

LET THE

ARMSTRONG INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The magazine of the

STONES SPEAK



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2023



FINDING THE HITTITES



FROM THE EDITOR | GERALD FLURRY

Publishi

IN ISAIAH 40:9, THE PROPHET ISAIAH EXPLAINS his message to the people of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah. “O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, Get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, Lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid; Say unto the cities of Judah: ‘Behold your God!’”

The phrase “tellest good tidings” is used twice in that one verse. Despite being occasionally mislabeled as a “prophet of doom,” so much of the Prophet Isaiah’s message is uplifting and positive. And he delivered his message with all the strength and excitement he could muster.

At the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology, we identify with Isaiah and his “good tidings.” When you think about Jerusalem and Israel, and all of the extraordinary historical and archaeological sites across the nation, it’s inspiring. Nothing brings the ancient history of the Bible alive like a visit to the Ophel or the City of David, or one of the plentiful biblical sites in Israel, such as Shiloh, Lachish, Gezer, Megiddo—the list goes on.

Actually, the practice of biblical archaeology extends well beyond the borders of Israel. Consider the Hittites, featured in the cover story of this issue. Until the early 20th century, the Hittite civilization confounded scholars and archaeologists. They would read the biblical text, which has a lot to say about the Hittites, and marvel at the fact that there was no archaeological or textual evidence to support the Bible. This dearth of evidence led some to reject the

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FROM THE EDITOR

Publishing ‘Good Tidings’	1
Kingdom of David and Solomon Discovered	2
Has the Seal Impression of Eliakim, Son of Hilkiah, Been Discovered?	4
Finding the Hittites	6
INFOGRAPHIC	
The Hittite Empire	18
Can We Trust the Book of Daniel?	20
Early City Planning in the Kingdom of Judah	24
What Is a Casemate Wall?	28
Are Biblical Hittites in Canaan Anachronistic?	31
Psalms of the Fugitive	33

ng ‘Good Tidings’

biblical history of the Hittites as fiction. Others concluded that the Hittites must have been a marginal and irrelevant people.

Then the narrative suddenly changed. By the early 1900s, scholars and scientists were gaping at not just the presence of a Hittite civilization but also its impressive nature and territorial size. Some even noted that the archaeology and textual evidence being uncovered aligned with the biblical text. The way the Hittites went from being a “fictional” civilization to a recognized regional superpower is a wonderful story, and it is beautifully told by Christopher Eames and George Haddad (see page 6).

In a way, the example of the Hittites encapsulates the Prophet Isaiah’s message in Isaiah 40: It’s “good tidings” that one can “behold.” It also encapsulates the purpose of the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology. Like Isaiah, we want to share the history and archaeology of the Hittites and others, and their connection to the biblical text, with the people of Israel. They might have been primarily centered in modern-day Turkey, a good distance from Jerusalem, but the Hittites—like many Near East peoples and *numerous* archaeological sites and discoveries—demonstrate the credibility of the biblical text and how important it is as a tool in archaeology across the region.

Be sure to also read “Psalms of the Fugitive,” by Ryan Malone (page 33). An accomplished musician and composer, Mr. Malone is the music director and an instructor at Herbert

W. Armstrong College. He has studied biblical history and poetry for many years and currently teaches Biblical Poetry. Mr. Malone’s article takes some of David’s poems and places them in their historical context, which is recorded in Samuel and Kings. This approach to the psalms not only gives added context and power to the poems, it shows how interconnected and complementary the biblical text is.

Finally, I’ll conclude by sharing my excitement for the next issue of *Let the Stones Speak*. The November-December issue will be a special issue that coincides with the opening of our new exhibit: “Kingdom of David and Solomon Discovered.” (To learn more about this exhibit, just turn the page.)

If everything goes according to plan, it will be significantly longer than a regular issue, filled with detailed and compelling articles—accompanied by original maps and illustrations—that explore the surprisingly vast amount of evidence we have of a monumental 10th-century B.C.E. Israelite kingdom. We’re going to work very hard to make the next issue the most enlightening and impactful we have ever produced. We want it to be monumental and impressive, just like its subject.

Like the Prophet Isaiah, our plan for the upcoming exhibit and the November-December issue is to share the “good tidings”—to explore all the great archaeological and scholarly work that has been done to reveal the monumental kingdom of kings David and Solomon. You don’t want to miss our next issue! ■



Kingdom of David and Solomon DISCOVERED

A WORLD PREMIERE EXHIBIT

presented by

Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology

January 1-September 30, 2024



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INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY



GRAND OPENING

Sunday, December 31, 2023

Join us for **“Uncovering Greatness,”** a concert featuring three internationally acclaimed Israel-born musicians: violinist Itamar Zorman, pianist Inon Barnatan and cellist Amit Peled in a program featuring composers and pieces honoring the rich musical tradition of the Jewish culture.



Tickets to the concert start at \$40 for adults and \$35 for youth ages 6 to 17. Tickets include entry to the exhibit.



BOOK TICKETS NOW!

Location: Armstrong Auditorium
Edmond, Oklahoma

Phone: (866) 500-7979

Website: ArmstrongAuditorium.org

“Kingdom of David and Solomon Discovered” will showcase over three dozen artifacts from 10th-century B.C.E. biblical Israel. It will mark the world premiere of both the Ophel pithos inscription and a selection of artifacts discovered by Dr. Eilat Mazar in the City of David. The exhibit will also feature elements of monumental Jerusalem, including a Phoenician-style capital discovered in Jerusalem.

Discovered at archaeological sites across Israel, including Jerusalem, Timna, Lachish and Khirbet Qeiyafa, this unique collection of iron, pottery, stone and textiles will be presented within a sensational exhibit featuring life-size monumental wall reconstructions, virtual reality tours, video presentations, and several original illustrations and artwork selections.

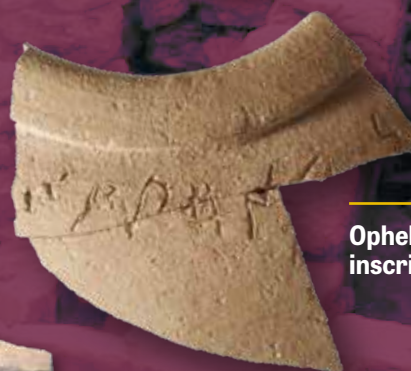
This exhibit is totally unique. This is the first time such a diverse collection of 10th-century archaeological finds have been collected in one place and presented in their broader scientific, historic and biblical context to reveal the monumental nature of the united monarchy during the reigns of kings David and Solomon.

This free exhibit is presented and funded by the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology in association with the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation, the Israel Museum and the Israel Antiquities Authority.

This is Armstrong Auditorium’s third exhibit of biblical artifacts, following “Seals of Jeremiah’s Captors Discovered” (2013–2015) and “Seals of Isaiah and King Hezekiah Discovered” (2018–2019), which won Oklahoma Tourism’s 2020 award for Outstanding Temporary Exhibit.



Seal of Eliakim



Ophel pithos inscription



Tel Dan Stele (replica)

You're invited!

Excavating the Ophel

A special presentation by Prof. Uzi Leibner



Join us in Edmond, Oklahoma, for a presentation by professor and head of the Institute of Archaeology for Hebrew University and Ophel excavation director Uzi Leibner. For the past two years, Professor Leibner has worked alongside Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology staff and students to continue the excavations of the late, esteemed archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar. The last two seasons of excavation have further revealed a monumental Second Temple Period structure that is related to the function of the temple in Jerusalem. On November 14, Professor Leibner will discuss Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period and what the Ophel excavations have revealed, including other remarkable discoveries from ancient Jerusalem. The lecture will conclude with a question and answer session.

This free lecture will begin at 2:00 p.m. CST on Tuesday, November 14, and will be hosted in Armstrong Auditorium in Edmond, Oklahoma. Online streaming of the event will also be available at ArmstrongInstitute.org.

Has the Seal Impression of Eliakim, Son of Hilkiah, Been Discovered?

A discovery that brings to life one of the most prominent historical personalities related to King Hezekiah

BY BRENT NAGTEGAAL

EXCAVATIONS AT TEL LACHISH HAVE UNEARTHED two identical seal impressions that scholars believe may belong to the chief steward of Judah's King Hezekiah. This steward, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, is referred to in both 2 Kings and the book of Isaiah. All totaled, he is mentioned nine times in Scripture. In Isaiah 22, Eliakim is described as holding the "key" to the royal house of David. This prominent official was critical in conveying messages between King Hezekiah and Assyrian Emperor Sennacherib's officials during the latter's failed campaign to take Jerusalem in the late eighth century B.C.E.

The beautifully crafted seal impressions belonging to Eliakim were unearthed in 2014 during renewed excavations at Lachish, led by Hebrew University's Yosef Garfinkel, Michael G. Hasel and Martin G. Klingbeil of Southern Adventist University. A report authored by the archaeologists (as well as by Nestor H. Petruk) appeared in the May 2019 issue of *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, but it was largely overlooked in popular reporting.

The first of the identical impressions (known as bullae) was discovered in situ inside a small juglet in a destruction layer left by Sennacherib's assault on Lachish. A second identical bulla was identified months later after the earth surrounding the juglet was sent to Jerusalem to be wet-sifted.

The destruction of the fortified city of Lachish in

southern Judah is well attested in the archaeological record of the site (Lachish level III). The fall of Lachish is also documented on the wall reliefs at Nineveh, where Sennacherib pictographically represented his conquest of the city. Additionally, the Bible records Lachish's fall in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and Isaiah. Thus, both seal impressions were found in the correct context to relate them to the biblical event.

The inscription on the bulla reads, "L'lyqm yhwzrh," or "Belonging to Eliakim, Yehozarah." According to the scientific report, the relationship between the two names Eliakim and Yehozarah is most probably clarified by inserting "son of." While seal impressions often contain a *ben* (meaning "son of"), there are several examples where the *ben* is absent but implied. For example, the seal impression of King Hezekiah himself, discovered in Eilat Mazar's 2009–2010 Ophel excavation, reads: "Hezekiah · Ahaz." Here, "son of" is clearly implied. Thus, the Lachish bulla is—or *should* be—understood to say, "Belonging to Eliakim, [son of] Yehozarah."

But Isaiah 22:20 clearly identifies Eliakim as the son of Hilkiah. This seal impression identifies Eliakim as the son of Yehozarah. So how could it possibly belong to Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, an associate of Isaiah and King Hezekiah?

In their report, the excavators note that the name Yehozarah does not appear anywhere in the Bible. Yet it *does* appear on a seal impression that surfaced on the

antiquities market in 1974 (now displayed at the Israel Museum). Although it wasn't discovered in a controlled archaeological excavation, the Yehozarah impression is considered to be authentic. It has also been dated epigraphically to the time of Hezekiah. This bulla reads: "Belonging to Yehozarah, son of Hilkiyah, servant of Hezekiah."

Yehozarah appears only a handful of times in the archaeological record. The two Lachish bullae identify Yehozarah as Eliakim's father. And the antiquities market bulla has Yehozarah as the son of Hilkiyah (who was also a servant to King Hezekiah).

Combining the two seal impressions, we are presented with three generations: *Eliakim, son of Yehozarah, son of Hilkiyah*. Thus, Hilkiyah was actually Eliakim's grandfather, not his immediate father. The biblical Hebrew terminology allows for the skipping of a generation, especially if the grandfather was more well known than the father himself. The biblical word for "son" is used in the same manner for "grandson." The researchers highlight numerous biblical examples of this, including Laban and the children of Leah and Rachel, Saul and Meribbaal, Nimshi and Jehu, Iddo and Zechariah (among others).

The manner in which the name Hilkiyah is used also attests to its special status. Eliakim is almost always mentioned with this "son of Hilkiyah" appellation. The same is not true, however, for Shebna and Joah, individuals mentioned alongside Eliakim. "Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh ..." (2 Kings 18:26). In fact, Shebna's father is never mentioned in the biblical text, although Joah's father, Asaph, is sometimes mentioned.

The Bible draws extra and repeated attention to the importance of Eliakim's "father" three times in this single chapter. Clearly, this is not a regular listing of a "father's name." The historical record clearly emphasizes Hilkiyah's unique and special role.

Garfinkel, Hasel, Klingbeil and Petruk concluded their discussion this way: "Thus, it is possible that the bullae from Lachish presented here stem from the personal seal of Eliakim the royal steward in the time of Hezekiah (according to 2 Kings 18:18), son of Yehozarah (not mentioned in the Bible but on the bulla from the Israel Museum) and grandson of Hilkiyah (also mentioned in 2 Kings 18:18)."

The scholars also drew attention to the imagery (iconography) on the bullae. Impressed in the central

register of each seal impression are two grazing does, facing each other. This imagery is consistent with other seal impressions discovered at Lachish (and elsewhere in Judah) from the same period. The grazing doe motif is predominately found in Judah, as opposed to the northern tribes of Israel.

A motif of a grazing doe, which is believed to symbolize prosperity, was identified on the seal impression of Isaiah the prophet, discovered by Dr. Eilat Mazar in Jerusalem. The Prophet Isaiah was a contemporary of both Eliakim and Hilkiyah, and this kind of imagery is found throughout the book of Isaiah (i.e. Isaiah 11:6; 13:14 and 35:6).

There are numerous unprovenanced bullae, likely from around the same period, that feature the grazing doe. Two of these can be directly connected to the reign of King Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah. It is possible that the image was related to those in religious service to the Judean monarchy throughout the long eighth-century service of Isaiah the prophet.

"It stands to question if this persisting motif ... is not an indicator for an intentional royal strategy to preserve a religious and political national identity" (ibid). This would fit well within the period of religious reform led by the Prophet Isaiah and supported by King Hezekiah.

Put together, both the inscription and the iconography on the bulla fit extremely well within the context of the biblical narrative during the time of Isaiah and King Hezekiah. And while it's impossible to be 100 percent certain that the seal impression belonged to Eliakim, Hezekiah's royal steward, the evidence strongly points to this being the case.

This discovery, then, brings to life one of the most prominent historical personalities related to King Hezekiah. As recounted in Isaiah 22, Eliakim was not always in such a lofty position. Instead, he replaced the disgraced Shebna and held the keys to the royal house of David.

Isaiah 22:20-22 state: "And it shall come to pass in that day, That I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah; And I will clothe him with thy [Shebna's] robe, And bind him with thy girdle, And I will commit thy government into his hand; And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; And he shall open, and none shall shut; And he shall shut, and none shall open." ■



Belonging to Eliakim (son of) Yehozarah

A photograph of an ancient stone archway. In the center, a large stone sculpture of a lion stands on a pedestal, its mouth wide open as if roaring. The archway is built from large, rough-hewn stones. To the right, the arch opens up to a bright, outdoor area. The overall scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the opening of the arch.

