BURIAL PRACTICES, FUNERARY TEXTS, AND THE TREATMENT OF DEATH IN IRON AGE ISRAEL AND ARAM

by

RACHEL VIRGINIA KING NABULSI

Under the Direction of RICHARD FRIEDMAN

ABSTRACT

This research encompasses two branches of evidence regarding the treatment of death and burial among the Iron Age cultures of Israel and Aram – the archaeological and the textual. The importance of this investigation lies in placing these groups in dialogue with one another, and in the comprehensive use of both archaeological and textual information. The archaeological aspect of this research begins by collecting archeological data from a large number of burial sites throughout both of the target territories. The range of this data extends from the time of the Late Bronze Age into the Persian period, but the primary focus is upon the Iron Age. The first section of the dissertation relates to each of these areas and what can be learned from a survey of sites over this period, with particular attention paid to commonalities and contrasts among the two cultural groups. The second half of this research encompasses the textual and inscriptional data. Textual data include inscriptions from coffins, tombs, and funerary monuments from the Iron Age through the Persian period in Israel and Aram. Another crucial aspect of this textual data is the text of the Hebrew Bible. The biblical text, particularly the narrative sections of the text, provides a great amount of material for understanding death in Iron Age Israel and Judah.

INDEX WORDS: Israel, Judah, Aram, Hebrew Bible, death, funerary inscriptions, burial customs, Iron Age, archaeology

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with love and thanks to my husband Radi and to my son Ali, who never doubted me and always supported me in every way.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	*Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
Ag. Ap.	*Against Apion*
Akkadica	*Akkadica*
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
ANGSBA	Annual of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARA	*Annual Reviews of Anthropology*
ASOR DS	American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series
Atiqot	*ʼAtiqot*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BAS	*Berytus Archaeological Studies*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BAR IS	Biblical Archaeology Review International Series
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BAIAS	*Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society*
BMB	*Bulletin de Musée de Beyrouth*

BSAW	Berlin Studies of the Ancient World
ConB	Coniectanea Biblica
CRAI	*Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
*Cur*BS	*Currents in Research: Bibical Studies*
CWA	Cambridge World Archaeology
EPRO	Etudes Préliminaires Aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain
EJM	*European Journal of Mineralogy*
HA	*Hadashot Arkheologiyot*
HFS	Historisk-Filosofiske Skrifter
HANEMS	History of the Ancient Near East Monographic Series
HOS	Handbook of Oriental Studies
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IAAR	Israel Antiquities Authority Reports
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Iraq	*Iraq*
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JNER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*

JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JPOS	*Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KAI	*Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*
LASBF	*Liber annuus: Studium biblicum Franciscanum*
Levant	*Levant*
Maarav	*Maarav*
MesCiv	Mesopotamian Civilizations
MMAB	Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
MMUMP	Museum Monographs of the University Museum of Pennsylvania
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
Or	*Orientalia*
OrAnt	*Oriens Antiquus*
OIC	*University of Chicago Oriental Institute Communications*
OIAR	*Oriental Institute Annual Report*
OIP	University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
OLP	*Orientalia lovaniensia periodica*

OMA	Oxbow Monographs in Archaeology
Orient	*Orient*
OTR	Old Testament Readings
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PHBB	Prentice-Hall Backgrounds to the Bible
PICAANE	*Proceedings of the International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*
PLoS ONE	PLoS ONE
PSBA	*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*
QDAP	*Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*
RAr	*Revue Archéologique*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RIM	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia
RSF	*Rivista di studi fenici*
SAL	Society of Antiquaries of London
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
Science	*Science*
ScEs	*Science et Esprit*
SSM	*Social Science and Medicine*
Syria	*Syria*

TA	*Tel Aviv: Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University*
TSO	Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UCPNES	University of California Publications: Near Eastern Studies
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of the Survey

The purpose of this survey of texts, inscriptions, and mortuary archaeology is to consider common and divergent custom and practice related to death and burial in Iron Age Israel and Aram. In the treatment of the dead, what concerns were shared between these two groups? How did each say goodbye to the dead, or how did they seek to keep them close? What things were needful and proper for burial, what variations were accepted, and why? What belief systems underlay and motivated these practices? To address these questions we must utilize information provided by both archaeology and texts.

Archaeology yields a wealth of information: types of burials, dimensions of tombs, sometimes even the age, gender and cause of death of an individual. Archaeology can also give us tangible examples of grave goods and shed light on burial practices such as the secondary treatment of the bones of the dead. The physical remains can also attest to custom and ritual, and human custom and ritual is always laden with meaning. In keeping with this idea, David Ilan sets out a concise and relevant set of considerations regarding death and burial in the archaeological record and how the material artifacts relate to meaning:

1) Death is a central event in human experience.
2) A human being's reaction to death reflects his or her cultural values and life experience.

3) Patterns detected in the mortuary remains of the past will reflect cultural values held by a community and not just by an individual.

4) Tomb offerings are socially selected and do not represent a random sample.[1]

The physical remains of bodies and the graves and tombs in which they are buried are a result of the complex human response to death. This is much more than a simple need to dispose of a dead body. The various practices and types of burials reflect, as Ilan recognizes, the communal values regarding what constitutes an appropriate response. The artifacts speak. The difficulty is interpreting at this distance in time and culture just what these material remains are saying. Careful examination can tell us much about the community's response to the death of one of its members. Archaeology can tell us what people do in the face of death and from this we can often draw reasonable conclusions about why these things are done. Some beliefs, for example those regarding the fate of the soul or spirit of a person, are only hinted at by the material remains of graves, grave goods, and bones.[2] While physical remains can inform us about the actions related to the treatment of the dead, the texts are uniquely suited for understanding beliefs relating to death, for only words can explicitly set forth the reasons behind the action or the symbolic meaning behind physical items.[3] Ted Lewis writes about the ways in which mortuary archaeology and texts can support each other:

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[1] David Ilan, "Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age: A Reflection of Canaanite Society and Ideology," in *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (eds. Stuart Campbell and Anthony Green; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), 117-139.

[2] Occassional reference will be made to the "soul" throughout this dissertation in reference to the incorporal, personal essence of a person. While we realize that this English word may not precisely reflect the ancient view of that part of an individual which is not the physical body, there are few better alternatives. See also the related discussion on pages 224 and 308. In the vast majority of references in the Hebrew Bible the word *npš* is used in ways which mean the inner self: the heart, the mind, and the life essence. The usage is very similar in Aramaic.

[3] Theodore J. Lewis, "How Far can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*

> We need both disciplines working critically and independently yet informing each other. Sadly all too often, textual scholars refrain from wrestling with the archaeology due to its complex nature in an age of specialization and sophistication. Likewise archaeologists more and more bypass the text, perhaps out of fear that the skills of philologians have become equally specialized or perhaps out of a fear that even considering the text may lead to a charge of Albrightian bibliolatry.[4]

The goal of this work is to produce a reasonably comprehensive comparative synthesis of archaeology and text which places the cultures of Israel and Aram in dialogue. Through this we can learn something important about the way death was approached by people in this particular place and time which only comes to light by comparative analysis.

The chronological focus of this study will primarily concern the Iron Age (here defined as extending from 1200 BCE to the Neo-Babylonian period ending in 539 BCE), but earlier and later material will be included as needed to provide sound context and comparative data. This time period yields rich troves of archeological and textual data for both groups. Additionally this period was chosen for the interest of its connection with the world of the Hebrew Bible. It is by investigation of the specific archaeology and texts of the Iron Age that our major point regarding Israelite and Aramaic philosophy and theology will be highlighted. The geographic focus will be the politically defined territories of Israel/Judah and the Aramean states during this period, although these were certainly prone to some fluctuation. For the area of Aram the cluster of small states which were present prior to the wave of Assyrian annexation in the mid-9th to 8th centuries will

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(ed. Barry Gittlen; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 169-177. Theodore J. Lewis, "Job 19 in Light of the Ketef Hinnom Inscriptions and Amulets," in *Puzzling Out the Past: Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Bruce Zuckerman* (eds. M. Lundberg, S. Fine, and W. Pitard; (Boston: Brill, 2012), 99-113.

[4] Lewis, "How Far can Texts Take Us?" 205.

be considered. This will include evidence from as far south as Aram-Damascus and as far north as Zincirli (Sa'mal), Carchemish, and Gurgum (Marqas, modern Maraş).

The format of this survey will be first archaeological, and address sites in Israel/Judah and the Levant before moving to data from Aram. Individual sites will be discussed in detail as representatives of a type, with the aim of providing a comprehensive view of practice in each area with detail anchored by particular sites. Archeological investigation is addressed first so that an overview of evidence can be obtained before using the texts to apply an interpretation to the physical evidence. In the second section of this work funerary inscriptions from Israel/Judah and Aram will be analyzed for comparative purposes. While the attempt has been made to provide symmetry in presentation, an additional chapter is devoted to the biblical text and its importance for understanding the treatment of death in Israel. The biblical material provides a tremendous amount of information and has no parallel in the Aramaic texts. The narrative books of the Hebrew Bible contain many episodes which convey several perspectives on what death is and what it means to die, as well as what was common and accepted treatment of the dead and what was regarded as being outside accepted practice.

What will ultimately determine the success of this work will be the way in which archaeology and text can be placed in dialogue with one another to yield new understandings. Israel, influenced by all of its neighbors (Phoenicia, Philistia, Moab, Edom, and Aram) but developing in distinctive social, political, and theological ways, ultimately left the world with a powerful legacy which is still a living influence today. The states of Aram, shaped by a mixture of Hittite and Aramaic rulers and populace, also illustrate a powerful process of cultural dialogue. The crossroads of Anatolia and the

Mediterranean yielded a rich environment for cultural and intellectual mixing for each of these groups. The mixing of influences, both of native and foreign elements, produced a unique cultural and religious synthesis for Israel and for Aram. In the treatment of death an entire life is summarized by a few personal items, some pottery, and an arrangement of bones. We seek from the archaeology and texts a better understanding of death in Israel/Judah and Aram.

The overarching argument that will be supported by this investigation into texts and archaeology concerns the similarity of belief systems regarding death in both cultural systems. In archaeology this translates into a similarity of treatment of the dead in certain respects of providing offerings and grave goods for the benefit of the deceased, although other aspects of burial practice vary widely. While tomb types and the type of burial varied (cremation versus inhumation, for example) the types of grave goods provided are remarkably similar. Pottery which likely held food and drink are equally common in graves from Iron Age Israel and Aram, and the provision of personal items is also very similar. Weapons, jewelry and imported items, particularly from Egypt, are found equally in Israel and Aram. The funerary inscriptions and texts related to death also support this idea of similarity. Despite differing religious systems, Israel and Aram viewed death in similar ways. This includes ideas about the proper treatment of the dead and appropriate mourning practices, although the specific forms of these varied. Particularly important was the preservation of the sanctity of the grave, which was often protected by a curse against potential grave robbers. Both cultures in this time period show comparable attitudes to a good or peaceful death in old age as a reward for a

righteous life. The focus in both Israel and Aram was the blessing of the divine in this life.

To introduce this basis of our thesis we need to first establish what the basic attitude towards death was. The frequent references to death and the afterlife found in Ugaritic and other literature of the Ancient Near East portray a dreary, shadowy place where all go when they die regardless of their personal goodness or wickedness. In this view it is indeed a "…common, unpleasant, equal, and sad destiny (which) awaits everyone who leaves this world."[5] *The Epic of Gilgamesh* describes "the house which none leave who have entered it…the road from which there is no way back…the house wherein the dwellers are bereft of light, where dust is their fare and clay their food, they are clothed like birds, with wings for garments, and see no light, residing in darkness."[6] In the text the *Descent of Ishtar,* which has been found in both Akkadian and Sumerian (in Sumerian as *Inana's Descent),* there is a very similar description of the dead who go to "the dark house...the house where none leave who have entered it…the house wherein the entrants are bereft of li[ght], where dust is their fare and clay their food…clay for bread, drink muddied water for beer."[7] The ritual to honor Niqmaddu, the deceased king of Ugarit, (KTU 1.161) also relates a similar idea of going down into the earth. Parts of this ritual may be interpreted as attempting to aid the dead king and make his afterlife more bearable by magical means.[8]

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[5] Paolo Xella, "Death and the Afterlife in Canaanite and Hebrew Thought" in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East Vol. 3* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; New York: Charles Scribner, 1995), 2063.
[6] James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 58-59.
[7] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 80-81.
[8] Johannes De Moore, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 165-167. also David Tsumura, "The Interpretation of the Ugaritic Funerary Text KTU1.161," in *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the First Colloquium on the Ancient Near East – the City and its Life* (ed. Eiko Matsushima; Heidelberg: Winter, 1993), 40-55. This text also mentions the *rpum*

Was this general view shared not only by Late Bronze Age Ugarit, but also by Iron Age Israel and Aram? The answer is yes. Material from as far north as Hattuša reinforces the widespread nature of these ideas. In this text the dead are forgetful – sisters, brothers, parents and children do not recognize one another. The dead do not eat wholesome food, but instead eat bits of mud and drink foul water.[9] Texts from Iron Age Aram are not as explicit on this matter, being shorter and of a different nature (primarily short funerary inscriptions rather than longer poems or mythological texts) but the combined archeological and textual evidence as addressed in later chapters will show that there is no reason to amend this view of death and the afterlife for Aram. The Hebrew Bible also reveals this idea. Consider such references to a shadowy existence as Numbers 5:2; 6:11, and 9:10 and the descriptions of Sheol or "The Pit" as a place of destruction, darkness, forgetfulness, and silence.[10] Sheol can mean either the grave itself, the mythical realm of the dead (often viewed as under the waters), or part of the distant earthly world, far to the west or north.[11]

In this worldview the divine beings were indeed gods (or goddesses) of the living. While very concerned for justice and righteousness in life, they did not sentence one to pleasure or pain in the afterlife. Unlike in Egyptian religion and mythology here there is no cosmic framework established for the benefit of the human soul or spirit after death.

– *rephaim* – shades or ancestors – which will be discussed in more detail later in this work (see chapter 5 on death in the biblical text). The text may be commanding the furniture to go down to the underworld as well to serve the former king. The title also mentions a "feast" which bears further discussion as well (see chapter 6 on Aramean funerary inscriptions).

[9] This is the Ankara fragment KBo 22.178 and the Berlin fragment KUB 48.109. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., "A Scene in the Realm of the Dead" in *Scientific Humanist: Studies in Honor of Abraham Sachs* (ed Erle Leichty and Maria Dej Ellis; Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1988), 191-199.

[10] Job 26:6; Prov 15:11;27:20; Ps 88:12; 94:17; 115:17; Job 10:21-22. Rainer Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," in *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 431.

[11] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of Household and Family," 431.

This becomes clear in the way in which funerary texts are formulated and the way in which the gods are presented. In the Hebrew Bible YHWH is petitioned for help in this life – for rescue from enemies, for fertility of land, animals and humans, for rewards. In treaties and texts concerning Baal/Hadad, Astarte, Asherah, and others, divine power is called upon to play in the living world in order to enforce the agreements of men.[12] Even Mot, the very god of death, or Erishkigal, the queen of the underworld, have no interest in the death and afterlife of individual humans, but rather rule over the kingdom and play a role almost as a force of nature. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh* Erishkigal is not concerned with the individual, but merely inquires "who has brought this one hither?" In another text, the Ugaritic poem of Baal and Anat, Mot is the king of the underworld, his city the "Pit" but he does not administer the city or care for the inhabitants, being more akin to a great living entrance to the underworld, one who gobbles up all. M. Astour call Mot "a personification of death as a permanent status, of the great infernal abyss with yawning mouth into which all men alive must ultimately descend forever."[13] Both Mot and Erishkigal are much more interested in their own conflicts with other gods than in dead humans.[14] Part of what will be revealed by our examination of archaeology and text is this: despite wide variation in religious beliefs the people of Israel and Aram held very similar views regarding the disinterest of the gods in the death and ultimate fate of

[12] Possibly hundreds of biblical verses could be cited in support of this idea of intercessory prayer by the living for help in this life. Psalms very obviously contains a great many such statements. For treaties the most famous is probably the Sefire treaty. See Joseph Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire I and II," JAOS 81 (1961): 178-222, but see also Simo Parpola, "Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh," JCS 39 (1987): 161-189 for additional examples of the gods as enforcers of treaties.
[13] Michael Astour, "The Nether World and its Denizens at Ugarit," in *Death in Mesopotamia: XXVVI Rencontre Assyriologique International* (ed. Bendt Alster; Mesopotamia 8;Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 230.
[14] See the conflict between Mot and Baal and Anat in the Baal cycle, as well as the interaction/trickery at play between Erishkigal and Innana/Ishtar in *The Descent.* Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 92-117, 80-84.

humans. Possible exceptions to this view will carry interest for us as we examine several unusual pieces of evidence, particularly the amulets from Ketef Hinnom in Judah.

A second issue follows from this. How are humans to respond to this worldview? What is to be done then to care for the dead if the gods do not? If the gods don't care about the fate of humans in the afterlife, humans must care for the ancestors themselves. Thus the answer may lie in the concept and practice of veneration of the dead. There was a strong but sometimes vaguely defined relationship between the dead and the living. In some conceptions the dead need the living to "feed them" to make the shadowy world more bearable. In other conceptions the living ask the dead for assistance, for information, and for blessings. Further suggestions as to what this might have meant will be taken up in the conclusions to each section.

CHAPTER 2: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF MORTUARY REMAINS IN ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Israel and Canaan in the Bronze Age: A Brief Overview

Our first step towards drawing conclusions about the treatment of the dead in Israel and Aram will be to examine what archaeology can show us. Before turning to Iron Age mortuary archaeology in Israel, it is first useful to survey earlier customs in the Bronze Age Levant in order to have a context for the later material and to see points of continuity and change. This idea of continuity will become increasingly important as we follow through the sections and the chapters that follow, as the overall shape of this work will confirm strong continuity in perspectives upon death and treatment of the dead in Israel, Judah and Aram. What we will see is continuity through time as well as continuity across cultures and religions. In the first part of this section we will see cultural distinctions that are apparent in burials of the Early Bronze Age (such as burials in nawamis and tumuli), but by the Middle and Late Bronze Age a number of practices will become established (such as cave burials and pottery included with burial offerings) that will persist through the entire Iron Age and into the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. Other practices such as simple pit burials, jar burials, and burial beneath houses change in frequency over time but never entirely disappear. Throughout the discussions that follow reference will be made to common chronological divisions of the Bronze and Iron Age Levant (see Figure 1).

Period Name	Chronological Span	Dominant Factors/Characteristics
Middle Bronze I	2100–2000	Egyptian First Intermediate Period
Middle Bronze IIA	2000–1750	Egyptian Middle Kingdom, 12th Dynasty
Middle Bronze IIB	1750–1550	Canaanite city-states; 13-15th Dyn.
Late Bronze I	1550–1400	Egypt New Kingdom- earlier 18th Dyn. (to Amenophis II)
Late Bronze IIA	1400–1300	Egypt New Kingdom – later 18th Dyn. (from Tuthmosis IV)
Late Bronze IIB	1300–1200	Egypt New Kingdom 19th–20th Dyn. – Ramessides
Iron IA	1200–1100	Deurbanization phrase; Israelite "settlement" Middle Assyrian Period
Iron IB	1100–1000	Growth of settlements, regional centers. Middle-Assyrian Period
Iron IIA	1000–900	United Monarchy (David, Solomon), Neo-Assyrian Period
Iron IIB	900–800	Nation-states (Israel, Judah, Ammon…). Neo Assyrian Period
Iron IIC	800–586	Neo-Assyrian period through collapse of Assyria, begin Neo-Babylonia Period
Babylonian-Persian Period	586–333	Babylonian, early Achaemenid Periods

Figure 1: Chronological table for archaeology of Israel and Canaan in the second and first millennia. Adapted from Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 410.

Our remarks here are preparatory – whatever model one uses for the beginnings of Israel in Canaan, these Bronze Age burials are largely prior to that development.[15] In the Early Bronze Age the regional areas of the lowlands, the highlands, and the semiarid zones reflected cultural distinctions in a variety of burial practices. Residents of the highlands, for example, buried between 5 and 200 individuals in cave tombs (as found at

[15] Two indispensable works for understanding the primary models of the emergence of Israel as a discrete entity are Baruch Halpern, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan* (SBLMS 29; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1983) and William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come from?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2006).

ʻAi, Tel Asawir, Tel el-Farʻah, Gezer, Jericho, Tel en-Nasbeh, and Tel Taʻanach).[16] By contrast in the more arid regions of Beersheba and the southern Sinai the dead were sometimes buried in nawamis (above ground stone structures of circular shape).[17]

For the Early Bronze Age (3050–2300) the only known extensive cemetery in the area is Bâb edh-Dhrâʻ on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. At Bâb edh-Dhrâʻ thousands of shaft tombs were found. The site is nothing less than shocking – a massive cemetery over a kilometer long and a half kilometer wide that was in use for a thousand years, from the 32nd to the 22nd centuries BCE. Here bones were placed in small piles on reed mats, with skulls (commonly 2 to 6 individuals) set out in a line to the left (as viewed from the entrance). Along the walls were stacked ceramic vessels, often red-burnished – small juglets and small bowls as well as a rather unique larger and deeper type of bowl. At a later phase of usage (and characterized by pottery of the "Proto-Urban" tradition similar to that found at Jericho), bodies were laid out whole, then pushed aside later to make room for subsequent burials. Finally, there are the mud brick "charnel houses." These were built here from the 29th to the 23rd centuries on the pattern of contemporary houses and contained large assemblages of grave goods and partly burned bones (in one for example over 200 individuals are represented and 900 complete pots).[18] Tumuli (mounds of stone and earth over a stone lined and covered pit containing a burial) were

[16] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," in *Near Eastern Archaeology: A Reader* (ed. Suzanne Richard; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 105.
[17] The term is a Bedouin word meaning "mosquito" and is attached to a legend that the structures were built by the tribes of Israel as protection against mosquitoes. The more common explanation is that the term is applied to any single structure. Ofer Bar Yosef and others, "The Nawamis Near 'Ein Huderah (Eastern Sinai)," IEJ 27 (1977): 65-88.
[18] Paul Lapp, *The Tale of the Tell: Archaeological Studies by Paul W. Lapp* (ed. Nancy Lapp; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1975), 104-110. Bâb edh-Dhrâʻ was investigated first by Paul and Nancy Lapp in 1965-67, and again in the 70s and 80s by T. Schaub, W. Rast, and others. See the excellent later publication of Lapp's 1965-67 work by Schaub and Rast. Paul W. Lapp, R. Thomas Schaub and Walter E. Rast, *Bāb Edh-Dhrāʻ: Excavations in the Cemetery Directed by Paul W. Lapp (1965-67) Vol. 1* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 598.

constructed in the Negev, Jordan Valley, the Transjordanian plateau, Hauran and the Golan.[19]

All of these burial types are associated with other distinguishing cultural marks such as house types, flint, and pottery forms. A number of these forms are distinctive and not found in later periods (for example the nawamis and charnel house) or other areas. Such distinctive forms combined with identifiable cultural features probably designate a cultural group. Other forms of burial, such as simple pit burials and burials beneath the floors of houses, are also found in the Levant from the Neolithic period. These extend through the entire Bronze Age, and continue into the Iron Age as well.

The Middle Bronze Age (2000–1550) saw increasing urbanization of the Levant. Increased international contacts are reflected in the copying of north Syrian elite burial practices. The burial of the wealthy dead in corbelled vaults constructed below the floors of palaces is found in Ebla, Tell el-ʻAjjûl, Hazor, and Taʻanach as well as Ugarit.[20] Much of this influence did not penetrate to the highlands, however. A steady decrease in burials within the city or village continued at this time, and by the Middle Bronze Age burial within the city and town was largely limited to built tombs (see Dan, Ugarit, and Aphek for example).

This is not an absolute case, however. At Taanach Paul Lapp excavated 56 subfloor burials from the MB IIC period, and his excavation again highlights the diversity of burial practices, which included jar and cist burial as well as round shaft tombs. Over

[19] Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant", 106-107.
[20] Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," 108-109. Family tombs as well as royal tombs at Ugarit were placed beneath the floors of living spaces. P. Xella interprets this as symbolic of the continued relationship between the living and the dead. Xella, *Death and the Afterlife*, 2061. The Hazor tomb 8144-8145 doesn't seem to be a "corbelled vault." It is cut into the NE corner of the Stratum 3 palace and contains a large number of bones and vessels. Yigael Yadin, *Hazor II: An Account of the Second Season of Excavations, 1956* (Vol. 2 of *The James A. De Rothschild Expedition at Hazor*; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1958), 140-142.

130 ceramic tomb gifts were associated with these burials, as well as gold and silver jewelry.[21] Continued use of cave burials outside the city or town is exemplified by the well known "Dominus Flevit Tomb", a bilobate Jebusite burial cave on the western slope of the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem. This cave was in use for about 300 years, from approximately 1400–1100 BCE. In addition to Middle and Late Bronze jars, juglets, dippers and bowls, the tomb yielded more than 300 clay lamps, alabaster and faience objects imported from Egypt, scarabs, bone plaques, and 75 bronze/copper blades, as well as rings and toggle pins.[22] Also worth noting here is a much larger MBI (2100–1900) burial at Dhahr Mirzbaneh (modern Mughâyir) which was discovered in 1963 by Paul and Nancy Lapp. This site consisted of at least 86 shaft tombs divided among three cemeteries. Many of these had been robbed, but undisturbed finds revealed secondary burial of skulls and larger bones, along with lamps, cups, and small pots and jars. The lack of contemporary large nearby settlements and the apparent lack of small bones in the burials led Lapp to interpret this as a burial ground for nomadic peoples who returned regularly carrying the remains of those who had died during the intervening period.[23]

By the Late Bronze Age extramural (outside of the city, town, or village) pit and cist grave cemeteries were widely distributed throughout the lowlands.[24] These Late Bronze pit burials included a fairly well-defined group of vessels – 2 or 3 large storage jars with cover bowls and dipper juglets, additional bowls, and some smaller containers. The exceptions to this assemblage are found at Tell el-ʿAjjul, Tell el-Farʿah, and

[21] Lapp, *The Tale of the Tell*, 91-103.
[22] W. Harold Mare, *The Archaeology of the Jerusalem Area* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker House, 1987), 44-56. Other caves at Ophel Hill near Jerusalem have remains from Early and Middle Bronze Age burials as well.
[23] Lapp, *The Tale of the Tell*, 77-82.
[24] See for example the 17 Early-Late Bronze Age burials at Afula. Eleazar L. Sukenik, "Archaeological Investigations at 'Affula," JPOS 21 (1948): 1-79.

Megiddo, which have fewer jars and may reflect continuity with earlier types.[25] One striking feature here is that by the Late Bronze Age (LBI) some of these cemeteries are associated with only a small settlement or no settlement at all. The assemblage of goods as well as personal and luxury items reflects continuing ideas of provision for the dead. Bench tombs began to be adopted in the southern Levant at this time.[26]

In summary, a wide variety of burial customs are evident during the Bronze Age. These included rock cut tombs, chamber tombs (cave tombs), masonry chamber tombs, shaft burials, masonry cist tombs, pit or cist burials, and jar burials. Burial types varied by location as well as by age. Burials at Tel Dan for example indicate a demographic consideration for the use of these types of tombs. Chamber tombs were used for male and female adults, cist tombs for children from 3–13 years, and jar burials for infants and fetuses. Kinship relationships are illustrated by multiple burials under house floors and by the interment of successive bodies in the same tomb over a period of time. [27]

The later funerary evidence from recent excavations at Iron Age Tel Dan reflects its complicated history as the northernmost city of Israel. Salvage excavations conducted in 2006 under the direction of M. Hartal uncovered 7th–6th century burials of four young

[25] L. Steel has also noted this phenomenon of extramural interment at Cyprus at the beginning of the Iron Age. Formal burial areas were established outside the settlement at this time and a new tomb type was introduced (rock-cut chamber tombs). She connects these changes with "major changes in the island's settlement pattern and material culture" but she does not speculate if this was related to the invasion of the Sea Peoples or to Phoenician expansion and colonization at this time (but note that 40% of pottery from these burials are classified by Steel as "Phoenician." Louise Steel, "Differential Burial Practices in Cyprus at the Beginning of the Iron Age" in *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (eds. Stuart Campbell and Anthony Green; OMA 51; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), 199-204. See Gonan's discussion of the contents of pit burials. Typical forms are egg-shaped or straight-shouldered jars, Cypriot Monochrome or White Slip and small Cypriot juglets or Mycenaean stirrup or piriform jars. Rivka Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan* (ed. Baruch Halpern; ASOR DS 7; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 15-20. P. L. O. Guy, *Megiddo Tombs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 224 and plates.

[26] Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," 108-109.

