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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES, POLÍTICAS Y DE LA COMUNICACIÓN
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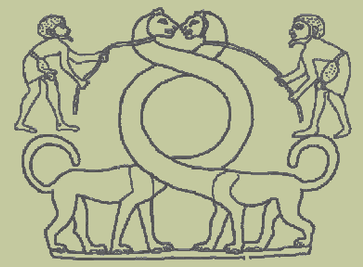

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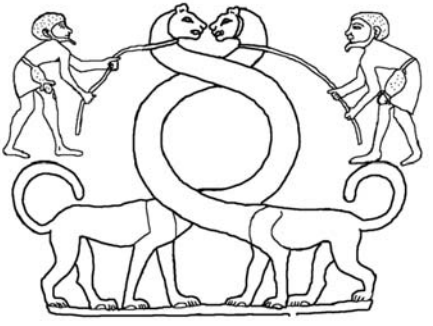

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Some Implications of the Volcanic Theophany of YHWH on His Primeval Identity

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Summary: Some Implications of the Volcanic Theophany of YHWH on His Primeval Identity

YHWH's theophany and mode of action are frequently evoked in the Bible as a volcanic event. It is shown here that this representation, of central importance in the story of the Sinai Covenant, is probably not anchored in any specific volcanic eruption experienced by the Israelites in the past. In Antiquity, volcanic activity was specifically associated with the gods who patronized metallurgy, given the homology between lava flowing from a volcano and slag released from a furnace at smelting. Evidence towards such a link is also identified in the Bible. Accordingly, rather than being simply a literary artifice imaging the outstanding powers of YHWH, volcanism may reflect the existence of metallurgical roots in Israelite theology. This contention is supported by Biblical evidences associating YHWH with metal production: (i) his primeval dominion in mining areas, (ii) his special worship by metalworkers, (iii) the representation of his celestial universe as a giant furnace. It is concluded that the volcanic representation of YHWH's theophany and mode of action reveal a surprising level of preservation of the metallurgic religious traditions in the ancient Israelite theology.

Keywords: Volcanism – Metallurgy – Smelting God – Origins of Yahwism – Sinai Covenant

Resumen: Algunas implicancias de la teofanía metalúrgica de Yahvé en su identidad primitiva

La teofanía y el modo de acción de Yahvé son frecuentemente evocadas en la Biblia como un evento volcánico. Se muestra aquí que esta representación, de central impor-

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tancia en la historia de la Alianza del Sinaí, probablemente no se encuentra anclada en ninguna erupción volcánica experimentada por los israelitas en el pasado. En la antigüedad, la actividad volcánica estaba asociada específicamente con los dioses que apadrinaban la metalurgia, dada la homología entre la lava que fluye de un volcán y la escoria liberada de un horno de fundición. También es posible encontrar evidencia sobre este vínculo en la Biblia. En consecuencia, en vez de ser un simple artificio literario que representa los poderes excepcionales de Yahvé, el volcanismo podría reflejar la existencia de raíces metalúrgicas en la teología de los israelitas. Esta opinión se sostiene por las evidencias bíblicas que asocian a Yahvé con la producción de metales: (i) su dominio en las zonas mineras, (ii) su adoración especial por parte de los trabajadores metalúrgicos, (iii) la representación de su universo divino como un horno gigante. Se concluye que la representación volcánica de la teofanía de Yahvé y su modo de acción revelan un sorprendente nivel de preservación de las tradiciones religiosas metalúrgicas en la teogonía del Antiguo Israel.

Palabras clave: Vulcanismo – Metalurgia – Dios de la Fundición – Orígenes del Yahvismo – Alianza del Sinaí

Introduction

YHWH's revelation at Sinai is one of the main fundaments of the religion of ancient Israel. This theophany is reported in Chapter 19 of Exodus as an extraordinary event. It begins with a series of lightning bolts accompanied by intense smoke and a terrifying noise which gradually amplifies. These phenomena are followed by an intense fire associated with violent quakes that shake the entire mountain (Ex 19:16–19). Both Biblical scholars and geologists have clearly recognized in this description the successive phases of a volcanic eruption.[1] The volcanic character of the revelation at Sinai is confirmed in Deuteronomy: "The mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness" (Deut 4:11). The flowing lava is not mentioned here, but in the song of Deborah, the entire event is referred to as a liquefaction of the Sinai mountain by the presence of YHWH: "The mountains melted (*nazlu*) to YHWH, Sinai before YHWH the God of Israel" (Judg

[1] The Sinai revelation has been identified as a volcanic eruption by many authors, such as Noth (1962: 156), Koenig (1964; 1966; 1968), Bentor (1990: 336) and Humphreys (2003: 84–87). See Dunn (2014: 388–397) for a review of this opinion.

5:5). It seems therefore that the Biblical tradition has kept the memory of an intimate association between volcanism and YHWH's theophany at Sinai.

Three explanations may justify this volcanic theophany. The first presupposes a historical background to this story. It assumes that in this passage the Bible reports a genuine "covenant ceremony" experienced by the Israelites in the past in the vicinity of an erupting volcano. The second explanation assumes that volcanism was introduced solely for literary purposes, the volcanic eruption providing a fantastic and impressive background for the revelation. According to the third explanation, this representation reflects a theological link between YHWH and volcanic eruptions independent of any historical or literary consideration. The validity of these three eventualities is examined first.

The Volcanic Representation at Sinai

The Historical Justification

During historic times, volcanic activity was totally unknown in south Canaan and the Sinai peninsula. Accordingly, the assumption that the theophany at Sinai reflects the memory of an authentic eruption implies its relocation around an active volcano. Regarding the parallels between the Biblical descriptions of Mount Sinai and the landscape of the north-west Arabian Peninsula, some scholars have suggested displacing the mount of revelation from Sinai to this area, where volcanic activity is attested throughout the last millennia.[2] They assumed that the wanderings of the Israelites brought them to this area, where they discovered (or at least heard about) the phenomenon of volcanic eruption. Other scholars justified the relocation of the ceremony to the Arabian Peninsula by assuming that *Sinai* does not designate an area, but rather derives from *Sîn*, the Mesopotamian moon god worshipped in the Arabian Peninsula during the first millennium BCE.[3] However, these expla-

[2] Some scholars (Philby 1955: 125–126; Noth 1962: 156) located Mount Sinai in the Tabuk volcanic field, north-west of the Arabian Peninsula. Others identified the Biblical Sinai with the volcano Hala' al-Badr, Harrat ar-Raha, Jabal al-Lawz or Al-Jaw (see Silversten 2009: 59–66; Hoffmeier 2005: 131–136; Whittacker 2003: 85–145; Koenig 1971: 67–102 respectively).
[3] The most convincing affinity is the representation of Sîn as a golden calf (Key 1965: 20), though it is also a common mode of figuration young gods in the Levant. This hypothesis fits also the identification of Sinai with *Hala' al-Badr*, the Arabian volcano whose name means

nations are not supported by any positive evidence regarding the presence of the Israelites in this area. Furthermore, the precise memory of the volcanic dimension during the revelation at Sinai, as it is attested in the Bible, is not compatible with a complete amnesia concerning its location. For these reasons, it is difficult to justify the volcanic representation at Sinai on the basis of purely historical considerations.

The Literary Justification

Volcanism is an outstanding natural phenomenon. It exhibits all the components expected in theophany: the impressive atmospheric phenomena (lightning, thunder) evoke a celestial intervention; the thick rising column of smoke accounts for a sudden communication between heaven and earth. The extreme heat in the crater, reached without combustion, is essentially a miraculous phenomenon. The unpredictable and capricious nature of a volcanic eruption strengthens the aura of mystery about its cause. Finally, the devastating effect of volcanic eruptions (together with the related phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunamis) spontaneously reminds one of the expressions of divine anger.[4] With this perspective, it is not difficult to assume that the author of this story, wishing to stress the exceptional nature of the Sinai theophany, could be tempted to represent it as a volcanic eruption.[5] Such a literary use of volcanism has other advantages. Since volcanic imagery was poorly exploited by the ancient Near Eastern religions, its use at Sinai emphasizes the uniqueness of YHWH and of his Covenant with the Israelites.

If the volcanic eruption is nothing more than a picturesque metaphor, one would not expect it to interfere substantially with the covenant itself. However, in the narrative of the revelation at Sinai, the vision of the volcanic eruption, and especially of the great fire, is approached as the evidence that YHWH was truly revealed at Sinai and spoke to the Israelites (Deut 5:19–20). Furthermore, it seems that volcanism introduces restrictions in the way YHWH is approached. For example, the Israelites are asked to stand far from the mountain in order to survive the revelation. This danger is explicitly presented as a consequence of the volcanic nature of the theophany (Ex 19:21).

"the crater of the moon" (Lewy 1946: 442; Koenig 1964: 137). However, the identification on such a basis remains tenuous.

[4] Humphreys 2003: 84–85.

[5] Vitaliano 2007.

In Deuteronomy, the Israelites even refused to meet YHWH, justifying their reserve by the risk of death inherent to the volcanic eruption: "Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of YHWH our God any more, then we shall die" (Deut 5:21). These restrictions are totally unexpected if volcanism is introduced only for literary purposes. Rather, their occurrence suggests an essential link between YHWH and volcanism, independent of any historical background or literary contingency.

The Theological Justification

If volcanism is essentially related to YHWH, we may expect to find in the Bible a multiplicity of representations of YHWH's theophany as a volcanic event, and a close relation of the symbolic meaning of volcanism with an essential attribute specifically related to YHWH. This point is examined here.

The Pillar of Cloud

The presence of YHWH among the Israelites, during the 40 years of wandering, is symbolized by a pillar of cloud (Ex 40:36–38). Approached as a genuine theophany of YHWH, this miraculous phenomenon is described as a column of smoke by day and a fire by night.[6] A description of this nature is, once again, a precise reminder of what is observed when approaching an active volcano: a thick, dark cloud of volcanic ash, gas and steam skyward, which in the dark radiates reddish light from the crater.[7] For this reason, the "cloud" moving with the Israelites can be considered the epitome of the volcanic phenomenon.

The volcanic homology between the Sinai theophany and the "presence" of YHWH in the pillar of cloud is so deep that some authors assume a strict equivalence between the two.[8] However, the pillar of cloud appears immediately after the Exodus (Ex 13:21–22), before the Sinai theophany and independently of it. This is why it should not be considered as a substitute for the Sinai theophany, but rather as another volcanic marker of the divine presence.

[6] Ex 13:21; 16:10; Num 14:14; Neh 9:12,19. See also Mann 1971.

[7] For the identification of the volcanic nature of the pillar of cloud / fire, see Bentor 1996: 334; Noth 1962: 109; Lewy 1946: 442; Humphreys 2003: 164–171.

[8] Cassuto (1953: 337–340) concluded that the tabernacle and the pillar of cloud symbolize together a Mount Sinai in miniature moving with the Israelites.

The Melting of Mountains

YHWH is praised for his general ability to transform mountains into active volcanoes. In Ps 114, the psalmist evokes YHWH liquefying the stone (v. 8) and "skipping" the mountains (v. 4.6).[9] The same reality is attested to in Ps 46:7 ("He utters His voice, the earth melts"). Here again, volcanism is considered as an inevitable consequence of the manifestation of YHWH on the earth. This specific power of YHWH is confirmed in Ps 97:5, where the volcanic activity appears to be essentially related to YHWH: "The mountains melt like wax at the presence of YHWH, at the presence of the master of the whole earth." It is also explicitly acknowledged in Ps 104:32: "He looks at the earth, and it trembles. He touches the mountains and they smoke."

The volcanic activity even appears to be an inevitable consequence of the manifestation of YHWH on the earth. This is clearly expressed in Ps 144:5, where the call to YHWH to self-reveal leads spontaneously to a volcanic event: "YHWH, bow Your heavens and come down, touch the mountains that they may smoke." Exactly the same linkage is stressed in Isa 63:19: "That you would rend the heavens, that you would come down, that the mountains may be liquefied (*nāzōlû*) at your presence."[10] The consequence of this volcanic dimension inherent to the divine revelation is tragically evoked by Amos: "My Lord, YHWH-Sebaoth, he touches the land and it melts, and all that dwell therein mourn" (Amos 9:5). If YHWH cannot approach the earth without provoking a destructive volcanic eruption, it must be concluded that volcanism was truly approached by the Israelites as an essential component of his theophany.

The Volcanic Mode of Action of YHWH

In the book of Job, it is mentioned that YHWH regularly recasts the landscape by "moving" mountains: "He removes the mountains, and they know it not, when He overturns them in His anger" (Job 9:5). Such a process characteristic of volcanic eruptions is evoked here as a general mode of action following

[9] On the volcanic dimension metaphors used in Psalm 114, see Amzallag and Avriel 2011: 311–313. Exactly the same metaphor of lava flowing down the mountain like a herd ("The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like young sheep", Ps 114:4) is used in Greek mythology to evoke the volcanic activity of the Etna. See Scarth 1989: 92–94.

[10] The same image is reproduced in Isa 64:1–2, this time in direct contact with the revelation at Sinai. This is another evidence of volcanic dimension of this theophany.

YHWH's anger. In fact, his wrath is described as a fire igniting the foundations of the mountains (*mosdey harim*, Deut 32:22), an image evoking, here again, their transformation into active volcanoes.[11] Similarly, some prophets explicitly represent the "anger of YHWH" as a hot and destructive liquid flowing on the earth.[12] Even the eschatological visions, where YHWH is expected to self-reveal to the entire earth, are characterized by an intense volcanic activity. This is clearly expressed by Micah:

> *For, behold, YHWH comes forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters that are poured down a steep place.* (Mic 1:3–4)

Also in the book of Isaiah, the eschatological vision of the revelation of YHWH is accompanied by a huge volcanic eruption darkening the sky, and blindly destroying the world.[13] This volcanic representation may explain why this eschatology holds such a terrifying character.[14] It is not surprising that the result of this final revelation is approached by Isaiah as an event leading to the genesis of a new landscape, where the valleys are leveled and the mountains removed: "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the rugged shall be made level, and the rough places a plain" (Isa 40:4).

These many instances show that the volcanic theophany of YHWH may in no way be restricted to the Sinai revelation. They also reveal that this volcanic representation cannot be simply interpreted as a metaphor. The lament of Amos about the blind-destructive consequence of YHWH's volcanic theophany (Amos 9:5), the call of Isaiah for a volcanic intervention by YHWH against the enemies of Israel (Isa 63:19) and the explicit representation of the day of YHWH as a giant volcanic event suggest that volcanism was interpreted

[11] It is therefore not surprising that the destruction of Jerusalem is precisely described as a fire consuming the deep foundations of the city (Lam 4:11).
[12] Ezek 22:31; Hos 5:10; Zeph 3:8.
[13] Isa 13:9–10, 42:14–15.
[14] The book of Joel describes in detail the devastation that lava is expected to provoke on the earth (Joel 2:1–10), at the time the sun will be veiled (Joel 3:4, 4:15), probably by a thick cloud of volcanic ash.

as the genuine manifestation of YHWH on the earth. Furthermore, the belief that volcanism is able to reveal YHWH to mankind (Joel 4:15–17; Zeph 3:8–9) implies the existence of an essential relation between YHWH and volcanism.

Two possible explanations may justify such an essential kinship. The first assumes that YHWH was formerly a foreign volcano-god introduced in Canaan by the Israelites. The second possible explanation assumes that YHWH is not a volcano-god, but that volcanism serves as a symbol representing one of his most essential attributes. In order to test this latter eventuality, it is necessary to first identify what volcanism symbolized in Antiquity, and to examine whether this reality is essentially related to YHWH.

The Religious Significance of Volcanism

Furnaces and Volcanoes

Smelting, the transformation of ore into metal in a furnace, is the only human activity involving stone melting. Therefore, a perfect and even *exclusive* homology exists between the flowing of lava from a volcano and the release of slag from a furnace during the smelting process.[15] This explains why volcanoes were typically related to the gods of metallurgy in Antiquity. Hephaestus, the Greek smith-god is called the prince of Etna.[16] Also his "servants," the Cyclops, dwelled around the Etna and Lipari volcanoes. Their metallurgical activity was supposed to occur at the heart of the volcano.[17] The Etruscan and Roman counterparts of Hephaestus (respectively Sethlans and Vulcan) are also fully identified with active volcanoes. A homology between metallurgy and volcanism is also clearly attested to in the mythologies of Central and Northern Europe.[18]

[15] This homology is related by Dieterle (1987: 5) as following: "... Among the apparati of the forge, there is no doubt that it is the furnace that corresponds to the volcano, since the molten slag flowing from it is profoundly like the flow of the molten lava from a volcano..."
[16] Euripides, *Cyclops*, v. 600.
[17] In the Odyssey, Polyphemus, the most famous Cyclop, is even completely assimilated to the volcanic activity of the Etna. See Scarth 1989.
[18] See Davidson 1958: 158; Dieterle 1987: 3–6. Surt, the Icelandic volcano god, is acknowledged as the master of the giants, the mythical metalworkers from the past. His metallurgical acquaintances are confirmed by his legendary flaming sword and the metallic boat in which he moves. And exactly as the eschatology related by some Biblical prophets, the Nordic mythographers tell that the volcanic activity of Surt is expected, in the far future, to entirely consume

The essential nature of the association between metallurgy and volcanism is confirmed by the figuration, in ancient Greece, of the islands of Rhodes and Lemnos as sites of volcanic activity.[19] Exactly as with the Sinai in the Bible, this volcanism remains a pure fiction. It was apparently introduced in order to justify the presence of the semi-divine metalworkers and their patron deity in these islands.[20] These observations reflect a widespread symbolic correspondence, in Antiquity, between active volcanoes and metal workshops, and especially the furnace.[21]

Volcanism and Metallurgy in the Bible

In the Bible, the intimacy of the relationship between metallurgy and volcanism is revealed in the text referring to the theophany of YHWH at Sinai. There, a homology is promoted between the pillar of smoke rising from the mountain and the smoke of a furnace: "Mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because YHWH descended upon it in fire. The smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace (*kibšan*), and the whole mount quaked greatly" (Ex 19:18). This comparison is very striking. The mention of a massive pillar of smoke rising from the mountain is easily seen, so it does not require any clarification through analogy. Furthermore, the didactic power of smelting imagery is very limited, smelting being a highly specialized activity. Finally, the smoke of a furnace is so reduced with regards to the smoke of a volcano that the analogy minimizes the outstanding amplitude of the events relative to the Sinai revelation. These considerations suggest that the reference to furnace metallurgy is introduced here in order to stress the homology between volcanic eruptions and furnace activity.

This interpretation is confirmed by literary considerations. The text of the Sinai revelation (Exodus 19) is organized as a giant chiasm centered on verse

the creation in order to replace it by a new world (see Davidson 1958: 154). MacCulloch (1930: 202, 279–280) reports that in Nordic mythology, volcanic eruptions are considered to be caused by the giants and their activity. On the relationship between Giants and metallurgy in Norse mythology, see Dieterle 1987: 4.

[19] Newbold 2006: 3. Concerning the association between the Telchines from Rhodes and metalworking, see Martin 2004: 10; Eliade 1977: 87; Blakely 2006: 15–16, 152–156.

[20] Burckert 1970: 1–16; Capdeville 1995: 272.

[21] See Virgil, *Enneid* iii 571.582; *Georg*. i. 471, Ovid. *Metam*. xv, 340. In Scandinavia, for example, the furnace (*aflar*) is explicitly identified with a volcano (see Einarson 2011: 63, 84).

18, a feature stressing its central importance for understanding the story as a whole.[22] The homology between the smoke of the volcano and that of the furnace promoted in this verse becomes therefore a key to reading the whole story of the Sinai revelation.[23]

The homology between metallurgy and volcanism also appears in the book of Isaiah. On the one hand, it is related that the holy of holies of the Jerusalem temple is filled by a cloud of smoke by day and a light visible at night (Isa 4:5), a description inspired by the volcanic theophany of YHWH (see above). On the other, the temple of Jerusalem is symbolically considered as the site of divine metallurgical activity. This is revealed by the sentence closing the divine speech in Isa 31:9: "This is the word of YHWH, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Isa 31:9). Here, the mention of the "divine furnace" at Jerusalem cannot be approached simply as a metaphor because it is introduced to ensure that YHWH truly spoke, exactly as volcanism ensures that the theophany at Sinai is that of YHWH. It appears therefore that the Jerusalem temple was approached as the "furnace of YHWH," at the time his presence was evoked through volcanic imagery.

The book of Isaiah describes the celestial throne of YHWH as being surrounded by *seraphim* (Isa 6:2). These dragon-like creatures are standing near burning coals (Isa 6:6) exuding a thick smoke (Isa 6:4). These details suggest that YHWH's throne is symbolically assimilated here to something recalling both a furnace and a volcano. This kinship is confirmed in the book of Daniel evoking the Divine Master sitting on a throne positioned above a huge torrent of fire (Dan 7:10). This vision is reminiscent of a volcanic effusion of lava and/or flow of slag cast out of an open furnace.

All these considerations indicate that the homology between volcanism and metallurgy was acknowledged in ancient Israel as it was in other ancient cultures. This invites us to examine to what extent YHWH's volcanic theophany and mode of action reflect an essential link between the deity and metallurgy, and especially with furnace smelting.

[22] Avishur 2000: 119–203.

[23] As related by Meynet (2010: 310–311), the central verse of a concentric structure is well known as representing a key of reading for the entire text. See also Van der Lugt 2010: 537–542.

Metallurgy as YHWH's Essential Attribute

Some elements link YHWH to metals and metalworking in the Bible. For example, YHWH's mode of action is sometimes envisioned as a metallurgical process (ore roasting, smelting, furnace re-melting, and metal purification).[24] The scepter-serpent transformation performed by Moses in the name of YHWH (Ex 3:2–3, 4:2–5) resembles a process of furnace remelting.[25] Also YHWH's divine emissary (malak-YHWH) displays strong affinities with the Canaanite smith-god.[26] Even the limping of Jacob inherent to his transformation into Israel (Gen 32:32–33) recalls an initiatory infirmity typically associated with smiths and metalworkers.[27] These elements together suggest an essential relation between YHWH and metallurgy. This conclusion is confirmed by further observations.

YHWH and the Mining Areas

The essential link between YHWH and mining areas is revealed by the mention of his "origin" in the mountainous region of Seir, South Arabah and Sinai (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4; Hab 3:3). The common point of these locations is the presence of rich resources of copper ore: the mining area of Punon (Faynan, North Arabah), of Timna (South Arabah) and of Serabit El-Khadim are located at Seir, Paran and Sinai respectively. All these areas knew an intense activity of mining and copper production in Antiquity, attested to by the huge amount of slag found in these sites.[28] At the end of the second millennium BCE, this metallurgical activity was particularly intense in the Arabah valley.[29]

The god specifically related to these areas is expected to be deeply involved in the wealth of their inhabitants. Since the exploitation of copper ore and

[24] See Gen 19:24–28; Isa 34:9; Jer 6:27–30, 9:6; Ezek 22:18, 24:11. For discussion about the metallurgical dimension of this mode of action, see Amzallag 2013: 158–162.
[25] See Laughlin 1975: 16, n. 41; Amzallag 2009a: 395–396.
[26] See Amzallag 2012.
[27] See Eliade 1977 [1956]: 88–89; Martin 2005: 17–20; Dieterle 1987: 3–4; Amzallag 2009a: 400–401.
[28] The amount of slag produced between the fourth and first millennia BCE is evaluated as 100.000 tons in the Punon (Faynan) area (Bartlett 1989: 36; Levy *et al.* 2004: 867). The same amount is evaluated at BirNasib in the mining district of Serabit el Khadim (Rothenberg 1987: 4). The amount of slag at Timna is estimated at up to 10,000 tons (Erez Ben-Yosef, pers. comm.).
[29] See Levy *et al.* 2004.

metal reduction was practically the only local activity of these desert regions, it is likely that YHWH patronized copper production. This is confirmed by further considerations. The land granted by YHWH to the Israelites is evoked in Deuteronomy as a country rich in iron and copper ore resources, considered to be a substantial source of wealth: "A country where you should eat your bread without scarceness, where you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper" (Deut 8:9). This claim is unfounded, however, because the "Promised Land" is completely devoid of these ores. The rich resources of copper ore in south Canaan (the region of the Arabah) were granted by YHWH to the Edomites, not to the Israelites (Deut 2:5). The Israelites were obviously aware that this mention of fabulous mineral resources was a fiction, so that such a false claim weakens the entire promise. This means that it was probably introduced not as an instrument of persuasion, but rather as a theological requirement. If YHWH originally dwelled in a mining area, his presence among the Israelites requires the symbolic transformation of the entire "Promised land" into a giant mining area.

The Patron of the Smelters

As a god originating from an area of copper production, YHWH is expected to display a special relationship with the smelters and metalworkers. This point is acknowledged in the book of Isaiah, where YHWH reveals his presence in the smith's workshop. He is involved in blowing air on the coals, and he even participates in the production of metal artifacts: "Surely, I am (YHWH) who have created the smith, who blows on the fire of coals and who brings forth the instrument of his work" (Isa 54:16). In the Bible, such an involvement is not seen in relation to any other human activity, a feature suggesting, here again, a special kinship of YHWH with metallurgy.

This conclusion is confirmed by the closeness of YHWH to the Canaanite smelters, the Kenites.[30] Their importance is stressed by the mention of Cain, the ancestor of the tribe, as the firstborn of mankind (Gen 4:1).[31] The special attachment to YHWH of this congregation is promoted by the sign of their

[30] For the identification of Kenites as Canaanite metalworkers, see Miller 1974; McNutt 1990: 239–249; Blenkinsopp 2008: 140; Mondriaan 2011: 416–418.

[31] The comparative analysis of the genealogies in Genesis 4 and 5 led some authors to assume that Cain, and not Seth, was formerly regarded as the ancestor of Noah. See Lewy 1956: 431; Sawyer 1986: 158; Knohl 2004: 63–70. According to Sawyer (1986), Genesis 4 evokes not only the closeness to YHWH of Cain and his lineage, but also their status of civilizing heroes.

divine protection (Gen 4:15), a mark of their prestigious status and closeness to YHWH,[32] as well as their Yahwistic fervor and inspiration.[33] The mention of Jethro the Kenite as a priest dwelling near the holy mountain of YHWH (Horeb) confirms these conclusions. Furthermore, it is highly significant that Moses discovered the genuine identity of YHWH hitherto unknown to the Israelites (Ex 6:3) after dwelling for years near Jethro, his father-in-law.[34] For all these reasons, many authors assume that YHWH was formerly a Kenite god, that is to say, a god worshiped specifically by the Canaanite metalworkers.[35]

Edom was a nation emerging at the end of the second millennium BCE in the Arabah in close relation with the Kenites and to the production of copper.[36] Many Biblical indications suggest that YHWH was committed to the Edomites as he was to the Israelites.[37] A senior status of Edom is even revea-

[32] See Blenkinsopp 2008: 141–142; McNutt 1990: 239–241. This sign is also mentioned in Ezekiel 9:4.

[33] Caleb and Othniel, two members of a clan (Qenizites) affiliated to the Kenites, are praised for their zeal for YHWH and their divine inspiration (Num 32:12; Judg 3:9–11). The attachment of the Kenites and their related clans (Qenizites, Rechabites, see McNutt 1990: 242–243) to YHWH is evoked in Ex 18.10–12; Num 13.6; Jos 14:13–14; 2Kgs 10:15–16; and Jer 35:18–19. Also Bezalel and Uri, the metalworkers involved in construction of the tabernacle, are considered as being filled with "the spirit of god" (Ex 31:1–5).

[34] Concerning the Kenite influence on Moses, see North 1964: 381; Albright 1963; Garbini 1988; Weinfeld 1988; Blenkinsopp 2008: 133–136.

[35] The Kenite hypothesis of the origin of YHWH is debated for a long time. See for example Smith 1918; Schmökel 1933; Gray 1953; Albright 1963; North 1964; Weinfeld 1988. For recent developments and discussions, see Blenkinsopp 2008; Mondriaan 2011. Curiously, the metallurgical affinities of YHWH and his cult were denied even by the authors promoting the Kenite hypothesis. For example, Immanuel Lewy (1956: 431) assumed that "The Kenites and related tribes worshipped Yahu or Yahweh but they did not know the origin of that worship and so they attributed it to their ancestor, Cain, the first smith or hammerer." However, this speculative explanation remains unlikely, due to the great conservatism of the metallurgical traditions and beliefs in Antiquity, as revealed by their similarities in different cultures. See Eliade 1977: 82–91. This feature is confirmed by the similarities observed between the metallurgical traditions from traditional societies in Africa and those on Ancient Greece and Canaan. See Blakely 2006: 1–5; McNutt 1990: 241, 245–246.

[36] See Levy and Najjar 2006; Tebes 2009: 107–108. The ethnic/cultural continuity between the ancient people of Seir and the new Edomite political entity, already suggested in Genesis 36, is supported by comparison of the archaeological findings from the Late Bronze Age (Seir) and the Early Iron Age (Edom) (see Levy 2009: 251–252). The cult of YHWH by this population is confirmed by an Egyptian inscription from the temple of Amon at Soleb (Nubia) from the time of Amenophis III mentioning "the shasu Land of Yahu" (see Giveon 1971: 27). For interrelations between the Kenites and Edomites, see Abramsky 1953: 119–120.

[37] On the Biblical evidences about the worship of YHWH in Edom, see Haney 2007;

led by the divine blessing that Isaac intended to give to Esau "Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be a lord over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be every one that curses you, and blessed be every one that blesses you" (Gen 27:29). The stormy story of the transfer of the primogeniture rights from Esau to Jacob (Genesis 27) confirms that the privileged status of Israel as "people of YHWH" was originally destined to the Edomites, and not to the Israelites.[38]

Juan Manuel Tebes suggested that the "wisdom" of Edom explicitly mentioned in Jer 49: 7–8 (see also Obad 8) is closely related to metallurgy.[39] A few verses later, the Edomites are likened to those in Israel who are consecrated to YHWH, through their common interdiction of wine consumption (Jer 49:12).[40] This suggests that the "metallurgical" wisdom of the Edomites was not restricted to manual skill, but also extended to deep knowledge of YHWH.

The Celestial Furnace

In the vision opening the book of Ezekiel, the celestial throne is evoked as a universe of fire, flames and embers (Ezek 1:4,13). Amid these embers, Ezekiel evokes a strange reality he calls *ḥašmal*: "And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire flashing up, so that a brightness was round about it; and out of the midst thereof as the color of *ḥašmal,* out of the midst of the fire" (Ezek 1:4).

Elektron, the Greek term translating *ḥašmal* in the Septuagint, is generally used to designate amber or a metal alloy of pale yellow color. The same dual meaning is also encountered in the words close to *ḥašmal* in Egyptian (*ḥasmn*), Akkadian (*ešmarû*) and Elamite (*išmalu*).[41] Amber is a fossilized resin, so that it carbonizes without shining light once surrounded by fire. This means that, in Ezekiel's vision, *ḥašmal* designates a metal. Being positioned amid glowing embers, this matter is probably not in a solid state. It seems that here Ezekiel describes molten metal through the pale yellow radiation radia-

Blenkinsopp 2008. About the affinities between the Qos, the Edomite god, and YHWH, see Kelley 2009: 264–271.

[38] On the significance of the conflict between Jacob and Esau, see Waterman 1938; Tebes 2006.

[39] See Tebes 2009.

[40] This interdiction of wine consumption of the metallurgists is confirmed in Jer 35:6 (accounting for the kinship between the Rechabites and the Kenites stressed in 1 Chron 2: 55).

[41] See Bodi 1991: 82–90.

ting from it, exactly as it may be observed in a furnace.[42] This is an additional detail revealing that the throne of YHWH was conceived by the Israelites as being positioned upon a giant celestial furnace. This representation confirms the assumption of a relationship between a volcanic theophany and metallurgy as an essential attribute of YHWH.

The Cauldron Symbolism

The link between furnace and volcanism may also be deduced from the use of the cauldron as a symbol of the Jerusalem temple, because the cauldron was in Antiquity the cultic artifact expressing the homology between metallurgy and volcanism.

The Cauldron as Furnace/Volcano

Cultic cauldrons were approached in Antiquity as specific sites of rejuvenation by fire and liquefaction.[43] The single human activity corresponding to such a property is the recycling of rust copper by its remelting in a furnace. The strong reducing power of the furnace enables an ingot of shiny copper to be regenerated from old rust artifacts without any loss of matter. The furnace is therefore the site of infinite regeneration of metal through destruction/loss of shape by fire. This consideration introduces an essential homology between cauldrons and furnaces. It is even strengthened by the similar shape of cauldrons and furnaces used in copper metallurgy, as well as the metallic nature of this cultic artifact.

The comparative analysis of the symbolism of the cauldron in Antiquity reveals its strong homology with the crater of a volcano in activity.[44] This is especially expressed through the serpent symbol. Snakes are typically associated with cauldrons in Antiquity, adorning the body, the protomes and even the support of this ritual artifact.[45] The volcanic affinities of this symbol are

[42] Driver (1951: 62) already concluded that the Ezekiel vision identifies the celestial throne of YHWH with a furnace of copper smelting.

[43] See Tresidder 2008, article "Cauldron." This fact is attested from the Bronze Age in the Mediterranean world. See Willets 1962: 315–316.

[44] According to Suhr (1967: 218–219), "The bronze cauldron, around which the protomes are placed, is similar in shape to the caldera or crater from which gas and lava are ejected."

[45] See Hopkins 1960; Suhr 1971; Erdy 1995; Ridgway 1977. This association between cauldrons and snakes is apparently ancient in the Near East (see Hornblower 1933: 84).

revealed by the fact that the volcano was frequently regarded as the preferential habitat of snake-dragons.[46]

As a parallel, this mythical animal is also typically associated with metallurgy. In Mesopotamia, the gods who patronized metallurgical activity were closely related to dragons.[47] Their Egyptian counterpart, Ptah, was identified with the cosmic dragon Ir-ta.[48] The same ophidian symbolism is encountered in ancient Greece, where Hephaestus is the father of the serpent-god Erechtonius. In the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula, snake worship is clearly attested to in mining areas, where it is observed in close relation with ritual metallurgy.[49] Also in the Bible, it is reported that the Israelites were bitten by burning serpents (*seraphim*) at the vicinity of the copper mining area of Punon (Num 21:4–9).[50] This reveals that these creatures were, here again, closely related to metallurgy.

The link between metallurgy, snakes and cauldrons is confirmed by the representation, on the Gundestup cauldron (Denmark), of a deity (probably Cernunnos) holding a serpent in one hand and a torque in the other, as a sign of their close relationship.[51] The torque was the preferred form of storage of metal in Central Europe during the Bronze Age.[52] Accordingly, the relationship between snakes and metal ingots in the context of the cauldron confirms that this ritual artifact symbolized the regeneration of copper by recycling old rust artifacts in a furnace.

These considerations reveal that the use of the serpent / dragon to symbolize the cauldron, the volcano and the metallurgical activity reflects an essential link between them.

[46] In Greek mythology, for example, Typhoon lives in the Etna. It is even regarded as responsible for the volcanic eruptions. See Ogden 2013: 162–163, 219–220.
[47] Enki is called the snake from Apsu (Espak 2006: 51–53), Ea is closely associated with snakes (Budge 1921: 24–26) and Ningizzida, his homolog, is represented as a dragon (Van Buren 1934; McDonald 1989: 29–35; Wiggermann 1997: 40–41).
[48] Sauneron and Yoyotte 1959: 33–38; Cruz-Uribe 1994: 188.
[49] See Rothenberg 1984: 93–100; Potts 2007: 65; Benoist 2007: 38, 46–48.
[50] For identification of the site as Punon, see Sawyer 1986: 156; Tebes 2009: 108.
[51] See Fickett-Wilbar 2003: 85–87, 95. Weland, the Nordic counterpart of Cernunos is also explicitly associated with snakes and dragons. See Davidson 1958: 152, 154, 156–157.
[52] Schaeffer 1949.

The Cauldron as Symbol of the Jerusalem Temple

The book of Kings evokes ten copper-made chariots positioned at the entrance of the Jerusalem temple, each one supporting a copper-made basin (*kior*) (1Kgs 7:27–39). This cultic artifact is generally interpreted as the recipient of the water used by the priests for purifications.[53] However, beyond this purpose, it is likely that the basins had also a symbolic function. The term *kior* also designates in the Bible a site of combustion: "In that day will I make the chiefs of Judah like a *kior* of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire among sheaves" (Zech 12:6). In 1 Sam 2:14, this term explicitly designates a cultic cauldron in which the meat of the sacrifice was cooked.

A close similarity exists between the chariots evoked in 1Kgs 7:27–39 and the cauldron cart from Enkomi dated from the 11th–10th Centuries BCE.[54] At Enkomi, the copper basin is clearly identified as a cauldron, and the central importance of cultic metallurgy at Cyprus suggests its metallurgical acquaintances. According to the similarity between the cauldron cart from Enkomi and the chariots of the Jerusalem temple, we may assume that the basin (*kior*) of these latter was also approached as a cultic cauldron.

Also the "sea of copper" of outstanding dimensions positioned at the entrance of the Jerusalem temple (1Kgs 7:23–26) looks like a giant cultic cauldron. Its appellation as "sea of copper" (2Kgs 25:13; Jer 52:17; 1Chron 18:8) even suggests that the water filling it symbolized molten copper, slag and/or lava.[55]

The assimilation of Jerusalem as a whole with a smoking cultic cauldron is attested in Ezek 24:6. Exactly as in 1 Sam 2:14, here the cultic cauldron is expected to cook the meat of the sacrifices (Ezek 24:3–5). However, two chapters before, the city of Jerusalem is imaged as a giant metallurgical site in which the Israelites become molten by the deity:

[53] This interpretation is supported by the mention of the copper basin at the entrance of the tabernacle (Ex 30:18–21, 40:30).

[54] See fig. 8 in Hopkins 1960.

[55] This interpretation is supported by the fact that the term *mayim* in Biblical Hebrew does not only designate the water element, but also every other matter at a molten state. In Ps 114:8, *mayim* explicitly evokes molten stone (see Amzallag and Avriel 2011: 312–314). Similarly, the molten lava poured by YHWH as expression of his wrath is equated to water in Mic 1:4 and Hos 5:10 (See Koenig 1966: 16–17). Identification of molten metal as water is already attested in Bronze Age cultures. See Lambert 1980: 382–387.

> *Therefore thus said my lord YHWH: Because you are all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver and brass and iron and lead and tin into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will cast you in, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall you be melted in the midst thereof; and you shall know that I, YHWH, have poured out My fury upon you.* (Ezek 22:19–22)

The combination of these two representations reveals the equivalence promoted by Ezekiel between the cultic cauldron and metallurgy. This equivalence is confirmed by the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem is justified by the inability to eliminate the rust accumulated on the cauldron / Jerusalem without processing a complete furnace re-melting of this cultic artifact (Ezek 24: 9–13). Accordingly, Ezekiel assumes here that the purifying/revitalizing function inherent to the cultic cauldron, symbolized by furnace remelting of rust copper, becomes impossible because this cultic artifact is too corroded so that it itself has to be re-melted. This mention of the entire melting of Jerusalem as a cauldron not only fits the image of furnace re-melting, but also a volcanic event similar to that mentioned in Deut 32:22; Mic 6:2 and Ps. 18: 8.

Discussion

Volcanism as Symbolic Representation of Metallurgy

The present analysis indicates that the revelation of YHWH at Sinai is conditioned by the volcanic nature of the event. However, it also stresses that volcanism should neither be approached as a historical event, nor as a simple metaphor of YHWH's overwhelming powers. Rather, the extensive use of the volcanic imagery in divine context reveals a theological background to this representation.

In light of the volcanic activity attested in the Arabian Peninsula during the historical period, some authors have suggested that YHWH was formerly an Arabian volcano god. This position was recently reformulated by Jacob Dunn as follows:

> *Without doubt, destruction by fire and earthquake was YHWH's modus operandi in his earliest traditions connected with a sacred mountain near Midian in northwest Saudi Arabia. In essence, YHWH can be seen as a djinn, an Arabian fire "demon" who was worshipped by the indigenous populations in proximity to Midian. It is suggested, moreover, that Yahwism entered secondarily into Israelite religion, and that this fierce volcanic deity was brought north by the Midianite/Kenites on the trade routes linking Arabia with Levant. In an entirely new land—Canaan—almost completely devoid of volcanic mountains, a volcanic deity like YHWH was quickly transformed into a storm deity like Baal. Over time the volcanic nature of YHWH was eclipsed...*[56]

The data exposed in this study suggest another explanation: exactly as attested in other ancient religions, volcanism may have been introduced in the Bible in order to express the essential kinship of YHWH with metallurgy. The likelihood of these two hypotheses may be compared in light of the data exposed in this study.

(i) *Metallurgy*: If YHWH was formerly a volcano-god, he is not expected to display any specific kinship with metallurgy. Accordingly, the symbolic association between metallurgy and volcanism in ancient religions and the metallurgical background of Yahwism identified here support the second hypothesis.

(ii) *Volcanic activity*: If YHWH was formerly an Arabian volcano god, his theophany and mode of action are expected to be inspired by the volcanic activity specifically attested in this area. In Psalm 46, we find an explicit mention of volcanic activity ("he utters his voice, the earth melts", v. 7) together with the description of mountains (islands) suddenly collapsing within the sea (v. 3). The only possible natural phenomenon fitting this description is the collapse of a caldera following overextended volcanic activity. This reality (which recalls the Santorini volcanic eruption) has nothing to do with the activity of an Arabian volcano god. However, it is perfectly justified if volcanism, wherever it occurs, is evoked as symbol of the metallurgical powers of YHWH.

[56] Dunn 2014: 423–424.

(iii) *Origin of YHWH*: If YHWH was in the past a volcano god, we expect to find mention of his origin in a volcanic area (first hypothesis). However, this information is lacking in the Bible. In contrast, some Biblical sources explicitly mention the origin of YHWH in the mining areas of Arabah and Sinai, as predicted by the second hypothesis.

(iv) *The prominent status of YHWH*. Nothing is known about the ancient cult of a volcano god in the Arabian Peninsula. This means that such a deity, if he truly existed in this area, was in no way approached as the supreme god. It is therefore difficult to justify how such a minor Arabian divine being may have become a supreme god in a land (Canaan) where his powerful expression is totally ignored. In contrast, the status of supreme deity of the god of copper metallurgy is perfectly plausible given the central cultural and religious importance of metallurgy in the Bronze Age.[57] Some of the most essential advancements in early metallurgy of copper, such as the invention of the furnace, were elaborated in Canaan during the fifth millennium BCE. Later, the Canaanites remained deeply involved in the international trade of metals, so that metallurgy remained an important source of wealth and prestige.[58] These singularities justify the prominent position, in the pantheon of South Canaan, of the god patronizing this activity.

According to these considerations, we may therefore conclude that the volcanic theophany of YHWH attested in the Bible does not reflect his primeval identity as a volcano god. Rather, it seems to be introduced for theological purposes, as the expression of his essential relation with metallurgy.

The Knowledge about Volcanic Activity

The Sinai theophany in Ex 19:16–19 details no less than seven different phases of a volcanic eruption, all mentioned in their chronological order of appearance.[59] This indicates that the author devoted special attention to providing a maximum of realism to his description, probably in order to ensure the

[57] According to Kristiansen and Larsson (2005: 43–61) the metallurgists were in Bronze Age societies identified as civilizing heroes and masters of the esoteric knowledge. This opinion is supported by the prestigious status of the metallurgists later observed in traditional societies from Africa and India, which recalls the status of metallurgists in Antiquity. See McNutt 1990: 43–81; Blakely 2006: 99–121, 166–183.

[58] Amzallag 2009b: 502–505, 511–513.

[59] Bentor 1990: 336.

authenticity of YHWH's revelation to the Israelites at Sinai. It implies that the author was well informed about volcanic activity, though no volcanic eruption was known in Canaan during the historical time. Three possible sources of knowledge about volcanism may be envisaged:

(i) *Memory of ancient volcanic events*. The volcanic activity of Santorini, at the middle of the second millennium BCE, had a profound impact in the eastern Mediterranean.[60] This is reflected by myths and stories from Egypt and the Aegean.[61] Some authors have interpreted the plagues affecting Egypt at Exodus as a literary reuse of the geo-climatic disturbances that affected Egypt during the explosion of Santorini.[62] The description of the volcanic theophany at Sinai may therefore be an extension of such a literary use of this memorable eruption.[63]

(ii) *Vicinity of the Arabian volcanic field*. The Arabian Peninsula is the site of volcanic activity in historical times.[64] The land of Midian, a confederation of nomads in close contact with the Israelites, extended into the Arabian north-west volcanic field.[65] Furthermore, the book of Jeremiah mentions contacts between Israel and the kingdoms of Dedan and Tema (Jer 25:23, 49:8), also located in a volcanic area.[66] In addi-

[60] LaMoreaux (1995) reported the identification of volcanic ash from Santorini as far as Crete, Egypt and Anatolia.

[61] See Foster *et al.* 1996: 3–5.

[62] Even destruction of Pharaoh's army in the sea is regarded by many authors as a 'literary updating' of the powerful tsunami that accompanied the explosion of Santorini. See Silversten 2009: 8, 23–24 and references therein.

[63] Other volcanic events may be also considered. A millennium before (2880–2460 BCE), a series of volcanic eruptions is identified in the North East of Canaan (Kra volcanic field), 100 kilometers eastward of Galilee. See Trifonov 2007: 133–142; Camp and Roobol 1989: 71–95. These eruptions destroyed many villages, a feature leaving durable traces in collective memory.

[64] See Camp *et al*. 1987: 489–490. According to Camp *et al.* (1991, 1992), no less than 21 volcanic eruptions are attested in the Arabian peninsula during the last 15 centuries.

[65] See Whittaker 2003: 18–39. On the extension of the Midianite territory, see Philby (1955). On contacts between this region and the south of Canaan at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, see Rothenberg (1998). It is noticeable that Mount Horeb, the first site of the revelation of YHWH to Moses (Ex 3:1,19), is located in the territory of Midian. The name of this mountain (= *destruction*) and the presence of a mysterious fire burning without fuel (Exodus 3:6) are particularly well suited to a volcano.

[66] See Ezek 25:15,20. One of the most important volcanic hot points of this volcanic area, *Harrat Rahat*, is located at about 600 kilometers eastward of the valley of the Arabah (Camp and Roobol 1989: 71, 79).

tion, many volcanic fields are close to the caravan routes ensuring traffic of gold, frankincense, spices and perfumes from southern Arabia to the Mediterranean coast.[67] In this way, the Israelites may have easily heard about volcanic eruptions occurring in the Arabian Peninsula.