FINDING HITTITES

How a lost empire confirms biblical history
BY CHRISTOPHER EAMES AND GEORGE HADDAD

NG THE HITTITES

THE IDENTITY OF THE HITTITES PERPLEXED historians and archaeologists for centuries. Until relatively recently, many considered the Hittites to be a fictitious people mentioned only in the Bible. Some even used the Hittite question as evidence of the Bible's fallibility.

The Bible refers to the Hittites 60 times and implies their kingdom was a significant second-millennium B.C.E. civilization. The problem, as claimed by skeptics, was that there was *no archaeological or historical evidence to support their existence*. Therefore, the biblical record, at best, could not be trusted or, at worst, was outright wrong.

Even at the beginning of the 20th century, with evidence of the Hittite civilization beginning to mount, certain scholars continued to either reject the presence of the Hittites entirely or believe that the Hittites could not have been more than a small and insignificant tribal entity.

Today, our understanding of the Hittites has changed dramatically. Thanks to large-scale archaeological excavations, as well as the discovery and successful interpretation of troves of clay inscriptions, we know more about the Hittites than ever. And the understanding we now have of the Hittites closely parallels the description in the biblical record.

Who were the Hittites? How did one of the chief powers of the ancient world remain undiscovered for so long? What discoveries led researchers to accept the presence of this significant kingdom? And how well do the biblical record and archaeology align?

Let's examine this enigmatic civilization.

19th-Century Naysaying

Until the late 19th century, the Bible stood alone as the only known historical work that discussed the Hittites in any detail. Hittitologist Prof. Gary Beckman wrote in his 2010 article "The Hittite Language and Its Decipherment": "The Hittites of both the second and first millennium were largely forgotten by later peoples. They find no explicit mention in Classical Greek or Latin sources."

For some early critics, this provided an opportunity to reject the Bible as a historical work. "[T]he casual references to the Hittites in the Bible have been used by the enemies of divine revelation to discredit the historical accuracy of the book," observed William Wright in his 1882 article "The Hittites and the Bible."

Twenty-five years earlier, Oxford professor Francis William Newman referred to the Bible's references to the Hittites as "unhistorical" and "not exhibiting the writer's acquaintance with the times in a very favorable light" (*A History of the Hebrew Monarchy*).

Even in the early 20th century, as evidence for the Hittites was emerging, some scholars refused to accept their existence. Archaeologist John Garstang wrote in 1929 that "25 years ago some of the foremost orientalist did not believe in the existence of a Hittite nation" (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

In 1909, Egyptologist Dr. Melvin Kyle recalled in *The Hittite Vindication* an earlier conversation with an esteemed colleague, writing: "In 1904, one of the foremost archaeologists of Europe said to me: 'I do not believe there ever were such people as the Hittites ...'" (It seems likely this individual was Sir Ernest Alfred Thomson Wallis Budge, the famous Egyptologist. Read Dave Armstrong's article "'Higher' Hapless Haranguing of Hypothetical Hittites (19th C.)" for more information.)

Evolutionary geologist George Frederick Wright noted how the Hittites were used not only as an example of an *error* in the Bible but also as *proof* of the general falsity of the book itself. He wrote, "[T]he numerous

references in the Bible to this mysterious people were unconfirmed by any other historical authorities, SO THAT MANY REGARDED THE BIBLICAL STATEMENTS AS MYTHICAL AND AN INDICATION OF THE GENERAL UNTRUSTWORTHINESS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY" ("The Testimony of the Monuments to the Truth of the Scriptures," 1910; emphasis added throughout).

By the time of Wright's missive, the narrative surrounding the Hittites had suddenly changed.

"All the doubts entertained in former times concerning the accuracy of the numerous biblical statements concerning the Hittites is now seen to be due to our ignorance," Wright wrote. "It was pure ignorance, not superior knowledge, which led so many to discredit these representations. When shall we learn the inconclusiveness of negative testimony?"

Two years later, in 1912, Dr. Melvin G. Kyle observed that "NO ONE is saying now that 'no such people as the Hittites ever existed.'"

What caused this sudden volte-face?

First Discoveries

Evidence of the Hittite kingdom first began to be uncovered in Turkey in the early-to-mid-19th century. In 1834, French archaeologist Félix Marie Charles Texier discovered monumental ruins in Boğazköy (central-northern Turkey). It wasn't until 1886 that his compatriot Georges Perrot, an archaeologist who also excavated the site, first identified it as Hattuša, the Hittite capital.

Between 1893 and 1905, the site was probed by various archaeologists. They began discovering clay cuneiform tablets written in the Akkadian language and another, then obscure, language.

As the ancient ruins of Hattuša were being exposed during the 19th century, scholars were beginning to unlock a number of long-lost, ancient languages. This was famously spearheaded by Jean-François Champollion, who in the first decades of the 19th century utilized the recently discovered Rosetta Stone to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs. That same century also saw the decipherment of various cuneiform-script languages, including Persian, Babylonian, Akkadian and Sumerian. Scholarship no longer needed to rely on early classical historians who wrote in understandable languages like Greek and Latin; the very archives of the ancient civilizations themselves could be read and understood. New frontiers of understanding were being opened.

Texier's discoveries were the first steps in unraveling the Hittite identity. Later, archaeologists such as Hugo Winckler and Kurt Bittel conducted a lot of the groundwork in uncovering the Hittite kingdom. As their discoveries emerged, there was naturally a



significant amount of debate as to whether or not they could indeed be called “Hittite”—and whether or not newly discovered Egyptian references to a mysterious kingdom named “Kheta” could refer to the same thing.

Gradually, a consensus was being reached that the Hittites not only existed but were a major force in the ancient world, rivaling the power of Egypt and centered in Anatolia, modern-day Turkey. A major turning point in reaching that consensus occurred in 1906, with one of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries in history.

A Royal Archive

In 1906, Winckler and his team concentrated excavations on what appeared to be a royal fortress area at Hattuša. What they discovered that year astounded them and even now is difficult to grasp: a royal archive containing more than 10,000 inscribed clay tablets. The sheer quantity of tablets discovered at Boğazköy makes it one of the most impressive archaeological discoveries in history. But what did the tablets say?

Most of the tablets were written in Akkadian, the diplomatic lingua franca of the second millennium B.C.E.—a language that linguists could already interpret. But a significant percentage of the tablets contained an otherwise unknown language. Thanks to certain tablets that had already been discovered over prior decades, some steps had been made toward

identifying the language. Given the use of the same cuneiform script as Akkadian, it was relatively easy to arrive at the phonetic sounds; the *meaning* behind them, of course, was another story.

Professor Beckman wrote: “The first significant attempt to translate a Hittite text was made by the Norwegian scholar J. A. Knudtzon, who ... was not even aware he was dealing with Hittite” (op cit). These initial texts Knudtzon worked with were actually from the 14th-century B.C.E. el-Amarna archive discovered in Egypt in 1887—many of the 300-plus clay tablets constituted correspondence between the Hittite ruler and the pharaoh. Location names on the texts were readily identifiable, pointing to the region of ancient Anatolia.

In 1902, Knudtzon was the first to propose the Hittite language as Indo-European. Yet his early conclusions were rejected by his peers. “Sadly, the arguments of Knudtzon and his associates were not well received,” Beckman wrote. “The only prominent linguist to declare his belief in the Indo-European character of the language of the Arzawa letters was yet another Scandinavian, Holger Pedersen. It seems that even Knudtzon himself eventually lost faith in his decipherment” (ibid).

Following the discovery of the trove of documents from Hattuša and their subsequent analysis and presentation by a Czech professor named Friedrich Hrozny in 1915 (who had also initially discounted

the Indo-European hypothesis), Knudtzon was proved to have been correct all along. By the mid-1920s, the identification of the Hittite language as an Indo-European script came to be widely accepted (unfortunately, years after Knudtzon's death). This recognition of the nature of the text, in light of other Indo-European languages, enabled Hittite to finally be properly deciphered and understood. The Hittite language is now recognized as the oldest of the Indo-European languages.

The story of the decipherment of the Hittite language is much like the discovery of the polity itself. Regarding Knudtzon's initial identification, Beckman wrote: "What accounts for such a negative reception of a view which we now know to have been correct? Reluctance to follow Knudtzon was due to both historical preconceptions and to scholarly caution: A century ago no one expected to find an Indo-European language at home in ancient western Asia, and linguists consequently demanded overwhelming proof before accepting such a notion ..." (ibid).

Much of our modern understanding about the Hittites derives from the deciphered trove of documents found at Hattuša, as well as from contemporary Egyptian and Mesopotamian hieroglyphic and cuneiform sources. Alongside this is another Hittite writing system, composed of hieroglyph symbols, known as "Luwian," whose primary decipherment came in the 1970s.

(As we finalized this issue for the printer, breaking news emerged of the discovery of a brand-new language at Hattuša. As announced by the Çorum Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, "an unexpected surprise was encountered in this year's excavations. Hidden within a cult ritual text written in Hittite was a text written in an unknown language. Epigraphist Prof. Dr. Daniel Schwemer from the University of Würzburg in Germany reports that this language is identified as the language of the Kalašma land, likely located in the northwestern tip of the Hittite central region"—thus the new text is being labeled "Kalašma language.")

Capital Worthy of an Empire

Winckler's excavations at Boğazköy continued for another six years, further revealing the elaborate capital of a lost empire. What he found was truly sensational. Beyond an immense royal archive, he discovered an ancient city replete with city walls, temples, palaces, fortifications and gateways. To Winckler and his associates, there was no doubt that the ancient city of Hattuša was the capital of a vast and powerful kingdom.

The ancient city site is truly monumental, befitting that of a powerful empire. Hattuša is located in a steppe region, situated on a sloped plateau some 300 meters

above the valley floor. The city is enclosed by a wall over more than 8 kilometers (5 miles). At its peak, the city would have been home to roughly 50,000 individuals living within its area of around 450 acres.

The capital is divided into an upper and lower city. The fortifications of the upper city contain more than 100 towers, as well as five monumental and ornately carved stone gates (including the famous, oft-depicted "Lion Gate" and a "Sphinx Gate"). Numerous temples are situated within the upper and lower cities, dedicated to the plethora of Hittite and (related) Hurrian gods and goddesses; the Hittites themselves called Hattuša a "city of a thousand gods." Large-scale relief art covers rock faces at the site, depicting gods, goddesses, royalty and inscriptions.

Who were these people?

Hittites at a Glance

The term *Hittite* comes from the English translation of the biblical Hebrew term for this people, חֵת—a Hebrew word pronounced as *Heti/Kheti*. This term is connected to the patriarch חֵת, pronounced *Het/Khet*, mentioned in Genesis 10:15 and 1 Chronicles 1:13. The ancient Egyptian hieroglyph form of this name is almost identical.

The rise and fall of the Hittite kingdom occurred over the course of the second millennium B.C.E. This Hittite history can be divided into the following general periods: a pre-kingdom, Early Hittite period (circa 20th–17th centuries B.C.E.), the Old Kingdom period (17th–15th centuries B.C.E.), the Middle Kingdom period (15th–14th centuries B.C.E.), the New Kingdom period (14th–12th centuries B.C.E.), and finally a devolution into more minor, "Syro-Hittite" states (or "mini-kingdoms") that existed between the 12th century and early first millennium B.C.E.

These divisions follow remarkably close to the manner in which the Hittites are mentioned in the biblical account. During the pre-kingdom, Early Hittite period—the time of the biblical patriarchs—the Hittites are primarily referred to as "children of Heth," "sons of Heth" and "daughters of Heth." There is also an allusion to their territory at this time as one of *nations*, plural—rather than a highly unified kingdom (Genesis 14:1). Following the lifetime of Jacob (Genesis 49:32), and simultaneously with the rise of the Old Kingdom in the mid-17th century B.C.E., the Bible never again refers to these people as the children, sons or daughters of Heth—rather, with the collective title, *Hittites*. Then, by the time of King Solomon (at the start of the first millennium B.C.E.), the Bible describes his interactions with "*all the kings of the Hittites*" (i.e. 1 Kings 10:29)—aptly fitting the devolved

1. Rock-carved relief of 12 gods of the underworld at the Yazilikaya Rock Temple at the foot of Hattuša

2. Hittite clay tablet (letter and envelope (on right))

3. Close-up of the Lion Gate at Hattuša

4. Sphinx Gate at Alacahöyük

5. The monumental sloped Yerkari rampart at Hattuša



Hittite empire into various Syro-Hittite states ruled by several minor kings.

The general sweep of Hittite history pairs remarkably well with the specific manner in which the Hittites are described in the Bible.

Biblical Patriarchs and the Early Hittites

Although modern secular research took a comparatively long time to come to terms with the existence of the Hittites, the history of this polity is weaved throughout the biblical account. Following an initial mention of the Hittite ancestor, Heth (great-grandson of Noah, through his son Ham—Genesis 10:15), the earliest mention of individuals with this patronymic appellation is during the days of the patriarch Abraham.

Genesis 15 describes God covenanting land to Abraham’s descendants from various territories, including land occupied by Hittites (verses 18-20). Genesis 23 documents Abraham purchasing land within Canaan from “Ephron the Hittite” for the burial of his wife Sarah. Various other personal interactions with Hittites are described.

Our article “When Was the Age of the Patriarchs?” (ArmstrongInstitute.org/845) examines the chronological debate regarding when Abraham was on the scene. We concluded that the biblical account best fits the early second millennium B.C.E.—specifically, putting Abraham’s lifetime within the 20th to 18th centuries B.C.E. This fits within the early period of Hittite history, just prior to the start of the Old Kingdom period.

Naturally, the earliest periods of Hittite history are comparatively less attested to in the archaeological record. The late Tel Aviv University Prof. Aharon Kempinski summarized the early inhabitants of Hittite territory in his *Biblical Archaeology Review* article “Hittites in the Bible: What Does Archaeology Say?”: “We now have some basis for thinking that the Hittites ... came from Europe via the Dardanelles ... toward the second half of the [third] millennium [B.C.E.], they penetrate[d] into the heart of the Anatolian plateau. There they mixed with the autochthonous (proto-) Hattic populations. ...

“[Proto-Hattic] refers to the pre-Hittite population in Anatolia, which was not Indo-European. In the scholarly literature, the name ‘Hattians’ or ‘proto-Hattians’ is used to refer to this indigenous population. It is from this that the Hittites received their name” (September-October 1979).

Prof. Gregory McMahon, in his 1989 *Biblical Archaeologist* article “The History of the Hittites,” wrote: “What we call Hittite civilization is a mix of the early Hattic culture with that of the Indo-European

newcomers and, later, with the culture of the Hurrians of northern Mesopotamia.”

