THE PLASTER TEXTS FROM KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD AND DEIR ʿALLA

AN INDUCTIVE APPROACH TO THE EMERGENCE OF NORTHWEST SEMITIC LITERARY TEXTS IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.E.

Gareth James Wearne

Bachelor of Ancient History (Hons.), Macquarie University, Sydney, 2011

Department of Ancient History
Macquarie University

2015

They are proud and wilful, but they are true-hearted, generous in thought and deed; bold but not cruel; wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs, after the manner of the children of Men before the Dark Years.

J. R. R. Tolkein, *The Two Towers*

But what if the traditional character of these structures was given more than lip service? What if traditional came actively to indicate extratextual? What if it came to refer to a reality larger than even the entire individual performance, or group of performances?

John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*

And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Shelley, *Ozymandias*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART THREE

RERENCES AND APPENDICES

ABSTRACT

This study examines the emergence of literary texts from the primarily oral milieux of the southern Levant during the first millennium B.C.E. The question of textualisation has received considerable attention in the last two decades, with particular emphasis given to the origins of the Hebrew Bible. But whereas earlier studies have tended to work heuristically— beginning at the level of the received biblical text and attempting to develop explanatory models—, the present study proceeds inductively— beginning with a particular instantiation of the phenomenon of literary text production, namely plaster wall inscriptions, and extrapolating conclusions based on these specific examples.

Working within the paradigm of an oral-literate continuum, the research focusses on two roughly contemporary case studies: the 8th century B.C.E. plaster texts from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla. For both case studies detailed epigraphic and archaeological analyses are used to assess three core questions: What was written? Who was writing? And how were the texts experienced by their audiences?

It is concluded that in the physical context of the plaster inscriptions writing served both symbolic and memorialising functions, communicating specific information to posterity and serving as a form of communal self-identification and expression. Possible numinous associations of writing are also considered along the way.

The final section includes a discussion of implications for the origins of the biblical text. It is argued that by the end of the 8th century B.C.E. there is evidence for the textualisation of stories and songs comparable to those found in the Hebrew Bible, and that the impulse toward literary text production was shaped within a larger pool of folk-traditions.

Declaration

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other
university or institution.

_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Who can begin to express the debt we owe our teachers? To Elspeth Collins and Jack Shannon, who first instructed me in historical methodology and modelled for me what it means to work as a Christian historian, thank you. Your wisdom, humility, diligence, and integrity are my constant guide.

Among the Macquarie University staff I would especially like to thank Kyle Keimer, Boyo Ockinga, and Rachel Yuen-Collingridge, for taking time to discuss aspects of my thesis and provide feedback on my written work. Among the Macquarie postgraduate community I epecially thank Andrew Pleffer, Lydia Gore-Jones, Blake Wassell, Alexandra Wrathall, Julien Cooper, Ellen Ryan, and Paul Yeates, for making time to read and

ABBREVIATIONS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

AB	Anchor Bible Commentary Series
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan*
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AION	*Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
AS	Assyriological Studies
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AuOr	*Aula orientalis*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford, 1907
BH	*Buried History*
BHLen	*Biblia Hebraica Lenigradensia*. Edited by A. Dotan. Peabody, Mass. 2001
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by K. Ellinger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
Bib	*Biblica*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BO	*Bibliotheca orientalis*
BS	The Biblical Seminar
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAL	Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon: <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/index.html>
CIS	*Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum*
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CTU	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani,*

	and Other Places. Edited by M. Dietrich, O, Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible.* Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden, 1995
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
ErIsr	*Eretz-Israel*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.* Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2d ed. Oxford, 1910
GLECS	*Comptes Rendus du Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamito-Semitiques*
GUS	Gorgias Ugaritic Series
HACL	History, Archaeology and Culture of the Levant
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stramm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994–2000
HANEM	History of the Ancient Near East Monographs
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HR	*History of Religions*
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HUCM	Monographs of the Hebrew Union College
IBHS	*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990
ICC	International Critical Commentary of the Old and New Testaments
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JAEI	*Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
Joüon	Joüon, P. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew.* Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Subsidia biblica 14/1–2. Rome, 1991
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*

KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.* H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2d ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–1969
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
MGRLL	Monographs on Greek and Roman language and literature
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PLO	Porta Linguarum Orientalium
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OIS	Oriental Institute Seminars
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
Or	*Orientalia*
OT	*Oral Tradition*
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAIS	Studies in Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and its Literature
SBLANEM	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near Eastern Monographs
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SEL	*Studi epigrafici e linguistici*
SHAJ	*Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
StudOr	Studia Orientalia
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TADAE	*Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. Edited by Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. 4 vols. Winona Lake, 1986–1999.
TC	*Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by T. J. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, D. E. Green and D. W. Stott. 14 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–2004
TS	*Theological Studies*
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Tesament*. Edited by R. L. Harris, G .L. Archer Jr., B. K. Waltke. Chicago, 2003
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*

UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*
Williams	*Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, ed. J. C. Beckman. 3rd ed. Toronto, 2007
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WSS	Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Seals*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebräistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeischrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDVP	*Zeischrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

BIBLE MANUSCRIPTS, VERSIONS, AND ANCIENT TEXTS

Ant.	Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*
Barb.	Barberini Codex; the Barberini Greek version of Habakkuk 3
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
Kajr	Kuntillet ʿAjrud
LXX	Septuagint
LXX[A]	Codex Alexandrinus
LXX[B]	Codex Vaticanus
MT	Masoretic Text
MT[A]	Aleppo Codex
MT[L]	Leningrad Codex
papMur	Papyrus manuscript from Wadi Murabbaʿat
Ḥev	manuscripts from Naḥal Ḥever
Sam. Pent.	Samaritan Pentateuch
Tg(s).	Targum(s)
Tg. Jon.	*Targum Jonathan*
Tg. Neof.	*Targum Neofiti*
Tg. Onq.	*Targum Onqelos*
Tg. Ps.-J.	*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*
Theod.	*Theodotion*
Vulg.	Vulgate

GENERAL

1.	First person
2.	Second person
3.	Third person
adj.	adjective
Akkad.	Akkadian
Ammon.	Ammonite

Aram.	Aramaic
Arab.	Arabic
BA	Biblical Aramaic
BH	Biblical Hebrew
c.	common
ca.	circa
ch(s).	chapter(s)
col(s).	column(s)
DAPT	Deir ʿAlla Plaster Text
DN(N)	Divine Name(s)
esp.	Especially
f.	feminine
gent.	Gentilic
GN	Geographic Name
Heb.	Hebrew
IA	Imperial Aramaic
idiom.	idiomatic
impf.	imperfect
inf.	infinitive
impv.	imperative
KAPT	Kuntillet ʿAjrud Plaster Texts
lit.	literally
m.	masculine
MH	Mishnaic Hebrew
m.l.	*matres lectionis*
Moab.	Moabite
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
NWS	Northwest Semitic
OA	Old Aramaic
obv.	obverse (front) of a tablet or stele
p.	plural
pf.	perfect
Phoen.	Phoenician
pl.	plate
PN(N)	Personal Name(s)
repr.	reprint
rev.	reverse (back) of a tablet or stele
s.	singular
Syr.	Syriac
v(v).	verse(s)
Ug.	Ugaritic

SIGLA

א̇	Reconstructed letter
[ ]	Lacuna
◦	Indecipherable sign

√	Root
=	Equivalent to
≈	Might equal; signifies one of several possible vocalisations
*	Hypothetical form
< >	Emendation
{ }	Scribal correction
⌞ ⌟	Consonantal emendation to MT

Map Showing Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla
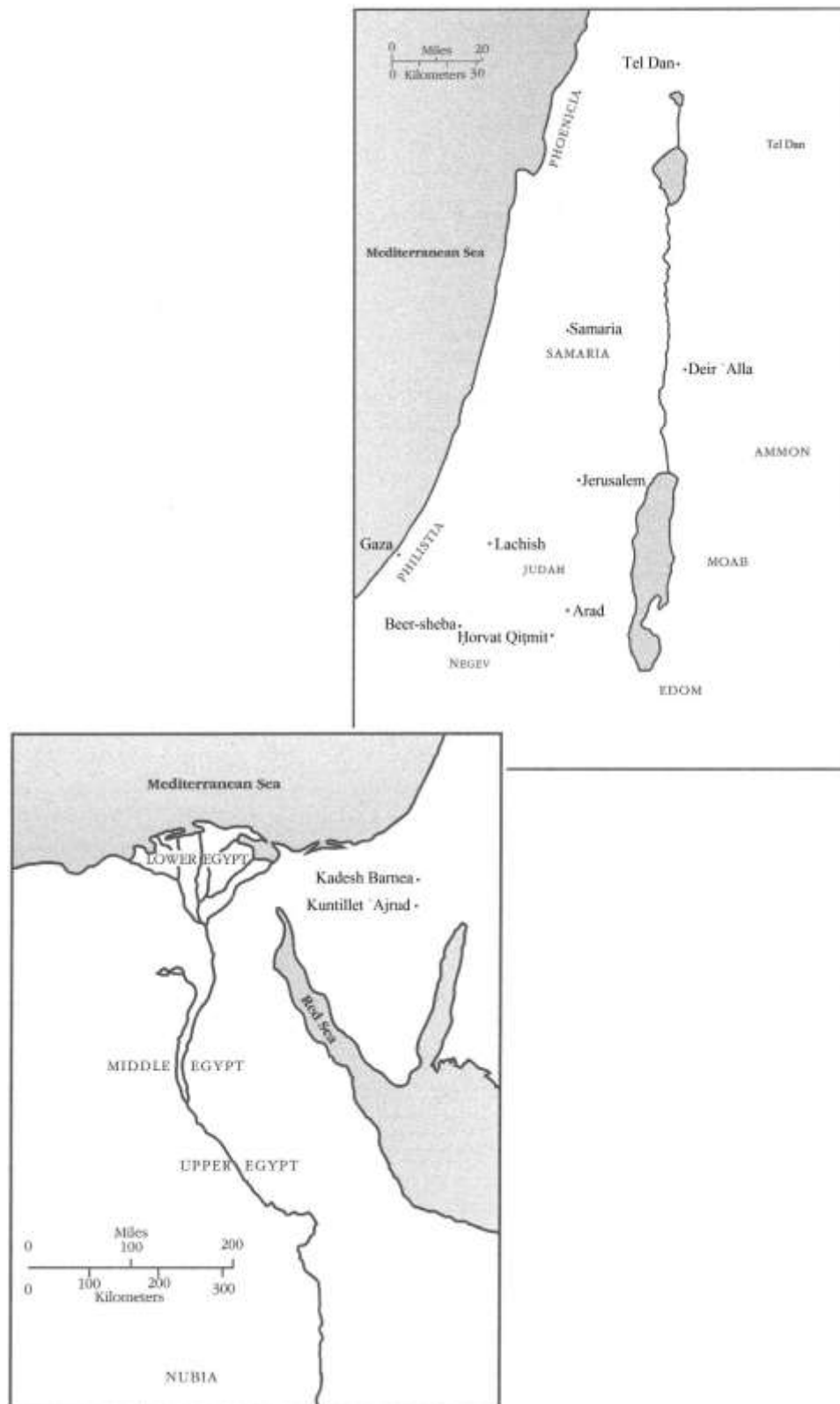
INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: THE PHENOMENON OF TEXTUALISATION

1.1. THE PROBLEM OF TEXTUALISATION

Why would a functioning oral society choose to set its traditions in writing? In other words, what could impel the tradents of a living oral tradition to supplement conventional modes of memory and performance with a written text? It is by no means inevitable that they should do so. Even with the development of chirographic technologies sufficient for the requirements of complex administrative tasks and record keeping, it is not self-evident that writing should be used to transpose and transmit traditional performance-based genres (e.g. stories, songs, genealogies, etc.).[1] As such, the phenomenon of textualisation—as it may be called—presupposes an abstracted use of writing that amounts to nothing less than a paradigmatic shift with regard to perceptions of folklore, and the potential of the written word. The purpose of the present study is to explore this phenomenon with reference to the primarily oral milieux of the Northwest Semitic cultures that inhabited the Southern Levant during the first millennium B.C.E.

---

[1] As was observed by eminent folklorist and oral theorist, the late John Miles Foley, "[a]s folklorists have long known, the mere presence of some kind or level of literacy, established perhaps by an inscription or artifact, means next to nothing as evidence for or against oral or written communication in a given context or situation. Late-twentieth-century North Americans, many of them deeply engaged in intensely literate pursuits for most of their waking hours, also participate in oral traditions that may never have been textualized"; John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1995), 72, and n.27 where he cites the examples of "folk preaching" and "tall tales".

To the extent that it is bound to questions about the authority and reliability of sacred texts, the subject of textualisation holds particular significance for the study of the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament). It should be stated at the outset, however, that this is not a thesis about biblical origins, nor is it about orality and literacy in the ancient Near East *per se*; although these are important matters with which the present study intersects. Rather, the thesis is concerned with the specialised use of writing to encode ethnic traditions, and the manner in which such emergent literary texts were encountered and experienced by their audiences. In other words, it is primarily concerned with the question: *what were early literary texts for*? In an ancillary sense, then, it is concerned *inter alia* with the context whence, and into which, the biblical text emerged. More specifically, the premise of the thesis is that through close contextual analysis of literary-epigraphic material, it is possible to shed empirical light on the uses and perception of literary texts in Iron Age Israel and Judah. As such, the thesis does not develop a general (or generalizable) model of textualisation; instead it is concerned with demonstrable uses of writing in the context of specific sets of early literary inscriptions, with a view to developing empirical and contextual controls for the wider discussions. To this end, the thesis is devoted to two complementary case-studies: namely, the plaster wall inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud (KAPT) and Deir ʿAlla (DAPT).

1.2. TEXTUALISATION IN AN ORAL-LITERATE CONTINUUM

There is an underlying assumption in the preceding paragraphs that the plaster texts emerged within a primarily oral context. This should be qualified by the observation that in each case it is impossible to determine whether the text was orally-derived (e.g. by transcription of a pre-existing song, as may have been the case for *Kajr*4.2, see Chapter 2), or whether it was composed anew in writing. Furthermore, we do not know precisely how the KAPT and DAPT were situated in relation to larger written tradition(s). It is possible that the plaster texts were themselves secondary

textual products, which were received in written form and copied onto the walls from pre-existing manuscripts. Indeed, this case has been made with regard to the DAPT in particular, chiefly on the basis of their visual configuration and the designation ספר, "scroll, book", in the superscription (see Chapter 5).[2] Consequently, we simply cannot assume *a priori* that the KAPT or the DAPT represent incipient phases in the textualisation process. Be that as it may, the KAPT and DAPT are, by any estimate, comparatively early examples of the phenomenon of literary text production in a Northwest Semitic setting. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the following chapters, both sets of inscriptions intersect in important regards with aspects of biblical literature, suggesting that they partook in a wider matrix of folklore and popular motifs. Hence, while we cannot be certain that the KAPT or DAPT had an oral pre-history, it may be safely assumed that wider oral traditions formed a primary (perhaps the primary) frame of reference for their respective audiences.

In more general terms, the texts can be viewed within the framework of an oral-literate continuum.

The concept of an oral-literate continuum arose in the last decades of the 20th century in response to the "Great Divide" mentality that had developed as an outworking of the seminal studies on oral epic by Milman Parry and Albert Lord.[3] The concept rapidly achieved the status of a

---

[2] This view has been advocated by André Lemaire especially; cf. André Lemaire, "Fragments from the Book of Balaam Found at Deir Alla", *BAR* 11/5 (1985): 38.

[3] In its earliest iterations, the concept of an oral-literate continuum is associated most closely with the British anthropologist and oral theorist Ruth Finnegan. See, for example, Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988). In particular, Finnegan was concerned with the arguments of Walter Ong and Jack Goody (among others) that the development of writing occasioned a cognitive development in literate societies, *vis*-à-*vis* non-literate or pre-literate societies, and the pejorative associations that were attached to the latter. For a brief but incisive discussion of developments and pitfalls within the Parry-Lord oral-formulaic camp, see John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1995), 1–7.

consensus in the fields of oral studies and folkloristics.[4] Rather than viewing oral and literate modes as deterministically and diametrically opposed art forms, conditioned by their respective communicative technologies, proponents of an oral-literate continuum emphasise the many and varied ways orality and textuality continue to intersect—even in modern typographic societies—in a complex multi-modal interplay.

Without question, it was Susan Niditch who did most to introduce this paradigm to the study of ancient Israel, emphasising the profound influence of an oral aesthetic on the shape of biblical literature specifically, and the world of the Hebrew Bible generally.[5] The significance of this insight was quickly recognised by others in the field, as is demonstrated by the importance placed on cognitive approaches to memory in a number of subsequent studies, and the rise of the biblical performance criticism movement.[6]

---

[4] The programmatic and paradigmatic significance of this premise can easily be appreciated by a survey of the articles in the journal *Oral Tradition*.

[5] Niditch has written many books, chapters, and articles on the topics of orality and folklore in ancient Israel, but it is her *Oral World and Written Word*, that has had the most profound impact on biblical studies; cf. Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

[6] See, for example, Raymond F. Person, Jr., *The Deuteronomic School: History, Social Setting and Literature* (SBL Studies in Ancient Literature 2; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 83–101; idem, "The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 601–09; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), *passim*; idem, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13–36. For the performance criticism movement, see the monograph series *Biblical Performance Criticism*, published by Wipf and Stock. Note, however, that the application of the continuum paradigm is not universal or uniform among biblicists. William Schniedewind, in particular, has cautioned against too rapid an abandonment of the traditional distinctions between oral and written modes, noting that different communicative technologies afford distinctive opportunities and pragmatic restrictions; cf. William M. Schniedewind, "Adrift: How the Bible Became a Book", in *In Conversation with W. M. Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book: The*

These developments in the fields of oral theory and biblical studies have several important implications: first, by problematizing the evolutionist presuppositions of the "Great Divide" paradigm (i.e. that "oral" equals early and unsophisticated), they emphasise the importance of oral artistry, and the capacity of primarily oral societies to generate a "high culture". Second, in a related development, they undermine the teleological view that written literature is an inevitable consequence of the technology of writing. Third, they discredit the (often implicit) assumption that oral and textual modes tend to behave in monolithic ways. Fourth, and most importantly, they underscore the fact that oral traditions do not cease to exist the moment they are committed to writing; rather, texts often continue in a mutually informing relationship with the oral traditions from which they are derived.

But, notwithstanding the tremendous utility and explanatory potential of the paradigm, the descriptive power of the oral-literate continuum suffers from a terminological weakness. That is because the term "continuum" entails an implied linearity. This limitation is amply demonstrated by Niditch's attempts to situate texts at either the oral or literate ends of the continuum. In raising this objection, I do not wish to impugn Niditch's work; she is sensitive to the issues at hand.[7] Nor do I wish to imply that there is no distinction between oral and literate modes; clearly each has its own conventions and affords different communicative opportunities. My contention is simply that at one level, when classifying and describing texts, the model of a continuum can become unduly prescriptive, and runs the risk of enshrining precisely the binarism it was designed to combat.

Textualization of Ancient Israel (Cambridge, 2003) (ed. Gary N. Knoppers), *JHS* 5 (2005): 47.

[7] See for example, Susan Niditch, "Oral Register in the Biblical Libretto: Towards a Biblical Poetic", *OT* 10 (1995): 387–408; idem, "The Challenge of Israelite Epic", in *A Companion to Ancient Epic* (ed. John Miles Foley; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 277–87.

One way around the impasse is to frame the questions of textualisation and textuality in terms of *register*. The concept of register is adapted from the social semiotic theories of M. A. K. Halliday, who defined it as "the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type".[8] According to Halliday,

> Language also varies according to the functions it is being made to serve: what people are actually doing, in the course of which there is talking, or writing, involved; who the people are that are taking part in whatever is going on (in what statuses and roles they are appearing); and what exactly the language is achieving, or being used to achieve in the process. These three variables (what is going on; who are taking part; and what role the language is playing) are referred to as FIELD, TENOR, and MODE; and they collectively determine the functional variety, or register, of the language that is being used.[9]

For Halliday, then, communicative acts, whether spoken or written, are inherently functional and situational. The appeal of this conceptualisation is that it supplies a terminology that is at once precise enough to satisfy the requirements of classification with variable degrees of specificity (e.g. an oral poetic register, or a literary register), and dynamic enough to allow for interplay and mutual influence between registers and modalities.[10]

1.3. JOHN MILES FOLEY AND THE IMMANENT TRADITION

Within the field of oral studies, the concept of register is most closely associated with the work of John Miles Foley.[11] In a ground-breaking

---

[8] M. A. K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (Baltimore, Md.: University Park Press, 1978), 111.

[9] M. A. K. Halliday, *Spoken and Written Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 44.

[10] Ibid, 45.

[11] Note that Niditch was herself deeply influenced by the work of her colleague, Foley, and the concept of an "oral register" features prominently in her work; see, for example, Susan Niditch, "Oral Register in the Biblical Libretto", 387–408.

reconceptualisation of the processes by which meaning is produced in oral performance, Foley took the functional approach of Halliday and combined it with receptionalist theories developed in the field of literary criticism, and a keen sensitivity to the importance of situational and environmental context (in his terms, the "performance arena") for the reception and interpretation of oral performance.[12] This led him to posit a model of performance and reception that, by extension, has profound implications for the uses and function of writing in primarily oral societies.

At the heart of Foley's model is the conviction that audiences, or more particularly their horizons of expectation, serve an important role as co-creators in the production of meaning.[13] Thus, building on the work of literary theorist, Wolfgang Iser, Foley remarked:

> the reader equipped to respond to textual signals must also be ready to bridge the gaps of indeterminacy that exist in all works of fiction ... it is not only the reception of positive, content-laden signals that constitutes the reader's interpretative charge, but also the "emendation" of apparent lacunae that the author has left in the textual map as a natural and necessary part of the script for performance of the work.[14]

It is a corollary of this conceptualisation that the expectations and experiences of the audience are an important consideration when approaching a performance or a text.

---

[12] See Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, esp. 15–17, 42–47, 47–49, 49–53.

[13] At the analytical level, this is strictly speaking a matter of *implied audience*, equivalent to Wolfgang Iser's *implied reader*: "An *implied reader*… is a projection from the text and is perceived by the reader as acting out the role of an ideal reader figure, although the real reader may not actually assume this role. In ironic texts, the implied reader position is understood to be filled with somebody capable of enjoying the ironical remarks by the narrator, and the real reader will ideally take on that role"; Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London: Routledge, 2009), 23; cf. Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 43.

[14] Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 43. Note that this premise can be generalised beyond the narrow confines of fiction to embrace other genres and registers, including traditional stories and songs.

Foley's great insight was to recognise the vital role of the immanent tradition in supplying the interpretive keys necessary for an audience to fill these gaps. According to Foley, "immanence may be defined as *the set of metonymic, associative meanings institutionally delivered and received through a dedicated idiom or register either during or on the authority of traditional oral performance*".[15] In other words, Foley was concerned with the way meaning is created in performance through a range of liminal and subliminal associations, so that various performance strategies including lexical choices and the employment of keyed phrases (and, in the present context, we might add medium) have a metonymic, or allusive, signification. Consequently, in every performance there is a reciprocal relationship between the audience and performer, their shared experience both within the context of the performance at hand and also all performances that have come before, and, ultimately, with the wider pool of tradition. To take an example from Foley, "under the aegis of such a reconception, [the formulaic epithet] 'grey eyed Athena' would serve as an approved traditional channel or pathway for summoning the Athena not just of this or that particular moment, but rather of all moments in the experience of audience and poet".[16]

To the extent that a written text intersects with, and references, the immanent tradition, oral and written modes are commensurable. Foley was quick to recognise the implications of this for emergent textuality, noting that if an orally-derived text is, in some sense, an active remembrance of oral tradition, then our interpretive strategies must endeavour to take

---

[15] John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 7 (italics in the original). Foley also observed that "[t]he argument proceeds similarly for the vast array of traditional structures outside the noun-epithet formulas, and beyond even the larger category of the phraseology as a whole. That is, the traditional phrase or scene or story pattern has an indexical meaning *vis-à-vis* the immanent tradition; each integer reaches beyond the confines of the individual performance or oral-derived text to a set of traditional ideas much larger and richer than any single performance or text"; Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 6.

[16] Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 5.

account of that continuation in its fullest rhetorical implications.[17] The question then becomes, how does a text continue the tradition of reception? Furthermore, he noted that:

> The responsibility for attention to this question does not derive from our knowledge or hypothesis that the work under consideration reaches us as a first-generation transcription of an oral performance, but from the evidence of an oral tradition in its background and some demonstration of the work's continuing dependence upon that oral tradition.[18]

As will be seen in the following pages, these conditions are satisfied by both the KAPT and the DAPT, and this brings us full-circle to the observation that the texts functioned within an oral-literate continuum, not only in the sense of traditional registers (their form or texture), but also in the sense of their content (including traditional referentiality).

In accordance with the foregoing considerations, the following discussion of textualisation will be predicated on the paradigm of an oral-literate continuum, in which written texts were both influenced by, and continued to influence, the immanent tradition, while the plaster texts themselves will be treated as instantiations of specific written registers.

1.4. SOME DEFINITIONS

Before proceeding to a discussion of past approaches to the problem of textualisation and the methods employed in the present study, it will be beneficial to establish a number of basic definitions.[19]

In what follows, the term *text* will refer to a specific instance of writing, which has a spatial and visual presence.

---

[17] Ibid, 79.

[18] Ibid, 79.

[19] The following definitions pertain specifically to the terminology used (in a fairly pragmatic way) in the present discussion; they are not intended as general categories applicable at the wider level of theoretical discourse about the nature of literature.

The terms *literary* and *literature* can, on one level, be defined functionally, according to the conventional papyrological distinction between "documentary" and "literary" texts—that is, the distinction between occasional documents intended for a limited circulation (e.g. letters, tax records, lists, etc.), and works written for a wider audience (e.g. poetry, or narrative prose). At the same time, the concept of "literature" is also wider and more nebulous. In this broad sense, literature entails far more than a single text; it also pertains to a conventionalised system comprising reified vocabulary, themes, and structures, one of the chief characteristics of which is the quality of durability in the sense of transgenerational reiteration. It is in this broad sense that we can speak of a literary canon or literary register. Importantly, according to this definition, a new composition may qualify as literary if it coheres to the conventions of the literary register. Furthermore, when defined in this way, literature can be composed and transmitted either in written form or in oral performance.[20] A *literary text*, then, is any text that contains a literary composition, either in part (i.e. an excerpt) or in full.

According to this definition, the concept of literature is closely related to tradition. By *tradition*, I mean a system of customs and lore that is indexically related to a particular social and performance setting, and which holds durational significance for the community within which it is transmitted. In this sense, *tradition* refers both to the contents of transmitted lore and to the horizons of expectation within which, and according to which, it is interpreted.

Finally, the term *textualisation* will refer to the processes of text production, particularly as this pertains to the encoding of oral tradition in written form. Defined narrowly, textualisation is the act of committing a particular composition (e.g. a story or song) to writing. Defined broadly, it is a part of a generalised process whereby a number of literary works are (re)produced as texts. In its broadest sense, the phenomenon of

---

[20] Cf. Ruth Finnegan, "The How of Literature", *OT* 20 (2005): 164–87.

textualisation can refer to the development whereby chirographic and typographic technologies supplant oral performance as the prevailing mode of transmission; although, as discussed above, this does not necessarily entail the cessation of the oral tradition.

1.5. APPROACHES TO TEXTUALISATION IN THE STUDY OF THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The phenomenon of textualisation was not unique (or even original) to the secondary states of the southern Levant. Indeed, in the older neighbouring cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia sophisticated uses of writing, including what may be termed literary genres, were already well developed by the first millennium B.C.E.[21] Therefore, the likelihood that these cultures influenced the rise of the textuality in the Iron Age Levant must be seriously entertained. Nevertheless, because the focus of the present study is on the textualisation of ethnic traditions and the function of such texts within their immediate contexts, it is not enough to simply adduce the existence of comparable literary forms, as though this somehow explains the phenomenon. As such, primary attention should be given to geographically, temporally, and culturally proximate examples of emergent textuality. Within these parameters, the Hebrew Bible occupies a special place as the most extensive witness to literary text production.

The problem of textualisation has long been recognised by biblical scholars. In what follows below I provide an overview of major developments in approaches to textualisation in the field of biblical studies since the beginning of the 20th century. This necessarily brief sketch is intended to serve as a basic introduction to some of the wider issues with which the present study intersects.

Already in the works of the earliest form critics, the problem of textualisation arose as a natural consequence of the emphasis placed on

---

[21] See for example the discussions in Miriam Lichtheim, *Egyptian Literature: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1973); Marc van der Mieroop, *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History* (London: Routledge, 1999).

"primitive" oral traditions.[22] According to Gunkel, the drawing together of individual stories (*Märchen*) into larger complexes (*Sagen*) began already in the oral pre-history of the Bible.[23] Gunkel saw the textualisation of these complexes as a project of conservation, conducted by many writers over a protracted period. Thus, in *The Legends of Genesis* he conjectured, "the writing down of the popular traditions probably took place at a period which was generally disposed to authorship and when there was a fear that the oral traditions might die out if they were not reduced to writing".[24] For Gunkel, this was couched within a larger concern about the evolution of an historical genre in the time of the monarchy. Thus, in Gunkel's view, the culmination of the textualisation process was history writing (*Geschichtsschreibung*), which, he believed, existed only in written form among small circles of literate elites.[25]

In its time, Gunkel's schema for the evolution of biblical traditions was innovative and it held a pervasive influence over biblical scholarship for several generations, particularly in the Germanic schools.[26] As a consequence, the question of textualisation became intimately bound to the rise of history writing. This development was given fullest expression in the tradition-historical approach pioneered by Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth.

For von Rad, textualisation was an outworking of a cognitive development, marked by the distinctively Hebrew capacity to "think

---

[22] I use the term "primitive" advisedly in an attempt to highlight the evolutionist assumptions underpinning the work of the early form critics. It should be noted that, overall, there is a sense of deterministic inevitability—tinted by the modernist ideal of rational enlightenment—that pervades Gunkel's work.

[23] Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (trans. W. H. Carruth; Chicago, Ill.: Open Court, 1901), 123.

[24] Ibid, 123.

[25] See, for example, Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 1–3; cf. the discussion in John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1983), 210–13.

[26] For an excellent discussion see Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 209–20.

historically" (i.e. "causally").[27] According to von Rad, such historical thinking was conditioned by (1) the ancient Israelites' preoccupation with their own origins; (2) the development of a narrative style; and (3) the belief that God actively intervened in human affairs.[28] According to this view, textualisation, in the form of history writing, was essentially an analytical or interpretative enterprise that grew out of older (oral) aetiologies and heroic sagas. In von Rad's opinion, the first example of this new genre was the historical narrative about the succession to the throne of David,[29] which, he argued, was composed in the court of Solomon.[30]

The emphasis on causational thinking also featured at the heart of the Deuteronomistic hypothesis articulated by Noth.[31] Here we must draw a distinction between the sources used by the Deuteronomist(s)—including annalistic material and short orally-derived texts commensurate with those posited by Gunkel—and the final redacted work, concerned with the theological interpretation of Israel's history in the period from the Conquest to the Exile. Ultimately, for Noth's Deuteronomist, writing from the vantage point of the Exile, history writing served a moralising, didactic purpose.

However, notwithstanding the explanatory power of the models developed by the form and tradition critics, these early studies are marred by a significant oversight; namely, the question of the texts' intended

---

[27] Gerhard von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel", in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. E. W. Trueman Dickins; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), 166.

[28] von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel", 168–71.

[29] In delineating the succession narrative, von Rad basically accepted the earlier reconstruction in Leonard Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids*; English translation: *The Succession to the Throne of David* (trans. Michael D. Rutter and David M. Gunn; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982).

[30] von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel",176–204.

[31] Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. Bernhard W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

audiences. Just who were they meant to address? Further, how widely, and by what processes, were they disseminated? These fundamental questions have largely gone unanswered in subsequent iterations of the Deuteronomistic hypothesis.[32]

In Frank Moore Cross' influential revision of the Deuteronomistic hypothesis, the presuppositions underlying the discourse around textualisation took a major turn. By positing an earlier Josianic redaction (Dtr^1) that presented the reforms of King Josiah as a new hope for Israel, Cross introduced the concept that text production might have served an apologetic purpose for ideological legitimisation.[33] Textualisation, in the form of history writing, was no longer a retrospective interpretive process as it was for Noth's Deuteronomist; now it was a creative enterprise that could serve as a sort of ideological propaganda. However, questions remain about the identity of the intended audience, and the effectiveness of writing as communicative medium in a context of limited literacy. Nevertheless, the seed had been sown, and it quickly took root, finding its fullest expression in the so-called minimalist movement that arose in the last decades of the 20th century.[34]

In 1996 Susan Niditch fundamentally altered the tenor of the discussion, with the publication of her monograph *Oral World and Written Word*. Shifting attention away from the homogenising tendencies of source and redaction criticisms, Niditch argued the need for greater complexity, emphasising the dynamic interplay of oral and literary qualities in the biblical text. For her part, Niditch proposed four models of textualisation

---

[32] The notable exception to this oversight is in the work Raymond Person, see below.

[33] Cf. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 281–85.

[34] Consider, for example, the following comments by Lemche: "The Israelite nation as explained by the biblical writers has little in the way of a historical background. It is a highly ideological construct created by ancient scholars of Jewish tradition in order to legitimize their own religious community and its religio-political claims on land and religious exclusivity"; Neils Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1998), 165–66.

that might account for the origins and function of portions of the biblical corpus:

> (1) the oral performance, which is dictated to a writer who preserves the text in an archive, creating a fixed text out of an event; (2) the slow crystallization of a pan-Hebraic literary tradition through many performances over centuries of increasingly pan-Israelite tales to audiences with certain expectations and assumptions about shared group identity; late in the process authors write down the shared stories; (3) a written imitation of oral-style literature to create portions of the tradition; (4) the production of a written text that is excerpted from another written text by a writer who deftly edits or recasts the text in accordance with his own view of Israelite identity.[35]

According to Niditch, none of these is, or could be, a complete model for the composition of the Hebrew Bible, but each might have been a viable process contributing to its final shape. Ultimately, Niditch's great contribution was to demonstrate the variegated nature of biblical literature, and the need for sensitivity to the interactive continuation of oral tradition alongside biblical literature.[36] Yet more importantly, she drew attention to the limiting role of tradition as a control in the creative processes of textualisation.

In 2004 the question of textualisation of biblical tradition was put firmly back on the agenda with the publication of a short but provocative study by William Schniedewind, entitled *How the Bible Became a Book:*

---

[35] Niditch, *Oral World Written Word*, 130.

[36] In later works Niditch was critical of what she perceived to be attempts to "[tuck] notions of orality more safely under some of the old assumptions about documents and intertextuality"; e.g. *Susan Niditch*, "Hebrew Bible and Oral Literature: Misconceptions and New Directions", in *The Interface Between Orality and Writing* (eds. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote; *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 260; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 8–9.

The Textualization of Ancient Israel.[37] Where Niditch had emphasised synchronic variation, Schniedewind was primarily concerned with the diachronic, historical processes that had led to textualisation. For Schniedewind, the recording of tradition in writing was primarily a political tool:

> The making of books and the appeal to the authority of writing was largely derived from the institutions of state and temple. Writing was the domain of the royal court and then the priestly aristocracy. Writing was used as a tool of government and then taken over as a tool of religious authority and orthodoxy.[38]

What is particularly interesting in the present context is Schniedewind's emphasis on the socio-political changes of the late-8th century as a watershed in the phenomenon of textualisation in ancient Israel and Judah.

> A major transition in ancient Israel began in the late eighth century B.C.E. Writing became both more centralized and more widespread in Judah; as the society became urbanized, the economy more complex and the government more substantial. Writing had always been a projection of royal power, and now this power extended to the collection of a great library in Jerusalem (just as the Assyrians and the Egyptians were doing during this same period). King Hezekiah desired to create a kingdom similar to the legendary (in his days) kingdom of David and Solomon.[39]

A second major theme of Schniedewind's work was the metaphysical dimension of writing: "[w]riting had a numinous power, especially in pre-literate societies. Writing was not used, at first, to canonize religious praxis, but to engender religious awe. Writing was a gift

---

[37] William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[38] Ibid, 212.

[39] Ibif, 191, see also the longer discussion in Chapters 3, "Writing and the State", and 5, "Hezekiah and the Beginning of Biblical Literature".

of the gods. It had supernatural powers to bless and to curse".[40] According to this conception, the materiality and non-rational functions of writing are important considerations that should not be overlooked in the study of textuality (for a discussion in the present study, see especially Appendix B).[41]

The political dimension of writing was also emphasised by Seth Sanders in his 2009 monograph, *The Invention of Hebrew*, and in a series of related articles.[42] Taking a wide comparative and diachronic approach, Sanders argued that the emergence of "vernacular" texts (i.e. native texts written in local dialects) was intimately related to the rise of the early alphabets:

> Excavated texts show that Ugarit by the thirteenth century and Israel-Judah by the eighth century had produced standardized written forms of their spoken regional languages. The creation of these literatures represents an act of political will of an unprecedented sort ... This is to say that they represent deliberate attempts to produce a native literature in a native language and writing system, over against an international cosmopolitan *lingua franca*, Babylonian.[43]

---

[40] Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 24. See also idem, "Writing and Book Production in the Ancient Near East", in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From Beginnings to 600* (eds. James C. Paget and Joachim Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 48–52.

[41] For a similar discussion in the context of Classical Greece, see Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. Chapter 5, "Beyond the Rationalist View of Writing".

[42] Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2009); idem, "Writing and Early Iron Age Israel: Before National Scripts, Beyond Nations and States", in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit abecedary in Context* (eds. R. E. Tappy and P. K. McCarter Jr; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 97–112; idem, "What was the Alphabet For? The Rise of Written Vernaculars and the Making of Israelite National Literature", *Maarav* 11 (2004): 25–26.

[43] Sanders, "What was the Alphabet For?", 26.

According to Sanders, the rise of the alphabet and localised script traditions in the developing Levantine states during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages fundamentally altered the conceptual landscape, fostering a new sense of cultural identity and distinctiveness.[44]

For Sanders, a pivotal moment in the story of the rise of vernacular texts came during the 9th century in the form of royal monumental inscriptions, proclaiming the *magnalia regis*, and cast in the voice of the king.[45] Now, to the extent that these monumental texts address a specific political context at a particular moment in time, they do not strictly qualify as literary in the sense defined above.[46] Nevertheless, they signal an important transformation with regard to the perceived potential of writing, in a period shortly before the KAPT and DAPT were written on their respective walls.[47]

The sudden and dramatic appearance of the royal monumental inscriptions in the 9th century B.C.E. also features in a forthcoming article

---

[44] "The early alphabet was not universalizing, but particularizing—precisely the opposite of what we would expect from the conventional story of the alphabet. It would have been difficult, even impossible, to use this alphabet anywhere but home. Rather than being universal, the texts were designed to be read within a strictly limited region"; Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 56.

[45] "Historical narrative first appears in West Semitic during a broad historical moment of around fifty years, across a region from Anatolia through Syria in the North down to Jordan in the South. This Early wave consists of no less than five known inscriptions, all most likely from the last third of the ninth century B.C.E. (though two might be slightly later, from the early eighth). The suddenness, breadth, and uniformity with which a new genre appears at on stroke in a set of newly written languages can hardly be an accident of discovery. At once we witness something new entering the world and recognize it as the transformation of something else." Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 114.

[46] Note, especially, that the historical presentations these monuments contain have more to do with the exploits of the king, addressed to the political exigencies of the immediate moment, rather than popular traditions transmitted over generations.

[47] It should be reiterated that we cannot be certain that the physical plaster texts were the incipient forms of the respective texts.

by Brian Schmidt.[48] In Schmidt's view, one of the earliest and most important examples of "lengthy" literary text production in the southern Levant is the Mesha inscription, which, he argues, was a local emulation of the Aramean imperialising practice of erecting victory monuments in conquered territory; a practice that was, in turn, inspired by Neo-Assyrian prototypes.[49] Thus, the production of literary texts was, for Schmidt, initially a result of external influence, and related to the rhetoric of power. This proposition has particular significance for the present study, because Schmidt identifies the DAPT as a product of the same socio-political situation. That is, he argues that the DAPT was written in a (local?) Aramean dialect as an expression of Aram's recently acquired control of Ammon-Gilead and the regional market economy.[50] By framing this expression of hegemonic authority in the form of an oracular tradition familiar to the local populations (cf. the biblical oracles against the nations), the writer claimed divine legitimation, superordinate to local religious traditions.[51] In this, Schmidt's argument approximates the earlier arguments of Erhard Blum, who raised the possibility that the DAPT contained originally disparate traditions reconfigured by Aram-Damascus

---

[48] Brian B. Schmidt, "Memorializing Conflict: Toward an Iron Age 'Shadow' History of Israel's Earliest Literature", In *Literacy, Orality and Literary Production in the Southern Levant: Contextualizing Sacred Writing in Early Israel* (*SBLAIL*) (forthcoming).

[49] Note that Schmidt's working definition differs from mine in the emphasis he places on length. This led him to explicitly exclude the KAPT from his primary data-set: "Such lengthy literary texts in the epigraphic corpus should also be distinguished from much shorter literary texts lithe the early 8th century, partially preserved, six-line text (a hymn?) from Kuntillet Ajrud, or the later non-literary, eleven-line epigraphic production, Arad ostracon 31, a palimpsest list of grain allocations. The first is very brief and fragmentary, though literary, while the second is twice as long but non-literary in character"; Schmidt, "Memorializing Conflict", 2. However, given paradigmatic implications of the phenomenon textualisation, discussed above, I believe that it is quality, not quantity, that should be the determining factor when appraising the evidence for literary textuality in this period.

[50] Schmidt, "Memorializing Conflict", 12.

[51] Schmidt, "Memorializing Conflict", 12.

for the purpose of the acculturation of the local elites.[52] The implications of this are profound, because it suggests that the textualisation of local traditions in the southern Levant was ultimately derived from an external precedent, and was, in some sense, imposed on the local populations. This may be correct. However, as I will argue in Part 2, the evidence that the DAPT were written in Aramaic by an Aramean scribe is not, in my view, compelling. Yet, even so, the complex socio-political interconnections of the 9th–8th centuries were doubtless an important factor in the story of textualisation.

There is one other model that deserves to be discussed at this juncture; that is, the view that the textualisation was closely connected with the educational curricula of scribal schools. This view has been championed by David Carr, Karel van der Toorn, and Raymond Person, among others.[53] At the heart of the model is the conviction, based on analogy with the better documented cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, that the primary loci for the composition and transmission of literary texts were the schools attached to scribal guilds. In many ways this is an attractive position, particularly with regard to the transmission, redaction, and canonisation of long-duration texts. However, the model does not, of itself, shed much light on the processes of, and impulse behind, textualisation, and its explanatory power is greatly reduced when it approaches the question of nascent textuality.

---

[52] Ehard Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla Vorschläge zur Rekonstruktion mit historisch-kritischen Anmerkungen", Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt: Feschrift für Reiner Albertz zu Seinem 65. Geburtstag (eds. Ingo Kottsieper, Rüdiger Schmitt, and Jacob Wöhrle; *AOAT* 350 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 574–601. Note, however, that Schmidt does not affirm Blum's source critical conclusions.

[53] See, especially, Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Person, *The Deuteronomic School*. However, note that Person was particularly interested questions of redaction, rather than initial composition.

1.6. THE WRITING ON THE WALL

The most striking characteristic of the discourse surrounding textualisation, especially during the last decade, is the plurality of approaches and the ensuing diversity of conclusions. Rather than a clear consensus, we are left with a number of questions: Did textualisation serve a political purpose as a tool of ideological persuasion? Did it primarily take place in the context of scribal education? Was textualisation associated with religious institutions or with the state (if such a distinction can be made), or both? Were the writers principally concerned to record and memorialise the received tradition, or did textualisation involve a creative, compositional element? To what extent did the immanent tradition determine the form and contents of emergent texts? And, perhaps most importantly, who were the text's intended audience(s)?

Clearly, what is needed in order to sift through this plurality is some sort of contextual control. That is, demonstrable instances of literary text production where the context of reception is known and logical inferences can be drawn about the text's audience(s) and function. It is precisely for this reason that KAPT and DAPT have been selected as case studies. This is especially timely, since, with the recent publication of the archaeological material and inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud (after a delay of some 35 years), evidence of an unprecedented quality and quantity is now available.[54]

In many ways the plaster texts from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla are exceptionally well-suited as case studies for the question at hand. First, an analogous use of writing with ink on plaster is attested in Deuteronomy 27:2–8, when Moses instructed the elders of Israel to erect an altar on Mount Ebal and to inscribe the words of the law on plastered stones. Consequently, in terms of the technology of writing, it is possible to establish a direct line of continuity with a custom described in the Hebrew

---

[54] See Zeʾev Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border* (ed. Liora Freud; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012).

Bible.[55] Second, as will be discussed in the following chapters, the contents of both sets of inscriptions have numerous points of intersection with biblical traditions. Third, the KAPT and DAPT share remarkable similarities with each other in terms of their physical presentation and content, making them ideally suited for comparative analysis. Thus, both sets of inscriptions were written on the plaster that covered the walls of their respective rooms, both were accompanied by pictorial designs, in both cases the writers used a combination of red and black inks, and at both sites the rooms in which the plaster texts were discovered were lined with benches (see Chapters 4 and 7 respectively).

However, the plaster texts also present difficulties of their own; chiefly in the matter of medium. Put simply, because the KAPT and DAPT were display texts written on walls, they share a specialised range of functions, which are distinct from the movable papyrus or leather scrolls that are assumed to lie behind the biblical texts (cf. Jeremiah 36). In general terms, such display inscriptions can be loosely identified with four overlapping functions. These will be treated in greater detail when considering the inscriptions in later chapters. The four functions are:

1) *Denotative*: the text serves to communicate a specific set of information; e.g. the historical accounts in the Siloam Tunnel Inscription, and the Tell Dan, Mesha, and Kilamuwa inscriptions. Often this is associated with a commemorative or memorialising function.

---

[55] Note that the parallel text in Josh 8:30–32 seems to be corrupt and it is the altar itself that is inscribed. Later parallels for the phenomenon of writing on walls are known: e.g. Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, II.6; *m. Roš Haš.* II.8–9; Ben Sira 22:17. I am indebted to Stephen Llewelyn for these references. Note also that Lawrence Stager has argued that the standing stones at Shechem might have been coated with plaster and inscribed, drawing parallels with both Deut 27:2–4 and the DAPT; cf. Lawrence E. Stager, "The Shechem Temple", *BAR* 29/4 (2003): 26–31, 33–35, 66, 68–69; I am indebted to Gerrit van der Kooij for this reference.

2) *Connotative/emblematic*: in this case it is not so much the words themselves that are significant but, the connotations they evoke. In the example of royal inscriptions above, allusions to specific military conquests also stand *pars pro toto* for the exploits of the monarch in a more general sense, thereby conveying an implicit message about the military prowess and dominance of the ruler. In this regard the materiality (i.e. location, scale, iconography, and medium) of the inscription may also be important; e.g. the Tell Dan Stele, which was erected in conquered territory as a visual symbol of Aramean hegemony, or the Mesha Stele, symbolising Mesha's piety and military superiority.

3) *Numinous*: this function is harder to determine archaeologically or epigraphically. One manifestation of this function relates to apotropaic or protective functions; e.g. the Arslan Tash plaques with their incantation texts for protection of the house.

4) *Ornamental*: this views writing as aesthetic in a purely decorative sense, without depending directly on the information contained within the text.

The specialised nature of these functions mandates a high degree of caution when attempting to move beyond the plaster texts themselves and draw general inferences about the phenomenon of textualisation.

1.7. AIMS AND METHODS

In order to present the evidence in as systematic a manner as possible, the thesis will be divided into two parts corresponding to the two case studies. Part 1 will consider the KAPT, and Part 2 will consider the DAPT. The overarching method of both parts will be close contextual analysis, framed in terms of the audiences' experiences, and what this reveals about the function(s) of the plaster texts.

According to the receptionalist perspective discussed above, the environmental and situational context of the KAPT and DAPT (i.e. what

activities were conducted in the space) forms an essential frame of reference, equivalent to both the format of the text (i.e. its materiality and visual-semiotic configuration) and its content (i.e. its denotative function and its connotations vis-à-vis the immanent tradition). It stands to reason, then, that integrated consideration of these three variables (i.e. format, content, and situation) can be used to predict (adapting a Hallidayan concept) the purpose the texts were intended to serve.[56]

To this end, the two case studies will both be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will focus on the question: what was written? Specifically, it will explore the form and content of the texts (both literary and non-literary) in order to develop a holistic overview of textual activity at each site, and consider the ways in which the plaster texts intersected with the immanent tradition. The second chapter will explore the question: who was writing? That is, it will be concerned with aspects of each text's format as encoded in dialect and script. This will be approached via linguistic and palaeographic analyses, with a view to circumscribing the socio-linguistic traditions with which the plaster texts were affiliated. The third chapter in each section will consider the question: how were the texts experienced by their audience(s)? The focus of these chapters will be a detailed spatial analysis of the physical context in which the plaster texts were encountered. The governing principle behind this spatial analysis will be interactive. That is, consideration of the practical constraints

---

[56] In Halliday's terms: "[t]he participants of a culture make use of this close relationship between the text and the situation as a basis for their own interaction. I have used the term 'prediction' to refer to this, and it is perhaps important to make one point clear. I am not saying, of course, that either the participant in the situation, or the linguist looking over his or her shoulder, can predict the text in the sense of actually guessing in advance what exactly what is going to be said or written; obviously not. What I am saying is that we can and do (and must) make inferences from the situation to the text, about the kinds of meaning that are likely to be exchanged; and also inferences from the text to the situation"; M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social Semiotic Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 34–38.

determining an audience's ability to interact with the text, particularly as this is indicated by lines of sight. In the event that interaction seems impractical, other possibilities (e.g. symbolic or numinous functions) will be considered. It might be objected that this method favours a pragmatic paradigm, which presupposes a human audience, and relegates the metaphysical dimensions of writing to secondary importance. However, it is the only sure basis on which an empirical approach can be founded, and allows us to avoid the precipitous step of assuming, from the outset, a magical or numinous function that cannot be verified. Even so, this might seem to unduly limit the scope of discussion, and will not be entirely satisfactory to all readers. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it will provide fresh insights and, in due course, generate new discussion.

The last section (Part 3) will present a series of individual and comparative conclusions relating to the respective functions of the KAPT and DAPT. Chief among these are the inferences that the plaster texts served an aesthetic purpose, giving physical and enduring expression to the activities conducted within their respective spaces, and that, at both sites, textualisation was inherently (if indirectly) associated with religious activities. Finally, a number of generalised inferences will be considered, with regard to the phenomenon of textualisation and the origins of the Hebrew Bible, and new lines of enquiry will be proposed.

The method of translation employed throughout the thesis is as literal as practicable—sometimes at the expense of English style—while maintaining the texture and literary quality of the original texts. Where vocalisation is called for, my policy has been to follow the Tiberian system. This is not a perfect solution, but it is a viable proxy for a fully realised historical phonology, and it is adequate for representational purposes. Departures from this system are noted and explained wherever necessary.

Finally, in a more general sense, it is not my intention to produce new editions of the KAPT and DAPT. Both sets of texts have been published in full, and vast bodies of secondary literature have grown

around them.[57] With this in mind, the epigraphic remarks in the following chapters are principally limited to matters that have a bearing on the function and purpose of the texts, and to the elucidation of my position with regard to disputed readings and issues of interpretation. Nevertheless, I have ventured to propose several new restorations and interpretations along the way in the hope that these might be found acceptable.

---

[57] For the *editiones principes* see Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*; J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla* (Documenta et monumenta Orientis antiqui 19; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976).

PART ONE

═ KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD ═

Fig.2.1—Location map of the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions

Building A

Building B

Incised on stone: 1.1–1.4

Incised on pottery: 2.1–2.28

Inscribed on pottery: 3.1–3.17

    On pithos Ⓐ : 3.1–3.5

    On pithos Ⓑ : 3.6–3.15

Inscribed on plaster: 4.1–4.5

K. Ajrud
J. Dekel
Shatil

0   5m
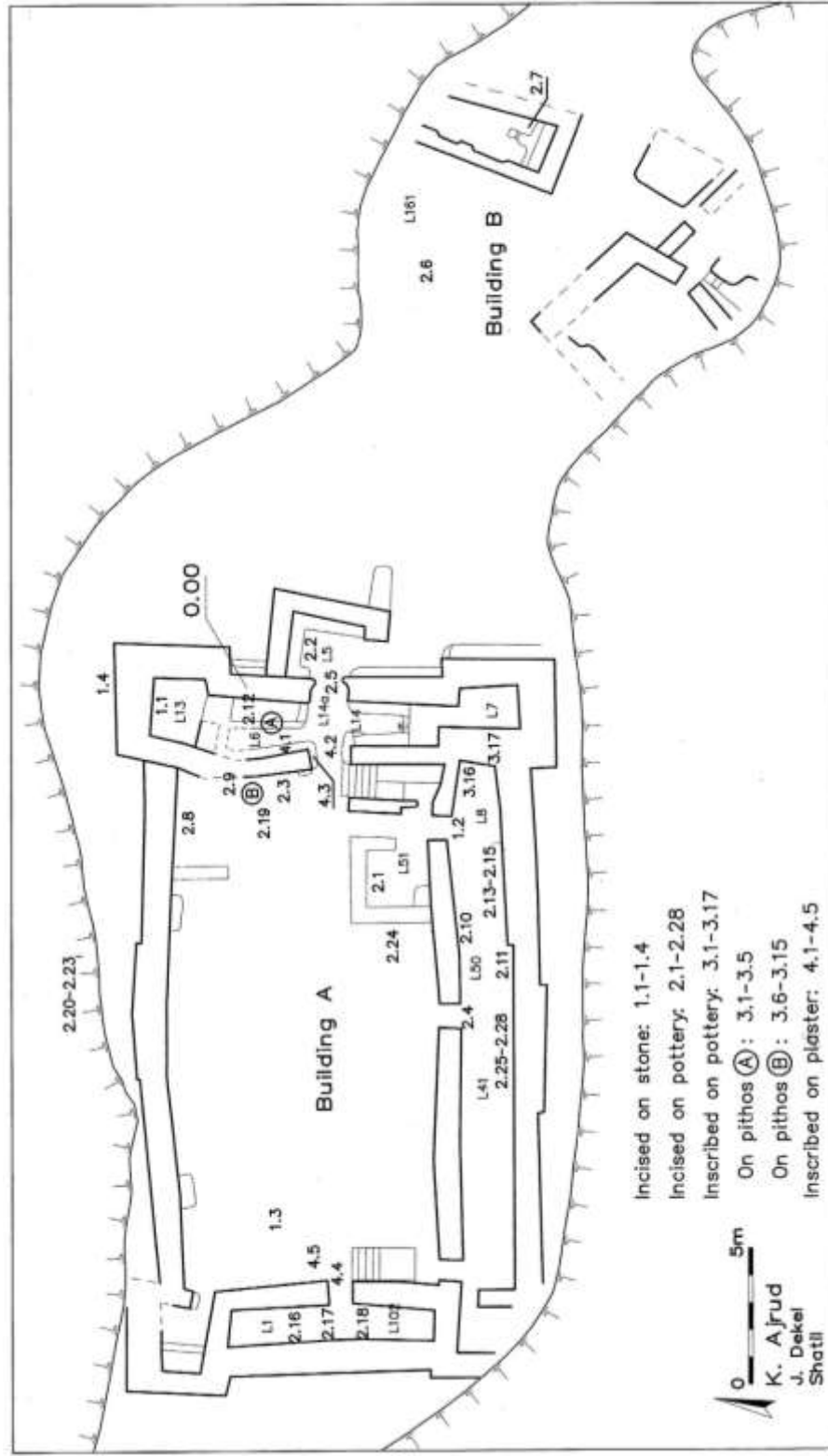
Chapter 2

EPIGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD INSCRIPTIONS

The architectural remains at Kuntillet ʿAjrud consist of two buildings. The larger and better preserved of the two, commonly referred to as Building A, seems to have included the main living areas (see Chapter 4). It was in this building that the majority of the inscriptions and all of the plaster texts were discovered (see fig.2.1). The structure to the east, Building B, is severely eroded and its function is difficult to determine. None of the plaster texts was found in Building B; although the excavators did discover a number of decorated plaster fragments bearing floral and geometric designs and a partially preserved drawing of a wall with crenelated towers and figures standing on the ramparts.[1]

2.1 THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT DISCUSSION

The primary concern of this study is the plaster inscriptions. However, these were not produced in isolation, and they are surrounded by numerous inscriptions and drawings on stone and ceramic objects; most notably the two decorated pithoi, commonly referred to as Pithos A and B (respectively), which have excited considerable attention due to their possible allusions to (and perhaps depictions of) the goddess Asherah. Therefore, in order to contextualise the KAPT in terms of written activity at Kuntillet ʿAjrud generally, this chapter will begin with a discussion of

---

[1] The plaster drawings are discussed in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 184–98, esp. 185–86. The editor, Pirhiya Beck, described the latter scene as a "city wall". She does not seem to have considered the possibility that it is a depiction of Kuntillet ʿAjrud itself, despite the fact that Building A had tower-like structures at each of its four corners.

the non-plaster inscriptions, before turning to an analysis of the plaster texts.

Given the limitations of a thesis such as this, it will not be possible to engage in a general way with the iconographic material, although specific images and groups of images will be discussed as they are relevant for understanding the function of the written material.[2] Nevertheless, special mention should be made of Pirhiya Beck's proposal, recently taken up again by Brian Schmidt, that certain images and texts on the pithoi might have served as drafts or studies, which were subsequently transferred to the walls.[3] This is certainly possible, but it should be noted that there is no instance in which a particular text or image has demonstrably been reproduced.[4] As such, a methodologically cautious approach is to treat the inscriptions (and drawings) on pithoi and plaster as discrete corpora.

---

[2] For dedicated discussions of the iconographic material the reader is directed to the the original study by Pirhiya Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", *TA* 9 (1982): 3–68, reproduced as Chapter 6 of Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*; and Brian B. Schmidt, "The Iron Age *Pithoi* Drawings from Horvat Teman or Kuntillet Ajrud: Some Proposals", *JANER* 2 (2002): 91–125.

[3] See Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 197; Brian B. Schmidt, "Kuntillet Ajrud's Pithoi Inscriptions and Drawings: Graffiti <u>and</u> Scribal-Artisan Drafts?", *Maarav* (forthcoming).

[4] It is true that on the plaster in Building B there was a volute tree design which is reminiscent of (though not identical to) the motif of the tree flanked by ibexes on Pithos A; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 188, 152 (respectively). Similarly, a painted stone (graffito?) from the doorjamb of the southern storeroom includes a human head and some sort of animal design, which are broadly comparable to images on both pithoi; although the arrangement on the doorjamb appears to be an *ad hoc* jumble of motifs, rather than a carefully planned design (on the arrangement of texts and drawings on the pithoi, see below); see ibid, 196. Be that as it may, it will be argued in chapter 4 that the seated figure in the entrance to Building A is reminiscent of the figure of the lyre player on Pithos A (cf. also the design on painted sherd "Z" discussed by Schmidt, "Kuntillet Ajrud's Pithoi Inscriptions and Drawings"). But again the designs differ in specific details, suggesting a similar topic but not necessarily that the one was a study for the other. Notwithstanding these reservations, the suggestion of scribal-drafts is in many ways an attractive proposal. However, it is possible to make too much of the similarity

In addition, due to the importance of Kuntillet ʿAjrud for the study of ancient Israelite folk-religion, past discussions have typically been dominated by the Asherah/asherah question—that is, whether the expression לאשרתה signifies the goddess or the cultic object of the same name. However, the semantic distinctions of the Asherah/asherah question are largely tangential to the present focus on the uses of writing, and there are already many excellent treatments of the question. Consequently, I will not attempt to resolve it here.[5] Suffice to say, at Kuntillet ʿAjrud לאשרתה occurs exclusively in connection with YHWH in the expression ליהוה ... ולאשרתה; hence, what obtains for YHWH in those instances also obtains for his Asherah/asherah.

2.2. INSCRIPTIONS INCISED IN STONE: *Kajr*1.2–1.4

2.2.1. A LARGE STONE BASIN: *Kajr*1.2

*Kajr*1.2 consists of a single line of twenty-one letters incised into the rim of a large limestone basin. According to Meshel, the basin (weighing about 150kg) was brought to the site from outside, although the inscription itself may have been incised at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[6] The basin was discovered broken into nine fragments in a layer of fill (possibly a collapse) in the eastern part of the southern store-room of building A (see fig.2.1), apparently having fallen from another part of the structure.[7]

---

between the pictorial designs; after all, there is no reason to doubt that the plaster and pithoi paintings were produced by the same artist(s), in which case (all things being equal) we would expect continuity in repertoire and style. Accordingly, in the absence of direct copies, the suggestion that the drawings and texts on the pithoi were drafts can be nothing more than an interesting hypothesis—appeals to potentially lost material are unreliable at best.

[5] For a sample of the voluminous literature the reader is directed to the discussion of אשרתה in *Kajr*3.1, below.

[6] Zeʾev Meshel, email correspondence August 11th, 2012.

[7] This layer also contained a number of other objects including several small pottery vessels, two grinding stones, five loom weights, a spatula, several pieces of worked wood,
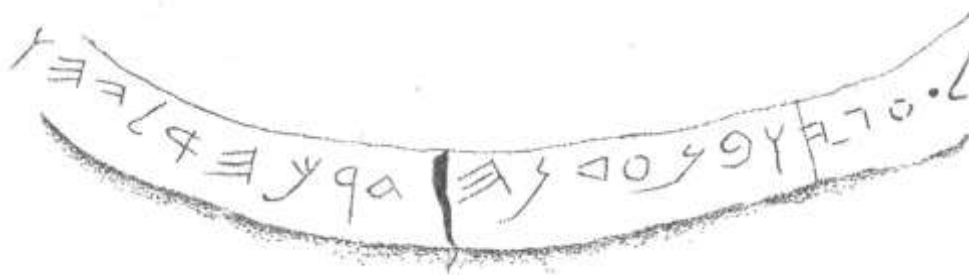
לעבדיו בן עדנה ברך הא ליהו

To ʿ*Obadyāw* son of ʿ*Adnāh* blessed be he to YHW

לעבדיו—Aḥituv et al. observed that in this context the preposition should probably be interpreted as having the sense "pertaining to, as for", referring to the PN as the intended beneficiary of the invocation, rather than designating ownership of the vessel or its contents; cf. ולישמעאל שמעתיך הנה ברכתי אתו, "and as for Ishmael, I have heard you, behold I (hereby) bless him" (Gen 17:20).

The shape of ʿ*ayin* is peculiar, being formed as a round depression in the stone rather than the usual circular outline (cf. the more typical ʿ*ayin* in ninth position). As such, its shape resembles that of a word divider. This separation of the preposition from the object it governs is unparalleled in either the biblical or epigraphic records outside of Kuntillet ʿAjrud; however, a similar disjunction apparently occurs in *Kajr*3.6 line 3.[8] But, whereas in *Kajr*3.6 the preposition is appended to its preceding verb—suggesting a cognitive error arising at

---

and three complete pomegranates—Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 51–52, 76. These items are consistent with others that may have fallen from the second storey of the building (cf. §4.3). Accordingly, it is possible that the stone basin was originally situated on the upper storey (or the roof). If so, a correct relationship with the bench-room is thrown in to question.

[8] Cf. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed Pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.6).

the level of the wider semantic unit (see below)—in *Kajr*1.2 the preposition has no comparable antecedent. Moreover, the fact that no other word dividers appear in *Kajr*1.2, together with the external witness to the PN עבדיו in Samaria Ostracon 50 (see appendix A) lend weight to Meshel's suggested reading, "Obadiah".[9] Nevertheless, a possible, albeit less likely, alternative is: ל.עדיו "to *ʿAdayaw*" (cf. עדיהו, Arad 58; *WSS* 21, 156, 293–93, 336, 593; 2 Chr 23:1; עדיה, 2 Kgs 22:1; I Chr 6:26;; Ezra 10:39).

ברך—A Qal passive participle = BH בָּרוּךְ. For the same expression see Ruth 2:20. Note the absence of internal *mater lectionis* indicating long -*ū*- (cf. §3.2.1).[10] An equivalent participial form is found in a similar phrase in line 2 of the Uriah inscription from Khirbet el-Qôm Tomb 2,[11] as well as the unprovenanced "stonecutter" inscription (probably also from Kh. el-Qôm),[12] and two offering(?) bowls from Samaria which probably bear the incised formula "blessed be PN [by DN],"[13]

Most commentators interpret this inscription as having a precatory force, i.e. "*may* PN be blessed by DN."[14] However, the participle may

---

[9] This reading already appeared in Zeʾev Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: An Israelite Religious Centre in Northern Sinai", *Expidition* 20 (1978): 53.

[10] Cf. Christopher A. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence", *BASOR* 344 (2006): 63, and n.48.

[11] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 409-14, esp. 411.

[12] Ibid, 548-49.

[13] Jeffrey Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones and Ancient Near Eastern Votive Practices" in *Shai le Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, its Exegesis and its Language* (eds. Moshe Bar-Asher et al.; Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 2007), 345, 346.

[14] Cf. the general discussion in Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones", 344 and n.16.; alternatively, cf. John Healy's suggestion (discussed by Tigay) that the analogous Palmyrene formula *dkyr lṭb* was addressed to the passer by, instructing them to name (in this case, to bless) the individual; John F. Healy, "May He Be Remembered for Good: An Aramaic Formula", in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin*

also be understood to have a predicative function (cf. Gen 14:19),[15] i.e. "PN *is* blessed by DN"; in which case, the formula serves as a performative, simultaneously actualising and memorialising the blessing (cf. several Phoenician votive seals which describe the donors as הברך "the blessed").[16] Significantly, as the predicate participle typically entails a durative sense, the inscription ensures that the invocation would be offered continuously and perpetually on behalf of the beneficiary (see Appendix B).[17] Whatever the case, the illocutionary force of the formula amounts to a plea for (continued) blessing by the deity.

ליהו—Here the preposition follows the passive verb to express agency (cf. ברוך אברם לאל עליון, "blessed be Abram by God on high", Gen 14:19).[18]

יהו is evidently an apocopated form of the Tetragrammaton which occurs only here and (possibly) in *Kajr*3.9; elsewhere, the Tetragrammaton is written in full (*Kajr*3.1, 3.6, 3.9, 4.1.1).[19] Johannes

---

McNamara (eds. K. J. Cathcart and M. Maher; JSOTSup 230; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 176–85.

[15] Cf. Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (*New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 79 §3.4.3.*b*.

[16] Cf. *WSS* 717, 718, 720, 722 and 723; see also, line 1 of the Karatepe inscription KAI 26.

[17] Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 79–80 §3.4.3.*b1*.

[18] Cf. Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 114 §4.1.10.*l*; also, Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones", 344 n.16.

[19] The correctness of both readings has been questioned; cf. Johannes Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften: Teil 1 Text and Kommentar* (vol. 1 of *Handbook der Althebräischen Epigraphik*. Edited by Johannes Renz and Wolfgang Röllig. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 56 n.*a*. However, for a possible late 8th or early 7th century B.C.E. parallel of the shortened spelling see Pessah Bar-Adon, "An Early Hebrew Inscription in a Judean Desert Cave", *IEJ* 25 (1975): 228. But note that the poor preservation of the latter and the curvature of the stalactite on which this text was inscribed mean we cannot be certain of the original spelling. For several additional (possible) late parallels see Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 130; Brian A.

Renz suggested that the faint horizontal strokes after the *wāw* might be traces of *hê*, but on inspection of the published photographs it seems unlikely that these marks belong to a letter, and Renz' proposal has met with little acceptance.[20]

In more general terms, Aḥituv et al. have observed that where the Tetragrammaton occurs in the absolute state in a nominal construct it is written in full, but that the shortened form occurs in instances where the noun stands alone.[21] This observation is supported by the possibility that both the short and long forms of the tetragrammaton might be attested under these conditions in *Kajr*3.9,[22] and to a lesser degree, that the proper noun עדנה in *Kajr*1.2—which also occurs in the absolute state in the nominal construct בן עדנה—is similarly written *plene* with final ה while the shortened form of the Tetragrammaton occurs later in the same line.[23] Even so, the editors were reluctant to posit a theological reason for the various spellings.[24] An alternative possibility proposed by Dennis Pardee is that the shortened form may simply be a phonetic spelling (*yahwê*) according to the Northern Israelite/Phoenician tradition.[25] However, this does not explain the occurrence of both

Mastin, "Who built and used the buildings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud?" *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies* (eds. James K. Aitken et al.; Berlin: W. De. Gruyter, 2011), 84.

[20] The photograph published in Zeʾev Meshel and Carol Meyers, "The Name of God in the Wilderness of Zin", *BA* 39 (1976): 8, fig.2, leaves no doubt as to the fact that no attempt was made to represent a final *hê*.

[21] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 129.

[22] Although see "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed Pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.4.

[23] Note the probable different vowel quality in each.

[24] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 129–30.

[25] Dennis Pardee, "An Evaluation of the Proper Names from Ebla from a West Semitic Perspective: Pantheon Distribution According to Genre," in Eblaite Personal Names and Semitic Name Giving (ed. Alfonso Archi; vol. 1 Archivi reali di Ebla: Studi; Missione archeologica italiana in Siria, 1988), 119-51

spellings in *Kajr*3.9 (assuming the reading is correct), or the fact that the full form appears in *Kajr*3.6, a fragment of an epistolary address formula written according to the northern orthographic conventions (viz. תמן with contraction of the diphthong, cf. §3.2.3), while the sender's name includes the northern theophoric element י- (cf. §3.4).[26] In other words, the dialectical explanation does not appear to be consistently borne out in other northern dialect inscriptions. Finally, it cannot be ruled out that the shortened form is simply the result of scribal error.[27]

*Kajr*4.2 appears to have a votive or dedicatory purpose, in which a donor is named and blessing is sought from YHWH. The immensity of the object means that it is unlikely to have moved much once it was positioned; as such, it can be viewed as a fixture of sorts. As noted by André Lemaire, the letters are crudely written, with several forms attested for the same letter (cf. the *bêts* in the seventh and thirteenth positions); although, it should be noted that the uneven surface of the vessel makes the uniform reproduction of the letters difficult.[28]

---

[26] Of course, it cannot be pressumed that the dialect of the author was identical to that of the individual who wrote text, although in this instance the orthographic evidence seems to point in that direction.

[27] So, André Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hebraïques et pheniciennes de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *SEL* 1 (1984): 134–35; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World*, (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996), 110; Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 399 n.102.

[28] Even so, the exceptional difference between the first and second ʿ*ayin*(?) and the unevenness of the inscription, characterised by the shallow carving of the initial letters (esp. *bêt* and *dālet* in the third and fourth positions) when compared to the deeper incisions in the second half of the inscription, may suggest that this inscription was carved by an inexperienced hand; cf. André Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hebraïques et pheniciennes de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 134–35.

2.2.2. THREE INCISED STONE BOWLS

In addition to the large stone basin, the excavators unearthed three smaller inscribed stone bowl fragments with PNN partially preserved on their rims.

*Kajr*1.1	שמעיו. בן עזר	*Šĕmaʿāw* son of *ʿĒzer*
*Kajr*1.3	שבל ǀ חליו	*Šōbāl* (son of) *Ḥaliyāw*
*Kajr*1.4	לעבד]	To/of *ʿEbed*[[29]

Although these fragments were found in different parts of building A (see fig.2.1), it is interesting to speculate whether their function may have been related to that of *Kajr*1.2; but without clearer evidence this cannot be determined.[30]

2.3. INSCRIPTIONS INCISED IN CLAY: *Kajr*2.1–2.28

The inscriptions incised in clay fall into two classes: (1) those incised after firing (*Kajr*2.1–2.7), and (2) those incised prior to firing (*Kajr*2.8–2.28). Four inscriptions incised after firing (*Kajr*2.1–2.3, and *Kajr*2.7) are very fragmentary, consisting of only a few letters, possibly belonging to PNN, carved into the sides of storage jars. One of these (*Kajr*2.3) includes a word beginning with *lāmed* (possibly a preposition), and it is possible that these names denote the owner of the vessel, or else the recipient, if the vessels were used for the delivery of goods. The archaic script on one vessel (*Kajr*2.2) seems to predate the structures at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, which might indicate that it was brought to the site from elsewhere.[31]

Four vessels *Kajr*2.4–2.6 were inscribed לשרער (restored in *Kajr*2.5: ל]שרער, and *Kajr*2.6: [לשר]עֹר)), which is usually translated "to/of the

---

[29] לעבד could conceivably be interpreted as a common noun: "for (the) servant (of)"; but comparison with *Kajr*1.1 and 1.3 suggests a PN.

[30] William Dever, for example, referred to these as "votive bowls"; cf. William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 196.

[31] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 79.

governor of the city" (*lĕśarʿîr*).[32] Aḥituv et al. compared this to a pair of
7th century bullae from Jerusalem, which were stamped שרהער (*WSS* 402),
and likewise written *scriptio contiuna* and spelled *defectively*.[33] However,
the lack of the definite article in *Kajr*2.4–2.6 is surprising (see §3.2.2). All
of the לשרער inscriptions appear to have been incised by the same person
and are found on only one type of storage jar, which Etan Ayalon
describes as a "bag-shaped jar with a plain rim" coated with a light-
coloured slip.[34] Petrographic analysis of a jar of this type suggested a point
of origin in the region of Tel Miqne in the Shephelah.[35]

The title "governor of the city" may be compared with several biblical
examples where it appears to denote the highest municipal official (e.g.
Judg 9:30; 1 Kgs 22:26 = 2 Chr 18:25; 2 Kgs 23:8; 2 Chr 34:8; 2 Chr
29:20).[36] However, it is impossible to know whether the title refers to an
individual stationed at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Assuming these vessels were used
for provisioning the site, the title might reflect any stage of the distribution
chain. But if the title did refer to someone at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, then

---

[32] On the basis of the single published illustration available to him, Catastini suggested
reading *dālet* instead of *ʿayin* (i.e. שרדר "governor of the community"); however, based
on the other two recently published examples, *ʿayin* seems assured; cf. Alessandro
Catastini, "Le Iscrizioni di Kuntillet ʿAjrud e il Profetismo", *AION* 42 (1982): 128.

[33] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 81; cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew
Inscriptions*, 282. For the seals see Nahman Avigad, "The Governor of the City", *IEJ* 26
(1976): 178–82.

[34] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 220.

[35] Cf. Jan Gunneweg, Isadore Perlman, and Zeʾev Meshel, "The Origin of the Pottery of
Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *IEJ* 35 (1985): 280, table 1, and pl.33D; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud
(Ḥorvat Teman)*, 220–21.

[36] Cf. the discussion of the title שר העיר in Nili Sacher Fox, *In the Service of the King:
Officialdom in Ancient Israel and Judah*, (HUCM 23; Cincinnati, Oh.: Hebrew Union
College Press, 2000), 150–58. Fox concluded that שר העיר was "the title of the highest
municipal administrator…but lesser classes of urban centers were undoubtedly
administered by this class of official as well". Of course, even if the title did not refer to
an individual located at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, *Kajr*2.4–2.6 still indicate that the site was
externally provisioned.

*Kajr*2.4–2.6 reinforce the impression that KuntilletʿAjrud may have ultimately fallen under royal (or at least remote) jurisdiction (cf. §4.7).[37]

One of the vessels inscribed before firing contains only the letters לי] (*Kajr*2.8). If these inscriptions did serve as labels for delivery, then the fact that *Kajr*2.8 was incised prior to firing suggests that the vessel was made with the intended recipient in mind. But again it does not necessarily follow that this recipient was located at KuntilletʿAjrud, as it is possible that the vessel was reused and sent to the site secondarily (cf. *Kajr*2.2 above).

By far the most common class of inscriptions from KuntilletʿAjrud consists of only one or two letters: either *ʾālep* (*Kajr*2.12–2.23), *yōd* (*Kajr*2.24–2.28), or in two (possibly three) instances *qōp-rêš* (*Kajr*2.9–2.11).[38] These letters were incised before firing onto the shoulders of several large pithoi of similar size and shape. These were mainly found in the storerooms of Building A (see fig.2.1). Significantly, the clay from which these vessels were made suggests a point of origin in or around Jerusalem.[39]

The meaning of the incised letters is unclear. The letters *qôp-rêš* have been plausibly explained as an abbreviation of קרבן "sacrifice" (cf. two inscribed bowls which appear to have an abbreviation of קדש "holy," found near the altar at Arad; and the vessels marked קדש at Ekron, see below), and may indicate that the vessel's contents were to be set apart for sacrificial use.[40] Similarly, in keeping with his interpretation of the site as

---

[37] At the very least, as was observed to me by Andrew Pleffer, their presence can be taken as further evidence that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was connected to official administrative systems.

[38] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 82–83. Note that there can be no question of reading *qôp-dalet*, as in *Kajr*2.10 both the *qôp* and *rêš* are formed separately.

[39] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 82, 279–87; cf. Gunneweg, Perlman and Meshel, "The Origin of the Pottery of KuntilletʿAjrud", 270–83.

[40] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 82; Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "Two Offering Dishes with Phoenician Inscriptions from the Sanctuary of ʿArad", *BASOR* 235 (1979): 75–78; Yohanan Aḥaroni, *Arad Inscriptions*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981), §102–103; Seymour Gitin, "Seventh Century B.C.E. Cultic Elements at

a religious settlement, Meshel has suggested that the ʾālep may represent offerings sent to Kuntillet ʿAjrud from the first or the best of the harvest.[41] However, as Aḥituv et al. note, there is no comparable evidence for the use of letters to represent numbers in West Semitic inscriptions until the Hellenistic period.[42] Moreover, this explanation is unlikely to extend to the yōd, since in this period we would expect the tithe to be indicated by the hieratic numeral 10, or by mêm (i.e. BH מעשר).[43]

An alternative possibility is that ʾālep and yōd may be abbreviations for the vessels' contents: i.e. ʾālep = אכל "grain," and yōd = יין or ירוש "wine" (cf. the storage vessels marked שמן "oil" and דבל "cluster of figs" from Tel Miqne-Ekron).[44] Comparable one-letter abbreviations, probably designating units of measure (e.g. šîn for "shekel" and bêt for "bath [measure]") are attested in Iron Age texts from Arad, Ekron and Tell

Ekron", in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July, 1990* (eds. Avraham Biran, Joseph Aviram, and Alan Paris-Shadur; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1993), 250–58.

[41] Zeʾev Meshel, "Teman, Ḥorvat", in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 4:1458–1464.

[42] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 82. Although, cf. several short Phoenician inscriptions published by Joseph Naveh, "Unpublished Phoenician Inscriptions from Palestine", *IEJ* 33 (1987): 25–30. The comparison with Mishnah *Menaḥot* 8:1, 3, 6, is anachronistic.

[43] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 85; cf. Yigael Yadin and Joseph Naveh, *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965 Final Reports: The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989), 32–33.

[44] On the inscribed vessels from Ekron, cf. Gitin, "Seventh Century B.C.E. Cultic Elements at Ekron", 251–52; Trude Dothan and Seymore Gitin, *Tel-Miqne-Ekron: Summary of Fourteen Seasons of Excavations 1981–1996 and Bibliography 1982–2012* (Jerusalem: Tel Miqne-Ekron Excavation and Publications Project, 2012): 9; see also the much later examples from Masada, Yadin and Naveh, *Masada I*, 12, 46–48.

Qasile.[45] According to this explanation, it might be possible to interpret *qōp-rêš* as an abbreviation for קמח ר

אשית, or קמח רשאן "the first/best of the flour" (cf. הקמה הרשאן "the first flour" Arad 1:5–6, 7; דגן ראשיתם, "the first of their grain", Num 18:12; קרבן ראשית, "an offering of firstfruits", Lev 2:12). This interpretation is also consistent with the possibility of external provisioning (see §4.7). However, without knowing the contents of the vessels this must remain a conjecture.

While we may not be able to determine the meaning of these letters, it is significant that they were incised prior to firing. This, coupled with the apparent origin of these store-jars in Jerusalem, suggests that the vessels were manufactured and transported for a specific end-purpose.

2.4. INSCRIPTIONS WRITTEN IN INK ON CLAY: *Kajr*2.1–2.28

2.4.1. TWO LETTER FRAGMENTS

Among the texts written on the sides of the inscribed pithoi are two sets of epistolary formulae, consisting of the *praescriptio* and benediction. Comparison of the handwriting indicates that these inscriptions were probably written by two different scribes.[46]

---

[45] Cf. שׁ–Arad 16.5; 65.1–2; 81.1; Qasile 2.2; ב–Arad 1.3; 2.2; 3.obv.2; 4.3; 5.12; 7.5; etc., see Ian Young, "Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions," in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (ed. Ian Young; JSOTSup 369; London: T & T Clark, 2003), 299–300, §3.4.1.1; see also Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 8, 9–10, 32, 34, 403, 404, etc. The interpretation of these letters as abbreviations for units of measure seems probable on the basis of comparison with the Ekron inscriptions, which include seven vessels marked בת (apparently *bath*) and two that were simply marked ב (apparently an abbreviation of the same); cf. Gitin, "Seventh Century B.C.E. Cultic Elements at Ekron", 251; although, note that Gitin's interpretation was apparently influenced by Aḥaroni's interpretation of the Arad inscriptions, see p. 256, n.33.

[46] This is suggested most strongly by comparison of the curved vertical shaft of the *ăleps* in *Kajr*3.1 with the relatively straight vertical shaft of the *ăleps* in *Kajr*3.6, and by the cursive "ticks" on the tail of the *yôds* in *Kajr*3.6, which are omitted in *Kajr*3.1. Of course,

2.4.1.1. *Kajr*3.1

The formula on pithos A (*Kajr*3.1) comprises two lines written with red ink immediately below the shoulder of the vessel between the two handles. This inscription is damaged, with a break where the sender's name should be and a break, apparently not more than 14cm wide,[47] immediately before the beginning of the blessing formula (where one would expect the recipient(s) to be named).[48]

The inscription intersects with a drawing of two figures resembling the Egyptian dwarf-god "Bes".[49] There has been much discussion about the possible relationship between *Kajr*3.1 and the drawing: do the figures represent YHWH and his Asherah? This possibility was endorsed by Brian Schmidt, who argued that: "[t]he overlap of the inscription and the larger central figure's headdress on pithos A is deliberate and meaningful, coincides with the composer's application of overlapping elsewhere in these scenes and with what we presently know about ancient artistic technique more generally".[50] This may be so, but it not always clear on the inscribed pithoi where overlapping is deliberate and meaningful, and

---

this might simply be stylistic variation, which would be consistent with a scribe rehearsing various calligraphies, and, indeed, this might go some way to accounting for the variety of scripts on the vessels (see variously below).

[47] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 87.

[48] This fragment is unusual insofar as it names several recipients. Evidently at least one name has been lost in the lacuna but it is difficult to know whether there were others as well. Alternatively, the blessing may have been preceded by a welfare enquiry (e.g. השלם את) as in *Kajr*3.6, line 4. Note that the smaller fragment, bearing the words ברכת אתכם, was discovered separately from the rest of Pithos A, with the fragments of Pithos B (see below).

[49] Cf. the discussion of Pirhiya Beck, who attributed the drawing and inscription to different hands; Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", 87.

[50] Schmidt, "The Iron Age *Pithoi* Drawings from Horvat Teman", 111.

where it is not.[51] As such, I prefer to reserve judgement on this point.[52]

אמר . א[...] רֹעֹ [.] הֹמֹ[ל]ֹך . אמר. ליהל[י] . וליועשה . ול[   ] ברכת . אתכם.
ליהוה . שמרן . ולאשרתה .

1. Message of ʾA[...] friend of the k[in]g, say to *Yāhēlī*, and to *Yawašāh*,
    and to[   ] I bless you
2. to YHWH of Samaria and to his *asherah*

אמר...אמר—A common North-West Semitic epistolary address formula, typically used in personal correspondence.[53] There is some uncertainty as to the best interpretation of אמר. The second אמר in the sequence does not present any real difficulty and is easily understood as a simple imperative verb (*ʾĕmōr*). The first אמר, however, may be vocalised

---

[51] Compare the overlapping of *Kajr*3.8 with the abecedaries on Pithos B, which in turn overlap *Kajr*3.6. While the abecedaries and *Kajr*3.6 might conceivably be correlated in a dedicatory context (see below), it is difficult to see how *Kajr*3.8 could relate. This gives the arrangement a somewhat chaotic appearance, suggesting that the placement of the drawings and inscriptions was *ad hoc*, determined by practical spatial considerations, as much as by design.

[52] For an alternative interpretation of this scene, see Chapter 4.

[53] Variations on this formula occur in a Hebrew papyrus palimpsest from Wadi Murabbaʿat; an Edomite ostracon from Ḥorvat ʿUza; an Ammonite ostracon from Tell el-Mazar; and a Phoenician papyrus from Saqqara; cf. James M. Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters* (ed. Kent H. Richards; SBLWAW 14; Atlanta: SBL, 2003) 136–39, §67b–70, respectively.

either as a noun (*ʾōmer*),[54] "message, saying", or as a verb in the suffix conjugation (*ʾāmar*), "he says, he has said".[55]

Shmuel Aḥituv understands אמר to be a noun, observing that "First Temple Hebrew normally did not begin a clause with the verb".[56] However, it should be noted that this argument is influenced by the elevated registers of biblical prose and poetry, and we cannot be certain that these conventions are indicative of Hebrew usage in other contexts (i.e. different dialects, idiolects or registers).

The ambiguity surrounding אמר is further compounded by the fact that both the verbal and nominal interpretations find partial parallels in older Semitic epistolary formulae. Thus, the Ugaritic letters of the second millennium B.C.E. employ the noun–verb formula *tḥm* PN, *l*-PN *rgm*, "message of *x*, say to *y*",[57] while the Akkadian formulae contain an imperative verb (as though addressed to the messenger) followed by *umma* (a deictic particle usually translated "thus") + PN,[58] so that the verb of address is implied. This latter formula also bears a considerable resemblance to the biblical messenger formula, כה אמר "thus says ...".

---

[54] So, Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 316; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 90; Itzhaq Beit-Arieh and Bruce Cresson, "An Edomite Ostracon from Ḥorvat ʿUza," *TA* 12 (1985): 96–101; Khair Yassine and Javier Teixidor, "Ammonite and Aramaic Inscriptions from Tell El-Mazār in Jordan," *BASOR* 264 (1986):47–48.

[55] So, Sandra L. Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew* (SBLRBS 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 304, 414; Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, 136; Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 290. Dennis Pardee, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters* (SBL Sources for Biblical Study 15; Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1982), 121.

[56] Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 316; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 90.

[57] Robert Hawley, *Studies in Ugaritic Epistolography* (vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2003) 70, 101–02.

[58] It is perhaps significant that this convention is particularly prevalent in the Western peripheral Akkadian formulae. That is, in the zone of interaction with the Northwest Semitic dialects Hawley, *Studies in Ugaritic Epistolography*, 102.

Given this variety, it is worth noting with Robert Hawley that each of these address formulae is at least formally, if not lexically parallel.[59]

In light of this uncertainty, I have opted to follow the *editio princeps* in translating אמר as a noun solely for representational rather than semantic purposes.

א[...] רֹעֹ [.] הֹמֹ[ל]ך—The sender's name. Damage to the vessel between the ʾālep and kāp means the intervening text is too badly effaced for confident reconstruction. However, traces of some letters remain. Following the ʾālep there is space for two or three letters before a long-shafted letter, either wāw or rêš (cf. the examples in line 2). Following this is a space for one letter before a probable hê, followed by a long-tailed letter that might be a mêm (cf. the mêm of שמרן in line 2).[60] Therefore, McCarter proposed the restoration אשיו המלך, whom he identified as the Israelite king Joash (2 Kgs 13:9–13, etc.). McCarter argued that the spelling אשיו, rather than יואש (cf. 2 Kgs 13:9), need not be considered a problem, as in several other instances the theophoric elements in royal names are reversed (cf. אחזיהו, 2 Kgs 8:24 = יהואחז, 2 Chron 21:17; יהויכין, 2 Kgs 24:6 = יכניהו, Jer 24:1).[61] This restoration is plausible: Joash's reign (ca. 802–787 B.C.E.) corresponds to the upper

---

[59] Hawley, *Studies in Ugaritic Epistolography*, 101–02.

[60] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud*, 87, 90, 135 n.3; Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 316; McCarter commented that "[t]hough the *mem* of the title cannot be seen in published visible-light photographs, it is clear in infrared images"; "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 1", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47A:171, n.1).

[61] Cf. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 1", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47A:171, n.1). This suggestion might be supported by the PN אשיהו המלך (bearing the southern theophoric element, cf. §3.4) in the unprovenanced Moussaïeff Hebrew Ostracon 1; see P. Bordreuil, F. Israel and D. Pardee, "King's Command and Widow's Plea: Two New Hebrew Ostraca of the Biblical Period", *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61 (1998): 2–13; cf. Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, 109 and nn. *c–e*.

limit of the ^{14}C determinations for Kuntillet ʿAjrud,[62] and the establishment of an Israelite settlement in the eastern Sinai desert is broadly consistent with what we can infer about the historical circumstances of his reign (see §4.7).[63] However, this restoration should be held lightly, not least because there appears to be traces of a letter between the long-shafted letter and the *hê*.

A stronger alternative was proposed by Naʾaman, who restored the official title רע המלך, "friend of the king" (cf. 2 Sam 15:37; 16:16; 1 Kgs 4:5; Prov 27:10).[64] Granted that the benediction names "YHWH of Samaria" (see below), the naming of a royal high official might be taken to suggest that the scribe copied an excerpt from an actual letter sent to the site.[65] There is no reason to suppose that the official was himself present at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, and as such, the impulse to copy the formulae might have been motivated by a desire to rehearse the formulae, or the script, or simply for the pleasure of writing. The first two alternatives are consistent with the possibility that education was conducted at the site.[66]

---

[62] Cf. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 1", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47A:171, n.1), who framed the correlation specifically in terms of the palaeography of the inscriptions.

[63] Cf. P. Kyle McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, (eds. Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson, S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1987), 138–39.

[64] Nadav Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud Through the Lens of Historical Research", *UF* 43 (2011): 302–03. This restoration leaves space for only 3–4 letters before the tile. As such, the sender is unlikely to be ʿ*Amariyāw*, the sender of *Kajr*3.6.

[65] Alternatively, it might have been a draft of a letter sent back to Samaria by an official (i.e. the "friend of the king") visiting the site. Either way, *Kajr*3.1 testifies to direct correspondence between Kuntillet ʿAjrud and the northern capital Samaria.

[66] Although, *Kajr*3.1 might otherwise have been produced by a more experienced scribe (note the high standard of the handwriting) who wished to rehearse their skills.

A less convincing possibility is to restore *wāw* as a conjunction between the names of two senders (cf. Arad 40). However, in that case, it is difficult to know how to restore the second name. The conjectural theophoric PN יהמלך*, "Yhwh is king" (cf. Phoen. יחמלך, KAI 4, which similarly compounds the noun מלך) is unlikely, as the theophoric element יה is never found at the beginning of PNN.[67]

ברכת . אתכם—This blessing (1.c.s. *piʿel*, *bēraktī*) may be compared with blessings contained in the second letter fragment (*Kajr*3.6, line 5), Arad ostraca 16, 21, and 40, an Edomite ostracon from Ḥorvat ʿUza, and a Phoenician letter fragment from Saqqara (KAI 50).[68] Note, however, that where each of these latter examples affix the pronominal suffix to the verb, in *Kajr*3.1 the suffix is affixed to the direct object marker. The variation attested in these blessings suggests that epistolary conventions were not merely static syntagms, but permitted a degree of stylistic flexibility.

The use of the perfect conjugation should be interpreted as the, so-called, "epistolary perfect". Adapted from classical epistolography by Dennis Pardee, the term epistolary perfect denotes a class of verbs (often performatives) written in the suffix conjugation, and typically used self-referentially to describe acts relating to the writing and sending of the letter. [69] From a morphological point of view, these verbs

---

[67] Cf. Benjamin Sass, "Personal Names and their Components", in Nahman Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic stamp Seals*(revised and completed by Benjamin Sass; Jerusalem,: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Israel Exploration Society, the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1997), 502.

[68] These are reproduced with bibliographic details in Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, §60, 54, 51, 68 and 70, respectively.

[69] Dennis Pardee, "The 'Epistolary Perfect' in Hebrew Letters", *BN* 22 (1983): 34–40; Dennis Pardee and Robert M. Whiting, "Aspects of Epistolary Verbal usage in Ugaritic and Akkadian", *BSOAS* (1987), 1–31. This classification, which was developed on analogy with classical epistolography, is purely descriptive (referring to a translation

assume the perspective of the receiver at the time of hearing or reading, rather than that of the sender at the time of writing or dictation.

שמרן . ליהוה—Meshel initially interpreted שמרן as a *qal* active participle (*šomranū*) meaning "our guardian". However, most (including Meshel) now understand שמרן to be a GN, "Samaria" (i.e. "YHWH of Samaria"), parallel to יהוה (ה)(תמן)/(ה)תימן, "YHWH of (the) Teman" (*Kajr*3.6, 3.9 and 4.1).[70] Yet, some scholars advocate caution on the grounds that it is unusual to find a proper noun in the construct state (cf. GKC, §125*d*; Joüon, §131*o*; 137*b*).[71] Nevertheless, the divine epithet YHWH of Samaria conforms exactly to a pattern (DN + GN) that is widely attested throughout ancient Semitic cultures; cf. the common biblical divine epithet יהוה צבאות "YHWH of Hosts".[72]

---

option) and is not intended to reflect a separate morphologically or syntactically marked grammatical category.

[70] The reading "YHWH of Samaria" was first proposed by M. Gilula, "To Yahweh Shomron and His Asherah", *Shnaton* 3 (1978–1979): 129–37 (Hebrew); cf. Zeʾev Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *ABD* 4: 109.

[71] For example, Dobbs-Allsopp, et al. suggest that here the tetragrammaton may be taken as an synonym for "God". This can neither be affirmed nor disproved; Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 291–92. Alternatively, Cross, noting the existence of parallel formulae with the locative particle *-h*, has suggested that the formulae should be translated DN *at* GN, where the locative particle is implicit. But, as Smith has argued, on the basis of the available evidence it does not necessarily follow that the unmarked formula *implicitly* corresponds to the *explicit* marked formula; Frank Moore Cross Jr., "Inscriptions in Phoenician and Other Scripts" in *The Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon: Ashkelon I, Introduction and Overview (1985–2006)* (eds. Lawrence E. Stager, J. David Schloen and Daniel M. Master; Winona Lake Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008). 338, n.58; cf. Mark S. Smith, "The Problem of the God and His Manifestations: The Case of the Baals at Ugarit, with Implications for Yahweh of Various Locales" in *Die Stadt im Zwölfprophetenbuch* (eds. Aaron Schart and Jutta Krispenz; BZAW 428; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 208, n.15.

[72] See the extensive catalogue in Smith, "The Problem of the God and His Manifestations", 208–18. Cf. the earlier discussion and many examples in John A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from

Notwithstanding the syntactic debate, there is a broad consensus that the function of the DN + GN formula serves to identify the deity as he was manifest in a particular place. But there has been considerable discussion about the theological implications, nonetheless: were YHWH of Samaria and YHWH of (the) Teman distinct local entities, or were they manifestations of a single transcendent deity?[73]

This question was recently taken up again by Jeremy Hutton with specific reference to the evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[74] Hutton's discussion is cogent and his conclusion that both YHWH of Teman and YHWH of Samaria were venerated at the site as manifestations of a single deity who simultaneously led separate lives in the experience of worshippers, may be correct, as far as it goes, but it also falls short of the mark. Hutton's characterisation of the invocation of יהוה שמרן in *Kajr*3.1 as "informal and ad hoc…simply a petitionary note left by the author of the inscription as an expression of personal piety in a setting publically recognized as dedicated to a competing manifestation" fails to take into account the fact that both epithets occur in the context of epistolary formulae (*Kajr*3.1 and 3.6).[75] It is surely significant that the

---

Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *ZAW* 94 (1982): 4–5; McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy", 140–41; Jeremy M. Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh and Worship in the Interstices: A Note on Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *JANER* 10 (2010): 180–83. Cf. Muraoka's observations to the effect that the so-caled "rules" of Hebrew grammar must be responsive to new data as it becomes available; Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, (Subsidia Biblica 27; trans. Takamitsu Muraoka; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), 452, n.1.

[73] See the discussions in Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), esp. 71–72; Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh", 177–210; Smith, "The Problem of the God and His Manifestations", 205–50. Cf. already, McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy", 140–41.

[74] Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh", 177–210.

[75] Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh", 204.

only reference to YHWH of Samaria at Kuntillet ʿAjrud occurs in the context of a letter, and it makes little difference whether the text was transcribed onto the pithos as a dedication or some sort of writing exercise (see below). Furthermore, if the restoration הֹמֶּ[לֹל]ךְ is correct, then the original letter was, in all probability, sent to Kuntillet ʿAjrud from Samaria (or it is a mimicry of such a letter). The strong implication, then, is that the senders of the letters addressed the benediction to the manifestation of the deity associated with their local shrine (cf. Amos 8:14). Consequently, the evidence seems to presuppose that YHWH who was immanent in Samaria was also powerful in Teman, and vice versa, otherwise the blessing would be ineffectual and meaningless. In other words, in order for the benediction to be efficacious, it is reasonable to suppose that YHWH of Samaria and YHWH of Teman were one and the same.

In his discussion of the various manifestations of Baal at Ugarit, Benjamin Sommers observed, "Baal of the city Ugarit is Baal of the heavenly mountain Ṣaphon, but Baal of Ṣaphon is much more than Baal of Ugarit".[76] Given the strong association of YHWH with the southern regions and the importance of this association for the location of the site (see §2.8.4), might a similar sentiment be inferred in regard to Kuntillet ʿAjrud? i.e. *YHWH of Samaria is YHWH of Teman, but YHWH of the Teman is much more than YHWH of Samaria.*

ולאשרתה—The complex issues surrounding the interpretation of אשרתה—that is, whether the term is the GN "Asherah", or signifies a cultic object, "asherah"—are well known. Strong arguments have been advanced by both sides of the debate, and, as noted above, it is beyond

---

[76] Sommer, *The Bodies of God*, 26. Cf. Smith, "The Problem of the God and His Manifestations", 240; John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSupp; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 68–69.

the scope of the present study to resolve the question here.[77] Nevertheless, several observations are in order.

First, given that both Baal and El appear to feature in addition to YHWH as DNN in the KAPT (see below), there is no *a priori* reason to doubt that Asherah might also have been venerated at the site.

Second, in this matter, appeals to the expected conventions of Semitic grammar are not entirely convincing. On the one hand, even if it is agreed that אשרתה should be interpreted as a DN, the precise nature of the relationship communicated by the pronominal suffix remains an open question; "consort" is a modern gloss.[78] On the other hand, it is not clear that there is anything in either the biblical or epigraphic records that is strictly analogous to this syntagm.[79] Both considerations make categorical statements difficult.

Be that as it may, I am inclined, for my part, to agree with those who understand אשרתה at Kuntillet ʿAjrud to be a common noun referring to a cult object, or, more precisely, some sort of cultic site or sanctuary

---

[77] Detailed surveys of this debate can be found in Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah'", 315–37; Judith M. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[78] This point should be particularly stressed in response to Emerton's analogical argument, seeking to supply a qualifying noun: e.g. "YHWH and his (wife) Asherah"; cf. Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah'", 319–20. Others have made a similar point, while stressing the positive nature of the relationship between YHWH and Asherah; cf. the discussion in Schmidt, "The Iron Age *Pithoi* Drawings from Horvat Teman", 106, 107, with references. Baruch Margalit went furthest when he attempted to identify אשרתה with the denominal Semitic root ʾṯr "trace, footstep", which he interpreted metonymically to refer to "one who follows behind (viz. wife)"; Baruch Margalit, "Some Observations on the Inscription and Drawing from Khirbet el-Qôm", *VT* 39 (1989): 374; however, he was unable to indicate any analogous examples.

[79] The only possible exception is *l ʿnth* in *KTU* 1.43 [*CTA* 33.13], which admits the same difficulties as לאשרתה at Kuntillet ʿAjrud; cf. Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah'", 322, 330.

(אשרת) as was defended by Cross.[80] The latter term, which is a precise orthographic equivalent to אשרתה at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, occurs in several first-millennium B.C.E. Phoenician and Punic inscriptions in contexts where אשרת can only be understood to refer to some sort of cultic structure.[81] Moreover, as Cross and others have noted, this term is a clear cognate of Akkadian *asĭrtu*, "cella, sanctuary, socle, etc." (CAD A ii: *asĭrtu*, 436). Significantly, Akkad. *asĭrtu* need not designate a temple or sanctuary only, but could apparently also designate a special room in a private house set apart for cultic purposes (CAD A ii: *asĭrtu* 2, 439). Hence, the term seems to have had a relatively broad denotative range, but the principal connotation seems to relate to a sacred space admitting access to, and contact with, the deity. Though the nature and function of the structures at Kuntillet ʿAjrud are, as yet, undefined, the religious content of the plaster inscriptions seems to suggest some sort of cultic association, and as such the reference to "Yнwн of (the) Teman and his אשרת" may relate immediately to some part of the structures at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (see Chapter 4). However, this can only be a provisional hypothesis.

In my opinion, one of the greatest obstacles faced by those who would see אשרתה as a reference to the goddess is the difficulty in defining her role at the site. This can be framed as a question of agency. Jeffrey Tigay has argued that whereas in *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6 the blessing names both Yнwн and his אשרת/ה, in *Kajr*3.6, when the blessing is reiterated

---

[80] Cross, "Inscriptions in Phoenician and Other Scripts", 338, n.58; idem, "The Phoenician Ostracon from ʿAkko, the ʿEkron Inscriptions and אשרתה" in *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies: Ephraim Stern Volume* (*ErIsr* 29; Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2009), 19–28; cf. already the discussion in Moshe Dothan, "A Phoenician Inscription from ʿAkko", *IEJ* 35 (1985): 83, 85; G. A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish* (Oxford, Calrendon Press, 1903), 50–51.

[81] Cf. the discussion in Moshe Dothan, "A Phoenician Inscription from ʿAkko", *IEJ* 35 (1985): 83, 85; Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, 50–51.

in an explicit form, the verbs appear to be masculine and singular.[82] Consequently, while both YHWH and his אשרת/ה are named in the benediction, it is YHWH alone who is represented as the *agent* of blessing. This observation requires further refinement. It seems that in the orthography of the pithoi inscriptions final vowels were not marked for verbal conjugations (cf. ברכת for *bēraktī*, see the longer discussion in §3.2.1). Consequently, for both ישמרך and יהי it is impossible to know whether the underlying form is 3.m.s. (i.e. *yišmorkā* and *yĕhī*) or 3.m.p. (i.e. *yišmĕrûkā* and *yihyū*). For יברך, however, there seems to be no alternative but to conclude that the underlying verbal form was the 3.m.s. *yĕbārekā*, "may *he* bless you". In this instance, the unusual orthography (cf. BH יברכך) suggests that there has been a merger of the third radicle of the stem and the homophonous consonant of the pronominal suffix (i.e. יברכך > יברך). This seems to imply that the underlying form was the 3.m.s. *yĕbāre(k)kā*, rather than the 3.m.p. *yibrĕ(kû)kā*, where the vowel in the penultima would have served to stabilise the syllable, preventing the assimilation of the *kāp*.[83]

---

[82] Jeffrey H. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 190; cf. recently Mark S. Smith, "The Blessing God and Goddess: a Longitudinal View from Ugarit to 'Yahweh and ... his asherah' at Kuntillet ʿAjrud" in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N.D. Mettinger* (eds. Göran Eidevall and Blaženka Scheuer. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 213–26, who reached a similar conclusion from a diachronic and iconographic perspective.

[83] Of course, if *Kajr*3.6 was transcribed by sight, the orthography might also be explained by haplography. But it is nevertheless reasonable to suppose that visual copying was, at least in part, a process of internalisation; cf. the discussion of "synonymous variants" in Raymond F. Person Jr., "The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer" *JBL* 117 (1998): 604–08; Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 41–44. In *Kajr*3.6 this seems assuredly to have been the case, as the irregular orthography of the address formula implies a cognitive, rather than visual, error (see below). Hence, phonological considerations are an important control, and the orthography continues to support the underlying *yĕbāre(k)kā*, rather than *yibrĕ(kû)kā*.

Inasmuch as only one of two named deities is active, no precise parallel exists for the blessing in *Kajr*3.6. The closest parallel for the formula occurs in the Phoenician letter from Saqqara (KAI 50): ברכתך לבעל צפן ולכל אל תחפנחס יפעלך שלם, "I have blessed you to Baal Ṣaphon and all the gods of Tahpanhes may he/they make you well". But, on the basis of the Phoenician orthography, it is impossible to know whether the verb יפעלך is singular or plural. [84]

In light of the morphological evidence of *Kajr*3.6, it is interesting to note that in the extant portion of *Kajr*4.1 (which also names both YHWH and his אשרת/ה) it is again YHWH alone who conveys blessing (cf. 3.m.s. verbs היטב and היצב in line 2). Similarly, in the only certain example of a dedicatory inscription, *Kajr*1.2, YHWH is named but not his אשרת/ה (although it is possible that this inscription is incomplete, see above).[85] Hence, at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, we must conclude that the אשרת/ה (whatever it was) was probably not considered an agent of blessing, or else that the active role of the אשרת/ה was comparatively limited. Of course, it does not necessarily follow from this that אשרת/ה was not a goddess worshiped at the site. There are analogous instances known from the Ugaritic literary corpus in which blessing is conveyed from a

---

[84] The same is true of KAI 102 and 105, which were discussed in Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah'", 320–21. One intriguing piece of evidence, also discussed by Emerton, is KAI 79, a Punic votive inscription offered to לררבת לתנת פן בעל ולאדן לבעל חמן, "to the/my lady, to Tannit, the face of Baal, and to the/my lord, to Baal Ḥammon", in which blessing is sought of the goddess alone, indicated by the 3.f.s. jussive תברכא. However, as Emerton himself admits, in KAI 79 the actual blessing is not addressed to both deities, and, as such, is not directly comparable with the blessings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

[85] In light of the apocopated form of the tetragrammaton in *Kajr*1.2, it may be that the inscription was incomplete. But there is no evidence for this, and the exceptional nature of the object—in particular, the inordinate labour that must have been involved with transporting it to the site—rather testifies against this possibility that the inscription would be left unfinished. The fragmentary nature of the inscriptions on the other stone vessels renders them useless for comparative purposes.

chief deity on behalf of the pantheon (cf. KTU 1.15 II. 14–20).[86] But it is nonetheless a problem for those who wish to identify the settlement at Kuntillet ʿAjrud principally with the cult of Asherah (cf. §4.8).

But if אשרת/ה is thus deprived of agency—or, at least, if that agency is diminished—what might the expression ליהוה ... ולאשרתה mean? To begin with, it should be noted that, in the past, the four iterations of this expression at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (*Kajr*3.1, 3.6, 3.9, 4.1) have typically been treated somewhat homogeneously.[87] This homogeneity is based on the assumption that each iteration represents some form of prayer or benedictory invocation. However, as will be discussed below, this assumption might not be justified in every instance. In fact, in only two of the four iterations (*Kajr*3.1 and 3.6) is the verb ברך actually used, and both instances reflect the conventions of a clearly defined epistolary tradition. In the other two instances it is יהוה and his אשרת/ה who appear to be the recipients of something offered; in *Kajr*3.9 this might be some sort of hymn sung to the deity (cf. §2.4.2), while in *Kajr*4.1 this is the missing object of the verb נתן (cf. §2.6.1). This might tip the balance in favour of translating אשרת/ה as a DN, but a parallel for the practice of dedicating something to a sanctuary can be adduced from the offertory inscriptions from Ekron which read לאשרת and למקם.[88] It might be objected that these inscriptions could, in fact, be interpreted as delivery instructions, identifying the intended destination of the vessel and its

---

[86] Cf. Smith, "The Blessing God and Goddess", 206–19; esp. 207–08.

[87] I exclude the reference to YHWH and his אשרת/ה in the Kh. el Qom inscription from the current discussion for two reasons: (1) I don't believe that the syntax and structure of the latter are yet sufficiently well understood to serve as a basis for detailed comparison—particularly in regard to the need to translate the preposition as some sort of agentive particle. Though there is some evidence for such usage in BH, in those cases the particle always refers to a passive verb (cf. *Williams* §280); (2) the reference to YHWH in the Kh. el Qom inscription differs from the Kuntillet ʿAjrud formulae insofar as it is not qualified by a toponym.

[88] Gitin, "Seventh Century B.C.E. Cultic Elements at Ekron", 250 –58.

contents. However, several of the vessels from Ekron were inscribed with the word קדש, including one on which the word קדש is paired with the designation לאשרת. This would seem to imply that the vessels and/or their contents were set apart as "holy" for the אשרת.[89] While לאשרת at Ekron admits many of the same difficulties of interpretation as לאשרתה at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, no such ambiguity attends למקם, and the latter can safely be interpreted as designating an offering to the sanctuary. Consequently, in at least one independent source, there is relatively certain evidence of something being offered to a shrine or sanctuary. Of course, a similar case can be made if אשרת/ה is interpreted as some sort of symbol or object, as there is abundant evidence for "votive" offerings being deposited with the image of a god.[90]

So, what of the epistolary formulae in *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6? In light of the possibility that אשרת/ה should be interpreted as a cult place, it is somewhat tempting to translate the expression: "I have blessed you to YHWH *at* his sanctuary".[91] But this is not entirely satisfactory. While it may be possible to alleviate the problem of agency by translating the preposition as the locative "at" rather than the indirect object "to", and while this interpretation might be consistent with the possibility that the pithoi inscriptions were themselves offerings devoted on behalf of a third party (see below), the difficulty lies in the fact that the two prepositions are coordinated by means of the *wāw* conjunction. A

---

[89] Cf. Gitin, "Seventh Century B.C.E. Cultic Elements at Ekron", 250 –58. See also the discussion in Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), 73. Comparison should also be made to Ps. 68:24 (Heb.25), where MT בקדש is rendered εν τω αγίω by the LXX, presumably on analogy with Heb. מקדש. Although, cf. Hoftijzer and Jongeling "qdš₂", in *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* 2:994. However, in this instance, the pairing with לאשרת seems to preclude the translation קדש = "sanctuary".

[90] Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones", 339–55.

[91] Or even the more speculative, "I have blessed you to Yhwh (by dedicating something on your behalf) *at* his sanctuary"; cf. נתן, *Kajr*4.2.

straightforward reading of this syntagm seems to require that both prepositions be translated as the indirect object of the verb ברכת. Accordingly, as others have done before, it might be better to understand the אשרת/ה in *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6 as being, in some sense, a mechanism of the divine blessing.[92] It is not immediately clear what this could mean, but in this case, as in everything, we must follow the evidence where it leads.

In short, no single interpretation of the expression ליהוה ... ולאשרתה has proved wholly convincing and it seems that most arguments are limited to demonstrating the plausibility their preferred alternative. Ultimately, however, it matters little for the present study whether אשרת/ה is understood as a common noun or a proper noun. But, if the latter, it must be stressed that at Kuntillet ʿAjrud the goddess appears to be of secondary importance to Yʜᴡʜ.

2.4.1.2. *Kajr*3.6

The fragment on pithos B (*Kajr*3.6) was also written with red ink below the shoulder of the vessel. This inscription comprises ten short lines bordered by a vertical margin on the right-hand side adjacent to a handle. This inscription is relatively well preserved but some lines present difficulties owing to their intersection with various other fragmentary inscriptions and the partially drawn figure of a cow.[93]

---

[92] Cf. Smith, "The Blessing God and Goddess", 219.

[93] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 92–94, 157.

<div dir="rtl">
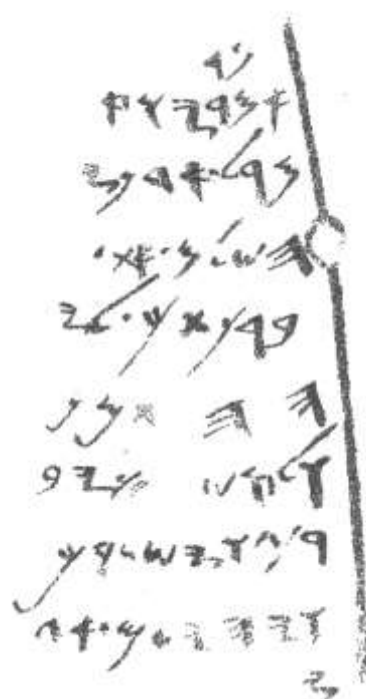
1. אֹמֹר

2. אמריו . א

3. מר ל.אדני

4. השלם . את .

5. ברכתך . לי

6. הוה [.] תמן

7. ולאשרתה . יב

8. רך וישמרך

9. ויהי עם . אדנ

10. י

</div>

1. Message of

2. *ʾAmariyāw*,

3. say to my lord

4. are you at peace?

5. I bless you to

6.   YHWH of Teman

7.   and to his *asherah*. May he

8.   bless you, and may he keep you,

9.   and may he be with my

10.   Lord

אמר...אֹמֹר—See above (*Kajr*3.1).

אמר ל.אדני—Note the separation of the preposition from the noun.[94] This may reflect a cognitive error on the part of the scribe, suggesting that, in this instance, the verb and preposition were conceived as a linguistic unit. This sort of reflexive error is understandable in the context of rote memorisation of a formula in which the PN was a variable; i.e. "say to" + PN(N).[95] By way of contrast, in the conventional phrase ברכתך ליהוה "I bless you to/by YHWH" (line 5), where the object of the verb was fixed formulaically, the preposition is affixed to the noun in the conventional manner. This may be an indication that *Kajr*3.6 was written as an (educational) exercise by an inexperienced scribe.

את . השלם—A welfare enquiry: "are you well/at peace?" An identical welfare enquiry occurs in the Edomite letter from Ḥorvat ʿUza, while a similar expression שלם את, "are you well/at peace?", without the interrogative particle, also occurs in the Ammonite letter from Tell el-Mazar and the Phoenician letter from Saqqara (KAI 50).[96]

ברכתך—1.c.s. *piʿel*, "epistolary perfect", with second person pronominal suffix (*bēraktīkā*; cf. ברכת אתכם, *Kajr*3.1).

---

[94] Cf. §2.2.1.

[95] In modern terms this is equivalent to writing "Dear, *x*" rather than "Dear *x*,".

[96] Cf. Beit-Arieh and Cresson, "An Edomite Ostracon from Ḥorvat ʿUza", 97; Yassine and Teixidor, "Ammonite and Aramaic Inscriptions from Tell El-Mazār in Jordan", 47.

תמן . ליהוה—תמן is most likely a toponym, identified with biblical Teman
(cf. Gen 36:34; Jer 49:7, 20; Ezek 25:13; Amos 1:12; Obad 9; Hab 3:3;
see also Eliphaz the Temanite, Job 2:11, etc.).[97] In the Hebrew Bible,
Teman is both the name of a city and general designation for the
southern regions traditionally associated with Edom.[98] For parallel
references to YHWH of Teman, see *Kajr*3.9 and 4.1. Note the
contraction of the diphthong (cf. BH תימן), a phenomenon commonly
associated with the northern Israelite dialect (see §3.2.3).

יברך...עדני—This benediction is reminiscent of the priestly blessing in
Numbers 6:24–26; cf. Ps 67:2 and the two 6th century B.C.E. silver
amulets from Ketef Hinnom.[99] Reference should also be made to the
seventh century B.C.E. dedicatory inscription from Ekron, which
contains a *feminine* counterpart for the blessing: תברכה ותשמ[ר]ה ותארך
ימה ותברך [א]רצֹה, "may she bless him, and prote[ct] him, and prolong his
days, and bless his [l]and". Evidently, these blessings were influenced
by a common North-West Semitic benedictory tradition.

Bilhah Nitzan has demonstrated that the priestly blessing became the
archetypal blessing adapted throughout much ancient Hebrew literature,
and while this is the only known instance of its use in an epistolary

---

[97] Naveh read שמרן, *qal* active participle, "our guardian", (see above), which he
understood to be semantically parallel to נצרי in the problematic third line of the
inscription from Kh. el-Qôm. But the suggestion that שמרן can be read in *Kajr*3.6 line 6
seems unlikely. In particular, it is highly doubtful that the third letter in this word is *rêš*
(of which there are several clear examples in lines 2, 3 and 5), and the most probable
reading remains *nûn*.

[98] Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography: Revised and
Enlarged Edition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 40; Nili Shupak , "The God
from Teman and the Egyptian Sun God: A Reconsideration of Habakkuk 3:3–7", *JANES*
28 (2011): 108–110; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 96, 130.

[99] Cf. Gitin, Dothan and Naveh, "A Royal Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron", 1–16.
Clearly elements of this benedictory formula were both ancient and wide spread.

context, its inclusion here indicates that it was not limited to literary or liturgical contexts only.[100]

Finally, it is interesting to note that this letter is addressed to an individual of higher status, identified only as "my lord". As such, the more effusive blessing might be understood as a deferential gesture.[101]

The function of these inscriptions has been much discussed, but they are widely believed to have served some sort of votive or dedicatory function. In an early study, Joseph Naveh suggested that the epistolary formulae may have been appropriated by a donor who wished to make a dedication on behalf of a third party.[102] This may well be correct, but, if so, it is not

---

[100] Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 145–71; cf. Michael Fishbane, "Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing", *JAOS* 103 (1983): 115–21.

[101] The address of the recipient by the epithet "my lord" is unusual among the אמר letters, which tend to use PNN. Typically this formula seems to be used in correspondence between individuals of relatively equal social status, marked by the inclusion of kinship terms (cf. the letters from Saqqara and Tell el Mazar) and the absence of other titles or epithets. *Kajr*3.6 is the only known example in which this formula is demonstrably addressed to a superior.

[102] Joseph Naveh, "Graffiti and Dedications", *BASOR* 235 (1979): 29. To support this suggestion Naveh cited two parallels. The first, a fragmentary Phoenician inscription incised before firing into the side of a storage vessel from Sarepta in modern-day Lebanon, consisting of a partial abecedary (note the comparable collocation of *Kajr*3.6 and abecedaries on Pithos B), followed by: [ת]אמר לאדנן גרמלקר, "say to our lord Germelqar[t]"; cf. James B. Pritchard, *Sarepta: A Preliminary Report on the Iron Age,* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1975), 99–100. However, as was discussed by the editors of the Sarepta fragment, it is possible that אמר belongs to a PN, rather than an epistolary formula. Furthermore, there is no hint of a comparable abecedary associated with *Kajr*3.1. Note also that the abecedaries on Pithos B were written in multiple hands, while the epistolary formula is addressed to a single individual, who is, in any case, un-named. It is difficult to see how these elements can be reconciled with Naveh's theory. Naveh's second parallel was the Thamudic graffiti, *l-X wḏkrt lt* Y *w-Z...* "By X. And may you, Allat, remember Y, Z, etc."; cf. Naveh, "Graffiti and Dedications", 29.

clear why the verb(s) of address should be retained, or why the scribe would have chosen to appropriate the epistolary formulae rather than adapt a more direct benedictory formula as attested in *Kajr*1.2.[103]

Others, such as William Dever, suppose a dedicatory function on the basis of the proximity of the inscribed pithoi to the bench-room. [104] But this is a tenuous argument. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the function of the bench-room is far from certain, and, in any case, the fact remains that only Pithos A was discovered inside the bench-room, while Pithos B was discovered in the courtyard, on the other side of a wall.[105] In fact, there is absolutely no evidence connecting Pithos B directly with the bench-room.[106] Furthermore, given that a large fragment of Pithos A was

---

[103] This objection is strengthened when considered in light of the inscription discovered in a cave near en Gedi which appears to contain a series of blessings, in which ברך (most likely passive participles; cf. *Kajr*1.2) is repeated in each instance on a new line before the name of a desired beneficiary, thereby testifying to the versatility of the basic ברך formulae; cf. Bar-Adon, "An Early Hebrew Inscription in a Judean Desert Cave", 228.

[104] Dever, *Did God Have a Wife*, 128.

[105] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 33.

[106] Etan Ayalon observed that "[i]n light of the large concentration of pithoi in the two store-rooms, it is extraordinary that the two complete pithoi decorated with drawings and inscriptions were placed as they were: one in the Bench-room and the other in the nearby northeastern corner of the courtyard"; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 240. I do not deny that the placement of the pithoi is remarkable; however, the vessels themselves are extraordinary precisely by virtue of being inscribed. The adornment of the vessels with drawings and inscriptions sets them apart from the uninscribed pithoi (although note that inscribed Pithois C does not seem to have warranted special treatment) and testifies to the fact that they served some sort of secondary function (i.e. beyond that of storage). It requires an interpretative leap to view these as religious objects. Furthermore, as I will discuss below, the inscriptions may plausibly be explained as writing exercises and ordinary administrative documents. As such, their location in the courtyard and the bench-room may reflect the function of those spaces in the daily activities of the settlement, suggesting that they were not segregated for cultic use. Therefore, since the case for the religious function of both the bench-room and the vessels has often been interconnected, if the inscribed pithoi can be interpreted apart from a religious explanation, then the implications for the use of space as a whole should be re-examined.

actually discovered in the courtyard (not the bench-room!) together with the fragments of Pithos B, there are serious grounds for doubting a primary (functional) association between the bench-room and the inscribed pithoi.[107]

More importantly, neither Naveh nor Dever have sufficiently accounted for the variety of the inscriptions found on both pithoi. These include a number of sweeping pen strokes on Pithos A, which are difficult to understand as anything other than an exercise, or trials of a pen (see further below)—such scribblings are difficult to reconcile with the view that the pithoi served a special religious function.[108]

These considerations combine to suggest that that *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6 were produced as practice exercises. In view of the fact that both sides of the correspondence between a superior(s) and his subordinates is represented (*Kajr*3.1 and 3.6 respectively), the formulae may be compared to the terse ל- + PN formulae in the requisition slips at Arad, and the deferential formulae addressed to a superior at Lachish.[109] The use of the אמר formula at Kuntillet ʿAjrud suggests something closer to parity between the correspondents and testifies to the (semi)official nature of settlement and the high esteem in which it was regarded (see §4.8.1).

In short, it is not my attention to deny the possibility of a religious explanation, but to reiterate the existence of alternatives that have equal or greater explanatory power.

[107] Importantly, the fragment from Pithos A bears the inscription ברכת אתכם (from *Kajr*3.1), which further problematises a specifically dedicatory association for the epistolary formulae. If the formulae had a dedicatory function and/or numinous power, why was this fragment deposited in the putative *favissa* (see §4.4.3)? On the location of the fragment, see Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 33–34.

[108] This same conclusion was reached by the editors; see Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 134. Although, it should be noted that this may still be consistent with Schmidt's proposal that the vessels were originally used for drafts, and that their sanctification was a secondary development (see below).

[109] Cf. Pardee, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters*, 146.

2.4.2. A POSSIBLE HYMN TO YHWH: *Kajr*3.9

This three line inscription on pithos B is situated to the left of *Kajr*3.6, immediately above a drawing of a procession of "worshippers".[110] The letters are written with red ink in a controlled hand. The beginnings of the first two lines have been effaced, although traces of some letters remain.

.1   [ליהוה . התמן . ולאשרתה .

.2   [כל אשר . ישאל . מאׄל . חנן הא ואׄם פתה . ונתן לׄה יׄהׄו

.3   כׄלׄבׄבׄה

1.   ] to YHWH of the Teman and to his asherah

2.   ] all that he asks from God, he (god) favours! And if he

                 entreats, YHW(H) will give to him

3.   According to his desire

להוה . התמן . ולאשרתה—The wording of line 1 is reminiscent of the epistolary formulae on pithoi A and B (*Kajr*3.1 and *Kajr*3.6).[111] However, Aḥituv et al. estimate that there is only space for about 15 letters at the beginning of this line,[112] and it is, therefore, unlikely to have consisted of a full epistolary formula, which even in its most basic form would be too long for the inclusion of proper names; e.g. אמר PN ל+PN.אמר ברכתך[113] Even so, based on the affixation of the preposition

---

[110] For the interpretation of this scene, see the detailed discussion in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 173–77.

[111] Specifically, the ל preposition with the DNN.

[112] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 100.

[113] Given that proper names (or epithets, in the case of *Kajr*3.6) are included in the other epistolary formulae from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, there is no reason to believe they would be

to the DN (cf. *Kajr*1.2, *Kajr*3.1 and *Kajr*3.6), one might be justified in reconstructing some kind of blessing (cf. ברכת אתכם *Kajr*3.1, ברכתך *Kajr*3.6, or ברך הא *Kajr*1.2).[114]

But there are other difficulties in interpreting this text as an epistolary or benedictory formula. First, in contrast to the present text, it was usual for the authors of first millennium B.C.E. North-West Semitic letters to transition from the third person to the first or second person immediately after the *praescriptio* and *benediction*.[115] Second, the panegyric to YHWH, in the second and third lines (although conceivably and extension of the benediction) is, to the best of my knowledge, unparalleled in epistolary or benedictory formulae.

---

omitted in this instance. As such, the same objection would apply if one attempted to restore an alternative verbal formula; e.g.ברכתך PN שלח לשלם PN (cf. Arad 16, 21, 40). The one possible exception is the Hebrew palimpsest from Wadi Murabaʿat (papMur 17a), in which the recipient's name is replaced by a simple pronoun: אֹמֹר[...][יהו לך—perhaps because the recipient was named in an address line on the outside of the papyrus (cf. KAI 50). However, papMur 17a is the sole attestation of this formula, and on the basis of *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6, it seems *a priori* preferable to restore the full nominal formula (see below). On the other hand, the shorter prepositional formula known from the Arad and Lachish ostraca (e.g. אל אלישב, Arad 1) are also to be ruled out as they are never accompanied by blessing formulae.

[114] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 100; 127.

[115] Cf. the examples cited above. The only exception is the 6th century Ammonite letter fragment from Tell el-Mazar in which the sender *Pelet* refers to the recipient in the third person as "his brother (לאחה) Ebed-el". However, in the *praescriptio* and *benedictio* of the Canannite letters it is usually customary for the sender to refer to the recipient in the first person; e.g. אמר לאחתי ארשת "say to *my* sister Arishut" KAI 50. The anomalous example from Tell el-Mazar is best explained either on the basis the use of the third person reflects the perspective of the scribe commissioned to write the letter and is a continuation of the scribal voice represented in the אמר formula; or that it facilitated the delivery of the letter to a third party; for an analogous Greek formula, see Stephen R. Llewelyn, "The εἰς (τὴν) οἰλίαν Formula and the Delivery of Letters to Third Persons or Their Property", *ZPE* 101 (1994): 71–78.

Be that as it may, epistolary formulae are not the only context in which the preposition + DN construction is found. The same construction frequently occurs in the Psalter; cf. הודו ליהוה בכנור בנבל עשור זמרו־לו "*Give praise to* YHWH with a lyre; play for him with a ten-stringed harp" (Ps 33:2); ממלכות הארץ שירו לאלהים זמרו אדני סלה "*Sing to God*, O kingdoms of the earth; *sing to the lord, Selah*" (Ps 68:32 [Heb.33]); הודו ליהוה כי־טוב כי לעולם חסדו: ²הודו לאלהי האלהים כי לעולם חסדו: ³הודו לאדני האדנים כי לעלם חסדו "*Give praise to Yhwh*, for he is good, for his love endures forever. ²*Give praise to the God of gods*, for his love endures forever. ³*Give praise to the lord of lords*, for his love endures forever" (Ps 136:1–3). One alternative, therefore, is to interpret *Kajr*3.9 as a portion from a hymn-like composition, and to reconstruct a verb of praise or adoration before the DN.

Significantly, the eulogistic style of the second and third lines also finds parallels in the psalms (e.g. Ps 23:1–5; 54:4–5; 68:32–35; 136:1–26), and, consequently, this suggestion allows for a greater consistency in register and style both within the inscription itself and within the corpus of inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud more broadly.

If the above interpretation is correct, it might be possible to restore the first section along the lines: [הדו לאל שירו] להוה התמן ולאשרתה "Give praise to God; sing to YHWH of the Teman and to his Asherah …";[116] or אש לאל ישיר[יד][117] להוה התמן ולאשרתה, "Let a man praise God; let him sing to YHWH of the Teman and to his Asherah…" The latter reading may be preferable insofar as it introduces the otherwise unidentified subject of the second line.

---

[116] Note that *El*, YHWH and *Baal* seem to be named in the context of *parallelismus membrorum* in *Kajr*4.2.

[117] That is, a *hipʿil* 3.m.s. jussive (*yōd*) √ידה; cf. the examples from the Psalter cited above. Note that *defective* orthography seems to have been the norm at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. §3.2.1).

התמן—As Aḥituv et al. noted, the presence of the definite article suggests that the toponym תמן refers to a geographical region rather than a city (cf. התימן in *Kajr*4.1).[118]

[וישאל .] כל אשר . ישאל . מאל̇ . חנן הא—McCarter suggested restoring . כל אשר . ישאל . כל אשר . ישאל, which he translated, "and may he grant all that he asks…" (sic.).[119] The subject of the 3.m.s. impf. ישאל is unknown.

Many, including Aḥituv et al., follow Moshe Weinfeld and read מאש "from a man".[120] However, McCarter, noting that the *šîn* is unclear, suggested restoring *lamed*, and reading מאל̇ חנן as a nominal construct "the compassionate god"; cf. the second Khirbet Beit Lei cave inscription and the expression אל רחום וחנון "the gracious and compassionate God" (Exod 34:5).[121] The difficulty with this reading, however, is that it leaves the pronoun הא without a verbal or nominal complement.[122] As such, it might be preferable to translate the expression חנן הא as a refrain, comparable to the Islamic *takbīr*, i.e. "whatever he asks of God (gracious is he!)…" (cf. the refrain "his love endures forever" in Ps 136, cited above).

---

[118] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 100; "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.1).

[119] Cf. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.2).

[120] Weinfeld, "The Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions and their Significance", *SEL* 1 (1984): 121; Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", ABD 4:107; Graham I Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 81; Johannes Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften*, 64; Othmar Keel and Christopher Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, (trans. Thomas Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 227; Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 415; Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 122–23; Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 156; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 98–100.

[121] "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.3); cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 286.

[122] While this portion occurs in a very faded section of the line, traces of *ālep* and *hê* may be faintly seen and the following word ואם̇ is contextually assured.

Then again, Aḥituv et al. interpreted חנן as a *qal* active participle (*ḥōnēn*–cf. Ps 37:21, 26; 112:5), and the pronoun as functioning in a *casus pendens* construction referring back to מאש, i.e. "whatever he asks of a man, *that man who had been asked*, will give him generously".[123]

Perhaps a preferable interpretation, however, is to understand חנן הא as a subordinate clause with a gnomic perfect; i.e. "whatever he asks from God, he (God) favours".[124]

ונתן לה יהו—Following Aḥituv et al. in reading the DN; although, as McCarter noted, this depends upon the problematic apocopated form of the Tetragrammaton (cf. *Kajr*1.2).[125] An alternative is to follow McCarter and read לדיהו, "and he will give according to his

---

[123] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 98–100.