(iii) *Knowledge from far*. The Etna volcano has a mode of eruption consistent with that described in Sinai. Furthermore, it shows an almost continuous activity during historical times. Though this volcano is far from Canaan, knowledge about its activity may have reached the East Mediterranean area in two ways: the Philistines and the Phoenicians.[68]

These considerations reveal that, despite the lack of volcanic eruptions in Canaan, reliable information was available to the Biblical authors in order to make an accurate description of the Sinai as a volcano in activity and to identify the divine mode of action and even YHWH's final day as a volcanic event.

CONCLUSION

The present study has revealed the theological dimension of the volcanic activity closely related to YHWH in the Bible. At the same time, the specific kinship between YHWH and metal production reveals the existence of metallurgical roots to Yahwism. These two realities are linked here through the symbolic relationship acknowledged in Antiquity between volcanism and metallurgy. Beyond these considerations, the multiplicity of volcanic representations in the Bible reveals that the metallurgical background of ancient Yahwism was surprisingly vivid among the Israelites.

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[67] See de Maigret 1998: 221–222; Dunn 2014 and references therein.

[68] The Egyptian documents evoke the presence of *Sherden* and *Sekelesh* among the Philistines (*Plst*). These peoples were identified by some historians as originating from Sardinia and Sicily respectively. See Woudhuizen 2006: 34, 38, 95–98, 111–115. Concerning the Phoenician presence in this area, see Stern 1991: 91–93; Tykot 1994: 73.

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Recently Discovered Iron Age Lion Figurines from Jerusalem

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Summary: Recently Discovered Iron Age Lion Figurines from Jerusalem

More than 500 Iron Age figurines were discovered in the 2005–2010 Western Wall Plaza excavations in Jerusalem.[1] The excavations revealed a large building, probably of the four-room type. Many figurines were discovered in this building, others in fills below and above it, dating in general to the eighth-sixth centuries BCE. Here we focus on two heads most likely depicting lions, one of them exceptional—holding another animal in its mouth. We discuss the identification of these figurines as lions, the lion motif in a variety of media in the Southern Levant, and finally recent theories concerning lions in the Hebrew Bible and their relation to Yahweh. We suggest that the two Western Wall Plaza figurines represent lions as wild animals, in similarity to other figurines of wild animals made on occasion by Judean coroplasts.

Keywords: Lion – Figurine – Judah – Yahweh

[1] As in every other excavation, the vast majority of the figurines are fragmented. However, the type can be identified in most cases. For convenience, we call them "figurines" and will not add the word fragment in each case.

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Resumen: Estatuillas de león de la Era de Hierro recientemente descubiertas provenientes de Jerusalén

Más de 500 estatuillas de la Edad del Hierro fueron descubiertas en las excavaciones de la Plaza del Muro Occidental de 2005–2010, en Jerusalén. Las excavaciones revelaron un gran edificio, probablemente del tipo de cuatro habitaciones. Se descubrieron muchas estatuillas en este edificio, otras en rellenos debajo y por encima de éste, datadas en general en los siglos VIII–VI a.C. Aquí nos focalizamos en dos cabezas que muy posiblemente representen leones, una de ellas excepcional—sosteniendo otro animal en su boca. Discutimos la identificación de estas estatuillas como leones, el motivo del león en una variedad de medios en el sur del Levante, y finalmente, teorías recientes concernientes a los leones en la Biblia Hebrea y su relación con Yavé. Sugerimos que las dos estatuillas de la Plaza del Muro Occidental representan leones como animales salvajes, de manera similar a otras estatuillas de animales salvajes realizadas en ocasiones por alfareros judaítas.

Palabras clave: León – Estatuilla – Judá – Yahvé.

Introduction

The Western Wall Plaza salvage excavations, initiated by the Western Wall Heritage Foundation and carried out on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, took place between 2005 and 2010 on the northeastern slope of the western hill of Iron Age Jerusalem, c. 100 m west of the Western Wall (**Figs. 1–3**). In the course of the excavations, a building, probably of the four-room house type, was partly uncovered.[2] It was built in the seventh century BCE above an abandoned quarry and its foundations were laid on the exposed bedrock (**Figs. 2–4**). The building is very well preserved—its walls (including foundations) still stand 4–5 m high (**Fig. 4**, sections 1–1, 2–2). Concurrently with its construction, earthen fills were intentionally laid between the walls, up to floor levels, about 2.5 m above the bedrock. The original floors, which had risen 10–15 cm during the lifetime of the building, were preserved in all rooms. In Rooms 1–2 the floors were sealed by a thick collapse layer—in Room 1 interspersed with yellowish-white clayey lumps; in Room 2 containing building stones that lay like fallen dominoes, indicating a sudden, violent collapse. The absence of a collapse layer in Rooms 4–6 probably implies that only Rooms 1–2 had a second storey (perhaps also Room 3, but it is mostly reconstructed). Material that probably originates from the Iron Age settlement

[2] Weksler-Bdolah *et al*. 2009; 2012: 37–41; Ornan *et al.* 2008; 2012.

upslope was deposited on top of the collapse layer (in Rooms 1–2) and above the floors (in Rooms 4–6). Finds within this fill included numerous pottery sherds dating between the eighth-sixth centuries BCE, terracotta figurines, and seven personal seals. The Roman *cardo* level sealed the Iron Age remains.[3]

A total of 553 figurines were found in the excavations, mostly in fills related to the late Iron Age building (Loci 6000–7000, eighth-early sixth centuries BCE). Of the c. 400 figurines from the building, half were found in fills sealed under the floors of the building and the rest were found in fills that accumulated above the floors. There was no discernible difference between the two assemblages.

The debris from the Iron Age fills was sent for wet sieving. Quite many figurines were retrieved by the sieving (153, or 28% of all figurines), most of them very small, worn-out fragments. Only 27 (c. 17.6%) of the 153 sieved items are large (50 mm or more in any dimension). Among the 400 figurines found without sieving, 203 (c. 50.8%) are large. All the types found by sieving were found also in the "regular" excavation.[4]

The figurines from the Western Wall Plaza excavations belong mostly to well-known types. Judean Pillar Figurines (56 items) (**Fig. 5**) form the vast majority among anthropomorphic figurines. With animal figurines (excluding fragments and legs that cannot be attributed to specific types with certainty), the most common types are solid animals, mostly equids (**Fig. 6**) (181 items, including 63 heads and 118 body parts), and horses and riders (23 items). Bird figurines, zoomorphic vessels, and bed-models are much less common. The figurines have a distinctive local Judean character.[5] Most of them are solid, made of brown-red clay with dark gray cores and white and gray grits.

Although in this article we focus on two feline heads, there were some other rare or even unique figurines in the assemblage. They include a few double-headed horses and riders—a type that was first noticed at Ramat Rahel by Antonia Ciasca.[6] Comparable 'double' figurines are found in neigh-

[3] Ornan *et al.* 2008; 2012; Ornan 2012. For the complex issue of the Neo-Babylonian period in Jerusalem see Tebes 2011, with references.

[4] Finds retrieved by sieving lose the exact context, even if the Locus is known. In addition, workers might be less careful if they perceive sieving as a "security net." Therefore, sieving should be an added measure, never a tool for hastening the pace of excavating.

[5] Kletter 1996; Darby 2011.

[6] Ciasca 1964: 96, Figs. 35:3; 36:4.

boring regions at roughly the same time, for example in Cyprus.[7] Among hundreds of figurines of horses and of horses and riders from Iron Age Judah,[8] there are only about a dozen "double-headed" fragments, which we interpret as pairs of horses and riders.[9]

Description of Two New Figurines from Jerusalem

The first head (**Figs. 7–8**) is small and worn out, made of brown-orange ware with gray core and white and gray grits (B71342, L6186, 28x16 mm). It was found in an earthen fill interspersed with gravel below the lower floor level of Room 5, c. 20 cm above bedrock (**Fig. 4**, section 1–1). The eyes are deeply impressed; there are scant remains of very small ears set widely apart. The muzzle is broken as well as the neck.

The second head (**Figs. 9–12**) was found in Room 1, c. 50 cm above the upper floor (L6114, B60790). It was discovered inside a thick (70 cm) layer of earthen fill, interspersed with yellowish-white clayey lumps that probably originated from the collapse of the roof or a second floor (**Fig. 4**: section 2–2). The head could originate from the building itself, or from the slope-wash.[10]

This head is quite large and rounded (59 mm high and 23 mm thick at the muzzle). It is made of light brown ware with light gray core and gray grits. There are small rounded ears at the top of the head, both damaged. Perhaps there are incised lines at the lower end of the left ear, but if so, they are very faint. The eyes are deeply impressed and placed low on the sides of the head. The forehead is wide and on it there is an applied mane, which is at present partially broken off. The neck is oval in section. There is a wide, open mouth. The edge is plastically rendered and there is no trace of teeth. The animal holds in its mouth a small animal, which is placed horizontally. This animal is, unfortunately, very badly broken; only its body survives. After placing the

[7] Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988: 78–84; Karageorghis 1995: 69–70, nos. 49–52, Pls. 34:8–9, 35:1; Karageorghis 1996: 23, 28, Cat. 25.

[8] Wenning 1991; Uehlinger 1999; Im 2006; Cornelius 2007.

[9] Kletter and Saarelainen 2014.

[10] Interestingly, the fill above the floor in this room contained two seals: one depicting an Assyrian archer with the name לחגב, the other broken and inscribed ...י...לעט (Ornan *et al.* 2008: nos. 2, 4).

animal inside the mouth, the potter closed it by pushing clay around the little animal, blurring some of its details. We cannot determine the exact species of the small animal, but it appears to be a quadruple. Its head (left of the mouth) is missing; so is the tail at the opposite side, but broken areas of two rear legs are still noticeable.

Discussion

Iron Age figurines from Judah (except molded heads of pillar figurines) are usually very schematic.[11] This is especially true in regard to animal figurines, affecting our ability to identify the species. Animal figurines are also less studied than anthropomorphic ones.[12] In old excavations fragments of animal figurines were often discarded. In publications animal figurines are usually accompanied by fewer photographs and drawings, and often more briefly described, than anthropomorphic ones.

Exact identification is in many cases impossible for closely related species. To give an example, horses, donkeys, and mules have similar features. Strictly speaking, we should define Judean figurines as equids, not horse figurines. However, the horse occupied a much more important military and economic position in comparison to all other equids. This is reflected in the numerous allusions to horses in biblical and other written sources, as well as in pictorial evidence.[13] Therefore we can be confident that most Judean equid figurines represent horses. The significant number of such figurines with riders attached to their backs strengthens this identification: they are horses and riders, reflecting the growing importance of cavalry during the Iron Age.[14]

Regarding felines, several species lived in the Southern Levant during the Iron Age, including lions (*Panthera leo*), panthers (*Panthera pardus*) and cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*). The schematic nature of Judean figurines means that at least in theory, the heads discussed here can belong to any one of these species, and perhaps even to smaller cats and to hyenas. However, only one of these animals—the lion—occupied an important place in the literature and iconography of the Southern Levant. All the other felines are very rarely men-

[11] Kletter 1996: 50; 2004: 2080; Kletter and Saarelainen 2014: 197.
[12] The only general catalogue for animal figurines from Iron Age Palestine is Holland 1975.
[13] McKay 2002; Klingbeil 2003.
[14] Dalley 1985; Drews 2004: 83–87; Kletter and Saarelainen 2014.

tioned or portrayed. Thus, if these heads are feline, they are much more likely to represent lions than other feline species.

How did we reach the conclusion that these heads portray felines? We start from a basis of close knowledge of Judean terracottas. Over the years we classified and prepared for publication something in the region of 1800 Judean clay figurines from various sites,[15] and read a considerable amount of related literature. Types of animal figurines can be recognized even when only a fragment survives, as long as there are some indicative features. While it is hard to identify body parts, especially middle body parts (trunks) that have few or no telltale features, heads are easier to identify, since they usually include features such as ears, eyes, muzzle, nostrils, etc.[16]

Among Judean animal figurines, equids occupy a dominant place and are well-defined.[17] Comparison to Judean equid/horse figurines (**Fig. 6**) shows immediately that the present heads from Jerusalem are not heads of equids. Heads of Judean equid/horse figurines have large pointed ears and cylindrical muzzles. The nostrils, if portrayed, are formed as two punctures at the end of the muzzle. The mouth, when it exists, is depicted by a horizontal incision. Usually the nostrils and the mouth are not portrayed and there is just a simple, cylindrical muzzle.

The present heads are not heads of bovines/bulls either. Bovines are seldom represented in Iron Age II clay figurines and zoomorphic vessels.[18] They are recognizable (among other features) by their horns. When the horns are broken off, areas of breakage are left on the heads. We do not have such areas in the present figurines.

The small animal placed in the mouth of head B60790 (**Figs. 8–11**) considerably narrows the possible candidates for identification. There are two possibilities. If it portrays prey, the larger animal is a predator, hence ruling out identification with most domesticated quadruples (except perhaps dogs) and with grazing animals, like horses, bovines, deer, etc. However, the small animal in the mouth could also be a cub, since felines (also Hyenas) frequently carry their offspring in their mouth, usually by the neck, but sometimes by the middle body.

Considering the animal held in the mouth, the lack of head precludes exact identification. The remaining parts and the size fit best a *caprid* (sheep/goat).

[15] Jerusalem, Lachish, Moza, Beth Shemesh, Beer Sheba, Malhata, Kh. ʻUzza, etc.
[16] Compare Holland 1975: 301.
[17] Tchernov 1996: 85.

If the potter did not consider proportion a problem, a young bovine (calf) is a possibility too, or wild game such as deer. Alternatively, it could be a lion cub.

Another important part of identifying animal figurines concerns cooperation with archaeozoologists.[19] Such cooperation is highly recommended, as it improves the identification and raises awareness of species that could have been overlooked otherwise. In the present case, we asked Liora Kolska-Horwitz of the Hebrew University to look at the Western Wall Plaza animal figurines, and she identified the two heads as lions.

The leonine character of head B60790 (**Figs. 9–12**) is clear (compare with **Fig. 13**). Indicative features, as noted by Horwitz, are:

1. The shape of the small rounded ears, located widely apart of each other.
2. The muzzle with a flat, wide mouth.
3. The lock of hair (mane) at the top of the head.
4. The remnants of an animal held in the mouth.
5. The position of the eyes.

Whether this head represents a lion or a lioness is impossible to say. However, both probably held similar significance in the eyes of Judeans. The lack of a massive mane would suggest that a lioness is depicted, but this is not conclusive. We notice that this head is quite big for Judean animal figurines. Nothing survives from the body, though, so we cannot tell if the head belonged to a larger than usual figurine, or was attached perhaps to a vessel/object.

The identification of head B71342 (**Figs. 7–8**) is more tentative. Though at a first glance it looks different than the second head, this is partly due to its bad state of conservation. Both heads share the wide face, the deeply punctured eyes, and the small, rounded ears, features that fit felines.[20] However, head B71342 does not carry an animal in its mouth.

Of course, it is possible that there is a mismatch between the zoological features we identify and what the ancient potter meant to portray. For example, take a potter who normally makes horse figurines, but is asked to produce a hippopotamus. The result might be a clumsily-made, unrealistic creation, depending on the potter's skill and on her/his knowledge of hippopotami. However, the present heads from Jerusalem are not very clumsily-made or highly unrealistic, and there is no reason to suspect that something of the sort happened in this case.

[18] Holland 1975: 247–251, 281, etc.; Kletter 2004: 2076, nos. 42–43.
[19] Tchernov 1996.
[20] Compare a lion head from Gibeon, Pritchard 1961: 122, Fig. 93.

In sum, head B71342 probably depicts a lion and head B60790 depicts a lion in a unique way for Judah—either carrying off or devouring its prey, or carrying a cub.

Lion Representations in the Southern Levant (Late Bronze to Persian Periods)

A lion devouring an animal or carrying a cub is a new type of figurine, the first of its kind ever found in Iron Age Judah. We discuss briefly possible comparisons, since data published up to c. 2000 AD was mostly compiled by Strawn—though with different conclusions.[21]

Throughout the ancient Near East the lion was a symbol of power and status, attribute of divinities and kings in a variety of media. Lions are shown hunting other animals or being hunted, guarding entrances, trampling human enemies, serving as attributes of deities, etc. When lions are depicted hunting domesticated or wild animals, they are shown biting their necks, or pouncing on their backs.[22]

Various Representations – Late Bronze Age

In Late Bronze Age Palestine lions are depicted on *orthostats* from Hazor and Beth Shean. They appear on a cult stand from Tell el Far'ah South, on ivories from Megiddo and on various seals. We also find lions as attributive animals of a female deity in Egyptian reliefs and on gold and clay plaques found in various locations, including Palestine. [23]

Various Representations – Iron Age II

In the Iron Age II, an ivory from Samaria depicts a lion attacking a bull from the back, while another shows a lion grasping a bull by its throat. Two crouching lion sculptures from Samaria were possibly attached in origin to a throne or a bed.[24]

[21] Strawn 2001; 2005.
[22] Strawn 2001: 103–104; 2005: 101–102, Fig. 3.94, etc.
[23] Rowe 1930: Frontispiece; Mazar 2010: 250; Beck 2002: 347–349; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 50, 58, 62, 82; Cornelius 2004: nos. 5.1–5.10, 5.20–23, etc.; Press 2012: 175–176.
[24] Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938: Pls. 9–10; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 188, 190; Schroer 1987: 382–385.

In Iron Age II Judah lions appear in various media, though rarely. Keel and Uehlinger related a few bone seals featuring striding lions with Judah.[25] Yet, these seals are found all over Palestine. A seal depicting a roaring lion, carrying a Hebrew name Nawâ (?), was found 6–7 m east of the four-room building in the Western Wall Plaza excavations (**Fig. 4**).[26] Though found in a fill of a Roman quarry, it undoubtedly originates from the late Iron Age stratum. Two limestone objects from Tell Beit Mirsim —a statue (50 cm long) and a libation tray—depict lions. Albright dated them to the LB period, but Amiran ascribed them to the Iron Age II and suggested that the statue was part of a pair of standing lions.[27] Two guarding creatures—perhaps lions—were carved on the entrance of a tomb at Tel ʻEton.[28] Lions/lionesses appear on the Pithoi from Kuntillet ʻAjrud, a site with mixed Judean and Israelite material features.[29]

Various Representations – The Persian Period

Lion motifs seem to be more numerable in the Persian period. Lions appear on decorated cuboid incense altars found at Gezer, Lachish and Tel Jemmeh, probably related to the incense trade (they show other wild and/or desert animals, such as camels, scorpions, and ibexes). These objects are hardly found in the area of Yehud, though.[30] In Yehud, Samaria (Wadi ed-Daliyeh), and elsewhere in Palestine, lions appear in seals in several positions and styles.[31] They also appear on Samarian coins striding, sitting in profile, looking backwards, attacking prey, and as heads. The motifs in these coins are mostly copied or adapted from foreign mints, so it is hard to assess their local meanings.[32] A lion striding above a bull appears in a coin from Yehud. This motif, however, originates from Tarsos.[33] Finally, we notice one unusual head of a clay figurine from Lachish that probably portrays a lion-masked figure.[34]

[25] Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 268–269.
[26] Ornan *et al*. 2012: 5–8, no. 5.
[27] Albright 1938: 65–68, Pls. 23–24, 52; Amiran 1976.
[28] Ussishkin 1974: 113, Fig. 4, Pl. 21:1–3.
[29] Beck 2002: 109–112, Figs. 4c, 4h; Beck 2012: 156–158, Figs. 6.1, 6.3–4, 6.13.
[30] Frevel and Pyschny 2014: 174.
[31] Stern 2001: 540–542; Lipschits and Koch 2010; Grabbe 2014: 25–26; Schroer and Lippke 2014: 319–322, 329, 342–344. According to Schroer and Lippke (2014: n. 88), Jürg Eggler of Fribourg University is preparing a comprehensive catalogue of lion representations.
[32] Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 61–62; Grabbe 2014: 27, 31; Leith 2014: 281–284; Wyssmann 2014: 228, 238 n. 54, 240, 252.
[33] Wyssmann 2014: 245, Fig. 189.
[34] Tufnell 1953: Pl. 31:19; Cornelius 2014: Fig. 8. We did not forget one lion item from Arad.

Small Figurines – Surrounding Regions

To the best of our knowledge there is no comparable figurine of a lion carrying an animal in its mouth from the Southern Levant. In Jordan, two bowl fragments from Tell Deir ʻAlla (in the Jordan Valley) have complete figures of lions sitting on the rim. Unfortunately, both are unstratified.[35] A complete, small (standing) lion figurine from Tell Abu al-Kharaz was attributed to the Iron I period.[36] One well preserved clay lion figurine is known from an Iron Age IIC level at Tell Jalul, and a few more figurines were found at Tell es-Sai'idiyeh and Tel Mazar, but none can be considered a close comparison to the Jerusalem figurines.[37]

From northern Israel, a metal figurine of a standing quadruped from Beth Shean Level VI was interpreted as a dog (c. 12th century BCE).[38] It is holding something, maybe a small animal, in its mouth. However, it is not similar to the Western Wall Plaza lion figurine. A solid body fragment of a crouching animal from Beth-Shean was tentatively identified as a lion.[39] A lion head applied to a rim of a bowl was discovered at Tell el-Farʻah North.[40] Few Iron Age solid clay figurines from other areas may represent lions, but their date is doubtful.[41]

Several small clay figurines from Cyprus of the Cypro-Archaic period are interpreted as lions, but none is depicted holding another animal.[42] Other figurines are interpreted as dogs, and a few among them are eating or catching something in their mouth. One perhaps holds a bone;[43] another is biting the hind part of an animal (maybe hare).[44] Yet another is shown sitting and biting

Since it is a weight, not a figurine (as believed at first); made of metal, not of clay; and probably Assyrian, not local, we do not think that it is merits discussion here (Kletter 1998: 125–126, Fig. 28).

[35] Franken 1961: Pl. 21; Holland 1975: 301, Fig. 67:1–2.

[36] Bürge 2013: 526–527, Fig. 463:1.

[37] Herr *et al*. 1996: 72, Fig. 9c; Amr 1980: 231–3, Figs. 185–187; Yassine 1988: Pl. 13:3, bottom right; Yassine and van der Steen 2012: 157, CAT013.

[38] Rowe 1940: Pl. 53a:5.

[39] Yahalom-Mack and Mazar 2006: Fig. 13.1:2; cf. a figurine from Taʻanach, Sellin 1904: Fig. 6.

[40] Chambon 1984: Pl. 64:5.

[41] Holland 1975: 255–256, 301; add a schematic head from Gezer, which may represent a lion, but it is not certain, Macalister 1912: Pl. 125:13; Holland 1975: 255–256.

[42] Karageorghis 1987: 33, Pl. 33: no. 186; 1996: Pl. 10:1–3; Monloup 1984: 103, no. 430.

[43] Karageorghis 1996: 44, Cat. 26, Pl. 27:3.

[44] Karageorghis 1996: 45, Cat. 29, Pl. 27:5.

an animal standing in front of it.[45] The identification as dogs is based on comparison to Boeotia, where figurines interpreted as dogs are shown carrying their youth in the mouth.[46] These possible dog figurines lack the distinctive leonine features that appear in the Western Wall Plaza heads.

In Iron Age Philistia lion figurines are extremely rare, though lion-headed cups and a head of a lion statue are known.[47] A few figurines from Tell Jemmeh were identified as lions by Petrie, but their identification is not secure.[48] Among the c. 200 figurines published from Ashkelon, only one lion head was found, ascribed to a post Iron Age context; while another head is possibly from a hollow lion vessel.[49]

Small Figurines – Judah

In the Iron Age II, one clay lion head was found at Gibeon (date and context unclear); Holland suggested that it was modeled after a metal prototype.[50] A clay figurine depicting a roaring lion, now in the Hecht Museum (Haifa), was allegedly found at Beit Aula, dated to the eighth or seventh centuries BCE.[51] No lions are identified among hundreds of animal figurines from the Ophel, Jewish Quarter, and City of David excavations in Jerusalem, though other wild species such as hyena or hippopotamus have been identified.[52] We mention here also one terracotta lion figurine from the Late Bronze Age Fosse Temple at Lachish.[53]

[45] Karageorghis 1996: 45, Pl. 27:6, Cat. 30; cf. Karageorghis 1987: 34, no. 174.
[46] French 1971: 160–161, Figs. 12–13; Szabo 1994: 35, Pl. 21.
[47] Ben-Shlomo 2010: 125–131; Meiberg 2013; Stern 2013: 50–52.
[48] Petrie 1928: 18, Pl. 38:1–2, 7; Holland 1975: 308, L.V.d.9, Fig. 68:4, Pl. 40:1.
[49] Press 2012: 122–123, 187; Cat. Nos. 165–166; both are not similar to the present figurines.
[50] Pritchard 1961: 122, Fig. 93; Holland 1975: 107, L.V.d.6.
[51] Keel and Uehlinger 1998: Fig. 206a; Strawn 2001: Fig. 3:101; Strawn 2005: 105, Fig. 3:101.
[52] Holland 1977; Gilbert-Perez 1996; Tchernov 1996; Yezerski and Geva 2003. Izaak de Hulster (pers. comm.) identifies one body-part from Jerusalem as a lion. For possible Persian Period figurines from Jerusalem, see Hulster 2012; but they may be residual Iron Age pieces.
[53] Tufnell 1940: Pl. 28:7.

Lions in Iron Age Cult Stands

Lions in various forms are found on clay cult stands (or altars) from Palestine, not devouring other animals, but guarding, flanking other entities or serving as bases or pedestals for female figures. We find them at Pella and Ta'anach, Yavneh, Tel Rekhesh, Tel Rehov (a shrine model), and elsewhere.[54] The anthropomorphic figures on the cult stands are predominantly female, and if one accepts they represent deities, the lions on such stands are perhaps related to female deities. However, the cult stands themselves could be votive objects dedicated to various deities, male or female.[55] In any case, figurative cult stands with lions are hardly known from Iron II Judah; the sole example is a crude, round cult stand recently found at Moza, west of Jerusalem, with remains of two very badly preserved figurines that appear to be lions.[56]

Discussion

How should we interpret the lion heads from the Western Wall Plaza excavations? Lions have a great variety of representation and meanings in Ancient Near Eastern sources, such as attributive animals of deities or symbols of royals.[57] In Assyrian reliefs lions are depicted in various positions—running, leaping, standing, or fallen; but none carries prey (or cubs) in their mouth.[58]

In Egyptian art lions appear from early periods, but mainly during the New Kingdom time, as representing Egypt or the Pharaoh devouring the enemy. Yet, this enemy is human and is attacked and bitten on the head or neck, not carried in the mouth.[59]

Recently Strawn has reviewed the biblical association of lions with Yahweh.[60] Lions appear as metaphors for Yahweh, as favorites of Yahweh (Ps.

[54] McNicoll *et al.* 1992: 97–99, Pl. 71; Sellin 1904: 76, Fig. 4.8; Lapp 1969: 42, Fig. 4.9; Beck 2002: 399–400, 403–407; Ziffer 2010: 67–68, 83–84; Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: Stands 1–3, 28, 56; Pls. 8:1; 9:2; 50–52; 98:3; 155: 1–2; Zori 1977: 117, Pl. 33, Nos. 3–5; Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2008; Katz 2006: 208–209.
[55] Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: 188.
[56] Kisilevitz 2013: 43, Fig. 6.
[57] Ornan *et al*. 2012: 6*–7*.
[58] Albenda 1974.
[59] David 2011: 90–92, Fig. 4; the language of devouring an enemy as metaphor for its annihilation is not limited to Egypt; see for example Jeremiah 51:34 (Noegel 2010: 38).
[60] Strawn 2001; 2005; 2009; also Way 2006: 33–34.

104: 21–22; Job 38: 39–40), as punishing tools of Yahweh (1 Kings 13; II Kings 17: 25–26; Isa. 15:9 etc.), and as divine beings with leonine aspects that serve Yahweh (Ezek. 1:10; 1 Kings. 7:29, etc.).[61] Strawn has suggested that Yahweh may be termed "a Lion-God", and that the biblical concept of Yahweh as a "Lion God" originates from ancient Near Eastern objects depicting lions. However, the biblical verses do not necessarily need to be understood as turning Yahweh into "a Lion-God" in any literal sense. They can be interpreted as figurative speech, which uses the lion imagery to demonstrate characteristics of God. Yahweh devours his enemies *like* a lion or roars *like* one; this does not mean that he was thought of as having the shape of a lion. As Strawn stresses, the "leonine aspects" of Yahweh are often found in prophetic literature.[62] Lion imagery in this literature is likely not based on iconographic sources (material objects), but on real, living lions, since, as we have seen, material representation of lions is rare in Iron Age II Judah.

Another recent study identified the image of a lion, when a single motif on stamps from Judah, as an attribute of Yahweh. This was based on the Hebrew seal with a lion motif found in the Western Wall plaza excavations, and on a few other seals found elsewhere.[63] Ornan et al. identified other Judean seal motifs—the two-winged disc, the four-winged beetle, and the winged *uraeus* as Yahwistic emblems. The *uraeus* depicted not Yahweh himself but a member of his entourage, perhaps the שרף mentioned in biblical sources (Isa. 6:2, etc.).[64] Others identify the Cherubim in the Jerusalem Temple (whether guardians or throne bearers) as winged lion creatures.[65]

Lions are extremely rare in seals from Iron Age Jerusalem in particular and from Judah as a whole.[66] They are also rare as clay figurines, though figurines of horses, or of horses and riders are common.[67] The seals with lions, some of which relate to monarchy (like the seal of *sm' 'bd Yrb'm* from Megiddo), can also be interpreted as royal symbols. Given Yahweh's central religious position in Judah (for example, as seen from private names), if the lion was his symbol, we would expect that more leonine objects and motifs would appear

[61] In some verses Yahweh appears as a lion-hunter (Ezek. 12:13, 17:20)—such a role hardly fits a "Lion God".
[62] Strawn 2005: 25–26; 2009.
[63] Ornan *et al.* 2012: 5–7*, Fig. 1.
[64] Ornan *et al.* 2012: 8*; cf. Keel 1977: 74–79.
[65] Wood 2008, with references; see also Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 188, 190–191.
[66] Ornan *et al.* 2012: 1*, n. 12.
[67] Cf. Bürge 2013: 527.

over a wider variety of media. This complex question requires a separate discussion. However, concerning the two lion figurines from the Western Wall Plaza, we do not think that they are images or symbols of Yahweh.

Conclusions

We suggest that the two Western Wall Plaza figurines depict lions. As scholars of iconography we often see objects as symbols that point to a higher, deeper reality, which we want to decipher. In this case, we suggest that the signified and the signifier are similar. Namely, the lion clay figurines refer to living wild lions, not to a divinity.

What could be the meaning and function of such lion figurines? Why were they manufactured and how were they used?[68] We can suggest some possibilities, but the lack of direct data bearing on these questions prevents definite answers. The figurines could refer to a scene from a folkloristic story, which did not survive in writing. They could refer to situations in daily life. Figurines that depict daily-life scenes appear in Phoenician and Cypriote contexts (women grinding wheat or washing), but we do not know their functions. Lion figurines could be used in rituals, for example to protect herds against wild animals.

Lions are not entirely out of place in the figurine assemblage of Judah, since figurines of other wild animals are found, though rarely. Suggested identifications include hyena, hippopotamus, deer, ibex, gazelle, ostrich, elephant, and bear.[69] Such rarely portrayed wild animals are not likely to be emblems or representations of deities in Judah (as also rarely portrayed domestic animals, like dogs and camels).[70] Similarly, there is no compelling reason why the present lion figurines should be seen in this role.

After researching lion figurines from ancient Judah, one can easily identify leonine features elsewhere (**Fig. 14**). The features that enable us to identify the ancient figurines as lions are apparent here too.

[68] On possible meanings of clay figurines, including magical figures and toys see Voigt 1984: 186–187.
[69] Gilbert-Peretz 1996: various Type B1 subtypes, Fig. 14: 8–11, 13–17; Pls. 5: 6–9, 11–15, 17–18; Holland 1975: 251, 254–255.
[70] Holland 1975: 252–253.

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Figures

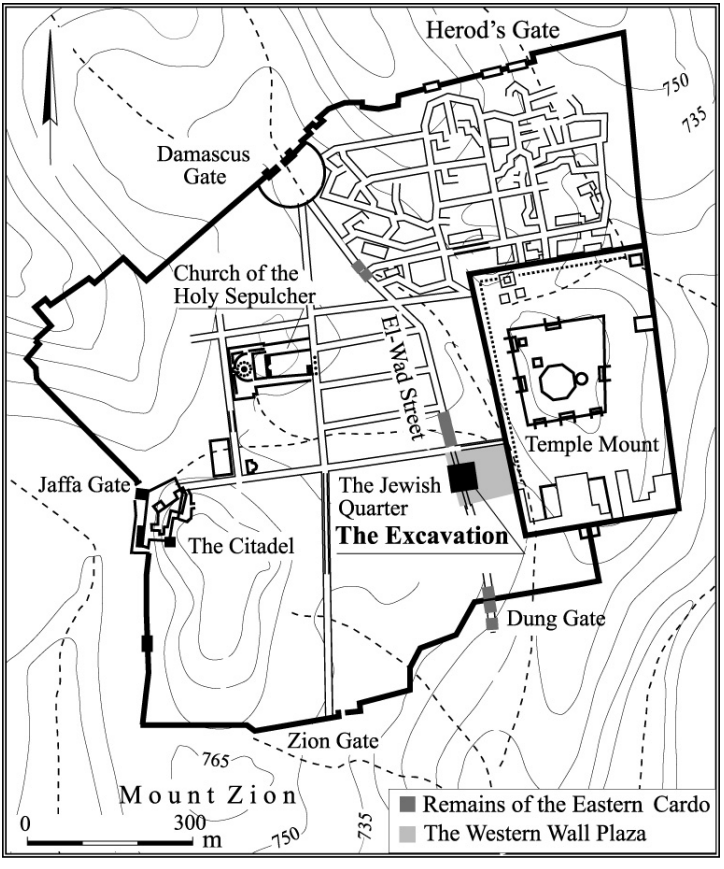

Fig. 1. The Western Wall Plaza Excavations – location map (drawing Natalia Zak).

Fig. 2. Western Wall Plaza, view northeast in January 2009; the Temple Mount at the right (photo Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah).

Fig. 3. Western Wall Plaza, view southwest. Iron Age building lower right; Roman eastern cardo left (photo Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah).

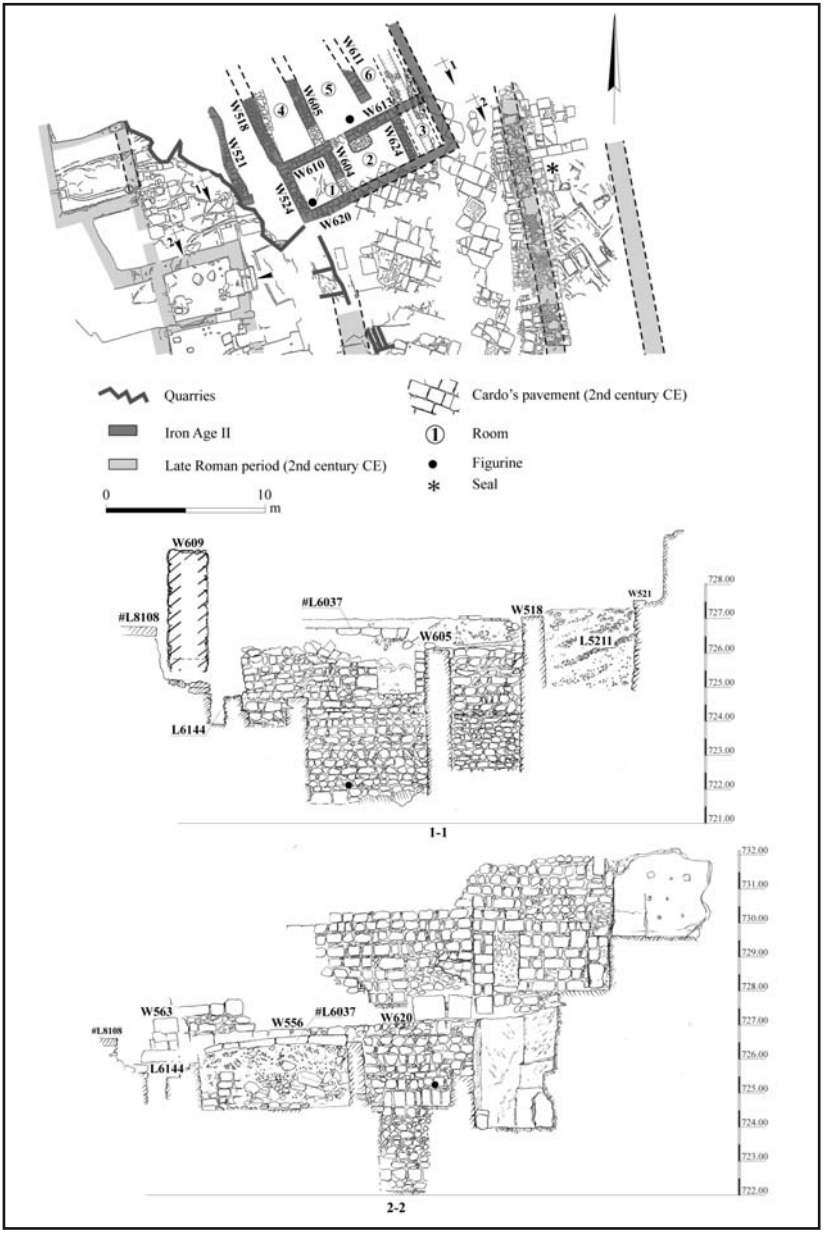

Fig. 4. Plan and sections of the Iron Age building (drawing Vadim Essman, Mark Kipnis, Mark Kunin, and Yaakov Shmidov).

Fig. 5. Handmade head of Judean Pillar Figurine, Western Wall Plaza B60905; (photo Clara Amit).

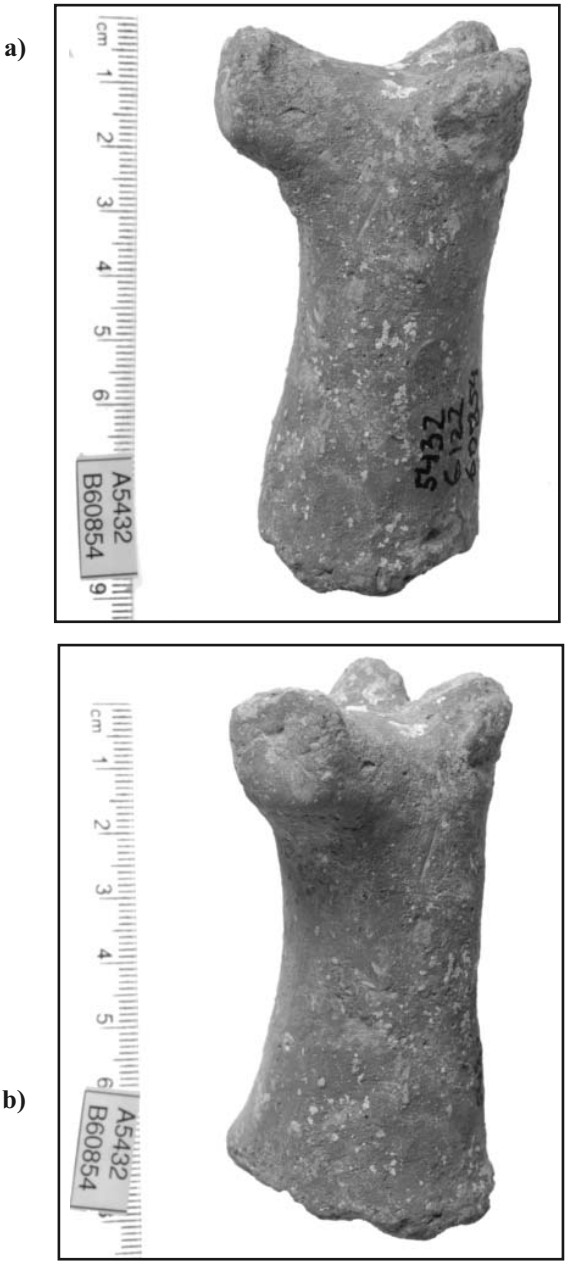

Fig. 6 (a-b). Horse Head B60854, Western Wall Plaza (photos Clara Amit).

Fig. 7. Lion Head B71342 – side (photo Clara Amit).

Fig. 8. Lion Head B71342 – front (photo Clara Amit).

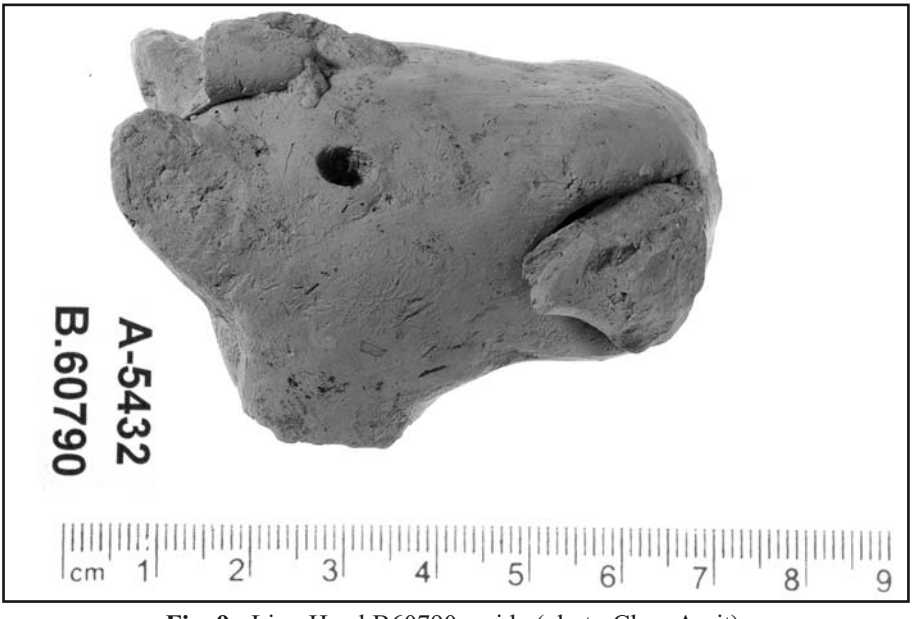

Fig. 9. Lion Head B60790 – side (photo Clara Amit).

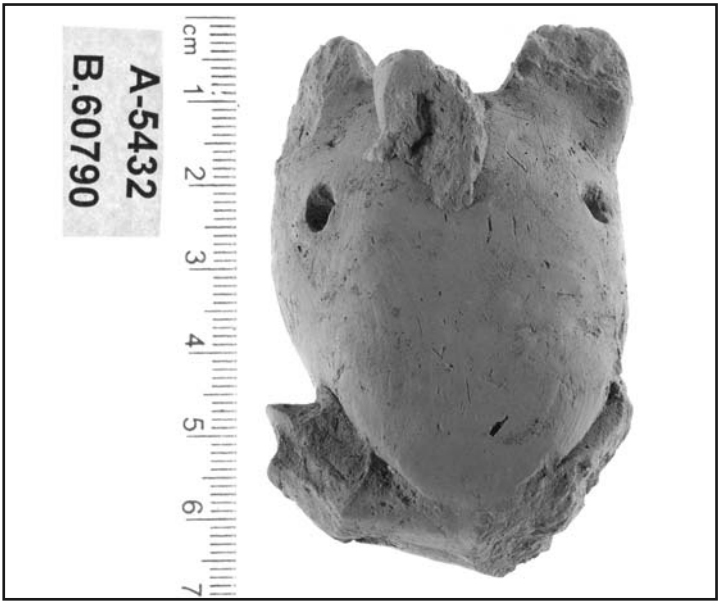

Fig. 10. Lion Head B60790 – front (photo Clara Amit).

Fig. 11. Lion Head B60790 – side (photo Clara Amit).

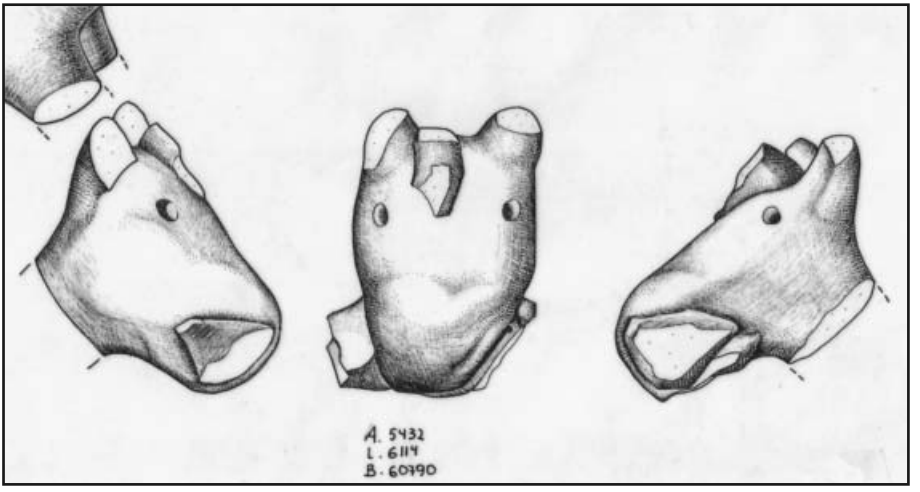

Fig. 12. Lion Head B60790 – drawing (by Dalit Weinblat-Krauz).

Fig. 13. Lioness, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania (Photo Harvey Barrison, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ngorongoro_2012_05_30_2591_%2875 00981960%29.jpg?uselang=en-gb).

Fig. 14. Lion heads, Chinatown, San Francisco (photo Raz Kletter).

The Origin of the Alphabet: An Examination of the Goldwasser Hypothesis

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Summary: The Origin of the Alphabet

Since 2006 the discussion of the origin of the Semitic alphabet has been given an impetus through a hypothesis propagated by Orly Goldwasser: the alphabet was allegedly invented in the 19th century BCE by illiterate Semitic workers in the Egyptian turquoise mines of Sinai; they saw the picturesque Egyptian inscriptions on the site and borrowed a number of the hieroglyphs to write their own language, using a supposedly new method which is now known by the technical term acrophony. The main weakness of the theory is that it ignores the West Semitic acrophonic syllabary, which already existed, and contained most of the letters of the alphabet. Twenty-two propositions from Goldwasser's publications are examined critically.