As such, it is the indigenous *Hattians*, rather than the better-known Hittites, who could best be considered the direct descendants of the biblical patriarch Heth. Evidently, their name stuck for the territory. Trevor Bryce explains in his 1998 book *The Kingdom of the Hittites* that the ancient Hittites typically referred to themselves as “people of the land of Hatti” (also “Hatti-land”)—not necessarily the descendants of Hatti themselves.

As such, it is possible that the biblical “children of Heth,” with whom the patriarchs dealt, were themselves Hattians, literal descendants of Heth—while other general references in the Bible to “Hittites” could refer either to the indigenous Hattians, to the Indo-European Hittites or to an amalgamation of both.

During the Middle Bronze Age (20th to early 17th centuries B.C.E.), the territory of Anatolia consisted of numerous small polities. Kempinski said that, by this time, “the Hittites were already settled in most of the areas of central Anatolia where they established petty princedoms.”

Four early tablets, whose authorship is believed to date to the 18th century B.C.E., reveal a particular rivalry between two royal Hittite families—one controlling territory in northern Anatolia, and another in the south.

The more fragmented nature of the pre-kingdom, Early Hittite period fits a particular biblical account. Genesis 14 contains the famous narrative of the invasion of the Elamite king Chedorlaomer and his allies into the Levant, leaving a path of destruction, before they were beaten back by Abraham and his band of 318 men. One of these antagonist allies of Chedorlaomer was “Tidal king of Goiim.” This individual and his territorial entity have long been posited as Hittite (or, “proto-Hittite”). This is due to the linguistic parallel of his name to that of several later Hittite rulers, *Tudhaliya*. And despite the fragmentary records for this Early Hittite period, various scholars have postulated a “proto-Hittite king” Tudhalia I on the scene around this time, during the first half of the second millennium B.C.E.

Peake’s Commentary states, “Certain is the name of Tidal (Heb. *Tidh’al*), which appears in Ugarit as *TDGHL* [corresponding to] Hittite *Tudkhaliya* and *Tudkhul’a* in the Spartoli texts This name is common in the Cappadocian texts of the 19th century B.C.E. and





Hieroglyph room at Hattuša

appears frequently among the names of Hittite kings and nobles in later centuries.” Professor McMahon wrote of this figure associated with the biblical Tidal: “Tudhaliya I is a shadowy figure whose existence is uncertain. He was originally proposed as the first king of this name because the name Tudhaliya was found at the beginning of one variant of the sacrificial lists as the father of one PU-šarruma ... (KUB XI 7)” (op cit).

The territorial title for this biblical Tidal/Tudhaliya would be a good fit. The Hebrew word “Goiim” refers generically to “peoples” or “nations.” This would fit with the nature of the pre-empire, Anatolian menagerie of tribal entities during this early second millennium period. According to Prof. Kenneth Kitchen, this fits “the fractured nature of political power in Anatolia in the 19th and 18th centuries B.C.E. according to archives of Assyrian merchants in Cappadocia” (“The Patriarchal Age”).

Hittite Old Kingdom Period

The Hittite Old Kingdom is recognized as officially beginning during the mid-to-late 17th century B.C.E., with its progenitor, Hattušili I, consolidating control over wider Anatolia and the northern regions of Syria. (Note that there is some debate about him as the first king; an otherwise-obscure “Labarna” is sometimes credited—although some believe this simply to be a personal name of Hattušili I). A key text for understanding this earlier history of the Hittite Old Kingdom is the 16th-century B.C.E. *Edict of Telepinu* (catalogued as CTH 19), a document consisting of 24 tablets and tablet fragments discovered among the Hattuša archives. The document enables scholars to reconstruct a timeline of early Hittite kings.

The *Edict* summarizes Hattušili I’s rule, in part: “Hattušili was king, and his sons, brothers, in-laws,

family members and troops were all united. Wherever he went on campaign, he controlled the enemy land with force. He destroyed the lands one after the other, took away their power, and made borders of the sea.”

Hattušili I was succeeded by his grandson, Muršili I. The meteoric rise to power of the Hittite empire is aptly illustrated by Muršili’s circa 1590 B.C.E. campaign to Babylon and sack of the city, bringing an end to the Old Babylonian Empire (as described on the *Edict*, as well as the 14th-century Mesopotamian Chronicle 40).

Yet infighting marred the Hittite Empire, particularly within the ruling class. The *Edict* reveals that Muršili I was assassinated by his brother-in-law Hantili I, with the help of Hantili’s son-in-law, Zidanta I. After Hantili’s death, Zidanta proceeded to murder the legitimate heir and establish himself on the Hittite throne. After a 10-year reign, Zidanta was murdered by his own son, Ammuna. When Ammuna died, his two sons Titiya and Hantili were apparently murdered, in the wake of which Huzziya I—either a lesser son or a usurper—became established on the throne. After a short five-year reign, Huzziya was deposed and exiled by his brother-in-law, Telepinu, and was later killed.

Exodus, Conquest and the Middle Kingdom Period

Following the rule of Telepinu, the Hittite empire entered a period of obscurity during the 15th to 14th centuries B.C.E. This period constitutes what is often referred to as the Middle Kingdom. One possible reason for weakness and obscurity during this period appears to be attacks from the north by a Black Sea shore population known as the Kaskians.

Perhaps not coincidentally, this same period aligns with the biblical chronology for the Israelite exodus from Egypt and the beginning of the conquest of the Promised Land. (See “What Is the Correct Time Frame for the Exodus and Conquest of the Promised Land?” at ArmstrongInstitute.org/350.) The land of the “Hittites” was included in the land promised to Abraham’s descendants.

While records for the Middle Kingdom are scarce, some surviving texts, referred to as “Royal Hittite Instructions,” constitute directives for officials and officers. Professor McMahon noted: “These texts make clear the priority given to guarding the frontiers and keeping hostile neighboring lands under surveillance during the Middle Hittite Kingdom, a period of military weakness” (op cit).

From the mid-14th century B.C.E., one Hittite text, known as the Prayer of Arnuwanda I and Ašmunikkal to the Sun-goddess of Arinna (CTH 375), highlights the desperation and direness of the political and social situation at the time. King Arnuwanda I and his queen

mourn the loss of conquered cities and plead with the gods, reminding them how they have diligently served and cared for them.

Could there be a connection between this period of instability—particularly along the Hittite *frontiers*—and the period of the Israelite Exodus and conquest, which included such promised northern border lands? (Compare Genesis 15:18-21, Numbers 13:29 and Nehemiah 9:8.) Several times, the Hittites are mentioned at the top of the list of entities for the Israelites to conquer (e.g. Deuteronomy 7:1; 20:17). Joshua 1:4 contains information about territorial Hittite land intended for conquest.

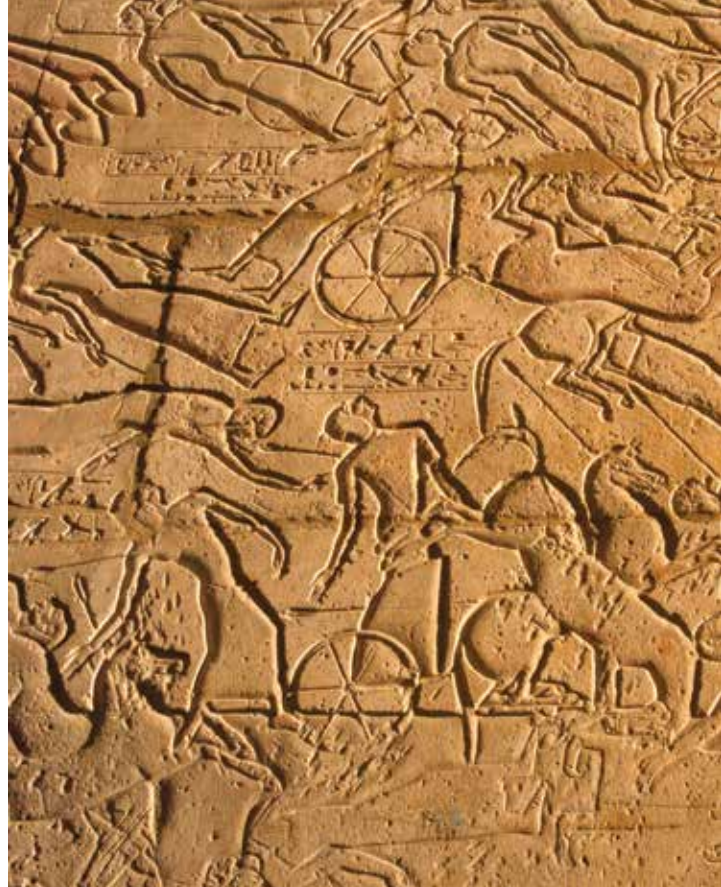
In one unusual conquest account, an individual of Bethel betrayed an entry point to the city, leading to its destruction at the hands of the Israelites. He and his family were allowed to go free: “And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz, which is the name thereof unto this day” (Judges 1:26). Of this verse, Dr. Bryant Wood wrote: “Although no clues are given as to the location of הַחִיִּטִּים אֶרֶץ (*eres hahittim*) in this verse, the expression is the same as in Joshua 1:4, suggesting the area of Anatolia. The mid-14th century is about the time of the Hittite king Tudhaliya III, when *Hatti* was being harried by attacks from the west and north” (“Hittites and Hethites: A Proposed Solution to an Etymological Conundrum,” 2017).

Joshua 11 lists Hittites as part of an alliance joined with “Jabin king of Hazor” to fight against the Israelites. The Bible describes their defeat at the hands of Joshua and the Israelites: “And they [Israel] smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was none left that breathed; and he [Joshua] burnt Hazor with fire” (verse 11; evidence of this fiery destruction has been found at Tel Hazor).

“And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and he smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed them ...” (verse 12). Such verses take on new meaning against the backdrop of the much-diminished, Middle Kingdom Hittites.

Of course, as repeatedly accounted throughout the books of Joshua and Judges, the Israelites failed to carry out the conquest to its fullest intent (particularly to the north). “And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the *Hittites*, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods” (Judges 3:5-6). The same passage describes the various, remaining entities becoming a thorn in Israel’s side, “teach[ing] them war” (verse 2).

And so, by the mid-14th century B.C.E., the Hittite polity once again ballooned in size, reaching new heights of power in what is known as the New Kingdom period.



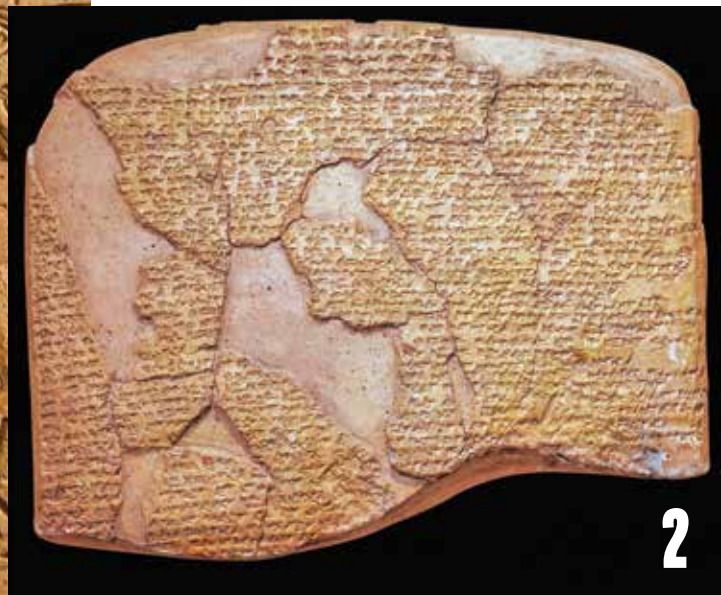
Hittite New Kingdom Period

This period, from the 14th to the 12th centuries B.C.E., is often referred to as the Hittite Empire period. During this apex period, kingship not only became hereditary but also took on an Egyptian-style, godlike status. Texts reveal Hittite citizens labeled their rulers as “my Sun.”

A key New Kingdom ruler was the mid-14th-century king Šuppiluliuma I, who significantly strengthened the borders of the Hittite empire. Yet during his reign, a tularemia outbreak devastated the empire, eventually killing the king and his successor. During this outbreak, the Hittites were attacked by the kingdom of Arzawa. The Arzawans were repelled by infected Hittite rams in the first documented case of intentional biological warfare.

Hittite expansion during the New Kingdom reached as far down as the southern Levant. Along this southern border of the empire, rivalry for domination took place between the two dominant regional powers of the time—the Hittite empire and the Egyptian empire (each within their own “New Kingdom” period). Caught in the middle was the comparatively weak Israelite nation, chronologically within the first half of its fraught judges period.

During this period, one of history’s most infamous battles took place between Egypt and the Hittites: the Battle of Kadesh. Criticism is sometimes leveled against a lack of mention of this pivotal event within the biblical



1. Battle scene from the Great Kadash reliefs of Ramesses II

2. Cuneiform 'Treaty of Kadesh' from the Hattuša archive

account. But Israel was in a state of national anarchy during the judges period (Judges 21:25). Even so, there is rather dramatic (albeit circumstantial) biblical allusion to this monumental 13th-century B.C.E. event.

The Battle of Kadesh

In “On the Interpretation of the Kadesh Record,” Prof. Boyo Ockinga wrote: “No battle fought in antiquity is so well documented as the clash between the Egyptians and the Hittites before the city of Kadesh on the Orontes in 1274 B.C.E.”

The Battle of Kadesh was a struggle for control over the wider Levantine strip. Fought between Egypt’s Ramesses II and the Hittite empire’s Muwatalli II, this battle is often cited as one of history’s largest chariot battles, with—depending on the source—around 6,000 chariots fielded (perhaps many more), and as many as 70,000 combatants. This record-setting battle bears witness to some of the earliest-documented military formations and strategies, ending with the world’s first known peace treaty.

The Battle of Kadesh is well documented in Egyptian sources, in what is known today as the Kadesh Inscriptions. The Kadesh Inscriptions are recorded in two primary forms: the “Poem” and the “Bulletin.” The “Poem” details those involved in the battle—Egyptians, Hittites and allies. The “Bulletin” is more of a lengthy text that accompanies wall reliefs, repeated several times in various temple locations in Egypt.

Although these inscriptions form the primary understanding of the battle, given their Egyptian source, they are written from an Egyptian perspective and are naturally biased. The outcome of the Battle of Kadesh is still debated. A peace treaty was signed 13 years after the battle, but both sides claimed victory. Scholars believe that the Egyptians secured more of a “victory” in morale from the battle, but in practical terms, the Hittites were the real victors. “Under Muwatalli, the Hittites outmaneuvered the Egyptian army led by Ramesses II, who was fortunate to escape with his life,” wrote McMahon. Further, “continued Hittite control of the area indicates that the victory belonged to the Hittites” (op cit).

