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Connectivity on the Edge of Empire: Movement, Liminality,
and Ritual in the Southern Levantine Drylands

By

Andrea M. Creel

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Near Eastern Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Benjamin W. Porter, Co-Chair

Professor Marian H. Feldman, Co-Chair

Professor Aaron Brody

Professor Rosemary S. Joyce

Summer 2017

Abstract

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Professor Benjamin W. Porter, Co-Chair

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In the ancient Near East, the Sinai, the Negev, southern Jordan and northwestern Arabia constituted a marginal and peripheral landscape, a liminal land considered both lifeless and teeming with fantastic creatures and divine powers. However, the position of this region between the more populated areas of Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Peninsula marked this landscape as a crossroads for materials and people, a movement of phenomena perpetuated mainly by local mobile pastoral communities. As such, roadside ritual comprised a major expression and practice of multiple ideologies about the land from earliest times. Sites of ritual along roadsides harnessed a variety of overlapping and intersecting senses of liminality, the potency and danger of being inbetween, to lay claim to the land and offer protection against human and suprahuman dangers. In this context, roadside ritual sites operated as confluences of interaction for multiple communities and religious traditions in this region. The ways in which these communities understood and experienced this landscape often drastically differed, and the interaction of these communities generated new and distinct ways of seeing.

This dissertation utilizes textual, ethnographic, and archaeological materials to explore these phenomena in the sixth through the first millennium BCE, with a focus on the early first millennium BCE. This period sees the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in ancient Iraq, which came to dominate much of the ancient Near East in the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries BCE. Imperial domination inscribed the land with new settlement patterns, monumental architecture, and fortifications that recursively interacted with the ancient meshworks of pilgrimage, subsistence, memory, and liminality already engraved within the landscape. Two ritual sites, Kuntillet 'Ajrūd in the northeastern Sinai (eighth century BCE) and Ḥorvat Qitmit in the northern Negev (seventh century BCE) act as case studies that both manifest these ancient traditions of movement and interaction and presage their acute intensification in later Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, and Ottoman contexts.

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Introduction

Imagine the desert. Imagine a place desolate and overrun with life. Imagine a place where you see nothing but the horizon for endless miles and then suddenly a town, a single building, an artificial mound of rocks or, perhaps, a drawing etched on a rock. Imagine a place where humans live and wander side by side with gods and spirits, where people go to find their gods, where people can be alone with their gods. This place is a world unto itself.

Still, this place is like any other in some ways. People traverse this terrain for many reasons. They are traveling somewhere else. They are carrying something somewhere. They are looking for something or someone. Like in other places, they may ask gods and spirits for protection, for favors, for mercy. They bring gifts to these entities and place them at certain locales where the gods are especially present. They construct particular places within the space of the desert and furnish them with objects to aid in the carrying out of rituals. Then, like in other places, these special locales may be abandoned, and these special objects left behind or buried.

Yet, there is also something different, something potent, about all of this in a desert setting that is unlike other places. Living and traveling in the desert requires constant vigilance and a specialized knowledge of survival skills unique to deserts: how to get food and water in a place where life seems absent, how to deal with/avoid sickness and injury where help may be unreachable, how to find shelter in a vast expanse, and knowing the right times and places to take cover or keep on moving. Moreover, for most people in the world, both in the past and even today, survival here also depends on maintaining proper relationships with divine and supernatural powers who may help or hinder you, depending on your fidelity and reliability. Furthermore, not all deserts are the same. Deserts, like other places, each have their own unique histories and mythologies, names and atmospheres, and specific relationships to adjoining regions. Those adjoining regions even interact with desert settings to create the notions associated with both the desert and its neighboring area. Each place becomes a here and there based on relations to one another.

The deserts of the Sinai, the Negev, and southern Jordan during the Iron Age II (1000-600 BCE) present a particularly interesting and distinctive case study in which to explore both the commonalities and specificities in the relationships between landscape, liminality, memory, and ritual in desert settings. Located at the crossroads of Egypt, the Mediterranean, the Levant, Mesopotamia, the Red Sea and the Arabian Peninsula, these deserts are marked as liminal and marginal by their neighboring regions and assume an acutely peculiar sense of liminality as the threshold spaces to other peripheral spaces. The entire Levantine littoral is located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean and the Near East and was marked for the entirety of its history as a hub for trade, travel, and military conquest. This was the place that people, objects, and armies regularly traveled through to get to other places, and it was a place where people lived and interacted with each other and with the strangers (strangeness) in their midst. Consequently, its inhabitants, though rarely politically or militarily dominant, lived in fluctuating landscapes of movement, characterized by intersecting interactions, transformations, and traditions.¹ Furthermore, the Iron Age sees the unique formation of regionally based polities and identities in the Levant not previously attested in the region. However, these same distinct entities maintain

¹ Some recent scholarship, adopting approaches in cultural hybridity and transculturalism, refers to the specific diversity and interaction in the Levant as “Levatism” (Steiner and Killebrew 2014: 2-3)

deep-rooted traditions and memories of a collective past, as well as periodic interactions with the Aegean, Anatolia, Assyria, and Arabia.

In this world, the Sinai, Negev and southern Jordan are the periphery of the periphery, a region considered marginal, remote, inhospitable, and rural. The scholarship on this region often focuses on environmental change, subsistence strategies, and settlement patterns over the study of its communities (Avner 2006; Avner and Carmi 2001; Avni et al 2012; Bruins 2012; Bruins and Jongmans 2012; Haiman 1996; 2003; Greenwood 1997; Ore and Bruins 2012; van Asperern et al 2014; Shahack-Gross and Finkelstein 2008; Yekutieli 2002; Winter-Livneh et al 2010). However, these lands were always peopled and the peopling of this region is thoroughly interconnected with its surrounding areas, despite and sometimes *because of*, the marginality and liminality of these lands. For example, relatively higher precipitation rates in the northern Negev and parts of southern Jordan allowed for limited agriculture and urbanization. Thus, these areas often emerged as highly interactive, semi-sedentarized spaces, where ideas, people, and objects regularly passed between the more urbanized Near East and the more mobile and rural periphery. Similarly, the northern Sinai operated as a land bridge between Egypt and the Levant and provided access to the Mediterranean Sea, facilitating the flows of people and materials throughout the Near East and the Aegean. Concomitantly, the steep and increasing decline in precipitation proceeding southwards through the central and southern Negev, southern Jordan, and the southern Sinai necessarily produced a more sparsely populated environment. However, these lands and the people within them experienced their own senses of interaction and movement, senses deriving from the cycle of movements inherent to mobile pastoralism, small-scale trade and mining, and access to the Red Sea.

Consequently, I suggest that we re-orient ourselves to this region and re-consider these places in the context of the local experience of the landscape. In so doing, I avoid the term “desert” throughout the rest of my analysis. This word tends to echo with a particular mystique in the English language, connoting something that is peopleless and lifeless. It derives from the ecclesiastical Latin *dēsertum*, the absolute use of the neuter of *dēsertus*, an adjective meaning abandoned or left waste. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a desert as: “an uninhabited and uncultivated tract of country; a wilderness... now conceived as a desolate, barren region, waterless and treeless, and with but scanty growth of herbage.”² I suggest that we might avoid the erroneous perceptions of this region that the word desert conjures if we employ the more neutral and precise “drylands.” This is a common term within the wider discipline of geography, which primarily defines the regions we call deserts by low rates of precipitation over and above factors of geomorphology, temperature, and forms of human and animal habitation (Edgell 2006: 3, 8-9; Thomas 2011: 5-6).

In the Iron Age (1200-600 BCE), the development of large-scale copper mining, rise of the Arabian incense trade, and increasing hegemony of the Assyrian Empire suggests that the inhabitants of these drylands become more intimately linked into the wider Levantine framework of interaction and negotiation, albeit in a rather distinctive way. In fact, it is this distinctiveness, this simultaneous rurality and interconnectedness in a semi-arid/arid environmental context, that may have marked this region as particularly numinous. The unique combination of an intensified copper mining and trading industry, the Arabian incense trade, and Assyrian hegemony plugged the drylands into the Levantine network of movement in acute and discrete ways not previously experienced by its inhabitants. It also brought more and more outsiders – traders, migrants,

² "desert, n.2". OED Online. December 2016. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/50774?rskey=cm2mL8&result=2&isAdvanced=false> (accessed February 06, 2017).

refugees, pilgrims, or other passers-through – in and out of the land. These outsiders brought objects and stories into and out from the land as well, creating another layer of entangled interactions that may have contributed to exoticizing the landscape, both for local and non-local communities.

This entangled movement of peoples, objects, and stories within and without the region was also impacted by the visible, often enigmatic, remains of millennia of human activity in the drylands. These remains included both the mundane (hunting traps, hut bases, animal pens, and processing installations) and the not-so-mundane (open-air ritual sites). The ritual sites include (1) single or groups of vertically set stones associated with offering tables, altars, and basins, (2) open courtyards of single course fieldstones, associated with similar installations, (3) geoglyphs of circles, lines, and zoomorphic creatures, and (4) clusters of megalithic aboveground tombs. These remains likely appeared different, strange, and otherworldly to those who later encountered them. Consequently, as more and more of these sites are constructed and then subsequently abandoned by their original architects, they entered into a particular dialogue with their stark surroundings, creating a distinctively potent atmosphere, steeped in memory and magic and intimating numinous otherworlds.

Over the centuries, rituals increasingly derived much of their potency from this littered landscape and the numinous otherworlds it intimated, drawing simultaneously on movement, geographic and social liminalities, and the built environment. This relationship between ritual and the landscape is especially notable for understanding ritual as a habituated practice. In the ancient Near East, ritual was both a practice of “privileged differentiation” (Bell 1992) and a quotidian act, ubiquitous and pervasive. A wide cross-section of people performed rituals each day, some small, some elaborate, but always recursively interacting with larger notions about place, identity, the self, the other, and the social. Rituals are special, but they are also common. It is through this simultaneous distinctiveness and commonness that ritual activity may provide a unique glimpse into a world characterized by intersecting movements, liminalities, and identities.

These relationships between ritual, landscape, memory, movement and liminality are particularly visible in ritual remains from the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. During this time, single period roadside ritual sites were constructed at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd (eighth century BCE) in the northeastern Sinai and Ḥorvat Qitmit (seventh century BCE) in the northern Negev (Fig. D.1).³ These sites are separated by over 250 kilometers of land and fifty to a hundred years of time, sharing relatively little in terms of architecture and material culture. However, each site features idiosyncratic architecture and an eclectic array of artifacts that may index⁴ the highly idiosyncratic nature of ritual in this region, the diverse, multiple communities who visited these sites, and the embeddedness of these sites within the enduring and visible traditions of the region.

However, most scholarship overlooks the context of these sites within their specific landscapes of movement and visibility, preferring to focus on identifying the sites, or some components of their material culture, with particular ethnic groups or political entities known from textual sources (Beck 1996; Beit-Arieh 1995; Dearman 1995; Edelman 2010: 97-98; Finkelstein 1992; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 382-385; Mandell 2012; Meshel 2012; Ornan 2016;

³ A possible third roadside ritual site is also proposed at En Ḥaṣeva (seventh century BCE) in the central Negev (Ben-Arieh 2011; Cohen and Yisrael 1995; 1996).

⁴ In this dissertation I use the term “index” in the Peircian semiotic sense, that is to refer to the material traces of specific human activities, ideologies and patterns. For example, smoke from a distant fire indexes that a fire is occurring, even if the observer cannot see the fire.

Singer-Avitz 2006; Zevit 2001: 142-148, 370-405; Zucconi 2007: 246-248) In so doing, the materials from these sites are associated with other regions in the Southern Levant and used to interpret the political, social, and religious developments of communities outside of the drylands, as well as the greater Southern Levant. While these sites certainly do reflect certain Pan-Southern Levantine trends and political, social, and religious developments within particular Southern Levantine communities, these interpretations fail to consider these sites as local phenomena. In order to gain new insight, it is necessary to deeply emplace these sites within their landscape and its history. Such an analysis will provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the communities associated with these sites and of the Iron Age Southern Levant.

In this dissertation, I explore these sites within the context of the Sinai, Negev and southern Jordan, their particular histories and topographies, and the relationships of these lands and communities with that of the Southern Levant and the Ancient Near East. My analysis demonstrates that these sites index the movements of diverse communities with multiple, intersecting identities and relationships to the land – local and non-local, indigenous and non-indigenous, elite and non-elite, sedentist, mobile pastoralist, miner, merchant, migrant, pilgrim, and others in a land of blurred boundaries, potent ritual markers, and movement. I maintain that the construction and maintenance of these sites was borne out of, and recursively interacted with, deeply embedded notions of the land as marginal and liminal and, thus, dangerous and potent. In so doing, I contend that various senses and scales of liminality intersected and overlapped in this land and at these sites – senses steeped in the intersecting of the nested inbetweenness of the drylands, peripherality, marginality, and rurality, aridity and stark topography, and roads, mobility, and movement. Each sense of liminality recursively interacted with and enhanced each other, combining with the visible and sometimes enigmatic archaeological remains scattered across the landscape, to generate a milieu awash in the numinous and the extraordinary.

However, I also stress that these intersecting senses of liminality are increasingly understood and experienced in new and different ways with the advent of the Iron Age and the greater flow of people and goods moving in and out of the drylands. At this time, non-indigenous and sedentary communities may have increasingly experienced senses of liminality engaged with roads, mobility, and movement that presage characteristics and trends common in the later Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, and Ottoman periods. Meanwhile, those in indigenous and mobile pastoralist communities may have experienced the increased presence of non-indigenous and sedentary communities as an encroachment that radically altered the landscape, in which senses of liminality were primarily steeped in dislocation and the gaze of the Other. Thus, the appearance of new styles of roadside sites that engaged both the ritual and non-ritual needs of travelers at Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit may help to mark a major shift in engagement and understanding of this region. Furthermore, these sites may also offer a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of religion, ritual, landscape, liminality, memory, and materiality and the ways in which they are entangled and recursively intermingle.

I.I. Methodologies

In order to do this analysis, I utilize methodologies heavily steeped in the language of movement, mobility, orientation, flows and confluences, meshworks and networks. I find this language to be particularly useful in elucidating the variable and overlapping materialities of the Southern Levant, its “mosaic of communities” (Philip 2011: 198), and its shifting senses of

betweenness. In recent years, similar methodologies are coalescing under the emerging rubric of “New Materialism.” New Materialist approaches are highly variable, but generally draw on critical theory in phenomenology, practice, and materiality to emphasize the recursiveness and relationality of geological, biological, and social ways of being. In these monist perspectives, immanence and becoming are central themes and both personhood and agency are reconstituted as distributed and variable (Coole 2013; Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012; Joyce 2015; Joyce and Gillespie 2015; Witmore 2014).

I particularly draw on Karen Barad’s agential-realist notion of “intra-action,” in which phenomena only come into being in relation to each other. Barad draws on the work of physicist Niels Bohr that deconstructs the distinctions between abstract, independent subjects and objects, observer and observed, knower and known. Instead, these positions are inextricably interrelated as *phenomena*. Barad elaborates that phenomena only exist insofar as their relations, or “intra-actions.” Rather than the prior existence of independent entities presupposed by the term interaction, intra-action is the infinite (re)emergence of “relata-within-phenomena” (2003: 815). For Barad, phenomena constitute reality and the world is intra-action, the process of becoming. Barad also situates this constant becoming as the process of materialization and the constitution of human and nonhuman bodies (2003: 811-829).

Barad’s work is steeped in the language of movement and the present tense, of constant becoming, acting, practicing, and performing. I employ a similar language of complex movement in the present tense to imagine the drylands as a meshworking of overlapping and interrelated movements, constituting a series of topographies interwoven together. These are movements/topographies of landscape, history, tradition, subsistence and matter. These topographies flow, assembling and disassembling at particular moments in time.

I.II. Terminologies and Topographies

I suggest that we look beyond modern nomenclatures that segment the drylands according to modern political constructs and analyze this region as a collection of interrelated and distinct arid topographies. The contemporary distinctions (Sinai in Egypt, Negev in Israel, and southern Jordan) historically and environmentally obscure the human experience of this landscape, where access to water looms as the primary concern. The ability and means to store water is paramount to human survival in all contexts. However, the aridity of these lands renders access to water as an especially potent and significant experience. This region forms a contiguous east-west land mass of more than 130,000 square kilometers, with an average annual rainfall of less than 300 millimeters a year. These low rates of precipitation mark this land mass as particularly challenging for human survival, requiring a very precise set of subsistence and survival strategies specifically characteristic to this region. Archaeological and ethnographic evidence suggests that these survival strategies largely depended on varying levels of mobile pastoralism, supplemented by foraging, limited agriculture, and trade. Furthermore, the movements of these mobile pastoral communities throughout the region resulted in broad similarities in material culture and traditions (see Chapter 3: Sections 3.2; 3.4). Thus, I maintain that we may better understand these places and their communities as a highly-interrelated assemblage of topographies, which I call the Southern Levantine Drylands.

However, referring to these drylands as Southern Levantine is admittedly problematic. In modern archaeological parlance, the term Levant is used to denote the eastern Mediterranean littoral between Anatolia and Egypt, including modern Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, the West

Bank, Gaza, Cyprus, and sometimes parts of Turkey and Iraq. The term is often utilized as a neutral geographic label. However, its origins are in no way more neutral than the word desert. Levant derives from the French *levant*, the present participle of *lever*, “to rise.” It entered English in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries CE to either refer to the cardinal direction of east and associated lands or, more specifically, to the eastern Mediterranean.⁵ By the late nineteenth century, the term referred specifically to the Mediterranean littoral, Asia Minor, and Egypt, becoming particularly associated with the merchant communities of Beirut, Izmir, and Alexandria. During colonial rule, the term entered academic literature in discussions of archaeology or ancient history, primarily in Europe. In the twentieth century, the term became more associated with the northern Mandate states of Syria and Lebanon under French rule and Palestine (or Transjordan) referred to the British Mandate in the south. After 1948, many North American archaeologists continued to refer to the Southern Levant as Palestine/Transjordan and/or by other biblical or historically-oriented terms, such as Israel, Land of Israel, Canaan, Syria-Palestine, Holy Land, and Land of the Bible. Archaeologists in North America have only relatively recently embraced the term Levant in an effort to expand their research interests beyond biblical concerns (Burke 2010; Steiner and Killebrew 2014: 1-2; Suriano 2014: 9-10). In modern archaeological terms, the Levant is subdivided along a north-south axis, based on distinctions in urbanization and monumentality in the archaeological record and relative associations with biblical narratives. The Northern Levant comprises Syria, most of Lebanon, and parts of southeastern Turkey. The Southern Levant includes Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, and select portions of southern Lebanon, mainly along the coast (Suriano 2014: 10-21). Consequently, Levant is a problematic term that reflects a western gaze on the region. However, other terms that denote or include this region often present similar difficulties and/or may not adequately distinguish between this region and other parts of the ancient eastern Mediterranean and southwestern Asia.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I employ the terms Levant and Southern Levant, and understand the drylands along a similar north-south axis as Southern Levantine, on account of geographic proximity and the consistent, intense, and enduring intra-action between the drylands and the Southern Levant (see Chapter 3). However, that these places should be considered Levantine is a matter of position. Roman and Greek sources perceived the Southern Levantine Drylands along an east-west axis, constituting this region as part of Arabia. This association may appear as early as the fifth century BCE writings of Herodotus, but is unequivocal in the first century CE. Pliny the Elder and Josephus divided Arabia into two regions – (1) *Deserta*, the more northerly region, including the areas controlled by the Nabataean Kingdom in southern Jordan and the Negev and (2) *Felix*, the most southern part of the Arabian Peninsula corresponding roughly to modern Yemen (Bowersock 1994: 48). In 106 CE, the Roman Empire annexed *Arabia Deserta* from the disintegrating Nabataean Kingdom and reorganized the region as part of the newly created *Provincia Arabia* or *Arabia Petraea*. Claudius Ptolemy named settlements in this province from the Sinai (*Pharan*), southern Jordan (*Aila*, *Petra*, *Auara* and *Atru*), the Negev (*Eboda*), the Wadi Arabah (*Zoara*), the Kerak Plateau (*Characoma* and *Rabathmom*), northern Jordan (*Gerasa*, *Medaua* and *Esbuta*) and southern Syria (*Bostra*) (Ward 2008: 73-77). It is only in the fourth century CE that Greek and Latin sources begin to incorporate these areas within Palestine, rather than Arabia, presumably due to Byzantine administrative changes. However, it is a slow and somewhat inconsistent conversion in the

⁵ "Levant, n.1". OED Online. December 2016. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/107624?rskey=fJJdO6&result=1> (accessed February 06, 2017).

writings of contemporary authors, and a sixth century CE source still remembers that the southern Sinai was “once Arabia” (Tsafrir 1986; Mayerson 1984; Ward 2008: 77-86). However, three provinces of Palestine (*Prima*, *Secunda* and *Salutaris*) are attested in the fifth century CE, where *Palaestina Salutaris* likely refers to much of the former *Arabia Petraea* province. Later in the century, the name of the province was changed to *Palaestina Tertia*. In the sixth century CE, the northern border of *Palaestina Tertia* shifts further north to include the Kerak Plateau in Transjordan (Ward 2008: 86-91).

These administrative and perceptual changes indicate that nomenclature is a particular area of concern because notions of *how* to refer to these areas and *what* constitutes the extents of these areas at any given time fluctuates, both through time and by who is doing the defining. This is precisely because these notions are not self-evident, but inextricably bound to the biases of human stakeholders. I argue that understanding the changes in these definitions is critical as it demonstrates that understanding this region is not simply a matter of distinguishing between terrains and climates. Rather, we must consider this landscape through the lenses of multiple and diverse communities. Furthermore, I suggest that we should re-orient our focus to local communities, because the naming and defining of these places is mainly preserved through the lens of outsiders for whom these places were peripheral, exotic, and empty of people (or people who matter). The limited texts related to this region portray the drylands as hazy, barren wastelands of indeterminate size and scope, a place where strange things may happen and even stranger things may live. These are places of the supernatural, of gods, of demons, of visions. As such, these are places to be venerated, feared, avoided, and/or controlled, notions which extend to their inhabitants (when they are acknowledged to exist). The othering of this region is directly reflected in the multiple terminologies employed to refer to it, terminologies which may not necessarily correspond to changes in terrain and which often mask both the distinctions and the continuities in the landscape (see Chapter 2).

I emphasize that the way we understand places is always intimately interrelated with our geographic position to those places. Those who live outside a place see differently than those who live within. Those who live near a place see differently than those who live further afield. Those who have travelled through a place see differently than those who have only imagined a place. Those who remember a place as something they experienced in the past see differently than those who are still experiencing it in the moment. Even those who live within the same place may perceive the landscape differently. For example, T.J. Wilkinson proposes that the same “desert landscape” in the ancient Near East becomes two different landscapes, depending on who is doing the looking. Sedentary communities who live on the margins of the drylands or in oases see their constructed and landscaped space with contiguous grazing areas (home) and, beyond that, a great, inhospitable vastness (not-home). Conversely, mobile pastoral communities see multiple, different landscapes of wadis, dune fields, mountains, steppe lands, pasture lands, flora, and fauna (2003: 151). The “desert” then is as much a perception as it is a place, a way of seeing (see Chapter 1: Section 1.4).

I.III. (Re)Modeling the Iron Age II Southern Levantine Drylands

Yet, much of the scholarship on the drylands heavily relies on traditional or biblical perspectives of this region, in which the ancient states of Israel and/or Judah have settled or rule over the Negev and a (sometimes hostile) state called Edom exists in southern Jordan. These interpretations may not clearly differentiate between Israel and Judah, but often see a sharp

distinction between Israel/Judah and Edom, with discrete boundaries, identities, and religions. These models may posit, either explicitly or implicitly, a sharp political and social distinction between the Negev and southern Jordan, usually with a well-defined “natural” border at the Wadi Arabah. In these models, most Iron Age II Negev sites (including select sites in the northeastern Sinai) are identified as the expansion of Israelite/Judean communities into the region and/or index the rise of a Judean identity/state/kingdom comprising all or parts of the southern highlands west of the Jordan, the Shephelah (the southern lowlands between the southern highlands and the southern coastal plain), and the northern Negev in the tenth or ninth centuries BCE. These interpretations cite biblical texts and similarities in material culture to identify Negev sites as Judean in jurisdiction and population. However, these sites may also include small pockets of communities who might hail from Arabia or southern Jordan. In this model, local mobile pastoral communities may live in the interstices between the Judean settlements, perhaps facilitating trade. More recent analyses emphasize that Judah administered this region as a client-state of Aram-Damascus or Assyria and/or that the region is likely more ethnically diverse or complex than previously considered (Aharoni 1958; Finkelstein 2014: 98-100; Herzog 2016; Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004; Rainey 1984; Thareani 2007; 2014b; Zucconi 2007)

Conversely, early and traditional interpretations draw on biblical sources to characterize southern Jordan as a distinct bounded nation-state or kingdom called Edom, centralized at Tall Busayra (identified with biblical Bozrah) and ruled over by a king. The biblical texts utilize this nomenclature in the geographic sense to refer to the land, the social sense to refer to the people who live on that land, and in the political sense to refer to a centralized polity presided over by a king (Exod. 15:14-16; Num. 20:14-20; Deut. 2:4-9; Judg. 11:16-18; 1 Sam. 14:47-48, 18-22, 21:8, 22:9-10, 18-22; 2 Sam. 8:12-14; 1 Kgs 9:26, 11:15-16; 2 Kgs 3:4-27, 8:20-22). Relatedly, extra-biblical sources that mention Edom or Edomites include three letters written on ostraca at Tel Arad in the northern Negev, a seal impression from Umm al-Biyara in southern Jordan, and a seal from Babylon (Aharoni 1981: 17-18; 46-49; 71-74; van der Veen 2011: 79-81). Neo-Assyrian sources also refer to Edom, usually in the context of southern Levantine leaders paying tribute to their imperial rulers (Borger 1996: 18, 63; Fales and Postgate 1995: 4; Fuchs 1998: 73-74; Grayson and Novotny 2012: 64, 114, 131, 175, 192; Horowitz 1998: 68-85; Kuan 2016: 82-83; Leichty 2011: 23, 46; Saggs 2001: 219-221; Tadmor 1973: 148; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122-123). Archaeologically speaking, this polity is most often identified with several sites in the highlands of southern Jordan, currently dated to the late eighth-sixth centuries BCE. Notably, Tall Busayra features monumental architecture that implies a certain level of centralization and social stratification. Furthermore, some Assyrian texts refer to leaders of Edom as kings (Borger 1996: 18; Fuchs 1998: 73-74; Leichty 2011: 46; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122-123). Many early or traditional interpretations characterize Edom through this biblical lens as a centralized and urbanized kingdom, albeit with strong mobile pastoral elements (Bartlett 1989; 1992; Glueck 1934; 1939; 1947; Knauf 1995; Lindner and Knauf 1997; Lipiński 2013).

However, some recent interpretations employ a more nuanced perspective, based on more critical readings of the relevant texts, archaeological evidence, and ethnographic analogies. In these analyses, Edom is characterized as a loosely centralized political polity, which likely emerged in response to, or as a byproduct of, Assyrian imperial ambitions in the late eighth century BCE. These ambitions presumably focused on access to copper, Arabian and Red Sea trade routes, and pastoral by-products. However, the Assyrians did not demand direct involvement in local affairs. Rather, local mobile pastoral communities administered the region,

protected the trade routes, and delivered materials to the Assyrians as tribute payments, in exchange for relative autonomy and possibly access to property and prestige goods. Some scholars characterize this polity as a “tribal kingdom,” a “segmentary society,” or a “chiefdom” (Bienkowski 2000; 2002; 2007; 2009; 2014; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; LaBianca and Younker 1995; Porter 2004; Tebes 2006c; 2014: 14-19; 2016).

Early and traditional interpretations also model a hostile relationship between Judah and Edom. Certain biblical texts describe interactions between Judah and Edom in antagonistic terms (Judg. 11:17; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam 8: 11-14; 1 Kgs 11: 14-16; 2 Kgs 8: 20-22; 14: 7, 10; 2 Kgs 16:6) and an ostrakon at Tel Arad may imply a similar hostility (Aharoni 1981: 46-49). These interpretations identify relatively dense concentrations of southern Jordanian material culture in the eastern Negev as related to a violent incursion into the Judean Negev by the Edomite polity during the seventh century BCE. In this model, certain materials in the eastern Negev are associated with interloping Edomite settlers, and a network of fortified outposts in the northern Negev indexes the Judean response to the Edomite threat (Bartlett 1992; Beit-Arieh 1989; 1995; Govrin 1991: 18).

However, some alternative analyses increasingly interpret the highly-mixed assemblages in the northern Negev within the context of a newly expanded trade network with Arabia and the remote hegemony of the Assyrian empire. These models continue to reconstruct the northern Negev as predominantly under the control and/or populated by Judeans, but also observe that the long-distance trade of Arabian spices and local copper brought these populations into contact with local mobile pastoralist communities, itinerant traders, southern Jordanian communities and/or their associated material cultures. Consequently, these scholars may identify concentrations of southern Jordanian material culture in the eastern Negev as the result of trade and the demand for “foreign” goods, that the border of Edom shifted east of the Wadi Arabah through a mixture of military activity and “peaceful infiltration,” and/or as evidence of a higher level of ethnic diversity and interaction than previously imagined. In the latter models, this ethnic diversity may include local and non-local Judeans, Edomites from southern Jordan, and mobile pastoral communities that may have identified as Edomite, shared certain affinities with Edomite culture, or otherwise occupied a nebulous space between Judean and Edomite identities (Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; Finkelstein 1992; 1995; Tebes 2014a; Thareani 2010; 2014b; Uehlinger 2007; Zucconi 2007).

These more complex analyses of the Negev and southern Jordan as a diverse intersection of communities are significant and more properly address the material and social complexities of the region. However, many of these studies continue to rely heavily on anachronistic models of kingdoms or nation-states and/or static and discrete notions of ethnic identity. Relatedly, Piotr Bienkowski suggests that many of these distinctions between the Judean Negev and Edomite southern Jordan are conflating modern political and social identities and borders with the ancient past. He observes that the Wadi Arabah was not conceived as a discrete physical barrier between landscapes or people, much less a distinct political border, until after the formation of the modern border between Palestine and the Transjordan in the 1920s (which would become the border between Israel and Jordan in 1948) (2006: 20-22; 2007: 38-43). Accordingly, Bienkowski suggests that we might better understand this region from a phenomenological perspective, in which we seek to understand the landscape as local and ancient communities may have perceived this place. In this model, Bienkowski draws on archaeological evidence and Bedouin poetry to contextualize the region as inhabited by kinship-based communities (“tribes”) of varying mobilities, who employed a mixed and flexible system of subsistence strategies (2007: 36-38;

54-55). These communities continuously moved through the Negev, the Wadi Arabah, and southern Jordan, engaging with the landscape on material, social, sensual, sacred and political levels, vacillating between amicable and hostile terms in their relationships with each other and outside communities. As such, Bienkowski prefers to see the Wadi Arabah as a “landscape of movement and negotiation” (2007: 43), in which neither Judah nor Edom (however these entities are perceived) maintained centralized control on either side of the Arabah (2006: 16-20; 2007: 43-49; c.f. Bailey 2006). Similarly, Charlotte Whiting characterizes the Wadi Arabah as a thoroughfare, running both north and south and east and west. For example, the shortest distance to cross the Arabah lies in the area between En Ḥaṣeva (‘Ain Husb) and Tall Busayra. This area is also amply supplied with springs, which encouraged east-west movement in the recent (and likely also the ancient) past. Consequently, Whiting prefers to understand the Wadi Arabah as a “zone of interaction,” rather than a border (2007: 130).

Likewise, I suggest that the material complexity of the Negev and southern Jordan requires that we employ more complex lenses of analysis. I propose that we may better understand this complexity via Tim Ingold’s “dwelling perspective,” in which we carefully and methodically imagine how humans might have experienced the landscape from within (1993; 2000; see Chapter 1: Section 1.3). We might envision this region within spatial and experiential contexts as a collection of interrelated arid topographies (which I call the Southern Levantine Drylands), inscribed with the movements and senses of local mobile pastoral communities. Furthermore, Bienkowski observes that these communities were in continuous interaction with the remnants of the past in their midst, including millennia of ritual sites built by their ancestors and the material and social impact of Egyptian mining expeditions (2007: 48-49). This emphasis on context also requires that we engage with specific historical particularities and the contemporary world of the drylands at any given time. In the Iron Age II, this is a world in transition, in which the drylands experience increased interaction with neighboring regions, the remote hegemony of nascent empires, a greater flow of materials and communities through the land, and shifting senses of identity and community.

I.IV. (Re)modeling Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit

Similarly, the archaeological remains at Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit require more complex and nuanced interpretations, which allows for a more complex and nuanced understanding of the Southern Levantine Drylands in the Iron Age II. Both sites are typically interpreted through traditional or biblical lenses, where each site indexes the political reach of either Judah/Israel or Edom and/or the association of territory with discrete and static notions of ethnic identity. These interpretations neglect the significance of roadside ritual sites within the context of the Southern Levantine Drylands, the complex role of ritual in the foundation and maintenance of these sites, and the multiple, overlapping, and conflicting meanings imbued in these contexts. I suggest that we should analyze these sites as ritual nodes in a meshwork of empire, in which ritual is a site of intra-action and community. In the following discussion, I trace some of the modern contexts and interpretations of Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit, in order to demonstrate how the traditional analyses of these sites lack the necessary frameworks and nuance for properly interpreting both sites.

I.IV.I. Kuntillet 'Ajrûd

Archaeological remains at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd were first documented by English explorer Edward Henry Palmer (1840-1882) in 1870. Palmer recorded wall foundations, mudbricks, wood beams, and “large amphorae or jars...in sets of four,” one of which was incised with a “Phoenician aleph” (Palmer 1871: 342). He identified the site as a Roman fortress. In 1902, Czech explorer Alois Musil (1868-1944) visited the site with Bedouin guides. He described it as “once home to a small fort, the foundations of which are still visible, and is now used for burials” (Meshel 2012: 7) At one of the nearby wells, another group of Bedouin attacked Musil and his companions, reportedly “enraged that [Musil and his companions] would climb up to their holy place” (Meshel 2012: 8). Following the Six Day War and the Israeli occupation of the Sinai in 1967, Israeli archaeologists began surveying the region and made the first modern archaeological observations of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd. In his 1967 survey of the Sinai, Beno Rothenberg (1914-2012) identified the site as an Iron Age fort, dated to the eighth century BCE. Ze'ev Meshel also explored the site during a survey in the late 1960s and returned to specifically survey Kuntillet 'Ajrûd in 1970. This survey found the slopes of the hill covered in Iron Age IIB sherds (including sherds with incised alephs) and the remains of a rectangular structure visible on the summit (Meshel 2012: xvii, 3-9).

Meshel returned to excavate the site in October 1975, sponsored by the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, the Institute for Nature Conservation Research of Tel Aviv University, and the Department of Holy Land Studies of the Kibbutz Movement. Two more seasons followed in December 1975 and May 1976. Notably, Meshel opted not to grid the site and employ excavation squares “due to the small area of the site and the buildings” (Meshel 2012: xviii). Meshel also records that the excavated soil was dumped onto the slopes of the hill (following the collection of diagnostic sherds) in the first two seasons. In the third season, they dumped at a spot to the east of the main structure (Building A) and used this soil to cover the white-plastered rooms at the end of the excavation. Meshel published several preliminary reports from 1977 through the early 1980s, including a catalogue for the Israel Museum in 1978. At that time, the Israel Museum exhibited the finds as a part of the celebration of Israel's thirtieth Independence Day. Some of these objects remained on permanent display until 1994, when all the finds from Israeli excavations of the Sinai were returned to Egypt. Meshel continued to intermittently publish encyclopedia and dictionary entries in the 1990s. Analyses of the radiocarbon evidence, ceramics, and textiles were also published in the 1990s. However, the final publication did not appear until 2012 (Ayalon 1995; Carmi and Segal 1996; Beck 1982; Goren 1995; Gunneweg, Perlman and Meshel 1985; Meshel 1978; 1979; 2012: ix-xx; Meshel, Carmi, and Segal 1995; Sheffer and Tidhar 1991).⁶

Kuntillet 'Ajrûd is an enigmatic site with no clear parallels or single function. Consequently, the site is frequently interpreted in a myriad of ways, often in dialogue with biblical texts, historical considerations, and the dating of the site. These interpretations generally fluctuate between economic, military, and religious functions, perhaps favoring one as more significant than another at any given time. In early analyses of the epigraphic evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, the excavators and certain specialists drew heavily on biblical texts and historical consideration to date the site to between the late ninth and early eighth century BCE (Meshel 1978; 1979; Lemaire 1984; Weinfeld 1984). Later, Etan Ayalon published a ceramics

⁶ See Meshel 2012 for full bibliography.

report that confirmed this dating and favored the early eighth century BCE, largely based on comparisons to assemblages in northern Israel, especially Samaria (1995). In the same year, Israel Carmi and Dror Segal published the radiocarbon evidence, mainly derived from architectural beams made of Tamarisk. Their results also supported an occupation between the end of the ninth to the beginning of the eighth century BCE (Carmi and Segal 1995; 1996). The final publication largely re-printed the reports from the mid-1990s with little alteration, settling on an early eighth century BCE date (Ahituv, Eshel and Meshel 2012: 73; Ayalon 2012; Carmi and Segal 2012; Meshel 2012).

Meshel interpreted the site as a wayside shrine with some hospitality/fortress functions associated with Israel and/or Judah in the preliminary publications (1978a: 34; 1978b: 54) and a “border-temple” built “to demonstrate the control of Israel over the road and over Judah to its border” in the final publication (2012: 69). Other scholars may similarly characterize the site as a shrine, perhaps visited by “caravaneers” (Zevit 2001: 375 n. 47) or Israelite/Judean kings on war expeditions to the Red Sea (Weinfeld 1984: 124, 127). In the 1990s, some scholars attempted to dis-entangle Kuntillet 'Ajrûd from a religious/ritual function, preferring to identify the site as a wayside station for travelers (*caravanserai*) (Dijkstra 2001: 17-21; Hadley 1993; 2000: 106-120; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 247). In response, other scholars identified the site as a *caravanserai* with ritual elements (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 189; Horwitz et al 2012: 327; Schmidt 2002: 103). More recent interpretations tend to focus on the site’s economic and military functions. Alice Mandell maintains that Kuntillet 'Ajrûd was originally built by Israel as a military outpost or installation “to monitor travel and trade in the region” (2012: 132), which later developed into a “religious attraction” (2012: 137). Israel Finkelstein identifies the site as a “cult place along the desert trade routes” (2015: 22) and a “trade-station,” associated with Israel under the hegemony of Aram-Damascus (2014: 101). Tallay Ornan identifies the site as a “state-run trading post” (2016: 6) or “royal outpost,” under the auspices of Israel, which contained “a cultic architectural unit” (2016: 22).

Recently, Lily Singer-Avitz re-evaluated the ceramics, largely based on comparisons to sites in or bordering the drylands, and suggests down-dating the site to the late eighth century BCE (2006). She observes that the radiocarbon dating is derived from wooden architectural beams and some of the problems in radiocarbon dating from wooden remains, especially architectural elements (Singer-Avitz 2006: 197; 2009: 114-115). Based on these observations and the general similarity in layout between Building A at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and the fortress at Tell el-Qudeirat, Singer-Avitz associates Kuntillet 'Ajrûd with Assyrian activity in the southern coastal plain and western Negev, “part of the control of and supervision over the desert routes and inhabitants” (2006: 213). However, she identifies the ceramics assemblage as mainly Judean and suggests that the inhabitants of the site primarily came from Judah, noting that “desert nomads, who...controlled the trade routes” may also have resided at the site (Singer-Avitz 2006: 213).⁷

Generally, these interpretations are problematic for various reasons. They may employ imprecise or ill-defined vocabulary, especially when attempting to define the site’s ritual aspects. For example, they may refer to the site as a “shrine” without defining the term or properly

⁷ In response, Israel Finkelstein and Eli Piasezky analyzed the original radiocarbon evidence quantitatively. Given certain historical considerations, they concluded that the site was constructed before the advent of Assyrian activity in the drylands, sometime between 820 and 795 BCE, and abandoned in 730-720 BCE (2008). Additionally, Liora Freud responded to Singer-Avitz’s ceramics critique by citing parallels from earlier strata in the sites utilized by Singer-Avitz (2008). Singer-Avitz’s rejoinder cited significant methodological issues in these works (2009).

justifying why Kuntillet 'Ajrûd should be characterized as a shrine, rather than some other type of ritual site. These interpretations also often attempt to ascribe the site with specific Southern Levantine ethnic/national polities or identities (usually Israelite or Judean), despite the highly-mixed nature of the assemblage, the remote location of the site, and the methodological issues in ascribing ethnicity based on material remains or discrete categories, especially given the limitations of certain evidence. For example, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd is often associated with Israel or Israelites, partially based on the language of the inscriptions. The final report identifies the inscriptions as linguistically Hebrew, several of which are written in a Hebrew script with orthographic conventions associated with Israel. However, the final report also identifies the wall inscriptions as drawn in a "Phoenician" style. Furthermore, these inscriptions utilize orthographic conventions associated with Judah. The authors of the epigraphic analyses in the final report posit that the scribe who wrote the wall inscriptions was a Judean who had adopted a Phoenician script due to Phoenician influence on Judah at the end of the ninth century BCE (Ahituv 2014; Ahituv et al 2012: 121-127). More commonly, the authors of the final report and other scholars cite epigraphic evidence from the northern Levant, the coast, and northern Israel to characterize the use of the Phoenician script at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd as a widespread prestige practice, especially associated with Israel (Ahituv et al 2012: 126; Dijkstra 2001: 22; Mastin 2009: 100-105, Na'aman 2012: 308). However, other scholars identify the wall inscriptions as both Phoenician in script and in language, a mix of Hebrew and Phoenician, and/or admit the difficulty in precisely delineating between West Semitic languages with limited epigraphic evidence (Niehr 2015: 26-28).

Given its material complexity and roadside location near a water source in a remote and arid landscape, I propose more fluid and mutable interpretations of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, grounded in the site's relationship to the landscape and multiple stakeholders and communities. I emphasize that the site likely drew visitors from a diverse array of communities, both local and non-local, and served multiple functions simultaneously, possibly none of which may be characterized as "primary." However, the position of these remains near a water source and several roads in a remote and arid landscape, combined with the ritual elements of the site, indicates that Kuntillet 'Ajrûd partially served as a welcome respite from the harsh conditions of the drylands and an opportunity to thank the gods for a safe journey thus far and request continued protection in the rest of the journey. In this dissertation, I focus on the ritual aspect of the site, in which I characterize the site as a ritual node in a meshwork of empire. As such a node, this site funnels and generates multiple and overlapping potencies inherent to the landscape and the site's position within the landscape. More specifically, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd operated as ritual node in the context of the eighth century BCE, in which the Southern Levantine Drylands only indirectly experienced the increasing imperial dominance of Assyria over the Southern Levant for most of the century.

I.IV.II. Ḥorvat Qitmit

Archaeological remains at Ḥorvat Qitmit were first recorded by Tel Aviv University archaeologist Itzhaq Beit-Arieh (1930-2012). In 1979, Beit-Arieh led a survey, sponsored by the Israel Survey Society and the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, related to the excavations of nearby Tel 'Ira. This survey observed the remains of two structures visible on the hilltop and a large amount of Iron Age II vessels and figurine fragments scattered over an area of approximately 2000 square meters. Systematic excavation began in 1984. However, Beit-Arieh

reports that he collected “some 300 fragments of figurines and various fragments of cult vessels from the site and the surrounding area” between the site’s discovery and the beginning of excavations (Beit-Arieh 1995: xv). The excavations, sponsored by the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, continued bi-annually through 1986. Beit-Arieh published various preliminary reports of the excavations beginning in 1985 and continuing into the early 1990s, all of which identified the site as an “Edomite shrine” (1988; 1989; 1992). In 1987, Beit-Arieh also contributed to the Israel Museum catalogue accompanying the special exhibit on the “Edomite shrine” at Ḥorvat Qitmit. The final report, subtitled “An Edomite Shrine in the Biblical Negev,” appeared in 1995 (Beit-Arieh 1995: xv-xvi). The final report dated the site to the late seventh-early sixth century BCE, based on the ceramics. However, recent ceramics research at Tel Malḥata suggests that the site should be updated to the late eighth-early seventh century BCE, with preference for the early seventh century BCE (Beit Arieh 1995; Beit-Arieh and Freud 1995; Freud 2014; Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015).

Unlike Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd, interpreters of Ḥorvat Qitmit agree on the site’s ritual function and rarely analyze this aspect of the site beyond the interpretations of the site’s final report. Rather, most interpretations of Ḥorvat Qitmit focus on how to understand the site in the context of the ethnic identity of its visitors and/or how the site may or may not indicate fluctuations in territory between Judah and Edom. Beit-Arieh identified the site as Edomite based on ceramic and epigraphic evidence. The ceramic report emphasized parallels with sites in the Negev and southern Jordan, but posits a “relatively higher percentage of Edomite pottery” at Ḥorvat Qitmit, compared to other sites in the Negev (Beit-Arieh and Freud 1995: 254). Most significantly, the report cites parallels for the most frequent cooking pot type (83% of the cooking pot assemblage) at sites in southern Jordan and the eastern Negev, but most dominant in southern Jordan (Beit-Arieh and Freud 1995: 216, 254). This cooking pot style is generally referred to as Edomite or Edomite-style and associated with the movements of communities from southern Jordan based on the notion of foodways as an inherently conservative cultural or social trait (Freud 2014). Beit-Arieh also identifies the script on several fragmentary ostraca as Edomite in style. Some of these inscriptions also mention, or may mention, Qôš (or persons with Qôš-names). Qôš is a deity associated with Edom, usually presumed to be the chief deity based on the appearance of Qôš as the theophoric element in Edomite “royal” names. Beit-Arieh posits that Qôš may have been one of the main deities worshipped at Ḥorvat Qitmit and conflates Qôš worship with Edomite identity and political control (Beit-Arieh 1995: 258-268; 306; Dearman 1995: 121).

Beit-Arieh identifies Ḥorvat Qitmit as a state-run “shrine,” dedicated to the Edomite national god Qôš (and possibly an unnamed goddess). This shrine is staffed and patronized exclusively by Edomites. Furthermore, Beit-Arieh interprets the presence of an Edomite ritual site “in the heart of the Judaeen [sic] Negev” as evidence of a political and military expansion of Edom across the Wadi Arabah into the eastern Negev. In so doing, he cites biblical texts and ostraca at Tel Arad and Ḥorvat ‘Uza that may suggest a hostile relationship between Judah and Edom (Beit-Arieh 1995: 311-313).

In an early critique of this perspective (based on the preliminary publications), Israel Finkelstein refers to the “poor architectural remains” at Ḥorvat Qitmit as evidence against the notion that the site was state-run (1992: 166). Rather, Finkelstein identifies Ḥorvat Qitmit as a “popular cult place for wayfarers and for the local Arabs [mobile pastoral communities]” (1992: 166). Finkelstein emphasized the extramural roadside location, parallels from other periods, and the material complexity of Ḥorvat Qitmit to identify its patrons as “pastoral nomads living in the area (that is, the Arabs of the Assyrian texts) and traders and other wayfarers, who visited it

along a caravan route” (1992: 159). Later, he identifies the site’s visitors as “caravaneers of various origins – Arabs, Phoenicians, Judahites, Edomites, and others” (Finkelstein 1992: 166). He associates the founding of the site with the emergence of the Arabian incense trade and Assyrian domination of the Negev via proxies in Judah. Similarly, Andrew Dearman draws on biblical descriptions of mobile pastoral communities in the Negev to posit that visitors to the site may have been “a mixture of Edomite, Amalekite, Arab, Qedarite, and Kenite” (1995: 122-123). Beit-Arieh rejected this interpretation in the final publication. He cites a lack of non-Edomite “foreign” pottery and doubts that mobile pastoral communities would have produced the diverse ritual objects and vessels at the site. Finally, he claims that the “beliefs and religions of the peoples of the region were rigidly separated” and expresses skepticism that a single ritual site would serve multiple communities (1995: 310, n. 9).

Subsequent discussions of Ḥorvat Qitmit often mention or focus on the site’s purported Edomite affiliation, either to affirm, refine, critique, or deconstruct Beit-Arieh’s interpretation. These discussions are typically focused on how to identify ethnicity and interpret the relationship between communities in the Negev and southern Jordan, usually in the context of political, military, or economic matters (Beck 1996; Bienkowski 1998; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; Edelman 2010: 97-98; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 382-385; Uehlinger 2007; Zevit 2001: 142-149; Zucconi 2007: 246-248). As in the similar discussions of Kuntillet ’Ajrûd, these interpretations problematically employ imprecise, ill-defined, and anachronistic ritual and political/ethnic terminologies that gloss over the material and social complexities of Ḥorvat Qitmit and the drylands more broadly.

Like Finkelstein, I suggest that Ḥorvat Qitmit’s extramural roadside location is a particularly significant feature and should figure prominently in our interpretations of the site. I also agree that the site likely attracted a diverse array of visitors from multiple communities, both local and non-local. However, I propose that we re-envision these visitors at the intersection of multiple, overlapping, entangled, and conflicting identities, whether political, social, economic, or ethnic/cultural/kinship based. I also suggest that we consider Ḥorvat Qitmit itself as a site of community, recursively generating and transforming communities. I further maintain that we re-situate Ḥorvat Qitmit within the milieu of the traditions, trends, and movements specific to the drylands, as well as the political, economic, and social elements of the seventh century BCE Southern Levant. I focus on ritual practice and model Ḥorvat Qitmit as a ritual node that funneled the potencies of ritual, movement, liminality, and community in a meshwork recursively shaping and being shaped by the remote hegemony of the Assyrian empire and an increasing integration with the Southern Levant.

I.V. Mapping the Terrain

Re-modeling Kuntillet ’Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit requires tacking between textual, archaeological, and ethnographic evidence, as well as multiple theoretical frameworks. In the rest of this dissertation, I focus on different types of evidence within each chapter, but always with an eye towards what came before and what will come. I suggest that the complexity of these sites within the complexity of this landscape requires a similarly complex and flexible approach, in which we dispel with rigid categorizations and employ a fluid sense of interpretation.

In “Chapter 1: Methodological Movements in the Southern Levantine Drylands,” I outline the methodological framework of this dissertation. I suggest that we may best understand the Southern Levantine Drylands through the language of mobility and movement. Moreover, I

stress that methodological movements grounded in contouring, intersecting, entangling, embodying, and tacking provide the most suitable means for the proper interpretation of these concepts and materials. I roughly divide my major methodologies and concepts into three categories: religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, and memory and materiality. I define each of these concepts and their entangled relationships to each other and review the most relevant and constructive literature related to each concept.

In “Chapter 2: Strangers in a Strange Land Ways of Seeing and Intra-action in the Southern Levantine Drylands,” I explore the physical landscape of the Southern Levantine Drylands juxtaposed against the witness of the ancient textual sources. I demonstrate that this is a diverse land of multiple regions, in which access to water served as the primary factor in the experience and perception of the land. I outline the spaces and analyze the language and concepts used to refer to them. Then, I discuss the nature and features of the etic written sources, which are mainly derived from Pharaonic Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, and biblical contexts. I analyze these sources for their perceptions of the land and the peoples who lived within the land. In so doing, I show that these texts shared a common perception of the drylands as a liminal landscape, infused with a fantastic potency and strangeness.

In “Chapter 3: Contextualizing a Palimpsest Landscape – Meshworks and Networks in the Southern Levantine Drylands,” I analyze the archaeological remains of the Southern Levantine Drylands, especially the sixth through second millennia BCE, and reconstruct this landscape as a material palimpsest. I explore how indigenous mobile pastoral communities engaged with this landscape through pilgrimage and the visible past, constructing their own notions of memory, identity, and liminality. I utilize the metaphors of meshworking and networking to interpret this landscape on a macro-scale and a series of micro-scales through these millennia. I demonstrate both continuity and change within these communities and the constant intra-action of the past and present with the materialities of the landscape. In so doing, I emphasize movement and flows of phenomena along roads and through sites, exploring liminality and connectivity at multiple intensities and orientations. This chapter lays the archaeological groundwork for understanding the region in the Iron Age II (early first millennium BCE) and how the trends both persisted and transformed.

In “Chapter 4: Ritual on the Rural Road – Empire, Connectivity, and Senses of Liminality in the Late Iron II Southern Levantine Drylands,” I focus on the archaeological remains from the Iron Age II, especially the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. I contextualize these remains within the traditions of the drylands, the political and social realities of the greater Southern Levant and the rising hegemony of the Assyrian Empire. As in Chapter 3, I utilize the metaphors of meshworking and networking to understand this landscape on macro- and micro-scales and specifically focus on Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as ritual nodes in these mesh/networks. I characterize Kuntillet 'Ajrûd as a ritual node in the remote northeastern Sinai during the eighth century BCE and Ḥorvat Qitmit as a ritual node within the network of northern Negev settlements in the seventh century BCE. I also focus on ritual and movement through these sites and how these elements intra-acted with their position in the landscape and their temporal contexts.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes my major arguments and proposes avenues for future research. I suggest that future research may explore in more detail how the early first millennium BCE presages later time periods and how imperial domination in the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, and Ottoman periods continues and more fully develops these trends. Further research might also continue to trace the themes of movement, ritual, and empire through

these later periods. I also suggest that the relationship between ritual and liminality is useful in analyzing other Southern Levantine contexts. Most significantly, I stress how movement, ritual, and liminality are productive concepts for thinking about the complex relationship between rurality and connectivity. These concepts allow us to re-envision “marginal” landscapes as places of interaction, change, and innovation, and to imagine new worlds.

Chapter 1: Methodological Movements in the Southern Levantine Drylands

This chapter explores some of the fundamental methodological movements that inform my analysis of the Southern Levantine Drylands in the early first millennium BCE. To begin, I have drawn rough divisions between the major methodologies and concepts – religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, memory and materiality. However, I do so merely as a heuristic device as my analysis immediately re-integrates these divisions in order to explore the intimate and entangled interrelation of these concepts. These are concepts as movements, as phenomena, flows among flows in which the flows intersect and bend against each other (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; De Landa 2000). These concepts as phenomena do not come into being distinct from each other. Rather, they become in relation to each other, what Karen Barad refers as “intra-action” (2003: 815). This is a complex assemblage of different movements – contouring, intersecting, entangling, embodying, tacking – that always intertwine and mesh together. In the first section of this chapter, I explore these movements as they inform the concepts of religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, and memory and materiality. Then I move into the concepts themselves and their interrelations. In doing so, I demonstrate a few ways in which these movements and concepts may relate and help to interpret the Southern Levantine Drylands.

Movement and mobility have become increasingly recognized within archaeology and the broader social sciences as recursively interactive with human perspective and cognition, and, thus, particularly meaningful. Especially relevant to this dissertation, recent mobilities research even challenges the inherently sedentist assumptions within the social sciences that treat stability, meaning, and place as normal and distance, change, and placelessness as abnormal or romanticized. Rather, much of this work seeks to understand the multiple and diverse senses of mobility and movement in human experience and the different ways mobility and movement are experienced and understood by different actors. This emphasis on movement is in recognition that mobility and movement, whether in the physical, social, or representative senses, is a defining aspect of human experience. This research also examines how mobility and movement are fundamental to relations of domination and the production and distribution of power. Like any resource or material, mobility and movement are accessed differentially and narratives about mobility and movement recursively form and are formed by social relations and historical and cultural particularities (Beaudry and Parno 2013; Creswell 2010; Joyce 2015; Joyce and Gillespie 2015; Sheller and Urry 2006).

Mobility and movement are especially relevant to the Southern Levantine Drylands as mobile pastoral communities constitute the principal extent of human occupation of the region since the Neolithic. These communities shaped and were shaped by this landscape and their experiences of movement across and through this landscape recursively interacted with notions of religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, and memory and materiality throughout the millennia. In this dissertation, I demonstrate that the notions engendered by these experiences played a fundamental role at Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit. Thus, I contend that a methodological framework embedded in movement facilitates a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the Southern Levantine Drylands and the Iron Age ritual activity at Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit. In the following section, I begin with specific movements – contouring, intersecting, entangling, embodying, and tacking – as ways to understand

phenomena and the interrelatedness of religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, memory and materiality.

1.1. Contouring, Intersecting, Entangling, Embodying, Tacking

The first movement is to separate, outline, contour – The Contours of Religion and Ritual, The Contours of Landscape and Liminality, The Contours of Memory and Materiality – indicating both what the section is about and the necessarily incomplete nature of the endeavor. To mark or form the contour of something is to outline it, to define or bound it, to map it. As such, contouring is also implicitly an unrefined act. It is a rough sketch, a summary, because it is constrained both spatially and temporally. The moment one defines something it is frozen in the moment in which it was defined and hardened into a specific shape dictated by medium or sculptor. It no longer represents that which is always changing, always in flux. Thus, contouring is necessarily always brushing with broad strokes, erasing and filling in the shapes and colors as needed. Contouring is also a limited metaphor though since it infers viewing only from above or outside, not from within or through. It cannot track or follow the paths between and within the contours. In so doing, it privileges a single viewer with a specific viewpoint.

There are several conceptual movements though that may supplement and enrich the contours. Intersecting, for example, draws attention to the overlap between contours. To intersect is to meet, to cross, to pass through. It is a point in which two or more lines merge and are each line simultaneously. This device has had great influence in feminist critique. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in order to refer to the ways that socially constructed categories like gender, ethnicity, or class interrelate and also manifest as inequalities. This approach emphasizes the multiple identities of individuals and the inherent fluidity of those identities, recognizing that the study of societies cannot be reduced to simplistic and monolithic categories (Crenshaw 1989; 1991; Collins 1991). Intersectionality is also implicitly interrelated to another facet of feminist epistemology – situated knowledges or standpoint theory. Standpoint theory acknowledges that every human is situated in a specific standpoint used to socially construct their world and that inequalities between groups create radical differences in their standpoints. These standpoints then, by their very nature, are partial and never complete. Rather than advocating that we should or can overcome our biases, standpoint theorists encourage the cultivation of different, multiple, and overlapping standpoints, in order to create a greater objectivity, much like how a journalist will seek the perspective of multiple witnesses and sources in order to create the most complete portrait of the story (Haraway 1988; Harding 2004; Wylie 2004). Intersecting in feminist methodology then speaks to the inherent overlap in human identities and perceptions contained within each person. However, intersecting is also a useful device in addressing the social as identity is inherently a social construct and identities may shift and change within and across communities.

Similarly, entangling is another constructive conceptual tool. Entanglement speaks to the complex matrix of intersecting identities, social milieus, histories, geographies, and materials in which human existence is ensconced.¹ Pierre Bourdieu refers to something similar as the *habitus* – a force comprised of a recursive relationship between discourse and doxa that is able to “generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their

¹ For a recent in-depth archaeological engagement with entanglement, see Hodder 2011; 2012.

outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (1990: 53). For Bourdieu, the *habitus* is an irreducible instance of practice that is centered in the “socially informed body” and its senses, which includes both the traditional five senses and more abstract senses – senses of duty and responsibility, reality, beauty, propriety or what is commonly referred to as “common sense” (1977: 124).²

However, Bourdieu has been rightly critiqued for failing to take into fuller account the role of agency and agents within the *habitus*. Accordingly, Bruno Latour proposes that instead we may conceptualize the social matrices in terms of networks and actors/actants. Originally drawing on the metaphor of the fishing net, Latour defines the social as interrelated traces of associations, as “string[s] of actions where each participant is treated as a full-blown mediator” and all the actions “do something,” thus creating new strings, new associations (2005: 128). Furthermore, these mediators – actors or actants – are defined as any entity that makes a difference, that does something – such as “authorize, block, render possible, forbid and so on” (2005:72). Thus, mediators are necessarily defined as both humans and non-humans and agency is distributed through both. Similarly, Jane Bennett refers to the “force” or the “vitality” of things, the power of nonhumans to act as “agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own” (2010: viii). For Bennett, nonhumans are “vibrant matter,” lively, affective, and effective. It is in this ability to affect and effect, rather than in the intentionality of human subjects, that Bennett identifies agency. Effects result from “a swarm of vitalities at play” and the relations between these vitalities (2010: 32). Bennett and Latour allow us then to reconfigure human interaction and the *habitus* in terms of agency and the material world, an “active and distributed materialism” (Latour 2005: 129).

Unfortunately, the rise of computer and other technical networks often detracts from the original fishing net metaphor that Latour intended. According to Tim Ingold, the metaphor of the net in the industrialized world has increasingly lost its association with its original meaning as “a tangle of interwoven and complexly knotted strings” (2007: 80). Instead, the net(work) is seen as “a complex of interconnected points,” through its association with the realms of modern transport and communication, especially information technology (2007: 80). Ingold observes that this model emphasizes the points over the lines that connect them, rendering the model static and flat. The lines are merely a means to an end. Ingold is keen to retain the movement and activity of lines, and thus offers “meshwork,” borrowed from Henri Lefebvre, as an alternative. In this model, the entanglement of the lines is emphasized because the “lines of the meshwork are the trails *along* which life is lived” (2007: 80-81). Latour also notes this problem and offers tentative alternatives with the terms “work-net” or “action-net,” emphasizing the constant fluidity and activity of the concept. However, he is hesitant to replace the word entirely, given its long usage and an avowed averseness towards jargon (2005: 131-132). Relatedly, Carl Knappett also sees how networks are problematic. However, he wonders how something ungainly like meshwork is to be analyzed. Accordingly, Knappett sees networks as useful analytical paradigm precisely because networks may be broken down into constituent heterogeneous entities and analyzed at multiple scales. For Knappett, meshworks and networks are “experiential and analytical dimensions, respectively” (2011: 40), in which we are entangled in unintelligible matrices of

² *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie Kabyle* was originally published in French in 1974, then translated into an English edition, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in 1977. A follow-up, *Le sens pratique*, was originally published in French in 1980, then translated into an English edition, *The Logic of Practice*, in 1990.

being or meshworks, and we make these meshworks intelligible through the analysis of identifiable and bounded assemblages or networks (Knappett 2011: 149-190).

Whether one uses network or meshwork, both terms share the same concern with the complexities of intersecting and entangling. However, as nouns, their lexical configuration implies a static thingness, rather than the fluidity and movement that both authors wish to emphasize. Thus, in order to emphasize this fluidity and movement, it may be more appropriate to parse them as hyphenated continuous verbs: net-working, mesh-working. Furthermore, these terms need not be opposed to each other. Rather, we may understand meshworking and networking as complementary in the sense of multiple scales of analysis. In Chapter 3, I explore how the meshworking metaphor may be particularly conducive to a macro-scale analysis of a landscape while the networking metaphor allows for the analysis of particular segments or points in a landscape and their relationships to other segments or points.

This emphasis on movement and flow also implicitly speaks to the relationship between bodily experience and cognition, which, for humans, is always entirely enmeshed with each other. This notion of embodiment has developed somewhat independently across several intellectual traditions, but usually in response to, or contra, dichotomized distinctions between mind and body, subject and object, inherent to Cartesian traditions. Notions of embodiment seek to re-situate human cognition, “the thinking subject,” within its bodily context, by emphasizing that human experience, cognition, and perception are simply unintelligible without the body, that we are and always have been our bodies, and we cannot fathom the world or the things in it in the absence of our bodies and our senses (Crossland 2010: 389). In fact, David Morgan suggests that the corporeal body “hosts” belief, because it is the body that shapes, colors, tunes, tastes and performs belief (2009: 59). In other words, it is the body that feels and senses and through these senses and feelings humans are linked to one another, animals, living things, places, and objects.

In archaeological theory, thinking about embodiment has been most widely informed by Bourdieu’s practice theory, the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and feminist studies of gender and sexuality (Crossland 2010: 387-391). Bourdieu’s entire concept of *habitus* is grounded in the notion that the body is a “fundamental dimension of the *habitus*... inseparable from a relation to language and time” (1990: 72), that practical sense is “immanence in the world” (1990: 66). In Merleau-Ponty, human consciousness is constituted interactively and intersubjectively both with the body and the world (1962; 1968).³ In feminist thought, the relationship between sex and gender has been deconstructed, and, accordingly, the category of ‘the body’ destabilized. This emphasizes that all bodies are not the same, but rather are historically and socially contingent and always in flux (Butler 1990; 1993; Bynum 1995; Fausto-Sterling 2000; Grosz 1994; Joyce 2004; 2008a).

This sense of movement within the notion of embodiment is most cogently deployed by Tim Ingold. Ingold characterizes embodiment as “a movement of incorporation,” wherein the body is not a thing, but the process of being and becoming – the necessarily temporal moving of the life-cycle – wherein “forms themselves are generated” (2000: 193; See also Ingold 1990: 215). Thus, embodiment should not assume a bounded and unified physicality or sense of self. Rather, the condition or state of being a person – personhood – may be understood and experienced as relational and distributed. That is, the sense of self may not be limited to the

³ *Phénoménologie de la perception* was originally published in French in 1945, but was only translated into an English edition, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, in 1962. *Le Visible et l’invisible, suivi de notes de travail* was originally published in French in 1964, and then translated into an English edition, *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, in 1968.

confines of a single body of flesh, but may be recursively constituted through an array of means, materials, and relationships embedded within the *habitus*. Just as distinctions between mind and body, subject and object, are blurred, blurring distinctions between inside and outside further allows for the historical and social contingency of bodies and/or selves (Crossland 2010: 392-393; Fowler 2004; Gillespie 2001; Joyce 2004; 2008a).

Similarly, Morgan uses the term body in both a corporeal and a social sense as a “bounded set of members that work together to endure...a body with a face that has the ability to reveal the unseen depth” (2012: 5). In this model, the body is multi-scalar and may include single corporeal beings, families, those living in shared space, and a various array of social identities (2012: 5). Thus, our senses of self or selves, what we may call identity or identities, are constituted through the body, our senses, materials that are distributed and circulated away from the body, and our relationships with others and the world around us. As such, sense of self, identity, is inherently intersectional and multiple, embodied and relational, a way of being a person in a community (Meskell and Preucel 2004).

Thus, embodiment is a way of knowing or a way of seeing. Vision and visibility are often reduced to matters of physical optics and lines of sight. However, seeing is actually an embodied, emplaced, and embedded practice, intimately interrelated with the other corporeal senses. Moreover, Morgan suggests that seeing (and not-seeing) is also a learned, routinized practice – a “way of seeing” – that organizes elements into spheres of relating and understanding. Seeing is composed of a matrix of relationships between the seer, fellow seers, the seen, their physical, social, and historical contexts, and the protocols and practices that govern the relationship between the seers and the seen. As such, seeing is active and interactive, singular and communal. One learns to see and sees through their *habitus* and the intersection of communities to which they are tied (Morgan 2005: 3-6; 2012: 55-83). Seeing is always embodied, recursively interacting with all the senses in order to process, relate, understand, and react. Seeing selects, organizes, engages, focuses, remembers, and forgets. Seeing makes visible and renders invisible. Seeing intuits and imagines. Seeing mediates belief and boundaries. Seeing makes worlds (Morgan 2005: 6-15, 48-52, 54; 2012: 48-54; 80-83).

Thus, the inherent interrelatedness of these conceptual devices and methodologies requires that my analysis employ a series of intersecting dialectical tackings – moving back and forth along interweaving cables of understanding. Clifford Geertz conceived of this tacking as between the “experience-near” – those concrete, experience-embedded concepts by which members of a group understand themselves and their actions, and the “experience-distant,” – those abstract, interpretative concepts employed by the ethnographer (1974: 28-29, 43). Alison Wylie envisions this more specifically as a diagonal tack, but notes that such intellectual zigzagging necessarily requires moving back and forth along several spatial dimensions simultaneously – diagonally, vertically, and horizontally. The vertical tack requires reflection on one’s own experience-near concepts and practices and the pre-understandings that constitute such contexts. Meanwhile, the horizontal tack recognizes that subjects may also employ their own sense of “experience-distant” self-understandings at various levels of abstraction, which investigators must also grasp and interweave into their analysis. Wylie further notes that this sort of tacking between distant and near is also complicated by the implicit inferential nature of the tacking. We draw on both practical knowledge and general theories in order to formulate a hypothesis about the subject(s) of our enquiry, a process of inference that requires a critical examination of whether specific experience-distant hypotheses drawn from one context may apply to other contexts and to what extent these analogies can be made (1989: 8-10; 2002: 163-165).

Tacking across and through these various methodologies and themes allows a multi-scalar analysis – in which we may consider multiple levels of social interaction and relations of power within specific spatial and temporal contexts – that acknowledges the complex interplay between cooperation and conflict, heterarchy and hierarchy, and individuals and groups (Lopiparo 2005). This will demonstrate both what is particular to the Iron Age Southern Levantine Drylands and its communities and what this region shared with the rest of the Southern Levant and the Near East. It will also demonstrate the various and complex styles of subsistence and community-building within the Southern Levantine Drylands as specific communities manage their particular environments, histories and traditions, and interactions with each other and outsiders.

Such multi-scalar tacking has rarely been applied to research on the Southern Levantine Drylands, especially in the Iron Age. Rather, this research often focuses on the dominance of and/or interdependence between specific areas within the Southern Levantine Drylands and their presumably more complex urbanized neighbors in the Southern Levant, Mesopotamia, and Egypt (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein 2014; Finkelstein and Piasetsky 2006; Rosen 2009a; Tebes 2004; 2006c; Thareani 2014a; 2014b). However, Ben Porter (2013) recently considered the various intersecting layers of complexity within the marginal communities of semi-arid west-central Jordan in the Early Iron Age. Drawing on elements of practice theory, complex adaptive systems thinking, and resilience studies, Porter demonstrates how marginal/ized communities are often sites of innovation and creativity, shifting back and forth between egalitarian and hierarchical modes as the need arises, precisely because of their precarious circumstances. Thus, the analysis of such communities necessarily requires a similar sense of flexibility and complexity.

1.2. The Contours of Religion and Ritual

I suggest that it is through the lenses of religion and ritual that may we may fruitfully employ flexible and complex analyses in the Southern Levantine Drylands, as these phenomena are themselves intricately fluid, complex, and, most importantly, pervasive. However, religion and ritual are notoriously difficult terms to discuss precisely because of this pervasiveness and complexity. Many attempts at definition are too narrow and thus exclude institutions, systems, and activities that are commonly cited as religious. Other definitions are too broad, resulting in the erosion of the terms as analytic categories altogether (Bell 1992; 1997; Saler 2008). Given these difficulties, defining these terms must necessarily involve elasticity in thought and flexibility in approach. It should always be understood that any definition is likely to be lacking in some capacity, but that these concepts are such intrinsic aspects of human experience that some effort must be made to characterize them. Furthermore, these phenomena are fundamental and integral to the experiences of those who lived and traveled in the ancient Southern Levantine Drylands. They are the structured and structuring praxes, the habitus, the ways of seeing that characterized these places in the ancient past.

However, religion and ritual remain difficult to define and parse out for the scholar. Part of the ambiguousness of the term religion stems from its principal derivation within a European and Christian context. The word first appears in English in the thirteenth century CE where it refers exclusively to monastic living. However, early sources link the etymology of the word both with the Latin *relegere*, ‘to read over again,’ understanding the original sense of religion as ‘painstaking observance of rites,’ and with the Latin *religāre*, ‘to tie up or back, to restrain, bind

fast, to make fast, secure,' where religion is understood as "that which ties believers to God."⁴ Modern academic definitions of religion often include some component or variation on these early senses, but the innately manifold nature of religion in a global context is such that a consensus is likely never to be reached.⁵ Religion is even more problematic of a term when considered in ancient contexts (as well as in many contemporary contexts). The emergence of such a concept as a distinct and separate category is relatively late and implies an epistemological distinction between the sacred and the quotidian that would have been inexplicable to people in the ancient past.⁶

Due to the epistemological difficulties inherent to the study of religion and the tendency of traditional scholarship to emphasize belief and texts, some scholars focus on ritual as a possibly more coherent and accessible subject. However, the concept of ritual is also debatable and has equally been contracted or stretched beyond recognition. The term derives from the Latin *rītuālis*, 'relating to religious ceremonies'⁷ and *rītus*, 'religious observance, ceremony, mode of behaviour [sic], practice, usage.'⁸ As such, the elements of ritual are commonly described as repetitive, formal, structured, anachronistic, symbolic, and performative. However, these lists of traits are never as comprehensive as we would like and tend to invariably exclude some ritual activities or conversely include activities that are arguably not religious in nature (Bell 1997: 138-169). Furthermore, these discussions falsely dichotomize religion and ritual as belief vs. practice, not unlike the Cartesian mind/body, subject/object opposition. In this model, religion is defined in the abstract as the system of beliefs and symbols, whereas ritual acts as the mere enactment of those beliefs and meanings. In archaeology, as in other disciplines, this is derived from a long line of anthropologists and sociologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who understood religion as reflecting a preexisting framework of belief and cognition, which was then expressed through ritual symbols, activities, and materials (Fogelin 2007: 57).⁹

However, religion and ritual are not so easily distinguished from each other, and more recent analyses have begun to embrace the fluid interweaving of these concepts (Keane 2008a; 2008b; King 2010; Meyer 2006; Morgan 2012; Vásquez 2010). For example, Webb Keane casts religion as inherently material, noting that even something supposedly as abstract as belief must in fact be materially constructed because ideas are not transmitted telepathically. Rather, they "must be exteriorized in some way, whether in words, gestures, objects or practices, in order to be transmitted from one mind to another" (Keane 2008a: 230). Birgit Meyer stresses that religion should be understood as "a practice of mediation that organizes the relationship between experiencing subjects and the transcendental via particular sensational forms" (2006: 18). These

⁴ "religion, n." OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/161944?redirectedFrom=religion&> (accessed March 06, 2013); "relegate, v." OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/161936> (accessed March 06, 2013).

⁵ In academic discourse, defining and describing religion as a distinct category has been a fraught and protracted endeavor, and several scholars have critiqued these efforts for an implicit bias towards Western ontologies and epistemologies. See Fitzgerald 2000; Dubuisson 2003; Masuzawa 2005; McCutcheon 1997.

⁶ See Brück 1999 for a thorough critique of the ritual-secular dualism in archaeological interpretation, in which she argues that not only is the categorization problematic for the ancient past, but that our notions of practicality and rationality are also inappropriate and need to be set aside when considering the past.

⁷ "ritual, adj. and n." OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/166369?redirectedFrom=ritual> (accessed March 07, 2013).

⁸ "rite, n." OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/166351> (accessed March 07, 2013).

⁹ See Bell 1997 and Vásquez 2010 for a fuller discussion.

“sensational forms” – bodily practices, collective rituals, and physical objects – work to invoke and organize access to the transcendental and create and sustain links between practitioners (Meyer 2006: 9). Similarly, David Morgan understands religions as “communities of feelings or sentiment that are held together by shared forms of intuition, imagination, and body practices” (2012: 6). These scholars demonstrate the fundamental enmeshing of these phenomena within each other, allowing for more multi-scalar and intricate ways to imagine their workings.

Archaeologists have also begun to more fruitfully understand the relationship between religion and ritual as more complex and recursive than previously imagined. In so doing, these studies often note the distinctive perspective that archaeological analysis may offer. If we consider what Yorke Rowan calls the “human need to materialize the ethereal, render concrete the immaterial and to provide tactility to praxis” (2011: 1), as well as the tendency of the material to shape, maintain, and transform the immaterial, then archaeology is uniquely primed for the study of religion and ritual (Boivin 2009: 274; Pollard 2009: 348).¹⁰ Yet, these perspectives have made little impact on studies of ritual and religion in the Southern Levant, especially in the first millennium BCE. Rather, many of these works favor single-dimension descriptive explanations, often predicated on a dichotomy between belief and practice and/or a heavy emphasis on biblical texts (Ackerman 1992; Albertz 1994; Albertz and Schmidt 2012; Alpert-Nakhai 2001; Aufrecht 1999; Bodel and Olyan, eds. 2008; Clifford 1990; Burke 2011; Day 2000; Daviau 2001; Dever 1999; 2005; Hadley 2000; Hess 2007; Mattingly 1989; Mazar 2000; 2015; Miller et al, eds. 1987; Smith 2003; Zevit 2001). However, the inherent complexity and fluidity of the Southern Levant suggest that this region is especially ripe for more nuanced analyses of religion and ritual. Furthermore, this same complexity and fluidity may provide new understandings of the complexity and fluidity of religion and ritual.

In line with the above discussions of movement and flow, I suggest that Thomas Tweed’s more fluid and mutable understanding of religion may be particularly useful and especially relevant to the aims of this dissertation. Tweed sees religions as “confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries” (2006: 54). This definition is particularly amenable to this study, because it is grounded in his work on the religious life of transnational migrants and addresses three key themes: movement, relation and position, which I also wish to address (2006: 5). Thus, Tweed is careful to pluralize religion in order to emphasize that interpreters never encounter “religion-in-general,” but rather are “situated observers encountering particular people in particular contexts” (2006: 55). Moreover, he emphasizes two orienting categories of metaphors that are also relevant to this context – (1) the aquatic metaphors of confluences and flows to express that “religions are not reified substances but complex processes,” (2) and the spatial metaphors of crossing and dwelling to suggest that “religion is about finding a place and moving across space” (2006: 59).

These spatial metaphors are particularly conducive to my questions about ritual in the Southern Levantine Drylands as their alignment highlights position, movement, and place. Dwelling may initially appear static. However, it involves three overlapping practices of doing: mapping, building, and inhabiting. These practices emplace and orient persons and communities in time and space, transform places and spaces, and “allow devotees to inhabit the worlds they construct” (Tweed 2006: 82). Conversely, crossing refers to the ways in which religions mark boundaries and prescribe and proscribe movements across those boundaries, whether they be

¹⁰ See Joyce 2011; Fogelin 2007; Rowan 2011; Swenson 2015 for histories of archaeological research on religion and ritual and current theoretical models.

territorial, corporeal, or cosmic (Tweed 2006: 123). For Tweed, the confluent processing of the organic and the cultural that characterizes religions are always done in the context of place. Thus, it might be said that religions *are* spatial-temporal orienting and the mapping and boundary marking of space and place (Tweed 2006: 85-98, 111). In this, Tweed emphasizes that religions are not objects, not nouns, but “active verbs linked with unsubstantial nouns by bridging prepositions: *from, with, in, between, through,* and, most important, *across*” (2006: 79). Concurrently, Tweed also imagines the differentiated spaces associated with religions as processes, rather than things, which are both generated and generative. That is, places also do, also make, as they are done, are made (Tweed 2011: 121-123).

Tweed’s hydrodynamic model for understanding this spatial-temporal orienting, religion as flows of seeing and moving, is also especially useful at it allows for a less constrained discussion of ancient practices and experiences in which modern distinctions between the religious and the non-religious are entirely alien. In the ancient Southern Levantine Drylands in particular, this model also more closely resembles the sinuous intra-actions of a liminal and marginal landscape, its communities, and the flows of materials, persons, and ideas coursing through it. However, this is not to take a completely totalizing tack either and gloss over distinctions and differences sometimes implied by metaphors of amorphous flows and a porous world. Recently, Manuel A. Vásquez suggested that we may avoid the “excessive anti-structuralism of hydraulic models” by supplementing flows with networks (2010: 296-97). Based on his own work with Latino immigrants in the United States, Vásquez points out how mobility and flows also necessarily implies containment, closure, and boundedness, with stopping, funneling, and concentrating movement, movement as power (2010: 294-95; 297). For Vásquez, the metaphor of the intersecting nodes of the net, the net as “capillaries,” allows for a way to analyze shifting and multi-centered flows of power and material within the context of their specific structured and structuring praxes (2010: 299). In combining flows and networks, Vásquez speaks to the need to tack back and forth between explanatory mechanisms, as no single trope can encapsulate the complexities of human experience, especially something as multi-dimensional and pervasive as religion.

Accordingly, a similar nimbleness and flexibility is also required in our analysis of ritual. Catherine Bell has profitably refocused the discussion of ritual from the composing of static and rigid lists of traits to asking “how activities, in their doing, generate distinctions about what is and is not acceptable ritual” (1992: 80-81). Bell draws from Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory by adding “sense of ritual” – the learned but now unconscious mastery of ritual practice – to Bourdieu’s list of senses. This shifts the discussion to interrogating the process of ritualization – “a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities” (Bell 1992: 74). The “privileged differentiation” is created synchronously in both the body and the environment. The “ritualized body” – the “body invested with a ‘sense’ of ritual” – creates an environment arranged to the schemes of privileged differentiation and is, in turn, created and maintained through this environment (Bell 1992: 98-99).

That ritualization necessarily implies a material context is also evident if we consider how ritualization is also the act of making something sacred. In his work on Neolithic and Iron Age Europe, Richard Bradley demonstrates how everyday household objects and domestic transactions were ritualized, i.e. made sacred, in the act of ritual performance. These objects gained an enhanced significance, not necessarily because they were inherently special or unique, but because of the ways in which they were deployed. For example, between 1000 and 100 BCE,

human and animal remains and household artifacts were deposited in re-used silos at the thresholds of houses in the Rhineland, Belgium, northern France and southern England. There are no morphological or ornamental distinctions between the household artifacts in these silos and those found elsewhere in domestic contexts. However, their careful deposition in contexts associated with burial, subsistence, and the household likely indicates the transformation of these quotidian objects into sacred entities (Bradley 2003: 19-20). In this analysis, Bradley emphasizes both the significant role of objects and context in ritual and how ritual may act as a vehicle for transformation through privileged differentiation.

Accordingly, religion and ritual may be best construed as “intra-action,” phenomena that come into being in relation to each other, multiple overlapping and intersecting practices, embodied and embedded in place and the material. Moreover, these are practices that are both privileged and quotidian in the context of the ancient past, and their intersecting with landscape, memory, and materiality reveals both conscious and unconscious ways of seeing and being in the world. Conversely, seeing as embodied interpreting demonstrates how seeing and all that is or may be (in)visible is fundamental to religion and ritual. If, as Tweed says, religions *are* spatial-temporal orienting and the mapping and boundary marking of space and place, then religions are ways of seeing and ritual constitutes this way of seeing. Thus, if we are to understand the human experience of the Southern Levantine Drylands, we must employ the lenses of religion and ritual, lenses informed and generated through the materialities, memories, and various intersecting senses of liminality of the landscape. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, these privileged but quotidian practices progressively inscribed the stark landscape with monuments and materials that remained visible for millennia after their construction, and impacted ways of seeing and experiencing these places, as well as the senses of ritual of their inhabitants and visitors alike.

1.3. The Contours of Landscape and Liminality

Much like religion and ritual, Barbara Bender characterizes landscape as subjective, volatile, and variable (2006: 303-304). Initially used in English to refer to a genre of perspectival painting “representing natural inland scenery,” landscape – literally “land shaped” – is now also commonly defined both as “a view or prospect of natural inland scenery” and “a tract of land with its distinguishing characteristics and features, esp[ecially] considered as a product of modifying or shaping processes and agents.”¹¹ These definitions suggest that the term landscape is restricted to descriptions of the physical environment, distinct from human presence, and visualized as something that humans may merely gaze upon or modify according to their needs. Accordingly, many early landscape-based archaeological and geographical studies focused on positivistic analysis of particular landforms and water features, their floral and faunal constituents, attendant climatic conditions and the human use and modification of these elements (David and Thomas 2008: 28-32). These types of analyses are critical in understanding past and present human behaviors. However, they have also been critiqued as limited and overly functionalistic in their approaches. Thus, while it is agreed that humans certainly do assess and modify their physical environment according to their subsistence needs, this relationship is far more recursive and complex than positivistic analysis of the physical environment alone reveals. Accordingly, many archaeologists have begun to explore alternative methodologies (David and Thomas 2008: 32-38). Yet, this positivistic approach to landscape remains common in Near

¹¹ "landscape, n." OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/105515?result=1&rskey=6sJoRW&>.

Eastern archaeology, especially in the archaeology of the Southern Levant (Rambeau 2010; Wilkinson 2003).

For the purposes of this study, I employ phenomenologies of landscape, which first entered the archaeological literature in the mid-1990s (Gosden 1994; Ingold 1993; Tilley 1994; 2008). These approaches are firmly centered in a sense of embodiment. Rather than render the land as abstract, neutral, passive, or discrete, these approaches seek to understand landscape as intricately interwoven with the human body and consciousness (Bender 2006: 304-305; Rainbird 2008; Tilley 1994: 11-14; 2008). Christopher Tilley stresses that it is through “the very physicality of the body” that we understand and experience the landscape (1994: 16). As such, landscape is not just a physical environment as perceived via our eyes, but it involves all the bodily senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.¹² Ingold goes even further and asserts that landscape is “not ‘nature,’” as in not ‘out there,’ as opposed to the ‘in here’ of our mental representations. Rather, he rejects the division between inner and outer worlds and emphasizes that landscape is with us, not against us, because we *are a part* of the landscape and the landscape *is a part* of us (Ingold 1993: 154). Thus, Ingold defines ‘landscape’ via a ‘dwelling perspective,’ that is, as “the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them” (1993: 156).¹³

Edward S. Casey also points to the interrelatedness of the body and landscape when he identifies the body as kinds of places – an “intra-place” – a place containing our internal organs which orients and organizes us within its current spatiality – and an “inter-place” – a place that moves from place to place, “the place between places” (2000: 196). For Casey, place is rather distinct from geographic or perceptual space, in which all positions are determined in relation to each other and to the whole and structured by a coordinate system. Rather, place is highly relational and experiential. Landscape is a character of place then, in “its most encompassing and exfoliated format,” in which “there is always a visible (or at least sensed) horizon” (Casey 2000: 197-98).

That we may consider landscapes and bodies along a continuum has also been explored archaeologically in Peter Whitridge’s 2004 analysis of prehistoric Inuit communities in Alaska. Whitridge sees place as a “spatialized imaginary” that can be sited along a continuum of scales from the microscopic to the cosmological, where each scale is invariably complex and bleeds into the next. While analyzing different scales at once may not be possible, we can tack back and forth between these scales (Whitridge 2004: 214, 228-229). In terms of the prehistoric Inuit communities of Alaska called Thule, Whitridge cites five different scales of “Thule Places” – (1) landscapes, seascapes, and icescapes, (2) settlements, (3) houses, (4) things, and (5) bodies (2004: 229- 239). In marking landscape within a multi-scalar context, Whitridge also implicitly draws on the themes of tacking and movement.

Tilley also draws attention to the significance of movement in the bodily experience of the landscape, noting that “all perceptive experience has a bodily basis in movement through and exploration of the landscape” (2008: 39). Tilley observes that the mere process of moving through the landscape, whether it be swimming across a river or climbing a mountain, irrevocably alters our perception. Furthermore, this perceptual shift is continuous and multi-dimensional. Movement makes bigger or smaller that which is seen, higher or lower that which is heard, stronger or softer that which is smelt, and it “continually inscribes itself within

¹² For a discussion of the rise in importance of sensory perception in archaeology, see Fahlander and Kjellström 2010.

¹³ See also Ingold 2000: 185-193.

the body, from sweat to heart rate to a straining of joints, tendons, and muscles” (Tilley 2008: 39-40). Ingold broadens this theme by defining landscape itself through movement and the passage of time. The experience of landscape and moving across it necessarily involves the experience of time passing and all that has happened before, is happening now, and will happen in the future. Moreover, the landscape itself is also moving, as the movements of humans, animals, plants, weather and climate, and even plate tectonics constantly transform and are transformed by the environment (Ingold 1993: 157-164; 2000: 198-201). As such, this movement is the intra-relational becoming of time, bodies, and landscapes, a becoming perhaps most dramatically described by Manuel De Landa as a single flow of “matter-energy,” in which “rocks and winds, germs and words, are all different manifestations of this dynamic material reality” (2000: 21). Yet, this is not to say that there are no differences between the phenomena or their movements in this flow of matter-energy. Rather, different movements at different scales are always at work in this flow – interactions and feedback, bifurcations and accumulations, meshworks and hierarchies (De Landa 2000: 14-16, 32-33).

Furthermore, mobility and movement of persons are not simply a matter of a universal corporeal experience of the landscape, either. Rather, just like the landscape, mobility and movement are socially constituted and filtered through human perception and the *habitus* of particular persons. Moving through landscapes is experienced differently by different people at different times, and these experiences are steeped in different bodies, different historical and cultural particularities (Bender 2006: 303). Thus, any phenomenological interpretation of the landscape must take into account historical, cultural, and environmental particularities of any given place in any given time and consider how what came before continually impacts what came later, whether or not the agents involved consciously recognize all the particulars of that relationship. This is not an easy or straightforward task so observations derived from the simultaneous invoking of time and place are necessarily contingent, what Bender has described as “always in process and in tension” (2006: 304).

If landscape is always in flux, always variable and volatile, then what does it mean to say that a specific landscape is liminal, as I suggest for the Southern Levantine Drylands? Derived from *limes*, Latin for “threshold,” the notion of liminality is itself also about flux, the variable, and the volatile. Analogous to crossing the threshold of a doorway, liminal states, places, times, and peoples are in-between, and like landscape, are in-transition. However, the notion of liminality also implies a certain potency to this in-betweenness, which is lacking in accounts of landscape. Arnold van Gennep originally hypothesized a profound significance to the act of transitioning in 1909’s *Les rites de passage* (English: *The Rites of Passage*), singling out those rites that mark the passage of the individual or social group from one status to another as particularly evocative and intense in the human experience.¹⁴ Distinguishing three different stages in these rites – separation, transition, and incorporation – van Gennep pointed to rites of passage as acutely potent and pervasive human practices in which the individual or social group is radically transformed in the process. Moreover, van Gennep maintained that the middle stage – the liminal phase – is especially potent due to its transitioning, ambiguous condition, that sense of neither here nor there (1960: 10-11, 15-25).

Though spatial liminality was not the focus of *Rites of Passage*, van Gennep’s metaphor is entirely derived from a spatial context, and his first step is to compare the potency of

¹⁴ *Les rites de passage* was originally published in French in 1909, and then translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle E. Caffee as *The Rites of Passage* for the University of Chicago Press in 1960. See Thomassen 2009; 2012 and Kapferer 2008 for reviews and bibliographies of van Gennep and the reception of liminality in academic circles.

transitioning rites to the potency of transitioning spaces, what he calls, “territorial passages,” or “neutral zones” – spaces between claimed territories, such as deserts, marshes, and forests (1960: 15-25). He observed:

...the territories on either side of the neutral zone are sacred in relations to whoever is in the zone, but the zone, in turn, is sacred for the inhabitants of the adjacent territories. Whoever passes from one to the other finds himself physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds (1960: 18).

Van Gennep rests this potency in/of transitioning on his characterization of sacredness as itself variable, contextual, and above all, relational, a concept which he called “the pivoting of the sacred” (1960: 12). Derived from the Latin, *sacer*, “sacred” may be more generally defined as something that is “dedicated, set apart, exclusively appropriated to some person or some special purpose,”¹⁵ or, as Catherine Bell (1992) might call it, a “privileged differentiation.” However, Van Gennep suggests that sacredness is not an inherent, fixed quality in any particular thing, person, or place. Rather, sacredness is more like a series of “magic circles” rotating and shifting, fluctuating with the perspectives of persons and communities, a way of seeing (1960: 13).

Thus, some scholars have wondered that if landscape is inherently variable, volatile, even relational – defined by bodily movement, by transitioning – then, in a certain sense, are not all landscapes liminal (Andrews and Roberts 2012; Crouch 2012)? However, liminality is more than transitioning and ambiguity. Liminality is also about the power of transitioning and ambiguity, a power which is derived in part from the threat of possible danger that ambiguity may bring. Ambiguous things are unpredictable things, and unpredictable things have the ability to disrupt, to change the status quo, to make new worlds. Thus, they are inherently dangerous. Bjorn Thomassen even notes that “without reintegration liminality is pure danger” (2009: 22). That the world is always changing, that all landscapes are variable and always in flux is not relevant to liminality, because liminality, like the sacred, is a way of seeing. It depends entirely on who is doing the looking. Actors may not see or deem significant fluxes in the landscape. Actors may see some landscapes as more familiar and thus safer, less powerful than others. That is, embodied actors experience landscape differently and relatively. It is this relativity and the ambiguity, unpredictability, and danger perceived of certain landscapes that imbues such landscapes with a sense of liminality over others in the perspective of particular agents.