Keywords: Protoalphabet – Acrophony – Syllabary – Consonantary

Resumen: El origen del alfabeto

Desde el 2006, la discusión sobre el origen del alfabeto semítico ha recibido un impulso a través de la hipótesis propagada por Orly Goldwasser: el alfabeto fue aparentemente inventado en el siglo XIX a.C. por trabajadores analfabetos semíticos en las minas egipcias de turquesa en Sinaí. Ellos vieron las inscripciones pictóricas egipcias en el sitio y tomaron prestadas un número de jeroglíficos para escribir su propio lenguaje, usando un supuesto nuevo método que es ahora conocido con el término técnico de acrofonía. La principal debilidad de la teoría es que ignora la acrofonía del silabario semítico occidental, que ya existía, y que contenía la mayoría de las letras del alfabeto. Veintidós proposiciones de las publicaciones de Goldwasser son examinadas críticamente.

Palabras clave: Protoalfabeto – Acrofonía – Silabario – Consonantario

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INTRODUCTION

In 1916 Alan Gardiner published his hypothesis regarding the origin of the alphabet, plausibly proposing that the original letters of the alphabet, as displayed in the Semitic inscriptions from the turquoise mines of Sinai, had been borrowed from the Egyptian store of hieroglyphs, and by the application of the acrophonic principle a consonantal script had been created.[1]

In 2006 Orly Goldwasser went further, surmising that illiterate Semitic workers at the Sinai mines had actually invented the alphabet to write their own language, employing the Egyptian pictorial signs they saw in the stela inscriptions at the site, but with no understanding of the Egyptian writing system; and in the process they created the idea of acrophony.[2]

Goldwasser has briefly stated her case thus:

> *"I believe that the inventors of the alphabet did not know how to read Egyptian. When they looked at the Egyptian sign [N35] (**N** in Egyptian) they recognized the picture of water. In Canaanite (their language) the word 'water' might have been **mem** or **maim**. From this word they took*

[1] Gardiner 1916. Two useful manuals containing information on the study of the early alphabetic inscriptions are: Sass 1988 and Hamilton 2006. For an attempt to trace the course of the alphabet from Sinai to Hellas, see Krebernik 2007. Note that Sass, Hamilton, and Krebernik follow the Albright table of the supposed characters and sound-values of the original alphabet, as presented in Albright 1966: Fig. 1, and replicated, for example, in Cross 1980: 16. This differs in several details from my paradigm, in Colless 2010: Fig. 5, and reproduced in this article; it is based on more evidence than is customarily invoked, and proceeds along the reliable path laid down by Butin 1932: 137–159. Puech 1986: Fig. 8 diverges from the Albright system and his identifications are closer to the Colless version: D is a door not a fish; S is a fish; G is a boomerang; P is a mouth, not a corner; but his Tet, Sadey, and Qof are different from my choices. Albert van den Branden 1979 taught me that the best identification of Sadey is a tied bag, but Albright thought this figure-8 character was Qof. Butin (1932: 139) constructed an excellent table (flawed by his confusion of Y and K), which recognized the true Sadey and had none of the deviations that Albright and his successors unwisely pursued.

[2] Goldwasser 2006, entitled "Canaanites Reading Hieroglyphs". Note that I prefer to use a word "Canaanian" (as a counterpart to "Phoenician") since the term "Canaanite" has bad connotations from its usage in the Bible; "West Semitic" is another way of referring to the languages and scripts of Canaan (Syria-Palestine). Incidentally, in my opinion the frequently used terms "Protosinaitic" and "Protocanaanite" are now obsolete; the former was a subset of the latter, and yet it is incorrectly applied to all protoalphabetic inscriptions, even though it is obviously applicable only to the Sinai examples.

> *the first sound alone – M; which became the letter* ***mem*** *in the Canaanite scripts, and finally the English letter M."*[3]

We will here examine twenty-two points made by Goldwasser in the presentation of her thesis,[4] and confront them with findings from my own research on the same subject.[5]

1. The Alphabet Was Invented in Sinai, Before Year 13 of Amenemhet III

This means that the invention (or innovation) took place around 1840 BCE (This dating is achieved, dubiously, by means of her interpretation of Sinai Egyptian Stela 92; see section 22 below). It is true that the protoalphabet[6] is represented in inscriptions in Sinai in the Middle Kingdom period, but there is no explicit evidence that it was invented there rather than elsewhere. A scribal school in some city of Canaan or Egypt would be a more likely setting,

[3] This is Orly Goldwasser's reply to a correspondent (Bonnie Long) who was wondering how the Egyptian hieroglyph for *N* became the letter *M*. It has to be asked whether the Egyptian N clearly represents ripples of water (it could be a range of mountain peaks); knowledge of its usage would presumably be required before it could be employed in a new script. Certainly, polychrome inscriptions colour this sign blue, but Goldwasser's Semitic workers were presumably looking at plain inscriptions; in any case, my view is that we must also consider the use of the sign in the West Semitic syllabary, which preceded the consonantary (the protoalphabet), and which shows clear understanding of the Egyptian system in its hieroglyphic and hieratic forms.
[4] Goldwasser 2012: 12–14 (entitled "The miners who invented the alphabet") contains the most succinct statement of her thesis ("the gist of my hypothesis"), and almost all of the propositions being considered here are taken from there; see also Goldwasser 2006: 130–156; 2011: 263–296.
[5] Colless 1988; 1990; 1991; 2010. Goldwasser (2006: 157) includes Colless 1988 and Colless 1990 in her bibliography, and she refers to Colless 1990 and Colless 1991 as "the latest effort" to read the inscriptions (Goldwasser 2006: 134, n. 82), but she does not engage with my work.
[6] Note that I use the informal term "protoalphabet" or "proto-alphabet" to describe the West Semitic prototype of the alphabet (Colless 1990: 6, 1996: 67, as noted by Hamilton 2006: 4, referencing Colless 1988; 1990; 1991). Technically speaking, the protoalphabet was an acrophonic consonantary, a consonantal script with no vowels represented, as also in Egyptian writing; moreover, according to my interpretation of the evidence (Colless 1988: 65; 1990: 5; 2010: 88–91), and again like the Egyptian system, it was a logo-consonantary (it had logograms, in that its letters could also be used for the whole word they represented) and a morpho-consonantary (it had what I call rebograms, whereby the signs could be used as rebuses); if the protoalphabet was in fact influenced by the Egyptian system it is not unlikely that it also included these features, though they are not present in the later Phoenician consonantal alphabet.

but the place and time are still a mystery. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the *oldest-known* protoalphabetic inscription has been found in Sinai (perhaps **349=22**).[7]

2. All Hieroglyphic Prototypes for the Letters of the Alphabet Clearly Exist in the Hieroglyphs of the Sinai Inscriptions of this Period

This assertion may be true (excepting the signs that do not have an Egyptian model, namely W, Z, T, T, in my view; see section 14 below) but it is not "clearly" substantiated by Goldwasser, as her tables of protoalphabetic signs with presumed Egyptian counterparts ("Graphemes of the Protosinaitic Script") have only 21 items (though she knows it must have had several more).[8] Her identifications of half of the signs on her table are faulty, in my opinion. Het and Tet are not registered, but they occur in the Sinai Semitic texts, and their prototypes are present in the Egyptian inscriptions at the site. She singles out the letter He as a "special link": it depicts a man standing with his arms raised (each forming a right angle, at either side of the head) and it will ultimately become the Greek and Roman letter E; in her opinion the sign (a version of hieroglyph A28, be high or joyful) probably represents a local title related to the expeditions, since it is rare in Egypt; in that context I think it indicates a "superior", one who is high, rather than denoting jubilation, which is a better option for the origin of He (see my discussion of H in section 12 below).

[7] With regard to the numbering system used for the Sinai inscriptions: the Egyptian texts are catalogued from **1** onwards; the Sinai Semitic inscriptions are included in the same collection, beginning with **Sinai 345**. My supplementary numbering runs from 1 to 44 (**372=19,** for example) and allows easier reference to my drawings (Colless 1990: 8–11) and my descriptions (Colless 1990: 12–47), and so a footnote does not need to be provided every time a Sinai inscription is mentioned. Also, Sass (1988) and Hamilton (2006) arrange their illustrations and descriptions of the inscriptions numerically from **345** to **375d**, and any particular item can easily be found in their handbooks.

[8] Goldwasser 2006: 153–156. Compare and contrast my table (attached to this article, **Fig. 1**) with drawings of signs, and proposed hieroglyphic prototypes. The progress of my understanding of the origin and development of the components of the alphabet is traceable in the successive tables I have published: Colless 1988: 34; 1990: 7; 1991: 21; 1996: 74; 1998: 34–35; 2010: 96.

Of course, given that the objects depicted by the protoalphabetic characters are derived from the real world (sky, landscape, living creatures, and human culture), it should be asked whether the Egyptian hieroglyphs needed to be involved as intermediaries. My considered opinion is that in the formation of the West Semitic syllabary and its derivative consonantary (the protoalphabet) the Egyptian hieroglyphs and their current cursive forms were taken into account. Proof of this hypothesis can be found in the use of such distinctive signs as *nefer* [F35]*, djed* [R11], *'ankh* [S34], and *ra'* (sun) [N5, N6] (examples in sections 15 and 19 below; exceptions in section 14).

3. About 30 Protosinaitic Inscriptions Were Found in the Area of Serabit el-Khadem and this Must Have Been Where the Alphabet was Invented

It should be added that one inscription (Sinai **348=9**) was found in the Magharah area (probably NK, not MK) but it is now lost, though two copies have survived; and my tally is 44, not merely 30. This substantial number of items is used as a questionable argument for the origin of the protoalphabet in Sinai: "The only reasonable explanation for such a 'boom' in this kind of writing in Sinai is that Sinai was the site of its invention."[9] However, other possibilities exist: stone was readily available at this site, for writing Egyptian and West Asian inscriptions, and they have survived, albeit damaged by weathering; but texts on perishable material, in Sinai and elsewhere, would have vanished. Moreover, there is no dearth of protoalphabetic and syllabic inscriptions from Egypt and Canaan, and beyond (see sections 5 and 6).

4. All but One of the Texts Show Very Early Paleographical Stages of the Script, and Were Probably Produced During a Short Span of Time

The one exception she adduces is "Sinai 375c" (**381=41** in my numbering scheme), attributed to the New Kingdom; but others must also be NK. Gordon Hamilton has two main categories in his chronological scheme for the Sinai

[9] Sinai is thus presumed to be the locus of the invention of the alphabet because of the relative abundance of inscriptions: Goldwasser 2006: 132–133. See also Goldwasser 2012: 1; 2012: 21, notes 70–73. For a larger number than 30 texts, see Colless 1990: 8–11 (drawings of the 44 items) and 51 (table of the texts and their provenance).

texts: *earliest* (ca 1850–1700), and *typologically developed* (ca 1700–1500);[10] by this criterion Goldwasser's "short span" is impossible, needing to encompass the centuries from the 19th to the 16th; there are numerous examples from the 12th Dynasty (Middle Kingdom, 19th century BCE) and also from the 18th Dynasty (New Kingdom, 16th century BCE); and the pictorial aspect is constant throughout.

5. In Egypt Only Three Such Inscriptions Are Known

To arrive at this total, Goldwasser takes the Wadi el-Hol inscription[11] as two items (but it is a single continuous text, in my reading of it);[12] and she adds the ostracon from the Valley of the Queens (which should be NK; see section 12 below). However, there are considerably more protoalphabetic consonantal inscriptions, plus several syllabic texts. Flinders Petrie brought many of them to light: Sass has depictions (figures 282–285) of three items from Kahun/Lahun in the Fayyum (presumably but not certainly MK): an ostracon, a stamp seal, and a heddle-jack (this has a syllabic inscription, in my view). Sass (1988) and Hamilton (2006) have overlooked the six limestone tablets from southern Egypt (presumably from Thebes), which Petrie published in 1912; they are from the New Kingdom period; one of them is syllabic; the three most important of them comprise two inventories of the letters of the protoalphabet (they are not texts).[13]

[10] Hamilton 2006: 289–311. Notice that Hamilton is accepting (rightly, in my view) that the Sinai inscriptions date from both the MK and the NK, but there has long been an either-or debate; see Sass 1988: 135–144.

[11] Darnell *et al.* 2005 (the Wadi el-Hol graffito is understood as "Two early alphabetic inscriptions").

[12] Colless 2010: 91, and 95, Fig. 4; and also: http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2009/12/wadi-el-hol-proto-alphabetic.html. In my view it marks the site of celebrations for the goddess 'Anat.

[13] Petrie 1921 for the three Kahun/Lahun objects; Petrie 1912, Frontispiece, for photographs of the six tablets from Qurneh/Thebes in southern Egypt; they are presented upside down, except the one in the bottom right corner, on which see: http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2006/07/alphabet-when-young-above-is.html. The syllabic piece (top left) is studied in Colless 1997: 48–50; 1999: 31–33. For an examination of the three inscriptions comprising two "abgadaries" (inventories of the protoalphabetic letters, not in any particular order, though both documents have similar clusters of signs) together with a criticism of Hamilton's proposed identifications of the protoalphabetic signs (Hamilton 2006), which are not entirely supported by this neglected evidence, go to http://cryptocraker.blogspot.nz/2007/10/gordon-hamiltons-early-alphabet-thesis.html.

From the Nile Delta a collection of five inscribed terracotta objects found their way to an antiquities dealer in Melbourne, and eventually passed into oblivion; but the inscriptions on the three lamps are syllabic (each begins with the word *niru* "lamp"); the two statuettes have consonantal inscriptions, apparently.[14] There is a tiny amulet from Deir Rifa (in the extreme south of Middle Egypt) with a West Semitic inscription that could be consonantal or syllabic.[15] These objects would presumably date from the time when "Asiatics" (the Hyksos) ruled northern Egypt (15th Dynasty, 17th–16th centuries BCE), between the Middle Kingdom (12th Dynasty) and the New Kingdom (18th Dynasty).[16]

An inscription on a statue in the far south of Egypt (near Elephantine) could be consonantal or syllabic, and Middle or Late Bronze Age.[17]

Notice that in these three periods in Egypt (MK, Hyksos, NK) protoalphabetic and protosyllabic inscriptions are found together, and they are difficult to distinguish (especially if a reader is only versed in the consonantal system), because they have much in common.

6. Only a Handful of Early Alphabetic Inscriptions Are Known from Canaan, Dating from the 18th to the 13th Century BCE

Actually, besides fragmentary and minimal texts, there are more than a dozen that make a statement, all on non-perishable materials.[18] None are extant on papyrus or parchment, though such must have existed; the argument from silence is certainly not valid, as absence of evidence is not evidence of absence; in the Iron Age the situation is similar, since the writings of the

[14] The three lamps are studied in Colless 1997: 50–55; the objects have different legends, but each lamp (*niru*) is described as "nice" (*ṭb* or *n'm*). The drawings of the inscriptions on the two figurines remain unpublished. An unpublished and unprovenanced (possibly from Syria) bowl-lamp (the Frederick O. Waage bowl, Dept of Classics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) also has a significant inscription: *niru nugahuta*, "bright lamp."

[15] Hamilton 2009; http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2011/09/from-deir-rifa-gordon-hamilton-has.html.

[16] On the Semitic ("Asiatic") presence and hegemony in the Nile Delta region, see the large collection of essays in Oren 1997.

[17] Goedicke 2006. It includes a sequence G'N (consonantal), or GASHINA (syllabic, Goshen?).

[18] Protoalphabetic inscriptions from Canaan: Colless 1991: 19–20 listed; 22–24 illustrated; 20–62 examined; Puech 1986: 172–187; Sass 1988: 51–75; Lemaire 2000: 110–114; Hamilton 2006: 390–400.

Phoenicians are lost, but we know they kept records (see also sections 20 and 21 below).

Goldwasser's supposition is that the protoalphabet was not widely used, and was the lowly person's writing system; but the examples from Canaan are from temples (on paraphernalia such as bowls, an incense stand, and a ewer), from factories (on pottery), and from a tomb that did not belong to a pauper (on a dagger).

A surprise has come from Babylonia, in the form of Canaanian signature inscriptions on cuneiform tablets from the First Sealand Dynasty (16th century BCE); the letters have the forms current in early Phoenician inscriptions of the Iron Age.[19]

West Semitic syllabic texts are also found in many diverse places:[20] Egypt (as noted in section 5 above), Byblos,[21] Tuba (Umm el-Marra in Syria),[22] Megiddo,[23] Trieste,[24] Norway,[25] and elsewhere.[26] A remarkable seal with syllabic writing, possibly from Byblos, depicts a royal family in the style of Akhenaton and Nefertiti, and presumably dates from the Amarna period (14th century BCE).[27]

[19] Four West Semitic graffiti on Babylonian clay tablets: Colonna D'Istria 2012: 61–63.

[20] Colless 1998: 29, a list of 20 syllabic inscriptions.

[21] Dunand 1945; Mendenhall 1985; Colless 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997.

[22] Schwartz (2010) discusses the inscriptions on four small broken cylindrical objects (funerary talismans, I suggest); but he misses the connection with other West Semitic syllabic writing, and fails to see the significance of the dating, perhaps ca. 2350 BCE, in the Early Bronze Age, demonstrating the antiquity of the syllabic script. See also: http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2007/03/oldest-west-semitic-inscriptions-these.html

[23] The Megiddo signet ring from a Late Bronze Age tomb, Colless 1997: 45–46; 1998: 33; https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/megiddoring. My reading: "Sealed, the sceptre of Megiddo" (*nukhutama shubṭu sha magaduda*) assists in confirming Mendenhall's decipherment.

[24] Colless 1998: 30–31; an inscribed plaque, discovered in a cave near Trieste, published in 1973, and acknowledged by Giovanni Garbini (2006: 63–66) as a genuine Semitic "pseudo-hieroglyphic" inscription; before 1985, when Mendenhall published the key, West Semitic syllabic fakes could not easily be made.

[25] Kongsberg, in Norway, at a silver mine which has a syllabic and a consonantal inscription: http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2013/09/phoenicians-in-scandinavia.html

[26] Unprovenanced artefacts: scaraboid seal (Asia Minor?) Colless 1998: 30; stone stamp: http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2010/03/inscribed-west-semitic-stone-seal-this.html. A disc reportedly from the Amuq Valley in Syria, depicting a mare and a foal, with an inscription saying "the foal (*'uwalu*) brings (*yibi*) a gift (*zabuda*)". Other inscribed objects are known to me, but omitted here.

[27] Garbini *et al.* 2004. I think the seal may have had a funerary purpose.

7. The Inventors Were Illiterate, Unable to Read or Write Egyptian

Of course, when they had invented the new script for writing their own West Semitic language they would have become literate. But Goldwasser is assuming that they had no knowledge or understanding of writing, including the Egyptian system (and, it must be added, their own acrophonic syllabary, from which a majority of the letters arguably derive; see section 8). As we progress through her propositions we will see reasons for doubting this claim; a notable example is the use of the *nefer* hieroglyph (F35) for Tet in the protoalphabet, an icon that is rather opaque and not self-explanatory (see section 15 below).

Another aspect is the social status of the Semitic workers at the Sinai mines. Goldwasser usually refers to them as "illiterate miners," but this overlooks the metalworkers, the "sons of the furnace" (*bn kr*), whose "equipment" (*'nt*), notably the "melt-furnace" (*kbšn mš*), features strongly in the inscriptions, and the remains of such metallurgical apparatus have been found on the site.[28] W. F. Albright may have misinterpreted the inscriptions, particularly in his misreading of Sadey in favour of Qof to produce his phantom word *nqbn* for "miner" ("piercer" or "hole-borer"), and his distortion of *m'hb b'lt* ("beloved of Baalat", which had been a vital point in the decipherment process) into "Swear to bring a sacrifice"; but he did well in directing our attention to the details of the Beni-Hasan depiction of a party of thirty-seven male and female Asiatics: "asses, weapons, musical instruments, and portable bellows for use in working copper" (he compares Genesis 4:21–22, referring to Jubal the ancestor of all those playing "the lyre and the pipe", and Tubal Qayn connected with "forging copper and iron").[29]

Evidence from the Iron Age copper mines at Timna indicates that the metalworkers were considered to be specialists and were accorded high social status; and ethnographic studies have shown that this was the case in such sites in other times and places.[30] Accordingly, the image we should have of

[28] The significant details of the Sinai protoalphabetic inscriptions are summarized in Colless 1990: 2, 6, 12. For a thorough report on the metallurgical evidence from Mine L and Mine G, see Beit-Arieh 1985.

[29] Albright 1968: 98, 200.

[30] Sapir-Hen and Ben-Yosef 2014, with ample bibliography. One indicator of higher status was the consumption of the better cuts of meat. In Sinai Mine L, Capra bones were found but not analysed with these criteria in mind (Beit-Arieh 1985: 113).

the Sinai Semites is of competence and professionalism, which could well involve literacy.

8. Their Illiteracy Motivated them to Formulate New Relations of Sound and Icon, and to Discover a New Solution, Namely Acrophony

In fact the acrophonic principle was already established for them in their West Semitic syllabary, dating back to the Old Kingdom in the Early Bronze Age.[31] This significant fact alone would invalidate Goldwasser's basic hypothesis. The acrophony ("summit sound") principle was apparently a modification of the rebus principle, and it was the mechanism for constructing the syllabary and subsequently the consonantary.[32] In the syllabary, a picture of a door evoked the word *daltu* (door) and acrophonically this yielded the syllable DA; in the consonantary (the protoalphabet) it was D. In one case there was a monosyllabic word: the picture of a mouth said *pu* and subsequently became alphabetic P.

The Mendenhall decipherment of the Byblos syllabic inscriptions has been rejected or ignored, mainly on the insufficient grounds that his translations are "cryptic".[33] However, much research has been undertaken since his book was published in 1985;[34] but for our purposes it suffices to show that the majority of the consonantal letters of the Phoenician alphabet already existed in the syllabic inventory, and this can be seen in the BS (Byblos script) column on the table of signs supplied with this article (**Fig. 1**).[35]

[31] On the antiquity of the West Semitic syllabary, its use of acrophony, and its influence on the formation of the protoalphabet, see: Mendenhall 1985; Hoch 1990; Isserlin 1990; Colless 1992; 1998; and also https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/westsemiticsyllabary.

[32] On acrophony as modified rebus writing, see Colless 1996; and the idea is also broached here: https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/alphabetevolution.

[33] This facile opinion is paraded here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byblos_syllabary.

[34] Hoch 1990; Colless 1992; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997; 1998.

[35] See also Colless 1998: 34–35, for a comparative table of the syllabic and consonantal signs, with corresponding Egyptian hieroglyphs.

9. The Sinai Alphabetic Inscriptions Consistently Show the Wrong Direction of Writing According to Egyptian Rules

This is the first of a number of alleged indications of the illiteracy of the inventor or inventors of the protoalphabet.

Egyptian scribes arranged their texts either in blocks of horizontal lines or in sets of vertical columns, and in both cases the preferred direction was from right to left. With regard to horizontal *lines* of writing, Egyptian scribal practice was to run the characters from right to left (sinistrograde, as in Hebrew and Arabic practice), but sometimes from left to right (dextrograde, as in English writing). Egyptian signs with fronts and backs (such as birds and human heads) must look backwards to the beginning of a horizontal line of writing. Most of the Sinai Semitic inscriptions run down in columns; only one of them has a block of inscribed lines: Sinai **349=22** (now mutilated by weathering) has the bovine and human heads facing towards the end of the line (that is, they are looking where they are going); the direction of writing on 349 is sinistrograde (running from right to left), and this is in agreement with the Egyptian tradition, but the animals (ox, snake, human) are facing the wrong way. Inscription **357=32** has a vertical column leading into a dextrograde line (left to right); the latter has the heads facing rightwards; this is opposite to Egyptian practice.

When an Egyptian text is arranged in vertical *columns* (with the text running from top to bottom in each line, and the columns moving from right to left) fronts and faces are regularly turned to the right; but in the previously mentioned vertical section of protoalphabetic **357=32** the oxen, the snakes, and the fishes look leftwards, as do the animals on the two columns of **351=23** (with a picture of the god Ptah facing leftwards, that is, in the direction of the columns of writing, the opposite of the depiction of Ptah on Sinai Egyptian Stela 92, a document which is central to Goldwasser's thesis)[36]. These three texts (349, 351, 357) are from Mine L; they are carefully inscribed and may be some of the oldest on the site. They are deviant according to Egyptian rules, but here is the important point: they are actually faithful to their own West Semitic tradition of writing, which goes back to the time of the Old Kingdom; the syllabic texts from Gubla (Byblos on the coast of Lebanon) have bees and birds looking left along sinstrograde lines (Texts A, C, D) and

[36] Goldwasser 2012: 14–18, on Sinai Stela 92 as "The Link" (see section 22 below).

looking left in columns (Text G).[37] Note that there is at least one West Semitic syllabic inscription from the turquoise region of Sinai (**526**); it moves from left to right, and the signs face that way, contrary to the Egyptian style.[38]

What we have in these significant Semitic inscriptions from Sinai is the work of scribes who were apparently well acquainted with their own two writing systems (syllabary and consonantary), and it is likely that they were always bringing the protoalphabet with them from elsewhere, rather than inventing it on the spot on one of their Sinai expeditions.

However, absolute consistency in orientation (note the word "consistently" in Goldwasser's statement) is hard to find in the rest of the collection: on the block statuette from the temple (**346=4**), the one fish and the two human heads look one way while the three snakes face in the opposite direction; the fish and the ox on **363=16**, **352=28**, and **358=35** are looking in different directions. Moreover, the heads on **356=29** (from Mine L) are actually in conformity with the Egyptian convention (whether by accident or design). The writing on the bilingual votive sphinx from the temple (**345=3**) is interesting: the two horizontal Semitic lines are uncharacteristically dextrograde (the ox and the dancing man are not obviously looking where they are going, but the snake is pointing away from the direction of the writing); the Egyptian text is characteristically sinistograde (the Horus bird is looking rightwards). Some of these cited inscriptions (notably this sphinx inscription, with its NK Qof [hieroglyph V25] having two strokes at the top) would be from the New Kingdom period, and would not be relevant to the question of the beginnings of the protoalphabet.

In summary, the writers of the protoalphabetic inscriptions (as also the syllabic texts) show a fairly consistent tendency to observe their own long-standing custom of writing from right to left, which was possibly something they imitated from Egyptian practice; but they usually had letters facing forward, in the direction of the line, which is (whether accidentally or intentionally) the opposite of Egyptian practice.

[37] Drawings of the Gubla syllabic texts, showing the direction of writing: Colless 1993: 4 for document D; 1994: 60 for C; 1994: 73 for A; 1997: 42 for G. For photographs, see Dunand 1945: 72–81.

[38] For Sinai 526 (a syllabic inscription) see Colless 1997: 47–48.

10. Letters in One and the Same Inscription May Show Different Stances

As examples, Goldwasser cites **357** (inside Mine L) and **358** (inside Mine M, which is joined to Mine L), both of which have already been mentioned here; in each case, the two instances of the letter L are in a lying position on the one hand, and standing obliquely on the other; this is an interesting observation; a possible explanation is that the two instances are considered to be in different sorts of lines (horizontal versus vertical), but inspection of the whole set shows that this is not a general rule in the system; there is a wide variety of stances for that letter. On the block statuette from the temple (**346=4**), the text may have had more than one writer (front and side); there are two different kinds of head (R) and three variant styles of house (B). No such variation would normally be permitted in the work of a trained Egyptian scribe (but see the remarks on Sinai **28** and **53** in section 15 below), but perhaps the Semitic writers are simply showing their individuality, not their ignorance.

Incidentally, in Israel in the Iron Age I (1200–1000 BCE) the few available inscriptions exhibit various stances and shapes for each letter in each text, leading to the suspicion that the signs were being used syllabically (with vowels a, i, u, as in the original syllabary). This hypothesis will be explored and tested as more documents are brought to light; in the mean time a preliminary survey is accessible.[39]

11. In Most Cases, the Writers Do Not Follow any Order in Writing

Again, Goldwasser's generalizing is too sweeping. Her prize trophy is the jumble of letters on one side of the block statuette (**346=4**, probably MK): the line of writing meanders. "No Egyptian scribe would ever produce such an inscription." But it alerts us to the need to take meandering and clustering into account when reading some of the inscriptions: **365=8**, **363=16**, **361=13**. Two examples of the line taking a sharp turn are **357=32** and **358=35**; each begins as a vertical column and then runs sideways. This is untidy, but sometimes the surface of the wall might be to blame for such irregularities. Also, mining tools were used for the task; this is stated in **376=1** ("The pickax has

[39] Colless 2013.

engraved…"); its four columns are in boustrophedon style ("as the ox ploughs": 1 down, 2 up, 3 down, 4 up) starting on the left; a large fish is standing on its tail to fit into column 3 (certainly a "different" stance); the bovine and human heads are facing right so we know which direction the text is taking (left to right). These apparent anomalies have their own artistry and attractiveness (like Arabic calligraphy), and generally the writers have aimed at setting their texts down in orderly lines or columns.[40]

12. Different Hieroglyphs May Be Used as Prototypes for a Single Letter

Goldwasser rightly adduces ***N*** (snake), which is found as a viper (I9, *f*) and as a cobra (I10, *ḏ*); but she does not show an example of the viper; the ideal cases are the two similar inscriptions: **360=14** (Mine K) has a viper, and **361=13** (Mine N) has a cobra in the corresponding position in the sequence of signs. But both are snakes.

R is a human head, and she suggests that it is based not only on the profile hieroglyph (D1 *tp*) but also the frontal form (D2 *ḥr*), which is possibly but not certainly evidenced on **364=37**, **365=8**, and **367=17**.

H (a man with upraised forearms, the forerunner of the letter E in the alphabet) could be cited in this connection: Goldwasser has assumed that this is a high officer shouting Hey or Hoy, but the more likely link is a person exulting or jubilating (*hillul* celebration, already used in the syllabary for HI). A28 (man with both forearms raised) is more refined (and clothed) than the simple stick figures in the Semitic texts, but as the determinative marker for high and joy it provided the semantic basis for HI and H in the West Semitic scripts. The character for H is also found in an inverted stance (standing on hands, as in hieroglyph A29) at the end of **358=35**; and it occurs on the Valley of the Queens ostracon in Egypt;[41] there it could be taken as an inverted K, but as H it produces the word *ʾmht* (maidservants), and this goes with the reading of the word below it as *ʾšt* (women, though *ʾṯt* is the expected form in the Bronze Age) with the letter Shin as the NK form of the sun with a single

[40] Note the comments of Albright (1966: 8–9) on the arrangement of lines; he points to one peculiarity: "the lineation is not precise, so that a text may run down and then go back up slightly and even circle around, very much as in later North-Arabian graffiti".

[41] Valley of Queens ostracon: Goldwasser 2011: 308, Fig 3a; Sass 1988: Fig. 286.

uraeus serpent and a tail (N6). Furthermore, on the Wadi el-Hol inscription in Egypt, one of the three instances of H (fifth in the vertical line) has only one forearm raised, and Goldwasser tries A1 (seated man) and A17 (seated child with hand to mouth); but the man is obviously dancing for joy, as with hieroglyph A32, likewise denoting jubilation (but if he is kneeling, then A8 could be invoked, being yet another jubilation sign).

Rather than demonstrating ignorance of the Egyptian system, this evidence indicates knowledge of its contents on the part of the Semitic users of the protoalphabet.

13. In Some Cases New Iconic Readings Are Given to Egyptian Signs

This statement is baseless, in my view. Goldwasser plays with possible origins for the letter Waw (oar, mace, toggle-pin) but disregards the fact that *waw* means "hook" or "nail" (WA in the syllabary, W in the consonantary);[42] in the protoalphabet it was a circle on a stem, and then in the Phoenician alphabet the circle was opened up at the top, and this was an inverted version of the form it had in the syllabary. This object had no counterpart among the hieroglyphs, and so it leads into the next point.

14. Some Letters Have their Origin Outside the Egyptian System

Refer to my table of signs to see the forms (and the BS column shows the syllabic forerunners attested at Byblos, and elsewhere):

W (*waw*) would fit here, as just noted.
Z (*ziqq* fetter) not an Egyptian character, as far as I can see.
T (*taw*, + or x, meaning a mark or signature) has no Egyptian counterpart.
T (*ṯad* breast): a female double breast has no Egyptian prototype.[43]

[42] Hamilton (2006: 90–92) creates unnecessary difficulties about *waw* and its "hook" or "nail" meaning; he insists with Albright that it is a mace; he expects it should have become *yaw* (but presumably its usage as the letter name would maintain its initial *w*); he surmises that the shape of the letter caused *waw* to be used for the hooks from which the temple curtains were hung; his motive for this unnecessary hypothesis seems to be the desire to find an original Egyptian hieroglyph for every single letter of the protoalphabet.

[43] Regarding Thad/Shad (breast) in the protoalphabet (Th) and in the syllabary (SHA), and Shimsh (sun, generating SHI and Sh) refer to the table of signs (Fig. 1, though this lacks the circle as a representation of the sun); also section 19 below for clarification; and see further

Goldwasser puts two signs into this category: hand and bow. The bow (composite bow, **ṯann*, the supposed source of Th and/or Sh**)** is a phantom, seen only in speculation.[44]

K as a hand finds little to compare with hieroglyph D46 (but fingers can be shown in this character, to compare with the upright hand on **349=22**; but it has two different precursors in the syllabary (see section 16).

15. LACK OF STANDARDIZATION

B With regard to the letter Bet, Goldwasser declares that there is a plethora of house forms in the Sinai Semitic inscriptions, but she goes too far when she includes houses with multiple rooms, such as the one with two rooms and a rounded courtyard in **380=11** at Mine G; this is actually the sign for Het.

Ḥ Other examples of Het are: the two-part dwelling in text **360=14** at Mine K, and the three-section mansion in **361=13** at Mine N. These are based on Canaanian mansions, the relevant word being *ḥaçir*, and comparing this to hieroglyph O6 (mansion) is legitimate, given the similarity to the Semitic forms in examples in Sinai Egyptian inscription **28**.[45]

Ḫ The original hieroglyph (V28) is one of the single-consonant signs, representing Egyptian *Ḥ* but Semitic *Ḫ*. It is a hank of thread, or a wick, shaped like a double helix. Sinai inscription **53** (dating from year 44 of Amenemhet III)[46] is a splendid piece of Egyptian calligraphy (and it has a host of hieroglyphs that are prototypes for the letters of the alphabet, though eleven of them are missing by my calculation); but it shows inconsistency, having some cases of this sign with the standard three loops (lines 1, 4, 7) and others with only two loops (lines 4, 8). In the Sinai protoalphabetic texts the form with three loops is found once (**376=1**) and the remaining few instances have two loops.

Likewise on Sinai **53**, hieroglyph F35 (*nfr*) shows variation: it has one stroke at the top of its stem in lines 1 and 15, and two strokes in line 6. Its

Colless 2010: 90 and 92, and n. 48. Sh and Th both occur in the Wadi el-Hol text, for example, and neither character resembles the composite bow (**ṯann)* of Albright's scheme.

[44] Hamilton (2006: 235–237), in his quest for completeness, provides hieroglyph T10 for the composite bow, unnecessarily in my view; Colless 2010: 92, and n. 48.

[45] Semitic forms of hieroglyph O6 (mansion) in Sinai 28: Goldwasser 2006: 126, Fig. 6; 144, Fig. 22.

[46] Photograph and drawing of Sinai inscription 53: Sass 1988: Figs. 291, 292.

equivalent (as Tet) in Sinai **351=23** has only one stroke, though in the syllabary it could have two strokes (see the BS column on my table of signs).

Ṭ Tet only appears once in the Sinai corpus, in **351=23**, but it was clearly a borrowing of the Egyptian *nefer* hieroglyph, which stands for goodness and beauty, and Semitic *ṭab* (good, beautiful) provides the acrophone (also ṬA in the syllabary). As this hieroglyph does not readily yield up its meaning (the heart and the windpipe perhaps expressing emotional reaction to goodness) knowledge of the Egyptian symbol would be required, contrary to Goldwasser's assumption of the inventor's ignorance.

16. Two Icons Competing for the Representation of a Particular Sound

Again the accusation is lack of standardization.

D Goldwasser sets up a false opposition for the letter D: *dalt* (door, which is still visible in the Roman form of D) versus *dag* (fish), though she knows that the fish sign could be (and surely is, I would say) Samek.[47] So there are two origins for **S** (*samk*): fish and spinal column (see the table of signs). The fish occurs in the south; the northern form is the spine, as also in the syllabary (for SA).

Two more possible instances can be offered; both come out of the syllabary.

K *kapp* (palm of the hand, KA) and *kipp* (palm branch, KI).

M horizontal waves (water, MU) and vertical wavy line (rain, MI).

Incidentally, these examples (D, K, M) show that the formation of the protoalphabet was basically a matter of choosing phonograms from the Canaanian syllabary, and using them as consonantograms; but preference was given to signs with the –a vowel.[48]

[47] The fish sign as D (erroneous opinion, properly S) alongside the door sign: Goldwasser 2006: 135–137; Hamilton 2006: 61–75; Sass 1988: 113–114. The fish and the door are both found in Sinai **376=1**, and this should settle the matter: they must represent different consonants.

[48] A connection between the syllabary and the consonantary was proposed long ago, but the idea remains neglected: Mendenhall 1985: 23–25 ("From Syllabary to Alphabet"); Colless 1992: 96–99 ("the relation of the proto-alphabet to the Byblian signary"); Colless 1998: 34–35 (comparative table of syllabic, protoalphabetic, and hieroglyphic signs).

17. The Acrophonic Script Shows no Signs of Contamination from the Complex Egyptian Ideographic System

Goldwasser asserts that "its complicated semiotic mechanism escaped them." On the contrary, its workings had been understood by their scribes since the time of the Old Kingdom, when the West Semitic *logosyllabary* was constructed.[49] In the new acrophonic script, the protoalphabet, which was a *logo-consonantary* (possibly conceived because the Egyptian system was known and comprehended), each sign could also function as a *logogram* (for example, house icon as *bayt*), and as a *rebogram* (the consonants of the word that goes with the picture could be employed to express homophones, or act as components in another word). Examples have been collected and presented elsewhere.[50] Such extended usage of the letters seems to have been still operating in the early Iron Age, in the text of the Izbet Sartah ostracon.[51] It is detectable in the Wadi el-Hol text.[52] Strangely, Goldwasser allows a "classifier" sign into this inscription (letter 5 on the vertical line);[53] in my interpretation it is a dancing man and a logogram (*hillul* "celebration"); she wants it to be a human male classifier preceding a male personal name, but the name following it is ʻAnat, the goddess who is pictured beside the name.

18. No Clear Case of Borrowing from the Monoconsonantal Repertoire

This is true, but eight of them do turn up in the inscriptions, with different sound-values, of course: *B (*Egyptian *h) Ḫ (ḥ) Y (ʿ) K (d) M (n) N (f) N (ḏ) P (r).*

[49] Hoch 1990.
[50] Colless 2010: 82–83, 88–89, 91.
[51] https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/abgadary.
[52] Colless 2010: 91, and 95, Fig 4; also http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/2009/12/wadi-el-hol-proto-alphabetic.html.
[53] Goldwasser 2006: 146–150. Her interpretation of the inscription as a name with a title and a toponym ("The besieger [*mktr* encircler] *ʻwt*. El's trickle [*pkʼl*]") is unlikely to be what the writer intended; I regard it as a statement identifying the drinking-place (*mšt)* where celebrations for the goddess ʻAnat were held (see the preceding note for references). Goldwasser's K (the "two hands" grapheme) is the Egyptian *k3* hieroglyph (D28), but it is actually a sun-sign (*š*) as described in section 19 below; she invokes a scarab from Tell el-ʻAjjul (Fig. 32) showing a form of this character, where the "hands" are small circles; but the correct identification is there at the top of the text, obviously the sun with the serpent; incidentally there is a correspon-

19. No Hieratic Signs Mixed with Hieroglyphs

If stylized "hieratic" signs (in which the original image is almost obliterated) were borrowed for the protoalphabet, this would require literacy as a precondition, and she insists that the inventors "interacted only with the pictorial meanings of the signs".[54] However, others disagree with her, she acknowledges.

Obviously, Goldwasser would eschew the discredited idea that the letters of the Phoenician alphabet were newly made from hieratic characters, instead of being stylized versions of the original pictophonograms.[55] However, the characters of the Canaanian syllabary are related to Old Kingdom hieratic as well as hieroglyphic.[56]

This is an opportunity to point out that the users of the protoalphabet did take note of current Egyptian symbols and the fashion changes that occurred in the hieroglyphic script. For the sun-sign (which functioned as *ši* in the syllabary and *š* in the consonantary) the hieroglyph for sun (*r*ʿ N5) was employed: in the syllabary it was a circle, with or without its central dot; but the circle (the sun-disc) is not attested in the consonantary (though it is known in the derivative cuneiform alphabet); instead we have variations of N6, depicting the sun-disc with one uraeus serpent (New Kingdom) or two serpents (N6B, found in the MK and NK periods); the double-serpent sign is obviously the prototype for the Sinai version of *š* (with the sun disc omitted).[57] Another N6 variant is found twice in the Wadi el-Hol text; it has the

ding sun-sign on the "Saint Louis cylinder seal" or "Grossman seal" (Hamilton 2006: 397); see Colless 1991: 24 (drawing No 30), 58–60; at that time I did not recognize the correct value for that sign (Colless Sadey, Hamilton Qof), and it can now be seen as another document containing both Sh (sun) and Th (breast), like the Wadi el-Hol inscription.

[54] Goldwasser 2011: 273–274 ("The Unnecessary Hypothesis of Hieratic Sources").

[55] Goedicke (2006: 126–127) still argues that the alphabet derives from Egyptian hieratic (cursive) signs, and this "can be fully demonstrated", on his Fig. 6 ("Parallel table of hieratic letter > alphabetic letter including their names"); the names were given later (not when the signs were created); for example, the name *resh* "head" was given to the character for R because it resembled a head; Goldwasser and myself accept that acrophony was applied to the image of a head and the sound *r* emerged from the word for head, in the beginning; but I would add that it was already RA in the syllabary.

[56] Hoch 1990, and this connection with the Egyptian Old Kingdom is one argument for the invention of the syllabary in the Early Bronze Age, before 2200 BCE.

[57] This point was kindly clarified to me by Stefan Wimmer (2010: 5), where he recognizes that I had shown the sun-sign connection in Colless 1988: 50–51; N6B with the two serpents was

sun-disc and the serpent, but it lacks the tail that is part of the N6 form in the New Kingdom; [58] examples of this version can be found on inscriptions in Sinai (**85** and **87**, year 4 and 5 of the reign of Amenemhet III) which relate to Khebded, a literate member of the Re<u>t</u>enu ruling family (and a candidate for identification as the deviser of the alphabet) who has played an important part in Orly Goldwasser's research; it occurs as a representation of the sun in the pictures on each stela, not as a hieroglyph in the text, but it matches the protoalphabetic sign.

20. NOT USED BY ANY INSTITUTION OR STATE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES

This is an argument from silence, which ignores the possibility of lost documents; state administration records were written on papyrus, which usually only survives in the dry Egyptian climate. But it would be fair to say that a large number of the Sinai protoalphabetic documents on stone were official, under the authority of the Egyptian government. Without being able to give a coherent and comprehensive interpretation of the corpus of inscriptions, Orly Goldwasser makes generalizations like this: it allowed the peripheral sectors of society to write their names or the name of a god, or to present a short prayer. This is true as far as it goes, but in the Semitic inscriptions at the Sinai turquoise mines there are official texts as well as private statements, though all are open to public gaze.

Four are concerned with a man named Asa: **376=1** records "the sickness (*dwt*) of Asa"; **345=3** is the votive sphinx from the temple, with his signature on the left shoulder above the dedicatory line, "This is my offering (*nqy*) to Baalat"; **358=35** inside Mine M is his obituary, "Asa has done (*p'l*) his work (*mlkth*)"; **363=16** is on his burial site, "This grave (*knkn*) is the resting place (*n<u>ḫ</u>t*) of Asa". The block statuette from the temple (**346=4**) bears a prayer to

also clearly the prototype for the character on the Timna inscription, which we both studied (Wimmer 2010; Colless 2010). Incidentally, in a West Semitic logo-syllabic inscription from Thebes (New Kingdom) there is a case of the sun syllabogram (which was normally a simple circle) with a combination of serpent and disc, instead of one or the other (Colless 1997: 48–50; 1998: 31–33); also at Timna (Colless 2010: 94, Fig. 2).

[58] Wimmer (2010: 5) accepts that this is a sun-sign, and rejects the proposed connection with a composite bow; but Goldwasser (2006: 142, No 19) follows Hamilton (2006: 241–244) in the supposition that *<u>ṯ</u>ann (a double bow?) is the source of the letter Shin; it is true that the sign for <u>ṯ</u> became Shin, but it was the human breast, <u>ṯ</u>*ad* (Colless 2010: 90, 92).

Baalat "for increase (*lsg*) of pasture (*mr'ṯ*)" (for the donkeys and goats, presumably).

The official announcements relating to Mine L, for example, were inscribed in steliform (stela-shaped) panels on rock outside the mine. It is reasonable to suppose that these were posted at various times and relate to different expeditions to Serabit el-Khadim. Officers are mentioned in them: "the chief prefect" (*rb nçbn*) appears in **349=22**, and on the statuette **346=4**; "the prefect of the expedition" (*nçb wṯ* = Egyptian *wḏ'* "expedition") is on **351=23**, and possibly on **350=27**.[59]

The inscriptions concerned the equipment (*'nt*) for the metalworking (making and remaking the copper tools for the mining operations) by the "sons of the furnace" (*bn kr*), and also the vessels (*'nt* "equipment", *kd* "water vessel", *'b* "water bag") for watering the vegetable garden (*gn*). In other places I have provided a full account of the information and instructions in the inscriptions.[60] However, in our attempts to decipher these enigmatic documents, we must constantly keep in mind that the only one who really knew what an ancient alphabetic inscription meant was the person who wrote it.