It is unclear how much territory Egypt continued to control north of Canaan. There are hardly any Hittite references to the battle (except for circumstantial references found among the Hattuša archive). One interesting reference, however, comes in the form of an Egyptian document preserved in the Egyptian *Papyrus Raifet* and *Papyrus Sallier III*—a letter from Ramesses to Hattušili III scoffing at a complaint he had evidently received from the Hittite king regarding Egypt’s victorious depiction of the battle.

At this time in the biblical record (around the 13th century B.C.E.), we find a rather remarkable and unique account relating specifically to the north of Israel (the region closest to the location of the Battle of Kadesh). “And the Lord gave them [the Israelites] over into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth-goiim. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord; for *he had nine hundred chariots of iron*; and

twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel” (Judges 4:2-3).

Sisera’s force of “nine hundred chariots of iron” is the only significant biblical mention of chariots during the centuries-long judges period. This kind of incredible strength is ordinarily laughable—until the parallel historical context of the Battle of Kadesh is considered. (Not only that, but the very name of the captain “Sisera” is comparable to the Egyptian title *Ses-Ra*, “servant of Ra”—and *Ra* was the name of one of Egypt’s four chariot divisions at Kadesh. It is possible that this captain was a mercenary. See ArmstrongInstitute.org/236 for more detail.)

The song of the prophetess and judge Deborah references the eventual Israelite victory over this regional Canaanite ruler. She makes an otherwise strange allusion to *kings fighting* just prior to this Canaanite, chariot-dominated oppression. “*The kings came, they fought; Then fought the kings of Canaan ...*” (Judges 5:19).

This biblical account fits perfectly with the setting of the great historical “battle of kings,” in which an unprecedented flush of chariots were introduced into the region and reportedly abandoned after battle.

Bronze Age Collapse

The century following the Battle of Kadesh saw the eventual wane and collapse of the Hittite empire (circa 1190 B.C.E.) and virtually all surrounding powers, including the Egyptians, Mycenaeans and even Mesopotamian powers. This enigmatic period is known as the “Bronze Age collapse.” There is a significant amount of debate over its cause, with various interpretations citing environmental catastrophes, the rise of the mysterious “Sea Peoples” and their conquests, or a combination of such factors.

What is fairly well attested is periods of drought and *famine*. Several 13th-century Hittite texts reference famines and grain shortages. During the mid-13th century B.C.E., a Hittite ruler wrote to Pharaoh Ramesses II, “I have no grain in my lands.” The next Egyptian pharaoh, Merneptah, noted grain shipments being sent to “keep alive the land of Hatti” (circa 1210 B.C.E.).

This textual evidence pairs with recent research published in February this year, in which dendrochronology analysis of ancient Anatolian juniper trees revealed a sudden, severe, multiyear drought at the start of the 12th century B.C.E. This adds to research published in 2013 by scientists from Tel Aviv University and Germany’s University of Bonn, led by Prof. Israel Finkelstein, which demonstrated the same conclusions for the Levant. Their examination of pollen samples from sediment cores extracted from Israel’s Sea of Galilee and Wadi Zeelim showed that during



the 13th to 12th centuries B.C.E., there was a sudden decrease in agriculture that required large quantities of water and a corresponding increase in the farming of dry-climate trees. The researchers identified this as the result of successive droughts within this period.

This fits well with another judges-period account in the book of Ruth. The pretext for this book is a multiyear famine “in the days when the judges judged” (Ruth 1:1). This famine was so severe that the Israelite individuals in the account were forced to “sojourn in the field of Moab.”

The framework for general regional collapse in connection to drought and famine is made clear by the biblical, archaeological and agricultural evidence. Still, according to Prof. Eric Cline, drought and famine were only part of the reason for the fall of the Hittite and surrounding civilizations. “In my opinion, drought was just one of the numerous problems that the Hittites and others were facing at that time,” he wrote. “There was a cacophony of catastrophes that led not only to the collapse of the Hittite empire but also to the collapse of other powers as well. They include climate change, which led in turn to drought, famine, and migration; earthquakes; invasions and internal rebellions; systems collapse; and quite possibly disease as well. All probably contributed to the ‘perfect storm’ that brought this age to an end, especially if they happened in rapid



1



2

1. View of the Hattuša site at Boğazköy, Turkey

2. Aerial view of Hattuša

succession one after the other, leading to domino and multiplier effects and a catastrophic failure of the entire networked system” (“Tree Rings, Drought, and the Collapse of the Hittite Empire”).

Ultimately, uprisings within central Anatolia culminated in the eventual destruction of the Hittite capital Hattuša, circa 1180 B.C.E., and the end of the New Kingdom period with its final king, Šuppiluliuma II.

Hittites in the Israelite Kingdom Period

Though the empire itself had disintegrated, the biblical account contains several further references to Hittites. And the manner of such references from this point forward (early first millennium B.C.E.) is notable.

There are the individual references to Ahimelech the Hittite as well as the infamous Uriah the Hittite, one of David’s soldiers and the husband of Bathsheba. Also of note are references to Solomon’s dealings with “all the kings of the Hittites” (1 Kings 10:29), attesting to the multiplicity of fragmented, tribal Hittite leaders at the time. (This refrain is repeated in 2 Chronicles 1:17 and 2 Kings 7:6.) 1 Kings 9:20-21 and 2 Chronicles 8:7-8 describe Solomon requiring tribute from the Hittites, who became his “bondservants.”

Secular history attests to this status quo (see map, page 19), with the Hittite entity having transformed

into a disjointed, regional series of vassal “Syro-Hittite states” throughout the first part of the first millennium B.C.E. “[T]he plural ‘kings’ fits very well with the nature of these states, which were not unified into one polity but consisted of several small kingdoms,” Professor McMahon wrote. “Assyrian documents dating to the first millennium B.C.E. refer to northern Syria as the land of Hatti, reflecting the continued presence of small Hittite states in the southern part of the former Hittite empire” (op cit). Eventually, these entities were absorbed into the rapidly expanding Assyrian Empire of Sargon II, at the end of the eighth century B.C.E.

From this point forward, the Hittites became enveloped entirely in the obscure fog of history. So much so that the Bible alone continued to be the sole recognized preserve of textual evidence for this once-mighty kingdom.

The Hittites are a fascinating case study not only into the machinations of an ancient empire and its people but also the progress of scholarly research over the past two centuries—from initial doubt and ridicule to the eventual realization of remarkable discoveries fitting with the very scriptures so derided as fable. (See page 31 for further investigation of the question of how well archaeological discoveries parallel the biblical account of Hittites in Canaan.)



Now we have undeniable proof of the existence of this once-great empire. Again, in the words of Dr. Melvin Kyle: “[N]o one is saying now that ‘no such people as the Hittites ever existed.’” ■

THE HITTITE EMPIRE

Pictured is the Hittite empire, an ancient polity centered in the region of Anatolia (or Asia Minor) and a major geopolitical power throughout much of the second millennium B.C.E. Depicted here is the empire at its greatest territorial extent, during the New Kingdom period—specifically, during the reign of Šuppiluliuma I (mid-14th century B.C.E.). Significant locations and surrounding empires are indicated, along with a general timeline of Hittite history at the bottom. (Note that Hittite chronology is highly debated and notoriously difficult to construct, with several different schemes—including a high, middle and low chronology.) This map is based largely on Trevor Bryce's 1998 book *The Kingdom of the Hittites*.

HATTUŠA





The impressive Hittite capital, Hattuša, is located in modern-day Boğazköy, Turkey. The powerful fortress, containing an upper and lower city, was encircled by an 8-kilometer long wall. At its peak, it would have been home to roughly 50,000 inhabitants within its roughly 450 acres. The city boasted over 100 towers, numerous temples and ornately carved stone gateways. The city, initially established in the 19th century B.C.E. as an Assyrian trade outpost, became capital of the Old Hittite Kingdom in the mid-17th century B.C.E. In 1180 B.C.E., the city was sacked, thus marking the end of the New Kingdom and Hittite empire as a whole.

GETTY IMAGES (2)

HITTITE RELIGION

The Hittites are famous for their enormous pantheon of deities. This is aptly summed up by the nickname for the capital Hattuša, the “city of a thousand gods.” Prof. Gregory McMahon noted, “The Hittite religious tendency toward an eclecticism in which every god, no matter what its origin, is to be propitiated with the appropriate ceremonies is exemplified beautifully in the cult inventories of Tudhaliya ... lists compiled by special deputies commissioned by the king to visit cult sites throughout Anatolia and make an inventory of all the religious accoutrements.” During the Hittite Empire period, the Hittite kings themselves began to take on a divine status.

GETTY IMAGES (3), KOPPAS



EMPIRE

BLACK SEA



BATTLE OF KADESH

The Battle of Kadesh, fought circa 1274 B.C.E. between the Hittite empire's Muwatalli II and Egypt's Ramesses II along the modern-day border of Lebanon and Syria, is known as the "best documented battle in all of ancient history." Inscriptions relating to this battle for control over the northern Levant contain some of the earliest known information about battle formations and military tactics. It is also recognized as one of the largest chariot battles in history—with around 2,000 Egyptian light chariots and possibly 3,500 Hittite heavy chariots. The outcome of the battle, which was followed by the world's first known peace treaty, is still debated. Scholars believe the Egyptians secured more of a "victory" in morale, but in practical terms, the Hittites were the real victors—continuing to possess and dominate the region following the Egyptian departure.

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

SYRO-HITTITE STATES

Following the disintegration of the Hittite empire (c. 1190 B.C.E.), the Hittites devolved into a series of fragmented, petty southern kingdoms known as Syro-Hittite (or Neo-Hittite) states. The Bible refers to "kings of the Hittites" at this time (i.e. 1 Kings 10:29), contemporaneous with the biblical kingdom of Israel. (Verse 28 describes Solomon's interactions with one such Hittite state, Que—also translated Keveh or Kue.) By the late eighth century B.C.E., these Hittite states were swallowed up by the burgeoning Assyrian Empire, led by Sargon II.



NEW KINGDOM PERIOD

SYRO-HITTITE STATES

ASSYRIAN PERIOD >>

B.C.E.

1200 B.C.E.

1100 B.C.E.

1000 B.C.E.

900 B.C.E.

800 B.C.E.

700 B.C.E.



Can We Trust the Book of Daniel?

Was the book of Daniel written before or after the incredible events it claims to have prophesied?

BY ARMSTRONG INSTITUTE STAFF

THE BOOK OF DANIEL IS PROBABLY *the* key book in the debate about the authenticity of the Bible. This book purports to forecast multiple world-shaking events, including the emergence of specific kings and the rise and fall of empires.

Because of its prophetic nature, many believers consider the book of Daniel evidence that a divine Being inspired the Bible. Many critics, however, dismiss this book entirely. They say it must have been written *after* the fulfillment of its many “prophecies” and that it is simply a clever retelling of history. To the cynics, it is impossible that such incredibly accurate prophecies could have been made in advance.

Amid this debate, one thing is certain: The historical events documented in the book of Daniel occurred. Many figures and events in this book, from the breathtaking splendor of King Nebuchadnezzar II and the Neo-Babylonian Empire, to Alexander’s blitzkrieg destruction of the Medo-Persian empire, are powerfully corroborated by ancient texts and archaeological evidence. So the crucial question is: On which side of those events was Daniel written? Is the book of Daniel evidence of divine revelation, or is it an outright fake? How can we know which is true?

Bible believers accept that Daniel wrote during the sixth century B.C.E., the chronological period described in the text. Critics say the book was written as late as the *second* century B.C.E., after many of the prophecies—especially related to the Persian and Greek empires—had come to pass.

The skeptics use several arguments to make their point. For example, they claim that since Daniel used Greek words, his book must have been written during the later, deeply Hellenistic time period in Judea. They also note that there are details in Daniel that have

not been corroborated by ancient history or archaeology. As such, these unconfirmed events must be the product of a late writer’s imagination.

Let’s examine these arguments.

Language

The book of Daniel is written in Hebrew (chapters 1-2:4 and chapters 8-12) and Aramaic (Daniel 2:4 through chapter 7). A number of words transliterated into the Hebrew and Aramaic are of foreign origin.

The book does contain Greek words—a sum total of *three*. All three words refer to musical instruments, and they are all listed together, repeated four times throughout the same chapter: Daniel 3:5, 7, 10 and 15. (For additional information, read “The Instruments of the Bible” at ArmstrongInstitute.org/905.) Does the presence of a handful of Greek words prove that Daniel was written much later than the sixth century B.C.E.?

The first Greek word is *kitharis*. This probably refers to a lyre or lute, known to have been in use as early as the *eighth* century B.C.E.—some 200 years *before* the traditional dating of the book of Daniel. The transliteration of this word into Daniel’s Aramaic—as *kitharos*—actually matches more closely with the most *ancient* Greek form of the word, as used by Homer in the eighth century. (The Greek *kitharis* had long changed to *kithara* by the second century B.C.E.)

The second Greek word is *symphonia*. Pythagoras used this word in the sixth century B.C.E. A form of this word also appears in *Hymni Homerici* from the early sixth century B.C.E.

Finally, the Prophet Daniel used the word *psanterin*, linked to the Greek word *psalterion*. This word probably refers to a harp. It has not yet been found in ancient Greek texts, which means there is

no tangible proof it was in use in the sixth century B.C.E. Consider, however, the estimation that *less than 10 percent* of classical Greek writings have survived to this day. Is it rational to use *one* Greek word as evidence that Daniel did not write this book?

Consider also: Would it really be unusual for a handful of Greek technical terms for specialty instruments to have been used in sixth-century B.C.E. Babylonian courts? Ancient texts show there was a measure of cultural interaction between the Greeks and the Babylonians. Musical instruments are easily transportable symbols of specific cultures. It wouldn’t be unusual for Greek instruments (and even Greek artists) to feature in the Babylonian court. Nor would it be unusual for an official like Daniel, who served in both the Babylonian and Persian courts, to record their presence in a book.

What *would* be unusual is for a second-century B.C.E. book to be so *devoid* of Greek terminology. If Daniel had been written during the second century B.C.E., *when Greek language and culture were saturating the region*, surely it would contain more than *three* different Greek words.

Some scholars point to the use of *Persian* words in Daniel as evidence for a later date. This argument, too, is hard to substantiate. The 18 Persian words used in the book mostly refer to administrative positions. Daniel himself is clearly described as living and writing *during* the Persian period of rule. And six of these Persian words are not found in use *after* the fourth century B.C.E. *All* the Persian words in the book are considered “Old Persian,” indicating that the book was assembled in Persian history.

As stated above, the main body of Daniel was written in Aramaic, and bookended in Hebrew. The Hebrew is difficult to date for the

periods in question, but evidence suggests that Daniel was first written *entirely* in Aramaic before being partially translated into Hebrew. Initially, critics believed Daniel's Aramaic was of a late, Western Aramaic style. This belief bolstered the view that Daniel was authored at a later date. But this assumption had to be revised following the discovery of the Elephantine Papyri and Dead Sea Scrolls.