[27] David Ilan, "The Dawn of Internationalism – the Middle Bronze Age," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas Evan Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 318. Ilan, *Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age*, 117-139.

individuals (15–18 years old) in the grooves and recesses of a cracked bedrock surface and covered with stones. These burials included bronze bracelets, bronze and silver toggle pins, silver earrings and bronze and iron arrowheads, as well as a complete "torpedo" type storage jar and two small dipper juglets. To the southwest of this area two jar burials were located that contained bone and one of which contained two small bracelets. Further west of these jars was a hole mouth krater with a disc base that contained the burned bones of an adult, and the skull and long bones of another individual nearby.[28] A final nearby tomb contained an adult and the skulls of two infants, along with earrings and a bronze ring. This tremendous variety of burial practice reflects the nature of the city. The cremations are related by Hartel to Phoenician cultural ties with Dan, but could reflect also Aramaic practice as well.[29] The other burial forms do not reflect standard Israelite practice, although the city was often within Israelite territory. These burials are connected with the last settlement strata of Dan after the Assyrian conquest, and may only be a small part of a larger Iron Age cemetery.[30]

Variation can also be seen at Khirbet el-ʿAlya, where a Late Bronze burial cave was discovered that in addition to juglets and pottery contained a rich deposit of bronze and copper jewelry. In addition a seal representing an animal and a hunter and carnelian beads were found. Most interesting was the find of skulls at this site which had been deliberately burned.[31] Just as regional cultural differences can be detected in regional variation of burials from the Early Bronze Age, by the late Bronze Age another type of regional differentiation can be seen. In the western foothills cave burials with multiple

[28] Hartal, *Tel Dan (North)* HA 118 (2006).
[29] See appendix A for more on the mortuary archaeological evidence from Phoenicia
[30] Hartal, *Tel Dan (North)* HA 118 (2006).
[31] Yehuda Dagan and Astrid Mettens, "Khirbet El-'Ayla, East (A)," in *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* (ed. Ayala Sussmann ; HA 17; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1998), 102-104.

interments are present, while pit burials and individual interments are more common in the Coastal Plain.[32] Mazar claims that the biblical distinction between the "Canaanites" of the plains and the "Amorites" of the hill country is reflected here, but evidence is not sufficient to determine the question.[33]

The valleys and urban centers are marked by a mix of burial customs. Two trends can be seen in the Late Bronze Age: a spread of pit burials along the Coastal plain and the "receding" of cave burials into the hills. R. Gonen attributes the spread of pit burials to increasing Egyptian influence along the coast, with more traditional cave burials remaining in the less accessible hill country. Gonen argues this on the basis of the geographic spread of pit burials, which mirrors increased Egyptian control of the coastal plains and central valleys, and she connects the practice with Egyptian emphasis upon the preservation of the body – intact burial and an avoidance of communal burial in which bones could be intermixed.[34] While this is an interesting interpretation, it is not absolutely convincing. Pit burials have been a long extant and widespread form of burial in the Levant. They are a low cost and low labor endeavor and so are well suited to expedient burial and burial of the poor. We also cannot make any good estimation of the numbers of pit burials. Pit burials are most easily disrupted and destroyed by human activity and natural occurrence. There is no reason to believe that pit burials are in part the provenance of Egyptian cultural influence when they have been widespread and preexisting in the Levant. By contrast a practice that is probably related to the Egyptian

[32] For a good presentation of a typical Middle and Late Bronze group of cave tombs with their grave goods see Sara Ben-Arieh and David Alon, *Bronze and Iron Age Tombs at Tell Beit Mirsim* (IAAR 23; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004), 212..
[33] Amihai Mazar et al., *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1990), 277-279.
[34] Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 37-38.

presence and influence in the area is the use of anthropomorphic coffins such as those found at Beth Shan (see below for discussion).

Gonen also argues that the increase in individual pit burials and village cemeteries at the expense of intramural burial may be related to social upheaval at the end of the Late Bronze Age, wherein people lost family property and the family tombs that they held, and cities and settlements lost large percentages of their populations. Despite this trend, both wealthy urban dwellers and rural pastoralists continued to bury their dead in caves and family tombs.[35] Lewis, Bloch-Smith, van der Toorn, and others have proposed that such tombs were used to establish and verify the claim to property rights and so are closely bound up with the idea of the naḥălâ, the inalienable inheritance.[36] There is no direct evidence of this – no document or law stating that "this is yours because your family dead are buried here." It is instead an extension of a logical process: the burial of family dead at a site confirms that a particular family had possession of that site for a reasonably long period of time. The important connection between ancestors and the land is also seen in both Canaanite and Israelite place names which were originally personal names. Van der Toorn notes places such as Jiphthahel, Jezreel, Ibleam, Jokneam and Jokmeam in Israel, and Joktheel, Jekuthiel, Jokdeam, and Jekbzeel in Judah. Such names bear witness to the belief that the land originally belonged to or was at least inhabited by specific ancestors.[37] When use of these traditional burial sites was discontinued or disrupted so was the use of (and probably the claim to) the

[35] Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*. 39. Shlomo Bunimovitz, "On the Edge of Empires – Late Bronze Age (1500-1200 BCE)" in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas Levy; New York: Facts On File, 1995), 330-331.
[36] Lewis, *How Far can Texts Take Us?,* 183. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (JSOT Supplement 123 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 111-112. Albertz however, disagrees. Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 458.
[37] K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Changes in the Forms of Religious Life* (SHCANE 7; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 206-207.

farmland, buildings, and homes associated with them. These things probably occurred simultaneously during periods of major social disruption such as the Late Bronze Age collapse.

While we lack explicit documentation that family burial established land rights, it is fairly clear that these rights were widely assumed to be tied to established family holdings that were passed from father to son. This is supported by biblical evidence as well as Mesopotamian adoption contracts and inheritance law.[38] This relates to the idea of family burial on a landholding because in this understanding land cannot simply be sold to any buyer, but its passage among owners is governed by kin relationships. Burial of ancestors in this land could therefore be a way of establishing this family right and relationship by serving as proof of a continuing kinship connection between previous generations of owners and the current one. The connection between family burial places and land ownership will continue to be important as we move into our discussion of Iron Age practices.

Burial Practices in Iron Age Israel and Judah

Iron Age I: A Gradual Transition of Forms

The turmoil experienced in the Late Bronze Age was dramatic, though not evenly distributed. The disruptions arose from multiple causes, beginning in the 16th century with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt under Pharaoh Ahmose I (1526 to 1506 BCE). There continued to be heavy Egyptian activity in the area through the reign of

[38] For example the Law of Eshnunna "If a man is hard up and sells his house, the owner of the house shall be entitled to redeem (it) whenever the purchaser sells it." Much more complicated is the Code of Hammurabi, which devotes significant space to consideration of inheritance laws and how property may and may not be disposed within a family. See also the sale-adoption document of Kuzu and Tehip-tilla from Nuzi. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 136, 156-167. For the Biblical texts see Num 27:8-11; 36:2-9; Deut 19:14 (notes the use of landmarks as boundaries); 1 Kgs 21:3-4; Ezek 46:16-18 as examples of the rich language of land rights. A large part of the plot of the book of Ruth is also governed by this framework.

Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE). The Egyptian campaigns were a major cause of site destruction and abandonment at this time.[39] Destruction layers at some sites may also have been caused by conflict between cites or with nomadic tribes, and culminated with the 12th century destructions by the infamous "Sea Peoples." Finally climate change, specifically strong drought conditions from approximately 1250–1100, had an impact as a stressor of populations and an incentive for migration. A recent compilation of survey data shows a dramatic drop in inhabited sites between the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. A few examples will illustrate this trend. The Upper Galilee area went from 52 to 14 inhabited sites, the Lower Galilee from 28 sites to 9, the Western Jezreel dropped from 58 to 35 sites, Samaria north of Shechem from 161 to 36, and the Golan area from 132 to 20. By the Iron Age II period, however, these areas had rebounded dramatically, with the Upper Galilee at 36 sites, the Lower at 57, Western Jezreel at 66, Samaria north of Shechem at 238, and the Golan at 86 inhabited sites (See Figures 2 and 3 which illustrate most of the major Iron I and Iron II sites).[40]

[39] Hiroaki Watanabe, "Middle Bronze-Late Bronze Transitional Period in Palestine"(PhD diss, University of Arizona). Watanabe examines 10 major sites for dating and destruction layers: Hazor, Megiddo, Shechem, Shiloh, Jericho, Gezer, Tell Beit Mirsim, Tell el-`Ajjul, Tell el-Far`ah (South) and Tell el-Dab`a (Avaris) and concludes that the primary causation for the Late Bronze destruction here was Egyptian activity. See also Christopher Bronk Ramsey et al., "Radiocarbon-Based Chronology for Dynastic Egypt" *Science* 328 (2010): 1554-1557, for radiocarbon dates. Egyptian dates here follow the standard low chonology.

[40] Dafna Langgut, Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Litt, "Climate and the Late Bronze Collapse: New Evidence from the Southern Levant," *TA* 40(2013): 153.

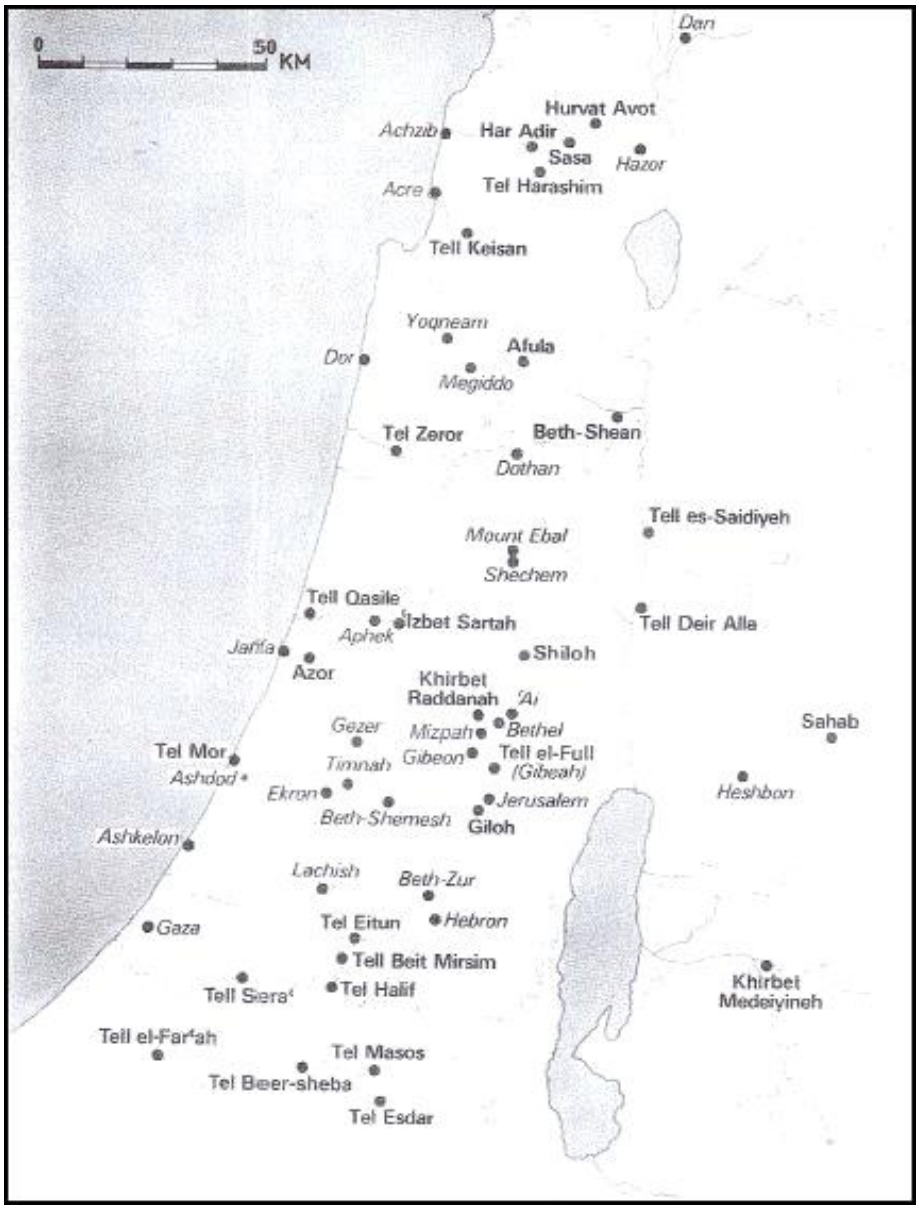

Figure 2: Iron Age I Sites
Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 309.

Despite these dramatic population fluctuations there is no clear break between burial practices in Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Israel. Bronze Age tombs were reused during the Iron Age (a good example being Lachish Tomb 4002, a cave tomb with five

loculi used during the Middle and Late Bronze Age and again in use in Iron IIB).[41] Bronze Age burial practices extended into the Iron Age, although throughout the Levant cist, jar, and anthropoid coffin burials decreased during the Iron Age while bench tomb burials increased, particularly in Israel and Judah.[42] Other types of burial also increased, such as simple burials, cremation (from two 11th century examples at Azor to over 100 along the Phoenician coast from the 8th to the 6th centuries) and bathtub coffins (often associated with Assyrian elements and found with more frequency in the 8th century and later).[43] Because the division is not sharp, it is more difficult to define what constitutes distinctive Late Bronze burial practices and what can be classified as Early Iron (1200–1000).

Normal practice in Iron Age Israel and Judah was interment and burial outside the city. Cremation as a burial practice was rare, with only a few examples found in the archaeological record, and those before the 10th century are not in the territory of Israel

[41] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 468. Late Bronze Age loculi tombs are also found at Tell el-ʿAjjul and Megiddo. Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 24-25.

[42] See as a few examples the cist graves at Tel Yavne from the 8th century and later. Raz Kletter, "Tel Yavne," HA 116 (2004). Also pit burials at Afula stratum IIIA (1050-1020) and and IIIB (1200-1150) which yielded nine skeletons and one jar burial of an infant with pottery which continues the LB tradition. This pottery shows a slow and gradual transition to Early Iron Age forms. Moshe Dothan, "The Excavations at Afula," *ʿAtiqot* (1955): 47-52. Also of note are the wide variety of burial types at Iron Age Tel Dan Moshe Hartal, "Tel Dan (North)," *HA* 118 (2006) (though see the discussion at the end of this chapter regarding the questions posed by the Tel Dan material) and Dothan which included a pottery coffin and jar burials. Daniel M. Master, *Dothan: Remains from the Tell (1953-1964)* (Vol. 1 of *The Excavations of Joseph P. Free at Dothan (1953-1964); Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005)*.

[43] The cremations at Azor were very unusual and may indicate an individual from another area – such as Greece. Tomb D63 contained a golden mouthpiece, a bronze bowl, and the cremation jar itself, which was of a type rarely found outside of Azor. Tomb D62 included two Philistine Bichrome kraters, a complete carinated red-slipped bowl, a jug and a double-flask vessel. David Ben-Shlomo, "The Cemetery of Azor and Early Iron Age Burial Practices," *Levant* 40 (2008): 38-40.
For a short and general description of Iron Age burial types in the Southern Levant – including pit and cist graves, jar burials, anthropoid coffins, cremation burials, bathtub burials, cave, bench, and arcosolia tombs see "Southern Levantine Iron Age Burial Types (1220–586 BCE)," NEA 65 (2002): 124–127. By far the best detailed and comprehensive work on Iron Age burials in Judah is Elizabeth Bloch-Smith's work. Of particular use is Bloch-Smith's tally of numbers of these grave types across the Levant in the 12th–11th and the 10th-8th centuries. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 314..

and Judah, being located at Azor (a probable Philistine site), and Amman.[44] One textual reference to cremation is found in 1 Sam 31:12 regarding the treatment of the bodies of Saul and his sons. This was an unusual situation in the narrative, however – a point where the bodies had already been desecrated – and cannot be taken as in any way reflective of standard practice. Generally graves were located outside the city walls, and a comment in 2 Kings 23:6 mentions the "graves of the common people" which are outside of Jerusalem. This passage records the destruction of a wooden image by King Josiah, the ashes of which were thrown on the graves. This action shows the cemetery as a place of defilement separated from the living (see discussion of Osborne's anthropological treatment of death below). This is in contrast with the tombs of the kings of Judah, which were located in the City of David according to the text (1 Kings 2:10). Megiddo, Lachish, and Tel el Far'ah all have large cemeteries with simple graves and few grave goods – often including just a few bowls. [45]

While burial outside the city walls becomes much more common, older forms were not completely abandoned in the transition between the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age. The biblical text also shows a good deal of variation – note that Samuel is buried "at his house" (1 Sam 25:1).[46] Joab also is buried "in his own house in the wilderness" (1 Kings 2:34). Burial under the floor of houses is well attested in Bronze Age excavations. Burial of infants and children under the floors of houses was more common in the Middle Bronze II period, with the burial of adults becoming a more common added practice in

[44] Azor mentioned above is a Philistine site. The other possible site is the find at Amman of a temple with rich finds of Mycenaean, Minoan, and Egyptian material and burnt human bones. The interpretation of this site is very hotly contested. Mazar et al., *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 255-256.
[45] J. D. Schloen and Amir Sumaka'i Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," BASOR 356 (2009): 23; Guy, *Megiddo Tombs*, 224 and plates.
[46] Klaas Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East (*AOAT 219; Butzon and Bercker Kevelaer, 1986), 238.

the Late Bronze Age. This can be seen at Megiddo, Tell el-ʿAjjul, Hazor, and Tell el-Farʿah.[47]

The gradual change from burial under houses and within settlements to burial in cemeteries outside of the city, town, or village indicates a gradual cultural evolution rather than a sudden ideological shift. This is a particular drawback of archaeological as compared to textual data. The archaeology clearly indicates a change of practice but we can only speculate as to the reason why. Just as Gonen speculates that the burial of children under the floors of houses may relate to a need to keep them close to the family, so Bloch-Smith and others speculate that the change to extra-mural burials is related to the upheaval of the Late Bronze collapse (as mentioned above).[48] We can also speculate that ideological changes may have also been at work, for by the biblical period we will see textual evidence that graves were considered places of defilement.

An issue that further adds to the difficulty in making comparisons in burial practices is the lack of excavated burial sites for the Early Iron Age in the highlands of Israel. This phenomenon extends from Samaria through the territory of Benjamin and Judah. Graves prior to 1200 are present, and excavations have uncovered remains from the 9th century and later, but there is a distinct gap in data for this time and place.[49] Block-Smith also notes that surveys by M. Kochavi (1972), Z.Gal (1982) and I. Finkelstein (1986) in the highlands all "failed to locate even a single burial" and she also argues that simple and cist graves were either not found or had vanished.[50] Raz Kletter remarks upon this mysterious paucity of Iron I (and extending into Iron IIA) burials in the

[47] Ilan, *The Dawn of Internationalism – the Middle Bronze Age*, 318-319; and Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 98-123; and Yadin, *Hazor II*, 81-86, 125.
[48] Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 20.
[49] Avraham Faust, "Early Israel: An Egalitarian Society," BAR 39 (2013): 45-46.
[50] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 52.

Central Highlands of Israel. He notes "many Late Bronze caves" in contrast to few Iron I burials. Kletter disagrees with Spronk and Bloch-Smith regarding the difficulty in distinguishing between Late Bronze and Early Iron burials, using the very paucity of numbers of burials as major dividing criteria. While this is an argument from silence, Kletter states that it indicates a different burial custom that did not leave a lasting mark in the archaeological record.

Another part of the issue is Kletter's emphasis upon the assignment of Late Bronze and Early Iron Age categories as a result of cultural indicators rather than absolute dates. He recognizes that the Iron Age arrived in different areas at different times. So while Bloch-Smith might assign everything with a date after 1200 to the Iron Age, Kletter would assign some of these to the Late Bronze. He takes issue with the dating or interpretation of Dhahr Mirzbaneh, Tel Rumeidah (Hebron), Tel en-Nasbeh, and Gibeon, arguing that the pottery finds at these sites are more indicative of Late Bronze and Iron Age II with a gap during Iron I, rather than continuous use from Late Bronze through Iron II. [51]

Kletter concludes by acknowledging that limited archaeological data, the short time span of the period, the limited population in the highlands, and the lack of destruction layers by which to separate periods all contribute to the difficulty of separating LB and Iron I data. He nonetheless stands by his claim that these factors are not sufficient to explain the phenomena. Kletter extends his argument beyond the direct data and claims that "the lack of burials must be acknowledged as a sharp break from the burial customs of the preceding Late Bronze Age." He expands the speculation to

[51] Raz Kletter, "People without Burials? The Lack of Iron I Burials in the Central Highlands of Palestine," IEJ 52 (2002): 28-48.

include possible "abandonment of the dead" or shallow graves with few or no grave goods (indicating a relatively poor, egalitarian society) making the burials "invisible" to the archaeological record.[52] We should remember that abandonment of the dead is contrary to all previous and later custom in the Levant. Ultimately Kletter raises an interesting issue but fails to prove his argument.

A. Faust picks up Kletter's idea and gives evidence for an ideal of an egalitarian society. The simple, undecorated pottery, lack of temples and cultic buildings in towns, and lack of royal inscriptions for Faust point to an egalitarian ideal that was reflected in "simple" ground inhumation burial with minimal grave goods. Faust takes care to acknowledge that Early Iron Age society in Israel and Judah was not actually egalitarian, nor was it as poor as has been previously conjectured (he also draws parallels to other societies in which simple burial does not reflect social status).[53]

In addition to the issue of the "missing" graves of the highlands, the Early Iron Age shows a notable decrease in both the quantity and quality of pottery grave goods. Lamps and bowls are commonly associated with highland burials in the Levant, while pyxides, pilgrim flasks and kraters were found more often along the coast as well as through the Shephelah and valleys.

[52] Raz Kletter, "People without Burials?," 28-48.
[53] Faust, *Early Israel: An Egalitarian Society*, 45-63. That Israel may have held such values is not a new idea, and Faust notes a long line of scholarly ancestry including Speiser, Gottwald, Mendenhall, Gordis, Kelso, Lenski and others.

Iron IIA–B: Continued Differentiation

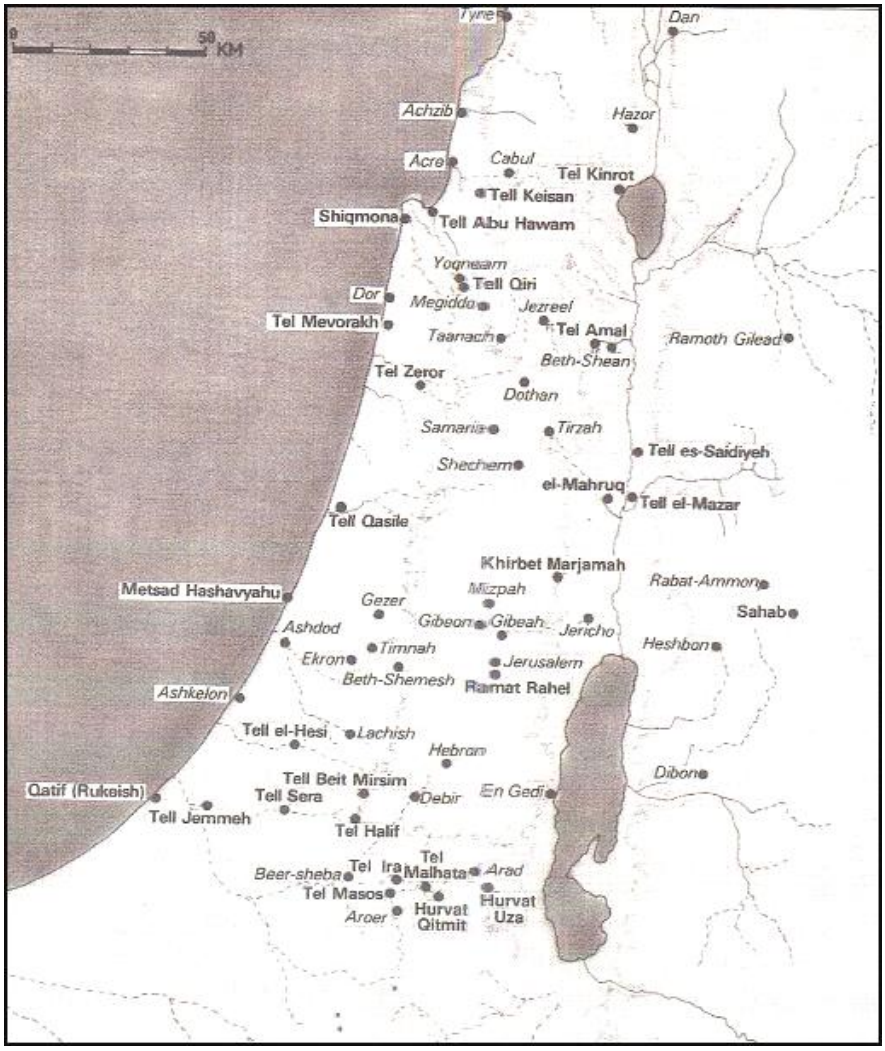

Figure 3: Iron Age II Sites
Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 370.

Beginning in the 10th century there occurred a change in the pottery assemblages found with the addition of new forms of bowls, jars, juglets and cooking pots. For Bloch-Smith this is not sufficient to distinguish between Israelite and Canaanite gravesites. While she does remark that the use of cave tombs continuing alongside bench tombs could reflect two distinct populations, she also states that the use of cave tombs could just

as easily have been employed by early Israelites along with their Canaanite neighbors for practical reasons.[54] The issue of what constitutes Israelite versus Canaanite burial reflects the same sort of cultural continuity and gradual divergence we see in other culture markers such as pottery. It is not a radical change, for example, to a previously unknown 4 room house plan or to a brand new type of large storage jar. Instead it is the total assemblage taken together that indicates a cultural shift. In a similar way early inscriptions are designated as Hebrew, Phoenician, or Aramaic by their location, not necessarily by distinguishing features. As specialization and divergence continue, distinctive and recognizable features such as letter form and spelling conventions emerge. In the realm of mortuary archaeology bench tombs do not suddenly appear as a new Israelite form of burial. Late Bronze Age burial caves with benches are known from 16 sites, mostly found along the coastal plain from Sidon to Tell el-Farʿah in the south, and occasionally in the mountain regions. Except for Tell el Farʿah these early sites usually have only one bench in the burial cave. They are very diverse in their plans and features and are grouped together primarily on the presence of the bench. Gonen speculates that these early tombs reflect the influence of groups from Cyprus.[55] Modified and adapted, the bench tomb becomes characteristic of burial in Israel and Judah, and later in the Iron Age further distinguishing features can be found, such as inscriptions with theophoric names and references to YHWH.

All of this data accords with the arguments of William Dever and others regarding the gradual formation of Israel as a distinct cultural and political group. Dever argues that between the 12th and 11th century populations were moving into the area (not just natural

[54] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 36-41.
[55] Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 23-24.

increase). Over this time the development of a distinctive "4-room house" which connects with L. Stager's "bet av" compound is seen. In keeping with the ideas of Kletter and Faust regarding a relatively simple and egalitarian society, there has not been found evidence of obvious central authority or large public works during this time period. With the exceptions of the Bull Site (in the northern part of the Samarian hills) and Mount Ebal there are no major temples or shrines.[56] The center of social and economic activity was through the family and clan. New technologies begin to appear, such as hillside terracing, plastered cisterns, and stone-lined silos. Bronze and flint are still in use, but we begin to see the introduction of iron items, such as plow points, in the 12th–11th centuries in the hill country.[57] These things taken together begin to create a distinguishable cultural complex. The absence of pig bones at Israelite sites is the single feature that makes a sharp distinction between Canaanite and Israelite settlements.[58]

Burial in the Highlands of Samaria

Having reviewed in our previous section the paucity of evidence for Iron I in Samaria, we can now move to what information we have for this area in the next period, Iron II. Irit Yezerski has compiled many of these sites in his article "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands" (see Figure 4 for a map of relevant sites)." He lists

[56] See Adam Zertal, "Early Iron Age Cultic Site on Mount Ebal: Excavation Seasons 1982-1987," *TA* 13-14 (1986): 105-165 for the preliminary report and interpretation of the Iron I site of Mt Ebal as a cultic site. See Amihai Mazar, "The "Bull Site" – an Iron Age I Open Cult Place," BASOR 247 (1982): 27-42, for a discussion of the "Bull Site" and the major find there of a bronze bull figurine, as well as the identification of the site with the early Iron Age and the Israelite tribe of Manassah. Thanks to Dr. B. Halpern for his comment on this.

[57] Dever, *Who were the Early Israelites and Where did they Come from?*, 117-118. Regarding the general spread of iron use in the Levant: while there are a few examples of iron items at Tell es Zuweid, Tell el Farah, Beth Shan, Megiddo, and Tel Qasile from 1200-1100, in the next centuries the number of iron items located in the Levant jumped to 78 examples from 13 sites in 1100-1000, and 192 examples from 17 sites in 1000-900. The general movement was from ornamental items such as rings and bracelets to tools such as hoes, axes, arrowheads and plowshares. Vagn Fabritius Buchwald, *Iron and Steel in Ancient Times* (HSF 29; Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2005), 74-45.

[58] William G. Dever, *What did the Biblical Writers Know, and When did They Know it? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 111-123.

nineteen Iron Age burial sites for the Jordan Valley, the Jezreel Valley, and the Sharon Plain. The evidence here is very similar to that found in Judah.

North of the mound of Samaria, on the western slope and near the Roman era city wall, are seven Iron II burial caves in two clusters. Of the northern group all but one tomb was found in ruins. That tomb (107) included two rooms and an entrance hall, with the ceiling of the entrance hall being supported by a central rock pillar. One bench and six deep pits were discovered. The pits did not contain human remains but broken vessels, bronze, and iron objects, a scarab, a Bes-amulet, and animal bone. Four human skeletons were laid out in the north burial room with their heads to the east and bronze and stone objects and vessels beside them. Most of the grave goods appear to be Buff ware and Red slip bowls. Like other sites in Yezerski's compilation the original reports (by Sukenik in 1945, Crowfoot and Kenyon in 1957) are fragmentary. Another two-room tomb was found at the south end of the row containing this first group. It contained an entrance hall and two hewn pits and a second burial room with a pit and bench. This tomb contained pottery, bronze objects, and spindle whorls, among other items. There was no report for the second group of tombs.[59]

[59] Irit Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," TA 40 (2013): 79-84. Albertz seems to refer to this same tomb as Tomb 103. Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family", 465.

