveries complementing each other, thus explaining the chain found at Lachish."<sup>36</sup>

#### 1980–2000: DECONSTRUCTING LACHISH

Following the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, a highly critical approach developed in the humanities and social studies during the 1970s. This approach also reached biblical studies, the history of biblical Israel, and archaeology in the 1980s and still affects scholarship today. The chief aim of this movement is to demolish old structures of knowledge that were constructed by earlier generations of scholars and to suggest a totally new understanding of the discipline. In the case of the archaeology of the Holy Land, every possible effort was made to demolish the structure that Albright had built on the basis of strong connections between archaeology and the Bible, a structure that is commonly called biblical archaeology. The main goal here was to detach the biblical tradition from its ancient Near Eastern context and place it in the Hellenistic world.<sup>37</sup>

Like a row of dominoes, biblical traditions lost their historicity one after the other: the Patriarchs, the exile in Egypt, the Exodus, the wandering in Sinai, Joshua's destruction of the Canaanite cities, the time of the Judges, the United Monarchy, David, Solomon and his Temple, Rehoboam's fortifications, Jerusalem's fortifications, and the early centuries of the Kingdom of Judah. But even in accordance with this school's tenets, Sennacherib's written account and the relief clearly support the biblical tradition. Hezekiah king of Judah, the revolt against the Assyrians, and the attack on Lachish are documented independently by archaeology, Assyriology, and iconography. Here the biblical tradition could not be refuted.

The proceedings of a conference dedicated to the events of 701 BCE were published in a volume entitled *Like a Bird in a Cage*.<sup>38</sup> This title is taken from

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<sup>35</sup> Yigael Yadin, "The Lachish Letters—Originals or Copies and Drafts," in *Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks and Benjamin Mazar (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1984), 179–86.

<sup>36</sup> Yigael Yadin, "The Mystery of the Unexplained Chain," *BAR* 10.4 (1984): 65–67.

<sup>37</sup> For a review, see Yosef Garfinkel, "Biblical Archaeology Today: 2010," in *What Is Bible?*, ed. Karen Finsterbusch and Armin Lange (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 15–24.

<sup>38</sup> Lester L. Grabbe, ed., "*Like a Bird in a Cage*": *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE*, JSOTSup 363 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003).



Sennacherib's chronicle of his campaign to Judah. This rather poetic description is an Assyrian metaphor for King Hezekiah trapped in Jerusalem during the Assyrian siege. In other words, however, it says that Sennacherib was unable to take Jerusalem. Kings that revolted against Sennacherib were always killed. The fact that the Assyrians failed to reach Hezekiah's head is disguised by the poetic language.<sup>39</sup>

In that volume Christoph Uehlinger dedicated an eighty-six-page article to a critical review of the Sennacherib relief. He attacked Ussishkin's interpretation of the relief, with the main claim that the relief does not represent reality.<sup>40</sup> This is not an original idea, as Ruth Jacoby had already suggested that Assyrian depictions were made in accordance with artistic conventions and do not represent authentic landscapes.<sup>41</sup> Uehlinger also examined the original records of Layard from Nineveh and from the British Museum and found some minor discrepancies between records. Uehlinger had managed to point out minute problems in the field work of Layard, but he was not able to deconstruct the event described by the relief, or to change anything about Lachish:

- (1) Tell ed-Duweir is still biblical Lachish.
- (2) The Assyrian siege ramp is still at the southwest corner of the site.
- (3) The city gate of Lachish is still located to the left of the siege ramp, as in the relief.
- (4) The Assyrians attacked Lachish in two places, the gate and the siege ramp, as indicated by the spatial analysis of hundreds of arrowheads uncovered during Ussishkin's excavation.<sup>42</sup> This situation is also described in the Sennacherib relief.
- (5) The event took place during the time of King Hezekiah of Judah, as mentioned in both the Assyrian chronicle and the biblical tradition.

It is interesting to note another article on the subject, entitled: "What if we had no accounts of Sennacherib's third campaign or the palace reliefs depicting his capture of Lachish?"<sup>43</sup> The name of the article clearly expresses the wishful thinking of the deconstructionist school. Without Sennacherib's campaign to

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<sup>39</sup> Hayim Tadmor, "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah, Historical and Historiographical Considerations" [Hebrew], *Zion* 50 (1985): 65–80.

<sup>40</sup> Christoph Uehlinger, "Clio in a World of Pictures—Another Look at the Lachish Reliefs from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh," in *"Like a Bird in a Cage": The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, JSOT Supplement 363 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 221–307.

<sup>41</sup> Ruth Jacoby, "The Representation and Identification of Cities on Assyrian Reliefs," *IEJ* 41 (1991): 112–31.

<sup>42</sup> Gottlieb, "Weaponry of the Assyrian Attack."

<sup>43</sup> Diana V. Edelman, "What If We Had No Accounts of Sennacherib's Third Campaign or the Palace Reliefs Depicting His Capture of Lachish?," *BI* 8 (2000): 88–103.

Judah it could be argued that, just like David and Solomon, Hezekiah is a mythological figure. Indeed, Edelman wrote: "In spite of the important information contained in the various accounts of Sennacherib's third campaign and the reliefs of his conquest of Lachish that were on the palace wall at Nineveh, their absence would have little effect upon the recreation of events in the reign of Hezekiah by historians of Judah." This evaluation is mistaken, as using the biblical tradition and archaeology without an extrabiblical source would still be open to debate.

### 2013: THE FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH

A major intellectual aspect of the archaeology in the Holy Land is the combination of archaeological data and the biblical tradition. In the past, the connection was made in a simple fashion: biblical traditions were used for the dating and interpretation of the archaeological finds, and then the archaeological finds were used to support the biblical tradition. This circular reasoning created numerous errors; one of them, the dating of Level III and the *mlk* storage jars, has been described above.

Wherever possible the fourth expedition is basing its dating of the various levels on radiometric dating, in this way avoiding errors created by wishful historical theories. The archaeological data should be analyzed first, and only after this can integration with historical data be proposed. A major question that we are attempting to resolve is when Lachish was first built and when was it first fortified in the Iron Age. Various suggestions have been raised over the years: the first half of the tenth century BCE (the time of David and Solomon), the end of the tenth century BCE (the time of Rehoboam), the end of the ninth century BCE (after the destruction of the Philistine Kingdom of Gath), or the late eighth century BCE (after the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel).<sup>44</sup> This is not merely a chronological or historical question but has direct implications for understanding the biblical tradition and its historical accuracy.

In our excavations, a previously unknown city wall relating to Level V had been uncovered. Its radiometric dating indicates that it was built at the time of King Rehoboam. This date supports the biblical tradition that attributes the fortification of Lachish to this king (2 Chr 11:9).

### SUMMARY

As I have shown above, the modern history of Lachish is a fascinating panorama of all the major stages of modern interest and research in the ancient Near East. My survey has included leading figures like Lord Byron, Edward Robinson, Eli Smith, Austin Henry Layard, Sir William Flinders Petrie, William Foxwell

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<sup>44</sup> For a review, see Garfinkel, Hasel, and Klingbeil, "An Ending and a Beginning."

Albright, James Lesley Starkey, Olga Tufnell, Yohanan Aharoni, David Ussishkin, and Yigael Yadin. The story starts in 1815 with the Romantic Movement, before any scientific activity had taken place. Then came the pioneering surveys in the Holy Land and pioneering excavations in Mesopotamia. At Tell el-Hesi, believed to be biblical Lachish, the two main paradigms of archaeology (stratigraphy and typology) were formulated together in 1890. During the twentieth century the first three expeditions to Lachish uncovered a huge amount of data that has enabled scholars to tackle major methodological issues related to the disciplines of archaeology, history, biblical studies, and iconography. There is no other case study in the entire Near East in which all these aspects are so closely interlinked.

In one aspect, however, the various expeditions of Lachish do not at all reflect the situation that frequently characterizes Near Eastern archaeological projects. The final reports of excavations are often published with a very long delay, or sometimes not published at all. In contrast, all the three expeditions that have completed their field work at Lachish have published the final excavation reports, in four volumes (the first expedition),<sup>45</sup> one volume (the second expedition),<sup>46</sup> and five volumes (the third expedition).<sup>47</sup>

Finally, I will focus on what I see as the unique contribution of Lachish to ancient Near Eastern studies. The new understanding of Level III creates a meeting point between different ancient sources: (1) biblical texts (2 Kgs 18:14, 17; 19:8; 2 Chr 32:9; Isa 36:2; 37:8); (2) the Assyrian chronicles of Sennacherib describing his military actions against Judah; (3) the Assyrian relief from Sennacherib's palace, now in the British Museum; and (4) the archaeological data from excavations at the site of Lachish. This unique situation enables scholars to cross-reference the data with various methodological issues that cannot so easily be investigated at other sites:

- (1) The accounts of the victorious side (Assyrian) versus the narrative of the defeated side (Judah).
- (2) The biblical tradition (a complex edited text) versus extrabiblical primary historical sources.
- (3) Archaeological data versus historical data.
- (4) Pictorial representation versus archaeological data.
- (5) Pictorial representation versus historical data.

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<sup>45</sup> Torczyner, *Lachish I*; Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *Lachish II*; Tufnell, *Lachish III*; Tufnell, *Lachish IV*.

<sup>46</sup> Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish*.

<sup>47</sup> Ussishkin, *Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish*.

These issues have already attracted much attention,<sup>48</sup> and each successive generation of scholars will find interest in these basic questions. Indeed, there is no other case study in the entire Near East with such a unique combination of different sources and different methodological issues to be dealt with.

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Raymond, P. Dougherty, "Sennacherib and the Walled Cities of Judah," *JBL* 49 (1930): 160–71; Richard D. Barnett, "The Siege of Lachish," *IEJ* 8 (1958): 161–64; John B. Geyer, "2 Kings XVIII 14–16 and the Annals of Sennacherib," *VT* 21 (1971): 604–6; David Ussishkin, *Conquest of Lachish*; Israel Eph'al, "The Assyrian Siege Ramp at Lachish: Military and Lexical Aspects," *TA* 11 (1984): 60–70; John M. Russell, *Sennacherib's "Palace Without Rival" at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); John M. Russell, "Sennacherib's Lachish Narratives," in *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art*, ed. Peter J. Holliday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 55–73; William R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies*, SHCANE 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Benjamin Z. Begin, *"As We Do Not See Azeqa": The Source of the Lachish Letters* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2000).

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# Proto-Aeolic Capitols and the Queen of Heaven

Pamela Gaber

The enigma of volutes on column capitals has interested scholars of the ancient Near East since the nineteenth century. Even then it was known that the volute capitals “are holy trees and Asherat” derived from the date palm.<sup>1</sup> Since that time numerous scholars have written on the subject, usually when a new example of so-called proto-Aeolic capitals was uncovered in archaeological investigations.<sup>2</sup>

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It is a privilege to write in honor of P. Kyle McCarter Jr. He and I were half of the fourth semester Akkadian class taught by Professor Thorkild Jacobsen in 1972. Our professor was late to the final exam in the course, and we waited quite a while for him to appear. Kyle wrote a prayer to Ishtar—in Akkadian—on his desk while we waited. It is therefore fitting that my subject, the origin of the volute in ancient Near Eastern art, leads us back to Ishtar’s progenetrix, Inanna, the Sumerian Queen of Heaven.

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez, *Histoire de l’art dans l’antiquité 3* (Paris: Hachette, 1885); M. Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible, and Homer: Oriental Civilization, Art and Religion in Ancient Times* (London: Asher, 1893), 190, plate XVII, 2–4.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Einer Gjerstad, *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition Vol. IV Part 2: The Cypro-Geometric, Cypro-Achaic and Cypro-Classical Periods* (Stockholm: Swedish Cyprus Expedition, 1948); William Culican, “A Terracotta Shrine from Achzib,” *ZDPV* 92 (1976): 47; Culican, *The First Merchant Venturers: The Ancient Levant in History and Commerce* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1966), 75; Y. Shiloh, “New Proto-Aeolic Capitals Found in Israel,” *BASOR* 222 (1976): 67–77; Shiloh, “The Proto-Aeolic Capital and Israelite Ashlar Masonry,” *Qedem* 11 (1979): I–X, 1–95; Baruch Brandl, “A Proto-Aeolic Capital from Gezer,” *IEJ* 34 (1984): 173–76; Elizabeth P. McGowan, “The Origins of the Athenian Ionic Capital,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 66 (1997): 209–33, plates 55–60; Joel F. Drinkard, “The Archaeology of Moab,” *NEA* 60 (1997): 249–50; Ephraim Stern and Yitzhaq Magen, “Archaeological Evidence for the First Stage of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim,” *IEJ* 52 (2002): 49–57; Norma Franklin, “From Megiddo to Tamassos and Back: Putting the ‘Proto-Ionic Capital’ in Its Place,” in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na’aman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 129–40; Franklin, “68. Window Balustrade,” in *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York: Metropolitan Museum of New York, 2014), 179; Oded Lipschitz, “The Origin and Date of the Volute Capitals from the Levant,” in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na’aman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 203–25; and especially Philip P. Betancourt, *The Aeolic Style in Architecture: A*



An ambitious master's thesis from Uppsala includes a helpful compendium of all the then known theories of the origin of the proto-aeolic capital:

One of the theories suggests that it was developed from Bronze Age palm designs like the sacred tree or tree of Life. According to this proposal, the Proto-Aeolic capital would have spread from Assyria and Mesopotamia to the northern Syro-Palestine area. According to the second theory the tradition developed from Egyptian lotus and lily capitals. A third theory suggests a Hittite origin and the fourth one suggests that it developed from Mycenaean and Minoan art.<sup>3</sup>

All of the authors referred to above subscribe to one or another of these theories. In fact, none of them has gone back far enough. Art historical method requires a different procedure from that in use in either epigraphy or archaeological publication. It is no less empirical—that is practitioners must amass the data—but the comparative methodology requires first citing examples that continue through time, and then meticulously documenting the regions as well as the chronological appearance of a given motif. Finally, contact between cultures using the motif cited at a given time must be documented. Accordingly, then, let us examine those prior arguments, and propose a more complete documentation to explain the transmission of the volute motif through time and across cultures.

It is a common habit of scholars to look at the regions and time periods with which they are most familiar. It is sometimes a failing that scholars neglect territories and eras farther away. The origin of the Proto-Aeolic capital is one such example. Since the nineteenth century no one has looked farther away than Assyria, or earlier than the ninth century BCE. There is evidence that the volute goes back to the bound reed bundles (or possibly sheaves of grain<sup>4</sup>) uniformly recognized as the symbols of Inanna. The classic examples are the Warka Vase and the Warka Trough.<sup>5</sup>

On both of these late-fourth-millennium works from ancient Uruk, the bundles, symbols of Inanna, are central to the décor and to the narrative. During the Jamdat Nasr period, ca. 3300–2900 BCE, a pictograph representing these bundles was the sign that indicated the name of the goddess, Inanna.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, the

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*Survey of Its Development in Palestine, the Halika Peninsula, and Greece, 1000–500 B.C.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). The works of Betancourt (*The Aeolic Style*) and Franklin (“From Megiddo to Tamassos”) are particularly useful for assembling multiple examples in corpora easy to reference.

<sup>3</sup> Recep Kendirci, “Iron Age Aeolic Style Capitals in the Israel and Palestine Area” (MA Thesis, Uppsala University, 2012), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Thorkild Jacobsen, oral communication, referring to “A Song of Inanna and Dumuzi,” where Inanna is called “a shock of two-row barley.” *ETCSL* 4.08.18. Cf. *ANET*, 642.

<sup>5</sup> For the Warka Vase, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warka\\_Vase#/media/File:Warka\\_Vase\\_top\\_register.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warka_Vase#/media/File:Warka_Vase_top_register.jpg). For the Warka Trough, see [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1928-0714-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1928-0714-1).

<sup>6</sup> Toshiko Kobayashi, “Miscellanea of <sup>P</sup>Lugal-E-Muš,” *Oriens* 19 (1983): 32.

bundles could be single, face each other, both face the same way, or be placed “back to back.” Sometimes, as on the Warka Vase and many cylinder seals,<sup>7</sup> one or more of these positions is in evidence.

These volute and tree references continue without a break in Mesopotamia, most importantly on cylinder seals, those most portable of motif-carriers. Familiar from the large stone vessels with their images in the Uruk period, seals carry the Goddess bundles.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the third millennium cylinder seals commonly have a representation of a tree-like plant on a stand with volute-like curls hanging down (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 1. A goddess presenting a worshipper to Inanna. ca. 2112–2004 BCE.<sup>10</sup> OI A27903. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, used with permission.

Also at this time it was quite usual to have Inanna/Ishtar represented by her other attributes: “In praise of her warlike qualities, she is compared to a roaring, fearsome lion.<sup>11</sup> In her astral aspect, Inana/Ištar is symbolized by the eight-pointed star.”<sup>12</sup>

The second millennium BCE saw the Semitic goddess, Ishtar, firmly syncretized with Inanna. The two shared much iconography, including the lion on which each often stands, the eight-pointed star, or rosette, symbolizing their dominion over the realms of heaven, and that the date palm, which was often depicted

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, BM 32427001, white and cream calcite cylinder seal, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/32427001>.

<sup>8</sup> See BM 32427001.

<sup>9</sup> Cf., for example, the “tree” on a stand in front of King Ur-Nammu on the depiction of his libation before the god seated on his temple/throne.

<sup>10</sup> Betty De Shong Meador, *Inanna Lady of Largest Heart: Poems of the Sumerian High Priestess Enheduanna* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 76.

<sup>11</sup> See *ETCSL* 1.3.2, “Inana and Ebiḫ.”

<sup>12</sup> Yağmur Heffron, “Inana/Ištar (goddess),” *Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses*, Oracc and the UK Higher Education Academy, 2016, <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/inanaitar/>.

alongside, or in place of the human representation of the goddess.<sup>13</sup> It appears to have been in this mid-second millennium period when the date palm imagery became ubiquitous.

At this juncture it is important to note that by 2000 BCE there was a thriving international trade in copper, emanating from Cyprus, and traveling to Mesopotamia, Egypt, and throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>14</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that Cypriot cylinder seals of the second millennium BCE exhibit some of the characteristics of Mesopotamian seals of the period. In particular, the principal deity of Cyprus was a “Great Goddess” (whose name remains unknown), so that it would be natural to borrow some of the iconography used for the Queen(s) of Heaven in Mesopotamia (fig. 2). This borrowing demonstrates that the imagery of the trees with volutes was common throughout the Levant in the Bronze Age. (It is particularly interesting in this example that the form of the “Tree of Life” motif with its repeated and alternating volutes, seems to presage the familiar Neo-Assyrian style trees of life from the following millennium).<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 2. Mistress of animals flanked by rampant horned animals. Late Cypriot II, ca. fourteenth century BCE Cypriot; Hematite. 2.54cm. MET 1985.357.48. Public Domain.

Similarly, there is evidence that these paired volutes continued to be revered as symbols of one Great Goddess or another in the form of stylized trees. On Cyprus, for instance, “La Grande Déesse de Chypre,”<sup>16</sup> whose name we do not know,

<sup>13</sup> As seen on a cylinder seal in the Louvre: AO 25365; bulls raised against trees, a symbol of abundance. Kassite period, 1595–1200 BCE Limestone, 5.5cm in height and 1.7cm across.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Pamela Gaber, “Idalion in Its Environment: Diachronic Perspectives on Settlement Patterns in the Yialias River Valley,” in *Environment, Landscape and Society: Diachronic Perspectives on Settlement Patterns in Cyprus*, CAARI Monograph Series, in press.

<sup>15</sup> Cf., for example, a gypsum alabaster relief sculpture from Nimrud in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, accession number 32.143.3.

<sup>16</sup> Jacques Karageorghis’s 1997 volume *La Grande Déesse de Chypre et son culte à travers l’iconographie de l’époque néolithique au VIe sa C.* was translated into English and updated in 2005 as Karageorghis, *Kypris: The Aphrodite of Cyprus, Ancient Sources and Archaeological Evidence*

was the recipient of the gifts of devotees on bronze stands dated to the twelfth century BCE.<sup>17</sup>

Because the worshippers in these bronze stands are bearing what are presumably the fruits of their labors—textiles, copper ingots, and music—it seems clear that they mean to be offering them to the Great Goddess, and not simply to a tree. A simplified version of these bronze stands occurs in a number of plainer stands, like the one from the Cesnola collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 3).<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 3. Ancient repairs to this stand's rim are one indication that it was a valuable, treasured item that may have been passed from one generation to another. MET 74.51.5684. Public Domain.

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(Nicosia: Leventis, 2005). However, since it is clear that the Great Goddess of Cyprus was not referred to as “Aphrodite” until very late in the first millennium BCE, it seems preferable to retain the earlier appellation. Cf. Annie Caubet and Marguerite Yon, “Les Multiple visages de la grande Déesse à Kition,” *Cahiers* 44 (2015): 265–80.

<sup>17</sup> See BM 1920, 1220.1, bronze stand, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\\_1920-1220-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1920-1220-1); Karageorghis, *Kypris*.

<sup>18</sup> Similar stands exist in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, as well as elsewhere in the Mediterranean. According to The Met's record on this object, “The stands themselves have a wide distribution, having been found on Cyprus, Crete, and the Cyclades, as well as in mainland Greece, Sardinia, and Italy.” “Bronze Rod Tripod, ca. 1250–1050 B.C., Cypriot,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/244562>.

In these simpler Late Bronze Age tripods each leg is clearly meant to represent a symbol of the Great Goddess, her special “tree”—or at any rate, vegetal motif with a volute at the top of each. It is significant that in all of these examples the top of each leg shows a pair of clear volutes that, if they were found in Greece six hundred years later, would be called, “Ionic.” Similar examples occur in the Late Bronze Age all over the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup>

The side panels of the Ishtar Gate in Babylon may be the classic example of the Neo-Babylonian version of the display of this design (fig. 4).

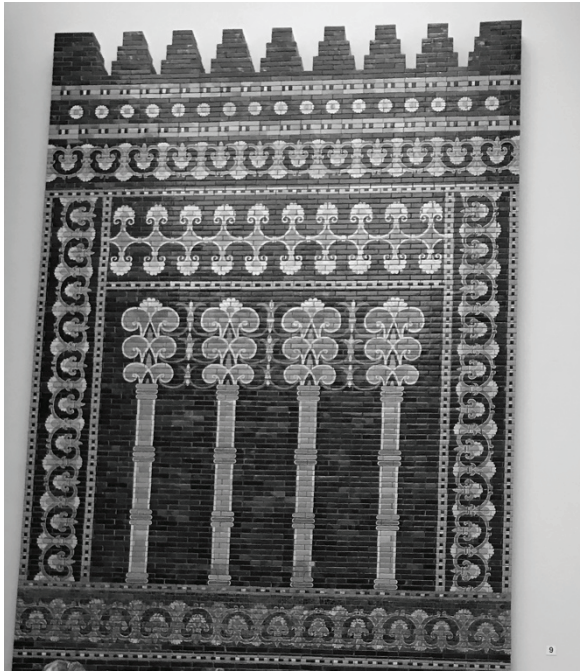


Fig. 4. Ishtar Gate, Pergamon Museum, Berlin. Photo by Pamela Gaber

There is no doubt that the Tree of Life motif became increasingly elaborate and varied during the first millennium BCE. One of the main reasons for that elaboration and variation was the artistic exuberance of the Phoenicians. It should be remembered that these intrepid travelers ventured all over the Mediterranean Sea, as witnessed by the Nora Stone, which testifies that they were at least as far

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Fulvia Lo Schiavo and Lucia Vagnetti, “Late Bronze Age long distance trade in the Mediterranean: the role of the Cypriots,” in *Early Society in Cyprus*, ed. Edgar J. Peltenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 230.

as Sardinia by the ninth–eighth centuries BCE.<sup>20</sup> Much has been said and written about their eclectic presentation of popular motifs, particularly in ivories, a medium almost as portable as seals.<sup>21</sup> “The three main Levantine groups or ‘traditions’ [of ivory carving] are, therefore, the ‘Phoenician’, the ‘Syrian-Intermediate’ and the ‘North Syrian.’ Each of these ‘traditions’ consists of a series of defined groups, such as the easily recognizable ‘Egyptianizing’ ivories of the Phoenician tradition.”<sup>22</sup>

The recent extraordinary exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, entitled “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age,” presented not only the regional variation in works of art, but the geographic range from the Atlantic Ocean to the Tigris and Euphrates basin.<sup>23</sup> Objects chosen for the exhibit exemplify that range. In particular the treatment of the ivories from Arslan Tash in that volume is a case in point.<sup>24</sup> Elisabeth Fontan, who authored that section of the catalog, describes the Levantine liking for sphinxes of various types. (She mistakenly ascribes the origin of the motif to the Egyptians.<sup>25</sup> All of the illustrated sphinxes are winged—a patently north Syrian or Phoenician characteristic.) More pertinent here is the appearance of trees with volutes.<sup>26</sup> The ivories from Nimrud also exemplify this tradition.

There are other vegetal motifs, especially on ivory furniture panels included in the Assyria to Iberia Exhibit, that include the volutes with a triangle, which is the basic formula for the proto-aeolic, or “volute” capital.

One more element of the Proto-Aeolic capitals that has been nearly universally misunderstood are the circles appearing above the triangle in the middle of

<sup>20</sup> Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff, and Yelena Rakic, eds., *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of New York, 2014), 213 and bibliography there. Cf. Aruz, “Cypriot Bronzework and Images of Power: The Cesnola Krater and Tripod,” in *Amilla: The Quest for Excellence: Studies Presented to Guenter Kopcke in Celebration of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Robert B. Koehl, INSTAP 43 (Philadelphia, PA: Academic, 2013), 304.

<sup>21</sup> Georgina Herrmann and Alan Millard, “Who Used Ivories in the First Millennium B.C.?,” in *Culture through Objects: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of P. R. S. Moorey*, ed. Timothy Potts, Michael Roaf, and Diana L. Stein (Oxford: Griffiths Institute, 2003), 377–402; cf. Herrmann and Stuart Laidlaw, “Assyrian Nimrud and the Phoenicians,” *Archaeology International* 16 (2013): 84–95.

<sup>22</sup> Herrmann and Laidlaw, “Assyrian Nimrud,” 87; cf. Irene Winter, “Is There a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving in the Early First Millennium B.C.?,” *Iraq* 43.2 (1981): 101–30.

<sup>23</sup> Aruz, Graf, and Rakic, *Assyria to Iberia*.

<sup>24</sup> Elisabeth Fontan, “Ivories of Arslan Tash,” in *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York: Metropolitan Museum of New York, 2014), 152–56.

<sup>25</sup> Fontan, “Ivories,” 154.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., Fontan, “Ivories,” 153, fig. 3.50.



the capital. Recently, Oded Lipschitz has published a diagram of what he considers to be the definitive form of the “Volute capital.”<sup>27</sup>

It is important to remember that the Phoenicians were Canaanites. An examination of the Late Bronze Age tradition of goddess worship and its paraphernalia in the Canaanite homeland clearly indicates that what Lipschitz terms the “oculus” is a breast.<sup>28</sup>

The eight-pointed star is the iconographic descendant of the original Inanna/Ishtar symbol of the dominion of the Queen of Heaven. The gold plaques may represent Astarte or Asherah (or perhaps even Anat) who are consorts of the supreme god of the Canaanites, “Bull El.” There are so many of these plaques found in the Canaanite territories—including modern Israel—that it is fair to say that they were ubiquitous. It is reasonable, in view of this ubiquity, to suggest that the circles on the proto-aelic capitals represent breasts of the goddess—of whatever “Great Goddess” may have been dear to the worshipper who wore the pendants or carved the capitals.

There are instances, however, where the original form of the original emblems of the Great Goddess, Inanna, remain recognizable—and perhaps intentionally so—into the first millennium BCE in the Levant: the Taanach stand, for instance, on which the Inanna bundles can be seen plainly in the topmost register.

It seems likely that the “Great Goddess” bundles on the Taanach stand refer to the Queen of Heaven mentioned in the Tanakh by Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 7:18; 44:19, 25), most probably Asherah.<sup>29</sup> It is doubtless the veneration of a native (or at least local) Great Goddess in the Levant that led to the conscious use of Inanna/Ishtar’s original symbol.

Similarly, in Cyprus there was a venerated Lady (of Heaven), the Cypriots’ own “Great Goddess.” This might account for the fact that the Inanna/Ishtar bundles persist in Cypriot art. These representations continued without a break in the Levant. Indeed, in the Hellenistic period, they join other vegetal motifs, even on column capitals (fig. 5).

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<sup>27</sup> Oded Lipschitz, “The Origin and Date of the Volute Capitals from the Levant,” in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 205, fig. 1.

<sup>28</sup> See BM 383756001, Gold eight-pointed star pendant. Gold plaque (pendant) representing the Canaanite goddess Astarte, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/383756001>.

<sup>29</sup> William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); cf. Darlene Kosnik, *History’s Vanquished Goddess ASHERAH, God’s Wife: The Goddess Asherah, Wife of Yahweh; Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Syro-Palestinian Pre-biblical Religious Traditions, Macrocosmically Examined* (Emergent, 2014). Kosnik’s volume appears wholly derivative and uncritical. Thus, it appears here and not in the text.



Fig. 5 a, b. Two column capitals from “Hadji Abdoullah” near Paphos; Kouklia Museum. Photos by Pamela Gaber.<sup>30</sup>

One more emblem of Inanna is worthy of note: her “standard.” It can be seen that Ishtar inherited the “Standard of Inanna.” These images, too, continue in use throughout the millennia in the ancient Near East (fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Old Babylonian cylinder seal. ca. 2000–1600 BCE. H. 2.3 cm; Diam. 1.4cm. The scene represents heroes and monsters in combat, presided over by Inanna/Ishtar wielding her “standard.” MEt 1999.325.24. Public Domain.

Perhaps their most recognizable appearances occur in the balustrades of the so-called woman at the window images (fig. 7).

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. the limestone plaque from Idalion, found in Hellenistic layers. Pamela Gaber and G. Bonny Bazemore, “Two Enigmatic Inscriptions from Idalion,” *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1999): 237–42.





Fig. 7. Woman at the Window Ivory from Nimrud, MET 59.107.18. Public domain.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the balustrade duplicating Inanna/Ishtar's scepter or standard, it seems evident that the so-called "window" in fact represents her temple.<sup>32</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Early in ancient Near Eastern history at least one great, powerful goddess appeared, Inanna, Queen of Heaven. She continued to be venerated in many cities through many centuries. With the arrival of the Amorites/Akkadians, a Semitic great goddess took up residence alongside her in Mesopotamia. Through the ensuing ages the iconography—and, indeed, the worship—of these great goddesses came to include attributes including an 8-pointed star or rosette representing the realms of the heavens over which they held sway. Their fierce, warlike aspect was represented by the presence of a lion. The responsibility of Inanna/Ishtar for fecundity came to be represented first by the reed (or grain) bundles that were the gateposts of grain storehouses in the oldest Sumerian tradition, and later by tree images, including date palms and others, which came early on to include the "volutes" represented by the original bundles.

Through the ensuing millennia, cultures that came into contact with the beliefs and symbols of the Great Goddesses picked and chose the motifs that seemed

<sup>31</sup> Aruz, Graf, and Rasic, *Assyria to Iberia*, 15, 144.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the stele of Hammurabi from Susa on which he presents his law code to the god Shamash who sits upon his temple/throne; or again, Ur Nammu before Enlil, who is also seated upon his temple/throne.

to suit their local religious practices and beliefs. In regions where there was a local supreme goddess, as perhaps Asherah in ancient Israel and Judah, and the Queen of Heaven venerated in Cyprus, it appears that the original bundle emblems of the Great Goddess were employed along with the more common Tree of Life motifs.

Because there was so much trade, exchange, and political interaction in the ancient Near East from the third millennium onward it is not surprising that intimate, highly venerated iconographic motifs came to be shared. It is only surprising that we, looking back “though a glass darkly,” took so long to understand this.

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## Touch of Ebal

### Tesselated Identity in the Historical Frontier of Iron I

Baruch Halpern

It is archaeological ballyhoo. Joshua's altar, right out of the Bible, on Mount Ebal. The headlines occasioned ripples. Many thought the explanation too facile—a leap from interpretations of the text and of the text's nature to interpretations of the remains and of their function.

But what was it? Not Joshua's altar, but possibly still a key site for the conquest, and especially for coming to grips with what "the conquest" meant from early to later times. After all, no Israel entered Canaan intent on a conquest, so the choice of that concept, too, had its history.