21. The Cuneiform Alphabet Was a Sophisticated Reworking of the Protoalphabet

Goldwasser accepts that the cuneiform signs of the alphabet that was used for various purposes at Ugarit (and in other places) were based on the pictorial characters of the consonantary. However, she surmises that the protoalphabet was a despised script, which now achieved respectability in new raiment. Let us not forget that the reason we have so much written material from Ugarit is that it was preserved on clay, unlike the lost royal records of Byblos and Tyre. Clay tablets are far less fragile and perishable than papyrus rolls. If the scribes of Ugarit had chosen to write their documents on papyrus, we would have at

[59] Albright 1966: 42 (glossary) reads the Sadey (Ç) as Qof ; and so he has *nqb* as **naqbu*, "mine, tunnel" (from root *nqb* "pierce, bore a hole"), and *nqbn* as *naqbân*, "miner", which in his view has a plural in *m* (mimation); he can find the sequence *rb nqbnm* ("chief of the miners") in **349**, but in **346** the mimation is lacking, so he helpfully and authoritatively provides it, as *rb nqbn(m)*. My reading, *rb nçbn* ("chief of the prefects") has nunation for the plural of *nçb*, "prefect, foreman", a word attested in Hebrew (1 Kings 9:23).

[60] For my first attempt at a comprehensive analysis of the Sinai protoalphabetic inscriptions, see Colless 1990; more recently I have placed several new articles concerning the main texts on this website: http://cryptcracker.blogspot.co.nz/

our disposal an adze with a name and a title, another adze with the same title (*rb khnm*, chief priest), and a cylinder seal with a personal name on it.[61] Consequently, someone would be asserting that this insignificant cuneiform script was only used for writing owners' names on their property.

Fortunately some official documents have survived on stone and metal at Byblos (Gubla) to show that the West Semitic syllabary was used there in the Bronze Age.[62] Early in the Iron Age (11th century BCE) Wen Amon reported that Zakar-Baal of Byblos brought out the official records of his forefathers and had them read out to reveal past dealings with Egypt (was the writing syllabic or consonantal?).[63] At Megiddo the syllabic script is found on an official signet ring ("Sealed: the sceptre of Megiddo") from the Late Bronze Age.[64] At Beth-Shemesh a scribe had made himself a copy of the cuneiform alphabet,[65] and an ostracon speaks (slurringly) of carousing in a wine tavern.[66]

It is thus clear that all three West Semitic writing systems (syllabary, consonantary, cuneiform script) were operating around 1200 BCE at the end of the Bronze Age, and the syllabary and the consonantary had flourished side by side for many centuries.

22. The Egyptian Stela 92 is the Link

This monumental inscription includes a portion by an important Semitic personage, Khebded the brother of the Prince of Retenu, who participated in the expeditions during the long reign of Amenemhet III in the 19th century BCE[67]

[61] See Goldwasser 2011: 292–293. This cuneiform consonantary (with three syllabograms: 'a, 'i, 'u) is represented beyond Ugarit (sometimes in a reduced form, a "short alphabet"): Dietrich and Loretz 1988; Puech 1996. For the three brief inscriptions not on clay tablets, see Gordon 1965: 257 (inventory) and 159 (transcriptions). For my demonstration of the origin of the cuneiform alphabet in the signs of the protoalphabet, go to: https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/cuneiformalphabet

[62] Mendenhall 1985: 32–143; Colless 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997.

[63] Breasted 1905: 106–107 ("journals"); Lichtheim 1978: 226–227 ("daybooks"); presumably papyrus.

[64] Megiddo gold signet ring: Colless 1997: 45–46; 1998: 33; the word "sceptre" is a logogram (with hieroglyph S44 as its prototype); see n. 23 above.

[65] Sass 1991; Puech 1986: 197–213; Dietrich und Loretz 1988: 277–296.

[66] Beth Shemesh ostracon: Colless 1990: 46–49; https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/winewhine.

[67] Goldwasser 2012: 14–17. Her essay is in response to Christopher Rollston, whose arguments are reproduced there: he suggests that the evidence she presents actually supports the opposite

Goldwasser finally allows that some of the Semites on the Egyptian expeditions to Sinai were officials who could read Egyptian writing; but they did not invent or use the alphabet; they would have learned about it from the workers at Mine L. Khebded's Egyptian inscription uses a square for the house sign, and also a closed rectangle. The square would have been borrowed from the protoalphabetic script at Mine L, where it represented a house, to go with the word *bayt* and to stand for the letter B; that is Goldwasser's "link" between Stela 92 and Mine L; and therefore, she presumes, the alphabet had already been invented by that time, Year 13 of the reign of Amenemhet III (see section 1, above). This is not necessarily so.

Here is a more likely connection (refer to my table of signs, for B in the Sinai, Canaan, and BS columns): Khebded would have known his own West Semitic syllabic script; one form of the BA sign was related to an Old Kingdom cursive sign for "house" (*pr*), with the base line of the square moved up diagonally to touch the top corner;[68] but the closed square *and* rectangle were also options for the house sign and BA; and, as happened with so many of the syllabic characters, all three forms were passed on to the consonantal protoalphabet. That is how Khebded came to be employing rectangles and squares for "house" in his Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription: he was already doing so in his Semitic syllabic writing.[69]

A new "link" is thus made; the "house" built by Orly Goldwasser collapses; her hypothesis is refuted.

SUMMATION

If we think in evolutionary terms, the consonantal protoalphabet was not so much an invention as a mutation of the previous syllabic system. In this regard, Mendenhall speaks of "the evolution from syllabary to alphabet".[70] By

of her case. Goldwasser (2010, 46) has a photograph of Stela 92 and its depiction of Khebded, with the surprising editorial caption: "Was he the Canaanite who invented the alphabet?" Perhaps he was.

[68] Hoch 1990: 116, 119; he also raises the question of a possible relationship between the syllabary and Egyptian "group writing".

[69] Dunand (1945: 103) indicates the inscriptions where the square and upright rectangle are attested; but relates them to the Egyptian *p* hieroglyph (Q3, seat); he recognizes the possibility that the square with its base as a diagonal line is a *beth* (100–101); significantly, inscriptions with this sign (C and D) do not have the closed rectangular form. See further Mendenhall 1985: 26; Hoch 1990: 118–120; Colless 1992: 62.

[70] Mendenhall 1985: 23.

the same token, the cuneiform alphabet was a modification of this consonantary, representing its pictorial signs with clusters of wedges (as had happened in the development of the Mesopotamian cuneiform logosyllabary). Research on the signs of any one of these three systems must always take the other two into account (as seen in the discussion of *š* as the sun, in section 19 above).

In the creation of the West Semitic scripts, evolution is the process; simplification is the driving force; acrophony is the creative technique, an offshoot of the older rebus principle; there is room for human intervention, but the move from syllabary to consonantary was not a new start with a new invention (acrophony) by a humble artisan who was ignorant of his own culture, as Goldwasser believes. The bulk of the letters of the protoalphabet were already functioning in the syllabary; and 18 of the 22 letters in the Phoenician alphabet of the Iron Age had an ancestor in the Canaanian syllabary of the Bronze Age (in my view, the exceptions were Het, Lamed, Sadey, Zayin). The reader should pause for a moment and ponder over this striking fact. The relevant signs are presented in the BS column of my chart (**Fig. 1**), and even if it is retorted that this script is not generally acknowledged as having been deciphered, the comparisons and resemblances are striking, and this would appear to be the obvious place for the protoalphabetic characters to be found. It seems significant that the initial syllables with the vowel *–a* predominate overwhelmingly in the acrophonic protoalphabet (refer to the Sinai/Egypt column of the table). Note further that Sadey has not been detected in a syllabic text yet, and if the tied bag (V33) was used, then it will be 19 out of 22. A number of new signs were added to the protoalphabet (which had more consonants than the syllabary) to bring the total of consonants to 27.[71]

The consonantal aspect of the Egyptian system had long been known to educated Semites, but it could well be that in the Middle Kingdom period, when many Canaanians ("Asiatics") were living in Egypt and were welcomed by the rulers, the motivational influence was there to promote further simplification in their writing, and to produce the most compact system the world had seen. They might not have called this unique species of script a consonantary (or a vowelless syllabary), but they knew how to operate the device. Its "genetic code" or "genome" contained not only letters (pictophonograms, specifically consonantograms, one of which was a double helix, incidentally) but also some lingering benign viruses, namely logograms and rebograms. In

[71] Colless 2010: 92. But some sounds had more than one sign to represent them (see section 16 above).

this regard, it is not necessary to suppose that the Semitic scribes focused on the Egyptian monoconsonantal signs as a model, since their letters would also function as biconsonantal and triconsonantal phonograms when acting as rebograms. The use of alternative signs for particular sounds is a phenomenon arising from *syllabary options* (ka or ki for K, mi or mu for M, showing that the signs with –a were not always given preference) and *hieroglyph choices* (for hi and H [*hillul* jubilation] three joy signs [A28, A29, A32] were available and were employed).

Ultimately Orly Goldwasser's hypothesis was a good one, because it was falsifiable. Somebody needed to try this idea, but unfortunately it has proved to be deeply flawed speculation, groundless rather than groundbreaking, perilously conducive to flights of fancy. Of course, the possibility remains that the protoalphabet was indeed conceived at the Sinai mines, but not on a basis of ignorance and illiteracy.

Goldwasser was striving to cause a paradigm shift in this field of study, where the consensus was certainly in need of a shake-up. When the West Semitic logosyllabary generated the logoconsonantary (the protoalphabet) there was a species of paradigm shift, and now that the process and its results are perceptible (starting with Mendenhall's evolution insight and then the realization that the signs in both systems could also function as logograms and rebograms) we have a different approach to reading protoalphabetic inscriptions, and a fresh paradigm in the grammatological sense, that is, a table of signs and sounds to replace the statutory stone tablet that was promulgated by William Foxwell Albright. Orly Goldwasser was likewise misguided by the chart from which the Albright school would not deviate; she also gave credence to his questionable readings of the Sinai inscriptions.[72] Nevertheless, the things Goldwasser has achieved through the publication and defence of her thesis are laudable.

I have personally been stimulated to go back to all the Egyptian inscriptions from Serabit and Magharah, and simultaneously look for dating criteria to apply to the protoalphabetic and syllabic inscriptions, apparently with some success. An example appears in the next paragraph.

Goldwasser's colourful popularising article in *Biblical Archaeology Review*[73] was enriched by helpful illustrations, notably photographs of the

[72] Sass (1988: 49–50) concludes that Albright's 1966 study cannot be regarded as a decipherment, and he offers **349** and **352** as examples of Albright's excessive rewriting of the texts.
[73] Goldwasser 2010.

bilingual sphinx (**345**, with "beloved of Hathor" in Egyptian hieroglyphs, and "beloved of Baalat" in the West Semitic script) which paradoxically would seem to undermine her belief that the Semitic workmen could not read Egyptian writing, but it is obviously from the New Kingdom not the Middle Kingdom (for Q it has a very clear 18th Dynasty form of the cord wound on a stick, that is, V25 not V24) and so it is not relevant to the question of origins; that same article showed the Serabit temple ruins with many of the monumental inscriptions still standing (notably Khebded's Stela 92), and it displayed a reconstruction of this sanctuary; it opened up the subject to the public, and a large amount of correspondence was received by the editor; scholarly response was opposed to her ideas, notably from Anson Rainey before his death, and then Christopher Rollston (her 2012 publication, which has been scrutinized here, was a reply to him).

One correspondent, namely James E. Jennings of the University of California (Los Angeles), begged to differ on the grounds of what he had been taught by "the brilliant linguist J. Ignace Gelb": "The Canaanites did not invent the alphabet." I will accept that assertion, if the emphasis is placed on the word "invent" (it was a mutational innovation rather than an invention); but his next point is not (as Mendenhall, Hoch, and myself say) that they drew the signs out of their existing syllabary, which had already employed Egyptian hieroglyphs acrophonically for a new Semitic purpose, but this: "they extracted 22 signs from the already existing 24 uniliteral signs found in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing" (and the acrophonic principle had no part in this, according to Gelb); they produced a script that can be described as "open consonantal uniliteral writing" (whereby the sign represented a consonant plus an unspecified vowel or no vowel, and this is what I was hinting at when I mentioned "a vowelless syllabary" earlier).[74] The figure "24" for the Egyptian monoconsonantal signs is slightly suspect (24 is the number of sounds but there are alternative signs for *y, w, m, n, s, t*), and I have already said that only eight of the "uniliteral" or "monoconsonantal" hieroglyphs found their way into the protoalphabet (in section 18 above).

[74] See also Helmut Satzinger 2002, "Syllabic and Alphabetic Script, or the Egyptian Origin of the Alphabet"; "syllabic" refers to the Gelb idea of the alphabet as an economical syllabary, not to the West Semitic syllabary that generated the alphabet; he speculates (entirely contrary to the Goldwasser hypothesis) that the inventors must have had a profound knowledge of the Egyptian hieroglyphic system, and they may have been Egyptian scribes (not non-Egyptian miners). Note also the speculative studies of Ludwig Morenz (2011; 2012) on the early alphabet and its genesis; he follows the Albright scheme.

The great irony, as I see it, is that Gelb was one of the decipherers of hieroglyphic Hittite (the Luwian syllabary), but he did not realize that it had been constructed acrophonically, presumably following the pattern provided by the West Semitic logosyllabary. These days Gelb's most faithful follower is Barry Powell, and in his book entitled *Writing* (2006) he has a chapter on the origins of West Semitic writing, in which he dismisses the "discredited" acrophonic principle as a factor.[75] This is quite easily done, by withholding Occam's razor (entities should not be multiplied) and regarding the "undeciphered" epigraphic material (such as our Sinai and Wadi el-Hol inscriptions) as examples of other experiments in creating scripts, and thus divorcing them from the Phoenician alphabet, as evidenced around 1000 BCE when there were no picture-signs. But at that time they would be saying, so to speak, "D is for Door (Dalet)", whereas at the start it was "Door [*dalt*] is for D", that is, practising acrophony.

Ultimately, this is the great boon that Orly Goldwasser has bestowed on her readers: people have learned that the alphabet was indeed formed by means of the acrophonic principle.[76]

[75] Powell 2006: 153–186, on West Semitic writing.

[76] It needs to be added that doubt still remains whether the Egyptians knew the acrophonic principle through their single-consonant signs. Goldwasser (2012: 19, n. 1) says that these particular signs represented monosyllabic words and "did not acquire their phonetic value, as far as we know, by the use of an acrophonic procedure". However, Jacques Freu (2000: 98), after surveying the development of ancient hieroglyphic writing, concludes that the Egyptians actually invented the alphabet, since the monoliteral signs were the precursors of the Phoenician alphabet. Freu maintains (2000: 94–95) that there was an Egyptian consonantal alphabet from the beginning, and it was constructed by the application of the principle of acrophony: for example the *f* of the viper sign was derived from the word *ft* meaning "viper", and *d* from the cobra, *dt*; the water sign supplied *n* from *nt*, water; **nine** of the signs fit this model, and **five** are not clear (m, g, w, k, s); the remaining **ten** would fit the pattern of being monosyllabic words. It is difficult to deny that acrophony was at work here, and this principle could have been noticed by the practitioners of West Semitic writing in the Bronze Age. At the same time, this does not necessarily nullify my idea that in the evolution of West Semitic scripts, the acrophonic syllabogram and then the acrophonic consonantogram were extensions (or reductions) of the rebus principle; and these Canaanian signs continued to function as full rebograms and logograms; in this regard, Freu (2000: 95) reminds us that most of the single-sound hieroglyphs kept their ideographic value, and this could be another connection between the Egyptian and Semitic systems. Incidentally, in my estimation, only one of the protoalphabetic signs goes with a monosyllabic word, namely P (*pu*, mouth). Finally, it is important to remember that Charles Lenormant, as long ago as 1838, thought and taught that "Phoenicians" had borrowed from Egyptians the alphabetic principle and the acrophonic method (*méthode acrologique*), taking a selection of hieroglyphs and applying new sound values to them; and he gave as examples, the ox for 'alep, the house for B, and the eye for 'ayin (Lemaire 2000: 105–106).

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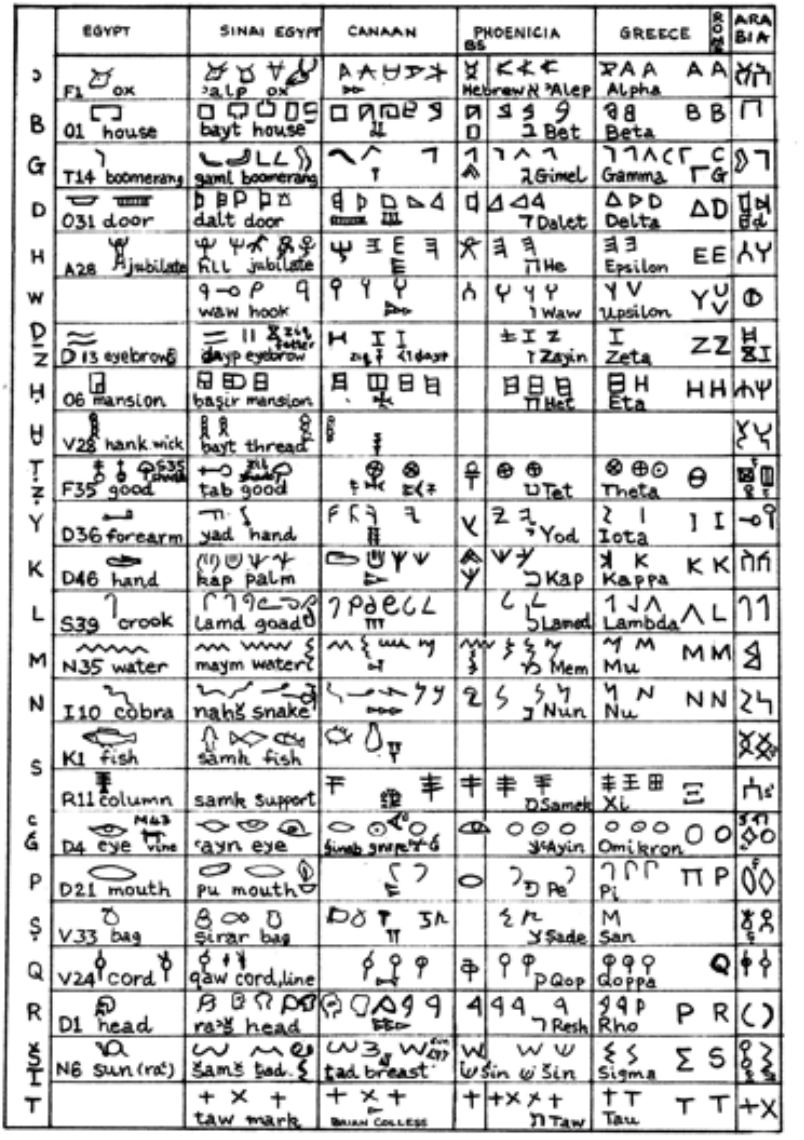
Hypothetical Origins of Alphabet Letters

Egyptian hieroglyphs (F1 et cetera)
West Semitic acrophone (*'alp* et cetera)
Hebrew and Greek names of letters
See also **Fig. 1**: Chart of Alphabet Evolution

'A *'alp* (ox, bull) Alep (Alpha) F1
B *bayt* (house) Bet (Beta) O1 O4
G *gaml* (boomerang) Gimel (Gamma) T14
D *dalt* (door) Dalet (Delta) O31
H *hillul* (exultation, celebration) He (Epsilon) A28 A29 A32 (cp A8)
W *waw* (hook, nail, peg) Waw (Upsilon)
Ḏ *ḏayp* (eyebrow) D13
Z *ziqq* (fetter) Zayin (Zeta)
Ḥ *ḥaçir* (mansion) Het (Eta) O6
Ḫ *ḫayṭ* (thread) Hbr *ḥuṭ* (thread, cord) V28
Ṭ *ṭab* (good) Tet (Theta) F35
Ẓ *ẓil* (shade) Hbr *çel* (shade, shadow) S35
Y *yad* (hand, forearm) Yod (Iota) D36
K *kapp* (palm, hand) *kippat* (palm branch) Kap (Kappa) (D46)
L *lamd* (Hbr *malmad* ox-goad) Lamed (Lambda) S39 (crook) V1 (rope)?
M *maym* (water) *mu* (water) Mem (Mu) N35
N *naḥaš* (snake) Nun (Nu) I10 (cobra) I9 (viper)
S *samk* (fish) K1 K3
S *samk* (spinal column) Samek (Xi) R11
ʿ *ʿayin* (eye) Ayin (Omikron) D4
Ġ *ġinab* (grape) M43
P *pu* (mouth) Pe (Pi) D21
Ṣ Ç *çirar* (bag) Çade/Sadey (San) V33
Q *qaw* (cord, line) Qop (Qoppa) V24 V25
R *raʾš* (head) Resh (Rho) D1
Š *šamš* (sun) N6 N6b
Ṯ *ṯad* (breast) Shin/Sin (Sigma)
T *taw* (mark) Taw (Tau)

Fig. 1. Chart of Alphabet Evolution
(For an enlargement see
https://sites.google.com/site/collesseum/ABTEVNTBL.jpg)



La política desde abajo en la Siria-Palestina de la Edad del Bronce Tardío

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Abstract: Politics from Below in Syria-Palestine during the Late Bronze Age

During most of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1200 BCE) Syria-Palestine was occupied and ruled by foreign powers: Egypt in its southern part, Ḫatti and Mitanni in its northern part. In such a situation, in which the foreign political hegemony marked the pace of inner socio-political dynamics, it would be possible to ask whether there were actual instances of political resistance and maneuvering "from below" in the petty kingdoms of the Levant. Politics from below can in fact be detected in the textual-epigraphic data from the period. This paper offers an analysis of these local political dynamics faced to foreign rule, also sketching a basic political anthropology of the region.

Keywords: Syria-Palestine – Political Hegemony – Local Politics – Patronage

Resumen: La política desde abajo en la Siria-Palestina de la Edad del Bronce Tardío

La región de Siria-Palestina durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío (ca. 1550–1200 a.C.) estuvo mayormente ocupada y dominada por poderes extranjeros: Egipto en la zona meridional, Ḫatti y brevemente Mitanni en la zona septentrional de dicha región. Ante tal situación, en la que la hegemonía política desde el exterior marcaba las pautas y las dinámicas sociopolíticas generales, cabe preguntarse si existían instancias de réplicas y/o resistencias y de maniobrabilidad políticas "desde abajo", desde los pequeños reyes y líderes locales. Dicha actitud, en efecto, puede ser evidenciada en parte del material documental proveniente de este período. En la presente comunicación, exponemos dicho material documental y efectuamos un análisis del mismo, tendiendo a ofrecer una síntesis de la antropología política local, a partir de la interacción entre dominantes externos y dominados locales.

Palabras clave: Siria-Palestina – Hegemonía política – Política local – Patronazgo

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La política "desde arriba" en Siria-Palestina durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío

Durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío (ca. 1550–1200 a.C.), la región de Siria-Palestina estuvo mayormente ocupada por poderes extranjeros: Egipto en la zona meridional del Levante, Ḫatti y brevemente (a inicios de este período) Mitanni en la zona septentrional de dicha región[1]. La configuración política de la dominación externa del territorio era inexorablemente jerárquica y vertical. Las órdenes emanaban desde las capitales imperiales y los pequeños reyes locales, súbditos de aquellos amos lejanos, debían obedecer. Hasta aquí, el panorama es el esperable en prácticamente cualquier situación de dominación imperial a través de jerarquías y lazos políticos particulares[2]. Sin embargo, en Siria-Palestina se observa además una variante doble en la relación entre dominantes y dominados. En la zona septentrional del Levante, el reino de Ḫatti impuso una dominación sobre los pequeños reinos locales a través de alianzas personales entre reyes, alianzas notablemente asimétricas, celebradas a través de tratados de subordinación impuestos por el soberano hitita[3]. En la zona meridional, bajo dominio egipcio, la situación divergía con respecto a su contraparte del norte puesto que la dominación egipcia no se valía de tratados o lealtades personales (al menos, formalmente) sino que apelaba a la dominación directa que el poder militar en el territorio garantizaba. De este modo, si Ḫatti gobernaba a través de una especie de "gobierno indirecto", Egipto sostenía el orden local a partir de una presencia formal de sedes administrativas y guarniciones militares a lo largo del territorio de Palestina[4]. Es relevante notar, no obstante, que la disposición contractual en la expresión de la relación de subordinación por parte de los pequeños reyes locales, tal como se manifestaba con el dominio hitita, parecía subsistir en el dominio egipcio de la región. Si bien el faraón no reconocía a los pequeños reyes del Levante como aliados sino apenas como súbditos habitando una periferia bárbara, es significativo que estos pequeños reyes parecieran arrogarse el derecho a peticionar ayuda y asistencia al gran rey y hasta reprochar la falta de reciprocidad en dicha relación de subordinación, así como amenazar con abandonar la

[1] Entre otros estudios, véase Zaccagnini 1990; 1999; Knapp 1992; Pfälzner 2012; Pfoh 2013a; Bryce 2014: 28–94.
[2] Véase al respecto, por ejemplo, Newbury 2003.
[3] Véase Imparati 1999: esp. 359–363.
[4] Véase el detallado estudio de Morris 2005.

sumisión a Egipto, estableciendo alianzas con otros poderes o facciones para poder sobrevivir políticamente[5].

En otras oportunidades hemos argumentado a favor de comprender esta particular dinámica sociopolítica basada en peticiones, reproches y reciprocidad de parte de los pequeños reyes levantinos atendiendo a la lógica particular que instaura una relación patrón-cliente en la sociedad[6]. En esta ocasión, y a partir de dicha argumentación, deseamos explorar las instancias de réplicas y/o resistencias políticas "desde abajo", de parte de los pequeños reyes y líderes locales de Siria-Palestina. Dicha actitud, en efecto, puede ser evidenciada en parte del material documental proveniente de este período. Así pues, exponemos a continuación algunos ejemplos de dicho material documental y efectuamos un análisis del mismo, con la intención de ofrecer una síntesis de la antropología política local, a partir de la interacción entre dominantes externos y dominados locales.

Sobre la práctica de lo político y la política "desde abajo"

Desde un principio, indicamos que toda referencia que hagamos a "lo político" debe distanciarse de los entendimientos propios de la modernidad occidental (y en especial de su variante liberal) al respecto y, en cambio, comprenderse a partir de una definición antropológica de lo político o la política. *Política* en este sentido remite a una relación social particular que debe contextualizarse temporal y culturalmente, aun cuando podamos ofrecer marcos generales de interpretación de las acciones consideradas precisamente como políticas[7]. Por otra parte, el concepto de *cultura política*, proveniente de la ciencia política y la sociología política contemporáneas, puede ser de gran utilidad analítica puesto que hace referencia a un "patrón particular de orientaciones para la acción política"[8]; un patrón que responde a un modo cultural-

[5] Cf., por ejemplo, EA 83:14–16.
[6] Véase, por ejemplo, Pfoh 2009; 2013a; 2013b.
[7] Como bien indica Bailey (1972: 22): "Sin dudas, fallaríamos desde el inicio si no reconocemos que, en ciertos niveles, los actores políticos del Medio Oriente están hablando, literal y metafóricamente, lenguajes que difieren de los nuestros. En cierto grado, estos lenguajes y estas culturas políticas son únicos. Pero solamente los comprendemos al punto de la generalización, demostrando que son variaciones de cuestiones que hallamos en otras culturas" (todas las traducciones son mías). Véase también la discusión y el análisis general en Gledhill 2000.
[8] Almond 1956: 396. Véase también Meisel 1974; Dittmer 1977; Chilton 1988.

mente condicionado de realizar la práctica de lo político, a través del cual podemos interpretar ciertos eventos[9]. Una vez que los preconceptos acerca de lo político, forjados mayormente por la filosofía política de Occidente, son puestos a un lado, podemos atestiguar prácticas políticas culturalmente válidas en sí mismas, y no como una deformación o degeneración particular de un modelo arbitrario de referencia. Indagar en la lógica particular de dichas prácticas, tal como podemos interpretarlas, en nuestro caso concreto, a través de los archivos diplomáticos y otros elencos epistolográficos de la Edad del Bronce Tardío, nos permite hacer un intento de reconstrucción (o simplemente de interpretación) de cosmovisiones y universos políticos ahora formalmente desaparecidos, pero pasibles de ser aproximados, siquiera de manera heurística, a través de ciertas prácticas todavía o hasta recientemente activas en el Medio Oriente contemporáneo, tal como lo atestigua el registro etnográfico y etnohistórico de la región[10].

Asimismo, se debe aclarar que toda referencia a la política "desde abajo" en contextos antiguo-orientales debe apartarse de lecturas que podrían llegar a modernizar un fenómeno social separado por milenios de los contextos sociopolíticos contemporáneos. Toda práctica política desde abajo debe también ser primeramente comprendida en su contexto sociocultural. La noción de "política desde abajo" puede relacionarse, sin dudas, con la perspectiva de una "historia desde abajo" propuesta originalmente por el reconocido historiador británico E.P. Thompson[11]. Sin embargo, en el contexto analítico de la presente problemática, debemos distanciarnos de dicha perspectiva, mayormente por razones epistemológicas: las instancias y las relaciones sociales que la perspectiva de Thompson se propone analizar se encuentran atravesadas por la modernidad occidental en sus componentes económicos, políticos e ideológicos, alejadas temporal y culturalmente de las situaciones históricas de la Siria-Palestina de la Edad del Bronce Tardío. Y lo mismo podríamos decir de la importante contribución de J.C. Scott con respecto al alcance de la "infrapolítica de los grupos subordinados"[12]. Estos estudios presuponen, en

[9] En general, sobre los aspectos culturales de la constitución de lo político, sin contar como exclusiva su manifestación en el Estado occidental, y sobre los límites de "la política", cf. Gledhill 2000. Véase también Schemeil 1999, y Buccellati 2013, para tratamientos históricos del Cercano Oriente antiguo; y Clastres 2001 [1980], para ejemplos etnográficos sudamericanos.

[10] Cf. Gilsenan 2000; Lindholm 2002; van der Steen 2013, entre otros estudios.

[11] Thompson 1966.

[12] Scott 1990: 183–201.

cierta medida, un sujeto político moderno que no podemos trasladar automáticamente a las realidades históricas de la antigua Asia sudoccidental. Por ende, toda comparación y todo empleo de estas categorías analíticas, si bien posible, debe realizarse con extrema cautela. Así pues, el uso analítico que realizamos aquí de la "política desde abajo" apunta más bien a interpretar y a reconocer los modos en los que las relaciones y prácticas políticas locales en Siria-Palestina, inclusive aquellas que denotan resistencia, se inscriben en el marco general de la dominación extranjera en la región y operan a través o a pesar de las pautas de acción que habilita dicha dominación.

Resistencias nativas, política nativa

En el repertorio epistolográfico proveniente del archivo encontrado en el sitio de Tell el-Amarna (Alto Egipto), que atestigua en gran medida la comunicación política entre el rey egipcio y sus súbditos en diferentes sitios del Levante, es en verdad posible hallar instancias de resistencia nativa ante una orden del lejano faraón. Más aún, podemos delinear dos instancias generales de resistencia política ante una autoridad: la primera, la resistencia a una autoridad exterior por parte de un rey o jefe local, y la segunda, la resistencia a una autoridad local por parte de sus propios subordinados locales.

El caso más emblemático referido a la primera instancia tal vez sea el de Aziru de Amurru, reino éste que se extendía desde la zona noroccidental de Siria hasta las montañas del actual Líbano. En la vida política de Aziru encontramos un episodio crítico en donde un pequeño rey local debe elegir aliarse con uno de dos patrones exteriores posibles. Luego de la captura y posterior muerte del rey de Amurru, Abdi-Aširta, uno de sus hijos, Aziru, se hizo con el trono del reino, ejerciendo una relativa influencia política en la zona, tal como se atestigua en las quejas constantes de Rib-Hadda de Biblos ante el faraón sobre la inminencia de una incursión de Aziru en su territorio[13]. En un principio, Aziru solicitó el reconocimiento del faraón como sirviente leal y se puso bajo sus órdenes[14]; sin embargo, luego de la intervención del rey hitita Šuppiluliuma I (*ca.* 1355–1320 a.C.) en Siria, Aziru mantuvo una relación ambigua con el faraón, moviéndose dentro de su territorio, de modo que se produjeron desencuentros con el mensajero del faraón, y valiéndose también

[13] Cf. EA 136–138.
[14] Cf. EA 157.

de la variación semántica de ciertos términos en la comunicación epistolar para dilatar así el cumplimiento de órdenes o responder a pedidos[15]. Como ha indicado M. Liverani, Aziru se comportaba como un "sirviente de dos patrones", puesto que la movilidad y las dilaciones, que dificultaban su encuentro con el emisario egipcio, se correspondían precisamente con las entrevistas que Aziru mantenía con el mensajero hitita. En rigor, la conducta de Aziru puede comprenderse como la propia de un momento dramático en el que un actor político debe optar por subordinarse a uno de dos grandes señores:

> *La política de sus movimientos, de interponerse a sí mismo entre dos bloques políticos opuestos, claramente intenta alcanzar una mejora de status, una condición de independencia de facto de los dos grandes reyes. Al mismo tiempo, [Aziru] también intenta alcanzar el status de gran rey al establecer relaciones asimétricas, en provecho propio, con los reyes de su periferia. Se encuentra muy activo de Ugarit a Biblos, de Tunip a Arwad, e inclusive en el área de Qadesh. Realiza acciones militares, ofrece un tipo de protección, que es más bien un protectorado, y asume ambiguamente las funciones del rābiṣu egipcio en Sumura*[16].

Los acontecimientos, y tal vez la mayor cercanía geográfica, hacen finalmente que Aziru se subordine al poder hitita. Este "juego político" se encuadra bien como ejemplo dinámico de una situación en donde, un agente político, al no poder erigirse él mismo como líder autónomo de su región, a la sombra de los poderes imperiales, debe elegir subordinarse a un patrón de mayor poder y de su conveniencia, para poder permanecer a la cabeza de su propio reino, como un patrón menor, con una esfera de dominio relativamente acotada[17]. Es interesante notar en este contexto un ejemplo particular que señala G. Simmel:

[15] Cf. Liverani 2004.
[16] Liverani 2004: 143.
[17] Sobre las estrategias que conducen a este tipo de praxis política, cf. especialmente Bailey 2001.

> *La sumisión a dos instancias suele iniciar para el subordinado un aumento de libertad, que en ocasiones llega hasta manumitirle por completo. Una diferencia esencial entre el siervo medieval y el vasallo consistía en que aquél no tenía ni podía tener más que un señor, mientras que éste podía recibir tierras de varios señores, prestándoles juramento de fidelidad. Gracias a esta posibilidad de entrar en distintas relaciones de vasallaje, el vasallo obtenía frente a cada uno de sus señores una fuerte capacidad de resistencia, y así se encontraba considerablemente compensada su situación fundamental de vasallo*[18].

Por supuesto, la analogía medieval es más que impropia con respecto a las realidades del Cercano Oriente antiguo[19]; sin embargo, en el ejemplo que comenta Simmel podemos observar una instancia similar a la de Aziru pero en un marco estructural divergente: Aziru gana autonomía e independencia al no someterse definitivamente a sus dos potenciales señores, pero esta situación no se puede sostener demasiado en el tiempo; debe inevitablemente definirse: la situación estructural del vasallo medieval no es sino una situación circunstancial y efímera para el caso de Aziru de Amurru.

Debemos notar aquí también que, en efecto, teniendo presente la manera en que Aziru no responde ante las demandas del faraón, es posible aceptar la presencia de una cierta agencia política consciente, por parte del propio Aziru, que se vale de las interferencias semánticas propias de las concepciones egipcia y asiática de la praxis política[20]. No obstante, la posibilidad de que Aziru haya sido un agente consciente, que capitalizaba la ambigüedad del léxico epistolar a su favor, no invalida—creemos—la propia existencia de la interferencia semántica ya mencionada, entre la corte egipcia y los pequeños reyes siro-palestinos. Según sostiene Liverani:

[18] Simmel 1927 [1908]: 56.

[19] Cf. una breve crítica al respecto en Pfoh 2013b: 35–40.

[20] Liverani 1983. Herman (1995) ha estudiado el "lenguaje de la fidelidad" en la Francia del siglo XVII como el medio a través del cual patrones y clientes comunicaban sus intenciones políticas, más allá de que estas intenciones fueran sinceras. Tal vez sería metodológicamente de utilidad tener presente esta constatación al interpretar episodios como los de Aziru en la correspondencia amarniana; cf., al respecto, las consideraciones sobre la comunicación diplomática amarniana en Jönsson 2000; y acerca de una aproximación "realista" a la política amarniana, cf. David 2000.

> *Es difícil señalar un límite claro entre la conciencia y la inconciencia en esta interacción hecha de malentendidos y de entendimientos limitados. La equivocidad semántica que proviene de una traducción inadecuada es generalmente inconsciente: cada uno de los dos sistemas lexicales diferentes está tan profundamente imbricado en la 'cosmovisión' de quien produce el mensaje que éste ni siquiera percibe que el sistema lexical y la cosmovisión de su contraparte en el diálogo son diferentes. Pero, a veces, un uso adicional, de carácter voluntario, de la equivocidad tiene lugar, [y] apunta a una explotación astuta de las posibilidades ofrecidas por la ambigüedad lingüística (y especialmente de las ambigüedades de la traducción) para resistir de mejor manera los argumentos de la contraparte en el diálogo, o para reforzar sus propios argumentos*[21].

La segunda instancia de resistencia, a una autoridad local desde el interior de la comunidad política, tiene variados matices en la correspondencia amarniana. Un caso directo y explícito es el que proporciona Rib-Hadda de Biblos en su comunicación epistolar con el faraón, denunciando una situación de crisis en el orden interno de su pequeño reino y declarando en una de las cartas "Temo que los campesinos me derroquen" (*pal-ḫa-ti* LU.MEŠ *ḫup-ši-ia ul ti-ma-ḫa-ṣa-na-ni*), y en otra de ellas se pregunta: "¿Qué <voy a decir> a mis campesinos?" (*u mi-na a-<qa-bu-na a->na* LU.MEŠ *ḫup-ši-ia*)[22]. Pero, por otra parte, también es posible identificar indicios de lo que P. Artzi ha llamado *vox populi* o "intervención popular" en la correspondencia amarniana, a partir de la conmoción que la intervención hitita en el Levante septentrional causó en los súbditos egipcios en la zona[23]. Si bien la evaluación de Artzi de la situa-

[21] Liverani 1983: 45.

[22] EA 77: 36–37; 81: 33. Cf. Knudtzon 1907/1915: 386–387, 394–395; Moran 1992: 148, 151; Liverani 1998: 175, 178. Sobre las estrategias retóricas de Rib-Hadda (también transliterado como Rib-Addi), véase Pryke 2011. En su estudio, esta autora sostiene que "la motivación regular de parte de Rib-Addi para hacer una declaración de lealtad [al faraón] es la búsqueda de una recompensa, ya sea en la forma de ayuda militar o de bienes materiales" (Pryke 2011: 412). Tal afirmación, no obstante, debería ser comprendida no como una mera acomodación circunstancial al dominio egipcio de la región, sino a partir de las reglas implícitas del "juego político" en el cual Rib-Hadda/Rib-Addi se encuentra inscripto, a nuestro parecer, un sistema de relaciones de tipo patrón-cliente.

[23] Artzi 1964; véase también Reviv 1969; Momrak 2013: 419–504.

ción de la Siria-Palestina amarniana como un período de ebullición social—opinión, en verdad, común en la historiografía antiguo-oriental de mediados del siglo XX—puede ser reconsiderada y discutida[24], es interesante considerar los testimonios de las cartas de El Amarna que analiza Artzi a los fines de identificar las características de la política nativa.

En la carta EA 59, los habitantes de Tunip, en Siria occidental, le escriben al faraón solicitando que nombre un gobernante para la ciudad, de hecho al hijo del gobernante anterior, ante el riesgo de que Aziru de Amurru (ahora súbdito hitita) se apodere de ella, lo cual significaría una expansión de la soberanía hitita en la región. De igual modo, en la carta EA 100 el consejo de ancianos de Irqata, al norte del actual Líbano, le solicita al faraón que nombre un nuevo gobernante, puesto que el rey anterior ha sido asesinado bajo la acusación de traición al faraón[25].

Estos dos últimos ejemplos, lejos de evidenciar un tipo de realidad "republicana" o "democrática" en ciertas locaciones de la Siria-Palestina amarniana, como alguna vez se llegó a considerar[26], en realidad pueden interpretarse de mejor manera a la luz de la dinámica sociopolítica que impone el orden de la política tradicional y personalizada en varias regiones de Medio Oriente y que refleja lo que de cierto modo podríamos entender como la naturaleza de la política popular[27]. Asimismo, la existencia de un consejo de ancianos (*šibūtu*)

[24] Véase inicialmente Liverani 1967; también Pfoh 2013a; 2013b.

[25] Cf. EA 75: 25ss.; Momrak 2013: 441–442. Véase también Bunnens 1982, analizando casos de disidencia local en Ugarit y Alalaḫ.

[26] Cf. Landsberger 1954: 61 n 134. Cf. la evaluación historiográfica sobre esta cuestión en Liverani 1993; y más recientemente el estudio de Solans 2011. Asimismo, Momrak (2013: 504) concluye lo siguiente: "La imagen que surge de la organización de la ciudad-Estado bajo un imperio extranjero en el Cercano Oriente es que los habitantes tenían su propios cuerpos de toma de decisiones, los cuales podían actuar independientemente de sus gobernadores y funcionarios y tenían contacto directo con sus amos extranjeros. Estos cuerpos de toma de decisiones no parecen haber estado formalmente constituidos. Se conoce poco sobre el modo en que se organizaban. Parece ser que la gente tomaba parte, o al menos era testigo, en la toma de decisiones, pero que la autoridad de la ciudad yacía en un cuerpo limitado de jefes locales o representantes de las principales familias. Así pues, existía una política popular en las ciudades-Estado bajo un imperio extranjero: existe evidencia de ciudades semi-autónomas en el Levante durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío y en Mesopotamia en la Edad del Hierro, en donde las personas podían tomar decisiones de manera independiente de los funcionarios y gobernantes. Sin embargo, las relaciones entre la gente y el más limitado cuerpo de toma de decisiones son difíciles de dilucidar y ambos, a menudo, no pueden ser separados en las fuentes".

[27] Véase, por ejemplo, Gilsenan 2000: 95–115.

tomando decisiones ejecutivas en lugar del rey, o a pesar de la existencia del rey[28], no está en verdad indicando un principio de gobierno colectivo como fin en sí mismo: en ambos casos, el consejo de ancianos de la ciudad le solicita al faraón que nombre un gobernante para la ciudad, en otras palabras, que restaure el orden jerárquico tradicional en la comunidad, pero sin que ello signifique una apelación a algún tipo de despotismo en ciernes; por el contrario, se pide el nombramiento de un rey/jefe (*mlk*) para que—bien podemos suponer—se ocupe de las tareas propias de un rey/jefe en la comunidad local. Aquí debemos atender al carácter propio de la monarquía siro-palestina que no remite, en efecto, a una idea de un líder absoluto, sino más bien, a una imagen propia de un mediador entre la comunidad y el mundo exterior, y también, a través de la performance de rituales, entre el mundo de los dioses y el ámbito humano[29]. Es interesante notar que inclusive en el reino de Ugarit, que presenta por cierto una configuración sociopolítica algo más compleja que la mayoría de los sitios del Levante meridional, se puedan observar limitaciones estructurales al dominio y la operatividad política del rey[30]. Y tal vez una mayor limitación pueda ser observada en otro sitio de Siria, en Emar, durante este período[31].

En gran medida, y tal vez sin exagerar, el rol tanto religioso como político del rey en el mundo semítico-occidental se asemejaba notablemente, y ante todo en un sentido funcional, más al del líder tribal que al de un líder con poder político absoluto. Es así que, en varios lugares de la documentación amarniana, puede observarse que los pequeños reyes o jefes siro-palestinos se encontraban constantemente sometidos ya sea a la voluntad del poder superior (egipcio, hitita), ya sea a las demandas que provienen "desde abajo", del consejo de ancianos o de los campesinos. De igual manera, resulta relevante la ausencia en la documentación textual-epigráfica proveniente de Palestina de instancias de represión militar de los conflictos internos a cada reino por parte del propio pequeño rey. En Siria, la ciudad de Ugarit, por ejemplo, contaba con un ejército bien formado[32]. Sin embargo, en Palestina—territorio de

[28] Cf. también la información textual de Alalaḫ en *AT* 2:27; *AT* 3:38 (Wiseman 1953: 27 y 29; 32); y de Ugarit en RS 20.239: 21–27 (Nougayrol 1968: 142–143). Véase Solans 2011: 283–337.
[29] Cf. Handy 1994: 111–113; Wyatt 2007. Es pertinente señalar, por otra parte, que los pequeños líderes o jefes siro-palestinos se presentaban a sí mismos en las cartas al faraón, en muchas instancias, como líderes de una ciudad del rey egipcio antes que referenciarse como "reyes"; cf. Mynářová 2010: 71–77.
[30] Liverani 1974; Solans 2011: 398.
[31] Cf. Fleming 1992.
[32] Cf. Vita 1995; Vidal 2006.

una mucho menor escala en todos los aspectos, con respecto a la situación en Siria—, no se atestigua una formación militar del estilo en los pequeños centros sociopolíticos locales, probablemente a causa de la merma demográfica durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío y las consecuencias socioeconómicas que ello implicaba[33], aunque no se puede descartar por completo la presencia militar egipcia como factor determinante del bajo grado de "militarización" de los pequeños reinos locales.

