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Cover: The statue of Mereruka, Saqqara

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Table of Contents **Page**

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Editorial

This edition of *Buried History* coincides with the official opening of the Institute's new premises adjacent to La Trobe University. Again there is a range of papers three of which have been provided by people residing outside Australia. Our practice has been to publish the journal at the end of the year, however as a number of papers for Volume 44 have already been submitted, its timing is likely to be earlier in the year.

We are honoured to begin with an important paper from Professor Naguib Kanawati. It draws on the annual lecture of the Institute that he gave in August and argues that the decoration in the Tomb of Mereruka presents a narrative that was constructed at least partly with the oversight of the tomb owner.

Dr Kanawati is Professor of Egyptology, Macquarie University. He is an Egyptologist with a special interest in the Old Kingdom having excavated at Akhmim, Deshasha, Hawara, Giza and Saqqara. In 1997 Professor Kanawati was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, in 2003 he received the Centenary Medal "for services to the Australian society and the humanities in the study of archaeology" and in 2007 he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia.

Juan Manuel Tebes is Assistant Professor of Ancient Near Eastern History in the University of Buenos Aires and the Argentine Catholic University. His research has focussed on the History and Archaeology of the Iron Age in the southern Levant, especially in relation to peripheral societies, such as the Midianites. In recent years he has been Fellow at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, and at the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman. We have been pleased to establish links with another southern hemisphere institution.

Tremper Longman is the Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies and the chair of the department at Westmont Westmont College, Santa Barbara CA, USA. He is a prolific author having written a number of articles and books including *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, *How to Read the Psalms*, *Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind*, *Old Testament Commentary Survey*, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, and *God is a Warrior*. He has written a short commentary on the minor prophet Micah, as well as major commentaries on Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Daniel, and Nahum.

Professor Longman's paper provides a Biblical Scholar's perspective on the archaeological and historical issues associated with the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. Readers will note that he is critical of a number of other scholars who have contributed to *Buried History* or whose work has been reviewed in it. Readers should be aware that *Buried History* does not have defined positons on issues and instead expects its contributors to respect the evidence and the views other serious scholars. Its editorial policy does however mean that it may pass up the opportunity to publish material that is not in its defined area of interest. The Institute was pleased to have supported Professor Longman's 2007 visit to Australia and will be supporting a visit in 2008 by Professor James Hoffmeier, one scholar with whom he takes issue.

Helen Merrillees lives in Provence in retirement with her husband Robert. She and Robert have had a long association with the Institute and she is the author of a monograph on all cylinder and stamp seals in Australia, which she is revising and will be published by the Institute later this year.

During 2007 the Institute published Susan Balderstone's monograph on *Early Church Architectural Forms* and we were delighted to have it launched by Rev. Professor Robert Gribben. Robert is President of the United Faculty of Theology, a Fellow of Queen's College and the University of Melbourne. Robert has kindly adapted his remarks made at the launch to be included herein as a review.

As ever we acknowledge the contribution of our referees without whose work this volume could not be produced.

Christopher J Davey

The Tomb of Mereruka: a document on his life and character

Naguib Kanawati

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Abstract: A purely metaphoric/symbolic interpretation of the depictions in Old Kingdom tombs is questionable considering the specific events and practices that are often depicted. In particular the decoration in the Tomb of Mereruka provides an understanding of the life and character of the tomb-owner who is seen to be a man of power and wealth. His emphasis on security seems to have contributed to the growth of violence in ancient Egypt.

Wall scenes in Egyptian tombs of the Old Kingdom depict scenes of daily life, including agricultural pursuits, fishing, fowling, animal husbandry, various workshops, preparation and consumption of food, games and entertainment and rarely, war scenes. The paradox of representing activities from life in a tomb is not easy to explain, and accordingly diverse and frequently opposing theories have been put forward to interpret them, with strong conviction by the proponents of each theory.

Some believe that such activities took place in a Hereafter identical with actual life, others think that the scenes represent posthumous visits to the land of the living, or show a man-in-death watching life's manifestations, or that they depict a fictitious and symbolical domain to compensate the dead for actual loss, while some suggest that they are the summing up of a life's achievements. Furthermore, some scholars believe that with very few exceptions, such as war scenes, there is no story told in these pictures, and the accompanying inscriptions do not link events or explain their development; they are typical sayings belonging to typical situations.[1]

These views do not take into account the very specific events recorded in many tombs, such as the rendering of accounts in the tombs of Mereruka and Khentika at Saqqara (Duell, 1938: pl. 38; James, 1953: pl. 9), or Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi (Davies, 1902: pl. 8), where the names and titles of the culprits are clearly identified and the nature of the punishment depicted. One can also look at the incident of the fighting boatmen shown in the tomb of Inumin at Saqqara, where the usually amusing game apparently turned very rough, with two men resorting to the obviously painful hold of grasping each other by the genitals. All the characteristic features of each man are shown and the fight is watched by the tomb owner and his wife (Kanawati, 2006: pls. 16-17). The same applies to the circumcision scene in the tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqara where the progress of the procedure is clearly shown (Kanawati and Hassan, 1997: pl. 55), and to the bullfighting scenes in the tombs of Tjetiiqer and Kheni at El-Hawawish (Kanawati, 1980:fig. 10; 1981: fig. 20), where the tomb owners and the overseer of the herd stand and watch the action in a relaxed posture. That this was a specific fight and not a typical one, which could have occurred at any time and in any place, may be concluded from the fact that two of the bulls preparing to attack each other, were named, 'Beloved of his lord' and 'The beautiful head' (Kanawati, 1980:fig. 10).

In more recent years a growing tendency to interpret wall scenes in a metaphoric/symbolic context is observed. Thus, the spear fishing of the *Tilapia*, the most common species in the Nile River, was linked to its mouth-brooding habits, which was associated with fertility and rebirth in the Hereafter (Brewer and Friedman, 1989:2). Similarly, bed making scenes have been associated with resurrection, the transportation by a palanquin was seen in a funerary context as a parallel to the funerary procession, and the scenes of bullfighting were interpreted as symbolizing the deceased overcoming his opponent and maintaining his leadership in the Netherworld. Even playing the *senet*-game was associated with the difficult passage from the realm of the living to that of the dead; as for 'painting the seasons' which only appears in the tombs of Mereruka and Khentika, it was linked to control over time.[2] Some scholars have already argued strongly against such metaphoric interpretations, warning of the lack of strong, unambiguous, contemporary textual evidence in its support.[3]

It is not the intention here to discuss the highly controversial topic of the purpose, or the *raison d'être*, of tomb scenes and whether they were depicted for the direct benefit and enjoyment of the deceased himself and to guarantee the fulfillment of his/her needs after death, or as a form of communication with visitors to the tomb in order to persuade them to present offerings. In either case, the tomb owner needed to record the wealth and power he amassed during his life and perhaps also specific events which reflected his character or demonstrated his importance. The extent of the use of symbolism in tomb scenes of the Old Kingdom is open to question, and presuming a purely metaphoric/symbolic interpretation for most of these scenes is hazardous. Not only would such interpretation challenge the specificity and historicity of the illustrated events, but

***Figure 1**: The entrance to the Tomb of Mereruka at Saqqara (Photo: the editor 1976)*

it reduces the significance of tombs as one of the richest sources for the study of life in ancient Egypt.

The Egyptian did not separate inscriptions from scenes, they complemented each other, with some themes or events being better narrated and others being better illustrated. Even within the same scene an action represented may be accompanied by inscriptions, such as names, titles, descriptions and dialogues. Autobiographies also are often included in tombs containing these scenes; yet while we accept the biographies as recording historic events, for no good reason we are less ready to consider the scenes as having similar purpose. A careful study of these scenes cannot only enrich our sources for the study of the history of the Old Kingdom, but also greatly enhance our understanding of Egyptian manners and customs of the period. Perhaps it can in addition inform us about the characters of the important tomb owners who shaped the events of their time. Assuming that these officials had the final say in the choice of the scenes depicted in their tombs and their details, they should reflect some aspects of their personality. The tomb of Mereruka will be used as test case (Figures1 & 2).

The unusual complexity and richness of Mereruka's mastaba was traditionally explained by the fact that he was a vizier and son-in-law of King Teti, founder of the Sixth Dynasty (approx. 2345 BC). Yet Egyptian history is full of viziers and sons-in-law of kings who were buried in a less lavish style. This applies even to Mereruka's immediate neighbour, Kagemni, who occupied the same position and was married to a daughter of the same king, Teti (Harpur and Scremin, 2006: passim). So, why was Mereruka so distinguished?

Although it is possible that Mereruka left an extensive biography, as did many of the great men around his time, only a very small section of his façade inscriptions has survived; the rest has unfortunately been quarried away (Duell, 1938: pls. 3-4). Remaining, however, are a large quantity of wall scenes and some accompanying texts inside a massive chapel, which is formed of three separate sections, one for him (A), the second for his wife Waatetkhethor/Seshseshet (B) and the third, a later addition, for their son, Meryteti (C) (Duell, 1938: pl. 1; & Figure 2). A careful examination and analysis of these scenes and inscriptions, as well as the architectural design of the tomb, may answer some of the questions related to the apparently unusual wealth and importance of this vizier (Kanawati, 2008: passim).

Mereruka held eighty-four titles, the highest number of responsibilities entrusted to an Old Kingdom official (Duell, 1938: passim). Like other viziers and higher officials his list of titles included honorific, administrative and religious ones, some of which have never been combined in the hands of another man. Among these are the offices of vizier, overseer of various departments and priesthoods of many deities, including the influential post of the high priest of the Sun-god, Re. Mereruka was also in charge of the newly introduced responsibility of overseer of the protection of all royal palaces, a position attested only during Teti's reign. The king came to the throne by marrying the daughter of his predecessor, Wenis, but the transition was apparently not smooth and was opposed by some strong men. The last two viziers of Wenis were punished and lost their tombs, which were reallocated to two children of a king, possibly of Teti. The king also adopted the throne name Sehetep-tawy 'He who pacifies the Two Lands', which hints at the presence of troubles. Evidence suggests that the relationship between the monarchy and the priesthood of Re was not at its best, and the unusual appointment of the vizier himself, Mereruka, to the position of the high priest of this cult might be an attempt to bring its priesthood under control (Kanawati, 2008: passim). In

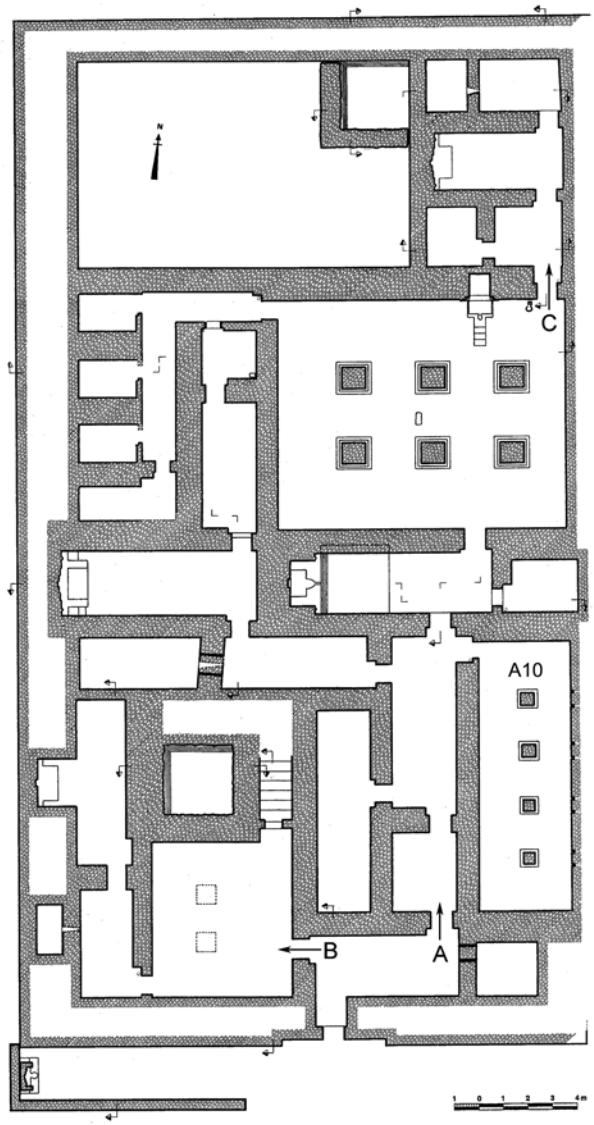

Figure 2: *A plan of the Tomb of Mereruka showing the entrances to sections A, B & C (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

such circumstances the introduction of an office related to the protection of all palaces is understandable, but why entrust it as well as practically everything else to Mereruka?

Mereruka was believed to be a self-made man who rose in his administrative career, married King Teti's daughter, Waatetkhethor also called Seshseshet, and accordingly became the king's trusted man. Yet Teti had many daughters, perhaps as many as nine, and none of them or their husbands enjoyed the privileges which Mereruka and his wife experienced, including their remarkable tomb. Our research shows that this vizier was not a self-made man who came from a humble background. His mother, whose tomb was discovered by the Australian Centre for Egyptology in the Teti Cemetery, was the daughter of the very high official Seshemnefer II of Giza, and her brother Seshemnefer III, Mereruka's uncle, became a vizier late in the Fifth Dynasty under Djedkare. Also, Waatetkhethor was not just a daughter of Teti, but his eldest daughter by his official queen Iput, daughter of his predecessor, King Wenis. It appears also that Teti had only one son, Nebkauhor, who died prematurely and was buried in the tomb of Akhethotep/Hemi, the disgraced vizier of Wenis. This presumably occurred early in Teti's reign and before his own cemetery was inaugurated (Kanawati, 2008: passim). In such circumstances the husband of the eldest daughter of the king by his official wife (as in the case of Teti himself before Mereruka) or their eldest son becomes the heir apparent, at least until the king produces a male heir, should he do so.

From the beginning Mereruka was not an ordinary vizier but a possible future king or, more likely, the father of the future king. Waatetkhethor was young, judging by her constant representation with the head-band and streamer associated with youth, and she was not Mereruka's first wife, for he already had grown-up sons by a previous wife. It seems likely that Waatetkhethor's young age delayed the production of her first child, which happened a few years later and after the decoration of the tomb was well advanced. A son, Meryteti, was born and was included in the decoration as a later addition (Duell, 1938: pls. 5, 8, 23, 46). To avoid any genealogical confusion he was not described as Mereruka's son, but as 'eldest son of the king of his body' and 'lector priest of his father', two titles borne by heirs apparent. In her own chapel (section B), Waatetkhethor was represented on a throne-like seat (Figure 3) attested again only in the tomb of Queen Mersyankh III of the Fourth Dynasty (Dunham and Simpson, 1974: figs. 7-8), and was accompanied by this son, Meryteti.

However, it seems that late in Mereruka's life, before the decoration of his tomb was completed, a son, Pepy (I),

Figure 3*: Accompanied by her son, Waatetkhethor sits on a throne-like chair with the lion motif, symbol for the monarchy (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

was born to Teti and as a result Mereruka and his family lost their special status. The last part to be decorated in his chapel, room A10, shows a sudden and drastic decline in the quality of art, perhaps reflecting a decline in his resources, and only there Meryteti is described as 'his son', i.e., Mereruka's (Duell, 1938: pl. 88). A chapel was then added (section C) for Meryteti within the mastaba of his parents, since it became unlikely that he would be buried in a pyramid. But the size of this chapel and the standard of its decoration are modest (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 2004: passim). Soon after, Mereruka died and the positions he once accumulated were never again put into the hands of one man. Evidence excavated and/or recorded and published by the ACE seems to support a claim made by the Egyptian historian, Manetho, who wrote in the third century BC that King Teti was assassinated (Waddell, 1980: 53). An ephemeral king, Userkare, usurped the throne perhaps for one year before Pepy I, the young son of Teti, regained the kingship. This was presumably with the support of strong officials, who either remained loyal to his father or had lost some privileges with the accession of Userkare (Kanawati, 2003; passim). If these changes reflect the struggle for power between the monarchy and the priesthood of Re, it seems that Pepy I, or his advisors, succeeded in dealing with the problems. Early in his reign he changed his name from Pepy/Nefersahor to Pepy/Meryre, i.e. Pepy/'beloved of Re'.[4] The relationship with the priesthood of Re appears, at least on the surface to have been peaceful for the remainder of the Sixth Dynasty. But there were other problems developing, and following this dynasty the so-called Old Kingdom started to crumble.

For most of Teti's reign Mereruka was the most important man after the king; in fact, as the father of the heir apparent (before Pepy I was born) his status was almost similar to that of a king. It is true that Teti acknowledged the heir apparent Meryteti as 'eldest son of the king, of his body', but in reality Meryteti was surely known as being the physical son of Mereruka. Furthermore, despite this designation Meryteti was depicted with Mereruka and Waatetkhethor in positions reserved for sons. The choice of Mereruka to play this important role is curious. He was not one of the first viziers who probably helped Teti in establishing himself on the throne, since Neferseshemre and perhaps Kagemni held this office before Mereruka. The latter's marriage to the princess, which was not his first marriage, probably took place after the death of Teti's first son Nebkauhor and with the aim of producing a male heir apparent. But why Mereruka in particular?

This vizier was the descendant of a strong, noble family, the Seshemnefers; yet such an advantage must have applied to many men at the time. In addition he was considerably older than the princess; she was rather young, while he was already married and had grown-up sons. When he died before the end of Teti's relatively short reign (12 years?), he was a middle-aged man or older according to his skeletal remains (Firth and Gunn, 1926: 26). Mereruka must have been known to possess certain abilities or characteristics which were deemed necessary at the time. If this vizier had any say in the choice of the themes represented in his tomb and in the included details, these may shed some light on his personality.

On the east side of the entrance passage to his chapel Mereruka appears seated in front of an easel and painting a representation of the three seasons of the year (Duell, 1938: pl. 6). Regardless of any metaphoric significance of the scene, the depiction of the vizier before an easel, which is attested again only in the case of the vizier Khentika (James, 1953: pl. 10), hints at his artistic ability. Almost certainly Mereruka was not involved in the actual decoration of his tomb, but probably he bore some responsibility for the selection and layout of the scenes.

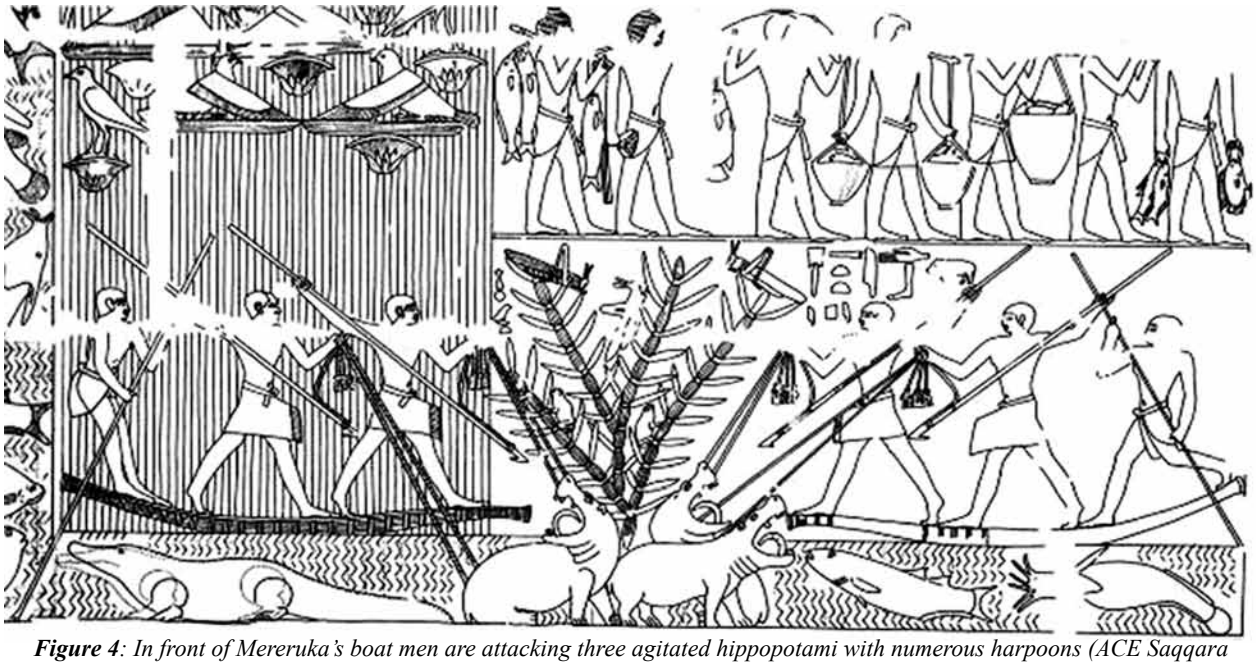

***Figure 4**: In front of Mereruka's boat men are attacking three agitated hippopotami with numerous harpoons (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

Figure 5: *Nine dogs are viciously attacking a Nubian ibex from every direction (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

The creation of the position of overseer of the protection of all royal palaces suggests that Teti felt threatened, and Mereruka's appointment as the first holder of this office must indicate the king's knowledge of and trust in his abilities in this particular sphere. Security appears to have become of paramount importance at the time, and an examination of the scenes in Mereruka's own chapel clearly demonstrates an unprecedented level of security. Wherever the vizier and his wife appear they are accompanied by guards, the number varying in accordance with the possible level of danger. Thus, when the couple are in the open, as for example in a spear fishing trip or standing by the river bank watching fishermen at work or in the fields viewing agricultural pursuits, they were accompanied by up to an estimated forty-two guards (Duell, 1938: pls. 8-9, 41, 167-168), a number which coincides with that of the Egyptian provinces.[5] In a desert hunt and despite the fact that the animals are shown inside a fenced reserve, guards stand not behind the couple, but between them and the fence (Duell, 1938: pls. 23-25). Even in the rather intimate situation where the princess entertained her husband by playing the harp while seated on a couch presumably inside their house, they were accompanied by some male guards/attendants for him and female ones for her (Duell, 1938: pl. 94).