[124] An alternative, speculative, possibility is that חנן functions as an inverted perfect coordinated with ישאל; i.e. "he *will* favour"; cf. Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 357–60, §117. Joüon argued for the development of an inverted *qatal* form (marked by the inversion of the stress), on the analogy of the punctiliar preterite *yiqtol* (i.e. *yiqtol* indicating a single occurrence of action in past time rather than habitual or repeated events or actions), and the postulated proto-Semitic jussive-preterite: "Then, by analogy, a form like *qatálti* "I killed" would have become *qataltí* "I shall kill" (by inversion of the stress), which may be preserved in w-qataltí" (Joüon §117*c*); cf. Robert Hetzron, "The Evidence for Perfect *Y'aqtul and *Yaqt'ul in Proto-Semitic", *JSS* 14 (1969): 1–21. If this inference is correct, then it should be at least plausible for an unmarked *qatal* imperfect to exist as a relic. While this possibility should be qualified by the observation that the inversion is not grammatically marked, it should also be noted that this interpretation is functionally extended in most translations to ונתן later in the same line; although, cf. Dobbs-Allsopp et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 296, who understood נתן to be a precative perfect (cf. 1 Sam 24:15; 2 Sam 7:29; Lam 1:21; 3:55); cf. Sandra L. Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, (SBLRBS 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 415.

[125] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 98; Weinfeld, "'Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions and Their Significance", 121–30.

sufficiency", with the alternative form of the 3.m.s. pronominal suffix (הו-).[126]

כלֹבֹבֹה—lit. "according to his heart's desire" (cf. Ps 20:5).[127] Alternatively, כלבפה "according to all that is in his mouth".[128]

If *Kajr*3.9 is interpreted as an excerpt from a hymnic composition extoling YHWH's munificence, the question remains as to how we might account for its inclusion among the various texts and images on pithos B. In Egypt, where the numinous properties of writing seem to have been particularly developed, there is abundant evidence for the depositing of inscribed songs in cultic contexts.[129] In those contexts, it may reasonably be inferred that the songs functioned as a form of prayer offered perpetually before the deity (see Appendix B), and it may be that a similar function could be extended to *Kajr*3.9; although, it should be noted that in the Egyptian examples the songs are usually reproduced in full. Then again, David Carr has argued convincingly for the special place of psalms and songs in the context of the ancient educational curricula, and it may be that *Kajr*3.9, too, was a practice exercise.[130] Such an interpretation accords well with the colocation of abecedaries, letter formulae, and other possible writing

---

[126] Cf. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.4).

[127] Weinfeld, "The Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions and their Significance", 121; Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", ABD 4:107; Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions*, 81; Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften*, 64; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 227; Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 415; Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 122–23; Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 156; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 98–100.

[128] Cf. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Inscribed pithos 2", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47B:172, n.5).

[129] See for example the hymns in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: New Kingdom* (vol. 2 of *Ancient Egyptian Literature*; Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1976), 81–113.

[130] Carr, *Writing on the tablet of the Heart*, 69, 132–33, 153–55.

exercises on the pithoi (e.g. *Kajr*3.5, 3.15), and supports the inference that scribal education was conducted at the site. Alternatively, *Kajr*3.9 might be nothing more than an idle jotting.

Finally, if *Kajr*3.9 is, in fact, some sort of hymnic composition, then it may be possible, in at least this one instance, to identify a direct relationship between a drawing (i.e. the processional immediately below the inscription) and one of the texts. If so, the composite scene (including both text and drawing) might have been inspired by an actual ritual witnessed at the site (see §4.8).

2.4.3. THE ABECEDARIES *Kajr*3.11–3.14

Four partially preserved abecedaries were also included among the inscriptions on pithos B. These lie adjacent to (and partly intersect with) *Kajr*3.6 and the handle of the vessel. Two of the abecedaries (*Kajr*3.12 and *Kajr*3.14) were written in red ink, in a skilled hand and stylised script, which is characterised by the elegant and controlled curve on the down-strokes of the *kāp*, *mêm*, *nûn* and *pê*.[131] The other two (*Kajr*3.11 and *Kajr*3.13) were written in black ink in a less flamboyant script.[132]

Despite their partial preservation, the KuntilletʿAjrud abecedries occupy an important place in discussions about the standardisation and diffusion of the competing linear alphabetic sequences in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Levant.[133] In three of the abecedaries (*Kajr*3.12, *Kajr*3.13 and *Kajr*3.14—the relevant portion of *Kajr*3.11 has not been

---

[131] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman),* 102.

[132] Ibid, 102.

[133] See for example the discussion in Aaron Demsky, "A Proto-Canaanite Abecedary Dating from the time of the Judges and its Implications for the History of the Alphabet," *TA* 4 (1977): 18; Ron E. Tappy et al., "An Abecedary of the Mid-Tenth Century B.C.E. from the Judaean Shephelah," *BASOR* 344 (2006): 14-27; Joseph Naveh, "Some Considerations on the Ostracon from ʾIzbet Ṣarṭah," *IEJ* 28 (1978): 31–35; Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts," *BASOR* 238 (1980): 13; Ryan Byrne, "The Refuge of Scribalism in Iron I Palestine," *BASOR* 345 (2007): 5–6; Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 92–94, 111–12, 123, 129.

preserved) the letter sequence follows the defunct *pê-ʿayin* order known from the 12th century abecedary from *ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah*, certain biblical acrostic poetry (Lam 2:16-17; 3:46-51; 4:16-17; Ps 10:6-8; Prov 31:25-26 [LXX]) and, most recently, the abecedary found at Tel Zayit.[134] This *pê-ʿayin* sequence stands in contrast to the *ʿayin-pê* sequence which later rose to prominence in post-exilic Hebrew, and supports the growing impression that the *pê-ʿayin* sequence was in wide-spread and common use throughout the Iron Age. In addition to the *pê-ʿayin* sequence, it is interesting to note the relative positioning of the *sāmek* and the *pê* in the second and fourth abecedaries (*Kajr*3.12 and *Kajr*3.14). The height of these letters relative both to one another, and to the other letters in the line, conform to a pattern that Christopher Rollston has argued is characteristic of the Old Hebrew cursive tradition. That is, the *sāmek* is typically written above the ceiling line while the *pê* is written noticeably lower, this is especially so when *sāmek-pê* are written in sequence, with the result that the *pê* fits neatly under the bottom left-hand lateral stroke of the *sāmek*.[135] Ryan Byrne has taken this observation one step further. Noting that this phenomenon does not appear to be reproduced in any of the neighbouring Aramaic or transjordanian script traditions, Byrne reasonably concluded that the relative positioning of *sāmek* and *pê* may be indicative of a distinctly Hebrew pedagogical tradition in which the letters were learnt through repetition according to the sequence *sāmek-pê-ʿayin*.[136]

---

[134] Aaron Demsky, "A Proto-Canaanite Abecedary Dating from the time of the Judges and its Implications for the History of the Alphabet," *TA* 4 (1977): 18; Tappy et al., "An Abecedary of the Mid-Tenth Century B.C.E. from the Judaean Shephelah", 26

[135] Christopher A. Rollston, "Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I: Pillaged Antiquities, Northwest Semitic Forgeries, and Protocols for Laboratory Tests," *Maarav* 10 (2003): 178; *idem*, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence," *BASOR* 344 (2006): 58–59.

[136] Byrne, "The Refuge of Scribalism in Iron I Palestine", 5; cf. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 58–59; Sanders, "Writing and Early Iron Age Israel", 102. This does not automatically mean that all abecedaries are necessarily pedagogical aids. For a well-argued critique of the reflex to associate abecedaries with scribal education see

*Kajr*3.11   א ב ג]   [ח

                                          ק ר ש ת[

*Kajr*3.12   ט י כ ל מ נ ס פ [ע] צ ק ר ש ת[

*Kajr*3.13   פ ע צ ק ר ש ת[

*Kajr*3.14   כ ל מ נ ס פ ע צ ק ר ש ת[

The question remains as to what relationship (if any) existed between the abecedaries? Given that the abecedaries appear to be written in series by at least two different hands, it is tempting to assume that these are pedagogical exercises, in which a teacher has written a text for their pupil(s) to copy. Alternatively, Naveh suggested that the abecedaries should be understood in connection with *Kajr*3.6 and served a dedicatory function (see §2.4.1).[137] But under this explanation it is difficult to account for repetition of the abecedaries in multiple hands.[138] Then again,

---

Menahem Haran, "On the Diffusion of Literacy and Schools in Ancient Israel," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986* (ed. John A. Emerton; Jerusalem: Leiden: Brill, 1988), 81–95. However, Byrne goes too far when he suggests (albeit cautiously) that it may be possible to infer from the presence of the *pê-ʿayin* reflex alongside the northern theophoric name ʿAmaryaw (*Kajr*3.6) that there was particular a *northern* preference for the *pê-ʿayin* sequence; Byrne, "The Refuge of Scribalism in Iron I Palestine", 5, n.19. In addition to Byrne's caveat regarding the methodological flaw of equating the scribe's dialect with that of the named party (ʿAmaryaw), it is by no means certain that *Kajr*3.6 and the abecedaries were composed by the same scribe. At the very least they appear to have been written at different times, and probably by more than one individual. Cumulatively, the evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrud seems to suggest that the site was primarily occupied by inhabitants from the northern kingdom of Israel (see §3.7), but it wold be precipitous to presume that every text at the site reflects northern conventions.

[137] Naveh, "Graffiti and Dedications", 29.

[138] Note that it is *Kajr*3.1 (which is not accompanied by abecedaries), rather than *Kajr*3.6, which names multiple recipients. Naveh's attempt to associate the formulae and abecedaries would be greatly strengthened if this were reversed.

Menahem Haran raised the possibility that such abecedaries might have held no more significance than the simple pleasure of writing: "it is also possible that sometimes the engraver or inscriber, for whom writing was still something of an adventure and a bit of a thrill, felt like scribbling the letters of the alphabet for no particular reason. The empty space of the writing surface and the fact that the engraver already had the necessary implement in his hand may have also enticed him into jotting down all the writing signs, that is, the letters of the alphabet as they were known to him".[139] This suggestion accords well with the elegant calligraphy of *Kajr*3.12 and *Kajr*3.14. Ultimately, however, the concentration of other possible education/practice texts on the two pithoi lends weight to the pedagogical hypothesis.[140]

2.4.4. THE VERTICAL STROKES

Intersecting with an image of a suckling calf on pithos A are 10 broad vertical strokes arranged in a triangular pattern. These may be some form of tally (perhaps related to the provisioning of the site; cf. *Kajr*3.8 below), but at present their significance is unclear:

<div align="center">

| | | | |
| | | |
| |
|

</div>

---

[139] Haran, "On the Diffusion of Literacy and Schools in Ancient Israel", 94 and n.28. Recognizing the plausibility of Naveh's suggestion, Haran also suggests (n.27) that the abecedaries may have served as templates for the (re)production of letters in longer texts– cf. Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II–III", in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (ed. Amnon Beb-Tor; trans. R. Greenberg; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 350. For a possible parallel for the practice of writing short texts as a means of passing time, cf. Merle K. Langdon, "A New Greek Abecedarium," *Kadmos* 44 (2005): 175–82.

[140] A more nuanced view, that takes account of the high standard of the handwriting, might be that the abecedaries were produced by an experienced scribe, rehearsing their skill or experimenting with different scripts.

2.4.5. THE REMAINING INSCRIPTIONS WRITTEN IN INK ON CLAY

The remaining ink on clay inscriptions consist mainly of short and apparently disconnected pieces, most of which are extremely fragmentary and difficult to interpret. At least some of these appear to contain personal names (e.g. *Kajr*3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.7; 3.17[141]). One inscription on pithos B (*Kajr*3.10) contains a list of six names written adjacent to a handle (immediately to the left of *Kajr*3.9). Four of the names in this list bear the theophoric ending יו- (see §3.4), one, אמץ, is probably parallel to the biblical name אמוץ, "Amos",[142] while the sixth and final name, מצרי, "Egyptian", may be either an epithet or a personal name.[143]

One truncated inscription (*Kajr*3.8) reads ה.שמרן שערם [ ] ("]*ḥ*. Samaria barley"). This was written between the abecedaries on pithos B; although it is not clear which was prior. Aḥituv et al. compared *Kajr*3.8 to the so-called "Barley Ostracon" from Samaria and the "Shepherd's Ostracon", which include references to measures of barley; however, they note that due to the lack of context it is impossible to determine the relationship between the nouns שמרן and שערם, 'barley".[144] Notwithstanding this uncertainty, it is tempting to restore a numeral as part of a list or tally; e.g. שערם שמרן ה[שלש], "[thre]e (consignments of) Samaria Barley". Yet on the

---

[141] *Kajr*3.17 was actually written on the side of a jar, and, other than the KAPT, is the only ink inscription from Kuntillet ʿAjrud that was not written on one of the three inscribed pithoi; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 104.

[142] Cf. two Moabite seals from the 8th–7th centuries (*WSS* 1007, 1018).

[143] Aḥituv et al. argue that at some point before the 7th century the epithet מצרי appears to have become a relatively common personal name. מצרי is also attested as a PN in Ugaritic and Phoenician; see Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 100–01.

[144] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 98. For the so-called shepherd's ostracon, see Hanan Eshel and Esther Eshel, "A Late Iron Age Hebrew Letter Containing the Word 'Noqedim'", in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, vol. 2 (eds. C. Cohen, V. A. Hurowitz, A. Hurvitz, Y. Muffs, B. J. Schwartz, and J. H. Tigay; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 571–84.

basis of known parallels, if *Kajr*3.8 was part of a list, we might expect the scribe to use hieratic numerals rather than writing the number alphabetically.[145] In any case, the fact that in *Kajr*3.8 שמרן appears here to be a toponym lends further weight to the suggestion that שמרן in *Kajr*3.1 may also be read as a toponym.

Finally, on Pithos A, the letter *yôd* is repeated three times in a vertical line (*Kajr*3.5) adjacent to a drawing of a suckling calf. These are written upside-down from the perspective of the vessel stood on its base.[146] The execution of the letters is inconsistent and the scribe has omitted the arm from the middle *yôd.* In addition, approximately 10 *yôds* of varying shapes and dimensions (*Kajr*3.15) are written immediately above one of the handles on pithos B. Finally, a number of unidentifiable marks occupy the space below the "Bes" figures on pithos A. It is difficult to find any other explanation for these letters and markings than the scribbling of an idle hand, strokes to remove excess ink from the nib, or a student learning to handle a pen.

2.5. DISCUSSION

It is possible that the lithic and ceramic inscriptions were dedicatory graffiti offered as a safeguard for the named parties, but the evidence is not compelling. Each of the pithoi inscriptions (including the epistolary formulae and drawings) may plausibly be explained as *ad hoc* documents including lists, drafts, and practice exercises. Cumulatively, they suggest that the pithoi were simply viewed as a convenient writing surface. This is further supported by the inscribed Pithos C (*Kajr*3.16, 3.17), which was

---

[145] Cf. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 66.

[146] Note that whereas the drawings are consistently oriented according to the perspective of the vessel standing on its base, a number of inscriptions on Pithos A are written at different angles, suggesting that the vessel was laid on its side (in various positions) when it was inscribed, indicating that many of the inscriptions were completed once it had been emptied. This reinforces the impression that the Pithoi were simply used as a convenient writing surface, rather than being used for depositing offerings in the bench-room.

located together with ordinary store-jars in the southern storeroom (see fig.2.1), suggesting that there was nothing inherent in the written word that gave the vessel a religious (or numinous) significance.[147] Recently, Brian Schmidt has argued that the drawings and inscriptions may have served as scribal-artisan drafts for pieces that were subsequently transferred onto the walls, and that they secondarily took on a numinous (apotropaic) function. This may be so, but the case for secondary sanctification of the vessels goes beyond the available evidence, and does not account for the full diversity of the written material.[148] This leaves only the stone vessels (*Kajr*1.1–1.4) for which a dedicatory function seems likely.

If it is permissible to view the epistolary formulae as evidence of a general practice of written correspondence, then we may suppose that one or more literate individual(s) were stationed at the site on a (semi)permanent basis. This is consistent with the extraordinary volume of written material, and the inference that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was an officially sanctioned settlement that was provisioned from outside (see further §4.7). In general, the impression is that writing featured at Kuntillet ʿAjrud as a more or less quotidian activity.

---

[147] There is no indication that the inscriptions on Pithos C should be treated differently to those on Pithoi A and B. It is true that no DNN are preserved in the extant fragments, which might be significant if it is assumed that the presence of DNN gave Pithoi A and B numinous power; cf. Schmidt, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud's Pithoi Inscriptions and Drawings". But this is an argument from silence, and, as such, is not decisive. On the other hand, the inclusion of PNN in *Kajr*3.16 (cf. Appendix A) suggests that the dangers inherent in writing PNN were not sufficient to warrant the special treatment of Pithos C; cf. the discussion of the written name in Schniedewind, *How The Bible Became a Book*, 29–32.

[148] Cf. Schmidt, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud's Pithoi Inscriptions and Drawings". See, for example, the repetitive and seemingly careless clusters of letters (e.g. *Kajr*3.5 and 15) and the overlapping of the abecedaries and *Kajr*3.6 with *Kajr*3.8. That is not to deny that the writing *could* have had a numinous association in some (or even all) instances, but simply to state that the evidence does extend that far.

2.6. THE PLASTER TEXTS

2.6.1. *Kajr*4.1

Written in black ink on a thin layer of white plaster, *Kajr*4.1 was discovered on a bench in the northern wing of the bench-room (fig.2.1). Although the plaster is extremely fragmentary, it was possible to restore two lines of text spanning five relatively large fragments. The fragments apparently belong to a single text; however, they are not perfectly aligned and it is uncertain precisely how much has been lost in the intervening spaces—the internal coherence of the lines suggests it was not much. While there are no visible traces of letters above the first line, insufficient space remains for us to be certain whether anything might have come before. On the other hand, the space preserved below the second line suggests that the surviving portion comes from the end of the inscription, or at least the end of a section. In addition, a number of disconnected small fragments were found in the same locus.[149] These smaller fragments contain only a couple of letters each and appear to belong to the same inscription, indicating that *Kajr*4.1 was originally somewhat longer.
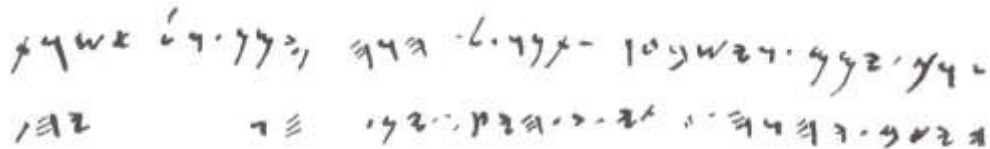
1. ‏[אֹרך . ימם . וישבעוֹ[...]ֹיֹתנו . ל[יֹ]הוה[...]ה[...]תֹימן . ולאשרת]ה

2. ‏[היטב . יהוה . הֹתֹי[מֹן...]י . היצב .יֹן[...]הה[...]יהוֹ[]ֹה...

1.]length of days and they were satisfied […] they gave to [Y]ahweh [of the] Teman and to [his] Asherah

2.]YHWH of the Te[man…] has bettered […]has placed yn[…]hh[…] YHW[H…

---

[149] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 108–09.

אֹרך . ימם—Meshel initially restored ברך as the first word of the line; however, the traces of the first letter are ill-suited to *bêt*, and, although uncertain, *ʾālep* is the preferable reading.[150]

The restoration אֹרך has generated a number of differing interpretations. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al. understood ארך ימם to be a construct chain (cf. biblical אֹרֶךְ יָמִים, "length of days", Ps 21:4 [Heb. 21:5]; 91:16; Prov 3:16; etc.).[151] Alternatively, Mehsel restored a verbal clause, interpreting ארך as either the *hipʿil* 3.m.p. impf.; i.e. יַאֲרִיכוּ יָמִים "they will live long," *lit.* "prolong days", or the corresponding *hipʿil* jussive "may they live long"; However, this reading must be considered extremely improbable due to the *plene* spelling of the 3.m.s. וישבעו and [ו]יֹתנו later in the same line.[152] Then again, Aḥituv has suggested the *hipʿil* 3.m.s. jussive יַאֲרִיךְ יֹמָם "may he lengthen their days".[153] But Dobbs-Allsopp, et al. have countered that in biblical Hebrew the *hipʿil* of ארך never appears with the singular noun יום (cf. Deut 11:9; Josh

---

[150] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 108–09. In this, he was followed by Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften*, 58; Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 413; Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", ABD 4:107; Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 322; Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 286; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 105–06. Recently Naʾaman has argued in favour of ברך, adducing the *ʾālep* in [ה]ולאשרת as evidence against the restoration of *ʾālep* as the first letter of line 1; cf. Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿArud", 308. In response to this I can only observe that the *bêts* in line 1 and 2 afford an even less convincing parallel than the *ʾālep*.

[151] Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 286.

[152] Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", ABD 4:107; Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 286.

[153] Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 322; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 105, 107. Note, however, that Aḥituv translated this as the plural "days", which one would expect to be written ימיהם rather than ימם; cf. the unreduced *êy* diphthong in היטב (line 2, see below). Note that Garr translates ימם as a singular noun; cf. W. Randall Garr, *Dialect Geograhy of Syria-Palestine, 1000–586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 57.

24:13; Judg 2:7).[154] Be that as it may, Aḥituv's reconstruction is supported by the 3.f.s. jussive תארך ימה, in line 4 of the Ekron dedicatory inscription.[155] As such, in order to agree with the following 3.m.p. verbs, it seems preferable to follow Aḥituv and interpret the *mêm* of ימם as the 3.m.p. pronominal suffix, rather than the masculine plural. However, there is no evidence to support the decision to translate ארך as jussive (see below), and the 3.m.s. indicative, "he has lengthened", fits contextually.

יֹתנו[ו...]וישבעֹו—These verbs have consistently been interpreted as having a volitive (jussive) sense;[156] however, there is no *a priori* reason to prefer the jussive over the indicative. Indeed, the use of the perfect indicative in line 2 rather supports the translation of the verbs in line 1 as indicative; although, since the end of the first line is incomplete, it is difficult to establish the precise relationship between the two lines.

If translated as an indicative, then the conjunction might be understood as the *wāw*-consecutive (cf. §3.1.1).[157]

יֹתנו[ו]—For the use of נתן√ in the context of offering something to a deity, compare Exod 22:29–30 and 1 Sam 1:11 where the verb refers to the consecration of the firstborn to God.

---

[154] Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 286.

[155] Note that while there is some damage to the stone surface of the Ekron inscription at this point, the reading is reasonably well assured; see Gitin, Dothan, and Naveh, "A Royal Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron", 1–16.

[156] Cf. Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften*, 58; Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 322; Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 285, who interpreted the verbs as pasive; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 105; "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: The Two-Line Inscription", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47C:172); Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 122–23; however, cf. Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 413.

[157] Cf. Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften*, 58; Brian A. Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *VT* 59 (2009): 108. Cf. וימסן and וידכן, *Kajr*4.2.

ה[תֹ]ימן...[תֹ]ימן—The presence of the definite article in line 2 suggests that the article should be restored before תימן in line 1 (on the significance of the article see §2.4.2).

היטב—*Hipʿil* 3ms, √יטב "to make good, to make glad".[158] Note the unreduced diphthong (*ay*), which has been interpreted as an indication of Judaean (rather than Israelite or Phoenician) orthography (§3.2.3).[159]

Note the alliteration of היטב and היצב, which has the quality of a refrain. This might suggest that *Kajr*4.1 had a liturgical or ritual function (see below).

היצב—Aḥituv, et al. read this as היטב.[160] But, if the letter following the *yôd* is a *ṭêt*, it is deformed (cf. the preceding *ṭêt*, which is reasonably assured). Consequently, Naʾaman proposed the restoration היצב, a 3.m.s. *hipʿil* from √נצב, "to set, (cause to) stand firm".[161] However, in that case, it is necessary to interpret the *yôd* as a *mater lectionis* (*m.l.*). This is possible, but it is far from certain that internal *m.l.* were employed in the orthography at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. §3.2.1). Consequently, it is preferable to interpret היצב as a 3.m.s. *hipʿil* of the cognate I-*yôd* verb √יצב*, "to set, (cause to) stand" (though in BH √יצב is only attested in *hitpaʿel*, e.g. יתצב, Josh 1:5; 1 Sam 3:10; התיצבו, Deut 31:14; 1 Sam 10:19). In this case, the *yôd* should be understood to represent the diphthong *ay* as in היטב. Note that in Aramaic the cognate

---

[158] Cf. Zeʾev Meshel, "Did Yahweh Have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai" BAR 5/2 (1979): 28. Meshsel translated this "Yahweh favoured". Cf. Hoftijzer and Jongeling, "*yṭb*" *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* 1:454, n.72, identified this root as Phoenician; however, as Mastin noted, this is the only example from Phoenician which they offer, and they concede that the word may be Hebrew; Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 108).

[159] Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 324; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 107, 122–27.

[160] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 109.

[161] Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 308–09.

D-stem participle, מיצב, "to be valid", has a qualitative meaning (*TADAE* B3.10 R.22).

Aḥituv restored the following word as יְמָם (presumably influenced by his reading of ימם in the preceding line).[162] However, this can hardly be correct, as the visible traces of the second letter of this word do not correspond to any of the other examples of *mêm* in *Kajr*4.1 the letter in question is more likely to be *nûn* (cf. תימן, and יתנו in line 1).

Early publications identified *Kajr*4.1 it as a prayer or blessing, and this interpretation has had a lasting influence on discussions of the text ever since. This tendency was no doubt influenced to some degree by the apparently high number of blessing formulae found at the site, and has, in turn, influenced other interpretational choices, such as the translation of the imperfect verbs in the first line as jussive rather than indicative.[163] However, once this bias is recognised and made explicit, the way is laid open for *Kajr*4.1 to be reconsidered. In fact, the use of perfects in the second line, and (correspondingly) the *wāw* consecutives in the first, gives the inscription a retrospective quality, which casts considerable doubt over the view that *Kajr*4.1 should be classified as a prayer or blessing. Rather, the first line apparently refers to something being offered or consecrated (נתן) to YHWH of the Teman and to his אשרת/ה, while line 2 seems to describe the YHWH's benevolence. Could this text preserve part of an offering ritual? If so, it should be observed that the perfect aspect imbues the text with a retrospective rather than a prescriptive quality. Another possibility is that *Kajr*4.2, like *Kajr*3.9, might be a transcript from a song, in which YHWH is praised for his benevolence (e.g. Ps 98:1). In either

---

[162] Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 322.

[163] For the influential view that Kuntillet ʿAjrud served as a way-station at which blessings and prayers for divine protection (including the KAPT) were deposited, see already Zeʾev Meshel, "Notes and News: Kuntilat ʿAjrud, 1975-1976", *IEJ* 27 (1977): 52; Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", 61. Weinfeld, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions and Their Significance", 124–25.

case, there is a possibility that the text could be related to activities conducted in the immediate vicinity (see further Chapter 4).

2.6.2. *Kajr*4.2

This is the longest of the surviving plaster inscriptions. It was located on the floor of the bench room near the entrance to the courtyard.
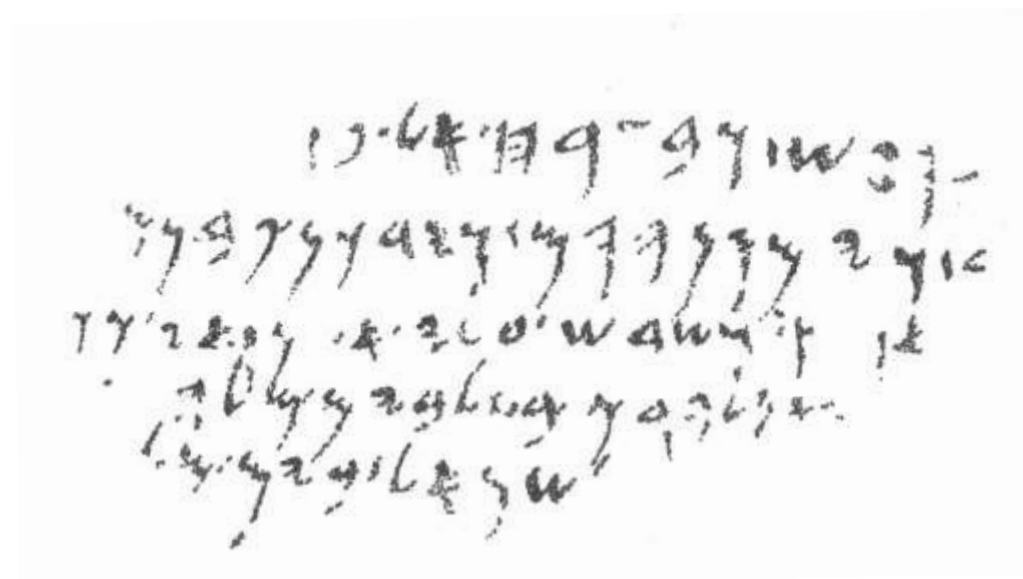
1.   [בֹּרעֹֿש . ובֹֿזרֹח . אל . בֹּרֹ]ם
2.   [ר. וימסן . הרם . וידֹכֹן . פבנֹמֹ]
3.   [ארֹקֹ . קֹ{ש}דש . עלֹי . אֹלֹמֹ]
4.   [◦ הֹכֹן [ל]בֹּרך . בעל. בים. מלֹחֹמֹ]ה
5.   [לֹׁשֹמֹ . אל . בים מלֹחֹ]מה

1.   ] when the earth quakes and when God shines in the high places […
2.   ]r and mountains will melt and hills will be crushed[…
3.   ] earth. The holy one over the gods […
4.   ] prepare [to] bless Baʿal on the day of battle[…
5.   ] to the name of God on the day of batt[le…

בֹּרֹעֹֿש—A temporal clause: ב preposition + inf. meaning "when". The imagery of the earthquake is a commonplace in descriptions of

theophany (e.g. Exod 19:18; Judg 5:5; Ps 29; 114:7–8; Ezek 3:12, 13; 38:19; Hab 3:6; cf. 1 Kgs 19:11–12; Isa 29:6).

ובזרח—For similar occurrences of this verb (√זרח "to go forth"; figuratively: "shine") in the context of theophany see Deut 33:2; Isa 60:1.

אל . בֹּר[ם]—Aḥituv et al. identified בֹּרֹם with heaven; i.e. the dwelling place of the deity.[164] However, in Habakkuk 3:10 the collective noun רום (*rôm*) apparently refers to "(mountain) heights" as part of a three tiered merismus signifying the whole of creation.[165] Moreover, the disruption of nature at the passing of the divine presence is a common motif of the southern theophany tradition to which *Kajr*4.2 seems to belong (see §2.8.2). As such, it is better to see רם as a synonymous parallelism corresponding to הרם "the mountains", in the following line (cf. Mic 1:3).

וימסן . הרם—For similar descriptions of the mountains melting (√מסס) in the context of theophany see Ps 97:5; Mic 1:4.

וימסן ... וידכֹּן—As Aḥituv argued, the use of paragogic *nûn* on these 3.m.p. verbs indicates future tense, rather than preterit or jussive. Accordingly, the *wāw* should be translated as simple conjunctive rather than *wāw* consecutive.[166]

---

[164] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 111.

[165] Gareth J. Wearne, "Habakkuk 3:10-11: In Defence of a Masoretic Unit Division" *VT* 64 (2014): 515–18.

[166] Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 325. The so-called *nûn paragogicum* is typically found on the imperfect indicative, rather than the jussive or *wāw* consecutive. However, this is not always the case. In the Hebrew Bible paragogic *nûn*s are found after *wāw* consecutive eight times: Deut 1:22; 4:11 [x2]; 5:19; Judg 8:1; Isa 41:5; Ezek 44:8; Amos 6:3, and only rarely on jussive verbs e.g. Job 31:10; Isa 26:11 (Joüon §44e); cf. Stephen A. Kaufman, "Paragogic *nun* in Biblical Hebrew: Hypercorrection as a Clue to a Lost Scribal Practice," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor*

וידכּן . פבנמ—Several readings are possible for וידכּן (דכה/דכא√ "to crush"). Aḥituv et al. preferred either *hitpaʿel* (*wĕyiddakkûn*; cf. Ps 51:10– Heb.8), or *nifʿal* (cf. Ps. 51:19–Heb.17),[167] while Dobbs-Allsopp, et al. prefered *puʿal*.[168] Alternatively, McCarter has suggested וירכּן (רכך√) "grew weak".[169]

The adjective גבננים ("jagged, rugged"; cf. גבן, "hunchbacked", Lev 21:20) is attested in Ps 68:15–16 [Heb. 16–17], where it describes the mountain(s) of Bashan;[170] however, as Aḥituv et al. noted, if this reading is correct, one must assume that *Kajr*4.2 reflects an orthographic convention whereby a single consonant is used rather than repeating an identical consonant (in this case *nûn*), even when those two consonants have different phonemic values; cf. יברך (= יברכך) in *Kajr*3.6 (see above).[171] Yet, the possibility remains that both יברך and גבנם are in fact instances of haplography, and, indeed, there are a number of other instances at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (albeit from incomplete or uncertain readings) in which identical juxtaposed letters are repeated (e.g. הה *Kajr*4.1; שממ *Kajr*4.6.1; תת *Kajr*4.6.6, and ממ *Kajr*4.6.8).[172]

Be that as it may, a far superior interpretation on palaeographic grounds is McCarter's פבנם, cf. Hurrian *pabn-* "mountain". As McCarter noted,

---

of Jonas C. Greenfield, (eds. Ziony Zevit, et al.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 98, who explained the forms in Deuteronomy and Judges as hyer-corrections.

[167] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 111.

[168] Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 288.

[169] "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Plaster Wall Inscription", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47D:173, n.3).

[170] Cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 288.

[171] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 111–12.

[172] Of course we cannot be certain of the phonological environment of those combinations (cf. שממ, *Kajr*4.6).

the alternative גבנמ "fails on epigraphic (sic.) grounds: The first letter is a perfect *pê* but unparalleled as *gîmel*."[173]

קֻ{שׁ}דשׁ . עלי . אֹלֹם—As Aḥituv et al. note, קשדש is meaningless. Accordingly, they suggested that the first *šîn* is a scribal error and amended the reading to קדש, which they interpret as a divine epithet, "holy one".[174]

For the use of קדש as a substantive see Num 16:7; Deut 33:2; Job 6:10; Ps 71:22; KAI 4:4–5.

The noun אלים, the shorter plural form of El, "God/Gods" (as opposed to the more common אלהים), only occurs four times in the MT: twice in the expression בני אלים "sons of gods" (Ps. 29:1; 89:6 [Heb. 7]);[175] once in the expression מי־כמכה באלם "who is like you among the gods?" (Exod 15:11; note the *defective* spelling); and once in the expression אל אלים "god of gods" (Dan 11:36); cf. בני עליון (Ps 82:6); בני־האלהים (Gen 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7); בני ישראל (Deut 32:8), which in the LXX is rendered ἀγγέλων θεοῦ (and in several manuscripts: υἱῶν θεοῦ).[176]

Although no precise parallel is known for the expression קדש עלי אלם, "holy one over the gods", it is interesting to compare the common

---

[173] "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Plaster Wall Inscription", translated by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*COS* 2.47D:173, n.2).

[174] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 112, 135 n.5 and n.6; cf. Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 326.

[175] Note the possibility that בְּנֵי אֵלִים in Ps. 29:1 and 89:6 reflects original בני אלם (i.e. DN "El", singular + enclitic *mêm*); cf. Horace D. Hummel, "Enclitic *mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL* 76 (1957), 85–107, esp. 91 and 101–02; Simon B. Parker, "Sons of (the) God(s) בני עליון/אלים/(ה)אלהים", *DDD*: 794; Karel van der Toorn, "God (1) אלהים", ibid, 353.

[176] See the discussion in Michael S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (2001): 52–74.

Ugaritic divine epithet: *bn qdš*, "sons of the Holy One" (or, "sons of holiness"; KTU 1.2 I), evoking a hierarchy in the divine council.[177]

Recently, Naʾaman has proposed the restoration דשדש עלי אבן, "he treaded (sic.) on earth over (the) stones", interpreting דשדש as a *pilpēl* form of the verb √דוש, "to tread, trample".[178] This suggestion is possible; although the stance and proportions of the first grapheme seem to be better suited to *qôp* than *dālet*.[179]

הֹכֹן [ל]בֹּרך . בעל . בים . מלחֹמֹ]ה—The noun בעל might reasonably be understood either as a DN, or an epithet (i.e. "the *lord*"), in synonymous parallelism with El in the following line.[180] However, there is no clear evidence that בעל was ever used as an Epithet of El in the Hebrew tradition.[181] The lone reference to the divine appellation בעלי, "my lord/Baal" (Hos 2:16) is of uncertain value.[182] It is therefore more likely that בעל in *Kajr*4.2 represents the deity Baal. In any case, owing to the

---

[177] Cf. Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 2, Introduction with Text , Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3–1.4* (VTSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 62.

[178] Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 309.

[179] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 112–13, figs. 5.54, 5.55a and 5.55b.

[180] See the detailed discussion in Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 110–13; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 133.

[181] See the discussions in Wolfgang Herrmann, "Baal בעל", *DDD*: 136–37; Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Arhcaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Academic, 2007), 242; although, compare the apparently Baalistic imagery in Hosea 2; Smith, *The Early History of God*, 73–75. Cf. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 68, who argued that הבעלים in Jer 2:23 is a reference to the cult of Molech.

[182] Herrmann, "Baal בעל", *DDD*: 136 argued that in this context בעל should be understood as the common noun "husband". Perhaps more significant are the allusions to בעל ברית and אל ברית in Judges 9:4 and 9:46 (respectively). However, as Day has suggested, in this instance the agrarian imagery makes it more likely that Baal is a proper noun and El a divine appellation; cf. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 69–70.

expression קדש עלי אלם in the preceding line, it is not surprising to find multiple DNN at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

The allusion to blessing the deity is unusual, but parallels are known from the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Deut 8:10; Ps 26:12; Ps 134:2; cf. Judg 5:2, 9).

For the expression [בים מלחמ[ה "day of battle," see Job 38:23; Ps 78:9; Prov 21:31; Hos 10:14; Amos 1:14; and Zech 14:3. Prov 21:31 and Zech 14:3, in particular, associate the day of battle with the divine warrior.

*Kajr*4.2 is a portion from a theophany, sharing notable similarities in vocabulary and compositional structure with theophanic hymns in the Hebrew Bible (these will be discussed in greater detail in §2.8*ff*.).[183] The text is incomplete and its original length is unknown; however, the surviving lines appear to be composed in parallel cola, and, while we cannot know the place of this section in relation to the whole, the internal coherence of the fragment (esp. lines 4–5) suggests that the lines themselves were probably not much longer.[184]

From a literary-traditional point of view, it is significant that the closest biblical parallels for the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 associate the deity with the South (e.g. אלוה מתימן יבוא, "Eloah comes from Teman", Hab 3:3). This southern association, together with the references to YHWH of (the) Teman in *Kajr*3.6, 3.9, and 4.1, suggests that the physical location of Kuntillet ʿAjrud was an important influence on text choice. We will return to this in Chapter 4.

In addition to the large fragment, there was a small fragment preserving portions of two lines (amounting to only five letters) written in

---

[183] Cf. Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 324; Weinfeld, "The Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions and their Significance", 126–27.

[184] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 110. Note that Meshel apparently preferred to view the lines as coming from the beginning (or near the beginning) of a composition; cf. ibid, 110.

the same hand. The editors placed the small fragment to the left of the main inscription so the second line was aligned with the first line of the large fragment, but there is no physical evidence to support this placement. The first line of the small fragment bears the word שנת. Aḥituv et al. suggested that שנת may be vocalised *šēnīt*, "second time," or *šĕnat/šĕnōt*, "year/years". As discussed by the editors, *šēnīt* might have introduced a second or repeated theophany (cf. Gen 22:15; 41:5; Jer 1:13; 31:1); although this is unparalleled in the comparable biblical theophanies (see §2.8.2). Alternatively, *šĕnat/šĕnōt* may have been intended to situate the theophany temporally or sequentially (cf. Deut 32:7 שנות דור־ודור; Joel 2:2 שני דור ודור, "years of ages past"). A third possibility, apparently not considered by Aḥituv et al., is that שנת be vocalised *šĕnat*, the construct of *šēnāh*, "sleep" (cf. the expression שנת־עולם, "sleep of ages", viz. "death"; Jer 51:39, 57; cf. אישן המות "sleep of death", Ps 13:3 [Heb.4], in the context of divine speech in a prophecy against Babylon).

The second line bears the letters *wāw* and (probable) *hê*, which Aḥituv et al. related to the tetragrammaton. If correct, this would amount to a third possible DN, but it cannot be confirmed.

2.6.3. *Kajr*4.3

*Kajr*4.3 was the only plaster inscription found in situ. It was written in black ink on the north-western doorjamb of the bench room (fig.2.1), approximately 1.2m above floor level.

1.   [...]

2.   [...°ךֹלֹה]

3.   [...ןֹה°°[...]דֹיֹֹל]

4.   [...ֹנֹה . אֹסק . ֹשָׂאֹל] נאות ...[ֹבּ]

5.   [...°בֹֹ°ֹל [...] שׁ[...]

6.   [...]ֹ°שֹׁ°[...] ֹֹישֹׁוֹ [...] הֹֹלֹל]

7.   [...]ֹשֹׂחֹת . קין . ֹשֹׂדֹֹה ומרֹםֹ ה]רם

1.   ]...[

2.   ] he/they walked [

3.   ] to the hand of the [

4.   ] the oppressive [...]. I will ascend to green [pastures …

5.   ]...[

6.   ] to him. And he will [

7.   ] Cain destroyed a field and lofty mo[untains…

ֹנֹה—Aḥituv et al. read the *hê* with the following word: קסח/ה | רי; although they left the line untranslated. The verb √הני, "to oppress", occurs x19 in the Hebrew Bible. In Pentateuchal law הני is often used to describe the oppression of the poor or the alien: e.g. Exod 22:21 [Heb.20]; Lev

19:33; Deut 23:17 [Heb.16]; cf. Jer 22:3; Ezel 18:1, 16; 22:7, 29.[185] The syntax of this line may be compared to instances in which the attributive *qal* participle היונה qualifies a preceding noun: חרון היונה, "oppressive anger" (Jer 25:38) חרב היונה, "the oppressing sword" (Jer 46:16; 50:16); העיר היונה, "the oppressing city" (Zeph 3:1).

אֹסק . דֹשׁא—Aḥituv et al. declined to translate this line. Naʾaman proposed the restoration [א]ני . ועסק . בן . אב[ין] . אש דל, "a poor and oppressed son of a ne[edy], a poor per[son…].[186] However, the *ʿayin* of עסק seems unlikely on the basis of the published photographs. The *sāmek* and *qôp* are quite clear, but the straight edge of the preceding grapheme is better suited to ʾalep. The remainder of the line admits several interpretations. The hapax verb אֹסק, 1.c.s. imperfect of √נסק*, "to ascend", is attested in Ps 139:8 (אם־אסק שמים שם אתה, "if I ascend to the heavens, there you are").

The noun דשא, "green grass, vegetation" is widely attested in the Hebrew Bible, while in the stative verb דשא is attested once in Joel 2:22: דשאו נאות מדבר, "the pastures of the wilderness are green".

שֹׁחֹת . קין . שֹׁדֹה ומרֹם הֹ]רם—This is the reading cautiously proposed by Aḥituv et al.; cf. Naʾaman's translation "spear".[187] קין may be identified with the Kenites (cf. Num 24:21–22), who are often associated with mountain heights in the Hebrew Bible (Num 24:21; Jer 49:16; Hab 2:9; however, cf. Josh 5:57, where קַיִן is listed among towns in the Judean hills). Given the references to YHWH of (the) Teman *Kajr*3.6, 3.9, 4.1 and the southern theophany in *Kajr*4.2, it is interesting to note that in the Hebrew Bible the Kenites are particularly associated with the region of Edom, reinforcing the impression that the physical location of

---

[185] See Paul R. Gilchrist, "יָנָה" in *TWOT*: 874.

[186] Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 310.

[187] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 115–17; Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 311.

Kuntillet ʿAjrud had a direct bearing on the texts inscribed on the walls (see *Kajr*4.2).[188] Following Aḥituv et al., שחת may be identified with the Hebrew root √שחת, "to destroy, lay waste".

ומרם—Other interpretations of מרם [...] include [ו]מִרְמֶה "heights" (cf. מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֶה, "open heights" Judg 5:18), and וּמִרְמָה "treachery" (cf. Ps 55:24).[189]

The text is in very poor condition, making its interpretation extremely difficult. Nevertheless, Naʾaman has recently suggested that *Kajr*4.3 might contain an early version of the Exodus story, in which the birth of a hero (Moses) is followed by the crossing of the sea.[190] In broad terms, Naʾaman may be correct in his conjecture that *Kajr*4.3 was drawn from an ancient Israelite folk-tale; however, my interpretation differs from his in several particulars. The restoration offered above seems to describe the protagonist(s) rising from affliction (line 4). Meanwhile, the possible references to green pastures (line 4) and to Cain/Kenites (line 7)—who are associated in the Hebrew Bible with the region of Edom—might suggest that the extant fragment comes from a wilderness itinerary (note also the verbs of motion: הלך, line 2; אסק, line 4). Significantly, as with the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 and the references to Yʜᴡʜ of (the) Teman in *Kajr*3.1, 3.9 and 4.1, the probable allusion to Edom gives the text a local frame of reference.

---

[188] Cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah", *JSOT* 33 (2008): 131–53. Note that Blenkinsopp even suggests that the narrative about Cain and Abel might parallel the narratives about Esau (Edom) and Jacob (Israel).

[189] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 115–17.

[190] Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 311–12; cf. Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (SBLANEM 5: Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2013), 146.

2.6.4. *Kajr*4.4

This inscription consists of two larger fragments and a number of smaller fragments that preserve only one or two letters. The text is written in red ink and was located at the western end of the courtyard (fig.2.1). The script of *Kajr*4.4.2 appears to differ from that of *Kajr*4.4.1 and may have been written by a different hand.[191] *Kajr*4.4.1 is the only fragment from which it is possible to reconstruct a partial phrase.

1.   ]°[

2.   וישמע . [בֹּעל . בקֹל]

3.   [הֹֿמֹ°יֿ]

1.   ]°[

2.   And]Baʿal listened to the voice[of

3.   ]ḥ̇m°ẙ[

בקֹל . בֹּעל—In the Hebrew Bible בקול most often occurs in the construct as the object of a verb; e.g. וישמע יהוה בקול ישראל, "And YHWH listened to the voice of Israel", Num 21:3 (cf. Num 21:3; Deut 8:20; 13:18; 15:5; Josh 5:6; 10:14; Judg 13:9; Isa 50:10; Jer 3:25; etc.). However, Aḥituv et al., presumably influenced by the old Canaanite theophany tradition (cf. KTU 1.4 vii, lines 25–37; see §2.8.1), restored the verb √רעם, "to

---

[191] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 117.

thunder" and understood בקל, as the voice of Baal: בעל [וירעם]
[בקל/בקל[ה "Baal thundered in voice/[his voice]" (cf. 1 Sam 7:10: וירעם
יהוה בקול־גדול, "and the LORD thundered in a great voice").[192]
Alternatively, it is also possible to read Baal as the object of a verbal
clause, e.g. [גדל [ויענו] בעל בקל "and they answered Baal in a great voice" (cf. 1
Sam 28:12).

In this instance it seems likely that בעל should be interpreted as a DN,
suggesting that בעל and אל in *Kajr*4.2 should also be interpreted as
DNN. This is also consistent with the possibility that אשרתה should be
interpreted as a DN, but it does not amount to proof.

2.6.5. *Kajr*4.5

This inscription, written in red ink and located at the western end of the
courtyard (fig.2.1), is accompanied by a partially preserved line-drawing
of an anthropomorphic head in profile. The outline of the drawing appears
to have been lightly incised into the plaster before being retraced in the
same red ink as the letters. Traces of two lines of writing are visible on the
left-hand side of the head.

1.   [כֹ]
2.   [הנבאֹ]

---

[192] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 117.

הנבא—Traces of the fourth letter are visible on the broken edge of the plaster. These consist of a broad vertical stroke and possible traces of a horizontal line, suggesting an ʾālep; in which case, the word might read הנבא "the prophet" (cf. Lachish 3 and 16).[193] If this reading is correct, then it is interesting to speculate as to the relationship between the inscription and the anthropomorphic figure: could this be a representation of the prophet referred to in the text? Needless to say, due to the extremely poor condition of this small fragment, such conjectures cannot be verified.

2.6.6. *Kajr*4.6

Written in faded red ink, this inscription was found at the foot of the stairs at the western end of the courtyard (fig.2.1). A number of smaller fragments appear to belong to the same inscription, but it is difficult to supply any order to them.

1.   [ס̇ם . לֹעֹם שׁמֹם]

2.   [אֹמר . אֹם̇ את ל]

3.   אֹמרִי . וֹאל]

---

[193] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 122–27.

1.   […] . to a people names(?)
2.   […] he said . "If the…
3.   […] my word(s) . but do not …!"

לעֹם שמֹם—The space between the probable *lamed* and *ʿayin* is slightly larger than expected; however, there is a clear word divider following the *mêm* at the beginning of the line, indicating that *lamed* and *ʿayin* should be read together. Erhard Blum proposed the alternative restoration לעֹמשֹך, √עמש*, "to/for your load" (cf. the BH homophone עמס and the PN עֲמָסָא); although, his attempt to identify this with the possibility that Kuntillet ʿAjrud functioned as a caravanserai is less convincing.[194] שמֹם admits several alternatives. It might be translated "heavens", with contraction of the diphthong (cf. BH שָׁמַיִם). While this would be the only demonstrable instance of diphthong contraction in the KAPT (cf. §3.2.3), it should be noted that *Kajr*4.6 stands apart from the other plaster inscriptions on palaeographical grounds (see §3.6). שמֹם might, otherwise, be related to the noun שֵׁם, "name", with the 3.m.p. pronominal suffix: i.e. שְׁמָם, "their name"; or, as noted by Aḥituv et al., it might be derived from the verb √שָׁמֵם, "to be astonished".[195]

אֹמֹ את—Aḥituv et al. were hesitant to posit a reconstruction for these letters; however, the traces of ʾ*ālep* and *mêm* are reasonably clear. An alternative is to read *šîn* rather than *mêm*, and restore the common noun אש, "man". Blum's proposed אֹך is not convincing.[196] For the pairing of the conditional particle with the *nota accusativi*, compare: אם את־הדבר הזה תעשה, "if you do this thing" (Exod 18:23); ואם את־שדה מקנתו אשר לא

---

[194] Erhard Blum, "Die Wandinschriften 4.2 und 4.6 sowie die Pithos-Inschrift 3.9 aus *Kuntillet ʿAǧrūd*" ZDVP 129 (2013): 42. For the phonological equivalence of *śîn* and *samek*, cf. the discussion of the PN אשא, corresponding to the biblical PN אָסָא; see Appendix A (§27).

[195] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 120.

[196] Blum, "Die Wandinschriften 4.2 und 4.6 sowie die Pithos-Inschrift 3.9 aus *Kuntillet ʿAǧrūd*", 42.

משדה אחזתו יקדיש ליהוה, "and if someone consecrates a bought field, which is not part of his possession, to YHWH" (Lev 27:22; cf. Num 11:22; Josh 24:15; 2 Kgs 17:36, 39). Alternatively, את may be parsed as the 2.m.s. independent pronoun, "if you" (e.g. Gen 23:13; 31:52; cf. pl. אם־אתם, Num 14:30; Judg 6:31; on the *defective* orthography, see §3.2.1).

אֹמְרי . וֹאל—Aḥituv et al. read אמר ישאל, presumably "he said: 'he/they will ask'".[197] Alternatively, Blum has proposed the preferable אֹמְרי וֹאל, "my word(s), and do not", followed by an imperative.[198]

While the lack of context hampers interpretation, it is interesting to note the repetition of the verb אמר (lines 2 and 3), suggesting that *Kajr*4.6 may have recounted some form of discourse. Recently, Blum has argued that *Kajr*4.6 was an open letter addressed to visitors passing through the site, which makes sense only if the writer assumed the addressee would stop in the foreseeable future or was aware of its presence.[199] Hence, he argued, the text was directly related to Kuntillet ʿAjrud's function as a way-station.[200] Blum's interpretation may be correct, but his bold restorations of this exceptionally fragmentary text are made to bear a very heavy burden. Ultimately, the best test of his hypothesis is the extent to which it can be reconciled with the other plaster inscriptions and the archaeology of the site (see Chapter 4). To this end, it should be noted that apart from Blum's proposed reading of *Kajr*4.6, there is no indication that the KAPT address their audience directly. Furthermore, *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3 have a hymnic and mythopoeic quality, respectively, that might suggest they were adapted from traditional (oral) registers (cf. §2.8.3). On the other hand, as

---

[197] Note that Aḥituv et al. offered no translation for *Kajr*4.6; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 120.

[198] Blum, "Die Wandinschriften 4.2 und 4.6 sowie die Pithos-Inschrift 3.9 aus *Kuntillet ʿAǧrūd*", 42.

[199] Ibid, 43.

[200] Ibid, 43.

was discussed above, *Kajr*4.1 might describe some sort of ritual, but even there the use of perfect verbs suggests that the focus is on past events. Of course, it is not necessary to presume that the KAPT represent a coherent and uniform corpus (note that *Kajr*4.6 was removed spatially from *Kajr*4.1–4.3; see further §4.9.1), but even so the uniqueness of Blum's interpretation warrants caution. By this measure, the hypothesis may be deemed possible, but not probable.

2.7. DISCUSSION

The fragmentary nature of the KAPT (esp. *Kajr*4.4–4.6) permits only provisional comments regarding their nature and possible function. Be that as it may, *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3 (and perhaps 4.1) give the impression of being drawn from traditional tales and songs. What is particularly striking in each is the close association with the geographical location of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: e.g. the epithet "YHWH of Teman" (*Kajr*4.1); the southern theophany tradition (*Kajr*4.2); and the (probable) allusion to Cain/Kenites (*Kajr*4.3).

In addition to the geographical association is the intriguing possibility that *Kajr*4.5 included an allusion to a prophet (נבא). Did the settlement at Kuntillet ʿAjrud have a prophetic connection associated with the immanence of YHWH of Teman? We will return to this question in Chapter 4.

2.8. "WHEN GOD SHINES IN THE HEIGHTS": *Kajr*4.2 AND THE MARCH OF THE DIVINE WARRIOR

Owing to its relatively good state of preservation and its prominent position near the entrance to the bench-room, it is inevitable that the theophany (*Kajr*4.2) should occupy a central place in discussions of the plaster inscriptions at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. To be sure, there is a danger that this text might be made to bear a disproportionate weight when appraising the literary character of the plaster corpus as a whole. However, as will be seen, *Kajr*4.2 can be read within a well-established form critical tradition

and offers potentially significant clues as to the function of the plaster texts in the context of the bench-room and the nature of the site at large.

2.8.1. THEOPHANY IN THE BIBLE AND IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

In the last fifty years, biblical theophany has been the subject of a number of significant form critical studies.[201] Each of these has attempted, with the characteristic emphases of their respective authors, to understand biblical theophanies against their Near Eastern background. And each has shed valuable light on various aspects of the forms and history of the theophany traditions. However, the diversity reflected in these studies and the variety of their conclusions testify to the enormous adaptability of the theophany genre throughout biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature.

In part, the diversity in the secondary literature is definitional, stemming from the fact that each study has applied different criteria to delimit the corpus of theophanic texts. Thus, for example, George Savran emphasized communicative and transformative aspects at the level of

---

[201] The most notable being: Jörg Jeremias, *Theophanie: die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung*, (WMANT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965); J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The Self Revelation of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967); Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), esp. chs 4–8; Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exultation*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995); Eric N. Ortlund, *Theophany and Chaoskampf: The Interpretation of Theophanic Imagery in the Baal Epic, Isaiah, and the Twelve* (GUS 5; Piscataway, Nj.: Gorgias, 2010). To these studies we might also add Walter Beyelin's earlier study of the Sinai tradition in Exodus, Walter Beyerlin, *Herkunft und Geschichte der ältesten Sinaitraditionen* (Tübingen : J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1961). English Version *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions* (trans. S. Rudman; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965). More recently, George Savran has undertaken an extensive literary critical study based on Robert Alter's seminal work on biblical type-scenes, entitled *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* (JSOTSup 420; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2005).

divine-human interaction in his concern with the narratival function of theophany accounts.[202] While, Jörg Jeremias, in his comparison with Mesopotamian and Canaanite storm-god theophanies was especially concerned with the visual appearance of the deity and attendant phenomena.[203] Meanwhile, Cross extended the latter scope even further to include the Canaanite cosmogonic mythic cycle in which all participants are either divine or semi-divine. [204]

As with Cross and Jeremias, the following discussion assumes a broad definition of theophany, in which it is not only the human response to the divine manifestation that is understood to be significant but also that of nature. More specifically, what is in view is any appearance of the deity that provokes some sort of change or reaction, *especially* where this is borne out in the natural world. Indeed, this approach is necessarily determined by the highly descriptive language of *Kajr*4.2.

Broadly speaking, ancient Near Eastern theophanies can be identified with two basic genres:

---

[202] As Savran himself said, "I am not speaking of techniques of divination, nor am I referring to the notion of prophecy; itself a hugely complex and uncommon means of divine–human communication. Rather, I am alluding to texts which speak of visitation, of actual meeting between human and divine"; Savran, *Encountering the Divine*, 1.

[203] Jeremias, *Theophanie: die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung*, passim, but note especially the discussion on pages 1–2, and 66–67.

[204] The classification Baal cycle as cosmogonic is disputed and it has been objected by some that the extant texts do not relate a creation event, for a survey of the most influential interpretations see Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1: Intriduction With Text Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2* (Leiden; E.J. Brill, 1994), 58–106; however it seems likely that the mythic conflict between Baal and Yamm is a reflex of the widely attested *chaoskampf* motif, commonly throughout the ancient Near East; cf. David T. Tsumura's recent study *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaokampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), esp. 41–42.

1) Covenantal theophanies:[205] these have as their focus the relationship between the human and the divine. They may be either individual or communal and relate to a range of matters from divine election to the issuing of oracles. They tend to be initiated by the deity.[206] The message communicated by the deity and the human response are at the fore, and, consequently, divine discourse is a major focus in theophanies of this type. The divine legitimisation of the future or newly-crowned monarch is a frequently recurring theme.[207] Generally, texts belonging to

---

[205] This label is adapted from Jeffrey Niehaus and is intended here to emphasize the relationship these texts assume to exits between the deity and the respondent; e.g. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 142: "[a]ll Yahweh theophanies do in fact take place in covenantal contexts. The salvation and judgement that occur when God appears also take place under an aegis of covenant."

[206] Cf. Kuntz, *The Self Revelation of God*, 32. Niehaus contended that, in contradistinction to biblical theophanies, other religious practices of the ancient Near East often involved strenuous efforts to evoke the desired deity; cf. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 20; however, even in such cases, the appearance (or non-appearance) of the deity is always left to the deity's own volition. The oracular dream report in the annals of Ashurbanipal (cylinder B, col. V, lines 46–50) is a case in point:

> Ishtar hears the sighs I emitted, and she said, "Fear not!" and comforted me in my heart: "Because of the raising of thy hands which thou hast raised, (because of) thy eyes, filled with tears, I have had mercy on thee." During that very same night in which I approached her, a certain seer lay down and saw a dream-vision. (Translation by Arthur C. Piepkorn, *Historical Prism Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal I: Editions E, B₁₋₅, D, and K* (AS 5; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 65–67; cf. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 34)

In response to Niehaus, it might also be noted that this same pattern of prayer and response is likewise present in a number of biblical theophanies, e.g. 2 Sam 22:7–20 (= Ps 18:6–19).

[207] Niehaus cited a number of divine election texts from Mesopotamia; Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 95–101), but the pattern was also well-established in Egypt. Examples include the nomination of Thutmose III, recorded on the walls of temple of Amon at Karnak ("The Divine Nomination of Thut-mose III," translated by John A. Wilson (*ANET*, 446–47); and the dream oracle of Thutmose IV in which the future reign of the prince is announced and Thutmose is directed to restore the sphinx ("A Divine Oracle through a Dream," translated by John A. Wilson (*ANET*, 449).

this first category culminate in a renewed or altered understanding of the relationship between the human recipient(s) and the divinity.

2) Divine warrior and storm-god theophanies:[208] the manifestation of a deity in a storm may sometimes describe natural phenomena, envisaging the storm as the embodiment and expression of the deity's power,[209] but

---

[208] This genre has received particular attention in recent decades. Monograph length studies include: DIVINE-WARRIOR: Patrick D. Miller Jr., *The divine warrior in early Israel* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973); Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Bible and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlins and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988); Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995); Harold W. Ballard Jr., *The divine warrior motif in the Psalms* (BIBAL dissertation series 6; North Richland Hills, Tex. : BIBAL Press, 1999); STORM-GOD: Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zietalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien Nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Wiesbaden 2001); cf. idem, "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies: Part I," *JANER* 7 (2007): 121-168; idem, "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies: Part II," *JANER* 8 (2008): 1-44; Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003). See also, Paul E. Dion "YHWH as Storm-God and Sun-God: The Double Legacy of Egypt and Canaan as Reflected in Psalm 104," *ZAW* 103 (1991): 43–71; Moshe Weinfeld, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures* (eds. Hayim Tadmor and Moshe Weinfeld; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 121–47.

[209] Schwermer took account of both the ubiquity and diversity of the storm-god motif when he observed:

> "Storm and Tempest were felt to be a numinous power in all ancient Near Eastern societies; everywhere one of the great gods was thought to be the embodiment of and lord over the storms, tempests and associated phenomena. The relative significance and sphere of activities of the individual strom-gods was dependent, among other things, on the climactic conditions of the individual regions. Thus the storm-god as bringer of rain has no role in the agrarian rituals of Babylonia, where agriculture was characterised by irrigation, while his characteristic as lord of the destructive storm–including dust-storms– is prominent" (Schwemer, "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East", 130–31).

often the divine warrior and storm-god motifs are mixed. In theophanies of this type, the deity is usually depicted as wielding cosmic or meteorological weapons and often leads an entourage of personified natural and meteorological elements;[210] sometimes the deity is described as riding the flood or the storm.[211] These descriptions share a characteristic focus on the mighty deeds of the deity, whether past, present, or future.

Both of these basic types may be identified in the Hebrew Bible. The most common examples of the first type are the annunciation and call narratives (e.g. Gen 28:10–19; Exod 3:1–22; Judg 13:2–18; and 1 Sam 3:10–13), but the relational emphasis of this type is also evident in the great communal theophanies: e.g. the Sinai theophany (Exod 19–31); the ordination of Aaron (Lev 9); and the dedication of the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kings 6–8; esp. 8:6–11). The second type is most evident in the Psalms and the Prophets (e.g. 2 Sam 22 (= Ps 18); Ps 46; 74:12–17; 77:16–20; 97; Isa 29:6; Jer 10:16 (= 51:16), etc.), and frequently imagines God as a powerful judge coming to vindicate the righteous.[212]

*Kajr*4.2 belongs to a subgroup of the divine warrior theophany genre. The characteristic feature of this subgenre is its focus on the march of the divine warrior and the upheaval of nature that is caused by his passing. Biblical theophanies belonging to this subgroup include: Exod 19:9–20 (cf. Deut 5:4–5); Deut 33:2–3; Judges 5:4–5; 2 Sam 22:8–13 (= Ps 18: 7–12);

If Gerald Wainwright's historical reconstruction is correct, then this same pattern also holds true of the Egyptian storm-gods. Gerald A. Wainwright, "The Origins of Storm-Gods in Egypt," *JEA* 49 (1963): 13–20.

[210] An excellent survey of these themes is Weinfeld, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East", 121–47.

[211] E.g. the epithet of Baal, *rkb ʿrpt*, "rider of the clouds". For a discussion of this and other titles of Baal, see, Nicholas Wyatt, "The titles of the Ugaritic storm-god," *UF 24 (2007): 403-24.*

[212] For a study of this motif in the Psalms, including a discussion of divine warrior terminology, see Harold W. Ballard Jr., *The divine warrior motif in the Psalms* (BIBAL dissertation series 6; North Richland Hills, Tex.: BIBAL Press, 1999), 35–40.

1 Kgs 19:11–13; Ezek 1:4, 26–28; 3:12–13; Mic 1:3–4; Hab 3:3–16; cf. 2 Esdras 13:2–4; Enoch 1:3–9.

Owing to the continuity of both form and content, it is often felt that there is a linear (hereditary) relationship between biblical theophanies and other Canaanite and Near Eastern theophanies; although one must make allowance for inherent demands and possibilities afforded by the subject matter. Among the most persuasive analyses of this relationship, and possibly the most relevant for the study of *Kajr*4.2, is Cross' *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*.

Based principally on his reading of the mythic Baal-Anat cycle from Ugarit and Psalm 29—which is commonly understood to be an ancient Baal hymn appropriated for use in the Yahweh cultus[213]—Cross thought to discern two patterns or genres basic to the divine warrior-storm god theophany. The first pattern (1) describes the march of the divine warrior to battle. In this pattern the deity's wrath is manifest in nature as heavens and earth are thrown into turmoil at his passing. In the foreground is the cosmogonic struggle with chaos. The second pattern (2) describes the return of the victorious warrior to be enthroned in his new temple on his newly-won mountain. In the background is the cosmogonic struggle with the Sea or flood-dragon; in the foreground is the deity's manifestation as "victor" and "king" in the storm. Triumphant, the divine warrior sounds

---

[213] It seems that Harold Ginsburg was the first to identify the probable Cannanite background of Psalm 29; H. L. Ginsberg, "Phoenician Hymn in the Psalter," *Atti del XIX Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti: Roma, 23-29 settembre 1935 (XIII)* (Roma: Tipografia del Senato, 1938), 472-76; for a survey of modern research see Oswald Loretz, *Psalm 29 : kanaanäische El- und Baaltraditionen in jüdischer Sicht* (Altenberge : CIS-Verlag ; Soest : Vertrieb und Auslieferung, CIS-Verlag, 1984), 11–22. Note that this interpretation is not universally accepted; cf. Yitzhak Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 39–40, 44–51.

his voice in the storm-theophany and all nature is awakened. His coming brings renewed fertility and nature rejoices at the exultation of the deity.[214]

According to Cross, these same patterns and motifs are also present, in altered form, in the hymnic fragments of Yahwistic theophany preserved in the Hebrew Bible, and this led him to conclude that "the language of theophany in early Israel was primarily language drawn from the theophany of Baal."[215]

Cross' analysis of the Ugaritic evidence is compelling and there can be little doubt that at almost every level a common stock of language and motifs permeate both the Canaanite divine warrior/storm god theophany and the biblical theophanies. Otherwise, to quote Cross, "the Cannanite hymn, Psalm 29, would hardly have been accommodated to the cult".[216]

---

[214] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 155–56; cf. idem, *From Epic to Canon:History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 39.

[215] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 156–57, drawing on the fuller discussion in chs. 5 and 6; idem, *From Epic to Canon*, 24. Significantly, Cross understood these hymnic fragments to be among the oldest material in the Bible and, consequently, closer in time to the Canaanite prototype than their later reworking during the time of the monarchy; cf. Cross, *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 86, 99–105, 157, 158, 163. Central to the tradition was the crossing of the Reed Sea; although, Cross did not believe that the earliest sources—which were principally concerned with the folk-memory of the Exodus-Conquest—equated the crossing with the divine warrior's slaying of Yamm or the flood-dragon. Rather, this was a later mythologising development, cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 87, and esp. Ch. 6.

[216] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 156. The continuities between biblical and Ugaritic poetry are, now, widely recognised. Older works on this matter include, Umburto Cassuto, "Chapter iii of Habakkuk and the Ras Shamra Texts," "Parallel Words in Hebrew and Ugaritic" and "The Israelite Epic," in *Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts*, (trans. Israel Abrahams; vol. 2 of *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, Umburto Cassuto; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975); *Ras Shamra parallels: the texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*, (ed. Loren R. Fisher; 3 Vols.; AnOr 49–51; Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1972–1981). For a more cautionary approach with a summary of earlier literature see, Peter C. Craigie, "Ugarit and the Bible: Progress and Regress in 50 Years of Literary Study," in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic* (ed.

However, despite Cross' expert and nuanced reading of the texts, there is in fact little evidence that his first pattern (1) is properly a part of the Ugaritic genre.[217] That is, while the mythic texts vividly describe the preparations of the divine warrior, followed by the moment of battle and its aftermath, the march of the deity and the ensuing turmoil are not described. The focus is solely on the divine action and the passive response of nature, an essential feature of *Kajr*4.2 and the biblical theophanies to be discussed below, is omitted.[218]

The climactic scene describing Baal's combat with Yamm (KTU 1.2 IV, lines 1–35) is a perfect example. In this text, after an extended prologue describing the exchange of messengers, the narrative transitions directly from Baal's first battle with Yamm (lines 1–7), to Kothar wa-Hasis' fashioning of weapons for Baal (lines 7–23), then to Baal's ultimate victory over Yamm (lines 23–35). But nowhere is Baal's march to battle described.[219]

Gordon D. Young; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 99–112. In his later essay "Traditional Narrative and the Reconstruction of Early Israelite Institutions", in *From Epic to Canon*, 39, Cross added: "[t]hat the pattern existed before the elaboration of units in the Israelite Epic – and indeed shaped the selection of events to be narrated – can be argued on the basis of the myth of the Divine Warrior from Ugarit, as well as from Hebrew poetry early and late". Cf., more extensively, Cross, *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 162–63). Indeed, Cross had already anticipated this equation in an earlier chapter of *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic* when he said: "More eloquent testimony is to be found in the archaic hymns to be discussed in the next section. Thus Exodus 15:1–18 treats both Exodus and Conquest; Deuteronomy 33:1–3, 26–29; Judges 5:4–5 (=Psalms 68:8–9); and Habakkuk 3:3–7, all describe the Divine Warrior marching in conquest from the Southland. In these poems one finds the language of the theophany of the Divine Warrior utilizing mythical elements from the theophany of the stormgod as warrior"; Cross, *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 86.

[217] For a more general critique of Cross's method see John Van Seters, *The Pentateuch: A Social Science Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 50–57.

[218] This pattern seems to be repeated in the Hittite myths; e.g. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Hitite Myths* (2nd edition; SBLWAW 2; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1998), §2.16; §18a.67.

[219] Admittedly, we cannot know what may have come in the damaged KTU 1.2, col. III.

Similarly, in Mot's depiciton of Baal's conquest of the flood-dragon Litan[220] (KTU 1.5 I, lines 1–4 = lines 27–31), the response described in the heavens is a reaction to the battle and the defeat of the primordial monster, rather than the march of the divine warrior:

k tmḫṣ . ltn .bṯn . brḥ	When you smote *ltn*, the writhing serpent;
tkly , bṯn . ʿqltn . [[*š*]]	(When you) annihilated the crooked serpent,
šlyṭ . d . šbʿt . rašm	The tyrant with seven heads.
*ṯṯkḥ . ttrp . šm*m	The heavens wilted, they sagged.[221]

The scene in which Baal is commanded to descend to the underworld (KTU 1.5 v, lines 6–13) may be closer to Cross' formulation. But even here the response of the natural world to the passing of the divine presence apparently falls outside the poet's frame of reference. Instead, in imagery reminiscent of Habakkuk 3:5, the storm god Baal is described as surrounded by an entourage of personified meteorological elements:

wat . qḥ	And you, take
ʿrptk . rḥk . mdlk	your clouds, your winds, your lighting,
mṭrtk . ʿmk . šbʿt	your rain with you; your seven
ġlmk . ṯmn . ḫnzrk	youths, your eight attendants[222]

---

[220] Following Mark Smith's vocalisation; Mark S. Smith, "The Baal Cycle," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (trans. Mark. S. Smith, et al.; SBLWAW 9; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997), 141) = Cross' Lôtān, *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 118–19.

[221] For a review of the secondary literature surrounding the difficult word *ttrp* see Cornelis Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim: A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 65, n. 114.

[222]Cf. KTU 1.101 obv., lines 3–4:

šbʿt . brqm [[.ṯ]]	Seven lightnings…
ṯmnt . iṣr rʿt . ʿṣ brq.	Eight storehouses of thunder. The shaft
y[x(x)]	of lightning…

ʿmk . pdry . bt . ar	with you. *Pdry*, daughter of light
ʿmk . {t}ṭly . bt . rb. idk	with you. *Tly*, dauther of rain (?).

On the other hand, the two great Baalistic theophanies, which do describe the response of nature, plainly belong to Cross' second pattern. Thus, the storm-theophany (KTU 1.4 vii, lines 25–37) follows after the conquest of Yamm and describes the opening of a window in Baal's newly won palace:

...yptḥ . ḥ	…(Baal) opens a window
ln . b bhtm . urbt	in the house, an opening
b qrb . hklm [.] yptḥ	within the palace.
bʿl .bdqt [.] ʿrpt	Baal opens a break in the clouds.
qlh . qdš [.] bʿl [.] ytn	Baal gives forth his holy voice,
yṯny . bʿl . ṣ[at .] špth	Baal repeats the is[sue of] his lips.
qlh . q[dš .]kpr²²³ . arṣ	His holy voice covers (?) the earth
ṣat . [špt]h] ġrm [.]	(at) the issue of his lips the mountains
tḫšn²²⁴	tremble
rtq[ṣ? . ġrm (?)]²²⁵	The ancient [mountains?] leap
qdmym . bmt . ar[ṣ]	the high places of the earth
tṯṭn . ib . bʿl . tiḫd	totter. The enemies of Baal take to
yʿrm . šnu . hd . gpt	the woods. The haters of Hadd, to
ġr .	the mountain slopes

A similar pattern is found in Psalm 29 (e.g. vv.4–5); e.g.:

⁴The voice of YHWH breaks cedars;	קול יהוה שבר ארזים
YHWH shatters the cedars of Lebanon	וישבר יהוה את־ארזי הלבנון
⁵He causes Lebanon to skip like a calf,	וירקידם כמו־עגל לבנון
And Sirion like a young aurochs	ושרין כמו בן־ראמים

---

²²³ Following the restoration of Smith and Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 650, 674–75.

²²⁴ Following ibid, 650, 675.

²²⁵ Following ibid, 650, 675–76.

There can be no doubt that Psalm 29, like KTU 1.4 vii, lines 25–37, describes the exultation of the triumphant deity. In the opening quatrain (vv.1–2) the refrain "ascribe" (הבו) is repeated three times, balanced in the fourth colon with "bow down" (השתחוו), while verse 10 reads:[226]

Yhwh is enthroned over the flood;	יהוה למבול ישב
Yhwh is enthroned king forever.	וישב יהוה מלך לעולם

Significantly, in both of these texts the upheaval of nature is explicitly identified as a response to the issuing of the deity's voice קול—apparently symbolising thunder, and so conceived as part of his meteorological arsenal—rather than a response to the divine presence itself.

When we look to the Mesopotamian theophanies the picture is somewhat different. A common Mesopotamian motif describes the intervention of the deity in battle wielding cosmic or meteorological weapons, as in the following excerpt from the epic of Tukulti-Ninurta:[227]

Aššur in the vanguard went to the attack; the fire of defeat burned
    upon the enemy.

Enlil…in the midst of the foe … sends flaming arrows smoking.

Anu pressed the unpitying mace upon the wicked.

The heavenly light Sin imposed upon them the paralysing weapon
    of battle.

Adad, the hero, let a wind (and) flood pour down over their
    fighting.

Šamaš, lord of judgement, dimmed the eyes of the armies of the
    land of Sumer and Akkad.

Heroic Ninurta, first of the gods, smashed their weapons.

---

[226] Note also that in the opening quatrain (vv.1–2) the refrain "ascribe" (יהב) is repeated three times, balanced in the fourth colon with "bow down" (שחה).

[227] Translation by Peter Machinist, "The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I. A Study in Middle Assyrian Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1978), 118–21; apud Kang, *Divine War in the Bible and in the Ancient Near East*, 46.

> And Ištar beat (with) her skipping rope, driving the warriors
>
> insane.

However, there is also a widely attested pattern in which the deity's power is figuratively described as being actively manifest in (and against) nature. Thus, in the Old Babylonian hymn *Angim*, Ninurta is described as "the mace that destroys the mountains".[228] While, in a Sumerian hymn to Inanna, adapting imagery borrowed from the storm, we read:[229]

> Like a dragon you have deposited venom on the land
>
> When you roar at the earth like thunder, no vegetation can stand up
>
> to you.
>
> A flood descending from its mountain,
>
> Oh foremost one, you are the Inanna of heaven and earth!

Interestingly, in the Zinçirli Stele (rev. lines 12–14), this same pattern is adapted to the king, Esarhaddon; although there it is considered a sign of divine approval:[230]

---

[228] Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur: An-gim dím-ma* (AnOr 52; Rome: Pontificium institutum biblicum, 1978), 88 – 89. From the context it is clear that the language here is metaphorical describing Ninurta's power

[229] Translation by William W. Hallo and J. J. A. van Dijk, *The Exultation of Inanna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 15.

[230] Translation by Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 135; following the text of Riekele Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (AfO 9; Osnabruck: Biblio-Verlag, 1967), 97, §65, Rs. lines 12–14:

> 12. *šarru šá tal-lak-ta-šú a-bu-bu-um-ma ep-še-ta-šú*
>
> 13. [*lab*]-*bu na-ad-ru pa-nu-uš-šú zu*(?)-*um-ma ar-ke-e-šú ti-ib*(?) *qit-ru-ub*
>
> 14. *ta-ḫa-zi-šú dan-nu nab-lu muš-taḫ-me-ṭu ᵈGira la a-ni-ḫu*

In the recent RINAP edition, Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)* (RINAP 4; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), §98, 184, translated these lines somewhat differently:

> The king whose march is like a flood-storm, whose acts are like a raging lion; before him is a storm-demon, behind him is a cloud-burst; the onset of his battle is mighty; a consuming flame, an unquenchable fire.

A common motif underlying each of these texts, as in the Baalistic theophanies, is that of the deity actively wielding his/her might against nature in an awesome display of power.[231] Insofar as this is the case, these theophanies are subtly but significantly distinct from *Kajr*4.2. That is, where the Ugaritic and Mesopotamian theophanies describe the gods' actions against nature, *Kajr*4.2, like the biblical theophanies to be discussed below, seems to conceive of the upheaval of nature as a passive response to the deity's mere presence. But that is not to say that the passive response of nature is not attested elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

In the Egyptian *Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor*, lines 56–66, the narrator describes the earth-shaking approach of the deity as follows:[232]

12. *mu-ḫal-li-qu ga-re-e-šú* LUGAL *šá tal-lak-ta-šú a-bu-bu-um-ma ep-še-*	the king whose passage is the deluge and whose deeds are a
13. *ta-šú*	raging lion – before he (comes) it
lab-bu na-ad-ru pa-nu-uš-šú URU-*um-*	is a city, when he leaves it is a
14. *ma ar-ke-e-šú ti-lu qit-ru-ub*	tell. The assault of his fierce
ta-ḫa-zi-šú dan-nu nab-lu muš-taḫ-mì-ṭu ^dGIŠ.BAR *la a-ni-ḫu*	battle is a blazing flame, a restless fire.

Regardless of the translation of the difficult line 13, the imagery in line 12 likening the king's passage to a powerful flood is striking.

[231] A similar pattern can also be identified in the mythic descriptions of the Hittite storm god, Telipinu, e.g. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 61 §38 (B iii 3–14).

[232] The *Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor* is known from a single Middle Kingdom papyrus copy, P Leningrad 1115, located in the Imperial Museum of St. Petersburg. For text and discussion, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: a Book of Readings: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (vol.1 of *Ancient Egyptian Literature: a Book of Readings*; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973-1980), 211.

> Then I heard a thundering noise and thought, "It is a wave of the
> sea." Trees splintered, the ground trembled. Uncovering my face, I
> found it was a snake that was coming. He was of thirty cubits; his
> beard was over two cubits long. His body was overlaid with gold;
> his eyebrows were of real lapis lazuli.[233]

While in this text the imagery may simply underscore the serpent-deity's
immense size, in the first stanza of the "cannibal spell" similar imagery is
used to describe the approach of the deified king:[234]

> The sky is clouded, the stars disturbed,
> The "bows" quake, the bones of the earth god tremble.

In other texts, too, the appearance of the deity is heralded by quaking in
the heavens and earth.[235] As in the cuneiform examples above, Erik
Hornung has suggested that the imagery is calculated to reflect the
tremendous power believed to emanate from the deity, and this would
seem to be confirmed when we compare waking theophanies with
Egyptian dream theophanies. Generally, the literary accounts of dream
theophanies make no mention of tumult accompanying the appearance of
the deity. An explanation of this difference may lie in an ancient Egyptian
belief about the nature of sleep and the dream-state, as identified by
Adriaan de Buck. According to this view the sleeper enters into the world
of the gods, the *Jenseits*,[236] and, consequently, the action that unfolds in a
dream occurs within the divine realm. But when the deity enters into the
"visible world", nature struggles to contain their presence; unless, that is,

---

[233] Translation by Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol.1, 212.

[234] Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (trans. J. Baines; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 131.

[235] Cf. the examples cited in Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, 131, n.71.

[236] Adriaan de Buck, *De godsdienstige opvatting van den slaap, inzonderheid in het Oude Egypte* (Mededeelingen en Verhandelingen van het Vooraziatsch Egyptisch Gezelschap "Ex Oriente Lux" 4; Leiden: Brill, 1939), 28–30; cf. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, 130–31.

the divine presence is mediated in some way, as in the person of the Pharaoh or a cultic object.[237] This pattern is also reflected in the biblical dream theophanies (cf. Gen 28:10–19), and a similar belief may lie behind the biblical texts that associate the deity with a sacred place (e.g. Exod 3:5; cf. Exod 40:34–48; 1 Kgs 8:6–11), or a sacred object (e.g. 1 Sam 4:3, 7–8), since in those passages there is typically no mention of disruption in the natural world.[238]

2.8.2. THE BIBLICAL SOUTHERN THEOPHANY MOTIF

As we have seen, Cross' conflation of theophany motifs led him to overstate the similarity of the patterns preserved in biblical and Ugaritic literature. At the same time, he assumed an artificial homogeneity in the inner-biblical theophanies. Even within the divine-warrior motif there is considerable diversity, and although the pattern of the deity *actively* wielding their power against nature is attested in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ps 29 above), it is in the southern theophany motif that we find the clearest examples of the tumult of nature as a *passive* response to the divine presence. This motif is characterised by a pattern in which the deity (identified as YHWH, *Elohim* or *Eloah*), in the role of the divine warrior, marches in power from the South. Four texts in particular reflect this motif: Deut 33:2–3; Jud 5:4–5; Ps 68:7–8 (Heb.8–9); and Hab 3 (esp. vv.3–4).[239] In addition, similar language and imagery are found in Ps 97:1–

---

[237] Cf. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, 134–35.

[238] Interestingly, this same pattern is repeated in the DAPT, insofar as there the dream theophany is summarily described with no reference to attendant phenomena; although, this is, of course, an argument *ex silentio.*

[239] Significantly, it is precisely these texts, along with the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–18), that Cross understood to mirror most closely the theophany of Baal; cf. Cross, *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 157. Note also that some commentators see a reflection of the southern theophany pattern in Isa 63:1–6; e.g. Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited", 137. However, in these verses there is no mention of the response of nature which is a common thread that unites the other southern theophany texts. As

6 and Mic 1:3–4; although there the pattern is reconfigured so that the dwelling place of the deity is in Jerusalem. Significantly, the Sinai theophany in Exodus 19 is also expressed in remarkably similar terms, suggesting that it, too, draws on the same immanent tradition: e.g. והר סיני "and ,עשן כלו מפני אשר ירד עליו יהוה באש ויעל עשנו כעשן הכבשן ויחרד כל־ההר מאד Mount Sinai was entirely shrouded with smoke, because YHWH had descended on it in fire; smoke went up like the smoke from a kiln. And the whole mountain shook terribly" (Exod 19:18; cf. Deut 5:4–5).[240]

More precisely, *Kajr*4.2 is associated with the southern theophany motif through a shared repertoire of vocabulary and imagery:[241]

1) The deity is said to come from the mountainous regions to the south, identified variously as "Teman" (Hab 3:3); "Sinai" (Deut 33:2); "Seir" (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4); "Paran" Deut 33:2; "Edom" (Judg 5:4); and possibly "the deserts of Kadesh" (Deut 33:2, see Appendix C). The southern location is not specified in *Kajr*4.2, but note the southern location of Kuntillet ʿAjrud and the repetition of the appellation "YHWH of (the) Teman" in *Kajr*3.6, 3.9, and 4.1.

2) Following from the preceding point, the deity is associated with high places: רם (*Kajr*4.2:1);[242] הרם (*Kajr*4.2:3; Judg 5:5); פבנים (*Kajr*4.2:2); הר פארן (Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3); במותי ארץ (Mic 1:3); cf. גבננים and מרום (Ps 68:15, 18 [Heb.16, 19]).

3) The deity is associated with luminary imagery: זרח (*Kajr*4.2; Deut 3:2); cf. כצאת השמש בגברתו, (Judg 5:31); cf. Deut 33:2 and Hab 3:4,

---

such, Isa 63 seems to reflect a later adaptation of the motif of God's marching in judgement from the south.

[240] That is not necessarily to say that the Sinai theophany was the prototype of these later theophanies as is sometimes suggested; cf. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*.

[241] Admittedly, the four key Southern Theophany texts contain numerous textual problems. A full discussion is presented in Appendix C.

[242] Cf. Wearne, "Habakkuk 3:10-11", 515–18.

which seem to describe a radiant aura (analogous to Akkadian *melammu*) surrounding the deity.[243]

4) There is an emphasis on the disruption that accompanies the passage of the deity: e.g. רעש (*Kajr*4.2:1; Judg 5:4; Ps 68:8 [Heb.9]; cf. Hab 3:6); מסס (*Kajr*4.2: Ps 97:4 [Heb.5]; cf., הרים נזלו Judg 5:5); שמים/עבים נטפו (Judg 4:4; Ps 68:8 [Heb.9]).

Inasmuch as they share a focus on the deity's appearing in radiance in the South and on the passive response of nature, these theophanies (including *Kajr*4.2) are set apart from other biblical and Near Eastern theophanies, and the pattern may be described as a characteristically Hebrew tradition.

2.8.3. THE *SITZ IM LEBEN* OF THE SOUTHERN THEOPHANY TRADITION AND IMPLICATIONS OF *Kajr*4.2

The first thing that should be noticed with regard to *Sitz im Leben* is that each of the four main biblical iterations of the southern theophany motif (Deut 33:2–3; Jud 5:4–5; Ps 68:7–8 [Heb.8–9]; and Hab 3) occurs in the context of a song.[244] This is important, because songs are inherently related to performance and, as such, they are by nature highly contextual. That is not to say that *Kajr*4.2 was itself necessarily intended to be performed—although it might have been—but it means that *Kajr*4.2 is unlikely to have been far removed from the life setting(s) of the southern theophany tradition as reflected in the Hebrew Bible. This must have shaped its reception. In this regard it matters little whether *Kajr*4.2 was a new composition or an adaptation of a pre-existing song (although there is no *a priori* reason to doubt the latter), or, for that matter, whether it was intended as a script to be sung aloud in oral performance, what matters are

---

[243] See Gareth J. Wearne, "מימינו אשדת למו and קרנים מידו לו: Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another", *TC* 19 (2014): 1–10.

[244] Note the prosodic composition of *Kajr*4.2, reflected in the use of *parallelismus membrorum*.

the evocative and referential qualities associated with the motif.[245] In other words, by participating in the conventions of the tradition, the contents of *Kajr*4.2 evoke (and invoke) the immanent performance situation(s) of the southern theophany motif. As such, its function within the space, and the function of the space generally, are likely to reflect (in some form) the situational context of the cognate songs. It follows that if we can determine the manner in which those songs would have been encountered, we can go some way toward appreciating the function and reception of *Kajr*4.2.

Unfortunately, comparison with the biblical evidence supplies only a partial picture. The two psalms, Ps 68 and Hab 3, have all the hallmarks of choral compositions—including a superscription and musical directions (Ps 68:1; Hab 3:1, 19), and the annotation *selah* (Ps 68:7 [Heb.8], 19 [Heb.20], 32 [Heb.33]; Hab 3, 9, 13)—and both may have had a liturgical function in a cultic setting.[246] This might support the view that the

---

[245] The interpretation of the (probable) DNN El and Baal in *Kajr*4.2 might have a bearing on the question of the text's originality. Given the, otherwise overwhelming, prominence of YHWH of Teman at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, the naming of other DNN in the theophany is somewhat surprising. Consequently, in view of the close relationship that the GN Teman establishes with the geographical context of the site, it could be inferred that *Kajr*4.2 was an older song that was selected primarily because of the geographical associations of the southern theophany tradition. If so, then it is reasonable to suppose that YHWH of Teman was the principle deity venerated at the site—as has already been argued on the basis of other evidence. In this case, the DNN in *Kajr*4.2 might be interpreted in two ways: (1) they might be taken as evidence for the syncretism of Yawhistic and Elohistic cults (even at this comparatively early stage), and interpreted as an indication that YHWH/El (and perhaps the wider pantheon collectively) inhabited the southern regions (note the prominence of Elohistic appelations in the southern theophany tradition, e.g. Hab 3:3); or (2) as discussed above, both אל and בעל might be interpreted as common nouns and epithets of YHWH. On balance, the appearance of the (probable) DN Baal in *Kajr*4.4 lends weight to the former alternative.

[246] Cf. J. H. Eaton, "The Origin and Meaning of Habakkuk 3", *ZAW* 76 (1964): 158–70. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that at some stage the Psalm of Habakkuk 3 might have existed independently of the rest of the book. In the Codex Alexandrinus it is reproduced in a slightly modified form in the book of "Odes", and in the Habakkuk Pesher from Qurman it is omitted entirely; cf. the insightful discussion in James W.

architecture at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (or the bench-room specifically) had some special cultic function (see §4.5). On the other hand, the victory hymn of Judg 5 and the blessing of Moses in Deut 33 suggest a setting in the folk traditions of (northern) Israel.[247] Therefore, in light of the divergent performance traditions of the biblical southern theophany motif, and owing to the fragmentary condition of the plaster, it is impossible to know whether *Kajr*4.2 is better characterised as a folk-song or a cultic hymn (or both); though we will return to this question with reference to the archaeological remains in chapter 4. Nevertheless, for the time being, it is possible to draw an inference of a more general nature.

That is, despite their different performance settings, what unites the four biblical songs is the theme of thanksgiving for God's protection of his people. What is more, in three of the four songs (Judg 5; Ps 68; and Hab 3) the imagery is explicitly militaristic. As such, it may be inferred that the songs would have served (in part) to foster the solidarity of the theological community within which they were transmitted; i.e. those who fell under the divine protection.[248] Given the remote—and potentially volatile (cf.

Watts, "Psalmody in Prophecy: Habakkuk 3 in Context", in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays On Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D.W. Watts* (eds. James W. Watts and Paul R. House. JSOTSupplements 235. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 209–23. Note that even if Watts is correct to argue that the psalm of Habakkuk was an imitation song that did not originate in a life setting in worship, the fact remains that it must have been intelligible and credible against such a backdrop.

[247] On the relative primacy of Judges 5 in relation to Judges 4, and its implications for the transmission and development of folk traditions in Israel and Judah, see Baruch Halpern, "The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography", *HTR* 76 (1983): 379–401. The elaborate blessing in Deuteronomy 33 would also be well suited to such modes of tradition, comparable to the widely attested transmission of oral genealogies; cf. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technoligizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002), 47–48; Hugh Kennedy, "From Oral Tradition to Written Record in Arabic Genealogy", *Arabica* 44 (1997): 531–44.

[248] Cf. the discussion of the Song of Deborah as a persuasion song in Terry Giles and William J. Doan, *Twice Used Songs: Performance Criticism of the Songs of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, Ma.: Hendrickson, 2009), 75–77. Note that in Micah 1:3–7 the

§4.7)—geographical setting of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, it is surely no coincidence that a song associating the deity with the South should be found on the walls. Regardless of whether it had a cultic function, *Kajr*4.2 must have served—at least implicitly—to give theological validity to the site; i.e. validation derived from the immanence of the warrior god (viz. YHWH of Teman, although he is not named in the extant portions of *Kajr*4.2). As such, the physical presence of *Kajr*4.2 was probably partly symbolic, displaying these credentials (visually, and perhaps through associated performances) to the inhabitants and anyone passing through the site.[249]

2.9. CONCLUSIONS

Bearing in mind that the purpose of this chapter is to answer the question *what was written at Kuntillet ʿAjrud?*, the foregoing discussion suggests five inferences that stand out as being particularly important for the study of textualisation and the phenomenon of writing on walls. However, because of the fragmentary state of the inscriptions, it must be stressed that these inferences are provisional and should be left open to refinement and revision as necessitated by future research.

First, the written material from Kuntillet ʿAjrud is characterised by its overall range and diversity. In addition to the literary plaster texts (and possibly *Kajr*3.9) there were a number of documentary texts, including possible administrative and educational pieces. Furthermore, as was discussed above, there are grounds to suppose that one or more literate individuals were stationed at the site on a (semi)permanent basis. Yet it is not clear how many people were productively involved in the act of writing at Kuntillet ʿAjrud—perhaps it was only two or three individuals,

---

distinctively Israelite motif (associated with divine favour and protection) is adapted and ironically reconfigured in a polemic against the Northern Kingdom.

[249] As was discussed in the Chapter 1, if allowance is made for the likelihood that the contents would be transmitted by word of mouth, it is not necessary to assume that every member of the audience possessed the ability to read the text. In this case, it is the visual and mnemonic properties of the physical inscription that are important.

although given the variety of handwriting styles on the pithoi it might have been more.[250] Regardless of the number of individuals involved, the significance of this evidence is that literary text production at Kuntillet ʿAjrud emerged within a broader writing culture.

Second, the references to YHWH of (the) Teman in *Kajr*3.6, 3.9, 4.1, together with the theophany in *Kajr*4.2, and the (possible) reference to Cain/Kennites in *Kajr*4.3 draw a direct connection between the written artefacts at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and the geographical location of the site. In other words, Kuntillet ʿAjrud is situated precisely in the region traditionally associated with YHWH'S theophany. This supports the view that at Kuntillet ʿAjrud the literary texts drew inspiration from the immediate surroundings, and this perhaps hints at a direct correlation between the written material and activities conducted at the site. We will return to this in Chapter 4.

The third point relates to the question whether the KAPT's intended primary audience was human or divine. Past commentators have tended to draw special attention to the apparently large number of blessings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, typically interpreting these as prayers offered to the deity.[251] However, as was discussed above, there is reason to believe that this number has been overestimated (cf. *Kajr*4.1 §2.6.1).[252] In fact, only three texts (*Kajr*1.2, 3.1 and 3.6) explicitly refer to "blessing". Moreover, in the case of the two epistolary formulae (*Kajr*3.1 and 3.6), the blessings

---

[250] Allowance should be made for the possibility of deliberate variation in style (as discussed above).

[251] Naveh, "Graffiti and Dedications", 27–30; Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", 46; Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 116; Hutton, "Locan Manifestations to Yahweh", *passim*; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 68; cf. Israel Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt and the Southern Trade in the Late Iron Age II" *ZDVP* 108 (1992): 163. Note that in *The Context of Scripture* the material from Kuntillet ʿAjrud is collected under the rubric "Votive Inscriptions".

[252] As such, McCater's observation that "[a]t Kuntillet ʿAjrud the divine name 'Yahweh' occurs only in blessing formulas", must be re-evaluated; cf. McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy", 139.

were a standard feature of the epistolary tradition, and if they functioned as dedicatory offerings they were (probably) only secondarily such. In the case of the large stone basin, on the other hand, there can be little doubt that the vessel and its inscription served a dedicatory purpose. Therefore, it is only in the case of *Kajr*1.2 (and possibly the smaller stone bowls) that a divine audience can be assumed.[253] In addition, *Kajr*4.2 (and perhaps *Kajr*3.9) is a special case insofar as it is related to a tradition of thanksgiving hymns addressed to the deity. However, the significance of *Kajr*4.2 is unclear. In the extant portion only the description of theophany is preserved (not the expression of thanksgiving), and there is no way of knowing how much more might have originally been included.[254] As such, it is not clear whether the hymn was *primarily intended* for a divine audience, as a sort of prayer (cf. §2.4.2), or for a human audience, as a memorial to the immanence of the deity (see further §4.9).[255] Consequently, the notion that the KAPT included prayers directed to the deity cannot be affirmed on the basis of the extant material. At best, it remains a possibility in the case of *Kajr*4.2, and an unlikely possibility in the case of *Kajr*4.1. Of course, the two functions are not mutually exclusive, and in reality the texts might have served both benedictory and memorialising purposes.

On the other hand, it should be noted that there is no clear instance (other than the epistolary formulae), in which a human audience was directly addressed (cf. §2.6.6). In fact, as far as can be determined the KAPT are consistently framed in the third person, and each seems to have a retrospective aspect and descriptive quality. This broad agreement in

---

[253] At another level, it should be noted that the immensity of the basin entails implicit connotations of prestige and piety that cannot have failed to impress a human audience.

[254] That is, *Kajr*4.2 might have only contained a short excerpt, standing metonymically for the whole song and ultimately the wider tradition.

[255] *Kajr*3.9 and 4.2, if songs, might have shifted from (retrospective) description to direct address as sometimes happens in biblical songs (e.g. the second person framing of the Song of Deborah, Judg 5:2–3, 31; or the alternation of grammatical person in Ps 23).

terms of outlook suggests that the KAPT (at least the texts nearest the entrance; cf. §4.9.2.1) can be viewed collectively as a functionally coherent and mutually informing group.

The fourth inference follows from the preceding observation about the functional coherence of the group. Put simply, the interrelatedness of the texts means they have collective significance that amounts to more than the sum of their parts. In effect, based on the evidence at hand, this means that the geographical and theological implications that pertain to the texts' contents individually (esp. *Kajr*4.1–4.3) are magnified with regard to the group as a whole. In other words, when viewed collectively *Kajr*4.1–4.3 have a proclamatory force, grounding Kuntillet ʿAjrud in its physical context, and reinforcing the message impressionistically through repetition with variation.

Finally, in a more general observation, it should be noted that the KAPT furnish evidence for the textualisation at a relatively early date of traditional stories (*Kajr*4.3) and songs (*Kajr*4.2, and perhaps *Kajr*3.9), comparable to those found in the Hebrew Bible.

Chapter 3

WHO WROTE THE KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD

PLASTER TEXTS?

Insofar as a text may be considered a written artifact, its linguistic classification can offer potentially significant insights into its authorship, (intended) audience, and cultural context. The same is true of orthography and palaeography, to the extent that it may be possible to identify standardisation with a particular educational tradition. But that is not to say that culture and dialect are one and the same. In the preceding chapter the comparative method was used to situate the KAPT within the folkloric continua of the ancient Northwest Semitic cultures, highlighting the peculiarly Hebraic quality of the theophany (*Kajr*4.2). Linguistic classification provides a tool for further refining and interpreting those relationships. This is particularly important in the case of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, due to the enigmatic nature of the inscriptions and the important place they occupy in discussions of ancient Israelite folk religion.

Ever since Meshel first announced the presence of inscriptions written in "Phoenician" script, speculations have abounded as to the nature and extent of Phoenician involvement at the site.[1] Consequently, the following discussion will consider the question of authorship under four headings: morphology/syntax, phonology/orthography, onomastics, and palaeography, paying particular attention to the question of Phoenician influence. Consideration will also be given to differentiation between northern and southern Hebrew dialects. It will be argued that the cumulative evidence suggests that the KAPT were written by, or at the behest of, the Israelite inhabitants at the site.

---

[1] See Mastin, "Who built and used the buildings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud?", 69–85, esp. 69.

3.1. MORPHOLOGY/SYNTAX

3.1.1. *Pargogic nûn*

Two examples of paragogic *nûn* occur in *Kajr*4.2 (וידכן; וימסן). While, the paragogic *nûn* is relatively common in BH,[2] it is exceptionally rare in Phoenician, occurring in two late inscriptions only (KAI 14, and KAI 60), both of which are possibly influenced by Aramaic.[3] Crucially, there are no unquestioned examples of paragogic *nûn* in early Phoenician inscriptions.[4] Consequently, its presence in *Kajr*4.2, a text that contains Pheonician style palaeography (see below), suggests Hebrew affiliation.

3.1.2. *Hipʿil conjugation*

The *hê* prefix of the C-stem verbs היטב and (probably) היצב (*Kajr*4.1) is in accordance with the Hebrew *hipʿil* conjugation, in contradistinction to the Phoenician *yifʿil* conjugation.

3.1.3. *Wāw consecutive*

Two possible examples of the *wāw consecutive* appear in the KAPT: וישבעוֹ (*Kajr*4.1); [ו]יֹתנו (*Kajr*4.1).[5] Although common in Hebrew, the *wāw*

---

[2] Occurring some 310 times according to the assessment of W. Randall Garr, "The Paragogic *nun* In Rhetorical Perspective," in *Biblical Hebrew in its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives*, (eds. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006.), 65.

[3] Johannes Friedrich and Wolfgang Röllig, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik* (2nd ed.; AnOr 55; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1999), 82 §135, n.2; cf. McCarter, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Plaster Wall Inscription" (COS 2.47D:173, n.3); Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 135 n.10.

[4] For the sole possible exception, see Mastin's discussion of יתלנן in the Kilamuwa inscription (KAI 24.10); Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 107–08.

[5] I exclude וימסן (*Kajr*4.2) and וידכן (*Kajr*4.2) from consideration on the basis of the paragogic *nûn* (cf. §2.6.2).

consecutive is virtually unknown in Phoenician.[6] However, in each case the *wāw* might be the simple copulative, and, as such, this isogloss is of uncertain value.

3.2. Phonology/Orthography

3.2.1. *Matres lectionis*

The following *matres lectionis* (*m.l.*) are attested at Kuntillet ʿAjrud:

Final *m.l. yôd* representing long *-î*

אדני—1.c.s. pronominal suffix, "my lord" (*Kajr*3.6)

ויהי—3.m.s. jussive, "and may he be" (*Kajr*3.6)

מצרי—*adj. gent.* "Egyptian" (*Kajr*3.10)

Final *m.l. wāw* representing long *-û*

ישבעו—3.c.p sufformative, "they will be satisfied" (*Kajr*4.1)

יתנו—3.c.p sufformative, "they will give" (*Kajr*4.1)

יהו—DN (*Kajr*1.2; 3.9); however, both readings are questionable. Furthermore, as Sandra Gogel observes, "*-yhw* may have been vocalized *yahwē* (where *wāw* is etymological), rather than *-yahū*".[7]

Final *m.l. hê* representing long *-â*

אדה—PN, "ʾ*Adāh*" (*Kajr*2.2)

אדנה—PN, "ʾ*Adnāh*" (*Kajr*1.2)

יועשה—PN, "*Yawʿasāh/Yôʿasāh*" (*Kajr*3.1)

---

[6] Cf. Friedrich and Röllig, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*, 191–92 §266:1; cf. Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *VT* 59 (2009): 108.

[7] Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 58, 59.

פתה—verb 3.m.s. pf., "entreat" (*Kajr*3.9)

Final *m.l. hê* representing -*ô* (?)[8]

אשרתה—3.m.s pronominal suffix, "his *asherah*" (*Kajr*3.1; 3.6; 3.9)[9]

כלבבה/כלבפה—3.m.s pronominal suffix, either: "according to all that is in his mouth," or "according to his heart's desire" (*Kajr*3.9)

Final *m.l. ʾālep* representing -*â*

עירא—PN, " *ʾÎrāʾ* / *ʿAyirāʾ* " (*Kajr*2.2)

Although final -*ā* is represented for PNN and for the 3.m.s. perfect verb פתה "entreat" (*Kajr*3.9), it is omitted for the 2.m.s pronouns: את (*ʾattā*;

---

[8] The 3.m.s. pronominal suffix is a special case. In Tiberian Hebrew the form of the suffix is ו- (-*ô*). The usual explanation for the development of this suffix is *-*ahu* > *-*au* > *-*aw* > -*ō*; cf. Edward Lipiński, *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar*, (OLA 80; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 1997), §36.20. However, at Kuntillet ʿAjrud final *m.l. wāw* is used to represent long -*ū*, which might suggest that the contraction to *ô had already taken place; cf. Ziony Zevit, *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs* (ASOR monograph series 2; Cambridge, Ma.: ASOR, 1980), 17 §23, 26. But in that case week would expect the contraction of the diphthong to be resolved with final *m.l. wāw* as in northern theophoric PNN (see below). This might suggest that the underlying form was closer to Aramaic 3.m.s. ה- (cf. BA -*ēh*), although it is difficult to see the path that would have led from -(*i*)*h* to -*ô*. Andersen and Forbes likewise rejected the theory that ה- results from the syncope of intervocalic *hê*. Preferring to retroject the later pronunciation -*ô* onto the spelling ה-, they suggested that the underlying form was *-*aw* and explained the spelling ה- as a result of the generalised use of *hê* to represent any word terminal vowel other than -*î* or -*û*. In this case, the resemblance to the 3.m.s. pronoun הוא would be coincidental; cf. Francis I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible: Dahood Memorial Lecture* (Biblia et Oreintalia 41; Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1986), 39–44. This is possible, but it is pure conjecture. In short, it is safest to conclude with Andersen and Forbes that we cannot be certain about the pronunciation of the early 3.m.s. Hebrew suffix when it is spelled with *hê*.

[9] In *Kajr*4.1 the final *m.l.* is restored.

*Kajr*3.6; cf. 4.6), ברכתך (*bēraktikā*; *Kajr*3.6), and ישמרך (*yišmĕrekā*; *Kajr*3.6). Similarly, the final *m.l.* is omitted for the first person pronoun *-ī* in ברכת (*bēraktī*; *Kajr*3.1);[10] though it is used to mark the 1.c.s. possessive suffix in אדני (*ʾădōnî*; *Kajr*3.6), and the 3.m.s. possessive suffix represented by *-hê* is written for אשרתה, and כלבבה/כלבפה (*Kajr*3.9). *Wāw* is used to mark the 3.m.p. sufformative *-û* in ישבעו and יתנו (*Kajr*4.1). While the tendency to omit final *m.l.* for the pronominal endings of verbs is attested in epigraphic Hebrew, it is by no means universal.[11]

The function of *ʾālep* in the 3.m.s. independent personal pronoun הא (*hûʾ*; *Kajr*1.2, 3.9) is uncertain; Sandra Gogel notes that this spelling may either be historical, a final *m.l.*, or a consonant (i.e. **huʾa*).[12]

There is no unequivocal evidence for internal *m.l.* at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. It is possible that an internal *m.l.* is used to represent *-ī-* in the PN עירא (*Kajr*2.1; cf. BH עִירָא, 2 Sam 20:26; 23:26, 28; 1 Chr 11:28, 40; 27:9).[13] However, עירא might also be etymologically related to עַיִר, "male ass", in which case the PN should be vocalised *ʿâyraʾ* (or *ʿayirāʾ* if triphthongisation had taken place), and the *yôd* understood to represent the diphthong rather than a true *m.l.*[14] This possibility is further supported by

---

[10] The omission of the *m.l.* might be for phonological reasons. Rollston, citing a personal correspondence form McCarter, observed that in rare instances in the MT the *yôd* is omitted from the 1.c.s. perfect suffix (cf. Ps 140:12 Heb.13; Job 42:2; 1 Kgs 8:48). This might suggest that the vowel of the suffix may, at times, have been lost or shortened in speech; see Christopher A. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 62, n.40; cf. Francis. I. Andersen, "Orthography in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions", *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 36 (1999): 5–35; Ian Young, "Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions", 306, §3.4.2.5, §4. Nevertheless, the cumulative data from Kuntillet ʿAjrud suggest that final *m.l.* were routinely omitted for pronominal suffixes.

[11] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 123–24; Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 62, n.40.

[12] Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 153, n.179.

[13] This was the vocalisation adopted by Aḥituv et al.; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 79.

[14] Cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 281; Renz, *Die Althebräischen Inschriften*, 55 n.1; Mastin, "Who built and used the buildings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud?", 80.

the spelling of עֹר ("city") in לשרער (*Kajr*2.4–2.6; cf. BH עִיר), which is written *defectively*, without internal *m.l.*[15] Similarly, there is no internal *m.l.* representing long -*ī*- in the plural endings ימם (*yomīm*; *Kajr*4.1); הרם (*hārīm*; *Kajr*4.2); ג[בנם] (*pabunīm*; *Kajr*4.2); אֹלֹם (*ʾēlīm*; *Kajr*4.2), or long -*ō*- in בים (*běyōm*; *Kajr*4.2). Nor is there an internal *m.l.* representing long -*ū*- in the *qal* passive participle ברך (*bārūk Kajr*1.2). The retention of the diphthong might indicate that this PN is Judahite in origin (see below). However, it should also be noted that *Kajr*2.1 was inscribed in an archaic script, unlike any of the other inscriptions at the site and, as such, might not have originated at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. In any case, the representation of medial vowels does not seem to have been standard practice at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

The PN יועשה (vocalised *yôʿāśāh* by Aḥituv et al.) supplies the only other evidence for the possible use of an internal *m.l.* at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. However, the vocalisation proposed by Aḥituv et al. is far from certain, and in this case too it seems preferable to interpret the *wāw* of the theorphoric element as the (uncontracted) diphthong *aw* (see below).

Of the five inscriptions commonly held to be written in the Phoenician script (*Kajr*4.1–4.5, see below), only *Kajr*4.1 (and possibly *Kajr*4.6, if את is understood to be a 2.m.s. independent pronoun) contains words ending in vowels: וישבעוֹ and יתנו. Significantly, both of these evince final *m.l.* The uncertain reading את (≈ *ʾattā*) in *Kajr*4.6 does not have a final *m.l.*, but this is to be expected on the basis of the spelling of the same pronoun in *Kajr*3.6.

In sum, the presence of final *m.l.* in the inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud suggests an affiliation with Hebrew rather than Phoenician orthography, which tended to be more conservative, rarely employing

---

[15] Cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 281.

m.l.[16] The lack of any undisputed occurrence of internal *m.l.* is not surprising given the early 8th century context.[17]

3.2.2. *Omission of the definite article in* שרער

Alessandro Catastini saw the omission of the definite article in the expression לשרער (*Kajr*2.4–2.6, §2.3) as an indication of Phoenician authorship.[18] According to Friedrich and Röllig, the definite article was not regularly used in Phoenician until ca.700 B.C.E., and even then it was often omitted in titles.[19] However, Biblical Hebrew evinces a similar tendency to omit the definite article in titles (Joüon §137*r*).[20]

However, the explanation for the lack of the article may also be phonological. If the spelling שרער implies that the title was conceived as a compound noun (e.g. the analogous את־בית־מלך, 1 Kgs 16:18; cf. the expected את־בית־המלך), then the omission of the article may simply reflect

---

[16] Friedrich and Röllig, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*, 35 §67; Cf. Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 54.

[17] Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 61; Young, "Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions", 309, §4.

[18] Catastini, "Le Iscrizioni di Kuntillet ʿAjrud e il Profetismo", 128, and nn. 7–8. Note that Catastini suggested reading Phoenician *dālet* instead of ʿ*ayin* (i.e. שרדר "governor of the community") reinforcing his belief in a significant Phoenician presence at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. However, in light of the published photographs this reading is no longer viable (see §2.3).

[19] Friedrich and Röllig, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*, 210–11§296, §297, n.3; cf. Mastin, "Who built and used the buildings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud?", 71; see also Jo Ann Hackett, "Phoenician and Punic," in *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia*, (ed. Roger D. Woodard; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 94–95, §4.4.

[20] Moreover, Gogel was able to identify a number of additional epigraphic Hebrew examples in which the article is absent where syntactically it is expected; Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 174–75, and n. 206; cf. Gad B. Sarfatti, "Heberw Inscriptions of the First Temple Period: A Survey and Some Linguistic Comments," *Maarav* 3 (1982):71–73 §6.

spoken pronunciation.[21] In an apparently analogous development, Gad Sarfatti, citing Robert Gordis, noted that there was a certain tendency for the omission of the article in the *ketib* variants of the MT ("corrected" by the restoration of the article in the *qere*), most notably in nouns in the construct state. A similar omission of the article is also evinced in Mishnaic Hebrew. Accordingly, Sarfatti argued on the basis of these later parallels that the omission of the article may simply reflect common pronunciation in non-literary or popular speech.[22]

Even so, it is important to bear in mind, that since these vessels were probably inscribed before being transported to the site, the spelling of שרער(ל) may have little direct bearing on the question of text production at Kuntillet ʿAjrud itself (cf. §2.3).

3.2.3. *The ay diphthong*

The diphthong *ay* is represented in התימן (*Kajr*4.1 x2); היטב (*Kajr*4.1); היצב (*Kajr*4.1); עלי (*Kajr*4.2); קין (*Kajr*4.3) and possibly in the PN עירא (*Kajr*2.1). However, it is omitted in התמן/תמן (*Kajr*3.6, 3.9).[23] It is axiomatic in pre-exilic Hebrew dialectology that in northern (Israelite) phonology and orthography the diphthong contracted, resulting in the elision of the *yôd*, as in Phoenician and Ugaritic, whereas in the southern (Judahite) dialect the diphthong was retained.[24] This phenomenon is

---

[21] Cf. Sarfatti, "Hebrew Inscriptions of the First Temple Period", 72, who also cited the *ketib* בית מלך (*qere* בית המלך) in 1 Kgs 15:18; 2 Kgs 11:20; 15:25). The phonological argument was also considered by the editors; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 81.

[22] Sarfatti, "Hebrew Inscriptions of the First Temple Period", 71–73; cf. Robert Gordis, *The Biblical Text in the Making: A Study of the Kethib-Qere*, (2nd ed.; New York: Ktav, 1971), 147 list 77, 194 n.451.

[23] Note that the dialectical argument is particularly strong with regard to תימן, as the shortened form תמן is attested in *Kajr*3.6—a text that contains the northern theophoric PN אמריו (cf. §3.4).

[24] See, for example, Sabatino Moscati, et al., *An Introduction to Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (PLO 6; Wiesbaden: Otto

attested most clearly in the spelling ין "wine" (cf. יין Arad ostraca; BH יַיִן)
in the Samaria ostraca (8th century).[25] Aḥituv et al. have drawn attention to
the fact that at Kuntillet ʿAjrud the diphthongs are only represented in the
plaster inscriptions (although see the discussion of עירא above), which
might suggest that the KAPT were produced by a Judahite author. At first
glance, this dialectical interpretation seems persuasive.[26] But, the
onomastic evidence and the reference to YHWH of Samaria in *Kajr*3.1
suggests that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was predominantly occupied by inhabitants
from the northern kingdom of Israel (see below), and, as such, it is
surprising to find signs of a Judahite scribe (or at least a scribe educated in

Harrassowitz, 1980), 54–55; Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, 44–49;
Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, 48–49; P. Kyle McCarter Jr. "Hebrew," in *The
Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (ed. Roger D. Woodard; Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2008), 46–47, §3.2.2.3, 51–52, §3.6.2; Geoffrey Khan, "The
Language of the Old Testament", in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From
Beginnings to 600* (eds. James C. Paget and Joachim Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2013), 16–17, and 18, n. 40. It should be noted that the phenomenon of
generalised diphthong contraction in the North has been questioned in some quarters; cf.
Ian Young, Robert Rezetko, and Martin Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts,
vol. 1* (London: Equinox, 2008), 183, 187. However, the consistency with which the
pattern of diphthong contraction and retention is demonstrated in the inscriptions from
Kuntillet ʿAjurd (i.e. in the GN *Teman*), testifies to the validity of the phenomenon.

[25] The spelling חרן (= חורן* cf. Greek Αυρωνα) in Tell Qasile Ostracon 2 is sometimes
also cited as evidence of diphthong contraction; cf. Garr, *Dialect Geograhy of Syria-
Palestine*, 37–38. However, the significance of this spelling is unclear. In the Tell Qasile
Ostracon 2 the noun חרן (either GN or DN) occurs in the syntagm בית חרן; where *yôd*
apparently indicates the uncontracted diphthong in בית ("house of" or "temple of"). This
is the inverse of the progression in Samarian Hebrew, where the *ay* diphthong appears to
have contracted earlier than the *aw* diphthong (if the evidence of the theophoric element
in PNN can be relied upon, see below). In addition to this orthographic ambiguity, it
should be noted Tell Qasile Ostracon 1 includes a PN with the southern (not the northern)
theophoric element יהו- (see below). However, given that both inscriptions were found on
the surface of the tell, it is difficult to know what (if any) relationship might exist between
them. For the Greek cognate Αυρωνα = חורן*, see William F. Albright, "The Canaanite
God Ḥaurôn (Ḥôrôn)" *AJSL* 53 (1936): 1–12.

[26] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʾAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 126–27.

the Judahite orthographic tradition) writing prominently on the walls of the complex. However, the evidence for dialectical variation may not be as clear-cut as it first appears.

First of all, as has been noted by Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensvärd, it is possible that the spelling ין in the Samaria Ostraca is purely orthographic, without revealing anything about the underlying phonological situation.[27] That is, it might be that in the orthography of Samarian Hebrew the *ay* diphthong was treated as an ordinary vowel and so was not represented.[28] In this case, the representation of diphthongs should be regarded as an orthographic innovation, equivalent to any other *plene* spelling.[29] This suggestion would allow for either spelling on phonological grounds, but it does not explain why both spellings are attested side by side at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (note especially the occurrence of both *plene* and *defective* spellings in תימן and תמן).

---

[27] Cf. Young , Rezetko, and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, 183, 187.

[28] By "Samarian Hebrew" I mean the Hebrew vernacular that was written (and presumably spoken) in texts associated with the northern capital. This, of course, includes the Samaria ostraca, but if the reference to YHWH of Samaria in *Kajr*3.1 may be taken as an indication of the place of origin for the original letter fragment, then it is highly likely that the dialect of the pithoi inscriptions (or, at least *Kajr*3.1) is also representative of the Samarian dialect.

[29] It is interesting to consider whether this suggestion can be generalised beyond Hebrew. This possibility seems to be consistent with much of the available epigraphic evidence, especially regarding the representation of the diphthong in Aramaic, which evinces a remarkably full use of both final and (at a later stage) internal m.l. to represent long vowels. Furthermore, this possibility lessens the difficulty posed by the apparent revival of the diphthongs in later Galilean and Babylonian Aramaic, cf. Yochanan Breuer, "Aramaic in Late Antiquity", in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Vol. 4, The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (ed. Steven T. Katz; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 484–85. Ultimately, if the explanation for spelling variation is orthographic rather than phonological, then the nature of the relationship between the graphic representation of diphthongs and the development of *m.l.* needs to be reconsidered; cf. the discussion in Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, 42–55. However, this would require a thorough epigraphic study that far exceeds the scope of the present discussion.

The latter difficulty might be resolved in several different ways: (a) the variant spellings might reflect different educational traditions—although, this would probably (but not necessarily) still suggest a north/south regional divide (note the preference for *plene* spellings in Judahite texts); (b) the variant spellings might reflect individual preference or idiolect (note that on palaeographic grounds there is reason to believe that the pithoi and plaster inscriptions were written by more than one individual, see below); or (c) the variant spellings might indicate diglossia—that is, the pithoi inscriptions (especially the epistolary texts) might reflect a "low" vernacular (Samarian Hebrew) in which the diphthong had contracted, whereas the plaster inscriptions might reflect a "high" literary language in which the diphthong was preserved.[30] We will consider the possibility of diglossia in greater detail below, but first let us return to the question of dialectical variation.

As noted above, Aḥituv et al. interpreted the retention of the diphthong as probable evidence of a Judahite scribe. However, Jeremy Hutton has further complicated the question by suggesting that the orthography of the plaster inscriptions might equally reflect a local (i.e. east-Sinaitic or Negevite) vernacular.[31] To support this suggestion Hutton cited the retention of the *aw* diphthong in the Edomite DN Qaus (קוס) as late as the early-6th century B.C.E.[32] According to Hutton, if we assume that the retention of the *aw* diphthong is indicative of the situation

---

[30] Cf. the discussion of diglossia in pre-exilic Hebrew in Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, 173–79.

[31] Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh", 200–02. Although, note that ‏(ה)תימן‎, "(the) South", implies a northern perspective.

[32] Ibid, 201 and n.97. The DN is attested four times in two Edomite ostraca: once as the agent of blessing in the Horvat ʿUza Ostracon (‏והברכתך לקוס‎, "I bless you to Qaus") and three times (although in one instance as a restored reading) as a theophoric element in the Edomite ostracon from Tell el-Kheleifeh (‏קוסנ[דב]‎, ‏פגעקונ[ס]‎, ‏קוסב[נה]‎). Hutton also adduced Eusebius' rendering of the toponym Θαιμάν (*Onom.* 96.18-23; 102.7-10), although as Aḥituv has noted this might reflect the BH (Judahite) historical spelling; cf. Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 313; Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh", 201, n.98.

regarding the *ay* diphthong, this might be taken as evidence that diphthongs were preserved in the dialect(s) of the southern Negev during the 8th century (although on the analogous retention of *aw* in Samarian theophoric PNN see below).[33] This is certainly possible, but again it does not explain why the texts containing the uncontracted diphthong would be displayed in such a prominent position.

Yet another possibility is that the orthography of the plaster inscriptions might reflect fossilised (historical) spellings. That is, it may be that the preservation of the diphthong reflects an orthographic retention

---

[33] This inference is reasonable, but it is not assured. As Rendsburg has observed, "[o]ur experience with the treatment of diphthongs in other Semitic languages shows that what transpires with *aw* is generally true of *ay* and vice versa. When one is preserved, the other is preserved; when one is reduced, the other is reduced"; cf. Gary A. Rendsburg, "Monophthongizaion of *aw/ay* > *ā* in Eblaite and in Northwest Semitic" in *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language, Vol. 2* (eds. C. H. Gordon and G. A. Rendsburg; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 94. However, it does not follow that the process of monophthongisation occurred simultaneously or followed the same time-frame for both diphthongs; indeed Joshua Blau has argued on the basis of the orthography of the Pentateuch that the process of monophthongisation probably occurred more rapidly and systematically for the *aw* diphthong than it did for the *ay* diphthong; cf. Joshua Blau "The monophthongization of diphthongs as reflected in the use of vowel letters in the Pentateuch" in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots; Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (eds. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin and Michael Sokoloff; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 7–11; reproduced in Joshua Blau, *Topics in Hebrew and Semitic linguistics* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), 21–25. On the other hand, the evidence of the Samaria Ostraca seems to suggest that in Samarian Hebrew the *ay* diphthong contracted earlier than *aw*, at least in PNN (see below). The fact that evidence for the preservation of the *aw* diphthong in Samarian Hebrew is only found in the theophoric element of PNN is of no importance at this juncture, as exactly the same situation obtains in the evidence for the preservation of *aw* in Edomite (i.e. DN and PNN). Finally, it is interesting to note that in Isa 21:11 the contraction לֵיל occurs in place of the expected לַיְלָה (one of three instances of this form in the MT, the other two occur in a prophecy against Moab in Isa 15:1). Isa 21:11 contains a prophecy against Edom, and it has been suggested that this contraction might reflect an attempt to represent Edomite pronunciation; cf. Ian Young, "The Diphthong **ay* in Edomite" *JSS* 37 (1992): 27–30. If correct this would rather suggest the contraction of *ay* in Edomite too.

from a period before generalised diphthong contraction. In this regard, it is interesting to compare the situation in the Mesha Stele (9th century Moabite), in which the diphthongs *ay* and *aw* appear to be preserved in the gentilic הדיבני (lines 1–2) and the GN חורנן (lines 31, 32), but have apparently contracted throughout the rest of the inscription (although, cf. the two spellings בית/בת, lines 7 and 23, and 25, respectively, which might indicate that the process of contraction was not yet complete).[34] As suggested by Garr, this might be taken as evidence that at the time of inscription diphthongs were preserved in (certain) Moabite place names, but had generally contracted in the spoken language.[35] Garr has suggested that similar historical spellings might also be preserved in GNN in the northern Tell Qasile Ostracon 2 and the Beth-Shean Ostracon (i.e. בית; cf. the expected contraction בת; although in both cases the interpretation is problematic).[36] Certainly, the conservative nature of GNN affords an attractive explanation for the evidence. But, while this explanation might be extended to account for the spelling תימן in *Kajr*4.1, it does not account for the apparent contraction of the diphthong (תמן) in the pithoi inscriptions. Is it likely that an historical spelling would be preserved for the GN in *Kajr*4.1 but not in the identical syntagm in *Kajr*3.6 and 3.9? Moreover, this explanation does not account for the preservation of the diphthong in the *hipʿil* verbs היטב and היצב (*Kajr*4.1). Nevertheless, the suggestion of historical spellings hints at another possibility.

A fifth alternative, alluded to above, is that the variant spellings might be diglossic. In other words, the orthography of the plaster inscriptions might be understood to reflect an archaic—or archaising— literary register. To this end, it is interesting to note that the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 is a poetic composition that has clear ties to some of the oldest—

---

[34] Cf. the discussion in Garr, *Dialect Geograhy of Syria-Palestine*, 37–38.

[35] Ibid, 37–38.

[36] Cf. Ian Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew* (FAT 5; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993), 116–17. On the difficulties posed by the Tell Qasile Ostracon, see n.25 above.

or at least, most conservative—poetry of the Hebrew Bible (see §2.8.2). By comparison, there is little that can be said with confidence about the contents of *Kajr*4.3, but it, nonetheless, seems to have a retrospective narrative quality, consistent with a mythopoeic register (see §2.6.3).[37] The same may also be said of the difficult *Kajr*4.1, especially if the verbs of the first line are translated as indicative rather than volitive.[38] This is not to affirm that *Kajr*4.1 and 4.3 are necessarily literary-poetic texts, but simply to note that the possibility exists. But is there any evidence to support the hypothesis of a linguistically conservative literary register in the northern kingdom?

Unfortunately, no lengthy poetic or literary inscriptions survive from northern Israel. The closest comparandum is the Gezer Calendar (קץ "summer fruit", line 7; cf. קַיִץ 2 Sam 16:1), which apparently evinces diphthong contraction.[39] However, the dialect and interpretation of the Gezer Calendar are debated, and despite being described as poetic, there is no evidence that it should be connected with a hypothesised "high" register.[40] Consequently, in the absence of poetic or literary inscriptions

---

[37] See the discussion above; cf. Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 310–12. Garr also considered the possibility that the *yôd* might be explained as an internal *m.l.* (otherwise unparalleled for this period), or as a borrowed spelling from a dialect in which the diphthong had not contracted; Garr, *Dialect Geograhy of Syria-Palestine*, 38;

[38] Of course, even if *Kajr*4.1 is interpreted as a benediction, the possibility remains that it reflects an archaic (or archaising) literary register.

[39] Given the placement of ירח קץ in line 7, and the fact that the bottom edge of the tablet is broken, it is possible that the calendar is incomplete, and that ירח קץ was originally meant to read ירח קצ[ר...] as in the lines above. Note, in this connection, that regardless of whether ירחו in lines 1, 2, and 6 is a dual form, the number of months does not amount to twelve.

[40] Compare the discussion of Ian Young, "The Style of the Gezer Calendar and Some 'Archaic Biblical Hebrew' Passages", *VT* 42 (1992): 362–65, who concluded that "the linguistic peculiarities of the Gezer Calendar are best set in the context of the ABH style". However, while I agree with Young's general assessment that the Archaic Biblical Hebrew poetic corpus might be explained in terms of style and register, it remains possible, in light of the antiquity of the tablet, that the archaic characteristics of the Gezer

from a northern dialect area, it is pertinent to turn to biblical evidence. More specifically, it is necessary to isolate a selection of texts for which a northern provenance can reasonably be inferred, and which are likely to reflect a conservative register. To this end it is interesting to compare the orthography of Judges 5, Deuteronomy 32, and the blessings of the northern tribes in Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33. Each of these passages has been plausibly connected with the northern tribes, and each belongs to the corpus of Archaic Biblical Hebrew (ABH) poetry, which is typified by its highly conservative linguistic profile.[41]

Intriguingly, there is no evidence for the contraction of diphthongs anywhere in these chapters. In fact, in a number of instances the *ay* diphthong is clearly represented:[42] e.g. בין (Judges 5:16, 27 x2; Gen 49:10, 14);[43] קיני (Judges 5:24);[44] יין (Gen 49:11, 12; Deut 32:38; cf. suffixed יינם

Calendar are simply genuine archaisms. Moreover, it is possible that the language and orthography of the Calendar reflect a mixture of conservative (ABH) and vernacular features; cf. Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, 118–19.

[41] The arguments in favour of the northern provenance of Judges 5 are well known and need not be rehearsed here. For the other songs see the discussion in Joel D. Heck, "A History of Interpretation of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147 (1990): 16–31; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Israelian Features in Genesis 49" *Maraav* 8 (1992): 161–70; idem., "Israelian Hebrew Features in Deuteronomy 33", in *Mishneh Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy in Its Cultural Environment in Honour of Jeffrey H. Tiggay* (eds. Nili S. Fox, David A. Glatt-Gilad, Michael J. Williams; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 167–83; Paul Sanders, *Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). In each case the arguments for the text's provenance are complex, but a northern connection seems likely. For a discussion of the linguistic profile of ABH poetry see David A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula, Mont.: SBL, 1972); however, cf. Young, "The Style of the Gezer Calendar", 362–75, who has emphasised the dialectical peculiarities of this corpus and has argued that archaic linguistic features and historical contents are not necessarily evidence of its antiquity.

[42] In the examples that follow I have omitted instances of the *ay* diphthong preceding pronominal suffixes on plural and dual nouns (cf. Blau "The monophthongization of diphthongs, 22–23), and focussed on internal diphthongs.

[43] Cf. Joüon §103*n*, who describes this form as the construct state of בַּיִן*.

Deut 33:28); עין (Gen 49:22; cs. Deut 33:27; cf. dual עינים Gen 49:12; suffixed עינו Deut 32:10); עלי (Gen 49:17 x2, 22 x2, 23; Deut 32:2 x2);[45] אין (Deut 32:4, 12, 28, 39; 33:26);[46] אילים (Deut 32:14). It is also interesting to compare איתן (Gen 49:24) with the contracted form אתן in Job 12:19; 33:19.[47]

Of these four passages, only Deut 32 is preserved in the Qumran manuscripts. But there also the diphthong is uniformly represented: e.g. יין 4QDeut^q, col. I: frag. 2 (Deut 32:38); עינו 4QpaleoDeut^r, frag. 37 (Deut 32:10); איל]ים[4QpaleoDeut^r, frag. 40 (Deut 32:14).[48] The fragmentary nature of the Qumran witness precludes categorical statements, but it can at least be noted that, here too, there is no evidence for diphthong contraction in the manuscript tradition.

Of these examples, יין (Gen 49:11, 12; Deut 32:33, 38) may be considered particularly significant as the contracted form ין in the Samaria Ostraca is one of the primary data adduced to demonstrate the contraction of the diphthong in the North. Indeed, as Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd

---

[44] Cf. קַיִן as a PN Gen 4:1–25, as a GN/people group Num 24:22; Josh 15:57, and as a common noun "spear" 2 Sam 21:16.

[45] On the origin and morphology of this poetic form, cf. GKC §103n, o; Joüon, §103m.

[46] Note that there is some evidence for diphthong contraction in the homophonous particle אַיִן "where?" (i.e. אָן, מֵאַיִן; etymologically related to אִי "where?"), when it occurs in spoken contexts: 1 Sam 10:14; 2 Kgs 5:25 (Ketiv); Job 8:2; see the discussion in William Schniedewind and Daniel Sivan, "The Elijah-Elisha Narratives: A Test Case for the Northern Dialect of Hebrew", JQR 87 (1997): 333–34.

[47] On the northern provenance of Job, see David Noel Freedman, "Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job", ErIsr 9 (1969): 35–44; C. L. Seow, "Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job", JBL 130 (2011): 63–85. Note especially the spoken context of אתן in Job 12:19; 33:19, which may be explicable as an example of code-switching, see Gary A. Rendsburg, "A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew: Grammar and Lexicon", Orient 38 (2003) 8; on dialectical code-switching in spoken contexts in BH generally, cf. Schniedewind and Sivan, "The Elijah-Elisha Narratives", 333–34.