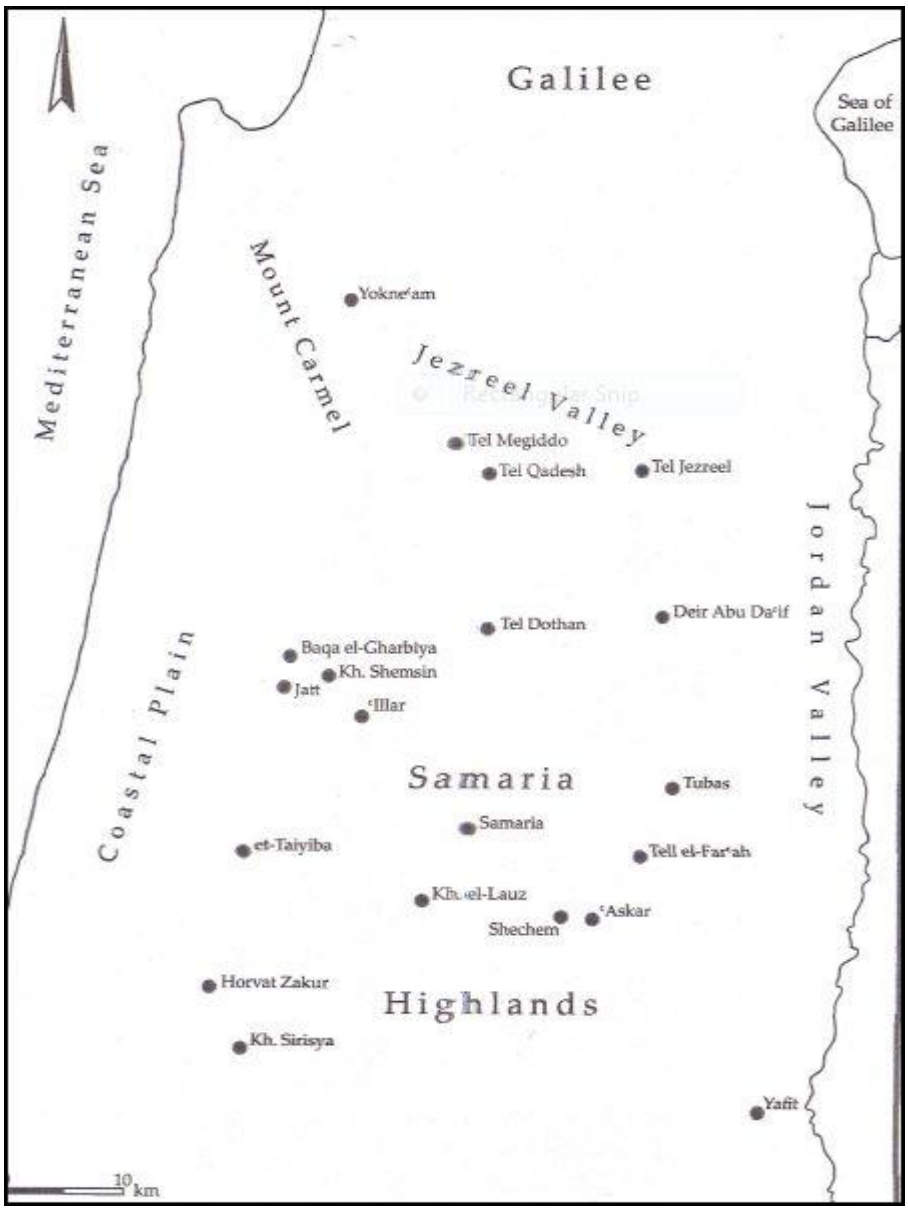

Figure 4: Iron Age Burial Sites in the Samarian Highlands
Irit Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," TA 40 (2013): 73.

Somewhat later (1965–67) excavations on behalf of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities yielded another burial cave that was blocked with large stones. A central burial room and three smaller adjoining rooms were excavated. The tomb had been disturbed in previous centuries and bones and pottery were in general disarray. A wide

variety of pottery was found, including flasks, jugs, dipper juglets, chalices, strainers, and lamps, with dates ranging from the late 9th to the 8th centuries BCE.[60]

Other sites in the highlands yield a wide variety of burial types. Baqa-el-Gharbiya, on the border between the Highlands and the Coastal plain, contains a bench tomb complex of three chambers, and pottery indicating use in the 10th century.[61] Deir Abu Daʿif is a small cave with a rich grouping of pottery dating from the 10th to 7th centuries. As with other tombs, the dating is helped tremendously by the presence of a Cypro-Phoenician bichrome jug belonging to the Cypro-Geometric III period (850–750 BCE). The appearance of this jar has parallels at Beth-Shean, Lachish and Beer-sheba at the end of the 9th century. Khirbet Shemsin has yielded a bench tomb with the remains of a young man (who appears to have been killed violently and whose hand was detached). On the southern bench a woman and two children were lain. This cave is also interesting for the burials of two babies in natural depressions in the floor which were covered with stone slabs. At least five other skeletons were found lying on their backs with their heads pointing east. Dating of pottery in this tomb gives an 8th century date. Other Israelite sites yield a variety of burial types. Tel Dothan for example has interments, jar burials, and bathtub burials all within the boundaries of the town and dating to the 8th and 7th centuries. Like the Tel Khirbet Shemsin burial, one inhumation is of a young man with his hands cut off and buried beneath him.[62] The violent deaths here and an Assyrian "Palace Ware" bowl found in this burial suggest a connection with the Tel Rehov

[60] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 85.
[61] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 72-74.
[62] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 75-76.

burials.[63] Iron Age burial caves are also located at ʿIllar, Tubas, ʿAskar (Tel Balata – Shechem), Khirbet Sirisya, Khirbet el-Lauz, and et-Taiyiba. Unfortunately for many of these there are problems with data collection, and the dreaded words "vague archaeological context," "tomb was in ruins," and "damaged by construction" thread their way throughout the discussions. The et-Taiyiba tomb was in particularly long use, with a few sherds from the Early Bronze I found, a large group of pottery and iron from the 10th century, and re-use during the Hellenic period apparent. Re-use of caves in later periods is common and is also found at Tubas, ʿAskar, Khirbet Sirisya, and Samaria. In the south Ketef Hinnom is notable for its use through from the First Temple, Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods.[64] Re-use in Samaria and its surrounding area ranges from the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine to the Islamic period.

Another type of burial found in Samaria is the 8th to 7th century ceramic "bathtub" coffins. These distinctively shaped containers containing bones and grave goods have been found in pit graves and chamber tombs as well as inside domestic

[63] Free's classification of "Assyrian Palace Ware" here included carinated bowls and does not seem to make a determination if these were actual imports or imitations, something that can now be determined with clay analysis techniques. N. Na'aman makes two interesting arguments regarding these ceramic classifications. One claim is that these may not be Assyrian imitations at all, but Edomite in influence (based in part on the black and red Edomite style decoration seen on many of these items). Secondly Na'aman suggests that if these are imitations then they are probably to be dated to no earlier than the 7th century BCE, based upon the need for examples to imitate and the general theory of the time needed for cultural assimilation to take place after a major cultural/political shift. Nadav Na'aman, "Dating the Appearance of Imitations of Assyrian Ware in Southern Palestine," *TA* 33 (2006): 61-82. Master, *Dothan: Remains from the Tell (1953-1964)*, 87-88, 112-113. Compare also the finds from Tel ʿAroer, which list entire sections of ceramic work as Assyrian/Edomite without distinguishing between the two.Yifat Thareani, David Ilan and Itamar Taxel, *Tel 'Aroer: The Iron Age II Caravan Town and the Hellenistic-Early Roman Settlement : The Avraham Biran (1975-1982) and Rudolph Cohen (1975-1976) Excavations* (ANGSBA 8; Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 2011), 120-150. Despite these caveats, Akkermans affirms that "…the adoption of certain ceramic types originally at home in Assyria seems to accompany the estabilishment of imperial control. These include the fine, thin-walled pottery known as Assyrian Palace Ware…The appearance of these Assyrian pottery types implies economic or cultural connections throughout the empire as well as emulation of elite styles in the imperial heartland." Peter M. M. G. Akkermans and Glenn M. Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c. 16,000-300 BC)* (CWA; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 397.

[64] Gabriel Barkay, "The Riches of Ketef Hinnom," BAR 35: 4-5 (2009): 27.

structures and palaces at numerous locations (Tel el Mazar, Amman, Jerusalem, Tel-Abu Hawam, Tel Dothan, Tel el- Far'ah, Tel Qitaf, Shechem, Megiddo, and Jezreel).[65] We should note here L. Mazow's investigation into the contexts of bathtub containers. She states that the Tel el-Farʿah bathtubs are not found in burial contexts, and that only two of the Megiddo bathtubs (from Schumacher's excavation) are. Mazow points out a circular argument – that having once been identified as a burial form all items of this category are assumed to be involved in burials regardless of context.[66]

The coffin at Jezreel contained no burial offerings. At Jezreel all burial pits were dug in a west-north-west/east-southeast direction and date to the 7th century. Associated gifts with the pit burials include a bronze mirror and an alabaster palate. Interestingly the coffin at Shechem was found in a rock-cut tomb and not as part of a ground interment. This coffin contained a man and a woman. Compare this with one of the bathtub coffin burials at Tel Dothan, which contained one complete skeleton and one additional skull.[67] Yezerski calls bathtub burials a "new funerary tradition" in Judah and Samaria during the 7th century and connects its appearance with Assyrian domination of the area, as does Bloch-Smith. Yezerski bases this interpretation in part on the well attested practice of such burials under the floors of homes in Mesopotamia. The bathtub coffins at Hazor and Dor (and possibly Dothan) were found inside towns. L. Mazow however proposes that the funerary contexts of many of these are not clear. Confirmed bathtub burials are found at Jezreel (Grave 2000, Tel Dothan, Amman (Obj. No 47 and No. 49), Megiddo

[65] Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," 111-114. Master, *Dothan: Remains from the Tell (1953-1964)*, 112-113.
[66] Laura Mazow, "The "Bathtub Coffin" from Tel Qitaf: A Re-Examination of its Context and Function," PEQ 146 (2014): 31-39.
[67] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 86-87; and D. Ussishkin and J. Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1994-96: Third Preliminary Report," *TA* (1997): 32-40; also Master, *Dothan: Remains from the Tell (1953-1964)*, 112-113.

(Schumacher's excavation and Tomb 27), Tell el-Mazar (Grave 23) and Shechem. Others at North Tel-Ashod, Tel el-Farah North, Megiddo, Tell en Nasbeh, and Tel Qitaf are not in burial contexts, and Mazar writes that these are fuller's tubs, representing new technology in the preparation of wool, not a cultural appropriation of burial custom.[68] The argument that other burials in Israel and Judah at this time were primarily extra-mural, and so such items are evidence of foreign influence is damaged, as the intramural presence of these tubs could then be explained by their domestic purpose and not as burial vessels. Bathtub burials increased in Assyria from the 8th century BCE and continued through the 4th century BCE, however, so the possibility of some transference of custom should be maintained.[69] It would not be surprising if the "bathtub" vessel did serve both a domestic and a funerary function. There is good evidence for ceramic types being used in a variety of contexts. The type of vessel used in jar burials, for example, is not exclusive to that use, but is a basic type of large storage jar. The kraters used in Aram for cremation burials are also not of a type exclusively used for burial, but are a common shape found also in plentiful domestic contexts.[70]

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[68] Mazow, "The "Bathtub Coffin" from Tel Qitaf: A Re-Examination of its Context and Function," 31-39. Mazow notes the domestic context of many of these items and the residue of small pebbles in the bottom of some of the tubs . This may suggest the action of agitating wool in hot water with pebbles to create the desired meshing of the fibers to create felt.

[69] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 94-95.. See John Curtis, "Gold Face-Masks in the Ancient Near East," in *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (eds. Stuart Campbell and Anthony Green; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), 226-231 for a description and discussion of Late Assyrian bronze bathtub burials. See also McGuire Gibson, *Excavations at Nippur: Eleventh Season* (OIC 22; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 74, 87 for an excellent example of an Assyrian bathtub burial, though a bit later (Persian or Selucid) than what we are discussing here.

[70] J. Zorn uses the same unfortunate set of assumptions that a specific jar shape was always used for a particular purpose when he discusses "burial jars" from Hazor, a "bathtub coffin" from Megiddo, and a fragment from Dor. The items he discusses were not found in funerary contexts and are not associated with funerary remains. The Hazor jar predates Assyrian presence at the site, and the Megiddo fragment has "unusual" clay and finish "for a coffin" and was reused as the roof of a kiln (highly unlikely if those who reused it knew of its original function). Another fragment from Dor is subjected to the same treatment. Despite having no context Zorn claims "Its presence on the tell…does indicate that some burials were taking place within the cities walls." Despite all of these problems he concludes that Assyrian-Babylonian

Finally, a few more comments should be made regarding discoveries in the Samaritan highlands. The cemeteries at Tel Qadesh and Jatt are so disturbed that the collection of ceramic and metal vessels from the 11th–10th centuries are the primary remains from these sites. A simple burial from Horvat Zakur was found with an adult and a child in a sandstone hewn niche. Offerings there included ceramic pottery and a bronze bracelet (8th century). Finally, two tumuli were excavated from Moshav Yafit, but no vessels were found to date this structure. Vessels above ground and outside the tumuli date to the Late Iron Age [71]

Evidence from Tel Rehov

Throughout the Iron Age, simple pit burials persisted alongside bench tombs as a less labor intensive form of burial. This burial type particularly lent itself to inhumation of the poor and of those who died suddenly and away from their homeland (as in war). Even simple pit burials of the Iron Age can tell us a great deal, and even a single item can be revealing. Of five pit burials at Tel Rehov following the Assyrian conquest, for example, the pottery and grave goods may indicate the identity of the dead.

The excavations at Tel Rehov have been directed by Amhai Mazar since 1997 under the auspices of The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The burials of interest to us are located in Stratum III of the excavation, which constitutes the 8th century city. For two burials the only associated find was an Assyrian style bottle found next to the skeleton. Such bottles are a well known type with cylindrical necks and pointed bases and are found in numerous neo-Assyrian sites. The vessel fits well in the general assemblage

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culture had “strong impact” on funerary practices in the area. Jeffrey Zorn, "More on Mesopotamia Burial Practices in Ancient Israel," IEJ 47 (1997): 214-219.

[71] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 90-91.

of Assyrian ceramics, and items of this type have been found at Fort Shalmaneser, Khirbet Qasrij and, Til Barsip, which was a major Assyrian administrative center.[72]

The simple burials with single Assyrian type bottles also parallel finds from Tel ʻAmal excavated by Levy and Edelstein in the early1970s.[73] Burial 8200 gives more information. This body of a young man was buried with both Assyrian and Judahite style pottery, a bronze Assyrian type bowl, jewelry, and other items, but most strikingly a sword of distinctive Assyrian type (a simple straight sword often depicted as a standard weapon of Assyrian soldiers but without close parallel in the Levant) and a Hebrew seal (interpreted as a valuable looted item).[74] A child burial nearby also contained a single Assyrian shaped bottle. These finds date to after the destruction of the Israelite city.

Another skeleton had only a single local type jug buried with him, and three uneven cut-marks on the skull illustrate a violent death. These burials are distinguished only by pottery and an indication of the type of death. These are very simple burials, containing typically only five to seven vessels and one to three items of personal adornment.[75] When paired with the findings of two unburied and violently murdered bodies in a nearby house of the same period, the burials with Assyrian type ware might be reconstructed as Assyrian soldiers and their family members stationed there after the

[72] Na'aman, "Dating the Appearance of Imitations of Assyrian Ware in Southern Palestine," 71.
[73] Mazar et al., *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. A. Mazar and S. Ahituv, "Tel Rehov in the Assyrian Period: Squatters, Burials, and a Hebrew Seal," in *Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin* (eds. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 265-280.
[74] This is Mazar's claim. Mazar et al., *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. See also Amy Barron, "Late Assyrian Arms and Armour: Art Versus Artifact" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), ii, 46-71, for further discussion of Assyrian sword types and comparison of artifacts with artistic representation. Barron notes that the depiction of swords in Assyrian art is often subject to inaccuracy and distortion due to "a propagandistic viewpoint which sometimes obscures the reality of Assyrian warfare,..artistic license and spatial restraints…(and) the possible unfamiliarity of the artists with changing military technology and methods of construction."
[75] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 459.

destruction.[76] The body buried with only a single Israelite type decanter and cut marks to the skull was most likely a native victim of the invading army.

While we cannot make the claim that "pots equal ethnicity" and we should consider the possibility of general cultural assimilation and imitation as a cause for the occurrence of these styles, these distinctions in grave goods are very interesting.[77] One frequently finds vessels and pottery of imported type associated with Iron Age burials (especially "fine" Cypriot ware) which signify not the ethnicity of the dead but the value placed upon imported objects. In this unusual example we find that the dead are distinguished in these simple burials by the use of pottery. Could this have been intentional in this case – a way to separate the conquerors from the conquered, even in death?

Cave Burials

Tel Halif

Each type of burial tells us a story. The data from Samaria shows variation: the Tel Halif caves and similar cave sites speak of continuity over time. In 1965 at the present site of Kibbutz Lahav near Tel Halif, an intact Iron Age burial cave was found that had indications of use from the 10th to the 6th centuries. Tel Halif was a small site on the border country with Philistia and on the northern fringe of the Negev Desert. At least one other nearby cave had been destroyed by building activity, and other cave openings were visible in the area. At the bottom of an entrance shaft the entrance was blocked by a large square stone. The burial chamber contained a bench at the rear of the chamber. Similar caves have been found at edh-Dhaheriye, near Mevasseret Yerushalayim, at Beth

[76] Mazar and Ahituv, "Tel Rehov in the Assyrian Period: Squatters, Burials, and a Hebrew Seal," 265-280.
[77] Thanks to Dr. Baruch Halpern for the point that "pots do not always equal ethnicity" but should be taken into consideration with other types of evidence.

Shemesh, Lachish, at Tel ʿEitam, Tel en-Naṣbeh and Kibbutz Naḥshonim.[78] The most interesting feature of this tomb is the way in which the repository pit (.7 m. deep) was separated from the bench by a wall of undressed stones that reached almost to the ceiling of the cave. This pit contained approximately 350 complete objects (281 pottery items).[79] In the burial chamber itself were pottery and bones, including parts of five skulls and two complete skeletons on the bench.

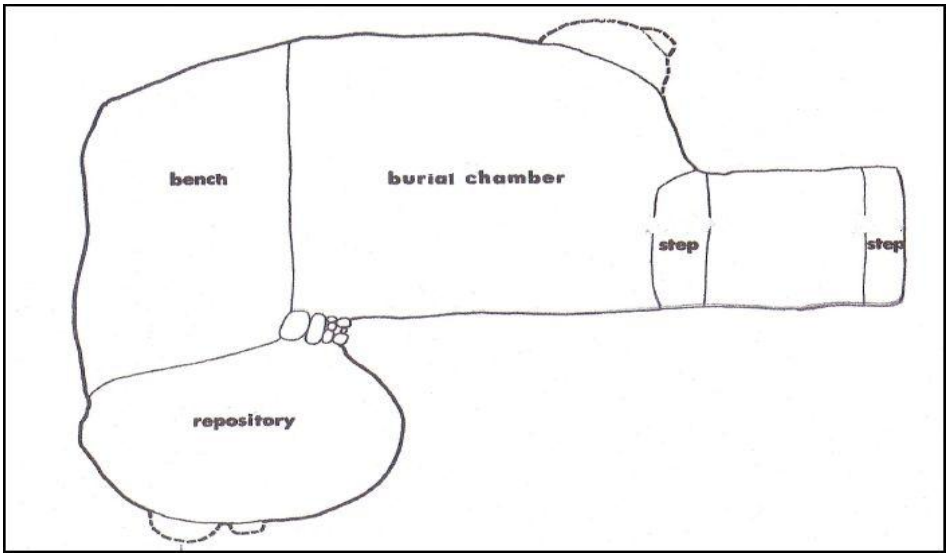

Figure 5: Tel Halif Burial Cave
A. Biran and R. Gophna, "An Iron Age Burial Cave at Tel Halif," IEJ 20 (1970): 154.

The repository pit was piled almost to the ceiling – this seems to have been the purpose of the wall between the two areas, to prevent the repository material from overflowing into the bench area. Pottery found included bowls (often carinated with thickened rims), jugs and juglets (60) and lamps (25). The large number of lamps accords with Block-Smith's comments regarding their importance in cave burials. Many of the pottery items had red slip finish, but black juglets were common here as well. While most

[78] A. Biran and R. Gophna, "An Iron Age Burial Cave at Tel Halif," IEJ 20 (1970): 151-169.
[79] A. Biran and R. Gophna, "An Iron Age Burial Cave at Tel Halif," IEJ 20 (1970): 151-169.

lamps were pottery, one bronze lamp was found. At least two Cypro-Phoenician juglets were also present. In addition a large number of bronze anklets were found (34). We can compare these finds with Beth Shemesh, Tel en-Naṣbeh, and Lachish.[80]

Very striking here was the find of a scarab and a seal bearing the cartouche of Thutmose III. Another scarab with this name was found in a 12th century grave at Jericho (Tomb 11) as well as at Achziv.[81] Two scarabs with the name were also found at the Neo-Babylonian-Hellenistic necropolis at Neirab.[82] This is rather odd that we would find this particular Pharaoh's name in Canaanite, Israelite, Syrian and Phoenician burial contexts hundreds of years after his rule.[83] Thutmose III had a very long rule, engaged in a long and successful series of campaigns in the Levant (the most famous being the battle of Megiddo in year 23 of his reign) and presided over an artistic flourishing that left a distinctive footprint in Egypt.[84] We have seen elsewhere the retention or reuse of very old seals and amulets. Older motifs and foreign (Egyptian) designs were also often replicated by later local craftsmen.[85] Other evidence of Egyptian influence includes a number of

[80] A. Biran and R. Gophna, "An Iron Age Burial Cave at Tel Halif," IEJ 20 (1970): 151-169.
[81] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 38.
[82] B. Carrière and A. Barrois, "Fouilles de l'École Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," *Syria* 8 (1927): 136-142.
[83] See appendix A for the Phoenician material.
[84] The Annals of Thutmose III, also known as Menkheperre (1504-1450 high chronology or 1479-1425 low chronology), are "the longest and most important historical inscriptions in Egypt…Conquests recorded in the Annals involved the most serious military projects undertaken by any Egyptian king – projects so successfully carried out by Thutmose III that he is to be regarded as unquestionably the greatest military leader of ancient Egypt." His 17 campaigns in 18 years resulted in the complete domination of the Levant, including the capture of Megiddo and Carchemish, the crossing of the Euphrates, and the setting of his boundary stone next to that of his father Thutmose II. Thutmose III repeatedly smashed rebellions and alliances in Syria, including those led by Mittani and Kadesh. Gifts and tributes are recorded from Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hittite envoys among many others. James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt; Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest: Vol. II the 18th Dynasty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 163-249. It is probable that the impact of this Pharaoh was so profound that his name and image continued to circulate for centuries as a legendary figure.
[85] In addition to what is described here very old items have been found at Deve Hüyük (a Cappadocian seal much older than the grave in which it was found), and Tell Sabi Abyad (a prehistoric amulet). Note also the burial at Nineveh which included both a gold aureus of Tiberius and an even more ancient cuneiform cylinder seal. Curtis, "Gold Face-Masks in the Ancient Near East," 226-227.

other scarab seals (symbolic of renewal and rebirth) and faience Egyptian style cat amulets (5 of these were found at Tel Halif, one also found at Beth Shemesh).[86] One wonders if these amulets fall into the category of the merely decorative, or if they represent an Egyptian deity (in this case the cat-goddess Bastet – associated earlier with warfare but by the Iron Age with protection) as many other such amulets clearly do. Such amulets have been found over a very wide area.[87]

Distinctions can be made between the group of materials found in the repository at Tel Halif with those found in the burial chamber and on the bench, with the repository material dating to the 10th–9th centuries and the material in the burial chamber dating to the 9th–6th centuries. Biran and Gophna reconstruct two periods of usage for the cave by two different families, with a break in usage in the 9th century.[88]

The similar tombs at Tel en-Naṣbeh (Tomb 54) and Lachish (Tomb 521) are both dated to the 10th century. The cave tomb of Tel en-Naṣbeh yielded the remains (mandibles) of 54 individuals. The tomb had a rich trove of grave goods, including 193 vessels (33 lamps), flint and bronze items including bracelets and rings, iron arrowheads, and cylinder and stamp seals. Tomb 3 at this site had a forecourt leading to a burial chamber with three benches and a slab covered repository. The tomb at Lachish was a shaft tomb with a rectangular chamber and a bench along the north wall. Two skeletons remained on the bench and two were lying before the south wall. In addition to lamps and vessels (lamps, storage jars, jugs) three iron knives and an iron trident were found, as

[86] Biran and Gophna, "An Iron Age Burial Cave at Tel Halif," 168-169. We should also consider the possibility that many of these seals were later products reproducing earlier styles and forms. See Othmar Keel, Christoph Uehlinger et al. *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 466 for a comprehensive discussion of the iconography of seals and other small figures from Israel.

[87] See Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 83-86 for a detailed listing of sites.

[88] Biran and Gophna, "An Iron Age Burial Cave at Tel Halif," 164-168.

well as four seals and two bone spindle whorls.[89] One object of each group (one lamp, one bowl, one jug, and one seal) was associated with each burial. There was a standard assemblage of items expected for each burial, though we see broad variation among other personal items added to these.

Beth Shemesh, Khirbet Beit Lei, The Damascus Gate Caves, and Gezer

While additional evidence from Jerusalem will be discussed further in a separate section, it is appropriate here to mention the burial caves discovered in 1937 just north east of the Damascus Gate. Samaria tells a story of variation, Tel Halif and related caves reveal continuity over time, and now this next set of sites relate to continuity of kinship, with multi-chambered tombs large enough to accommodate multiple members of an extended family. These are hewn from limestone and are comprised of an irregular central chamber from which radiate four burial rooms of various irregular sizes. These caves are provided with three benches along the walls surrounding a central rectangular depression. Pottery assemblages are typical of 8th–7th century Judah. Similar patterns can be found at Beth Shemesh, Khirbet Beit Lei and Cave No. 1 at Khirbet el-Qom. The benches of Cave No. 2 include horseshoe-shaped headrests similar to those found in Silwan, St. Etienne and Khirbet el-Qom. [90] With the advent of these headrests we see continued development of distinctively Israelite/Judean burial practices. All of these

[89] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 461.

[90] Amihai Mazar, "Iron Age Burial Caves North of the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem," IEJ 26 (1976): 1-8. See also discussion below for more on these sites. The significance of these headrests has been discussed by both Barkay and Kloner as well as O. Keel. The "omega" or "Hathor wig" shaped headrests have also been found at the Shoulder of Hinnom cemetery. Barkay and Kloner suggest that these represent the "Hathor wig" shape familiar from Egypt. Keel instead looks for the origin of the shape in Mesopotamian imagery associated with the womb and birth. While both suggestions have a logical shape to them, they rely heavily on the transference of imagery and meaning from Egypt and Mesopotamia. Keel does support his interpretation with biblical texts suggesting an association of the earth as a womb for both body and soul (Ps 139:8-15 and Job 1:21), but the suggestions remain of necessity very speculative. Othmar Keel, "The Peculiar Headrest for the Dead in First Temple Times," BAR 13 (1987): 50-53.

seem to have been family tombs which were planned to be enlarged over time. This could mean that like the Tel Halif group, the tombs were planned to be in use over a long period, but it could also designate different chambers for different branches of an extended family. This is further illustrated by the potential for additional burial chambers leading from the central room at both Khirbet el-Qom and Khirbet Beit Lei. At the latter this can be seen from the outlined incision that had been prepared for a future entrance that was not completed. Few items were found in the Damascus Gate tombs; only fragmentary skeletal remains and a small number of jugs and juglets were recovered. More material was found in one of the repository pits (D) which yielded six lamps and more jugs and juglets dating from the 8th–7th centuries.[91]

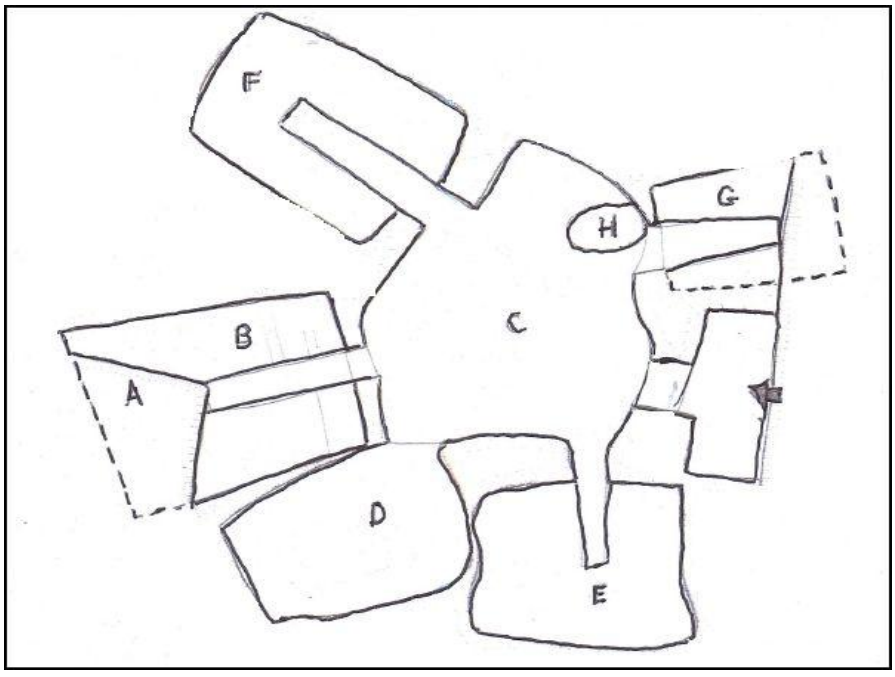

Figure 6: Damascus Gate Burial Cave 1
Amihai Mazar "Iron Age Burial Caves North of the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem," IEJ 26 (1975): 2.

[91] Mazar, "Iron Age Burial Caves North of the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem," 1-8.