In addition to his clear preoccupation with security, the scenes in Mereruka's chapel illustrate an unusual level of aggression. The harpooning of three hippopotami which appeared in front of his boat in the spear fishing trip (Figure 4) and the fight between a hippopotamus and a crocodile in the fowling scene demonstrate excessive violence (Duell, 1938: pls. 12, 19. Cruelty appears even more graphically in the desert hunt scene where nine dogs were allowed to tear apart a Nubian ibex (Figure 5), while being watched by Mereruka and his wife (Duell, 1938: pl. 24).[6] The depiction of one of Mereruka's men grabbing an Egyptian

Figure 6: *The defaulter is being held against a whipping post and beaten by policemen (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

Figure 7: *Entering the large pillared hall the visitor is face-to-face with the imposing statue of Mereruka (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

mongoose by the tail, preventing it from catching some fledgelings, might hint at his watchfulness (Duell, 1938: pl. 19).[7] Yet Mereruka's severity is nowhere more apparent than in the rendering of accounts scene. There, the heads of the estates present their accounts before the scribes, while a defaulter is being held against a whipping post and beaten by two policemen (Duell, 1938: pl. 36). This was the first time corporal punishment was represented in tomb scenes (Figure 6).

As the visitors proceed through the rooms of Mereruka's chapel they cannot fail to observe his harsh character, an image which he probably wanted to project. Once they reach the innermost part of the chapel, the pillared hall, A13, they are confronted by his larger-than-life statue placed in a niche high up in the north wall, opposite the entrance, with a flight of steps leading down to the floor of the hall (Duell, 1938: pls. 123, 148). The instant effect was that of reverence, if not fear, which may have been Mereruka's aim when he planned the decoration programme of his chapel (Figure 7).

On almost every wall of his multiple-roomed chapel Mereruka appears with his wife Waatetkhethor. No other official has represented his wife so regularly in his tomb. The vizier might have been deeply in love with his young wife and he did not hesitate to display this in the scenes in his chapel. Twice the couple is shown walking hand in hand, and once they appear on a couch while she is playing the harp for him (Duell, 1938: pls. 14, 91, 94), highly unusual representations of intimate moments in tomb scenes (Figure 8).[8] However, the frequency of Waatetkhethor's depiction

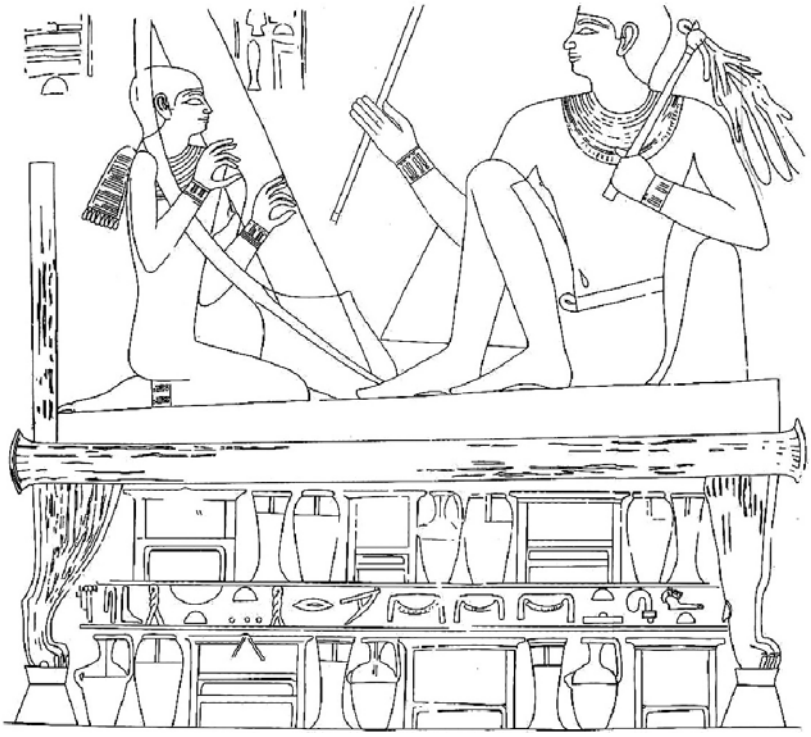

Figure 8*: Waatetkhethor playing the harp for Mereruka on a couch, a rare example of intimacy in Egyptian art of the Old Kingdom (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

Figure 9: *Display of grief in a funerary procession possibly connected with the transportation of Mereruka's coffin to his tomb (ACE Saqqara expedition).*

in Mereruka's chapel might not be due to his feelings alone, but also to his desire to emphasize and publicize their union. It is through his marriage to the princess that this vizier was elevated to such an extraordinary status and was given unprecedented powers. But it might be significant that in Waatetkhethor's own chapel, section B, her husband was never depicted.

Two themes represented in the large pillared hall, A13, seem to demonstrate Mereruka's desire to record the love and esteem his family and retainers had for him. On the north wall of this hall he depicts himself in three successive panels as supervising work, then presumably taken ill and being supported by a son and an official, and finally being carried in a palanquin with all members of his family accompanying him (Duell, 1938: pls. 149-158). On the opposite south wall a funerary procession is depicted. While this was probably not Mereruka's own funeral but the transportation of his coffin and funerary furniture as part of the preparation of the tomb, it was nevertheless a sad occasion and a reminder of the actual burial. There, we see men and women in a state of excessive grief, lamenting, fainting and tearing their hair and dresses (Figure 9). Men even threw themselves in the river behind the boat carrying the coffin in a demonstration of the worthlessness of life after Mereruka (Duell, 1938: pl. 130). It is interesting that a man as tough as Mereruka felt the need to record the people's love towards him. Perhaps even tyrants, or particularly tyrants, need to think that they were loved and appreciated.

Mereruka played an important role during the reign of King Teti, but he may have also left his mark on the Egyptian administration and way of life for the remainder of the Old Kingdom. His severe personality and his harsh punishment of defaulters appear to have been emulated in the latter part of the Sixth Dynasty. Thus, we see in the tomb of his successor, Khentika, two men held against a whipping post and beaten (James, 1953: pl. 9), while in the tomb of Henqu II at Deir el-Gebrawi a man is similarly punished and another is being conducted with a yoke around his neck and his hands shackled to a heavy object to prevent him from escaping (Kanawati, 2005: pls. 27-28, 55).[9] The treatment of the culprits is even harsher in the tombs of Tjeti-iqer of El-Hawawish and Ibi of Deir el-Gebrawi, where the guilty men are stripped naked, stretched on the ground and beaten with sticks (Kanawati, 1980: fig. 9; Davies, 1902: pl. 8). The downfall of the Old Kingdom at the end of the Sixth Dynasty, a short time after the stability and richness which it apparently enjoyed under Teti, is difficult to explain. If the admonitions of the Egyptian sage Ipuwer reflect historical reality and if they describe the conditions associated with the collapse of this kingdom, then we have the picture of a social revolution.[10] One wonders if the harsh social conditions at the time might have contributed to the downfall, even though the collapse of regimes is usually the result of a complicated web of causes and effects.

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Endnotes

1 For a summary of these opinions see Groenewegen – Frankfort, 1972: 28-36, also Moscati, 1963: 80; Gaballa, 1976: 28ff.

2 These interpretations have been discussed in detail by a number of scholars in Fitzenreiter and Herb, 2006: passim.

3 See in particular R. Van Walsem, in ibid, pp. 297-305.

4 The king appears to have ordered his officials to change his name from Nefersahor to Meryre wherever it was inscribed in their tombs, as it is shown in the tomb of Inumin at Saqqara (Kanawati, 2006: pls. 7a, 44).

5 With such a number, it could be surmised that the guards were selected from the different provinces to avoid any possible collusion.

6 The same scene appears again in the tomb of Mereruka's son, Meryteti (Kanawati, 2004: pls. 6, 46) and Inumin, a near contemporary of Mereruka (Kanawati, 2006: pls. 13, 47).

7 The same is shown again only in the tomb of the vizier Mehu, an immediate successor of Mereruka (Altenmüller, 1998: pl. 11).

8 The only similar representation is found in the tomb of Pepi at Meir (Blackman, 1953: pl. 45).

9 It is ironic that on the wall adjacent to this scene Henqu II inscribed a biography where he says, 'I did not put fetters on any man' (Kanawati, 2005: 72, pl. 66).

10 Scholars differ in their views on the historicity of this document (Lichtheim, 1973: 149-163).

Pottery Makers and Premodern Exchange in the Fringes of Egypt: An Approximation to the Distribution of Iron Age Midianite Pottery

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Abstract: This paper aims to study the distribution of Midianite pottery, a ware that was manufactured in the Hejaz and spread over the Negev (most notably Ramesside Timna), southern Palestine, and southern-central Jordan during the Iron Age. The admittedly meagre evidence from local sites suggests that the context of discovery is of particular significance. Since Midianite wares appear consistently in cultic contexts, administrative buildings and burial offerings, they may have been seen as valuable imports, probably due to their rich polychrome decorations, cultic character and/or imported nature. The presence of Midianite wares in these contexts implies that these goods were valued for their social significance as well as their functional content. This, in turn, points to the existence of exchange mechanisms of some kind, most notably gift-exchange and trade.

The combined results of several surveys and excavations conducted in the Negev and southern Jordan show the existence of a distinctive pottery tradition spanning (and most probably extending beyond) the Early Iron Age: Midianite pottery. The largest corpus of this ware has come largely from the 13th-12th centuries BC Ramesside sites at Timna valley. This evidence has recently been strengthened by evidence from the Faynan region of southern Jordan, where Midianite wares have been found in large numbers. In addition to its obvious importance for understanding the chronology of the Negev, Edom and the Hejaz, Midianite pottery is an invaluable source of information for the societies that the Egyptians encountered when they expanded into the Negev and Jordan during the last part of the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Ages.

The primary focus of this paper is the sociohistorical context in which the Midianite wares were manufactured and distributed over the southern Levant. In the first part I will survey the current data on Midianite wares, especially reassessing their spatial distribution in the southern Levant. In the second part, I will present a model that seeks to answer two central questions: What was the social significance of the Midianite wares? And how were they distributed? The conclusions are examined in the light of current knowledge of similar societies in the contemporary Near East and throughout the world. Although the complex forms of regionally centralized organizations are not manifested here, there appears to be evidence that the population of the Hejaz, Edom and the Negev were engaged in the exchange of ordinary goods, most notably Midianite painted wares. Midianite wares were deliberately taken out of circulation only when they were buried with an individual as grave goods or when they were buried in the ground as votive deposits. The presence of Midianite wares in burial, cultic, and administrative contexts would imply that these goods were valued for their social significance as well as their functional content. The fact that these wares were considered to have certain degree of social significance would point to exchange mechanisms of some kind.

Midianite pottery

Midianite pottery, also known as "Qurayya pottery" (Parr 1988), "Hejaz pottery" (Knauf 1983: 151), and "Taymanite Painted Ware" (Abu Duruk 1990: 18), was discovered during the 1930s by Glueck in his surveys in southern Jordan and his excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh in the southern Arabah valley. In the light of their decorative patterns, Glueck identified these vessels as "Edomite" and therefore dated them to the Iron Age II (Glueck 1967). During his surveys and excavations in the Arabah in the late 1950s and 1960s, Rothenberg found similar decorated wares, and following Glueck's typology labeled them as "Edomite" pottery (Rothenberg 1962). Nonetheless, after the discovery at Timna valley of the several Egyptian findings belonging to the 19th and 20th Dynasties, Rothenberg re-dated this pottery to the 13th-12th centuries BC. Petrographic studies carried out on some of the Timna wares led to the conclusion that they originated in the Hejaz, that is to say, northwestern Arabia. This area was known by the ancients -as attested in biblical and classical sources- as Midian, so Rothenberg proposed the name "Midianite pottery" for these wares (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 65-69).

To this day, the only clear archaeological context where Midianite wares have been found is provided by the Late Bronze/Iron I Ramesside activities at Timna valley. For this reason, Midianite ware has sometimes been used as diagnostic pottery for demonstrating Late Bronze/Iron I occupation in other areas, particularly Edom (cf. Rothenberg and Glass 1983; Finkelstein 1992a; 1992b; 1995: 127-137). It has become increasingly clear, however, that all of these findings are not precisely contemporary. Contrary to common opinion and according to new archaeological

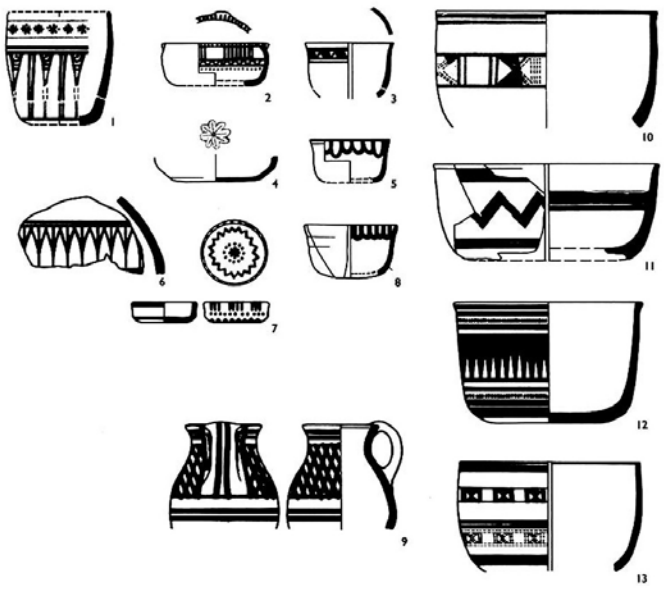

Figure 1: Midianite pottery from Timna (Site 2) (Rothenberg 1972: Fig. 32)

data, Midianite pottery very likely continued being used during the Iron Age II; in fact, Midianite wares overlapped geographically and chronologically with true "Edomite" ceramics, distinctive of the Late Iron Age II (Bienkowski 2001; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 23 n. 2).

The distinguishing feature of the Midianite wares is their painted decoration (Figures 1 & 2). It consists of tones of black, brown, red and yellow applied to a thick buff or cream slip; however, plain wares are also present. The vast majority of these wares are wheel-made, though there are some coil and hand-made types too (Parr et al. 1970: 238; Parr 1992a: 595). They were possibly made on large thrower's wheels, but using a slow moving work force (Kalsbeek and London 1978: 54; London 1999: 72). We owe much of our knowledge on Midianite wares to Rothenberg and Glass' study on the Timna pottery assemblage (1983); their petrographic studies on Midianite pottery from Timna have shown that these wares were not manufactured locally but rather in the Hejaz, most probably in the site of Qurayya (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 111-113; Glass 1988: 100-111; cf. also Slatkine 1974: 108, 110; 1978: 118-122; Kalsbeek and London 1978). Additionally, more recent instrumental neutron activation analyses (INAA) determined an origin in northwestern Arabia -maybe Qurayya- but also probably in southern Jordan (Gunneweg et al. 1991: 249-251).

The ease with which Midianite potters adopted foreign motifs, and perhaps underlying cultural concepts, is another distinctive feature of the Hejazi culture glimpsed during the end of the second millennium BC. There have been a number of propositions regarding as to which were the sources of the elaborated decorative patterns of the Midianite wares. Up until few decades ago, the assumption of some scholars was that the Midianite geometric patterns were reminiscent of the Hurrian pottery from Nuzi (Dayton 1972: 32; Aharoni 1982: 139; Dornemann 1983: 80 n. 5). However, present knowledge indicates that Hurrian pottery was too far away from the Midianite pottery's geographical and chronological distribution to be a direct influence. Scholarly attention has also focused on the influence of the Eastern Mediterranean wares of the Late Bronze Age, especially Bichrome, Minoic, Mycenaean and Cypriot wares (Dayton 1972: 28-30; Bawden and Edens 1988; Knauf 1988: 23; Mendenhall 1992; Sherratt 1994: 73; Parr 1988; 1996; Barako 2000: 516 n. 23). Motives borrowed from the Egyptian ceramics (Dornemann 1983: 80 n. 5; Knauf 1988: 23) and the lotus-flower designs in the Egyptian faience (Kitchen 1997: 131) may be present as well. The idea that Midianite pottery came into the southern Levant from the Hejaz is supported by the depictions of bundles of plants, human figures and camels in these wares, which find parallels in the Arabian rock art (Knauf 1988: 23-24).

Despite the scholarly energies that have been expended in trying to understand Midianite pottery, consensus on many issues eludes scholars. The result is that scholarly literature presents varied and sometimes opposed pictures of Midianite pottery. Two views have emerged in characterizing Midianite wares and their producers.

One line of reasoning stresses the foreign interconnections of Midianite pottery. It was Dayton (1974: 29) the first to relate Midianite pottery with the ancient exchange routes. Dayton drew attention to the similarities between the Midianite decorations and typical Mycenaean motifs and presumed that during the Late Bronze Age a trade route existed between the eastern Mediterranean basin and the Hejaz. In the same vein, Parr contended that Midianite wares were not articles deliberately and methodically traded, but rather items brought and used by their owners, either Midianites resident in Jordan, Canaanites (1982: 129) or Sea Peoples visiting northwestern Arabia or Timna (1996: 216; followed by Rothenberg 1998; 2003). Furthermore, Parr established a connection between this painted pottery and the Egyptian

***Figure 2**: Midianite juglet from southern Jordan (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: Fig. 1)*

interests in the Arabian incense trade (1992a: 595-596; 1992b: 42; see also Jasmin 2006: 146; Sherratt 2003: 49). The extent to which the Midianite wares were connected with areas outside the Levant was pursued by Rothenberg and Glass in their study of the Midianite pottery found in Ramesside Timna (1983). Their reading of the results of the petrographic analyses led them to advance the rather unlikely thesis that this pottery was carried to Timna from the Hejaz by "probably skilled and experienced metallurgists", and that these same people used the vessels in their daily activities in the smelting camps and presented them as offerings in the Temple of Hathor.

For other scholars a central tenet has been the simple manufacture of Midianite pottery, which has deep implications in the characterization of the society that produced them. Thus, Kalsbeek and London (1978: 54) noted the lack of uniformity in both shapes and decorations of the Midianite wares, and concluded that their manufacturers were neither skilled nor professional potters. The lack of standardization led them to infer two further possibilities. Either the wares were made by people with lack of skill (the knowledge had been lost or had been borrowed from another culture) or the pottery was manufactured for special purposes, possibly of cultic nature, by women or priests. A somewhat similar approach was adopted by Knauf (1988: 18), who based on the simple forms and manufacture of the Midianite wares, suggested that production was carried out by families or tribes for their own needs, and further pointed out that the rich, polychrome decorations are not incompatible with this mode of production.

While each of these approaches has merit, the ways in which such contradictory concepts may be used together in models of exchange deserve scrutiny. I will suggest an hypothesis that incorporates both of these views: that of a tribal society exchanging pottery with a powerful social significance.

A Hejazi pottery workshop industry

To date, the only Hejazi site that provides strong evidence for the manufacture of Midianite pottery is the site of Qurayya, but production in other places can not be discarded (cf. below the case of Tayma). Qurayya, about 125 km. south of Aqaba, was visited by survey teams led by Parr in 1968 (Parr et al. 1970) and Ingraham in 1980 (Ingraham et al. 1981), but has not yet been object of excavations. The site consists principally of one isolated outcrop ("Citadel Hill") divided into three sections by two stone walls. To the northeast, are the ruins of a settlement surrounded by a wall; a number of long walls – probably part of a farming system- arise from the base of the citadel and connect with the settlement and small rectangular fields further north. Production of Midianite pottery is directly attested by the discovery, in the northern part of Citadel Hill, of at least six ruined kilns surrounded by discarded/vitrified pottery, burnt clay and clinker, as well as by two caves on the northern face of the citadel, probably used as claystone quarries (Parr et al. 1970: 219-240; Ingraham et al. 1981: 71-73; Parr 1992a).

The vestiges of pottery making at Qurayya were concentrated north of the Citadel Hill, between walls C and D (Parr et al. 1970: 240), suggesting production in an isolated workshop. The location of this workshop, in an open space outside the residential area, may be attributed to a number of factors. First, it can be attributed to the fact that the potters did not belong to the town's community, thus probably being local pastoral groups. However, manufacture by pastoral potters is very unlikely, given that Midianite wares were professionally made and probably needed professional potters and permanent workshops. A more likely explanation is that a location outside the residential area was necessary for safety reasons –most notably, the danger of fire inside the town- and therefore having nothing to do with the social organization of the group.

Although the technology used at Qurayya was very simple, the overall evidence seems to imply production beyond the household level, pointing to what some researchers have called individual workshop industry (Peacock 1981: 188-189; Rice 1987: 184), a mode of production predominant in times of decentralized economy (e.g. the Iron Age I in Palestine) (cf. Wood 1990: 34). Since individual workshop industry is usually associated with poor agricultural areas, pottery making provides a supplement income to the local inhabitants. Furthermore, some villages might be specialized in the production of pottery in order to supply other areas (Peacock 1981: 189; Wood 1990: 37).

More recent excavations at Tayma, 264 km. southeast of Tabuk, have provided probable evidence of local manufacture of pottery. South of the city, in an area known as the "Industrial Site" (*Sinaeyya*) (termed so because the area is in between modern industries), numerous tombs were excavated, some of which revealed, among the buried items, several Midianite wares. According to the excavator, at least one vessel of this type was unbaked, which would indicate that pottery was locally produced at Tayma (Abu Duruk 1990: 16-17). A number of pottery kilns have also been found at many sites in Tayma (ibid.), but so far no relationship with the production of Midianite wares was reported.[1]

The northern Hejaz is not an area well suited for extensive cultivation, and the low precipitation levels precluded any permanent settlement outside the low-lying inland drainage basins or broad valleys that collect the run-off waters subterraneanly, which later find their way to the surface through wells. This seems to be the case of Qurayya and Tayma, two towns situated in oases and with evidence of complex irrigation systems and agricultural fields. Parr (1992b: 42) has coined the term "oasis urbanism" for the settlement pattern that aroused in the northern Hejaz during the late second millennium BC, which was centered on the major oasis centers of Qurayya and Tayma. Although he explains the emergence of these towns as a result of the development of the incense trade coming from southern Arabia, the evidence of Qurayya points rather to a more regional role.