Spatial liminality, like all senses of liminality, is also intersectional and multi-dimensional. Recently, Thomassen observed that thinking about liminality necessarily requires a dialectical tacking along four dimensions – that of the subject, that of time, that of space, and that of scale. That is, different types of liminality may operate simultaneously, in various combinations, and at various degrees (2009: 16-18). For example, Thomassen points to Victor Turner’s work on pilgrimage as a possibly fruitful avenue for exploring how spatial liminality intersects with other senses of liminality (2009: 15-16; 2012: 28). Beginning with 1964’s “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage,” Turner became the first scholar to draw on and develop van Gennep’s work in a significant way.¹⁶ In this work, followed by

¹⁵ “sacred, adj. and n.” OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/169556?redirectedFrom=sacred> (accessed January 10, 2015).

¹⁶ Unfortunately, van Gennep’s work was largely overlooked in France and almost entirely unknown outside of France until its translation into English in 1960. Malinowski and Claude Levi-Strauss made some allusions to it, but

several others, Turner focused more particularly on the liminal period in rites of passage – which he referred to as a period of “betwixt and between” – and the persons progressing through this period, who, by definition, are similarly ambiguous and dangerous. To that end, he paid special attention to the special relationships that existed between persons going through this liminal rite together. Since they are perceived by others as ambiguous and dangerous because they exist in a netherworld between social categories, Turner contends that liminal persons relate to each other with a sense of *communitas*, an “undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, non-rational, existential, I-Thou” sense of interaction (1974: 274; 1978: 250). Thus, Turner’s treatment of liminality points to its intersecting temporal and embodied dimensions, and as a force recursively shaping and shaped by communities and social relationships.

Careful to note the spatial contexts of certain liminal rites and their significance throughout his work, Turner turns to spatial liminality most prominently in a chapter on pilgrimage in 1974’s *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* and to a lesser extent in a 1978 monograph co-authored with Edith Turner – *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. Characterizing pilgrimages as “a connected network of processes each involving a journey to and from a particular site” (1974: 189), Turner sees pilgrimage as an initiatory experience principally defined by a bodily transversal of space that echoes the temporal structure of rites of passage – “beginning in a familiar place, going to a Far Place, and returning to a Familiar Place” (1974: 182, 195). In moving toward the Far Place, the route becomes progressively “sacralized” and “secularized” (1974: 182). As the pilgrim draws closer to their sacred destination, perhaps encountering an ever increasing number of sacred sites and objects along the way, they also may encounter more dangers (bandits, wild animals) and more distractions (markets, fairs) that interfere with the sacrality of the journey. Ultimately however, the route itself becomes sacred, as does every landmark along it and every step taken on it. Turner then demonstrates how a landscape can become liminal by virtue of its position between what is near and what is far and the dangers it contains. Moreover, there is a complex interplay between the liminal land, the body moving across that land, and accessing ritual power (Turner 1974: 182-183; 197-198).¹⁷

Admittedly, Turner’s discussion lacks a great deal in complexity and fails to address other significant dimensions and experiences of pilgrimage, such as economics, identity, or social modeling (McCorriston 2011: 21-28). Moreover, Turner’s work also assumes that pilgrimage is similarly situated and experienced by every pilgrim, asserting that, in its senses of liminality, pilgrims experience a sense of *communitas* with each other (1974: 166-167). Turner characterizes pilgrimage as a generally monolithic rite in the experience of the pilgrim. More recent works demonstrate that pilgrimage may also be marked by a high degree of contestation. To that end, critiques of Turner by Bonnie Wheeler and Simon Coleman prefer to see pilgrimage as marked by a confluence of *communitas* and competition, mixed agendas, and multiple bodily and spatial experiences and discourses. Thus, even pilgrims on the same pilgrimage at the same time would experience the rite in dramatically different ways (Eade and Salnow 1991; Coleman 2002; Wheeler 1999).

Turner was the first scholar to engage with it in any significant way, and, thus, bring it into mainstream scholarship. See Turner 1964; 1969, 1974 (Thomassen 2009; 2012; Kapferer 2008).

¹⁷ Unfortunately, Turner ultimately preferred to refer to pilgrimage as merely liminal-like, or *liminoid*, due to his perception that pilgrimage is voluntary and thus somehow innately distinct from obligatory rites of passage. However, I would point out that, for the pilgrim, pilgrimage is no more voluntary than any other ritual obligation. Like Thomassen, I contend that liminality does not pivot on a sense of obligation and remain defining it mainly with sense of ambiguity and danger (Thomassen 2012; Turner 1974, Turner and Turner 1978).

Most significantly, Turner's discussion assumes that pilgrimage derives its liminality from a highly intermittent back and forth movement between a particular familiar and fixed profane place – “home” – and the unfamiliar and distant sacred place – “not-home.” Recently, Joy McCorrison challenged this model by pointing toward the role of pilgrimage in South Arabia, where mobile pastoralist practices played a key role in many communities. McCorrison more broadly defines pilgrimage as “a journey to a sacred place to participate in a system of sacred beliefs” (2011: 19), and, as such, focuses on the movement of pilgrimage as one of its defining characteristics (2011: 51). She shows how, in traditional South Arabian mobile pastoralist communities, pilgrimage sites are not unfamiliar and distant places, but rather the central and unifying nodes around which these dispersed communities congregate and enact and affirm their identities, what McCorrison refers to as a “pilgrimage-making society” (2011: 50). In a pilgrimage-making society, pilgrimage is not a disruptive and intermittent activity, but rather that which constitutes the community. In other words, pilgrimage sites for these communities are each “home,” rather than “not-home.” Thus, McCorrison has little use for either of Turner's notions of *communitas* and liminality or the tripartite sectioning of ritual into pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal, favored by Turner and van Gennep.¹⁸

Yet, it is precisely through this elaborated sense of pilgrimage favored by McCorrison that we may understand liminality in a more complex sense than that enumerated by Turner. For both Turner and McCorrison, the defining act of pilgrimage is movement from one place to another, and I contend that that is what makes it liminal. Liminality is the movement of transitioning, whether that movement be the embodied transitioning through a landscape, the social transitioning in position or rank, or the experiential transitioning between ways of knowing. Karen A. Hutchins has recently pointed to this complex sense of movement inherent to liminality, suggesting that the liminal state should be understood not only as moving between states, but also as “the interplay between the two states” (2013: 153). In this, she notes the flexibility or ambiguity in identity that this affords and how one may shift back and forth simultaneously between states and identities (2013: 153).

Moreover, Hutchins also identifies the complex interplay between ambiguous land and ambiguous people in her discussion of “Parting Ways,” a de-facto settlement for families of the “wandering poor” in eighteenth century Massachusetts. Hutchins' analysis reveals the intersecting senses of liminality at Parting Ways through (1) the perceived inbetweenness of its location, (2) its name, (3) its unsuitability for agriculture, and (4) its marginalized residents. Traditionally, towns in Massachusetts claimed a corporate responsibility for their poor. However, the influx of immigrants from Europe and neighboring towns in the eighteenth century placed a financial strain on traditional systems of aid. Thus, more towns began forcing out some of the

¹⁸ Indeed, both Turner's and van Gennep's attempts to universalize initiation rites, initiatory models of ritual, and liminality have been met with some well-deserved critique. For example, Caroline Walker Bynum points to the clear lack of a tripartite social drama of separation, transition, and incorporation in the conversion and Eucharist stories of late medieval women, as opposed to its foundational structuring of similar stories of late medieval men. Rather, women's stories are marked mainly by continuity and occasionally some slow, gradual change, as it is allotted to them by men. That is, given their marginalized and restricted position, late medieval women simply did not have the power to choose to go through the radical process of separation, transition, and incorporation. Bynum contends that such a process then, at its very core, is constructed through a specific lens of power and privilege; that the dichotomy between “structure and chaos, from which liminality or *communitas* is a release, is a special issue for [male] elites, for those who in a special sense *are* the structures.” (Bynum 1991: 49) Bynum further observes that the use of female imagery in male stories demonstrates that women were perceived as eternally liminal by men, but this is not necessarily how women perceived themselves (Bynum 1991: 34-49).

indigent before they could establish themselves. This resulted in a perpetual state of limbo for these families as they made their way from town to town. Eventually, some of these families were allowed to build their own homes at Parting Ways, a parcel of uninhabited pasture land outside the boundaries of three nearby towns, including Plymouth, and at the intersection of two major roads. However, the land the houses were built on remained under the ownership of Plymouth. Thus, by the standards of eighteenth century Massachusetts, these families remained in limbo and on the move, even after they built permanent dwellings (Hutchins 2013: 153-159). Later, these families eventually sold their homes to several recently freed black families, demonstrating a continuity in the sense of liminality attributed to the place, even as certain demographics of the population shifted (Hutchins 2013: 162).¹⁹

If we consider liminality as movement in all its possible senses, pilgrimage, whether practiced by sedentary or mobile communities, may constitute a particularly salient way to understand some of the possible senses of liminality in the Southern Levantine Drylands in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. A long tradition of pilgrimage-making by indigenous mobile pastoral communities, similar to that seen in Southern Arabia, is archaeologically visible in the Southern Levantine Drylands dating back to the Neolithic (See Chapter 3, Section 3.2). Furthermore, there is ample textual and archaeological evidence in later periods for Jewish, Christian, and Muslim pilgrimage in the Southern Levantine Drylands by both sedentary and mobile communities (Manginis 2016; Kerkeslager 1997; Tate 2007; Ward 2008; 2014). The appearance of possible pilgrimage activity marked by both sedentary and mobile communities at the roadside sites of Horvat Qitmit and Kuntillet 'Ajrûd may indicate both the continuity of these traditions and their changing forms as the result of the movements of transitioning people through a transitioning land in a transitioning time. Pilgrimage may be understood as a both a liminal rite and that which interacts recursively with the lands and its people.

Hutchins' discussion also touches on another aspect of liminality entangled with movement and landscape that is relevant to the Southern Levantine Drylands – that of roadways and crossroads. Roadways have been the subject of anthropological and archaeological research in an array of contexts, but are especially concentrated within research on the Roman Empire and its provinces, prehistoric Europe, pre-Columbian Latin America, and the American Southwest. These works may employ textual evidence and a variety of methods to document and map large networks of roads, including reconnaissance survey, intensive survey, remote sensing, geographic information systems, and excavation. These works are often documentary in nature, but some employ theoretical perspectives, derived from political economy, phenomenology and spatial theory, practice theory and structuration, ethnogeography and others (Snead, Erickson and Darling 2009: 4-17; See also Alcock, Bodel and Talbert 2012; Riemer and Förster 2013). In pre-Roman Near Eastern archaeology, research on roads has mainly concentrated on the Achaemenid road system, Mesopotamia and Syria in the fourth and third millennia BCE, and Egyptian desert roads (Briant 2012; Gates-Foster 2012; Förster and Riemer 2013; Snead, Erickson and Darling 2009: 5; Ur 2003; 2009; Wilkinson 1993; 2003). There has been very little work done on roads in the Southern Levant or the Southern Levantine Drylands, even in the realm of mapping. Most

¹⁹ This entangled and recursive relationship between liminal spaces and the liminality of the people within those spaces has also been common to so-called “borderland studies,” which largely grew out of the analysis of interactions on the Mexican-U.S. border and conjoining regions. These works may draw on post-colonial theory and Homi Bhaba’s notions of “cultural hybridity” and “third space.” See Alvaraz 1995; Naum 2010; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Truett 2004; Weber 1995 for examples and discussions of some of the major methodological turns in this literature.

roads are presumed to have existed based on the placement of sites, references in texts, and the evidence for later Roman roads. Yet, roads often enter into discussions of the Southern Levantine Drylands, especially in the early first millennium BCE, due to their role in trade and mining. However, the roads are rarely more explicitly discussed. Rather, roads are reduced to assumed conveyances that brought goods in and out of the Southern Levant and Egypt (Avner 2002: 127; Dorsey 1991; Finkelstein 1992; Beit-Arieh 1989; 1992; 1995: 1-3; Meshel 2000: 99-117; Tsoar and Yekutieli 1993).

However, roads were an embedded and significant feature of the Southern Levantine Drylands intimately interrelated with its senses of liminality. In their recent edited volume on roads in the broader Saharo-Arabian Desert, Heiko Riemer and Frank Förster consider desert roads as both 1) intricate networks, “capillaries”²⁰ that allow the passage of peoples, goods and communication, and 2) as embedded linear structures – an integral part of the physical landscape, both shaping and shaped by the land (Riemer and Förster 2013: 30-32). Furthermore, these roads are increasingly inscribed over time with their own specific set of features – animal and wheel tracks, provision depots, and various types of road markers, including stelae and petroglyphs (Riemer and Förster 2013: 39-42). These features inscribe the landscape and sediment its potency. Jennifer Gates-Foster also observes that such features allow for those journeying along these roads to imagine the travelers – and I would add perhaps the supernatural entities – that came before them (2012: 203).

Some scholars may attempt to define and/or differentiate between different kinds of roadways – roads, trails, paths, tracks (Earle 2009; Whitridge 2013). However, I define roadways more broadly as continuous inscribed lines of various widths winding through and between landscapes, indexing mobility and movement. Peter Whitridge refer to roads as “nested in landscapes,” observing that landscapes literally come into being through the channeling of movement produced by roads (2013: 230). As in Casey’s treatment of the interrelatedness of the body and landscape, roads are both an intra-place and an inter-place. They are places, both distinct from and incorporated within landscapes, simultaneously connecting and dividing landscapes and places. They are also places between places – places between regions, towns, neighborhoods, homes and businesses, and the places they bisect, the places on either side of the road. As places between places, they direct and even restrict moving through the landscape. Crossroads appear as a particularly powerful choice, the place to decide in which direction to continue, the place between all the places. Roadways and crossroads merge spatial in-betweenness with movement, doubly invoking senses of liminality. Desert roadways and crossroads are layered with another sense of liminality through their marginal and arid setting, thus generating a tension between connectivity and movement with rurality and place. This suggests that ritual on roadsides in the Southern Levantine Drylands may have been seen as especially potent practices, entangled in layers of spatial liminality.

Thus, liminality – as movement, transitioning, ambiguity, tension – provides an avenue into understanding how ritual and landscape in the Southern Levantine Drylands may have recursively interacted. Furthermore, liminality infers the inherent entanglement of religion, ritual, and landscape with memory and materiality, both in the Southern Levantine Drylands and in other contexts. Liminality inherently speaks to the role that “memory work” – the social practices that create memories and the interrelationships of those social practices with humans and materials – plays in configurations of the *habitus* and social mesh-working (Mills and

²⁰ T.M. Ciolek. Old World Trade Routes (OWTRAD) Project (Canberra: T.M. Ciolek/Asia Pacific Research Online) <<http://www.ciolek.com/owtrad.html>> (February 2013)

Walker 2008: 4). Most significantly, liminality is a multi-scalar and overlapping way of seeing, an embodied and emplaced disposition, a sense. Liminality nests within and swathes the other senses, including even other senses of liminality. Senses of liminality recursively interact with other senses and each other, creating conflict and tension. Ultimately, liminality is power.

1.4. The Contours of Memory and Materiality

Memory is a bodily sensation and an experience of embodiment. The act of remembering is what links us to our experiences, each other, things, and places. That memory is an intricately interconnected and connecting phenomenon with perception and the social was first explored in detail by Maurice Halbwachs in 1925's *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (English: *The Social Frameworks of Memory*) (Olick and Robbins 1998: 106).²¹ Following the works of his mentors, Henri Bergson and Émile Durkheim, Halbwachs developed the concept of “collective memory,” that individuals can only remember and recreate the past through their specific temporal-social-spatial context, and that this context shapes what and how they remember. Conversely, those in the same social context will share similar experiences as well as the interpretation and memory of those experiences, based on their shared knowledge of the past. Halbwachs' work is especially relevant here for suggesting that the construction and preservation of memory hinges on our interaction with the social, material, and spatial frameworks related to that memory.

In more recent decades, scholars have rightly critiqued Halbwachs for emphasizing the collective as an abstract entity, distinct from and over and above individuals. However, Halbwachs' emphasis on the interrelatedness of memory and the social remains forceful, and many scholars have broadened and complicated this relationship under the term, “social memory” (Fentress and Wickham 1992; Hendon 2010: 10-12; Mills and Walker 2008: 5-10; Olick and Robbins 1998). As such, memory is configured as a social process, something made as much as experienced – memory work (Mills and Walker 2008: 4). Memory interacts recursively with temporal, spatial, social, and material contexts through the acts of recognizing, remembering, recalling, reshaping, forgetting, inventing, commemorating, and transmitting (Fentress and Wickham 1992: x, 26-31; Hendon 2010: 9; Mills and Walker 2008: 4, 7-8.). Thus, memory is both an individual and a social experience, one that even allows individuals to “remember” events they did not experience or people they have never met (Hendon 2010: 9).

The body is fundamental to this process. In his seminal 1989 work, *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton described memory work as primarily occurring through two types of social practice: incorporating and inscribing. Incorporating practices are bodily activities – facial expressions, postures, touching, speaking – that may transmit information, either intentionally or unintentionally, to those immediately present. Inscribing practices are the (usually) intentional recording, storing, and retrieving of information in a material form – books, newspapers, photographs, digital formats, and so on. While Connerton notes that these categories sometimes overlap – the very act of writing is in itself an incorporating practice – he makes the distinction in order to highlight that social memory is hinged on the experiences and unconscious habits of our bodies (1989: 72-78). Incorporated social memory may be transmitted through overt practices, like commemorative ceremonies that seek to re-enact or re-present some historical event through the participation of our bodies. Concomitantly, it may be more subtle and routine.

²¹ *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, originally published in 1925 in *Les Travaux de L'Année Sociologique*, was re-issued by Presses Universitaires de France in 1952, and then translated into English by Lewis A. Coser as *On Collective Memory* in 1992.

For example, the rise of a specific table decorum in Europe transformed the ostensibly simple act of eating into a treatise on artistic refinement, ethical value, and the knowledge of a shared past with a specific social class (Connerton 1989: 41-71, 82-84). Relatedly, Marcel Mauss observed that some bodily practices – walking, sitting, standing – may seem natural, but are actually “techniques of the body,” or as Edward Casey would have it – body memory (Mauss 1973; Casey 2000). That is, they are learned and are, thus, historically and socially contingent. Consequently, the body is an instrument of communication and social memory precisely because its movements are socially and historically ingrained.

Correspondingly, Casey has elaborated on the interrelatedness of body memory with place memory. Memory is sedimented both in our bodies and in the places they inhabit, because our bodies always occupy and interact with a specific portion of space at any given moment. Thus, body memories are “memories of body-in-place” (Casey 2000: 213). As such, places act as containers for the things within them and our experience and memories of them, in which the body mediates between “the psychological aspects of remembering and the physical features of a place” (Casey 2000: 189). Accordingly, landscape feeds into memory through (1) “variegation” – “shifts in the land that stand out in our mind’s eye for their differentness,” (2) “sustaining character” – “the durability of the land combined with its ability to enclose,” and (3) “expressiveness” – “the ability of the land to absorb and invoke emotions” (Casey 2000: 198-200).

These emphases on body memory and place memory also demonstrate that memory is fundamentally enacted and expressed through the material. That is, memory is made and experienced through a sense of materiality – the physicality of body and of place *and* of all the things-in-place and interacting with the body-in-place. The social practices of memory work – incorporating and/or inscribing – necessarily involve physical places and, in particular, the things that make up those places. As noted previously (Chapter 1, Section 1.1), Latour defines the mediators/actors/actants in networks as any entity that makes a difference, that does something, whether human or non-human (2005: 72). Things are actants because they do something. They enable or constrain. They “authorize, block, render possible, [or] forbid” (2005: 72). Taking this argument a step further, Daniel Miller reframes the significance of things, as not in their physical ability to constrain or enable, but in our obliviousness to their ability to enable or constrain. He observes that the less we are conscious of things and what things do “the more powerfully they can determine our expectations by setting the scene and ensuring normative behavior, without being open to challenge” (Miller 2005: 5). Similarly, Bourdieu’s *habitus* is partially built on the notion of how the categories, orders, and placements of objects could be correlated with less tangible orders, such as gender or social hierarchy, and so enable and constrain habitual ways of being in the world (1977). Like landscape or embodiment or memory, this sense of materiality – the interrelatedness of humans and things – is a continuously recursive interacting and always deeply interrelated with senses of place, body, and memory.

However, despite (or perhaps because of) its entrenched nature, materiality has only risen to a position of prominence in anthropological and archaeological circles since the 1980s. Much like embodiment, these works draw on multiple and disparate intellectual strands – often citing Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, Mauss, Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu, and Appadurai, to name but a few. Though much of archaeological analysis is focused on things, this deeper sense of thing analysis only initially arose through the lens of object biography and agency in the 1990s, and has expanded in a number of different and disparate ways (Buchli 2004; Crossland 2010; Hodder 2012; Keane 2003; 2005; Meskell 2005; Tilley 2006). Within Near Eastern archaeology,

materiality studies are a more recent and relatively limited trend, especially within research on the Iron Age Southern Levant (Chesson 2011; Feldman 2014; Laneri 2011; Meskell 2005; Nakamura 2005; Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015).

The emphasis on things and our relationships with them compels us to consider all the components that make up things – their physical composition, tactility, visuality, durability, dimensionality and proportionality. Yet, this is not to say a thing can be understood as any one of these qualities. As Webb Keane notes, each quality is only intelligible as a single “factor of co-presence,” contingently bound up with each other and with other qualities or associations that the object may bear, in what he imagines as “bundling” (2003: 414; 2005: 188, 194). The notion of bundling also infers that our relationship with things is nested within our physical, bodily interactions with them. In a recent ethnography on popular Irish Catholicism, E. Frances King demonstrates how objects may carry a “material charisma,” related to both physical and emotional awareness, in which the haptic interactions of humans with these objects constitute a significant element in the human engagement with the objects. For example, King notes how one elderly informant who seemed especially diffident about her experiences with religion and ritual became animated and engaged on the subject while holding an image of a saint. King emphasizes that it is “through the practices and visual stimuli of material religion that we become bodily affirmed in our beliefs within our own particular *habitus*; and that “to be born into a religious household is to grow into a particular kind of religious sensibility – to become grounded in tenets and beliefs, while also becoming familiar with religious artifacts and ways of behavior” (2010: 5). In this sense, the things of religion become incorporated, because it is through bodily practices – the way we hold objects, smell them, and wear them – that we orientate our bodies towards things and places.

As in landscape, an emphasis on the significance of things necessitates that we define what exactly constitutes a “thing” in the first place. That is, does materiality – ‘thingness’ – necessarily always correlate to physicality? Morgan has defined a thing as a “thing-for-us,” that is a thing is its physical properties, its relationships to other objects, its placement in space, and what it offers us physically – pain, pleasure, or threat of harm (2009: 70). Miller goes a step further and asks what of more ephemeral things – a moment in a streaming video, a dream, a sensation? We experience and interact with these just as we do a chair or a statue, and we are enabled by, constrained, and as unconscious of their ability to enable and constrain as of these objects (Miller 2005: 7). In archaeological terms, Rosemary Joyce has most cogently pointed out this deficiency by pointing to how archaeologists routinely identify things through materialities of absence. She provides the posthole as an example of a thing that is both present and absent. The posthole, identifiably present as a pattern of soils, also indexes the past presence of something that is now absent (Joyce 2008b: 27). Thus, Joyce prefers to look toward the broader – though succinct – legal definition of materiality as “that which is material to the case,” wherein the emphasis is on the “relationships of people to other materialities and the ways that practices shape and reshape what matters” (2008b: 27). Like landscape, we may also consider materiality as multi-scalar, where its analysis requires tacking back and forth between different scales at different times and flexibility and elasticity in our approach.

The inherent entanglement of memory and materiality has recently emerged as a significant approach within the wider archaeological literature, including some works within Near Eastern archaeology (Chesson 2001; 2007; Feldman 2012; 2014; Hendon 2000; Joyce 2000; 2001; Kuijt 2001; 2008; Meskell 2003; Schwartz 2007; Van Dyke and Alcock 2004). Ruth Van Dyke and Susan Alcock have most explicitly outlined how archaeologists are uniquely

positioned to explore this relationship between memory and the material within four broad categories – (1) ritual behavior, (2) narratives, (3) objects and representations, and (4) places. Ritual behavior is archaeologically visible through the material remains of rituals, such as burials, votive and sacrificial offerings and deposits, and feasting. Narratives may be preserved in various written or oral forms. Objects and representations, particularly those that are commemorative in nature, provide a “graphic but non-linguistic access to the past” (Van Dyke and Alcock 2004: 5). Meanwhile, places – here defined as “spaces that have been inscribed with meaning, usually as the result of some past event or attachment” – are particularly noted as meaningful in memory production and thoroughly entangled with other aspects of memory work (Van Dyke and Alcock 2004: 4-6). However, their discussion also frequently notes the inherent overlap and entanglement of all of these categories, further demonstrating the complex interweaving between memory and materiality.

Yet, these methodologies have made little inroads within the archaeology of the Iron Age Southern Levant. Instead, the heavily interrelated concepts of identity and ethnicity are more common topics. Yet, many of the studies on identity and ethnicity in the Iron Age Southern Levant rarely make overt or methodical use of the role of memory or materiality in identity, often preferring to simply associate certain aspects of material culture with particular identities found in the Hebrew Bible and geographic regions in the Southern Levant (Dever 2003; Faust 2006; Finkelstein and Mazar 2007; Killebrew 2005; Levy 2008a; 2008b). Given the inbetweenness of the Levant and its highly intersecting and interconnecting character, it becomes apparent that this region requires a more nuanced analysis, which, in turn, may contribute to more nuanced understandings of memory, materiality, and identity. In fact, this sort of analysis is already being done in certain studies of the Early Iron Age (1200-600 BCE) Northern Levant (Bonatz 2000; 2001; Brown 2008; Feldman 2012; 2014). Many of these works specifically engage the frequent use of particular large-scale and small-scale monuments and commemorative objects in developing a landscape steeped in the memory of the Late Bronze Age (1500-1200 BCE), but also dynamically re-interpreting and re-formulating new identities born out its collapse.

Most saliently, Marian Feldman has focused on how style – alternately “sets of visual traits, used to associate like with like” (2012: 202) and “the manner of making or executing” (2012: 208) – may act as a particular practice of memory work and social identity. Drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of human embeddedness within the *habitus*, Feldman cites the embodied practice of producing and consuming particular styles, and conversely rejecting or countering other styles, as a particular (though not necessarily intentional or conscious) practice entangled with and recursively interacting with memory and identity. For example, Feldman points to a particular set of markings used to render some animals in Early Iron Age Levantine ivories – the so-called Flame and Frond style-group.²² These markings are also seen in large carved stone reliefs of the Early Iron Age at Tell Halaf (Syria), the Late Bronze Age Lion Gate at Mycenae (Greece) and an assortment of Late Bronze Levantine luxury items associated with royalty and diplomatic exchange from across the eastern Mediterranean. In a counterbalance to previous scholarship that focused on attributing certain stylistic traits to particular geographic locations,

²² The Flame and Frond style-group consists of a flame-like motif on the rear haunch, a line along the back of the animal, often embellished with straight denticulations, V’s, or dots and ending with a series of parallel lines near the base of the tail, parallel lines running vertically across the ribcage, and a crosshatched plaited pattern running along the belly and back of the hind leg on leonine forms. Though noted in previous scholarship, this set of markings was only named thus and systematically described by Georgina Herrmann in the 1980s (Feldman 2014: 52).

Feldman sees the deployment of these markings in the Early Iron Age as an instance of evoking and relating to a golden past through stylistic practices associated with the Late Bronze Age and heroic kingship. Concomitantly, this emotive evocation is also a response and counter to the new, possibly threatening, realities of the Early Iron Age – the increasing dominance of imperialism, commercialism, and ethno-linguistic fragmentation. Thus, these markings may index and recursively constitute a broader pan-Levantine sense of identity in the early centuries following the Late Bronze collapse (Feldman 2012; 2014: 11-78).

Feldman's work provides a specific example of how shifting to the intersecting between practice, memory, and materiality may provide insights into community and identity not afforded by the simple attribution of material culture to geographic regions and perceived groups. Moreover, Feldman highlights how style as a manner of doing, making, or executing may be inherently meaningful. While focused on the visual or artistic style of luxury items, this methodology is equally useful when considering any particular way of doing, making, or executing – Mauss' "techniques of the body" or Bourdieu's "logic of practice" – and the materials and patterns that are produced from it. Thus, style, both in its visual sense and in its broader sense, is another useful way to think about and through materiality and memory and their entangling with ritual, landscape, and embodiment.

Similarly, we may also consider religion and ritual as a specific kind of memory work. If, as Tweed, we imagine religion as dwelling (mapping, building, and inhabiting) and crossing (marking boundaries and prescribing and proscribing moving across those boundaries), then the confluence between religion, memory, and identity becomes apparent. Religion, as it is materialized and embodied from birth, creates, transmits, modifies, and recursively interacts with memory and identity. Through the privileged differentiation of ritual practice, the ritualized body and differentiated landscape are the sieves through which memory and identity are processed and recreated.

Such an approach may be teased out from Lynn Meskell's (2003) analysis of the New Kingdom village of Deir el-Medina in Egypt and its later appropriation by Ptolemaic and Roman communities as a part and parcel of an ancient sacred landscape. Situated on the Theban West Bank of the Nile, Deir el-Medina began as a settlement for the workmen who were building royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings and their families during the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Dynasties (ca. 1539-1075 BCE). In this period, occupants of Deir el-Medina routinely ritualized their homes by paying homage to their ancestors in materialized forms, namely through ancestor stelae and busts. The ancestor stelae were small round-topped limestone stelae, dedicated to one, two, or three persons, and typically depicting a seated man and a procession of dedicators. The seated man is shown smelling a lotus in one hand and the other hand is outstretched toward a table of offerings or holding an ankh. The ancestor busts were painted limestone or sandstone anthropomorphic figures, often with floral collars around the neck. They are largely unscribed and their gender is ambiguous. These objects acted as material flows between worlds and through time, through the ritual practices of offerings and invocations regularly made before them, what Meskell refers to as "tangible sites of embodied memory that simultaneously operated as a conduit between worlds" (2003: 44).

However, memory work also entails forgetting and re-remembering as Meskell also demonstrates through the re-imagining of Deir el-Medina as part of the Memnonia in the Ptolemaic (332-30 BCE) and Roman (30 BCE-395 CE) periods. The term Memnonia referred to a shifting toponym in and around Deir el-Medina, where Roman travelers made ritual obeisance (*proskynemata*) to the gods, recorded as graffiti at the site. These travelers were unaware that the

clearly visible remnants of Deir el-Medina were formerly a workmen's village and simply collapsed it into a larger sacred landscape, comprising the desert setting, the views of the monuments on the East Bank, other religious sites in close proximity, and the 400 tombs surrounding the village. Thus, similarly to what I will argue for the Southern Levantine Drylands, the visibility of the remains of Deir el-Medina within its particular geographical and monumental contexts attracted later communities to re-imagine and re-remember the site within the context of a mythic landscape, redolent with the supernatural and the past. These later communities re-inscribed this landscape with meaning and memory significant to them through the ritual practice of making obeisance to the gods and then etching that obeisance onto the site (Meskell 2003: 49-53).

These examples from Deir el-Medina demonstrate how ritual may act as memory work through either small-scale objects or the large-scale landscape. However, ritual also bridges distinctions between the small-scale and the large-scale, encompassing things, bodies and landscapes. In the Southern Levant, Meredith Chesson (2007) offers a similar analysis of Early Bronze Age (3500-2000 BCE) mortuary practices that demonstrate the entangling of ritual with multiple scales of materiality. Chesson paints a rich portrait of the interweaving of ritual with remembering and forgetting through two different burial styles found in the southeastern Dead Sea Plain of Jordan. At the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, the earliest evidence of human occupation in the southeastern Dead Sea Plain is represented only by cemeteries at Feifa, Safi/Naqa and Bab edh-Dhra'. Possibly associated with mobile pastoral communities, these cemeteries consisted of rock-cut shaft or cobble and slab-built cist tombs, into which de-fleshed and disarticulated human remains and mortuary goods were sorted and deposited. Later, a settlement was established at Bab edh-Dhra', and burial practices expanded to include primary burials in re-used shaft tombs and depositing the de-fleshed and disarticulated remains of their kin in above ground, circular, mudbrick charnel houses. In the Early Bronze II-III (3000-2200 BCE) the settlement at Bab edh-Dhra' grew to 4 hectares and was bounded by a massive fortification wall with towers. However, settlement outside the wall also continued. At this time, burials at the site became restricted to secondary deposition in rectangular mudbrick charnel houses outside the fortification wall (Chesson 2007: 111-112). Chesson emphasizes how the particular ritual practice of secondary burial involves a continuous and complex cycle of remembering and forgetting deeply tied into kinship and the materiality of human remains, a cycle punctuated by the opening and closing of multiple-successive burials, the processing and transfer of human remains, and the ritual observances that ensured the proper and successful completion of these acts (Chesson 2007: 113, 116-120). However, Chesson also observes that the shift from exclusively underground to exclusively aboveground secondary burial coincides with the establishment and intensification of settlement at Bab edh-Dhra', marking a shift in how these communities related to their dead. Noting the proximity and visibility of the EB II-III charnel houses and their similarity in size and shape to domestic architecture within the settlement, Chesson contextualizes this shift within the broader intensification of settlement seen throughout the EB II-III Southern Levant that radically transformed the landscape. The third millennium BCE sees a sharp intensification in settlement building characterized by cycles of establishing settlements, followed by abandoning those settlements, and then establishing new settlements within view of the abandoned settlements. Visibility and durability became powerful undercurrents within these communities, entangling and enmeshing with the past, the land, and the dead. Thus, by burying the dead in visible aboveground monuments – immediately adjacent to the settlement and in domestic-like architecture – the inhabitants of Bab edh-Dhra' inscribed

the landscape with their histories, memories, and identities and engaged in a material means to reassert and renegotiate those identities and memories as necessary (Chesson 2007: 113-115, 120).

The above discussion of Meskell's work on Deir el-Medina during the New Kingdom and Roman periods and Chesson's work on Bab edh-Dhra' in the Early Bronze Age provide different but overlapping and intersecting examples of how we may access memory and materiality. They both demonstrate the entangled role of landscape and ritual within memory and materiality and the multiple scales at which we may consider these notions. Moreover, they accentuate how visibility relates to memory and materiality. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, where thousands of years of occupation remained visible throughout the landscape, it seems germane then to explore how this visibility might have constituted a way of seeing for these communities.

1.5. Ritual on the Rural Road – (Re)Envisioning Memory, Materiality, Landscape, and Entangled Liminalities in the Southern Levantine Drylands

In her recent analysis of memory and ritual on roadways in the Egyptian deserts during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Jennifer Gates-Foster (2012) demonstrates a specific example of how visibility and ritual may have interacted along roads in the drylands of the ancient Near East. Referring to roads as “palimpsests,” Gates-Foster maintains that roads index all those who have gone before – those who “made” the road – and allow those traveling along the road to imagine the travelers who once were and are (2012: 202-203). Yet, it is not the road alone that generates these imaginings, but the road's embeddedness within a broader landscape and its materiality. Thus, travelers may experience particular senses of community and connectivity specific to certain roads. For Graeco-Roman tourists in the Egyptian deserts, Gates-Foster envisions a sense of community born out of their imaginings of a sacred and dangerous landscape, heavily inscribed with the past and the supernatural. She suggests that these tourists also actively participated in this sense of community through the specific ritual practice of inscribing sites along the desert roadways with *proskynemata* and signatures (Gates-Foster 2012: 203-304). Additionally, these inscriptions derived their potency both from their content and their placement. In the Ptolemaic Period, *proskynemata* invoking Pan (the god of remote, dangerous places) are common and widespread (Gates-Foster 2012: 212). In the Roman Period, the inscriptions lack the invocation of Pan or any other deity, largely simply stating “so and so was here.” This change in inscribing practices may indicate some sort of shift in belief or sentiment about traveling through these deserts, but the physical placement and arrangement of the Roman Period graffiti points to some sort of continuity as well. Examples include graffiti clustered around or on Pharaonic images of Min (to whom Pan was assimilated) and roughly sketched contemporary images of Pan in “a clear visual appropriation of the divine” (Gates-Foster 2012: 214-15). For Gates-Foster, the clustering of these inscriptions and images indexes a community of memory along these roads, generated through ritual, the landscape, and the visible past (2012: 216).

Gates-Foster shows how roads and visibility may constitute specific senses of ritual and interweave with memory and landscape in an ancient Near Eastern drylands setting, generating a specific sense of community. I suggest that this sort of analysis can also be fruitful in the context

of roadside ritual sites in the first millennium BCE Southern Levantine Drylands, where similar elements are also at play. Moreover, I contend that this analysis can be complicated by exploring the entangled interplay between roads as liminal intra-places and inter-places, “landscapes of movement” (Snead, Erickson, and Darling 2009: 1), embedded within a landscape of visibility and multiple senses of liminality and community.

Gates-Foster’s emphasis on a specific sense of community among Graeco-Roman tourists traveling along roadways in drylands also highlights the notion of communities as fluid, multiple, overlapping, conflicting, and multi-scalar. Recently, Ben Porter (2013) traced some of the various ways that philosophers, anthropologists, and archaeologists have visualized the concept of community, demonstrating its complexity and elasticity. Often, these definitions of community rest on shared spatiality, resources, or issues and a shared self-consciousness or sense of community (Porter 2013: 1-4, 14-26). However, similarly to religion and ritual, discrete categorical definitions of community may too rigidly define communities as static entities, rather than as shared senses of doing, and thus exclude many possible communities. Porter defines communities as inherently complex, adaptive, dynamic, and embedded within particular contexts (2013: 20-26). Likewise, Marian Feldman understands communities in a broader sense as social relations and shared ways of doing, pointing to style as one such way of doing that embraces a large assemblage of people we otherwise might not recognize as a community (2014: 2, 59-66). Similarly, David Morgan sees communities as shared ways of seeing (2012: 5-6, 68). Thus, it is important to remember that persons may belong to multiple communities at any given time and over the course of their life, and these communities may not necessarily always align. Community can be and is a source of tension.

This way of understanding communities is quite fitting for the Levant as well, given the fluidity and mutability of its communities, and the tendency of these communities to defy more rigid characterizations. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, these shifting senses of seeing and community are also germane to a landscape embedded in the past, rural but interconnected and layered with various senses of liminality and movement. These are places where persons and communities are on always on the move and always adapting, where communities shift in and out of focus. However, I suggest that one way we might understand some of these senses of community is through ways of doing and seeing ritual, ritual as intra-action in the flow of phenomena. Such a focus will demonstrate the fluidity and mutability of senses of community in the drylands and how ritual constitutes communities, even if sometimes these communities are ephemeral. I also suggest that this ritual drew on and enhanced multiple, nesting senses of liminality embedded within the landscape.

I maintain that the later Iron II sites of Kuntillet ’Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit may be better understood and explored within these broader contexts. Moreover, I suggest that such an exploration also provides insight on the entangling of religion, ritual, landscape, liminality, memory and materiality. That is, if we understand ritual as intra-action in the flow of phenomena, then ritual sites act as emplaced nodes for this intra-action, both in the physical and abstract senses. Furthermore, I contend that roadside ritual sites are particularly acute nodes of intra-action and liminality that mediate diversity and change (Henn 2008). These sites inherently generate distinct (if ephemeral) communities out of a disparate elements and form new matrices of connectivity and interaction. Consequently, roadside ritual sites are particularly visible places for analyzing intra-action, change, and connectivity.

In the above discussion, I have tried to illuminate and somewhat disentangle this mesh-working by anchoring it within movement and seeing. Through the metaphors of contouring,

intersecting, entangling, embodying and tacking, I outlined the overlapping concepts of religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, and memory and materiality. Yet, I also interwove these concepts together, in order to demonstrate their inherent entanglement and complexity as each constitutes the others. I maintain that the Southern Levantine Drylands in the first millennium BCE offers a unique opportunity to more fully explore this mesh-working and derive new insights. In the following chapters, I specifically demonstrate some of the scales and means by which this mesh-working operates in the Southern Levantine Drylands and what can be gleaned about the entangling of all these elements. In so doing, I suggest that multiple, conflicting, nesting senses of liminality generated and were generated by this mesh-working in a distinct visibly palimpsest landscape. First, I turn to the ways of seeing the Southern Levantine Drylands preserved in ancient textual sources in the next chapter and juxtapose these sources against the modern social and political construction of these lands and the geomorphic and climatic elements of the landscape.

Chapter 2: Strangers in a Strange Land – Ways of Seeing and Intra-action in the Southern Levantine Drylands

As a palimpsest landscape, there are many ways of seeing the Southern Levantine Drylands. These ways shift over time and through various communities, reflecting both the inherent subjectivity, volatility, and variability of landscape (Bender 2006: 303-304) and the multiple, nesting, overlapping, and conflicting senses of liminality embedded in this specific landscape. Some of the ways that people perceived and interacted with the land are preserved in texts from Egypt, Assyria, and the Southern Levant, dating to the third through first millennia BCE (and later). These texts are incomplete and uneven, but they provide an important glimpse into a few of the ways that select communities understood the drylands – as a nameless no man’s land, a place betwixt and between, a liminal land, in which numinous powers, drawing from the liminality of the landscape, manifested in fantastic creatures, supernatural beings, miraculous events and were even imbued in the earth itself.

Unfortunately, these texts were produced entirely by communities outside the Southern Levantine Drylands. The inhabitants of the drylands either did not produce relevant texts or those texts did not survive the passage of time. Thus, this analysis will necessarily focus on the perspectives of outsiders, some of whom may not have ever been to the Southern Levantine Drylands. However, I suggest that outsider perspectives may have recursively interacted with and increasingly impacted the land, the people within it, and compositions of ritual, memory, and landscape in and of the land. That is, we may better understand these perspectives within Karen Barad’s terminology as indicating intra-action (2003; see Introduction: Section I.I). These ways of seeing the land were not born in a vacuum, but become in relation to other ways of seeing and the physical land itself. These outsider perspectives are thus intrinsically significant to understanding how both local and non-local communities perceived and interacted with this landscape.

In this chapter, I demonstrate this intra-action by juxtaposing the physical and environmental elements of these lands with the descriptions of these lands contained in ancient textual sources. This juxtaposition demonstrates that the language used of these lands is a powerful tool both in expressing ways of seeing and in the (re)production of ways of seeing. I begin by defining my terms, that is, outlining the spaces themselves and analyzing the language and concepts used to refer to them, followed by a discussion of the natures and features of the written sources. Then, I mine those sources for patterns in the ways of seeing these lands and the people within these lands to demonstrate the complex, recursive relationship (the flows of matter-energy) between ambiguity, power, and landscape in this particular region.

2.1. (Re)Defining the Land

The region that I refer to as the Southern Levantine Drylands comprises a vast area of approximately 115,000 square kilometers across three modern nation-states – the Sinai in Egypt, the Negev in Israel and the southern region of Jordan. From an environmental perspective, this landmass is marked by both ecological and geomorphic diversity and the common element of aridity. However, the ecological and geomorphic diversity is strongly tied to the varying rates of aridity. Furthermore, the next chapter (Chapter 3: Section 3.2; 3.4) demonstrates a strong sense of shared subsistence strategies and material culture across mobile pastoral communities in this

region, suggesting that aridity and access to water is a highly significant common element that shaped shared ways of seeing within and of these lands for millennia. I maintain that understanding both the diversities and the commonalties of the physical landscape provides a key to understanding how and why local and non-local communities perceived this landscape as liminal (albeit in different ways). In the following discussion, I describe and analyze the geomorphic, ecological, and climatic elements of this landmass. As a matter of convenience and shared language, I employ the modern place-names and boundaries in my description. However, some of this nomenclature tends to obscure the continuities and distinctions of the actual geographic features, thus impeding our understanding of the human experience of this landscape, both today and in the ancient past. Consequently, this discussion seeks to expose some of these issues and re-situate this region within its environmental and experiential contexts.

To begin, the Sinai Peninsula is usually defined as a triangular peninsula of approximately 64,500 square kilometers within the territory of modern Egypt. Forming a land bridge between Africa and Asia, the Sinai is situated between the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Gulf of Suez to the southwest, and the Gulf of Aqaba to the southeast, both of which drain to the Red Sea. These water features form fairly clear boundaries on the north, southwest, and southeast portions of the peninsula. However, the demarcation between the Sinai, Egypt, and the Negev on its northwest and northeast flanks, respectively, is inevitably less clear. On its far northwestern edge a series of salt valleys and other water features, including several ancient canals, appeared to have marked this boundary prior to the construction of the Suez Canal. However, the northeastern boundary between the Sinai and the adjoining Negev desert has more to do with human geographies than with landscape features (Greenwood 1997: 2; Mumford 2015b: 9; Redmount 1995).

Geomorphologically, the Sinai may be divided into eight main areas: (1) the Dune Sheet of the Mediterranean Littoral, (2) the Insular Massifs (mountain ranges), (3) the gravelly and rocky Tih Plateau, (4) the sandy terraces of the Suez Foreshore, (5) the Dividing Valleys between the Tih Plateau and the Sinai Massif, (6) the Sinai Massif, (7) the Plain of Qa, and (8) the Aqaba Foreshore (Fig.: D.2). The Dune Sheet comprises a rough crescent of undulating sand dunes that extends 230 kilometers across the northern Sinai and into the Negev, with a total area of approximately 4,000 square kilometers. However, a coastal salt flat (called a *sabkha* in Arabic) also appears on the Mediterranean coast in the central portion of the northern Sinai. In the south, the Dune Sheet surrounds the most northern mountain in the Insular Massifs, Gebel Maghara, but fade out further south toward Gebel Yi'allaq and Gebel Halal. The wide Wadi el-Arish passes to the south of these mountains, before winding north around Gebel Halal toward the Mediterranean Sea. The Tih Plateau, a dark gravel plain (*hamada*) in the central Sinai, rises gently upward from the southern banks of the Wadi el-Arish at 500 meters above sea level and extends south towards the Sinai Massif, reaching up to 1000 meters above sea level. It is bounded by escarpments (steep slopes or long cliffs) to the west and south, but breaks into scattered peaks in the east. The southern half of the plateau is the most desolate part of the Sinai, precluding almost all plant growth and impeding most north-south travel. To the west of the Tih Plateau, a series of low-profile terraces dominate the northern part of the Gulf of Suez coast. To the south, a system of sandstone valleys, 20-30 kilometers across, divide the northern and central Sinai from its southern tip. The Sinai Massif, the tallest peaks in the peninsula, occupy the central portion of this tip, lying between the Plain of Qa and the Aqaba Foreshore. Gebel Katherina, the tallest mountain in the Sinai Massif, reaches 2,637 meters above sea level. The

Plain of Qa quickly descends to sea level, but some mountains extend to the water on the Aqaba Foreshore (Edgell 2006: 24, 189, 403, 440; Greenwood 1997: 2-3, 5, 26-46).

The Dune Sheet and the Tih Plateau abet the modern border of Israel – an almost straight line from Rafah on the Mediterranean shore to Taba on the Gulf of Aqaba. The other side of this line marks the southwestern border of the Negev. However, the distinction between the Sinai and the Negev marked by this border has little to do with features of the landscape or patterns of indigenous settlement. Rather, it is a modern political construct based on the 1906 border between the Egyptian territory of the British Empire and the Syrian territory of the Ottoman Empire (Bruins 1986: 10; Levin et al 2010: 7). In terms of geomorphology and aridity, the Negev is simply an extension of the Sinai Peninsula (Edgell 2006: 24-27; Evenari et al 1982: 9; Levin et al 2010: 3). The Dune Sheet itself cuts across this line and extends to Beersheba, and the Tih Plateau merely breaks into scattered peaks toward the central and southern Negev. Otherwise, the geomorphic formations that characterize this plateau continue unabated into the Negev¹ (Edgell 2006: 187, 189-190; Greenwood 1997: 29, 31).

Meanwhile, the Negev is characterized as a triangular-shaped region of approximately 12,500 square kilometers – corresponding to modern Israel’s southwestern border with Egypt, southeastern border with Jordan, and roughly terminating just north of the modern city of Beersheba. The Negev is further divided into several geomorphic regions. The northern Negev includes (1) the coastal strip, including the Wadi Gaza (Naḥal Besor)² region, (2) the basin areas (known collectively as the Beersheba Valley) encompassing the Wadi e-Seba‘ (Naḥal Beersheba) and the Wadi el-Milḥ (Naḥal Malḥata), and (3) the northwestern plains and foothills (sometimes called the Negev Lowlands) extending 2000 square kilometers south of the Beersheba Valley (Fig. D.3). The central Negev is primarily defined by a 2000 square kilometer plateau rising about 300 meters above the lowlands called the Negev Highlands. However, this area also includes three large erosional cirques – The Ramon Crater, The Large Crater, and the Small Crater – and portions of the Negev Lowlands. The southern Negev includes (1) desolate limestone plains south of the Negev Highlands (occasionally broken by mesas and buttes) and (2) a small area of roughly 70 square kilometers northwest of Eilat where the igneous mountains of southern Sinai continue into modern Israel (Evenari et al 1982: 39-63; Rainey 1984: 88-92).

To the east, the Wadi Arabah runs from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba, forming a distinct environmental milieu, entangled with both the Negev and southern Jordan. It rises in altitude from 396 meters below sea level at the Dead Sea to 230 meters below sea level a few kilometers south, before reaching 200 meters above sea level near Gharandal, then drops back down to sea level at Eilat/Aqaba. The northern Wadi Arabah – from the Dead Sea to the confluence of the Wadi Fidan and the Wadi Arabah – is 15-20 kilometers wide. The central

¹ The faint line visible in satellite imagery is due to differences in land management practices between the states of Egypt and Israel (Tsoar 2008).

² Archaeological sites and other place names in the modern state of Israel known before 1948 often have both an Arabic and a Hebrew name. In the 1950s, the Governmental Names Commission sought to “Hebraize” the landscape and renamed most Arabic place names with Hebrew names. Sometimes these names were simply the Hebrew translation of the place names, but names also may have been changed to biblical place names, something descriptive in the local area, or simply a Hebraized spelling of the Arabic name (which may have been nonsense in Hebrew). Some archaeological sites have also been identified as places known from ancient sources, usually the Hebrew Bible, and renamed by their excavators (Benevenisti 2000; Azaryahu and Golan 2001). In this dissertation, I provide both names at the first mention of a site and then typically use the most common name in the literature thereafter. For both Hebrew and Arabic place names throughout the drylands, I use the English spelling conventions most commonly found in scholarly publications or, if applicable, used in recent excavation reports.

Arabah, up to 30 kilometers wide, continues between the Negev Highlands and Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands until Yahel and Jebal Gharandal. However, the Negev Highlands are situated further to the west and do not form a clear boundary. Rather, the area from Faynan through En Ḥaṣeva (‘Ain Husb) to the Zin Valley forms an extensive east-west connection, frequently used as a crossing point in antiquity. The southern Arabah comprises the narrowest part of the valley, between 8-10 kilometers wide. It is more clearly demarcated on each side by igneous hills in the southern Negev and the much higher sandstone and crystalline mountains in southern Jordan (Bienkowski 2006: 8; Bruins 2006: 29).

Southern Jordan lies on the other side of the Wadi Arabah, delineated by the Wadi al-Ḥasa to the north and Jordan’s political borders with Israel to the west and Saudi Arabia to the east. It may be roughly divided into five geomorphic regions, not including the Wadi Arabah: (1) the Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands, (2) the Sandstone and Crystalline Mountains, (3) the Southern Sandstone Mountains and Valleys, and (4) the Central Plateau, and (5) the Al-Jafr Basin (Fig. D.4). The Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands extend from the south margins of the Wadi al-Ḥasa canyon to the Ras an-Naqb escarpment, at elevations fluctuating between 1,500-1,700 meters in the west and 1,000-1,500 meters in the east. This area, along with the contiguous Wadi Arabah valley, are associated with Edom and sometimes called the Edom Mountains. The Sandstone and Crystalline Mountains form a narrow range bordering the Wadi Arabah valley (at elevations between 1,300 and 1,500 meters) that extends from Ras an-Naqb to the Saudi Arabian border. Rock debris slope down from these mountains and alluvial fans extend around and between these mountains. To the west, the Southern Sandstone Mountains and Valleys – steep-sided sandstone hills rising above desert plains – extend to the Saudi Arabian border. Elevations of the hills range between 1,000-1,700 meters, while the valley bottoms are between 800-1,000 meters. North of these mountains and east of the Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands, the Central Plateau wraps around the Al-Jafr Basin and extends north of the Wadi al-Ḥasa. The plateau is characterized by rolling plains, while the Al-Jafr Basin is a large, flat-bottom depression. Elevations range between 600-900 meters (Cordova 2007: 34-35).

This geomorphic diversity is significant, both for how it recursively intra-acts with the human experience of this landscape and for its intimate interrelationship with varying rates of aridity. Geomorphic distinctions within drylands are typically the characteristic landforms produced by arid climates, due to infrequent rainfall, higher evaporation rates, and related physical processes, such as exfoliation and wind action (Edgell 2006: 3, 8). For example, steep fault scraps in the southern Sinai provide drainage west into the Gulf of Suez and east into the Gulf of Aqaba (Edgell 2006: 440).

Drylands are primarily subdivided based on average annual rainfall rates – (1) hyper-arid – less than 25 millimeters, (2) arid – between 25-200 millimeters, and (3) semi-arid – between 200-500 millimeters. Most of the Sinai lies within arid or hyper-arid zones, receiving less than 100 millimeters of rainfall per year, and over half of the peninsula only receives about 25-50 millimeters per year (Greenwood 1997: 57-59). The annual averages of the Negev range between 25-200 millimeters of rainfall per year (the lower end of semi-arid to hyper-arid conditions), with the maximum rainfall average occurring in the Beersheba Valley and then decreasing as one moves south through the region (Evenari et al 1982: 31-32). In the Wadi Arabah, precipitation rates fall within the lower end of arid conditions, with average annual rainfall ranges from 50 millimeters near the Dead Sea to 30 millimeters near the Red Sea (Bruins 2006: 30). Southern Jordan experiences similar conditions, with average annual rainfall generally below 80 millimeters per year. However, areas in the Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands may receive between

225-300 millimeters per year, allowing for semi-arid conditions (Bruins 2006: 36; Cordova 2007: 47). These rates of aridity are directly tied to the types and extent of vegetation growth possible in each area. Most of this landmass falls within three semi-arid to arid vegetation zones – (1) Irano-Turanian, (2) Sudanian and (3) Saharo-Arabian. The Irano-Turanian is a semi-arid steppe-prairie, a transitional zone between areas with Mediterranean climates and more arid conditions, forming a rough arch from Jordan to Iran and extending across Syria, eastern Turkey and northern Iraq. In the Negev, it encompasses the Beersheba and Malḥata valleys and winds down into parts of the central Negev. In the Sinai, it appears sparsely in the higher plateaus and mountains. In Jordan, it continues from the Kerak Plateau in central Jordan down into the north-central portion of southern Jordan surrounding a similar strip of Mediterranean zone vegetation. The Sudanian features tropical plants that have adapted to dry conditions. It includes a strip running along the Rift Valley down into the northern Wadi Arabah, enclaves in the southern Wadi Arabah, the warm lowlands of the gulfs of Suez and Aqaba, the Southern Sandstone Mountains and Valleys of southern Jordan (as well parts of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Pakistan, and India). The Saharo-Arabian features little bio-diversity, but a relatively large proportion of endemic plant life. It appears in much of the Sinai, mostly along wadis, rocky hill slopes, and sand dunes (especially in the Dune Sheet and the Tih Plateau). It also appears in most of the Negev and the Central Plateau and the al-Jafr Basin in southern Jordan (Cordova 2007: xii, 45-47, 102-111; Edgell 2006: 71-72; Greenwood 1997: 89; Rosen 2008b: 411; 2011b: 4).

In terms of large-scale food production like agriculture, these distinctions in precipitation rates are also especially relevant. Semi-arid zones generate just enough rain to employ conventional rain-fed agriculture and sedentary livestock rearing, albeit on a reduced scale compared to non-arid zones. Arid and hyper-arid zones do not. However, arid zones with the appropriate landscape and soil properties may supplement direct rainfall by engaging in rainwater harvesting agriculture or runoff-farming. In this type of agriculture, rainwater is collected and stored by means of a landscape catchment in order to be introduced into the soil of a smaller cultivable area. This method may also be used in semi-arid zones, both to improve the yields of the rain-fed agriculture and as a complementary or alternative method of irrigation in times of drought (Bruins 1986: 3-5; Edgell 2006: 2). Consequently, agriculture and sedentary livestock rearing in the Southern Levantine Drylands is largely limited to semi-arid zones, such as the Beersheba Valley in the northern Negev and the Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands in southern Jordan. However, there is some evidence for more limited agriculture in drier areas during certain time periods, like the central Negev during the Iron Age (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4; 3.5.2). Otherwise, most human habitation of the Southern Levantine Drylands is characterized by varying levels of mobile pastoralism, supplemented with other resources like mining and trade, resulting in a sparsely-populated, rural landscape with few large settlements (Rosen 2002; 2008a; 2008b; 2009a; 2013).

This confluence of geomorphic, ecological, and climatic conditions with mobile pastoralist subsistence strategies generates a distinct milieu in the ancient Near East, a milieu that may have been quite exotic or strange to communities in the more urban and fecund parts of the region. Furthermore, the position of this landscape between the more familiar and people-filled places marks this landscape as a land of crossing, the way to get to other places. However, to cross this land is to make a difficult and dangerous journey that few outsiders can complete.

2.2. (Out)Sourcing the Land

For the purposes of depth and a manageable breadth, I focus on textual evidence relating to the third, second, and first millennia BCE – primarily Pharaonic Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, and biblical sources. The Egyptian evidence is mainly limited to periods of high indigenous political centralization in the third and second millennia BCE – the Old Kingdom (ca. 2575-2125 BCE), Middle Kingdom (ca. 2010-1630 BCE), and New Kingdom (ca. 1539-1069 BCE). In these periods, Egyptian pharaohs used the northern Sinai as a land bridge into the Levant and sent mining expeditions into the southern Sinai, documenting their exploits in monumental architecture and elite archives. Alternatively, Mesopotamian sources on the Southern Levantine Drylands only begin to appear in the first millennium BCE, coinciding with the expansion of the Assyrian Empire into the Southern Levant and Arabia during the Neo-Assyrian Period (883-627 BCE). The Hebrew Bible purports to contain stories from the second and first millennia BCE, but the texts themselves were recorded only in the first millennium BCE, much of it later in the millennium. Thus, this survey is necessarily uneven and incomplete. However, my exploration of the textual sources pertaining to the Southern Levantine Drylands is not by any means meant to be an exhaustive catalogue of even the limited sources to which we have access. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate via broad strokes some of the attitudes and perceptions that would have contributed to senses of ritual, memory, and landscape in the early first millennium BCE.

All three sets of sources are distilled via the lens of elite scribes, many of whom may have never actually been to the Southern Levantine Drylands. Thus, these texts cannot provide a direct witness to how non-elites may have perceived of these lands. However, these narratives likely circulated widely within their respective milieus and interacted recursively with non-elite perspectives. The degree to which any of these sources derive directly from first-person experience of these lands is also unclear. However, these sources were often informed by and recursively interacted with the experiences of those who did travel to and live in the drylands. Thus, the surviving evidence allows us to mark certain ways of seeing the Southern Levantine Drylands by only certain people in contiguous regions during the third, second, and first millennia BCE. However, these sources also notably share a common perspective of the Southern Levantine Drylands as a nameless no man's land, a place betwixt and between, and a place of power and wonder. The precise details shifted over time and varied by geographic, economic, political, and social orientation of the sources. Nevertheless, these sources mark a broad-ranging sense of liminality to the drylands, in which the land is ritually charged and potent.

2.2.1. Egypt

Many of the earliest and most numerous texts that may refer to the Sinai-Negev and southern Jordan come from Egypt, which is not unexpected given Egypt's position adjacent to the Sinai Peninsula. However, these references are never as clear and definitive as one might expect from such a position. In part, this may be due to the nature and limited scope of the evidence. These sources are comprised of (1) monumental inscriptions written on walls and rock faces, (2) inscriptions written on stelae, coffins, and devotional objects, and (3) various genres of

texts written on papyri. However, they are often only partial in their preservation or simply laconic in character.³

The major sources for the southern Sinai appear mainly at two closely situated sites in the sandstone valleys of southwestern Sinai – Wadi Maghara and Serâbît el-Khâdim. Wadi Maghara lies 19 kilometers from the Gulf of Suez coast, but was likely reached via overland routes of approximately 26-30 kilometers in length. The site consists of a series of cliffs featuring copper and turquoise mines, an Old Kingdom mining camp, a Middle Kingdom stone structure, and an array of hieroglyphic Old and Middle Kingdom rock inscriptions.⁴ Serâbît el-Khâdim lies 29 kilometers from the Gulf of Suez coast, to the northeast of Wadi Maghara. The site consists of turquoise mines, a Middle Kingdom fortified camp, and a Middle-New Kingdom temple to Hathor on a sandstone plateau (Fig. D.7), surrounded by several wadis. The site also features an array of hieroglyphic rock, stelae, and votive inscriptions, all dating primarily from the Middle and New Kingdoms. Twenty-nine Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions of the late Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate Period are also etched on or near Middle Kingdom monuments. Other copper and turquoise mines and smelting camps, some with similar inscriptions, are also known in the area, including Old Kingdom activity at Wadi Khariğ, nine kilometers to the northeast of Serâbît el-Khâdim, and Middle and New Kingdom activity at Wadi Nasb, six kilometers to the east of Serâbît el-Khâdim (Beit-Arieh 1985; Gardiner et al 1955; Giveon 1977; 1978a; Mumford 1999a; 1999b; 2006a; Mansour 2014: 13-24, 54-56; Mumford and Parcak 2003: 85-88; Pinch 1993: 49-58; Tallet et al 2010; Valbelle 1996)

The rock inscriptions at these sites are all monumental and commemorative in nature. At Wadi Maghara, they were commissioned either by the kings who sent the mining expeditions or high-ranking individuals who paid visits to the sites during those expeditions. At Serâbît el-Khâdim, they were commissioned either by the king or the leader of the expedition. The Old Kingdom inscriptions at Wadi Maghara usually list the king and his patron gods and sometimes refer to the king “subduing the foreign lands.” They may be accompanied by scenes of the Egyptian king smiting a foreign enemy. Those at Serâbît el-Khâdim are more stylized and ritualized. They usually lack an image, save for the occasional scene of a king making an offering to Hathor. The preserved rock reliefs at both sites tend to be formulaic, terse, and occasionally use terminology that is not always well understood. Serâbît el-Khâdim also features devotional inscriptions on the walls of the Hathor temple accompanied by offering scenes and inscriptions on monumental stelae, funerary stelae, and small objects found in the temple (Gardiner et al 1955; Mumford 1999a; Mumford 1999b; Mumford and Parcak 2003; Valbelle and Bonnet 1996).

Conversely, the major sources for the northern Sinai are primarily from New Kingdom wall reliefs at the Temple of Amun at Karnak and an unprovenanced New Kingdom papyrus. Seti I (r. 1290-1279 BCE) commemorated his campaigns to southwestern Asia on the walls of the Temple of Amun as a series of interrelated scenes interspersed with hieroglyphic inscriptions. One of these reliefs provides a “map” of Seti I’s return to Egypt along the northern Sinai coastal road between Egypt and Palestine – the *w3wst hr*, the “Ways of Horus.”⁵ This relief lists each

³ For a more detailed listing and description of these texts, see Appendix B: The Southern Levantine Drylands in Texts.

⁴ There is also a single inscription from the New Kingdom (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 44).

⁵ “Ways of Horus” is traditionally understood as referring specifically to the fortified coastal road, but Dominique Valbelle (1994) suggests that the phrase also may have been a more general reference to the northern Sinai.

fortified station on the road and its associated water source along an east-west axis, depicting Seti I near Tharu, the station furthest to the west (now identified with Tell Heboua). The easternmost station listed is that of “the town of Robihwa” (likely modern Rafah), after which presumably the traveler would have continued on to Gaza.⁶ Unfortunately, this relief is also only partially preserved as are many of the accompanying inscriptions. Additionally, most of the scholarship has focused on the “cartographic” elements of the relief, that is, which archaeological sites to identify with which fortresses listed on the relief (al-Ayedi 2006: 20, 108; Gardiner 1920; Mumford 2015: 8; Shore 1987: 119; Spalinger 1979: 29-30). The other main source for this road is Papyrus Anastasi I – a satirical hieratic letter written by an Egyptian scribe named Hori during the reign of Ramses II (r. 1279-1213 BCE). Hori details the types of things a scribe is supposed to know, including a long section on the geography of the Southern Levant and the Ways of Horus (al-Ayedi 2006: 20-27; Gardiner 1911: 28-29, Lines 27, 1-9; Wentz 1990: 98-110). Much like the Karnak reliefs, the description of the Ways of Horus is limited to listing the stations along its course and does not overtly address Egyptian perceptions of the Sinai.

The Ways of Horus or its associated stations⁷ are also mentioned in a variety of other texts from the New Kingdom (al-Ayedi 2006: 14-18, 29-52, 80-82, 84-86, 90, 92-108, 111-121). These sources include tomb and sarcophagus inscriptions, statue and stela inscriptions, and various papyri. A few earlier references also appear in Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom texts (al-Ayedi 2006: 10-14, 28-29). The Ways of Horus is not mentioned again after the New Kingdom, but some of its associated stations continue to appear in texts from the Third Intermediate (1069-664 BCE), Late (664-332 BCE), Ptolemaic (309-30 BCE), and Roman (30 BCE-395 CE) periods (al-Ayedi 2006: 54-64, 86-87).

2.2.2. Assyria

Unlike Egypt, Sumerian and Akkadian texts of the third and second millennia BCE appear to not refer directly to this region, most likely due to the relatively more distant position of the Tigris-Euphrates river valleys to the drylands. It is also possible that this region is mentioned, but with names that have yet to be identified with it by modern scholars. The first known references to the Southern Levantine Drylands in Mesopotamian sources appear in first millennium BCE Neo-Assyrian texts. These are mostly composed of a series of stela inscriptions, clay prisms or cylinders, and clay tablets that contain terse descriptions of military campaigns, building accounts, and lists of subdued territories, kings, people, and the tribute extracted from them (Borger 1996; Fales and Postgate 1995; Fuchs 1998; Gadd 1954; Grayson and Novotny 2012; Horowitz 1998; Kuan 2016; Leichty 2011; Saggs 2001; Tadmor 1958; 1973; Tadmor and Yamada 2011; Appendix B). However, a text from the reign of Esarhaddon (r. 680-669 BCE) does provide an account of an Assyrian incursion directly into these territories. Fragment F, a fragmentary clay tablet from the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, recounts the second Egyptian campaign of Esarhaddon in 671 BCE. This text provides a vivid depiction of

⁶ It is assumed that the road continued to Gaza because Gaza served as the southern headquarters for Egyptian administration of the Southern Levant during the New Kingdom and would have been the first major city one encountered traveling along the coast of the Sinai from Egypt (al-Ayedi 2006: 111).

⁷ Tharu, the westernmost station, is mentioned the most with references ranging from the Middle Kingdom to the Roman Period (al-Ayedi 2006: 29-52). Most of the other stations, with a few exceptions, are only mentioned in the Karnak reliefs of Seti I and Papyrus Anastasi I (al-Ayedi 2006: 80-110).

the Sinai-Negev that is unlike any other in the Assyrian assemblage (Leichty 2011; Radner 2008). Thus, this text offers a unique glimpse into Assyrian perceptions of the Southern Levantine Drylands.

2.2.3. Hebrew Bible

Conversely, the Hebrew Bible is relatively thick with allusions to the Southern Levantine Drylands. Characterized as “the foundational setting of the Pentateuch,” the book of Genesis recounts the journeys of the Patriarchs within and through these lands, and the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy detail various aspects of the Israelites’ sojourn from Egypt to the Southern Levant through the drylands, presumably in the second millennium BCE (Lee 2008: 1). Moreover, the tales of the Israelites’ journey through the drylands are immensely significant to the construction of the national identity of the Israelites and the transformation of early Israel from “a mixed multitude” (Exod. 12:38) to a cohesive community with “a shared memory of the collective past” (Hendel 2005: 7-8, 57). Unsurprisingly, later texts, such as 1 and 2 Kings and the writings of the Prophets, continue to reference these experiences and the drylands, either directly or metaphorically, as well as contribute new tales from the reigns of Israelite and Judean kings in the early first millennium BCE.

However, these sources are also problematic for several reasons. First, the Hebrew Bible primarily survives as a curated collection of texts from later time periods, either from the third centuries BCE-first century CE (Dead Sea Scrolls) or the ninth- tenth centuries CE (the Masoretic Text). Furthermore, these texts are the composite result of multiple writings, rewritings, and redactions of pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic elite Judean scribes.⁸ There have been many attempts to parse the texts into their chronological foundations and perhaps tease out some of the source material on which they were based. However, there is no true consensus, nor is there much in the way of external corroborating evidence to substantiate the source criticism. Based on philological and textual analysis, the occasional provenienced archaeological evidence,⁹ and references to sources in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. 1 Kgs 11:42; 1 Kgs 14:19, 29), some of these texts likely originally date from the Iron II period and may partially derive from royal or priestly annals in Samaria and Jerusalem (Barkay et al 2004; Halpern 1988; Haran 1999; Hendel 2005: 109-117).

Thus, we may draw upon the Hebrew Bible as a site of memory, in which certain texts preserves some first millennium BCE Southern Levantine notions about the drylands. However, these memories are multiple, complex, and unstable, changing over time and from one source to the next (Hendel 2005: 31). Consequently, it is not my intention to distinguish the pre-exilic traditions from those that came later. Rather, I explore some of the recurring themes among the

⁸ The major strands include: 1) early prophetic oracles preserved in books like Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah, 2) The Yahwist – so named for the consistent use of the name Yahweh for Israel’s god, found in portions of Genesis through Numbers, (3) the Elohist – so named for the use of the El/Elohim for the name of Israel’s God, also found in portions of Genesis through Numbers, 4) the Deuteronomistic History contained mainly in Deuteronomy and the books of Samuel and Kings and probably sourced from earlier pro-Josiah tractates and Judean and Israelite king lists, and 5) the Priestly editor(s) who supplemented these strands with various genealogies, laws, etymologies, and ritual instructions (Halpern 1988; Van Seters 1997).

⁹ For example, two small silver amulets were excavated from a late pre-exilic burial tomb near Jerusalem containing the earliest known versions of the Priestly Benediction of Numbers 6:24-26. These have been more specifically dated to the seventh-sixth centuries BCE on paleographic grounds (Barkay et al 2004).

various texts, sources, and editions and demonstrate the similarities and differences from the themes in the Egyptian and Assyrian texts.

The remaining sections will show that certain communities in Egypt, Assyria, and the Southern Levant consistently perceived the Southern Levantine Drylands as a place to be simultaneously venerated and feared. I will also show that this way of seeing grew out of their experiences, both real and imagined, with a landscape that they saw as harsh and magical, a landscape iconically situated between the more familiar places to which they were accustomed.

2.3. (Mis)Perceiving the Land

Even given the vagaries of preservation and the terseness of the texts, a close look at the content of the available sources reveals ways of seeing the Southern Levantine Drylands, in which the ambiguity in naming and defining the land indicates the perceived ambiguity of the land itself. In that ambiguity laid the fearsome and awesome powers believed to be inherent to the landscape.

2.3.1. Egypt

In Egyptian sources, the ambiguity is demonstrated in the vagueness of terminology used for the Southern Levantine Drylands. This vagueness is especially notable, given that the Egyptians were regularly traveling through the region (see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.2). The oldest inscriptions referring to the “Ways of Horus” date to the late third millennium BCE, but the Egyptians may have begun using the northern Sinai coast as a route into southwestern Asia as early as the fourth millennium BCE. In the early third millennium BCE, they also began mining for copper and turquoise in the southern Sinai (Mumford 2015: 5, 7-8). Yet, Egyptians mainly used generic geomorphic nomenclature to refer to the peninsula, such as *ḥ3st*, “hill-country/foreign land,” or *dšrt*, “Red Land.” This is opposed to the Egyptian designation of the Nile Valley and the Delta as *kmt*, “Black Land,” and the relatively more specific terminology likely employed for lands in the Levant, such as Retenu, Pa-Canaan, and Djahy. In Egyptian conceptions of landscape, the world was mainly divided between the Black Land (the Nile Valley) and the Red Land (everywhere else), in which the Black Land is identified with order and stability and the Red Land identified with chaos and death (Allen 2003: 23; Bárta 2010: 23; Cooper 2015: 354-357; Hasel 2009; Hikade 2007; Nibbi 1985; Richards 1999: 85-87).

However, the Egyptians also occasionally refer to particular regions in the Sinai by their significant features. In the Old Kingdom, Egyptian texts begin referring to the fortified road that spanned the northern Sinai coast (and perhaps the wider northern Sinai region) as *w3wst ḥr*, the “Ways of Horus,” a term that persisted through the New Kingdom (Al-Ayedi 2006: 10-26; Valbelle 1994; Appendix B.1.1, 22, 25-27, 32, 37). Conversely, malachite and turquoise mining determined the nomenclature of the southern Sinai. Old and Middle Kingdom texts refer to the southern Sinai as *ḥtyw mfk3t*, “Terraces of Turquoise” (Cooper 2015: 203-204, No. [64.1-10]; Gardiner 1917: 35; Gardiner et al 1955: No. 4, 13, 17; Mourad 2015: 275-276; Tallet 2012: 107, No. 4; Appendix B.1.2-6, 8, 11). Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom reliefs at Wadi Maghara pair the word for turquoise, *mfk3t*,¹⁰ (sometimes spelled *mf3k3t* or *fk3t*) with an unpronounced

¹⁰ Some scholars speculate that *mfk3t* may have also been used in a wider ranging matter to include other stones in the family of blue-green copper ores, such as azurite, malachite, and paratachamite (Levene 1998: 13; Mansour 2014: 4; Masquelier-Loorius 2012: 159-161; Pinch 1993: 49).

grapheme depicting three hills between two valleys. This grapheme, by itself or in combination with certain other graphemes, acts as the sign for *ḥ3st*, “hills” or “hill-country,” and likely originally referred to the rugged terrain on either side of the Nile Valley, i.e. “Not-Egypt.” However, when appended to a noun like *mḥk3t*, this sign converts the word into a place name, “Turquoise-Country,” in part by emphasizing foreignness and an alien landscape. (Cooper 2015: 34-36, 203-207; Gardiner et al 1955: No. 27-29; Givón 1978b: 64; Mansour 2014: 3). Certain Old and Middle Kingdom texts also may refer to the southern Sinai (and/or perhaps the Eastern Desert) as “Malachite-Country” or *t3 šzmt*, “the Land of Malachite” (Cooper 2016: 165-168, 349-350; No. [42.1, 4-6, 9]; Gardiner et al 1955: 42; Mansour 2014: 60-61; Nibbi 1976: 50). Later New Kingdom texts refer to the southern Sinai as *ḥ3st mḥk3t*, “Hill-Country/Foreign Land of Turquoise” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.16]; Gardiner et al 1955: 3; Grandet 1994: 339; Mansour 2014: 11). Similarly, several Middle Kingdom texts in both Egypt and the southern Sinai refer to the Sinai mining region as *bi3* or *bi3.w*, a term also used of other places where the Egyptians sent mining expeditions (such as Nubia and the Eastern Desert) and which may be generically translated as “mine(s),” “mining country,” or “mining district.” However, the inscriptions in the southern Sinai tend to utilize the term more specifically as a toponym for the southern Sinai or certain places in the southern Sinai (Abd el-Raziq et al 2002: 57, No. 22; Cooper 2015: 189-191, No. [55. 1-12]; Gardiner et al 1955: No. 53, 90, 117, 141, 409; Graefe 1971; Appendix B.1.8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17-21). Notably, these terms remain generic and only engage with the land by the features that were of significance to the Egyptians (Cooper 2015: 354-357).

More rarely, an early Middle Kingdom stela and several New Kingdom texts (as well as texts from the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods) also refer to a place called *r3š3wt* or *ḥ3st r3š3wt*, “Ra-shaut,” (also sometimes spelled as *r3š33wt*, *r3š3t*, or *r3š3wti*), either in close association with other toponyms in the southern Sinai or as a source of turquoise (Appendix B.1.8, 23, 24, 39). The precise etymology of the word is unclear, but *r3* is a common word for desert valleys and *š3* may refer to the word for ‘plant, garden.’ Alternatively, the *š* may have shifted from a *ḥ*, rendering *ḥ3wt*, “quarry, mining region.” Julien Cooper proposes that the *r3* likely refers to a specific valley within the southern Sinai, possibly Wadi Kharig, Wadi Baba, or Wadi Nasb (Cooper 2015: 196-198, No. [59.2], [59.4], [59.5], [60.1]; Gardiner et al 1955: 3). Additionally, the early Middle Kingdom stela lists *r3-š33wt*, Ra-Shaaut in close association with several source-places for metals and turquoise, “shining metal of *ihwiw*, Ihuiu, strong metal of *mn-k3w*, Men-kau, as turquoise of *ḥrrwt*, Hereutet” that likely refer to the southern Sinai or places within the southern Sinai (Appendix B.1.8). Ihuiu is likely non-Egyptian, probably Semitic. Men-kau may refer to a specific mine or smelter named for Old Kingdom pharaohs Menkauhor or Menkaure. Hereutet appears to be the plural for flowers and may refer to a specific site with flower fields after a favorable rainfall (Cooper 2015: 182-184, 194-196, 199, No. [51.1], [57.1], [59.1], [60.1]).

Otherwise, a New Kingdom papyrus refers to an expedition to the copper mines in *ḥ3st tk*, the hill-country/foreign land, “Atika,” which is likely a Semitic name (Cooper 2015: 188, No. [54.1]; Grandet 1994: 338-339; Appendix B.1.40). Since the expedition accesses these copper mines by both land and sea, several scholars suggest that this should be understood as referring specifically to the copper mines in the southern Negev (Cooper 2015: 188-189, [54.1]; Grandet 1994: 338; Levene 1998: 10; Rothenberg 1972: 201; Tebes 2006a: 80-81). Furthermore, the earliest references to places called, *idm*, “Edom” and *sʿr*, *sʿsrr*, “Seir,” both Semitic names, appear in New Kingdom Egyptian contexts (Cooper 2015: 184-185, [52.1], 207-210, [66.1-5];

Giveon 1971: No. 16a, 25, 33, 37, 38; Moran 1992: 331; Appendix B.1.28, 36-38, 40-41).¹¹ These sources do not specify where New Kingdom Egyptians perceived Edom and Seir to be located. Scholars often assume some sort of continuity with the later Iron Age place names of Edom and Seir in southern Jordan. However, there is no archaeological indication of Egyptian presence in southern Jordan during the New Kingdom (or the rest of the second millennium BCE) (Bartlett 1992: 287-288; Crowell 2004: 69-70). Yet, a rock inscription of Ramses III (1183/2-1152/3 BCE) does appear near the oases of Tayma in northwest Arabia. Similar inscriptions of Ramses III are also found near water sources in the central Sinai and near Eilat, possibly indexing a road leading to the Arabian Peninsula that may have passed through southern Jordan (Avner 1972; Somaglino and Tallet 2012).¹²

Regardless, this lack of precise terminology does not necessarily suggest that the Egyptians considered this region insignificant. Rather, the use of the ostensibly generic *bi3* for this region may actually indicate a reverence for the land, particularly related to the precious minerals that the Egyptians were mining from the earth. Aside from denoting a place or places, *bi3* seems to have also taken on a variety of seemingly conflicting and discrete connotations not having to do with actual places, such as “remote,” “treasures,” “wonders,” and as a broad term for metals. Furthermore, both the Pyramid Texts¹³ and the Coffin Texts¹⁴ considered *bi3* to be the material from which the stars were made and associated the word with omens, miracles, and all things phantasmic (Balanda 2005: 34-35; Graefe 1971: 2-3, 13-14, 95-96, 136).¹⁵ However, it is not hard to see how all these notions may have been related in the Egyptian view. Exotic and precious metals and minerals had to be sourced from remote and sparsely populated areas, especially the drylands around the Nile Valley. This might then have resulted in the identification of the properties of these products and Egyptian responses to those properties – wonder, reverence, esteem, awe – with the lands from which they came. That the southern Sinai is also so frequently referred to by malachite and turquoise names further indicates a conflating of these materials with the land itself.

Ian Shaw suggests something similar in his description of Egyptian mining expeditions as “ritually charged” affairs (1998: 256). Shaw contends that these expeditions derived their potency through attaining material resources from drylands regions that were both far flung and associated with chaos and the unknown. The successful expedition to these places indicates the king’s power over these places and the universe, powers he wielded on behalf of the gods. As evidence, Shaw cites two Middle Kingdom sources – a stela from Serâbît el-Khâdim and a rock relief at Wadi Hammamat in the Eastern Desert. In a stela of Amenemhat III (Cooper 2015: No.

¹¹ This includes a letter in Akkadian from the Amarna archives written to Amenhotep III (r. 1390-1353 BCE) from King ‘Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem (Moran 1992: 330-332; Appendix B.1.28).

¹² Kitchen also argues that early second millennium BCE references to a place called Kushu in the Tale of Sinuhe and the Brussels Texts should be understood as referring to southern Jordan. Kitchen bases this assertion on that the name of the leader of Kushu in the Tale of Sinuhe – Ya’ush – is identical to one of the sons of Esau in Gen. 36:5, 15, 18 who decamped to Edom (Kitchen 1992: 21).

¹³ Pyramid Texts is a common term used to describe the hieroglyphic religious texts inscribed on the walls of the pyramid tombs of Old Kingdom kings and queens. The term originated with the foundational text edition of Kurt Sethe (1908-1922). See Allen 2005 for discussion and English translations.

¹⁴ Coffin Texts is the common term used to refer to the hieroglyphic religious texts inscribed on coffins, a practice that emerged in the Middle Kingdom, but which appears to be a development in a longer tradition of Egyptian mortuary literature that began with Pyramid Texts. The foundational text edition was published by Adriaan de Buck in 1935 and an English translation by R.O. Faulkner in 1973-1978.

¹⁵ See for example: PT Utterance 214, Line 138b, South wall of Sarcophagus chamber of Old Kingdom Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara and CT I, 270, Spell 65.

[55.6]); Gardiner et al 1955: 97-98, No. 90; Appendix B.1.14), the “god’s seal-bearer” miraculously discovers good caches of turquoise at Serâbît el-Khâdim during the mining off-season, thanks to the benevolence of the goddess Hathor. The rock relief of Mentuhotep IV describes how a gazelle gave birth on recently quarried stone, generating a miraculous rainstorm that filled the local well (Shaw 1998: 256).

That the Egyptians perceived the drylands in these ritually charged terms can also be demonstrated in the associations they made between particular gods and particular regions in the drylands. The northern Sinai was mainly associated with Horus during the Pharaonic periods. Furthermore, he remains heavily associated with the station at Tharu and a place called *msn* (Mesen) in later periods. New Kingdom, Late Period, Ptolemaic, and Roman inscriptions refer to Horus as “lord of Tharu,” “lion of Tharu,” “lion preeminent in Tharu” or *nb msn*, “lord of Mesen.” As these inscriptions frequently appear in proximity to each other, Mesen may refer to a place near Tharu or perhaps a place within Tharu (al-Ayedi 2006: 36-37, 56, 59, 61-64, 73-78).

In the southern Sinai, divine associations shift over time. Thoth appears as the most prominent deity in Old Kingdom reliefs at Wadi Maghara and Wadi Kharig (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 7, 10; Givon 1977: 225). In a fifth dynasty rock relief at Wadi Kharig, he is referred to as “Thoth, Lord of Terror, who smashes Asia” (Givon 1977: 225). At Wadi Maghara, a Fifth Dynasty rock relief refers to Thoth as *nb ḥ3swt*, “lord of the hill-countries/foreign lands/deserts” (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 10). This title (as well as *nb iwntyw*, “lord of the nomads”) also appears in a Fifth Dynasty funerary complex in Egypt (Gardiner et al 1955: 29). Thoth continues to appear in some Middle Kingdom contexts at Wadi Maghara and Serâbît el-Khâdim, but is largely replaced by Sopdu and Hathor (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 23, 24, 115, 125, 217, 332).

Sopdu first appears at Wadi Maghara and Serâbît el-Khâdim in the Middle Kingdom, where he is frequently referred to as *nb i3bt*, “lord of the east,” or *nb ḥ3swt*, “lord of the hill-countries/foreign lands/deserts” (Cooper 2016: No. [64.12]; Gardiner et al 1955: No. 28, 33, 35, 80, 115, 121, 122, 124, 125). Sopdu also appears as “lord of the hill-countries/foreign lands/deserts” at a mining site on the Red Sea coast of Egypt (Mansour 2014: 61). Certain Middle Kingdom texts outside the Sinai refer to Sopdu as *nb t3 ššmt*, “Lord of the Malachite-Land” (Cooper 2015: No. [42.10]; Mansour 2014: 10; Nibbi 1976: 50). Sopdu continues to appear in select New Kingdom inscriptions, often as “lord of the east” (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 44, 184, 211, 212, 231, 296). However, he is largely overshadowed by Hathor and other deities.

Less frequently, Horus also appears in Middle Kingdom inscriptions at both Wadi Maghara and Serâbît el-Khâdim as *nb ḥ3swt*, “lord of the hill-countries/foreign lands/deserts” (Cooper 2015: No [64.12]; Gardiner et al 1955: No. 28, 430). However, this epithet is known for Horus outside of the southern Sinai as well. Furthermore, he is frequently referred to as “Horus of the east,” and Horus of *šzmt*, Malachite-Country” in the Pyramid Texts. This overlap in titles between Horus and Sopdu is echoed in the representations of Sopdu in the southern Sinai as a crouching or seated falcon, similar to Horus. This may suggest that Horus and Sopdu were associated or assimilated to each other, or, perhaps, that Sopdu served as a specific manifestation of Horus (Cooper 2015: No. 42.1, 4-6, 9]; Mansour 2014: 60-61).

Hathor begins appearing in Wadi Maghara inscriptions in the Middle Kingdom, at first associated with Thoth and then singly as *nbt mfk3t*, “Lady of Turquoise” or “Lady of the Turquoise-Country” (Cooper 2015: [No. 64.11-15]; Gardiner et al 1955: No. 23, 27-30, 33, 35). In one of these inscriptions, she is also referred to as *nbt ḥsbḏ*, “Lady of Lapis Lazuli” (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 102; Givon 1978b: 62). She also appears as “Lady of Turquoise” in a Middle Kingdom inscription at Rod el-Air, a mining site near Serâbît el-Khâdim (Gardiner et al 1955:

No. 519). At Serâbît el-Khâdim, Hathor appears in both Middle and New Kingdom inscriptions as “Lady of Turquoise,” often in the context of a temple dedicated to her worship (Bonnet and Valbelle 1997; Gardiner et al 1955: 3, 41-42; Giveon 1981; Pinch 1993: 147, 186, 304-305; Valbelle and Bonnet 1996). In New Kingdom inscriptions of the Nineteenth Dynasty, she also appears as *hnwt mfk3t*, “Mistress of Turquoise,” (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 251, 264, 268, 273; Pinch 1993: 64, 151, 273, 307).

These titles also appear in Southern Levantine Drylands sites outside the southern Sinai. At Site 200 in the southern Negev, she appears as “Lady of Turquoise” and “Mistress of Turquoise” on New Kingdom votive objects (Rothenberg 1972: 1 66; 1988: 118, 121, 141, Schulman 1976: 127; Schulman 1988: No. 21, 33, 55, 221). She also appears as “Lady of Turquoise” in a New Kingdom stela in a small shrine at Gebel Abu Hassa, southwest of the Bitter Lakes (Clédât 1919: 212; Mumford 2015: 6) In the Coffin Texts, Hathor is described as ascending in turquoise. She continues to appear as “Lady of Turquoise” or otherwise associated with turquoise in texts from the Third Intermediate Period, Ptolemaic Period, and Roman Period (Aufrère 1991: 506-507; Mansour 2014: 80, 92-98).

Given that people frequently bring their gods with them wherever they go, the significance of these references lie not in their existence, but in that they associate these specific gods with particular parts of Sinai in certain time periods. For example, Thoth’s predominance in the Old Kingdom materials in the southern Sinai may be related to seeing the area as particularly hostile and dangerous during early forays into the region. In Old Kingdom sources, Thoth largely appears as a slayer of inimical beings (Stadler 2012). At Wadi Maghara, the Old Kingdom materials frequently depict scenes of the Pharaoh smiting non-Egyptian enemies, a motif that is largely unique to the site during the Old Kingdom (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 14, 16, Pl. I-VI, VIII; Giveon 1974; Hall 1986: 7-10). This includes a rock relief where the Pharaoh is smiting an enemy before an ibis-headed god presumed to be Thoth (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 7; Stadler 2012). Furthermore, an Old Kingdom rock relief at Wadi Kharig refers to Thoth as “Lord of Terror, who smashes Asia” (Giveon 1977: 225).

In the Middle Kingdom, Sopdu/Horus and Hathor largely replace Thoth in the southern Sinai. Sopdu, Horus, and Hathor are often associated with the east or foreign lands in Egyptian sources, including the southern Sinai. In this, they partially functioned as sources of good will and protection for Egyptians in lands outside the Nile Valley (Shaw 1998: 253; Tower 2009: 3). However, certain sources also associate Sopdu and Horus with malachite and Hathor with turquoise, linking these deities to very specific materials of the southern Sinai (Mansour 2014: 10, 60-61, 80-98). In the case of Hathor, this appears especially significant because Hathor is often associated with precious materials and the lands from which they come. Her epithets include “Mistress of Punt” and the “Mistress of Incense” (Bleeker 1973: 73). Punt (East Africa or South Arabia) primarily served as a source of aromatic tree resins and other luxury items, including ivory, ebony, various woods, and exotic animals (Balanda 2005: 33, 36-44; Bradbury 1988; Glenister 2008: 26-60, 94-109, 118-129; Harvey 2003; Meeks 2003). In the second millennium BCE (or possibly earlier), Hathor is associated with Byblos, the major source of cedar in antiquity, as *nbt kbn*, “Lady of Byblos” (Tower 2009: 1-3). An Old Kingdom tomb inscription refers to her as “Mistress of Imaau” (likely Nubia), from which the Egyptians attained gold, amethyst, and carnelian (Bloxam 2006: 282). She is also invoked in various Egyptian cult centers in Nubia beginning in the Middle Kingdom. Additionally, she is the principal deity associated with amethyst, galena, and carnelian mining sites in the Eastern and Nubian Deserts (Bloxam 2006: 282-285; Pinch 1993: 71, 116; Shaw 1998: 253). Middle Kingdom stelae at the

amethyst mines of Wadi el-Hudi in the Eastern Desert refer to Hathor as *nbt ḥsmn*, “Lady of Amethyst” (Espinel 2005: 60; Sadek 1980: 37-39, 42, 46, 51, 52). A New Kingdom stela at the galena mines of Gebel Zeit on the Red Sea coast refers to Hathor as *nbt msdmt*, “Lady of Galena” (Castel and Soukiassian 1985: 291, pl. 64). The association of Hathor with these materials and their lands of origin, seen most vividly in the southern Sinai, suggests an entangled flow of intra-action between Hathor, special materials, and the land. In this flow, the power and awesomeness of the goddess recursively interacted with the power and awesomeness of the special materials and the extraordinary lands from which they came.

2.3.2. Assyria

This sense of the extraordinary associated with the Southern Levantine Drylands also appears in texts from Mesopotamia. The first known direct references to the Southern Levantine Drylands appear in first millennium BCE Neo-Assyrian texts. However, these are mostly limited to the appellations *údumu*, *údumua*, *údumma*, *údume*, “Edom,” and *naḥal mušur*, “the Brook of Egypt.” The occurrences of Edom appear in texts associated with Adad-Nirari III (r.810-783 BCE), Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 744-727 BCE), Sargon II (r. 721-705 BCE), Sennacherib (r. 704-681 BCE), Esarhaddon (r. 680-669 BCE) and Assurbanipal (r. 668-635 BCE) (Borger 1996: 18, 61; Fales and Postgate 1995: 4-6; Grayson and Novotny 2012: 64, 114, 131, 175, 192; Horowitz 1998: 68-85; Leichty 2011: 23, 46; Saggs 2001: 219-221; Tadmor 1973: 148; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122-123; Appendix B.2.1, 5, 7-9, 15-21, 24, 28-30, 38-40). It may appear in reference to the land itself, the people associated with it, or the name of a leader “of Edom.” It is usually in lists of territories that the Assyrian kings claimed that they subdued or exacted tribute and is grouped with other, presumably adjacent or nearby, first millennium BCE Southern Levantine regional or urban polities such as Tyre, Sidon, Samaria, Judah, Moab, or Philistia (Crowell 2004: 77). In the texts of Adad-Nirari III, Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib, Edom appears with the determinative for land (KUR). However, in the texts of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal II, both the determinative for land (KUR) and the determinative for city (URU) appear with Edom.