#### THE FACE OF EBAL: JOSHUA'S ALTAR ON THE GROUND

I first saw el-Burnat, just over Ebal's crest northeast of Shechem, under excavation in 1983. Yigael Yadin and Abraham Malamat led our small group (Pinchas Artzi, Henri Cazelles, Israel Finkelstein, Siegfried Hermann, Ami Mazar, Alan Millard, Larry Stager) there through the Israel Defense Force camp on Mount Ebal. Adam Zertal reviewed the remains: apparent enclosure walls, with divisions inside the enclosure; within, a rich scatter of artifacts, most ceramic, from Iron I. Many of the vessels were miniatures, probably votive. Also within the enclosure was a thick-walled square building with a possible stairwell at ground level. From it, walls radiated in three directions.

The square building had two visible phases of use. (Zertal had removed a heap of stones. He later inferred, they had been used to bury it; in any case, they reflect its disuse.) To the south of it, Zertal uncovered other remains from Burnat Stratum II, the earliest occupation, with LB IIB/Iron IA ceramic. These he interpreted as a four-room house, which he in turn interpreted as a marker of Israelite affiliation. Both views are in want of qualification, especially in early Iron I: it would be more accurate to see the four-room house as a form that, when later we can speak with confidence about territorial political identities, eventually became

almost emblematically Israelite. However, the identification of the site as Israelite made it germane to Israel's earliest emergence in Canaan.

Zertal was still tentative about the square building's character (I remember his injunction, *ani met she-ta 'avod alav*). The fill inside brimmed with burnt bone, and he was already reconstructing it based on a Talmudic description of Solomon's temple altar. He tentatively identified the square structure with the altar Joshua erected on Mount Ebal (Josh 8). Based as it was on a late description of Solomon's altar, on the assumption that Solomon's duplicated Joshua's, and on the historicity of a part of the Joshua story long antedating the institutional setting of its retelling, he qualified that flourish in 1988.<sup>1</sup>

Zertal regarded elongated terraces as characteristic cult locations for the initial Israelite settlers in the Manasseh region. Outside the building, but inside the enclosure at Burnat, were multiple deposits, some of bones, some of miniature, and thus arguably votive, containers for liquid, his libation. The bone remains with which the square building was thick had been subject to culinary butchering. (As an aside, this means the sacrifices there were intended for shared meals.) The enclosure, including two subdivisions attached to the "altar," might have penned sacrificial animals.

Some of these features comported with taking the building for an altar. But the topographic parallel sites lack such a feature. Nor would a sacrificial platform be superimposed on bones processed for cooking, unless an underlying altar antedated it. Zertal pressed a "fire circle" on the building floor into service as an earlier cooking zone (= Burnat II), but there is no evidence, taphonomic or ceramic, of stratification. Plastered stone within the fill also suggests at least a partly finished interior. Assessing Zertal's overview, Ralph Hawkins has adopted Burnat's

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Imagine the scholarly community as a group hiking on a wide ledge along the side of a steep mountain. Those who abandon the group to walk closer to the edge are in greatest danger from the precipice. But they also attain the longest, widest vista. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., since we first met almost forty years ago, has consistently ventured beyond the consensus to get a better view.

To Kyle it is appropriate to offer constructive historical work. What follows is meant to encourage others to imitate his example, to understand our literature as driven by agendas accessible to those who get a closer look at the landscape. We can, after all, profitably discuss new perspectives, and explore on their foundation, without propelling ourselves into the abyss of undisciplined historical imagination. This study owes much to the influences and input of Amanda Walls, Tyler Kelley, David Vanderhooft and Richard Elliott Friedman.

<sup>1</sup> Adam Zertal, "A Cultic Center with a Burnt-Offering Altar from Early Iron Age I Period at Mt. Ebal," in *Wünschet Jerusalem Frieden*, ed. Matthias Augustin and Klaus-Dietrich Schunck, IOSOT Congress Volume Jerusalem, 1986, BEATAJ 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), 137–54. For the excavation proper, Zertal, "An Early Iron Age Cultic Site on Mt. Ebal: Excavation Seasons 1982–7: Preliminary Report," *TA* 13–14 (1986–87): 105–65.

comparison to sites of similar topography in the Iron I central hills, but also, and independent of Zertal's other points, persuasively re-argued its cultic nature.<sup>2</sup>

Zertal, in a pair of *BAR* publications, considered alternative interpretations.<sup>3</sup> He expressly rejected the suggestion, favored by Aharon Kempinski,<sup>4</sup> that his square building on Ebal was a watchtower: though visitors survey a spectacular "natural amphitheatre" to the north and east, it does not overlook any trafficked route. And, Mount Ebal's peak obstructs the view from the building toward Shechem. The natural vista from atop Ebal, the highest peak in the central hills, is a strategic asset, and yet Zertal dated only one site on the entire hill to Iron I—el-Burnat.

Kempinski's mind ran to the possibility of a watchtower because the remains at the center of the bottom of the square building strongly suggest a stairwell. Of the alternatives to his own interpretation, this is the one Zertal felt most worthy of attention. The reason, conscious or not, may lie in the Book of Judges. The mutual illumination of Burnat and Judg 9 especially, already mooted by others (below), will backlight the site, the text and, as we shall see, the conceptualization of early Israel.

#### THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE EBAL ALTAR: ABIMELEK, JERUBBAAL AND SHECHEM IN JUDGES 9

In canonical sequence, Judg 9 takes place six centuries after Gen 34. There, Simeon and Levi murder the Hivvites and take the women of the town, Shechem, to avenge their sister's abduction by Shechem, son of Hamor, the Grandee of the District (*něšî' hā-'āreš*). Shechem is accordingly native Israelite in Numbers and Joshua, some two hundred years before Judg 9. It is a Manassite clan in P's eighth century sources and, Joshua designates it a city of refuge assigned to Levi.<sup>5</sup>

Joshua also executes Moses's order to build an altar on Ebal and commit Israel, in the land, to YHWH.<sup>6</sup> He conducts the ceremony at Jacob's purchased altar

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Hawkins, "The Iron Age I Structure on Mount Ebal. Excavation and Interpretation" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2007); Hawkins, *How Israel Became a People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2013), 175–88.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Zertal, "Has Joshua's Altar Been Found on Mt. Ebal?," *BAR* 11.1 (1985): 26–43; Zertal, "How Can Kempinski Be So Wrong?," *BAR* 12.1 (1986): 43–53. See Hawkins, "The Iron Age I Structure" for a detailed assessment of these reports.

<sup>4</sup> Aharon Kempinski, "Joshua's Altar or An Iron Age I Watchtower?," *BAR* 11.4 (1986): 42–49.

<sup>5</sup> For the clan, Num 26:31; Josh 17:2; and, the Samaria Ostraca. For the city of refuge, 21:21. For the "Levitical" town, 20:7, and see Jeremy M. Hutton, "The Levitical Diaspora (II): Modern Perspectives on the Levitical Cities Lists (A Review of Opinions)," in *Levites and Priests in History and Tradition*, ed. Mark A. Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton, *AIL* 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 45–81.

<sup>6</sup> Deut 11:29–30; 27:1–8; Josh 8:30–35; 24. The author seemingly presents Josh 24 as the account of a ceremony held in Josh 8:30–35. Compare 4QJosh<sup>a</sup>, putting 8:34–35 before Josh 5. The

precinct outside the town (Gen 33:18–20, E).<sup>7</sup> The freshly re-named Jacob called it “El Elohey Israel.” “Elohey Israel” is the divine epithet invoked in Josh 8:30, when Joshua builds the Ebal altar: common in Joshua, the epithet is rare in the Pentateuch, though inflected with gravity in Exod 34:23. Joshua (24:32) consecrated the parcel further with Joseph’s tomb, on ancestral soil. Small wonder that Josephus, already, regarded Abimelek’s Shechem as Israelite. (Shechem is also where Israel later secedes from the Jerusalem regime.)

In Judg 9, the “Seventy Sons of Jerubbaal” constitute a ruling clique in southeastern Manasseh, based in the town, Ophrah, in hailing distance of modern Taybeh. They claim sovereignty over a territory abutting that of the ancient city-state, Shechem, and perhaps champion people and land interlaced with it. And they threaten the indigenous exercise of governance in Shechem’s territory.

One of the Seventy, Abimelek son of Jerubbaal, has a mother “in Shechem” (Judg 8:31). He recruits her “brethren,” “all the moiety (*mišpāhā*) of [her] father’s house”—the expanded kinship network of which her family was a part—to lobby Shechem’s syndics (baals). These seize an opportunity to install a relative, albeit affinal, as ruler over the adjoining territory.<sup>8</sup> They finance Abimelek’s coup with seventy silver sheqels from the Temple of Baal Brit.<sup>9</sup>

Abimelek invests the capital in cutthroats. They slay the Seventy, “on a single stone.”<sup>10</sup> “Jotham, Jerubbaal’s youngest son, was left” (*ytr* 9:5). The survivor is

question of when YHWH wanted the altar built (“when” you cross) might result in various dispositions of the 8:30–35 account. Its current placement signals Israelite control over Joseph, Shechem’s Amarna-era territory, after inaugural victories at Jericho and Ai. Joshua 24, now, may be read as an appendix, on the order of those following Judges (17–21 or even 13–21) and Samuel (2 Sam 21–24).

<sup>7</sup> Unqualified references to the Pentateuchal sources J, E, and P follow the inductive and contextually sensitive analysis of Richard Elliott Friedman in *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> A parallel is Absalom appointing the son of Yitra’ (*ytr*’), the “Israelite,” as his commander in Judah—if Israelite is the original reading (2 Sam 17:25; its sole parallel, in Lev 24:10, involves a contrast with a foreigner, where the usage makes at least some sense). For the appointment of an Israelite, see W. O. Dietrich, “Hebräische Hapaxlegomena in den Samuelbücher,” in *Biblical Lexicology: Hebrew and Greek. Semantics—Exegesis—Translation*, ed. Jan Joosten, Regine Hunziker-Rodewald, and Eberhard Bons, BZAW 443 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 112. For an emendation to “Jezreelite,” see Jon D. Levenson and B. Halpern, “The Political Import of David’s Marriages,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 507–18. Relevant is the fact that *zayin* and *samekh* may alternate in Phoenician phonetics (e.g., *zkr/skr*).

<sup>9</sup> Trouble with the affines is standard fare in stories from traditional societies, as with Jacob and Laban. Cf. David (*Joab*) and Amasa; Simeon, Levi and Hamor-Shechem. Despite the occasional concern with succession, as with the daughters of Zelophehad, the social nuances differ regarding conflict among brothers, half-brothers, and in-laws whether over women or property.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the “single stone” (as Zech 3:9; or, the “single YHWH” of Deut 6:5) erected as Ebenezer in 1 Sam 7:12. Adversion to the *’bn šht* (“stone of disruption,” *KAI* 215.7) has been unproductive. Cf. J. Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli: Neue Edition und vergleichende Grammatik des phönizischen, sam’alischen und aramäischen Textkorpus*, ALASP 6 (Münster: Ugarit, 1993), 112–13. Zincirli monuments use the phrase’s second term (*KAI* 24.15, 16; 214.27, 28, 29, 31; 215.2, 7), with a destructive

implicitly likened to, or identified with, the “Jether, (Gideon’s) eldest” (*ytr* 8:20) who is too callow to kill captive Midianites.

Conventionally, in Israel’s archetypes and Near Eastern lore, abiding authority is earned by a championing a group. The convention affects not just the plot of succession stories, but even their diction.<sup>11</sup> Those who commissioned Abimelek accordingly install him as king after his victory. Shechem’s baals (here, syndics) and all the House of Millo conduct the ceremony at Elon Muzzab (*muṣṣāb*) at Shechem. Here, Shechem’s syndics play a part relative to the House of Millo that Israelite elders play relative to the “people” throughout Biblical literature. In Israelite constitutional theory, the elders set out resolutions and the popular assembly vote on them.<sup>12</sup> It is useful to imagine the syndics as the collective owners of the town’s lands, including commons, undivided tracts and civic properties; individually, they enjoyed hereditary title to fields. Whether their authority governed the territory of subsidiary settlements in Shechem’s countryside is unsure.

Jotham declaims a caution about the coronation from atop Gerizim. The upshot is, Shechem’s syndics and House of Millo acknowledge the claims of the house of Jerubbaal (likely, for relief from Midian).<sup>13</sup> They subscribe to Abimelek’s rightful sovereignty. In his kingship in Shechem, he unites the Israelite elements (Manasseh) and the Shechemite elements of the area. The narrative takes care not to present Abimelek as a king in Israel—he wishes to govern (*mšl*) or officiate (*šrr*) over it.<sup>14</sup> It suggests a personal union of Shechem, where his title is king, and Manasseh, where it is not.

As Shechemite degradation on wayfarers defies and provokes Abimelek, a company takes up, or has taken up, residence in Shechem. Its leader, Gaal (Josephus, Gual) ben-Ebed, English “Abhorrence (Josephus, Abhorred) son of Slave,” gains the syndics’ trust. At the bacchanalia of the vintage, “Abhorrence” vaunts

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element in the royal house in the last, the Panamuwa inscription of Rakib-el. For the first term, neither a prosthetic aleph nor a possessive suffix yields satisfaction. Though no less enigmatic, compare also the expression “one Shechem/shoulder” (Gen 48:22; Zeph 3:9). Oddly, the two all but merge in Josh 4:6, where a single man from each tribe hoists a single stone from the Jordan to lay by (4:1–8), probably until the altar is built at Shechem (8:31–32), apparently to fulfill Deut 27:1–8. This seems an effort proleptically to fulfill the letter of Deut 27:2, “on the day when you cross the Jordan” (which really means, “at the time when you cross”).

<sup>11</sup> See Baruch Halpern, *Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel*, HSM 25 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981), esp. ch. 4, on “Patterns of Leadership.”

<sup>12</sup> Halpern, *Constitution of the Monarchy*, ch. 7.

<sup>13</sup> 9:16, 19, an epanaleptic frame for editorializing about how this could not be so: but the very presence of the framing indicates, rhetorically, that the context is ritual covenant making and that the editorialization is tangential to the point. In the subsequent action, Abimelek is in the right.

<sup>14</sup> Abimelek’s argument to his kin (9:2) compares rule (*mšl*) by Seventy to rule by one, in an echo of the status Gideon turns down in 8:22–23, *šrr* in 9:22.



his power to right a nativist grievance: Abimelek and his appointee, Zabul (Prince), have subjected the “men of Hamor, father of Shechem” (9:28).

It is important to the story’s unfolding that Gaal has set up a dichotomy between Abimelek and Hamor. The “sons of Hamor” sell Jacob his parcel in Gen 33:19 (E); Josh 24:32, as aboriginals. In Gen 34 (J), Hamor himself is Jacob’s contemporary. But the father of Shechem in that story, too, is aboriginal. And in Judges 9, Gaal’s xenophobia is directed against Abimelek as an outsider—“Who is Abimelek? And who Shechem?” reverberates with rejections of David.<sup>15</sup> He assumes the syndics are not Israelites. In Gen 34:2, Hamor is specifically Hivvite.

Another Hivvite residential cluster covers the Ayyalon Pass in central/western Benjamin and Judah in Josh 9.<sup>16</sup> There named as dependencies of Gibeon, they are called Amorite survivals in 2 Sam 21. Judges 9, too, makes best sense if the reader *assumes* Shechem to have been under the control of people unaffiliated with Israel. This is why YHWH is not invoked, even as an enforcer of the pact between Abimelek and Shechem (but see below on El Brit); in Jotham’s fable, admittedly, unless God drinks alone, gods are plural (9:9, 13). The later territorial status of the town is what has confused not just exegetes since Josephus, but even the author of Judg 8:33, who seems to use Shechem’s cult as a stick to beat Israel. This detail triggered later reading in which Shechem’s status became Israelite, or mixed.

Detailing tactics with a specificity matched only in Judg 20, Judg 9 relates that Shechem’s Resident (Abimelek’s *pāqīd, šar hā-’ir*), Zabul, goads Gaal into leading syndics against Abimelek. After the sally is repulsed, Zabul expels Gaal’s gang. But when the population feels the issue is settled and goes about its field-work, Abimelek captures them in the fields, demolishes the town, and sows the place with salt.

Abimelek moves on to a settlement called Migdal Shechem. Often rendered “tower,” Migdal in the Gideon story (Judg 8:9, 17), and elsewhere, denotes a fortified safehold. This village has its own population and its own syndics. These *hear* what happened in Shechem itself, and take refuge in the turret or keep of the

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<sup>15</sup> Difficulty surrounds the interpretation of “Who is Abimelek, and who [G+: the son of] Shechem, that we should serve him?” If “we” are “Shechem,” the revolt is nativist against Abimelek and Zabul. This is MT’s interpretation: “Serve the men of Hamor ... for why should we serve *him*?” is a dig at Abimelek, as in 9:38. G’s “son of Shechem” refers to Abimelek, comparable to the “son of Jesse” in the “Who is David?” abjurations (1 Sam 25:10; 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kgs 12:16). G continues, “Is (he) not the son of Jerubbaal, and Zabul his resident, his slave with the men of Hamor, father of Shechem.” The difference affects the vocalization of *bdw* as “serve!” or as “his servant.” In one or another combination, “the son of Shechem” might be Zabul. In any event, the syndics support Gaal (9:26, 39).

<sup>16</sup> Benjaminites, in Judges and Samuel, tend to dwell more to the east of the watershed, like Gideon’s Manasseh *vis-à-vis* Shechem. Is there something to Israel Finkelstein’s inference from survey pottery alone that the Iron I’s earliest new foundations started on the edges of the Jordan Valley? See Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988).

Temple of El Brit. The Migdal, thus, is not within sight of Shechem, but is the locus of a temple presumably identical with that which funded Abimelek's campaign.

It is, in our present knowledge of shrine distribution, possible that this equation is false: that discrete temples were dedicated to two gods characterized functionally as being "of the compact;" that the contrast was between a term reserved for a divinity (*'ēl*) who was party to the compact, and a ready epithet (*ba'al*), signifying partnership in the compact (9:4, 46). But neither designation is a name, just a rôle. There is nothing to say that these gods differed—a single god in a single location satisfies the text's demands. The god could even be a local instantiation of YHWH: YHWH Shalom at Ophrah, after all, does not much differ, as name, from El Brit. Aware of the alternatives, however, we may proceed on the scenario that the Shechemites raid a fund involving groups outside the town proper. After all, Gaal's sedition climaxes in "their god's temple," a building, inside Shechem, but it is not identified with a covenant deity (9:27).

Migdal Shechem, with a temple to a god "of the compact," is incinerated in the campaign against Shechem. Burnat is destroyed on the same Iron IA cultural horizon as the town of Shechem. Migdal Shechem had a keep. Burnat's main feature resembles a keep. Migdal Shechem had a temple. Burnat's precinct hosted formal, and commemorated, sacrifice. Burnat was not a "watchtower," but then, again, neither need Migdal Shechem have been one: Tebez, an Issacharite town (Josh 19:20 Ebez, with *'aleph-taw* interchange) on the southern margins of the Jezreel, where Abimelek is struck dead by a falling millstone, also has a *migdal* inside the town; Penuel in Judg 8 centers on one as well.<sup>17</sup> Kempinski's embrace and Zertal's avoidance of the term was perhaps based on the occurrence of *migdal*, usually "tower," but here an architectural redoubt. The Judg 9 narrative might even reflect memory of Migdal Shechem's location: Jotham, atop Gerizim, has a path of flight that does not cross, and is not surveyed from, Ebal.

After its destruction, Burnat went permanently out of use. Shechem was rebuilt perhaps a century later. That both were emptied of population without resettlement suggests that they fell victim to a single opponent. This opponent treated their denizens as aliens to be removed. Abimelek's attack on Shechem in the text ends with his sowing the town with salt, to perpetuate its desolation, and the presentation gives every reason to expect that he had similar intentions, at least, at Migdal Shechem, the locus of the temple of El Brit from which the whole imbroglio was financed.

First advanced by J. A. Soggin, the identification of Burnat with Migdal Shechem has faced resistance principally because the Drew-McCormick Expedition to Shechem had identified remains atop the "Migdol temple" (MB-LB) with the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. the Ekur (*bēt 'aršā'*) on the Tirzah temple/palace in 1 Kgs 16:9, apparently used for feasting.

text's temple.<sup>18</sup> But, as attention to the text's geography reveals, were one assigning a sacral function attested in Judg 9 to the remains above the *migdol* temple, it would be the location of the town god, in a local manifestation. Soggin rightly stressed the distance in the text between Shechem and Migdal Shechem. But he summarily denies the identity of the Temple of El Brit at Migdal Shechem with that of Baal Brit, presumably inside Shechem. Absent a fuller archaeological record for correlation to texts' assumptions, the latter notion remains in the air.

This understanding of Judg 9 suggests first of all that el-Burnat is Migdal Shechem, and that the square building there is the temple of a god with the epithet, El (or Baal) Brit. If we join the text to the remains in detail, or if we are reporting our storyteller's imagination of the structure, it came equipped with a rooftop sacrificial platform, a virtual minaret (*šryh*). The many votives, especially the closed vessels, suggest pilgrimage to Burnat, as do the separately buried remains of feasts (in pits filled with bone). And the site's status as a pilgrim destination increases the likelihood of the identification. Other temples and altar sites leave zoological concentrations comparable to those on Ebal. Finally, Shlomo Bunimovitz and Israel Finkelstein early placed Ebal's final phase in the late Iron IA.<sup>19</sup> They independently place the Burnat phenomenon, and by the inference above the change at Shechem, in closer proximity to the rise of the Benjaminite Monarchy in the late eleventh century.

#### ASSEMBLING ABIMELEK AND THE HIVVITES: ALIEN TERRITORIES, CULTS, IDENTITIES IN THE NARRATIVE

Pitfalls in material and in textual analysis are usually most obvious after one has tripped on them. Joining the sources often creates them, and so may the effort here. It exposes directions from which one might view the evidence, without finality in detail.

The soubriquet, "God/Proprietor of the Compact," naturally encourages speculation. The god's temple, if there was one only, lay outside Shechem. The reason is probably ideological. Thus, the early claim that YHWH came from Sinai expressed a similar sentiment about Israelite identity—an extra-territorial god is not

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<sup>18</sup> J. Alberto Soggin, "The Migdal Temple, Migdal Š'kem, Judg 9 and the Artifact on Mount Ebal," in *Wunschet Jerusalem Frieden*, ed. Matthias Augustin and Klaus-Dieter Schunck, IOSOT Congress Volume, Jerusalem, 1986 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), 115–20; see L. E. Stager, "The Fortress-Temple at Shechem and the 'House of El, Lord of the Covenant,'" in *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell, Jr., at His Retirement*, ed. Edward F. Campbell, Prescott H. Williams, and Theodore Hiebert (Atlanta: Scholars, 1999), 228–49, with stratigraphic clarification.

<sup>19</sup> Late twelfth or early eleventh century: Bunimovitz, Shlomo, and Israel Finkelstein, "Pottery," in *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site*, ed. Israel Finkelstein (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1993), 81–196.

especially accessible in any worshippers' residential zone. (And this is what makes heaven and the netherworld inviting homes for our invisible friends generally.) In Judg 9, the ex-urban "Proprietor of the Compact" suggests a league, for which the god's temple was a home at least overtly outside the political control of any single subscriber community (compare the Athenian call on league treasuries). This phenomenon recurs periodically, but a probable Iron I parallel is Dhahrat et-Tawileh, "the Bull Site," also in the later territory of Manasseh, not far from Tubas.<sup>20</sup> Especially in times and places of looser bureaucratic control, extra-urban shrines are venues for exchange among groups in their proximity.

The connection between Migdal Shechem, Shechem, and a third target, Tebez (= Tubas?), where Abimelek's demise became a watchword (9:50–55; 2 Sam 11:21), also suggests a league. Migdal Shechem might, by the name alone, be thought to belong to the larger town; otherwise, no reason for that campaign is furnished. In the case of Tebez, the wording does not even hint at a *casus belli*: it assumes that the reader recognizes it for a non-Israelite, Shechemite town.

In this construction of the narrative, the league was of Hivvite settlements. Hivvites confederated around and in the territory of Shechem. The league leadership, probably inside Shechem, withdrew silver from the temple at Migdal Shechem to sponsor Abimelek. They thus implicated the whole territory, not just the town itself, in the decision. Conversely, Soggin's distinction between the temples of El and Baal Berit removes the (subjectively sacred) subvention from contribution, and thus formal subscription, by subordinate settlements in Shechem's territory. Even in this case, we might hypothesize a Hivvite league, or at least a league whose members are tarred in Judg 9's community as alien, but who are elsewhere embraced as predecessors of collateral (P) descent.

At the same time, the association of at least the Ayyalon Pass Hivvites with YHWH is deeply rooted: witness, the ark's residence in Qiryat-Yearim, a Gibeonite town; Solomon's incubation at Gibeon itself; David's appeasement of Gibeon or its confederacy (2 Sam 21); the standing employment of Gibeonite confederates as ritual attendants; plus, at the end of the Iron Age, the Yahwistic name of the our sole Gibeonite prophet (Jer 28:1). We should not rule out differences in allegiance and civic and state gods between Gibeon and Shechem. The ease of Gibeon's transition to accommodating David is instructive all the same.

Abimelek's Shechemite maternity explains his rise there, but he retains his Israelite patrimony. The combination presumes connubium; such relations with Midian, for example, are unthought of. In Gen 34 (J), Israel, Jacob's sons, reject the Hivvites as well. Historically, accommodation between Israel and Hivvite Amorites, by turns hostile and consensual, is in play. If we allow that Gen 34

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<sup>20</sup> For the site, see Amihai Mazar, "The 'Bull Site': An Iron Age I Open Cult Place," *BASOR* 247 (1982): 27–42.

furnishes a different perspective on relations between Israelite and Hivvite groups, alongside 1–2 Samuel, an inviting vista opens to our contemplation.<sup>21</sup>

Scholars have unanimously correlated Judg 9 to Shechem's destruction since the Drew-McCormick Expedition first reached Iron I levels. And the contemporaneous destruction of Migdal Shechem in the narrative makes an identification with el-Burnat and its decommissioning attractive. But other texts have pertinent comments. Saul was bent on the subjection or expulsion of the Gibeonites, the Hivvite league in the Ayyalon Pass. (Again, 2 Sam 21:2 identifies them as relict Amorites.) David came to their defense, and our literature has come through David's partisans. It is indulgent of Saul's "fanaticism for the children of Israel and Judah," while regretting his excesses. (We may omit the story of Josh 9, where the Gibeonites become Yahwists.)

The Pentateuch and Joshua also address Shechem. Contextualized in realistic Iron I settlement configurations and political concerns, this material transmogrifies in Genesis's mythic time. But the transformations have too many stimuli for us to draw secure conclusions about Iron I. For example, is circumcision in Gen 34 (J) an etiology of a Hivvite practice? If so, why? If not, is it a concession to resistance to the practice? In the view represented below, thus, I assume that the validation of practices from Iron II has shaped our literature, so as, again for example, to issue a patriarchal kashrut certificate for a cult place at Shechem. Although one can range arguments against early patriarchal associations with Shechem, that position will not lack partisans. Still, examining the relationship between patriarchal and historiographic reflections provides parameters for the conceptual framework within which the historical texts themselves operate. It also exposes their physical and geographic assumptions. Here, the latter come to the fore.

Like Abimelek's, Jacob's relations with Shechem involve affinal relationships and coexistence. In Gen 33:18–20 (E), Jacob purchases what will be Joseph's burial ground in Joshua, in proximity to but outside Shechem. There he "erects" an altar—it is the only time the verb for building an altar is "to erect," *nšb*, typically used of setting up a monument.<sup>22</sup> He calls the altar, El Elohey Israel, "El/God, the god of Israel." Shechem, again, appears in Josh 24 as the center where, offered a choice between its own old gods, Amorite gods and YHWH, Israel chooses the last. In 1 Kgs 12, it is where Israel considers Rehoboam's election as king. In light of the "history" of the Proprietor of the Compact, its role as a league center for Jacob may not be accidental. Shechem, many scholars,

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<sup>21</sup> Contemporary source critics identify Gen 34 as J, as Friedman, *Sources Revealed*. Why this narrator takes a view on alliance with Hivvite Shechem different from that of Judg 9, whether to deny or to embrace it, deserves more extensive discussion in the context of early political diplomacy.

<sup>22</sup> BHS conjectures an original "stela" for "altar." But is this a literary echo paired to the Bethel stela (28:17–18, 20–22, also E), or an ellipsis or fine nuance? Or does it reflect on some physical aspect of the landscape?

especially older ones, have held, enjoyed a special cultural status. On the questions, among whom, and when, opinion has varied.

Abraham, earlier, builds an altar on seeing YHWH at Shechem, at “the precinct of Shechem, Elon Moreh [ *’ēlôn mōre<sup>h</sup>*, Oracular Oak].” Joshua describes the christening of the Ebal altar commissioned in Deuteronomy.<sup>23</sup> Ophrah also boasts a deciduous tree (or trees, *hā-’ēlā*) at its altar (YHWH Shalom), and a sizeable icon in gold (ephod). In Judg 9, Jotham confabulates about trees, during a ceremony near (*im*) Elon Muzzab (Oak of the Erection). In Gen 35, Jacob buries (ancestral, Aramaean) gods and earrings “under the Oak-Terebinth (*’ēlā*) that is near Shechem;” Joshua (24:14, 23) orders the gods stripped away there as well, and then sets up a memorial “under the Oak-Terebinth (*’āllā*) that is in YHWH’s sanctuary” there (24:26). Immediately after the Abimelek story, Israel strips out alien gods yet again (Judg 10:16), before their final suppression by Samuel (1 Sam 7:3–4).

The tales and legends serve up a stew of three altars, temples at Shechem and Migdal Shechem, abjurations, sacred trees and brush (Abimelek, in fulfillment of Jotham’s fable and curse, uses the brush to burn out his enemies). Another tree, Elon Meonenim (Chanters’ Oak), marks a height on a hill nearby (9:37, the country’s navel). Like the Oracle’s Oak and the Erection Oak, Chanters’ Oak has a name tied to ritual. In the story’s reception, hearers might locate the Gerizim-Ebal declamation of Deut 27 at it. Too, it could easily be Abraham’s Oracle Oak; Elon Moreh appears in Deut 11:29–30 in the plural, “Oracular Oaks”: this environment near Ebal by implication puts Abraham’s altar in a deciduous stand, by the (sacred) precinct of Shechem (Gen 12:8).

It is uncertain which trees or altars may have been associated with Jacob’s plot. Jacob’s “erecting” an altar in Shechem’s arable outskirts suggests Elon Muzzab, where Abimelek is crowned: the soubriquet explains the choice of the verb for “constructing” in Gen 33. The Erection Oak would coincide with and probably inspire Joshua’s “large stone” memorial, rather than allude to it. However, Jotham in Judg 9 is visible and audible on Gerizim, so the ceremony could not take place at el-Burnat on the other face of Ebal. It is set most likely outside Shechem, perhaps partway up a slope. The same problem attaches to the identification of el-Burnat with Joshua’s altar: Deuteronomy situates the ceremony there, again, between Ebal and Gerizim, on the wrong face of the mountain.

Joshua’s altar, Jacob’s plot and Jotham’s Elon Muzzab and thus perhaps Jacob’s plot, are all imagined closer to Tell Balāṭa, the site of Shechem, than is el-Burnat. Still, the reflections on the mythic past set the site just outside the town. Abraham’s Oracular Oak at Shechem’s Stand of them (Deut 11:30) suggests it,

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<sup>23</sup> Josh 8:30–35; 24; Deut 11:29–30; 27:1–13. Cf. “this day you become a people to YHWH your god,” Deut 27:9, with Josh 24:14–25.

too, was extramural, and near the others (is “place of Shechem” in Gen 12:6 equivalent to Bamah of Shechem?).

Shechem itself was resettled probably in the tenth century. Judges 9 may not take cognizance of the development: the town’s fate is sealed with salt (9:45). First Kings 12 suggests it regained significance especially in Iron IIA. No such rebuilding follows at el-Burnat. Its identification with Migdal Shechem, perhaps as the Temple of Baal/El Brit, seems likeliest, and its Hivvite hostility to Abimelek also explains why, in the coronation scene, Jotham declaims his fable from the twin hill, Gerizim. The site’s marginality also explains why the patriarchal shrines, in musings about the distant past that were formulated in Iron II, are nearer Shechem.

The warfare conducted by Abimelek exterminates Shechem, Migdal Shechem and Tebez (the last also with a stronghold, 9:50–54). Early Israelite literature typically reserves total warfare for foreigners, and later literature prescribes it for the indigenese. The finds at Burnat also distinguish it from other sites. Aside from the votive miniatures and the overwhelming preponderance of closed vessels, discussants remark its dearth of cooking pots.<sup>24</sup> Israelite sacrifice, like British cookbooks, habitually focused on boiled meat. In the continuum from the raw, to roasted, to boiled, and in William Propp’s typological triad to measure the *pesah*, *’ólâ*, *zēbah* (= *šelem*), *qorbân*, Burnat falls on the roasting side.<sup>25</sup> At least later, the Israelite state does adopt Passover as its quintessential identity festival, but only P, not J, E or D, introduces roasting.