As aforementioned, a workshop industry focused on the production of pottery operated at Qurayya. Workshop industry usually implies allocation of pottery by some exchange means (Rice 1987: 184). I would suggest that the economy of Qurayya (and maybe Tayma) was based, in the local level, on the irrigation farming, and in the regional level on its role as production center (although not probably the only one) of local painted wares for the Hejaz, southern Jordan and the Negev. How much of this surplus was intended for local exchange and how much was deliberately produced for export abroad remains a problematic question.

Distribution Of Midianite Wares In The Southern Levant

An account of the distribution of Midianite wares in Iron Age sites of the southern Levant is provided below (cf. Table 1 and Fig. 3). Much information on the spatial and temporal distribution of these wares and their associations is already available scattered through the literature, while Rothenberg and Glass (1983) have made the most significant contribution. Due to the number of excavations and surveys constantly under way in the region and the amount of unpublished data, the following list is intended as a balanced outline rather than a comprehensive record of the pottery distribution.

Before surveying the Midianite pottery in the Levant, I want to point out some major problems. First and foremost, uncertainty about the dating of the Midianite pottery continues. Less equivocal evidence should be provided, surely, by the dateable Egyptian findings from the Negev. The chronology of Egypt has rarely been influenced by the Levant – mostly the other way around. With few exceptions and few clear archaeological or contextual clues, dating of Midianite wares is done through the chronology of Timna established by Rothenberg. Since the only firm historical peg for the Midianite wares is provided by the Ramesside findings at Timna, it has been tacitly, and sometimes explicitly, assumed that the presence of Midianite pottery in other sites is indication of 13th-12th century BC occupation (cf. Tebes 2004a). Close examination of the evidence, however, reveals likely indications that the Midianite pottery tradition was still alive in the Iron Age II. A concomitant problem lies in the fact that some Midianite sherds might be stray findings, sherds that somehow found their way into later strata. Second, efforts have been made to recognize Midianite pottery from early archaeological reports of the last century, thus providing identifications that in some cases have been successful (cf. below the cases of Tel Far'ah and Gezer). Nonetheless, one must be aware that Midianite wares share many decorative motifs with other polychrome wares. Additionally, not only are Midianite wares identified in base of their decorations but also through petrographic analyses and/or INAA. Hence some hasty identifications have been proved to be incorrect.[2] These problems aside, meticulous study of the sites where Midianite pottery occurs, including those

Figure 3: *Geographical distribution of the Midianite pottery in the southern Levant (Map: J.M. Tebes)*

coming from surveys, presents the most convincing basis for establishing the credibility of any chronology and the social/functional significance of these wares.

Southern Arabah valley. Midianite wares are strongly related to the Egyptian copper mining activities in the southern Arabah. These were principally investigated by the surveys and excavations directed by Rothenberg between 1959 and 1990. At Timna, archaeologists recovered large amounts of Egyptian, Negevite and Midianite pottery, dated, according to contemporary New Kingdom Egyptian findings, to the 13th-12th centuries BC. The chronology of Timna is relatively well attested: in the Temple of Hathor, several Egyptian cartouches were found, from the time of Seti I (c. 1294-1279 BC) to Ramses V (c. 1160-1156 BC); moreover, a rock-drawing of Ramses III is on a cliff next to the Temple (Rothenberg 1999: 149, 170).

Midianite wares appeared predominantly at Timna valley (*Wadi Mene'iyeh*), but also a great deal of sherds were found in locations further south, at Nahal 'Amran (*Wadi 'Amrani*), Nahal Shlomo (*Wadi Masri*), and Jezirat Fara'un (Coral Island) in the Gulf of Aqaba (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 75-81).

At sites in Timna valley, archaeologists discovered large quantities of Midianite wares, most of which were concentrated in the Temple of Hathor (Site 200) and in the several work or residential camps: Sites 2, 30 (Layers 2-3), 34, 3, 13, 14, 15, 185, 419, 198, and 199. Apparently, the distribution of the different pottery types corresponds

Site	Date of Pottery (Century BC)							
	13th	12th	11th	10th	9th	8th	7th	6th
Negev								
Central Negev Highlands				M				
En Hazeva-Givat Hazeva							M?	M?
Gezer		M?						
Jezirat Fara'un	M?	M?						
Har Shani		Mc						
Kadesh-Barnea				M?				
Lachish		Ma?						
Mezad Gozal		M?						
Nahal 'Amram	M	M						
Nahal Shlomo	M	M						
Tel Far'ah (south)	Mab	Mab						
Tel Jedur	Mb							
Tel Masos				Mc?				
Timna valley:								
Work camps	M	M						
Site 2	Mc	Mc						
Site 199	Mbc	Mbc						
Site 200	Mc	Mc						
Uvda Valley		Ma						
Yotvata		M?						
Sinai								
Bir el-'Abd	M							
Southern Jordan								
Amman Airport	Mc							
Amman Citadel	M?							
Barqa el-Hetiye					M			
Ghrareh							M	
Khirbet Duwar	Ms?							
Khirbet en-Nahas			M	M	M			
Khirbet esh-Shedeiyid	Ms?							
Tawilan						M?	M?	M?
Tell el-Kheleifeh						M?	M?	
Um Guwe'ah	Ms?							
Keys:								
M: Midianite pottery		b: burial context		s: survey finding				
a: administrative context		c: cultic context		?: uncertainty of identification or date				

Table 1: *Chronological distribution of the Midianite pottery in southern Levantine sites*

with their function. Midianite wares found in the smelting sites consist mainly of relatively large-size domestic types, especially large bowls –some undecorated- and jugs; their shapes are very primitive, attesting the use of a very slow wheel. All vessels are slipped and often burnished, whereas the decorations are usually in dark colors –black, brown and red-brown. The simplicity of the vessels' morphology contrasts strongly with the sophisticated bichrome decorations on most of these wares, in which the geometrical forms are the most usual motif. A noteworthy feature is that large vessels for storage or transport are completely absent in the Midianite pottery assemblage. On the other hand, most of the wares found in the Timna sanctuaries were small, perhaps used as offerings (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 87-100).

In several of the Timna sites, Midianite pottery consistently appears related to cultic and funerary contexts. The most striking remains were found in Site 200, where a temple dedicated to the cult of the Egyptian goddess Hathor was excavated (Figure 4). There, Midianite wares comprised 25% of the total ceramic assemblage; they consisted of sophisticated vessels, probably brought as votive gifts, as small decorated bowls, jugs and juglets. In the vicinity of this site, on the top of the so-called "King Solomon's Pillars", was located a burial place (Site 199), where one Midianite jug was found. Not far from this burial, about 50 m. to the south, was a small shrine with quantities of Midianite sherds.

Site 2, a work camp with profuse evidences of copper smelting, also provided Midianite pottery. At this site, two cultic structures were uncovered: a small building identified as a "Semitic Shrine" (Area A) and, on the top of a nearby hill, a "High Place" (*bamah*) (Area F) (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 75-81, Pl. III-IV, Figs. 3-8; Rothenberg 1972: 63-179 and figs.; 1988: 93-95 and figs.; 1999).

Tell el-Kheleifeh. Glueck excavated the site between 1938 and 1940, finding a wide variety of wares, among them Midianite, Negevite and Edomite pottery (cf. Glueck

Figure 4: *Cultic context: Temple of Hathor at Timna (Photograph: J.M. Tebes)*

1967). Based on his identification of Tell el-Kheleifeh with Solomon's port Ezion-Geber, Glueck dated the earliest occupational level and their ceramics to the 10th century BC. The next important work on Tell el-Kheleifeh was carried out more recently by Pratico, who made a reappraisal based on the archaeological evidence discovered by Glueck. Pratico identified two main occupations in the site: a casemate wall associated with a four-room structure, followed by an offsets/insets settlement related to the four-room building (Pratico 1985; 1993). Pratico's conclusions contradicted in part the dates offered by Glueck, since the former has shown that the wheel-made pottery actually belongs to the eighth-early sixth centuries BC (Pratico 1993: 13, Table 1). To complicate matters, a recent analysis of the earlier casemate structure and the four-room building has not found any pottery earlier than the seventh century or later than the sixth century BC (Mussell 2000).

Glueck published as "Edomite" six pottery sherds found in an uncertain stratigraphic context (Glueck 1967: Figs. 1:2 [5:1], 4:3-5). Pratico considered these wares to belong to the Midianite pottery group because of their fabrics and geometric motifs (Pratico 1993: 43, 47, 49).[3]

Yotvata ('Ain el-Ghadian). At this site, an irregular casemate fortress was surveyed by Glueck and Rothenberg in the 1950s, and excavated by Meshel since 1974. The findings in the fortress, still unpublished, include several fragments of Midianite pottery, as well as Negevite wares. In view of the occurrence of Midianite pottery, Meshel prefers an Iron I date for this casemate fortress (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 74; Meshel 1993: 1518; Kalsbeek and London 1978: Fig. 2a-b).

Har Shani. A group of thirteen open-air shrines were surveyed at the foot of Har Shani, 17 km. N-NW of Eilat, of which one (Har Shani X) was excavated. The findings associated with these structures range from the Chalcolithic to the Roman-Byzantine periods. The three pottery types common in Timna were found (Egyptian, Negevite and Midianite wares), along with the fragment of an Egyptian *ushabti* figurine (Avner 1982; 1984: 124; 2002: 107, 111, Fig. 5:121.2)

Uvda valley (Wadi 'Uqfi). Surveys in the late 1970s directed by Avner collected Midianite pottery sherds in the eastern Uvda Valley (Site 87a), along with Egyptian and Negevite pottery (Avner 1979). At Site 87a there is a "four-room building", structure that according to Avner most probably served as an administrative center for the tent camps spread on the area. The population of the tent camps, which probably were not nomads, supplied the cereal grains for the workers in Timna. In several threshing floors and on the cultivated surface surveyors found several pottery sherds of the types present in Timna, among other types and periods (U. Avner, pers. comm., December 2004). Occasionally Midianite sherds were collected at road trails, such as Ma'aleh Shaharut (Avner 2002: Fig. 6:3.2). These findings illuminate the connection between Uvda and Timna, which are less than one day walk away of each other.

Central Negev Highlands. Isolated findings of Midianite sherds originated in unstratified assemblages are reported in some of the 10th century BC sites of the central Negev Highlands (Cohen and Cohen-Amin 2004: 8*, 141; e.g. one body sherd from Har Romem (Borot Loz): ibid., 113, Fig. 80.1). Some scholars have argued that the presence of Midianite pottery in the central Negev Highlands may hint that activity in the area began during the Late Iron I (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006: 20), but the dates and composition of these few wares are suspect.

Kadesh-Barnea ('Ain el-Qudeirat). Excavations in Kadesh-Barnea (1956: Dothan; 1976-1982: Cohen) uncovered the remains of three superimposed fortresses belonging to the Iron Age. Cohen's excavations unearthed Midianite pottery in the site, which is in process of publication. This pottery was found in the Early Fortress (late 10th century BC); its identification is based on decoration, whereas petrographic analyses are still lacking. The local Midianite pottery assemblage consists of one part of a decorated jug, an incomplete bowl, and lots of sherds. Most of them are closed forms, except for the jug and bowl. All are decorated on a pinkish slip (H. Greenberg, pers. comm., January 2005).

Radiocarbon analyses from the Early Fortress have provided a surprisingly early date (11th century BC) (Bruins 1986: 112-116; Bruins and van der Plicht 2005: 352). Given that the radiocarbon sample seems to be stratigraphically connected with the destruction of the Early Fortress, this raises the question of whether the construction of the fortress can be dated to the Late Bronze Age or the beginnings of the Iron Age. Bearing in mind the Timna's findings, this date would be more congruent with the Midianite pottery found in the Early Fortress, but completely disagrees with the 10th century BC date proposed by the excavators.

'En Hazeva ('Ain Husb) - Givat Hazeva (Givat Haparsa). Under the direction of Cohen and Yisrael, 'En Hazeva was excavated in 1972 and later on since 1987 (Cohen and Yisrael 1995a; 1995b), although the final report is still unpublished. According to the preliminary reports, the site consists of a series of superimposed fortresses, of which the

earliest one possibly dates to the 10th century BC. The level that is of interest here is Stratum IV (seventh-sixth centuries BC), where Late Iron II pottery was found in two places: a *favissa* (a cultic pit) north of the fortress' northern wall; and deposits inside the fortress (Cohen and Yisrael 1995b: 23-27). The fills in the fortress area provided Edomite and Negevite pottery. One of the excavators, Yisrael, has also reported two possible Midianite pottery sherds from disturbed fills inside the fortress (pers. comm., January 2005). One sherd is red or pinkish slipped, burnished, and decorated in black, white, and brown. The other one is white slipped, with brown decoration (visual examination, Israel Museum, Jerusalem).

At Givat Hazeva, a nearby hill to the northwest, the same team exposed a site that seems to be chronologically contemporaneous to Stratum IV of 'En Hazeva (Cohen and Yisrael 1983). The site consists of three main areas, of which two are important for our purposes. One cultic area, where Edomite pottery -similar to the cultic wares found in the above-referred *favissa*- has been found. In addition, one smelting area with Edomite pottery and one possible Midianite pottery sherd (pinkish slip, decoration in black and red; visual examination, Israel Museum). The pottery at Givat Hazeva has been dated to the seventh-sixth centuries BC (Y. Yisrael and S. Ben-Arieh, pers. comm., January 2005).[4]

Mezad Gozal (Khirbet Umm Zoghal). Rothenberg's survey (1957) and Aharoni's excavations (1964) investigated Mezad Gozal, a small fort located on the southwestern shores of the Dead Sea. Initially Aharoni identified the site as an "Edomite" fort of the 11th-10th centuries BC (Aharoni 1962; 1965). Rothenberg recovered very few Midianite sherds in the site and, based on the dates of Timna, concluded that the fort dates to the 12th century BC (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 73-74). Yet the "Edomite" or "Midianite" character of the fort of Mezad Gozal seems to be at odds with the Hellenistic/Early Roman-type architecture of the site and the presence of pottery from that period. Because of these factors, Mezad Gozal has been identified quite recently as a Nabatean roadsite fort (Hirschfeld 2006: 167-169).

Tel Masos (Khirbet el-Meshash). According to the excavators, the Iron Age occupation at Tel Masos consists of three strata: Stratum III (late 13th-middle 12th centuries BC), II (late 12th-second half 11th centuries BC) and I (late 11th-early 10th centuries BC) (see Tebes 2003). This dating may well be correct, but it is not beyond dispute. More recent studies have lowered the date of the site, dating Stratum II to the 10th century BC (e.g. Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004: 222-223). Eight Midianite sherds, probably part of a single vessel, were found in House 314 (Area H/Stratum II) along with other imported pottery, such as Phoenician and Egyptian wares and imitations of Mycenaean pottery (Fritz 1983: 87, Pl. 142:10, 148:11). It has been suggested that the Midianite wares should be assigned the earliest layer, i.e. Stratum III (e.g. Yannai 1996: 144-145).

Evidence indicates that in House 314 functioned a workshop for working copper. It may have been connected to a ritual function, as has been suggested by the appearance of four "figurines", that is to say, natural molded stones resembling human figures, very similar to the offerings found in the Temple of Hathor of Timna, along with other cultic wares (Fritz and Wittstock 1983: 40-41).

Tell Jedur. In a small burial cave at Tell Jedur, near Hebron, a small Midianite round bowl with flaring rim and flat base was found among the burial offerings. An early 14th to late 13th century BC date for this tomb seems appropriate (Ben-Arieh 1981: 120, 81*, Pl. 5:1; 1993).

Tel Far'ah (south). Decorated sherds found by Petrie's excavations at this site during 1928-1929 (Starkey and Harding 1932: Pl. LXIII:42, 52-56) have been found similar to Midianite wares because of their decorations (Parr et al. 1970: 239; Dayton 1972: 28; Parr 1982: 128) and this identification has been confirmed through petrographic analyses (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 82). These were found in Building YR, termed the "Governor's Residency" by Petrie, on the cobbled courtyard YX and beneath its pavement, as well as in pit ZZW that cut the "Residency" (Starkey and Harding 1932: 28-29; Yannai 2002: 372-374). This building is at present dated to the 13th-12th centuries BC (Figure 5). Buildings known as "Governor's Residencies" are architectural structures that are usually associated with managerial functions of the Egyptian rule in Canaan (Oren 1984).

Rothenberg and Glass (1983: 82) have added to this corpus a complete Midianite juglet from Tomb 542, identified through petrographic analyses. Tomb 542 (Figure 6) is one of Petrie's "tombs of the Philistine Lords", which included Egyptian and Philistine ceramics as well as several prestige items (cf. Bloch-Smith 1992: 175). Additionally, Dothan

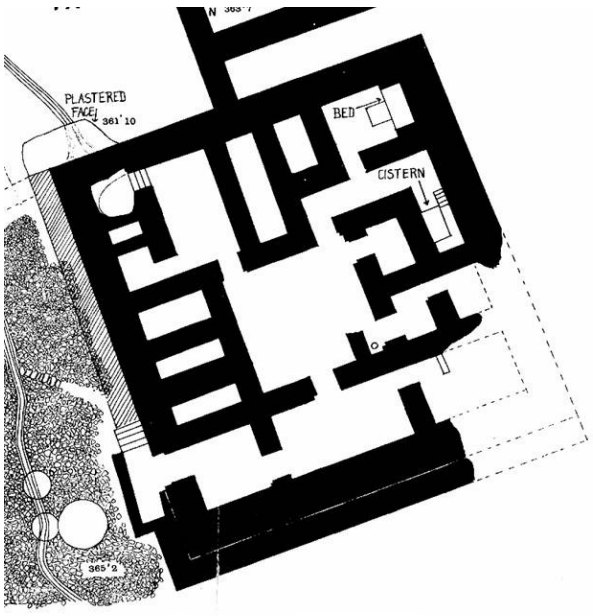

Figure 5: *Administrative building: Plan of the "Governor's Residence" at Tel Far'ah (south) (Starkey and Harding 1932: LXIX)*

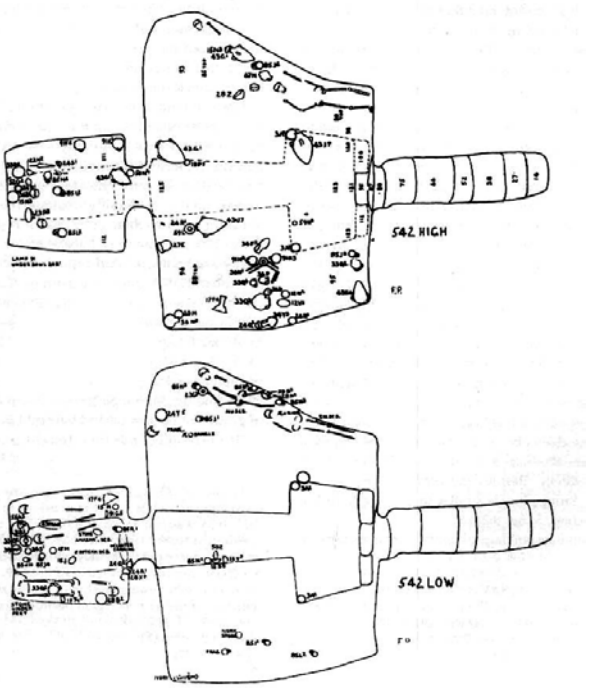

Figure 6: *Mortuary structure: Tomb 542 at Tel Far'ah (south) (Dothan 1982: Fig. 1)*

(1982: 28) suggested that a sherd from the area of Cemetery 900 also belongs to the Midianite pottery corpus, although based solely on its decorative patterns.

Lachish (Tel ed-Duweir). The excavations directed by Ussishkin (1973-1987), which recently reached the stage of final publication (Ussishkin 2004a), found three Midianite painted sherds in the foundation fills of Judaean Palace B (Level IV), which contains debris removed mostly from Levels VII, VI and V (Singer-Avitz 2004: 1280, Figs. 20.55-56). The builders of this palace-fort apparently used the remains of the Late Bronze acropolis as constructional fill for the structure's foundations. The Midianite sherds were uncovered in loci adjacent to the Enclosure Wall of Levels IV-III (eastern part of Area S), opposite the southwestern corner of Palace B, along with Early, Middle and Late Bronze pottery (Barkay and Ussishkin 2004: 473, 485). In view of the Ramesside context in which the Midianite wares were found at Timna, the Lachish Midianite sherds were attributed to Level VI (c. 1200-1150/1130 BC) (Singer-Avitz 2004: 1285). Petrographic analyses carried out on three of these sherds showed the same provenance than the Timna pottery assemblage, namely, the Hejaz (Goren and Halperin 2004: 2558-2559, Table 36.4:49-51).

It is not completely clear where the constructional fill of the Judaean palace-fort, which was taken from mound debris, came from. Ussishkin has pointed out that it may have originated in the Late Bronze acropolis, which would have risen to the east of the palace-fort (Area D) (Ussishkin 2004c: 1243). Unfortunately, the remains of Area D were in poor state of preservation. However, it can be said that during the Late Bronze Age (Level VI) this area was occupied by the acropolis of the Canaanite city, which according to some findings possibly included an Egyptian administrative center of the time of the 20th Dynasty (Ussishkin 2004b: 304-305). Since no other recognizable architectural remains were found in Area D/Level VI, I would suggest that the Midianite wares' original deposition area was this administrative quarter.

Gezer (Tell Jezer). During the first excavations at Gezer directed by Macalister (1902-1909), a bichrome bowl with flat base was found (Macalister 1912: II: 183; III: 10, Pl. CLXI:16). Brandl has classified this vessel as Midianite ware (Brandl 1984). Macalister did not provide the exact find-spot of this vessel, but it was published among the pottery of his "Third Semitic Period" (1400-1000 BC) (1912: 131).

Bir el-'Abd. One of the silos at Bir el-'Abd in northern Sinai, a New Kingdom Egyptian fortress in the "Way of Horus" dated to the 19th-20th Dynasties, yielded three Midianite sherds (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 83).

Khirbet en-Nahas. This important site, located in Faynan (the richest copper area in the southern Levant), is ubiquitous in Midianite pottery findings. In 1931 a survey conducted by Horsfield, Head and Kirkbride found a large decorated bowl in the site (Glueck 1967: 12-13, Fig. 2:3), subsequently identified as Midianite ware by Rothenberg and Glass (1983: 85).