[48] Readings based on Eugene Ulrich, The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants (VTSup 134; Leiden: Brill, 2010).

have observed, the uncontracted form יַיִן occurs consistently throughout the Hebrew Bible, even where a northern association might be expected, e.g. narratives dealing with the northern prophets Hosea and Amos.[49] In fact there is only one possible (probable) attestation of the contracted form known from the whole of the Hebrew Bible: i.e. יני, "my wine" (Ps 141:5).[50]

The consistency with which the *ay* diphthong is represented in these passages, balanced by the total lack of evidence for diphthong contraction, may be significant. As Francis Andersen has remarked, "[i]f any biblical compositions arose in a northern-dialect area, or passed through channels using such a dialect or following its spelling and conventions, the differences would show up in the *defective* spelling of **ô ← *aw** and **ê ← *ay**".[51] Nevertheless, this observation must be treated with utmost caution, since the textual history of the chapters is unknown. It might easily have been the case that the songs were composed orally in the North but set down in writing in the South, according to the standards of southern pronunciation and orthography.[52] Then again, it might also be that at some stage the spelling of these verses was updated to represent diphthongs; though, in that case, it is interesting to note the presence of a number of

---

[49] Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, 183; cf. Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, 167–68.

[50] See Gary A. Rendsburg, "Morphological Evidence for Regional Dialects in Ancient Hebrew", in *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (ed. Walter R. Bodine; Dallas, Tex.: Summer Institute of Linguistics; Winona Lake, Ind.: Distributed by Eisenbrauns, 1994), 85–86. On the MT's vocalisation *yānî*, rather than the expected *yênî*, see idem, "Monophthongization of *aw/*ay> ā in Eblaite and in Northwest Semitic", 107.

[51] David Noel Freedman, A. Dean Forbes and Francis I. Andersen, *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 68.

[52] Cf., recently, Robert Rezetko and Ian Young, *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Toward an Integrated Approach* (SBLANEM 9; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2014),esp. 111 – 12, who argue convincingly that updating and variation was the norm, to the extent that the current form of text and script is of little or no value as a witness to the original.

remarkable *defective* spellings that are left unaltered.[53] Of course, it is also possible that the orthography underwent a major updating sometime before the generalised use of internal *m.l.*; however, there is no clear proof for this.

My contention is not that the biblical text supplies positive proof for a conservative northern literary register in which diphthongs were preserved. Rather my intention is far milder, merely to note that there is no clear obstacle precluding the hypothesis of diglossia, and to raise the possibility that a "high" register might be reflected in the orthography of the plaster inscriptions at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[54]

But is this *historically* credible? There is evidence that the diphthong had already contracted by the Late Bronze Age in Ugaritic and Amarna Canaanite.[55] However, this has little bearing on the question of diphthong contraction in the Hebrew dialects. Indeed, the retention of both *aw* and *ay* in pre-exilic Judahite Hebrew, together with the probable retention of the

---

[53] E.g. בְּכֹרִי (Gen 49:3; cf. *plene* בְּכוֹרוֹ, Gen 38:6); כְּבֹדִי (Gen 49:6; cf. *plene* כְּבוֹדִי, Gen 45:13); וּבִרְצֹנָם (Gen 49:6; cf. *plene* רְצוֹנָם, 2 Chron 15:15); עֶפְרֹן (Gen 49:30; cf. *plene* עֶפְרוֹן;); for a number of examples in Deut 32, see Paul Sanders, *Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 326–32. Interestingly the two spellings of Zebulun in Judges 5 זְבוּלֻן (5:14), זְבֻלוּן (5:18) suggest a phonetic spelling, and might point to a period before the use of *m.l.* was fully standardised; although, intriguingly, note that both spellings appear in Judges 4:10, 6 respectively, suggesting literary dependence (!).

[54] Note that on the basis of the epigraphic evidence (of which, only a limited selection of the material from Kuntillet ʿAjrud was available) Young has proposed a similar scenario: "[i]f we still wished to retain the general dialectical tendency of Northern Hebrew to diphthongal reduction (which is not necessary to explain the evidence), we could suggest the following situation. The 'correct' High pronunciation was always with the diphthong, going back at least to the Jerusalem standardization of the High language. In daily speech, Northern Hebrew had undergone a general diphthongal reduction. Therefore any reduction appearing in the High language represent 'slips' or intrusions of this Low speech habit." Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, 117, cf. 199.

[55] For Ugaritic, cf. Daniel Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (HO 28; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 37–41; for Amarna Canaanite, cf. Willam L. Moran, "The Hebrew Language in its Nothwest Semitic Background", in *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings* (eds. John Huehnergard and Shlomo Izre'elona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003): 206.

aw diphthong in northern PNN (see below), suggests that Hebrew stems from an ancestor in which diphthongs were retained.[56] The Gezer Calendar seems to indicate that *ay* had contracted in some contexts by the 10th century, but this may reflect Phoenician rather than Hebrew convention.[57] At the latest, the contraction of *ay* must have taken place in the Samarian vernacular by the 8th century (e.g. the Samaria Ostraca and Kuntillet ʿAjrud pithoi inscriptions). This means that any hypothesised diglossic situation need not have existed for more than a couple of centuries. However, there is no necessary durational constraint on diglossia, especially in the context of a living poetic tradition.[58] An analogous situation occurs in the epic poetry of ancient Greece, in which numerous dialectical and archaic elements were preserved and transmitted over several centuries through both oral and written channels.[59]

3.2.4. *The aw diphthong*

The *aw* diphthong seems to reflect a different pattern of retention. At Kuntillet ʿAjrud *aw* is apparently represented in the theophoric elements -יו /יו- in the following PNN (cf. Appendix A): שמעיו (*Kajr*1.1); עבדיו (*Kajr*1.2); חליו (*Kajr*1.3); יועשה (*Kajr*3.1); אמריו (*Kajr*3.6); אליו, שמריו, שכניו, and עזיו (*Kajr*3.10). As noted above, there is some disagreement as to whether *wâw* in these names represents a diphthong *-yaw-* or a *m.l. -yō-* (resulting from diphthong contraction, i.e. **yahu > *yaw > *yō*). However,

---

[56] Unless the representation of the diphthong is viewed as an orthographic innovation.

[57] Cf. Dennis Pardee, "A Brief Case for the Language of the 'Gezer Calendar' as Phoenician", in *Linguistic Studies in Phoenician: In Memory of J. Brian Peckham* (ed. Robert D. Holmstedt and Aaron Schade; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2013): 226–45.

[58] Cf. Young, "The Style of the Gezer Calendar", 362–75.

[59] See conveniently, Steve Reece, *Homer's Winged Words: The Evolution of Early Greek Epic Diction in the Light of Oral Theory* (Mnemosyne supplements: MGRLL, 313; Leiden: Brill, 2009), esp. 3–13; for a more detailed treatment of the preservation of dialectical and diachronic diversity in Homeric orthography/phonology, see Olav Hackstein, "The Greek of Epic", in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (ed. Egbert J. Bakker; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 401–23.

both McCarter and Baruch Halpern have rightly observed that contraction of the diphthong (i.e. *yaw* > *yō*) is contra-indicated by the fact that the theophoric element is never spelled יה- (*yō*) in final position.[60] The retention of the *aw* diphthong in PNN despite the contraction of *ay* is consistent with the orthography of the Samaria Ostraca (see §3.4).

3.2.5. *Non-assimilation of nûn in* שנת

The spelling שנת on the smaller fragment of *Kajr*4.2 may be contrasted with Samarian שת, in which the *nûn* apparently assimilated (cf. בשת, "in the year", in the Samaria Ostraca); however, the fragment is incomplete and other readings are possible (e.g. f.p. participle ישׁן√, [*yĕ*]*šunōt*, "sleepers"), and, in any case, it remains a possibility that the orthography can be attributed to a conservative literary register (see above).

3.3. VOCABULARY

It has been noted that the root יטב/טוב, "to be good", although comparatively common in Hebrew, is unattested in Phoenician (cf. the Phoenician parallel נעם√).[61]

3.4. ONOMASTICON

Twenty-eight personal names are attested in the corpus of inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud (see Appendix A). Of these, four consist of only one letter and so offer little by way of diagnostic evidence. Eight are incomplete: five broken on the left-hand edge so that the (possible) endings are missing (עבד[...], ראי[...], יהל[...], שמעי[...] and גד[...]), and three

---

[60] See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "'Yaw, Son of Omri': A Philological Note on Israelite Chronology", *BASOR* 216 (1974): 7, n.5; Baruch Halpern, "Yaua, Son of Omri, Yet Again", *BASOR* 265 (1987): 82.

[61] See most recently, Shmuel Aḥituv, "Notes on the Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions", in *See, I will bring a scroll recounting what befell me" (Ps 40:8): Epigraph and Daily Life From the Bible to the Talmud* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2014), 31; cf. Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 108.

broken on the right-hand edge so that the (possible) beginnings are missing (Nos. ‬עדה[...], ‬פגי[...] and ‬אמֹנ[...]). This leaves sixteen complete names. Of these, nine bear the *Yahwistic* theophoric element ‫-יו‬-, eight as a suffix (‫שמעיו ,עבדיו ,חליו ,אמריו ,שכניו ,שמריו ,אליו‬, and ‫עזיו‬), and one as a prefix (‫יועשה‬). The compounding of the *Yahwistic* theophoric element suggests the specifically Hebrew character of these PNN. More specifically, the spelling of the theophoric element suggests an origin in the northern kingdom of Israel rather than Judah. The *Yahwistic* element of Hebrew PNN is known from biblical and epigraphic evidence in three basic forms: ‫-יו/יו‬-, ‫-יהו/יהו‬- and ‫-יה‬-.[62] The first of these ‫-יו‬- (apparently resulting from the syncope of intervocalic *hê*; i.e. **yahū > *yaū > *yaw*) is relatively well attested as the standard form in northern (Israelite) PNN: although this form also occurs in several southern (Judahite) PNN of the 8th century (*WSS* 3, 4,[63] 663, and 678[64]). In southern PNN, however, the *Yahwistic* element is normally spelled ‫-יהו‬- (i.e. without syncope of the *hê*).[65] To date,

---

[62] For a thorough discussion of the 8th century *Yahwistic* onomasticon see Brian A. Mastin, "The Theophoric Elements *yw* and *yhw* in Proper Names in Eighth-Century Hebrew Inscriptions and the Proper Names at Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *ZAH* 17–20 (2004–2007): 109–35.

[63] Aḥituv et al. note the possibility that *WSS* 3 and 4 may simply have been engraved by a scribe accustomed to the northern orthography; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman*, 136 n.12.

[64] However, Aḥituv et al. argue that the three spellings ‫ יבנה‬, ‫יהובנה‬ and ‫יובנה‬ (*WSS* 676, 677 and 678, respectively), which apparently all belonged to the same individual, attest to no more than the carelessness of the scribe; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 136 n.12. As such, it is interesting to note that *WSS* 677 appears to have originally been written without the *wāw* (cf. *WSS* 676), which was later inserted into the space between the *yôd* and the *hê*; Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), 248–49.

[65] The question has been raised as to whether the explanation for the two forms of the *Yahwistic* element may in fact be chronological rather than purely regional, ‫ יו‬- being relatively more common in Judah in the 8th century; Alan Millard, "The Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals: Review Article," *IEJ* 51 (2001): 85; cf. Harold L. Gindsberg,

only one example of the יהו- form is attested in the North. This comes from port of Tell Qasile and, as such, its significance is uncertain (i.e. possible Judahite provenance).[66] The fact that so many of the PNN at Kuntillet ʿAjrud are compounded with the י- theophoric element, coupled with the complete absence of the יהו- theophoric element, is therefore taken as evidence for the predominance of Israelites at the site; an impression that accords well with the (possible) allusion to YHWH of Samaria in *Kajr*3.1.

On the basis of the unreduced diphthong, Johannes Renz has argued that the PN עירא (*Kajr*2.1) might be Judahite. However, as noted above, (1) עירא might be a local spelling; and (2) the palaeography appears to be considerably older than the other inscriptions, meaning there is no evidence that the individual named עירא was ever present at the site.

Significantly, each of these PNN (or their cognates) is attested in Hebrew sources, further reinforcing the impression that these individuals were from a Hebrew background. Two of the PNN are also attested in Ammonite sources (עדנה, אשא, and possibly [...]עבד), and one is attested in Moabite (אמץ). The gentilic מצרי ("Egyptian") is attested more widely but this is hardly surprising as it could refer to anyone of Egyptian origin or descent.[67]

It is interesting to note the complete lack of non-*Yahwistic* (e.g. *Baalistic*) theophoric names at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Though, this too is perhaps not surprising. In his careful analysis of theophoric PNN in the biblical and epigraphic sources, Jeffrey Tigay calculated a ratio of 89%

"Lachish Notes," *BASOR* 71 (1938): 25; Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals,* 25, and 25, n.17, 504; Frank Moore Cross, "The Seal of Miqneyaw, Servant of Yahweh," in *Ancient Seals and the Bible*, (eds. Leonard Gorelick and Elizabeth Williams-Forte; Undena: Malibu, Calif., 1984), 55–63; Mastin, "The Theophoric Elements *yw* and *yhw*", 109–35; see also the discussion in Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200-539 B.C.E.* (SBLAB 12; Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 142–43, n.136.

[66] See Mastin, "The Theophoric Elements *yw* and *yhw*", 126. On the general dialectical ambiguity of Tell Qasile see above.

[67] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 101.

Yahwistic to 11% non-*Yahwistic* theophoric names out of 466 pre-exilic biblical individuals, and 94.1% *Yahwistic* to 5.9% non-*Yahwistic* theophoric names in pre-exilic epigraphic sources.[68] However, as Tigay argued, the onomasticon of a society need not bear a direct correlation to the pantheon and religious experience of that society.[69] Consequently, the lack of *Baalistic* names is of no use for determining whether בעל in *Kajr*4.2 is DN or an epithet. That being said, PNN compounded with a *Baalistic* element are comparatively common in Phoenician sources from the first half of the first millennium B.C.E.[70] Consequently, the absence of *Baalistic* names at Kuntillet ʿAjrud suggests that none of the named individuals were of Phoenician origin. At this point it is also worth noting three seals (each with a patronymic containing the *Yahwistic* element יהו-) that appear to have PNN compounded with אשר- (*WSS* 457, 579, and 580). Nahman Avigad suggested that this element is probably theophoric, standing for a male counterpart to Asherah.[71] If this suggestion is correct,

---

[68] Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods*, 18. This includes the names from Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

[69] Ibid, 19–20; cf. Martin Heide, "Die theophoren Personennamen der Kuntillet-'Aǧrūd Inschriften" *WO* 32 (2002): 110–20, who takes the preponderance of *Yahwistic* theophoric names as evidence of the prominence of the Yawhistic cult in Israel in the 9th century.

[70] Cf. the names גרבעל, זכרב[על] , עזרבעל and אדנבעל, attested on bronze arrow-heads dating from the 12th–10th centuries B.C.E. (John C. L. Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions: Including Inscriptions in the Mixed Dialect from Arslan Tash* (vol. 3 of *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*; ed. John C. L. Gibson; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1–8); בעליתן (KAI 7); שפטבעל (KAI 6); אלבעל (KAI 5); אבבעל (KAI 1) א[תבעל] (KAI 3); עזרבעל and אבדבעל, on a bronze statuette from Seville, Spain (Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 64–66); cf. the feminine PN אמתבעל (KAI 29); cf. *WSS* 713, 719, 726, 729–32, 743; see also the discussion and catalogue in Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Insrciptions* (studia Pohl 8; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), esp. 288–90.

[71] Avigad and Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, 486. Cf. already, Raphael Patai, "The Godess Asherah" *JNES* 24 (1965): 41; Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods*, 65, n.3. As noted by Avigad, the age of these seals means that אשר- is unlikely to correspond to Assyrian *aššûr*.

then it is also worth noting the lack of any PNN compounded with an -
-אשר element at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

3.5. DISCUSSION

The linguistic evidence overwhelmingly supports a Hebrew classification,
even for those texts written in the Phoenician script (see below).
Furthermore, the onomastic evidence and the contraction of the *ay*
diphthong in *Kajr*3.6, 3.9 indicate a northern, Israelite, affiliation. Even so,
the retention of the diphthong in *Kajr*4.1–4.3 and the spelling שנת in
*Kajr*4.2 might indicate a Judahite affiliation for the plaster texts. But, as
discussed above, this interpretation is not necessary to explain the
evidence.

Finally, the onomastic evidence seems to support the inference that
the cultic focus of the site was predominantly Yahwistic (cf. §2.4.1.1).

3.6. PALAEOGRAPHY

Already in 1977 Meshel had written of the presence at Kuntillet ʿAjrud of
inscriptions in both Hebrew and Phoenician scripts.[72] It is not surprising,
then, that the palaeography of the inscriptions has received considerable
attention over the years, with particular emphasis given to the
classification of the scripts.[73] The most recent and comprehensive
palaeographic analysis is supplied in the *editio princeps*, where it is
concluded that all of the inscriptions on clay and stone and one inscription

---

[72] Zeʾev Meshel, "Notes and News", 52; cf. idem, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *ABD* IV:107; idem,
"Teman, Ḥorvat," *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy
Land* 4:1461–62.

[73] e.g. Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions ", 14; Lemaire, "Date et Origine Des
Inscriptions Hebraïques et Pheniciennes de Kuntillet ʿAjrud"*,* 134–36; Johannes Renz,
*Schrift und Schreibertradition : eine paläographische Studie zum kulturgeschichten
Verhältnis von israelitischem Nordreich und Südreich* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997);
Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 376–78; Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient
Israel", 54–60; Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 100–
105; Meshel, *Kuntillet Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 73–126.

written on plaster (*Kajr*4.6) reflect a Hebrew series, while the remaining plaster inscriptions (*Kajr*4.1–4.5) reflect a Phoenician series, similar to the script of the Karatepe inscription.[74] In what follows, the evidence for this conclusion will be reviewed and implications discussed.

It is generally believed that the Hebrew script began to separate from Phoenician as an independent national script sometime during the 9th century B.C.E.,[75] although there are signs that the process may have begun in a limited sense somewhat earlier.[76] The emergent Old Hebrew script is characterized by a number of features, including: (1) the elongation of vertical strokes in certain letters: e.g. *ʾālep*, *wāw*, *kāp*, *mêm*

---

[74] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 74, 122.

[75] Joseph Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 53–124; cf. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 377. For the political significance of this differentiation see Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*; *idem.*, "Writing and Early Iron Age Israel".

[76] Central to this question is the identification of the debated scripts of the Gezer Calendar and the Tel Zayit abecedary; cf. Tappy et al., "An Abecedary of the Mid-Tenth Century B.C.E.", 26–31. On the limitations of the evidence see Christopher A. Rollston, "The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedary and Putative Evidence for Israelite Literacy," in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context* (eds. Ron Tappy and P. Kyle McCarter; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 61–96, esp. 83). Cross argued preferred to see the script of the Gezer Calendar as an emergent form of the early Hebrew script, referring in particular to the elongation of the vertical strokes or "legs" of such letters as *ʾālep*, *wāw*, *kāp*, *mêm* and *rêš*; Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions", 14; cf. Tappy et al., "An Abecedary of the Mid-Tenth Century B.C.E.", 26–41, esp. 40–41. However, he admitted that these signs are "faint at best"; Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions", 14. But Joseph Naveh disagreed with even so cautious an assessment, stating, "The script of the Gezer Calendar…, although the earliest Hebrew inscription known to date, resembles the writing of the tenth-century B.C. Phoenician inscriptions from Byblos. At this stage no specifically Hebrew characters can be distinguished, and the Hebrew followed the scribal tradition current in Canaan"; Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 65; cf. Rollston, "The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedary", 80.

and *rêš*;[77] (2) a progressively cursive tendency reflected in the leftward curve of the down-strokes of the "long-legged" letter-signs: e.g. *kāp*, *mêm* and *nûn*;[78] (3) the consistent use of the Y-shaped *wāw* with a semi-circular head, rather than the offset head that developed in the Phoenician and Aramaic traditions (e.g. ⫫);[79] (4) the *tāw* began to rotate from a "cruciform" + shape, to a "reclining" × shape;[80] and (5) toward the end of the century, a "cursive tick" (a short downward stroke) began to develop at the end of horizontal lines drawn left-to-right.[81] I will discuss each feature in turn:

(1) Elongation can be seen across the entire corpus from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, including the inscriptions written in ink on plaster. However, Christopher Rollston has argued that elongation is reflected in each of the major West Semitic script series (i.e. Phoenician, Aramaic and Old Hebrew) and, therefore, elongation cannot, of itself, be considered a distinctive marker of a particular script series.[82]

(2) The cursive tendency is likewise reflected across the entire corpus, although it is more pronounced in some inscriptions than in others (e.g. the exaggerated curvature on the down-strokes of the *ʾāleps* in *Kajr*3.1, 3.9 and esp. *Kajr*3.16, compared to the relatively straight down-

---

[77] Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions", 14; Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 53–58.

[78] Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions", 14; Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet,* 66–70, 89–99, esp. 66; Ada Yardeni, *The Book of the Hebrew Script: History, Palaeography, Script Styles, Calligraphy and Design* (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE : Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 17.

[79] Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet,* 66; Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 377; Yardeni, *The Book of the Hebrew Scrip*, 17.

[80] Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 377; Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 66; Yardeni, *The Book of the Hebrew Scrip*, 17.

[81] Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions", 14.

[82] Rollston, "The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedary", 83–88.

strokes in *Kajr*2.13–23,[83] 3.6, 4.2 and the "archaic" ʾ*ālep* in *Kajr*2.1).[84] Notably, this cursive tendency is also reflected in the plaster inscriptions.

(3) The inscriptions written on stone and clay (both incised and dipinti) consistently use variations of the Y-shaped *wāw*. The incised *wāws* in *Kajr*1.1 and 1.2 consist of three lines with an angular head (fig.3.1.1–2) similar to the *wāw* in line 2 of the Gezer Calendar; in *Kajr*1.3 the head is angled to the right (fig.3.1.3). In *Kajr*3.1 (fig.3.1.4) the *wāws* are roughly symmetrical with a small semi-circular head, similar in shape and stance to the *wāw* of the Mesha inscription.[85] In *Kajr*3.2 the *wāw* consists of two strokes: a broad slanting vertical shaft with a short bar intersecting about half-way down the right-hand side (fig.3.1.5). The *wāws* in *Kajr*3.6 also consist of two strokes: a vertical stroke angled to the right and a short curved stroke, which intersects from the left to form the head (fig.3.1.6). The *wāws* in *Kajr*3.9 and 3.10 consist of a wavy vertical shaft, intersected by a bar to form the head (fig.3.1.7).[86] Clearly distinctive, however, are the *wāws* in *Kajr*4.1–4.3. These consist of a straight vertical shaft and an offset head formed by a curved bar, which intersects near the top left-hand edge of the vertical shaft (fig.3.1.8–10). This form is common to the Phoenician and Aramaic scripts.[87] There are no examples of *wāw* preserved in *Kajr*4.4–4.6.

---

[83] Note that *Kajr*2.13–23 were incised prior to firing, and before being transported to the site (cf. §2.3). As such, we cannot identify the writers of these signs directly with the scribes at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

[84] Apparently for historical reasons, Rollston described the ʾ*ālep* at Kuntillet ʿAjrud as "among the earliest exemplars of the cursive Old Hebrew ʾ*alep*", and used it as an anchor for his typological discussions; Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 54.

[85] Although the shaft is elongated and the curvature of the head is less pronounced in *Kajr*3.1 than in the Mesha inscription.

[86] This is a characteristically Hebrew development, cf. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 94 (fig. 84: No. 13).

[87] Ibid, 94. e.g. the Kilamuwa, Karatepe, Zakkur inscriptions, etc.
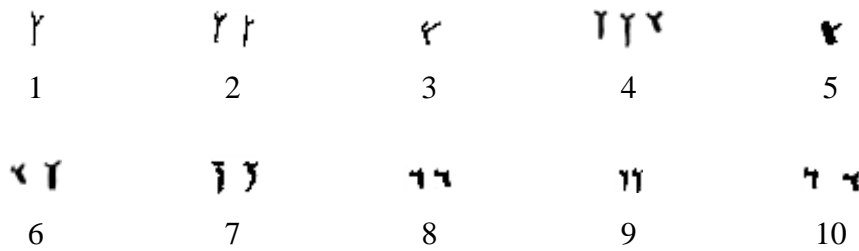
Fig.3.1—Comparison of *wāw*: (1) *Kajr*1.1; (2) *Kajr*1.2; (3) *Kajr*1.3; (4) *Kajr*3.1; (5) *Kajr*3.2; (6) *Kajr*3.6; (7) *Kajr*3.9; (8) *Kajr*4.1; (9) *Kajr*4.2; (10) *Kajr*4.3.[88]

(4) The inscriptions on stone and clay consistently use the symmetrical ×-shaped *tāw* (e.g. fig.3.2.1). In *Kajr*3.13 the stance is more upright, but this may simply be due to the curved surface of the vessel (fig.3.2.2).[89] In *Kajr*4.1 and 4.3 the left-hand line is elongated and slightly curved, and the right-hand line barely transverses the point of intersection (fig.3.2.3–4). In *Kajr*4.2 the right-hand line extends well beyond the point of intersection but is still relatively short compared to the elongated left-hand line (fig.3.2.5). This asymmetrical *tāw* (*Kajr*4.1–3) is similar to the *tāws* of the Karatepe inscription. In *Kajr*4.1.16 the right-hand arm hooks downward (fig.3.2.6), anticipating a later characteristic of the Phoenician *tāw*. The closest parallel to the *tāw* of the KAPT (esp. *Kajr*4.1) is the *tāw* of the Deir ʿAlla script (although, the latter is more developed; cf. fig.6.1). *Kajr*4.6 uses the ×-shaped *tāw* but there is some elongation of the left-hand line (fig.3.2.7).

Fig.3.2—Comparison of *tāw*: (1) *Kajr*3.9; (2) *Kajr*3.13; (3) *Kajr*4.1; (4) *Kajr*4.3; (5) *Kajr*4.2; (6) *Kajr*4.1.16; (7) *Kajr*4.6.

(5) Cursive "ticks" are visible on *yōds* in *Kajr*3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.10, 3.12, 3.15 and possibly 1.3, although, the latter may only be a scratch in

---

[88] Figures are not to scale and are for illustrative purposes only.

[89] Cf. the adjacent *šîn* which is also slightly askew.

the surface of the stone. In addition, a faint "tick" is visible on the *zayin* in *Kajr*3.10.

In addition to the above features, *bêt*, *yōd* and *kāp* may also be considered diagnostic.

(6) *bêt*: Rollston noted that in the Iron Age Phoenician cursive and lapidary series, *bêt* typically has a closed head and its stance is often upright or with the top leaning to the left (cf. *Kajr*4.1 and 4.3, and the unclear examples in *Kajr*4.4 and 4.5). In contrast, the Hebrew *bêt* is consistently drawn top-right, a trait that became more pronounced during the 8th–6th centuries (cf. *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6).[90] However, it should be noted that these features may not be very pronounced during the 9th–early-8th centuries.

(7) *yōd*: in *Kajr*4.1 and 4.2 the *yōd* is small and upright, drawn with two strokes: a sweeping brush stroke, similar in shape to a "2," and a short lateral bar. The angle between the upper horizontal and the vertical lines is slightly obtuse, which, as Zevit notes, is a characteristic development of the Phoenician *yōd* after the 8th century. In contrast, both angles of the "Hebrew" *yōd* tended to be acute.[91]

(8) *kāp*: in *Kajr*1.2 (fig.3.3.1), and in the pithoi inscriptions (e.g. fig.3.3.2–3), the *kāp* consists of a main shaft and two oblique strokes (cf. the *kāps* of the Samaria Ostraca and the Siloam Tunnel Inscription).[92] However, in *Kajr*4.1 and 4.2 one of the oblique strokes is replaced by a short downward stroke attached to the left-most tip of the remaining stroke (fig.3.3.5–6). The *kāps* in *Kajr*4.3 are badly preserved, but they appear to reflect a similar shape to *Kajr*4.1 and 4.2 (fig.3.3.4). Similar *kāps* are found in the Phoenician inscriptions at Karatepe and on the lid of an ivory box from Ur. A similar form is also attested in the script represented in the

---

[90] Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 59–60.

[91] Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 377.

[92] Cf. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 55.

DAPT (see §6.6 and fig.6.1). This basic shape reflects an innovation shared with Phoenician and Aramaic but not with Hebrew.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Fig.3.3—Comparison of *kāp*: (1) *Kajr*1.2; (2) *Kajr*3.1; (3) *Kajr*3.12; (4) *Kajr*4.1; (5) *Kajr*4.2.

In light of the foregoing, the strongest indications of Phoenician script at Kuntillet ʿAjrud are the offset *wāw*, the asymmetrical and hooked *tāw*, the left-leaning *bêt*, the obtuse *yōd* and the Phoenician-style *kāp*. As concluded by Aḥituv et al., these features are most evident in the plaster inscriptions *Kajr*4.1–4.3 and possibly the more fragmentary 4.4. *Kajr*4.5 preserves too few letters to draw any conclusions.[93]

3.6.1 DISCUSSION

It remains to consider what implications the above observations hold for the identity of the writers at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. There are at least two conceivable explanations that might account for the use of Phoenician script in the KAPT: (1) the plaster texts may have been written by a scribe who learnt his letters in Phoenicia or according to the Phoenician tradition;[94] or (2) the choice of script might have been optional, suggesting

---

[93] Cf. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 377, and n.51.

[94] On the basis of the unreduced diphthong, Aḥituv, et al. preferred to understand the scribe as a Judahite who had learned the Phoenician script; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʾAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 126. Mastin has argued that there are at most three extant inscriptions which show that the Phoenician script was used in Palestine south of Samaria in the 9th or 8th centuries B.C.E. By comparison, texts written in Phoenician script are relatively common north of Samaria; Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 101–105; cf. Meindert Dijkstra, "I have blessed you by YHWH of Samaria and his Asherah: Texts with Religious Elements from the Soil Archive of Ancient Israel," in, *Only One God? Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah* (eds. Bob Becking, et al.; The Biblical Seminar 77; London and New York, 2001), 22. However, the recent discovery near the Gihon spring in Jerusalem of a number of

that the Phoenician script retained the status of a "prestige script" at this time.[95] In other words, the "Phoenician" script of the KAPT might reflect a literary book hand, distinct from the chancery hand represented on the pithoi. This would be consistent with the diglossic situation postulated above.

Following the careful work of Gerrit van der Kooij on the development of the early Northwest Semitic alphabetic scripts, it might be possible to give preference to the former option.[96] According to van der Kooij, the divergence of the three major Northwest Semitic script traditions (viz. Phoenician, Hebrew, and Aramaic) can be attributed to changes in the angle used in handling the broad-nibbed implement used for writing in ink. Thus, Phoenician scribes tended to maintain the traditional writing angle of 45°–50°, while in Hebrew the angle narrowed to ca. 15°–30°.[97] The consistency with which this pattern is repeated, along with concomitant changes to letter stance and shape, is best explained as a product of education. In other words, the handling technique of the writing implement was taught at the same time as the letter forms. This is

---

uninscribed bullae bearing Phoenician motifs indicates that Jerusalem already had significant contact with Phoenicia in the 9th century, so a Judahite connection cannot be eliminated; Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron and Omri Lernau, "Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem," *IEJ* 57 (2007): 156–57; Alon De Groot and Atalya Fadida, "The Pottery Assemblage from the Rock-Cut Pool near the Gihon Spring," *TA* 38 (2001): 158–66.

[95] E.g. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 59; idem, "Asia, Ancient Southwest: Scripts Epigraphic: West Semitic" in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, Second Edition, vol. 1* (ed. Keith Brown; Oxford: Elsevier, 2006): 501; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 126.

[96] For the fullest discussion see Gerrit van der Kooij, "Early North-West Semitic Script Traditions. An Archaeological Study of the Linear Alphabetic Scripts up to c. 500 B. C." (Ph.D diss., Leiden University, 1986).

[97] Cf. Gerrit van der Kooij, "Early North-West Semitic Script Traditions"; idem, "The Identity of Trans-Jordanian Alphabetic Writing in the Iron Age", in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan: III* (ed. Adnan Hadidi; Amman: Jordanian Deptartment of Antiquities, 1987), 107–21, esp.108.

significant, because it is not only the shapes of letters but also the writing angle that is mirrored in the KAPT written in Phoenician script (e.g. the shaft of the ʿaleps in *Kajr*3.1, 3.6, and *Kajr*4.1, 4.2). Given the fundamental nature of handling techniques—that is, the improbability of *ad hoc* changes in grip and ductus—this differentiation suggests that the writer of *Kajr*4.1–4.5 was trained in the Phoenician tradition, rather than a Hebrew scribe emulating Phoenician forms. It is possible that *Kajr*4.1–4.4 were written by a single hand. *Kajr*4.6 tells a different story. The unusual shape of the *šîn* and the elongation of the *lamed* indicated that this inscription was written by a different hand. The shape of the *mêm* with the hooked tail is reminiscent of the *mêms* in *Kajr*3.6 and the abecedaries, but in this text, too, the steeper writing angle is evinced (e.g. the *rêš* in line 2 and 3, and the *ʾālep* in line 2). Was this perhaps a scribe trained in the Phoenician tradition, but attempting to reproduce Hebrew letter forms? Whatever the case, as was discussed above, the orthography and morpho-syntax of the KAPT suggest a Hebraic scribe(s).[98]

3.7. Conclusions

Palaeographic, orthographic, and onomastic considerations suggest that all of the inscriptions on stone and clay (and perhaps *Kajr*4.6) were written in northern (Israelite) Hebrew. On palaeographic grounds *Kajr*4.1–4.4 show signs of Phoenician influence in the training of the scribe. However, there is evidence in *Kajr*4.1–4.3 for the retention of the *ay* diphthong; a decidedly un-Phoenician trait. This might be an indication that *Kajr*4.1–4.3 were written by a Judahite scribe, but, as was argued above, this is not a necessary conclusion. *Kajr*4.5 is too fragmentary to draw any conclusions.

   Prima facie the evidence seems to suggest that the KAPT should be differentiated from the other inscriptions, inasmuch as the palaeography (and perhaps orthography) suggests that the scribes were educated in different traditions. In socio-linguistic terms, the differentiation might be

---

[98] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʾAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 126–27.

viewed as a form of anti-language; perhaps left by a Judahite scribe wanting to subvert the prevailing Israelite socio-linguistic order.[99] However, the references to YHWH of (the) Teman (*Kajr*3.6, 3.9, and 4.1) written in both Hebrew and Phoenician scripts across both pithos and plaster inscriptions, suggest a basic continuity throughout the inscriptions. Hence, while they were apparently written by different scribes, the texts can probably be attributed to a single community. If the onomasticon—especially within the epistolary fragments—can be relied upon as an indication of the identity of the residents at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, then the evidence seems to suggest that the site was administered by individuals from the northern kingdom of Israel. This inference is consistent with the evidence for diphthong contraction in the pithoi inscriptions, and, as has already been noted, it is supported by the reference to YHWH of Samaria in *Kajr*3.1 (cf. §2.4.1.1). Hence, while it is possible that the KAPT were inscribed by a non-Israelite scribe, it seems likely that this was done under the guidance and approval of the Israelite administration. We will return to this in the next chapter.

---

[99] That is, a specialised register employed by an "anti-society", which is set up within another society as a conscious alternative to it; cf. Michael A. K. Halliday, "Anti-Languages", *American Anthropologist* (1976): 570–84.

Fig.3.4—(1) *Kajr1.2*; (2) *Karj3.1*; (3) *Kajr3.6*; (4) *Kajr3.9*; (5) *Kajr4.1*; (6) *Kajr4.2*; (7) *Kajr4.3*; (8) *Kajr4.4*; (9) Gezer Calendar, 10th century B.C.E.; (10) Mesha Stele, mid-9th century B.C.E.; (11) Samaria Ostraca, late-9th century B.C.E.; (12) Siloam Tunnel inscription, 8th century B.C.E.; (13) Karatepe inscription, mid-8th century B.C.E.; (14) Ivory box, Ur, ca. 7th century. *Note that figures are for illustrative purposes only, they do not have scientific precision.

Chapter 4

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD PLASTER TEXTS

It remains to consider what the physical context of the KAPT reveals about their origin, purpose, and the manner in which they would have been encountered. To this end, we will begin by considering Kuntillet ʿAjrud in its environmental and historical context, before turning to a spatial analysis of the KAPT.

4.1. TOPOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Arab. "the solitary hill of the water source"[1]) is situated in the eastern Sinai Desert about 50km south of Kadesh Barnea (Tell el-Qudeirat) and about 15km west of the *Darb el-Ghazzeh*, the ancient overland route connecting the Mediterranean coast with the Red Sea at Eilat.[2] The settlement was constructed on a narrow hilltop, aligned on an east-west axis, at the eastern end of the Wadi Quriaya. The prominent mound rises approximately 23m above the floor of the wadi, and dominates the surrounding landscape. Several wells near the base of the

---

[1] The modern Hebrew name Ḥorvat Teman was assigned by the excavators because of the inscriptions referring to "YHWH of (the) Teman"; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, IX.

[2] For a discussion of the history of the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* from the Early Bronze Age see Zeʾev Meshel, *Sinai: Excavations and Studies* (BAR international Series 876; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 99–117; cf. Meshel's description in *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 3–9. Note that the ruins at Tell el-Kheleifeh seem to date to a period shortly after the *floruit* of Kuntillet ʿAjrud; see Edward Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographic Researches* (OLA 153; Dudley, Ma.: Peeters, 2006), 381–86; cf. 1 Kgs 22:48.

hill provide one of the few perennial water sources in the region. The regional importance of the water source is attested by the modern Arabic name.[3] The wadi itself may have provided a natural east-west route through the central Sinai.[4] These factors led Meshel to suggest that an important crossroad might have existed near the site; although the archaeological remains give no clear indication of western contact (see below).[5] Lars Axelsson went further in his study of Southern Judah and the Negev, and postulated that Kuntillet ʿAjrud could be specifically identified as the דרך הר־שעיר "the way of Mount Seir" (Deut 1:2), which he believed was a western branch of the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* connecting Kadesh Barnea with southern Sinai.[6] Ultimately, the relationship of the site to the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* and surrounding routes is unclear.[7]

The climate in the eastern-Sinai is dry, with little precipitation, and the high water table that supplies the wells is supported by a network of

---

[3] Cf. the modern reports by Palmer and Musil (see below). The distance from the wells at Kuntillet ʿAjrud to the spring at ʿAin el-Qudeirat, was about 1.5–2 days journey; cf. James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 120.

[4] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 3; cf. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 44.

[5] Ibid, 3. Bones of Nile Perch were identified among the faunal remains (see below); however, as this was a commodity traded throughout the Levant, it cannot be taken as evidence for direct contact with Egypt; cf. ibid, 332. In any case, it is not clear why traders or travellers would pass through the difficult Central Sinai, rather than the easier coastal road to the north.

[6] Lars E. Axelsson, *The Lord Rose up form Seir: Studies in the History and Taditions of the Negev and Southern Judah* (ConBOT 25; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), 45–46; cf. the fuller discussion in Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 122–24, 143–44. Needless to say, owing to the uncertain location of Mt. Sinai and the traditional association of Seir with the territory of Edom, Axelsson's proposal should be treated with caution; cf. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 128–30; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 362–63, who argued that in Hebrew literature Seir appears to have been a designation for both the east and west sides of the Wadi Arabah.

[7] Cf. Lily Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", *TA* 36 (2009): 110–19.

wadis that collect runoff from occasional rainstorms and flash-floods in the highlands of central Sinai.[8] The summit of the hill can be subject to harsh winds and extreme summer heat, both of which were experienced by the excavators over the course of the three excavation seasons.[9]

4.2. EXPLORATION AND EXCAVATION

The first published description of Kuntillet ʿAjrud was written by the English orientalist Edward Palmer, who visited the site (known to him as *Contellet Garaiyeh*) in 1870. Interestingly, Palmer's description implies that the site was regionally known: "we were bound for some ruins, called Contellet Garaiyeh, of which we had heard".[10] He described Kuntillet ʿAjrud as a fortress on a white hill with a slight depression on the summit.[11] Of particular interest is his reference to the discovery of several storage jars embedded in the walls, including one with a Phoenician *ʾālep* on its shoulder.[12] Palmer also referred to wells at the foot of the hill, which were dry at the time of his visit.[13] Based on the location and architectural remains, Palmer proposed that Kuntillet ʿAjrud could be identified with

---

[8] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 3; cf. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 45.

[9] Ibid, X; cf. the earlier description of Edward H. Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus: Journeys on Foot in the Wilderness of the Forty Years' Wanderings II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1871), 341: "the weather was frightfully hot, and as a sandstorm had been blowing with great violence for two days it was by no means a comfortable journey".

[10] Edward H. Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus: Journeys on Foot in the Wilderness of the Forty Years' Wanderings II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1871), 341. Palmer's description of the hill, and his reference to the use of branches in the construction of the walls is a strong indication that this was indeed Kuntillet ʿAjrud; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 13, although it can hardly be assumed that the use of wood to reinforce walls was unique to Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. 1 Kgs 7:12).

[11] Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, 341–42. Cf. the description in Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: An Israelite Religious Centre in Northern Sinai", 50.

[12] Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, 6.

[13] Ibid, 342–43.

the Roman way-station Gypsaria (known from the *Tabula Peutingeriana*); however, no Roman remains have been found at the site.[14]

Next to describe Kuntillet ʿAjrud was the Czech explorer Alois Musil, who visited the site in 1902. What is particularly striking about Musil's account is his reference to reports of inscriptions (perhaps inspired by Palmer's discoveries 32 years earlier),[15] as well as a nearby watering hole fed by an underground stream.[16] In addition, Musil reported that his visit sparked a hostile encounter with the local Bedouin, ostensibly on the grounds that Kunillet ʿAjrud was a holy place (*heilige Ort*).[17]

Following the Israeli occupation of the Sinai in 1967, the way was opened for Israeli archaeologists to explore the region. In 1967 Kuntillet ʿAjrud was surveyed by Beno Rothenberg, who identified it as an 8th century Iron Age fort.[18] The site was surveyed again in 1970 by Zeʾev Meshel, who found Iron Age IIB remains, including four sherds with the letter *ʾālep*.[19] But it was not until 1975 that the first scientific excavations were conducted by a team, led by Meshel, from the University of Tel Aviv. The excavations were conducted over three short seasons in October 1975, December 1975 and May 1976. In the first season work was limited the western building (Building A). In the second season attention shifted to include the eastern structure (Building B). In the third season work was completed on both buildings and the open space in between. Following the excavations Meshel concluded that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was a single period site that could be dated between the middle of the 9th and the middle of the

---

[14] Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, 422–23.

[15] Alois Musil, *Arabia Petraea II: Edom* (Vienna: 1908), 171, 173.

[16] Ibid, 174.

[17] Ibid, 174

[18] Beno Rothenberg, "An Archaeological Survey in Sinai, 1967–1972", *Annual of Museum Haaretz* 14 (1972): 89–100 (Hebrew); *apud* Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 9.

[19] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, XVII.

8th centuries B.C.E.[20] With the exception of part of the southern half of the western storeroom, excavations were completed to floor level in all areas of Building A; however, it should be noted that the excavators only reported reaching bedrock in one locus, at the northern end of the western storeroom.[21]

In 1978 the finds from Kuntillet ʿAjrud were displayed in the Israel Museum as part of a special exhibition. Many of the inscriptions remained on display there until 1994 when they were returned to Egypt along with other artefacts excavated in the Sinai.[22] The current location of the inscriptions and artefacts is unknown.[23]

4.3. THE ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

The architectural remains consist of two buildings: Building A at the western end of the summit, and Building B approximately 13.5m to the east.

Building A

Building A, the better preserved of the two, appears to have been the main building. It is roughly rectangular, constructed around a central courtyard with four square rooms reminiscent of towers at each of its corners. Access to the building was attained via a bent-axis entrance at the eastern end of the courtyard. Comparable bent-axis entrances are known from the religious architecture of Mesopotamia, where they apparently served symbolically and functionally to separate the image of the deity from the

---

[20]Zeʾev Meshel, "Notes and News", 53; idem, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: An Israelite Religious Centre in Northern Sinai", 51.

[21] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 48. I am indebted to Kyle Keimer for this observationd.

[22] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, XX; Zeʾev Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum Catalogue 175, 1978).

[23] Hershel Shanks, "The Persisting Uncertainties of Kuntillet ʿAjrud" *BAR* 33 (2012): 37.

outside world.[24] However, there is no clear indication that a cult image was located inside Building A.[25] Then again, the design of the bent-axis entrance at Kuntillet ʿAjrud is also reminiscent of the gate at the so-called "Aharoni Fortress", approximately 10km north-west of Kadesh Barnea, and it is possible that it was primarily a defensive structure (see below).[26]

Elongated chambers run along the southern and western walls of Building A. Storage vessels imbedded in the floor indicate that these were probably used as storerooms at the time the site was abandoned.[27]

A bench-lined transverse room (the "bench-room") flanked the entrance at the eastern end of the courtyard. This room was separated into

---

[24] See Clifford M. McCormick, *Palace and Temple: A Study of Architectural and Verbal Icons* (Berlin, de Gruyter, 2002), 76–77.

[25] Admittedly Zevit drew attention to two bench-shaped installations at the northern end of the courtyard, positing that these were related to the worship of two deities, but he was vague as to what precisely this would entail. Presumably he meant that the installations could have served as pedestals for a cult image, perhaps to be identified with the worked stones (maṣebot?) found in the north-western corner-room. This may be correct, but it is pure conjecture. Cf. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 379; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 43. For the interpretation of the worked stones see Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 66. Furthermore, evidence of animal dung excavated at floor-level suggests that the courtyard may have been used to pen animals, at least on occasion (although this conceivably have come from a period shortly after the site was abandoned); ibid, 31, 33. Is it likely that cult images would be erected in an area where they could easily be knocked down by the movement of the animals?

[26] Cf. Zeʾev Meshel, "The 'Aharoni Fortress' near Quseima and the 'Israelite Fortresses' in the Negev", *BASOR* 294 (1994): 42–47. Note, however, that gate complex at the "Aharoni Fortress" was constructed approximately 150–200 years before Kuntillet ʿAjrud. In addition it should be noted that a piece of worked palm-wood was discovered at the eastern end of the courtyard at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, and Meshel suggested that this might have been part of a door socket. This interpretation is further supported by a burnt wooden beam in the south eastern door jamb, which might be a remnant of a wooden doorframe, suggesting that, at some stage, the entrance could be sealed from the inside; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 22, 322–23. Note that the location of the benches on the north-western doorjamb would have precluded a door in the inner entrance during Phase 3.

[27] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 47–49.

two wings by a central passageway, meaning that anyone entering Building A would have to pass between the wings of the bench-room. The walls and benches in this room were coated in white plaster, and it was here that several of the KAPT were found (see below).

Stairways in the south-eastern and south-western corners of the courtyard apparently admitted access to a second storey.[28] Within a collapse at the western end of the courtyard the excavators discovered pieces of a loom, textiles, small vessels, and organic remains including grain, date and olive pits, and pomegranate peel, suggesting that the upper-storey might have been the main living area, where activities related to weaving and food consumption were conducted.[29] It is also worth noting with Naʾaman and Lissovsky that a lookout standing on the rooftop would have a commanding view of the surrounding area, making the site eminently defensible against local raiders (cf. the plaster drawing which depicts figures standing on the roof of a towered structure).[30]

Building B

Building B is severely eroded and its plan is difficult to determine. It consists of two wings which frame the main entrance to the site. The northern wing of Building B includes a chamber with a pilastered entrance and plastered walls and floor. Most of the decorated plaster fragments (as opposed to inscribed plaster) with floral and geometric designs were discovered in this wing. The stone wall-bases of this structure run to only three or four courses, and it seems that, unlike Building A, the walls were

---

[28] In the opinion of the excavators, the quality and quantity of stones in the collapsed wall at the western end of the courtyard is consistent with a two-storey structure; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 42.

[29] Ibid, 41–42, 45, 240. Cf. William G. Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Instersect* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 178.

[30] Nadav Naʾaman and Nurit Lissovsky, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah", *TA* 35 (2008): 187–88.

made of mudbrick.[31] The function of this building remains unclear. The southern wing of Building B is yet more difficult to interpret, but it too appears to have been plastered. The standout feature of this wing is a platform structure, constructed from a solid mass of stones rising approximately 70–80cm above the surface level, which the excavators interpreted as a possible *bamah*. It appears that this structure was also plastered.[32] To the south of this structure there appears to have been a second building that included a walled courtyard, the southern perimeter of which is entirely eroded.[33] The only inscription discovered in Building B was *Kajr*2.7 ([...]לרא). In addition, inscription *Kajr*2.6 (לשר[עֹר]) was discovered in the open space between the two buildings.

4.4. KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD IN DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

Notwithstanding the apparently short occupancy of the site, there is evidence for at least three building phases. Nevertheless, due to the fact that Building A was constructed at the western extremity of the summit—causing its corner foundations to lie at different elevations—the excavators interpreted the first two phases as simply technical phases, writing: "[w]e assume that the builders of the site arrived in the area with a plan which was intended to fulfil a pre-defined aim. After finding the appropriate hill the plan was fitted to the size and shape of the summit, which dictated the dimensions of the buildings but not the basic plan".[34] This is plausible; however, the fact that the benches in the bench-room were constructed on top of two successive occupational levels (see below), suggests that there was a fundamental shift in the function and use of the settlement between the first and last phases.

---

[31] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 53, for the drawing see 185 and figs.6.30 and 6.31.

[32] Ibid, 57.

[33] Ibid, 58.

[34] Ibid, 11, 15.

4.4.1 *Phase 1*

The first phase (fig.4.1) can be recognised most clearly in the bench-room of Building A. In Phase 1 the distinctive benches were not yet built and the floors extended to the walls. There is no indication that the room had a special function at this stage.[35] During this phase there was direct access between the northern and southern wings of the bench-room and the two corner-rooms; however, the corner-rooms were later partially blocked by the Phase 3 benches (see below), suggesting a fundamental change in the use of the rooms.[36] The design of the room is otherwise indistinguishable from the southern and western storerooms, and it seems reasonable to assume that in Phase 1 the bench-room, too, was simply used for storage.

In the south-western corner of the courtyard, adjacent to the western stairway, the excavators unearthed a food preparation area. This was dubbed the "western kitchen". The function of this space was indicated by three tabuns, occurring at different elevations. At least two of these should be identified with Phase 1 (see below).

During this initial phase the walls of Building A were coated with a crude grey plaster made of mud and straw.[37] The characteristic white plaster was not applied in the bench-room until Phase 3, and while it is possible that the whitened surfaces at the western end of the courtyard and in Building B were applied in Phase 1, it is likely that all of the plastered surfaces were contemporary. There is, therefore, no evidence that wall inscriptions or painted decorations were associated with this phase.

There are signs that the site was partially destroyed sometime prior to the construction of Phase 2: at the eastern end of the southern storeroom the excavators unearthed what appeared to be a ramp formed with

---

[35] Note that fragments of a possible tabun were found in the southern wing of this room; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 24.

[36] Ibid, 24, 26, 28.

[37] Cf. ibid, 24, 26, 28.

compacted debris from a wall collapse,[38] and at the southern end of the
courtyard there were indications of a probable roof collapse, which
covered the two lower tabuns in the western kitchen.[39] Given the dates
proposed above, it is tempting to associate this collapse with the
earthquake in ca.760 B.C.E. (see above), but there is no evidence to
support this.

4.4.2. *Phase 2*

There may have been a short occupation gap after Phase 1, but there is no
proof of this. Evidence for Phase 2 occurs only in the northern and
southern wings of the bench-room, where the Phase 1 floor was covered
by a layer of fill, and a second floor (also abutting the walls) was laid over
the top.[40] In light of the fact that the fill only covered the floor of the
bench-room, not the corner-rooms, the excavators have interpreted this as
merely a technical phase, meant to strengthen the Phase 3 floors and
benches.[41]

4.4.3. *Phase 3*

Once again, the clearest evidence for Phase 3 (fig.4.2) comes from the
bench-room. In this phase the benches were constructed along the walls,
partially blocking the openings leading into the corner-rooms.[42] It was at
this time that the floor and walls of the entrance and bench-room were
coated in white plaster. The finds in the corner-rooms consisted primarily
of small vessels (flasks and small jugs), bowls, organic remains (including
date and olive pits), and several cooking pots (in the southern corner-

---

[38] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 51.

[39] Ibid, 37.

[40] Cf. ibid, 24, 26.

[41] Ibid, 26.

[42] Ibid, 24–25, 26.

room).[43] The unusual nature of these finds, especially in the north-eastern corner-room, led the excavators to speculate that the rooms might have been used as *favissae* for vessels deposited as offerings in the bench-room (although see §4.5).[44] That may be so, but it should be noted that the corner-rooms—and, for that matter, the site as a whole—were devoid of the sorts of artefacts (e.g. altars, incense burners, etc.) that are typically used to determine the nature of religious architecture.[45] This should encourage a considerable degree of caution when ascribing a religious function to the space (see below).

During this phase a second kitchen was constructed in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard. The majority of the faunal remains were located around this kitchen, which might indicate that it served as the primary food preparation area during Phase 3; however, none of the skeletal remains showed damage resulting from butchery or burning.[46]

It is not entirely clear to which phase Building B should be attributed; however, there is evidence that some sort of activity was conducted in the area prior to its construction.[47] Whatever the case, the use of white plaster in both the entrance complex of Building A and the surfaces of Building B, suggests (at least) a conceptual relationship between the two buildings during Phase 3.

4.4.4. *The abandonment of the Kuntillet ʿAjrud*

It is not immediately clear why Kuntillet ʿAjrud was abandoned. There is evidence that at some stage the buildings were partially destroyed for a

---

[43] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 26, 30. Given that there was apparently direct access to the corner-rooms during Phase 1, it is reasonable to infer that these finds were deposited after the entrances were blocked.

[44] Ibid, 30, 243, 271, n.8; cf. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, 160.

[45] Cf. already the comments of Meshel, "Notes and News", 53; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 68.

[46] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 328–29.

[47] Ibid, 57, 58–59.

second time, possibly by an earthquake.[48] It is not known whether this occurred before or after the abandonment of the site, although it should be noted that a layer of ash was discovered beneath a debris layer in the entrance to Building A, which might suggest that fire played some part in the destruction.[49] Furthermore, Ayalon has suggested that the concentration of certain vessel types in particular parts of the complex (esp. bowls and lamps near the entrance, and accumulations of storage vessels blocking the doorways of the store-rooms) might attest the hasty desertion of the site; although, why this should be characterised as "hasty" is not immediately clear.[50] As Meshel noted, other possible explanations for the abandonment of the site include the drying of the wells after a period of drought (cf. Palmer's report cited above); the cessation of provisioning; or a royal directive.[51]

---

[48] In part this is based on the fact that the walls in the southern storeroom toppled in opposite directions; i.e. the southern wall appears to have collapsed southward down the slope, while the northern wall fell northward into the courtyard; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 37, 48, 66. However, as the southern wall was at lower elevation, this might have simply been due to the work gravity after the roof had deteriorated.

[49] Ibid, 22–24.

[50] Ibid, 243.

[51] Ibid, 66.
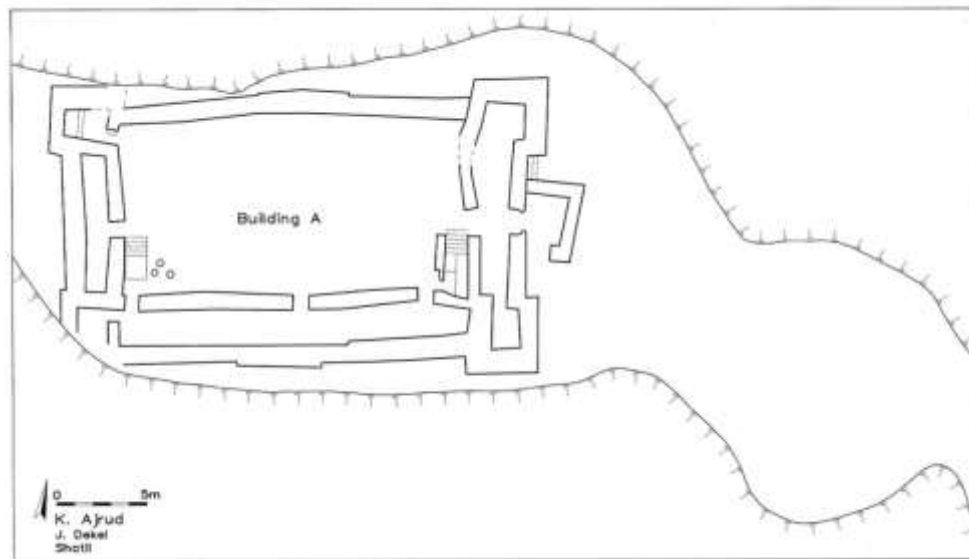
Fig.4.1—Kuntillet ʿAjrud Phase 1

 Fig.4.2—Kuntillet ʿAjrud Phase 3

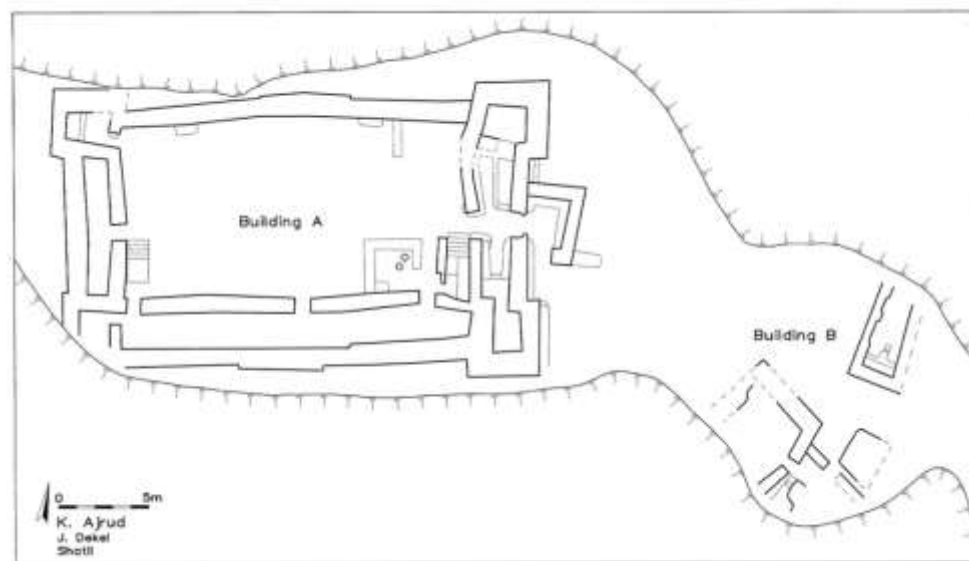## 4.5. EXCURSUS: THE BENCH-ROOMS

One of the most enigmatic and compelling features of the architecture at both Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla is the benches framing the rooms in which the plaster texts were found. Benches associated with religious architecture are known elsewhere in the southern Levant (e.g. Tel Arad, Tell Qasile, Jerusalem Cave 1; and the Lachish cult room), where they

apparently served as a place to leave offerings and dedications.[52] Comparable benches are also known from cult corners in domestic contexts.[53] This has been taken by some support the view that the bench-rooms at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla were designed to accommodate ritual or cultic activities. However, at these other sites, the cultic function of the benches was indicated by the associated finds (e.g. altars, incense burners, etc.). But this is not the case at Kuntillet ʿAjrud or Deir ʿAlla. Granted, a number the finds recovered in the vicinity of the bench-room at Kuntillet ʿAjrud were extraordinary. In particular, the excavators emphasised the unusual accumulation of small vessels in the north-eastern corner-room (see above).[54] Meanwhile, Liora Horwitz, et al., have noted the presence of several aquatic species (i.e. shells and fish bones) in the vicinity of the bench-room. Several of these are known to have been traded in the Levant during the Iron Age. This led them to suggest that the aquatic remains represent trade-items deposited in the bench-room as offerings.[55]

---

[52] Cf. Zeʾev Herzog, et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad", *BASOR* 254 (1984): 7, 11; Yohanan Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple", *BA* 31(1968): 3, 19; Amihai Mazar, "Excavations at Tell Qasile, 1982–1984: Preliminary Report", *IEJ* 36 (1986): 4–5; Kathleen Kenyon, *Digging up Jerusalem* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 139–40; Franken and Steiner, *Excvations at Jerusalem 1961–1967*, 125–28; Yohanan Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachis V)* (Tel Aviv: Gateway, 1975), 26–32.

[53] Cf. the discussion in Louise A. Hitchcock, "Cult Corners in the Aegean and the Levant", in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (eds. Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, Laura B. Mazow; Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 321–46; Elizabeth Ann Remington Willett, "Women and Household Shrines in Ancient Israel" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Arizona, 1999), *passim*.

[54] This lead the excavators to suggest that the room was used as a *favissa* for vessels from the bench-room ; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 30. Note, however, that the vessels could conceivably be connected to eating and drinking, and do not necessarily entail a cultic association; cf. ibid, 241, fig.7.30.

[55] However, they observed that no terrestrial animals were found in the bench-room; ibid, 333.

However, their interpretation is weakened by the fact that the remains are not restricted to the bench-room, but are dispersed throughout the southern and eastern parts of the courtyard.[56] Perhaps more significant is the fact that two of the engraved stone bowls (*Kajr*1.1, 1.4) were located in the north-eastern corner-room; however, it should be noted that the third was discovered in the north-western corner of the courtyard (see fig.2.1). Finally, as was discussed in Chapter 2, the majority of the fragments from Pithos A—which may or may not have had a dedicatory function (cf. §2.4.1)—were discovered on the eastern bench in the northern wing of the bench-room; however, Pithos B together with a sherd from Pithos A were discovered in the courtyard, separated from the bench-room by a wall.[57] Thus, while it is possible that the artefacts associated with the bench-room at Kuntillet ʿAjrud reflect a cultic or ritual function, this is by no means assured.

At Deir ʿAlla the case is starker. There, the bench-room was almost entirely devoid of artefacts (see §7.6.2). This is all the more significant given that the room was apparently destroyed by an earthquake, meaning we should expect signs of the activities conducted in the room at the time of destruction to be preserved.

An alternative possibility was proposed by André Lemaire, who, taking the abecedaries and other inscriptions at both sites as evidence for scribal education, argued that the bench-rooms at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla might have served as a classroom.[58] However, while Lemaire is

---

[56] Only the single *Glycymeris insubrica* shell fragment was associated exclusively with the northern corner-room; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 331.

[57] Again we should note Zevit's suggestion that the bench-shaped installations at the northern end of the courtyard may have been related to the worship of two deities at the site (cf. fn.25, above). Zevit noted that Pithos B was discovered near the easternmost of these installations, which might reflect an association between the two; but this is conjecture; cf. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 379, and n.45.

[58] André Lemaire, *Les écoles et la formation del a Bible dans l'ancien Israel* (OBO 39; Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1981), 25–30, 92, n.67; idem, "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle", in *The Balaam Text from*

probably correct that educational activities were conducted at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. §2.4.1.2), his attempt to interpret the bench-room as a classroom is less convincing—as Hadley has countered, the tight confines of the room are not well suited to this purpose.[59] Nevertheless, the classroom hypothesis was recently revived with regard to Deir ʿAlla by Erhard Blum (cf. §5.1.1.1).[60] In this case Lemaire and Blum may be correct, but it is an inference based primarily on the assumed suitability of the room and the (ambiguous) nature of the inscribed material, and remains unsubstantiated.[61]

But the explanation for the bench-rooms may in fact be more mundane. John Holladay has highlighted the fact that the design of the transverse room at Kuntillet ʿAjrud resembles the chambered gate complex at the fortress at Arad.[62] This comparison is particularly compelling with regard to Phase 1, for which there is no reason to believe that the room had a special function. However, Holladay was also able to cite parallels for the benches in the gate complexes at Gezer, Tel Dan, Tell en-Nasbeh, and

---

Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989 (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 54–55.

[59] Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 115; cf. Emilé Peuch's critique in "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984* (ed. J. Amitai; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985), 363.

[60] Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla", 597–98.

[61] Note that with the exception of a (probable) partial abecedary (cf. §5.2.3), Deir ʿAlla had nothing comparable to the (probable) drafts and exercises found at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

[62] John S. Holladay, Jr., "Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach", in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. Patrck D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadeliphia: Fortress, 1987), 259, 286, n.52. Cf. Herzog, et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad", 8–10, figs. 10, 16, 21.

Khirbet el-Qom.[63] At these sites the benches had no apparent cultic function, and may have been nothing more than a place to sit and conduct business; hence it is entirely plausible that the function of the bench-room at Kuntillet ʿAjrud was related simply to the daily life of the community, perhaps furnishing a shaded place to sit in relative comfort (see further below).

Indeed, the design of the north-eastern bench might provide indirect support for the possibility that the benches were primarily intended as seating. This bench was constructed at a higher elevation than the corresponding bench on the western wall, and was fitted with a small ledge running along its base—a similar arrangement occurs in the north-western corner of the southern wing. It is conceivable that this ledge was intended as an additional shelf to deposit small offerings, but, in view of the height of the bench, it is ideally suited for use as a "footrest". This does not exclude the possibility that the benches served a dual purpose, but there is little evidence to support this.[64]

Ultimately, the architectural remains could be consistent with either cultic or secular functions. In order to determine which, it is necessary to consider their relationship to the plaster texts in closer detail. Consequently, I will defer judgement until discussion of the KAPT and DAPT.

4.6. THE DATE OF KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD

Early ^{14}C analyses indicated that the site was probably built at the end of the 9th century or beginning of the 8th. However, Lily Singer-Avitz and

---

[63] Holladay, "Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy", 259, and 286, n.52; William G. Dever, et al., "Further Excavations at Gezer, 1967-1971" *BA* 34 (1971): 115–16.

[64] In this regard, it is interesting to note that the bench in the northern part of the bench-room was raised some 20cm above the level of the other benches, creating a kind of platform in front of the window leading into the corner-room. Was this an offering niche? Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 26–28.

Edward Lipiński have questioned the reliability of the ^{14}C dates, noting the high ratio of long-lasting wooden samples—which, given the dry climate, might already have been quite old before they were used in the construction—rather than samples taken from short-lived materials such as fruit or reeds.[65] Nevertheless, using a new quantitative method that attempted to account for the potential skewing of the data, Israel Finkelstein and Eli Piazetsky subsequently defended and further refined the ^{14}C dates, arguing that the site was probably founded between 820 and 795 B.C.E.[66] However, the calibrated results allow a range between 754–544 B.C.E. for the abandonment of Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[67] Notwithstanding this range, a clustering of dates in the second half of the 8th century led Finkelstein and Piazetsky to suggest a *terminus post quem* for the abandonment of the site sometime after 745 B.C.E.[68] In order to further refine the dates it is necessary to turn to typological and historical arguments.

Owing to the contestable nature of the ^{14}C results, Singer-Avitz turned to the ceramic assemblage. But the interpretation of the ceramics

---

[65] Cf. Lily Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *TA* 33 (2006): 197; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 375–76, n.78.

[66] See the discussion in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 61–63; cf. earlier discussions and methodological considerations in Zeʾev Meshel, Israel Carmi, and Dror Segal, "[14]C Dating of an Israelite Biblical Site at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *Radiocarbon* 37 (1995): 205–12; Israel Carmi, and Dror Segal, "[14]C Dating of an Israelite Biblical Site at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teiman): Corrections, Extension and Improved Age Estimate", *Radiocarbon* 38 (1996): 385–86; Israel Finkelstein, and Eli Piasetzky, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: The [14]C Perspective", *TA* 35 (2008): 175–85; Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 197–28; idem, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", *TA* 36 (2009):110–19; note also the as-yet-unpublished determinations cited by Finkelstein: Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom*, 148.

[67] Singer-Avitz "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 115.

[68] Cf. Finkelstein and Piazetzky, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: The [14]C Perspective", 178.

has proved no less contentious.[69] The initial typological analysis of the pottery was completed by Etan Ayalon for his 1985 M.A. thesis at Tel Aviv University, and published in 1995 in the journal *Tel Aviv*.[70] In these studies, Ayalon concluded that "the ceramic assemblage of ʿAjrud must be dated to the time span between the end of the 9th century to the beginning of the 8th century B.C.E.".[71] This conclusion was subsequently endorsed by Liora Freud.[72] However, Singer-Avitz has challenged this assessment, arguing that the ceramic assemblage should be compared to the Lachish III pottery and dated (along with Arad X–VIII and Beersheba III–II) to the end of the 8th century.[73] I will leave the intricacies of typological analysis to those better equipped to deal with them, but a methodological observation is in order.

The identification of the Kuntillet ʿAjrud assemblage with the Lachish III horizon is not, in itself, controversial; where the difficulty lies is in determining the temporal relationship with that horizon.[74] As Singer-Avitz has eloquently argued, ceramic typologies are most useful for

---

[69] This debate was played out in the pages of the journal *Tel Aviv*: Etan Ayalon, "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", *TA* 22 (1995): 141–205; Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 196–228; Liora Freud, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Reply to Lily Singer-Avitz", *TA* 35 (2008): 169–74; Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 110–19.

[70] Ayalon, "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from Ḥurbat Teiman"; idem, "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from HorvatTeiman", 141-205; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 245–46.

[71] Ayalon, "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from HorvatTeiman", 198.

[72] Freud, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Reply to Lily Singer-Avitz", 172.

[73] Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 209–12; idem, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 110–14. Ayalon had originally determined that the Kuntillet ʿAjrud assemblage was typologically earlier than Lachish III; Ayalon, "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from HorvatTeiman", 197.

[74] Cf. Finkelstein and Piazetzky, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: The 14C Perspective", 183.

determining the final period before the end of a stratum.[75] In effect, this means that there is a gap in our knowledge about the development of ceramic types between the end of Lachish IV and the end of Lachish III. Assuming it is correct to equate the destruction of Lachish IV and Arad stratum XI with the earthquake in the days of Uzziah (cf. Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5), then it should be possible to establish a *terminus post quem* ca. 760 B.C.E. for the beginning of Phase 3 at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[76] However, this leaves open the question of the abandonment of the site. To resolve this Singer-Avitz turned to the provenance of the ceramic types, emphasising the fact that a combination of petrographic, neutron activation, and typological analyses of the Kuntillet ʿAjrud pottery indicated a preponderance of vessels from Philistia and Judea, with comparatively few vessels from the northern regions around Israel and the Pheonician coast.[77] According to Singer-Avitz this basic pattern is replicated in the Beersheba III repertoire (which can be equated with Lachish III and Arad strata X– VIII). Furthermore, she noted that there is a marked change in the ceramic assemblages of Beersheba III and II, observing that in these strata *all* vessels of northern (i.e. Phoenician, Israelite) provenance are associated *only* with Stratum II, while *none* are found in Stratum III.[78] She attributed this disparity to the reinstitution of Phoenician trade networks in Philistia and Egypt during the reign of Sargon II.[79] Given that vessels of northern provenance are also present at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Singer-Avitz argued that it

---

[75] Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 110–19; cf. already, Freud, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Reply to Lily Singer-Avitz", 172.

[76] Lily Singer-Avitz, "Arad: The Iron Age Pottery Assemblages", *TA* 29 (2002): 114–16, 162, 180; cf. Zeʾev Herzog, "The Fortress Mound at Tel Arad: An Interim Report", *TA* 29 (2002): 98.

[77] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 243–45, 275–76, 279–87; Gunneweg, Perlman, and Meshel, "The Origin of the Pottery of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 270–83.

[78] Lily Singer-Avitz, "A Group of Phoenician Vessels from Tel Beersheba", *TA* 37 (2010):188–99; idem, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 211–12; idem, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 113–14

[79] Singer-Avitz, "A Group of Phoenician Vessels from Tel Beersheba", 196.

too should be associated with the economic developments of the late 8th century.[80] But this conclusion rests on the assumption that a single historical explanation must pertain in both cases. In the absence of other data this assumption would not be unreasonable, but Singer-Avitz has overlooked the compelling linguistic evidence for (northern) Israelite presence at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (see §3.5), basing her typological conclusions solely on the limited number of northern vessels. For historical reasons that will be discussed below, the cumulative evidence at Kuntillet ʿAjrud is better suited to the reign of Jeroboam II in the mid-8th century, when it seems that the northern kingdom of Israel was in a position of comparative strength in the South. More importantly, however, the reference to Yhwh of Samaria in *Kajr*3.1 (a transcription of a letter that appears to name a royal confidant, רע המלך) militates against a date long after the destruction of the northern capital in 720 B.C.E.

If Beersheba II is not used to anchor Kuntillet ʿAjrud to the late 8th century, then the ceramic assemblage at ʿAjrud could be attributed anywhere within the Lachish III horizon. Moreover, within this horizon it should not be surprising to find that the ceramic assemblage was typologically advanced (i.e. with few older types intermingled). This is precisely what we would expect at a site of short duration that was actively provisioned from outside, since, in such cases, there would be little need or opportunity to reuse older vessels. As such, there is no reason to presume a date at the end of the Lachish III period.

In short, the ^{14}C and ceramic evidence is consistent with the possibility that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was abandoned sometime before the last two decades of the 8th century. This is further supported by the

---

[80] Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 211–12; idem, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 113–14.

palaeography of the pithoi and stone vessels, which shows affinities to the script of the Samaria Ostraca.[81]

4.7. KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

On the basis of its southern location and the suspicion of Phoenician influence in the script and iconography, Meshel initially conjectured that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was a Judean site dating from the time of Jehoshaphat or Queen Athaliah in the 9th century B.C.E.[82] However, Lemaire subsequently argued that the date should be lowered to the 8th century on palaeographic grounds. He then turned to historical considerations in order to account for the preponderance of northern theophoric PNN (cf. §3.4).[83] Lemaire reasoned that it is unlikely that an Israelite settlement would have been established in the remote south during the period of political turmoil in the second half of the 8th century, and certainly not after the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III in 734/2. On the other hand, he argued that it was equally unlikely that the site would have been founded during the period of Aramean dominance at the end of the 9th century. This leaves only a short window in the first half of the 8th century.[84] Accordingly, Lemaire concluded that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was probably founded in the brief period of Israelite economic recovery, during the reign of Jeroboam II (786–746 B.C.E.; cf. the notice in 2 Kgs 14:25).[85] Accordingly, if we take the report

---

[81] Cf. Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts", 18; and Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 66, 69; Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel", 51–52, n.40; cf. Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hebraiques et pheniciennes de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 131–43.

[82] Meshel, "Notes and News", 53.

[83] Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hébraïques et phéniciens de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 136–39.

[84] For the palaeographical discussion see ibid, 134–36.

[85] Ibid, 137–38. Although, cf. Nadav Naʾaman, "Azariah of Judah and Jereboam II of Israel", *VT* 43 (1993): 227–34, who argued that there was a Judean resurgence under Azariah, which restored control of the lucrative trade routes by the way of the Arabah, forcing the Israelites to use the less convenient *Darb el-Ghazzeh* (see below).

of Amaziah's war with Edom (2 Kgs 14:7) at face value, then Kuntillet ʿAjrud could be associated with territory recently wrested from Edom, and then usurped by Israel in the wake of Amaziah's disastrous northern campaign (2 Kgs 14:8–14).[86] If so, then the political situation might have been comparatively volatile (see below).

Lemaire's historical reconstruction has received widespread support, but it is not universally accepted. As noted above, the uncertainty surrounding the ^{14}C results led Singer-Avitz and Lipiński to re-examine the provenance of the ceramic assemblage. Both stressed the preponderance of vessels from Philistia and Judea, rather than the northern regions of Israel and Phoenicia.[87] This led Singer-Avitz to argue—based primarily on her comparison with the pottery from Beersheba—that the Kuntillet ʿAjrud pottery assemblage should be ascribed to the cultural and economic system of late 8th century Judah.[88] In particular, she sought to identify the historical context of the site with the Iron IIB fortifications at Kadesh Barnea and Tell el-Kheleifeh, which she maintained (following Naʾaman) were constructed as part of an Assyrian strategy to control the peripheral regions of the empire.[89]

Lipiński was also drawn to the period of Assyrian imperial expansion in the South. To support his case, Lipiński placed considerable emphasis on Lemaire's palaeographic analysis, stressing his comparison between the cursive tick on several *yôds* at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. §3.6) and

---

[86] Cf. Lipiński, who argued that Judah's territorial advances might have been more modest than is typically assumed, arguing that אילת mentioned in 2 Kgs 14:22 should be identified with Ramath al-Ḫalīl, 3km north of Hebron, rather than Tel el-Khaleifeh; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age*, 383.

[87] Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 209; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 376–78; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 243–45, 275–76, 279–87; Gunneweg, Perlman, and Meshel, "The Origin of the Pottery of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 270–83.

[88] Singer-Avitz, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 197–213.

[89] Ibid, 197–213; idem, "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder", 116; cf. Nadav Naʾaman, "An Assyrian Residence at Ramat Raḥel?" *TA* 28 (2001): 260–80, esp. 267–70.

the cursive tick on the *yôds* in Arad ostracon 72.[90] Ignoring Lemaire's proposed dating of the script at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (ca. 800-734), Lipiński fixated on Lemaire's suggestion that Arad ostracon 72 should be connected with Arad stratum IX, which he argued must be later than Lachish IV (= Arad XI). He attributed the destruction of Lachish IV to Sennacherib's attack at the end of the 8th century,[91] and, by extension, Lipiński concluded that Kuntillet ʿAjrud "can hardly precede the last quarter of the 8th century".[92] However, it can be countered that the cursive tick, which is the centrepiece of Lipiński's dating, also finds clear parallels in several of the Samaria ostraca (e.g. 6:2–4; 9:1–3; 16:3).[93] And at the very least we may affirm that there is a deliberate and pronounced tick on the *yôd* in line 3 of the Barley Ostracon from Samaria, which must predate the Assyrian destruction ca.722 B.C.E. That being so, Lipiński's only obstacle to an earlier date is removed. In fact, as aside, may be noted there is a considerable similarity between the script of *Kajr*3.6 and that of the

---

[90] Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hébraïques et phéniciens de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 136; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 374.

[91] In this he was following an earlier observation by Kathleen Kenyon, "[it] could be that the destruction recorded by Ussishkin as ending Level IV but wihout evidence of burning is really that of the Assyrian attack"; Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, 4th ed., (London: E. Benn, 1979), 297; cf. Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 374. Of course, the date of the end of Lachish IV is not assured, but many would place the transition from Lachish IV to Lachish III in the middle of the 8th century, perhaps associated with Amos' earthquake, rather than the end of the 8th century; for a recent discussion, see Kyle H. Keimer, "The Socioeconomic Impact of Hezekiah's Preparations for Rebellion" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2011), 36–42.

[92] Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 374–75.

[93] See also the newly published inscribed fragment in Anat Mendel and Leore Grosman, "Unpublished Hebrew and Other Northwest Semitic Inscriptions from Samaria Studies with a 3-Dimensional Imaging Technology", *Mainz International Colloquium on Ancient Hebrew* (Johannes-Gutenberg Universität, Mainz, 2011): 171–88. Note that Lemaire had already compared the script at Kuntillet ʿAjrud to the Samaria Ostraca, specifically proposing a date in the first three quarters of the 8th century; this too was overlooked by Lipiński; c.f Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hébraïques et phéniciens de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 135.

Barley Ostracon, which might suggest that the site was still occupied and maintained contacts with the Northern Kingdom in the second half of the 8th century.[94]

Having lowered the date to the end of the 8th century, and citing the presence of Pheonician inscriptions on the walls (by which he meant inscriptions in Phoenician script), Lipiński claimed that the administration of the site was probably in the hands of Pheonician attendants from the newly-established Assyro-Phoenician trading centre at Abu Ruqeish.[95] However, the orthography of the plaster inscriptions (specifically the unreduced diphthong; cf. §3.2.3) militates against this possibility.[96]

Ultimately, however, neither Singer-Avitz nor Lipiński payed sufficient attention to the preponderance of northern Israelite theophoric names (cf. §3.4), or the reference to Yнwн of Samaria (*Kajr*3.1; cf. *Kajr*3.8) at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. While it is possible that these signs of northern contact might reflect the presence of refugees from the north following the destruction of the northern capital in the last decades of the 8th century—as Singer-Avitz suggested with regard to the northern ceramics—the complete absence of southern theophoric names tips the balance in favour of a direct association with the Northern Kingdom. Consequently we are left with a seeming paradox: on the one hand the ceramic assemblage suggests southern affiliation; on the other hand the onomastic and epigraphic evidence suggests northern affiliation. How, then, are we to explain the high ratio of vessels from Jerusalem and Philistia?

It is conceivable that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was initially founded under the aegis of the kingdom of Judah following the Edomite wars (2 Kgs 14:7)—

---

[94] Compare, for example, the elongated *yôd* (although, less dramatic in *Kajr*3.6) with a pronounced cursive tick; elongated and curved *mêm*; the tendency for the top bar of the *hê* to extend beyond the shaft; elongated *lamed* and the virtually identical *kāps*.

[95] Cf. Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 74, 378.

[96] This datum was available to Lipiński, and, as such, given his linguistic credentials, Lipiński's disregard of the diphthongal evidence is surprising.

at which time the Judahite and Philistian vessels were deposited—but was later taken over by a group of northerners who inscribed the vessels.[97] But, as was discussed in Chapter 3, the references to YHWH of the Teman in *Kajr*3.6, 3.9 and 4.1 rather testifies to the essential continuity of the site.

Another possibility is that the vessels were tribute exacted from the kingdom of Judah. It appears that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was provisioned entirely from outside.[98] In addition to the epigraphic evidence discussed in Chapter 2 (§2.3, §2.4.5), Ayalon observed that no sickle blades or granaries, and only three grinding stones were discovered at the site— despite the fact that areas at the foot of the hill were tillable, and are cultivated today by local Bedouin.[99] An external supply chain is also indicated by the large number of storage vessels, and (possibly) by the faunal remains, which included a high ratio of imported fish.[100] This is consistent with the historical reconstruction outlined by Lemaire. Following Joash's victory over Amaziah in the final years of the 9th century (2 Kgs 14:8–14), it is reasonable to conjecture that the Israelite kings may have exacted tribute from the conquered kingdom of Judah (cf. 2 Kgs 14:14). It possible that the Judahite vessels at Kuntillet ʿAjrud may have formed part of this levy.[101]

---

[97] In that case, the evidence for diphthong retention in the KAPT might suggest that the wall inscriptions were written during a time of Judahite occupancy; but as has already been argued, this is not necessary to explain the orthography.

[98] This is consistent with the interpretation of the vessels marked קר and א, *Kajr*2.9–11 and *Kajr*2.12–23 respectively (cf. §2.3). Compare Zevit's discussion of an internal shipping system in Judah in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C.E.; Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 379–80.

[99] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 271, 356.

[100] Liora Horwitz, et al. also drew attention to the absence of medium to large sized hunted taxa, which would be expected if the site was self-sufficient; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 336. Furthermore, they observed that the desert region would not have been able to support more than a modest flock of sheep or goats on a permanent basis.

[101] The same inference was drawn by Nadav Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 313.

Following this argument further, it is reasonable to conjecture that the situation was unlikely to have long endured the political turmoil following the death of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 15:1–30). Perhaps in this period of decline, the economic burden of provisioning Kuntillet ʿAjrud was too great and the site was simply abandoned.[102]

4.8. THE FUNCTION OF KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD

There are almost as many theories relating to the nature and function of the site as there are scholars who have written about it. Broadly speaking, opinions can be divided into two groups: those who prefer a primarily cultic association, and those who prefer a primarily economic association. In reality there are few who would see these as mutually exclusive alternatives. The following discussion does not attempt to be exhaustive, but only considers the most prominent positions.

Already in 1977 Meshel had written that, despite its appearance, Kuntillet ʿAjrud was unlike other Negev fortresses in terms of its plan and the variety and nature of its finds.[103] This led him to speculate that the site may have been a religious centre at which travellers prayed for safety and the success of their venture.[104] He also suggested that the site might have been a border shrine demarcating the end of the territory of Judah; although he later came to identify the site with the northern kingdom of Israel.[105] However, noting that cultic objects (such as altars and incense burners) were conspicuously absent from the finds at Kutnillet ʿAjrud,

---

[102] Cf. Keimer, "The Socioeconomic Impact of Hezekiah's Preparations for Rebellion",100, n.84.

[103] Meshel, "Notes and News", 53.

[104] Ibid, 53.

[105] Zeʾev Meshel, "The Israelite Religious Center at Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 2 (1982–1983): 52; idem, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 66–67.

Meshel was forced to concede that activities, such as burning incense, pouring libations, and offering sacrifices, were not conducted at the site.[106]

More recently, on the basis of the textile remains, Meshel and others have suggested that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was inhabited by a community of priests who offered religious services and blessings to desert travellers and caravan drivers.[107] Among the most extraordinary finds at Kuntillet ʿAjrud were large quantities of textiles (more than 120 fragments), mainly comprising linen. In the Hebrew Bible, linen is frequently associated with the priestly vestments (e.g. Exod 28:15, 39, 42; Lev 6:10; 16:4; 1 Sam 22:18; 2 Chron 5:12; Ezek 44:17–18), and, as such, the high ratio of linen to wool may indicate that the site was inhabited by a contingent of priests and Levites.[108] Yet more important, however, are three fragments (one of them dyed red and blue) that combine both wool and linen. The wearing of such mixed fabrics (*šaʿaṭnez*) is expressly prohibited in Lev 19:19 and Deut 22:11; however, it has been argued that the coloured vestments of the High Priest, described in Exod 28, were made of just such a linen-wool blend (cf. Exod 28:5).[109] Hence, it seems that the biblical proscriptions were intended to restrict such fabrics for the use of officiating priests.[110] This is further supported by Second Temple sources (Josephus, *A.J.* 4.208;

---

[106] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 68.

[107] Ibid, 68; cf. Susan Ackerman, "Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving?" *JNES* 67 (2008): 1–30, esp.26–29; Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 376.

[108] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 302, 310, n.29. As Susan Ackerman observed, the high ratio of linen to wool is particularly suggestive in light of the distance of the site from the flax producing regions in Israel to the north or in Egypt to the west, compared to the proximity of sheep-herding regions in the Negev; Ackerman, "Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving?", 27.

[109] Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 160–62; as Haran observed, the qualification פן־תקדש, "lest it become holy", appended to the related prohibition against sowing mixed crops in Deut 22:9, supports the view that such mixtures were sacrosanct. Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 307–08, 309, n.14.

[110] Cf. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 376.

m. Kil. 9:1). This is not conclusive, as the *šaʿaṭnez* and fine linen could be trade items (cf. Hadley, below), and, in any case, it is not self-evident that the biblical proscriptions can be applied to the community at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Nevertheless, as will be discussed below, the priestly hypothesis tallies well with other circumstantial evidence.

A religious interpretation was also favoured by Nadav Naʾaman and Nurit Lissovsky, who hypothesised that there might have been a sacred tree or grove in the vicinity associated with the cult of Asherah, and that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was a cultic site where food offerings were presented to the goddess. According to Naʾaman and Lissovsky Building A was used to store the dedications to the goddess and other sancta, and served a secondary function as a hostel for passing traders.[111] However, as Naʾaman and Lissovsky readily admit, this conjecture is impossible to verify.[112]

Susan Ackerman was similarly inclined to view the settlement as a religious site devoted to the worship of Asherah. Drawing on a range of biblical and archaeological data, she argued that one of the major religious activities conducted at Kuntillet ʿAjrud probably involved spinning and weaving of textiles for Asherah (2 Kgs 23:7).[113] This interpretation is not sufficient, in itself, to account for the origins of the site, but it does go some way toward explaining the extraordinary nature of the textile remains and the possible references to Asherah.[114] However, caution is advisable, since, as was discussed in §2.4.1.1, there is reason to question whether Asherah should be afforded such a prominent role at the site.

Yet another possibility was proposed by Finkelstein, who argued that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was established as a local shrine by Arab traders along the

---

[111] Nadav Naʾaman and Nurit Lissovsky, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah", *TA* 35 (2008): 186–208.

[112] Ibid, 190.

[113] Ackerman, "Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving?", 26–29.

[114] Of course, allowance should be made accidents of preservation. The quantity of fabrics alone is, therefore, not decisive, nor, for that matter, is the presence of *šaʿaṭnez* fabrics, since few textile remains are preserved from this period and we cannot know what was normal. The same is true of the possible references to Asherah.

Darb el-Ghazzeh.[115] According to Finkelstein, the phenomenon of an isolated caravan cult place is paralleled at the later Negevite shrine at Ḥorvat Qiṭmit (7th–early 6th centuries B.C.E.).[116] In Finkelstein's view, the poor architectural remains and eclectic pottery repertoire at Ḥorvat Qiṭmit indicates that the shrine was not a state sanctioned enterprise, but a popular cult place established by the caravaneers who plied the trade routes that ran through the Beersheba Valley in the Neo-Assyrian period.[117]

It is true that Ḥorvat Qiṭmit and Kutnillet ʿAjrud resemble one another in several important regards: both were established in an isolated location; both were constructed in close proximity to known trade routes; and both had a heterogeneous ceramic assemblage, representing a broad cross-section of wares from throughout the region. In addition, Ḥorvat Qiṭmit also yielded several short inscriptions, carved into the sides of vessels, which are best understood as votive offerings (cf. the engraved stone bowls from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, §2.2).[118] But, the two sites differ in one important regard: at Ḥorvat Qiṭmit a cultic function was indicated by large quantities of special finds, including human and animal figurines, a fragment of a small altar, and elaborately shaped chalices; yet, as has already been noted, such objects were conspicuously absent at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[119]

A popular alternative view is that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was an ancient caravanserai, or way station, for the use of passing traders and travellers. Such lodging places (מלון) are known from the Hebrew Bible; cf. Gen 42:27; 43:21; Exod 4:24; Josh 4:3, 8; 2 Kgs 19:23; Isa 10:29; Jer 9:2 (Heb. 1). This position was endorsed most strongly by Judith Hadley, who, due

---

[115] Israel Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt and the Southern Trade in the Late Iron Age II" *ZDVP* 108 (1992): 163.

[116] For the Ḥorvat Qitmit archaeological report, see Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, *Ḥorvat Qitmit: An Edomite Shrine in the Biblical Negev* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 1995).

[117] Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt", 163, 164–66.

[118] Cf. Beit-Arieh, *Ḥorvat Qitmit*, 258–68, esp. 267.

[119] For the finds at Ḥorvat Qiṭmit see Beit-Arieh, *Ḥorvat Qitmit*.

in large part to the absence of cultic objects, rejected the possibility that the site functioned primarily as a shrine.[120] For Hadley, the structures (including the bench-room) were reminiscent of secular rather than religious architecture (cf. the plan of the fortress at Kadesh Barnea).[121] Hadley was also sceptical of the inference that the linen and *šaʿaṭnez* fragments indicate a priestly presence, noting that these might easily be explained as trade items left by passing merchants.[122] Haldey's analysis is thorough, and she is correct to draw attention to the absence of cultic paraphernalia; however, her discussion makes no allowance for the large limestone basin (*Kajr*1.2). Minimally, the difficulty involved in transporting this massive object to the site suggests that Kuntillet ʿAjrud had some special religious association beyond that of a simple caravanserai.[123]

Nevertheless, it is worth considering the caravanserai hypothesis further. In a study drawing on a combination of archaeological and ethnographic evidence ranging from Iron Age Israel to the Ottoman Empire, Yifat Thareani-Sussely attempted developed a system of criteria

---

[120] Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 106–20. A slightly different view was adopted by André Lemaire, who described the site as "probalement une sorte de khan", and interpreted Kuntillet ʿAjrud as a joint Phoenician-Israelite commercial venture related to the Red Sea trade; Lemaire, *Les écoles et la formation del a Bible dans l'ancien Israel*, 25; idem, Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hébraïques et phéniciens de Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 137–39.

[121] Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 110. Cf. Holladay, "Religion of Israel and Judah Under the Monarchy", 259; Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, 160; idem, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Israel*, 94–95; and Gösta W. Ahlström, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine* (Leiden: E. J.Brill, 1982), 42–43.

[122] Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 112. On linen as a valued commodity cf. Judg 14:12–13; Prov 7:16.

[123] See §2.2.1, n.6.

for the identification of ancient caravanserais.[124] The list comprises of four features of primary importance and four features of secondary importance:

> Primary features:
>
> 1.   Proximity to trade route
>
> 2.   Separation from local population
>
> 3.   Existence of sleeping accommodation
>
> 4.   Food preparation and consumption areas
>
> Secondary features:
>
> 5.   Animal holding pens
>
> 6.   Security post or fortresses
>
> 7.   Trade centres (characterised by objects such as weights and seals, amulets, jewellery and cosmetics)
>
> 8.   Water supply systems

Significantly, with the exception of criterion 7, the buildings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud exhibit (or can be assumed to have exhibited) each of these characteristics:

> 1.   *Proximity to trade route*: as discussed above, the settlement seems to have been situated at an intersection of north-south and east-west trade routes.
>
> 2.   *Separation from local population*: according to Ayalon, the extraordinary absence of hand-made "Negevite" type vessels at Kuntillet ʿAjrud raises the question whether the nomads of the desert were banned from settling at the site (see further below).[125]

---

[124] Yifat Thareani-Sussely, "Ancient Caravanserais: An Archaeological View from ʿAroer" *Levant* 39 (2007): 123–41.

[125] Ayalon, "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from Ḥorvat Teiman", 195, 199; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 205.

3.   *Existence of sleeping accommodation*: the existence of sleeping accommodations can be assumed, perhaps on the upper storey.

4.   *Food preparation and consumption areas*: food preparation areas were found at both ends of the courtyard.

5.   *Animal holding pens*: as noted by Hadley, the central courtyard of Building A could have been used as an overnight pen for animals.[126] Remnants of animal dung unearthed at floor level in the courtyard lend credence to this possibility.[127] In addition, a trough-like installation was located in the alcove between the bent-axis gate and the north-eastern corner room on the outside of Building A. The excavators plausibly identified this as a feeding trough.[128]

6.   *Security post or fortresses*: there is no evidence that a garrison was stationed at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (e.g. no weapons or amour), but, as noted above, the design and location of Building A on top of the hill made it eminently defensible. Furthermore, in the *editio princeps*, Meshel and Goren noted several enigmatic piles of pebbles that had been brought up from the Wadi Quraiya. As these were located in the corners of courtyard near the base of the stairs, perhaps they should be explained as missiles and sling-stones (cf. 1 Sam 17:40) stockpiled for the defence of the settlement.[129]

---

[126] Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 112.

[127] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 31, 33. However, it cannot be proved that the dung was contemporary with the occupation levels, and it may have been deposited by passing animals, traders, or desert nomads shortly after the abandonment of Phase 3.

[128] As noted by Meshel and Goren, this installation was coated in mud rather than hydraulic plaster, indicating that it was used for feeding not watering animals. Pieces of dry matter mixed with straw on the ground near this trough might be dung of livestock; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 21.

[129] This interpretation was rejected by the excavators, who suggested that they were meant to be used as part of the courtyard pavement, in order to prevent the surface of the

7.   *Trade centres*: there was no clear evidence for seals or weights, indicating commercial activity, but that is hardly surprising given the remote location of the site.

8.   *Water supply systems*: the hill overlooked an important perennial water-source.

However, these criteria are sufficiently general to include the basic necessities of any remote outpost (e.g. shelter, defensibility, access to water).[130] Therefore, in order to support the caravanserai hypothesis one would like to see clear evidence of commercial activity. No such evidence is not forthcoming. In fact, the evidence seems to imply the oposite. In an important study of the distribution of locally produced pottery types throughout southern Jordan and the Negev, Piotr Bienkowski and Eveline van der Steen argued that the pattern of pottery distribution (especially the so-called Edomite Ware) could reflect the movements of local nomads as middlemen in the lucrative Arabian incense or spice trade.[131] Significantly, in the view of Bienkowski and van der Steen, the distribution of Edomite pottery suggests that during the Late Iron Age the Beersheba valley and the Wadi Arabah formed a vital land-bridge for commercial activities between the Gulf of Aqaba and the Mediterranean Coast.[132] More recently

---

courtyard form turning to mud during rain; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 30. For an analogous pebble pavement see Yifat Thareani-Sussely, "Ancient Caravanserais: An Archaeological View from 'Aroer", *Levant* 39 (2007): 131. Note, however, that if they were intended for that purpose, they were used inconsistently.

[130] This does not diminish the value of Thareani-Sussely's criteria in the context of unban caravanserais, which, was her primary focus at Tel ʿAroer.

[131] Piotr Bienkowski and Eveline van der Steen, "Tribes, Trade, and Towns: A New Framework for the Late Iron Age in Southern Jordan and the Negev" *BASOR* 323 (2001): 21–47.

[132] Juan Manuel Tebes, "Assyrians, Judaeans, Pastoral Groups, and the Trade Patterns in the Late Iron Age Negev" *History Compass* 5 (2007): 625–26; cf. Lily Singer-Avitz, "Beersheba—A Gateway Community in Southern Arabian Long-Distance Trade in the Eight Century B.C.E.", *TA* 26 (1999): 3–74, who argues that the development of the

Juan Manuel Tebes endorsed this interpretation with a view to economic development under the aegis of the Neo-Assyrian Empire at the end of the 8th century.[133] Correspondingly, the almost complete absence of Edomite pottery at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, may suggest that the more difficult route along the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* was not much used during the Late Iron Age.[134] If Singer-Avitz and Lipiński are correct to date the foundation of Kuntillet ʿAjrud to the end of the 8th century (which, for the reasons outlined above, seems improbable), then this exceptional gap in the ceramic assemblage is difficult to account for; especially in light of the Edomite wares found elsewhere along the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* (i.e. Kadesh Barnea and Tell el-

Beersheba route occurred in the last third of the 8th century, specifically under the aegis of Neo-Assyrian economic development.

[133] Juan Manuel Tebes, "Trade and Nomads: The Commerical Relationships between the Negev, Edom, and the Mediterranean in the Late Iron Age", *Journal of the Serbian Archaeological Society* 22 (2006): 45–62; idem, "Assyrians, Judaeans, Pastoral Groups, and the Trade Patterns in the Late Iron Age Negev", 619–31. This seems have been a period of rapid expansion in the settlement of the Negev; cf. Israel Finkelstein, "Patriarchs, Exodus, Conquest: Fact or Fiction", in Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar, *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel* (ed. Brian B. Schmidt; SBLABS 17; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 48. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that the importance of the incense trade predated Neo-Assyrian commercial interests in the region: already in the 2nd millennium there is evidence for the South Arabian incense in Syria and even Mesopotamia; cf. Kjeld Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel* (VTSupp. 38; Leiden: Brill, 1986).

[134] Tebes, "Assyrians, Judaeans, Pastoral Groups, and the Trade Patterns in the Late Iron Age Negev", 625. David Ussishkin has argued that the *floruit* of Kuntillet ʿAjrud corresponds a period of abandonment at Tell el-Qudeirat; David Ussishkin, "The Rectangular Fortress at Kadesh-Barnea", *IEJ* 45 (1995): 119–27, esp.126–27. It seems that it was not until the Assyrian attempts to control the regional economy at the end of the 8th century that the later fortress was built; cf. Naʾaman, "An Assyrian Residence at Ramat Raḥel?", 267–70; although Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt", 163, has offered a cautionary note. If Ussishkin's understanding is correct, this would seem to support the inference that commercial activity along the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* was relatively modest during this period.

Kheleifeh).[135] But, the Arabian trade must have pre-dated Assyrian interests in the region, and the absence of local pottery types at Kuntillet ʿAjrud also needs to be explained if the settlement is dated to the first half of the 8th century. In other words, regardless of whether the *floruit* of the site is dated to the beginning or the end of the 8th century, the dearth of local pottery types suggests that there was little or no commerce with the local populations.[136]

Of course, the absence of such types does not automatically preclude the possibility that trade passed via Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Due to the perishable nature of the trade goods, we should not necessarily expect archaeological traces of spice trade itself.[137] Consequently, it might be conjectured that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was founded as part of a state-run project intended to cut out the middle-man and gain direct access to the Arabian incense trade, presumably by connecting with the Arabian traders at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba.[138] But, even so, the exclusion of local pottery types in the ceramic assemblage at Kuntillet ʿAjrud hints at an uneasy relationship with the local nomadic communities, suggesting that this was a comparatively modest operation.

This situation seems to be consistent with Naʾaman's hypothesis that there was a Judahite resurgence in the southern Negev during the days of

---

[135] See Yifat Thareani, "The Spirit of Clay: 'Edomite Pottery' and Social Awareness in the Late Iron Age" *BASOR* 359 (2010): 37.

[136] Cf. Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000–586 B.C.E.* (Doubleday: New York, 1990), 449.

[137] Tebes, "Assyrians, Judaeans, Pastoral Groups, and the Trade Patterns in the Late Iron Age Negev" *History Compass* 5 (2007): 626; cf. Singer-Avitz, "Beersheba—A Gateway Community in Southern Arabian Long-Distance Trade", 4.

[138] Noting the scarcity of artefacts of Arabian origin in southern Jordan and the Negev, Tebes has plausibly suggested that the Arabian caravans only travelled as far as southern Edom and the Negev, at which point the Edomite and Negevite pastoral groups carried out the transport of Arabian Incense from Edom to the Mediterranean coast; Tebes, "Trade and Nomads", 54–55. Hence, it is unlikely that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was utilised, or at least administered, by Arabian caravaneers, as Finkelstein seems to assume; Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt", 163.

King Azariah (cf. 2 Kgs 14:22). According to Naʾaman, the remote location of Kuntillet ʿAjrud on the less lucrative *Darb el-Ghazzeh* may have been the result of the refusal of the kings of Judah to allow Israel to participate in the trade that passed via the Wadi Arabah.[139] In that case, however, it is *a fortiori* unlikely that the predominance of Judahite and Philistian wares should be viewed as tribute levied by Jeroboam II, as discussed above.[140] I am at a loss to explain this seeming contradiction. Perhaps, then, it is best to follow Finkelstein, and simply attribute the location of the site to the alternating preference between the eastern route along the *Darb el-Ghazzeh* and the western route through the Wadi Arabah and the Beersheba Valley in the pre-Assyrian period.[141]

As an aside, shell remains (found in very small numbers) might provide further support for the hypothesis that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was related to the north-south trade routes.[142] Two species, *Glycymeris inscubria* and *Stramonita haemastoma* originate from the Mediterranean Sea. And two species, *Lambis truncata sebae* (Seba's spider conch) and the comparatively rare *Monetaria moneta*, originate from the Red Sea.[143] A similar picture emerges with regard to the fish bones (also found in small numbers).[144] Particularly interesting, however, are several bone fragments

---

[139] Naʾaman, "Azariah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel", 227–34, esp. 232–34.

[140] This is not altogether implausible when it is considered that the items in question include storage vessels, which may have remained in use for some time.

[141] Cf. Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt", 163.

[142] Although note the caution of Liora Freud in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 327, editor's note. For the evidence of shell-trade in Iron Age Palestine, see David S. Reese, Henk K. Mienis and Fred R. Woodward, "On the Trade of Shells and Fish from the Nile River", *BASOR* 264 (1986): 79–81.

[143] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 332; Henk K. Mienis, "A Look Behind the Scenes at How an Ivory Fragment Turned into Part of a Spider Conch", *The Arhcaeo+Malacology Group Newsletter* 16 (2009): 8–9.

[144] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 331; W. van Neer, et al., "Fish Remains from Archaeological Sites as Indicators of Former Trade Connections in the Eastern Mediterranean", *Paléorient* 30 (2004): 134.

that were identified as belonging to Nile Perch, *Lates niloticus*.[145] This might reflect contacts to the north, south, and west. However, each of these species was traded widely throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and, as such, the presence of fish and shells in such small numbers might reflect nothing more than the fact that the site was provisioned from outside.[146]

Yet another hypothesis that has garnered relatively wide acceptance is that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was an ancient pilgrim station on the route to Sinai.[147] This suggestion goes some way toward explaining the remote location of the site and the nature and quantity of religious inscriptions found there; especially those that are perceived to contain benedictory prayers. Furthermore, according to this hypothesis, it might be possible to account for the inscription naming "YHWH of Samaria" (*Kajr*3.1) as an offering deposited by a pilgrim from the northern capital.[148] However, Naʾaman has explicitly rejected this proposal, arguing that pilgrimages to

---

[145] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 332.

[146] Cf. ibid, 332.

[147] See for example, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: An Intriguing Site in Sinai: Answers and Questions about Settlements in Northern Sinai and the Negeb" *BH* 14 (1978): 13–15; Axelsson, *The Lord Rose up form Seir*, 62–63; Ahlström, *An Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine*, 29, n.90; Helga Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Handbuch der Archäologie. Vorderasien 2; Munich: Beck, 1988), 625; Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, 46; Meindert Dijkstra, "I have Blessed You by YHWH of Samaria and His Asherah: Texts with Religious Elements from the Soil Archive of Ancient Israel" in *Only One God? Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah* (eds. Bob Becking, et al.; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 22; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 68. The case for a pre-exilic pilgrimage route to Sinai, based on the itinerary is Num 33:2–49, was already made by Martin Noth*, "Der Wallfahrtsweg zum Sinai" *Palastinajahrbuch* 36 (1940): 5–28. Many of Noth's specific arguments (especially many of his toponymic identifications) have been challenged; but the underlying pilgrim hypothesis has endured; cf. Allen Kerkeslager, "Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt", in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (ed. David Frankfurter; Religions in the Greco-Roman World 134; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 148–49.

[148] Cf. Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh", 202.

far-off destinations were unknown before the Byzantine period.[149] But despite Naʾaman's objections, there is evidence in the Hebrew Bible for pilgrimages to holy sites. Specifically, in connection with the pilgrimage festivals at the sanctuaries at Bethel, Gilgal, Shiloh and Jerusalem (e.g. Exod 34:23–24; Deut 16:16; 31:11; 1 Sam 1:3; 1 Kgs 3:4; 12:29–30; Isa 2:3 = Micah 4:2; Isa 30:29; Lam 1:4; Ezek 46:9; Amos 4:4; cf. later Zech 14:16–19).[150] An analogy for the custom of journeying into the wilderness to worship the deity might also be drawn from Moses and Aaron's request that Pharaoh permit the people to go into the desert (במדבר) to celebrate a festival (√חגג; Exod 5:1).[151] In an earlier study Naʾaman and Lissovsky attempted to draw a distinction between these *short-distance* pilgrimages and the sort of *long-distance* pilgrimage assumed by the pilgrim station hypothesis.[152] However, it is worth noting that this distinction was created

---

[149] Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 315; cf. already Naʾaman and Lissovsky, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah", 188–89. Cf. Finkelstein, "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt", 159, "[t]o the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence for a phenomenon of urban people visiting a remote cult site in the desert."

[150] The account of Elijah's flight to Horeb (1 Kgs 19:3–9) is often cited in arguments for a common pilgrimage route from Israel to Sinai; cf., already, Gustav Westpal, *Jahwes Wohnstätten nach den Anschauungen der Alten Hebräer: eine alttestamentliche Untersuchung* (BZAW 15; Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1908), 60). However, Naʾaman dismisses the narrative as post-exilic and anachronistic; cf. Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 315, n.9. Regardless of its date, the evidence of 1 Kgs 19:3–9 requires a large measure of inference, and it would be unwise to place too much emphasis on it.

[151] An Egyptian parallel might be inferred from the work-lists from Deir el-Medina (e.g. BM 5643) in Ramesside Egypt, which record days spent at work and days off of the royal workforce. One of the reasons given for absenteeism in these lists is that an individual was "making an offering to his god". As some of these were absent for several days at a time, it is tempting to speculate that the offerings included travel to the appropriate shrine; cf. Kenneth A. Kitchen, Ramesside Inscriptions, Translated and Annotated: Translations, vol. 3 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 361 – 68; see also the discussion and additional references in idem, *On The Reliability of the Old Testament* (Crand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 248, 553, n.10. I am indebted to Boyo Ockinga for this parallel.

[152] Naʾaman and Lissovsky, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah", 189.

by Naʾaman and Lissovsky themselves and is not found in the ancient
Near Eastern sources. As such, their objection amounts to an argument
from silence. In other words, there is an underlying assumption that
because we have no direct evidence for long-distance pilgrimages, they are
unlikely to have occurred.[153] Indeed, it could be countered that long and
short-distance pilgrimages are inherently related phenomena and that it is
the nature of the destination and its religious associations that are
important, not the difficulty involved in getting there.[154] Even so, there is
little direct evidence, beyond the dedicatory inscriptions, to support the
pilgrim station hypothesis.

Then again, elaborating on the suggestion that it was the location of
the site that was important Naʾaman has raised the possibility that the hill
of Kuntillet ʿAjrud might have been identified as Mount Sinai itself; the
precise location of which was unknown in the Late Iron Age.[155] In this
case, the settlement might be understood to be a religious site established
by passing traders in honour of Yʜwʜ. However, Naʾaman rejected this
possibility too, arguing that typically such sites were built at the base of

---

[153] A more cautious approach was adopted by Allen Kerkeslager, "Jewish Pilgrimage and
Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt", in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in
Late Antique Egypt* (ed. David Frankfurter; Religions in the Greco-Roman World 134;
Leiden: Brill, 1998), 99–225, esp. 147–52, who stressed the lack of direct evidence for
established pre-exilic pilgrim routes and argues that Jewish pilgrimage was a virtually
unknown phenomenon in the Greco-Roman period, but, nevertheless, admits the
possibility of pre-exilic pilgrimages to Sinai and Horeb.

[154] Of course, there are practical constraints (e.g. expense) determining who might be able
to undertake such a journey and at what times, but that does not necessarily invalidate the
basic pilgrimage hypothesis.

[155] If I have understood it correctly, Naʾaman's proposal is not that the site be identified
with the historical Mount Sinai—the precise location of which was unknown—but that,
due to its southern location, the mound of Kuntillet ʿAjrud came to be identified with the
traditions about the Mountain of God, perhaps by travellers along the *Darb el-Ghazzeh*;
cf. Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 316.

the mountain, rather than on its summit where the divine presence was believed to dwell.[156]

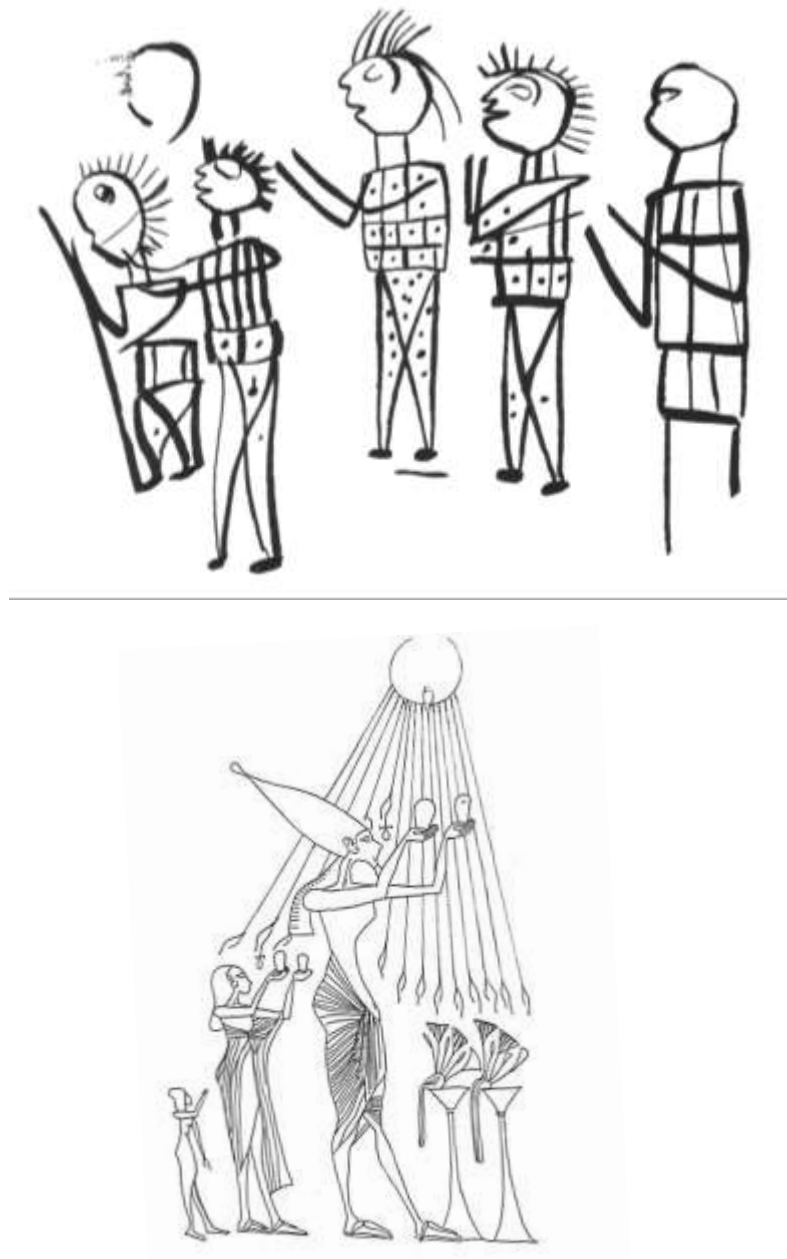**Fig.4.3—TOP: the processional on Pithos B; BOTTOM: Akhenaten worshipping the Aten, relief from the Great Aten Temple, Tell el-Amarna**

Be that as it may, Mount Sinai was not the only site in the region to have a divine association. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the references to YHWH of (the) Teman in *Kajr*3.6, 3.9 and 4.1, and, more particularly, the

---

[156] Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 316.

vocabulary and imagery of *Kajr*4.2 connect the site to the biblical tradition of southern theophany.[157] Consequently, the significance of the site might derive from its being situated in a region that was traditionally identified with the immanence of YHWH of Teman.[158] In fact, the east-west orientation of the hilltop means that Kuntillet ʿAjrud faced toward the region of Teman in Edom. This eastward orientation is particularly suggestive when considered in light of Habakkuk 3:3: אלוה מתימן יבוא, "Eloah comes from Teman". In his commentary on Habakkuk, Francis Andersen observed that "[w]ith the image of the sunrise, the perspective of Habakkuk 3:3 is that of a resident of the Negeb or farther south. It describes the progress of God from the east westward, not a march from the south northward" (cf. §C.4).[159] This is certainly plausible, and, in the case of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, it is demonstrably true. More generally, the eastward orientation is reminiscent of Ezekiel 8:16: והנה־פתח היכל יהוה בין האולם ובין המזבח כעשרים וחמשה איש אחריהם אל־היכל יהוה ופניהם קדמה והמה משתחויתם קדמה לשמש, "and behold, at the entrance to the temple of YHWH, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, their backs to the temple of YHWH and their faces to the east, and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun". In this regard, it is interesting to reconsider the drawing of the processional on Pithos B. The orb above the heads of the left-most figures might be a sketch of an unfinished sixth figure, but its position above and to the left of the figures

---

[157] Cf. Erhad Blum, "Der historische Mose und die Frühgeschichte Israels", *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1 (2012): 58–60, who shares my views regarding the northern provenance of the southern theophany tradition; *pace* Naʾaman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", 316, n.10.

[158] The possibility that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was some sort of regional cult site dedicated to YHWH of Teman has already been raised by McCarter: "'Yahweh of Teman,' therefore, must be Yahweh as he was worshiped in the region of Teman. This does not exclude the possibility, however, that there was a particular shrine where the Temanite Yahweh's cult was located"; McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy", 140.

[159] Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 292

raises the possibility that it should be interpreted as a solar disk. If so, then the scene is strikingly reminiscent of Egyptian Aten worshiping scenes of the Amarna period (fig.4.3).[160] Cumulatively, the evidence suggests that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was home to some sort of religious activities associated with the solar theophany of Yahweh of Teman.

In light of this association it is interesting to revisit an alternative hypothesis that has received relatively little attention in the academic literature. In 1982 Alessandro Catastini suggested that Kuntillet ʿAjrud might have been inhabited by a community of prophets.[161] The prophetic hypothesis was based primarily on biblical references connecting bands of itinerant prophets with the wilderness areas (e.g. the Elijah-Elisha cycle), as well as the large number of "votive" offerings found at the site, and Catastini's ultimately unconvincing attempt to read שר דר "leader of the community" (viz. "community" of prophets) in *Kajr*2.5 (cf. §3.2.2).[162] As such, the hypothesis was essentially speculative, and it has largely been ignored in subsequent discussions.[163] Nevertheless, when the site as a whole is considered together with its artefacts and inscriptions, the hypothesis that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was occupied by a community of prophets holds considerable explanatory potential:

(1) First, as noted above, the inscriptions explicitly identify Kuntillet ʿAjrud with a region that was traditionally associated with theophany (cf. §2.8.2). As such, it was a liminal place, on the boundary between the human and divine planes. Such places are frequently sites of mantic activity.[164]

---

[160] A similar interpretation of this scene has also been advanced by J. Glen Taylor, "Was Yahweh Worshiped as the Sun?" *BAR* 20 (1994): 52–61, 90–91.

[161] Catastini, "Le iscrizioni di Kuntillet ʿAjrud e il profetismo", 127–34.

[162] Ibid, 128–29.

[163] One of the few attempts to deal systematically with Catastini's arguments was presented in Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 112–14; however, she rejected the suggestion due to a lack of evidence.

[164] Cf. Kimberley C. Patton, "'A Great and Strange Correction': Intentionality, Locality and Epiphany in the Category of Dream Incubation" *HR* 43 (2004): 203–06; with an

(2) There is a possible reference to a prophet (or, prophets?) accompanied by an illustration in *Kajr*4.5.

(3) The drawing of the seated lyre player on Pithos A has generated considerable discussion.[165] Various inconclusive attempts have been made to determine the identity of the figure, but as far as I am aware none has yet attempted to associate the image with prophetic activity. There is, however, biblical evidence that attests the use of music to induce a prophetic state (cf. 1 Sam 10:5–6; 2 Kgs 3:15; 1 Chron 25:1).[166] These Hebrew sources are

---

ancient Near Eastern focus specifically, Annette Zgoll, "Die Welt im Schlaf sehen—Inkubation von Träumen im antiken Mesopotamien" *Die Welt des Orients* 32 (2002): 86–88; Koowon Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the Aqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories: A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of KTU 1.14 i-1.15 III, 1.17 I-II, and 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11* (VTSup 145; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 68–69.

[165] See Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 147, with references. See most recently, Irit Ziffer, "Portraits of Ancient Israelite Kings?" *BAR* 39 (2013): 43–51; however, As Keel and Uehlinger have argued, the seated figure need not be interpreted as royal or divine; Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 223–24.

[166] This evidence is especially valuable because the references to music are of an incidental nature. There can be little doubt in these texts that the music is instrumental in affecting the altered state of the prophet:

ויהי כבאך שם העיר ופגעת חבל נבאים ירדים מהבמה ולפניהם נבל ותף וחליל וכנור והמה מתנבאים: וצלחה עליך רוח יהוה והתנבית עמם ונהפכת לאיש אחר, "And when you come to the city, there you will meet a band of prophets descending from the high place *with harp, timbrel, flute and lyre* before them *and they will be prophesying. 6And the spirit of YHWH will descend upon you, and you will prophesy with* them and you will be changed into a different person",
(1 Sam 10:5–6)

ויאמר אלישע חי־יהוה צבאות אשר עמדתי לפניו כי לולי פני יהושפט מלך־יהודה אני נשא אם־אביט אליך ואם־אראך: ועתה קחו־לי מנגן והיה כנגן המנגן ותהי עליו יד־יהוה, "And Elisha said, 'As YHWH of hosts lives, before whom I stand, were it not for the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, whom I regard, I would neither look at you or see you. 15But now, fetch me a musician'. And, *while the musician was playing*, the hand of the Lord was upon him" (2 Kgs 3:14–15)

complemented by two texts from Mari describing the ritual of Ištar in which musicians (probably choristers) would perform, apparently in order to induce an ecstatic state in the prophet/prophetess (*muḫḫûm/muḫḫūtum*).[167] As I have already argued, the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 is closely related to biblical hymnic traditions (§2.8.3); there is also reason to believe that *Kajr*3.9 too should be interpreted as a hymn (see §2.4.2), perhaps accompanied by an illustration of a procession of choristers (fig.4.3). If so, might this text preserve a fragment of one of the prepartory hymns performed by the community?[168]

ויבדל דויד ושרי הצבא לעבדה לבני אסף והימן וידותון הנבאים בכנרות בנבלים ובמצלתים, "And David and the leaders of the host set apart for service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, *the prophets with lyres, harps and cymbals*". (1 Chron 25:1, *Qere*)

The situation described in 1 Sam 16:14–23 also seems to be phenomenologically related: והיה בהיות רוח־אלהים אל־שאול ולקח דוד את־הכנור ונגן בידו ורוח לשאול וטוב לו וסרה מעליו רוח הרעה, "And whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand, and the spirit of Saul was relieved and was well, and the evil spirit would depart from him." (1 Sam 16:23)

[167] Texts and translations are reproduced in Marti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (SBLWAW 12; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 80–83, §51 and §52. Alice Mouton, following a suggestion by Johan de Roos, has also suggested that music and song might have played a part in Hittite mantic rituals, see Alice Mouton, *Rêves hittites: Contribution à une historie et une anthropologie du rêve en Anatolie ancienne* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 28; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 45; cf. Johan de Roos, "Hittite Votive Texts" in *Acts of Third International Congress of Hittitology*, Çorum, September 16-22 (eds. S. Alp and A Süel; Ankara, 1998), 494. While the use of music seems to presuppose some sort of transcendental, or even ecstatic, state was the desired outcome of these activities, it is not my intention to suggest that every ancient Near Eastern prophet was an ecstatic. Cf. the discussion in Jonathan Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison* (Culture and History in the Ancient Near East 56; Leiden: Brill, 2012): 226–27, 230.

[168] As an aside, it is interesting to note that while these lines have a precatory element (cf. פתה; ישאל), the thing that is sought is not specified in the extant fragment. Did this hymn perhaps contain a request that a prophetic state be achieved, or that a revelation be

(4) This interpretation of the lyre player on Pithos A also raises questions about the seated figure drawn on the plaster at the entrance to Building A. Following Beck's reconstruction, which was informed by Egyptian and Phoenician royal iconography, this figure has typically been interpreted to be holding a lotus blossom.[169] But it has not been considered whether the figure might be compared to the seated lyre player on Pithos A.[170] Yet, as far as can be discerned the postures of both figures are similar, and although few traces remain of the blossom reconstructed by Beck, what does remain might in fact be consistent with the upper-edge of a lyre held close to the face (cf. fig.4.4).[171] In view of this alternative interpretation, it is significant that in none of Beck's comparanda does the seated figure actually hold the flower before their face; rather, the blossom is consistently held either in the lap or beside the hips. To be sure, there are some Egyptian wall paintings in which (non-royal) figures are depicted with a lotus blossom before their faces, but these are always angled toward the face, a position that is not compatible with the surviving traces in the Kuntillet ʿAjrud wall painting. As such, the reconstruction proposed by Beck is one for which no precise

---

granted? Note that success in inducing a prophetic state was by no means assured; cf. Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 81, §51, lines 21–27.

[169] Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman", 52–56; cf. most recently Ziffer, "Portraits of Ancient Israelite Kings?", 43–51.

[170] Beck did suggest that the bichrome drawing of a seated figure on Pithos B (not the lyre player) might have been a "study piece" for one of the wall paintings, cf. Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman", 43.

[171] Note that Beck described the arms of the lyre player on Pithos A as "unnaturally long", cf. Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)" *TA* 9 (1982): 31. The restoration proposed here would be better proportioned.

parallel is known to exist.[172] This explanation of the plaster drawing might, in turn, suggest that the enigmatic figure standing behind the seated figure could also be interpreted as a musician, perhaps playing a frame drum (?).[173] If this alternative reconstruction is accepted, then the prominent placement of the plaster drawing at the entrance to Building A testifies to the importance of music in the experience of the inhabitants at Kuntillet ʿAjurd.
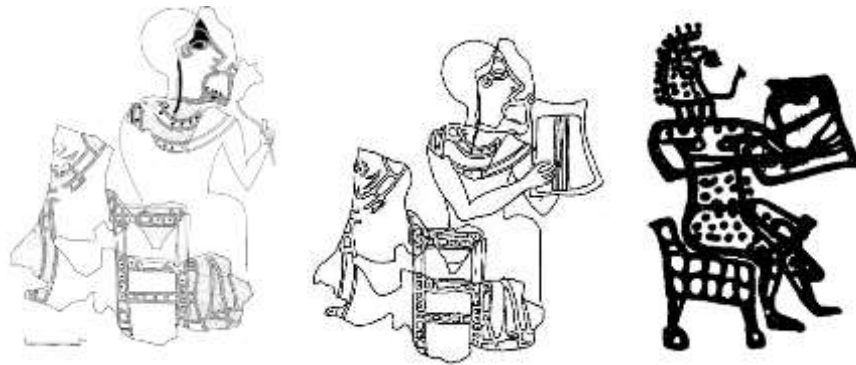
Fig.4.4—LEFT: Beck's reconstruction of the seated figure; CENTRE: proposed reconstruction of the seated figure; RIGHT the lyre player on Pithos A

(5) In her study of the drawings from Kuntillet ʿAjrud Beck raised the possibility that the two Bes-like figures on Pithos A might be

---

[172] I am indebted to Tamara Wearne for this observation. See the discussion and illustrations in Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman", 55; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 192; Ziffer, "Portraits of Ancient Israelite Kings?", 41–51.

[173] For depictions of both a seated lyre player and a standing hand-drummer, cf. the rock etchings from Jebel Ideid in the southern Negev, which have been interpreted to represent a dance scene; Joachim Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources* (Grand Rapids Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 71–74, discussion with illustrations). Compare the bronze seal discussed by Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 221, illus.229,223, 224. Note also the references to both percussive and stringed instruments in the biblical passages cited above.

interpreted as dancing to the accompaniment of the lyre.[174] To support this suggestion, Beck cited the common association of Bes with music and dance in Egyptian iconography. If correct, this too might have prophetic implications, as the phenomenon of using dance to achieve a state of altered consciousness is widely attested across cultures with many ethnographic parallels.[175] Special mention should be made here to the first-millennium B.C.E. omen series *Šumma ālu* I, lines 106–112, in which cultic dancers (*ḫuppû*) and possibly musicians (viz. *balaggu* players, *ēpiš balaggi*) are named alongside other mantic specialists, including male and female dreamers (*šabrû/šabrâtu*), performers of incubation (*muttaʾilūtu*) and haruspices (*bārûti*).[176] Could it be, then, that both the figure of the lyre player and the dancing Bes figures were engaged in ritual acts to induce a vision?[177]

[174] Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", 35–36; cf. Gabriel Barkay and Mi Young Im, ""Egyptian Influence on the Painted Human Figures from Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *TA* 28 (2001): 297. For a different view, cf. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 149–50. Note that *ex hypothesi* it does not matter whether the dance depicted on the pithos had a celebratory or apotropaic purpose; cf. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 150. Joachim Braun, has noted that a remarkably similar lyre to that held in the hands of the lyre player on Pithos A appears in a depiction of Bes from Ptolemaic Egpyt; Joachim Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine*, 151.

[175] Cf. Erika Bourguignon, "Trance and Ecstatic Dance", in *Moving History/Dance Cultures: A Dance History Reader* (eds. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright; Middletown Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 97–102, esp. 100–01.

[176] Text and translation reproduced with discussion in Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 191, §129. For a discussion of the date and literary connections of *Šumma ālu*, cf. Nils P. Heeßel "Šumma ālu" in *The encyclopedia of ancient history, vol. 11* (eds. Roger S. Bagnall, et al.; Malden, Ma.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). 1 Kings 18:2, ויפסחו על־המזבח אשר עשה, "and they passed over/danced upon(?) the altar they had made", might also be pertinent; however, this passage is not without difficulties, see below.

[177] Might we go even further and suggest that the Bes faces were in fact masks worn by the dancers? Given Bes' stereotypical role as a protector god, it may be that the masks were intended as a safe-guard for the dancer while they were in a transcendental state and,

Incidentally, according to this interpretation it matters little that the right-hand Bes figure is now widely accepted to be female, as it is the iconographic connotations of dance and music, and the apotropaic significance of Bes that are important.[178] In any case, there is considerable biblical evidence for the existence of female prophets (נביאה) as well as male (cf. Exod 15:20; Judg 4:4; 2 Kgs 22:14; 2 Chron 34:22; Isa 8:3; Ezek 13:17–23; Nah 6:14).[179]

(6) Although it is not uncommon for Bes to be depicted as (partially) naked in Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian contexts, it is *ex hypothesi* tempting to interpret the scene on Pithos A in light of 1 Sam 19:24: ויפשט גם־הוא בגדיו ויתנבא גם־הוא לפני שמואל ויפל ערם כל־ היום ההוא וכל־הלילה על־כן יאמרו הגם שאול בנביאם, "then he [Saul] too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel. And he lay naked all that day and all that night. Therefore it is

---

therefore, possibly more susceptible to the influence of malignant powers. But this would be to wander too far down the path of speculation. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Hadley has also suggested that dance of Bes should be interpreted as an apotropaic dance; cf. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 150.

[178] The nature of the appendage between the legs of the left-hand Bes figure has been central to the discussion of the gender of the two figures (and consequently whether they may be interpreted as YHWH and his Asherah). In my opinion the double line on the bulge to the left of this appendage, which is reasonably clear in the recently published photographs, is best explained as an attempt to represent testes, assuring the interpretation of the appendage as a phallus, rather than a tail. For my part, I am not convinced that the editors were correct to omit the appendage from the figure on the right. In the published photographs there is a faint mark—the same colour as the other ink traces—between the legs of the figure in question. However, without access to the originals this cannot be verified.

[179] Although it should be noted with Keel and Uhlinger that the depiction of the procession of worshipers on Pithos B contains only men, and the same is true of the onomastic evidence, which names only masculine PNN; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 225. For a more detailed discussion of women prophets in ancient Israel, see Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 186–92.

said, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'".[180] It should be noted that the reference to Saul removing his clothing belongs to a larger literary motif, spanning the Saul-David cycle, in which actions related to donning or removing items of clothing symbolises the transference of the kingship; however, once again, there is comparative evidence that lends credibility to the underlying practice of the removal of clothing in ancient Near Eastern cultic and mantic contexts.[181] While this suggestion might, at first, appear to afford too little weight to the well-attested iconographic conventions concerning Bes,[182] it may be justified by comparison with the procession of worshipers on Pithos B. Due to the fact that no attempt was made to represent clothing (i.e. a kilt), these figures likewise appear to be naked, at least below the waist—although the triangle between the legs of the three middle figures might represent a loin-cloth of some sort.[183] This point has seldom been discussed (although Beck did suggest that a phallus might be represented on the figure second from the left), and has never been explained.[184] Even so, this observation must be treated with utmost caution; the system of vertical and horizontal lines covering the torsos of all five figures

---

[180] Isa 20:2–4 might also be considered in this context, but there the reference to the nakedness of the prophet is clearly described as a symbolic foreshadowing of the impending captivity and nakedness of Egypt.

[181] For the motif of the transference of clothing as a symbol of the transference of the kingship in the Saul-David cycle, see Ora Horn Prouser, "Suited to the Throne: The Symbolic Use of Clothing in the David and Saul Narratives", *JSOT* 71 (1996): 27–37; for the comparative ANE evidence, see the discussion in Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene*, 109–13.

[182] For a convenient discussion see Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 137–44.

[183] The central figure does have dots covering its legs, but it is far from certain that these were intended to represent clothing, cf. Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman", 40. The exception is the figure on the extreme right, who might be wearing a longer garment of some sort.