Burnat may not be Migdal Shechem. But it is very plausibly construed as a cult place dominated by a different culture than the one that achieved prepollency in the Iron II. Indeed, a contrast between interstitial gatherings with roasting and Israelite with boiling may have hardened, over time, into an ideological divide, much like pork avoidance. And P’s endorsement of roasting for the Passover, aside from showing rare good food sense, probably underwent a convoluted birthing process.

The high proportion of fallow deer (10 percent of the zooosteology overall, 21 percent inside the square building) is also a marked departure from sample results in more densely inhabited times and places, even including Dan in Iron II, where deer should abound. It suggests the possibility of heavy patronage at the site by rural elements staking out holdings in a wooded zone, possibly in concert with the denizens of larger communities. No pig is reported at the site.

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<sup>24</sup> Adam Zertal, “An Early Iron Age Cultic Site on Mt. Ebal: Excavation Seasons 1982–7: Preliminary Report,” *TA* 13–14 (1986–87): 105–65; see further Ralph Hawkins, “The Iron Age I Structure on Mount Ebal: Excavation and Interpretation” (PhD diss, Andrews University, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> See William L. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1999), 1.396, 448–51; Ron C. Hendel, “Sacrifice as a Cultural System: The Ritual Symbolism of Exodus 24,3–8,” *ZAW* 101 (1989): 384–87 for discussion of P’s ideology here.



Sensible scholars hesitate before identifying objects or even places with textual referents. I am, after all, claiming here (in the company of others) that the former identification of the temple of El Berit with the Migdol Temple temenos at Tell Balaṭa was hasty. Sometimes, however, the indirect correlations are determinative.

At Tel Dan, for example, the five mysterious “massebot” in the entry plaza probably originate in the subdivision of the city-state-tribe into five moieties, whose leaders at the time of the story are the five scouts of Judg 17.<sup>26</sup> Who would think that a tribe assigned a single “clan” by P could be subdivided, or that the number of subdivisions would coincide with family worthies leading a reconnaissance, a correlation P extends to Israel in Num 13, and with the number of standing stones leading to the tribal center?

Equating Burnat with Migdal Shechem is attractive because it helps makes sense of the Gideon account. Judges 6–8, which identify Gideon with Jerubbaal, amount to a long series of miraculous and revelatory episodes associated with the cultic establishment Gideon founded at Ophrah. Even a century later, the road from Michmash north is called “the Ophrah road” (and not yet Shechem Road; 1 Sam 13:17). The altar, we are told, survived intact (Judg 6:24). An editorializing notice (8:27) also concedes family administration of the shrine over more than a generation.

The sequence, Judg 6–9, indicates that Ophrah supplanted Shechem as a center of devotion. YHWH Shalom succeeded El Brit, in the storyline, as the dominant object of devotion in the region: the names, again, resemble one another. The story asserts the ongoing presence of YHWH’s angel, YHWH’s regular accessibility at the site. Even when the angel vanishes from vision, his conversation with Gideon continues (Judg 6:21–23; 7:1–11 are also conversations with YHWH or with YHWH, Inc., the divine family firm). The angel sits, then materializes, to hear Gideon’s complaint about the absence of wonders, and to respond with three miraculous visible signs. He remains at the site afterward, a point later made regarding Shiloh (1 Sam 3:21). All this is at Gideon’s estate.

The supernal interventions continue. Gideon implements two divinely-designed tests of his troops as well. At the site of his attack, he is privy to a dream revelation to the enemy and its interpretation. Gideon is indeed “invested” in the spirits’ favor.

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<sup>26</sup> I hope others will evaluate this proposal before I return to it. On the story of Dan’s migration, see, still, the superb presentation of Abraham Malamat, “The Danite Migration and the Pan-Israelite Exodus-Conquest: A Biblical Narrative Pattern,” *Bib* 51 (1970): 1–16. The influence should run mainly from the Danite to the Numbers story. Regardless, if the plaza stelae represent lineages, they commemorate the lineage eponyms; the plaza hosted rituals of commemoration. Note their position in a place of assembly outside the royal temenos.



At Ophrah, the angelic epiphany comes in the form of face-to-face interaction. Gideon experiences it as an ordinary transaction, a common approach in the genre (Jacob, Manoah). Only the fiery consumption of the sacrifice at the altar tips him off that he has been speaking with a divinity. This is likely the oldest of the three stories that make a point of it. At Ophrah, and altogether, the sheer density of supernatural manifestations is extraordinary, comparable only to the case of Moses and, arguably, Saul in 1 Sam 10:1–12.

Ophrah has the altar—to this day, it is still in Ophrah. It has a foundation narrative concerning a legendary victory, in the patrilineage burial area and the shrine precinct where Gideon was barraged with numinosity, enough violation of ordinary reality to inspire awe. Its icon, the golden ephod, consisted of shares of the booty freely given in gratitude and transformed by Gideon himself into its commemoration as a constitutive War of YHWH, a Sword for YHWH and Gideon (or, YHWH's and Gideon's Sword). We have the shrine's foundation tradition, much of it perhaps a script or textbook for instructing personnel and possibly docents for visitors. Our narrative's content, if not the wording, derives from advocates of the Jerubbaal Party, sanctuary and militia.

The echoes of the Gideon story are many—conceivably, in Abraham's purchase of Ephron's field (Gen 23, P), and more obviously in the calls of Saul and Moses, and in the insistence on YHWH's kingship to the exclusion of human kingship (cf. 1 Samuel). The last comes along with a human connection if Jotham, of the fable in Judg 9, is to be identified with Yeter, who would not slay Midianite captives in Judg 8. Yeter means "relict, survivor;" Judg 9:5 uses the same term to announce that Jotham "survived" (*way-yiwwātēr*). Yeter might be the eponym of the Jethrites, Ira and Gareb (2 Sam 23:38). Ira is a priest in David's hierarchy (2 Sam 20:26 with *'aleph::taw* interchange): that would mark inclusion of the adherents to the Gideon tradition and allies in David's fold. After all, Jotham's sacral fable does lend him a priestly role.

If we take the storyline's outline to reflect historical events, then the Abimelek catastrophe left Ophrah with a storied shrine, but without military leadership. This circumstance may have inspired the story that Gideon refused dynasty (8:22–23), contributing to the Cincinnatus ethic among the landed classes, to which Jotham, importantly, turns in his fable: productive elements do not seek governing power; heaven protect us from those that do, and from ourselves. Conveniently for later singers, the story element affirms the inviolability of sworn sovereignty. Acknowledging the tradition is again an authorial act of inclusion for loyalists of Gideon's glory.

#### ISRAELITE CATHEDRALS OF MEMORY: SWALLOWING SHECHEM IN FOLKLORE

Different establishments—a variation on the older appeal to "local traditions"—produced and perpetuated our materials on the subject of Hivvites and their

conquest. In the name of the altar at Ophrah, “YHWH Shalom,” Judg 6 plays on the divine name, as “to cause to be,” or perhaps “to be,” so the phrase, “YHWH Shalom to you” is ambiguously “He brings you Serenity/Completeness,” or, “You Shall Have Completeness;” the altar’s name is either the first, or YHWH of Completeness (there are no other yahwehs of any such quality). The play on YHWH’s name is again shared by Moses’s vocation, including the phrase “I am with you”/“I-AM is with you.” The altar name as a whole also evokes a traditional offering (*šelem*). But Shalom refers to treaty relations, and again the possibility of its application to a league obtrudes. “YHWH is an ally for you” is a likely alternative translation.

Genesis 34, the story of Dinah’s rape, treats the relationship between Israel and Shechem with notable sympathy for the Hivvites. Although impetuous, Shechem son of Hamor acts properly, even regally, in the aftermath of his tryst with Dinah. He falls victim to heartless Israelite treachery. Contrast Abimelek, who suborns Shechem’s support to fall on his innocent brothers. And in turn the Shechemites are treasonous toward him. In Gen 34, the Shechemites open their territory to the Israelites and offer them holdings in it. In Judg, they commission a coup in Israel. In both stories, Shechem ends razed.

Several elements suggest that the issue of relations with Hivvites is a proxy for all sorts of political differences. In Gen 35 (E), Jacob strips away gods and earrings. Gideon uses the latter as a source of the 1700 sheqels of his icon, so on the assumption that the folklore is encoding positions on recent memories, Gen 35 (E) seems to reject Gideon’s icon: its very material was tainted. The other icon made with earrings is Aaron’s Golden Calf (Exod 32:2, E).

E’s rejection of Gideon’s icon is of a piece with its greater sympathy with the Hivvites. Likewise, in Judg, Gideon earns his laurel by a rout of Midianites pasturing in the Jezreel. His is the “day of Midian” celebrated in Isaiah (9:3; 10:26; and, Ps 83), Midian’s swan song in the reported course of Biblical history. And yet both J and E, and thus the author of Gen 34, tie Moses and his lineage to a Midianite priest senior to him. The implications for the manipulation of Midian as a token in political positioning in Judah are a matter for exhilarating speculation. The contrast in these early perspectives, however, is again of a piece with the other differences between Judg 6–9 and JE. (It is, perhaps, also significant that Gideon does not figure, though the failed Abimelek does, in 2 Samuel, on which, further below.)

Perhaps more important, in Judges, the precinct associated with Shalom is Gideon’s, at Ophrah. In Gen 34, however, Hamor and Shechem both mention, Jacob’s gang are “at one (*šlm*, stative) with us.” Readers encounter ambiguity as to Jacob’s arrival “intact/peaceably at the town, Shechem” or, in the Samaritan

interpretation, “at Salem, the city of Shechem” (Gen 33:18).<sup>27</sup> (Samaritan tradition identifies Shechem with the Salem rescued by Abraham: Gen 14:18; cf. Ps 110.) Either way, the intention is to usurp YHWH Shalom, Ophrah’s godhead or motto, or altar-name, on behalf of Jacob’s Shechemite foundation. Jacob’s *temenos* is not associated with the back axis of Ebal.

The apparent concern with Serenity/Completeness (*shalom*) and shared community pairs with this indication of a union in the area. In the aftermath, it is fear of god that deters the population of nearby centers from pursuing Jacob in his progress to Bethel.<sup>28</sup> It would be too daring to suggest a connection between the legend in Genesis and a historical Hivvite-Israelite league. But is it too much to suggest that *some participants* among the rural element represented in the deer bones of Burnat identified themselves as Israelite?

Both Judg 9 and Gen 34 furnish perspectives on how to think—in one case historically, with a particular slant, in the other ideologically, with a different slant—about the redistribution of title to Hivvite lands in the Shechem district in accordance with Israelite canons of ownership. In a way, each is about the completion of the conquest, at least in this territorial patch: old land tenure patterns, old root of title, give way to governance by Israelite usage. That is why Joshua’s altar belongs there, central to the growth of the Israelite group. It is why Josh 9 represents the Hivvites as indeed perpetrating deception: they do so to avoid extirpation. And there you have the “tolerant” view: Gibeonite Hivvites will cheat you, but only to cheat death, unlike those extirpated Shechemites; Saul must be held to account for violating Israel’s compact with them. The narrative in Joshua, too, contains no hint of conquest in the hills of Ephraim or Manasseh (hence 17:14–18), precisely in traditional Shechemite territory: but again, this material is undated, and Tirzah does appear in the list of kings in Josh 12:24, despite being, like Shechem, a Manassite clan.

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<sup>27</sup> Psalm 76:3 links Salem with Zion, probably by way of Gen 14; only Deut 27:6; Josh 8:31; 1 Kgs 6:7 deploy the same root (*šlm*, stative) to describe intact stones, untouched (*nwp*, C stem; similarly only Deut 23:26) by iron, for use in building, while as weights, unmodified stones appear in Deut 25:15; Prov 11:1. Exod 20:25 stipulates avoidance of *gāzīt*, stone that has been “sheared,” which may be reinterpreted as a demand for “intact” stone that was nevertheless quarried, or even dressed in the margins, traditionally, with copper. The invocation of iron for stonecutting presumably reflects a time in the 8th century or later. Sargon’s sapper corps still used copper picks, though they may have been the last to do so, and military conservatism over technical innovation involving logistical adjustments is hysterically legendary.

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 34:30; 35:5. Gen 34:30 “Canaanite” and “Perizzite” occur together in Gen 13:7 (J); Judg 1:4. (Deut 3:5, with a different vocalization; Josh 17:15); 1 Sam 6:18 all suggest residence in unsecured settlements.

MODELING THE CONQUEST OF ETHNICITIES AND OPTICS IN THE EARLY AND  
LATER MONARCHY

The obvious explanation for all the Judges–Samuel material—for Shechem’s sealed end, for the tragedy befalling Gideon’s polity, for the resemblance of Saul’s to Gideon’s calling, for the blaming of Hivvites—is that Jerusalemite writers took up traditions advanced by Saulides in particular, and, in accordance with Davidic policy, revised the book on the Hivvites from a more tolerant perspective: Solomon’s epiphany at Gibeon never mentions communal Gibeonite marginality or legal extra-territoriality, and Gibeon’s role in Josh 9, which justifies hunting down Saul’s issue (2 Sam 21), integrates them into the Israelite *‘ēdā*, which in later usage (esp. P) will be the public, but of the descent group. That notion raises the question whether the first collection of stories in Judges, starting with Ehud, did not reflect a core of antecedents adduced to frame Saul’s achievements, but taken over by David’s house.<sup>29</sup> One of the sources of David’s Apology was the house of Jonathan, Benjamin’s Shadow Cabinet in Jerusalem. Their accounts, incorporating Saul’s story as a tragedy, mainly found their way into the A source in 1 Samuel.<sup>30</sup> Even if inaccurate or incomplete, the very consideration materially nuances the range of factors requiring integration into our histories of pre-monarchic Israel: perspectives in external relations, such as the “Philistine threat,” are a reflex, as well as a source of, faction.

There is an axiom in method here. One irony in the study of the conquest is that we have looked for it in all the wrong places—the places dictated by our reading, as history, of Israelite mythology and folklore. This is a problem inborn in the field. A natural continuity of assumptions sometimes delays us in the chrysalis of innocence, before an attitude emerges akin to “Trust, But Verify.” Or, Trust what you *can* verify, as the basis for understanding other details.

This overture will advocate that we evaluate claims in the Pentateuch and Joshua only against information about historical periods and events. I do not mean, no detail in the Pentateuch is accurate. The narrative, however, is not. It

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<sup>29</sup> For a similar approach, see Sarah Milstein, “Saul the Levite and His Concubine: The ‘Allusive’ Quality of Judges 19,” *VT* 66 (2016): 95–116.

<sup>30</sup> For the A source (1 Sam 9:1–10:16; 13–14; 16:14–23; parts of 17–18; 20–24; 28:3ff.; 31), see Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). We may choose to think that Jonathan’s mother, Ahinoam, negotiated her status as David’s “first wife,” a formal installation as presumptive queen-mother, at the time of her defection from Saul’s House, perhaps at Ishbaal’s accession. This status then translated into narrative about her having joined David earliest of all his wives; it produced otherwise pointless elaboration on the legendary friendship between David and Jonathan (almost all in A). It is tempting to take Micha son of Mephiboshet as the adaptor, but his cameo appearance in 2 Sam 9:12 may be meant to signal continuity of Jonathan’s sons’ place at court (and 1 Chr 9:40–44 ostensibly with thirteen generations starting from Jonathan; in the Davidic royal sequence, thirteen generations takes us to Jotham or, if one discounts Athaliah, Ahaz).

does not strive for accuracy, so much as precision. Distance from events in time is sometimes used to evaluate sources, as a proxy test of accuracy. But the test is only partly accurate—one must sift what has been elaborated from what has been inherited in any case. Genre is equally, sometimes more, important, as we shall see. Second Samuel and sources in Judges and Kings may not be altogether accurate. But their imagined human geographies are close to those of a country contemporary with the authors: this does not hold in narrative elsewhere. They are also reliable in the sense that any state-preserved (and state-commissioned) partisan work of advocacy must be: they not only naturally, as Aristotle claimed, but *necessarily, professionally* allow imagined opponents' arguments to define their expressions.<sup>31</sup>

Perspicuous political analysts ask, "What motivates this position statement?" They discount self-justification in autobiographies, even ones as accomplished as those of Theodore Roosevelt and, while in the Wilderness, Winston Churchill. The nakedly political sources are our most reliable guides to other texts and teach us to look more closely at the Israels in each of those texts severally before allowing seventh-century and later redactors and slightly older collections of legends to program our historical imaginations.

On the other side, our skepticism can extend too far. Because the lists of denizens of Canaan, which seem to come at the reader from all sides and at unpredictable times, are so manifestly unrelated to anything at all in the epigraphic record, we tend to dismiss them. At least, I do not think I am alone in that response: Amorite and Hittite are eastern terms for Westerners at different times; Canaanites, and the other indigenous groups, have left no distinctive cultural trace, and no record. But these are remnants of Israel's own ethnology, and valuable as such. When Israel Finkelstein was first pointing out the "Canaanite" renaissance in the eleventh-century Jezreel, scholarship did not sufficiently acknowledge the implications of the discovery and synthesis: it requires us to integrate other cultures, and not just on the plain, into our understanding of early Israel.<sup>32</sup> In that sense, this study is driven equally by the archaeological and the textual evidence.

Israelites did differentiate among non-Israelites—in Samuel, in the story and song of Heshbon, repeated with Jephthah—and some of the distinctions seem to have lingered, in Israelite consciousness, for a good long time before the labels became otiose. This has important implications for the conception of the conquest, which must now be regarded as coeval and coterminous with, as Avraham Faust

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<sup>31</sup> And hence Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*.

<sup>32</sup> Israel Finkelstein, "City-States to States: Polity Dynamics in the Tenth–Ninth Centuries BCE," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past*, ed. Seymour Gitin and William G. Dever (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 75–83.

has called it, Israel's ethnogenesis.<sup>33</sup> Engaging that significant advance together with Finkelstein's observations on the era will prove, if slowly, a productive and illuminating exploration.<sup>34</sup>

The conquest was intelligently intuited by Alt, who unfortunately could not refrain from linking it to pastoralist sedentarization, an idea that stems from the folklore, and mostly from the idea of a Wilderness Era, married to the nineteenth–twentieth century romance of the Bedouin. He correctly conceived of it as a long process, however. The conquest could not end before the rise of a state to complete it: the conquest was the stamping of Israelite identity on the territory associated with the states Israel and Judah. The conquest narrative functions sociologically, not just ideologically. It denies the pertinence of succession in the transmission of title to land for anyone not recognized as a landowner by the Israelite state. A state usurping authority, with a new patronage pattern, would expect to abrogate, repudiate and abolish anterior claims on real estate, even if it to smaller or greater degree merely ratified existing ownership by incorporating groups into its own legal structure. I imagine, the chief point of this exercise was to establish assignments not of individual fields inside settlements, but of areas, especially agricultural, between settlements, that is, to coopt or, if necessary, supplant the old dominant sites in a district, and their established lineage system, for administrative purposes. The gimmick would gin up beneficiaries' enthusiasm. Allowing that this is not the reason for the importance of the conquest in all, especially later, ideologies, it nevertheless helps explain the idea's socialization. One has no conquest until one imposes one's legal system, especially on land tenure.

*The impulse to revise land tenure explains the state's public celebration of Israel's allochthony.*<sup>35</sup> It probably implies that embrace came early, as early as

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<sup>33</sup> Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Note the prescient work of Baruch Rosen, as in "Subsistence Economy in Iron Age I," in *From Nomadism to Monarchy*, ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 339–51.

<sup>35</sup> This is only one explanation for propagating a myth of allochthony. Malagasy converts to Christianity did so for confessional purposes (see Maurice Bloch, *Placing the Dead. Tombs, Ancestral Villages and Kinship Organization* [London: Seminar, 1971]; Gerald M. Berg, *Historical Traditions and the Foundations of the Monarchy in Imerina* [PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1973]): to dissociate themselves from ancestor veneration and its rites, identifying the old objects of that ritual attention as displaced aborigines, like Israel and the supposedly aboriginal Rephaim in the seventh century (Baruch Halpern, *From Gods to God: The Dynamics of Iron Age Cosmologies*, FAT 33 [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2013], 472). It is a sound wager that early Israelites had allochthonous ancestors, so the question should be, in what eras was allochthony embraced by local populations? On the question, did any allochthonous groups share a history before entering in the land, see latterly the discussion in Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exodus: How It Happened and Why It Matters* (New York: Harper One, 2017).

the state concocted an administrative hierarchy reaching the lineages. In any instance, the analysis of Judg 9 and its narrative setting and world depends on one's view of Israel's own evolving stories about the conquest.

The earlier material, narrated from the state's perspective, reflects a subjective experience in which the same space contained a variety of identities, some of which might at any time be exclusive of others or not. Terms like "Benjamin," "Judah" and "Manasseh" may have entirely different meanings for the authors of the material, or entirely different meanings than they would have had for actors in the drama. So, at times one might be able to be both a Hebrew and a Gittite, or a Judahite and a Hivvite.

The content of the names of these identities is uncertain: "Amorite" attaches in JE to the hills populations, but in Samuel includes subgroups such as Gibeonites and in Judges Jebusites; Canaanites are lowlands people, mainly coastal. Texts do on occasion stipulate locations for Hittites, Perizzites, Hivvites and Jebusites, and even Rephaim. For all we know, "Hittites" were represented only around Hebron (and, like Hivvites, in the far north); of the two named in Samuel, one has a Yahwistic name; the other is an associate of David's listed *ahead* of Joab and Abishai (2 Sam 11–12; 1 Sam 26:6, and cf. 2 Sam 8:7). And yet, they may with "Amorite" and "Canaanite" also be an umbrella designee.

We have sought the conquest at the end of the Late Bronze because of Pentateuchal data. Pragmatically, the conquest was complete when an Israelite no longer had to pay tax, to anyone but another Israelite. We should all along have been looking for it when Israelite historiography, the early historiography, in Samuel, says it took place—at the end of the "wars of YHWH," in David's time, or, more probable historically, over the course of the next century or two. The concern with the conquest in David's time, however, suggests that as an idea, it was still in evolution.

Saul fought "the wars of YHWH" (1 Sam 18:17; 25:28), the wars of Canaan (Judg 3:1), including those against the Hivvites. We may imagine that his partisans transmitted the stories of Ehud, Gideon and Jephthah, among those eventually fixed in writing in the book of Judges.<sup>36</sup> Saul's vocation resembles, and his protest probably mimics, Gideon's. (Moses's vocation probably does as well.)<sup>37</sup> The concentration of four signs and omens, plus an epiphany, is picked up in the four signs to Saul, including his divine inspiration (1 Sam 10:1–12; Saul's death scene in 1 Sam 31 evokes Abimelek's). And Saul exacts vengeance

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<sup>36</sup> The Book of the Wars of YHWH in Num 21:14 is related to this or a similar ideological framework.

<sup>37</sup> I prescind from arguing at length that the call of Moses in E derives from that of Gideon as well, with its concentration of signs and reasonable objections. The relationship among the call narratives was substantially illuminated in Wolfgang Richter's study of communiques reporting God's election of warriors or kings. Wolfgang Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte*, FRLANT 101 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970).

on those who devastated Gideon's house, or at least on their ilk. Conversely, that last veteran of the wars of YHWH, David, defended the Hivvites, among others, and incorporated them into the state (and note 1 Sam 7:14, with the freighted word *šālôm*, implying Samuel's endorsement of that policy). For at least a time, the Hivvites and Amorites were essentially Israelites who did not subscribe to the Israelite national myths, or at least to all of them. By the eighth century at latest, they seem to have embraced, or at least submitted to, the cultural imposition.

The conquest was the coalescence of the many identities of the hill country, and ultimately other tracts, into a crystallized Israelite culture. In the end that was a Reformationist culture, which is what gives it its scientific and monotheistic impulses. It was given to Reformation because inhabiting its artificial, negotiated cultural landscape inevitably meant negotiation between a comprehensive collaborative system and its more insular, and thus less abstract and portable, component societies: repudiating the past in favor of a new, or renewed, Israelite identity rose to an extraordinary pitch in eighth and especially seventh century policy. The Rejection of Tradition (as alien) may have been a part of that identity almost from the outset: our ancestors worshipped icons or follies; we here now know better. The conquest itself ended with the state's professed adoption of the now-wider, Israelite culture, in the environment that spawned it—in Israel's historiographic terms, at a time of rest, or better, respite, though not necessarily peace.

#### TRAJECTORIES IN ETHNIC HISTORIOGRAPHY: "IN FIVE MINUTES, THE EBAL ALTAR WILL BE DESTROYED"

To derive information from Biblical testimony, historians need to privilege the expressions of communities' subjective experience *in the historical texts*, which is to say, in texts about time in the land. Most readers first encounter the Pentateuchal materials—they see how thematically integrated they are and make aspects of them primary. But prequels often plumb events they precede, and appropriation works in both directions.<sup>38</sup>

The Levites are a parade case. In narratives about life in a physically real context, Levites cluster in the Benjamin region (which originally included northern Judah) and Ayyalon Pass: thence a singular emigration to Dan. There is no reason to think of them as "scattered," except from prescriptive materials set in mythic times. What do we learn from their "scattering" and Gen 49? Neither the bellwethers of Levi nor those of Simeon administered a kinship-subordinated landholding structure in a state-sanctioned zone. Neither ever enjoyed command of a military, versus ritual, division.

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<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Hava Shalom-Guy, "The Call Narratives of Gideon and Moses: Literary Convention Or More?," *JHS* 11 (2011): article 11, [http://jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_158.pdf](http://jhsonline.org/Articles/article_158.pdf).



Some will invoke the characterization of Simeon and Levi in Gen 34 and 49 to argue “tribal” involvement in the Shechem events, especially in light of the complex relationship among Gibeon, Levi and Benjamin in the early monarchy. However, these tribes may appear in the folklore for reasons entirely extrinsic to the considerations that actuate recalling Shechem’s destruction. Translating events to folklore offers storytellers an opportunity not just to reframe them in a congenial perspective, but to combine elements of disparate events or plot threads for economy or to further characterization. The question arises for each detail, in what degree were tale-tellers out to relate historical events, in what degree condense but repurpose them, or to express, even explore, perspectives on life at large.

When the story genre makes no natural distinction, we need some other means to find solid ground. One cannot start a structure on swampland. It once was common in ancient history to proceed from a yarn, a story about mythic ancestors, to historical conclusions. The method spawned scenarios, which were then offered as hypotheses, of many a migration: this is textbook *histeron proteron*. Part of a cycle, and of a longer narrative work, stories incorporated into sources, such as Gen 34, answer purposes of literary continuity, thematic exposition, character development, plot advancement and even entertainment and moral instruction. Their stories are displaced onto phantasms: this is not because of a historiographic intent. They present comparanda for historical sequences, commentary and, sometimes, as in Greek drama, simply perspectives, silhouettes for contemplation. Using them to imagine actual events is not a historical operation and was not even when de Vaux was writing his *Early History of Israel*. It is an exercise in imagination, not evaluation.

But it is right and sound to examine the yarn, in this case the yarns in the Pentateuch, to try to discern the imprint of the past on it. Gen 34 still addresses the issue of assimilation. This was no doubt real: with the destruction of Shechem, and the regional center for the territorial festivals at Burnat, the villages of Shechem’s territory were left without a center around which to organize. Apparently, Ophrah succeeded it as the locus of interlocution among the community’s components. The villagers were previously Hivvite, though perhaps not of the Shechemite Hamor branch of Hivvites: they integrated into the economy—social, political, religious—of their effective territorial homeland, Shechem. Now, they had lost their political-economic context. So, in the wake of Abimelek’s activity, the northern reaches of Ephraim and those of central and western Manasseh became Israelite, which is to say, they affiliated with the political economy called Israel. Over time, ethnic distinction receded with the resolution of administrative confrontation.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For documentation of the diffuse genealogical reaffiliation of a clan in what was then Rhodesia, when inroads by neighbors had stopped its functioning, see Jack R. Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. by Jack R. Goody (Cambridge:

The Israelites' refusal to permit mixing in Gen 34, their demand for formal affiliation, their treachery even to that agreement, out of sanctimonious, punctilious pique—that may be comment on the events or on the absence of defined landholdings for Simeon and Levi, or both. There is at least a contrast with the Israelites who are party to and respect Joshua's commitment to the again-guileful Gibeonites (Josh 9), so that in J, Simeon and Levi play the role of Saul in Josh 9 and 2 Samuel.

But the importance of the events for Israel's formation impressed itself enough on tale-spinners to make Abimelek's unfulfilled promise proverbial, the death of a shogun, and an embarrassment. And even when Gen 34 (usually, J) was written, wisps of a former Hivvite commonwealth seem to have remained (34:30; 35:5). That the latest transactions stemmed from conflict over affiliation seems less likely than the commercial etiology of Judg 9. The irony of Shechem engineering the coup and then getting its comeuppance from its own instrument, while delicious, turns, after all, on the drunken invocation of ancestral tradition. In that story, then, the xenophobia is on the Hivvite side. Thus, the issues of mingling and integrating arise principally from the outcome of the conflict. Historically strategies of mobilization, they remain in the narrative mix: the non-historical recombination of that matter into archetypes expresses a perspective on relations at a later date, when the past was refashioned and refurbished, when one could no longer be both a Hivvite and at one with Israel, but had to abjure one identity, when the conquest was in the rear-view mirror.

E, almost exclusively, conceives the conquest as expulsion (*grš*; the J exception is Exod 34:11). Related texts (Josh 24; Judg 3:1–5; 6:7–10)<sup>40</sup> pursue the idea. The Covenant Code, one of E's premier segments, ends, YHWH will expel: the Hivvite, the Canaanite, the Hittite (Exod 23:28; and, 33:2). The three elements are present in writings about David and Solomon (contrast the local groups in Exod 23:23). In this conquest theory, Israel did not expel all the land's denizens, leading to intermarriage, and to conflict unresolved until YHWH granted rest from all sides to David (2 Sam 7:1) and Solomon (1 Kgs 5:4). The books of Samuel in fact return over and over to the theme of the conquest, especially in 1 Sam 12; 2 Sam 7 and in locutions about “YHWH's wars;” the same holds for 1 Kgs 5 and 8.

In the transition to the composition of JE, the conflicts among the identities involved were resolved sufficiently to make them functionally, which is to say

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Cambridge University Press, 1968), 27–68; repr. of “The Consequences of Literacy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1963): 304–35.

<sup>40</sup> Based on its absence in LXX, Wellhausen (*Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, 3rd ed. [Berlin: Reimer, 1899], 214 = F. Bleek, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 4th ed. [Berlin: Reimer, 1878], 186), along with a majority of commentators, marks Judg 6:7–10 as a late accretion. That Judg 6:7–10 is unrepresented in 4QJud<sup>b</sup> has been taken to confirm his position. But the text conforms to Elohist rather than deuteronomistic views on the conquest. It may in fact represent a remnant of an old variant account.

bureaucratically, compatible. The result is that elements such as the Rephaim, ancestral spirits, in an age of attack on ancestral rituals become part of the indigenous populations, are mixed in with the militia-groupings. The others become increasingly fictive, etiolate. This is why we are hard-pressed to stipulate persuasively that terms such as Amorite have “kinship” correlatives—Israelites distinguish Amorites from Canaanites, or Perizzites from Jebusites. In the Hexateuch, if Hivvites and Jebusites are types of Amorite, are they singled out as territorial, topographical, cultural, kin, economic or political economic, or even (some suggest, Qen) professional types? Are the Rephaim, for example, conceived in some of our literature as “sprites” occupying the crevices of the land in another time and mindset?<sup>41</sup> In the literature of Samuel, however, the categories used of native non-Israelites are still concrete. And expulsion is still a reality, for Israelites (1 Sam 26:19; 2 Sam 19:10; Ishbaal’s residence at Mahanaim) and others (2 Sam 4:2–3). Originally, 2 Sam 7:23 referred to YHWH expelling nations and gods from before Israel as well (see OG).

First Samuel 7:14 relates accommodation between Israel and the Amorites. In the plot of Numbers to Kings, this represents the start of Amorite subordination, finally realized with Solomon’s subjection of that population to corvée (1 Kgs 9:15–21; Judg 1). Yet, around 760, Amos has Amorite giants, as towering as oaks, so that the population has already been mythicized. A parallel shift is a rhetorical movement from “expulsion” to extirpation (as Deut 31:3) or supplanting (as Judg 1–3; 11:21–22) in texts about Joshua’s conquest. The dominant terminology thus contrasts not expulsion to accommodation, but expungement to subjugation.<sup>42</sup> The Original Nations grew more important as they dwindled away.