Recent excavations at Khirbet en-Nahas directed by Levy have provided a significant number of Midianite wares, found both in the fortress' western gate complex (Area A) and in a nearby metal-working building (Area S) (Levy et al. 2004: 875-876, Fig. 6). Due to the limited exposure of the fortress, the current understanding of the site's strata and their relationships is somewhat limited. Scholarly controversy raged about the date of the occupation in the site. Calibrated C14 dates indicate occupation in the 10th-ninth centuries BC in Area A, and during the 11th-early ninth centuries BC in Area S (ibid., Table 1). Findings of Midianite and Negevite pottery led Levy to suggest earlier dates for the occupation of the site, as early as the 12th century BC (Levy et al. 2005). However, findings of Midianite pottery in late contexts at other sites would make Levy's amendments unnecessary (van der Steen and Bienkowski 2006: 15).

Barqa el-Hetiye. At Barqa el-Hetiye, another site in the Faynan area, Midianite pottery was found both in House 2 and in a nearby work platform. The excavator, Fritz, based on comparisons with the Midianite pottery from Tel Masos, suggested a 11th century BC date for these wares (Fritz 1994: 144-145, Fig. 12, Pl. 7-8; 2002: 96-98, Fig. 3).[5] However, this site was later radiocarbon dated to the ninth century BC (Hauptmann 2000: 66 Table 7).

Ghrareh. Hart's excavations found one small Midianite sherd in a courtyard house of Area A. The Iron Age occupation of the site appears to be a single period; local pottery is standard Edomite, dated to the seventh-sixth centuries BC (Hart 1989: 18, Pl. 25:4).

Tawilan. Glueck published several decorated wares from his survey at Tawilan (Glueck 1967: 13), and one sherd (ibid.: Fig. 2:1) appears to be Midianite ware (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 84). Bennett's excavations at Tawilan (1968-1970) found one sherd of a small Midianite painted jug in Area I (late eighth-sixth centuries BC) (Hart 1995: 60).

Amman Airport structure. Following the discovery in 1955 of a Late Bronze Age structure at the Amman Airport, rescue excavations were carried out by Saleh. The findings were studied in 1965 by Hankey, who reported one Midianite bowl and sherds from other bowls (Hankey 1995: 182, Fig. 11, Pl. 14:4). During the subsequent excavations in 1966, Hennesy found more Midianite sherds (Parr et al. 1970: 239 n. 56). Midianite pottery was only a minimum part (0,1%) of the rich material assemblage, which included local items and goods from Egypt, Greece, Syro-Mesopotamia, Crete and Cyprus (Mumford 2002). This building was dated to the end of the 14th and beginnings of the 13th centuries BC. It is commonly designated a temple, although it lacked specific cultic items; for some scholars it was, rather, a mortuary installation (Burdajewicz 1993: 1246).

Amman Citadel (Jebel Qal'ah). In 1976, Bennett conducted excavations at the Amman Citadel, finding the neck of a jug that subsequently Kalsbeek and London identified as Midianite ware (1978: 47). Bennett's excavations were carried out at the southwestern slope of the Citadel, and no Iron Age architectural remains were reported in this dig season (Bennett and Northedge 1977-1978; Northedge 1992).

Surveys in southern Jordan. Material from surveys supplements the repertoire of Midianite wares in southern Jordanian sites. All of these wares were found without any stratigraphical context, and given the uncertainties regarding the Iron I period in Edom, it is doubtful whether they belong to the Iron I or Iron II periods. Glueck's surveys provided Midianite pottery from Khirbet esh-Shedeiyid (one body sherd of a juglet) (Glueck 1967: 15, Fig. 2:2) and Khirbet Duwar (one sherd) (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 83-85; Finkelstein 1992b: 161-163; 1995: 131). Jobling's survey between Aqaba and Ma'an found one Midianite sherd, probably the base of a small bowl, at Um Guwe'ah in the Wadi Rumman (Jobling 1981: 110, Pl. XXXI).

A model of Early Iron Age regional exchange

So in the area taken as a whole there lived a mixed population, consisting of local and Hejazi groups, who played an important role in the circulation of decorated pottery. This, however, is still a static picture that tells us nothing of the means by which these goods reached its users in the southern Levant.

The following is an interpretation of data that diverges in diverse points from traditional views. I believe that the study of the circulation of Midianite wares should consider the archaeological data as much as current anthropological models about the circulation of goods.

Local groups and circulation of Midianite wares

From the overview presented in the previous section it is clear that Midianite wares were spread over a wide area, which included Edom, central Jordan, the Negev and southern Palestine. Quantitatively, both Timna and Faynan possess the highest concentration of wares; by contrast, outside these areas the number of vessels that have been found is minimal. Additionally, at northwestern Arabia (the homeland of the Midianite pottery) Midianite wares are found in large numbers in several local sites that have not been excavated (not published here; cf. Rothenberg and Glass 1983; Knauf 1988: 15-17).

The wide distribution of Midianite pottery may be the result of various processes. Certainly, Midianite wares were not used as containers for commodities, for most of them seem to be tablewares and, to a lesser extent, cooking pots. However, it would be misleading to conclude that they were not transported by nomads,[6] since their wide distribution can only be explained as an outcome of movements of people. Nomadic life entails a great deal of hanging around; it is conceivable that mobile peoples carried these wares with them from one site to the other and left their personal ceramic possessions in the places that they visited. The introduction of Midianite wares into the southern Levant may be attributed to people straddling the interface between the northern Hejaz, Edom and the Negev. Whereas the evidence found in Qurayya seems to point to pottery production by the local villagers, the appearance of non-locally made Midianite wares in the southern Levant points to movements of people and/or exchange. The clustering of pottery findings in Timna may be evidence that Hejazi people lived in this area; on the other hand, the paucity of findings in southern Palestine and central Jordan seems to be indication of non-permanent contacts with the Hejaz, possibly through mobile pastoral groups. Therefore, I would suggest that the main agents of distribution of these wares in the southern Levant were a combination of Hejazi villagers and pastoralists that moved between the Hejaz, Edom and the Negev, carrying and exchanging their local painted wares (cf. Tebes 2004b). Thus, Rothenberg and Glass' proposal that the Midianite potters travelled to Timna to make use of their own wares seems to be redundant. It was the consumers, not the producers, who circulated the Midianite wares over such a wide area.

The social significance of Midianite wares

This brings us into a problematic area since we need to assess not only the spatial distribution of the Midianite wares but also to study the contexts in which these were discovered. The admittedly meagre evidence from sites in Palestine and Jordan suggests that the context of discovery is of particular significance. The occurrence of

these objects in unusual, non-domestic contexts is particularly conspicuous and demands explanation. Since some Midianite wares appear in cultic contexts, administrative buildings and burial offerings, they may have been seen as "exotic" imports (Knauf 1988: 20), probably due to their rich polychrome decorations, cultic character and/or imported nature. In this light, the presence of Midianite wares in these contexts would imply that these goods were valued for their social significance as well as their functional content. While this conclusion remains unexamined in detail, there are encouraging reasons to think that this linkage has some merit.

Let me sketch such a linkage. As aforementioned, Midianite wares have been found in or in the vicinity of architectural structures identified as shrines or temples. At Timna, Midianite wares are a prominent feature of the Temple of Hathor (Site 200), the "Semitic Shrine" and "High Place" (both in Site 2), and the small shrine of Site 199. In addition, they also have been unearthed in the open-air sanctuaries of Har Shani, the Amman Airport structure (a temple or mortuary installation), and House 314 at Tel Masos (cultic context?) The most plausible reason for the deposition of Midianite wares as votives is in connection with the cult of an other-worldly power. Gifts made to the gods establish a relation of reciprocity in which the return is uncertain in time and nature (Osborne 2004: 2-4). Except for the offerings made in the Temple of Hathor, the question of whom these objects were dedicated to is tantalizingly vague. Votive offerings to the goddess Hathor made at temples in Egypt, Serabit el-Khadem in Sinai, and Timna, usually consisted of broken or pierced objects, such as pottery and faience. Hathor was a goddess that was connected with the caves of the netherworld and of the mines. The ritual of breaking offerings was performed to invoke her help and guidance in the search for turquoise and copper ores (Kertesz 1976).

Certainly, production of ceramics in contemporary societies, which bears many resemblances to the ancient manufacture of metals, is known to be rich in ritual meaning (Stark 2003: 204). Unfortunately, lack of research in the only known workshop of Midianite wares (Qurayya) prevents any conclusion about the symbolic significance of their production.

Midianite wares would have very possibly functioned as burial offerings at Tel Far'ah (south) (Tomb 542), Tell Jedur, and Timna's Site 199. Again, we seem to be dealing with a significant, valuable product. I would suggest that another example of Midianite pottery used as burial offering can be found at the Hejazi site of Tayma. Recent excavations at several collective tombs located in the "Industrial Site" at Tayma revealed several Midianites wares along with two Egyptian scarabs, terracotta figurines, metal bracelets, rings and bead types (Abu Duruk 1990: 15-18). Except probably for Tomb 542 at Tel Far'ah, all of these mortuary structures were not large nor very elaborated, and did not possess prestige goods, features that are normally indicative of burials belonging to people of high social status (cf. discussion in Pearson 2000: 72-94). Therefore, I would suggest that the Midianite wares deposited in these burial contexts were not used as markers of social distinction. This would imply that the people that included Midianite wares in their funeral rituals did not belong to the local elites, but to more average social groups.

Midianite pottery is also a feature of structures or areas testifying a certain level of wealth and high status. This is the case of the "Governor's Residency" at Tel Far'ah (south) and probably Area D/Level VI (the Canaanite acropolis) at Lachish, which have been associated with administrative functions. At Tel Far'ah and Lachish, the ruling elite did make use of Midianite pottery, albeit not to the same degree as with other wares, such as Mycenaean and Egyptian pottery. Less compelling evidence that nevertheless warrants mentioning is represented by Uvda valley's Site 87a, which could have functioned as an administrative building. The presence of Midianite wares in these contexts suggests that they were used as tablewares. Then a question arises as to whether the use of Midianite tablewares had a special meaning in food consumption. Ethnographic research has demonstrated that food consumption can be used to establish social bonds of solidarity between peers, or to uphold unequal relations of status and power (van der Veen 2003: 413-414). The archaeological and textual record is mute on these meanings, yet due to the utilization of Midianite wares as cultic votives and burial offerings, their use for signaling social relations should not be ruled out. Some caution must be expressed, however, for two reasons. The first is the lack of data concerning the specific context in which the Midianite wares were found in these administrative areas. The second is intercultural barriers: consumers' use of tablewares can be very different from the behavioral patterns that are predominant in the society that produced them (e.g. Yassur-Landau 2005: 171).

It would be premature to say what defining factor in the distribution in these unusual contexts might be, but the fact that these painted wares were considered to have a certain degree of significance would point to exchange mechanisms of some kind (gift-exchange or trade). I would propose that the Midianite wares were items that were exchanged, and that consequently they should be considered as commodities. With Appadurai, I consider that a commodity is "any thing intended for exchange" (2003: 9). Appadurai has made a case of treating gift exchange and commodity exchange in preindustrial, nonmonetary societies, as not being fundamentally contrasting nor mutually exclusive (2003: 18-22). For Midianite wares to be considered commodities, they should have possessed some intrinsic values worth of acquisition. The recurrent presence of Midianite wares in special, non-domestic archaeological contexts is understandable given the symbolic content these wares apparently possessed. In stateless societies, the demand for ordinary, domestic goods may have a social meaning that can provide the main motivation for the development and viability of trade networks.

The proposed model of Early Iron exchange draws much of its theoretical background from Smith's (1999) important contribution on the existence of trade networks in premodern, stateless societies. The assumption of this author is that the need for ordinary goods with symbolic significance is an incentive for the development and success of regional trade patterns because production of those items by households was aimed at meeting both functional and social requirements. The manufacture of some of these goods for exchange provided participation in a wider social sphere, maintaining long-distance kinship networks and in doing so generating a social cohesion in the absence of a bureaucratic state apparatus. This is because, without political integration, the necessary information and information-transfer points can also be provided by other agencies, such as merchant groups, religious institutions and kin-based networks (Smith 1999: 109-112). More specifically, redistribution of pottery has been used, internally, to forge or maintain bonds of loyalty with clients and factions, and externally, to appease commercial partners and in doing so keeping open the commercial roads (e.g. Navajas 2006).

The presence, in the Negev and southern Jordan, of peoples that exchanged ordinary goods with symbolic significance such as Midianite decorated wares and other goods (most notably, copper items; cf. Tebes 2005), would naturally have created not only an exchange network of regional significance, but also a social mechanism to create and maintain social bonds within the broader sphere of kin relationships.

The overview of the evidence indicates that Midianite pottery was used by different social groups in the southern Levant. It was a common item in the pastoral and semi-pastoral contexts of the Hejaz, southern Arabah and Faynan. It was also used, albeit in far lower numbers, by the urban communities of southern Palestine and central Jordan. It is fairly significant that in southern Palestine and central Jordan Midianite pottery is usually found associated with other imported ceramics, such as Egyptian, Mycenaean, Cypriot, Philistine and Phoenician wares, pottery types that similarly possessed a high degree of cultural significance (e.g. Hankey 1981; Bloch-Smith 1992: 78-81; van Wijngaarden 2002: 109-124). This complexity in the pattern of distribution indicates that the social significance of Midianite pottery was not the same everywhere. However, the comparatively wide use by urban groups of wares originated in northwestern Arabia and brought by pastoralists indicates that there was not an impassable cultural barrier between urban and rural populations.

Gift-exchange and trade of Midianite wares

Much evidence points to the likelihood that the distribution of Midianite wares operated some kind of exchange mechanisms. Economic anthropology and ethnography have traditionally defined two ideal ways by which items can be exchanged, namely, reciprocity and trade (Polanyi 1957: 250; Dalton 1975: 91-94; Hodder 1978c: 200-211). Reciprocity and exchange are not easy to set apart. The mere circulation of goods does not tell us anything about the economic mechanisms implicated. A major problem is that where the upholding of socially equitable relationships between partners is considered vitally important, and where the incentive of giving and returning is strong, the spatial distribution of goods often gives the appearance as if market forces are operating (Hodder 1978b: 165-166). With respect to trade, supply-and-demand price mechanisms may have been involved in the distribution of Midianite decorated pottery in the southern Levant. However, ethnographic researches have made an important point in revealing how the material profit gained from an exchange is frequently less important than the social and symbolic relationships involved. Gift-exchange, in its numerous forms, stresses the friendly relationships between partners, as expressed in the obligation to give, receive and repay, very often in symbolically significant contexts (feasts, public meetings, ceremonial presentations, etc.), with a noticeable lack of concern for profit (Polanyi 1975: 149; Hodder 1978c: 200-202). Assuming that the mobility of the Negev pastoralists facilitated, if not encouraged, partnerships between groups, gift-exchange is likely to have occurred. There is little doubt that the significant status of decorated pottery and other goods facilitated their use as gift-exchange goods.

A number of exchange models have been described by Renfrew (1975: 41-43), and our artifactual analysis may indicate whether any or perhaps several of these apply to the exchange network of Midianite pottery. I will suggest three modes of movement of goods for the Negev and southern Jordan, which are not mutually exclusive. First, goods could have been transported by one group from the source areas to the consumers in southern Palestine and Jordan ("direct access"). Second, middlemen could have taken the goods from the producers and exchanged them with the consumers ("middleman trading"). Third, goods could have traveled across successive groups and through successive exchanges ("down-the-line trade").

Any discussion of the movements of wares in the Iron Age must consider the logistics of transport at that time. During the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, pastoralism was primarily based on sheep and goat breeding; the most common means of land transportation was the donkey (*equus asinus*) (Grigson 1995: 250, 258). There has been a lot of dispute concerning when the camel (*camelus dromedarius*) began to be used as beast of burden in the Near East (cf., for discussion and references, Retsö 1991; Zarins 1992). The classical viewpoint is Albright's (e.g. 1970), who argued for a c. 1300 BC date for the domestication of the camel in Arabia. Albright also defended that transport by the Midianite caravans was carried out mainly by donkeys, and that the references to the use of camels in the Hebrew Bible were anachronistic in date (1970: 205). It has been postulated that the domestication of the camel allowed control over areas and markets previously impenetrable, which consequently made pastoral societ-

ies more independent in front of peasant villagers (Knauf 1992: 635; Köhler-Rollefson 1993). Although there are some indications that the camel was used as early as the Late Bronze Age (Ripinski 1975; Bulliet 1990: 58-64; Stone 1992), textual and pictorial evidence from Syria and Assyria shows that it was not utilized significantly as beast of burden until the ninth century BC (Bulliet 1990: 77-86; Retsö 1991: 205; 2003: 126-127; Mitchell 2000), and for that reason desert routes could not have been very long before that time.

Therefore, there is no compelling reason to resort to models of extensive movements of people across the Negev and southern Jordan (e.g. Renfrew's models of "direct access" and "middleman trading"). These patterns of long-distance movements do not seem to correspond well with the nature of pastoralism in the Early Iron Age. We are not dealing with the kind of caravan trade carried out by specialized middlemen that was characteristic of later periods.

Renfrew's third mode, down-the-line exchange, seems more attractive. Not only does it not need to account for extensive movements of people; it also may operate with or without market-price mechanisms. Reciprocal exchange has important implications in the distribution of goods, as the chain of gift-exchanges may move artifacts far beyond the original contexts, crossing over different social, cultural and political boundaries (Hodder 1978c: 203-204). I would argue that an important part of the Midianite wares (and maybe the Arabah copper) that found their way into Palestine and Jordan did so by down-the-line exchanges between pastoral groups and between pastoral groups and villagers.[7]

It is not clear from the distribution of the items whether these exchanges were reciprocal or trade mechanisms; as aforesaid, the resultant archaeological records can be very similar. In fact, it can be the case that both exchange types were present at the same time. This set of exchanges may have operated through the territories controlled by the local tribes, clans and/or chieftains, a picture not very different of the complex, decentralized trade of the Late Iron Age II (Tebes 2006). A significant difference, however, resides in the fact that the Early Iron exchange network consisted of relatively short local routes. Its importance was therefore regional, restricted to the Negev and southern Jordan areas. Beyond the radius of the Negev/southern Jordan down-the-line interactions, goods were circulated through the chain of villages and towns of southern Palestine and central Jordan, in which in all likelihood other modes of exchange were in operation.

Conclusion

The development of the Midianite pottery tradition in late second millennium Hejaz has long been viewed as the product of impinging external influences, specifically, the Egyptian imperialism and the introduction of Mediterranean trade items, as well as the ideological impact of cultural interactions with these older civilizations. The consequences of such long-distance contacts included the development of a local pottery industry, the establishment of interregional exchange networks and the emergence of towns. While the importance of external influences can not be discounted, what has been lacking heretofore is an understanding of why the Hejazi communities were so responsive to external demands that necessitated higher labor inputs in the sphere of economic production. This paper has attempted to show how a foreign demand for symbolically-laden painted wares triggered the development of a phase of "oasis urbanism" in this periphery relatively lacking of resources.

To what extent the Early Iron Age exchange of Midianite wares continued in the Iron Age II is not clear. It seems that the exchange that had hitherto taken place came to a standstill, or at least their distribution networks seem to have diminished in volume and geographic scope as well. Though not well attested, the end of the phase of "oasis urbanism" in the Hejaz may have depleted the local production of pottery. Concurrently, the development of new indigenous pottery traditions in the southern Levant during the Iron Age II (slipped, burnished, and subsequent ware types; cf. London 1999: 88-96) may have decreased the demand for Hejazi decorated wares. The major problem still remains that much of this picture depends on chronological factors that, as we have seen, are not properly understood.

The data reviewed in this study have important ramifications in the debate on the origin of the Iron Age exchange networks, the nature of the goods traded, and the peoples that carried them. In discussing the preceding issue, I have attempted not to describe a number of attributes of exchange networks that I think could hypothetically have occurred in the past. But I consider that the archaeological material does indeed suggest the existence of reciprocity and trade mechanisms in the Early Iron Age Hejaz, Negev and southern Jordan. To be sure, I do not wish to argue that the specific attributes of networks I have emphasized taken individually or together are sufficient. There is much need for experimentation and debate before a definitive approach will be devised.

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Endnotes

1. Since 2004 Tayma has been excavated by the Saudi Deputy Ministry of Education, Riyadh, and the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin. Although the final report from this excavation has not yet come to light, preliminary reports have informed about sherds of polychrome painted pottery found in one building (Area A) and in several tombs located between the outer and inner wall and in Area S. These sherds, which are similar to those found in the "Industrial Site", have been dated from the late second millennium to the early first millennium BC. The correct identification of these pottery sherds should wait for the final report of the Saudi-German dig; see <http://www.dainst.org/index.php?id=3258&sessionLanguage=en>
2. The issue is well illustrated by the painted pottery found by Petrie's excavations at Tell el-'Ajjul, identified as Midianite ware by Parr et al. (1970: 239) and Dayton (1972: 28), but subsequently recognized as "Chocolate-on-White" ware by Rothenberg and Glass (1983: 86).
3. Rothenberg, based on the Timna's findings, speculates that the occurrence of Midianite pottery in Tell el-Kheleifeh attests occupation in the Iron I (Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 76), but that would be going too far due to the few sherds that were recovered in the site.
4. The possible findings of Midianite pottery at 'En Hazeva and Givat Hazeva raise several questions. Although these wares have been identified as Midianite pottery because of their decorations, until now no petrographic analyses have been carried out on them. Also, caution should be expressed due to the limited number of sherds that have been unearthed, and the resemblance between some of the Midianite decorative patterns with those of the Edomite painted pottery.
5. In the face of the erstwhile low dating, Rothenberg (1998: 203) suggested that the Midianite pottery from Barqa el-Hetiye came from an unexcavated stratum below House 2.
6. As, e.g., Knauf (1983: 151) and Herr (1999: 73) suppose.
7. The resultant distribution of down-the-line transactions is a gradual fall-off in the quantity of goods in relation to the distance from the supply zone (Renfrew 1975: Fig. 11; 1977: Fig. 4.a). However, we have to acknowledge one weakness in our interpretation of the data, the surviving evidence is very unevenly distributed. The large amount of Midianite pottery found at Timna outnumbers the quantity of items found elsewhere in southern Palestine and Jordan to the extent that it is currently impossible to calculate any statistically meaningful numerical proportion to the spatial allocation of goods.