Meanwhile, the “Brook of Egypt” appears to refer to the Sinai-Negev region in texts of Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II, and Esarhaddon (Fuchs 1998: 28; Gadd 1954: 199-200; Leichty 2011: 18, 29, 37, 77, 90, 135, 155, 175; Tadmor 1958: 77; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 127; Appendix B.2.6, 10, 11, 24-26, 29-31, 33-37). In Summary Inscription 8, Tiglath-Pileser successfully suppresses a revolt in the Gaza region and erects a victory stela *ina URU.naḥal mušur*, “in the city Brook of Egypt” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 127; Appendix B.2.6). Following a campaign into southern Philistia, a text of Sargon II refers to an unnamed place, *ša paṭṭi*¹⁶ URU *naḥal M[ušur...]* *ša šulmu šamši*” (Fuchs 1998: 28; Tadmor 1958: 77; Appendix B.2.10). This has been read alternately as “on the border of the city of the Brook of E[gypt], a province which is on the shore of] the Western (sea),” (Tadmor 1958: 78)¹⁷ and “which is on the border of the Brook of E[gypt...] toward the sunset I stationed [my army?]” (Hooker 1993: 206). Between suppressing a revolt in Tyre and invading Egypt, Esarhaddon travels to the city of

¹⁶ pātu (pattu) – 1) edge, border (of a plot of land); 2) boundary, border (between two territories); 3) border area, border district (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary 2005: 305-309).

¹⁷ See Na’aman 1979: 71 for a fairly similar translation.

Rapiḫi,¹⁸ *ana ite naḫal KUR.muṣur* (Appendix B.2.30). This is read alternately as “which is in the neighborhood of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt,” (Leichty 2011: 87) “as far as the border of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt,” (Hooker 1993: 210), “beyond the border of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt,” (Na’aman 1979: 24), “to the border zone of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt,” (Na’aman 2004: 63), and “on the bank of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt” (Radner 2008: 306). The proximity of Gaza, Rafah, and a campaign into southern Philistia in these references implies that the “Brook of Egypt” should be located somewhere in the Sinai-Negev.

Traditionally, “the Brook of Egypt” is associated with a literal wadi in the Sinai-Negev, usually the Wadi el-Arish or the Wadi Gaza/Naḫal Besor (Hooker 1993; Na’aman 1979; Na’aman 2004: 57; Rainey 1984: 92-93). However, the term may also designate a geo-political region in Assyrian texts, likely the northeastern-most extent of Egyptian territory as seen from an outside, northern perspective – thus somewhere in the vicinity of Gaza and Rafah (Hooker 1993: 203; Na’aman 1986: 241; 2004). However, this does not necessarily mean the Sinai-Negev on the other side of the “the Brook of Egypt” was considered a part of Egypt proper in this time period, either by Egyptians or even by the Assyrians. The term, “Brook of Egypt,” never appears in Egyptian texts (Hooker 1993: 203; Retsö 2003: 195, n.50). Meanwhile, another term *mišir*¹⁹ – as in *mišir KUR.muṣur*, “the border of the land of Egypt” – appears in one of the same texts as “Brook of Egypt” (Leichty 2011: 88). This term may refer to a location at the edge of the Nile Valley (Verreth 1999: 236). Thus, the term “Brook of Egypt” may have also been used in a more general sense for the border region between lands controlled or overseen by Egypt or polities in the Southern Levant.²⁰

One of these references to the “Brook of Egypt – and perhaps two others – are also notable for perceiving this region as extremely arid. Fragment F describes the “Brook of Egypt” as *ašar ĪD la*, “where there is no river” (Leichty 2011: 87; Appendix B.2.30). Fragment G and Summary Inscription 8 are both partially lost at this point, but they are preserved enough for a similar reconstruction. This notion that the Sinai-Negev is entirely desiccated, thus intensifying the dangerous and strange qualities of the landscape, is a major theme of Fragment F’s portrayal of the incursion of the Assyrian army through the region during Esarhaddon’s second Egyptian campaign in 671 BCE. That portrayal, of a parched, nameless landscape containing fantastic creatures, echoes many of the same mentalities I have enumerated already, wherein the drylands are seen as ambiguous, dangerous, and powerful. The text bears quoting in part:

{17-18} (For a distance of) thirty ‘miles’ of land, from Apqu which is situated in the border region of Samerīna to Rapiḫu on the bank of the Brook of Egypt where there is no river, I let the troops drink buckets of water drawn from wells with ropes and chains. {rev. 1} According to the command of my lord Aššur, an idea came to my mind and I conceived (the following): {2} I mobilized the camels of all the kings of Arabia and loaded them with [water skins and water containers]. {3} Twenty ‘miles’ of land, a journey of 15 days, I marched through [mighty sand] dunes. {4} Four ‘miles’ of land I

¹⁸ This is usually identified as modern Rafah at the modern Sinai-Negev border line on the Mediterranean coast (Radner 2008: 307).

¹⁹ *mišru* – 1) border, border line; 2) territory, region, land (as a political term) (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary 1977: 113-155). Translated as “border” by both Radner 2008 and Leichty 2011 (88).

²⁰ That Muṣur is always specific to the Nile Valley is also contested. It may, at the very least, also include territories which were merely under Egyptian sovereignty or sphere of interest (Retsö 2003: 195, n. 50).

travelled over alum, mušû stones [and other stones]; {5-7} four ‘miles’ of land, a journey of two days, I stepped repeatedly on two-headed snakes [... whose touch] is deadly, but continued; four ‘miles’ of land, a journey of [two days] – yellow snakes spreading wings (but continued); four ‘miles’ of land, a journey of two days, [...]: {8} (in sum) 16 ‘miles’ of land, a journey of eight days, I marched. [...] very much. {9} The great lord Marduk came to my rescue [...]. {10} He revived my troops. Twenty days seven [...] {11} of the border of Egypt, I set up a night camp [...]. (Radner 2008: 306-307).²¹

Karen Radner suggests that this text is not organized chronologically, but emphatically. This is not a play by play of the expedition, but one that invokes the dangers and strangeness of the expedition, especially the inaccessibility of water (Radner 2008: 311). Thus, the text conveys the impression that traveling through the drylands is a long and arduous journey with a constant risk of death. The ambiguity and strangeness of the terrain is highlighted by a marked lack of toponyms. While the text provides a strikingly detailed itinerary of the trek in the sense of listing distances and days, the drylands themselves are not named and have no places and no names within them. This lack of naming is further highlighted by the listing of toponyms before entering the drylands and then again immediately after. Thus, this text presents the drylands as a vast, mysterious expanse, lacking water but nonetheless featuring amazing creatures – deadly “two-headed snakes” and “yellow snakes spreading wings” (Radner 2008: 307-308). Then, lines 9-10 magnify this sense of danger by implying that the journey might have ended in disaster for Esarhaddon and his troops but “The great lord Marduk came to my rescue [...]. He revived my troops” (Radner 2008: 307). This is not only a place where one may meet and be attacked by monstrous supernatural creatures, but this is also a place where a beneficent deity may directly intercede and counter the dangerous threats of the landscape.

2.3.3. Hebrew Bible

This sense of the extraordinary ambiguity of the Southern Levantine Drylands also appears in the texts of the Hebrew Bible. However, the drylands seem to have played more intense roles in the mythology, ritual, and lived experiences of the first millennium BCE Israelite and Judean communities and their descendants. Various biblical texts, such as Genesis, 1 and 2 Kings, and Isaiah, contain accounts of the miraculous and dangerous drylands. Furthermore, the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy recount the trials and tribulations of the newly-liberated Israelites as they migrate through the drylands, repeatedly encountering the divine and the supernatural. Yet, despite a more pronounced presence in these texts, the Southern Levantine Drylands are no more tangible in the Hebrew Bible than in Egyptian or Assyrian texts. Rather, they appear as an amorphous betwixt and between swath, filled with divinities and supernatural creatures and imbued with the awesome powers of ambiguity and danger.

The ambiguousness and in-betweenness of the drylands is immediately apparent in the terminologies for the drylands. The most common noun used of the region is *midbar*. A similar term also appears in Ugaritic and Akkadian as a West Semitic loan word (e.g. Appendix B.2.22). Its root, *dbr*, is most commonly used of speaking in biblical Hebrew. However, as in Arabic, it also may connote turning (away), driving flocks, driving away, pursuing, being pursued, and subduing. Often rendered as “desert” or “wilderness” in English translations, the majority of the occurrences of this term in the Hebrew Bible refer to “steppe” lands, the thinly inhabited areas

²¹ See Appendix B.2.30 for alternative translation in Leichty 2011.

between settlements and deserts unsuitable for agriculture and used for pasturing grazing animals (Koehler and Baumgartner 2001: 209-210; Talmon 1966: 40-41). Whether referring to deserts or steppe lands, its use always connotes an in-between place, with constantly fluctuating and shifting boundaries (Feldt 2012: 65-66).

Biblical texts also refer to regions within the drylands in more specific terminology – *midbār* followed by a proper name, such as *midbar šin*, *midbar pārān*, *midbar šinay*, *midbar šin*. These terms imply a sense of specificity and distinctness to areas within the drylands. However, these same texts are vague in all other details and may even offer conflicting accounts. Thus, the precise locations of these places are not readily apparent from these texts. Modern identifications of these regions then typically derive from Hellenistic and Roman Period Jewish sources, early Christian sources, and scholarly attempts to interpret laconic biblical texts and rectify competing claims.

For example, early Christian traditions associate Mt. Sinai and the *midbar šinay* with the southern Sinai (Davies 1992: 48). However, there is little evidence for this association in pre-Christian Jewish sources. At least as early as the third century BCE, Jewish sources located Mt. Sinai near the settlement of Madyan (identified with biblical Midian, modern Al-Bad') in northwestern Arabia (Kerkeslager 1997: 63-69; 1998: 146-152). The similarity of *midbar šin* with *midbar šinay* may also suggest that the words and/or region are related (Seely 1992: 47). Similarly, the wildernesses of *šin* and *pārān* are both or alternately associated with a place or places called *qādēš* (derived from the root *qdš* – 'holy') or *qādēš barnēa* (Num. 13:17, 22; 27:14; 33:36). Associating these wildernesses with a specific site may seem to emplace them. However, these texts are equally vague in fixing Kadesh/Kadesh Barnea as anywhere more specific than somewhere between the Reed Sea and Mount Sinai. Thus, the various proposed locations for Kadesh/Kadesh Barnea are heavily reliant on the proposed location of Mount Sinai. Since the late nineteenth century, Biblicists have commonly identified Kadesh Barnea with the oasis of 'Ein El-Qudeirat in northwestern Sinai, based on a similarity in name and the early Christian association of the *midbar šinay* with the southern Sinai. Alternatively, Josephus and the Targums often translated or understood Kadesh/Kadesh-Barnea as Petra (Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 4; Levin 2006: 64-65). Otherwise, scholarly suggestions for the location of Mount Sinai range from mountains throughout the Sinai, the Negev, southern Jordan, and northwestern Arabia (Seeley 1992: 47).

It may be tempting to infer that contemporary audiences were already familiar with these places and did not require any overt specificity in describing their locations. Without denying this possibility, attention should also be paid to the range of ideologies implicit within these texts. That is, we may also consider that this lack of specificity dressed as specificity may have been a stylistic and rhetorical choice, possibly indexing any number of overlapping and intersecting literary strategies. Perhaps, the scribes, lacking a lived experience of the landscape, constructed an imagined landscape based on a variety of reports and sources that claimed this lived experience. Some of the seeming conflict may also result from the combinations of several temporally divergent traditions, thus reflecting the shifting nature of place names over several centuries or millennia. Alternatively, perhaps, these scribes also may have employed an intentional ambiguity in locating specific places in order to further exoticize the landscape and denote its liminal properties.

Relatedly, the cardinal direction south, *negev*, also appears as a generic designation for lands located to the south of Judah, *'aršāh hannegev*, "the lands of the south, (e.g. Gen. 20:1) and as a more precise term for specific regions to the south of Judah – *negeb hakkērētī*, "the

negev of the Cherethites” (1 Sam. 30:14), *negev hayyarḥēmē’ēlī*, “the *negev* of the Jerahmeelites” (1 Sam. 27:10), *negev haqqēnī*, “the *negev* of the Kenites” (1 Sam. 27:10), and *negev yēhu(w)dāh*, “the *negev* of Judah” (1 Sam. 27:10; 30:14).²² Most of these terms associate specific regions within the Southern Levantine Drylands with particular mobile pastoral communities, but neglect to locate the regions or the communities within the actual landscape. Aside from the possibilities above, this also may indicate an intentional obscuring and disassociation between the land and mobile pastoral communities by the urban elite.

The nebulousness of the land is also seen in how the land itself is depicted. Despite the fact that this land figures so prominently in many of these texts, there is very little description of the physical features of the land. Rather, the land is mainly characterized by the overbearing sun (Exod. 16:21), a lack of water (Exod. 15:22; 17: 1; Num. 21:5; Deut. 8:15; Jer. 2:6), and the absence of human settlement or agriculture (Exod. 16:35; Jer. 2: 2, 6). Thus, the land lacks senses of materiality and realness. Conversely, the land is also filled with immateriality and magic. It literally teems with the supernatural – miraculous events, magical food, and divine and fantastic creatures. Furthermore, like Egyptian and Assyrian sources, the relentless heat and lack of water paves the way for supernatural intervention and the miraculous. This is most cogently seen in the trials and tribulations of the newly-liberated Israelites in the book of Exodus as they migrate through the drylands. In Exodus 15: 22-25, the wandering Israelites cannot find water for days. When they finally stumble upon a water source, it is too bitter to drink. Moses beseeches Yahweh for help. Yahweh directs Moses to a piece of wood, and Moses throws the wood in the bitter water. Astoundingly, the water suddenly becomes drinkable. Similarly, in Exodus 17:1-7, the Israelites are parched and unable to find water, but, after consulting with Yahweh, Moses uses his staff to miraculously bring water gushing out of a rock. Meanwhile, other texts recount a plethora of encounters with the magical and divine, such as the descent of Yahweh to Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19), bizarre manifestations of alternately benign or malevolent clouds and fires through which Yahweh occasionally speaks (Num. 11: 1-3, 25; 12: 5-10; 14:14), and the magical materializations of food – bread from the sky and quails who submit themselves for the slaughter (Exod. 16).

Recently, Laura Feldt observed the tendency of these texts to fluctuate between the real and phantasmic by offering elements of realistic (pseudo-realistic?) geographical space in which extraordinary marvels occur (2012: 58). She argues that this slippage between geo-physical materiality and the fantastic imaginary (accompanied by a continual oscillation between benign and malevolent powers and events) sets the drylands in the arena of uncertain and ambiguous space, “a hallucinatory wonder-object” (Feldt 2012: 82.9+63). The ambiguity and liminality of the land is further invoked by the role that the drylands play in the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. Robert L. Cohn describes this journey as both a pilgrimage and a “corporate rite of passage,” in which the liminal phase manifests in the bodily, spatial, and temporal transitioning of wandering for 40 years in the wilderness (1981: 13).

These phantasmic events are not only limited to the Israelites’ sojourn in the wilderness. Genesis 21: 9-19 recounts the harrowing tale of Hagar, handmaiden of Abraham’s wife Sarah, and her son Ishmael being cast out into the *midbar bē’ēr šāba’*, the wilderness of Beersheba. Mother and son only narrowly escape certain death when a supernatural entity – an intermediary creature called a *mal’āk*²³ – appears and reveals a hidden water source. In 1 Kings 19:4-8, the

²² The Negev of Judah is commonly identified as the Beersheba Valley (Rainey 1984: 88-90, 99-100).

²³ This is commonly translated as “messenger” or, based on the Greek, “angel” (Koehler and Baumgartner 1994: 585-586).

prophet Elijah flees into the wilderness from Beersheba, where a *mal'āk* provides him with food and water, miraculously sustaining him for another forty days. Then, at Horeb, *har hā'ēlōhīm*, “the mountain of God” (1 Kgs 19:8), Yahweh physically manifests, causing a fierce wind, earthquake and fire, before finally speaking with a *qôl dēmāmāh daqqāh*, “a still, small voice” (1 Kgs 19:11-1).

Besides Yahweh and his intermediaries, other dangerous and fantastic creatures also populate this terrain – venomous snakes (Num. 21:6), fiery serpents and scorpions (Deut. 8:15), and vipers and flying serpents (Isa. 30: 6). That this land is inhabited by so many different types of fantastic and supernatural beings may suggest a recursive and symbiotic relationship between these creatures and the land, in which they share the power and potency of one another. For example, Job 28 describes the mining of precious metals and stones (silver, gold, iron, copper, sapphires), in which the earth is *nehpak kēmōw 'ēš*, “turned up as by fire” (Job 28:5b). Thus, the land itself carries a certain potency, capable of influencing and dominating that which is in it, as well as being influenced and dominated. Perhaps, this is the numinous power that is suggested in Leviticus 16: 7-10, 22. In this text, Yahweh instructs Aaron to transfer the iniquities of Israel to a goat and then send the goat into the wilderness, as if the wilderness will literally absorb the malevolent energy and dispel it.

Southern Jordan also figures into these biblical notions of the numinous land, but in a slightly different vernacular. The term used *'edôm*, derived from a Semitic root meaning “red” or “ruddy,” appears in New Kingdom Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, and biblical sources (See Appendix B). It is unclear if *'edôm* ever referred to territory west of the Wadi Arabah, but is presumably marked off by the Wadi al-Ḥasa to the north (Edelman 1995: 2).²⁴ It is usually referred to simply as *'edôm*, but other phrases also appear – *'ereš'edôm*, “the land of Edom” (Gen. 36:16, 17, 21, 31; Num. 20:23; 21:4; 33:37; 1 Kgs 9:26; Isa. 34.6), *šēdēh'edôm*, “the field/country of Edom” (Gen. 32:3; Judg. 5:4), and *midbar'edôm*, “the wilderness of Edom” (2 Kgs 3:8). It is also sometimes associated with a land or mountain called *šē'ir* (Num. 24:18; Judg. 5:4), likely meaning “hairy” or “rugged. Seir is alternately identified as synonymous with Edom, as a particular region within Edom, or as a contiguous region eventually subsumed by Edom. Similarly, *'edôm* is also associated with *tēmān* (Jer. 49:20; Amos 1: 12).²⁵ These places may be synonymous or Teman may refer to a particular region of Edom (Bartlett 1989: 37-44; 1992a: 287; Edelman 1995: 1-11).

Edom is mentioned quite often in the Hebrew Bible, usually in reference to the wanderings of the Israelites (Exod. 15:14-16; Num. 20:14-20; Deut. 2:4-9; Judg. 11:16-18) or the dealings of the kings of Israel and Judah with the Edomites in political and military matters (1 Sam.14:47-48, 18-22, 21:8, 22:9-10, 18-22; 2 Sam. 8:12-14; 1 Kgs 9:26, 11:15-16; 2 Kgs 3:4-27, 8:20-22). However, the biblical texts are relatively laconic on the land of Edom itself. Instead, they mostly offer contradictory descriptions of the social and political organization of Edom, often anachronistically portraying it as a highly centralized and urbanized polity. However, the *midbar'edôm* is the site of a (now familiar) narrative where a severe scarcity of water in the *midbār* threatens death – that is, until a supernatural intervention renders a miracle. 2 Kings 3

²⁴ Deut. 2:8-13 appears to refer to *naḥal zāred*, “the Brook of Zared,” as the dividing line between Moab and Edom, and this is commonly identified with the Wadi al-Ḥasa.

²⁵ Elsewhere, *tēmān* appears in parallelism with Mount Paran (Hab. 3:3) and Mount Esau (Obad. 9). The word *tēmān* is the *taw*-preformative noun from the root *ymn*, meaning south, which means that it could be used of any southern region, but also appears particularly associated with Edom (Edelman 1995: 10-11).

describes how a coalition of the armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom campaigned against Moab via “the way/road/path of *midbar ʿēdôm*” (2 Kgs 3:8):

“...the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the *melek ʿēdôm*, king of Edom set out; and when they had made a roundabout march of seven days, there was no water for the army or for the animals that were with them. Then the king of Israel said, ‘Alas! Yahweh has summoned us, three kings, only to be handed over to Moab.’ But Jehoshaphat said, ‘Is there no prophet of Yahweh here, through whom we may inquire of Yahweh?’ ...Elisha said... ‘But get me a musician.’ And then, while the musician was playing, the power of Yahweh came on him. And he said, ‘Thus says Yahweh, ‘I will make this wadi full of pools.’ For thus says Yahweh, ‘You shall see neither wind nor rain, but the wadi shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, you, your cattle, and your animals.’ ... The next day, about the time of the morning offering, suddenly water began to flow from the way of *midbar ʿēdôm*, the wilderness of Edom, until the country was filled with water” (2 Kgs 3:8-20)

Moreover, the land of Edom may exhibit its own particular sense of numinous power. Certain texts seem to especially associate the perceived origins of Yahweh within Edom. In Deuteronomy 33:2, Moses asserts that Yahweh *missînay bā wēzārah missē ʿîr*, “came from Sinai and arose from Seir,” that *hu(w)pîa ʿ mēhar pārān*, “he shone forth from Mount Paran,” appearing with a multitude of “holy ones” by his side. The so called “Song of Deborah” in Judges 5:4 also declares that Yahweh emerged *missē ʿîr*, “from Seir,” and marched *missēdēh ʿēdôm* “from the field/country of Edom,” causing earthquakes and thunderstorms. Habakkuk 3:3 proclaims that Yahweh came *mittēmān*, “from Teman” and *mēhar pārān*, “from Mount Paran.” Scholars have long noted these references to Yahweh coming out of Edom, often surmising that this and certain other allusions may indicate that Yahweh worship originally arose in southern Jordan and/or northwestern Arabia (Axelsson 1987; Blenkinsopp 2008: 131-139; Kelley 2009). Whether this is actually the case, these texts do draw a strong correlation between Yahweh and the drylands to the south of Judah, evoking images of a divine warrior at the head of a supernatural army thundering northward, the earth shaking beneath them. Here, gods and lesser divinities are in a kind of cacophonous communion with the land, their rapport reverberating in the earth and the sky.

In sum, the above discussion demonstrates that communities in Egypt, Assyria, and the Southern Levant perceived the Southern Levantine Drylands as an ambiguous and active space, teeming with munificent and malicious powers, fantastic creatures, and mysterious and wondrous phenomena, but also juxtaposed against a stark and scorching landscape in which no humans may survive or dwell within, unless uniquely favored by a divinity.

2.4. (Un)Peopling the Land

Yet, archaeological and ethnographic evidence demonstrates that humans did survive and dwell in the Southern Levantine Drylands, largely in mobile pastoral communities (see Chapter 3: Sections 3.2; 3.4-3.5). These communities rarely feature in the tales of incredible perseverance favored by the Assyrian and biblical texts. Rather, they are deliberately overlooked or downplayed in these accounts. When these accounts do admit to their existence, it is with a

similar sense of ambiguity as exhibited toward the drylands. This ambiguity, coupled with the tendency to otherwise disregard their existence, results in vague language, distorted images, and misleading slippage between different groups of people. These tendencies also recursively interact in generating the ambiguous perception of drylands residents and the lands in which they lived.

2.4.1. Egypt

For example, Egyptian texts of the third and early second millennium BCE employ a number of terms that appear to refer the peoples of southwestern Asia, including the Sinai Peninsula. These terms were often descriptive and based on characteristic features, such as “people with the knot on their shoulder,” “kilt-wearers,” “people of the bow,” or “those who dwell on the sand.” However, it is often unclear if particular terms refer to people from specific places in southwestern Asia or, if so, to which places they might refer. Furthermore, it remains unclear if or how Egyptians distinguished between sedentary and mobile pastoralist communities of southwestern Asia in language or visual representation (Bárta 2010: 32-33; Redford 1986; Zarins 1989: 131-132). Old Kingdom rock reliefs at Wadi Maghara refer to subduing peoples called *iwnwt* or *mntw*, often accompanied by an image of the pharaoh smiting a figure in clothing generally associated with southwestern Asian communities, but which might also more specifically represent mobile pastoral communities. These terms may refer to people that the Egyptians encountered in the southern Sinai during their mining expeditions in the third millennium BCE (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 6-8, 10, 14, 16; Mumford and Parcak 2003: 87). Neither term is well understood linguistically,²⁶ but the context of the terms implies that they should be translated generically as “nomads” or “barbarians.” (Cooper 2015: 68). Moreover, the repeated use of the smiting scene in this context may be of significance for marking a particularly hostile attitude towards the indigenous inhabitants of the southern Sinai at this time. During the Old Kingdom, this motif appears almost entirely at Wadi Maghara (Hall 1986: 7). Furthermore, the Old Kingdom inscriptions frequently mention naval titles and military detachments, which are lacking in the Middle Kingdom inscriptions (Shaw 1998: 247). The textual and pictorial evidence implies that the Egyptians met with resistance and hostility from local communities during their earliest mining expeditions, and that they felt particularly threatened and antagonistic towards these communities. This hostility is also visible archaeologically at Tell Ras Budran (Site 345), a heavily fortified anchorage and waystation on the coast of the Gulf of Suez. This fortress protected the mining expedition’s ships and secured a coastal camp against attack from local communities, thus ensuring access to the mining sites in the southern Sinai and a safe return to ‘Ayn Sukhna, where major smelting operations were performed (Mumford 2006b: 58-59; see also Abd el-Raziq et al 2012; Mumford and Hummel 2015). Presumably, this antagonism resulted from disrupting their access to materials that they felt to be rightly theirs and the pharaoh’s new-found supremacy over foreign lands, a supremacy that he wielded by right of the gods (Shaw 1998: 256).

By the early second millennium BCE, the Egyptian inscriptions from the southern Sinai are less bellicose and begin listing foreign members of their mining expeditions – (1) the *’3mw*, usually understood as the generic term “Asiatics,” denoting anyone from western Asia, (2) the *rtnw*, a term generally identified with Levantine communities, and (3) the *’3mw* from *rtnw*. Since

²⁶ Donald Redford proposes that *mntw* is derived from the root “to be wild,” literally yielding “wild men” as the translation (1986: 126 n. 15)

'3mw could designate any person from western Asia, including the Sinai, it is possible '3mw may have referred to local communities and/or to expedition members of Levantine origin or descent (Cooper 2015: 68-69; Gardiner et al 1955: No.114, 115, 120; Redford 1986; Zarins 1989:131-132). Old and Middle Kingdom inscriptions occasionally refer to “interpreters” and “overseers of interpreters” on mining expeditions in Sinai. Gary Mumford and Sarah Parcak suggest that this implies extensive interactions between Egyptians, Asiatics, and indigenous communities, interaction that eventually resulted in recruiting workers from these communities. This interaction may be reflected further in the appearance of Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1630-1539 BCE) inscriptions written in Proto-Sinaitic on or near Egyptian monuments at Serâbît el-Khâdim and Wadi Maghara. Proto-Sinaitic is an early alphabetic script derived largely from Egyptian hieroglyphs but rendered for the Semitic language of the indigenous communities of the Sinai. Interaction at these sites is also visible in non-Egyptian stelae that depict the Egyptian god of craftsmen, Ptah, along with Hyksos-style²⁷ scarabs and sherds and Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware²⁸ juglets (Mumford and Parcak 2003: 87-88).

Indeed, Elizabeth Bloxam suggests that most of the miners during the Middle Kingdom may have been derived from indigenous communities. She further contends that the Egyptian elite intentionally introduced Hathor to these communities, invoking her role as a divine mother, in order to foster social cohesion and interaction. This strategy also coincided with the miners intentionally adopting certain elements of Egyptian material culture out of a demand for foreign goods and ideologies as their community grew in social complexity. Thus, the Temple of Hathor at Serâbît el-Khâdim served as a site of ritual interaction and indexes the appropriation of Hathor by indigenous communities. Interaction and appropriation at the temple may be visible in the appearance of votive inscriptions to both Hathor and the Levantine goddess Ba'alat, locally produced Middle Kingdom ceramics, and the local production of Hathor imagery and structural elements, which is not necessarily the case for other remote mining sites of this period (Bloxam 2006: 281-82, 291-96).

Unfortunately, the New Kingdom Egyptian inscriptions from the Sinai rarely mention toponyms or distinct communities. However, other texts do begin referring to peoples called š3sw, “Shasu,” a term that likely derives from the root š3s, ‘to wander, to roam.’ It is also sometimes used to refer to the territory they inhabited, t3 š3sw, Shasu-Land (Appendix B.1.29, 34, 35). In these texts, Shasu primarily appears as a generic term for mobile pastoral communities in southwestern Asia. The Shasu are described as animal herders, subdivided by kinship and region, who may live in tents or towns across a broad swath of the Levant in the Late Bronze Age. Significantly, these texts also describe the Shasu as lawless, rebellious highwaymen and a threat to Egyptians, despite the fact that they are also hired as mercenaries by the Egyptian

²⁷ Hyksos is a Greek modification of the Egyptian phrase, *ḥk3 ḥ3swt*, “ruler of foreign lands,” and refers to non-Egyptian communities that reigned over northern Egypt during the Fifteenth Dynasty of the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1630-1539 BCE). Textual and archaeological evidence suggests that these communities originally derived from southwestern Asia, likely somewhere in the Levant. See Mourad 2015 for recent discussion.

²⁸ Tell el-Yahudiyeh Ware refers to wares of gray or light brown clay, burnished and slipped in in gray, brownish-black or yellowish, and decorated with puncture marks arranged in grooves, lines, or geometric patterns. The ware is named after the site of Tell el-Yahudiyeh in the eastern Nile delta, where it was first excavated by Flinders Petrie. This ware is generally distributed along the coast of Lebanon and Syria, eastern Cyprus, and at sites in Israel and the Nile Delta. However, the forms of this ware are classic Levantine. The ware appears in early second millennium BCE (Middle Bronze Age) contexts and appears to be associated with Hyksos occupation in Egypt (Amiran 1969: 118-120).

army (Cooper 2015: 69-70, 104-105; Giveon 1971: No. 16a, 25, 33, 37, 38; Redford 2003: 91-92; Ward 1992: 1166).

However, the Shasu are sometimes distinguished in geographic terms, and some Shasu communities are associated with the Sinai-Negev and southern Jordan. The Shasu are most clearly associated with the Sinai-Negev in the Karnak reliefs of Seti I. The relief to the left of the Ways of Horus scene depicts the subjugation of Pa-Canaan (“the city of Canaan”), and the accompanying inscription alludes to the vanquished Shasu “from the fortress of Tharu to Pa-Canaan,” likely referring to the northern Sinai and possibly the northwestern Negev (Giveon 1971: 56-57; al-Ayedi 2006: 19). Meanwhile, the relatively clearest evidence for Shasu presence associated with southern Jordan occurs in a papyrus referring to *mhwt š3šw ’idm*, “the Shasu kinspeople of Edom,” dated to the reign of Merneptah (r. 1213-1204 BCE) (Cooper 2015: No. [52.1]; Giveon 1971: No. 37; Kitchen 1992: 27; Appendix B.1.38). Otherwise, the Shasu are also associated with a place called *s ’r, s ’rr*, “Seir,” identified specifically as a mountain in one source, and associated with southern Jordan and/or the Sinai-Negev in later biblical sources (Cooper 2015: No. [66.2-4]; Giveon 1971: No. 25, 38; Appendix B.1. 34-36, 40).²⁹ More possible Egyptian references to the Shasu in the Sinai-Negev and southern Jordan are also extant in Nubia. The Temple of Amun at Soleb, built by Amenhotep III (r. 1390-1353 BCE), lists three toponyms in *t3 š3sw*, “the land of Shasu” (Appendix B.1.29). Another temple at Amarah West, attributed to Ramses II (r. 1279-1213 BCE), lists six toponyms in “the land of Shasu,” three of which are the same as those in the Soleb temple inscription (Appendix B.1.34). Some of these places have been identified with the Sinai-Negev and southern Jordan or sites within the region (Cooper 2015: No. [53.1-3], [66.3]; Giveon 1971: No. 6a, 16a; Ward 1992).

The deep association of Edom, Seir, and the Shasu (as a land and a people) with lands perceived as ambiguous, foreign, dangerous, and strange also suggests that the Egyptians conflated the land with their perceptions of the people within it. Thus, both the land and its people are wild and unsettled, ambiguous and nameless, recursively intra-acting with each other in their becoming.

2.4.2. Assyria

The Assyrian sources also occasionally admit to people inhabiting this land. However, like the Egyptian texts, these references are nebulous. Beginning in the mid-ninth century BCE, Assyrian texts start to mention a group of people who appear to have ranged across a broad swath of Syria, the Trans-Jordan, the Sinai-Negev, and the Arabian Peninsula - the *arba, aribi* or *arubu*, the earliest references to Arabs in textual sources (Retsö 2003: 119-211; Appendix B.2.2-4, 6, 12-14, 22-24, 27-30, 32, 38, 39). Like the Shasu in New Kingdom Egyptian texts, these references leave the impression of mobile pastoral communities, who are alternately allied with, subjugated to, or hostile toward the Assyrians. They are usually associated with camels, tents, and the *madbaru*, a West Semitic loan word analogous to *midbār* and also alternately translated as “steppe” or “desert” (Koehler and Baumgartner 2001: 547; Chicago Assyrian Dictionary 1977: 11-12; Retsö 2003: 126-128, 131, 133, 149, 154, 159, 162, 164). Sometimes, they are also associated with the incense trade, though there is some suggestion that their role in this activity may have been a later development (Retsö 2003: 122). In Tiglath-Pileser III’s Summary Inscription 7, they are perhaps first associated with the Sinai-Negev where Tiglath-Pileser

²⁹ Biblical passages associating Seir with southern Jordan and/or the Sinai/Negev include Gen: 32:3, 36: 21; Num. 24: 18; Deut. 1:2; 2: 4-8; Judg. 5: 4 (see Chapter 2: Section 2.3.3. and Appendix B.3).

appoints someone named Idibi'ilu as the “gatekeeper” *ina* UGU KUR.*mušri*, “facing/in front of [the land of] Egypt,” which has been taken as an appointment to stewardship of the Sinai-Negev (Retsö 2003: 135; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122; Appendix B.2.5). In the Kalḫu Annals, Tiglath-Pileser III appears to associate the people of Idibi'ilu with KUR.*arubu* (Retsö 2003: 135; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 63; Appendix B.2.2). Sargon II refers to overwhelming both the KUR.*mušur*, “the land of Egypt,” and LÚ.*arabi* together (Gadd 1954: 179-180; Appendix B.2.12). Sargon II also refers to Samsi, the queen of the KUR.*aribi*, along with the kings of Egypt and South Arabia. This, perhaps, implies a geographical proximity that points to the Sinai-Negev (Retsö 2003: 147-149; Appendix B.2.13). It is also perhaps significant that Esarhaddon collects camels from all the kings of KUR.*aribi* (presumably at Rafah) for his Egyptian campaign across the Sinai (Leichty 2011: 88; Appendix B.2.24). The prefixing of both the determinative for land (KUR) and the determinative for people (LÚ) may indicate that a portion of the Sinai-Negev constituted part of Arabia as early as the Neo-Assyrian period (see Introduction: Section I.II).

The people of Edom are just as nebulous as the Arabs in Neo-Assyrian documents. Lists of tribute payments recorded for Adad-Nirari III, Tiglath-Pileser III, Sennacherib, and Assurbanipal mention Edom amongst the subjugated Southern Levantine polities, thus implying a people of Edom. Tiglath-Pileser III names their leader as Qauš-Malaka, a West Semitic name featuring the deity Qôš as a theophoric element (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122; Appendix B.2.5). Qôš appears as a theophoric element in several Iron Age and later West Semitic and Assyrian sources, often associated with Edom (Dearman 1995: 120-121; Kelley 2009: 256-258; also Ezra 2:53; Nehemiah 7:55). Sargon II refers to a joint rebellion by the kings of Philistia, Judah, Moab, and Edom, in which they sought an alliance with the king of Egypt (Fuchs 1998: 44-46, 73-75; Appendix B.2.8). Sennacherib names their tribute-bearing leader as Aya-rāmu (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 64, 114, 131, 175, 192; Appendix B.2.15-21). Esarhaddon includes *qauš-gabri* LUGAL URU.*údume*, “Qauš-Gabar, king of the city of Edom,” in a list of twenty-two kings of the Levant and Cyprus forced to transport building materials for his palace in Nineveh (Leichty 2011: 23; Appendix B.2.24).³⁰ Assurbanipal also lists *qauš-gabri* LUGAL KUR.*údume*, “Qauš-Gabar, king of the land of Edom” in a list of twenty-two tribute-bearing kings from the Southern Levant (Borger 1996: 18; Appendix B.2.39). Qauš-Gabar is another West Semitic name meaning “Qôš is my [divine] Warrior/Hero” (van der Veen 2011: 81).³¹ However, very little about the Edomites can actually be gleaned from these texts, other than that they were subject to the remote hegemony of the Assyrians, rebelled at least once, worshipped a god named Qôš, and were represented to the Assyrians by a single leader.

2.4.3. Hebrew Bible

Unlike the Egyptian and Assyrian corpora, the Pentateuchal traditions of the Hebrew Bible are unique in that they depict the Israelites or Hebrews as a nomadic community in the Southern Levantine Drylands. Yet, this mobility is temporary and unintentional, an aimless wandering in the wilderness forced on the Israelites as a punishment for sin in a time from long ago, not experienced or desired by their descendants (Num. 34:14). This is not to say that the authors and receivers of these traditions did not feel a certain sense of kinship, albeit

³⁰ The same phrase is reconstructed in Nineveh S: VI 8 (Leichty 2011: 46).

³¹ This name, along with a striding human-headed sphinx, also appears on a seventh century BCE bulla from Umm al-Biyara in southern Jordan (van der Veen 2011: 79-81; See Appendix B.4.3).

ambiguously, with mobile pastoral communities. Nor is this to say that the uniqueness of this context should be minimized. Rather, it is to point out that while the authors and the receivers of these traditions claimed a mobile pastoralist pedigree, they still set themselves apart from it, and, moreover, they set themselves apart from “other” mobile pastoral communities, both real and imagined. Thus, they perceived the mobile pastoralist communities of the Southern Levantine Drylands in many of the same ambiguous terms as did the Egyptians and Assyrians.³²

The Israelites are said to wander a vast expanse for forty years, moving from camp to camp in a seemingly endless cycle of pitching and dismantling tents. During this time, they rarely encounter other humans, but when they do these humans mostly occupy sedentary settlements. When other mobile pastoralists garner mention, it is either with suspicion and hostility, neutrality or ambiguity, or a guarded and ambiguous sense of kinship. For example, various texts assert that a mobile pastoralist community called the Amalekites inhabited a wide swath of the Sinai-Negev before, during, and after Israel’s “nomadic phase.” These references are usually in the context of conflict between the Israelites and the Amalekites (Gen. 14:7; Exod. 17:8; Num. 13:29; 14: 25; Judg. 1:16; 1 Sam. 27:8). Arabs are also regarded in a hostile fashion or treated as subjects. Jeremiah compares an unfaithful Israel to a prostitute on the roadside waiting for lovers *ka ʾarābî bammidbār*, “like an Arab in the wilderness” (Jer. 3:2). Isaiah proclaims that after Yahweh destroys Babylon the site will never be inhabited again and that *wēlō yahel šām ʾarābî*, “no Arab shall pitch a tent there” (Isa. 13:20). Solomon receives gold tribute from *kāl malkê hā ʾereb*, “all the kings of the Arabs” (1 Kgs 10:15), or *kāl malkê ʾarab*, “all the kings of Arabia” (2 Chr. 9:14). Nehemiah mentions *gēšem hā ʾarbî*, “Geshem the Arab,” along with Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite, as ridiculing his plan to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 6:1; 2:19). Conversely, the Kenites, Midianites, and Ishmaelites are sometimes regarded as kin, or at least, allies in some verses, while appearing as opponents in others.³³

This same sense of ambiguity is accorded to the Edomites as well. The Edomites are anachronistically portrayed as a sedentary and urbanized southern Levantine polity in the Pentateuchal and early monarchic texts, comparable to Moab and Ammon. However, the Edomites are also simultaneously imagined as the ultimate enemy and as a kin community, intimately interrelated to Israel as descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Israel’s eponymous patriarch, Jacob. Esau is characterized as *šā ʾir ʾîš*, “a hairy man” (Gen. 27:11) and skilled hunter (Gen. 25:27), tricked out of his blessing by his “smooth” and wily brother. Consequently, Esau is doomed to a life of struggle and deprivation from the so-called boons of agriculture (Gen. 27: 5-40). Thus, a mythic theme develops, in which the sedentary agriculturalists, Israel, and the mobile pastoralists, Edom, are eternally and archetypically linked as close kin who simultaneously co-exist and struggle with each other. Additionally, the compiled texts include accounts of Israel waging war against and even dominating Edom (1 Sam. 14:47-48; 2 Sam. 8:12-14; 2 Kgs 14:7), as well as accounts of partnership and cooperation (1 Kgs 9:26; 2 Kgs 3:4-27),

³² Biblical scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended to propose that the desert and mobile pastoralism were considered mostly positively as a “nomadic ideal” in the biblical texts. By the mid-twentieth century, a critique of this hypothesis asserting the opposite appeared, i.e. that biblical texts represented the desert and mobile pastoralism primarily in a negative light and with hostility. For a thorough review of the major perspectives of this debate, see Pace 2005 and Blenkinsopp 2008. Until more recently, there has been little biblical scholarship with a more nuanced perspective on these texts. See Feldt 2012.

³³ For the Kenites see Gen. 15: 19; Num. 24:22; Judg. 4:11; 1 Sam. 15:6; 27:10; 30: 29. For the Midianites see Gen. 25:2; Exod. 2: 15-22; 18; Num. 10: 29-32; 25: 6-18, 31: 1-20; Judg. 6-8; Ps. 83:9; Isa. 60:6; Hab. 3:7. For the Ishmaelites see Gen. 21: 9-20; Ps. 83:6.

and the admonition “not to abhor an Edomite, because he is your brother” (Deut. 23:8) (Bartlett 1989: 175-186; 1992: 13-22; Crowell 2004: 141-202; Glazier-McDonald 1992: 23-32; Hendel 2005: 12).

Egyptian, Assyrian, and biblical ambiguity towards mobile pastoralists is not unique to these texts or their source communities. However, I suggest that general ambiguity towards indigenous mobile pastoral communities by the sedentary ancient Near East recursively interacted with the perceptions and feelings of ambiguity related to the Southern Levantine Drylands. I also suggest that the particular uncertainty expressed towards indigenous mobile pastoral communities in the drylands may reflect an inability to fathom how mortal humans would be able to sustain themselves, and even thrive, in a realm of such unpredictable and otherworldly creatures and terrain. Consequently, these outsider communities conflated the people of the Southern Levantine Drylands with the liminality of the land, casting the people of the Southern Levantine Drylands also as unpredictable and otherworldly creatures imbued with similar senses of potency and liminality.

2.5. Strange Ways of Seeing the Strange Land

The Egyptian, Assyrian, and biblical sources on the Southern Levantine Drylands suggests a complex meshwork of perception and intra-action within these communities. This meshwork is characterized by real and imagined encounters with the land and its people and multiple ways of seeing intimately tied to specific temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts. In the physical sense, the Sinai, Negev, and southern Jordan feature varying rates of aridity, related vegetation types, and a diverse array of geomorphic formations – dune fields, mountains, escarpments, valleys, basins, plateaus, plains, terraces, wadis, and erosional cirques. Agriculture is largely limited to semi-arid zones, such as the Beersheba Valley in the northern Negev and the Tafila-Ras an-Naqb Highlands in southern Jordan, as are larger sedentary settlements. Instead, most communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands were organized into smaller kinship based groups and subsisted by means of mobile pastoralism and supplemental resources. The particularities of this landscape and its people rendered the Southern Levantine Drylands as exotic and alien to the sedentary communities of the Ancient Near East, something strange, phantasmic, unreal, incredible, and extraordinary. These sedentary communities recursively interacted with the physical reality of the Southern Levantine Drylands, the meshwork of their own histories, identities and desires, and the perceptions of others. This intra-action generated distinct ways of seeing the Southern Levantine Drylands. Yet, these ways of seeing also shared a common perception of liminality, ambiguity, danger, and potency.

In Egypt, portions or all of the drylands were known variously as (1) *ḥ3st*, “foreign land” (2) *dšrt*, “Red Land,” (3) the *w3wst ḥr*, “Ways of Horus,” (4) *bi3*, “mining-country,” “metals,” “remote,” “treasures,” “wonders,” star stuff, (5) *mfk3t*-country, “land of turquoise,” (6) *rš3wt*, Roshawet, (7) *3tik3*, Atika, (8) *ʾidm*, Edom, and (9) *sʾr*, *sʾrr*, Seir, and (10) *š3św*, Shasu. Some of these names seem to chiefly associate the land with the special materials – metals and semi-precious stones – extracted from the land by the Egyptians or indigenous miners in their employ. Thus, they may indicate a conflating of these materials with the land itself. Different deities are associated with different regions of the drylands. Thoth appears most prominently at mining sites in the southern Sinai during the Old Kingdom, while the gods Sopdu/Horus and Hathor are more commonly cited during the Middle and Late Kingdoms. Meanwhile, Horus is associated with the northern Sinai and the road traversing it in all time periods. That these particular gods are

invoked during those specific eras is also significant. Tho both likely indexes seeing the land as particularly hostile and dangerous in the early years of mining within it, while Hathor may index an entangled association between the goddess, special materials, and the special lands from which they come. Egyptian texts also refer to indigenous mobile pastoralist communities within the drylands. In the Old Kingdom, they are *iwnwt* (“nomads”) and *mntw* (possibly “wild men”). Middle and New Kingdom texts refer to (1) the *'3mw* – Asiatics, those people over there (2) the *rṯnw* – people of the Southern Levant (3) the *'3mw* from *rṯnw*, and (4) the *š3św* – animal herders, highwaymen, mercenaries, a threat. References to interpreters and overseers of interpreters in Old and Middle Kingdom texts may index extensive interaction between Egyptians and mobile pastoralist indigenous communities and that a large contingent of miners on Egyptian mining expeditions were derived from these indigenous communities. Thus, the temple of Hathor at Serâbît el-Khâdim served as a site of ritual interaction and indexes the appropriation of the goddess Hathor by indigenous Sinai communities during the Middle and New Kingdoms. Similarly, these communities also may have appropriated the Egyptian god Ptah, or the imagery of Ptah, in the Second Intermediate Period. These place-names and texts often imply that the Egyptians viewed these places as dangerous and powerfully potent and the land and its people as thoroughly entangled with the power and wonder of the metals and gemstones the Egyptians coveted, metals and gemstones submerged deep in the earth, a part of the land itself.

In first millennium BCE Assyria, the Sinai-Negev region between Egypt and Palestine was known as *naḥal mušur*, the Brook of Egypt, a borderland between Egypt and the Near East. Meanwhile, southern Jordan and possibly part of the Negev were known as *údumu*, *údumua*, *údumma*, *údume*, Edom. Like the Egyptians, the Assyrians saw this land as dangerous and phantasmic, lacking water, but filled with two-headed and winged snakes. This place was the middle of nowhere, where only the beneficence of the gods could deliver you from its dangers. The Assyrians also refer to the peoples of the drylands. These primarily include – (1) the *arba*, *aribi* or *arubu*, associated with tents and camels and alternately depicted as trade partners and allies or enemies and rebellious bandits, and (2) the people of Edom, from whom the Assyrians exacted tribute and quashed rebellions. Occasionally these texts list the names of specific leaders of these communities.

In the Hebrew Bible, the drylands are known as (1) *'aršāh hannegev*, “the lands of the south,” (2) *'edôm*, “red,” “ruddy,” (3) *šē'ir*, “hairy,” “rugged,” (4) *tēmān*, “south,” and (5) the *midbar*, the steppe, the wilderness, lands of turning away, driving away, driving flocks, pursuing, being pursued, and subduing. Certain places within the drylands were known by more specific names, including – (1) *midbar šin*, (2) *midbar pārān*, (3) *midbar sînay*, and (4) *midbar sîn*, (5) *midbar 'ēdôm* (6) *qādēš*, holy (7) *qādēš barnēa'* (8) *negeb hakkērēti*, the *negev* of the Cherethites, (9) *negeb hayyarhēmē'ēli*, the *negev* of the Jerahmeelites, (10) *negeb haqqēnî*, the *negev* of the Kenites, and (11) *negeb yēhu(w)dāh*, the *negev* of Judah. These places are both named and unnamed, only vaguely emplaced in a vast wilderness and seen through a haze. Like the Assyrian sources, these lands are dangerous and phantasmic – scorched by the sun, lacking water, filled with fantastic creatures, where Yahweh makes miracles and speaks through bushes, clouds, winds, earthquakes, fire and a still, small voice. Like the Egyptian sources, the earth itself is potent, turned up as by fire, absorbing and dispelling energy. Yahweh thunders forth from these lands, the head of a supernatural army of lesser divinities, destroying and dominating all in his path. Peoples are within this land as well – Amalekites, Kenites, Midianites, Ishmaelites, Edomites and Arabs, to name a few. They tend to shift back and forth along a continuum of relations with the Israelites, now kin, now grudging allies, now hated enemies.

Edomites are especially noteworthy for this fluctuating and ambiguous sense of kin – brothers uniquely allotted their land by Yahweh and enemies at war, to be dominated by a mighty Israel.

These sources may differ in their details, but they share a fundamental tension and uncertainty about the Southern Levantine Drylands. It is precisely this tension, this sense of uncertainty and ambiguity, about the drylands and its inhabitants that endows them with the special condition of liminality. These places are unknown, dangerous, and potent. It is a contagious power embedded in the very soil, recursively interacting with and consuming all within its grasp. It is no wonder then that these sedentary communities tended to fetishize this landscape, constructing a cognitive dissonance of the landscape as both unchanging and unpredictable. I further suggest that these intersecting and nesting senses of liminality may not have been restricted to ancient sources, to the lens of outsiders, but also may have recursively interacted with the experiences of those who lived in or traveled through the drylands and a landscape strewn with the visible past, which I address in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Contextualizing a Palimpsest Landscape - Meshworks and Networks in the Southern Levantine Drylands

However the textual sources may paint the Southern Levantine Drylands, the archaeological evidence tells its own, often conflicting, story of a landscape continuously inhabited and altered by various human communities over thousands of years. These communities developed their own rhythms and senses of subsistence embedded in their particular experiences of dwelling in these lands, senses quite distinct from the imaginings of Egyptian, Assyrian, and Southern Levantine elites. Yet, through trade, demands for raw materials, and the imperial ambitions of various empires, these communities also continuously interacted with the people and things of their neighboring regions, becoming increasingly entangled with these communities and their ways of seeing. In this chapter, I demonstrate this simultaneously distinct and entangled character of the Southern Levantine Drylands through multi-scalar tacking between the interrelated movements and flows of meshworking and networking practices. This allows for a glimpse of the Southern Levantine Drylands beyond that of the textual sources and demonstrates some of the complexities of dwelling in this land that are lacking from those sources.

Yet, this analysis will also demonstrate that these texts drew upon and were generated by multiple, overlapping, nesting senses of liminality imbued in a marginal, in-between, stark landscape littered with the remains of the visible past and crisscrossed by a meshwork of ancient roads associated with the migrations of mobile pastoralist communities for thousands of years. If we understand the Southern Levantine Drylands as a liminal landscape, a landscape defined by its senses of movement, transitioning, and inbetweenness, a landscape both connected and distinct, then tacking between meshworking and networking models allows for a way to understand some of the multiple, complex, and conflicting ways of seeing this landscape in the past. I maintain that this sort of deep historical contextualizing is absolutely necessary to a fuller understanding of first millennium BCE ritual in the Southern Levantine Drylands – that the past left a mark on this land in ways seen and not seen.

In order to facilitate this contextualizing, I employ meshworking and networking as multi-scalar and complementary models of connectivity. First, I suggest that meshworking may act as an apt metaphor for ways of seeing in a landscape visibly altered by millennia of mobile pastoral seasonal movements and Egyptian mining expeditions. In meshworking, we may understand the Southern Levantine Drylands on a macro-scale as a “landscape of pilgrimage,” in which mobile pastoralist communities move from site to site in a continuous pilgrimage in honor of their ancestors, marking the entire landscape as well as certain places within it as their homeland (McCorriston 2011: 73). In turn, this littered landscape encodes and reproduces this sense of visible territoriality and intimately links it to the divine and the supernatural for generations to come. In meshworking, we may consider how Egyptian mining expeditions also permanently inscribed the landscape and how this may have impacted and interacted with ways of seeing this landscape for both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Ultimately, meshworking allows us to emphasize the interaction between micro and macro scale movements and the landscape over many millennia, to reveal similarities and continuities in a palimpsest landscape.

I also suggest that we may identify networks within the meshwork and reveal concentrations of movement and power within the meshwork. If we more closely analyze

movements in particular segments or points in the landscape, then we see how movements are contained, funneled, concentrated and bounded. Channeling movement has far-reaching consequences on impacted communities and their ways of seeing. In focusing on nodes or clusters of nodes, we see how some nodes, some places are more connected, more densely packed with change and interaction than others. Networks are an analysis of movement as power, change, regionalization, and specialization. I suggest that we may recognize some of these networks in the Southern Levantine Drylands through two distinct trends: a north/south regionalism that may indicate east/west seasonal movements by mobile pastoral communities and the dense concentration of movement and power in “gateway communities” at the fringes of the drylands. In analyzing regionalism within the Southern Levantine Drylands, we look beyond the totalizing framework of the meshwork and recognize distinctions between mobile pastoral communities and how they may have constituted themselves within the landscape. Meanwhile, gateway communities, like Tel Arad (Tell ‘Arad) in the early third millennium BCE and Tel Masos (Khirbet el-Mashash) at the second-first millennium BCE transition, index the increasing complexities of movement and power within the Southern Levantine Drylands and interactions with their neighbors.

In employing both meshworks and networks, I demonstrate that the Southern Levantine Drylands are a series of complex landscapes in which the visible past and a sense of timelessness are always in dialogue with each other. I contend that multiple, overlapping, and conflicting senses of liminality are born out of this dialogue and recursively interact with ritual and the potency of the landscape increasingly through these early millennia, setting the stage for the distinct senses of ritual in the first millennium BCE.

3.1. Meshworking and Networking

In order to understand the entangled and nesting senses of liminality and movement imbued in the landscape, I employ both networking and meshworking as complementary tactics. The network metaphor originally modeled the fishing net to visualize relations in physical or social space. However, the metaphor is now more commonly associated with transportation systems and information technology. This metaphor or methodology is common to many disciplines, including archaeology (Knappett 2011: 15-58; Latour 2005; see Chapter 1: Section 1.1). For example, in *An Archaeology of Interaction, Network Perspectives on Material Culture & Society*, Carl Knappett draws on social network analysis, which characterizes networks as things, termed “nodes” or “vertices,” connected by “links” or “edges.” Nodes may be a single person, place or thing or a cluster of persons, places, or things, and the links between these nodes may be multiple and of various lengths. Nodes may be evaluated by the number and types of connectivity of their links. The more links a node has, the higher its “degree centrality,” and the more connected a node is between subgroups, the higher its “betweenness centrality” (Knappett 2011: 38-42). Thus, we may see how closely some nodes are related and identify significant clusters of nodes within larger networks. Knappett emphasizes how this imagery and vocabulary may aid in visualizing both physical and social connectivity simultaneously, something which is often of concern to archaeologists.

However, conceptualizing networks in such a technical sense has also met with some critique. According to Tim Ingold, modeling the net as “a complex of interconnected points,” rather than as “a tangle of interwoven and complexly knotted strings,” misleadingly emphasizes the points over the lines that connect them (2007: 80). Ingold suggests “meshwork” (borrowed

from Henri Lefebvre) as an alternative. This model emphasizes the movement, flow, and entanglement of lines as the “lines of the meshwork are the trails *along* which life is lived” (Ingold 2007: 80-81). Knappett notes the validity of this critique, but points out that those offering up meshworks as an alternative have not fully explicated how such meshworks are to be analyzed. Thus, Knappett asserts that networks may still provide a useful analytical paradigm precisely because the network concept allow for interactions to be broken down into constituent heterogeneous entities and analyzed at multiple scales. In fact, Knappett sees no reason to oppose networks and meshworks, preferring to understand these concepts as “experiential and analytical dimensions, respectively” (2011: 40). For Knappett, we live in tangled and unintelligible matrices of being and sociality enmeshed within thingness, “meshworks of things.” However, we are also able to analyze these matrices as “networks of objects,” identifiable and bounded assemblages linked to each other at various scales (Knappett 2011: 149-190; See also Chapter 1: Section 1.1).

Like Knappett, I suggest that meshworks and networks need not be opposed to each other. However, I maintain that we may be better served by tacking between them as different ways of understanding phenomena, rather than as experience vs. analysis. That is, the analysis of complex and intersecting phenomena requires a sense of flexibility in our approach, a deftness of methodological movement in which we may employ multiple models and perspectives on the same sets of archaeological data as a way to mimic some of the different and multiple ways of seeing in the past. The notion of meshworks allows us to attend to phenomena as entangled movements while the notion of networks allows us to focus on certain nodes and clusters of nodes that may be particularly visible at any given time and the relations that constitute them. Just as Manuel A. Vásquez has suggested that we may avoid the “excessive anti-structuralism of hydraulic models” by supplementing flows with networks in our analyses of religions, I suggest that meshworks (as flows) may complement networks (2010: 296). Notions of mobility and flows also necessarily imply containment, closure, and boundedness, the stopping, funneling, and concentrating of movement, movement as power. For Vásquez, the metaphor of the intersecting nodes of the net in flow, the net as “capillaries,” allows for a way to analyze shifting and multi-centered flows of power and material within the context of their specific structured and structuring praxes (Vásquez 2010: 294-95, 297; See also Chapter 1: Section 1.2).

Meshworking and networking represent slightly different ways to talk about connectivity, whether spatial or social, physically or metaphorically, at multiple scales. They also bring attention to positionality and what is between, to the liminal. They are the ways in which liminality is constructed and re-constructed, through movement and flows, through the wide angle and the narrow focus.

3.2. Meshworking the Visible Past - Visibility, Landscape, and Memory in the Southern Levantine Drylands

This is a landscape mired in its own past, the land via Tim Ingold’s dwelling perspective – “an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves” (2000: 189). Archaeological remains attesting to thousands of years of human activity are strewn across this landscape, visible today as they were visible to those in the past. However, this is not a mute past. This is not a still past. This is a visible past borne out of movement. Many of these remains were constructed by indigenous mobile pastoral communities, especially in the sixth-third

millennia BCE, during their seasonal crossings through these lands. These sites – largely including dwellings, open-air ritual complexes, and burial fields connected via a web of roads – often remained focal points in the migration patterns of these communities and their descendants for hundreds of years, becoming intimately linked to their senses of movement, landscape, and identity. Generations of communities dwelled at these sites, altering, abandoning, and expanding sites and parts of sites, continually drawn to preserving and dwelling within the visible past.

This visible past accumulated over the millennia, increasingly sedimenting the landscape with materials that may have appeared strange and otherworldly to other communities. As those who encountered these remains became increasingly removed from their origins, they may have constructed their own notions about them, notions which recursively interacted with the stark landscape, ancient traditions, and stories passed on from others to create a fantastic world of supernatural enigmas and powerful creatures. Both indigenous communities and non-indigenous communities would have participated in this process, but never truly separately. As indigenous mobile pastoral communities became increasingly entangled with sedentary and non-indigenous communities, both within and without the land, so did their stories. Thus, those notions of a fantastic landscape preserved in the textual sources may have even been partially entertained by some communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands, and possibly even introduced to outsiders by these communities. The continuing visibility of these sites directly impacted and recursively interacted with ways of seeing and senses of liminality in the Southern Levantine Drylands, meshworking the land and providing senses of movement embedded in deep and mythic time.

In the following discussion, I analyze the Southern Levantine Drylands in the millennia leading up to the first millennium BCE via this meshworking or flows perspective. I first discuss the movements of indigenous mobile communities and the increasing and recursive impact these movements had on the landscape. I then discuss the impact of Egyptian mining expeditions on the landscape, and how indigenous and Egyptian ways of seeing may have recursively interacted with each other. In so doing, I suggest that this is a land imbued with multiple nesting senses of liminality and movement constituted by the visibility of the past and memory work.

3.2.1. A Meshwork of Pilgrimage

Particular entangling senses of movement characterize the earliest Neolithic communities of the Southern Levantine Drylands. Geoglyphs (stones arranged in patterns on the ground or images engraved on the ground) and petroglyphs (images engraved on rock face) are associated with roads from early times. The precise dating and significance of these features are unclear. However, physical and ethnographic evidence suggests they likely functioned partially as road markers. Ethnographic evidence also suggests that they represented an assortment of ideologies and imagined worlds (Anati 1999, 2013; Avner 2002: 100, 102-104, 113-115; Darnell 2009; Eisenberg-Degen and Rosen 2013; Mailland 2009; 2011; Meshel 2000: 114; Riemer and Förster 2013; Whitridge 2004; 2013). Most significantly, these images impacted ways of seeing in and of this landscape. Together, these roads and glyphs may have constituted some of the earliest and most enduring and visible intra-places and inter-places, places both distinct and incorporated within the landscape, simultaneously connecting and dividing, the places between places.

However, the shift towards pastoralism most visibly and radically altered the landscape in a transformation intimately interrelated with notions of territoriality and identity. Sometime during the late seventh or early sixth millennium BCE, the first domestic herd animals were

introduced into these mobile hunter-forager meshworks, as demonstrated by (1) domestic sheep and goat dung layers in Negev rock shelters, (2) reduction in arrowhead percentages, (3) the appearance of Near Eastern sheep and goats in Egypt, and (4) the occurrence of domesticates on the desert periphery (Rosen 2008a: 119-120). Steven Rosen refers to this shift as a “herder-gatherer transition,” characterized by small band-level mobile communities slowly introducing domesticated herd animals into their hunter-forager subsistence economy (2002: 26-30; 2008a: 121). By the mid-late sixth millennium BCE, major developments in population, site size, and architecture demonstrate a strong shift to a largely mobile pastoral subsistence framework, though hunting remains visibly and ideologically significant. These developments first appear in the central and southern Sinai, southern Negev, northern Arabia and the southernmost regions of Jordan¹ and indicate dramatic changes in social complexity and ideology, likely intimately tied to indigenous mobile communities shifting emphases from hunting to pastoralism (Goring-Morris 1993: 78-82; Rosen 2008a: 119-122; 2009a: 61-63; 2011a: 72-74). These include: 1) a transition in architecture from clustered-room to enclosure and attached-room homes, 2) increasing site sizes, 3) intensified use of desert kites (gazelle hunting traps), 4) the appearance of communal ritual complexes, sometimes on a megalithic scale, 5) construction of large extramural burial fields, sometimes in association with the ritual complexes, and 6) a chipped stone industry characterized by small and transverse stone arrowheads, microlithic drills, tabular scrapers, ad hoc blade tools, and a wide range of ad hoc flake tools (Rosen 2008a: 119-122; 2009a: 61-63; 2011b: 72-74). Similar sites also begin appearing in the central Negev in the fifth millennium BCE (Rosen 2011a: 74; 2013).

Rosen suggests that these developments demonstrate the advent of a “formative tribal organization,” that is “a level of demographic organization able to draw on social groups beyond band size for various activities,” intimately enmeshed with the rising dominance of pastoralism and the need for ready access to large swaths of land for keeping herd animals (2008a: 120). The conversion from clustered rooms to enclosure and attached-room sites demonstrates the centrality of herd animals, while the increasing size sites and the labor organization required for their construction and the construction of elaborate, monumental ritual complexes suggests seasonal aggregations of multiple bands, thus inferring greater social interaction, more complex social patterning, and a greater social need to interact, organize, and build at a grander scale than was previously done. This is further indicated by the escalation in the construction and use of desert kites, which suggests cooperative hunting strategies and planning previously not attested (Rosen 2008a: 120-122).

Perhaps most significantly, Rosen points to the “explosion” of ritual activity at this time as particularly meaningful, indicating the rise of a distinctly mobile pastoral ideology, embedded in notions of visibility and territoriality (2008a: 120-121). The monumentality and visibility of communal ritual sites and burial fields suggests new notions of borders and the increased need to demarcate and legitimize claims to territory – notions which are more likely to become significant with livelihoods based on the keeping and feeding of groups of herd animals that require large swaths of land to sustain them (Rosen 2008a: 122; 2009a: 61; 2015: 44-46).

In that regard, the visibility of the burials is especially notable. The most common of these burials are shallow cist interments marked by concave mounds of limestone slabs. Ranging

¹ Due to a more steppe and forested landscape in the Neolithic, the Wadi Faynan sees the rise of several substantial agro-pastoral settlements at Wadi Ghuwayr 1 and Wadi Fidan 1 in the Aceramic Neolithic B and Tell Wadi Fidan in the Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic (Adams and Genz 1995; Barker 2012: 3). The advent of the mobile-pastoral meshworks in the rest of the drylands roughly coincides with the latter site.

in size between 4-8 meters across and 1-2 meters high, these tumuli-like tombs are often arranged in clusters, circles, or lines, frequently within direct sightlines on elevations or false horizons. Long assumed to be single inhumations, recent excavations at Ramat Saharonim in the southern Negev and El Awag in southwestern Sinai have revealed multiple-successive burials, suggesting reuse by kin groups. These are mainly primary burials, but secondary burials are also attested (Close and Minichillo 2010; Rosen et al 2007: 7, 16-19). Similarly, circular or bee-hive shaped slab-built tombs called *nawamis*² in the southern Sinai likely also feature kinship burials. These tombs, composed of sandstone or igneous rock slabs, are 3-6 meters in diameter and up to 2 meters high. Features include corbelled arch ceilings, gravel fill or stone slab floors, and well-defined doorways, usually facing west. They also often contain artifacts – mostly beads made of ostrich egg shell, bone, seashell, steatite, carnelian, turquoise, hematite or copper. Other artifacts include mollusk shell jewelry, ceramics, flint tools, ground stone utensils, copper awls, wooden and bone points, cloth and other organic materials (Bar-Yosef et al 1977; Bar-Yosef et al 1986; Bar-Yosef Mayer 2011: 186-189).

The *nawamis* in the Sinai have been largely dated to the fourth millennium BCE. However, morphologically similar tombs in the Negev and the drylands of Eastern Jordan are dated to the early fifth millennium BCE, and certain fields in Yemen are largely dated to the third millennium BCE (Braemer et al 2001; Rollefson 2011: 106; Rosen et al 2007). These geographic and chronological distinctions likely indicate several different, though perhaps related, communities, with differing relationships to these tombs. Relatedly, these tombs are often also associated with lines of similar-looking rock structures that do not contain evidence of having ever been used as burial containers. Often referred to as cairns, their association with and resemblance to actual tombs suggests that they may have served a more symbolic memorial meaning. Certain ethnographic evidence may also support this interpretation (Anati 2013: 33-34; Avner 2002: 104-105; Rowan et al 2015). For example, several late nineteenth-early twentieth researchers describe a contemporary custom of building cairn lines called *Kanatir* or *Shehadat* (“witnessing cairns”), in honor of the revered deceased during pilgrimage to their tombs. Similarly, small, conical mounds of rocks along roadsides called *makwan* memorialize tragic events. Passers-by routinely added stones to these mounds and recited the story (Avner 2002: 104; van der Steen 2013: 239). According to Uzi Avner, Bedouin in the Sinai during the 1970s and early 1980s reported that they continued to add stones to these mounds in condolence and solidarity with the victims, even if they did not know the precise circumstances of their construction (2002: 104).

Despite these distinctions, these tombs and cairns may also share a certain sense of territoriality and identity. The burial of the physical remains of generations of relatives, remains which were routinely revisited and reclaimed through repeated burials, makes for a powerful and highly visible claim to the land on which they were constructed (Chesson 2007; Rosen 2008a; 2009a; See Chapter 1: Section 1.4). Graham Philip refers to a similar trend of visibility, monumentality, and ancestral interaction in the use of multiple-successive above-ground burial in the EB II-III Southern Levant as “symbolic capital” (2003: 119). Philip suggests that we may understand these visible monuments to the ancestors as “bringing the ancestors into physical and symbolic relationships with the landscape,” in order “to convey an image of stability and order, of legitimacy and inevitability in regards to claims to the land” (2003: 119). Moreover, much like

² The term, meaning “mosquitos,” is derived from Bedouin legend that the structures were built by the wandering Israelites as shelters from mosquitos (Bar-Yosef et al 1977: 65), demonstrating a continued engagement with the material remains of the past by local communities in recent times.

how Meredith Chesson describes mortuary practices at Bab adh-Dhra' (see Chapter 1: Section 1.4), burial in shared tombs constitutes a continuous and complex cycle of remembering and forgetting deeply tied into kinship, identity, and the materiality of human remains. Burial in shared tombs, whether primary or secondary, creates a cyclical sense of time, punctuated by the repeated opening and closing of the tomb, the arrangement and re-arrangement of human remains, and the ritual observances that ensured the proper and successful completion of these acts (Chesson 2007: 113, 116-120). In the context of mobile pastoral communities, this cyclicity also would have recursively interacted with the cycles of movement of the community with the seasons and the herds, creating a deep sense of timelessness and eternal kinship with the ancestors and with the land.

Similar associations between ancestors and the landscape may also be indicated, and possibly doubly claimed, by the simultaneously more widespread appearance of standing stone sites. Standing stones (also known as baetyls, pillars, *maṣṣebôt* or *anṣāb*)³ are unworked or roughly worked medium to large sized stones set vertically into the ground, either singly or in groups (Fig. D.5). Occasionally, these stones are modified with perforations, light shaping, or facial features, such as eyes, nose, or mouth. Various features are found in association with these standing stones, including a low stone circular or semi-circular cell, flat stones, or pavements. These are variously identified as offering benches, stone basins, hearths or sunken altars (Anati 2015: 450; Avner 2002: 67; Avner et al 2014: 107-108). Artifacts are sometimes recovered from the foot of the standing stone(s), sometimes next to the flat stone pavement, or buried behind them, apparently placed as offerings or dedications. These dedications may include flint flakes, tabular or non-tabular scrapers, grinding equipment, stone bowls, Red Sea shells and shell bracelets, stones of special natural shapes and colors, and the hind limbs of young wild or domesticated animals (Avner 2002: 79-81). Standing stone sites are both independent of and incorporated within larger ritual complexes or burial fields (Avner 2002: 70-73).⁴ Given their frequency throughout Arabia as well, scholars have long associated standing stone sites with pre-Islamic mobile pastoralist religions.⁵ Based on evidence from later periods, standing stones are typically identified as gods or ancestors or something to contain the god or ancestor (McCorriston 2011: 65-66; van der Steen 2013: 236; Zevit 2001: 257). Thus, these sites also index the same intersection between visible territoriality and the ancestors seen in the burial fields.

The same notions of visibility and territoriality may also be applied to the contemporaneous ritual complexes, especially since they are often in association with the burial fields and standing stone sites. Known variously as wall tombs,⁶ rectangular shrines, open

³ The biblical Hebrew and Arabic terms, *maṣṣebôt* (s. *maṣṣebāh*) and *anṣāb* (s. *nuṣb*), respectively, are derived from the root *n-ṣ-b*, "to be erect." This root is also the basis for the term in several other Semitic languages, including Phoenician (*mṣbt*), Punic (*mṣbt*, *mnṣbt*), Aramaic (*nṣb*), and Nabataean (*mṣb*, *nṣb*, *nṣbt*) (Zevit 2001: 257).

⁴ Often the standing stones are incorporated into the ritual complexes during their construction, but sometimes they may even predate the complex. Thus, certain complexes were elaborations of existing ritual sites (Avner 2002: 75).

⁵ Standing stone sites are also found in a couple of Ceramic Neolithic sites in the Southern Levant, but their rarity is notable in comparison to their frequency in the Southern Levantine Drylands and the Arabian Peninsula (Avner 2002: 86). In later periods, standing stone sites do begin to proliferate at sedentary sites in the Levant, which perhaps indicates the appropriation of a mobile pastoral tradition by the sedentary Levant.

⁶ This term is unique to Beno Rothenberg (see 1979:125-126) and seems to derive from the fact that occasionally tumuli are found in or across/through the elongated cell/double wall of some of these complexes. Rothenberg assumed that the tumuli and wall complexes were contemporary and dated both to the Aceramic Neolithic B.

sanctuaries, open-air shrines, and courtyard shrines, these complexes vary in their size, architecture, and spatial arrangements. The likely earliest sites⁷ are constructed of an eastern oriented double wall – built of two rows of large vertically-set limestone blocks or slabs approximately 20-40 centimeters apart – and filled in with orderly laid medium stones. A courtyard, usually rectangular, of single-course stones is attached to the east broad side of the wall (Avner 2002: 99-100; Rosen et al 2007: 7). At the clusters of sites at Maktesh Ramon, Ramat Saharonim, and Wadi Radadi, the double wall was partially covered by horizontal stone slabs (Avner 2002: 100). Occasionally, standing stones and tumuli are incorporated in, set just in front of, or attached to the end of the double wall. Semi-circular and quadrangular stone cells or platforms were also attached to the double wall, usually on the side enclosed by the courtyard (Avner 2002: 99-100).

Another style of communal ritual complex also appears, sometimes next to the double wall and courtyard complexes. These are square or near square structures, approximately 8 x 8 meters, built of a single row and course of rounded wadi pebbles. A small circular stone installation is usually located in the center of these structures, and sometimes also conjoining it. Uzi Avner, among others, had originally assumed that these structures were contemporary with the double wall and courtyard arrangements and interpreted these as double pairs of shrines, representing male and female. However, recent excavations at Maktesh Ramon/Ramat Saharonim demonstrate that the construction of this second structure postdates the construction of the double wall/courtyard by one to two thousand years, occurring sometime during the late fifth millennium and fourth millennium BCE, after the double wall and courtyard were no longer being maintained (Avner 2002: 120-21, 126; Rosen et al 2007: 13).

These complexes have been identified as sites of communal ritual by their size and privileged differentiation of their construction and placement – (1) their distinct appearance (contra contemporary domestic sites), (2) megalithic construction, (3) alignments with astronomical activities or landscape features, and (4) their position on roadsides. However, it is not always clear what activities were being performed in these complexes, due to a frequent lack of artifacts. However, it may be inferred from the appearance of hearths or “sunken altars”⁸ at some of these sites that cooking and the burning of offerings were performed. Likewise, aggregations or caches of flint tools and flakes, rocks of unusual forms and colors, seashells and fossils may point to votive deposition (Avner 2002: 107-108, 114-115; Rosen et al 2007: 13). Given the size of these sites and their close association with burial fields and standing stones, these rituals likely drew on and recursively intra-acted with similar notions of community, identity, ancestors, and the landscape, continually linking their participants to each other and the land.

Geoglyphs and petroglyphs may also be associated with these complexes. Geoglyphs include stone circles of 1-1.5 meters in diameter (sometimes in long chains), single or double lines between 4-6 meters long (sometimes in chains), zoomorphic shapes or other images (Avner 2002: 100, 104-107, 116-119; Mailland 2009; 2011; Rosen 2015: 40). Petroglyphs include linear images of zoomorphs, anthropomorphs, eyes, hands, feet, tools, weapons, geometric and abstract

⁷ Of those that have been excavated, C14 dates usually place their initial construction in the mid-late sixth millennium BCE, with evidence for continued use or rebuilding through the fifth-fourth millennia BCE. Many of these sites also exhibit evidence of re-use in the third millennium BCE-Early Islamic periods (Avner 2002: 107-116; Rosen et al 2007).

⁸ “Sunken altars” are vase-shaped stone installations, built into the ground, ca 80 cm in diameter, ca 30 cm deep, containing ash and heavy discoloration on the stones from repeated burning events (Avner 2002: 107-108).

or unidentifiable shapes. Sometimes, these glyphs may be understood together to represent scenes, including hunting and herding scenes (Fig. D.6). Unfortunately, these images are notoriously difficult to date. Chronologies based on style, subject matter, superpositioning, and patination have been offered, but these remain tentative due to the lack of direct dating methods (Anati 1999, 2013; Eisenberg-Degen and Rosen 2013). Superpositioning and evidence for retouching these images demonstrates that this imagery constitutes a visible sedimenting of landscape in direct association with ritual sites and senses of movements, demonstrating a continual interaction with this landscape by successive visitors (Eisenberg-Degen and Nash 2014: 9-10).

Recently, Joanna S. Smith (2012) remarked on a similar layering of images in recut cylinder seals from Late Bronze Age Cyprus. Smith demonstrates how a close analysis of these recarvings that recognizes both when and which images were erased and when and which images were reincorporated into new images may reveal important ways of seeing and meaning-making. In specific reference to petroglyphs in the Negev, Davida Eisenberg-Degen and George Nash propose that this superpositioning and retouching of images suggests “a long-term fluid narrative whereby successive artists add their marks to a well-established (and revered) scene” (2014: 10). However, as Smith suggests, such sedimenting of images is likely more complex, and may well imply the appropriation, remaking, and rejection of multiple ideologies and images over time.

This wide and interrelated distribution of communal complexes, burial fields, standing stones, geoglyphs, and petroglyphs along roads throughout the Southern Levantine Drylands indexes the punctuated movements of indigenous mobile pastoral communities, not unlike that described by Joy McCorrison in South Arabia. McCorrison contends that traditional mobile pastoralist practices and pilgrimage-making in South Arabia were deeply intertwined from the onset in converging notions of territory, identity, and movement. For McCorrison, this is a “landscape of pilgrimage,” in which the act of frequently moving between ritual sites in pilgrimage allows mobile pastoral communities to affirm social identities intimately tied to raising herd animals on large swaths of land and simultaneously ensure continued access and dominion over that land (2011: 50-52; 73; 116-117). Yet, these are not uniform or unchanging senses. Rather, these sites are highly idiosyncratic palimpsests, and a broad variation in dimensions, features, and deposition patterns is evident from the earliest phases (Avner 2002: 99-121). Each site served a particular purpose for a particular community, heavily tied to its location in the landscape, the seasons during which it was visited, and the particular needs of associated communities. Furthermore, archaeological and ethnographic evidence suggests that these sites served a multitude of purposes, such as water sources, meeting places, and markets, demonstrating the entangled nature of ritual in these communities and the idiosyncrasy of these sites (Harrower 2008; McCorrison 2011; van der Steen 2013).

However, certain broader shifts within ideologies that tied specific communities to these particular locations and particular movements across the landscape may also be visible in the shift from double wall and courtyard complexes to square courtyard complexes. This is a dramatic change in the composition of communal ritual space that suggests both new ritual practices and new ways of organizing ritual participants. However, the construction of the square courtyard complexes next to the now abandoned double wall and courtyard complexes likely indexes some sort of continuity, either real or perceived, with the visible past. That the square courtyard complexes may date to a thousand years after the double wall and courtyard complexes had gone out of use may suggest that newly emerging communities are laying claim to an imagined past as well as to the landscape. As the square courtyard complexes are also found

without the double wall and courtyard complexes, this demonstrates that these newly emerging communities were also developing their own landscapes of movement and pilgrimage, re-positioning themselves in the landscape even as they claimed continuity with the past.

Similarly, an elaborate ritual complex that may have served as a regional center for communal gathering emerged at the site of Gilat in the northwestern Negev in the late fifth-early fourth millennia BCE. The site features several strata of adult burials, infant and fetus deposits, hearths, platforms, cup marks, mudbrick lined pits, and distinctive artifacts. These artifacts include basalt fenestrated stands, cornets, torpedo jars, and violin-shaped figurines, often found in caches and pits. One room also contained two elaborate painted ceramic statuettes – a ram with three cornets embedded in its back and the “Gilat Lady,” a seated female with a churn on her head and an object under one arm. Many of these special finds appear to come from a complex of broadrooms surrounding a large open plaza, suggesting a type of communal ritual space. Gilat is unique in its construction and finds, sharing features with ritual sites in the Southern Levant and the Southern Levantine Drylands. However, some features, such as the violin-shaped figurines, are almost entirely unique to Gilat. Notably, Gilat appears at roughly the same time as the emergence of relatively dense, sedentary settlements in the Beersheba region, likely indexing its emergence from the interactions of shifting sedentary and mobile indigenous communities (Levy 2006; Rowan and Golden 2009: 57-58).

It should also be noted that “the land” is not just the earth itself, but also includes all the features and resources of the land. Michael J. Harrower points to the close proximity between tumuli tombs in the Wadi Sana and irrigation structures linked to “mobile irrigators” of the late fourth-third millennia BCE Yemen. The visible multiple-successive burial of kin-groups in the vicinity of these structures lays a profound claim both to the land and the irrigation structures, but, perhaps, more significantly, also to the water collected and distributed by them (Harrower 2008: 503-505). Thus, the land derives its significance not just from its surface, but also from its contents, from what is beneath the surface, whether water, human remains, or precious minerals. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, this significance likely took on added dimensions with the first indigenous forays into copper mining in the Wadi Faynan and the Timna Valley⁹ in the fifth and fourth millennia BCE (Avner 2014: 125-134; Barker et al 2007: 231-232; Hauptmann 2006: 129-130; Rowan and Golden 2009:15-18; 29-30, 43; Rothenberg and Glass 1992; Rowan and Ilan 2013: 100-101). Demand for copper and the labor-intensive strategies employed to retrieve it from deep within the earth would have had a profound impact on the movements, subsistence strategies, and ideologies of indigenous communities and their relationships with other communities. Moreover, mining also radically altered the landscape, creating chasms in the earth interspersed with mounds of refuse materials and associated architectural features.

For indigenous communities, this is a land both eternal and visibly sedimented with the past, a land marked by pilgrimage, the dead, and the supernatural, a land in which everything is seen, but yet some things remain hidden. As a landscape of pilgrimage, movement across this landscape generates ritual power linked with territoriality and the ancestors. This is a land of continuous and punctuated movement, of always becoming and already became. Recursive and entangled senses of liminality are borne out of a meshwork of movement, the visible past, roads as inter-places and intra-places, the precious things in the earth, and the endless horizon.

⁹ Different types of mines in the Timna Valley likely correspond to local developments in mining technology and strategy. The earliest mines, dated to the fourth millennium BCE, consist of irregular vertical cavities leading to a system of horizontal galleries at a depth of ca. 4 m (Avner 2014: 125-129).

3.2.2. Egypt in the Meshwork of Pilgrimage

Egyptian inscriptions in the Sinai were largely unreadable to most of their viewers, but the pictographic nature of hieroglyphic writing and the accompanying imagery (in styles vastly different from indigenous styles) made its own impact on the landscape and ways of seeing in this landscape. In the decades after the Egyptians abandoned their mining operations in the southern Sinai, indigenous communities likely developed their own traditions about the meanings of these strange-looking etchings. These traditions would have developed out of the social memory of interacting with Egyptians at mining sites during the third millennium BCE, any continuing contact these communities or related communities might have experienced during possible seasonal migrations into Egypt, and the materiality of the inscriptions and their positions within the landscape.

During the second millennium BCE, Egyptian mining expeditions further sedimented this landscape with the strange and foreign. In the Middle Kingdom (2010-1630 BCE), the Egyptians inscribed at least twenty more hieroglyphic monumental inscriptions and built a five-room stone structure at Wadi Maghara (Mumford 1999b: 1072-1075; Chapter 2: Sections 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1, Appendix B.1). They also began exploiting the turquoise mines at Serâbît el-Khâdim and the copper mines at Wadi Nasib, marking ever more rock faces and stelae with unusually drawn enigmatic text-images. These expeditions also began building a ritual complex at Serâbît el-Khâdim by cutting chambers into a rock outcrop dedicated to the worship of Hathor (or Sopdu). Enclosure walls, stelae, columns and other architectural structures attest to successive Middle Kingdom alterations of the site (Bonnet and Valbelle 1997; Mumford 1999a: 881-884; Chapter 2: Sections 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1, Appendix B.1). State-sponsored mining expeditions are not textually attested in the Second Intermediate Period (1630-1539 BCE). However, the presence of Hyksos-style¹⁰ scarabs and sherds, Tell el-Yehudiyeh Ware¹¹ juglets, Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions, and stelae dedicated to the Egyptian god, Ptah attest to continuous activity and refurbishment of the site through this period (Bloxxam 2006: 297; Mumford and Parcak 2003: 87-88; Chapter 2: Section 2.4.1). During the New Kingdom (1539-1069 BCE), mining expeditions from Egypt returned to Serâbît el-Khâdim and expanded the Hathor complex even further, appending a line of chapels to the face of the rock outcrop (Fig. D.7). The chapels and the surrounding area were progressively filled with more inscribed monuments and all matter of strange artifacts by each expedition – Egyptian, Cypriot, and Mycenaean ceramics, alabaster, core glass, and faience vessels, faience beads and pendants, menat-necklace counterpoises, throwsticks, sistra, bracelets, cat-figure and Hathor-head plaques, female figurines, scarabs, and alabaster statuettes (Mumford 1999a; 2006a; Pinch 1993; Valbelle and Bonnet 1996; Chapter 2: Sections 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1).

These expeditions also continued to inscribe monumental rock reliefs at Serâbît el-Khâdim and at other sites. The New Kingdom rock reliefs at Serâbît el-Khâdim, commissioned either by the king or the leader of the expedition, are more stylized and ritualized in nature than those of earlier periods. They are usually without a non-hieroglyphic image, save for the occasional scene of a king making an offering to Hathor. The site also features devotional inscriptions on the walls of the Hathor temple, accompanied by offering scenes and inscriptions on monumental and funerary stelae (Beit Arieh 1985; Mumford 1999a; Mumford and Parcak 2003; Gardiner et al 1955: 32-51, 77-216). Inscriptions of Ramses III – at Wadi Abu Gada (western Sinai) and Themilat Radadi (near modern Eilat) – appear on an ancient road leading

¹⁰ See Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1.

¹¹ See Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1.

from the head of the Gulf of Suez to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, as well as at Site 200 in the Timna Valley (Avner 1972; 2014; Rothenberg 1972: 201; 1988: 85, 143-144; Schulman 1988: 143-144; Somaglino and Tallet 2012; Chapter 2: Section 2.3.1). These traces of the strange sedimented and re-inscribed this landscape with the numinous powers of otherworlds, both foreign and supernatural, for generations to come.

However, these materials were also not entirely unfamiliar to these communities, either. Rather, indigenous mobile pastoralist communities in the Sinai likely interacted directly with Egyptians during seasonal migrations into Egypt and through the Sinai mining expeditions. Egyptian sources refer to the presence of both western Asian members of these expeditions (the *'3mw* and *rtnw*) and “interpreters” and “overseers of interpreters,” likely indicating extensive indigenous involvement in Egyptian mining efforts (Gardiner et al 1955: No.114, 115, 120; Mumford and Parcak 2003: 87; Redford 1986; Zairns 1989:131-132; see Chapter 2: Section 2.4.1). Material remnants of indigenous activity at Serâbît el-Khâdim are also evident and include – 1) a series of standing stones arranged in circles around a central stela en route to the temple, 2) inscriptions written in Proto-Sinaitic, a Semitic language written with consonantal, pictographic signs derived largely from Egyptian hieroglyphs, 3) stelae in tall, narrow shapes that are more similar to standing stones than traditional Egyptian stelae, and 4) references to the Levantine goddess Ba’alat (as well as other Levantine deities) in Egyptian and Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions (Bloxam 2006: 296; Gardiner 1916: 15; Mumford 1999a: 884; Mumford and Parcak 2003: 87; Mumford 1999a; Rothenberg 1979: 163-4).¹² These materials indicate that indigenous communities also participated in the construction and ritual activities of the Hathor temple at Serâbît el-Khâdim, both in direct interaction with Egyptian mining expeditions as well as independently of them. Thus, we may understand Serâbît el-Khâdim as a focal point for ritual interaction between Egyptian expeditions and indigenous communities, where world-making and ways of seeing enmeshed in the visibility of the landscape and the past coalesced with the foreign and exotic.

Recently, Elizabeth Bloxam suggested that Middle Kingdom Egyptian elites intentionally introduced Hathor worship to these communities in a strategy to procure access to indigenous labor and resources. Likely, Hathor was assimilated to a local, indigenous goddess, presumably Ba’alat. This established a common language of negotiation between the Egyptians and local communities, fostering social cohesion and interaction with and within these communities. Concomitantly, burgeoning elites in local communities appropriated elements of Egyptian material culture out of a demand for foreign goods and ideologies that would bolster and ingrain emerging social differentiation (Bloxam 2006: 281-82; 293-95). Such an appropriation, whether or not related to changes in social complexity, would have been facilitated by a ritual landscape already inscribed with a millennium of strange Egyptian text-images enmeshed within several millennia of rock art and pilgrimage sites. In so doing, these communities also reworked and reimagined these materials within the context of this heavily inscribed arid and marginal landscape and their own traditions of movement across this landscape.

By the third millennium BCE, this landscape had been inscribed with millennia of movements, striated by a web of roads and embroidered with tombs, cairns, standing stones, courtyards, altars, petroglyphs, geoglyphs, mining refuse, and more. Even for descendant communities, the origins of many of these visible monuments had likely already faded into myth

¹² Similarly, Flinders Petrie also noted the Levantine ritual materials at Serâbît el-Khâdim, including basins, steles, and possible evidence for animal sacrifice. However, he interpreted these as evidence of Egyptians seeking the protection of local deities (Petrie 1906: 71, 186-193).

and legend and subsequently appropriated to new social realities. For those in the Sinai, these new social realities included the earliest mining incursions of the Egyptians, incursions which left an indelible mark both on these communities and on the landscape. The earliest Egyptian mining campaigns to the southern Sinai in the early-mid third millennium BCE¹³ literally began engraving the landscape with new images of the divine and the exotic through hieroglyphic rock reliefs and stelae, mainly at the mining sites of Wadi Kharig and Wadi Maghara. Many of these inscriptions, commissioned either by the kings who sent the mining expeditions or high-ranking individuals who paid visits to the sites during those expeditions, are accompanied by images of deities or scenes of the Egyptian king smiting a foreign enemy (Gardiner et al 1955: 22-31, 52-75; Giveon 1974; Mumford 1999b: 1072; Mumford and Parcak 2003: 85-86; Resk Ibrahim and Tallet 2009; see Chapter 2: Section 2.2.1). This includes scenes of a pharaoh smiting an enemy before an ibis-headed god presumed to be Thoth and another before the jackal god, Wapwawet (Gardiner et al 1955: No. 3, 4, 7; Mumford 1999b: 1071; Stadler 2012: 2).

This appropriation and entangling of “foreign” and “local” sees its natural progression in Site 200, a ritual complex in the southern Negev (Figs. D.8-13). Site 200 is one of hundreds of sites associated with mining in the Timna Valley, a 9 x 10 kilometer valley comprising Har Timna (Gebel Mene‘iyeh), Naḥal Timna (Wadi Mene‘iyeh), Naḥal Neḥushtan, and their tributaries. Bounded by steep cliffs, the valley is only accessible from the east/south-east. The earliest evidence for copper mining in the Timna Valley dates from the fourth millennium BCE, with much of the most intense activity dated to around the second millennium-first millennium BCE transition (the Late Bronze Age, the Late Bronze-Iron I transition, the Iron I, and/or the Iron IIA) (Avner 2014: 125-131; Erickson-Gini 2014: 48; Yagel et al 2016: 33-34).

Site 200 is located at the foot of a pair of monumental geological formations called “King Solomon’s Pillars,” along the southwestern edge of Mount Timna. This complex consists of (1) three low walls set against the rock face, (2) an offset entryway flanked by interior stone benches, (3) a red sandstone pavement partially covered by a white crushed stone floor, (4) a white sandstone cell fronted by a white sandstone ashlar pavement (5) a 1.5 meter high rock cut niche in the pillar face wall behind the cell, (6) two additional small niches set higher in the wall and flanking the large niche, (7) a row of standing stones, (8) an altar rock with an incised circular depression and associated basin and drainage channel and (9) a small chamber attached to the eastern side of the complex (Fig. D.8). The complex features a significant quantity of Egyptian and Egyptian-style artifacts, including square pillars bearing the face of Hathor, fragments of unadorned square pillars, white sandstone Egyptian-style sculptures, and a copious amount of small finds, many Egyptian in nature (Rothenberg 1988: 75-83; 270-278; 1993: 1482-1485). Furthermore, a small rock stela (49 x 78 cm) commemorating the visit of an official in the court of Ramses III (Fig. D.13) was carved into the cliff face about 20 meters above the structure (Schulman 1976; 1988: 143-144).