Vistos en conjunto, estos indicios y noticias nos permiten considerar, por un lado, la condición relativamente frágil de la autoridad real de los monarcas locales, a pesar de que la configuración interna de la sociedad local era indudablemente jerárquica; y por otro lado, la importancia de la intervención política de parte de los grupos subordinados a estos reyes, quienes se asemejaban en su capacidad pues más a jefes tribales y que, ante la evidencia textual amarniana que connota una praxis política en la que lealtad y reciprocidad articuladas son componentes esenciales, podemos conjeturar articulaban su autoridad sobre sus súbditos así como su subordinación ante soberanos poderosos a partir de vínculos patrón-cliente, vínculos en los que el poder no se encontraba concentrado en un polo de la sociedad sino que estaba de cierto modo distribuido de manera desigual entre las partes, el patrón (el rey siro-palestino) y sus clientes (el consejo de ancianos, los campesinos del reino, etc.). Estas instancias propias de las relaciones de patronazgo, admitían entonces una intervención de relativa importancia política de parte de los subordinados: a escala regional, los pequeños reyes siro-palestinos; a escala local, los súbditos de estos pequeños monarcas. Es cierto que la dinastía de Abdi-Aširta de Amurru alcanzó mayor movilidad política que otros centros de Siria-Palestina, probablemente a causa de los lazos de parentesco (tribales) que articulaban su dominio local, y también una subordinación laxa con respecto a los grandes poderes, probablemente debido a su locación en un terreno montañoso, difícil de ser dominado por completo desde el exterior[34]. Sin embargo, la diferencia sociopolítica entre Amurru y el resto de los pequeños centros de la región pareciera ser solamente de grado: Amurru explotaba su estructuración tribal o de parentesco para "hacer política" a nivel regional, mientras que

[33] Cf. la discusión en Bunimovitz 1994. Sobre las limitaciones estructurales de las "ciudades-Estado" de finales del Bronce Tardío, especialmente en lo que respecta a su maniobrabilidad y control políticos, cf. la descripción en Jasmin 2006.

[34] Cf. Morris 2010. Sobre la geografía humana de las montañas, en lo que respecta a las relaciones políticas, cf. Braudel 1972: 25–53.

en los pequeños centros urbanos se verificaban otros polos de acción política de alcance local que incidían en la manera en que los pequeños monarcas operaban. Con todo, en todas las situaciones, las relaciones de tipo personal parecen haber sido el factor dominante de la acción política.

Por una antropología política de la antigua Siria-Palestina

A partir de la diversa información textual del período, es posible identificar una particular antropología política en Siria-Palestina durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío. Este período es, por un lado, una época en donde los miembros de un sistema de grandes poderes (Egipto, Ḫatti, Babilonia, Mitanni, Asiria) establecían alianzas entre sí, intercambios de mercancías, en tanto bienes de prestigio, y se disputaban también la hegemonía de territorios periféricos[35]. Pero, por otro lado, existía también un nivel de relaciones políticas, especialmente en el Levante, propio de los reinos subordinados a estos grandes poderes. Dicha política de subordinación en gran parte obedecía a, o mejor dicho, coincidía con las pautas que los poderes dominantes habían establecido. Sin embargo, hemos visto que existen indicios en la documentación textual de una cierta resistencia política, al menos hacia una obediencia estricta y directa, expresada a partir de diversos canales y conductas: el retraso en responder a una orden, o directamente el no entendimiento, adrede o involuntario, de una orden, etc. Existía también un subnivel de esta política desde abajo que expresaba las tensiones dentro de la comunidad local y que permitía identificar el carácter propio de la cultura política local.

Si ofrecemos una conclusión preliminar a partir de la evidencia que hemos analizado, podríamos indicar que la cultura política de Siria-Palestina estaba organizada y se conducía a partir de relaciones de autoridad y prestigio propias de las sociedades tribales o de parentesco extendido, pero también, coherentes con prácticas de patronazgo y clientelismo, tal como están documentadas en el registro etnográfico de la cuenca del Mediterráneo[36]. Son estas instancias sociopolíticas, ancladas en estructuras de vinculación personal, las que marcan el paso de la práctica política desde abajo en Siria-Palestina, generando pues

[35] Véanse los esquemas analíticos expuestos en Liverani 2001; sobre los intercambios, cf. esencialmente el análisis integral en Zaccagnini 1973; véase también Pfälzner 2007, desde una perspectiva alternativa.

[36] Cf., por ejemplo, los estudios reunidos en Gellner y Waterbury 1977.

fricciones con la práctica política desde arriba que impone el dominio egipcio en la región meridional del Levante, pero también acoplando la dinámica local con las pautas de dominación hitita del norte de la región. Y es entonces en este plano analítico, el de la interacción entre dinámicas políticas regionales desde arriba y prácticas políticas desde abajo, en donde podemos identificar los elementos básicos para configurar una antropología política de Siria-Palestina, no sólo durante la Edad del Bronce Tardío, sino también observando los cambios y las continuidades que se manifestaron posteriormente, durante la Edad del Hierro, hasta mediados del primer milenio a.C.[37]

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[37] Cf. Pfoh 2013b.

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The Date of the Qurayyah Painted Ware in the Southern Levant

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Summary: The Date of the Qurayyah Painted Ware in the Southern Levant

The "Qurayyah Painted Ware" (known also as "Midianite Ware"), which originated in northern Hejaz, has been conventionally dated to the period between the 13th (or late 14th) and the mid-12th century BCE based on the Egyptian finds from Timna Site 200—the Hathor temple. During the last decade, due to new finds from excavations in the southern regions of Cis- and Transjordan, the date of this pottery group became a much-debated topic. Scholars have questioned the above dating, arguing that the time frame during which this pottery was in use is much longer, and even included in it the Iron IIA and Iron IIB periods. The aim of this paper is to reexamine the data pertaining to the date of this pottery, and consider the possibility that it was in use in Cis- and Transjordan longer than in its area of origin in northern Hejaz.

Keywords: Qurayyah Painted Ware – Midianite Ware – Iron Age

Resumen: La fecha de la cerámica pintada Qurayya en el sur del Levante

La "cerámica pintada Qurayya" (también conocida como "cerámica madianita"), originaria del norte del Hejaz, ha sido datada convencionalmente en el período entre el siglo XIII (o finales del XIV) y mediados del siglo XII a.C. sobre la base de los hallazgos egipcios de Timna, Sitio 200—el templo de Hathor. Durante la última década, debido a nuevos hallazgos en excavaciones en las regiones sur de Cis- y Transjordania, la datación de este grupo cerámico se convirtió en un tema muy debatido. Los investigadores han cuestionado la fecha mencionada anteriormente, sosteniendo que el marco temporal durante el cual esta cerámica fue utilizada es mucho más extenso, que incluso comprendía la Edad del Hierro IIA y IIB. El objetivo de este artículo es reexaminar la información relativa a la datación de esta cerámica, y considerar la posibilidad de que estuviera en uso en Cis- y Transjordania durante más tiempo que en su área de origen en el norte del Hejaz.

Palabras Clave: Cerámica pintada Qurayya – Cerámica madianita – Edad del Hierro

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The painted pottery group which forms the subject of this paper was initially discerned in the north-western part of the Arabian Peninsula (Hejaz) and the southern part of Wadi Arabah more than forty years ago, and was identified and defined at that time as "Midianite ware".[1] Over the years, many more vessels of this group have been found at other sites in northern Hejaz, and in the southern regions of Cisjordan and Transjordan.[2] In an attempt to avoid a name associated with an ethnic group ("Midianite Ware"), and based on the data from Qurayyah in the north-western Arabian Peninsula where the richest assemblages of this pottery group as well as the kilns probably used in their manufacture had been found, Parr[3] suggested the name "Qurayyah Painted Ware", a term that is widely accepted in the current literature (henceforth QPW).[4] Petrographic and chemical analyses demonstrated that the pottery found at sites in the southern regions of Cisjordan and Transjordan were manufactured in the Hejaz—most probably in Qurayyah and/or Tayma.[5]

Opinions differ as to the artistic sources that influenced the potters who produced this pottery group, *i.e.*, whether they were inspired by Bichrome Ware or Mycenaean pottery,[6] by Egyptian faience vessels,[7] by an early group of Sea People,[8] or by a mixture of local Levantine, Eastern Mediterranean and Arabian motives present in the rock art of Arabia.[9]

Based on the Egyptian finds from Timna Site 200—the Hathor temple—the QPW has been conventionally dated to the period between the 13th (or late 14th) and the mid-12th century BCE (the time of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Egyptian Dynasties).[10] This pottery has been found at relatively many sites in southern Cis- and Transjordan, but most of these sites have each yielded merely a few sherds, not always found in stratigraphic context.[11]

During the last decade, the date of this pottery group became a much-debated topic, especially since new excavations have taken place in the southern

[1] Parr *et al.* 1970; Rothenberg 1970.
[2] Parr 1988; Rothenberg and Glass 1983; Tebes 2013a.
[3] Parr 1982; 1988.
[4] Knauf (1983), for the same reasons, suggested the name "Hejaz Ware".
[5] Rothenberg and Glass 1983; Glass 1988; Gunneweg *et al.* 1991; Kalsbeek and London 1978; Slatkine 1974; Daszkiewicz in Hausleiter 2014: 409–413.
[6] Dayton 1972; Muhly 1984.
[7] Parr 1982: 129–130.
[8] Parr 1996; Rothenberg 1998.
[9] Tebes 2014. For a detailed study of the painted decorative motives, see Tebes 2015.
[10] Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 100–101; Rothenberg 1998: 201.
[11] For a list of sites see Rothenberg and Glass 1983; Tebes 2013a.

regions of Cisjordan (Timna valley by Erez Ben-Yosef and Tali Erickson-Gini) and Transjordan (Wadi Faynan by Thomas Levy and Mohammad Najjar). As a result, scholars have questioned the generally accepted dating stated above, arguing that the time frame in which this pottery was in use is much longer, and included even the Iron IIA and Iron IIB periods (*i.e.*, c. 700 years).[12]

In addition to Qurayyah, QPW was found in about a dozen sites in the northern Hejaz, the homeland of this pottery group.[13] However, until recent years none of these sites were properly excavated and all available data were based on surveys and surface finds.

Recently, the expedition of the Saudi-German Joint Archaeology Project has conducted archaeological excavations at Tayma, which revealed some stratified contexts that may help shed light on the issue of the QPW date.[14] Based on the stratigraphy at the Oasis of Tayma, Hauseleiter[15] defined four different successive pottery groups and created a pottery sequence for the Late Bronze and Iron Age in this site. Relying on radiocarbon tests, Hauseleiter suggested that at Tayma the QPW probably began to appear in the 13th–12th centuries BCE and that the main phase of its production and use may have come to an end before the end of the 11th century BCE.[16]

In the discussion below, I shall reexamine the presence of this pottery at sites on both sides of the Jordan River, my aim being to consider whether at these regions the duration of QPW could have lasted longer than at its area of origin. I will focus mainly on sites that have been stratigraphically excavated and published, in which one can examine the pottery assemblages that accompanied the QPW.

[12] Ben-Yosef 2010: 574; Ben-Yosef *et al.* 2012: 63; Bienkowski 2001; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 23 n. 2, 26 n. 8; Bimson and Tebes 2009; Smith 2009: 569; Smith and Levy 2008: 84; 2014: 412; Tebes 2007: 12, 14; 2013a: 320–323.

[13] Parr *et al.* 1970: 229–238; Ingraham *et al.* 1981: 71–74.

[14] The fact that kilns have been found at Tayma and Qurayyah and that the source of clay and technology are similar, may suggest that this pottery was produced at both sites (Abu Duruk 1990: 16–17; Hauseleiter 2014).

[15] Hauseleiter 2014.

[16] Hauseleiter 2014: 408. In Table 1 Hauseleiter (2014: 423) states that the terminal date of this group is probably the 10th century BCE (with question mark). This suggested date is based on the dates proposed by scholars for some Levantine sites (Hausleiter 2014: 402) as will be discussed below.

Cisjordan

Timna Valley

Site 200: As mentioned earlier, the dating of QPW to the 13th and 12th centuries BCE (the period of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Egyptian Dynasties), was based on the Egyptian finds from the Hathor Temple—Site 200.[17] Seventy fragments of QPW as well as hand- and wheel-made vessels of other types uncovered in the temple were published.[18] Examination of the stratigraphic context of the QPW sherds as determined by Rothenberg[19] reveals that 37 of them cannot be attributed to a specific stratum, whereas 18 fragments could be assigned only to a long sequence of strata (V, V–III, III–I; with Stratum V dated by the excavator to the Chalcolithic and Stratum I to the Roman period). Only 15 QPW sherds were assigned to Strata III or II. According to Rothenberg,[20] Stratum III, the main construction period of the temple, was built by Ramesses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty and was in use until the time of Ramesses V of the Twentieth Dynasty, while Stratum II was short-lived.

The temple strata are largely disturbed, a conclusion supported by the fact that fragments of several vessels were found dispersed in all strata.[21] Since most of the finds cannot be assigned to a specific stratum due to various disturbances, it cannot be established whether the presence of QPW parallels the entire period of time in which the temple was in use, *i.e.*, from the reign of Ramesses II in the 13th century until the time of Ramesses V in the 12th century, or if its time frame can or should be narrowed.

Site 30: A large smelting site labeled Site 30 was excavated by Rothenberg in 1974 and 1976.[22] Rothenberg excavated a c. 2 meters high "slag mound" where he distinguished three major layers—Layers III and II dated from the end of the 14th to the mid-12th century and Layer I dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE.[23] QPW sherds were found in Layers III and II but not in Layer I. In

[17] Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 100–101; Rothenberg 1998: 201.
[18] Rothenberg 1988: Figs. 4–10.
[19] Rothenberg 1988: 287–290.
[20] Rothenberg 1988: 277–278.
[21] Rothenberg 1988: 270–271.
[22] Rothenberg 1980; 1999: 158–163.
[23] Rothenberg 1980: 210–211.

2009, new excavations were carried out at the site by Ben-Yosef.[24] The main goal was to clarify the chronology by using AMS Radiocarbon tests. Ben-Yosef re-excavated the "slag mound" (Area S) and dug a probe in metallurgical deposits (Area L) where he defined an earlier layer (Layer IV) as well. Only a few pottery sherds have been found, among them two QPW sherds. The radiocarbon dates (only three of the eleven samples were short-lived) obtained for Layers IV–I demonstrated that activity started here in the last decades of the 12th Century BCE.[25] Layers III and II (which form, in fact, the same metallurgical sequence with no distinct difference in material culture[26]) began in the 11th century BCE (although one radiocarbon date is from the end of the 12th century) and Level I is dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE.[27] As QPW sherds were found at Layers III and II, it follows according to Ben-Yosef's revised chronology that this pottery was present at Site 30 in the 11th century BCE.

Site 2: Site 2 is a large smelting site that was excavated by Rothenberg between 1964 and 1966.[28] A relatively large quantity of pottery sherds and a scarab from the reign of Ramesses II were found there. The pottery includes QPW, hand-made and wheel-made vessels.[29] Among the wheel-made vessels are two collared rim pithoi,[30] carinated bowls and kraters, cooking-pots, a jug and a pyxis[31] that are typical to the end of the Late Bronze and Iron I periods. Based on these finds Rothenberg dated the site to the 13th–12th centuries BCE.[32]

Between 2005 and 2011 Erickson-Gini[33] renewed the excavations at Site 2. The ceramic finds from her excavations include vessels similar to those discovered by Rothenberg in this site and in Site 200.[34] Radiocarbon analysis of

[24] Ben-Yosef *et al.* 2012.
[25] Ben-Yosef *et al.* 2012: 51, Table 4.
[26] Ben-Yosef *et al.* 2012: 51.
[27] Ben-Yosef *et al.* 2012: Table 4.
[28] Rothenberg 1972: 67–111; 1999: 151–158.
[29] Rothenberg 1972: Figs. 30–32.
[30] Rothenberg 1972: 109.
[31] Rothenberg 1972: Fig. 30.
[32] Rothenberg 1972: 110.
[33] Erickson-Gini 2014.
[34] Erickson-Gini 2014: 64, Figs. 13–16.

charcoal samples found in the 2005 excavation indicated that the material had been deposited sometime between the late 13th and 11th centuries BCE.[35] These finds led Erickson-Gini[36] to suggest that the date of 13th–12th centuries BCE suggested by Rothenberg should be maintained.

Yotvata

The site of Yotvata, located 20 km. north of Timna Valley, was excavated by Meshel in 1974.[37] An irregular casemate wall enclosed the site from three sides. In the casemate rooms two QPW bowls were found[38] together with hand-made and wheel-made vessels of other types.

This site has particular bearing on the dating of QPW, as it is a single stratum site, and its pottery assemblage includes a series of complete local vessels (mainly storage jars), as opposed to sherds usually found at most other Arabah sites.

The excavation report is currently in preparation for publication by Meshel, while the pottery assemblage is being studied by the author. Most local vessels have parallels in sites located in the southern part of Cisjordan and point to continuity between the Late Bronze and the Iron I periods. Some vessels, which have direct Late Bronze antecedents, are known mainly at the early Iron I period. It seems that we can date the assemblage to the transition period between the end of the Late Bronze and early Iron I periods.

'En Hazeva

A few QPW sherds have been found out of stratigraphical context in the earliest stratum at the site—Stratum IX, which predates the Early Iron IIA settlement (Stratum VIII) and should therefore be dated to the Iron I period.[39]

Central Negev Highland settlements

Three hundred and eighty settlements dated to the Early Iron IIA period were studied in the wilderness regions to the south of the Beersheba Valley and in

[35] Erickson-Gini 2014: 58 and Table 1.
[36] Erickson-Gini 2014: 76.
[37] Meshel 1993.
[38] Kalsbeek and London 1978.
[39] I would like to thank Tali Erickson-Gini who is preparing the publication of the pottery from 'En Hazeva for this information.

the Negev Highlands.[40] C. 50 of the sites were excavated. Only one QPW sherd (its clay was not tested) has been reported from them (Har Romem).[41] It is clear that far-reaching conclusions cannot be drawn from a single sherd uncovered during the investigation of three hundred and eighty sites.

Tel Masos

Tel Masos was the largest settlement in the Beersheba Valley during both the Iron I (Stratum III) and Early Iron IIA (Strata II–I) periods.[42] Two QPW sherds were found in Stratum II.[43] Yannai[44] is probably correct that these sherds were mistakenly assigned to Stratum II, and that they, as well as two fragments of Egyptian pottery typical to the time of the Twentieth Dynasty[45] should be assigned to the earlier Stratum III. The Stratum III pottery was produced in the Late Bronze ceramic tradition of the southern part of Cisjordan.[46]

The stratigraphy at Tel Masos is complicated due to continuity of occupation at the site without major destruction layers. Some of the Stratum III buildings were also in use in Stratum II, and since the Stratum II floors were close to those of Stratum III,[47] the presence of earlier sherds in a later context is most likely.

Tell el-Far'ah (south)

A few QPW were found at Tell el-Far'ah (south) on paved courtyard YX of Building YR, known as the "Governor's Residency."[48] Together with them were found Philistine pottery[49] and a fragment of an Egyptian vessel bearing

[40] Cohen and Cohen-Amin 2004; Haiman 1992: 160.
[41] Cohen and Cohen-Amin 2004: 141, Fig. 80:1.
[42] Stratum II was attributed by the excavators to the Iron I as well and was dated by them to the 12th–11th centuries BCE (Fritz and Kempinski 1983: 78, 87). Later research has shown that this stratum should be dated to the Early Iron IIA period (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004: 222–223).
[43] Fritz and Kempinski 1983: Pls. 142: 10,148:11.
[44] Yannai 1996: 144–145.
[45] Fritz and Kempinski 1983: Pls. 134:4, 151:7.
[46] Kempinski 1983: 73; Yannai 1996: 144.
[47] Fritz and Kempinski 1983: 37.
[48] Starkey and Harding 1932: Pl. LXIII:53–56.
[49] Dothan 1982: 27–29. Yannai (2002) showed that the pottery from the courtyard is restricted to the early types of the Philistine pottery (monochrome) only.

the cartouches of Seti II.[50] The initial stage of the building probably dates to the end of the 13th century and it was occupied during the 12th century BCE.[51]

A complete QPW juglet[52] was found in the rich bench chamber Tomb 542 together with Egyptian bowls and Philistine pottery (monochrome and bichrome).[53] Among the finds, scarabs dated to the reign of Thutmosis III and to the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties were found as well.[54] These finds indicate that the tomb was used for a long period of time (there is also evidence that the bones were pushed aside to a corner of the tomb),[55] thus it is impossible to establish to which of the tomb phases the juglet belongs.

Lachish

Three fragments of QPW vessels were unearthed in the foundation fills of Palace B, the Level IV Palace-Fort which contained debris removed mostly from Levels VII, VI and V.[56] The stratigraphic context of these sherds is unclear; however, due to various considerations they were attributed to Level VI[57] which is dated to the 12th century BCE (until c. 1130 BCE).

Tell Jedur

One QPW bowl was found among hundreds of vessels recovered from a plundered tomb at Tell Jedur.[58] The tomb was in use for a considerable period of time during the Late Bronze II period. It contained many burials but the various burial stages could not be separated, and the assemblage was analyzed typologically. Vessels similar to the Lachish Level VI pottery were among the ceramic finds,[59] thus it may well be assumed that the QPW bowl should be assigned to the latest phase of the tomb in the 12th century BCE.

[50] Starkey and Harding 1932: Pl. LXIV:74.
[51] Oren 1985: 47–48.
[52] Laemmel 2003, Vol. 3: Pl. 120:542/87.
[53] Laemmel 2003, Vol. 3: Pls. 104–120.
[54] Laemmel 2003, Vol. 2: 94–95.
[55] Laemmel 2003, Vol. 1: 72–73.
[56] Singer-Avitz 2004: Figs. 20.55, 20.56.
[57] Singer-Avitz 2004.
[58] Ben-Arieh 1981: Fig. 5:1.
[59] Ben-Arieh 1981: 125.

Gezer

A bowl found at the site by Macalister and assigned by him to his "Third Semitic Period" was defined as QPW by Brandl.[60] The exact find-spot of the bowl was not given by Macalister and the stratigraphic context of the bowl is unknown. The importance of the bowl is due to the fact that Gezer is the most northern site in Cisjordan where this type of pottery is known to have been present.

Kadesh-Barnea (northern Sinai)

The site of Kadesh Barnea covers the entire sequence of the Iron Age (Strata 4–2). Two near-complete QPW vessels, as well as 18 body fragments (labeled as "Midianite Ware") were unearthed at Kadesh-Barnea.[61] Most of the QPW items were not found in-situ and could not be stratigraphically associated with one of the occupation levels. Rudolph Cohen, the excavator, and Hannah Bernick-Greenberg, who prepared the excavation report, believed that the site had not been settled in the Iron I period, hence they dated the QPW vessels and sherds to the Iron IIA period, *i.e.* to the 10th century BCE.[62]

A different solution was suggested by me in an earlier study.[63] Remains of an early stratum (labeled by the excavators as Substratum 4c) have been noticed in a few places at the site. This substratum which was dubbed by the excavators as "Pre-Fortress Occupation" marks the earliest occupation of the site and predates the oval "fortress"[64] dated to the Early Iron IIA. The QPW as well as other Iron I pottery vessels (such as bowls and collared-rim pithoi)[65] should be attributed to this pre-Iron IIA occupation. This conclusion is further reinforced by four stamp seals and seal impressions that stylistically should be assigned to the time of the New Kingdom (Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties),[66] and by two radiocarbon measurements of charcoal[67] that provided dates in the 12th–11th centuries BCE.[68]

[60] Macalister 1912: Pl. CLXI:16; Brandl 1984.
[61] Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 140, Pls. 11.6, 11.7.
[62] Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 143.
[63] Singer-Avitz 2008.
[64] Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 7, 141.
[65] See Bernick-Greenberg 2007: Pls. 11.11:4, 6; 11.15:2; 11.20:1, 16; 11.39:12.
[66] Münger 2007.
[67] Bruins and van der Plicht 2005: 352, 357; 2007: 493.
[68] For arguments supporting an Iron I Age date of the radiocarbon samples see Finkelstein 2010: 113–117 contra Gilboa *et al.* 2009.

SOUTHERN TRANSJORDAN

Tell el-Kheleifeh

While reexamining the Tell el-Kheleifeh pottery, Pratico observed that "the earliest pottery is represented by six Midianite sherds (Glueck 1967: Figs.1: 2 [5: 1] and 4: 3−5)."[69] Unfortunately, however, the "records do not provide reliable provenance for those pieces."[70] Rothenberg and Glass assumed that these early-in-date sherds should be attributed to an early settlement that probably existed at the site.[71] We may assume that in parallel to Kadesh-Barnea[72] and 'En Hazeva (see above) an early occupation level existed also at Tell el-Kheleifeh, indicating the existence of a settlement that predated the fortresses.

Ghrareh

One small painted sherd was found at the single period site dated at the earliest to the 8th century BCE.[73] Hart was not sure whether it belongs to QPW and defined it as "Midianite" with a question mark.[74]

Tawilan

One sherd found during Glueck's survey of the Tawilan region appears to be of the QPW type.[75] A single body sherd found during Bennett's excavations at Tawilan (which was dated to the 8th–early 6th centuries BCE) was suspected by Hart as QPW.[76] The sherd was too small to enable determination of its vessel type, and it is not presented in the report by either drawing or photograph. Possibly an analysis of its clay could have helped to solve the issue, but this has not been done.

A hoard of gold jewellery was found at the site in a copper alloy vessel.[77] Following analysis of the stylistic characteristics of the items, Ogden conclu-

[69] Pratico 1993: 49.
[70] Pratico 1993: 50.
[71] Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 75–76.
[72] Singer-Avitz 2008: 79; Finkelstein 2014: 122–123.
[73] Hart 1989: Pl. 25:4.
[74] Hart 1989: 239.
[75] Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 84.
[76] Hart 1995: 60.
[77] Ogden 1995.

ded that "there seems little doubt that the hoard pre-dates the majority of the other finds from the site and either presents evidence for earlier settlement or is a hoard, or separate finds, discovered in antiquity and then reburied for safety."[78] One interesting item in this hoard is a tassel earring.[79] Noteworthy, similar tassel earrings were found at the Hathor temple in Timna[80] and at several tombs at Tell el-Far'ah (south).[81]

Following Ogden's suggestion and the above comparisons, we may conclude that the two QPW sherds (assuming that the sherd found in Bennett's excavations is indeed QPW) belong to an earlier settlement or earlier human activity at Tawilan.

Khirbet en-Nahas

Excavations in this most important copper production site in the Faynan area, which are being carried out since 2002 by Levy and his team,[82] yielded a relatively rich collection of QPW sherds. The sherds were scattered in all strata.[83] Thus, it is impossible to establish to which phase of occupation the QPW sherds originally belonged. Based on the presence of New Kingdom-Third Intermediate period Egyptian scarabs (which were found in association with later contexts) the excavators suggested a possible 12th century BCE date for the beginning of the site's occupation.[84] This early date is supported by Iron I pottery found at the site[85] and radiocarbon dates indicating that the site was occupied during the 12th and 11th centuries BCE.[86]

[78] Ogden 1995: 74–75.
[79] Ogden 1995: 69–72, Fig. 8.6–8.15.
[80] Rothenberg 1988: 181–182 [Cat. No. 3], Fig. 55:15.
[81] For dating these earrings see Sass 2002: 23; Laemmel 2003, Vol. 1: 260.
[82] Levy *et al.* 2004; 2010; 2012; 2014a.
[83] Smith and Levy 2014: Figs. 4.17:18, 4.24:3 – Str. I; Figs. 4.16:4–8, 4.22:9–12 – Str. II; Fig. 4.8:7–8 – Str. II-III; Fig. 4.20:9–10, 15–17 – Str. III; Fig. 4.11:10 – Str. III–IV; Fig. 4.3:8 – Str. IV; Fig. 4.7:9 – Str. IV–V; Fig. 4.4:7 – Str. V;
[84] Levy *et al.* 2004: 875–876; 2014b: 982, 988; Smith and Levy 2008: 86.
[85] Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2009.
[86] Ben-Yosef *et al.* 2010: 742; Levy *et al.* 2007: 24; 2014c: Tables 2.4, 2.9, 2.11–2.12, 2.17, 2.19.

Barqa el-Hetiye

Barqa el-Hetiye is a smelting site in the Faynan area where large slag heaps as well as a four-room house were unearthed by Fritz.[87] Several QPW sherds were among the pottery found in the building.[88]

Based on pottery comparisons (local and QPW) Fritz dated the building to the 11th century BCE.[89] Later on, this site was dated to the 9th century BCE based on a single radiocarbon test,[90] a date that was accepted by several scholars.[91]

Reexamination of the pottery published by Fritz[92] leads to the conclusion that this late date contradicts the date indicated by the pottery. The collared rim pithoi that are included in the assemblage[93] appear at stratified sites only at Iron I strata and are unknown at Iron II contexts. It seems that the Iron I date determined by Fritz should be maintained.

Several houses were unearthed at a one-period site near Barqa el-Hetiye by Russell Adams.[94] Several QPW sherds were found, which are being studied petrographically by Adams.[95]

Rujm Hamra Ifdan

Two soundings were made at Rujm Hamra Ifdan by Levy and his team: Sounding A near the summit of the site and Sounding B at its foot near a large enclosure wall. Based on radiocarbon dates, Sounding A was dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE and Sounding B to the 7th to 6th centuries BCE.[96]

One QPW sherd is reported from Sounding A and was thus attributed to the 10th century.[97] However, it seems that the pottery sherds from Sounding A

[87] Fritz 1994; 2002.
[88] Fritz 1994: Abb.12.
[89] Fritz 1994: 142–147, Abb. 10–13.
[90] Hauptmann 2000: 66, Table 7; 2007: 89, Table 5.1.
[91] Bienkowski 2001: 261–262; Levy *et al.* 1999: 305; Tebes 2007: 18.
[92] Fritz 1994.
[93] Fritz 1994: Abb. 11:8–9.
[94] See Tebes 2013b.
[95] J.M. Tebes, pers. comm, 2015.
[96] Levy *et al.* 2008: 16464–16465; Smith *et al.* 2014.
[97] Levy *et al.* 2008: 16465; Smith 2009: 569; Smith and Levy 2014: 412.

are similar to those of Sounding B: the open folded-rim bowl from Sounding A can be paralleled to those in Sounding B;[98] the medium-sized globular bowls (painted and unpainted) are found in both soundings[99] and so are the cooking-pots.[100]

Based on pottery comparisons it appears that both soundings A and B are contemporaneous and should be dated to the end of the Iron Age. The QPW sherd was not presented with the published drawings of the Sounding A sherds.[101] Petrographic analysis could have possibly proven whether this sherd was indeed imported from Qurayyah.

Amman Airport Building

A large pottery assemblage was uncovered in rescue excavations of a public building at Amman Airport.[102] Many Mycenaean vessels that range in time from Myc IIA to late Myc IIIB and a few Cypriote vessels were recovered inside the building.[103] The assemblage also included a few local vessels[104] and a QPW bowl.[105] Outside the building only local pottery was found.[106] Based on the imported pottery Hankey dated the building to the 14th–13th centuries BCE, but the local pottery suggests a later date, as the latest forms already reflect the transition from Late Bronze II to the Iron I horizon.[107] Unfortunately, the original find spot of the QPW bowl is unknown and it is unknown which vessels accompanied it.

[98] Smith and Levy 2014: Figs. 4.27:1; 4.28:7–9 respectively.
[99] Smith and Levy 2014: Figs. 4.27:2–3; 4.28:21; 4.29:5, 7, 16, 41–43.
[100] Smith and Levy 2014: Figs. 4.27:7–10; 4.31:10–12.
[101] Smith and Levy 2014: Fig. 4.27.
[102] Many of the finds inside the building were collected after bulldozing operations and thus the original find spot is not clear (Hankey 1995: 169).
[103] Hankey 1974.
[104] Most of the local pottery was lost, but among the few local pottery published by Hankey are lentoid flasks (1995: Fig. 12). These vessels occur through the Late Bronze II and Iron I periods (Ben-Shlomo 2012: 136; Gilboa and Sharon 2003: Table 9 on p. 29; Laemmel 2003, Vol. 1: 176; Oren 1973: 113).
[105] Hankey 1995: Fig. 11.
[106] Herr 1983; Kafafi 1983.
[107] Herr 1983: 21.

Amman Citadel

One QPW jug neck is reported from Bennett's excavations at the Amman Citadel.[108] As hardly anything is known about the settlement of Amman during the Late Bronze and Early Iron periods,[109] it is impossible to relate it to any context and to date it.

The two sites in Amman are the northernmost sites in Transjordan where QPW is known to have been present.

Finally, it should be noted that a few QPW sherds were found in surveys in Cis- and Transjordan.[110] As they lack any stratigraphical context, these finds cannot contribute to the present discussion.

DISCUSSION: DATING THE QPW

As shown in the above review only in a limited number of sites fragmentary or complete QPW vessels were found in a reliable context. At Timna (Sites 200 and 2) and the "Governor's Residency" at Tell el-Far'ah (south) this pottery was found in a context dated to the period of the Twentieth Egyptian Dynasty in the 12th century BCE. We may assume that the QPW bowls found at the Tell Jedur tomb and at the Amman Airport building should be attributed to the latest phases of the tomb and the site respectively and thus should be dated to the 12th century BCE. Also Strata III–II at Timna Site 30 can perhaps be dated to the late 12th and 11th centuries. The single period site of Yotvata is dated to the end of the Late Bronze and beginning of the Iron I periods.

The early occupation phases (which preceded the erection of the fortresses) at Kadesh Barnea, 'En Hazeva, Tell el-Kheleifeh and Khirbet en-Nahas should be dated to the Iron I period, but thus far it is not possible to define their date more accurately. Similar is the case of Tomb 542 at Tell el-Far'ah (south) that was in use in the Iron I period.

The available data on the sporadically found sherds, supposedly QPW and their date, upon which scholars try to extend the time range of this pottery group to the 10th–9th and even to the 8th–7th centuries BCE (Rujm Hamra Ifdan, Tawilan, Ghrareh) are partial, as their drawings or photographs were not

[108] Kalsbeek and London 1978: 47.
[109] Hübner 1992: 24.
[110] Avner 2002: 115; Jobling 1981: 110; Rothenberg and Glass 1983.

published and their clay was not analyzed. Significantly, the similarity between the QPW decoration and the Edomite painted pottery (Busayra Painted Ware) can sometimes be confusing,[111] especially when the sherds are small. Thus, only petrographic or Neutron Activation analyses can validate the origin of the sherds in question.

In addition, dating by radiocarbon test results, while at the same time ignoring ceramic typology (Barqa el-Hetiye and Rujm Hamra Ifdan) is methodically incorrect as it creates a new pottery chronology that is inconsistent with other sites and even within the same site. It is important to note that there are serious impediments in the radiocarbon dating method and the procedure of data processing.[112] Therefore we must be aware that

> *radiocarbon dating does not (presently) seem capable of differing a definitive solution for our dispute over such a short period; it should instead be considered one of many lines of evidence that inform our chronological picture of the Iron Age.*[113]

The above discussion suggests that the QPW appeared at the end of the Late Bronze period and continued in the beginning of the Iron I.[114]

The date of the transition between these periods is a much-debated topic and the terminology employed by different scholars is not uniform. The traditional date of 1200 BCE for this transition was set in 1921 when the three official schools of archaeology in Jerusalem (British, French, and American), in co-operation with the Department of Antiquities, drew up a system of archaeological periods in which the Iron Age was sub-divided.[115]

Following excavations in sites such as Lachish, Megiddo and Tel Sera‘ it turned out that the Canaanite material culture continued into the 12th century (the time of the Egyptian Twentieth-Dynasty presence in Canaan) and ended only after the reign of Ramesses VI (c. 1130 BCE).[116] These data create some

[111] Bimson and Tebes 2009: 93.
[112] *E.g.,* Bietak 2013; Singer-Avitz 2009; Wiener 2012.
[113] Frese and Levy 2010: 197.
[114] In an earlier paper, I expressed the view (following Rothenberg) that the end of Egyptian rule in Canaan (under Ramesses V or VI) also marks the disappearance of QPW from Canaan (Singer-Avitz 2004). However, based on the current analysis, it seems that this conclusion should be revised.
[115] Albright 1949: 111–112.
[116] Finkelstein 1995; Oren 1985; Ussishkin 1985; 1995.

scholarly confusion since there is no consensus and scholars are divided as to the character of the 12th century BCE and how to term this period. The 12th century assemblages are called "Iron Age I,"[117] "Late Bronze IIIB,"[118] "LB|IR transition"[119] or "Transitional (Late) Bronze and Iron Ages" (TBI).[120] Following Ussishkin, the term Late Bronze IIIB will be used here for the period of the 12th century BCE (until c. 1130 BCE). Consequently, the Iron I period begins only at the last third of the 12th century BCE and continues into the 11th century BCE.

Dating the QPW to the Late Bronze IIIB and the beginning of the Iron I period, *i.e.* the 12th–11th centuries BCE, corresponds well with the dates given recently at the Hejaz (Tayma), the homeland of this ware, from where it was exported northward. Based on the sites discussed above, it seems that there are no data confirming the notion that the QPW survived for several centuries, long after its manufacture at its place of origin had come to an end.[121]

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[118] Ussishkin 2004: 74–75.
[119] Sharon *et al.* 2008: 185.
[120] Martin 2011: 20.
[121] The homogenous nature of QPW, expressed by its material, shapes and decoration (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 102), may also indicate that it was used for only a brief period of time.

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La estructura social del Calcolítico palestinense: Una propuesta de interpretación desde el Materialismo Histórico

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Summary: The Social Structure during the Chalcolithic in Palestine: a Historical Materialistic Proposal.

In this paper we analyze the different interpretations proposed by scholars about the social structure of the Chalcolithic (Ghassulian) period of the southern Levant. Special attention is given to those proposals which argue the presence of chiefdoms or egalitarian societies in this time span. It is considered that these interpretations fail to account for the characteristics of the period, which are the result of the forcible application of the concepts of neo-evolutionism. It is proposed to apply a historical materialist approach, particularly from the concept of community-patriarchal mode of production. We conclude that what prevailed during the southern Levantine Chalcolithic was an economic-social formation dominated by agropastoral communities with relatively developed craft industries**.**

Keywords: Chiefdoms – Equalitarian society – Mode of production – Socio-economic formation – Chalcolithic – Southern Levant

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Resumen: La estructura social del Calcolítico Palestinense: una propuesta de interpretación desde el Materialismo Histórico.

En este trabajo se analizan las diferentes interpretaciones propuestas por los arqueólogos acerca de la estructura social del Calcolítico (Ghassuliense) en el Levante meridional. Se dedica especial atención a aquellas que argumentan la presencia de una sociedad de jefatura o de una sociedad igualitaria. Se considera que estas interpretaciones no logran dar cuenta de las características del periodo, lo que es consecuencia de una aplicación forzosa de los conceptos del neoevolucionismo. Se propone aplicar un enfoque materialista histórico, en particular a partir del concepto de modo de producción comunitario-patriarcal. Se concluye que durante este período prevaleció una formación económico-social con predominio de comunidades agropastoriles con ramas de producción artesanal relativamente desarrolladas.

Palabras clave: Sociedad de jefatura – Sociedad igualitaria – Modo de producción – Formación-económico social – Calcolítico – Levante meridional

Introducción

El objetivo de este artículo es revisar las diferentes interpretaciones socioeconómicas sobre el periodo Calcolítico palestinense (ca. 4500–3800/3600 a.C.), y proponer nuestro punto de vista basado en la evidencia arqueológica y en una concreta utilización de la teoría social, sobre todo del materialismo histórico.

La historia de la arqueología del Calcolítico palestinense comenzó en 1932 cuando, durante una campaña del Instituto Pontificio Bíblico de Jerusalén, se halló un sitio de 20 hectáreas en el montículo de Teleilat Ghassul, en el valle del Jordán al noreste del Mar Muerto[1] (**Fig. 1**). En este sitio se descubrió una serie de pinturas murales, únicas para la región, y un repertorio artefactual particular, del cual se derivó el nombre de cultura Ghassuliense. Allí se encontraron también algunos objetos de cobre. Durante esa misma década, en la planicie costera del Mediterráneo, se hallaron cuevas con enterramientos secundarios, con huesos depositados en jarras y osarios[2]. Durante la década de los ‘50, se excavaron algunos sitios en el área de Beersheba (*e.g.* Abu Matar, Bir Safadi), donde se encontraron, debajo de estructuras rectangulares, cuevas de habitación y de almacenamiento[3]. Estos últimos sitios, junto a los

[1] Mallon *et al.* 1934.
[2] *E.g.* Sukenik 1937.
[3] *E.g.* Perrot 1955.

cementerios de la costa, fueron englobados dentro de la cultura de Beersheba, aunque hoy en día tiende a hablarse de una misma cultura Beersheba-Ghassuliense[4].

Sin embargo el episodio más extraordinario de esta historia ocurrió en 1961 cuando, en una campaña en el desierto de Judea, se halló un tesoro al interior de una cueva en Nahal Mishmar, compuesto por más de 400 artefactos de cobre arsenicado, elaborados con la técnica de la cera perdida, y decorados con una rica y variada iconografía[5]. Durante esa misma década se excavó, a pocos kilómetros de allí, un santuario en el sitio de Ein Gedi, el cual se suele asociar a este tesoro[6]. A partir de entonces, otras campañas, especialmente en las últimas décadas, han ampliado la cantidad de sitios del Calcolítico palestinense, entre los que podemos destacar el santuario de Gilat[7], y las cuevas de Nahal Qanah[8] y de Peqi'in[9].

Uno de los aspectos más problemáticos de este periodo son las diferentes denominaciones que ha recibido. Por ejemplo, algunos lo han clasificado como Calcolítico tardío o final[10], mientras que otros lo han llamado Protourbano I[11]. Nosotros, siguiendo la propuesta de Gilead[12], preferimos nombrarlo aquí simplemente Calcolítico, pues es el primer período en que aparecen artefactos de cobre en la región. Lo asociamos así con el complejo cultural Beersheba-Ghassuliense, por lo que la cronología del período depende de la datación de esta cultura (ver **Tabla 1**). Ahora bien, la mayoría de los arqueólogos concuerda en que comenzaría alrededor del 4500 a.C., pero existen bastantes discusiones en torno al final y la transición al Bronce Antiguo (BA) IA, en las que se incluyen aspectos relativos a las causas del final del Calcolítico[13]. Por ejemplo, mientras que Gilead[14] sostiene un final abrupto alrededor del 4000/3900 a.C., Burton y Levy[15] apuntan a un final más tardío,

[4] Gilead 2011.
[5] Bar-Adon 1980.
[6] Ussishkin 1971; 1980.
[7] Alon y Levy 1989; Levy 2006.
[8] Gopher y Tsuk 1996.
[9] *E.g.* Gal *et al.* 2011.
[10] *E.g.* Garfinkel 1999.
[11] Finkelstein 1996.
[12] Gilead 2011.
[13] Para los problemas relativos a la datación cronológica del período, y en especial la transición al BA, ver Lovell and Rowan 2011, y el número 39/1 de la revista *Paléorient*.
[14] Gilead 2011.
[15] Burton y Levy 2011.

en torno al 3700/3600 a.C. Es probable que la diferencia entre estas perspectivas cronológicas se deba a un problema objetivo, o a la falta de ejemplos de C^{14} para ese hiato, porque es evidente que no puede haber habido un periodo tan largo (dos siglos) sin habitación humana alguna en el territorio palestinense. Desde nuestra perspectiva, teniendo en cuenta el modo de producción de los artefactos, proponemos una posible transición durante esos dos siglos[16], o la posibilidad de que nuevos fechados nos reduzcan ese hiato[17].

Período	Años a.C.
Neolítico Precerámico	11000–6500
Neolítico Cerámico	6500–4500
Calcolítico	4500–3800/3600?
Bronce Antiguo I	3600–3000

Tabla 1: Periodización de la prehistoria tardía palestinense.

Las características principales del periodo que podemos destacar son la completa domesticación de los animales que se utilizan para la carne, la leche y la lana, así como también el aparente surgimiento de la horticultura y del cultivo del olivo. De particular importancia es la emergencia de la metalurgia del cobre, que en este caso se desarrolló bajo dos formas: una de molde abierto, que utilizaba cobre puro, destinada preferentemente a artefactos utilitarios, y otra de la cera perdida, que utilizaba cobre arsenicado, una variante exótica proveniente de Transcaucasia[18], reservada a artefactos no utilitarios. Es menester señalar que uno de los aspectos más singulares del periodo es que una parte importante de los asentamientos se estableció en las zonas semiáridas, anteriormente deshabitadas, y que no volverían a ser ocupadas hasta el primer milenio a.C.[19]

En relación a los aspectos simbólicos, podemos destacar la presencia de cementerios de enterramiento secundario en jarras y osarios, en cuevas de la pla-

[16] Ver Milevski 2013; Jaruf *et al.* 2013.
[17] Recientemente, Regev *et al.* (2012) han sugerido que el BA I finalizó alrededor del 3100 a.C. y no del 3000–2950 a.C. como estaba aceptado hasta el momento. Si esto es así es probable que el BA haya comenzado antes del 3600 a.C., y entonces el hiato entre el fin del Calcolítico y el principio del BA se acortaría.
[18] Hauptmann 2007 [2000]: 302–304.
[19] Rosen 2009.

nicie costera y del piedemonte contiguo (Sefela), y en estructuras subaéreas, como dólmenes, túmulos y cistas, en el valle meridional del Jordán y del Néguev septentrional. Este periodo también se caracterizó por la presencia de una gran cantidad de artefactos artísticos, decorados con una amplia y variada iconografía, entre los que podemos destacar a los animales salvajes, a menudo ungulados astados y aves rapaces, así como también animales domésticos y figurinas antropomorfas, con narices prominentes y órganos sexuales destacados[20].

¿Una sociedad de jefatura?

Levy[21] fue el primero en introducir, de manera explícita, la teoría social en la arqueología del Calcolítico palestinense. Inspirado en la escuela neoevolucionista[22], ha definido este periodo como una sociedad de jefatura o de rango ("cacicazgo"). Según esta corriente antropológica, existirían tres o cuatro estadios de evolución universal, de los cuales la jefatura sería la fase inmediatamente anterior al surgimiento del Estado. La misma se caracterizaría, principalmente, por el crecimiento demográfico, la mayor productividad, la presencia de trabajo artesanal especializado, y el control central de las actividades económicas, políticas y religiosas, las cuales estarían a cargo de jefaturas hereditarias[23].

A partir de sus trabajos en la región del Néguev septentrional, Levy argumentó la presencia de un sistema jerárquico de asentamientos en dos niveles[24]: la especialización en el pastoralismo[25] y en la metalurgia[26], y la centralidad político-religiosa de ciertos sitios, como por ejemplo Gilat[27]. Desde su punto de vista, el control de centros de producción metalúrgica, en un contexto de crecimiento demográfico y de competencia por los recursos, le posibilitó a las élites locales contar con armas más fuertes con las que imponer la coacción, mientras que el control del intercambio de larga distancia les permitió tener acceso a un material exótico, el cobre y su variante arsenical, mediante el cual expresaron su prestigio[28]. Esta nueva forma de organización político-

[20] Epstein 1978; 1982.
[21] *E.g.* Levy 1995.
[22] Fried 1967; Service 1984 [1975].
[23] Verhoeven 2010: Tabla 2.1. Para una crítica al neovolucionismo en relación a Mesopotamia septentrional y los modos de subsistencia del Neolítico ver Zeder 1994; 2009.
[24] Levy y Alon 1983.
[25] Levy 1983.
[26] Levy y Shalev 1989.
[27] Alon y Levy 1989.
[28] Levy 1995.

social se expresó, a su vez, mediante un comportamiento más territorial, en el cual los cementerios y los santuarios sirvieron también como marcas de posesión de territorios determinados.