[184] Ibid, 38.

are in some ways reminiscent of the markings on the line-drawings from Khirbet Beit Lei, and might have been intended to represent clothing.[185]

(7) Following this line of enquiry further, one might be tempted to interpret the enigmatic dots covering the figures on both of the decorated pithoi in light of 1 Kgs 18:28: ויקראו בקול גדול ויתגדדו כמשפטם בחרבות וברמחים עד־שפך־דם עליהם, "Then they cried out in a great voice, and, as was their custom, they cut themselves with swords and lances until the blood gushed over them".[186] Do these markings represent lacerations similar to those described in the story about the priests of Baal?[187] Owing to the uncertain date of the tale in 1 Kgs 18 and its polemic intent, this cannot be regarded as anything but a (remote) possibility.

(8) Several biblical texts refer to communities or guilds of prophets attached to a charismatic leader (cf. 1 Sam 10:5, 10–12; 19:20; 1 Kgs 18:19; 20:35; 2 Kgs 2;12, 7, 15–18; 4:1, 38; 5:15, 22; 6:1; 9:1; Isa 8:16).[188] It will be immediately evident that the

---

[185] Cf. Joseph Naveh, "Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave" *IEJ* 13 (1963): 74–92, esp. figs. 4 and 7. Note that the Kh. Beit Lei figures resemble the ʿAjrud figures in other respects, too; specifically, Naveh's interpretation of the "praying figure" and the "figure with a lyre".

[186] On the difficulties posed by the dots, cf. Beck, "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman", 27–34, 40.

[187] Although 1 Kgs 18:28 attempts to distinguish the Yahwistic prophet from such actions by the comment "according to their custom (כמשפטם)", this may be attributable to the polemic intent of the account. It should also be noted that this suggestion does not explain the horizontal and vertical lines that cover the torsos of the five figures.

[188] These bands are referred to variously as חבל (1 sam 10:5); <קהלת> (1 Sam 19:20; following McCarter in emending להקה on the basis of LXX[B] τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, cf. P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AB 8; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 327–28); מחנה (2 Kings 5:15); למוד (Isa 8:16); but most commonly בני־הנביאים (e.g. 1 Kgs 20:35, ect.). The latter epithet might also lie behind Amos 7:14 "I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet" לא־נביא אנכי ולא בן־נביא אנכי, and Jeremiah 35:4 "And I brought them to the house of the Lord into *the chamber of*

communities attached to Elijah and Elisha are over-represented in this list. This poses a redaction-critical problem, as the disputed provenance of the Elijah-Elisha cycle means it is unclear to what extent these references may be considered historically reliable and to what extent they may be anachronistic.[189] The same may also be true of Isa 8:16, which might be an interpolation.[190] Attempts to circumvent this difficulty are almost inescapably circular. However, the two passages in 1 Sam offer a faint possibility of escaping this circularity. That is because these passages are part of elaborate aetiologies for the proverbial saying הגם שאול בנביאים, "is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam 10:11; 19:24). It makes no difference which of these aetiologies (if either) is correct; what does matter is that the reference was intelligible to the audience of the Deuteronomistic History. Indeed, in this instance, the fact that competing aetiologies are offered lends weight to the authenticity of the proverb. Consequently, we may, cautiously, conclude that the reference to bands of prophets reflects some sort of historical social reality, probably dating within a couple of centuries of Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

(9) There is considerable biblical evidence for state sponsored prophetic activity in Iron Age Israel; cf. the court prophets Nathan (2 Sam 7:1–3) and Gad (2 Sam 24:11), and the prophets

---

the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, *the man of God*, which was near the chamber of the officials, above the chamber of Maaseiah son of Shallum, keeper of the threshold" ואבא אתם בית יהוה אל־לשכת בני חנן בן־יגדליהו איש האלהים אשר־אצל לשכת השרים אשר ממעל ללשכת מעשיהו בן־שלם שמר הסף; cf. Matthijs J. de Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: a Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (VTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 324, n. 304.

[189] See the recent discussion in Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 220, n.78.

[190] Cf. James L. Crenshaw, "Transmitting Prophecy Across Generations" in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd; SBLSymS 10; Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 36.

associated with the courts of Ahab (1 Kgs 18:19; 22:6) and Zedekiah (Jer 37:2, 19). Other prophets were attached to the temples at Bethel, Gilgal, and Jerusalem (e.g. 2 Kgs 2:3; 4:38; Jer 23:11; 26:7–8, 11, 16; 28:1 35:4; Lam 2:20; cf. 1 Sam 10:5). A similar situation seems to be reflected at Mari and in the Neo-Assyrian prophecies.[191] Hypothetically, the presence of a state sponsored community of prophets at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, could explain the interest of the northern kingdom in provisioning the site.

(10)   There is also evidence for an direct association between some biblical prophets and the priesthood; e.g. 2 Kgs 22:4; Jer 26:7, 8; 29:8 (note also that Jeremiah is identified as the son of Hilkiah, Jer 1:1, which might suggest that he belonged to the family of the high priest); Ezek 1:3; Hag 1:1). This is consistent with the possible evidence (i.e. the linen and šaʿaṭnez fragments) that a community of priests occupied the site.[192]

(11)   The use of letters to transmit prophetic messages is well attested in Israel and the ancient Near East; e.g. Lachish 3; Lachish 16; Jer 29:1, 31; the prophetic letters from Mari; and the reports of prophetic oracles in the Neo-Assyrian letters.[193] This

---

[191] Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1995), 88; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel: Revised and Enlarged* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 43–44. de Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 294–303.

[192] Mazar suggested that the inhabitants Kuntillet ʿAjrud possibly could be identified with the scribal clans named in 1 Chron 2:55; cf. Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000–586 B.C.E.* (Doubleday: New York, 1990), 449. But this is probably going too far; although it is interesting to note the Kenite connection in *Kajr*4.3 (cf. 1 Chron 2:55b).

[193] See, for example, the discussions in Meindert Dijkstra, "Prophecy by Letter (Jeremiah XXIX 24-32)", *VT* 33 (1983): 319–22; Klaas A.D. Smelik, "Letters to the Exiles: Jeremiah 29 in Context" *SJOT* 10 (1996): 282–95; de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient*

practice may be compared to the letter fragments transcribed onto the two pithoi (*Kajr*3.1 and 3.6), which seem to reflect letters sent back and forth between Samaria and Kuntillet ʿAjrud. This is not positive evidence for a prophetic community, nor does it *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6 were themselves related to prophecy, but the evidence for written correspondence is consistent with known mechanisms for the communication of prophetic utterances. In this connection, it is interesting to note a number of examples in which a prophetic oracle is explicitly identified as a response to royal supplication (e.g. SAA 9 1.8; Zakkur A:11–12; cf. Jer 37:2). If the letters do reflect direct contact with the northern capital (note the probable title רע המלך in *Kajr*3.1), then perhaps the prophetic community was a royal enterprise, commissioned to intercede and seek guidance on behalf of the king.

(12)   Recently Koowon Kim has conducted a major comparative study of dream incubation in the ancient Near East. As part of this study Kim identified various ritual activities used by the incubant to prepare for a vision. Examples cited by Kim include, among other things, purification rites, grain-offerings, pouring libations, crying, offering prayers and oaths, fasting, remaining silent, putting on special clothing, going naked and suspending daily routine.[194] Each of these activities could have been performed at Kuntillet ʿAjrud without leaving a trace in the archaeological record. After all, we have no anepigraphic evidence for any other prophet from this period.

Near Eastern Prophets, 176–79, 399–402. See also the convenient collections and discussion in Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*.

[194] Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene*, 69–70; cf. Patton, "A Great and Strange Correction", 202–03. These ritual activities could plausibly be extended to waking visions, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to assume that dream incubation (specifically) was conducted at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

(13)   Finally, it is possible that the large limestone basin (*Kajr*1.2) should be understood in connection to purification rites (e.g. washing hands and feet). Ritual cleansing before divine encounters is well attested in the Hebrew Bible: e.g. in Exod 19:10 the Israelites are required to wash their clothes before the Sinai theophany; meanwhile in Exodus and Leviticus there are explicit instructions for Aaron and his sons to wash before approaching God in the tabernacle (Exod 29:4; 30:17–21; 40:12, 30–31; Lev 8:6). The preceding are largely concerned with priestly cleanliness, but in 2 Kgs 3:11 Elisha is described as אשר־יצק מים על־ידי אליהו, one "who used to pour water over the hands of Elijah", which may have mantic connotations, although this is not assured.[195] It may even be possible to draw a direct analogy with the bronze basin (כיור) described in Exod 30:17–21 (cf. Exod 38:8; 40:7). Based on references from the Second Temple period we might surmise that the stone basin was used because it was believed to be immune from defilement (cf. John 2:6; *m. ʾOhal.* 5:5). Hence, the hypothesis that Kuntillet ʿAjrud was inhabited by a priestly-prophetic community offers some explanation for the labour invested in transporting this immense object to the site.

Furthermore, it may be no coincidence that the narrative in 2 Kgs 3:4–20 presupposes that the northern prophet Elisha could be located in the region of the wilderness of Edom. This is not to imply that a specific allusion to Kuntillet ʿAjrud was intended in this passage, but simply that it might preserve an underlying historical recollection.

The above points are, of course, highly conjectural, but the appeal of the hypothesis of a community of priestly-prophets lies in its ability to account not only for the remote location of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, and the

---

[195] It is possible that this simply reflects a social custom and the privileged proximity of a favoured disciple, but it should be noted that the phrase is nowhere else used in the Hebrew Bible.

interest of the northern capital in provisioning the site, but also for a number of the most important inscriptions and drawings, together with the (possible) evidence for a priestly presence. Crucially, as many mantic activities would leave little or no trace in the archaeological record, this hypothesis also provides some explanation for the absence of the sorts of items that we would usually expect to find associated with other cultic activities.

4.8.1. TOWARD AN EXPLANATION

In light of the foregoing, and taking account of the diachronic perspective, I tentatively propose the following scenario. Kuntillet ʿAjrud was initially constructed at the end of the 9th century or the beginning of the 8th as a caravanserai overlooking and protecting an important watering-hole (Phase 1). There is no way of knowing whether in the initial phase(s) the site was associated with the northern kingdom of Israel, since all of the inscribed materials were found on the Phase 3 floor—meaning they can only be directly associated with the final period of occupation. After some time there was a partial collapse of the Phase 1 complex. A short while later the buildings were rebuilt (Phase 2). However, this seems to have been an intermediate stage, anticipating a fundamental shift in the way the site was used. In the final stage (Phase 3) the benches were constructed in the bench-room and the KAPT were written on the newly plastered walls. It was at this time that Building B was constructed. Evidence for the weaving of fabrics suggests that in this phase the site was occupied on a permanent or semi-permanent basis (cf. §2.5).[196] The eastern orientation of the hill-top and the hymnic theophany (*Kajr*4.2) written on the wall of the bench-room suggest an association with the cult of YHWH of Teman, whose appearing was (symbolically) manifest as the sun rose each morning over Edom to the East. It seems that during this phase the settlement was occupied by a community of priests who were also

---

[196] *Pace* Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 111.

prophets of Y<small>HWH</small> (and Asherah?), drawn to the area as a place of divine immanence.[197] This community was apparently royally sanctioned and it was evidently of considerable importance as it was provisioned with wares drawn from around the kingdom of Israel, perhaps including tribute from Jerusalem. Furthermore, the transcribed letter fragments (*Kajr*3.1 and 3.6) suggest that the community maintained correspondence with the royal administration in Samaria.

Sometime in the second half of the 8th century the site was abandoned. There is no evidence that this was a hurried process. At that time, or shortly after, the buildings were again damaged, perhaps by an earthquake. There were no attempts to rebuild.

4.9. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE KAPT

With this provisional historical reconstruction in mind, we may now turn to consider the physical context of the plaster texts. The following discussion will examine the KAPT within four radiating contexts or spheres of interaction, beginning at the level of the writing surface, then at the level of the room, then the larger building or complex of rooms of which the room is a part, then at the level of the settlement as a whole. It should be recognised, however, that this is ultimately an artificial division. In the words of the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre: "[v]isible boundaries, such as walls or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity. The space of a room, bedroom, house or garden may be cut off in a sense from social space by barriers and walls, by all the signs of private property, yet still remain fundamentally part of that

---

[197] Given the ability of sunstroke to induce delirium and hallucination, it tempting to speculate that the community at Kuntillet ʿAjrud was an ecstatic cult that used music and sun-exposure on the platform structure to induce a vision; however, this goes far beyond the evidence.

space."[198] This complexity is compounded when we move beyond architectonics and consider patterns of behaviour conducted within and between physical spaces.[199] Consequently, the following discussion will attempt, as far as possible, to be responsive to functional and conceptual relationships between spaces, particularly as these would have been experienced in transitioning from one to another.

As discussed in the Introduction (§1.7), the governing principle will be interactive, focussing primarily on how an audience would have experienced a given text, with particular emphasis given to lines of sight.

4.9.1. *The Writing surface*

Analysis of the writing surface entails two aspects: (1) the technologies and techniques involved in the preparation of materials and the act of writing; (2) the physical arrangement of the inscribed fragments.

(1) *The writing surface and materials*

The white plaster was apparently made of local gypsum, applied in two thin layers over the crude mud-plaster that coated the walls of the

---

[198] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 87.

[199] This subject is vast, and far exceeds the scope of the present discussion. Indeed much of the discussion in *The Production of Space* was given matters of abstract, or social space; cf. also the lengthy critique in Edward Dimendberg, "Henri Lefebvre on Abstract Space", in *The Production of Public Space* (eds. Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith; Philosophy and Geogpraphy 2; Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998),17–48. What is important to note in this regard, however, is that the use of space can be responsive and dynamic, not merely static and deterministic. In other words, the manner in which individuals and groups interact with and within a space is conditioned by convention, past experience, and present and future exigency, as well as the physical features of the space. This brings us back to Foley's discussions of performance arena, and the horizons of expectations that audiences bring to bear on a performance event.

Fig.4.5—The benches at the entrance to Building A, looking North.

complex.[200] The base layer (which was not always present) consisted of unslaked gypsum with some lime inclusions, while the outer gesso was composed of slaked gypsum without grits.[201]

There is nothing intrinsic to gypsum-plaster that might suggest that it held a specifically cultic or religious significance.[202] However, it is worth noting that the plaster was restricted to certain areas of the site, located mostly at the eastern end of the complex and the east-facing wall at the western end of the courtyard in Building A. Some parts of the complex appear to have been roofed (e.g. the eastern entrance to Building A and the

---

[200] See Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 3: "[f]rom a morpho-geological point of view Kuntillet ʿAjrud is a residual hill structure of hard chalk with gypsum veins (Ghareb Formation). These were the materials for the buildings on the site".

[201] Ibid, 199.

[202] On the ubiquitous use of lime and gypsum plasters in building construction and decoration in the ancient Near East, see George R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine, Vol. 1* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 420–21; P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 330–31. Note with Wright that plastered surfaces were not infrequently decorated.

northern wing of Building B), and in those areas the use of gypsum-plaster may have been intended simply to illuminate the dimly-lit rooms. But this does not seem to be the case for the (apparently) open-air platform structure of Building B, which also seems to have been coated with gypsum-plaster (cf. §4.3).[203] As such, the restricted use of gypsum might suggest that the plaster was applied to demarcate certain sections as, in some way, separate from the rest of the complex; although the reason for this is not immediately clear (see below).

An alternative possibility that has not yet been discussed in the literature is that the reflective plaster was applied to the external surfaces in order to cool the site from the daytime heat (see §4.1). The use of white surfaces to reflect sunlight and limit thermal retention is a well attested strategy still used in modern building design, especially in warm dry climates.[204] In this case, the use of the white plaster on the internal surfaces of the bench room might have been intended to maximise light in the comparatively dark space (note that the plastered floor in the entrance to Building A would have created an effect similar to a lightwell). Otherwise, it might have been merely decorative or aesthetic.

Incidentally, it may be noted that the bench-lined extension forming the bent-axis entrance to Building A would have blocked sunlight for much of the morning, thereby providing a shaded and comparatively cool place to sit (fig.4.5; cf. 1 Sam 1:9; Prov 9:14; Tobit 7:1).[205]

---

[203] Cf. the discussion in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 57.

[204] Edward Allen and Patrick Rand, *Architectural Detailing: Function, Constructibility, Aesthetics* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 49, 56; Steven V. Szokolay, *Introduction to Architectural Science The Basis of Sustainable Design* (Hoboken, N.J.: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 74 §1.5.3.3.

[205] It should also be noted that the low surface area to volume ration of the long rooms to the east, south, and west of Building A corresponds to a building principle still used to regulate heat gain/loss; see Arvind Krishan, *Climate Responsive Architecture: A Design Handbook for Energy Efficient Buildings* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Education, 2001), 37.
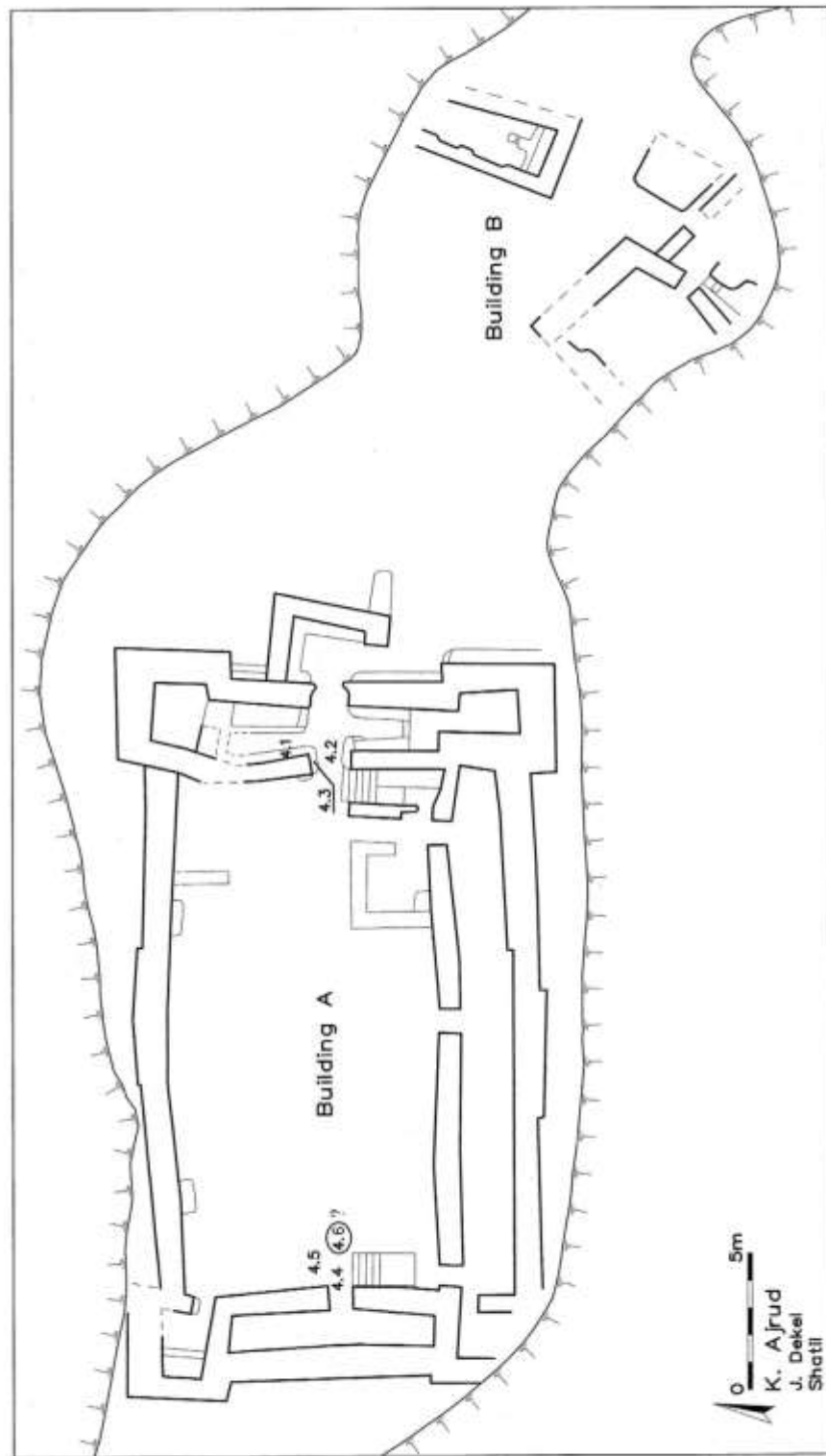
Fig.4.6—Location map of the KAPT

It is not clear whether it was intended from the outset that the white plaster would serve as a writing surface. But, if the whitened surfaces were designed to help with temperature regulation, then their use as a writing surface would presumably have been secondary. Furthermore, the fact that pictorial designs were painted directly onto the stone surface at the central entrance to the southern storeroom, suggests that the motivation to decorate the walls was not determined by the plaster alone.[206] This seems to confirm that the writings and drawings were, in some sense, additional (or incidental) to the primary purpose of the whitened surfaces (see further below).

Turning to the writing materials, two types of inks were used at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (including the KAPT). The black ink was composed of soot from burnt wood, while the red ink consisted of haematite (i.e. ochre; Fe_2O_3), which may have been sourced locally.[207]

The writing implement seems to have been a sort of brush, probably fashioned from a reed or rush, with stiff fibres cut to form a chisel-shaped nib (cf. §7.6.1).[208] In several places the ink preserves clear traces of the separation of the fibres (e.g. *Kajr*4.1, line 1). It should be noted, however, that at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (unlike Deir ʿAlla) there was no locally occurring

---

[206] See Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 51, 196.

[207] Ibid, 200, n.22. In terms of composition, there is nothing remarkable about the pigments. For a general discussion of the inks used for Northwest Semitic alphabetic texts see Godfrey R. Driver, *Semitic Writing: From Pictograph to Alphabet* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 86; David Diringer, *The Book Before Printing: Ancient, Medieval and Oriental* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), 548; Y. Nir-EL and Magen Broshi, "The Red Ink of the Dead Sea Scrolls", *Archaeometry* 38 (1996): 97; June Ashton, *Scribal Habits in the Ancient Near East c.3000 BCE to the Emergence of the Codex* (Mandelbaum Studies in Judaica 13; Sydney: Mandelbaum Publishing, 2008), 50–54.

[208] van der Kooij, "Early North-West Semitic Script Traditions", 252. See also the discussions in Driver, *Semitic Writing*, 85–86; cf. Ashton, *Scribal Habits*, 48–50. Note, however, that despite numerous organic finds, no such implement was discovered at the site; see the catalogue of botanical finds in Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 343–50.

source from whence reeds or rushes could be acquired, indicating that the necessary materials were brought to the site from elsewhere.

(2) *The arrangement of the fragments*

Broadly speaking, the plaster inscriptions can be divided into two groups: collection 1 was discovered at the eastern end of Building A, near the entrance to the bench-room; collection 2 was discovered at the western end of Building A, near the western stairway. Interestingly, the different coloured inks correspond to these two collections (i.e. collection 1 was written with black ink, while collection 2 was written with red ink); however, at present, it is unclear precisely what this distinction signifies. The following outline is based primarily on descriptions published by the excavators, Zeʾev Meshel and Avner Goren, in the recent *editio princeps*.[209]

Collection 1

*Kajr*4.1—The fragments of *Kajr*4.1 were discovered on top of the western bench in the northern wing of the bench-room. The plaster pieces remained pressed against the surface of the wall, evidently where they had fallen, suggesting that *Kajr*4.1 was written on the eastern face of the wall, at some height above the bench.[210]

*Kajr*4.2—The two fragments of *Kajr*4.2 were excavated from a layer of debris on the floor of the vestibule in the western entrance of the bench-room. Beneath the debris, the floor was covered by a layer of ash and charcoal which was interpreted by the excavators as evidence of a ceiling.[211] This led Meshel and Goren to suggest that there might have been a lintel spanning the entryway. On the basis of this reconstruction

---

[209] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 11–60.

[210] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 28. Given that *Kajr*4.3 was found *in situ* at a height of approximately 1.2m, it seems reasonable to infer that *Kajr*4.1 was originally situated at a similar height.

[211] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 22–24.

they inferred that *Kajr*4.2 was originally located on the eastern face of the lintel above the doorway between the bench-room and the courtyard.[212]

*Kajr*4.3—This was the only plaster text found *in situ*, approximately 1.2m above the floor level on the northern jamb of the doorway between the bench-room and the courtyard.[213]

Collection 2

*Kajr*4.4—The fragments of *Kajr*4.4 were discovered in the entrance to the western storeroom, apparently having fallen from the lintel (cf. *Kajr*4.2).[214]

*Kajr*4.5—Meshel and Goren included *Kajr*4.5 in their discussion of locus 104, at the base of the western stairs; however, elsewhere in the *editio princeps* the fragment is listed as coming from locus 101 (i.e. the western stairs).[215] Meshel has subsequently confirmed locus 104 to be the find-spot.[216] Consequently, Meshel and Goren suggested that the fragments might have come from the doorjamb leading into the western storeroom (cf. *Kajr*4.3).[217]

*Kajr*4.6—These fragments were listed as coming from locus 101, near the entrance to the western storeroom, but more precise information regarding the location of *Kajr*4.6 is not available. Note that *Kajr*4.6 was not originally plotted on the published plans (fig.4.6).[218]

---

[212] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 22–24.

[213] Ibid, 22.

[214] Ibid, 40; cf. the discussion on pp.46–47.

[215] Ibid, 40, 119.

[216] Zeʾev Meshel, email correspondence August 20th, 2014.

[217] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 40.

[218] Ibid, 120.

4.9.2. *The room*

4.9.2.1. *Collection 1: The Entrance to Building A*

In spatial terms, the most significant feature of collection 1 is its location in and around the western doorway of the bench-room. If it is assumed that *Kajr*4.1–4.3 comprise a single functionally related unit (cf. §2.9), then this collection as a whole should properly be associated with the transitional space between the bench-room and courtyard, rather than the bench-room itself. This impression is reinforced by the fact that there is only one place in the whole of the bench-room from which all three texts could be seen; specifically, the northern end of the south-eastern bench. But from there the oblique angle would have made it impossible to read *Kajr*4.1 (note the backward angle of the north-western wall; cf. fig.4.6). Of course, it may also be that *Kajr*4.1 should be isolated from *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3 and treated independently, with the northern wing of the bench-room as the primary frame of reference. But, even so, the fact remains that *Kajr*4.3 was actually situated *within* the doorway, while *Kajr*4.2 was apparently written on the lintel, positioned in such a way as to be readily visible to someone passing through the vestibule between the two wings of the bench-room. As such, it may reasonably be inferred that *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3, at least, were probably connected to activities associated with passing through the entry-way.

But what was the nature of this association? Unfortunately the texts themselves are silent as to the reason for their placement, and it is necessary to proceed heuristically. This is necessarily a speculative undertaking, but it is possible to limit the degree of speculation by drawing comparisons, where possible, with analogous uses of writing in other contexts.

The first observation is, however, entirely pragmatic. That is, the placement of the inscriptions in the entrance has practical implications that must have necessarily affected any interaction with the KAPT. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is the small size of the handwriting, only averaging about one centimetre in width per letter (see fig.4.7). This small

scale must have required a reader to stand remarkably close to the inscription in order to read the text. All the more so if the bench-room was roofed, as seems to have been the case (see §4.9.1), since the space would surely have been comparatively dark even during the daytime.[219] However, given the location of *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3 in the only passage leading into Building A, it would have been impractical to pause and study the text; an inconvenience that could easily have been mitigated if the inscriptions were written on the adjacent walls in the manner of *Kajr*4.1.

This raises the question whether the inscriptions were intended for (semi)permanent residents or regular visitors who were familiar with the contents and signification of the texts, or whether they were intended to communicate previously unknown information to occasional visitors to the site. Unfortunately, the texts contain no clear indication of their intended audience(s). But, in either case, given their obscure placement, it seems that ease of reading was a secondary consideration; rather, it was apparently the semiotic or the material presence of the written word that was paramount.[220] Consequently, any explanation of the KAPT must be able to account for their placement at the entrance to Building A without requiring that they be read. Several explanations satisfy these criteria. I will discuss each in turn.

---

[219] The comparative darkness would have been especially inhibiting immediately on entering from the outside. Depending on the amount and quality of ambient light, it might even have been necessary to use a lighted lamp, and two lamps were in fact found in the northern wing of the bench-room; but, there is no evidence connecting these to the inscriptions; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 28.

[220] Nevertheless, the prominent placement of the texts suggests that they were visually significant.

Fig.4.7—*Kajr*4.2

The KAPT as ornamentation

In some ways the simplest explanation is that the texts were purely ornamental. This supposes an abstracted use of writing, in which individual graphemes and the written text as a whole are dissociated from their semantic functions in order to satisfy aesthetic sensibilities without imparting any deeper significance. But is this likely? Probably not. I am not aware of any comparable instance in which writing is used in this purely abstract sense. Writing is an inherently semiotic system, and even in Islamic artistic traditions which evince a remarkably developed use of calligraphy in architectural decoration, written ornamentation seems to have at least symbolic or connotative significance.[221]

---

[221] See the example of inscribed minarets adduced in Oleg Grabar, "Graffiti or Proclamations: Why Write on Buildings?" in Oleg Grabar, *Islamic art and beyond* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006), 243.

The KAPT as graffiti

Another explanation is that the inscriptions were graffiti.[222] By graffiti I mean unsanctioned and opportunistic writing, the meaning of which is not dependant on the function and use of the object or structure on which it is found.[223] That is not to say, however, that the writing surface is insignificant. A hypothetical modern example will suffice to illustrate the point. A pair of lovers might carve their initials into a park bench; e.g. "A.B. loves C.D.". In itself, this act neither adds to nor detracts from that bench's function as a place to sit, but for the lovers who produced it the engraving is profoundly connected to the time and place. Moreover, the semi-permanence (or perceived permanence) of the writing surface is inherently connected to the role of the graffito as a memorialising activity. By carving their initials into the bench, the lovers are able, in some sense, to transcend the particular moment they wish to commemorate, and to communicate it to posterity.

Several interrelated qualities of graffiti may be particularly illuminating in regard to the KAPT:

First, *graffiti is esoteric*. In the example of the lover's graffito, the denotative signification of the initials is unknown to the average passer-by, but to the initiated, who know the identities signified by the letters (i.e. the lovers), the graffito is deeply meaningful. Correspondingly, in the case of the KAPT, the choice of texts might have held special significance for the graffitist, but we should not necessarily expect this personal significance to be immediately obvious to an uninitiated audience.

Second, *graffiti is polysemous*. The lover's graffito serves a dual role. On the one hand, it is a private communication between the lovers. On the other hand, it serves as a public proclamation of their love; albeit, one in which the identity of the lovers is encoded. Furthermore, to someone familiar with the custom, the graffito may evoke an amorous

---

[222] For other examples of pre-exilic Hebrew graffiti the Khirbet Beit Lei graffiti.

[223] Grabar, "Graffiti or Proclamations", 239–40.

experience of their own; while, to someone who is less romantically inclined, it may simply be seen as an act of vandalism. In the case of the KAPT, the act of writing is itself deeply symbolic. Even to an illiterate audience, writing connotes, among other things, a certain social standing (indicated, at a basic level, by the ability to participate in education). Further, given that for the most part writing would have only been encountered in official contexts (e.g. temple, market place, or military establishments), it is probable that the written word would generally have held deeply ingrained connotations of religious and administrative power and authority. However, if the KAPT were unauthorised graffiti, it might be preferable to view these connotations in terms of the subversion of authority (cf. the discussion of anti-language in §3.7).[224]

This also has implications at the level of the content. As discussed in Chapter 1 (see §1.3), the act of naming particular deities (e.g. YHWH of Teman *Kajr*4.1) or referencing certain folklore and motifs (e.g. *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3) has cultural significance that transcends the specific text.[225] Depending on how one is situated in relation to the immanent tradition, such referentiality might be either inclusive or exclusive. That is, it might represent to the audience the degree to which they participate in the cultural continuum of the composer or performer, or it might demonstrate the degree to which they are removed from that culture. This emblematic or referential quality of graffiti leads to my next two points.

Third, *graffiti is a form of self-identification*. In other words, it is an intentional appropriation of the emblematic qualities just described in order to communicate participation in a particular social or cultural

---

[224] Consider, for example, the ritual curses written by the priest in Num 5:11–31; the military correspondence preserved in the Arad and Lachish ostraca, and the juridical petition recorded in the Meṣad Ḥašavyahu ostracon; or inscribed seal impressions or the inscribed lion weights from Nimrud. For a discussions contexts within which writing would have been encountered in daily life in ancient Israel, see Ian M. Young, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence: Part II", *VT* (1998): 416–19.

[225] Cf. Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, pp. 1-29, esp. 7-8.

tradition. Through the adoption of a certain aesthetic and vernacular the graffitist consciously aligns himself/herself with (or against) an ideological or social group.[226] This is readily transparent in the case of political graffiti or the stylized calligraphy of modern street-art.[227] In the case of the KAPT this relates to the use of the Phoenician script and Hebrew literary register (see Chapter 3). But the choice of text is also significant, and in this regard it is interesting to note the particularly Israelite character of both the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 and (potentially) the apparently mythopoeic *Kajr*4.3. It is not unreasonable to assume that these texts were selected specifically for their nationalistic implications as a form of self-identification: an implicit statement of ethnicity, or cultural alignment. This statement takes on special significance in the context of a remote settlement in the eastern Sinai desert.

Fourth, *graffiti is spatializing*. That is, graffiti is essentially a colonising activity that claims spaces and demarcates margins and borders.[228] By writing on a wall the graffitist implicitly asserts his/her right to be in that place.[229] Once again, this might be both inclusive and exclusive.

What is striking about the last three qualities of graffiti is that they operate primarily at the level of connotation. The content of the inscription is important, but the signification of the text amounts to much more than the sum of the words. According to this explanation, the placement of the

---

[226] Compare Halliday, "Anti-Languages", 570–84.

[227] See, for example, Karen L. Adams and Anne Winter, "Gang Graffiti as a Discourse Genre", *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 1 (1997): 337–60; Swati Chattopadhyay, "Visualising the Body Politic", in *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City* (eds. Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2014), 52–54.

[228] Cf. Tracey Bowen, "Graffiti as Spatializing Practice and Performance", *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 25 (2013): n.p. [cited 10 September 2014]. Online: http://www.rhizomes.net/issue25/soldatenko.html.

[229] This quality even operates, in a relatively benign way, in the example of the lover's initials, as the act of carving the initials into the bench is motivated by a desire to claim a specific time and place as particularly significant for the pair.

KAPT at the entrance may be understood as a visual declaration of identity and the right of the graffitist to be at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, either as a resident or a traveller passing through the site.[230]

The KAPT as authorised spatial markers

A third explanation mirrors the spatializing and emblematic qualities of graffiti but extends them in the context of an authorised text. That is, the distinctively Israelite inscriptions might have been commissioned by the authorities at Kuntillet ʿAjrud in order to signal the Israelite character of the settlement, or, more specifically, of the religious community postulated above. Especially significant in this regard are the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 and the references to YHWH of the Teman in *Kajr*4.1, which imply the theological legitimacy of the Israelite presence due to the immanence of the Israelite national god (see §2.8.2). In other words, by invoking the name of YHWH of the Teman, who, in the southern theophany tradition (i.e. *Kajr*4.2), is associated with the remote South, the writer claims divine protection and an imputed right to be in the region.

This explanation is inevitably bound to the geo-political context of the settlement. If the historical context discussed above is correct (see §4.7), then the recent military conquests formed the immediate background to the KAPT. In this regard, the possible reference to Cain/Kenites in *Kajr*4.3 is particularly intriguing. At one level, depending on how the text as a whole is reconstructed, this reference might be understood as either exclusive, asserting Israelite hegemony, or conciliatory, alluding to the primeval relationship and shared history of the two nations.[231] However, these alternatives can be narrowed from an archaeological point of view. Given the complete lack of local Negev ware at the site, it seems that the Israelite presence was essentially exclusivist,

---

[230] Again, there might be a subversive element here, but the evidence does not seem to require it (cf. §3.7).

[231] Cf. Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited", 140–50.

rendering a conciliatory gesture unlikely.[232] In this regard, it is perhaps no coincidence that the texts located around the main entrance seem to reference characteristically Israelite deities and traditions.

Importantly, it is not necessary to assume that local populations possessed the ability to read the inscriptions. Part of the inscription's effectiveness might lie precisely in the fact that their denotative significance would be concealed from some (illiterate) viewers. By displaying access to hidden knowledge the writers tacitly assert their separation from those from whom that knowledge is concealed. Furthermore, according to the old adage that knowledge is power, hierarchical relationships are a basic correlate of such concealed knowledge. Conceivably, at both conscious and subconscious levels this inscrutability would further codify the us/them distinction implied by the indexicality of the texts' contents; i.e. the inscription of characteristically Hebraic traditions. But allowance should also be made for the possibility that knowledge of the texts was disseminated by word of mouth.[233] In this case, a suitable analogy is the Tell Dan stele, which was written in Aramaic and erected in newly conquered territory as a symbol of Aramean hegemony. The materiality of the stele (i.e. its medium, and location) is thus an important aspect of the symbol as a whole. Accordingly, at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, the act of writing collection 1 at the entrance to Building A co-opts the whole structure to this semiotic system, meaning that the texts and building should be viewed as an integrated whole and interpreted in terms of the semiotics of power.

---

[232] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 67. Of course, it is possible that the inhabitants differentiated between local communities, separating themselves from certain groups, but still wishing to be aligned with the Kenite group.

[233] Note that these are not mutually exclusive possibilities. Even if reports of the inscriptions' contents circulated more widely, it I reasonable to assume that details about their precise wording and contents would remain a mystery.

The internal division of space

A fourth possibility is that collection 1 was intended to demarcate the bench-room as separate from the rest of the complex; perhaps as some sort of sacred space? In this context it is interesting to recall that the closest biblical parallels for the theophany in *Kajr*4.2 are songs, some of which may have been sung in the liturgical setting of a temple context (see §2.8.3; cf. *Kajr*3.9 and the discussion of mantic hymns above). As such, the religious content of the texts might reflect activities that were conducted within the bench-room. A somewhat base analogy might be the erotic frescoes found in the brothels at Pompeii. In this regard, it is worth recalling the possible mural of a musician painted on the wall of the bench-lined annex to the east of the bench-room.

The KAPT as prayers

Yet another explanation, relating to the numinous power of writing, is that the inscriptions (either as graffiti or authorised texts) were prayers for wellbeing or protection (cf. §4.5). This explanation follows directly from the interpretation of *Kajr*4.1 as a blessing, and seems to have been presumed in much past scholarship.[234] According to this explanation, the association of the southern theophany tradition with the motif of the divine warrior marching to succour his people (*Kajr*4.2) might have been intended as an invocation for divine protection. However, it is not easy to see how the narrative recorded in *Kajr*4.3 would correspond to this explanation.

The KAPT as apotropaic

Lastly, it is possible that the inscriptions of collection 1 had an apotropaic function. From the point of view of comparative anthropology, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the texts located near the entrance are to

---

[234] Again, it is worth noting that in *The Context of Scripture*, *Kajr*4.1 and 4.2 are included together with the pithoi inscriptions under the rubric "Votive Inscriptions" (cf. §2.9).

be associated directly with the passageway, since ethnographers and anthropologists have long stressed the ritual and conceptual importance of doorways and other transitional spaces.[235] Thus, Arnold van Gennep, the seminal theorist on liminality and transitional rituals, famously observed: "The door is the boundary between the foreign and the domestic worlds in the case of the ordinary dwelling, between the profane and the sacred worlds in the case of the temple. Therefore to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world".[236] Although somewhat stark, this binary formulation posits a helpful analytical framework that has proved to be both remarkably versatile and remarkably enduring.[237] That is, insofar as walls and doorways function to create and define physical space, they necessarily establish a dichotomy which is reflected in the conceptual categories: *inside* and *outside*; *this side* and *that side*. The boundary between spaces is not impermeable, however, and it is possible to pass from one to the other. The portals through which this boundary is traversed (i.e. doorways and windows) constitute an intermediate space (van Gennep's liminal space) with its own particular dangers and vulnerabilities. As such, this liminal space is often felt to be in need of special protection, typically in the form of apotropaia, talismans, and rituals of inclusion and exclusion that are intended to assist in the

---

[235] Cf. Mike P. Pearson and Colin Richards, "Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space and Time", in *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space* (eds. Michael P. Pearson and Colin Richards; London: Routledge, 1997), 22–24.

[236] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 20.

[237] van Gennep's liminality paradigm has been developed and applied to fields as diverse as social behaviour and urban planning; e.g. Quentin Stevens, "Betwixt and Between: Building Thresholds, Liminality and Public Space" in *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (eds. Karen A. Franck and Quentin Stevens; London: Routledge, 2007), 73–92; and the phenomenology of pain; e.g. Marja-Liisa Honkasalo, "Space and Embodied Experience: Rethinking the Body in Pain", *Body & Society* 4 (1998): 35–57.

transition between spaces on the one hand, and to guard against the incursion of malignant forces on the other.[238]

Strong evidence for the existence of a belief in the ritual significance of doorways in Iron Age Palestine is found in the aetiological tale in 1 Sam 5:1–5, which records the Philistine custom of not stepping on the threshold of the temple of Dagon in Ashdod. It appears that by the late pre-exilic period this superstition had come to be relatively widespread, as Zephaniah seems to reflect a similar practice of avoidance in his prophecy against כל־הדולג על־המפתן, "all the leapers on (or over) the threshold" (Zeph 1:9).[239] Further, the belief that the threshold represented a special place of danger seems to be hinted at by the metaphor: לפתח חטאת רבץ, "sin is crouching at the door (lit. opening)" (Gen 4:7); cf. the story of the Levite's concubine in Judg 19:26–27, where the threshold (הסף) is a symbol of denied protection, and the liminal status of the concubine. Comparison

---

[238] See the dated but still informative H. Clay Trumbull, *Threshold Covenant: Or The Beginning of Religious Rites* (2nd ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896). See also Pearson and Richards, "Ordering the World", 21–22. And, with a focus on ancient Mesopotamian worldviews, see Deena Ragavan, "Entering Other Worlds: Gates, Rituals, and Cosmic Journeys in Sumerian Sources", in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World* (ed. Deena Ragavan; OIS 9; Chicago, Ill.: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2013), 213–14.

[239] It is generally agreed that 1 Sam 5:1–5 forms the background to this verse, but there has been some debate as to whether Zeph 1:9 should be understood in terms of the adoption of Philistine customs in Judah, or of deliberate contravention by stepping on the threshold; see the discussion in O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wiliam B. Eerdmans, 1990), 277–78, and n.4. The confusion is compounded by the mixed textual witness. The LXX contains the variant reading: εκδικήσω επί πάντας εμφανώς επί τα πρόπυλα, "I will visibly punish all in (or upon) the gateway" (although, LXX[B] omits επί πάντας; while *codex Sinatucus* has προπύλαια). In favour of the MT's reading, however, is *Tg. Jon.*: כל דמהלכין בנמוסי פלשתאי, "all who walk according to the customs of the Philistines", which is clearly influenced by 1 Sam 5:5; and Vulg.: *omnem qui arroganter ingreditur super limen*, "all who arrogantly enter over the threshold". The Syriac has the apparently interpretative variant: ܥܠܘܬܐ ܘܒܙܘܙܐ "robbers and despoilers".

may also be drawn with the ceremony in which a slave could make his/her status permanent, by having his/her ear pierced at the door (Exod 21:6; Deut 15:17). The symbolism of this act is unclear, but it is probably significant that the ritual involved the slave coming permanently into the בית אב.[240]

More generally, it is possible to cite abundant evidence for the use of apotropaic devices at doorways throughout the ancient Near East. One of the most ubiquitous examples is the portrayal of hybrid creatures at city gates and the entrances of public and religious architecture (e.g. the *lamassu* gates from Nimrud).[241] On a domestic scale, clay figurines were often deposited in liminal areas of Neo-Assyrian houses, including the space around doors and thresholds.[242] And in Pharaonic Egypt there is

---

[240] Moreover, Exod 21:6 specifies that the slave is to be brought before God (והגישו אדניו אל־האלהים), which might suggest that the ritual had a religious dimension. However, as Tigay noted, the omission of the phrase "before God" probably implies that in Deuteronomy the ceremony was entirely secular; cf. Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* דברים: *The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (Philadelphia : Jewish Publication Society, 1996).

[241] See, for example, Harry R. Hall, *Babylonian and Assyrian Sculpture in the British Museum* (Paris: Les Éditions G. van Oest, 1928), 37, and pl.xx; Heinz Demisch, *Die Sphinx: Die Geschichte ihrer Darstellung von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1977), 24, 28; Margaret Huxley, "The Gates and Guardians in Sennacherib's Addition to the Temple of Assur", *Iraq* 62 (2000), 109–37; Ragavan, "Entering Other Worlds, 201–21; Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta, Ga: SBL, 2013), 62, with references; cf. the temple at ʿAin Dara: Ali Abou-Assaf, *Der Tempel von ʿAin Dārā* (Mainz am Rhein: P. v. Zabern, 1990). An interesting comparison can be drawn with the depiction of Dragon motifs and other apotropaic devices on lintels and doorways in early-medieval Islamic art; cf. Sara Kuehn, *The Dragon in Medieval East Christian and Islamic Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 21–22; Finbarr Barry Flood, "Image against Nature: Spolia as Apotropaia in Byzantium and the *dār al-Islām*", *The Medieval History Journal* 9 (2006):149–51.

[242] Carolyn Nakamura, "Dedicating Magic: Neo-Assyrian Apotropaic Figurines and the Protection of Assur", *World Archaeology* 36 (2004): 11–25. Nakamura drew special attention to the fact that these deposits were buried, noting an ancient Mesopotamian world-view identifying the ground as the permeable barrier against malevolent chthonic

evidence that internal and external doors of domestic structures were often painted red, which seems to have had apotropaic significance.[243] In a more specialised context, there is evidence for the placement of apotropaic images and figurines at the entrances to sick-rooms in Mesopotamia in order to protect infants from the child-snatching demon Lamaštu.[244] And one Babylonian incantation, warding against an un-named malevolence that rises from under the bed, even addresses the door itself: "you, door and bolt, you must know: I now fall under the protection of (these) two (divine) lords [i.e. Ninurta and Marduk]".[245]

By and large, the material evidence of apotropaia tends to be pictorial or sculpted, but the evidence of spoken rituals, such as the Babylonian incantation just cited, demonstrates that safeguards associated with the doorway were not limited to iconographic representations alone.[246] In fact, there is also evidence that the written word was felt to be potent and effective for protection. For this we may adduce the two

---

forces; ibid., 18; cf. idem, "Mastering Matters: Magical Sense and Apotropaic Figurine Worlds of Neo-Assyria" in *Archaeologies of Materiality* (ed. Lynn Meskell; Malden, Ma.: Blackwell, 2005), 36–38. See also the discussion and bibliography in Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts For the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, Ma.: Hendrickson, 2005).

[243] See Bernard Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1934–1935)* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1939), 40; see also the discussion in Lynn Meskell, "An Archaeology of Social Relations in an Egyptian Village", *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5 (1998): 227–29; J. F. Borghouts, *The magical texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 44. On the significance of the colour red, cf. Georges Posener, "Les Signes noirs dans les rubriques", *JEA* 35 (1949): 77–81, esp. 78; note in particular the use of red ink to write the names of enemies (p.78), apparently in order to confound them. I am indebted to Boyo Ockinga for the Posener reference.

[244] Marten Stol and Frans A. M. Wiggermann, *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible: its Mediterranean Setting* (Cuneiform Monographs 14; Groningen: Styx, 2000), 239.

[245] Trans. Frans A. M. Wiggermann, in Stol and Wiggermann, *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible*, 246.

[246] For additional evidence of ritual incantations see Blane W. Conklin, "Arslan Tash I and other Vestiges of a Particular Syrian Incantatory Thread" *Bib* 84 (2003): 89–101.

engraved plaques from Arslan Tash, which bear incantation texts accompanied by apparently apotropaic images, including a winged sphinx.[247] The upper-edges of both plaques are pierced, apparently so that they could be hung, and although it is by no menas certain that they were to be situated at the doorway, the incantations seem to be primarily concerned with protection of the house from demonic intrusion (note especially the references to פתח "door" and מזזת "doorframes" in the text covering the image of the deity on tablet 1).[248] Significantly, these tablets were inscribed on every available surface, including the top, base, and sides, and even covering the iconographic designs, which suggests that the writing itself was felt to have an important role in protecting against danger.[249]

Within the Hebrew tradition, the inscribed doorframe at Kuntillet ʿAjrud invites comparison with Deut 6:6–9 (paralleled in Deut 11:18–20):[250]

---

[247] See, John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions: Including Inscriptions in the Mixed Dialect of Arslan Tash*, vol.3 (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1982), 78–92, with references; cf. more recently Denis Pardee, "Les documents d'Arslan Tash: authentiques ou faux?", *Syria* 75 (1998): 15–54, with photographs, transcriptions and philological remarks.

[248] On the significance of the references to the doorway see esp. Conklin, "Arslan Tash I and other Vestiges of a Particular Syrian Incantatory Thread", 89–101.

[249] Cf. the inscribed amulets from Ketef Hinnom. Although, as Yehudah Cohn has cautioned, the parallel is not precise, as the Ketef Hinnom amulets contain no mention of malevolent forces, curses or magic formulas; Yehuda Cohn, *Tangled Up in Text: Tefillin and the Ancient World* (BJS 351: Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008), 50. For additional examples of inscribed amulets from the ancient Mediterranean, see Yehuda Cohn, *Tangled Up in Text: Tefillin and the Ancient World* (BJS 351: Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008), 17–21.

[250] This parallel has long been recognised; cf. Zeʾev Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *ABD* 4: 105.

‏⁶והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על־לבבך: ‏⁷ושננתם לבניך ודברת בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך: ‏⁸וקשרתם לאות על־ידך והיו לטטפת בין עיניך: ‏⁹וכתבתם על־מזוזת ביתך ובשעריך

⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷And you shall teach them to your children and you shall speak them when you sit in your house and when you walk in the way; when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand and they shall be a frontlet between your eyes. *⁹And you shall write them on the doorframes* (‏מזוזת‎) *of your house and on your gates.*

Attempts have been made to draw parallels between these verses and the plaques from Arslan Tash.[251] But, it is not self-evident that the injunction in Deut 6:6–9 and 11:18–20 had apotropaic intent. In fact, inner-biblical tradition apparently saw the imagery as figurative: cf. Prov 6:20–22: ‏²⁰נצר בני מצות אביך ואל־תטש תורת אמך: ‏²¹קשרם על־לבך תמיד ענדם על־גרגרתך: ‏²²בהתהלכך תנחה אתך בשכבך תשמר עליך והקיצות היא תשיחך:, "My son, keep the commandments of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother. ²¹Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. ²²When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down they will guard you; and when you wake they will preoccupy you" (cf. Prov 1:8–9; Isa 44:5).[252]

To be sure, Deut 6:6–9 and 11:18–20 are the basis for the ancient custom of attaching a *mezuzah*[253] to the doorframes of Jewish homes, and in some modern Jewish circles there is a belief that the mezuzah itself has mechanistic potency as a deterrent against evil.[254] Certainly, by the

---

[251] e.g. Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and Richard J. Saley, "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B. C. from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria" *BASOR* 197 (1970): 48–49.

[252] For a fuller discussion of the relationship between these verses, seeCohn, *Tangled Up in Text*, 46–48.

[253] A container in which there is a scroll bearing the words of Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21.

[254] For a discussion of the mechanistic view of the mezuzah, including ancient rabbinic sources, see Martin L. Gordon, "Mezuzah: Protective Amulet or Religious Symbol?" *Tradition* 16 (1977): 7–8.

medieval period the protective function of the *mezuzah* appears to have been generally accepted,[255] and there is some evidence that this belief also featured relatively widely in earlier rabbinic thought.[256] However, there is no evidence for the antecedents of this understanding in the biblical period. Indeed, in the Deuteronomic injunction, the use of the anaphoric pronoun אלה to identify the inscription's contents as הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום, "*these* words that I command you today" (Deut 6:6; 11:18), rather suggests that the texts were primarily intended as a reminder (for the Israelites) of the Deuteronomic Law.[257] Moreover, in Deut 11:21–28 the contingent blessings are explicitly said to stem from faithful observance (שמר; 11:22) of the commandments (מצות; 11:22), rather than any inherent or mechanistic potency of the written word.[258]

Further still, the memorialising or mnemonic intention behind the verses seems to be confirmed by the description of the words as an אות, "sign". Significantly, in the Pentateuch the noun אות regularly denotes a symbol serving as a reminder for the Israelites of their covenant relationship with God (e.g. Gen 9:12, 13, 17; 17:11;[259] Exod 3:12; 13:9,

---

[255] Martin L. Gordon, "Mezuzah: Protective Amulet or Religious Symbol?" *Tradition* 16 (1977): 8.

[256] See esp. *b. ʿAvod. Zar.* 11a; *b. Menaḥ.* 33b; Cf. Wojciech Kosior, "'It will not let the Destroying [One] Enter': The Mezuzah as an Apotropaic Device According to Biblical and Rabbinic Sources:" *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture* 9 (2014): 221–38; however, there is also reason to believe that this belief was not universal; cf. Martin L. Gordon, "Mezuzah: Protective Amulet or Religious Symbol" *Tradition* 16 (1977): 7–40.

[257] Cf. Deut 27:1–10.

[258] In fact, the Hebrew employs an emphatic construction consisting of an infinitive absolute followed by an imperfect verb, leaving no doubt that it is obedience that is at issue: כי אם־שמר תשמרון את־כל־המצוה הזאת, "if you *diligently obey* all these commands" (Deut 11:22). Admittedly, there is an inherent ambiguity in the expression, as "these words" (Deut 6:6; 11:22) may be interpreted cataphorically to refer to the injunction itself, or anaphorically, referring to the Mosaic law more broadly; however, the wider context seems to suggest that it is the latter that is intended (see esp. Deut 11:31).

[259] Interestingly, *b. Menaḥ. 43b* draws an equivalence between circumcision and the Mezuzah; however, as this passage predicated on the protective power of each, it is

16; 31:13, 17 Num 16:38 [Heb. 17:3]).[260] However, the evidence is complex. The Deuteronomic expression: וקשרתם לאות על־ידך והיו לטטפת בין עיניך, "you shall bind it as a sign upon your hand and as a frontlet between your eyes" (Deut 6:8; 11:18) is paralleled in Exod 13:16 והיה לאות על־ידכה ולטוטפת בין עיניך, "and it shall be as a sign upon your hands and as a frontlet between your eyes". A slight (but significant) variation of this same expression also occurs in Exod 13:9 והיה לך לאות על־ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך, "and it shall be for you as a sign on your hand and as a *reminder* between your eyes" (cf. Isa 57:8 where זכרון is again used of a memorial seemingly associated with the doorway מזוזה).[261] Neither verse in Exodus relates the אות to the written word. Rather, in both verses the sign is connected to ritual performances, commemorating God's saving works in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt (cf. Exod 13:6–8, 12–14). Moreover, Exod 13:9 includes the (probable) interpolation that the sign is to serve as a memorial (זכרון) for the Israelites themselves (לך; *dativus commodi*, lit. "for you"). Nevertheless, in Exod 13:12–15 the context is the redemption of the firstborn among the Israelites, which is explicitly linked to the death of the firstborn in Egypt (Exod 12:1–32), and, by extension, to the blood of the Passover lamb, which was spread on the doorframes (מזוזת) of the houses of the Israelites (Exod 12:21–23). Significantly, in Exod 12:13 this blood is likewise described as a sign (אות): והיה הדם לכם לאת על הבתים אשר אתם שם, "and the blood shall be for you *as a sign* upon the houses where you are", and, consequently, Deut 6:6–9; 11:18–20, and Exod 12:1–32 are tethered by a linguistic thread (which also runs through Exodus 13), centred on the אות.

---

unclear whether the equivalence rests on the fact that both are described as signs (אות; Gen 17:11), or whether it rests on the apparently apotropaic circumcision rite in Exod 4:25.

[260] Cf. Exod 4:8, 9, 17, 28, 30; 7:3; 10:1; Deut 4:38; 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 26:8, 46, where אות is a sign of God's power and deliverance.

[261] I am indebted to Stephen Llewelyn for Isaiah reference.

The relationship between these verses was not lost on later rabbinic commentators. One midrash in the *Mekilta*, tractate Pisḥa 11, explicitly draws an analogy between the injunction of Deuteronomy and the blood of the Passover lamb, stating: "if it is said of the blood of the paschal sacrifice in Egypt, the less important … 'he will not permit the destroyer (to enter)'; how much more so will the mezuzah, the more important … not permit the destroyer (to enter)".[262] However, as this is a *kal v'chomer* (*a fortiori*) argument, based on the potency and frequency of the divine name in specific pericopae (vis. Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21), it is not certain that the premise can be extended to collection 1 (notwithstanding a relatively high proportion of DNN).[263]

Furthermore, a certain ambiguity also surrounds the biblical description of the paschal sacrifice itself. To be sure, Exod 12:13b and 12:23 seem to imply that God (or the "destroyer") is repulsed by the blood; however, the verses do not explicitly attribute any mechanistic efficacy to the blood. Rather, in both verses the sparing of the Israelite houses is attributed to God's seeing (ראה√; 12:13, 23) the blood at the door, and seems to assume some sort of volitional agency (ולא יתן המשחית לבא, "and

---

[262] In full, the text reads: ומה אם דם פסח מצרים הקל שאינו אלא לשעה ואינו נוהג ביום ובלילה ואינו נוהג לדורות נאמר בו ולא יתן המשחית מזוזה שהיא חמורה שיש בה עשרה שמות מיוחדין ונוהגת ביום ובלילה ונוהגת לדורות על אחת כמה וכמה שלא יתן המשחית, "what! if it is said of the blood of the paschal sacrifice in Egypt, the less important—since it was not prescribed for day and for night, and was not to be observed in subsequent generations—'he will not permit the destroyer (to enter)'; how much more will the *Mezuzah*, the more important—since it contains the name of God ten times, and was prescribed for day and night and for all generations—not permit the destroyer (to enter)"; Hebrew based on Jacob Z. Lauterbach, *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael* (JPS Classic Reissues; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 61–62.

[263] The tetragrammaton occurs three times in *Karj*4.1, and El (x2) and possibly Baal are attested in *Kajr*4.2. No DNN are preserved in the extant fragment of *Kajr*4.3. Note also that there is no real evidence that in the biblical period the tetragrammaton was felt to have the sort of numinous power assumed by the *Mekilta*; cf. Steven Ortlepp , *Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton: A Historico-Linguistic Approach* (lulu.com, 2011), 38–39.

he (God) *will not permit* [*qal*] the destroyer to enter" 12:23).[264] Moreover, in Exod 12:13a the sign (אות) of the blood is again specified by the *dativus commodi* as being for the benefit of the Israelites themselves, suggesting that the blood had a symbolic (mnemonic) if not an affective (apotropaic) purpose.[265] Admittedly, it is possible that this reflects an historicising or demythologising *tendenz*.[266] But, even so, these considerations warrant caution when ascribing an apotropaic function to the KAPT, especially because we cannot know where the writers Kuntillet ʿAjrud stood in relation to the postulated demythologisation process.

So, what are the implications for Kuntillet ʿAjrud? On the one hand, the possibility that Deut 6:6–9 and 11:18–20 served a mnemonic purpose means we cannot simply assume that collection 1 was placed near the doorway for apotropaic reasons. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the parallel between collection 1 and Deut 6:9 and 11:20 is ultimately superficial, stemming principally from the similar location of each. Yet there are also important differences between the two.

As has already been noted, Deut 6:9 and 11:20 seem to relate specially to the Deuteronomic Law (cf. the instruction in Prov 6:20–22),

---

[264] William K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 43–49, has reached much the same conclusion. As Gilders seems to recognize, the agreement of these verses as to the role of the blood is all the more significant due to the fact that it bridges the customary source-critical divisions of the text.

[265] The enigmatic tale about the circumcision of Moses and Zipporah's son (Exod 4:24–26), may be adduced as indirect evidence for a belief in the inherent apotropaic power of blood. For a detailed discussion of this difficult passage see Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus* (Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1974), 95–101. It is, furthermore, interesting to note that *Tg. Neof.* and a fragmentary targum introduce the מחבל. "destroyer" as a character in Exod 4:25, the same noun as is used to translate משחית in Exod 12:23, implying that in later Jewish exegetical tradition these events were understood to be related; cf. the discussion of the reception history of Exod 4:25 in Geza Vermes, "Baptism and Jewish Exegesis: New Light from Ancient Sources", *NTS* 4 (1958): 308–19.

[266] I am indebted to Stephen Llewelyn for this suggestion.

but at Kuntillet ʿAjrud this is not the case. The fragmentary nature of *Kajr*4.1 and 4.3 means it is impossible to be certain about their contents, but when we turn to the poetic theophany in *Kajr*4.2 we are on surer ground. In fact, as has already been discussed (see §2.8.3), comparisons with similar biblical theophanies suggest a relationship with hymnic traditions, extolling God's protection of his people. This might hold a clue for the interpretation of *Kajr*4.2. Could the text have been associated with a ritual for passing through the entrance?[267] If so, then the material text may be compared with the engraved blessings discussed in Chapter 2 (*Kajr*1.1–1.4; cf. Appendix B), insofar as it stands perpetually in lieu of the ritual performer. This may be extended, and some sort of apotropaic function inferred. We will return to the possible nature and motivation of this apotropaic precaution below (see §2.9.3), but first let us consider collection 2.

4.9.2.2. *Collection 2: The western stairs*

In some ways the interpretation of collection 2 is both simpler and more complex than the interpretation of collection 1. It is simpler because, here, at the western end of Building A, we need not be directly concerned with the interpretation of the bench-room. But it is complicated by an even greater degree of uncertainty regarding the texts' contents and placement. Furthermore, it is not immediately clear whether we should seek a single explanatory principle that could account for both collections, or whether the two collections were inscribed for different reasons (note the use of different coloured inks for each collection).

---

[267] There is comparative evidence from Mesopotamia for spoken rituals associated with passage through entrances; cf. Ragavan, "Entering Other Worlds", 201–21. It is also tempting to speculate whether a similar custom might be reflected in Psalm 100:4. Interestingly, Deut 6:9 and 11:20 are also framed by references to oral recitation associated with passage between spaces and postures; cf. Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* 99–100; Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 135–36.

As a preliminary consideration, it may be observed that collection 2 was located in the vicinity of the western stairs. At first glance, this might suggest that the texts were associated with activities conducted on the second storey or rooftop. This might support the view that the purpose of the KAPT was related to the internal division of space, as discussed above. However, based on the descriptions published by the excavators, it seems that the texts actually framed the entrance to the western storeroom at the foot of the stairs, rather than the stairway itself (cf. §4.9.1).[268] In this instance, then, it seems that collection 2 might have been spatializing or ornamental, but it is *a priori* unlikely that the texts were apotropaic. After all, why would a storeroom, which has no other signs of being unusual, need special protection?[269] This might lend support to the possibility that the placement of the texts was secondary and opportunistic; i.e. taking advantage of an existing plaster surface. This, in turn, would seem to

---

[268] Note that the profusion of storage vessel fragments in this room—including a number with their bases *in situ*—is comparable to the southern storeroom, and, as such, it is reasonable to infer that this room was primarily used for storage; cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 47, 48–49.

[269] The entrance to the north-western corner-room was also coated with plaster, and in this room the excavators unearthed a number of unusual artefacts, including several worked stones that were tentatively identified as *maṣṣebot*. This led Meshel and Goren to ask whether the room was perhaps a kind of store for special artefacts; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 45. This may well be so, but the there is no indication that the plaster at the entrance to the north-western corner-room was inscribed, and the western storeroom does not admit access to the corner-room. Consequently, there is no indication that texts were directly associated with the special artefacts. Moreover, several of the vessels in the western storeroom were imbedded in the floor, suggesting that storage was the primary function of the room. These included three of the vessels with the incised ʾālep (*Kajr*2.16–18), which, according to one interpretation, may suggest that the room was used for the storage of offerings (cf. §2.3); however, more of the same (*Kajr*2.13–15) were also discovered in the southern storeroom, which was not adorned with plaster or wall inscriptions.

indicate that the use of gypsum plaster was essentially pragmatic—at least at the western end of the complex.[270]

4.9.3. *The building complex*

When entering Building A through the bent-axis gate (i.e. the only entrance), a visitor would immediately have seen *Kajr*4.2 (the theophany) on the internal lintel. Now, if collection 1 did in fact serve an apotropaic purpose, this interior location is remarkable. Rather than the interior walls of the bench-room, we would naturally expect an apotropaic device—designed to prevent malevolent forces from entering the building—to be located on an external surface. Moreover, the position of collection 1 on the internal walls was clearly not a simple matter of expediency—based on the location of existing plastered surfaces—as the scribe could equally have written the text on one of the plastered surfaces of the bent-axis gate; or, if the texts were intended to separate the sacred space of the bench-room from the courtyard, on the west facing surface of the lintel (see above).

This poses a problem for the apotropaic explanation, but it is not insurmountable, since it is possible that the texts were in fact intended to protect the domestic spaces surrounding the courtyard of Building A, rather than the bench-room itself.[271] However, this begs the question why the bench-room was not felt to be in need of similar protection. An alternative possibility is that collection 1 was intended as a prophylactic against the so-called *sancta contagion*; that is, the belief that sanctification (or defilement) is communicated by contact with the divine presence, sometimes with lethal consequences (e.g. Exod 19:12; 30:20; 2 Sam

---

[270] I is unclear whether the whole of the western wall was plastered, or only the doorframes (see §4.9.1). If the former, then use of the plaster might have been connected to heat regulation, as discussed above (§4.9.1). If the latter, then the whitened doorframes might have been intended to reflect light into the storerooms (cf. §7.6.1).

[271] That is, if the food preparation areas and the probable second storey that framed the courtyard are related to domestic activities.

6:7).[272] In other words, it might be that collection 1 was intended to demarcate and separate the sacred spaces at the eastern end of the complex (corresponding to the plastered surfaces of Building B and the gate complex of Building A), creating a metaphysical barrier between them and the living areas at the western end of Building A (i.e. the courtyard and surrounding rooms). In that case, the purpose of collection 1 would have been to repel the sanctifying presence in order to prevent it from permeating the profane spaces of the complex and rendering them uninhabitable. An analogous situation is apparently implied by Ezekiel 44:19 (cf. 42:14):

ובצאתם אל־החצר החיצונה אל־החצר החיצונה אל־העם יפשטו את־בגדיהם אשר־
המה משרתם בם והניחו אותם בלשכת הקדש ולבשו בגדים אחרים ולא־יקדשו את־
העם בבגדיהם

And when [the priests] go out into the outer court to the people, they shall remove the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the sanctified rooms; and they shall put on other garments, so that they do not sanctify (lit. make holy) the people by their garments

Due to the concentration of reflective plastered surfaces at the eastern end of the complex, and the prominence of solar imagery in the southern theophany tradition, it could be conjectured that the *sancta contagion* might have been related to the rays of the rising sun. If so, then the apotropaic explanation may also be extended to collection 2: given that the entrance to the western storeroom is east facing, and assuming that the room was used for the storage of food or other ordinary objects, the plastered surfaces might have been intended as an additional level of protection as the rising sun crept over the walls at the eastern end of the complex. It could be objected that there is no evidence of comparable

---

[272] The classic study of *sancta contagion* in the Hebrew Bible and early Jewish thought is Jacob Milgrom, "Sancta Contagion and Altar/City Asylu", in *Congress Volume: Vienna, 1980* (ed. John A. Emerton; VTSupp 32; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 278–310.

protection around the entrances to the southern storeroom, but it should be noted that the openings in the southern part of the complex are north facing, and so would not have allowed direct sunlight to permeate.

The concentration of plaster on the east facing surfaces is suggestive, but it is hardly conclusive. Moreover, it should also be noted that the plastered surfaces might have had different functions and associations at different times. In other words, the application of plaster might initially have been pragmatic or aesthetic, and developed an apotropaic association at a later stage. Accordingly, the placement of these texts at the entrance also makes sense if they were authorised texts, intended to promote ethnic or cultural self-identification (see above); a clear and unmistakable sign to anyone entering the building that they were in an area controlled by the kingdom of Israel. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the most clearly culturally aligned texts were located at the main entrance. Owing to their impractical position, however, it is likely that collection 1 was primarily symbolic and mnemonic rather denotative—this assumes that the intended audience would be familiar with their contents (see above). In this case, the inscriptions of collection 2, at the western end of the courtyard, are less easily explained. Perhaps, they were simply a form of artistic self-expression (cf. the dipinto on the doorjamb of the southern storeroom) drawing inspiration from the life and activities of the community; hence the transcription of a song (*Kajr*3.9) onto Pithos B, and the possible reference to the prophet in (*Kajr*4.5).

4.9.4. *The total excavated area*

The question remains as to how all of this relates to Building B. As noted above, it is almost impossible to reconstruct the outline and function of Building B; however, its location at the entrance to the site, and the fact that the northern wing was decorated with elaborate murals suggests that it

was of some importance.[273] Moreover, it was here that the possible *bamah* was located. Furthermore, it seems likely that Building B should be related to the reconfiguring of the site in Phase 3.[274] Whether intentionally or not, the fact that the gypsum plaster was applied to the surfaces at the eastern end of Building A and to the surfaces of Building B creates a visual and conceptual continuity between the two spaces, suggesting that activities conducted in the bench-room were related in some way to the activities conducted in Building B. Nevertheless, the material remains suggest that there were functional differences between the two structures. In particular, it should be noted that, unlike Building A, Building B was almost entirely devoid of artefacts. This may simply reflect the severe erosion and poor state of repair of these building remains, but it is noteworthy nonetheless. Any attempt to reconstruct the use of this space would be pure speculation: perhaps Building B was an open air shrine used in solar worship (for the sorts of activities this might have involved see the processional on Pithos B; cf. Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 23:5, 11; Jer 8:2; Ezek 8:16–17). In that case, the bench-room may have served as a place for the conjectured prophets to sit and receive a vision (cf. §7.7).[275]

4.10. CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, any attempt to define the relationship between the KAPT and their physical context requires a degree conjecture. Consequently, while it is possible to draw a number of empirical observations from the archaeology, many of the conclusions that follow are provisional.

---

[273] Cf. Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 13. The location of Building B to the east of Building A means that anyone approaching Building A would have to pass between the two wings of Building B.

[274] Whether this was always the intention as argued by the excavators, or whether it was a secondary re-configuring of the space makes little difference, the fact remains that the structure should probably be related to Phase 3 and the construction of the bench-room.

[275] Note the possible depiction of a seated musician at the entrance (cf. the seated lyre player on Pithos B).

Beginning on the surer ground of empirical observation, it may be observed that the awkward position and small lettering of collection 1 suggests that their function was primarily visual and symbolic. In other words, they were impressionistic, designed to be viewed rather than read. Moreover, the position of *Kajr*4.2 and 4.3 immediately in the interior doorway means collection 1 was probably related to the entryway rather than the bench-room. Clearly their impact was meant to be felt immediately on entering Building A.

By comparison, the location of collection 2 is more enigmatic. This collection was aligned on the same axis as collection 1 at the main entrance, but the texts apparently framed the doorway to an otherwise unremarkable storeroom. This might suggest that their *raison d'etre* was fairly prosaic.[276]

Turning to matters of inference, the location of collection 1 at the entrance to Building A is compatible with at least two alternatives. On the one hand, the theophany (*Kajr*4.2), the references to YHWH of (the) Teman (*Kajr*3.9, and 4.1), and the orientation of the site toward the east, might suggest that the religious activities of the community included some sort of solar cult. In keeping with this, the location of both collections might be interpreted as relating to an apotropaic function, acting against the so-called *sancta contagion*, as the rising sun—symbolising the Yahwistic theophany—rose over the walls of the compound. On the other hand, the presence of traditional texts indexically related to Israelite ethnic and religious traditions might have had a political function, intended to signal the identity and theological legitimacy of the Israelite settlers at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. In this case, the text selection may have simultaneously served two purposes: an exclusive one, relating to the separation and segregation of the local nomadic communities, and an inclusive one, giving expression to

---

[276] Of course, the contents of the inscriptions might have a bearing on the interpretation of the space; note the possible reference to a prophet that framed the entrance to the room. But the fragmentary condition of the texts and the nature of the room's contents preclude judgements in this matter.

the Israelite settlers' right to be in that place. In this regard, the principal function of the KAPT was ornamental, or memorialising, but in the emblematic sense discussed in Chapter 1.

While either explanation is plausible, the political motivation is perhaps preferable on the basis of its capacity to explain the text selection collectively. That is, according to this explanation it is possible to interpret *Kajr*4.1 and 4.2 (and perhaps *Kajr*4.3) as signalling the divinely sanctioned right of the community to inhabit the space. This is consistent with the fact that no local pottery types were found among the ceramic assemblage, suggesting that the settlers had little or no commercial contact with the surrounding peoples.

In a more general sense it might be supposed that the texts were more or less related to activities conducted at the site. These may have been chiefly prophetic—e.g. the reference to the prophet (*Kajr*4.5), and possible preparatory hymns (*Kajr*4.2 and 3.9). In this case, collection 2 is perhaps best viewed as a form of creative self-expression (i.e. writing for writing's sake) drawing inspiration from the daily activities of the community.

It should be noted, however, that both explanations are not mutually exclusive. In other words, the KAPT might have been politically motivated and at the same time served an apotropaic function; although, if so, it seems reasonable to assume that one of these was a secondary association.

Finally, both explanations could be explained as either graffiti or an authorised text, but in either case, given the prominent position of the KAPT (esp. collection 1) and the correlation between the plaster texts and the Pithoi inscriptions (e.g. the references to YHWH of (the) Teman *Kajr*3.6, 3.9, 4.1; together with the possible inclusion of hymnic material on both *Kajr*3.9 and 4.2; and the possible depiction of musical and worship activities in both media) it may safely be assumed that the KAPT were representative of the activities conducted by, and the ideology of, the Phase 3 community as a whole.

PART TWO

══ DEIR ʿALLA ══

Chapter 5

EPIGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE DEIR ʿALLA INSCRIPTIONS

The *editio princeps* of the DAPT was published in 1976 by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij.[1] The editors were able to reconstruct two principal groups or "Combinations" along with several smaller combinations of fragments. Important refinements to the alignment of specific fragments were subsequently proposed by André Caquot and André Lemaire, Émile Puech, and Edward Lipiński (see below).

Notwithstanding the remarkable achievements in the restoration and interpretation the DAPT, the interpretation of both combinations is complicated by substantial lacunae and uncertainty regarding elements of vocabulary and imagery. Consequently, in many instances commentators have found it necessary to draw widely from the pool of comparative Semitic languages and literature, citing parallels from sources as late as Syriac and Classical Arabic. Ultimately, the validity of this method may be judged on its capacity to restore a coherent interpretation of the text.

In accordance with the convention established by the *editio princeps*, the following designations are used: a large Roman numeral followed by a Hindu-Arabic numeral indicates combination and line number (e.g. I.1 = Combination I, line 1); a small Roman numeral followed by a letter in brackets indicates the fragment number (e.g. iii(d)). The discussion below is limited to I.1–16 and II.1–17, from which reasonably coherent sequences can be restored.

---

[1] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*.

5.1. THE DEIR ʿALLA PLASTER TEXTS

5.1.1. COMBINATION I

Fig.5.1—Combination I

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
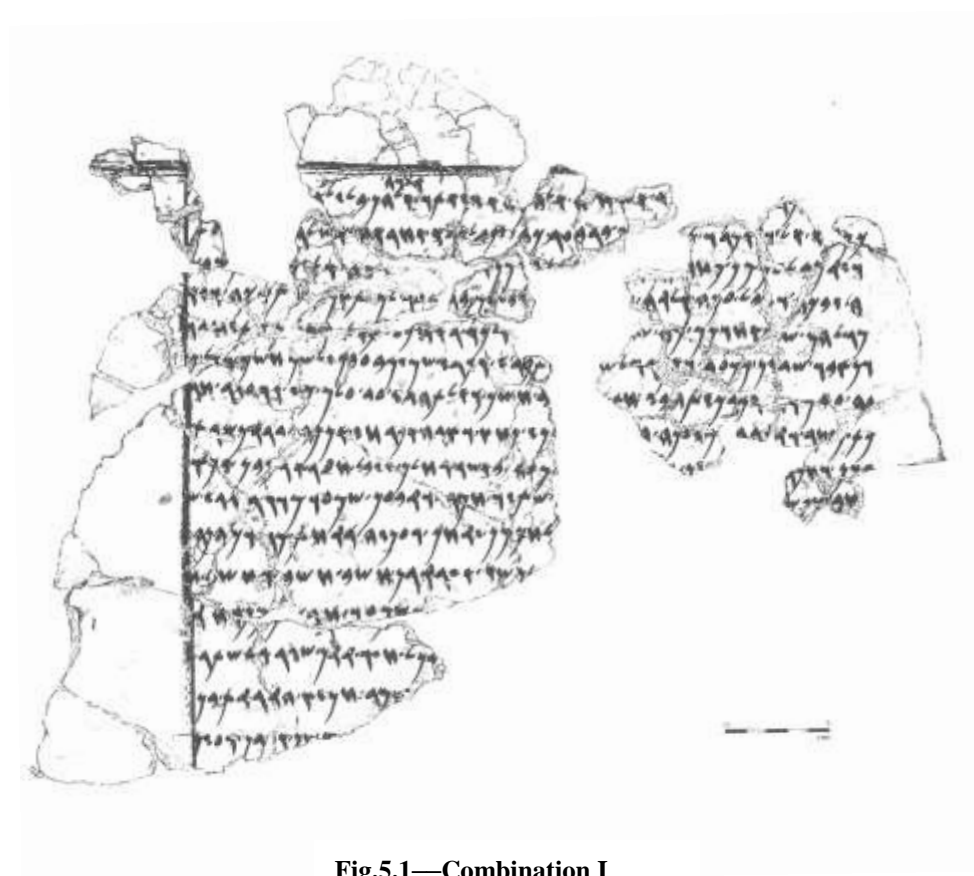
*shaded areas represent the rubrics written in red ink (see below)

1. [… of] the account of [Balaam, son of Beo]r, a man who is/was a seer of the gods.[2] The gods came to him at night [and] revea[led (lit. uncovered) to] him

2. according to the pronouncement of El. [And] they said to [Balaa]m, son of Beor, "Thus will (El) do, according to the bird omen(?). Each will s[ee that which you have he]ard".

3. And Balaam arose before morning […] right hand […] and could not [eat] and he wept

4. bitterly. And his people went up to him, and they said to Balaam, son of Beor, "Do you fast? Do you weep? And he

5. said to them, "Sit down! I will reveal to you what the *šadd*[*ayīn* have done(?)]. Now, come! See the deeds of the gods! The go[d]s gathered

6. and the *šaddayīn* took their place in the council, and they said to *Š*[…] "sew shut the heavens with your cloud! Let there be darkness and not bright-

7. ness, gloom and not heat(?), in order that you migth induce terror and much darkness, but do not be angry forever! For the oriole(?) has re-

8. proached the Griffon Vulture(?) and the clutch of the Egyptian Vulture(?); the ostrich had compa[ssion on] the young of the hawk(?), but harmed the chicks of the heron(?). The swallow tore at

9. the dove and the sparrow(?) with its beak[…] and […] the staff; when ewes lead, it is the rod that is led. Hares ate

10. […]. Flitter-m[ice] were filled [with bee]r; [bat]s got drunk (with) wine (?). Hyenas heeded instruction; the cubs of the

11. f[ox…] multitudes walked […] laughed at the wise. The poor woman(?) mixed myrrh, and the priestess

12. […] to the one who wears a girdle of threads(?). The esteemed esteems and the esteemer is

---

[2] Or, "one who sees the gods".

13.   es[teemed…] the deaf hear from afar

14.   […] and all (fore)see(?) the restriction of procreation and fertility *l-*

15.   […] to the leopard. The piglet chased the young

16.   [of…][3]

Line 1

אלהֹן . חֹזֹה . אש . בר בע]רֹ . בלעם . [ ] סֹפֹרֹ [...]—Three sections of the DAPT are written in red ink: the first half of I.1, the second half of I.2 and the first half of II.17. As has long been recognised, the red ink appears to be analogous to the use of rubrics in the Egpytian scribal tradition.[4] As such, the red sections probably indicate some sort of heading, marking key points in the text. The first (I.1) contains the heading of the entire text, comparable to the superscriptions of biblical prophetic books (see below); the second (I.2) apparently included a summary of the god's revelation, corresponding to the first instance of divine speech; and the third (II.17) describes the purpose of Balaam's account, and perhaps the function of the DAPT itself.[5]

[…]—The lacuna at the beginning of the line allows for approximately three or four letters. Émile Puech proposed that this space might be filled with iii(f), bearing traces of *yôd*, *sāmek* and *rêš* written in red ink,

---

[3] I.16 is so badly damaged that no sense can be made of it.

[4] On the use of red ink for rubrics in Egyptian texts see T. George Allen, "Types of Rubrics in the Egyptian Book of the Dead", *JAOS* (1936): 145–54; Georges Posener, "Sur l'Emploi de l'Encre Rouge dans les Manuscrits Égyptiens", *JEA* 37 (1951): 75–80; Richard Parkinson and Stephen Quirke, *Papyrus* (Austin Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1995), 44–47.

[5] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 184, who interpret the *rubrics* as follows: I.1 = the title of the piece; I.2 = the first clauses of direct discourse; II.17 = the beginning of the response by Balaam's hearers; compare Stephen A. Kaufman, review of J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla, BASOR* 239, (1980): 73, who suggested that the red section in the second line marks the divine speech.

and iii(d), with a *yôd* written in red ink.[6] The resulting restoration, יסרי,

"warnings, admonitions of…," is plausible and has met with some

acceptance.[7] However, it should be noted that there are no physical

joins to confirm the placement of the fragments.

סֹפֹֿר [בלעם . בר בע]רֿ—Traces of a *rêš* and another long-legged letter (either

kāp, *mêm*, *pê*, or *tāw*) written in red ink, are visible at the top of i(c).

The reading ספר was first proposed by André Caquot and André

Lemaire,[8] and greatly strengthened by Jo Ann Hackett,[9] who, following

---

[6] Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356; cf. idem, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam* (eds. George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten; Themes in Biblical Narrative, Jewish and Christian Traditions 11; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 30, 32–33.

[7] Cf. Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 246–47, who identified it with Late Hebrew יִסּוּר, "suffering, discipline"; Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Hendrickson, 2005), 582; cf. Choon-Leong Seow, §138 "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", in *Prophets and prophecy in the ancient Near East* (ed. Martti Nissinen; SBLWAW 12; Atlanta, GA.: SBL, 2003), 209; Edward Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II* (OLA 57; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 1994), 117. In support of his restoration Puech cites Jer 17:13, ...יסורי בארץ יכתבו כי, "my chastisements against the land are written, for…," noting "[t]his title could limit the column to being only an excerpt of the 'whole' book of Balaʾam" (Puech, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 33). Alternatively, Manfred Weippert, proposed the restoration of the Aramaic demonstrative pronoun: זנה; Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā and the Study of the Old Tesament", in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 153. However, on the danger of dialectically leading restorations, cf. Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (HSM 31; Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1984), 33.

[8] André Caquot and André Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", *Syria* 54 (1977): 194.

[9] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 31; cf. André Lemaire, "L'insription de Balaam trouvée à Deir ʿAlla: épigraphie", in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984* (ed. J.

a suggestion by Gordon Hamilton, proposed that iii(h) be placed at the top of i(c), to restore the tops of *pê* and *šîn*. Physically, these fragments appear to fit well, and, with some reservation, Gerrit van der Kooij has also offered his support for this restoration.[10]

ספר is generally understood to refer to a written document, either the *Vorlage* (see below) or the DAPT itself. However, it is also possible that ספר refers to an *oral dream report* (cf. Gen 37:9, 10; 40:8, 9; 41:8, 12), which was subsequently transcribed (see further the discussion on II.17).

The superscription, "account of PN," is paralleled in Nahum 1:1, משא נינוה ספר חזון נחום האלקשי, "A pronouncement concerning Nineveh. The account of the vision of Nahum the Elqoshite." [11] Note the generally high degree of coincidence between the superscription in Nahum 1 and the DAPT I.1–2: ספר (I.1); חזה (I.1); משא (I.2).

An alternative possibility is to follow the earlier suggestion of P. Kyle McCarter Jr. and restore אמרי.[12] Stephen Russell argued that this noun is paralleled in the biblical Balaam pericope (Num 24:4, 16), where it is apparently used with the technical sense "(oracular) utterance";

Amitai; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985), 316.

[10] Gerrit van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 247.

[11] Cf. Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 166–67. Stephen Russell also points to Gensis 5:1 זה ספר תולדת אדם, "this is the account of the generations of man", as a possible parallel; Stephen C. Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature: Cisjordan-Israelite, Transjordan-Israelite, and Judahite Portrayals* (BZAW 403; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 130, n.81.

[12] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51.

however, there אמר pertains to divine speech, while the noun נאם is used of the prophetic utterance.[13]

The restoration of the PN is supported by I.4, where it is written in full (for a discussion of the role and characterisation of Balaam, see Appendix D).

הֹא [.] אלֹהֹן . חֹזֹה . אשׁ—In the context אש may be either the relative pronoun or the common noun, "man".[14] Hackett preferred to interpret אש as the relative pronoun. However, in I.9, following McCarter, she interpreted באשר as the relative, on the analogy of BH בַּאֲשֶׁר. While the relative pronoun אשר is attested once in Moabite (Mesha Stele) and once in Edomite (Ḥorvat ʿUza), there are no known instances in which both אש and אשר are attested in the same text.[15] Consequently, one or the other of Hackett's readings should probably be revised (although, on the interpretation of באשר, see below).

---

[13] Cf. Stephen C. Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature*, 130, n.81. Russell observes that the expression אמרי סקר בלעם בר בער would, then, parallel דברי עמוס (Amos 1:1), and דברי ירמיהו (Jer 1:1).

[14] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 31. On the relative pronoun אש/ש cf. John Huehnergard, "On the Etymology of the Hebrew Relative šɛ-," in *Biblical Hebrew in its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* (eds. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake, In: Eisenbrauns, 2006): 106, 123–25; idem, "Relative Particles" in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics, vol. 3* (ed. Geoffrey Kahn; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 363–64. For an argument in favour of אש, "man", see Al Wolters, "Aspects of the Literary Structure of Combination I," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 296.

[15] The same is true of Biblical Hebrew; cf. Huehnergard, "Relative Particles", 363–64. Although, note that if Phoenician אש is derived from אשר, as discussed by Huehnergard, then the DAPT might reflect an intermediate stage, before the *rêš* had fully elided.

In either case, הא may be treated as a copula completing the relative clause.[16] Hackett was able to adduce several examples in which the 3.m.s. copula follows the relative ponoun אשר. However, this is comparatively rare, which might indicate that the common noun *ʾîš* is the preferable translation of אש; cf. the expression איש האלהים הוא, "the man of God is he" (1 Kgs 13:26).

Noting that the red ink of the rubric ceases after אלהן, McCarter preferred to read הא as the beginning of a new clause; either as the exclamatory particle "lo! behold!"[17] or else as a *casus pendens*, "as for him" (as proposed in the *editio princeps*).[18] However, as Jonas Greenfield observed, the interpretation of הא as an exclamatory particle would produce a syntactic structure for which there is no known parallel.[19]

In any case, the change from red to black ink is not necessarily indicative of the syntax of the line. Following Gordon Hamilton, Jo Ann Hackett suggested that the change of colours is determined by the middle of the line, rather than the semantic content of the inscription.[20]

---

[16] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 31; cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, review of J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, *CBQ* 40 (1978): 94–95; Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 247.

[17] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 52; cf. Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 194.

[18] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 185; cf. Puech, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 30.

[19] Jonas C. Greenfield, "Philological Observations on the Deir ʿAlla Inscription," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 111.

[20] Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 30–31, n.1; cf. the review articles by J. A. Fitzmyer, *CBQ* (1978), 94–95; Joseph Naveh, review of J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, *IEJ* 29 (1979):134–35; Baruch A. Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions," *JAOS* 101 (1981): 179. Although, compare Kaufman, *BASOR* (1980): 73.

Interestingly, there is also evidence that Egyptian scribes did not always feel compelled to make their rubrics conform strictly to the syntax of the text. For example, in a study of two Middle Kingdom literary papyri copied by the same scribe, Richard. B. Parkinson observed the scribe's tendency to revert to black ink at the beginning of a new line, even if the semantic content of the rubricised section continued across the line.[21]

חזה—The substantive חזה "seer" is well known from Hebrew and Aramaic sources.[22] Hackett analysed the form as a G-stem active participle, noting that the *hê m.l.* indicates the contraction of the original **-iy* ending (חזי).[23]

Lemaire drew special attention to the use of חזין, "seers," in the Aramaic Zakkur inscription, stressing the possible Aramaic affiliation of the DAPT.[24] But Hackett, citing Robert Wilson's careful sociological study of prophecy in ancient Israel, argued that the pairing of חזה and משא is well attested in the southern (Judahite) biblical tradition, and insisted

---

[21] Richard B. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 95–96, 102–03. The careful use of rubrics was clearly a matter of some concern for this scribe as in another place they apparently intentionally left the last line of the page short in order to begin the following rubric at the beginning of the next page. The papyri contained editions of *The Tale of Sinuhe* and *The Eloquent Peasant*, respectively.

[22] Cf. J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, "ḥzy₁", *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, vol. 1 (Handbuch der Orientalistik I/21; Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1995), 357–61.

[23] Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 31; in this she was followed by Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 316.

[24] André Lemaire, "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle", in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 51.

that the DAPT should be read with reference to a wider southern Levantine context.[25]

ו[י]אתו {אלוה} . אלהן . בלילֹה [. ו]ישֹת[מו . ל]ה—The restoration ו[י]אתו is assured. Despite the fact that the plaster is damaged at this point, traces of a *yôd* can clearly be seen on the broken edge and there is space for the restoration of a *wāw*.

ו[י]אתֹו appears to be the first of a number of examples of the *wāw consecutive* in Combination I (ויאמרו, I.2; ויקם, I.3; וֹיעל, I.4; וֹיאמרו, I.4–5; cf. §6.2.1).[26] If, however, הא is understood to be a *casus pendens*, then it is necessary to follow Puech, and intepret the conjunction as a *wāw* of apodosis (cf. *Joüon* §176*b*).

אלוה was added as a supralinear correction, probably by the scribe who wrote the main text (cf. similar supralinear corrections in II.9, II.14, II.17). The omission—by homeoteleuton—of אלוה before אלהן implies a visual error, suggesting that the scribe copied by sight from a *Vorlage*, rather than memory or dictation. The fact that a scribe took the effort to correct these errors indicates that the content of the inscription was significant.

The restoration [ו]ישֹת[מו ל]ה was offered by Edward Lipiński, who proposed that iv(c)—bearing *šîn* and traces of two other letters—should be placed in the lacuna at the end of the line. In support of this reading, Lipinksi cited the difficult root √שתם, which appears twice in the biblical Balaam narrative as a passive participle describing the seer: נאם בלעם בנו בער ונאם הגבר שתם העין, "the prophecy of Balaam, Beor's own

---

[25] Jo Ann Hackett, "Response to Baruch Levine and André Lemaire," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 83–84; cf. Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), esp. 149, 254–56; 136.

[26] Cf. Puech, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 30.

son, and the prophecy of the man whose eye is open" (Num 24:3, 15).[27] However, this verb is otherwise unparalleled, and textual corruption has been suspected (cf. BDB; *HALOT*). Consequently, שְׁתֻם in Num 24:3, 15 has been compared to the more common verb סתם√, "to close" (cf. שָׂתַם, Lam 3:8).[28] Intriguingly, in a later context in Ezekiel 28:3 and Daniel 8:26; 12:4 סתם√ is used of concealed knowledge, and in this sense, the expression הגבר שתם העין, "the man who closes the eye", might be semantically consonant with the characterisation of Balaam as a dream interpreter (cf. §D.1). Accordingly, [ו]יׄשתׄ[מו ל]הׄ might be understood to mean that the אלהן induced a visionary state in the prophet. Be that as it may, the suggestion remains tenuous.

Others have restored a simple verb of address. Thus, Manfred Weippert restored [ויאמרו ל]הׄ, balancing ויאמרו in the following line, while André Lemaire, restored ו[ימללו אלו]הׄ, and Choon-Leong Seow restored וידברו (cf. דבר in II.17).[29] The proposals of Lipiński and Weippert are both consistent with Puech's proposed placement of xv(b), bearing traces in black ink of a long-legged letter above another letter in red ink, at the end of the line.[30] Alternatively, Hackett, following Hamilton, placed v(e) and xv(c) at the end of line 1, and proposed the restoration ויחז מחזה, "and he saw a vision."[31] However, as Manfred Weippert notes,

---

[27] Edward Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II* (OLA 57; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 1994), 118.

[28] See BDB with references.

[29] Cf. respectively: Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 154; André Lemaire, "L'inscription de Balaam trouvée à Tell Deir ʿAlla: épigraphie," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984* (ed. J. Amitai; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985): 318; Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 209.

[30] Cf. Puech, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 30.

[31] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 33. This restoration was also adopted by Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356.

this placement is rendered highly unlikely by the traces of ink visible along the upper edge of v(e).[32]

Line 2

כמ[ש]א—Hoftijzer originally proposed the restoration ובשכמ[ת]א, which he interpreted as a plural form of Heb. שכם, "mountain ridge" (lit. "shoulder"; for the sense, cf. Gen 48:22; Josh 15:8, 10, 11; 18:12, 13, 16, 18, 19), with emphatic *ʾālep*.[33] The letters *wāw*, *bêt*, *šîn* were based on the original placement of i(c) at the end of line 3. However, following the re-arrangement of the fragments by Caquot and Lemaire (see ספר above), this restoration can no longer be accepted—there is no corresponding *šîn* at the end of line 1, and the reading "mountainous regions"[34] makes no sense in the context of line 2.

Both McCarter and Caquot and Lemaire restored כמ[לי]א, from √מלל, "word, speech".[35] As noted by van der Kooij, there are traces of ink that may belong to a *lāmed* visible before the lacuna;[36] however, this reading is far from certain, and the restoration כמשא, a cognate of BH מַשָּׂא, "pronouncement, oracle", is now widely accepted.[37]

---

[32] Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 153.

[33] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 188–89.

[34] As rendered by Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 179.

[35] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 195; McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51.

[36] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 104, i 4 (c.2), 1.

[37] Cf. Alexander Rofé, *The Book of Balaam: Numbers 22.2-24.25: A Study in Methods of Criticism and the History of Biblical Literature and Religion with an Appendix: Balaam in the Deir ʿAlla Inscription* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1979), 61 (in Hebrew); Levine, *JAOS* (1981), 198; idem, *Numbers 21–36*, 244; Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 33; Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356; idem, "Le texte "ammonite" de Deir ʿAlla: Les admonitions de Balaam (première partie)," in *La vie de la Parole: De l'Ancien au Nouveau Testament, Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Pierre Grelot professeur à l'Institut Catholique de Paris* (ed. Pierre Grelot; Paris:

In the Hebrew Bible מַשָּׂא is a technical term denoting an oracle of disaster directed against a foreign nation, a meaning that suits its use in the DAPT.[38]

כה...ויאמרו—The syntagm ויאמרו...כה marks what follows, in red ink, as the revelation of the gods; although, note that כה might also belong to the direct discourse.

כֹּדֹא . יפעל—Faint traces remain of the letters preceding the ʾālep, but these are almost entirely obscured by a crack in the plaster (fig.5.2). The ink traces immediately before the ʾālep might be consistent with gîmel, dālet, ṭêt, lāmed, or rêš. The preceding letter is almost entirely obliterated, a long tailed letter seems probable: i.e. kāp, mêm, or nûn; but a distorted yôd is also possible (cf. the yôd on v(d)). The reading of יפעל is certain. The damage at this point makes interpretation exceptionally difficult, and suggested restorations are both numerous and varied.[39]

McCarter, for example, suggested that the verb יפעל might refer to the erection of some sort of monument (perhaps the text itself) commemorating Balaam's vision. Hence: יפעל].   [א . אחראה . אש . לר]את . זי . ש[מעת, "Let someone make a [   ] hereafter, so that [what] you have hear[d may be se]en!" This reading is appealing, but as Hackett noted, it is difficult to see what could possibly be restored after the verb that would be both physically and semantically appropriate.[40]

Desclee, 1987), 27; J. W. Wesselius, "Thoughts about Balaam: The Historical Background of the Deir Alla Inscription on Plaster", *BO* 44, cols. 593–94.

[38] Müller, "מַשָּׂא," II, *TDOT* 9:23–24; on the pairing of משא and חזה, cf. Jepsen, "חָזָה," III.1, *TDOT* 4:282.

[39] Cf. the survey in Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā and the Study of the Old Testament", 155–56, n.17.

[40] Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 35.

For her part, Hackett translated the line, "thus will [   ]ʾ do hereafter".[41] However, in that case, we would expect the subject of the verb to be either El or the female deity named in I.6, neither of which can be easily reconciled with the ʾālep that is clearly visible at the end of the lacuna.[42] Alternatively, Hackett noted that the verb might be passive: "thus will it be done".[43] But it is still not easy to see what could be restored in the lacuna.

Fig. 5.2—The lacuna in I.2

Caquot and Lemaire entertained the possibility of restoring גדא, "fortune", in the emphatic state, though in the end they chose to leave the line untranslated.[44] Puech, on the other hand, restored *kāp* as the first letter and read כלֹא, a bi-form of BH כלֹה, "destruction, annihilation", bound to אחראה.[45] Consequently, Puech translated the line: "he will do [sic.] the annihilation(/decrease) of his posterity; the man who will have to see what you have heard". However, notwithstanding the fact that Puech was able to cite numerous examples

---

[41] Ibid, 35; cf. Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 210.

[42] Note also that Hackett was particularly reluctant to restore the emphatic suffix in damaged contexts; Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 35; cf. idem, "The Dialect of the Plaster Text from Deir ʿAlla", *Or* 53 (1984): 60.

[43] Hackett, *The Balaam Text From Deir ʿAllā*, 35.

[44] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 195; cf. Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 155–56, n.17.

[45] Puech, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 33. I cannot see the head of the *kāp* that Puech describes.

of the combination יפעל כלה/כלא, this restoration is problematic. First, in the script of the DAPT *lāmed* is written characteristically small and high on the line (see fig.6.1). As such, the restoration of כלא would suppose a form of the *lāmed* that is unparalleled in the text.[46] Second, the unnamed subject of the following clause (אש) does not seem to feature anywhere else in the extant fragments. Instead, in I.4 Balaam's vision is recounted to "his people" (עמה; cf. [II.17]), who thus fulfil the role ascribed to the אש; i.e. being shown (√ראה, I.5) what Balaam has heard.

Yet another option was proposed by Lipiński, who restored a word divider between the *ʿayin* and the *lāmed*, reading יִפְעֹ [.] לִיגֹא, "[he] approached to pierce", (cf. Arab. √وجا, "to strike, pierce"). However, this meant that it was necessary to identify the subject of the finite verb. Lipiński's solution was to interpret אחראה as the Aramaic noun אחרי, "pledger", with the 3.m.s. suffix, i.e. "his pledger".[47] He then translated אש as "fire", and interpreted it as the beginning of a main clause. Accordingly, he rendered the line: "His pledger approached to pierce; the fire approached his hut". Lipiński interpreted these enigmatic clauses as a series of ill-omens that were subsequently interpreted by Balaam.[48] To be sure, *gîmel* is a strong candidate for the debated letter before the *ʾālep*, and Lipiński's reading is certainly ingenious; but it is ultimately rather laboured—especially, because the subject of the 3.m.s. pronoun is left unidentified.

---

[46] Although, van der Kooij did deem *lāmed* the most likely reading; Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 102.

[47] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 120; Hoftijzer also restored a word divider before the *lāmed*, Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 187–88, but on the difficulties of this reading see van der Kooij's discussion on p.102.

[48] On the supposedly proverbial treachery of the pledger see Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 120, n.69, 60, n.257.

A hitherto unexplored alternative is to restore the verb נדא* (cf. the BH *hapax* √נדא* (*qere* וידח) 2 Kgs 17:21; Ug. √*ndʾ* "to frighten away, expel"; BH √נדה, "to remove expel" Isa 66:5; Amos 6:3).[49] On palaeographic grounds √נדא is a good fit, and it is possible to restore either a G-stem active ptcp., נדא, "frightening away"; an N-stem passive ptcp., נדא, "one who is frightened away"; or a C-stem 3.m.s. impf., ידא, "he will frighten away". However, it is difficult to make sense of this verb in the context of the DAPT as a whole—although, it is interesting to note that the notion of fear or terror is apparently picked up again in I.7 (חת).

Yet another solution could be to understand ידא in light of the verb √דאה, "to fly" (cf. BH דאה; Ug. *dʾy*; Aram. דאי). In this case, the subject of the verbs is best understood to be El; the ellipsis of the subject need not be considered a problem as the expression occurs in the contex of a direct quotation[50] The verb √דאה is used four times in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 28:49; Jer 48:40; 49:22; Ps 18:11), always with the figurative sense of God (or his agents) swooping down to punish the nations. Consequently, given the prominence afforded to birds later in the inscription (I.7–9), it is possible that the revelation in I.2 contains a word play, drawing on an established avian metaphor for divine judgement. However, it should be noted that in each of the biblical examples, the object of the verb is clearly identified. Perhaps, then, the imagery should be understood to mean that El will abandon the world

---

[49] A possible association with דאה, "to fly" (see below) has also been suggested for this verb; "נָדָא", in *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles; Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Book House, 1979), 533; cf. "דָּאָה" (p.184).

[50] Cf. the analogous situation in Lachish 3:8, in which a resumptive pronoun (ידעתה) has apparently been reproduced without its referent in the context of a direct quoatation; cf. Gareth J. Wearne, "The Role of the Scribe in the Composition of Written Correspondence in Israel and Judah", in conference volume: *Observing the Scribe at Work: Knowledge Transfer and Scribal Professionalism in Pre-Typographic Societies* (forthcoming).

to the impending chaos (I.6–7*ff.*); i.e. "thus may (El) do; may he fly away hereafter". If the restoration ידא is accepted, then the elision of the final consonant indicates that the verbs should be translated as jussive.

Following this line of enquiry further, it might in fact be preferable to restore the cognate noun דא*, "kite, raptor" (cf. BH דאה; Lev 11:14; Deut 14:13, MT = ראה, but read דאה with *HALOT*; and דיה, Deut 14:13; Isa 34:15; Ug. *diy*; Aram. הדיא; Arab. حِدَانة).[51] The spelling might indicate that in the Deir ʿAlla dialect דא* was pronounced *dîʾ* or *dāʾ* (in which case, the pronunciation stands in the tradition represented by BH דאה).[52] In light of the available space and visible ink traces, it is necessary to restore a letter before *dālet*. The preposition *kāp* is an option. In that case, the expression יפעל כדא might be translated "(El) will do according to the Kite". An avian reference would not be out of place in the context of the divine revelation of I.2, given the bird sequence in I.7–9 (see below). In fact, the expression יפעל כדא, "he will do according to the kite", might be understood as standing metonymically for the *omina* described in I.7*ff.*; i.e. "(El) will do according to (the sign of) the Kite" (viz. bird omen). The appeal of this reading is twofold: first, it is well suited to the visible letter traces; second, it appears to be consistent with the overarching themes of Combination I. In a more general sense, it may be observed that omens related to birds of prey are relatively commonplace in ancient Near Eastern sources, and the non-specific nature of the allusion might reflect the proverbial nature of the דא* as a bird of ill-omen; but, this is speculation. [53] Admittitedly, if כדא is restored and its usage is

---

[51] Cf. Henry B. Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible* (London: S.P.C.K., 1898), 181–82.

[52] On the retention of the quiescent ʾ*ālep* as an historical spelling, cf. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 49–50.

[53] Cf. Nicla de Zorzi, "Bird Divination in Mesopotamia: New Evidence from BM 108874, *Kaskal* 6 (2009): 1000–1051, from whence the above example was taken. On bird omens in the ancient Near East more generally, see the recent discussion in Duane E. Smith,

understood in terms of a bird omen, it is strange that the אדה* is not named again in I.7–9 (cf. the comments regarding Lipiński's proposed restoration ‏יֹ[ד]‏ in I.9).[54]

Whatever the case, it is clear that the revelation in I.2 prompted Balaam's dramatic response in I.3.

אחראה—The spelling of this word is problematic.[55] Typically, אחראה is assumed to be related to the preposition אחר, and is translated anaphorically with reference to the verb יפעל. Puech and Lipiński interpreted the final *hê* as the 3.m.s. pronominal (object) suffix.[56] This is the simplest explanation, but it depends on the restoration of the difficult lacuna. Alternatively, McCarter interpreted אחראה as a substantive in the emphatic state;[57] however, as Hackett observed, this leaves the problem of explaining an internal emphatic.[58] Both Hackett and McCarter cited BH הָלְאָה, "thereafter, further on" (cf. Gen 19:9; Num 17.2, etc.), as an analogous form. However, if the restoration of

---

"Portentous Birds Flying West: On the Mesopotamian Origin of Homeric Bird-Divination", *JANER* 13 (2013): 49–85. For the suggestion that popular fables or didactic folk-stories might lie behind certain protases in the Mesopotamian omen lists, see Amar Annus, "On The Beginnings and continuities of Omen Sciences in the Ancient World", in *Divination and the Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World* (ed. Amar Annus; OIS g; Chicago, Ill.: The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 2010), 5.

[54] Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 132.

[55] For the difficulties of Hoftijzer's reading, "I want to kindle", see McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā: The First Combination", 52.

[56] Lipiński explained the *ʾālep* preceding the suffix as serving the function of breaking up the diphthong in order to avoid a doubly closed unstressed syllable (Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 120); Puech offers no explanation.

[57] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 52; cf. Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 195.

[58] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 35. Owing to the absence of any indisputable attestation of the emphatic article in the DAPT, Hackett is right to advise caution when restoring the article in damaged contexts (see above), but this nonetheless remains an option when other possibilities have been exhausted.

כֹּדֹא is accepted, then the final *hê* can be interpreted as a resumptive pronoun, and the expression יפעל כדא אחראה treated as pleonastic; i.e. "as the kite, he will act like it".

אש—On the possible interpretations of אש see above. Note that here אש may also have the meaning "fire".[59]

לֹרֹ[א]ֹת [.] זי/זה . ש[מֹעת—Estimates vary as to the number of letters that might be made to fit this lacuna.[60] Traces of a long-tailed letter, in red ink, are clearly visible beneath the *ʿayin*. The restoration לר]את . זי/זה . ש[מֹעת was first proposed by McCarter, and seems to fit the context.[61]

Line 3

ויקם—As Hackett noted, the same verb, with *wāw consecutive*, occurs in Num 22:13 and 21 to describe Balaam's rising after a night-time vision (cf. Num 22:9–13; 19–21).[62] In the context of the DAPT, the verb serves to emphasise the fact that Balaam received the vision at night while lying down, asleep.

מן . מחֹר—Compare BH ממהרת, which seems to have the general sense, "the next day".

ימן—The placement of viii(d) to the right of i(c) allows for the restoration of *yôd*, *mêm*, and *nûn*. Hackett allowed for a small space between the fragments; but as van der Kooij cautiously observed, it might in fact be

[59] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 179; Lemaire, "L'inscription de Balaam trouvée à Tell Deir ʿAlla", 318, (יֹפֹעֹ נֹהֹרֹא אחראה אֹשֹ לֹהֹתֹיֹסֹרֹה יֹפֹעֹת, "the final radiance has appeared, a fire of punishment has appeared", French: "la dernière lumière est apparue, un feu pour le châtiment est apparu"). Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 120.

[60] For the bewildering array of proposed reconstructions see Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā, 155–56, n.17.

[61] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 52.

[62] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 36.

possible to identify a join at the edge of the two fragments.[63] Lipiński
further proposed that v(k) should be placed below and to the right of
i(a), which enabled him to restore: ‏[רפה‏ ‏.‏ ‏יד‏ ‏.‏ ‏נפ]ל‏.‏ ‏ימן‏, "(his) hand was
slack, (his) right hand hung low".[64] In the context this reconstruction is
plausible, but in light of the extensive damage at this point it is best to
err on the side of caution.

‏[וליכ]ל‏ ‏.‏ ‏לאכל‏—This restoration, first proposed by McCarter, fits physically
within the lacuna and graphically with the surviving letter traces.
Further, as McCarter observed, it is consistent with the reference to
fasting in the following line.[65] Alternatively, Lipiński has proposed that
v(o) should be placed immediately to the left of line 3 of i(a), allowing
the reading ‏ולֹיכֹל‏ ‏.‏ ‏טֹמן‏, "and he was not able to calm himself". It is
difficult to see which reading is preferable, as traces of a tail that might
belong to either a *kāp* or *nûn* can be seen on i(d). In the preceding
lacuna, Lepinski proposed: ‏ו[צם‏ ‏.‏ ‏יצם‏ ‏.‏ ‏]לֹחדרֹה‏, "and he fasted continually
in his chamber."

Line 4

‏עֹמֹה‏—The reference to Balaam's "people" distances the audience from the
narrative. This might suggest that the account was a received tradition,
or, at the very least, that the tradents believed the account (and by

---

[63] van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 245. There appear to be traces of ink on
the right-hand edge of viii(d) which might be part of the *yôd* (cf. McCarter, "The Balaam
Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 52). Below this are traces that may belong to a long legged letter;
although, if so, then the letter must also extend above the line on i(a), suggesting *tāw*.
Note that the space before *lāmed* may be sufficient for a word divider, in which case the
lāmed should be interpreted as a preposition, i.e. ‏לימן‏, "to/of (his) right (hand)."

[64] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 115; cf. Seow, "Deir ʿAllā
Plaster Texts", 209, 211, note that Seow restores ‏שפל‏ following ‏יד‏, rather than Lipiński's
‏נפל‏.

[65] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 52.

extension the prophecy) to be relevant beyond Balaam's immediate (diegetic) audience (see §5.1.1.1).

לם—Syntactically, this particle may be analysed as signifying direct speech (cf. Syriac ܠܡ),[66] or as an interrogative particle (= לְמָה), "why?" However, the latter option is almost certainly to be rejected owing to the fact that the interrogative particle מה is written *scriptio plena* in I.5.[67] Note that the discourse marker need not occur at the beginning of the direct speech.[68]

[וַיֹּאמְרוּ] . לְבַלְעָם . בַּר . בְּעֹר . לֹם . תצֹם . וַתִּבְכֶּה—Depending on the placement of viii(d) in relation to 1(a) and 1(c), the PN may or may not form part of the discourse. McCarter restored: ויאמרו לבלעם בר בער לם תצם ותבכה, "and they said to Balaam, son of Beor, 'do you fast? Do you weep?'", while Hackett restored: ויאמרו לה בלעם בר בער לם תצם ותבכה, "and they said to him, 'Balaam, son of Beor, why are you fasting and crying?'". The damage to the letter on the right-hand edge of viii(d) precludes certainty.[69]

---

[66] So Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 179; McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 53. For a general treatment of this particle see Takamitsu Muraoka and Bezalel Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1998), 339, §90e.

[67] On the unusual force of מה in I.5 see McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 53; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 39, n.21. As Stephen A. Kaufman, *BASOR* (1980): 73; cf. idem, "An Assyro-Aramaic *egirtu sa sulmu*", in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (ed. M. de Jong Ellis; Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 19; Hamden, Ct.: Archon, 1977), 121, has argued, לם may be explained as a contraction of לאמר; although, on the basis of לאם in a 7th century legal document from Assyria, Kaufman understood the equation of לם in the DAPT with Syr. ܠܡ to be anachronistic.

[68] Cf. Muraoka and Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*, 339, §90e, n.1285.

[69] Although on the alignment of the fragments cf. Jacob Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say? Remarks on the First Combination of the Deir ʿAlla Plaster Texts," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at*

Line 5

אחוכם—The verb √חוה, "to reveal, declare", is attested six times in the
Hebrew Bible, mainly in the book of Job (Job 15:17; 32:6, 10, 17; 36:2;
Ps 19:2 [Heb.3]). In Aramaic the comparatively common root √חוי has
distinctly visual connotations.[70] Consequently, the expression may be
compared with מה־יראני והגדתי לך, "Whatever (YHWH) shows me, I will
make known to you" (Num 23:3).

[פעלו . שד]ין . מה—Only the *šîn* and part of a short legged letter are visible.
Based on his interpretation of I.16 (= I.14; cf. also, I.6), Hoftijzer
restored the DN שגר. However, it is not certain that שגר in I.14 should
be interpreted as a DN (see below). Therefore, given that שדין is parallel
to the אלהן in the next line, it is better to follow Caquot and Lemaire in
restoring שדין.[71]

The etymology of the noun שדין (*šaddayīn*) is debated. McCarter,
following Cross, compared שדין with the biblical epithet אֵל שַׁדָּי, which
he took to mean "God of the mountain". Accordingly, he identified the
שדין as "the ones of the mountain"; i.e. *the gods who meet at the
mountain of assembly.*[72] Alternatively, Lipiński has argued that שדין is a
qattal stem derived from the Aramaic root √שדי, "to sprinkle", which
may reflect the original function of these deities as water suppliers and
fertility gods.[73] Accordingly, Lipiński proposed the translation,

---

Leiden 21–24 August 1989 (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 134–35.

[70] Cf. "ḥwy₁", in *Dictionary of the North-west Semitic Inscriptions*, 353–54.

[71] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 195; cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 53, 57.

[72] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 57; cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic,* 52–60.

[73] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 123; idem, "Shadday, Shadrapha et le dieu Satrape", *ZAH* 8 (1995): 247–275.

"*Fécondateurs*"; a translation that fits well within the context of the DAPT (see below).[74]

As Hackett observed, the restoration of the following verb is entirely arbitrary. Both פעלו and אמרו are obvious possibilities. Levine (following Puech) restored [שבו]ח, "they (the *šaddayīn*) have planned"; however, the *ḥêt* is by no means as certain as Levine suggests.[75] Note that if the verb relates to the divine assembly in I.6 or the delivery of the revelation in I.1–2, then a perfect is called for.[76] If, on the other hand, it relates to the future events that Balaam is about to recount, an imperfect would be preferable.[77]

ראו—The imperative of √ראי, "to see". The language of vision is striking in light of I.7*ff.* (see below).

Line 5–6

אֵלֹ[ה]ֶן . אִתְיַחֲדוּֽ . ונצבו . שדין . מוֹעֵֽד—Hoftijzer has convincingly explained אתיחדו as an *ʾtpʿl* perfect of יחד.[78] As has often been recognised, the apparently chiastic structure of I.5–6 indicates that the אלהן and שדין should be understood as working in concert, rather than as opposing divine factions.

[74] Lipiński, "Shadday, Shadrapha et le dieu Satrape", 251.

[75] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 249. Puech, "Le texte "Ammonite" de Deir ʿAlla," 21. Note, however, that in his 1984 treatment Puech originally restored the line [שד]ין יפעלו; Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356, 361.

[76] So McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51; Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 196; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 26.

[77] So Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356; Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā, 156; Erhard Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir 'Alla", 577.

[78] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 192.

Line 6

[   ]לשׁ . וֹאֹמֹרו—The object of the verb is evidently a DN, although only the first letter, *šîn*, remains. Assuming that the reconstruction of the subsequent verbs is correct, a feminine deity is to be supplied. Based on his reading of the expression שגר ועשתר in I.14 (see below), Hoftijzer restored שגר.[79] However, this is entirely dependent on the interpretation of 1.14, and has met with only limited acceptance.[80]

Caquot and Lemaire offered the alternative restoration שמש; i.e. the deified sun; equivalent to the Ugaritic goddess *špš*.[81] However, McCarter objected that (1) the Aramaic noun שמש is masculine; although, he acknowledged that in Hebrew שמש apparently has a mixed gender; and (2) it is curious that a solar deity would be tasked with obscuring the sky with a cloud (though on the translation of עב, see below). Instead, McCarter proposed the personified שאל, "Sheol" (cf. Isa 5:14), followed by כה or לם to fill the space.[82] But, it is not clear that Sheol would be better suited to the context.[83] Moreover, as Hackett observed, the imagery in I.6–7 is logically consistent with a solar deity who possessed the power to provide or withhold light.[84] A fourth

---

[79] Known from both a Punic PN (ʿbdšgr), a list of DNN from Ugarit; and (as noted by Levine) an inscription from Emar (*Ša-ag-ga-ar*). Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 272–74. Cf. respectively, Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Insrciptions*, 163. Claude F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica V: nouveaux textes accadiens, hourrites et ugaritiques des archives et bibliothèques privées d'Ugarit* (Mission de Ras Shamra 16; Paris: Librarie Orientaliste Paul Guenther, 1968), 580–88.

[80] Following Hoftijzer, the main proponent of the restoration שגר was Baruch Levine; cf. Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 249–50, who interpreted שגר ועשתר as a goddess whose composite name synthesised an astral aspect with that of fertility.

[81] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 196–97.

[82] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 53. Although it is equally difficult to see how עב could relate to Sheol.

[83] In any case there is in fact little evidence for a Canaanite cult of the deified Sheol; cf. Hans M. Barstad, "Sheol," *DDD*:268–70.

[84] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 41.

possibility, identified by Hackett, is to restore the Hurrian/Mesopotamian goddess *Šala*.[85] This is certainly possible. The symbol of *Šala* was a barley stalk, suggesting she may have been an agricultural goddess (cf. 1:14), and in Mespotamian tradition she was a wife of the storm god Adad.[86]

Perhaps a preferable alternative, however, would be *Šaušga*, the Hittite goddess of fecundity, whose responsibilities seem to have included the provision of rain (see the discussion of תפרי סכרי שמין below).[87] In iconographic representations *Šaušga* was often associated with the storm god, and in some contexts she forms a symbolic triad with earth and solar deities, representing the basic fertility requirements of agrarian society.[88] Yet more significant, however, is the fact that *Šaušga* can be identified with *Ištar*, thereby drawing a connection between the female DN in I.6 and the reference to עשתר in I.14.[89] In fact, there is evidence that in the Neo-Assyrian period *Šaušga* could be used as an appellation of *Ištar*.[90] Most importantly, the probable depiction of *Šaušga* on a Late Bronze Age ivory plaque discovered at

---

[85] Ibid, 41; cf. Lluís Feliu, *The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 19; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 289–93. Note that Feliu draws a distinction between *Šalaš*, the wife of Dagan, chiefly worshipped in Syria, and *Šala*, the wife of Adad, chiefly worshipped in Mesopotamia.

[86] Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, "Šala", *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London: British Museum, 1992), 173.

[87] Robert L. Alexander, "Šaušga and the Hittite Ivory from Megiddo", *JNES* 50 (1991): 170, 172, 175.

[88] Alexander, "Šaušga and the Hittite Ivory from Megiddo", 168, 176, 179.

[89] Gary Beckman, "*Ištar* of Nineveh Reconsidered", *JCS* 50 (1998): 1–10; Alexander, "Šaušga and the Hittite Ivory from Megiddo", 167.

[90] Beckman, "*Ištar* of Nineveh Reconsidered", 8.

Megiddo, and a 9th century bronze plaque from Tel Dan, suggests that her sphere of influence may have extended as far as the Palestine.[91]

שמין . סֹכרֹי . תֹּפֹרֹי—Caquot and Lemaire were the first to read תפרי and סכרי as f.s. impv. from √תפר, "to sew", and √סכר "to shut". [92] If this is correct, then the expression תפרי סכרי should probably be interpreted as a verbal hendiadys, meaning "to sew shut".[93] In the Hebrew Bible the expression to shut up the heavens is well attested as a metaphor for the withholding of rain, often as a form of divine punishment (e.g. Gen 8:2, which uses √סכר; Deut 11:17; 1 Kgs 8:35 = 2 Chron 6:26; 2 Chron 7:13; cf. Amos 4:7).[94]

Such imagery is commensurate with the agrarian lifestyle at Deir ʿAlla. Remains of cereals and other crops excavated from the Phase IX occupation level indicate that during the Iron Age II, intensive agricultural activity was conducted around the Tell.[95] However, the climate at Deir ʿAlla is variable and annual precipitation often falls

---

[91] Alexander, "Šaušga and the Hittite Ivory from Megiddo", 161–82; Tallay Ornan, "The Lady and the Bull: Remarks on the Bronze Plaque from Tel Dan", in *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Ancient Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Naʾaman* (eds. Yairah Amit, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 297–312 Alexander believed that the ivory plaque was probably not locally produced, and may have been acquired through trade or booty; however, Ornan has argued that the bronze plaque from Dan reflects local workmanship.

[92] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 197. cf. Hoftijzer's, אל] . חף[ת/י, "[let not] the abundant rain (?) [br]eak the bolts of heaven"

[93] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 54.

[94] Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 123–24; cf. Helmer Ringgren, "Balaam and the Deir ʿAlla Inscription", in *Isac Leo Seeligman Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World*, vol. 3 (eds. by A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch; Jerusalem: Rubinstein, 1983), 95. On the conceptual context of the figurative language of the DAPT, see Levine, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAllā", 61–62.

[95] Cf. Eva Kaptijn, *Life on the Watershed: Reconstructing Subsistence in a Steppe Region Using Archaeological Survey: A Diachronic Perspective on Habitation in the Jordan Valley* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2009), 365–68.

below the levels necessary for rain-fed agriculture.[96] To combat the unreliable climate, it seems that the valley relied upon a complex network of irrigation canals (cf. §7.1). But this irrigation system was still dependent on adequate precipitation, and short-term climactic changes would have affected the inhabitants of the valley.[97] In this situation, a prophecy about the restriction of rain would have serious implications for the inhabitants of the site, and might explain Balaam's extreme response in I.3. Of course, it is not certain that the DAPT was a local composition, such imagery would be at home throughout the ancient Levant; but it may explain why the text was felt to be relevant at Deir ʿAlla.

Be that as it may, Manfred Weippert has proposed an alternative restoration, תפקי, a feminine jussive of √פקק, "to smash, break to pieces", interpreting סכרי שמין as "the bolts of heaven".[98] In that case, it seems that some sort of deluge was intended (cf. Gen 7:11; Ps 78:23, describing God's provision of manna).[99] However, it is less easy to see how the imagery of rain or a flood relates to I.6–7.

בֹּעַבְכִי—It is usually assumed that בֹּעַבְכִי should be translated as the noun עב, "cloud," with an instrumental preposition and the 2.f.s pronominal

---

[96] Cf. Eva Kaptijn, "Settling the steppe: Iron Age Irrigation around Tell Deir ʿAlla, Jordan Valley" in *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East Madrid, April 3-8 2006* (eds. Joaquín Mª Córdoba, et al.; Madrid: Centro Superior de Estudios sobre el Oriente Próximo y Egipto, 2008), 267.

[97] Cf. Kaptijn, *Life on the Watershed*, 375.

[98] Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 157, n.21; cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 122. Weippert had originally proposed the feminine jussive H-stem of √פרר, "to break"; H. and M. Weipert, "Die "Bileam" –Inschrift von Tell Dēr ʿAllā," *ZDVP* 68 (1982): 92. However, he subsequently revised this following by Jonas Greenfield's objection that in Biblical Hebrew the H-stem of פרר is only used of abstract nouns. On the validity of this reading, cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 111; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 43, n. 29.

[99] Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 123–24.

suffix; i.e. "sew shut the heavens with your cloud." However, Lipiński has argued that if the language of the DAPT is Aramaic (as he supposes), then עב is unlikely to mean "cloud", since in Aramaic the noun is usually vocalised עֵיבָא (note that in the Deir ʿAlla orthography the diphthong was generally retained see §6.3.2).[100] Consequently, Lipiński proposed that עב should instead be identified with the Aramaic noun עוּבָּא, "bosom", which, he argues, is frequently used metonymically to mean "midst".[101] He therefore interpreted -ב as a spatial preposition introducing a main clause and translates the remainder of the line "in your midst let there be darkness and not brilliance!" As Lipiński commented, the metonymy is well chosen inasmuch as it is applied to a female deity.[102]

Lipiński went even further, however, and interpreted the imagery as an allusion to an annular eclipse (in which only the outer-ring of the sun's disk remains visible). He then observed that if the destruction of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX is understood to have occurred ca. 760 B.C.E. (cf. §7.4), one could also argue that the eclipse referred to might have been inspired by the eclipse mentioned in Amos 8:9, ca. June 15, 763 B.C.E. If so, this would imply that the DAPT is almost contemporary with the original composition; although he noted that other eclipses are also possible.[103]

The association with a solar eclipse is certainly suggestive, but it should be noted that the text does not require this degree of specificity. As Levine and others have observed, the motif of celestial darkness as a punishment for sinfulness is well known from biblical literature (e.g. Ezek 33:3–8; Zech 1:14–17).[104] Moreover, it might also be argued that

---

[100] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 128.

[101] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 128, n.119.

[102] Ibid, 128.

[103] Ibid, 128–29, and n.124.

[104] Cf. Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", esp. 204–05.

an indefinite period of drought and darkness makes better sense of the subsequent expression: ואל תגי עד עלם, "but do not remain angry forever!", assuming that reading is correct (see below).

Finally, Levine has suggested that כי should be interpreted as the causal conjunction "because, that", rather than the possessive suffix.[105] However, in this instance there does not seem to be sufficient space for a word divider between *bêt* and *kāp*.[106] Furthermore, as Hoftijzer observed, word dividers may be omitted in the DAPT, but usually only between words that are closely related.[107] On this basis, it seems strange to find a word divider omitted before the conjunction כי but inserted after it.

שם—This vocable is especially difficult. It may be understood as the locative particle, i.e. "in your cloud, there (שָׁם) is darkness," but this leaves the problem that ואל is left to govern a noun (see below). Hackett surmounted this difficulty by vocalizing שם as an infinitive absolute from שִׂים, "to put, place".

Line 6–7

נגה . ואל . חשׁך—The interpretation of the syntax of the end of line 6 depends, to a large extent, on how one interprets the negative particle אל. As noted above, Hackett supplied an infinitive derived from √שִׂים, which she interpreted as having volitive force, in order that אל might govern a verb. However, there is evidence—albeit comparatively rare— that in BH אל might sometimes be used before a noun.[108] Regardless,

---

[105] Cf. Levine, "The Balaam Inscription form Deir ʿAlla: Historical Aspects", 329.

[106] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, pl.10 (line 8).

[107] Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 121–22; cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 179. However, compare the inconsistency noted by Puech, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 35, who observed that sometimes the scribe has included two word dividers (e.g. I.5), and sometimes none (e.g. I.1, I.2).

[108] For the most detailed treatment see Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription," *BO* 50 (1993): 317, who cited 9 examples (all in poetic contexts): 2 Sam

the sense is clear; Lipiński described it as a nominal sentence with a volitive acceptation.[109]

Line 7

עטׁם—Hoftijzer and van der Kooij originally read עטם, which Hoftijzer understood to be a cognate of *ʿẓm (cf. Heb עָצַם, "to be strong, numerous"), with the sense, in this context, of "thick darkness".[110] However, as McCarter notes, this presupposes a phonological merger *ẓ > ṭ, which is contra-indicated elsewhere in the inscription (cf. עצה, II.9, יעץ, II.9, where *ẓ > ṣ).[111]

An alternative reading, עלם, was first proposed by McCarter (followed by Hackett), who observed that there is sufficient space for a short *lāmed* to be read instead of the damaged *ṭêt*.[112] McCarter interpreted נגה עלם as an adjectival phrase "perpetual radiance". But, it seems preferable for reasons of parallelism to interpret ע(ל/ט)ם as a noun, parallel to ואל סכרכי (for the interpretation of סכרכי see below), rather than an adjective. In that way, the command to sew shut the heavens in I.6 (assuming that reading is correct) is followed by a pair of two

---

1:21 x2; Amos 5:14; Joel 2:13; Ps 141:5; Prov 8:10; 12:28; 17:12; 27:2. In keeping with his interest in the classification and history of Israelian Hebrew, Rendsburg interpreted this as of characteristic of the northern dialect; cf. Gary A. Rendsburg, "A Comprehensive Guide to Isrealian Hebrew: Grammar and Lexicon," *Orient* 38 (2003): 24.

[109] Cf. Jouon §163b.

[110] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 106, 197.

[111] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 54, and 59, n.2; cf. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 27; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 44, 91. Hoftijzer himself recognised this problem; Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 197, 283.

[112] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 54; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 44. It should be noted in passing that Caquot and Lemair's restoration עדם, "nothing," is ill-suited to the visible letter traces and is unlikely to be correct; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 197–98.

balanced couplets joined by ואל. In other words, it seems that I.6–I.7 repeats a pattern of antithetical pairs for dramatic or mnemonic effect.

However, this leaves the question of how to translate עׄ(ל/ׅטׄ)ם? Victor Sasson attempted to explain עׄטם as a cognate of the BH *nipʿal* hapax נעתם (Isa 9:18), which he related to Arabic عتمة, a noun signifying the darkness of night, or the gloom after dusk.[113] Alternatively, Puech has explained עׄטם as a metathesis of Aram. √עמט, "obscurity, darkness."[114] Lipiński has also suggested a possible link with *eṭemmu*, "spirit of the dead"; however it is not clear how this could suit the immediate context.[115]

Ultimately, whatever the etymology of עׄטם, it is syntactically and philologically preferable to restore a noun connoting "darkness."

כי] . [סכרׄ] . לׄ[אׄ]וׄ–The reading [לׄ[אׄ]וׄ is reasonably assured.[116] Hoftijzer initially read סׄמרכי, which he related to the Hebrew verb √סׄמר, "to shudder" (cf. Ps 119:120; Job 4:15), translating the noun as "shuddering fear."[117] Alternatively, McCarter cautiously proposed that סמר might be related to Heb. √סָמַר, "to bristle," and translated "bristling (i.e. radiate)

---

[113] Victor Sasson, "Two Unrecognised Terms in the Plaster Texts from Deir ʿAlla," *PEQ* 117 (1985):102–03; cf. Edward W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, Williams and Norgate, 1863), 1950.

[114] Cf. Puech, "Le texte "ammonite" de Deir ʿAlla", 22, n.39; idem, "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla", 35.

[115] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 129; cf. already Puech, "Le texte "ammonite" de Deir ʿAlla", 22. Note, however, that Lipiński's gloss, "shade," is not self-evident in the Akkadian, cf. "*eṭemmu*", CAD 4:397. Furthermore, even in light of the apparently funereal content of Combination II (see below), it is not clear how *eṭemmu*, "spirit of the dead", would suit the immediate context.

[116] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 45.

[117] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 198.

with light." However, Hoftijzer has subsequently challenged the semantic validity of this proposal.[118]

Other proposals include Sasson's suggestion that סמר might be related to Arabic سمر, which has connotations of "night, darkness"[119]—although, as noted above, it seems preferable, for syntactic reasons, to identify the noun with the semantic domain of light, rather than darkness; and Lipiński's potential Akkadian cognate *samaru*, which he loosely translates as "sex appeal." The latter might be a pun on the עב of the preceding line, although one should be very careful about speculatively reading imagery into the text.[120]

Reference should also be made to the radically different solution offered by Hackett. Instead of treating אל as a negative conjunction, Hackett interpreted it as a preposition and restored סכרכי, instead of סמרכי, which she related to סכר in the preceding line. Hence, she translated the clause: "and put the dark se[al] on your bolt." However, this presupposes that עלם (Hackett's reading) belongs to the preceding clause, which although possible, is less likely.

Even so, the restoration of *kāp* instead of *mêm* is palaeographically valid and may suggest another, previously unconsidered, alternative.[121]

---

[118] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 54; cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 126.