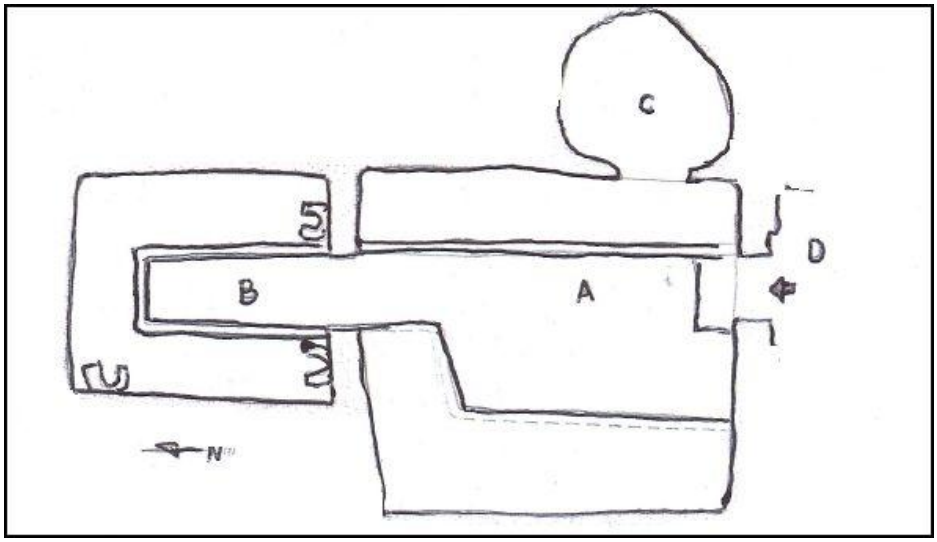

Figure 7: Damascus Gate Burial Cave 2
Amihai Mazar, "Iron Age Burial Caves North of the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem," IEJ 26 (1975): 6.

Like the Damascus Gate caves, Gezer tomb 59 also follows a pattern of a central chamber with 5 recesses. Gezer lies about halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, in the north section of the Judean foothills. The Gezer tombs were first excavated by R.A.S. Macalister between 1902 and 1909, and later nine more Late Bronze and Early Iron Age tombs were excavated by Raymond-Charles Weill in 1914 and 1924. Much of the data from the Weill excavations has been lost, but A. Maeir has collected and published the finds from the excavation, including 186 vessels, the types and proportions of which fit soundly into what is expected from Late Bronze and Early Iron funerary contexts.[92] This tomb contained the remains of more than 30 individuals, with most grave goods found in one recess which was probably used as a repository. This recess contained over 100

[92] Aren M. Maeir, *Bronze and Iron Age Tombs at Tel Gezer, Israel: Finds from Raymond-Charles Weill's Excavations in 1914 and 1921* (BAR IS 1206; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 1-3.

vessels, some of which were Philistine and some Cypro-Phoenician black on red ware. Also included were 40 lamps, rings, knives and other items including a Bes amulet.[93]

Notable also among the finds are more spindle whorls, a bronze, tanged blade, and an Egyptian 18th dynasty glass vessel. Four stamp seals, amulets, and three scarabs were also recovered. One of these scarabs dates to the Middle Kingdom, and Maeir construes this as either an heirloom or an example of a "well known phenomenon in which earlier Egyptian objects were traded throughout the Ancient Near East, and appear in contexts that are much later than their original period of production and initial usage."[94]

Tel Beit Mirsim

Tel Beit Mirsim is in the eastern region of the Judean foothills. Excavations here were carried out by W.F. Albright in the 1920s and 1930s. Like Gezer it has both Bronze and Iron Age remains. It was only in the 1970s that the necropolis of the tel was located, and salvage projects were undertaken from 1978–1982 by D. Alon, E. Braun, and D. Bahat. As was the case with Khirbet el-Qom, Deve Hüyük, and other important sites, all tombs had been looted prior to excavation.[95] Even after looting, however, some of the tombs yielded rich finds: Tomb 24 for example held 200 pottery vessels, Tomb 500 about 150, and Tomb 100 approximately 600 (all of these were Middle and Late Bronze Age tombs). Most of the tombs were created from natural caves and enlarged limestone cavities.

This group further illustrates the points already made regarding the gradual and sometimes subtle nature of the transition between Bronze and Iron Age burials and

[93] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 561.
[94] Maeir, *Bronze and Iron Age Tombs at Tel Gezer, Israel*, 62.
[95] Ben-Arieh and Alon, *Bronze and Iron Age Tombs at Tell Beit Mirsim*, 1.

continuity over time. Pottery forms are often the only way to distinguish between Bronze and Iron Age burials here. Five tombs are dated as Middle Bronze, two as Late Bronze, and four as Iron II, with another three with both Late Bronze and Early Iron Age material. There is some indication of change, however: only the Iron Age tombs show "significant investment" in shaping the tombs, while the Bronze Age caves are left largely in their natural state.[96] A number of both the Bronze and Iron Age tombs have sealing stones. Benches are not described in any of these cave tombs. Tomb 1, that has both Late Bronze and Early Iron material, had a central support pillar, on top of which boulders were stacked to assist in supporting the ceiling. From the Iron Age tombs the pottery assortment of lamps, bowls, jugs and juglets, often red-slipped, can be compared to Lachish III and Tel Halif 16,17, and 20, giving us dates of the 9th and 8th centuries.[97]

Beth Shan also has tombs with mixed Late Bronze and Early Iron Age material. Some of these tombs seem to have been intended only for a single burial in contrast to the burial of multiple individuals and generations in family tombs as described above. The Beth Shan necropolis is comprised of over 200 tombs cut over a period of many centuries. The tombs encompass a wide variety of forms, including single chamber shaft tombs and multi-chambered tombs of a variety of forms.[98]

In addition to the large number of Early to Late Bronze Age tombs, the so called "Coffin Group" from Beth Shan includes two tombs from the Late Bronze, four tombs yielding material of mixed date, and five tombs (Tombs 7, 66, 69, 202, and 227) which

[96] Ben-Arieh and Alon, *Bronze and Iron Age Tombs at Tell Beit Mirsim*, 3-10.
[97] Ben-Arieh and Alon, *Bronze and Iron Age Tombs at Tell Beit Mirsim*, 3-10.
[98] Eliezer D. Oren, *The Northern Cemetery of Beth Shan* (MMUMP; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 307. Oren relates the Beth Shan site more closely to Early Bronze burials in the Northern Levant and coastal Syria. The Megiddo Early Bronze cemetery is particularly noted as a good parallel.

are assigned exclusively to the Iron I period of the 12th –11th centuries.[99] The "Coffin Group" takes its name from the nearly fifty clay sarcophagi found in 11 funerary deposits. All of these had been damaged and often smashed by looters. The damage was so severe that only two coffins were complete enough to merit restoration and display. An exceptionally large amount of Egyptian-influenced pottery and grave goods were associated with these finds, including two shawabti figurines. Also discovered was a (possible) gold mouth plate (Tomb 202). The coffins are cylindrical in shape with the face, arms and hands modeled in relief in either "naturalistic" or "grotesque" style. The very unique nature of these coffins – with strong Egyptian elements but locally made and with distinctive designs on the heads – has led to the idea that some of these (in the "grotesque" category) represent the final resting place of members of a group of Sea Peoples, while others were for members of Egyptian troops garrisoned at Beth Shan. Both groups may have served as part of the garrison.[100] These coffins have a few parallels from Amman and Lachish (Tomb 570), and the facial segment of a similar coffin was found at Tel Midrass. Finally, three more anthropoid coffins come from Tel el-Far´ah. These were previously interpreted as being Philistine burials, but this is dismissed by E. Oren primarily due to the lack of any evidence of Philistine pottery connected with the coffins.[101]

Thus far we have examined a variety of practices over a fairly lengthy time period. The purpose of such a survey is to build a picture of the types of stories these burials tell and to see how they fit together. Several important points have emerged

[99] Eliezer D. Oren, *The Northern Cemetery of Beth Shan,* 129-131 Oren compares these to the "900" and "500" cemeteries at Tell el-Far´ah
[100] Eliezer D. Oren, *The Northern Cemetery of Beth Shan,* 132-139
[101] Eliezer D. Oren, *The Northern Cemetery of Beth Shan,* 140-142

already. One major feature we see is the continuity among Bronze and Iron Age practices. We have also seen evidence of a variety of burial types persisting throughout the Iron Age, with pit and cave burials as well as jar, bathtub, and clay coffin burials being represented. A third important point is the use of cave tombs to inter many generations of a family or possibly multiple related family groups. Finally we see that the inclusion of pottery and personal items is customary with almost every burial regardless of type.

The balance of this chapter will concern the most dominant form of burial in Iron Age Israel (as least insofar as archaeological remains attest), the bench tomb. The story these tombs will tell concern Israel and Judah as now distinct – politically, culturally, and religiously. Much of our evidence for the following discussion will come from Judah and the areas near Jerusalem. The focus of these stories concerns politics, wealth, and religion.

Wealth, Status, and the Bench tomb

While our earlier discussion has included a number of earlier examples of bench tomb burials as they appear in the section of cave burials (from the 12th to 8th centuries BCE with some examples being used into the 7th and 6th centuries BCE), we need to turn our attention now to the form as it develops into a distinctively Israelite type. The bench tomb appears in the southern Levant by the 13th century BCE (at Tell Aitun, Gezer, Sarafend, Lachish, and Pella) and at coastal sites such as Tell el-Ajjul and Sidon. This type becomes increasingly common through the sixth century. The tombs display a wide variety of patterns and features and development over time. The bench tomb has come to

be seen as a characteristically Israelite form of burial, particularly in Judah.[102] This type of tomb is represented at about forty sites comprising close to 300 tombs.[103] W. Dever constructs a typology of two major tomb types with significant variation within each type. One type has walk-in lateral chambers, and the other has niches or benches which are reached from the central chamber. Both are best known from the 8th to 6th century and only in Judah.[104]

Bloch-Smith and Gonen both distinguish between arcosolia (those tombs with carved arched recesses) and bench tombs. Bloch-Smith states that arcosoli and loculi (those tombs with carved niches for placement of the body) were intended for single permanent burials, whereas benches were used with the intention of relocating older remains and using the benches again for later burials.[105]

Although the bench tomb is characteristic of burial in Iron Age Israel and it is also the most durable form, a large proportion of the population was certainly buried in more simple graves that did not endure over time. Dever argues that the bench tomb is a marker of wealth and status.[106] He describes features of these tombs in the late Iron Age that mark them as monuments to the wealthy, such as the quality of construction and details such as benches and carved head and foot rests (for example Ketef Hinnom from the 7th–5th centuries BCE, and Silwan (Siloam) from the 8th century BCE). The size of the tombs, which sometimes had multiple chambers and finely finished facades, can also be a

[102] Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," 105-115., Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 51.
[103] James F. Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," JNES 70 (2011): 39.
[104] William Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," HUCA 40-41 (1969-70): 150.
[105] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 41.
[106] William Dever, "Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II Period on the Eve of Destruction," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 422.

marker of wealth and status. The inscriptions associated with a few of these tombs (discussed below) suggest to Dever both literacy and "well known Phoenician customs."[107] Yezerski disputes that the bench tomb indicates wealth, pointing to numerous tombs in Samaria and some in Judah which show "poor execution" and "sloppy work" which indicates that the tombs were not markers of status (see the discussion below of an-Nabi Danyal).[108] The bench tomb as an indicator of status is probably more likely the case in Judah than Samaria. The finer rock cut tombs near Jerusalem with their carved details probably were markers of wealth and status for those associated with the royal city, but the modified caves of Samaria reflect traditional Late Bronze/Early Iron Age practice.

An-Nabi Danyal

Germane to this discussion are the unexcavated but carefully described caves of an-Nabi Danyal, a site located south of Bethlehem and just east of Maqam an-Nabi Danyal. Iron II pottery sherds and four jar handles bearing the LMLK seal impression (plus one with a rosette impression) give an 8^{th}–7^{th} century date. This is the largest number of burial caves in one area in the Hebron hills.[109]

[107] William Dever, "Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II Period on the Eve of Destruction," 421
[108] Yezerski, "Iron Age Burial Customs in the Samaria Highlands," 92.
[109] David Amit and Irit Yezerski, "An Iron Age II Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," IEJ 51 (2001): 171-193.

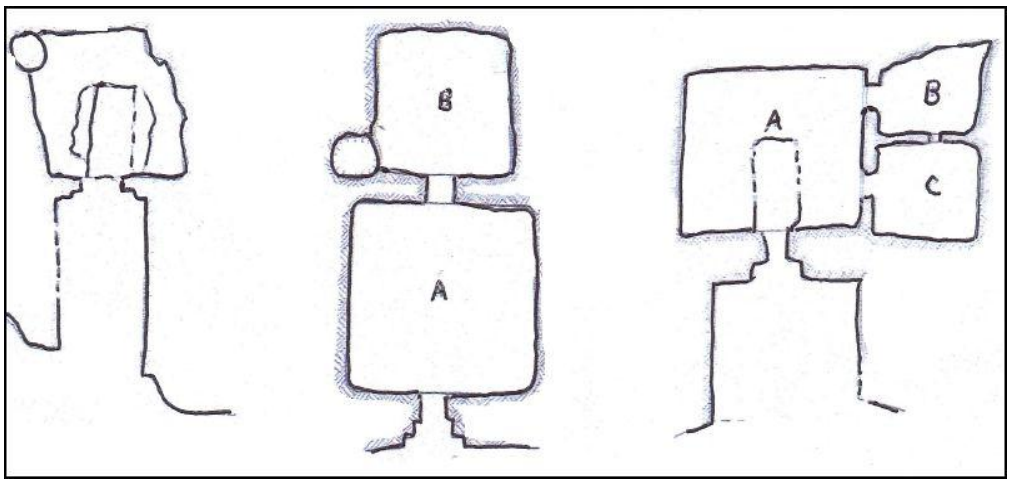

Figure 8: an-Nabi Danyal Burial Caves 1–3
David Amit and Irit Yezerski "An Iron Age Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," IEJ 51 (2001): 171-193.

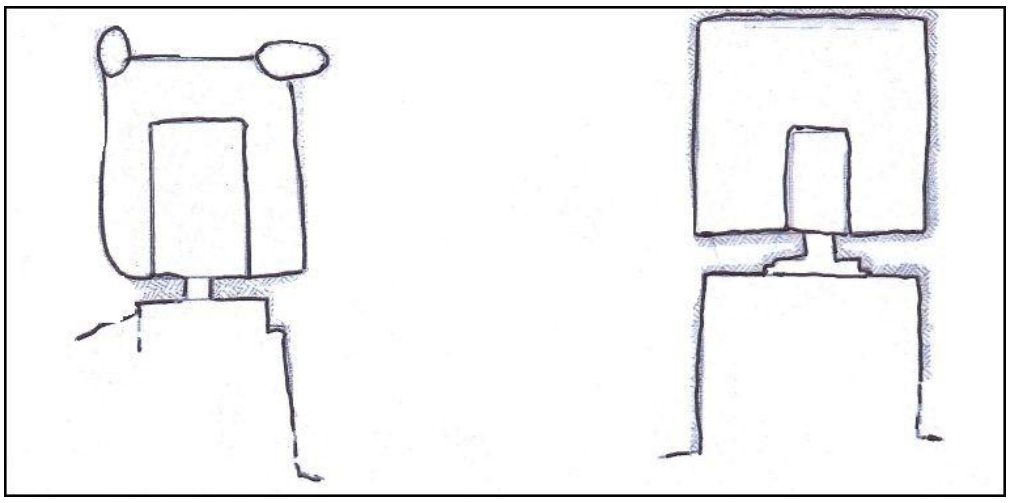

Figure 9: an-Nabi Danyal Burial Caves 4–5
David Amit and Irit Yezerski "An Iron Age Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," IEJ 51 (2001): 171-193.

There are 12 Iron Age burial caves here, eight of which contain single burial chambers and the other four that contain two or three chambers each (Caves 2,3,6, and 10). While there are a number of interesting features at an-Nabi Danyal, "it is evident that most burial chambers (here) contained burial installations typical of Iron Age II Judean

burial caves, such as benches and repositories."[110] Also fitting this type are the small square front chamber openings, and side chamber entrances which are high and rectangular or trapezoid. What is interesting about this report are the descriptions of the work itself. Cave 1 is described as "crudely hewn" with an asymmetrical burial chamber, but containing a "finely wrought" circular repository. Cave 2 has straight sides and a "carefully hewn" repository. Cave 3 has a "carefully hewn" entrance recess. In nearly all the caves the marks of the tools are visible. The workers did not smooth the surface to provide a polished finish. The point here is that the funereal architecture is quite plain, with no hewn banisters or head rests, and the work is certainly competent but not polished. This may mean that this large group of tombs were not representative of elite status or great wealth, although since these have not been excavated we do not have grave goods to add to our data. All tombs appear to have been robbed in antiquity, so finds may be minimal.[111]

There is a second point to be made here, and that regards variation. Amit and Yezerski call these tombs "architecturally homogeneous" and therefore contemporaneous, all created within a short time period.[112] While it is true that the tombs do fit well within the typology of Judean bench tombs, almost every one has some distinguishing features. Briefly we can review these as follows: Cave 2 has a double recessed entrance frame. Cave 3 has a rock–cut covered forecourt and a sealing stone, and triangular candle niches (compare Tomb 2 at Khirbet el-Qom and Caves 2,3, and 4 at Tel ʿEitun, as well as Tomb 5 at Tel en-Naṣbeh). Cave 4 has a smooth façade with a

[110] David Amit and Irit Yezerski, "An Iron Age II Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," 192.
[111] David Amit and Irit Yezerski, "An Iron Age II Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," 171-176, 190.
[112] David Amit and Irit Yezerski, "An Iron Age II Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," 171-193.

projecting hewn frame and two small repositories. Cave 5 possesses a hewn courtyard, a double recessed frame, and unusually wide benches (1.3 to 1.7m). Cave 5 also has no repository. Cave 6 has two burial chambers and a large repository. Cave 7 like Cave 3 has two triangular candle niches. These are located near the ceiling on either side of the entrance. Cave 10 is provided with a covered quadrangular vestibule which is divided into two entrances by a hewn square column and two sealing stones. Cave 10 also has particularly small chamber entrances. Cave 11 has two cup marks along the terrace next to this cave. Such marks are also located elsewhere throughout the site but Amit and Yezerski do not specify where. We can compare Cave 20 at Ketef Hinnom for this. Cave 11 also has a hewn pediment-like decoration over the entrance.[113]

While the bench tomb itself might not be a mark of wealth, what Dever is ultimately saying accords with the work of Levy, Alon, Binford, and others that the rank possessed by an individual is reflected in the amount of energy expended in burial. This energy or "corporate involvement" as it has been termed, includes labor such as that required to carve out these tombs, as well as the value of the material things left with the body of the dead. The problem with this is the distinction between status and wealth, as they often co-occur. One might ask if it is status, wealth, or the combination of both which merit the greater expenditure of energy on behalf of the dead. One of the ways in which this distinction might be made is to consider the customs of mourning that accompany the burial. Lewis notes for example the funeral of Abner in 2 Sam 3:31 which describes the bier, mourning rituals, and a procession to the tomb[114] Comparison can be made between the public mourning for kings (the death of the kings of Israel and Judah

[113] David Amit and Irit Yezerski, "An Iron Age II Cemetery and Wine Presses at an-Nabi Danyal," 171-193.
[114] Lewis, *How Far can Texts Take Us?*, 178.

will be particularly addressed in chapter 5) and the condemnation of the prophet Isaiah of Shebna the steward for his tomb (Isa 22:15-16). In this case Shebna has sufficient wealth, but in the eyes of Isaiah insufficient status to merit such a burial despite his high office.

Evidence from Jerusalem – Repositories and the Bench Tomb

To further illustrate this discussion of the later bench tombs we can point to seven tombs from just outside of Jerusalem which have been discussed by A. Kloner. The tombs were excavated and surveyed from the 1950s to the 1980s.[115] In addition to the three bench pattern and repository, these tombs have an interesting additional feature. They are entered by two or three steps leading down into the tomb, at the center of which is a "standing pit" – a recessed area enabling a person to stand upright in the space. Three of these tombs have evidence of being sealed with large stones (one stone found in situ, one with the blocking stones nearby, and one possessing a "frame" in which a rolling stone could be placed.

One seemingly Israelite innovation in the 7th and 6th century BCE is the use of designated pits in the corner of the chamber into which the older bones were placed.[116] These repository pits commonly contain the remains of between fifteen and one hundred individuals. The pits also contained the small objects that had remained with the body while it resided on the bench of the tomb. Thus we have rich evidence for not just the shape and form of the tomb, but the contents as well.

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[115] The sites are listed by Kloner as follows: 1) Burial cave north of Jerusalem, in the Maʾalot Dafnah neighborhood 2) Burial cave at Givʾat Ram, in the Presidents Garden 3) Burial cave between the Egged bus station and Binyanei Haʾuma 4) Burial cave at the military cemetery on Mt. Herzl 5) Burial cave between Beit Hanina and Nabi Samwil 6) Burial cave at Suba/Tzova northwest of Tell Sobah 7) Burial cave at Khirbet el-Khamis. Amos Kloner, "Iron Age Burial Caves in Jerusalem and its Vicinity," BAIAS 19/20 (2001): 95-118. Bloch-Smith also notes three tombs at Mamilla, near Haʿemeq Street from the 6th-5th centuries. Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," 236.

[116] Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 239-240.

Unplundered graves included personal items such as beads, jewelry, imported Cypriot and Egyptian pottery, scarabs and seals, model furniture, and terra-cotta figurines. Most Iron Age cave, chamber and bench tombs contained terracotta models. The rattle and the female pillar figurine became increasingly common from the 10th century onwards. Birds, dogs, horses, beds, and other model items also appear. Dogs may have been associated with warding off demons, and horses may have been associated with the sun-cult.[117] At Yunus and Deve Hüyük I such animal figures are found only in the graves of children and there can be viewed as personal possessions or playthings (these cemeteries will be examined in detail in chapter 3).

The terracotta images of a female form (the pillar figurines) deserve further discussion. These figures appear widely in throughout the Levant, sometimes with divine symbols and sometimes without. These are quite different than the Early Iron Age plaque type figurines found at Tel Zeror and Tell Beit-Mirsim, which can be connected with precedents in the Late Bronze Age.[118] Plaque figures which are slightly different in form,

[117] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 101. Such figurines have been found as far south as Tel ʿAroer in the southern Beersheba Valley. Female heads of pillar figurines, classified as "Judean" (despite a certainly mixed population in this area) have been found here in Iron IIB-C stratigraphic contexts (8th-7th centuries), as well as more crudely formed terracotta animal figures. These were found in domestic and industrial areas. Rattles here were also found in domestic contexts in contrast to the cultic and burial contexts of Israel and Judah. Thareani, Ilan and Taxel, *Tel 'Aroer: The Iron Age II Caravan Town and the Hellenistic-Early Roman Settlement*, 261. One burial in ʿAroer also contained a zoomorphic figurine. The ethnicity of this burial cannot be determined with certainty due to the liminal nature of the territory and the very few finds (only the rim of a bowl under the head and this figurine were directly associated with the burial) which do not lend themselves to clear categorization. Thareani, Ilan and Taxel, *Tel 'Aroer: The Iron Age II Caravan Town and the Hellenistic-Early Roman Settlement*, 188-205.

[118] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 85-103. Bloch-Smith is referring to pillar figurines, but also of interest regarding the problem of interpretation is Miriam Tadmor, "Female Cult Figurines in Late Canaan and Early Israel: Archaeological Evidence," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. Tomoo Isida; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1979), 139-173. Female "Plaque figurines" that depict a nude woman with her hands by her side are found in Late Bronze Age burials, such as Deir el-Balah. These have been interpreted as being human figures – women lying on beds. This contrasts with another type of plaque figure in which the woman has a "Hathor wig" and holds a long stemmed flower (such as the item found in the Hecht collection (H726) or snakes. These females are sometimes depicted standing on a lion or horse (as on the example from the temple at Lachish). These symbols taken together are interpreted as representing divinity, and these plaques are termed "Astarte

and seemingly influenced more by Phoenician style, have been recovered at Hazor, Megiddo, Beth-Shean, Tell el-Farʿah, and Taanach, but are not found in Iron Age Judean tombs. Instead the pillar type figurines are more common, particularly by the end of the 8th century.[119] More than 800 of these items have been recovered in both Judah and Israel, dating to the end of the 8th and entire 7th century, in both domestic and funerary contexts. The clear majority are found in rooms of houses, with another large proportion of finds in fills, surfaces and debris, pools, pits, and silos. What we draw from this is that these are not specifically funerary in nature, but fall into the category of personal possessions that might be buried with an individual. These are found in larger numbers in Judah than in Israel, with almost half being located in Jerusalem. Figurines and fragments have been found in graves at Beth Shemesh (Tombs 1 and 5) and Lachish, Mamila (Tomb 5) (Jerusalem), Jericho.[120] They are usually assigned a loosely defined role in "personal piety" and connected with the worship of Asherah[121]

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plaques." By contrast Tadmor interprets the "women on beds" as representing mortuary plaques. Keel and Uehlinger disagree, claiming that the shape of the plaques vary and do not necessarily represent beds, the items are not always found in a funerary context but more frequently in domestic settings, and the stylistic connection with plaques that are widely accepted as representing divine figures is too strong to ignore. Keel, Uehlinger et al., *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 97-104.

[119] Tadmor, *Female Cult Figurines in Late Canaan and Early Israel: Archaeological Evidence*, 139-173. Keel, Uehlinger et al., *Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 202, 325-336. See Sabatino Moscati, *The Phoenicians* (Milan: Bompiani, 1988), 328-353 for a discussion of the creation and distribution of Phoenician terracotta figures with many excellent plates.

[120] Raz Kletter, *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*, (BAR IS 636; Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996), 57-63.

[121] Keel, Uehlinger et al., *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 324-336. Other suggestions have been: mortal figure (human woman), toy, fertility goddess or mother goddess, or magical figurine. Kletter singles out Asherah as the identification of these figures, as Astarte was more associated with Phoenicia and Israel, not Judah. Kletter also accepts the possible magical function of these figures, but like other scholars gives little evidence to support this claim other than that they fit the type of a common good luck or magical figure in that they are of private ownership and cheap material and show loose analogies to Egyptian and Mesopotamian usage. There are no clear references for the usage of such figures in Judah. Kletter, *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*, 73-81. See Kathleen Kenyon, *Jerusalem: Excavating 3000 Years of History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 101-104 for some of these figures from domestic contexts in Jerusalem. She states that these were "fertility figures" or "mother-goddess types". B Halpern notes that the distribution for these pillar figurines in a domestic

Returning to our discussion of the use of the repository itself, J. Osborne argues that this movement of bones was not the mere shoving aside of older skeletons to make room for re-use of the benches of the tomb, but were part of a more formal "secondary mortuary practice" with social and spiritual significance.[122] For Osborne this process included temporary deposition of the body separate from a final burial location, isolation of the burial from the place of habitation, offerings placed with the body, and belief in the contaminating power of the decaying corpse. These aspects are fairly easy to identify in the attested burial practices of Israel and the laws of the biblical text relating to the defiling nature of a corpse. For this aspect compare the Priestly law of Num 19: 11–22, and Deut 21:23 (an unburied body). The most extensive evidence for support of the defiling nature of a corpse (or bones) comes from the descriptions of the reforms of King Josiah. 2 Kings 23:13 describes the burning of bones upon an open air altar by King Josiah as a way to defile the altar (but consider the narrative value of this as a story of prophetic fulfillment of 1 Kgs 13:2). 2 Kgs 23:14 relates the breaking of sacred pillars and wooden images and the filling of their "places" with human bones. An additional related passage is Josiah's burning of the wooden image from the temple in 2 Kgs 23:6 and scattering of its ashes on the graves of the common people.

While these passages do support the idea of a corpse as defiling, we should also recall with Albertz that Jer 31:4–5 allows mourners to bring offerings to the temple, which indicates that mourning itself did not make one unclean.[123] Thus it is not the state of mourning but the association with the physicality of death that creates an unclean state.

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context in Judah is about one per compound. He suggests that this may indicate a specific function for such an item. Baruch Halpern, personal communication, June 22, 2015.

[122] Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," 35-53.

[123] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 435.

Also relevant here is Exod 43:7–9, in which YHWH lodges a complaint that the *pgrm* (graves, corpses, possibly funerary steles) of the kings are next to the temple precinct "They profaned my holy name by their abominations which they committed." Here also the proximity of death (a grave, a corpse) to something holy (an altar, a tithe) is defiling. For further discussion of the biblical material see chapter 5.

Other claims by Osborne regarding perception of the place and attitude of the soul during this process are much less easily evidenced and rest upon unwarranted anthropological extrapolation.[124] For the claim of the movement of bones to the repository pits as a secondary mortuary practice, there is no direct description of such secondary funerary rites in the text, although the archaeology does clearly show the movement of bones from the bench to the tomb bone repository. Lacking textual evidence we cannot make assumptions regarding a spiritual or ritual meaning associated with this practice.

The repeated phrase "to be gathered to one's people" (Gen 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33; Num. 20:24, 26; 27:13; 31:2; Deut. 32:50), which Osborne understands in a literal way as the gathering of bones into the repositories, is much better understood as a euphemism for death in general. Each of these occurs in P and is a particularly priestly way of expressing death. It illustrates continued connection between generations, an

[124] While Osborne's concluding comments regarding the importance of the family tomb's relationship with the kinship structure of Israel are sound, in the course of his article he makes another claim that oversteps the bounds of evidence. Osborne claims that the text shows the spirit of the newly dead as being in a hostile or malicious liminal state prior to becoming a peaceful or beneficent ancestor. For this the only text he uses is 1 Sam 28:3-25, the raising of the spirit of Samuel. Samuel's words and the response of Saul and the necromancer are very specific to the circumstances of the story. Nowhere else in the text or in tomb inscriptions from Israel is there a suggestion that the dead are malicious. Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," 39. See also Brian B. Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part Four* (eds. Alan Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 97-98.

important concept that will be discussed later in chapter 5.[125] In addition to the biblical texts we can compare the use of a similar phrase in the ninth century Aramaic Tel Dan stele: "and my father lay down, he went to his [ancestors]."[126] This statement about death and burial in Damascus, while from a neighboring state, also supports the idea that such phrasing was a widely used euphemism for death itself, and not a reference to the literal placement of bones. Going to/being gathered to the fathers/kin/ancestors has positive connotations of a "good death" and burial in the family tomb, but going beyond that is not warranted.