No obstante, el elemento más importante para explicar el surgimiento de este tipo de sociedad es el rol transformador de la actividad metalúrgica. Tanto es así, que este autor llega a afirmar la existencia de una verdadera "revolución del metal"[29]. Ahora bien, desde nuestro punto de vista, este tipo de interpretación, que asume como agente del cambio a una tecnología específica, corre el riesgo de caer en un materialismo de tipo mecanicista. Es preferible pensar, en cambio, que una tecnología se encuentra inmersa en determinadas relaciones de producción, y que son estas últimas las que determinan su grado de incidencia en la estructura social.

Recientes trabajos como el de Kerner[30] sobre especialización artesanal han vuelto a plantear que el período Calcolítico es un claro ejemplo de una sociedad compleja o un "cacicazgo", aunque el carácter exacto del mismo no es del todo claro. La misma autora sugiere diferentes formas en las que las sociedades de jefatura pueden ser descriptas (grupal versus individual, sencilla versus compleja, y "staple finance" versus riqueza basada en prestigio), aunque concluye que probablemente se trataba de una sociedad basada en pocas diferencias sociales y en élites cuyo prestigio se fundaba en cierta riqueza, por ejemplo en los objetos de metal.

Dicho esto, debemos mencionar que no existe una cantidad suficiente de indicios que nos permitan afirmar la existencia de una verdadera industria del metal para este periodo. Incluso, casi no hay evidencia de metalurgia en los sitios considerados santuarios, ni siquiera en Gilat. Además, es probable que esta actividad haya comenzado un poco más tarde de lo que se suponía, resultando en la paradoja de la existencia de un Calcolítico premetálico, que ya muchos autores han empezado a señalar[31]. En consecuencia, podemos suponer que fue el tipo de sociedad que surgió a comienzos del periodo lo que sirvió como precondición para el surgimiento de la metalurgia y no al contrario.

[29] Levy 2007.

[30] Kerner 2010: 192. Lamentablemente no tenemos aquí mucho espacio para referirnos a otras propuestas recientes como las de Garfinkel (2014: 1458) en el sentido de que en el Calcolítico ya habia formas de proviedad privada de los medios de producción, aunque en realidad quizás lo que se demuestra es una forma familiar según sus propias investigaciones.

[31] Golden 2010; Shugar y Gohm 2011.

No obstante, el principal problema de esta propuesta es lograr identificar en el registro material los indicios de una élite de tipo de jefatura. Por ejemplo, no se han hallado estructuras ni expresiones iconográficas que permitan establecer la presencia de jefes[32]. Por su parte, si bien se han señalado algunas evidencias en contextos funerarios[33], lo cierto es que las tumbas y los ajuares del periodo no dan cuenta de diferencias de rango significativas[34].

Con respecto a la coerción, en los últimos años se ha señalado la existencia de signos de violencia en la Prehistoria tardía como prueba de conflictos y de desigualdades sociales[35]. Sin embargo, es de destacar los escasos indicios del ejercicio de la violencia para este periodo[36]. En el caso de ciertos artefactos considerados no utilitarios, como las cabezas de maza, se puede suponer que fueron utilizados como armas[37], pero en otros casos, como las puntas de flecha "tranversales", esto no está demostrado[38]. De todos modos, es preciso señalar que según algunos autores[39], existirían indicios de confrontaciones violentas, pero que se ubicarían en la fase que ellos denominan "Calcolítico Final", y que en parte serían la causa del final del periodo[40].

Por último, en relación al sistema de asentamientos en dos niveles, algunos autores sostienen que el tamaño y los patrones de los sitios representan una distribución no jerárquica[41]. En el caso del norte del Néguev[42], los sitios parecen haber sido ocupados por sociedades de pequeña escala, con bajos niveles de complejidad. Asimismo, la mayoría de los sitios no muestran jerarquías internas en su edificación. Si bien en algunos centros, como Teleilat Ghassul, existen edificios identificados como santuarios[43], en otros la evidencia es bastante discutida, como en el caso de Gilat[44].

[32] Para un análisis de la iconografía del período ver Milevski 2010; Milevski y Gandulla 2012.
[33] Levy 1987; Gopher y Tsuk 1996; Gal *et al.* 2011.
[34] Joffe 2003.
[35] Bar-Yosef 2010.
[36] Dawson *et al.* 2003.
[37] Sebanne 2009.
[38] Rosen 1984.
[39] Joffe y Dessel 1995; Yekutieli 2012.
[40] La fiabilidad de la asociación de los datos con la fase del período en cuestión es problemática (ver Jaruf *et al.* 2013).
[41] *E.g.* Gophna y Portugali 1988.
[42] Winter *et al.* 2010; *contra* Levy 1995.
[43] Seaton 2008.
[44] *E.g.* Rowan y Ilan 2007.

Banning[45] en un interesante estudio sobre casas y organización del espacio en las aldeas calcolíticas (ver más adelante) rechaza la definición de jefaturas pero resalta que los edificios de culto aparecen en sitios donde hay pruebas de diferenciación socio-económica entre las casas, como en Teleilat Ghassul. Lo más importante es que según este autor algunas de las características que podríamos asociar con desigualdades políticas y económicas estarían determinadas "por el género, la edad, el talento o la habilidad". Las grandes diferencias que a veces aparecen entre el tamaño de la casa y la riqueza de los hogares sugieren un aparente fuerte grado o rango de diferenciación socio-económica.

En resumen, no hay pruebas de que la sociedad del Calcolítico palestinense constituya una sociedad jerárquica con jefes-sacerdotes, así como tampoco de la existencia de una jerarquía en la estructura de los sitios y de los patrones de asentamiento, aunque sí probables diferencias internas en las aldeas del período.

¿Una sociedad igualitaria?

El principal arqueólogo que se ha opuesto a la hipótesis de una sociedad de rango o de jefatura, aunque sin hacer referencia explícita a la teoría social, ha sido Gilead[46]. Según este autor, durante el Calcolítico palestinense habría existido una sociedad de tipo igualitaria, caracterizada por formas de organización social basadas en una religión doméstica a cargo de chamanes[47]. Para defender su propuesta, este arqueólogo enfatiza la ausencia de indicios claros de jerarquía social, como los mencionados en el apartado anterior, así como también relativiza el grado de especialización en el pastoralismo y en la metalurgia, señalando asimismo el escaso lugar que ocupaba el intercambio de larga distancia en esta sociedad[48].

En lo que respecta al sistema de asentamiento, Gilead discute la jerarquía de dos niveles, sosteniendo la ausencia de centros político-religiosos[49]. En el caso específico de Gilat, argumenta que se trataba simplemente de un sitio doméstico[50], y que además no era contemporáneo de los mayores sitios del

[45] Banning 2010.
[46] *E.g.* Gilead 1993.
[47] Gilead 2002.
[48] Gilead 1988.
[49] Winter-Livneh *et al.* 2010.
[50] Gilead 2002.

Néguev septentrional, a los que, según Levy, estaba asociado, sino que era anterior[51]. En el caso de Teleilat Ghassul, si bien la dimensión del sitio implica la existencia de espacios diferenciados en términos funcionales, es probable que predominaran las prácticas religiosas de tipo chamánica, de las cuales los frescos serían un ejemplo, ya que según este autor, el hecho de que fueran repintados una y otra vez sería un indicador de que estaban vinculados a prácticas mánticas y/o a experiencias de trance[52].

Otros arqueólogos han apoyado la hipótesis de una sociedad igualitaria. Por un lado, Joffe, Dessel y Hallote[53], tras un análisis de la iconografía y de las estructuras identificadas como templos, llegan a la conclusión de que las elites locales no pudieron crear un repertorio simbólico que diera cuentas de relaciones de autoridad, por lo que eran débiles y pequeñas, estando esencialmente constituidas por chamanes. La iconografía, por su parte, reelaboraría y continuaría aspectos simbólicos propios de una sociedad igualitaria, por lo que el Calcolítico formaría parte de una larga tradición en el extremo de una trayectoria que habría comenzado en el Epi-paleolítico[54]. Por otro lado, Shalem[55], en base al análisis de la iconografía de los osarios de la costa y del piedemonte contiguo, llega a una conclusión semejante, según la cual predominaba un sistema simbólico similar al del Neolítico, centrado en los conceptos de fertilidad y de reproducción[56], con probables coincidencias con el ciclo mítico mesopotámico de las deidades Inanna y Dumuzi.

Ahora bien, uno de los problemas de estas hipótesis es que relativizan los cambios ocurridos en los procesos de producción, en especial en lo que se refiere a la especialización en los productos secundarios y las artesanías. Por ejemplo, si bien el empleo del riego y la verdadera domesticación de olivos en el Calcolítico (no sólo la utilización) sugerida por Zohary[57] no es aceptada por todos los estudiosos[58], es evidente que algún tipo de producción de oliva debió existir en este periodo[59]. También es evidente que las industrias de la

[51] Gilead 2011.
[52] Gilead 2002.
[53] Joffe *et al.* 2001.
[54] Joffe y Dessel 1995.
[55] Shalem 2008.
[56] Ver también al respecto Milevki 2002.
[57] Zohary 1975.
[58] Gilead 1988; Liphschitz y Bonani 2000.
[59] Epstein 1993; Meadows 2001; Lovell *et al.* 2010; Milevski 2012.

leche y de la lana, productos secundarios derivados de la cría de ovicápridos, son características del Calcolítico, con fuertes indicios no sólo en el registro faunístico[60], sino también en el repertorio cerámico e iconográfico del periodo[61]. Estos cambios tuvieron incidencias en los niveles de productividad, como indica el desarrollo de los dispositivos de almacenamiento, los cuales fueron importantes incluso en sus primeras etapas (horizonte pre-ghassuliense) como en Tel Tsaf[62]. Otros sitios como Teleilat Ghassul, también muestran considerables instalaciones de almacenamiento[63].

Durante el Calcolítico también se evidencian cambios importantes en las artesanías. Por ejemplo, si bien la cerámica representa una continuación de las tradiciones neolíticas tardías, la misma se destaca por tener parámetros mucho más estandarizados y nuevas variantes en las formas conocidas. Sobre todo las tinajas de almacenamiento que son mucho más grandes, lo cual significa una mayor producción y almacenamiento de productos como granos y aceite[64]. Como resultado de la estandarización la producción cerámica aumenta. En definitiva, la licuación de este periodo en un mundo igualitario semejante al del Neolítico, deja sin explicar las consecuencias de los cambios ocurridos durante el Calcolítico.

A nuestro entender, la principal debilidad de estas aproximaciones es que, con el afán de discutir el modelo de la sociedad de jefatura, realizan un análisis parcial de la evidencia. Este proceder es consecuencia de que, a pesar de las críticas, también comparten una misma concepción del cambio social que responde a un esquema evolutivo ideal, preconcebido, no materialista, el cual impide explicar de manera integral la presencia de evidencias que en primera instancia parecen contradictorias. Esto es visible en la aplicación del supuesto de que en una sociedad igualitaria habría un predominio del chamanismo, lo cual ha sido criticado en arqueología[65], y además, como afirma el reconocido historiador de las religiones, Mircea Eliade:

> *(...) la presencia de un complejo chamánico, en una zona cualquiera no significa necesariamente que la vida mágico-religiosa de tal o cual pueblo haya cristalizado alrededor del chamanismo.*

[60] Grigson 1995; 2006.
[61] Milevski 2009.
[62] Garfinkel *et al.* 2009.
[63] *E.g.* Bourke 2002.
[64] *E.g.* Garfinkel 1999.
[65] Insoll 2004: 29–30, 59–61.

> *Puede presentarse este caso (y se produce, por ejemplo, en determinadas regiones de Indonesia), pero no es lo más corriente. Por lo común, el chamanismo coexiste con otras formas de magia y de religión*[66].

En relación a esto, debemos decir que, si bien en el Calcolítico palestinense hay evidencias de prácticas chamánicas, también existen evidencias de otras formas de mediación religiosa, algunas catalogables dentro de la definición de sacerdocio[67]. En resumen, si bien no hay pruebas que el periodo Calcolítico palestinense haya constituido una sociedad de jefatura, existió una cierta división del trabajo y una suerte de diferenciación social dentro de las propias comunidades, lo que hace que dicho periodo tampoco pueda ser definido como una sociedad igualitaria.

¿Dos elites?

Una de las pocas interpretaciones que intenta salvar estas contradicciones y ambigüedades es la de Bourke[68], quien en base al análisis de los sitios de la región del valle meridional del Jordán, llega a la conclusión de que durante este período habría habido una coexistencia, en tensión, de dos elites. Una de ellas era de tipo tradicional, y basaba su prestigio en el control de un conocimiento especializado de tipo religioso, por lo que estaba compuesta por un grupo sacerdotal. A ella estaría asociada la rica y variada iconografía del período, en especial los artefactos de cobre arsenicado elaborados con la técnica de la cera perdida, cuya producción controlaban. A su vez, había una elite nueva, cuyo sustento era el control de los excedentes agrícolas. Este último sector habría entrado en conflicto, hacia fines del Calcolítico, con el grupo tradicional, sobre el cual habría triunfado. Desde su perspectiva, esto explicaría por qué las elites del BA IA no disponían de una parafernalia simbólica similar a la del Calcolítico, ni utilizaban la metalurgia del cobre arsenicado para elaborar artefactos de prestigio.

Lo atrayente de esta hipótesis es que intenta romper con el modelo unívoco del neo-evolucionismo, e introduce la dinámica del conflicto en la estructura social del Calcolítico. Además, da cuenta del proceso histórico, estable-

[66] Eliade 1976 [1968]: 22.
[67] Rowan y Ilan 2007.
[68] Bourke 2001; 2002.

ciendo los cambios y las continuidades con el período inmediatamente posterior, variable que consideramos necesaria para interpretar una formación social concreta[69]. Lamentablemente, a pesar del atractivo de esta propuesta, debemos señalar que los contextos socio-económicos de la situación de estas dos elites no resultan claros. En realidad, no podemos saber si representan uno o dos órdenes sociales diferentes.

Una seria debilidad de este argumento es que no explica cuál sería el fundamento material de la elite tradicional, pues la existencia de un grupo sacerdotal supone preguntarse por el sustento de los mismos, ya que la existencia de todo sector no ligado a la producción implica la presencia de un conjunto dedicado a la creación de un excedente que le sirva de sostén. Aún más, si consideramos que esa elite controlaba la producción metalúrgica, debían contar con un medio a través del cual mantener al grupo de artesanos especializados. Sin embargo, todo el sistema productivo que se desarrolla durante esta época, que bien podría servir de sustento para este grupo sacerdotal, en la propuesta de Bourke sirve de fundamento para otra élite, la cual, llamativamente, no adopta estrategias de legitimación simbólica. Se da así el singular caso de que tenemos una élite sacerdotal que se legitima por medio de la religión y que no posee mecanismos de sustento económico, y por otro lado una élite socio-económica que no necesita legitimar su posición por medio de la religión, pero que sí posee un sustento económico.

Una última observación a esta propuesta es que, si bien parece escapar, en un primer momento, a las dicotomías y limitaciones propias del neo-evolucionismo, su posición en realidad termina constituyendo la consecuencia de la aplicación de los modelos ideales. Sucede que la supuesta coexistencia de dos élites es resultado de la aplicación de una metodología según la cual encontramos en la evidencia indicios tanto de una sociedad de jefatura como de una sociedad igualitaria. Como a cada tipo de sociedad le corresponde una élite con determinadas características, entonces se deriva la coexistencia de dos élites, las cuales, a su vez, entrarían en conflicto.

Ahora bien, si seguimos el recorrido lógico de esta argumentación, nos damos cuenta que esta contradicción no es más que una contradicción entre dos tipos ideales, por lo que se trata no de una contradicción interna a la estructura social del período, sino de una contradicción ideal. Una de las maneras de solucionar las supuestas contradicciones de la evidencia sería aumentar la cantidad de tipologías sociales, como a menudo ha sucedido en

[69] Sereni 1973 [1970].

el neo-evolucionismo, introduciendo nuevos estadios intermedios, o especificando variedades dentro de estadios establecidos[70]. Sin embargo, aplicar este tipo de procedimiento implica volver a ajustar la evidencia, haciendo de la clasificación una explicación. Por el contrario, desde nuestro punto de vista, lo que se debe estudiar es la formación social concreta y las contradicciones de esa formación social, resultado de la relación entre las diversas formas de producción presentes.

Comunidad, parentesco y especialización productiva

¿Cómo podríamos entender la organización de la estructura aldeana del Calcolítico, sus formas de parentesco y las formas de enterramiento sin abordar el centro de interés que es la forma en cómo se producen los artefactos? Esto no sólo incluye la etapa de producción propiamente dicha, sino también la de la distribución y el consumo, fases mediante las cuales podemos inferir las relaciones de producción dominantes durante un periodo determinado[71]. En consecuencia, nuestra metodología no consiste en la aplicación de un tipo social extraído de un modelo evolutivo ideal, sino en el análisis relacional de los componentes de una formación económico-social concreta. Este tipo de procedimiento nos permite deducir, entre los diversos modos de producción que coexisten en todas las situaciones histórico-sociales específicas, la presencia de una forma dominante, que "asigna a todas las otras su correspondiente rasgo e influencia"[72].

Pero las características de una estructura social no sólo dependen de las cuestiones relativas a la producción de la vida material, sino también la de los aspectos simbólicos. Desde el materialismo histórico se sostiene que sobre la forma de producción dominante "se alza un edificio jurídico y político [al] que corresponden determinadas formas de conciencia social"[73]. En otras palabras, las características de una formación económico-social concreta dependen de la relación entre la estructura socio-económica y la superestructura ideológica. En relación a esto, debemos tener en cuenta que la forma de esta relación no es mecánica, a la manera de un reflejo, sino dialéctica. En este sentido rescatamos algunos aportes teóricos fundamentales realizados por la

[70] Ver Verhoeven 2010.
[71] Marx 1980b [1859].
[72] Marx 1980a [1957]: 307.
[73] Marx 1980b [1959]: 4.

arqueología contextual[74]. Según esta corriente arqueológica, el registro material está constituido por una estructura de significación situada cultural e históricamente. Desde nuestro punto de vista, esta estructura estaría condicionada por el modo de producción dominante durante el periodo en cuestión.

En el caso concreto del Calcolítico palestinense, al tratarse de una sociedad pre-urbana[75], estaríamos ante una formación económico-social dominada por el modo de producción comunitario. Según Marx[76], en la *forma primitiva* el clan o la comunidad se realizan, no como resultado, sino como un supuesto de la apropiación comunitaria y la utilización de la tierra y otras formas de la naturaleza. Esta comunidad se desarrolla precisamente en forma *natural*, incluyendo las sociedades pastoriles, y presupone la *comunalidad* de todas las formas de sangre, de idioma y las costumbres sociales necesarias para permitir que un grupo haga frente a las condiciones objetivas de la vida, como la agricultura, el pastoreo, la caza, entre otros. Cada individuo se comporta, en tanto tiene un vínculo, o es miembro de esa comunidad, como propietario o poseedor.

Entre los estudiosos que han profundizado en la organización comunitaria podemos destacar a Sahlins[77], quien prefiere hablar de un modo de producción doméstico, haciendo foco en el nivel local o familiar de la organización. Esta preponderancia de las relaciones de parentesco también fue señalada por Godelier[78], quien afirmó que las mismas son, en este modo de producción, un elemento tanto de la superestructura como de la estructura, en tanto organizador de la producción. Sin embargo, desde nuestro punto de vista, el aporte más claro fue el que realizó Suret-Canale[79], quien distinguió entre un modo de producción comunitario propiamente dicho, aplicable a sociedades cazadoras-recolectoras preferentemente, y un modo de producción tribo-patriarcal, más común de hallar en sociedades agrícola-ganaderas. Según este autor, en este modo de producción:

[74] *E.g.* Hodder 1988 [1986].
[75] Para el concepto de urbanismo en las sociedades del Levante meridional y su surgimiento en el Bronce Antiguo ver Greenberg 2011; de Miroschedji 2014; para el lugar del mismo en la transición del Calcolítico al Bronce Antiguo, Milevski 2013.
[76] Marx 1971 [1939]: 433–440.
[77] Sahlins 1983 [1977].
[78] Godelier 1974.
[79] Suret-Canale 1978 [1974].

> *(...) el estado de las fuerzas productivas (fundada sobre la agricultura, sobre las primeras formas de división del trabajo) permite la producción del plusproducto. Pero la organización social, marco de las actividades productivas, permanece como una herencia de la época anterior: la comunidad patriarcal o aldeana está muy próxima a la comunidad primitiva. Diversas formas de diferenciación social aparecen sin embargo, y se desarrollan más o menos en función del estado de las fuerzas productivas, de las condiciones geográficas, de las circunstancias históricas, etc. Pero la aparición de estas contracciones internas no ha conducido todavía a la aparición del Estado. Se puede considerar la sociedad tribal o tribo-patriarcal como típica de la transición de la comunidad primitiva a la sociedad de clases*[80].

Estas consideraciones nos resultan de gran valor por diferentes razones. En primer lugar, destacan aún el predominio de una ideología comunitaria en un contexto de surgimiento de formas de jerarquización social. En segundo lugar, vincula estos aspectos con el grado de desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas y la producción de un plusproducto, acentuando la aparición de contradicciones estructurales internas. Por último, enfatizan su carácter de transición, resultado de estas contradicciones, lo que constituye una situación semejante a la del Calcolítico, ya que se trata también de un periodo de transición entre las formaciones económico-sociales agropastoriles del Neolítico y las urbanas del Bronce Antiguo (ver **Tabla 2**).

[80] Suret-Canale 1978 [1974]: 210–211.

Parámetros	Neolítico Precerámico	Neolítico Cerámico	Calcolítico	Bronce Antiguo
Agricultura	Comienzos, legumbres y luego cereales.	Cereales	Horticultura Azada	¿Arado?
Cría de animales	Caza de animales salvajes, inicios de la domesticación de animales.	Domesticación completa de la oveja, la cabra, los porcinos y bovinos.	Utilización completa de la oveja, la cabra, los porcinos y bovinos.	Domesticación del asno ¿utilización de bovinos para arado?
Artesanías	Especialización part time, pedernal.	Especialización part time, pedernal, alfarería.	Especialización part time, pedernal, alfarería, basalto, metalurgia, artesanías relacionadas con hilado, tejido y productos lácteos.	Especialización part time y full time, pedernal, basalto, metalurgia.
Redes de intercambio	Locales, cortas y medias distancias; esporádicas largas distancias.	Locales cortas distancias; esporádicas largas distancias.	Locales cortas y medias distancias; esporádicas largas distancias.	Locales e internacionales, medias y largas distancias.
Organización social	Comunal, tribal.	¿Comunal, tribal?	Aldeana, comunal.	Aldeana, preurbana y urbana.

Tabla 2: Parámetros del desarrollo social y económico en las comunidades prehistóricas tardías palestinenses y el lugar que le cabe al periodo Calcolítico en ese desarrollo.

Dicho esto, debemos señalar que nos resulta preferible cambiar la denominación de tribo-patriarcal por la de comunitario-patriarcal, ya que consideramos que el concepto de tribu no da cuenta, de manera clara, del tipo de relaciones de propiedad al que estamos haciendo referencia.

Por lo tanto, según lo expuesto aquí, para determinar el tipo de relaciones sociales de producción dominantes para el periodo Calcolítico, no sólo debemos analizar los aspectos vinculados de manera directa con la producción, sino también aquellos rasgos estructurales y superestructurales como la forma de los sitios, la arquitectura, o los modos de enterramiento.

Producción e intercambio

Tomando en cuenta lo anterior, sostenemos que a pesar de que el Calcolítico palestinense está dominado por un sistema simbólico comunitario, esto no impidió la emergencia de un proceso de jerarquización social de ciertos individuos, seguramente las cabezas de familia: los patriarcas (aunque no debemos excluir la posibilidad de que este rol fuera ocupado también por las mujeres). Sin embargo, esta jerarquización se daría aún dentro del marco de la familia, y respondería a las posiciones de prestigio determinadas por las relaciones de parentesco.

Este proceso de jerarquización fue correlativo con el aumento de la productividad, la aparición de nuevas ramas de producción y la expansión relativa de las redes de intercambio. Según estudios que hemos realizado[81], las redes de intercambio de bienes en el Calcolítico se hicieron más regulares en distancias de varias decenas de kilómetros, incluyendo la cerámica, los utensilios de basalto, y los productos de cobre. De todas maneras, es probable que a pesar del aumento, esta circulación de bienes aún fuera de proporciones reducidas. Al parecer, los patrones de distribución eran longitudinales y transversales, pero en áreas restringidas (el Valle de Hula y cierta zona de la Galilea; el Valle del Jordán, la Sefela y la cuenca de Beersheba), probablemente reflejo de los límites de las redes de intercambio. En concreto, podemos decir que, en el periodo Calcolítico, la distribución de la mayoría de los bienes no excede de un radio de 20 km. Esto contrasta con la producción y las redes de intercambio de la cerámica del BA I que se caracteriza por una multiplicación de tipos regionales[82] y, lo más importante, por su distribución a tra-

[81] Milevski y Barzilai 2010.
[82] Braun 1996; Milevski 2011: 42–50, 74–84.

vés de circuitos de media y larga distancia, la mayoría de ellos de 100 km y más.

En lo que respecta a la productividad, debemos señalar la mayor cantidad y tamaño de los silos, resultado de una mayor producción cerealera, así como también de los múltiples indicios de intensificación en la horticultura y en la producción artesanal (cerámica, utensilios de pedernal y basalto). Cabe destacarse también la multiplicación de la evidencia en relación a los productos secundarios, en especial de los textiles y de la leche[83].

Con respecto a la cerámica del Calcolítico estamos en el primer momento en que existe una estandarización y producción en serie que no existía antes. Según estudios en la zona centro-sur palestinenses se han distinguido cinco grupos petrográficos que se distribuyeron a través de pequeñas a medianas redes interregionales[84]. En la zona norte—aunque los estudios petrográficos sistematizados sólo están en su comienzo[85]—tenemos varios sitios en la Galilea que contienen cerámica proveniente del Golán y el Valle de Hula. Un tercer grupo de pastas proviene probablemente de la aledaña zona costera del Líbano. Esta situación también parece existir en sitios de enterramiento como la cueva de Peqi'in en la Alta Galilea[86].

Acerca de la cuestión de la metalurgia, ya mencionamos que no es un agente de cambio por sí mismo, sino que depende de las relaciones de producción dominantes durante un período. El hecho de que haya surgido uno o dos siglos después del comienzo del Calcolítico[87], y que haya estado destinada más que nada a artefactos no utilitarios, significa que fueron las condiciones de la organización social las que hicieron posible el surgimiento de esta actividad, y no al contrario. Por otro lado, si bien la especialización en la metalurgia pudo no responder a un desarrollo natural de las relaciones del parentesco, la misma se insertó dentro de esta lógica, limitando un mayor desarrollo y confinándola a una función subsidiaria. Es probable que este tipo de relaciones sociales hayan determinado que la actividad se organice con una mínima división del trabajo,

[83] *E.g.* Grigson 1995; Meadows 2001; Gilead *et al.* 2004; Milevski *et al.* 2013a; ver también Milevski 2013.

[84] *E.g.* Goren 2006; Roux y Courty 1997; Milevski y Barzilai 2010.

[85] El proyecto petrográfico de sitios ubicados en la Galilea conducido por Dina Shalem (Kinneret College), Anat Cohen-Weinberger y Ianir Milevski (Israel Antiquities Authority) se halla en los primeros pasos de estudio. El proyecto es parte del PICT 2010/0883 del Foncyt, Argentina.

[86] Cohen-Weinberger 2013.

[87] Shugar y Gohm 2011.

ya que luego de la extracción del metal de las minas de Wadi Feinan[88], todos los pasos del trabajo (fundición, fusión, etc.) se desarrollaban en el mismo lugar: en los sitios de producción en la zona de Beersheba[89]. Lamentablemente, aún no conocemos los sitios de producción de los artefactos por la técnica de la "cera perdida". De todas maneras, según los análisis petrográficos de los núcleos cerámicos de las mazas emprendidos por Goren[90] es probable que hayan sido fabricados cerca del desierto de Judea.

Desde nuestro punto de vista, todos estos son indicios claros del desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas durante el Calcolítico con respecto al periodo anterior, el Neolítico Cerámico, lo cual no habría podido ocurrir sin una mayor división social del trabajo. El sustento de los productores especializados habría dependido de los líderes aldeanos tradicionales, es decir las cabezas de familia, quienes estaban a cargo de la distribución del plusproducto. Si bien esto implicaría cierta diferenciación social al interior de las comunidades, la misma no resultó en la emergencia de una élite de tipo jefatura, ya que no hay evidencias materiales que nos permitan afirmar la existencia de un consumo diferencial por parte de un grupo social, ni tampoco expresiones simbólicas que diera cuenta del mismo. Más bien, como señalamos más arriba, es probable que los santuarios y algunos cementerios hayan sido centros de peregrinación y reunión de líderes comunitarios, lo cual sería expresión de la expansión de las familias, de la unidad de diversas familias, o bien de una unidad religiosa. En definitiva, nuestra interpretación es que durante el Calcolítico prevaleció una forma de organización socio-económica con predominio de comunidades agro-pastoriles con ramas de producción artesanal relativamente desarrolladas.

Sin embargo, todavía hay un largo camino para profundizar e indagar en determinadas áreas que nos permitan especificar mejor las características de la formación económico-social del Calcolítico palestinense, y lograr así una interpretación más acabada de las relaciones de producción y sus dinámicas[91].

[88] Levy 2007.
[89] Shalev 1994; Golden 2010.
[90] Goren 2008.
[91] Este es el objetivo principal del proyecto del investigación PICT 2010–0883 "Economía y sociedad en el Calcolítico palestinense (4500–3700 a.C.): Producción e intercambio", cuyo investigador responsable es el Dr. Bernardo Gandulla. Este proyecto es financiado por el Fondo para la Investigación Científica y Tecnológica, del Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación Productiva de la Nación Argentina.

El espacio doméstico

En el estudio mencionado al principio, Banning[92] estudió las diferentes formas (sintaxis) de casas y construcciones en los asentamientos calcolíticos, de acuerdo al modelo de Hillier y Hanson[93]. Se resalta el caso donde las casas se organizan en forma separada del resto de su comunidad por intermedio de patios y paredes, una especie de módulo construido como bloque, como en el caso del nivel IV del Tel 1 de Ghassul[94]. Sus patios, por un lado, proporcionan acceso restringido que protege su ganado y silos mientras que, por otro lado, proporcionan espacios para la exhibición selectiva de la riqueza a miembros de la familia o los visitantes.

En otros casos vemos sustanciales diferencias en los tamaños de patios, de las casas, y en las capacidades de almacenamiento, y esto es consistente con la competencia entre los hogares y la creciente diferenciación social y económica que fomenta. Si alguno de estos complejos de edificios alojaron familias extensas, que no muestran la repetición obvia de unidades familiares independientes, entonces esto indicaría que las familias asociadas estaban probablemente vinculadas por una relación de dependencia, estando las ramas más jóvenes de la familia subordinadas al grupo principal en la toma de decisiones.

En el Tel 3 de Ghassul (nivel IVA)[95] las casas son más pequeñas y aparecen como agregadas unas a otras, también con patios y silos. Las pequeñas unidades parecen representar los hogares nucleares de la familia, o pequeñas familias extensas, que no tenían los mismos recursos sociales o económicos que las grandes casas. En Gilat[96] habría un caso similar al anterior por lo menos en el estrato 2B. Pero en Shiqmin hay patios abiertos más grandes o plazas, a veces en la unión de dos o más calles o vías; la organización de las casas en el sitio puede indicar una separación espacial de grupos sociales, aunque es posible que las grandes esctructuras tuviesen un carácter no-doméstico, comunal, como el caso de las estructuras subterráneas de los sitios de Beersheba[97].

[92] Banning 2010.
[93] Hillier y Hanson 1984.
[94] Mallon *et al.* 1934: 33.
[95] Koeppel 1940: Pl. II.
[96] Levy 2006: Figs. 5.14–5.20. Horbat Illit B se parece en cierta medida a Gilat y también a Tel Teo (ver abajo) (Milevski *et al.* 2013a).
[97] Perrot 1955.

En Tel Teo[98], aún con diferencias entre el estrato VII y VI, hay un grupo de casas "anchas" organizadas en derredor de un patio, según Banning se sugiere que al menos algunos de estos compuestos se construyeron todos a la vez por un grupo existente de hogares aliados[99]. En las alturas del Golán, Epstein[100] ha sugerido para las estructuras domesticas "en cadena" que posiblemente estos grupos de casas significaban distintos clanes.

En resumen, la estructura de las unidades de habitación en varios sitios calcolíticos importantes parece mostrar una forma nuclear de familas organizadas en torno a módulos, algunas con subunidades alrededor de patios. Otras con estructuras más pequeñas con formas agregadas, o más libres entre las unidades. Todas con formas de almacenamiento en silos relativamente medianos o pequeños. En algunos casos hay unidades para reuniones más grandes como observa Bourke[101], quien sugiere que pueden haber sido utilizadas para alimentar al ganado.

Es probable que estos espacios podrían haber servido para algún tipo de reuniones sociales, negociaciones entre los ancianos de la comunidad [102]. Algunos de estos edificios parecen haber tenido actividades de culto especializadas como en Teleilat Ghassul[103], dentro de los mismos asentamientos. Otros, como en Ein Gedi[104], quizá fueron un centro aislado de asentamientos cercanos. Del mismo modo los cementerios (ver abajo) también podrían haber sido lugar de culto y de alianzas "políticas" de los clanes y líderes más influyentes.

Modos de enterramiento

El estudio de las costumbres funerarias nos podría llevar a entender también las relaciones sociales dentro de esas comunidades, esto es a lo que llamamos "modos de enterramiento" (**Fig. 2**). En el período Neolítico precerámico, hay enterramientos debajo de las casas, que marcan claras formas de "entierros de hogar"[105]. Cuando llegamos al Calcolítico Ghassuliense las cosas cambian, hay entierros primarios dentro del sitio, "entierros de hogar", pero luego se

[98] Eisenberg *et al.* 2001: Pls. 3.7–3.8.
[99] Banning 2010: 79.
[100] Epstein 1998.
[101] Bourke 2001: 120.
[102] Banning 2010: 79.
[103] Seaton 2008.
[104] Ussishkin 1980.
[105] *E.g.* Kuijt y Goring-Morris 2002.

retiran los huesos, se los coloca en contenedores, osarios y son re-enterrados en cementerios, en las cuevas de enterramiento generales, es decir, los "entierros de la comunidad"[106].

Los últimos estudios sobre tres cementerios del Calcolítico en el Levante meridional, Peqi'in, Horvat Qarqar y Quleh-Mazor indican que los mismos no estaban adscriptos a un solo asentamiento sino a varios, cuyas distancias podían variar en varias decenas de kilómetros[107]. Esta adscripción múltiple resulta de estudios petrográficos que indicarían que osarios y utensilios de cerámica allí enterrados tendrían origen en zonas diferentes, alrededor de los cementerios secundarios. Si esto es así podríamos estar ante el hecho de que varias comunidades tendrían como punto de cultos familiares (¿y de alianzas políticas?) a dichos cementerios.

Para el BA tenemos algunos ejemplos, incluyendo Jericó[108], Bab edh Drah[109] y Assawir[110]. En Bab edh Dhra, al sudeste del mar Muerto, las tumbas EB IA son todavía secundarias. Los entierros articulados, es decir primarios, tuvieron lugar por primera vez en el BA IB en el mismo sitio. En este caso las tumbas incluyen un gran número de personas lo que fue interpretado por Chesson[111] como una ampliación de las relaciones de parentesco. Este es también el caso de algunos entierros de BA IB en Assawir, en la llanura costera central del Mediterráneo (sur de Haifa), donde fueron enterrados cientos de individuos en cuevas cerca del asentamiento[112]. El BA I es un periodo de transición al urbanismo, también desde el punto de vista de los modos de enterramiento.

En el BA II–III se desarrolló el primer urbanismo en el Levante meridional y allí podemos encontrar varias diferencias en los entierros que indican una jerarquía social en los asentamientos urbanos. Por ejemplo, en las llamadas "*charnel houses*" (tumbas con enterramientos numerosos) de Bab edh Dhra[113], están las pequeñas y las grandes. Mientras que en las primeras hay

[106] Cf. Nativ 2013, pero ver Milevski 2014.
[107]Cohen-Weinberger 2013; Milevski *et al.* 2013b; Boness 2015. Pero ver Golding-Meir y Iserlis 2013.
[108] *E.g.* Kenyon 1965: 3–32.
[109] Schaub y Rast 1989.
[110] Yannai, en prensa.
[111] Chesson 1999.
[112] Yannai, en prensa.
[113] Chesson 1999.

utensilios de uso local, las "grandes" contienen oro, faience, conchas de madre-perla, joyas, paletas de piedra y otros artículos de lujo, además de vasijas de cerámica importadas. Contienen también armas de metal y cabezas de maza, señal probable de los poderes políticos y militares. Este cementerio, como el de Jericó, muestra una división social al interior de los asentamientos urbanos nunca vista anteriormente[114].

En suma podemos definir el modo de enterramiento del Calcolítco en comparación con los anteriores y los posteriores, como una forma comunitaria de enterramiento, donde la comunidad sería la unidad que prevalece en este modo por encima de la unidad doméstica, pero que aún no ha llegado a una diferenciación social a su interior en forma evidente.

Conclusión

Las alternativas de interpretación propuestas por los autores analizados, a pesar de nuestras observaciones críticas, contienen aportes positivos que son importantes rescatar. Consideramos, como principio metodológico, que la comprensión y dilucidación de un problema como el que aquí se plantea nunca es resultado del rechazo u omisión de abordajes distintos al que proponemos, por el contrario se trata de un proceso en el cual estas diferentes perspectivas de análisis se integran a un nivel superior de síntesis que las revaloriza desde un punto de vista dialéctico e innovador.

En la concepción de una sociedad de jefatura, los indicios de especialización laboral y de jerarquización entre los sitios, especialmente en la región del valle meridional del Jordán y del Néguev septentrional, apuntan al desarrollo de un proceso de complejización social en relación al Neolítico Cerámico, incluso a las fases que algunos llaman Calcolítico temprano o medio[115]. Este aspecto es un rasgo característico del período, que no sólo determina la singularidad del sistema de asentamientos en las regiones semiáridas, sino que también guarda estrecha relación con el proceso de división social del trabajo. La especialización y la producción de un excedente constituyen los basamentos a partir de los que surgen las primeras formas de diferenciación social fundadas en el nivel de desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas.

[114] Harrison 2001.
[115] *E.g.* Garfinkel 1999.

En el caso de la visión que propone al Calcolítico como una sociedad igualitaria, no se puede negar el predominio de un sistema simbólico comunitario, centrado en aspectos como la fertilidad y la reproducción, el cual, a nuestro entender, también es posible advertir en la forma y arquitectura de los sitios de habitación así como en los modos de enterramiento. Pero esto no sería sinónimo de igualitarismo social, sino más bien del predominio de una ideología comunitaria, que es consecuencia de las formas de organización social. Esta ideología bien podría haber servido de vehículo para ciertas formas de expresión de jerarquización social, así como de freno a las mismas. Los aspectos contradictorios de esta formación económico-social refuerzan los aspectos vinculados al modo de producción comunitario-patriarcal antes señalado.

La interpretación de Bourke, si bien logra rescatar estos aspectos contradictorios, al mantenerse dentro de la aplicación de los tipos ideales, no logra superar el problema, defendiendo la coexistencia de dos élites cuyos contextos socio-económicos no resultan claros. La presencia de una contradicción al interior de las comunidades agropastoriles, resultado del incremento de las fuerzas productivas y del desarrollo de un proceso de jerarquización social, todo ello inmerso en una forma de organización aún comunitaria, son indicios que nos hablan de la existencia de una tensión al interior de la estructura social, posiblemente acentuada a finales del período. Estas contradicciones y tensiones estructurales habrían hecho del Calcolítico palestinense una época de dinamismo, propio de las etapas de transición, en el cual las formas de organización de tipo estatal aún no han surgido, pero en las que las viejas formas del comunitarismo estaban entrando en crisis.

En suma, de la evaluación general de los tres enfoques críticamente analizados es posible deducir la existencia de aspectos reales de la organización socio-económica del Calcolítico levantino. No obstante, la acentuación de un aspecto,—en cada caso dominante—no alcanza a resolver de modo cabal, integrado o totalizador, la dinámica de la formación social del período en estudio en toda su complejidad objetiva. En función de esa problemática ha sido intención de este ensayo que la propuesta aquí formulada de un modo de producción comunitario-patriarcal, a partir de un enfoque materialista histórico, aporte a la comprensión de la estructura social del Calcolítico palestinense.

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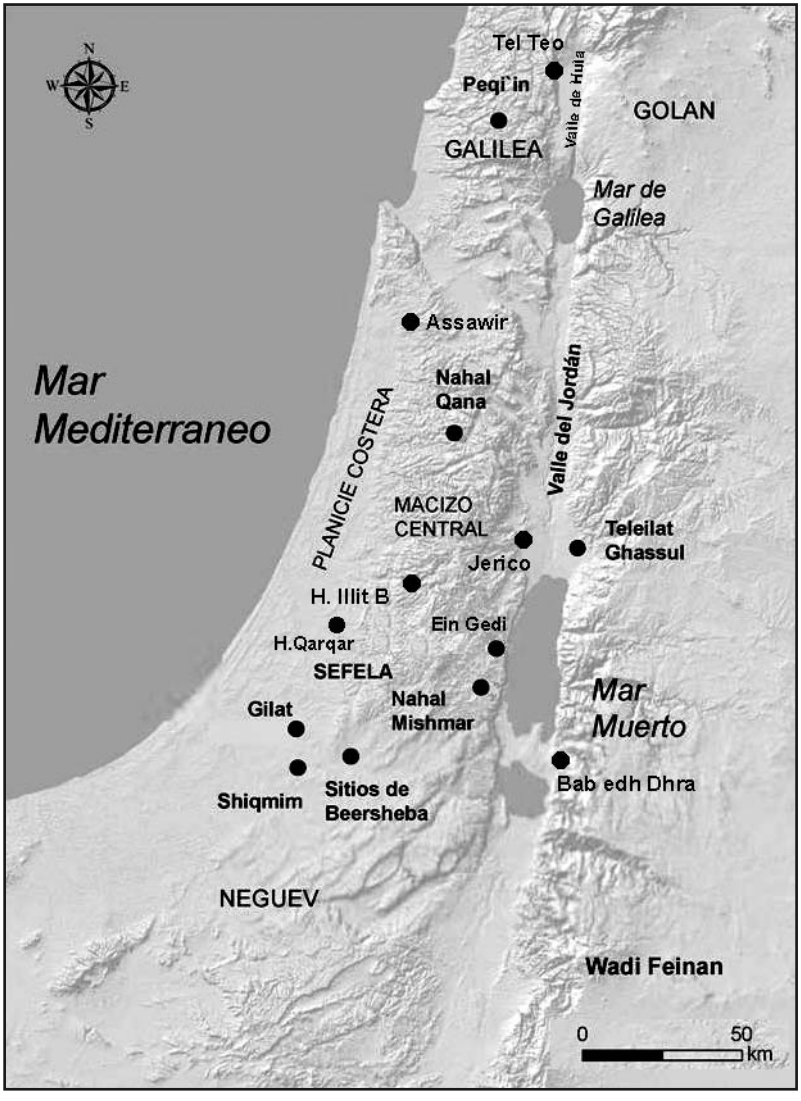

Fig. 1. Mapa con la ubicación de los sitios y zonas mencionados en el texto.

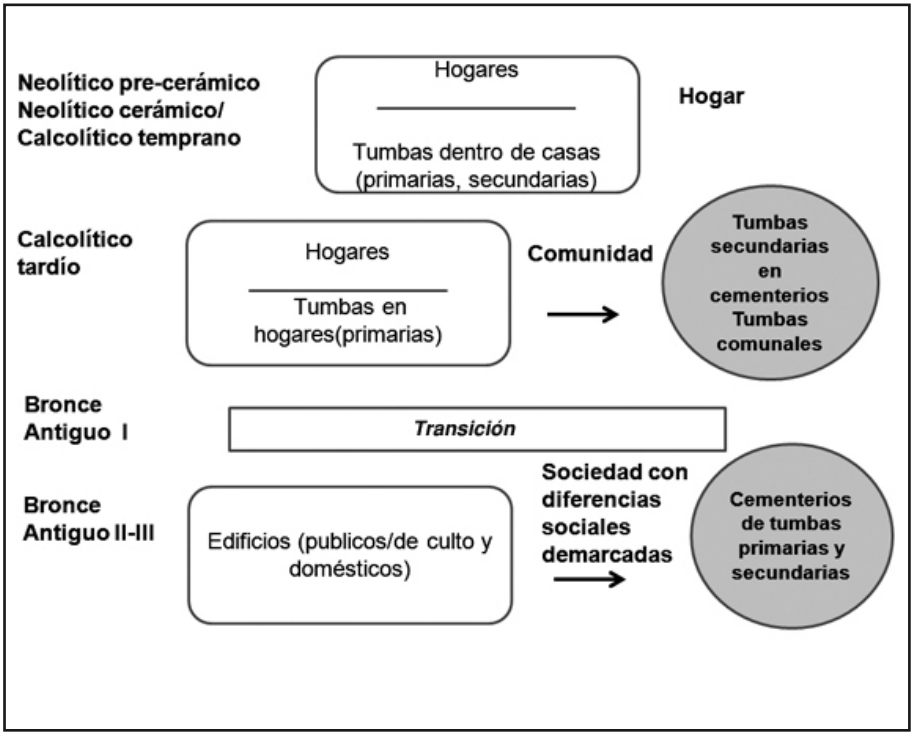

Fig. 2. Modos de enterramiento y relaciones sociales del Levante meridional durante la prehistoria tardía.