As it turns out, the Aramaic style of writing in the book of Daniel fits with the early Imperial style, a style used in the sixth-century B.C.E. period. Desperate to place authorship of this book in the second century B.C.E., some argued that the authors of Daniel must have *faked* an early-style Aramaic.

The book of Daniel contains about 20 native Assyrian and Babylonian words. If the book of Daniel was written in the second century, this would be unusual, considering the Babylonian Empire fell 400 years earlier.

Additionally, the book of Daniel contains specific phraseology that points to an *early* date of writing. For example, the phrase "Lord of heaven" was not used during the Maccabean period because at that time it was associated with the pagan god Zeus.

Analyzing it word for word, the book of Daniel as a whole was written in a somewhat older linguistic style, with more archaic terms than the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther—books that are widely accepted as dating to the fifth century B.C.E. This fits, then, with the traditional dating of Daniel: the sixth century B.C.E. (For more detail on these points of language, see Craig Davis's book *Dating the Old Testament*, pages 404-428.)

Historicity

It is true that certain events of the book of Daniel have not been fully verified by archaeology. Does this

prove that these events must have been the invention of second-century B.C.E. ghostwriters?

Archaeological discoveries are constantly confirming Daniel's description of life in Babylon and Persia as remarkably accurate. For example, Daniel's descriptions of Nebuchadnezzar's building programs, boastfulness, hasty threats and possibly even a love for cedar trees (Daniel 4) have all been confirmed archaeologically.

Numerous ancient sources, including the annals of Cyrus the Great, corroborate Daniel's account of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E. Many other historical details have also been verified, such as the binding nature of the laws of the Medes and Persians. In Persia, even a *king* couldn't take back his own laws (Daniel 6; Esther 8:8). This was not the case in Babylon, where kings *could* haphazardly change laws (e.g. Daniel 3:28).

Archaeology has revealed an event similar to that recorded in Daniel 6, in which a Persian king decreed that a man be executed, then the man was found to be innocent—yet executed anyway. Even upon discovering the error, the king himself could not reverse his command—such was the binding nature of Medo-Persian law. According to historian John C. Whitcomb: "Ancient history substantiates this difference between Babylon, where the law was subject to the king, and Medo-Persia, where the king was subject to the law."

As confirmed by the archaeological and historical record, the Babylonians used fire as punishment, just as Daniel 3 describes. The Persians, however, considered fire holy and thus wouldn't have used it for such a purpose—but they did keep caged lions.

Daniel accurately detailed governmental bureaucracy—leaders and officers of the Babylonian and Persian empires—from kings

to magicians to the "chief officer" (Daniel 1:3). He recorded the reign of Belshazzar, a coregent king considered fictional by the skeptics until he was proved through archaeology with a reference on the Nabonidus Cylinder. Even the famous fifth-century B.C.E. historian Herodotus does not mention this man—but Daniel does. The accuracy of Daniel's account has been proved time and again through archaeology—even down to such minutia as the fact that the Babylonian palace walls were plastered (Daniel 5:5).

Considering the highly accurate, verifiable details in the book of Daniel, it is hard to imagine a Maccabean-period author, writing *more than 300 years later* and living over a thousand miles away in Judea, composing such an account.

Of course, archaeology has not confirmed and cannot confirm every word of Daniel. There remains some ambiguity over the identity of Darius the Mede, just as there was with Belshazzar until his existence was proved. But there is far more evidence attesting Daniel's authorship than there is evidence proving it was written by someone else. And the golden rule of archaeology is that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence—it is not *proof* that something did not happen.

The biggest and most overlooked *proof* for a traditional date of Daniel, though, is the very thing that motivates a late dating: *prophecy*.

Prophecy

The first-century C.E. historian Josephus wrote that when Alexander the Great swept into Judea (circa 329 B.C.E.), he was met by a procession of Jewish priests. When the high priest came before the famed conqueror, he showed him from the book of Daniel where his conquests were directly prophesied. This amazed Alexander. He was moved by the revelation and

gave the Jews tremendous favor (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.8.4-5). This is also recounted in the later Jewish Talmud (circa 500 C.E.).

If this account is accurate, it means the book of Daniel was written *before* Alexander's time (333 B.C.E.). Naturally, the skeptics reject the record of Josephus as fiction. Yet his narrative of this wider period has been corroborated by other historical records and archaeology. Since Josephus lived 2,000 years *closer* to the actual events than we do, and had access to a far larger archive of since-destroyed historical material, isn't it reasonable that he would know more about what transpired between the Jews and Alexander the Great?

The critics do not redate Daniel because science demands it. They redate it because they struggle to accept that the events it describes were written long before they were fulfilled. The only explanation they can accept for the accuracy of Daniel's prophecies is that they were written *after* the events they foretold.

There is one major problem with this rationale. Dating this book to the second century B.C.E. still puts its authorship *far earlier* than many of the figures and events it forecasts!

If they could, the critics would claim this book was written even later—preferably in the *fifth century C.E. or later*. But they can't. Why? For one, copies of the book of Daniel were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which means the text was already in existence by the second century B.C.E.—thus, that is the latest date that can be assigned.

If this book *was* authored in the second century, this would mean its remarkable “prophecies” about the Greek Empire and Antiochus VI were written after the events they portended. But what about the events Daniel prophesied that occurred *after* the second century?

Daniel, in fact, prophesies primarily about the *Roman Empire*. He clearly described four successive world-ruling empires of man (Daniel 2, 7): first, the Babylonian; second, the Medo-Persian; third, the Greco-Macedonian; and finally, the *Roman*. Scholars try to make Daniel's four empires fit before the second century B.C.E. by separating the Medes and Persians as the second and third empires, and thus making the Greek Empire the fourth. The book of Daniel, though, explicitly identifies Medo-Persia as one empire—the second—and the Greco-Macedonians as the third.

The accuracy of the prophecies about the Roman Empire is incredible. Daniel forecast that it would bring about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Daniel 9:25-26)—a prophecy fulfilled in 70 C.E. He not only foretold the founding of the empire, he also described the divide between Rome and Constantinople (symbolized by the two legs of the statue in Daniel 2:33, 40-41; fulfilled in 395 C.E.), as well as 10 “resurrections” of the empire (described in symbol as “ten horns” in Daniel 7:7, 19-20, 24). Daniel also prophesied about the takeover of Rome by three barbarian tribes (verses 8, 20, 24; fulfilled in the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. by the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths), followed by the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church as the spiritual head of the empire (the “little horn” of verses 8, 20-21, 25; fulfilled 554 C.E. onward).

Even if we accept a late date of authorship, the book of Daniel is still a powerfully prophetic book!

Despite all the effort to assign the book of Daniel a later date, *no* date is late enough to escape his prophetic timeline. This book wasn't written for his day. The prophet himself admitted how *confused* he was with the prophecies. “And I heard, but I understood not;

then said I: ‘O my Lord, what shall be the latter end of these things?’ And he said: ‘Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are shut up and sealed *till the time of the end*’” (Daniel 12:8-9).

As this concluding passage reveals, this book *could not* have been wholly understood, in its full prophetic context, at any other point in history—until the very “time of the end.”

God's Word to the Skeptics

Our predecessor, the late Herbert W. Armstrong, once wrote the following: “Most highly educated people, and men of science, *assume* that the Bible is *not* the infallible revelation of a supernatural God, and they *assume* this *without the scientific proof* that they demand on material questions” (*The Proof of the Bible*). Such is the case with the book of Daniel. But this is not the only problematic approach. He further wrote, “Most fundamentalist believers *assume*, on sheer faith, *never having seen proof*, that the Holy Bible is the very Word of God.”

Both approaches are *wrong*. Science should be based on *fact* and *firm evidence*. And likewise *faith*, as is brought out in several Bible passages, should be *educated* (Isaiah 1:18; Malachi 3:10). It is right and necessary to question, to prove. And when it comes to holding a purported *prophet*, like Daniel, to account, God Himself instructs in Deuteronomy 18: “And if thou say in thy heart: ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?’ When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him” (verses 21-22).

The Bible says we must test the prophets. If they pass the test, then we must believe them. ■

Early City Planning in the Kingdom of Judah

BY PROF. YOSEF GARFINKEL

IN THE JULY-AUGUST ISSUE OF *LET THE STONES SPEAK*, WE interviewed Hebrew University archaeologist Prof. Yosef Garfinkel. The interview focused on a paper published in the *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology* in which Professor Garfinkel demonstrated similarities in the design, construction and material presence of five fortified 10th-century B.C.E. Judahite sites.

In his paper, Professor Garfinkel suggested that the construction of five urban centers during the same time period and using essentially the same blueprint demonstrates the presence of a centralized government in Jerusalem.

This is a novel and fascinating approach to the study of the kingdom of Judah during the time of King David. In researching his paper, Professor Garfinkel focused on five separate archaeological sites: Khirbet Qeiyafa, Beth Shemesh, Tell en-Nasbeh, Khirbet ed-Dawwara and Lachish. He observed similarities in urban planning between all five sites.

The title of Professor Garfinkel's article is "Early City Planning in the Kingdom of Judah: Khirbet Qeiyafa, Beth Shemesh 4, Tell en-Nasbeh, Khirbet ed-Dawwara and Lachish V." The full article, with its tables and references, is available to read at jjar.huji.ac.il.

The following is a simplified, popular-format version of Professor Garfinkel's article, edited and published with the permission of Professor Garfinkel and the *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology*.

Abstract

The earliest fortified sites in the kingdom of Judah in the early 10th century B.C.E. feature a casemate city wall lined with an abutting belt of houses, which incorporate the casemates as rear rooms. [See page 28 for an explanation of a casemate wall.] This urban plan is clearly recognized in the sites of Khirbet Qeiyafa, Tell en-Naşbeh, Khirbet ed-Dawwara and, as discussed in detail, Beth Shemesh. Recently, excavations at Lachish, Level V, uncovered a similar pattern comprising a peripheral belt of structures abutting the city wall. This city wall was solid with no casemates. These sites have far-reaching implications for understanding the urbanization process, urban planning and borders of the earliest phase of the kingdom of Judah.

Introduction

The Shephelah region, southwest of Jerusalem, was the kingdom of Judah's most favorable ecological zone. In the Judean and Hebron hills, which constituted the kingdom's geographical core, the slopes are steep, and the landscape's suitability for agriculture is limited.

To the east and south, the arid and hilly Judean and Negev deserts can support a pastoral economy but not large-scale agriculture. Hence, the Shephelah, with its low rolling topography, fertile soil and comparatively substantial annual precipitation, is the only part of the kingdom where large-scale agriculture was possible, constituting it as the domain's breadbasket and the sole part of which that could support a large population. Therefore, the kingdom's takeover of the Shephelah and its agricultural resources was an important stage in its development.

The kingdom's expansion in the hill country and, from there, further south and west has been the subject of several discussions in the last decade, most of which sought to defend the claim that this process took place only in the late ninth or eighth century B.C.E. However, since these articles' publication, new data have been uncovered, suggesting that the kingdom had begun expanding in the hill country and the northern Shephelah as early as the 10th century B.C.E. and that it expanded into the southern Shephelah about two generations later.



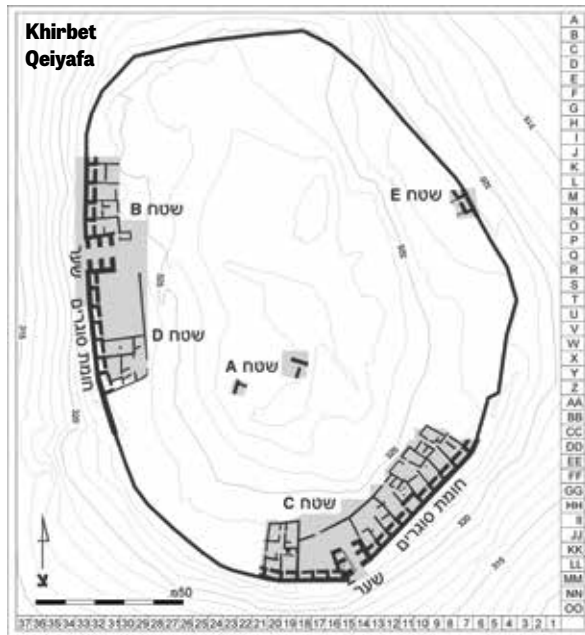
In this paper, I examine the kingdom of Judah's early urbanization as manifested in its known fortified settlements, five sites altogether. Three are located in the Shephelah—Khirbet Qeiyafa, Beth Shemesh and Lachish—and two are located in the hill country: Tell en-Naşbeh and Khirbet ed-Dawwara (see map).

Khirbet Qeiyafa IV

Khirbet Qeiyafa IV was a 2.3-hectare fortified city. It was located on a prominent hill overlooking the Valley of Elah, between the sites of Socoh and Azekah, and about a day's walk from Jerusalem. The city was destroyed shortly after its construction.

In the excavated structures, hundreds of well-preserved finds were recovered, including pottery, stone tools, metal tools, ritual objects, scarabs and seals, inscriptions, botanical remains and animal bones. We excavated the site in 2007–2013. The shallow accumulations allowed us to uncover a considerable part of the city (around 20 percent), including two gates, two piazzas, a casemate city wall, a peripheral belt of buildings abutting the city wall, a large pillared building (Area F), and a major public building occupying the highest point of the site (Area A).

While the excavation results have been published in detail, three points are worth rehearsing. Firstly, the casemates are oriented away from the gates. Secondly, a peripheral belt of buildings abuts the city wall and incorporates the casemates as rear rooms. Thirdly, two inscriptions in (proto-)Canaanite script were recovered. Carbon-14 dates assign the fortified city to the first quarter of the 10th century B.C.E.



The excavation of Khirbet Qeiyafa prompted an animated debate on whether this site should be assigned to the late Iron Age I or the early Iron Age IIA. The pottery supports an early Iron Age IIA attribution. It includes black juglets and Cypriot black-on-white ware, barrel-shaped juglets, but lacks Philistine pottery typical of the Iron Age I. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the site's pottery assemblage suggests close parallels with other early Iron Age IIA sites in the region, including Tel Sheva VIII, Arad XII, Beth Shemesh 4, Khirbet ed-Dawwara and Khirbet al-Ra'i.

The site's expedition conducted a comparative analysis of Khirbet Qeiyafa's material culture against the various ethnic entities in the region: Philistine, Judahite, Canaanite and Israelite. The various aspects analyzed included urban planning, faunal assemblage compositions, stamped jar handles and female clay figurines. The observed patterns indicate that Khirbet Qeiyafa's material culture is closest to that of sites in Judah, like Tel Sheva VII and Arad XII.