The Theology and History of the Exodus: The State of the Question

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Abstract: The archaeological record as we currently understand it does not confirm the circumstances and date for the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Indeed it does not unequivocally indicate that it happened at all. It is argued that while it may not matter that the precise details of the event are unknown to us, it is important to accept that the event did actually happen.

The Exodus is the early apex of the salvation history of the Old Testament. The Exodus fueled Israel's self-identity as the chosen people of God. It was part of the complex of redemptive events that transformed them from a family of God to a nation of God. The Exodus was a salvation event that was epitomized by the crossing of the *Yam Suph*, commonly, but probably incorrectly, translated Red Sea (Exod. 14-15). This Sea crossing not only provided rescue for threatened Israel but also simultaneously judged her enemies. The special status of this rescue is underlined by the fact that Moses and his people found themselves in an impossible situation with the Sea on one side and an embarrassed and angry Pharaoh and his elite chariot troops on the other. There was no human avenue of escape. They were cut off, but God did the impossible, opened the Sea and allowed them to escape. And then he closed the Sea to execute judgment on their enemies. The Exodus gave Israel its self-identity. From such a description we can recognize that it is hard to underestimate the importance of the Exodus event. But did it happen and does it matter whether or not it happened?

We begin with an assessment of the current state of the historical evidence in regard to the Exodus. We must admit that there is no direct evidence outside of the Bible for the Exodus. There is no mention of Israel or Moses in Egyptian sources for instance. Purported discoveries of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots beside the Red Sea are misleading if not fraudulent and are decisively debunked by Cline (2007).

Of course, we can immediately recognize why there is such an absence. We rarely hear of Egyptian defeats from Egyptian sources and this event would have been particularly embarrassing to Egypt. This is not the type of event that they would want to remember or memorialize on a large stone monument or on tomb walls.

What we do have on tomb walls, however, does show that Semitic peoples were engaged in slave labour in the 2nd millennium in Egypt. As early as the reign of Thutmosis III around 1460 BC we have scenes of foreigners who are making bricks for the temple of Amun in Thebes for instance. This is one example of some indirect evidence that can be marshalled to make the account of the Exodus sound reasonable.[1] In this context, we should also note that the first extra-biblical evidence for the existence of Israel as a people in Egypt comes from the very end of the 13th Century BC in a victory monument of Pharaoh Merneptah (also known as the Israel stele), which mentions Israel as a vanquished enemy (Hallo and Younger 2000: 40-1).

However, there are further problems connected to the archaeology of both Egypt and Palestine as it relates to the Exodus and the closely related Conquest. Here we can only be illustrative rather than exhaustive, but in short the results of archaeological research over the past one hundred years do not fit easily with the biblical description of the Exodus and conquest.

The problem extends to the issue of the date of the conquest. This problem is raised on two levels. For one, the chronological information that we do get in the Bible is in the form of relative, not absolute dates and we have to transform them to our system. As we will see, we also have to reckon with the possibility that the dates we are given are not actual numbers but symbolic. And then second, the biblical text does not provide the name of the pharaohs.

Beginning with the second issue, imagine how many of our issues would be resolved if the narrative had named the Pharaoh! Thutmosis or Raamses, or perhaps another, but the account does not give us a name and its absence raises the question of why not. Hoffmeier has been helpful in responding to this issue by pointing out that it is likely that the biblical account is mimicking the Egyptian practice of not naming and thus glorifying an enemy (Hoffmeier 1997:109, 112).

Now on to the first issue: How do biblical scholars convert the relative dates of the Bible into absolute dates? After all, in the Bible we do not have an absolute dating system like our contemporary BC (BCE) and AD (CE) system. Events are recorded using a relative dating system. The same is true when it comes to dating the Exodus. The main text is 1 Kings 6:1: "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD."

The text places the Exodus four hundred and eighty years before the fourth year of Solomon, the year he began to construct the temple. Thus, if we can determine the date of the fourth year of Solomon, theoretically at least we could establish an absolute date for the Exodus. But, if all the dates in the Bible are relative, how can we transition to an absolute date?

Dating the Old Testament

We begin by turning our attention to chronological texts from Assyria, the most important of which is the Assyrian Eponym Canon (AEC), a dating system that covers the years 910-612 BC. The Eponym Canon does not provide absolute dates on the surface; it lists years by the names of a *limu* (important official) or king and associates that year with a significant event that occurred during that year. These events include statements about war, flooding, and astronomical phenomena, including eclipses. Since eclipses occur at regular and predictable times, astronomers today can calculate when they occurred in antiquity in Assyria (ancient northern Iraq) and thus provide an absolute date for the *limu*. An eclipse of the sun is mentioned during the "eponymate of Bar-sagale, of Guzan." This event can be dated to 763 BC and the date provides a centre from which other relative dates can be determined. By the use of the AEC in comparison with other Assyrian historical texts that mention Israel (i.e. the Black Obelisk that mentions the Assyrian king Shalmaneser making Jehu of Israel pay tribute), scholars can absolutely date certain biblical events. Once some biblical events are dated this way, then other relative dates can be converted into absolute dates.

Without going through all the details, by proceding in this fashion it is possible to situate the fourth year of Solomon to 966 BC, give or take a few years. If so, then by adding 480 years to 966, we end up with an approximate date of the Exodus in the middle of the fifteenth century BC. (Cryer 1995).

Other biblical texts support this date, but they are not as precise or dependable as 1 Kings 6:1. For instance, in his negotiations with the Ammonites concerning the occupation of land in the Transjordan region, Jephthah makes the argument that "For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn't you retake them during that time?" (Judges 11:26).

Jephthah here refers to the taking of this region in the time just before the Conquest of Palestine, which of course takes place forty years after the Exodus. The chronology of Judges does not allow us to specifically date the time of Jephthah, though a period of 300 years certainly makes more sense of a fifteenth century Exodus followed by the Conquest, than its leading rival date of the thirteenth century, to be described below.

The Problem with a Fifteenth Century Date

On the surface at least the biblical text is clear and self-consistent, pointing to the fifteenth century BC. The problem arises not with the Bible, but rather with the archaeological evidence. In a word, the conclusions of archaeologists working in the second half of the twentieth century and into the present century do not support the biblical picture. Many books may be cited as adopting this conclusion, but W. G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (2003) may be taken as a recent representative. In this section, we will present the problem and respond to them in a section to follow.

The issues surround (1) problems as to the names and identification of the cities Exodus 1:11 names as the location of Israel's forced labour and (2) archaeological evidence from the cities defeated by Joshua during the conquest.

Pithom and Rameses

According to Exodus 1:11: "So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh."

The first problem for a fifteenth century date is the name of the second city: Rameses.[2] The name of this city derives from a royal name known from the 18th dynasty, beginning in the late fourteenth/early thirteenth century BC. As we will observe later, one of the leading contenders for the pharaoh of the Exodus is Rameses II (1279-1213 BC).

More telling, since we could explain the name as an instance of postmosaica,[3] is the second problem that concerns the dating of the archaeological site associated with Rameses.[4] Consensus now is that Rameses should be associated with Pi-Rameses and identified with Qantir (Tell el-Daba'a). Kitchen (2003: 210), for example, states "Beyond any serious doubt, Raamses is Pi-Ramesses, the once vast Delta residence-city built by Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC), marked by ruin-fields that extend for almost four miles north to south and nearly two miles west to east, centered on Qantir (Tell el-Dab'a), a dozen miles or so south of Tanis (Zoan)." He is also representative of the view that the archaeology of Qantir settles the question of the date of the Exodus, since, in his opinion, the archaeological results only point to the thirteenth century BC. Kitchen, though aware of some remains of Seti I (1294-1279 BC), points to massive building during the reign of Rameses II. He also emphasizes the short-lived nature of the settlement here; due to a change in the course of the Nile, Qantir was soon abandoned and by the eleventh century the centre of power (as well as much of the stone and other remains of Qantir) was moved to Tanis (Zoan). However, more recently, M. Bietak, the archaeologist of the site, has reported remains of a citadel and storage facility from the time of Thutmosis III during the 18th Dynasty (mid-15th century BC), using bricks from an even earlier citadel from the Hyksos period (2001: 353).

The Archaeology of the Conquest

Another problem for the fifteenth century date has to do with the date of the Conquest, which of course bears on the date of the Exodus since the biblical record reports the conquest began forty years after the Exodus.

Close reading of the book of Joshua indicates that widespread destruction of urban centres did not occur.[5] Only Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were said to be burned during Joshua's campaign, most of the other victories took place on the open battlefield. Thus, the absence of burn layers throughout Palestine dated to this period is not disturbing. However, many of the sites said to have been in existence according to the Exodus and Conquest accounts do not show signs of habitation during the Late Bronze Age (c.

1550-1200 BC), the period in which the events purportedly took place.

Let's take a look, for instance, at Jericho. Of course, Jericho was Israel's first great victory after crossing the Jordan River. The biblical text describes it as a major city with massive walls. When John Garstang, the British archaeologist, dug at Tell es-Sultan, universally recognized as ancient Jericho, in the 1930's, he claims to have discovered the walls that fell at the time of the Conquest. However, from 1952-1958, a new archaeological investigation was launched by Kathleen Kenyon, also a British archaeologist. Her conclusions were radically different than Garstang's. According to her work, Jericho shows signs of existing before the fifteenth century and afterward, but not at the time of the Conquest. Her conclusions were driven largely by the lack of a certain type of ceramic pottery, imported Cypriot bichrome ware, that was characteristic of the period. Its lack indicated to her that no one lived at Tell es-Sultan at that time.

Ai proved to be another problem for those who want to date the Exodus-Conquest to the late fifteenth century. Ai means "dump" or "ruin" in Hebrew and so it is often associated with a modern archaeological site that has the name Khirbet et-Tell, et-Tell being Arabic for "the ruin." It is located near Beiten, often associated with the ancient city of Bethel, which the Bible tells us was near ancient Ai. Archaeologists who have studied the remains at this site note that there is no evidence of occupation for the period between 2400-1200 (Isserlin 1998: 57). Thus, according to this interpretation of the archaeological evidence, the biblical picture must be wrong in terms of date or substance.

Re-Dating the Exodus Event

As we will describe below, the problematic archaeological evidence has led many scholars to abandon or modify the idea of the Exodus and the Conquest as explanations for how Israel comes into being in the land of Palestine. For now, we will focus on those scholars who are persuaded by the archaeological evidence, but continue to believe that the Exodus and Conquest actually happened. In a word, they re-calibrate the biblical statements about date.

The most passionate recent defenders of the following position are Kenneth Kitchen and James Hoffmeier,[6] both of whom hold a high view of Scripture and are eminent Egyptologists. They propose that the 480 year period between the Exodus and the fourth year of Solomon (1 Kgs. 6:1) is not a literal but a symbolic number. The key is the fact that the number is divisible by 40, which represents a generation. After all, the wilderness wandering period was forty years, the time for the first generation to die and for a second generation to rise in its place. So 480 stands for 12 generations.

However, while 40 is a symbolic number for a generation, it is not the actual, typical age when people start having children and thus begin the next generation. They suggest that 25 is the actual number of a generation. Thus, to get the real number of years represented by the number 480, we must multiply 12 times 25. The result is 300 which added to 966 BC (the 4th year of Solomon, give or take) points to 1266, or the thirteenth century BC. Such a date works much better with the results of archaeology.

While this solution is tenable, it does have a tone of desperation around it. It takes a bit of imagination to make the number work. Imagination may be what is called for, but, on the other hand, perhaps the conflict between archaeology and the biblical evidence should lead us in the opposite direction. Rather than re-reading the biblical text, perhaps we should re-read the archaeological material.

Re-Reading the Archaeological Material

The metaphor of reading and re-reading the archaeological remains is intentionally chosen. Many lay people and minimalists (see below) have the mistaken impression that archaeology is a science that involves no or minimal interpretation, contrasting with the study of the Bible which everyone recognizes demands interpretation. While archaeology utilizes some methods of study that are scientific (and science itself involves interpretation), the understanding of mute archaeological remains is a hermeneutical (interpretive) task just like the study of the Bible. Archaeological remains are amenable to more than one interpretation.

Can the materials associated with the dating of the Egyptian store cities and the cities of the conquest be re-read in a way that conforms to a fifteenth century date of the conquest?

In a now classic and controversial study published in 1978, J. J. Bimson argued that there was a way to interpret the archaeological materials that is amenable to a fifteenth century date of the Exodus (Halpern 1987). The details of his arguments cannot be presented here, but the broad outline of his reinterpretation is as follows:

According to a traditional reading of the archaeological work done in the twentieth century in Palestine, the end of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine (ca. 1550 BC) witnessed the destruction of many cities. The destruction has been attributed to Egyptian armies that moved into Palestine in pursuit of fleeing Hyksos, a Semitic group that had dominated Egypt for about one hundred years. Bimson, however, points out that there is no textual or artifactual reason to associate the destruction of these cities with the fleeing Hyksos. Indeed, the texts speak of a pursuit only as far as Sharuhen in southern Palestine and the Egyptians took that city only after a three year siege.

Bimson thus questions dating the destruction of these cities to the sixteenth century and their association with the Hyksos. He presents the view that they should rather be placed in the fifteenth century and associated with the Hebrews.

Some other scholars argue that these northern Palestinian cities were destroyed later by Thutmosis III and indeed we have textual evidence of this pharaoh's campaigns into northern Palestine. However, we have no evidence that

he destroyed all the cities on his list. Rather he may have been making a show of force as he collected tribute. Yet other scholars have also joined the effort of reassessing archaeological interpretations that have dominated the field for years. Bryant Wood (1990), for instance, has questioned Kathleen Kenyon's chronology of Jericho based on ceramics.

Bimson appropriately does not insist that his interpretation is definitely the right one, but what he does effectively demonstrate, even if certain aspects of his theory can be shown to be wrong, is that archaeology is amenable to more than one reading or interpretation. In my opinion, it is utterly wrong minded to divorce textual evidence from archaeological evidence. J. Walton (2003) makes the point very clearly: "From the above discussions it is evident that the complexity of this issue derives from the need to juxtapose biblical, historical and archaeological data to one another. When the data are not easily reconciled, which data hold priority?"

Many scholars today operate with a method that says archaeology should not be interpreted in the light of the biblical text but rather independently. I think that archaeology should be done in the light of textual records (biblical or otherwise). Not that archaeology should be misread to make it fit the biblical record, but rather the archaeologist and historian should ask if the material that we have fits with the biblical text. Bimson's conclusions are an example of this. Palestinian cities show a destruction level that, in the light of what we know from texts, could be associated with the Hyksos or the Israelites. However, those texts say nothing about destruction of cities to the north of Sharuhen, but do inform us that Joshua destroyed certain cities. Thus, why not interpret the archaeology in that direction?

Of course, this would put the emergence of Israel at the start of the Late Bronze Age rather than the Iron Age. Neither transition provides strong evidence for a significant break in culture that some expect when a foreign intruding culture (Israelite) replaces the resident culture (Canaanite). Thus, a number of scholars argue that what we call Israelite is really an inner-Canaanite development (Dever 2003). That is, there are no external intruders. However, it is questionable whether an intrusive migratory people would enter the land and establish a discernibly different material culture. Perhaps they adapted to Canaanite pot making techniques. They likely used the cisterns and other technologies of the Canaanites. Indeed, Deuteronomy 6:10b-11 warns the Israelites not to forget God who will give them a land "with large flourishing cities you did not build; houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant." Perhaps if the list went on it would include, "pots you did not make…" In addition, in a fascinating article, Millard (2003) points out that many invasions that are well known from textual witness bear no archaeological trace including the Amorite invasion of the Third Dynasty of Ur around 2000 BC, the Saxon and Norman invasion of Britain and the Arab invasion of Palestine.

Conclusion

We therefore cannot be utterly confident that the Exodus and Conquest took place at the early date. Though that seems the most natural reading of texts like 1 Kings 6:1, they aren't the only reading (so Kitchen, et. al.). The truth is that the archaeological data, as traditionally interpreted, fits in better with the late date. It also, of course, makes sense of the name Rameses for one of the two store cities in Exodus 1:11. However, even the late date has problems with certain archaeological facts (see Ai above).

Some of my readers will be frustrated by the fact that I am unable to come to a clear decision regarding the time period of the Exodus and further exasperated by the idea that archaeology does not definitively support the presence of Israel in Egypt, their escape, their wilderness wanderings, or the conquest.

On the one hand, however, the truth is that the biblical record was not written in a way to satisfy all our historical questions. Not even the few chronological statements we have (i.e. 1 Kings 6:1) are uncontroversial as we convert them to our dating system.

On the other hand, archaeological evidence is not in the business of providing objective evidence one way or the other. Such evidence is open to multiple interpretations, not any interpretation, but more than one.

What can we say in conclusion? Our present day knowledge of the archaeology of Palestine and Egypt does not lead to an easy correlation with the biblical testimony of the Exodus.

Why? In the first place, the biblical material is amenable to different interpretations. What the Bible intends to teach in the book of Exodus is perfectly clear. God intervened on behalf of ancient Israel to save them from their powerful enemies in a dramatic way. However, the Bible is not perfectly clear about the precise date that this event happened. The Egyptian kings are not named in keeping with the Egyptian practice of not naming enemies (Hoffmeier 1997: 111-12). The meagre chronological information that we get from 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 are not pointing to a precise date and there is a legitimate question as to whether the number in Kings is symbolic rather than literal.

On the other hand, the archaeological material is also amenable to different interpretations. The traditional interpretation of archaeological materials is not the only possible reading. My introduction of Bimson's work intended to illustrate this point, not argue his interpretation is the only possible one, a claim that not even Bimson makes.[7]

Good archaeological arguments can be made to support both the early and the late date of the Exodus and Conquest, though they both have abiding questions.

In reaction to the present state of our knowledge, two extremes should be avoided. First, there are those like the minimalists (see below) and others who conclude that since archaeology does not prove the Exodus we must reject the

idea that the Exodus happened. They reach this conclusion because they a priori reject the idea that the Bible itself counts as a historical testimony.[8]

The second extreme that should be avoided is the appeal of amateur archaeology or sensationalist archaeology. As one example of his phenomenon, it is not uncommon to hear the claim that Pharaoh's chariots' wheels have been discovered at the bottom of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba). An amateur archaeologist named Ron Wyatt promoted this idea through a series of church seminars. He claimed that he had seen them and had pictures to prove his contention. They were "coral incrusted." Many ministers and Christian laypeople took this as proof of the biblical account of the Exodus. On the surface of it, however, the claim is ridiculous. How could one know that these wheels were from Pharaoh's army? But the claim is a fraud. The supposed coral incrusted wheels are really coral wheels.[9]

Another strategy to make the Exodus a more palatable story is through giving it a naturalistic interpretation, the most recent example of which is Colin Humphreys' book, *The Miracles of Exodus* (2003). By miracle, he means a miracle of timing. All the events of the Exodus from the burning bush[10] to the crossing of the Sea, which happened by a strong wind at the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, can be explained by natural phenomena. This approach makes a mockery of the Bible's description of what happened.

The Bible claims that the Exodus and the crossing of the *Yam Suph* actually took place and was a witness to God's power and desire to save his people. The archaeology and historical witness can be read in such a way as to conform to an understanding of either an early or a late date, though neither is without problems.

We should hope that future archaeological research will illumine matters further. One of the problems is the fact that archaeology has really only scratched the surface of the available material. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions like Jim Hoffmeier's digs in Egypt (1997, 2004, 2005), many archaeologists are no longer interested in this question, so we may not be getting a lot of new material in the near future.

Does It Matter?

Radical challenges to the historicity of the Old Testament have dominated the scholarly discussion for the past decade and a half. A group of loosely affiliated scholars have led the charge, questioning the historical value of biblical narrative.[11] They have been dubbed "minimalists" because their conclusion is that a minimum of the Old Testament story is historically valid. They argue that a new group came into Palestine in the Persian (for some, even the Greek) period for the first time.[12] People like Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar, Ezra and Nehemiah weren't returning to Judah after an exile, they were coming into the area for the very first time. In order to justify their presence in the land, they constructed a story that told of their long occupation and the divine gift of the land to an ancestor, Abraham, who never existed.

The deep scepticism of the minimalists is new and not shared by the broad circle of scholars, even those who practise historical critical scholarship. Most scholars don't question the exile, the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, the monarchy, even Solomon and David. However, many scholars have doubted the stories that precede the time period of the rise of kingship in Israel, the Exodus included.

Recently, I've noticed a trend that concerns me: fellow evangelical scholars who have questioned or doubted the historical truth of the Exodus event. Granted, few have put their thoughts in print and most of my knowledge comes from personal communication and discussion, but the trend to discount the history of the Exodus is present in the mind of more than a handful of such scholars. I imagine too that thoughtful seminarians, college students, and pastors have wondered about the significance of the historicity of the Exodus.

Such doubts arise for a variety of understandable reasons. As we have seen, there is no direct evidence for the Exodus outside of the Bible. Is it possible to be confident in the historicity of the Exodus if Egyptian records do not mention it? Why are there no traces of the Exodus story from the time period in which it purportedly took place?

Second, post-modern culture has promoted the value of story. Stories are powerful agents of transformation and vehicles of insight. Indeed, many modern and post-modern approaches to the study of literature warn against moving outside of the story itself to find its significance. Using a technical phrase, they argue against the referential function of literature. To find its meaning, one needs to enter the story and its world and not worry about anything outside of it. In the light of these issues, I ask: Does it matter? Does it matter whether or not the Exodus took place?

Establishing a Track Record

The book of Exodus is a work of theological history. However, theological intentions do not mitigate its historical purpose. The book intends to teach us about God and his relationship with us by describing how he acted in history.

In the Exodus, God acted to rescue his people from an impossible situation. Pharaoh and his chariot troops had cornered the unarmed Israelite people with their backs literally against the water. They could not go forward, backward, or sideways. There was absolutely no possible route of escape available to them. However, in response to their prayers God opened up a way through the Sea. Thus, they escaped. Further, the Egyptians followed and God used the same act to both rescue his people and judge their enemies.