"The Self-Destruction of Diversity": A Tale of the Last Days in Judah's Negev Towns

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Summary: "The Self-Destruction of Diversity": A Tale of the Last Days in Judah's Negev Towns

The prosperous settlement system that developed in the Negev desert frontier towards the late Iron Age was characterized by the presence of various ethnic groups, including permanently settled and nomadic elements—most of whom took part in the long-distance Arabian trade. This multicultural reality experienced by Judeans, Edomites and Arabs is reflected in the rich archaeological and paleographical assemblages uncovered in Negev towns, attesting to diverse stylistic traditions. Alas, the flourishing urban system came to an abrupt end—marked by heavy destruction layers and abandonment patterns—which altered the region's settlement system and subsistence economy for many years to come. Traditionally scholars have suggested that one of two malefactors brought about this violent end: the Babylonian empire or the Edomite kingdom—that is, external forces. A renewed study of late Iron Age IIc material culture from Negev sites has identified a third possibility. According to this reconstruction, following the decline of the Assyrian empire, Iron Age II Negev society experienced increasing socio-ethnic tension between local semi-nomads of an Edomite orientation on the one hand and on the other Judean sedentary groups. This escalating conflict eventually led to the inevitable collapse of a delicate symbiosis which had flourished in the region for over a century.

Keywords: Desert frontier – Edomite – Multicultural – Semi-nomads

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Resumen: "La autodestrucción de la diversidad": Una historia de los últimos días en las ciudades del Negev de Judá

El sistema próspero de asentamientos que se desarrolló en la frontera del desierto del Negev hacia fines de la Edad de Hierro se caracterizó por la presencia de varios grupos étnicos, incluyendo asentamientos permanentes y elementos nomádicos—muchos de los cuales participaron del comercio arábigo de larga distancia. Esta realidad multicultural experimentada por judaítas, edomitas y árabes está reflejada en los ricos conjuntos arqueológicos y paleográficos descubiertos en las ciudades del Negev, atestiguando las diversas tradiciones estilísticas. Por desgracia, el floreciente sistema urbano llegó a un abrupto fin—marcado por una fuerte destrucción de estratos y patrones de abandono—el cual alteró el sistema de asentamientos de la región y la economía de subsistencia durante muchos años. Tradicionalmente, los investigadores han sugerido que uno de dos villanos ocasionó este violento fin: el imperio babilónico o el reino edomita—esto es, fuerzas externas. Un estudio renovado de la cultura material de finales de la Edad de Hierro IIc identifica una tercera posibilidad. De acuerdo con esta reconstrucción, siguiendo el declive del imperio asirio, la sociedad de la Edad de Hierro II del Negev experimentó un incremento en la tensión socio-étnica entre grupos semi-nómades de orientación edomita por un lado y, por el otro, grupos sedentarios judaítas. Este conflicto ascendente llegó eventualmente al colapso inevitable de una delicada simbiosis que había florecido en la región por más de un siglo.

Palabras Claves: Frontera del desierto – Edomita – Multicultural – Semi-nómades

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of social relations within towns—ancient and modern alike—is a matter of a continuous discourse.[1] While the ancients often thought of their cities as oases of civilized life in a wild and chaotic landscape,[2] conflicting forces were also at work in urban settings, influencing and shaping the reality of town residents. The tension that existed between constructive and de-constructive elements in towns provides one example of these conflicting forces. As much as the values and interests of a city's inhabitants contributed to its development and prosperity, the very same ideals could eventually lead to its ultimate destruction. The history of the southern Levantine desert frontier—the biblical "Negev" of the late Iron Age (mid eighth-early sixth centuries BCE)—presents a good case study for this sort of counteraction.

[1] Simmel 1964; Sjoberg 1965; Park 1967; Faust 2003.
[2] Van de Mieroop 1997: 44–46; Portugali 2000: 65, 335.

The late Iron Age saw the development of the Negev desert frontier's first prosperous settlement system, incorporating urban centers, fortresses, small settlements and an administrative center (**Fig. 1**). While this flourishing settlement system has been extensively discussed in the archaeological and historical literature,[3] recent studies have highlighted the role of internal social processes as prime movers behind cultural changes in the desert frontier, and of the local inhabitants as active agents in shaping their socio-political environment.[4]

The early sixth century BCE brought major cultural change to the Negev, marking the end of the Iron Age. This change was manifested archaeologically by heavy destruction layers at most excavated sites, followed by widespread evidence of abandonment and desertion that changed settlement and subsistence patterns in the region for centuries.[5] While most scholars have maintained that external factors were responsible for the destruction of Negev sites, recent archaeological evidence and developments in our understanding of Negev society and politics during the late Iron Age have given rise to other explanations.

This paper seeks to examine the potential contribution of archaeological evidence from Negev sites to such an alternative socio-historical reconstruction of the Iron Age II desert frontier in its last days. In broader terms, this study aims to explore the self-destructive potential of ancient urban forms, the role that internal social forces played in the collapse of ancient systems and the ways in which these mechanisms are expressed through the archaeological record.

For this purpose, IAIIb-c Negev settlement system will be presented along the geopolitical background for its development. Sedentary-tribal relations in the IAII southern desert frontier will be analyzed with an emphasis on the special role that semi-nomadic groups with Edomite orientation played in the region at the eve of the destruction. The archaeological description of the settlement system destruction will be followed by the two currently dominating

[3] See discussion and previous literature in Thareani 2010a: 28–32.

[4] Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; Tebes 2007; Whiting 2007; Thareani 2008; 2009; 2010b; Singer-Avitz 2011.

[5] *E.g.* Tel 'Ira Stratum VI (Beit-Arieh 1999: 176–177); Tel Arad Strata VII–VI (Herzog 2002: 40–49); Tel Malhata Stratum III (Beit-Arieh 1998: 34–35); Tel 'Aroer Stratum IIb (Thareani 2011: 307); Horvat 'Uza Stratum III (Beit-Arieh 2007: 23–24, 53); Horvat Radum (Beit-Arieh 2007: 306–310); Horvat Qitmit (Beit-Arieh 1995: 12).

explanations and by their critical view. These will provide the basis for a new understanding of the identity of the demolishers of the IAII Negev settlement system.

THE NEGEV URBAN SYSTEM IN THE LATE IRON AGE

The transition to the eighth century BCE (Iron Age IIb) brought a dramatic change in the status of the desert frontier as the region became part of the kingdom of Judah and was integrated into the long-distance trade network with Arabia. The importance of land-based trade during this period, the Negev's location at the edge of the settled region, with Judah to the north, Edom to the east, the Philistine coast and the ports to the west, Egypt and the nomads to the south contributed to and intensified the Negev's status as a buffer zone between distinct social and political entities. However, this major transition in the role of the Negev desert frontier was also largely due to changing geopolitical circumstances—namely, the approach of the most influential political power of all: the Neo-Assyrian empire. The arrival of the Neo-Assyrian empire into the southern Levantine arena entirely altered the political situation and deeply influenced foreign policy and internal affairs of the newly-subordinated southern Levantine kingdoms. The reduction in conflict between Judah and its neighbors brought relative peace and political stability, and stimulated the development of flourishing settlement systems and long-distance trade networks from as early as the mid-eighth century BCE.[6]

Of the fifty late Iron Age Negev sites documented in surveys and excavations, ten are large (more than 10 dunams). Some of these were political and economic centers.[7] Five are classified as forts.[8] One, Tel Beersheba, was an administrative center.[9] Another forty small, unfortified sites in the region were also founded.[10]

[6] Otzen 1979: 255–256; Na'aman 1995: 113.
[7] Tel 'Ira (Beit-Arieh 1999), Tel Malhata (Beit-Arieh 1998), Tel 'Aroer (Thareani 2011) and Bir es-Seba' (Gofhna and Israeli 1973; Panitz-Cohen 2005).
[8] Horvat Radum (Beit-Arieh 2007), Horvat 'Uza (Beit-Arieh 2007), Tel Arad (Herzog 2002; Singer-Avitz 2002), Horvat 'Anim (Kochavi 1972: 82, site 250; Cohen 1995: 118) and Horvat Tov (Cohen 1995: 116).
[9] Aharoni 1973; Singer-Avitz 1999.
[10] Thareani-Sussely 2007a: 73; and see the exceptional compound at Horvat Qitmit: Beit-Arieh 1995.

While the imperial control strategy exercised by the Assyrians in northern Palestine and along the Coastal Plain was direct and accompanied by typical Assyrian architecture and other material culture manifestations,[11] Assyrian presence in the Negev desert frontier was limited to indirect rule through the subordinated client kingdom of Judah.[12] This is indicated in the archaeological record of Iron Age II Negev sites by such evidence as traditional architecture and typical Judean ceramic repertoires, as well as the Judean weight system, script and names.[13] While the Negev settlement system mostly preserved its local character, the imperial presence in the rest of the southern Levant had a significant positive effect on the sense of safety and economic prosperity, parts of which region had never before been permanently settled. Under imperial patronage, client kingdoms such as Judah could develop large hierarchic settlement systems incorporating several urban centers such as fortresses, administrative centers and satellite sites in the economic hinterland.

A valuable tool for our understanding of the economic and political role of the Iron Age II Negev system are the faunal assemblages of Negev sites, which from the eighth century on show a steady increase in the number of camel bones, mostly dromedaries (*Camelus dromedaries*).[14] Thus far camel bones have been identified at Tel 'Ira, Tel 'Aroer, Tel Beersheba and at western Negev sites such as Tel Jemmeh.[15]

During the eighth and seventh centuries BCE the Negev also saw the first appearance of trade-related objects and Assyrian imported goods such as (**Fig. 2**): animal-shaped weights; ceramic vessels imitating Assyrian metal bowls and bottles; Assyrian glass cup; and cylinder seals; *ostraca* bearing Arabian signs; a seal containing an Arabian name; and small limestone altars.

The appearance of the camel (the breeding conditions and maintenance of which are expensive), as well as imported goods from Assyria, Arabian script and foreign names at Negev sites should all be interpreted in the context of the Negev settlements' integration into the framework of the long-distance Arabian trade.[16]

[11] See for example the plan of Stratum III at Megiddo (Peersmann 2000) and thevaulted mudbrick structure at Tel Jemmeh (Ben Shlomo and Van Beek 2014).
[12] I prefer to use theterm "client kingdom" instead of the common term "vassal kingdom." For its adoption in the study of the Assyrian world see Postgate 1992: 204–207.
[13] Stern 2001: 151–163.
[14] Jasmin 2006: 147; Motro 2011: 268, 276–277, Table 3.60.
[15] Wapnish 1981; 1984; Dayan 1999: 480–487; Kolska-Horwits 1999: 488–494; Jasmin 2006: 147; Motro 2011: 268, 276–277, Table 3.60.
[16] Finkelstein 1992: 161–162; Singer-Avitz 1999: 55–58; Thareani-Sussely 2007a: 138–139.

A *longue durée* view of the Negev shows that establishment of new urban centers in the region has often been accompanied by the arrival of persons involved in trade (tribal elites, traders, tax collectors, caravaneers and the like) who have taken an active role in the organization and maintenance of the trade network. In such periods of economic florescence, trade-related institutions and services have emerged within and outside Negev towns. These have included trade quarters such as the extramural neighborhood at Iron Age IIb-c ʻAroer,[17] commercial centers such as the store avenue in Nabataean-Roman Mampsis,[18] the Ottoman Bedouin market at Beersheba[19] and caravansaries such as the Iron Age IIb-c caravanserai at ʻAroer and Nabataean Mampsis.[20] These institutions provided food and shelter to the trade caravans that passed through the Negev and enabled the concentration of products and goods in towns, selling or transporting them onwards to Judah, Egypt, Transjordan or the coastal ports.

Having outlined the settlement pattern of the late Iron Age Negev, another important aspect of social life in the region requiring attention is the interaction between the sedentary and nomadic systems.

SEDENTARY-TRIBAL RELATIONS IN IRON AGE II NEGEV TOWNS

The important position of semi-nomadic societies in frontier areas in general and in the Negev desert in particular has been extensively explored. Early discussion of the term "nomad" was affected by diverse biased imaginary views that saw nomads either as independent stateless entities existing outside the civilized world or as barbaric groups swaying from the desert the helpless inhabitants of the settled land.[21]

According to this view, nomadic groups concentrate in arid zones that are not suited to agricultural processing. Nomads focus on animal husbandry; they live in autonomous groups, operating an autarchic economy reliant on

[17] Thareani 2008.
[18] Negev 1988: 163–167.
[19] Ben-David 1990: 191.
[20] Thareani-Sussely 2007b; Negev 1988: 191–194.
[21] Szuchman 2009: 2; and see, for example, the ideology which underlays perception and presentation of nomads by historians and geographers of the ancient Mediterranean, and the way this attitude influenced the perception of nomadism in modern western thought (Shaw 1982–1983).

animal products and bereft of sedentary population contacts. Nomads are hostile to central authority and wait for windows of opportunity when they can take advantage of its weakness and attack.[22]

From the 1960s on, many studies have emphasized the economic aspects of pastoral nomadism, arguing that pastoral nomadism is an economic adaptation in which mobility is a by-product of a specialized economy. Economic necessity was held responsible for close reciprocal relationships between nomadic and sedentary populations in a way that distinction between the two communities is not always possible.[23] The Near Eastern pastoral nomadism was multi-resourced, that is an economic adaptation depending upon diverse resources such as small-scale cultivation, trade, crafts, raiding etc. Pastoral nomads operate along a continuum of economic and social activities. Under certain socio-political conditions[24] semi-nomads may maintain symbiotic relations with the sedentary system and even settle in urban environments, whereas in times of trouble and distress[25] even permanent settled populations can adapt their subsistence patterns and become nomads.[26]

With these understandings in mind, scholars agree that nomads can become city dwellers without this interfering their nomadic identity and tribal kin while the nomadic identity is being kept even in the context of residential stability.[27] Settled nomads are identified as members of a tribe. Past theories, such as that of Sahlins[28] and Service,[29] have seen the tribe as a segmented organization integrated through mechanisms of lineage and other forms of organizational solidarity. It is now realized that the tribe is a flexible, adaptive and highly variable entity involving communal decision making and exercising several forms of political authority. Therefore, tribes may exhibit urban features and political hierarchies, while still remaining in some sense, tribal.[30]

Prominent in this context is the settlement of members of the tribal elite, who function as mediators between the tribe and the town. This becomes possible when elite members receive political power[31] or become land owners,

[22] Musil 1928; Reifenberg 1955; Barth 1961; Patai 1971.
[23] Marx 1984; Khazanov 1994.
[24] *E.g.* strong central authority, development of long-distance trade, etc.
[25] *E.g.* threat or collapse of central authority.
[26] Barth 1961: 93–100; Rowton 1974; Marx 1984; 1992: 256–258; Khazanov 1994: 202–212.
[27] Rowton 1973: 201; Szuchman 2014: 3.
[28] Sahlins1961; 1968.
[29] Service1971.
[30] Szuchman 2014: 4–5, with further reading.
[31] *E.g.* when the tribe leader becomes the town's governor.

military officers or administrators. Consequently, part of the tribe continues to practice semi-nomadism while others settle.[32] In this way, elite groups in both communities, the sedentary and the semi-nomadic, become leaders in towns by directing the value systems of their origin group, functioning as bridges between the two communities and gaining an economic power that often becomes political.[33] This behavioral pattern is also evident in the *longue durée* of the southern Levantine desert frontier.[34]

In light of this review, any study of socio-political change in the history of the Negev desert frontier will have to take into account the nomadic, tribal, kingdom and imperial aspects into consideration in order to build a comprehensive picture of the diverse elements that generated and affected this change.

THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF IRON AGE II NEGEV TOWNS

The crucial role that the Negev played in the Arabian trade network determined its function as a node of interaction and had a direct influence on the social fabric of its towns and fortresses, which included people of various ethnic origins and social classes. The historical records and the archaeological finds from Negev sites reflect three main social groups who resided in the region during the Iron Age IIb-c: Judeans, Arabs and the so-called "Edomites."

Evidence for Judean presence at Negev sites includes the appearance of Judean weight system, Judean names and script, Judean pillar figurines and a massive amount of ceramics which are doubtless Judean.[35] The architectural layout of Negev sites is also similar to those of other Judean regions. The impression is that Judeans were the largest and most influential social group in the Iron Age II Negev. Moreover, the fact that the 35 settlements of the Negev are included in the list of towns of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:21–32) supports the claim that the area was included within the southern territory of the Judean kingdom by the seventh century BCE—the time that text was composed.[36]

[32] Rowton 1976: 244–246; Marx 1992: 258; Khazanov 1994: 212–221.
[33] Ahmed 1973: 76.
[34] For the archaeological and historical reflection of this imperial strategy see Thareani 2009.
[35] The same repertoire is typical of unequivocally Judean sites at the end of the Iron Age, such as Jerusalem, Lachish and 'En Gedi (Stern 2001: 151–163).
[36] Alt 1925; Na'aman 2005: 345–347.

A much less evident social factor in the Iron Age Negev—at least as far as is reflected in the archaeological record to date—is the Arabian element. Various Arabian inscriptions and objects from several IAIIb-c Negev and some other Judean sites illustrate a commercial activity that is usually associated with the long-distance Arabian trade from as early as the eighth century BCE (see discussion above on p. 189).

Pottery sherds bearing Arabian signs have been traced at Tel Jemmeh, Tell el-Kheleifeh, Tel 'Aroer, Tel Beersheba and the City of David.[37] In addition, Negev sites such as Tel Beersheba and Hazeva have yielded several stone seals bearing Arabian signs or names (**Fig. 3**).[38] Some of these seals are of local manufacture: the Arabian seal from Beersheba was carved from local stone.[39] Arabian signs from 'Aroer and the City of David have also been shown to be local Judean products.[40] The appearance of local seals bearing Arabian names and signs on local Judean vessels supports the impression that Arabian merchants settled in Judean centers and managed their business affairs from there. These people may have presaged the massive Arabian presence in the Negev from the Persian period onwards.[41]

Apart from the Judean and Arabian presence, another social element that is most relevant to our discussion is the so-called "Edomite" group. The appearance of the "Edomites" in the Iron Age IIb-c Negev is often associated in the scholarly literature with a group of pottery vessels identifiable by their light-colored fabric and characteristic forms.[42] This pottery is known mainly from Edomite sites in Transjordan but is also found in smaller quantities at Iron Age IIb-c Negev, Arava and Sinai sites.[43]

[37] Ryckmans 1939; Shiloh 1987: 289, Fig. 1:3, 4; Singer-Avitz 1999: 50–52; Thareani 2011: 206–207, 228, 304–305; van der Veen and Bron 2014: 203–226 .
[38] Singer-Avitz 1999: 50–52; Naveh 2001: 197–198.
[39] Singer-Avitz 1999: 50–52.
[40] Shiloh 1987: 292; Thareani 2011: 228.
[41] Eph'al 1982: 197–200.
[42] Initially, the distinctive style in which some of these vessels were painted was called "Edomite" (Glueck 1934–1935: 124–137). In the 1990s it was suggested to rename it "Busayra Painted Ware" after the site where it was most commonly found (Bienkowski 1992: 7; Thareani 2010b; Tebes 2011b).
[43] Sites as: Tel 'Aroer (Thareani 2011: 120–157), Horvath Qitmit (Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995: Figs. 4.2: 17; 4.4: 11; 4.14: 12; 4.17: 37; 4.23), Tel Beersheba (Singer-Avitz 2004; 2014), Tel Malhata (L. Freud, pers. comm.), Tel 'Ira (Freud 1999: 194, Figs. 6.83:5; 6.90:4, 16), Tell el-Khleifeh (Pratico 1993: 47, Pl. 37–8–12), Kadesh Barnea (Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 168–70, figs. 11.74–11.77) and 'En Hazeva (Cohen 1993: 593).

The "Edomite" ware (**Fig. 4**) includes undecorated vessels alongside vessels that are decorated in a distinctive style.[44] Although this style is often regarded as a foreign influence of a Transjordanian origin, petrographic analyses have well established that the "Edomite" assemblage is mostly produced locally.[45] One should add to this the handmade and wheelmade "Edomite" cooking pots, some of which were imported from the Edomite plateau and southeastern Negev. "Edomite" cooking pots were unearthed at Tel Malhata, Kadesh Barnea and at 'Aroer where they were found together with pig bones bearing butcher marks.[46]

While pig bones are considered foreign to Iron Age II archaeozoological Judean assemblages,[47] their presence—with cut marks, and in association with imported Edomite cooking pots—in the southernmost Judean town implies that this forbidden animal was consumed by people who were ethnically distinct from Judeans.[48]

Nonetheless, the ceramic and faunal evidence do not stand alone; they are supported by a unique array of finds from the cultic site of Horvat Qitmit and elsewhere which have parallels in artifacts from sites along the Edomite Plateau.[49] The paleographic evidence from Horvat Qitmit is of the same typological group as lapidary inscriptions from seventh-early sixth centuries BCE Transjordan.[50] The name *qos*—after the Edomite god—appears in a cultic context at Horvat Qitmit and in an administrative context at Arad.[51] A *qosa* seal has been found at 'Aroer.[52] Another seal, bearing the Edomite inscription *lmsqt ben wehazam*, comes from Hazeva.[53] The Edomite-oriented names *'aznael* and *danael* were in use at Tel Malhata.[54] The Edomite ostracon from Horvat 'Uza, on which an Edomite grain transport to the fortress is document-

[44] Whiting 2007; Thareani 2010b.
[45] Iserlis and Thareani 2011: 179–187, with previous literature.
[46] Bernick-Greenberg 2007a: 192–193; Thareani 2011: 184–185; Motro 2011: 278; Freud 2014: 285–286.
[47] Hesse 1990: 197–198; Sapir-Hen *et al.* 2013: 9–11, 13, Table 1.
[48] Motro 2011: 278; Thareani 2011: 304–305.
[49] Beck 1995: 186–187; 1996; Beit-Arieh 1995: 261–262, 264–267, 303–305.
[50] For comparative analysis see Beit-Arieh 1995: 266, Fig. 5.8.
[51] Aharoni 1981: 26; Beit-Arieh 1995: 267.
[52] Avigad and Sass 2011.
[53] Naveh 2001: 197–198.
[54] Kochavi 1993: 936.

ed, is yet another indication of the presence of people bearing an ethnic "Edomite" orientation that resided in the Negev desert frontier.[55] This collection of paleographic evidence is important for our understanding of the "Edomite" ceramic group.

Scholars have disputed the origin and nature of these Edomite settlers. The traditional position has been that Edomites arrived in the Negev as intruders from the east. According to this view the Edomites crossed the Wadi Arabah and conquered the Judean Negev.[56] This image of Edomites invading the Negev from the east is founded upon a general assumption that relationships between Judeans and Edomites during the Iron Age were mostly hostile in nature—an assumption deeply-rooted in anthropological and biblical studies.

From the anthropological perspective, the late 19th and early 20th centuries were dominated by a hypothesis (see p. 190–191 above) that posited a perpetual hostility and friction between sedentary and nomadic populations. From the biblical point of view, this argument relied upon the negative image of Edom as reflected in several prophetic sources (see p. 199 below).

Contrasting with these viewpoints is that which holds that Edomite-Judean relations were more complex. According to this view the strong archaeological evidence reflects co-existence rather than hostility, and that the wide range of "Edomite" material culture supports the notion that its geographical distribution has no connection with the modern concept of ethnicity or with the borders of the Iron Age II Edomite kingdom; the border status of Wadi Arabah is merely a modern bias.

On this background it was suggested that the Negev frontier was inhabited by local semi-nomadic tribes of some sort of Edomite orientation who benefited from the long-distance trade on the one hand, and on the other conducted random raids.[57] The military *ostracon* from 'Uza implies that local "Edomite" mercenaries served in Iron Age II Judean fortresses, alongside local "Edomite" tribes who settled in Judean towns (see note 55 below).

This substantial collection of archaeological evidence, especially the appearance of Edomite material culture in clear Judean contexts, suggests that autochthonic semi-nomadic groups of an Edomite orientation that had once been nomads in the Iron Age II Negev desert frontier settled in Judean towns and held symbiotic relations with the Judean population.

[55] Beit-Arieh 2007: 332–335; Na'aman 2012: 214–216, 225.
[56] Beit-Arieh 1996; Bienkowski and Galor 2006.
[57] Finkelstein 1992: 158–159; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 37–39.

Against this background, it is likely that the inhabitants of the late Iron Age Negev originated from different ethnic groups—Judeans, Arabs and Edomites—and various social classes—merchants, administrators, soldiers' families, local tribal groups, etc.—comprising a multi-cultural desert frontier society in which diverse traditions co-existed as elements of a single social community.

Neo-Assyrian imperial rule, overseeing semi-autonomous communities, stimulated the creation and development of such multi-cultural societies. Although Assyria did not control the Negev directly, the Assyrians used local proxies (Judean and local tribal elites) as agents of their economic and political interests, a policy that is well attested in the material culture and textual data from Assyria and other pre-industrial empires.[58]

Given the clear Assyrian interest in Arabian trade, all subject cultures of the Negev—the dominant Judean community, the local semi-nomadic tribes, the Arab-oriented population and others—had no choice but to co-exist with each other. Imperial interests far stronger than those of Judah forced the southern kingdom to practice a tolerant socio-political strategy. The archaeological evidence supports the impression that under imperial patronage different cultural groups demonstrated relative tolerance in their daily life.

Negev towns constituted a delicate social organism. Equilibrium between the empire whose spirit hovered over the region, local semi-nomadic groups, a sedentary system and a subordinated kingdom—all contributed to the prosperity of the Iron Age II desert frontier.

WHO SHUT UP THE CITIES OF THE SOUTH?

The thriving Iron Age II Negev settlement system came to an abrupt end. Destruction layers have been found in most of the central sites and fortresses; in some cases patterns of abandonment have been detected. At Tel 'Ira, Stratum VI yielded evidence for conflagration. Collapsed stones, ash remains and broken vessels were discerned in several rooms of Area C, probably indicating the collapse of a second storey. A thick destruction layer was also unearthed in Area L, especially in a building adjacent to the city wall; floors were thickly covered with debris in which were found storejars, kraters and burnt wooden beams. A group of juglets was found above the collapsed stones, most likely having fallen from the shelves of an upper storey.

[58] Thareani 2009 with references.

Evidence for a conflagration was also attested in one of the casemate rooms of Area E, where a skeleton was detected in an ash layer.[59]

Stratum IIb at Tel 'Aroer also came to a violent end. A conflagration layer 0.3–0.7 m thick sealing its remains was detected in most of the excavated areas: in the caravanserai of Area A; in the intramural town; and in buildings abutting the exterior of the city wall. This destruction layer included fallen stones, burnt mudbricks and ash which buried assemblages typical of late seventh-early sixth century BCE Judah.[60] A total of 101 complete vessels dating to the last phase of the Iron Age II occupation at 'Aroer were retrieved from Stratum IIb, supporting the violent end of what used to be a thriving trade town. In one case, in the extramural road station of Area C on the bank of Nahal 'Aroer, a pattern of abandonment was detected, implying a convergence of population around town in times of warfare.[61]

Preliminary results from the excavation of Tel Malhata have indicated a fierce conflagration of Stratum III that dates to the same time of Stratum IIb at 'Aroer. Burnt cedar beams and many smashed vessels were found on the floors of two large mudbrick structures. Thick mudbrick debris (up to 1.5 m in depth) appeared to have fallen from the second floors of buildings and from the upper sections of fortifications.[62]

The evidence from the Negev fortresses is equally telling. At Tel Arad, the most important Judean administrative and military center in seventh century BCE Negev, Strata VII–VI were destroyed in a fire.[63] Conflagration remains from this phase include Eliashib's Archive, which is vital to our understanding of affairs in the region at this crucial.

Not far from Arad, Horvat 'Uza suffered a similar fate. Signs of conflagration were discerned throughout the area of the fortress gate, where collapsed stones of the Iron Age walls and burnt cedar beams—perhaps door remains—were found on the surface. Smashed pottery and *ostraca* were recovered from a small adjacent room and in the gate passageway itself.[64] The fortress interi-

[59] Ayalon 1999: 45–49; Beit-Arieh 1999: 176–177; Biran 1999: 115; Finkelstein and Beit-Arieh 1999: 76; Fig. 3.66.
[60] Thareani 2011: 25–33, 49–55, 107–108, 111–112, fig. 2.29.
[61] Thareani 2011: Table 3.6, 66–67.
[62] Beit-Arieh 1998: 34–35.
[63] Aharoni 1981: 150; Herzog 2002: 102. Strata VII–VI at Arad are referred here as one stratigraphic horizon contrary to the excavators' opinion (Aharoni 1981: 8, 149; Herzog 2002: 40–49) and in light of subsequent stratigraphic, ceramic and paleographic analyses (Mazar and Netzer 1986: 90; Zimhoni 1997: 204–205).
[64] Beit-Arieh 2007: 23–24.

or—mainly the western section—included empty rooms with few if any Iron Age II finds. This dearth may be explained by an ashy dump at the western end of the site, containing much Iron Age II pottery—the result of Hellenistic-period clearance work.[65] Although evidence for the Iron Age II destruction at Horvat 'Uza is thus far limited to the fortification area, it seems reasonable to assume that the entire fortress experienced a violent destruction by the end of the period.

The fate of Horvat Radum, 'Uza's smaller neighbor to the south, was somewhat different. Only a few sherds and several Hebrew *ostraca* were detected on the surface of the gateway and inner rooms of the fortress. A layer of ash covered a whole side of one room.[66] In light of the absence of settlement at Radum in later periods it seems safe to assume that the site was abandoned by its inhabitants towards the final stage of the Iron Age IIc—in the excavator's words, "due to threatened or actual enemy attack."[67]

Finally, the single-period shrine at Horvat Qitmit ended its relatively short life in a conflagration. A ca. 20 cm-thick layer of ash mixed with sherds and animal bones was uncovered in the rooms.[68]

Archaeologists, historians and biblical scholars have debated the question of when the Negev desert ceased to be part of the kingdom of Judah. One school of thought has dated the destruction of Negev towns to the Babylonian campaign of 598 BCE. Alt argued that the Negev had already been cut off from the Judean kingdom in 598/7 BCE, in a punitive campaign carried out by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.[69] His view was supported by Noth, Welten, Bartlett and Dykehouse.[70]

Another view, held by most scholars, attributes the conquest and destruction of the Negev to the year 587 BCE, contemporary with the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.[71] Lipschits has claimed that Negev towns fell

[65] Beit-Arieh 2007: 53.
[66] Beit-Arieh 2007: 306–310.
[67] Beit-Arieh 2007: 314.
[68] Beit-Arieh 1995: 12.
[69] Alt 1925: 108.
[70] Noth 1958: 283–284; Welten 1969: 166; Bartlett 1982: 23; 1989: 149–150; Dykehouse 2013.
[71] Kochavi 1970: 23; Biran and Cohen 1981: 272; Beit-Arieh 1985: 20, 25; 1986: 33, 35; Na'aman 1987: 15. Based on the ascription of two occupation layers at Arad to the seventh century BCE, Rainey (1987: 23–24) dated the destruction of Stratum VII at that fortress to the Babylonian campaign of 598 BCE and that of Stratum VI to the 587 BCE campaign, prior to the conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. This view, however, has remained a minority one.

one after another following the Babylonian campaign and the destruction of Jerusalem.[72]

Several candidates have been put forward by historians and archaeologists as possible destroyers of the Negev settlement system. According to the traditional view it was the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar who razed the Negev.[73] It was to this time that Alt attributed Jeremiah's lamenting prophecy:

> *Say thou unto the king and to the queen-mother:*
> *'Sit ye down low;*
> *For your headtires are come down,*
> *Even your beautiful crown.'*
> *The cities of the South are shut up,*
> *And there is none to open them;*
> *Judah is carried away captive, all of it;*
> *It is wholly carried away captive.*
> (Jeremiah 13:18–19)

While some scholars consider the biblical text as proof of a complete or near-complete obliteration of early sixth century BCE Judean towns,[74] others have suggested that the literary evidence is a creation of the post-exilic Judaeo-Babylonian immigrant community that does not reflect historical reality.[75]

On the other hand, the antagonistic mention of Edom in prophetic and other biblical books[76] have contributed significantly to the more common view that relations between Edom and Judah were always hostile in nature and that the Edomites should be held responsible for the destruction of the Negev towns.[77]

This argument has further support in paleographic evidence provided by Ostracon 24 from Arad, which contains an order to Eliashib, the commander of the fortress, to send reinforcements from Arad and from Qinah to Elisha son of Jeremiah, the commander of the garrison at Ramat-Negeb, in anticipation of attack there. Much emphasis is placed on warnings:

[72] Lipschits 2005: 144–146, 181–182.
[73] Alt 1925: 108; Noth 1958: 283–284; Welten 1969: 166; Bartlett 1982: 23; 1989: 149–150.
[74] Albright 1949: 142; Stern 2001: 304–331.
[75] Blenkinsopp 2002: 177–178; Tebes 2011a, and see a rejoinder in Stern 2004.
[76] Ezekiel 35: 1–36; Psalms 137; and especially Obadiah 11–14, where Edom is singled out.
[77] Mazar 1963: 5–6; Myers 1971: 390–392; Lemaire 1977: 192–193; Aharoni 1982: 278–279; Kletter 1995: 24.

> *From Arad 50 and from Kin[ah]...*
> *and you shall send them to Ramat-Negeb by the hand of Malkiyahu the son of Qerab'ur and he shall hand them over to Elisha' the son of Yirmiyahu in Ramat-Negeb, lest anything should happen to the city. And the word of the king is incumbent upon you for your very life! Behold, I have sent to warn you today: [Get] the men to Elisha': lest Edom should come there.*[78]

Some scholars have taken the Edomite ostracon from Horvat 'Uza together with Ostracon 24 from Arad as an indication that there was a temporary Edomite conquest of the Judean fortresses prior to their final fall.[79] However, this argument is not supported by the evidence from Negev sites where only one major destruction horizon is detected. The presence of a military *ostracon* written in a foreign language should not necessarily be taken as indicative of foreign military conquest. Rather, this could reflect Judah's hiring of mercenaries of various origins to man its forts—a common practice during the Iron Age II.[80] Moreover, the picture drawn from the *ostraca* presents Judean-dominated fortresses hosting groups of diverse ethnic origin, some of whom were local semi-nomads who resided in the desert frontier and were integrated in the administration and maintenance of Iron Age II Negev forts. The Arad *ostraca*, for example, mention that the men stationed in the fortresses included elite troops of Kittim (*ktym*), most likely of Aegean origin.[81]Na'aman has argued that the Kittim were hired by the Judean king and sent to the Negev fortresses in advance of an expected Edomite attack.[82]

In a historical critique of the hostile description of Edom in the book of Obadiah, E. Ben-Zvi has argued that Edom was selected in order to contrast its traditional "brotherhood" with Israel against the deep-rooted historical hatred that existed towards Edom in post-monarchic Judah.[83] More recently, Guillaume has called for a new reading of Arad Ostraca 24 and 40, arguing that far from being warnings of an Edomite threat, their subject are quarrels over grazing rights and their date should be lowered to the Babylonian era.[84]

[78] Aharoni 1981: 46–49.
[79] Aharoni 1981: 150; Blenkinsopp 2002: 186; Beit-Arieh 2007: 332–335.
[80] Na'aman 2012: 225.
[81] Aharoni 1981: 12–13; Fantalkin 2001: 140–142.
[82] Na'aman 2011: 83.
[83] Ben-Zvi 1996: 230–246.
[84] Guillaume 2013.

To sum up, the traditional scholarly views concerning the role played by both the Babylonian empire and the Edomite kingdom as the destroyers of Judah's southern frontier relies upon literary evidence the chronology and meaning of which are doubtful. I thus believe that archaeology can shed new light on the old question of the Iron Age II Negev system destroyers' identity.

New Framework – New Candidates?

The crucial role of the "Edomite" ethnic group in the socio-political history of Negev towns is reflected in the archaeological and paleographical record: the so-called "Edomite" vessels, some of which are decorated in a distinctive style; locally-made and imported cooking pots; *ostraca* and seals bearing Edomite script and names; and the pig bones found at 'Aroer (see pp. 193–195).

Earlier, it was suggested that decorated Edomite vessels along with other Edomite material culture manifestations reflect components of sharpening tribal identity.[85] The use of typical Edomite style and objects was intended to preserve certain social behaviors and to transform a stylistic message about the ethnic identity of its users, in a milieu in which sub-groups from local tribes settled in an urban environment and interacted with a variety of ethnic groups within the framework of the Arabian trade system.

Although political conditions in this desert frontier stimulated the creation of a multicultural community and brought economic prosperity and political stability to this arid region, the material culture from Negev sites suggests that relationships between local semi-nomadic and sedentary populations were not egalitarian. These distinct groups shared economic interests and created a communal code that enabled the coexistence of various traditions following diverse cultural lines.

While the economic and socio-political advantages of such multiculturalism are clear, pluralism comes at a price. Thriving multicultural urban centers own a built-in tendency toward self-destruction. First identified by the social activist Jane Jacobs who in her seminal book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* argued that the "self-destruction of diversity" constantly causes urban hubs to shift their centers.[86] Although Jacobs' contention that urban centers come wired with a clear potential for self-destruction was

[85] Thareani 2010b: 51–52.
[86] Jacobs 1961: 255–257.

developed with modern cities in mind, the basic principal is also applicable to ancient urban forms.

Pluralistic societies are destined to experience a permanent tension between the distinct elements of which they are composed. At the time of the Assyrian peace, when semi-nomadic groups settled in urban environments and when traders, soldiers, sheikhs, administrators and farmers coexisted, the necessity to sharpen identity components and mark social and cultural boundaries would increase. Some aspects of the group become translated and changed, and others remain closed. Therefore ethnic tension is an inevitable and integral part of the multicultural experience.

In his article "Dimorphic Structure and the Tribal Elite," Michael Rowton showed how western Asian semi-nomadic tribes who formed part of territorial states tended to strengthen their autonomy whenever the power of the central authority weakened.[87] More recently Eveline van der Steen illustrated how throughout history settlement patterns and power structures of Near Eastern tribal societies have been continuously shaped by territorial rights and ownership of the land. In this framework, territorial conflicts formed a crucial cause of stress and socio-political change in tribal societies.[88]

We saw earlier that a full-scale long-distance Iron Age II trade system necessitated the presence of a strong and effective security force to guard the route and patrol the desert frontier—a policy most likely exercised for over 150 years by the collaboration of the Judean kingdom with the local semi-nomadic tribes. Towards the third quarter of the seventh century BCE, when the Assyrian empire retreated from the region and Judah entered a period of political turmoil that would divide its society between pro-Egyptian and pro-Babylonian camps, it seems reasonable to assume that these years were characterized by an increasing tension between the beleaguered Judean rulers on the one hand and the local semi-nomads on the other.

In the absence of any imperial protection that would force co-existence among different ethnic groups, the previous socio-political order that was based on a delicate balance between the sedentary and the semi-nomadic systems was undermined. An increasing ethnic tension and political uncertainty may have tempted the local Edomite groups of the Iron Age II Negev to challenge the Judeans ruling the desert frontier.

[87] Rowton 1976: 240. Similar behavioral patterns have been identified for other regions of the ancient world. See: Lattimore 1940; Marfoe 1979; Adams 1981.
[88] Van der Steen 2013: 80, 262.

In this socio-political climate, even a single event that damaged the ability of the Judean political and administrative institutions to preserve their former level of activity could have generated the snowball that may ultimately led to the Negev's final destruction. This event may have been the Babylonian campaign of 587 BCE, which applied such a pressure on the administrative center in Jerusalem that as a consequence the regular maintenance of the kingdom's internal affairs suffered. The first to feel the effects were the frontier areas. Local semi-nomadic groups took advantage of Judah's political and administrative weakness, acting in collaboration with the Babylonian forces. While the latter conquered the region and destroyed several of its urban centers, the local Edomites completed the process. It is probable that this was not a systematic razing which occurred as a single event, but rather a short series of unorganized destructions taking place over a limited amount of time.[89]

A growing perceived necessity for identity assertion as well as a desire to maximize profits from trade and other sources, previously controlled by Judah, stood behind the unavoidable conflict between Judean rule and local semi-nomadic tribes. According to this reconstruction the Iron Age II Negev towns were destroyed as a result of an internal socio-ethnic conflict between local semi-nomadic and sedentary groups. It is not clear whether the local Edomites collaborated with Babylonian troops or with Judah's neighbors (who had long awaited such an opportunity). It is also difficult to ascertain the exact time when the Negev settlement system was destroyed, although it seems that the latter ceased to function as part of the Judean kingdom in or about the same time as the destruction of Jerusalem.

Against this background, "the evil that Edom made…" could be interpreted differently than it traditionally has been. Does the name "Edom" necessarily refer to the tribal kingdom that lay southeast of Judah? Could it be alternatively be interpreted as a local semi-nomadic power that saw a window of opportunity and took an active role in destroying the settlement system from which it had so long profited?

[89] For examples of a socio-political and settlement change that were generated by inter-tribal conflicts of both the nomadic and the sedentary systems see Van der Steen 2013: 127, 248.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE NEGEV DESTRUCTION

Long-term factors of built-in ethnic tension underpinned the social conflict and ultimate early sixth century BCE violent destruction of the Iron Age II Negev settlements, from which the area did not recover for many generations. Several scholars have suggested that there was continued occupation of the Negev into the Neo-Babylonian period, citing evidence such as the possible Neo-Babylonian period Tomb 23 at Tel 'Ira.[90] Without getting into a detailed discussion, the scarcity of such evidence highlights its exceptionality, especially by comparison with the previous period. It is thus clear that, if it existed at all, Negev settlement in the Neo-Babylonian period was very limited in scope.

Archaeological excavations and surveys carried out in the Negev desert frontier indicate a sharp decline in the number and construction quality of settlements, as well as a decrease in the level of their socio-political complexity in the Persian periods (**Fig. 5**). Most of the Iron Age II fortresses were destroyed or abandoned by the early sixth century BCE. Only two sites (Arad and Beersheba) were settled during the Persian period, based on wall remains and Aramaic *ostraca*.[91] A similar process is reflected in Negev towns. Three of the four late Iron Age II Negev towns were destroyed by the end of the period. Meager architectural remains of the Persian period were detected at Tel 'Ira and pottery sherds were unearthed at Tel Masos and Tel Malhata.[92] Tel 'Aroer was not reoccupied until the Roman period. Small unfortified sites were deserted as well, maybe as a result of the movement of their inhabitants to the central sites.

By the Hellenistic period the western border of Idumaea reached Hebron and included the central and the southern Shephelah. Kasher claimed that this was a gradual process of Edomite penetration from the east, stimulated by the Babylonian deportations and by the displacement of the Edomites by the Arabs.[93] Lipschits has argued that this process is crucial for understanding the role of Edom in the Negev's destruction.[94] Glueck, however, determined that "…it is not to be imagined that all of the Edomites emigrated *en bloc* out of

[90] Beit-Arieh and Baron 1999: 162–165; Lipschits 2005: 227, 229.
[91] Naveh 1973: 79, 82; 1981: 153–176.
[92] Ayalon 1999: 49; Beit-Arieh 1999: 173; Biran 1999: 126.
[93] Ronen 1985: 9; Kasher 1988: 11–12.
[94] Lipschits 2005: 144–146.

their former territory to settle in southern Palestine, where the district in which they lived became known as Idumaea."[95]

Contrary to the biblical description (Jeremiah 13:18–19), the archaeological evidence attests that the Negev was not totally forsaken by its inhabitants in the transition from the Iron Age to the Persian period. This is indicated by evidence from Tomb T23 at Tel 'Ira,[96] and by the appearance of Judean names in Aramaic *ostraca* from Arad and Beersheba.[97]

Never has the Negev desert frontier been an extensively settled area. Unlike the Coastal Plain and the valleys, occupation in the arid zone has usually been dependent on the initiative and strength of a central authority. As long as the latter had sufficient political and economic means to control the region, resources were directed to that end —and to the general benefit of local settlements and their inhabitants. However, it would be wrong to assume that that population would simply fade away in the event of the central authority's decline. It is more likely that at least part of the local population continued to exist in the region, at a lower degree of social complexity, practicing a different subsistence strategy and experiencing an entirely new political reality.

Even if local Negev inhabitants deserted the area for a while, not long afterward some of them returned and resettled former Judean sites. Various ethnic groups joined them, including members of the semi-nomadic and Arab groups[98]—thereby creating a new community in the Negev desert frontier.

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[95] Glueck 1970: 166.
[96] Beit-Arieh 1999: 173, 177–178.
[97] Aharoni 1973: 79–82; 1981.
[98] Naveh 1981: 175–176; Eph'al 1982: 200.

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TABLES

Table 1. Selected Assyrian imported and style objects in Iron Age IIb-c Negev sites, shown in Fig. 2.

Nº.	Object	Reg. Nº	Site and Stratum	Description	References
1	Glass cup	F/47/1	‘Aroer III	A piece of an Assyrian glass cup with a diamond cut	Barag 2011: 259–260, Plate VIII; Pl. 48:2
2	Weight	F/414/2	‘Aroer IV	A duck-shaped weight measuring six Mesopotamian *shekels*. Hematite	Thareani 2011: 209, Fig. 3.98, Pl. 1:3
3	Weight		Arad	A crouching lion weight. Bronze	Herzog 2002: 80, Fig. 35:3; Ornan 1997: 276–277. Courtesy of Ze‘ev Herzog, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University
4	Cylinder seal		Arad	Linear style. A seated figure and a bird	Herzog 2002: 80, Fig. 35:1–2. Courtesy of Ze‘ev Herzog, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University
5	Cylinder seal		Beersheeba	From Suhu, dedicated by Rimut-ilani to the great deity Apla-Adad	Rainey 1973: 61–70. Courtesy of Ze‘ev Herzog, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University
6	Decorated bottle	5025/43	‘Aroer	Well-levigated, light brown clay. Exterior wheel-burnished. Black stripes decoration	Na’aman and Thareani-Sussely 2006: 70–71, Fig. 4:4
7	Imitation of Assyrian Palace-Ware	309/25	‘Aroer	Well-levigated clay, thin-walled with a plastic petal decoration	Na’aman and Thareani-Sussely 2006: 70, Fig. 4:1

Table 2. Selected Arabian objects in Iron Age IIb-c Negev sites, shown in Fig. 3.