These materials led the excavator, Beno Rothenberg, to identify its earlier phases as a New Kingdom Egyptian mining temple dedicated to Hathor, similar to that found at Serâbîl el-

¹³ The earliest known monumental reliefs, dated to the First Dynasty (early third millennium BCE), appear at Wadi el-Humur, approximately 25 kilometers north of Wadi Maghara (Resk Ibrahim and Tallet 2009). The reliefs at Wadi Maghara and Wadi Kharig date from the Third Dynasty (2705–2630 BCE) to the Sixth Dynasty (2400–2250 BC), nearly the entirety of Egypt’s Old Kingdom period (Gardiner et al 1955; Mumford 1999a: 1073-1074).

Khâdim (1988: 29; 75-83; 270-278; 1993: 1482-1485).¹⁴ Due to the rock reliefs associated with Ramses III at Site 200 and further south at Wadi Radadi, Rothenberg also suggested that this valley may be identified as the copper-producing country of *Atika*, mentioned in Papyrus Harris I (Appendix B.1.40), which other scholars often follow. Rothenberg also associated many of the mining and smelting sites in the valley with Egyptian mining campaigns, similar to those of the southern Sinai (Cooper 2015: No. [54.1]; Grandet 1994: 338-339, V. 3: 261; Levene 1998; Rothenberg 1972: 201; 1988: 270-278; 1990: 49; 1993; see Chapter 2: Section 2.3.1).

However, certain evidence suggests that Egyptian involvement in the Timna Valley and Site 200 is more limited than that of the southern Sinai. Recent re-excavation and radiocarbon evidence at smelting camps Site 30 and Site 34 to the west of Mount Timna (both previously associated with Site 200) down-date these sites to the eleventh-ninth centuries BCE. This work associates these sites with a major indigenous copper industry (likely an extension of the large-scale copper industry at contemporary sites in Wadi Faynan) at the turn of the millennium. This suggests that many similar mining and smelting sites in the Timna Valley should be re-evaluated and possibly associated with this later copper industry, including Site 200 (Ben-Yosef et al 2012; Yagel et al 2016: 34). Yet, recent radiocarbon evidence at select sites (Site 2, Site 3) suggests that some Timna Valley mining activity also occurred in the thirteenth-twelfth centuries BCE, which may be associated with an Egyptian presence (Erickson-Gini 2014; Yagel et al 2016). The extent of this presence is still somewhat unclear and may have been rather limited, possibly concentrated only at a few sites north of Mount Timna (Sites 2, 3, 13, 14, 15). Afterwards, a large-scale indigenous industry (Sites 30 and 34) followed in the eleventh-ninth centuries BCE. This research suggests that a careful re-evaluation of each site is likely to reveal several different mining landscapes in the Timna Valley and thus complicate our understanding of Site 200 (Ben-Yosef et al 2012; Yagel et al 2016: 34, 48).

Some of these complications are already evident. For example, Serâbît el-Khâdim features a large variety and quantity of imported Egyptian and locally-made Egyptian-style ceramics. Conversely, only a few sherds of imported Egyptian and locally produced Egyptian-style wares were found at Site 200. Furthermore, a reassessment of these vessels may well reclassify many, if not all, as non-Egyptian, as was the case at Site 30 (Ben Yosef et al 2012: 62; Rothenberg 1988: 92-95). Otherwise, the ceramics at Site 200 mostly consist of local wheel-made wares, large vessels of Qurayya Painted Ware from northwestern Arabia,¹⁵ and some

¹⁴ Based on the architecture and inscriptions, Rothenberg identified the red sandstone court, the niches, and the cell (Strata IV-III) as a New Kingdom Egyptian temple, dated to the thirteenth century BCE. Due to the high number of Hathor associated artifacts contained within and the presence of a Hathor temple at Serâbît el-Khâdim, he also identified Hathor as its patron deity. Like Serâbît el-Khâdim, Rothenberg characterized this complex as a place of worship for Egyptian, and to a lesser extent, indigenous miners. Rothenberg placed the other major elements – an application of lime plaster to the ashlar pavement, the stone benches, standing stones, the addition of the small chamber, and lumps of folded up rough woolen cloth, sometimes with beads attached (identified as the remains of a tent covering) in Stratum II. He characterized this stratum as a rebuild and reorganization of the site into a “tented shrine” by indigenous communities sometime after the Egyptians depart from the Timna Valley near the end of the New Kingdom (Rothenberg 1988: 29; 75-83; 270-278).

¹⁵ Qurayya Painted Ware, also known as Midianite Pottery, Hejaz Pottery and Taymanite Painted Ware, is a coarse ware with many large black and red inclusions, buffed or cream slipped, and usually painted with geometric designs and sometimes birds, animals, and humans in tones of black, brown, red and yellow. Mainly composed of tablewares and a few cooking pots, most were wheel-made, but some coil and hand-made types also appear. Petrographic and INAA analyses have located the origin of this ware in Northwestern Arabia, and a workshop has been identified at the site of Qurayya, about 125 kilometers southeast of Aqaba. The imagery has been compared to

smaller quantities of a local hand-made ware known as Negev Ware (Rothenberg 1988: 92-96). Similar ceramics are attested at various smelting and mining sites in the Timna Valley, but in differing proportions (Ben Yosef et al 2012: 59-63; Erickson-Gini 2014: 64-70; Gunneweg et al. 1991; Rothenberg 1972: 107; Rothenberg and Glass 1983: 114). Tali Erickson-Gini suggests that the relative proportion of these ceramics at each site may indicate chronological/social distinctions. For example, Erickson-Gini proposes that we should associate the relatively more sizable assemblage of Qurayya Painted Ware at Site 200 with Egyptian mining expeditions in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE, as opposed to its relative lack at the later site of Site 30 (2014: 76-80).

Consequently, there is a growing consensus that the stratigraphy and ceramics at Site 200 need to be reevaluated, which is likely to fundamentally alter our understanding of the site. Before this new radiocarbon evidence came to light, certain scholars, some of whom also evaluated and published material from Site 200, already down-dated the site to the Late Bronze-Iron I transition (the late thirteenth-twelfth centuries BCE). This places the Egyptian abandonment of the site as contemporary with their retreat from sites at the northwestern periphery of the Negev in the mid-late twelfth century BCE (Pinch 1993; Schulman 1988; Tebes 2006a: 82). More recently, John J. Bimson and Juan Manuel Tebes cite recent radiocarbon dates at contemporary mining and smelting sites in the Timna Valley, ceramics, and issues in Egyptian chronology to suggest down-dating further to the twelfth-mid eleventh centuries BCE for Stratum IV and the late eleventh-ninth/eighth centuries BCE for Stratum III (2009: 98-105). Alternatively, Uzi Avner proposes lengthening the occupation of the site to include both the late second millennium BCE and the tenth century BCE, if not longer (2014: 122). Lily Singer-Avitz suggests that this confusion likely stems from the disturbed nature of the strata at Site 200, most succinctly seen by the fact that fragments of the same vessels were found in different strata (2004b: 1281; 2014: 126).

Meanwhile, Avner also proposes that Site 200 is likely more closely identified with indigenous mobile pastoral communities and a local metallurgical industry, with a short and limited intrusion by Egyptians during which the Egyptians and indigenous communities shared the site.¹⁶ This phase is mainly represented by the white sandstone cell, which Avner refers to as the Egyptian *naos* (an inner chamber containing the image of the deity). Avner notes its off-center position to the left of the standing stones (when facing the entry, i.e. from the god's perspective). As secondary figures often appear in this position in ancient Near Eastern imagery, Avner suggests that the Egyptian deity (presumably Hathor) was a secondary figure in the complex (2014: 123-125). Avner's reconstruction provides a much-needed nuancing of the phasing at Site 200 and properly emphasizes the primary role played by indigenous communities

rock art typical of the drylands. Their precise dating is currently unclear, but estimates range from the thirteenth-ninth centuries BCE. Outside of Northwestern Arabia, these wares seem to be especially concentrated in the southern Negev and the Wadi Faynan, specifically in non-domestic cultic, burial and administrative contexts. Tebes suggests that this distribution may indicate a particular symbolic significance to these wares, which also reflects and is reflected by their movement in gift-exchange and trade networks by mobile pastoral communities (Dayton 1972; Gunneweg et al 1991; Rothenberg and Glass 1988; Singer-Avitz 2014; Tebes 2007b; 2014b; 2015).

¹⁶ Avner reconstructs the complex with 8 phases, defined as (1) the lower living level containing two standing stones but no architecture, (2) the red pavement, the altar rock, the two basins, the drainage channel, and the standing stones, (3) the addition of the cell with Hathor pillars, described as an Egyptian *naos*, (4) the overlay of the red pavement with the white floor, (5) re-facing the cell with ashlar sandstone blocks and installing an ashlar sandstone pavement in front of it, (6) the upper living level, Rothenberg's Stratum III, which contained most of the small finds, (7) the construction of the courtyard walls, (8) addition of the small chamber (Avner 2014: 116-120).

in the site. This scenario adheres far more closely to the site's history and may well prove to be the most accurate interpretation.

However, our understanding of Site 200 also need not feature any direct building or renovation by actual Egyptians. Given the ceramics and many non-Egyptian elements, Egyptian presence at Site 200 has been primarily understood based on the votive objects and a few moderately sized structural components. Yet, votive objects, by their very nature, are often heirloomed or archived out of their original depositional context. The limited Egyptian architectural and sculptural elements also could have been brought from elsewhere. The only element that concretely points to an Egyptian presence at Site 200 is the rock stela of Ramses III on the cliff face above the ritual complex (Schulman 1976; 1988; Fig. D.13). However, a direct and contemporary association between this stela and any sustained or long-term Egyptian presence at Site 200 cannot be assumed. The stela is located on a rock face to the right of the complex, facing the wall with the small chamber attached. However, its small size and placement 20 meters above the site renders it invisible from the complex.¹⁷ If the stela is directly associated with the construction of the site, then visibility from the complex may not have been of import to its carvers. Still, this lack of visibility allows for the possibility that the stela originated in an unrelated or chronologically remote event.

Thus, Egyptian presence at Site 200 may be quite minimal or ephemeral, and we might understand the site as entirely (or almost entirely) indigenous. In this scenario, indigenous communities largely constructed and utilized the site, based on a specific and distinctive sense of ritual which had developed over centuries of contact with Egyptian mining expeditions and Egyptian material remains inscribed on the landscape. Employing materials brought into the drylands by the Egyptians throughout the second millennium BCE, these indigenous communities likely drew on traditions of Hathor worship first encountered during interactions with Egyptian mining expeditions in the Middle Kingdom. These traditions, appropriated and transformed by indigenous communities through time, were fostered by senses of movement across and through a landscape sedimented with the visible past and pilgrimage.

Site 200 serves as a striking example of processes of appropriation and transformations of non-indigenous traditions, especially those of Egypt and the Southern Levant, throughout the Southern Levantine Drylands. These communities, varying in time and place, engaged in meshworking and recursive relations with their neighbors, whether through face-to-face interactions or the flows of materials and ideas. Similar entangling and enmeshing of phenomena is also clearly evident in the Hathor temple and mines at Serâbât el-Khâdim. Both sites demonstrate that indigenous communities of the Southern Levantine Drylands continually (re)interpreted and (re)incorporated new visual elements of their changing landscape. Moreover, the foreignness and strangeness of certain elements may have played into and shaped new senses of liminality, movement, and power in the landscape.

3.4. Networks within Meshworks - Regionalism in a Marginal Landscape

Yet, this is not to say that every indigenous community experienced or understood these meshworking flows in the same way or at the same intensities. Movements also coalesce. Flows

¹⁷ Based on my own observation of the site in May 2013. It is only possible to view the stela after climbing up the rock face several meters and then looking through a telescope installed by the National Park. Erosion has certainly affected the visibility of the stela. However, its placement and moderate size likely never would have made it clearly or markedly visible from Site 200.

converge. Each pilgrimage or mining site, each water source or desert kite, each rock art surface are places where movements gathered, lines intersected, and flows swirled and merged into each other. These are the nodes in the network in which various movements continually coalesce in place, where new movements are created and move out. If we focus on the nodes, then we may glimpse different but complementary ways of understanding the landscape. Thus, we may notice that some nodes are more connected, more densely packed than others, such as the Hathor Temple at Serâbît el-Khâdim or Site 200 in the Negev. Certain nodes also may have a more intense and differently experienced impact on their links and connected vertices than other nodes. Nodes may cluster.

Thus, though we may understand the Southern Levantine Drylands within the broad strokes of a meshwork, we may also focus on areas of denser connectivity within the meshwork. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, these clusters are generally visible spatially and temporally as geographic regions in which more closely connected communities shared in more intense interactions with each other and with their immediate neighbors. In Chapter 2, I described the geomorphology, aridity, and vegetation of these regions (Section 2.1). These ecological factors recursively interacted with the movements and adaptations of indigenous communities, directly impacting social realities and material phenomena and generating distinct communities within these regions. In a recent work on mobile pastoralists, landscape, and interaction in Bronze Age Eurasia, Michael D. Frachetti suggests that mobile pastoralism is a highly sensitive and adaptive strategy, requiring flexibility and improvisation that may have long-term consequences. Mobile pastoralist communities within the same broad region are highly localized and distinct, though they may share certain general common attributes. In the Eurasian steppe of the second millennium BCE, Frachetti broadly distinguishes between the eastern, central, and western steppe, tracing the seasonal migrations of these communities in a north-south direction within each region. Frachetti also proposes that we may understand interaction between these distinct mobile pastoral communities as a series of rotating, permeable, interconnected spheres of social networks that shift toward, through, and away from other in patterned and non-patterned movements. Periodic variations in these movements tied to social and ecological factors disseminated and extended certain material and semiotic forms, allowing for certain shared assemblages across these regions. Meanwhile, these same variations and movements also allowed for innovation and interpretation of these assemblages within these regions. Thus, just as mobile pastoralist communities recursively intra-act with sedentary communities, they also recursively intra-act with each other in punctuated and cyclical movements (Frachetti 2008; McCorrison 2011; van der Steen 2014)

In the Southern Levantine Drylands, we may trace a similar sense of concentrated movement and interaction as early as the Neolithic. In the late Aceramic Neolithic B, the stylistic aspects of the lithic assemblage and the distribution of exchange items – such as shells, malachite, and turquoise – in the Southern Levantine Drylands suggests the earliest segmenting of a northern and southern spheres. In this case, the northern sphere includes northern Sinai and the northern and central Negev, which exhibit heavier associations with sites on the Levantine coast, and the southern sphere comprises the southern Sinai and southern Negev, with clear links to southern Jordan (Goring-Morris 1993: 72). This segmenting continues in later periods and becomes increasingly more marked over time. The northern Sinai and northern Negev, particularly, experienced more intense and frequent interaction with Egypt, the Mediterranean, and the Southern Levant. Relatedly, the semi-arid environmental character of the northern Negev and the highlands of southwestern Jordan allowed for moderate agricultural endeavors that

encouraged further interaction and integration with these regions. However, due to the proximity of the Red Sea and Levantine and Egyptian demands for raw materials, interaction also occurred in the southern Sinai, southern Negev, and the rest of southern Jordan, albeit often indirectly or on a more reduced scale. These southern areas also tended to rely more heavily on mobile pastoralism, mining, and trade, rather than agriculture. These varying levels of interaction and senses of subsistence are reflected in material culture assemblages that may broadly segment into 1) a northern sphere – the northern Sinai and the northern Negev and 2) a southern sphere – the southern Sinai, southern Negev, and much of southern Jordan. Meanwhile, the central Negev and the contiguous areas of southern Jordan may shift back and forth between these spheres or display major characteristics of both (Rosen 2002; 2008a; 2009a; 2011a, 2011b; 2013).

Steven Rosen largely refers to this mobile pastoral southern sphere as the Timnian Complex, which he traces temporally – Early, Middle, Late, and Terminal – from the mid-sixth millennium BCE through the third millennium BCE.¹⁸ Rosen's Timnian Complexes demonstrate both a high degree of continuity and regionalization throughout the pastoral landscapes of the Southern Levantine Drylands. The Early Timnian Complex first appears in the southern Negev, central and southern Sinai, southern Jordan and northern Arabia in the mid-late sixth millennium BCE. Features of this complex include 1) enclosure and attached-room architecture, 2) intense use of desert kites, 3) elaborate ritual complexes, sometimes on a megalithic scale, 4) extramural burial fields, sometimes in association with the ritual complexes, and 5) a lithic assemblage dominated by the chipped stone industry – characterized by small and transverse stone arrowheads, microlithic drills, tabular scrapers, ad hoc blade tools, and a wide range of ad hoc flake tools (Rosen 2008a: 119-122; 2009a: 61-63; 2011b: 72-74). The Middle Timnian Complex (late fifth-fourth millennium BCE) sees the spread of these assemblages to the central Negev, albeit in a more peripheral distribution, and the relatively more widespread use of ceramics. These are dominated by the 'Arkosic ware' cooking pot – globular hole-mouth cooking pots with a flat bottom and thin, irregularly shaped rim, either made from the clays of southern and eastern Sinai or the Wadi Faynan (Rothenberg and Glass 1992: 145-146; Rosen 2002: 27; 2009a: 61; 2011b: 81; 2013). Chipped-stone axes disappear sometime before the middle of the fourth millennium BCE. Incised tabular scrapers, with patterns cut into the cortices, appear sometime in the early-mid fourth millennium BCE (Rosen 2011b: 75). The square shaped ritual complexes also replace the double wall and courtyard ritual complexes at this time (Avner 2002: 120-21, 126; Rosen et al 2007). In the Late Timnian Complex (early third millennium BCE), lithic assemblages feature tabular scrapers, a simple blade industry, a dominant ad hoc industry, and transverse arrowheads – now in the form of microlithic lunates and rectangles, rather than triangles (Bar-Yosef Mayer 2011: 190; Rothenberg and Glass 1992: 147-148; Rosen 2002: 31-32; 2009a: 62).

However, regional distinctions between mobile pastoralist communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands are also apparent, if less well documented. Nawamis appear mainly in the southern Sinai (Bar-Yosef et al 1977: 66, Fig. 1; Bar-Yosef et al 1986). In the northern Sinai and northwestern Negev, mobile pastoralist communities largely favored Egyptian materials over Levantine materials at the end of the fourth millennium BCE and Levantine materials over Egyptian materials at the ends of the third and second millennia BCE (Bárta 2010: 24-26; Gophna 1995; Oren 1989; 1993a: 1387-1388; 1999: 896; Yekutieli 2004; Yezerski 2003: xx-xxi,

¹⁸ In the final weeks of completing this dissertation, Rosen published an updated monograph on the Timnian Complexes, *Revolutions in the Desert: The Rise of Mobile Pastoralism in the Southern Levant* (2017). However, I was unable to incorporate this work into this dissertation and hope to do so in a future publication.

174-175). In the early third millennium BCE, communities in the western highlands of the central Negev adopted year-round dwellings composed of several round or oval rooms, 2-4 meters in diameter, arranged around an enclosed courtyard(s) of 5-20 meters in diameter. However, an additional 100 temporary dwellings, animal pens, and encampments are also attributed to these communities, presumably for use in the seasonal movements of goats and sheep. Mordechai Haiman has also associated a specific style of rock tomb to these communities, based on the spatial patterning of these tombs and the dwellings. These tombs, measuring 3-10 meters in diameter, consisted of a ring of upright stones, half to a full meter in height, and filled in with stones of various sizes. A burial cist, 1-2 meters long, lay just beneath the surface in the center of the ring. Haiman also traces another tradition of erecting rock tombs within settlements to this period. These tombs featured secondary burial of single and multiple interments, both in the traditional tumulus style and in a more well-defined square shape, approximately 3-4 meters per side and up to 1.5 meters high, with a burial niche covered in stone slabs. However, square rock tombs appear in both the central Negev and the southern Sinai (Haiman 1992: 27-38, 43; 2014: 172-174; Rosen 2009a: 62-63; Sidel and Haiman 2014: 7-57).

Through these regional variations, we also may note denser connectivity between particular regions in particular time periods. Some of the central Negev settlements in the early third millennium BCE also featured a few rectilinear structures, which Mordechai Haiman compares to rectilinear structures in the northern Negev at Tel Arad and sites in the southern Sinai, also dated to the Early Bronze II/Late Timnian Complex (2014: 171-172). Certain other similarities in material culture between these three regions may also index a dense north-south connectivity (that also included copper production sites in the Faynan region) in the early third millennium BCE (Adams 2006: 136; Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 80; Haiman 2007: 307-309; 2014: 171-172; Sidel and Haiman 2014).

Later in the third millennium BCE, connectivity shifts in an east-west flow between the northern Sinai, the central Negev, and southern Jordan. In the Wadi Fidan, Khirbat Hamra Ifdan re-emerges as a major processing site for copper mined throughout the Wadi Faynan region (Adams 2000; Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 80; Levy et al 2002). This intense copper industry is accompanied by a distinct wave of occupation in the central Negev, comprised of seven large sites concentrated in the southern lowlands and the northern highlands and a thousand small sites distributed between these sites and down into the southern highlands. The large sites, comprised of 100-200 stone structures, vary geographically. In the western lowlands and northwestern highlands, these sites consist exclusively of single round rooms, sometimes agglutinated, with one to three pillars in the center of the room. Most of the small sites are similar to these sites. In the eastern Negev highlands, the large sites also feature square structures with central pillars and courtyards. One site in the southwestern lowlands, Naḥal Nizzana, features a tight clustering of agglutinated round, oval, and square rooms and courtyards, interspersed with rock tombs and cairns. Round platforms, measuring 7 to 20 meters in diameter and paved with flat stones, were located to the northwest of the site. The large sites are all located near water sources and feature high-quality construction, while the small sites are generally more ephemeral and lack access to water. This may indicate a distinction between year-round and temporary or seasonal occupation and/or, perhaps, a temporal distinction (Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 82; Dunseth et al 2016; Haiman 1996: 3-14; Shahack-Gross and Finkelstein 2015: 262). The central Negev occupation is heavily linked to the Wadi Faynan copper industry through ceramics, distinct crescent-shaped copper ingots, and some similarities in architectural styles (Adams 2000; 2006: 137-140; Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 80-82; Hauptmann et al 2015). Small ephemeral sites (similar to those concentrated in

the southern highlands of the central Negev) are also attested in the southern Negev and in the Insular Massifs and the Tih Plateau in the Sinai (Haiman 1996: 12-14). This activity largely coincides with Old Kingdom mining activity in the southern Sinai and a disintegration in the social and economic systems of the Southern Levant, suggesting a high sense of mobility and connectivity in an east/west flow in the mid-late third millennium BCE (Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 80-82; Haiman 1996: 23-24).

Areas of denser connectivity thus allow us to get a sense of mobility patterns in particular time periods and how these patterns may shift over time. Similarly to Bronze Age Eurasia, the broad but perceptible segmenting of material and phenomena between north and south in the Southern Levantine Drylands may index a general trend of east-west migratory patterns. However, due to the terrain and the environment, pastoral communities likely shifted their movements on an as needed basis as well, moving in various directions and patterns in any given region. These are but a few examples of some of the networks visible within the greater meshwork of the Southern Levantine Drylands. They aptly demonstrate though the possibility of concentrations of movements within a meshwork, especially for mobile pastoral communities. Movement may be even more concentrated and controlled though. In the clustering of nodes, certain nodes may be denser and may especially demonstrate connectivity at more intense levels.

3.5. Networking at Nodes – Gateway Cities and Senses of Movement in the Southern Levantine Drylands

In a networking model, we may also more heavily focus on particular nodes and explore sites as places where communities of varying mobilities may have experienced the most intense interaction. This is movement in place, networking to and through places. The northern Negev sites of Tel Arad in the Early Bronze II (3000-2700 BCE) and Tel Masos in the Iron I (1200-1000 BCE) are already described in reminiscent terms as “gateway communities” or “gateway cities” (Finkelstein 1995: 79-86, 123; Rosen 2008a: 123; 2009a: 62). Gateway cities is a term originally used to refer to North American frontier towns as sites focused on wholesaling and transportation in a long-distance trade system that develop “dynamically, along a moving frontier of settlement, or statically, on or close to the boundary (or the zone) between areas of differing intensities or types of production” (Burghardt 1971: 272). In geography and urban studies, gateway cities now commonly refer to points of entry for commercial activities and points of entry for immigrants and travelers, thus more explicitly emphasizing the movement of people as well as goods to and through the gateway city. These places may also be more generally defined as “spaces through which people, goods, and trade pass,” and “nodes in a larger urban network or system [that] function as transition points or starting points for movement (of goods and people) to other parts of a region or country, as well as the globe” (Hoffman 2007: 297). Gateway cities or communities are the densest nodes in deeply entangled networks of communities and materials, which by definition are highly mixed, always in flux, and thus liminal by their very nature. Drawing on the work of Karen Barad (2003), I suggest that we may consider gateway communities as *sites of intra-action* (see Introduction, Section I.I). These are places where emerging phenomena within the context of their entangled relations are particularly visible for analysis as “relata-within-phenomena” (Barad 2003: 815).

In his 1995 monograph, *Living on the Fringe: The Archaeology and History of the Negev, Sinai and Neighbouring Regions in the Bronze and Iron Ages*, Israel Finkelstein reconstructs Arad in the Early Bronze Age II and Tel Masos in the Iron I as gateway communities. According

to this model, these sites operated as distribution centers for the commodities of the drylands, in which select indigenous communities chose to sedentarize, partially adopting agriculture, while other indigenous communities choose to remain non-sedentary, but benefited by participation in trade in exchange for the agricultural surpluses from Tel Arad and Tel Masos (Finkelstein 1995: 79-86, 123). As hubs for trade and distribution then, these communities also attracted migrants, merchants, and other non-indigenous persons, marking these communities as “heterogeneous” (Finkelstein 1995: 123). Similarly, based on an analysis of cooking pot styles, Raphael Greenberg refers to settlement at EB II Tel Arad as a “comingling” of different communities (2006: 45). These scholars differ in how they reconstruct the composition of these communities, but such analyses demonstrate the usefulness of the gateway metaphor for these sites. This comparison is even more apt if we consider the role of the gateway in ancient Levantine settlements as both a point of entry and the major meeting place for governance, legal hearings, and festivals. Thus, we may envision gateway communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands as something akin to gateways in the ancient Levant – liminal nodes through which multiple phenomena flow and intermingle, becoming as they transition.

In the Southern Levantine Drylands, gateway communities tended to develop on the edges of this region, places immediately contiguous to the Southern Levant, Egypt, and the waters that carried goods and people to other lands – the northern Sinai and Negev coast, the northern Negev valleys, the Wadi Faynan area and its tributaries, and the Red Sea coast. Besides Tel Arad and Tel Masos, examples may include the fourth millennium BCE site of Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan on the Red Sea coast and the Wadi Faynan sites WF100 and Khirbat Hamra Ifdan of the late fourth millennium and early third millennium BCE respectively. Relative to the rest of the Southern Levantine Drylands, the material cultures of communities in these areas often feature a high degree of imported and locally-made imitation materials, as well as materials exhibiting the influences of both foreign and local traditions (Adams 1999; 2003; Barker 2012: 5-10; Klimscha 2011; Levy et al 2002; Rosen 2011). In the northern Negev valleys and the Wadi Faynan region, semi-arid environmental conditions also allowed for moderate agricultural endeavors. Thus, these regions see a long history of shifting or coeval agro-pastoral settlement systems,¹⁹ in which dense hubs for indigenous metallurgical industries and trade networks operated as intense sites of intra-action between multiple entangled communities and flows of materials (Adams 1999; 2003; 2006; Barker 2012: 5-10; Gilead 1990; Gilead 2007: 42-44; 2011: 16-19; Kuijt & Goring Morris 2002; Mithen et al 2011; Levy et al 2002; Rowan and Golden 2009: 7-8, 14-17, 27-29; Rosen 2011b). That sites in these areas acted as nodes of intra-action and movement is also visible in aerial photography of Tel Haror and the Beersheba region in the

¹⁹ Such settlement first appears in the Wadi Faynan region in the early tenth to mid-ninth millennium BCE (ca. 9750–8550 BCE), and continues to appear throughout southern Jordan intermittently in the eighth through the sixth millennia BCE (Barker 2012; Mithen et al 2011; Kuijt & Goring Morris 2002). In the early-mid fifth millennium BCE, sedentary agro-pastoral settlement also appears in the northern Negev and northeastern Sinai coast, complete with its own distinct ceramic traditions (Gilead 1990; 2007: 42-44; 2011: 16-19; Rowan and Golden 2009: 7-8). The late fifth millennium BCE sees the rise of agro-pastoral sites broadly defined as Chalcolithic – based on material culture and the first appearances of copper working – in the Southern Levant, including sites in the northern Negev (Rosen 2011b: 74; Rowan and Golden 2009: 14-16, 27-29). The Wadi Faynan region is also characterized as sedentary and agro-pastoral at this time, but its relationship to the Beersheba Valley is still unclear (Rowan and Golden 2009: 17). With the decline of the Beersheba region in the late fourth millennium BCE, intense indigenous agro-pastoral settlement continues in the Wadi Faynan, newly centered at WF100 (Barker 2012: 5-8; Rosen 2011b). Major agro-pastoral settlement shifts back to the northern Negev in the early third millennium BCE, centered at Tel Arad. After Tel Arad is abandoned (c. 2700 BCE) agro-pastoral settlement returns to southern Jordan, now centered at Khirbat Hamrat Ifdan (Adams 1999; Barker 2012: 9-10; Levy et al 2002).

northwestern Negev. This photography reveals ancient roads hidden beneath the soil, because the roads collect water and are rendered visible by lines of vegetation. At Tel Haror and in the Beersheba region, these roads radiate outward from these sites in dense patterns, revealing the sites as central nodes in complex networks of intra-action and movement (Tsoar and Yekutieli 1992: 213-215).

The following discussion will focus on the sites of Tel Arad in the early third millennium BCE and Tel Masos at the late second millennium-early first millennium BCE transition as examples of agro-pastoral gateway communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands. Specifically, this discussion will utilize networking models in order to focus on how these communities acted as dense sites of intra-action and potent hubs of liminality and power through the funneling, constraining, and coalescing of flows of movement. This sort of active, agentive, intentional manipulation of movements generated new movements and new social realities within and without the Southern Levantine Drylands.

3.5.1. Tel Arad (Tell 'Arad)

After the decline of the Beersheba region in the mid-fourth millennium BCE, some sparse sedentary settlement first returns to the inland valleys of the northern Negev near the end of the fourth millennium BCE. In the early third millennium BCE, this settlement network dramatically intensifies, converging at the site of Tel Arad (Tell 'Arad) in the northeastern Negev. Fortified and enclosed within a wide stone wall interspersed with semi-circular towers, Tel Arad (Fig. D.1; D.14) grew to ten hectares and featured a network of streets, open spaces, and clusters of distinct stone broadroom dwellings (Amiran et al 1978; Amiran et al 1980; Amiran and Ilan 1996).

Previous scholarship on Tel Arad focused on emplacing the site and its communities within various binaries – northern vs. southern, sedentism vs. nomadism, indigenous vs. colonist. Ruth Amiran, the original excavator of Tel Arad, and Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, who excavated several small sites in the southern Sinai with similarities to Tel Arad, portrayed Tel Arad as a Southern Levantine Early Bronze II “city-state” (or at least urban center) and Aradian-style sites in the Sinai as the immigration of Aradians to the southern Sinai in order to mine copper for transport back to Tel Arad (Fig. D.15). If mentioned, mobile pastoralists are either depicted as migrants or intruders or simply commented on as existing at the fringes or the interstices of Aradian settlement (Amiran et al 1973, 1978; Beit-Arieh 1981: 133-134; 2003a: 440-444). Alternatively, Israel Finkelstein interprets the rise of both Tel Arad and the Aradian-style sites in the southern Sinai as the sedentarization and semi-sedentarization of select indigenous mobile pastoralist groups in response to the demand for copper from sedentists in the Southern Levant (1995: 79-86). Meanwhile, Raphael Greenberg characterizes Tel Arad as “not so much the sedentarizing of the nomads [but] as the comingling of northern sedentists and desert tribes” (2006: 45). Steve Rosen also characterizes Tel Arad as a “gateway town,” yet sees a similar binary between mobile and sedentary communities. He characterizes this period as the development of “pre-camel pastoral nomadism,” in which the mobile communities of the drylands have completely abandoned hunting and gathering as subsistence strategies and devote their energies to pastoralism (Rosen 2002: 30). However, this is still not their only major method of subsistence, as they have also turned to trade with sedentary communities to procure grains, ceramics, and other necessities. For Rosen, this relationship is one of economic asymmetry, as the turn toward intense mobile pastoralism coincided with a dramatic demographic expansion in the drylands

that pastoralism alone could not support. Thus, mobile communities turn to trade with sedentary communities to supplement their incomes, and so come to rely on sedentary communities for their survival. Yet, this relationship is inherently asymmetrical because sedentary communities can survive without the trade with mobile pastoral communities (Rosen 2002: 30-33; Rosen 2009a: 62). For Rosen, Tel Arad is firmly sedentary and the Aradian-style sites in the southern Sinai cast are interloping “trade stations” with an inherently economically asymmetric relationship to Tel Arad (2008a: 123; 2009a: 62).

However, if we are to understand Tel Arad as a gateway community within the context of the Southern Levantine Drylands, we must nuance these discussions by engaging with Tel Arad as a site of intra-action. Like other gateway communities in the northern Negev and Wadi Faynan, Tel Arad may be defined within an agro-pastoral-industrial semi-arid and rural landscape. Considerable quantities of carbonized grains, large storage vessels, sickle blades, and possible silo bases point to a significant agricultural component, while the faunal remains and the relatively small amount of sickle blades compared to agricultural sites further north indicates a comparable emphasis on pastoralism (Amiran et al 1978: 44-50, 58-59, 61, 64-115; Rosen 1983: Table 1). Finally, evidence for copper processing at the site indicates a local copper manufacturing industry with copper imported from the Wadi Faynan (Amiran et al 1978: 55-57; Hauptmann, Begemann, and Schmitt-Strecker: 1; 6: Table 1).²⁰ This evidence demonstrates various and fluctuating intensities of agriculture, pastoralism, and metallurgy at Tel Arad that cannot be neatly allocated to so-called sedentary vs. mobile communities. Rather, like other environmentally marginal regions, this variability and complexity speaks to the resilience and flexibility of communities that shifted between diverse modes of production and subsistence as the circumstances required (Porter 2013).

A closer look at the idiosyncrasies of Tel Arad also demonstrates this flexibility and the comingling of styles and traditions. Domestic architecture at Tel Arad is known distinctly as the “Arad House” in archaeological literature (Fig. D.16). These dwellings were comprised of a cluster of sunken broadrooms, constructed mostly of local chalk and partially masoned, and a courtyard enclosed by a stone fence. The main broadroom often contained chalk benches along the walls and chalk slabs in the center of the room, presumably to serve as socles for a wooden column. This room also usually contained cooking stoves constructed of flint slabs, stone mortars, cupmarks, stone platforms, and silos. Occasionally, some of these installations also appeared in the subsidiary rooms or the courtyard (Amiran et al 1978; Amiran and Ilan 1996; Ilan 2001: 323-328). Broadroom domestic architecture is common in Southern Levantine sites, but is rarer in the drylands. Furthermore, the Arad House features an arrangement of architectural components and installations unique to the Southern Levantine Drylands, some of which are derived from the region’s traditional roundhouse domestic architecture. For example, sunken floors are characteristic of the roundhouses associated with mobile pastoral communities (Finkelstein 1995; Ilan 2001: 348-349).

Tel Arad is also notable for a sizeable “sacred precinct” containing large broadroom complexes, similar to structures identified as temples at sites like Megiddo, Jericho, and Ai in the Southern Levant (Fig. D.18). One area of this precinct contains two sizable pillared broadrooms, conjoined by a single meter wide back wall, but each opening into their own courtyards. The courtyard of the northern hall contained two large features: 1) a stone platform, approximately 2 x 3.2 meters wide and 60 centimeters high, with the remains of a hard, burnt plaster on its

²⁰ Copper production in the Wadi Faynan is attested at Barqa el-Hetiye and Khirbat Hamra Ifdan during the Early Bronze II (Adams 2003; Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 80; Adams et al 2010; Hauptmann 2007).

surface, and 2) a limestone lined basin, approximately 1.3 meters in diameter and one meter deep, surrounded by a low enclosure wall. Very few artifacts were recovered from this complex, but included a large well-dressed standing stone, a foundation deposit, a ceremonial mace head, and a stone pendant bearing an incised bird image. This so called “Twin Temple” complex is noted to be especially similar to the Megiddo XIX Twin Temple (Amiran et al 1978: 38-41; Amiran and Ilan 1996: 45-57).

Aradian ceramics share certain affinities with Southern Levantine assemblages, but perhaps significantly, one of the major cooking pots was a globular squat-ovoid holemouth vessel with thin walls and round base. These vessels contain arkose sand temper, of Sinai or Wadi Faynan provenience, and are constructed by “stretching” the clay over a mold, a technique foreign to Southern Levantine ceramics. This is in direct contrast to cooking pots common in the Southern Levant – (1) the necked cooking pots in the far north, (2) the elongated-ovoid holemouth cooking pots in the northern inland valleys, (3) and the thick-walled, flat-based piriform or oval holemouth pots in the southern interior. Ornit Ilan and Raphael Greenberg have both pointed out that the heating and cooking methods inherent to this type of vessel – open-flame, gradual heating from bottom to top – likely signal differences in cuisine. Given that this pot is also the common cooking pot at mobile pastoral sites in the drylands, Greenberg asserts that these pots indicate the presence of cooks and/or cooking traditions from the drylands (Adams 2003: 16-18; Amiran et al 1978: 44-51; Greenberg 2006; Ilan 2001: 334-347; Rothenberg and Glass 1992: 147-148).

That Tel Arad was closely interrelated with the Southern Levantine Drylands is perhaps most visible in the central Negev, the southern Sinai, and the Wadi Faynan region of southern Jordan. The central Negev sees its most intense increase to date in mobile pastoral sites at the same time as the emergence of Tel Arad. Copper beads and metamorphized or ferruginous sandstone grinding stones, produced by Late Timnian communities in the central Negev, are found in high concentrations at Tel Arad (Amiran et al 1978: 55; PL. 68-69; Rosen 2009b: 255-258). Other trade items associated with indigenous mobile pastoral communities in the drylands also appear at Tel Arad in large quantities, including tabular scrapers, Red Sea seashells, and shell beads (Rosen 2002: 32-33; Rosen 2009a: 62; Rosen 2011).

Meanwhile, 300 kilometers south of Tel Arad, sites named for the tomb of Sheikh Nabi Salaḥ in the Wadi el-Sheikh are distributed in the high mountains of southern Sinai, the area of the Feiran Oasis, and east along a narrow strip bordering the Gulf of Eilat (Beit-Arieh 2003a: 440). These sites are composed of sunken broadrooms with rounded corners, arranged in circles or semi-circles around a central courtyard, and sometimes fitted with stone benches, door substructures, fire pits, stone compartments, and column pediments in center of the rooms (Fig. D.17). The morphological similarity to the “Arad House” (c.f. Figs. D.16 and D.17). is striking and points to some sort of intimate interrelationship (Beit-Arieh 2003a: 11-77, 101-109). Furthermore, the ceramics included the arkose-tempered, thin-walled, round-based globular squat-ovoid holemouth vessels common at mobile pastoral sites and at Tel Arad, as well as other unique Tel Arad wares – knobbed jars and medium sized jars. Smaller vessels included amphoriskoi, jugs, juglets, platters, cup-bowls and bowls, also likely produced in the Tel Arad area (Beit-Arieh 2003a: 110-126). There were also several copper tools – awls, chisels and axeheads – similar to those from Tel Arad, and a few remains of copper artifacts (Amiran et al 1973: 194; Beit-Arieh 2003a: 196-207). However, the flint assemblage was dominated by tools associated with indigenous mobile pastoral and mining communities – tabular and other types of scrapers, perforating tools, burins, cutting tools, and retouched tools (Beit-Arieh 2003a: 129-

183). These sites also featured black axeheads made of black diorite, a stone indigenous to the Sinai mountains, and various shaped stone pendants, also made from Sinai stones (Beit-Arieh 2003a: 127-128, 214, 224-227). Aradian-style dwellings have also been uncovered in the southern Negev, in association with a smelting site. Unlike the southern Sinai settlements though, the ceramics of these dwellings are entirely composed of Sinaitic and locally manufactured wares (Rothenberg 1999: 82-83).

Tel Arad also features evidence of copper manufacturing with copper imported from the Wadi Faynan region. Copper production in the Wadi Faynan region during this time is attested at Barqa el-Hetiye and Khirbat Hamra Ifdan, which are located approximately 5 kilometers from each other. The shifting, bi-directional flow of the intra-action between these regions is evident in certain ceramic correlations between Tel Arad and the Wadi Faynan sites, as well as activity at copper manufacturing sites along roadsides between Tel Arad and the Wadi Faynan, such as Ashalim and the Zohar Ascent (Ben-Yosef et al 2016: 80; Gidding 2016; Yekutieli 2006a; 2006b).

If we visualize Tel Arad as a particularly dense and visible node in a complex network, then these examples demonstrate that the flow of phenomena between Tel Arad, the Southern Levant, and the Southern Levantine Drylands were multi-directional and recursive, with differing trajectories and impacts on each other. Different communities interacted at different scales within this network, but the size and agro-pastoral nature of Tel Arad likely indexes the greatest interaction and movement between multiple communities in the region, both in the sense of people and in the sense of materials. As a site of intra-action situated on a periphery, this is also a particularly betwixt and between place, a coalescing of flows that transforms that which flows through it, in which communities flexibly alternated between subsistence strategies and may have understood themselves at a intersectioning of identities. As a gateway, Tel Arad also became a site for funneling and controlling power and access, for constraining and directing senses of liminality, power, and identity.

3.5.2. Tel Masos (Khirbet el-Mashash)

Near the end of the second millennium BCE, a gateway community also appears at Tel Masos (Khirbet el-Mashash) on the north bank of the Wadi Bir e-Seba' (Naḥal Beersheba), about 12 kilometers southeast of the modern city of Beersheba (Figs. D.1: D.19). Like Tel Arad, we may envision Tel Masos as a dense node and site of intra-action between multiple communities. However, this is a denser and more intense funnel than Tel Arad. Certain innovations at the second-first millennium BCE transition may indicate that this site was situated as particularly liminal in time, as well as space.

Stratum III – dated by the excavators to the late thirteenth century BCE, but sometimes down-dated to the twelfth century BCE by others – begins rather ephemerally as a series of ash pits, silos, ovens, and beaten earth floors. By Stratum IIIB though, the site features a cluster of permanent domestic structures: (1) the traditional broadroom-style house – now with attached courtyard – and (2) a pillared-style house consisting of an anterior longroom – segmented by a longitudinal row of pillars into an interior room and a courtyard – attached to a posterior broadroom. In Stratum II – dated to the late twelfth-second half of the eleventh centuries BCE – Tel Masos reached its largest size and complexity, comprised of a circular, unfortified settlement of 3-6 hectares, featuring large public buildings containing agricultural storage, a copper workshop, and significant quantities of imported vessels (Fig. D.20). The public buildings were

pillared mudbrick structures,²¹ as were the domestic units.²² Ceramics included painted and unpainted wares common to the Southern Levantine coast and the Shephelah,²³ Philistine Bichrome Ware, Egyptian vessels, a few sherds of Qurayya Painted Ware (possibly an intrusion from Stratum III), and a few sherds and complete vessel of Negev Ware.²⁴ In Stratum I – currently dated to the late eleventh-tenth centuries BCE – the site shrinks to a central fortress surrounded by a sparse distribution of houses, after which the site is abandoned (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein 1995: 114-118; Fritz and Kempinski 1983; Kempinski 1993; Singer-Avitz 2014: 129; Tebes 2003).

The rise of Tel Masos roughly coincides with a multitude of intense settlement and production phenomena throughout the Southern Levantine Drylands in the last two centuries of the second millennium BCE and into the first century of the first millennium BCE. In the Beersheba Valley, this includes sedentary and semi-sedentary settlements at Tel Esdar, Naḥal Yatir, Tel Beer-Sheba', and Tel Arad (Finkelstein 1995: 118-120).²⁵ In the late eleventh century BCE, the Wadi Gaza (Naḥal Besor) region sees several sedentary settlements in its northern part, including a small, unfortified settlement at Tel Haror (Tell Abu-Hureireh) and seasonal encampments in its southern part. Both types of settlements contained ceramics characterized as a synthesis of southern coastal and hill country types, with the assemblages of the southern sites reduced in their variety (Gazit 2008: 77-79, 80-81; Oren, Morrison and Gilead 1986: 61-62; 75). These assemblages also bear a striking resemblance to sites in the North Sinai, which also sees a moderate demographic recovery at the end of the eleventh century BCE and continuing through the first half of the tenth century BCE (Oren 1999; Yezerki 2003: xx-xxi, 174-175).²⁶ Meanwhile, the Wadi Faynan and the Timna Valley see the rise of the most intense metallurgical industry to date. Given its deep similarities to other smelting camps and associated mine shafts in the Timna Valley, renewed work at smelting camp Site 30 likely reveals a valley-wide Iron I-IIA copper mining and processing industry that developed gradually through the late twelfth-

²¹ These thick walled, multi-story structures consisted of Building 1039 – a mudbrick broadroom unit segmented into smaller rooms by longitudinal walls and rows of pillars and House 314 – a square “courtyard house” style structure with a latitudinal row of pillars in the courtyard.

²² The domestic structures are characterized as rectangular mudbrick superstructures on stone foundations, segmented into 3-5 variously arranged rooms, including a courtyard and 1-2 rows of pillars

²³ The distribution of imported versus local imitation in these wares is unclear from the publication.

²⁴ Negev Ware is relatively rare in the northern Negev. A single cooking-pot is reported from Stratum VIII (eighth century BCE) Tel Arad, 2-3 sherds at Tel Beer-Sheba' Stratum V (ninth century BCE) and Stratum III (eighth century BCE), a few sherds from Ḥorvat Qitmit (early seventh century BCE), a sherd in a cluster of structures at Naḥal Tale, and a hole-mouth jar at an Iron I campsite (Site 107) at Naḥal Besor (Tebes 2006b: 101-102).

²⁵ The earliest Iron Age strata at Tel Beer-Sheba' (IX-VI), dated by their excavators to the mid-twelfth-ninth centuries BCE, comprise an initial phase of pits, a dwelling pit, and a well, followed by three strata of variously arranged structures, presumably houses, in the “pillared” building tradition – usually rectangular longrooms, sometimes segmented by one or more longitudinal axes of pillars or walls, and affixed to posterior rectangular broadrooms. Settlement appears again at Arad (XII, XIIA, XIIB) in the ninth century BCE as a mixture of reused EB II houses and pillared houses. The excavator of both sites interpreted the houses as encircling an inner courtyard (Stratum VII at Tel Beer-Sheba' and Stratum XII at Arad), similarly to the casemate-ringed enclosures, but without sharing all of their walls. In the ninth century BCE, Tel Beer-Sheba' (Stratum V) is fortified and extended, apparently transformed into an administrative center, until its destruction at the end of the eighth century BCE (Herzog 2002: 14-21; 2016: 15-29, 1454-1478). Tel Malhata is also resettled in the ninth century BCE (Stratum V) and heavily fortified with a rectangular wall and a stone-faced rampart. The city is re-built (possibly following a short gap in occupation) at the beginning of the eighth century BCE (Stratum IV) and continues into the seventh century BCE (Stratum III) (Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015: 739-742).

²⁶ Shared ceramics include bell-shaped bowls with vestigial horizontal handles, carinated bowls, closed kraters with thickened ledged rims, and cooking pots with a triangular rim and sharply-carinated bodies.

eleventh centuries BCE and then peaked during the tenth century BCE. This industry co-developed simultaneously in the Wadi Faynan, as seen in recent excavations at sites with evidence for copper processing and domestic activity, such as Khirbat an-Nahas, Khirbat al-Jariya, Khirbat Hamra Ifdan, and Khirbat al-Ghuweiba (Ben-Yosef 2010; Ben-Yosef et al 2010; Ben-Yosef et al 2012; Levy, Najjar, and Ben-Yosef 2014; Levy, Ben-Yosef and Najjar 2012).

Similar to the trends seen in earlier periods, this industry seems to mainly be the purview of indigenous mobile pastoral communities steeped in a long local tradition of copper mining (Avner 2014: 125-129). This is likely reflected at Wadi Fidan 40, a cemetery in use from the late eleventh-ninth centuries BCE, but peaking in the tenth century BCE. Wadi Fidan 40 contains over a thousand burials, 287 of which have been excavated and found to be remarkably similar to burial fields in the Southern Levantine Drylands – a circular stone surface installation, usually a pavement or a tumulus, covering subsurface cists lined with sandstone or cobble slabs. Occasionally, these graves included standing stones, some of which were anthropomorphized with protrusions indicating shoulders, noses and ears. Grave goods include beads, wooden vessels, textiles, pomegranates, jewelry of copper, iron, shell, stone, and bone, and other objects. As there are no sedentary settlements nearby and the burials conspicuously lack ceramics, the excavators propose that this burial ground was used by mobile pastoral communities. They further assert that it is these same communities engaged in the Wadi Faynan metallurgical industry, on the basis of comparative materials, the high presence of copper artifacts in the graves, and preliminary toxic metal studies of the human remains that may indicate long-term or repeated exposure to the toxic byproducts of metal production (Beherec 2014; Levy, Adams and Muniz 2004; Levy, Ben Yosef, and Najjar 2012: 206-207; Levy 2009: 153-154).

Recently, Martin and Finkelstein (2013) tied a wave of ostensibly tenth century BCE occupation in the Negev Highlands and northeastern Sinai into the Wadi Arabah copper industry. This activity is characterized by 350 sites dispersed throughout the region, which are composed of various combinations of single room 2-3 x 4-5 meter structures – laid with small stone rectangular, round, oval, or horseshoe-shaped foundations, multi-room rectilinear structures with large stone foundations, and casemate-like rooms surrounding an inner courtyard, usually in the shape of an oval. Features often include animal pens, water cisterns, stone lined silos, threshing floors, and agricultural terracing. Sickle blades and limited ceramic assemblages also appear. The ceramics are comprised of varying proportions of wheel-made Iron IIA wares typical to the northern Negev, the southern coastal plain, and the Shephelah and the roughly hand-made Negev Ware commonly associated with local mobile pastoral communities (Boaretto et al 2010; Bruins 1986; 2007; Bruins and van der Plicht 2005: 359-362; Bruins et al 2012; Finkelstein 1995:103-126; 2002:114-115; Haiman 1994: 36-52; 2007; Martin and Finkelstein 2013; Meshel 2000: 48-73; Shahack-Gross and Finkelstein 2008; 2015; Shahack-Gross et al 2014).²⁷ Recent

²⁷ Most of the discussions of these sites have focused on the casemate-ringed enclosures, similar to those reported at Tel Beer-Sheba and Tel Arad. In the central Negev, these structures are traditionally identified as fortresses built by northern sedentists, but others prefer to associate these structures with indigenous mobile pastoralist communities. Part of this debate also centered on whether they should be dated exclusively to the tenth or the eleventh centuries BCE. However, recent radiocarbon dating suggests dating these particular structures to the tenth century BCE, and even down into the ninth century BCE. It is usually assumed, implicitly and explicitly, that all the other structures and features are contemporaneous with the casemate-ringed enclosures, whether or not they in close proximity to a casemate-ringed enclosure. However, more recent work suggests that these sites are a palimpsest of different occupations from several time periods (Boaretto et al 2010; Bruins and van der Plicht 2005; Bruins et al 2012; Cohen 1979; Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein 1995; 2010; Shahack-Gross and Finkelstein 2008; 2015;

petrographic analysis places the origins of a substantial portion of both the wheel-made and the hand-made wares in the Wadi Arabah. Notably, the hand-made wares are also often tempered with crushed copper slag. Finkelstein, Martin, and others see these unusual inclusions as a direct link between Negev Highlands communities and the Wadi Arabah copper industry (Martin and Finkelstein 2013; Martin et al 2013).

In the traditional dating of Tel Masos, the peak of the site occurs in the centuries before the intense occupational and production phenomena in the central Negev and southern Jordan. However, Stratum II Tel Masos has long been characterized as a “Central Place” of the Beersheba Valley or the seat of a Beersheba Valley “chiefdom,” based on its size, complexity, and material culture. In chiefdom models, power and wealth have become relatively more concentrated in the hands of elites, but elites are still rather constrained by kinship affiliations and pressures, thus requiring the regular redistribution of wealth. Social and economic complexities and disparities are evident, but still diffuse. Archaeologically, these systems are said to be recognizable by certain features: a settlement hierarchy, supra-household production, social differentiation, and an ideological framework that supports social ranking, all of which are thought to be evident at Tel Masos (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein 1995; Frick 1985: 157-169; Tebes 2003; 2014a: 10-12).

Several scholars now suggest down-dating Tel Masos, placing Strata I-II as contemporary with the emergence of intensive copper extraction in the Faynan and Timna. Thus, they identify Tel Masos as a major trade and distribution center for agricultural products and Wadi Arabah copper production, while the roughly contemporaneous, but undifferentiated and much smaller settlements, encampments, and farmsteads in the Beersheba Valley, the Wadi Gaza (Naḥal Besor) area, and, possibly, the Negev Highlands/northeastern Sinai functioned as “socioeconomic satellite sites” (Tebes 2003: 68) of Tel Masos (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006; Finkelstein 1995; Frick 1985: 157-169; Tebes 2003; 2014a: 11). In this scenario, pastoralist communities transport bulk copper from the Wadi Arabah to Tel Masos, likely in exchange for agricultural products. This copper is then refined in local workshops, and exported to the Mediterranean coast by local or coastal communities, in exchange for manufactured products and goods that were not locally available. These goods are then either retained in Tel Masos or re-distributed along kinship networks in the drylands (Tebes 2003: 72; 2014a: 10-12). Like Tel Arad in the early third millennium BCE, Tel Masos may also be defined as a “gateway community,” the population of which Finkelstein describes as a “heterogeneous” mixture of “sedentarized nomads,” merchants from the southern coastal plain, and perhaps some hill country communities (Finkelstein 1995: 123). Finkelstein’s scenario offers a basic outline of how materials and communities were likely funneled through Tel Masos at the second-first millennium BCE transition.

However, I suggest that we may re-construct a more nuanced, multi-scalar analysis of Tel Masos by considering it as a gateway community in the sense of a node at the intersection of multiple, overlapping, conflicting and entangled communities, a site of intra-action through which materials, communities, and power in a marginal and sparse landscape were distinctly

Shahack-Gross et al 2014). More work will have to be done in order to parse out what parts of these sites belong to what centuries and thus may be associated with each other, but for now it can be said that parts of these sites may have been contemporary with all three of Tel Masos’ strata, and so probably related to the site in some way. Fantalkin and Finkelstein have previously argued something like this, when they slightly down-dated Tel Masos as closer in date to the Iron I-IIA mining activity at Wadi Faynan, placing the height of both in the tenth century BCE (2006: 21, 24-26, 28-29).

funneled and re-directed. Like Tel Arad, these communities flexibly alternated between subsistence strategies and may have understood themselves at a intersectioning of identities. Furthermore, the kinship networks that linked Tel Masos and the northern Negev with the central Negev and the Wadi Faynan likely encompassed and superseded these flexible subsistence strategies and varying mobilities. However, the emergence of Tel Masos as a primary node in a thick bi-directional network does indicate emerging economic and social complexity and greater interaction with contiguous regions, likely at a more intense level than that seen at EB II Tel Arad.

The relative intensity of these complexities at Tel Masos is evident through three interrelated innovations that would have a profound impact on the Southern Levantine Drylands throughout the Iron Age and later periods – (1) the domestication of the camel, (2) the development of the saddle, and (3) the adoption of the woven tent by mobile pastoralists. The domestication of the camel and the development of the saddle are likely key events in rendering the adoption of the tent and the rise of the spice trade with Arabia possible, as neither the transport of woven tents or the substantial distances required for the Arabian trade are likely to have been tenable before the rise of domesticated camels as pack animals (Rosen and Saidel 2010). The domestication of the camel was likely an irregular process, varying regionally in its intensity and nature, as various facets of domestication – exploitation of the camel’s products, riding camels, and using camels as pack animals – would be utilized by different communities at different times, depending on their needs. However, the emergence of camels as pack animals in the drylands has been more recently pinpointed to the second millennium-first millennium BCE transition, where they were first utilized in the Wadi Arabah copper trade. In fact, new evidence may suggest an even more exact date in the late tenth century BCE for the wide-scale use of camels as pack animals in the copper trade (Finkelstein 1995: 121-122; Grigson 2012; Heide 2010; Rosen 2008a; Rosen and Saidel 2010; Sapir-Hen and Ben-Yosef 2013). These developments would have had a dramatic impact on mobilities and ways of seeing in the Southern Levantine Drylands, perhaps contributing to greater senses of connectivity, mobility, and interaction while simultaneously allowing for greater concentrations of wealth and power. Moreover, the incorporation of the camel and the woven tent into mobile pastoral lifeways would have radically restructured movement and senses of dwelling and ritual for these communities. The lumps of folded up rough woolen cloth with beads attached that Beno Rothenberg found at Site 200 and identified as the remains of a tent covering may well reflect these changing senses of ritual (Rothenberg 1988: 273). If the ritual complexes of previous millennia had been open-air, then the act of enclosing ritual space likely indicates more restricted notions about sacred space, visibility, and accessibility.

Greater interaction and integration through a site like Tel Masos also may be seen in the renewed reliance on and appropriation of ceramics, including the widespread (re)appearance of Negev Ware, amongst indigenous communities. In previous millennia, ceramics in the Southern Levantine Drylands tended to be more modest in number and limited in repertoire than in comparison to the Southern Levant. Occasionally, certain agro-pastoral communities on the periphery developed their own industries and traditions. However, more mobile communities tended to eschew ceramics in favor of baskets and textiles. If mobile communities chose to utilize ceramics, they generally employed more restricted assemblages with less variety of forms. These assemblages might be composed of crude, local, handmade wares and/or ceramics appropriated from sedentary communities, with very little development of indigenous traditions (Rosen 2009a: 65-68; Tebes 2006b: 96-108).

The Iron Age sees the renewal of these trends amongst mobile pastoral communities in the central Negev. The limited ceramic assemblages feature varying proportions of wheel-made Iron IIA wares (typical to the northern Negev, the southern coastal plain, and the Shephelah), and Negev Ware, a locally produced hand-made ware of coarse clay containing straw and other organic materials. The range of forms of Negev Ware are limited mainly to cooking pots and bowls, especially a cylindrical cooking pot with flat base, irregular hole-mouth rim, and vertical sides that may taper slightly upwards. Petrographic and neutron activation analyses have sourced the clay from this ware to the Negev and southern Jordan. Often, mat impressions are found on the base of these wares, probably from being dried on wool and goat-hair textiles. Similar to wares produced locally in the Early Bronze II, Early Bronze IV, and the Early Islamic, these wares appear through much of the Southern Levantine Drylands during the Iron I and Iron II (Tebes 2006b: 96-97; Saidel and Haiman 2014: 103). Notably, the greatest concentration and variety of Iron Age Negev Ware appears in the central Negev, indexing this area as the geographic core of the production and distribution of these vessels. In the central Negev as a whole, the wheel-made pottery – usually closed forms – dominates. Some scholars assume that this represents a colonization of the region by northern sedentists. However, the relative proportions of wheel-made wares and Negev ware vary widely by site. Furthermore, Negev Ware ‘cooking kraters’ are more frequent than wheel-made cooking vessels, likely reflecting a closer adherence to indigenous foodways (Tebes 2006b: 99). Thus, Juan Manuel Tebes recently suggested that we consider the early first millennium BCE central Negev ceramic repertoire in light of this inclination for adopting commonly known regional ceramic styles, rather than developing indigenous styles (Tebes 2006b: 106-108). This practice of appropriation is already well known in later periods in the Southern Levantine Drylands. In the first millennium CE, ceramics associated with mobile pastoral activities are largely classified in the traditions of sedentary communities – Nabataean and Early Roman (ca. 1-300 CE), Byzantine (ca. 300-640 CE), and Early Islamic (ca. 640-800 CE), reflecting the direct appropriation of ceramics by mobile pastoral communities. As in earlier periods, these assemblages tended to be more modest in number and limited in repertoire than in comparison to the Southern Levant, and there is little evidence of the development of indigenous traditions (Rosen 2009a: 65-68).

Thus, we may see the second millennium-first millennium BCE transition in the Southern Levantine Drylands as particularly liminal in a temporal sense. This is a land on the cusp of great changes and a radical re-orientation of traditional lifeways, a land of innovation and transformation. Consequently, this period may particularly demonstrate how mobile pastoralist communities in a marginal and liminal landscape may both experience great change and provoke great change in other communities. Frachetti suggests precisely this for the Bronze Age Eurasian pastoral communities, that their mobility and geography positions them as arbiters of change and innovation for contiguous sedentary communities (2008: 1-7). In the Southern Levantine Drylands, the domestication of the camel and associated technologies amongst mobile pastoral communities allowed for greater mobility and connectivity between sedentary communities and a dramatic increase in the flows of materials and phenomena between these communities. This is liminality as change and transition, liminality and marginality as integral to innovation and invention.

3.6. Contextualizing the Palimpsest Landscape - Senses of Liminality in a Landscape of Movement

To the untrained eye, the Southern Levantine Drylands may appear deceptively stark and empty, a vast, lifeless, unchanging horizon. Indeed, the ancient textual sources often painted such a portrait. However, thousands of years of archaeological remains, often still visible today, attest to quite another picture. This is a sedimented landscape, a palimpsest, where multiple communities inscribed and constituted themselves over many millennia. Many of these communities largely subsisted on a flexible patchwork of pastoralism, foraging and limited agriculture, trade, and mining framed within punctuated and cyclical movements of pilgrimage across the landscape. These are communities of resilience, movement, and innovation.

In this chapter, I sought to explore these communities and their entangled relationships with the landscape and each other through meshworking and networking metaphors. In meshworking, I explored flows of phenomena and movement on a macro-scale, analyzing similarities and continuities across a vast landscape. This demonstrated how the visible past interacted with ways of seeing in and of this landscape and how communities may construct memory and identity from this visible past. I suggest that the movement of mobile pastoral communities through this visible past generated various communities of memory in a landscape of pilgrimage, allowing these communities to access and wield ritual power over and through the land. Egyptian visual elements were appropriated to this landscape of pilgrimage and the senses of ritual of indigenous communities, imbuing the land with an even greater sense of power. In networking, I focused on certain segments, nodes, and confluences in the meshwork, exploring connectivity at multiple intensities and orientations. I described certain regional and temporal trends, often linked to interaction with Egypt and the Southern Levant. These included a broad segmenting between northern and southern spheres, possible east-west migratory movements, and the rise of gateway communities in certain periods. In so doing, I drew attention to ways in which movement is funneled, concentrated, constrained, and bounded, the manipulation of movement as power.

These movements are facilitated through the meshwork of roads, the places between places, continuously inscribed lines on the landscape that both dramatically altered the landscape, but are rendered invisible by their ubiquity. These roads both index power over the land and the role of movement in wielding that power. Mobile pastoral communities used these roads to claim this land and to move the materials that other communities used to generate and wield their own powers. Thus, mobile pastoral communities wielded a certain power over these communities, a power directly linked to movement and transitioning.

Even as they moved, indigenous communities were rooted in the land through liminalities of movement, transition, ambiguity, and power. They drew on the potency of always being in the 'inbetween' to generate and maintain senses of self, community, and a deeply held past. The particulars of these were always in flux and each community would experience and express these particulars in diverse ways. As the Iron Age began, the rise of the domesticated camel and associated technologies both radically altered and more firmly entrenched certain senses of liminality. Thus, we may envision the second-first millennium BCE transition and the early first millennium BCE as a particularly potent period in the Southern Levantine Drylands, in which increasing interaction with other communities redefined and re-inscribed the land as liminal and powerful. As the first millennium BCE progressed, these senses of liminality also intersected with the rise of the Assyrian Empire and its particular, region-specific methods for

asserting hegemony over the Southern Levant. This is essential context for understanding senses of ritual later in the Iron Age at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit. In the next chapter, I will explore how this context may inform our understanding of these often discussed but poorly understood sites.

Chapter 4: Ritual on the Rural Road – Empire, Connectivity, and Senses of Liminality in the Late Iron II Southern Levantine Drylands

Entangled connectivity, movement, and multiple, overlapping, and conflicting senses of liminality continue to characterize the Southern Levantine Drylands in the early first millennium BCE. As in previous millennia, multiple mobile communities rotate through the land in a meshwork of pilgrimage, metallurgy, trade, and pastoralism. Some of these communities also engage in limited agriculture in the semi-arid fringes, where flows of material and people are funneled through multiple and fluctuating gateway communities (or sites of intra-action). However, these flows shift in fundamental ways as a new meshwork of empire is super-imposed on the drylands, radically altering movement and generating new ways of seeing.

Roads play a significant role in the entangling of these meshworks, both shaping and shaped by the land and those who traveled along the roads. Just as these roads provided a sense of continuity to local communities enmeshed in pilgrimage and the visible past, they also provided access and opportunity for change, the capillaries through which phenomena could recursively impact the Southern Levantine Drylands. In the Iron Age (1200-600 BCE), several interrelated phenomena – the large-scale intensification of the copper mining industry, the domestication of the camel, the adoption of the tent by mobile pastoral communities, the expansion of the Arabian incense trade, and the increasing hegemony of the Assyrian Empire – entangle the drylands within the greater ancient Near East and Mediterranean in new and profound ways. The ancient web of roads (pilgrimage paths) crisscrossing the drylands renders this entangling conceivable (possibly even inevitable) to certain communities. These roads, both inter-places and intra-places, are the conduit for continuity and change in a liminal landscape.

In this context, roadside ritual acquires a keen potency. In one sense, this potency is ancient, the power of roads and roadside ritual in an abiding meshwork of pilgrimage entangled within a liminal landscape, a potency generated by millennia of tradition and multiple, overlapping senses of liminality. However, as new communities, materials, and ideas transform this landscape in the Iron Age, roadside ritual begins to take on an especially acute significance as sites of intra-action at the confluence of continuity and innovation. I suggest that Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit index this confluence. Furthermore, I suggest that a comparison of these two sites within their specific temporal and spatial contexts may shed light on how this confluence developed between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Kuntillet 'Ajrūd, dated to the eighth century BCE, demonstrates certain trends in the northeastern Sinai/northwestern Negev (Fig. D.1) on the cusp of imperial domination or its immediate aftermath. This site provides insight into the ways that some communities in the more remote parts of the drylands negotiated this changing world through ritual and interaction. In contrast, Ḥorvat Qitmit, dated to the seventh century BCE, reflects trends in the northern Negev (Fig. D.1) network of settlements under the established domination of the Assyrians or their proxies. This site illuminates the role of ritual and interaction in more integrated region radically altered by Assyrian imperial ambitions and military dominance.

Lastly, ritual nodes like Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit are sites of community. The rituals performed in these places constituted shifting and ephemeral communities among their participants. Those who participated in these rituals likely identified with a number of a diverse and perhaps conflicting communities. However, their participation in ritual at these sites inducted

them into the community of the site, entangling local and non-local communities within the meshwork of the Southern Levantine Drylands and each other, even if they never meet.

In the following discussion, I outline the meshworks and networks that were specific to the Southern Levantine Drylands in the Iron II, especially in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Then, I analyze and compare Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as emplaced ritual nodes in these meshworks/networks and how the elements of ritual at each site recursively interacted with the landscape, visibility, movement, connectivity, and liminality. Finally, I explore the significance of roadside ritual in the late Iron II Southern Levantine Drylands, drawing on comparisons between these sites and a roadside ritual site in central Jordan, Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13 (WT-13). In this comparison, I suggest that sites of roadside ritual are highly idiosyncratic. However, these sites share a common element of drawing on multiple senses of liminality to evoke protection against human and suprahuman dangers.

4.1. The Meshwork of Empire

In the Iron Age II (1000-600 BCE), the Southern Levant is increasingly defined by the hegemony of Assyria.¹ Beginning with the reign of Adad-Nirari III (r. 811-783 BCE), kings in Assyria instituted military campaigns that gradually brought the Southern Levant within the Assyrian matrix during the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Concurrently, the Southern Levant segmented into regionally defined small-scale polities of varying levels of centralization and complexity – the “Phoenician”² cities and their environs on the northern coast, Philistia on the southern coastal plain, Israel in the northern interior valleys and highlands west of the Jordan River, Judah in the southern interior valleys and highlands west of the Jordan River, Ammon and Moab on the northern and central plateaus east of the Jordan River, and Edom south of the Wadi al-Ḥasa. However, the economic and territorial ambitions of Assyria affected the degree to which these polities and their peoples expressed identity and autonomy. For example, the coastal areas were organized more loosely as confederations of city-states, while the inland areas tended more toward centralization in a capital city. However, this centralization occurred unevenly and largely in dialogue with Assyria (Aubet 2014; Bagg 2013; Bienkowski 2014; Ben-Shlomo 2014a; Boyes 2012; Feldman 2014; 2016; Finkelstein 2013; 2014; Hardin 2014; Hitchcock and Maier 2013; Hodos 2009; Killebrew 2014; Mazzoni 2014; Porter 2016; Sader 2014; Shai 2006; Shavit 2008; Steiner 2014; Süter 2010; 2011; Thareani 2016; Woolmer 2011; Younker 2014).

Recently, Ariel Bagg characterized Assyrian imperial ambitions in the Southern Levant, as an “empire without a mission,” that is, an empire based on maximum profit with minimum infrastructural investments (2013: 129, 131). Like the Roman Empire, the Assyrians dominated a

¹ In the ninth century BCE, a polity centralized in Damascus may have extended its control over parts of the Southern Levant, especially Israel. However, the extent and impact of Damascene hegemony is currently unclear. The Hebrew Bible records a series of battles between kings of Israel and Judah and kings of Damascus. Some of these texts may imply that Israel became a client-polity to Damascus (1 Kgs 15: 16-22 [2 Chr. 16:1-6]; 1 Kgs 20, 22; 2 Kgs 6:24-7:20; 2 Kgs 8: 7-15; 2 Kgs 8:29-29; 2 Kgs 10; 2 Kgs 13:3-7, 22-25; 2 Kgs 15:37, 16:5-9, Isa. 7:1-9). Other sources for this polity are thin. Neo-Assyrian inscriptions from Shalmaneser III, Adad-Nirari III, and Tiglath-Pileser III record military campaigns against kings in Damascus. Aramaic inscriptions also occasionally refer to these kings (Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995; Finkelstein 2014: 99, 101; Pitard 1987: 81-192).

² Phoenicia/n is a later term used by the Greeks to refer to a cluster of cities along the central and Southern Levantine coast (modern Lebanon and northern Israel) and their inhabitants. Biblical sources refer to these communities by the specific names of the cities – Tyrians (Tyre), Sidonians (Sidon). Neo-Assyrian sources refer to these cities with the determinatives for city and land, sometimes within the same document. There is currently no evidence for how these communities may have self-identified (Hodos 2009: 223-224).

substantial portion of the known world, experienced cycles of rise and decline, and stabilized through the consolidation of the periphery. However, unlike the Romans, the Assyrians were not interested in the systematized cultural and infrastructural integration of the periphery into the Assyrian world. Rather, vassal states were only converted into administrative provinces if their continuing independence became a threat to Assyrian hegemony. Furthermore, neither vassal states nor provinces were systematically acculturated by Assyria (Bagg 2013: 129-132). Similarly, Mario Liverani characterizes the Assyrians in the Middle Euphrates as a “network empire,” in which Assyrian domination is imagined as “a network of communication over which material goods are carried,” rather than a spread of land (1988: 86). Alexander Fantalkin and Oren Tal refine this concept for the Southern Levant in their analysis of fortifications at Tell Qudadi on the mouth of the Yarkon River. They contextualize this fortress within a network of roads and river settlements that provided the land-locked Assyria with access to the Mediterranean Sea. In this, they characterize Assyrian strategy as “formatting... fragmented landscapes into coherent units, within the framework of intentionally created landscape, serving a much more complicated imperial network” (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 22).

In the Southern Levant, the Assyrians employed a variety of strategies to attain and maintain domination, including annexation, deportation, military occupation, tribute payments, and collaboration with local proxies (Singer Avitz 1999: 6-8; Thareani 2016: 79-80, 88). For example, Assyrian strategies for maintaining control varied along the coast, from the direct annexation of city-states on the northern coast to the indirect subordination of cities on the southern coast. Military occupation is most visible south of the Yarkon River. However, fortresses along the central coast feature more local architecture and material culture than fortresses further south, implying that these sites may have been manned by local client-polity garrisons, rather than Assyrian garrisons (Fantalkin and Tal 2015: 23; Thareani 2016: 93-95).

In the late eighth century BCE, the Assyrians began their assault on the most southern part of the coast near the borderlands of Egypt. According to Summary Inscription 4, Tiglath-Pileser III conquered Gaza in 734 BCE and established an emporium in the city, from which he received all matter of elite and exotic goods (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 106; Appendix B.2.4). Following the campaign to Gaza, Tiglath-Pileser III also assumes control of the towns and peoples “who are on the border of the west]ern [lands]... whose country is remote,” appointing Idibi’ilu, who is elsewhere associated with indigenous Arab mobile pastoral communities, as the “gatekeeper... facing/in front of Egypt” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 107, 122; Appendix B.2.4). He also erects a royal image in the town of the “Brook of Egypt” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 127; Appendix B.2.6). In Assyrian terms, this image acted as a material signature of the oath sworn by vassals to the Assyrian king and indexed Assyrian hegemony in the region (Yamada 2000: 296-297). Later, Sargon II claims to have “opened the sealed h[arb]or (k[?r]u) of Egypt, mingled Assyrians and Egyptians together and made them trade with each other” (Gadd 1954: 179; Na’aman 2004: 63; Appendix B.2.12). Similarly, Sargon and Esarhaddon also record making military campaigns and political appointments in the Brook of Egypt region (Fuchs 1998: 28; Gadd 1954: 199-200; Leichty 2011: 18, 29, 37, 77, 87, 135, 155, 158, 175; Na’aman 2004: 62; Appendix B.2.10,11, 24-26, 29-31, 33-37). These textual references are visible archaeologically as direct military occupation at Tel Abu Salima and Ruqeish. Tell Abu Salima, located between Rafah and the Wadi el-Arish (Fig. D.1), features Assyrian fortifications and an Assyrian temple. Ruqeish, a coastal site about 7.5 kilometers south of Wadi Gaza/Naḥal Besor, is characterized by fortifications and mudbrick platforms typical of Assyrian architecture. Both

sites are identified as the possible location of Sargon II's "sealed harbor" (Oren 1993a: 1391-92; 1993b: 1293-1294; Oren 1993c: 103-104; Reich 1984; Thareani 2016: 95).

These texts also suggest that access to trade and commodities primarily drove Assyrian policy in the region, similar to their dealings with Edom and local Arab communities in the late eighth-seventh centuries BCE. Tiglath-Pileser III records receiving camels and aromatics from the "queen of the Arabs" and the town dwellers and kins-peoples "who are on the border of the western lands, whom none (of my predecessors) had known about and whose country is remote" (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 48, 59, 70, 11-18, 86-87, 106-107; Appendix B.2.2-4, 6).

Sennacherib and Esarhaddon also occasionally list camels and aromatics, usually from Arab communities, amongst their tribute payments (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 28, 232; Leichty 2011: 19, 30-31, 42-43, 49-50, 78, 88, 180; Appendix B.2.14, 23, 24, 28). Similarly, Edom is mentioned in lists of tribute payments by Adad-Nirari III, Tiglath-Pileser III, Sennacherib, and Assurbanipal (Borger 1996: 18, 63; Fales and Postgate 1995: 4; Grayson and Novotny 2012: 64, 114, 131, 175, 192; Tadmor 1973: 148; Kuan 2016: 82-83; Tadmor 1973: 148; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122-123; Appendix B.2.1, 5, 7, 15-21, 39).

However, archaeological evidence for Assyrian domination in the rest of the drylands is less visible. In the northeastern Sinai, Iron Age activity appears at an oasis on the Wadi el-Qudeirat, a site within proximity of the Darb al-Ghaza, the later name of a road leading from Gaza to the Red Sea. Tell el-Qudeirat features unfortified settlements in its earlier strata, possibly dating to the twelfth-early eighth centuries BCE. In the late eighth century BCE, a rectangular fortress with eight towers (Fig. D.38) was built over the remains of these settlements. The excavators of the site interpreted its late Iron II strata as representing two different fortresses, one in the late eighth century BCE and another in the late seventh-sixth centuries BCE. However, other scholars prefer to interpret these strata as multiple phases of construction and renovation of a single fortress continuously occupied from the late eighth century BCE to the late seventh or early sixth centuries BCE. In either case, this fortress lacks distinctive Assyrian architecture or other evidence of direct Assyrian involvement. Furthermore, this site is somewhat unique in its layout and construction. Interpretations vary accordingly. The excavators identify this installation as a Judean administrative center, featuring a sizable contingent of local mobile pastoral communities. However, others prefer to interpret the site as a fortress, commissioned by the Assyrians to facilitate control of the Darb al-Ghaza, and staffed by garrisons from Assyrian client polities, perhaps mainly from Judah (Cohen and Bernick-Greenburg 2007: 1-2, 9-17; Finkelstein 2010: 119-123; 2014; Na'aman 1991: 48-49; Ussishkin 1995).

Similarly, sites in the northern Negev valleys (Fig. D.70) lack evidence of direct imperial involvement. Major settlements appear at Tel 'Ira (Khirbet Ghara), Tel Malhata (Tell el-Milh), Tel 'Aroer (Khirbet 'Ar'ara), and probably also beneath the modern city of Beersheba (Bir e-Saba'). Some of these communities may appear as early as the tenth or ninth century BCE,³ and some are only established in the eighth century BCE. Other sites include an administrative center at Tel Beer-Sheba⁴ (Tell e-Seba'), a fortress at Tel Arad, a heavy scattering of small agricultural

³ Finkelstein identifies these earlier Iron II settlements at Tel Beer-Sheba' (Stratum V) and Tel Arad (Stratum XI) as a Judean expansion under the vassalage of Damascus in the second half of the ninth century BCE (2014: 99).

⁴ The mound known today as Tel Beer-Sheba' (also spelled Tel Beer Sheva, Tell e-Seba' in Arabic) lies four kilometers to the east of the modern city of Beersheba and was identified as the biblical city of Beersheba by Leonard Wooley and T.E. Lawrence in their 1914 survey and also by the excavator of the site, Yohanan Aharoni. However, this identification is unclear as archaeological remains have been found in and around the modern city of Beersheba from the Iron Age and other periods. The site of the modern city was also a center for activity for local

or production sites, and a burial ground at Khirbet Za'ak. Some of these sites are destroyed or partially destroyed at the end of the eighth century BCE, presumably in the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE. However, the major settlements recover and flourish through the seventh century BCE. At this time, a series of fortifications appear at Ḥorvat 'Anim, Ḥorvat 'Uza (Khirbet Ghazza), Ḥorvat Radum (Khirbet umm-Radim), and Ḥorvat Tov. A small occupation (the nature of which is somewhat unclear) also appears near the abandoned remains at Tel Masos. Iron II ceramics are also recorded at an unexcavated settlement near Ḥorvat 'Uza and at three unexcavated settlements in the northwestern Beersheba Valley – Tel Shoqet (Tell as-Saqati), Ḥorvat Hur (Khirbet Haura), and Ḥorvat Yattin. However, the nature and extent of the Iron II at these sites is unclear. Currently, survey and extensive excavation of the northern Negev has not revealed any distinctive Assyrian architecture or other evidence of direct Assyrian involvement. Nevertheless, northern Negev sites often contain artifacts demonstrating Assyrian interaction and influence and feature a highly idiosyncratic mixture of elements, indicating a large degree of heterogeneity and interaction (Beit-Arieh 1995; 1999; 2003b; 2007; Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015; Fritz & Kempinski 1993; Gophna and Yisraeli 1973; Govrin 1991: 17-18, 29-30, 45, 70-71; Herzog 2001; 2002; Meshel 2013; Rösel 1983; Singer-Avitz 1999; Thareani 2007; 2011; 2014).

Assyrian hegemony is perhaps more visible further south. The exact nature of occupation in the central Negev in the late eighth-seventh centuries BCE is still unclear (see Chapter 3: Section 3.5.2). However, an Iron II fortress or fortified settlement appears at En Ḥaseva ('Ain Husb), approximately six or seven kilometers west of the Wadi Arabah. Preliminary publications defined several strata dating approximately to the tenth-sixth centuries BCE. However, due to lack of precise documentation and final publication, the exact chronology and reconstruction of these remains is still unclear and may remain so indefinitely. A cache of ritual artifacts just outside the gate to this fortress or fortified settlement likely represents a ritual depository, which the excavators proposed should be associated with an open-air extramural ritual site. A similar fortress or fortified settlement, dated to the eighth-sixth centuries BCE, appears at a Tell el-Kheleifeh on the eastern side of the Wadi Arabah further south (approximately 500 meters from the modern shoreline of the Gulf of Aqaba). The construction style and techniques of these sites may indicate Assyrian activity in the region, like Tell Abu Salima and Ruqeish on the Mediterranean coast (Ben-Arieh 2011; Cohen 1994; Cohen and Yisrael 1995; Finkelstein 2010: 121; Mussell 2000; Na'aman 1991; Pratico 1993).

Assyrian contact and influence (if not actual direct involvement) may also appear elsewhere in southern Jordan. Like the northern Negev, southern Jordan sees an intensification of occupation in the late eighth-seventh centuries BCE. However, the nature of this settlement differs. Newly-founded sites in the region include fortified settlements at Tall Busayra and Khirbat ad-Dabba, open villages and farms at Tawilan and Khirbat al-Mu'allaq, a fortified farmstead at Ghrareh, the fortress or fortified settlement at Tell el-Kheleifeh, and a series of small mountain-top settlements in the Petra region – Umm al-Biyara, as-Sadeh, Ba'ja III, Jabal

Bedouin prior to the founding of the modern city. Thus, some scholars suggest that biblical Beersheba is more appropriately identified with the remains under the modern city and Tel Beer-Sheba' may be identified as another site, such as Ziklag, Sheba, or Bethel. Others suggest that more than one site may have been called Beersheba, based on similar examples in the Hebrew Bible and the Shoshenq List (Herzog 2016: 1480-1481; Thareani 2007; van der Steen 2013: 34, 134, 176; Woolley and Lawrence 2003: 60). Many scholars often refer to the mound by the shorthand of Beersheba, which causes some confusion. In this dissertation, I refer to the mound specifically as Tel Beer-Sheba', and restrict the term Beersheba to the modern city, its environs, the biblical place, or the Beersheba Valley region.

al-Qseir and Qurrayyat al-Mansur (Bennett and Bienkowski 1995; Bienkowski 2002; 2011; 2013; Hart 1988; Hübner 2004; Lindner and Farajat 1987; Lindner, Farajat and Zeitler 1988; Lindner, Knauf, Zeitler and Hübl 1996; Mussell 2000; Pratico 1993). Tall Busayra (Fig. D.1) features two large complexes on monumental platforms, not unlike the platforms at En Ḥaṣeva, Tell el-Kheleifeh, and Ruqeish. Despite distinct idiosyncrasies in the complexes at Tall Busayra, their overall layout and construction seems to mimic Assyrian architectural forms and may reflect Assyrian influence, if not direct Assyrian involvement (Bienkowski 1995: 140-141; 2002: 57-95; 478-482; Porter 2004: 384-386).⁵ Sites in southern Jordan also contain material culture featuring Assyrian influence or inspiration (Bennett 1981; Crowell 2004: 232-253; Porter 2004; Routledge 1997).

Given the archaeological and textual evidence, several scholars now suggest that the Assyrians imposed a sort of absentee or remote hegemony over certain parts of the drylands, not unlike similar arrangements in this region under the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. In these models, indigenous and local communities remained largely autonomous of Assyrian control. However, they did so through a complex meshwork of collaboration, exchange, and negotiation with the Assyrians, the specifics of which varied between different communities in the drylands (Bienkowski 2002; 2007; 2009; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; Crowell 2004; Porter 2004; Singer-Avitz 1999; Tebes 2006c; 2007a; Thareani 2014; 2016: 95; van der Steen 2004; 2013).

In southwestern Jordan and the Wadi Arabah, shifting kin-based mobile pastoral and mobile agro-pastoral communities loosely consolidated resources and power as “Edom,”⁶ a small-scale client-polity that may have developed as a response to or as a byproduct of Assyrian imperial ambitions. This polity is mentioned in Assyrian and biblical sources (see Chapter 2: Sections 2.3.2; 2.3.3), ostraca at Tel Arad, a seal impression from Umm al-Biyara, and likely also a seal from Babylon (Aharoni 1981: 46-49; 71-74; Lemaire 1987: 68-69; van der Veen 2011: 79-81). Archaeological and textual evidence suggests that Edom was centralized at Tall Busayra, a political and spatial focus that may have emerged from the site acting as a meeting place (pilgrimage site?) between different mobile pastoral communities (see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). However, these communities continued to maintain distinct kin-based identities and traditions that likely superseded the notion of “Edom.” Assyrian interest in this region presumably focused on access to Arabian and Red Sea trade routes, local materials, and a military buffer zone with Egypt. However, the Assyrians did not demand direct involvement in local affairs. Rather, resident communities administered the region, protected the trade routes, and delivered goods to the Assyrians as tribute payments, in exchange for relative autonomy and possibly access to property and prestige goods (Bienkowski 2002; 2007; 2009; 2013; Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; Crowell 2004; Porter 2004; Tebes 2006c; 2007a; 2007b; van der Steen 2004).

⁵ However, Piotr Bienkowski maintains that erecting public buildings on artificial platforms was a general trend throughout Mesopotamia, north Syria and the Levant in the late Iron Age “so there is no need to cite direct Assyrian influence” (2009: 13).

⁶ Given that the term “Edom” appears in sources earlier than the late eighth century BCE, it is not yet clear what relationship these late Iron Age highlands communities may have had to the lowlands communities of the eleventh-ninth centuries BCE. The excavators at Wadi Faynan now suggest continuity between the eighth-sixth century polity called Edom and its Edomites and the earlier activity in the Wadi Faynan, which they describe as the center of a “nomadic pastoral chiefdom,” also called Edom and inhabited by early Edomites (Levy 2008a; 2008b; 2009; Levy and Najjar 2006; Levy, Najjar, and Ben-Yosef 2014; Levy et al 2004).

In the northern Negev and northeastern Sinai, Assyrian interests focused on control of and access to the borderlands of Egypt, Mediterranean Sea trade routes, routes between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, and local materials. However, these interests were dispersed through local communities and the small-scale polity of Judah. Like southwestern Jordan and the Wadi Arabah, indigenous mobile pastoral communities mediated trade in the northeastern Sinai and the Negev and administered the “Brook of Egypt” region as nominal agents of the Assyrian Empire, likely also in exchange for relative autonomy and prestige goods (Tebes 2006c; 2007a, Thareani 2016: 95). Conversely, evidence suggests that Judah, a client-polity of Assyria, administered the northern Negev for Assyria. Similar materials and architecture to sites in Judah dominate the villages and fortresses of this region in the Iron II. Furthermore, some biblical texts include the northern Negev or sites in the region within the borders or purview of Judah (Rainey 1984: 90; c.f. Josh. 15:21-32; 1 Sam. 27: 10). Yifat Thareani suggests that Assyrian military activity also reflects this administrative arrangement. Unlike the near total destruction of the Shephelah (the borderlands between Judah and Philistia) during the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE, the northern Negev experiences markedly less devastation. Most sites remain largely intact or are quickly reconstituted in the early seventh century BCE. According to Thareani, this pattern marks the Assyrian interest in deterring future rebellion from Judah, while maintaining the viability of regional trade routes (2014a: 239-240). Similarly, the addition of fortifications at Ḥorvat Anim, Ḥorvat ‘Uza, Ḥorvat Radum, and Ḥorvat Tov in the seventh century BCE, along with the re-built fortress at Tel Arad, may suggest an Assyrian policy of protecting this region through Judean garrisons and resources, not unlike what Thareani suggests for the central coast (2016: 93-95).

Thus, the evidence in the Sinai-Negev coast, southern Jordan, and the northern Negev denotes that these regions operated within a distinct meshwork of empire in the late eighth-seventh centuries BCE. However, the Assyrians maintained a remote hegemony in these regions, preferring to leave the routine duties of administration to indigenous mobile pastoral communities and local client-polities. Similar policies were often employed by the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Ottoman Empire in this same region (Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001; van der Steen 2004; 2013). This meshwork of empire inscribed the land with new settlement patterns, monumental architecture, and fortifications that became entangled and recursively interacted with the ancient meshworks of pilgrimage, subsistence, memory, and liminality already engraved within the landscape and partially preserved in Assyrian and biblical texts (see Chapter 2: Sections 2.2-2.4; Chapter 3: Section 3.2).

4.2. Networking Communities in a Landscape of Movement

The meshwork of empire recursively interacted with the landscape and indigenous and local communities to foster and control inter-regional networks. In so doing, this meshwork both facilitated and constrained connectivity in the drylands. However, indigenous and local communities also drew on the ancient meshworks of this landscape to generate and cultivate senses of self in the midst of empire. For example, the relative lack of destruction in the northern Negev compared to the Shephelah during the campaign of Sennacherib may also/alternatively demonstrate some very distinct ways of seeing in the late Iron II northern Negev. Unlike sites in the Judean heartland, the villages of the northern Negev feature a significant proportion of materials influenced by, copying, or imported from Egypt, the Mediterranean coast, Philistia, the Red Sea, the Wadi Arabah, southern Jordan, the Arabian Peninsula, and Assyria. The relative

proportions of these materials vary by site, with more Mediterranean and Egyptian materials in the west and more Red Sea, Wadi Arabah, and southern Jordanian materials in the east (Freud 2014; Singer- Avitz 1999; 2014; Tebes 2006c; 2007a, Thareani 2011; 2014). As shown in Chapter 3 (Sections 3.2.1; 3.5), significant material complexity is common to the agro-pastoral northern Negev since the Neolithic, marking this region as a high-contact, intermediary space between Egypt, the Mediterranean coast, and the sedentary Levant. Iron II communities may have (consciously and unconsciously) drawn on ancient traditions of intra-action embedded in this landscape and its history.

Moreover, these communities were likely composed of a blend of mobile pastoral communities of the Sinai-Negev and southern Jordan and immigrant and descendant communities from Judah, Philistia, the coast, and other areas (Tebes 2006c; 2007a; Thareani 2014a: 240-241; 2014b: 192-196). Furthermore, these communities also would have included those who lived at the intersections of various identities. Some may not have understood themselves as primarily “Judean” (whatever that may have meant), nor may they have unanimously or intensely supported the Judean rebellion. Consequently, the Assyrians may not have had to exert the same level of force in the northern Negev as they did in the Shephelah.

The material complexity of the northern Negev also marks these communities as nodes or sites of intra-action in densely entangled networks of movement and interaction through which materials and people of multiple identities and orientations flowed, similar to communities in earlier periods (see Chapter 3: Section 3.5). For example, Lily Singer-Avitz characterizes the late eighth century BCE remains at Tel Beer-Sheba⁷ as a “road station” for trade and a “gateway community” (1999: 55, 60). Tel Beer-Sheba⁷ lies on the Naḥal Beersheba (Wadi e-Saba⁷) in the northwestern Negev, approximately 50 kilometers from the Mediterranean coast (Fig. D.1). The site features a planned layout with uniform construction methods and a significant density of agricultural storehouses and administrative buildings (Fig. D.21). While certain aspects of the layout appear in earlier strata,⁷ the storehouses are specific to Strata III-II and suggest that Tel Beer-Sheba⁷ served as a major administrative center for the collection and distribution of grains in the late eighth century BCE. Like other northern Negev sites, Tel Beer-Sheba⁷ is dominated by materials and architecture with similarities to sites in Judah. However, the site also features a considerable variety of ceramics and small finds influenced by, copying, or imported from Egypt, the coast, southern Jordan, the Arabian Peninsula, and Assyria (Singer-Avitz 1999: 12, 44, 58; 2004a; 2007; 2010; Thareani 2007: 70, 73). Singer-Avitz attributes the significant variety in ceramics and small finds to the burgeoning incense trade with the Arabian Peninsula. She identifies the site as a major thoroughfare for this trade, in which traveling merchants could re-supply their grain and other goods on their way to and from the markets on the coast (Singer-Avitz 1999: 54-60).