Implicit in Samuel is a different view of the conquest: the concept of absorption is present, even if the texts maintain the myth of an unchanging Israelite essence to which others untraceably assimilated. In every respect, the presentation of the mosaic of kinship-centered militias in Benjamin and Ephraim dovetails better as a model for the conquest with archaeology as construed for example by Avraham Faust,<sup>43</sup> to include non-Israelites for example in the Iron I inner

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<sup>41</sup> For transmogrification of spirits of the dead into supplanted indigenese, see Halpern, *Gods to God*, 472. Provisionally, in the JE lists of peoples (and those of the Former Prophets), I would take Perizzites, Hivvites and Jebusites as varieties of Amorite, with Canaanite, Hittite and Amorite as the major categories (possibly, not Hittite).

<sup>42</sup> *hwrš* versus *lkd*. See Baruch Halpern, “Settlement of Canaan,” *ABD* 5:1121–36. Unlike Joshua, Judg 11:22 agrees specifically with E’s CC in Exod 23:30 on the extent of Israel’s Transjordanian conquest: both describe it as reaching “from the steppe to the (Jordan) river.” One may maintain that Judg 11 is simply unconcerned with territories farther north. Regardless, both images are very modest. First Kings 5:1, “from the river, the land of the Philistines, all the way to the territory of Egypt,” is in the same vein.

<sup>43</sup> Avraham Faust, “Tel ‘Eton Excavations and the History of the Shephelah during the Iron Age,” in *Le-ma’an Ziony: Essays in Honor of Ziony Zevit*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn and Gary A. Rendsburg (Eugene: Cascade, 2017), 21–43.

Shephelah. Interestingly, his idea of that alien strip in the anticline is also present in 1 Sam 23:3 in the identification of the town, Qeilah, and likely its region, as neither Judahite nor Philistine. First Sam 6 may treat Bet Shemesh the same way, again in line with archaeological indications identified there by S. Bunimovitz and Z. Lederman.<sup>44</sup> In both cases, the ceramic assemblage has significant coastal properties and comes with limited quantities of “Philistine” bichrome; neither exhibits pig consumption or dog sacrifice.

A similar perspective explains a minor, and often elided, perplexity of 2 Samuel: Accosting potential partisans, Absalom performs a triage with the question, “From what town do you hail?” The answer comes, “From one of the tribes of Israel” (2 Sam 15:2). The apparent impertinence is in fact the narrator’s distillation of a direct answer:<sup>45</sup> one’s home settlement is governed either by an “Israelite” or a non-Israelite public culture, and the answer says which. The question goes out of its way to acknowledge the point. But it makes perfect sense, as does the summary of the answer, if the territory is understood as a patchwork of local authorities and cultural systems.<sup>46</sup>

In this Israel, the town of Hebron is to the Hebron hills what Shechem, then Ophrah, were—a stage for adjudication and negotiation across members of the regional political economy, full participants in the collocation of the group. It was a cult center for a cluster of locals, probably called Calebites (parallel to Hamor at Shechem), who dominated a palpable territory that included tracts to the south (1 Sam 30:14). Thus the region’s political economy had its assembly point at Hebron. But later, Caleb was not the state’s administrative channel, because the state dismantled the system of townships and jurisdictional mosaics that had arisen as a result of unsupervised “hinterland” turbulence.

Notably, the importance of locality as a factor in identification is nowhere more obvious than in 2 Samuel, and especially in the so-called list of David’s heroes in 2 Sam 23. In the culture underlying this compilation of senior military staff, an identification with Beeroth signals affiliation outside Israel’s kinship network (with Hivvites: 23:37 after characters from Zoba and Ammon); the meaning of association with Shaalbim (23:32) would presumably have been clearer to a contemporary reader than it is to us, today. The prevalence of the assumptions

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<sup>44</sup> See now Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, *Tel Beth-Shemesh. A Border Community in Judah. Renewed Excavations 1990–2000: the Iron Age*, 2 vols., Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, Tel Aviv 2016 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), esp. 1.40–62.

<sup>45</sup> So, correctly, Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel*, Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament 8 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1902), 270.

<sup>46</sup> For this and for other aspects of the context, see Stephen C. Russell, “Gate and Town in 2 Sam 15:1: Collective Politics and Absalom’s Strategy,” *Journal of Ancient History* 3 (2015): 2–21.

about identity is striking.<sup>47</sup> Integrating Burnat into the matrix of early Israelite social relations both enriches our appreciation of historical processes and sheds light on the Biblical text. “Tribal territory” was not culturally or politically homogeneous, and the monarchic administrative systems that reified territorial definitions—for the very obvious purpose of voiding title claims based on previous regimes, as well as for taxation—only partly coincided with active kinship dispositions.

Internal Israelite relations are implicated, too. E in Gen 33:18–20; 35:1–8 seems to reject Ophrah—the burial of the rings, the location of the shrine for all Israel at Shechem, and that shrine featuring Jacob’s first altar constructed in the persona of Israel, which is reflected in the title of the deity there invoked. Genesis 34 also implicitly pleads the mitigation of the Hivvite delict, as do Josh 9; 2 Sam 21:1–14. The contrast is to Judg 9 which, defending Ophrah and its anti-Hivvite agenda, takes a more factious view. Gideon’s kin, closer and more distant, come to his aid in Judg 7–8. Taking Abimelek to have seized power, we might imagine that the southern Hivvites of the Gibeonite confederacy remained neutral, preserving in Benjamin the condominium that Abimelek ended in the north and explaining their later protection by Jerusalem (possibly as sacral centers). Like the Israelite categories for the larger rubric groups (Canaanite, Amorite, perhaps Hittite), “Hivvite” may aggregate more than one set of communities.

When Joab, then by implication David, cites the example of Abimelek, it is of one of the tragic heroes of the “wars of YHWH” or “wars of Canaan” that Samuel claims David also fought, perhaps usurping a theme of Saul’s. (Much of the book of Judges, especially the stories of the Major Judges, reflects concern with Saul’s territory in the Ayyalon Pass, along with resentment of Ephraim.) But the J and E traditions adopt the view that the Saulide take distorts history, that coexistence with the Hivvites was agreed. By way of contrast, “the Ophrah road” of 1 Sam 13:17, not Shechem Road, if not a reflection of Shechem’s ongoing abandonment, would seem to lean more in Gideon’s favor.

In that sense, the mutual illumination from the identification of el-Burnat with Migdal Shechem and the interpretation of the narrative by reference to its reliable, observable assumptions and assertions makes each of the two productive. It may even permit us access to the kinds of issues, and perspectives on them, that state scribes and their audiences were grappling with. There are still lots of ways to reconstruct relations between Israel and Shechem—for example, the altar, El Elohe Israel at Shechem (Gen 33 Jacob) may signal a one-time creation of Israel by alliance between a group such as the Sons of Jacob, with other populations in the central hills; and that is just one of the teeming possibilities. A more banal

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<sup>47</sup> Applied to other texts, perhaps the same holds. Is Judah’s “familiar,” Hirah, in Gen 38:1, a Canaanite, like Shua, from Adullam? And Timnah in Gen 38:12? And what is the status of Bet Shemesh in 1 Sam 6?

interpretation would derive the tradition from the rehabilitation of Shechem's extramural sacred zone in connection with Jeroboam and specifically Israelite elements in the central hills. But the Temple of the God or Master of the Covenant still pronounces delphically on the negotiation of a common identity in ancient Israel.

THE HIVVITE IN THE MIRROR IN DEUTERONOMISTIC DOUBLE-THINK: FOLLOWING THE ROUTE OF EBAL

Judges 8:33–35, the narrative transition from Gideon to Abimelek, implies that Shechem in Judg 9 is Israelite. This introduction comes from one of the editors of our book of Judges, who placed the moralizing frameworks around the stories, and wrote the table of contents in Judg 2:11–19.<sup>48</sup> On the death of a judge, goes the pattern, the Israelites would serve the indigenous baals, and foreigners would squeeze them. In this instance, however,

<sup>33</sup>It was when Gideon died that the Israelites went back to tomcatting after the baals, and made Baal Brit their god.<sup>49</sup> <sup>34</sup>The Israelites no longer recalled YHWH their god who had rescued them from the grasp of all their opponents from about.

<sup>35</sup>Nor did they reciprocate to [*'sh hsd 'm*] the House of Jerubbaal Gideon, in proportion to all the benefit that he rendered to [*'sh 'm*] Israel.<sup>50</sup>

Judges 9:4 associates Baal Brit with the Shechemites. And Shechem kickstarts Jotham's curse by outfitting Abimelek to exterminate the Seventy, and seals it by infidelity to Abimelek. More subtly read, 8:33 might simply report Israelite participation in Shechemite behavior. Still, the author never says outright that the Shechemites are foreign: the strategy makes sense for a framework redactor conversant with the picture in Joshua, and from Shechem's patriarchal depopulation.

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<sup>48</sup> See, however, a different assessment in the best-reasoned analysis of Judges' composition, in Wolfgang Richter *Berufungsberichte*; Richter, *Die Bearbeitung des "Retterbuches" in der deuteronomischen Epoche*, BBB 21 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1964).

<sup>49</sup> *šym*, "put" + "for themselves (*lhm*) + obj. DN + "as (*l-*) a god." This seems clear enough but is without close parallel in the corpus. {*šym* (direct object A) *l-* (direct object B)} means, to alter A's status to B, to appoint A as B; for example, in Gen 45:7–8, "Elohim has made me a father to Pharaoh" and *l-* Lord over Egypt. {*šym* + direct object A + direct object B} can mean to change status as well, in some cases de novo: compare Gen 47:26, "Joseph turned it into (*l-*) a standing rule" (cf. 1 Sam 30:25); versus, Exod 15:25, "there he furnished to him Rule and a Ruling" = Josh 24:25 (and cf. 1 Sam 30:25), or 1 Sam 18:13, "he made him a brigadier for himself;" 2 Sam 15:4, "Would someone made me a judge." The locution has an intriguing pattern of distribution.

<sup>50</sup> *hsd* is created or banked reciprocal credit. The PN is perhaps a double-reading (8:35), but joins the two traditions, of Gideon's victory (starting with a vocation in 6:11–24), and the regional importance of Jerubbaal (starting with a vocation in 6:25–32, but focused in ch. 9). In a way, it brackets 7:1, with only 8:29 between mentioning him.

But regardless, the evidence of Israelite guilt here is the Shechemites' behavior in Judg 9.

For this purpose, Judg 9 is integral to the book of Judges. The redactor of Judges—that is, the author of its cyclical framework—adapted his formulae to suit the peculiarities of the text: he presents Judg 9 as evidence of Israelite debauchery after a judge's death, which will lead to the more regular sequence of minor judges (10:1–5; 12:7–15; Eli, Samuel?). It does after all mention a local god, whose name the editor cites as Baal (not El) Brit, probably because it complements his designation, baal or baals, for aboriginal gods. If any remained, they were marginal in the redactor's time. And, in 8:35, the Israelites are ungracious toward Jerubbaal, when in the story the curse for injuring his house is directed at Abimelek (9:56). The redactor has reinterpreted the Shechemites' crime, and re-applied its very wording, to make Israel responsible, in part or whole.

It thus seems the redactor-historian has adapted the formulary in order to introduce material from a (written) source whose essence he has not changed. This redactor purported, as did the author of the Josianic version of Deuteronomy–2 Kings, that Hivvite Shechem never survived Jacob, that Hivvites, like Girgashites, Perizzites, Amorites and even Hittites, were banished from Israelite territory or otherwise peripheralized (Gibeon). The Josianic historian, for this purpose identified with the author of Judg 2:6–19, even thought them more extirpated than expelled, thought their territorial control had been “supplanted” by Israel.

The *source's* plot, however, depends heavily on the contrast between Shechem and Israel. Abimelek's mother (in 8:31) is a concubine not resident with Gideon. Abimelek's appeal is not just that he is a legitimate candidate, but that he is one of *us* (9:2; vv. 3, 18). David uses the same words to secure reelection from Judah after Absalom's revolt; he avoids them with Israel. And Gaal's sedition asserts the claims of the noble lineage of Hamor, nowhere anything but the non-Israelite father of Shechem, in contradistinction to those of the ruling house (for Josiah's historian) of Israel.<sup>51</sup>

Gaal's case for supporting Hamor's tradition is this specific question: “Why should it be *us* who serve *him*?”—*lmh n'bdnw 'nhnw*. The stress is not on the service, but on the parties, particularly the Shechemites, “we”: Abimelek is *not* “the men of Hamor,” not part of “our” heritage. (There is irony in Gaal's immigrant zeal for Hamor, and subsequent expulsion.) Such extreme alienation and extensive denial of mutual ties is missing in connection with any inner-Israelite

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<sup>51</sup> The presentation implicitly criticizes inebriation in the cult assembly, and possibly even the Shechemite cult itself. See the suggestive essay of Aaron Koller, “The *Kos* in the Levant. Thoughts on Its Distribution, Function, and Spread from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age II,” in *The Ancient Near East in the Twelfth to Tenth Centuries BCE: Culture and History*, Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the University of Haifa, 2–5 May 2010, ed. Gershon Galil et al., *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 392 (Münster: Ugarit, 2012), 269–90, and significantly his observation on the rarity of ritual drinking vessels in funerary assemblages.



conflict, including the Solomonic schism, David's civil war and royal conflicts, even the Gibeah episode (see Judg 21), except when Israelite custom is attributed to supplanted peoples. Abimelek's indurate warfare against populations is also atypical in reports of inner-Israelite policy. Penuel, which may be an appendix of Sukkot as Burnat was of Shechem, and which also may not be Israelite, fares little better in the Gideon account (Judg 8:14–17). So, the story turns on Abimelek's initial reception as kin by Shechem in its relations with Israel, then on his rejection as an Israelite rather than a traditional Shechemite.

Treating Shechem as Israelite in Judg 9 plays into the program of the Josianic historian. Past identities are abolished, no longer part of the population. The idea must go back beyond Amos's Amorite giants (2:9). It was a part of Jerusalem's statehood project, as manifested in the literature starting around Hezekiah's time, to eliminate justifications for unwanted elements of popular culture by marginalizing, or revising, lineage structures.<sup>52</sup> One of Josiah's objectives, again with antecedents under Hezekiah, was to bring the state into direct communication with the citizen, to eliminate intermediaries such as clan structures, and other communities with specific local or regional interests. Shechem is Israelite in Judg 9 not because of the story's content, which speaks against the identification, but because of the author's desire so far as possible to homogenize the identity of his audience with the identities of groups in his historical reports.

The Deuteronomistic, Josianic, historian, mainly absorbed Deuteronomy. In that presentation (Deut 2, and similarly Gen 14), Israel and its Transjordanian congeners, and even their Philistine counterparts, abolished aboriginal populations. The leftovers, the discarded trimmings, were Israelite for him. Still, the historian stops short of denying their persistence altogether. Whether or not Jer 27 points out his opponent's derivation from Gibeon to intimate a Hivvite background, even that chapter does not correlate political alignment to identity expressed through descent. Were lineage communities otiose by that time, because Hezekiah, Sennacherib and Manasseh successively reconfigured Judah's residential patterns? To what degree did they remain flash-points of denigration? Did historical social fault lines lose their explanatory power in contemporary politics? Or, is the picture skewed by the state's rhetoric, privileging its inspired rules above flesh-and-blood connections?

There are lessons in the approach proposed above. First, the Pentateuch, the eponymic folklore, is a distant second choice as a guide to Israelite history and the understanding of its society. Source criticism in Biblical Studies was once called Literary Criticism, for good reason. Too often, it does not engage the world outside the text sufficiently to furnish control, nor indeed the conventions of Israelite and Near Eastern literature even about such basic questions as the

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<sup>52</sup> Elaborated in Halpern *Gods to God*, 12–141. For the almost Cleisthenic system reflected in Deuteronomy, Halpern, "What Does Deuteronomy Centralize?" (forthcoming).



representation of sequence and confluence. Even at its best, it lacks sufficient reliability in detail to construct, rather than be correlated to, a history. It is not enough for this purpose to identify handwriting, or to assume each implied writer invented or gladly appropriated every feature of a text's content. To penetrate the fog of transmission requires a focus on a realistic sociology, and a step-by-step mechanics of transmission that enables us to trace content, not words, to particular parties. Augmenting our source-critical inquiries to include tracing the political and social *Sitz im Leben* of each story—and not just its incorporating framework—enhances the recovery of historical information. This represents a return to the practice of source analysis as it is pursued in other areas of ancient history,<sup>53</sup> a model perhaps underlying the appeal from criticism exercised in biblical studies.

“RARELY IS THE QUESTION ASKED, IS OUR CHILDREN LEARNING?”: RESULTING PERSPECTIVES ON THE EARLY MONARCHIC ISSUES

These thoughts offer an unexploited angle for reconsidering Israel's early history. It is especially appropriate to offer them to a scholar who has done so much to change the way we examine David's apology. As a preeminent commentator on Samuel, Kyle will, I know, appreciate that it is not just the premonarchic era that the perspective affects, but the whole history of Davidic kingship through to the Solomonic schism. The Ayyalon Pass hosted a melange of associations and identities, including Hivvites, Hittites, Jebusites, and possibly Gittites, along with Levites, Benjaminites, Judahites and perhaps others (Hebrews, Danites, Perizzites). Their jostling ignited the wars over Benjamin leading to Jerusalem's ascendancy. Reported Philistine inroads in the Jezreel and Transjordan may involve their local alliance system rather than a significant presence from Pentapolis capitals.<sup>54</sup> The mix in Dan, Benjamin and elsewhere probably remained a factor in domestic and perhaps international politics into the eighth century. And the internal fraction in these communities, Hivvite or Judahite or Philistine, is, depending on the resolution of a narrative, obscured in part or whole.

Here is one possibility this perspective raises: its geographic distribution suggests the list of “minor judges” (M-) is not in origin a document about succession.

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<sup>53</sup> For two sterling examples, see Ernst Badian, “Waiting for Sulla,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962): 47–61; Jonathan David, “Achaemenid Propaganda and Oral Traditions: A Reassessment of Herodotus' Early Persian Logoi,” in *Cultural Contact and Appropriation in the Axial-Age Mediterranean World. A Periplos*, ed. Baruch Halpern, Kenneth S. Sacks and Tyler E. Kelley, Culture & History of the Ancient Near East 86 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 60–81.

<sup>54</sup> First Samuel 31:7, 10 (A). At the Iron I, eleventh/tenth-century layer of Megiddo VIA, Area K (local stratum K-4), Brian Hesse reported (during excavation) a “puppy in a pot” found with “degenerate” bichrome, suggesting a Philistine visitor at the villa there. But mainly, literary Gittites from the Ayyalon Pass, including Obed-Edom and Ittay, and Philistine archaeological invisibility there, together suggest the underlying pattern: the text, as appropriate, fuses allies with Philistines.

Gideon hails from southeastern Manasseh (Judg 8:30, 32). Tola, an Issacharite, resided on the Jezreel Valley, probably near Samaria, south of Jenin (10:1, Shamir, Ephraim hills). Yair and Jephthah (10:3–5; 12:7) preside over the Bashan down the Yarmuk and thence to the Arnon. In 12:8, Ibzan is from a Bethlehem, arguably the one in Naphtali, just north of the Jezreel. And 12:11–12 places Elon at a town of that name in Zebulun, northeast of Manasseh on the Jezreel. Finally, 12:13–15 place Abdon ben-Hillel in Piraton, in north central Ephraim.<sup>55</sup>

Each member of this list is identified with a separate region. Regional inclusiveness does not, however, dictate the list's content, even given the context of the major judges (M+). Nothing south of Ephraim appears, nor south of the Jabboq in Transjordan, nor much, if anything, north of the Jezreel Valley. In fact, a long-standing caveat dictates that some judges may have overlapped with others in time. With M-, the list of minor judges, despite the sequential presentation in the text, this seems especially true.

A logical explanation both for the preservation of the names and burial locations and for the geographical distribution is this: M- preserves the identity of the different militias, or the most powerful "families," which is to say organized parties, from the time of Saul, or conceivably sometime later (the Omride state seems the downward limit). Even including Eli (1 Sam 4:18c) and Samuel (1 Sam 7:15; 25:1; 28:3) in M-, the battleground, Benjamin, stands out as absent from this material. This suggests that Saul, who comes across in 1 Samuel's A source as transitional from the last great savior judges—the so-called major judges—is perhaps the culmination of an early collection, or, more specifically, of the idea behind the collection. Likewise, Ephraim, between Benjamin and Gideon's Hivvite-free Manasseh, is portrayed as bullying first Gideon and then Jephthah, demanding credit without risk; only the last minor judge stems from its territory, just outside of which the real action swirls. While starting the story of Israel's waxing in the land with Deborah probably made sense, the Ehud story has also been attached to that, so that the era of the judges begins and ends in Benjamin. Similarly, in the version of events we now have, the story of Judges begins with conquests and a savior-judge (M+) from Judah (1:1–20; 3:7–11),<sup>56</sup> and the story of a stable administration of the whole Promised Land crescendos in Solomon.

In other words, the succession of minor judges may preserve an embedded memory of concentrations of military potential. The coordination, more than the unification, of these lay at the core of someone's administration. The literary

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<sup>55</sup> The list of minor judges, M-, starts with Gideon and includes Jephthah: Baruch Halpern, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan*, SBLMS 29 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1983), 209–21. On a town named for Elon, cf. Ebez, a town in Issachar perhaps associated with Ibzan, and later "clan" names in the cases of Ehud and Tola.

<sup>56</sup> For Othniel in Judg 3:7–11 as a Deuteronomistic contribution to the litany, *after* the construction of the frameworks around the narratives, see Richter, *Bearbeitung*.

confines within which they present are, however, clad in a retrospective, reconstructed dress, however much anterior memory survives. At first glance, therefore, only, they suggest two contingent hypotheses: first, that the home villages of the regional strongmen were not necessarily their administrative centers (Tola of Issachar ruling from the hills of Joseph), which might in fact distinguish Gideon from the rest; second, that their accession depended to some extent, at least—and here, the identity of the villages is important—on their ethnic identity as Israelite, in contradistinction to, say, Hivvites or others. If the aggregation of figures is early, then this speaks for a Saulide provenance, since he pursued policies of internal consolidation based on Israelite affiliation. It also has implications for matters as far-flung as the status of the Galilee and the history of its incorporation into Israel, and the nature of affiliation, and even the earliest formation of the Judges–Samuel storyline. This is in the realm of speculation contingent on the model in use here. But it does offer an explanation of why figures, and specifically the figures of Gideon and Jephthah, should appear both as major and as minor judges: their stories were useful for asserting claims on contested territories, and especially, their legacies included powerful communities.

Counterposed against this reconstruction is another of the same sort, but closer to Albrecht Alt's approach.<sup>57</sup> Imagine, then, that the early Israelites, wherever they came from, experienced the Hivvites and Jebusites, probably along with other varieties of people they lumped together as Amorites, as the aborigines of Canaan. Much as early Muslims encountered their Byzantine and other predecessors, they first treated with one another simply as neighboring family groups. After a time, Gen 34 claims that the Hivvites suffered for pulling a fast one; Judg 9 suggests the same. And this incident, or really a series of incidents, precipitated and exacerbated hostility based on distinctive affiliation, which can be described as ethnic. The difference now was, the bad blood demanded exclusive affiliation, and inhibited previously pedestrian workaday intercourse.

This is the background that shaped Saul's faction. But part of the group identifying with Israel wanted to continue commerce with its Hivvite neighbors, and perhaps not see them neutralized as a counterweight to, say, east Benjaminites. And the Hivvites in the north, who were neighbors of Israelites in the Galilee, and the Hivvites in the south, who were neighbors of Judah and inland Philistines, remained integrated, remained tied by blood and economy to natural allies. From this faction, David arose, and the minor judges are just as likely the heroes of militias or factions that allied with David, either against Saul and Ishbaal or in the Absalom revolt.

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<sup>57</sup> See Albrecht Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* I (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1953), 89–125; repr. of *Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina* (Reformationsprogramm der Universität Leipzig, 1925); and Alt, *Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina* (1939), repr. in *Kleine Schriften* I:126–75 for what has been regarded as the “infiltration” model of the conquest.

Any one of these militias, not least Saul's, is a likelier candidate for the destruction of Shiloh than are "the Philistines." Likewise, Alt's old hypothesis, now rarely revisited, of a national assembly at Shechem, might be reanalyzed as reflecting a Davidic or Solomonic revival of a practice once combining Israelite and Hivvite elements.<sup>58</sup> The withdrawal of Egyptian administration precipitated even greater fluidity than is in evidence in the Amarna letters, and repeated adaptations of group alliances in Canaan's multilateral scheme of relations. In all likelihood, the hierarchical vacuum had much to do with making the hill country inviting to investors.

Reduced governance over traffic patterns also encouraged a burgeoning interest in trade in southern metals that may have enhanced the value of the town, Dan, as a site of transmission to and exchange with a more northerly regional economy. The same may hold for Abel of the House of Maacah, which is identified as Aramaean in Gen 22:24 (Friedman's J, and certainly JE). Abel belonged to Hadadezer's Aram Zoba in 2 Sam 10–11, itself concentric with the district, Yarimuta, in the Amarna archive (the region's matriarch in Gen 22:24 is Reumah). In 2 Sam 20, the town urges its affiliation to Israel, without suffering contradiction. In other words, the forging of a common market, which began under Deborah and Abimelek, ushered an economic boom into inland Canaan. A national monarchy came to champion the agenda by compelling local cultures to conform, by dismantling internal tariffs.

As biological along with other sciences<sup>59</sup> reprogram archaeology in the next decades, a grasp on the observable cohabitation, coexistence and exchange of local groups will assume increasing import: it will be needed to prevent facile correlations exaggerating the significance of small samples. In this less macro-historical direction, those with their eyes on the big picture, P. Kyle McCarter Jr. prominent among them, have been pointing us for many years. In the interim, the challenge to material culture specialists, taken up already by some,<sup>60</sup> will be to

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<sup>58</sup> For the hypothesis and its history, see F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, HSS 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), 85–86 n. 15.

<sup>59</sup> E.g., A. Cohen-Weinberger, N. Szanton, and J. Uziel, "Ethnofabrics: Petrographic Analysis as a Tool for Illuminating Cultural Interactions and Trade Relations between Judah and Philistia during the Iron Age II," *BASOR* 377 (2017): 1–20.

<sup>60</sup> For the sort of analysis required, see Shlomo Bunimovitz and Avi Faust, "Building Identity: The Four-Room House and the Israelite Mind," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestine*, Albright Institute of Archaeological Research Centennial, ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 411–23; Avraham Faust, "An All-Israelite Identity: Historical Reality or Biblical Myth?," in *The Wide Lens in Archaeology: Honoring Brian Hesse's Contributions to Anthropological Archaeology*, ed. by Justin Lev-Tov, Paula Wapnish, and Allen Gilbert (Atlanta: Lockwood, 2017), 169–90. Even within Cisjordanian settlements characterized by elements later emblematically Israelite, such as house plans or plain dishware or pig avoidance, identities in Iron I may have been more fluid than we acknowledge.

tease out distinctions subtler than hitherto in symbolically-freighted recoverable remains, matters ranging from funerary assemblage and diet to food preparation, table service components, house and compound disposition, space use and even settlement environment.

Some deposits, as in the case of Iron I ceramic at the City of David or at Khirbet Qeiyafa, that elicit almost reflexive chronological response, may involve variables beyond time lag in the diffusion of styles. It would be productive, historical reflection will disclose, to investigate supplier hypotheses. DNA results will become meaningful as tomb groups are analyzed with a view to gaining a window on exchange. But eventually the panoply, not the first group samples, will determine our views. As the corpus collects, results will be interpreted in light of textual readings ranging from naïve to dismissive. It would be helpful, this time around, were the science targeted toward evaluating and refining historical scenarios arising not from simplistic readings of textual claims, but from more multi-dimensional overtures to ancient reality. In the meanwhile, those citing the natural scientific evidence have a duty to contemplate the real-world likelihoods and the real-world limitations of the methods applied.

It advances discussion, at such times, to consider the mechanics underlying conceptual subsystems in the cultures we study: each isolable product exemplifies such a subsystem. Take the literature about early Israel in Canaan. There, Ehud, Gideon and Samson are certainly wealthy characters, as are Elqana, Qish and Jesse, along with others, in Samuel. The stories in Genesis also attribute wealth to Israelite forebears, for what that is worth. It would be simplistic to infer that this literature was *aimed* only at the moneyed, since the upper crust is a natural setting for stories. But our scribes still choose the landholding classes to exemplify “Israelite” character and leadership. They are in a position to implement an ideal, which later comes to expression in the idea of an ancestral holding, a franchise (Heb. *nahālā*) to which each Israelite is entitled. Each full citizen was in the late theory entitled to such a holding, to the franchise. That the theory of land reform arose before state redistribution seems unlikely.

Survey data—a delicacy for the historical imagination—suggests that elements later dominant in the Israelite state early occupied lands suitable for intensive horticulture, for commerce. It is not a coincidence that the Song of Deborah, Gideon’s and Jephthah’s campaigns in Transjordan and Saul’s gamble at Jezreel all address the issue of trade.<sup>61</sup> Canaan was a patchwork of local authorities, any one of which might enforce tolls for the crossing of its territory, or even sponsor piracy, as we are told Shechem did in Judg 9. Purveyors of cash crops will have found a more unified market, under regional governance, more conducive to their commerce. Far from reflecting anxiety about local commingling, the

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<sup>61</sup> For trade in Judg 5 in particular, see J. David Schloen, “Caravans, Kenites and *Casus Belli*: Enmity and Alliance in the Song of Deborah,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 18–38.

geography induced conflict over access to larger markets. (David would resolve exchange with Egypt by annexing the Negev and accommodating Philistia and Tyre.)

When we reflect on the vantagepoint of our early literature, it seems to be that of the landed, therefore. We are hardly speaking of anything resembling an aristocracy, but a more general population of established rural entrepreneurs based in horticulture. It does no damage to consider the kin-groups so supported, or the members thereof who had a claim on the lands under cultivation, as the gentry, or as the bourgeoisie. To adopt another perspective, they were the citizenry of Israel. Probably, the “Hebrews” of 1 Sam 13–14, neither Benjaminite nor Israelite, were landless like the *gēr* in those quarters, but not entirely abjured as kin.<sup>62</sup> More certainly, the concept excluded those whom Samuel and Judges denominated Amorite or otherwise foreign, and perhaps even local Israelite identities. Among the Israelite population we see evidence of extra-urban, but not subsistence peasant, cultivation; of distributed ownership of flocks as a risk-spreading and communal maintenance strategy. We do not see abject poverty because it is literally and architecturally masked.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The story supposes “Hebrew” loyalties were split between the Philistines and Israelites (13:3, 7; 14:21). This also explains why the Philistines, recognizing “Hebrews” in 14:11, nevertheless invite them to the camp, and on that factor Jonathan’s tactics depend. Plural “Hebrews” appear in the striking phrase, “the land of the Hebrews” in Gen 40:15 (E), as well as other JE Egyptian contexts, as “god of the Hebrews” (Exod 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3, all E), and, per Friedman, Gen 43:32 (J); Exod 1:15, 16, 19 (all 3 f., E); 2:6, 7(f), 11, 13 (all 4 J). An echo of E in Jonah aside, the other instances come in 1 Samuel (8x). Just as in Exodus, “Hebrews” is a group label which Egyptians assign to Israelites, in 1 Samuel, also across the A/B source line, it appears mainly as a Philistine designation for Israelites. In Philistine speech, see 1 Sam 4:6, 9; 13:19; 14:11; 29:3. But when Saul apostrophizes them in 1 Sam 13:3, “all Israel” heard, and the report of Hebrews’ desertion (13:7) is matched by a remarkably parallel potshot at Israelites gone to ground in Ephraim (13:22). Sociologically, this is a remarkably rich text. The category is larger than Israel alone. Nor is it certain that in the writers’ worlds, all Israelites were Hebrews, a question pertinent to the “Hebrew slave law” of CC, where rabbinic commentators take it to be a social status: see on the Deuteronomic version of the law Benedetta Rossi and Philippe Guillaume, “An Alternative Reading the Law of the Hebrew ‘Slave’ (Deuteronomy 15:12–18),” *Res Antiquae* 15 (2018): 1–28.

<sup>63</sup> Attempts on social stratification are typically based on goods and house sizes. See for example Avraham Faust, “Social Criticism of the Prophets and the Social Reality in Israel and Judah: An Archaeological Examination,” in *Tributes of Friendship and Esteem for Samuel Vargon*, Studies in Bible and Exegesis 10 (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2011), 263–79. But lineage configuration, among other factors, qualifies house footprint, and even concentration of valuables, as correlates to net worth, and ignores those without housing plots or houses. Contrast our biased sample on funerary practice, where the particulars, though meaningful, attach to otherwise visible classes. See for example, A. Fantalkin, “The Appearance of Rock-Cut Tombs in Iron Age Judah as a Reflection of State Formation,” in *Bene Israel: Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and the Levant in Honour of Israel Finkelstein*, ed. Alexander Fantalkin and Assaf Yasur-Landau, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 31 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 17–44.