The story thus teaches us a great deal about God. He is the Saviour and the Judge.

Yet, if the event described by the story did not happen, it would teach us nothing about God. The story has no power apart from the event. If God did not actually rescue, why

would we think of him as a Saviour? If he did not actually judge, why would we think of him as a Judge?

The account of the Exodus establishes a track record for God. He is more than words. He acts on his words. Such a past action elicits present confidence and hope for the future after the event. If God could do such a marvellous act to save his people in the past, he could certainly do so in the present. This, after all, is how the Exodus tradition is used in later Scripture.

The Use of the Exodus in Later Tradition

The importance of the historical basis of the Exodus account is also emphasized by its use in later biblical tradition. The Exodus story echoes through Scripture, remembered in a variety of ways and for a number of different purposes. Psalm 77 illustrates one such use of the tradition:

For Jeduthan, the choir director: A psalm of Asaph

1. *I cry out to God; yes, I shout.*
   Oh, that God would listen to me!
2. *When I was in deep trouble,*
   I searched for the Lord.
   All night long I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven,
   but my soul was not comforted.
3. *I think of God, and I moan,*
   overwhelmed with longing for his help.
4. *You don't let me sleep.*
   I am too distressed even to pray!
5. *I think of the good old days,*
   long since ended,
6. *when my nights were filled with joyful songs.*
   I search my soul and ponder the difference now.
7. *Has the Lord rejected me forever?*
   Will he never again be kind to me?
8. *Is his unfailing love gone forever?*
   Have his promises permanently failed?
9. *Has God forgotten to be gracious?*
   Has he slammed his door on his compassion?
10. *And I said, "This is my fate;*
    the Most High has turned his hand against me."
11. *But then I recalled all you have done, O LORD;*
    I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.
12. *They are constantly in my thoughts.*
    I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.
13. *O God, your ways are holy.*
    is there any god as mighty as you?
14. *You are the God of great wonders!*
    You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations.
15. *By your strong arm, you redeemed your people,*
    the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
16. *When the Red Sea saw you, O God,*
    its waters looked and trembled!
    The sea quaked to its very depths.
17. *The clouds poured down rain;*
    the thunder rumbled in the sky.
    Your arrows of lightning flashed.
18. *Your thunder roared from the whirlwind;*
    the lightning lit up the world!
    The earth trembled and shook.
19. *Your road led through the sea,*
    your pathway through the mighty waters—
    a pathway no one knew was there!
20. *You led your people along that road like a flock of sheep with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds.*

(New Living Translation)

Psalm 77 is an individual lament. The psalmist begins by expressing deep emotional pain, but not specifying the cause. The latter is typical of the psalms. They almost certainly were written in the light of the poet's experience, but the specific event is suppressed so that later worshippers can use the psalm as their prayer in similar though not necessarily identical circumstances (Longman III 1987).

After comparing his present distress with the bliss of the past (vss. 4-6), he blames God. In a series of rhetorical questions (vss. 7-9), he accuses God of breaking his covenant promise that he would care and protect him. Abruptly, however, the psalmist changes his tune from accusation to praise in vss. 13-15. Laments frequently demonstrate such turns, leaving the later reader wondering why. Note, for instance, the movement in Psalm 69 from verse 29 to 30:

I am suffering and in pain.
Rescue me, O God, by your saving power.
I will praise God's name with singing,
and I will honour him with thanksgiving.

Though no explanation for the change is stated in Psalm 69, Psalm 77 is clear about what motivates the poet to praise. In a word, it is the past and specifically it is the Exodus, the crossing of the Sea. Remembrance of the past triggers confidence in the present and hope for the future. Vss. 11-12 begin the move:

But then I recall all you have done, O LORD;
I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.
They are constantly in my thoughts.
I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.

And then, vss. 16-20 end the poem with a reflection on God's act at the Sea. Interestingly, but not uniquely (see Ps. 114), the poet personifies the waters and envisions the moment as a conflict of sorts between God and the Sea. In this way, the poet utilizes the age-old motif of the waters representing the forces of evil and chaos (and probably in this instance specifically the Egyptian army, the agent of evil).

The psalmist's move from severe agitation to calm is now understandable. He is presently in the position of the Israelites at the Sea, in trouble and beyond human aid. But God is in the business, he remembers, of saving his people in such circumstances. When God saves independently from human help, then those he rescues know beyond a shadow of doubt who helped them.

Notice it is because God actually saved his people in the past that the psalmist finds confidence and hope for his present. To belabour the point, it is because God has established a track record with his people—he actually

did it—that the psalmist can find relief. Imagine telling the psalmist it is a story, and in this case the often misused "it's just a story" is to the point. God never actually saved anyone. It would completely and utterly eviscerate the point of the psalmist.

Again, the point of this section is not to argue that the Exodus did take place. Rather it is to point out that it loses its significance if it did not. Psalm 77 demonstrates that the power of the story of the Exodus is in its connection with the event of the Exodus.

Did Job really have to suffer for the book to be true?

Does our insistence on the historical quality of the Exodus event extend to the rest of the Old Testament as well? Certainly not. In this section, we will briefly examine the case of another biblical book: Job.

The book of Job sends mixed signals concerning its literary type. Likely, the genre of the book was clear to its ancient audience, but at such a historical distance, we do not have the literary sensitivity to be dogmatic.

It is unnecessary for our purposes to run through all the nuances of this issue (Longman III & Dillard 2006: 224-36). On the side of reading the book as fiction is the presentation of the dialogue in poetic format. Poetry indicates artifice. People do not and did not speak to one another in elaborate poetic speeches like we see in Job 3:1-42:6. Granted the Bible never reports speech as if it was spoken into a microphone. While all speech is presented with artifice, the dialogues of Job go to an extreme, likely to raise the level of discourse from a specific historical event to the level of general ethical and theological reflection. Poetry elevates the book from a specific historical event to a story with universal application. The book of Job, then, may not be a historical chronicle but rather the expression of wisdom that is to be applied to all who hear it.

On the other hand, the book begins like a historical narrative. Formally, we can detect no real grammatical difference between the opening lines of the book and books that do have historical intent (compare with the opening verses of Judges 17 and 1 Samuel 1). A broader discussion of this issue would include comment about the mention of Job in other places in the Bible (Ezek. 14:14, 20) and a comparison between Job and similar extra-biblical books (*Ludlul bel Nemeqi* and the *Babylonian Theodicy*).

On a full analysis, our conclusion would be that it is not certain whether we should judge Job historical or fictional or, as is probably more likely, historical fiction. But does it matter? And, if not, why doesn't it matter with Job when we argued that it did matter with the Exodus and the crossing of the Sea?

The theological significance of the Exodus, including the crossing of the Sea, depends on its historicity, because it is a part, indeed an integral part of the history of redemption. A crucial feature of biblical religion is that God entered space and time to be involved with his people. He participates in history in order to rescue his people from the effects of sin. The Exodus contributes to this redemptive history that leads to Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, Job's suffering does not serve a redemptive purpose. Job's pain does not alleviate our pain. Job's story rather serves a didactic purpose. It teaches us that suffering is not always the result of personal sin. Job is the ideal wise, righteous person, and yet he suffers. Thus, we cannot judge people's piety or morality based on their success or suffering.

Again, the case of Job may be contrasted with the Exodus in regard to the question of theology and history. The book reminds us that we should not automatically assume that all biblical narrative must have a historical intention. On the other hand, we cannot use a book like Job to diminish the theological importance of the historical nature of the Exodus event.

Summary and Conclusion

In the final analysis, we must concede that we cannot prove that the Exodus happened to all impartial and neutral observers. This conclusion results from the fact that there is no direct evidence for the Exodus event, save one. The one text that directly provides testimony for the Exodus is the book of Exodus. Of course, the quality of the book of Exodus (and the whole Old Testament) is a matter of intense disagreement and debate. Those, like myself, who have confidence in the book of Exodus as a witness to actual events will be untroubled by a lack of external evidence that supports it, while those who do not share this perspective will disregard it.

Upon reflection, we should not be surprised to find ourselves in the position of affirming the historical foundation of our faith apart from external evidence that would convince every scholar. The Exodus stands along with the patriarchs, the conquest, the period of the Judges, the early monarchy, even the crucifixion and resurrection itself in this regard.

We, thus, find ourselves in the school of Augustine: "I believe in order to understand" not in the school of Aquinas, "I understand in order to believe." But we are also not in the school of Tertullian, "I believe because it is absurd."

The archaeological evidence, which is amenable to more than one interpretation, can be read in such a way as to lend support to the view that the Exodus happened. And, finally and importantly, we cannot permit ourselves the easy way out by saying it does not matter. The Exodus loses its theological and ethical significance if it did not happen in space and time.

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Endnotes

1 For a full and excellent presentation of the indirect evidence for the Exodus event (Hoffmeier 1997). Figures 8 and 9 in this book reproduce the scene of the Asiatic labourers making bricks.

2 Exodus 1:11 spells the name Raamses, though other occurrences of the name in the Bible (Gen. 47:11; Exod. 12:37; Num. 33:3, 5) spell it Rameses.

3 It is clear that additions and updates were made to the Pentateuch during the period of canon formation, the most famous of which is the account of Moses' death in Deuteronomy 34. Indeed, the reference to Rameses in Genesis 47:11 is such an updating, no matter when one dates the Exodus. Hoffmeier (2007) has been successfully answered by B. Wood (2007). In a most peculiar article, R. Vasholz (2006) has argued that the city was actually named Rameses in the fifteenth century. His view has been effectively undermined by Hoffmeier (2007a).

4 The archaeological evidence for Tel er-Retebe, often identified as Pithom, is not problematic for either the early or the late date of the Exodus.

5 For a more detailed account of the evidence, as well as a rejoinder to many of the conclusions of archaeologists, see I. Provan, V. P. Long, and T. Longman (2003: 174-89).

6 See the recent interchange between Hoffmeier (2007) and the rejoinder, defending the early date, by Bryant Wood (2007).

7 See Walton (2003) for a number of other possible syntheses of biblical and archaeological evidence concerning the Exodus.

8 For a defence of the Bible as historical testimony, see I. Provan, V. P. Long, and T. Longman III, (2003: 3-104).

9 See Cline (2007). Also in a personal communication, the archaeologist Randall Younker told me that he examined the claim personally and saw the so-called wheels, confirming that they are completely composed of coral.

10 He explains that the bush "was growing on top of a region containing natural gas, which is known to exist in Midian. The natural gas came up from under the bush through cracks in the rocks, was ignited either spontaneously or by lightning." He also allows for an alternative source for the gas and that is a "volcanic vent." (2003: 77)

11 The minimalist approach is different from the perspective adopted by many literary scholars of the Bible in the period of roughly 1980-1995. The latter believed that the fact that the Bible was story meant that the question of history was unimportant. A. Berlin's (*Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, p. 13) comments about Abraham are representative: "Above all, we must keep in mind that narrative is a form of representation. Abraham in Genesis is not a real person any more than the painting of an apple is a real fruit."

12 Some representative minimalist scholars are K. W. Whitelam (*The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History,* London: Routledge, 1996); T. L. Thompson (*Early History of the Israelite People from the Written and Archaeological Sources,* SHANE 4, Leiden: Brill, 1992); N. P. Lemche (*Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society,* BSem 5; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988); G. Garbini, (*History and Ideology in Ancient Sources,* New York: Crossroad, 1988); P. R. Davies, (*In Search of "Ancient Israel",* JSOTS 148, Sheffield: JSOT, 1992).

Ancient Near Eastern Seals - Enduring Envoys

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Abstract: UNESCO has received, over the years, a small collection of objects donated to it by member countries. Iraq has given one cuneiform tablet and two seals. This paper discusses the seals, a stamp seal and a cylinder seal, and considers the significance of the imagery of the sun god.

Preface

Since my university days I have always been interested in ancient history and art, especially in the form of the glyptic of the Near East, specializing in cylinder seals of the 1st millennium BC Achaemenid period, but of course concerned with earlier glyptic which underpinned this last phase of their administrative use.

During the course of a diplomatic life with my husband, Robert S. Merrillees, an Australian working for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, I have been very fortunate to be able to keep up these interests, visiting and staying in many countries that allowed me to pursue my research and gave me access to many famous museums. When and where I could I made notes and drawings of the seals that were often part of the collections of many of these institutions. In 1991, we found ourselves in Paris where Robert was accredited for four months to assist with the election of Mr. Barry Jones to the Executive Committee of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

UNESCO has received, over the years, a small collection of objects donated to it by member countries. Iraq, in keeping with its ancient and venerable history, had given one cuneiform tablet and two seals (Figure 1). I thought then of the endurance of seals in the diplomatic/trade sagas of their times and that one day they it might make a worthwhile article. This paper gives me the opportunity to illuminate, perhaps in a different light, certain well worn paths that hopefully lead to a better understanding of stamp and cylinder seals and their value in bringing different places, cultures, and times closer together.

Introduction

The two different shaped seals from Iraq in UNESCO, the stamp and the cylinder, each relate to two very important events in human history as it evolved in the ancient Near East, extending from Anatolia (Turkey) in the west, south to the Gulf and Egypt and east to Iran, encompassing Mesopotamia, made up of north-east Syria and Iraq, the area of the seals' origins.[1] Stamp seals belong to the beginnings of settled life during the Late Neolithic Prehistoric period c. 8000 B.C., considered to have arisen in the northern and western regions of the Near East with the domestication of crops and animals, the making of pottery and its attendant dwellings, goods and chattels at Çatal Hüyük (Mellaart 1975:55ff; 98ff; fig. 53), and in the Levant (Braidwood 1960:499-501; Moore 1982/84:65ff; Moore & Schwartz 1985:50-74). Cylinder seals appear just before the Early Bronze Age c. 3500 B.C., at about the same time as writing, which was to enable the recording of the increasing complexities of urbanization, particularly along the great water-ways of the Euphrates and Tigris which facilitated the intermingling of people and the long-distance exchange and bartering of goods.

Stamp and cylinder seals were both developed and used for the identification and safe- guarding of collective and individual goods, chattels and properties and at a later stage the recording of these activities. However, the earlier stamp seals, found in areas to the north and west of Mesopotamia are, due to the absence of seal impressions, considered to have been probably used more for decorative purposes. Their circular, oval, and cruciform bases deeply incised with linear and spiral designs, with their backs forming small loop or stud handles, may have been dipped into pigments and stamped as repeating patterns on textiles, for body ornamentation, and even as bread stamps

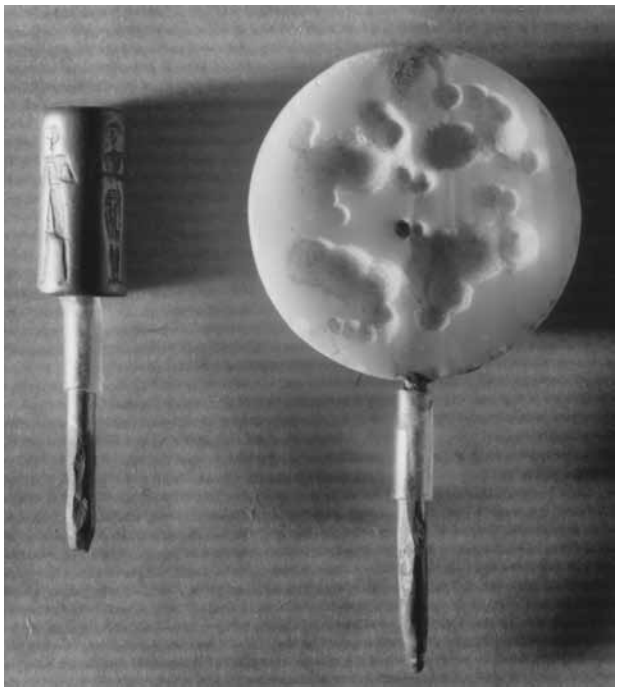

Figure 1: *Photo of the UNESCO Cylinder and Stamp seals.*

– still used to-day (Buchanan 1984:1). Some stamp designs recall the wall decorations of buildings from Catal Hüyük in central Turkey - c. 6100 B.C. (Mellaart 1967:fig. 24, illus. 121). Stamp impressions on gypsum plaster have been found at Tell Bugras and Tell al-Kaum, just west of the Euphrates and on baskets and ceramics from Tell Sabi Abyad in north Syria dated to c. 5500-5100 B.C. (Collon 1997:11, 21). Stamp and cylinder impressions have also been found on pottery from Palestine, Syria and Lebanon dated to the Early Bronze Age B.C. (Collon 1981:499-501) and later in Cyprus from c. 12th Century B.C. (Smith 1994 238ff). Perhaps significantly it was the stamping of pottery and bread which gave the potters and bread makers the idea of individual ownership identity and securing of property rights. To this process may be attributed the appearance of stamp and cylinder designs impressed on wet clay lumps (bullae) securing the string or rope round various portable goods, door knobs of properties or store rooms, culminating in the impressions (sealings) over clay tablets, the original documentary material, and rolls of papyrus and much later parchment (Frankfort 1939:1-3; Collon 1997). These utilitarian roles performed by seals, particularly in regard to protection, may have also carried some amuletic connotations that increased their intrinsic value evident from their discovery in burials and sanctuaries (Woolley 1934:323; Mallowan 1947:39-41; Carter, Hole et al. 1992:30.)

Stamp seals were the predominant sealing tool for over 5000 years and maybe even more, until superseded by cylinders with the advent of writing. However, they continued intermittently in parts of the Near East (Collon 1989:17-19; Merrillees 2001:45, 55) and re-emerged at the end of the 2nd millennium B.C., becoming the main sealing device with the gradual supplanting of cuneiform by alphabetic scripts and the use of parchment during the 1st millennium B.C. when the Hellenistic, and Roman worlds came to dominate in the 1st millennium A.D., together with the Parthians and Sassanians. Indeed the stamp seal never disappeared and in various guises, as for example, signet rings, continues into the modern age.

With larger settlements went concomitant organisation of the river systems and land for agriculture commodities, especially in the alluvial south and plains of Mesopotamia. The rise of Uruk, an early temple state in the south, is a good example of the growing necessity of not only securing and identifying, but also documenting the management of surplus commodities to be exchanged, such as primary produce for materials like minerals and timber lacking in these farming areas but found in the higher northern areas of Mesopotamia and its eastern surrounds (Roux 1964/92:7-15, 69-76). Methods of recording had already started as early as c. 8000 B.C. with a basic system of counting and differentiation by means of multiple shaped, small, plain tokens, representing the various commodities such as units of grain, oil, or wool and even animals, to be kept or exchanged. By 3500 B.C. these tokens had become more diverse with new shapes and markings, reflecting a more complex socio-economic milieu. These representative tokens, accompanying the consignments to the various destinations not only of primary but now also finished goods, were enclosed in hollow, spherical clay balls (comparable to an envelope) which were then marked with verification signs of the consignments and sealed by stamps or the newly introduced cylinders which were found to be better able to cover the curved surfaces of 'envelopes' (Collon 2005:13).

The invention of writing is considered to have grown out of the counting and marking signs of the tokens, initially produced as pictographic signs, more easily accommodated on flattened pieces of clay, dispensing finally with the somewhat cumbersome system of tokens and their holders, which had resulted in a kind of double accounting method (Merrillees 2001:45-46). This momentous step appears to have started in a number of places in the Near East, but probably initially in Uruk in southern Iraq and Susa in south-west Iran. The abundance of clay in both environments, which supplied the material for the clay coverings of the token system as already mentioned, was certainly a factor in the making of clay tablets. Perhaps also the region's chief building material, the sun-dried clay brick with its flat sides (except for the curved top Sumerian plano-convex brick) influenced in a smaller form the shape of these tablets. This also gave an adequate surface surround to the cylinders' larger and more detailed impression. The attendant iconography could also be rolled as a continuous frieze (see Collon 2003:254 on the areas of the cylinder seal's first appearance). The other element in the beginnings of writing would have been the reeds growing in the marshes covering the southern part of the Tigris-Euphrates delta (Roux 1964/92:11-12). These plants must have been found eminently suitable, when cut, to produce the wedge-shaped marks and symbols of what became wedge-shaped writing of cuneiform (from Latin 'cuneus' meaning 'wedge') scripts on the soft clay tablets to be later sun-hardened for permanent keeping. This permanence led to their eventual discovery and history over 5000 years later.

Both stamp and cylinder seals were at first made mainly from soft materials that could be cut fairly easily. They ranged from calcite and limestone, serpentinite, chloritite, soapstone and at times the more valuable lapis lazuli (a medium hard stone) which indicated contact and trade of materials as far distant as Afghanistan. Examples from Tepe Gawra are given by Tobler (1950:176 pl. LXXXVIIIc). Other materials were ivory, faience, glass, metal, wood and baked clay, and there are examples of the use of hard stones such as rock crystal during the 3rd millennium B.C. (Merrillees 1990:26-27). Many of these minerals had to be imported from areas where they existed to areas without them as part of trade exchanges, as noted above. In the early periods of both types of glyptic, the designs were incised with hand-held tools, such as files of various types, pointed, straight or curved such as at Tell Asmar (Merrillees 1990:23, 30 fn. 7, pl. 1a, b) for horizontal and diagonal cuts,

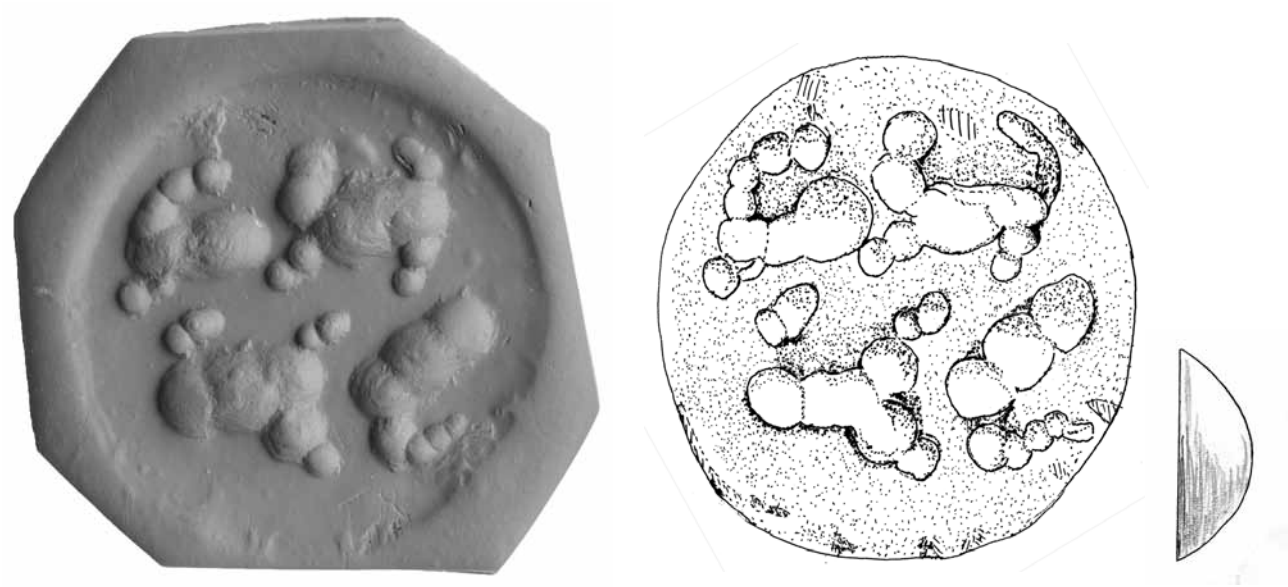

Figure 2: *Photo and drawings of the UNESCO Stamp seal.*

and micro-chipping. Holes were either gouged or drilled using drill bits powered by hand-held vertical bow drills with the seal kept secure in a small, wooden block. For the engraver's work, the cutting tools were made initially of flint and then copper and possibly wooden sticks coated with honey or resin dipped in a quartz based abrasive such as fine sand (Merrillees 1990:41; Wilkinson 1983: illus. 54; Sax et al. 1998:18-19).).