While trade certainly played a substantial role at Tel Beer-Sheba⁷, we might complicate this model by considering these materials in light of the earlier gateway communities at Tel Arad and Tel Masos (see Chapter 3: Section 3.5). Thus, we may envision Tel Beer-Sheba⁷ as an intersection of multiple, overlapping, and conflicting communities and a node through which materials, communities, and power were funneled. However, this channeling occurred within a highly developed network of settlements under the directive of the Assyrian empire, via proxies in Judah and local communities in the northern Negev and Sinai. Similarly, Finkelstein proposes

⁷ Due to limited excavation, it is unclear how the settlement appeared in earlier strata. However, the outlines of the city wall, the location of the gate, the circular street, and water system are visible in Stratum V, dated to the ninth century BCE (Finkelstein 2015: 99; Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2016; Singer-Avitz 1999: 58).

that the early Assyrian campaigns along the Sinai-Negev coast suggest a reorganization of southern trade that transferred the main trade route from the Darb al-Ghaza to the Beersheba Valley and southwestern Jordan. Thereafter, the Assyrians (or their proxies) established fortresses at En Ḥaṣeva and Tell el-Kheleifeh and an administrative center at Busayra to better funnel these movements as they saw fit (2015: 101). Additionally, Tel Beer-Sheba⁷ was never rebuilt after its destruction in the campaign of Sennacherib (unlike other sites in the northern Negev). This is likely related to Assyrian administrative changes to this network following the Judean rebellion (Finkelstein 2014: 101; Thareani 2007: 73-75). Thus, we may also understand these sites as nodes in the Assyrian imperial network and dense sites of intra-action in the flow of phenomena in the drylands.

4.3. Networking at Ritual Nodes

Similarly, we may also envision Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as emplaced nodes or sites of intra-action in the flow of phenomena of a liminal landscape. However, these sites are smaller, concentrated hubs of ritual, likely with few permanent inhabitants. As sites of roadside ritual, these nodes acted as potent landmarks of multiple, overlapping senses of liminality for diverse communities in the drylands. These communities channeled the power of these liminalities through ritual practice at these sites in order to wield the potency of the land for their own benefit. These rituals employed a diverse array of traditions, blending ancient ways of seeing with the realities of the contemporary world and allowing these communities to navigate a dangerous and unforgiving landscape. Consequently, we might broadly understand the nature of both sites within the long tradition of pilgrimage/meeting sites used by mobile pastoral communities in the drylands for millennia. These pilgrimage/meeting sites served as foci of pilgrimage and ritual, water sources, meeting places for governing and legal decisions, and markets for associated communities (McCorriston 2011: 58-84; Van der Veen 2013: 236-237, 240; see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1).

However, each site also operated within a specific temporal and spatial context, indicating contemporary realities in different parts of the Southern Levantine Drylands and shifts in those realities between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Kuntillet 'Ajrūd was built on a roadside in an isolated and remote area of the Sinai in the eighth century BCE, a time in which the Assyrians progressively came to dominate more and more of the Southern Levant. Until the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon along the Sinai-Negev coast and Sennacherib in the northern Negev in the late eighth century BCE, the Assyrian menace remained distant, perhaps even abstract, for most communities in the drylands. Thus, we should understand Kuntillet 'Ajrūd within the context of a land on the cusp/in transition, as a ritual site funneling and concentrating potent senses of liminality derived from and generated by a marginal and sacred landscape, its lone position along roadways, its material complexity, and its idiosyncratic architecture featuring nested thresholds, multiple orientations, and allusions to gates and fortresses. Conversely, Ḥorvat Qitmit lay within the seventh century BCE northern Negev agro-pastoral network of settlements, a ritual node in the Assyrian meshwork of empire, funneling and concentrating potent senses of liminality derived from and generated by a marginal and sacred landscape, its position alongside a major roadway near major settlements, its material complexity, and its idiosyncratic architecture featuring a mixture of sedentary and mobile traditions, astronomical or landscape alignments, potent visibilities, and less constrained movements.

In the following discussion, I emplace each site within its drylands context and the context of their contemporary worlds, focusing on how ritual recursively interacted with landscape, the region, and the era. I suggest that we may understand the particular confluence of materials, liminalities, and communities at these sites through a meticulous consideration of the ritual elements of each site and how these elements interacted with each other, the larger context of the sites, and their place in the Southern Levantine Drylands.

4.3.1. Kuntillet 'Ajrûd

The archaeological remains of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd are located on the western end of a prominent flat-topped hill (435 meters above sea level) in the northeastern area of the central Sinai (Old Israel Grid 0948 9554, UTM 6377 3404), now approximately 24 kilometers from the modern border between Egypt and Israel. The chalk hill, containing veins of gypsum, lies on a large nearly flat expanse of *hamada* (Meshel 2012: 3; Figs. D.24; D.26; Chapter 2: Section 2.1). Several undated zoomorphic and circular geoglyphs are visible on this *hamada* to the north of the site (Meshel 2012: XVIII-XIX; Fig. D.25).⁸ The Wadi Quraiya winds around the south, 25 meters below the summit. A series of five shallow wells lie to the west (Meshel 2012: 3; Fig. D.23). The site also likely lies at the crossroads of up to three or more ancient roadways. The Darb al-Ghaza runs in a N-S direction, fifteen kilometers to the east of the site, but may have run closer to the site in the Iron Age. The Wadi Quraiya served as a natural E-W route through the terrain and another route may be traced down into the southern Sinai (Meshel 1978: 50; 2000: 103-104; 2012: 3, Fig. D.22). The closest contemporary settlement may lie at Tell el-Qudeirat, 50 kilometers to the north (Finkelstein 2010: 118-119; contra Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 4-13).

The final publication and select recent analyses of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd place the construction of the site in the early eighth century BCE (Meshel 2012; Finkelstein 2015; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2008; Freud 2008; Ornan 2016). However, Lily Singer-Avitz recently suggested down-dating the site to the late eighth century BCE, based on a re-appraisal of the ceramics, architectural similarities with Tell el-Qudeirat, historical considerations, and problems with the radiocarbon evidence (2006; 2009).⁹ This difference in chronology significantly impacts their interpretations of who built and occupied Kuntillet 'Ajrûd. Those who prefer the early eighth century BCE interpret the site as Israelite outpost (perhaps under the vassalage of Damascus). Singer-Avitz interprets the site as an Assyrian outpost, perhaps staffed by local and/or Judean communities (Finkelstein 2014: 101; Mandell 2012: 132; Meshel 2012: 69; Ornan 2016: 6, 22, Singer Avitz 2006: 213; See Introduction: Section I.IV.I).

In the final publication, Ze'ev Meshel divided the architecture into two complexes: Building A to the west and a Building B to the east (Figs. D.27; D.28). Building A includes a

⁸ Meshel refers to these images as “gravel drawings” and does not specify their exact location in the Kuntillet 'Ajrûd publication. In a list of sites surveyed along branches of the Darb al-Ghaza and vicinity published in 2000, Meshel uses similar terminology to refer to two other sites – Site 9 and Site 16, approximately twenty to thirty kilometers northwest of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd. Site 9 is characterized as the “Chariots of the gods” style (and the accompanying photograph does not match the photograph in the Kuntillet 'Ajrûd publication). No description is provided of the images at Site 16 (2000: 112).

⁹ Several scholars attempted to refute Singer-Avitz with re-assessments of the radiocarbon evidence through quantitative analysis and addressing select issues in her ceramics analysis (Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2008; Freud 2008). However, these responses did little to engage with the problems in data gathering and methodology that Singer-Avitz observed, which she remarked upon in her response (2009). See Introduction, Section I.IV.I.

single rectangular structure and an open stove on a low saddle at the western extremity of the hill (L94), nearly 20 meters from the rectangular structure. Building B is a complex of structures and features positioned on either side of a mud-plastered pathway (L151), approximately 2.5 meters wide (Meshel 2012: 11-15). According to the excavators, the site was abandoned under unclear circumstances. After its closure, a series of earthquakes and fires swept through the site, damaging some parts of the site more than others. Additionally, severe erosion along the edges of the summit destroyed parts of the site, especially elements of the Building B complex (Meshel and Goren 2012: 11, 15, 26, 31, 37, 46, 48, 53-59; Meshel 2012: 66).

4.3.1.1. Building B

Meshel's presentation of the site emphasizes the better preserved Building A and most interpretations of the site also focus on this area (Meshel 1978; 1979; Meshel and Goren 2012: 16-52). However, the Building B complex (Fig. D.29) formed the entryway (Fig. D.27) to the site (Meshel 1978; 1992: 106; Zevit 2001: 370, 375). Consequently, this complex was an area of liminal potency that funneled and constrained movement into and through the rest of the site. Therefore, its significance in understanding the site is immense.

Meshel and Goren refer to the areas north and south of the mud-plastered pathway as the Northern Wing and Southern Wing, respectively. Erosion on the edge of the summit destroyed parts of structures in both the Northern and Southern Wings, and little remained of a wide thick-walled structure in the Southern Wing. A lack of rubble in this area led Meshel to conclude that these structures were unroofed and stood only two or three courses high, with "only the doorjambs reaching their full height" (2012: 12). However, Meshel and Goren also state that many of the stones in the Building B complex were "in a fully disintegrated state even before excavations began" (2012: 53). Given the visibility of the site, the evidence for looting, and this area's position as the entryway for the site, it also seems likely that some stonework may have been salvaged by later communities and passersby (Meshel and Goren 2012: 12-13, 53, 56).

The Southern Wing contains a square-like stone platform (W51), an "open-air courtyard" (L166, L170), a wide thick-walled structure (L168), and a basin feature (L167). The stone platform (W51; Fig. D.30) occupies the northeastern portion of the complex and would have been the first structure encountered on entering the site. Preserved to a height of 70-80 centimeters above the surface, Meshel and Goren describe the platform as a "solidly built mass of stones" (2012: 57). Remains of white plaster over mud plaster survived on the flanks of the platform. A sounding (L165) on the western side of W51 revealed that the platform was built on a thin layer of ash and straw overlying the bedrock. Meshel and Goren identify this material as evidence for "some kind of activity conducted in this area during the construction of the building or prior to it" (2012: 57). They draw a similar conclusion related to material in another locus (L170) in the southern wing, but do not speculate any further. A mud-plastered wall (W47) appears immediately southwest and parallel to the platform. The narrow corridor (L164) between the platform and this wall contained collapse comprised of broken stones, a few sherds, and pieces of white plaster on a patch of mud-plaster floor (Meshel and Goren 2012: 57-58).

Stone or mudbrick platforms are a common feature at ritual sites in the Southern Levant and may appear in either interior or exterior spaces. In temples, large stone platforms are often found in central courtyards. They likely facilitated offering rituals, which may or may not have included burning (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 81-200; Dever 1999; Dolan 2007: 114-115; Edelman 2010: 91; Hundley 2013: 116-117, 119; Petit and Kafafi 2016: 22; Zevit 2001: 298-306). Meshel

and Goren identify W51 as a *bamah* (often translated as “high place”), a biblical term for a ritual installation that scholars sometimes identify as an open-air platform (2012: 58, 66; Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 161-169; LaRocca-Pitts 2001: 127-159; Zevit 2001: 262-263).

In the Levant, gates and walls in ritual architecture often rigidly distinguished between divine and human spheres, by segmenting and controlling access to spaces (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 127, 129; Hundley 2013: 119-124). Platforms in outdoor spaces constituted the most visible act of ritual in the Southern Levant, allowing for the witness of ritual by gods, ritual officiants, and the laity alike. Consequently, these features constituted larger and more diverse ritual communities and greater access to ritual power. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, platforms often appear in the agro-pastoral settlements and associated sites in the high-contact intermediary fringes of the northern Negev and southern Jordan, likely indicating the flow of humans and practices into the drylands and the appropriation of these practices by local communities (Amiran et al 1978: 40; Beit-Arieh 1995: 13-14; 2007: 31; Herzog 2002: 53-56). In the mobile pastoral ritual traditions of the drylands (in which all communal ritual was performed in open-air settings), these platforms and their associated practices provided a common ritual language with non-local and more sedentary communities, allowing for intra-action and the generation of new traditions and practices.

At Kuntillet 'Ajrūd, the position of such a platform at the literal threshold of the site marks the intra-active flow between liminality, ritual, and visibility. The rituals performed at this platform would have been visible to anyone on the plateau, both within and without the site. Moreover, these rituals were visible to the gods, the sky, and the cosmos. The rituals performed while utilizing this platform also drew on multiple, nesting, overlapping liminalities of the potencies of an architectural threshold in a highly visible site embedded in a meshwork of pilgrimage and a liminal landscape. If visitors accessed the site at the appropriate times, these rituals were their first and possibly primary experience of the sanctity of the site.

The features associated with the platform in the Southern Wing may hint further at the significance of this area in a ritual context. An opening in Wall W47 was reconstructed as roughly in line with the western edge of the platform. Meshel and Goren identified the area south of this wall as an open-air courtyard (L166, L170). However, its southeastern boundary was lost to erosion and the relationship between the two loci and a nearby wall (W45) is unclear (Meshel and Goren 2012: 58). Just below the surface, a heterogeneous layer approximately 20 centimeters thick appeared directly over a purported occupation level. It contained broken stone, sherds, worked wood, a few olive and date pits, fifteen pebbles, and a dark ash that colored everything black. The western half of this courtyard (L170) also featured a similar layer approximately 20 centimeters below the occupation level, near the entrance to a wide, thick-walled structure (L168), containing branches, straw, patches of ash, a few date pits, and a piece of rope. Meshel and Goren cite this material as further evidence “of activity that took place here prior to, or during the construction of Building B” (2012: 58-59). The entrance of the wide, thick-walled structure (L168) featured a narrow threshold, raised and paved with three stones. The southern portion of this structure was entirely lost to erosion. The preserved interior measured approximately 4 x 3 meters and contained patches of mud plaster and gypsum plaster flooring. The partially preserved thick walls (W44, W46, W49, W50) also showed traces of mud plaster and gypsum plaster. A basin feature (L167) appeared on the southwestern side of the entrance to Structure L168, wedged between W44 and W45. This feature contained two gypsum plastered basins in a row, separated by a narrow stone gypsum-plastered partition (Fig. D.31). The northern basin measured approximately 40 x 40 centimeters, with a depth of 30 centimeters.

The southern basin, also 30 centimeters deep, widened to the south, with a maximum width of one meter. A narrow gap filled with broken stone (W44a) appeared between the basins and W44. Two coats of plaster on W45 may indicate an association with the basin feature (Meshel and Goren 2012: 57-59).

This area is more difficult to interpret due to poor preservation and a relative dearth of artifacts. However, a few features are notable. Plastered basins are another common feature of Southern Levantine ritual sites. They likely index liquid-based rituals, such as the pouring of libations (Edelman 2010: 89-90; Zevit 2001: 147). At Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, the position of these basins next to the entrance of L168 marks a close association between these basins and this structure. Furthermore, the close spatial association between the platform, the “open-air courtyard,” the basins, and the thick-walled structure (L168, W44, W46, W49, W50) indicates a series of related practices. Movement through these features is funneled through a bent-axis approach between the platform (W51) and the wide thick-walled structure (L168). The thickness of the walls of L168 are comparable to the tower rooms in Building A, perhaps indicating a similar or related function. The entrance to this structure (L168) is oriented toward the southeast, facing away from the site and highly visible to/from the rest of the plateau and the land, which may index rituals associated with the rising sun.

This orientation is especially notable when compared to the so-called Northern Wing, a single stone broadroom (L159, L153, L154) on the northern side of the mud-plastered pathway (Fig. D.32). The entrance features two raised gypsum-plastered thresholds (L155, L163) divided by a pilaster-like wall segment (Fig. D.33) and faces the northwest, an orientation that may suggest rituals associated with setting sun. Unfortunately, the exact dimensions of the building are unknown due to erosion at the northern end. However, the narrowness of the gypsum plastered interior space (approximately 4 x 2 meters, including the thresholds) creates a small, intimate space. The double threshold on the long wall of such a small, narrow space produces a portico-like arrangement, suggesting that we might understand this building as a stage for ritual and/or as a niche, or cell, to contain the visible images of ritual, such as deities, symbols, or tools. Sherds and fragments of white plaster were heavily scattered in the exterior space in front of the double threshold (L162, L161), indicating that this space served as an activity area and/or materials that were swept out of the broadroom (Meshel and Goren 2012: 53-57).

The interior of the structure contained a layer of earth and black ash, devoid of stone rubble and branches. It also contained small quantities of a material possibly identifiable as disintegrated mudbrick. The floor was coated in mud-plaster overlaid with white gypsum plaster. Large fragments of white plaster, likely fallen from the walls, appeared on the floor. These fragments included plaster painted with tableaux and geometric and floral patterns. More painted plaster wall fragments were recovered from the thresholds and the area outside the entryway (L162). A large fragment of a pithos with a black and yellow image of a seated woman was also found in this area. Another sherd marked *lšr'r* (Inscription 2.6; Appendix C.1.10) appeared in the area just to the east (L161).¹⁰ The interior space was divided into four areas (L152, L153, L154, L159). A storage jar fragment incised “To/of *r'y*[...]” (Inscription 2.7; Appendix C.1.11) appeared in Locus 154. A narrow cell (L152) appears across the southern end of the broadroom. A T-shaped wall (W48) separates the cell from the rest of the interior (L153, L154, L159) (Meshel and Goren 2012: 53-57). Meshel and Goren state that no floor or entryway to L152 was

¹⁰ Ahituv et al understands this inscription as reading “to/of the governor of the city” (2012: 81). However, Nadav Na’aman contends that the omission of the definite article means that we should probably understand *šr'r* as a personal name (2011: 302).

found (2012: 53). However, the photographs show substantial damage to the eastern wall of the structure, which may have obscured a possible eastern entryway. Alternatively, the thinness of W48 may indicate that it served more as a low partition than as a full wall.

The surviving wall plaster fragments indicate that this building was highly decorated around the thresholds and along the interior walls. Images around the thresholds included figures on a city wall (Painting No. 1; Fig. D.34), voluted palmette trees (Painting No. 7), a linear border design (Painting No. 3), an animal scene (Painting No. 8), and a lotus chain and guilloche border design (Painting No. 10; Fig. D.35). Images inside the structure included a red circle and yellow petals (?) (Painting No. 4), a wide-banded border design (Painting No. 2) and a checkered border design (Painting No. 6) (Beck 2012: 185-189, 192-194). These images generated a distinctive atmosphere, an atmosphere likely amplified by the narrowness of the structure and the high visibility of some of these images from the double threshold.

The northern wing and southern wing of the Building B complex are separated by a mud-plastered pathway, approximately 2.5 meters wide. This indicates that each wing was considered a distinct unit. However, their relative proximity and position at the entryway of the site also suggests a close association between these units, thresholds, and ritual power. These units may have been the site of some of the most potent rituals at the site, if not the most visible and accessible. Their relative proximity is also significant, in light of the relative distance between the Building B complex and Building A, approximately 13.5 meters northwest of Building B.

4.3.1.2. Building A

Building A includes an open stove on a low saddle at the western extremity of the hill (L94) and a large rectangular structure, measuring approximately 29 x 15 meters. Since Building A was better preserved and documented, most interpretations of Kuntillet 'Ajrūd focus almost exclusively on this part of the site.¹¹ However, a fuller understanding of Building A is only possible through its relationship to the rest of the site. The relative distance between the closely associated smaller structures of the Building B complex and Building A marks these as distinct units. However, the mud-plastered pathway in the Building B complex and a large gypsum-plastered forecourt marking the exterior entryway of Building A demonstrates the significance of movement between the architectural units through exterior open spaces. The plastering of these areas funneled and constrained movement in specific bi-directional flows and marks the associations of these areas.

The general architectural layout of Building A provides the primary evidence for interpretations focusing on economic or military functions for the site (see Introduction: Section I.V.I). This plan (Fig. D.37) features three broadrooms surrounding a central courtyard, four corner rooms that protrude outward like towers, and indirect entry from a small eastern antechamber. A rectangular inset on the northern exterior of the building (between Walls W13, W11, and W23) contained a rectangular mud-plastered feature, identified as a feeding trough. The walls were built of stones cut from the local chalk and coated with a straw-tempered mud-plaster. A shiny white gypsum plaster was also applied over the mud-plaster in the entry rooms. Patches of a course of tamarisk branches between two stone courses in the highest preserved

¹¹ Both the publications and the various interpretations and commentaries refer to this large structure as Building A exclusively. In the final publication, Meshel includes the open stove at the westernmost point of the hill in his general distinction between Building A and Building B. However, the rest of the publication almost entirely treats the rectangular structure as the lone referent of "Building A." For ease of language, I will do the same.

walls (W19, W23) may denote that the entire building featured this course. The outer walls measured between 80 centimeters and 1.2 meters thick (Meshel and Goren 2012: 13-15, 21).

The basic shape, protruding corner towers, and thick walls suggest a military function. Square or rectangular fortresses and fortified settlements with corner towers and thick walls appear across the Southern Levantine Drylands in the later Iron Age, Hellenistic, and Roman periods (Aharoni 1958: 33-35; Beit-Arieh 2007: 55-56; Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 12; Herzog 2002). Notably, the closest parallel to Building A at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd (both in resemblance and proximity) lies 50 kilometers north at Tell el-Qudeirat. The Tell el-Qudeirat fortress is a larger rectangular structure (approximately 33 x 50 meters), with thick(er) walls (4.2-4.8 meters wide) and eight towers, four at the corners and two in the long walls (Appendix D: Fig. D.38). However, the significance of this similarity is currently unclear, partially due to dating issues. The construction of the fortress at Tell el-Qudeirat is dated to the late eighth century BCE, while most scholars date Kuntillet 'Ajrûd to the early eighth century BCE (But see Singer-Avitz 2006; 2009). The similarity between these structures is often remarked upon, but rarely discussed more in depth. Additionally, the materials and techniques used in the construction of Building A vary widely from the better built, sturdier, more durable and impenetrable structure at Tell el-Qudeirat and other fortresses/fortified settlements in the drylands (Aharoni 1958: 33-35; Beit-Arieh 2007: 55-56; Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 4-13; Herzog 2002).

Several architectural units and certain materials inside Building A belie an (exclusively) military function as well. The most notable of these are a complex of rooms at the entrance of the building, including a forecourt, antechamber, broadroom, and two corner rooms, hereafter referred to as the bench-room complex (Fig. D.39). The walls and floors of these rooms were all coated in a white-gypsum plaster and several of the rooms are lined with benches. The bench-room complex forms a unique architectural unit within Building A, indexing a distinct ritualized atmosphere and a variety of rituals and movements through the space.

The bench-room complex is entered from the east through a gypsum-plastered exterior forecourt (L15), approximately 6 x 4.5 meters, and a roughly square gypsum-plastered antechamber (L5), approximately 3.5 x 2.5 meters (Figs. D.40-42). The antechamber (L5) opens to the south. A series of gypsum-plastered benches (W33, W35, W36, W37, W38), approximately 30-40 centimeters high, line the gypsum-plastered walls of the antechamber and the exterior walls (W12, W24) to the south. A narrow ridge bisects Bench W33. Another bench (W34), preserved to a length of 1.5 meters, juts from the eastern face of the antechamber, continuing the line of Wall W20. The floor of the antechamber and the forecourt was paved with gypsum plaster, up to the eastern extremity of bench W34. This configuration created an L-shaped indirect line of movement into the building (Fig. D.39). Finds in this area included a large concentration of sherds, especially storage jar fragments, on the southern end of Wall W20 and several painted plaster fragments, including a large image of a seated figure (Painting No. 9; Fig. D.50). A flat limestone object with an incised grid (identified as a game board) was found on a beaten earth surface (L22) immediately north of Bench W34. A cowrie shell was recovered from the area north of that (L16) (Beck 2012: 187, 189-192; Horwitz et al 2012: 332, 339; Meshel and Goren 2012: 19-22; Reshef 2012: 356, Item 30).

The antechamber opens into the center of a narrow broadroom (L14a, L14, L255, L6), approximately seven meters long. This room was also lined with benches and covered in mud-plaster and gypsum plaster (Figs. D.43-45). Meshel referred to this broadroom as the "Bench-

room” and identified it as a site of ritual, primarily for the deposition of votive offerings.¹² The entryway between the antechamber and the eastern broadroom features a low partially destroyed threshold and slight protrusions from the walls (W11, W12) over it. Meshel and Goren identify these protrusions as doorjamb, partially based on a piece of a burnt wooden beam inserted into the bottom of the southern protrusion on Wall W12. The northern jamb (W11) also featured an inscription (Inscription 4.3; Appendix C.1.26; Fig. D.51) *in situ* on the plastered wall, about 1.3 meters above the floor. Unfortunately, reconstructions of Inscription 4.3 are tentative and contested, due to poor preservation.¹³ In the central part of the western wall of the broadroom and mirroring the entryway between the antechamber and the broadroom, another entryway leads into a rectangular courtyard. Gypsum-plastered benches on the western walls (W9, W10) wrap around the ends of the walls, lining this second entryway. The gypsum-plastered floor also continues to the western edge of the entryway. However, this entrance lacks a threshold. A few painted plaster fragments and an inscription on a plaster fragment (Inscription 4.2; Appendix C.1.25) were found in the center of this entryway. Inscription 4.2 describes a theophany featuring Yahweh, Baal, and El (Ahituv et al 2012: 110, 115-117; Meshel and Goren 2012: 22-24).

Raised thresholds also appear at the openings to the northern and southern ends of the broadroom, creating three distinct areas that Meshel refers to as the Northern Wing (L6), the Vestibule (L14a), and Southern Wing (L14). The northern wing (L6) and the southern wing (L14) of the broadroom are similarly arranged with gypsum-plastered benches lining the eastern and western walls of these areas, leaving less than a meter of floor space between them (Figs. D.44-45). However, the northern wing is slightly wider and its eastern bench (W27) features a partial second tier (W28). Robber pits (L262, L255) in the northern and southern wings allowed the excavators to phase the building. The southern wing contained a cowrie shell and only a few ceramic sherds on the floor, including two bowls, a juglet, a krater, and a jar. Date pits also appear on Wall W15. Finds in the northern wing were more numerous and included an inscription on a plaster fragment (Inscription 4.1.1; Appendix C.1.23), painted plaster fragments, fragments of a decorated and inscribed pithos (Pithos A; Inscriptions 3.1-3.5; Appendix C.1.20; Figs. D.52-55) on the central part of bench W27 and in the robber pit (L262),¹⁴ reshaped sherds, and fragments of small vessels, worked wood, and leather. Inscription 4.1.1 was found pressed against Wall W10, about 80 centimeters above the floor, apparently having slid down from its original position further up the wall. It contained a blessing featuring “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah.” The inscriptions on the pithos included a blessing by “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah.” The central area (L14a; Meshel’s “Vestibule”) was covered in an ash layer containing small pieces of charcoal. Meshel identified this as the remains of a ceiling made of branches. Finds in this area included fragments of an inscribed storage jar (Inscription 2.5; Appendix C.1.9) and a nearly complete four-footed limestone bowl (Ahituv et al 2012: 87-91; 105-107;

¹² In the preliminary publications, Meshel characterizes the eastern broadroom as a site of ritual, in which devotees deposited offerings on the plastered benches and the small eastern corner rooms served as ritual depositories for when the benches were routinely cleared away (Meshel 1978: 54; Meshel 1979: 34). In the final publication, he is less clear on this interpretation, only stating concretely that the northeastern corner room served as the depository for vessels from the eastern broadroom (Meshel and Goren 2012: 30).

¹³ The surviving inscription is composed of seven lines. The final publication only attempts to translate the second half of the final line:]n [...] nyw šht qyn šdh wmrh h[rm, “[...] Cain destroyed a field and lofty mo[untains].” However, other possibilities for the end of the line are offered, including reading and translating the last letters of the line as *mrmh[w]*, “the open heights,” or *wmrh [bydw]*, treachery [in his hand] (Ahituv et al 2012: 115-117).

¹⁴ A large fragment of Pithos A (Inscription 3.1. “I have blessed you”) was found in the courtyard (L19) near the destroyed segment of Wall W10, at an elevation of 0.86 (Meshel and Goren 2012: 33-34).

Ayalon 2012: 247; Meshel and Goren 2012: 22-28; Horwitz et al 2012: 332, 339; Reshef 356: Item 13).

Two small corner rooms (L13, L62, L7) were attached to the northern and southern ends of the eastern broadroom. Thick meter-wide gypsum-plastered partition walls (W61, W15) divided these rooms from the eastern broadroom. The corner rooms were only accessible through the gaps between the ceiling and the tops of the partition walls, approximately one meter above the floor level of the corner rooms. The southeastern corner room (L7, L62) was partially eroded, but measured roughly over a meter wide and over two meters long. The preserved walls and floor were coated with mud-plaster and traces of white gypsum-plaster. The debris in this room contained ropes, textile fragments, date pits, pomegranate peel, a wooden spatula, a partially-baked clay weight, a limestone bowl, a ceramic three-footed bowl, and large ceramic fragments of cooking pots, storage jars, a holemouth jar, and a jug. Meshel and Goren suggest that these items may have fallen from a second story or were deposited during looting activity (2012: 26). The northeastern corner room (L13) measured roughly or less than two by two meters and featured evidence of multiple conflagrations. The walls and floor were coated in a crude non-white plaster, darkened by fire. The floor had sunk and cracked and covered with a half meter layer of ash, charcoal, earth, and artifacts. These artifacts were mainly composed of small ceramic vessels: juglets, flasks, jugs, bowls, and a few sherds of Samaria Ware. Other items included fragments of two to three storage jars, a cooking pot, a wooden wedge, and an inscribed red limestone bowl fragment (Inscription 1.1; Appendix C.1.1). An inscribed soft limestone rim (Inscription 1.4; Appendix C.1.4) was found just beyond Wall W22. Both inscriptions were dedicatory in nature. A few date and olive pits and a bivalve shell from the Mediterranean Sea appeared on the floor. Meshel and Goren identify this room as a *favissa*, a Latin term for underground cellars where temple offerings were re-deposited. They suggest that the northeastern corner room served as a depository for when votive vessels from the eastern broadroom were routinely cleared away (Ayalon 2012: 249; Horwitz et al 2012: 332, 339; Meshel and Goren 2012: 26-30; Reshef 2012: 356, Items 2, 6; Sitry 2012: 320).

Several components of the bench-room complex indicate ritual, power, movement, and multiple, overlapping senses of liminality. The arrangement of the forecourt and the antechamber in a bent axis approach funneled movement into the bench-room in a distinct way. Moreover, this configuration also restricted visibility of the bench-room outside Building A and reduced lines of sight on entering and exiting Building A. The layout of this area is also significant for its similarity to Iron Age city-gates in the Southern Levant (Figs. D.46-48). These gates are typically characterized as one, two, or three parallel broadrooms, bisected by an opening or path that segments these broadrooms into two, four, or six chambers. Occasionally, an antechamber re-directs movement in a bent axis approach to the gate (Figs. D.46-47). Examples of these gates appear at sites such as Tel Dan (Tell el-Qadi), Tel Hazor (Tell el-Qedah), Tel Megiddo (Tell al-Mutesellim), Tell en-Nasbeh, Gezer (Tell el-Jezer), Tel Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir), and Tel Beer-Sheba' (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2016: 127-128, 140-144, 207-220; Mazar 1990: 467-470; Zorn 1997). The gate-like appearance of the bench-room complex (Fig. D.48) as the entry area for Building A suggests an attempt to evoke notions of liminality and crossing thresholds associated with city-gates. Furthermore, city-gates often also served as sites of ritual in the Iron Age Southern Levant, demonstrating the potency of liminal spaces in Southern Levantine ritual contexts and the recursive intra-action between ritual and liminality of these contexts (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 185; Daviau and Steiner 2000; Edelman 2010: 93-94; Zevit 2001: 149-150; 191-196, 238-241). At Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, the gate-like appearance of the bench-room complex draws

specifically on the potency of city-gates and associated rituals to create a distinct atmosphere of multiple and overlapping senses of liminality and ritual power

The gate-like appearance of the bench-room complex is also significant for its position as the entryway to a building that mimics fortress architecture. In the Southern Levant, fortress-like architecture is a recurring element in ritual spaces. The Middle Bronze Age (2000-1600 BCE) sees the emergence of so called “Migdol” or “Tower” temples, so named for their citadel components. These include foundations on raised ground, enclosure walls, meter thick walls, and facades composed of two towers or buttresses. This style of temple continues to appear in a reduced form through the Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 BCE) and Iron Age (1200-600 BCE) (Burke 2014: 410; Hundley 2013: 105-114). Notably, the tower facades of Migdol temples resemble gate architecture, which may also suggest a ritual connotation to gates (Mazar 1992: 167). Significantly, a temple also appears in an Iron Age fortress at Tel Arad in the northeastern Negev (Fig. D.49). This fortress was built on a hill to the east of the ruins of the Early Bronze city (Fig. D.14) and persisted through several phases and renovations. The plan is similar to other Iron Age fortresses in the northern Negev – a square shape of approximately 52 x 52 meters, thick casemate or solid walls, and towers either at the corners or flanking the gate. In the strata associated with the temple (X-IX, currently dated to the eighth century BCE), the fortress featured solid walls and two towers flanking the gate. The small temple occupied the northwestern corner of the fortress in a total area of 380 square meters. The layout is roughly comprised of a southeastern corner entry into a courtyard flanked on the northern and eastern walls by broadrooms. The courtyard featured a large stone platform (identified as a sacrificial altar) and the northern broadroom featured a niche on its back wall in line with the entrance to the room. The excavators identify this niche as the seat of the deity or deities and their related icons (*debir, naos*) (Herzog 2001; 2002: 26-37, 52-72; 2010; Herzog et al 1984). The final publication of the fortress and temple is not yet available, but the association between a remote military installation and a highly structured ritual space further speaks to a Levantine tradition that conflated ritual power with military power. A gate-like ritual complex at the entryway of a fortress-like building at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd alludes to a long Levantine tradition of an association between ritual, gates, and defense architecture, perhaps in order to evoke notions of power, prestige, and protection.

An atmosphere of ritual power is also generated through the images and inscriptions on walls and objects within the bench-room complex (Schmidt 2016: 23-24).¹⁵ White wall plaster fragments, painted in single colors and/or featuring inscriptions and images, appear throughout the benched areas. The legible wall images were both found in the forecourt and include a dotted pattern (Painting No. 5) and fragments of a large (30 x 25 cm) seated figure in profile holding a plant, mostly likely a lotus blossom (Painting No. 9; Fig. D.50). A largely illegible inscription was found *in situ* on the northern doorjamb between the antechamber and the broadroom (Inscription 4.3; Appendix C.1.26). An inscription associated with Wall W10 in the northern chamber (L6) of the broadroom contains a blessing by “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah” (Inscription 4.1.1; Appendix C.1.23) Another inscription in the courtyard entrance (between walls W9 and W10) contains a theophany scene mentioning Yahweh, Baal, and El (Inscription 4.2; Appendix C.1.25). Furthermore, a decorated and inscribed pithos (Pithos A; Fig. D.52) was

¹⁵ While in the final weeks of completing this dissertation, I came upon a monograph recently published by Brian Schmidt (2016), detailing some similar observations to my own on how the inscriptions and images worked together to generate ritual power in a ritualized atmosphere. I have attempted to cite this work, particularly where we overlap. However, I hope to engage with it more fully in a future publication.

found on a bench in the northern chamber of the bench-room. This pithos contained a blessing by “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah” (Inscription 3.1; Appendix C.1.20) as well as several other partial or illegible inscriptions (Inscriptions 3.2-3.4; Appendix C.1.20). Images on one side of Pithos A included a tree flanked by caprids (Fig. D.53), a striding lion, a horse, a boar and a lioness. Images on the other side of the pithos include a chariot horse, an ibex and garland, a cow and a suckling calf, a seated lyre player (Fig. D. 55), and double Bes figures (Fig. D.54). The blessing by “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah” appears across the headdress of the larger Bes figures (Fig. D.52). A similar decorated and inscribed pithos (Pithos B; Inscriptions 3.6-3.15; Appendix C.1.21; Fig. D.56) was recovered from the floor and debris of the courtyard (L19), mainly near the middle of the Wall W10. Its similarity and proximity to Pithos A suggests that Pithos B also might have been deposited in the bench-room complex during its movement through the site. This pithos contained a blessing by “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah,” (Inscription 3.6), another text that mentions “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah, (Inscription 3.9), personal names (Inscriptions 3.7, 3.10), a reference to Samaria and barley (Inscription 3.8), and several abecedaries (Inscriptions 3.11-3.15). Images on Pithos B include an ibex, archer, lion’s tail, cow, bull, and a procession of human figures with upraised arms (Fig. D.57), which may constitute a pose of prayer. Other inscribed vessels were recovered from the antechamber (Inscription 2.2; Appendix C.1.6), the central area of the broadroom (Inscription 2.5; Appendix C.1.9), and the northeastern corner room (Inscriptions 1.1, 1.4; Appendix C.1.1, 4) (Ahituv et al 2012: 87-103, 105-107, 110-117; Ayalon 2012: 220-221; Beck 2012: 144-177, 187, 189-192; Meshel and Goren 2012: 19-30; Reshef 2012: 356, Items 2,4).

The choices of motif, rendering, and arrangement of the images combined with the appearance, content, and arrangement of the inscriptions generated a distinct ritualized atmosphere within the bench-room complex (Schmidt 2015: 78-81). These images and inscriptions draw on a variety of stylistic and symbolic traditions from Egypt, Assyria, the Levant, and the Southern Levantine Drylands/Arabian Peninsula, indicating a flow of intra-action at Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd and recursively interacting with the multiple, overlapping liminalities of both the site and the bench-room complex. The motifs of the images and inscriptions suggest notions of divinity, royalty, authority, music, rhythm, prayer, dancing, fertility, water, life, birth, masculinity, femininity, continuity, and protection. These are images and words of power, designed to recursively interact with ritual and the liminalities of the bench-room complex¹⁶ (Ahituv et al 2012; Barkay and Im 2001; Beck 1982; 2012; Franken 1999; Hutton 2010; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 210-248; LeMon and Strawn 2015; Mandell 2012; Mastin 2009; Na’aman 2011; Ornan 2016; Schmidt 2002; 2015; 2016: 16-122; Tebes 2014b; 2015).

The position of some of these inscriptions in the thresholds between the antechamber, the broadroom, and the courtyard (Inscriptions 4.2; 4.3; Appendix C.1.25, 26) is particularly

¹⁶ Ziony Zevit observes that the wall inscriptions are “reminiscent” of an ink on plaster wall inscription mentioning Balaam the seer in a possible ritual complex at Tell Deir ‘Alla in the Jordan Valley north of the Zarqa River (an area associated with Ammon and the tribe of Gad in the Hebrew Bible). Zevit parallels these texts as “formally scripted mythological inscriptions,” a parallel that suggests that the wall inscriptions at Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd should be interpreted within the site as a whole, rather than as “casual graffiti” (2001: 370-371). The inscription at Tell Deir ‘Alla was found in the debris of a cave-like room, apparently having fallen from the western wall. The inscription is incomplete and highly fragmentary, but also appears to mention several supra-human entities along with “Bal’ am son of Be’or,” a seer who might be identified with a seer of the same name mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (Num. 22-24), as well as later texts. Henk Franken described the Balaam inscription as “magical in the sense that it describes and represents a situation existing through the creative power of the divine word, and written down to make the word visible, if not for the general public then for the ‘initiated’” (1999: 190).

significant. These inscriptions recursively generate and draw on the liminality of thresholds within an entrance complex. Unfortunately, Inscription 4.3 is illegible, but Inscription 4.2 describes a cacophonous and chaotic theophany of earthquakes, melting mountains, and collapsing hills on “a day of war” (Ahituv et al 2012: 110; Appendix C.1.25, 26). This scene is reminiscent of many biblical descriptions of Yahweh appearing on the earth as a divine warrior, sometimes at the head of a supernatural army (e.g. Deut. 33:2; Mic. 1:3-4; Judg. 5:4, Ps. 29; 97:5) (Ahituv et al 2012: 110-114; see Chapter 2: Section 2.3.3). The potency of this scene lies in the appearance of the divine on earth and the physical impact of this appearance on the land, as if a meeting between highly reactive elements. The violent upheavals described in this and other scenes marks a powerful relationship between the divine and the earthly realm. The violent physical effects on the earth are a consequence of the potency of the interaction between these two realms, as well as the potency of the divine relative to the earth.

The inscriptions in the thresholds of the bench-room complex also may index certain rituals, first with the application of the potent ritual language to the doorways (Schmidt 2016: and then with crossing through these portals. Passing through such potent doorways may have required certain gestures and/or incantations, perhaps in direct interaction with the inscriptions. The placing of sacred words or images on doorways and rituals associated with passing through doorways are attested in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish and Christian traditions in the Levant (e.g. Deut. 6:9; 11: 20; Frankfurter 2008: 200). The gate-like appearance of the bench-room complex also suggests rituals of crossing.

Ritual in the bench-room complex is also clearly indicated by the plastered benches and the distribution of materials within the complex. Plastered benches appear in numerous Southern Levantine enclosed ritual sites in the Iron II.¹⁷ While the common term “benches” implies that these features served as seats for people, benches are more likely characterized as shelves for ritual items (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 175, 177-178, 181; Daviau and Steiner 2000; Dolan 2007: 114-115; Zevit 2001: 123-266).¹⁸ At Kuntilet 'Ajrûd, a decorated and inscribed pithos (Pithos A; Fig. D.52), a bowl, and another unidentified small vessel were found on the benches in the broadroom. Furthermore, other small vessels littered the narrow floor between the benches, which may indicate that they had fallen from the benches (Ayalon 1995: 146, fig. 3; 189, fig. 29; Meshel and Goren 2012: 28). Additionally, the concentration of more than twenty complete vessels and fragments of twenty-five additional vessels in the northeastern corner room likely indexes that this room served as a secondary depository/disposal area for objects initially deposited on the benches in bench-room complex (Ayalon 2012: 242; Meshel and Goren 2012: 30). That we may identify this room as a ritual depository/disposal area is further suggested by the pit-like structure of the room restricting accessibility. The room is separated from the bench-room by a thick partition wall (W61) and the only entry into the room is through a “window-like” gap between the ceiling and the top of the partition wall, approximately one meter above the floor level of the northeastern corner room (Meshel 1979: 28; Meshel and Goren 2012: 26, 28). Southern Levantine ritual depositories/disposal areas are generally characterized as simple pits dug into the ground or in rock crevices (Edelman 2010: 90; Kletter 2010: 202). Presumably,

¹⁷ Benches are also attested as far back as the Chalcolithic Period (Alpert-Nakhai 2001; Dever 1999). Admittedly, the distinction between benches and platforms is unclear in much of the secondary literature, but seems to hinge on the height of the feature.

¹⁸ The benches at Jerusalem Cave 1, Khirbet al-Mudayna on Wadi ath-Thamad and Sarepta lacked artifacts (Daviau and Steiner 2000; Pritchard 1978). However, small vessels were found on the benches of Cult Room 49 at Lachish as was a fenestrated ceramic stand at Ai (Zevit 2001: 153, 216).

the southeastern corner room served a similar purpose. However, this remains conjecture due to possible post-depositional processes (Meshel and Goren 2012: 26).

The nature of the materials within the bench-room complex suggests that we might understand this space as a site of votive deposition, in which devotees (or ritual functionaries on behalf of devotees) placed offerings on the plastered benches and the small eastern corner rooms served as ritual depositories/disposal areas for when the benches were routinely cleared. (Meshel 1978: 54; Meshel 1979: 34; Meshel and Goren 2012: 30). Votive offerings occur within a larger context of rites of exchange and communion in which humans present or promise something to gods or other supernatural entities, both to express devotion and/or ask for something in return. That which is presented/promised may refer to a physical object(s), a person, or an action. This offering may occur in exchange for a variety of favors, ranging from material blessings (e.g. a good harvest, a healthy child) to more abstract states of being (e.g. grace, redemption). Votive offerings may request a favor yet to be received, express gratitude for a blessing already bestowed, or both. These offerings are presented either through a ritual functionary or by the devotee directly and may occur in a wide variety of settings, including temples, homes, and sites in nature. Votive deposition often (but not always) refers specifically to when a physical object is presented to a deity and is not destroyed in the process, as opposed to sacrificial offerings or ritual meals (Bell 1997: 108-114; Bradley 1990; Gruber 2017; Morgan 2017; Osborne 2004; Weinryb 2016; 2017). It is a particularly material and physical ritual act that leaves a visible trace, a trace that continues to act upon the world long after the act of offering is completed. This act may have included the recitation of certain words and gestures and would have far reaching implications for the devotee's relationship with the deity and the experience of subsequent devotees who encountered the deposit.

Votive deposits are common to ritual contexts in both the Southern Levant and the Southern Levantine Drylands. However, they often differ in content between these regions, as well as between sites. In the Southern Levant and semi-arid Southern Levantine Drylands, vessels are a common form of votive offering at most sites. Furthermore, these vessels are usually common or quotidian wares associated with the home, indicating the significance of the materials within the vessels and the ritualization of common objects (Bradley 2003; Edelman 2010: 89; Zevit 2001: 125-247; see Chapter 1: Section 1.2). Notably, several texts in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Lev. 23: 16-17; Deut. 26: 2-4) and other ancient sources emphasize both sacrificial and votary grain, meat, and liquid offerings, which were likely presented in common household vessels (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 44-79; Levine 2002). Vessels are less common at mobile pastoral ritual sites in the Southern Levantine Drylands, where aggregations or caches of flint tools and flakes, rocks of unusual forms and colors, seashells, and fossils may index more common styles of votive deposition (Avner 2002: 107-108, 114-115; Rosen et al 2007: 13; see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1).

Evidence for votive deposition at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd is based on a similar distribution of materials. The bench-room complex in Building A features a "distinct concentration of small vessels (bowls, jugs, juglets, flasks)," especially in the northeastern corner-room (Ayalon 2012: 241-242). This concentration of vessels and the relative percentage of these vessels at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and within this particular architectural unit (along with the aforementioned architectural plans, features, and décor) suggests that these vessels contained food and liquid gifts presented as votive offerings by visitors to the site (or ritual functionaries on behalf of visitors). The remains of pomegranates, olive pits, and date stones from the Northern Sinai (perhaps the oasis at Wadi el-Qudeirat), fish from the Mediterranean and Red Seas, Nile Perch, Red Sea cowrie shells,

Mediterranean bivalve shells, almond shells, ostrich eggshells, objects made of wood from the northern or southern Sinai, and an object made of cedar of Lebanon may indicate some of the types of materials used in votive deposits at the site (Horwitz et al 2012: 332, 339; Liphshitz 2012: 340, 344, 349; Sitry 2012: 344-345).

Evidence for votive deposition at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd is also attested by several inscribed vessels. The northeastern corner room contained a red limestone bowl fragment (Inscription 1.1; Appendix C.1.1) and an inscribed soft limestone rim (Inscription 1.4; Appendix C.1.4) was found just beyond Wall W22, likely fallen from the northeastern corner room. Both inscriptions bore the names of their respective owners: “šwm 'yw, son of 'zr,” (Inscription 1.1) and “to/of 'bd” (Inscription 1.4), which may infer that the vessels were deposited as votive offerings. Another inscribed limestone fragment (Inscription 1.3; Appendix C.1.3) found on the surface bore the name “šbbl (son of) hlyw.” A clay oven (Tabun C) in one of the kitchens (L51) contained an incised ceramic storage jar fragment (Inscription 2.1; Appendix C.1.5), bearing the partial name of another person, “-] t (son of) 'ra.” Most significantly, the debris in the southern broadroom contained a massive inscribed limestone basin (Inscription 1.2; Appendix C.1.2: Figs. D.58; D.59), invoking a blessing by Yahweh on behalf of its owner, “To/of 'bdyw, son of 'dnh, blessed be he to YHW.” (Ahituv et al 75-79; Meshel 2012: 68; Meshel and Goren 2012: 30, 35-37, 42, 52; Reshef 2012: 356, Items 1-4). It is likely that some of these items were deposited on or near one of the benches in the forecourt, the antechamber, or the eastern broadroom during their movement through the site (Joyce 2015; Joyce and Gillespie 2015).

Most of the rest of Building A is generally considered to be more quotidian in nature, associated more with the daily upkeep of the site and its inhabitants than with ritual (Meshel and Goren 2012: 30-52). However, evidence for ritual is also attested in other parts of Building A, demonstrating both the general pervasiveness of ritual in the ancient world and at this site. Furthermore, many of these more quotidian aspects were likely also associated with producing materials for ritual and recursively interacted in the generating of a distinct ritualized atmosphere.

The bench-room complex feeds into a courtyard, measuring 18.5 x 9.5 meters. Features in the courtyard include a mud-plaster floor, two stairways, two kitchen areas, and several small wall benches and installations. Two other broadrooms are accessed through this courtyard, one to the south (L3, L41, L50, L256, L8) and one to the west (L1, L102), as well as a corner room to the northwest (L10, L92). The occupation layer of this courtyard generally contained pieces of twig, straw, bones, feathers, goat dung, textile and rope fragments, pomegranate peel, ostrich eggshell fragments, date and olive pits, and ceramic sherds. Both kitchens were covered in a thick stone collapse, presumably from the stairways (Meshel and Goren 2012: 30-31).

In the southeastern corner of the courtyard, a stone mud-plastered stairway (L68) abuts Wall W9, its lowest step in line with the entrance from the eastern broadroom. The partial remains of three humans – an adult male, an adolescent female, and a fetus – were recovered from the collapse covering this stairway. The remains were not dated specifically, but stratigraphically post-date occupation of the site.¹⁹ A walled kitchen area (L51) stood approximately one meter west of the stairway. The entrance to this kitchen is in the southeastern corner of the room, facing the meter-wide path (L65) between the kitchen and the stairs and an alcove (L66) underneath the stairs. The alcove featured a stone-built shelf-like feature coated in mud plaster and an adjacent sunken cell. The kitchen contained three successive clay ovens, 30-

¹⁹ A lock of human hair in the collapse (which Meshel associated with the human remains) was dated to somewhere between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries CE (Arensburg and Yakar 2012: 342).

70 centimeters in diameter, and a hearth. Meshel and Goren identify this kitchen as a later addition, either augmenting or replacing the kitchen in the southwestern area of the courtyard. The path (L65) between the kitchen and the stairs also led into the eastern entrance of the southern broadroom (Arensburg and Yakar 2012: 341-42; Meshel and Goren 2012: 34-37).

Another mud-plastered stone stairway (L101) stood in the southwestern corner of the courtyard, over the western entrance to the southern broadroom. Like the eastern stairs, its lowest step aligned with the entryway to the western broadroom. An open kitchen area (L103) and an unidentified stone installation abutted this stairway to the east. This kitchen also featured three clay ovens, 40-60 centimeters in diameter. However, the two smaller ovens (L96, L97) were contemporary with each other and pre-dated the largest one (L95). According to Meshel and Goren, this is the earliest kitchen area. The stone installation was set against Wall W2 and blocked the southwestern entry to the southern broadroom. It was comprised of a dense accumulation of pebbles, enclosed by lines of large upright stones to the north and west, with an opening to the east. Meshel and Goren associate this installation with the later oven (L95), based on its elevation. A similar but longer stone installation appeared adjacent to Wall W4, stretching between the doorways to the northwestern corner room and the western broadroom (L83). It opened to the north. This installation is also attributed to a later phase (Meshel and Goren 2012: 37-42).

In the northern part of the courtyard, two small stone-built plastered benches were constructed against Walls W16, one along the northwestern end (L73) and one along the northeastern end (L81). Fragments of three restorable storage jars were also recovered from near Wall W16 in Locus 73. The rim of a woven sieve was recovered near Wall W16 in Locus 81. The northeastern corner of the courtyard also featured another stone installation of enclosed pebbles (L18) against Walls W16 and W21. However, this installation featured one single course of upright stones to the south (W41) and a more substantial mud-plastered wall to the west (W62). A small gap between these walls provided a southern facing access. Finds include pottery sherds and textile and rope fragments, which were all recovered from the debris. Another largely complete decorated and inscribed pithos (Pithos B; Inscriptions 3.6-3.15; Appendix C.1.21; Fig. D.56) was recovered from the floor and debris of the area south of this enclosure (L19), mainly near the middle of the Wall W10. Locus 19 also contained a cowrie shell and several other concentrations of vessel fragments, including four storage jars, a cooking pot, and a flask. One jar (Inscription 2.8; Appendix C.1.12) was inscribed before firing and another sherd with an incised aleph (Inscription 2.19; Appendix C.1.16) also appeared (Horwitz et al 2012: 332, 339; Meshel and Goren 2012: 31-34; 43-44).

Certain aspects of the courtyard (e.g. unidentified stone installations) are more difficult to interpret than others. Nevertheless, we may understand the courtyard as a central hub, providing access to nearly all parts of Building A, and as a series of activities areas associated with the upkeep of the site and its inhabitants and the production of ritual at the site. The two stairways indicate either a full second story (possibly just over the corner rooms and the southern and western broadrooms) or an open roof used as activity space. The entrances to the southern and western broadrooms and the northwestern corner room are exclusively through the courtyard. These features demonstrate that the courtyard acted as a nexus of movement within Building A, a confluence of flows between the broadrooms, the corner rooms, and the second story/roof.

Additionally, the two kitchen areas containing clay ovens and a hearth index cooking (and possibly also the consumption of food) within the courtyard. Significantly, cooking vessels appear in relatively low proportions (7% of the assemblage) at Kuntillet 'Ajru'd compared to

other sites. These vessels are concentrated in the eastern half of Building A, with the highest concentrations in the courtyard and southern storeroom (Ayalon 2012: 216; 239-240; 243). According to Meshel, the clay ovens and lack of cooking pots suggest that cooking was “communal” for the site’s inhabitants (2012: 67-68). Furthermore, cooking at Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd was likely not just for sustenance. As a site of ritual that emphasized food and liquid offerings, cooking likely played a large role in these rituals, producing both the materials for the rituals and possibly also incorporating ritual in the process of cooking.²⁰

Ritual is also indicated by the thresholds between the courtyard and the western broadroom and courtyard and the central entrance of the southern broadroom. The debris and collapse covering the western stairway (L101), the foot of the western stairway (L104), the entrance to the western broadroom (L87), and a northwestern portion of the courtyard (L83) contained fragments of red lettered inscriptions on white wall plaster (Inscriptions 4.4-4.6; Appendix C.1.27). One of these inscriptions mentioned “Baal in voice” (Inscription 4.4.1). Another inscription (4.5) contained fragmentary letters with the image of a head (Painting No. 11) between the letters. Many of these fragments were concentrated around the entrance to the western broadroom, which led Meshel and Goren to attribute these fragments to the doorjamb and the lintel of the western broadroom doorway (Ahituv et al 2012: 117-121; Beck 2012: 194-196; Meshel and Goren 2012: 46-47). Additionally, a red and yellow drawing of an animal and one or two human heads (Painting No. 12) appeared directly on the stone of the eastern jamb of the central entrance to the southern broadroom (Beck 2012: 196; Meshel and Goren 2012: 51). Like the inscriptions associated with the thresholds in the bench-room complex, these images and inscriptions may indicate certain rituals, first with the application of the images and text to the thresholds and then with crossing these thresholds.

Certain materials in the southern broadroom and the western broadroom also likely indicate ritual, mainly within the collapse from the roof/second story. The southern broadroom (L3, L41, L50, L256, L8) measured 19 meters long and averaged 1.8 meters wide. It featured three entrances from the courtyard, one at each end and one in the center. However, the unidentified stone installation in the courtyard blocked the western entrance entirely and two pithoi partially blocked the central entrance. The southern broadroom varied widely in its construction and preservation. The easternmost part (L8) was built on the lowest part of the summit and may have been accessed via a stone ramp across Locus 256. This area was filled with a layer of loose black collapse or fill, approximately 1.3 meters thick, that could not be associated with a floor or occupation level. Some materials likely fell from the destruction of the roof/second story, Wall W8, and part of the southeastern corner room (L7). Materials associated with this collapse include a massive (nearly one meter in diameter) inscribed limestone basin (Inscription 1.2; Appendix C.1.2; Figs. D.58; D.59) and a limestone ashlar block with a comb dressing. Other finds in this collapse included a large sieve, two grinding stones, five loom weights, a spatula, pieces of worked wood, small ceramic vessels, three complete pomegranates, Nile Perch bones, an inscribed pithos fragment (Inscription 3.16; Appendix C.1.22), and jug or jar fragment with a drawing of a boar. A layer of ash covered the occupation levels and floors in the rest of the room. Finds in this room were mainly concentrated in the eastern side of the room (L50, L256, L8). Locus 50, just to the east of the central entrance, contained the bases of nine pithoi embedded *in situ* in the floor, as well as storage jars and other vessels. Several pithoi fragments were incised with single letters. One complete jar was inscribed with *lšr’r* on its side

²⁰ For an example of cooking in ancient Southern Levantine ritual, see the discussion of Jeremiah 7 and 44 in Ackerman 1992: 5-35.

(Inscription 2.4; Appendix C.1.8). The embedded pithoi and associated concentration of pithoi and storage jar fragments mark the southern broadroom as storage space for larger ceramics and their contents, including provisions for the inhabitants and visitors to the site. The occupation layer in Locus 50 contained ash, straw, rope and textile fragments, fish bones from the Mediterranean, pomegranate peels and parts, olive and date pits, barley seeds, a wooden basket handle, a limestone stopper, clay plugs, and a bead (Ahituv et al 2012: 76-77, 80-81, 103-104; Ayalon 2012: 240; Beck 2012: 180; Horwitz et al 2012: 331-332, 339; Meshel and Goren 2012: 15, 48-52; Reshef 2012: 356, Items 1, 19, 21, 27, 28).

The western broadroom (L1, L102) measured approximately 7.5 meters long and featured a single entrance in its central axis, coinciding with the lowest step from the western stairway. This entrance was possibly inscribed with images and text. A collapse layer attributed to a second story covered the floor. It contained ash, stone, olive pits, pomegranate peel, pottery sherds, and loom weights. Parts of a wooden loom were also recovered from the collapse materials covering the western stairway (L101), the foot of the western stairway (L104), the entrance to the western broadroom (L87), and the western part of the courtyard (L83). The northern half of the room (L1) also contained a group of four tightly packed pithoi, their bases embedded *in situ* in the floor, as well as additional pithoi and storage jar fragments. Another group of four pithoi with bases embedded in the floor appeared in the southern area of the room (L102). Fragments of additional pithoi and storage jars also appeared in this area. Like the southern broadroom, the embedded pithoi and associated concentration of pithoi and storage jar fragments mark the western broadroom as a storage space for larger vessels and their contents (Ayalon 2012: 240; Meshel and Goren 2012: 40-42; 46-48).

The clearest evidence for ritual in these rooms is in the eastern end of the southern broadroom (L8), which contained a limestone basin, bearing an inscription, “To/of *ḥdyw*, son of *ḏnh*, blessed be he to YHW” (Inscription 1.2; Appendix C.1.2; Figs. D.58; D.59). The basin was found within collapse material, directly in front of the eastern entrance of the broadroom, inclined and cracked into nine contiguous pieces. It measures nearly a meter across in diameter and weighs 150 kilograms. The rim was blackened by ash (Ahituv et al 76-77; Meshel and Goren 2012: 52; Reshef 2012: 356, Item 1). Like the other inscribed limestone vessels, this basin indexes votive deposition, specifically by a devotee named *ḥdyw* (possibly pronounced *Ḑḥadyāw*). Its size, weight, and material mark this vessel as a particularly prestigious gift, the transport of which would have required significant resources. The size and charring on the rim also suggest that this object was likely used in ritual on site, demonstrating that votive objects could also serve as ritual furniture or tools.

However, the archaeological context of the basin suggests that it fell from another location, likely during an earthquake after the site was abandoned. The collapse in the southern portion of the courtyard and the southern broadroom suggest that the wall (W2) between the courtyard and the southern broadroom buckled northwards into the courtyard and the parallel exterior wall of the southern broadroom (W1) crumpled southwards down the slope (Meshel and Goren 2012: 37, 48), likely indexing a N-S shifting movement in the earthquake. However, the eastern end of the southern broadroom (L8) features some collapse material from Wall W8 and part of the southeastern corner room (L7), the southern wall of which was completely destroyed. The excavators report that they were unable to find an occupational level in this locus or determine if the materials in this locus had fallen from a second story (Meshel and Goren 2012: 52). If we should understand these materials as collapse from the second story, then this places the limestone basin on the roof/second story, likely directly above the southern broadroom.

Consequently, we might understand the roof/second story as another site of ritual in Building A. Rituals performed on rooftops are documented in texts from the Hebrew Bible and Ugarit (Jer. 19:13; 32: 29; Zeph. 1:5; RS 1.003:50-55). The southern broadroom also contained a significant number of small vessels, including most of the large bowls recovered from the site. Some of these vessels are associated with the collapse from the southeastern corner room. However, many of these vessels may also have fallen from the roof/second story and further indicate rooftop ritual (Ayalon 2012: 240, 242; Meshel and Goren 2012: 52). Materials on the western stairway (L101), the foot of the western stairway (L104), the western broadroom (L1, L87), and the southern broadroom (L8) also include a wooden loom and caches of unbaked clay loomweights, indicating that weaving was likely practiced on the roof/second story. Weaving on rooftops is also attested archaeologically at Jericho and Tel Beer-Sheba' (Meshel and Goren 2012: 40-42, 47-48, 52; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012: 305-306; Sitry 2012: 317-318). While weaving is generally a utilitarian activity, certain texts suggest that weaving may also have constituted a ritual practice in the ancient Near East. This may be attested archaeologically in a possible Iron Age ritual complex at Tell Deir 'Alla (Ackerman 2008; Boertien 2007; Franken 1999: 197; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012: 307). Thus, we might also understand weaving on rooftops at Kuntillet 'Ajrūd as a simultaneously utilitarian and ritual practice. This practice may have constituted a ritual act, produced textiles for use in rituals, or, perhaps, functioned in both ways.

It is also possible that the collapse materials in the eastern end of the southern broadroom are only partially from a second story and the breakdown of the walls. Both the western and central entrances to the southern broadroom were intentionally blocked either before or during the abandonment of the site (Meshel and Goren 2012: 40, 48-49). Ayalon cites the accrual of vessels at the central entrance of the southern broadroom as evidence that "may attest to a hasty desertion of the site," a desertion that also included the piling of vessels in other parts of the site, the cleaning out of the kitchens, and the lamps left alongside the entrance (2012: 243). The limestone basin was found directly in front of the eastern entrance, perhaps indicating that it slid from the entryway or the hallway (L65), where it (and perhaps other materials) were placed to barricade the eastern entrance during the abandonment of the site. Thus, we may understand the materials obstructing the entrances to the southern broadroom as an intentional act to block access to the southern broadroom and, by extension, the southwestern corner room. If the limestone basin was used in this fashion, then its size and weight might suggest that it was kept close by (probably in the courtyard), before it was dragged to the doorway.

Finally, we might also identify materials within the western corner rooms as associated with ritual. These rooms roughly mirror the eastern corner rooms, both in their position within Building A and in flanking the western broadroom. However, neither of these rooms was accessible through the western broadroom. Rather, their entrances faced east, forming a line of three entryways similar to that of the southern broadroom, with entry into the northwestern corner room (L10, L92) through the courtyard and entry into the southwestern corner room (L11, L12) through the southern broadroom. Both rooms also contained rectangular compartments set against their western walls. In the northwestern room, this compartment (L92) was delineated by a line of three stones laid lengthwise on their side in parallel to Wall W19. This compartment, built on a layer of ash and burnt material (which Meshel and Goren refer to as "occupational"), measured 70-80 centimeters wide. Finds in this compartment were all from a collapse layer and included ceramic vessels, painted plaster fragments, a mud stopper, a wooden fire board fragment, textile fragments, pomegranate peel, olive and date pits, barley seeds, and seed husks. Notable ceramic finds included a rare pithos with rope-like grooves, a four-handled storage jar

with unidentifiable clay applications, and bichrome jug fragments decorated in a Cypro-Phoenician style. The area outside compartment L92 (L10) measured less than two by two meters and featured a collapse layer containing several limestone objects, including bowls, a game board, and possible standing stones. The excavators could not identify a function for this room, but noted that it “contained an abundance of finds, some unique to the site” (Meshel and Goren 2012: 44). Both rooms suffered from damage, but the damage in the southwestern corner room was greater. Its southern and western walls had collapsed onto the slopes of the hill and little remained of compartment L12. The area outside compartment L12 (L11) measured less than a meter across and at least two meters long. It featured a beaten earth floor covered with a layer of black ash containing sherds, two near-complete jugs, and three limestone plugs. A large round limestone basin and a sandstone grinding stone were set in the entryway alongside Wall W7. The excavators do not identify a function for this room (Ayalon 2012: 218-219, 225, 230; Meshel and Goren 2012: 44-47; Reshef 2012: 356, Items 7, 8, 10-12, 16, 17, 22-26, 29; Sitry 2012: 318-320).

The materials in the northwestern corner room are all associated with a collapse layer, indicating that at least some of these materials may have fallen from the roof/second story or another location. However, the concentration of small and distinct objects in a small room directly mirroring a ritual depository (L13) suggests that the northwestern corner room (and/or one that may have been above it) also served as a space to deposit ritual items. However, this room may have been intended for storage, rather than disposal. If this is the case, then this room is also distinct because of the types of materials within it, especially compared to the eastern corner rooms. The identifiable ceramics were larger, but distinct, vessels. The pithos with rope grooves pre-dates Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, indicating that it may have been an heirloom or removed from an earlier site. Significantly, the cited parallels for this vessel are all at sites in the drylands – Stratum 4 at nearby Tell el-Qudeirat, Tel Masos II and Tel Beer-Sheba' III in the northern Negev, and Ḥorvat Mesora in the Negev highlands. Similarly, a parallel at Ḥorvat Mesora is cited for the four-handled storage jar with unidentifiable clay applications, suggesting that it was also heirloomed or salvaged from an earlier site in the drylands (Ayalon 2012: 219, 225; Singer-Avitz 2006: 209). The uniqueness and antiquity of these vessels likely marks these objects as special and perhaps distinctly appropriate for votive deposition. As cached objects unique to the drylands, the deposition of these vessels at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd specifically drew on traditions of memory and this region in order to make a uniquely potent offering (Feldman 2006: 172; Joyce 2000).

The northwestern corner room also contained the largest concentration of stone artifacts, almost entirely made of limestone. These objects index the flow of rituals, materials, and communities between Egypt, the Southern Levant, and the drylands, as well as within the drylands. The limestone objects included a small bowl, a shallow rectangular basin, a bowl fragment, a game board, unidentifiable fragments of worked stone, and three possible standing stones. The three possible standing stones were all found together piled on top of the bowls, basin, and a flat and smoothed stone. The possible standing stones were roughly finished and measured between 50 and 65 centimeters long. Two of these stones were made of red limestone and featured a round depression in either the narrow or wide side. A smooth, shiny brownish-black flint pebble, about 15 centimeters long, was also found alongside these items (Meshel and Goren 2012: 45-46; Reshef 2012: Items 10-12, 22, 23-26, 31-32). The possible standing stones are especially significant in the context of the site and their associated materials. Standing stones are pervasive across the drylands and are intimately interrelated with memory, movement, ritual,

and tradition in this region (see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). One or more of these possible standing stones may even have been removed from one of the myriad standing stone sites in the drylands and deposited at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd for use in ritual and/or as a votive gift. Like the pithos and the storage jar also in this room, these standing stones recursively interacted with memory and the potency of the drylands and contributed to the distinct ritualized atmosphere of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd. Similarly, the sandstone grinding stone in the southwestern corner room is also associated with sites across the drylands (see Chapter 3: Section 3.5.1). This object may index local food preparation styles at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and/or may also have been deposited as a votive gift, evoking memory, tradition, and the potency of the land. Finally, the limestone incised game boards²¹ demonstrate an ancient flow between Egypt, the drylands, and the Southern Levant. Boards made of chalk with similar incisions appear at EB II Tel Arad and EB III Tell as-Safi, a site in the Shephelah. These boards are identified as the Egyptian board game Senet (Sebbane 2001; Shai et al 2014). Iron Age examples also appear at Ḥorvat Radum in the northern Negev and Lachish in the Shephelah (Reshef 2012: 351-352).

4.3.1.3. Kuntillet 'Ajrûd as a Ritual Node in a Landscape of Movement

The elements of ritual at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd demonstrate this place as a site of continuity and innovation, the local and non-local, a ritual node in a liminal landscape, and a site of community. For example, much of the architecture at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd suggests that the sense of ritual at the site was highly idiosyncratic. The excavators found no parallels to the architecture in the Building B complex and the only clear parallel to Building A lies at the fortress at Tell el-Qudeirat (Meshel 1992: 103; Meshel and Goren 2012: 12-13). Otherwise, elements of Building A's architecture bear some resemblance to Iron Age fortresses and city-gates in the northern Negev and Southern Levant. The platform, plastered basins, and plastered benches often appear in Southern Levantine ritual contexts. However, there is no uniformity to these features (Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 81-200; Zevit 2001: 122-266). Rather, ritual architecture in the Iron Age Southern Levant and the drylands is highly localized, specifically tailored to the needs of the community. Similarly, the architecture at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd reflects the needs of its associated communities, traditions about the site and the region, and the physical realities of the site.

The material culture of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd also suggests an idiosyncratic sense of ritual and flows of multiple and diverse communities through the site. The imagery is a mix of motifs and styles from Egypt, Assyria, the Levant, and the Southern Levantine Drylands/Arabian Peninsula, uniquely re-deployed to generate a distinct ritualized atmosphere and creating a novel style in the process. The inscriptions invoke various deities from the Southern Levant and the Southern Levantine Drylands and employ a script-style primarily associated with ("Phoenician") communities on the central Levantine coast. The remains of pomegranates, olives, and dates from the Northern Sinai (perhaps the oasis at Wadi el-Qudeirat), sieves and cords made of date palm fronds, fish from the Mediterranean and Red Seas, Nile Perch, Red Sea cowrie shells, Mediterranean bivalve shells, almond shells, ostrich eggshells, limestone bowls and basins, standing stones, limestone Senet boards, heirloom or salvaged drylands ceramics, objects made of wood from the northern or southern Sinai, an object made of cedar of Lebanon, and linen textiles from Egypt or the Jordan Valley demonstrate a flow of materials and people from throughout the drylands and the ancient Near East (Ayalon 2012; Horwitz et al 2012: 332, 339; Lipschitz 2012: 340, 344, 349; Sheffer and Tidhar 2012: 290, 306-307; Shamir 2012: 313; Sitry

²¹ Another game board was found just outside the entrance to the Building A.

2012: 344-345). The ceramics assemblage is also highly mixed, featuring vessels in styles common to the entire Southern Levant as well as vessels associated with particular regions. Many of the vessels also appear or are prevalent at sites in the Judah, Philistia, the Shephelah (borderlands between the Philistine and Judean heartlands), the northern Negev, the western Negev, and the Sinai-Negev coast (Ayalon 2012; Singer Avitz 2006: 197-209). Petrographic analyses of certain vessels mainly identified clays from the northern or northwestern Negev and the Shephelah, with a few from Judah and northern Israel. One storage jar was associated with Cyprus or the Aegean. The clay of the Cypro-Phoenician style bichrome jug was sourced from central or northern Israel. Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) of the decorated pithoi (Pithos A and B) and undecorated pithoi of the same type from the western broadroom identified elements related to the clay from the Motza Formation near Jerusalem (northern Judah). The clays of several storage jars were attributed to Philistia. The clays from sherds of Samaria Ware found in the bench-room complex were provenanced to northern Israel (Ayalon 2012; Goren 2012; Gunneweg et al 2012). Generally, the materials at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd are similar to other sites in the western drylands, with a mix of materials mainly influenced by, copying, or imported from Egypt, the Mediterranean coast, Philistia and Judah (see above, Section 4.2). This broad similarity firmly emplaces this assemblage within its regional context and demonstrates the mix of local and non-local elements at the site.

However, there are also several idiosyncrasies within this assemblage that indicate innovation and creativity in a changing Iron Age context. Votive deposition of common or quotidian vessels made of clay, stone, wood, or straw comprises a major, if not primary, ritual practice at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd. According to this sense of ritual, appropriate offerings were largely (but perhaps not entirely) restricted to vessels and their contents. This sense of votive deposition may have derived from the blending of indigenous mobile pastoral ritual traditions and the votive traditions of the urbanized, sedentary ancient Near East. Votive deposition at standing stone sites in the drylands is marked by aggregations or caches of flint tools and flakes, rocks of unusual forms and colors, Red Sea and Mediterranean seashells, and fossils (Avner 2002: 107-108, 114-115; Rosen et al 2007: 13; Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). Alternatively, the Hathor Temple at Serâbît el-Khâdim and Site 200 feature senses of ritual and votive deposition that blended Egyptian, Southern Levantine, and drylands traditions (see Chapter 2: Sections 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1; Chapter 3: Section 3.2.2). Sites of ritual in the semi-arid agro-pastoral drylands, such as Ḥorvat Qitmit (see below, Section 4.3.2:1-5), tended to blend local and non-local, sedentary and mobile traditions of the Southern Levant and the drylands. This demonstrates the idiosyncrasies of ritual in the drylands and the innovation of ritual in the context of contact.

Ritual at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd served as the latest iteration of the entangling of traditions and the emergence of new traditions. The open-air stone platform provided a common ritual language between mobile pastoral communities of the drylands and non-local and more sedentary communities, allowing for intra-action and the generation of new traditions and practices. Other open-air or partially open-air ritual installations (e.g. the basins and the portico) and certain ritual practices (e.g. votive deposition of utilitarian vessels and their contents) also provided visible and accessible ritual practices to different visitors to the site. These installations/practices afforded an opportunity for diverse visitors to interact and coalesce into new ephemeral or temporary communities. However, this site also featured enclosed architecture, plastered pathways, and nested thresholds that funneled and constrained the movements and sightlines of visitors, drawing on and generating various potencies derived from senses of liminality and

restricted visibility. A rich mixed assemblage of images and materials and architectural allusions to fortresses and city-gates further generated various senses of liminality and multiple potencies.

This understanding of Kuntillet 'Ajrūd allows for a broader and more fluid interpretation of the materials at the site, regardless of whether Kuntillet 'Ajrūd is dated to the early or late eighth century. However, the question of whether we might attribute the construction and/or occupation of Kuntillet 'Ajrūd to particular communities is an important consideration in producing a more precise interpretation of its material flows. If the site belongs in the late eighth century BCE, then we might understand it in the context of the remote hegemony of the Assyrians over the drylands and perhaps attribute its construction to imperial funneling and constraining of movement in a remote landscape, in which the site was built and occupied by local communities and/or contingents from Assyrian proxies, in response to Assyrian policies and activities. If it belongs in the early eighth century BCE, then we would need to interpret it based on a wider domination of the Levant by the Assyrians and attribute its construction to some other entity (perhaps local, perhaps non-local).

In either case, these are material flows related to domination, control, and the funneling of movement and power, ritual or otherwise. As a ritual node on a roadside in a remote landscape, Kuntillet 'Ajrūd served as a potent landmark of liminality for diverse communities. Ritual practice at the site concentrated the power of these liminalities for visitors so that they might wield the potency of the land for their own benefit. These rituals employed a diverse array of traditions, blending ancient ways of seeing with the realities of the contemporary world and allowed these communities to navigate a dangerous and unforgiving landscape. These rituals and the experience of the site also constituted new communities, as visitors to the site were then connected by their experiences of Kuntillet 'Ajrūd, even if they never met each other. Consequently, we may envision Kuntillet 'Ajrūd as a potent confluence of diverse communities and traditions, a place of innovation and creativity, entangled with multiple, overlapping senses of liminality.

4.3.2. Ḥorvat Qitmit

The archaeological remains of Ḥorvat Qitmit (Old Israel Grid 1564 0660, UTM 36R 697037m E 3451880m N) lie in the southeastern Beersheba Valley (Figs. D.1; D.60) and comprise a 1300 square meter area on the northeastern end of a flat-topped limestone hill with slopes of stepped flint cliffs (Figs. D.61; D.62). The Naḥal Qitmit (Wadi Qatamat) runs in a N-S direction, directly to the east of the site and its tributary wraps around the south. These wadis cut off Ḥorvat Qitmit from the nearby hill ranges. This area, marked by Irano-Turanian vegetation, receives approximately 200 millimeters of rain per year. Several undated cairns or tombs and Early Bronze structures dot the surrounding hills and floodplain, including the remains of cairns or tombs (Site 58) on a long hill less than 500 meters southwest from the remains at Ḥorvat Qitmit. A stone installation (Site 57) on a nearby hill, approximately a kilometer northwest of Ḥorvat Qitmit, may also be contemporary with the remains at Ḥorvat Qitmit. However, the nature of this installation is unclear. The closest contemporary settlement is firmly identified at Tel Malḥata, five kilometers (or an hour's walk) northwest of Ḥorvat Qitmit. Wells near Tel Malḥata also provided the nearest consistent water source. Otherwise, Tel 'Ira and Tel Masos lie approximately 19 and 20 kilometers, respectively, to the northwest. Tel 'Aroer lies 18 kilometers to the southwest. Ḥorvat Radum and Ḥorvat 'Uza, lie approximately 10 kilometers to the northeast, while Tel Arad lies approximately 15 kilometers to the northeast

(Fig. D.60). Furthermore, the site is visible from Tel Malḥata, as well as further away at Tel 'Ira and Tel Arad. Ḥorvat Qitmit is likely situated at a nexus of roads that led north to Tel Malḥata and other settlements in the Beersheba Valley, east to the Wadi Arabah, and south to the Negev Highlands and southern Jordan (Beit-Arieh 1995: 1-8; 2003b: 10-12). Beit-Arieh identifies the presumed eastern road with the biblical “way of Edom” or the “way of *midbar 'edôm*” (1995: 1-2; see Chapter 2: Section 2.3.3).

The site was originally dated to the late seventh-early sixth century BCE, based on the ceramics. However, recent ceramics research at Tel Malḥata suggests that the site should be updated to the late eighth-early seventh century BCE, with preference for the early seventh century BCE (Beit Arieh 1995; Beit-Arieh and Freud 1995; Freud 2014; Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015). The seventh century BCE coincides with the infiltration and increasing hegemony of the Assyrian Empire, in which a series of military campaigns brought the Southern Levantine Drylands under the control of the Assyrian or their proxies. The Assyrians increased trade and interaction in all parts of the empire, in order to attain goods and property. In the Southern Levantine Drylands, these polices increased interaction with the Mediterranean, the Southern Levant, and the Arabian Peninsula and interaction between sedentary and mobile communities. Ḥorvat Qitmit reflects this increased interaction and flow of materials. However, the drylands also remained entrenched in ancient traditions and ways of seeing. This included multiple, recursive, and overlapping senses of liminality, which were amplified in the northern Negev by the domination of Assyria through their proxies in Judah, the flow of Judean communities and materials into the Negev, and ever-increasing interactions between mobile and sedentary communities in the northern Negev and southern Jordan. As an open-air roadside site near several major settlements, Ḥorvat Qitmit operated as a ritual node for this intra-action and flow of communities and materials, recursively generating and drawing upon many potent senses of liminality.

Beit-Arieh divided the architecture at the site into two roughly defined complexes – (1) Complex A, a 300 square meter area on the southern end of the site, and (2) Complex B, 15 meters north of Complex A (Fig. D.63). A large, elliptical stone enclosure lies between Complex A and B, and a smaller stone enclosure lies to the southwest of Complex A. Beit-Arieh found no evidence for destruction of the site and asserts that the site was abandoned under unclear circumstances (1995: 3). However, Thareani proposes that a thick layer of ash in the rooms of Complex A indexes destruction by conflagration (2014b: 198). Following the end of the site, the structures were covered with a thin layer of earth and sand over time and the site suffered from severe wind and rain erosion, with artifacts scattered over a large area. A large concentration of artifacts slid down the eastern slope of the hill, where some fragments were found 100 meters from the site (Beit-Arieh 1995: 3, 8). Given the visibility and accessibility of the site, stones and other materials were also likely salvaged by later communities, as well.

Unlike Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, intended flows of movement through Ḥorvat Qitmit are less clear. The entire site is a collection of open-air, or partially open-air, structures and no plastering guides movement. Certain structures in Complex A and Complex B are oriented towards the south. However, the topography of the hill and a line of stones (C71) in the eastern area of Complex A may suggest that the site was accessed primarily from the west, which Beit-Arieh categorizes as a bent axis approach (1995: 9, 308).

4.3.2.1. The Large and Small Enclosures

Two circular features, which Beit-Arieh refers to as “enclosures,” appear in the western part of the site. The smaller of these (locus 60) is characterized as a foundation course of large flint stones arranged in an elliptic circle on the far southwestern edge of the site, 11 meters from the closest feature in Complex A. The circle measured 6.5 meters at its major axis and 3.5 meters at its minor axis and enclosed a beaten earth floor. The flint stones were all laid on their long, narrow side. The inner north wall featured a low step or bench, preserved to a length of 1.3 meters. The southeastern side of the enclosure also featured a large upright stone (1.4 meters high and 70 centimeters wide) *in situ*. A similar stone (one meter long and 85 centimeters high) was found turned on its side next to the upright stone. Finds on the floor included ceramic sherds and a zoomorphic figurine fragment. In a second phase, the enclosure was filled in with small and medium stones and thin layer of soil, raising the floor level by about 30 centimeters. More sherds were found on this second floor. Beit-Arieh suggests the fill might have been intended to stabilize the wall foundation (Beit-Arieh 1995: 25-26; Beck 1995: 137; Cat. 147).

The larger circular feature (locus 114) appears near the northwestern corner of a three-room structure in Complex A. This enclosure was constructed of a single course of fieldstones, averaging 30 x 25 x 60 centimeters. Beit-Arieh considers this to be the only course, due to the size of the stones and the lack of dislodged stones in the vicinity. The circle measured 13 meters at its major axis and 11 meters at its minor axis. An opening, approximately 1.1 meters wide, appeared along the northeast, roughly facing Complex B. On the southeast, a stone step or bench (F91), approximately 5 meters long, abutted the interior of the wall. The largest stone in the enclosure wall appeared behind the center of this bench, set on its narrow side. This stone measured 1.15 meters long by 70 centimeters high (Fig. D.64). Beit-Arieh suggests the possibility that the stone was broken and may have been taller in antiquity. Sherds were recovered from between the large stone and the bench at a much greater density than those found in probes within the enclosure (Beit-Arieh 1995: 24).

Beit-Arieh tentatively classifies both circular features as ritual units, identifying the large stones in the southeastern edges as possible standing stones and the step/benches as offering tables (1995: 24, 26). The alignment of these possible standing stones with the rising sun may support this identification. Significantly, these structures resemble circular geoglyphs and structures found at mobile pastoral ritual sites throughout the drylands (Avner 2002: 100, 104-107, 116-119).

4.3.2.2. Complex A

Complex A is a 300 square meter area situated approximately eleven meters to the northeast of the small enclosure, two meters southwest of the large enclosure, and 15 meters south of Complex B. Complex A (Fig. D.65) comprises a square stone platform set within a wall corner (Locus 30), a set of stone and plastered features enclosed by a circular wall (Loci 24, 37, 38, 42), a rectangular three-walled structure (Loci/Rooms 16-18, 31, 36), and a line of stones (C71) between the east wall of the three-wall structure and the circular wall/stone and plastered features (Beit-Arieh 1995: 9-10).

The platform (Fig. D.66), measuring 1.25 x 2 meters, was constructed of medium-sized fieldstones and filled in with pebbles. Its four corners were roughly compass oriented. Lumps of plaster bearing negative imprints of stone on the bedrock indicate that it was covered with a

heavy coat of plaster. Straight wall fragments (F51, E41) of two rows of small stones (ca. 50 centimeters wide) appear two meters to the south and west of the stone platform. Beit-Arieh reports that a “Bedouin grave” destroyed part of the western wall fragment (F51) (1995: 14). He reconstructs these fragments as a single L-shaped wall. Another wall fragment (D61) of two rows of medium-sized stone (ca. 90 centimeters wide) abutted the basin feature, more than four meters to the east. Beit-Arieh reconstructs this wall fragment with the thinner L-shaped wall fragments as a single structure, forming an enclosure “shaped like a trapezoid” (1995: 14). However, Beit-Arieh also notes that “several fragments of the wall collapsed and have left no trace” (1995: 14). Consequently, the connection between a half meter wide straight perpendicular walls near the platform and an angled thicker wall abutting Locus 24 is unclear, unless the topography of the site suggests otherwise. Artifacts were scattered all over this area, but mostly appear in the area between the stone podium and the thick diagonal wall (the eastern half of Locus 30). Finds in this area included a calcite stamp seal (Fig. D.79), ceramic figurines and jar stands, jugs, jars, kraters, chalices, a juglet, a dense concentration of bowls, bronze and stone jewelry, a few rare Red Sea cowrie shell beads, and a scattering of sheep/goat bones. Some of the finds in this area were clustered together on the bedrock or in the fills. A cooking pot was also recovered *in situ* from the northern part of Locus 30, wedged in a fissure in the rock. A dense cluster of artifacts (Locus 44) was also found on the sloping rock surface to the south of the stone podium, apparently washed down by flooding. Finds included ceramic stand fragments, model shrine fragments, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurine fragments, kraters, jugs, jars, chalices, a dense concentration of bowls, and a fragmentary inscribed sherd (Inscription No. 1; Appendix C.2.1). Most of the bowls in Complex A were recovered either from Locus 30 or Locus 44 (Beck 1995; Beit-Arieh 1995: 13-18, 214, 258-259; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995: 220-227, 241-244; Horwitz and Raphael 1995: 290; Mienis 1995: 276-277).

Beit-Arieh identifies the stone platform as a *bamah*, the biblical term for a ritual installation that scholars often identify as an open-air platform (1995: 13; Alpert-Nakhai 2001: 161-169; LaRocca-Pitts 2001: 127-159; see above, Section 4.3.1.1). He observes that the size of the area, the position of the podium within its boundaries, and the many ritual objects concentrated in this area indicate that that the platform was the most prominent and important part of the site. That we might understand the platform as a place for offerings is further suggested by the ceramic jar stands. Beit-Arieh reports that fragments from about fifty jar stands were recovered from this area, as well as sherds from 350 bowls. The most complete jar stands are characterized as storage jars with a pedestal base, bearded heads as the neck of the vessel, and arms attached to the body (Catalogue Nos. 23-24; Figs. D.76; D.77). One measures 60 centimeters high and the other is estimated at 56 centimeters high. Both ends are open and the top opening served as a stand for bowls. Remnants of black paint appear on the beards, moustaches, and eyebrows and red paint on one of the faces. Other ceramic jar stands were more fragmentary, but included an anthropomorphic jar stand without a beard, plain jar stands, and stands with applied anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures, often on ledges. Most of the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurine fragments in this area also appear to have been originally applied to stands (Beck 1995; Beit-Arieh 1995: 13-14, 308).

This dense concentration of objects associated with offering practices in proximity to a plastered stone podium suggests that offering rituals of food and liquid (likely including votive deposition) constituted a major practice at Ḥorvat Qitmit. In the context of the northern Negev, this platform indicates a flow of humans and practices through the drylands, the appropriation of these practices by local communities, and innovation in ritual (see above, Section 4.3.1.1). As a

prominent and highly visible area in an open-air extramural ritual site on a roadside, this platform provided a common ritual vernacular between local and non-local, mobile and sedentary communities, including the inhabitants of Tel Malḥata, local mobile pastoral communities, and travelers on the road. Furthermore, the motifs and style of materials deposited at this platform (as well as the rest of the site) suggest an intra-flow of traditions from Syria, Phoenicia, Philistia, Judah, Ammon, Moab, Assyria, and the drylands (especially in the northern Negev and southern Jordan). Significantly, the jar stands and select other materials bear a distinct resemblance to ritual objects recovered from a seventh century BCE deposit at En Ḥaṣeva (‘Ain Husb), a fortress or fortified settlement near the Wadi Arabah, approximately 56 kilometers southeast of Ḥorvat Qitmit. Similarly, a figurine head with three horns and a knob-headress (Catalogue No. 68; Fig. D.74a-b) found in this area is stylistically and technologically comparable to a double flute player figurine and a bearded male head at Tel Malḥata (Fig. D.75a-b). The appearance of horns likely identifies this figurine as a deity. The lack of beard may suggest a female deity (Beck 1995: 43-50, 78-80, 185-187; Beit-Arieh 1995: 310, 315; Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015: 741; Ben-Arieh 2011; Cohen and Yisrael 1996; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995; Kletter 2015: 567).

Immediately adjacent to Wall D61, fragments of a circular wall (C51) enclosed another set of features (Loci 24, 37), which Beit-Arieh refers to as the “altar enclosure.” The circular wall was built of rows of medium-sized stones and measured 40 centimeters wide. Much of its southern half was lost to erosion due to flooding. Another row of stones (C71) branched off from the northwestern part of this wall, almost reaching the three-walled structure at the end of Wall C82. According to Beit-Arieh, the circular wall enclosed three features: 1) a flint slab feature, 2) a round plastered basin embedded in the ground and 3) a pit (Locus 37). Beit-Arieh characterizes the flint slab feature (Fig. D.68) as a large flint slab (90 x 70 x 30 centimeters) laid on a base of medium-sized flint slabs and smaller stones. It appears along the western edge of the enclosure and measured 50 centimeters high. Beit-Arieh identified this feature as an altar for burnt offerings based on “the cultic nature of the site, the distinctive structure of the installation, and its proximity to the basin and pit” (1995: 9, n.1). However, Beit-Arieh also notes that there is “no tangible evidence for its use for sacrifices, since being very close to the surface it was badly eroded so that any traces of sacrificial activity have been lost” (1995: 9, n.1). The northern half of the enclosure also contained a circular basin, built of rectangular fieldstones laid on the bedrock (Fig. D.67). The inner surface and the lower part of its outer surface were covered with several layers of white plaster, 4-12 centimeters thick, likely indicating a hydraulic function, perhaps for the offering of libations (Zevit 2001: 147). The inner diameter measured one meter across and the sides measured 40 centimeters thick. Less than a meter south of the basin, a pit (ca. 80 centimeters deep) had been hewn into the bedrock. Two limestone slabs *in situ* lined the inner south wall of the pit. Beit-Arieh suggests that similar slabs lined the entire pit. Finds associated with this enclosure are relatively few in number. These include ceramic jar stand and figurine fragments, bowls, cooking pots, a krater, jars, and unidentified items both within in the enclosure and on the sloping rock directly southeast of the enclosure (Beck 1995; Beit-Arieh 1995:18-20; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995: 233-235).

Roughly seven meters to the north of the enclosure, an open tripartite structure (Loci 16-18) faced south (Fig. D.69). This structure measured 10.5 x 5 meters and featured three conjoined longrooms. There was no evidence of doors at the entrances to these rooms. Beit-Arieh reconstructs the building as roofed and having two phases. In the first phase, the walls were constructed of local flint, measuring 60-70 centimeters wide. The rooms (16-18) averaged a

little over two meters wide. The floors were covered with a white crushed-lime floor. In a second building phase, the eastern walls (D81, C82) in Rooms 16 and 17 were enlarged by the addition of two rows of stones on their inner sides, reducing the room widths to between 1.8 meters and two meters wide. In Room 17, a second floor of crushed chalk was laid over the crushed lime floor and a free-standing stone feature (C83) was erected in the southern half of the room. The stone feature was comprised of two courses of large flint stones and measured approximately 2.5 meters in length. This feature nearly bisected Room 17 lengthwise, its southern end roughly aligning with the southern ends of the walls. The upper course formed a flat surface, approximately 60 centimeters high. Beit-Arieh describes the feature as a “podium-like wall segment or ‘table’” (1995:12). A similar (partially damaged) stone feature (D82) also appeared in Room 16. Stone Feature D82 aligned with the ends of wall, but met a threshold composed of two rows of flat stones and a step (approximately 20 centimeters high) in the entrance to the room. An unidentified round stone installation appeared approximately a meter south of the threshold and step in the courtyard (Locus 33). A shallow pit (a meter across and 20 centimeters deep) also appeared in the center of Room 16, near the east wall (D81). This pit contained ash, sherds, and animal bones. No walls were thickened in Room 18, but a stone bench (approximately 40 centimeters wide) was added to the eastern wall (D84). A stone feature (E82) was also attached to the western wall (E81) of the entrance. Beit-Arieh describes this feature as a “‘table,’” much like the stone features in Rooms 16 and 17 (1995: 12). It was built of three courses of large stones, 60 centimeters high, with an upper course of flat slabs. However, this feature is “‘joined to the east wall by the same kind of flat slabs,” thus creating a compartment (1995: 12). In all three rooms, a layer of ash, sherds, and animal bones, approximately 20-30 centimeters thick, covered the floors in the second phase. Finds inside the tripartite structure included an array of domestic wheel-made vessels, hand-made bowls and basins, a few figurine fragments, and sheep, goat, and cattle bones in and above the layer of ash. Room 16 mostly contained bowls and basins, a few chalices and stand fragments, and a few sheep/goat bones. Room 17 contained a dense concentration of bowls, cooking pots, jugs, jars, basins, chalices, a few stand fragments, and sheep/goat, cattle, and unidentified bones. The animal bones in Room 17 were all burnt, comprising most of the burnt bones at the site. Room 17 also contained fragments of human ribs, which Horwitz and Raphael attribute to the reported “Bedouin grave” near the stone podium. Room 18 contained a few bowls and jars, a juglet, and a female plaque figurine head (Catalogue No. 116). The majority of the cooking pots at Horvat Qitmit were either found in this tripartite structure or associated with the stone podium (Beck 1995 106-107; Beit-Arieh 1995: 9-13; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995: 216, 228-232; Horwitz and Raphael 1995: 289-290, 297).