On this group, as a constituent assembly, supervised an indigenous monarchy that could not be resented as imperial or alien, like Abimelek, or so its successors insisted.<sup>64</sup> But a regularized administration of taxes and public lands necessitated a systematized registry, a segmentary, hierarchical structure. The memory of that framework survives in our more comprehensive sources, especially P. Its monarchic administrative engagement is confirmed in the Samaria ostraca.<sup>65</sup>

Social relations in the free countryside were organic. The state acknowledged some networks and subordinated others. Thus, Gad and Manasseh between them became structures to which Gilead was subordinated, no doubt with considerable overlap between the original and the new status of freshly-affiliated residents. Neither Levi nor Simeon, neither Hivvites nor Perizzites, not even Joseph seems to have enjoyed abiding administrative identity with a fixed territory. Dan's southern seat was discarded (already in Solomon's district list). Like the Gilead and Machir of Judg 5, groups such as Caleb and Jerahmeel were subsumed in bureaucratic categories overlapping or engulfing them. And, even more such choices were implied for budgetary hierarchy below the tribal and "clan" levels. Such units vary in segmentary rank because of diachronic organizational adaptation. A full historical agenda involves recovering some of the organizational and terminological wealth obscured by these developments. As others have recognized,<sup>66</sup> the systematization(s) of J or JE, and Josh 13–19, along with their echoes, are superimposed by administrative necessities on structures founded on personal, social and cultural dimensions irrelevant to bureaucrats.

Too often, we expect a name ("Israel") to imply identical characteristics in variable contexts. We incidentally extend the "essence" (name) to include unimplied particulars. We do this even where such properties shift rapidly. But the immutable, in a strand of thought seemingly running from Xenophanes through Parmenides with perceptible antecedents in Jeremiah (as 10:10–11) and earlier, is an abstract entity that imagines itself. No absolute inertia exists in our four-

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<sup>64</sup> This is the point the B source drives home repeatedly in 1 Sam 8; 10:17–27; 11; 12, usually thought to be anti-monarchic: the source absolutely insists that Israel alone is responsible for indigenous monarchy; it must therefore bear and deal with the consequences. The source legally and unequivocally opposes any government other than monarchy.

<sup>65</sup> Of the two rough periods represented in the ostraca, clan names (of Manasseh) characterize one (year 15). The alternative administrative practice for years 9–10 can be accounted for even so, but it reduces the likelihood that a single period is dated with reference to separate kings—an explanation never likely to begin with. The districting, however, seems to remain the same in both corpora, as reflected in the clustering of town or clan names reporting severally to the recipients.

<sup>66</sup> Christoph Levin registers the point, in pursuing what seems to me an implausibly late dating for it. See Christoph Levin, "The System of the Twelve Tribes of Israel," in *Congress Volume, Paris 1992*, ed. John A. Emerton, VTSup 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 163–78; see now Ernst Axel Knauf and Philippe Guillaume, *A History of Biblical Israel. The Fate of the Tribes and Kingdoms from Mernptah to Bar Kochba* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2016).



dimensional perception of matter. Henri Bergson argued, persuasively, that our senses' evolution is governed by adaptivity. We thus conceive of immortals and ideals ("Israel") as emanations from unexperienced dimensions to which our perception has no access; or, since perception therefore imposes few limits on our thought, as black-box heuristics for negotiating the "real." But that very human process hinders progress in integrating histories of neighboring regions and peoples especially with Israel's history—we appropriate our very Immutables ("Israel," and equally, "Amorite") from the sources.

The sources were describing interpretations of historical events and introducing elements and strategies, in speech and in action, with which to express the interpretations. We struggle to free ourselves from their perspective when it is confused with the recording. I can imagine David as a hero or villain, which says more about my nature, ideology or mood than about the historical human: only what we can ascertain sets limits on what we license ourselves to imagine. It is a starting-point for a drama or comedy. But to balance the hubris of our perspectival freedom the most important source of humility and of liberty in the historical community is an awareness of what we cannot ascertain.

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# Turning Hippos into Ducks: Avian Artifacts in Ivory

Ron E. Tappy

In the course of excavations at Tel Zayit, my team discovered an ivory-carved duck head in levels dating to the late thirteenth or early twelfth century BCE. This small artifact, expertly fashioned with realistic features, likely represents a disarticulated component of a once elegant zoomorphic box, perhaps used for storing cosmetics. The following article acknowledges the important place held by ivory over the long course of human artistic expression, draws together the chronological and geographical distribution and the hallmark attributes of duck-shaped images, and along the way describes more specifically the context and form of the Tel Zayit specimen. The resultant survey, through its intentionally broad base, discusses the use of animals (particularly the avian world) in ancient Near Eastern and Aegean art and concludes with an excursus on the two principal sources of ivory in those areas.

## INTRODUCTION: IVORY OF OLD

The recognition of ivory as a raw material with intrinsic beauty, value, and prestige—a material desirable for artistic presentations of oneself, of deities, or aspects of the natural world—emerges in the cultural record nearly 50,000 years ago, with the appearance of behaviorally vs. merely anatomically modern humans. From the advent of higher cognition, our artistic messages have resided to some degree in the very media we use.<sup>1</sup> Yet the rise of ivory as a material of choice for human artwork—whether obtained from the tusks of a mammoth, mastodon,

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I am happy to present this study in honor of P. Kyle McCarter Jr., whose impressive depth of academic knowledge and breadth of personal interests afford those of us who now pay him tribute an extraordinary range from which to elicit our own subject matter.

<sup>1</sup> Recall the classic and still relevant study by Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore (*The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* [Corte Madera, CA: Gingko, 2001]; repr. of *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* [New York: Random House, 1967]) and the work of McLuhan in general.

elephant, hippopotamus, walrus, boar, warthog, orca or narwhal whale, babirusa, dugong, or from the teeth of a sperm whale, seal, or elk—is noteworthy not only because of its early attestation but also because it is manifested across vastly different cultures and time periods, from the Upper Palaeolithic period to modern day.<sup>2</sup> Any timeline of artistic evolution can easily document our persistent, if not evenly attested, fascination with ivory carving.



Fig. 1. Venus of Hohle Fels (left) and Löwenmensch figure (right)

Consider, for example, the following selection: an early representation of the female form in the so-called Venus of Hohle Fels<sup>3</sup> and the 40,000-year-old Löwenmensch figure from Hohlenstein-Stadel (fig. 1);<sup>4</sup> the further use of mammoth ivory for spears and thousands of ivory beads to enhance the appearance and highlight the status of Upper Paleolithic human burials;<sup>5</sup> the more complex social organization and craft-specialization in the Chalcolithic period as witnessed through the anthropomorphic ivory statuettes of the Wadi Beersheba culture at

<sup>2</sup> In the ancient southern Levant, the elephant, hippopotamus, and boar provided the three principal sources of ivory (Liora Kolska Horwitz and Eitan Tchernov, “Cultural and Environmental Implications of Hippopotamus Bone Remains in Archaeological Contexts in the Levant,” *BASOR* 280 [1990]: 67). From pianos to billiard balls, buttons to bagpipes, modern obsession with ivory is reflected in desperate efforts to squelch the illicit but obviously prosperous ivory-poaching enterprise. In certain countries, the worldwide ivory-trade ban instituted in 1989 has proven only sporadically effective.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sarah M. Nelson, *Gender in Archaeology: Analyzing Power and Prestige* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Ernst Künzli, *Löwenmensch und Schlangendracen: Fabeltiere und Mischwesen in Vorzeit und Altertum* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner; Mainz: Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Colin Renfrew and Paul G. Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practices*, 3rd ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 389, 413.

Şafadi<sup>6</sup> and the perforated ivory sheaths from Nahal Mishmar's Cave of the Treasure;<sup>7</sup> the appearance of assorted objects drawn from both elephant and hippopotamus ivory in the mid-third millennium, Stratum II town at Bâb edh-Dhrâ';<sup>8</sup> decorative appliqué designs recovered from Pella in Transjordan and el-Jisr in Palestine and dating to the Middle Bronze Age;<sup>9</sup> the upsurge in "narrative" presentations on LBA plaques depicting military and feasting scenes and the magnificent ivory bedstead panels (*du lit de repos du palais*) from Late Bronze Age Megiddo and Ugarit;<sup>10</sup> the accelerated appearance of free-standing objects, sculpture in the round, furniture and furniture inlays or panels, and much more from Iron Age sites such as Samaria, Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Arslan Tash (see fig. 2);<sup>11</sup> ivory repertoires recovered beyond these areas, in locales such as Hasanlu in Iran to the east<sup>12</sup> and across the Aegean world to the west; and the list goes on. Little wonder that ivory is sometimes considered the "white gold" of the ancient Near East.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Evan Levy, *Journey to the Copper Age: Archaeology in the Holy Land* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Man, 2007), 53, fig. 4.11.

<sup>7</sup> Pessah Bar Adon, *The Cave of the Treasure: the Finds from the Caves in Nahal Mishmar* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> Nancy H. Broeder and H. Catherine W. Skinner, "Jewelry and Ornaments," in *Bâb edh-Dhrâ': Excavations at the Town Site (1975–1981), Part I. Text*, vol. 2 of *Reports of the Expedition to the Dead Sea Plain*, ed. Walter E. Rast and R. Thomas Schaub (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 567.

<sup>9</sup> H. Liebowitz, "Bone, Ivory, and Shell: Artifacts of the Bronze and Iron Ages," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, ed. Eric M. Meyers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1.342.

<sup>10</sup> C. F.-A. Schaeffer, "The Largest Single-Piece of Ivory Carving to Be Found in the Near East: Richly Carved Panels from the Bed of the King of Ugarit, 3300 Years Ago," *ILN* March 27 (1954): 488–90, pls. VIII, X; K. Kitchen, "Egyptianizing Features in the Nimrud Ivories, Synoptic Notes," in *Ivories from Room SW 37, Fort Shalmaneser: Commentary and Catalogue*, Ivories from Nimrud (1949–1963) IV.1 (Gertrude Bell Memorial Volume), ed. Georgina Herrmann (London: The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1986), 41; Izak Cornelius, *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE* (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 67, fig. 24a, cat. 3.11.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., J. W. Crowfoot and Grace M. Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste II: Early Ivories from Samaria* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1938); Gordon Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, OIP 52 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Richard David Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East*, Qedem 14 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1982); et passim.

<sup>12</sup> Oscar White Muscarella, *The Catalogue of Ivories from Hasanlu, Iran*, UPMM 40 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> See Eric Gubel, "Het witte goud van de Feniciërs: Olifanten en ivoorhandel in het oude Nabije Oosten," in *Zoom op Zoo: Antwerp Zoo focusing on Arts and Sciences*, ed. Cécile Kruythoof (Antwerp: Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, 1985).



Fig. 2. Selected Ivories from Samaria (courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund, London)

#### IVORY CARVING IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND AEGEAN WORLDS

Already during the second half of the fourth millennium BCE, the Egyptians were using ivory not only for ornamental, ceremonial symbols of status and conquest<sup>14</sup> but also as components of furniture and, particularly, for various cosmetic utensils.<sup>15</sup> Although the Aegean world had acquired ivory from areas in the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt by the end of the third millennium BCE,<sup>16</sup> when hippopotamus incisors and lower canines were used in the manufacturing of seals, there

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the beautifully carved symbolism in the Gebel el-Araq knife handle from the predynastic, Naqada II period (ca. 3450 BCE); see Barnett, *Ancient Ivories*.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Rehak and John G. Younger, "International Styles in Ivory Carving in the Bronze Age," in *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium: Proceedings of the Fiftieth Anniversary Symposium, Cincinnati, 18–20 April 1997*, ed. Eric H. Cline and Diane Harris-Cline, Aegaeum 18 (Belgium: Université de Liège; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 231.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Claude Poursat, *Catalogue des Ivoires mycéniens du Musée National d'Athènes* (Athens: École Française d'Athènes; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1977), and Poursat, *Les ivoires mycéniens: Essai sur la formation d'un art mycénien*, vols. 1–2 of Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 230 (Athens: Écoles Françaises d'Athènes, 1977); Olga Krzyszkowska, "Ivory in the Aegean Bronze Age: Elephant Tusk or Hippopotamus Ivory," *ABSA* 83 (1988): 209–34, and *Ivory and Related Materials: An Illustrated Guide*, Classical Handbook 3, Bulletin Supplement 59 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1990); Rehak and Younger, "International Styles," 232.



ivory trading and craftsmanship appear more limited in scope until the advent of the Neo-Palatial Period in the Middle Minoan IIIA Period, sometime around 1700 BCE. The increased use of ivory around that time quickly involved, as it had elsewhere, “cosmetic containers and related objects,” such as combs and mirrors. The handles on some mirrors depicted young girls clad in short skirts, sporting short coiffures, and holding either clutches of flowers or ducks. Following widespread destructions that led to the so-called Post-Palatial Period sometime in the fifteenth century BCE, when general contact between the Aegean and Mediterranean worlds increased, ivory-working industries spread to the mainland during the Mycenaean Age.<sup>17</sup>

The incipient, if limited, use of ivory in the Aegean world (at least on Crete) from Pre-Palatial times on<sup>18</sup> gradually became part of a two-way exchange system in which not only carved items<sup>19</sup> but also unworked raw material and probably even individual artists and ivory merchants moved both eastward and westward. Thus a pyxis lid from Saqqara likely represents an item imported to Egypt from the west, while a duck head from Asine (in hippo ivory) reflects the movement of luxury carvings to the Aegean from Egypt or the Mediterranean littoral.<sup>20</sup> A round ointment box recovered from a grave of late Dynasty 18 at Kahun shows western artistic influence but was probably crafted in Egypt.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the well-known ivory pyxis lid from Tomb 3 at Minet el-Beida<sup>22</sup> displays an amalgam of traits from both east and west but was likely produced in Ugarit, possibly by an artist or apprentice from the Aegean area. Thus the channels of exchange carried not only actual, pre-crafted objects but also patterns of design and ideas about technique.

The exchange of ideas, diffusion of unworked raw material, and trade in completed artistic products occurred alongside and abetted the migration of craftsmen.<sup>23</sup> The cargo of the Uluburun shipwreck, for example, provides

<sup>17</sup> Rehak and Younger, “International Styles,” 117–18, 238, 241–45.

<sup>18</sup> G. Daniel, “Ivory from Hippopotamus Tusk in the Aegean Bronze Age,” *Antiquity* 58 (1984): 123; Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean Bronze Age,” 209.

<sup>19</sup> Such items that moved both east and west often depict a hybrid “Levanto-Mycenaean style” (Rehak and Younger, “International Styles,” 249–52). See also Kantor’s earlier, seminal study of the “Mycenaean-influenced school of decorative art” that established itself on Cyprus and in Syria-Palestine during the Achaeon period (late fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BCE), survived the so-called dark ages, and “re-emerged as an important North-Syrian school of ivory carving in the early first millennium B.C.” (Helene J. Kantor, “Ivory Carving in the Mycenaean Period,” *Arch* 13 [1960]: 14–25).

<sup>20</sup> Helene J. Kantor, “The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium B.C.,” *AJA* 51 (1947), repr., *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium B.C.*, AIA Monographs 1 (Boston: Archaeological Institute of America, 1997), 85, pl. XXIV: A.

<sup>21</sup> Kantor, “Aegean and Orient,” 84, pl. XX: 2, D.

<sup>22</sup> Kantor, “Aegean and Orient,” 86–89, pl. XXII: J.

<sup>23</sup> For discussions of the chronological and geographical range for the transport of raw ivory, see Sophie Cluzan, “Cyprus: An International Nexus of Art and Trade,” in *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and*



dramatic witness to the exchange of multiple classes of goods—from raw materials to utilitarian pieces to luxury and exotic items—between Egypt, the Mediterranean littoral, Cyprus, Crete, and other Aegean outlets, possibly even north into the Black Sea/Cappadocia region if Pulak is correct about the destination of the ill-fated ship.<sup>24</sup> Judging from this vessel's cargo, the bulk of raw ivory shipments involved hippo vs. elephant ivory, a reality that may have taken hold already in the early second millennium BCE.<sup>25</sup> The nature of the cargo (e.g., *un-worked* tusks; copper and tin *ingots*) speaks to the spread of complex crafts and technologies (in addition to actual goods and commodities) to disparate areas from Egypt through the Levant and Anatolia to the Aegean world.

A similar exchange of motifs, designs, and marketable products also evolved across trade networks operating between Syria-Palestine and Mesopotamia. The many Egyptianizing features witnessed on the ivories from Samaria and, farther afield, Nimrud might well have been transmitted to those areas as part of a centuries-long influence from Levantine craftsmen who had actually worked in Egyptian centers such as Tanis, Bubastis, or Memphis.<sup>26</sup> This possibility prompted Winter<sup>27</sup> to ask “whether many of the motifs might not have entered the Phoenician/Canaanite repertoire in the later second millennium, thus allowing time for their drift from the originals by the first millennium.”

#### AVIAN/DUCK MOTIFS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Within the Mediterranean world of art, birds (including ducks) clearly held a significant place. Of the more than 450 avian taxa identified as having lived in ancient Egypt, for example, roughly 75 species have appeared in Egyptian art.<sup>28</sup> Fowling scenes along the marshy areas of the Nile occur as early as the Old

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*Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 311; and Cemal Pulak, “The Uluburun Shipwreck and Late Bronze Age Trade,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 328–29.

<sup>24</sup> Cemal Pulak, “The Uluburun Shipwreck,” in *Res Maritimae: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean from Prehistory to Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Second International Symposium “Cities of the Sea,” Nicosia, Cyprus, October 18–22, 1994*, ed. Stuart Swiny, Robert L. Hohlfelder, and Helena Wylde Swiny, CAARI 1, ASOR Arch Reports 4 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 255–56.

<sup>25</sup> Annie Caubet, “The International Style: A Point of View from the Levant and Syria,” in *Aegean and Orient*, ed. Cline and Harris-Cline, 105–6.

<sup>26</sup> Kitchen, “Egyptianizing Features,” 41.

<sup>27</sup> Irene J. Winter, review of *Ivories from Room 37 Fort Shalmaneser. Fasc. 1. Commentary and Catalogue. Fasc. 2. Plates*, by Georgina Herrmann, *JNES* 51 (1992): 140.

<sup>28</sup> Douglas J. Brewer, “Fauna, Wild,” in *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Kathryn A. Bard (London: Routledge, 1999), 308. More than twenty-five sites in Egypt have yielded animal mummies ranging from very large (elephant, cow/bull, or horse) and dangerous (crocodile, lion) to quite small (lizard, shrew, scarab beetle) species (cf. map in A. R. Williams, “Animals Everlasting,” *National Geographic Magazine* November [2009]: 41).

Kingdom.<sup>29</sup> Among mummified remains in Egypt appear at least 44 species of avian taxa, the vast majority of which are birds of prey from the genera *Milvus*, *Circus*, *Accipiter*, *Buteo*, *Aquila*, *Falco* (the most numerous, with at least eight different species represented), et cetera. The ibis claims a position as the most frequently mummified bird, owing not only to its ubiquitous presence in the Nile marshes but also to its symbolizing the god Thoth.<sup>30</sup> Only one species of goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*, or “Egyptian Goose”) appears to have merited the mummification process. Ducks (*Anas* genus), however, represent five of the ten species of birds attested among avifaunal remains, whether bones or actual mummified specimens, found in tombs as left-overs from funerary meals or sustenance to help guide the pharaoh to the next life.<sup>31</sup> In addition to various cuts of beef, geese, and pigeons, necropolis ducks were salted, dried in natron, wrapped in linen, and placed in tombs (especially in the royal Valley of the Kings) as “victual mummies,” that is, provisions for the deceased.<sup>32</sup>

While Egypt apparently did not provide a suitable home for swans,<sup>33</sup> ducks (also geese, *Anser*) frequently appear, either individually or paired with another animal, in other artistic and socio-cultural venues not only in Egypt but across the Levantine and Aegean worlds. Thus, the funerary relief on the 735 BCE Stele of Kuttamuwa, an official of Panamuwa II of Sam’al, shows a feasting scene that includes a backward-facing duck resting in an apparent votive bowl (fig. 3).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Peter Der Manuelian, “Two Fragments of Relief and a New Model for the Tomb of Mentuemhat at Thebes,” *JEA* 71 (1985): 113–14, fig. 6.

<sup>30</sup> See the comments by Salima Ikram in Williams, “Animals Everlasting,” 40; compare also Richard Jasnow, “Birds and Bird Imagery in the Book of Thoth,” in *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*, ed. Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, OIMP 35 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2012), 71–76.

<sup>31</sup> Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1986), 140. Geese from the *Anser* genus account for three more categories.

<sup>32</sup> Williams, “Animals Everlasting,” 38. For computed tomography (CT scanning) and biomedical study of victual mummies, see chs. 11–14 by multiple authors in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*.

<sup>33</sup> Arielle P. Kozloff and Betty M. Bryan, *Egypt’s Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1992), 337; but see Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Animal World of the Pharaohs* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 142.

<sup>34</sup> See J. David Schloen and Amir S. Fink, “New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Sam’al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 1–13; Eudora J. Struble and Virginia Rimmer Herrmann, “An Eternal Feast at Sam’al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli in Context,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 28, figs. 3–4, 8. Judging from Syro-Hittite mortuary reliefs as well as Hittite and Hurrian ritual texts, waterfowl (particularly ducks and geese) accrued symbolic significance not only through their association with the life-giving elements of water and air but also because they acted as substitutes for either the living or the dead (as the latter enter the liminal space between life and death) by providing a means through which to remove impurities from humans (compare Dominik Bonatz, *Das syro-hethitische Grabdenkmal: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung einer neuen Bildgattung in der Eisenzeit im nordsyrisch-südostanatolischen Raum* [Mainz: von Zabern, 2000], 94–95; Paul Allan Mirecki and Marvin W. Meyer, eds., *Magic and Ritual in the*



Fig. 3. Stele of Kuttamuwa of Sam'al (Zinjirli) (courtesy of J. David Schloen, University of Chicago)

A slightly earlier wooden stele from Egypt, discovered in Thebes and dating to the time of Osorkon I (ca. 924–889 BCE), shows a similar table and food offering.<sup>35</sup> Even ivory artisans in Nimrud may have carved the symbolic ritual duck with

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*Ancient World*, RGRW 141 [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 230, 237). (Liminal themes from Egyptian art appear in abundance throughout Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*). A painted relief block from Egypt depicts Akhenaton sacrificing a pintail duck, which he has seized by the wings and neck, to the god Aton, whose rays (in the form of hands) descend toward king and offering. One ray extends an *ankh*, representing life, toward the pharaoh's face (John P. O'Neill, ed., *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Egypt and the Ancient Near East* [New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987], 58). Among the many dream-omina listed in an Assyrian Dream-Book from the library of Ashurbanipal, a positive outcome results for the one who eats a duck: "he will have food in abundance" (A. Leo Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book," *TAPS* 46 [1956]: 272, 316). In Ptolemaic Egypt, ducks constituted a common artistic motif, and their embroidered images served as protective, life-giving symbols on knee/shoulder patches of children's tunics (Susan H. Auth, "Birds in Late Antique Egypt," in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 78).

<sup>35</sup> O'Neill, *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 77.

head turned back,<sup>36</sup> although complete, duck-shaped boxes apparently were not common there. Mesopotamian sculptors certainly integrated the trope of a duck with head looking back into their design for stone weights (see n. 39). The importance of the avian world to ancient Egypt is also reflected in its writing system: Gardiner's list of hieroglyphic signs incorporated "sixty-three standard hieroglyphs ... which deal with birds and parts of birds."<sup>37</sup> One late (fourth to third century BCE) Ptolemaic school text, Papyrus Saqqara 27, contains two alphabetical lists that employ birds (including, alas, the mosquito) as mnemonic aids for designating and learning letter names, a practice that seems to have survived in Coptic.<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 4. Duck-shaped Weights in Hematite from Ishchali<sup>(?)</sup> (courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago)

<sup>36</sup> See Herrmann, *Ivories from Room SW 37*, IV.1–2, 191, no. 948.

<sup>37</sup> Houlihan, *Birds of Ancient Egypt*, xii; Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer ("Birds in the Writing System," in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 167) now counts 65 bird-based signs.

<sup>38</sup> François Gaudard, "Birds in the Ancient Egyptian and Coptic Alphabets," in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 65–67. Building on this purported relationship between birds and individual hieroglyphs, Jasnow has even suggested bird netting as a metaphor for writing, a symbolic gathering of the alphabet. One passage in the Book of Thoth reads: "The one-who-loves-knowledge, he says: 'I desire to be a bird-netter of the (hieroglyphic) signs of *Isten* (= Thoth)'" (Jasnow, "Birds and Bird Imagery," 73).



Fig. 5. Duck-shaped Branding Irons from New Kingdom Egypt (courtesy of The Petrie Museum, University College London)

From the necropolis to artistic depictions of hunting scenes to tribute lists or processions, duck motifs appear on a variety of objects,<sup>39</sup> and their place and

<sup>39</sup> In addition to their symbolic roles within various forms of artwork, ducks appear on utilitarian objects ranging from stone, precision weights (sometimes inscribed; Jean M. Evans, “Duck-Shaped Weight with Cuneiform Inscription,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 371, no. 236) in the shape of sleeping (or trussed?) ducks from Mesopotamia (see fig. 4, a set of nine hematite weights from the early second millennium BCE site of Ishchali in the Diyala region; Oriental Institute, accession no. OIM A9684; William B. Hafford, “Mesopotamia Mensuration Balance Pan Weights from Nippur,” *JESHO* 48 [2005]: 345–87) to openwork, bronze branding irons made in the outline of a duck from New Kingdom Egypt (see fig. 5, University College London, The Petrie Museum, accession no. UC63717; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Tools and Weapons* [London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, Constable and Co., and Bernard Quaritch, 1917], 56–57, pl. 71: W47–49, with one brand including the sign *men*, which Petrie understood as an abbreviated form of Amen, the god to whom the branded cattle [or slaves] were dedicated). Mesopotamian duck weights often appear in tombs or temples, settings reflecting either concepts of justice and equality or royal power and gift-giving (cf. barrel- or duck-shaped weights from graves at Ur, the Ishchali temples mentioned above, and the royal Treasury at Persepolis; see Michael Roaf, “Weights on the Dilmun Standard,” *Iraq* 44 [1982]: 137–

activity within the various displays hold both pathos and significance. For example, ducks (and/or geese) succumb to clap-nets and hang in groups from shoulder-borne poles in the panels of the Dynasty 19 ivory box from Tell el-Far‘ah.<sup>40</sup> Ramesses II himself (along with Horus and Khnum) appears as an Egyptian fowler engaging in the same symbolic activity.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, an early-fourteenth-century painting in the tomb of Nakht depicts a net full of captured ducks,<sup>42</sup> while another detail from the tomb of Nabamun reveals ducks crammed into stacked baskets so small that the ducks’ heads and webbed feet stick out through the containers’ staves and weavers.<sup>43</sup> Tomb paintings of the swampy haunts along the Nile portray fleeing ducks whose necks are struck and broken in midflight by the furtive fowler’s accurate throw-stick, while various land-animal predators quickly move in among the sedge-like papyrus stems to prey upon eggs left in the nests.<sup>44</sup> (Contrast this scene with the imaginable din of a hippo hunt, as depicted in the tomb relief cited in n. 65 below; in the latter scene, only a couple grasshoppers and frogs have remained in the papyrus swampland to witness the action.)

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41; Nicholas Cahill, “The Treasury at Persepolis: Gift-Giving at the City of the Persians,” *AJA* 89 [1985]: 373–89; Harold D. Hill and Thorkild Jacobsen, *Old Babylonian Public Buildings in the Diyala Region*, OIP 98 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990]; Luca Peyronel, “Some Remarks on Mesopotamian Metrology during the Old Babylonian Period: The Evidence from Graves LG/23 and LG/45 at Ur,” *Iraq* 62 [2000]: 177–86; E. Ascalone and Luca Peyronel, “Two Weights from Temple N at Tell Markikh-Ebla, Syria: A Link between Metrology and Cultic Activities in the Second Millennium BC?,” *JCS* 53 [2001]: 1–12). Their chronological range extends at least from the UR III rule of Shulgi (*conventional* = 2094–2047 BCE; *low* = 2029–1982 BCE), son of Ur-Nammu, to that of Eriba-Marduk of Babylon (ca. 770/769–761 BCE), and throughout the ninth- and eighth-century reigns of the Assyrian kings Aššur-našir-pal II, Adad-nirari III, Aššur-dan III, and Tiglath-pileser III (ranging roughly from 883 to 727 BCE; see Joan Oates and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* [London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq, 2001], 46–47, 68, 86, 221). Interestingly, the duck weight from the time of Tiglath-pileser III bears the figure of an incised lion (Oates and Oates, *Nimrud*, 221, fig. 32), thereby presenting a somewhat curious juxtaposition of different animals. (For the duck and leopard or hippo, see below.) Long before the advent of this style of weight, stamp seals made of bone carved in the shape of ducks with heads turned back were used in the fourth millennium BCE at sites such as Hamoukar in northeastern Syria (McGuire Gibson et al., “First Season of Syrian-American Investigations at Hamoukar, Hasekeh Province,” *Iraq* 64 [2002]: 45–68: 53, 58, fig. 12).

<sup>40</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Beth-Pelet I (Tel Fara)* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt and Bernard Quaritch, 1930), 19, pl. LV; Barnett, *Ancient Ivories*, 21, fig. 10a–c.

<sup>41</sup> Jasnow, “Birds and Bird Imagery,” 74, fig. 7.3.

<sup>42</sup> Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, “From Kitchen to Temple: The Practical Role of Birds in Ancient Egypt,” in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 23, fig. 1.1.

<sup>43</sup> John Wyatt, “Bird Identification from Art, Artifacts, and Hieroglyphs: An Ornithologist’s Viewpoint,” in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 83, fig. 9.1; Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, “Farmers Deliver their Quota of Geese,” in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 155, cat. no. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Houlihan, *Animal World*, pl. XXIV.





Fig. 6. Ivory Plaque from the Late Bronze Age Treasury at Megiddo (courtesy of Z. Radovan, Jerusalem)

On the well-known ivory plaque from the LBA Treasury at Megiddo (fig. 6),<sup>45</sup> however, ducks and other fowl freely graze or flutter about, but only around the enthroned prince/king and tribute area, not along the procession in general. Elsewhere, their mention within lists of desirable items bespeaks their practical or symbolic worth. The 857 BCE tribute list of Shalmaneser III from Fort Shalmaneser records that, while residing in the city of Dabigu, the Assyrian king received from Unqi, Gurgum, Sam'al, and Agūsi gifts including silver, gold, tin, bronze, iron, red-purple wool, elephant ivory, garments with multicolored trim, linen garments, cattle, sheep, wine, and ducks.<sup>46</sup> Ducks appear on cosmetic spoons, ivory pins, royal banquet boxes (see Tell el-Far'ah above), and more. One example even serves as a replacement for the scarab on a sistrum from Gezer. A hieroglyph in the form of a duck represented the word “son” in one of Pharaoh’s principal titles, “Son of Re,” and a ring from Amenhotep III, with a bezel bearing an impressed duck and lotus, may have signified the “son” rising from the lotus.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See David Ussishkin, “The Art of Ivory Carving in Canaan,” *Qad* 2 (1969): 4.