There is some variation in the form of the repository pit. In several cases in the Jerusalem tombs the repository pit is cut into the stone benches themselves where the "feet" of two benches meet. The tombs circling Jerusalem are often constructed with one burial chamber and three benches. The tombs which possessed countable skeletal remains contain the remains of between 6 and 15 individuals.[127]

One of these tombs, the cave at Giv'at Ram in the President's Garden, included a separate niche-like chamber, about 2m in length and 1.1m wide, which may have served as a repository for the main chamber.[128] The pottery remains from these tombs indicate

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[125] Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," 45. see also Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003), 9 for linguistic consistencies within sources.

[126] The proposed author for this inscription is King Hazael of Aram-Damascus (per Biran and Naveh's reconstruction). Other authors have been suggested, including Hazael's predecessor Adad-idri or Bar-Hadad, his son. These identifications are possible however only if one rejects the joining of fragments A and B. Sigurður Hafþórsson, *A Passing Power: An Examination of the Sources for the History of Aram-Damascus in the Second Half of the Ninth Century B.C.* (ConB 54; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2006), 49-64. See also Baruch Halpern, "The Stela from Dan: Epigraphic and Historical Considerations," BASOR 296 (1994): 63-80.

[127] The cave at Ma'alot Dafnah contained the remains of 6 people, the cave at the Military cemetery on Mt Herzl contained at least two individuals, and the cave at Suba/Tzova held 15 individuals. Kloner, "Iron Age Burial Caves in Jerusalem and its Vicinity," 95-118.

[128] Caves with repositories carved into the meeting point of two benches include the cave in the Ma'alot Dafnah neighborhood, the cave between the Egged Bus Station and Binyanei Ha'Uma, the cave at the Military Cemetery on Mt Herzl. Kloner, *Iron Age Burial Caves in Jerusalem and its Vicinity*, 95-118.

an extended period of use from the late Iron Age and (for several tombs) continued use or re-use into the Hellenistic period. Two cooking pots dated to the Herodian period were recovered from the burial cave at the Military Cemetery on Mt Herzl. Fragments of a Hellenistic period juglet and cooking pot, as well as the dating of several plum stones found in the cave between Beit Hanina and Nabi Samwil, also prove later use. Another point of interest from one of these tombs (the tomb at Suba/Tzova) is a hole bored through the burial bench into the repository below which may have served for the draining of fluids from the bench or perhaps for the pouring out of offerings (though this is very speculative).[129] All of these caves are located within 1.5 to 4km of the city of Jerusalem. This close proximity indicates that the tombs were used by residents of the city and its close environs – the farmsteads and rural areas associated with the worked land around Jerusalem. The closest villages surrounding Jerusalem – Anatoth, Gibeah, Ramat Rahel, Mizpeh Kerem, and others are all about 5–6km out from the city. These villages possessed their own burial grounds[130]

Silwan (Siloam)

The necropolis at Silwan on the east side of the Kidron valley has yielded 50 partially preserved tombs. Most of the tombs are cut into two limestone cliffs, called the "upper" and "lower" cliffs, and the tombs are arranged in two roughly parallel but curved lines, one above the other. The tombs served as quarries in the Late Roman period and as housing for Byzantine Christian monks. Later the Arab village incorporated many of the tombs into homes, businesses, cisterns, and storage spaces. One tomb (22) called the

[129] Kloner, *Iron Age Burial Caves in Jerusalem and its Vicinity*, 95-118. The second suggestion is my own speculation – this could be a way to offer drink offerings to the ancestors whose remains are contained in the repository below.
[130] Kloner, *Iron Age Burial Caves in Jerusalem and its Vicinity*, 95-118.

"Tomb of Isaiah" after a Greek inscription found there, now serves as a Franciscan church entered through Tombs 23 and 24. All of this activity greatly altered and sometimes destroyed the original form of the tombs.[131] The area has been investigated by scholars such as C. Schich, C. Clermont-Ganneau, A. Reigenberg, N. Avigad, S. Loffreda, D. Ussishkin, and others. Investigation was carried out despite friction with the villagers who have been called "hostile, lawless, and unscrupulous ruffians" by investigators.[132] Two inscriptions have been found here, dating to the 8th century, which will be discussed below along with the rest of the inscriptional data from Israel.[133]

While the majority of scholarship dates the inscriptions and tombs to this time, Stanislaus Loffreda has made an argument for the later dating of the tomb complex. While cave and bench tombs are characteristic of burials in Israel and Judah during the Iron Age, there are features of the Silwan tombs that are distinctive and the combination of which, for Loffreda, point toward a late Hellenistic or Roman date. Particularly the gabled roofs and scooped-out "trough-like" benches, some of which have an edge to support a cover (for example as found in Tomb 2, 6, and 9 , 10, 13, and 16) are not found elsewhere in Iron Age tombs of Judah. Loffreda also includes carved "pillows" in his set of features not found in Judah until after the close of the Iron Age (as found for example

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[131] David Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1993), 17-21. Ussishkin's survey and description of all tombs is of tremendous value for understanding the necropolis.

[132] David Ussishkin, "The Necropolis from the Time of the Kingdom of Judah at Silwan, Jerusalem," BA 33 (1970): 33-46. It seems obvious that the two groups had radically differing perspectives and agendas. The "proper use" of these spaces according to one group would mean their destruction to the other. The village has been called "wretched" and "filthy in the extreme" and the people "robbers and thieves and even "troglodytes." Certainly these perceptions did not help relations between archaeologists and residents. Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom*, 1-2. The arrogance of both earlier and recent investigators comes through clearly in their writing, wherein they appear shocked that the people living there do not wish to allow them free access to their houses, storerooms and other spaces that have incorporated the tombs. The investigators appear to feel that they have greater claim on to the tombs than the families who have been living there for generations.

[133] Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 242-243.

in Tombs 6, 10,16, and others).[134] However the Ketef Hinnom tombs (excavations of which were begun a few years after Loffreda's article), are firmly dated to the late First Temple period and have just such headrests, as do Tel Halif, Tel Ira, and St.Etienne. Gabled roofs have since been found in the Kidron Valley cliffs and at Akhziv.[135] Ketef Hinnom also has features that are unique to it, just as does Silwan – thus illustrating that wealthy tomb complexes can have unique variations that are not always a simple result of the date of their creation.

Loffreda himself agrees that the combination of these features is "quite unique and with no close parallel in the whole history of funerary architecture in Palestine."[136] While his arguments from architecture are thought provoking, they have been considerably weakened by finds of tombs with parallel features of a date far earlier than the period he proposes. Loffreda also does not address the epigraphy of the inscriptions at all.

D. Ussishkin separates the Silwan tombs into three groups. Those with gabled ceilings (7 of these – 6,9,10,13,14,16, and 19) are single chambered and contain trough type burial niches. Most of these are concentrated in the middle part of the lower cliff. Ussishkin posits that these types reflect a period of strong Phoenician influence. The second group of tombs include those with straight ceilings and burial benches (the majority, close to 30 tombs) are scattered along the length of the upper cliff. These types fall well within the typology of "typical" Judean bench tombs. The third type of tomb at Silwan is the monolithic above ground tomb (three with a fourth of similar type) which

[134] Stanislaus Loffreda, "The Late Chronology of some Rock-Cut Tombs of the Selwan Necropolis, Jerusalem," LASBF 23 (1973): 7-36; and Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom*, 364.
[135] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 42-43.
[136] Loffreda, "The Late Chronology of some Rock-Cut Tombs of the Selwan Necropolis, Jerusalem," 27.

are found at the north end of the necropolis. The tombs of each type are concentrated together. It is the monolithic tombs that give us the inscriptional material that will be discussed in chapter four.[137]

Almost all of the Silwan tombs are finely constructed and they are unusual in the broader typology or Judean/Israelite tombs in that many of these are not generational family tombs such as those we have previously discussed. Instead they were created for individuals or small numbers of people (perhaps high-ranking officials of Jerusalem). Many are single chambers and some only have a single burial bench, although in many cases the tombs have been so altered over time that the existence and number of benches cannot be verified. Some are unfinished (Tombs 4,5,8 and 32). Ussishkin also marks the trough-niches "for couples" (Tombs 10 and 16 for example). Although it is not unlikely that the intent was for a husband and wife to be buried together, this is not absolutely confirmed by the archaeology. There is considerable variation in the tombs. Tombs 17 and 18 for example, have three parallel loculi cut into the rear wall of the main chamber, and others (Tombs 33, 38, 41 and 42 for example) are quite large and contain multiple chambers.[138] See Figures 10, 11, and 12 as examples of this variation – a comparison of several simple, single chambered tombs with larger and more elaborate tombs.

[137] Ussishkin, "The Necropolis from the Time of the Kingdom of Judah at Silwan, Jerusalem," 33-46; and Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom*, 257-266, 280-281.
[138] Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom*, 257-266, 280-281.

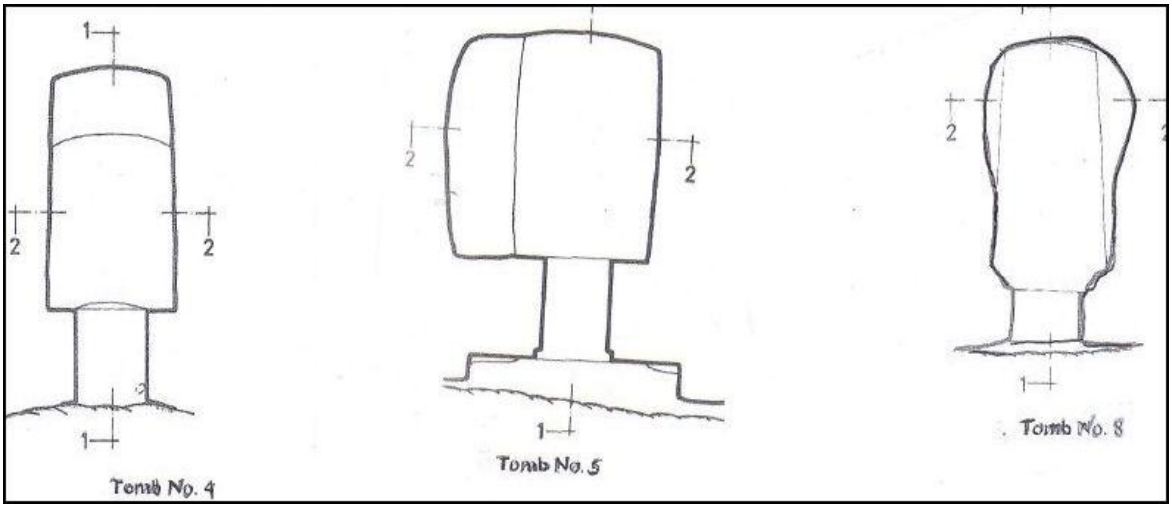

Figure 10: Silwan Tombs 4, 5, and 8 plans – simple single chamber tombs
David Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993): 64,65,72.

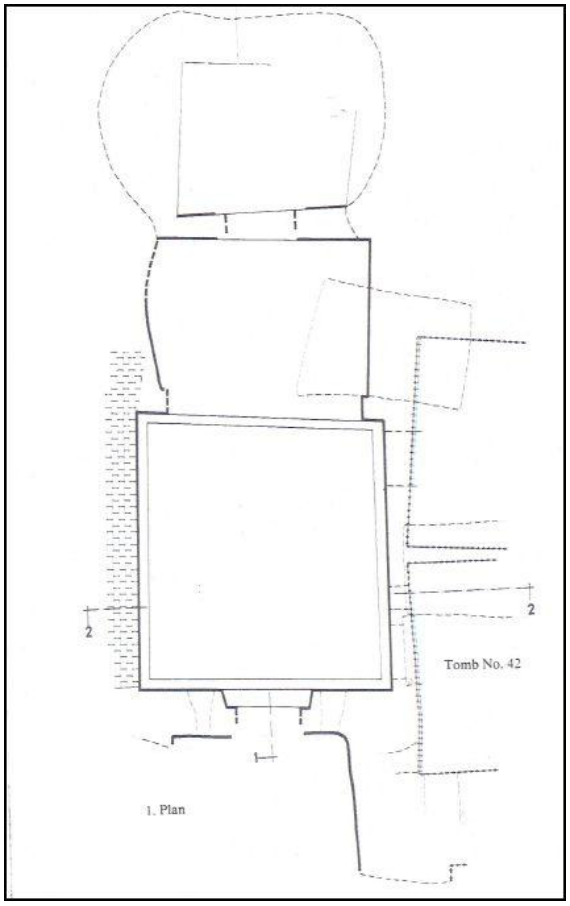

Figure 11: Silwan Tomb 41 plan
David Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 216.

B. Halpern argues for a connection between the advent of individual tombs (some with only one bench and some lacking repositories) and dramatic political and social changes that were taking place in Judah over the time of the reigns of Hezekiah to Josiah. One of the results of these changes was the "desacralizing" of the land and the uprooting of the population with a following concentration into forts and particularly into Jerusalem. Halpern's argument is complex, but points to a central idea of breaking the bond of clans and "clan-sectors" (first by Hezekiah for strategic purposes and later by Josiah for political and religious purposes) with the land and a loosening of kinship bonds, one result of which was smaller family groups and individuals being buried in more individuated tombs in some cases.[139]

The monolithic tombs require more detailed comment here. There are four of these – Tombs 3, 28, 34, and 35. Several of these have been given names: "The Tomb of Pharaoh's Daughter (Tomb 3)" and the "Tomb of the Royal Steward" (Tomb 34 – see Figure 12).

[139] Baruch Halpern, "Jerusalem and the Lineages in the Seventh Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," in *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel* (eds. Baruch Halpern and Deborah W. Hobson; Sheffield, 1991), 11-107. Halpern follows this train of thought further and connects the results of these actions of Hezekiah, Senacherib, and Josiah, with the growth of new ideas. With the severance of the clans and clan-sectors from the land and the growing alienation of individuals from their larger kinship groups and from their ancestors (physically and emotionally) the idea of individual moral responsibility and culpability took stronger root. At the same time the bonds formerly made with clan and ancestor relationships were replaced by the idea of the monarch and the state as a collective worthy of loyalty.

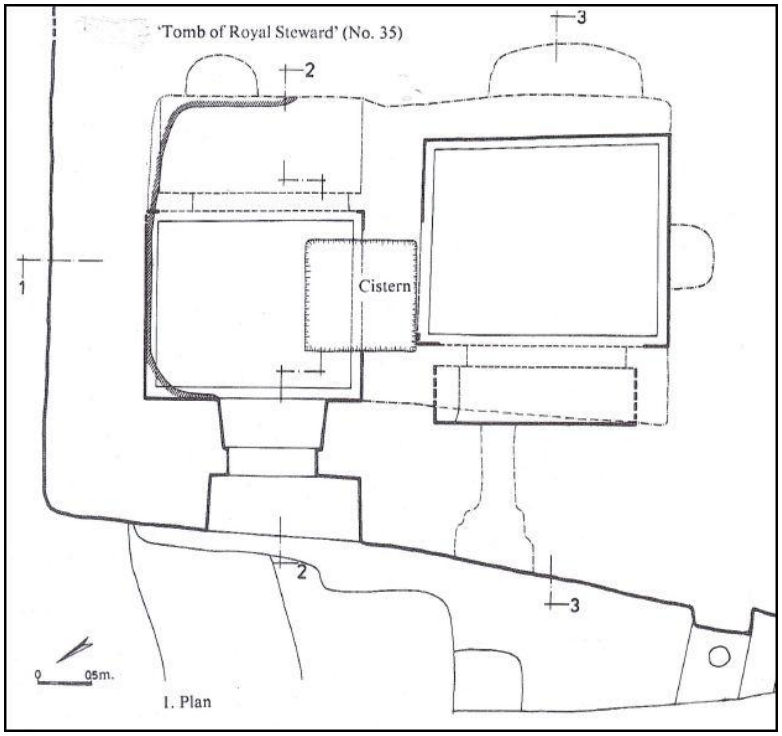

Figure 12: Tomb of the Royal Steward (Tomb 35) plan
David Ussishkin *The Village of Silwan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 194.

These monolithic tombs have been cut away from the cliff to create a free-standing above ground tomb. One of the most interesting features of two of these tombs is the possibility that they may have originally been crowned with a pyramid type structure, as evidenced by the remains of the base of the pyramid on three sides of the currently flat roof.[140] All of these tombs present challenges to interpretation due to their use and alteration during the Byzantine period and their current incorporation and use within the village. Ussishkin puts forth Phoenician influence as part of the explanation for some of the unusual architecture of these tombs. Most interestingly he connects the biblical text of Isa 22:15–19 with this phenomenon. He proposes that when the prophet calls the royal steward *skn*, a Phoenician title, and asks "what and whom do you have

[140] Baruch Halpern, "Jerusalem and the Lineages in the Seventh Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," 43-53.

here" that he would carve himself such a tomb, he is making reference to the foreign origin of this official (see chapter 4 below for further discussion of the Royal Steward inscription).[141]

Ketef Hinnom

While the Jerusalem tombs have yielded clay figurines, pottery, and other personal artifacts but nothing that indicates special wealth or exclusive status, the Ketef Hinnom and Silwan (Siloam) tombs may tell a different story. Located to the southwest of the Old City across the Hinnom Valley from Mt. Zion, this site was once part of the Upper City of Jerusalem. The excavations at Ketef Hinnom were directed by Gabriel Barkay with the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University beginning in 1975.[142] Barkay excavated seven rock-cut tombs of the late First Temple period (7^{th}–6^{th} centuries) at Ketef Hinnom, all of which follow familiar patterns for bench tombs, with carved benches with headrests for the bodies and repositories for older remains.

[141] Ussishkin, "The Necropolis from the Time of the Kingdom of Judah at Silwan, Jerusalem," 45-46.
[142] Barkay, "The Riches of Ketef Hinnom," 23-25.

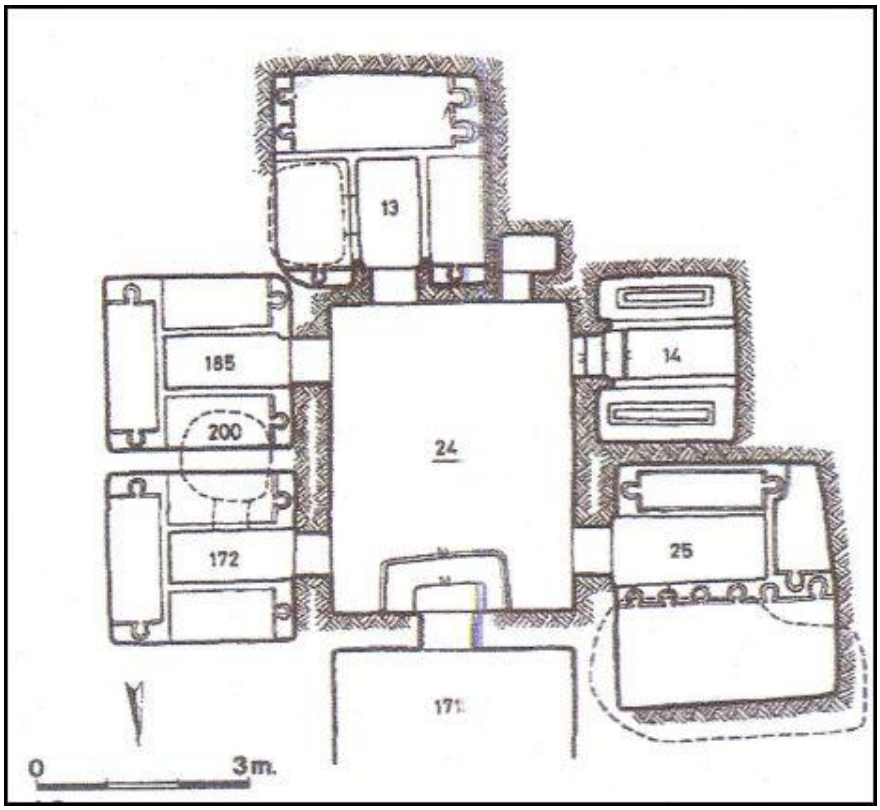

Figure 13: Ketef Hinnom Cave 24
Gabriel Barkay, "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," BASOR 334 (2004): 44.

Most of the tombs are small (about 10 feet by 10 feet) but two are larger and have several burial chambers coming off of the main hall. The largest is Cave 24 which has five chambers around a central room. The largest of these chambers (chamber 25) could accommodate nine bodies laid out at a time. One bench in this chamber could accommodate six bodies and another (in chamber 13) could accommodate four bodies side by side. Multiple headrests caved on a single bench in this way are unique to Ketef Hinnom.[143] It was also in Chamber 25 of Cave 24 that an untouched repository was found, hidden for centuries by a layer of rock that had fallen from the ceiling. As mentioned above, many of the tombs we have discussed have been looted and were in

[143] Barkay, "The Riches of Ketef Hinnom," 23-30.

ruins. The finds in this unlooted repository were rich – arrowheads, cosmetic implements, spindle whorls, and over a hundred gold and silver objects – earrings, rings, and pendants.

Overshadowing even these rich finds was the discovery of two inscribed silver amulets. These amulets contain the earliest known quotation of the Hebrew Bible (the significance of the inscriptions themselves will be discussed in chapter 4 with our other funerary inscriptional material from Israel and Judah). The pottery from this site included material from the seventh to the fifth centuries. More than 250 complete vessels were found. These were primarily juglets, wine decanters and oil lamps.[144] The fine pottery (including a glass amphorisko) is quite distinct from the more modest collections found in other Jerusalem tombs as well as in Samaria. The quantity and quality of these goods supports (at least in this instance) Dever's claim for some bench tombs as representing the wealth and status of their owners. One final find must be mentioned: a sixth century seal with the name Palta and containing a palm branch and a lotus bud design. Barkay speculates that the expanded form of the name would be Pelatyah or Pelatyahu, and calls our attention to Ezek 11:1, 13 and the mention there of the official Pelatiah son of Beniah.[145]

Conclusion

What can we conclude so far from this first section of evidence? We see a gradual shaping of the existing material culture into something that becomes characteristic and distinctive of Israel and Judah. This gradual process by which burials become culturally distinctive in Iron Age Israel and Judah parallels a similar process found in material

[144] Barkay, "The Riches of Ketef Hinnom," 31-33.
[145] Barkay, "The Riches of Ketef Hinnom," 31.

evidence from other aspects of life. House plans, domestic pottery assemblages, and farming techniques also have continuity with earlier forms and are part of the broad material culture of the Levant. They also progress through the Iron Age into forms which are particular to Israel and Judah. Cave and bench tombs of Iron I were not distinguishable between Canaanite and Israelite/Judahite tombs. Tomb II of Kafr Kama in the lower Galilee, for example, is a simple cave and does not contain benches. Finds there include red-burnished slip juglets, small dipper juglets and storage jars dating to Iron I. See also the discussion of Tel Beit Mirsim above. Later tombs in Israel and Judah developed into the sophisticated 8^{th} – 6^{th} century BCE tombs seen at such sites as Jerusalem, Silwan and Ketef Hinnom. These tombs not only show distinguishing architectural features but also yield clearly Judahite artifacts and inscriptions that specifically relate to the god of Israel and Judah.[146]

Alongside these developments are retained (particularly in the northern nation of Israel) a variety of practices that either pre-date the political constitution of the nation or illustrate outside influence. Artifacts associated with burial from the Bronze Age onward include pottery for almost every burial excavated, ranging from a single jar to a significant assemblage. This is directly parallel to findings from Phoenicia and Aram, as will be seen in later sections. This practice predates the formation of the nation state and is part of a broad cultural practice. Other variations continue as well, such as pit burials. Egyptian influence, particularly in the form of amulets and scarabs is also paralleled in Phoenicia and Aram.

We have then a picture of continuity of burial practice that is distinguished by variety and a relatively even pace of development and change. The custom of using a site

[146] Karen Covello-Paran, "Kafr Kama," HA 117 (2005).

such as a cave or cut tomb for multiple burials over generations and/or multiple burials of many members of an extended family or clan remained strong from the Bronze throughout the Iron Age. A wide range of burial practices were accepted, but common to all is the presence of grave goods. We can narrow this further and state that these grave goods always included pottery, and in addition a wide range of personal items might be included with a burial.

The conclusions we draw in this first section are not surprising, but will provide one part of the several pieces of argument that will connect together to form a larger final conclusion. The data reviewed here provide evidence that the Israelite/Judeans of the Iron Age buried their dead in keeping with widespread Bronze Age practices of family burial in caves and tombs (as well as pit burial, jar burial and other types) and the provision of the dead with offerings and personal items. This shows a continued belief and interest in the individuality of the dead. After a period of time individuality becomes much less of a concern, as older skeletal remains were moved aside in group tombs. It also indicates concern to provide for the perceived needs of the dead. These needs could be met regardless of whether the deceased were interred in a cave, cut tomb, pit, or other manner. The overarching requirement was respectful burial as exhibited by intentional positioning of the body with offerings, with a strong bias towards burial with others of your group (one can safely assume family group/clan as the basis for burial grouping but lacking DNA evidence we cannot be positive of this). Burial with the family/group can be expressed by a range of situations from burial with hundreds of other individuals over a span of centuries, to burial of a woman and child together or a male and female couple.

While the material culture shows development and distinctive features (such as the increase in the prevalence of the bench tomb) as the Iron Age progresses, there is no discernible difference in the type of provisions made (meaning the categories of pottery and personal item were unchanged) in Bronze Age "Canaanite" and Iron Age "Israelite" practice. The minimal grave offering seems to have been one or two jars deposited with the body. Changes in material culture and burial types reflect cultural and historical developments. When we see change we can often point to a reasonable explanation that has nothing to do with the basic beliefs about the dead. The simple Tel Rehov burials, for example, are a product of the violence and upheaval associated with the Assyrian conquest. The individual/couple tombs of Silwan are likely related to social and political developments that separated individuals from their traditional family land holdings and burial places, and the riches of Ketef Hinnom reflect a level of prosperity that allowed for a comparable rise in the "standard of death" along with the "standard of living" for the wealthy of the area. Continuity over time in the provision of pottery and personal items, but development and flexibility regarding other features of interment in Israel and Judah, is part one of the evidence for an overarching similarity in a belief system regarding the dead that crossed cultures and religions in the Levant.

CHAPTER 3: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR MORTUARY REMAINS IN ARAM

The Kingdoms of Aram – Aramean and Hittite influence

Having documented the variety of Iron Age burial practices in Israel and Judah, we can now move to consideration of the customs and practices of the eastern and northern neighbors of Israel and Judah, the kingdoms of Aram. We have not devoted time to the discussion of the political formation of the states of Israel and Judah, assuming that the major outlines of the process and significant debates are familiar to the reader. The same cannot be said for Iron Age Syria however, and so a brief overview of the formation of the Neo-Hittite/Aramaic states is in order. These states were heirs to the legacy of the Hittite empire of Anatolia, as well as to the influence of powerful Aramean tribes. These states are sometimes called "Neo-Hittite states" because they were formerly under Hittite rule and many retained strong cultural and dynastic connections with Anatolia. At other times these states are referred to as the "Aramean Kingdoms" from the ethnicity of their rulers (as well as sections of the population) at this time. Sometimes the term "Aramaic states" is also used in reference to the language in primary use at the time (though in some states we continue to find the Luwian dialect in use in monumental inscriptions into the Iron Age).[147] The use of these terms signifies that the influence of the Anatolian culture of the Hittite kingdom did not vanish with its passing, and also that the Aramean tribes formed a significant part of the population as well as the ruling class of these states.

[147] The indispensable collection and discussion of these Iron Age Luwian inscriptions is found in the two volumes by J. D. Hawkins. Inscriptions are covered from Carchemish, Tell Ahmar, Amuq, Aleppo, and Hama, as well as other sites. J. D. Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I: Inscriptions from the Iron Age Part I* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 639.

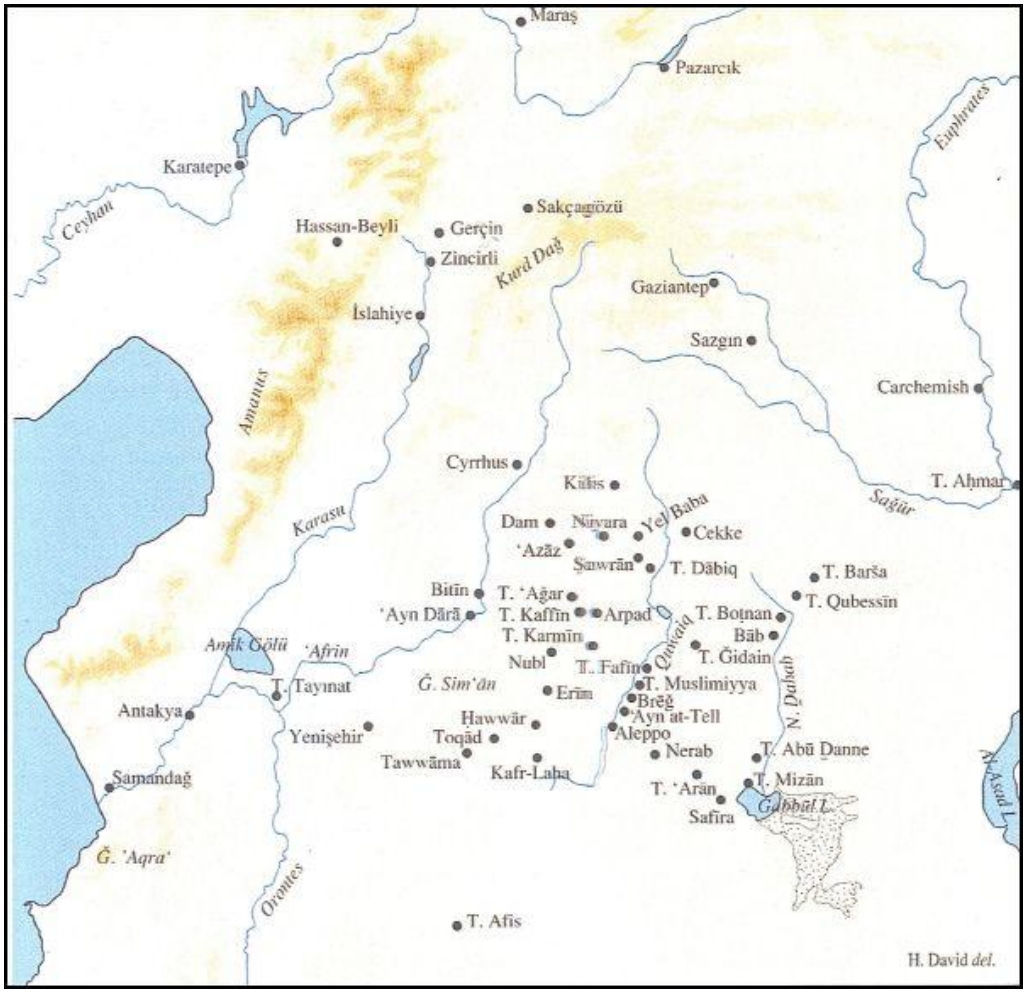

Figure 14: Map of central Iron Age Aram showing tells and cities
Edward Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 201.