By the end of the 3rd millennium B.C., harder stones such as the black and grey hematites and brownish goethites began to be used, moving into more colourful quartzes by the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C., like the chalcedonies, agates, cornelians and jaspers, while the soft stones especially serpentinite, chloritite with the addition of faience (a reconstituted quartz material, an influence from Egypt) continued to be used, particularly for less important seals (Segnit, 2001:73-95 for analysis of gem materials). Although hard stones were already used for seals from the 4th millennium B.C. (see above) the development of more efficient cutting tools led to their increasing popularity. Research on the various types of engraving cuts has now established that cutting wheels and drills mounted horizontally, which allowed a greater degree of dexterity and speed, began during the 18th century B.C., in the latter part of the old Babylonian period (Sax et al. 2000:157-176; Buchanan 1970:53ff.).

Together with the differing materials and technical innovations, another dimension should be taken into account relating to the designs and inscriptions on ancient glyptic - their development and change according to their perceived need, use, economic and religious significance. Such areas of study can give indications of the seals' geographical regions, historical period, and social context, while with the evolving iconographical depictions help reveal some of the beliefs and mores of these ancient times. It is in this vein that the two UNESCO seals will be considered.

1. UNESCO Stamp seal - Fontenoy, Paris.

Don de la République Irakienne à l'occasion de son XXV ème anniversaire (4 novembre, 1971).

Shape, Material, Size: Hemispheroid - light grey/green in colour with faint wide undulating striations through the soft stone (?marble). H. 12mm., 35 x 35 mm. with oval-shaped bore 5 mm. The seal is in good condition and has been marked in white ink with Arabic letters which have been translated by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat as possibly meaning 'Mikraran 3346'.

Description: Animal scene(?): four separate groups of merged large and small drilled depressions producing zoomorphic 'blobs'.

Date: C. 3200-3000 B.C. - Jemdat Nasr period.

Parallels: Provenanced examples include an almost identical example from Jemdat Nasr (Mackay 1931:283, pl. LXXIII no. 14), from Girsu/Tello (Buchanan 1967:533 nos. 5, 8, Pl. 1 nos. 3, 4); from Kish (bought) and no. 212 from Jemdat Nasr (Buchanan/Moorey 1984:29 no. 209). For a good unprovenanced example see Goff (1963) no. 417 and Basmachi (1975/76 illus. 39 left and 4 down) - stamp seals from various Sumerian sites dated to between 3000-2400 B.C..

The UNESCO hemispheroid stamp seal belongs to an interesting group of this type and design which signalled the end of the stamp seals' early period of dominance and the introduction of the cylinder seal c. 3500 B.C. with writing (see above). Hemispheroids appeared in two phases. The first group appear in some numbers with impressions in c. 5th millennium B.C., although possibly found during earlier periods. They are considered, from provenanced examples, to be predominately from the northern regions of Mesopotamia and Syria. They were usually small in size with their bore holes through the higher section of their rounded backs and made of dark

Figure 3: *Photo and Drawings of the UNESCO Cylinder seal.*

coloured stones (possibly black chloritite or serpentinite), engraved with linear designs, which at first seems to have been a continuation of the previous geometric patterns, but changed to interlocking figurative designs of humans and animals (Tobler 1950:175-176, pl. LXXXVIII; Buchanan 1984:5-6; Collon 1989:22).

The second phase in the 4th millennium B.C. to which the UNESCO hemispheroid belongs, is characterised by Buchanan (1967:267) as "the floruit of the stamp seal" in the Late Prehistoric into Early Protoliterate - the transition between the Late Ubaid and Uruk/Jemdat Nasr - c. 3900-3500 B.C. In contrast to the previous hemispheroid type these later stamps were larger in size and appear not only as circular shapes, but also ovoid and sometimes tabloid. They were made of more colourful stones with their perforations closer to their base (Buchanan/Moorey 1984:26; Collon 1989:31). The greatest concentration was in south Mesopotamia and Susiana, which may have been the centres of their production, but they have been found throughout Mesopotamia, no doubt carried by trade and travel along well trodden routes (Buchanan 1984:26-27).

The designs on the bases of these later hemispheroids were mainly of different kinds of animals (not always recognisable), made in a drill-hole patterning style that was also used on the bases of the beautifully carved animal amulet/seals of the same date and regions (Collon 1989:30, 36). In describing the method of executing this drilled style Collon (1989:31) writes that drill-holes "are almost invariably executed with extensive use of a fairly large drill, at times the drill holes are linked together by gouging, and some details are indicated by lines...". Furthermore as Buchanan (1984:26) points out these stamp seals and their drilled technique, made during the emerging stages of the cylinder seal, probably influenced certain of these new type seals, particularly the small, squat Jemdat Nasr types where a number of the designs, especially the seated pig-tailed figures, were drilled. It is also interesting to note that although there are clay impressions from figured stamp seals, this does not seem to be the case for drill-hole stamps (Collon 1997:12). Perhaps they, together with the small animal shapes, were primarily amulets.

2. UNESCO Cylinder seal - Fontenoy, Paris.

Don de la République Irakienne à l'occasion de son XXVème anniversaire (4 novembre, 1971).

Shape, Material Size: Cylinder - Black/grey in colour (?hematite). 20 x 9.5 mm. Bore hole 4 mm. The engraving is worn with possible recutting over the inscription area; there are two chips beside the foot of the figure facing left (on the impression) and slight chipping along upper edge. The seal has been marked in white ink with Arabic letters, part of which has been translated by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat as the number 3350.

Description: Presentation scene of three figures: a male deity stands facing left with torso presented frontally; he is bearded and his hair ends in an 'S' shaped loop on the nape of the neck; he wears the horned headdress and a full-length belted mantle with pleated skirt open; one foot is placed forward on a crosshatched, square shaped object, probably representing a mountain; one arm rests across his chest while the other hand is slightly raised holding a 'saw-tooth blade'. Before the deity stands an unbearded 'priest' personage, whose hair or headgear is not easily ascertained; he wears a belted wrap-over tunic with double border edge; his hand over his chest is raised with palm facing outwards, his other hand holding a simplified frond(?) is raised towards the deity. Behind the worshipper stands a nude female facing frontally, she is the same size as the other two figures; her hair falls each side of her face and three horizontal lines across her waist possibly indicates a belt (Collon 1986:131-132). To the side stands a single feline standard (rather faintly outlined).

Date: c. 1822-1750 B.C. - Old Babylonian period

Parallels: The juxtaposition of the three figures on the UNESCO seal is somewhat rare, particularly with the nude female, who more often appears with the two group figures of the god/king with the mace and the suppliant goddess and not so often with the 'sun-god'. Porada (1948) nos. 471 and 489 show a priest-like figure with a staff, and on the second seal there is also the nude female; Collon (1986) nos. 329, 333, 352, 368, are all examples of the priest figure with the 'sun-god'. Often another one or two figures are depicted as on no. 352, which also shows the nude female.

The Old Babylonian Period 1900-1600 B.C., to which time and style the UNESCO seal belongs, is considered to be the 'heyday' of the cylinder seal when its administrative value gained importance from the spread and use of cuneiform throughout the Near East for recording and regal correspondence (Collon 1997:16). It is also pertinent to note that with the Old Babylonian period, the change from soft to hard stones, specifically hematite, was taken up throughout the Near East (Collon 1982:130). It is temping to speculate that the greater use of this type of stone may have been associated with the trading colonies set up by the northern Assyrian city of Ashur in Cappadocia, central Anatolia, at about the same time c. 1940-1720 B.C. At that time Assyrian merchants, during their travels across Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia, trading in gold and silver, could possibly have encountered materials such as hematite or possibly greater outcrops of this mineral, whose medium hardness, but hard-wearing properties and ability to produce impressive sealings was recognised, becoming then the chosen stone for cylinders for the next four hundred years (Roux 1964/92:231ff; Teissier 1994:1; Merrillees 2001:49).

The scene shown on the UNESCO cylinder was part of the repetoire of Old Babylonian symbolic iconography. This can be traced back to the 3rd millennium B.C. and earlier when the ancient beliefs of Mesopotamia were formulated, particularly in the Sumerian period and subsequently during the Akkadian period (2334-2193 B.C.). The unification of the region under the Sargonid dynasty was enhanced by the confirmation and canonisation of the religious philosophy and practices as manifest in the Mesopotamian divine pantheon, which although believed to be superhuman and immortal, was 'conceived as a replica of the human society' of that time and place (Roux 1964/92:85-87).

In the 'Presentation' scene, the main figure is the one in the 'ascending posture' position. It is the stance used by a number of deities, such as the 'smiting' god, the weather god, the warrior deity, but most frequently by the 'sun-god'. In this case it is probably the latter god represented together with his his 'saw-blade'. The second figure before the 'sun god' probably represents a priest. He appears on a number of seals and seems to be associated with the 'sun-god', sometimes taking the place of the suppliant goddess. The priest usually placed behind one of the main personages and in some cases standing on a dais is dressed in a kilt and carries a pail and cup or a stick-like object which has been described as a frond, fan, torch or like a knife weapon. In this instance, the position of the priest standing directly before the 'sun-god' without another deity or king figure in between is unusual. The role of this figure, however, is not completely understood, but he has been linked with another similar figure who carries a bird and could possibly be an interpreter of omens and dreams, which would explain his connection with the 'sun-god', one of the main deities concerned with omen and divination queries (Collon 1986:35, 139-140; Starr 1990:XIII-XIV).

The third figure designated the 'nude goddess/female' appears to be of Western origin attested by the Egyptian 'Hathor-like' hairstyle and her link on seals with the crook of Amurru and the Weather god's lightning fork, both symbols attached to Anatolian deities; Özgüç (1968:66 pl. XIIIC) show an interesting juxtaposition of a 'nude goddess' and the Hathor head on a seal impression from Kültepe dated to Level Ib, c. 1614-1782 B.C. On seals, and as terracottas, the 'nude goddess/female' was popular between c. 1822 and 1750 B.C., and Collon considers that she may have been "the object of a popular cult rather than part of the official pantheon", with a connection to itinerant 'dwarf' musicians and naked female dancers accompanied by monkeys that made an appearance in the 20th century B.C. (1986:45-46, 131-132; cf. Al-Gailani-Werr 1988:15, 20-21). The 'nude goddess/female' seems to make her original appearance in miniature guise, as a filling motif on well cut seals that showed the 'king with a mace and suppliant goddess' scene. This 'standard' Old Babylonian theme replaced the Ur III and Isin-Larsa seated presentation scenes c. 1895 and continued to c. 1712 B.C. (Collon 1986:61, 100f). The appearance of the 'nude goddess/female' as a full-length figure seems to be a secondary development and is found for the most part on poorly cut seals which show other less well-defined characters as on the UNESCO cylinder. It is possible that the manifestation of the 'nude goddess/female' and other uncertain motifs belong to the gradual infiltration of influences from Anatolia in c. 1940 B.C. (see above). This is a reversal of influences, as it were, and suggests that such seals could belong more to the peripheral north-western areas of Mesopotamia (Porada 1948:54ff).

Somewhat in contrast to this scenario, other sites in north-western regions and 'along the Assyrian-Cappadocian trade route' such as Tell Leilan in the plain of Habur (now north-east Syria), have yielded seal impressions, the majority of which emphasise the strength of the Old Babylonian glyptic tradition. They depict, it would seem carefully and finely as one their chief themes, 'the man with the mace facing the suppliant goddess'. These particular impressions have been dated to between c. 1807 and 1728 B.C., which covers part of the reign of ShamshiAdad of Ashur (1813-1781 B.C.). Tell Leilan has been identified possibly with Shubat, originally a 3rd millennium B.C. city called Sehna, considered one of the capitals of the 'Great Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia', which included Mari. Within these boundaries, the glyptic from Tell Leilan "provides documentation for the production of high quality Old Babylonian seals for the end of the 19th and beginning of the 18th centuries (B.C.)...", while beyond these frontiers other glyptic styles from Anatolia and Syria prevailed, see above and Parayre (1990:556, 558-566), Parrot for Mari (1959:156ff) and Al-Gailani-Werr for the Diyala region (1988:3ff).

Finally, I would like briefly to reflect upon one of the figures portrayed on the UNESCO cylinder - that of the 'sun-god'. This was a deity that endured through the ages from the Sumerian UTU, Akkadian Shamash, Elamite Nahunte and

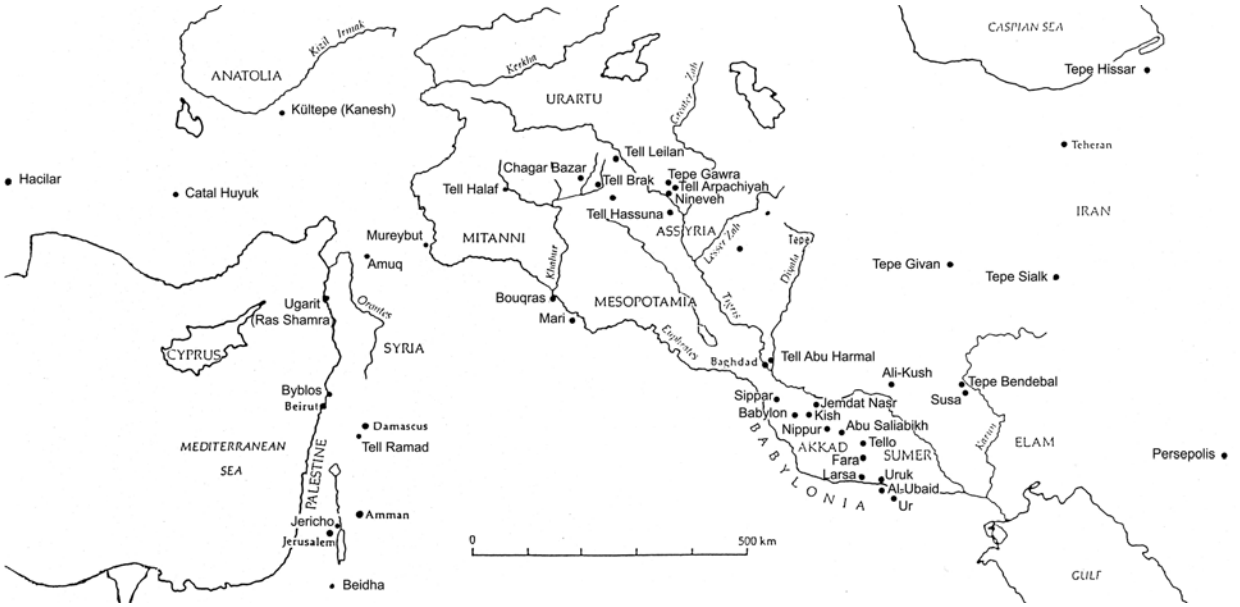

Figure 4: *A map of the ancient near east.*

Iranian Mithra, and possibly into the Classical period as Helios and/or Apollo. The powers of the sun-god extended from the obvious ones - the giving of light and warmth - to overseeing the course of truth, justice and right as god of omens, contracts and oaths. This latter function evolved from the sun-god's daily passage through the skies, making all clear on earth. It was a role retained well into 1st millennium B.C. and beyond.[2]

It was in the Early Dynastic III period (c. 2600-2400 B.C.) that the god of the sun appears holding his saw blade, rays emanating from his shoulders and sitting in a boat (Frankfort 1939:67-70 Pl. XVj, n). For the sun-god's attributes at this time, it is worth examining the role of Shamash in the epics of the king/hero Gilgamesh of Uruk. The surviving written forms of the stories were produced from about the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. to the Neo-Assyrian period and contain different versions, but some of the original tales appear to be from the Early Dynastic period. In them it is the sun-god who, despite the importance of the two chief deities of Uruk, Anu and his daughter Inanna, appears to play a central role in decision-making, succouring and aiding Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu. The sun-god is also presented as the all-seeing deity and valiant warrior in his path through the dense darkness of night to the light of day (Dalley 1989:39-153). It is in these last manifestations that Shamash assumes and maintains through the millennia his most important role as god of the light/truth and upholder of right/justice by warring against dark/evil, cf. Black and Green (1992:184).

In the next period, the Akkadian (2334-2154 B.C.), the most frequent imagery of Shamash was of the deity with rays and saw-blade, stepping out from between two mountain peaks (Collon 1982:83, nos. 168-171). Shamash, in simpler guise, but still with the saw-blade, continued into the Old Babylonian period (1990-1640 B.C.), when he became the most popular of the gods worshipped, especially in Larsa in Sumer and Sippar in Akkad. The Code of Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.), represents the sun-god holding a wedge and ring - measuring rod and tape - and describes him in the epilogue in the terms first set out in the Early Dynastic period "...Shamash, the great judge of heaven and earth, may my justice prevail in the land" (Pritchard 1969:178 (80); Al Gailani-Werr 1988:8-10). The seal inscriptions of the period of Hammurabi, particularly the contest scenes and some with Shamash himself, evoke the name UTU/Shamash and his consort a-a/AYA, although the link with the inscribed names and the engraved figures does not always match.

From the texts the saw-blade has been interpreted as the 'sassaru' weapon used by Shamash in his role as 'Supreme Judge' to 'cut decisions' and before whom oaths were taken. In his role as the Sun-god, the saw-blade was the tool by which he opened the mountain to allow out the first rays. The mountain peaks became the 'portals of the sky' between which the sun emerged. Both these roles were retained on Old Babylonian cylinders, although the mountain appears to have been reduced on our seal to a type of square stool (cf. Frankfort 1939:95-100, 160-162; van Buren 1945:179-180, Porada 1948:24 nos. 178, 179; Teissier 1984:23-24; Merrillees 1990:nos. 31, 32). Of the supernatural beings and animals associated with Shamash such as the bull, bull-men and scorpion-men from the Akkadian period and possibly the horse from the Middle Assyrian period, it was the animals - the bull and horse - that were to remain important symbols in Zororastrian beliefs linked to the sun and Mithra (Boyce 1975:151, 172-173; Black & Green 1992:39-40, 48-49, 103104, 161).

By the Neo-Assyrian/Babylonian period, Shamash seems to have assumed a more universal presence. Hymns to the sun dating to the time of Ashurbanipal (668-633 B.C.), though perhaps of earlier origin, emphasise this development (Pritchard 1969:386-389):-

..light of the great gods, light of the earth,
illuminator of the world regions,
..exalted Judge, the honoured-one of the
upper and lower regions;
...Thou dost look into all the lands with thy light...

In keeping with this idea, the glyptic of the 1st millennium B.C. seems to show the sun-god in a more symbolic and ethereal manner - one of the first deities to be so considered. The actual god does not appear to be clearly represented, but it is rather the motifs appertaining to the persona of the sun that are used. One of the most important of these symbols is the disk and rays of the sun, often attached to wings symbolising the skies and 'heaven' (Porada 1948:nos. 637, 640-651, 691, 725-731, 771-775; Collon 2001:79). This imagery was employed par excellence by the Achaemenid hierarchy with the winged disk or bust appearing on seals and sculptures throughout the empire (Schmidt 1957 :pls. 3-10). It is used also at about the same time in the book of one of the minor Biblical prophets 'Malachi', where 'Yahweh' is alluded to in a striking metaphor "But for you who fear my name, the sun of Justice/righteousness shall rise with healing in his rays/wings" (I am indebted to Dr. D. Collon for this reference).

Has the sun-god become an aspect of a universal god? Does this point to a shift away from the ancient anthropocentric presentation of gods to a more abstract thought concerning the nature of the world and the heavens? Such questions will continue to be asked. They become part of the quality of ancient seals as enduring envoys that conveyed messages during their own historical existence and today carry good-will messages from an historical land to a modern concept - UNESCO, as well as continuing to tantalise us in trying to interpret their iconogaphy.

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My sincere thanks go to the staff of the Office of the Director General, UNESCO, for allowing me to examine and take impressions of the two seals, and to M. M. Claude, the photographer, who took the excellent photographs of the seals. I am particularly grateful to Christopher Davey for giving me the opportunity to make this contribution. I also thank as always my husband Robert S. Merrillees and my long time friend and colleague Dominique Collon, former Assistant Keeper in the Department of the Ancient Near East, The British Museum, for their unfailing support and help in all my endeavours.

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Abbreviations used:-
B.A.R. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford.
JAOS. Journal of the American Oriental Society, New Haven.
M.D.P. Memoires de la Delegation en Perse, Paris.
(including those numbers which have a slightly different title but are numbered in the same sequence.)