<sup>46</sup> A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC, II (858–745 BC)*, RIMA 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 7–11. Assyrian rulers had claimed for some time to receive ducks as tribute by the hundreds or even thousands (cf. Tukulti Ninip [Ninurta] II in J.-V. Scheil, *Annales de Tukulti Ninip II, Roi d'Assyrie, 889–884*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 178 [Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1909]: 18, obv. 78; 22, rev. 19, 28; Aššur-našir-pal II in D. J. Wiseman, “A New Stele of Aššur-našir-pal II,” *Iraq* 14 [1952]: 31, 35, Col. iii, l. 111). The term *iššūrāti rabūti*, (MUŠEN.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ), lit. “large birds,” is understood as “ducks” in *CAD* 7, s.v. “*iššūru rabū*,” and the text from Aššur-našir-pal distinguishes it from the adjacent reference to *ūsū(mēš)*, “geese” (for which, elsewhere, compare the frequent use of *kurkū* or *paspasu*). Based on his knowledge of modern-day delicacies in the Mosul area, Wiseman (“A New Stele,” 38) suggested that this reference might refer to bustards.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Arielle P. Kozloff, “Ring: Duck and Lotus,” in *Egypt's Dazzling Sun*, ed. Arielle P. Kozloff and Betty M. Bryan, 450, no. 132, and Kozloff, “Pharaoh Was a Good Egg, But Whose Egg Was He?,” in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 60. Cf. also the classic theme of the hero drawn from a river. Otto Rank, *Der Mythos von der Geburt des Helden: Versuch einer Psychologischen*

When ducks appear either as mundane or symbolic representations in ancient art, they frequently have their heads turned back over their anterior wings and bodies, as if sleeping (cf. the Amenhotep ring just mentioned). A crystal bowl in the shape of a duck with backward-turned head was recovered from Grave Omikron [O] in Grave Circle B at Mycenae.<sup>48</sup> The tomb of the scribe Nefer-khēwet, “who functioned as one of the chief secretaries of Ḥat-shepsūt while she was as yet no more than crown princess...” (thus early in the fifteenth century BCE, in Dynasty 18), yielded another duck-depicting artifact: a small bronze knife apparently used by the scribes for trimming bushes and cutting sheets of papyrus. Nefer-khēwet’s knife, which he bequeathed to his son, displays a curved handle in the shape of a duck’s head, which faces back over the knife’s blade.<sup>49</sup> Details of gold inlays highlight the duck’s head and throat. Similarly, a wall painting from the Theban Tomb of Kenamun, dating to the succeeding reign of Amenhotep II, features a decorative duck bowl with backward-facing adult and forward-looking duckling, both with bills agape and tongues projecting as they communicate with each other.<sup>50</sup>

Within these assorted contexts, ducks often find themselves paired with other animals in scenes both realistic and symbolic in nature. For example, a folding stool (lacking its leather-covered seat) from ca. 1400 BCE (Dynasty 18) displays eight graceful duck heads inlaid with ebony and ivory not only on the base of the four descending legs but also at each end of the two bottom cross bars; the four ducks on the crossbars have their heads turned back.<sup>51</sup> One of Tutankhamen’s well-known “folding” stools displays a seat,<sup>52</sup> with an attached tail, made of ebony wood inlaid with ivory and supported by four crossed legs ending in gracefully carved duck (or goose?) heads whose open bills again grip two crossbars, now gold-tipped (fig. 7). From an art-historical point of view, interpretations of this

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*Mythendeutung* (Vienna: Deuticke, 1909; repr., *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Exploration of Myth* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004]).

<sup>48</sup> Athanasios A. Diamandopoulos, “Organic and Inorganic Cosmetics in the Preclassical Eastern Mediterranean,” *IntJ Dermatol.* 35 (1996): 754–55, fig. 5.

<sup>49</sup> William C. Hayes, “The Tomb of Nefer-khēwet and His Family,” *BMAA* 30 (1935): 33–34, fig. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Suzy Hakimian, “Duck-Shaped Vessel,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 335, fig. 107.

<sup>51</sup> See Nora E. Scott, “Our Egyptian Furniture,” *BMAA* New Series 24 (1965): 134, 138, fig. 19, and Scott, “The Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians,” *BMAA* New Series 31 (1973): 143, fig. 17; Rozann Bailleul-LeSuer, “Fragments of a Stool with Duck Heads,” in Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 163, fig. C15, cat. no. 17.

<sup>52</sup> Unlike other seats made from leather, this rigid seat, constructed from curved slats of wood, actually prevents the stool from folding. The design, therefore, places this item among the “imitation folding stools” (see Marianne Eaton-Krauss, *The Throne, Chairs, Stools, and Footstools from the Tomb of Tutankhamun*, Griffith Institute Publications [Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2008], 116–19, 210 pls. LI–LIII). For further details of the stool’s construction, its placement in the antechamber, and other, similar furnishings, see figs. 13, 26–27, and pls. I, XXIII–XXV, XXIX, and XLVII–L.



stool vary. While some analysts understand the inlaid seat to represent the night sky and Hathor as a celestial cow, and the avian heads to depict geese (not ducks) and, by extension, the goddess Nut,<sup>53</sup> others have seen in this design the pairing of a spotted leopard and ducks.<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, both the spotting on the body and the tail depiction on Tutankhamen's stool seem congruent with one of the small-to-medium-sized animals (vs. a cow) borne by Nubians as gifts in a scene from the Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes.<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 7. Folding Stool, from the Tomb of Tutankhamun, ebony inlaid with ivory; New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty (courtesy of the Egyptian National Museum, Cairo, Egypt; photograph © Boltin Picture Library/Bridgeman Images, XBP391008)

<sup>53</sup> Kozloff and Bryan, *Egypt's Dazzling Sun*, 334–38. Reflecting ritual activity and the bounty of Egypt, painted limestone blocks from a temple dating to the reign of Amenhotep III portray four figures (who represent four nomes, or provinces) bearing trays of offerings and leading forth sacrificial animals. Ducks and/or geese appear in all four scenes, wherein they hang in clutches from the arms of a god or the horns of an animal or ride on the backs of larger animals (including a cow that also has a clutch of ducks/geese(?) dangling from its neck [10–11, pl. 2]).

<sup>54</sup> E.g., Bailleul-LeSuer, “Fragments of a Stool,” 163–64; see the discussion in Eaton-Krauss, *Throne, Chairs, Stools*, 87–88, 118–19.

<sup>55</sup> Krzyszkowska, *Ivory and Related Materials*, frontispiece.

Whether or not the latter scenario (i.e., a pairing of ducks and leopards) is true, the association of those two animals may seem rather odd. But the connection calls to mind a ceremonial bronze dagger with gold handle and hilt recovered from Grave 5 in Grave Circle A at Mycenae (fig. 8).<sup>56</sup> The blade's designer carved into its side a serpentine river and swimming fish passing through a lotus thicket. A charging leopard has flushed several ducks (and/or geese) from the cove and has actually succeeded in striking the neck of one duck with the claws of its hind paws. The neck of the fleeing duck is lacerated and bleeding. The front paws and muzzle of the leopard reach out for yet another fowl that is struggling to escape, its out-stretched neck also appearing to bleed near the base. A similar scene plays out farther to the right, as the blade narrows toward the tip.<sup>57</sup>



Fig. 8. Ceremonial Dagger from Royal Cemetery, Grave Circle A, at Mycenae (courtesy Michael Fuller, St. Louis)

The rapid and violent action of capture or sudden destruction portrayed by means of a flying leap or gallop constitutes a well-known Aegean motif—a kind of Mediterranean “koiné”<sup>58</sup> also used, though perhaps more sparingly, in Egyptian animal art.<sup>59</sup> Smith published a similar stool with backrest and considered it a

<sup>56</sup> See Spyridon Marinatos, *Crete and Mycenae* (New York: Harry M. Abrams, Inc., 1960); repr., *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas* (München: Hirmer, 1973), 100, pls. XXXV, XXXVII.

<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, some early examiners of the stool described above remarked that imitation paws or claws had originally attached to the seat's four corners. The veracity of such comments, and whether the purported elements might have represented a predatory carnivore or hoofed mammal, remains difficult to determine (see Eaton-Krauss, *Throne, Chairs, Footstools*, 117).

<sup>58</sup> Caubet, “The International Style,” 110.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, reliefs from the time of Thutmose III in the tombs of Puiyre and Rekhmire (Kantor, “Aegean and Orient,” pls. XIII: B; XV: F and XVI: E; XVIII: I, respectively).

hybrid design imported to Egypt.<sup>60</sup> In any case, while the bucolic world along the Nile often stood as “an emblem of rebirth,”<sup>61</sup> it sometimes symbolized the opposite—a place of unleashed power, violence, and death. And artistic appeal to fateful but symbolic encounters along such a waterway between leopard and duck apparently enjoyed a long run over a wide geographical span. Building on the leopard–duck–liquid constellation, one much later artist fashioned an early Islamic Iranian<sup>62</sup> ewer with a circular mouth, a rim decorated with ducks’ heads, and a handle in the form of a leopard stretching to reach the ducks. This echo of an old theme dates to the late seventh or early eighth century CE.<sup>63</sup>

Not only the intrinsic themes but also the initial collection of raw material from which to fashion ivory-based designs similar to the ones mentioned here brought the artist or his/her associates to places where ducks were caught or hunted. In addition to hosting the occasional prowling leopard, these spaces provided regular encounters with a much larger and more dangerous animal whose life became strangely intertwined with that of the hapless duck—namely, the hippopotamus. The pathos of one Nilotic hunting scene<sup>64</sup> proves poignant: Egyptians standing aboard a flat skiff or sledge with up-rolled bow have roped and begun to spear a mother hippo, whose calf follows in the water close behind. Noise created by the violent capture and the hippo’s struggle to live have flushed a number of birds (including, I believe, various species of ducks) from the surrounding thicket. Ironically, perhaps, following such a successful hunt, Egyptian artisans

<sup>60</sup> William Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture in Ancient Egypt* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1958; Baltimore: Penguin, 1965), 212, pl. 148A.

<sup>61</sup> G. Pierrat-Bonnefois, “Duck-Shaped Container with Female Swimmer,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 333.

<sup>62</sup> Sasanian period; 226–651 CE.

<sup>63</sup> Prudence Harper et al., “Origin and Influence: Cultural Contacts; Egypt, the Ancient Near East, and the Classical World,” *BMAA* 29 (1971): 325. The action of a leaping leopard powerfully portrays the dominant command of empire. Paintings completed in Minoan fresco technique and with an apparently strong Knossian influence also sometimes depict leopards engaging in this type of hunting activity. These works date either from late Hyksos period or from early Dynasty 18 and reflect a growing interest in things exotic (Rehak and Younger, “International Styles,” in Cline and Harris-Cline, *Aegean and Orient*, 140; compare also the somewhat more stylized Late Cycladic I wall painting in West House, Room 5, from Akrotiri, Thera, in Sarah P. Morris, “Bridges to Babylon: Homer, Anatolia, and the Levant,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 436–37, fig. 138; see also Joan Aruz, “The Art of Exchange,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 387, and, from Palace F at Tell el-Dab’a, 389, fig. 120). A leaping leopard served as the handle on an alabaster cosmetic spoon from the palace of Amenhotep III (Dorthea Arnold, “An Egyptian Bestiary,” *BMAA* New Series 52 [1995]: 19, no. 15; the missing spoon or bowl precludes our knowing whether the artifact somehow incorporated a duck motif). Exemplifying yet another LBA hunting subject, again perhaps from the tomb of Amenhotep III, a lunging ivory dog—complete with lever to operate its lower jaw with inset fangs—apparently represented Pharaoh’s own hunting companion (Arielle P. Kozloff, “Running Dog,” in Kozloff and Bryan, *Egypt’s Dazzling Sun*, 427; Arnold, “Egyptian Bestiary,” 57, no. 75; Catharine H. Roehrig, “Mechanical Dog,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 417–18, no. 271).

<sup>64</sup> For a drawing, see Krzyszkowska, *Ivory and Related Materials*, 21.

sometimes would transform the ivory harvested from the hippo's lower canines and incisors into, among other prized items, duck-shaped cosmetic boxes.<sup>65</sup>

#### DUCK-SHAPED BOXES: TIME, PLACE, AND FORM

Anhydrite duck forms—representing “the only stone flasks that depict prepared food”<sup>66</sup>—may have been in vogue already by Middle Kingdom Egypt, and ivory-carved, duck-shaped cosmetic boxes also appear originally to have originated as an Egyptian concept. The latter, however, seem limited to the fourteenth through twelfth centuries BCE,<sup>67</sup> with a floruit in the thirteenth century. Dates become less secure for proposed earlier examples, such as those from LBA I Megiddo, Tombs 24 and 855.<sup>68</sup> Lilyquist accepts an MB II date for the duck from Tomb 24, since the overall assemblage included Hyksos scarabs and Tell el-Yehudiyeh pottery.<sup>69</sup> Liebowitz, on the other hand, properly observed that Tomb 24 also included LB II pottery<sup>70</sup> and would therefore favor the LB II (Dynasty 18) as the initial period for duck-shaped cosmetic containers.<sup>71</sup>

Regardless of the *terminus post quem* for this general motif, one conclusion seems certain: duck-shaped vessels with or without backward-turned heads had stylistic appeal that eventually gained intercultural acceptance throughout most of the eastern Mediterranean (e.g., fig. 9, from Kamid el-Loz). Note again the above-mentioned cosmetic rock-crystal container based on this theme that appeared in the excavations at Mycenae and that dates to around 1600 BCE. The Ugarit/Minet el-Beida exemplars can reasonably date to sometime between the two destructions of the palace there, that is, between roughly 1370/1350 and 1180 BCE, respectively.<sup>72</sup> These two destructions provide an important chronological range for the coastal Syrian objects. Caubet dated the boxes from Ras Shamra and Kition<sup>73</sup> to

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<sup>65</sup> Compare a similar scene from the Saqqara mastaba of Mereruka (Dynasty 6), in which three baying hippos bare huge lower canines, artistically emphasized through their exaggerated curvature (Houlihan, *Animal World*, 56, pl. IX).

<sup>66</sup> Biri Fay, “Egyptian Duck Flasks of Blue Anhydrite,” *MMJ* 33 (1998): 28.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. David ben-Shlomo and Trude Dothan, “Ivories from Philistia: Filling the Iron Age I Gap,” *IEJ* 56 (2006): 29.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. C. Lilyquist, “The Use of Ivories as Interpreters of Political History,” *BASOR* 310 (1998): 30, versus the caution of A. Mazar, *Excavations at Tel Qasile, Part Two. The Philistine Sanctuary: Various Finds, the Pottery, Conclusions, Appendixes*, Qedem 20 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1985).

<sup>69</sup> Lilyquist, “Use of Ivories,” 30, n. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Liebowitz, “Bone, Ivory, and Shell,” 14.

<sup>71</sup> Liebowitz also mentioned a head from the Shechem area that supposedly belongs somewhere in the seventeenth to fourteenth centuries BCE.

<sup>72</sup> See Caubet's remarks in Lilyquist, “Use of Ivories,” 27.

<sup>73</sup> Caubet appears also to date the samples from Megiddo, Lachish, and Kamid el-Loz to this same time.

the thirteenth and twelfth centuries and viewed them all as “a homogeneous Syro-Palestinian group.”<sup>74</sup> On the lower end of the chronological spectrum, duck boxes appear along the southern coast of Canaan at Philistine sites such as Tell Qasile, Stratum XI<sup>75</sup> and Ekron Stratum VIA. One highly stylized form comes from LB II Ashkelon but, contra ben-Shlomo and Dothan,<sup>76</sup> bears little similarity to the Ekron heads. Currently, the specimen from Qasile offers the “best-preserved evidence for the continuation of such ivory boxes into the Iron Age I.”<sup>77</sup>

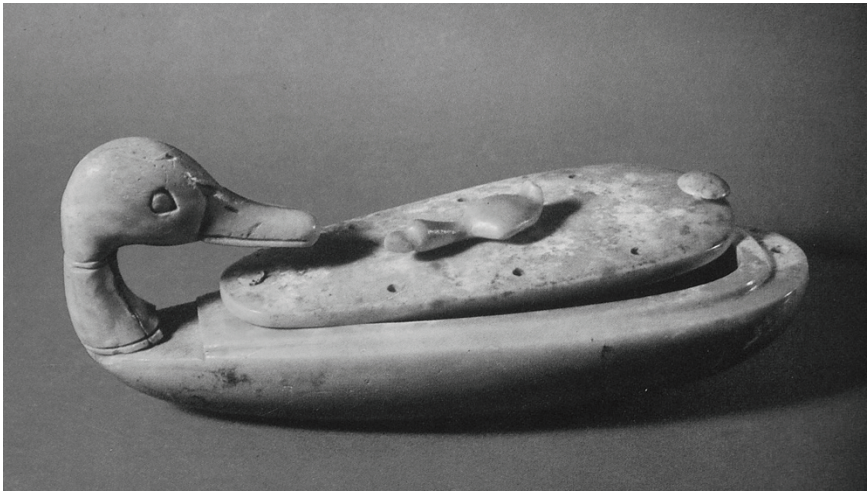


Fig. 9. Duck-shaped Ivory Box from Kamid el-Loz

Geographically, duck boxes are attested in Egypt, around the Levantine coast, and westward through Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, and mainland Greece, including the Peloponnese peninsula.<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, the design does not seem to have reached the Mesopotamian heartland. In fact, examples barely made it inside the great western bend of the Euphrates River. From Tell Brak (ancient Nagar), a fragmentary (or perhaps unfinished) duck box of hippopotamus ivory appeared among the debris from the destruction of the Mitanni palace in the early thirteenth

<sup>74</sup> Personal communication in Lilyquist, “Use of Ivories,” 27.

<sup>75</sup> Mazar, *Qasile, Part Two*, 10.

<sup>76</sup> Ben-Shlomo and Dothan, “Ivories from Philistia,” 19.

<sup>77</sup> Mazar, *Qasile, Part Two*, 11; Amihai Mazar, *Excavations at Tel Beth-Shean, 1989–1996, Volume III: The Thirteenth–Eleventh Century BCE Strata in Areas N and S* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), 550, 757.

<sup>78</sup> Jacqueline Gachet-Bizollon, *Les Ivoires d'Ougarit et l'art des ivoiriers du Levant au Bronze Récent*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 16 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2007), 51, tab. 4.



century BCE.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the front half of a left wing (with a series of scaled, dotted circles of double lines near a front mortise, three parallel slanting lines, and bands of wavy lines down the widest part of the wing) emerged at Tell Meskéné-Emar, again, dated to the thirteenth to twelfth centuries BCE.<sup>80</sup> Also from just beyond the Mediterranean littoral, a partially preserved head (upper and lower bill, nostrils, and round eyes) came from LB II levels in the sanctuary cella of Deir ‘Alla.<sup>81</sup>

These boxes typically appear as composite artifacts, with the head, tail, wings, body, and neck (when made of individual rings or bands) fashioned as separate elements subsequently joined through a mortise-and-tenon technique. This fact allowed (or, alas, promoted) the separation of parts over the course of even careful but long-term use, to say nothing of the devastating effects a violent destruction event might have leveled on the survivability of such objects. Beyond the consequences of time and historical events in antiquity, the steady passing of the ages from then to the modern day also militates against the intact preservation of such multi-piece items. Consequently, excavations sometimes recover only disarticulated parts of these vessels, as we did at Tel Zayit in 2005.

However one ultimately interprets the nuanced form and function of duck-shaped boxes recovered from sites around the eastern half of the Mediterranean, their detailed carving is impressive. Portrayals of neck rings often appear as incised lines or decorated bands or with stacked disks made of different materials (e.g., from Egypt, ebony<sup>82</sup> and ivory). The duck’s hollowed-out body held the commodity of choice. Either two wings (usually incised with feathers; fig. 10a) or one oval lid (sometimes decorated with incised floral and/or faunal scenes, inlaid geometric patterns, or perforated designs—perhaps as fumigation holes allowing the contents to “breathe”) covered the top of the body.

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<sup>79</sup> Jean M. Evans, “The Mittani State,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 195; David Oates, “Excavations at Tell Brak 1985–86,” *Iraq* 49 (1987): 187–88, pl. 42a–b.

<sup>80</sup> Dominique Beyer, *Meskene-Emar: Dix ans de travaux, 1972–1982* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1982), 123, fig. 1; Annie Caubet and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires de l’Orient ancien aux Temps modernes*, Département des Antiquités 67 (Paris: Musée de Louvre, 2004), 61, no. 62.

<sup>81</sup> H. J. Franken, “A Bronze Age Shrine and Unknown Script,” *ILN* 17 (1965): 35, fig. 6.

<sup>82</sup> Judging from unworked logs found among the cargo of the Uluburun shipwreck (Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Swiny et al., *Res Maritimae*, 242), Egyptian references to ebony refer to the so-called “blackwood” (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) native to tropical Africa.



Fig. 10a. Duck-shaped Box with Swimming Female, from Egypt (Musée du Louvre, Paris; Département des Antiquités Égyptiennes; E218; photograph courtesy of ©RMN-Grad Palais/Art Resource, NY)

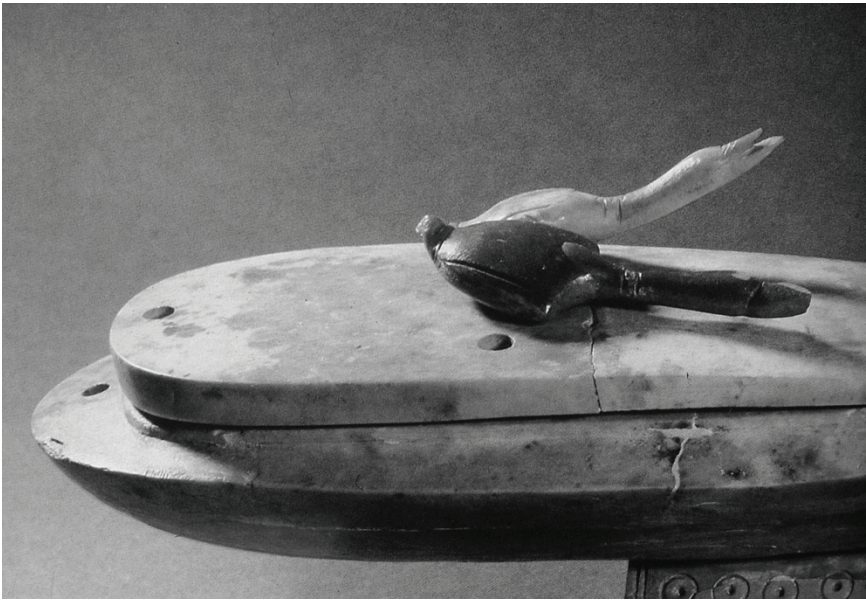


Fig. 10b. Ducklings on Back of Duck-shaped Cosmetic<sup>(?)</sup> Box, from Kamid el-Loz (courtesy Philippe Maillard/akg-images, London; AKG643005)

In both cases, lids were generally attached at the front by means of mushroom-shaped pegs that allowed each wing or single oval to swivel sideways and reveal the contents of the box. Oval lids sometimes had one, two, or, very rarely, three ivory ducklings sitting atop them (fig. 10b) and craning their necks toward the adult duck, who has dramatically turned its head fully backward to face the

little ones.<sup>83</sup> The oval cover on a specimen from Kamid el-Loz supports one ivory and one jade duckling (see fig. 10b above).<sup>84</sup> It seems possible that the ducklings also served as small handles to facilitate opening the lids.

Especially in Egypt, both lids and bodies were sometimes made of wood vs. ivory (compare figs. 9–10a, b). When recovered, attached tails tended to flair out from the body and display incised feathers arranged in herringbone patterns. The underside of the body either rested on one of several styles of bases or simply showed the duck's feet, which were usually pulled back flat against the body or, as in two specimens from the Uluburun shipwreck, pulled forward so as to lie flat and rest on a thin, rectangular ivory base.<sup>85</sup>

In some cases where the duck's feet are present, another interesting component occasionally attended these boxes: an attached, tandem female swimmer. Photographs of at least one stylized duck box from Egypt reveal that the hands of the female are holding onto the feet of the duck, which are folded forward under its body.<sup>86</sup> This motif apparently enjoyed a long life in Egypt, as witnessed in the beautiful example found in an early fourteenth-century tomb from the reign of Amenhotep III<sup>87</sup> and in a Nilotic scene on a silver plate from Tanis dated to Psusennes I (ca. 1039–991 BCE).<sup>88</sup>

Although the swimming-female-plus-duck combination apparently did not make its way to Mesopotamia, a region that has yielded an otherwise large catalogue of locally made ivory objects carved with Egyptian themes, the single element of swimming females certainly did. One cosmetic spoon from Nimrud has three swimming females attached to it.<sup>89</sup> Barnett recognized this theme as commonly *Egyptian*<sup>90</sup> and understood the nude female not as swimming to catch

<sup>83</sup> E.g., Jacqueline Gachet, "Objets en os et en ivoire," in *Le Centre de la Ville, 38<sup>e</sup>–44<sup>e</sup> Campagnes (1978–1984)*, ed. Marguerite Yon, Ras Shamra-Ugarit III (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1987), 266–72, pls. 1–7, and A. Caubet and F. Poplin, "Les objets de matière dure animale: Étude du matériau," in Yon, *Le Centre de la Ville*, 280, fig. 8, from Kamid el-Loz.

<sup>84</sup> See Rolf Hachmann, ed., *Frühe Phöniker im Libanon: 20 Jahre deutsche Ausgrabungen in Kāmid el-Lōz* (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1983), 96, 119, 121: Abb. 46; cf. also 6–7, 83: kat. no. 8; 122:11–12; and 163: no. 106.

<sup>85</sup> Pulak, "Uluburun Shipwreck," in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 331, nos. 199a–b.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Madeleine Frédéricq, "The Ointment Spoons in the Egyptian Section of the British Museum," *JEA* 13 (1927): pl. VI: 38186.

<sup>87</sup> Pierrat-Bonnefois, "Duck-Shaped Container," 333, no. 200.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Smith, *Art and Architecture*, 228–29, pl. 168: B; ben-Shlomo and Dothan, "Ivories from Philistia," 9. Note also the duck/bird trapping scene, set in the marshes of Egypt, on a silver jug with gold handle from Bubastis, Dynasty 19, in Smith, *Art and Architecture*, pl. 167: A.

<sup>89</sup> Richard David Barnett, "Early Greek and Oriental Ivories," *JHS* 68 (1948): 5, fig. 2.

<sup>90</sup> See also Richard David Barnett, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories, With Other Examples of Ancient Near Eastern Ivories in the British Museum*, supplement by Leri Glynnne Davies, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1975), 92, 198, pls. L: S89; S91a–b; S92a–b; LI: S93; LII: S90a–d.



a duck by its feet (as on Egyptian objects) but as “prostrating herself to offer a bowl [presumably containing a cultic gift] in her arms.”<sup>91</sup> The elongated female form associated with some Egyptian duck boxes has also sometimes prompted their classification as cosmetic spoons, with the female’s outstretched body meant to serve as the handle. But the form’s very fragile nature casts doubt on this interpretation—at least on the degree of its utility. That some such vessels bear inscriptions “with wishes for the new year or good fortune”<sup>92</sup> suggests that they represent gifts exchanged privately among individuals. Moreover, that the constituent parts of some boxes merge artistic themes from Egypt (swimming female) with others from Phoenicia (duck’s head and beak) and still others from the Uluburun shipwreck (wings) allows for the interesting possibility that different artisans specialized in the carving of specific elements, which at some point were brought together and assembled as the finished product.<sup>93</sup> Still, such hybrid motifs also appear on non-composite monolithic ivory carvings (plaques, furniture panels, etc.) from places such as Samaria and Nimrud, products that were more likely manufactured in a single location.

Some duck forms that served as cosmetic, medicinal, or perfume containers appear as though they have been plucked and prepared for sacrifice, as seen in two ivory mallards,<sup>94</sup> two trussed ducks in anhydrite from Middle Kingdom Egypt,<sup>95</sup> and possibly a wooden specimen lacking incised artwork to represent feathers.<sup>96</sup> These samples represent a larger corpus of similar forms.<sup>97</sup>

Apart from one’s conclusions concerning specific issues relating to the repertoire of ivory boxes, one fact seems certain: their beauty and meaning, as well as their extraordinarily innovative, skillful construction, transcend the perceived triviality that some early interpreters assigned to them. Although Hayes acknowledged that “the Egyptian artist reached his peak when turning out small and preferably frivolous objects,” he classified ducks dressed for the table or for sacrifice as “knickknacks,” a “minor art” form. Reflecting the tone and tenor of his time, Hayes understood these items as “frivolous objects, destined for no more serious end than to delight and amuse some pretty girl in the pharaoh’s harem ...

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<sup>91</sup> A similar design appears on an object from the Acropolis at Athens (Barnett, “Early Greek,” 5, fig. 3).

<sup>92</sup> Pierrat-Bonnefois, “Duck-Shaped Container,” 333.

<sup>93</sup> See the comments by Pierrat-Bonnefois, “Duck-Shaped Container,” 334.

<sup>94</sup> Arnold, “Egyptian Bestiary,” 28, no. 26; Fay, “Egyptian Duck Flasks,” 25, fig. 8.

<sup>95</sup> Arnold, “Egyptian Bestiary,” 28, no. 27.

<sup>96</sup> Rosemarie Drenkhahn, *Elfenbein im Alten Ägypten: Leihgaben aus dem Petrie-Museum London*, Sonderausstellung des Kestner-Museums Hannover vom 15. Januar bis 31. Mai 1987 (Hannover: Kestner Museum, 1987), 76, pl. 11.

<sup>97</sup> See Fay, “Egyptian Duck Flasks,” 25, fig. 8; 34–44, figs. 31–45.

with no historical associations and happily innocent of any ‘ritual significance.’”<sup>98</sup> Nowadays, scholars usually interpret the forms alluded to by Hayes more seriously as highly symbolic political gifts among elites<sup>99</sup> or items “prepared to be offered to a deity.”<sup>100</sup> Likewise, some art historians now describe the cosmetic jars and boxes, whether or not they seem to carry religious or cultic symbolism or function, as “among the most highly prized products of the Egyptian craftsman.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> William C. Hayes, “Minor Art of the Egyptian New Kingdom: A Perfume Jar and Pair of Cosmetic Boxes,” *BMAA* 35 (1940): 81; cf. Stephen B. Luce, “Archaeological News and Discussions,” *AJA* 46 (1942): 265.

<sup>99</sup> While it remains somewhat unclear whether rulers included ivory duck boxes in their gift-exchange repertoires, one letter among the Tell el-Amarna correspondence may hint that they sometimes did so. An inventory of gifts sent from Amenhotep IV to Burna-Buriyaš, King of Karaduniyaš, as part of the dowry for a Babylonian princess includes numerous animal-shaped boxes made of “stained ivory” and bearing various oils and aromatics (EA 14.iv.15; William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992], 34; at least 11 boxes made of ivory and ebony; 388 containers of oil made of stained ivory; plus several dozen cosmetic items of stained ivory, such as combs, toggle pins, and headrests). In another Amarna letter, the governor of Alašiya records sending numerous pieces of ivory, apparently as raw material, to his counterpart in Egypt as well as to others (Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 113). Undoubtedly related to these sorts of presents, an ivory box displaying a chariot game-hunting scene appeared in Tomb 58 at Enkomi (J. Lesley Fitton, “Game Box with Chariot Hunt,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 412, no. 265). For examples of other royal gifts often including ivory objects, see Rehak and Younger, “International Styles,” in Cline and Harris-Cline, *Aegean and Orient*, 243–44.

<sup>100</sup> Arnold, “Egyptian Bestiary,” 28.

<sup>101</sup> Scott, “Daily Life,” 155, fig. 29. Besides their typical manufacture from hippo ivory, some (probably only a few) of the duck-shaped luxury boxes were fashioned from gold. One relatively early example (circa fifteenth to fourteenth century), from a royal tomb at Qatna, seems to corroborate the concept of gift reciprocity (see fig. 11 above). Two solid gold duck heads (if not heads of hissing geese), separated by a gold baton topped by the head of Hathor, display incredible realism in their depiction of plumage and the anatomical details of their slightly open beaks, nostrils, tongues, and once in-laid eyes. The beauty and sophistication of their form, the technicalities of production (fifteen individual pieces soldered together, with the two heads made through the lost-wax method), and the double-duck design that would have accommodated two separate oil, perfume, or cosmetic bowls (duck bodies), strongly suggest a purpose and function at the royal or elite level of society. Even the tenons themselves were made of solid gold. Peter Pfälzner (“The Royal Palace at Qatna: Power and Prestige in the Late Bronze Age,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 222) believes that “the workshop where this masterpiece was produced must therefore have been organized by a division of labor involving various specialists.”