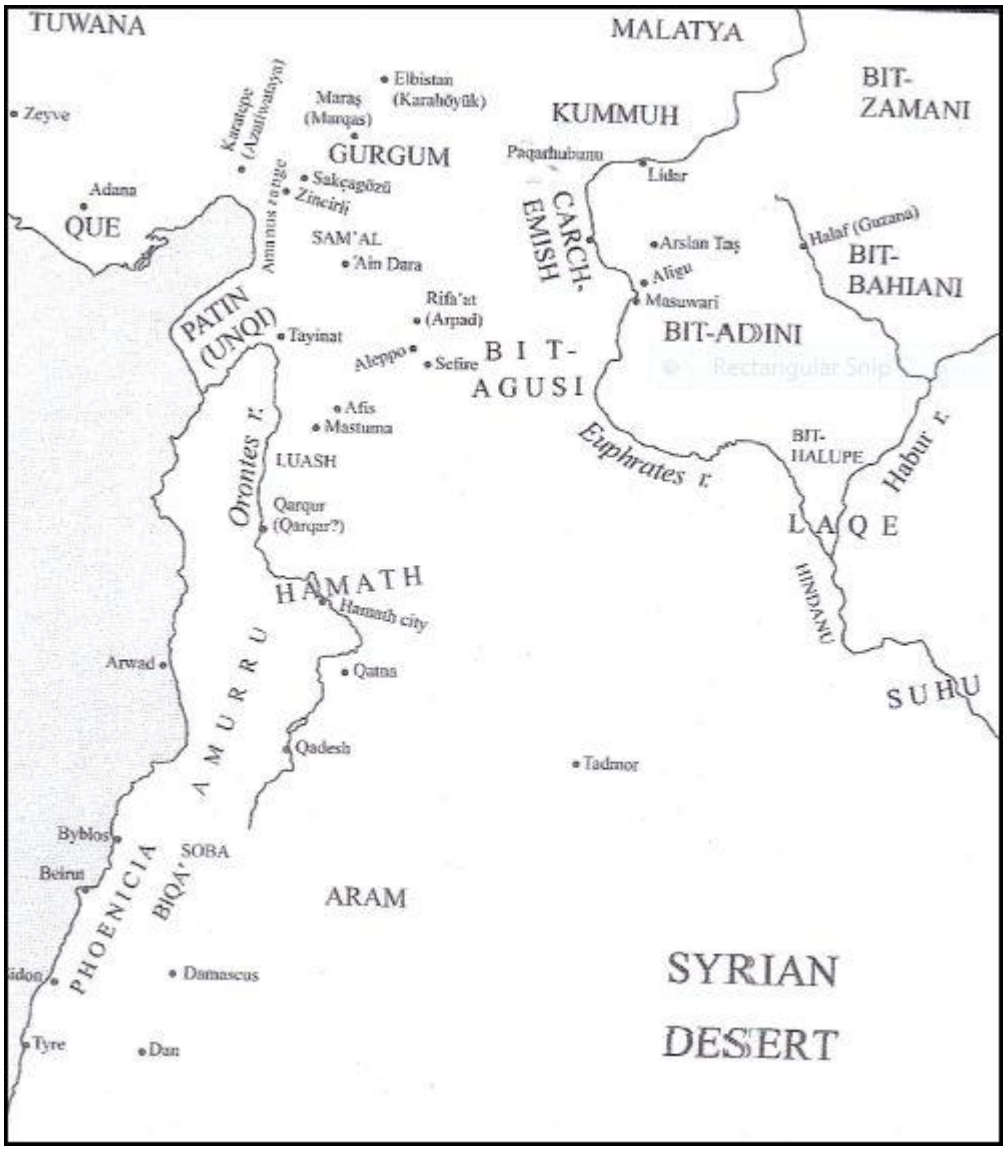

Figure 15: Map of greater Aram, 1000–800 BCE, with names of nations and city-states. Trevor Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46.

From its base in the area of Hatti in Anatolia and its capital city of Hattusas, the Hittite empire spread outward, carrying a strong and lasting complex of art, architecture, language, and political influence. Just as the Romans left their mark upon many aspects of both material and non-material culture everywhere they went, so too the Hittites left evidence of their presence, not only by leaving physical remains, but by altering the

shape of culture. This was in part due to the powerful political hold the capital of Hattusas had over Anatolia and Syria. At its greatest extent in the 14th century BCE Hittite territory encompassed much of northern Syria to the Euphrates river and included direct control of some cities (the primary examples being Carchemish and Aleppo) by the installation of viceroys who were princes of the royal family. We might consider also the impact that later immigration may have had upon the creation of these Neo-Hittite states. Recent excavations of Hattusa indicate that the city may have been largely abandoned prior to its destruction. In the upheaval of the collapse of the kingdom (and prior to this time as well) it would not be surprising to find individuals and groups seeking their fortune in other parts of the late empire and bringing their culture with them (though this is unproven).[148]

While we can pinpoint the specific political and geographic nexus for the Hittite influence upon the territories of Aram, it is much more difficult to concretely identify the "Aramean" aspect of this area and culture. No certain reference can be found to the "Arameans" from the second millennium in north Syrian, Mesopotamian or Hittite documents. The earliest reference to the term is found in a topographical list on a statue base from Thebes dating to the time of Amenōphis III (1388–1351 BCE– this pharaoh was also called Amenhotep III). This list uses the determinative for people rather than for country or territory with the term Aramean (this is a parallel to the earliest reference to Israel which is also Egyptian – the Merneptah stele).[149] Several centuries later the annals of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 BCE) and Ashur-bel-kala (1073–1056

[148] Trevor Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms: A Political and Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 13-14.
[149] Wayne Pitard, *Ancient Damascus: A Historical Study of the Syrian City-State from Earliest Times Until its Fall to the Assyrians in 732 BCE* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 81-82.

BCE) describe the resistance of the *aḫlamû* ^{ku}*armaya* – the Aḫlamû Arameans – and call the area west of the Euphrates from the Ḫābur to the foot of Mt. Lebanon the land of Aram.[150] Aram and Aramean designate both a geographic area as well as a variety of ethnic/cultural groups with political identities. Aramean as a descriptor in the Assyrian annals can be neutral as an ethnic identifier. It is also part of a complex of stereotypes that included nomadic tendencies (at least prior to the formation of the Aramean states) and "unsavory" traits such as raiding and rebellion (per the Assyrians).[151] Much must remain speculative, as materials from the Aramean states themselves do not make overt identification with an "Aramean" ethnicity as a whole. This was a label which was applied to them by their Assyrian neighbors. H. Sader argues that the Assyrian designation of the kingdoms as "Bit-PN" indicates an eponymous tribal leader/ancestor or dynastic founder, and a degree of kinship cohesion. This means that those who are part of the "house" were connected by more than simple political rule, but by (psychological if not actual) kinship centered within a particular territory (though this is speculative).[152]

From the 13th–12th century BCE massive upheaval and political and social restructuring of the area (which included the Late Bronze Age collapse and the end of the Hittite empire) resulted in the development of new territorial states governed by an Aramean elite, as evidenced by the names of these new states (as referenced in the Assyrian annals). In addressing the question of what markers of Aramean ethnicity we might look for, S. Hafþórsson states that language and religion is of greater help than

[150] Helen Sader, "The Aramaean Kingdoms of Syria: Origin and Formation Processes," in *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (ed. Guy Bunnens; Sterling, Va.: Peeters, 2000), 64. Edward Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (OLA 100; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 694. Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)* (vol. 2 of RIM; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 23, 34, 94, 98, 101, 102.
[151] Alan Millard, "A Wandering Aramean," JNES 39 (1980): 153-155.
[152] Sader, "The Aramaean Kingdoms of Syria: Origin and Formation Processes," 67.

material culture in distinguishing an Aramean presence. In the context of his discussion of Aram-Damascus he states: "It is not certain that material remains can help us detect Aramean presence at a site. Indeed, it is not certain that there is such a thing as an Aramean material culture different from, e.g. Neo-Hittite or Israelite material culture." He does describe a number of features of city planning and architecture that may loosely be considered as "Aramean/Syrian." These features include the *bīt-hilāni* style of palace construction, multiple city gates, upper and lower mound sections, and concentric walls. He describes a number of characteristic pottery finishes and shapes, and of course the presence of Aramaic texts at a site as markers of an Aramean presence.[153] As we will continue to see as we move through this discussion, almost every site has strong evidence of multicultural contact, adoption and adaptation. We will find that this is as true of burial practices in Aram as it is of language, art, and architecture. Just as we saw in Bronze and Iron Age Israel and Judah there are not sharp lines running through the archaeological record that separate ethnic groups, and mixing of features from different groups is common.

Sader argues for a relatively peaceful process of state formation in the Early Iron Age, beginning with settlement and increasing density and urbanization, followed by territorial claims by tribal leaders who would become the founders of dynasties. It would appear that these nomadic or semi-nomadic groups took advantage of the de-urbanization of the late Bronze Age to move into and settle the area. Archaeological evidence shows a lack of urban centers but an increase in rural settlements at the beginning of the Iron

[153] Hafþórsson, *A Passing Power*, 187-192.. Pottery types include buff/orange/white/brown ware, thin or coarse, and shapes such as wide fruit stands, ring and flat-based bowls, and flat platters with ring or flat bases.

Age.[154] These small kingdoms existed as independent entities for only a fairly short time before they were swallowed up by the Assyrian empire.[155]

We can distinguish those states that took their names from the Aramean founder or first ruler of the kingdom, for example Bēt-Gūš (or Bēt-Agūši), Bēt Baġyān (also called Bit Bahiani), Bēt Zammāni and Bēt-ʻAdini, Bet Ṣullūl. We can also include in this group Aram-Damascus, Nisibis (a very short lived kingdom), and Bēt Reḥov/Bēt Zobah (these last being known primarily from references in the Hebrew Bible).[156] A second group can be comprised of the more properly "Neo-Hittite" states of Carchemish, Pattina (Unqi), Hama (Hamath) and the city of Til Barsip (Hittite Masuwari, modern Tell Ahmar). This later group retained the use of the Luwian language. In some cases they had royal dynasties of Hittite descent (or at least who used imperial Hittite names), monumental sculpture and architecture in clear Hittite style, and (in the case of the goddess Kubaba) religious affiliation reflective of Anatolian antecedents.[157]

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[154] In these areas as in Israel the evidence is mixed – not every area experienced such discontinuity. Śam'al (Zincirli) and Carchemish, for example, were urban centers at this time, and neither was Hama abandoned. Tell Afis (possibly ancient Hazrak) also shows good continuity from the Bronze to Iron Age. Other areas, such as in the Balikh valley (Tell Hammam et-Turkman) show abandonment at the end of the Late Bronze Age concurrent with, among other changes, the collapse of Mittani and Hittite expansion. Peter Akkermans and Inge Rossmeisl, "Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, Northern Syria: A Regional Centre on the Assyrian Frontier," *Akkadica* 66 (1990): 13-60; and Trevor Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of People and Places of Ancient Western Asia: The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2009); also Akkermans and Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria*, 258-362.

[155] Sader, "The Aramaean Kingdoms of Syrian: Origin and Formation Processes," 61-62.

[156] As with Hama, P. Dion equates the Aramaic cultural influence on Aram-Damascus with a particular ruler, and states that there "…is no reliable evidence for its Aramaean character until the early tenth century, when it fell to the Aramaean chieftain Rezon." Paul Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia," in vol. 2 of *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; New York: Charles Scribner, 1995), 1284.

[157] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 5-7. and J. D. Hawkins, "Karkamish and Karatepe: Neo-Hittite City-States in North Syria," in vol. 2 of *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; New York: Charles Scribner, 1995), 1295-1307. Specifically Hawkins describes characteristic building techniques, including wall footings faced by large slabs of black basalt or limestone which were often inscribed and sculpted, with entrances guarded by carved lions or sphinxes. Dion also notes the continuity of Neo-Hittite design in the Aramaic states, including colossal statues, the royal compound and bīt ḥilāni type palace, and long room temples. Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia," 1281-1293.

These "Aramean" and "Neo-Hittite" states were near neighbors in a very small geographic area, so we cannot consider them in isolation from each other. This is particularly illustrated by the state of Śam'al, which included a dynasty with both Hittite and Aramean names, Neo-Hittite styles of sculpture, and the use of Aramaic inscriptions. Hama also, while often classified as "Neo-Hittite" rather than "Aramean", shows religious affiliation to the Semitic Balʿalat as well as to Anatolian deities.[158] The well known Zakir stele from Hama also illustrates strong Aramaic influence: not only is the language Aramaic, but the god Baal Shamayim is specifically mentioned as well.[159]

The later stages of state formation are seen from Assyrian annals, which recognize fortified cities belonging to Bit Adini, Bit Agusi, Hama, Bit-Gabbari (Śam'al), Damascus, and Bit Bahiani. Probably the most important event of the 9th century for these states was the anti-Assyrian league lead by Hadadezer (Adad-idri) of Damascus. His league of twelve middle and southern Syrian states challenged Shalmaneser III and led him to conquer Bit-Adini and threaten Hama. The battle of Qarqar on the Orontes was, despite the claims of the Assyrian annals, not the overwhelming victory for the Assyrians as claimed, and continued conflict is attested in 849, 848, and 845 BCE. The power of Damascus continued even after the end of the anti-Assyrian coalition under Hazael (possibly an usurper, called a "son of nobody") and Ben-Hadad. This king built a

[158] Hawkins, "Karkamish and Karatepe: Neo-Hittite City-States in North Syria," 1295-1307.
[159] Max Miller, "The Moabite Stone as a Memorial Stela," PEQ 106 (1974): 12. Dion connects the seizure of power by "the Aramaean Zakkur" (Zakir) with the shift in culture and official language use at Hama from Neo-Hittite/Luwian to Aramaic. Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia," 1283. B. Peckham offers a similar way to categorize or "sort" these states by suggesting that distinctions can be made among the Iron Age states based upon whether they were predominately Hittite or Syrian in culture, whether they began as tribal entities or national states, and the status of their access to the Mediterranean. Brian Peckham, "Phoenicians and Aramaeans: the Literary and Epigraphic Evidence," in *The World of the Aramaeans II: Studies in History and Archaeology in Honor of Paul-Eugène Dion* (eds. P. Daviau, J. Wevers and M. Weigl; Sheffield: Sheffield, 2001), 21.

new coalition that threatened Zakkur of Hama. Only at this time was Damascus halted by the Assyrian Adad-nirari III. [160]

Those states that survived into the 8th century show further centralization of the state apparatus, with new capitals being built as economic and bureaucratic centers of each respective kingdom. By the end of the 8th century, however, Tiglath-Pileser III had reclaimed Arpad, Hama and the other northern kingdoms and brought Damascus under submission, and a short time later the Annals of Sargon II describe the widespread campaigning in the area that brought the last vestiges of independence of Carchemish, Gurgam, Hamath, Tabal, and many other of the Aramaic states to a close.[161]

Aram and the Biblical Text

The central focus of this work is to place death and burial in Israel and Aram in constructive dialogue, so we should also briefly consider evidence for political and other connections between them. The first mention of Aram in the "Table of Nations" (Genesis 10) already shows an acknowledgement of the close relationship between Israel and the Arameans. The connection is strengthened when the family of Abraham is placed in Padan-Aram by the Priestly source and Laban and his father Bethuel are called אֲרַמִי (sometimes translated as "Syrian" in English) four times (Gen 25:20; 28:5; 31:20; and 31:24). Deuteronomy claims for Israel that "A wandering Aramean was my father" (Deut

[160] Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia," 1285. For the Zakkur stele (KAI 202), which describes the pressures of this coalition see Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 219-220. For the halting of Damascus in the Assyrian annals for Adad-nirari III see Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)* vol. 2 of RIM (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 203, 208-213. Ben-Hadad is here called "Mari" meaning "Lord." It is also clear that Assyria was deeply involved in the affairs of Hama from the drawing of a boundary between Hama and Arpad by Adad-nirari III.

[161] Sader, "The Aramaean Kingdoms of Syrian: Origin and Formation Processes," 68-73. Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia," 1285-1286. Grant Frame, "Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period," n.p. [cited 18 June 2014]. Online: http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/abouttheproject; Julius Oppert, "Annals of Sargon," in *Records of the Past Vol. 7: Assyrian Texts* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1876), 21-56,

26:5).[162] All of these statements reinforce the ideological connection of the patriarchs with the Aramaic world. The attitude of these stories towards this Aramean element is ambivalent at best. It portrays a fundamental connection between the two groups but also occasional hostility. The treaty of Gen 31:44–55, with its strong overtones of distrust and potential violence (such that a treaty oath and a boundary stone is required to separate the two parties) mirrors the later friction between Israel and Judah and another Aramaic group, Aram-Damascus.[163] 1 Sam 14:47; 2 Sam 8:1–12; and 2 Sam 10 mentions conflict with Aram Zobah and Aram Beth Rehov (which may have been one entity under two names). Aram Zobah and Aram Beth Rehov were very likely part of the complex of Aramaic groups which formed sometimes ephemeral political entities.[164] We reach firmer historical ground however with the narratives during the period of the divided kingdom. In addition to the apparent use of court records for part of the composition of the books of

[162] This particular phrase אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי merits further discussion. First one must consider the biblical context of the phrase. אֹבֵד has been interpreted as both "wandering" (with the implication of being lost or fugitive), wandering as a lifestyle – nomadic, and "perishing" (of exposure or thirst or starvation). This connects with the narratives of Abraham, Isacc, Jacob and Joseph, in that all are represented as traveling and also being threatened by famine. "Your father" therefore is a composite of all of the wandering forefathers. "Aramean" may have in this context also denoted a class of people known for their nomadic lifestyle, with particular emphasis upon traveling in times of shortage and drought. In the context of Deut 26 the celebration of first-fruits contrasts the past narrative of want and wandering with settlement and agricultural bounty of the land. J. Gerald Janzen, "The 'Wandering Aramean' Reconsidered," *Vetus Testamentum* 44, (1994): 359-375. The second issue to be considered is the connection with the Akkadian term *arame halqu* munnabtu "the fugitive Arameans, the run-away" from the annals of Sennacherib (applied there to rebels in Babylonia). Sargon II describes the Arameans of his reign as "*mār habbātti* "a roving people" with the suggestion of raiding, robbing, or plundering. See for example the Sargon Prisims from Nimrud (Calah/Kalhu). C. J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisims of Sargon II from Nimrud," *Iraq* 16, (1954): 193. The word *'apirū* has a similar meaning to *munnabtu* of one who flees or is a fugitive, and is also often brought into discussions of relationships between the patriarchs and ancient Mesopotamia. The common denominator is a representation of the forefathers of Israel as being connected with a certain stereotype of Arameans by a nomadic lifestyle of uncertain and perilous type, made more so by conflict with authoritative people and institutions. Millard, "A Wandering Aramean," 153-155.

[163] For an interesting discussion of the relationship see Carl-Johan Axskjöld, *Aram as the Enemy Friend: The Ideological Role of Aram in the Composition of Genesis-2 Kings*, (ConB 45; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1998), 183. Axskjöld makes an interesting claim that the Arameans of the Pentateuch act as instruments to further the ultimate good of Israel, and that this theme appears also in the historical books. He claims for Aram the status of "enemy-friend" one who opposes but ultimately serves to strengthen.

[164] Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms: A Political and Military History*, 356.

Chronicles and Kings, we may also relate the biblical narratives to such valuable external evidence as the Mesha stele, the Tell Dan stele, the stele of Zakkur, and the Assyrian annals.[165]

By far the greatest interactions between Israel, Judah and the Aramean kingdoms were with their nearest neighbor of this group – Aram-Damascus. 1 Kgs 11:23–25 introduces Rezon of Damascus as an adversary of Solomon. We then learn of the shifting alliances among Baasha of Israel, Asa of Judah, and Ben-Hadad of Damascus, as well as hostilities between Ben-Hadad and Ahab of Israel (1 Kings 15 and 20).[166] One problem with these narratives is that of the 25 times that Ben-Hadad is mentioned (from 1 Kgs 15:18 through 2 Kgs 13:25, 2 Chr 16:2–4, Jer 49:27, and Amos 1:4) it is sometimes unclear which Ben-Hadad is meant in the text.[167] 1 Kgs 22 describes further warfare, this time with Judah and Israel against Aram-Damascus. 2 Kgs 5, 6, and 8, part of the Elisha stories, also mention the "King of Aram" and Ben-Hadad. King Hazael is the other king of Damascus who is discussed in the texts, as contained in 2 Kgs 8–10, and 12–13. Much

[165] This is not to suggest that the earlier accounts of Samuel are to be discounted or that the Kings material is free of error, bias or invention. The "Court History" of David is certainly of great historical value. The situation is very complex and there are masses of literature on the subject. See particularly Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, (San Francisco: Harper SanFrancisco, 1998), 402. Friedman reveals a continuous narrative that runs from Genesis through 2 Kings. See also B. Halpern's work Baruch Halpern, "Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure: Indications of an Earlier Source," in *The Creation of Sacred Literture* (Ed Richard Elliot Friedman; UCPNES 22; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 35-54, on Kings and Chronicles as part of a strong historiographic tradition.

[166] Axskjöld, *Aram as the Enemy Friend*, 183.

[167] Ben-Hadad I appears in 1 Kings 15 and the parallel 2 Chr 16, and is called the son of Tabrimmon son of Hezion of Aram. Ben-Hadad III is the son of Hazael and can be identified with Bar-Hadad of the Zakkur stele. The problem resides with the Ben-Hadad of 1 Kgs 20, and 2 Kgs 6:24, and 8:7-15. As the great predecessor of Hazael he should be Ben Hadad II, but the king (contemporary with Ahab) is Ben-Hadad here but Adad-idri in Assyrian texts. The two names are often conflated and explained as being the same person – a personal and a throne name. The problem also arrises that 1 Kgs 20 and 2 Kgs 6:24ff may refer instead to the son of Hazael and not his predecessor. Hafþórsson, *A Passing Power*, 178-180. Also relevant here is the Melqart stele, a votive monument offered by one of these Bar/Bir/Ben Hadads to fulfil a vow to the Phoenician god Melqart. This damaged inscription has been read in several ways in an attempt to decipher which king was responsible for this stele. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 219; and Reinhold Gotthard, "The Bir-Hadad Stele and the Biblical Kings of Aram," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24, (1986): 115-126; also W. F. Albright, "A Votive Stele Erected by Ben-Hadad I of Damascus to the God Melcarth," BASOR 87 (1942): 23-29.

of the material from Kings is paralleled in 2 Chr 16, 18, 22 and 24. Amos 1:3–5, Isa 17:1–3, and Jer 49:23–27, all oracles against Damascus, also reflect a long term and continuing hostility between the two nations.[168]

Unfortunately we have very little funerary material from this near neighbor of Israel. Much of our data for burial practices and inscriptional evidence comes from the more northern Aramaic and Neo-Hittite Kingdoms.[169]

A Note on the Choice of Inclusion of Sites

The choice of what sites to consider in the course of this discussion was challenging. First we are limited by what sites have thus far yielded mortuary evidence. Some very promising locations such as Tell Tayʿinat (in ancient Pattina/Unqi), have given us many archaeological riches in recent years but have not yet provided us with mortuary evidence. As much of the excavation work has been focused upon the palace and living areas, a nearby or adjacent cemetery may yet be revealed.[170] The classic survey of the area by R. and L. Braidwood covers assemblages at a large number of sites, including Chatal Hüyük, Tell al-Judaidah, Tell Taʿyinat, Tell Dhahab, and Tell Kurdu, but this work covers sites from as early as the Neolithic period and only carries us through the Middle Bronze Age and so is less relevant to our investigation (findings from later periods were never published).[171] While this cannot be a comprehensive survey, the

[168] Hafþórsson, *A Passing Power*, 304. For further discussion of the relationship see also Pitard, *Ancient Damascu*s.
[169] Hafþórsson, *A Passing Power*, 185-246.
[170] S. Batiuk, T. Harrison and L. Pavlish, "The Ta'Yinat Survey, 1999-2002," in *The Amuq Valley Regional Projects Vol. I: Surveys in the Plain of Antioch and Orontes Delta, Turkey, 1995-2002* (eds. Leslie Schramer and Thomas Urban; OIP 131; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2005), 171-192; and Timothy Harrison, "Tayinat Archaeological Project," n.p. [cited 21 June 2014] Online: http://sites.utoronto.ca/tap/index.html .
[171] Robert J. Braidwood, Linda S. Braidwood and Richard C. Haines, *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch* (OIP 95; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); also Leonard Woolley, *Alalakh: An Account of the*

attempt has been made to select sites that represent a fairly broad geographic range within the territories of Aram, which comprise a range of time from the Late Bronze/Early Iron transition to the end of the Iron Age, and of course which include those sites that are of importance for the burials that they have yielded. The aim is to gain a picture of the types of burial practices that are found within the territories of the Aramean/Neo-Hittite states during the Iron Age. As has already been noted we will see that the situation is far from clear as to what ethnic groups are represented by the burials as we find them.

We will begin our discussion of the mortuary archaeology of the Iron Age Aramean/Neo-Hittite world with two comparatively early sites that represent the western and eastern extent of the Aramean/Neo-Hittite territories. To the west by the river Orontes lies the site of Tell Achtana, and to the east the site of Tell Sabi Abyad served as a buffer area between Aram and Assyria. These two serve as an excellent opening frame for our discussion, as they are border/buffer areas to east and west that give us a snapshot of the treatment of death at the very close of the Late Bronze Age. Following this we will work our way to the heart of Aram and the heart of the Iron Age, with an exploration of the evidence from four great Aramean/Neo-Hittite states: Bet Bagyan (Bit Bahiani), Bet Adini, Hama, and Carchemish. Several sites from each of these polities are available for our investigation. Lastly in this chapter we will add a final frame in time and place by considering a set of late Aramaic coffins far to the south in Egypt. This chapter however will not be the end of the range of our investigations within Aram. Chapter six will pick up with inscriptional material from the site of Zincirli in Śam'al in the northern reaches

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Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937-1949 (SAL 18; London: Society of Antiquaries, 1955), 411.

of Aram to Neirab in the territory of Bēt-Gūš in the south. This material will connect with our inscriptional and textual evidence from Israel and Judah.

Two Late Bronze Age Sites

Tell Atchana (Alalakh)

The city of Alalakh (Tell Atchana), which lies very near Tell Taʿyinat on the western side of the Amuq plain by the Orontes River, was excavated by L. Woolley beginning in 1936–39. This work was interrupted by WWII and resumed after the war from 1946–49 (such interruptions will become a familiar theme). In 2000 excavations were begun anew under the direction of K. Aslihan Yener as part of the University of Chicago Oriental Institute's Amuq Valley Regional Project (which to date has researched 346 sites in the area). While nearby tells have occupation levels from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic period, Tell Atchana was founded in the Early Bronze Age. As with the other sites we will examine, Alalakh is a multicultural site, being the seat of the small Late Bronze Age kingdom of Murkish, which had underlying Amorite origins but which was subject to strong external cultural influences. Burned by the Hittite king HattušilisI in approximately 1575, the city was later connected through the royal family to the city of Aleppo (The Idrimi dynasty of the 15th century). First a vassal of Mittani, again partially destroyed by the Hittite Šuppiluliumaš (1370–1340 BCE), the city was finally incorporated into the Hittite realm by his son, Mursilis II, and took a great deal of influence from that culture. Extensive royal archives of over 550 documents contain materials in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hurrian and Hittite.[172] Hittite influence is also clear

[172] K. Aslihan Yener, "Alalakh," n.p. [cited 23 June 2014]. Online: http://www.alalakh.org/team.asp; K. Ashihan Yener, "Alalakh Spatial Organization," in *The Amuq Valley Regional Projects Vol I: Surveys in the Plain of Antioch and Orontes Delta, Turkey, 1995-2002* (eds. Leslie Schramer and Thomas Urban, OIP 131; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2005), 100-103.

from fortress and temple remains, as well as the remains of monumental sculpture and carved orthostats, some of which were re-used for other purposes at a late period of the city's history.