[119] Sasson, "Two Unrecognised Terms", 103; cf. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1424–26; Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 126, and 127, n.37. See also, Meindert Dijkstra , "Response to H.-P. Müller and M. Weippert," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 210–11, and n.15; and the respons by Sasson in Victor Sasson, "Deir ʿAlla *smr* Obscured, not Re-evaluated", 258–62.

[120] Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 130.

[121] Cf. van der Kooij's palaeographic discussion in Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 107.

That is, the root סכר might possibly be related to the Akkadian verb *sekēru*, "to heat", and to the nominal and verbal derivitives of Arab. سقر, "heat", which can refer specifically to the oppressive heat of the sun.[122] Consequently, if this proposal is acceptable, it may be possible to translate עטם . וֹאֹ[ל] סכֹרכי, "gloominess and not your heat," which may be readily understood if the deity in I.6 is identified as שמש. However, this is the only instace in the two couplets in which the noun takes the pronominal suffix, and, it is therefore preferable to follow Levine and translate כי as a conjunction.[123]

תהבי . כי—תהבי . חת is probably the 2.f.s. √יהב, "to give", with חת, "terror" (cf. Heb. √חתת, "to be dismayed"), as its direct object. Caquot and Lemaire noted that the synonymous expression נתן חתת is used in Ezek 26:17; 32:23 24, 25, 26, 32.[124]

Alternatively, McCarter (followed by Hackett) restored חתם, "a seal," and translated the sentence תהבי חת]ם אל ע[ב חשך, "you will put a sea[l upon the thick] cloud of darkness";[125] however, cf. the discussion of בעבכי...חשך above.

Wesselius has challenged the restoration of √יהב on the grounds that the imperfect of √יהב is never attested in Hebrew or Aramaic (Aram. the imperfect of √נתן is used). Consequently, he proposed the alternate

---

[122] Cf. "*sekēru* B", CAD 15:213–14; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1379. This assumes that Arabic ق represents etymological /*k/. While, in Arabic the use of ق to represent etymological /*ḳ/ is relatively stable, there is evidence for the interchangability of the phonemes *k and *ḳ; cf. MH קִרְסֵם > BH כִּרְסֵם, "to cut, nibble" (*Peʾah* 2.7); MH קִפֵּל > BH כפל, "to double, fold" (*Šabb* 2.3), cf. M. H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Eugene Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 30, §1.2.45.

[123] Cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 128.

[124] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 198.

[125] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 54; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 45.

restoration תחבי, √תחבל, "to hide." However, the surviving letter traces seem better suited to *hê* than to *ḥêt*.[126]

חשך . ור[ב]ֿ—The restoration בע[ב] חשך "on the thick cloud of darkness" was first proposed by McCarter, and has found wide acceptance.[127] In light of בעב in the preceding line, Lepinski read: "[may] you inspire terror midst the darkness." The reading ור[ב] חשך, "much darkness," adopted here, was first proposed by Baruch Levine.[128]

עלם . עד . תגי [.] ואל—The verb תגי has attracted several explanations. Hoftijzer originally related it to the root √הגה, "to mutter, utter a sound."[129] Alternatively, McCarter, proposed that תגי might be related to the homonym √הגה, "to remove," and read: "and you will not remove it [viz. the seal, חתם] forever."[130] Then again, Lipiński, following a suggestion by R. Hazim and O. Ghul, identified תגי with the root √והג*, which in Arabic (وهج) means "to glow," and translated the clause, "and may you not glow forever!"[131]

Yet another possibility was proposed by Manfred Weippert who suggested that the verb may be derived from the geminate root √הגג*, which he related to Akkadian *agāgu*, "to be angry" (cf. Arabic هجّ, "to

---

[126] Cf. Wesselius, "Thoughts about Balaam", 596–97, but cf. n.6. For the grapheme in question cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, pl.2 i(c), line 9.

[127] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 54; Lemaire, "L'inscription de Balaam trouvée à Deir ʿAlla" 318, although Lemaire regarded the reading as uncertain; cf. Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356; Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 156; Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 244; Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 209, 211.

[128] Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 197.

[129] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 199.

[130] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 54.

[131] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 130, n.132; note also the possibility of reading ואלנגי, "and not-light," cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 129.

burn"), and interpreted as limiting the duration of the ensuing calamity: "but do not remain angry forever."[132]

Ultimately, the decision about how to interpret this line is subjective. I have opted here to follow Weippert in reading a limiting clause on the basis that an oppositional noun-pair would be imprecisely balanced with the preceding couplets, insofar as it alone is introduced by a verb (תהבי). But it should be noted that other possibilities exist.

Lines 7–8

כי . ססאגר . חרפת . נשׁ—The causal conjunction כי in I.7 is the turning point of the whole of Combination I. In the past כי has typically been interpreted as part of the divine speech, and as such, it has been understood as either: (1) *retrospective*, as a motivation for the gods' actions in I.6–7: i.e. *the gods have done* A *because of* B; (2) *prospective*, as supplying a reason for the limitation of the imminent catastrophe (assuming ואל תגי עד עלם in the preceding clause means "do not be angry forever,"): i.e. *do not be angry forever, for* X *will be the result*; or (3) *resultative*, read as part of the curse: i.e. *sew shut the heavens…in order that...*[133]

In a radical new study, Erhard Blum has argued that כי may be an editorial insertion—marking a seam between two previously independent *Vorlagen*—which is used to explicate the decision in the

---

[132] Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 157, n.23; cf. already Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 198, n.12. As Weippert noted, the limitation of cosmic catastrophes is a common motif in ancient Near Eastern mythology; Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 171–72.

[133] The most thorough discussion of the function of כי in I.7–8 occurs in Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 132 – 34; cf. G. I. Davies, "Response to J. Greenfield and J. Hoftijzer," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 146–47. The third alternative has not found much acceptance; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 47, n.37.

divine council (i.e. option 1, above).[134] According to Blum, the disproportionate length of the sequence describing the inversion of the natural order (I.7*ff.*), the lack of formal resolution in the extant fragments, and the tension between the outlooks of the two parts (i.e. between the speech of the אלהן in I.2, and the abysmally desolate world, "*abgründig desolaten Welt*" of I.7*ff.*), suggest that I.1–7 and I.7*ff.* were not originally parts of a unified whole.[135] However, there is yet another alternative, which alleviates the tensions identified by Blum.

Rather than viewing I.7*ff.* as a continuation of the divine speech (I.6–7), it is possible that the prophecy might in fact conclude after עלם, and that כי might mark the resumption of Balaam's own voice, in which he reports the contents of the dream-vision which has hitherto only been summarised in I.2 (see the schematic representation in appendix E). According to this interpretation, I.7*ff.* might be understood as a series of ill-omens, characterised by the disharmony of nature; i.e. *the gods will do* A (I.6–7)*, for it is portended by* B (I.7*ff.*).[136] In other words, the section beginning from כי (I.7*ff.*) might contain the description of Balaam's dream, which consisted of a series of portents of the impending plague. This should not be surprising, given that I.1 introduces a narrative about a nocturnal revelation.

---

[134] Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir 'Alla", 593. However, he left open the question as to whether the lines following כי should be understood as a continuation of the divine speech, or a resumption of Balaam's narration.

[135] According to Blum, Combination I conflates two different texts, one a prophetic narrative (I.1–7), the other a wisdom teaching (I.7–15); Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir 'Alla", 593–96.

[136] The syntax is loosely comparable to 1 Samuel 14:10, in which כי, following an imperfect, anticipates a predetermined outcome expressed in the perfect conjugation: ואם־ כה יאמרו עלו עלינו ועלינו כי־נתנם יהוה בידנו וזה־לנו האות, "if they say 'come up to us', then we will go up, *for YHWH has given them into our hand*. That will be the sign for us" (cf. also 1 Sam 20:22).

The inversion of the natural order—symbolising chaos and divine displeasure—is a widely attested motif in ancient Near Eastern literature.[137] And it is reasonable to suppose that the DAPT contains a reflex of this motif, in which the inversion of the natural order is interpreted as a harbinger of woe. This suggestion comports well with biblical and early Jewish tradition that Balaam was an augur and diviner (see appendix D).

If it is the case that I.6*ff.* comprises an account of an oracular dream and its interpretation, then the closest parallels can be found in the biblical dream oracles, which similarly contain a description of the dream omen, followed by its interpretation (e.g. Gen 37:5–8, 9–10; 40:5, 9–13, 16–19; 41:1–36; Dan 2:31–45; 4:10–27). However, it should be noted that the order of vision and interpretation is inverted (perhaps for dramatic effect) in the DAPT.[138]

In this case, we should not look to I.7*ff.* for the resolution of the plague, as argued by Blum, but rather view Combination I together as a complex whole. Indeed, it will be argued in the next secion that the resolution which Blum seeks can probably be found in Combination II.

As was recognised by Hoftijzer, the conjugation of the verbs in this section may be of some assistance for interpreting I.7*ff.*[139] Initially, Hoftijzer identified two imperfect verbs in this section: יענה (I.8) and ייבל (I.9); however, as will be discussed below, the first of these should

---

[137] Cf. Paul A. Kruger, "A World Turned on its Head in ancient Near Eastern Prophetic Literature: A Powerful Strategy to Depict Chaotic Scenarios," *VT* 62 (2012):58–76. This motif has been widely recognised in the DAPT since it was described by McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 58, n.78.

[138] In a recent Masters thesis at Macquarie University, Axlexandra Wrathal has explored, among other things, the important role of supsence in narrative artistry of the DAPT; see Alexandra Wrathall, "Reading Between the Lines: A Narratological Approach to the Deir ʿAlla Inscription Combination I" (M.Res. Diss., Macquarie University, 2014), 42–45.

[139] Cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 129–32.

probably be read as a noun,[140] while the second appears to belong to a discrete syntactic unit. This leaves three verbs in this section: חרפת (I.7–8), צרה (I.8), and possibly ח[ס] (I.8). Of these, the third must be omitted from consideration; even if it is identified as a verb (see below), the fact remains that the ending must be restored, and all that can be said with certainty is that it is not an imperfect form. This leaves חרפת, "to scorn, revile", and צרה, "to split, rend", both of which may be parsed as either a perfect or a participle.[141] However, if I.9 is understood as a continuation of the inverted world-order motif, then on the basis of אכלֹו it is reasonable to translate the verbs as perfect.[142] This is consistent with the interpretation proposed above.

ססאגר—This bird species is apparently named in Isaiah 38:14, where it is vocalised סוס עָגוּר (cf. Jer 8:7, where the *Qere* reads סִיס וְעָגוּר). On the basis of Jeremiah 8:7 this bird should be identified as a migratory species. The reference to migratory birds might suggest that the prophecy refers to the springtime, toward the end of the wet season (cf. §7.1); an inference that accords well with the apparent reference to the restriction of fertility in I.14.

Following local Palestinian tradition, H. B. Tristram identified the ססאגר as the swift (cf. local Arab. صبص).[143] However, Lipiński has argued in favour of its identification as a swallow, noting the physical similarity of the two (cf. Isa 38:14, where סוס עגור is translated LXX χελιδών; Vulg. *pullus hirundinis*; Syr. ܣܢܘܢܝܬܐ). According to Lipiński

---

[140] Cf. ibid, 130, n.57.

[141] For structural reasons, I agree with Hoftijzer that חרפת is unlikely to be a noun forming part of a list of birds (cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 130, and n.59).

[142] Although note the possibility that the verbs of this section might be interpreted as gnomic or prophetic perfects, cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 131; Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 140, and n.109.

[143] Henry B. Tristram, *The Survey of Western Palestine: The Flora and Fauna of Palestine* (London: The Palestine Exploration Fund, 1885), 82–83; cf. Godfrey R. Driver, "Birds in the Old Testament: II. Birds in Life", *PEQ* 87 (1955): 131.

ססאגר might be explained etymologically as a refence to the swallow's characteristic nest (cf. Arab. عجر, "projection, protrusion").[144] Alternatively, Rendsburg has cited an Eblaite cognate, *sa-su-ga-lum*, which apparently denotes some sort of coloured bird.[145] He has plausibly, but tentatively, proposed the golden oriol (*Oriolus galbula*), which meets the criteria of a small brightly coloured migratory songbird (cf. the onomatapoic אֲצַפְצֵף, Isa 38:14), commonly found throughout northern Syria and Israel.

Line 8

נשר—נשׁר is typically translated either "eagle," or "vulture" (cf. Arab. نسر). Lipiński contended that the subsequent reference to the "vulture's nest" (קן רחמן) in I.8 indicates that נשר should be translated eagle,[146] but Tristram's ealier arguments for the identification of the נשר as the Griffon vulture (*Gyps Fulvus*) on the basis of its bald appearance remain convincing (cf. Mich 1:16c, הרחבי קרחתך כנשר, "make yourself as bald as the *nešer*). Significantly, the Griffon vulture is particularly common around the region of Deir ʿAlla.[147]

רחֹמן . וקֹן—Hoftijzer restored *lāmed* after *qôp* and read: וקֹל רחמן יענה, "and the voice of vultures will resound".[148] Traces of ink may be discerned on the edge of the short lacuna which might belong to a *lāmed*, but other restorations have been proposed. Thus, Lemaire interpreting the

---

[144] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 131.

[145] Gary A. Rendsburg, "Eblaite *sa-su-ga-lum* = Hebrew *ssʿgr*", in *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language, vol. 3* (eds. Cyrus H. Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 151–53.

[146] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 131.

[147] Tristram, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, 95.

[148] This restoration has found wide acceptance, e.g., McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 55; Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 197; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 25; Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 209; cf. Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 198.

word as another bird's name offered the restoration [א]נשר וק, "l'aigle et le péli(can)";[149] though, the surviving letter traces are a poor match for ʾālep. Alternatively, Puech proposed קן, "nest," and read an elliptical clause related to חרפת; i.e. "because the sparrow mocks the eagle, the nest of vultures the ostrich".[150] This reading may indeed be preferable insofar as קן רחמן, "the nest of the vulture", provides a pleasing and balanced parallel to בני נצץ, "the young of the hawk", and אפרחי אנפה, "the chick of the heron", in the subsequent clauses. However, it seems to me that the syntax of the following clauses requires the restoration of a verb in the lacuna after יענה (see below), and, consequently, I am inclined to read both נשר and קן רחמן as the objects of חרפת.[151]

Tristram identified Hebr. רחם as the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), which could formerly be found throughout Palestine during the summer months; although, today they are a threatened species.[152] However, he also noted that the brown coloured young of the Egyptian vulture are rarely seen in Palestine. This might suggest that the רחם of the DAPT is a different species of vulture, or else it might be

---

[149] "The eagle and the pelican"; Lemaire, "L'inscription de Balaam trouvée à Deir ʿAlla", 318.

[150] Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356, 359: "car le passereau raillera le rapace, la nichée des vautours l'autruche"; cf. Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 154, 157; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 132; Andréas Schüle, *Israels Sohn, Jahwes Prophet: ein Versuch zum Verhältnis von kanonischer Theologie und Religionsgeschichte anhand der Bileam-Perikope (Num 22-24)* (Altes Testament und Moderne 17; Hamburg: Verlag Münster, 2001), 129, 130. Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 246, rendered the syntax slightly differently: "[i]t shall be that the swift and crane will shriek insult to the eagle, and a nest of vultures shall cry out in response."

[151] Note that in the analogous list of positive reversals in Isaiah 11:6–8 the verbs take a mixture of one, two, or three, subjects, suggesting that it is not necessary to assume a 1:1 ratio of subject and object in the DAPT.

[152] Tristram, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, 96; cf. Yoav Perlman and Jonathan Meyrav, *Checklist of the Birds of Israel* (Tel Aviv: Israel Ornithological Center, 2009), 8.

explained in light of the pattern of unusual behaviour that characterises this section; i.e. *the* רחם *has uncharacteristically built its nest in the north* (cf. "the ostrich had compa[ssion on] the young of the hawk", below).

נֹצֵץ . בְּנִי [עֹל . סֹת . ח[סֹת .]יענה—the interpretation of יענה and the restoration of the following word depend to a large extent on the syntax of the subsequent clause. As a verb יענה may be translated "answers" or even "sings."[153] As a noun it may be interpreted in light of BH יַעֲנָה, "female ostrich" (cf. יָעֵן, "male ostrich").[154]

The restoration of the next word, beginning with *ḥêt*, has also proved something of a difficulty. Typically it has been felt that this should be translated as another bird's name. McCarter propsed the restoration ח[סד], "stork", noting the physical similarity of the stork to the "heron" (אנפה), which is named later in the line.[155] However, he acknowledged that this restoration is problematic, inasmuch as the subsequent verb צרה leads us to expect a masculine object, while the only known cognate (Heb. חֲסִידָה), is femine. In addition, if the word at the beginning of the break is restored as a noun, then it is necessary to supply a verb before בני נצץ; but there does not seem to be sufficient space for this. Lipiński attempted to resolve this diffuclty by treating line 9 as a list of nouns related, by ellipsis, to חרפת; though this results in cumbersome syntax.[156]

Other solutions may also be viable. If יענה is understood to be a noun, then it is possible to restore a verb at this point. Repetition of the verb

___

153 Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 179; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 199; McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 54–55.

154 For a survey of literature, cf. Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 130, n.57.

155 McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 54; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 132.

156 Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 116, 132.

חרפת (I.7) is an obvious possibility, but it is not the only option. A previously unexplored alternative might be to restore f.s. perfect or participle [ח]סת (cf. Heb. √חוס), "to pity, look compassionately upon". There appears to be space for the restoration of about 4–5 letters in the lacuna plus one or two dividers, and this allows enough room for the restoration of the preposition עַל, which typically accompanies this verb. Given the sequence of inversions that characterises this section, the restoration √חוס is particularly apposite, as in the Hebrew Bible the parental negligence of the ostrich is proverbial; e.g. כי־תעזב לארץ בציה ועל־עפר תחמם: ותשכח כי־רגל תזורה וחית השדה תדושה: הקשיח בניה ללא־לה לריק יגיעה בלי־פחד:, "for she abandons her eggs on the ground, and lets them warm upon the dust; she forgets that a foot may crush it, or some beast of the field may step on it; she treats her young harshly, as though they were not her own, with no concern that her labour may have been in vain" (Job 39:14–16).

The identification of the noun following בְּנִי is also debated. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij read this as נחֹץ, and translated it "distress, trouble".[157] However, as McCarter observed, we would expect some sort of bird here.[158] Puech has proposed the restoration נצץ, which may be interpreted as a cognate of *Syr.* ܢܨܐ, and BH נץ, "hawk".[159]

Consequently, it is possible to restore: "the ostrich has compa[ssion on] the young of the hawk." As such, it is particularly interesting to note that in the allegory of Ezekiel 16:5 חוס has the sense of showing compassion to a foundling.

---

[157] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 113, 174, 179, 202–03.

[158] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 55.

[159] Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 356.

אנפה . אֹפרחי . וצרה—For the identification of the verb צרה with an Aramaic root meaning "to rip, lacerate", see McCarter (cf. Arab. ضر, "to harm, injure").[160]

אנפה—In Heb. the noun אנפה is traditionally identified as the heron.[161]

Lines 8–9

וצֹפֹר . יון . נשרת . דרר—דרר, יון and צפר may all be identified as species of birds. דרר is known from the Hebrew Bible (cf. דְּרוֹר; Ps 84:4; Prov 26:2) and is traditionally translated "swallow."[162] The noun יון, "dove," has cognates in both Syr. ܝܘܢܐ and Heb. יוֹנָה. While in Hebrew צפר is a common noun meaning "bird". However, as McCarter observed, in the context a specific bird is porbably meant, and צפר has been plausibly translated as "sparrow."[163]

נשרת—Hoftijzer read נשרת as a plural noun, "birds of prey, eagles," but as McCarter observed, the syntax leads one to expect a verb at this point. Note also that if [ח]סת and נשרת are interpreted as verbs, then I.7–9

---

[160] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 55; cf. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, 718; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1776.

[161] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 55; although, compare Driver, "Birds in the Old Testament: I. Birds in Law", *PEQ* 87 (1955): 17, 19, 20.

[162] Cf. Driver, "Birds in the Old Testament: II", 131; Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, 207; however, the etymology of דרור is disputed. Gesenius explained it in relation to the swallow's gyrating flight, while Driver saw it an onomatopoeic reference to the bird's vocalisations. Note that in Modern Hebrew דרור means "sparrow," cf. Perlman and Meyrav, *Checklist of the Birds of Israel*, 25–26.

[163] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 204; McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā," 55; Hans-Peter Müller, "Die Funktion divinatorischen Redens und die Tierbezeichnungen der Inscrift von Tell Deir ʿAllā," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 199–200; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 132.

comprises a series of three syntactically parallel cola, in which a subj., verb, obj. (x2) word order is repeated.

As McCarter noted, the Akkadian verb *našāru* can mean "belittle", while in Mishnaic Hebrew and Aramaic, the D-stem of נשר can mean "to tear, pluck, mutilate".[164] In Arabic the root نسر means "to tear into pieces, rend with teeth or beak" and, by extension, can also denote the beak of a bird of prey;[165] hence the translation above: "the swallow tears at the dove and the sparrow with its beak."

וצֹפֹּר . יון—As Meindert Dijkstra has observed, in the Hebrew Bible the nouns יון and צפר twice appear (in reverse order) as a parallel pair (Ps 84:4; Prov 26:2).[166]

Line 9

יֹן[וצֹפֹּר] . יון– Lipiński proposed the restoration [ד]יֹן from the root √דיה (see above); although this is not required in the context.[167]

מֹטֹה[וֹ]—Seow offers the restoration: וֹ[באשר . ייבל] . מטה, "and instead of [   ] it is the staff [that is led]," which is plausible, but not certain.[168]

חטר . ייבל . רחלן . באשר—Both Hoftijzer, reading: "[i]n the place fit for breading ewes the staff (viz., punishment) will bring hares," and Caquot and Lemaire, reading: "à l'endroit où le bâton (= la houlette) menait (paître) des brebis, des lièvres mangent," identified באשר with the Aramaic noun אתר, "place."[169] However, McCarter (followed by

---

[164] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 55.

[165] Cf. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, 571–72; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2790.

[166] Dijkstra, "Response to H.-P. Müller and M. Weippert", 211, n.17.

[167] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 132.

[168] Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 210, 211.

[169] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 179, 205; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 199, trans.: "in the place where the stick

Hackett) rejected this on syntactical grounds, and proposed the translation "instead of ewes, it is the rod that is led"; apparently on the analogy of BH בַּאֲשֶׁר.[170] However, in BH the syntagm בַּאֲשֶׁר is typically used to signify equivalence or causality (i.e. "inasmuch as," or "on account of"), not substitution ("instead of").

Yet a third alternative is to interpret באשר as the infinitive construct of the verb √אָשַׁר, "to walk" (which in *piʿel* can mean "to lead"; cf. Isa 3:12; 9:15), with the preposition, indicating a temporal clause, followed by an apodosis with an imperfect verb: i.e. "when ewes lead, it is the rod that is led". This expression has proverbial force.

Line 10

חֹמֵר . שֹׁתִיוֹ . עטלפ[וֹ]ן . את[רויו . ב[נזית . חֹפשׁ[וֹן—Hoftijzer identified חפשׁ as a nominalisation derived from √חפשׁ, and translated it as a vocative following an imperative "fear! *You seekers*". Alternatively, Caquot and Lemaire (followed by McCarter) read חפשׁ, "freedmen"; although they were unable to fill the lacuna before שֹׁתִיוֹ.[171] However, this shift of focus into the human realm seems premature in light of the apparent reference to hyenas at the end of the line.[172] Consequently—based on his placement of v(d) between i(c) and i(d)— Lipiński proposed the restoration: חפשׁ [.] מן .[נזית את]רוי], "the flitter-mouse gets [drunk on] brewage" (cf. Arab. خفاش, "bat").[173] He then restored the parallel

---

(= leadership) led (grazing) sheep, hares eat"; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 133.

[170] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 55; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 49.

[171] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 200; cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 55; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 49.

[172] Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 134; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 50.

[173] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 134; cf. (already!) Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 50. Lipiński also restored את[רוי], an *tpʿl* form

Hebrew noun ןֿ[עטלפ], "bats," before שׂתֹיו חֹמֹר: i.e. "the flitter mouse gets drunk on brewage, bats are drinking wine". Note that Seow restored the plural חפשׁן (which he translated "serfs") followed by *bêt*, which results in an even closer parallelism.[174]

Recent studies recognise 24 different species of Jordanian *Chiroptera*, constituting an estimated 31% of the total mammalian species in Jordan.[175] Consequently, it should not be surprising to find bats included in a list of birds and animals in the region. Although, we should not presume that the DAPT was a local composition (cf. §5.1.1.1).

 וקבען—On the translation of וקבען as hyena see McCarter.[176] Hoftijzer has argued that "hyenas" (or "aggrievers" as he translated קבען) heeding instruction must be considered a change for the good, and, consequently, that this line should not be understood as a continuation of the words spoken to the goddess, beginning in line 6.[177] However, the imagery simply describes the inversion of the natural order; it is not necessary to assume a change for the worse.[178]

Line 11

יִקֹחֹךֿ—On the interpretation of יִקֹחֹךֿ as "laughs" see McCarter.[179]

---

derived from רוי, which is attested in the Proverbs of Ahiqar and in Jewish Aramaic with the meaning "to get drunk."

[174] Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 210.

[175] Zuhair Sami Amr, Mohammad Adnan Abu Baker, and Mazin Botros Qumsiyeh, "Bat Diversity and Conservation in Jordan," *Turkish Journal of Zoology* 30 (2006): 235–44, esp. 236.

[176] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 56.

[177] Hoftijzer, "What did the Gods Say?", 139–40; cf. Davies, "Response to J. Greenfield and J. Hoftijzer", 146.

[178] On the ancient Near Eastern motif *mundus inversus*, cf. Kruger, "A World Turned on its Head", 58–76, esp. the definition on p. 59.

[179] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 56.

וענׅיה—Hoftijzer, identified עניה as a nominalisation derived from the verbal root ענה√, "to answer", seeing this as some sort of cultic functionary comparable to the *āpilu/āpiltu*, "answerer," from Mari. In this he was followed by Levine, who saw עניה as belonging to a list of cultic and prophetic functionaries; however, as Hackett countered, there no reason to prefer a list when it is possible to continue the series of oppositions.[180] Lipiński also interpreted עניה in a cultic context, but translated it "songstress."[181] Caquot and Lemaire, on the other hand, interpreted עניה as a "poor woman" (cf. Isa 51:21; 54:11), and saw the imagery in terms of a poor woman mixing expensive ointments.[182]

Line 12

לׅנׁשׁא . אׁזר . קרן—This line admits no easy interpretation. אזר is presumably related to BH אֵזׄור, "waistcloth, girdle". McCarter has ingeniously proposed that קרן is related to BH קוּר*, which in its only occurrence (Isa 59:5, 6) refers to a spider's web, and, therefore, לנשא אזר קרן might be translated, "to the one who wears a girdle of threads."[183] Seow interpreted this as a "tattered girdle", but the imagery may just as easily be of fine/costly threads.[184]

Line 12–13

[שב]חׁ . וׁחׁשׁׄב . חׁשׁׄב . חשׁׄב—The syntax here is difficult, but the most promising solution seems to be McCarter's suggestion that this is an

---

[180] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 212; cf. Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 199; cf. Hackett, "Response to Baruch Levine and André Lemaire", 77.

[181] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 135–36.

[182] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 200; cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 56.

[183] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51, 56; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 137, who translated קרן, "guard", as in South-Arab.

[184] Cf. Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 211.

alternating sequence of active and passive participles (for a similar construction, cf. Isa 28:13).[185] However, reference should also be made to Victor Sasson's suggestion that חשב וחשב חשב might be interpreted in the context of performance, as marking a new section of the text, in which Balaam turns to address his audience directly. That is, חשב might be interpreted as an infinitive absolute with imperative force: "Consider! Think! And consider!"[186] Unfortunately, the damage to the subsequent lines precludes certainty.

Line 13

ושמעו . חרשן . מן . רחק—The ink is almost entirely effaced at this point and I am dependent on the readings of Hoftijzer and van der Kooij.[187]

Line 14

וّכّל . חזו . קקן . שגר . ועّשתر—Hoftijzer interpreted קקן as a *peʿal* plural participle from *ḍwq (cf. Aram. עוק), "to be in distress", treating it as the object of חזו with כל as the subject; i.e. "and all suffered oppression". The couplet שגר ועשתר was thereby left to begin a new clause. [188] Lipiński also interpreted קקן on the basis of *ḍwq, but restored שّכל[ו], "the fool", rather than וכל. Consequently, he translated the line: "[…and] the fool saw perturbations. Šaggar and Aštar did not…"[189] Caquot and Lemaire, on the other hand, interpreted קקן שגר ועשתר together as the object of the verb: "[e]t tous voient restraint (עיק)

---

[185] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 56.

[186] Cf. Victor Sasson, "The Book of Oracular Visions of Balaam from Deir ʿAlla," *UF* 17 (1968):288, 303, 308; idem, "Deir ʿAlla *smr* Obscured, not Re-evaluated", 260–61; Dijkstra, "Response to H.-P. Müller and M. Weippert", 209, 213–14.

[187] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 117, 217.

[188] Ibid, 218–19.

[189] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 137–38. Note also the possibility noted by Lipinski, that קקן might be a plural noun, designating a species of bird, perhaps a species of pelican.

le croît des bovins et des ovins" (see below).[190] Yet another possibility was proposed by McCarter, who identified קקן with *qḏy. "to decree" (cf. Arab. قرر), and interpreted it as a plural participle with שגר ועשתר as the object; i.e. "and everyone has seen those things that decree offspring and young."[191] Finally, Hackett, also restored שכל instead of וכל before the 3.c.p. verb חזו, and understood קקן in light of BH ṣwq, "restrain, oppress": i.e. "[…] a fool see visions. The constraint of fertility (lit.: offspring)."[192]

The disagreement about how to interpret the line stems, to a large extent, from the interpretation of שגר ועשתר. On the one hand are those who follow Hoftijzer and interpret both nouns as DNN: *Šagar-and-ʿAštar*;[193] on the other are those who prefer to interpret the expression in light of Deut 7:13; 28:4, 18, 51 as a reference to fertility: e.g. "offspring and young".[194] Now, while both שגר and עשתר are attested as DNN,[195] the divine pairing שגר ועשתר is unparalleled outside of Deuteronomy. Consequently, I prefer to translate the expression שגר ועשתר in light of the attested biblical usage. As Hackett noted, this seems to fit well within the context. I have, therefore, opted above to

---

[190] Trans.: "and all have seen the restriction of the young of sheep and cattle." Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 201; cf. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 129 (1985): 281.

[191] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51–52, 56.

[192] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 54.

[193] Cf. Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 359; Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 199, 204; idem, *Numbers 21–36*, 254; Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", 158. Note that Weippert understood שגר ועשתר as the agents of oppression: i.e. "And all are beholding the oppression (exercised) by Šagar-and-ʿAštar.

[194] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 56; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 201; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 53–55; Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 281.

[195] Cf. the discussion in Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 273–74.

follow Lemaire's 1985 translation: "et tous ont vu restreints la progéniture et la fécondité", which agrees with biblical usage and supplies a comparatively straightforward translation of the text.[196]

Be that as it may, the pairing שגר and עשתר in both the DAPT and in biblical usage should probably be ultimately understood as hypostases of the fertility deities.[197] Hence, even if שגר and עשתר are understood as DNN, I.14 should still be understood as an allusion to the restriction of fertility as a result of the plague decreed in I.6–7.

Finally, it should be noted (following Hackett) that the 3.m.p. verb חזו may have oracular overtones (cf. the use of both חזה, I.1 and ראה, I.5, suggesting that חזה had a technical meaning).[198]

Line 15

הקרקת—For the interpretation of קרק as the C-stem perf. of *ḏrq (cf. Aram. ערק), "to flee", see Hoftijzer.[199]

5.1.1.1. COMBINATION I: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Combination I describes a nocturnal revelation beheld by Balaam, son of Beor, "a man who was a seer of the gods". Unfortunately, the message conveyed by the gods is no longer legible. Whatever the case, the revelation leaves Balaam extremely perturbed (I.3–4). Concerned, Balaam's people come to him and he narrates for them the calamity that will soon befall: a period of darkness and drought (I.4–7). What follows in

---

[196] Trans.: "and all have seen the restriction of offspring and fertility," Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 281.

[197] Cf. the discussion of the demythologised Deuteronomic conceptualisation in Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 147–49.

[198] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 54.

[199] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 197, 219, esp. n.99.

I.7*ff.* is a description of the upheaval of the natural order, characterised by a series of abnormal behaviours.

A small gambolling bird is said to scorn birds of prey (I.7–8). The ostrich, which in biblical tradition is a symbol of parental neglect, is said in one instant to care for the young of the hawk and in the next to harm the chicks of the heron.[200] The swallow is said to attack the dove and the sparrow (I.8–9). The lines following the bird section (I.9*ff.*) are fragmentary, but it appears that the disruption of the natural order continues through the end of the extant text of Combination I.

In I.14 there is a probable reference to the restriction of procreation and fertility, and this appears to be a consequence of the drought foretold in I.6–7 and the reason for Balaam's despair. Significantly, this interpretation is consistent with the references to migratory birds in I.7–9. Even today, the Jordan Valley is renowned among ornithologists for the seasonal migration of birds (including species that nest in in the region), especially at the beginning of spring and summer (cf. Jer 8:7). Indeed, the eminent Victorian naturalist Henry Tristram described the vernal migration as follows:

> The thickets abounded in francolin, while the valley itself seems to be the highway of all the migratory birds returning from their African winter quarters to western Asia and Russia. Bands of storks, masses of starlings, clouds and swallows, long lines of swifts and bee-eaters may be seen hour after hour ceaselessly passing northwards overhead, while the surface of the plain is alive with countless myriads of familiar songsters in loose scattered order, hopping, feeding, taking short flights, but all pursuing their northward course.[201]

---

[200] This image is especially strange in view of the fact that the flightless ostrich builds its nest in a shallow depression in the ground, while the hawk and the heron build their nests in trees, on cliff faces and, in the case of the heron, reed beds (see Appendix F pl.5b). This is consistent with the *mundus inversus* motif throughout this section.

[201] Henry B. Tristram, *apud*, Peter Goodfellow, *Birds of the Bible: A Guide for Bible Readers and Birdwatchers* (Oxford: John beaufoy, 2013), 118. Indeed, when I was at Deir

It is probably against this vibrant background that we should read the references to the "young of the hawk", the "chicks of the heron", and perhaps the "nest of the vulture" in I.8 (note also the apparent reference to "ewes" I.9, and "the piglet" and "the young of…" I.15). If so, then the unifying theme of Combination I is related to fertility and the destitution brought about as a result of the plague (cf. I.14).

In addition, the references to migratory birds give the DAPT a local flavour. And while it does not necessarily follow that the DAPT were composed locally,[202] the fact that the imagery is well suited to the environmental context of Deir ʿAlla, suggests, at the very least, that the inhabitants at the site probably felt a direct connection with the text(s), either as a prophecy directed to their own times, or a tradition inherited from their ancestors (see below).

In broad terms, Combination I may be identified as a prophecy of judgement corresponding to the basic pattern: announcement + result, or announcement + justification.[203] Alternatively, Combination I might be viewed as a dream report, with an interpretation followed by a description of the oracular dream. In this case, the withholding of the description might be for dramatic effect, building anticipation and perhaps serving double duty to characterise the consqeunces of the plague ordained in I.6–7. Another view was espoused by Blum, who argued that Combination I comprised a sapiential work subsumed in a prophetic apophthegm.[204]

ʿAlla in early April, numerous small birds could still be seen and heard in the bushses that surround the tell, while larger birds could be seen overhead in the valley.

[202] See for example the interpretations of Al Wolters, "The Balaamites of Deir ʿAlla as Aramean Deportees", *HUCA* 59 (1988): 101–13 (discussed in §7.4); André Lemaire, "Fragments from the Book of Balaam Found at Deir ʿAlla", 38.

[203] Cf. Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. Hugh Clayton White; Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1991), 176–81; cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 58; Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 204–05.

[204] Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla", 573–98. On the parallel between the motif of *mundus inversus* of in I.7*ff.* and sapiential traditions

According to Blum, this conflated text should be understood in the context of scribal education, serving to acculturate the local elite in the service of the Aramean governor (for the geo-politcal context of the DAPT see §7.4). As discussed above, Blum may have overstated the case for the incongruence of the two parts of Combination I, and in the next chapter it will be argued that the linguistic evidence does not necessarily support his political interpretation (see esp. §6.5), but there may yet be some merit to the suggestion that the DAPT would have been encountered in the context of scribal education.[205] However, as has already been discussed (cf. §4.5), this cannot be confirmed.

By its nature, the prophetic narrative has its resolution in a specific temporal point or event (i.e. the fulfillment of the prophecy). This finite perspective raises the question, what could be the motivation to set the account in writing? Two principal alternatives suggest themselves: (a) to warn of an oracle that was yet to be fulfilled; or (b) the desire to memorialise a successful prognostication. It is also possible that in the course of transmission and reception the focus might have shifted from one to the other if the prophecy was perceived to be fulfilled. Ultimately we cannot know which alternative is correct. However, the fact that the superscription in I.1 foregrounds Balaam (the man), rather than his prophecy, suggests that it was the Balaamite tradition(s) that was important.[206] That is, in addition to the specific prophecy, the superscription has an evocative or metonymic quality, transcending the text and recalling all that the audience knew and felt about the seer Balaam. This traditional refferentiality might give preference to the former

(especially the Egyptian *Admonitions of Ipuwer*), see already Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 75–76.

[205] Cf. Already Lemaire, "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle", 54–55.

[206] Contrast the supserscriptions in Isa 1:1, and Obad 1:1 which focus attention on the vision; and Jer 1:1; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1, which focus attention on the divine word.

option. Be that as it may, both alternatives are essentially commemorative. Hence, although Combination I is a record of a prophecy, the significance of the inscription lies in its enduring importance, and indeed relevance, to its audience.

There is no way of knowing whether the DAPT relates to an historical oracle (as opposed to a fictional one), nor is it clear from Combination I whether the DAPT were intended for a human audience, or whether they served an apotropaic function—perhaps warding against the actuation or recurrence of the calamities (cf. the discussion of the sphinx-like icon in §7.6.2). But in the next section it will be argued that Combination II contains a possible reference to oral transmission (II.17). This might indicate that the DAPT were drawn from (oral) folk traditions rather than a *de novo* composition. If so, the act of writing on the walls separates the oracular utterance from its original performance and transmission context(s) (see the discussion of עם in I.4).[207] As such, irrespective of whether the tradents at Deir ʿAlla can be identified as the original recipients of the oracle, and regardless of whether the *Vorlage* from which it was copied was composed in another time and place, the materiality of the inscription reorients the message, framing it within the immediate confines of the bench-room and extending to the text situational associations related to the use of that space, and inversely colouring the experience of the room through association with the Balaamite oracle. We will return to these matters in Chapter 7, but for now it will suffice to reiterate that the act of transcribing the prophetic text(s) onto the walls testifies to its enduring importance.

---

[207] This is also true in the case of Blum's arguments, just removed by a further stage.

5.1.2. COMBINATION II

Although the fragments of Combination II are more easily aligned than Combination I, no single line is complete to the end, and this has meant that the interpretation of this combination is even less certain. Adding to this uncertainty, it is unclear whether the two combinations belong to a single narrative, or to multiple narratives.[208] On v(q) there is a small space which was apparently intentionally left blank. The placement of this fragment is not certain, but a position at the end of Combination I seems likely.[209] This suggests some sort of section division or paragraphing, implying that the narrative of the first combination did not flow directly onto Combination II; but, ultimately, impressions pertaining to the relationship of the two combinations depend on the criterion of thematic continuity.

---

[208] See, for example, the discussion in André Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", *SEL* 3 (1986): 86, who preferred the reconstruction of two columns with Combination I coming after(!) Combination II.

[209] See the discussion in Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 159, 169, and the photograph on pl.13.

Fig.5.3—Combination II

[	]∘ .1
[	ה̇ . לש∘] .2
בית]	רן . אכל] .3
ויאמר(ו)]	עלמה̇ [.] רו̇י̇ . דדן . כ∘] .4
אל]	לה̇ . לם . נקר . ומד̇ר . כל . רט̇ב] .5
[	ירוי . אל . יעבר . אל . בית . עלמן . בי̇] .6
[	בית . ליעׄל . ה̇לך . וליעׄל . חתן . שם . בית] .7
[	ורמה̇ . מן . גדש . מן . פחזי . בני̇ . אש. ומן . שק̇ן] .8
[	[ ] . לי . ה̇לעצה̇ . ᵈ ל[יתעזׄ . או למל̇כה . ליתמלך . ישב̇] .9
[	ו̇ . מ̇] [בן̇ . תכסן . לבש . חד [.] הן . תשנא̇ן . יאנש. הן . ת̇] .10
[	אש̇פ̇. ידי .]תחת . ראש̇ך . תשׁכׄב . משכבי. עלמיך . לחלק . ל] .11
[	[בׄלבבם{ו̇} [.] נׄאנח . נקר . בׄלבבה̇ נאנח . ∘] א̇] [כ] .12
ליש̇בם [.] יקח . מות . על . רחם . ועל̇[...לא יוסיף עוד]	מלכן] [ ] .13
[	]לבב . נקר . שה̇ . כי . אתה . ל] שמה] [ ] .14
[	]לת . מלך . ס̇ס̇ה̇ [.] וש̇]כׄל̇ן] לקצה̇ . [ ] .15
[	]שׄא̇לת . לם] [ ] .16
[	ᵖ̇ד̇ע̇ת . ספר . דבר̇ . ל̇]שמר .]על . לשן . לך̇. מׄשפט . ומלק̇]ה [.] אמר] .17
[	]ענשתי . למלך] .18

1.	[…]
2.	[…]
3.	ate […(of)]
4.	his youth; sated with love like […and he/they said]
5.	to him "the sprout and the soil containing succulents (?) […]
6.	Let him [not] be sated, let him/it not pass over to the eternal dwelling place (viz. the grave) […]²¹⁰
7.	the house for the use of the traveller, and for the use of the bridegroom; the name of the house[…]²¹¹

---

²¹⁰ Or, "let El be sated, let him pass over to the eternal dwelling place (viz. the grave) […]"

8.	and wormrot from the grave (?). From the thighs of men and from the legs of […]
9.	[…] surely he has not sought council from you; he has not sought the advice of the one who sits […]
10.	[…] you will cover with a single garment. If you hate him, he will grow ill; if you […]
11.	I will place [my hand (?)] under your head. You will lie down on the bed of your youth for the portion of (?) […]²¹²
12.	[…] in their heart(s). The scion sighs to himself (lit. in his heart). He sighs […]
13.	[…] sacrifices (?)²¹³ […] he will not cause them to return. Death will [no longer] take the newborn infant (lit. the suckling of the womb) and the suckling of […]²¹⁴
14.	[…] his name […] the heart of the scion is weak, for he has come (?) to […]
15.	To complete²¹⁵ […] a sacrifice, a mare (?),²¹⁶ and the bereaved […]²¹⁷
16.	[…] you asked, saying […]
17.	Heed the account! speak [to retain it (?)] on your own tongue: a judgement and a chastisement. Say […].
18.	I have punished the king(s?) […]

---

[211] Or, "the house the traveller will not enter, and the house the bridegroom will not enter, there […]".

[212] Or, "your eternal bed".

[213] Or, "our king".

[214] Or, "death will take…".

[215] Or, "to his/the end".

[216] Or, "or the king his horse/a mare".

[217] Or, "and he asked"; or, "and his request"; or, "and (he) lay (with)".

Lines 3–4

עלמה—עלמה may be translated *ʿôlām*, "eternity" (with pronominal suffix, cf. בית עולמו, idiom. "his grave", Qoh 12:5); *ʿālûm*, "youth" (with pronominal suffix, cf. Ps 89:45 [Heb. 46] עלומיו; Prov 30:19, where the LXX has ἀνδρὸς ἐν νεότητι); *ʿelem*, "young man" (with pronominal suffix, cf. אישו, I Kgs 20:20; נעריו, Ruth 2:14, etc.);[218] or *ʿalmāh*, "young woman."[219]

In the Hebrew Bible the noun עֶלֶם, "young man," is attested twice, once in a description of the youthful David, still in the house of his father and considered too young to join battle with the Philistines (1 Sam 17:56); once to describe the page-boy who accompanies Jonathan to fetch his arrows (1 Sam 20:22).

In Exod 2:8 עַלְמָה, "young woman," refers to the young sister of the infant Moses. In Isa 7:14 it is clear that an עלמה may also be of childbearing age (cf. Isa 54:4), and in Gen 24:43 she is a suitable candidate fro marriage.[220]

In Job 20:11 and 33:25, עֲלוּם denotes youthful vigour, but Ps 88:45 (Heb. 46) refers to the cutting short of "the days of his youth" (הקצרת ימי עלומיו).

Consequently, it seems that עלמה/עלם refers to a young man or woman who is unmarried (cf. Isa 54:4, where בשת עלומיך, "the shame of your

---

[218] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 29, 56. Note that Hackett interprets this as "his son".

[219] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 221; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 202. On the orhtography of עלמה cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 143–44.

[220] In this context it makes no difference whether the עלמה in Isa 7:14 is understood to be a virgin or not. The references to עֲלָמֹות in 1 Chron 15:20; Ps 68:25 [Heb. 26]; Song 1:3, 8:6; and the superscription to Ps 46, are all ambiguous, but it seems from the context that all refer to young women.

youth", paralleled with חרפת אלמנותיך, "the disgrace of your widowhood", both in the context of childlessness; i.e. the spinster and the childless widow) and still belongs to their parent's household or is under the care of a guardian (cf. 1 Sam 20:22). Significantly, this definition is broadly compatible with the pattern of usage in the cognate langauges.[221]

Based on a combination of biblical and cognate sources, Botterweck, et al. (*TDOT*) proposed an alternative definition in which עלמה/עלם (and its cognates) specifically denotes a foreign woman.[222] However, while in some instances עלמה/עלם may refer to ethnicity (cf. *ġlmt KTU* 1.24, 7; עלמה, Gen 24:43; Exod 2:8 in the sense of a resident alien; and conceiveably, although not for any internal reasons, 1 Chron 15:20; Ps 46:1; Ps 68:25; Prov 30:19: Song 1:3; 8:6), this definition does not account for the reference to David as an עלם (1 Sam 17:56), and it seems ill-suited to the עלמה of Isaiah 54:4 (why would a foreigner be singled out at this point?).[223] Moreover, it does not account for עָלוּם which is used in contexts that clearly refer to youth, rather than ethnicity (cf. Job 33:25, where עָלוּם stands in parallelism with נַעַר). Furthermore, it should be noted that עלמה is not used to denote a foreigner in other contexts where it would surely be most apposite (cf. the description of Ruth as a נערה, Ruth 2:5). It can be concluded,

---

[221] Cf. the examples cited in G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry, "עַלְמָה," *TDOT* 11:154–63, esp. §I.1.

[222] Cf. ibid, 154–63.

[223] This might be explained as an abstraction of the etymology proposed by Botterweck, et al., leading to the lexicalisation of the meaning "youth". However, this is not made explicit in the discussion in *TDOT* (in fact Isa 54:4 is ignored by Botterweck, et al.), and the arguments of Botterweck, et al., that the עלמות in Song 1:3; 8:6 should be identified as foreign women (i.e. in accordance with the proposed etymology) rather tells against this interpretation—although due allowance should be made for differences owing to the regional/temporal divide that may separate these passages. The uncertainy relating to the provenance of Song of Songs especially renders categorical statements impossible in this matter.

therefore, that while a foreigner might be an עלם/עלמה, an עלם/עלמה need not be a foreigner.

In light of the above definition of עלם/עלמה as a young man or woman who is unmarried, there is little reason to expect that the expression רוי דדן, "sated with love" (see below), applied to either *ʿelem*, or *ʿalmāh*. This leaves two alternatives: *ʿôlām*, "eternity," or *ʿālûm*, "youth". In either case, on the basis of the 3.m.s. pronominal suffix -ה, it is necessary to restore a transitive verb followed by a noun in the construct state at the end of II.3. If עלמה is related to *ʿôlām*, then the restoration of בית might to be justified based on the expression בית עלמן in II.6 (although it should be noted that in II.6 עלמן is plural); e.g. [בא לקרב בית] עלמה, "he has entered his eternal dwelling place," or [לקרב בית] עלמה, "to approach his eternal dwelling place," etc.[224] However, if עלמה is identified with *ʿālûm*, then it is possible to restore something along the lines, לא זכרת את־ימי עלמה, "he has forgotten the days of his youth" (cf. Ezek 16:22, referring to infancy, in the context of lost sexual purity). Given the semantic continuity between the expression רוי דדן, "sated with love" (II.4), and משכבי עלמיך, "the beds of your youth" (II.11), *ʿālûm* is the preferable option.[225]

רֹוִי . דדן—As Hackett noted, רוי (√רוה, "to be sated") is unlikely to be the 3.m.s. perfect indicative, as in the orthography of the DAPT, the *-iy* ending of III-weak verbs generally contracts and is marked by *hê* as a mater.[226] Depending on the syntax of the clause, however, רוי may be

---

[224] Cf. Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 259. For the restoration בית עולם in II.3–4, cf. Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 211.

[225] Note that in the Hebrew Bible עֲלוּם always occurs with a pronominal suffix: three times with the 3.m.s. (Job 20:11; 33:25; Ps 89:46), once with the 2.f.s. (Isa 54:4).

[226] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 22, 56.

analysed as a m.p. construct participle, a feminine imperative, factitive (D-stem), or as an adjective (cf. BH רָוֶה).[227]

For the pairing of רוה and דוד, with probable sexual connotations, cf. Prv. 7:18, לכה נרוה דדים עד־הבקר נתעלסה באהבים, "Come! Let us satiate ourselves with love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love".[228]

Lines 4–5

[ויאמר(ו)] לֹה . לם . נקר . ומֹדֹר . כל . רטֹב—Blum interpreted לם as an interrogative particle introducing a series of questions and responses about the transience of life; however, on the the interpretation of לם as a discourse marker, see I.4 above.[229] It is proabable that לה identifies the object after a verb of address; i.e.: ויאמרו לה, "[and they(?) said] to him/her". However, Lipiński has proposed the speculative restoration: [ויאמר? בת]לה, "[and he spoke? to the maid]en," which is also plausible.[230]

Hoftijzer, understanding this section to contain a series of curses, read נקר as a G-stem passive participle (נקר√, "to pierce, hollow"), which he interpreted figuratively to mean "a blinded one" (cf. Num 16:14; Judg 16:21; 1 Sam 11:2; Prov 30:17).[231] However, in the context it is

---

[227] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 223; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 202; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 56.

[228] Cf. Prov 5:19, where Hoftijzer reads דֹּדֶיהָ instead of דַּדֶּיהָ; Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 221.

[229] Erhard Blum, "'Verstehste du dich nicht auf die Schreibkunst…?' Ein weisheitlicher Dialog über Vergänglichkeit und Verantwortung: Kombination II der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla", in *Was ist der Mensch , dass du seiner Gedenkst? (Psalm 8,5): Aspekte einer theologischen Anthropologie: Feschrift für Bernd Janowski zum 65. Gubertstag* (eds. Michaela Bauks, Kathrin Liess and Peter Riede; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 38, 43.

[230] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 144.

[231] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 193.

preferable to follow either Caquot and Lemaire (followed also by Hackett and others) and identify נקר with BH נצר√, "sprout, shoot, scion",[232] or Levine and read *naḏr, "corpse" (cf. Isa. 14:19).[233] On the basis of usage later in combination II (II.12, II.14), it seems that Hackett's "scion" is the more likely reading (see below).

The next word is also difficult. Most have followed van der Kooij and Hoftijzer and read ומדר.[234] Hackett's suggestion that מדר might be a cognate of BH מְדוּרָה, "pyre, pile of wood" (cf. Isa 30:33; Ezek 24:9) is interesting, especially in light of her suggestion that there may be an association with child sacrifice later in Combination II (see below).[235] However, the evidence for this is far from certain, and at present it seems preferable to follow Hoftijzer and interpret מדר in light of Syriac ܡܕܪܐ, "soil, earth"; or BA מדר, "dwelling place" (cf. Dan 2:11; 4:22, 29; 5: 21).[236] Arabic مدر, means "to plaster with clay or mud," which suggests that the former two acceptations might be etymologically

---

[232] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 202; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 57, 91. As Caquot and Lemaire observed, there is ample evidence for the orthographic realisation *ḍ = q, in the DAPT, cf. קבע (I.10); קחך (I.11); הקרק (I.15), and possibly קק "restrain" (I.14).

[233] Levine, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAlla", 68–70; cf. Hackett, "Response to Baruch Levine and André Lemaire", 77–79. Christopher Hayes has recently argued that *נצר, "corpse," in the DAPT and Isa 14:19 might be understood as an Egyptian loanword; Christopher B. Hayes, "An Egyptian Loanword in the Book of Isaiah and the Deir ʿAlla Inscription: Heb. nṣr, Aram. nqr, and Eg. nṯr as "[Divinized] Corpse," *JAEI* 4 (2012): 17–23. However, Hayes' phonological arguments have been criticised in Joachim F. Quack, "Critical Remarks on a Proposed Etymology of Hebrew נצר and Aramaic nqr," *JAEI* 5 (2013): 29–32.

[234] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 121, 222.

[235] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 57; idem, "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson, S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 126.

[236] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 222; compare also, the construct noun מדרי דבבל, "water-courses, drains of Babylon", BT Bek 44b.

related, perhaps denoting a dwelling plastered in clay or mud.[237] As such, it is interesting to note the adobe structure in which the DAPT was located (see §7.3.5).[238]

Aḥituv, translated מדֹּר כל רטֹב: "the dwelling containing foliage", comparing the imagery to Song of Songs 1:16b–17: אף־ערשׂנו רעננה קרות ברותים רהיטנו ארזים בתינו, "our couch is lush (רעננה); the beams of our house are cedars, our rafters are pines".[239] He likened this imagery to descriptions of Inanna's couch in the Sumerian love poetry "the people will set up my fruitful bed, they will cover it with plants (the color of) *duru*-lapis lazuli";[240] and "my enduring house which floats like a cloud…a fruitful bed, lapis bedecked…his reed-filled house..."[241] If the DN in I.6 is understood to be *Šaušga* (= Ishtar), then this indirect association with Inanna (= Ishtar) is particularly interesting. However, Aḥituv's interpretation goes beyond the evidence.

כל—Following Hackett, and interpreting כל as a participle √כול, "to contain, enclose."[242]

רטֹב—Cf. Job 8:16, where רטב is used of a lush plant: רטב הוא לפני־שׁמשׁ ועל גנתו ינקתו תצא, "he is succulant (רטב) before the sun, spreading his shoots (ינקתו) over his garden"; Job 24:8, מזרם הרים ירטבו, "with the rain of the mountains they are wet."

If I.6 is understood to refer to a period of drought, then the imagery of fertility and new growth in II.5 might suggest a connection between the two combinations (see below).

---

[237] Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 222, n.106.

[238] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 18, 23–24.

[239] Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 458

[240] "Love in the Gipar," translated by S. N. Kramer (*ANET*, 638).

[241] Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 458; cf. Tzvi Abusch, "Ishtar," *DDD*, 452–56; for the Sumerian hymns, see "Inanna and the King: Blessing on the Wedding Night," translated by S. N. Kramer (*ANET*, 640).

[242] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 58.

Lines 5–6

יעבר . אל . ירוי [אל]—אל may be translated either as a DN, that is: "El will pass over", or as the negative particle governing the jussive יעבר: "let him not pass over".[243] If the latter, then, in the interest of balance, it may also be desirable to supply the negative particle before ירוי.[244]

Interpreting the DAPT as an excerpt from an ancient El repertoire (see below), Levine proposed the restoration: אל ירוי [דדן], "El sates himself with lovemaking".[245] He translated the following clause: "then El built an eternal home"; reading יעבד, rather than יעבר.[246] However, Aḥituv objected that the use of פעל, meaning "to do, make" (I.5), makes יעבד unlikely.[247]

Line 6

עלמן . בית—The acceptation "grave, tomb" is well established for the expression בית עלם, and is attested in Hebrew, Punic and later Aramaic sources.[248] However, as noted by Caquot and Lemaire, it is also possible to read *bayt ʿălûmîn*, "a/the house of youths" (see above).[249]

---

[243] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 59–60; cf. also Caquot and Lemaire's less likely proposal that אל reflects a paratactic spelling of (ה)אל, "and these."

[244] On the orthography of ירוי, cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 59.

[245] Levine, "The Balaam Inscription form Deir ʿAlla: Historical Aspects", 333–38; cf. idem, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAlla", 59; idem, *Numbers 21–36*, 255, 257, 267–71.

[246] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 257; or, "a netherworld," idem, "The Balaam Inscription form Deir ʿAlla: Historical Aspects", 333. Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 58–59.

[247] Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 458.

[248] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 224–25; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 59; Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 259.

[249] "la maison des jeunes gens," Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 203.

The next word, beginning *bêt yôd*, may be restored either as a prepositional phrase [בֹ]יֹם, "by day", or as a noun, בית. This latter was preferred by Levine, who suggested that after בית עלמן there originally stood a series of three descriptive statements, each beginning with בית (cf. Deut 8:7–9; 11:11–12, in which occurs a sequence of descriptive statements introduced by ארץ, "land").[250]

Line 7

בית . שם . חתן . וליֹעֹל . הֹלך . ליֹעֹל . בית—The negative proclitic affixed to the verb (cf. §6.1.8) suggests that ליֹעֹל is unlikely to be the jussive, and is therefore probably an imperfect derived from √עלל, "to enter", rather than √עלה, "to go up, ascend".[251] Alternatively, Caqout and Lemaire identified ליֹעֹל with BH √יעל, "to help, be of use", and translated the line "une maison pour l'utilité du voyageur, et pour l'utilité du fiancé, le nom de – ou là (est) – la maison...".[252] The decision as to which alternative to adopt is ultimately subjective.

For the translation הלך, "traveller", cf. ויבא הלך לאיש העשיר, "the traveller came to the rich man" (2 Sam 12:4).[253]

Line 8

ורמֹה . מן . גדש—The interpretation of II.8 depends, to a large extent, on the translation of the expression ורמה מן גדש. Hoftijzer (Followed by

---

[250] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 259.

[251] *Pace* Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 60–61, and n.66.

[252] Trans.: "a house for the use of the traveler, and the use of the bridegroom, the name of – or there (is) – the house…," Caqout and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 203; cf. Rofé, *The Book of Balaam*, 68, who identified this as a house of sacred prostitution (see below). As Lipiński observed the placement of שם corresponds to the usual syntax of a relative clause with a verb; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 145–46. But either translation is viable.

[253] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 259 (note that Levine incorrectly cited this as 1 Sam 12:4); cf. Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 459.

Hackett, Levine, and Lipiński) interpreted גדש in light of Job 21:32 to mean "grave, mound" (cf. Arab. جدث, "grave"), and translated רמה as *rimmā*, "worm, maggot", giving the phrase: "the worm from the grave".[254] As Hoftijzer observed, similar expressions, combining רמה with a word for grave occur in Isa 14:9–11; Job 17:14; 21:26 (cf. also Sir 10:11). However, it should be noted that the expression "the worm from the grave" sits somewhat uneasily with the following expression "from the thighs of men and from the legs";[255] especially if the latter is understood to have reproductive connotations (see below).

Another possibility was proposed by Aḥituv, who likewise interpereted רמה as "worm", but noted that גדש might be translated "stack of grain" (cf. Exod 22:5; Judg 15:5; Job 5:26), suggesting that this line could be interpreted as a curse, according to which the harvest would be affected.[256]

Another possibility was proposed by Caquot and Lemaire, who interpreted גדש in light of Syr. ܓܕܫܐ "misfortune, fate", and parsed רמה as a feminine participle from √רום, "to arise", giving them the translation "rising up from misfortune".[257] However, the difficulty with this solution lies in identifying the feminine subject of the verb. While it is conceivable that the subject could have been introduced in the lacuna at the end of II.7, there is no indication that a feminine subject continues later in II.8.

Yet another alternative is to identify רמה with Heb. √רמה (Aram. √רמי; Arab. √رمي), "to throw, cast down". In this case it might be preferable

---

[254] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 226–27; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 62; Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 200; idem, *Numbers 21–36*, 259–60; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 146.

[255] Contra, Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 211.

[256] Aḥituv, *Echoes From the Past*, 460.

[257] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 204.

to follow Aḥituv and translate גדש as "stack of grain". Contextually, the Dp-stem is to be preferred for רמה; i.e. "it was cast down from the stack of grain".

Finally, passing reference should also be made to Lemaire's 1985 translation, in which he interpreted מן as a comparative: "et sa hauteur plus qu'une meule, plus que les hanches d'un homme et plus que des cuisses…"; although, he did not explain his translation of גדש as "millstone".[258] For the translation of פחזי and שקי as "legs" and "thighs", see below.

מן פחזי . בני . אש . ומן . שקי—Commentators are unanimous that מן פחזי marks the beginning of a new clause, but beyond that interpretations are divided. Hoftijzer identified פחז with Arab. فخذ, "thigh" (see below), which in Classical Arabic can be used metaphorically as a tribal subdivision connoting close kinship. He therefore read: "From the tribes of men".[259] However, there is no additional evidence to support this metaphorical usage in any ancient Near Eastern context. Alternatively, Levine, citing פחז כמים, "unstable as water", in Gen 49:4, translated the clause "from the reckless affairs of men".[260] Meanwhile Hackett, following a suggestion from Cross, cited 4QSam[b] (1 Sam 20:34) where פחז is used to translate קום in the MT (4QSam[b]: ויפחז יונתן ויקם יונתן מעל השלחן; MT: מעל השלחן), on the strength of which she

---

[258] Trans.: "and its height is more than a millstone, more than the hips of a man and more than thighs…" Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 276.

[259] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 227; cf. cf. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2349, and the discussion in Delbert R. Hillers, "Paḥad Yiṣḥāq," *JBL* 91 (1972): 90–92.

[260] Levine, "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions", 200, 201; idem, *Numbers 21–36:*, 259–60. However, on the interpretation of פחז in Gen 49:4, see §5.1.2.1, n.352.

translated פחזי as a participle meaning "those who rise up (from the underworld) among human beings."[261]

A fourth option, preferred by Alexander Rofé, is to identify פחז literally with Arab. فخذ, "thigh" (cf. פחדין, Tg. Onq. Lev 21:20, "testicles" = Heb. אֶשֶׁךְ; פחד, "thigh" Job 40:17).[262] As Delbert Hillers has discussed, the semantic range of this noun can be extended to cover the male reproductive organ and metaphorically, in the sense adopted by Hoftijzer above, it is frequently used to refer to progeny.[263]

As Lipiński observed, the interpretation פחז = "thigh" is further supported by שקי, which can be translated "legs of" (cf. BH שוק; Arab. ساق), enabling one to restore the balanced reading: "from the thighs of men and from the legs of…"[264] Given the possible reference to someone being cast down to the grave at the beginning of II.8 (רמה מן גדש), perhaps this clause contains the counterpart referring to someone (a saviour figure?) rising up (viz. being born), or perhaps it is a further reference to death of the young (cf. I.14; II.13).

But this is not the only possible reading. Hackett (following McCarter), related שקי to Syr. ܥܩܒ, "mound, sarcophagus", although she noted that in Syriac the noun is feminine, while in the DAPT it is masculine,[265] whereas Hoftijzer identified שקי with Aram. שוק, "street, market place",

---

[261] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 63; cf. Armin Lange, "Die Wurzel *pḥz* und ihre Konnotationen," *VT* 51 (2001): 497–510.

[262] Rofe, *The Book of Balaam*; idem (response), 366. Cf. Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 204; Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 276; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 146; Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 211.

[263] Hillers, "Paḥad Yiṣḥāq", 90–92, esp. 90–91; cf. Julius Wellhausen, "Die Ehe bei den Arabern," *Nachrichten von der koniglichen Gesellschaft der Wisrenschaften zu Gottingen* (1893): 474-75; William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957) 248, n.71.

[264] Cf. Rofé (response), 366; Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 209.

[265] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 63.

and translated the second half of the line, "from the tribes of mankind and from the places (?) of…"[266]

Levine, on the other hand, saw a possible parallel with Ps 147:10: לאֹ־ בשוקי האיש ירצה, which he translated "the lustful desires of men", proposing that שוק be related to BH תשוקה, "desire" (cf. Gen 3:16; 4:7; Song 7:11).[267]

Line 9

הלעצֹה . {בך} ליתעׂץ . או למֹלכה . ליתמלך . ישב°—I agree with Hoftijzer that the disjunctive או cannot here be understood to coordinate two contrastive words or clauses. Instead, he interpreted -ה and או as asseverative particles, translating the line: "as to counsel one will not ask you for it, and as to advice one will not ask (you) for it."[268]

The identification of מלכה with the common Aramaic root meaning "counsel" is seemingly assured by the parallelism with עצה, "counsel," in the preceding clause (for יתעץ, "plan, advise", cf. √עוץ, Judg 19:30; Isa 8:10); however, Lipiński has argued that הלעצה and ליתעץ may also be related to either Aram. עצי, "to rebel," or Arab. عوص, "to be difficult, intricate". In this case, מלכה might be understood in light of Canaanite √מלך, "to rule"; i.e. "To rebel against you, will he not plot or, to reign himself, will he not take over?"[269]

Note the change to the second person (בך), indicating direct speech. The subject of the prounoun may be either Balaam—perhaps continuing the

---

[266] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 227–28.

[267] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 259–60.

[268] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 229–30.

[269] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 142, 147; cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 229; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 64.

discourse commenced in II.5—or the audience (albeit addressed individually, see below).[270]

Line 10

[בֹן   ]מֹ[—In view of the difficulty in identifying the letter traces, I have opted to follow Hackett and leave the beginning of the line untranslated.[271] Caquot and Lemaire restored the noun מֹשֹׁ[ג]בֹן, which they identified as a plural cognate of Heb. מִשְׂגָּב, "high place, refuge".[272] Alternatively, Levine, proposed the restoration: מֹשֹׁ[כ]בֹן, noting that forms of the verb שכב occur elsewhere in Combination II.[273] However, there is no trace of a *kāp's* tail visible below the line.

תֹ . הן . יאנש . תשנאֹן . הן [.] חד . לבש . תכסן—Hoftijzer analysed the verbs תכסן and תשנען as 2.m.s. impf., with energic *nûn*.[274] Alternatively, Caquot and Lemaire parsed the verbs as 2.m.s. impf., with 1.c.s. or 1.c.p. pronominal suffix.[275] Hackett similarly explained the forms as as 2.m.s. but argued for a 3.m.s. object suffix, preceded by energic *nûn*.[276] The simplest explanation, however, is that the verbs are 2.f.p. or 3.f.p. impf.[277]

For the translation of יאנש, compare the *nipʿal* hapax וַיֵּאָנַשׁ, "he became ill," (2 Sam 12:15).

Line 11

---

[270] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 260.

[271] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 63.

[272] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 204.

[273] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 260; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 148.

[274] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 297–98.

[275] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 204.

[276] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 65–66.

[277] Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 147–48, who interpreted II.9 as warnings directed to a king, and II.10 as counsels addressed to the young woman of II.4.

אשׂםֹ[. ידי . תׄחת] . ראשׁךֹ—The first word in the line is poorly preserved. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij restored אשׂםֹ, 1.c.s. impf. "I will place"; however, Hoftijzer left the first part of the line untranslated.[278] Alternatively, Caquot and Lemaire restored אשׁתֹ, "woman",[279] and, in an unpublished view, McCarter (reportedly) read אשׁ, "someone".[280]

Following אשׂם there is a short lacuna and then the words תחת ראשׁךֹ. Hoftijzer proposed two possible interpretations for this expression. The first option is to translate תחת ראשׁך as a prepositional phrase meaning, "under your head". The second option is to treat תחת as a passive verbal form from √חתת , "to scatter, break", and to translate the phrase along the lines "your head will be shattered"—a sentiment that has good biblical parallels.[281] However, in light of the subsequent verb תשכב, "you will lie down", the former option must be deemed preferable.

The text between אשׂם and תחת has been almost entirely effaced, but there is space for about three letters and Lemaire (followed by Lipiński) has proposed the restoration ידה, "his hand", with the 3rd person pronominal suffix agreeing with the 3rd person masculine object of the preceding line. However, if the first word in the line is understood to be the 1.c.s. verb אשׂםֹ, then the first person ידי, "my hand", is also possible.[282] For the pairing of hand and head with erotic connotations, cf. שמאלו תחת ראשׁי, "his left hand is under my head" (Song 2:6; 8:3).[283]

משכבי עלמיך . משׁכֹבֹ—תשֹׁכֹבֹ עלמיך . עלמיך is commonly translated in light of בית עלמן (II.6), to mean "eternal bed", and is understood as a continuation of

---

[278] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 124, 180, 233; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 67; Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 260.

[279] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 205.

[280] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 67.

[281] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 235.

[282] Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 277; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 148.

[283] I am indebted to Dr. Stephen Llewelyn for these references.

the mortuary imagery (II.6, 8);[284] cf. Hoftijzer: "you will sleep the sleep of death";[285] Hackett: "you will lie down on your eternal bed";[286] Lipiński: "you will lie down on your eternal couches";[287] Levine: "you shall lie on your eternal bedding";[288] Seow: "you will lie down on your eternal bed".[289]

As Hackett noted, the references to placing something under the subject's head and to an "eternal bed" may have ritualistic connotations; although she acknowledged that the change to the second person address directed to the deceased seems somewhat abrupt.

Caquot and Lemaire, in keeping with their interpretation of Combination II as a whole, interpreted the expression משכבי עלמיך as referring to a bed of youth (cf. Lev 18:22 and 20:13; see below). Accordingly, although they were unable to translate the line, they suggested that it might relate to advice or some sort of ritual for the conservation of youthful virility.[290] Subsequently, Lemaire has offered the translation: "tu coucheras comme tu couchais dans ta jeunesse pour partager…"[291] And indeed, comparison with משכב elsewhere in biblical and epigraphic sources suggests that this general interpretation is to be preferred (see §5.1.2.1).

עלמיך—According to the popular interpretation *eternal resting place*, עלמיך must be translated as a suffixed plural noun derived from ʿôlām.

---

[284] See the discussion in Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 234; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 67; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 148; Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 260.

[285] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 180.

[286] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 31.

[287] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 142.

[288] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 257.

[289] Seow, "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts", 212.

[290] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 205.

[291] Trans.: "you will lie as you slept in your youth, to share…"; Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 276.

However, this flies in the face of attested usage. In the epigraphic corpus, Hoftijzer and Jongeling only cited one addititional (Palmyrene) instance of ʿôlām with pronominal suffix.[292] The greatest concentration of examples by far occurs in the Hebrew Bible. But even there, out of 438 occurrences, עוֹלָם only occurs x12 (less than 3%) as a plural (whether in the past, cf. Ps 77:6; Isa 51:9; Ezek 1:10; or in perpetuity I Kgs 8:13 = 2 Chron 6:2; Ps 61:5; 77:8; 145:13; Qoh 1:10; Isa 26:4l; 45:17 x2; Dan 9:24). Only once does it occur in a suffixed form (Qoh 12:5); although, it is perhaps significant that this occurs in the context of death: כי־הלך האדם אל־בית עולמו, "because man must go to his eternal home" (cf. בית עלמן, Deir ʿAlla II.6). On the other hand, עָלוּם, "youth," is only attested x4 in the Hebrew Bible, but every time it occurs as a suffixed *nomen rectum* in a construct chain. Three times it occurs with the 3.m.s. pronominal suffix ימי עלומיו, "days of his youth" (Ps 89:46; Job 20:11; 33:25; cf. the synonymous expressions בימי בחורותך, Qoh 11:9; 12:1; בימי נעוריך Ezek 16:22, 43, 60), and once with the 2.m.s. pronominal suffix, בשת עלומיך, "the shame of your youth".[293]

חלק—לחלק has been translated "for the portion of" (cf. BH, Aram. חלק),[294] or "to die" (cf. Ug. ḫlq; Akkad. ḫalāqu).[295]

Caquot and Lemaire offered no explanation for חלק that would agree with their translation of the first half of the line.[296] However, given the

---

[292] Hoftijzer and Jongeling, "ʿlm" *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, vol.2, 589, admittedly they were also only able to adduce one instance of ʿālûm with pronominal suffix (862); however, this noun is attested far fewer times overall.

[293] Cf. אשת נעור(י)ך, Prov 5:18; Mal 2:14; חסד נעוריך, Jer 2:2.

[294] Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 276.

[295] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 234, n.137; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 67; Baruch A. Levine, "The Semantics of Loss: Two Exercises in Biblical Hebrew Lexicography," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (eds. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin, Michael Sokoloff; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 137–58.

[296] Cf. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique", 276.

well documented phonological merger *$ḍ$ > q elsewhere in the DAPT (see §6.3.1), I tentatively propose that חלק could possibly be identified with the conjectural root, √*$ḥlḍ$, "to procreate, inseminate". In BH the dual noun חלצים, "loins", is attested a number of times in the context of procreation: cf. ומלכים מחלציך יצאו, "kings shall come from your loins" (Gen 35:11); כי אם־בנך היצא מחלציך הוא־יבנה הבית לשמי, "but the son who will come from your loins will build the house for my name" (1 Kgs 8:19 = 2 Chron 6:9); אם־ילד זכר מדוע ראיתי כל־גבר ידיו על־חלציו כיולדה, "Does a man bear (a child)? Why (then), do I see every man with his hands on his loins as though giving birth?" (Jer 30:6).[297] This moves us into the semantic domain of procreation and fertility,[298] and as such, √*$ḥlḍ$, "to procreate, inseminate", would be consistent with imagery elsewhere in Combination II; e.g. רוי דדן, "sated with love" (II.4); פחזי (testicles?) (II.8); and משכבי עלמיך "the (sexual) beds of your youth" (II.11; cf. §5.1.2.1). According to this hypothesis, the line could be translated: "you will lie down on your bed of youth to procreate…" Admittedly, this is pure conjecture, and I include it here solely for the purpose of exploring the possibilities.[299]

---

[297] Cf. Isa 5:27; 11:5; 32:11, "loincloth"; Job 38:3; 40:7 "gird up your loins" (cf. חלץ, prepare for battle). The meaning of Job 31:20 (*Qere*), אם־לא ברכוני חלציו, "whose loins have not blessed me," is uncertain, but it seems to imply the inner-most person(?).

[298] In particular, it should be noted that the preposition מ(ן) in Gen 35:11; 1 Kgs 8:19 and 2 Chron 6:9, suggest that the fertilization was achieved by male insemination (cf. the countless times that זרע, "seed," is used not only for semen, but also for the offspring).

[299] At present I am not able to adduce stronger credentials for this suggestion. There is an Ug. noun $ḫlq$, the meaning of which is uncertain, although it has plausibly been argued that it should be interpreted in light of modern Arabic حلق, "throat"; cf. Gary A. Rendsburg, "Modern South Arabian as a Source for Ugaritic Etymologies" *JAOS* 107 (1987): 628. However, in KTU II:14, 28, $ḫlqm$ parallels $brkm$, "knees"; see further Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (trans. Wilfred G.E. Watson; HO 67; Boston, Ma.: Brill, 2002), 361. However, Aram. $ḥrṣ$ "loin", rather suggests etymological /$ṣ$/. Yet, cf. Heb., Aram. חלק, "to divide". Then again, it is interesting to note that the Arabic root خلق, "to

Line 12

בלבבה נאנח . נקר . [.] נֹאנח [.] {וֹ}בֹלבבֹם[ ]—The first part of this line is extremely damaged, and though van der Kooij was able to suggest several possible letter identifications, Hoftijzer declined to offer a translation.[300] Lipiński was more bold in his restoration, and proposed: בלב . חיֹה [.] וֹכל . טרחֹן . רכ[שׁ] . אֹהֹך, "I shall go bind[ding] the miscarried ones and every living being in the womb."[301] However, given in light of the fact that the ink has entirely faded, Lipiński's proposals cannot be confirmed and, for the time being, the first part of II.12 is best left untranstaled.[302]

The interpretation of בלבבם is problemaitic. Both van der Kooij and Hackett identified traces of a possible word divider after בלבב, followed by a *nûn*,[303] which was subsequently written over and partially obscured by a *mêm*. Hoftijzer interpreted this as the interrogative מֶן, "who?" However, if this was simply a case of the scribe omitting the *mêm*, then the correction would most likely have been supplied as a supralinear addition, as is the case elsewhere in the inscription.[304] Consequently, it is preferable to follow Hackett and interpret *mêm* as the 3.m.p. suffix, pertaining to בלבב, i.e. "in their hearts." Hackett's suggestion that the scribe initially skipped the suffix and began the *nûn* of the next word, before returning and correcting their mistake is plausible and consistent

---

fashion, form, measure", can refer to the constitution of an animated being as it is created in its mother's womb; cf. خالق, "creator", as an epithet of God; but otherwise used of artisans; cf. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 799–802.

[300] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 236.

[301] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 142, 148–50. For the interpretation of בלבב as "womb," Lipiński cited parallel usage in Akkadian.

[302] The letters are no clearer on the plaster than they are in the published photographs.

[303] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 126–27, cf. 236; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 68.

[304] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 236–37; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 68.

with scribal conventions throughout the DAPT.[305] But, as both van der Kooij and Hackett observed, the suffix on בלבבם may in fact be *kāp* rather than *mêm,* in which case the sentence should probably be viewed as addressing the subject of the preceding line(s).[306]

The principal difficulty in the second half of the line has to do with the interpretation of the noun נקר and its relationship to the verb נאנח, "to sigh". In keeping with their respective interpretations of II.5 (see above), Levine interpreted נקר as "corpse", while Caquot and Lemaire preferred to translate נקר consistently throughout the text as "sprout, shoot". They suggested, therefore, that נקר should be interpreted metaphorically as in Isa 11:1; cf. Heb. צמח in Jer 23:5, and Phoen. שרש, in Larnaca inscriptions II, line 16, and III, line 3.[307] Hackett preferred to translate נקר as "scion", observing that "the sprout sighs" is perhaps too weak a translation in this context.[308]

נאנח may be parsed in a variety of ways depending on how the syntax of the line is construed. Hoftijzer interpreted נאנח as the 3.m.p. perf. N-stem √אנח, "to sigh"; although he expressed unease at finding evidence of the N-stem in what he understood to be an Aramaic inscription (see §6.1.4).[309] Alternatively, Caquot and Lemaire translated נאנח as the

---

[305] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 68. As Hoftijzer observed, in the other instances where letters are added as a supralinear correction, the scribe was inserting forgotten signs, however in this instance, it is a question of correcting a mistake rather than an accidental omission. As there was not enough space for the insertion of the *mêm* between the *bêt* and the beinnning of the next word, it seems reasonable to suppose, as Hackett suggested, that the eronious *nûn* was deliberately over-written as a form of erasure.

[306] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 127; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 68; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 149.

[307] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 205.

[308] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 68.

[309] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 236.

1.c.p. imperfect,[310] interpreting the line as both a question and its answer: "dans le coeur de qui soupire le rejeton? c'est dans son coeur (à elle ?) qu'il soupier."[311] Lipiński also read נאנח as the 1.c.p. imperfect (or, less likely, 3.m.s. jussive with proclitic *nûn*); although he read בלבב כֹן, rather than בלבבם, which he translated as the Aramaic conjunction "when" (cf. Tell Fekherye inscription line 10, proverbs of Ahiqar 83), introducing a subordinate temporal clause: "when we shall tire out the scion in her womb."[312] However, if Hackett's explanation of בלבבם is accepted, then נקר must be understood as the subject of the verb, requiring that נאנח be interpreted as the 3.m.s N-stem.

Line 13

מלכן—The first half of the line is in a similar condition to the preceding, and מלכן is the only word that can be read with any certainty. As discussed by Hackett, this may pertain either to a king (*melek*) or to child sacrifice (*mulk*).[313] Note also that the final ן- might be either a plural or a possessive suffix.

---

[310] Cf. Dennis Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text Written on Plaster," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 101.

[311] Trans.: "does the offspring sigh in their heart? it is in his (her?) heart he sighs," Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 205.

[312] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 142, 149–50.

[313] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 69. On the identification of מלך with human (child) sacrifice cf. Otto Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1935); George C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek : a Reassessment* (JSOTSup 43; Sheffield : JSOT Press, 1985); John Day, *Molech: a God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Bennie H. Reynolds, "Molek: Dead or Alive? The Meaning and Derivation of *mlk* and מלך", in *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange, and K. F. Diethard Römheld; Studies in the History of Religions 112; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 133–50; Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 101–02,

לישבם—Hackett noted that the C-stem of שוב√ is used in Job 33:0 and 2 Sam 12:23 with the meaning "to restore from the dead".[314]

על—לישבם [.] יקח . מות . על . רחם . ועל should be identified with Heb. עוּל, "suckling infant" (cf. Isa 49:15; 65:20; Job 24:9).[315] Accordingly, על רחם may be translated "the infant, *just out of* the mother's womb" (viz. a newborn infant).[316]

Significantly, if Combination II is understood to continue from Combination I, this line may be related to the restriction of fertility in I.14. Alternatively, the *lāmed* of לישבם might be interpreted as a negative proclitic (see §6.1.8), in which case, לישבם might belong to the protasis of a conditional sentence; i.e. "if he does not return (or, cause to return), death will take the newborn infant, and the infant of..." Then again, II.13 might refer to the cessation of the calamities in Combination I, and the restitution of order: i.e. לא‮־‬[...] יקח מות על רחם ועל [עוד יוסיף, "death will [no longer] take the newborn infant and the infant of..."; cf. Isa 51:22, את‮־‬קבעת כוס חמתי לא‮־‬תוסיפי לשתותה עוד, "you will no longer drink the dregs of the cup of my wrath".

293; on the question of Pheonician/Carthaginian child sacrifice, see most recently: Patricia Smith, et al., "Aging Cremated Infants: the Problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage," *Antiquity* 85 (2011): 859–74; J. H. Schwartz, et al., "Bones, Teeth, and Estimating Age of Perinates: Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice Revisited," *Antiquity* 86 (2012): 738–45.

[314] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 70.

[315] Cf. *KAI* 61A2, 98.2, 99.2 and possibly 163.3, cited in Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 70, n.75.

[316] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 70; cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 180, who translated על רקם, "the child still in (?) the womb".

Line 14

שה{ה}—Hackett plausibly identified שהה with with a Syriac root meaning "to be weary, worn out".[317]

לֹ[. אתה . כי—אתה can be either the second person demonstrative pronoun continuing the "you" introduced in II.10, or a 3.m.s. perfect אתה, "he has come".[318]

Line 15

לֹת[   ] . לקצֹה—Hoftijzer, following van der Kooij's palaeographic identifications, tentatively restored גדר טש, "plastered wall", in the lacuna at the beginning of the line.[319] This reading is attractive in light of the plastered surface on which the inscription has been written; however, the ink is almost entirely faded at this point and, consequently, the reading is far from certain.

Note that if Combination II follows directly from Combination I קצה might be an allusion to the end of the plague introduced in I.6–7; cf. the possible reference to bereavement later in the line (see below).

מלך . סֹסֹֹה—Once again, Hackett noted the possibility that מלך might be understood in terms of child sacrifice, observing that the introduction of a king at this point in the inscription seems surprising.[320] However, the damaged context precludes certainty.

---

[317] Ibid, 71.

[318] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 71.

[319] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 243; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 72.

[320] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 72.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the possible allusion to מלך-sacrifices alongside sacrifices of sheep and horses in the Incirli inscription.[321]

וש[כ]ל—Hoftijzer read וש[א]ל, which he interpreted as the request of the king; i.e. "what the king asks for".[322] However, only *šîn* and *lāmed* are visible, and other restorations are possible. One option is to restore וש[כ]ל, related to Heb. שֶׂכֶל, "intelligence, discretion, insight", or Heb. שָׁכוֹל, "loss, bereavement" (adj. שַׁכּוּל "bereft"). The latter would be particularly apposite following II.13. Perhaps, then, מלך סס should be related to sacrifices to expiate the divine wrath (cf. 2 Kgs 3:27).

Other options include Heb. √שָׁגַל, "to lie with", or the derived noun שֵׁגַל, "king's consort".

Line 17

סֿפר—van der Kooij originally read וֿפר. Hoftijzer identified this with the Akkadian root *parāru*, which can have connotations of confusion, foolishness, or mental deficiency.[323] But, the restoration סֿפר, which was first suggested by Caquot and Lemaire, fits with the visible letter traces and makes better sense in the context.[324]

---

[321] Cf. Bruce Zuckerman and Stephen Kaufman, "Recording the Stela: First Step on the Road to Decipherment," in *A Preliminary Report on the Incirli Stela* (by Elizabeth Carter: http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/nelc/stelasite/zuck.html); On the uncertainties of the reading cf. Kaufman, Stephen A., "The Phoenician Inscription of the Incirli Trilingual: A Tentative Reconstruction and Translation," *Maarav* 14 (2007): 7–26. Note that the word סס apparently also occurs on v(q), cf. Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (HSM 31; Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1984), 73.

[322] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 242. Note that Hoftijzer and van der Kooij also restored שאל before מלך.

[323] Ibid, 246.

[324] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 207; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 73.

[מלק]ה . מֹשפט . לֹך . לֹשן . על .]שמֹר . לֹ . דבֹר . סֹפר . דֹעֹת{לֹ}—The rubric has been interpreted by Hackett and others as pertaining to the inscription itself, perhaps containing instructions for its erection (cf. McCarter's interpretation of the rubric in I.2). Based on Hamilton's measurements (see I.2 above), it is unlikely that the red ink of the rubric began in II.16 (no longer extant); though, the semantic content may have done so, perhaps with instructions for the writing of the text. This is consistent with the preposition + infinitive construct (לדעת) at the beginning of II.17, which is typically translated along the lines "in order that you/they may know." However, other interpretations are possible. In the Aḥiram graffito (KAI 2), the same syntagm is used in a context that can only reasonably be understood to mean "beware!"[325] and it is possible that this acceptation might also be extended to לדעת in II.17, with the sense "take heed!" In this case, the object ספר can be readily identified with the ספר in I.1; although, as observed above, it is interesting to note that in the story of Joseph in Genesis, the verb ספר is used several times for an oral recounting of a dream (cf. Gen 37:9, 10; 40:8, 9; 41:8, 12). Perhaps, then, ספר refers not so much to the written document, but to the dream report. In either case, the first half of the line could be interpreted as an admonition not to neglect the warning contained in the inscription (further suggesting continuity between combinations I and II). The appeal of this reading is that it accounts for the seemingly abrupt change to a 2.m.s. subject in לֹך.

As pointed out by Hackett, the expression על לשן, lit. "on the tongue," suggests an oral report, presumably referring to Balaam's retelling of his nocturnal vision.[326] However, if לדעת is interpreted as an admonition, then perhaps לֹך should be read together with על לשן and

---

[325] John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Vol. 3. Phoenician Inscriptions Including Inscriptions in the Mixed Dialect of Arslan Tash* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 17.

[326] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 73; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 155.

understood as the reflexive pronoun: i.e. "on your own tongue"; for a similar sentiment, cf. ‎למען תהיה תורת‎ ‎והיה לך לאות על ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך‎ ‎יהוה בפיך‎, "it shall be a sign to you upon your hand and a memorial between your eyes, in order that the law of YHWH may be in your mouth" (Exod 13:9).[327]

This leaves the question of how to restore the lacuna after ‎דבר‎. Several alternatives are possible. van der Kooij read ‎לענֹה‎; although he suggested a number of potential alternative identifications.[328] Consequently, Hackett (following McCarter) read ‎דבר לעמֹה‎, "he said to his people" (cf. I.4).[329] Accordingly, the first part of the rubric might be read: "heed the report spoken to his people!" or, if the rubric is understood to commence at II.16, "to heed the report he spoke to his people". Alternatively, on the basis of van der Kooij's discussion and drawing (the ink is almost entirely effaced at this point), it might also be possible to restore the verb ‎שמר‎;[330] cf. the analogous expression: ‎ואביו‎ ‎שמר את־הדבר‎, "but his father guarded the matter," i.e. *kept the matter in mind* (Gen 37:11).[331] In his reconstruction of the text, van der Kooij read a *lāmed* after ‎דבר‎, and if this reading is correct, then ‎שמר‎ should probably be restored as an infinitive construct with the *lāmed* indicating either manner (*Joüon* §124*o*): i.e. "heed the account … by [retaining (it)] on your own tongue"; or purpose: i.e. "heed the account … to [retain (it)] on your own tongue". Accordingly, ‎לֹ[שמר] על לשן לֹך‎, might

---

[327] Inasmuch as the pronominal suffix in Gen 37:11 is affixed to the noun while in II.17 it is affixed to a preposition, the two expressions are not precisely analogous; however, in II.17 the addition of the prefix might be understood to underscore the transferance of the responsibility to guard the report to the text's audience; cf. Muraoka's *centripetal lāmed* in, "On the So-Called *Dativus Ethicus* in Hebrew," *TS* 29 (1978): 495–98; see also *BDB*, "‎ל־‎", 515, n.*h*.

[328] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 135.

[329] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 73.

[330] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 135, and pl.30.

[331] On the possibility of reading *šîn*, cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 135.

be understood as an epexegetical clause, specifying the manner in which the account is to be "heeded"; i.e. it is an injunction to transmit the tale through oral recitation.[332]

This just leaves דבר. Contextually the simplest option is to interpret דבר as an imperative, "speak!" In which case, we may restore the beginning of II.17 as follows, "heed the account! Speak, retain (it) on your own tongue!"

If this line of reasoning is correct, מֹשׁפט and [ה]מלק may be understood as substantives further qualifying the ספר at the beginning of the line;[333] i.e. "Heed the account! Speak, [retain (it)] on your own tongue: *a judgement and a chastisement*."[334]

---

[332] For a discussion of the epexegetical use of the infinitive construct see Williams §195.

[333] For the identification of the noun מלקה, meaning "punishment, chastisement", with MH and JA מלקו, see Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 207–08; for the vocalization מלקה with *hê*, cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 73.

[334] The abrupt change to the second person has proved somewhat vexing and has attracted numerous explanations. Thus, in an interpretation similar to that proposed above, Hackett interpreted לך as a preposition with a 2.s. pronominal suffix, and viewed this line as a direct address to the readers of the inscription (albeit individually): "to make known (lit. "to know") the account he spoke to his people orally (lit.: "by tongue"), your judgement and your punishment"; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 73. However, this does little to clarify the reason for the change. Alternatively, if one reads נֹשׁפט instead of מֹשׁפט, then לך may be read as an imperative: "come let us judge and render a verdict" (cf. Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (HSM 31; Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1984), 74); however, this leaves the problem of reconciling a plural imperfect with a singular imperative. Then again, מֹלק might also be interpreted in light of the BH *hapax legomenon* √מלץ, "to be sweet, pleasant," cf. מה־נמלצו לחכי אמרתך מדבש לפי, "how sweet are your words to my palate, more so than honey to my mouth." (Ps 119:103). Given that the next word in II.17 is אמר, it might be possible to restore a D-stem 3.c.p. perfect, coordinated with the preceding imperfect: לך נֹשׁפט ומלק[ן] אמר[ן], "come, let us judge and render sweet word[s]." If so, then the rubric would have a more positive tenor than might otherwise be supposed. But once again this leaves the problem of reconciling a plural imperfect with a singular imperative.

Taken in this way, the rubric in II.17 may be understood as an admonition to remember and (orally) repeat the warnings. Similar admonitions occur in Exodus 13:9; 17:14; and Deuteronomy 6:6–9; 11:18–20. One also wonders whether a similar desire that a text be repeated orally lies behind Sefire IB:8–9: ואל תשתק חדה מן מלי ספרא זנ[ה] ויתשמען מן] ׁערקו ועד יאד[י]..., "and let not one of the words of this treaty (ספר) be silenced. [but let them be heard from] ʿrqu(?) to Yʾd[y…], etc." Significantly, in each of these examples the admonition is associated with the establishment of some sort of memorial.

Finally, regardless of whether the rubric as a whole, or only in part, is understood as an admonition, the use of the second person pronoun (לך) distances the audience from the narrative world. More importantly, the rubric signals that the text has a didactic purpose.

5.1.2.1. BEDS OF ETERNITY, OR BEDS OF YOUTH?

A crux for the interpretation of Combination II is the difficult expression משכבי עלמיך (II.11). In the Hebrew Bible מִשְׁכָּב occurs x46.[335] In the majority of instances (85%) it simply denotes a place to lie down.[336] Only twice is משכב used in a context of death to denote a funerary bier: בתוך חללים נתנו משכב לה בכל־המונה סביבותיו קברתה, "they have given him (Elam) a bed in the midst of the slain with all its multitude, their graves surround it" (Ezek 32:25); וישכיבהו במשכב אשר מלא בשמים וזנים מרקחים במרקחת מעשה, "and they laid him in the bed filled with perfume and various spices prepared by the spice mixer's art" (2 Chron 16:14).[337] To this might be added בית

---

[335] Cf. מִשְׁכָּב, "bed," Dan 2:28, 29; 4:2, 7, 10; 7:1.

[336] That is, 39 of 46 times, Cf. Gen 49:4 (although see below);Exod 7:28 (Eng. 8:3); 21:18; Lev 15:4, 5, 21, 23, 24, 26x2; 2 Sam 4:5, 7, 11; 11:2, 13; 13:5; 17:28; 1 Kgs 1:47; 2 Kgs 6:12; 2 Chron 16:14; Job 7:13; 33:15, 19; Ps 4:5; 36:5; 41:4 (Eng. 41:3); 149:5; Prov 7:17; 22:27; Song 3:1; Qoh 10:20; Isa 57:2, 7; 8x2; Ezek 23:17; 32:25; Hos 7:14; Mic 2:1.

[337] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 233.

המשכב, apparently meaning "sepulchre", in 3Q15 xi.16,[338] and משכב, meaning "grave, final resting place", in KAI 9; 13; 14; 34; 35.[339]

As a *nomen regens* in a construct relationship, משכב occurs x11 (all of them in the Hebrew Bible); x9 in the singular: Lev 15:26; Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judges 21:11, 12; 2 Sam 4:5; Ezek 23:17; and x3 in the plural: Gen 49:4; Lev 18:22; 20:13. Significantly, all but one of these (2 Sam 4:5, משכב הצהרים, "the noontime bed") have sexual connotations. Furthermore, in seven instances (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11, 12; cf. Isa 57:8 and Ezek 23:17) משכב is used metonymically as a reference to a sexual act. I will discuss each in turn.

In Num 31:17, reference is made to כל־אשה ידעת איש למשכב זכר, "every woman who has known a man with respect to the bed of a male".[340] In the parallel expression in Num 31:18, משכב זכר functions as the object of the verb: כל הטף בנשים אשר לא־ידעו משכב זכר, "all the young women who had not known the bed of a man"; cf. Num 31:35, מן־הנשים אשר לא־ידעו משכב זכר, "from the women who had not known the bed of a man". Similarly, Judg 21:11 refers to כל־זכר וכל־אשה ידעת משכב־זכר, "every man and every woman who has known the bed of a man", and in Judg 21:12, נערה בתולה אשר לא־ידעה איש למשכב זכר, "a young virgin who had not known a man with regard to the bed of a male". As Saul Olyan has noted, in these contexts משכב זכר (lit. "the bed of a male") must refer to a sexual act, because it is the criterion which defines a virgin over against a non-virgin.[341]

---

[338] Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 148. Note that Lipiński incorrectly refered to line 15.

[339] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 233; for a full listing see, Hoftijzer and Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, vol.2, 701. Admittedly, a mortuary association seems to predominate in the epigraphic sources cited by Hoftijzer and Jongeling; however, allowance must be made for the context in which these epigraphs were found.

[340] Cf. GKC §114o, 119u; Joüon §130g; Williams, §273a.

[341] Saul M. Olyan, "'And with a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying down of a Woman': On the Meaning and Significance of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13", *Journal of the History of*

An analogous expression occurs in Lev 18:22 and 20:13, where, once again, משכב almost certainly has sexual connotations; but there the syntax is more difficult.[342] Lev 18:22 contains the prohibition: ואת־זכר לא תשכב משכבי אשה תועבה הוא, lit. "and with a male you shall not lie the beds of a woman it is an abomination", while Lev 20:13 has the pronouncement, ואיש אשר ישכב את־זכר משכבי אשה תועבה עשו שניהם, lit. "and a man who lies with a male the beds of a woman they have both committed an abomination". These verses are usually translated as though they contained the prepositional phrase כמשכבי אשה, i.e. "as with a woman", but as Olyan has noted, this is an interpretation, it is not literal.[343] How, then, is משכבי אשה to be translated?

This question is all the more important, because the syntax of these verses is virtually identical to that of the DAPT, albeit with negative prescriptive force. In other words, in both Lev 18:22; 22:13, and the DAPT II.11, the verb √שכב in the imperfect is followed by the masculine plural construct משכבי without a preposition.

In two other instances משכב occurs without a preposition even though one is expected (Gen 49:4; 2 Sam 4:5), but in both instances the sense can be inferred from the preceding transitive verb.[344] But this is not the case with Lev 18:22 and 20:13. In these verses, the expression משכבי אשה is best understood as having an epexegetical function; i.e. "and with a male you shall not lie, (that is) as the lyings down of a woman, it is an abomination" (Lev 18:22); and "a man who lies with a male, (that is) as the lyings down of a woman, they have both committed an abomination" (Lev 20:13). In this, the expression is semantically equivalent to לא־ידעה איש למשכב זכר in Num 31:17 and Judg 21:12, in which the parenthesis is

---

Sexuality 5 (1994): 179–206, esp. 184. It is interesting to compare the English denominal verb "to bed" (viz. to have sexual intercourse).

[342] Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 205, noted the similarity between these verses and Deir ʿAlla II.11.

[343] Olyan, "'And with a Male You Shall Not Lie'", 179.

[344] Cf. the discussion of this principle in Joüon §133*i*.

marked by the specificatory preposition -ל. Accordingly, the parenthetical expression משכבי אשה (Lev 18:22; 20:13) can be understood as clarifiying the nature of the lying; that is, *in the manner of a woman*.[345]

But why in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 is משכב written as a plural construct, while in Num 31:17 and Judg 21:12 (cf. Num 31:18, 35; Judg 21:11) it is singular?

To address this question it is instructive to look more closely at the overall pattern of usage of the noun משכב in the Hebrew Bible. In the majority of cases, whether in the absolute or construct state, משכב is singular. Three times (Gen 49:4; Lev 18:22; 20:13)—all in sexual contexts—משכב occurs as a masculine plural in the construct state; the same form as in the DAPT. However, in four instances (Isa 57:2; Hos 7:14; Mic 2:1; Ps 149:5) משכב occurs as a plural, agreeing with a plural subject, and in each of these cases the plural form is feminine (משכבות).[346] Notwithstanding these morphologically feminine forms, lexicographers have tended to identify משכב as an irregular masculine noun—presumably on the basis of the morphologically masculine plural construct;[347] however, the evidence of the feminine suffixed form cannot be easily discounted. Moreover, it should be noted that in Lev 18:22 the pronoun referring to the masculine plural משכבי אשה, is the 3.f.s. demonstrative הִוא.

---

[345] It is possible that this basic explanation might also be extended to 2 Sam 4:5, which narrates the murder of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, at the hands to Baanah and Rachab, the sons of Rimmon the Bejaminite. In 2 Sam 4:5 it is reported that Baanah and Rachab came to Ish-bosheth as he was taking his noonday rest, Heb. והוא שכב את משכב הצהרים. If משכב הצהרים was simply the object of שכב, one would expect והוא שכב על־משכב הצהרים, "and he lay upon his noonday-bed" (cf. Lev 15:23; 2 Sam 4:11; etc.). However, this is not what we find; rather משכב הצהרים is introduced by the accusative particle את, lit. "and he lay, the bed (or, lying) of noonday." The syntagm על את does not occur togerther with משכב anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, and as such, it might be preferable to translate את משכב הצהרים as a parenthetical explicatory clause, clarifying the nature of the active participle שכב, i.e. "he lay, (that is) the lying of noonday."

[346] In each case משכב occurs in the syntagm עַל־מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם, with the sense of the subjects either resting or scheming upon their beds.

[347] Cf. Gesenius, "מִשְׁכָּב", in *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, 517; מִשְׁכָּב, *BDB*: 1012.

In fact, with the exception of the three plural examples just cited, none of the occurrences of משכב in the Hebrew Bible are demonstrably masculine. The same is true of the epigraphical data collated by Hoftijzer and Jongeling, with the sole exception of the masculine plural construct משכבי in Deir ʿAlla II.11.[348] In addition, it should be noted that two other nouns derived from שכב√ (שְׁכָבָה and שִׁכְבַת), are apparently both feminine, despite the fact that they are primarily associated with male sexuality.[349] Consequently, there is substantial evidence to suggest that משכב should generally be identified as a feminine noun. This makes the few masculine plural construct forms all the more significant.

As noted above, whenever the noun משכב is demonstrably masculine, it always denotes a sexual act (Gen 49:4; Lev 18:22; 20:13). But when משכב is demonstrably feminine, it generally denotes a place to lie down. As such, there seems to be a functional distinction between the feminine noun (משכב(ות, "couch, bed", and the masculine noun (משכב(ים, "copulation".[350] It goes beyond the evidence to assume that every instance in which the singular משכב has a sexual acceptation it was masculine, but it is a possibility. At a semantic level, it might be speculated that the ambiguous masculine plural construct was intended to have an expansive, inclusive connotation. As such, משכבי would evoke not so much a specific sexual encounter, but, in a more general sense, all sexual experiences associated with the head noun.

The intentionality with which (משכבות/משכבי(ם are employed in BH can perhaps be demonstrated from the one other instance in which the

---

[348] Hoftijzer and Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, vol.2, 701.

[349] *שְׁכָבָה, "layer", only ever occurs in the construct state, and seven out of nine times appears in the construct chain שְׁכְבַת־זָרַע, "layer of seed" (viz. semen; cf. Lev 15:16, 17, 18, 32; 19:20; 22:4; Num 5:13). The only exception is Exod 16:13, 14, where it refers to a layer of dew. *שִׁכְבַת, likewise occurs only in the construct, often with the masculine possessive suffix, governed by the verb נָתַן√, and seems to have the sense "copulation" (cf. Lev 18:20, 23; 20:15; Num 5:20).

[350] Of course, the verb šākab is frequently used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse; cf. Gen 19:32, 33, 34, 35; 30:15, 16; 34:2; 35:22; 38:26; 39:7, 12, 14; Deut 22;14, 22, 25, 29; Lev.18:22; 20:13; 28:30; 1 Sam 2:22; 2 Sam 11:4, 11; 12:11, 24; 13:11, 14.

masculine plural construct appears. Genesis 49:4 refers to the משכבי אביך, "the beds (viz. *copulations*) of your father". The reference is unambiguously sexual, as the allusion is to Reuben's adulterous dalliance with his father's concubine Bilhah (Gen 35:22).[351] In the MT the verse reads: פחז כמים אל־תותר כי עלית משכבי אביך אז חללת יצועי עלה, lit. "unstable as water,[352] may you (Reuben) not excel, for you went up (to) the beds (viz. *copulations*) of your father; then you defiled (it)—he went up to my bed!"[353] The significance of the expression משכבי אביך can best be appreciated by considering how the parallel noun יצועי was treated in the ancient translations. The Pesher in 4Q252 iv.4–5 preserves a variant reading, in which the 3.m.s. suffix (יצועיו) replaces the 1.c.s. (יצועי): עליתה משכבי אביכה אז חללתה יצועיו עלה, "you went up (to) the beds (viz. *copulations*) of your father, then you defiled his couches, he went up".[354] The effect of this change, is that the singular noun יצועי (MT) is transformed into a plural noun יצועיו (4Q252). As such, the plural יצועיו precisely parallels the plural משכבי. This variant is supported by the Vulgate: *quia ascendisti cubile patris tui et maculasti stratum eius*, "you went up to your father's bed, and you defiled his couch". It might also be

---

[351] This incident is described in only one verse, which is immediately followed by a list of the sons of Jacob. The purpose of this juxtaposition is unclear, but one wonders whether it might be mnemonic; preparing the audience for the intertextual reference in Jacob's final blessing at the end of the book.

[352] Note the double entendre of the verb פחז (see above). Another possible interpretation of the expression פחז כמים אל־תותר is "may your loins be like water, may you never suceed". In other words, the first part of this verse might be interpreted as an imprecation in which Reuben is cursed with impotency as a consequence of his adultery. Indeed, this interpretation is probably to be preferred on the basis of the juxtaposition with Gen 49:3, which stresses Reuben's virility and primogeniture.

[353] Note that the weak disjuctive accent *ṭifḥa* lies beneath חללת, suggesting that יצועי should be read together with עלה.

[354] Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, vol.1, 1Q1–4Q273 (Leiden, Brill, 1999), 505, smoothe this in translation: "you mounted your father's bed; then you defiled it, he had lain in it," cf. *yāṣṣîʿa* , "to spread out, lie" (Isa 58:5); however, note that this assumes that *mškb* is feminine.

supported by the LXX: ἀνέβης γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν κοίτην τοῦ πατρός σου τότε ἐμίανας τὴν στρωμνήν οὗ ἀνέβης, "you went up upon your father's bed, then you defiled the couch where you had gone up". As such, it might be possible to explain the abrupt change to the first person (יצועי) in the MT as a corruption from יצועיו.[355] However, the MT's variant is supported by Sam. Pent. (יצועי), Syr. (ܐܣܛܪܘܬܗ), *Tg. Onq.* (שיויי); *Tg. Ps.-J.* (שיוויי); *Tg. Neof.* (יצועי), and indirectly by the Samaritan Targum (עיצי). In light of this evidence, it might be possible to view the variant 3.m.s. suffix in 4Q252, Vulg. and LXX as an interpretive plus, intended to smooth out the abrupt change in grammatical person. The significance of this is that, in the tradition reflected by the MT, משכבי and יצוע are not strictly parallel; a disparity that certain sources sought to ameliorate.

The authenticity of the MT's reading might be further supported by internal evidence, since the emendation of the 1.c.s. pronominal suffix creates the problem of explaining the third person verb עלה, which is left hanging in 4Q252 (note the insertion of the relative adverb οὗ in the LXX in order to alleviate this tension). One option is to follow the LXX and emend עלה to the second person (עלית, "you went up"), but this does little to clarify the meaning of the verb in the context. Another option is perhaps to interpret עלה as a pleonastic resumptive pronoun with the preposition עַל (i.e. עָלֶ(י)הָ); i.e. "you went up (to) the beds (viz. *copulations*) of your father, then you defiled his couches, upon it (viz. the couches)".[356] A far simpler option, however, is to follow the unamended MT and interpret יצועי עלה as an *ad hoc* exclamation: "he went up to my couch!"

But it may not be necessary to go so far as to posit an Urtext which originally read יצועי; perhaps it is enough to simply note that some witnesses attest a variant with both plural משכבי and singular יצוע. It should also be noted that the use of plural משכבי appears to have been deliberate,

---

[355] This is a simple enough change, which requires only the accidental omission of the *wāw*.

[356] However, note that עליה is singular, while the emended יצועיו is now plural, which again indirectly supports the MT's reading.

since, as illustrated above, משכב with sexual connotations need not be plural (e.g. Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11, 12). Consequently, we are warranted to seek an explanation, and, as such, it may be inferred that the use of the masculine plural construct משכבי in Gen 49:4 was deliberately calculated to emphasise the sexual nature of the transgression.[357]

In short, in light of the overwhelming biblical evidence, and especially given the close parallel in the syntax of Lev 18:22 and 20:13, it seems unavoidable that משכבי in Deir ʿAlla II.11 should be interpreted as a sexual, rather than a mortuary allusion.

5.1.2.2. COMBINATION II: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

As noted above, the interpretation of Combination II is hampered by the uncertainty regarding the relationship between the two combinations and by the fact that no single line is preserved to the end. Broadly speaking, interpretations of the Combination II can be divided into two groups: those who see death as the dominant theme, and those who see references to youth and sexuality.

The foremost proponents of the first view are Baruch Levine and Jo Ann Hackett. According to Levine, Combination II "presents a dramatic description of the netherworld", which is characterised by a complete separation from the experiences of the living.[358] In Levine's view both Combination I and Combination II are separate prophecies of the seer Balaam that were collected under a single rubric ספר בלעם בר בער אש חזה אלהן (I.1).[359] Levine understood these oracles to be part of an ancient "El repertoire", noting that the "reference to the deity El, links the two 'Combinations' of the Balaam text to one another more firmly than was

---

[357] Consequently, in this context it should also be noted that the LXX typically uses κοίτη for משכבי (cf. Lev 18:22; 20:13; Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11, 12), which has corresponding sexual connotations (cf. *LSJ*, κοίτη IV).

[358] Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, 255.

[359] Levine, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAlla", 71–72.

previously possible".[360] Central to Levine's translation is the interpretation נקר, "corpse" (based primarily on his association with Isa 14:19), and the reference to רמה מן גדש, "wormrot from the grave".

Hackett was likewise persuaded to see a mortuary context, especially with regard to the expression רמה מן גדש, "the worm from the tomb". However, she disagreed with Levine over the interpretation of נקר, which she read as "scion" rather than "corpse". More importantly, Hackett understood מלך (II.9, 15) as an allusion to child sacrifice, which she suggested was an overarching theme of Combination II.[361] As Hackett realised, the principal appeal of this view is that it is then possible to establish a direct relationship between both combinations, inasmuch as the child sacrifices of Combination II might be understood in the context of an expiatory ritual in response to the prophecy of Combination I.[362]

The second view, that Combination II was concerned with matters of sexuality and youthful vitality, has been championed by Caquot and Lemaire, and by Alexander Rofé. Caquot and Lemaire did not offer an overall interpretation of Combination II, but their interpretation of עלם as "youth", רמה מן גדש, as "rising up from affliction", and משכבי עלמיך in terms of youthful vitality, shifted focus away from a mortuary context.

Rofé went further, interpreting the two combinations of the DAPT as belonging to a *heiros logos* that culminates in a description of a ritual for the prevention of the calamities described in Combination I.[363] For Rofé the clue to interpreting Combination II lay in what he took to be a number

---

[360] Levine, "The Balaam Inscription form Deir ʿAlla: Historical Aspects", 333. Levine subsequently re-endorsed this view; although, he commented that "I now seriously doubt that Combination II is topically sequential to Combination I"; Levine, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAlla", 71, 72.

[361] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 80–83; idem, "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan", 126. As Hackett observed, the more or less synonymous nouns צמח and נצר are used in Neo-Punic texts in the context of child sacrifice (cf. KAI 162:2; 163:3); cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 80, n.87.

[362] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 80.

[363] Cf. Rofe, *The Book of Balaam*; idem, Rofé (response), 365–66.

of sexual allusions: e.g. עלמה רוי דדן, "young woman, be sated with love" (II.4); and מן קחזי מני אש ומן שקי, "from the testicles of men and from thighs" (II.8). This led him to interpret בית ליעל הלך וליעל חתן שם, "a house to benefit a guest, and to benefit a bridegroom there" (II.7), as a reference to sacral prostitution intended to increase fertility and avert drought and desolation.[364]

Intriguingly, despite their different emphases, the suggestions of both Hackett and Rofé that Combination II describes some sort of ritual act might be extended to the physical context of the DAPT. Were the benches used for the preparation of the deceased for burial, or beds used for sacral prostitution? Can they be linked to the משכבי עלמיך in II.11? Unfortunatley, we cannot be certain in either case.

Yet another view was propounded by Blum, who again argued that Combination II was a sapiential text containing a dialogue between two or more interlocutors on the transience of life.[365] Hence he saw Combination II as a third composition, conflated with the two texts he reconstructed in Combination I (see further below). Blum's arguments are cogent and he may well be correct to classify Combination II as sapiential, but, for my part, I am inclined to see Combinations I and II as belonging to an original and coherent whole, united by the themes of death and rejuvenation that follow from the divine pronouncement in I.6–7.

Blum was certainly right to caution against imposing an artificial harmony where there are such substantial lacunae.[366] But the overarching unity of the two combinations is suggested by the references to death, which correspond to the restriction of fertility (I.14), and renewed vitality, which underscores the cyclical nature of life: e.g. "…pass יעבר אל בית עלמן " over to the grave" (II.6); רמה מן גדש, "wormrot from the grave" (II.8);

---

[364] Note that the concept of sacral prostitution in the ancient Near East generally is now much disputed; see, for example, Edward Lipiński, "Cult Prostitution in Ancient Israel?", *BAR* 40/1 (2014): 48–56, 70.

[365] Blum, "'Verstehste du dich nicht auf die Schreibkunst…?'", 33–53.

[366] Ibid, 40.

(possibly) ל[כ]שׁ, "the bereaved" (II.16); נקר ומדֹּר כל רֹטב, "the sprout and the soil containing succulents" (II.5); יקֹח מות על רחם ועל, "death will (no longer?) take the newborn infant and the suckling of …" (II.13). It is against this imagery of restricted and renewed fertility that the sexual allusions should read: e.g. רֹוֹי דדן, "sated with love" (II.4); משכבי עלמיך, "the bed of your youth" (II.11). These allusions to fecundity are logically consistent with the plague announced in I.6–7. Furthermore, if the designation ספר in the rubrics in I.1 and II.17—which frame combinations I and II—is correctly understood as a reference to the dream report, then the qualification [ה]משפט ומלק, "a judgement and a chastisement" in II.17 can readily be understood as a reference to the calamities described in Combination I.

Granted the unity of the two combinations, Combination II seems to describe the resolution to Combination I—perhaps including some sort of ritual including sacrifices as suggested by Hackett—followed by an exhortation to preserve the account orally.[367] The text is too fragmentary to know whether Combination II included a description of how the plague was resolved, or whether it prescribed a ritual to avert the disaster. In either case, the exhortation in II.17 might suggest that the account was preserved and transmitted for didactic purposes. This may support the view that the DAPT were related to education, but it is important to draw a distinction here between the *Sitz im Leben* of the Balaam tradition and the purpose of the text.[368] Consequently we will reserve judgement until the discussion of the physical context of the DAPT in Chapter 7.

5.2. ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS FOUND AT DEIR ʿALLA

In addition to the DAPT a number of noteworthy inscriptions were unearthed from different strata at Deir ʿAlla. These can be used to build a

---

[367] Incidentally, this significantly lessens the force of Blum's contention that there is no resolution to the calamites in Combination I (see above).

[368] Note that didacticism doesn't necessarily imply a pedagogical context. Proverbs and other didactic texts have a long established history in oral lore (e.g. Aesop's fables).

picture of the shifting cultural affiliations of the site, and the range of writing activity that took place there.

5.2.1. INSCRIBED CLAY TABLETS

Fig.5.4— Deir ʿAlla tablet 1440

At the end of the 1964 season the excavators discovered two rooms associated with the Late Bronze Age sanctuary (see §7.3.3). The rooms were apparently destroyed in the earthquake that demolished the sanctuary. A *terminus post quem* ca.1200 B.C.E. was determined for this destruction on the basis of a faience vase bearing the cartouche of the 19th dynasty Egyptian queen Taousert, which was discovered on the sanctuary floor.[369] This was corroborated by the ceramic evidence.[370] Among the finds in these rooms were three small clay tablets, one of them broken. They had been inscribed, while the clay was still wet, with a hitherto undeciphered linear script. Together with these inscribed tablets were seven more tablets decorated with incised dots in various configurations.[371] An additional

---

[369] See the discussion in Henk, J. Franken, "The Stratigraphic Context of the Clay Tablets Found at Deir ʿAlla," *PEQ* 96 (1964): 73–78.

[370] Henk J. Franken, "Clay Tablets from Deir ʿAlla Jordan," *VT* 14 (1964): 377–78; cf. idem, "The Stratigraphic Context of the Clay Tablets Found at Deir ʿAlla", 74.

[371] Four of the tablets published by Franken appear to be arranged with 7 dots forming an L shape: 6 dots on one line, and 1 dot on the line beneath. One other tablet appears to follow the same pattern but with 5 dots on the upper line and 2 dots on the lower. A sixth tablet appears to have 7 dots, but with 4 on the upper line and 3 on the lower; for drawings of these tablets, see Franken, "The Stratigraphic Context of the Clay Tablets Found at Deir ʿAlla", 73; idem, *Excavations at Tell Deir 'Alla. The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary* (Louvain: Peeters, 1992); Zeidan A. Kafafi, "The Archaeological Context of

tablet appears to have been prepared for inscription/decoration, but was crushed while the clay was wet—perhaps by the scribe—and discarded prior to incision. As Franken noted, the presence of this crushed tablet indicates that the texts were probably produced locally.[372]

Franken originally speculated that the function of the tablets may have been related to the Bronze Age sanctuary; however, the subsequent discovery of additional tablets in domestic contexts on the southern side of the tell challenges this assumption.[373] The function of these tablets with their enigmatic script and markings remains unclear.

A number of studies have been devoted to the decipherment of the script, but none has been entirely convincing. Comparisons have been drawn with the Cypriot and Minoan linear syllabaries,[374] early Arabic,[375] Phoenician,[376] and Etruscan scripts,[377] and Luwian hieroglyphs.[378]

---

the Tell Deir ʿAllā Tablets," in *A Timeless Vale: Archaeological and Related Essays on the Jordan Valley in Honour of Gerrit van der Kooij on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (eds. Eva Kaptijn, Lucas P. Petit; Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009), 124, fig. 9. Whatever their function (talismans, gaming pieces, administrative chits, counting tokens?), this preference for the (symbolic) number 7 merits further consideration.

[372] Franken, "Clay Tablets from Deir ʿAlla Jordan", 378.

[373] Franken, "The Stratigraphic Context of the Clay Tablets Found at Deir ʿAlla", 78; cf. Kafafi, "The Archaeological Context of the Tell Deir ʿAllā Tablets", 119–28.

[374] William F. Albright, "Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 2, part 2 (3rd ed.; eds. I. E. S. Edwards, et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 510. Noting the presence of philistine-style pottery in the room in which the inscriptions were found, Albright thought that the script might be related to the Philistines or another of the sea-peoples. Cf. Ora Negbi, "Were there Sea Peoples in the Central Jordan Valley at the Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age?", *TA* 18 (1991): 212–14, who argued against the view that the tablets are evidence for the incursion of a groups of Sea Peoples. Nevertheless, Cross similarly described the script as having "Aegean affinities," Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "A Philistine Ostracon from Ashkelon," *BAR* 22 (1996): 64–54; repr. *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook*, §21, 164–65.

[375] A. van den Branden, "Essai de Déchiffrement des Inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla," *VT* 15 (1965): 129–49.

[376] H. Cazelles, "Deir-Alla et ses tablettes," *Semitica* 15 (1965): 5–21.

One of the most ambitious attempts to translate and interpret the tablets was undertaken by William Shea.[379] Shea's arguments are particularly important owing to his claim to have identified the GN Pethor in one of the inscriptions (DA1449 = Shea text I).[380] Basing his conclusions on a combination of internal (i.e. plausibility of readings) and external considerations (i.e. comparison with known letter forms in other scripts), Shea described the writing system as an "Early Canaanite" script related to "other early West-Semitic alphabets".[381] Now it is true that Shea's reconstructions achieve a certain internal consistency, which is at first glance attractive, but, quite apart from his prior assumption that the language (as distinct from script) of the tablets belongs to the Semitic family,[382] his arguments rest on a number of problematic assumptions, generalisations, and orthographic anomalies that ultimately render his conclusions extremely unlikely. I include just a few of the most significant objections here.

One of the strongest objections to Shea's readings is his need to postulate the extensive use of internal *m.l.*; e.g. *wāw* representing /ō/ (*wywbbq*, "and the Jabbok (river)" (DA1441);[383] *yôd* representing /ī/ (as a

---

[377] Z. Mayani, "Un apport a la discussion du texte Deir ʿAllah," *VT* 24 (1974): 318–23.

[378] George. E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of a Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University, 1975): 160–61.

[379] William H. Shea, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part I," *AUSS* 27 (1989): 21–37; idem, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part II," *AUSS* 27 (1989): 97–119), respectively.

[380] Subsequent to Shea's attempted decipherment an additional fragment was found on which the combination of signs he identified as the GN Pethor occurs twice in two lines; cf. Kafafi, "The Archaeological Context of the Tell Deir ʿAllā Tablets", 126, fig. 17.

[381] Shea. "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part I", 28.

[382] Cf. Shea. "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part I", 27: "The vertical box-shaped sign at the beginning of the one word on the side of text III has been difficult to identify. It looks most like *heth*, but it does not function like *heth* because it is followed by a clear example of an ʿayin. The combination of *heth* followed by ʿayin does not occur in West-Semitic languages."

[383] Shea, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part II", 99.

plural ending in the nouns *btym*, "houses," DA1440; and ʿʿ*ym*, "ruins," DA1440, cf. BH עי, "heap of ruins"; and as a medial vowel: *wysym*, √**śîm*, "to set, place" DA1400).[384] Although internal *m.l.* are attested in Old Aramaic inscriptions as early as the 9th century, it would indeed be surprising to see such fully-fledged use of internal vowel letters in texts dated archaeologically to the late 13th century.[385] Shea recognised that in this regard his proposed readings were extraordinary, but he ignored the difficulty. This disregard of the problem amounts to special pleading.[386]

In addition, according to Shea's reconstruction, the orthography of the clay inscriptions differs significantly from that of the DAPT. Thus, in the first line of tablet 1440 Shea reads *btym*, "houses", with contracted diphthong, while in the DAPT II.6, 7 we find the *plene* spelling בית, suggesting the uncontracted diphthong (cf. §6.3.2). Similarly, in the same tablet Shea finds two counts of the masculine plural -*ym* (with mimation), while in the DAPT the masculine plural absolute is written ן- (with nunation; cf. §6.1.1). Admittedly, this objection is of a lower order, as (a) there is evidence of a cultural break between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age II settlements (cf. §7.3.4); and (b) it cannot be proved that the dialect represented by the DAPT is representative of the local dialect spoken at Deir ʿAlla. Nevertheless, the variation should be noted, especially because Shea assumes that there was a fundamental continuity (related to the Balaam tradition) on the basis of the GN Pethor.

In addition to these orthographic concerns, objections could be raised in regard to Shea's palaeographic comparisons. For instance, Shea's identification of *lāmed* and *mêm* with cognate forms in the roughly

---

[384] Cf. Shea, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part II", 103–06, 107–08.

[385] On the use of internal *m.l.* in OA, note especially *yšym* in the Tell Fekherye inscription (KAI 309, line 12); cf. Shea, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part II", 106.

[386] Cf. Ibid, 107.

contemporary ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon are not as secure as he suggests.[387] In particular, the identification of *mêm* in the ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon is debated, and most scholars read *nûn* for the grapheme Shea identifies as *mêm*. Yet Shea did not attempt to supply any graphic parallels for his interpretation of the ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah *mêm*, and his argument rests solely on internal criteria.[388]

Finally, Shea's identification of the GN "Pethor" in tablet DA1449 is questionable. It is far from certain that the biblical noun פְּתוֹרָה (Num 22:5; Deut 23:5) is a toponym (cf. §D.2), and Shea's attempt to identify Tell Deir ʿAlla as "Pethor" seems to betray a methodologically unsound desire to identify the site directly with the biblical prophet Balaam, despite the occupational gap noted above.[389]

In a more modest assessment, it may simply be observed that the repetition of such a small inventory of signs suggests an alphabetic script. Vertical lines incised into the surface of the clay appear to be word dividers, separating the signs in clusters of 3–5 graphemes, which might indicate a triconsonental system (supporting Shea's assumption of a Semitic base). And, according to Franken a number of factors, including the angle at which the signs were incised, suggest that the tablets should be read from right to left.[390]

---

[387] Cf. Kochavi, "An Ostracon of the Period of the Judges", 1–13; Demsky: "A Proto-Canaanite Abecedary Dating from the Period of the Judges", 14–27; and Naveh, "Some Considerations on the Ostracon from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah", 31–35.

[388] Cf. Naveh, "Some Considerations on the Ostracon from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah", 31–32; Cross, "Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts", 10. For Shea's identification of *mêm* in the ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon, which ultimately rests on the sequence of letters, see William H. Shea, "The ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah Ostracon," *AUSS* 28 (1990): 64.

[389] Indeed, one wonders whether this identification would have been possible if it were not for the DAPT. Irrespective, a questionable interpretation in a debated text (DA1449) can hardly be viewed as confirmation of the difficult Masoretic reading.

[390] H. J. Franken, "A Note on How the Deir ʿAlla Tablets were Written", *VT* 15 (1965): 150–52.

5.2.2. THE MEASURE "OF THE GATE"

From the same stratum as the DAPT, the excavators also unearthed two interrelated inscriptions incised into a small round stone and a small jug respectively.[391] The inscription on the stone, written *scripta continua*, reads אבנשרעא, "stone of *šrʿ*". While the inscription on the jug, also written *scripta continua*, reads זישרעא, "of *šrʿ*", where זי is the genitive demonstrative pronoun.

The surface of the stone above the inscription has a shiny appearance, which Franken interpreted as the result of frequent kissing or touching. This led him to the view that the stone was an object of veneration.[392]   Owing to the possibly religious nature of this object, Hoftijzer then posited the possibility that *šrʿ* might be a DN; although he acknowledged that the DN *šrʿ* is not attested in any other context.[393]

Fig.5.5—The inscribed stone

---

[391] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 15, and pl.16a.

[392] Ibid, 15.

[393] Ibid, 274–75. Hoftijzer doubted that *šrʿ* was to be identified with the DN in I.6, due to the fact that the stem of the *rêš* would likely then be visible on the plaster below the break.
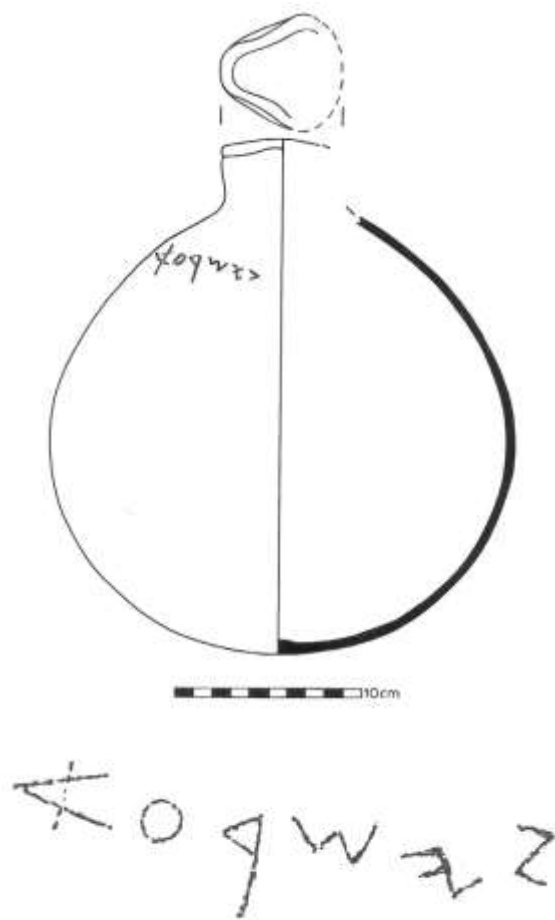
Fig.5.6—The inscribed jar

A more elegant solution was proposed in 1993 by Israel Ephʿal and Joseph Naveh.[394] Noting the difficulties in interpreting *šrʿʾ* as a DN, Ephʿal and Naveh instead read, "of the gate" (cf. Aram *trʿ*; Heb. *šʿr*), and identified the stone and the vessel with a system of official weights and measures.[395] To support this interpretation they adduced numerous

---

[394] Israel Ephʿal and Joseph Naveh, "The Jar of the Gate", *BASOR* 298 (1993): 59–65.

[395] The reading *šrʿʾ* = "gate" had already been proposed by Jonas C. Greenfield, "Review of Hoftijzer and van der Kooij", *JSS* 25 (1976): 251. McCarter proposed *"of the gatekeeper"* (cf. Syr. ܬܪܥܐ); McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 50–51. While Caquot and Lemaire interpreted אבנשרעא as "the stone of *šrʿʾ*," interpreteing *šrʿʾ* as a PN; Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 190.

comparable examples, the most notable being a jar from Tel Kinrot bearing the Hebrew inscription כד השער, "the jar of the gate".[396]

Notwithstanding the spelling *šrʿ*, rather than the expected *ṯrʿ*, the use of the postpositive article *-āʾ* strongly hints at Aramaic affiliation.[397] As noted by Naʾaman, this might suggest that at some stage Deir ʿAlla was incorporated into the Aramean imperial system (see further §7.4).[398]

5.2.3. AN ABECEDARY

Another text, incised before firing below the exterior rim of a clay bowl, has been interpreted as a partial abecedary. From right to left this inscription reads אבגדזח.[399] Hoftijzer suggested that omission of the *hê* and *wāw* may be due to the fact that those letters also function as *matres lectionis*, and so were treated as special by the scribe.[400] However, it should also be noted that only part of the *ḥêt* is preserved, and what is visible is questionable. We would expect the lateral bars of a *ḥêt* to slope downward to the left, rather than upward as they do in this instance. As such, to the best of my knowledge, this *ḥêt* would be unique. The *dālet* is also distorted, and is, in fact, similar in stance and proportion to the damaged *ʾālep* in the first position (or, less likely, a *rêš*). Furthermore,

---

[396] Cf. Volkmar Fritz, "Kinneret, Vorbericht über die Ausgrabungen auf dem Tell el-ʿOreme am See Genazaret in den Jahren 1982-1985", *ZDVP* 102 (1986): 39.

[397] Cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 51; Ephʿal and Naveh, "The Jar of the Gate", 59. For a discussion of the process that led to the distinctive Aramaic article, see Naʾama Pat-El, "The Development of the Semitic Definite Article: A Syntactic Approach" *JSS* 54 (2009): 45–46. The demonstrative pronoun זי is sometimes also adduced as an Aramiasm (cf. Ephʿal and Naveh, op cit.); however, the retention of this particle in BH means this is hardly conlusive; cf. Naʾama Pat-El and Aren Wilson-Wright, "Features of Archaic Biblical Hebrew and the Linguistic Dating Debate", *HS* 54 (2013): 401–02.

[398] Nadav Naʾaman, "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead", *ZDPV* 111 (1995): 107; contra Levine, "The Balaam Inscription form Deir ʿAlla: Historical Aspects", 328.

[399] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 267; cf. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle", 53–54.

[400] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 285.

both the left and right-hand edges of the inscription are damaged, meaning it is possible that the extant letters preserve only a fragment from a longer line. As such, while the identification of this inscription as an abecedary is probable, it is not assured.

5.2.4. AMMONITE INSCRIPTIONS

Several ostraca and seals found in strata above the DAPT testify to the incorporation of Deir ʿAlla into the Ammonite cultural sphere in the 7th and 6th centuries (see §7.3.5).[401]

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

As at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, the overall picture of writing activity that emerges from Deir ʿAlla is variegated, including lengthy literary plaster texts alongside mundane administrative activities; e.g. the (probable) measures "of the gate". However, unlike Kuntillet ʿAjrud there is little evidence for *ad hoc* and occasional writing (e.g. lists and epistolary texts). This may simply be an accident of preservation, or it may reflect the localised and more or less self-contained nature of the site, meaning there was little or no occasion for writing.[402]

When considered diachronically, the various inscriptions reflect the changing orientation and allegiance of the settlement. Thus, the discovery of Ammonite texts in the strata above the DAPT points to an increasing incorporation into the Ammonite cultural sphere during the 7th century (see the more detailed discussion in Chapters 6 and 7). Yet more significant are the Late Bronze Age tablets, which have been used to argue for a basic

---

[401] Photographs of some of these are reproduced in Gerrit van der Kooij and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads: A Continuing Review of Excavations at Deir Alla, Jordan* (Leiden: University of Leiden Archaeological Centre, 1989), cat. no.123, cat. No. 140, and cat. no. 151.