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Endnotes

1 Collon (1997:11) defines such regions of the ancient Near East.

2 For the vexed question of the equation between Shamash and Mithra see Zaehner (1961:106-111), Gershevitch (1967:26-44), Thieme 1975:21ff) and Boyce (1982:28-29), and for Mithra as 'guardian of contracts' see Frye (1975:64) and Boyce (1975: 24ff, 267; 1982:219, 268 and above).

Reviews

Susan Balderstone, *Early Church Architectural Forms: A Theologically Contextual Typology for the Eastern Churches 4th- 6th Centuries,* Melbourne: Australian Institute of Archaeology, 2007, ISBN 9780980374711, x + 70 pp, AUD 43.

Reviewed by Professor Robert Gribben

This short but thoroughly packed monograph invites the reader into a fascinating set of connected fields, the title naming the main ones: architecture, ancient churches, theology. The architectural variations of these buildings are indeed fascinating, and obvious to anyone who has wandered through archaeological sites in the Middle East - I think of my own in Egypt, Armenia, Jordan, Palestine and Syria with an eye to the liturgical purposes of such variations. The parallels in the development of such buildings, Jewish, Graeco-Roman, Latin, whether house, synagogue, aula, or basilica, in the early centuries of the common era are intriguing (so the work of Michael White). And the 4th-6th centuries saw the greatest explosion of Christian theology that faith had yet experienced, where clarifications were made, such as the Nicene creed and the Chalcedonian definition, which account for several of the divisions of the early church, and which can be visited in their modern forms any Sunday in Melbourne. Into this complex mix, Professor Balderstone has ventured, providing some significant classifications and guidelines for interpretation.

So I come first with real admiration of the years of field work and study which has gone into this work. Susan Balderstone has described and catalogued the vast majority of early basilicas from the late 3rd (the famous house-church at *Dura-Europa*) to the early 7th century of the Common Era, covering the whole eastern Mediterranean area. Most of the introductory paragraphs on the churches are also illustrated with a ground plan, culled from various sources, but of a standard kind so that they may be compared. It has been wonderful to visit some old friends. (I once walked through Hagia Sophia with Fr Robert Taft as he described how the building served the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom in the 6th C under that amazing dome).

The book ends with two tables, the second, a summary of the various church types – house, hall, commemorative church with ambulatory, single-apse, centralized with an octagon, or round, cruciform plan, churches incorporating the tri-conch as a tripartite symbol, the use of transepts, and finally the triple apse in various forms. Table A, however, tabulates each church by date, emperor (and dominant theology), local bishop, the forms adopted for baptistery and sanctuary – all colour coded. This really is a prodigious piece of work, but it is, of course, not merely for taxonomic purposes.

Table A summarizes the evidence for the tendencies which suggest the thesis which runs through the book (as it does in the author's earlier articles) that the reason for the variation in basic patterns of early churches is the particular theological stance which those in power took during the various disputes, Christological or Trinitarian, and which were so church-dividing (and therefore empire-dividing) in the middle of this period, especially from the 3rd to the 5th Centuries. It is an intriguing thesis, and worth exploring. The author acknowledges that written evidence is barely extant, and reading ancient stones is difficult, as readers of this journal know.

In my own field of liturgy, a really major challenge has been directed at most conclusions based on documentary evidence by Professor Paul Bradshaw of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind., in his *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, and applied to one particular area of liturgical theology in his *Eucharistic Origins*, London: SPCK 2004. (Bradshaw is not represented in the book's bibliography.) Bradshaw bluntly points out how many gaps there are in the record; church historians, and liturgiologists have allowed themselves to become romantically attached to certain early sources, making the covert assumption that they represent what went on in many churches within a region. But we don't know what has not been found; we cannot make a secure judgement as to the value of the source for saying what the eucharist looked like in Syria or Egypt or Milan at a particular time. Some may say that Bradshaw protests too much, but it is a sober reminder, at least in my own field. Susan Balderstone is also aware that the liturgical record is thin for what might have influenced the building of sanctuaries. I ought to add that there has been a recent reassessment of the influential writings of Dom Gregory Dix – by Dr Simon Jones of Merton College, Oxford; see his commentary in a new edition of Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy* [1945]. Interested persons might like to consult the published work of our own Dr Andrew McGowan, Warden of Trinity College in the University of Melbourne.

I don't feel competent to make a judgement over such a detailed set of evidence, but I bring a concern from another related field, which is that of the history of doctrine. Church History has often been read as a development of intellectual thought without relation to what we might call the social and political aspects of their cultural context. What difference (for instance) did it make to the Council of Nicaea that they worked out their creed while staying in the imperial palace at Iznik (now submerged in the lake) with the emperor in residence, and the imperial guard rattling their spears at every gateway? This was ignored in my own studies at Cambridge – where we studied J. N. D. Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines* (1960, later revised) – but it frustrated me and I have changed my mind about the

approach since. Who decided on these labels – Orthodox, Arian, Nestorian, Monophysite, Monothelite, Miaphysite, Eutychian, Pelagian and all the rest? They are – they must be – political labels as well. It is interesting to note how many of the churches condemned as heretical at the early Councils just happened to be outside the influence of the Roman-Byzantine emperor: greater Syria, Armenia, Assyria, Persia, Egypt. We read in this study of the swings between the acceptance and the rejection of the Definitions of Chalcedon and other councils. Indeed, in the last forty years, the theologians of the Eastern Orthodox (related to Constantinople) and the Oriental Orthodox (mostly the churches accused of heresy) have got together and managed to agree on a common statement on Christology, recognizing that forces other than theology had driven them apart. In fact, the first Great Schism of the Christian era (451) has been largely resolved. I suggest the categories of doctrine need nuancing, and we need perhaps to look more closely at local, cultural and even architectural factors in explaining certain repeated patterns. I am prepared to accept that theology is one of the *influences*, and that numerology, which modern people might find hard to accept, was another; coping with the architectural legacy of the last temple under your building was a factor too – and local fashions, materials, and the abilities of your builder.

Whatever your conclusion, I recommend a thorough read of this very fine piece of research, which provides detailed information for many more interests than the thread which holds it together. Pack it in your suitcase next time you wander around Middle Eastern ruins!

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James H. Charlesworth (ed), *Jesus and Archaeology,* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2006, xxv+720pp, dwgs, b/w plates, ISBN 978 0 8028 4880 2, USD 35.

Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey

This book contains thirty-one papers that were delivered at the millennium conference in Jerusalem in 2000. While the delay in publication is a disappointment, the volume itself represents a comprehensive and invaluable coverage of the subject.

Introducing the work Charlesworth reminds readers that no one has a mortgage on objectivity, 'One should not imagine that biblical scholars are subjective theologians and archaeologists are objective scientists'. Comments on the differing perspectives of New Testament scholars and archaeologists occur throughout the book. Many of the contributors according to Charlesworth have a foot in both camps.

The first paper entitled 'What is Biblical Archaeology' by Avraham Biran, a student of Albright, demonstrates how his excavations at Tel Dan have illuminated many Old Testament references to the site. He does not defend his approach which has not fared well since the death of Albright. His claim that in the early Iron Age the tribe of Dan had within it a tradition of metal working is interesting, as it seems that in the Bronze Age there were also nomadic Semitic metal workers.

Charlesworth's essay on 'Jesus Research and Archaeology' sets the scene. His approach aims to use the results of archaeological work to 'enrich Jesus Research'. He sets aside the various quests for the historical Jesus and instead begins with open questions not shaped by the theological agendas that drove those who were attempting to write a biography of Jesus. The book aims to assess 'what has been learned from archaeological excavation of sites known from the New Testament and how such information helps us re-create the world of Jesus' time and his life and message'. This approach leaves archaeology as an autonomous discipline excavating and accurately recording data independently of any historical hypothesis. Biran's does not say if his archaeology has such autonomy although it is strongly implied when he describes Albright's method as 'detached' and 'scientific'.

The demise of Biblical Archaeology is discussed briefly noting that opposition to it arose partly because of attempts to use it as a tool to prove the historicity of the Bible. Charlesworth believes that there is now a willingness by archaeologists and New Testament scholars to re-engage in the task of understanding Jesus in a historical context; this is what the volume is about.

Sean Freyne traces the history of archaeology and the theological quest for a historical Jesus and discusses the

contribution that the knowledge of First Century Galilee can make to the understanding of Jesus. In the pages that follow the topics discussed include amongst many things, Peter's House, the Galilean Boat, the Theodotus Inscription, pre-AD70 synagogues, Judas, the early church and the 'Essene quarter' of Jerusalem and 'Bethany beyond Jordan'. The sites discussed in the volume include, Sephoris, Khirbet Qana, Bethsaida, Qumran, the Herodian (before the reported discovery of Herod's tomb), Jerusalem, Ein Gedi, Ramat Hanadiv and Mount Tabor.

The birth of Jesus is discussed by Bruce Chilton, James Dunn evaluates the evidence for synagogues at the time of Jesus and the evidence for Caiaphas, Pilate and Simon of Cyrene is discussed by Craig Evans. Urban von Wahlde and Paul Anderson present substantial pieces on archaeology and the Gospel of John and its historicity. Many of these papers deserve their own reviews.

The underlying assumption of this work is that Jesus was a Jew and that he would have grown up and lived exclusively as such. This is not necessarily the New Testament story. Jesus' earliest schooling may have been somewhere like Alexandria and the Gospels sometimes quote Jesus speaking Greek, that is using Greek rather than transliterated Aramaic names. There are stories such as the feeding of the four thousand that seem to take place in Gentile regions where Jesus, unlike his disciples, was completely at home.

One slight departure is Jürgen Zangenburg's review of our knowledge of Samaria. He is right that Samaria is not directly important to the New Testament story, but that is not the point, it did contribute significantly to the cultural, religious and geographic landscape at the time of Jesus and is therefore important for those wanting to understand period. While Caesarea is mentioned, the cities of the Decapolis are not.

It is not suggested that this 700 plus page book should include more. While it may be important for some people to find Jewish remains in what is now Israel, it does not follow that any such evidence means that Jews of the first century Galilee lived in European style ghettos or contemporary Israeli cultural isolation. The complex cultural communities of pre-1917 Palestine, Baghdad and Alexandria may provide more relevant models for understanding First Century Galilee.

Jesus and Archaeology presents an indispensable resource for those wanting to study the world known to Jesus. It is a beginning to such study and while the results described here are most satisfying, significant anticipation arises from the apparent opportunities for future inquiry.

Georgina Howell, *Daughter of the Desert: The remarkable life of Gertrude Bell,* London: Macmillian, 2006, xxiv+519, maps, b/w plates, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-1405045872, AUD 60 (hb), AUD 25 (ppb). (In the USA: *Gertrude Bell: Queen of the Desert, Shaper of Nations,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, ISBN 978-0374161620 USD 27(hb))

Janet Wallach, *Desert Queen The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, adviser to Kings, ally of Lawrence of Arabia,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004, xxviii+419, maps, b/w plates, ISBN 0 75380 247 3, USD 35.

Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey

Some who knew her have argued that Gertrude Bell was one of the world's greatest women. She was the first woman to receive a first in Modern History at Oxford (1888), published an acclaimed translation of the Persian poetry of Hafiz (1897), became a fearless and renowned mountaineer (1902), travelled extensively in the remote regions of the Middle East becoming an authority on its society and politics, undertook archaeological recording and publication in Turkey and Iraq, took charge of the Missing and Wounded Office of the Red Cross for the first year of World War I, shared responsibility for the establishment of Iraq as an independent State after the War, and at her death was the honorary Director of Antiquities in Iraq and founder of its museum. She spoke six languages fluently, became a respected cartographer, was a Major in the British Army Intelligence and received a CBE and the Founders' medal of the Royal Geographic Society. Writing a boring biography about her would be no mean feat, which fortunately neither of these authors has achieved.

There have been at least nine biographies of Gertrude Bell. Recently Winstone's 1978 and Wallach's 1996 (as reviewed here) biographies have been revised and two more have been published, including Howell's. She had one of the world's most documented lives leaving dairies, letters, writings and thousands of photographs now in the Robinson Library of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and displayed on the University web site. She wrote as often as three times a week to her parents and her prose is so engaging that all books are inclined to use her material directly. The Bell hand is ever present in the two books under review.

Recent events in Iraq have rekindled an interest in Bell who was instrumental in its creation eighty years ago. Familiarity with the British experience in Iraq described by Bell in her papers and letters does nothing but emphasise US credulity in their self-inflicted predicament. 'We people of the West can always conquer, but we can never hold Asia – that seems to be the legend written across the landscape' she wrote at Ashur in 1911.

Howell's book is a good read focussing on Gertrude's character and the way she saw the world. Parts are written topically rather that chronologically, relying partly on a chronology at the rear of the book and the maps of her journeys at the front to keep the reader orientated. A section on Bell's mountaineering experiences and their significance is valuable as it goes beyond the Bell letters. The first journey and highlights from the next ten years of travels are dealt with in another chapter. The chapter on her relationship with Dick Doughty-Wylie leads to a detailed description of her last desert journey to Ha'il and the tribal lands of the Rashid. The subsequent war work and the time in Iraq are largely chronological.

Howell writes a throw away line that Gertrude's parents' attitude to hereditary titles was no doubt inherited from the Pattison Quaker tradition. Gertrude's grandfather, who married Margaret Pattison, was a wealthy and famous industrialist with a university education gained in Britain, France and Germany. While his bread and butter was iron making, he pioneered the manufacture of undersea cable and aluminium. Bell family economic matters are discussed as they made Gertrude's extraordinary life possible, but Howell does not appreciate the complex religious attitudes that she inherited and which may have had more influence than even the avowed atheist Bell herself acknowledged. The respect her family had for non-Europeans and their cultures did not come from upper class English society. The strong non-conformist beliefs that were present during England's period of industrial growth and that drove much egalitarian and enquiring behaviour seems to have escaped the attention of most modern writers.

Howell leaves intriguing images. The mysterious visit to the Dardanelles' grave of Lt. Col. Dick Doughty-Wylie VC in November 1915 by a veiled woman during which time firing on both sides ceased; Howell believes it was Bell. The mystery of her death apparently by suicide at the height of a Baghdad summer; was it the prospect of poverty in retirement, loneliness as English friends left Iraq as it assumed independence, or her deteriorating health and possible lung cancer from a life of heavy smoking? Her funeral with a coffin draped with the Union Jack and the flag of Iraq, which she helped design, surrounded by British staff, the Iraqi cabinet, the whole of Baghdad and sheikhs from near and far. There is enough material here for a dozen films.

Wallach is a US journalist with a background in the Middle Eastern politics. Her book is more straightforward than Howell's and she does not convey the same intimacy with the English aristocratic female character, but there is more archaeological detail. While Howell's geography sometimes lets her down, Wallach has some doubtful descriptions. Burqa, where Bell spent Christmas Day 1913, is described as having some 'evidence of Roman occupation'; there is in fact a Roman watchtower standing to over 5 metres high. On a number of occasions bedouin are said to have served 'roasted' lamb, it was more likely boiled. These are minor matters of detail, but they do display a limited knowledge of the Middle East.

Wallach disagrees with Bell about the Balfour Declaration; Bell thought it unworkable and artificial. If Bell returned today she would say 'I told you so' and she would scoff at Wallach's statement that Israel is the 'only democracy in the Middle East'. Bell who had a compassion for Arabs would point to the ninety-year oppression of the Palestinians, something not important to Wallach. It leaves one wondering how much Wallach actually understands Bell. Wallach's main interest is Bell's last ten years in Iraq to which she devotes over two-thirds of her book, compared to less than half by Howell.

Prior to World War I the Ottoman Empire ruled the area that became Iraq as three *vilayets,* Basra, Baghdad and Mosul thus dividing Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds. The idea of combining them into one country called Iraq seems to have been Bell's, and although the situation in 1918 was far worse than it has been recently, the British established a stable country, where Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, Christians and Jews shared in an administration that lasted for over thirty years. The most gripping part of Wallach's book is the description of this work.

Bell lived at a time when women were thought to be intellectually inferior and non-Europeans were considered politically incompetent. Her independent means, political networks, intellectual brilliance, unquestioning family support, fearless personality and respect for the people of the Middle East, their culture and language, enabled her to break through chauvinistic bureaucracies and create a state where diplomacy had a chance over force of arms.

Neither book gives much detail, but the antiquities regime she pioneered facilitated the retention of Iraq's heritage within the country and established the Iraq Museum as one of the great museums of the world. The antiquities law she wrote for Iraq is one of the earliest. There is potentially another book here.

It was with some sadness that I put these books down. Their vividness brought to mind more recent intrepid English women and the desert places where they were encountered, but it is the loss of Bell herself, whose presence through photograph and written word is so intense, the demise of Iraq, which represented her greatest work, and the recent suffering of Iraqis who were so esteemed by Bell, that aches most. Bell's experiences do not auger well for those who now need to bring peace to Iraq. One hopes that her example described in these books will encourage others to follow her path; the world is as ever in need of more Gertrude Bells.

Robert Irving, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies,* London: Penguin Books, 2007, 410, ISBN 978 0 140 28923 7, USD 35.

Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey

This book is about Orientalism and its review here may seem to lack relevance. However in many respects archaeologists who work in the Middle East are Orientalists as are those who study a well known eastern book, the Bible. The failure to appreciate the oriental origin of much of Biblical literature has often led Western scholarship to misunderstand its meaning.

According to Irving it was not until the work of Julius Wellhausen and William Robertson Smith in the nineteenth Century that the oriental nature of the Bible was treated seriously. Western universities had instead focussed on Classics and Biblical studies overlooking Arabic and other Eastern languages and culture. Irving's book is in many ways a story of the fortunes, or more often misfortunes, of the study of Arabic in the West.

Robert Irving is a well published researcher associated with the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. In this book he has written a history of the intellectual relationship between East and West as it appears from Western literature beginning with Herodotus and Xenophen. The 'book contains many sketches of individual Orientalists – dabblers, obsessives, evangelists, freethinkers, madmen, charlatans, pedants, romantics.' Many interesting characters pass through these pages.

He barely mentions the Crusaders who destroyed much Arab literature and instead focuses on the other end of the Mediterranean where in medieval Spain scholarship was immersed in Arabic texts that were later to contribute to the Renaissance. Irving does not overstate this contribution and instead traces European curiosity in Eastern languages, Arabic in particular. Interest in Arabic was driven by its usefulness for Old Testament studies and for contact with the Eastern Church.

English interest did not develop with any seriousness until Chairs in Arabic were established at Cambridge and then Oxford soon after 1630. The Bodleian Library at Oxford had already accumulated a good collection of Arabic texts. But no one seems to have been interested in Islam, something that may be understandable given the expansion of the Ottoman Empire across Europe; Vienna was besieged by the Turks in 1529 and 1683.

Discussion about Oriental matters was written in Latin for the convenience of scholars throughout Europe, and it was not until *The Thousand and One Nights* was translated and published in French by Antoine Galland (1704-1717) that a general interest in the East began.

Irving traces the origin of modern Orientalism to Silvestre de Sacy who worked in the French public service and learnt Arabic, Syriac and many other Eastern languages during the French Revolution and in 1795 became a professor in the Ecole spéciale des langues orientales vivantes. By the time of his death in 1838, most competent Orientalists in Europe had been trained by him and there were many Oriental institutions founded as a result of his activity.

Most Europeans scholars, including de Sacy, were Christian and regarded Muhammad as an impostor. Where Islam was studied, scholars often focussed on oriental sects with which there was some identification. It was a Hungarian Jew, Ignaz Goldziher, who while living in Cairo in 1874 came to the belief that Islam was better than Judaism and Christianity. This outlook caused Goldziher some personal inconvenience as he continued to be employed by Jewish organisations.

In 1905 Louis Massignon met Goldziher and became his 'intellectual son'. Irving devotes a comparatively large section to Massignon who he dubs a 'holy madman'. Both Goldziher and Massignon were brilliant scholars and both engaged sympathetically with their subject matter living for significant periods in the Middle East. Massignon focussed on the teachings of al-Hallaj, a Sufi mystic who was executed for heresy in Baghdad in 922. Like most Western scholars he disliked Shi'a Islam, but unlike most of them according to Irving, he had a fondness for lying on tombs, supported the cult of Joan of Arc and meditated on redemptory suffering.

It is in the later parts of Irving's history that we get these intriguing images of those who have interacted with Eastern literature and culture. There are many truly interesting people and one often wishes that Irving would pursue the implications of their work with more than the odd sentence.

The occasion for this book is Edward Said's *Orientalism* published in 1978. Said carried out a similar survey of Western study of the East and questioned its legitimacy and morality. Said's book has coloured all oriental study since and according to Irving has led to a general disenchantment with the enterprise and even to the closure of some university oriental studies departments.

Irving dislikes Said and his book with a passion, but this need not distract the reader because he has confined his comments and invective to the Introduction and Chapter 9. Irving establishes that *Orientalism* contains many errors of fact and that its assessments are often questionable. The fact that many of these features have been known since the first publication of Said's book leaves Irving mystified at its continued popularity.

Irving even quotes Israelis who question Said's Palestinian credentials, as they did Arafat. However, this is the point, whenever Said, or any of his countrymen who are not confined to refugee camps, prisons or the occupied territories cross an international frontier the inconvenience and humiliation to which they are subjected leaves them in no doubt about their nationality. Said believed that the

discarding of his people had been made possible by the way the West has studied the East.

Irving has no interest in this question. Indeed he lauds Israeli oriental studies, 'For obvious reasons, Israel has use for trained Arabists and some of them do important work for the army and Mossad while on national service.'(271) That this work may involve the denial of human rights and crimes against humanity does not warrant any comment of concern by him.

Orientalism for Irving is an academic exercise where points are scored or lost and in the best English scholastic tradition participants are assumed to contribute to the enterprise in good faith. Said on the other hand believed that the arrogance of Westerners, including Orientalist scholars, led to the framing of the Balfour Declaration and all the subsequent tragedies his people have suffered. For Said, even the identification of the Orient as a field of academic study exhibited arrogance.

Irving has arrogance in abundance often making disparaging and personally derogatory comments about Said in brackets. One need look no further for an illustration of the attitude that so concerned Said. Contrary to the credits, this book has not banished the ghosts of Edward Said's *Orientalism,* rather it epitomizes his very point. However Chapter 9 aside, it is not a bad yarn and leaves one wishing that life had afforded more time for the study of Arabic literature.

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