Destruction and re-building of the temple several times attest to the turbulent history of Alalakh. Level I of that city is dated to the Late Bronze/Early Iron transition, 1220–1190, and coincides with the Late Bronze Age collapse and impact of the arriving Sea Peoples. Above this is an "ephemeral" "Level 0" (Woolley's assignment) dated to after the period of destruction, but which nonetheless possesses a substantial wall and tower. Level II dates to 1275–1220. It is these levels that we will focus on, though it is worth noting that graves are also attested for levels III–VIII, and there are a few additional graves to which Woolley found it difficult to assign a date. Interestingly, graves were not found at all in the earlier levels, IX–XVI.[173] All of Woolley's graves are located under the floors of houses. Most of these are simple inhumation burials, but there also are a number of cremation burials, most in level one. This affirms evidence from elsewhere that cremation became much more common in Syria after the transition to the Iron Age. A cremation grave (ATG/37/2) was uncovered in Level 0, the only grave of this level. It contained a scarab with the cartouche of Ramses VI (1145–1137), along with jewelry and an ivory comb. The pottery used for the burial urns from the graves is frequently local ware – in this case a clay jug with a broad band of red paint around the shoulder.

Level I contained four cremation graves and five inhumation graves. Imported pottery used as grave goods in levels I and II is often Mycenaean. This Mycenean pottery included vases and small flasks. Parallel types have been found at Tell Abu

[173] Woolley, *Alalakh*, 201-223, 384. Yener, *Alalakh*, n.p.

Hawam and Ras Shamra which are dated from 1400 to 1200 BCE.[174] All of the graves, both cremation and inhumation, contained small personal items such as jewelry, beads, spindle whorls, combs, pendants, and seals. The majority of these included pottery items among the grave goods, and at least one also included animal bones (cremation ATG/46/8). Notable also is that the most lavish grave is a double burial (ATG/38/5) of an adult and child, which in addition to ear-rings, bangles, and a great number of beads included two cylinder seals.[175]

Already we see notable parallels with the material from Israel and Judah. First we find that as with the Bronze/Iron Age transition in Israel there is simple inhumation and burial under houses. Grave goods are present which are similar in nature to those found in Israel and include pottery as the most common type of item, as well as personal items. Among the personal items in Israel as well as at this site are items made in Egypt or those copied locally from Egyptian designs, with scarabs being particularly common. The primary difference is the presence here of cremation burials, a form that is exceedingly rare in Israel, though not absolutely unknown (see for example the find at Tell Dan mentioned in chapter 2, as well as the very well known episode of the cremation of Saul in 1 Sam 31:12).

Based upon the small number of graves recovered in proportion to the houses excavated, Woolley speculated that not all burials were made under houses, but that there must be a cemetery elsewhere. His interpretation has since been verified by later excavation of the site, when in 2003 Area 3 of the site yielded a small necropolis related to the final period of the site's occupation:

[174] Woolley, *Alalakh*, 369-370.
[175] Woolley, *Alalakh*, 201-207.

> Unexpectedly, ten burials and more fragments of eroded interments were found on the slope. Thus, we now had a necropolis on this part of the site…Of the burials, one stood out as special: a tomb (03-3017) with multiple interments and special grave goods. This burial consisted of a plaster arched structure on a cobblestone foundation.... Within the arched plaster covering, which must have been over a wooden coffin (impressions were seen of the wood), were four individuals laid tete-beche, each separated from the other by a level of plaster. Person #2 was buried with slag placed under the chin and many gold, carnelian, ivory, amber, and glass beads. A number of gold appliqués decorated with raised rosettes were found around person #3, probably from a since-disintegrated cloth or headdress placed over the head. There was a gold ring still on #3`s finger, gold sheet earrings or hair rings by the skull. A number of copper-based toggle pins were found, one of silver fastening burial clothing. Some of the pottery came in pairs – two Base Ring Ware vessels, two Red Burnished Spindle Flasks (also called Red Lustrous Ware Bottles), and two trefoil-mouth jars. Furthermore a leg of cattle, numerous bird bones, seeds, and sheep/goat remains were also found. [176]

Taken together, the later graves excavated by Woolley and by Yener's team yield a picture of the treatment of burial that was just as diverse as the population which inhabited the site. While here the provision of pottery at burial is common, it does not seem to be a required part of the grave accoutrements, either for cremation or interment, and there does not seem to be a distinction in the types of goods that were included with cremations versus inhumations. As in Israel and Judah the same types of grave goods were provided regardless of the type of burial.

Tell Sabi Abyad

The eastern side of our geographic frame is the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age site of Tell Sabi Abyad. This site bordered the territory of Bēt Baġyān (Bit-Bahiani) and formed a buffer zone between the Aramaic/Neo-Hittite states and Assyria. Like Tell Achtana Tell Sabi Abyad also shows a great deal of cultural mixing.

[176] Yener, *Alalakh*, n.p.

The tell is in northeast Syria in the Balikh valley, about 30 km from the Turkish border. What is interesting about this site is its location on the border of the Assyrian and Aramean territories. Again like Tell Achtana it is difficult to pinpoint the ethnic make up of the residents of Tell Sabi Abyad. The area was formerly part of the Hurrian state of Mittani during the Late Bronze Age, but with the dissolution of the state the area fell under Assyrian political control. By the Early Iron Age Hanigalbat (the Assyrian term for the region) was "fully Aramized" with an influx of nomadic invaders, especially the Arameans.[177]

Tell Sabi Abyad was a large and important settlement in the 6th millennium but was abandoned and only resettled for a brief period in the 13th–12th centuries. Akkermans says: "The political-cultural framework…is poorly understood…it seems that after the fall of Mitanni, western Syria up to the Euphrates was controlled by the Hittites and the eastern-most part of Syria fell within the Assyrian realm, whereas the intermediate region, perhaps including the Balikh valley, was part of the kingdom of Hanigalbat."[178] Pottery finds at the tell are very similar to the assemblage of the Assyrian governor's seat of Dur-katlimmu (Tell Sheik Hamad), and cuneiform tablets found at the site provide further evidence for Assyrian presence.[179] Burial practices, however, show a wide variation and both Assyrian and Neo-Hittite/Aramean influence, as we will see.

Thus far the tell has yielded 38 inhumations and 9 cremations, with a total of 48 individuals. The burials uncovered here encompass a mixture of burial practices. While

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[177] Amir Harrak, *Assyria and Hanigalbat: A Historical Reconstruction of Bilateral Relations from the Middle of the Fourteenth to the End of the Twelfth Centuries B.C.*, (TSO 4; Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1987), 277, 283.
[178] Akkermans and Rossmeisl, "Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, Northern Syria," 34.
[179] Akkermans and Smits, "A Sealed Double Cremation at Middle Assyrian Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria," 251-263; Akkermans and Rossmeisl, "Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, Northern Syria" 13-60. Cuneiform tablets were found on the floor of room A of a house in stratum 3 of the southeastern area.

the burials here are repeatedly characterized as Late Bronze Age, they date from the very end of this period, and Akkermans' date for the Assyrian fortified farmstead/estate, or *dunnu* from which the burials come is 1225–1120.[180]

The inhumations at Tell Sabi Abyad were either simple pits or mud brick tombs, with the bodies positioned in "typical Assyrian style of burial" (Akkermans' words), with the body lying on its back with the knees flexed up (see Figure 16). Jar burials and pit burials for children are present. There are also cremation graves, as well as a mass pit burial of five individuals together. One interesting feature is the frequent placement of a ram's skull and other bones at the head of the corpse, both for inhumations and cremation burials. Here also the grave goods are very revealing. Most graves include one or more pottery bowls and/or personal ornaments such as bronze bracelets, anklets, rings, earrings, and necklaces with beads of various kinds of material. Also present in smaller quantities was jewellery, faience bowls and cylinder seals.[181] One burial contained an Assyrian cylinder seal of typical Middle Assyrian type still lying on the chest of the skeleton, and a scarab, probably of local manufacture, is associated with a cremation burial (from square Q12). Additionally a Hittite style cylinder seal but with Assyrian elements comes from the mass pit burial[182]

[180] Peter Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p. [cited 23 December 2014]. Online: http ://www.sabi-abyad.nl/Page.aspx?pageType=page&pageID=315; Peter Akkermans and Elisabeth Smits, "A Sealed Double Cremation at Middle Assyrian Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria," in *Fundstellen gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altvorderasiens Ad Honorem Hartmut Kuhne*, (eds. Dominik Bonatz, Rainer Czichon and F. Janoscha Kreppner; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 251-263.
[181] Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p.
[182] Akkermans and Rossmeisl, "Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, Northern Syria," 28-30.

Figure 16: An inhumation burial at Tell Sabi Abyad
Peter Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p.
Online: http://www.sabi-abyad.nl/Page.aspx?pageType=page&pageID=420.

An interesting variation of cremation custom was discovered Tell Sabi Abyad:

> One grave...was originally covered with a cloth tied with cord and carrying a clay sealing with a cylinder-seal impression. This vessel contained the burnt remains of two young adults – a man and a woman, both between 20 and 30 years old. It also contained a large collection of necklaces, rings, pendants, earrings, gem settings and other jewellery made of gold, bronze, iron, stone and bone.[183]

The cylinder seal impression that sealed this burial was of typical Middle Assyrian type with a galloping winged horse and foal. The bones were sexed based on a difference of robustness between duplicate anatomical parts. Also contained in the urn were fragments of the head and legs of a ram. Such multiple cremations have also been found at Tell Shiukh Fawqani. Those burials contained three and four individuals, both adults and children.[184]

Akkermans describes another unusual cremation burial at Tell Sabi Abyad:

> In one case the burnt bones and other content were not placed in a vessel but buried in a shallow, square pit straightaway. The pit was filled in with ashes and burnt wood (undoubtedly from the funeral pyre), and also contained many hundreds of ornaments of all kinds. There were more than 1200 beads made of colourful stones, faience and gold (originally part of a number of necklaces), as

[183] Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad." n.p.
[184] Akkermans and Smits, "A Sealed Double Cremation at Middle Assyrian Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria," 251-263.

> well as a faience scarab, bone hair ornaments, and parts of gold and bronze rings, bracelets, pins, earrings and pendants, one of them in the shape of an animal. There was also a considerable quantity of broken and incomplete pottery in the pit. Both the ornaments and the ceramics were damaged by the funerary fire and partly molten and deformed.[185]

Both of these burials are quite different than the findings from other cremations in Aram (for example Carchemish and Deve Hüyük, as well as from Phoenician practice).[186]

Figure 17: A cremation burial from Tell Sabi Abyad. Notice the rams skull and partial skeleton. Peter Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p. Online: http://www.sabi-abyad.nl/Page.aspx?pageType=page&pageID=420.

In another multiple burial two very young children were buried in one pot (see Figure 18 below). Another child burial had a small stone amulet that was "without doubt" prehistoric and reused as an ornament in this period (Akkermans' words: image or description of the amulet is lacking).

[185] Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p.
[186] See also appendix A.

Figure 18: Double child burial from Tell Sabi Abyad
Peter Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p.
Online: http://www.sabi-abyad.
nl/Page.aspx?pageType=page&pageID=420.

Finally, while single graves were the norm, one grave of five individuals was excavated, wherein the group was seemingly thrown into a pit with little or no arrangement of the bodies. For Akkermans this may represent either a mass execution or the interment of victims of disease. There were no grave goods associated with this pit burial except a single cylinder seal.[187] While some of the grave goods and the placement of the bodies at inhumation are in accord with Assyrian practice, cremation burials were much less common in Mesopotamia and instead are more commonly associated with Anatolian/Phoenician/Neo-Hittite practice. Later in the Iron Age the practice of cremation did reach the heart of Assyria itself, with (for example) two cremation burials

[187] Akkermans, "Tell Sabi Abyad," n.p; Akkermans and Rossmeisl, "Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, Northern Syria," 13-60.

being attested in the royal tombs of the 8th century queens of Assyria at Nimrud (Calah).[188]

Aline Tenu discusses the problem of determining what group a given burial represents in an area where multiple groups were known to interact. Her article centers upon Tell Shiukh Fawqâni, where there are both Assyrian and Aramean elements present (see discussion below), but is equally relevant here. The point, she says, is to identify who burnt their dead. Like J. D. Schloen and others, Tenu also sees the rite of cremation as contrary to the Mesopotamian conception of the afterlife (and thus indicative of a non-Assyrian population).[189] It appears to me that the distinction cannot be made so easily. Other examples of "Assyrian" cremations are found at Ziyaret Tepe (along with an inhumation), in the Assyrian city of Tushhan, in southeastern Turkey, and nearby Kavusan. Again the excavator expressed surprise at finding "unusual Assyrian cremations." Further regarding "typical" Assyrian laying out for burial, another male inhumation at Ziyaret Tepe was face down, with the grave goods below him.[190] It may be that it is time to re-evaluate our expectations for "Assyrian" burials, particularly in

[188] Joan Oates and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001), 82.While we should note that royal burials do not make good parallels with common burials, the presence of a cremation burial in a royal tomb attests to the fact that such a treatment of the body was not considered abhorrent to the Assyrians of the time. Note also that we do not know the identity of this individual. The queens themselves in these tombs were laid to rest in coffins. We do not know if the cremation was a family member or servant, or perhaps a member of the court from another culture. For a more ordinary Assyrian chamber burial for comparison see F. Janoscha Kreppner and Heide Hornig, "A Neo-Assyrian Chamber Tomb at Dur Katlimmu," in *Dur-Katlimmu 2008 and Beyond* (ed. Hartmut Kuhne; Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2010), 107-114.

[189] Aline Tenu, "Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Euphrates Valley Viewed from the Cemetery of Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Syria)," *Syria* 86 (2009): 88-89; and Schloen and Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," 1-13.

[190] Timothy Matney, "Ziyaret Tepe," n.p. [cited 30 June 2014]. Online: http://blogs.uakron.edu/ziyaret/2011/08/03/assyrian-burial-discovered-in-bronze-palace/.
Timothy Matney, "The Assyrian City of Tushan: A Race Against Time," *Past Horizons: Adventures in Archaeology.* n.p. [cited 30 June 2014]. Online: http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/10/2012/the-assyrian-city-of-tushhan-a-race-against-time.

frontier areas. Either the Assyrians were much more flexible in adopting practices such as cremation than was previously believed, or these burials do not represent ethnic Assyrians.

Tell Sabi Abyad is a clear example of the way in which a variety of burial practices were followed. Such variety may reflect circumstance or preference. Children were buried in pots over a wide span of time and geography. Such burials are found in Israel and Aram. Such containers were readily available and of suitable size to serve as a secure resting place. Likewise the mass grave certainly was created in response to unusual circumstances such as disease or execution. Aside from convenience or the pressure of specific circumstance, we see in the variety of burial practices here that both inhumation and cremation were accepted, and that a variety of grave goods were considered to be appropriate gifts. Akkermans leaves the question open as to the ethnicity of these burials, and I agree that a determination cannot be reached. Akkermans concludes "The local, Assyrian-dominated community at Tell Sabi Abyad seems to have easily integrated funeral trends of Levantine or Northwest-Syrian origin in its burial repertoire"[191]

[191] Akkermans and Smits, "A Sealed Double Cremation at Middle Assyrian Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria," 255.

Evidence from Iron Age Aram

Bēt Baġyān (Bit Bahiani)

Figures 19 and 20: Basalt figures that closed the entrance to two tombs at Tell Halaf (Gozan). Source: Maggie Struckmeier and David Connolly "War-shattered Artefacts from Tell Halaf Restored by Berlin Museum" *Past Horizons: Adventures in Archaeology 6/2014*. n.p. Online: http://www.pasthorizons.com/index.php/archives/01/2011/war-shattered-artefacts-of-tell-halaf-restored-by-berlin-museum.
Original photos 1913 Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung, Cologne

We now move further to the center of Aramean territory and forward in time to an archaeologically important and artistically impressive site. The kingdom of Bēt Baġyān (or Bit Bahiani in Assyrian) had its capital at Gōzān, which is identified with modern Tell Halaf. The tell is located in Northeast Syria at the springs of the Khabur river, and adequate rainfall, as well as fertile soil and the Khabur itself, has allowed flourishing agriculture for millennia. The tell was excavated early in the last century by M. Von Oppenheim. It was Von Oppenheim's explorations that brought to light the monumental

art of the tell. As was the case with Carchemish, work was interrupted by WWI and resumed in the 1920s.[192]

In 2006 excavations were begun anew by a joint Syrian and German team under the direction of Lutz Martin, Mirko Novak, Joerg Becker, and Abd al-Masih Bago. The tell has yielded material from the pottery Neolithic through the Hellenistic period, but the tell flourished primarily during the pottery Neolithic period and much later during the Iron Age. Most notable of the Late Bronze material is the grave of a 14–15 year old girl (grave 16), who was buried in a mud brick box with elaborate beaded jewelry, as well as jewelry composed of bronze, iron, and bone. Ceramic pottery was included in the grave, which includes a large pot placed at the feet and a cup lain near the head of the body.[193]

The impressive carved orthostats and sphinx figures leading up to the palace and the presence of gold, silver, and ivory artifacts attest to the wealth of this city at its zenith as the capital of Iron Age Bēt Baġyān.[194] The two most notable Iron Age burials excavated at Gozen are shaft tombs that have been dated to the 10th–9th centuries. The tombs each held a single cremation burial. Each contained an urn with ashes and offerings of gold, bronze, and ivory. The goods placed in the southern grave included a golden mouth covering and a tripod vessel. The entrance to each shaft was closed with a sitting female figure carved in basalt (se Figures 19 and 20). E. Lipiński interprets this as meaning that the deceased was a queen or a high priestess. Of course "queen or priestess"

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[192] Mirko Novak, "Tell Halaf Ausgrabungsprojekt," n.p. [cited 11 June 2014]. Online: http://www.grabung-halaf.de/location.php?l=eng . Von Oppenheim's work is published in a multi-volume set in German, one of which focuses upon the small finds, one upon the prehistoric finds, and one on the buildings. Max Freiherr Von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf* (ed. Barthel Hrouda; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962).

[193] Novak, "Tell Halaf Ausgrabungsprojekt," n.p. Most helpfully the excavators have created a short video of the grave excavation that also includes images of cleaned and reconstructed jewelry. It can be found at: ://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nd3tHt23Og0&feature=youtube

[194] Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of People and Places of Ancient Western Asia: The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire*, 275-277.

is often the default explanation for any rich female grave. Although the statues were destroyed during World War II, one can see from the photographs that the two were very individualistic in appearance. Both statues were carved in the same seated position, with the right hand holding a cup, and the lap of the figure forming a table-like surface upon which offerings might be placed.[195] The style of the sculptures is not Assyrian in influence, but owes more to the Neo-Hittite tradition, although the unique style cannot be construed as a simple continuation of any single artistic tradition.

The independence of artistic style, along with inscriptional evidence related to the particularly energetic king Kapara, who seems to be responsible for much of the monumental and fortification work in the city, for W. Albright gave a date at the end of the 10th century for the vast majority of the finds here.[196] Unfortunately these basalt statues and other monumental works from Gōzān were transported to Berlin after their discovery and a short time later were destroyed during the bombing of Berlin during WWII. The bombing destroyed the Tell Halaf Museum which had been dedicated to their preservation. The fire created by the bombs heated the basalt to a high temperature, which resulted in the statues shattering when they were doused by the cold water used to put out the fire. Only recently (beginning in 1993) has work begun to sort through and restore the fragments thus produced.[197]

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[195] Herbert Niehr, "Religion," in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (ed. Herbert Niehr; HOS 106; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 144-145.
[196] W. F. Albright, *The Date of the Kapara Period at Gozan (Tell Halaf)* (Ankara:The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1956), 75.
[197] Kirsten Drueppel and Christian Lehmann, "Fire Bombing of the Tell Halaf Museum in Berlin during World War II; Reconstruction of the Succession of Events Based on Mineralogical Investigations," *European Journal of Mineralogy* 21 (2009): 443-456; Maggie Struckmeier and David Connolly, "War-Shattered Artefacts of Tell Halaf Restored by Berlin Museum," *Past Horizons: Adventures in Archaeology*. n.p. [cited 23 June 2014]. Online: http://www.pasthorizons.com/index.php/archives/01/2011/war-shattered-artefacts-of-tell-halaf-restored-by-berlin-museum.

One further statue should be mentioned, particularly as it relates to a non-royal funerary monument. The statue portrayed the son of a scribe. M. Novak writes: "On the torso of a seated statue made of basalt, a three-line inscription has been preserved. It names Kammaki, son of the scribe Ilu-le'I, and states that destruction of the statue by a later ruler is to be declared a sin. According to the form of the signs, the inscription seems to date back to the middle of the 8th century BCE It is possible, that the sculpture was intended for worshipping the ancestors."[198]

Other burials at Gōzān are typically inhumations. From the same period as the cremation tombs come two high ranking inhumations which were excavated from below the terrace of the *bīt hilāni* of the city. The tombs included an entrance which was added at a later date, and a lamp niche. The southern burial vault was barrel shaped, with access through a gate on the eastern side, which was walled over sometime after the burial. This tomb showed evidence of the corpses being laid out on the floor, along with numerous offerings of silver, bronze, and ivory. The primary burial was oriented with the head to the east. Finds included a golden mouth covering, a headdress plaque, and golden appliqués on the sandals.[199] The northern vault tomb had been robbed. This was a double burial vault with two chambers which were separated by a central wall. Entrance to the tombs was first through the northern chamber and then to the southern chamber through a door in the central wall.[200] The robbed tomb is dated to the end of the 9th century, and contained fragments of a clay coffin. Three other above ground tombs from the 10th–9th

[198] Novak, "Tell Halaf Ausgrabungsprojekt," n.p.
[199] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 636-638; Niehr, "Religion," 143-144.
[200] Niehr, "Religion," 144-145.

centuries BCE were constructed of brick. These tombs contained an entrance hall and one or two chambers each.

Lipiński also describes a "cultic place" in the town that contained standing and sitting "divine and human" statues. He proposes that the evidence from Gōzān constitutes a royal cult of the dead. This however does not shed much light upon those of lesser rank. This cult room was located in a square near the southern gate of the city, and included a complex with several adjoining rooms. Opposite the main entrance was a statue of a seated couple in a similar style to the "queen" statues of the two cremation graves. Also present was the statue of a standing man, and other smaller figures in stone and metal. An alter still held the remains of sacrifices. Oppenheim, Lipiński, Niehr, and others have all interpreted this as a place where offerings were made to ancestors or gods. [201]

The burials at Tel Halaf are presented first here of the evidence from Iron Age Aram, and they represent the greatest departure in burial practice from what we have seen thus far in Israel and Judah. These tombs are also unusual for burials in Aram, although chapter 6 will address several important royal statues from Śam'al that may present a useful comparison. What we find is that lower status and less wealthy graves in Aram have much more in common with burials in Israel and Judah than with these royal tombs. The "royal" tombs and statues from Tel Halaf and the grave goods included with them represent a tremendous outlay of resources. What we have is remarkable: the remains of several individuals of the highest wealth and status in a city marked by the devotion of significant resources to public monuments and architecture. The public monuments can be compared to Carchemish, but that city has no comparable burials.

[201] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 639; and Niehr, "Religion," 146-149.

Tell Fakharīya

Only about 2 km east of Tell Halaf lies Tell Fakharīya. This is the site of ancient Sikkān (located at the southern edge of the modern city Ras al-ʻAin). Sikkān was under Assyrian domination in the early 13th century, but by the latter part of the 11th century had come under Aramean influence. The site is notable for the discovery there in 1979 of a statue of the 9th–8th century Assyrian governor Hadd-yiṯʻi, which is inscribed with a bilingual Assyrian and Aramaic inscription and dedicated to the god Hadad of Sikanu.[202] Brief exploration of the tell was undertaken in 1940 by an American expedition from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute directed by Calvin McEwan and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Disputes between the Germans and the Americans after the opening of hostilities of WWII brought work to a standstill. Baron Max Von Oppenheim had previously held a concession to excavate in the area but this was cancelled at the outbreak of the war. The America team that had then begun excavating at the tell were later forced to leave the site on 24 hour notice in 1940 due to von Oppenheim's protest with the French Vichy government. These disputes over the rights to the site, which had their roots in the hostile wartime atmosphere, seriously disrupted the work. After the war brief soundings by a German team in 1955–56 were directed by Anton Moortgat.[203] More recent excavations have been undertaken in 2005 and later by the Syrian Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums and the Free University of Berlin.

The brief and disrupted early investigations none the less yielded many riches. In addition to many fine ivory pieces, cylinder seals, and cuneiform tablets dating to the

[202] Paul-Eugène Dion, "Image et Ressemblance en Araméen Ancien (Tell Fakhariyah)," *ScEs* 34 (1982): 151-153.
[203] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 120. Calvin Wells McEwan, *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah* (OIP 79; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), v.

reigns of Shalmaneser I (1263–1234 BC) and Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233–1197 BC), three burials were uncovered by the early American investigation. We will address these first, and secondly deal with the burials that have been discovered in the much more recent excavations of 2006–2010.

The first burial discovered by C. McEwan was a pot burial that was placed below the floor in the southwest corner of a private house. The burial contained no small objects but three coarse pottery bowls were found nearby. The body was placed in a flexed position within a large vessel. The vessel had a rounded base and thick rim with rope molding. Another vessel had been placed over the head of the body. This vessel also had rope molding and had a conical base. This type of interment is termed a composite burial as two vessels were used to contain the body, and is comparable to Middle Assyrian burials found at Assur (No 949 and No. 950). A second burial, also a pot burial, was located higher in the building in a northward extension. Dating for this burial to the Neo-Assyrian period is clear due to the presence of grave goods, including iron rings. This burial also contained carnelian beads.[204] Another very similar burial, also below a house, was found in the 2006 season. Analysis of the material revealed that the bones had been burned. This burial also contained two pots as grave goods.[205]

Burial three, also a Neo-Assyrian period grave, was found in close proximity to McEwan's burial two. It is not termed a pot burial in the field catalog. The most striking feature of this burial is the large number of metal weapon points found: 10 bronze lance heads, two bronze arrowheads, an iron knife blade and possibly two additional iron

[204] McEwan, *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah,* 45.
[205] Dominik Bonatz, "Tell Fecheriye," n.p. [cited 19 June 2014]. Online: http://www.fecheriye.de/index.php?l=eng .

arrowheads. This burial also contained lamp fragments, as well as a ceramic goblet and jar.[206]

During the 2006 – 2010 seasons 45 more graves were investigated by the Berlin Free University team. These included multiple jar burials as well as simple inhumations (see figures 21–23). These burials were either embedded under the floor levels of Middle Assyrian level rooms, or cut into the remains of House I and House II, just as were the graves earlier found by McEwan. Below is a brief description of a few of the more outstanding finds:

> One burial is exceptional concerning its grave goods that consist of a very rich collection of small finds including over one hundred beads made from semi-precious stones, shell and "faience", a dozen golden earrings, bronze bracelets, and animal shaped pendants. The bones of the individual buried within this grave indicate an infant still having its deciduous teeth. A complete Middle Assyrian standardized carinated bowl is placed on top of the southern end of the grave pit in a niche separated from the pit by a mud-brick standing on its edge. In the fill of the pit the extremities, skull and shoulder blade of a small ruminant animal (goat or sheep) were found pointing out the ritual context of the burial….Additional to a very rich double-pot burial discovered in 2007 and the one already excavated by the McEwan expedition in 1940, another grave could be investigated. It is dug in the north-western corner of the room and contains a double-jar burial of an adult male equipped with several semi-precious stone beads…two skulls of rams with their extremities and shoulder blades were found in the fill of the grave. Another huge double-jar burial was found close to the eastern end of *Room 1*. It contained the remains of two individuals – one adult and one infantile. Additional to the head of a sheep contained within the fill of the grave pit, a jar with handle was found. [207]

The majority of burials at Tell Fakharīya were grave-pits at the base of which a rectangular mud-brick enclosure was erected. These pits often had a roof formed of mud-bricks standing on edge to form a triangular pediment. Twenty-nine such graves were

[206] McEwan, *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah*, 46.
[207] Bonatz, "Tell Fecheriye." n.p. An earlier burial must be included for interest alone: "A different type of burial was found below one of the walls of the Middle Assyrian *House I*. It is an inhumation grave covered by three mud-bricks. The corpse of the deceased was heavily mutilated by a blow on the head that cracked the skull. In addition to this the right lower leg was cut off. Both of those mutilations must have happened during life since the bones show adhesions. The stratigraphic position of the grave indicates a date for this burial older than that of the Middle Assyrian *House I*."

excavated on the western terrace (where Houses I–III were located) and a further one was located in Area A. The pottery deposited in the grave pits near the head of the deceased often included a large jar, a nipple base goblet placed in the bottom of the jar and a small bowl to cover the mouth. These vessel types were used over a long time span from the Middle Assyrian period to the Roman era. As with burials in Israel/Judah and Phoenicia (see appendix A), certain groupings of pottery were customary for burial. While the particular types of pottery making up the group varied by time and location, such burial sets were very common. The jar-burials share with the mud-brick cist burials the presence of the remains of small ruminant animals (sheep or goat) placed into the shaft of the grave or on top of the fill.

In 2010, an additional radiocarbon analysis of several inhumations was conducted that confirmed a date between 1250 and 900 BCE.[208] Here as elsewhere we find a variety of burial practices attested, and are left wondering if these are Arameans or Assyrians buried here. The prolonged interaction of the two groups and shared living spaces meant that each may have been willing to adapt the burial practices of the other.

[208] Bonatz, "Tell Fecheriye." n.p.

Figures 21–23: Examples of the variety of burial practices at Tell Fakharīya: Infant jar burial C-1255, Crouching burial C-1294 (above) and Supine inhumation C-1520 (below)
Dominik Bonatz, "Tell Fekheriye," n.p. Online: http://www.fecheriye.de/campaigns.php?l=eng.