[402] Even if Deir ʿAlla did feature relatively prominently in the regional economy, as has been suggested by some (see §7.3.5), it does not necessarily follow that this must have been accompanied by extensive written records.

continuity between the Late Bronze Age sanctuary at Deir ʿAlla and the Iron Age bench-room in which the DAPT were found.[403] Ultimately, however, attempts to translate these texts have proved unconvincing, and their significance remains a mystery. As such, the tablets are currently of no value for determining the question of continuity.

Turning to the plaster texts, the DAPT can best be characterised as a coherent prophetic narrative, recording a doom oracle (Combination I) and its resolution (Combination II). If the interpretation offered for the rubric in II.17 is accepted, then it seems that the account was adapted from (and accompanied by) oral traditions. Be that as it may, the evidence seems to suggest that the DAPT were transcribed from a written *Vorlage* (cf. the visual error in I.1). Yet there is no way of knowing how old this *Vorlage* was: it might have been an old scroll brought to Deir ʿAlla from elsewhere, or it might have been a local draft, composed immediately prior to being written onto the wall. Whatever the case, the act of transcribing the DAPT onto the wall surface testifies to the ongoing importance, and indeed relevance, of the Balaam prophecy at Deir ʿAlla.

Returning to the possible allusion to oral transmission in II.17, there is no reason to suppose that the inscription was intended to replace the oral medium. Indeed, the fact that the exhortation to preserve the account orally was itself copied along with the narrative testifies to the continuity of the oral tradition. In other words, the reproduction of the exhortation presupposes a desire that the tradent(s) who produced the DAPT (and/or its *Vorlage*) would continue to transmit and perform the tradition by word

---

[403] See especially Shea, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part I", 21–37; idem, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part II", 97–119. On the question of continuity genearally, see more recently, Brian B. Schmidt, "Memorializing Conflict: Toward an Iron Age 'Shadow' History of Israel's Earliest Literature", in *Literacy, Orality and Literary Production in the Southern Levant: Contextualizing Sacred Writing in Early Israel* (SBLAIL) (forthcoming); although, note that Schmidt does not adduce the tablets in this context.

of mouth; otherwise, it could simply be omitted from the transcription.[404] As such, it is probably safe to view the written text as a visual and mnemonic aid, metonymically related to the immanent performance tradition (see further Chapter 7). Significantly, as with the theophany at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, this supports the view that, at least in certain contexts, written literature continued to be viewed and experienced as part of the living, immanent tradition (see §2.9). But it should also be stressed that while these reflections stem from the new restoration of II.17, they are not ultimately dependent on that restoration. There is no *a priori* reason to doubt that at some stage a form (or forms) of the account existed in the oral lore, and, if so, the principle of continuity may apply even if it is not expressed explicitly.

This raises the question whether the text was embellished or modified when it was set in writing. In particular, should the frame narrative (I.1–6) be associated with the oral tradition, or only the prophetic apophthegm (I.6*ff.*) which is reproduced in poetic diction (i.e. *parallelismus membrorum*)? To a large extent, the answer to this question depends on the interpretation of the noun ספר in the rubrics in I.1 and II.17. If ספר is understood to refer reflexively to the DAPT, then the fact that the rubrics encapsulate the frame narrative suggests that the framing was viewed as part of the whole intended for oral recitation (II.17). Minimally, this seems to imply that oral recitation of the frame narrative was felt to be viable, and, as such, there is no reason to isolate it as a literary embellishment.

Be that as it may, the DAPT are distinguished from oral performance by virtue of their fixity. Notwithstanding the probability of continued interaction between the oral and literate registers, in their material form the DAPT took on a physical existence of their own. Unlike, fleeting occasional performances, the inscription is permenant, standing as a perpetual monument to the tradition. Because of this material quality, the

---

[404] This suggests that the exhortation was itself well-established as an essential part of the received tradtion.

DAPT can only be fully appreciated with reference to their physical context. As such, it would be premature at this stage to speculate as to the function of the DAPT or the manner in which they would have been experienced. Such considerations will be deferred until Chapter 7.

Chapter 6

WHO WROTE THE DEIR ʿALLA PLASTER TEXTS?

As was remarked in Chapter 3, the linguistic classification of a text can offer potentially significant insights into its authorship and cultural context. But linguistic analysis can raise as many questions as it answers. This is especially true of the DAPT, which seem to reflect a unique admixture of Aramaic and Canaanite isoglosses. Indeed, almost since the time of their first publication, the linguistic classification of the DAPT has been a matter of intense debate, and the dialect has been described variously as a kind of Aramaic, or, with varying degrees of specificity, as a regional variety of Canaanite.[1]

---

[1] Since the publication of the editio princeps, the question of linguistic classification has featured in almost every study or review of the texts. The scholarly preoccupation with this question can be seen from the number of specialised studies that have been devoted specifically to the linguistic classification of the DAPT, cf. Jonas C. Greenfield, *JSS* 25 (1980): 248–52; *Joseph Naveh, IEJ* 29 (1979): 133–36; Jo Ann Hackett, "The Dialect of the Plaster Text from Tell Deir ʿAlla", *Orientalia* 53 (1984): 57–65; Baruch Halpern, "Dialect Distribution in Canaan and the Deir Alla Inscriptions", in *Working With No Data: Semitic and Egyptian Studies Presented to Thomas O. Lambdin* (eds. David M. Golomb and Susan T. Hollis; Winona Lake Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1987): 119–39; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 87–99; Dennis Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text", in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 100–05; Greenfield, "Philological Observations on Deir ʿAlla", 109–20; John Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", in *The Balaam Text*

Owing to the classificatory purpose of much of the earlier discussion, the question has typically been framed in reference to a family tree model, assuming a mutually-exclusive relationship between the Aramaic and Canaanite branches.[2] However, from the outset, the appropriateness of this model to describe the linguistic profile of the DAPT has been questioned.[3] More recent work on the classification of the Semitic languages has tended to emphasise a wave-like model of areal diffusion alongside the linear tree and branch model. This complementary

from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989 (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 282–93; Felice Israel, "Réflexions méthodologiques sur le classement linguistique de DAPT," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 305–19; Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription," *BO* 50 (1993): 309–28. Most attempts to apply a "Canaanite" label to the DAPT have emphasised the geographical location of Tell Deir ʿAlla; thus, the dialect has been termed: Midianite (Rofé, *The Book of Balaam*, 69–70; idem, *Biblical Archaeology Today,* 365–66); Ammonite (Greenfield, *JSS* 25 (1980): 251); Gileadite (McCarter "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā", 50), cf. Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription", 328, who accepts the "Gileadite" label, but stresses the relationship of the dialect with "Israelian Hebrew." Hackett eschewed any label for the Deir ʿAlla dialect, describing it only as "South Canaanite" (Hackett, "The Dialect of the Plaster Text from Tell Deir ʿAlla", 64–65; cf. Halpern, "Dialect Distribution in Canaan", 137–38).

[2] Subsequent discussions have been oriented more to a description, attempting, in turn, to analyse and interpret the implications of the DAPT for Northwest Semitic dialectology generally.

[3] Already in the editio princeps Hoftijzer observed: "[p]rovided one wants to maintain the distinction between Canaanite and Aramaic Languages (a distinction which can only have a very relative value), there can be no doubt that here we have to do with an Aramaic one," Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 300; cf. McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 97; John Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 282–93; idem, "What is Aramaic?" *ARAM* 7 (1995): 261–82, esp. 276–77.

model explains shared features as a result of contact between speakers of different dialects or languages, rather than inheritances from a common linguistic ancestor.[4] Hence, the model of areal diffusion allows greater sensitivity to the dynamic processes of linguistic change. Accordingly, the language of the DAPT is now widely understood to represent a regional dialect, reflecting its situation between Aramean and Canaanite geopolitical spheres (see further below).[5]

As in Chapter 3, the following discussion lists the most important isoglosses together with a brief evaluation of their significance, paying particular attention to diachronic considerations (i.e. linguistic innovations and retentions). For expediency, it will be convenient to use the term Aramaic (and occasionally Canaanite) in an abstract sense, as though

---

[4] Cf. John Huehnergard, "Features of Central Semitic," in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*, (ed. Augustinus Gianto; BibOr 48; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005), 155–203, esp. 163–64; John Huehnergard and Aaron D. Rubin. "Phyla and Waves: Models of Classification of the Semitic Languages," in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, (eds. Stefan Weninger, et al; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 267–68.

[5] The following remarks by Stephen A. Kaufman reflect the perspective well: "[i]f a new language appears in Gilead in the 8th century or so, looks somewhat like Aramaic to its North, Ammonite and Moabite to its South, and Hebrew to its West (that is to say: it looks exactly like any rational person would expect it to look like) and is clearly neither ancestor nor immediate descendant of any other known NW Semitic language that we know, why not simply say it is Gileadite and be done with it?". Stephen A. Kaufman, "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects in the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic Languages (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1988), 55–56. Broadly speaking, this view is reflected in much of the literature on the Dialect of the DAPT (cf. n.1 above), and only a few scholars have held to a more polarised view, cf. Lemaire, "Le inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle", 46–49; Hackett, "The Dialect of the Plaster Text from Tell Deir ʿAlla", 57–65. It should be noted, however, that Hackett's argument was framed in response to the, then, dominant view that the language of the inscription was Aramaic, and she has since reiterated that the situation is by no means clear cut, cf. idem, "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan", 125.

referring to a monolithic entity, just as one might speak today of English or Arabic. However, it should be borne in mind that this is an artificial homogeneity, and is only useful as a designation at the broadest levels of linguistic classification.

Ultimately, it will be argued that the data currently available are not sufficient to support a precise dialectical classification, but that the overall profile is well suited to that of a local vernacular dialect.

6.1. MORPHOLOGY

6.1.1. *Nunation of masculine plural Absolute*

The form of the masculine plural absolute suffix in the DAPT is ן- (אלהן, I.1x2, I.5; I.8; רחלן, I.9; ארנבן, I.9; קבען, I.10; לחכמן, I.11; עלמן, II.6; מלכן, II.13), with nunation, as in Aramaic (ין-/ן-), rather than mimation, as in Hebrew, Ammonite, Phoenician and Ugaritic (ים-/ם-). However, it has been observed that nunation is also attested in Moabite, the Phoenician dialect of Arslan Tash (alongside mimation! cf. בן אלם, rev.11; קדשן, rev.12; שממ, rev.13[6]), Mishnaic Hebrew (an Aramaism?), and, in various contexts, in Biblical Hebrew.[7]

---

[6] In adjacent lines on the reverse of inscription I. The significance of the presence of both alloforms in the inscriptions from Arslan Tash is debated. To find both forms attested in a single inscription is certainly surprising and Gibson may be correct in his opinion that the linguistic profile of the inscriptions reflects an intentional mix of Phoen. and Aram. forms (Gibson, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, 79–80); however, Garr has countered that the mimated forms may reflect borrowed or inherited religious vocabulary and might not reflect local speech patterns (Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 89). In response to this, it should be noted that although there are good parallels for בן אלם (cf. *DDD*, 794–800), it is less clear why שממ would reflect a borrowing, since the form שמין is well attested for Aramaic (cf. also DAPT I.6). Moreover, the extended formula (which presumably must form the basis of the borrowing or inheritance proposed by Garr) ב)אלת שמם וארץ), "(by/with) oaths of the heavens and the earth," is unparalleled outside of the inscriptions from Arslan Tash.

[7] Cf. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 89–91; McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 88; Greenfield, "Philological Observations on the Deir ʿAlla

In the Northwest Semitic dialects, it is not always clear whether nunation or mimation of the masculine plural suffix should be treated as evidence for a common ancestor or linguistic contact; although it has been argued that originally the nunated form was a linguistic retention, and mimation a secondary innovation shared by Ugaritic, Hebrew and Phoenician.[8] In any case, the evidence for nunation in Moab. and the dialect of Arslan Tash, both of which bear significant affinities to the Canaanite branch of the Northwest Semitic group, militates against viewing the nunated masculine plural absolute as a purely Aramaic isogloss.

Inscription", 109; Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription", 311. Note, in particular, that both Greenfield and Rendsburg interpreted the nunation of the plural ending in BH as a possible northern Israelite (or, according to Rendsburg's terminology, "Isralean") characteristic. However, this is a complicated issue. Rendsburg has identified 25 examples of the ין- masculine plural ending in the Hebrew Bible (Rendsburg, "A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew", 15–16). Of these, twenty are from texts that he identified as having either a (northern) Israelite origin, or else evincing significant Israelian features (Judg 5:10; Prov 31:3; Ezek 26:18; 1 Kgs 11:33; 15x in Job, a book with numerous Aramaisms, but which Rendsburg identifies as "style-switching" and which may also represent a dialect that is geographically proximate to that of Deir ʿAlla; cf. Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription", *passim*). The remaining 5 examples are from (so-called) Judahite Hebrew texts: three of these Rendsburg identified as Aramaisms (Ezek 4:9; Lam 1:4; and Dan 12:13), but for the remaining two (2 Kgs 11:13; Mic 3:12) he provided no explanation. But of the 25 (if the examples from Job are included) northern texts, *only one* (Judg 5:10) was identified by Rendsburg as true Israelian Hebrew (that is, having a securely northern provenance), the remainder he identified as examples of "style-switching." In light of this, and given that the shift *-îm > -în* is phonologically relatively minor and involves no semantic differentiation, it is possible that each of the biblical occurrences of ין- reflect Aramaic influence.

[8] Cf. Werner Diem, "Gedanken zur Frage der Mimation und Nunation in den semitischen Sprachen," *ZDMG* 125 (1975): 239–58; Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, 35–36; Joshua Blau "Short Philological Notes on the Inscription of Mešaʿ", *Maarav* 2 (1979–80): 143–45; Reproduced in *Topics in Hebrew and Semitic Linguistics* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), 344–46.

6.1.2. *The 3.m.s suffix* וה-

The characteristic Aram. 3.m.s suffix וה- is well known from OA and IA, where it is the usual form for plural nouns (והי-/וה-; cf. BA *-ôhî*).[9] However, the diagnostic value of this feature in the DAPT (אלוה, I.1, I.4[10]) has been questioned. Both Jonas Greenfield and Joseph Naveh have suggested that the suffix might also be attested in Moabite (ימה, "his days", and perhaps בנה, "his sons", Mesha inscription, line 8).[11] But Dennis Pardee has objected, arguing that the spelling of the only uncontested suffixed plural, שרעיה, "its gates" (Mesha, line 22) with a *yôd m.l.*, indicates that the underlying vowel was *i*-class rather than a *u*-class.[12] Consequently, it would be unwise to place too much significance on the

---

[9] In Jewish Palestinian Aramaic the form וי- is also attested, presumably from *והי- via syncope of the intervocalic *hê*. There is some disagreement regarding the vocalization of -וה in OA: whether *-*awh*, *-*awhŭ*, *-*awhî*, or *-*ôhî* (see below). Cross has argued for *-*awh*, on the basis that final vowels in OA are consistently indicated with *m.l.*, and diphthongs are always marked; Frank Moore Cross Jr., "Some Problems in Old Hebrew Orthography with Special Attention to the Third Person Masculine Singular Suffix on Plural Nouns [–*âw*]", *ErIsr* 27 *Hayim and Miriam Tadmor Volume* (2003): 18–24; reproduced in *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy* (eds. John Huehnergard and Jo Ann Hackett; HSS 51; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003) §55. However, Cook citing the improbability of the revival of proto-Aramaic final vowels after their temporary loss in OA, has argued for the retention of unmarked final unstressed long vowels in OA (Edward M. Cook, "The Orthography of Final Unstressed Long Vowels in Old and Imperial Aramaic," *Maarav* 5–6 (1990): 53–67). The problem remains unresolved.

[10] Possibly also כפוה, "his hands", fragment IX (a); cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 300, n.31; cf. McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 88.

[11] Cf. *Joseph Naveh, IEJ* 29 (1979): 136; Jonas C. Greenfield, *JSS* 25 (1980): 250; for בנה cf. Klaus Beyer, "The Languages of Transjordan," in *Languages from the World of the Bible* (ed. Holger Gzella, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 116, §2.2.

[12] As contraction of the diphthong was the norm in Moab. (*aw* > *ō*; *ay* > *ē*), the presence of the internal *m.l.* in שרעיה (*šaʿarēha*) indicates that the stress fell on the penultima; cf. Beyer, "The Languages of Transjordan", 113–14, §2.1.

possible Moabite attestation(s); after all, as Pardee observed, "[t]he Aramaic peculiarity of the suffix is not the -h, it is the -w-!"[13]

No matter what the situation in Moabite, the fact remains that the closest orthographic parallel for the Deir ʿAlla pronominal suffix can be found in Aramaic. As such, it seems reasonable to infer that the 3.m.s. suffix וה- in the Deir ʿAlla dialect and Aramaic is likely to reflect linguistic contact or a common intermediate ancestor.[14] But, even so, Huehnergard has cautioned against assuming too close an equivalence, stressing that we do not know how the suffix was pronounced at Deir ʿAlla, and the process that led to it may not have been the same as in Aramaic.[15]

6.1.3. *The 2.f.s. pronominal suffix* כי-

The 2.f.s. pronominal suffix כי- (עבכי, I.6; possibly סכרכי, I.7) has been interpreted as an Aramaic isogloss (cf. BH ךְ–; Phoen. ךְ, once כי)[16]—assuming, that is, that כי is to be understood as a pronominal suffix and not

---

[13] Dennis Pardee, Review of Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, *JNES* 50 (1991): 140, n.1. However, it should be noted that the same situation is apparently reflected in Samalian which also attests the suffix יה-; cf. Cross, "Some Problems in Old Hebrew Orthography".

[14] Cf. Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?", 281, who went on to stress that "the putative common ancestor should not yet be labelled 'Proto-Aramaic' but something else, perhaps 'Proto-Aramoid'."

[15] Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?", 281; cf. Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text", 103. The origins of this form remain uncertain. A popular explanation proposed by Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 107, is that the suffix developed along the following lines: **-ay-hū* > (via regressive assimilation) **-aw-hū* > (then through dissimilation of *u-u*) [awhī]. Alternatively, Israel, "Réflexions méthodologiques sur le classement linguistique de DAPT", 306, §1.1 has proposed that the vowel represented by *wāw* might be explained as a simple *glide* inserted as an aid to pronunciation (cf. BH אֵלָיו > אֶל).

[16] עבדכי, "your servant": *CIS*:3777, cf. Stanislav Segert, *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1976), 96; Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription", 315; idem, "A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew", 12. Note that this is from a late Punic text.

a conjunction, as proposed by Levine (see §5.1.1, line 6). However, it has been demonstrated that the *yôd* of the suffix, is a proto-Semitic retention *-*ki* rather than a shared innovation, and, as such, is not necessarily indicative of Aramaic affiliation.[17]

6.1.4. *The N-stem*

There appear to be two instances of verbs in the N-stem, with a reflexive sense as in Hebrew (נצבו, "gathered themselves," I.6; נאנח, "sighs," II.12x2). The loss of the proto-Semitic N-stem is already a significant isogloss of in OA.[18] Accordingly, the retention of the N-stem in the DAPT tells against an Aramaic affiliation. However, it is possible that it is simply an archaism of the Deir ʿAlla dialect.[19]

6.1.5. *The infixed t-stem*

The infixed t-stem has an *ʾālep*-preformative (אתיחדו, I.5; ליתמלך, II.9), analogous to the Aram. *ʾitpeʿal* and *ʾitpaʿal* conjugations.[20] McCarter has observed that this is somewhat surprising, owing to the fact that the

---

[17] For a discussion of proto-Semitic *-*ki* see Rebecca Hasselbach, "Final Vowels of Pronominal Suffixes and Independent Personal Pronouns in Semitic." *JSS* 49 (2004): 1–20; cf. Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, 308, esp. §36.19, and the comparative table on pages 306–07. Rendsburg adduced seven biblical examples to suggest that the 2.f.s. pronominal suffix כי- was retained in the northern "Israelian" dialect of Hebrew (Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription", 315; idem, "A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew", 12). However, these are of uncertain value, as it is unclear whether the examples he cites reflect a retention of proto-Semitic *-*ki*, or Aramaic influence.

[18] See Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 289, who argued that the morpholexical load that had to be carried by the *-t-*forms in OA suggests that the loss of the N-stem had already occurred in the period of a common ancestor; cf. idem, "What is Aramaic?", 272; Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, §41.16.

[19] Cf. Hackett, "The Dialect of the Plaster Text from Tell Deir ʿAlla", 62.

[20] Cf. McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 88–89. Although, as Halpern has argued this is a feature shared with BH; Halpern, "Dialect Distribution in Canaan", 128–29.

causative stem has a *hê* prefix (cf. הקרקת, "it has chased," I.15), since it is usual for the prefix on verbs with a *t*-infix to follow, analogically, the prefix of the C-stem; although, he noted that such mixtures are not unparalleled.[21]

6.1.6. *The 3.f.s perfect ending on verbs*

The 3.f.s perfect ending ת- (חרפת, I.7/8; נשרת, I.8; הקרקת, I.15) is a proto-Semitic retention shared with Aramaic and Samalian (cf. Ug. *-t*), in contrast with Canaanite **-ā* (cf. Hebrew *-h*; Phoen *-Ø*).[22] However, as Huehnergard and Rubin have argued, the uneven loss of final ת- in the Central Semitic group indicates that it should be interpreted as a parallel development, rather than a common innovation ascribed to a shared ancestor.[23]

6.1.7. *The G-infinitive with suffixed -t*

The suffixed *-t* of the G-infinitive (לדעת, II.17) is also a retention from proto-Semitic. The **miqtal* infinitive, with preformative *mêm*, which became characteristic of later Aramaic, is only sparsely attested in OA and, as such, its absence in the DAPT cannot reasonably be used to argue against Aramaic affiliation.[24]

---

[21] McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 89; cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 119. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 125, explained this according to the different functions of the prefixed consonant in the two stems. According to Lipiński, the *hê* of the causative stem is the preformative, while the *ʾālep* of the *ʾtpʿl* simply introduces a prosthetic vowel.

[22] Cf. McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 93; Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 89–91. Note that חרפת (I.7/8) and נשרת (I.8) can both be analysed as f.s. participles.

[23] Cf. Huehnergard and Rubin. "Phyla and Waves", 267–68.

[24] Cf. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 128–29; cf. Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 288.

6.1.8. *Forms of Negation*

Two negative particles are attested in the DAPT: the independent particle אל (I.6; I.7; possibly II.6) and the proclitic -ל (cf. I.3; II.7; II.9). As already noted, there remains some uncertainty as to whether אל is used in the DAPT to qualify nouns (see §5.1.1, line 6), or whether it is limited to the negation of volitive verbs. It is interesting to note, however, that Amarna Canaanite (following Akkadian) similarly evinces two negative particles: *ul* and *lā*, without any apparent difference in function.[25]

The second form, the proclitic -ל, follows the pattern of the negative particle in Aramaic over against Heb. לא and Phoen. (and Byblian) בל(א).[26] This correspondence was stressed by Lemaire as evidence of Aramaic affiliation.[27] But, as Felice Israel noted, the proclitic -ל is also attested in Ugaritic, suggesting that it is a proto-Northwest Semitic retention.[28] Furthermore, as Heuhnergard observed, the spelling of the negative particle may simply reflect the influence of Aramaic orthography, rather than linguistic affiliation.[29]

---

[25] William M. Moran, "A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos as Reflected in the Amarna Tablets" in *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings* (eds. John Huehnergard and Shlomo Izre'el; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 13–14. Cf. Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, §47.8; Moscati, et al., *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*, 121. This is in contradistinction to the situation in Old Babylonian, where the two particles evince a clearly defined and mutually exclusive range of uses; cf. John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 199.

[26] For a survey of the negation of finite verbs in the first millennium NWS dialects see Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 174–75.

[27] André Lemaire, "La langue de l'inscription sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla," *GLECS* 24–28 (1979–84):317–40, esp. 325.

[28] Israel, "Réflexions méthodologiques sur le classement linguistique de DAPT", 306, §1.1.

[29] Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 287, n.14.

6.1.9. *The Definite Article*

There are no uncontested instances of the definite article in the DAPT; but the article א- occurs on the noun שרעא, "the gate", on the inscribed jar and stone (see §5.2.2). The enclitic א- is an innovation known only from Aramaic and may be considered a pure Aramaism; however, as there are no certain examples of the article in the plaster texts, this must be treated independently of the DAPT.

6.2. SYNTAX

6.2.1. The *wāw-consecutive*

The DAPT contains a number of probable examples of the *wāw consecutive* (ויאתו, I.1; ויאמרו, I.2; ויקם, I.3; ויעל, I.4 ויחז, frag. v(e)). The identification of these as consecutive forms is suggested both on morphological grounds—by the shortened imperfect (e.g. ויאתהו < ויאתו, I.1; ויחזה < ויחז, frag. v(e))[30]—and on syntactic grounds. That is, in the case of ויאתו in I.1, the *wāw* is main clause initial, with no antecedent, and consequently cannot be interpreted as a copulative.[31]

The question of the existence of the *wāw* consecutive in Old Aramaic received renewed attention following the discovery of the Tel Dan inscription in 1993, and a considerable body of literature arose around this question in the following decade.[32] While there continues to be debate,

---

[30] However, the apocopation could also be analysed as a *yaqtul* preterite with simple copulative *wāw* (see below); cf. *Joüon* §117; T. Muraoka and M. Rogland, "The *waw* Consecutive in Old Aramaic? A Rejoinder to Victor Sasson," *VT* 48 (1998): 99–104.

[31] If the narrative is understood to commence after the rubric (which functionally parallels the superscriptions of biblical prophetic texts), then its use is that described by Alviero Niccacci as narrative initial, and as such is analogous to use of the *wāw consecutive* in BH prose narrative; Cf. Alviero Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose* (JSOTSup 86; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), esp. 37–38, §17–18, and 47, §26.

[32] For a summary of the debate with a thorough bibliography see Hallivard Hagelia, "Philological Issues in the Tel Dan Inscription," in *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon I: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 3rd-5th June 2004* (eds.

the syntax of the *yaqtul* preterite with (and without) *wāw* in the Zakkur and Tel Dan inscriptions (e.g. ואקתל, Tel Dan line 6) is strongly reminiscent of the *wāw* consecutive as encountered in Biblical Hebrew. Consequently, the use of the *wāw* consecutive in the DAPT cannot, with any certainty, be used to argue against Aramaic affiliation.

Interestingly, the consecutive forms are only attested within the prose frame narrative, but nowhere in sections containing direct discourse (beginning at I.5). Significantly, the preference for freestanding verbal forms in direct discourse operates even in environments where the *wāw* consecutive would be apposite; i.e. when the narration describes a sequence of actions in past time (e.g. ואמרו, I.6, rather than ויאמרו as in I.2). This disparity can be explained if the *wāw* consecutive is understood to be a narrative form that did not feature in the spoken dialect represented in the DAPT. In that case its omission in direct discourse can be viewed as mimesis of vernacular speech.[33]

6.3. PHONOLOGY/ORTHOGRAPHY

6.3.1. *Correspondence of *ḍ*

One of the features most frequently cited in favour of an Aramaic classification for the Deir ʿAlla dialect is the representation of etymological **ḍ* by *qôp*, as in OA and Samalian, rather than *ṣade* as in the Canaanite dialects (קרק < **ḍrq*, I.15, cf. Aram. ערק < **ḍrq* I.15; נקר < **nḍr*, II.5, 12, cf. Heb. נצר < **nḍr*; and (possibly) חלק < **ḥlḍ*, II.11, cf. Heb.

Lutz Edzard and Jan Retsö; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 248–53. On the question of Canaanite influence, (cf. Stanislav Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik: mit Bibliographie, Chrestomathie und Glossar* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1986), 377.

[33] Cf. the discussion in Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of the Waw-Consecutive: Northwest Semitic Evidence from Ugarit to Qumran* (HSM 39; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1991), 21–27. This does not invalidate the suggestion of oral transmission in the preceding chapter; rather it may simply be a product of the narrative register.

(חלצים).[34] However, here too the picture is not quite as clear as it may at first appear, since Hackett has observed that this is properly a matter of orthography rather than phonology.[35] Heuhnergard expressed the point particularly clearly, stating: "the orthography of the text is, everyone agrees, based on Aramaic precursors; therefore, if [*ḏ] remained a distinctive consonant in the dialect, it is only reasonable to expect that the scribe would write it with the same character as was used in Aramaic texts".[36]

6.3.2. *The diphthongs*

Diphthongs remain uncontracted in all positions throughout the DAPT (לילה, I.1; מועד, I.6; בני, I.8, II.8; בית, II.6, II.7; או, II.9; משכבי עלמיך, II.11; מות, II.13, etc.).[37] Diphthong retention is characteristic of Aramaic. However, as the same situation is attested in Judean (and possibly Samarian) Hebrew (cf. §3.2.3), this too cannot be considered a distinctively Aramaic isogloss.

---

[34] For the surveys of /ḏ/ in comparative Semitic linguistics and the DAPT see Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 23–24; cf. Halpern, "Dialect Distribution in Canaan", 122–26; Manfred Weippert, "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā and the Study of the Old Testament", 166–67; and briefly Caquot and Lemaire, "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla", 202. Early on Joseph Naveh, *IEJ* 29 (1979): 133–36 expressed some reservations as to whether this merger had in fact taken place. However, the case for נקר < *nḏr (cf. BH נצר) seems to be assured.

[35] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 111–13; McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 92; Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text", 102; Greenfield, "Philological Observations on Deir ʿAlla", 112; Weippert, "The Balaam Text form Deir ʿAllā and the Study of the Old Testament", 159.

[36] Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 287; cf. Kaufman, "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects in the Biblical Period", 48–49.

[37] McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā: The First Combination", 50.

6.3.3. *Non-assimilation of anarthrous* מן

In Biblical Hebrew and Moabite the *nûn* of the preposition מן regularly assimilates when prefixed to a noun. When the preposition precedes the definite article, however, it appears separately in its full form (cf. *GKC*, §101*a–b*).[38] In Old Aramaic and Samalian מן resisted assimilation in all environments. However, Ammonite presents a mixed picture: *nûn* is assimilated in מאלת, "from Elat" (Heshbon 4:4),[39] but apparently not in תנם [...] מן, "figs from" (Heshbon 11:2).[40] Therefore, the non-assimilation of anarthrous מן resembles Aramaic (c.f. I.3; II.8x3), but is not exclusive to the Aramaic group.

6.4. VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is a notoriously insecure basis for linguistic classification.[41] Nevertheless, a number of lexemes in the DAPT have been isolated as distinctively Aramaic, or as having characteristically Aramaic connotations. These include: בר, "son" (I.2, I.4; cf. Canaanite בן); חד, "one" (II.10; cf. Canaanite אחד); אתה, "to come" (I.1); קרק, "to flee" (cf. Aram. ערק; I.15); עלל, "to enter" (II.7, perhaps I.4). On the other hand there are a number of lexemes that suggest a Canaanite affiliation: פעל, "to do" (I.1; cf. Aram. אבד); impv. לכו (I.5, √הלך; cf., Aram. impv. derived from √אזל); ראה, "to see" (I.5, alongside חזה); דבר, "to speak" (II.17). Two of these lexemes, בר and חד, warrant closer attention, due to the fact that they seem to have been conditioned by characteristically Aramean sound changes.

Much has been written about the significance of the noun בר in the patronymic "Balaam son of Beor". Early in the discussion Joseph Naveh drew attention to the fact that בר is also used in a patronymic in the

---

[38] Cf. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 40–44.

[39] Ibid, 43.

[40] Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "Heshbon Ostracon XI", *AUSS* 14 (1976): 145–47; Beyer, "The Languages of Transjordan", 122, §3.

[41] Cf. Garr, *Dialect geography of Syria-Palestine*, 6 and 17, n.51; Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?", 275–76, n.40.

Phoenician Kilamuwa inscription (KAI 24, line 1; כלמו בר חי), arguing on this basis that its use in a patronymic at Deir ʿAlla need not imply that the DAPT reflects an Aramaic dialect.[42] However, Dennis Pardee countered that the use of בר in KAI 24 is otherwise unique.[43] Furthermore, he argued that in the DAPT בר is not strictly speaking part of the PN, but an independent noun linking two proper nouns, and, as such, it cannot simply be explained as part of the naming formula.[44] The latter point is underscored by the levelling of Balaam's name in the biblical narrative where it is written בלעם בן־בעור (e.g. Num 22:5).[45] Pardee's objections have some force; but Huehnergard has responded that as there are no unbound examples of the noun in the DAPT it is impossible to know whether בר or בן was the standard form in the Deir ʿAlla dialect.[46] Moreover, in response to the second point, Huehnergard has highlighted the fact that in I.2 the patronymic בלעם ברבעור is written *scriptio contiua*. This reinforces the impression that the patronymic was conceived as a discrete formula, which may have been external to the dialect of the DAPT.[47] At all events, the presence of בר in Balaam's patronymic alone cannot be used to determine the form of the word for "son" at Deir ʿAlla generally.[48]

---

[42] *Joseph Naveh, IEJ* 29 (1979): 136.

[43] Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text", 103, n.7.

[44] Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 289, n.18.

[45] Cf. Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text", 103, n.7. For an analogous levelling, compare בן־הדד (2 Kgs 13:3, 24); cf. Scott C. Layton, *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1990), 19.

[46] Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 289, n.18; cf. idem, "What is Aramaic?", 280, n.53.

[47] Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages", 289, n.18; cf. idem, "What is Aramaic?", 280.

[48] On the common etymology of בן and בר, see; David Testen, "The Significance of Aramaic *r < *n*," *JNES* 44 (1985):143–46, who argued for proto-Semitic *bn-*, explaining the Aramaic orthography by the conjectured phonological rule: proto-Semitic *n* becomes *r* when it is the second element of an initial consonant cluster *Cn- > Cr-* (cf. also בָּרָה <

The second lexeme חד, "one", is equally uncertain, owing to the disagreement regarding its origins and evolution. On the one hand, Edward Lipiński has reconstructed proto-Semitic *ḥd-, which he argued in some dialects underwent secondary development with the addition of a supplementary root morpheme to bring it into conformity with the triconsonental system. To support this reconstruction he cited a number of derivatives that appear to reflect the primitive *ḥd- pattern (e.g. Arab. واحد, "one", Heb. יחד, "union").[49] On the other hand, John Huehnergard, adducing the widespread attestation of forms with initial ʾālep, reconstructed proto-Semitic *ʾḥd-, which, he argued, underwent aphaeresis in Aramaic.[50] Consequently, it is not clear whether חד in the DAPT should be understood as a proto-Semitic retention, a shared innovation, or the result of language contact.

To summarise, while neither בר nor חד may be considered reliable indicators of Aramaic affiliation, in the case of the DAPT they only suggest the probability of linguistic contact with Aramaic at some point.

In addition to these Aramaic and Canaanite lexical isoglosses, Edward Lipiński has argued that there might be an Arabian substratum in the dialect of the DAPT.[51] While I do not support all of Lipiński's readings, the restoration ḥpš, "flitter-mouse, bat" (I.10), seems likely for contextual reasons. To this we may possibly add the noun sqr, "heat"

---

*bnh, "daughter"; תְּרֵין < *ṯn-, "two"). For further support of Testen's thesis, cf. W. Randall Garr, "The Comparative Method in Semitic Linguistics," *AuOr* 23 (2005): 18. However, while this phonological reconstruction is widely supported, it is not universally accepted, cf. Steven E. Fassberg, "The forms of 'Son' and 'Daughter' in Aramaic," in *Aramaic in Its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (eds. Holger Gzella, M. L. Folmer; Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 50; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 41–54, esp. 48, who argues on the basis of vocalisation patterns for original *bvn, rather tham *bn-.

[49] Lipiński, *Semitic Languages*, 281, §35.3, cf. 198, §27.26. Interestingly, √יחד is attested in I.5 (אתיחדו), rather than the more common Aramaic verb √חוד.

[50] Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?", 266, 277, and esp. 269, n.19.

[51] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 170.

(I.7).[52] According to Lipinksi, the Arabian substratum might also be reflected in the PNN. Following Martin Noth, Lipiński argued that בלעם should be interpreted in light of Arabic *blġ*, "eloquent" (cf. בלע בן־בעור, Gen 36:32)—with mimation as is common in Arabic proper names—noting that the names *Blʿ* and *Blġ* are attested in North Arabian inscriptions.[53] As for Balaam's patronymic, Lipiński observed that בער in the DAPT is identical to Sabaean *bʿr* "camel, beast of burden" (cf. BH בעיר, cattle, beast of burden), noting that the cognate جمل, "Camel", is a common PN in the Arabic world.[54] Following from this suggestion, Lipiński observed that a number of the Canaanitisms in the DAPT might also be understood in terms of Arabic influence; e.g. *rʾh*, "to see" (I.5); *rḥm* vulture (I.8).[55]

6.5. DISCUSSION

Many of the most distinctive isoglosses in the DAPT—especially the Canaanitisms—can be regarded as proto-Semitic retentions, and it is this pattern of linguistic retentions that led McCarter to describe the Deir ʿAlla dialect as "extremely conservative in comparison to the Northwest Semitic languages in general".[56] Five Isoglosses can confidently be identified with

---

[52] As examples of Arabian lexical items Lipiński also adduced *ypʿ*, to approach" (I.2), *ygʾ*, "to pierce" (I.2), *ṭmn*, "to calm oneself" (1.3), *whg*, "to glow" (I.7); Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 170.

[53] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 110; cf. G. Lankester Harding, *An Index and Concordance of pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 116. See also Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Hildesheim: *Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung*, 1966), 229, n.7.

[54] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 111; cf. Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabian: Sabaean Dialect* (HSS 25; Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1982), 51. Furthermore, as Lipiński noted the plural noun בערם, "beasts of burden", is apparently attested in Heshbon Ostracon XI; cf. Cross, "Heshbon Ostracon XI", 147.

[55] Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 170.

[56] McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 94. As argued by McCarter, this conservatism might be related to the literary register of the DAPT.

Aramaic innovations: viz. the phonological merger *ḏ > q; the 3.m.s suffix
וה-; the enclitic article א-; and the lexemes בר and חד. Of these, the first
might simply be explained as reflecting Aramaic influence on the
orthography, the third is external to the DAPT, and the last two might
simply reflect linguistic contact with an Aramaic speech community. This
leaves only וה-, which is of uncertain value, but seems to be an
Aramaism.[57] What are we to make of all this?

In part, this question is compounded by the difficulty involved in
determining precisely what is meant by Aramaic. Huehnergard has
convincingly argued that prior to the Official Aramaic (= IA) of the
Persian period, Aramaic was typified by dialectical diversity.[58] For
historical reasons, it has typically been assumed that the most likely source
of Aramaic influence at Deir ʿAlla would have been the Damascene dialect
which was spread to the region with the Aramean imperial expansions of
the 9th century (see §7.4). Building on this assumption, Blum observed that
the only extant lengthy example (i.e. more than 5 lines) of Damascene-
Aramaic is the roughly contemporary Tel Dan stele, which he averred
bears no substantial linguistic difference to the DAPT.[59] However, this is a
false equivalence. It is not the presence of Aramaic-type features in the
DAPT that is in question, but the nature of the relationship between the
Aramaic and Canaanite isoglosses. Crucially, with the exception of the
wāw consecutive—which is apparently also attested in the Zakkur
inscription—none of the Canaanite isoglosses (or their Aramaic
counterparts) is attested in the Tel Dan Stele.[60] As such, it is impossible to
know the extent to which the pattern of linguistic retentions that gives the

---

[57] Cf. Pardee, "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text", 103.

[58] Conversely, for the equivalent situation in Hebrew, see Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*.

[59] "m.E. keine substanziellen Sprachdifferenzen gegenüber diesen aufweist"; Erhard Blum, "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir 'Alla, 597.

[60] Nor is there a situation in which they would be expected in any of the preserved lines, meaning their non-appearance is a "Zero-" feature.

Canaanite flavour to the Deir ʿAlla dialect might also be characteristic of Damascene-Aramaic. In fact, the closest parallel to the Deir ʿAlla dialect in terms of its archaic profile seems to be the geographically remote Samalian dialect of ancient Zincirli.[61] If anything, this testifies to the overall diversity of the Northwest Semitic dialects in general during the first half of the first millennium B.C.E.[62] In short, the epigraphic evidence is still too scanty to permit categorical pronouncements regarding the classification of the Deir ʿAlla dialect.

Nevertheless, the linguistic profile of the DAPT maps well onto the dialectical continua of the region, and, at a purely impressionistic level, it may easily be understood as a local dialect. Even so, it is not unreasonable to suppose that some form of Aramaic influence would have been felt in the region following the Damascene expansion of the 9th century. Indeed, as noted in the preceding chapter (see §5.2.2), it is possible that the official measures "of the gate"—which incorporate the distinctive Aramaic enclitic article—attest the incorporation of Deir ʿAlla into the imperial economy (perhaps indirectly). And it may be to this period that the Aramean influence in the vocabulary and orthography should be attributed.[63]

---

[61] See the discussion in Huehnergard, "What is Aramaic?", 261–82 cf. Paul E. Dion, "The Language Spoken in Ancient Samʾal", *JNES* 37 (1978): 115–18.

[62] See especially Young, who has argued for a higher degree of similarity between pre-exilic Hebrew and Aramaic than has commonly been assumed; Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, 60–61; cf. Geoffrey Khan, "The Language of the Old Testament", in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From Beginnings to 600* (eds. James C. Paget and Joachim Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17.

[63] A similar assessment was formed by McCarter, who, furthermore, cited the influence of the Aramaic script in writing of Ammonite as evidence of the cultural influence of Damascus on northern and central Jordan (on the development of local script traditions, see below); McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 97. But that is not to say that the seeming Aramaisms should altogether be attributed to the 9th century; on the diversity of pre-exilic Hebrew generally, and the probability that many of the features commonly identified as Aramaisms should be understood as true Hebraisms lying beneath the homogeneity of Classical Hebrew, see e.g. Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*.

6.6. PALAEOGRAPHY

The direction for much of the palaeographical analysis of the script of the DAPT was established by the early studies of Naveh and Cross. In the same year that Franken published his initial report of the discovery of the plaster texts, Naveh responded with a brief palaeographic analysis. At that stage Naveh's intention was to correct Franken's preliminary dating of the text (on archaeological grounds) to the Persian period.[64] Working from the black and white photograph published by Franken, Naveh argued that the script belonged to an early stage in the development of the Aramaic cursive tradition and dated it to the middle of the 8th century; although he allowed that it might be a couple of decades earlier.[65] Shortly thereafter, Cross published his view that the Deir ʿAlla script should be identified with the emergent Ammonite "national" script.[66] Cross initially supported Naveh's dating to the mid-8th century, but later lowered his own dating to the middle of the 7th century as new evidence for the development of the Ammonite cursive series came to light.[67] Subsequent studies have tended to align themselves with either of these options.

---

[64] Cf. Henk Franken, "Texts from the Persian Period from Tell Deir ʿAllā," *VT* 17 (1967): 480–81; image 481.

[65] Joseph Naveh, "The Date of the Deir ʿAllā Inscription in the Aramaic Script," *IEJ* 17 (1967): 256–58; cf. idem, *IEJ* 29 (1979): 133–34. It should be stressed that Naveh's palaeographic identification was made prior to, and independent of, the subsequent linguistic debate. Indeed, Naveh subsequently avowed scepticism regarding the classification of the language of the DAPT as Aramaic; cf. *Joseph Naveh, IEJ* 29 (1979): 135–36.

[66] Frank Moore Cross Jr., "Epigraphical Notes on the Ammān Citadel Inscription," *BASOR* 193 (1969): 14 (reprod. *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook*, §7, 95–99); cf. idem, "Notes on the Ammonite Inscription from Tell Sīrān," *BASOR* 212 (1973): 12–15, esp.12–14; idem, "Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon: Heshbon Ostraca IV–VIII," *AUSS* 13 (1975):1–22, esp.10–12.

[67] For the initial comments concerning dating see Cross, "Epigraphical Notes on the Ammān Citadel Inscription", 14, n.2; for the revised date cf. idem, "Notes on the

Hence, in the careful palaeographical study published in the *editio princeps*, van der Kooij, like Naveh before him, opted for an Aramaic affiliation; although, due to a combination of palaeographical and historical factors, he settled on a date somewhere between those proposed by Naveh and Cross (ca. 700 B.C.E. ± 25 years).[68] However, he subsequently raised this estimate to ca. 800 B.C.E., in order to bring it into alignment with the calibrated ^{14}C dates (cf. §7.3.5).[69] On the other hand, Hackett followed Cross in identifying the script with the Ammonite series (citing especially the characteristic developments of the *hê*, and *kāp*), and proposed that it should be dated to the beginning of the 7th century.[70] Roughly the same conclusions were also reached by Puech; although, he defined the Ammonite tradition more loosely than did Hackett and Cross, and later came to attribute the script to the first half of the 8th century.[71]

At the heart of this debate is the nature and character of the Ammonite national script. Broadly speaking, the Ammonite script is understood to be a regional development of the Aramaic lapidary and cursive series, which is characterised by its highly conservative nature, coupled with certain innovative features (these will be discussed below).[72] The description and classification of this series owes much to the palaeographic studies by Larry Herr and Frank Moore Cross, and has

---

Ammonite Inscription from Tell Sīrān", 13–14; idem, "Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon: Heshbon Ostraca IV–VIII", 10–11.

[68] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 96; cf. Gerrit van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 256–57.

[69] Cf. van der Kooij, "The Identity of Trans-Jordanian Alphabetic Writing in the Iron Age", 109. This revised dating was first proposed by André Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir 'Alla et la littérature araméenne antique", 271–74; cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 104–06.

[70] Andre Lemaire, review of "Jo Anne Hackett: The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā", *Syria* 61 (1984): 142–43; idem, "L'inscription de Balaam trouvée à Deir ʿAlla: épigraphie", 315

[71] Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 357; cf. idem Approches paléographiques de l'inscription sur plâtre de Deir ʿAllā", 237–38.

[72] Cf. Cross, "Notes on the Ammonite Inscription from Tell Sīrān", 13–14.

received considerable attention in the last four decades.[73] However, the definition and significance of this regional development is debated. Naveh has argued that the Ammonites continued to use the Aramaic script, but with certain "local peculiarities".[74] While, van der Kooij, following his painstaking work on the ductus of the Northwest Semitic script series of the first Millennium B.C.E., has argued that the innovative "Ammonite" features belong to a wider southern-Levantine development, stemming from the changing angles brought about by adjustments in the handling techniques of the writing implement in ink based scripts, which, in turn, came to be reflected in the letter forms of the respective lapidary series (cf. §3.6.1).[75]

The issue goes beyond a simple question of nomenclature. If it can be shown that the Ammonite script represents a deliberate and concerted attempt at differentiation from the Aramaic tradition, this would suggest a self-conscious desire for cultural differentiation.[76] Given that Cross and Hackett place the Deir ʿAlla script close to the inception of the process, the DAPT could conceivably reflect this motivation.

In what follows I provide a brief discussion of some of the most distinctive features of the Deir ʿAlla script. As with Chapter 3, I have not attempted to provide a comprehensive description and classification of the script, but have focussed primarily on the question of differentiating between the Aramaic and Ammonite series.

---

[73] A helpful overview of the history of scholarship and typological characteristics of the Ammonite script is supplied in Walter E. Aufrecht, "Ammonite Texts and Language," in *Ancient Ammon* (eds. Burton Macdonald and Randall W. Younker; Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 17; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 167–69.

[74] Cf. esp. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 109–10.

[75] Cf. van der Kooij, "The Identity of Trans-Jordanian Alphabetic Writing in the Iron Age", 107–20; idem, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 249–57.

[76] Cf., for a similar situation in the context of the Hebrew national script, Seth L. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 126–27.

ʾālep—The ʾālep retains the traditional eighth century Phoenician and Aramaic shape, with no hint of the star-shaped development evinced in the seventh century Aramaic cursive of the Assur Ostracon and the Saqqara papyrus.

bêt, dālet, rêš, and ʿayin—The heads of the round-headed letters remain closed, unlike the Aramaic cursive forms, which tended to open from the late-eighth century onward (as attested by the Nimrud Ostracon).

hê—Both Hackett and Puech identified two separate forms of the hê: one in which the S-shaped downward stroke is attached to the horizontal upper bar, and one in which the S-stroke is unconnected, or else attached to the vertical shaft by an elongated ligature running parallel to the upper bar.[77] An example of the former type can clearly be seen at the end of II.9; however, van der Kooij has argued that this shape is anomalous, being caused by the scribe starting the S-stroke too close to the upper bar (although, cf. the hê in the supralinear correction to I.1).[78]

The typological relationship of this S-shaped down stroke is disputed. Hackett, following Cross, suggested that this form should be viewed as a precursor to the distinctive hê of the Tell Sīrān bottle ( ), suggesting that the latter may have developed via the elongation of the horizontals of the S-stroke so that they connected with the vertical shaft.[79] However, it seems that the precursor of the Tell Sīrān hê was the two-bar form which appears on some 7th century Ammonite seals (cf. WSS 865 ; 928); in which case, the vertical strokes and closed

---

[77] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 11; Puech, "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla", 357. See the earlier discussions by Naveh, "The Date of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription in Aramaic Script", 257; and Frank Moore Cross Jr., "Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon: Heshbon Ostraca IV–VIII," *AUSS* 13 (1975):15, who, working from the photograph initially published by Franken ("Texts from the Persian Period from Tell Deir ʿAllā", 481), based their analysis on the former shape.

[78] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 62; van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 250.

[79] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 11.

head of the Tell Sīrān *hê* must be interpreted as a secondary development. This renders a development from the Deir ʿAlla *hê* extremely unlikely. On the other hand, the Deir ʿAlla *hê* bears a considerable resemblance to the *hê* of the later Aramaic cursive series, which is attested in the Assur ostracon and Saqqara papyrus.[80] On the strength of this similarity, it seems reasonable to infer that the S-stroke retained its basic shape, but migrated upward (a development that is apparently already attested *inadvertently* at Deir ʿAlla), rather than extending laterally, as proposed by Cross and Hackett.[81] As such, it seems likely that the Deir ʿAlla *hê* and the Tell Sīrān *hê* belong to different evolutionary trajectories.

Finally, the single archaic three-bar *hê* (II.8) may suggest the sort of subconscious error (i.e. reversion) typical of someone who has learned to form their letters in a particular fashion and then learned to form them again in a different way. This may also account for the degree of variation attested in the forms with either connected or unconnected S-strokes. This explanation, in turn, may suggest a conscious innovation or emulation of a divergent form perhaps for reasons of cultural association or disassociation (see below).[82]

zayin —The *zayin* and *yôd* show none of the tendency to straighten that is typical of the Aramaic cursive of the seventh century.[83]

The Z–shaped *zayin* is already attested in the 9th century Hazael Booty Inscription from Samos, which also shows other similarities,

---

[80] This point was stressed by Naveh, "The Date of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription in Aramaic Script", 257, 258.

[81] Although, it should be noted that both possibilities are not mutually exclusive, as either development might have occurred at different places or at different times.

[82] An alternative possibility is that the *hê* reflects the influence of a more conservative lapidary *hê*; note that no lapidary *hê* is attested at Deir ʿAlla.

[83] Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 12, 13; cf. Naveh, "The Date of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription in Aramaic Script", 258. On the Development of the Aramaic *zayin* cf. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, 95.

most notably in the shape and stance of the forward leaning *qôp*, and the characteristically small and high *lāmed* and elongated *tāw*.[84] The older ⊥–shaped *zayin* is still attested in the lapidary script of the Tel Dan inscription, although the vertical shaft is sloped, while the roughly contemporary Zakkur inscription uses a fully developed Z–shaped *zayin*.

ḥêt—The *ḥêt* is typically considered one of the most significant letters for dating the Deir ʿAlla script. One of the characteristic developments of the Aramaic cursive tradition is the simplification of *ḥêt* by the omission of one or two of the three horizontal bars.[85] By contrast, the two-bar *ḥêt* was preserved in the Ammonite tradition until the end of the 7th century.[86] However, two-bar forms are also attested in the Mesha inscription and in the pottery inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. *Kajr*3.2, 3.9).[87]

Cross and Hackett understood the standard form of *ḥêt* in the Deir ʿAlla script to be written with two bars (although Hackett recognised a combination of two- and three-bar forms).[88] Meanwhile, van der Kooij, based on his microscopic analysis, argued that a three-bar form was written in all instances.[89] However, in many places the bars are drawn

---

[84] See Israel Ephʿal and Joseph Naveh, "Hazael's Booty Inscriptions", *IEJ* 39 (1989): 192–200.

[85] Single bar forms are already attested in the earliest examples of Aramaic cursive; e.g. the Hamath bricks, mid-8th century B.C.E.; cf. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, 12.

[86] Cf. the two-bar *ḥêt* of the Tell Sīrān bottle inscription; although, note that single-bar forms are more common on seals; e.g. *WSS* 867, 868, 874.

[87] The comparison with the Mesha inscription was also noted by Cross, "Epigraphic Notes on the Ammān Citadel Inscription", 14.

[88] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 12–13; Cross, "Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon: Heshbon Ostraca IV–VIII", 15; idem, "Epigraphic Notes on the Ammān Citadel Inscription", 14.

[89] van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 250; Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 63.

so close together as to be almost superimposed, making it difficult to determine precisely how many bars were intended.

Hackett has suggested that the steep incline of the horizontals in the Deir ʿAlla *ḥêt* anticipate the reverse N-shaped *ḥêt* in the Ammonite cursive of Tell Heshbon Ostraca IV and XI. However, a similar development can also be seen in the later Aramaic cursive of the Starkey-tablet, 571/70 B.C.E.[90]

ṭêt—The elliptical *ṭêt* in the DAPT is open at the left, with a single cross-bar slanting from the upper left to the lower right. The left-to-right cross-bar is unusual in the Northwest Semitic scripts, the only parallels occurring in the closed forms of the Amman Citadel and Bar Rakib inscriptions,[91] and in the open cursive forms found in Tell el-Mazār ostracon III,[92] and perhaps *Karj*4.1.[93] However, there is little to connect these forms and suggest an evolutionary relationship. Consequently, the

---

[90] J. L. Starkey, "Une tablette araméenne de l'an 34 de Nabuchodonosor (AO, 21.063)," *Syria* 37 (1960): 99–115.

[91] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 13; Puech, "Approches paléographiques de l'inscription sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 224, and n.17, 226 and n.25, 233 and n.50.

[92] Puech, "Approches paléographiques de l'inscription sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 232, includes this form in his comparative script chart of the Ammonite cursive series, although he does not draw the connection explicitly. The editors of the Tell el-Mazar ostracon, following Cross, identified the script as belonging to the Ammonite series of the mid-6th century; cf. Yassine and Teixidor, "Ammonite and Aramaic Inscriptions from Tell El-Mazār in Jordan", 47. This parallel is particularly interesting, as Tell el-Mazār is located only 3 km North of Deir ʿAlla, and may suggest a regional development; although the difficulty of interpreting the evidence from Tell el-Mazār has been signaled by Pardee, who has observed, in relation to the question of dialect, that as the ostracon contains a letter, it might reflect the conventions of the area from which it was sent, rather than the immediate vicinity of the Tell. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the letter to indicate the location of the sender. (Pardee, review of Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 141–42).

[93] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 252; note that the distortion of the two *ṭêts* in *Kajr*4.1 makes it difficult to determine precisely what shape was intended.

omission of the right-to-left cross-bar from the ṭêt might reasonably be understood as a parallel development.[94]

This inference is perhaps indirectly supported by the remarkable similarity, in both shape and ductus, between the ṭêt and the qôp at Deir ʿAlla.[95] This degree of similarity is unparalleled in any of the other known examples of the Northwest Semitic scripts, and might suggest that the unique form of the Deir ʿAlla ṭêt was an internal innovation, developing in tandem with the qôp.

kāp—The kāp is one of the most important diagnostic letters for the Deir ʿAlla script. The broad headed kāp is typically compared to the closed-triangle kāp of the Ammonite series (cf. the Tell Sīrān inscription and Heshbon Ostracon IV).[96] In a number of instances the Deir ʿAlla kāp is written with a simple triangular head (e.g. II.3 ⟡, pl.12, and II.9 ⟡, pl.5). However, several examples also include a short vertical tick on the lower left-hand edge of the head (e.g. frag. viii(e) ⟡, pl.13, II.14 ⟡, pl.11). Hackett has argued that this tick was inadvertently caused by the motion of writing the head, but in a number of instances it appears to be additional and deliberate (esp. frag. viii(e) ⟡).[97] Significantly, the closest parallel to these forms is found in the kāps of the KAPT, for which no Aramaic affiliation has been suspected (cf. Kajr4.1, in which the tick is apparently formed in the same manner as at Deir ʿAlla, i.e. with a small v–shaped motion, see fig.3.3). Be that as it may, van der

---

[94] In particular, with reference to van der Kooij's arguments, it should be noted that this development did not take place in all of the examples of broad-nibbed writing, with the classic right-to-left cross bar being far more common.

[95] Both are formed by three strokes—two forming the elliptical head and one, extended to form the stem of the qôp, and truncated to form the cross-bar of the ṭêt.

[96] Cf. WSS 861, 881, and 876; van der Kooij also cites related forms in the 5th century Phoenician lapidary inscriptions of Tabnit and Eshmunazar II, found at Sidon, and the two temple tariffs from Cyprus, cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 250, 253.

[97] Cf. Hackett, The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā, 14.

Kooij has argued that while the closed triangular form is not attested in Aramaic, it anticipates the later *kāps* of the Sefire inscriptions.[98] As such, the significance of the Deir ʿAlla *kāp* is ambiguous; its origin seems to be related to those of the triangular head of the Ammonite series, but it may still be related to the overall development of the Aramaic *kāp*.

mêm—Preserves the archaic form with a horizontal double-cupped head. There is no evidence of the tendency in the later Aramaic series for the head to straighten, which anticipated the development of the curved head intersected by a single line.[99]

sāmek—The clearest *sāmek* can be found on the infra-red photographs of fragment v(q). Based on this photograph it is clear that the head of the *sāmek* does not reflect the zigzag movement that is seen in the Aramaic cursive series from the Nimrud ostracon onward, but was formed by three distinct strokes.[100]

ṣādê—In the DAPT the tail of the *ṣādê* is formed by a single C-shaped stroke (e.g. I.6), which is a stylised simplification of the Z–shaped stroke typical of the Aramaic scripts. Comparable shapes occur in the Amman Citadel inscription, the Nimrud ostracon, and perhaps Heshbon ostracon IV.[101] The form in the Sīrān bottle inscription is more like the Aramaic Z–shaped *ṣādê*, but without the third stroke of the tail.

qôp—As noted above, the *qôp* has an open elliptical head with a marked forward lean. The basic shape resembles the lapidary *qôp* of the Tel

---

[98] van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", , 252–53; cf. idem, "The Identity of Trans-Jordanian Alphabetic Writing in the Iron Age", 109.

[99] Cf. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, 20; Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 14.

[100] Cf. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 15; van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 249. For photograph see Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, pl.13.

[101] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 249.

Dan and Zakkur inscriptions, and the lone *qôp* in the ninth century Hazael booty inscription, albeit with closed head. Interestingly, comparable forms, with narrow open heads, occur in the "Phoenician" cursive of the KAPT.

tāw—Fits well into the progression of the Phoenician and Aramaic *tāw*s of the eighth–seventh centuries (cf. §3.6). Once again it is interesting to note the presence of a similar shape in the inscriptions at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (esp. *Kajr*4.1, 4.3).

6.6.1. DISCUSSION

In a number of respects the script of the DAPT resembles the Aramaic of the late-9th–early-8th centuries B.C.E. (cf. the Tel Dan, Zakkur and Hazael booty inscriptions). This can most easily be explained as a result of Aramaic influence in the region in the 9th century B.C.E. (see §7.4).[102] Unfortunately, however, the paucity of ink-based inscriptions in the Aramaic and Ammonite scripts prior to the 7th century makes it difficult to know precisely how this script is situated in relation to the development of other cursive scripts in the region. That being said, van der Kooij's argument that the characteristic ductus of both the DAPT and Ammonite series can be attributed to the influence of the Aramaic pedagogical traditions seems to be convincing.[103] Moreover, this interpretation can be supported archaeologically, since the strongest indications of contact with the Ammonite cultural sphere come from strata above the DAPT (see §7.3.5).

Be that as it may, certain letters—most notably the *hê*—suggest that the script of the DAPT should not be classified as either Aramaic or Ammonite, but a distinct local script, manifesting the scribe's self-

---

[102] Cf. McCarter, "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts", 97; van der Kooij, "The Identity of Trans-Jordanian Alphabetic Writing in the Iron Age", 114–15.

[103] See esp. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 251.

conscious desire to distinguish him/herself from the dominant Aramaic tradition.

As an aside regarding the date of the script, certain letters, such as *hê* and *kāp*, resemble developments in the Aramaic cursive series of the seventh and sixth centuries, albeit with a distinctive local flavour. However, the fact that the script did not participate in other innovations of the later Aramaic cursive (especially, the opening of the round headed letters and simplification of the *ḥêt*), suggests a *terminus ante quem* before the end of the 8th century B.C.E. (cf. the Nimrud ostracon, in which these traits are clearly attested).[104] A number of letters (e.g. *hê*, *zayin*, *kāp* and *tāw*) are more developed than the lapidary inscriptions cited above, but allowance should be made for the more conservative nature of lapidary scripts. All of this suggests that a date near the beginning or middle of the 8th century is probable. This accords well with the archaeological and historical evidence, and is supported by the general superficual similarity to the Kuntillet ʿAjrud plaster scripts which are also dated to this period (cf. §4.6).[105]

6.7. CONCLUSIONS

At an impressionistic level, it is tempting to conclude that the DAPT were written by a local scribe trained in the Aramaic (Damascene) pedagogical tradition, but writing in a local dialect and (nascent) script. This, in turn, might suggest a conscious attempt by the scribe—and the community he/she represented—to separate themselves from Aramean hegemony

---

[104] For the suggestion that the Nimrud ostracon belongs to the Ammonite series, cf. Walter E. Aufrecht, "Ammonite Texts and Language," in *Ancient Ammon* (eds. Burton Macdonald and Randall W. Younker; Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 17; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 165, and n.7.

[105] In this I concur with Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 104–06. Lipiński also noted the parallel with Kuntillet ʿAjrud, although he focussed principally on the medium. As noted above, similarities between the scripts have also been identified by van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 252, esp. n.15.

(*pace* Blum and Schmidt).[106] On the other hand, there is no evidence that the DAPT should be connected directly to the Ammonite national script series. This accords well with the archaeological evidence, which (as will be seen) suggests that at the time the DAPT were written, Deir ʿAlla was a comparatively modest community, integrated into the regional valley economy, but with trade contacts to the west.

---

[106] Once again, the concept of anti-language comes to mind.

.1
.2
.3
.4
.5
.6
.7
.8
.9
.10

Fig.6.1: (1) Deir ʿAlla; (2) Mesha Stele, mid-ninth century B.C.E.; (3) Hazael Booty Inscription, Samos, second half-ninth century B.C.E.; (4) Tel Dan inscription, ca. 800 B.C.E.; (5) Zakkur Inscription, ca. 800 B.C.E.; (6) Amman Citadel inscription, late-ninth century B.C.E.; (7) Sefire I, eighth century B.C.E.; (8) Sefire III, eighth century B.C.E.; (9) Bar-Rakib, mid-eighth century B.C.E.; (10) Nimrud Ostracon, seventh century B.C.E.; (11) Assur Ostracon, seventh century B.C.E.; (12) Saqqara Papyrus, late-seventh century B.C.E.; (13) Tell Sīrān Inscription, late-seventh century B.C.E.; (14) Heshbon Ostracon XI, first half-sixth century B.C.E.; (15) Tell el-Mazar, mid-sixth century B.C.E.; (16) Heshbon Ostracon IV, ca. 600 B.C.E.; (17) "Starcky" Tablet, 571/570 B.C.E.; (18) Heshbon Ostracon II, ca. 525 B.C.E.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE
DEIR ʿALLA PLASTER TEXTS

7.1. TOPOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Tell Deir ʿAlla is situated at the fertile southern end of the central Jordan Valley. Today the tell is framed on three sides by natural boundaries, the high Amman plateau to the east, the Jordan River to the west and the Zarqa (= bib. *Jabbok*) River to the south (on the course of the latter see §7.5).

The climate during the Bronze and Iron Ages seems to have been roughly similar to that of the present day, with hot dry summers bringing little or no precipitation followed by wet and humid winters.[1] When rain does come to the valley, it typically falls in short heavy downpours between the months of October and April.[2] The heavy winter rains apparently presented a perennial problem for the inhabitants of the tell who repeatedly had to raise the level of internal floors to keep pace with the rising street levels caused by accumulated sediment washed from the mud-brick walls.[3] Henk Franken, described just such a process during the

---

[1] Although, there are paleoclimatic indications that during the Iron Age there was a small drop in average rainfall and rise in average temperature; cf. Kaptijn, *Life on the Watershed*, 18–19.

[2] Ibid, 16–17, esp. fig. 2.3.

[3] Franken, *Excavations at Deir ʿAlla 1*, 27–28; idem, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan", *VT* 10 (1960): 388; idem, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan: 2nd

second season of excavations: "[h]eavy winter rain, such as we experienced this year in Deir ʿAlla, washes down a considerable amount of mud from the roofs of houses and the accumulated dust and dirt of a mud brick town."[4]

Notwithstanding these downpours, the total annual rainfall at Deir ʿAlla varies greatly, and this unpredictability, together with the limited duration of the wet-season and high evaporation rates during the dry-season, make the local environment ill-suited to agriculture on all but a very modest scale.[5] Eva Kaptijn has argued that this difficulty was circumvented by a complex network of irrigation canals that watered the valley.[6] This has potentially profound implications for the geo-political alignment of the inhabitants of Deir ʿAlla, since Kaptijn has argued that the population density of the valley during the Iron Age II would only have been sustainable if settlements upstream shared access to water equitably with settlements downstream. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that in this period Deir ʿAlla was integrated into a cooperative socio-economic network in the valley.[7]

7.2. EXPLORATION AND EXCAVATION

The first modern description of tell Deir ʿAlla appears in Selah Merrill's *East of the Jordan* (1881). Merrill visited the tell, probably in 1877, during his tour of the north-eastern Transjordan. He reported that the mound was covered with broken pottery of "many colors and qualities", and noted the

---

Season", *VT* 11 (1961): 363, 64. In one place there is even evidence of wall that had collapsed due to erosion from below, cf. H. J. Franken, *Excavations at Deir ʿAlla 1*, 28.

[4] Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan: 2nd Season", 363, 64.

[5] Cf. Kaptijn, "Settling the steppe", 267.

[6] Ibid, 265–84; idem, *Life on the Watershed*. This had already been inferred from the large quantities of flax seeds (a water-intensive crop) recovered from Deir ʿAlla Phase IX, cf. Wilhem van Zeist and Johanna A. H. Heeres, "Paleobotanical Studies of Deir ʿAlla, Jordan" *Paleorient* 1 (1973): 26–27.

[7] Kaptijn, "Settling the steppe", 265–84. Although direct access at Deir ʿAlla to the Zerqa river might have meant that the tell could exist semi-independently of this network.

presence of ruins on the northern terrace. Merrill also repeated a local tradition that the mound was once occupied by a city.[8]

Deir ʿAlla was briefly described several times in subsequent decades. In 1903, G. Hölscher and H. Thiersch visited the tell, describing it as a steeply sloped tell on which Roman and older sherds were found.[9] W. F. Albright, also visited the site during a tour of the central Jordan Valley in the spring of 1920. He described Deir ʿAlla as "a beautiful mound, one of the finest in shape that I have ever seen, but small", and noted the presence of sherds dating from the Bronze and early Iron Ages.[10] But these early discussions were predominantly occupied by the identification of the tell (see below). It was not until Nelson Glueck's monumental *Survey of Eastern Palestine* that a detailed description of the site and its remains was published.[11] Glueck referred to some foundational remains visible on the summit and large numbers of sherds dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages.[12]

---

[8] Selah Merrill, *East of the Jordan: A Record of Travel and Observation in the Countries of Moab Gilead and Bashan During the Years 1875–1877* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), 388; cf. the description of the early reports on the Zerqa Triange including Deir ʿAlla in Eva Kaptijn, "Early Reports on the Zerqa Traingle: What was Known When the Tell Deir ʿAllā Excavations Started?", in *A timeless Vale: Archaeological and Related Essays on the Jordan Valley in Honour of Gerrit van der Kooij on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (eds. Eva Kaptijn and Lucas Petit; Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009), 19–28.

[9] G. Hölscher, "Bemerkungen zur Topographie Palästinas 2. Das Jordantal südlich von Bēsān", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 33 (1910): 21; cf. H. Thiersch and G. Hölscher, "Reise durch Phönizien und Palästina", *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 23 (1904): 33.

[10] Willilam F. Albright, "New Israelite and Pre-Israelite Sites: The Spring Trip of 1929" *BASOR* 35 (1929): 1–14, esp. 13.

[11] Nelson Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV", *ASOR* 25-28 (1951): 308–10; cf. idem, "Three Israelite Towns in the Jordan Valley: Zarethan, Succoth, Zaphon", *BASOR* 90 (1943):15.

[12] Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV", 310.

The first scientific excavations at Deir ʿAlla were conducted over four seasons from 1960–1964 by a Dutch team under the direction of Dr. H. J. Franken of the university of Leiden.[13] The stated aim of the expedition was to use controlled stratigraphic analysis to refine the relative chronology of Palestinian pottery from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age.[14] The team commenced a second expedition in 1967 with the intention to extend the excavated area to the east and southeast. It was in the final days of this season's excavations that the plaster texts were uncovered in the Phase IX stratum, near the summit of the tell.[15] However, the war of 1967 brought a halt to the project.

---

[13] See the preliminary excavation reports for details; Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan", 386–93; idem, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan: 2nd Season", 361–72; idem, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAlla in Jordan: 3rd Season", *VT* 12 (1962): 378–82; idem, "Excavations at Deir ʿAllā, Season 1964: Preliminary Report", *VT* 14 (1964): 417–22. Cf., more fully, Franken, *Excavations at Deir ʿAlla 1*; Hendricus J. Franken and J. Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village in the Jordan Valley: Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, a Medieval Tell, Tell Abu Gourdan, Jordan* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1975); Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*; Hendricus J. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, (Louvian: Peeters, 1992). For a detailed study of the pottery, cf. D. Homès-Fredericq and Hendricus. J. Franken, *Pottery and Potters – Past and Present: 7000 Years of Ceramic Art in Jordan* (Attempto-Verlag, 1986), esp. 155–64, 171–74. Valuable summaries of excavation work down to the present are located in van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, esp. 21–25; Gerrit van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell" in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Ecavations in the Holy Land, vol. 1* (ed. Ephraim Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society Carta, 1993), 338–39; Lucas P. Petit, *Settlement Dynamics in the Middle Jordan Valley during Iron Age II* (BAR International series 2033; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009), 23–29.

[14] Cf. Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan", 386.

[15] Cf. Franken, "Texts from the Persian Period from Tell Deir ʿAllā", 480–81. For a detailed description of the discovery, cf. idem, "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited", in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), esp. 6–8. Note that in early publications Phase IX was classified Phase M.

In 1976, excavations recommenced as a joint project between Leiden University, the Jordanian Department of Antiquities.[16] The aim of the renewed excavation was a diachronic settlement study of the tell, which focussed, in part, on the expansion and clarification of the Phase IX remains.[17] In 1980, Yarmouk University joined the project.

More recently, Deir ʿAlla has featured at the heart of the *Settling the Steppe Project*, directed by Gerrit van der Kooij and Diederik Meijer at the University of Leiden.[18] This project aims at a major multi-disciplinary regional study of settlement practices and habitation in the central Jordan Valley, and has already added valuable data on the ancient climate and settlement dynamics of Deir ʿAlla and neighbouring sites.[19] Reference should also be made at this point to a major technical study of faience and ceramic production at Deir ʿAlla, which was recently conducted by Niels Groot at Leiden University.[20]

---

[16] For preliminary reports see H. J. Franken and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim, "Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, 1986-1978", *ADAJ* 22 (1977/78): 57–80, 212–28; Moawiyah M. Ibrahim and Gerrit van der Kooij, "Excavations at Tall Dayr ʿAllā, Season 1979", *ADAJ* 23 (1979): 41–50; idem, "Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, Season 1982", *ADAJ* 27 (1983), 577–85; idem, "Excavations at Deir ʿAlla, Season 1984", *ADAJ* 30 (1986): 131–43; idem, "Excavations at Tall Dayr ʿAllā, Seasons 1987 and 1994", *ADAJ* 41 (1997): 95–114.

[17] Cf. van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 339; Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", , 18–17.

[18] Detailed overviews and reports of the project can be found in Lucas P. Petit, et al., "Dayr ʿAlla Regional Project: Settling the Steppe (Second Campaign 2005)", *ADAJ* 49 (2005): 179–88; Eva Kaptijn, et al., "Dayr ʿAlla Regional Project: Settling the Steppe. First Campaign 2004", *ADAJ* 50 (2006): 89–99; and Kaptijn, *Life on the Watershed*, 9–10.

[19] Major publications already completed under the auspices of this project include Kaptijn, *Life on the Watershed*; Petit, *Settlement Dynamics in the Middle Jordan Valley*.

[20] Niels C. F. Groot, "All the Work of Artisans: Reconstructing Society at Tell Deir ʿAllā through the Study of Ceramic Traditions: Studies of Late Bronze Age Faience Vessels and Iron IIc-III Ceramics from Tell Deir ʿAllā, Jordan" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2011)

7.3. TELL DEIR ʿALLA IN DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

The settlement of the tell seems to have fluctuated between periods of occupation and periods of abandonment. As a result, the character of the site reflects different influences in different periods.

7.3.1. *Chalcolithic*

The earliest ceramic finds on the tell date from the Chalcolithic period; however, it has been suggested that these sherds were probably brought from a nearby site, embedded in the clay that was transported to Deir ʿAlla for the construction of the Late Bronze Age terrace (see below).[21]

7.3.2. *Middle Bronze Age* (MBA)

MBA remains were found in an area of approximately 100m^2 at the south-eastern base of the Tell. Several MBA occupation phases have been identified, but the best preserved is the earliest, dating from the MBA II. Remains from this period include heavy mud-brick walls that were preserved up to 2.5m high in places. Other notable finds include two small bent bronze objects (one of them trident shaped) found at the bottom of a stone-lined pit in one of the rooms.[22] The function of these objects is unknown.

---

[21] H. J. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, (Louvian: Peeters, 1992), 10; cf. van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 339.

[22] van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 339; cf van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 76.
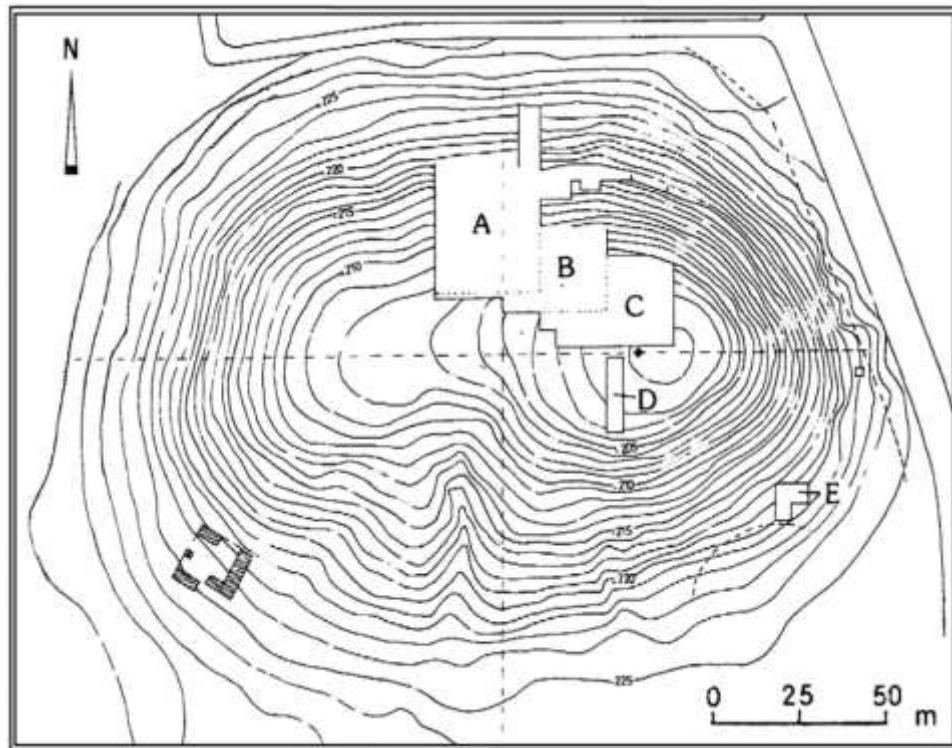
Fig.7.1—Topographic map of Tell Deir ʿAlla showing excavation areas

7.3.3. *Late Bronze Age* (LBA)

The LBA remains are among the most extensive on the tell, occupying both the northern and southern slopes.[23] Early in this period the tell was artificially extended to the north.[24] On top of this artificial terrace the excavators discovered the remains of a large structure, which Franken interpreted as a sanctuary.[25] Several successive phases of the LBA

---

[23] Cf. Eveline J. van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition: The Central East Jordan Valley and Surrounding Regions in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: A Study of the Sources* (Ph.D. diss. Leiden University 2002; republished as *Tribes and Territories in Transition: The Central East Jordan Valley and Surrounding Regions in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: A Study of the Sources* (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2004), 44–45.

[24] Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, 10–12; van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 339.

[25] The sanctuary and associated pottery has been published in full in Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*. Moreover, a helpful summary of the

sanctuary have been identified (Phases A–E), but the most thoroughly excavated is the last, Phase E.[26] It seems that the floor and roof levels of the sanctuary had been raised a number of times, apparently in order to keep pace with the continually rising surface levels elsewhere on the tell (see above), suggesting that the sanctuary was used more or less continuously over a prolonged period.[27] The Phase E sanctuary, together with the associated settlement, was apparently destroyed by an earthquake and concomitant fire. This destruction has been dated to the twelfth century on the basis of a faience vase bearing the cartouche of Queen Taousert, discovered on the floor of the cella.[28]

The destruction of Phase E was apparently followed by an attempt to rebuild the sanctuary (Phase F); but this too was destroyed by fire prior to completion.[29] Phase F was in turn followed by two short phases. Phase G was also destroyed by an intense conflagration. The next phase, Phase H, shows signs of fortification, leading Eveline van der Steen to suggest that the destruction of the sanctuary may have been followed by a period of political unrest. Historically, she attributed this to waning Egyptian influence in the region.[30]

---

excavation and interpretation appears in van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 76–80.

[26] For a detailed description of the findings from each of the successive phases see H. J. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, (Louvian: Peeters, 1992), esp. 12–13.

[27] Cf. Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan: 2nd Season", 363–64.

[28] Ibid, 365, and pl.5; idem, "Excavations at Deir ʿAllā, Season 1964: Preliminary Report", 420; idem, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, fig. 3.9–5, pl.4; J. Yoyotte, "Un souvenir du "Pharon" Taousert en Jordanie", *VT* 12 (1962): 464–69. For the destruction of the sanctuary see esp. Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAlla in Jordan: 3rd Season", 381.

[29] Franken, "Excavations at Deir ʿAllā, Season 1964: Preliminary Report", 418.

[30] Cf. Eveline J. van der Steen, "Introduction: Tell Deir ʿAlla in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages", in *Sacred and Sweet: Studies on the Material Culture of Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tell Abu Sarbut* (Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supp. 24; eds. Margreet L. Steiner and Eveline J. van der Steen; Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 23; cf. Hendricus J. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla and its

The nature of the LBA sanctuary remains uncertain. Franken has argued on the basis of the mixed ceramic repertoire—which included Mycenean, Egyptian and Edomite as well as locally produced wares—that the settlement and the sanctuary may have been integrally connected to a regional Gileadite trade network (cf. Gen 37:25).[31] The scale of the construction work—as represented by the artificial extension of the mound—suggests a coordinated workforce. Therefore, if the numerous objects of Egyptian provenance and the cartouche of Taousert may be taken as evidence of direct contact with Egypt, then it is reasonable to suppose that the construction of the sanctuary took place under the auspices of the Egyptian empire during the 18th Dynasty.[32] This possibility has also been endorsed by van der Steen, who cited the contemporaneous Egyptian stronghold at nearby Tell es-Saʿidiyeh as indication of Egyptian control over the Deir ʿAlla market region.[33]

Religion", in *Sacred and Sweet: Studies on the Material Culture of Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tell Abu Sarbut* (Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supp. 24; eds. Margreet L. Steiner and Eveline J. van der Steen; Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 39.

[31] Cf. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, esp. 163–79, with references; cf. Eveline J. van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in in Transition* (PhD diss.; Leiden University, 2002), esp. 97, who also argued for a trade centre, but one related to a trade route that ran from Amman, via Deir ʿAlla north to Pella and Beth Shean, and from there to Egypt; cf. the discussion in Franken, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 42–43. According to Franken, as much as 25% of the pottery from this period was not produced in the central Jordan valley; cf. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, 113.

[32] Cf. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, 166. Note also the large number of "gifts" of Egyptian origin that were found in the cella of the sanctuary, cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 38. Cf. Ora Negbi, "Were there Sea Peoples in the Central Jordan Valley at the Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age?", *TA* 18 (1991): 214, who argues that the LBA Deir ʿAlla sanctuary may be compared with the Canaanite Fosse Temples of Lachish, Levels VII-VI at Beth-shan and the Acropolis Temple at Lachish, which display strong Egyptian architectural affinities.

[33] van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition* (Phd diss. Leiden University, 2002), 97.

Accordingly, Franken interpreted the numerous foreign objects (including alabaster vessels, faience, glass, seals and amulets) found in the sanctuary as "gifts" offered to ensure "heavenly protection" of the trade enterprises.[34] More recently, Niels Groot has proposed a similar interpretation; although he emphasised the political dimension, explaining the presence of the many Transjordanian and Egyptian/Egyptianising objects as partly the result of a practice of regional gift giving, which included the offering of prestigious votive gifts to the local sanctuary".[35]

7.3.4. *Early Iron Age* (IRON I–IIA)

The transition from the LBA to the early Iron Age (Iron IA) seems to have been marked throughout the Southern Levant by a period of decentralisation, which was characterised by population movements away from city-states.[36] This pattern seems to be reflected in the Central Jordan valley generally and at Deir ʿAlla specifically. After the destruction of the LBA sanctuary there followed a period of semi-permanent occupation on the tell (Phases A–D). There are few architectural remains associated with this period and it seems that the population at that time consisted of semi-nomadic pastoralists, living in tents during the relatively clement winter and spring months.[37] A number of flint sickle-blades dating from this period also suggest agricultural activities.[38] Excavations also revealed several furnaces (associated with Phase B) on the summit of the tell. Initially Franken interpreted these as evidence of bronze smelting and

---

[34] Cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited", 11; idem, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 38.

[35] Groot, "All the Work of Artisans", 68.

[36] See Patrick E. McGovern, "Central Transjordan in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: An Alternative Hypothesis of Socio-Economic Transformation and Collapse", in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan III* (ed. Adnan Hadidi. Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1987), 267–73.

[37] There are a number of small post holes dating from this Phase, which may have been associated with tent poles; cf. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 21.

[38] Cf. van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 340; and more fully, Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 21.

casting; however Eveline van der Steen has recently challenged the suitability of the furnaces for this purpose.[39] At present, the purpose of the early Iron IA furnaces is unknown (on the significance of metal working for the identification of the site, see §7.5).

At some stage between Phases D–E tell Deir ʿAlla was apparently resettled by a different group. This resettlement is indicated by a change in the ceramic repertoire (reflecting forms found further to the east) and an increase in the number of lightly constructed mud-brick structures; although there were no indications of violent occupation or a period of abandonment.[40] Signs of more substantial buildings also begin to appear in this period (esp. Phases E–H) and Phase K showed signs of a round mud-brick tower, ca. 7m in diameter. Traces of occasional rebuilding and repair work (e.g. the raising of floor and roof levels) indicated a prolonged period of occupation.[41] This second period (Phases E–L) has been dated to the eleventh and tenth centuries B.C.E. on the basis of ^{14}C analysis of charcoal associated with Phase J.[42]

With the commencement of the joint Jordanian-Dutch project in 1976, it became apparent that a new and more precise system of stratigraphic classification was required. Hence, the project adopted a

---

[39] van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition* (Phd diss. Leiden University, 2002), 45; cf. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 20–21; van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 340. Van der Steen's objections were based on both typological comparison with known copper smelting furnaces and the notable absence of large quantities of ore or slag connected to metal-work (pp.162–63).

[40] Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 22–22. According to van der Steen, the resettlement in this period may be related to the economic collapse of the Amman Plateau, and the subsequent population influx of the Central Jordan Valley; cf. van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition* (Phd diss. Leiden University, 2002), 220.

[41] van der Kooij and M. Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 81; cf. Petit, *Settlement Dynamics in the Middle Jordan Valley*, 28.

[42] Cf. van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 340.

numerical system to replace the earlier alphabetic system.[43] It is not currently clear whether Phase L may be directly identified with Phase X of the new system, which is represented in a small area on the top of the tell.[44] There are indications that Phase X ended abruptly. In one storeroom a number of storage jars were found, which were evidently still full of liquid at the time they were abandoned.[45] This Phase seems to have been followed by a long occupational gap.[46] A large pit (12m x 5m) on the summit of the tell was apparently dug sometime after the end of this phase and the beginning of the next.[47]

7.3.5. *Mid-Iron Age* (IRON IIB)

Phase IX

It was in this stratum that the DAPT was discovered. Phase IX has been extensively excavated on the north-eastern summit of the tell (area B, fig. 7.1).[48] Surveys and limited excavations elsewhere on the tell suggest that

---

[43] The new system employs Roman numerals, with I representing the highest stratum (closest to the surface). Unfortunately the two systems are not fully integrated and it is necessary to designate strata by either the numerical or alphabetic system depending on the phase in question. From the Iron Age II period onward (Phase X) the numerical system is used. According to van der Kooij (personal communication), this system will be further subdivided and standardised in forthcoming final reports.

[44] Cf. van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 340.

[45] The fullest description of these jars occurs in van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 82. There is some uncertainty as to the precise number of vessels: in one place van der Kooij refered to twelve store-jars ("Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 340) and in another to thirteen ("The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā during the First Millennium BC, Seen in a Wider Context", *SHAJ* VII (2001): 295), and in yet another he referred to twelve of a group of fourteen jars filled with liquid (*Picking Up the Threads*, 86).

[46] Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 61.

[47] van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 295.

[48] van der Kooij has informed me (personal communication) that in subsequent excavations the excavated area was extended to the south and generally seems to reflect a continuation of the architectural features in Area B; although, less densely than in the northern squares.

the Phase IX village was restricted to the eastern summit.[49] On the basis of the excavated remains Kaptijn has estimated a total population of approximately 305 to 329 people.[50] The relatively long and straight walls of this phase indicated that the complex was probably planned and constructed in a single stage, rather than growing though a process of agglutination. This suggests a relatively swift and deliberate process of resettlement.[51] However, the delineation of spaces within the complex is complicated by the fact that thresholds between rooms were high and made of mud-bricks, while wall foundations were relatively insubstantial and often difficult to trace.[52] Nevertheless, a complex of about 40 rooms and open spaces has been identified. In general the architecture is relatively flimsy; but at least one room seems to have been lavishly furnished, including a wooden object with bone inlay panels.[53] ^{14}C analysis of a charred grain sample from Phase IX yielded a calibrated date of ca. 800 B.C.E. (± 50 years), which seems to be supported by the ceramic evidence.[54]

---

[49] Cf. Kaptijn, "Settling the steppe", 270.

[50] Cf. ibid, 270–71.

[51] Cf. van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 295; Gerrit van der Kooij, "Use of Space in Settlements", in *Moving Matters: Ethnoarchaeology in the Near East: Proceedings of the International Seminar Held at Cairo 7–10 December 1998* (eds. Willeke Wendrich and Gerrit van der Kooij; Leiden: Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies Universiteit Leiden, 2002), 71.

[52] Cf. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary*, 10–12; van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 86; Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", , 18.

[53] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 23, with references.

[54] The analysis is reported in J. C. Vogel and H. T. Waterbolk, "Groningen Roadiocarbon Dates X", *Radiocarbon* 14 (1972): 53. The results are discussed in Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 16; van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 88; van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 340–41. Note, however, that this date is based on a single sample only.

Notwithstanding the DAPT, there is little to suggest an unusually cultic character for the settlement; although reference should be made to several special objects including a "chalice" and a large conical "weight" in rooms BB421 and BB418.[55] Reference should also be made to several anthropomorphic female figurines not dissimilar to the terracotta figurines found throughout Palestine during the Iron Age.[56] The function of these remains a mystery, but they may well have been associated with household or folk religion.[57]

One remarkable feature of this phase is the extraordinarily large number of loom-weights found throughout the complex.[58] Of particular interest are fifteen groups of loom-weights, which might reflect looms associated with individual households. In two instances (the room in the north-eastern corner of grid ref. A-6 and the room in grid ref. A-7) the weights lay in a configuration that suggested they might have fallen from an active loom.[59] This profusion of loom-weights has been interpreted by some as evidence that weaving played a special part in the cultic activities of the tell.[60] However, Ibrahim and van der Kooij have argued that the fact

---

[55] These were found together with the inscribed stone and vessel (§5.2.2).

[56] van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 88; cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 18–17. The most extensive discussion of the figurines appears in Franken, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 46–48.

[57] Cf. William G. Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Instersect* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 208, with references.

[58] According to the calculations of Jeannette Boertien, Deir ʿAlla has yielded three times as many loom-weights as other Iron Age sites in the Levant; Jeannette H. Boertien, "Unravelling the Fabric: Textile Production in Iron Age Transjordan" (Ph.D. diss., Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit, 2013), 147.

[59] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 18, 22, n.4.

[60] Cf. most extensively Boertien, "Unravelling the Threads", 135–51. Boertien, drew particular attention to the preservation of a piece of fabric woven from hemp, which, is unique in an ancient Near Eastern context. Boertien's study is particularly interesting in the present context due to her comparison with Kuntillet ʿAjrud (cf. Ackerman, "Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving?", 1–30). However, its value is

that at a random moment (i.e. the time of the destruction of Phase IX) only one or two of the looms were in use, indicates that weaving was limited to occasional needs, or that it was seasonally conditioned.[61] That being said, Jeannette Boertien has recently argued that the number of loom-weights in the respective groups suggests that in Deir ʿAlla households had more than one loom. This far exceeds the requirements of individual households, and might indicate that textile production was an important economic factor in the community.[62]

In addition to these groups of loom-weights the excavators unearthed fifteen groups of assorted pottery, including storage jars and vessels for the preparation and consumption of food.[63] Accordingly, Ibrahim and van der Kooij, suggested that these two groups of finds could be interpreted as possible evidence of individual households.[64] Nevertheless, the apparent concentration of cooking facilities in grid ref. D-6 may suggest that food preparation and cooking were communal activities (see below).[65]

The pottery assemblage of Phase IX generally represents a continuation of Phase L/X types; although, with a number of locally produced imitations of forms from west of the Jordan.[66] There is also some

---

limited by her uncritical acceptance of a cultic function for the latter, and her reliance on the evidence of unusual fabrics, which (especially in the arid climate at Kuntillet ʿAjrud) may reflect an accident of preservtion.

[61] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 22–23.

[62] Boertien, "Unravelling the Fabric: Textile Production in Iron Age Transjordan" (Ph.D. diss., Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit, 2013), 147, 274–75; cf. Schmidt, "Memorializing Conflict",.

[63] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 18.

[64] Ibid, 18–19.

[65] Ibid, 18–19.

[66] Monique M. E. Vilders, "The Stratigraphy and the Pottery of Phase M at Deir ʿAlla and the Date of the Plaster Texts", *Levant* 24 (1992): esp. 197, 198; Homès-fredericq and Franken, *Pottery and Potters–Past and Present*, 171–72.

evidence of possible trade connections with the Phoenician coast.[67] Hence, it seems that in the first half of the 8th century, the commercial orientation of Deir ʿAlla was primarily to the west, rather than north or east. Nevertheless, there is evidence for northern (Aramean) influence in the weaving technology and stone artefacts.[68] This can most plausibly be attributed to the Aramean hegemony of the late 9th century. But it does not necessarily follow that the inhabitants of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX were ethnically or culturally Aramean; rather the picture that emerges is of a local settlement, integrated first and foremost into the regional valley network, and, in a wider context, (perhaps indirectly) into the economic zone to the west (see further below).

The destruction of Phase IX seems to have progressed in at least three stages: first, the tell was struck by an initial earth tremor. Following this initial tremor, a fire burned away the wooden looms and other perishable materials, leaving only charred remains.[69] It is possible that much of the missing plaster between Combinations I and II fell from the wall and was destroyed by this fire.[70] Finally, there came a second shock. It was this second shock that caused the collapse of the structure to which the plaster was attached (see §7.6.1).[71]

---

[67] This comes in the form of a pair of juglets typologically related to that region, which were filled with herbs and fruit seeds, which may represent trade goods; see Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 26.

[68] See respectively, Boertien, "Unravelling the Fabric", 260–61; Lucas P. Petit, "Grinding Implements and Material Found at Tall Dayr ʿAlla, Jordan; Their Place and Role in Archaeological Research", ADAJ 43 (1999): 145–67.

[69] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 12.

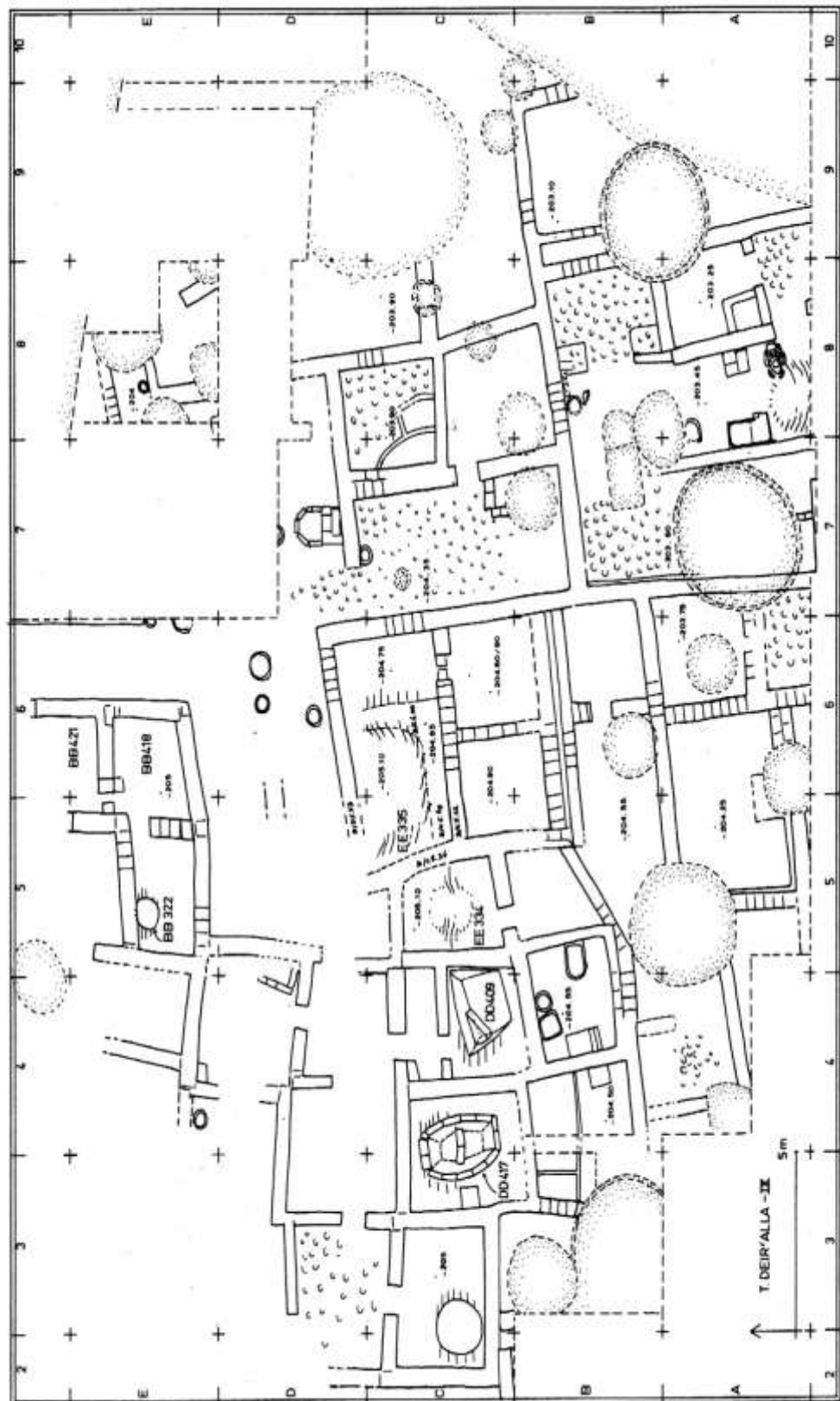[70] Cf. ibid, 9–10.

[71] Cf. ibid, 8, 10.

Fig. 7.2—Top plan of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX

Phase VIII

Shortly after the destruction of Phase IX a large building was constructed near the area of the bench room (grid ref. C-7). According to van der Kooij this structure was hardly used and was abruptly abandoned.[72]

Phase VII

Sometime around ca. 700 B.C.E. a new village was erected on top of the levelled Phase IX and VIII remains.[73] The material remains of this phase differ from preceding phases, suggesting greater influence from the east. The most notable changes include the presence of 'Neo-Assyrian' pottery and a seal bearing the name of the Ammonite deity Milkom, which might be indicative of greater connection with the Ammonite cultural sphere.[74] The Phase VII settlement was destroyed abruptly, apparently by an earthquake and concomitant fire, and it seems that there were no immediate attempts to rebuild.

Phase VI

During the mid-7th century a new walled settlement was established on the summit of the tell. The remains of this phase show clear signs of Ammonite affiliation, both in terms of ceramic typology and the palaeography and onamasticon of several inscribed seals and an ostracon.[75] This phase was destroyed by fire and abandoned.[76]

---

[72] van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 296, 297; cf. Groot, "All the Work of Artisans", 94.

[73] For descriptions and discussions of the archaeology, cf. van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 296, 297; cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "Excavations at Tall Dayr ʿAlla, Season 1979", 577–85 ; Groot, "All the Work of Artisans", 94.

[74] Cf. Groot, "All the Work of Artisans", 95.

[75] Groot, "All the Work of Artisans", 96.

[76] van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 297.

Phase VI/V

This stratum was not initially recognised as a separate phase. But, in light of the fact that the architectural remains recovered from this level cannot be directly related to either the preceding or subsequent phases, they have been provisionally labelled Phase VI/V in the preliminary reports.[77] The limited remains from these phases included facilities for the storage of fodder, and Groot has interpreted this phase as a hamlet or farmstead.[78]

7.3.6. *The Persian Period*

Phase V

At the beginning of the fifth century a new settlement was constructed on top of the tell. This phase seems to have existed for some time before its gradual abandonment.[79] The discovery of an Aramaic ostracon recording instructions for the restoration of a gate, seems to suggest that during this period Deir ʿAlla was part of a regional administrative network.[80] According to Groot, the ceramic assemblage from phase V reflects a general continuation of a Central Transjordanian ceramic tradition.[81]

---

[77] Cf. van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 297.

[78] Groot, *All the Work of Artisans*, 96. On the evidence for the storage of "fodder", cf. van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 297, n.3.

[79] van der Kooij, "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā", 297.

[80] Groot, *All the Work of Artisans*, 97; van der Kooij and M. Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 70.

[81] Niels C. F. Groot, "The Early Persian Period at Tell Deir ʿAllā: a Ceramic Perspective", in *A Timeless Vale: Archaeological and Related Essays on the Jordan Valley in Honour of Gerrit van der Kooij on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, (eds. Eva Kaptijn and Lucas P. Petit; Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009), 167–80.

Phases IV–II

Little remains from these periods, but there are signs of human occupation on the tell. According to Groot, Phase II might still be dated to the Persian period, but this cannot be proved. [82]

7.3.7. *Mamluk–Ottoman Period*

The Persian period seems to have been followed by a long occupation gap at Deir ʿAlla. In the Mamluk and Ottoman periods the tell was used as a local cemetary.[83]

7.4. DEIR ʿALLA PHASE IX IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Biblical sources allude to an early Israelite presence in Gilead in the vicinity of tell Deir ʿAlla.[84] Certainly, the Mesha Stele confirms that by the mid-9th century the Israelite kingdom had expanded into Transjordan, east of the Dead Sea to the south, and it is reasonable to suppose that Gilead was controlled by the Omrides at this time.[85] By the late-9th century, however, it seems that northern Transjordan had come under Aramean control (cf. 2 Kgs 10:32–33; Amos 1:3–4).[86] This probably occurred

---

[82] Groot, "All the Work of Artisans", 29.

[83] Franken and Kalsbeek, *Potters of a Medieval Village in the Jordan Valley*; cf. Petit, *Settlement Dynamics in the Middle Jordan Valley*, 29.

[84] For a discussion of the territorial borers of Gilead, see Israel Finkelstein, Ido Koch, and Oded Lipschits, "The Biblical Gilead: Observations on Identifications, Geographic Divisions and Territorial History" *UF* 43 (2011): 132–38; cf. Burton MacDonald, "The Bible, Archaeology and Jordan", in *The Archaeology of Jordan* (eds. Burton Macdonal, Russell Adams and Piotr Bienkowsk; Levantine Archaeology 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 664–65.

[85] Cf. Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom*, 84.

[86] Cf. Menahem Haran, "The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam ben Joash", *VT* 17 (1967): 269; Nadav Naʾaman, "The Story of Jehu's Rebellion: Hazael's Inscription and the Biblical Narrative", *IEJ* 56 (2006): 160–66; idem, "The Kingdom of Judah in the 9th Century BCE: Text Analysis versus Archaeological Research", *TA* 40 (2013): 268; Finkelstein, Koch, and Lipschits, "The Biblical Gilead", 153. However, it should be noted

shortly after the accession of Hazael as king of Aram-Damascus ca. 842 B.C.E.[87] Then, following the collapse of the Aramean empire at the end of the 9th century, there appears to have been a short period of Israelite resurgence under King Joash and his son Jeroboam II (cf. §4.7). During the reign of Jeroboam II (ca.788–747) this seems to have included a period of territorial expansion (cf. 2 Kgs 13:25; 14:25). Biblical evidence suggests that this expansion included the region of Gilead (cf. 2 Kings 15:25, 29; Hos 5:1–2; 6:7–8). In 732 B.C.E. Gilead came under the control of the Neo-Asyrian Empire.[88] However, two summary inscriptions of Tiglat-pileser III seem to suggest that at this time Gilead was once again under the control of Rezin of Damascus, suggesting that the region was reconquered by the Arameans in the intervening period of instability following the death of Jeroboam and before the Neo-Assyrian conquest.[89]

So when in this period of shifting influences should Deir ʿAlla Phase IX be identified? Al Wolters attempted to identify Phase IX with a community of deportees from northern-Syria brought to the area as part of the Neo-Assyrian policy of deportation and resettlement.[90] The basis for this argument lay primarily in the palaeographic dating of the DAPT to the end of the 8th century (ca. 700 B.C.E.). This rests in turn on the contention that the script stands at the beginning of the Ammonite national script series (cf. §6.6), which flourished between the 7th–6th centuries.[91]

---

with van der Kooij and Ibrahim, that "no specific evidence is available to postulate a close contact with the Aramaic culture at Damascus or Hama, except for the short inscriptions on stone and jar classified as Aramaic"; cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 26, van der Kooij has since repeated this opinion in conversation.

[87] Cf. Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom*, 119–28.

[88] Cf. Wolters, "The Balaamites of Deir ʿAlla as Aramean Deportees", 103, esp. n.21.

[89] Cf. Nadav Naʾaman, "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead", *ZDPV* 111 (1995): 105–17. It is against this background that Naʾaman interprets Amos 1:3–4.

[90] Wolters, "The Balaamites of Deir ʿAlla as Aramean Deportees", 101–13.

[91] Ibid, 103, 108–09. On the *floruit* of the Ammonite script cf. Larry G. Herr and Muhammad Najjar, "The Iron Age", in *The Archaeology of Jordan* (eds. Burton

However, as was discussed in the preceding chapter, this interpretation of the script is not universally accepted, and strong arguments have been advanced for dating the script earlier, to the first three quarters of the 8th century B.C.E.[92] This is further supported by the ^{14}C evidence, which places Deir ʿAlla Phase IX between the mid-9th and mid-8th centuries B.C.E. (see above).

As such, if, with all due reserve, the destruction of the site is attributed to the earthquake alluded to in Amos 1:1 and Zechariah 14:5 (ca.760 B.C.E.)., then the latter years of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX might be tentatively attributed to the period of Israelite dominance under Jeroboam II (making the DAPT almost precisely contemporary with the KAPT). This agrees well with the evidence for commercial contacts with the eastern Mediterranean coast (see above).[93] However, the evidence for periodical rebuilding suggests that Phase IX might have lasted some time, and it is possible that the origins of the Phase IX settlement should be sought in the period of Aramean hegemony at the end of the 9th century.[94] It is perhaps to the influence of this period that the Aramaic flavour of the Deir ʿAlla dialect and elements of material culture should be attributed. Moreover, as Naʾaman has observed, the official stone weight and jar measure inscribed in the Aramaic script and language might be understood as testament to the enduring Aramean influence in the region.[95] Consequently, Deir ʿAlla Phase IX might have been (re)founded in the Aramean period during the late 9th century, but its destruction should probably be attributed to the Israelite period in the first half of the 8th century. In other words, Deir ʿAlla Phase IX might be characterised as a

---

Macdonal, Russell Adams and Piotr Bienkowski; Levantine Archaeology 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 335–38.

[92] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 256–57.

[93] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 26.

[94] On the evidence for rebuilding cf. ibid, 17.

[95] Naʾaman, "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead", 107.

local settlement that came under Aramean and then Israelite influence successively.

That is not necessarily to say, however, that Deir ʿAlla was an Israelite site, or that the DAPT is an Israelite inscription. There is no evidence for disruption in the settlement pattern during this occupational phase, suggesting basic continuity in the local occupancy. But the possibility that Deir ʿAlla interacted with the Israelite cultural sphere comports well with the fact that traditions about the seer Balaam, son of Beor, were known on both sides of the Jordan.[96] This should be contrasted with the situation in the subsequent phases, when the geo-political orientation of the site seems to have shifted to the Ammonites in the east.

7.5. IDENTIFICATION OF THE SITE

Several attempts have been made to identify Tell Deir ʿAlla with biblical toponyms in the western Transjordan.[97] Among the most persuasive and enduring of these is the suggestion that the tell should be identified as biblical Succoth (cf. Gen 33:17; Josh 13:27; Judg 8:4–17; 1 Kgs 7:46 = 2 Chron 4:17; compare עמק סכות, "the valley of Succoth", Ps 60:6 [Heb. 60:8]; 108:7 [Heb. 108:8]).[98] The equation of Deir ʿAlla with Succoth is first and foremost etymological. In the Talmud (*J.Šeb* 9:2) the contemporary name for Succoth is given as תרעלה. It was apparently Selah Merrill who was first to identify this toponym with Deir ʿAlla,[99] and prior to the Dutch excavations in the 1960s this identification seemed probable:

---

[96] Certainly, the allusion to Balaam in Michah 6:5 attests the existence of Israelite traditions by the end of the 7th century.

[97] Bearing in mind that this would not necessarily reflect the local name for the Tell; cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited", 13–14. It would, however, provide a functional identification to facilitate a search for ancillary details in the biblical narratives pertaining to the nature of the site and its inhabitants.

[98] For a discussion with references, cf. Burton MacDonald, *"East of the Jordan": Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Bible* (ASOR Books 6; Boston, Ma.: ASOR, 2000), 148–49.

[99] Merrill, *East of the Jordan*, 386–88.

(1) the topographical situation of Deir ʿAlla matches the general descriptions of Succoth in the Hebrew Bible; (2) surface surveys had revealed pottery from the Bronze and Iron Ages (see above; cf. Gen 33:17; 1 Kgs 7:46 = 2 Chron 4:17); (3) the discovery of slag on the surface of the Tell is consistent with the biblical description of the casting of bronze implements for the Jerusalem Temple in the region (cf. 1 Kgs 7:46 = 2 Chron 4:17).[100] However, Franken has subsequently challenged the identification of Deir ʿAlla as Succoth on two counts: (1) alluvial deposits on the northern side of the Tell suggest that the modern course of the Jabbok River has shifted from ancient times and that Deir ʿAlla was originally located on the southern bank of the river; the wrong side for it to be identified with Succoth in the territory of Gad (Josh 13:24–28; cf. Deut 16:3);[101] and (2) according to the biblical description, the evidence of metal working is consistent with the entire industrial zone between Succoth and Zarethan, and not with Succoth alone.[102] Notwithstanding

---

[100] For the pottery, cf. William F. Albright, "The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age", *ASOR* 6 (1924–1925): 46; idem, "New Israelite and Pre-Israelite Sites: The Spring Trip of 1929", *BASOR* 35 (1929): 13; Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine, IV", 348; for metal working, cf. Nelson Glueck, "Three Israelite Towns in the Jordan Valley: Zarethan, Succoth, Zaphon", *BASOR* 90 (1943): 13; idem, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine, IV", 232. Negbi, "Were there Sea Peoples in the Central Jordan Valley", 205, saw the signs of metallurgy as "positive evidence" for an identification with Succoth.

[101] Regardless of the historicity of the tribal allotments in Josh 13, it seems probable that this account reflects an historical situation at some stage in the history of the northern tribes. However, on the mention of Gad in the Mesha Stele and the general difficulty in delineating the territorial boundaries throughout this period, cf. Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kindom*, 110.

[102] Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan", 389; cf. idem, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 5–6. Franken overstated the case for the latter point when he wrote "[t]he presence of a metal industry during the Iron I period…tends rather to weaken than to strengthen the equation Deir ʿAllā = Succoth" (p.5). The description of the metal working sites as being בין סכות ובין צרתן, "*between* Succoth and Zarethan", does not necessarily imply that these sites were excluded from the copper-work production as Franken apparently supposed. Furthermore, even if that were the case, the fact remains that on the

these objections, Franken's counter-proposal that the site might tentatively be identified as Gilgal—which according to 1 Samuel 11:15 was probably the site of a major early Iron Age shrine—has fared no better. No evidence of an Iron Age shrine corresponding to that of the LBA has yet surfaced.[103]

A popular alternative is Penuel (cf. Peniel, Gen 32:30 [Heb. 30:31]).[104] According to Judges 8:4–17, Penuel was located to the east of Succoth, and on the basis of Genesis 32:22, 23 (Heb.23, 24) it was close to

---

basis of these verses alone we would expect evidence of metalwork *throughout* this region. On the evidence for metal working and the identity of the artisans, see conveniently Negbi, "Were there Sea Peoples in the Central Jordan Valley", 216–19. Franken had initially argued that, contrary to Glueck's survey, no Middle Bronze remains had been unearthed from the Tell, but this no longer appears to be the case; see Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 6; cf. van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", , 339.

[103] Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAllā I*, 7. This proposal was not repeated in Franken's subsequent discussions of the identity of the site, cf. cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited", , 14. However, van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla, Tell", 338–42; although, van der Kooij (among others) has argued that the religious significance of the site must have continued, as is testified by the epigraphic remains and the site's modern name (see below).

[104] Cf. Gerrit van der Kooij, "Deir ʿAlla", *Le Mond de la Bible* 46 (1986): 34–35; André Lemaire, "Galaad et Makîr: Remarques sur la Tribu de Manassé á l'est du Jourdain", *VT* 31 (1981): 39–61; J. Briend, "Regards sur le Jourdein et sa Valée", *Le Mond de la Bible* 65 (1990): 18; MacDonald, *"East of the Jordan"*, 148–49; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 290–92; cf. Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits, "The Biblical Gilead", 148–49, who discuss the possibility that Deir ʿAlla is to be identified as biblical Penuel, but prefer Tell edh-Dhahab esh-Sharqi, on the grounds that (1) today Deir ʿAlla is not situated immediately on the Jabbok river; (2) the reference to the fortified tower of Penuel (Judg 8:4–17) fits the remains at Tell edh-Dhahab esh-Sharqi, which seems to have signs of a monumental building on its sumit; and (3) Penuel is not mentioned in any text speaking explicitly about the Jordan valley (e.g. Josh 13:27). In response to this it should be noted that: (1) the course of the river appears to have shifted since the Iron Age (see above); and (2) remains of a tower have been identified in Phase K, the memory of which might have informed the tradition reflected in Judges 8. Even so, the caution of these authors should be noted.

the ford of the Jabbok River.[105] The Talmudic equation of Succoth and תרעלה (= Deir ʿAlla) is not necessarily a problem for this interpretation. First, given that the tell was not continuously occupied between the Persian and rabbinic periods, *J.Šeb* 9:2 may simply reflect a later approximation of two toponyms known to have been located in the same region.[106] Second, Lipiński has suggested that the name תרעלה is derived from the Aramaic phrase תרע אלה* > תרעלה, "the gate of God" (cf. Jacob's description of Bethel as שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם, "the gate of the heavens" in Gen 28:18), with assimilation of the *ʾālep* to the *ʿayin*.[107] Consequently, according to Lipiński, תרעלה , "the gate of God", might be interpreted as a theologising interpretation of *Penuel* (lit. "the face of God").[108] Regardless of whether the equation of Penuel and תרעלה is correct, the linguistic argument is valid, and suggests that the site of תרעלה (Deir ʿAlla) was considered especially sacred.[109]

Consequently, while it may not be possible to ascribe a biblical toponym to the tell, there is suggestive ancient evidence linking the region

---

[105] Cf. *pr-nw-3r* (= Penuel) in the Sheshonq inscription; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.),* 2nd ed. with suppl. (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1995), 438. The location of Penuel to the east of Succoth corresponds well with the suggestion that the ancient toponym *Succoth*, "booths", is preserved in the modern Arabic *Tell al-Aḫṣāṣ*, cf. F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine, II* (Paris: Gabalda, 1938), 470; Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 292–93.

[106] Cf. Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 290; cf. Albright, "The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age", 45–46. It should be noted that, following an occupational hiatus in the 5th–4th centuries B.C.E., there were a number of large Roman farmsteads in the vicinity and from then on the valley was continuously occupied until the 16th century C.E.; cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited", 14.

[107] Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan*, 290.

[108] Ibid, 290.

[109] This would place the toponym תרעלה on a continuum with the LBA sanctuary. Note that the Arabic name ("high sacred building") must be ancient since no corresponding building is known from Arabic times. This would seem to be supported by the local tradition that Deir ʿAlla was once the site of a city, as was reported by Merrill (see above).

to theophany. Whatever its identity, the location of Deir ʿAlla, with its detailed description of a divine visitation (i.e. the DAPT), in the valley of Succoth, in the vicinity of a place named "the face of God", invites supposition about the existence of folk-traditions concerning past epiphanies. Would it be reasonable, then, to suspect that the vicinity of Deir ʿAlla was believed to have a special proximity to the divine? Like Kuntillet ʿAjrud, was it perhaps a location where divine encounters could be expected to befall, or to be induced?[110]

7.6. The Archaeology of the DAPT

As with Kuntillet ʿAjrud, discussion of the DAPT will be framed in terms of the four radiating spheres of interaction: the writing surface; the room; the building complex; and the total excavated area.

7.6.1. *The Writing surface*

As noted in Chapter 3, analysis of the writing surface involves two aspects: (1) the technologies and techniques involved in preparing and inscribing the writing surface; (2) the physical arrangement of the text.

Beginning with the technical discussion, it may be observed that the lime-based plaster that serves as the writing surface was tempered with organic material and applied ca.7mm thick over a thin layer of wet clay.[111] The tempering material has entirely degraded, but impressions left in the plaster suggest that it probably consisted of fine chaff, predominantly flax and straw, with possible traces of seeds in some fragments. These impressions led van der Kooij to suggest that the organic temper might

---

[110] Shea's suggestion that Deir ʿAlla might be identified as biblical Pethor (Num 22:5) can probably be dismissed, as it rests on a number of questionable historical and epigraphic assumptions (cf. §5.2.1); cf. Shea, "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla: Part II", *passim*.

[111] The composition of the plaster has been studied in detail by van der Kooij, cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 23–26.

have been sourced from the dung of herbivorous animals.[112] Once dry, the plaster was polished to create a smooth surface.[113] Evidence of comparable plaster surfaces (also averaging ca.7mm thick) was discovered in five other loci associated with Phase IX; however, in each instance the plaster fragments were detached from the wall, lying amongst debris covering the floor.[114] It appears that the plaster was only used as a writing surface in this one instance, further testifying to the unique nature of the room. In comparative terms, van der Kooij has concluded that the Deir ʿAlla plaster is closer in composition to Western Asiatic plasters rather than Egyptian plasters, which are generally thinner, ca. 1.5–3mm thick, with fewer inclusions (cf. §4.9.1).[115]

As at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, chemical analysis of the inks has revealed that the red pigment was derived from a red iron oxide (Fe_2O_3), while the carbon-based black ink was probably sourced from lamp-soot or charcoal.[116]

---

[112] Ibid, 23. Note that considerable quantities of dung, mostly in the form of cakes apparently used for fuel, were found in the Phase IX remains, cf. van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 30, 83, 84.

[113] van der Kooij has noted several polished stones in the south-eastern rooms that may have been used for this purpose; cf. van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 84

[114] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "Excavations at Deir ʿAlla, Season 1984", 137.

[115] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 27–28.

[116] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 21.
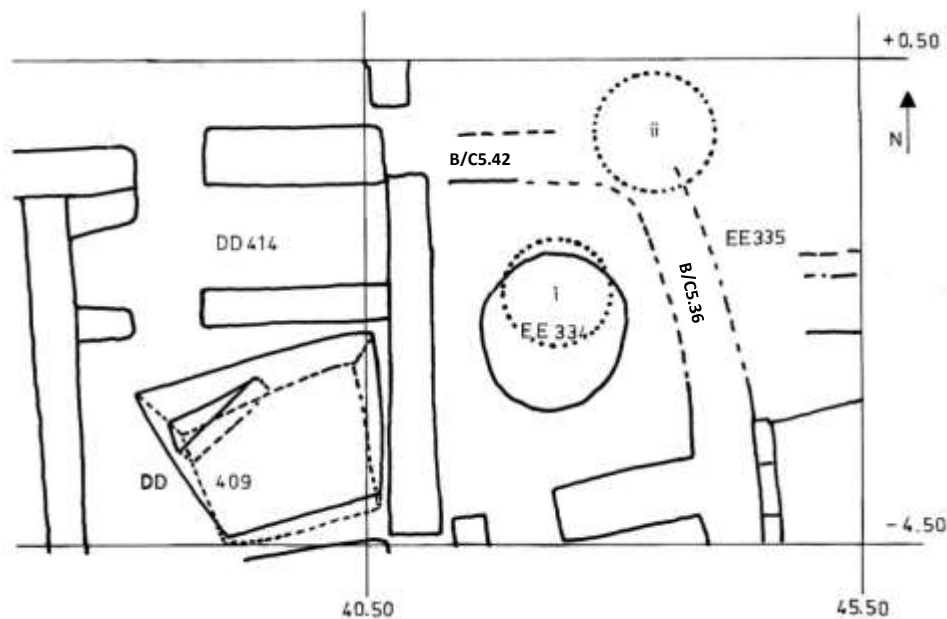
Fig.7.3—Top plan showing the distribution of fragments in rooms EE334 and EE335

The writing surface was divided into at least two columns by means of horizontal and vertical borders drawn in red ink.[117] This division was evidently undertaken prior to inscription, as in a number of places the black ink of the text covers the red of the border.[118] The horizontal border lines were apparently fashioned by dipping string in the red pigment, which was then laid against the surface of the plaster to create a straight line.[119] The vertical lines were drawn by a brush with short stiff bristles, which, in several places, have left small scratch marks in the surface of the plaster.[120] Van der Kooij, who is a leading expert on the characteristics and handling of ink-based writing implements in the Iron Age, has suggested that this implement might have simply been a small reed or stick with the fibres separated at one end, similar to implements known from Egypt.[121]

---

[117] For the tools and processes used to draw these lines, cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 24–25.

[118] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 25.

[119] Cf. ibid, 24–25. This same technique is also attested in Egypt.

[120] Cf. ibid, 24.

[121] Cf. ibid, 24, for a discussion of writing implements, see pp.32–57; cf. van der Kooij, "Early North-West Semitic Script Traditions". For a more general discussion of the

According to van der Kooij, the writing implement used for the text itself was probably something like a brush or pen fashioned from a rush, with stiff flexible fibres cut to form an angled nib. The skill involved in the preparation and care of this implement—and, for that matter, the preparation of the inks—indicates a high level of expertise on the part of the scribe. Once again, such implements are known from Egypt; although, as van der Kooij has observed, there is considerable evidence for the widespread use of similar implements throughout Syria and Mesopotamia by the 8th century B.C.E.[122]

The original layout of the plastered surface(s) can be reconstructed, to an extent, from the distribution of the fallen fragments. The fragments of Combination II (group ii) were discovered in a cluster just outside the north-eastern corner of room EE334. The distribution and comparatively large size of these fragments suggests that they had fallen a short distance from the west and, hence, were probably situated relatively low in relation to wall B/C5.36 in the north-western corner of room EE335 (see fig.7.3).[123]

The fragments of Combination I (group i), together with fragment xiv with the drawing of a sphinx, were found in the upper levels of a collapsed layer of unburnt rubble in and around a shallow depression in the floor of room EE334.[124] The distance of these fragments from the base of

crafting and use of pens for ink-based writing, cf. Driver, *Semitic Writing: From Pictograph to Alphabet*, 85–86.

[122] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 33. In particular van der Kooij cites the depiction of such pens on the Zincirli stele, and the numerous depictions of Neo-Assyrian scribes using pens for ink based writing alongside scribes using a stylus to inscribe clay.

[123] For a detailed description of the distribution and orientation of the plaster fragments see Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 25–28, see pl. 17a for a photograph of the find-spot; cf. also the discussion in André Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", *SEL* 3 (1986): 80–85.

[124] The nature of this pit is discussed in Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", , 20. Ibrahim and van der Kooij commented that it is possible that

the four walls suggests that they had fallen further and were probably situated higher than those of group ii. A number of fragments were also scattered between these two groups, suggesting the plaster had fallen from the north-west. The intervening fragments included some uninscribed fragments and fragments of group viii, preserving sections of text bordered on the left-hand side by a vertical margin line.[125]

The nature of the structure to which the plaster writing surface was attached has been a matter of debate.[126] Initially, van der Kooij suggested that the distribution pattern might suggest that the text was written on eastern and southern faces respectively of a massive mud-brick structure, perhaps a doorway or mud-brick stele of some kind.[127] However, no traces of such structures have been found. Moreover, comparative evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and the uninscribed plaster surfaces found elsewhere at Deir ʿAlla suggests that the plaster may have been applied directly to the wall surface.[128] If that is the case, however, then it is necessary to demonstrate that the location of group i, to the south-west of group ii, can be explained by the nature of the collapse of the wall. As it happens, subsequent excavations in the surrounding area have revealed that several of the walls of Phase IX had fallen with a twist to the west or south-west.[129] This uniformity is consistent with the directional shock of a severe

---

the pit may not have had a special use, because the shape of the depression was formed by the wall stumps of the preceding layer; however, they did note that shape of the pit had been maintained (i.e. the floor was not levelled) for some unknown reason.

[125] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 26.

[126] See esp. Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 80–81.

[127] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 25–28.

[128] The comparative evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrud has been discussed by several commentators; cf. McCarter, "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAlla", 49; Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 81; van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 240, and n.2.

[129] Cf. van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 83; van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 239–40. The fact that fragments i(a) and pieces of i(b) and i(c) were

earthquake.[130] Even so, the possibility of a doorway or opening between rooms EE335 and EE334 cannot be discounted (see further below).

The question of how the fragments were arranged in relation to one another is of equal importance to the question of the structure to which they were attached. Here, too, it is not possible to arrive at a definitive reconstruction, but several empirical observations may be weighed in consideration. The original disposition of the fragments has been the subject of detailed studies by van der Kooij and Lemaire, and much of what follows effectively amounts to a synthesis and response to their observations.[131]

(1)   As has already been observed, the relative height of the fragments can be deduced from the position of groups i and ii in relation to the base of wall B/C5.36.[132] The impression that group ii was

found relatively higher in the rubble might suggest that the wall collapsed upon itself rather than toppling in a single piece; although, if we assume a high ceiling (> 2.5m), it may be that the collapsing wall struck the opposing wall in room EE334 before breaking in its middle.

[130] The likelihood that Phase IX had been destroyed by a succession of earth-shocks had already been discussed by Franken in *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 7–8, on the basis of cracks running through the stratigraphy. For a contemporary and apparently similar destruction pattern at Tell es-Safi in the Judean Shephelah, which has also been attributed to earthquake damage, see Aren M. Maier, "Philistia and the Judean Shephelah after Hazael: the Power Play between the Philistines, Judeans and Assyrians in the 8th Century BCE in light of the Excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath", in: *Disaster and Relief Management in Ancient Israel, Egypt and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Angelika Berlejung; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012): 245–46.

[131] Cf. esp. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 25–28; Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 85–89; idem, "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle", 41–43; van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 239–44.

[132] Owing to the urgency with which the excavators were obliged to collect and record the plaster fragments in 1967 it was not possible to study the remains of wall B/C5.36 in as much detail as might have been hoped. Nevertheless, on the basis of the available data, the dotted lines depicted in the published top plans (see fig.7.2) seem to be reasonably assured (Gerrit van der Kooij, personal communication).

originally located near the base of the wall is further supported by a slight rotation in the writing angle, suggesting a change in the posture of the scribe.[133] Furthermore, according to van der Kooij, the type of surface damage at the lowest part of fragments ii(f) and ii(g), may also be consistent with this edge having been close to a floor.[134] This has a bearing on the number of columns of text.

(2)   The possibility that there may have originally been two or more columns of text was first proposed by van der Kooij in response to the fact that group i was located some distance to the south-west of group ii, suggesting that it may have come from a point to the left of Combination II; however, as noted above, this distribution might plausibly be explained by a twisting south-west collapse of the wall.[135]

(3)   The plaster at the right-hand extremity of Combination II is angled backward, suggesting that it was probably attached to a vertical edge of some kind, perhaps a doorway. This backward angle indicates the northernmost limit of the plaster surface. Note that the right-hand margin between the edge of the plaster and the text is a few centimetres wider at the base of fragment ii(g), suggesting a slight bulge in the base of the wall.

---

[133] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 26.

[134] Ibid, 25.

[135] For the initial discussion, see Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 25–26. Lemaire, who published his study before the evidence of the earthquake damage had been unearthed, understood this as one of the key indications that there were originally two columns of text, arguing that the structural corner at the junction of wall B/C5.36 and east-west wall 42 (i.e. north-eastern corner of room EE334), would have provided support to wall B/C5.36, preventing it from toppling in a southerly direction; Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 86. However, in response, van der Kooij has observed (a) that the wall foundations in this corner are almost entirely obliterated, but, hypothetically, a south-west collapse might be explained by a doorway in wall 42, weakening that corner; (b) the pattern of earthquake damage would conceivably make a south-west collapse of both interconnected walls possible; cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 244, n.5.

(4)   As van der Kooij has argued, the fact that the lowest reaches of
       the plaster were only found at the northern end of the east face of
       wall B/C5.36, probably indicates the southern limit of the
       plastered area.[136] In other words, the absence of plaster to the
       south of group ii, means it is unlikely that there was a column to
       the left of Combination II. However, this observation must be
       qualified, as van der Kooij himself acknowledges that fragment
       xiv must have been situated to the left of group i (see below).[137]
       The absence of plaster fragments to the south of group ii might be
       explained equally by the limited extent of the plaster surface, or
       by its destruction once it had fallen from the wall.[138]

(5)   Then again, the absence of fallen plaster fragments south of group
       ii might give slight preference to the possibility that group i came
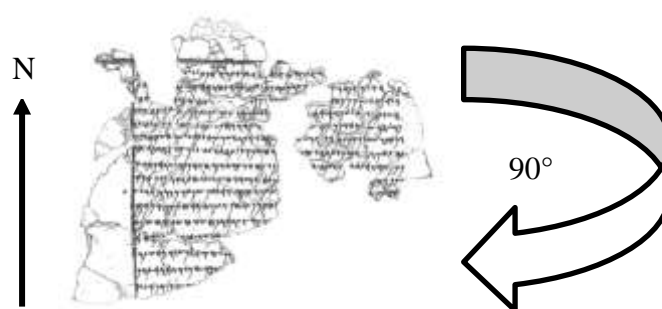
**Fig.7.4—The direction in which the plaster must have fallen
according to scenario (b)**

from a surface oriented toward the south. But, the dimensions of
this surface present a difficulty. It is probable that fragment xiv is,
more or less, contiguous with the left-hand edge of group i (see
below) and van der Kooij has estimated that the combined width
of these two columns would have been approximately 80cm, or
perhaps even a little wider.[139] However, the walls in this part of

---

[136] van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 242.

[137] Cf. ibid, 242.

[138] Note that much of the plaster that was originally situated between groups i and ii has
apparently disappeared without a trace.

[139] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 244.

the complex are, on average, approximately only 50cm thick (cf. fig.7.2). Consequently, if the text did continue around a corner, it most probably ran along the northern wall of room EE334 (i.e. the southern face of wall B/C5.42) this would presuppose that the northern end of wall B/C5.36 (bearing collection II) protruded slightly beyond wall B/C5/42, at the corner-entrance, similar to the doorway in room BB418 (fig.7.2, grid ref. E-6).
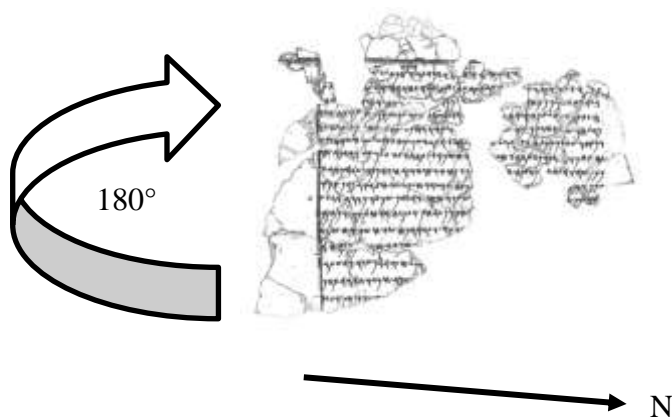

Fig.7.5— The direction in which the plaster must have fallen according to scenario (c)

(6) According to the description in *ATDA*, the fragments of group i were lying face-down in the rubble, with the vertical border-line of the left-hand margin oriented to the north and east.[140] This distribution might be consistent with the plaster having fallen from a relatively high position on either (a) the eastern wall of room EE334 (i.e. the western face of wall B/C5.36); (b) the northern wall of room EE334 (i.e. the southern face of wall B/C5.42); or (c) the western wall of room EE335 (i.e. the eastern

---

[140] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 27. The orientation of these fragments has not received as much attention in reconstructions of the text, presumably owing to the uncertain nature of the evidence. However, their orientation is suggestive of their original disposition.

face of wall B/C5.36).[141] If (a), the plaster must have fallen forward (i.e. pivoting 180 degrees along its lower edge). However, this is unlikely, due to the fact that fragments of group i were distributed among the upper levels the rubble, rather than lying beneath it, as would be expected to be the case if the wall had collapsed onto the plaster. If (b), the plaster must have fallen forward with a clock-wise twisting motion.