Beit-Arieh tentatively identifies the tripartite structure as an area for the ritual cooking of meat and the “‘tables’” as possible shelves for ritual objects, based on the concentration of cooking and serving vessels, burnt bones, and the thick layer of ash (1995: 308). However, Beit-Arieh does not identify any cooking installations in or near the structure, unless the pit in Room 16 or the stone installation just outside Room 16 should be identified as such. Alternatively, Horwitz and Raphael suggest that the concentration of burnt bones in Room 17 may index that this room was where animal sacrifices were offered or that this room served as a repository from animal sacrifices carried out on the stone platform or the flint slab feature (1995: 297). The concentration of cooking pots in Room 17 may also support one of these identifications. Somewhat similarly, Thareani proposes that the ash layer represents a destruction by conflagration, rather than cooking (2014b: 198). At the very least, the concentration of cooking

and serving vessels and burnt bones in the tripartite structure suggests the consumption of prepared meat (which was perhaps cooked in Complex B). The layout of the tripartite structure and its proximity to the stone platform and other ritual features also suggests that this consumption was related to ritual.

Beit-Arieh also notes the visibility of the “tables” from the courtyard and the significance of the southern orientation of the tripartite structure (and Complex B), suggesting an intentional alignment with “the Land of Edom” (Beit-Arieh 1995: 307-308). Certainly, the orientation and lines of sight of the tripartite structure are significant. However, an orientation toward southern Jordan is less likely as it lies in the southeast (Beit-Arieh 1995: 307; Uehlinger 2007: 94). Rather, we might consider this orientation in context of the drylands tradition of aligning ritual sites with astronomical activities or landscape features (see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). A southern facing orientation aligns with the movement of the sun across the sky and ensures the maximum amount of light over the course of the day within the open tripartite structure. However, as longrooms, the light may have been mainly limited to the entrances of the rooms with the rear areas shrouded in darkness for much of the day. Thus, the arrangement of the platforms at the entryways of small, intimate longrooms highlights that visibility and light played a significant role in the function of the building

4.3.2.3. Complex B

Complex B (Figs. D.70; D.71) is a stone structure approximately 15 meters north of Complex A and 11 meters northwest of the Large Enclosure. The exterior walls measure 1.2 meters wide and the interior measures approximately 8.5 x 8 meters. The plan in the publication reconstructs the eastern wall (B131) as shorter than the western wall (D121), creating an L-shaped structure. However, a one course “enclosure wall” (B111) continues the line of the eastern wall (B131), which Beit-Arieh attributes to a purported second phase (or perhaps later). Beit-Arieh also observes that the original length of eastern wall B131 is unclear and may have originally extended the entire length of Complex B. Much of the northern wall (B141) was not preserved as well (Beit-Arieh 1995: 20-21, 24).

Beit-Arieh reconstructed this building as having two phases. In the first phase, rooms 116 and 108 were built along the western wall (D121) of the structure. The southern room (108) featured a beaten earth floor and opened directly into a courtyard (104). The eastern extent of this room is marked by two “pillar-like” supports. An opening with a stone threshold in the northern wall of Room 108 may have led into Room 116. A standing stone feature (Fig. D.72) was erected at the endpoint of the short southern wall (D122). The standing stone is characterized as a large, embedded trapezoidal flint boulder, rising 70 centimeters above the surface. A paving was laid down in front of the standing stone to the north. This paving (measuring approximately 1.3 x 1.1 meters) was composed of rectangular flint slabs enclosed by long rectangular stones (Beit-Arieh 1995: 20).

In the second phase, a single course of stones (B111) was added to the end of the Wall B131. Room 108 was blocked up with stones a meter high. Room 116 was divided into a northern room (107) and a southern room (109) by a partition wall built of one row of small fieldstones. A layer of ash mixed with few sheep/goat bones (approximately ten centimeters thick) covered these rooms. A cooking pot was recovered from this layer *in situ* in the southeast corner of Room 109 (locus 110), as well as a fragmentary inscribed sherd (Inscription No. 5; Appendix C.2.5). Bowls, a cup, and two more cooking pots were also recovered from this corner.

Other finds in Room 109 included bowls, basins, cups, chalices, a cooking pot, an inscribed sherd incomplete at both ends (Inscription No. 2; Appendix C.2.2), and a fenestrated and incised limestone cuboid altar. The bottom half of a piece of Imitation Assyrian Palace Ware is included among the bowls. Beit-Arieh also attributed unidentified figurine fragments to the ash layer covering these rooms (Beit-Arieh 1995: 20-24, 259-260, 262-263, 275-276; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995: 236-237; Horwitz and Raphael 1995: 290-292).

Locus 112, the area along the interior of the missing northern wall outside of Rooms 116/107/109, featured a small bronze disc and piece of foil, sherds of bowls, jars, jugs, a krater, and a stand, and a dense concentration of sheep/goat or unidentifiable bones. South of Locus 112, a line of six standing stones (C132), approximately a meter long, appeared in parallel with the northern wall (B141). Beit-Arieh assigns this feature to a time after the site was abandoned. Sherds of a large bowl with handles and a cooking pot were found in the area to the east of the standing stones (locus 113). Finds in the courtyard area (104, 115) south of the standing stones included bowls, basins, cooking pots, a jar, inscribed sherds (Inscriptions No. 2, 3, 4; Appendix C.2.2) that mention or may mention the deity Qôš, a quartz bead, a carnelian bead, and a large concentration of sheep/goat bones (Beit-Arieh 1995: 20-24, 259-264, 272-276; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995: 238-239; Horwitz and Raphael 1995: 290-292, 297).

Beit-Arieh identifies the filled-in pillared room (Room 108) as a second open-air platform, with an adjacent cooking area (Rooms 107, 109), all unroofed (1995: 20, 24). Horwitz and Raphael also suggest that the ash layer in Complex B should be attributed to cooking activities, based on the density of animal bones in Complex B, especially relative to Complex A (1995: 297). Beit-Arieh's phasing of Complex B is somewhat vague on details or explanation. However, the conversion of Room 108 into a second open-air platform in the building's purported second phase may not be the only possible interpretation of these remains. Alternatively, we might interpret the blocking up of Room 108 with large building stones as part of the ritual decommissioning of the site.

Generally, Complex B is more difficult to interpret, but certain elements are notable in the context of an open-air ritual site in the drylands. The standing stone and paving on the end of wall D121 is a feature well known at open-air ritual sites throughout the drylands (see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). The paving likely served as a surface for depositing offerings before the standing stone, much like in other open-air standing stone sites (Beit-Arieh 1995: 20; see Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). Furthermore, this feature faces towards the interior of Complex B, requiring the devotee to face south (Beit-Arieh 1995: 20). However, the position of the standing stone feature at the end of wall D122 and facing towards the interior of Complex B also likely would have limited sunlight exposure to the face of the standing stone and the paved surface. If eastern wall B131 did not extend the entire length of western wall D121, then direct sunlight may have been limited to the mornings and midday. If the wall did extend this entire length, then direct sunlight may have been limited further, depending on the height of the wall and what parts of the structure may have been roofed.

Beit-Arieh attributes the line of six standing stones (C132) in the courtyard to a re-use of the site sometime after its abandonment (1995: 24). Whether or not this is the case, lines of standing stones in groups of two, six, or nine are well attested in the drylands (Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). If this standing stone feature is contemporary with the other remains at the site, then it further attests to the flows of traditions at the site. If this feature post-dates the other remains, then it demonstrates that certain communities in the drylands continued to venerate the site after it was abandoned.

4.3.2.4. Favissa (?)

A shallow pit (Locus 80) was also found on the slope of the hill, 70 meters southeast of the stone podium. The pit lay at the foot of a small natural rock formation (Fig. D.73) and contained a concentration of bowl and krater sherds, a few jar and jug sherds, and ceramic fragments of ritual and unidentified vessels and objects. Beit-Arieh identifies this pit as a possible *favissa*, a Latin term for underground cellars where temple offerings were re-deposited (Beit-Arieh 1995: 26; Freud and Beit Arieh 1995: 246; see above, Section 4.3.1.3).

4.3.2.5. Ḥorvat Qitmit as a Ritual Node in a Landscape of Movement

The elements of ritual at Ḥorvat Qitmit demonstrate that we may understand the site as another ritual node in a liminal landscape, a site of continuity and innovation, the local and the non-local, and a site of community. As an open-air ritual site, Ḥorvat Qitmit falls within a long tradition of such sites in the drylands. Similarly, many elements within the site belong to ancient traditions of the drylands, such as the circular enclosures, standing stone features, and alignments with astronomical activities and landscape features (Chapter 3: Section 3.2.1). However, Ḥorvat Qitmit also features an assortment of materials that distinguish the site from other open-air ritual sites in the drylands and reflect the entanglement of the site with the contemporary northern Negev, southern Jordan, Arabia, Assyria, and the Southern Levant, especially Philistia, the Shephelah, and southern Judah.

The ceramics assemblage largely features vessels that appear most frequently in the northern Negev and southern Jordan. The most common type of cooking pot at Ḥorvat Qitmit dominates sites in southern Jordan and features prominently at sites in the southern Beersheba Valley in the seventh century BCE. Petrographic analysis of these cooking pots at Ḥorvat Qitmit identified a red sandstone clay, likely from the Ḥaṣeva Formation in the northern Negev and the Arabah Valley. Furthermore, the ceramics and coroplastics reveal a close relationship with Tel Malḥata IV-III, likely indicating that many of these objects were produced at Tel Malḥata. For example, the southern Jordanian-style cooking pot that dominates Ḥorvat Qitmit also appears in larger than average quantities at Tel Malḥata, comprising 50% of the cooking pot assemblage in Stratum III (seventh century BCE). Additionally, a figurine head with three horns and a knob-headress (Catalogue No. 68; Fig. D.74a-b) at Ḥorvat Qitmit is stylistically and technologically comparable to a double flute player figurine (Fig. D.75a-b) and a figurine head of a bearded male (Fig. D.84) at Tel Malḥata (Beck 1995: 78-80; Beit-Arieh 1995: 310, 315; Beit-Arieh and Freud 2015: 741; Freud 2014; 2015; Freud and Beit-Arieh 1995; Kletter 2015: 545-547).

Concomitantly, the styles and motifs of many of the artifacts also demonstrate a broader intra-active flow within and between the drylands (including Arabia), Assyria, and the Southern Levant. Several handmade clay basins, mainly found in, or in front of, Rooms 16 and 17 in Complex A, are identified as Negev Ware, a handmade ware associated with mobile pastoral communities in the central and southern Negev and southern Jordan during the Iron Age and other periods (Bienkowski, Oakeshott, and Berlin 2002: 276; Freud and Beit Arieh 1995: 215; Tebes 2006b; See Chapter 3: Section 3.5.2). The dominant cooking pot at Ḥorvat Qitmit is also common at Tell el-Qudeirat (Stratum 2) and En Ḥaṣeva (Freud 2014: 286). Notably, the anthropomorphic jar stands are most closely paralleled to jar stands from the ritual depository at En Ḥaṣeva (Beck 1995: 43-50; Ben-Arieh 2011; Cohen and Yisrael 1996; Fig. D.78). Additionally, a little over 50% of the bird figurines at Ḥorvat Qitmit are identified as ostriches.

Wild ostriches inhabited the drylands of the Levant and Arabia until the early twentieth century CE. Ostrich eggshells or representations are frequent at sites in the Southern Levantine Drylands (including the Arabian Peninsula) and appear at sites in the Southern Levant and Assyria. Southern Levantine glyptic representations may feature a “Lord of the Ostriches” motif, in which an anthropomorphic figure appears in a pose of domination between two ostriches. Examples of a similar motif featuring a deity also appear in Assyrian glyptics. Several scholars suggest that the ostrich was a particularly potent creature in the ancient Near East, due to their aggressiveness and danger to humans, their ability to swiftly escape, the immense difficulty in taming them, and their association with the mysterious and hostile drylands (Beck 1995: 141-151; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 139-140, 182, 385-385; Potts 2001). Furthermore, fragments of a small (ca. 9 x 9 x 9 centimeters) limestone cuboid altar incised with diamonds, chevrons, dots, and lines in intersecting, zigzag, and parallel patterns appeared in Complex B. Similar small limestone cuboid altars are known from sites throughout the drylands beginning in the late eighth century BCE and became increasingly widespread in the Southern Levant during the Persian and Hellenistic Periods. They also appear at Iron II sites on the southern coast and the Shephelah. Evidence suggests that these altars may have been associated with the expansion of the Arabian incense trade into the Southern Levant (Beit-Arieh 1995: 275-276; Ben-Arieh 2011: Figs. 42-43, 45-46; Freud and Reshef 2015: 585-592; Hassell 2005; Shea 1983; Singer-Avitz 1999: 41-44). Finally, several cowrie shell beads are embedded in one of the anthropomorphic jar stands, likely depicting the fringe of a garment. This particular species of cowrie shell (*Cypraea annulus* Linnaeus) is rare in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez and only begins to become common in the extreme end of the Red Sea, along the southern and eastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula (Beck 1995: 43-45; Mienis 1995: 276-278).

Similarly, a broad array of small carinated bowls at Ḥorvat Qitmit demonstrates Assyrian flows. These vessels account for 12% of the bowl assemblage at Ḥorvat Qitmit (Freud and Beit Arieh 1995: 212). Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis on a carinated bowl at Ḥorvat Qitmit revealed an origin in the northeastern Negev (Gunneweg and Mommsen 1995: 281). These bowls mimic Assyrian Palace Ware, but lack glazing or certain morphological details and fabric. Assyrian-style or Assyrian-influenced/inspired wares appear across the Southern Levant and the Southern Levantine Drylands, most commonly in the early seventh century BCE. Recently, David Ben-Shlomo distinguished between “Assyrian-style” wares and “Assyrian-influenced” or “Assyrian-inspired” wares. Both wares are produced locally, but Assyrian-influenced or Assyrian-inspired wares lack the morphological details and distinctive fabric of the Assyrian-style ceramics. Assyrian-inspired wares also appear in a wider and larger distribution in the Southern Levant than the Assyrian-style wares. However, Assyrian-style wares appear in relatively large numbers at a relatively large percentage of sites in or bordering the Southern Levantine Drylands, including Tel Sera, Tel Jemmeh, Tel Beer-Sheba²², Tel ‘Ira, Tel ‘Aroer, Tell el-Qudeirat, Tell el-Kheleifeh, Tall Busayra, and Tawilan (Ben-Shlomo 2014b: 73-79).²² Bowls similar to those found at Ḥorvat Qitmit also frequently appear at Tel Malḥata IV-III (Freud 2015: 167-172). Additionally, a calcite stamp seal (Fig. D.79) at Ḥorvat Qitmit depicts a figure in a garment with a cross-hatched design facing a small tree and star. His left hand is raised and his right hand touches the small tree. An unidentifiable symbol (perhaps a taller tree) appears behind him. This imagery is generally associated with the spread of astral symbolism under the

²² Based on excavation work and petrographic analysis, Ben-Shlomo proposes the site of Tel Jemmeh in the Shephelah (identified as mainly Philistine in population, but sharing several ceramic trends with the northern Negev) as a major manufacturing site for these wares (2014b: 79).

Assyrians and, more specifically, with the moon deity Sîn of Ḥarran, a city in the northern Levant controlled by the Assyrians. However, this particular style and constellation of motifs are only known in the Southern Levant, especially along the coast. Examples of a similar style with a variant motif also appear at Ḥorvat 'Uza and Tawilan in the drylands and at Tel Jemmeh and Gezer in the Shephelah (Beck 1995: 178-179; 2007: 194-196; Bennett and Bienkowski 1995: 79-80, 290; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 298-305).

Furthermore, Pirhiya Beck's analysis of style and iconography at Ḥorvat Qitmit identifies major parallels and influences from across the Levant (1995: 179-183). For example, several female plaque figurines belong to a widespread Southern Levantine tradition of the late second millennium BCE-first millennium BCE. There are several spatial and temporal variants of this figurine style, in which the female may appear nude or clothed, hands clasping breasts, at the sides, or holding objects, and hair arranged in a long style or covered with a veil (Budin 2015; Cornelius 2004; Daviau 2014; Sugimoto 2008). The plaque figurines at Ḥorvat Qitmit are the nude bodies with hands clasping breasts (Figs. D.80) or veiled/long-haired heads (Figs. D.82; D.83). Two of the nude plaque figurines likely flanked a shrine model portal (Fig. D.81) and another may have stood astride some sort of animal. Similar, roughly contemporary, nude plaque figurines also appear at Tall Busayra and Tawilan. Beck compares several of the female figurine heads to female figurines at sites in southern Philistia. Tall Busayra also features several female figurine heads with strong similarities to female figurine heads at Ḥorvat Qitmit (Beck 1995: 99-107, 122-124; Bennett and Bienkowski 1995: 80, Fig. 9.3:1; Sedman 2002: 370-375).

Like Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, the imagery at Ḥorvat Qitmit generated a distinct ritualized atmosphere. These images drew on a variety of stylistic and symbolic traditions from Assyria, the Levant, and the Southern Levantine Drylands/Arabian Peninsula, demonstrating flows of intra-action at Ḥorvat Qitmit and recursively interacting with the multiple, overlapping liminalities of an open-air roadside ritual site in the drylands. The motifs of the images suggest notions of divinity, authority, music, rhythm, dancing, fertility, water, life, birth, masculinity, femininity, continuity, and protection (Beck 1995; 1996). Furthermore, inscriptions on pottery mention, or may mention, the deity Qôs (Inscriptions No. 2, 3, 4; Appendix C.2.2, 3, 4), perhaps in the context of votive deposition (Beit-Arieh 1995: 259-262). These are images and words of power, designed to recursively interact with ritual, power, visibility, and senses of liminality.

Ritual and the material elements of ritual at Ḥorvat Qitmit recursively intra-acted to generate and maintain particular senses of liminality and community, senses specific to the site's position in the drylands and the temporal context of the early seventh century BCE. Like Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, Ḥorvat Qitmit is a small ritual site near the crossroads of several rural roadways in an arid landscape saturated in sacred. However, this crossroads lies in the Beersheba Valley, within close proximity of Tel Malḥata and other villages and towns. Ḥorvat Qitmit likely drew visitors from these settlements, local mobile pastoralist communities, and other passersby. The rituals at Ḥorvat Qitmit would have had to address the concerns of both sedentary village and itinerant rural populations in a harsh landscape. This is visible in the particular material complexity of Ḥorvat Qitmit. The open nature of the site, the alignments and orientation of features, and the appearance of enclosures and standing stones likely appealed to the traditional sense of ritual of mobile pastoral communities. Other features, such as the stone platform, plastered basin, and rich assemblage of ceramics and imagery, likely appealed to the sense of ritual of sedentary and/or certain non-local communities. The stone platform and emphasis on food and liquid offerings may have provided a common ritual language for the interaction of

these communities and their senses of ritual. In so doing, new rituals and new communities emerged at Ḥorvat Qitmit in ways that are quite distinct from Kuntillet 'Ajrûd.

Furthermore, Ḥorvat Qitmit emerged within the context of the early seventh century BCE and the hegemony of the Assyrian empire via their proxies in Judah. The hegemony of the Assyrians dramatically increased interaction and intensified the intra-active flow of materials, ideas, practices and communities throughout the drylands. However, these flows were funneled and constrained through an imperial lens, always with an eye towards Assyria. Moreover, the Judean expansion through the northern Negev generated an increased and intra-active flow of materials, ideas, practices, and communities between the Judean heartland, the Shephelah, and the northern Negev. In this context, the northern Negev operated as a distinct sphere of interaction and liminal nexus between the communities of Judah, Philistia, and the drylands. Ḥorvat Qitmit demonstrates this interaction and a particularly intense east-west flow of materials and communities in the seventh century CE between the northern Negev and southern Jordan, likely in dialogue with Assyrian hegemony. Ḥorvat Qitmit acted as a ritual node for these flows, in which visitors of diverse identities interacted with each other and generated new communities of ritual.

4.4. On the Road at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit – Community, Liminality, and Empire in the Late Iron II Southern Levantine Drylands

In many respects, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit are distinct sites, each with their own particular geographic and historical contexts, senses of ritual, and material complexity. However, roadside ritual is a distinct and little-theorized phenomenon in the archaeology of the ancient Near East and a comparison of these sites within the context of the spatial and historical realities of the Southern Levantine Drylands provides a greater understanding of these sites, the drylands, and roadside ritual in the Southern Levant.

In this chapter, I suggested that we may model these sites and the Southern Levantine Drylands in the late Iron II in the language of meshworks and networks, with an emphasis on aridity, marginality, liminality, movement, and the visible past. These are roadside ritual sites in a land where multiple mobile communities rotate in a meshwork of pilgrimage, metallurgy, trade, limited agriculture, and pastoralism. It is a land littered with the ancient and visible remains of domesticity, ritual, and mining expeditions, a potent land, feared by outsiders, wild, liminal, and associated with otherworlds. This land is defined by movement and roads, a land where ritual on the road is as much a part of the landscape as the flora, the fauna, and the earth itself.

In the late Iron Age, this is also a land on the edge of empire, a land increasingly integrated with the Southern Levant, yet still quite distinct. In the eighth century BCE, the drylands averted direct interaction with the Assyrians until the campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III along the Sinai-Negev coast in 734 BCE. Sargon followed with another military campaign along the Sinai-Negev coast sometime during his reign, Sennacherib suppressed a rebellion in the northern Negev in 701 BCE, and Esarhaddon passed through the drylands on his campaign to Egypt in 671 BCE. However, these campaigns were the exception in Assyrian policy. Rather, Assyrians maintained a remote hegemony over the drylands and indigenous mobile pastoral communities and local client-polities performed the routine duties of administration. Nonetheless, this meshwork of empire inscribed the land with new settlement patterns,

monumental architecture, and fortifications, funneling and directing flows of phenomena that recursively interacted with regional networks and the ancient meshwork of pilgrimage and the visible past already inscribed on the landscape (see above, Section 4.1).

I suggested that we might understand Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as ritual nodes in this collection of inter-related networks. These are potent sites of ritual that draw in and channel these flows of phenomena, recursively intra-acting with layers of entangled meshworks of memory, visibility, liminality, and empire. However, each node is distinctive. The contiguous landscape, local communities and histories, and the politics of the ancient Near East generated a distinct intra-action of phenomena. I modeled Kuntillet 'Ajrûd within the context of its remote location in the northeastern Sinai in the eighth century BCE and analyzed elements of ritual related to votive deposition, nested thresholds, multiple orientations, allusions to gates and fortresses, and more constrained and directed movement. I modeled Ḥorvat Qitmit within the context of the northern Negev and its network of settlements in the early seventh century BCE and analyzed elements of ritual related to votive deposition, sacrifice, feasting, open-air ritual, astronomical or landscape alignments, potent visibilities, and less constrained movements.

The comparison of these sites highlights several important aspects of ancient roadside ritual. First, sites of roadside ritual are inherently sites of intra-action, memory, and community, where the past and the present meet and visitors interact with all who came before and will come after them. In her analysis of ritual on roadways in the drylands of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, Jennifer Gates-Foster describes the practice of ritually marking sites along roadsides as “a communal narrative among transients, a community on and of the road” (2012: 204; see Chapter 1: Section 1.5). Travelers interacted with other travelers by adding their own markings to these compositions, a material signature that bound travelers to the land and to each other. Similarly, the offerings deposited at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit bound materials and peoples together, generating communities, both visible and invisible. Moreover, the road communities of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit are distinct to the Southern Levantine Drylands and to their particular contexts within the drylands. At Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, these are communities defined by the flat expanse of the hamada, the visible geoglyphs and other ancient installations, the day long journey to the next major water source (and perhaps settlement) at Tell el-Qudeirat, and a crossroads linking the Mediterranean and Red Seas. At Ḥorvat Qitmit, these are communities defined by hills and valleys, a network of visible settlements and ancient remains, the short journey to Tel Malḥata, and east-west flows between the Negev and southern Jordan. Each site generated and hosted communities of transience and movement, communities “on and of the road.”

In this way, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit are comparable to another more recently excavated site of Iron Age roadside ritual in the Southern Levant, Wadi ath-Thamad Site WT-13 (WT-13). WT-13 is located on a small plateau overlooking the Wadi ar-Rumayl in central Jordan (ancient Moab). The original survey of the site recovered figurines, ceramic shrine fragments, beads, a possible zoomorphic vessel fragment, a footed stone mortar, a stone scarab, fragments of anthropomorphic jar statues and other fragmentary material from the surface. However, the site first appeared in the Iron I (Stratum III) as a beaten earth surface preserved to approximately 4.4 x 8.5 meters, featuring several cooking installations, over a thousand goat and sheep bones (mostly limbs), and thousands of ceramic sherds, mainly belonging to cooking pots and serving vessels. In Stratum II, a rectangular structure of approximately 12.8 x 6.25 meters was constructed on the site. Materials inside this structure primarily date from the Iron II (with a few Roman-Nabataean sherds) and included three stone benches or platforms, ceramic figurines,

model furniture, model shrine and anthropomorphic jar statue fragments, beads made of faience, shell, and bone, complete and fragmentary juglets, perforated tripod cups, shells from the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, a limestone bowl, and lamp fragments. In Stratum I (likely associated with the surface finds), portions of the rectangular structure may have been re-used. However, the proximity of this stratum to the surface did not allow for adequate preservation, rendering subsequent interpretation difficult (Dolan 2007: 106-122; 172-174).

Based on comparative evidence from Late Bronze Age, Iron Age (including Ḥorvat Qitmit), and Nabataean sites, Annlee Dolan characterizes WT-13 as a site of ritual communal meals and a meeting place for mobile pastoral communities in Stratum III, which developed into a “wayside shrine” for local mobile pastoral communities and passing merchants and traders in Stratum II. Stratum III and part of Stratum II likely pre-date a nearby unexcavated fortress, but the construction of this fortress in the later Iron Age may be directly related to the WT-13 and increased traffic and social complexity in the area (2007: 218-229). Like Kuntillet 'Ajrūd, Ḥorvat Qitmit, and other Southern Levantine extramural ritual sites, the materials and architecture at WT-13 are highly idiosyncratic and suggest that construction and maintenance of the site depended on topography and the needs of local and non-local communities and that WT-13 operated as a ritual node for the flow of materials moving through the region. Furthermore, the founding of WT-13 is associated with mobile pastoral communities and demonstrates how mobile pastoral ritual sites may be appropriated by and shared with other communities.

Perhaps significantly, WT-13 features anthropomorphic jar statues and figurines with similarly rendered facial elements as those at Ḥorvat Qitmit and En Ḥaṣeva (though the body shapes are different at each site). Furthermore, INAA analysis matched two of the anthropomorphic jar statues with a lamp fragment at En Ḥaṣeva and a bowl with a bowl from Tall Busayra, demonstrating a north-south flow of phenomena (Dolan 2007: 205-206). Anthropomorphic jar statues are rare in Southern Levantine assemblages and are perhaps limited to Ḥorvat Qitmit, En Ḥaṣeva, WT-13, and a newly discovered roadside ritual site in the central Jordan Valley, Tell Damiyah²³ (Dolan 2007: 175; Petit and Kafafi 2016: 24).²⁴ If so, this may suggest a tradition specifically associated with roadside ritual in the eastern Negev and the Transjordan during the late Iron Age.²⁵

In any case, the materials at Kuntillet 'Ajrūd, Ḥorvat Qitmit and WT-13 (and possibly En Ḥaṣeva) demonstrate that ritual on roadsides also draws on potent senses of liminality. As inter-places and intra-places, the liminalities of roads are inherently multiple. These are dangerous and powerful places, in which the liminality of the spaces both requires protection and is the source of that protection. Roads in marginal landscapes are even more potent and the rituals along these roads must seize control and harness the power of multiple, overlapping liminalities (so as not to be destroyed by them). In this regard, it is also interesting to observe the relationships between

²³ Tell Damiyah is the more similar to WT-13, both in architecture and the anthropomorphic jar statues, which is not surprising given their relative proximity (Petit and Kafafi 2016: 24).

²⁴ However, Beck cites a face fragment from Tel Erani that possibly belonged to an anthropomorphic jar statue and a possible stand from Jerusalem (1995: 113, 120, 185) Uehlinger cites “more such statuary” at Tel Abu-Haraz in the northern Jordan Valley (2007: 107). Outside of the Southern Levant, Ben-Arieh cites a parallel for one of the En Ḥaṣeva anthropomorphic jar statues at Tell Boueid in northern Syria (2011: 121) and Ben-Arieh (2011: 121) and Beck (1995: 116-117) cites examples of ceramic statues (not fashioned out of jars) from Cyprus and several Punic sites.

²⁵ Given that anthropomorphic jar statues may not be quite as limited in their distribution as they seem and that it is currently unclear if the ritual depository at En Ḥaṣeva should be attributed to an extramural ritual site, this statement is very tentative.

these sites and fortification architecture, an architecture associated with power, prestige and protection. WT-13, Ḥorvat Qitmit, and possibly En Ḥaṣeva are open-air ritual sites associated with nearby fortresses or fortified settlements. Conversely, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd is more remotely located. However, movement through Kuntillet 'Ajrûd is more constrained and the architecture of Building A mimics fortress architecture (and may perhaps mimic a specific fortress at Tell el-Qudeirat). These trends suggest that protection against human and suprahuman dangers played a significant role in the ritual of these sites, a role intimately inter-related with marginality, liminality, roads, diversity, and connectivity.

Conclusion

In the Southern Levantine Drylands, roadside ritual drew on multiple senses of liminality and provided venues for connectivity and interaction in an ostensibly dis-connected arid and marginal landscape. Ritual sites along roadsides operated as confluences of interaction for multiple communities and religious traditions in this region. The ways in which these communities understood and experienced this landscape often drastically differed, and the intersectioning of these communities generated an even greater variety of ways of seeing. My analysis explored how notions of liminality may or may not play into these various ways of seeing, and how liminality may have been differently understood and experienced by these communities. I utilized textual, ethnographic, and archaeological materials to explore these phenomena in the sixth-first millennia BCE, with focused case studies on the eighth century BCE site of Kuntillet 'Ajrūd in the Sinai and the seventh century BCE site of Ḥorvat Qitmit in the Negev. I contended that these sites both manifest ancient traditions of movement and interaction and presage their acute intensification in later Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, and Ottoman contexts.

In Chapter 1: Methodological Movements in the Southern Levantine Drylands, I outlined a methodological framework grounded in the language of mobility and movement. I suggested that we think of movement both in terms of how we analyze the Southern Levantine Drylands and in terms of the interpretations we produce of this region. I proposed that we embrace a flexible and multi-scalar methodology, in which our intellectual movements mimic the movements of contouring, intersecting, entangling, embodying, tacking, meshworking, and networking. I contoured my major concepts into three categories: religion and ritual, landscape and liminality, and memory and materiality. However, I also stressed that these concepts are entangled with each other, and we must always tack between them in vertical, horizontal and diagonal directions.

My discussion of religion and ritual considered some of the epistemological problems in defining and categorizing these terms, especially in the context of the ancient past. I emphasized the complex and recursive relationship between religion and ritual and the inherent materiality of these phenomena. I suggested that we conceive of these concepts as fluid and mutable phenomena that come into being in relation to each other (“intra-action”). Thus, we must integrate multiple models. I deployed Thomas Tweed’s (2006) hydrodynamic and Manuel A. Vásquez’s (2010) network models of religion, as well as Catherine Bell’s (1992) discussion of ritual as “privileged differentiation.” Like Tweed, I suggested that we define religions as “confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries” (2006: 54). In this model, religions are multiple and situated complex processes that emplace, orient, and transform persons, communities, and places, mark boundaries, and prescribe and proscribe movements across those boundaries. Relatedly, Vásquez emphasizes that religions are akin to capillaries in a network. Religions flow, but they also contain, bound, close, stop, funnel, and concentrate movement. In this, I suggested that we may follow Catherine Bell and constitute ritual as practice, the privileging and distinguishing of action, a learned but now unconscious technique, invested in the body and recursively interacting with and generating worlds.

Similarly, I considered landscape and liminality as phenomena highly inter-related with embodiment and movement. I suggested that we conceive of landscape in terms of the how we dwell within the world and are simultaneously of the world. I drew on Tim Ingold’s “dwelling

perspective” (1993; 2000) and Edward Casey’s (2000) notion of the body as an “intra-place” and an “inter-place” to consider landscapes and bodies along a continuum. I emphasized that movement is intrinsic to this continuum and our perceptions of landscapes and bodies. However, I also caveated that the experience of movement is not a universal corporeal experience, but contingent on different bodies and historical and cultural particularities. I explored the relationship between landscape and liminality, in which I focused on liminality as highly potent movement. Following the work of Arnold Van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (1974; 1978), I characterized liminality as the power of movement, transitioning, ambiguity, and the threat of danger. Liminality is multi-scalar and different senses of liminality may operate simultaneously, in shifting combinations and degrees. I suggested that may complicate and better understand some of the shifting senses of liminality in the Southern Levantine Drylands through discussions of pilgrimage in South Arabia by Joy McCorrison (2011) and Karen Hutchins’ work on the crossroads settlement at “Parting Ways” (2013). Pilgrimage is embedded in movement, transitioning, ritual, and power, the ultimate liminal practice, and one continuously in process for mobile pastoral communities in the drylands. Roads and crossroads are inherently liminal places, both inter-places and intra-places, embedded features and passages that enable, funnel, and constrain movement. In the drylands, roads are layered with these senses of liminality and the liminalities of arid and marginal landscape. Thus, we may conceive of ritual on roadsides in the drylands as especially potent and liminal phenomena.

Likewise, I discussed how memory and materiality are interrelated embodied and fluid social processes. Memory is made and experienced through inscribing and incorporating practices in temporal, spatial, social, and material senses (Connerton 1989). It is sedimented in our bodies, “body memory,” (Casey 2000) and recursively interacts with space, place, time, things, and identity. Memory is about materiality. The material world, the things within it, and their “factors of co-presence” (Keane 2003; 2005) are the experiential foundations of making, remembering, and forgetting memories. Things are physical and ephemeral. They enable or constrain, often unconsciously, and funnel our physical, intellectual, imaginary, and social movements (Joyce 2008; Miller 2005; Morgan 2009). I cited Marian Feldman’s (2012; 2014) work on style as a distinct practice of memory work and social identity, in which the particular way of doing something is inherently meaningful. I also tacked back to religion and ritual as a kind of memory work. Religion – materialized and embodied – creates, transmits, modifies and recursively interacts with memory and identity. In ritual practice, ritualized bodies, landscapes and things, operate as sieves, processing, recreating, and transmitting memory. For example, I discussed Lynn Meskell’s (2003) work on Deir-el Medina and Meredith Chesson’s (2007) discussion on Bab ad Dhra’ as examples of how ritual may act as memory work through small-scale objects or bodies, the large or macro scale of landscape, and visibility.

Finally, I draw some of these strands together in my discussion of the work of Jennifer Gates-Foster (2012) on memory and ritual on roadways in the Egyptian deserts during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. I used this work to demonstrate how roads and visibility may constitute specific rituals, memories, landscapes, materialities, movements, and liminalities that generate and maintain communities or shared ways of seeing. I proposed that we may use these insights to illuminate similar trends in the Southern Levantine Drylands and the specific contexts of ritual at Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit.

In Chapter 2: Strangers in a Strange Land – Ways of Seeing and Intra-action in the Southern Levantine Drylands, I juxtaposed the physical landscape of the Southern Levantine Drylands against modern nomenclature and the witness of the ancient textual sources. In this, I

deconstructed the role of language in how we perceive and interpret this region. I demonstrated that this is a diverse land of multiple geomorphic regions, including dunes, mountains, hills, valleys, plateaus, salt flats, erosional cirques, plains, and basins. However, this land is also characterized by varying levels of aridity. Consequently, access to water loomed foremost in the experience and perception of the land. Limited access to water necessitated sparser human habitation with few settlements. For example, agriculture is largely limited to semi-arid regions, such as the northern Negev and parts of southern Jordan. In the rest of the drylands, communities were smaller and primarily subsisted on mobile pastoralism, foraging, and trade. The confluence of environmental conditions, rurality, and mobile pastoralist lifeways generated a distinct landscape encompassing multiple geomorphic regions and communities.

I discussed the nature and features of the written sources, which are mainly derived from elite Pharaonic Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, and biblical contexts. The Egyptians used the northern Sinai as a land bridge into Asia and sent mining expedition to the southern Sinai in the third and second millennium BCE. The main sources for these activities are preserved in inscriptions on the walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak, various rock reliefs in the southern Sinai, and a few intermittent references in papyri, tomb and sarcophagus inscriptions, statue and stela inscriptions, and votive inscriptions, either recovered from archaeological excavations or the antiquities market. Neo-Assyrian texts contain fewer reference to the drylands, usually in the context of military campaigns, building accounts, and lists of territories, kings, people, and tribute preserved on stela, clay prism or cylinders, and tablets. Conversely, the Hebrew Bible contains many stories and reference to the drylands preserved as a curated collection of texts, likely containing material from first millennium BCE royal or priestly annals in Samaria and Jerusalem.

I analyzed these sources for their perceptions of the land and the peoples who lived within the land. Egyptian texts conflate the drylands with the metals and semi-precious stones that the Egyptians mined from the land. They also associate different deities with various parts of the drylands, indexing specific ways of seeing these regions and the changes in those perceptions over time. For, example, the dominance of Thoth in Old Kingdom inscriptions at mining sites in the southern Sinai suggests that Egyptians perceived this land and its communities as particularly hostile and dangerous during their earliest forays into the land. That Thoth was eventually supplanted by Sopdu/Horus and Hathor in the Middle and New Kingdoms implies a shift in this orientation. That shift is also marked by the temple of Hathor at Serâbît el-Khâdim, which served as a site of ritual interaction between Egyptian miners and local communities. These local communities appear under a variety of names in the third and second millennia BCE, such as “nomads,” “wild men,” “Asiatics,” and “Shasu,” and are often conflated with the land as wild and unsettled, ambiguous and nameless. Thus, the drylands remained a potent place, thoroughly entangled with the marvelous and fantastic, a land of precious materials reigned over by the great goddess Hathor.

Like the Egyptians before them, the Assyrians saw this land as a dangerous and potent land between lands. They referred to the Sinai-Negev region as a borderland between Egypt and the Near East and southern Jordan as a subdued territory from which they exacted tribute. They also refer to people who live in tents and ride camels, the *arba*, *aribi* or *arubu*. These communities constantly shift throughout the texts. Sometimes they are trade partners and allies. Sometimes, they are enemies and rebellious bandits. The most detailed description of the drylands appears in a text recounting the second Egyptian campaign of Esarhaddon in 671 BCE. It describes a vast, waterless expanse filled with sand dunes and fantastic creatures, a land that

would have destroyed the entire retinue, if it were not for the benevolence of the great god Marduk. For the Assyrians, these lands and communities are ambiguous and dangerous, a potent cocktail of liminality and the phantasmic.

The texts of the Hebrew Bible are also ambiguous and conflicting in their accounts of the drylands. These are the lands of the south, red, ruddy, hairy, and rugged, lands of wilderness, turning away, pursuing, being pursued, subduing. This is a holy land of wandering, parched and scorched by sun, swarming with Amalekites, Kenites, Midianites, Ishmaelites, Edomites, Arabs, and all manner of fantastic creatures. This is a foundational land where the forefathers and foremothers of Israel, escaping from bondage in Egypt, wandered in the desert for forty years, performing a type of pilgrimage and a “corporate rite of passage” (Cohn 1981: 13), remembered and commemorated by generations to come. In this land, Yahweh rises as the head of a supernatural army of lesser divinities, destroying and dominating all in his path. In this land, Yahweh performs miracles. In this land, Yahweh speaks.

These texts demonstrate that Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, and biblical sources exhibited different orientations to and relationships with the Southern Levantine Drylands. These orientations derived from their geographic relationship to the drylands and the specific historical and social contexts of the sources. However, I detected a common perception of the drylands as a liminal landscape, infused with a fantastic potency and strangeness. I suggested that these sources recursively interacted with and increasingly impacted the land, its people, and compositions of ritual, memory, and landscape, generating and assembling new senses of liminality layered upon one another. I proposed that these ancient sources were in dialogue with those who lived in or traveled through the drylands, a landscape strewn with the visible past.

In Chapter 3: Contextualizing a Palimpsest Landscape – Meshworks and Networks in the Southern Levantine Drylands, I turned to this visible past and focused on the archaeological landscape of the Southern Levantine Drylands, specifically the remains from the sixth through the second millennia BCE. I analyzed these remains through the conceptual movements of meshworking and networking, tacking back and forth between macro and micro scales throughout the millennia. I identified an ancient meshwork of pilgrimage and the visible past, inscribed on the landscape by local and non-local communities. This meshwork of pilgrimage included roads, geoglyphs, petroglyphs, megalithic tombs and cairns, standing stones, and ritual complexes. These sites acted as “symbolic capital” (Philip 2003: 119), visible monuments that linked indigenous mobile pastoral communities to their ancestors and the land, and generated a “landscape of pilgrimage” (McCorrison 2011: 73). In this landscape of pilgrimage, mobile pastoral communities rotate through the land, moving from ritual site to ritual site, each sacred, each home. In the third and second millennia BCE, Egyptian mining expeditions inscribed another layer onto this meshwork, adding monumental rock reliefs, stelae, and other objects to this landscape. These objects often featured symbols and images that may have seemed magical and powerful to local communities. Over the millennia, local communities interacted with Egyptian mining expeditions and the materials they left behind, generating new ways of seeing and ritual making. A temple to Hathor at Serabit el-Khâdim in the southern Sinai and Site 200 in the southern Negev preserve aspects of these interactions, the appropriation of non-indigenous traditions, and the incorporation of new elements into the ancient meshwork of pilgrimage.

I also identified the clustering of power and phenomena through networks and nodes entangled within the meshwork. These networks are areas of denser connectivity and more intense interactions, in which movement is more intensely concentrated and funneled. Many of these clusters are associated with the movements of mobile pastoral communities. Northern and

southern communities segment as early as the late Aceramic Neolithic B and become more marked over time. Other regional distinctions also appear in the assemblages of these communities and vary over time. The northern Sinai and northwestern Negev fluctuate between Levantine and Egyptian orientations. Communities and phenomena in the northern Negev, the western highlands of the central Negev, and the southern Sinai flowed in a north-south direction during the early third millennium BCE. Communities and phenomena in the northern Sinai, central Negev, and the southern Jordan flowed in an east-west direction during the late third millennium BCE. Networks of the Southern Levantine Drylands also clustered at nodes, sites of intra-action where emerging phenomena are highly visible. I identified two northern Negev sites, Arad in the Early Bronze II and Tel Masos in the Iron I, as particularly potent nodes for analysis. These were “gateway communities,” the densest nodes in deeply entangled networks, accessible from the inside and the outside, the bridges into and through the meshwork of the drylands.

In tacking between meshworking and networking, I emphasized connectivity, movement, power, and liminality in the Southern Levantine Drylands. This is a place of many places, connected through an intricate web of roads, the capillaries of materials and people, both inter-places and intra-places. Thus, these roads were innately powerful. Mobile pastoral communities utilized these roads to claim the land and move materials, wielding the power of the roads and of movement. These communities were rooted in the land through movement and drew on the potencies of the land to generate and maintain senses of self, community, and the past. I suggested that many of these trends both persisted and were transformed in the Iron Age. The domestication of the camel and the inventions of the saddle and the tent in the Iron Age provided an even greater sense of movement and power to these communities, both radically altering and firmly entrenching ancient ways of seeing. Yet, the rise of imperial hegemony also countered these movements, funneling and constraining movement in ways both familiar and unfamiliar.

In Chapter 4: Ritual on the Rural Road – Empire, Connectivity, and Senses of Liminality in the Late Iron II Southern Levantine Drylands, I tracked these trends into the Iron Age II, especially the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, and focused on the sites of Kuntillet 'Ajrūd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as ritual nodes. I contextualized these sites within the traditions of the drylands, the political and social realities of the greater Southern Levant and the rising hegemony of the Assyrian Empire. As in Chapter 3, I utilized the metaphors of meshworking and networking to understand this landscape on macro- and micro-scales. I identified a new meshwork of empire overlaid and entangled with the ancient meshworks of pilgrimage, the visible past, and roads. The Iron Age II sees the rising hegemony of the Assyrians over the Southern Levant, through military force, annexation, deportation, occupation, tribute payments and collaboration. However, Assyrian domination varies by region and over time. The Southern Levantine Drylands averted direct interaction with the Assyrians until the late eighth century BCE when Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon campaigned along the Sinai-Negev coast and Sennacherib suppressed a rebellion in the northern Negev. In the seventh century BCE, only Esarhaddon records making another military foray into the drylands in 671 BCE. Outside of these campaigns, the Assyrians maintained a remote hegemony over the drylands, in which indigenous mobile pastoral or local client polities administered the region.

However, Assyrian policies and the memory of Assyrian assaults directly impacted this land, funneling and constraining movements in new and distinct ways. This included fostering and controlling multiple networks within the drylands. For example, the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE destroyed or partially destroyed several major settlements in the northern Negev settlement network, including a well-established administrative center/gateway

community/node at Tel Beersheba. However, the destruction was less intense than in the neighboring Shephelah. With the exception of Tel Beer-Sheba', the settlements were all rebuilt and a line of fortresses were also constructed. This may suggest that the Assyrians reorganized the trade routes in the drylands after Sennacherib's campaign by commissioning the building of locally-manned fortresses in the Beersheba Valley and along the Wadi Arabah, as well as an administrative center/node at Tall Busayra (Finkelstein 2015: 101). Relatedly, the material flows between the northern Negev and southern Jordan increased significantly in the seventh century BCE, as relatively more intense settlement activity spreads across southern Jordan.

I specifically focused on Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as ritual nodes within this increasingly entangled meshwork of pilgrimage and empire, or old and new ways of seeing. Allowing that Kuntillet 'Ajrûd served multiple functions simultaneously, I focused on the ritual elements of the site, characterizing the site as a ritual node in the remote northeastern Sinai during the eighth century BCE. I interpreted the site as a potent roadside landmark within a land on the cusp/in transition. I contended that Kuntillet 'Ajrûd funneled senses of liminality derived from and generated by a marginal and sacred landscape, its lone highly visible position near several roadways, its material complexity, and its idiosyncratic architecture featuring nested thresholds, multiple orientations, and allusions to gates and fortresses. I emphasized the position of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd within the landscape and explored how various elements of the site interplayed with its highly visible roadside position to generate a nexus of power and liminality.

Like Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, I also characterized Ḥorvat Qitmit as a ritual node. However, this node lay within the more integrated and populous northern Negev network of settlements under the hegemony of Assyria and local proxies during the early seventh century BCE. This is a ritual node firmly entrenched in a meshwork of empire, funneling senses of liminality derived from a marginal and sacred landscape, a roadside extramural position within the sightlines of several settlements, a distinctive material complexity, and an idiosyncratic architecture featuring a blending of sedentary and mobile traditions, astronomical or landscape alignments, potent visibilities, and less constrained movements. As an open-air ritual site, Ḥorvat Qitmit falls within a long tradition of open-air ritual sites constructed and maintained by mobile pastoralist communities in the drylands. However, the contents of the site and its proximity to so many settlements suggests that Ḥorvat Qitmit served a complex mixture of local mobile pastoralist communities, the residents of the settlements (especially Tel Malḥata), and other passersby.

Finally, I modeled Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as sites of community, in which ritual and its material correlates generated senses of community amongst their visitors, binding travelers to the land and each other, even if they never meet. These are communities "on and of the road" (Gates-Foster 2012: 204), transient, ephemeral communities born out of movement and liminality. I also compared these sites to WT-13, an Iron Age roadside ritual site in central Jordan. I suggested that these sites demonstrate the inherent idiosyncrasy of roadside ritual and related communities, the potency of these sites in rural contexts, and the continuing close association between roadside ritual and mobile pastoral communities in the Iron Age.

If we understand Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as liminal sites of community deeply embedded in a meshwork of pilgrimage and empire, then we must tack back and forth in time for a fuller understanding of these sites as phenomena. In Chapter 3, I explored the ancient meshwork of pilgrimage established and maintained by mobile pastoral communities in the mid-sixth millennium BCE and how subsequent communities altered and embellished this meshwork through the second millennium BCE. In Chapter 4, I suggested that we understand Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit as embedded within this meshwork, a meshwork now overlaid and

transformed by a meshwork of empire and increasing integration with the Southern Levant, an entangling of meshworks which would become more complex in later periods.

In this, I am specifically drawing on recent work by Steven Rosen tracing mobile pastoral communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands from the mid-sixth millennium BCE to the Early Islamic Period (2002; 2008a; 2009a: 61-63; 2011a; 2011b; 2013; 2015; 2017). Rosen identifies a broad continuity amongst mobile pastoral communities in the Southern Levantine Drylands from the mid-sixth millennium BCE through the third millennium BCE, which he calls the Timnian Complex and subdivides into an Early, Middle, Late, and Terminal phases (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1). Thereafter, Rosen identifies the second-early first millennium BCE as the Early Historical Complex and the late first millennium BCE-first millennium CE as the Classical Complex. Rosen characterizes the rise of the Timnian Complex as “the evolution of a tribal society” (2009a: 61) from smaller-scale mobile forager communities. Over the course of the Timnian Complex, mobile pastoral communities in the drylands experience an increasing integration and economic asymmetry with Mediterranean sedentary communities. The Classical Complex sees an even greater degree of integration and economic asymmetry as the drylands are dominated by a succession of imperial entities. However, Rosen sees a clear break in the intervening Early Historical Complex, in which mobile pastoral communities essentially disappear from the Negev, absorbed into the Mediterranean in a kind of “enclosed nomadism” (2009a: 63). In this model, mobile pastoral communities live in the interstices between urban sites and seasonally migrate beyond the settled zone. According to Rosen, we should interpret all occupation in the Negev and northeastern Sinai in the early first millennium BCE as the expansion of Mediterranean zone states that “may well have incorporated an extra-urban agro-pastoral component, perhaps a co-option of tribal groups” (2009a: 65). However, if we leave aside the difficult issues in defining and distinguishing between different types of mobile pastoralism, especially in relation to possible differences between our definitions and the senses of self in these communities, we might understand the early first millennium BCE as a liminal period of transition in the drylands. The domestication of the camel/development of the saddle/adoption of the woven tent radically re-structured mobile pastoral lifeways and the relationships between mobile pastoral communities with others, setting the stage for trends that continued and solidified in the Classical Complex. These trends also included a renewed reliance on and appropriation of ceramics, the use of cisterns, and domination by an imperial power.

Consequently, future research may explore in more detail how the early first millennium BCE presages the later Classical Complex and how the Classical Complex continues and develops these trends. Further research might also continue to trace the themes of movement, ritual, and empire through these later periods. Other avenues of research might explore the intersectioning of ritual and liminality in different Southern Levantine contexts, perhaps focusing on temple architecture or gateway and extramural ritual sites. In conclusion, I suggest that movement, ritual, and liminality are productive concepts for thinking about the complex relationship between rurality and connectivity and re-envisioning marginal landscapes as places of interaction, change, and innovation. I contend that the analysis of ritual is fundamental to understanding these shifts in ways of seeing and in making sense of the Southern Levantine Drylands and the ancient past. Moreover, understanding these complexities requires that we employ a flexible and multi-scalar sense of analysis.

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Appendix A: Comparative Chronology of the Southern Levant, Egypt, and the Southern Levantine Drylands

	The Southern Levant	The Southern Levantine Drylands	Egypt
early 10 th – late 7 th mil. BCE	Aceramic Neolithic (ca. 9750–6300 BCE)	Paleolithic	Neolithic (9000-6000 BCE)
late 7 th – early 6 th mil. BCE	Ceramic Neolithic (ca. 6300–4600 BCE)	Herder-Gatherer Transition (Late 7 th -Early 6 th Millennia BCE)	Predynastic Period (6000-3150 BCE)
mid-6 th -early 5 th mil. BCE		Early Timnian Complex (5500-4600 BCE)	
late 5 th – early 4 th mil. BCE	Chalcolithic Period (4600-38/3700 BCE)	Middle Timnian Complex (4600-3000 BCE)	
late 4 th mil. BCE	Early Bronze I (38/3700-32/2900 BCE)		
early 3 rd mil. BCE	Early Bronze II (32/2900-2900 BCE)	Late Timnian Complex (32/2900-2900 BCE)	
mid 3 rd mil. BCE	Early Bronze III (2900-2500 BCE)	Terminal Timnian Complex (2900-2000 BCE)	Early Dynastic Period (2950-2575 BCE)

late 3 rd mil. BCE	Early Bronze IV (2500-2000 BCE)		Old Kingdom (2575-2125 BCE) First Intermediate Period (2125-2010 BCE)
early 2 nd mil. BCE	Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 BCE)	Early Historical Complex (2000 BCE-1 CE)	Middle Kingdom (2010-1630 BCE) Second Intermediate Period (1530-1539 BCE)
mid-late 2 nd mil. BCE	Late Bronze Age (1550-1200)		New Kingdom (1539-1069 BCE)
late 2 nd mil. BCE-early 1 st mil. BCE	Iron I (1200-1000 BCE)		
early-mid 1 st mil. BCE	Iron Age II (1000-586 BCE)		Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BCE)
late 1 st mil. BCE	Neo-Babylonian/Persian Periods (586-332 BCE)		Late Period (664-332 BCE)
	Hellenistic Period (332 BCE-63 CE)		Macedonian Dynasty (332-309 BCE) Ptolemaic Period (309-30 BCE)
1 st mil. CE	Roman Period (63 BCE-314 CE) Byzantine Period (314-638 CE) Early Islamic Period (638-1099 CE)	Classical Complex (CE) Nabataean/Early Roman Byzantine Early Islamic	Roman Period (30 BCE-395 CE) Byzantine (395-641 CE) Early Islamic (641-1517 CE)

Appendix B: The Southern Levantine Drylands in Texts

B.1. Egyptian Sources

(all English translations from cited sources, with some modifications)

Old Kingdom (ca. 2575-2125 BCE)	
<p>B.1.1. Sarcophagus Limestone, 2.7 x 1.2. x 1 m Giza, Egypt, Tomb of Ḥkni-Ḥnmw 5th Dynasty</p>	<p>“overseer of the Ways of Horus” (al-Ayedi 2006: 10-11, No. 1a).</p>
<p>B.1.2. Wall Inscription Giza, Egypt, Tomb of Kaaper 5th Dynasty</p>	<p>“(Scribe of the army of the king) in the <i>ḥtyw-fk3t</i>, the Terraces of Turquoise” (Cooper 2016: No. [64.5]).</p>
<p>B.1.3. Rock Relief 134 x 47 cm Wadi Maghara, described in 1859 as partially intact “upon a flat surface of rock above ‘the Cave of Magharah’, i.e. an important excavation which was but a short distance to the north of the tablet of Neuserre (10),” “now destroyed” 5th Dynasty, Djedkare Isesi</p>	<p>“...Royal mission which was sent with the captain-of-the-ship’s-crew Ne’ankhkhentekhtay to the <i>ḥtyw-fk3t</i>, Terraces-of-the-Turquoise...” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.6]; Gardiner et al 1955: 60-61, No. 13, Pl. VII).</p>
<p>B.1.4. Wall Inscription Plaster and Ink Ain el-Sukhna (Egypt), Gallery G1 5th Dynasty, Djedkare Isesi</p>	<p>“...the mission which the overseer of nobles, Sed-Hetep, made to the <i>ḥtyw-fk3t</i>, Terraces-of-Turquoise” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.3]).</p>
<p>B.1.5. Wall Inscription Plaster and Ink Ain el-Sukhna (Egypt), right of ramp at entrance of Gallery G9 5th Dynasty (?)</p>	<p>“[...] to (?) the <i>ḥtyw-mfk3t</i>, Terraces-of-Turquoise (?);...” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.4]; Tallet 2012c: 107-108, No. 4).</p>

<p>B.1.6. Rock Relief 67 x 72 cm Wadi Maghara, “adjoining and immediately to the right of 16” “now destroyed” 6th Dynasty, Pepi II Neferkare</p>	<p>“...Royal mission which was sent with the god’s-sealer Hepy to the <i>ḥtyw-mfk3t</i> (with foreign land grapheme), Terraces-of-the-Turquoise...” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.7]; (Gardiner et al 1955: 64, No. 17, Pl IX).</p>
<p>B.1.7. Pyramid Texts</p>	<p>“Horus of <i>šzmt</i>, Malachite” PT 450b, 983a, 987b, 1085c, 1413a (Cooper 2015: [No. 42.1, 4-6, 9])</p>
<p>Middle Kingdom (ca. 2010-1630 BCE)</p>	
<p>B.1.8. Stela of Akhtoy Limestone, 37 cm h. Thebes, Tomb 65 11th Dynasty (?) (cited by Levene 1998: 12 as late First Intermediate or Early Middle Kingdom)</p> <p>Excavated in the 1913-1914 excavations of Thebes by Lord Carnarvon, and first published/translated/interpreted extensively in Gardiner 1917.</p>	<p>“When I was in <i>bi3</i>, Bia, (I) inspected it, and (I) went round the hill-countries of Tjenhet, when I was in the house of the Northerner, I sealed up his treasuries in that mountain of <i>Pr.w-n(.y)-ḥr.w-n(.y)-ḥtyw-mfk3t</i> The House-of-Horus-of-the-Turquoise-Terraces, I carried turquoise from the Gallery-of-the-house-of-the-Foreigner” Lines 2-5 (Cooper 2015: No. [61.1], [62.1], [64.9]; Gardiner 1917: 35; Gardiner et al 1955: 1).</p> <p>“...(I) returned in peace to his palace, and (I) brought for (him) the best of the hill-countries, as new-metal of Bat, shining metal of <i>’ihwiw</i>, Ihuiu, strong metal of <i>mn-k3w</i>, Men-kau, as turquoise of <i>ḥrrwtt</i>, Hereutet, lapis-lazuli of Teferret, as <i>saheret</i> of the summits-of-the-mountains, <i>ḥt-’w3</i> from the mountain-of-Heztu, <i>r3-ntt</i> from <i>B3wt</i>-of-the-desert, as sticks from <i>r3-š33wt</i>, Ra-Shaaut and eye-paint of Kehebu” Lines 9-12 (Cooper 2015: No. [51.1], [57.1], [59.1], [60.1]).</p>
<p>B.1.9. Story of Sinuhe Papyrus 12th Dynasty, likely composed soon after death of Amenemhat I (oldest extant copies from Amenemhat III)</p>	<p>“I halted at the Ways of Horus; the commander there, who was in charge of the frontier patrol, sent a message to the palace to let it be known” (al-Ayedi 2006: 12-13, No. 3a)</p>

<p>B.1.10. Rock Relief, Hieratic 19 x 12 cm Ain el-Sukhna (Egypt) 12th Dynasty, Senwosret I (?)</p>	<p>“the Chief, Deduef led the expedition to <i>bi3</i>, Bia for the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheperkare, the guider (?). (3) Year 9, 1st month of Peret, day 2” (Cooper 2015: No. [55.2]; Abd el -Raziq et al 2002: 57-58, No. 22).</p>
<p>B.1.11. Mit Rahina Daybook Pink Granite, 2 x 2.5 m Mit Rahina, Temple of Ramses II (possibly originally from Temple of Ptah at Memphis) 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat II</p> <p>List of donations to temples, chapels and festivals, visits from foreign dignitaries, and expeditions to foreign lands</p>	<p>“Arrival of the expedition which was dispatched to <i>hty(w) (m)fk3t</i>, the Turquoise Terraces. They had brought: 14 13/32 <i>hk3.t</i> and a remainder of turquoise; 8700 <i>dbn</i> of rotting (petrified?) wood; 5570 <i>dbn</i> of <i>kis-mineral</i>; 6 <i>hk3.t</i> of <i>ski-d3.t</i>; [...alum?]-<i>k3m</i> 26 13/16; 10 9/16 <i>hk3.t</i> of natron; 8 stars for the lake (starfish?); 33 sacks of <i>šs3wt</i>; 9 ¾ <i>dbn</i> of silver; 10 bulls; 3 young ibexes; 1 cheetah hide” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.10]; Mourad 2015: 275-276).</p> <p>“Temple of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheperkare, which is in the town of Senwosret on the Way of Horus” (al-Ayedi 2006: 13-14, No. 3b).</p>
<p>B.1.12. Stela of Sahathor Limestone, 114 x 64 x 18 cm Abydos, purchased from Anastasi in 1839 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat II British Museum EA569</p>	<p>“I visited <i>bi3</i> as a child, I compelled the great ones to wash (?) gold. I brought away turquoise” (Gardiner et al 1955: 2; Mansour 2014: 11).</p>
<p>B.1.13. Durham Stela N 1935 Basalt, 66 x 35 cm Wadi Gawasis, Sanctuary 12th Dynasty, Senwosret II Alnwick Castle</p>	<p>“Beloved of Sopdu, <i>nb t3 šsmt</i>, lord of Malachite-Land and lord of the east” (Cooper 2015: No. [42.10]; Nibbi 1976: 50).</p>
<p>B.1.14. Stela West face: 265 x 67 cm Serâbît el-Khâdim, Temple of Hathor, “Old Approach” 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III, Year 6</p>	<p>“The majesty of this god guided the god’s sealer, the chamberlain, controller of gangs, Horwerre, to this <i>bi3</i>, Bia. This land was reached in the third month of Peret, it was not the time for coming to this <i>bi3</i>, Bia. The god’s sealer, he says before the officials who will come to this <i>bi3</i>, Bia at this time” (Cooper 2015: No. [55.6]; (Gardiner et al 1955: 97-98, No. 90).</p>

<p>B.1.15. Stela West Face: 306 x 58 cm Serâbît el-Khâdim, Temple of Hathor, “Old Approach” 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III (?), Year 18</p>	<p>“name-list of the officials who were in this this <i>bi3</i>, Bia” (Cooper 2015: [55.8]; (Gardiner et al 1955: 118-199, No. 115).</p>
<p>B.1.16. Rock Relief 57 x 37 cm Wadi Maghara, Mine entrance, near No. 29, “now destroyed?” 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III, Year 43</p>	<p>“...Beloved of Hathor, <i>nbt mf3k3t</i>, lady of Turquoise-Country, the careful treasurer Iatu, lord of honor, who the mistress of the house, Py, bore, mistress of honor who is beloved of Hathor <i>nbt mf3k3t</i>, lady of Turquoise-Country” (Cooper 2015: [64.14]; Gardiner et al 1955: 70, No. 30, Pl. XIII).</p>
<p>B.1.17. Rock Relief 141 x 100 cm Serâbît el-Khâdim, Mine B 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III, Year 44</p>	<p>“Oh living ones who are upon the earth, who will come to this <i>bi3</i>, Bia...” [with foreign land determinative] (Cooper 2015: No. [55.5], 205 n.1109; Gardiner et al 1955: 79, No. 53, Pl XVII).</p>
<p>B.1.18. Stela East face: 89 x 35 cm Serâbît el-Khâdim, Temple of Hathor, Sanctuary Q 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III</p>	<p>“...List of the expeditionary members who came to this <i>bi3</i>, Bia...” (east face) (Cooper 2015: No. [55.9]; Gardiner et al 1955: 121, No. 117, Pl. XL).</p>
<p>B.1.19. Stela 35.5 x 26.5 cm Serâbît el-Khâdim, Temple of Hathor (“built into the wall of the Approach to Sopdu”) 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III Harvard Semitic Museum 8634b</p>	<p>“Oh living ones who are on earth, who will come to this <i>bi3</i>, Bia...” (Cooper 2015: [55.12]; Gardiner et al 1955: 207-208, No. 409, Pl. LXXXIII).</p>
<p>B.1.20. Stela Fragmentary, total height of stela postulated at 290 cm, width at 59 cm, thickness at 39 cm Serâbît el-Khâdim, Temple of Hathor, “Old Approach”</p>	<p>“The god’s sealer he says I came to the <i>bi3</i>, Bia for my lord” (west face) (Cooper 2015: [55.10]; Gardiner et al 1955: 139-140, No. 141, Pl. LII).</p>

<p>B.1.21. “The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor” Papyrus Leningrad 1115 Unprovenanced Hermitage Collection, St. Petersburg, Russia</p>	<p>“It is I, I am descending to <i>bi3</i>, Bia, on the mission of the sovereign in a boat of 120 cubits in its length and 40 (cubits) in its width” Papyrus Leningrad 1115 89-93 (Cooper 2015: No. [55.3]; Gardiner et al 1955: 2).</p>
<p>New Kingdom (ca.1539-1069 BCE)</p>	
<p>B.1.22. Wall Inscription Thebes, Tomb of Puyemre (Tomb 39) 18th Dynasty, Joint Reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III</p>	<p>Scene of reception of tribute from Retenu and the registration of tribute for the Ways of Horus, accompanied by inscription: “Receiving the tribute of the products of the northern lands and of the Ways of Horus, together with the gifts of the Southern and Northern Oasis, by the prince and mayor, royal chancellor, sole companion, rich in love, chief lector priest, [second] priest [of Amun], Puyemre, true of voice, which (my) lord had assigned to the temple of Amun” (al-Ayedi 2006: 17).</p> <p>Scene of unloading of wine jars accompanied by inscription: “Wine of the vineyards of the Ways of Horus” (al-Ayedi 2006: 17-18, No. 4e).</p>
<p>B.1.23. Architrave Inscription Speos Artemidos, Temple of Pakhet 18th Dynasty, Hatshepsut</p>	<p>“<i>r3-š3wt</i>, Ra-Shaut and Iuu, they were not hidden from my majesty, Punt has arisen for me upon the fields of trees with fresh myrrh” Lines 13-14 (Cooper 2015: No. [59.2]; Gardiner et al 1955: 3).</p>
<p>B.1.24. Obelisk Base Karnak 18th Dynasty, Hatshepsut</p>	<p>“Controller of the Asiatics...turquoise from <i>h3st r3š3wt</i>, the hill-country of Ra-Shaut” (Cooper 2015: No. [59.3]).</p>

<p>B.1.25. Wall Inscription Deir el-Bahri, Mortuary Chapel of Hathor 18th Dynasty, Hatshepsut</p>	<p>Bovine Hathor addresses Hatshepsut “I have come from Pe, I have marched through Dep, I have travelled through the marshes and the lands of the Ways of Horus” (al-Ayedi 2006: 14, No. 4a).</p>
<p>B.1.26. Wall Inscription Thebes, Tomb of Senufer, Mayor of Thebes (Tomb 96) 18th Dynasty, Amenhotep II</p>	<p>Scene of garden’s produce, accompanied by inscription: “Beholding the meadows and traversing the marshes and making arrangements at the Ways of Horus by the Mayor of the Southern City, Senufer, the justified” (al-Ayedi 2006: 16, No. 4c).</p>
<p>B.1.27. Statue of Senufer Black Granite, 90 x 38 x 54 cm Thebes (?) 18th Dynasty, Amenhotep II British Museum EA48</p>	<p>Djehuty-hay, Senufer’s father, described as “Overseer of the storehouse at the Ways of Horus” (al-Ayedi 2006: 16-17, No. 4d).</p>
<p>B.1.28. Clay Tablet EA 288 Amarna, Egypt 18th Dynasty, Amenhotep III Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin VAT 01643</p>	<p>“I am at war as far as the land of Šeru (Seir) and as far as Ginti-kirmil.” EA 288: 24-25 (Moran 1992: 331).</p>
<p>B.1.29. Wall Inscription Soleb, Sudan, Temple of Amun, Room C 18th Dynasty, Amenhotep III</p>	<p>“<i>t3 š3sw yh[w3]</i>, Shasu-Land of Yah[wa]” (Cooper 2015: No. [53.1]). “<i>[t3] š3sw yhw3</i>, Shasu-Land of Yahwa” (Cooper 2015: No. [53.2]; Givon 1971: No. 6a).</p>

<p>B.1.30. Papyrus Leningrad 1116A 18th Dynasty (second half) Hermitage Collection, St. Petersburg</p> <p>Papyrus Moscow 4658 Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow 18th Dynasty (late)</p> <p>Papyrus Carlsberg 6 University of Copenhagen, Denmark 18th Dynasty (late)</p>	<p>“Behold, I drove in my (...) mooring post in the region (?) that I made (?) on the east. From the boundaries of Hebenu to the Way of Horus, equipped with cities, filled with people of the best of the entire land, so as to repel their attacks” (al-Ayedi 2006: 11-12, No. 2a).</p>
<p>B.1.31. Statuette of King Senufer attributed to 18th Dynasty</p>	<p>“...beloved of Hathor, <i>nbt mfk3t</i>, lady of Turquoise-Country” (Cooper 2015: No. [64.15]; Gardiner et al 1955: 173, No. 241, Pl LXIX).</p>
<p>B.1.32. “Pleasures of Fishing and Fowling” Papyrus Fragment, Hieratic 18th Dynasty Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow</p>	<p>List of places: “[<i>sht</i>] <i>ḏt</i>, Avaris, <i>rhty</i>, the Upper Mansion, the Lower Mansion, the Ways of Horus” (al-Ayedi 2006: 18, No. 4f).</p>
<p>B.1.33. Wall Relief Karnak, Temple of Amun 19th Dynasty, Seti I</p>	<p>representation without “Ways of Horus,” mentions Tharu (al-Ayedi 2006: 18-20, No. 4g).</p>
<p>B.1.34. Wall Inscription Amarah West, Sudan, Hypostyle Hall 19th Dynasty, Ramses II</p>	<p>“<i>t3 š3sw s‘rr</i>, Shasu-Land of Seir” (Cooper 2015: No. [66.3]; Giveon 1971: Doc. 16a).</p>
<p>B.1.35. Obelisk I 10.54 m h. Tanis, Sudan 19th Dynasty, Ramses II</p>	<p>“...the raging-one who destroys <i>t3 š3sw</i>, Shasu-Land, who plundered the <i>ḏw-n(.y)-s‘r</i>, the Mountain-of-Seir...” (Cooper 2015: [66.2]; Giveon 1971: No. 25).</p>
<p>B.1.36. Stela 2.78 m x 1.06 m x 80 cm Gebel Shaluf 19th Dynasty, Ramses II</p>	<p>“...who plundered the <i>ḏw-n(.y)-S[‘r]....</i>, the Mountain-of-Seir” (Cooper 2015: No. [66.1]; Giveon 1971: Doc. 33).</p>

<p>B.1.37. Papyrus Anastasi I Unprovenanced, purchased on antiquities market in 1829, acquired by British Museum in 1839 19th Dynasty, Ramses II British Museum EA10247,6</p>	<p>“O Good Sir, you elite scribe and <i>Mahe</i>-warrior, who know how to use your hands, a leader of <i>Naarin</i>-troops at the head of the soldiery. I have described to you the hill countries of the northern reaches of the land of Canaan, but you have not answered me in any way nor have you rendered a report to me. Come, and [I] will describe many things to you. Head toward the fortress of the Ways of Horus. I begin for with the Dwelling of Sese, l.p.h. You have not set foot in it at all. You have not eaten fish from Husayin. Whereabouts is its fortress? Come now to the region of Edjo of Sese, l.p.h. into its stronghold of Usermare, l.p.h. and [to] Seba-El and Ibesegeb. Let me describe to you the manner of Aynn, you don’t know its position. Nekhes and Hebret, you have never seen them since your birth. O Maher, where is Raphia? What is its wall like? How many leagues march is to Gaza?” Papyrus Anastasi I, 4-34 (al-Ayedi 2006: 20-27).</p>
<p>B.1.38. Papyrus Anastasi IV 19th Dynasty, Merneptah British Museum EA10249,5</p>	<p>“...Another communication to my [lord], namely [that we] finished letting the families of the <i>mhw.t š3s.w n(.y) ’idm</i>, Shasu-kinspeople of Edom pass the fortress of Merenptah-Hetephermaat l.p.h which is in Tjeku, to the pools of the Temple of Atum of Merenptah-Hetephermaat, which are in Tjeku in order to feed them and feed their herds, through the ka of the Pharaoh, l.p.h.” Papyrus Anastasi IV, 54-56 (Cooper 2015: No. [52.1]; Givon 1971: No. 37).</p>
<p>B.1.39. Wall Inscriptions Medinet Habu 20th Dynasty, Ramses III</p>	<p>“They gave to you what God’s-Land created, in every costly stone and gold from his hill-countries of Amu, Lapis-lazuli of Tefereret, and turquoise of <i>r3-š3t</i>, Ra-Shaut” Room 21 (Cooper 2015: No. [59.4]).</p> <p>“words spoken by Thoth: ‘I write for you hundred-thousands of ten-thousands being assembled as a census of million in silver, gold, copper, lapis-lazuli, turquoise of <i>r3š3wti</i>, Ra-Shauti good-gold of the hill-</p>

	<p>country of Amu before your noble father, Amun-Re, king of the gods, so that he may give to you festivals of Ra, and the years of Atum” Treasury, Lines 14-18 (Cooper 2015: No. [59.5]).</p>
<p>B.1.40. Papyrus Harris I (Great Harris Papyrus) Near Medinet Habu, Tomb 20th Dynasty, Ramses IV British Museum 9999</p> <p>hieratic list of temple endowments and a brief summary of the entire reign of Ramses III, written during the reign of his successor, Ramses IV, found in a tomb near Medinet Habu and purchased by collector Anthony Charles Harris in 1855, entered the collection of the British Museum in 1872. See Grandet 1994 for the most recent and complete transcription and translation</p>	<p>“I destroyed <i>s’rw</i>, Seir(ites?), in the <i>mhwt š3sw</i>, Shasu-kinspeople/families” Papyrus Harris I, 76: 9-10 (Cooper 2015: No. [66.4]; Giveon 1971: No. 38; Grandet 1994: 337).</p> <p>“... I sent my ambassador to <i>h3st tk</i>, the hill-country/foreign land of Atika, to the great copper quarry which is in this place. Their galleys were carrying them, others were on a land journey upon their donkeys. It had not been heard before, since kingship (began). Their mines were found loaded bearing copper, (it) being loaded like tens-of-thousands to their <i>menesh</i>-ships; proceeding forward to Egypt, arriving healthy, carrying what they made in heaps under the window (?) in numerous bricks of copper, like hundreds-of-thousands, they were the color of gold of three-times” Papyrus Harris I, 78: 1-4 (Cooper 2015: No. [54.1]; Grandet 1994: 338-339, V. 3: 261).</p> <p>“I commanded butlers and officials to the <i>h3st mfk3</i>, Hill-country-of-turquoise, for my mother, Hathor, mistress of turquoise, (to) present to her silver, gold, royal-linen, <i>mek</i>-linen and numerous things in her presence like the sand. Wonders of true turquoise in numerous bags were brought for me, and it was presented before me. They (the wonders) had not been since again since (the time) of kingship” Papyrus Harris I, 78: 6-8 (Cooper 2015: No. [64.16]; Grandet 1994: 339).</p>
<p>B.1.41. Papyrus Moscow 127 Unprovenienced ca. 1000 BCE Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow</p>	<p>“Enter and send him to Naharin in order to bring the hidden Temrugen, with whom he traveled to <i>s’r</i>, Seir(ites) (?)...” Papyrus Moscow 127, 5:4-5 (Cooper 2015: No. [66.5])</p>

B.2. Assyrian Sources

(all English translations from cited sources, with some modifications)

Adad-Nirari III (r. 810-783 BCE)	
<p>B.2.1. Nimrud (Calah) Stela Stone Monument</p> <p>The Nimrud Stela is a commemorative inscription that describes Adad-Nirari's campaign to Syria in support of Zakkur, the king of Hamat and Lugath, against Bir-Hadad of Damascus in 796 BCE. It was found at Kalḫu in the 1850s by W.K. Loftus, but was left at the mound and is only known from a paper squeeze published in Rawlinson's folios (Tadmor 1973: 148-149).</p>	<p>“...from the banks of the Euphrates – Ḫatti, Amurru in its entirety, Tyre, Sidon, [Bit]-Ḫumri (Israel), KUR.udumu, (the land) Edom, Philistia, as far as the great sea of the setting sun – I brought them to my feet” Line 12 (Tadmor 1973: 148; English translation by Kuan 2016: 82-83, Lines 11-13).</p>
Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 744-727 BCE)	
<p>B.2.2. Kalḫu Annals Stone Slabs Nimrud</p> <p>The Kalḫu Annals are a series of texts inscribed on wall slabs that decorated the rooms and corridors in the unfinished “Central Palace” of Tiglath-Pileser III at Nimrud. However, some slabs were re-used in the unfinished “Southwest Palace” of Esarhaddon (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 4).</p>	<p>“(Dadilu) of the city Kaska, Uassurme of the land Tabal, Ušḫitti of the land Tuna, Urballâ of the land Tuḫana, Tuḫam[me of the city Ištunda], Urimmi of the city Ḫubišna (and) <i>zabibe</i>, <i>šarrat</i> KUR.aribi, Zabibe, queen of (the land) the Arabs: gold, silver, tin, iron, elephant hides, ivo[ry], multi-colored garments, linen garments, blue-purple [and] [red]purple wool, ebony, boxwood, all kinds of precious things from the royal treasure, live sheep whose wool is dyed red-purple, flying birds of the sky whose wings are dyed blue-purple, horses, mules, oxen and sheep and goats and camels, she-camels...” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 48, Text 15).</p> <p><i>samsi</i>, <i>šarrat</i> KUR.aribi, “Samsi, queen of (the land) the Arabs, who had transgressed an oath (sworn by) the god Šamaš and... (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 59, Texts 21) ...<i>i</i>dibi 'ilu KUR.arubu [...], I]dibi'ilu of (the land) the Arabs (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 63, Text 22).</p>

	<p>“...Dadilu of the city Kaska, Uas]surme of the land Tabal, Ušḫitti of the land Tuna, Urballâ [of the land Tuḫana, Tuḫamme of the city Ištunda, Urimmi of the city Ḫubišna (and) <i>zabibe</i>, <i>šarrat KUR.aribi</i>, Zabibe, queen of (the land) the Arabs: gold, [silver, tin, iron, elephant hides, ivory, multi-colored garments, linen garments, blue-purple] (and) red-purple wool, ebony, boxwood” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 70, Text 27).</p> <p>“...Dadilu of the city Kaska, Uassurme of the land Tabal, Ušḫitti of the land Tuna, Urballâ of the land Tuḫana, Tuḫamme of the city Ištunda, Urimmi of the city Ḫubišna (and) <i>zabibe</i>, <i>šarrat KUR.aribi</i>, Zabibe, queen of (the land) the Arabs: [gold, silver, tin, iron, elephant hides], ivory, multi-colored garments, [linen garments, blue-purple (and) red-purple wool, ebony, boxwood], all kinds of precious things from the [royal] tr[asure, live sheep whose wool is dyed red-purple], fly[ing] birds of the sky [whose wings are dyed blue-purple, horses, mules, ox]en and [sheep and goats, camels, she-camels, together with their young]” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 77-78, Text 32).</p>
<p>B.2.3. Stone Stele Western Iran Israel Museum 74.49.96a, 74.49.96b; Private Collection (H. Mahboubian)</p>	<p>“...(the people of) <i>KUR.qidri KUR.aribi</i>, (the land) Qedar (and) (the land) the Arabs/Arabia...(and) <i>zabibe</i>, <i>šarrat KUR.aribi</i> Zabibe, queen of (the land) the Arabs – I imposed upon them tribute...” (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 86-87; Text 35).</p>
<p>B.2.4. Summary Inscription 4 Stone slab Nimrud (Kalḫu), excavated but left <i>in situ</i>, text restored from squeezes</p>	<p>“<i>samsi</i>, <i>šarrat KUR.aribi</i>, Samsi, queen of (the land) the Arabs, at Mount Saqurri, [I] de[feated 9,400 (of her people)]. I took away (from her) 1,000, 30, 000 camels, 20, 000 oxen, [...], ..., 5, 000 (pouches) of all types of aromatics, thrones of her gods, [the military equipment (and) staffs of her goddess(es)], (and) her property. Moreover, she, in order to save her life, [...(and) set out] like a female onager [to the de]sert, a place</p>

	<p>(where one is always) thirsty. [I set the rest of her possessions] (and) her [ten]ts, her people's safeguard within her cape, [on fire]. [Samsi] became started [by] my mighty [weapons]s and she brought camels, she-camels, [with their young, to Assyria, befo]re me. I placed a representative (of mine) over her and [...10, 000 soldiers. The people of the cities Mas'a (and) Tema, the (tribe) Saba, the people of the cites [Ḫayappa, Badanu], (and) Ḫatte (and) the (tribes) Idiba'ilu, [...], <i>ša mišir</i> KUR.KUR <i>ša šulum šamši</i>, who are on the border of the western lands, [whom none (of my predecessors) had known about, and whose country is remo]te....As one, [they brought before me] gold, silver, [camels, she-camels, (and) all types of aromatics] as their payment [and they kissed] my feet. I appointed [Idibi'ilu as the "gatekeeper" UGU KUR.<i>mušri</i>, fa]cing (the land) Egypt." Obvs. 19b-34 (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 106-107, Text 42).</p>
<p>B.2.5. Summary Inscription 7 Clay Tablet Nimrud (Kalḫu), Southeast Palace, excavated by Austen Henry Layard British Museum K.3751</p>	<p>The people of the cities [Mas]'a, Tema, Saba, Ḫayappa, Badanu, (and) [Ḫatte, (and) LÚ.<i>idiba'ilu</i>...<i>ša mišir</i> KUR.KUR, the (people) Idiba'ilu, ... who are on the border of the west]ern [lands], whom none (of my predecessors) had known about, and whose country is remote....As one, [they brought] befo[re me gold, sil]ver, camels, she-camels, (and) all types of aromatics as their payment [and they kissed my feet]. I appointed [Id]ibi'ilu as the "gatekeeper" UGU KUR.<i>mušri</i>, facing (the land) Egypt." Rev. 3-6a (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122, Text 47).</p> <p><i>"gauš-malaka, KUR.údumua, Qauš-Malaka of (the land) Edom,"</i> in list of tribute payments from Ammon, Moab, Ashkelon, Judah, and Gaza, Rev. 11 (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 122-123, Text 47).</p>

<p>B.2.6. Summary Inscription 8 (ND.400) Clay Tablet Nimrud (Kalḫu), “Governor’s Palace,” excavated from fill in 1950 British Museum 1954,1115.310</p>	<p>“I erected] (a stele with) my royal image in URU.<i>naḫal.musur</i> (the city) Brook of Egypt” Obvs. 18 (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 127, Text 48)</p> <p>“[As for <i>samsi</i>, <i>šarrat</i> KUR.<i>aribi</i>, Samsi, queen of (the land) the Arabs,]” at Mount Saqurri, [I] de[feated 9,400 (of her people)]. [I took away (from her)...thrones of] her [gods], [the military equipment (and) staffs of her goddess(es), (and) [her property]. [Moreover, she, in order to save her life...] (and) set out [like a female on]ager [to the desert, a place (where one is always) thirsty. I set] the rest of her possessions] (and) her tents, her people’s safeguard within her camp, on fire]. [Samsi became started [by] my mighty [weapons]s and she brought camel]s, she-camels, [with their young, to Assyria, before me]” Obvs. 24b-27b (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 127-128, Text 48).</p>
<p>B.2.7. Nimrud Letter 16 (ND 2765) Clay Tablet Nimrud, Building ZT, Room 4</p> <p>The Nimrud Letters are composed of the royal correspondence of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II, part of an archive of clay tablets excavated at Nimrud in 1952 by Max Mallowan. Nimrud Letter 16 describes the progress of repair work on damaged colossi and the receipt of tribute from the Southern Levant and Egypt</p>	<p>“The emissaries of Egypt, of Gaza, of Judah, of Moab, of the Ammonites, entered Calah on the twelfth (with) their tribute in their hands. Twenty-five horses of the people of Gaza (are) in his hand. <i>māt.údumua</i>, The Edomites, Ashdodites, Ekronites....” Lines 34-42 (Saggs 2001: 219-220).</p>
<p>Sargon II (r. 721-705 BCE)</p>	
<p>B.2.8. Nimrud (Weidner) Prism Clay Prism Nimrud (Kalḫu), Library of Ashurbanipal, excavated by Austen Henry Layard British Museum K.1668 + K.1671</p>	<p>“Den Königen der Länder Philistia, Judah, Ud[ume/mu]<i>māt(kur)</i>, Edom, (und) Moab, (so wie auch denen), die das Meer(esufer) bewohnen, (die allesamt), meinem Herrn, tribut- [und] abgabepflichtig waren, schickten sie (Briefe voller) Lügengeschwätz</p>

<p>The prism describes a joint rebellion by the kings of Philistia, Judah, Moab, and Edom, in which they sought an alliance with the king of Egypt</p>	<p>und hochverräterischem Gerede, dazu gezacht, (sie) mir zum Feind zu machen. Zu Pir’ū, dem König von Egypt, einem Fürsten, der sie (doch) unmöglich hätte retten können, trugen sie ihr Geschenk und baten ihn wiederholt um Unterstützung” Lines 25b-33 (Fuchs 1998: 73-74).</p>
<p>B.2.9. Sargon Geography</p> <p>Clay Tablet and Tablet Fragments VAT 8006 Aššur, found in 1910 Neo-Assyrian Period</p> <p>British Museum 64382 + 82955 4.76 cm x 5.08 cm Sippar (?), presumably excavated by Horzmond Rassam Late Babylonian</p> <p>The text describes the extent of the empire of Sargon II.</p>	<p>“...[.Mo]ab... Tema/Til Temania.....ú<u>d</u>[u]mu, E[do]m, Ginnirtum... VAT 8006, Obvs. 45-47; BM 64382 + 82955, Rev. 4-9 (Horowitz 1998: 72-73).</p>
<p>B.2.10. VA 8424 Clay Prism Aššur, Temple Forecourt Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin 8424</p>	<p>“ša paṭṭi URU naḥal M[ušur...] ša šulmu šamši” II 5-6.</p> <p>on the border of the city of the Brook of E[gypt], a province which is on the shore of] the Western (sea),” (Tadmor 1958: 78).</p> <p>“which is on the border of the Brook of E[gypt]...] toward the sunset I stationed [my army?]” (Hooker 1993: 206).</p>
<p>B.2.11. ND 3411 Clay Cylinder Nineveh</p> <p>a fragmentary clay cylinder excavated from Nineveh in the early 1950’s</p>	<p>“adi naḥal KUR.musri, as far as (the land) the Brook of Egypt” Line 11 (Gadd 1954: 199-200)</p>

<p>B.2.12. “Prism D” (ND. 2601 + 3401 + 3403 + 3417) “Prism E” (ND. 3400 + 3402 + 3408 (itself two parts) + 3409)</p> <p>Prism fragments excavated from Nineveh in early 1950s.</p>	<p><i>nišê</i>(MEŠ) KUR.<i>musur</i> ù LÚ.<i>arabi</i>, the peoples of (the land) Egypt and (the people) Arabians” IV: 42 (Gadd 1954: 179-180).</p> <p>“.....?-ri(?) KUR.<i>musur kangu aptema</i> [<i>nišê</i>(MEŠ) ?] KUR.<i>aššur</i>(KI) ù KUR.<i>musur</i> [<i>itti</i>] <i>aḫameš ablulma</i> [<i>ùšep</i>]i^šá <i>maḫiru</i>... IV: 46-49 (Gadd 1954: 179).</p> <p>“...opened the sealed h[arb]or (k[?r]u) of Egypt, mingled Assyrians and Egyptians together and made them trade with each other” (Na’aman 2004: 63).</p>
<p>B.2.13. Khorsabad Annals Stone Slabs Khorsabad</p>	<p>“LÚ Tamudi, LÚ Ibadidi, LÚ Marsimanu, LÚ Hayapa, the distant KUR <i>arbaa</i>, (the land) the Arabs, dwellers of the desert, who did not know learned men or scribes, who had not brought tribute to any king I slew with the help of my lord Ashur; their remnant I dragged away, I settled them in Samaria. From Pir’u, king of Mušuri, Shamsi, queen of KUR.<i>aribbi</i>, (the land) the Arabs, Itamra, King of Saba (KUR Saba’a), the kings of the coast and the desert I received gold, products (?) from the mountain, precious stones, ivory, <i>ushu</i>-seed, all kinds of perfumes, horses, and camels as their tribute” Lines 120-125, parallel text in summary inscription by Winckler 100, 101, without the perfumes.</p>
<p>Sennacherib (r. 704-681 BCE)</p>	
<p>B.2.14. “First Campaign Cylinder” Clay Cylinder Purchased from I. Géjou, likely Nineveh British Museum 113203</p> <p>Earliest known annalistic account of Sennacherib’s reign; includes prologue, account of first campaign in Babylonia, and building report of renovations on Southwest Palace and other public works.</p>	<p>“I captured alive Adinu, a nephew of Marduk-apla-iddina, together with Basqānu, a brother of <i>iati’e</i>, <i>šarrat</i> LÚ.<i>aribi</i> Iati’e, queen of the (people) Arabs, along with their troops. I seized the chariots, wagons, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, [and] Bactrian camels that he had abandoned during the battle” Lines 28-29 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 34, Text 1).</p>

<p>B.2.15. “Rassam Cylinder” or “Cylinder B” 5 complete clay cylinders and fragments Nineveh, Southwest Palace, excavated by Hormuzd Rassam British Museum 22500, 22501, 22503, 22504 Istanbul (unnumbered)</p> <p>Inscription describes Sennacherib’s first three campaigns, a large-scale renovation of the Southwest Palace and other public works. The relevant text lists tribute brought from leaders of the cities of Samsimurun, Sidon, Arwad, Byblos, Ashdod and Bit-Ammon, followed by the lands of Moab, Edom and the lands of the kings of Amurru</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, KUR.ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” Line 37 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 64, Text 4)</p>
<p>B.2.16. Chicago Prism Clay Prism, Hexagonal, Complete Unprovenienced, purchased by J.H. Breasted 1919-1920 from a Baghdad antiquities dealer Oriental Institute A2793</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, KUR.ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” II 57 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 175, Text 22; same Edom text as Rassam Cylinder/Cylinder B).</p>
<p>B.2.17. Taylor Prism Clay Prism, Hexagonal, (complete) Nineveh (?), purchased by Colonel R. Taylor in 1830, sold to British Museum in 1855 British Museum 91032</p> <p>Describes the first 8 campaigns of Sennacherib.</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, KUR.ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” II 57 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 175, Text 22; same Edom text as Rassam Cylinder/Cylinder B).</p>
<p>B.2.18. Cylinder D 2 fragmentary octagonal clay prisms and prism fragments Nineveh</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, KUR.ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” III 22 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 114, Text 16; same Edom text as Rassam Cylinder/Cylinder B).</p>
<p>B.2.19. King Prism Clay Prism Purchased from I. Géjou British Museum 103000</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, KUR.ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” King Prism: II 82 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 131, Text 17; same Edom text as Rassam Cylinder/Cylinder B).</p>