Beth Shemesh

The site of Beth Shemesh is located in the northern Shephelah, roughly a day's walk from Jerusalem. It has been extensively excavated since 1911. The first expedition worked in 1911–1912. A second large-scale excavation project at the site was conducted in 1928–1933. It recognized that the early Iron Age II (Stratum IIA) city was enclosed by a casemate wall. A photograph of this city wall depicts two casemates built of massive stones, as would be expected for a city's fortification. The excavation

report pointed out this wall's similarity to the well-known casemate city wall found at Tel Beit Mirsim. The existence of a casemate city wall in early Iron Age II Beth Shemesh was accepted by numerous notable scholars.

[Yigal] Shiloh studied the layout and fortifications of Beth Shemesh. Although faced with plans that lumped together several Iron Age phases, he managed to produce a convincing blueprint of a segment of the casemate city wall and abutting houses. Indeed, close observation of the plan published for the Iron Age cities of Beth Shemesh reveals a rounded arrangement of houses in an orientation different from the other buildings and fortifications of the later cities. Striving to distinguish the early level from the otherwise undifferentiated plan, we may observe three principal components: a casemate city wall, a belt of houses that abut the city wall, and a peripheral road. From 1990 until recently, Bunimovitz and Lederman led a third excavation project at Beth Shemesh.

These excavations have significantly refined the site's stratigraphy and provided a new numerical system for its historical sequence. This sequence comprises a Late Bronze Age Canaanite city (Levels 8–7), an Iron Age I Canaanite village (Levels 6–4), an Iron Age IIA–B city affiliated with the kingdom of Judah (Levels 3–2), and, finally, an Iron Age IIC horizon of ephemeral activities (Level 1). This expedition overlooked the casemate city wall addressed by Grant, Avigad, Albright, Wright, and Shiloh.

Bunimovitz and Lederman's expedition understands Level 4 as a Canaanite village, which continues the



Aerial view of Khirbet Qeiyafa

The observed patterns indicate that Khirbet Qeiyafa’s material culture is closest to that of sites in Judah, like Tel Sheva VII and Arad XII.

simple social organization of the Iron Age I. They dated this village to 1050–950 B.C.E. and assigned it to the late Iron Age I. However, in their concluding remarks, they stated that “the Level 4 assemblage gives the impression of a pottery horizon belonging to the very end of Iron I–

beginning of Iron II.” Indeed, notwithstanding some differences—e.g. the absence of black juglets and Ashdod ware—the Beth Shemesh 4 pottery assemblage is almost identical to the early Iron Age IIA Judahite Khirbet Qeiyafa assemblage.

Furthermore, the slight difference observed may be accounted for by the difference in scales of exposure: While around 5,000 square meters of Khirbet Qeiyafa were uncovered, only around 100 square meters of Beth Shemesh 4 were excavated. Bunimovitz and Lederman’s Level 3 marked a major change in the site’s layout, manifesting features of state organization: large public buildings, an impressive underground rock-cut water reservoir, a commercial area, a storehouse and an enormous grain silo. It was dated to 950–790 B.C.E. on historical grounds. However, its proposed foundation in the 10th century B.C.E. was heavily criticized for being based on two sherds from a fill and should probably be pushed back. Notably, the radiometric dates are not wholly consistent with the expedition’s chronological framework. They provide lower determinations for most levels, and experts called the statistical analysis underlying them into question, especially regarding Level 4.

According to these critical accounts, the Beth Shemesh 4 carbon dates fall in the middle of the 10th century B.C.E. Why did Bunimovitz and Lederman fail to recognize the urban character of Level 4? Most likely, this is because they did not excavate the Level 4 casemate wall. The spatial distribution of the excavation areas dictates, to a large extent, the understanding of

the nature of Level 4. A similar issue arose regarding the site’s seventh-century B.C.E. phase. Bunimovitz and Lederman thought the site to be mostly abandoned at this time because their fieldwork concentrated on the western side of the site and missed the intensive Level 1 activities east of the mound.

Tell en-Naşbeh

Tell en-Naşbeh is located about half a day’s walk from Jerusalem. Badè excavated the entire site in five seasons between 1926 and 1935. The final report was published



Tell en-Naşbeh

some 10 years later, and Zorn provided an updated analysis of the site [in 1993]. Among other remains, two Iron Age II cities were uncovered. The earlier city was encircled by a casemate wall, which was lined by a belt of houses incorporating the casemates as rear rooms; on the other end, these houses opened onto a peripheral road. Additional constructions were found inside the city. About two centuries later, sometime in the late ninth century B.C.E., a second fortification system was constructed. It encircled a larger city and consisted of a massive solid offset-inset city wall dubbed the Great Wall. The dating of these two cities is not supported by radiometric dates. However, based on stratigraphic considerations and plan, it seems that the earlier city with its casemate city wall was built during the early 10th century B.C.E.

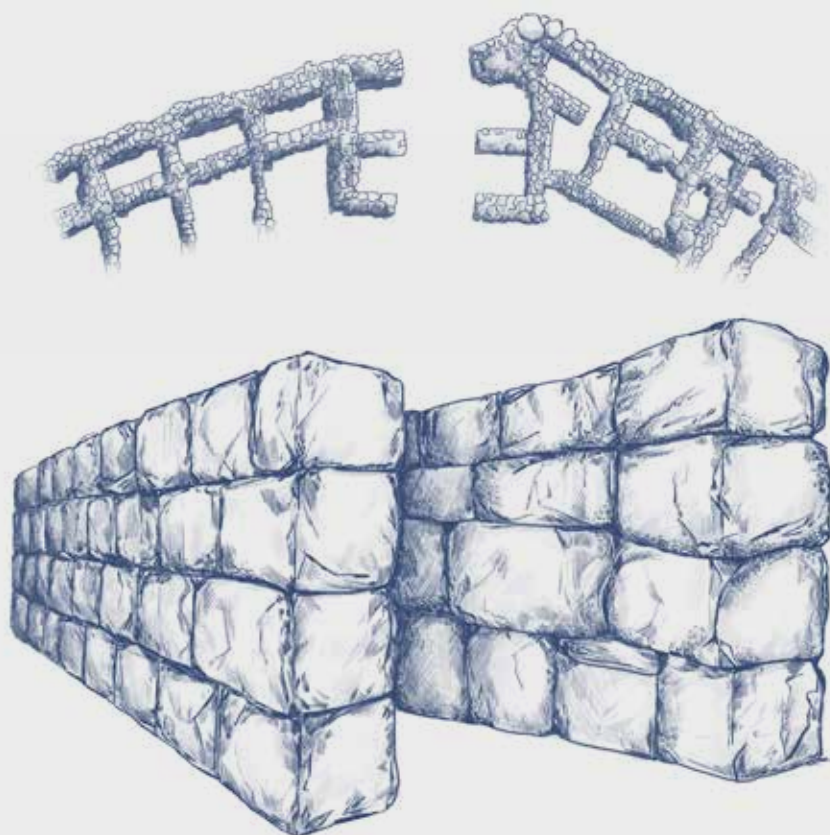
Khirbet ed-Dawwara

Khirbet ed-Dawwara is a small fortified site, only 0.5 hectare in size. It is located on the desert fringe

of the Benjamite hill country, about half a day's walk from Jerusalem. The arid environmental conditions implicated that the site could not support a large population, but its topographical position provided it with an excellent view in every direction, especially of the Dead Sea and the Transjordanian plateau to the east and the Judean desert to the east and south. Undoubtedly, it was strategically significant. Finkelstein conducted two seasons of excavations at the site in 1985–1986. He found a poorly preserved, short-lived site built on bedrock and featuring shallow accumulations. It comprised a single phase of settlement with remnants of four-room houses and a casemate fortification.

The excavator suggested that the site was occupied for two centuries and discussed it within the chronological and cultural framework of the Iron Age I. However, it featured pottery vessels similar to those of Khirbet Qeiyafa, suggesting that the site might be more suitably dated to the early 10th century B.C.E. and the Iron Age IIA.

WHAT IS A CASEMATE



WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN you think of a fortification line around an ancient city? Probably a firm, solid wall—one that is both wide and tall, strong enough to protect the population within from attacking forces.

Indeed, *solid* city walls are one common method of fortification. But another method common to the southern Levant (particularly during the Iron Age) is the *casemate* wall.

A casemate wall is a fortification line made up of essentially two parallel walls—a “double wall”—separated by a space in between. These parallel walls are each typically of a much narrower individual width than that of a solid fortification wall. In peacetime, the open corridors between these parallel walls can be used for storage or even as residences.

Lachish

Tel Lachish is located in the southern Shephelah, approximately two days' walking distance from Jerusalem. The site has been extensively excavated by seven different expeditions from 1932 until today. The earliest Iron Age fortification identified by the first and third expeditions was a 6-meter-wide brick construction that encircled the entire 7.5-hectare site and is assigned to Levels IV–III. A wide range of proposals was made concerning the dating of the early Iron Age levels at Lachish: the early 10th century B.C.E. during the time of David and Solomon, the late 10th century B.C.E. during the time of Rehoboam, the early–mid-ninth century B.C.E., and sometime after the destruction of the large Philistine city of Gath, Tell es-Safi. None of these proposals were based on radiometric dates. A recent field project conducted in 2013–2017 sought to resolve this controversy by closely exploring the city's fortifications on the northern slope. A previously unknown 3-meter-wide city wall

built of medium-sized stones was uncovered. In Area CC, a drainage channel for runoff water was recorded, and in Area BC, where the wall is poorly preserved, pillar buildings abutted its inner face. The subsequent mudbrick city wall of Levels IV–III was built on top of these buildings, putting them out of use.

The floor running up to the city wall in Area CC produced olive pits for radiometric dating. Stratigraphically, this floor was located above the last Canaanite city of Level VI and below the mudbrick city wall of Levels IV–III. Its ceramic assemblage included red-slipped and irregularly hand-burnished sherds. The radiometric dates, most of which represent the last years of Level V, cover the second half of the 10th century B.C.E. and the first half of the ninth century B.C.E. These results were challenged by Ussishkin, the site's former excavator. He argued that the recently uncovered wall was a revetment of the Level IV–III city wall, not a city wall proper. However, as discussed elsewhere, this claim disregards some critical factors and cannot be accepted.

WALL?

In war, however, these open spaces can be filled with rocks and earth, essentially transforming the two weaker, parallel walls into one massive, solid-style construction. Depending on the distance between the parallel casemate walls—the inner and outer wall—once filled as one unit these walls can be even *wider* than a typical, solid wall construction. Further, such a fill of looser material (including earth) within the casemate walls can have the potential advantage of better diffusing the blows of siege equipment.

Of course, there are pluses and minuses to both forms of wall (solid and casemate). Again, the casemate wall is an especially endemic style of construction to ancient Israel, peaking in the early Iron Age. As siege weapons improved (particularly those of the

Neo-Assyrian Empire), there was an eventual transition to different forms of solid wall construction to withstand attack.

Casemate walls were originally believed to have been a Hittite invention, imported into Israel from the north. Presently, however, the earliest examples of casemate walls have since been discovered at various sites within Israel, with some dating to as early as the 16th century B.C.E. (such as at Tel Ta'anach).

The Bible alludes to casemates in several passages. The Prophet Isaiah's warning in chapter 22 alludes to these walls and the preparations being made to them in advance of Sennacherib's invasion. "And ye saw the breaches of the city of David And ye numbered the houses of Jerusalem, *and ye broke down the houses to fortify the wall*"

(verses 9-10). This suggests the inner residential buildings were dismantled and the rubble was used to fill the casemates around the city.

Another well-known example is that of the harlot Rahab's house in the city of Jericho. Joshua 2:15 reads: "Then she [Rahab] let them [the two spies] down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall" (King James Version). The Hebrew word for "upon" is actually *in*. Thus, the last half of this verse more literally reads, "her house was *in* the town wall, and she dwelt *in* the wall." Of course, such phraseology does not at first seem to make much sense—until viewed in light of a casemate wall and the now-recognized practice of actually *living* in such "wall" quarters. **CHRISTOPHER EAMES**

Early Iron Age Fortifications in the Kingdom of Judah

In 1978, Shiloh recognized a particular plan that characterized early Iron Age cities. It consisted of a peripheral belt with three components: a casemate city wall, residential houses abutting the city wall, and a street. This urban pattern has been observed in at least four early 10th-century B.C.E. sites: Khirbet Qeiyafa, Beth Shemesh, Tell en-Naşbeh and Khirbet ed-Dawwara. As Khirbet ed-Dawwara was built in an arid zone that could not support a large population, it comprised a smaller settlement. In addition, Tel Sheva and Tel Beit Mirsim applied the same urban plan in the eighth century B.C.E. The accumulation of data supports a tripartite division of the Iron Age IIA:

1. *The early Iron Age IIA* (circa 1000–930 B.C.E.) is characterized by the low quantities of red-slipped and irregularly hand-burnished pottery decoration, Cypriot white-painted vessels, early Ashdod ware and archaic

The spread of writing indicated by these inscriptions is a sign of increasing demand for communication and a marker of centralized authority.

(Canaanite) script. Khirbet Qeiyafa IV, Khirbet al-Ra'i, Khirbet ed-Dawwara, Beth Shemesh 4, Arad XII, and Tel Sheva VII are dated to this phase.

2. *The middle Iron Age IIA* (circa 930–860 B.C.E.) is characterized by abundant irregularly and geometrically hand-burnished bowls, Cypriot black-on-red vessels, and early Phoenician-Hebrew script. Beth Shemesh 3 and Lachish V are assigned to this phase.

3. *The late Iron Age IIA* (circa 860–800 B.C.E.) is characterized by red-slipped pottery, irregularly hand-burnished ceramics, and late Ashdod ware. Tell eš-şafi IV, Lachish IV, and Beth Shemesh 3 belong to this phase.

The available radiometric dates for early Iron Age IIA come from Khirbet al-Ra'i VII, Khirbet Qeiyafa IV, and Beth Shemesh 4. Tenth-century B.C.E. radiometric dates have also been produced for Tel 'Eton, but the nature of the architecture and pottery assemblage associated with them is still unclear. The dates for the middle and Iron Age IIA derive from Lachish V–IV.

Most of the dates produce an orderly chronological sequence. Khirbet al-Ra'i VII is the earliest, followed by

Khirbet Qeiyafa IV and Beth Shemesh 4. Although all of these sites produced a few earlier radiometric dates falling in the early–mid-11th century B.C.E., they did not include Iron Age I Philistine pottery typical of this time. Therefore, Khirbet al-Ra'i VII, Khirbet Qeiyafa IV and Beth Shemesh 4 ought to be assigned to the 10th century B.C.E. The radiometric dates from Lachish V are the latest in the sequence, falling in the second half of the 10th century B.C.E. and the first half of the ninth century B.C.E. Above, I reviewed some patterns characteristic of the two earliest phases in the development of the kingdom of Judah. Here, I offer a summary and some conclusions.