Nº.	Object	Reg. Nº	Site and Stratum	Description	References
1	Ostracon	F/7110	'Aroer, mixed locus	Incised Arabian letter 'ח on a broken sherd of a locally-made storejar	Thareani 2011: 228, Plate IV, Pl. 231:1
2	Ostracon	F/6302	'Aroer, mixed locus	Incised Arabian sign on a broken sherd of a locally-made cooking pot	Thareani 2011: 228, Plate V, Pl. 207:1
3	Inscribed seal	10735/50	Beersheba II	A rectangular limestone object bearing the inscription: *khn*	Singer-Avitz 1999: 50–52, Fig. 15:1. Courtesy of Lily Singer-Avitz, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University
4	Stopper	11533/50	Beersheba II	Small stone object	Singer-Avitz 1999: 52, Fig. 15:2. Courtesy of Lily Singer-Avitz, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University
5	Inscribed seal		'En Hazeva		Naveh 2001: 197–198. Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Photographer: Clara Amit
6	Small altar	2681	'En Hazeva	Limestone. Cuboid	Ben-Arieh 2011: Figs. 42–43, No. 75. Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Photographer: Clara Amit
7	Small altar	F/36	'Aroer III	Limestone. Cuboid with short legs	Thareani 2011: 206–207, Fig. 3.96, Pl. 49:8
8	Small altar	F/7103	'Aroer III	Limestone. Cuboid with short legs. Residue of organic materials	Thareani 2011: 206–207, Fig. 3.97, Pl. 77:3

Table 3. Edomite pottery assemblage from Tel ‘Aroer, shown in Fig. 4

No.	Object	Reg. No.	Loc.	Stratum	Description
1	Bowl	391/1	130	IIb	Exterior red slipped. Exterior and part of interior burnished. Exterior decorated. Black horizontal stripes.
2	Bowl	322/1	102	IIb	Interior wheel burnished.
3	Bowl	50/8	39	III	Many mending holes. Interior partially red slipped and burnished.
4	Bowl	9643/53	1909	III	
5	Bowl	537/10	417	IV	
6	Bowl	25/1	32	IIb	
7	Bowl	315/57	102	IIb	
8	Bowl	621/1	Surface	Surface	Exterior white slipped. Exterior and partly interior wheel burnished. Decorated. Red and black horizontal stripes. Big black point.
9	Bowl	4177/20	970	IIa	Exterior decorated and wheel burnished. Red and black horizontal stripes and projections.
10	Bowl	1083/1	628	IIb	Exterior and rim wheel burnished and decorated. Black and red horizontal stripes.
11	Bowl	3102/1	838	Mixed	Exterior decorated and wheel burnished. Red and black. Horizontal stripes and points.
12	Bowl	3219/1	879	IIa	Exterior and rim decorated. Red and black horizontal stripes. Short vertical lines and complex geometric design.
13	Bowl	32/4	36	IIb	
14	Bowl	309/20	102	IIb	
15	Bowl	9643/57	1909	III	Exterior ridged and decorated. Black horizontal stripes.
16	Cup	6459/4	1333	III	
17	Cup	6556/8	1343	Mixed	Two rows of perforated holes.
18	Cooking pot	319/63	105	IIb	Exterior white paint.
19	Cooking pot	1324/12	515	IIa	
20	Holemouth jar	351/10	122	IIb	Plastic decoration. Small projections.

Figures

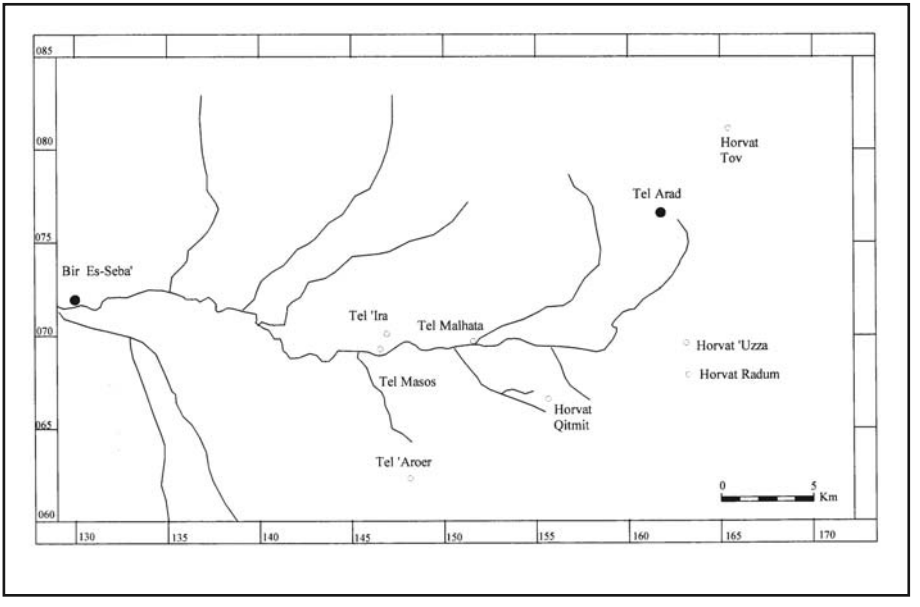

Fig. 1. The Negev settlement system in the Iron Age IIb-c.

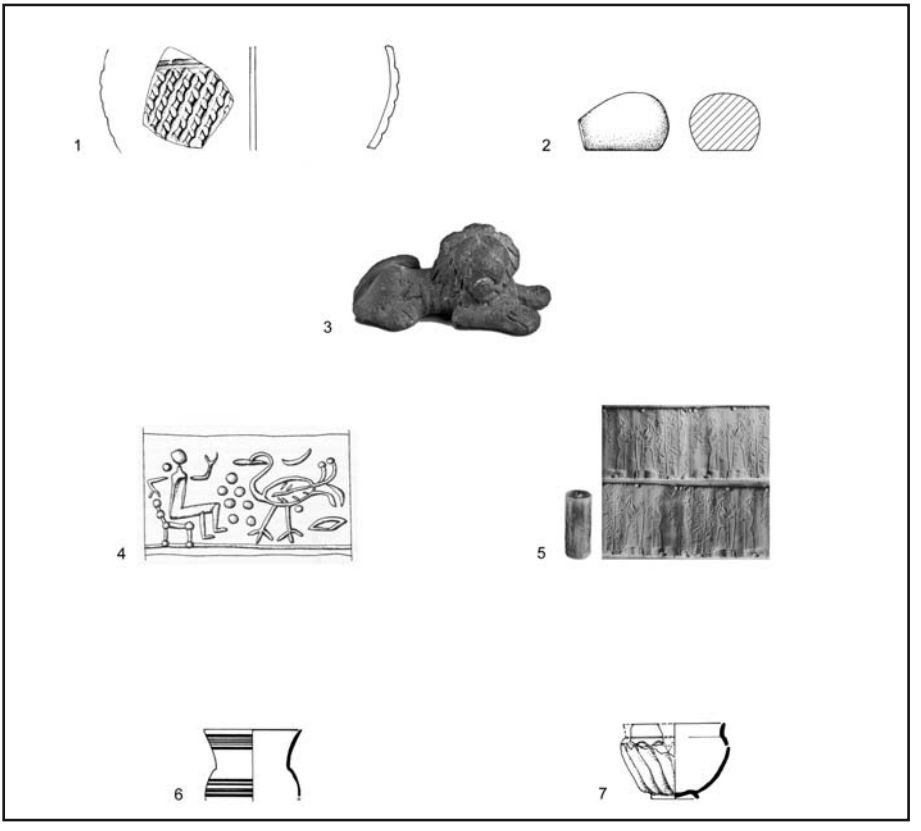

Fig. 2. Selected Assyrian imported and style objects in Iron Age IIb-c Negev sites.

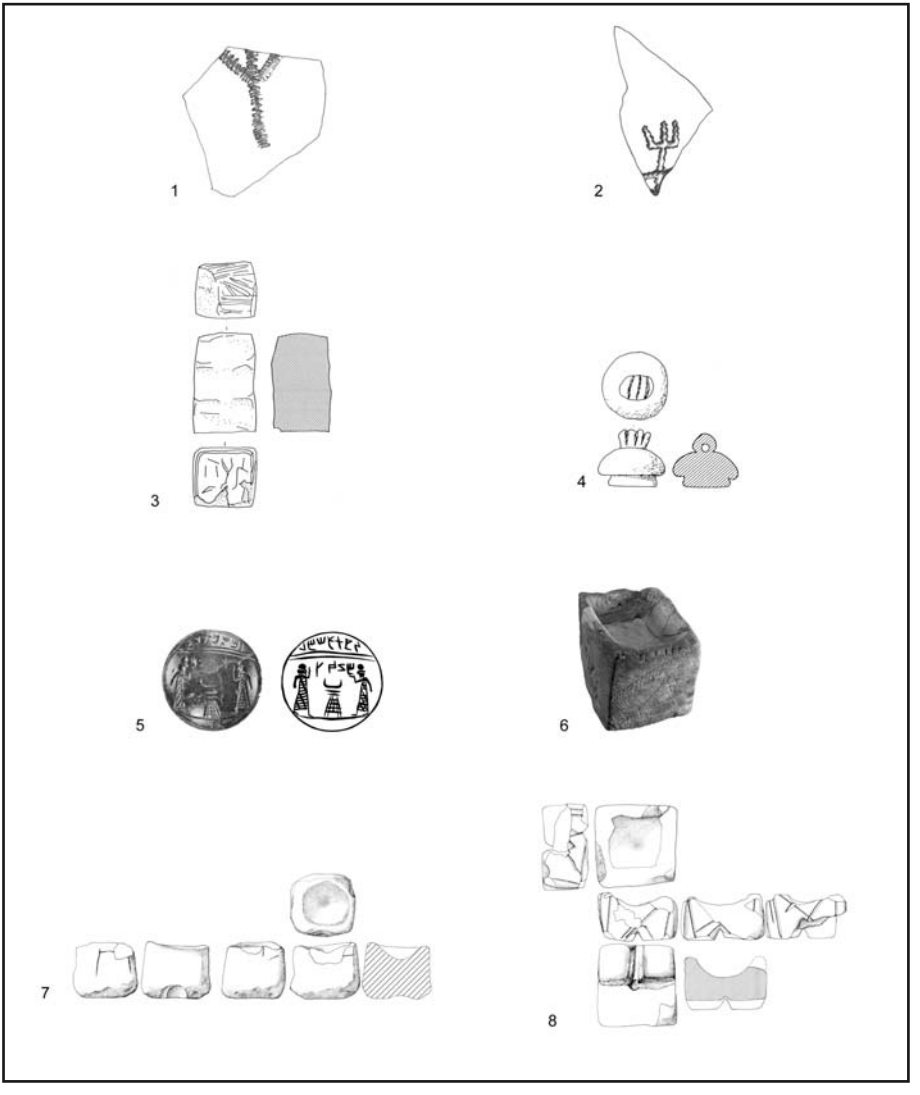

Fig. 3. Selected Arabian objects in Iron Age IIb-c Negev sites.

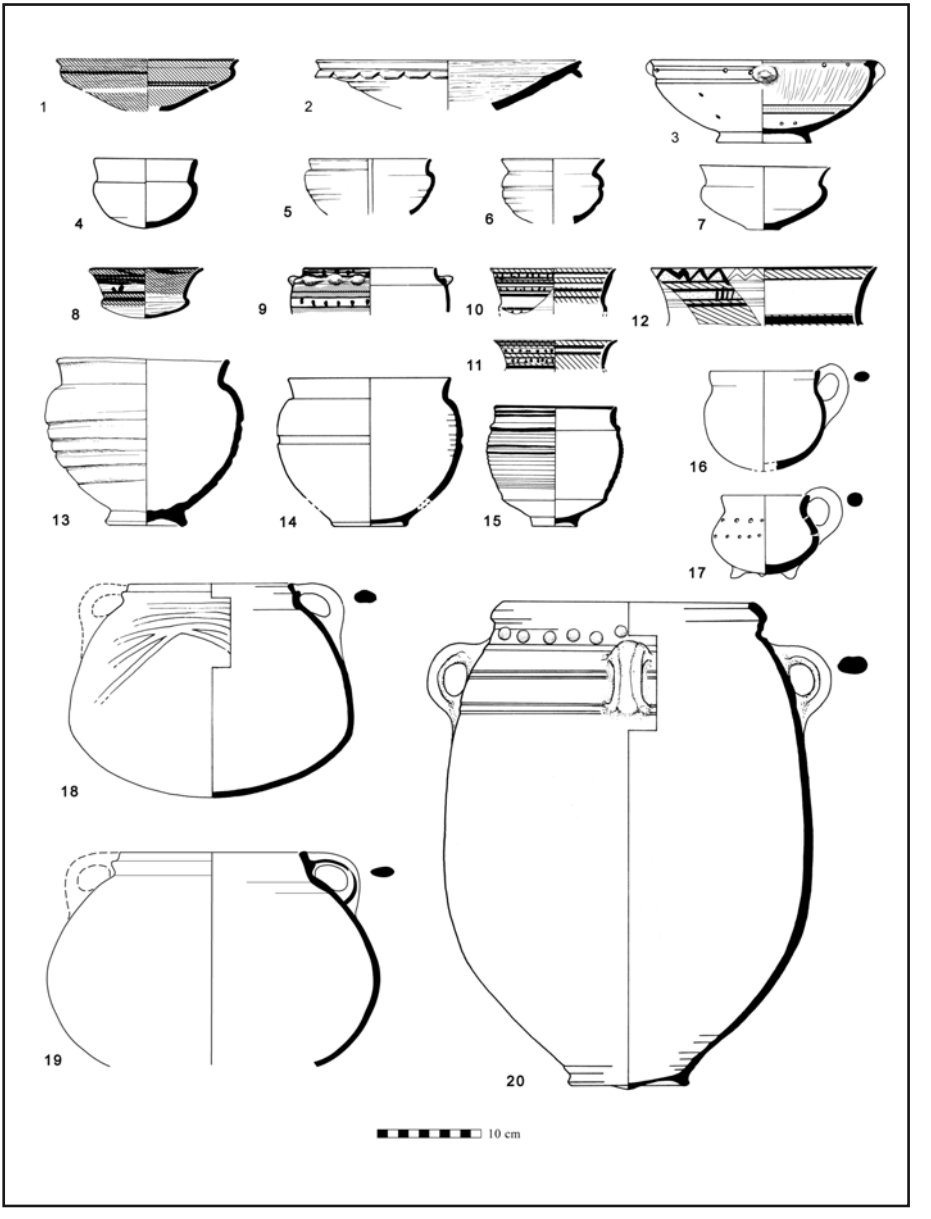

Fig. 4. Selected Edomite pottery from Tel ʻAroer.

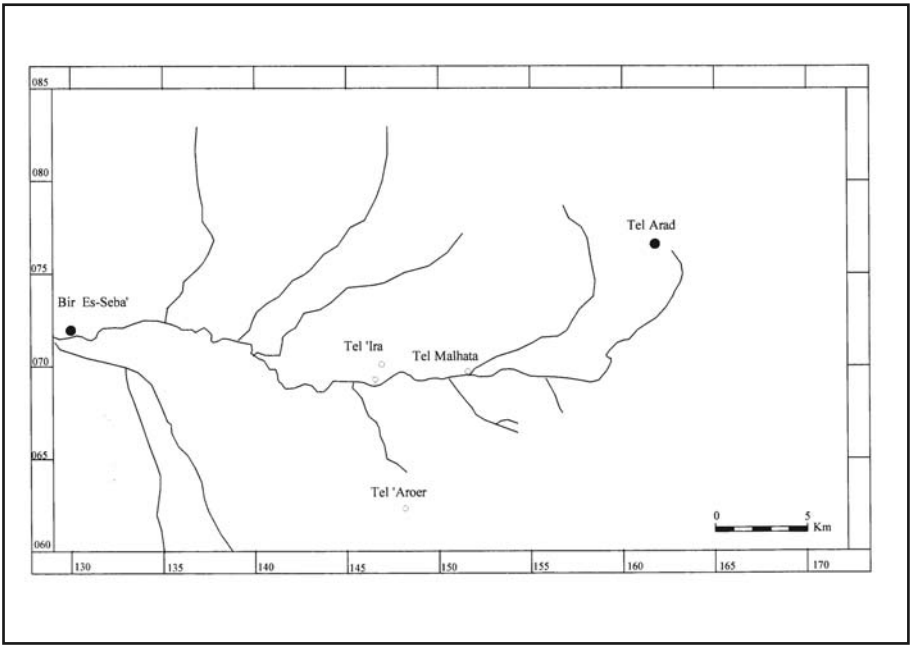

Fig. 5. The Negev settlement system in the Persian period.

Reseñas bibliográficas / Book Reviews

Juan Manuel Tebes (ed.), *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age*. Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement 45. Leuven, Peeters, 2014. vii + 306 pp. ISBN 978–90–429–2973–9. € 90.

Tradicionalmente, la exploración y los estudios del desierto del Néguev y la región de Edom, al sur y sudeste del Levante, han estado estrechamente vinculados a la exégesis histórica de las tradiciones bíblicas y sus referencias directas a estos territorios. Dichos estudios, sin embargo, han progresado considerablemente, tanto en problemáticas como en interpretación, desde que Nelson Glueck iniciara sus pioneras investigaciones arqueológicas en la región durante la primera mitad del siglo XX. Este volumen es prueba de ello. Originado en un *workshop* llevado a cabo en el Albright Institute de Jerusalén en Diciembre de 2010, el libro representa un compendio de los entendimientos que actualmente se tienen sobre el Néguev y Edom durante la Edad del Hierro (ca. 1200–600 a.C.).

Abriendo la obra, el estudio de J.M. Tebes, "Socio-Economic Fluctuations and Chiefdom Formation in Edom, the Negev and the Hejaz during the First Millennium BCE" (pp. 1–29), presenta una interesante utilización de la categoría de jefatura (*chiefdom*) para analizar la dinámica socioeconómica de la región dentro de un sistema-mundo (I. Wallerstein). Otro concepto clave en el análisis de Tebes es el de economía de "enclave", originada en el centro del sistema económico pero situada en la periferia del mismo. Estos elementos le permiten al autor ofrecer una perspectiva histórica sobre la formación y disolución de jefaturas locales, en Wadi Feinán, Tel Masos y Qurayyah en una primera fase entre los siglos XI y IX a.C. y a partir de la influencia egipcia en la región, y en Buseirah durante una segunda fase desde fines del siglo VIII a mediados del VI, bajo hegemonía asiria y, especialmente, ante la presencia de las redes comerciales árabes.

El capítulo de J.S. Holladay Jr. y S. Klassen, "From Bandit to King: David's Time in the Negev and the Transformation of a Tribal Entity into a Nation State" (pp. 31–46), analiza la aparición de la complejidad sociopolítica, i.e., el Estado, en tiempos del rey David a la luz de la configuración geopolítica y económica existente en el sur del Levante durante el siglo X a.C., pero también haciendo uso de la narrativa bíblica como indicio interpretativo.

Los tres siguientes estudios, a cargo de T. Erickson-Gini, "Timna Site 2 Revisited" (pp. 47–83), de S. Shilstein, S. Shalev y Y. Yekutieli, "Appendix: XRF Study of Archaeological and Metallurgical Material from Copper Smelting Sites in Timna" (pp. 85–102) y de U. Avner, "Egyptian Timna-Reconsidered" (pp. 103–162), analizan diversos aspectos de la cultura material, vale decir, arqueológica del valle de Timna, ubicado al sur del actual Estado de Israel, muy cerca del golfo de Aqaba y lugar de una importante producción metalúrgica de cobre hacia fines de la Edad del Bronce Tardío (ca. 1550–1200 a.C.), indicios de la cual se remontan no obstante unos cinco milenios a.C., además de ser el sitio que Glueck asoció con las minas del bíblico rey Salomón en los años '30 (conclusión considerablemente disputada en la actualidad)[1]. Erickson-Gini sostiene en su artículo que la interpretación que ofreciera inicialmente B. Rothenberg, excavador del lugar entre 1959 y 1990, sobre la conexión egipcia (ramésida) existente en la explotación metalúrgica del sitio 2 de Timna, es mantenida por la evidencia arqueológica más reciente. Shilstein, Shalev y Yekutieli presentan los últimos resultados arqueológicos sobre material metalúrgico, también del sitio 2. Por su parte, Avner discute la tesis original de Rothenberg, igualmente sostenida en los dos previos capítulos, sobre la explotación egipcia de la metalurgia de Timna, disputando en primer lugar que el llamado "templo egipcio" sea en realidad un templo y egipcio: según Avner, estaríamos en presencia solamente de un lugar de culto (*sanctuary*) de grupos locales. Asimismo, dataciones de Carbono 14 permiten sostener que la actividad metalúrgica en Timna tuvo su apogeo entre 1150 y 1000 a.C., época en la que no existía ningún gran poder sobre la región (*i.e.*, Egipto) y, por lo tanto, la explotación del cobre debería atribuirse a poblaciones locales.

En su segundo estudio en el volumen, "The Symbolic and Social World of the Qurayyah Pottery Iconography" (pp. 163–201), Tebes interroga la evidencia iconográfica de la cerámica de Qurayyah (o midianita) para intentar recuperar el mundo simbólico de sus productores. Pinturas de figuras humanas, probablemente jefes tribales o especialistas religiosos (chamanes), y de aves dan cuentan en principio de un sustrato africano que denota un proceder común a varias culturas africanas y del Mediterráneo oriental para representar un liderazgo local o la importancia de ciertos individuos dentro de la comunidad. Pero, también, de acuerdo con Tebes, podemos interpretar en la iconografía una reutilización de ciertos motivos "internacionales" adaptados a la

[1] Cf. Manor 1992.

cultura local. La utilización de estos motivos, cuya distribución regional debería ser relacionada con los contactos comerciales en el Mediterráneo oriental, vincularía a los líderes locales de esta región periférica con los centros urbanos de importancia, a la vez que otorgaría a dichos líderes un cierto prestigio social (tanto político como religioso) dentro de sus comunidades.

P. van der Veen y F. Bron, en su contribución "Arabian and Arabizing Epigraphic Finds from the Iron Age Southern Levant" (pp. 203–226), presentan evidencia escrita e iconográfica proveniente de hallazgos epigráficos (sellos, bullae, grafitti) que permiten confirmar que los intercambios comerciales entre la península arábiga y el Levante tuvieron su auge durante fines del siglo VIII y mediados del VII a.C., bajo la hegemonía territorial asiria del Cercano Oriente, durante la así llamada *pax assyriaca*.

La contribución de Y. Thareani, "The Judean Desert Frontier in the Seventh Century BCE: A View from 'Aroer" (pp. 227–265), indaga en la ocupación de la frontera meridional del reino de Judá durante el siglo VII a.C., vale decir, en el desierto del Néguev, iniciada en el siglo VIII a.C. y estimulada, según un reciente modelo interpretativo de los patrones de asentamiento, por la presencia asiria en el Levante meridional. La autora toma el sitio de Tel 'Aroer en el Néguev como ejemplo para revisar este entendimiento de la evidencia arqueológica; en rigor, una ampliación de este argumento es ofrecida: la zona sur del reino de Judá, el Néguev, no constituía en verdad un límite (*border*) político sino, más bien, una frontera (*frontier*), mucho más permeable, en donde habitantes locales, edomitas y árabes convivían y cuyas élites actuaban como intermediarias entre el comercio árabe de larga distancia y los intereses económicos asirios en la región. Más aún, esta dinámica socioeconómica tuvo su punto de mayor desarrollo durante el reinado de Manasés (ca. 697–641 a.C.), rey de Judá subordinado a Asiria. El comercio árabe de larga distancia prosiguió, no obstante, luego del reinado de Manasés y luego de la retirada asiria del Levante, hasta principios del siglo VI a.C.

Los estudios finales de L. Singer-Avitz, "Edomite Pottery in Judah in the Eighth Century BCE" (pp. 267–281), y de L. Freud, "Local Production of Edomite Cooking Pots in the Beersheva Valley: Petrographic Analyses from Tel Malhata, Horvat 'Uza and Horvat Qitmit" (pp. 283–306), tratan, como lo indican sus respectivos títulos, de la cerámica edomita, especialmente durante los siglos VIII y VII a.C. Singer-Avitz enfoca su atención en la evidencia proveniente del sur de Cisjordania, vale decir, la región del reino de Judá durante la fase final de la Edad del Hierro, que indica la presencia de cerámica edomita en dicho territorio. Tanto Singer-Avitz como Freud, quien limita su aten-

ción al valle de Beersheva, destacan que la cerámica edomita excavada proviene de una producción local en el Néguev y no de su importación desde Edom, teniendo en cuenta recientes estudios petrográficos (pp. 271, 300–301). Una vez más, la existencia de redes comerciales árabes parece ser el factor de explicación en la detección de influencias foráneas en aspectos de la cultura material de la zona.

Todos los estudios reunidos en esta obra proporcionan de manera notable un mayor entendimiento de la historia y la arqueología de la región más meridional del Levante. En particular, las contribuciones de Tebes, Avner y Thareani ilustran de modo efectivo la interacción disciplinar que puede realizarse entre la arqueología, la perspectiva histórica y modelos provenientes de la antropología social. La relevancia de la intervención imperial (Egipto, Asiria) y de los contactos comerciales árabes en la configuración sociopolítica y económica local y regional es un factor analítico que atraviesa todo el volumen y que permite presentar explicaciones propiamente históricas y menos herederas de imágenes bíblicas. En este sentido, muy probablemente, el capítulo de Holladay/Klassen, al prestar demasiada atención al relato bíblico de David para dar cuenta de la aparición del Estado israelita[2], desentone del resto de esta antología que hace un uso moderado, y adecuado a nuestro parecer, de dicha evidencia textual. Aun así, la discusión geopolítica y económica que realizan ambos autores no debe ser desconsiderada, a pesar de su evidente evolucionismo sociopolítico (*"the transformation of a tribal entity into a nation-state"*). Asimismo, la discusión sobre los alcances políticos del "tribalismo" en estas sociedades de la Edad del Hierro, tal como lo hace Tebes en su primera contribución, pero también presente en el artículo de Holladay/Klassen e implícito en el resto, merece seguir siendo pensada y desarrollada, especialmente a luz del registro etnohistórico y etnográfico de la región conocida como Medio Oriente[3]. En suma, este volumen constituye una importante contribución al *corpus* bibliográfico sobre la historia, la arqueología y la epigrafía del Néguev y Edom durante la Edad del Hierro.

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[2] Cf. al respecto Thompson 2006; Pfoh 2014.

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Shelley Wachsmann, *The Gurob Ship-Cart Model and Its Mediterranean Context*. Ed Rachal Foundation Nautical Archaeology Series. College Station, TX: A & M University Press, 2013. 352 pp. ISBN: 978–1–60344–429–3. U$D75.

In 1920, at the site of Gurob near entrance to the Fayum oasis in Middle Egypt, pieces of a small wooden ship model were discovered in a shallow and otherwise empty tomb (Tomb 611). Incorrectly assembled but perceptively labeled as a "Pirate Boat" by Flinders Petrie, the overseer of its excavation, the model was paired in antiquity with a *pavois* for carrying, as well as a wheeled cart, perhaps signifying its representation of a cultic object (pp. xviii, 20–21, 102, 163, 202–204). The model was largely forgotten until the turn of the millennium (pp. 6–7), when it was "rediscovered" in the Petrie Egyptological Museum and republished, in the volume presently under review (henceforth "*Gurob*"), by one of the foremost authorities on ships and seafaring in the Bronze Age Mediterranean, Shelley Wachsmann of Texas A&M University.

Wachsmann conclusively demonstrates in this volume that the Gurob model represents a Helladic oared galley, one of the most important vessel types in maritime history and the ancestor of the Greek *dieres* and Phoenician bireme which played such important roles in the travel, trade, and colonization of the first century BC (pp. 80–82, 262 n. 134). However, the author goes far beyond simply providing a close description of this fragmentary object,

and in short order, the reader is taken on an accompanied tour of the Eastern Mediterranean world writ large, with stops at Medinet Habu, Thebes, and the Dakhla Oasis in Egypt; Hama in Syria; the ruins of Thera, Knossos, Pylos, and Tiryns; and the Athenian Akropolis, among others. Wachsmann's talent for near-drowning his readers in data is on full display in *Gurob*, as written, iconographic, and physical evidence alike are marshaled from across the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean and from the Bronze Age to the Roman period and beyond in support of his study of this small object and its wider context.

Chapter 1, "The Gurob Ship-Cart Model," provides the background of the object's excavation and previous publication, along with close descriptions and detailed photographs and measurements of each of the model's component parts. The remarkable polychromatic nature of the object is covered in depth in print (pp. 26–28, 219–224). Though the book contains no color images, Wachsmann partnered with the Institute for the Visualization of History, Inc. to produce an excellent online resource (http://www.vizin.org/Gurob/Gurob.html), which provides a full-color companion to the photographs in the volume, as well as three-dimensional imaging that allows the user to interact with both original and reconstructed versions of the Gurob model.

Other physical elements of particular note include a waterline projection at the bow, vertical stem and stempost with upturned finial, and vertical pegs along the top of the hull that the author identifies as stanchions, or load-bearing posts, which on a physical galley would have supported the superstructure and partial decking (pp. 14–16, 201, 252). The importance of each of these aspects of the model is discussed in Ch. 2, while the wheels and *pavois* are addressed in Ch. 3.

Chapter 2, "The Iconographic Evidence," provides deep and wide-ranging comparative analysis in support of the author's assertion that the Gurob model is "the most detailed known [galley] representation, supplying structural details in a unique, multihued, three-dimensional manner, which contemporaneous ship depictions either ignore or, at best, illuminate in two dimensions only" (p. 33). Wachsmann meticulously compares each characteristic of the Gurob model and its corresponding feature in galley iconography from the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean (pp. 65–84), thus facilitating a contextual examination of each individual aspect of this unique addition to the corpus for the purpose of better understanding, wherever possible, the actual appearance and function of the various components that made up this important vessel type.

In making his case, Wachsmann first presents the corpus of representations found in Egypt, including the Medinet Habu reliefs and Dakhla Oasis graffito, and on the Syro-Canaanite littoral, including potsherds from the Philistine sites of Ashkelon and Ekron, graffiti from Nahal Meerot, and a cinerary urn featuring a Helladic galley with vertical stempost and upturned finial from the Syrian site of Hama. The representations of Helladic ships featuring open rowers galleries and birdlike stem devices found on the Levantine coast are held to "indicate that the Sea Peoples introduced this ship type to the region" (p. 59) from the Aegean, while the author has long interpreted the Hama urn as evidence for an Urnfield element among the invading Sea Peoples pictured at Medinet Habu.[1] As will be seen in the discussion of Ch. 4 below, evidence from Gurob is presented as further support for this hypothesis. Whether Wachsmann's case is convincing is up to the individual reader, though two related points should be noted: first, the argument for a Sea Peoples presence among prospective Central Europeans at Hama is dependent on a single urn out of 1,100 found in the relevant stratum at the site (p. 59). Second, while the hypothesized connection between Urnfield culture and the Sea Peoples pictured at Medinet Habu rests on the common ornamentation (bird heads at stem and stern) on the Sea Peoples' galleys and on ceremonial *Vogelbarken* in Central European iconography, the Hama urn—though presented as a connection between the two—features a galley decorated in typical Helladic fashion, with decorated finial on the stempost only.

Chapter 3, "Wheels, Wagons, and the Transport of Ships Overland," traces the tradition of ships on land, primarily as objects in processions. Wachsmann demonstrates that Egyptian funerary boats were sometimes depicted as being transported on wheeled wagons, and that deities were frequently transported overland in boat-shaped shrines fitted with poles attached to a *pavois*, which allowed them to be carried by porters. The author then goes beyond the Egyptian evidence to find examples of ship-cart use in Greek culture, as well, with particular emphasis on representations of Dionysos in a ship-cart and on the wheeled ship used to transport the new *peplos* at each Panathenaic festival.

Chapter 4, "Foreigners at Gurob," presents evidence for non-Egyptians at the site for the purpose of determining "the *most likely* foreign candidate for the model's owner" (p. 163; italics in original), as well as a brief history of the Sea Peoples movements, with particular focus on the Sherden (pp. 183–190). Foreign elements found at Gurob include Mycenaean and Cypriot pot-

[1] Wachsmann 1981; 1996; 1997; 1998: 175, 178–183, 329–330; 2000.

tery, Syro-Canaanite toggle pins, a spindle for "*z*-spun" threads, and blond hair. Additionally, both Tjuk-people (Libyans) and Sherden, a Sea Peoples group faced by Ramesses II, Merneptah, and potentially Ramesses III (esp. p. 206; cf. Emanuel 2013: 16), are mentioned in the mid-12th c. Wilbour Papyrus as owning or occupying land in an area of Middle Egypt that includes Gurob (Appendix 4).

Perhaps the most interesting intrusive phenomenon at Gurob, aside from the ship-cart model itself, are the Ramesside-era "burnt groups" consisting of personal possessions (pottery, jewelry, household items, and furniture) which had been buried intramurally and then burned (p. 193). The author notes several previous theories regarding these enigmatic "burnt groups," which are unique in Egypt, before offering his own proposal, that the burnt groups "represent physical evidence of an Urnfield element…in the midst of rapid acculturation" (p. 199). In Wachsmann's reading of the evidence, this acculturation by a central European element at Gurob meant that they "no longer cremated their dead, having adopted Egyptian burial practices, but still kept alive a memory of their traditions by burning and burying the deceased's personal items," which were then left in covered pits rather than being placed into urns (p. 199).

This interpretation of the burnt groups is presented in combination with the Hama urn in support of Wachsmann's theory regarding an Urnfield element among the Sea Peoples coalition. In arguing for this connection, he notes both that "[their] burial custom, resulting in vast fields of cremation urns, is one of the most typifying characteristics of the Urnfield Culture, *hence its name*" (p. 199; italics in original) and that "burial methods can adapt when foreigners arrive at a new setting [and] the particular burial customs that remain will be those that have consequential cultural meaning to the new arrivals" (p. 199). Accepting what Wachsmann calls "the most likely, and simplest, explanation for the burnt group phenomenon at Gurob" (p. 199), then, seems to require accepting that the act of burning, rather than cremation burial itself—in the cinerary urns that serve as the namesake for this culture-historical group—was the element of death-related ritual that carried "consequential cultural meaning" to the prospective Central Europeans at Gurob.

Chapter 5, "Conclusions" (pp. 201–206), provides a concise and accessible synthesis, while reinforcing the author's core argument about the Gurob ship-cart model, its cultural connections, and its potential ownership by a member of one Sea Peoples group or his descendant (p. 206). Following this are seven appendices (pp. 207–249), the majority of which deal with aspects

of the physical model, including lines drawings, virtual reality reconstructions, radiocarbon dating, and analysis of the wood and pigments. These are followed by a useful Glossary of Nautical Terms (pp. 251–253), extensive endnotes (pp. 255–283), a comprehensive bibliography (pp. 285–312), and a very helpful and accurate index (pp. 313–321).

The aforementioned online companion to the text is a further source of invaluable information, and one can only hope not only that it will survive online in perpetuity, but that it will also serve as inspiration to others in the field to avoid what the author has called the "Evans-Petrie Retrograde Paradigm Shift" by taking full advantage of web-based technologies to make artifacts, interpretations, and reports more accessible than ever, to practitioners and the public alike.[2]

Whether or not the reader agrees with all of the author's conclusions, *Gurob* is a formidable work of scholarship which goes far beyond the close study of an important object. As such, it represents a significant contribution to the existing literature not just on the development and construction of the Helladic oared galley and its Iron Age successors, but on seafaring, technological transference, and cultural interconnections in the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age transition across the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean worlds.

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[2] Wachsmann 2014: 205

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David Lee Phillips, *The Samaritan Version of the Book of Numbers with Hebrew Variants: A Close Textual Study.* Lewiston, NY; Lampeter, UK: Edwin Mellen Press, 2014. XV + 302 pp. ISBN 978–0–7734–4317–4. U$D 179,95.

The present study claims to have two goals: 1) "to determine the autograph Hebrew letters for each word, the grammar of its pronunciation, and the end of each sentence"; and 2) "to express ancient Hebrew in modern English" (I). Of the two goals, only the second can be achieved with any kind of certainty; the first presents an impossibility or at least a general uncertainty, and the difficulties associated with it are barely reflected in Phillips' monograph. Even the most optimistic biblical scholar would hardly claim to reconstruct "the autograph," *i.e.*, the very first edition of a biblical book, going back to its initial author. Nonetheless, Philips seeks to undertake such a reconstruction on the basis of the Samaritan text presented in the critical editions. Beyond this, he translates his presumed "autograph" and marks distinctions between the various witnesses (primarily LXX and MT). In general, this study presents a flawed methodology and contains many inaccuracies, which certainly advise against purchasing the volume at its overwhelming cover price of U$D179,95 (according to the publisher's website). To clarify this position, this review will exemplarily discuss several problems with the volume.

The book opens with a confusing series of introductions containing significant speculation and even substantial errors. To this first category, one can assign the dating of the pre-Samaritan textual tradition identified in Qumran manuscripts: the Samaritan passages in 4Q22 and 4Q27 were "from a copying tradition going back to the beginning of the monotheistic … Temple of Jerusalem in the 6th century BCE under the Persian regime of Darius I" (II). Such an assertion demonstrates that Phillips evaluates the transmission of texts over time as most stable and that he does not distinguish between elements that can be viewed as "pre-Samaritan" and elements that must be rec-

ognized as Samaritan. In general, he seems to believe that the manuscript 4Q27 essentially presented a text identical to the medieval Samaritan manuscripts used as the basis for the critical editions such as von Gall[1] or Tal[2] (an example of this will be discussed below).

To the second category, substantial errors, one can ascribe such drastic failings: "The speeches of Yahweh [attested in Numbers] are in the same Hebrew language as Mesha [*i.e.*, the Mesha inscription]" (III). The Mesha inscription was composed in Moabite, which—while certainly related to Hebrew—remains distinct from Hebrew and certainly distinct from the Hebrew found in the Bible. Beyond the errant linguistic attribution, one finds significant historical errors: "By the end of the Iron II period all speakers of Hebrew dialects [here, he is referring to the peoples of Moab, Ammon, Samaria, Judah, and Edom—JMR] were paying tribute to the Assyrian empire" (III). He removed the Babylonians from the equation, or at least failed to distinguish them from the Assyrians, an error that recurs throughout the volume; cf. his subsuming the "Chaldean Period" within the Assyrian period in his "Chronology" (287–288).

Yet the errors and curiosities do not end there. "Moses has a Cushite wife… The Cushite kingdom of Egypt parallels the historical period for the writing of the Five Books [of Moses]… Moses is said to marry a Cushite woman during these decades, which is the time of the writing of the autograph" (IV). It remains unexplained how Phillips arrived at this speculation and to what degree the mention of Moses' having a Cushite wife fulfills the demands of dating the original version of the book to the eighth century BCE, particularly as Phillips does not indicate the need to relate this event to the reigning Egyptian dynasty. Does he suppose that Egypt ruled Palestine at this time? Or does he conceive of Judean or Israelite scribes composing this in Egypt? Such questions remain entirely unanswered and lacking critical reflection.

His understanding of textual authority remains unclarified: "The apparatus of BHS is authoritative if partial" (VII). One wonders, to what degree—if any—can one speak of a critical edition as "authoritative", and for whom? These questions remain unaddressed. Finally, many of the explanations raise more questions than they answer, such as "A Strong's reference is an MT copying mistake which has turned into a dictionary entry" (XV), a statement which makes no sense, regardless of its context.

[1] von Gall 1916.
[2] Tal 1994.

Turning to the primary portion of the book, the odd-numbered pages present a translation of the Samaritan text, distinguishing cases where the Samaritan text varies from all other witnesses or agrees with another witness or witnesses. In these cases, the other witnesses addressed are MT, LXX, and Qumran manuscripts. The overwhelming majority of differences are orthographic in nature, unsurprising to anyone familiar with the Samaritan Pentateuch. The even-numbered pages proffer explanations of forms and the manuscripts reflected, describe the differences between the witnesses, and sometimes offer reasons for the particular translation chosen or other pertinent or even impertinent data.

To address some of the problems in the main portion of the book, it seems most appropriate to consider a more extensive passage, using it as an example for the rest. In this case, Numbers 22–24 presents an appropriate example of the standards of the monograph, in that the Samaritan text of Numbers 22–24 contains several significant departures from MT or LXX, while often supporting one reading against the other. One encounters several errors and unclear matters in Phillips' treatment of Numbers 22–24. Considering the translation first, one notes that Phillips translates the Hebrew הנהר in Num 22:5 with "Euphrates" without comment (125), which is certainly a possibility, but not the apparent meaning for the simple noun "the river." In Num 22:28, he inappropriately translates the phrase "and the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey" (attested in all witnesses) with "Yahweh changed the nature of the donkey" without further explication (129); the same could be said for his translation of 22:31 ("Yahweh changed the eyes of Balaam"; 129). Generally imprecise, Phillips sometimes lacks the article where it is attested in the Hebrew of the Samaritan Pentateuch (*e.g.*, 24:1) and even changes the antecedent of pronouns without explanation. For example, Phillips translates 24:2 "and the spirit of God was on them", using an English plural to reflect the Hebrew singular for "him" or "it"; this changes the apparent meaning from God's spirit being on Balaam to God's spirit being on Israel, a substantial interpretive—probably even eisegetical—judgment requiring an understanding reflecting an unmarked change of subject. In 24:14 Phillips uses the singular "day" in the phrase "at the end of the day," while the Hebrew presents an obviously plural noun, "in the last / later days", again without explanation. In 24:24 he translates incorrectly, stating that "God will come forth," when the Samaritan text—should one choose to divide it syntactically with Phillips—must be translated "God will bring them", *i.e.*, a Hiphil instead of a Qal. While some

of these translations may be justified in English usage (particularly regarding the use of the article), it remains conspicuous that no explanation is ever offered for even significant departures from the Hebrew. Some of them appear simply to attest errors. These examples could be readily multiplied.

While the marking of variants in the English translation could seem like a helpful aid, Phillips carries it out with marked imprecision. For example, he has underscored the verb "found" in Num 23:4 and formatted it in small capitals, meaning it is attested in both Qumran and the Samaritan Pentateuch (131). However, this form has only been *reconstructed* in the Qumran editions on the basis of the pre-Samaritan character of the text; it is not actually attested at Qumran. Precisely this problem turns up again in 24:8 (139); the cited Qumran text presents a reconstructed text within a lacuna and not the actual text found in 4QNum^{b}. Thus, rather than help the scholar, these distinguishing markings mandate additional work: the scholar engaging with Phillips' translation cannot always trust it and is thus forced to consult the editions anyway. It would be simpler to just consult the editions in the first place and avoid Phillips' book.

Turning to the material offered on the even-numbered pages (left-hand pages in the monograph), one finds explanations of terms ("the plains of Moab"; 122), reference to an extrabiblical source (the inscriptions from Tell Deir 'Alla; 124), quotes from the secondary literature (Wevers,[3] Ben-Hayyim;[4] 124), quotes from other English Bible translation (NETS; 124; Budd's commentary;[5] 128; KJV; 134; NRSV; 136), and a variety of other disparate material, often organized without rhyme or reason. For example, without explanation, Phillips begins a graphic presentation of the themes of Numbers on page 132 ("Ideal Tribes, Levites, Gender Inequality, Trek in the Wilderness, Balaam the Prophet). The previous datum was a quote from Ben-Hayyim's aforementioned grammar (130). Following the main themes, Phillips presents an overview of the contents of Numbers (132, 134), upon which follows a quote from Tyndale's translation and the translation of the KJV. Why these elements were incorporated here remains entirely mysterious. The same could be said of his "Glossary vis-à-vis Offerings" found on page 140, in a context that has nothing to do with offerings; the apposed translation consists of Num 24:13–21. In general the data offered on the even-numbered pages is often unclear or irrelevant, sometimes even incorrect.

[3] Wevers 1998.
[4] Ben-Hayyim 2000.
[5] Budd 1984.

Following the translation and explication, Phillips offers three appendices: L (readings of Smr also attested in Greek); M (readings of Smr also found in Masoretic manuscripts); and U (readings of Smr unattested elsewhere). Again, many of these differences are orthographic in nature or attest variant readings of names. Thereupon follows Phillips' chronological overview, which is structured into unclear periods: from 3500 BCE to the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE; the establishment of Samaria as a province to the end of the Cushite Dynasty in Egypt; the beginning of the 26th Dynasty in Egypt to the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 540 BCE [sic!], in which it is spuriously noted "All Semitic people speak Aramaic dialects"; Persian Jerusalem, Ptolemaic Jerusalem; Seleucid Jerusalem; Rabbinic Judaism's beginning, Judas Maccabee and Hellenized Jerusalem (ending with the Battle of Actium); the Herodian Period; and Imperial Roman Jerusalem + Byzantine Jerusalem + Islamic Jerusalem (including the death of Muhammad in 632, apparently in Jerusalem?) ending in roughly 1300 with the delineation of chapters in the Bible in Paris. As the overview shows, particularly the beginning and end of the chronology demonstrate exceptional imprecision. The combining of imperial Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Jerusalem is curious, as is the complete absence of the Babylonian period. Phillips identifies the year 586 BCE as the end of Hebrew polytheism without explaining the origin of this datum or how he can be so certain of this detail; other textual and archeological evidence could suggest otherwise.[6] The monograph presents a bibliography that is missing some fundamental literature for this topic, such as the third edition (or even the second edition, for that matter) of Emanuel Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*,[7] Gary N. Knoppers' *Jews and Samaritans*,[8] any of the works of Stefan Schorch,[9] and the most recent edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch from Tal and Florentine.[10] Additionally problematic, he references barely any literature from the past 15 years. Finally, the book concludes with an index that includes authors, subjects, and manuscripts under one rubric.

In sum, this monograph represents an incomplete attempt to cover the subject matter and does not really advance scholarship beyond the material upon which it relies. The author fails to appreciate the nuanced and difficult text-historical background of the various traditions behind his translation. Even the

[6] Cf., *e.g.*, Kratz 2013.
[7] Tov 2012
[8] Knoppers 2013
[9] *E.g.*, Schorch 2000.

proffered translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch lacks precision and cannot be regarded as trustworthy. Exegetes and scholars would be better served simply consulting the available critical editions of the various versions and the normal commentary literature. The suggested price for the volume exceeds by far what scholars or libraries should be willing to pay for it. Ultimately, no need for this book in any academic or private library presents itself.

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[10] Tal and Florentine 2010.

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