If (c), the plaster must have fallen with an anti-clockwise twisting motion. This might have occurred in two different ways: either falling backwards with the wall; or pivoting forward with a twisting motion along a horizontal crack at its lower edge (cf. (5) below). In either case, it must have taken considerable force to cause the fragments to rotate and fall in their final position.

Both (b) and (c) would be consistent with a south-west collapse of the corner between walls B/C5.36 and B/C5.42, dragging with it a length of the wall on either side.[142]

Fragment xiv, with the drawing of the sphinx, was lying face-down with the horizontal base-line (equivalent to the top-line of Combination I) oriented to the south. This may give preference to scenario (c), as it is difficult to imagine how the fragment could have landed in that orientation if it was originally attached to wall

---

[141] As van der Kooij observed, the fragments are unlikely to have fallen from the south (or, for that matter, the west), as, in that case, more plaster would have been found in those directions, Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 27.

[142] Two further observations may be made in response to this suggestion. 1) The estimated line of the wall in the top plans published by the excavators (fig.7.2) depict the wall as angled to the north-west, meaning that the supposed position of the corner is a short distance to the left of the corresponding corner in the south-east of room EE334. This may have predisposed the wall to topple in a south-westerly direction (i.e. from the north-eastern corner of room EE334). 2) The bench at the southern end of wall B/C5.36 may have provided some degree of structural support to the southern end of the wall.
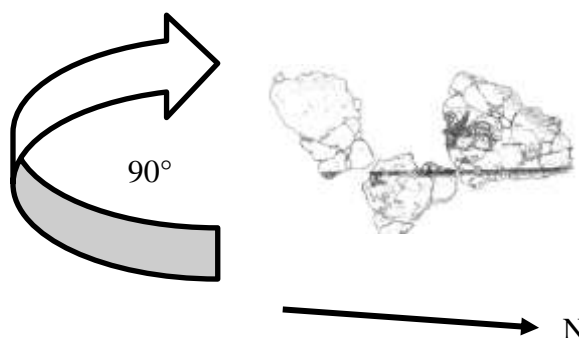
Fig.7.6— The direction in which fragment xiv must have fallen according to scenario (c)

B/C5.42.[143] Nevertheless, the general confusion of the fragments as they fell from the wall means that these observations must be held very tentatively indeed.

(7) According to a recent report by Dominic Dowling and Bijan Samali, the predominant modes of seismic damage to mud-brick buildings are "vertical corner cracking at the intersection of orthogonal walls, and horizontal, vertical, and diagonal cracking due to out-of-plane flexure…This often leads to overturning of walls and collapse of the roof".[144] This description seems to be consistent with the manner in which the plaster has cracked, and the distribution of the fragments in two principal groups.[145] However, as so little of the wall has been preserved, this must remain, to some extent, conjectural. While this does not amount

---

[143] That is, if fragment xiv had fallen facedown from the north, then, presumably, the base-line would be oriented to the north. This would be the case regardless of whether it fell with the wall or independently of it.

[144] Dominic M. Dowling and Bijan Samali, "Low-Cost and Low-Tech Reinforcement Systems for Improved Earthquake Resistance of Mud Brick Buildings", in *Proceedings of the Getty Seismic Adobe Project 2006 Colloquium* (eds. Mary Hardy, Claudia Cancino, and Gail Ostergren; Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2009), 24; cf. Ryan N. Roberts, "Terra Terror: An Interdisciplinary Study of Earthquakes in Ancient Near Eastern Texts and the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2012), 154, for a discussion the destruction at Deir ʿAlla see pp.166–69.

[145] I am indebted to Dr. Kyle Keimer for this observation.

to positive proof of a single column, it allows the possibility to be retained.

(8) The right-hand margin of Combination I is only preserved to a width of approximately 3.5cm and, consequently, it is impossible to know whether it was attached to the same vertical edge as Combination II. Nevertheless, van der Kooij described a slight decrease of plaster thickness on the right-hand side of Combination I; although, this is no longer perceptible owing to the manner in which the plaster was mounted for display. Such thinning might be consistent with the application of the plaster as it was pushed toward the edge of the wall; however, it might also have been caused by unevenness in the surface of the wall. Regardless, this thinning does not necessarily indicate that group i came from the same column as group ii, as it may equally have fallen from the right-hand side of the hypothetical south facing column.

(9) Van der Kooij also argued that there is an inclining angle (approximately 20 degrees from horizontal) running along the upper edges of Combination I and fragment xiv. Despite considerable damage to the plaster, van der Kooij argues that this incline may be traced continuously across the thinning upper edge of both fragments and indicates that fragment xiv, with the drawing of the sphinx, must have come from the left of Combination I. However, once again, the mounting of the inscription means that this cannot be verified.[146] The original proximity of fragment xiv and Combination I is further suggested by the location of fragment xiv with group i in room EE334.[147]

(10) The composition of the horizontal border line on fragments i(a); i(b); xiii(a); and xiv, provides further evidence of multiple columns. The border on fragments xiii(a) and xiv consists of 5

---

[146] Lemaire, "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla", 82.

[147] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 242.

lines (in a 4 + 1 pattern), while the border at the top of i(a) and i(b) consists of 4 lines (in a 3 + 1 pattern), which tend to separate slightly on the right-hand side.[148] Furthermore, examination of the uninscribed space above and below the border on both groups of fragments leaves no doubt that there must have been some sort of uninscribed surface to the left of Combination I.

(11) As was discussed by Hoftijzer, the second half of line 2 on fragment v(q) was apparently intentionally left blank (cf. §5.1.2).[149] Although not certain, it is probable that this fragment should be associated with the end of Combination I. This suggests internal section divisions, but it remains unclear whether this *vacat* should be interpreted as evidence of the end of a column, or only of an awareness of internal divisions (i.e. paragraphing).

(12) Finally, in addition to the inscribed fragments and the drawing of the sphinx, there were a number of unadorned fragments and one, xiii(c), with a zigzag pattern drawn in red ink. This suggests that a section of the plaster surface was left blank or perhaps decorated with drawings and patterns as was the case at Kuntillet ʿAjrud.[150]

These considerations allow a tentative reconstruction of the plaster surface. Observations (1), (6) and (7) admit the possibility that the plaster was applied directly to the eastern face of wall B/C5.36. In light of observation (6), this seems to be the most likely of the viable alternatives. If that is correct, observations (1), (3) and (8) suggest that the text was probably arranged in a single column, with Combination I situated above Combination II. This does not necessarily imply that Combinations I and II

---

[148] Cf. ibid, 242–45 and the reconstruction on p.243. Note also that fragment xiii(a) evinces a vertical stroke, perhaps indicating a partition of the plaster surface above the line; i.e. to the left of the sphinx. This partition is not repeated below the line.

[149] Cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 88.

[150] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 240, and n.2. In fact, van der Kooij reported the presence of a number of drawings on frags. viii(a), xiii(a) and xiv; cf. Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 25.

contain a continuous narrative; cf. observation (11). Finally, observations (9), (10) and (12) suggest that there was a plaster surface to the left of the column of text, which contained at least the drawing of the sphinx, and perhaps included other drawings as well.

Unfortunately, no single line of either Combination is preserved intact; but, there is reason to believe that not much plaster has been lost between fragments i(c) and i(d), suggesting an inscribed column width of a little over 30cm.[151] The margin on the left-hand edge of ii(c) is approximately 9cm wide,[152] suggesting a total column width of a little over 40cm. Although we cannot be absolutely certain, this reconstruction provides a useful working hypothesis, and a point of departure for an analysis of the spatial context of the inscription(s).

Two additional factors provide circumstantial evidence for a single column of text, with Combination I situated above Combination II:

(1) Although their purpose is not entirely clear, the "benches" in room EE335 suggest *prima facie* that the room had a special character. Moreover, the positioning of these benches opposite and facing the plaster surface on wall B/C5.36 suggests an interconnectedness that would be disrupted if the text continued around a corner into room EE334 (see below).

(2) Although the internal sequence of the two fragments is a matter of debate, there is reason to believe that Combination II references themes that are introduced in Combination I (see §5.1.2.2). In fact, if the proposed in interpretation for II.17 is accepted, it seems that in the DAPT ספר has a technical meaning, referring to the text itself. In light of the available evidence, it is reasonable to suppose that the ספר referenced in II.17 (assuming that reading is correct) is to be identified with that introduced in I.1. This testifies to the coherence of the two combinations, with the superscription in Combination I coming first; although, it is

---

[151] Cf. van der Kooij, "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā", 244.

[152] Cf. ibid, 244.

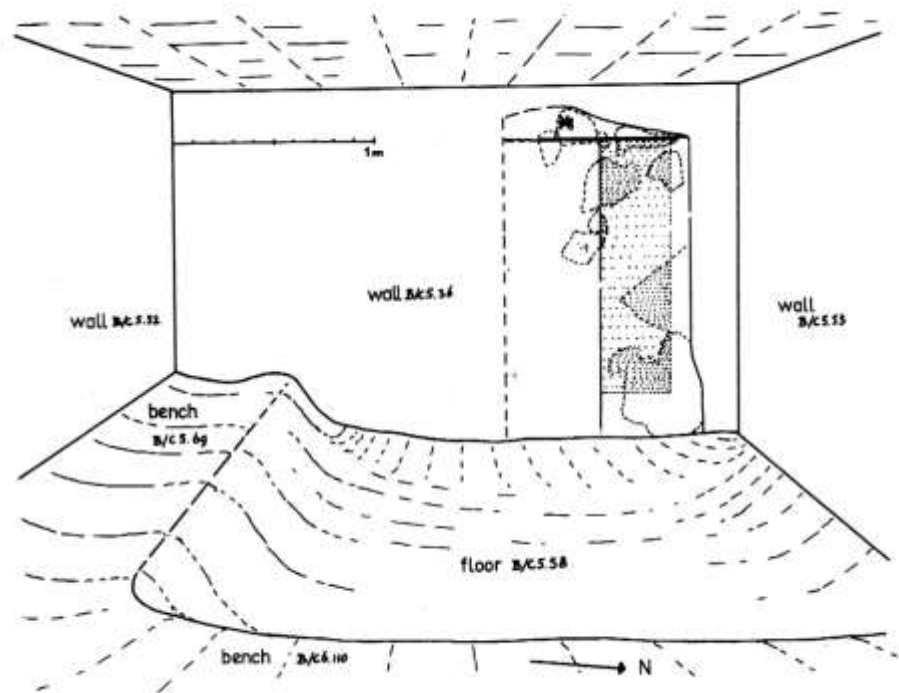possible that II.17 references a no-longer extant portion of the text.

Fig.7.7—van der Kooij's schematic reconstruction of room EE335, showing a single column of text

One final question pertains to whether the plaster was applied to the wall specifically in order to serve as a writing surface? As was noted above, comparable plaster surfaces have been discovered in relation to five other walls associated with Phase IX. These surfaces were not discussed in *ATDA*, as they did not come to light until the joint Jordanian-Dutch excavations of the 1970s and 1980s; however, the desirability of comparative data was mentioned at that time.[153] It seems that these plastered surfaces only covered a portion of the walls to which they were affixed, and it was suggested by the excavators that they may have been functional, intended to reflect and maximise the available light.[154] In light of the fact that room EE335, with the "Balaam" text, is apparently the only

---

[153] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*, 28, n.7.

[154] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", , 20.

place in which the plaster was inscribed, it is probable that, in this case, the use of the plaster as a writing surface was secondary.

7.6.2. *The room*

Assuming the reconstruction just described, the most striking feature of room EE335 is the configuration of the "benches" (B/C5.69 and B/C6.110) facing the plaster text(s) in the north-western corner. As noted above, there is reason to believe that the use of the plaster as a writing surface was secondary, and it may have been this configuration that suggested its suitability for such a purpose in the first place.

The benches themselves were fashioned from old wall stumps dating from an earlier phase and must have been a deliberate and original feature of the Phase IX room.[155] Since no comparable benches were found in any other Phase IX loci, it seems reasonable to conclude that room EE335 always had a special function.[156] But it would be premature to assume *a priori* that the room functioned as some kind of cultic space, as the purpose of the benches remains unclear (cf. §4.5).[157] It should be noted, however, that the distance from wall B/C5.36 to the eastern bench (approximately 3.75m), and the acute angle between the inscribed surface and the western end of the southern bench, would have made it impossible

---

[155] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 20.

[156] Two partially preserved stone and mud-brick "platforms" of indeterminate height were uncovered in the south-eastern part of the published excavation area (grid ref. A-8) in what the excavators have interpreted as a complex of storage rooms; however, these do not dominate the room in the same manner as the "benches" in room EE335 and do not seem to be directly comparable; cf. van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 82.

[157] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, for example, noted that some sanctuary rooms have benches along the walls to put objects on (cf. §4.5); although, they commented that only the southern bench would have been suitable for this purpose (presumably because the eastern bench was not backed by a wall to stop offerings from falling off) and, in any case, no such objects were found in the room; cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 20–21.
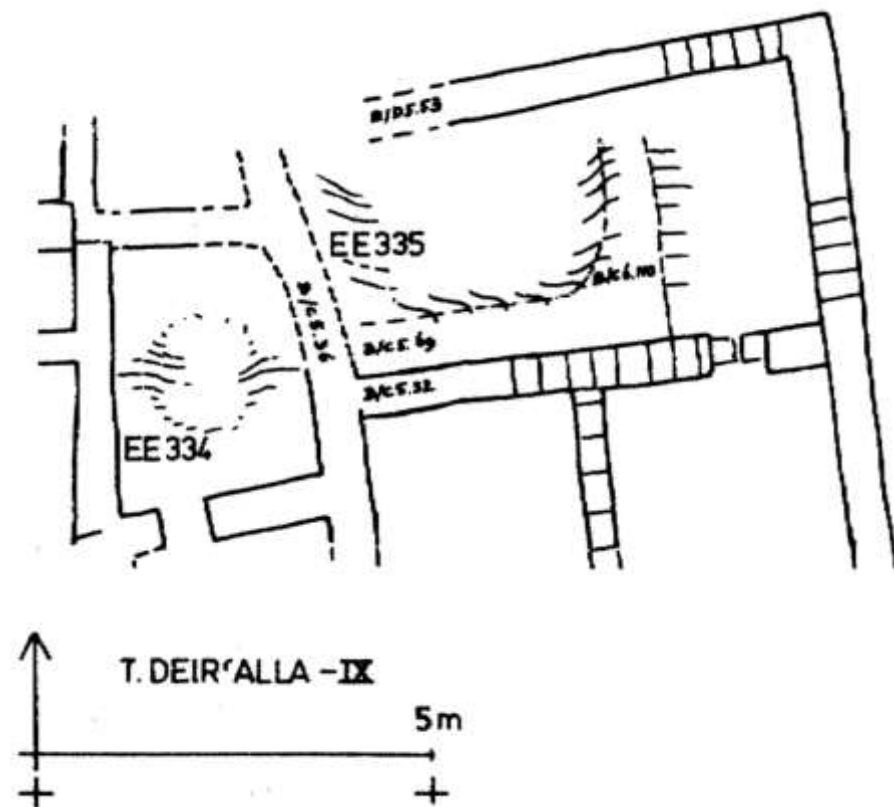
Fig.7.8—Enlarged top plan of rooms EE334 and EE335

for someone sitting in those positions to read the text(s).[158] This difficulty would have been compounded by the fact that the room, which was apparently roofed with reed matting, must have been comparatively dark; although, these difficulties could be alleviated if the narrative was read aloud by someone standing in the north-western corner (cf. II.17).

Regardless of the benches' purpose, their position in relation to the text(s) creates a conceptually unified space—although, this is admittedly an interpretation—suggesting that the functions of both were intrinsically bound together, and this, in turn, suggests that in some sense the space between wall B/C5.36 and the eastern bench (that is, the majority of room EE335) was probably also given over to that purpose.

---

[158] I experimented with this in a limited way in the relatively well-lit conditions in the Jordan Museum and found that the small size of the letters made it very difficult to read the text from a distance of more than a couple of meters.

This apparently unified configuration raises the question of the location of the entrances and thoroughfares through room EE335. There is evidence that there was originally a doorway located in the south-eastern corner of the room, which had been deliberately sealed-up sometime prior to the destruction of Phase IX (grid ref. C-6).[159] Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing why this alteration was made; whether it was associated with a change in the function of the room, perhaps related to the addition of the DAPT, implying increasing specialisation, or whether it is evidence that at some stage the room was decommissioned. Then again, as noted above, there is also the possibility of a doorway in either the western wall or the north-western corner of the room; though, no trace of a opening was found in either location. This lack of evidence is due, in part, to the difficulties involved with identifying the walls and thresholds of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX (see above), which is compounded in room EE335 by the speed with which the excavators were compelled to work in order to recover the plaster fragments in 1967.[160] Nevertheless, it should be noted that, as far as can be ascertained, most Phase IX rooms had only one entrance, or two if they served as a passageway to another room (cf. fig.7.2). Accordingly, while there may have been an entrance in either wall B/C5.36 or the north-western corner of room EE335, it is comparatively unlikely that there was an entrance in both. In light of the angled plaster on the right-hand edge of Combination II, it seems reasonable to infer the existence of a doorway or opening in the north-western corner of the room.

This inference is further supported by practical considerations, in that if there was an entrance in the wall between rooms EE335 and EE334, anyone entering the bench-room would have to pass through the space between the benches and the text(s), thereby disrupting the unity of the room. The same would be true, to a lesser extent, if the entrance was in the

---

[159] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 21.

[160] Hence the north-western corner is left blank in the published top plans. Cf. the description of the discovery and recovery of the fragments in Franken, "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited", esp. 7–8.

north-western corner of room EE335, although in that case someone entering the room could make their way along the northern wall with minimal disruption. Then again, this consideration might suggest that there were special times when the room was sealed or demarcated (perhaps physically) for the use of those within, and that during those times no one was able to enter from the outside.

Notwithstanding the fact that the inscribed surface was, therefore, apparently situated near a doorway, there is no reason to think that it was directly associated with the liminal space, as was apparently the case with *Kajr* 4.2 and 4.3. Rather, this proximity to the entrance should be attributed to the secondary use of the plaster as a writing surface, and it may reasonably be assumed that any interaction with the text(s) took place fully and exclusively within the room.

Another possibility was suggested by, Franken, who, in his later works, proposed an altogether different reconstruction of the bench-room. Franken argued that room EE335 together with the two rooms to its south comprised a single complex without doorways that was entered by an opening from above.[161] A similar situation is evinced in at least one other Phase IX room (grid ref. B-4/5), where the walls were preserved without doorways to a height of 1m. There, entry was apparently attained via stairs on either side of the western wall.[162] According to Franken, the design of the bench-room complex, thus reconstructed, might be interpreted as a symbolic representation of a sacred cave or grotto where contact could be established between the living and the divine.[163] As such, he suggested that

---

[161] H. J. Franken, "Balaam at Deir ʿAlla and the Cult of Baal", in *Archaeology, History and Culture in Palestine and the Near East: Essays in Memory of Albert E. Glock* (ASOR Books 3; ed. Tomis Kapitan; Atlanta Ga.: Scholars, 1999), 194; idem, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 42–43.

[162] This room has been interpreted as a storeroom, cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 18; Franken, "Balaam at Deir ʿAlla and the Cult of Baal", 194.

[163] Franken, "Balaam at Deir ʿAlla and the Cult of Baal", 195; idem, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 43.

the complex might be compared to the possible Cave I shrine at Jerusalem and the extramural rock-cut shrine at Samaria.[164] Significantly, this reconstruction would imply that the room (or, rather, the complex of rooms) was deliberately segregated from the rest of the Phase IX complex. However, Franken made no attempt to justify his contention that there was no doorway leading into room EE335, and his reconstruction is rendered unlikely by several factors: (1) as has already been noted, virtually no traces remain of the wall foundations in the north-western corner of room EE335; nevertheless, the convex curve on the right-hand side of Combination II suggests that these fragments were attached to a vertical edge. For the reasons outlined above, this is best interpreted as a doorway, rather than an independent structure; (2) Franken did not account for the secondary sealing of the doorway in the south-eastern corner of room EE335, which clearly indicates that at some stage the three rooms were no longer considered a single complex and would be problematic if entry was attained from the south-east, as Franken supposed;[165] (3) there is no

---

[164] For the description and interpretation of Cave I at Jerusalem, cf. Henk J. Franken and Margreet L. Steiner, *Excvations at Jerusalem 1961–1967, vol. 2: The Iron Age Extramural Quarter on the South-East Hill* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 125–28; for the extramural shrine at Samaria, cf. J. W. Crowfoot, Kathleen M. Kenyon and E. L. Sukenik, *Samaria-Sebaste: Reports of the Work of the Joint Expedition in 1931–1933 and of the British Expedition in 1935, No. I: The Buildings at Samaria* (London: The Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942), 23–24. For a comparative discussion and interpretation of both sites see Margreet L. Steiner, "Two Popular Cult Sites of Ancient Palestine: Cave 1 in Jerusalem and e 207 in Samaria", *SJOT* 11 (1997): 16–28. Franken also interpreted the fenestrated incense stands from Tanaach and Megiddo and similar models from Cyprus, which depict a single room with an elevated window but no door, as stylistic representations of such shrines. Franken laid particular emphasis on the Megiddo stand with depictions of serpents beneath the opening, which he understood to be chthonic symbolism; cf. Franken, "Balaam at Deir ʿAlla and the Cult of Baal", 194; idem, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", , 42–43.

[165] Although it is possible that the layout of the rooms and the means of ingress (especially if attained through the roof) might have been altered several times during their use.

evidence of stairs providing access to any of the rooms, as in B-4/5; although, the means of access to the two southern rooms remains a problem. It should also be noted that one of the principle criteria for interpreting the sites at Jerusalem and Samaria as cult sites was their contents, which included, among other things, pillar figurines, incense stands and house shrines; however, these objects were conspicuously absent from room EE335 (see below).[166] Accordingly, while Franken may be correct with regard to the basic function of the bench-room, there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to support his suggestion that it was designed as a symbolic representation of a sacred grotto.

Several other features of room EE335 are worthy of note. First, the configuration of the benches, text(s) and (probably) the doorway gives the room a westward orientation. Unfortunately there has not yet been a detailed study of the conventions of architectural orientation in Transjordan. However, it can be demonstrated that this westward orientation is in contrast to the prevailing custom in Israel and Judah, where, as Avraham Faust has demonstrated, there was a conscientious avoidance of the west in architectural design.[167] Faust has further argued on ethnographic and linguistic grounds that this practice most likely reflects an underlying cosmological principle, which imbued the west with negative connotations associated with the sea/chaos, sunset and death.[168] Interestingly, Faust has argued that the antecedents of this practice can already be observed in the Bronze Age, suggesting that it is not an exclusively Israelite custom.[169] Whatever the case, it is probably

---

[166] Cf. Margreet L. Steiner, "Two Popular Cult Sites of Ancient Palestine: Cave 1 in Jerusalem and e 207 in Samaria", *SJOT* 11 (1997): 23–26.

[167] Cf. Avraham Faust, "Doorway Orientation, Settlement Planning and Cosmology in Ancient Israel during Iron Age II", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 20 (2001): 129–55. While Faust's observations were limited, to a large extent, to the orientation of doorways, at Deir ʿAlla the westward orientation is assured on the basis of the presumed relationship between the benches and the text(s).

[168] Cf. Faust, "Doorway Orientation", 140–44, esp. n.7.

[169] Faust, "Doorway Orientation", 145–47.

significant that this westward alignment means that the room and anyone viewing the DAPT would have been oriented *toward* the setting sun. Given that Combination I describes a nocturnal revelation, this might suggest that the room—and any activities conducted within it—was intended primarily for nocturnal use. Interestingly, Ibrahim and van der Kooij also raised this possibility when they commented, in an attempt to account for the general lack of artefacts in the room, "perhaps it included a place to sleep, to obtain a vision!"[170]

Second, apart from a few unremarkable pottery-sherds the room was almost completely devoid of objects.[171] As has already been noted (§4.5), the fact that the destruction of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX occurred suddenly means that the objects found within the various rooms is likely to give a fairly good indication of the way the complex was used at the time of destruction; although, in room EE335 this should be qualified by the possibility, noted above, that the space was decommissioned sometime prior to the destruction of Phase IX.[172] As such, it is interesting to note that the only object that was found inside the room was an oil lamp, discovered near the north-western corner (that is, close to the DAPT).[173] This may support the inference that the room was used at night; however, this too should be qualified, as the fact that room EE335 was apparently roofed (with the doorway facing north), means that it may be assumed that the room was relatively dark much of the time.

Third, according to the reconstruction outlined above, it is interesting to note that the drawing of the sphinx faces *away* from the doorway. Consequently, if the image was intended to have an apotropaic function in

---

[170] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 21.

[171] Cf. Henk J. Franken and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim, "Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla. 1976–1978", *ADAJ* 22 (1977/78): 68; Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 21.

[172] On the likelihood that the contents of room EE335 reflect its use at the time of the destruction, cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", , 21, n.3.

[173] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 21.

terms of guarding the text (which is by no means certain), this was evidently not conceived in terms of any threat associated with the doorway (cf. §4.9.2.1.6).[174] Instead, a possible, albeit speculative, explanation might be sought in the common Semitic worldview that conceives the past as being in front and the future behind.[175] According to this embodied metaphor, the fact that the sphinx has its back to the DAPT might indicate that—in the eyes of the illustrator—the prophecy had not yet been fulfilled. Was the sphinx perhaps guarding against the woes described in the text? Or was it intended to guard against the recurrence of the calamities?

7.6.3. *The building complex*

As was noted by Ibrahim and van der Kooij, the general difficulty in identifying doorways throughout the Phase IX settlement means that it is difficult to combine rooms in to larger units.[176] Be that as it may, the blocking of the doorway in the south-eastern corner of room EE335 shows a clear and deliberate intention to separate the bench-room from the

Fig.7.9—The hand-shaped stone object discovered to the south of room EE335

---

[174] On the iconography of the sphinx as a protective figure in Israel/Palestine, cf. Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (OBO 169; Freiburg: University Press, 1999), 234, with references.

[175] Cf. Nicolas Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (BS 85; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), esp. 35–36.

[176] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 18.

southern rooms. However, as noted above, the motivation and timing of this are not known. Even so, mention should be made here of one unusual find; namely, a small hand-shaped object made of serpentine (fig.7.9) that was found on the floor of the south-western room (grid ref. B/C-5/6).[177] It has been suggested by the excavators that this object might have been connected in some way with incense or ointment and, as such, it might be related to the special function of room EE335—albeit from a period before the sealing of the doorway. Intriguingly the stem of the spoon-shaped stone object is hollow, leading Ibraham and van der Kooij to refer to it as a "pipe", and this remarkable characteristic invites speculation.[178] If room EE335 did in fact function as a sacred space for receiving or inducing visions, might this object have had a function related to the use of hallucinogenic substances?[179] Of course, this cannot be substantiated, and the function of the object and the reasons for its occurring in that location remain uncertain.

[177] Cf. Franken and Ibrahim, "Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla. 1976–1978", 68, and pls. 28, 29; cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 20–21, n.2.

[178] Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 20–21, n.2

[179] Volkert Haas has collated considerable textual evidence for the use of hallucinogens in the ancient Near East, including a possible reference in VAT 10057, obv.29, to the use of Juniper smoke as part of a ritual to induce a dream-vision about the underworld; cf. Volkert Haas, *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 121–23, esp. §X.2.5. For an English translation of the text, cf. *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA 3; ed. Alasdair Livingstone; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), 68–76, esp. 70; note that Haas' is not the only possible interpretation of the text and the juniper smoke might not necessarily have been related directly to dream incubation. Haas also cited a number of allusions to the use of hallucinogenic liquid concoctions, and it might be that the spoon-pipe was designed as a sort of funnel for mixing and imbibing liquids. In this regard, it is also interesting to note two bone tubes or "pipes", at least one of which was recovered from Phase IX, the function of which is also unknown; cf. van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 83–84, fig.104, and p. 110 objects 88 and 89.

The nature of the space to the north of room EE335 is also relatively uncertain, but it appears to have been a sort of communal courtyard (see below).[180] Consequently, if there was a doorway in the north-western corner of room EE335, access into the room would have been direct (i.e. not mediated via other rooms), further testifying to the separateness of the space in which the inscription was found.

7.6.4. *The total excavated area* (*Phase IX*)

It is difficult to know precisely what sequence to follow when describing the total excavated area of Phase IX, as it is inevitable that to some extent the order in which the rooms are introduced will form a prejudicial impression of their interrelatedness.[181] It should also be noted that the following observations relate only to the area represented in the published top plan (fig.7.2), and it is not known precisely how this complex was related to the rest of the Phase IX village. In what follows I begin at the northern end of the excavated area for the reason that if Ephʿal and Naveh are correct to translate the words "of the gate" on the inscribed stone and vessel (cf. §5.2.2), and hence to associate them with a system of commercial measurements, then it is reasonable to suppose that the entrance to the complex as a whole is to be sought to the north, in the vicinity of the rooms in which those objects were found—possibly adjoining the north-south alleyway (grid ref. E-6).[182] Indeed, even today,

---

[180] Cf. van der Kooij, "Use of Space in Settlements", 71, fig. 5.3.

[181] In his later works Franken adopted a practice of describing the complex by beginning at the eastern end and moving west; cf. Franken, "Balaam at Deir ʿAlla and the Cult of Baal", 183–202; idem, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 25–52. It is possible that in this he was influenced by the method of van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, which followed the exhibition at the *Rijksmuseum* van Oudheden in Leiden (cf. the forward to *Picking up the Threads*), focussing on the relatively well preserved remains of the south-eastern rooms.

[182] Assuming, that is, that commercial activity would have been conducted in and around the entrance or "gate" of the complex, as the expression implies, cf. Ephʿal and Naveh, "The Jar of the Gate", 62.

artificial terrace on the north-western slopes affords the easiest access to the summit of the tell (cf. fig.7.10).[183] Furthermore, this seems to have been roughly the location of main entrance in the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages.[184] But it is stressed that this is only a tentative hypothesis. Due to the severe erosion of the northern slopes and the limited excavation to the south and west, the location of the main entrance to the settlement cannot be proved, and perhaps all that can be said in support of this hypothesis is that it is not inconsistent with the available evidence. Accordingly, I will discuss the plan of the settlement in terms of five interrelated zones: four roughly corresponding to the north-eastern, north-western, south-eastern and south-western quarters respectively, and a fifth, comprising the (more or less) central courtyard and the bench-room.

There is little that can be said with certainty about the rooms in the north-eastern quarter, and at present it is best to avoid speculation.

---

[183] Note that the slopes to the south and east are particularly steep and actually rise above the Phase IX remains (cf. fig.7.1). This leaves the shallower incline to the north and west. However, Franken has noted that the wind has greatly enlarged the western summit of the tell, making it impossible to determine its original shape; cf. Franken, *Excavations at Deir ʿAlla 1*, 3.

[184] Cf. Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan: 2nd Season", 363–64, 368. Circumstantially, it is interesting to note that a gateway on the northern slopes would be aligned *toward* the settled parts of the valley, which may be consistent with the general alignment of the other architectural features of the Phase IX settlement. As van der Kooij observed, "by this orientation the inhabitants expressed their feeling of being part of the valley structure – they apparently liked to live there!"; cf. Gerrit van der Kooij, "Use of Space in Settlements", 71. This comports well with Kaptijn's conclusion that the irrigation systems of the central Jordan Valley gave rise to an integrated regional network; in other words, a community (see §7.1).

Fig.7.10—The northern slopes of tell Deir ʿAlla during the first season of excavations.

The area to the north-west is severely eroded and it is impossible to know what percentage of this part of the tell has been lost.[185] Nevertheless, it was in this quarter that the complex of four small rooms in which the inscribed jar and stone were found. The other finds do little to clarify the function of these rooms; although, the pottery repertoire seems to reflect storage activities.[186] Two other unusual objects were found in these rooms. One was an ornate chalice and the other an oversized loomweight. The nature and collocation of these unusual objects led Franken to postulate a cultic context.[187] However, it should be noted that the pierced conical "loomweight" is unlike any of the numerous loomweights found at the site.[188] Was this object, too, a unit of measure? This possibility was apparently entertained by van der Kooij and Ibrahim, and lends support to

---

[185] According to van der Kooij (personal communication), perhaps as much as 10m has eroded away from the northern slopes.

[186] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 22.

[187] Cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 44–46; Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 21.

[188] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 21.

the suggestion that the material repertoire of the rooms might be connected to commerce.[189]

The complex of rooms to the south-east (grid ref. A-7; B-7/8) has been discussed in detail by van der Kooij and Ibrahim, who concluded that they were probably used for domestic activities connected with the preparation of food and weaving, as well as for storing domestic objects, including grains, cooking utensils, tools and dung (presumably for fuel).[190] Nevertheless, several items, including several bone inlay panels, suggest a degree of opulence.[191]

The complex of rooms to the south-west is more difficult to interpret. In addition to the usual domestic and storage spaces this quarter also includes a number of unusual architectural features. One room (grid ref. C-3/4) had a large brick lined bath shaped pit (DD417), in the bottom of the pit were a grinding stone, some pestles and 10 loomweights. The function of this installation is unclear.[192] The burnt room directly to the east (grid ref. C-4) had a 1m deep trapezoidal pit with a step in the north-western corner (DD409); 30 loomweights were found inside this pit, leading Ibrahim and van der Kooij to suggest that it may have been a special kind of loom.[193] Finally, reference should be made to the enigmatic shallow pit in the centre of room EE334 (see above). The purpose of these features remains a mystery.[194]

The central courtyard seems to have functioned as a sort of hub of the excavated area, admitting access to each of the complexes from the east and west. One notable feature is a clay bin (grid ref. D-7) at the

---

[189] Cf. ibid, 21–22.

[190] van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 82–88, esp. 85, 86.

[191] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 23.

[192] Cf. ibid, 20. It has been noted, that is seems unlikely that this installation was used for dyeing since no dye residues have been found; cf. Vilders, "The Stratigraphy and the Pottery of Phase M at Deir ʿAlla", 190.

[193] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 20.

[194] Vilders suggested dry storage of grain or preparation of flax as possible explanations, cf. Vilders, "The Stratigraphy and the Pottery of Phase M at Deir ʿAlla", 190.

eastern end of the courtyard. Perhaps this served as a trough for feeding animals, or a bin for the dry-storage of grain. A number of cooking installations were located near the centre of the courtyard. Given the total absence of vessels in room EE335, there is no evidence that these cooking facilities should be connected directly with the benches or the DAPT.[195] As such, they may have served as communal facilities for the preparation of food.[196] It is, therefore, significant that room EE335 was apparently accessed directly from this communal space. On the one-hand, it seems that the room was deliberately segregated from the rest of the complex (e.g. the blocking of the door in the south-eastern corner); on the other, it seems that it was not entirely removed from the quotidian life of the inhabitants.

7.7. CONCLUSIONS

The picture that emerges from the archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX is of a modest village, organised according to individual households. For the most part, the settlement seems to reflect the material culture of the Central Jordan Valley and to have been integrated into the valley network; though there are signs of probable trade connections to the west during this period. There is little that can be confidently described as *cultic*, but a number of factors, including the scale of weaving activity and a number of unusual installations and artefacts—including the bench-room and the DAPT—are extraordinary.

---

[195] That is to say, there is nothing to support the view that the bench-room was used for ritual feasting, or the consumption of food in any other context.

[196] Cf. Ibrahim and van der Kooij, "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX", 18–19. Note, however, that food preparation was not restricted to this area alone. A number of smaller cooking installations (*tannurs*) were located inside rooms of the Phase IX complex, and these might have served as "winter ovens"; cf. Elena Rova, "Tannurs, Tannur Concentrations and Centralised Bread Production at Tell Beydar and Elsewhere: An Overview", in *Paleonutrition and Food Practices in the Ancient Near East: Towards a Multidisciplinary Approach* (ed. Lucio Milano; HANEM 14; Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2014), 127, n.46.

Notwithstanding the apparently modest nature of the settlement in this period, the technical skill evinced in the preparation and execution of the DAPT indicates that at some point there must have been at least one individual, proficient in the scribal arts, who resided at the site or passed through. Perhaps it was this individual who occupied the richly adorned household in the south-eastern quarter?

The layout of the bench-room (room EE335) and its relative segregation suggest that the room had a highly specialised function, distinct from the more mundane aspects of life in the settlement. Unfortunately, the absence of artefacts means there is little that can be concluded about this function, but several features invite speculation. The positioning of the benches in relation to the DAPT suggests that the western part of the room was a focal point of whatever activities were conducted in the space. However, as noted above, the special function of the room probably predates the inscribing of the plaster surface. As such, the DAPT should be understood to be related—but not essential—to the function of the bench-room. All of this would seem to suggest the DAPT did not feature, in an interactive sense, in the regular daily activities of the community. This might, in turn, suggest that their presence was merely decorative, but, as was noted in Chapter 5 the effort that was taken to correct the text, together with the possible injunction to recite the text(s) orally in II.17, suggests that their contents were important. Furthermore, although the benches are not ideal for reading the inscription, they are well situated for viewing the DAPT, or listening to a performance of the text(s). This may suggest that the DAPT had ritual significance.

Yet, it is possible to go even further in our speculations. In light of the contents of the DAPT and the fact that the room was oriented toward the west, it may be that the space was related to the incubation of dreams or some other mantic practices. The phenomenon of dream incubation is

attested throughout the ancient Near East.[197] And, as at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, this hypothesis is consistent with the almost complete lack of artefacts in the room. In this case, it is possible to explain the clay figurines as offerings (dedicated or stored outside of the bench-room) related to the practices of dream incubation—but this is conjecture.[198]

Whatever the case, the layout of room EE335 strongly suggests that people were interacting with the text in some manner, within the physical and situational confines of the room.

---

[197] Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene*, 27 – 60, note especially Kim's discussion of place (pp. 68–69).

[198] Note, especially, the possible fertility connotations of the figurines, which corresponds to the fertility motif in the DAPT. On the figurines, cf. Franken, "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion", 46–48.

PART THREE

══ CONCLUSION ══

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

We began this study by asking what could impel a functioning oral society to set its traditions in writing? Or, more succinctly, what were early literary texts for? Rather than attempting to develop a general model of textualisation, the study instead sought contextual controls in the form of demonstrable instances of literary text production, where the context of reception could be used as a basis for logical inferences about the text's audience(s) and function. To this end, the study was devoted to the plaster texts from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla, and the question of functionality was approached via consideration of three variables: format, content, and situation.

In what follows, the KAPT and DAPT will each be discussed in turn, with a focus on localised and particularised characteristics of text production. This discussion will be followed by comparative considerations and finally, generalised observations and desiderata concerning the study of textualisation and the origins of the Hebrew Bible.

8.1. THE KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD PLASTER TEXTS

In the first place it can be noted that the KAPT emerged within a localised writing culture. To an extent, the overall impression of the extraordinarily high rate of text production might be distorted by the accidents of preservation (owing to the favourable conditions for the preservation of ink-based texts at Kuntillet ʿAjrud), and the unusual concentration of inscriptions on the decorated pithoi. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the KAPT were produced alongside numerous examples of written correspondence (e.g. *Kajr*3.1 and 3.6), probable educational pieces (e.g.

*Kajr*3.1, 3.6, 3.11–14), and other occasional documents and literary texts (e.g. *Kajr*3.9). Consequently, it seems that writing would not have struck the audience(s) as something out of the ordinary. What is more, it is probable that one, or more, literate individuals were stationed at the site on a (semi)permanent basis. It does not follow, however, that the KAPT were intended for a literate audience. In fact, the awkward position of the texts (particularly collection 1) would have made them difficult to read. Nevertheless, they must have been highly visible in their prominent position framing the entrance to Building A. This suggests that the primary function of the plaster texts related to their material or visual presence, rather than a denotative purpose.

In addition, the prominent position of the KAPT, and the repetition of the DN YHWH of Teman across both the plaster and pithoi inscriptions, suggests that the plaster texts were authorised and sanctioned by the community. As such, they may be taken as a reflection of the community's beliefs and practices.

In terms of content, the most striking feature of the KAPT (and other texts) is their close association with the geographical situation of Kuntillet ʿAjrud in the remote South. This is most evident in the case of collection 1, at the entrance to Building A: e.g. the reference to YHWH of Teman (*Kajr*4.1; cf. 3.6 and 3.9); the southern theophany (*Kajr*4.2); and the (possible) allusion to Cain/Kenites (*Kajr*4.3).

What could explain this preoccupation with place? The answer lies in the immanent tradition. Comparison with biblical theophany motifs suggests that the Southern regions of Sinai and Edom (Teman) were closely identified with the immanence of God—traditionally it was from these southern regions that he would march forth to succour his people (cf. Judg 5:4). What is more, the evidence seems to suggest that, during Phase 3, Kuntillet ʿAjrud was occupied by a community of priests who were also prophets, drawn to the area as a place of divine immanence. Further still, the eastward orientation of the hill-top, the solar imagery of the southern theophany tradition, and depiction of the processional on Pithos B suggest

an association with the cult of Yʜᴡʜ of Teman, whose appearing was (symbolically) manifest as the sun rose each morning over Edom to the East. Hence, the southern theophany tradition was probably at the forefront of the community's experience and self-awareness.

This leaves the question: why were the texts written on the walls? Two explanations seem plausible. One possibility is that the texts served an apotropaic function, guarding against the *sancta contagion* as the morning sun rose over the complex; but in this case we must ask why was collection 1 written on the interior walls of the bench-room? The other possibility is that the texts served a political function, proclaiming theological justification for the existence of a northern Israelite site in the potentially volatile regions of the far south. In this case, the texts might have simultaneously served two purposes: an exclusive one, relating to the separation and segregation of the local nomadic communities, and an inclusive one, giving expression to the Israelite settlers' perceived right to be in that place.

Ultimately, the second alternative is better able to account for the selection of the texts, and their placement in the entrance to Building A. In this regard, it should be reiterated that it is difficult to ascertain an apotropaic connection in the case of the apparently mythopoeic *Kajr*4.3; but that a theologising-political function is compatible with the possible allusion to Kenites. Consequently, I cautiously propose that collection 1 served a political purpose, but not in the sense that it was meant to be read and thereby persuade a reading audience through carefully constructed arguments; rather, its power lay in its invoking the authority of the immanent tradition and adapting it to the exigencies of the immediate situation. As such, the texts may be described as emblematic/connotative, rather than denotative.

If this is correct, then the KAPT may be viewed in terms of identity construction, as a projection of an awareness of cultural differentiation. In this case, it is reasonable to suppose that the texts were reproduced from traditional oral lore, since their efficacy is predicated on their indexical

relationship with the Hebraic tradition. As such, we may infer that writing served a memorialising or mnemonic purpose, rather than a generative or creative one.

Collection 2 is more difficult to explain. It is possible however, that this group of texts simply served a decorative function, perhaps inspired by collection 1 and the availability of a blank plaster surface. This might be indirectly supported by the variety of (elaborate) scripts and drawings on the Pithoi. That is, it is possible that a number of the drawings and scripts on both media were produced purely for the pleasure of writing, and an aesthetic appreciation of the written word; as alluded to in Chapter 4, Arabic architectural calligraphic traditions might be illustrative in this regard. But, even if the impulse to write was essentially aesthetic, it is likely that the inspiration for the texts' content was derived from the situational context. In other words, it seems likely that the themes were drawn from the daily activities of the community. To support this view, we may cite the possible Yahwistic hymn, *Kajr*3.9, which was apparently accompanied by the illustration of the processional on Pithos B. In that case, it is tempting to interpret *Kajr*4.5 (the possible allusion to a prophet), and/or *Kajr*4.6 (apparently containing reported speech), as prophetic apophthegms (cf. the DAPT), related to the mantic practices of the community; but that is conjecture.

8.2. THE DEIR ʿALLA PLASTER TEXTS

The evidence for a general culture of text production is less extensive at Deir ʿAlla than it is at Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Moreover, unlike the KAPT, the evidence seems to suggest that interaction with the DAPT was restricted to a segregated part of the Phase IX village.

The DAPT can best be characterised as a prophetic narrative, recording a doom oracle (Combination I) and its resolution (Combination II). This suggests that its purpose was commemorative: either as a warning of an oracle that was yet to be fulfilled, or a memorial to a successful prognostication. In either case, the materiality of the text transcends the

original performance context, and, as such, the significance of the inscription lies in the enduring importance, and indeed relevance, of the prophecy to its audience(s). Consequently, it is reasonable to infer that the text (or rather its *Vorlage*) was derived from a pre-existing tradition. Perhaps more importantly, it is possible that II.17 included an instruction to the audience to observe the account, by continuing to perform it orally. If so, then the DAPT seem to point reflexively to their own traditionality, and furnish evidence for the continuation of oral and textual modes side by side.

Following the possible injunction to performative remembrance in II.17, the account is characterised as "a judgement and a chastisement", suggesting that the oral tradition might have been preserved for didactic purposes. However, this does not necessarily mean that the plaster texts served the same purpose. Indeed, it is not immediately clear what their function could have been. It seems likely that room EE335, in which the DAPT were located, served a special function. Moreover, given that the benches were a structural feature of the room, it seems that the special function predated the application of the plaster texts to the wall surface. This is further supported by the likelihood that the use of plaster as a writing surface was a secondary innovation. Consequently, the text selection may logically be seen as an extension and codification of the prior function of the space.

There are few clues as to what the special function of room EE335 might have been. It is possible that it served as a schoolroom, or perhaps a space for the community to sit and perform stories.[1] However, in view of the text's contents, the remarkable lack of objects in the room, and the room's westward orientation, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that it was used for dream incubation. In this case, it is not clear what purpose the DAPT served, they might have been ornamental, visually and symbolically demarcating the space and dedicating it for its mantic use, otherwise they

---

[1] Compare Gunkel's whimsical description of a family sitting around the hearth on a winter's evening listening to traditional tales; cf. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 41.

might have had an apotropaic function, or they may even have served as a medium, predicated on the numinous associations of writing, which was used to channel a divine presence into the room in order to ensure a successful incubation, then again, they might have been a script for (ritual) performance.

In any case, the scribe's policy of correcting orthographic errors, indicates that the content of the written word and, more significantly, the accuracy with which the tradition was transmitted, were important to the scribe and his/her intended audience.

8.3. COMPARATIVE LIGHT ON THE PHENOMENON OF TEXTUALISATION

When compared to one another, the KAPT and DAPT suggest several implications for the phenomenon of textualisation:

The first point to note is the similarity of the texts' presentation and physical environment, particularly in regard to their association with the bench-rooms. This may be coincidental, stemming from the specialised use of the space, especially in light of the possibility that mantic activities were practiced at both sites. However, it does support the premise that the use of writing was inherently functional and situational: written texts emerged from a situation, and addressed that situation in turn.

The second point is that both the KAPT and DAPT had religious content, including possible hymns (*Kajr*3.9 and 4.2) in the case of the Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Furthermore, at Kuntillet ʿAjrud the religious content is complemented by the inference that the site was inhabited by an enclave of priests. This supports the view that textualisation emerged, at least in part, among the priestly scribes, and was related to the cult. Be that as it may, there is no clear evidence that prists, or scribes, for that matter, resided at Deir ʿAlla. This migh indicate that the bench-room was known regionally as a place where people could come to receive a vision (again predicated on divine immanence). Hence, we might infer that the balaamite traditons and, by extension, the use of writing were conceived in terms of their wider regional significance.

Third, at both sites the evidence suggests that the plaster texts were, in some sense, a continuation of tradition, but in specific performance contexts. In part, this might be influenced by their specialised functions as display texts. Nevertheless, their very meaning and authority seems ultimately to have been derived from their indexical relationship to the immanent tradition. As such, their semantic function exceeded their denotative value.

Fourth, both the KAPT and DAPT evince awareness of the relationship between tradition and culture, and the potential of writing to give material substance to the projection of identity. At Kuntillet ʿAjrud this was realised through the preoccupation with place and the reproduction of distinctively Hebraic traditions. That this entailed an element of intentionality is supported by the tendency (reflected in the ceramic assemblage) toward exclusion of, and separation from, local populations. At Deir ʿAlla the projection of identity seems to be hinted by the use of a divergent script (standing apart from the prevailing Aramean tradition), and perhaps by the use of a vernacular dialect. However, it is possible to press the latter point too far: the script might reflect nothing more than artistic licence and the dialect might reflect a practice (in the *Vorlage*) of transcribing the tradition in the form it was received.

8.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Finally, it remains to consider the general implications of the KAPT and DAPT for the formation of the Hebrew Bible.

First, as was noted above, the evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrud might support the view that textualisation took place in the context of priestly scribal guilds. However, there is also evidence at the site for contact with the royal court (cf. the רע המלך in *Kajr*3.1), and the possibility remains that the scribe(s) at Kuntillet ʿAjrud were attached to the royal bureaucracy. Furthermore, there is evidence that education was conducted at the site (cf. the cognitive error in *Kajr*3.6). By comparison, at Deir ʿAlla there is virtually no indication of the texts' writer or intended audience.

Consequently, the study of the plaster texts is inconclusive with regard to the locus of textualisation (i.e. temple, court, or scribal education).

Second, the plaster texts constitute unambiguous evidence, at a comparatively early stage (i.e. by the beginning or middle of the 8th century), for the textualisation of stories and songs comparable to those found in the Hebrew Bible. This suggests that the early emergence of literary texts was characterised by plenitude and diversity. Furthermore, it means we should not be too hasty to dismiss biblical references to literary sources (e.g. the book of Jahsar, Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18; the book of the law 2 Kgs 22:8; the proverbs compiled by the men of Hezekiah, Prov 25:1) as fictive embellishments.

Third, the possible association with prophetic movements suggests that the traditions about the biblical prophets might have been transmitted (perhaps even in writing) among prophetic communities, and ultimately might have been contemporary with the prophets themselves. Certainly, the DAPT provides unequivocal evidence that the literary conventions of the prophetic books (including superscription and frame narrative) had appeared by the end of the 8th century.

Fourth, the KAPT and DAPT testify to the importance of the immanent tradition as a frame of reference and control to creative licence in the processes of textualisation. This reinforces the doubts raised in Chapter 1 concerning the viability of writing as a propagandistic medium. Nevertheless, at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, it seems that there was purposive approach to text selection and the coordination of texts into a concerted communicative effort. Thus, by virtue of their selectiveness, the KAPT suggest a conscious awareness of the communicative potentials of written texts, and the externalisation of tradition. In some sense, this selectiveness may have laid the foundation—along with the availability of annalistic source material and a rudimentary genre of history writing in the form of the royal monumental inscriptions—for the creative and interpretive enterprises that gave rise to the Deuteronomistic History.

These considerations have profound and far reaching implications for the origins of the Hebrew Bible; however, these fall far beyond the scope of the present study. It is therefore a desideratum that an integrated approach should be developed toward the study of the formation of the Hebrew Bible, and that future research should take account of the evidence of the plaster texts as a witness to complex literary textuality in the 8th century B.C.E.

I would like to conclude, then, by echoing Niditch's call for greater complexity in approaches to textualisation, and sensitivity to the dynamic interface of literature and tradition in pre-exilic Israel.

══ REFERENCES AND APPENDICES ══

REFERENCES

No author. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: An Intriguing Site in Sinai: Answers and Questions about Settlements in Northern Sinai and the Negeb". *Buried History* 14 (1978): 1–16.

Abel, F. M. *Géographie de la Palestine, II*. Paris: Gabalda, 1938.

Abou-Assaf, Ali. *Der Tempel von ʿAin Dārā*. Mainz am Rhein: P. v. Zabern, 1990.

Abusch, Tzvi. "Ishtar". Pages 452–56 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Ackerman, Susan. "Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving?" *Journal of ancient Near Eastern Studies* 67 (2008): 1–30.

Adams, Karen L. and Anne Winter. "Gang Graffiti as a Discourse Genre". *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 1 (1997): 337–60.

Aharoni, Yohanan. "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple". *Biblical Archaeologist* 31(1968): 2–32.

_____. *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachis V)*. Tel Aviv: Gateway, 1975.

_____. *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography: Revised and Enlarged Edition*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979.

_____. *Arad Inscriptions*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981.

Aḥituv, Shmuel. *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Periods*. Translated by A. F. Rainey. Jerusalem: Carta, 2008.

_____. "Notes on the Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions". Pages 29–38 in *See, I will bring a scroll recounting what befell me" (Ps 40:8): Epigraph*

and Daily Life From the Bible to the Talmud. Edited by E. Eshel and Y. Levin. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2014.

Ahlström, Gösta W. *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine*. Leiden: E. J.Brill, 1982.

_____. *An Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine*. Studia Orientalia 55; Finnish Oriental Society, 1984.

Albright, William F. "The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age". *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 6 (1924–1925): 13–74.

_____. "New Israelite and Pre-Israelite Sites: The Spring Trip of 1929". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 35 (1929): 1–14.

_____. "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 62 (1936): 26–31.

_____. "The Canaanite God Ḥaurôn (Ḥôrôn)". *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 53 (1936): 1–12.

_____. "Two Letters from Ugarit (Ras Shamrah)". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 82 (1941): 43–49.

_____. "The Psalm of Habakkuk". Pages 1–18 in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Dedicated to T. H. Robinson.* Edited by H. H. Rowley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950.

_____. "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm LXVIII)". *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23 (1950–51): 1–39.

_____. *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957.

_____. "Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Vol. 2, part 2 .3rd ed. Edited by I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, N. G. L. Hammond, and E. Sollberger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975. 510

Alden, Robert L. "נָחָשׁ". Page 572 in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Edited by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., and B. K. Waltke. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1980.

_____. "קֶסֶם". Page 805 in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Edited by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., and B. K. Waltke. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1980.

Alexander, Robert L. "Šaušga and the Hittite Ivory from Megiddo". *Journal of ancient Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991): 161–82.

Allegro, John M. "Short Notes: The Use of the Semitic Demonstrative Element *Z* in Hebrew". *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955): 309–12.

Allen, Edward and Patrick Rand, *Architectural Detailing: Function, Constructibility, Aesthetics.* Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.

Allen, T. George. "Types of Rubrics in the Egyptian Book of the Dead". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1936): 145–54.

Amr, Zuhair Sami, Mohammad Adnan Abu Baker, and Mazin Botros Qumsiyeh. "Bat Diversity and Conservation in Jordan". *Turkish Journal of Zoology* 30 (2006): 235–44.

Andersen, Francis I. "Orthography in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions". *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 36 (1999): 5–35.

_____. *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* Anchor Bible 25. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

Andersen, Francis I. and A. Dean Forbes. *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible: Dahood Memorial Lecture.* Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986.

Annus, Amar. "On The Beginnings and continuities of Omen Sciences in the Ancient World". Pages 1–18 in *Divination and the Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World*. Edited by A. Annus. Oriental Institute Seminars 6. Chicago, Ill.: The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 2010.

Arnold, Bill T., and John H. Choi. *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Ashton, June. *Scribal Habits in the Ancient Near East c.3000 BCE to the Emergence of the Codex.* Mandelbaum Studies in Judaica 13. Sydney: Mandelbaum Publishing, 2008.

Aufrecht, Walter E. "Ammonite Texts and Language". Pages 163–88 in *Ancient Ammon*. Edited by B. Macdonald and R. W. Younker. Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 17. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Avigad, Nahman. *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*. Rev. and Completed by Benjamin Sass. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities: Israel Exploration Society: Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997.

_____. "The Governor of the City". *Israel Exploration Journal* 26 (1976): 178–82.

Avishur, Yitzhak. *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994.

Axelsson, Lars E. *The Lord Rose up from Seir: Studies in the History and Traditions of the Negev and Southern Judah*. Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 25. Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987.

Ayalon, Etan. "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from Ḥurbat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)". M.A. Thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1985. (Hebrew).

_____. "The Iron Age II Pottery Assemblage from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)". *Tel Aviv* 22 (1995): 141–205.

Ball, C. J. "The Blessing of Moses (Deut XXXIII)". *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 18 (1896): 118–37.

Ballard, Harold W. Jr., *The divine warrior motif in the Psalms.* BIBAL dissertation series 6. North Richland Hills, Tex.: BIBAL Press, 1999.

Bar-Adon, Pessah. "An Early Hebrew Inscription in a Judean Desert Cave". *Israel Exploration Journal* 25 (1975): 226–32.

Barkay, Gabriel. "The Iron Age II–III". Pages 302–72 in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*. Edited by A. Beb-Tor. Translated by R. Greenberg. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Barr, James. *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968

Barstad, Hans M. "Sheol". Pages 268–70 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Beck, Pirhiya. "The Drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)". *Tel Aviv* 9 (1982): 3–68.

Beckman, Gary. "*Ištar* of Nineveh Reconsidered". *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 50 (1998): 1–10.

Beeston, A. F. L. "Angels in Deuteronomy". *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1951): 30–31.

Beit-Arieh, Itzhaq and Bruce Cresson. "An Edomite Ostracon from Ḥorvat ʿUza". *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985): 96–101.

_____. ed., *Ḥorvat Qitmit: An Edomite Shrine in the Biblical Negev* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 1995

Benoit, P., J.T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabbaʿât.* Discoveries in the Judaean Desert II. Oxford: Clarendon, 1961.

Benz, Frank L. *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Insrciptions.* studia Pohl 8. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972.

Berlinerblau, Jacques. *The Vow and the 'Popular Religious Groups' of Ancient Israel: A Philological and Sociological Inquiry.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press: 1996.

Bess, S. Herbert. "The Office of the Prophet in Old Testament Times". *Grace Journal* 1 (1960): 7–12.

Beyer, Klaus. "The Languages of Transjordan". Pages 111–27 in *Languages from the World of the Bible.* Edited by Holger Gzella. Boston: De Gruyter, 2012.

Beyerlin, Walter. *Herkunft und Geschichte der ältesten Sinaitraditionen* Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1961.

_____. *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions.* Translated by S. Rudman. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.

Bienkowski, Piotr and Eveline van der Steen. "Tribes, Trade, and Towns: A New Framework for the Late Iron Age in Southern Jordan and

the Negev". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 323 (2001): 21–47.

Black, Jeremy and Anthony Green. *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia.* London: British Museum, 1992.

Blau, Joshua. "Short Philological Notes on the Inscription of Mešaʿ". *Maarav* 2 (1979–80): 143–57.

_____. "The monophthongization of diphthongs as reflected in the use of vowel letters in the Pentateuch". Pages 7–11 in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*. Edited by Z. Zevit, S. Gitin, and M. Sokoloff. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995.

_____. *Topics in Hebrew and Semitic linguistics*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *A History of Prophecy in Israel: Revised and Enlarged.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

_____. "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (2008): 131–53.

Blum, Erhard. "Die Kombination I der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla Vorschläge zur Rekonstruktion mit historisch-kritischen Anmerkungen". Pages 573–601 in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt: Feschrift für Reiner Albertz zu Seinem 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by I. Kottsieper, R. Schmitt, and J. Wöhrle. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 350. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008.

_____. "'Verstehste du dich nicht auf die Schreibkunst…?' Ein weisheitlicher Dialog über Vergänglichkeit und Verantwortung: Kombination II der Wandinschrift vom Tell Deir ʿAlla". Pages 33–53 in *Was ist der Mensch , dass du seiner Gedenkst? (Psalm 8,5): Aspekte einer theologischen Anthropologie: Feschrift für Bernd Janowski zum 65. Gubertstag*. Edited by M. Bauks, K. Liess and P. Riede. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008.

_____. "Der historische Mose und die Frühgeschichte Israels". *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1 (2012): 37–63.

_____. "Die Wandinschriften 4.2 und 4.6 sowie die Pithos-Inschrift 3.9 aus *Kuntillet ʿAǧrūd*". *Zeischrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 129 (2013): 21–54.

Boertien, Jeannette H. "Unravelling the Threads Textiles and Shrines in the Iron Age". Pages 135–51 in *Sacred and Sweet: Studies on the Material Culture of Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tell Abu Sarbut.* Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplements 24. Edited by M. L. Steiner and E. J. van der Steen. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

_____. "Unravelling the Fabric: Textile Production in Iron Age Transjordan". Ph.D. diss. Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit, 2013.

Boling, Robert G. *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 6A. New York: Doubleday, 1969.

Bordreuil, Pierre, Felice Israel and Dennis Pardee. "King's Command and Widow's Plea: Two New Hebrew Ostraca of the Biblical Period", *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61 (1998): 2–13.

Borger, Riekele. *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*. Archiv für Orientforschung 9. Osnabruck: Biblio-Verlag, 1967.

Borghouts, J. F. *The magical texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348.* Leiden: Brill, 1971.

Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. "עַלְמָה". Pages 154–63 in vol. 11 of *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984–2006.

Bourguignon, Erika. "Trance and Ecstatic Dance". Pages 97–102 in *Moving History/Dance Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Edited by A. Dils and A. Cooper Albright. Middletown Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.

Bowen, Tracey. "Graffiti as Spatializing Practice and Performance". *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 25 (2013): n.p.

Branden, A. van den. "Essai de Déchiffrement des Inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla". *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 129–49.

Braun, Joachim. *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources.* Grand Rapids Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002.

Breuer, Yochanan. "Aramaic in Late Antiquity". Pages 457–91 in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Vol. 4, The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*. Edited by S. T. Katz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Briend, J. "Regards sur le Jourdein et sa Valée". *Le Mond de la Bible* 65 (1990): 8–18.

Bruyère, Bernard. *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1934–1935).* Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1939.

Buck, Adriaan de. *De godsdienstige opvatting van den slaap, inzonderheid in het Oude Egypte.* Mededeelingen en Verhandelingen van het Voorziatsch Egyptisch Gezelschap "Ex Oriente Lux" 4. Leiden: Brill, 1939

Byrne, Ryan. "The Refuge of Scribalism in Iron I Palestine". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 345 (2007): 1–31.

Caquot, André and André Lemaire. "Les Textes Araméens de Deir ʿAlla". *Syria* 54 (1977): 189–208.

Carmi, Israel and Dror Segal. "^{14}C Dating of an Israelite Biblical Site at Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teiman): Corrections, Extension and Improved Age Estimate". *Radiocarbon* 38 (1996): 385–86.

Carr, David M. *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

_____. *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Cartledge, Tony. *The Form and Function of Vows in the Old Testament.* Ph.D. Diss.; Duke University, 1989.

_____. *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East.* Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992.

Cassuto, Umburto. *Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts*. Vol 1. Translated by I. Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975.

⸻. *Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts*. Vol 2. Translated by I. Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975.

Catastini, Alessandro. "Le Iscrizioni di Kuntillet ʿAjrud e il Profetismo". *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 42 (1982): 127–34.

Cazelles, H. "Deir-Alla et ses tablettes". *Semitica* 15 (1965): 5–21.

Chattopadhyay, Swati. "Visualising the Body Politic". Pages 44–68 in *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*. Edited by A. Sen and L. Silverman. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Childs, Brevard S. *Exodus.* Old Testament Library. London: SCM, 1974.

Clanchy, Michael T. *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Cohn, Yehuda. *Tangled Up in Text: Tefillin and the Ancient World*. Brown Judaic Studies 351. Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008.

Conklin, Blane W. "Arslan Tash I and other Vestiges of a Particular Syrian Incantatory Thread". *Biblica* 84 (2003): 89–101.

Cook, Edward M. "The Orthography of Final Unstressed Long Vowels in Old and Imperial Aramaic". *Maarav* 5–6 (1990): 53–67.

Cooke, George A. *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish*. Oxford, Calrendon Press, 1903.

Cooper, Jerrold S. *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur: An-gim dím-ma*. Analecta Orientalia 52. Rome: Pontificium institutum biblicum, 1978.

Cooper, Julien, "Toponymy on the Periphery: placenames of the Eastern Desert, South Sinai and Red Sea in Hieroglyphic Documents". PhD. Diss. Macquarie University. Forthcoming.

Copeland Biella, Joan. *Dictionary of Old South Arabian: Sabaean Dialect*. Harvard Semitic Studies 25. Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1982.

Craigie, Peter C. "Ugarit and the Bible: Progress and Regress in 50 Years of Literary Study". Pages 99–112 in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*. Edited by G. D. Young. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1981.

Crenshaw, James L. "Transmitting Prophecy across Generations". Pages 31–44 in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. Edited by E. Ben Zvi and M. H. Floyd. SBLSymS 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Cross, Frank Moore, Jr. "Yahweh and the Gods of the Patriarchs". *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 225–59.

———. "Epigraphical Notes on the Ammān Citadel Inscription". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 193 (1969): 13–19.

———. *Canaaite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973.

———. "Notes on the Ammonite Inscription from Tell Sīrān". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 212 (1973): 12–15.

———. "Ammonite Ostraca from Heshbon: Heshbon Ostracaa IV–VIII". *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 13 (1975): 1–22.

———. "Heshbon Ostracon XI". *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 14 (1976): 145–48.

———. "Two Offering Dishes with Phoenician Inscriptions from the Sanctuary of ʿArad". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 235 (1979): 75–78.

———. "Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts". *Bulletin of the America Schools of Oriental Research* 238 (1980): 1–20.

———. "The Seal of Miqneyaw, Servant of Yahweh". Pages 55–63 in *Ancient Seals and the Bible*. Edited by L. Gorelick and E. Williams-Forte. Undena: Malibu, Calif., 1984.

———. "A Philistine Ostracon from Ashkelon". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 22 (1996): 64–54.

_____. *From Epic to Canon:History and Literature in Ancient Israel*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

_____. "Some Problems in Old Hebrew Orthography with Special Attention to the Third Person Masculine Singular Siffix on Plural Nouns [–âw]". *Eretz-Israel* 27 *Hayim and Miriam Tadmor Volume* (2003): 18–24.

_____. *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy.* Edited by J. Huehnergard and J. A. Hackett. Harvard Semitic Studies 51. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

_____. "Inscriptions in Phoenician and Other Scripts". Pages 333–72 in *The Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon: Ashkelon I, Introduction and Overview (1985–2006).* Edited by L. E. Stager, J. D. Schloen, and D. M. Master. Winona Lake Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

_____. "The Phoenician Ostracon from ʿAkko, the ʿEkron Inscriptions and אשרתה". Pages 19–28 in *Eretz-Israel* 29*: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies: Ephraim Stern Volume*. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2009.

Cross, Frank Moore, Jr. and David Noel Freedman. *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*. Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 1997.

Cross, Frank Moore, Jr. and Richard J. Saley. "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B. C. from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 197 (1970): 42–49.

Crowfoot, J. W., Kathleen M. Kenyon, and E. L. Sukenik. *Samaria-Sebaste: Reports of the Work of the Joint Expedition in 1931–1933 and of the British Expedition in 1935, No. I: The Buildings at Samaria*. London: The Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942.

Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms I:1–50: Introduction, Translation and Notes.* Anchor Bible 16. New York: Doubleday, 1965.

_____. *Psalms II:51–100: Introduction, Translation and Notes*. Anchor Bible 17. New York: Doubleday, 1968.

_____. *Psalms III:101–50: Introduction, Translation and Notes with Appendix The Grammar of the Psalter.* Anchor Bible 17A. New York: Doubleday, 1970.

Davies, Graham I. *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

_____. "Response to J. Greenfield and Jacob Hoftijzer". Pages 143–48 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.* Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Day, John. *Molech: a God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

_____. *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement series 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

Delitzsch, Franz. *Der Prophet Habakuk*. Leipzig: K. Tauchnitz, 1843.

del Olmo Lete, Gregorio and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Translated by W. G. E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Demisch, Heinz. *Die Sphinx: Die Geschichte ihrer Darstellung von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1977.

Demsky, Aaron. "A Proto-Canaanite Abecedary Dating from the time of the Judges and its Implications for the History of the Alphabet". *Tel Aviv* 4 (1977): 14–27.

Deutsch, Robert. *Messages from the Past: Hebrew Bullae form the Time of Isaiah Through the Destruction of the First Temple.* Tel Aviv: Archaeological Centre, 1999.

_____. *Biblical Period Hebrew Bullae: The Josef Chaim Kaufman Collection.* Tel Aviv: Archaeological Centre, 2003.

Deutsch, Robert and Michael Heltzer. *Forty New Ancient West Semitic Inscriptions.* Tel Aviv and Jaffa: Israel Numismatics, 1994.

_____. *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period.* Tel Aviv and Jaffa: Israel Numismatics, 1995.

_____. *Window to the Past.* Tel Aviv and Jaffa: Archaeological Institute, 1997.

Deutsch, Robert, Michael Heltzer, and Gabriel Barkay. *West Semitic Epigraphic News of the 1ˢᵗ Millennium BCE.* Tel Aviv and Jaffa: Archaeological Institute, 1999.

Deutsch, Robert and André Lemaire. *Biblical Period Personal Seals in the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection.* Tel Aviv: Bible Review, 2000.

Dever, William G. *Did God Have a Wife: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008.

_____. *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Instersect.* Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2012.

Dever, William G., H. Darrell Lance, Reuben G. Bullard, Dan P. Cole, Anita M. Furshpan, John S. Holladay, Joe D. Seger, and Robert B. Wright. "Further Excavations at Gezer, 1967-1971". *Biblical Archaeologist* 34 (1971): 94–132.

Diem, Werner. "Gedanken zur Frage der Mimation und Nunation in den semitischen Sprachen". *Zeischrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 125 (1975): 239–58

Dijkstra, Meindert. "Prophecy by Letter (Jeremiah XXIX 24-32)". *Vetus Testamentum* 33 (1983): 319–22.

_____. "Response to H.-P. Müller and M. Weippert". Pages 206–17 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.* Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. "I have blessed you by YHWH of Samaria and his Asherah: Texts with Religious Elements from the Soil Archive of Ancient Israel". Pages 17–44 in *Only One God? Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah.* Edited by B. Becking, M.

Dijkstra, M. C. A. Korpel, and K. J. H. Vriezen. The Biblical Seminar 77. London and New York, 2001.

Dimendberg, Edward. "Henri Lefebvre on Abstract Space". Pages 17–48 in *The Production of Public Space*. Edited by Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith. Philosophy and Geopgraphy 2. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

Dion, Paul E. "The Language Spoken in Ancient Samʾal". *Journal of Near Eeastern Studies* 37 (1978): 115–18.

_____. "YHWH as Storm-God and Sun-God: The Double Legacy of Egypt and Canaan as Reflected in Psalm 104". *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 103 (1991): 43–71.

Diringer, David, *The Book Before Printing: Ancient, Medieval and Oriental*. New York: Dover Publications, 1982.

Dobbs-Allsopp, Frederick William, Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, Choon-Leon Seow, and R. E. Whitaker. *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005.

Donner, Herbert, and Wolfgang Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969.

Dothan, Moshe. "A Phoenician Inscription from ʿAkko". *Israel Exploration Journal* 35 (1985): 81–94.

Dothan, Trude and Seymore Gitin. *Tel-Miqne-Ekron: Summary of Fourteen Seasons of Excavations 1981–1996 and Bibliography 1982–2012*. Jerusalem: Tel Miqne-Ekron Excavation and Publications Project, 2012.

Dowling, Dominic M. and Bijan Samali. "Low-Cost and Low-Tech Reinforcement Systems for Improved Earthquake Resistance of Mud Brick Buildings". Pages 23–33 in *Proceedings of the Getty Seismic Adobe Project 2006 Colloquium*. Edited by M. Hardy, C. Cancino, and G. Ostergren. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2009.

Driver, Godfrey R. "Hebrew Notes". *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 55 (1934): 51–56.

_____. "Birds in the Old Testament: I. Birds in Law". *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 87 (1955): 5–20.

_____. "Birds in the Old Testament: II. Birds in Life". *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 87 (1955): 129–40.

_____. *Semitic Writing: From Pictograph to Alphabet.* London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Duhm, Bernhard. *Das Buch Habakuk.* Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1906.

Eaton, J. H. "The Origin and Meaning of Habakkuk 3", *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 76 (1964): 144–71.

Eissfeldt, Otto. *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch.* Halle: Niemeyer, 1935.

Emerton, John A. "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 94 (1982): 2–20.

_____. "'Yahweh and His Asherah': The Goddess or Her Symbol?", *Vetus Testamentum* 49 (1999): 315–37.

Ephʿal Israel and Joseph Naveh. "Hazael's Booty Inscriptions", *Israel Exploration Journal* 39 (1989): 192–200.

_____. "The Jar of the Gate". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 298 (1993): 59–65.

Erhlich, Arnold B. *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Textcritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches: Leviticus, Numeri and Deuteronium.* Vol.2 of *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Textcritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches.* Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1909.

Eshel, Hanan and Esther Eshel. "A Late Iron Age Hebrew Letter Containing the Word 'Noqedim'". Pages 571–84 in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday.* Vol. 2. Edited by C. Cohen,

V. A. Hurowitz, A. Hurvitz, Y. Muffs, B. J. Schwartz, and J. H. Tigay. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

Fassberg, Steven E. "The forms of 'Son' and 'Daughter' in Aramaic". Pages 41–54 in *Aramaic in Its Historical and Linguistic Setting*. Edited by H. Gzella and M. L. Folmer. Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 50. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008.

Faust, Avraham. "Doorway Orientation, Settlement Planning and Cosmology in Ancient Israel during Iron Age II". *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 20 (2001): 129–55.

Feliu, Lluís. *The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria.* Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 19. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Finkelstein, Israel. "Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt and the Southern Trade in the Late Iron Age II". *Zeischrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 108 (1992): 156–70.

_____. *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*. Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near Eastern Mmonographs 5. Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Finkelstein, Israel, Ido Koch, and Oded Lipschits. "The Biblical Gilead: Observations on Identifications, Geographic Divisions and Territorial History". *Ugarit-Forschungen* 43 (2011): 131–59.

Finkelstein, Israel, and Amihai Mazar. *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*. Edited by B. B. Schmidt. Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies 17. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Finkelstein, Israel and Eli Piasetzky. "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: The [14]C Perspective". *Tel Aviv* 35 (2008): 175–85.

Finnegan, Ruth. *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication.* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988.

_____. "The How of Literature". *Oral Tradition* 20 (2005): 164–87.

Fishbane, Michael. "Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983): 115–21.

_____. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985,

Fisher, Loren R., ed. *Ras Shamra parallels: the texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*. 3 Vols. Analecta Orientalia 49–51. Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1972–1981.

Fitzmyer, J. A. Review of Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla. Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978): 93–95.

Flood, Finbarr Barry. "Image against Nature: Spolia as Apotropaia in Byzantium and the *dār al-Islām*". *The Medieval History Journal* 9 (2006): 149–51.

Fludernik, Monika. *An Introduction to Narratology.* London: Routledge, 2009.

Foley, John Miles. *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991.

_____. *The Singer of Tales in Performance.* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1995.

_____. "Plenitude and Diversity: Interactions between Orality and Writing". Pages 103–18 in *The Interface Between Orality and Writing.* Edited by Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 260; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Fox, Nili Sacher. *In the Service of the King: Officialdom in Ancient Israel and Judah*. Hebrew Union College Monographs 23. Cincinnati, Oh.: Hebrew Union College Press, 2000.

Franken, Henk, J. "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan". *Vetus Testamentum* 10 (1960): 386–93.

_____. "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan: 2nd Season". *Vetus Testamentum* 11 (1961): 361–72.

_____. "The Excavations at Deir ʿAlla in Jordan: 3rd Season". *Vetus Testamentum* 12 (1962): 378–82.

_____. "Excavations at Deir ʿAllā, Season 1964: Preliminary Report". *Vetus Testamentum* 14 (1964): 417–22.

_____. "The Stratigraphic Context of the Clay Tablets Found at Deir ʿAlla". *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 96 (1964): 73–78.

_____. "Clay Tablets from Deir ʿAlla Jordan". *Vetus Testamentum* 14 (1964): 377–78.

_____. "A Note on How the Deir ʿAlla Tablets were Written". *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 150–52.

_____. "Texts from the Persian Period from Tell Deir ʿAllā". *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1967): 480–81.

_____. *Excavations at Deir ʿAlla 1: A Stratigraphical and Analytical Study of the Early Iron Age Pottery*. Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui 16. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969.

_____. "Deir ʿAlla Re-Visited". Pages 4–15 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. *Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla. The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary.* Louvain: Peeters, 1992.

_____. "Balaam at Deir ʿAlla and the Cult of Baal". Pages 183–202 in *Archaeology, History and Culture in Palestine and the Near East: Essays in Memory of Albert E. Glock*. American Schools of Oriental Research Books 3. Edited by T. Kapitan. Atlanta Ga.: Scholars, 1999.

_____. "Deir ʿAlla and its Religion". Pages 25–52 in *Sacred and Sweet: Studies on the Material Culture of Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tell Abu Sarbut*. Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplements 24. Edited by M. L. Steiner and E. J. van der Steen. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Franken, Hendricus J. and J. Kalsbeek. *Potters of a Medieval Village in the Jordan Valley: Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, a Medieval Tell, Tell Abu Gourdan, Jordan.* Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1975.

Franken H. J. and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim. "Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, 1986-1978". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan* 22 (1977/78): 57–80, 212–28.

Franken Henk J. and Margreet L. Steiner, *Excvations at Jerusalem 1961–1967, vol. 2: The Iron Age Extramural Quarter on the South-East Hill.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Freedman, David Noel. "Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job". *Eretz-Israel* 9 (1969): 35–44.

_____. "The Poetic Structure of the Framework of Deuteronomy 33". Pages 25–46 in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*. Edited by G. Rendsburg, R. Adler, M. Arfa, and N. H. Winter. New York: Ktav: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980.

_____. *Pottery, Poetry and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew poetry.* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1980.

Freedman, David Noel, A. Dean Forbes and Francis I. Andersen, *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography.* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992

Freud, Liora. "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Reply to Lily Singer-Avitz". *Tel Aviv* 35 (2008): 169–74.

Friedrich, Johannes and Wolfgang Röllig. *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik.* 2nd ed. Analecta Orientalia 55. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1999.

Fritz, Volkmar. "Kinneret, Vorbericht über die Ausgrabungen auf dem Tell el-ʿOreme am See Genazaret in den Jahren 1982-1985". *Zeischrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 102 (1986): 1–39.

Frolov, Serge. "How Old is the Song of Deborah?" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36 (2011): 163–84.

García Martínez, Florentino and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition.* 2 vols. Leiden, Brill, 1999.

Garr, W. Randall. *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000–586 B.C.E.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

_____. "The Paragogic *nun* In Rhetorical Perspective". Pages 65–74 in *Biblical Hebrew in its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives*. Edited by S. E. Fassberg and A. Hurvitz. Winona Lake Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Gaster, Theodor H. "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33:3–5, 26–29". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 66 (1947): 53–62.

Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Gesenius, Wilhelm. *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. Translated by S. Prideaux Tregelles. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Book House, 1979.

_____. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2006.

Gibson, John C. L. *Phoenician Inscriptions: Including Inscriptions in the Mixed Dialect from Arslan Tash*. Vol. 3 of *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*. Edited by J. C. L. Gibson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Gilchrist, Paul R. "יָנָה". Page 383 in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Edited by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., and B. K. Waltke. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1980.

Gilders, William K. *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Giles, Terry and William J. Doan. *Twice Used Songs: Performance Criticism of the Songs of Ancient Israel*. Peabody, Ma.: Hendrickson, 2009.

Gilula, M. "To Yahweh Shomron and His Asherah" *Shnaton* 3 (1978–1979): 129–37 (Hebrew).

Ginsberg, Harold L. "Phoenician Hymn in the Psalter". Pages 472–76 in *Atti del XIX Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti: Roma, 23-29 settembre 1935 (XIII)*. Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1938.

_____. "Lachish Notes," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 71 (1938): 24–27.

Gitin, Seymour. "Seventh Century B.C.E. Cultic Elements at Ekron". Pages 248–58 in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July, 1990*. Edited by Avraham Biran, Joseph Aviram, and Alan Paris-Shadur. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1993.

Gitin, Seymour, Trude Dothan, and Joseph Naveh. "A Royal Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron". *Israel Exploration Journal* 47 (1997): 1–16.

Glueck, Nelson. "Three Israelite Towns in the Jordan Valley: Zarethan, Succoth, Zaphon". *Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research* 90 (1943): 2–23.

_____. "Explorations in Eastern Palestine, IV: Part I, Text". *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 25/28 (1945–1949): iii, v, vii, ix–xix, 1–423.

_____. "Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV". *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 25-28 (1951): 1–113.

Gogel, Sandra L. *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*. Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 23. Atlanta: Scholars, 1998.

Good, Edwin M. "The Barberini Greek Version of Habakkuk III", *Vetus Testamentum* 9 (1959): 11–30.

Goodfellow, Peter. *Birds of the Bible: A Guide for Bible Readers and Birdwatchers*. Oxford: John beaufoy, 2013.

Gordis, Robert. *The Biblical Text in the Making: A Study of the Kethib-Qere*. 2nd ed. New York: Ktav, 1971.

Gordon, Martin L. "Mezuzah: Protective Amulet or Religious Symbol?". *Tradition* 16 (1977): 7–40.

Gordon, Robert P. and K. J. Cathcart. *The Targum of the Minor Prophets: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus and Notes*. The Aramaic Bible 14. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988.

Grabar, Oleg. "Graffiti or Proclamations: Why Write on Buildings?". Pages 239–244. *Islamic art and beyond*. Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006.

Grabbe, Lester L. *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel*. Valley Forge: Trinity, 1995.

Gray, George B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers.* International Critical Commentary of the Old and New Testaments. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956.

Green, Alberto R. W. *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*. Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California 8. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

Greenfield, Jonas C. "Philological Observations on the Deir ʿAlla Inscription". Pages 109–20 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Grimme, Hubert. "Abriss der biblisch-hebräischen Metrik". *Zeischrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 50 (1896): 529–84.

Groot, Alon de and Atalya Fadida, "The Pottery Assemblage from the Rock-Cut Pool near the Gihon Spring". *Tel Aviv* 38 (2001): 158–66.

Groot, Niels C. F. "All the Work of Artisans: Reconstructing Society at Tell Deir ʿAllā through the Study of Ceramic Traditions: Studies of Late Bronze Age Faience Vessels and Iron IIc-III Ceramics from Tell Deir 'Allā, Jordan". Ph.D. diss. Leiden University, 2011.

Grossfeld, Bernard. *The Targum Onqelos to Deuteronomy: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes.* The Aramaic Bible 9. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988.

Gunneweg, Jan, Isadore Perlman, and Zeʾev Meshel. "The Origin of the Pottery of Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Israel Exploration Journal* 35 (1985): 270–83.

Hackett, Jo Ann. *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 31. Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1984.

____. "The Dialect of the Plaster Text from Tell Deir ʿAlla," *Orientalia* 53 (1984): 57–65.

____. "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan". Pages 125–36 in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross.* Edited by P. D. Miller Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.

____. "Response to Baruch Levine and André Lemaire". Pages 73–84 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.* Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

____. "Balaam". Pages 569–72 in vol. 1 of *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

____. "Phoenician and Punic". Pages 82–107 in *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia*. Edited by Roger D. Woodard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hackstein, Olav. "The Greek of Epic". Pages 401–23 in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*. Edited by E. J. Bakker; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Hadley, Judith M. *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Hagelia, Hallivard. "Philological Issues in the Tel Dan Inscription". Pages 232–53 in *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon I: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 3rd-5th June 2004*. Edited by L. Edzard and J. Retsö. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005.

Hall, Harry R. *Babylonian and Assyrian Sculpture in the British Museum.* Paris: Les Éditions G. van Oest, 1928.

Halliday, M. A. K. "Anti-Languages". *American Anthropologist* (1976): 570–84.

_____. *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. Baltimore, Md.: University Park Press, 1978.

_____. *Spoken and Written Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Halliday, M. A. K. and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social Semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Hallo, William W. "Individual Prayer in Sumarian: The Continuity of a Tradition". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 71–89.

_____. ed. *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*. Vol. 2 of *The Context of Scripture*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.

Hallo, William W. and J. J. A. van Dijk, *The Exultation of Inanna*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Halpern, Baruch. "The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography". *Harvard Theological Review* 76 (1983): 379–401.

_____. "Yaua, Son of Omri, Yet Again". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 265 (1987): 81–85.

_____. "Dialect Distribution in Canaan and the Deir Alla Inscriptions". Pages 119–39 in *Working With No Data: Semitic and Egyptian Studies Presented to Thomas O. Lambdin.* Edited by D. M. Golomb and S. T. Hollis. Winona Lake Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1987.

Haran, Menahem. "The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam ben Joash". *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1967): 266–97.

_____. *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1978.

_____. "On the Diffusion of Literacy and Schools in Ancient Israel". Pages 81–95 in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986*. Edited by J. A. Emerton. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

Haas, Volkert. *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.

Hasselbach, Rebecca. "Final Vowels of Pronominal Suffixes and Independent Personal Pronouns in Semitic". *Journal of Semitic Studies* 49 (2004): 1–20.

Hawley, Robert. *Studies in Ugaritic Epistolography.* Vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2003.

Hayes, Christopher B. "An Egyptian Loanword in the Book of Isaiah and the Deir ʿAlla Inscription: Heb. *nṣr,* Aram. *nqr*, and Eg. *nṯr* as "[Divinized] Corpse". *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4 (2012): 17–23.

Healy, John F. "May He Be Remembered for Good: An Aramaic Formula". Pages 176–85 in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara.* Edited by K. J. Cathcart and M. Maher. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement series 230. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Heck, Joel D. "A History of Interpretation of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33". *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147 (1990): 16–31.

Heeßel, Nils P. "Šumma ālu". Vol. 11 of *The encyclopedia of ancient history.* Edited by R. S. Bagnall, K. Brodersen, C. B. Champion, A. Esrkine, and S. R. Huebner. Malden, Ma.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Heibert, Theodore. *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3.* Harvard Semitic Monographs 38. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1986.

Heide, Martin. "Die theophoren Personennamen der Kuntillet-'Aǧrūd Inschriften". *Die Welt des Orients* 32 (2002): 110–20.

Heider, George C. *The Cult of Molek: A Reassessment.* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement series 43; Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1985.

Herr, Larry G. and Muhammad Najjar. "The Iron Age". Pages 323–45 in *The Archaeology of Jordan*. Edited by B. Macdonal, R. Adams and P. Bienkowsk. Levantine Archaeology 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001.

Herrmann, Wolfgang. "Baal בעל". . Pages 132–40 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Herzog, Zeʾev. "The Fortress Mound at Tel Arad: An Interim Report". *Tel Aviv* 29 (2002): 3–109.

Herzog, Zeʾev, Miriam Aharoni, Anson F. Rainey, Shmuel Moshkovitz. "The Israelite Fortress at Arad". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 254 (1984): 1–34.

Hess, Richard S. *Israelite Religions: An Arhcaeological and Biblical Survey.* Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Academic, 2007.

Hillers, Delbert R. "Paḥad Yiṣḥāq". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 90–92.

Hitchcock, Louise A. "Cult Corners in the Aegean and the Levant". Pages 321–46 in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*. Edited by A. Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling, L. B. Mazow. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Hoffmeier, James K. *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Hoffner, Harry A., Jr., *Hitite Myths*. 2nd ed. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 2. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1998.

Hoftijzer, Jacob "What did the Gods Say? Remarks on the First Combination of the Deir ʿAlla Plaster Texts". Pages 121–48 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Hoftijzer, J   and K. Jongeling. *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions.* 2 Vols. Handbuch der Orientalistik I/21. Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1995.

Hoftijzer, Jacob and Gerrit van der Kooij. *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla.* Documenta et monumenta Orientis antiqui 19. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.

Holladay, John S., Jr., "Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach". Pages 249–99 in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Edited by P. D. Miller, Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride. Philadeliphia: Fortress, 1987.

Hölscher, G. "Bemerkungen zur Topographie Palästinas 2. Das Jordantal südlich von Bēsān", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 33 (1910): 16 25.

Homès-Fredericq, D. and Hendricus. J. Franken. *Pottery and Potters – Past and Present: 7000 Years of Ceramic Art in Jordan*. Attempto-Verlag, 1986.

Hommel, Fritz. *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen arabistisch-semitologischen Inhalts*, 2. München: G. Franz, 1900.

Honkasalo, Marja-Liisa. "Space and Embodied Experience: Rethinking the Body in Pain". *Body & Society* 4 (1998): 35–57.

Hornung, Erik. *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*. Translated by J. Baines. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Huehnergard, John. "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages". Pages 282–93 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989* (eds. Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. "What is Aramaic?". *ARAM* 7 (1995): 261–82.

_____. *A Grammar of Akkadian.* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbraunsm 2005.

_____. "Features of Central Semitic". Pages 155–203 in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*. Edited by A. Gianto. Biblica et orientalia 48. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005.

_____. "On the Etymology of the Hebrew Relative šɛ-". Pages 103–25 in *Biblical Hebrew in its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives*. Edited by S. E. Fassberg and A. Hurvitz. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

_____. "Relative Particles". Pages 363–64 in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 3. Edited by Geoffrey Kahn; Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Huehnergard, John and Aaron D. Rubin. "Phyla and Waves: Models of Classification of the Semitic Languages". Pages 259–78 in *The Semitic Langages: An International Handbook*. Edited by S. Weninger, G. Khan, M. P. Streck, and J. Watson. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.

Hummel, Horace D. "Enclitic *mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957): 85–107.

Hundley, Michael B. *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Hutton, Jeremy M. "Local Manifestations of Yahweh and Worship in the Interstices: A Note on Kuntillet ʿAjrud", *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 10 (2010): 177–210.

Huxley, Margaret. "The Gates and Guardians in Sennacherib's Addition to the Temple of Assur". *Iraq* 62 (2000), 109–37.

Ibrahim, Moawiyah M. and Gerrit van der Kooij. "Excavations at Tall Dayr ʿAllā, Season 1979". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan* 23 (1979): 41–50, 11–30.

_____. "Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, Season 1982". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan* 27 (1983), 577–85.

_____. "Excavations at Deir ʿAlla, Season 1984". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan* 30 (1986): 131–43.

_____. "The Archaeology of Deir ʿAlla Phase IX". Pages 16–29 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. "Excavations at Tall Dayr ʿAllā, Seasons 1987 and 1994". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan* 41 (1997): 95–114.

Irwin, William A. "The Psalm of Habakkuk". *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1942): 10–40.

Israel, Felice. "Réflexions méthodologiques sur le classement linguistique de DAPT". Pages 305–19 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Jastrow, Marcus. *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature*. New York: Hendrickson, 2005.

Jeffers, Ann. *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria.* Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Jepsen, "חָזָה". Page 282 in vol. 4 of *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984–2006.

Jeremias, Jörg. *Theophanie: die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 10. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965.

Jong, Matthijs J. de. *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Propheices.* Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 117. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Joüon, Paul and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Translated by T. Muraoka. Subsidia Biblica 27. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006.

Kafafi, Zeidan A. "The Archaeological Context of the Tell Deir ʿAllā Tablets". Pages 119–28 in *A Timeless Vale: Archaeological and Related Essays on the Jordan Valley in Honour of Gerrit van der Kooij on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Edited by E. Kaptijn and L. P. Petit. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009.

Kang, Sa-Moon. *Divine War in the Bible and in the Ancient Near East*. Berlins and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988.

Kaptijn, Eva. "Settling the steppe: Iron Age Irrigation around Tell Deir ʿAlla, Jordan Valley". Pages 265–83 in *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East Madrid, April 3-8 2006*. Edited by J. Mª Córdoba, M. Molist, Mª C. Pérez, I. Rubio, and S. Martínez. Madrid: Centro Superior de Estudios sobre el Oriente Próximo y Egipto, 2008.

_____. *Life on the Watershed: Reconstructing Subsistence in a Steppe Region Using Archaeological Survey: A Diachronic Perspective on Habitation in the Jordan Valley*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2009.

Eva Kaptijn, Lucas P. Petit, E. B. Grootveld, Gerrit van der Kooij, F. Hourani, and O. al-Ghul. "Dayr ʿAlla Regional Project: Settling the Steppe. First Campaign 2004". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan* 50 (2006): 89–99.

Kaufman, Stephen A. "An Assyro-Aramaic *egirtu sa sulmu*". Pages 119–27 in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein*. Edited by M. de Jong Ellis. Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 19. Hamden, Ct.: Archon, 1977.

_____. Review of Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla. Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 239, (1980): 71–74.

_____. "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects in the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof". Pages 41–57 in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic Languages*. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1988.

_____. "Paragogic *nun* in Biblical Hebrew: Hypercorrection as a Clue to a Lost Scribal Practice". Pages 95–99 in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*. Edited by Z. Zevit, S. Gitin, and M. Sokoloff. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995.

_____. The Phoenician Inscription of the Incirli Trilingual: A Tentative Reconstruction and Translation". *Maarav* 14 (2007): 7–26.

Keel, Othmar and Christopher Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Translated by Thomas Trapp. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.

Keimer, Kyle H. "The Socioeconomic Impact of Hezekiah's Preparations for Rebellion". Ph.D. diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2011.

Kennedy, Hugh. "From Oral Tradition to Written Record in Arabic Genealogy". *Arabica* 44 (1997): 531–44.

Kenyon, Kathleen. *Digging up Jerusalem.* New York: Praeger, 1974.

_____. *Archaeology in the Holy Land*. 4th ed. London: E. Benn, 1979.

Kerkeslager, Allen. "Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt". Pages 99–225 in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*. Edited by David Frankfurter. Religions in the Greco-Roman World 134. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

Khan, Geoffrey. "The Language of the Old Testament". Pages 3–21 in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From Beginnings to 600*. Edited by J. C. Paget and J. Schaper. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Kim, Koowon. *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the Aqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories: A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of KTU*

1.14 i-1.15 III, 1.17 I-II, and 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 145. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Kitchen, Kenneth A. *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.).* 2nd ed. with supplements. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1995.

_____. *Ramesside Inscriptions, Translated and Annotated: Translations.* Vol. 3. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

_____. *On The Reliability of the Old Testament* (Crand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2003.

Klingbeil, Martin. *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography.* Orbis biblicus et orientalis 169. Freiburg: University Press, 1999.

Kochavi, Moshe. "An Ostracon of the Period of the Judges from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah". *Tel Aviv* 4 (1977): 1–13.

Kooij, Gerrit van der. "Early North-West Semitic Script Traditions. An Archaeological Study of the Linear Alphabetic Scripts up to c. 500 B. C.". Ph.D diss., Leiden University, 1986.

_____. "The Identity of Trans-Jordanian Alphabetic Writing in the Iron Age". Pages 107–21 in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan: III*. Edited by A. Hadidi. Amman: Jordanian Deptartment of Antiquities, 1987.

_____. "Book and Script at Deir ʿAllā". Pages 239–62 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. "Deir ʿAlla, Tell". Pages 338–39 in vol. 1 of *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Ecavations in the Holy Land.* Edited by E. Stern. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society Carta, 1993.

_____. "The Vicissitudes of Life at Dayr ʿAllā during the First Millennium BC, Seen in a Wider Context". *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 7 (2001): 295–303.

_____. "Use of Space in Settlements: An Exercise Upon Deir ʿAlla". Pages 63–73 in *Moving Matters: Ethnoarchaeology in the Near East: Proceedings of the International Seminar Held at Cairo 7–10 December 1998*. Edited by W. Wendrich and G. van der Kooij. Leiden: Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies Universiteit Leiden, 2002.

Kooij, Gerrit van der and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim. *Picking Up the Threads: A Continuing Review of Excavations at Deir Alla, Jordan.* Leiden: University of Leiden Archaeological Centre, 1989.

Kosior, Wojciech. "'It will not let the Destroying [One] Enter': The Mezuzah as an Apotropaic Device According to Biblical and Rabbinic Sources". *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture* 9 (2014): 221–3.

Kramer, S. N. "Love in the Gipar". Page 638 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969.

_____. "Inanna and the King: Blessing on the Wedding Night". Page 640 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969.

Krishan, Arvind. *Climate Responsive Architecture: A Design Handbook for Energy Efficient Buildings.* New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Education, 2001.

Kruger, Paul A. "A World Turned on its Head in ancient Near Eastern Prophetic Literature: A Powerful Strategy to Depict Chaotic Scenarios". *Vetus Testamentum* 62 (2012): 58–76.

Kuehn, Sara. *The Dragon in Medieval East Christian and Islamic Art*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Kuntz, J. Kenneth. *The Self Revelation of God*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.

Lane, Edward W. *Arabic-English Lexicon.* London, Williams and Norgate, 1863.

Langdon, Merle K. "A New Greek Abecedarium". *Kadmos* 44 (2005): 175–82.

Lange, Armin. "Die Wurzel *pḥz* und ihre Konnotationen". *Vetus Testamentum* 51 (2001): 497–510.

Lankester Harding, G. *An Index and Concordance of pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.

Lauterbach, Jacob Z. *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael.* JPS Classic Reissues. Philadelhpia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004.

Layton, Scott C. "Whence Comes Balaam? Num 22,5 Revisited". *Biblica* 73 (1992): 32–61.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space.* Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Leichty, Erle. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC).* Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

Lemaire, André. "La langue de l'inscription sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla". *Comptes Rendus du Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamito-Semitiques* 24–28 (1979–84): 317–40.

_____. "Galaad et Makîr: Remarques sur la Tribu de Manassé á l'est du Jourdain". *Vetus Testamentum* 31 (1981): 39–61.

_____. *Les écoles et la formation del a Bible dans l'ancien Israel.* Orbis biblicus et orientalis 39. Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1981.

_____. "Date et Origine Des Inscriptions Hebraïques et Pheniciennes de Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Studi epigrafici e linguistici* 1 (1984): 131–43.

_____. "L'insription de Balaam trouvée à Deir ʿAlla: épigraphie". Pages 313–25 in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984.* Edited by J. Amitai. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985.

_____. "Fragments from the Book of Balaam Found at Deir ʿAlla". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 11/5 (1985): 27–39.

_____. "Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla et la littérature araméenne antique". *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 129 (1985): 270–85.

_____. "La disposition originelle des inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla". *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici* 3 (1986): 79–93.

_____. "Les inscriptions sur plâtre de Deir ʿAlla et leur signification historique et culturelle". Pages 35–57 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.* Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Lemche, Neils Peter. *The Israelites in History and Tradition.* Westminster: John Knox Press, 1998.

Levine, Baruch A. "The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981): 195–205.

_____. "The Balaam Inscription form Deir ʿAlla: Historical Aspects". Pages 324–39 in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984.* Edited by J. Amitai. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985.

_____. "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAllā: General Interpretation". Pages 58–72 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.* Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. "The Semantics of Loss: Two Exercises in Biblical Hebrew Lexicography". Pages 137–58 in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield.* Edited by Z. Zevit, S. Gitin, and M. Sokoloff. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995.

_____. *Numbers 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* Anchor Bible 4A. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: a Book of Readings: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. Vol.1 of *Ancient Egyptian Literature: a Book of Readings*. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1973.

_____. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: New Kingdom.* Vol. 2 of *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1976.

Lindenberger, James M. *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*. Edited by Kent H. Richards. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 14. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Lipiński, Edward. *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II.* Orientalia lovaniensia analecta 57. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 1994.

_____. "Shadday, Shadrapha et le dieu Satrape". *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 8 (1995): 247–275.

_____. *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar*. Orientalia lovaniensia analecta 80. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Department Oosterse Studies, 1997.

_____. *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographic Researches*. Orientalia lovaniensia analecta 153. Dudley, Ma.: Peeters, 2006.

_____. *Resheph: A Syro-Canaanite Deity.* Orientalia lovaniensia analecta 181. Leuven: Peeters, 2009.

_____. "Cult Prostitution in Ancient Israel?". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 40/1 (2014): 48–56, 70.

Llewelyn, Stephen R. "The εἰς (τὴν) οἰλίαν Formula and the Delivery of Letters to Third Persons or Their Property". *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 101 (1994): 71–78.

Longman III, Tremper and Daniel G. Reid. *God is a Warrior.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995.

Loretz, Oswald. *Psalm 29: kanaanäische El- und Baaltraditionen in jüdischer Sicht*. Soest. Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur 2, 1984.

MacDonald, Burton. *"East of the Jordan": Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Bible*. American Schools of Oriental Research Books 6. Boston, Ma.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000.

──────. "The Bible, Archaeology and Jordan". Pages 663–69 in *The Archaeology of Jordan*. Edited by B. Macdonal, R. Adams and P. Bienkowsk. Levantine Archaeology 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001.

MacDonald, Nathan. *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

Machinist, Peter. "The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I. A Study in Middle Assyrian Literature". PhD diss. Yale University, 1978.

Maier, Aren M. "Philistia and the Judean Shephelah after Hazael: the Power Play between the Philistines, Judeans and Assyrians in the 8th Century BCE in light of the Excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath". Pages 241–62 in *Disaster and Relief Management in Ancient Israel, Egypt and the Ancient Near East*. Edited by A. Berlejung. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

Mann, Thomas W. *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exultation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Margalit, Baruch. "Some Observations on the Inscription and Drawing from Khirbet el-Qôm", *Vetus Testamentum* 39 (1989): 371–78.

Margolis, Max L. "The Character of the Anonymous Greek Version of Habakkuk, Chapter 3". *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 24 (1907): 76–85.

Margulis, Baruch. "Gen. XLIX 10/Deut. XXXIII 2-3: A New Look at Old Problems". *Vetus Testamentum* 19 (1969): 202–10.

Maspero, Gaston. *Les Mémoires de Sinouhit.* Cairo: de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1908.

Mastin, Brian A. "The Theophoric Elements *yw* and *yhw* in Proper Names in Eighth-Century Hebrew Inscriptions and the Proper Names at Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 17–20 (2004–2007): 109–35.

_____. "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Vetus Testamentum* 59 (2009): 99–115.

_____. "Who built and used the buildings at Kuntillet ʿAjrud?". Pages 69–85 in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*. Edited by J. K. Aitken, K. J. Dell, and B. A. Mastin. Berlin: W. De. Gruyter, 2011.

Mayani, Z. "Un apport a la discussion du texte Deir ʿAllah". *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974): 318–23.

Mazar, Amihai. "Excavations at Tell Qasile, 1982–1984: Preliminary Report". *Israel Exploration Journal* 36 (1986): 1–15.

_____. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000–586 B.C.E.* Doubleday: New York, 1990.

McCarter, P. Kyle, Jr. "'Yaw, Son of Omri': A Philological Note on Israelite Chronology", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 216 (1974): 5–7.

_____. *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary.* Anchor Bible 8. New York: Doubleday, 1980.

_____. "The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā: The First Combination". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 239 (1980): 49–60.

_____. "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data". Pages 137–55 in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Edited by P. D. Miller Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

_____. "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Texts". Pages 87–99 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.*

Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

———. *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World*. Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996.

———. "Hebrew". Pages 36–81 in *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia*. Edited by Roger D. Woodard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

McCormick, Clifford M. *Palace and Temple: A Study of Architectural and Verbal Icons*. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2002.

McGovern, Patrick E. "Central Transjordan in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: An Alternative Hypothesis of Socio-Economic Transformation and Collapse". Pages 267–73 in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan III*. Edited by A. Hadidi. Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1987.

McNamara, Martin. *The Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes*. The Aramaic Bible 5A. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997.

Mendel Anat and Leore Grosman. "Unpublished Hebrew and Other Northwest Semitic Inscriptions from Samaria Studies with a 3-Dimensional Imaging Technology". *Mainz International Colloquium on Ancient Hebrew*. Johannes-Gutenberg Universität, Mainz (2011): 171–88.

Mendenhall, George. E. *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of a Biblical Tradition*. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University, 1975.

Merrill, Eugene H. *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2006.

Merrill, Selah. *East of the Jordan: A Record of Travel and Observation in the Countries of Moab Gilead and Bashan During the Years 1875–1877*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881.

Meshel, Zeʾev. "Notes and News: Kuntilat ʿAjrud, 1975-1976". *Israel Exploration Journal* 27 (1977): 52.

_____. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud: An Israelite Religious Centre in Northern Sinai". *Expidition* 20 (1978): 50–54.

_____. "Did Yahweh Have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5/2 (1979): 24–34.

_____. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud". Pages 103–09 in vol. 4 of *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

_____. "Teman, Ḥorvat". Pages 1458–1464 in vol. 4 of *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. Edited by Ephraim Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Carter, 1993.

_____. "The 'Aharoni Fortress' near Quseima and the 'Israelite Fortresses' in the Negev". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 294 (1994): 39–67.

_____. *Sinai: Excavations and Studies.* Biblical Archaeology Review international Series 876. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000.

_____. *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*. Edited by Liora Freud. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012.

Meshel, Zeʾev, Israel Carmi, and Dror Segal. "[14]C Dating of an Israelite Biblical Site at Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Radiocarbon* 37 (1995): 205–12.

Meshel, Zeʾev and Carol Meyers, "The Name of God in the Wilderness of Zin". *Biblical Archaeologist* 39 (1976): 6–10.

Meskell, Lynn. "An Archaeology of Social Relations in an Egyptian Village". *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5 (1998): 209–43.

Mienis, Henk K. "A Look Behind the Scenes at How an Ivory Fragment Turned into Part of a Spider Conch". *The Arhcaeo+Malacology Group Newsletter* 16 (2009): 8–9.

Mieroop, Marc van der. *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History.* London: Routledge, 1999.

Milgrom, Jacob. "Sancta Contagion and Altar/City Asylu". Pages 278–310 in *Congress Volume: Vienna, 1980.* Edited by J. A. Emerton. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 32. Leiden: Brill, 1981.

Millar, Daniel. "Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11–31". *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 5 (2010): 1–16.

Millard, Alan. "The Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals: Review Article". *Israel Exploration Journal* 51 (2001): 76–87.

Miller, Patrick D., Jr. "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33". *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964): 240–43.

Miller, Patrick D. Jr., *The divine warrior in early Israel*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Mitchel, Christopher Wright. *The Meaning of BRK "To Bless" in the Old Testament.* Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 95. Atlanta Ga.: Scholars, 1987.

Moorey, P. R. S. *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence.* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999.

Moran, Willam L. "The Hebrew Language in its Nothwest Semitic Background". Pages 197–218 in *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings.* Edited by J. Huehnergard and S. Izre'el. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

_____. "A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos As Reflect in the Amarna Tablets". Pages 1–130 in *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings*. Edited by J. Huehnergard and S. Izre'el. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

Moscati, Sabatino, Anton Spitaler, Edward Ullendorff, Wolfram von Soden. *An Introduction to Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology*. Edited by S. Moscati. Porta Linguarum Orientalium 6. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980.

Mouton, Alice. *Rêves hittites: Contribution à une historie et une anthropologie du rêve en Anatolie ancienne.* Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 28. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Müller, Hans-Peter. "מַשָּׂא". Pages 23–24 in vol. 9 of *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984–2006.

_____. "Die Funktion divinatorischen Redens und die Tierbezeichnungen der Inscrift von Tell Deir ʿAllā". Pages 189–205 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Muraoka, Takamitsu. "On the So-Called *Dativus Ethicus* in Hebrew". *Theological Studies* 29 (1978): 495–98.

_____. *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985.

Muraoka, Takamitsu and M. Rogland. "The *waw* Consecutive in Old Aramaic? A Rejoinder to Victor Sasson". *Vetus Testamentum* 48 (1998): 99–104.

Muraoka, Takamitsu and Bezalel Porten. *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic.* Leiden; New York: Brill, 1998.

Musil, Alois. *Arabia Petraea II: Edom.* Vienna: 1908.

Mykytiuk, Lawrence J. *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200-539 B.C.E.* Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 12. Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.

Naʾaman, Nadav. "Azariah of Judah and Jereboam II of Israel". *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993): 227–34.

_____. "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead". *Zeischrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 111 (1995): 105–17.

_____. "An Assyrian Residence at Ramat Raḥel?" *Tel Aviv* 28 (2001): 260–80.

_____. "The Story of Jehu's Rebellion: Hazael's Inscription and the Biblical Narrative", *Israel Exploration Journal* 56 (2006): 160–66.

_____. "The Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud Through the Lens of Historical Research" *Ugarit-Forschungen* 43 (2011): 299–324.

_____. "The Kingdom of Judah in the 9th Century BCE: Text Analysis versus Archaeological Research". *Tel Aviv* 40 (2013): 247–76.

Naʾaman, Nadav and Nurit Lissovsky. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah". *Tel Aviv* 35 (2008): 186–208.

Nakamura, Carolyn. "Dedicating Magic: Neo-Assyrian Apotropaic Figurines and the Protection of Assur". *World Archaeology* 36 (2004): 11–25.

_____. "Mastering Matters: Magical Sense and Apotropaic Figurine Worlds of Neo-Assyria" in *Archaeologies of Materiality* (ed. Lynn Meskell; Malden, Ma.: Blackwell, 2005), 18–45.

Naveh, Joseph. "Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave". *Israel Exploration Journal* 13 (1963): 74–92.

_____. "The Date of the Deir ʿAllā Inscription in the Aramaic Script". *Israel Exploration Journal* 17 (1967): 256–58.

_____. *The Development of the Aramaic Script*. Jerusalem: Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 5, 1970.

_____. "Some Considerations on the Ostracon from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah," *Israel Exploration Journal* 28 (1978): 31–35.

_____. "Graffiti and Dedications". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 235 (1979): 27–30.

_____. Review of Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla*. *Israel Exploration Journal* 29 (1979): 133–36.

_____. "Unpublished Phoenician Inscriptions from Palestine". *Israel Exploration Journal* 33 (1987): 25–30.

_____. *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982.

Neer, Wim van, Omri Lernau, Renée Friedman, Gregory Mumford, Jeroen Poblóme, and Marc Waelkens. "Fish Remains from Archaeological Sites as Indicators of Former Trade Connections in the Eastern Mediterranean". *Paléorient* 30 (2004): 101–47.

Negbi, Ora. "Were there Sea Peoples in the Central Jordan Valley at the Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age?". *Tel Aviv* 18 (1991): 205–43.

Niccacci, Alviero. *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement series 86. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament press, 1990.

Niditch, Susan. "Oral Register in the Biblical Libretto: Towards a Biblical Poetic", *Oral Tradition* 10 (1995): 387–408.

_____. *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature.* Lousiville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

_____. "The Challenge of Israelite Epic". Pages 277–87 in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Edited by John Miles Foley. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

_____. *Judges: A Commentary.* The Old Testment Library. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.

_____. "Hebrew Bible and Oral Literature: Misconceptions and New Directions". Pages 3–18 in *The Interface Between Orality and Writing*. Edited by Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 260. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Niehaus, Jeffrey J. *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995.

Nielsen, Kjeld. *Incense in Ancient Israel.* Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 38. Leiden: Brill, 1986.

Nir-EL, Y. and Magen Broshi. "The Red Ink of the Dead Sea Scrolls". *Archaeometry* 38 (1996): 97–102.

Nissinen, Martti. *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 12. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

_____. "Mari Letters". Pages 13–79 in *Prophets and prophecy in the ancient Near East*. Edited by M. Nissinen. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 12. Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Nitzan, Bilhah. *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994.

Noth, Martin. *"*Der Wallfahrtsweg zum Sinai". *Palastinajahrbuch* 36 (1940): 5–28.

_____. D*ie israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung*. Hildesheim: *Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung*, 1966.

_____. *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*. Translated by Bernhard W. Anderson. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Nyberg, H. S. "Deuteronomion 33, 2–3". *Zeischrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 92 (1938): 320–44.

Olyan, Saul M. "'And with a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying down of a Woman': On the Meaning and Significance of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13". *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1994): 179–206.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technoligizing of the Word*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Ornan, Tallay. "The Lady and the Bull: Remarks on the Bronze Plaque from Tel Dan". Pages 297–312 in *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Ancient Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Naʾaman*. Edited by Y. Amit, E. Ben Zvi, I. Finkelstein, and O. Lipschits. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Ortlepp, Steven. *Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton: A Historico-Linguistic Approach*. lulu.com, 2011.

Ortlund, Eric N. *Theophany and Chaoskampf: The Interpretation of Theophanic Imagery in the Baal Epic, Isaiah, and the Twelve.* Gorgias Ugaritic Studies 5. Piscataway, Nj.: Gorgias, 2010.

Overbeck, Bernhard and Yaʿaḳov Meshorer, *Das Heilige Land: antike Münzen und Siegel aus einem Jahrtausend jüdischer Geschichte.* Munich: Selbstverlag der Staatliche Münzsammlung, 1993.

Palmer, Edward H. *The Desert of the Exodus: Journeys on Foot in the Wilderness of the Forty Years' Wanderings II.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1871.

Pardee, Dennis. *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters.* SBL Sources for Biblical Study 15. Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1982.

_____. "The 'Epistolary Perfect' in Hebrew Letters". *Biblische Notizen* 22 (1983): 34–40.

_____. "An Evaluation of the Proper Names from Ebla from a West Semitic Perspective: Pantheon Distribution According to Genre". Pages 119–51 in *Eblaite Personal Names and Semitic Name Giving.* Vol 1. Edited by A. Archi. Archivi reali di Ebla 1. Rome: Missione archeologica italiana in Siria, 1988.

_____. "The Linguistic Classification of the Deir ʿAlla Text Written on Plaster". Pages 100–05 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989.* Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

_____. Review of Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā. Journal of ancient Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991): 139–42.

_____. "Les documents d'Arslan Tash: authentiques ou faux?". *Syria* 75 (1998): 15–54.

_____. "A Brief Case for the Language of the 'Gezer Calendar' as Phoenician". Pages 226–45 in *Linguistic Studies in Phoenician: In Memory of J. Brian Peckham.* Edited by R. D. Holmstedt and A. Schade. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

Pardee, Dennis and Robert M. Whiting. "Aspects of Epistolary Verbal usage in Ugaritic and Akkadian". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1987), 1–31.

Parker, Simon B. "Sons of (the) God(s) בני עליון/אלים/(ה)אלהים". Pages 794–800 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Parkinson, Richard B. *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories.* Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Parkinson, Richard and Stephen Quirke. *Papyrus.* Austin Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1995.

Parry, Milman. *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*. Edited by Adam Parry. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Patai, Raphael. "The Godess Asherah". *Journal of ancient Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1965): 37–52.

Pat-El, Naʾama. "The Development of the Semitic Definite Article: A Syntactic Approach". *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54 (2009): 19–50.

Pat-El, Na'ama and Aren Wilson-Wright. "Features of Archaic Biblical Hebrew Poetry and the Linguistic Dating Debate". *Hebrew Studies* 54 (2013): 387–410.

Patterson, Richard B. "The Psalm of Habakkuk". *Grace Theological Journal* 8 (1987): 163–94.

Patton, Kimberley C. "'A Great and Strange Correction': Intentionality, Locality and Epiphany in the Category of Dream Incubation". *History of Religions* 43 (2004): 194–223.

Pearson, Mike P. and Colin Richards. "Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space and Time". Pages 1–37 in *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*. Edited by M. P. Pearson and C. Richards. London: Routledge, 1997.

Perlman, Yoav and Jonathan Meyrav. *Checklist of the Birds of Israel*. Tel Aviv: Israel Ornithological Center, 2009.

Person, Raymond F., Jr. "The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 601–09.

_____. *The Deuteronomic School: History, Social Setting and Literature.* Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Ancient Literature 2. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Petit, Lucas P. "Grinding Implements and Material Found at Tall Dayr ʻAlla, Jordan; Their Place and Role in Archaeological Research". Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan 43 (1999): 145–67.

_____. *Settlement Dynamics in the Middle Jordan Valley during Iron Age II.* Biblical Archaeology Review International series 2033. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009.

Petit, Lucas. P., Eva Kaptijn, F. Hourani, O. al-Ghul, E. B. Grootveld, and Gerrit van der Kooij. "Dayr ʿAlla Regional Project: Settling the Steppe (Second Campaign 2005)". *Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan*, 49 (2005): 179–88.

Peuch, Emilé. "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla". Pages 354–65 in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984*. Edited by J. Amitai; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985.

_____. "Le texte "ammonite" de Deir ʿAlla: Les admonitions de Balaam (première partie)". Pages 13–30 in *La vie de la Parole: De l'Ancien au Nouveau Testament, Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Pierre Grelot professeur à l'Institut Catholique de Paris*. Edited by P. Grelot. Paris: Desclee, 1987.

_____. "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla" Pages 25–47 in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*. Edited by George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten. Themes in Biblical Narrative, Jewish and Christian Traditions 11. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Peust, Carsten. *Egyptian Phonology: An Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language.* Monographien zur ägyptischen Sprache, 2; Göttingen: Peust & Gutschmidt, 1999.

Piepkorn, Arthur C. *Historical Prism Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal I: Editions E, B₁₋₅, D, and K.* Assyriological Studies 5. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933.

Porten, Bezalel and Ada Yardeni, eds. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt.* 4 Vols. Winona Lake, 1986–1999.

Posener, Georges. "Les Signes noirs dans les rubriques". *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 35 (1949): 77–81.

_____. "Sur l'Emploi de l'Encre Rouge dans les Manuscrits Égyptiens". *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 37 (1951): 75–80.

Prinsloo, Gert T. M. "Reading Habakkuk 3 in Light of Ancient Unit Delimiters," *HTS Theological Studies* 69 (2013): 1–11

Pritchard, James B. *Sarepta: A Preliminary Report on the Iron Age.* Philadelphia: University Museum, 1975.

Prouser, Ora Horn. "Suited to the Throne: The Symbolic Use of Clothing in the David and Saul Narratives". *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 71 (1996): 27–37.

Puech, Émile. "L'inscription sur plâtre de Tell Deir ʿAlla". Pages 354–65 in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984*. Edited by J. Amitai. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985.

_____. "Balaʿam and Deir ʿAlla". Pages 25–47 in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*. Edited by G. H. van Kooten and J. van Ruiten. Themes in Biblical Narrative, Jewish and Christian Traditions 11. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Quack, Joachim F. "Critical Remarks on a Proposed Etymology of Hebrew נצר and Aramaic *nqr*". *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 5 (2013): 29–32.

Ragavan, Deena. "Entering Other Worlds: Gates, Rituals, and Cosmic Journeys in Sumerian Sources". Pages 201–21 in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World*. Edited by D. Ragavan. Oriental Institute Seminars 9. Chicago, Ill.: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2013.

Redford, Donald B. "Egypt and Western Asia in the Old Kingdom" *Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt* 23 (1986): 125–43.

Reece, Steve. *Homer's Winged Words: The Evolution of Early Greek Epic Diction in the Light of Oral Theory*. Mnemosyne supplements: monographs on Greek and Roman language and literature 313. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Reese, David S., Henk K. Mienis and Fred R. Woodward. "On the Trade of Shells and Fish from the Nile River". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 264 (1986): 79–81.

Reich, Ronny, Eli Shukron and Omri Lernau, "Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem". *Israel Exploration Journal* 57 (2007): 153–69.

Remington Willett, Elizabeth Ann. "Women and Household Shrines in Ancient Israel". Ph.D. diss. The University of Arizona, 1999.

Rendsburg, Gary. "Hebrew *ʾšdt* and Ugaritic *išdym*". *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 8 (1980): 81–84.

_____. "Modern South Arabian as a Source for Ugaritic Etymologies". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107 (1987): 623–28.

_____. "Monophthongizaion of *aw/ay* > *ā* in Eblaite and in Northwest Semitic". Pages 91–126 in *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language*. Vol. 2. Edited by C. H. Gordon and G. A. Rendsburg. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

_____. "Israelian Features in Genesis 49". *Maraav* 8 (1992): 161–70.

_____. "Eblaite *sa-su-ga-lum* = Hebrew *ssʿgr*". Pages 151–53 in *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language*. Vol. 3. Edited

by C. H. Gordon and G. A. Rendsburg. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992.

_____. "The Dialect of the Deir ʿAlla Inscription". *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 50 (1993): 309–29.

_____. "Morphological Evidence for Regional Dialects in Ancient Hebrew". Pages 65–86 in *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew*. Edited by W. R. Bodine. Dallas, Tex.: Summer Institute of Linguistics; Winona Lake, Ind.: Distributed by Eisenbrauns, 1994.

_____. "A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew: Grammar and Lexicon", *Orient* 38 (2003): 5–35.

_____. "Israelian Hebrew Features in Deuteronomy 33". Pages 167–83 in *Mishneh Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy in Its Cultural Environment in Honour of Jeffrey H. Tiggay*. Edited by N. S. Fox, D. A. Glatt-Gilad, M. J. Williams. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009.

Renz, Johannes. *Die Althebräischen Inschriften: Teil 1 Text and Kommentar*. Vol. 1 of *Handbook der Althebräischen Epigraphik*. Edited by Johannes Renz and Wolfgang Röllig. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995.

Reynolds, Bennie H. "Molek: Dead or Alive? The Meaning and Derivation of *mlk* and מלך". Pages 133–50 in *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition.* Edited by K. Finsterbusch, A. Lange, and K. F. D. Römheld Studies in the History of Religions 112; Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Rezetko, Robert and Ian Young. *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Toward an Integrated Approach*. Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near Eastern Monographs 9. Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

Ringgren, Helmer. "Balaam and the Deir ʿAlla Inscription". Pages 93–98 in *Isac Leo Seeligman Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World*. Vol. 3. Edited by A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch. Jerusalem: Rubinstein, 1983.

Roberts, J. J. M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary.* Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991.

Roberts, Ryan N. "Terra Terror: An Interdisciplinary Study of Earthquakes in Ancient Near Eastern Texts and the Hebrew Bible". Ph.D. diss. University of California Los Angeles, 2012.

Robertson, David A. *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry.* Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 3. Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972.

Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.* Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wiliam B. Eerdmans, 1990.

Rofé, Alexander. *The Book of Balaam: Numbers 22.2-24.25: A Study in Methods of Criticism and the History of Biblical Literature and Religion with an Appendix: Balaam in the Deir ʿAlla Inscription.* Jerusalem: Simor, 1979 (Hebrew).

_____. Response. Pages 365–66 in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984.* Edited by J. Amitai. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985.

Rollston, Christopher A. "Non-Provenanced Epigraphs I: Pillaged Antiquities, Northwest Semitic Forgeries, and Protocols for Laboratory Tests". *Maarav* 10 (2003): 135–93.

_____. "Asia, Ancient Southwest: Scripts Epigraphic: West Semitic". Pages 500–04 in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics.* 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Edited by K. Brown. Oxford: Elsevier, 2006.

_____. "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 344 (2006): 47–74.

_____. "The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedary and Putative Evidence for Israelite Literacy". Pages 61–96 in *Literate Culture*

and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context. Edited by R. Tappy and P. K. McCarter, Jr.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

Roos, Johan de. "Hittite Votive Texts". Pages 491–95 in *Acts of Third International Congress of Hittitology*, *Çorum, September 16-22. Edited by S. Alp and A Süel. Ankara,* 1998.

Rost, Leonard. *The Succession to the Throne of David*. Translated by Michael D. Rutter and David M. Gunn. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982.

Rothenberg, Beno. "An Archaeological Survey in Sinai, 1967–1972". *Annual of Museum Haaretz* 14 (1972): 89–100 (Hebrew).

Rova, Elena. "Tannurs, Tannur Concentrations and Centralised Bread Production at Tell Beydar and Elsewhere: An Overview". Pages 121–70 in *Paleonutrition and Food Practices in the Ancient Near East: Towards a Multidisciplinary Approach*. Edited by L. Milano. Hebrew and Ancient Near Eastern Manuscripts 14. Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2014.

Rudolf, Wilhelm. *Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja.* Kommentar zum Alten Testament 13/3. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1975.

Ruppert, Lothar. "קֶסֶם." Page 73 in vol. 8 of Theological dictionary of the Old Testament. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984–2006.

Russell, Stephen C. *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature: Cisjordan-Israelite, Transjordan-Israelite, and Judahite Portrayals*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 403. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

Sanders, Paul. *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996.

Sanders, Seth L. "What was the Alphabet For? The Rise of Written Vernaculars and the Making of Israelite National Literature". *Maarav* 11 (2004): 25–26.

_____. "Writing and Early Iron Age Israel: Before National Scripts, Beyond Nations and States". Pages 97–112 in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit abecedary in Context*. Edited by R. E. Tappy and P. K. McCarter Jr. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

_____. *The Invention of Hebrew*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Sarfatti, Gad B. "Heberw Inscriptions of the First Temple Period: A Survey and Some Linguistic Comments". *Maarav* 3 (1982): 55–83.

Sasson, Victor. "The Book of Oracular Visions of Balaam from Deir ʿAlla". *Ugarit-Forschungen* 17 (1968): 283–309.

_____. "Two Unrecognised Terms in the Plaster Texts from Deir ʿAlla". *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 117 (1985):102–03.

_____. "Deir ʿAlla *smr* Obscured, not Re-evaluated and other Shady Matters". *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 108 (1996): 258–62.

Savran, George. *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement series 420. London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2005.

Sayce, A. H. "The Site of Pethor". *Academy* 10 (Sept. 16, 1976): 291.

Schaeffer, Claude F. A. *Ugaritica V: nouveaux textes accadiens, hourrites et ugaritiques des archives et bibliothèques privées d'Ugarit*. Mission de Ras Shamra 16. Paris: Librarie Orientaliste Paul Guenther, 1968.

Schwemer, Daniel. *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zietalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien Nach den schriftlichen Quellen*. Wiesbaden: 2001.

_____. "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies: Part I". *Journal of Ancient Near Easter Religions* 7 (2007): 121-168.

_____. "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies: Part II". *Journal of Ancient Near Easter Religions* 8 (2008): 1-44.

Schmidt, Brian B. "The Iron Age *Pithoi* Drawings from Horvat Teman or Kuntillet ʿAjrud: Some New Proposals". *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 2 (2002): 91–125.

_____. "Memorializing Conflict: Toward an Iron Age 'Shadow" History of Israel's Earliest Literature". In Literacy, Orality and Literary Production in the Southern Levant: Contextualizing Sacred Writing in Early Israel. Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and its Literature. Forthcoming.

_____. "Kuntillet ʿAjrud's Pithoi Inscriptions and Drawings: Graffiti <u>and</u> Scribal-Artisan Drafts?". *Maarav* Forthcoming.

Schniedewind, William M. "Sociolinguistic Reflections on the Letter of a 'Literate' Soldier (Lachish 3)". *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 13 (2000): 157–67.

_____. *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

_____. "Adrift: How the Bible Became a Book". Pages 44–56 in *In Conversation with W. M. Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel (Cambridge, 2003)*. Edited by Gary N. Knoppers. *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5 (2005).

_____. "Writing and Book Production in the Ancient Near East". Pages 46–62 in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From Beginnings to 600*. Edited by J. C. Paget and J. Schaper. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Schniedewind, William and Daniel Sivan, "The Elijah-Elisha Narratives: A Test Case for the Northern Dialect of Hebrew". *Jewish Quarterly Review* 87 (1997): 303–37.

Schwartz, J. H., F. Houghton, L. Bondioli, and R. Macchiarelli. "Bones, Teeth, and Estimating Age of Perinates: Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice Revisited". *Antiquity* 86 (2012): 738–45.

Seeligman, Isaac L. "a Psalm from Pre-Regal Times". *Vetus Testamentum* 14 (1964): 75–92.

Segal, M. H. *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*. Eugene Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2001.

Segert, Stanislav. *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic*. München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1976.

_____. *Altaramäische Grammatik: mit Bibliographie, Chrestomathie und Glossar*. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1986.

Seow, Choon-Leon. "AM עם", Pages 24–26 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

_____. "Deir ʿAllā Plaster Texts". Pages 207–12 in *Prophets and prophecy in the ancient Near East*. Edited by M. Nissinen. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 12. Atlanta, GA.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

_____. "Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011): 63–85.

Shanks, Hershel. "The Persisting Uncertainties of Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33 (2012): 28–37, 76.

Shea. William H. "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part I". *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27 (1989): 21–37.

_____. "The Inscribed Tablets from Tell Deir ʿAlla Part II". *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27 (1989): 97–119.

_____. "The ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah Ostracon". *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 28 (1990): 59–86.

Sherwood, Stephen K. *Leviticus*, *Numbers, Deuteronomy.* Berit Olam. Edited by D. Cotter. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002.

Shupak, Nili. "The God from Teman and the Egyptian Sun God: A Reconsideration of Habakkuk 3:3–7". *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 28 (2011): 97–116.

Singer-Avitz, Lily. "Beersheba—A Gateway Community in Southern Arabian Long-Distance Trade in the Eight Century B.C.E.". *Tel Aviv* 26 (1999): 3–74.

_____. "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud". *Tel Aviv* 33 (2006): 196–228.

_____. "The Date of Kuntillet ʿAjrud: A Rejoinder". *Tel Aviv* 36 (2009): 110–19.

Sivan, Daniel. *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language.* Handbuch der Orientalistik 28. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Smelik, Klaas A.D. "Letters to the Exiles: Jeremiah 29 in Context". *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 10 (1996): 282–95.

Smelik, Willem F. *The Targum of Judges.* Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Smith, Duane E. "Portentous Birds Flying West: On the Mesopotamian Origin of Homeric Bird-Divination". *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 13 (2013): 49–85.

Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of the Waw-Consecutive: Northwest Semitic Evidence from Ugarit to Qumran.* Harvard Semitic Monographs 39. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1991.

_____. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1: Intriduction With Text Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.

_____. *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry.* Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 9. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1997.

_____. *The Origins of Biblical Monthesim: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts.* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.

_____. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel.* Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.

_____. "The Blessing God and Goddess: a Longitudinal View from Ugarit to 'Yahweh and ... his asherah' at Kuntillet ʿAjrud". Pages 213–36 in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N.D. Mettinger*. Edited by G. Eidevall and B. Scheuer. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

_____. "The Problem of the God and His Manifestations: The Case of the Baals at Ugarit, with Implications for Yahweh of Various Locales". Pages 205–50 in *Die Stadt im Zwölfprophetenbuch*. Edited by A. Schart and J. Krispenz. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 428. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

Smith, Mark S. and Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 2, Introduction with Text , Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3–1.4*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 114. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Smith, Patricia, G. Avishai, J.A. Greene, and L.E. Stager. "Aging Cremated Infants: the Problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage". *Antiquity* 85 (2011): 859–74.

Sommer, Benjamin D. *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts For the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody, Ma.: Hendrickson, 2005.

Stager, Lawrence E. "The Shechem Temple". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 29/4 (2003): 26–31, 33–35, 66, 68–69.

Starkey, J. L. "Une tablette araméenne de l'an 34 de Nabuchodonosor (AO, 21.063)". *Syria* 37 (1960): 99–115.

Steen, Eveline J. van der. *Tribes and Territories in Transition: The Central East Jordan Valley and Surrounding Regions in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: A Study of the Sources*. Ph.D. diss. Leiden University 2002.

_____. *Tribes and Territories in Transition: The Central East Jordan Valley and Surrounding Regions in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: A Study of the Sources.* Leuven: Peeters Press, 2004.

_____. "Introduction: Tell Deir ʿAlla in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages". Pages 17–24 in *Sacred and Sweet: Studies on the Material Culture of Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tell Abu Sarbut*. Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplements 24. Edited by M. L. Steiner and E. J. van der Steen. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Steiner, Margreet L. "Two Popular Cult Sites of Ancient Palestine: Cave 1 in Jerusalem and e 207 in Samaria". *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 11 (1997): 16–28.

Stephens, Ferris J. "The Babylonian Dragon Myth in Habakkuk 3". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 43 (1924): 290–293.

Stevens, Quentin. "Betwixt and Between: Building Thresholds, Liminality and Public Space". Pages 73–92 in *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*. Edited by K. A. Franck and Q. Stevens. London: Routledge, 2007.

Stökl, Jonathan. *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison.* Culture and History in the Ancient Near East 56. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Stol, Marten and Frans A. M. Wiggermann. *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible: its Mediterranean Setting.* Cuneiform Monographs 14. Groningen: Styx, 2000.

Szokolay, Steven V. *Introduction to Architectural Science The Basis of Sustainable Design.* Hoboken, N.J.: Taylor and Francis, 2014.

Tabor, James D. "Heaven". Pages 90–91 in vol. 3 of *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Tappy, Ron E., P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., Marilyn J. Lundberg, and Bruce Zuckerman "An Abecedary of the Mid-Tenth Century B.C.E. from the Judaean Shephelah". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 344 (2006): 5-46.