<p>B.2.20 Heidel Prism Clay Prism Nineveh, western wall Iraq Museum, Baghdad 56578</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, KUR.ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” II 82 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 131, Text 17; same Edom text as Rassam Cylinder/Cylinder B).</p>
<p>B.2.21. Jerusalem Prism Clay Prism Israel Museum 71.72.249</p>	<p>“<i>aarammu</i>, [KUR].ú<i>dumma</i>, Aya-rāmu of (the land) Edom” II 54 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 192, Text 23; same Edom text as Rassam Cylinder/Cylinder B).</p>
<p>B.2.22. “Ungnad Stone Tablet Fragment Inscription” Stone Tablet Nineveh or Aššur Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin 3310</p> <p>Contains accounts of sixth, seventh, and eighth campaigns, campaign to Arabia, and building report</p>	<p>“[...Te’elḥu]nu, <i>šarrat</i> LÚ.<i>arabi</i>, queen of the Arabs, in the middle of the <i>madbari</i>, desert [...] I took away [...] thousand camels from her. She [...] with Hazael. [Terror of doing battle with me overwhelmed them. They abandoned their tents (and) fled for their lives [to the city....] and the city Adummatu. [(As for) the city...and the city Ad]ummatu, which are located in the <i>madbari</i>, desert, [...a place of thirst in whi[ch] there is no pasture (or) watering place, [...].]...” Rev. 53-59 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 232, Text 35).</p>
<p>B.2.23. “Winckler Stone Tablet Fragment” Stone Tablet Nineveh British Museum K.8544</p>	<p>“...I carried] off [...<i>Te’elḥunu šar</i>]rat LÚ.<i>arabi</i>, [...Te’elḥunu queen of the Arabs, together with [her] god[s...]...., <i>pappardilû</i>-stones, <i>pappar[minu]</i>-stone[s,...] <i>ḥašūru</i>-wood, all types [of] aromatics....” (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 232, Text 35).</p>
<p>Esarhaddon (r. 680-669 BCE)</p>	
<p>B.2.24. Nineveh A</p> <p>(1) “Esarhaddon Prism” Nineveh, Area SH, excavated by R W Hutchinson and Reginald Campbell Thompson in 1929 British Museum 121005</p>	<p><i>qauš-gabri</i> LUGAL URU.ú<i>dume</i>, “Qauš-Gabar, king of (the city) Edom” V 56 (Leichty 2011: 23, Text 1); also reconstructed in Nineveh S: VI 8 (Leichty 2011: 46).</p> <p>“I plundered the city Arzâ, which is in (the land) the Brook of Egypt, and threw</p>

<p>(2) Clay Prism fragments Nineveh, excavated by Austen Henry Layard in the 1840s British Museum K.1667, K.6387, 91030</p> <p>(3) unproveniented fragments housed at the Oriental Institute and the Vorderasiatisches Museum</p> <p>Nineveh A records Esarhaddon’s military campaigns and the construction of an armory at Nineveh.</p>	<p>Asuhili, its king, into fetters and brought (him) to Assyria” III 39 (Leichty 2011: 17-18, Text 1).</p> <p>“(As for) the city Adurnutu, the fortress of, LÚ.<i>aribi</i>, the Arabs, which Sennacherib, king of Assyria, my father, who engendered me, conquered and whose goods, possessions (and) gods, together with Apkallatu, <i>šarrat</i> LÚ.<i>aribi</i>, queen of the Arabs, he plundered and brought to Assyria – Hazael, LUGAL LÚ.<i>aribi</i>, king of the Arabs, came to Nineveh, my capital city, with his heavy audience gift and kissed my feet. He implored (me) to give back his gods, and I had pity on him. I refurbished the gods Atar-Samayin, Dāya, Nuḥāya, Ruldāwu, Abirullu, (and) Atar-qurumā, the gods of, LÚ.<i>aribi</i>, the Arabs, and I inscribed the might of Aššur, my lord, (and an inscription) written in my name on them and gave (them) back to them. I placed the lady Tabūa, who was raised in the palace of my father, as ruler over them and returned her to her land with her gods I added sixty-five camels (and) ten donkeys to the previous tribute and imposed (it) on him. Hazael died, and I placed Iata’, his son, on his throne. I added ten minas of gold, one thousand choice stones, fifty camels (and) one thousand bags of aromatics to the tribute of his father and imposed (it) on him. Later, Uabu, to exercise kingship, incited all of LÚ.<i>arubu</i>, the Arabs, to rebel against Iata’. I, Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters, who loves loyalty and abhors treachery, sent my battle troops to the aid of Iata’, and the trampled all of LÚ.<i>arubu</i>, the Arabs, threw Uabu, together with the soldiers who were with him, into fetters and brought (them) to me. I placed them in neck stocks and tied them to the side of my gate” IV 1-31 (Leichty 2011: 19, Text 1).</p>
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<p>B.2.25. Nineveh B Clay Prism Nineveh, Arsenal Iraq Museum, Baghdad 59046</p> <p>Nineveh B is the common title for an Akkadian inscription found on seven clay hexagonal prisms of an earlier and shorter version of Nineveh A. The relevant recension (IM 59046) is a complete prism excavated from Nineveh, below the surface of the mud brick terrace of the arsenal.</p>	<p>“The one who plundered the land Arzâ, <i>šá paṭi naḥal</i> KUR.<i>mušur</i>, which is in (the land) the Brook of Egypt. I threw Asuhili, its king, into fetters along with his counselors (and) brought (them) to Assyria” I 57 (Leichty 2011: 29, Text 2).</p> <p>(As for) the city Adumutu, the fortress of, KUR.<i>aribi</i>, (the land) the Arabs, which Sennacherib, king of Assyria, (my) father, who engendered me, conquered and whose goods, possessions, (and) gods, together with Apkallatu, <i>šarrat</i> KUR.<i>aribi</i>, the queen of (the land) the Arabs, he plundered and brought to Assyria — Hazael, LUGAL KUR.<i>aribi</i>, the king of (the land) the Arabs, came to Nineveh, my capital city, with his heavy audience gift and kissed my feet. He implored me to give (back) his gods, and I had pity on him. I refurbished those gods and I had the might of the god Aššur, my lord, and (an inscription) written in my name inscribed on them and I gave (them) back to him. I placed the lady Tabūa, who was raised in my palace, as ruler over them and returned her to her land with her gods. I added sixty-five camels to the previous tribute (which was paid to) my father and imposed (it) on him. Later, Hazael died and I placed Ia’lû (Iata’), his son, on his throne. I added ten minas of gold, one thousand choice stones, fifty camels, (and) one thousand bags of aromatics to the tribute of his father and imposed (it) on him.” II 46-III 8 (Leichty 2011: 30-31, Text 2).</p>
<p>B.2.26. Nineveh C Clay Prism Nineveh British Museum 91029</p> <p>Nineveh C records the building of the armory at Nineveh and duplicates parts of Nineveh A and B.</p>	<p>“The one who plundered the city Ar[zâ, [<i>šá paṭi naḥal</i>] KUR.<i>mušri</i>, which is in (the land) the Brook of] Egypt. I threw Asuhili, [its king], into fetters[along with] his [coun]selors [and] brought (them) [to Assyria]” II 10 (Leichty 2011: 37, Text 3).</p>

<p>B.2.27. Clay Prism Fragments Nineveh, discovered at Nebi Yunus by M.A. Mustafa in 1954 Iraq Museum 59047 A/B</p>	<p>“[(As for) the city Adumutu, the fortress of the Ar]abs, [which Sennacherib, king of Assyria, (my) father who] engendered me [conquered, and whose goods, possessions], (and) gods, [together with Apkallatu, the qu]een of (the land) of the Arabs/Arabia, <i>ša]rrat KUR.aribi</i>, [he plundered and] brought to [Assyri]a. – [Hazael, the king of] the Arabs [came to Nineveh], my capital [city, with his] heavy [audience gift and kissed] my feet. [He implored me to give (back) his gods and] I had [pity on him. I] refurbished....” II 2-24 (Leichty 2011: 42-43, Text 4).</p>
<p>B.2.28. Nineveh D Clay Prism Nineveh British Museum 134465</p>	<p>“... whose goods, possessions, (and) gods, together with [Apkallatu, the queen of the Arabs], he (Sennacherib) plundered and brou[ght] to Assyria — [Hazael, the king of the Arabs], came to [Nineveh, my capital city], with his heavy audience gift and kissed my feet. [He implored me] to gi[ve (back) his gods, and] (iii 5') I had pity on him. [I refurbished] the gods Atar-samay[in, Dāya], Nuḥāya, Ruldāwu, A[birillu], (and) Atar-qurumâ, the gods of, <i>LÚ.aribi</i>, the Arabs, [and I inscribed] the might of the god Aššur, my lord, and (an inscription) written in [my] name [on them and] gave (them) back to him. I placed the lady Tabūa, who was rais[ed] in the palace of my father, as ruler] over them and [returned her to her land] with her gods. I added sixty-five camels (and) ten donkeys to [the previous tribute] and imposed (it) on him. H[a]zael died and [I placed] Iata', his son, on [his throne]. I added ten minas of gold, one hundred choice stones, [fifty camels], (and) (iii 15') one hundred bags of aromatics to [the tribute of his father] and imposed (it) on him. La[ter, Uabu], to exercise kingship, incited [all of], <i>LÚ.aru[bu]</i>, the Ara[bs] to rebel against Iata'. [I, Esarhaddon, king of Assyria], king of the four quarters, who loves loyalty [and</p>

	<p>abhors treachery, sent] my battle troops to the aid of [Iata', and] they trampled all of, LÚ.<i>arubu</i>, the Arabs, [threw Uabu], together with the soldiers who were with him, into fetters, [and brought (them) to me]. I placed [them] in neck stocks [and tied them] to the side of my gate." III 1-21 (Leichty 2011: 49-50, Text 6).</p>
<p>B.2.29. Fragment B (K.8523) Clay Tablet, fragmentary Nineveh, excavated by Austen Henry Layard British Museum</p> <p>Fragment B contains an abbreviated version of Esarhaddon's annals.</p>	<p>"I conquered [the city Ar] [zâ, šá pa[ti] naḫal KUR.<i>mušur</i>, which is in (the land) the Brook of] Egypt (and) [threw Asuḫili, its king, toge]ther with his [cou]nse]lors into fette[rs] (and) brought (him) to Assyria" Obvs. 14b (Leichty 2011: 77, Text 31).</p> <p>"...Uabu, the ki[ng of...],to exercise kingship], incited all of [LU].<i>arubu</i>, (the people) Arabs, to rebel against Ia'utâ" Rev. 7-8 (Leichty 2011: 78, Text 31).</p>
<p>B.2.30. Fragment F Clay Tablet excavated by Austen Henry Layard in the 1840s British Museum K.1082, K.1086, SM .2027</p> <p>See also Leichty 2011: 89-90 for Fragment G, a clay tablet fragment from Nineveh, with similar description of this march</p>	<p>"to the city Raphia, <i>ana ite naḫal</i> KUR.<i>mušur</i>, which is in (the land) the Brook of Egypt, a place that has no river(s)" Obvs. 17-18 (Leichty 2011: 87, Text 34).</p> <p>Also translated as: "as far as the border of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt," (Hooker 1993: 210). "beyond the border of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt," (Na'aman 1979: 24). "to the border zone of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt," (Na'aman 2004: 63). "on the bank of the [land of the] Brook of Egypt" (Radner 2008: 306).</p> <p>In accordance with the command of the god Aššur, my lord, it occurred to me and my heart [prompted me] (and thus) I col[lected] camels from all of, LUGAL.MEŠ KUR.<i>aribi</i>, the Arab kings [and lo]aded them with [water skins (and water containers)]. I advanced twenty leagues distance, a journey of fifteen days, over [difficult] sand dunes, [where (one is always) thirsty]. I went four</p>

	<p>leagues distance (through terrain full of) alum, mušu-stones, (and) [...]. (rev. 5) I trampled over four leagues distance, a journey of two days, (through terrain full of) two-headed snakes ... [... whose venom] is deadly and I crossed over four leagues distance, a journey of two [days] (through terrain full of) [...] flying green [dragonflies. ...] four leagues distance, a journey of two d[ays ...] ... I advanced sixteen leagues distance, a journey of eight days [...] ... very much. The god Marduk, the great lord, came to my aid [...] (rev. 10) he revived my troops.” Rev. 1-9 (Leichty 2011: 88, Text 34).</p>
<p>B.2.31. Fragment G Clay Tablet Fragment Nineveh</p>	<p>“[in the neighborhood] of, URU.<i>naḫal.mušur</i> (the city) Brook of Egypt, a [place that has no rivers]” Obsv. 6 (Leichty 2011: 90, Text 36); similar description of march through Sinai as Fragment F.</p>
<p>B.2.32. Monument B/Tel Ahmar Stele Stele 390 x 172 x 70 cm Til Barsip Aleppo Museum</p>	<p>“[... Hazael], MAN LÚ.KUR.<i>aribi</i> the king of (the people/the land) the Arabs/Arabia, [who came to Nineveh, my capital city, with his heavy audience gift and] kissed my feet, [implored me to give (back) his gods, and (10) I had] pity [on him]. I refurbished [the gods Atar-samayin, Dāya, Nu]ḫāya, Ru[ldāwu], Abi[rillu, (and) Atar-qu]rumâ, [the gods of the Arabs], and [... I gave (them) b]a[ck to him]. I appointed the lady Tabū[a], who was [raised in the palace of my father, as ruler and returned her to her land with those gods [of the Arabs]. Later, Hazael [died] and I placed Iauta’ (Iata’), his son, on his throne. I im[posed upon] him [tribu]te and payment [greater than the payment] I fixed on [his father]. Uabu, who [...] my [...], took [for himself] the kingship of Iauta’. I sent my officials (and) [my battle troops] to the aid of Iauta’ [...] and [...] Uabu and the troops, his [trus]ted helpers, together [with ...] his gods, [...] his [possessions], his goods that ... I appointed as [...] (and) I carri[ed (them) off] to As[syria].” Lines 7-14 (Leichty 2011: 180, Text 97).</p>

<p>B.2.33. Aššur-Babylon E Alabaster Tablet Aššur Istanbul Archaeological Museum EŞ 6262</p> <p>Aššur-Babylon E is a summary of Esarhaddon’s most important military feats and two building accounts.</p>	<p>“I conqu[ered the city Arzâ, which is in the neighborhood of the], <i>naḥal mušur</i>, Brook of Egypt, threw Asuḥili, its king, into fetters and took [him to Assyria]” Obvs. 3 (Leichty 2011: 135, Text 60).</p>
<p>B.2.34. Kalḫu A Clay Barrel Cylinders British Museum 131129 (complete); ND.11308 (complete) + fragments from 5 other cylinders</p> <p>Kalḫu A is an abbreviated summary of events recounted in Nineveh A and the building account of an arsenal in Nimrud.</p>	<p>“the one who plundered the city Arzâ, which is in, <i>naḥal KUR.mušri</i>, (the land) the Bro[ok of Egypt] (and) [who threw] Asuḥili, its king, into fetters along with his counselors (and) brought (them) to Assyria” Line 16 (Leichty 2011: 155, Text 77).</p>
<p>B.2.35. Kalḫu B Clay Barrel Cylinders Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, house of the <i>rab ekalli</i>, excavated in the 1950s ND.7097 (complete), ND.7098 (complete), ND.7100 (complete) British Museum, Iraq Museum</p> <p>Kalḫu B is a summary of events recounted in Nineveh A.</p>	<p>“the one who plundered the city Arzâ, which is in, <i>na[ḥal.mušri]</i>, (the land) the Bro[ok of Egypt] (and) who threw Asuḥili, its king, into fetters along with his counselors (and) brought (them) [to Assyria]” Line 15 (Leichty 2011: 158, Text 78).</p>
<p>B.2.36. Barrel Cylinder Clay Nimrud, Nabû Temple British Museum ND 5404a, 4379b, 5404b, 4379a, 4379c, 4379d, 5404c</p> <p>This barrel cylinder is an abbreviated account of events from Nineveh A and the account of a building project for Esarhaddon’s son, Ashurbanipal.</p>	<p>“the one who plundered the city A[rzâ, which is in, <i>naḥal KUR.mušri</i>, (the land) the Brook of Egypt] (and) who [threw] Asuḥili, its king, [into fetters] along with [his counselors] (and) brought (them) to Assyria” (Leichty 2011: 161, Text 79).</p>

<p>B.2.37. Tarbišu A Clay Barrel Cylinder Aššur Istanbul Archaeological Museum EŞ 6703</p> <p>This barrel cylinder contains an abbreviated summary of events from Nineveh A, and a building account of a palace for Ashurbanipal in Tarbišu (modern Sherif Khan), near Nineveh.</p>	<p>“the one who plundered the city Arzâ, which is in, <i>naḥal KUR.mušri</i>, (the land) the Brook of Egypt (and) who threw Asuḥili, its ki[ng], into fetters along with his counselors (and) [brought (them) to Assyria]” Line 7 (Leichty 2011: 175, Text 93).</p>
<p>Ashurbanipal (r. 668-635 BCE)</p>	
<p>B.2.38. Prism A Clay Cylinder, ten-sided, complete Nineveh, North Palace, excavated by Hormuzd Rassam in 1878 British Museum 91026</p> <p>Prism A describes nine campaigns against various enemies, his rebuilding of the 'bīt ridûti' of Sennacherib, and his replacement of it with a new building equipped with a portico ('bīt ḥilāni').</p>	<p>“Upon the command of Aššur and Ištar, my troops in the girû of Azarilu and Hiratāqazaya, <i>ina udume</i>, in Edom, in the pass of Yabrûdu, in Ammon, in the region of Haurîna, in Moab, in Sa'arri, in Hargê, and in the region of Şubiti, inflicted on his (i.e. of Uaite') numerous troops a great defeat, I brought on them innumerable defeats. The people of, <i>KUR.aribi</i>, (the land) Arabia, as many had revolted with him, I struck with my weapons. But he (i.e. Uaite') fled before the mighty weapons of Aššur to a distant region. I set on fire the steppe-houses, the tents in which they live, and burnt them with fire. Uaite' faced misfortune, so he fled alone to Nabate” VII 109 (Borger 1996: 61-62; English translation from Crowell 2004: 92).</p>
<p>B.2.39 “Prism C” Clay Cylinder Fragment Nineveh British Museum K.1705</p> <p>“Prism C” is the common title given to various clay cylinder fragments excavated from Nineveh and Kalḫu in different excavations from the late 19th – mid 20th centuries, which may or may not physically join or belong to the same prism, but which appear to belong to the same version of the</p>	<p>“In the course of my campaign – Ba'al king of Tyre, Manasseh king of Judah, <i>qauš-gabri</i> LUGAL KUR.údume, “Qauš-Gabar, king of (the land) Edom Mušuri king of Moab, Şilbel king of Gaza, Mitinti king of Ashkelon, Ikausu king of Ekron... a total of twenty-two kings from the coast, the middle of the sea, and the dryland, my obedient servants brought their heavy <i>tāmārtu</i>-payment to me and kissed my feet. Those kings, together with their forces and their ships, I caused them to take the same route as my troops over</p>

<p>annals of Ashurbanipal. The fragment mentioning Edom (K. 1705) was excavated from Nineveh by Austen Henry Layard.</p>	<p>sea and by dry land.” II 40 (Borger 1996: 18; English translation from Crowell 2004: 90).</p> <p>“The people of KUR.<i>aribi</i>, (the land) Arabia, he incited to revolt with him, and they repeatedly plundered Amurru. My troops which dealt in the territory of his land I dispatched against him. Their defeat they accomplished; the people of KUR.<i>aribi</i>, (the land) Arabia, as many as had advanced, they struck down with weapons. Their tents, their dwellings, they set on fire, allotted them to flames. Cattle, sheep, asses, camels, slaves without number they took... Yawtha’ together with the rest of the LU.<i>aribi</i>, (the people) Arabs, who had fled before my weapons, mighty ‘Ira struck them down.” VIII 4-24 (Retsö 2003: 162).</p>
<p>B.2.40. Clay Tablet Nineveh, Library of Ashurbanipal, excavated by Austen Henry Layard British Museum K. 4384</p>	<p>“Land of Melid, Philistia, Sardis, Ash[kelon], URU.<i>údumu</i>, (city) Edom: [...], Ammo[n], Land of Cush” II 4 (Fales and Postgate 1995: 4).</p>

B.3. Hebrew Bible Sources

(all English translations from the New Revised Standard Version, with some modifications)

<p>B.3.1. Genesis</p>	<p>“From there Abraham journeyed toward <i>'arṣāh hannegev</i>, the lands of the south, and settled between <i>qādēš</i>, Kadesh, and <i>šūr</i>, Shur...” (Gen. 20:1).</p> <p>“So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in <i>midbar bē'ēr šāba'</i>, the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, ‘Do not let me look on the death of the child.’ And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and a <i>mal'āk</i> of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, ‘What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.’ Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink” (Gen. 21:14-19).</p> <p>“Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in <i>'arṣāh sē'îr</i>, the land of Seir, <i>šēdēh 'ēdôm</i>, “the field/country of Edom”” (Gen. 32:3).</p> <p>“Korah, Gatam, and Amalek; these are the clans/chiefs of Eliphaz in <i>'ereṣ 'ēdôm</i>, the land of Edom. They are the sons of Adah. These are the sons of Esau’s son Reuel: the clans/chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the clans/chiefs of Reuel <i>'ereṣ 'ēdôm</i> in the land of Edom. They are the sons of Esau’s wife, Basemath” (Gen. 36:16-17).</p>
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	<p>“Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the clans/chiefs of the Horites, the sons of <i>sē’îr</i>, Seir in <i>’eres’ēdôm</i>, in the land of Edom” (Gen. 36: 21).</p> <p>“These are the kings who reigned in <i>’eres’ēdôm</i>, in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites” (Gen. 36: 31).</p>
<p>B.3.2. Exodus</p>	<p>“Then the <i>’allu(w)pê’ēdôm</i>, chiefs of Edom were dismayed...” (Exod. 15: 15a)</p> <p>“Then Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds, and they went into the <i>midbar šūr</i>, Wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, ‘What shall we drink?’ He cried out to Yahweh; and Yahweh showed him a piece of wood/tree; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet” (Exod. 15: 22-25).</p> <p>“The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the <i>midbar sîn</i>, Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and <i>sînāy</i>, Sinai... The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.’ Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days’</p>

...Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to Yahweh, for he has heard your complaining.' And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud... In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that Yahweh has given you to eat. This is what Yahweh has commanded: 'Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an *omer* to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents.' The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an *omer*, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed... Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun grew hot, it melted" (Exod. 16: 1-21).

"The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a habitable land; they ate manna, until they came to the border of the land of Canaan" (Exod. 16: 35).

"From the *midbar sîn*, **Wilderness of Sin** the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as Yahweh commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to

kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?’ So Moses cried out to the Lord, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ Yahweh said to Moses, ‘Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested Yahweh, saying, ‘Is Yahweh among us or not?’” (Exod. 17:1-7).

“...they came into *midbar sînāy*, **the Wilderness of Sinai**. They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered *midbar sînāy*, **the Wilderness of Sinai**, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain...On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now *har sînay*, **Mount Sinai** was wrapped in smoke, because Yahweh had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. When Yahweh descended upon *har sînay*, **Mount Sinai**, to the top of the mountain, Yahweh summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up...” (Exod. 19: excerpts).

<p>B.3.4. Leviticus</p>	<p>“He shall take the two goats and set them before Yahweh at the entrance of the tent of meeting; and Aaron shall cast lots on the two goats, one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for Azazel.-Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for Yahweh, and offer it as a sin offering; but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before Yahweh to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the <i>midbar</i>, wilderness to Azazel...The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the <i>midbar</i>, wilderness” (Lev. 16: 7-10, 22).</p>
<p>B.3.5. Numbers</p>	<p>“Now when the people complained in the hearing of Yahweh about their misfortunes, Yahweh heard it and his anger was kindled. Then the fire of Yahweh burned against them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. But the people cried out to Moses; and Moses prayed to Yahweh, and the fire abated. So that place was called Taberah, because the fire of Yahweh burned against them” (Num. 11: 1-3).</p> <p>“Then Yahweh came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied” (Num. 11: 25).</p> <p>“Then Yahweh came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forward. And he said, “Hear my words: When there are prophets among you, I, Yahweh, make myself known to them in visions; I speak to them in dreams. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak face to face—clearly, not in riddles; and he beholds the form of Yahweh. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against</p>

them, and he departed. When the cloud went away from over the tent, Miriam had become leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam and saw that she was leprous” (Num. 12: 5-10).

“They have heard that you, Yahweh, are in the midst of this people; for you, Yahweh, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go in front of them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night...” (Num. 14:14).

“Moses sent messengers from *qādēš*, **Kadesh** to *melek ’ēdôm*, **the king of Edom**, “Thus says your brother Israel: ...here we are, in *qādēš*, **Kadesh**, a town on the edge of your territory. Now let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from any well; we will go along the King’s Highway, not turning aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.” But *’edôm*, **Edom** said to him, “You shall not pass through, or we will come out with the sword against you.” The Israelites said to him, “We will stay on the highway; and if we drink of your water, we and our livestock, then we will pay for it. It is only a small matter; just let us pass through on foot.” But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And *’edôm*, **Edom** came out against them with a large force, heavily armed” (Num. 20:14-20).

“Then Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, at Mount Hor, on the border of *’ereš ’ēdôm*, **the land of Edom...**” (Num. 20:23)

“From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Sea of Reeds, to go around *’ereš ’ēdôm*, **the land of Edom**. The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the *midbār*, **wilderness**? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food. Then Yahweh sent venomous serpents among

	<p>the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died” (Num. 21:4-6).</p> <p>“<i>’edôm</i>, Edom will become a possession, <i>šē’îr</i>, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly” (Num. 24:18).</p> <p>“They set out from <i>qādēš</i>, Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor on the edge of <i>’eres’ēdôm</i>, the land of Edom” (Num. 33: 37).</p>
<p>B.3.6. Deuteronomy</p>	<p>“It is eleven days from Horeb by <i>derek har šē’îr</i>, the way of Mount Seir to <i>qādēš barnēa’</i>, Kadesh-Barnea” (Deut. 1:2).</p> <p>“... ‘You are about to pass through the territory of your kindred, the descendants of Esau who live in <i>šē’îr</i>, Seir. They will be afraid of you, so, be very careful not to engage in battle with them, for I will not give you even so much as a foot’s length of their land, since I have given <i>har šē’îr</i>, Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. You shall purchase food from them for money, so that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them for money, so that you may drink...So we passed by our kin, the descendants of Esau who live in <i>šē’îr</i>, Seir, from the way of the Arabah, and from Elath and Ezion-geber...” (Deut. 2:4-8).</p> <p>“who led you through the great and terrible <i>midbar</i>, wilderness, an arid wasteland with venomous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock” (Deut. 8:15).</p> <p>“Yahweh came from <i>sînay</i>, Sinai, and arose from <i>šē’îr</i>, Seir, he shone forth from <i>har pārān</i>, Mount Paran, with him were myriads of holy ones at his right, a host of his own” (Deut. 33: 2).</p>

<p>B.3.7. Judges</p>	<p>“Yahweh, when you went out from <i>sē ʾîr</i>, Seir, when you marched from <i>šēdēh ʾēdôm</i>, the field/country of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens poured, the clouds indeed poured water” (Judg. 5:4).</p> <p>“...but when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the <i>midbār</i>, wilderness to the Sea of Reeds and came to <i>qādēš</i>, Kadesh. Israel then sent messengers to <i>melek ʾēdôm</i>, the king of Edom, saying, ‘Let us pass through your land’; but <i>melek ʾēdôm</i>, the king of Edom would not listen. They also sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. Israel remained at <i>qādēš</i>, at Kadesh. Then they journeyed through the <i>midbār</i>, through the wilderness, went around <i>ʾereš ʾēdôm</i>, the land of Edom and the land of Moab...” (Judg. 11:16-18).</p>
<p>B.3.8. 1 and 2 Samuel</p>	<p>“When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side—against Moab, against the Ammonites, against <i>ʾedôm</i>, Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; wherever he turned he routed them. He did valiantly, and struck down the Amalekites, and rescued Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them” (1 Sam. 14: 47-48).</p> <p>“When Achish asked, ‘Against have you made a raid today?’ David would say, ‘Against <i>negeb yěhu(w)dāh</i>, “the negev of Judah’ or ‘Against <i>negeb hayyarhēmē ʾēlī</i>, “the negev of the Jerahmeelites’ or, ‘Against the <i>negeb haqqēnī</i>, ‘the negev of the Kenites’” (1 Sam. 27: 10).</p> <p>“We had made a raid on <i>negeb hakkērētī</i>, “the negev of the Cherethites” and on that belonging to Judah and on the Negev of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag down” (1 Sam. 30:14).</p>

	<p>Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam. 22:9-10, 18-22).</p> <p>“He put garrisons in <i>’ēdôm</i>, Edom; throughout all <i>’ēdôm</i>, Edom he put garrisons, and all of <i>’ēdôm</i>, Edom became David’s servants. And Yahweh helped David wherever he went” (2 Sam. 8:14).</p>
<p>B.3.9. 1 and 2 Kings</p>	<p>“King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Sea of Reeds, in <i>’eres’ēdôm</i>, the land of Edom” (1 Kgs 9:26).</p> <p>Solomon receives gold tribute from <i>kāl malkê hā’ereb</i>, “all the kings of the Arabs” (1 Kgs 10:15).</p> <p>“For when David was in <i>’ēdôm</i>, Edom, and Joab, the commander of the army, went up to bury the dead, he killed every male in <i>’ēdôm</i>, Edom. Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had eliminated every male in <i>’ēdôm</i>, Edom” (1 Kgs 11: 15-16).</p> <p>“Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to <i>bě’ēr šeba’</i>, Beersheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the <i>midbār</i>, wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: ‘It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.’ Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly a <i>mal’āk</i> touched him and said to him, ‘Get up and eat.’ He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The <i>mal’āk</i> of Yahweh came a second time, touched him, and said, ‘Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.’ He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God” (1 Kgs 19: 3-8).</p>

	<p>“He said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh, for Yahweh is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before Yahweh, but Yahweh was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Yahweh was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Yahweh was not in the fire; and after the fire <i>qôl dēmāmāh daqqāh</i>, a still, small voice” (1 Kgs 19: 11-12).</p> <p>“Then he asked, ‘By which way shall we march?’ Jehoram answered, “By the way of <i>midbar’ēdôm</i>, the wilderness of Edom.’ So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and, <i>melek’ēdôm</i>, the king of Edom set out; and when they had made a roundabout march of seven days, there was no water for the army or for the animals that were with them. Then the king of Israel said, ‘Alas! Yahweh has summoned us, three kings, only to be handed over to Moab.’ But Jehoshaphat said, ‘Is there no prophet of Yahweh here, through whom we may inquire of Yahweh?’ ... Elisha said...’But get me a musician.’ And then, while the musician was playing, the power of Yahweh came on him. And he said, ‘Thus says Yahweh, ‘I will make this wadi full of pools.’ For thus says Yahweh, ‘You shall see neither wind nor rain, but the wadi shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, you, your cattle, and your animals.’ ... The next day, about the time of the morning offering, suddenly water began to flow from <i>derek’ēdôm</i>, the way of Edom, until the country was filled with water” (2 Kgs 3:8-20).</p>
<p>B.3.10. Isaiah</p>	<p>Isaiah proclaims that after Yahweh destroys Babylon the site will never be inhabited again and that <i>wēlō yahel šām ’ārābî</i>, “and no Arab shall pitch a tent there” (Isa. 13:20).</p>

	<p>“An oracle concerning the animals of the, <i>negeb</i>, Negev. Through a land of trouble and distress of lioness and roaring[a] lion, of viper and flying serpent, they carry their riches on the backs of donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels, to a people that cannot profit them” (Isa. 30: 6).</p> <p>“...For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in <i>'ereṣ 'ēdôm</i>, the land of Edom” (Isa. 34:6).</p>
<p>B.3.11. Jeremiah</p>	<p>“Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says Yahweh: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the <i>midbār</i>, wilderness, in a land not sown” (Jer. 2:2).</p> <p>“They did not say, “Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the <i>midbār</i>, wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?” (Jer. 2:6)</p> <p>Jeremiah compares an unfaithful Israel to a prostitute on the roadside waiting for lovers <i>ka 'ārābî bammidbār</i>, “like an Arab in the wilderness” (Jer. 3:2).</p> <p>““Therefore, hear the plan that Yahweh has made against, <i>'ēdôm</i>, Edom and the purposes that he has formed against the inhabitants of, <i>tēmān</i>, Teman: Surely the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away; surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate” (Jer. 49:20).</p>
<p>B.3.12. Job</p>	<p>Job 28 (1-2, 5-6), describes the mining of precious metals and stones (silver, gold, iron, copper, sapphires), in which the earth is <i>nehpak kēmōw 'ēš</i>, “turned up as by fire” (Job 28: 5b).</p>

<p>B.3.13. Obadiah</p>	<p>“Your warriors shall be shattered, <i>tēmān</i>, Teman, so that everyone from <i>har ‘ēšāw</i>, Mount Esau will be cut off” (Obad. 1:9).</p>
<p>B.3.14. Habakkuk</p>	<p>“God came from <i>tēmān</i>, Teman, the Holy One, from <i>har pārān</i>, Mount Paran” (Hab. 3:3).</p>
<p>B.3.15. Nehemiah</p>	<p><i>ḡešem hā‘arbî</i>, “Geshem the Arab” (Neh. 6:1; 2:19)</p>

B.4. West Semitic Epigraphic Sources

<p>B.4.1. Arad Inscription 24 Ostrakon Found outside the fortress on western slope, attributed to Stratum VI by script style (Aharoni 1981: 46-49)</p>	<p>“And you shall send them to <i>rmtngb</i>, Ramat-Negeb by the hand of Malkiyahu, the son of Qerab’ur and he shall hand them over to Elisha, the son of Yirmiyahu in <i>rmtngb</i>, Ramat-Negeb, lest anything should happen to the city. And the word of the king is incumbent upon you for your very life! Behold, I have sent to warn you today: [Get] the men to Elisha; Lest <i>’dm</i>, Edom should come there” (Aharoni 1981: 46).</p>
<p>B.4.2. Arad Inscription 40 Ostrakon Room in center of fortress (Aharoni 1981: 71-74)</p>	<p>“Your son Gemar[yahu] and Nehemyahu gre[et] Malkiyahu; I have blessed [you to the Lor]d, and now: You servant has listened to what [you] have said, and I [have written] to my lord [everything that] the man [wa]nted, [and Eshiyahu ca]me from you, and [no] one [gave it to] them. And behold you knew [about the letters from] <i>’dm</i>, Edom (that) I gave to [my] lord [before sun]set. And [E]shi[yah]u slept [at my house], and he asked for the letter, [but I didn’t gi]ve (it). The king of Judah should know [that w]e cannot send the [...and th]is the evil that <i>’d[m]</i>, Edo[m] has done]” (Aharoni 1981: 71).</p>
<p>B.4.3. Bulla 1.6 cm x 1.9 cm Umm al Biyara, southern Jordan Excavated from burned debris of trench A Dated by paleography to first three quarters of 7th century BCE (van der Veen 2011: 79-91)</p> <p>Incised burnt bulla with human-headed sphinx in central register; with inscriptions in upper and lower registers</p>	<p><i>lqwsgb[r] mlk ’dm</i>, “belonging to Qôs-Gabr, king of Edom” (van der Veen 2011: 80).</p>

Appendix C: The Inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd and Ḥorvat Qitmit

C.1. Kuntillet 'Ajrûd	
<p>C.1.1. Inscription 1.1 Incised in Stone Red Limestone Bowl Rim Building A L13, Northeastern Corner Room</p>	<p><i>šwm 'yw bn 'zzr</i></p> <p>“<i>šwm 'yw</i> (PN), son of <i>'zzr</i> (PN)” (Ahituv et al 2012: 75-76; Reshef 2012: 356, Item 2).</p>
<p>C.1.2. Inscription 1.2 Incised in Stone Limestone Basin, 150 kilograms Building A L8, easternmost part of Southern Broadroom</p>	<p><i>l'bdyw bn 'dnh brk h</i></p> <p>“To/of <i>'bdyw</i> (PN), son of <i>'dnh</i> (PN), blessed be he to YHW” (Ahituv et al 2012: 76-77; Reshef 2012: 356, Item 1).</p>
<p>C.1.3. Inscription 1.3 Incised in Stone Limestone Rim Building A L83, western end of courtyard (surface find)</p>	<p><i>šbbl hlyw</i></p> <p>“<i>šbbl</i> (PN) (son of) <i>hlyw</i> (PN).” (Ahituv et al 2012: 77-780; Reshef 2012: 356, Item 3).</p>
<p>C.1.4. Inscription 1.4 Incised in Stone Soft Limestone Rim Building A L17, just beyond Wall W22</p>	<p><i>l'bd</i></p> <p>“to/of <i>'bd</i> (PN)” (Ahituv et al 2012: 78; Reshef 2012: 356, Item 4).</p>
<p>C.1.5. Inscription 2.1 Incised on Ceramic Storage Jar Fragment Building A L51, Eastern Kitchen, in L261 (Tabun C)</p>	<p><i>-] t 'ra</i></p> <p>“<i>-] t</i> (son of) <i>'ra</i> (PN).” (Ahituv et al 2012: 79).</p>

<p>C.1.6. Inscription 2.2 Incised on Ceramic Storage Jar Shoulder Building A L5, Antechamber</p>	<p><i>J'dh</i></p> <p>Archaic script (Ahituv et al 2012: 79).</p>
<p>C.1.7. Inscription 2.3 Incised on Ceramic Jar Shoulder Building A L19, eastern end of courtyard (but not registered)</p>	<p><i>lh</i> [</p> <p>“To/of <i>h</i> [(PN)” (Ahituv et al 2012: 80).</p>
<p>C.1.8. Inscription 2.4 Incised on Ceramic Storage Jar Shoulder (Complete) Building A L50, just to the east of central entrance of Southern Broadroom</p>	<p><i>lšr'r</i></p> <p>“To/of the governor of the city” or Personal Name? same author as Inscription 2.5, 2.6 (Ahituv et al 2012: 80).</p> <p>Na'aman contends that the omission of the definite article means that we should probably understand <i>šr'r</i> as a personal name (2011: 302).</p>
<p>C.1.9. Inscription 2.5 Incised on Ceramic Storage Jar Body Sherd Building A L14a, in the center of entryway between Walls W9 and W10 (Meshel's “Vestibule”)</p>	<p><i>lšr'r</i></p> <p>same author as Inscription 2.4, 2.6 (Ahituv et al 2012: 80-81).</p>
<p>C.1.10. Inscription 2.6 Incised on Ceramic Storage Jar L161, exterior area to the east of L162, between Buildings A and B</p>	<p><i>lšr'r</i></p> <p>same author as Inscription 2.4, 2.6 (Ahituv et al 2012: 81)</p>

<p>C.1.11. Inscription 2.7 Incised on Ceramic Jar Building B L154, Northern Wing interior</p>	<p><i>lr'y</i> “To/of <i>r'y</i> (PN)” (Ahituv et al 2012: 81).</p>
<p>C.1.12. Inscription 2.8 Incised on Ceramic Jar, with perforated base Building A L19, eastern area of courtyard south of L18</p>	<p><i>ly</i>[... To/of <i>y</i>[... (PN) (Ahituv et al 2012: 82).</p>
<p>C.1.13. Inscription 2.9 (“Pithos B”) Incised on Ceramic Pithos Building A L19, eastern area of courtyard south of L18</p>	<p><i>Kr</i> (Ahituv et al 2012: 82).</p>
<p>C.1.14. Inscriptions 2.10-2.15, 2.25-2.28 Incised (before firing) on Ceramic Pithoi Fragments Building A L50, just to the east of the central entrance of the Southern Broadroom</p>	<p>Single letters: one kof, three alephs, three yods (Ahituv et al 82-86); retrograde aleph in Inscription 2.14 (see Ayalon 2012: Fig. 7.48.5, photo – 7.10.2).</p>
<p>C.1.15. Inscriptions 2.16-2.18 Incised on Ceramic Pithoi Building A L1, the northern half of the Western Broadroom, near entrance (L71 – northern part of L1)</p>	<p>a group of four tightly packed pithoi, their bases embedded in situ in the floor, uppermost fragments of pithoi contained three examples of an incised aleph (Ayalon 2012: 208, fig 7.2; 241, fig. 7.29)</p>
<p>C.1.16. Inscription 2.19 Incised on Ceramic Body Sherd Building A L19, eastern courtyard (L69, southern part of merged L19)</p>	<p>Aleph (Ahituv et al 2012: 84).</p>

<p>C.1.17. Inscriptions 2.20-2.23 Incised on Ceramic Body Sherds Survey</p>	<p>Single alephs</p>
<p>C.1.18. Inscriptions 2.24 Incised on Ceramic Body Sherd L252, Southern Courtyard</p>	<p>Yod</p>
<p>C.1.19. Inscriptions 2.25-2.2.28 Incised on Ceramic Body Sherds L50, L41, central part of Southern Broadroom</p>	<p>Single yods</p>
<p>C.1.20. Inscriptions 3.1-3.5 (“Pithos A”) Ink on Ceramic Pithos L6 (Northern Wing, on the central part of bench W27), 2 sherds in L262 (robber pit), 1 sherd in L19 (eastern area of courtyard south of L18)</p>	<p>Inscription 3.1 (1) <i>'mr. ' [--]...[-]m[-]k. 'mr.lyhly.</i> <i>wlyw 'sh.wl[-----]brkt. 'tkm</i> (2) <i>lyhwh.šmrn.wl 'šrth.</i></p> <p>(1) “Message of ' [--]...[-]m[-]k (PN): ‘Speak to <i>yhly</i> (PN), and to <i>yw 'sh</i> (PN), and to [...] I have [b]lessed you (2) to YHWH of Samaria and His asherah” (Ahituv et al 2012: 87-91)</p> <p>Inscription 3. 2 <i>] r 'w.hp [</i> (Ahituv et al 2012: 91)</p> <p>Inscription 3.3 (1) <i>]šm 'y[-----]pgy.[</i> (PN) (2) <i>yw [</i> (PN) (Ahituv et al 2012: 91-92)</p> <p>Inscription 3.4 <i>]yg.</i> (Ahituv et al 2012: 92)</p> <p>Inscription 3.5 <i>y</i> (Ahituv et al 2012: 92)</p>

<p>C.1.21. Inscriptions 3.6-3.15 (“Pithos B”) Red or Black Ink on Ceramic Pithos Building A L19, eastern courtyard, recovered from the floor and debris, mostly near the middle of the Wall W10</p>	<p>Inscription 3.6 (1) <i>'mr</i> (2) <i>'mryw '</i> (3) <i>mr l. 'dny</i> (4) <i>hšlm. 't.</i> (5) <i>brtkk.ly</i> (6) <i>hwh tmn</i> (7) <i>wl 'šrth.yb</i> (8) <i>rk wyšmrk</i> (9) <i>wyhy ym. 'dg</i> (10) <i>y [</i></p> <p>“Message of <i>'mryw '</i> (PN): ‘Say to my lord, are you well? I have blessed you by Y(6)HWH of Têmān (7) and His asherah. May He bless you and may He keep you, and may He be with my lord [forever(?)’” (Aḥituv et al 2012: 92-97).</p> <p>Inscription 3.7, Black Ink <i>'mny</i> (PN) (Aḥituv et al 2012: 98).</p> <p>Inscription 3.8 <i>]h.šmrn š 'rm</i></p> <p><i>]h</i> Samaria, barley (Aḥituv et al 2012: 98)</p> <p>Inscription 3.9 (1) -----] <i>lyhwh.htmn.wl 'šrth</i> (2)---] <i>kl 'šr yš 'l m 'š ḥnn h ' w 'm pth wntn lh yhw</i> (3) <i>klbbh</i></p> <p>“(1)] to YHWH of the Têmān and His asherah. (2) Whatever he asks from a man, that man will give him generously. And if he would urge – YHW will give him (3) according to his wishes” (Aḥituv et al 2012: 98-100).</p>
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	<p>Inscription 3.10 List of Personal Names: (1) <i>šknyw</i> (2) <i>'mš</i> (3) <i>šmryw</i> (4) <i>'lyw</i> (5) <i>'zyw</i> (6) <i>mšry</i> (Ahituv et al 2012: 100-101).</p> <p>Inscriptions 3.11-3.14 (11, 13 in Black Ink) Abecedaries (Ahituv et al 2012:102-103).</p> <p>Inscription 3.15 10 yods in different shapes and dimensions (Ahituv et al 2012: 103).</p>
<p>C.1.22. Inscription 3.16 (“Pithos C”) Red Ink on Ceramic Jar Fragment Building A L4, debris over the top of Wall W8, attributed to L8, eastern end of Southern Broadroom</p>	<p>(1) <i>'š'.b[n</i> (2) <i>hṯlh [</i> (3) <i>gd</i> (4) <i>d</i></p> <p>(1) <i>'š'</i> (PN), so[n of... (2) the lamb/the young [... (3) Gad [..." (Ahituv et al 2012: 103-104).</p>
<p>C.1.23. Inscription 4.1.1 Black Ink on Plaster Building A L6, Northern Wing, pressed against Wall W10, about 80 centimeters above the floor, apparently having slid down from its original position further up the wall, Building A</p>	<p>(1) <i>y] 'rk. ymm. wyšb 'w [...] ytnw.l[</i> <i>]hwh.tymn. wl 'šrth</i> (2) <i>hyṯb yhwh hty[mn...]y hyṯb ym[m...</i></p> <p>(1) ...May] He lengthen their days and may they be sated [...] recount to [Y]HWH of Têmān and His asherah [... (2) ...because(?)] YHWH of the Tê[mān], has shown [them(?)] favour, has bettered their da[ys... (Ahituv et al 105-107).</p>
<p>C.1.24. Inscriptions 4.1.2-4.1.20 Ink on Plaster Building A L6, Northern Wing</p>	<p>Partial letters</p>

<p>C.1.25. Inscription 4.2 Black Ink on Plaster Building A L14a, in the center of entryway between Walls W9 and W10 (Meshel's "Vestibule")</p>	<p>(1) <i>šnt</i> (2)] <i>br 'š.wbzh. 'l.br[m. y]hwh</i> (3)]<i>r wmysn hrm wydkn [g]bn(n)m [</i> (4)] <i>'rš.qdš 'ly 'lm [</i> (5)] <i>hkn [l]brk b 'l bym mlḥmh</i> (6)] <i>lšm 'l bym mlḥ[mh</i></p> <p>(1) [...] second time/years [...] (2)] in earthquake. And when God [El] forth in the [heights. Y] HW[H... (3)]r The mountains will melt, the hills will crush [... (4)] earth. The Holy One (q{s}dš) over the gods [... (5)] prepare (yourself) [to] bless Ba'al on a day of war [... (6) to the name of El on a day of wa[r... (Aḥituv et al 2012: 105, 110-114).</p>
<p>C.1.26. Inscription 4.3 Black Ink on Plaster Building A on plastered end of Wall W11/northern jamb of entryway, <i>in situ</i>, between the antechamber (L5) and the vestibule (L14a)/ about 1.3 meters above the floor</p>	<p>Reading is extremely difficult due to poor preservation.</p> <p>(1)] [] [(2)] <i>hly [</i> (3)] <i>y lyd[.]t hn [</i> (4)] <i>yd h/ḥsq.b ' [...] [...] '[..]b [</i> (5)] <i>š w by [...]</i> (6)] <i>l wy []k ḥ[]k 'd[</i> (7)] <i>n [...] nyw šht qyn sdh wmrh h[rm</i></p> <p>(7)“...] Cain destroyed a field and lofty mo[untains.” However, other possibilities for the end of the line are offered, including reading and translating the last letters of the line as <i>mrh[w]</i>, “the open heights,” or <i>wmrh [bydw]</i>, treachery [in his hand] (Aḥituv et al 2012: 105, 115-117)</p>
<p>C.1.27. Inscriptions 4.4-4.6 Red Ink on Plaster Building A collapse on the Western Stairway (L101), at the foot of the Western Stairway (L104), the entrance to the Western Broadroom (L87), and nearby in L83</p>	<p>Inscription 4.4.1 (1)] [(2)] <i>b 'l.bkl</i> (3)] <i>hn y</i></p> <p>(2) “[] Ba'al in voice [,” (Aḥituv et al 117)</p>

<p>Meshel and Goren attribute these fragments to the doorjambs and the lintel of the western broadroom (Meshel and Goren 2012: 40-42)</p>	<p>Inscription 4.5 - fragmentary letters with image of head between the letters (Ahituv et al 2012 119). Listed as locus 101), Painting No. 11 (Beck 2012: 194-196); listed as locus 87)</p>
<p>C.2. Ḥorvat Qitmit</p>	
<p>C.2.1. Inscription No. 1 Incised on Ceramic Sherd, Neck of Jug or Jar, 4 x 5 cm Complex A Locus 44, on hillside, 2 meters south of platform, approximately 10 cm below surface</p>	<p><i>’h</i> (Beit-Arieh 1995: 258-259).</p>
<p>C.2.2. Inscription No. 2 Incised (after firing) on Ceramic Sherd, 5 x 5 cm Complex B Locus 109, Northwestern Corner Room</p>	<p><i>...lkqw...</i> (Beit-Arieh 1995: 250-260).</p>
<p>C.2.3. Inscription No. 3 Incised on Ceramic Sherd, 4.5 x 6.5 cm Complex B Locus 115, east of Courtyard Locus 104</p>	<p><i>...blqwshp...</i> May mention Qôš as a deity or as theophoric element in personal name (Beit-Arieh 1995: 260-261).</p>
<p>C.2.4. Inscription No. 4 Incised (before firing) on Ceramic Krater Lip Complex B Locus 104, Courtyard</p>	<p><i>lqws...</i> Fourth letter visible, but partial and illegible, may read “To Qôš” (Beit-Arieh 1995: 261-262).</p>
<p>C.2.5. Inscription No. 5 Incised on Ceramic Sherd, 4 x 8 cm Complex B Locus 110, Northwestern Corner Room</p>	<p>(1) <i>q--</i> (2) <i>ll’p gš</i> (Beit-Arieh 1995:262-263).</p>

<p>C.2.6. Inscription No. 6 Incised on Ceramic Sherd, 3.5 x 6.5 cm Complex B Locus 104, Courtyard</p>	<p><i>š rš</i> (Beit-Arieh 1995:263-264).</p>
<p>C.2.7. Inscription No. 7 Incised on Metal Stamp Seal Locus 31 (surface find, 1991)</p>	<p>(1) <i>šwb</i> (2) <i>(l)snwq</i> “(to) <i>šwbnqws</i>” Read in boustrophedon manner as To PN, meaning “Pray Turn, O Qôš” (Beit-Arieh 1995:264-267).</p>

Appendix D: Figures

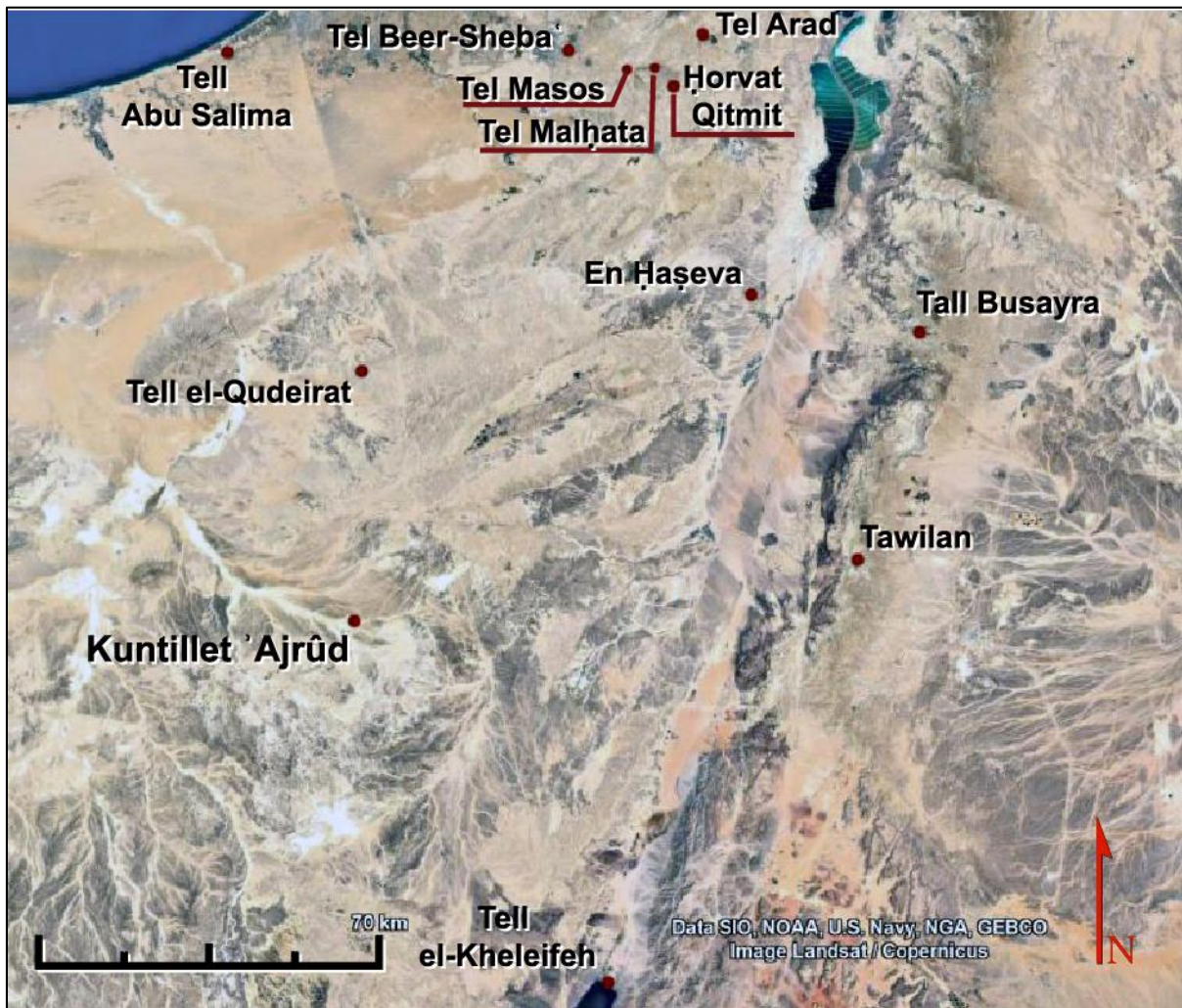


Fig. D.1: Select Iron Age II sites mentioned in text

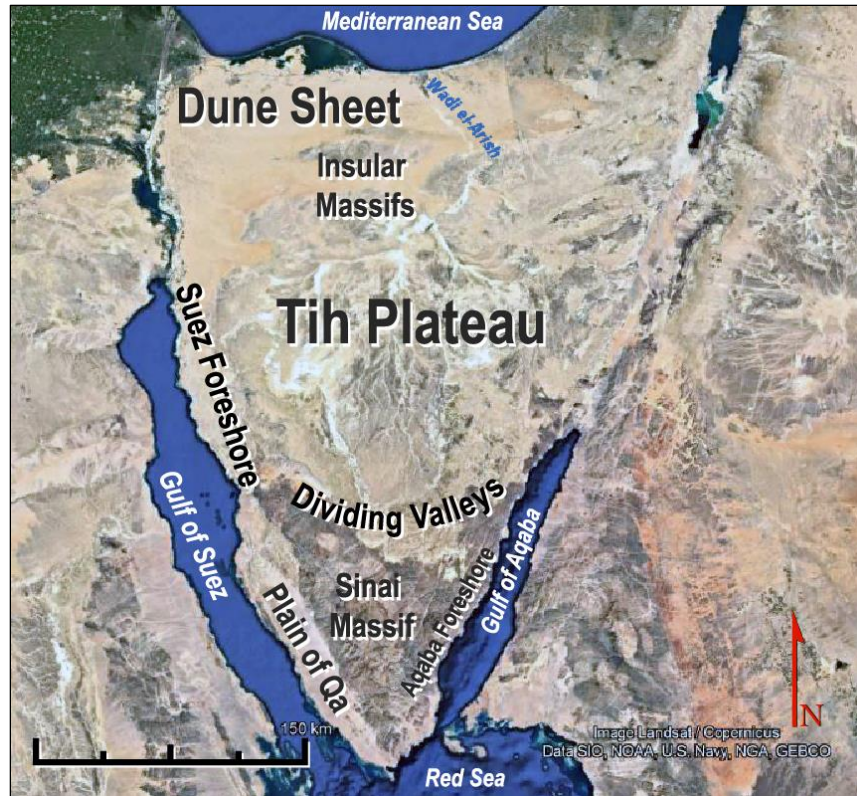


Fig. D.2: Geomorphic Regions of the Sinai Peninsula (modified from Google Earth)

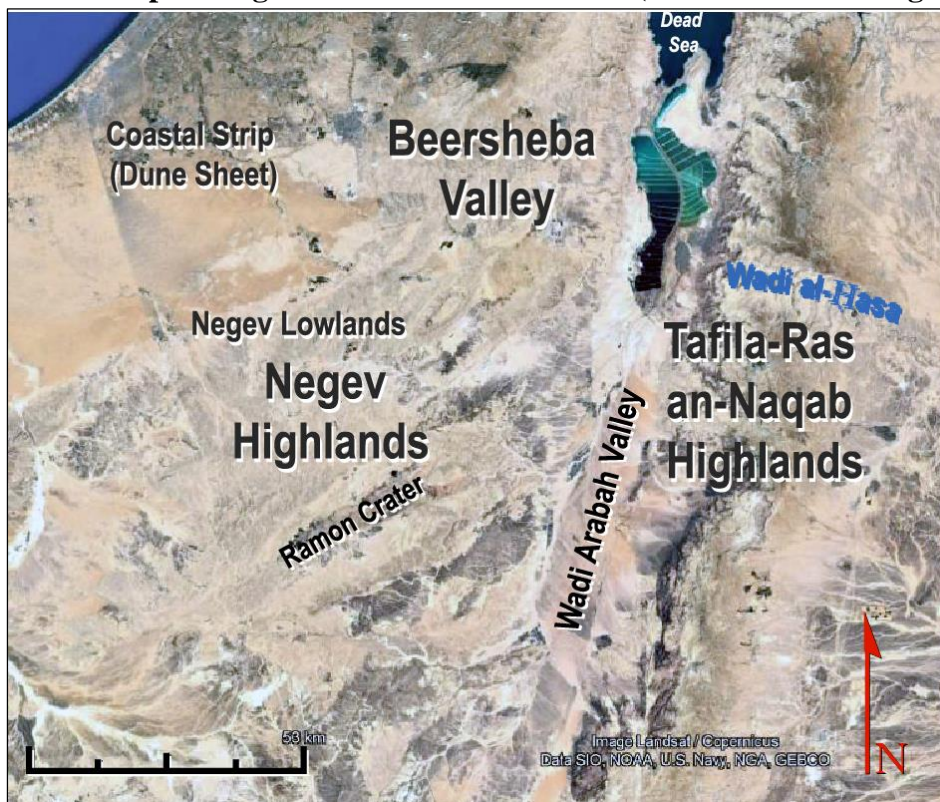


Fig. D.3: Geomorphic Regions of the Northern and Central Negev, Wadi Arabah, and southwestern Jordan (modified from Google Earth)

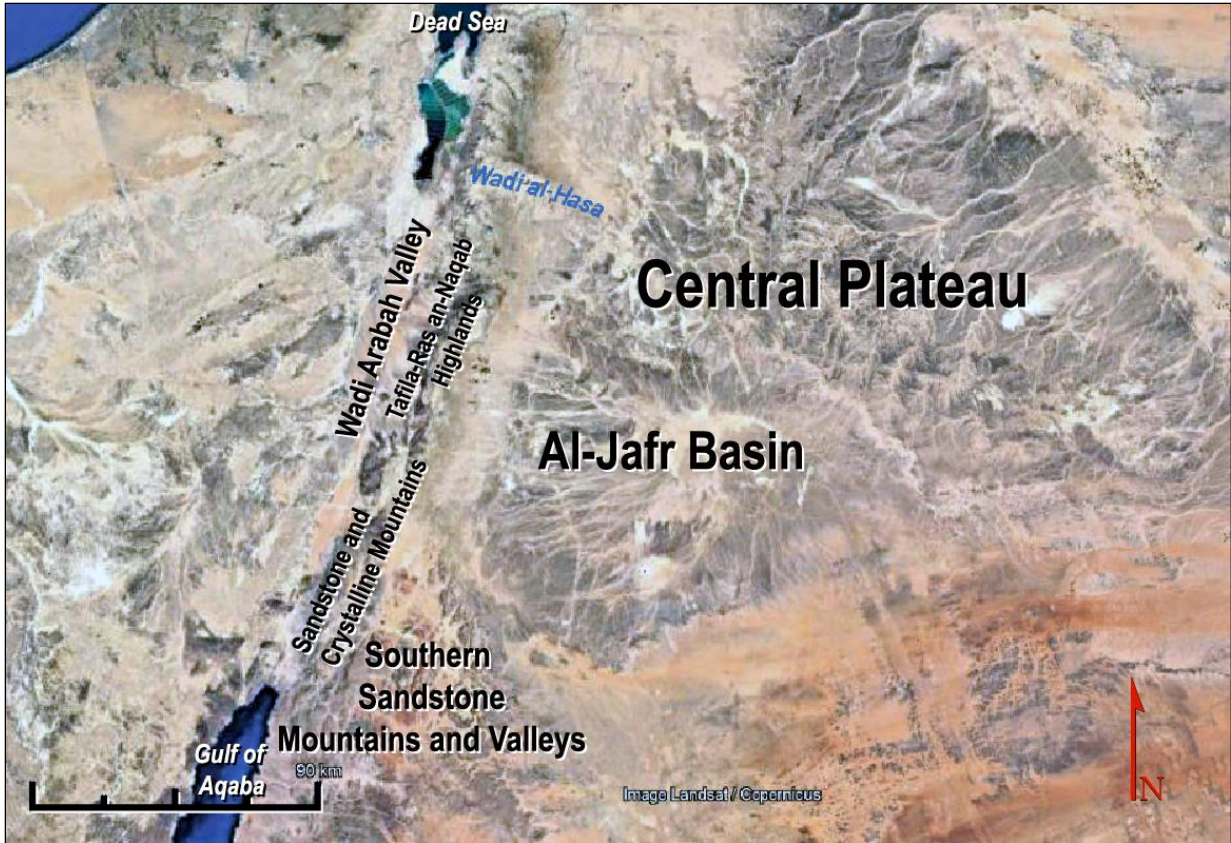


Fig. D.4: Geomorphic Regions of Southern Jordan (modified from Google Earth)



Fig. D.5: Standing Stone Line and Basin, Timna, Southern Negev (Photo by Author)



Fig. D.6: Petroglyphs of a Hunting Scene in the Timna Valley (Photo by Author)

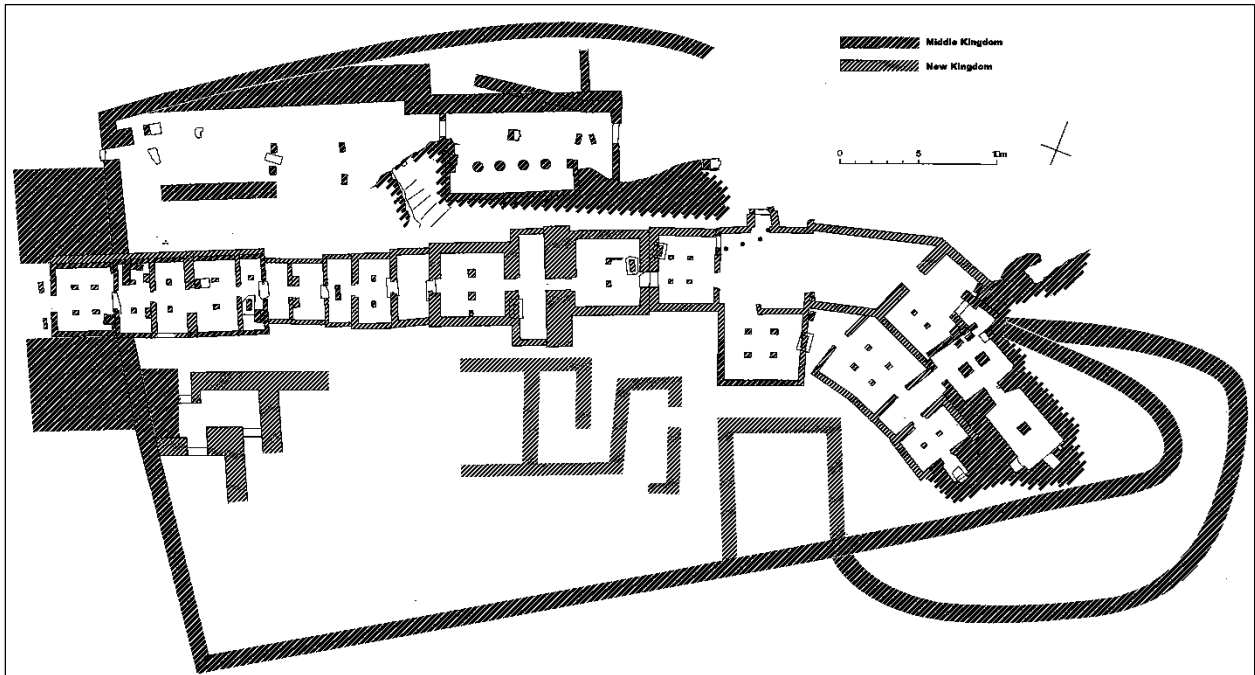


Fig. D.7: Site Plan of Hathor Temple at Serâbît El-Khâdim (Valbelle and Bonnet 1996: 100, Plan 3)

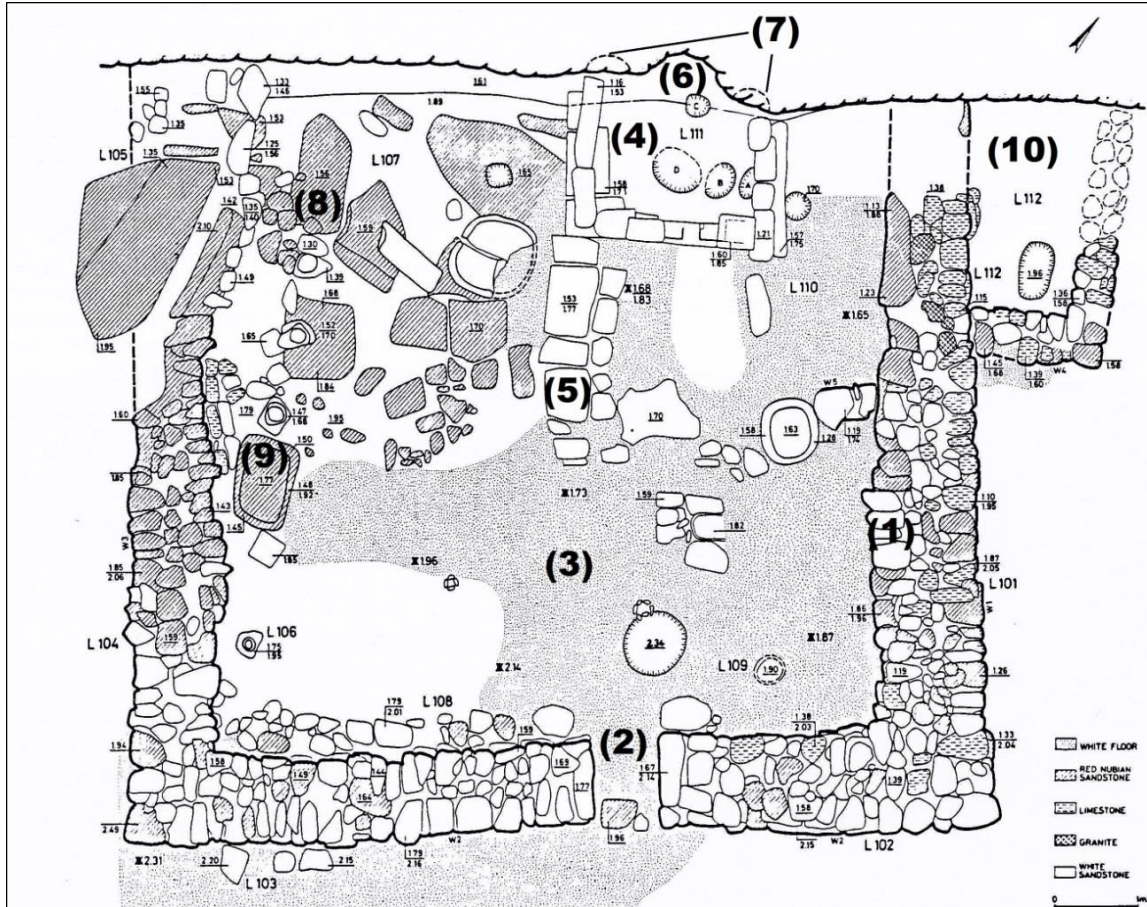


Fig. D.8: Site Plan of Site 200 (Rothenberg 1988: 22, illustration 6)

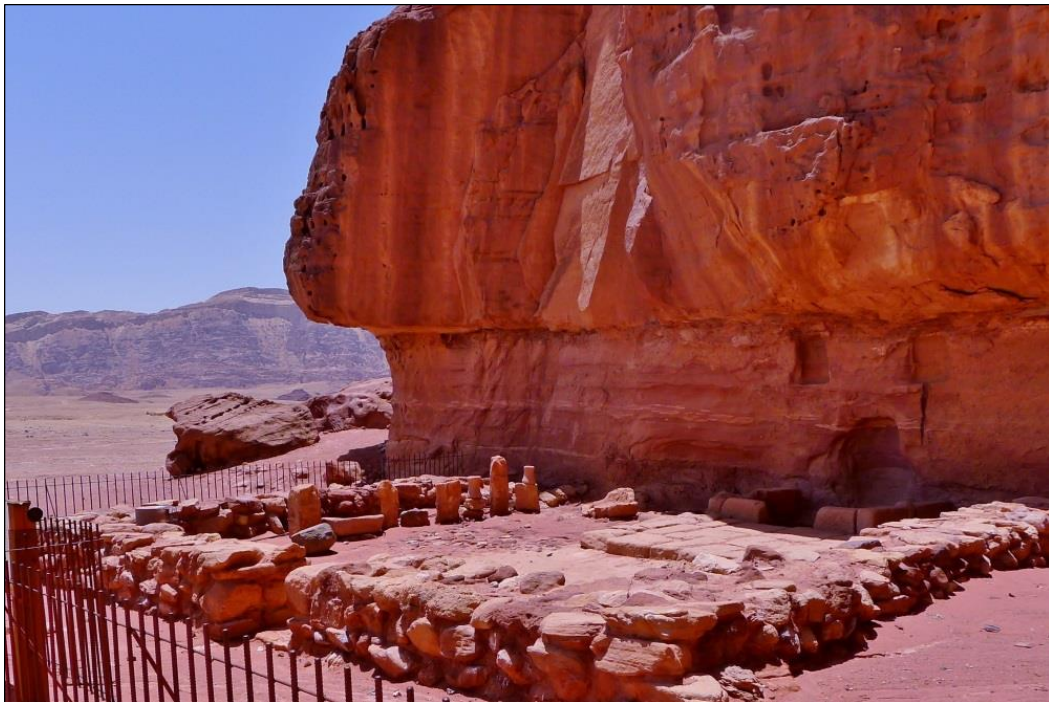


Fig. D.9: Site 200 looking west (Photo by Author)



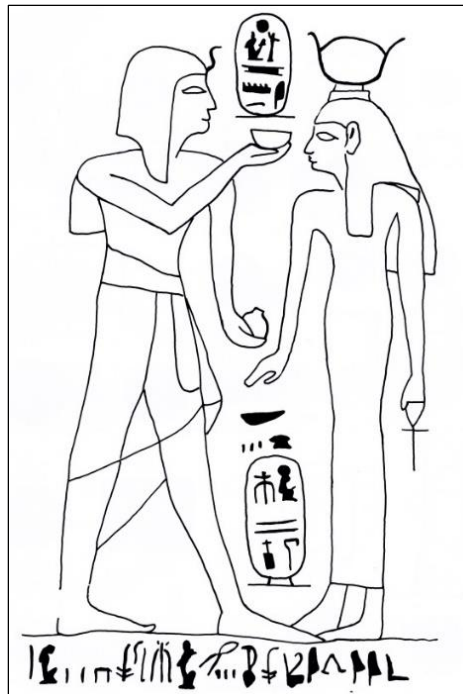
Fig. D.10: Site 200 looking south (Photo by Author)



Fig. D.11: Site 200 from above looking south (Photo by Author)



Fig. D.12: Site 200 Line of Standing Stones and Basins (Photo by Author)



(No Scale Given)

Fig. D.13: Drawing of Rock Stela near Site 200 (Rothenberg 1988: fig. 52). A king presents offerings to a goddess, presumed to be Hathor. The inscription contains the prenomen and nomen of Ramses III between the figures. The bottom line reads, “Coming by the royal butler, the [justified Ramsses[em]per[rē’].”

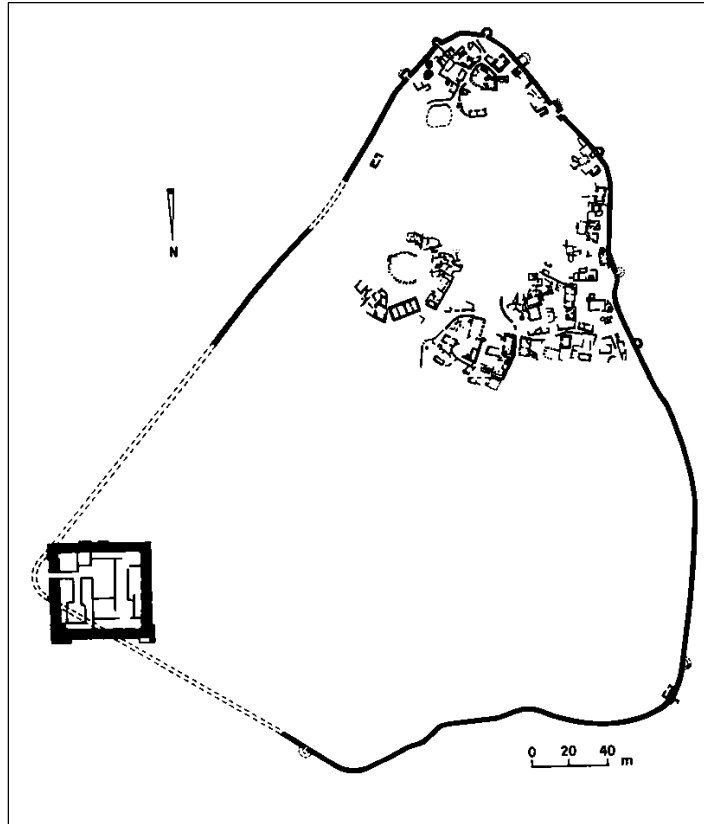


Fig. D.14: Plan of Early Bronze city and Iron Age fortress at Tel Arad (Amiran and Ilan 1993: 75)

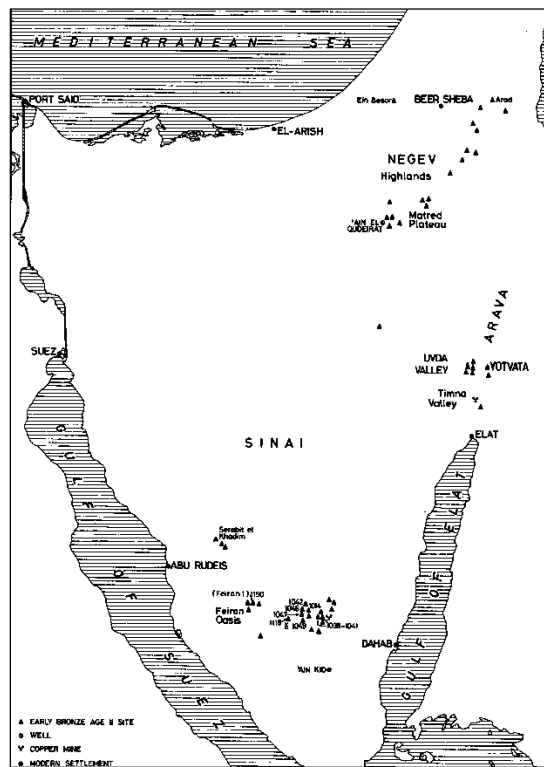


Fig. D.15: Distribution of EB II sites in Sinai and the Negev (Beit-Arieh 2003: 2, fig. 1.2)

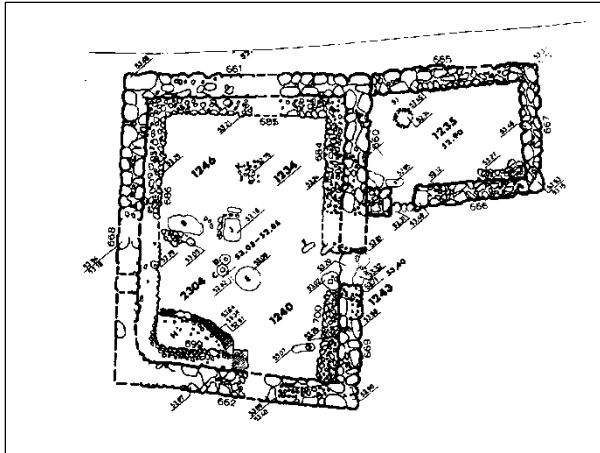


Fig. D.16: House 1234 at Tel Arad (Amiran 1978: PL. 183; Beit-Arieh 2003: 107, fig. 3.8)

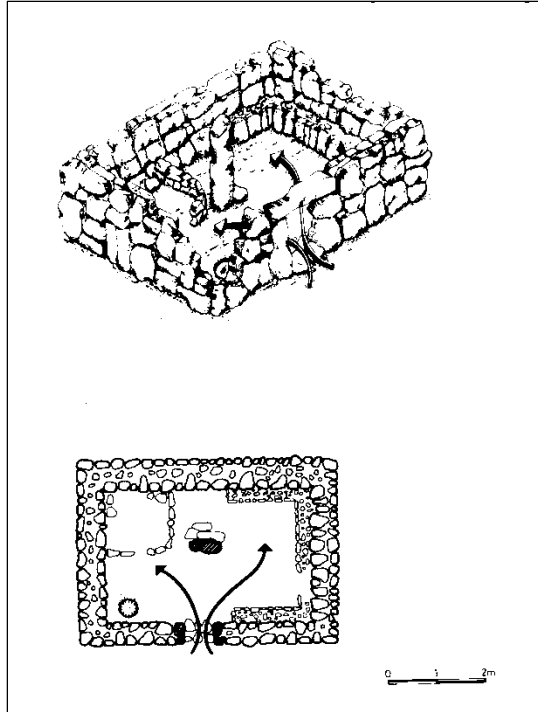


Fig. D.17: Reconstruction of "Aradian" Architecture in the Southern Sinai (Beit-Arieh 2003: 105, fig. 3.4)

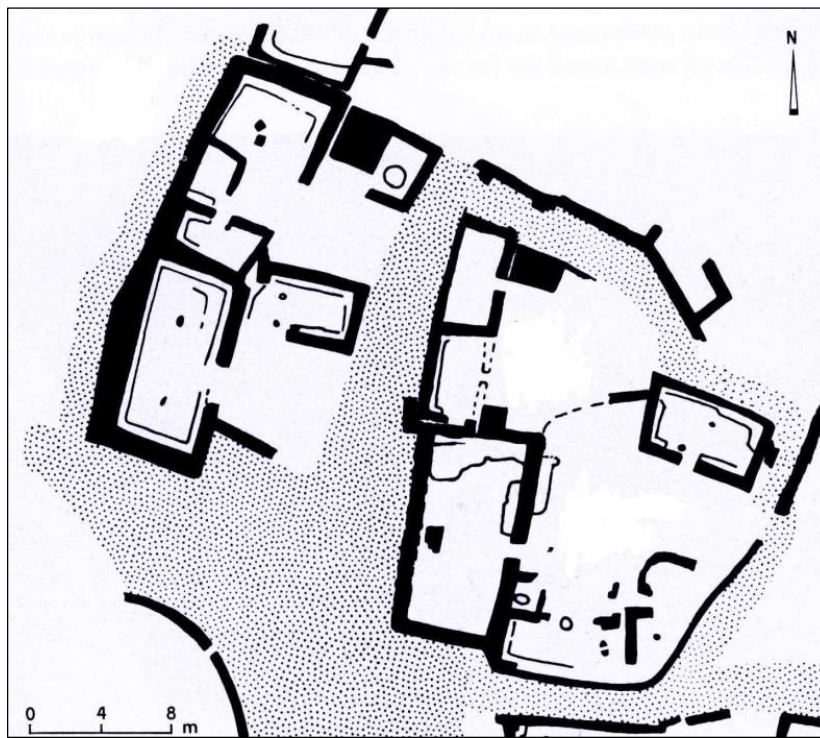


Fig. D.18: Early Bronze Age Temples at Tel Arad (Amiran and Ilan 1993: 79)

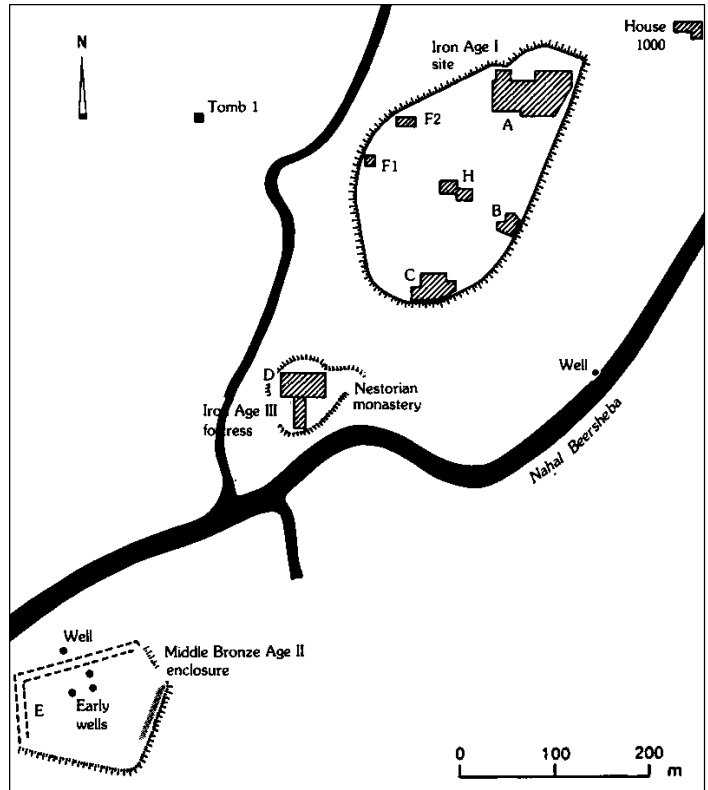


Fig. D.19: Tel Masos in its immediate environs (Kempinski 1993: 986)



Fig. D.20: Tel Masos City Plan, Stratum II (Kempinski 1993: 987)

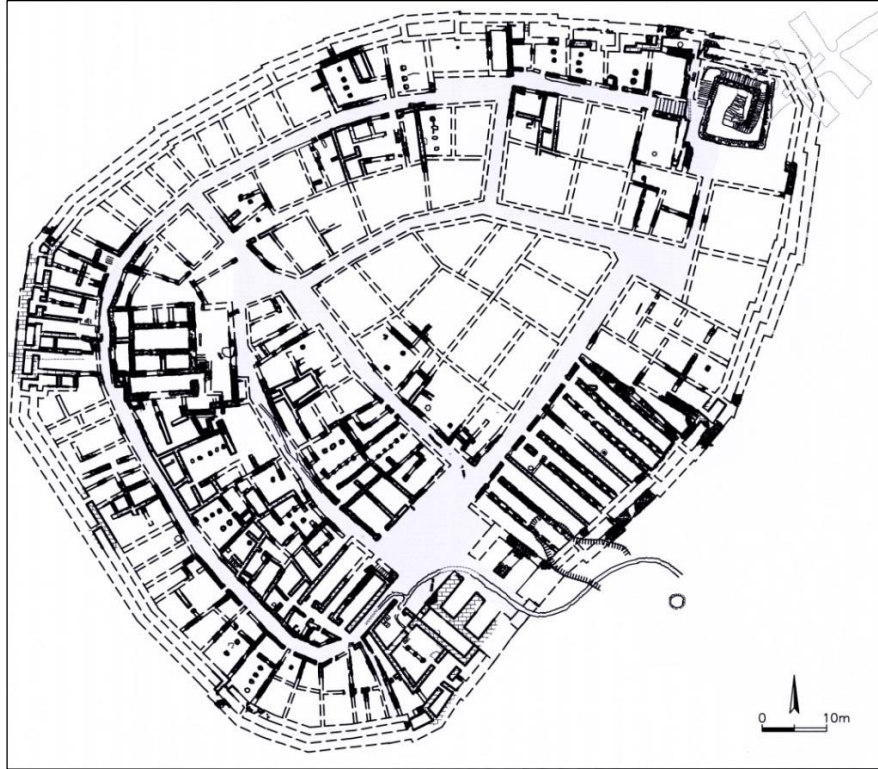


Fig. D.21: Tel Beer-Sheba ' City Plan, Stratum II (Herzog 2016: 1473, fig. 36.9)

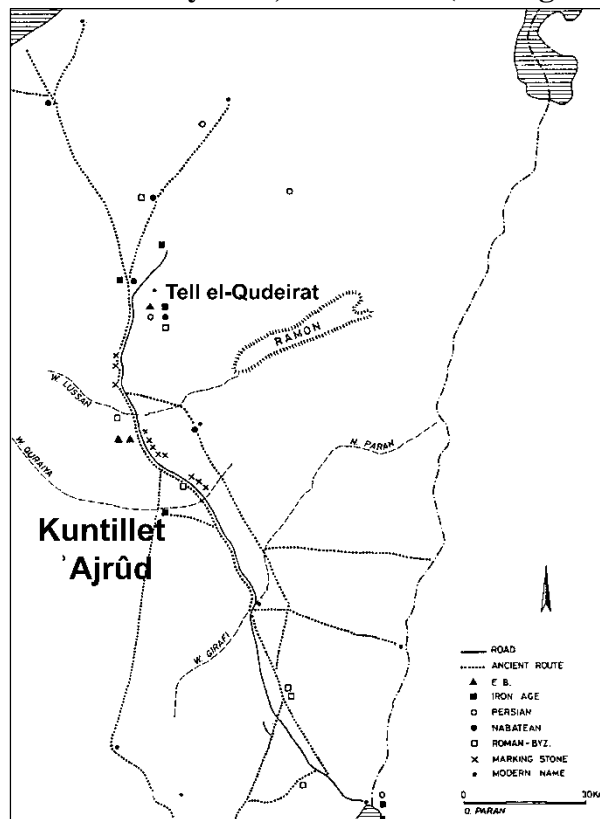


Fig. D.22: Map of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd in relation to Tell el-Qudeirat, the Darb al-Ghaza, and its main branches (Meshel 2000: 100, fig. 1)

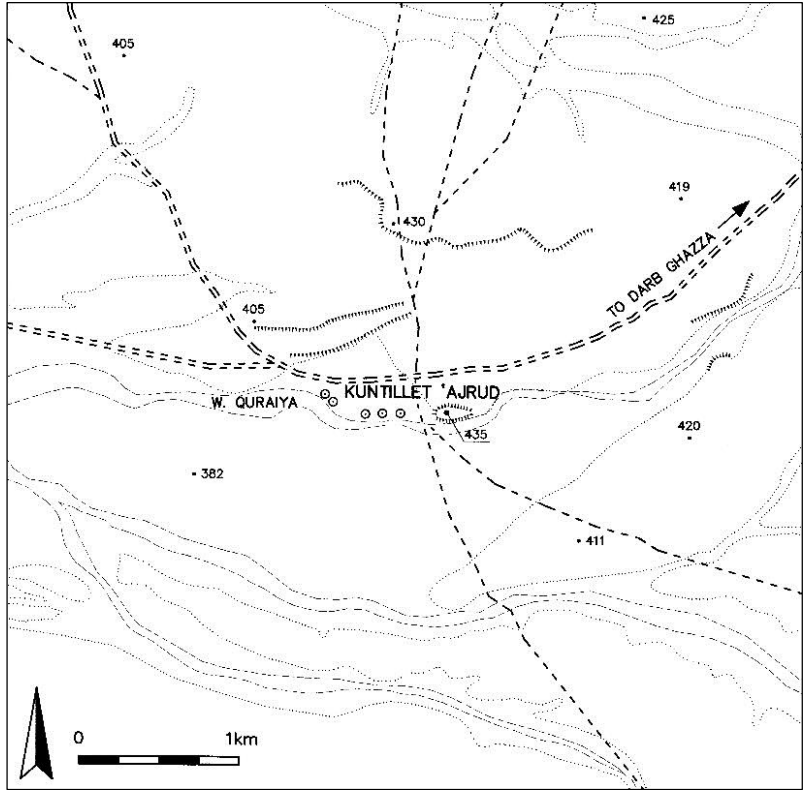


Fig. D.23: Map of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd in its local environs (Meshel 2012: 8, fig. 1.7)



Fig. D.24: Kuntillet 'Ajrûd overlooking the hamada (Meshel 2012: ix, fig. 1.2)



Fig. D.25: Geoglyphs visible on the hamada north of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd (Meshel 2012: xix, fig. 11)

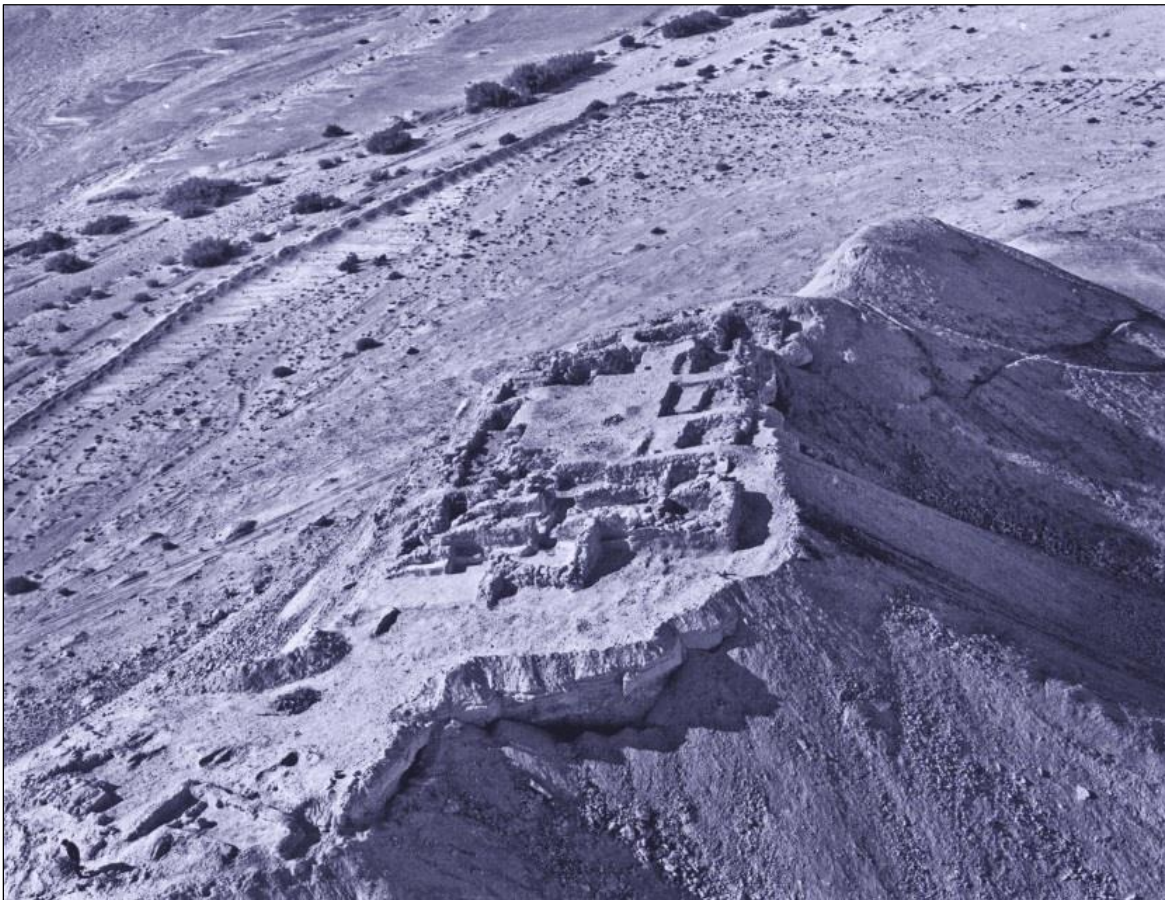


Fig. D.26: Aerial View of Kuntillet 'Ajrûd (Meshel and Goren 2012: 12, fig. 2.2)