During the early Iron Age IIA, the kingdom of Judah encompassed at least three cities: Khirbet Qeiyafa, Beth Shemesh and Tell en-Naşbeh. They featured the same underlying urban plan comprised of an outer casemate city wall and a belt of houses abutting the casemates, on the one side, and facing a peripheral road, on the other. Furthermore, none was more than a day's walk from Jerusalem and, thus, may be considered as marking the kingdom's geographical core. They were calculably positioned to guard strategic roads leading into the kingdom: Khirbet Qeiyafa controlled the Elah Valley, Beth Shemesh controlled the Soreq Valley, and Tell en-Naşbeh controlled the northern road to Jerusalem.

As Beth Shemesh 4 and Khirbet Qeiyafa feature the same material culture, they illuminate various aspects of the earliest phase of the Iron Age IIA in Judah. Particularly notable are the (proto-)Canaanite inscriptions found in both sites. The spread of writing indicated by these inscriptions is a sign of increasing demand for communication and a marker of centralized authority.

In the middle Iron Age IIA, a fortified city was founded at Lachish (Level V), occupying only the northeastern side of the mound. Unlike the earlier cities mentioned above, Lachish's city wall was solid, reflecting its importance as a regional center as early as the second half of the 10th century B.C.E. Some scholars have argued that the kingdom of Judah's expansion into the Shephelah occurred in the mid- or late-ninth century B.C.E. However, Khirbet Qeiyafa IV and Beth Shemesh 4 show that this process was already on its way in the early 10th century B.C.E. at sites located one day's walk from Jerusalem. Along with the casemate walled city of Tell en-Naşbeh, these sites mark the earliest borders of the kingdom of Judah. Toward the end of the 10th century B.C.E., the kingdom expanded its territory to a two-day walking distance from Jerusalem, primarily manifested by Lachish Level V. ■



Abraham buries Sarah in a cave purchased from Ephron the Hittite.

Are Biblical Hittites in Canaan Anachronistic?

BY CHRISTOPHER EAMES

AS HIGHLIGHTED IN OUR COVER ARTICLE, PRESENT scholarship has reconciled with the fact that the Hittites, as a major ancient entity described in the Bible, did in fact exist. Now, however, a relatively common charge is that the biblical Hittites are, at the very least, *anachronistic*—that the biblical Hittites of the second millennium B.C.E. (patriarchal period) are not accurate representations but rather retrojections of the later Syro-Hittite states (or “Neo-Hittites”) of the first millennium B.C.E.

This is based, in part, on the hypothetical assumption that the Torah was *not* written as traditionally ascribed to Moses but nearly 1,000 years later (closer to the middle part of the first millennium B.C.E.)—a compositional theory known as the Documentary Hypothesis. (The same theory also applies to the books of Joshua and Judges, and their own Hittite references.) This assumes that much later biblical authors (or perhaps more appropriately, *forgers*) could *not* have known the political situation of the Hittites during the second millennium B.C.E. and thus were retrojecting the geopolitical situation of the later Syro-Hittite onto this earlier history. Essentially claiming that the sweep of biblical Hittite history between Genesis and Judges is *anachronistic*—a falsified representation for narrative or ideological purposes.

In 2016, *Biblical Archaeology Review* staff wrote in an article titled “The Hittites: Between Tradition and History”: “Archaeology tells us a lot about the Hittites But it’s hard to reconcile this with the Hittites of the Bible. ...

“To a certain extent, the composition history of the Pentateuch may be relevant to this discussion. If

one were to assume that these narratives depict historical realities that were written down close to the time of occurrence, then one might conclude that the references are to the original Hittites rather than the Neo-Hittites. However, the majority of scholars believe that these narratives were composed hundreds of years after the events that they describe and often contain anachronisms for the time of composition superimposed on the narrative time. This would suggest that the references reflect the Neo-Hittites.”

In his 2006 article “The Hittites and the Bible Revisited,” Prof. Itamar Singer concluded that “the archaeological evidence seems hardly sufficient to prove a presence of northern Hittites in Palestine [during the second millennium B.C.E.]. After a century of intensive excavations, all that has surfaced is a handful of Hittite seals and about a dozen pottery vessels that exhibit some northern artistic influences. The seals may have belonged to Hittite citizens who passed through Canaan The paucity of tangible evidence becomes even more conspicuous in the face of the absence of two salient features of Hittite culture—the hieroglyphic script and the cremation burial—both of which seem to have extended only as far south as the region of Hama in central Syria.”

Is this a fair assessment? Is the idea of Hittites living deep in the Levant—as far south as Canaan—*anachronistic* for the second millennium B.C.E.?

This whole debate appears to be nothing more than a case of perspective—the proverbial “glass half empty” versus “glass half full.”

Amir Gilan, in his 2013 *Biblische Notizen* article “Hittites in Canaan? The Archaeological Evidence,” noted of the late second-millennium B.C.E. period: “Interestingly ... compared to other regions of the Ancient Near East, *Hittite finds in Palestine dating to the empire period are relatively numerous*, as Hermann Genz’s recent comparative survey has shown. Hittite objects were only rarely found outside central Anatolia, and such artifacts usually belong to the realm of diplomacy rather than trade” (emphasis added). Gilan proceeded to list numerous Hittite archaeological discoveries found throughout the Southern Levant, dating to the second half of the second millennium B.C.E.—the Hittite New Kingdom period.

Prof. Amihai Mazar likewise notes several such discoveries in Canaan in his comprehensive 1990 book *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000–586 B.C.E.*—going back as far as the *Old Kingdom* period. For example, a “silver pendant found at Shiloh was decorated with the symbol of the weather god, well known from Anatolia. This pendant indicates relations with the Hittite culture of Anatolia during that time,” deep in the heart of Middle Bronze Age Canaan.

In light of Singer’s reference to an absence of Hittite-style cremation burials, Mazar notes Larry Herr’s 1976 Amman Airport excavations, in which a mortuary building, used for adult cremation, was uncovered. This structure dated to the empire period and was identified by the excavator as the product of Hittite influence into this southern area. “The practice of cremation was unknown among the Canaanites, yet it was practiced by Indo-Europeans—among them Hittites, some of whom may have settled in Transjordan,” Professor Mazar writes. He calls it a sign of “demographic heterogeneity.” “[I]f correctly interpreted, [this] is unique evidence for the practice of cremation in the LB period in Palestine. It may indicate the presence of some Indo-Europeans (Hittites?) in this part of the country.”

Prof. Aharon Kempinski also tackled this question. In his 1979 *Biblical Archaeology Review* article “Hittites in the Bible: What Does Archaeology Say?,” he highlighted a laundry list of Hittite artifacts and architectural elements throughout Canaan during both the Old and New Kingdom periods. “Two Hittite jugs imported from the center of the Anatolian plateau were found in a Megiddo tomb dating from about 1650 B.C.E. [the start of the Old Kingdom]. From the Late Bronze Age (1600 B.C.E.–1200 B.C.E.) archaeologists have found in Palestine hieroglyphic Hittite seals, Syro-Hittite ivories ... and other objects ... of Hittite or Syro-Hittite influence can also be seen in Palestinian architecture. An especially impressive example is the lions at the entrance to the Canaanite temple from Area H at

Hazor The columns of the Hazor temple portico also demonstrate the strong influence which Syro-Hittite culture exerted on northern Palestine.”

Kempinski also highlighted a peculiar Hittite document from the 14th century B.C.E., known as “The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma.” The document describes how “formerly the storm-god took the people of Kurusutamma, sons of Hatti, and carried them to Egypt”

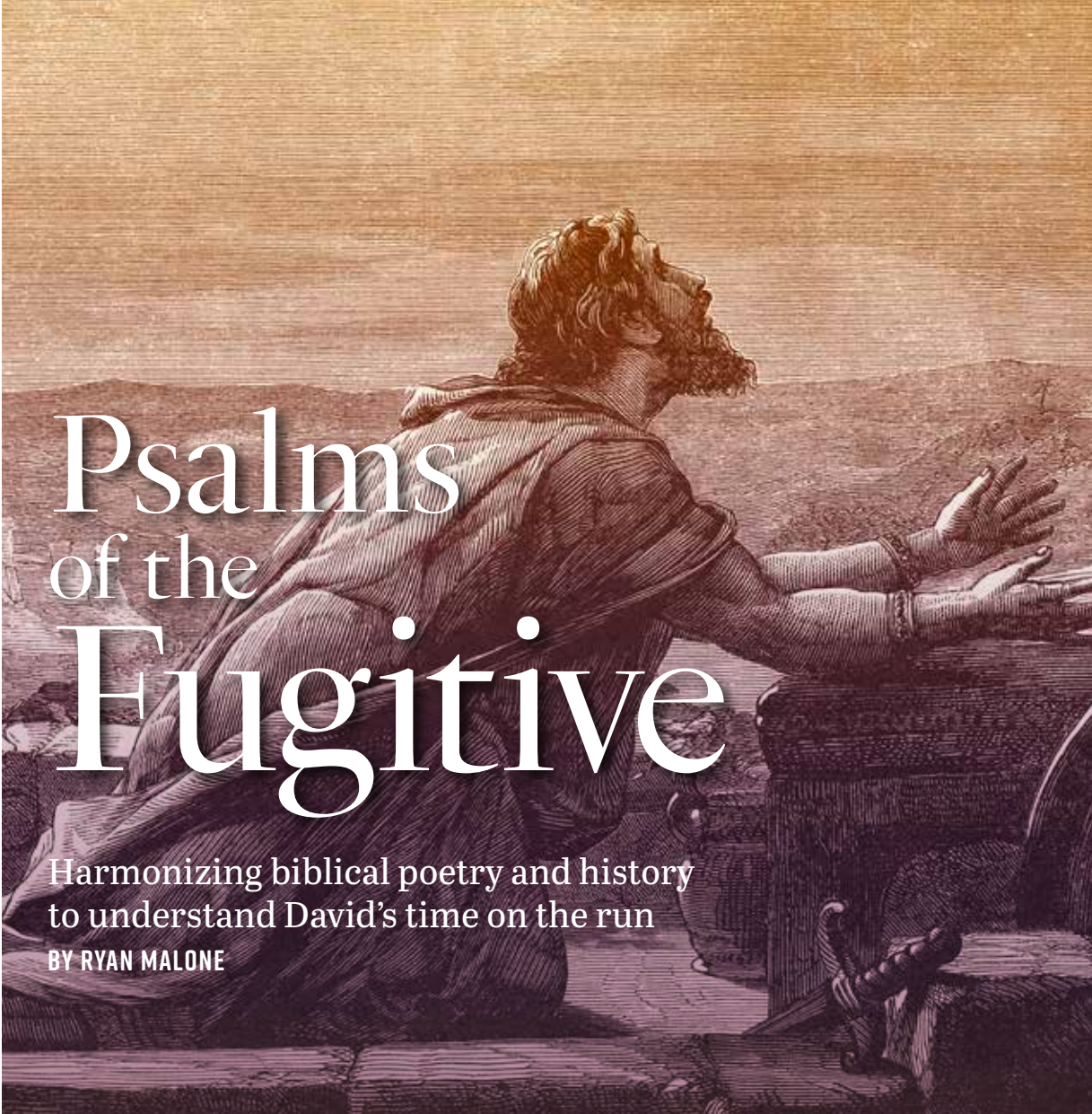
“Apparently, the Hittite people of Kurusutamma, a city in northern Anatolia near the Pontus Mountains, had resettled somewhere in Egypt as that term was understood by the Hittites,” Kempinski wrote. “For the Hittites, Egypt included all of the area under Egyptian rule, including Palestine and part of Syria. The Hittites from Kurusutamma may have resettled, then, in Palestine.” He noted that this explanation for the otherwise odd biblical appearance of early Hittites so far south in Canaan (i.e. in Hebron) at the time period of the patriarchs was first put forward by the “brilliant” Hittite scholar Emil Forrer in the 1930s: “Forrer’s suggestion was not widely accepted by scholars. In light of new evidence for Hittite settlement in Canaan ... it now deserves to be reconsidered.”

Then there’s the redoubtable Archibald Henry Sayce, who as early as 1905 concluded—based on archaeological evidence (namely, “trichromatic Cappadocian ware” from Gezer)—the presence of Hittites in the Southern Levant as early as the 12th Dynasty of Egypt (20th–18th centuries B.C.E.).

In light of such, even the *possibility* of such, is it just or necessary to conclude the biblical references to Hittites as far south as Canaan during the second millennium B.C.E. as confused or anachronistic—as *wrong*? Quite the contrary. Archaeological evidence *does* speak to the presence of Hittite culture and influence deep within Canaan across the second millennium B.C.E.

Further, the biblical text *itself* modulates for this polity, across the span of this second millennium. Why, if it was a simple retrojection of the first millennium Syro/Neo-Hittites? *Why* the very specific use of the term “children of Heth” during *only* the early patriarchal period—the first half of the second millennium B.C.E.? *Why* the appropriate use of the name “Tidal,” and as a ruler of a gaggle of *nations*? *Why* the consistent, later general references to *Hittites* during the kingdom period? *Why* is it *only* among the first millennium B.C.E. passages that we read of “*kings* of the Hittites,” plural, fitting with the breakup into the Syro-Hittite states of the period—and *never* before?

Of course, the answer should be obvious. But in the words of George Frederick Wright, in 1910, maybe we haven’t sufficiently learned the lesson that the discovery of the Hittite empire should have taught us: “*When shall we learn the inconclusiveness of negative testimony?*” ■



Psalms of the Fugitive

Harmonizing biblical poetry and history
to understand David's time on the run

BY RYAN MALONE

OF ALL THE MUSICIANS IN THE BIBLE, KING DAVID would have to be the most famous. His reign brought cultural renaissance to Israel.

Josephus wrote: “And now David being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God He also made instruments of music, and taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the Sabbath day, and on other festivals” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 7.12.3).

David was not just prolific after having been “freed from wars and dangers.” A handful of psalms contain title text, or subtitles, that show he was composing them during tumultuous times—even when on the run from his predecessor, King Saul.

Though the psalms are not written in chronological order narratively, we can “harmonize” them with the

events catalogued in the book of Samuel. These psalms add color to the historical tapestry of David's time on the run.

We could call these “the psalms of the fugitive.” They shed light on David's time before he officially began serving as Israel's monarch and show what was in his heart—and how he used poetry and song in a unique and masterful way.