Despite the use of gold and the presence of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, Pfälzner speculates that the principal production center for duck-shaped cosmetic boxes lay somewhere “in western Syria and the Levantine coast.” At the Uluburun shipwreck site, the two duck-shaped boxes (recovered in 1992) as well as the wing, head, neck, and feet (found in 1993) rested in a spill of cargo containing cosmetic utensils (ivory tube and associated kohl-stick; M.-H. Gates, “Archaeology in Turkey,” *AJA* 99 [1995]: 223, fig. 10; cf. Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Swiny et al., *Res Maritimae*, 244–45) that, once again, originated somewhere either in Syria-Palestine or Cyprus (see Rehak and Younger, “International Styles,” in Cline and Harris-Cline, *Aegean and Orient*, 245). The discussion by Kahryn

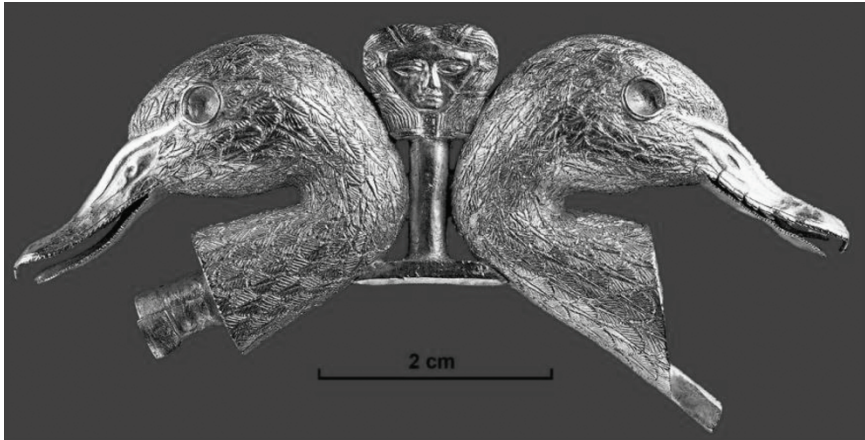


Fig. 11. Golden Duck Heads and Hathor Baton, from Qatna (National Museum, Damascus, Syria; MSH02G-i2038)

#### DUCK-SHAPED BOXES: CLASSIFICATION AND FUNCTION

Over the last several decades, archaeologists and art historians have attempted to group or classify a growing corpus of duck-shaped boxes, usually by means of focusing on one or two specific traits. Although Mazar's<sup>102</sup> discussion of twenty-five exemplars sought to review only complete forms, the catalogue was based mainly on preserved, hollowed-out bodies. Consequently, he organized the sample according to the attributes displayed on the lids covering them. One common design—a single elliptical or oval lid—comprised 70 percent of his study group and appeared to begin already in the LBA I period. A second type showed lids constructed as two independent wings, a style that Mazar believed occurred only in the LB II period. The body forms attested in this later group generally displayed

A. Lafrenz ("Tracing the Source of Elephant and Hippopotamus Ivory from the Fourteenth Century B.C. Uluburun Shipwreck: The Archaeological, Historical, and Isotopic Evidence" [MA thesis, University of South Florida, 2004], 69–72) of ivory workshops in Palestine focuses only on finished products found at sites in the area and offers no evidence for any production center. Yet she agrees with Lilyquist that nearly all Egyptianizing motifs, even from as far away as Ebla, were Syro-Canaanite in origin and appropriated by "local Palestinian artisans." Her discussion ignores the impressive cache of ivories, including unworked tusks, from the capital city of Samaria (see Ron E. Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria*, vol. 2: *The Eighth Century BCE*, Harvard Semitic Studies 50 [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001], 443, n. 2; 494, n. 158, and Tappy, "The Provenance of the Unpublished Ivories from Samaria," in vol. 2 of "*I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times*": *Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 643; Crowfoot and Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste II*, 43, pl. XXII: 3).

<sup>102</sup> Mazar, *Qasile, Part Two*, 10–11.

more rectangular and flatter shapes and, when preserved, the tail decoration involved an incised herringbone pattern with chevrons running in boustrophedon configuration. Mazar accepted an Egyptian origin for the overall blueprint and even suggested it as a possible ancestor to the bird-shaped ceramic bowls known primarily from the eleventh century BCE at sites such as Deir el-Medineh, Megiddo, Tell Qasile, Tell eṣ-Şafi, and others. One may recall also the bowls with an Egyptian-style splayed rim with duck or goose heads discovered at Beth Shan, primarily in the Level VII temple precinct, and other sites in Palestine.<sup>103</sup> These bowls seem to have appeared near the end of the LB II period and to have continued into the Iron Age, and the preponderance of their findspots argues for a cultic use at this site. (Some of the Egyptian examples bore traces of burning, perhaps from incense.) Pulak, who seems to accept Mazar's overall approach, saw in the oval lids a Canaanite design, while assigning an Egyptian origin to the two-winged types.<sup>104</sup>

Subsequent to Mazar's study, Gachet—in her publication of several fragmentary duck-shaped containers retrieved from Fosse 1237 and the Sanctuary of the Rhytons at Ugarit<sup>105</sup>—once again understood the vessels as “paint (i.e., cosmetic)” or “ointment” boxes. Based on her study of the various lids and the position of the heads, Gachet (like Mazar) also discerned two distinct types. In the first variety, called a “realistic style,” the head of the duck displays an elongated, gracious form laterally incised with a triangle between the base of the neck and the round eye. This design typically incorporates upper and lower beaks with nostrils, a forward-facing head, tail plumage incised with geometric motifs (single or double incised lines; circles with central dots surrounding parallel lines; etc.), and wing-shaped or plain lids that open by pivoting on tenons placed toward the head so that the wings flare out at the back, as they naturally would. Gachet believed that this type of box directly imitated Egyptian prototypes. She concluded further that, within this type, there existed “a preference for conventional geometric decoration in the northern region” (Alalakh, Meskene-Emar, Ras Shamra, and Kamid el-Loz) as opposed to the “simplified decoration but more realistic boxes of

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<sup>103</sup> Frances W. James and Patrick E. McGovern, *The Late Bronze Age Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan: A Study of Levels VII and VIII*, vols. 1–2, UPMM 85 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in cooperation with The University of Mississippi, 1993), 1:172–73; 2: figs. 86–89, pls. 16, 40. For thirteen additional examples from Beth-Shean, see also Mazar, *Beth-Shean*, xxiii, 546–50, fig. 9.17, photo 9.15.

<sup>104</sup> Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 332. For more on the use of hippo ivory in cultic settings during the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages, see D. S. Reese, “Hippopotamus and Elephant Teeth from Kition,” in vol. 5.2, appendix 8 (D) of *Excavations at Kition: The Pre-Phoenician Levels*, ed. Vassos Karageorghis and Martha Demas (Nicosia: Antiquities Authority of the Republic of Cyprus, 1985), and Reese, “A Hippopotamus Tooth from Hala Sultan Tekke, Cyprus,” appendix 3, in *Hala Sultan Tekke 10: The Wells*, SMA XLV, by Paul Åström (Jonsered: Åströms, 1998).

<sup>105</sup> Gachet, “Objets en os,” 254–55, nos. 19–22.

Megiddo.” According to Gachet, the latter style lay closer to the Egyptian template, though the feathered edges of round or overlapping circles may themselves reflect a Mycenaean motif. The Tel Zayit duck, discussed below, with its realistic attributes, incised circles around central dots, etc., seems to fit this category.

In Gachet’s proposed “Style 2,” the duck’s head turned toward its back, a position that others have suggested served also to stabilize the box and provide a suitable handle.<sup>106</sup> Gachet also posited an Egyptian origin for this basic design, though she believed the specimens from Kamid el-Loz (e.g., fig. 9 above), which provide the best study sample for Style 2, were actually more widespread in Syria-Palestine. While Gachet’s observations are helpful, they also demonstrate the difficulty of arriving at an iron-clad typology for these boxes, since one often sees a mixing of traits (e.g., backward-turned heads can easily appear either in an elongated or realistic presentation).

The typological principles espoused by Lilyquist<sup>107</sup> further demonstrate the complexity of classifying the extant duck boxes. Her system describes “a difference between passive (dead, trussed, sleeping, or resting) and active waterfowl (birds with head up, oriented frontally or turned back.”<sup>108</sup> Thus not only can the head look in either direction within a single type, but also the Egyptian examples of the active group are, according to Lilyquist, “objectively later” than other exemplars from around the Mediterranean and also more plentiful outside Egypt. For her, as a result, the items with “head up” or “turned back” (a category that subsumes nearly all the ivory boxes under consideration here) represent “Canaanite originals,” with the highest quality examples coming from Kamid el-Loz. Bryan<sup>109</sup> has suggested, on the other hand, that the highest-quality Levantine examples come from Megiddo<sup>110</sup> and are not simply poor imitations of Egyptian prototypes. Regarding this group, says Bryan, the Egyptians were in fact imitators, not innovators.<sup>111</sup>

Whichever classification scheme one chooses, Lilyquist’s succinct survey of a large corpus of ivory artifacts urges considerable caution in appealing to Bronze Age art forms in any medium when writing a political history or even discussing with confidence possible connections between Egypt and the larger

<sup>106</sup> Alfred Hermann, “Das Motiv der Ente mit zurückgewendetem Kopfe im ägyptischen Kunstgewerbe,” *ZfS* 68 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932): 96–97.

<sup>107</sup> Lilyquist, “Use of Ivories,” 25–33.

<sup>108</sup> Lilyquist, “Use of Ivories,” 27.

<sup>109</sup> Betsy M. Bryan, “Art, Empire, and the End of the Late Bronze Age,” in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century, The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, ed. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 52–53, n. 93.

<sup>110</sup> See Philip L. O. Guy and Robert Martin Engberg, *Megiddo Tombs*, OIP 33 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pls. 104, 142.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Barnett (*Ancient Ivories*, 26) and H. Liebowitz (“Late Bronze Age II Ivory Work in Palestine: Evidence of a Cultural Highpoint,” *BASOR* 265 [1987]: 14), who also argued for non-Egyptian origins for ducks with turned-back heads, since the majority of Egyptian examples face forward.

Mediterranean world.<sup>112</sup> In the judgment of Lilyquist,<sup>113</sup> any purported trace in the overall ivory-carving industry of a quasi-international “Egyptian” style comes as the product of local makers and owners who frequently incorporated Egyptian motifs “without understanding.” Similarly, Liebowitz<sup>114</sup> has argued that the cosmetic spoons with the swimming-female motif from sites such as Megiddo—while “inspired by Egyptian prototypes”—represent “neither Egyptian imports nor objects made by itinerant Egyptian craftsmen, but local imitations of Egyptian prototypes.” According to him, only in Egypt did the carved swimmers hold duck-shaped bowls.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, cosmetic spoons from Megiddo certainly incorporated the duck-head motif on their handles.<sup>116</sup>

#### WHAT TO MAKE OF A TEL ZAYIT DUCK: CONTEXT AND FORM

While many examples of duck-shaped “cosmetic” boxes now populate the archaeological record,<sup>117</sup> a partial specimen from Tel Zayit represents a particularly beautiful example of ivory craftsmanship at the cusp of the Bronze and Iron Ages (fig. 12). The small figure<sup>118</sup> appeared near the top of a 300-m<sup>2</sup> step trench that excavators cut down the steep eastern slope of the mound. Excavations on the eastern shoulder and slope of this site have exposed a series of direct stratigraphic connections from the LBA I (perhaps even MBA II) into the seventh century BCE. During this span of time, five major conflagrations occurred. More than six vertical meters of LBA remains, representing at least four major periods of occupation, emerged in the Area T trench. The unexpected thickness of strata from this period reflects the town’s regional importance during this time, even in the pre-Amarna phase.

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<sup>112</sup> Contra the approach of Bryan, “Art, Empire, and the End,” in Cooper and Schwartz, *Study of the Ancient Near East*, 33–79.

<sup>113</sup> Lilyquist, “Use of Ivories,” 29.

<sup>114</sup> Liebowitz, “Late Bronze Age,” 13.

<sup>115</sup> Liebowitz, “Late Bronze Age,” 20, n. 14.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Loud, *Megiddo Ivories*, 202–204, with the actual spoon missing.

<sup>117</sup> I have assembled a catalogue of more than 100 related items (heads, wings, full forms, etc.).

<sup>118</sup> The object measures 4.6 cm in height and 3.9 cm in width (back of head to tip of beak); its slightly oval-shaped base measures 2 (side-to-side) x 2.8 (front-to-back) cm, with a mortise somewhat offset from center and measuring roughly 0.6–0.7 cm in diameter; the compass-cut eyes and breast feathers measure ca. 0.5 cm in diameter.





Fig. 12. Ivory-carved Duck Head from Tel Zayit (photograph R. E. Tappy, Jerusalem; courtesy of The Zeitah Excavations)

Riding above two strata that revealed successive, monumental, multi-storied, public structures spanning the LB IIA–B periods, and preceding the earliest (tenth century BCE) Iron Age levels at Tel Zayit, a series of closely spaced, poorly preserved surfaces with clear LBA pottery reflects several short-lived phases of occupation by various squatter groups near the end of the Bronze Age. A large pit, cut immediately to the south of one of the LB IIB walls and actually impinging on a portion of it, yielded a chronologically important scarab belonging to the so-called “Early Palestinian Series.” Canaanite artisans carved this item probably

during the MB IIB or early IIC period. As such, it undoubtedly represents an heirloom from that earlier time, for which occupational levels must exist at Tel Zayit. The ivory duck head also appeared among stratigraphically related layers, in brown silty matrix of lying just north of another, associated LB IIB wall. Since its archaeological context belongs in the late thirteenth or possibly early twelfth century BCE, the artifact itself likely represents another heirloom that originated in the impressive LB IIB occupational phase, when Tel Zayit enjoyed a respectable socio-economic status within a large trading network.

The somewhat retracted neck on the Tel Zayit duck shows a ring or collar represented by two simple, parallel lines with regularly spaced, oblique cross-hatching between them. The band-like appearance may harken back to the stacked necks of ebony and ivory seen on some Egyptian exemplars. The slight retraction results in a gracefully curved posterior neck and a rounding of the scaly, feathered breast in front, with the scaling indicated by a cluster of compass-incised, dotted circles that are carved into a scalloped pattern and, unexpectedly, that overlap upwards (fig. 13).<sup>119</sup>



Fig. 13. Scalloped Breast Feathers on Ivory-Carved Duck from Tel Zayit (courtesy Z. Radovan, The Zeitah Excavations)

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<sup>119</sup> Some of the oval lids found at other sites were also clearly instrument-carved, with incised rosettes and other geometric designs indicating the use of precision tools.



To demarcate the lower extent of the breast feathers, the artist incised a single line around the bottom of the neck/breast immediately below the scales and near the point of attachment to the body/box. Presently, black flecks appear across nearly the entire piece, but especially above the neck ring and toward the front. It seems unlikely, however, that these specks point to remnants of paint, since neither their distribution nor their color distinguishes between the bill, head, eye, and plumage. Further analysis may identify them with the type of small, round inclusions, sometimes called “peas,” “pearls,” “beads,” or “seeds,” that often appear in dental layers situated near the pulp cavity, which can extend rather far into the tooth (especially in elephant tusks; see below).<sup>120</sup>

The artist carved the eye in a technique similar to that of the breast feathers, but with a slightly more prominent outer circle. The head crest and backside of the neck both display deeply incised lines representing colorful plumage or ornamental feathering.<sup>121</sup> These plumage lines cut diagonally across several parallel growth rings. The eyes align vertically with the mid-neck and the anterior breast feathers. In other examples with postures depicting a craning vs. retracted neck, the duck’s eye is centered vertically with the breast area and in front of a curved neck. The Tel Zayit example, then, captures an alert posture in which the neck is pulled erect and only slightly retracted to produce a tall, slender, forward-looking stance, not a backward-facing one in which the adult duck is attending to one or more suppliant ducklings resting on its back. (The forward pose of the Tel Zayit head, though less frequently attested overall, appears consistent with the Uluburun examples [compare Fig. 20 below] and with many Egyptian specimens [see n. 111 above].)

The rather flat and broad underside of the Tel Zayit duck’s bill produces a distinct head profile, and the thicker, upper bill distinguishes itself from its lower counterpart by only a shallow, horizontal incision. Vertical ivory growth rings are everywhere apparent, especially alongside the bill (fig. 14). That the head is noticeably larger than the exemplars recovered at nearby Ekron<sup>122</sup> may suggest a more typically Egyptian vs. Canaanite design. The varying sizes of attested heads and overall box forms may prove, with further study, to hold some chronological value, in addition to aiding in determining the use of elephant vs. hippo resources. (For a concluding statement on the material structure of the Tel Zayit duck, see the excursus below.)

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. also Erika Fischer, *Ägyptische und ägyptisierende Elfenbeine aus Megiddo und Lachish: Inschriften, Flaschen, Löffel*, AOAT 47 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), 58; Sylvia K. Sikes, *The Natural History of the African Elephant* (New York: American Elsevier, 1971), 84, 210–11, 324, pl. 88.

<sup>121</sup> An ivory duck head from Beth-Shean Stratum S-3 displays similar eye and plumage attributes, although at Beth-Shean “the eye’s pupils are actually two distal ends of a single round perforation which penetrates through the head” (Mazar, *Beth-Shean*, 755–57, fig. 6.11, photo 6.14).

<sup>122</sup> See ben-Shlomo and Dothan, “Ivories from Philistia,” 33, tab. 1:58, 63.

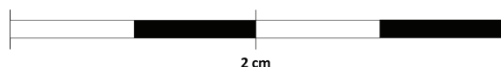


Fig. 14. Growth Rings on Ivory-Carved Duck from Tel Zayit (photograph by Z. Radovan, Jerusalem; courtesy of The Zeitah Excavations)

The Tel Zayit duck head obviously represents one component of a composite artifact originally assembled through an advanced mortise-and-tenon technique. The neck mortise, while slightly off-center, shows a wider drilling below the area of the neck ring, at the point where the ivory of the neck/breast itself becomes thicker. As the mortise penetrated deeper into the higher, narrower portion of the neck, the artisan also narrowed the diameter of the mortise to preclude crossing a growth ring and likely splitting the head (fig. 15; drawing by M. Smelansky, Jerusalem). If this drill-hole exploited the actual pulp canal, which also narrowed as the tooth or tusk tapered away from the gum socket, then the hole's own diameter might naturally have decreased under guidance of the pulp cavity. The drilling, however, left a notable artificial ledge at the point where the narrowing begins. In any event, this clever design not only required a sophisticated matching tenon, it also bore witness to the artisan's knowledge of raw materials, keen skill, planning, and refined technique.



Fig. 15. Mortise on Bottom of Ivory-Carved Duck from Tel Zayit (courtesy R. E. Tappy, The Zeitah Excavations; drawing by M. Smelansky, Jerusalem)

The realistic detail of the Tel Zayit object suggests that the artist attempted to render a specific species of duck, not simply a generic form.<sup>123</sup> If so, in my judgment the features witnessed on this piece most resemble those of the Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), a northern European duck that winters in a geographical band stretching across sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>124</sup> Seasonal migrations of such ducks (and other avian species) would have brought them along the flyways of the Nile and eastern Mediterranean littoral (and in the purview of artists there) on at least a biannual basis. As much as the inundation of the Nile, such cyclical movements within the avian world (movements that coincided with the autumnal flooding) signaled and brought into relief the basic rhythms of life in ancient Egypt.<sup>125</sup>

#### COSMETICS AND THE WIDE WORLD OF ANIMALS

Analysts commonly consider ivory-carved duck boxes as cosmetic holders.<sup>126</sup> Based on provenance data and associated items, this view seems plausible, perhaps even reasonable, but its confirmation will require more residue analysis on surviving traces of the boxes' contents. In any event, connections between the plant and animal world and personal adornment and hygiene are striking in the archaeological record. Long ago, Madeleine Frédéricq<sup>127</sup> ably demonstrated the

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Wyatt, "Bird Identification," 83–90.

<sup>124</sup> C. S. Roselaar, "Anas querquedula Garganey," in *Ostrich to Ducks*, vol. 1 of *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, ed. Stanley Cramp et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 529–36.

<sup>125</sup> G. Stein, foreword to Bailleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 7; R. Bailleul-LeSuer, introduction to Balleul-LeSuer, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 17.

<sup>126</sup> E.g., A. R. Williams, "Nile Style," *National Geographic Magazine* July (2008): 26.

<sup>127</sup> Frédéricq, "Ointment Spoons," 7–13, pls. III–IX.

great typological variety of ointment spoons bearing faunal or floral motifs. In addition to male and female figures, the diverse catalogue includes bowls (in oval or circular shapes), shells, ducks or geese, lotus buds or flowers, bouquets of flowers, royal cartouches, baskets or bundles of papyrus stems, fish, the god Bes, jackals or dogs, dogs holding a fish by its tail, quadrupeds, gazelles, and more. Other cosmetic, medicinal, or ointment containers in Egypt, often crafted from alabaster, took the form of wildcats, plucked mallards (in ivory), an occasional turtle, mollusk shells, fish, monkeys, or even rats and mice.<sup>128</sup> Perfume vessels from Middle Kingdom Egypt have appeared in the form of two trussed ducks,<sup>129</sup> a bound oryz carved in ivory (from Dynasty 18),<sup>130</sup> and so on.

When it came to acts of personal adornment around the Mediterranean world, however, duck motifs claimed a prominent and enduring place in the repertoire of animal imagery associated with human beautification. Duck images complement the design of cosmetic utensils such as the spoons and mirror handles mentioned above, jewelry,<sup>131</sup> and items used in the preparation, storage, and application of cosmetic substances applied directly to the body. Duck-shaped vessels even appear among the zoomorphic aryballoi (oil bottles) used by athletes in sixth-century BCE Greece<sup>132</sup>—an indication that this motif appealed, at least in certain settings, to both men and women.<sup>133</sup> Even as distant a place as southeastern Britain has yielded center-looped and end-looped bronze mortars that range in date from the late Iron Age to the Roman period, appear to represent cosmetic sets for grinding small quantities of some commodity, and frequently incorporate duck imagery in their designs.<sup>134</sup> Some of the end-looped varieties may even depict stylized duck forms with their heads turned down and back under the mortar.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Arnold, "Egyptian Bestiary," 21–59; nos. 17; 26, 36, 41–42, 78–79; cf. also Hayes, "Minor Art," 81.

<sup>129</sup> Arnold, "Egyptian Bestiary," 28, no. 27.

<sup>130</sup> Mikhal Dayagi-Mendels, *Perfumes and Cosmetics in the Ancient World* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1989), 53.

<sup>131</sup> Jewelry with gold foil ornamentation from the Neo-Palatial tomb at Poros Herakleion shows ducks set against a group of lily flowers (Rehak and Younger, "International Styles," 126).

<sup>132</sup> Dayagi-Mendels, *Perfumes and Cosmetics*, 19, 23.

<sup>133</sup> Besides the duck boxes recovered from the royal treasury at Kamid el-Loz, most of the extant corpus appears to derive from private contexts—houses and graves. This pattern of distribution led ben-Shlomo and Dothan ("Ivories from Philistia," 30) to conclude that these cosmetic holders, "although made of a luxurious material," served in the feminine domain and in private, daily use, not in cultic, religious, official, or public venues. Yet the use of similar forms by male Olympic athletes militates against limiting duck motifs to objects made for women. Kozloff and Bryan (*Egypt's Dazzling Sun*, 331ff.) include the boxes in their discussion of "Ritual Implements and Related Statuettes."

<sup>134</sup> Ralph Jackson, "Cosmetic Sets from Late Iron Age and Roman Britain," *Britannia* 16 (1985): 165–92.

<sup>135</sup> E.g., Jackson, "Cosmetic Sets," 180, fig. 6:28, 30, 34, 40, 41.

## A CONCLUDING COMMENT

Many aspects relating to duck-shaped ivory boxes of the Late Bronze Age remain subject to debate. Lingering issues concern the origin and chronology of the general motif, potential manufacturing centers, precise purpose and functional setting (public, private, funerary, ritual/cultic, etc.) of the completed items, and range of clientele (royals, elites, or ordinary citizens) who commissioned or purchased the objects. Aesthetic evaluations of this genre of ivory carving also vary according to the beholder's eye. Some scholars view the examples from Kamid el-Loz as the height of artistic craftsmanship and expression, the products of Levantine workshops; others understand the same collection as "faithful but technically inferior ... [copies of] Egyptian wood models."<sup>136</sup> Some relate them historically to a reciprocal gift-exchange system among the royals and elites of the ancient Near East; others argue strongly against attempting to draw too many reliable historical data from the extant corpus of artistically carved ivory objects.<sup>137</sup> In any event, the ivory duck head from Tel Zayit adds a particularly graceful specimen to an intriguing catalogue of avian objects with origins most often in none other than ... hippos.

## EXCURSUS—HIPPO OR ELEPHANT: WHICH ONE MAKES A BETTER DUCK?

While faunal remains from both bird and hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) appear in the record from camp sites in Egypt's Fayum oasis as early as 9000–6000 BCE,<sup>138</sup> many depictions of hippos (in faience or blue color) occur in Middle Kingdom Egyptian art.<sup>139</sup> Some analysts believe the symbolically significant, royal capture of the dangerous hippo to have communicated "the ruler's triumph over chaos."<sup>140</sup> Subduing hippos in a liminal, danger-laden, watery setting might also have related generally to the theme of self-preservation. After all, in the Egyptian Book of the Dead (Papyrus of Hunefer; ca. 1275 BCE), the hybrid creature Ammit—the Soul Eater, Eater of Hearts, Devourer of the Dead—took the form of three of Egypt's most dangerous animals: the crocodile (Ammit's head and snout), lion (mane, anterior body, and forelegs), and hippopotamus (posterior body and tail) (fig. 16).<sup>141</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Bryan, "Art, Empire, and the End," 49.

<sup>137</sup> See Federico Zangani, "Amarna and Uluburun: Reconsidering Patterns of Exchange in the Late Bronze Age," *PEQ* 148 (2016): 230–44.

<sup>138</sup> Rob J. Wenke, "Neolithic Cultures, Overview," in Bard, *Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, 19.

<sup>139</sup> See Guillemette Andreu, Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya, and Christiane Ziegler, *L'Égypte ancienne au Louvre* (Paris: L'Hachette, 1997), 88–90.

<sup>140</sup> Brewer, "Fauna," 308.

<sup>141</sup> See John Baines and Jaromir Málek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 217–19. Interestingly, neither elephant nor hippopotamus nor duck receives direct mention among the

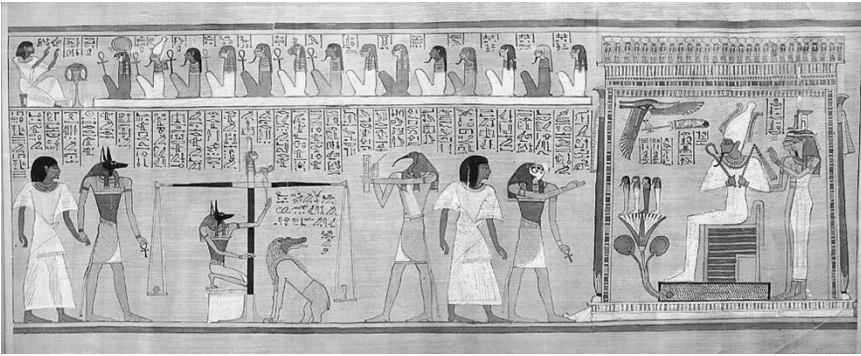


Fig. 16. Judgment of Hunefer the Scribe in the Egyptian Book of the Dead (Wiki Commons)

From as early as the Old Kingdom, reliefs in the Mortuary Temple of Pepi II (ca. 2355–2261) depict the Pharaoh harpooning a hippo; in an adjacent scene, a team of men tie the huge body, snout, and crumpled front legs of the vanquished animal to a flat-bottomed sledge.<sup>142</sup> Steatite and faience scarabs from the Second Intermediate Period and subsequent New Kingdom display similarly gruesome scenes.<sup>143</sup> Originally, these royal expeditions may have signaled the subduing of chaotic forces, as symbolized by the hippos, who eventually became the objects of a royal hunting sport. On the other hand, it seems that wild fowl—especially ducks and geese—always maintained a more mundane, practical value as a staple

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many animals that appear symbolically in the Bible, and the only possible reference to geese lies in the unidentified birds (ברברים אבוסיים) included in daily provisions brought to Solomon (1 Kgs 4:23 [MT 5:3]). Rarely attested images of the enigmatic Behemoth and Leviathan, however, seem to build on the appearance, behavior, and habitats of hippopotami and crocodiles. Job 40:15–42:8 provides the classic passage in which these two very dangerous, semi-aquatic animals appear together. While the aptness of an association with hippos and crocs remains open to question (Marvin H. Pope, *Job: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 3rd ed., AB 15 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973], 320–34), it seems significant that the agents of power and judgment in Yhwh’s second discourse, wherein Job’s righteousness (cf. Egyptian Ma’at) is being weighed, involve (like Egyptian Ammit) three apparently related beings: YHWH/El, Behemoth, and Leviathan. I certainly do not imply that the writer of this passage drew from or even knew about the Egyptian Book of the Dead. It seems reasonable, however, to think that both literary and pictorial portrayals of imminent death resulting from a failed test for true righteousness (vs. self-righteousness) could have capitalized on the symbolism inherent in a chimaera of dangerous animals. But even if alluding to some such conventional trope, the author of Job 41–42 separates God from the other two elements by stating (or inferring) that God not only created the two beasts but also has dominion over them, and therefore certainly over Job.

<sup>142</sup> For other such scenes from the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, executed from a small papyrus raft, see Baines and Málek, *Atlas*, 193.

<sup>143</sup> Peter Lacovara, “A New Date for an Old Hippopotamus,” *JMFA* 4 (1992): 20–21, fig. 5–6a.b.



in the Egyptian diet;<sup>144</sup> in fact, from “early in Egyptian antiquity ducks and geese were penned and kept both for eating and for their eggs (domesticated fowl was not introduced to Egypt until the Roman times).”<sup>145</sup> But in the Bronze Age, and especially in the Late Bronze Age, the hunting of hippos involved much more than mere sport; such pursuits also supported expanding ivory-carving and trading industries.

The increased availability in the Aegean/Mycenaean world of tusks from the Asian elephant may have “spurred the development of new forms and techniques [of artistic production] in the middle of the second millennium” and may have saved the art form of ivory carving in that area during the Late Bronze Age,<sup>146</sup> but the situation differed in Egypt. There, the African elephant had become extinct during the early dynastic period. As a result, the secondary use of elephant ivory proves not all that common in Egypt; it is largely confined to the New Kingdom period, when pharaohs such as Hatshepsut and both Thutmose I and III engaged in big-game hunts outside Egypt—for example, to Punt south of Egypt or to Niya in the Orontes River basin to the far north.<sup>147</sup> Consequently, the hippopotamus presented the best and most easily obtained source of ivory in the marshy areas of

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<sup>144</sup> Wenke, “Neolithic Cultures,” 20.

<sup>145</sup> Wenke, “Neolithic Cultures,” 20. One aviary scene from the mastaba of Sopduhotep (Dynasty 5) shows a keeper force-feeding a duck or goose in order to fatten it (Houlihan, *Animal World*, 139, fig. 98). Compare the fowl runs [*bīt iššūri*] for the keeping of ducks in Neo-Babylonian texts (A. Leo Oppenheim, ed., *I–J*, vol. 7 of *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* [Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago; Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1960], 214).

<sup>146</sup> Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 233; earlier, Helene J. Kantor, “Syro-Palestinian Ivories,” *JNES* 15 (1956): 174.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 226–27. For centuries in the early first millennium BCE, Mesopotamian rulers also engaged in sporting and prestige trips during which they hunted elephants, as attested in the written records of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076; cf. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 B.C.*, vol. 1 [London: Routledge, 1995], 358–62), Aššur-bel-kala (1074–1057), Aššur-dān II (934–912), Adad-nārārī II (911–891), Aššur-nasir-pal II (883–859), and Shalmaneser III (858–824); see A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC, I (1114–859 BC)*, RIMA 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 26, 103, 135, 154, 226, and *Assyrian Rulers II*, 41, respectively. Some Assyrians also collected live elephants for breeding and hunting purposes as well as for display in their zoological gardens (e.g., Aššur-nasir-pal II in Wiseman, “New Stele,” 31, col. iii, ll. 95–100). Direct references to elephants occur as early as the Ur II Period (e.g., The Curse of Akkad). Thus from Shulgi (recognized in one hymn as a hunter of elephants, lions, etc.) to Shalmaneser III (with elephants in the tribute procession on the Black Obelisk and booty from Mušri [perhaps Egypt; Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta’s Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 201] including the river ox [buffalo or hippopotamus] and elephant) and Sennacherib (who demanded elephant hides and ivory-inlaid couches as tribute from Jerusalem), Mesopotamian rulers maintained a longstanding, albeit injurious, relationship with elephants. Entire tusks or segments thereof have appeared at sites in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey (including the Uluburun shipwreck; see Fischer, *Ägyptische*, 78, Taf. 5b).

the Nile and Delta.<sup>148</sup> Based on the extant corpus of duck-shaped cosmetic boxes, their creators regularly (if not exclusively) exploited this animal for its lower incisors.

Qualitative differences exist between hippo and elephant ivory and “result from distinctive processes of dentine formation in the tusks.”<sup>149</sup> The four principal component layers of tooth and tusk development include the pulp cavity, the dentine, the cementum, and the enamel. On elephant tusks, the enamel crown wears away very quickly, thereby leaving the cementum layer (often referred to as the bark or rind) or, in many instances, only the exposed dentine itself. Numerous intersecting lines or dentinal tubules (called Retzius or Schreger Lines; see fig. 17), whose cross-hatching creates diamond patterns in the intervening spaces, are visible in section and represent a diagnostic element in the identification of elephant tusks.<sup>150</sup> As new tissue calcifies on the interior of the tusk, from the pulp canal outward, it produces new layers of dentine known as laminations or lamellae.