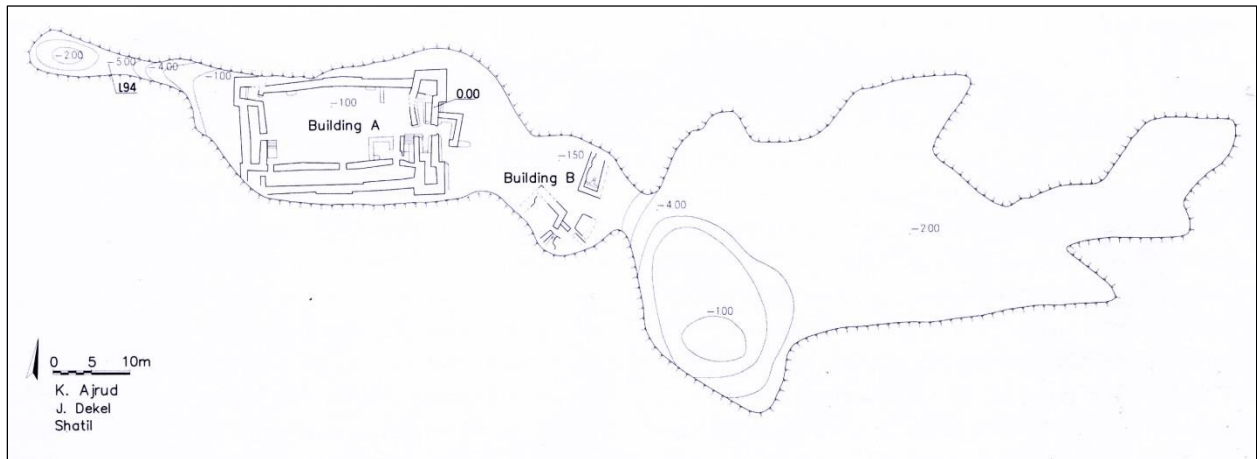


Fig. D.27: Kuntillet 'Ajrud plan of the summit of the hill (Meshel 2012: 5, fig. 1.3)

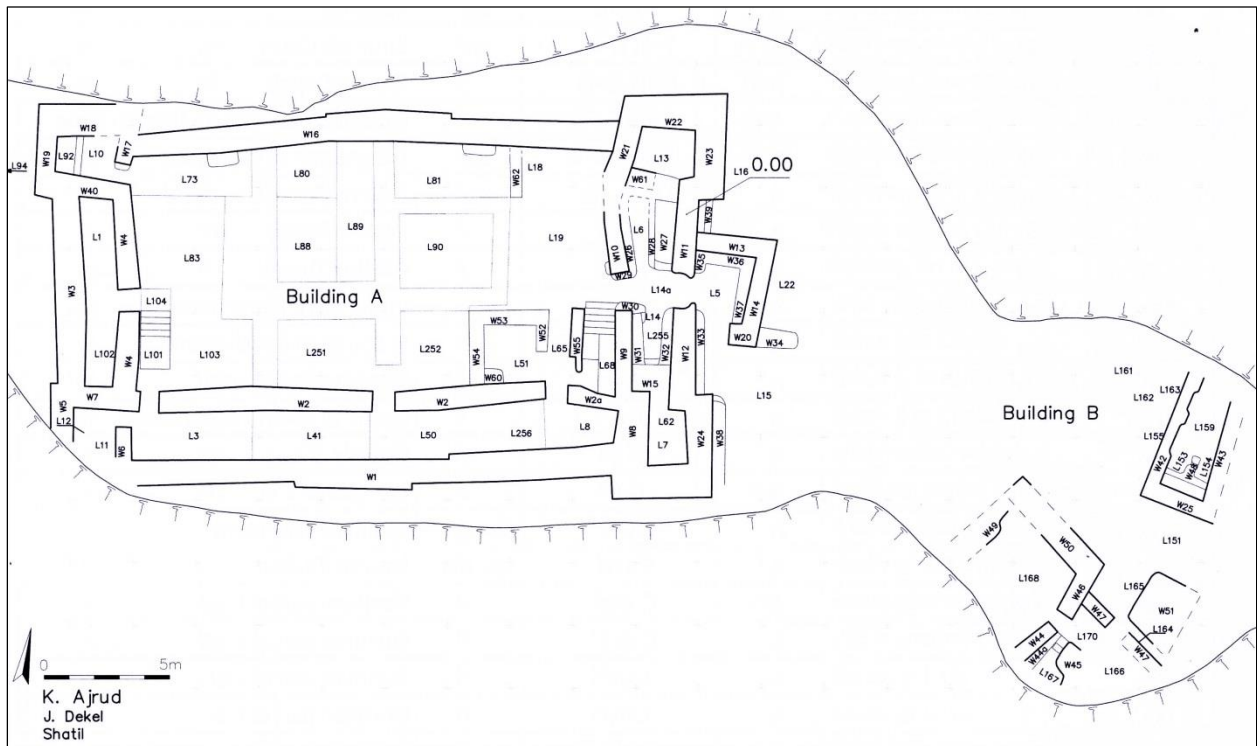


Fig. D.28:Kuntillet 'Ajrud General Site Plan (Meshel xxiii, fig. 13)

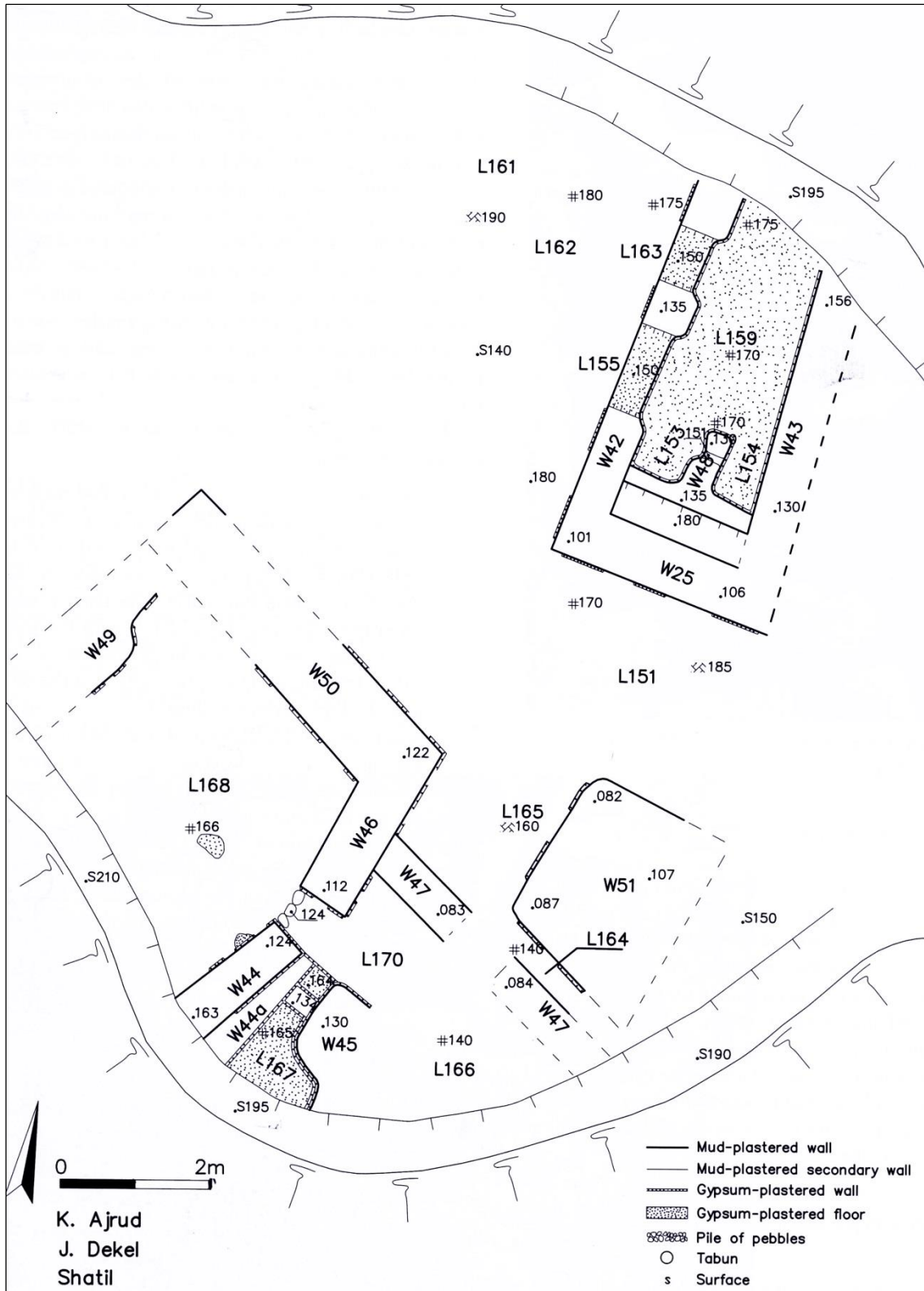


Fig. D.29: "Building B" Detail (Meshel and Goren 2012: 54, fig. 2.77)



Fig. D.30: Stone Platform (W51) looking southeast (Meshel and Goren 2012: 58, fig.2.84)



Fig. D.31: Plastered Basins (L167) looking north (Meshel and Goren 2012: 58, fig. 2.85)



Fig. D.32: Northern Wing of Bulding B (L159) looking south (Meshel and Goren 2012: 56, fig. 2.80)



Fig D.33: Threshold of Northern Wing looking west (Meshel and Goren 2012: 57, fig. 2.83)

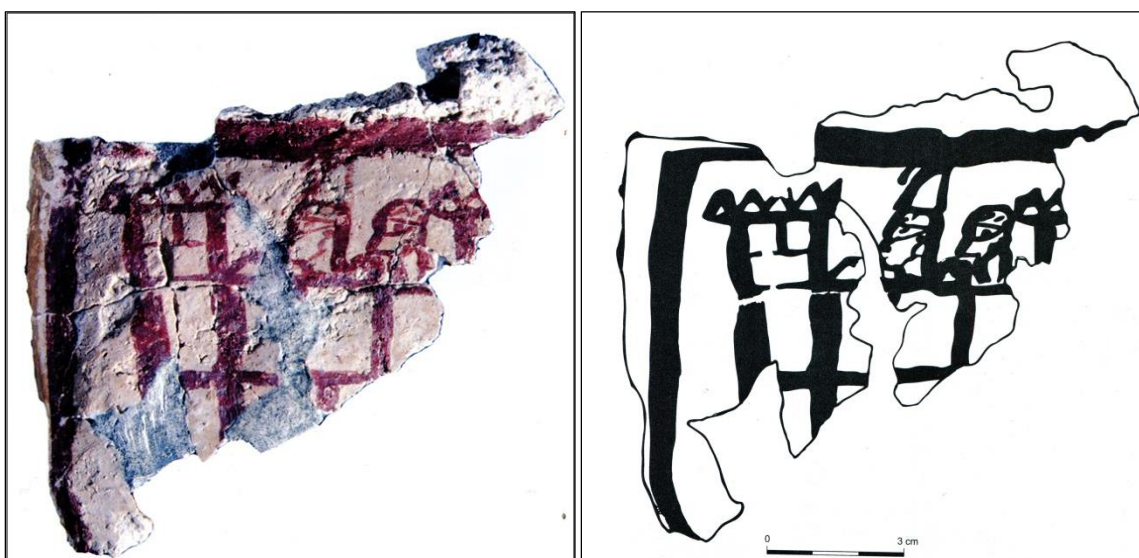


Fig. D.34: Painting No. 1 – Figures on a City Wall, from area just outside of double threshold (L163) of Northern Wing (Beck 2012: 185, figs. 6.31-31a)

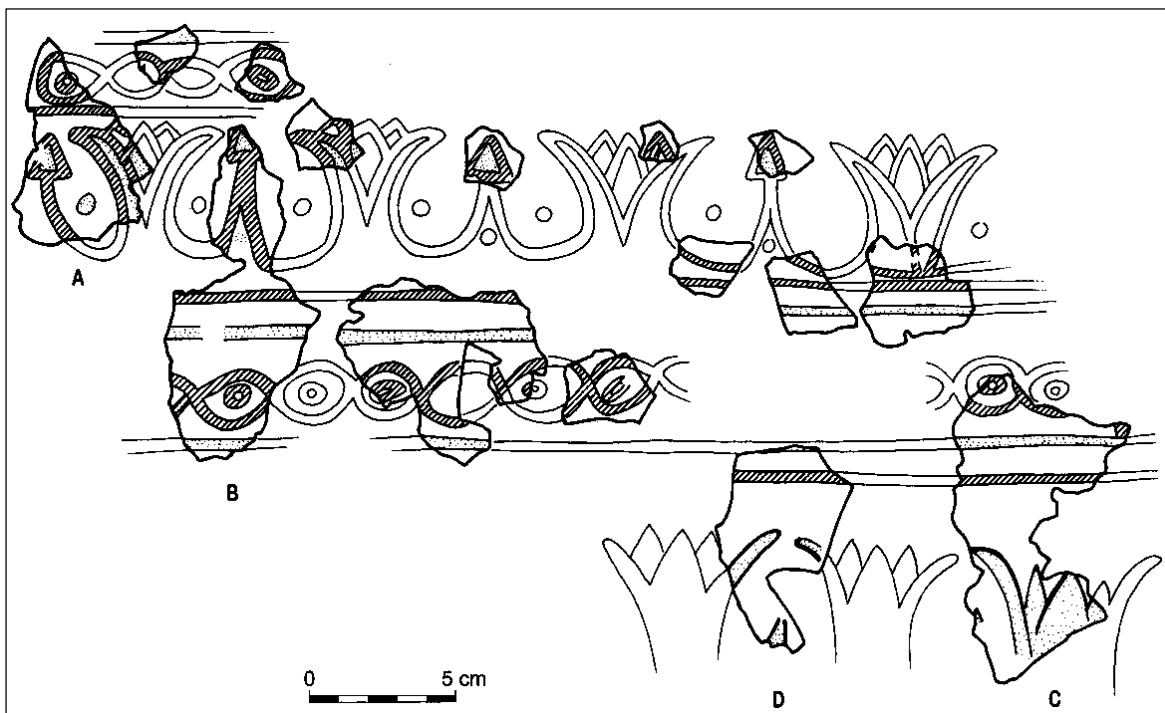
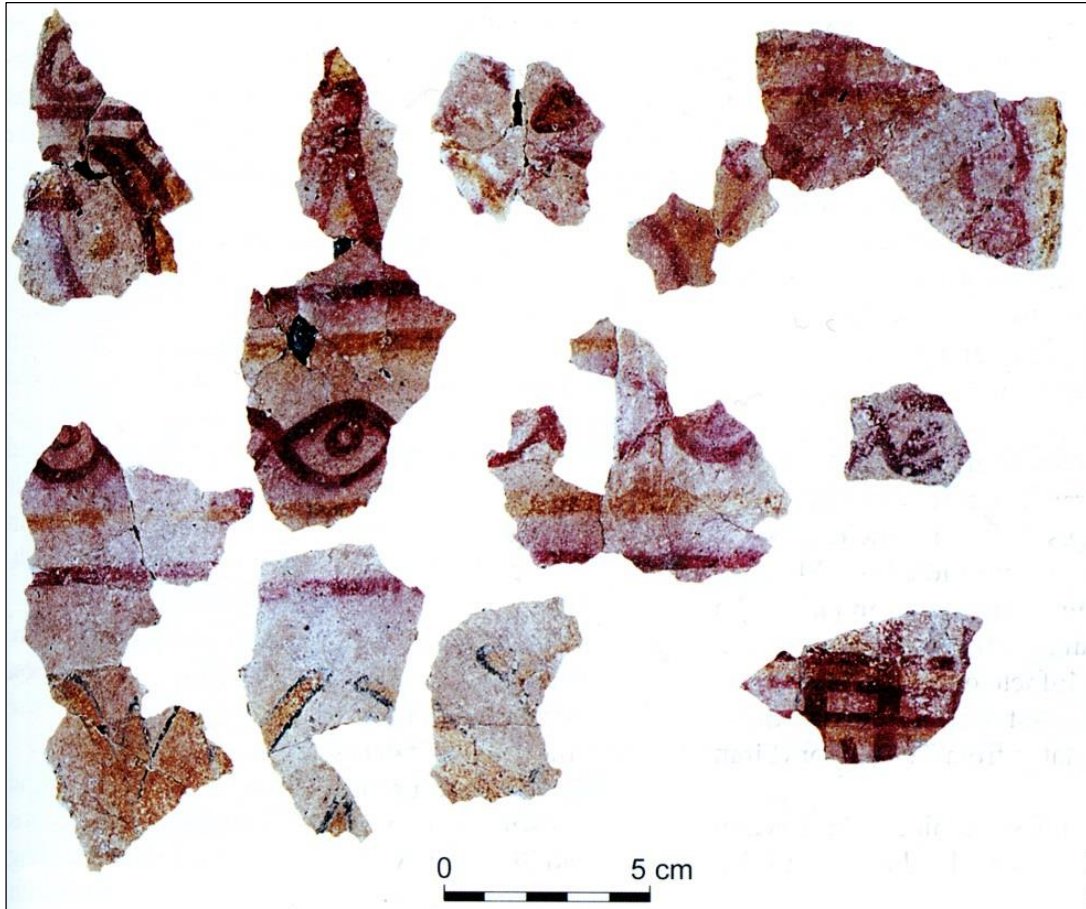


Fig. D.35: Painting No. 10 – Lotus Chain and Guilloche Border Design, from southern threshold (L155) of Northern Wing (Beck 2012: 193, figs. 6.40-40a)

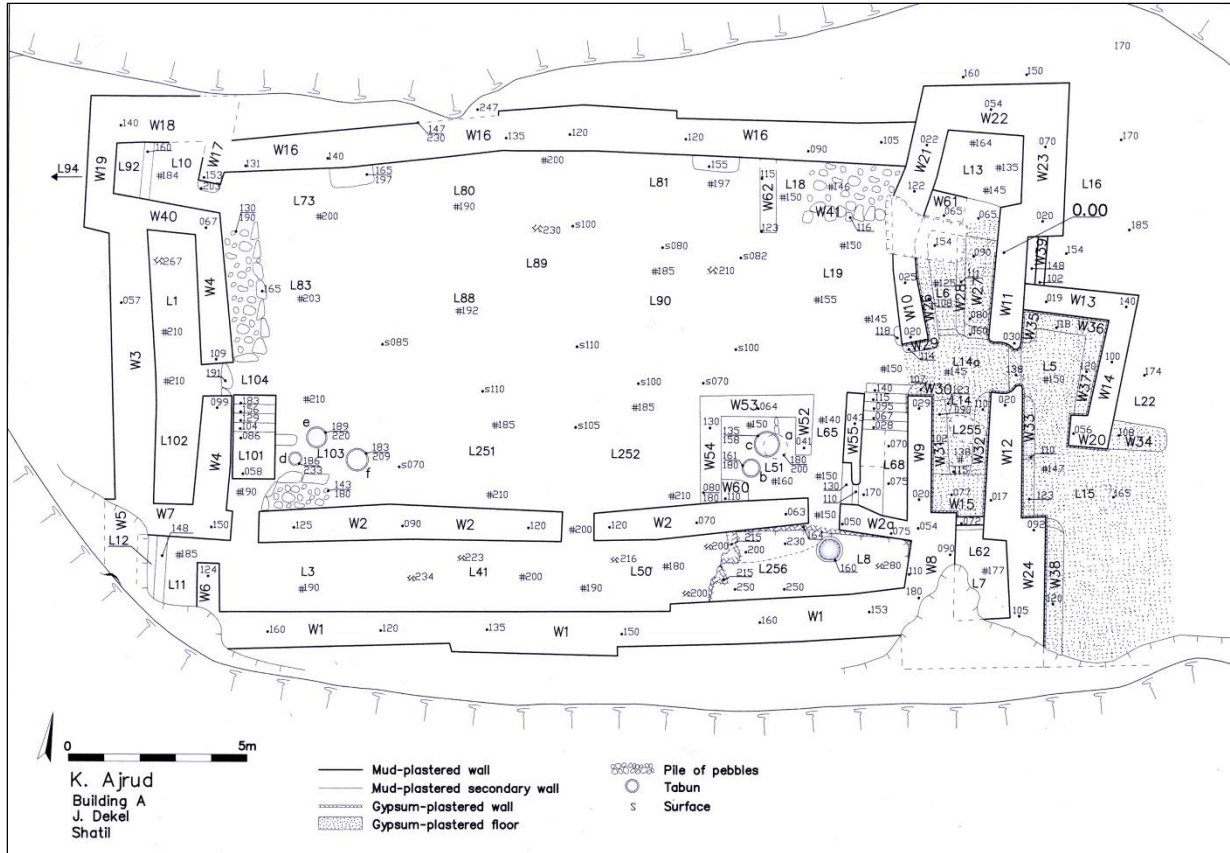


Fig. D.37: "Building A" Detail (Meshel 2012: 16, fig. 2.12)

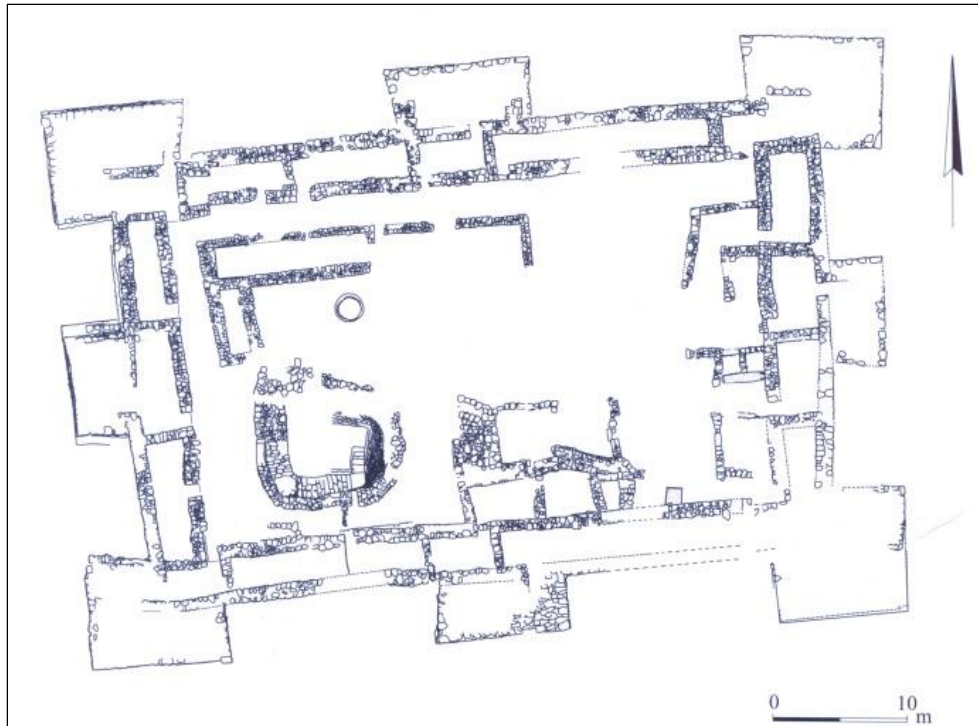


Fig. D.38: Tell el-Qudeirat, Stratum 2 Fortress (Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 15, fig. 1.3)

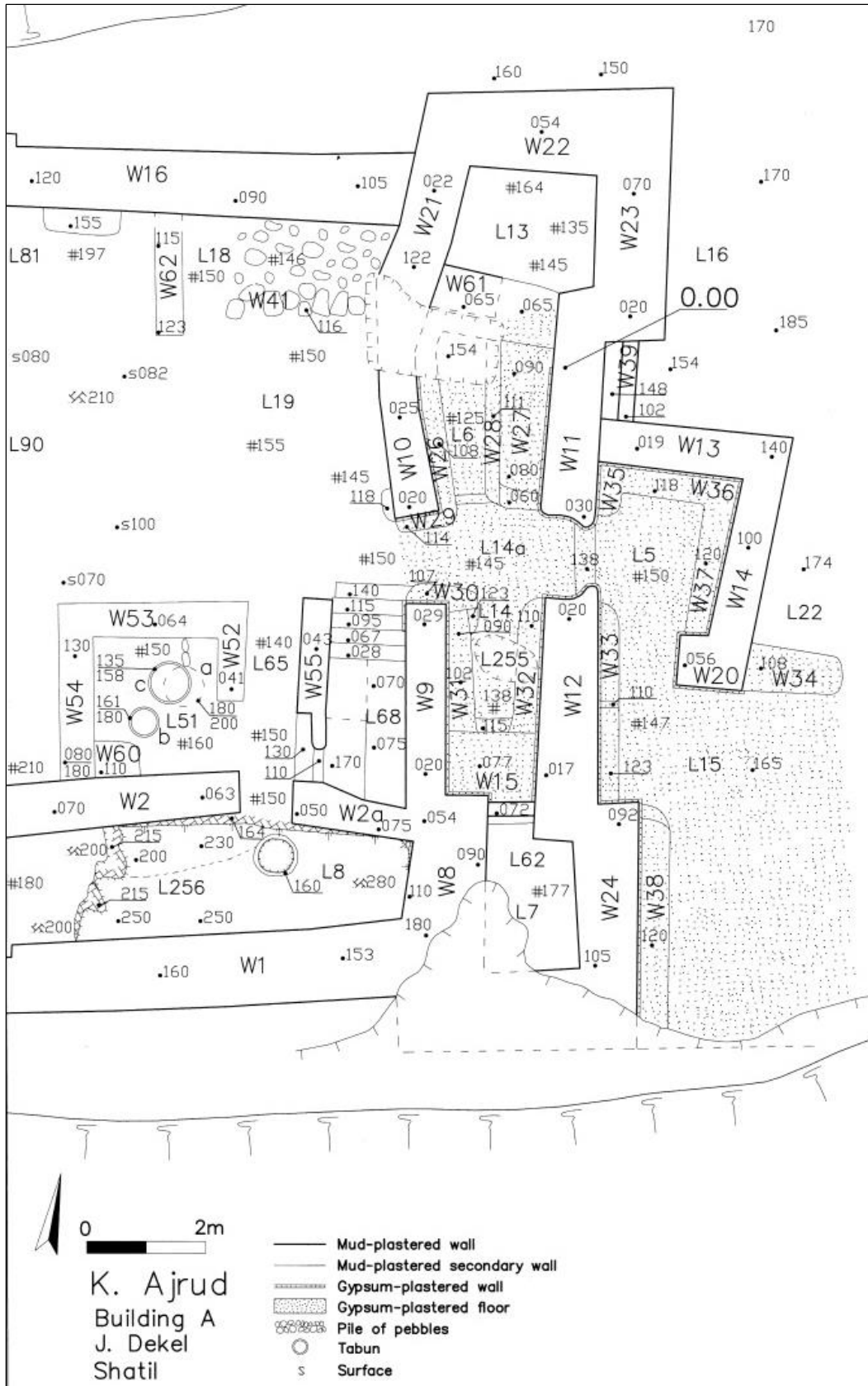


Fig. D.39: "The Benchroom Complex" (Meshel and Goren 2012: 18, fig. 2.15)



Fig. D.40: Forecourt (L15) looking west (Meshel and Goren 2012: 20, fig. 2.17)



Fig. D.41: Forecourt (L15) and antechamber (L5) looking north (Meshel and Goren 2012: 19, fig. 2.16)



Fig. D.42: Antechamber (L5) looking north (Meshel and Goren 2012: 21, fig. 2.20)

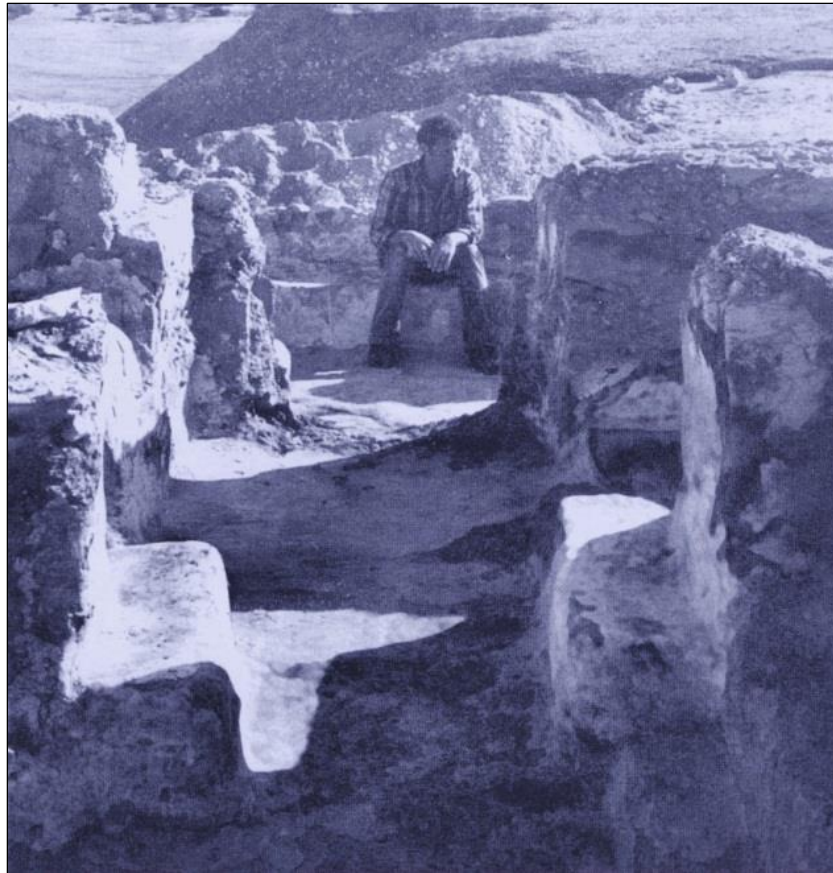


Fig. D.43: Central area of eastern broadroom (L14a) looking east toward the antechamber (L5) (Meshel and Goren 2012: 23, fig. 2.24)

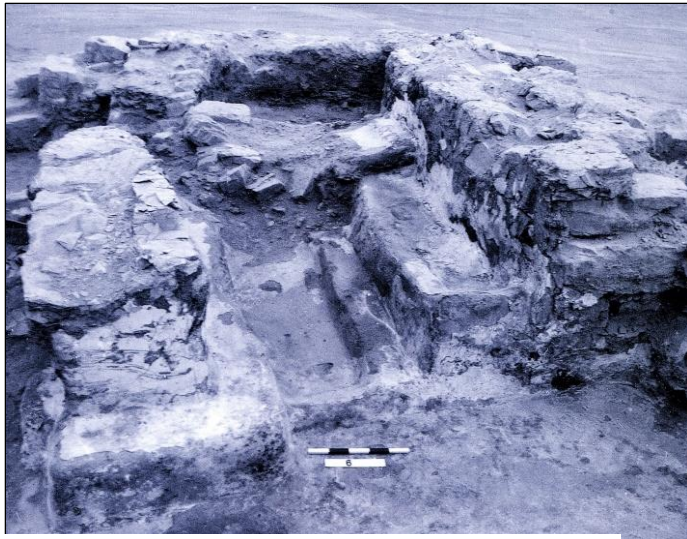


Fig. D.44: “Northern Wing” (L6) of eastern broadroom (Meshel and Goren 2012: 27,

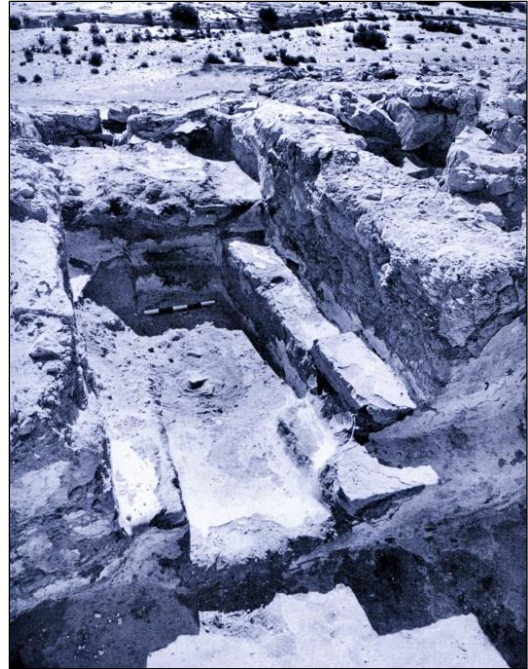


Fig. D.45: “Southern Wing” (L14) of eastern broadroom (Meshel and Goren 2012: 25, fig. 2.27)

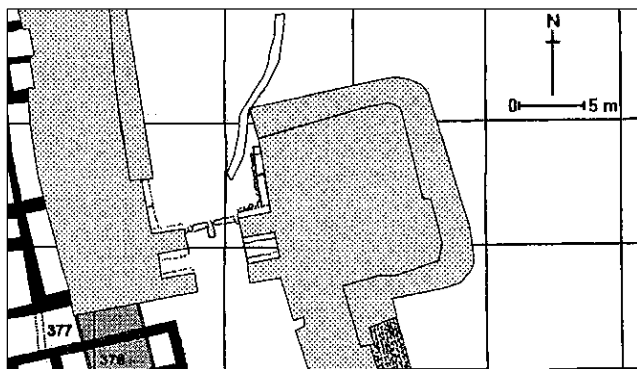


Fig D.46: Two Chamber City Gate at Tell en-Nasbeh (Zorn 1997: 64, fig 13)

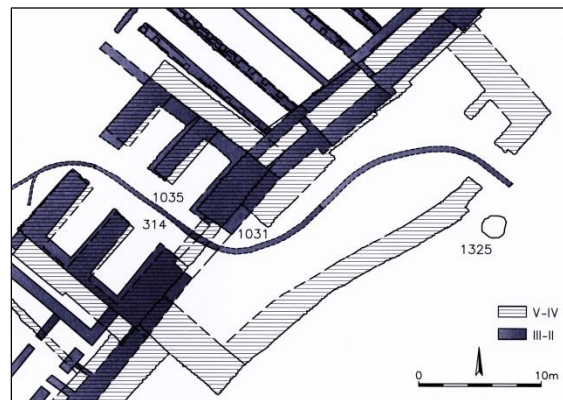


Fig. D.47: Four Chamber City Gate at Tel Beer-Sheba (Herzog 2016: 210, fig. 4.99)

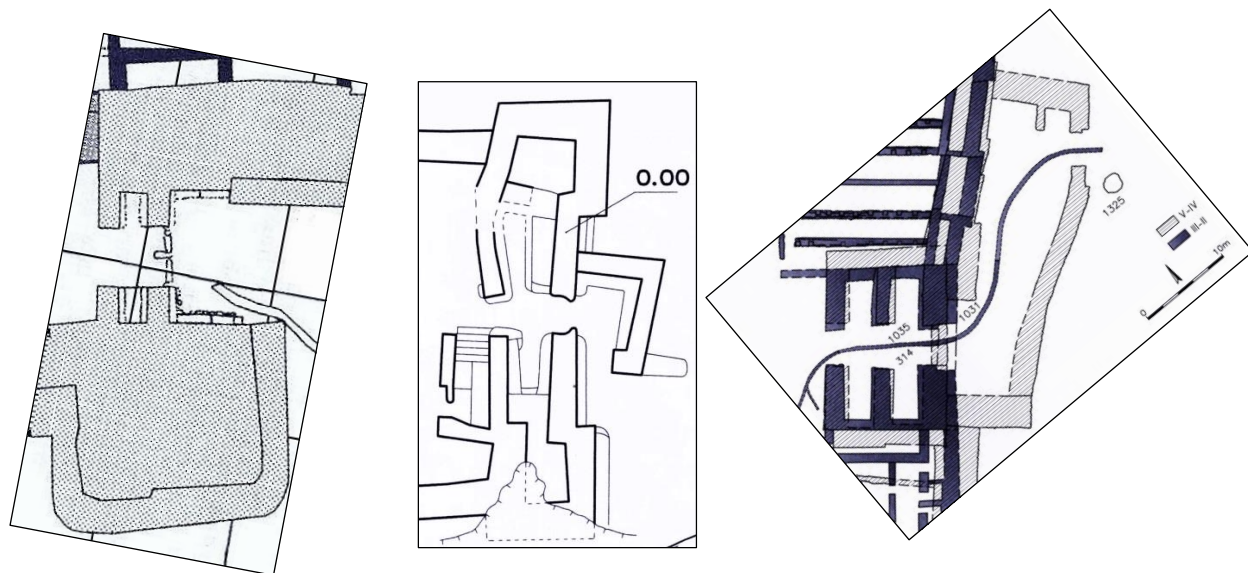


Fig. D.48: Comparison between Benchroom Complex and City Gates at Tell en-Nasbeh and Tel Beer-Sheba

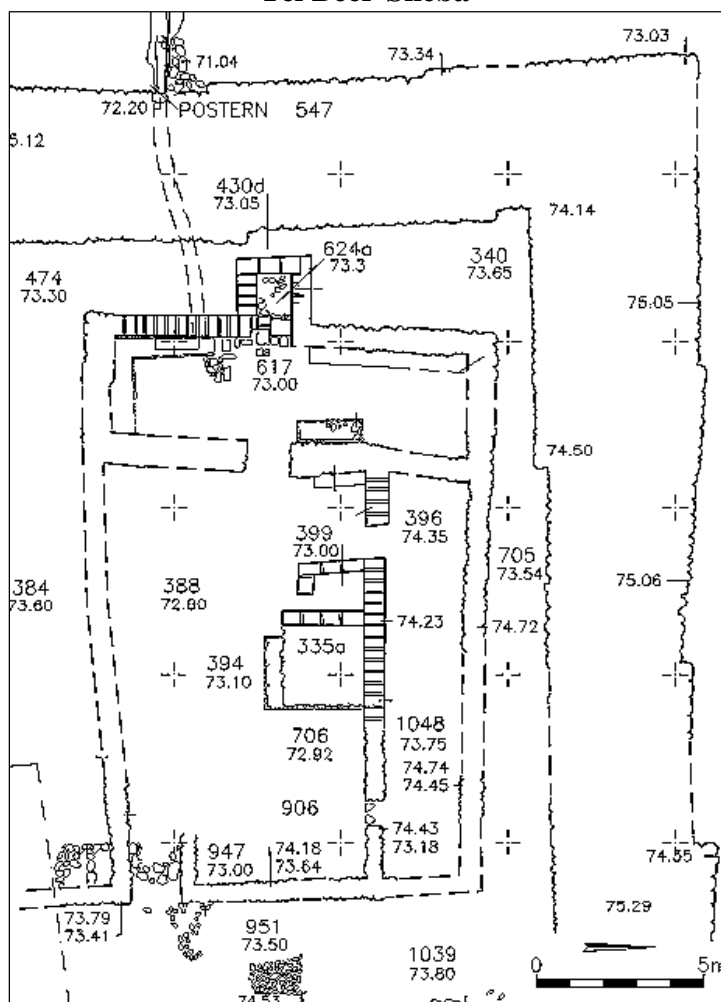


Fig. D.49: Tel Arad Stratum X Temple Plan (Herzog 2010: 170, fig. 1)



Fig. D.50: Reconstruction of Painting No.9 – Seated Figure Holding a Plant, from the antechamber (L5) (Beck 2012: 191, fig. 6.39)

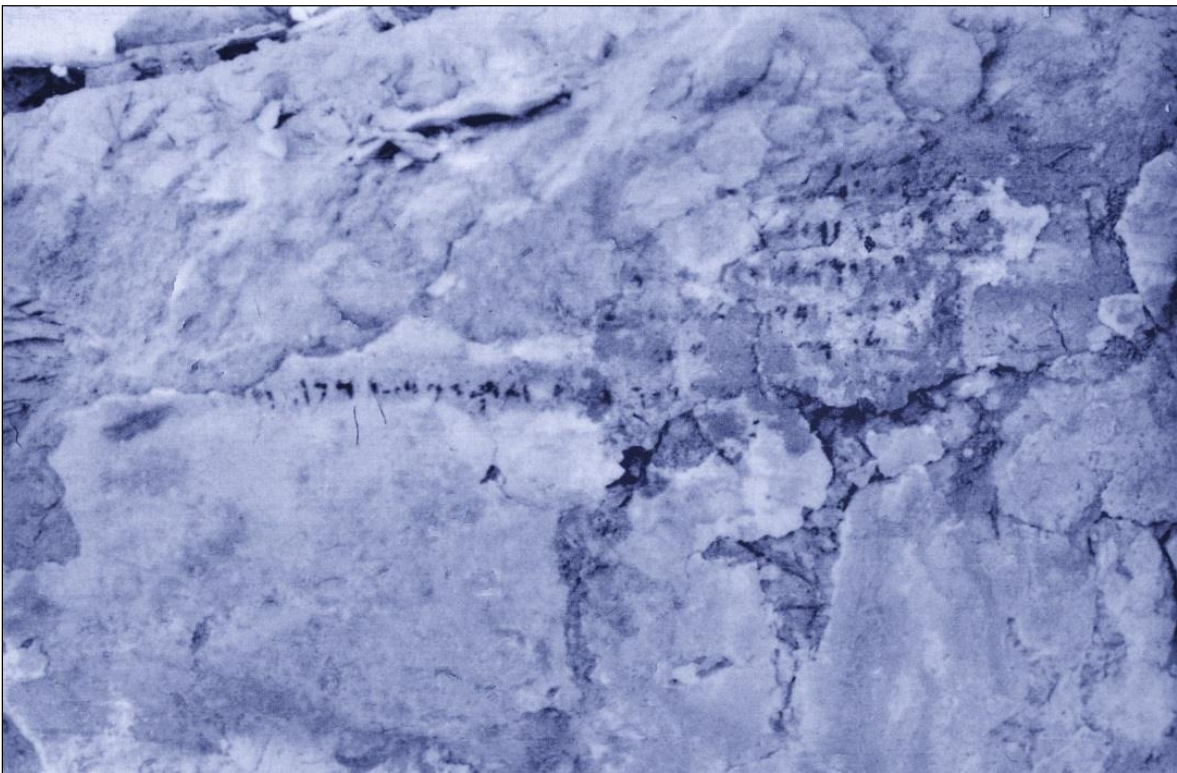


Fig. D.51: Inscription 4.2 *in situ* on northern doorjamb between antechamber (L5) and the central area of the eastern broadroom (L14a) (Meshel and Goren 2012: 24, fig. 2.25)

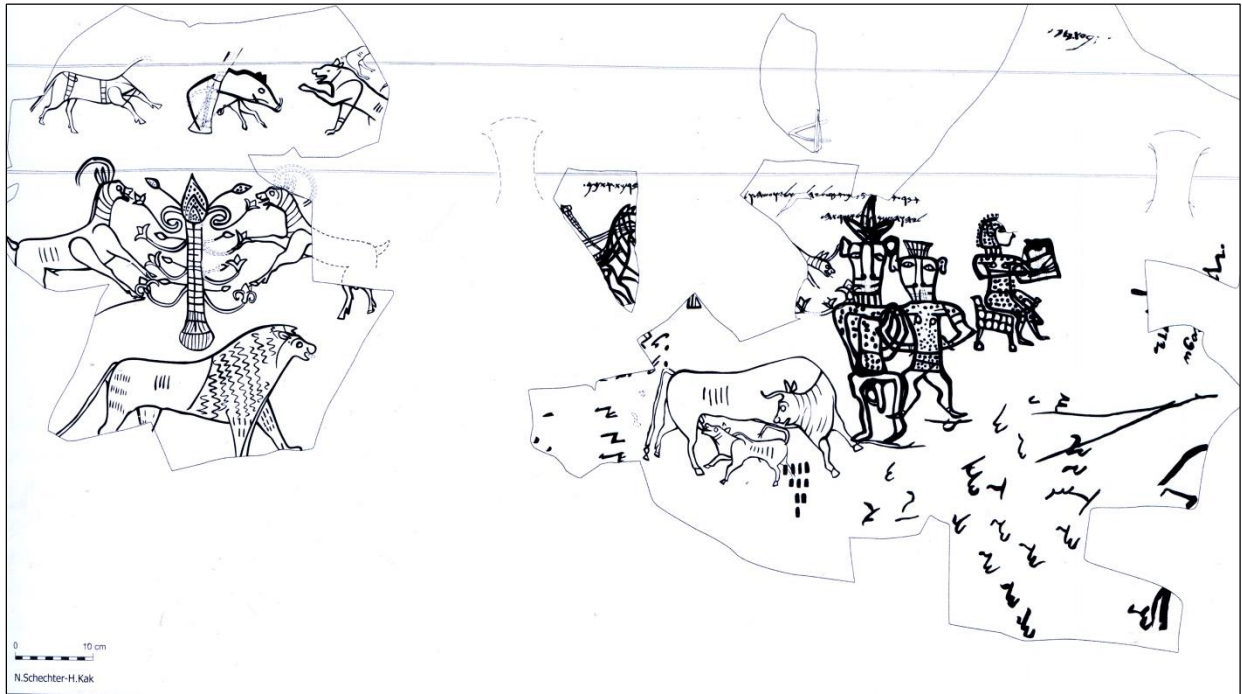


Fig. D.52: “Pithos A” Projection Drawing (Beck 2012: 147, fig. 6.5)

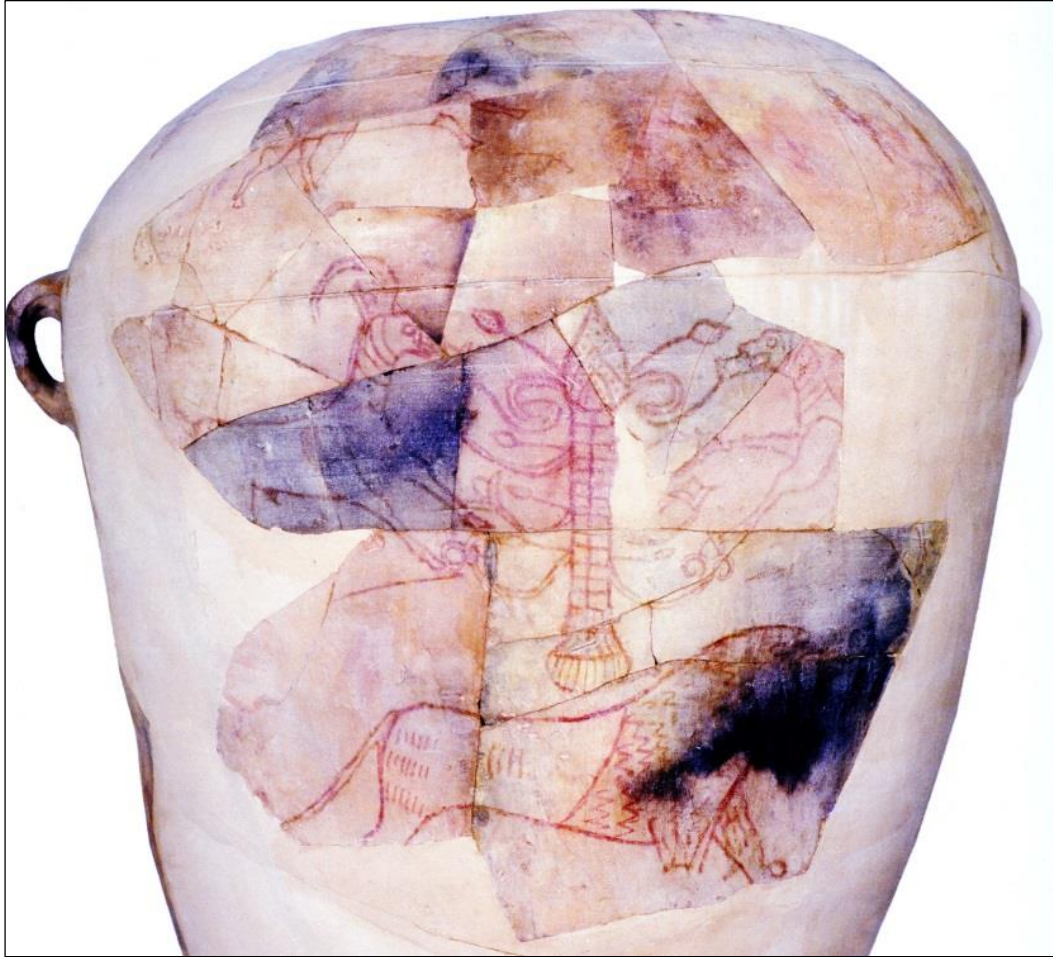


Fig. D.53: “Pithos A” Detail – Caprids Flanking Tree and Lion (Beck 2012: 146, fig. 6.3)



Fig. D.54: “Pithos A” Detail – Caprid head, Bes Figures, Lyre Player (Beck 2012: 166, fig. 6.20a)



Fig. D.55: “Pithos A” Detail – Lyre Player (Beck 2012: 170, fig. 6.23)

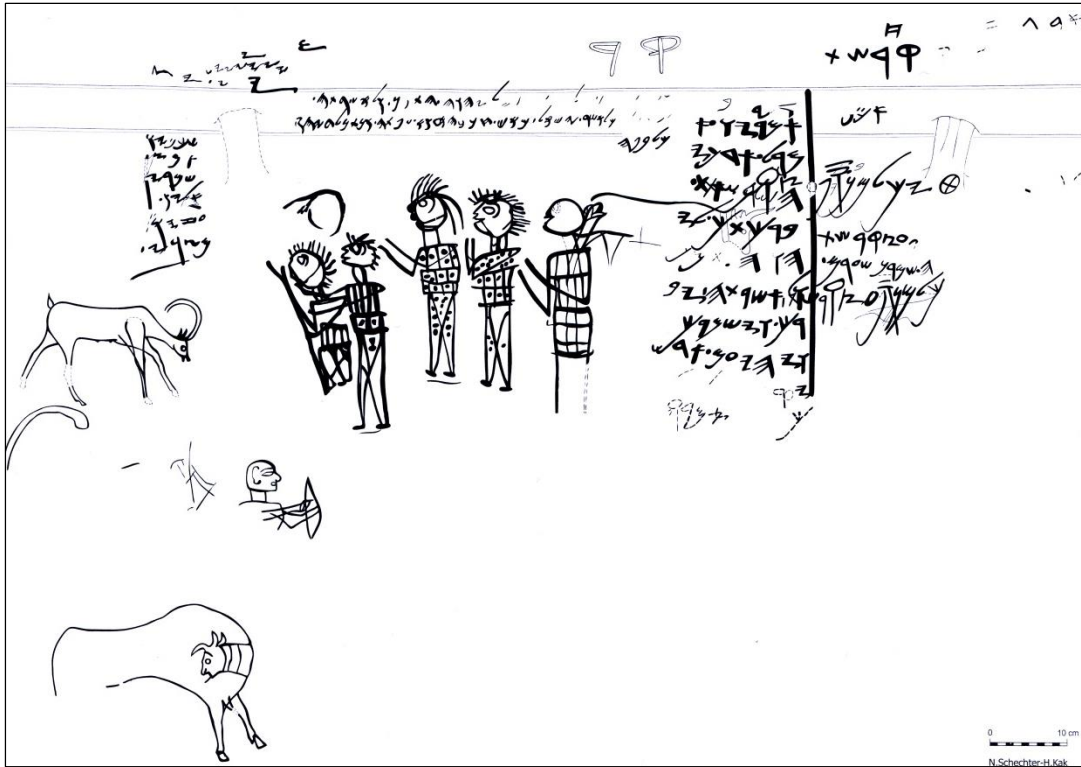


Fig. D.56: “Pithos B” Projection Drawing (Beck 2012: 148, fig. 6.6)

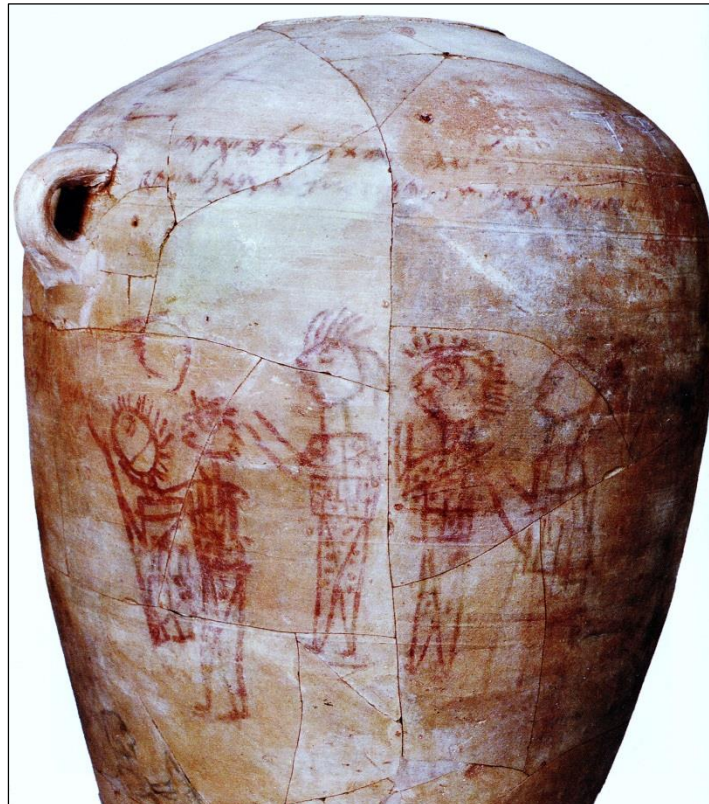


Fig. D.57: “Pithos B” Detail – Inscription 3.9 and Procession of Figures with Upraised Arms (Ahituv et al 2012: 94, fig. 5.36b)

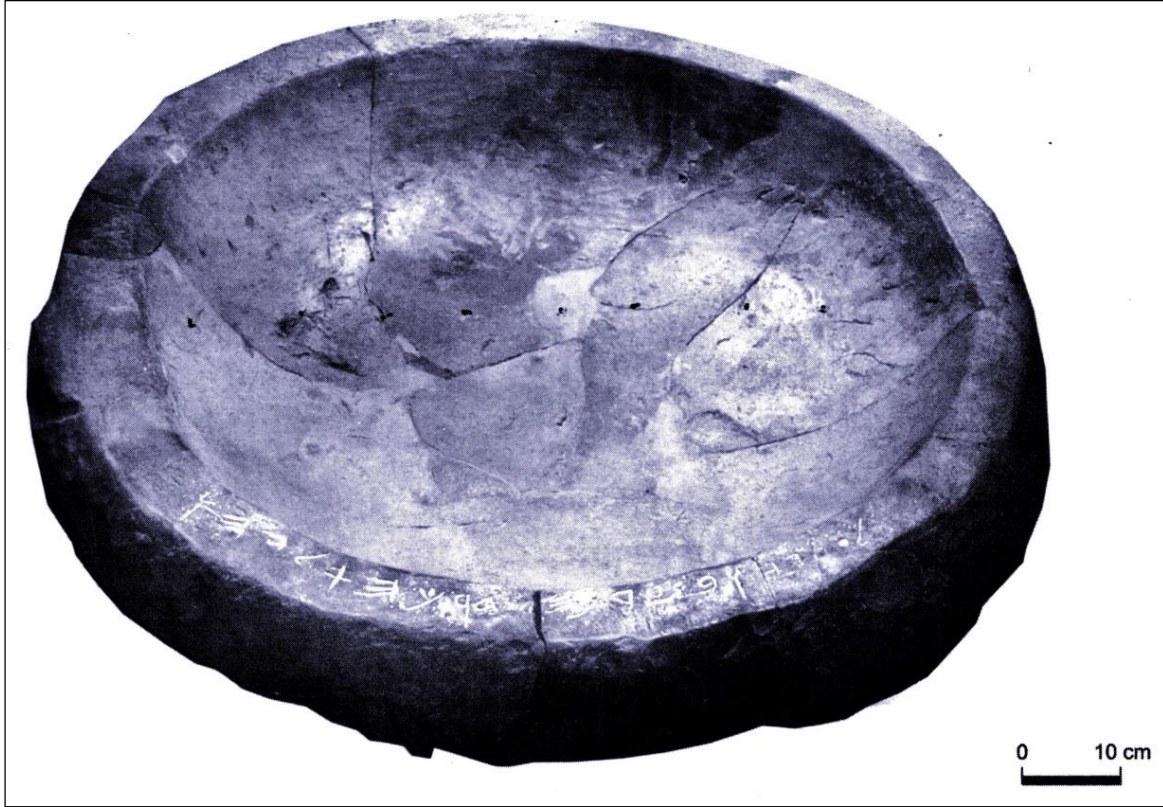


Fig. D.58: Limestone Basin with Inscription 1.2 (Reshef 2012: 252, fig. 14.2)



Fig. D.59: Limestone Basin as found (Meshel and Goren 2012: 52, fig. 2.75)

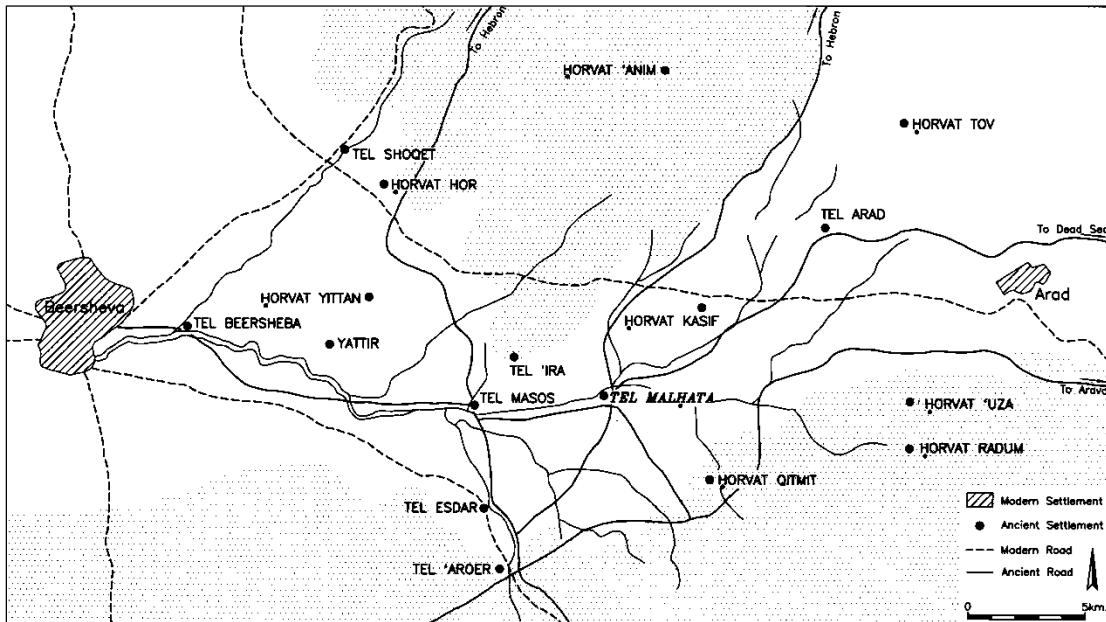


Fig. D.60: Map of major Iron Age sites in the Beersheba Valley (Beit-Arieh and Freud 2016: 12, fig. 1.1.b)

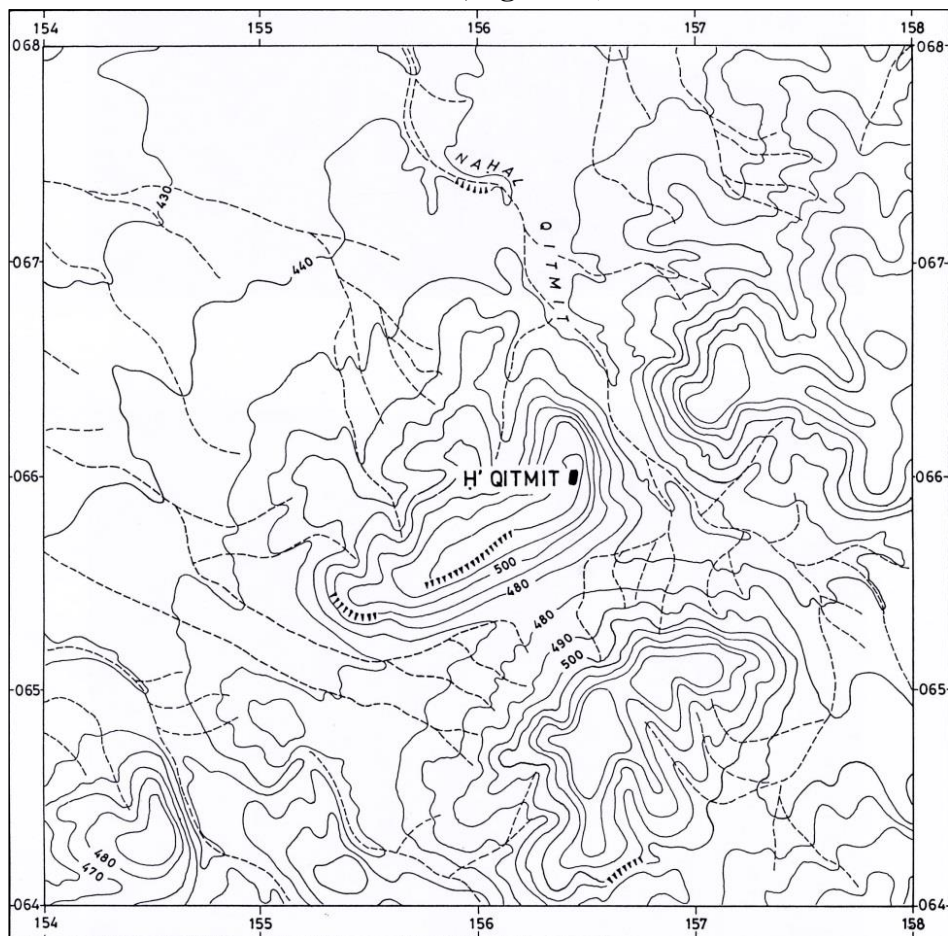


Fig. D.61: Topographical Map of Horvat Qitmit region (Beit-Arieh 1995: 3, fig. 1.2)



Fig. D.62: Aerial View of Horvat Qitmit looking southeast (Beit-Arieh 1995: 7, fig. 1.7)

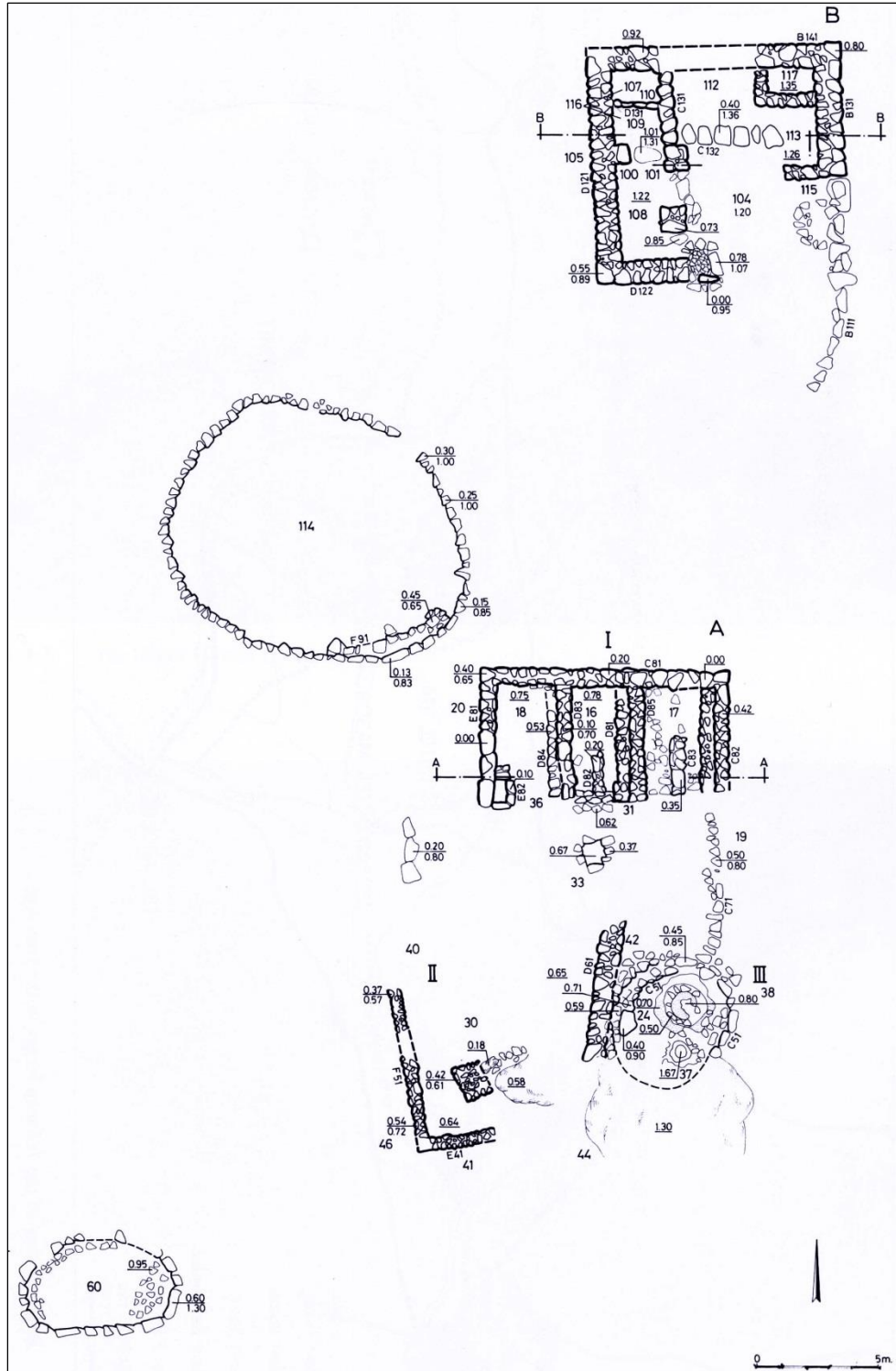


Fig. D.63: General Plan of Horvat Qitmit (Beit-Arieh 1995: 7, fig. 1.7)



Fig. D.64: Locus 114 – “Bench” and large stone in the “Large Enclosure” (Beit-Arieh 1995: 25, fig. 2.16)

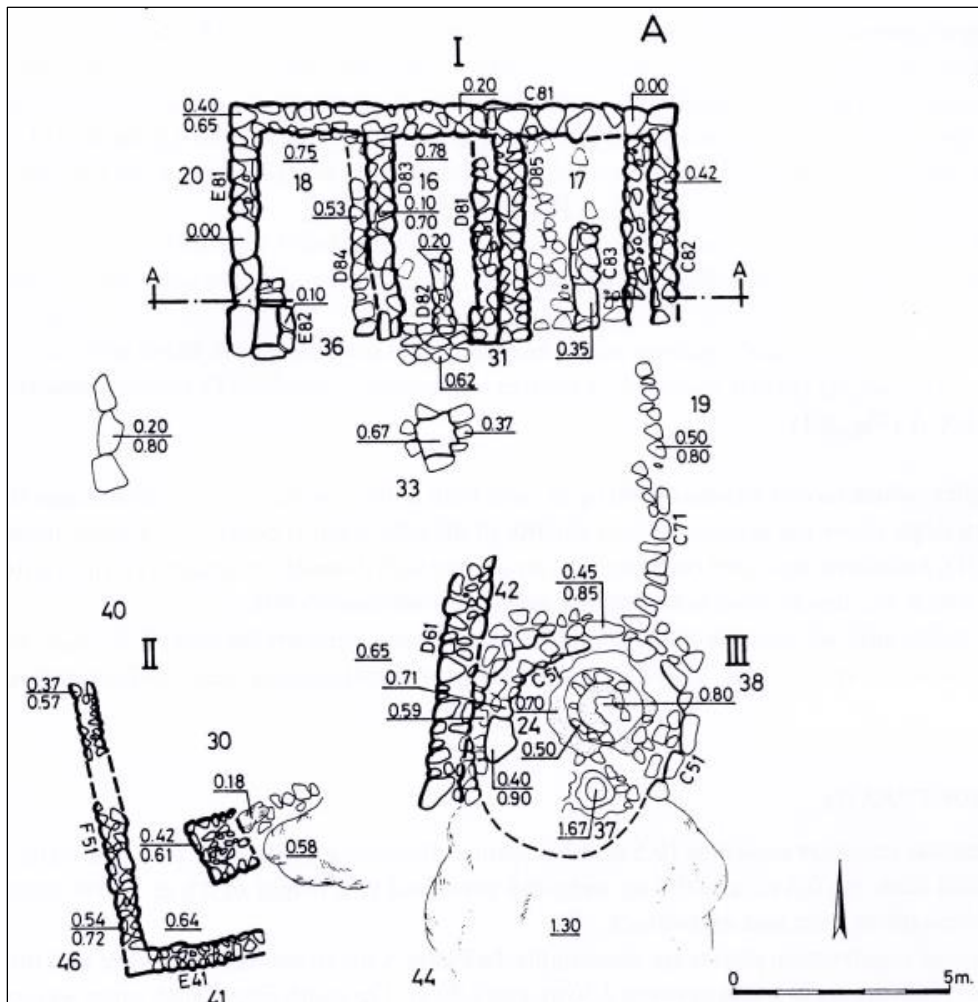


Fig. D.65: “Complex A” Detail (Beit-Arieh 1995: 10, fig. 2.1)



Fig. D.66: Stone Platform looking south (Beit-Arieh 1995: 14, fig. 2.5)

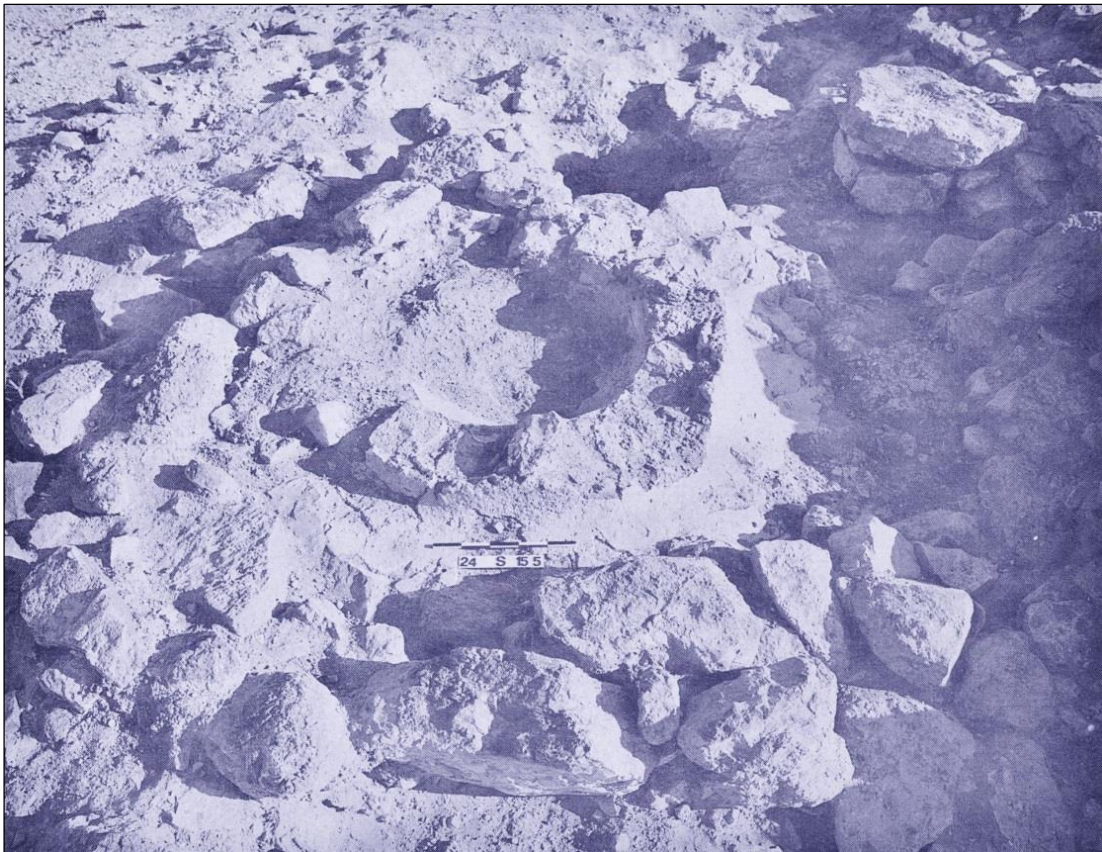


Fig. D.67: Plastered Basin and Flint Slab Feature (Beit-Arieh 1995: 18, fig. 2.10)



Fig. D.68: Flint Slab Feature (Beit-Arieh 1995: 19, fig. 2.11)



Fig. D.69: Open Tripartite Structure looking east (Beit-Arieh 1995: 11, fig. 2.3)



Fig. D.72: Standing Stone and Paving in Complex B (looking south) (Beit-Arieh 1995: 23, fig. 2.14)

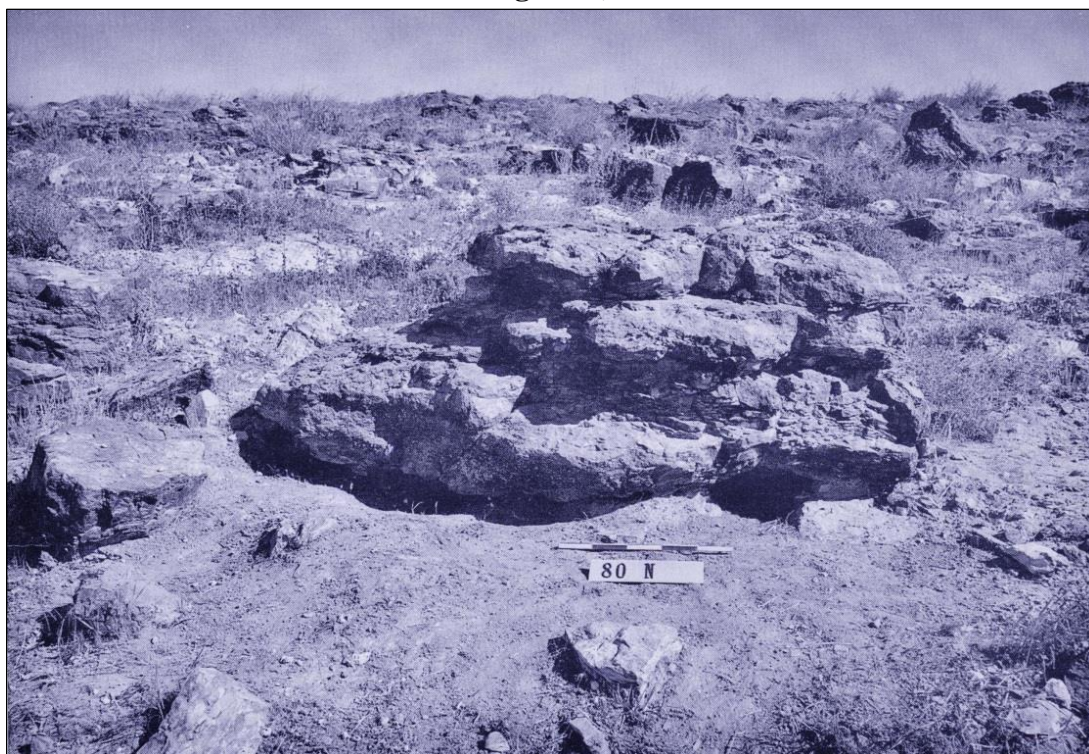


Fig. D.73: Locus 80 – Shallow pit at foot of natural rock formation (Beit-Arieh 1995: 26, fig. 2.17)



Fig. D.74a: Three Horned Head Catalogue No. 68, IAA 1987-117 (Photo by Author)

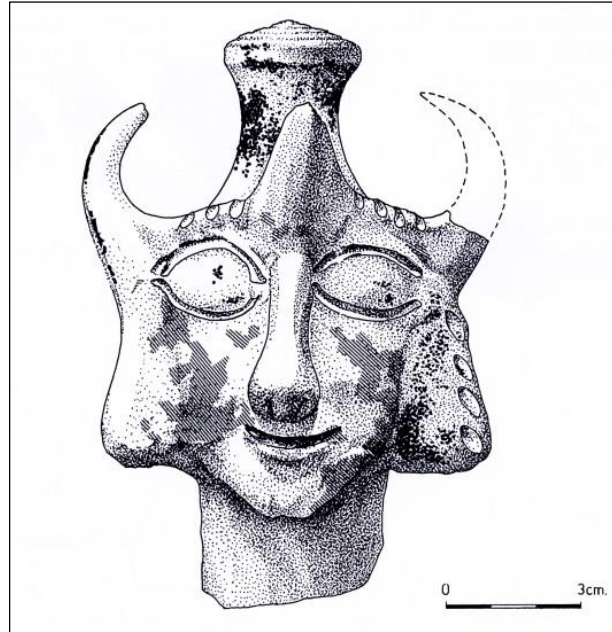


Fig. D.74b: Three Horned Head Catalogue No. 68 Line Drawing (Beck 1995: 78, fig. 3.53)



Fig. D.75a: Double Flute Player Figurine, Tel Malḥata, IAA 1994-3394 (Photo by Author)

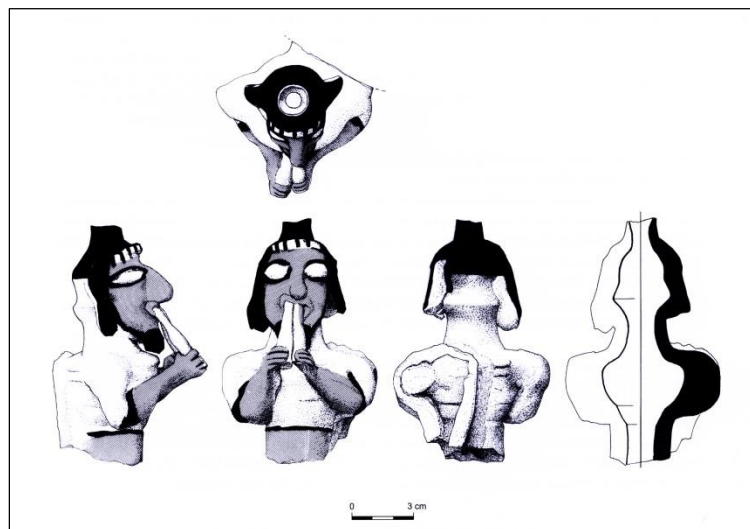


Fig. D.75b: Double Flute Player Drawing, Tel Malḥata, IAA 1994-3394 (Kletter 2016: 546, fig. 9.1)



Fig. D.76: Anthropomorphic Jar Stand Catalogue No. 23 (Beck 1995: 44, fig. 3.17)

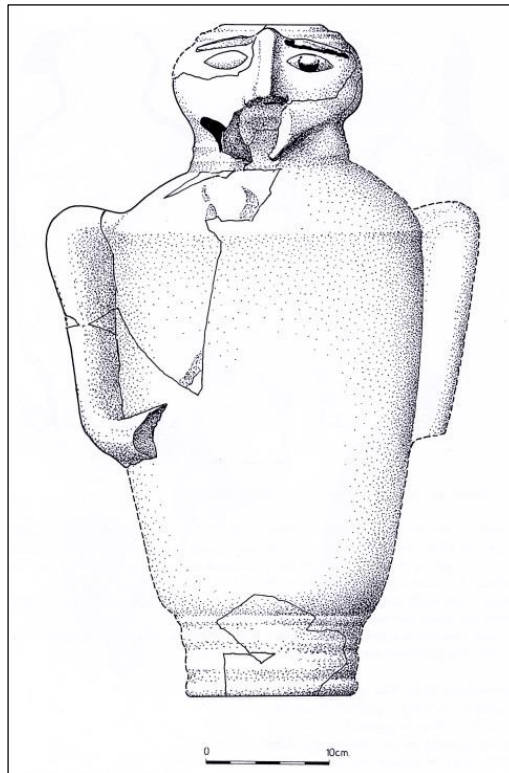


Fig. D.77: Anthropomorphic Jar Stand Catalogue No. 24 (Beck 1995: 40, fig. 3.22)



Fig. D.78: Anthropomorphic Jar Stands from ritual depository at En Ḥaṣeva (Photo by Author)



Fig. D.79: Stamp Seal of figure facing tree and star (Beit-Arieh 1995: 269, fig. 6.1)

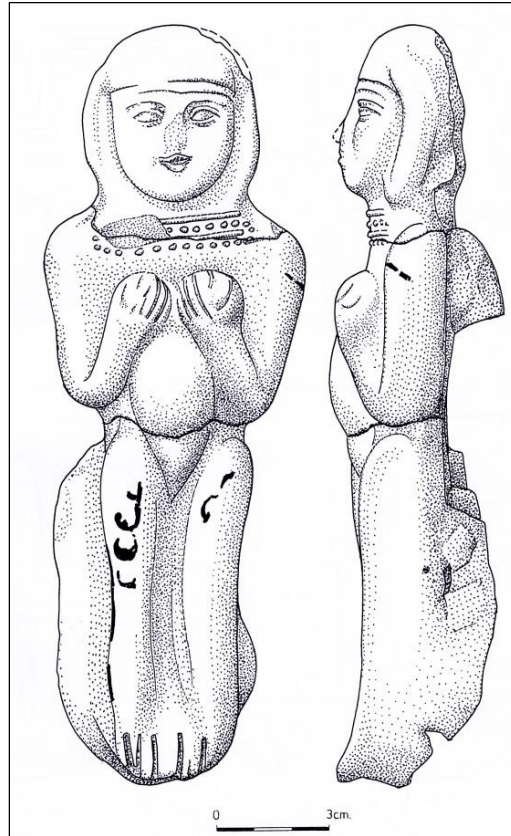


Fig. D.80: Female Figurine Catalogue No. 107 (Beck 1995: 101, fig. 3.67)

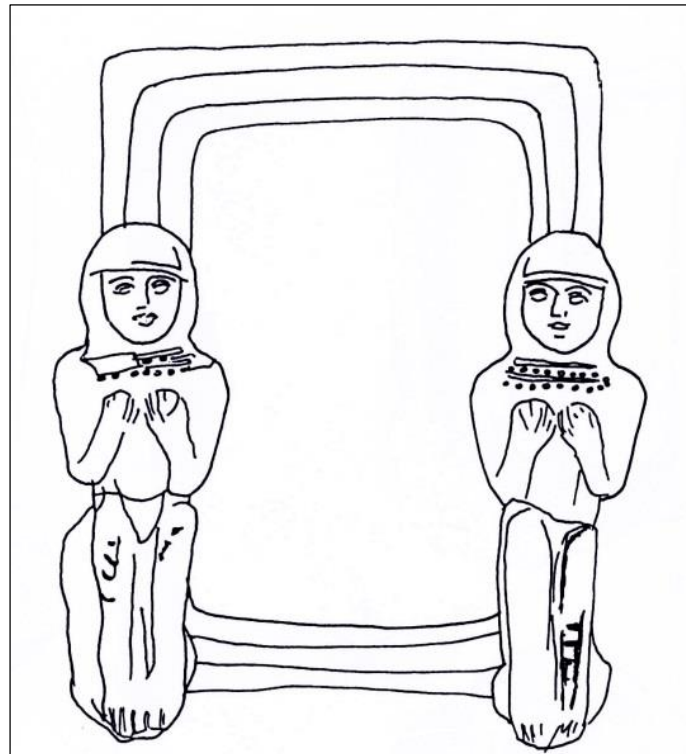


Fig. D.81: Reconstruction of Shrine Model with Female Figurines Catalogue Nos. 107 and 108 (Beck 1995: 103, fig. 3.69)

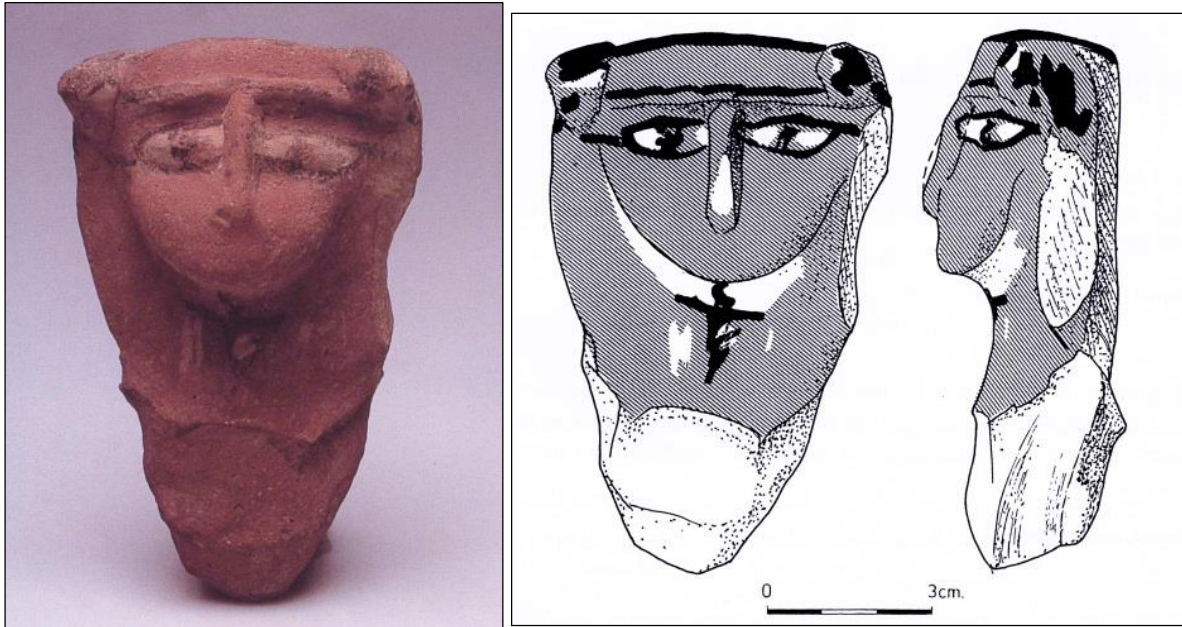


Fig. D.82: Female Figurine Head Catalogue No. 113 (Beck 1995: 84, 105, fig. 3.73)

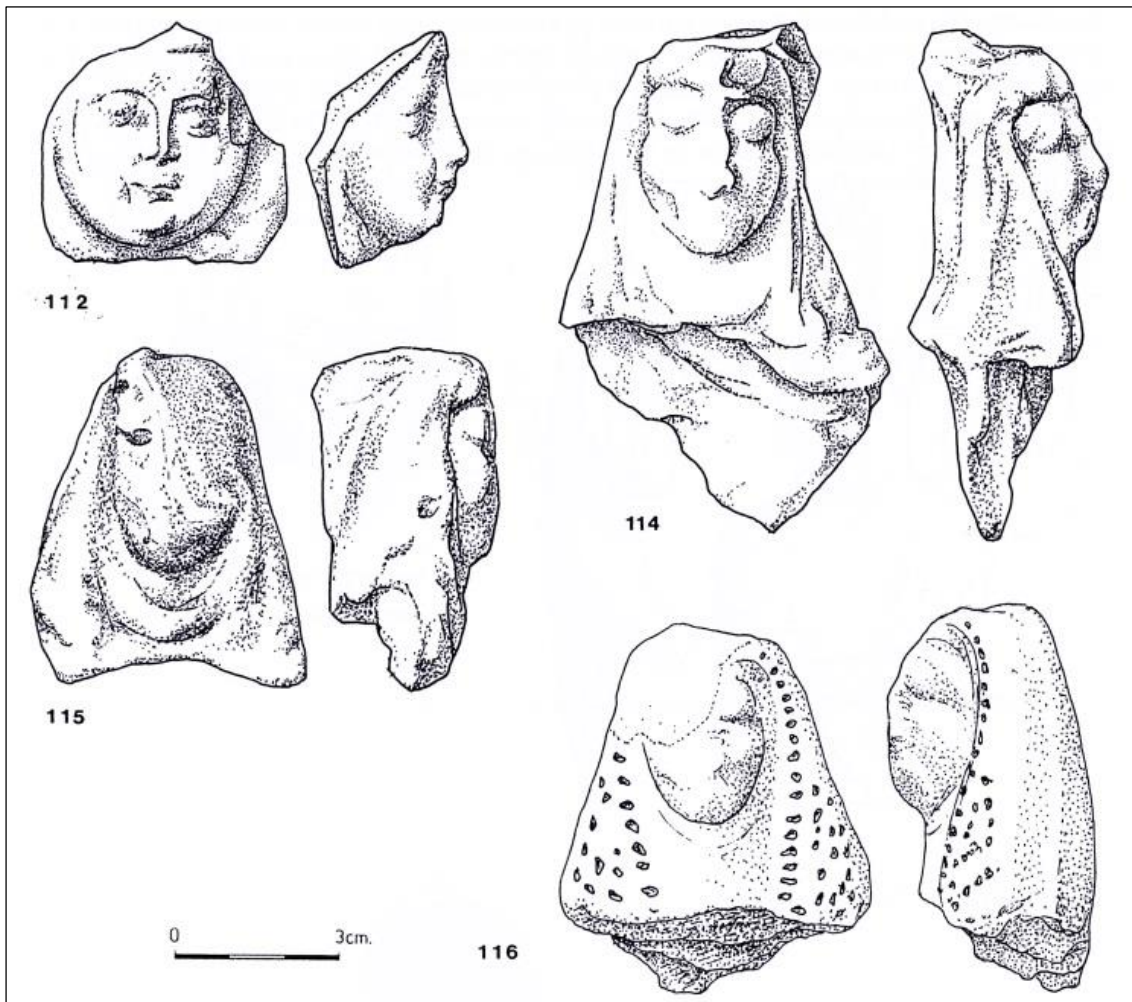


Fig. D.83: Female Figurine Heads Catalogue Nos. 112, 114-116 (Beck 1995: 107, fig. 3.75)

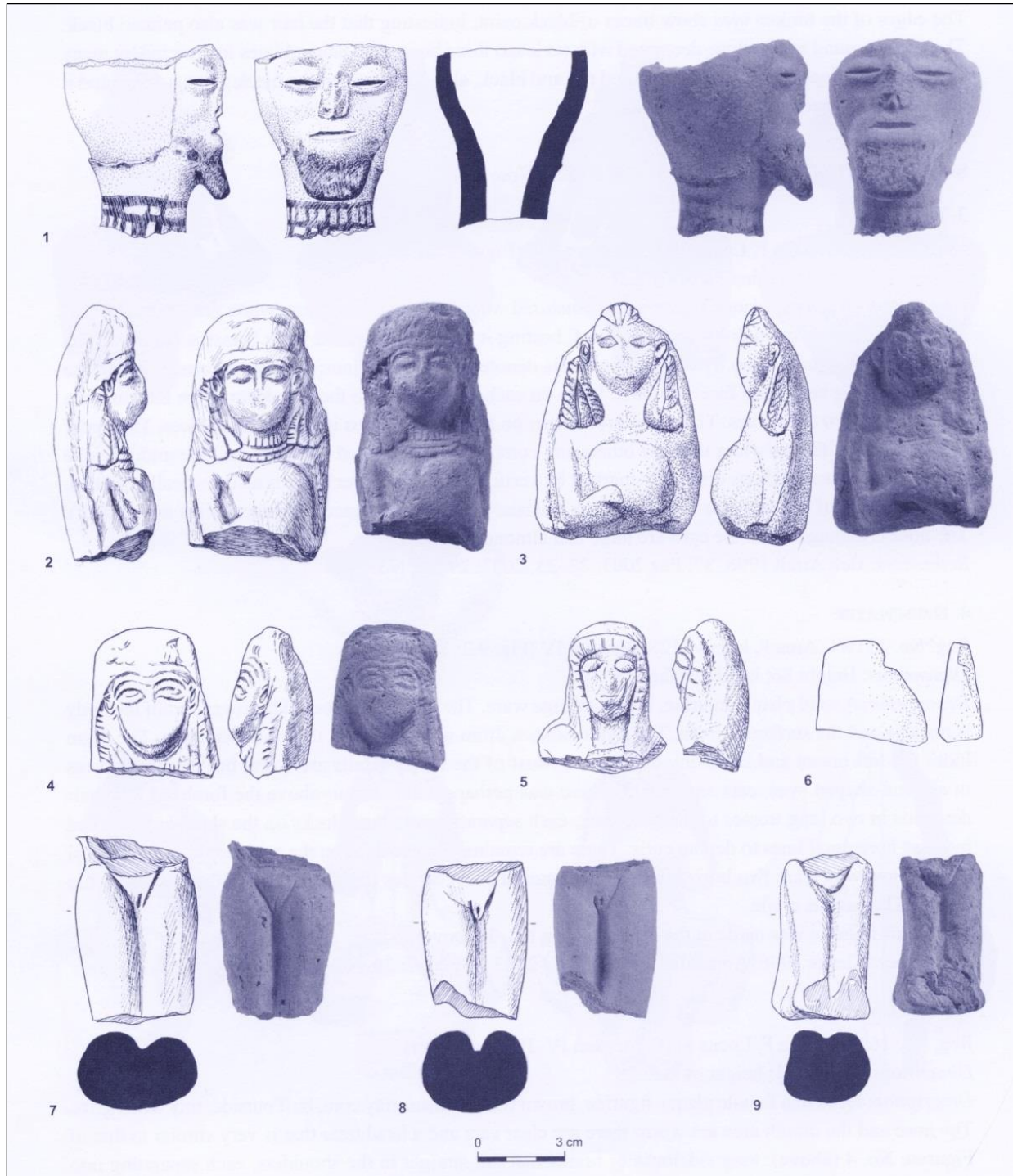


Fig. D.84: Anthropomorphic Figurines at Tel Malḥata (Kletter 2016: 548, fig. 912)