The Escape

1 Samuel 18 reveals King Saul's jealousy of young David and the events that initiated David's fugitive years. Verses 6-9 describe how Saul was envious of David's military prowess and exploits. Later in the chapter, Saul puts David in charge of a battle he was sure to lose. But his plan backfired: David not only emerged victorious, he was given Michal, Saul's daughter, as a reward. This

infuriated King Saul, who became “David’s enemy continually” (verse 29).

The next chapter describes a particularly harrowing night for David: “And Saul sent messengers unto David’s house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning; and Michal David’s wife told him, saying: ‘If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.’ So Michal let David down through the window; and he went, and fled, and escaped” (1 Samuel 19:11-12).

This night is the backdrop for Psalm 59, the subtitle of which reads: “For the Leader; Al-tashheth. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.” (It’s important to note: The translation used in *Let the Stones Speak* is the Jewish Publication Society. In this translation, unlike many others, Psalm subtitles are given verse numbers since they were part of the original Hebrew text. For some of our readers, verse numbers may be slightly different depending on the translation.)

Consider some of the highlights of Psalm 59, given the circumstances recorded in 1 Samuel 19: “Without my fault, they run and prepare themselves; Awake Thou to help me, and behold. Thou therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, Arouse Thyself to punish all the nations; Show no mercy to any iniquitous traitors. Selah. They return at evening, they howl like a dog, And go round about the city” (Psalm 59:5-7). Saul’s soldiers are likened to growling dogs (verse 15), evoking imagery assigned to Benjamin, Saul’s tribe, in Genesis 49:27.

As David hid in this upper story from which Michal “let [him] down,” he also invoked the image of God as “my high tower” (Psalm 59:10, 17-18).

David also uses language to heighten the nocturnal sense of this poem. He calls on God, “Awake Thou to help me” (verse 5) and “Arouse Thyself to punish ...”

“O Lord my God, if I have done this; If there be iniquity in my hands; If I have requited him that did evil unto me, Or spoiled mine adversary unto emptiness; Let the enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it, And tread my life down to the earth; Yea, let him lay my glory in the dust. Selah.”

—Psalm 7:4-6

(verse 6). He is certain that he “will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning ...” (verse 17).

Escaping this threat, David headed first to Naioth in Ramah where the Prophet Samuel was (1 Samuel 19:18). Perhaps David used his time in Naioth to compose psalms like Psalm 59.

Pleading for Justice

Psalm 7 also seems to fit these early days on the run. The subtitle reads: “Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning Cush a Benjamite.” The only known Benjamite with a similar name is that of Kish, Saul’s father (1 Samuel 10:11, 21). Additionally, the opening of Psalm 7 fits David’s escape from the spiteful king: “[I]n Thee have I taken refuge; Save me from all them that pursue me, and deliver me; Lest he tear my soul like a lion, Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver” (verses 2-3).

The untranslated word in the subtitle, *Shiggaion*, appears to refer to a loud cry. Habakkuk 3, which is constructed as a psalm, opens: “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. Upon Shigionoth” (verse 1). Habakkuk, who had bemoaned a lack of justice, calls on God in a poetic fashion to bring justice and revive a weakened work. Its final verses read similar to many subtitles in the psalms.

Similar to Habakkuk 3 and as *Shiggaion* may imply, Psalm 7 includes a theme of crying aloud for justice: “O Lord my God, if I have done this; If there be iniquity in my hands; If I have requited him that did evil unto me, Or spoiled mine adversary unto emptiness; Let the enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it, And tread my life down to the earth; Yea, let him lay my glory in the dust. Selah” (verses 4-6). These are less pleas for deliverance as they are cries for justice. He begs for justice, even if it means being on the receiving end of retribution himself.

Shiggaion may also carry the connotation of being a wanderer or fugitive, as the root *shagah* can mean “to stray or err.” “[John] Parkhurst and others explain *shiggayon* as ‘a song of wanderings,’” Alfred Sendrey wrote in *Music in Ancient Israel*. “According to this view, David wrote this psalm during his years of wandering when, as a fugitive, he tried to escape from Saul’s pursuits. ... [Franz Julius] Delitzsch maintains that ‘*shiggayon* (related to *shigaon*, madness) may mean ... a reeling poem, i.e. one endowed with a most excited movement and a rapid change of the strongest emotions ...”

One cast as a fugitive would utter a psalm that cries for justice, as seen in Habakkuk 3 and Psalm 7. This corresponds to the narrative of 1 Samuel 20:1: “And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan: ‘What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?’”

Ode to Doeg

David went next to Nob (1 Samuel 21:2), where the tabernacle and the priestly families resided. Verses 7-10 show that he ate of the showbread and was gifted Goliath's sword—being kept there as a sort of artifact of David's victory. He eventually would use the sword as a payment to buy his way into Gath as a hideout, but before leaving Nob, he was spotted by Doeg, an Edomite loyal to King Saul.

When Doeg told Saul of David's visit, the king had Doeg return to slaughter everyone in Nob for cooperating with the traitor. The only survivor of that massacre was Abiathar. "And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain

liken David to "an uncomplaining, meek dove, driven from his native home to wander in exile. Beset by domestic and foreign foes, David appeals confidently to God"

In this psalm, David mentions a singular "he" who "oppresseth me" (verse 2), as well as "They that lie in wait," and that "they are many that fight against me" (verse 3).

Verse 9 contains a fascinating detail about David's time on the run: "Thou has counted my wanderings; Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle; Are they not in Thy book?" (verse 9). Whatever book David is referring to, this again confirms the fugitive nature of this compo-

"But as for me, I am like a leafy olive-tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever"

—Psalm 52:10

the Lord's priests. And David said unto Abiathar: 'I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul; I have brought about the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; for with me thou shalt be in safeguard'" (1 Samuel 22:21-23).

These events correspond with Psalm 52: "When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him: 'David is come to the house of Ahimelech'" (verse 2). The majority of this psalm is addressed to Doeg, as a poetic device (David never intended to perform this *for* Doeg). He calls him a "mighty man" and contrasts his arrogant evil with the enduring "mercy of God" (verse 3).

He condemns Doeg, adding that God's punishment on him would cause others to mock him. He then contrasts himself to Doeg: "But as for me, I am like a leafy olive-tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever" (verse 10). He concludes by addressing God Himself: "I will give Thee thanks for ever, because Thou hast done it; And I will wait for Thy name, for it is good, in the presence of Thy saints" (verse 11).

Counting His Wanderings

By the time David arrived in the Philistine city of Gath, his reputation had preceded him. The king there knew of the song about David (1 Samuel 21:11-12).

Psalm 56 relates to this stint in Gath: "For the Leader; upon Jonath-*elem-rehokim*. A Psalm of David; *Michtam*; when the Philistines took him in Gath" (verse 1). The untranslated *Jonath-*elem-rehokim** literally means "on the silent dove of the far-off pine grove." *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary* says this psalm could

situation. And like other psalms, this one concludes by extolling God, encapsulated in this statement: "I will not be afraid; What can man do unto me?" (verse 12).

All Together

David became concerned he wasn't safe in Gath. 1 Samuel 21:14 says he "feigned himself mad in their hands" so he could be released. The subtitle of Psalm 34 says it relates to "when [David] changed his demeanor before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed." A couple of remarkable observations stand out about this psalm.

First, it's one of a handful of *acrostic* poems in the psalter—where each line or section of poetry begins with the next letter of the aleph-bet. This brings a ring of irony: Someone who'd feigned *insanity* composed a *highly structured* psalm.

Another noteworthy aspect of this poem is the use of first-person plural—particularly David's charge in verse 4: "O magnify the Lord *with me*, And *let us* exalt His name *together*." It's likely he introduced this as a "congregational" hymn for those who joined him while on the run, as described in 1 Samuel 22. Psalm 34:12 indicates he may have involved children in performing this.

Verse 8 reinforces this idea of a group setting for this composition: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, And delivereth them."

In the Cave

After departing Gath, David went to Adullam (1 Samuel 22)—the name of which means "justice of the people." This location was a "stronghold" for David (verses 4-5). This is where many supporters joined him,

including his own biological family: “[A]nd when his brethren and all his father’s house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them; and there were with him about four hundred men” (verses 1-2).

Psalm 57 is “of David ... when he fled from Saul, in the cave” (verse 1). “Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me, For in Thee hath my soul taken refuge; Yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I take refuge, Until calamities be overpast” (verse 2). “Refuge” is referenced twice in this verse.

The ensuing verses contain various metaphors related to David’s enemies: wanting to swallow him; being like lions; their tongues being sharp; preparing nets and pits in his path. David spends the remainder of the psalm exalting God, saying he will do so with instruments and a loud voice—even to the extent that “I will awake the dawn” (verse 9). To him, God’s glory was too great to keep silent, even in hiding places.

Betrayal of Strangers

After receiving advice from the Prophet Gad, David left Adullam and went to the forest of Hereth (1 Samuel 22:5). Later, David was inspired to go to Keilah, to save its citizens from a Philistine invasion (1 Samuel 23:5). While there, David learned of Saul’s plans to entrap him (verses 8-13).

David went to the “hill-country in the wilderness of Ziph” (verse 14). “Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying: ‘Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?’” (verse 19). This happens again in 1 Samuel 26 after David circles back into that area during his wanderings.

Psalm 54 refers to one or both of those occasions “when the Ziphites came and said to Saul: ‘Doth not David hide himself with us?’” (verse 2). David prayed for God’s attention: “For strangers are risen up against me, And violent men have sought after my soul; They have not set God before them. Selah” (verse 5). He also declared his assurance in God: “He will requite the evil unto them that lie in wait for me; Destroy Thou them

in Thy truth” (verse 7). He then promised a “freewill-offering” of thanksgiving in advance of God rescuing him: “For He hath delivered me out of all trouble; And mine eye hath gazed upon mine enemies” (verse 9).

Thirsty Lands

1 Samuel 23:20-23 show the particulars of this stint in Ziph. Verse 24 states: “... David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of Jeshimon.”

Maon, another Judahite wilderness David found himself in, was probably the setting for Psalm 63, “when he was in the wilderness of Judah” (verse 1). This psalm poignantly draws upon metaphors from a parched desert: “O God, Thou art my God, earnestly will I seek Thee; My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee, In a dry and weary land, where no water is” (verse 2). The next verses are filled with praise, and

then this image, to which anyone who’s been in a desert for an extended period of time can relate: “... in the shadow of Thy wings do I rejoice” (verse 8). At the end of the composition, he forecasts the fate of his enemies: “hurled to the power of the sword” and becoming “a portion for foxes” (verse 11).

1 Samuel 23:25 says Saul “pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon” but that he was drawn away by a Philistine threat (verses 27-28). “And David went up from thence, and

dwelt in the strongholds of En-gedi” (1 Samuel 24:1). This is the cave where David had the chance to kill Saul and likely the same place referred to in Psalm 142, “when he was in the cave” (verse 1).

In verse 8, he pleads: “Bring my soul out of prison, That I may give thanks unto Thy name” David was praising God in these life-threatening conditions, but he expressed a desire for deliverance to be able to do it MORE freely.

1 Samuel 25:1 tells us that Samuel died around the time that David “went down to the wilderness of Paran.”

Psalm 143 doesn’t contain a location in its subtitle, but its proximity to Psalm 142 may indicate that it coincides with this time in Paran. Psalm 143:3, 5 reference the dead and the “days of old,” possibly indicating a nostalgic David remembering the life of his mentor Samuel.



David spares Saul's life in the cave of Adullam

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FEEDBACK

IN RESPONSE TO

ARTICLE: “THE RATHER STUNNING BACKLASH AGAINST PROFESSOR GARFINKEL’S LATEST PAPER ON THE KINGDOM OF DAVID”:

Thank you for this outstanding article. Really appreciate all Armstrong does. Keep up the good work.

OHIO, UNITED STATES

I’ve been waiting patiently to receive your periodic magazine. I have friends who enjoy it very much, who suggested that I sign up to receive it.

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Thought I’d let you know that our son is studying Year 11 history on the Persians while homeschooling and his teacher has posted to the whole class your article “Uncovering the Bible’s Buried Civilizations: The Persians.” Who’d ever thought you’d become famous in Year 11 history? Take care!

QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

IN RESPONSE TO

VIDEO: MYSTERIOUS BEDROCK CUTS FROM FIRST TEMPLE PERIOD JERUSALEM

You guys are fantastic. You do breaking news in archeology. Thank you so much for making archeology relevant and interesting.

ISRAEL

Wow, this is very interesting! Thanks so much for sharing this with the rest of us so fast after the news release!

YOUTUBE RESPONSE

Verse 6 bears resemblance to the previous wilderness psalm: “My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a weary land ...” This phrase implies a wilderness hideout, though David believed—no matter where he hid—God was where he’d hidden himself (verse 9).

1 Samuel 25-31 record the remainder of David’s time on the run before Saul is killed in a battle against the Philistines. David spent the last 16 months of these fugitive years in Ziklag (1 Samuel 27:5-7). This is where he learned of Saul’s death and composed one of the most exquisite elegies in history (2 Samuel 1:19-27).

Around this time, he composed another psalm, which is recorded later in 2 Samuel 22. Psalm 18:1 reads, “For the Leader. A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who spoke unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.”

In this psalm, David calls God his “rock,” “fortress,” “deliverer,” “shield,” “horn of salvation” and “high tower” (verse 3). “Praised, I cry, is the Lord, And I am saved from mine enemies” (verse 4).

Songs of Deliverance

David also composed psalms while on the run later in life. Psalm 3 is attributed to “when he fled from Absalom his son” (verse 1). (Psalm 55 strongly implies the same time period in David’s life.) These events are related in 2 Samuel 15-18, but Psalm 3 shows David’s heart like nothing else: “Lord, how many are mine adversaries become! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there are that say of my soul: ‘There is no salvation for him in God.’ Selah” (verses 2-3).

King David composed psalms and prayers for deliverance to the God he looked to for his shield and for his promotion (verse 4). He proclaimed that he can literally rest assured: “I lay me down, and I sleep; I awake, for the Lord sustaineth me. I am not afraid of ten thousands of people, That have set themselves against me round about” (verses 6-7).

David was full of conviction that God would do for him later in life what he did in those many years he spent running from King Saul. “... For Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek, Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; Thy blessing be upon Thy people. Selah” (verses 8-9).

Exploring David’s artistic output, especially during the “fugitive” years, reveals something remarkable: He was never too busy or burdened to compose songs in praise of his God. As he wrote in Psalm 32:7, “With songs of deliverance Thou wilt compass me about. Selah.” To him, these were not trite diversions from the woes of life, but their own kind of rocky fortress. ■

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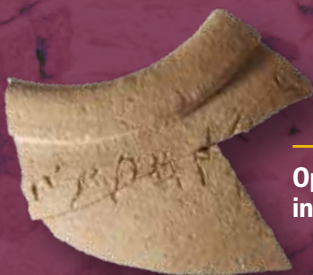


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