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<sup>148</sup> Caubet and Poplin, “Les objets,” in Yon, *Le Centre de la Ville*, 291–93; 299–300; Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 228. Judging from both osteological remains and unprocessed canines and incisors of hippopotami found in Syria, Cyprus, and Israel/Palestine and ranging from the Early Bronze Age through the Iron Age, hippo herds likely inhabited locales along the Levantine coast, particularly near riverine systems, and thereby provided local sources of ivory (see Horwitz and Tchernov, “Cultural and Environmental,” 71, fig. 4; Fischer, *Ägyptische*, 75, 85–86, Tafn. 5a, 6a–6b; G. Haas, “On the Occurrence of Hippopotamus in the Iron Age of the Coastal Area of Israel [Tell Qasileh],” *BASOR* 132 [1953]: 30–34; on a hippopotamus tooth from Philistine Ekron, see Edward F. Maher, “A Hippopotamus Tooth from a Philistine Temple: Symbolic Artifact or Sacrificial Offering?” *NEA* 68 [2005]: 59–60). P. J. Riis (*Sūkās*, vol. 1 of *The North-East Sanctuary and the First Settling of the Greeks in Syria and Palestine*, Publications of the Carlsberg Expedition to Phoenicia [Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1970]) concluded that the Orontes and Sinn river networks served as suitable biotopes for hippo populations as late as the early Iron Age. On the literary side, L. Stork (“Nilpferd,” *LÄ II* [1982]: 501–6) has documented the Egyptian hieroglyphs relating to the hippopotamus, and cuneiform texts call them *alap nāri* (“river ox”), *rīmu* or *rīmtu* (“a wild beast”), *nāhiru* (“river- or seahorse”; see Fischer, *Ägyptische*, 88–90), or *šinuntum* (“the animal with teeth/tusks”; Caubet and Poplin, “Les objets,” in Yon, *Le Centre de la Ville*, 294–97, nn. 22–23). Miguel Civil (“‘Adamdun,’ the Hippopotamus, and the Crocodile,” *JCS* 50 [1998]: 12–14) has suggested that one Mesopotamian scribe, unfamiliar with the river animals of Egypt, misconstrued a foreign word meaning “crocodile” and translated it as *dabū*, yet another loanword actually derived from the Old Egyptian *db* or *dbj*, “hippopotamus” (which traditional scholarly translations have, in turn, further confused by commonly rendering *dabū* as the non-aquatic “bear”). The hippopotamus itself did appear in the ivory carvings of Nimrud (as in the frieze of the Egyptian hippo-headed goddess Taweret; Herrmann, *Ivories from Room SW 37*, IV.1–2, 193, no. 964).

<sup>149</sup> Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 21. On the properties and morphological features of hippo and elephant ivory and the relationship of form to material, see the excellent discussions in Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 209–15; 1990; and Fischer, *Ägyptische*, 53–90.

<sup>150</sup> See Sikes, *Natural History*, 83–84; Fischer, *Ägyptische*, pl. 3a; Michael Locke, *Bone, Ivory, and Horn: Identifying Natural Materials* (Arglen, PA: Schiffer, 2013), 108–21, figs. 6.36–45.



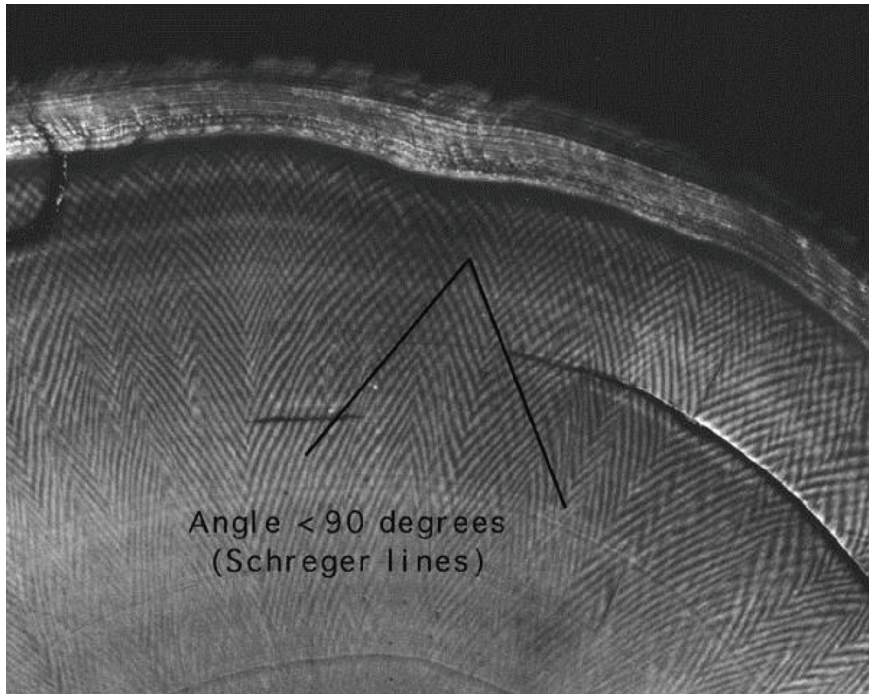


Fig. 17. Schreger Lines in Elephant Ivory (courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service, Forensics Laboratory, Ashland, OR)

In transverse sections, the concentric growth rings (called Lines of Owen, after the British anatomist Richard Owen) appear as concentric rings spaced approximately 1 cm apart. Each new layer reflects 6–8 years of growth<sup>151</sup> and represents a seam particularly vulnerable to splitting, especially as the newly exposed dentine dries. These tusks are generally round to slightly oval in section and have a fine, even grain that facilitates cutting in various directions. Moreover, during the carving process, an oily substance exudes through the pores of the tusk and aids not only the cutting but also the polishing of the ivory.<sup>152</sup> Though tusks from the large African elephant can measure up to 20 cm in diameter and 2–2.5

<sup>151</sup> Krzyszkowska, *Ivory and Related Materials*, 34.

<sup>152</sup> Krzyszkowska, "Ivory in the Aegean," 232.

m in length,<sup>153</sup> the hollow pulp canal is usually quite wide and can represent one-third to one-half of the tusk's thickness.<sup>154</sup>

On the other hand, hippopotamus teeth (or, legitimately, “tusks,” since they also grow continuously) display a markedly different material structure as well as a much whiter (and less susceptible to yellowing) appearance than elephant ivory—a fitting trait for carving both utilitarian and especially ornamental objects.<sup>155</sup> Both the lower canines (with a curved shape and more triangular cross-section) and incisors (straight with circular section) of the hippo (Fig. 18) have an outer, primary layer as well as an inner, secondary layer of dentine in addition to a thick, enamel crown that is ridged longitudinally.<sup>156</sup>



Fig. 18. Hippopotamus Canines and Incisors (from Hippo Worlds, Bio Expedition, ©2014)

The resultant hardness of hippo teeth (where the enamel can reach 6–7 on the Mohs scale—comparable to titanium, manganese, fused quartz, iron pyrite, opal,

<sup>153</sup> The tusks of the African steppe elephant generally weigh 30–50 kg; the largest ones, however, may exceed 75 kg. Those of the Asian elephant are smaller, with an average length of 1–1.5 m and weight of 25–30 kg (Fischer, *Ägyptische*, 58; compare Sikes, *Natural History*, 236, 238).

<sup>154</sup> See Sikes, *Natural History*, pl. 89.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Brewer, “Fauna,” 308.

<sup>156</sup> See Fischer, *Ägyptische*, pls. 4–5; Daniel, “Ivory,” 124; Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 328–29, nos. 197–198a.b. The dentine layers on other hippo teeth are too thin for carving most designs.

and jade) makes more difficult the initial, preparatory carving and shaping. Though these teeth are generally smaller than the elephant tusk (they may reach 50–60 cm in length and weigh approximately 3 kg),<sup>157</sup> they possess a relatively small pulp cavity, which narrows as the tooth tapers away from the jaw. The suture formed by the narrowing—that is, the *commissure*, which appears more eye-shaped or horizontally oblong in the hippo lower canine and more rounded in the incisor (fig. 19)<sup>158</sup>—provides a clue in distinguishing one tooth from the other. The overall material structure of hippo teeth is denser and the grain much finer than that of elephant ivory. Furthermore, these teeth do not emit lubricating oil during the carving process, as do elephant tusks.<sup>159</sup> Importantly, hippo tooth formation also does not produce the crisscrossed Schreger Lines so characteristic of elephant ivory. The absence of this feature, the pattern (particularly for the more triangular canines) and spacing of growth lines, and the more limited potential size of carved objects present key criteria for concluding that an artifact derives from hippo versus elephant ivory.

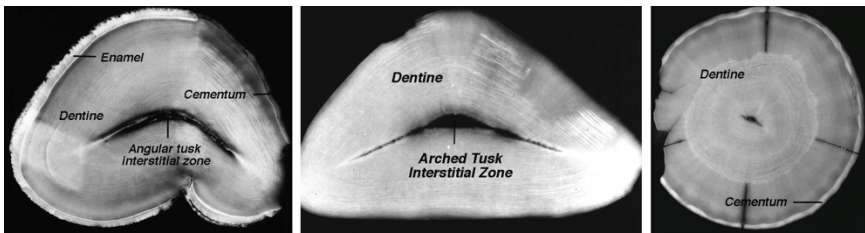


Fig. 19. Cross-sections of Hippopotamus Canines and Incisors (courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Forensics Laboratory, Ashland, OR)

While each source of ivory carried its benefits and limitations, the advantages of working with hippo teeth seem to have outweighed the challenges. The denser

<sup>157</sup> Fischer, *Ägyptische*, 54, 61–62; Daniel, “Ivory,” 124. While Fischer (*Ägyptische*, 54) notes that hippo enamel, which covers the surface of the teeth and is subjected to the greatest wear, constitutes “die harteste Substanz überhaupt, welche die Natur bei Mensch und Tier hervorgebracht hat,” Lafrenz (“Tracing the Source,” 10) disregards the enamel and cementum and thereby restricts the Mohs scale rating of “all ivory” to between 1.5 and 2.

<sup>158</sup> See Fischer, *Ägyptische*, pls. 6–7; T. K. Penniman, *Pictures of Ivory and other Animal Teeth, Bone and Antler, With a Brief Commentary on Their Use in Identification*, Occasional Paper on Technology 5 (Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum, 1984), pls. VI–VII.

<sup>159</sup> Hippo canines and incisors “are the hardest of all teeth used as ivory, and fire can be struck from the enamel” (Penniman, *Pictures of Ivory*, 23). The combined attributes of hippo ivory make it particularly suited to the carving of flat or thin items, such as furniture inlays or buttons. In addition, its whiteness, overall density, and greater resistance to decay have made it, throughout history, more desirable for the replacement of lost human teeth (on the density, color, and size of hippopotamus canines, see Horwitz and Tchernov, “Cultural and Environmental,” 67).

structure of hippo teeth produced a whiter appearance once carved. And though the narrower tusk size necessitated the manufacture of smaller, composite objects (e.g., the multi-part duck boxes), these items were by nature more easily stored and transported. Thus in addition to previously prepared ivory artifacts, fourteen hippo teeth and a short, cleanly sawn section of an elephant tusk appeared among the cargo of the Uluburun shipwreck.<sup>160</sup> The sometimes complex mortise-and-tenon technique required to assemble the component parts of such objects may not, in itself, have constituted a serious drawback to using hippo ivory. Even some items made from elephant tusks were manufactured in parts and pieced together with tenons, et cetera, to “ensure against accidental damage during manufacture, facilitate the delicate carving . . . , and promote an economical use of the raw material.”<sup>161</sup>

Returning, finally, to the Tel Zayit duck head, it remains difficult without further analysis to express certainty regarding the source of the ivory, whether hippo or elephant. On the one hand, the spacing of the growth rings—clearly visible in the cross section under the neck, in front of the right eye, and along the side of the bill—seems, in my judgment, close enough to suggest the hippo as a source. Extrapolating the full diameter of an average ring, however, yields a breadth approaching 7–7.5 cm,<sup>162</sup> which pushes the decision toward a larger elephant tusk as the source. If the diameter of the original ring did approximate this width, the ring’s form would appear to have been more rounded than oval. But, at least for this particular artifact, this deduction alone cannot settle the issue with certainty. If, with further analysis, the object proves to be hippo ivory, the roundness of both the growth rings and the pulp cavity (if this feature, in fact, accommodated the drilled mortise) would indicate the use of a lower incisor, not a canine tooth, with its more oblong canal. It would be unusual, however, for a hippo incisor to have a minimum diameter of 7 cm.<sup>163</sup> Yet one key element that favors an identification as hippo ivory centers on the apparent absence of Schreger Lines. But here, too, further inspection under microscope and proper lighting is required.

In any event, the purer whiteness of objects carved from hippopotamus teeth—which, unlike elephant ivory, resist the tendency to yellow with time—not

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<sup>160</sup> Cemal Pulak, “The Uluburun Shipwreck: An Overview,” *IJNA* 27 (1998): 203, and “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 294, 330. Lafrenz (“Tracing the Source,” 1) lists only six hippo canines and seven incisors from the Uluburun shipwreck. Most analysts believe the raw hippo tusks and related carved items found in Aegean contexts to be imports (cf. Daniel, “Ivory,” 125).

<sup>161</sup> Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 229. For more on the “economy of carving,” see Gachet, “Objets,” in Yon, *Le Centre de la Ville*, 255, and Gachet-Bizollon, *Les Ivoires*.

<sup>162</sup> Personal communication from Cemal Pulak, 9/9/16.

<sup>163</sup> While the hippo incisor usually does not exceed 6 cm in diameter, the large, curved canines can reach a width of 7.5 cm (Locke, *Bone, Ivory, and Horn*, 91).

only had to impress all who saw them but may also have promoted the special use of hippo-derived boxes and other objects in the reciprocal exchange of gifts by royals and other elites. In fact, the owners of the two duck boxes borne by the ill-fated Uluburun ship might well have intended them as an act of royal gift-giving.<sup>164</sup> Peltenberg<sup>165</sup> has commented on the extent of this so-called gift economy (established especially between the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean), its side-by-side existence with a “commodity economy,” the use of ivory in reciprocal gift exchanges, and the resultant noticeable increase in luxury goods during the so-called International Period (fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BCE)—the precise heyday of the extant repertoire of duck-shaped cosmetic boxes. In addition, Krzyszkowska appears to suggest that such princely exchanges might even account for the shipments of raw, unworked tusks to places such as the Aegean. She also notes that the only unworked elephant tusks in the Aegean come from Zakros on eastern Crete.<sup>166</sup>

Thus, one need not assume that ancient carvers considered hippo ivory less versatile and therefore less desirable than that of elephants. In fact, the vast majority of extant duck-shaped cosmetic boxes appear to derive from hippo ivory (though further study of a large sample is needed). Future analysis may nuance this view, for already the body-width of at least one box from the Uluburun shipwreck suggested the use of a combination of elephant and hippo ivory.<sup>167</sup> In fact, it now appears that the raw materials used by the creator of this item included hippo teeth, elephant tusks, and bone (see also the specimen in fig. 20, now housed in the Walters Art Museum).<sup>168</sup> But if hippo ivory proves to have enjoyed a virtual monopoly within the cosmetic-box industry,<sup>169</sup> this situation may have resulted as much from the artisan’s preference (based on the collective attributes of hippo incisors) as from the sheer lack of elephant tusks.

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<sup>164</sup> See Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in *Res Maritimae*, ed. Swiny et al., 256; “Uluburun Shipwreck: Overview,” 220; also Rehak and Younger, “International Styles,” 231.

<sup>165</sup> Edgar Peltenberg, “Greeting Gifts and Luxury Faience: A Context for Orientalizing Trends in Late Mycenaean Greece,” in *Bronze Age Trade in the Mediterranean: Papers Presented at the Conference Held at Rewley House, Oxford, in December, 1989*, ed. N. H. Gale, SMA 90 (Jonsered: Åströms, 1991), 162–70.

<sup>166</sup> Krzyszkowska, “Ivory in the Aegean,” 230.

<sup>167</sup> Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 332–33, n. 2.

<sup>168</sup> Personal communication from Cemal Pulak, 9/8/16. Compare further the duck’s wing made of bone and recovered from Beth-Shean Stratum S-3b (Mazar, *Beth-Shean*, 757, fig. 16.11.2, photo 16.14b). This object likely relates to the ivory duck head found in Stratum S-3 (see n. 121 above).

<sup>169</sup> Research increasingly shows that objects once thought to have derived from elephant ivory were, in fact, made from hippo teeth (Caubet and Poplin, “Les objets,” 292–97; note again Pulak, “Uluburun Shipwreck,” in Aruz, Benzel, and Evans, *Beyond Babylon*, 294, 330).





Fig. 20. Duck-shaped Object Made of Various Materials (courtesy of Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; acquired by Henry Walters in 1925; Creative Commons License; 71.519)

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## Afterword: Reflections On Provenance and Authenticity

Hershel Shanks

Some explanation would seem to be called for as to why the contribution of a nonscholar like me is included in a Festschrift for a towering scholar like P. Kyle McCarter Jr. We are old friends; he has written a number of articles for *BAR*, which I have edited for more than forty years, and we have cooperated on a number of other projects, including a volume of *Ancient Inscriptions*.<sup>1</sup> But the truth is that though I may know a lot about a little, I am but a scholar of nothing. I must rely on the judgment of scholarly experts. I am an expert in only one thing: I am an expert on experts. And at the top of my list of experts is Professor P. Kyle McCarter. I know I am safe when I rely on his judgment.

Another thing I have learned from Kyle: He always looks at the other side. He knows there is almost always another side. He is cautionary. He keeps an open mind. “Do not be too quick to rush to judgment,” he advises. I also bring this to the table from my years of practicing law. Kyle knows when to be tentative. He knows when he is not quite there yet.

It is in this vein that I respond to the invitation to contribute to this Festschrift—with a few words about a harried subject: unprovenanced, purportedly ancient inscriptions and other unprovenanced, purportedly ancient artifacts—objects that have *not* been recovered in a professional archaeological excavation and whose origins we usually do not know.

Scholars hold drastically different attitudes toward unprovenanced finds. Those who oppose unprovenanced finds are much more vocal. Some would require a mark in the citation of an unprovenanced find, indicating its tainted nature (see below). Some journals will not publish an unprovenanced find (although, oddly, they may permit a citation to another publication of unprovenanced finds).

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<sup>1</sup> P. Kyle McCarter, *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996).



For those scholars who are comfortable with the publication of unprovenanced finds, it is simply not an issue; they just go about their business, arguing for authenticity or inauthenticity without regard to the fact that it is unprovenanced. The unprovenanced condition of the artifact is not an independent ground for concluding that the artifact is a forgery. It is a fact to be noted. If its unprovenanced condition is relevant, it is discussed; but, its unprovenanced condition is not *ipso facto* an indication that it might be a forgery.

It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of unprovenanced inscriptions to the scholarship of the southern Levant. Consider these examples:

*The Dead Sea Scrolls.* Few scholars, if any, would suggest that the Dead Sea Scrolls are forgeries and cannot be trusted. Even Christopher Rollston—the chief crusader against the consideration of unprovenanced finds—accepts their authenticity, despite their unprovenanced condition. Indeed, Rollston recognizes “with great certainty” their authenticity; there seems to be no need to discuss that fact despite the fact that most came to the public via the antiquities market.

*The Nag Hammadi Codices.* Discovered by Egyptian peasants digging for fertilizer—or so we are told—in the Egyptian desert, they consist of fifty-two ancient texts, including the Gospel of Thomas. Most were written about the mid-fourth century CE.<sup>2</sup>

*Aramaic Ostraca from Idumea.* Two prominent and highly respected Israeli scholars, Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, have been working jointly and separately on a hoard of Aramaic ostraca from Idumea.<sup>3</sup> No one has been silly enough to suggest that they are forgeries, although they are unprovenanced. Rollston also accepts the fact that they are authentic, despite their unprovenanced condition.

In addition to the examples above, distinguished Swiss scholar Othmar Keel calls our attention to other unprovenanced material like the Egyptian Execration Texts. Further, he asks, “What would we do without the Amarna tablets?” Keel also observes that “ten times as many seals come from the market as come from legal excavations.” Finally, as he has famously said, “I don’t think we can write a history of the ancient Near East without relying on unprovenanced material.”<sup>4</sup>

According to the catalog *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, edited by Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, “only 7.3% of all seals and 25% of all bullae and docketts ... are provenanced.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, if we automatically exclude

<sup>2</sup> Charles W. Hedrick, “Liberator of the Nag Hammadi Codices,” *BAR* 42.4 (2016): 51–54.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Ostraca from Idumea*, vol. 1 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns: 2014), Dossiers 1–10: 401, Commodity Chits.

<sup>4</sup> Othmar Keel, “Update: Finds or Fakes? Defending the Study of Unprovenanced Artifacts: An Interview with Othmar Keel,” *BAR* 31.4 (2005): 56.

<sup>5</sup> Mitka R. Golub, “Revisiting Vaughn and Dobler’s Provenance Study of Hebrew Seals and Seal Impressions,” in *From Sha’ar Hagolan to Shaaraim: Essays in Honor of Prof. Yosef Garfinkel*, ed. Saar Ganor, Igor Kreimerman, Katharina Streit, and Madeleine Mumcuoglu (Jerusalem: Israel

consideration of unprovenanced finds, we are automatically excluding most of the available archaeological evidence. As Porten and Yardeni remark, “Certainly, looting must be prevented by every possible means, but once an item or a collection has found its way to the antiquities market, it becomes a precious artifact, not a piece of broken clay to be abandoned or reinterred.”<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to those scholars who would simply dismiss and ignore unprovenanced material, Keel takes a sensible approach: “Of course one has to be careful, particularly with high-priced items.” But, we cannot dismiss an inscription just because it is unprovenanced. The fact that an inscription is unprovenanced is not *ipso facto* a condition indicating that it is a forgery.

Frank Moore Cross, perhaps the world’s most eminent ancient Near Eastern paleographer at the time and the Harvard *Doktorvater* of our honoree, had no hesitation in publishing an unprovenanced seal impression.<sup>7</sup> His 1999 contribution to *BAR* entitled “King Hezekiah’s Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery” presents a seal impression that mentions Hezekiah. The bulla reads, “Belonging to Hezekiah (son of) Ahaz, king of Judah.” It surfaced with another bulla referring to Hezekiah’s father, Ahaz. Of the more than 1,200 West Semitic seals that had been published, only two—the two mentioned here—bear inscriptions made by the king’s own seal! So, there was good reason to be suspicious of the Hezekiah bulla. Yet Cross published it and defended its authenticity.

This story has a fascinating history. Another copy of the Hezekiah bulla was subsequently excavated by Israeli archaeologist Eilat Mazar in her dig on the Ophel in Jerusalem. This is the unusual instance where a professionally excavated inscription proves the authenticity of a previously known unprovenanced copy of the same bulla. Mazar’s excavated bulla proves the authenticity of the earlier-known unprovenanced bulla.

Several leading, especially American, journals, however, will not publish unprovenanced inscriptions. The recently inaugurated *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* explicitly states: “The journal does not publish unprovenanced artifacts purchased on the antiquities market or objects from private collections.” The American Schools of Oriental Research’s (ASOR)<sup>8</sup> scholarly journal *BASOR* stipulates that it “will not serve as the initial place of publication or announcement of any object acquired by an individual or institution after 30 December 1973. The only exceptions to this rule are if the object was in a collection as of 30 December 1973, or if it has been legally exported from the country of origin.” The Society of Biblical Literature adopted

Exploration Society, 2016), 371; see Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook*, xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Moore Cross, “King Hezekiah’s Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery,” *BAR* 25.2 (1999): 42–45.

<sup>8</sup> Editor’s Note: As of 2021, the American Society of Overseas Research.

ASOR's guidelines in 2016. Keel calls this "American Puritanism." (Oddly enough, these journals will permit citation to the publication of unprovenanced inscriptions.)

My own view, which I defend here, is that the fact that an inscription (or artifact) is unprovenanced is a neutral factor. It is not in itself an indication that the inscription (or artifact) is a forgery. Indeed, the danger is that the unprovenanced condition of the find will mislead the investigator into rejecting consideration of an authentic inscription because it is unprovenanced.

I shall direct further criticism against two friends who regard an unprovenanced condition as an indication that an inscription may well be a forgery. They are great scholars as well as great friends, so it is especially appropriate to consider their views from a critical perspective.

The first is Ed Greenstein of Bar-Ilan University. I shall focus on his article entitled, "Methodological Principles in Determining that the So-called Jehoash Inscription is Inauthentic."<sup>8</sup> First, I find his argument entirely unconvincing as he tests it against only one inscription—the Jehoash Inscription. How would his argument apply against a Dead Sea Scroll? Or against the James Ossuary Inscription? Or the inscription on the Ivory Pomegranate? But, that is only the beginning of my criticism. Greenstein is "prejudiced" against finding that the inscription is authentic *because* it is unprovenanced. Greenstein does not need to depend on this "prejudice," however, to justify a finding that the inscription is inauthentic. Would not his conclusion be stronger if he relied on the many philological reasons to conclude that the inscription is a forgery instead of an assumption that it must be a forgery because it is unprovenanced? "One always begins work from a particular stance," Greenstein declares.<sup>9</sup> I disagree. The whole history of judging proceeds on the basis that the judge comes to the case with no preconceived notions or prejudices. No doubt an unprovenanced inscription may be forged. But it may not be—as we know from many examples. "If a text has not been found in a controlled excavation, its authenticity cannot be presumed," Greenstein writes.<sup>10</sup> True. But neither can its inauthenticity be presumed. Greenstein's assumptions detract from our confidence in his conclusions.

Strangely enough, Greenstein's argument denies the possibility of an unprejudiced query as to whether the inscription is a forgery. Listen to him: "There is no such thing as taking no position. No one is standing nowhere; everyone is

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<sup>8</sup> Edward L. Greenstein, "Methodological Principles in Determining that the So-called Jehoash Inscription is Inauthentic," in *Puzzling Out the Past, Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Bruce Zuckerman*, ed. Marilyn J. Lundberg, Steven Fine and Wayne P. Pitard (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 83–92.

<sup>9</sup> Greenstein, "Methodological Principles," 83.

<sup>10</sup> Greenstein, "Methodological Principles," 84.

standing somewhere.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, we all have our prejudices. That may be true; but, surely we should try to suppress them, not elevate them and parade them as the source of our decision regarding forgery *vel non*.

It is also telling that Greenstein deals only with one inscription in his article, although the principle enunciated in the article purports to provide principles for determining whether inscriptions generally are forgeries. It is suspicious that Greenstein is determined to find one particular inscription a forgery. And he does it by the fact that the inscription was not found in a controlled excavation. This makes me have less, not more, confidence in Greenstein’s conclusion.

The authenticity of the Jehoash Inscription is questionable. Neither Yardeni, nor André Lemaire, nor Robert Deutsch—three world-class paleographers—will publish the Jehoash Inscription. Chaim Cohen defends some of the locutions that Greenstein and others find questionable. Why not duke it out on the merits instead of winning the argument on the ground that the inscription is unprovenanced?

Greenstein criticizes Cohen for “fail[ing] to allow the fact of its lack of provenance to affect his philological approach.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, Greenstein criticizes Cohen for his failure to base a conclusion on the inscription’s lack of provenance. If Greenstein disagrees with Cohen’s analysis, as he surely does, why not make the philological argument instead of arguing that Cohen should reach a different conclusion solely because the inscription is unprovenanced?

Israel’s leading paleographer until his recent death, Joseph Naveh has observed that “the avoidance of publishing seals bought on the market cannot serve as a remedy for the looting of ancient objects.”<sup>13</sup> All the same, Christopher Rollston has made a profession of arguing that unprovenanced inscriptions are assumptively forgeries. He would designate every unprovenanced inscription with the mark of Cain—with a mark that it is tainted. Why not instead argue their case on the merits instead of on an assumption of forgery based on the fact that it is unprovenanced? According to Rollston, the “study and publication [of unprovenanced inscriptions] within the academic guild ... encourages collectors and ultimately causes an escalation of the ‘value’ of an object.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, presumably, they should not be studied or published. Rollston goes on: “Forgers have all the tools needed to produce a nearly impeccable forgery.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore it is often useless looking for evidence of forgery in an unprovenanced object.

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<sup>11</sup> Greenstein, “Methodological Principles,” 85.

<sup>12</sup> Greenstein, “Methodological Principles,” 85.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Naveh, “On the Hecht’s Museum’s Seals Collection,” in *West Semitic Seals: Eighth–Sixth Centuries B.C.E.*, ed. Nahman Avigad, Michael Helzer and André Lemaire (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2000), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Christopher A. Rollston, “Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I: Pillaged Antiquities, Northwest Semitic Forgeries, and Protocols for Laboratory Tests,” *Maarav* 10 (2003): 135.

<sup>15</sup> Rollston, “Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I,” 139.

Scholars, according to Rollston, should simply avoid looking at unprovenanced objects.

Although forgeries are “nearly impeccable,” the forger’s flaws are also “readily apparent”—a term Rollston uses at least four times in the same article. If all these flaws are “readily apparent” and not just “apparent,” why does Rollston need to base his conclusion on the fact that the inscription has no reliable provenance? Indeed, his reliance on the lack of provenance for determining authenticity weakens his conclusion. Why not instead rely on paleographical, scientific, or factual evidence instead of relying on an assumption of forgery based on lack of provenance? Does such an assumption not weaken, rather than strengthen, his argument? Why is this assumption the major point of Rollston’s article?

Consider, for example, the so-called Moussaieff Ostraca: because they are unprovenanced, they must be considered forgeries, according to Rollston. But why does Rollston need this argument? Rollston’s analysis of the script of these ostraca demonstrates that this script is “fundamentally problematic.”<sup>16</sup> Citing the high standard of proof required in a criminal case, he writes, “I am confident beyond a reasonable doubt that both of the Moussaieff Ostraca ... are modern forgeries.”<sup>17</sup> So why bring the unprovenanced nature of the inscriptions into the argument? This only suggests that Rollston is not as confident in his conclusion as he claims to be.

The only rationale that Rollston has for rejecting unprovenanced inscriptions as inauthentic is that he is uncertain as to whether they are forgeries or not. In other words, the only legitimate basis for rejecting all unprovenanced inscriptions is that he is uncertain whether one or more unprovenanced inscriptions are forgeries. This is the case, he says, with the Ivory Pomegranate inscription: it is, in his judgment, “a probable or possible forgery.”<sup>18</sup>

I can call on no more eminent authority than the late Frank Moore Cross, who agreed with Naveh (see above, n. 13): “To throw away inscriptional materials because they come from illicit digs (or forgeries) is in my opinion irresponsible, either an inordinate desire for certitude on the part of those without the skills or energy to address the question of authenticity or the patience to wait until a consensus of scholars can be reached.”<sup>19</sup> John Boardman has even called the effort to discourage scholars from working on unprovenanced artifacts

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<sup>16</sup> Rollston, “Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I,” 173.

<sup>17</sup> Rollston, “Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I,” 173.

<sup>18</sup> Rollston, “Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I,” 182

<sup>19</sup> F. M. Cross, “Update: Finds or Fakes? Frank Moore Cross: Statement on Inscribed Artifacts Without Provenience,” *BAR* 31.5 (2005): 58.

as censorship.<sup>20</sup> Thus, ancient inscriptions should purportedly be published “whether dug up in scientifically excavations or dug up by plundering antiquities collectors or their minions.”<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, Rollston realizes that “it is not pragmatic to ignore non-provenanced inscriptions” like the Ivory Pomegranate Inscription, but they do create, he says, “irrational exuberance.”<sup>22</sup>

To ensure that readers who come across a citation to an unprovenanced find would not fail to realize that it is unprovenanced, Rollston would flag the citation with a special symbol, for example, like this: Ø. The citation would look like this: ØMoussaieff Ostrakon 1. This would ensure that the reader would not fail to realize that the cited find was unprovenanced.<sup>23</sup>

Giving some weight to the fact that the inscription is unprovenanced inevitably leads to a finding of forgery when the inscription is in fact authentic. I am thinking of the case where it is too close to call or the decision is authentic by a hair. So, by considering the fact that it is unprovenanced, the arrow switches just enough to make it more likely than not that the inscription is a forgery. So instead of labeling it “likely authentic,” it is falsely labeled a “likely forgery” simply because it is unprovenanced. This is bad scholarship and bad reasoning. In itself, the fact that the inscription is unprovenanced neither weighs for or against a finding of forgery.

The bottom line is that Rollston’s reliance on the inscription’s unprovenanced condition to conclude forgery only emphasizes the fact that without this assumption, we cannot conclude the inscription is a forgery. As Yardeni and Gideon Bohak write in a summary of their contribution to a recent *Gedenkschrift* for Joseph Naveh: “The corpus of Aramaic or Hebrew metal-plate amulets is a large and ever-growing body of ancient Jewish inscriptions that sheds light on many interesting aspects of late-antique Jewish society. Only a few of these have been found in authorized archaeological excavations and none of them is dated.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cross, “Update,” 58.

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<sup>23</sup> Christopher A. Rollston, “Navigating the Epigraphic Storm: A Paleographer Reflects on Inscriptions from the Market,” *NEA* 68 (2005): 71–72.

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