Taylor, J. Glen. "Was Yahweh Worshiped as the Sun?". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20 (1994): 52–61, 90–91.

Tebes, Juan Manuel. "Trade and Nomads: The Commerical Relationships Between the Negev, Edom, and the Mediterranean in the ate Iron Age". *Journal of the Serbian Archaeological Society* 22 (2006): 45–62.

_____. "Assyrians, Judaeans, Pastoral Groups, and the Trade Patterns in the Late Iron Age Negev". *History Compass* 5 (2007): 619–31.

Testen, David. "The Significance of Aramaic *r < *n*". *Journal of ancient Near Eastern Studies* 44 (1985): 143–46.

Thareani, Yifat. "The Spirit of Clay: 'Edomite Pottery' and Social Awareness in the Late Iron Age". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 359 (2010): 35–55.

Thareani-Sussely, Yifat. "Ancient Caravanserais: An Archaeological View from 'Aroer". *Levant* 39 (2007): 123–41.

Thiersch, H. and G. Hölscher. "Reise durch Phönizien und Palästina". *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 23 (1904): 1–52.

Thomas, Rosalind. *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Tigay, Jeffrey H. *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

_____. *The JPD Torah Commentary: דברים Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation.* Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996.

_____. "Priestly Reminder Stones and Ancient Near Eastern Votive Practices". Pages 339–55 in *Shai le Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, its Exegesis and its Language*. Edited by M. Bar-Asher, D. Rom-Shiloni, E. Tov, and N. Wazana. Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 2007.

Toorn, Karel van der. *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and Babylonian Woman.*

Translated by S. J. Denning-Bolle. The Biblical Seminar 23. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994.

———. "God (1) אלהים". Pages 352–65 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

———. *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Tov, Emanuel, R. A. Kraft, and P. J. Parsons. *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr): The Seiyâl Collection I.* Discoveries in the Judaean Desert VIII. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

Tristram, Henry B. *The Survey of Western Palestine: The Flora and Fauna of Palestine*. London: The Palestine Exploration Fund, 1885.

———. *The Natural History of the Bible*. London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1898.

Trumbull, H. Clay. *Threshold Covenant: Or The Beginning of Religious Rites*. 2nd ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896.

Tsumura, David T. "Niphal with an Internal Object in Hab 3, 9a". *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31 (1986): 11–16.

———. "Ugaritic Poetry and Habakkuk 3". *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989): 24–48.

———. *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaokampf Theory in the Old Testament*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005.

Uffenheimer, Benjamin. *Early Prophecy in Israel.* Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999.

Ulrich, Eugene. *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants.* Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 134. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Ussishkin, David. "The Rectangular Fortress at Kadesh-Barnea". *Israel Exploration Journal* 45 (1995): 119–27.

Van Dam, Cornelis. *The Urim and Thummim: A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

Van Seters, John. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History.* New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1983.

_____. *The Pentateuch: A Social Science Commentary.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Vermès, Géza. "Baptism and Jewish Exegesis: New Light from Ancient Sources". *New Testament Studies* 4 (1958): 308–19,

_____. *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies.* Leiden: Brill, 1973.

Vilders, Monique M. E. "The Stratigraphy and the Pottery of Phase M at Deir ʿAlla and the Date of the Plaster Texts". *Levant* 24 (1992): 187–200.

Vogel, J. C. and H. T. Waterbolk. "Groningen Roadiocarbon Dates 10". *Radiocarbon* 14 (1972): 53.

Von Rad, Gerhard. "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel". Pages 166–204 in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays.* Translated by E. W. Trueman Dickins. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966.

Wainwright, Gerald A. "The Origins of Storm-Gods in Egypt". *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 49 (1963): 13–20.

Watson, Wilfred G. E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques.* London: T & T Clark, 2005.

Watts, James W. "Psalmody in Prophecy: Habakkuk 3 in Context". Pages 209–23 in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays On Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D.W. Watts.* Edited by J. W. Watts and P. R. House. Journal fr the Study of the Old Testament Supplement series 235. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Way, Kenneth C. *Donkeys in the Biblical World*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

Wearne, Gareth J. "קרנים מידו לו and מימינו אשדת למו: Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another". *Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 19 (2014): 1–10.

_____. "Habakkuk 3:10–11: In Defence of a Masoretic Unit Division". *Vetus Testamentum* 64 (2014): 515–18.

_____. "The Role of the Scribe in the Composition of Written Correspondence in Israel and Judah". In conference volume: *Observing the Scribe at Work: Knowledge Transfer and Scribal Professionalism in Pre-Typographic Societies*. Forthcoming.

Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges.* New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2012.

Weinfeld, Moshe. "The Kuntillet ʿAjrud Inscriptions and their Significance". *Studi epigrafici e linguistici* 1 (1984): 121–30.

_____. "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East". Pages 121–47 in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*. Edited by H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984.

Weippert, Helga. *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit*. Handbuch der Archäologie. Vorderasien 2. Munich: Beck, 1988.

Weippert, Manfred. "The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā and the Study of the Old Tesament". Pages 151–84 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Weipert, Helga and Manfred Weipert. "Die "Bileam" –Inschrift von Tell Dēr ʿAllā". *Zeischrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 68 (1982): 77–103.

Wellhausen, Julius. "Die Ehe bei den Arabern". *Nachrichten von der koniglichen Gesellschaft der Wisrenschaften zu Gottingen* (1893): 431-81.

Wesselius, J. W. "Thoughts about Balaam: The Historical Background of the Deir Alla Inscription on Plaster". *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 44 (1987): 589–99.

Westermann, Claus. *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*. Translated by H. C. White. Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1991.

Westpal, Gustav. *Jahwes Wohnstätten nach den Anschauungen der Alten Hebräer: eine alttestamentliche Untersuchung*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 15. Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1908.

Wieder, Arnold A. "Ugaritic-Hebrew Lexicographical Notes". *JBL* 84 (1965): 160–64.

Williams, Ronald J. *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*. 3rd ed. Revised and Expanded by J. C. Beckman. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Wilson, Robert R. *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel.* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.

Wolters, Al. "The Balaamites of Deir ʿAlla as Aramean Deportees". *Hebrew Union College Annual* 59 (1988): 101–13.

_____. "Aspects of the Literary Structure of Combination I". Pages 295–304 in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-Evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Leiden 21–24 August 1989*. Edited by Jacob Hoftijzer and Gerrit van der Kooij. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

Wrathall, Alexandra. "Reading Between the Lines: A Narratological Approach to the Deir ʿAlla Inscription Combination I". M.Res. Diss. Macquarie University, 2014.

Wright, George R. H. *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine.* Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 1985.

Wyatt, Nicholas. *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East*. The Biblical Seminar 85. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001.

_____. "The titles of the Ugaritic storm-god". *Ugarit-Forschungen 24 (2007): 403-24.*

Yadin, Yigael and Joseph Naveh, *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965 Final Reports: The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and*

Jar Inscriptions. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989.

Yardeni, Ada. *The Book of the Hebrew Script: History, Palaeography, Script Styles, Calligraphy and Design.* London: The British Library; New Castle, De.: Oak Knoll Press, 2002.

Yassine, Khair and Javier Teixidor. "Ammonite and Aramaic Inscriptions from Tell El-Mazār in Jordan". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 264 (1986): 45–50.

Young, Ian. "The Diphthong **ay* in Edomite". *Journal of Semitic Studies* 37 (1992): 27–30.

_____. "The Style of the Gezer Calendar and Some 'Archaic Biblical Hebrew' Passages". *Vetus Testamentum* 42 (1992): 362–75.

_____. *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew.* Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993.

_____. "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence: Part II". *Vetus Testamentum* (1998): 408–22.

_____. "Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions". Pages 276–311 in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology.* Edited by Ian Young. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement series 369. London: T & T Clark, 2003.

Young, Ian, Robert Rezetko, and Martin Ehrensvärd. *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts, vol. 1: An Introduction to Approaches and Problems.* London: Equinox, 2008.

Yoyotte, J. "Un souvenir du 'Pharon' Taousert en Jordanie". *Vetus Testamentum* 12 (1962): 464–69.

Zeist, Wilhem van and Johanna A. H. Heeres. "Paleobotanical Studies of Deir ʿAlla, Jordan". *Paleorient* 1 (1973): 21–37.

Zevit, Ziony. *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs.* American Schools of Oriental Research monograph series 2. Cambridge, Ma.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1980.

_____. *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches.* New York: Continuum, 2001.

Zgoll, Annette. "Die Welt im Schlaf sehen—Inkubation von Träumen im antiken Mesopotamien". *Die Welt des Orients* 32 (2002): 74–101.

Ziffer, Irit. "Portraits of Ancient Israelite Kings?". *Biblical Archaeology Review* 39 (2013): 41–51.

Zorzi, Nicla de. "Bird Divination in Mesopotamia: New Evidence from BM 108874". *Kaskal* 6 (2009): 1000–1051.

Zuckerman, Bruce and Stephen Kaufman, "Recording the Stela: First Step on the Road to Decipherment". *A Preliminary Report on the Incirli Stela*: http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/nelc/stelasite/zuck.html

PICTURE REFERENCES*

Map (p.xxiii)—Showing Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla. Adapted from Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, xviii.

Fig.2.1—Location map of the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 74, fig.5.1.

Fig.4.1—Kuntillet ʿAjrud Phase 1. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 11, fig.2.1.

Fig.4.2—Kuntillet ʿAjrud Phase 1. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 11, fig.2.1.

Fig.4.4—LEFT: Beck's reconstruction of the seated figure; RIGHT the lyre player on Pithos A. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 191, fig.6.39, 166, fig.6.20 (respectively).

Fig.4.5—The benches at the entrance to Building A, looking North. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 19, fig.2.16.

Fig.4.6—Location map of the KAPT. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 74, fig.5.1.

Fig.4.7—*Kajr*4.2. Adapted from Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 111, fig.5.53.

Fig.5.1—Combination I. Adapted from van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 67, fig.85.

Fig.5.3—Combination II. Adapted from van der Kooij and Ibrahim, *Picking Up the Threads*, 68, fig.86.

Fig.7.9—The hand-shaped stone object discovered to the south of room EE335. Franken and Moawiyah M. Ibrahim, "Two Seasons of Excavations at Tell Deir ʿAlla, 1986-1978", 214, pls. XXVIII and XXIX (respectively).

Fig.7.10—The northern slopes of tell Deir ʿAlla during the first season of excavations. Adapted from Franken, "The Excavations at Deir ʿAllā in Jordan", pl. 2.

*all other drawings are my own. Note that figures are for illustrative purposes only, they do not have scientific precision.

Appendix A

PERSONAL NAMES AT KUNTILLET ʿAJRUD[1]

	NAME	INSCRIPTION	PARALLELS
1.	שמעיו	*Kajr*1.1	*Exact form unparalleled*; cf. (שמעיהו) *Arad* (ostracon) 27.2; 31.5; 39.obv.2, 7–8; 69.3 (שמע[ֹ]יהו); *Jerusalem* (pot) 32 (שמע[יהו]); *Lachish* (ostracon) 4.obv.6; 19.4 (שְׁמעׁיהו); *Wadi Murabaʿat* (papyrus) 1B.4 (שמעֹׁיהו); **BH**: (שְׁמַעְיָהוּ) Jer 26:20; 29:24; 36:12; Ezra 8:16; Neh 11:15; 2 Chr 17:8; 31:15; 35:9; (שְׁמַעְיָה) Ezra 8:13; 10:21, 31; Neh 3:39; 6:10; 10:9; 12:6, 8, 34, 35, 36, 41; 1 Chr 3:22; 4:37; 5:4; 9:14, 16(?); 11:2; 15:8, 11; 24:6; 26:4, 6, 7; 2 Chr 29:14; **seals**: *DH** 12, 64; *MP* 3.42, 90; *WSS* 373–74, 386, 439, 443, 456, 465, 502, 634–38, 656 .
2.	עזר	*Kajr*1.1	*Arad* (ostraca) 22.2, 23.8, 51.2, 58.3; *DH**

---

[1] Adapted and enlarged from Dobbs-Allsopp, et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, Appendix A: Personal Names, 583–622; and Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 74–104; 128–29. Inscription numbers follow the system used by Dobbs-Allsopp et al. Following Dobbs-Alsopp, et al., the following abbreviations are used: *BPPS*: Robert Deutsch and André Lemaire, *Biblical Period Personal Seals in the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection* (Tel Aviv: Bible Review, 2000); *DH** (1–39): Robert Deutsch and Michael Heltzer, *Forty New Ancient West Semitic Inscriptions* (Tel Aviv and Jaffa : Israel Numismatics, 1994); *DH** (40–79): idem, *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period* (Tel Aviv and Jaffa: Israel Numismatics, 1995); *DH** (80–120): idem, *Window to the Past* (Tel Aviv and Jaffa : Archaeological Institute, 1997); *DH** (121–160): Robert Deutsch, Michael Heltzer, and Gabriel Barkay, *West Semitic Epigraphic News of the 1ˢᵗ Millennium BCE* (Tel Aviv and Jaffa: Archaeological Institute, 1999); *DHL*: Bernhard Overbeck, Yaʿaḳov Meshorer, *Das Heilige Land: antike Münzen und Siegel aus einem Jahrtausend jüdischer Geschichte* (Munich: Selbstverlag der Staatliche Münzsammlung, 1993); *MP*: Robert Deutsch, *Messages from the Past: Hebrew Bullae form the Time of Isaiah Through the Destruction of the First Temple* (Tel Aviv, 1999); *PNPPI*: Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscription*; *PTU*: F. Gröndahl, *Die Personnamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (Studia Pohl 1; Rome Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967).

			77.3, 5; *Lachish* (ostracon) 19; *Khirbet el-Meshash* (ostracon) 1.2; **BH**: (עֶזֶר) Neh 3:19; 1 Chr 4:4; 12:10; (עֵזֶר) 1 Chr 7:21; (עֶזֶר) Neh 12:42; (עַזּוּר) Jer 28:1; Neh 10:18; (עַזּוּר) Ezek 11:1; (עֶזְרִי) 1 Chr 27:26;[2] **seals**: *DH** 24, 56; *ErIsr* 26, 112.16*; *MP* 3.37, 73; *WSS* 144; 301–04; 467; 495; 594; 691; 696–97; Ammon. *WSS* 962.
3.	עבדיו	*Kajr*1.2	*Samaria* (ostracon) 50.2; cf. (עבדיהו) *Arad* (ostracon) 10.4; 27.2 (עבדֿ]יהו[); 49.8; 63.3 (ד]י[ה]וֿ); *DH** 79.obv.9; *Meṣad Ḥashavyahu* (ostracon) 4.7 (ע]בֿדֿיֿהוֿ[); **BH**: (עֹבַדְיָהוּ) 1 Kgs 18:3–6, 16; 1 Chr 27:19; 2 Chr 34:12; (עֹבַדְיָה) Obad 1:1; Ezra 8:9; Neh 10:6; 12:25; 1 Chr 3:21; 7:3; 8:38; 9:16, 44; 12:10; **seals**: (עבדיה) *MP* 3.71; *WSS* 661; (עבדיהו) *MP* 72; *WSS* 9, 175, 180, 279, 290–92, 592.
4.	עדנה	*Kajr*1.2	(עַדְנָה) 2 Chron 17:14; cf. (עֶדֶן) 2 Chr 29:12, 31:15; (עַדְנָא) Ezra 10:30; Neh 12:15.
5.	שבל	*Kajr*1.3	*Exact form unparalleled*; cf. (שׁוֹבָל) Gen 36:20, 23; 1 Chr 1:38, 2:50, 52.[3]
6.	חליו	*Kajr*1.3	*Samaria* (ostracon) 118.1 (חליֿ]ו[); cf. **BH**: (אֲבִיחָיִל) Num 3:35; (יהוחל/יהוחיל) *WSS* 672–73; (חילא) *WSS* 235, 358; Ammon. (חלא) *WSS* 930.
7.	עבד]	*Kajr*1.4	עבד: Arad 72.5 (עבֿ]ד[); *Beersheba* (ostracon) 1.2 (עֿבדֿ); Cf. (עבדי) *BPPS* 73; *WSS* 187, 684, 690; Barkay (1992), 116 [עבדי}יֿ{];[4] Vaughan (1999), 208 [XXIc]);[5] **BH**: (עֶבֶד) Judg 9:26, 28, 30, 31, 35; Ezra 8:6;

---

[2] Incorrectly listed as 1 Chr 27:6 in Dobbs-Allsopp, et al.

[3] Aḥituv et al. note that in the Hebrew Bible שׁוֹבָל is always written *plene*, suggesting it might be a *shafʿel* I-*wāw* verb from √יבל. As such, they suggest that שבל may actually be derived from the masculine form of שִׁבֹּלֶת (ear of corn); cf. the Safaitic name *Sabal*; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 78. Be that as it may, there is no undisputed evidence for the use of internal *m.l.* at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, and as such שבל might yet be a phonetic spelling equivalent to BH שׁוֹבָל.

[4] Gabriel Barkay, "A Group of Stamped Handles from Judah", *ErIsr* 23 (2004): 113–28 (Hebrew).

[5] Andrew G. Vaughn, *Theology, History and Archaeology in the Chronicler's Account of Hezekia* (SBLABS 4; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 1999).

			(עֹבֵד/עוֹבֵד) Ruth 4:17. 21. 22; 1 Chr 2:12, 37, 38; 11:47; 26:7; 2 Chr 23:1. עבד[א]: *Samaria* (ostracon) 57:1; **BH**: (עַבְדָּא) 1 Kgs 4:6; Neh 11:17; **seals**: *DH** 17; *WSS* 142, 288–89, 507; Ammon. *WSS* 864; 1095, 1112–23. עבד[ד]: *DH** 113. עבד[יו]: (see *Kajr*1.2).
8.	ט[	*Kajr*2.1	אלפל[ט: *Tell el-ʿOreimeh* (jar) 1; **BH**: (אֱלִיפָלֶט) 2 Sam 5:16; 23:34; Ezra 8:13; 10:33; 1 Chr 3:6, 8; 8:39; 14:5, 7; cf. (פַּלְטִיאֵל) Num 34:26; 2 Sam 3:15; (פְּלַטְיָה/פְּלַטְיָהוּ) Ezek 11:1, 13; Neh 10:23(22); 1 Chr 3:21; *DH** 57, 129; *DHL* A34; *MP* 3.79–81. ישפ[ט: *Arad* (ostracon) 53; cf. **BH**: (יְהוֹשָׁפָט) 1 Kgs 15:24; 2 Kgs 1:17, etc.; (שָׁפָט) Num 13:5; 1 Kgs 19:16, 19; 2 Kgs 3:11; 1 Chr 3:22, etc.; *MP* 3.91; *WSS* 381–83; etc.; (שְׁפַטְיָהוּ/שְׁפַטְיָה) 2 Sam 3:4; Jer 38:1; Ezra 2:4; Neh 7:9; 1 Chr 12:6, etc.; *BPPS* 89; *DH** 102; *WSS* 296, 384–86. פל[ט: Ammon. *WSS* 966, 978; Khair Yassine and Javier Teixidor, "Ammonite and Aramaic Inscriptions from Tell El-Mazār in Jordan," *BASOR* 264 (1986): 45–50, ostracon No 3.
9.	עירא	*Kajr*2.1	**BH**: (עִירָא) 2 Sam 20:26; 23:26, 28; 1 Chr 11:28, 40; 27:9.
10.	עדה[	*Kajr*2.2	עדה: **BH**: (עָדָה) Gen 4:19–20, 23; 36:2, 4, 10, 12, 16; cf. (עַדְיָא) Neh 12:16. עדה[אל: *Mur* 1B.3 (אֱלְעֹדה); cf. **BH**: (עֲדִיאֵל) 1 Chr 4:36; 9:12; 17:25; *WSS* 52; (אֶלְעָדָה) 1 Chr 7:20. עדה[יו]*.[6]
11.	ח[	*Kajr*2.3	Probable PN.
12.	ראי[	*Kajr*2.7	ראי[ה: **BH**: (רְאָיָה) 1 Chr 4:2; 5:5; Ezra 2:47; Neh 7:50. ראי[ו]*: cf. (ראיהו חלציהו) *WSS* 624.
13.	י[	*Kajr*2.8	Probable PN.
14.	א[	*Kajr*3.1	Possibly א[שיו] King Joash of Israel 2 Kgs

---

[6] Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 79.

			13:9–13, etc.: cf. (יאוש) *Lachish* (ostraca) 2, 3, 6; **BH:** (יוֹאָשׁ) Judg 6:11, 29, 30, 31; 7:14; 8:13, 29, 32 x2l 1 Kings 22:26; 2 Kings 11:2; 12:20, 21; 13:1, 9, 10, 12, 13 x2, 14, 25; 14:1 x2, 3, 17, 23 x2, 27; Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1; 1 Chron 3:11; 4:22; 12:3; 2 Chron 18:25; 22:11; 24:1, 2, 4, 22, 24; 25:17, 18, 21, 23 x2, 25 x2.
15.	יהל[י]	*Kajr*3.1	*Unparalleled.*[7]
16.	יועשה	*Kajr*3.1	*WSS* 192.
17.	שמעי]	*Kajr*3.3	שמעי[ו: (see *Kaj* 1.1). *שמעי: (i.e. שָׁמְעִי).[8]
18.	פגי]	*Kajr*3.3	פגי: *WSS* 553; cf. Palmyrene (פגא).[9]
19.	אמריו	*Kajr*3.6	*Exact form unparalleled*; cf. (אמריהו) *Beersheba* (jug) 5.2; *Gibeon* (jar handles) 14–17 (א[מ]ריהו); 19 (א[מריהו]); 20 (א[מ]רֹיהו); 61 (אמריהו); **BH:** (אֲמַרְיָהוּ) 1 Chr 24:23; 2 Chr 19:11; 31:15; (אֲמַרְיָה) Zeph 1:1; Ezra 7:3; Neh 10:4; 11:4; 12:2, 13; 1 Chr 5:33, 37; 6:37; 23:19; **seals:** *DH** 133, 152; *MP* 3.35, 45, 62; *WSS* 212, 449; *BAR* 28 (2002): 42–51, 60.
20.	אמנ[ֹי	*Kajr*3.7	*Exact form unparalleled*; perhaps gent. or hypocoristic of אמן√, "reliable trustworthy";[10] cf. **BH:** (אָמוֹן) 2 Kgs 21:18–26; 2 Chron 33:22; (יואמן) *WSS* 187; (יאמן) *unprovenanced Heb. bulla from the Kaufman collection.*[11]
21.	שכניו	*Kajr*3.10	*Exact form unparalleled*; cf. (שכניהו) *DH** 79.obv.10; **BH:** (שְׁכַנְיָהוּ) 1 Chr 24:11; 2 Chr 31:15; (שְׁכַנְיָה) Ezra 8:3, 5; 10:2; Neh 3:29; 6:18; 12:3; 1 Chr 3:21–22, **seals:** *DH** 16; *MP*

---

[7] Aḥituv et al. note that there is not enough space for a *wāw* at the end of this name, but argue, nonetheless, that, יהלי is probably a shortened form of the theophoric PN יהליו*; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʾAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 90. There is analogous Biblical evidence for the practice of abbreviating PNN by dropping the theophoric element; see Arnold A. Wieder, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Lexicographical Notes", *JBL* 84 (1965): 161.

[8] Following the vocalization of Aḥituv et al.; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʾAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 91.

[9] See the discussion in ibid, 92.

[10] ibid, 98.

[11] Robert Deutsch, *Biblical Period Hebrew Bullae: The Josef Chaim Kaufman Collection*, Tel Aviv (2003), 187, No.179; *apud* Meshel, *Kuntillet ʾAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 98.

			3.79, 86; *WSS* 358, 516, 630.
22.	אמץ	*Kajr*3.10	*Beersheba* (ostracon) 1.4 (אמץׄ); *Tel Dan* (jug) 1 (אמ]ץׄ); Moab. *WSS* 1007, 1018; **BH**: (אָמוֹץ) Isa 1:1; 2 Kgs 19:2, 20; 2 Chr 26:22, etc.
23.	שמריו	*Kajr*3.10	*Samaria* (ostracon) 1.1–2; 13.2; 14.2; 21.1–2; **seals**. *WSS* 377; cf. (שמריהו) *Arad* (ostracon) 18.obv.4; **BH**: (שְׁמַרְיָהוּ) 1 Chr 12:6; (שְׁמַרְיָה) 2 Chr 11:19, Ezra 10:32, 41; **seals**: *WSS* 309, 375–76.
24.	אליו	*Kajr*3.10	*Exact form unparalleled*; cf. (אליהו) *Jrusalem* (jar) 10; **BH**: (אֵלִיָּהוּ) 1 Kgs 17:1 2 Kgs 1:10; 2 Chr 21:12, etc.; (אֵלִיָּה) 2 Kgs 1:3; Mal 3:23; Ezra 10:21, 26; **seals**: Avigad et al. 2000, no. 38;[12] *BPPS* 32; *MP* 3.28–29; *WSS* 66–67, 76, 435, 537.
25.	עזיו	*Kajr*3.10	*WSS* 3–4; cf. (עזיהו) *Arad* 20.2 (עׄזׄ]י[הו); **BH**: (עֲזִיָּהוּ) 2 Kgs 15:32, 34; Isa 1:1; 61; 7:1; Ezra 10:21; Neh 11:4; 1 Chr 6:9; 27:25; 2 Chr 26:1, 3, 8–9, 11, 14, 18–19, 21–23; 27:2; (עֻזִּיָּה) 2 Kgs 15:13, 30; Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5; **seals**: *WSS* 299–300, 501, 654.
26.	מצרי	*Kajr*3.10	*Possibly a nickname: DH** 79.obv.10, attested in Ug. and Phoen. (*PTU*, 161; *PNPPI*, 142, 238–39); **seals**: *WSS* 1093; *MP* 3.61a-b; cf. (מצר) *WSS* 556.
27.	אשא	*Kajr*3.16	*Jerusalem* (jar fragment) 11 (אש[א]); *Samaria* (ostracon) 22.2; 23.2; 24.1 ([א]שׄא); 26.1; 27.1; 28.1–2; 29.1; 37.3; 39.3 (אש[א]); 102.1 ([א]ש[א]); Ammon. *WSS* 920; cf. **BH**: (אָסָא)[13] 1 Kgs 22:42; 2 Chr 15:1–7, 12–15; 16:12, 13; 17:1; Jer 17:5.
28.	גד[	*Kajr*3.16	As PN: Gen 30.11; 35:26, etc.; as tribe: Num 1:25; 2:14; etc. גד]א: *Arad* (ostracon) 72.3 (גׄדׄא); cf. **BH**: (גַּדִּיאֵל) Num 13:10.

---

[12] Nahman Avigad, Michael Heltzer, and André Lemaire, *West Semitic Seals, Eighth–Sixth Centuries BCE: The Reuben and Edith Hecht Collection B* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2000) (Hebrew and English).

[13] As noted byAḥituv et al. the spelling אשא (as opposed to biblical אסא) might suggest that the scribe at Kuntillet ʿAjrud still perceived a distinction between the consonants *śîn* and *sāmek*; Meshel, *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman)*, 104.

			גד]י: *Arad* (ostracon) 71.A.3 (גדי[).

גד]י: *Arad* (ostracon) 71.A.3 (גדי[).

גד]יו: *Samaria* (ostracon) 2.2; 4.2; 5.2 (גד[י�ׄ]); 6.2 ([גד]יו); 7.2–3; 16a.2; 16b.2; 17a.2; 17b.2 (גדי[וׄ]); 18.2; 30.2; 33.2 (גדיׄו); 34.2 (ג[ד]יׄו); 35.2 (גד[יו]); 42.3 ([גדי]וׄ); **seals**: (גדיהו) *BPPS* 42; *WSS* 12, 117–18, 454, 467, 628–29, 649.

גד]ליה: *Arad* (ostracon) 110.2; **BH**: (גְּדַלְיָה) Jer 40:5, 8; 41:16; Zeph 1:1; Ezra 10:18; **seals**: *DH** 135; *DHL* A6; *MP* 3,8; *WSS* 80, 119 – 20, 405, 409, 468 (?), 504.

*גד]ליו: cf. (גדליהו) *Arad* (ostracon) 22.1, *Jerusalem* (jar handle) 6 (גדל[יהו]); *Uza* 4.7; **BH**: (גְּדַלְיָהוּ) 2 Kgs 25:22–25; Jer 38:1; 39:14; 40:6–16; 41:1–18; 43:6; 1 Chr 25:3, 9 .

Appendix B

VOTIVES: THE MATERIALITY OF *Kajr*1.2

As noted in Chapter 2, the inscribed stone basin (*Kajr*1.2; cf. *Kajr*1.1, 1.3 and 1.4) has typically been described as a "votive" or "dedicatory" offering. However, in one sense, the term votive (from the Latin *vōtīvus:* performed, offered, etc., in consequence of a vow)[1410] is unfortunate. That is, insofar as its association with a specific cultic act related to the enactment or fulfilment of a vow goes beyond the available evidence. Nevertheless, it is precisely in this sense that Dever sought to use the term; seeing this vessel, along with a number of other inscribed and uninscribed objects from ancient Israel, as strong circumstantial evidence for an ancient Israelite votive custom.[1411] Be that as it may, it has been objected that, to date, none of the artefacts that are commonly identified as votive objects (including those from Kuntillet ʿAjrud) explicitly mentions a vow

---

[1410] J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, "Votive" The Oxford English Dictionary (vol. 19; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 769; cf. Dever, *Did God have a Wife*, 189. In recent decades there has been growing interest in the study of ancient Hebrew and Near Eastern vows. See, for example, Tony W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield; JSOT Press, 1992); Karel Van Der Toorn, *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and Babylonian Woman* (Trans. Sara J. Denning-Bolle; The Biblical Seminar 23; Sheffield; JSOT Press, 1994), 97-102; Jacques Berlinerblau, *The Vow and the 'Popular Religious Groups' of Ancient Israel: A Philological and Sociological Inquiry* (Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press: 1996); Jeffrey Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones".

[1411] Dever, *Did God have a Wife*, 162, 195–96, see also pp. 51, 115, 128, 138, 147, 188–89, 190–92, 193, 194.

(נדר).[1412] And while Dever has rightly stressed that the highly contextualised and symbolic nature of a votive object means that it does not *need* to specify itself as such, in such equivocal cases it is prudent to opt for greater methodological caution by avoiding, as far as possible, leading terminology.

What is in question is not so much whether the ancient Israelites made votive offerings—the Hebrew Bible provides clear evidence that they did (e.g. Lev 7:16; 22:28; 22:21, 23; 23:38; Num 15:3; 29:39; Deut 12:6; 17)—but whether an object can be confidently identified as such without an explicit designation (i.e. in writing). Indeed, in the Hebrew Bible votive (נֶדֶר) offerings are frequently mentioned in the same context as freewill (נְדָבָה) offerings,[1413] and it is evidently by their designated purpose rather than their material substance that they are differentiated.[1414] This fact alone should mandate considerable caution when attempting to classify an artefact as "votive".

Notwithstanding this terminological distinction, the term votive is typically used broadly in ancient Near Eastern scholarship to refer to a range of dedicatory offerings. In this sense the essential function of *Kajr*1.2 appears, *prima facie*, to be related to that of ancient Near Eastern votive objects generally; that is, "taking the place of the suppliant, and relieving him of the need to proffer his prayer in his own person, orally

---

[1412] Tony W. Cartledge, *The Form and Function of Vows in the Old Testament* (Ph.D. Diss.; Duke University, 1989), 421, *apud* Berlinerblau, *The Vow and the 'Popular Religious Groups'*, 43.

[1413] E.g. Lev 7:16; 22:28; 22:21, 23; 23:38; Num 15:3; 29:39; Deut 12:6; 17. The fact that these verses specify offerings of food and drink does not necessarily affect the interpretation of the basin. That the nature and substance of offerings could be more diverse can be inferred from the proscription in Deuteronomy 23:18, which explicitly prohibits the offering of the wages of a prostitute or a male prostitute (trans. NRSV; *lit.* כֶּלֶב "of a dog") in fulfilment of a vow. In any case, it is possible that the stone vessels also contained offerings. Furthermore, it cannot be presumed that the proscriptions laid out in Leviticus and Deuteronomy were representative of Kuntillet ʿAjrud.

[1414] However, see Lev. 22:23.

and perpetually".[1415] Thus, for example, a 7th century b.c.e. Assyrian inscription by Assurbanipal states: "I had a statue of me as king made (and) placed (it) before the gods to constantly request well-being for me".[1416]

Accordingly, such benedictory inscriptions serve to do more than simply and directly communicate information to a human or divine audience (their denotative function); rather, they are profoundly caught up with ancient Near Eastern perceptions of the metaphysical dimensions of writing.[1417] In the case of the ancient Hebrews, the magical properties of writing may be glimpsed in the ritual for cursing a suspected adulteress (Num 5:11–31). Much has been written about this passage, and it is not necessary to go over it again here; for now it will suffice to note what this passage suggests about the transformative power inherent in the act of writing.[1418] That is to say, in this ritual it appears to be the material act of writing that actualises the curse and makes it efficacious. To this effect, it should be noted that although the act is accompanied by ritual invocations (Num 5:19–22), the affective power of the ritual is attributed to the המים המאררים "the water that brings the curse" (Num 5:22, 24), in which the priest had washed-off the written curses.

[1415] William W. Hallo, "Individual Prayer in Sumarian: The Continuity of a Tradition," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 75.

[1416] Translation, with additional examples, by Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones", 347, n.23. As Tigay has noted, in the Hebrew Bible a number of practices and objects are similarly described as serving as a reminder of the Israelites before God; Tigay, "Priestly Reminder Stones", 339–342.

[1417] For a general introduction to this topic see William M. Schniedewind, "Writing and Book Production in the Ancient Near East", in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From Beginnings to 600* (eds. James C. Paget and Joachim Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 48–52.

[1418] See, for example, the discussions in Daniel Millar, "Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11–31" *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 5 (2010), 1–16; cf. William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27–29.

As Bilhah Nitzan has shown, in Hebrew literature blessings and curses are frequently counterpoised,[1419] suggesting that conceptually they were diametrically equivalent phenomena; consequently, what is true of the actualising power of writing in the ritual context of cursing, may reasonably be supposed to be true for blessing. That is, the physical manifestation of the blessing in the form of an inscription has a substantiating effect. And, for that reason, the medium upon which a blessing is inscribed also has profound significance.

In the case of *Kajr*1.2, the physical dimensions of the stone vessel emphasises its qualities of permanence and immutability; qualities that ensured that the benedictory invocation would remain materially and perpetually before the deity. However, the physicality of the invocation goes beyond the exigencies of vicariously placing the donor's prayers before the deity. It may also be assumed that it served as a metaphysical safeguard for the donor, to ward against the perceived dangers of physically writing one's name.[1420] In light of this, it is significant that the closest parallels for *Kajr*1.2 (both functionally and linguistically), the Kh. el-Qôm tomb inscription and the stonecutter inscription (§2.2.1), are likewise engraved in stone. This pattern is repeated again and again in other Hebrew blessing inscriptions, to the extent that even on votive seals and the possible offering bowls from Samaria, the text is incised into the fabric of the vessel rather than inked onto its surface.[1421] In this way, the

---

[1419] Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 119–39.

[1420] E.g. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 29–32; Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word*, 82.

[1421] It should be noted that at least one example of a blessing written in ink is known, from a graffito written on the side of a monolithic column-shaped stalactite in a cave near En-Gedi (Bar-Adon, "An Early Hebrew Inscription in a Judean Desert Cave", 226–32). However, even in this case, the remoteness of the inscription and the proportions of the stalactite on which it was written might still a deliberate and conscientious approach to the selection of writing surfaces.

words became integrated with the medium on which they are written and are not easily altered or effaced.

All of this reinforces the impression that the stone basin on which *Kajr*1.2 was inscribed was brought to Kuntillet ʿAjrud as a special act of piety. This, in turn, supports the view that Kuntillet ʿAjrud and its environs had extraordinary religious associations (cf. §4.8).

NOTES ON THE TEXT OF THE SOUTHERN THEOPHANY
PERICOPAE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

C.1. *Deuteronomy 33:2–3*:

יהוה מסיני בא .2

וזרח משעיר ל[ע]ֹמַוֹ[^1]

הופיע מהר פארן

ואתה[^2] מ[ע]ֹרבֹ֫וֹת[^3] קדש[^4]

מימינו[^5] אשדת[^6] לו[^7]

אף חבב[^8] עמים .3

כל־קדשיו בידך

והם תכו[^9] לרגלך

י[נ]ֹשׂאֹוּ[^10] מדברתיך[^11]

2.   YHWH comes from Sinai,

And from Seir he dawns[12] upon his people;[13]

He shines from Mount Paran,

And he comes from the deserts of Kadesh.

From his right (hand), streams (of light?) surround

him.

3.   Surely, O beloved among the nations,[14]

All his holy ones are in your hand,[15]

They gather at your feet;[16]

That they might be lifted up on account of you.[17]

---

[1]The MT and Sam. Pent. have the "archaic" 3.m.p. personal pronoun למו "to them"; however, LXX (ἡμιν), *Tg. Onq.* (לנא), Syr. (ܠܢ), and Vulg. (*nobis*), witness the variant 1.c.p. לנו, "to us". Because of the different vowel quality represented by the *m.l.* (i.e. *ô*/*û*, respectively), it is difficult to account for this corruption on phonological grounds. Palaeographically, the confusion might be explained on the basis of the similarity between the *mêm* and *nûn* in the paleo-Hebrew script (and less easily the later square script). But in that case we would expect the *m.l.* to be differentiated orthographically (i.e. 3.m.s. = *hê*; 1.c.p. = *wāw*); although, there is some evidence that in pre-exilic Hebrew orthography the 3.m.s. pronominal suffix (= Tiberian -*ô*) might occasionally be represented by *wāw*: e.g. the crux רעו "his companion" in the third line of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription (see the discussion in Ian Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*).

An alternative restoration, which has gained some acceptance, is the hypothetical restoration לְעַמּוֹ, "to his people" (cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.*; *Tg. Neof.* And the fragmentary Tgs.). According to this reading, the לעמו < למו shift might be explained by the quiescence of the guttural as is attested in post-exilic Hebrew (e.g. the frequent omission of ʿ*ayin* in 1QIsa[a]). However, this does not resolve the problem of the multiple witnesses to the first person plural; see, already, Arnold B. Erhlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Textcritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches: Leviticus, Numeri and Deuteronium* (vol.2 of *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Textcritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches*; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1909), 347; cf. Isaac L. Seeligman, "a Psalm from Pre-Regal Times," *VT* 14 (1964): 75–92; Baruch Margulis,

"Gen. XLIX 10/Deut. XXXIII 2-3: A New Look at Old Problems," *VT* 19 (1969): 207; Umburto Cassuto, "Deuteronomy XXXIII and the New Year in Ancient Israel," in *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (trans. Israel Abrahams; vol. 1 of *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, Umburto Cassuto; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 50).

[2] In the MT אתה is pointed as a 3.m.s. perfect verb אָתָה, "he came". However, Sam. Pent., אתו; Tgs., עִ(י)מיה; LXX, σὺν μυριάσιν καδης; and Vulg., *et cum eo*, attest אִתֹּה, "with him". Emendation in favour of the preposition was initially supported be Frank Moore Cross Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 72, n.8; but, in a later essay Freedman revised his position, defending the MT's reading on poetic grounds (see below); cf. David Noel Freedman, "The Poetic Structure of the Framework of Deuteronomy 33," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon* (eds. Gary Rendsburg, et al.; New York: Ktav: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980), 38; cf. the earlier argument of Seeligman, "a Psalm from Pre-Regal Times", 76. Owing to the difficulties present in the rest of the line, there is no *a priori* reason to prefer either witness, and the interpretation of אתה ultimately depends on interpretational choices concerning the subject of the colon as a whole.

[3] The MT's reading מֵרִבְבֹת has also presented difficulty. Cross and Freedman, preferred to read the initial *mêm* as an enclitic, ואתה>ם<, and restored רִבְבֹת, √רְבָבָה "multitiude" (cf. 1 Sam 18:7); cf. Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 72, n.8. This has the support of: LXX, μυριάσιν; *Tg. Onq.*, רבות ריבבת; *Tg. Neof.*, ריבוון; *Tg. Ps.-J.*, ריבו ריבוון; Vulg., *millia*.; although note that 4QpaleoDeut[r] has מרבבו]ת[. However, it has been objected that this interpretation disrupts the pattern of geographical references established in the first three cola, and this has given rise to a number of proposed emendations. Seeligman, "a Psalm from Pre-Regal Times", 77,

emended the text to read, מערבות קדש, "from the desert of Qadesh (sic.)" (cf. מדבר קדש; in the theophany of Ps 29:8); while others, following C. J. Ball, read, ממריבת קדש, "from Meribat Kadesh"; cf. C. J. Ball, "The Blessing of Moses (Deut XXXIII)" *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 18 (1896); Lars E. Axelsson, *The Lord Rose up from Seir: Studies in the History and Traditions of the Negev and Southern Judah* (Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 25; Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), 49, esp. n.9. More recently, Tigay read "from Ribeboth-kodesh," stating, "Ribeboth-kodesh, literally, "myriads of Kodesh," must be the name of a place in the Negev or Sinai, like all the terms parallel to it"; Tigay, *The JPD Torah Commentary: דברים Deuteronomy*, 320. The parallelism that such readings afford is certainly appealing, especially due to the geographical proximity of Kuntillet ʿAjrud to Kadesh Barnea (cf. §4.1).

Further support for interpreting *mêm* as the proposition comes from Freedman, who has observed that there is a fivefold repetition of the preposition (מ(ן in the five cola of Deut 33:2; cf. Freedman, "The Poetic Structure of the Framework of Deuteronomy 33", 38. While it remains feasible to follow the MT in reading, "He came from myriad holy ones" (as, indeed, does Freedman), given the sequence of geographical references noted above, it is preferable to follow Seeligman and read מערבות קדש, "from the deserts of Kadesh". On the association of God with desert regions in the southern theophany tradition, compare Ps 68:4 [Heb. 5], where God is described as רכב בערבות, "(the one) who rides in the deserts", and Ps 86:7 [Heb. 8] where he is said to march in the "wilderness" (ישימון). Compare also the prose narrative of Num 13:26, where Kadesh is explicitly associated with the "wilderness of Paran" (מדבר פארן).

Following Freedman's observation about the fivefold repetition of the preposition (מ(ן, it appears that the quatrain comprises two bicola, reflecting a centrifugal pattern, in which the deity is said to come first from a mountain

(viz. Sinai, Paran), and then, syndetically, from a wider geographical region (viz. Seir, the deserts of Kadesh). But, unless Sinai and Paran are understood to be same, God is said to come from two different mountains. Consequently, the quatrain should probably be understood as an allusion to a region rather than a specific location. Alternatively, Mount Paran might be understood as synonymous with Mount Sinai; presumably taking its name from the region of in which the mountain was situated (cf. מדבר פארן, "the wilderness of Paran", Gen 14:6; Num 10:12; 12:16; 13:3, 26; 1 Sam 25:1). In that case the two bicola should be interpreted as synonymous parallelism, and Paran, Seir, and the deserts of Kadesh should be understood as different names for the same general region (note that Seir and Paran are frequently associated: Gen 14:6; Deut 1:1–2; 33:2; and possibly Hab 3:3, see n.28). According to 1 Kings 11:18, the region of Paran was west of Midian on the way to Egypt, which is consistent with the equation of Seir with the fields of Edom (see n.26). However, Numbers 10:12 militates against this interpretation: ויסעו בני־יישראל למסעיהם ממדבר סיני וישכן הענן במדבר פארן, "and the Israelites set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai, and the cloud settled in the wilderness of Paran". Regardless, the coordination of these GNN raises the question of the location of Mount Sinai. Based on the other place names in this verse, and geographical references elsewhere in the southern theophany tradition (cf. §2.8.2), it seems likely that Sinai should be located somewhere between the Wadi Arabah and Kadesh Barnea (i.e. in the region of Edom), or perhaps further south. However, this question is by now so fraught, that it is impossible to untangle here.

[4] Assuming the above, קדש must also be interpreted as a geographical designation. Nevertheless, the Tgs. (קדישין), evidently read קדש as a substantive, "the holy ones" (*Tg. Neof.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.*: "holy angels," מלאכין קדישין). This was followed by Cross and Freedman, who argued for original [קדש]ים, suggesting that the *mêm* was lost through haplography (Cross and

Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 72, n.9). However, it is also possible to read קדש, without emendation, as a collective noun (cf. Patrick D. Miller Jr., "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33," *HTR* 57 (1964): 241, n.6).

The LXX has the mixed reading σὺν μυριάσιν καδης, in which קדש is not translated. However, the difficulty of this reading was evidently felt by later interpreters. In an apparently related passage, Jude 1:14, following Enoch 1:9, reads ἐν ἁγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ, "with his holy myriads" (ἅγιος being the more usual translation of קדש in the LXX). Neither the LXX nor the Targumic witness can be accounted particularly authoritative. The ambiguity of the LXX attests to the confusion felt in the Greek tradition. While the Aramaic witness was apparently influenced by the belief that this verse alludes to the giving of the Law (see below).

On the tradition concerning the presence of angels at the giving of the Law, see Martin McNamara, *The Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 5A; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 162, n.7.

[5] מימינו may be translated "from his south," as Freedman suggests. However, the unusual syntax of this colon finds a striking parallel in Habakkuk 3:4 (מידו, "from his hand,"), suggesting that מימינו should be translated "from his right (hand)"; cf. Wearne, "קרנים מידו למו and מימינו אשדת למו קרנים מידו לו: Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another", 1–10.

[6] The crux אשדת has been accounted especially difficult. The MT (*Qere*) interpreted אשדת, as two words: אֵשׁ דָּת "fiery law." This reading was followed by the Vulg. *in dextera eius ignea lex*, "in his right hand is a fiery law," and the Tgs.: *Tg. Onq.*, כתב ימיניה מגו אישתא אוריתא ויהב לנא, "from the midst of the flaming fire he gave the Law, written by his right (hand)"; *Tg. Ps.-J.*, כתב ימיניה ואוריתיה מיגוא שלהובית אישתא פיקודיא יהב להון, "the writing of his right (hand) and the Law, from within the flaming fire he gave them the

commandments"; *Tg. Neof.*, ופשט ימיניה מן גו להבי אשתה ואוריתה יהב לעמיה, "and he stretched out his right hand from the midst of the flames of fire, and gave the Law to his people" (on the variant word order of some MSS of *Tg. Neof.*, see McNamara, *The Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy*, 162, n.7). Sam. Pent. follows the MT, but writes אש דת as two words. The only witness to attest a different reading is the LXX, ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, "On his right, his angels with him." It is difficult to see how ἄγγελοι could be related to אשדת, but presumably the solution is to be sought in μυριάσιν καδης/ מרבבת קדש in the preceding colon (note the apparent confusion of the LXX at that point).

The difficulty with the MT's reading, however, is that דָת is apparently a Persian loanword and is, therefore, felt to be anachronistic in what scholarly consensus holds to be an Early Biblical Hebrew text (cf. the discussion in Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, 303–04, §11.5.6.2). Not surprisingly, this has given rise to numerous attempts at emendation. The most plausible suggestions include: Ball's vocalization, אֲשֵׁדֹת, from the Syriac root ܐܫܕ , "to pour, to stream," which, as Ball noted, is commonly used to denote the pouring out of light; see Ball, "The Blessing of Moses (Deut xxxiii)", 119; cf. Seeligman, who adopted this suggestion, but apparently merged it with the MT's אֵשׁ, translating "fiery stream"; see Seeligman, "a Psalm from Pre-Regal Times", 77). Other proposals include, H. S. Nyberg's restoration of the DN "Asherah"; see H. S. Nyberg, "Deuteronomion 33, 2–3," *ZDMG* 92 (1938): 335); Cross and Freedmans' emendation and redivision אשר אלם, which they translated "proceeded the mighty ones"; see Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 72, n.11 (cf. A. F. L. Beeston, "Angels in Deuteronomy," *JTS* 2 (1951): 30–31; Miller, "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33", 241–43); and Freedman's, אֲשֵׁדֹת, "mountain slopes", paralleling the geographical references in the preceding cola; see Freedman, "The Poetic Structure of the

Framework of Deuteronomy 33", 39–41). Finally, Rendsburg has drawn attention to a possible Ugaritic cognate *išdym* in UT8 (= KTU 1.45), a mythological text apparently dealing with the sun goddess Špš; see Gary Rendsburg, "Hebrew *ʾšdt* and Ugaritic *išdym*," *JNSL* 8 (1980):81–84). As Rensburg notes, the similar structure and solar imagery apparently common to both Deut 33:2 and KTU 1.45 "are too close to be accidental"; see Rendsburg, "Hebrew *ʾšdt* and Ugaritic *išdym*", 83.

More decisive, still, is the apparently identical syntax of Hab 3:4, which, based on the context, should probably be understood to refer to some sort of luminosity or radiance. The pairing of the prepositions -ל and (ן)מ, and the absence of a verb in both verses, is unusual, and it is difficult to see how this awkward syntax might have entered the text through the error of a copyist; for a more detailed discussion see Wearne, "קרנים מידו לו and מימינו אשדת למו: Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another", 1–10. Furthermore, based on the similarities of Hab 3:4 and KTU 1.45, and the presence of the verbs זרח and הופיה in the preceding cola, some sort of luminary imagery is appropriate in Deut 33:2. Consequently, I follow Ball's √אזל, "streams (of light).""

[7] The MT has למו (cf. *Tg. Onq.*, לנא, "to us"; *Tg. Ps.-J.*, להון, "to them"; *Tg. Neof.*, לעמיה and perhaps the LXX, μετ' αὐτοῦ, "with him"). However, if this colon is understood to contain an idiomatic expression analogous to Hab 3:4, then it may be preferable to restore לו, and treat למו as dittography from the second colon; see Wearne, "מימינו אשדת למו and קרנים מידו לו: Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another", 9.

[8] The *hapax* verb חבב, pointed in the MT as a *qal* active participle, is usually associated with Aram. √חבב, "to love, to burn," (cf. Arab. حب, "to love, care for"); cf. *Tg. Jon.*, 2 Sam 1:26, where the *peʿil* verb חביבת is used to translate נעם, "was dear to."

Alternatively, Cassuto proposed that חֹבֵב be understood as a *polel* perfect (compare the PN חֹבָב, "the beloved," which is apparently derived from the *polal* form of the verb), and read עמו with the LXX (τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ), rather than עמים. Cassuto went even further, however, and suggested that it might be preferable to restore תְּחֹבֵב and עמך, in order to better harmonise this colon with בידך in the next colon. Accordingly, he translated the line, "And 'Thou dost' love 'Thy' people"; see Cassuto, "Deuteronomy XXXIII and the New Year in Ancient Israel", 51. However, while Cassuto's proposed emendation does succeed in harmonising the two cola, it has no support in the textual witnesses.

Then again, Cross, following George Mendenhall, suggested an Akkadian cognate, *ebēbu* "to be pure" (CAD IV, *E*, (Chicago: Oriental Institute Chicago, 1958), 4–8), and translated the line: "Yea, the purified of the peoples"; see Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 101–02, n. 38; cf. Miller, "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33", 243. But, as noted by Cross, in that case, we would expect a stative participle plural; cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 102, n. 38.

The LXX translation ἐφείσατο, "he spared," sheds no light on this question. However, in Hab 3:4 the LXX translated the *hapax* חביון with the improbable, ἀγάπησιν, "love" (see below), and it therefore seems that the translator(s) of LXX Habakkuk, at least, recognised a connection between Deut 33:2 and Hab 3:4. And this might offer indirect evidence that the received text of Deut 33:2 was understood in terms of √חבב, "to love".

The *plene* spelling of the Sam. Pent. (הובב) supports the MT's vocalisation as a *qal* active participle. However, for internal reasons it is also theoretically possible to restore the passive participle חָבוּב, "beloved" (see n.14, above). Admittedly, *defective* spellings are comparatively uncommon for *qal* passive participles in the MT, but they are not unknown (cf. כָּמֻס and חָתֻם in Deut 32:34). According to the statistical analysis by Andersen and Forbes, defective

spellings of *qal* passive participles occur 271 times, from a total of 1089 attestations (approx. 25%); Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, 202; cf. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*, 330–31.

[9] HALOT identifies the *hapax legomenon* תֻּכּוּ as the *puʿal* impf. of תכה* "crowd together." Alternatively, Cross and Freedman suggested *המתכו, a reflexive infixed-*t* form from מוך√ or מכך√, "to bend, to be low or humiliated." This root is known from Heb., Aram., Arab., and Ug., and suits the context well (Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 73, n.16). However, Margulis objected that this form is unparalleled, even in Job 24:24, despite very similar syntax; see Margulis, "Gen. XLIX 10/Deut. XXXIII 2-3: A New Look at Old Problems", 206 (although, note that Margulis understood the form in Deut 33:3 to be passive, as in Job 24:24, while Cross and Freedman translated Deut 33:3 as active).

[10] Theodor Gaster restored a 3.m.p. <ם>יִשָּׂאֻ נשא√, with enclitic *mêm*, rather than the MT's 3.m.s. יִשָּׂא; see Theodor H. Gaster, "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33:3-5, 26-29," *JBL* 66 (1947): 58; Margulis, "Gen. XLIX 10/Deut. XXXIII 2-3: A New Look at Old Problems", 206–07; cf. Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 74, n.17; see also Cassuto, "Deuteronomy XXXIII and the New Year in Ancient Israel", 52.

[11] If דברתיך is derived from דָּבָר, as is commonly assumed, then we would expect the usual masculine plural suffix (דְּבָרִים). Cassuto understood דברתיך to be a *qâṭṭil* form corresponding to the *piʿel* of דבר, with the feminine plural suffix, noting that the feminine form דִּבְּרוֹת is attested in later Hebrew; see Cassuto, "Deuteronomy XXXIII and the New Year in Ancient Israel", 52. Some such reading is apparently assumed by the LXX, καὶ ἐδέξατο ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ νόμον, "and accepted from his words a law," *Tg. Neof.*, על פום דבירוי, "according to his commandmensts," and Vulg., *accipient de doctrina illius*, "receiving his teaching".

An alternative possibility is that דברתיך is derived from the less common noun דְּבָרָה, which in Job 5:8 seems to denote a "(legal) cause". Elsewhere דְּבָרָה is used with the sense "on account of" (Ps 110:4; Eccl 3:18; 7:14; 8:2). If דברתיך is understood in the latter sense, it might be better to restore a passive conjugation and interpret (מ(ן with a causal nuance (see *Williams* §319; GKC §119*z*; cf. JM §133*e*): יְ[נָּ]שָׂאֻ מִדִּבְרָתֶיךָ, "they (his holy ones) will be lifted up on account of you" (cf. Job 5:8).

Whatever the case, as Gaster suggested, the asyndetic imperfect seems to indicate purpose or immediate consequence: i.e. "in order that they might lift up/be lifted up" (Gaster, "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33:3–5, 26–29", 58).

[12] Of the 18 occurrences of the verb זרח in the Hebrew Bible, 13 explicitly refer to the sunrise. Ps 112:4 refers to "light" (אור) and the two occurrences in Isa 60:1–2 refer to God's glory (כבד, paralleled in the same verses with "light" אור and contrasted with "darkness" חשך). 2 Chron 26:19 is less clear, as the verb (metaphorically) refers to the outbreak of leprosy on the forehead of king Uzziah. Nevertheless, the imagery in Deut 33:2 is undoubtedly of YHWH "shining forth" like the sunrise.

[13] Bernard Grossfeld has drawn attention to the transformation in *Tg. Onq.* of the anthropomorphic expression "He shone upon them" by the substitution of the active verb זרח with its related noun "the splendor of his glory" along with the passive verb "appeared"; Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Deuteronomy: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 9; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 102.

[14] The sentiment is difficult to comprehend. As Tigay observed, "If this refers to God, it is a surprisingly universalistic statement for a poem about His protection of Israel" (Tigay, *The JPD Torah Commentary:* דברים *Deuteronomy*, 320–21). Consequently, it may be better to follow the Targums

in interpreting עמים as a reference to the tribes of Israel. (cf. Gen 28:3; Judg 5:14).

However, it is also possible that חבב עמים is a noun-phrase, "beloved among the nations", referring to Israel (see below).

[15] The difficulty with this colon was well expressed by Margulis: "The problem is one of antecedents: whose 'holy ones' and whose 'hands'?"; see Margulis, "Gen. XLIX 10/Deut. XXXIII 2-3: A New Look at Old Problems", 206. The NRSV has surmounted this problem by translating the preceding colon: "Indeed, O favourite among peoples," whereby, חבב עמים is treated as a noun-phrase, apparently referring to the nation of Israel. Accordingly, the קדשיו may be understood to be "(God's) holy ones," and the ידך may be understood to be "(Israel's) hands." The NRSV's translation is appealing, insofar as it allows for a harmonised reading of the whole verse with minimal emendation. The change from the third person description of the theophany to the second person address to the nation is appropriate in the literary context of Moses' blessing of the people.

[16] Following Freedman, Stephen K. Sherwood suggested that יד and רגל are counterpoised in a kind of merismus, meaning "in every way"; see Stephen K. Sherwood, *Leviticus*, *Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Berit Olam; ed. David Cotter; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 282; cf. Freedman, "The Poetic Structure of the Framework of Deuteronomy 33", 41.

The imagery is apparently of submissiveness. In the Hebrew Bible, when the expression בידך is used of animate objects it often denotes the subjugation of one party to another, e.g. Josh 9:25, ועתה הננו בידך כטוב וכישר בעיניך לעשות לנו עשה, "and now, behold, we are in your hand; deal with us as seems good and proper in your eyes"; Ps 31:15, בידך עתתי הצילני מיד־אויבי ומרדפי, "my times are in your hand; deliver me form the hand of my enemies and persecutors" (cf. Job 12:10; Ps 95:4; Jer 26:14); while, in the next colon, תכו, apparently conveys the sense of doing obeisance. The sentiment may,

therefore, be expressed, "his holy ones submit themselves (or are submitted) to you in every way." Although, note the wordplay between רֶגֶל and יָשָּׂא.

[17] The theology assumed by this verse is complicated. קדשיו, "his holy ones", seems to refer to the divine assembly (cf. Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 74–75, n.19); compare the expression, קדש עלי אלם, "holy one above the gods," in *Kajr*4.2. But, if so, Deut 33:3 seems to imply that Israel, identified as the "beloved among the nations", is hierarchically superior to the קדשים. This apparently stands in contrast to Ps 8:5, in which the Psalmist declares, ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים וכבוד והדר תעטרהו, "you have made him (man) lower than the gods (LXX: ἀγγέλους, "angels"), you have crowned him with glory and honour"; or, "you have made them a little lower than God" (NRSV). However, Eugene Merrill has recently argued that the implicit hierarchy of Deut 33:3 is, in fact, reflected consistently throughout biblical theology:

> "The case has been made that God created man precisely so that man could function as a vice-regent. But the role of angels, who are presented as superhuman beings if not divine, cannot be overlooked. All evidence suggests that despite their exalted status angels do not enjoy a role superior to that of mankind; but, in fact, they were created to serve the human race in ways both known and unknown. This is seen in the narrative texts surveyed above, and it is explicitly affirmed in the fullness of God's revelation (Ps 91:11; cf. Ps 34:7; Isa 37:36; Acts 5:19; 12:8)." (Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2006): 146).

C.2. *Judges 5:4–5*

4.   יהוה

בצאתך[18] משעיר

בצעדך[19] משדה אדום

ארץ רעשה[20]

גם[21]־שמים נטפו[22]

גם־עבים נטפו מים

5.   הרים נזלו[23]

מפני יהוה

זה[24] סיני

מפני יהוה

אלהי ישׂראל

4.   O YHWH!

When you came[25] from Seir,

when you marched from the land of Edom,[26]

the earth shook,

yea, the heavens dripped,

yea, the clouds dripped water.

5.   The mountains flowed

from before YHWH,[27]

the One of Sinai,

from before YHWH,

the God of Israel

---

[18] Note the use of a preposition with the infinitive, to express temporality as in *Kajr*4.2 (cf. GKC §114*e*).

[19] The nominal form (צְעָדָה) of this verb is apparently used with the sense of God's marching in 2 Sam 5:24; 1 Chron 14:15.

[20] Note the verb √רעשׁ, describing an earthquake, as in *Kajr*4.2.

[21] גם might be related to Ugaritic *g* "thunder" (cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I:1–50: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB 16; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 155–56, n. 25:3; idem., *Psalms II:51–100: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB 17; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 14, n. 52:7; idem, *Psalms III:101–50: Introduction, Translation and Notes with Appendix The Grammar of the Psalter* (AB 17A; New York: Doubleday, 1970), 269–70, n. 137:1; see also del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 290). However, in other biblical theophanies the noun denoting thunder is קוֹל (e.g. Exod 19:16; Ps 29 *passim*, etc.). Moreover, the asseverative particle גם makes good idiomatic sense in the context (cf. אף in Ps 68:7 [Heb. 8]).

[22] LXX[A] reads ἐξεστάθη "amazed, astonished"; OG ἐταράχθη "was stirred up, in commotion." Consequently BHS proposes the emendation נָמוֹגוּ (√מוג "melt") or נָמוֹטוּ (√מוט "totter, shake, slip"), paralleling נָזֹלּוּ in the next verse; however, נָטְפוּ "to drip" is appropriate in the context (cf. LXX[B] ἔσταξεν: "trickle, stream, pour down"; Vulg. *distillaverunt aquis*, "dripped water"). *Tg. Jon.* has מכו, √מכך, "they were bowed, lowered". Willem Smelik argues this is connected to a specific concept of God's revelation at Sinai, which forms the exegetical context in the Targum; see. Willem F. Smelik, *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 402–03. However, the imagery is consistent with נטפו in the MT, if understood in terms of lowering clouds.

[23] The LXX, ἐσαλεύθησαν, "was weakened, shaken," and *Tg. Jon.* זוע; "to tremor, shake," presuppose Heb. נָזֹלּוּ, √זלל, "to shake, to tremble" (cf. Isa 63:19 [Heb. 64:1]; 64:2). However, Vulg. *fluxerunt* "melted," agrees with MT נזל√ נָזֹלּוּ "to flow" (cf. √מסס in *Kajr*4.2; Mi 1:4 and Ps 97:5). While both variants suit the context and vocabulary of theophany, the latter harmonises better with the imagery of the preceding verse; cf. Susan Niditch, *Judges: A*

Commentary (The Old Testment Library; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 71, n.*h*.

[24] For the suggestion that the archaic demonstrative particle *ḏū* lies behind זה, see Hubert Grimme, "Abriss der biblisch-hebräischen Metrik", *ZDMG* 50 (1896): 573, n.1; John M. Allegro, "Short Notes: The Use of the Semitic Demonstrative Element *Z* in Hebrew", *VT* 5 (1955): 310–11; William F. Albright, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology," *BASOR* 62 (1936): 30; cf. idem, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm LXVIII)," *HUCA* 23 (1950–51): 20; Frank M. Cross Jr., "Yahweh and the Gods of the Patriarchs," *HTR* 55 (1962): 238–39, esp. n.61; cf. Huehnergard, "On the Etymology of the Hebrew Relative šɛ-", 111; Pat-El and Wilson-Wright, "Features of Archaic Biblical Hebrew Poetry and the Linguistic Dating Debate", 401–02.

The LXX (τοῦτο Σινά), *Tg. Jon.* (דין סיני אתרגיף) and Vulg. (*et Sinai*) apparently understood זה סיני to be a gloss identifying the mountains referred to in the preceding colon (cf. the BHS textual note), and this reading has recently received renewed support. Indeed, Serge Frolov has argued that this was also apparently how the Masoretes interpreted the verse when they placed the disjunctive *atnach* under יהוה, separating זה סיני from the tetragrammaton; Serge Frolov, "How Old is the Song of Deborah?" *JSOT* 36 (2011): 166. However, in the parallel phrase in Ps 68:9 (which Frolov believes to be earlier) the *atnach* stands after the formula אלהים זה סיני. This variation is not mitigated by Frolov's suggestion that גם־עבים...מפני יהוה in Judges 5 is an interpolation. Rather, he simply pushes the question back onto Psalm 68; cf. Serge Frolov, "How Old is the Song of Deborah?", 166–67, n.9.

A more compelling objection was raised by Michael Fishbane, who also argued for the priority of Psalm 68. Rejecting Albright's (apparently despairing) proposal that Psalm 68 was simply a catalogue of incipits, Fishbane argued instead that Ps 68:8–9 may be related to the wilderness

wanderings and the theophany on Mt. Sinai. As such, Fishbane suggested that the specifying interpolation זה סיני was added by a later glossator in order to identify the earthquake of Ps 68:9 more clearly with the Sinai theophany in Exodus 19:18; see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 54–55, 75, n.193). This may be correct, and the association of biblical theophanies with the Sinai theophany is certainly a *tendenz* in the targums; however, earthquake imagery is commonplace in both biblical and extra-biblical theophanies (see §2.8.1), and, given the geographical references in the other southern theophanies, there is no evidence that זה סיני is an interpolation. In fact, its authenticity is virtually assured on structural grounds. That is, if זה סיני is read as an epithet, parallel אלהי ישראל, then the stanza has a balanced structure: a b b′ // c d d′ // e f f′.

[25] יצא is usually felt to have militaristic connotations, with the sense of marching into battle (cf. Deut 20:1; 1 Sam 8:20; 1 Sam 21:6, etc.). As Barry Webb notes, the verb יצא is paralleled in Deborah's rhetorical question in Judges 4:14 הלא יהוה יצא לפניך, "has not Yнwн gone before you?"; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 199. However, יצא is sometimes used of the sun or other celestial bodies (cf. Gen 19:23; Judg 5:31; Isa 13:10), and it is possible that this verse may also contain echoes of the solar imagery that seems to permeate the theophany tradition; cf. Francis Anderson's discussion of בוא in Hab 3:3; Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 290–91. But, if so, this connotation is not foregrounded by the poet. Nevertheless, the verb יצא meaning "sunrise" is repeated in Judg 5:31: כן יאבדו כל־אויביך יהוה ואהביו כצאת השמש בגברתו ותשקט, "may all your enemies perish thus, O Yнwн! But may those who love him be like the sun as it rises in its might!"; cf. Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, (AB 6A; New

York: Doubleday, 1969), 116, who likened the imagery to a sunburst after a storm.

[26] "Seir" and "the field(s) of Edom" are a matched pair; cf. Gen 32:3: וישלח יעקב מלאכים לפניו אל־עשו אחיו ארצה שעיר שדה אדום, "and Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, in the land of Seir, in the field of Edom."

[27] The imagery is of nature recoiling from before the divine presence, rather than of the elements participating in the conflict (pace Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 108).

C.3. *Psalm 68:7–8* [Heb.68:8–9]:

<div dir="rtl">

.7   אלהים

בצאתך לפני עמך

בצעדך בישימון

סלה

.8   ארץ רעשה

אף־שמים נטפו

מפני אלהים

זה סיני

מפני אלהים

אלהי ישראל֫

</div>

7.   O God![28]

When you go forth before your people,

When you march through the wilderness;[29]

selah

8.   The earth shakes,

Yea, the heavens drip,

From before God,

The one of Sinai;

From before God,

The God of Israel

---

[28] Note that Judg 5:4 uses the tetragrammaton, rather than אלהים. Zevit has posed the provocative suggestion that the Elohistic Psalter (Pss 42–83, characterised by the use of the divine name Elohim and the avoidance of the

tetragrammaton) reflects a drawing together of religious traditions from a time before the establishment of monotheistic orthodoxy in Judah. According Zevit, wherever אלהים functions as a divine name in these Psalms it replaces the name of some other deity; Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 681–84.

This suggestion might be correct, as far as it goes, but it too simplistic. Given that in Ps 68:7 it is, in fact, the tetragrammaton that is replaced with the divine name Elohim, the harmonisation reflected in the Elohistic Psalter should be understood as a response to a wider range of heterodox beliefs, than that envisaged by Zevit.

[29] Note the generalisation: "wilderness" (בישימון), rather than Edom/Seir in Judg 5:4.

C.4. *Habakkuk 3:1–19**

*There is a general consensus that the hymn in Habakkuk 3 is a composite work comprising at least two originally separate compositions (see below). However, in its final form the hymn effectively ammounts to an extended theophany, and, as such, it will be treated in full.

.1	תפלה לחבקוק הנביא
	על שגינות
.2	יהוה שמעתי שמעך
	יראתי יהוה פעלך
	בקרב שנים חייהו
	בקרב שנים תודיע
	ברגז רחם תזכור

.3	אלוה מתימן יבוא
	וקדוש מהר־פארן[30]
סלה	
	כסה שמים הודו
	ותהלתו[31] מלאה הארץ[32]
.4	ונגה כאור תהיה
	קרנים מידו לו
	ושם חביון עזה
.5	לפניו ילך דבר
	ויצא רשף לרגליו
.6	עמד וימדד[33] ארץ
	ראה ויתר גוים
	ויתפצצו הררי־עד

שחו גבעות עולם

הליכות עולם לו[34]

.7 תחת און ראיתי

אהלי כושן ירגזון

ס   יריעות ארץ מדין

.8 הבנהרים חרה יהוה

אם בנהרים אפך

אם־בים עברתך

כי תרכב על־סוסיך

מרכבתיך ישועה[35]

.9 עריה תעור קשתך

שבעות מטות [ת]אמר[36]

סלה

נהרות תבקע־ארץ

.10 ראוך יחילו הרים

זרם מים עבר

נתן תהום קולו

רום ידיהו נשא

.11 שמש ירח עמד[ו] זבלה[ו]

לאור חציך יהלכו

לנגה ברק חניתך

.12 בזעם תצעד־ארץ

באף תדוש גוים

.13 יצאת לישע עמך

לישע את־משיחך

מחצת ראש מבית רשע

ערות יסוד עד־צואר

פ[37] סלה

14.   נקבת במטיו[38] ראשׇ֣י פרזיו

יסערו להפיצני

עליצתם כמו־לאכל עני במסתר

15.   דרכת בים סוסיך

חמר מים רבים

16.   שמעתי ותרגז בטני

לקול צללו שפתי

יבוא רקב בעצמי

ותחתי ארגז אשרׇ֣י[39]

אנוח ליום צרה

לעלות לעם יגודנו

17.   כי־תאנה לא־תפרח

ואין יבול בגפנים

כחש מעשה־זית

ושדמות לא־עשה אכל

גזר ממכלה צאן

ואין בקר ברפתים

18.   ואני ביהוה אעלוזה

אגילה באלהי ישעי

19.   יהוה אדני חילי

וישם רגלי כאילות

ועל במותי ידרכני

למנצח בנגינותי

1.   *A Prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet; according to Shigynoth*

2.   Y<small>HWH</small>! I heard the report of you.

I was frightened, Y<small>HWH</small>, by your deed.

In (our) midst once more, by the life of YWHW,

    in (our) midst, once more, you did reveal,

in (my) distress you did proclaim (your name)–

    compassionate.[40]

3.   Eloah comes[41] from Teman;[42]

    and the holy one[43] from Mount Paran.

                                 selah

His majesty covers the heavens,

    and his praises fill the earth.

4.   And (his) glory is like light;

    Radiance from his hand surrounds him;

and there is his glorious veil.[44]

5.   *Deber* goes before him,

    and *Resheph* comes at his feet.[45]

6.   He stops and measures the earth;

    he looks and makes the nations tremble.

The eternal mountains are shattered;

    the ancient hills bow down.

The ancient orbits (lit. pathways) are his.[46]

7.   As punishment for sin I saw

    the tents of Cushan shake;

    tent curtains of the land of Midian.[47]

8.   Was it against the rivers,[48] O YHWH, that it

    burned?

    Was your anger against the rivers?

    Was your rage against the sea?

When you rode upon your horses,

>   your chariots of salvation.
> 9.   Your bow is unsheathed;[49]
>   seven weapons[50] you bring to view.
>
> *selah*
>
>   The land of rivers is torn asunder;[51]
> 10.   the mountains[52] see you and writhe.
>   A flood of water passes by;
>   the deep gives forth its voice;
>   the heights lift up their hands;[53]
> 11.   the sun (and) the moon stand still in their
>   dwelling place;
>   At the light of your arrows passing by;
>   at the brightness of your shaft of lightning.
> 12.   In rage you tread the earth;
>   in anger you thresh the nations.
> 13.   You come forth for the salvation of your people;
>   for the salvation of your anointed one.
>   You smite the head from the wicked house;[54]
>   exposing it from foundation to neck.[55]
>
> *selah*
>
> 14.   You pierce with his own weapon the heads of his
>   warriors;[56]
>   they storm to scatter me.
>   He lifts them up, as though to devour the poor in
>   hiding.[57]
> 15.   You trample the sea with your horses;
>   foaming the mighty waters.[58]
>
>
> 16.   I hear and my bowels tremble;

my lips quiver at the sound.
Rottenness enters my bones,
    and my steps tremble beneath me,
as I wait for the day of trouble
    to come upon the people who attack us.

17.   For the fig tree does not sprout,
        and there is no fruit on the vine;
    the produce of the olive tree fails,
        and the field does not produce food;
    the sheep are cut off from the fold,
        and the cattle are not in the stall.

18.   But I will rejoice in the YHWH,
        I will rejoice in the god of my salvation.

19.   YHWH my lord is my strength;
        he set[59] my feet like does,[60]
        and he made me tread on my high places.[61]

For the overseer with stings[62]

---

[30] The LXX has the obscure reading: ἐξ ὄρους κατασκίου δασέος, "from the shady, bushy mountain". However, δασύς, "bushy", can also mean "hairy", and is used with that sense to describe Esau (Gen 25:25; 27:11, 23) and Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8). Consequently, one wonders whether the vorlage of LXX Habakkuk may have named שעיר, "Seir", rather than Paran (cf. שֵׂעָר, "hair" = δασύς in Gen 25:25; שְׂעָרֹת/שֵׂעָר, "hairy" = δασύς/δασείαι Gen 27:11, 23), as suggested by Wilhelm Rudolf, *Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja* (KAT 13/3; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1975), 233. However, it should be noted that nowhere else in the LXX is Seir translated δασύς (cf. σηιρ, Deut 33:2). As Heibert observed, "the unusual interpretative character of

the translation suggests an attempt on the part of the translator to clarify a geographical term which was not understood"; see Theodore Heibert, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3*, (HSM 38; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1986), 16.

[31] Note that heaven and earth are paralleled, as are Teman and Paran. In both bicola, the second colon is linked by conjunctive וְ (cf. Deut 33:2).

[32] This is the only occurrence of the definite article in the whole of the poem.

[33] The MT has the *polel* verb, וַיְמֹדֶד. Godfrey Driver proposed an Arabic cognate: ماد, "became soft, quivered, shook" (√מוד*); see Godfrey R. Driver, "Hebrew Notes," *ZAW* 55 (1934): 54–55. This yields the translation, "he stopped and shook the earth", which is reflected in both the LXX, ἐσαλεύθη, "was shaken", and *Tg. Jon.*, אזיע, "shook". However, Barb. (διεμέτρησε), and Vulg. (*mensus*) presuppose the geminate root √מדד, "to measure", which may be a metaphor of divine supremacy; cf. Isa 40:12, מי־מדד בשעלו מים ושמים בזרת תכן, "who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and counted out the heavens with the span?" Syr. has the inexplicable, ܡܫܚ, "anointed."

Another option is to follow Heibert, who restored the *polel* of √נוד, "to shake", noting that the same root is used in Isa 24:20, to describe the reaction of the earth to God's presence, נוע תנוע ארץ כשכור והתנודדה כמלונה, "The earth staggers like a drunken man, and it sways like a hut"; see Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 19–20; following Max L. Margolis, "The Character of the Anonymous Greek Version of Habakkuk, Chapter 3," *AJSL* 24 (1907): 81; and W. f. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Dedicated to T. H. Robinson*, (ed. Harold H. Rowley; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950), 14; although, see the cautionary remarks offered by Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 308–09.

[34] Commentators have tended to see a major thematic division between v.7 and v.8, so that vv.3–7 and vv.8–15 are each treated as discrete literary units. As such, vv.3–7 are understood to contain the theophany proper, while vv.8–

15 are seen to reflect a Hebrew counterpart to the Canaanite *Chaoskampf* motif; cf. Umburto Cassuto, "Chapter iii of Habakkuk and the Ras Shamra Texts," in *Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts*, (trans. Israel Abrahams; vol. 2 of *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, Umburto Cassuto; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 3–15. This structural division has left a lasting impression on subsequent treatments of Habakkuk 3; see the discussion in David T. Tsumura, "Ugaritic Poetry and Habakkuk 3," *TynBul* 40 (1989): 24–48). However, the nature of the relationship between these units is debated. Heibert, for example, was inclined to see the stanzas as integrally linked; Theodore Heibert, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3*, (HSM 38; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1986), 59–60, 68–76, and on the overall literary unity of Hab 3, see 76–80. While Andersen went so far as to describe vv.8–15 as an originally separate composition; Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 313–14.

Perhaps the most detailed argument in favour of a division between v.7 and v.8 is Heibert's structural analysis, which identified a balanced A B C D C′ B′ A′ envelope construction in vv.3–7; see Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 69. However, this schematisation may be distorted. Heibert's reluctance to translate the difficult v.4 led him to separate the colon in v.4a from the cola in v.4b–c. But, as I have argued elsewhere (Wearne, "קרנים מידו לוֹ and מימינו אשדת למו Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another"*, 2), v.4 should properly be interpreted as a tricolon with its own envelope structure. Hence, Heibert's subdivision of the verse led him to restore an artificial symmetry in the stanza. This is a problem, as the symmetry of the stanza was central to his argument: "[t]he central literary feature of this stanza is its perfect cyclic, inclusive structure…The opening and closing bicola of Stanza II (A, A') correspond to one another at almost every possible level. They are metrically alike (1:1), and their verse structure

is nearly identical…Verse units B and B' which form a concentric circle within the opening and closing bicola (A, A') show many similarities as well. They are metrically alike tricola (1:1:1, 1:1:1)." (Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 69–70)

Nevertheless, the case for a division between v.7 and v.8 is supported by the *setumah* at the end of v.7 in MT^L (although this is omitted in MT^A). Peau included a corresponding *setumah* in his transcription of Mur 88 (= Mur XII), and, indeed, there seems to be a *vacat,* equivalent to about five letters, at the beginning of the line. This can be seen quite clearly in the recently published digital edition, and confirms the antiquity of the unit division (cited 4 September 2013; online: http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-281192).

Andersen noted the remarkable omission of the conjunction throughout vv.8–15, which might support the hypothesis that these verses originally belonged to an independent composition; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 314. Although, this is not a sure sign of multiple authorship.

[35] Freedman identified מרכבתיך ישועה as a broken construct chain, in which the pronominal suffix is affixed to the construct rather than the absolute noun. According to Freedman, "the reason for this unusual but effective variation is probably to be found in the association of *mrkbtyk* and the preceding *swsyk*, as coordinate elements in the compound phrase introduced by *ʿl* and controlled by *yšwʿh*"; David Noel Freedman, "The Broken Construct chain," in *Pottery, Poetry and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew poetry* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 339–342, esp. 340.

[36] The MT of v.9b consists of three nouns, all in the absolute state (שְׁבֻעוֹת מַטּוֹת אֹמֶר). This can hardly be original. But attempts at emendation are hampered by the baffling array of possible semantic and syntactic combinations; see the discussion in Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 320–25. The reconstruction here follows Andersen in viewing שְׁבֻעוֹת as a feminine plural form of the numeral "seven"

(cf. LXX ἐπὶ τὰ which may derive from επτά; Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 27), and emending אֹמֵר to the 2.m.s. תֹּאמַר, with the rare acceptation "to see"; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 320–25; cf. James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 322, n.31).

[37] As with the *setumah* above (§C.4, n.32), the *parashah petuaḥ* is attested in MT[L] but not in MT[A]. In Mur 88 (= Mur XII) there is a clear *vacat* after סלה in line 15—with a space corresponding to about one line in depth—before the text resumes at the beginning of Hab 3:14 (cf. P. Benoit, J.T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabbaʿât* (DJD II; Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), pl. LXIX; see also the digital edition, cited 2 September 2013; online: http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-281192).   A corresponding break is also indicated in 8Ḥev1 (= 8ḤevXII gr), col. 19; see Emanuel Tov, R. A. Kraft and P. J. Parsons, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr): The Seiyâl Collection I* (DJD VIII; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pl. XIII.

According to Gert Prinsloo, the following verses (Hab 3:14–19) may be interpreted as a discrete unit which first echoes language and imagery from earlier sections of the poem before culminating in a confessional statement of unconditional trust in Yhwh; Gert T. M. Prinsloo, "Reading Habakkuk 3 in Light of Ancient Unit Delimiters," *HTS Theological Studies* 69 (2013): 1–11, esp. 7.

[38] Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 338, suggested that the *wāw* suffix, pointed as a 3.m.s. in the MT, might be understood as a dual (cf. the apparently dual suffix ו- in the Gezer Calendar). However, as he was unable to corroborate this suggestion with any additional examples of the dual *wāw* suffix, it is best to follow the MT.

[39] Emending אֲשֶׁר to אֲשֻׁרַי, "my steps"; cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 273, 345.

[40] This verse admits no easy interpretation. The translation here follows that of Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 273, 283.

[41] Andersen has argued that, here, the verb בוא has solar connotations (Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 290–92). Regarding the imagery, Andersen notes, "[w]ith the image of the sunrise, the perspective of Hab 3:3 is that of a resident of the Negeb or farther south. It describes the progress of Yahweh from the east westward, not a march from the south northward"; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 292. Note, however, the imagery can readily be understood as figurative, and there is no indication that it need be interpreted literally. Compare Deut 33:2, which is situated in Moab, at least in its literary context (cf. Deut 34:1), but also uses the metaphor of the sunrise to describe the approach of YHWH from the south, with no apparent sense of contradiction. Although, note that in the case of Kuntillet ʿAjrud (*Kajr*4.2), Andersen's observation is demonstrably true (see §4.7).

[42] The LXX translates תימן with the GN θαιμαν; however, Barb. (λιβός); *Theod.* (νοτίου); *Tg. Jon.* (דרומא); and Vulg. (*austro*), apparently interpreted תימן as a general designation for the south (cf. התמן §2.4.2). As noted above, the geographical references in Deut 33:2 follow a centrifugal pattern, in which a specific mountain is named and then a wider region. This verse seems to adopt the corresponding centripetal pattern (cf. Jeremiah 49:7, in which "Teman" is a synecdoche for the lands of Edom).

[43] Note the substantive קדש, "holy one," (cf. *Kajr*4.2; and קדשיו, Deut 33:3).

[44] See Wearne, "מימינו אשדת למו and קרנים מידו לו: Reading Habakkuk 3:4 and Deuteronomy 33:2 in Light of One Another", 1–10.

[45] The imagery is of a divine retinue; cf. KTU 1.5 v, lines 6–13 (see §2.8.1). For a discussion of the ancient Near Eastern deities *Deber* and *Resheph*—associated, among other things, with pestilence and plague—see Edward Lipiński, *Resheph: A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (OLA 181; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), esp. 239–48.

[46] Following Albright, who argued that הליכות corresponds to Akkad. *alaktu* and Ug. *hlkt*, which are used of the orbits of the stars (cf. Judg 5:20, which

describes "the stars in their courses (מסלות)", lit. "highway, (built up) road"); Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk", 14, n.t; cf. W. F. Albright, "Two Letters from Ugarit (Ras Shamrah), *BASOR* 82 (1941): 49, and n.40. On the heavens as the dwelling place of God, see Isa 6:1; 40:22; 66:1; Ps 11:4; 102:19, etc.; on the separation between heaven and earth, see Job 22:12–14 (cf. Lam 3:44); Isa 64:1; cf. James D. Tabor, "Heaven," *ABD* 3:90.

Assuming this is correct, the verse employs a merism of heaven and earth corresponding to, and elaborating on, that in the Hab3.3. Note also the progressive elevation of the frames of reference, so that first the earth and the nations, followed by the mountain heights, and finally the celestial orbits are named. A similar pattern occurs in Hab 3:10–11; cf. Wearne, "Habakkuk 3:10–11: In Defence of a Masoretic Unit Division", 515–18).

[47] Following Albright, Andersen separated תחת און, "under trouble, iniquity(?)," from the following colon; although he notes that "the division does not match the Masoretic punctuation, which has *zaqef gadol* on 'iniquity'"; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 283, 310–11. Yet, the placement of the *atnach* in the MT suggests that the Masoretic tradition understood תחת אֹון ראיתי אהלֵי כושָׁן to be a unit.

The impulse to separate תחת און and read them with the preceding colon stems in part from the ambiguity of the expression, and in part from the observation that the repetition of עולם leads one to expect a tricolon, lest v.6b be unmatched; cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 310–11; pace William A. Irwin, "The Psalm of Habakkuk" *JNES* 1 (1942): 23. Following Albright, it has, therefore, been common to emend this colon in order to supply a verb parallel to שחח in the preceding colon. Thus, Albright redivided the MT's תחת און to לֹ־תחתאן (vocalized: תֵּחָתֶאנָה, *HALOT*; √חתא, "to destroy," which is known in Akkad., Ug., and Arab.), with emphaitic ל; Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk", 14, n.*u*; cf. W. F. Albright, "Two Letters from Ugarit (Ras Shamrah)", 49, and n.40).

However, recognition of the merism in preceding verse allays the need for emendation on structural grounds. In fact, the repetition of עוֹלָם in the fourth and fifth cola suggests that Hab 3:6 should be interpreted as a quintrain or pentacolon. The same structure—consisting of two parallel bicola followed by a fifth colon—can be recognised in Deut 33:2 (above), and Hab 3:3b–4. It is, therefore, tempting to supply a disjunctive in translation, in order to clarify the implicit contrast between the fifth colon and the preceding bicola: i.e. "he stops and shakes the earth; he looks and makes the nations tremble. The eternal mountains are shattered; the ancient hills bow down. But the heavenly orbits are his."

Returning to Hab 3:7, it is interesting to note that LXX, ἀντὶ κόπων εἶδον, "because of troubles," and Vulg., *pro iniquitate*, "because of iniquity," follow the MT in interpreting תחת און with the subsequent colon. However, Barb., αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα σεισθήσεται ἡ οἰκουμένη, "on his account the inhabited world will quake," seems to relate תחת און to the preceding verse; cf. Edwin M. Good, "The Barberini Greek Version of Habakkuk III," *VT* 9 (1959): 14, nn.8–9. While *Tg. Jon.* has the theologising, כד פלחו בית ישראל לטעותא מסרתינון ביד כושן חייבא, "when the house of Israel served idols I gave them into the hand of Cushan the wicked"; cf. Robert P. Gordon and K. J. Cathcart, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 14; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 158, n.33. Each of these readings, with the possible exception of *Barb.*, either directly or indirectly supports תַּחַת אָוֶן in the MT.

The translation above follows Wilhelm Rudolph in interpreting תחת as prepositional: i.e. "on account of"; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1975), 231. Accordingly, תחת און ראיתי is understood as an example of enjambment, in which the meaning of the line runs-over from the first colon to the second. Despite the fact that enjambment is not typical of Habakkuk 3 (although cf.

Hab 3:16), the appeal of this reading is that it allows for the usual 3/3/3 meter of the poem to be maintained; cf. Richard B. Patterson, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," *Grace Theological Journal* 8 (1987): 170; on enjambment in Hebrew Poetry generally, see Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 332–36.

The remainder of the verse follows Heibert in interpreting the verb ירגזון, "to shake", with אהלי כושן, despite the fact that there is an *atnach* beneath כושן in the MT; Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 22–23, n.26; cf. Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Habakuk* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1906), 81–82. As Heibert noted, this redivision recommends itself on several counts: 1) it allows for the preservation of the 3 beat meter; 2) it allows for the grammatical agreement of the 3.m.s. verb ירגזון with the masculine noun אהלים, rather than the feminine noun יריעות, as required by the MT's accentuation; 3) it allows for אהל to be the A-constituent in the matched-pair יריעה // אהל, as is usual in biblical poetry (cf. Isa 54:2; Jer 4:20; 10:20; 49:20, etc.); 4) the use of ellipsis (in the third colon) as a poetic technique is already attested in Hab 3:2.

[48] The usual plural form of the noun נהר, "river," is the feminine נהרות (cf. Hab 3:9). The LXX and Barb. (ποταμοῖς), and Vulg. (*fluminibus*) evidently interpreted נהרים as the plural "rivers." *Tg. Jon.*, on the other hand, apparently read the singular נהר, but interpreted it as a metaphor for a multitude, הא על מלכין ומשריתהון דסגיאין כמי נהרא הוה רגז מן קדמך יוי, "Behold, wrath from before YHWH was against kings and their retinues, which were as numerous as the waters of the river"; cf. Gordon and Cathcart, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 158, n.37. However, the principle of *lectio difficilior potior* compels us to at least attempt to explain נהרים as it appears in Hab 3:8.

Accordingly, the final *mêm* may be re-vocalised either as an enclitic, or else the dual suffix. As Heibert noted, the dual form is used at Ugarit to refer to the mythological sources of the deep (cf. CTA [= KTU] 4[51].4.21; 6.1.33; 49.1.5; Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 23, n.27). However, Tsumura has argued

that at Ugarit the dual form *nhrm* never occurs in the context of cosmogonic conflict (which seems to form the background of the imagery in the poem; cf. Cassuto, "Chapter iii of Habakkuk and the Ras Shamra Texts", 3–15). Moreover, he has demonstrated that in Ugaritic the usual order of the word-pair is *ym // nhr* (including the single instance of a *ym // nhrm* word-pair), rather than *nhr // ym*, as it appears in Hab 3:8; David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaokampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 165–66; Tsumura, "Ugaritic Poetry and Habakkuk 3", 29–30; cf. the equivalent Akkadian pair *ti-a-a-ta* "sea" // *na-ra-am* "river" in *Atra-Ḫasīs* III IV, lines 5–6; Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 166, n.9. Accordingly, Tsumura was inclined to understand "sea" and "river" as a "traditional" pair in ancient Semitic languages, and Habakkuk's usage simply as a metaphorical, without any direct association with the *Chaoskampf* motif (Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 166).

The dual form נַהֲרַיִם is also attested in BH; always in the form אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם, "Aram of the Two Rivers" (Gen 24:10; Deut 23:4 [Heb.5]; Judg 3:8; 1 Chr 19:6; Ps 60:2) as a designation of Mesopotamia. The LXX translates this GN with μεσοποτάμιος in Gen 24:10; Deut 23:5; 1 Chron 19:6). LXX Ps 60 has an abbreviated superscription, in which the toponym is omitted. The translation of Judg 3:8 is more varied: LXX[A], χουσαρσαθωμ βασιλέως συρίας ποταμῶν, "Chusarsathom king of the rivers of Syria"; LXX[B], χουσαρσαθαιμ βασιλέως συρίας ποταμῶν, "Chusarsathaim king of the rivers of Syria"; while Josephus, *Ant.*5.179–184, names: χουσαρσαθος τῶν ἀσσυρίον βασιλέως, "Chusarsathos, king of Assyria"). Each of these attestations of אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם occurs in prose contexts, and it may be that נהרים in Hab 3:8 functions metonymically for ארם נהרים, and by extension the land of Mesopotamia. This possibility is strengthened by Judg 3:8 which refers to כושן רשעתים מלך ארם נהרים, "Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram-Naharaim", who attacked Israel in

the days of the Judge Othniel. Significantly, this is the only place in which כושן (Hab 3:7) is paralleled. Consequently, it might be preferable to understand כושן in Hab 3:7 as a metonoymic allusion to Cushan-Rishathaim. In which case, כושן and נהרים, together should be understood as metonymically referring to Babylon. This possibility is supported by the paraphrase of Hab 3:7 in *Tg. Jon.*: מסרתינון ביד כושן חייבא, "I gave them into the hand of Cushan the wicked" which echoes Judg 3:8, וימכרם ביד כושן רשעתים, "and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim (lit. Cushan the twice-wicked)."

Perhaps a preferable option, however, is to view Hab 3:7–8 as a complex merismus, similar to those described above. In this case, נהרים may be associated with Mesopotamia north-east of Palestine; ים may be associated with the Mediterranean coast to the west; and ארץ מדין may be associated with the traditional territories of Midian to the south-south-east. This suggests that כושן is to be identified with כוש to the south-west (cf. Gen 2:13; 10:6; Isa 11:11; 20:4–5; Jer 46:6–9, where the Euphrates and the Nile are counterpoised). Further support for this interpretation lies in the fact that the references proceed from the south (v.7), northward (v.8), following the march of the divine warrior in Hab 3:3–4.

Finally, it should be noted that J. J. M. Roberts has suggested that the imagery of Hab 3:8 is multivalent. In Roberts' words, "The point of the question is not to suggest that God's anger is really directed at Babylon, rather than the natural world. The point of the question is to identify Babylon with the primeval powers of chaos and thus to suggest that this new march of Yahweh is a fundamental reenactment (sic.) of Yahweh's primeval victories from which there emerged an ordered world under God's kingship"; J. J. M. Roberts *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 155; see also, Ferris J. Stephens, "The Babylonian Dragon Myth in Habakkuk 3" *JBL* 43 (1924): 290–293.

---

[49] This verse is especially difficult; cf. Franz Delitzsch, *Der Prophet Habakuk* (Leipzig: K. Tauchnitz, 1843), 165; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 320. The translation here follows that of Tsumura, who analysed the noun עריה as a *figura etymologica* (cf. *GKC* §117*p*); David T. Tsumura, "Niphal with an Internal Object in Hab 3, 9a," *JSS* 31 (1986): 11–16.

[50] The translation "weapons" (מטות) is deliberately ambiguous in order to allow for a range of possible interpretations: cf. Heb. מַטֶּה, "staff, branch"; Akkad., *miṭṭu*, "mace"; Ug. *mṭ*, "arrow(?)"; cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 321–22.

[51] The MT has the *piʿel* verb נְהָרוֹת תְּבַקַּע־אָרֶץ, lit. "rivers you split the earth"; however, in its place the LXX has the passive, ποταμῶν ῥαγήσεται γῆ, "the land of rivers will be torn asunder". Accordingly, it might be preferable to emend the verse to read: תְּבָקַּע אֶרֶץ נְהָרוֹת.

[52] Heibert draws attention to the parallel of ארץ in v.9 and הרים in v.10; Heibert, *God of My Victory*, 28.

[53] Treating the *hapax* רוֹם as a collective noun, "the heights"; Wearne, "Habakkuk 3:10–11: In Defence of a Masoretic Unit Division", 515–18.

[54] LXX has θάνατον, rather than מבית, suggesting מות. However, It has been observed that the colon is unusual insofar as it has four words, while the surrounding cola only have three, and this might support the deletion of מבית entirely; cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 337. However, the noun יסוד, "foundation", in the following colon rather testifies the authenticity of בית. Consequently, "head of a wicked house" should be understood metaphorically, with the common acceptation, "dynsasty".

[55] Andersen understood this to be a reference to disembowelling; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 337–38.

[56] Another *hapax*. The translation "warrior" can be inferred from the context; cf. פְּרָזוֹן, Judg 5:7; פִּרְזֹנוֹ, Judg 5:11; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 338. The object of the 3.m.s. pronominal suffix may be identified with the "head of a wicked house" (see above).

[57] It is difficult to make sense of this verse, but the MT is supported by the LXX and Barb.; cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 338.

[58] In order to preserve the parallelism of the bicolon, the translation above follows Andersen in reading חמר as an infinitive absolute (cf. √חָמַר; Ps 46:3 [Heb. 4]; Lam 1:20; 2:11); Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 339.

[59] Note, with Andersen, that the *wāw*-consecutive suggests that, at this point, the poet is recalling a past victory, not a future hope; Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 350.

[60] The simile is paralleled in 2 Sam 22:34 and Ps 18:34

[61] The 1.c.s. pronominal suffix is unexpected, but its attestation in all three iterations of the formula (2 Sam 22:34 and Ps 18:34 and Hab 3:19) attests to its authenticity.

[62] The 1.c.s. pronominal suffix is *prima facie* surprising. *Tg. Jon.*, Vulg., and Mur 88 support the 1.c.s; however, LXX and Syr. have the less difficult 3.m.s.; see Roberts *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, 148.

BALAAM, SON OF BEOR

Assuming Balaam, son of Beor, in Combination I can be identified with the biblical Balaam, son of Beor—which must be judged extremely likely—then there is some value in turning to biblical literature to consider how Balaam was perceived in history and tradition. Furthermore, given that the biblical accounts contain several references to Balaam's homeland, the biblical allusions might yield helpful clues pertaining to the provenance of the DAPT.

D.1. BALAAM THE SEER

In biblical tradition Balaam is best known for the episode in Numbers 22–24, which reports his summons by Balaq, the king of Moab, to pronounce imprecations against the Israelites during their sojourn in Transjordan. Allusions to this incident also occur in Deut 23:4b–5 (Heb. 5b–6); Nehemiah 13:2; Josh 24:9–10; Mic 6:5; 2 Peter 2:15; and Jude 1:11.[1] In addition, Num 31:8, 16 (cf. Josh 13:22; Rev 2:14) identifies Balaam as an instigator in the Baal of Peor incident, despite the fact that he is not named in the corresponding narrative in Num 25:1–15.[2]

In the Numbers 22–24 pericope Balaam bears no prophetic or divinatory title (on the difficult noun פתורה, see below), but in Num 22:7 Balaq's messengers carry with them קְסָמִים (LXX μαντεία), lit. "divinations". This

---

[1] Cf. 2 Pet 2:15.

[2] Cf. Jude 1:11; Rev 2:14.

term is usually translated "fees of divination" (cf. Vulg. *divinationis pretium*), but it may also refer to the tools used for divination (cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.*, וגדין דקיסמין חתימן בידיהון, "the sealed arrows of divination were in their hands", which is doubtless influenced by Ezek 21:22 [Heb. 28], see below).[3] In either case, the reference to קסמים implies that Balaam was considered a diviner. This inference is supported by Joshua 13:22 (based on Num 31:8), in which Balaam is named הַקּוֹסֵם, "the diviner" (LXX τον μάντιν). This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible in which Balaam is unequivocally given a mantic title (see below). Additionally, in Num 24:1 Balaam is represented as actively seeking omens (נְחָשִׁים; LXX οἰωνός). It is clear from usage elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible that both קֶסֶם (and the related verb קָסַם) and נַחַשׁ (and the related verb נָחַשׁ) denote some sort of divinatory practice, but to what precisely do they refer?

The noun קֶסֶם occurs x11 in the Hebrew Bible and the verb קָסַם occurs x22.[4] In the LXX קָסַם/קֶסֶם are regularly translated with the general terms μάντις/μαντεύομαι, "diviner/divine". In most cases it is impossible to infer from the context the manner in which this sort of divination was conducted, but in 1 Sam 28:8 Saul asks the medium at Endor to קסמי־נא לי באוב, "divine for me by a spirit" (LXX μάντευσον), which might imply that קסם is specifically related to *necromancy*.[5] However, in the archetypal list of

---

[3] For the former, cf. Jo Ann Hackett, "Balaam", *ABD*: 1:569; for the latter, cf. *BDB*, "קֶסֶם 1"; Géza Vermès, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 130. Note that this same noun is used Num 22:7 (see below) in a context that almost certainly refers to the oracles themselves.

[4] קֶסֶם: Num 22:7; 23:23; Deut 18:10; 1 Sam 15:23; 2 Kgs 17:17; Jer 14:14; Ezek 13:6, 23; 21:21, 22 [Heb. 21:26, 27]; Prov 16:10; קָסַם: Deut 18:10, 14; Josh 13:22; 1 Sam 6:2; 28:8 x2; 2 Kgs 17:17; Isa 3:2; 44:25; Jer 27:9; 29:8; Ezek 13:9, 23; 21:21, 23 [Heb. 21:26, 28 x2], 29 [Heb. 34]; 22:28; Mic 3:6, 7, 11; Zech 10:2; cf. מִקְסָם: Ezek 12:24; 13:7.

[5] Note that in 1 Sam 28:9 (cf. 1 Sam 28:3), mediums are referred to as יִדְּעֹנִי and אֹבוֹת; cf. the pairing of אוב and ידעני in Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:11; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; 2 Chron 33:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3.

abhorrent mantic practitioners in Deut 18:10–11, קסם קסמים (LXX μαντευόμενος μαντείαν), "the one who divines divinations", is related to מעונן ומנחש (LXX κληδονιζόμενος καὶ οἰωνιζόμενος), "the fortune-teller and the diviner", while שאל אוב וידעני ודרש אל־המתים (LXX εγγαστρίμυθος καὶ τερατοσκόπος ἐπερωτῶν τοὺς νεκρούς), "the enquirer of spirits, necromancer, and seeker of the dead" are named separately. Usage elsewhere suggests that קסם might be related to *oneiromancy*. In Mic 3:6 we read לכן לילה לכם מחזון וחשכה לכם מקסם, "therefore, it will be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without divination", which has connotations of nocturnal revelation.[6] This has a clear resonance with the prominence of nocturnal revelations in the Balaam tradition in both biblical and extra-biblical sources (cf. Num 22:8–13, 19–21; DAPT I.1; *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 28:2; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 22:5; Num Rab. 20:7; Vulg. Num 22:5). This same pairing of קסם and חזה is also found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Ezek 13:6, 7, 23; 21:29 [Heb. 21:34]; Mic 3:7). In this regard, it is particularly interesting to note Zech 10:2, in which the diviners (קוסמים) see (חזה) in parallelism with dreamers (חלמות): והקוסמים חזו שקר וחלמות השוא, "the diviners see falsehood and the dreamers vanity". The other notable occurrence of קסם is in Ezek 21:21–23 [Heb. 21:27–28]: כי־עמד מלך־בבל אל־אם הדרך בראש שני הדרכים לקסם־קסם קלקל בחצים שאל בתרפים ראה בכבד, "for the king of Babylon stands at the crossroads, at the parting of the ways, to divine a divination, shake the arrows, consult the teraphim, inspect the liver". It has been suggested that the shaking of arrows, consultation of teraphim and *hepatoscopy* in this passage are subcategories of

---

[6] If so, the implication from Num 22:7 and Ezek 21:22 [Heb. 22:28] that קֶסֶם relates to an object must be explained. Perhaps these were objects used for inducing a vision? This might be consistent with Num 22:7, but Ezek 21:22 [Heb. 22:28] seems to imply that the קֶסֶם was itself used as a determination between two alternatives. It should also be noted that in this verse קֶסֶם apparently stands *pars pro toto* for the list of divinations in the preceding verse. As such, Ezek 21:22 [Heb. 22:28] should be noted as a caveat, but its significance is unclear.

קסם.[7] In which case, קסם could be interpreted broadly as referring either to a class of divinatory practices, or as a general term for any sort of divination. However, it is equally possible that קסם was itself intended as a technical term, equivalent to the other three. Consequently, it seems that קָסַם/קֶסֶם have a comparatively broad semantic range, but in a number of instances some form of visionary revelation seems to be intended, especially when paired with חזה.

נַחַשׁ and נָחַשׁ present an even more complicated picture. The noun נַחַשׁ occurs x2 in the Hebrew Bible, while the verb נָחַשׁ occurs x11.[8] In the LXX נָחַשׁ/נַחַשׁ is regularly translated by οἰωνός/οἰωνίζομαι, "*augury*", which is derived from οἰωνός, "bird of prey" (cf. *LSJ*, II–III, I, respectively). In the majority of cases the translation *augury* is broadly compatible.[9] However, Gen 44:5, refers to the silver cup (cf. Gen 44:2), in which Joseph practiced divination: הלוא זה אשר ישתה אדני בו והוא נחש ינחש בו (notwithstanding LXX, οἰωνισμῷ οἰωνίζεται). But, in Num 24:1 it is implied that Balaam's *modus operandi* was to "go out" to seek an omen: ולא־הלך כפעם־בפעם לקראת נחשים, "and he did not go, as before, to seek an omen," which, on the face of it, does not seem to imply *cyathomancy*. Finally, in light of the resemblance between נָחַשׁ/נַחַשׁ and נָחָשׁ, "snake," it has been suggested that the term might refer to *ophidiomancy*, or, more speculatively, to a hissing or whispering sound produced by these diviners, but this goes beyond the available evidence.[10] Consequently, as with קָסַם/קֶסֶם, it is impossible to precisely identify נָחַשׁ/נַחַשׁ with a single divinatory technique, and, once again, it may be that the term covers a range of mantic practices.

---

[7] Cf. Robert L. Alden, "קֶסֶם," *TWOT*: 805; cf. Lothar Ruppert, "קֶסֶם," *TDOT* 8:73; Ann Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 96–98.

[8] נַחַשׁ: Num 23:23; 24:1; נָחַשׁ: Gen 30:27; 44:5 x2, 15 x2; Lev 19:26; Deut 10:10; 1 Kgs 20:33; 2 Kgs 17:17; 2 Kgs 21:6 = 2 Chron 33:6.

[9] In this connection it is interesting to note Balaq's patronymic, בן־צפור, lit. "son of a bird," which may involve a subtle word play on Balaam's activities as an augur.

[10] Cf. Robert L. Alden, "נָחַשׁ," *TWOT*: 572.

Notwithstanding the difficulty involved with defining these terms, it should be noted that in several instances קסם and נחש are found together as a parallel pair (e.g. Num 23:23; Deut 18:10; 2 Kgs 17:17; cf. Num 22:7, 24:1), and their inclusion in lists of illicit divinatory and magical practices suggests that both terms had a technical meaning.

Beyond these technical terms, the Num 22–24 pericope contains a number of additional clues as to Balaam's *modus operandi*. In Num 22:8–12 and 22:19–20 Balaam is described as receiving nocturnal revelations reminiscent of the nocturnal theophany in the DAPT I.1–3 (cf. ויבא אלהים אל־ בלעם לילה, "and God came to Balaam at night" Num 22:20; ויקם בלעם בבקר, "and Balaam arose in the morning", Num 22:13, 21). It seems probable that this is to be identified as (or related to) the קסם, since in Num 22:8 it follows directly from the messengers bearing the קסמים.[11] It is not specified in the text whether these revelations were initiated by God, or whether Balaam performed some ritual act to induce the theophany, but it should be noted that

---

[11] If Num 22:8, 19 are understood to imply that Balaam actively sought divine instruction, this may explain God's otherwise perplexing change of heart in Num 22:22. The jarring juxtaposition of Num 22:22a, ויחר־אף אלהים כי־הולך הוא, "and God's anger burned because of his going," with Num 22:20b, אם־לקרא לך באו האנשים קום לך אתם, "if these men have come to summon you, arise, go with them," has often been interpreted as evidence for multiple sources (cf. Hackett, "Balaam", *ABD*: 569–70). However, if the implication of Num 22:19 is that Balaq and Balaam obstinately sought to change God's original determination, then the divine anger might be directed at Balaam for his wilful stubbornness in going despite God's earlier instruction. The irony in this narrative is, therefore, two-fold, not only is the "seer" blind to the presence of the angel blocking his way, which is painfully obvious to his donkey, but Balaam is also characterised as stubbornly and repeatedly trying to drive the ass onward. Both of these failings play on stereotypical entailments of the Donkey's perceived stupidity and stubbornness; Kenneth C. Way, *Donkeys in the Biblical World* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 98, 199. This interpretation of Balaam's wilfulness in Num 22:22–35 seems to be supported by later Jewish commentators, and may have been the source of the later biblical and extra-biblical references to Balaam, which portray him as stubborn in his determination to curse the Israelites; cf. Vermès, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 134).

Balaam's instructions to the messengers (Num 22:8, 19) imply that he believed a divine visitation was assured (cf. Josephus, *A.J.*, 4.105: ἀνέκρινε τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διάνοιαν "he inquired the will of God"; cf. Num 23:3: אולי יקרה יהוה לקראתי, "perhaps Yʜᴡʜ will come to meet me").[12]

In addition to the omens and nocturnal revelations it is also important to consider the significance of the sacrifices offered by Balaam before the pronouncement of each of his oracles (Num 23:1–5, 14–17, 29–30). It has been suggested that these sacrifices might imply that he engaged in *extispicy*; however, the text plainly states that in each instance Balaam left Balaq standing beside the sacrifices while he went off to look for an omen; e.g. התיצב על־עלתך ואלכה אולי יקרה יהוה לקראתי, "stand by your offering and I will go, perhaps Yʜᴡʜ will come to meet me" (Num 23:3; cf. 23:15, 17; 24:1).[13] Consequently, while the sacrifices were evidently essential to Balaam's preparation (cf. Num 23:4), it was apparently not from the sacrifices that the omens were gleaned.[14]

---

[12] In fact, it may be possible to detect a subtle tension later in the narrative with regard to the manner in which Balaam's mantic abilities are represented, and this might shed light on the vague description of the nocturnal revelation. Several times Balaam separates himself to seek divine instruction (Num 22:8, 19; 23:3, 15), and each time it is specified that it is God who met with him (Num 22:4, 20; 23:4, 16); as such, the narrative has a subtle polemic undertone, in which the divinatory agency is entirely removed from the diviner and ascribed to God. As a consequence of this, the methods used to achieve revelation are backgrounded and the divine action is foregrounded, meaning that, from a didactic point of view, the text serves to establish the limitations of the divinatory arts.

[13] In particular comparisons have been drawn between Balaam and the Mesopotamian *bārû*; cf. Christopher Wright Mitchel, *The Meaning of BRK "To Bless" in the Old Testament* (SBL Dissertation Series 95; Atlanta Ga.: Scholars, 1987), 91; Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, 150, with additional references; Benjamin Uffenheimer, *Early Prophecy in Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999), 79–80.

[14] Note esp. Num 23:29–24:1, in which Balaam offers sacrifices but does not seek an omen. Admittedly, it is possible to interpret these verses as saying that Balaam left Balaq beside the altars while he went to examine the entrails, but this is not the plain reading of the text; e.g.

No less ambiguous is Balaam's self-description in Num 24:4, 16. These verses contain the most elaborate descriptions of Balaam as a mantic specialist.[15] In these verses the interdiegetic narrator Balaam describes himself as one who שמע אמרי־אל אשר מחזה שדי יחזה נפל וגלוי עינים, "hears the words of El, who sees visions of Shadday; falling, but with eyes uncovered". In Num 24:16 it is added that he ידע דעת עליון, "knows knowledge of the Most High". This description has a clear resonance with the depiction of Balaam in the DAPT I.1 as one who was a חזה אלהן, "seer of the gods" (cf. שדי and שדין in I.5, I.6). Moreover, as has often been noted, the expression נפל וגלוי עינים, "falling, but with eyes uncovered" in Num 24:4, 16, suggests the behaviour of an ecstatic visionary; cf. 1 Sam 19:23–24, in which Saul, overcome by the spirit of God and prophesying (יתנבא), is said to fall down naked (ויפל ערם).[16]

Later Jewish sources evince a similar range of descriptors. In *A.J.* 4.104, Josephus describes Balaam as μάντις ἄριστος τῶν τότε, "the best diviner of that time"; Philo, in *On the Life of Moses* 1.264, refers to him as μαντεία

Num 23:3, 15, 17 where it is specified that Balaq stood beside the burnt offerings (עלות), while Balaam went aside. Note the similarity of these sacrifices to the sacrifices for the sanctification of Aaron before approaching God on the day of atonement, as described in Lev 16:1–19 (Lev 16:3: פר בן־בקר לחטאת ואיל לעלה, "a bull, the young of an ox, for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering"; cf. Deut 23:1: שבעה פרים ושבעה אילים, "seven bulls and seven rams").

[15] On the possibility that these verses might be an interpolation; cf. Hackett, "Balaam", *ABD*: 570–71.

[16] Cf. S. Herbert Bess, "The Office of the Prophet in Old Testament Times," *Grace Journal* 1 (1960): 8–9, who argues, theologically, that the suspension of Balaam's personality manifest in ecstatic behaviour was a consequence of his being out of harmony with the divine message (by inference the same would apply to Saul in 1 Sam 19:23–24). According to Bess, such unusual "ecstatic" behaviour was not the norm for biblical prophets. However, the question of ecstasy prophecy in Israel and the ancient Near East continues to be debated. For a recent discussion with references, cf. de Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 287–89, 297, 340.

περιβόητος…ὃσ ἅπαντα μὲν ἐμεμύητο τὰ μαντικῆς εἴδη, οἰωνοσκοπίαν δ' ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα συγκεκροτηκὼς ἐθαυμάζετο, "a famous diviner…who had been initiated into every form of the divination of signs, but was admired above all for his proficiency in augury"; while in *On the Confusion of Tongues*, 159, he is οἰωνόμαντιν καὶ τερατοσκόπον, "an augur and interpreter of signs," and in *On the Change of Names*, 202, he is τὸν οἰωνοσκόπον, "the augur." In *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 28:2, Pseudo-Philo identifies Balaam as *interpretem somniorum*, "interpreter of dreams." While this latter designation may simply be an interpretation based on the nocturnal revelations of Num 22:8–12, 19–20, it may also be derived from the noun פְּתוֹרָה in Num 22:5 (see below). Last of all, in *B. Bat.* 15b:2, Balaam is given the title נביא, "prophet", as one of seven prophets (שבעה נביאים) who prophesied to the gentiles. This is the only time the title נביא is applied to him. Each of these titles (especially those related to μάντις/μαντεύομαι and οἰωνός/οἰωνίζομαι, see below) can be plausibly explained as interpretations dependent on the biblical narratives about Balaam, but the possibility that they might reflect extra-biblical traditions cannot be dismissed.

In light of this possibility, one other late description of Balaam is worthy of note. In his introduction of Balaam in *On the Life of Moses*, 1.265, Philo says:

προεῖπε γὰρ τοῖς μὲν ἐπομβρίας θέρους ἀκμάζοντος, τοῖς δ' αὐχμόν τε καὶ φλογμὸν ἐν μέσῳ χειμῶνι, τοις δ' ἐξ εὐετηρίας ἀφορίαν καὶ ἔμπαλιν ἐκ λιμοῦ φοράν, ἐνίος δὲ πλημμύρας ποταμῶν καὶ κενώσεις καὶ θεραπείας λοιμικῶν νοσημάτων καὶ ἄλλων μυρίων

For to some he had accurately foretold an abundance of rain in the prime of summer, and to others drought and extreme heat in the middle of winter, to others barrenness following a good season and, contrariwise, a plentiful crop following famine, to some rivers in flood or empty, treatments for pestilences, and countless other things.

While this description may be nothing more than a paradigmatic list invented by Philo to convey the impression of an exceptionally gifted diviner, the nature of these prophecies resonates remarkably with the drought which is apparently prophesied in the DAPT (I.6–7, cf. I.14). Could it be, then, that Philo's description reflects a body of folk traditions that was still transmitted in the first century C.E., but which can be traced as far back as the Iron Age?

Finally, in Num 22:6 Balaam is famed for his efficacy as one who can pronounce blessings and curses: כי ידעתי את אשר תברך מברך ואשר תאר יואר, "for I know that whatever you bless is blessed, and whatever you curse will be cursed". Though, as Cristopher Mitchell has argued, this remark should not be interpreted to mean that Balaam had autonomous imprecatory power, since the biblical narratives make it abundantly clear that he was incapable of acting independently of the divine will (cf. Num 22:8, 18, 35, 38; 23:3–5, 8, 12, 16, 20, 26; 24:14; Josh 24:9–10; Deut 23:4b–5 [Heb. 5b–6]; Neh 13:2). Rather, this comment should be understood in terms of Balaam's skill and accuracy as a diviner (cf. Num 23:1–5, 14–17, 29–30, esp. 24:1). This is congruent with Balaam's characterisation in the DAPT—especially with regard to Balaam's weeping. As such, notwithstanding the superscription of the DAPT, Balaam is not so much the protagonist of the story, as simply a medium through whom the divine message is communicated.

To summarise, biblical tradition primarily characterises Balaam as an interpreter of dreams, a seeker of omens, and communicator of the divine will.[17] Each of these actions finds points of contact in the DAPT.

---

[17] Thus, when the narrative layers are stripped away, Balaam's deeds are seen to be essentially comparable to the prophetic(/divinatory) activities reflected in the Mari letters; cf. Martti Nissinen, "Mari Letters", in *Prophets and prophecy in the ancient Near East* (ed. Martti Nissinen; SBLWAW 12; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2003), 209 13–14.

D.2. EVIDENCE REGARDING BALAAM'S HOMELAND

As for Balaam's homeland, in Num 22:5 we read: וישלח מלאכים אל־בלעם בן־בעור פתורה אשר על־הנהר ארץ בני־עמו, "and he (Balaq) sent messengers to Balaam, son of Beor, at Pethor, which is on the river, in the land of the sons of his people". In the MT the difficult noun פְּתוֹרָה is apparently rendered as a GN, *Pĕtôr*, with locative *hê* (cf. LXX Φαθουρά; *Tg. Onq.* לפתור; Sam. Pent. פתרה). However, in the Vulg. (*ariolum*), Syr. (ܦܬܘܪܐ), *Tg. Neof.* (תורה חלמייה), *pĕtorâ* is interpreted as a *nomen agentis* meaning "interpreter (of dreams)" (cf. √פתר in the stories about Joseph in Gen 40:8, 16, 22; 41:8, 12, 13, 15).[18] Furthermore, as Scott Layton has remarked, the pattern PN + patronym + *nomen agentis*, is precisely paralleled in Josh 13:22: בלעם בן־בעור הקוסם, "Balaam, son of Beor, the diviner".[19] In addition, Deut 23:4 (Heb.5) has: מפתור ארם נהרים, "from Pithom (in) Aram of the two Rivers";[20] however, this has plausibly been explained as a case of inner-biblical exegesis.[21]

Be that as it may, one long-standing view identifies *Pĕtôrâ* with *Pitru* near Carchemish in northern Syria, known from the annals of Shalmaneser III.[22] But this identification has been challenged on morphological grounds

---

[18] *Tg. Ps.-J.* translates פתור as a GN but interprets it in terms of √*pātar* , "to interpret": ובית מותביה בפדן היא פתור על שמיה פתיר חלמי, "and the house of his residence in Padan was Pethor which name means interpreter of dreams". Cf. the discussion in Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 111–13; Scott C. Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam? Num 22,5 Revisited", *Biblica* 73 (1992): 32–61.

[19] Cf. Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 38–39. Although, Layton goes too far when he avers (n.31) that comparison of Num 22:5 and Josh 13:22 suggests that Heb. *qôsēm* and Aram. *Pĕtôrâ* are interdialectical equivalents.

[20] The LXX of Deut 23:4 omits *pĕtôr* and simply translates ארם נהרים, Μεσοποταμία; cf. Vulg. *Balaam filium Beor de Mesopotamia Syriae*.

[21] Cf. Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 34. On the interpretation of ארם נהרים see §C.4.

[22] See already, A. H. Sayce, "The Site of Pethor", *Academy* 10 (Sept. 16, 1976): 291; cf. the discussion and references in George B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 325.

(i.e. *_qatᵛl_ versus *_qitl_ base), and on the grounds that the distance Balaam would then have had to travel to reach Balaq is such that he would have been unlikely to undertake the journey on only a donkey with two servants on foot (Num 22:22).[23] However, it should be noted that this was not incredible to the writer of Deut 23:4.

It is clear that the _crux interpretum_ ארץ בני־עמו lies at the heart of this difficulty. In the MT עמו is vocalised _ʿammô_, "his people"; however, the expression "the land of the sons of his people" is unparalleled in BH as a geographic designation, and this has encouraged commentators to seek alternative explanations.[24] In 1945 A. S. Yahuda proposed that עמו should be identified with the land of ʿAmau (_ꜣmw_), known from Egyptian sources as a general designation for Asiatics.[25] However, as Donald Redford observed, this fails to account for the ʾ_ālep_ /ꜣ/, which in Egyptian would have been realised as a liquid /l/ or /r/.[26] It is true that in Late Egyptian liquid /ꜣ/ might be lost,

---

[23] Cf. Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 35–36. Gray, _A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers_ (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 326, calculated that the distance from Pitru to Moab would have been something like 400 miles, a journey of more than 20 days, and that the time taken for the four journeys of Numbers 22 would have required about 3 months. That Balaam's reputation would have been known such a long way away, and that Balaq would have undertaken to summon him, is certainly remarkable, but it is not inconceivable.

[24] As Layton observed, other instances of the expression בני עם followed by pronominal suffix are not a precise parallel, as these are never used in the context of a geographical designation;. Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 46.

[25] A. S. Yahuda, "The Name of Balaam's Homeland", _JBL_ 64 (1945): 547–51. Cf. William F. Albright, "Some Recent Discoveries: Alphabetic Origins and the Idrimi Statue", _BASOR_ 118 (1950): 15–16, esp. n.13, and the counter-arguments in Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 44–45. For the equation _ꜣmw_ = עם, see already Gaston Maspero, _Les Mémoires de Sinouhit_ (Cairo: de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1908), 67;

[26] Cf. Donald B. Redford, "Egypt and Western Asia in the Old Kingdom" _JARCE_ 23 (1986): 127, n.18. I owe this reference to Julian Cooper, who includes a valuable discussion of Egyptian _ꜣmw_ in his forthcoming Macquarie University doctoral dissertation: "Toponymy on

but we would then need to assume that a parallel development is reflected in the pronunciation of both languages (*ʿa(l/r)mau > *ʿamau), or that Hebrew borrowed a Semitic loanword back from Egyptian. Neither scenario is impossible, but nor are they particularly likely.[27]

An alternative solution is to follow, SP, Syr., and Vulg. and restore the variant <ן>עמו־בני ארץ "the land of the sons of Ammon". The emendation עמו<ן> has been defended on the grounds that it conforms to other geographical indications in the text: the river can readily be identified as the Jabbok, near Tell Deir ʿAlla (cf. §7.1), which formed the historical border of Ammonite territory (cf. Deut 2:37; 3:16; Josh 12:2; Num 21:24; Judg 11:13, 22), and the escarpment on the eastern edge of the Jordan Valley could be identified—by people living west of the Jordan—as הררי־קדם, "the mountains of the east" (Num 23:7).[28] Moreover, the appellation "Sons of Ammon" is well attested in the Hebrew Bible, and is even attested as a self-designation of the Ammonites in the Tell Siran Bottle and Amman Theatre inscription.[29]

Be that as it may, the authenticity of the MT's reading is supported by LXX (λαοῦ αὐτοῦ) and *Tgs. Neof. Onq.* and *Ps.-J.* (עמיה). In light of this textual witness, and due to the fact that the shorter עמו is the more difficult reading, Scott Layton attempted to defend the phonological basis of עמו as a parallel designation of the GN Ammon. To support his argument, Layton cited

the Periphery: Placenames of the Eastern Desert, South Sinai and Red Sea in Hieroglyphic Documents".

[27] On the phonological realisation of Egytian /ʒ/ see Carsten Peust, *Egyptian Phonology: An Introduction to the Phonology of a Dead Language* (Monographien zur ägyptischen Sprache, 2; Göttingen: Peust & Gutschmidt, 1999), 142.

[28] See esp. Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam? Num 22,5 Revisited", *Biblica* 73 (1992): 46–50; Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 111–13.

[29] Layton has observed that the name Ammon occurs x106 in the Hebrew Bible, x104 in the expression "Sons of Ammon"; see Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 49. Cf. the lone Neo-Assyrian reference to Ammon as *ba-an Am-ma-na* (and the more common: *Am-ma-na*, and *bīt Am-ma-na*); Daniel I. Block, "*Bny ʾmwn*: The Sons of Ammon", *AUSS* 22 (1984): 207–08.

comparable examples of PNN and GNN in which the termination *-on* is reduced to *-ô*.[30] However, he neglected to explain why the variant *ʿammô* would be preserved in this instance alone; after all, as Layton himself observed, "the fact remains that the name *ʿammôn* occurs 106 times in the MT … and it is never misspelled".[31]

But there is yet another possibility that, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been considered. The designation בני־עמו is almost exactly paralleled in the Qatabanian appellation *bnw ʿm* "the sons of *ʿAmm*", where *ʿAmm* is the name of the Qatabanian national god.[32] It remains an open question whether *ʿAmm* was venerated throughout the Levant (cf. the Ammonite PN, אליעם, "*ʿAmm* is my god"), but the similarity between the appellations בני־עמו and *bnw ʿm* is too close to be ignored. It is, therefore, interesting to note Lipinski's suggestion that there may be an Arabic substratum within the dialect of the DAPT (cf. §6.4).[33] Could it be that Numbers 22:5 preserves a vestige of the designation "the sons of *ʿAmm*", which was subsequently misunderstood and reanalysed as the tautologous common noun in the Hebrew tradition? If so, then the reliability of the entire biblical tradition regarding Balaam's origins is thrown into question.[34]

---

[30] Layton, "Whence Comes Balaam?", 50–60.

[31] Ibid, 49.

[32] See, Choon-Leon Seow, "AM עם", *DDD*: 25.

[33] Cf. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 111–13.

[34] This begs the question whether the designation "the sons of *ʿAmm*" might be related to the PN בני־עמי (Gen 19:38). In the aetiological tale about the incestuous origins of Moab and Ammon in Genesis 19:30–38 we read: והצעירה גם־הוא ילדה בן ותקרא שמו בן־עמי הוא אבי בני־עמון עד־היום, "the younger also bore a son, and she named him *ben-ʿămmî*; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day" (Gen 19:38). As Fritz Hommel argued, the name *ben-ʿămmî* might indicate that the Ammonites also venerated ʿAmm; Fritz Hommel, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen arabistisch-semitologischen Inhalts*, 2 (München: G. Franz, 1900) 155; cf. Seow, "AM עם", *DDD*: 25. However, this is the only time the name *ben-ʿămmî* is applied to the Ammonites, and in light of the context it is likely that the meaning was intentionally droll,

This does not necessarily mean that the provenance of the DAPT should be sought in Arabia; indeed, both biblical tradition and the physical location of the DAPT associate Balaam with Transjordan. In general terms, there is evidence for contact with north-Arabian traders in Transjordan by the 8th century B.C.E., and it might be that the Balaamite traditions should be identified with these groups.[35] In other words, it is not implausible that the reputation of a famed seer (and perhaps Balaam himself) would have passed along the trade routes, and were reappropriated and localised in the vicinity of Deir ʿAlla.[36] In that case, the variant ʿammôn which is attested in some textual witnesses might inadvertently point in the right direction. In any case, it must be stressed that, as with so much pertaining to the interpretation of the DAPT, there can be no certainty in this matter.

In sum, the ambiguity means the biblical tradition is inadequate to situate Balaam geographically, and so is ultimately of little or no use for determining the provenance of the DAPT.

---

i.e. "son of my kin" (cf. the apparent pun on אב, father in Moab, Gen 19:37). This is clearly how the verse was understood by the LXX with its explanatory pluses in Gen 19:37–38. As such, the etymology of Ammon must remain an open question, and the eponymous ancestor ben-ʿămmî cannot be used to situate the benê-ʿămmô in the territory of Ammon.

[35] On the question of Arabian contacts in the region, see Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics II*, 170, with references; Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "An Ostracon from Heshbon" *AUSS* 7 (1969): 228.

[36] After all, the possibility of Balaam (and Balaamite traditions) travelling to Moab from North-Arabia is no more outrageous than the possibility of his travelling from northern Syria.

Appendix E

SPEECH MOVEMENTS IN THE DAPT COMBINATION I

As discussed in Chapter 5, the identity of the speaker is an important clue for the interpretation of I.7*ff.* The table below is intended to visually represent the speech movements of Combination I in order to further clarify the arguments developed in 5.1.1. In what follows, words written in **bold type** are those spoken by the gods; words in *italics* are words spoken by Balaam. Rather than arranging the text according to the line divisions of the plaster inscription (as in Chapter 5), the text is presented according to the modern conventions for Hebrew poetry, with parallel cola indented. This arrangement is intended to highlight the literary quality of the DAPT.

Superscription
[… of] the account of [Balaam, son of Beo]r, a man who is/was a seer of the gods.

Scene 1
The gods came to him at night [and] revea[led (lit. uncovered) to] him, according to the pronouncement of El. [And] they said to [Balaa]m, son of Beor, **"Thus will (El) do according to the bird omen(?). Each will s[ee that which you have he]ard".**

Scene 2
And Balaam arose before morning, […] right hand […], and he could not [eat], and he wept bitterly.
And his people went up to him, and they said to Balaam, son of Beor, "Do you fast? Do you weep?"

And he said to them,
     "Sit down! I will reveal to you what the šadd[ayīn have done(?)].
     Now, come! See the deeds of the gods!
       The go[d]s gathered;
       And the šaddayīn took their place in the council,
 	
 And they said to Š[…],
     'Sew shut the heavens with your cloud!
     Let there be darkness and not brightness,

Gloom and not heat(?),
In order that you might induce terror and much darkness,
But do not be angry forever!'

For the oriole(?) *has reproached the Griffon Vulture*(?) *and the*
clutch of the Egyptian Vulture(?)*;*
The ostrich had compa[ssion on] the young of the hawk(?)*, but*
harmed the chicks of the heron(?)*;*
The swallow tore at the dove and the sparrow(?) *with its beak.*
[…] and […] the staff;
When ewes lead, it is the rod that is led.
Hares ate […].
Flitter-m[ice] were filled [with bee]r;
[Bat]s got drunk (with) wine (?).
Hyenas heeded instruction;
The cubs of the f[ox…].
Multitudes walked […];
[…] laughed at the wise.
The poor woman(?) *mixed myrrh,*
And the priestess […].
[…] to the one who wears a girdle of threads(?)*.*
The esteemed esteems, and the esteemer is esteemed.
The deaf hear from afar […];
And all (fore)see(?) *the restriction of procreation and fertility.*
[…] to the leopard;
The piglet chased the young [of…]"

Appendix F

THE BIRDS OF THE DAPT

Pl.1—א׃: Black Kite; *Milvus migrans*.

GOLDEN ORIOLE.
Oriolus Galbula. (Linn.)

Pl.2—ססאגר: Golden Oriole; *Oriolus galbula*.

Pl.3—נשר: Griffon Vulture; *Vulture fuliris***.**

Pl.4—רחם: Egyptian Vulture; *Neophron percnopterus*
(adult in front, Juvenile behind).

Pl.5.a—Nest of the Common Ostrich; *Struthio camelus***.**

Pl.5.b—Heron's nest.

Pl.6—נצ‎: Levant Sparrowhawk; *Accipiter brevipes***.**

Pl.7—אנפה: Purple Heron; *Ardea purpurea*.

Pl.8—דרר: Barn Swallow; *Hirundo rustica.*

Pl.9—יון: Turtle Dove; *Columba turtur***.**

Pl.10—צפר: Dead Sea Sparrow; *Passer moabiticus***.**

References:

Pl.1—illustration Edward Lear, in John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.29 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.2—John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.53 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.3—John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.1 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.4—illustration Edward Lear, in John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.3 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.5.a—J. G. Wood, *Wood's Bible Animals* (Philadelphia: Bradley, Garreston & Co., 1875), 450 (Source: https://archive.org/).

Pl.5.b—Nozeman, Cornelis, et al., *Nederlandsche vogeln, 1770-1829: zestien reproducties in kleur naar de fraaiste voorbeelden* (Amsterdam: 1770-1829) (Source: http://www.albion-prints.com).

Pl.6—Johann Friedrich Naumann, *Naturgeschichte der Vögel Mitteleuropas, vol.5* (Gera-Untermhaus,F.E. Köhler, 1899), pl. 53. (Source: http:// http://biodiversitylibrary.org/).

Pl.7—illustration Edward Lear, in John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.274 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.8—John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.54 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.9—John and Elizabeth Gould, *Birds of Europe*, pl.246 (Source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Pl.10—Joseph Wolf, *The Ibis* (1867), pl.7 (Source: http://www.archive.org/).

* In light of the variety of bird species common to Jordan, and the near impossibility of taxonomic identification of the species in the DAPT, images are intended to be representative only. All images are sourced from works in the public domain.