Bēt-'Adini

The kingdom of Bēt-'Adini is associated with the site of Tell Shiukh Fawquâni. It is identified with Marina (or Burmar'ina) in the territory of Bēt-'Adini. The tell is located a few kilometers south of the Turkish border and was excavated beginning in 1994 and

continuing through 2003 by the *Groupe International de Recherches Archéologiques* under the direction of L Bachelot and F. M. Fales.[209]

The Aramean presence at Tell Shiukh Fawquâni and early conflict with Assyria is attested in the inscriptions of King Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076). It is from these Assyrian writings related to Bēt-ʻAdini that we find the first mention of the Ahlamú-Arameans (as mentioned earlier).[210] The site is also well known for the bilingual Aramaic/Akkadian archive found there. The location of this small state along important routes to Anatolia and the Mediterranean coast made Bēt-ʻAdini an obvious target for Assyrian aggression. The actions of the particularly troublesome 9th century ruler Ahuni of Bēt-ʻAdini further incited Assyrian action by Ashurnasirpal II (883–859). The conflict was renewed again in 858 when Shalmaneser III, in response to the resistance of the ruler of Til-Barsip, crossed the Euphrates, burned 200 villages in the west bank territory of Bēt-ʻAdini and captured six fortified cities. At that time Shalmaneser III received tribute from Pattin, Śamʼal, Bēt-(A) Gūši, Carchemish, and Kummah. Another campaign followed in 856, and by 853 the state of Bēt-ʻAdini had been dismantled and reorganized by the Assyrian empire, with cities renamed and recreated as Assyrian royal residences and settled by Assyrian colonists.[211]

A.Tenu lists three significant features of burials at the tell – cremation, placement outside the city, and the plentiful presence of iron objects as grave goods (arrow heads,

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[209] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 163-164; also Luc Bachelot and Frederick Mario Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998* (HANEMS 6; Padova: Sargon, 2005), 1118.
[210] Tenu, "Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Euphrates Valley Viewed from the Cemetery of Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Syria)," 88-89; and Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*, 23, 34, 94, 98, 101, 102.
[211] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 192-193; Bryce, *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdom*, 168-169. For the initial campaigns against Gurgum, Bēt-ʻAdini, Pattin, Śamʼal, Que, Bēt-(A) Gūši, Carchemish, and others see Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*, 9-11, 15-19. For the resettling and renaming of Til Barsip and other cities of Bēt-ʻAdini as Assyrian royal cities see Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*, 19.

tweezers, and other small tools – most of these finds now reside at the Aleppo Museum). Radiocarbon testing of the bones yield dates between 1395 and 936 BCE. Tenu claims that the use of a necropolis to bury the dead is "rather new" at the beginning of the Iron Age in Aram, with the common Late Bronze custom being burial under houses – including both interments and cremations. The shift from burial under houses to burial outside the city walls is notable, and may indicate both a greater detachment (physical and very possibly emotionally/psychologically) from the dead, and also a loosening of the intimate bond between the space of a house and the family. As in Israel this may have had implications for the ownership of property.[212] It is a very different matter to sell a house that can be cleared of all personal goods, as compared to a home wherein the remains of multiple family members lie. This is a similar property issue to that of cave burials on a piece of land (as in Israel) but burials under house floors present an even more intimate connection of the family to the living space. As illustrated in the sections above, this same shift is seen throughout the Levant from the Bronze to the Iron Age.

Tenu notes Alalakh's burials of the 15th–12th centuries BCE (see above), with 13 cremations buried under house floors (compare the use of cremation at this early date in contrast with the rest of the Levant). Tell Mohammed Diyab (one cremation, 7 inhumations) and Tell Sabi Abyad in North East Syria (discussed above) also yielded cremation graves buried under houses. This indicates that cremation was becoming a more common practice just prior to the change from burial under house floors to burial in an external cemetery. There are two cemeteries at Tell Shiukh Fawquâni, and the cremation cemetery is actually earlier than the inhumation cemetery. This aligns with

[212] Tenu, "Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Euphrates Valley Viewed from the Cemetery of Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Syria)," 90-91.

data from Deve Hüyük that during the Iron Age cremation became very common for several centuries – from the 10th to the 7th centuries – then preferred practice returned to inhumation, sometime around the 6th century and later.

Tell Shiukh Fawqâni is the largest cremation cemetery within the territory of Aram after Hama, with about 150 burials. The burials are quite similar to Yunus at Carchemish and Deve Hüyük, which will be discussed below.[213] The similarity in practice between this "Aramaic" site and the "Neo-Hittite" Carchemish further illustrates how intermixed the Aramaic and Neo-Hittite cultures were at this time in Aram. The inhumation and cremations are located in separate areas. Both are on the outer edges of the tell, with the cremation site located further out in a northeastern area beyond a wadi that cuts just north of the tell (Area H). The inhumation site is located south of this at the eastern foot of the tell (Area G). We will first discuss the cremation cemetery then turn to the later inhumations. Four types of cremation burials are distinguished at Tell Shiukh Fawquâni. Type I has a pear-shaped cremation jar with carinated neck and flattened turned out rim. Burned bones and personal objects are placed inside the jar, and other objects lay beside the urn. Type II has the addition of two dishes associated with the jar, one under and one covering the top. Type III has an inverted krater over the urn. Type IV is represented by a tripod krater rather than a pear shaped urn, with an inverted clay tub as a cover. This last type is represented by only one burial and is similar in type to the Yunus "bathtub" graves which have a splayed rim and a rope molding appliqué.[214] These differences relate primarily to the type of container that is used for burial, and do not

[213] Tenu, "Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Euphrates Valley Viewed from the Cemetery of Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Syria)," 85.
[214] Bachelot and Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998*, 99.

indicate significant differences in the treatment of the dead or offerings provided. These variations have parallels to variations found at Carchemish.

Grave goods included spindle whorls for female and bronze copper javelin heads for male burials. Beads (with bangles/jewelry) were often included for the burials of children. As at Hama,Yunus, and Deve Hüyük, the objects were placed in the urn on top of the hot ashes, as evidenced by the charring (but not burning) of the items. Cylinder seals were also present. As at the inhumation cemetery, some pottery gifts (several small cups and a zoomorphic jar) were found, but the most common grave goods were small personal objects. At least one jar contained sheep and goat bones along with the human remains (TSF 98 H1466.6). One jar contained the remains of both a child and an adult (listed as TSF97 H894). Burials were located within the same field but at differing depths and at least in one case one above the other. This indicates that the area was used over a lengthy period and also suggests that previous graves were not always clearly marked above ground.[215]

Pottery from this area was of common ware of pink, reddish yellow, and red color. Three bell craters with handles were used as urns and also turned upside down as a covering for a burial. L. Bachelot proposes that the pear-shaped urns and the kraters, similar to those found in cremation burials at Yunus and Hama, were made especially for burials. The absence of Neo-Assyrian pottery in area H (though two Neo-Assyrian jars used as cinerary urns were found in neighboring fields), as well as the absence of painted pottery and red slip ware narrows the chronological range for this cemetery to the 10^{th}–8^{th} centuries BCE.[216]

[215] Bachelot and Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998,* 1003.
[216] Bachelot and Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998,* 1002-1008.

The inhumation cemetery is located in Area G of the tell, at the eastern foot of the mound, and dates to the 6th–5th centuries. Fourteen burials are in simple earthen pits and contain the graves of 4 children and 10 adults, with one double burial of a woman and child. The burials were in crouched position except for two extended burials (compare the single crouched burial at Tell Fakhariya). Most graves contained between one and seven (for the double burial – No. 289/340) grave good items. Only one male burial was listed with no objects (TSF 97 H895). This was a well preserved male skeleton buried in extended position and oriented SW (instead of SE as the other burials). There was no stone or mud brick cover on this grave as there was on every other grave, so robbery cannot be ruled out. Only two other graves are listed without goods – burial H906 was disarticulate and burial 1476 only contained large sherds which may or may not have been pottery gifts, so little can be deduced from these. Gender assignment for adults was made on comparative robustness of bones, but is marked as tentative by the excavators due to the poor state of preservation of the bones and possible low degree of sexual dimorphism of the population (a somewhat odd speculation on the part of the excavators).[217] Four of the graves contained large blocks of stone – it was unclear if these were either coverings or grave markers. All but two of the graves that lacked stones had instead mud brick remains as covers for the burials.[218]

[217] Sexual dimorphism can vary greatly between populations but does not show significant variation from region to region. Given the overwhelming evidence of mixing of populations in this area it is highly unlikely that this location would show a population specific reduction in dimorphism. Frayer and Milford's article extends far beyond these basics but is a very interesting read. David Frayer and Milford Wolpoff, "Sexual Dimorphism," *Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 14 (1985): 429-453.

[218] Bachelot and Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998*, 779-784. For the diagnoses of age and gender from remains see Alessandro Canci, "Human Remains From Tel Shiukh Fawqani; Anthropological Report," in vol. 2 of *Tell Shiukh Fawqani 1994-1998* (eds. L. Bachelot and F. M. Fales, ANEM 6; Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N, 2005), 1109-1118.

Bachelot and Fales write: "No common pattern for grave goods was detected amongst the adult burials; objects of various types and qualities were found."[219] This site is very unusual in this respect. While Bachelot and Fales do not detect a pattern for grave goods, we can recall the earlier mention of the inclusion of spindle whorls for female and bronze copper javelin heads for male burials as well as beads (with bangles/jewelry) for the burials of children. Interestingly the primary objects here were not pottery (though bronze bowls and jugs and jars of common ware are present) but small personal items – bronze earrings, scarabs, a stamp seal, fibulae, an iron knife, beads and rings.

M. Luciani compares Tell Shiukh Fawquâni with the Carchemish and Deve Hüyük sites of Woolley and Lawrence (also discussed below).[220] Luciani, as well as Bachelot and Fales, state that by the Neo-Babylonian period inhumation was practiced after the abandonment of cremation as a burial custom.[221] The cremation cemetery (dated 1395 and 936 BCE) at Tell Shiukh Fawquâni strongly parallels the 8th century cremation cemetery at Deve Hüyük, while the comparable inhumation cemetery there is dated to between 480 and 380 BCE, as compared to a century earlier for Tell Shiukh Fawquâni. Stele or stones to mark the grave were not found here, but are known at Hama and Carchemish.

Bēt-Gūš

The state of Bēt-Gūš is identified with the site of Tell ar-Rifʿat (ancient Arpad). Arpad controlled the area of Aleppo (Halab) in the 8th–7th centuries BCE. Bēt-Gūš takes its name from its founder Gūš of the Aramean tribe of Yahan, and first took shape in the

[219] Bachelot and Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998*, 936.
[220] Marta Luciani, "Iron Age Graves in Northern Syria: The Tell Shiukh Fawqani Evidence," in Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ed. P. Mathiae; Rome: University of Rome Department of Social Sciences; 1998): 803.
[221] Luciani, "Iron Age Graves in Northern Syria: The Tell Shiukh Fawqani Evidence," 805-809.

early 9th century. The small state is first mentioned in the annals of Ashur-dan II (934–912) by the Akkadian form of Yahan, Iahānu.[222] Tell ar-Rifʿat is surrounded by the modern village of Neirab, and the site has been disturbed by the building of modern houses.

Two of the most important finds from this site are the funerary steles with inscriptions of two priests of the moon god Sahar (Sin), which were recovered by C. Clermont-Ganneau in1891. These are known as the Neirab steles after the village. The Neirab steles will be discussed in the later chapter on Aramaic funerary inscriptions, but here we will focus upon the necropolis in which they were located and the burials there. The steles were not found in an isolated context. A large basalt coffin may have been associated with the monuments (also discovered by Ganneau). The site is also part of an Iron Age/Neo-Babylonian/Hellenistic necropolis which was excavated in several campaigns in 1926 and 1927 by the French archaeologists M. Abel, A. Barrois, and B. Carrière.

The finds at this site are interesting in that they attest to the continued importance of proper burial and grave goods throughout the Iron Age and into the Neo-Babylonian period. The presence of distinctive "torpedo jars" and the remains of birds as part of the grave offerings are a unique take on the common Aramaic burial customs.[223] The necropolis at Neirab is quite complex. The cemetery was in use from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic period and includes a variety of burials, including simple interments, burials protected by various types of brick and stone work, jar burials, and sarcophagi. The site

[222] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 195; also Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*, 133.
[223] M. Abel and A. Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 12 Septembre au 6 Novembre 1927." *Syria* 9 (1928): 193-195.

shows evidence of fire and disturbance in ancient times as well as modern looting and building. In addition excavation trenches of the site crossed walls at several points and also exposed a series of pipes and ancient wells (at least 4 wells are identified, one contained Hellenistic artifacts – a crater and lamps). The French expedition of 1926 dug a series of trenches (charmingly labeled A, S, F, T, N, Q, Pr, and Ch) which branched off from each other in a roughly zig-zag pattern and which cut across multiple strata of the tell (see Figure 24).[224] The descriptions of the excavation are therefore somewhat difficult to follow, but the maps and detail drawings of sections in the report are very helpful.

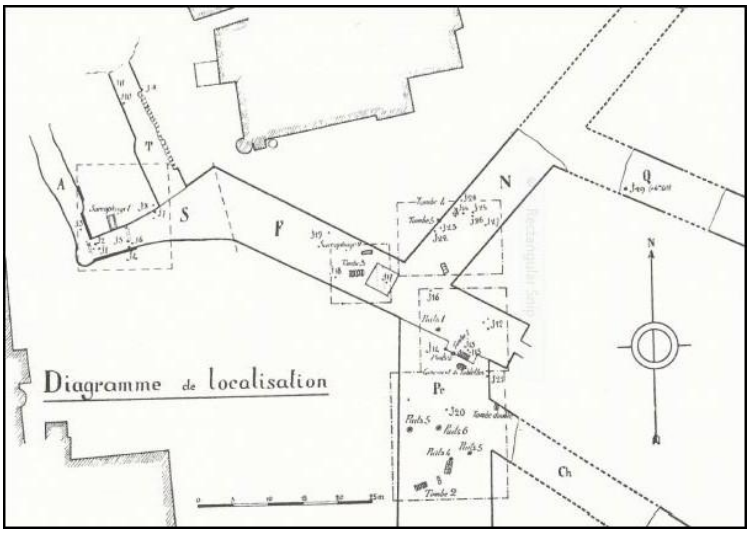

Figure 24 Map of the 1926–27 excavations at Neirab
B. Carrière and A. Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," Syria 8 (1927): Pl. XXXII.

At least 14 burials were uncovered in the first season of these excavations (1926). During the first season Iron Age material was recovered from Trench A and S: large jars, one of which contained the skeleton of a 2–3 year old child (Trench A), as well as lance points, iron hinges, bone blades, and terracotta figures in the area of Ganneau's basalt

[224] Carrière and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," 126-142.

sarcophagus. These small finds were characterized as "debris" scattered at the bottom of Trench S. Jar 4 in trench S had been damaged by fire, as were several jars in nearby Trench T.[225]

The opening of a new trench, Trench F, yielded several Hellenistic burials with intact skeletons and covered by large jars (Graves 1 and 3). While many earlier graves only had one or two torpedo shaped offering jars, Graves 1 and 2 held 6 jars, and Grave 40 held 7 such jars, as did Graves 4 and 3. While the form of these jars evolved somewhat from the Neo-Babylonian to Hellenistic period, they continued to be large and elongated, sometimes almost a meter long, such that laid in a row side by side they covered a burial completely (see Figures 25 and 26).[226] Earlier graves were often arranged with the jar or jars deposited at the head of the body, while later burials (which extended into the Hellenistic period) were made with the large jars placed over the body. Also close to these Hellenistic finds was a fragile and much damaged white stone sarcophagus containing the bones of an aged man.[227]

[225] Carrière and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," 126-132.
[226] Abel and Barrois, Fouilles de L'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem: Effectuées à Neirab du 12 Septembre au 6 Novembre 1927, 194-202.
[227] Carrière and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," 123-136.

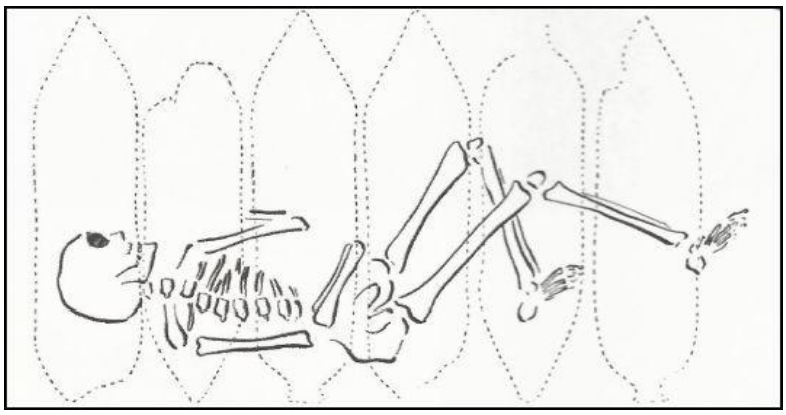

Figure 25 Configuration of body and torpedo jars in Grave 1
Jars are laid in a row on top of the body.
Carrière and A. Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," *Syria* 8 (1927), 134.

Figure 26 Photograph of jars on top of Grave 3
Carrière and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," *Syria* 8 (1927): pl. xxxvii.

While burials range from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic period, the majority of the site yielded material from the Neo-Babylonian period. Trenches N and PR held both Neo-Babylonian and Hellenistic finds, and the Neo-Babylonian material begins to dominate with the opening of Trench CH. This time frame is illustrated by the discovery

of a cache of cuneiform tablets in Trench PR.[228] Particularly striking here was the discovery of several very large Neo-Babylonian funerary pithos, one of which held the remains of a 12 year old child. As seen elsewhere, the most common types of items left with a burial were pottery and jewelry. Almost all skeletal remains from every period at this site were accompanied by jewelry – bronze, gold, and silver earrings and rings, as well as large numbers of beads. Personal items are also attested, such as a few scarabs and stamp seals (two in stone and showing a leaping animal), and in one case small alabaster plates and vases. Two scarabs were found with the name of Thutmose III (see discussion of similar finds in Israel in chapter 1 and Phoenicia in Appendix A). Frustratingly the season one report from Carrière and Barrois mentions a "large number" of weapons and instruments of bronze and iron, especially in Trenches F, N, and PR, but does not describe them or give further detail.[229]

About fifty graves were uncovered in the second season of excavation, and are primarily dated to the Neo-Babylonian period. Most burials were oriented towards the east, with the bodies on their left sides facing south with arms and legs bent. The "torpedo jars" contained grave offerings as mentioned above, often the bones of birds. These were most commonly a type of pigeon, and the excavators speculate that they were associated with a cult of Ishtar. Not only birds were found, but other offerings as well (for example a cluster of five jars containing a horn and ram bones).[230]

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[228] For more on these texts see F. Mario Fales, "Remarks on the Neirab Texts," *OrAnt* 12 (1973): 131-142. The texts are primarily a cache of business documents related to one family, and relate to the reigns of Neriglissar (559-556), Nabonidus (555-539), Cambyses (529-522), and Darius (521-486). Two additional texts have been related to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562) or more likely to a briefly reigning usurper, Nebuchadnezzar IV (Araka) (521).

[229] Carrière and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," 126-142.

[230] Abel and Barrois, "Fouilles De L'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem: Effectuées à Neirab du 12 Septembre du 6 Novembre 1927," 193-195.

The necropolis at Neirab contained many indicators of relative wealth. A large number of graves included multiple items of bronze, gold, or silver jewelry as well as pots and other ceramics, and items of Egyptian origin. One grave in particular was given special attention by Abel and Barrois for its richness. Grave 28 contained a large amount of jewelry and toiletry items (such as a bronze kohl case and a palate and spatula of bone). Also included was a collar necklace with a large conical pendant with a carving representing a worshiper or priest before a god (Marduk according to the excavators) and two stone amulets. The skull of the deceased had the remains of an elaborate headdress still partially affixed to it. A small blue figurine of Bes was also recovered. Multiple items were connected by a metal chain and placed across the chest. Many of the graves at Neirab were simple interments, but three sarcophagi were discovered. Of these, two were quite large and carved from basalt. One of these basalt sarcophagi was found in close association with the two priestly funerary steles (trench S) and the other was located in trench F. The third sarcophagus was of white stone and held the fragile remains of a very aged man as mentioned above. Jar burials are also attested as has been seen at other sites. Here also jar burials serve primarily for children, but also for adults in several cases. Adult jar burials employed two vessels placed together for this purpose. Child graves were treated in the same way as adult graves. In several cases children were buried with adults. Examples include Grave 11, which held the skeletons of three young children buried over the body of an adult, and Graves 8, 9, and 10: two infant graves in jar burials with a very rich adult grave (which included pigeon bones, silver and bronze jewelry, beads, and a cylinder seal). Most of the metal is bronze or silver, but a single iron knife

was found in Grave 69, and fragments and residue of iron were found elsewhere.[231]

Til Barsip

Til-Barsip (or Til Barsib or Tarbusiba, also called Masuwari in Luwian inscriptions) is identified with Tell Ahmar, and was one of the most important cities of the Aramean territories. Located on the east bank of the Euphrates, the city is only 20km downstream from Carchemish. The inscriptions of Shalmaneser describe Til Barsip as held by the ruler of Bēt-ʻAdini, from whom Shalmaneser took it in 856 and renamed it Kâr-Shalmaneser.[232]

The excavated remains of the town are Neo-Hittite in art, language and cultural remains except for a few Aramaic documents from a later period, as for example the trilingual inscription of Ninurta-bēl-usur and the 7th century Aramaic clay tablets. Cuneiform tablets from this period are also present and describe the local governance. Lipiński argues that the city was Neo-Hittite, but that the surrounding area on either bank of the Euphrates was controlled by a "powerful Aramean tribe (the Bēt-ʻAdini)."[233]

Cultural mixing of Neo-Hittite and Aramean elements is well documented for many of these territories. There is no reason for surprise at finding a Neo-Hittite cultural complex under Aramean rule. In this case the situation was quite complex. Masuwari and Bēt-ʻAdini were not interchangeable. Masuwari was the traditional Neo-Hittite territory, and Bēt-ʻAdini was the area controlled by the Aramean tribe. The discovery of multiple inscriptions (particularly that of the son of the ruler Ariyahina) tell of the usurpation of the throne by a member of the army in the 10th century BCE. After the death of the son of

[231] Abel and Barrois, *Fouilles De L'Ecole Archeologique Francaise De Jerusalem: Effectuees a Neirab Du 12 Septembre Au 6 Novembre 1927*, 195-204
[232] Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*, 19; and Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I*, 224-225.
[233] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 165.

the usurper (Hamiyata), a member of the earlier dynasty recovered the throne. The family of Hamiyata may have been Aramean and the earlier rulers Luwian, but this is unclear. While the stele may reflect the conflict between Aramean and Luwian/Neo-Hittite elements, G. Bunnens acknowledges that both may have been of Aramean descent. Both dynasties used the Luwian language and the Neo-Hittite artistic style.[234] D. Hawkins also conjectures that the period of Aramean occupation may have been limited in time and scope, thus leaving less of a mark upon the material culture of the site.[235] Certainly there was a degree of shifting back and forth of dominance of Neo-Hittite and Aramean elements as well as adoption of Neo-Hittite style by Aramean rulers.

Til Barsip was excavated in the early part of the last century by D. Hogarth, C. Thompson, and F. Thureau-Dangin. The University of Melbourne resumed excavations in the 1980s and 90s under the direction of Guy Bunnens, in large part because construction of the Tishrin Dam threatened the site. In 1999 the dam was completed and two-thirds of the site was permanently flooded. From 2000 on the project was taken over by the University of Liège, Belgium and directed by Önhan Tunca.[236]

The Melbourne excavations yielded remains from the late period of Assyrian occupation in the 7th century BCE. Assyrian influence is reflected in burials from this period. In the vicinity of Area C of the tell a large chamber tomb was excavated. The chamber was covered by a barrel vault of baked bricks. Within the chamber was a coffin of baked clay, resting on a square brick structure against the northeast wall of the tomb. This tomb had been robbed and there were no skeletal remains or other goods aside from

[234] Guy Bunnens, *A New Luwian Stele and the Cult of the Storm-God at Til Barsib-Masuwari* (Vol. 2 of Publications de la Mission Archéologique de l'Université de Liège en Syrie; Louvain : Peeters, 2006), 85-99.
[235] Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I*, 224-225.
[236] Bunnens, *A New Luwian Stele and the Cult of the Storm-God at Til Barsib-Masuwari*, 174.

a single beaked lamp on a pedestal.[237] Bunnens describes the material culture from this level as primarily Assyrian, and indicates that the site seems to have benefited from its role as an Assyrian provincial capital. The site does not include indications of violence associated with the end of Assyrian domination, but was abandoned after this period.[238] Til Barsip, then, is heir to at least three cultural traditions – Neo-Hittite, Aramean, and Assyrian. As at Tell Sabi Abyad and Tell Fakhariya, we need to consider the role of Assyrian influence. The type of vaulted chamber tomb found by Bunnens with its terracotta coffin is also found in the city of Nimrud (Calah) itself, housing the tombs of no lesser figures than three Iron Age queens of Assyria. These are Mullissu, queen of Assurnasirpal II (884–859 BCE), Yaba, queen of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE), and Atalia, queen of Sargon II (722–705 BCE).[239] While we should repeat here that royal tombs cannot be easily compared with common graves, the similarity in structure and coffin type is clear.

Hama (Hamath)

Much more prolific in its yield for burials is the city of Hama, where a massive necropolis of over 1600 burials dating from the Late Bronze and Iron Age has been excavated. This is by far the largest burial site yet investigated in Aram. The city of Hama in West Central Syria is divided into two equal parts by the Orontes River flowing NE through the city. The mound is about 313m above sea level and possesses good

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[237] G. Bunnens, "Til Barsib Under Assyrian Domination," in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (eds. Simo Parpola and R. M. Whiting; (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 23-24.

[238] G. Bunnens, "Til Barsib Under Assyrian Domination," 23-24.

[239] These tomb chambers were located below the floors of the Iron Age palace and accessed by a steep vertical shaft. Tomb I contained a terracotta sarcophagus, Tomb II had a massive stone coffin, and Tomb III contained another massive stone coffin as well as three additional bronze coffins. Tomb IV was also a vaulted brick chamber with a terracotta coffin. Two further terracotta coffins were discovered under floors of the palace (Room 64b and 69). We can also compare the Humaidat tomb, located about 16km north-west of Nineveh/Mosul. Oates and Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed*, 78-90.

stratification layers. It is an extension of other heights parallel to the river. Hama has been inhabited since Neolithic times, and has an occupational history as an important Syrian city which extends into modern times. During the 9th century Hama controlled the land of Luhuti (capital Hatarikka) to near Aleppo in the south. Geographically Hama controlled the middle Orontes valley and the passes to the coast to the north and south of Mount Saue. By 739 the records of Tiglath-Pileser III list 19 districts of Hama, including at least 14 cities.[240] Hama plays a role in 2 Sam 8 when king Toi sends his son to congratulate David on his victory over Hadadezer, and 2 Chr 8:3–4 credits Solomon with taking territory and building in the area. By 740 Assyrian annals record Hama's King Eni-îlu as paying tribute to Assyria, and soon thereafter Tiglath-Pileser is recorded as distributing the land of Hama among this generals, and transporting over 1,000 of its people to the area of the upper Tigris. Hama later joined in a short lived revolt against Sargon II, which was quickly crushed.[241] Isaiah 10:9 makes reference to the fall of Hama, and 2 Kgs 18:34 and 19:13 include Hama as part of the boast of the Rabshakeh against Jerusalem.[242] II Kgs 17:24, 30 also indicates that people from Hama were among other groups that were settled in Samaria.[243]

While the ancient citadel was originally to be the primary focus of a Danish expedition of 1931 to 38 under P. J. Riis, beginning in 1934 a series of burial places began to come to light, including the discovery of many tombs from the Bronze Age, as

[240] Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian InscriptionsVolume II*, 398-399.
[241] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 196. This text describes the death of Ia'ubidi of Hama under Sargon II (721-705) and the destruction of his cities as well as the conscription of chariot and horse contingents from the inhabitants. See also Frame, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* for a description of the earlier annexation of 19 districts of Hamath under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727)
[242] We also have several letters attesting to the pacification of Hama, and the levying of pack animals from the area. Simo Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West* (State Archives of Assyria 1; Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 1987), 135-136.
[243] George Robinson, "The Entrance of Hamath," *The Biblical World* 32 (1908): 7-18.

well as a cave that was used from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and finally an Iron Age cremation cemetery. As seen elsewhere in Aram cremation burials were rare (unknown at Hama) prior to the Iron Age. Most of the Iron Age funerary urns were buried on a small slope and there had been disturbance of the area by Islamic and Byzantine era construction. The oldest burials were discovered in the lowest area of the Souk el Khamis, with more recent ones discovered in the layers above the older tombs.[244]

The cremation cemetery was in use for hundreds of years, and contains well over a thousand burials. Riis divided the chronology of the major cremation necropolis into four periods based upon ceramic finds, weapon typology and jewelry design. His divisions are as follows: Period 1 from 1200 to 1075 BCE (610 burials), Period 2, from 1075– 925 BCE (490 burials), Period 3 from 925–800 BCE (170 burials) and Period 4, from 800–720 BCE (400 burials). Due to disturbance of the area and modern construction many graves from Period 3 are missing, and Riis presumed that at least a third of the funerary deposits had been destroyed. One area on the west side on the outskirts of the city was in use during periods 1–3 (1200–800 BCE). Burials from period 4 were found only in the eastern section, with the more recent cemetery presumably being instituted when the older had been filled. Other villages nearby had similar cemetery arrangements.[245]

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[244] P. J. Riis, *Hama, Fouilles et Recherches, 1931-1938: Les Cimetières à Crémation vol. 2 part 3* (Copenhague: Fondation Carlsberg, 1948), 1-11.

[245] P. J. Riis, *Hama, Fouilles et Recherches, 1931-1938,* 4, 202. Riss used five major features on which to base his chronology 1) the decoration of urns by painted figures and geometrical design, triangle shaped arrow heads, and toggle pins only found in deeper layers, 2) bowl/cups decorated with paint and larger arrowheads were in next upper strata, 3) urns painted with triangular shapes and Mycenaean fibula in another separate strata, 4) the presence of ceramic polished red vases w/ curved lines (red slip), 5) large jars and large cups, plates with a conical foot, and fibula with Greek geometric designs from the Cyclades found in the most recent strata.

The deposits were composed of urns with bones and grave goods, and some large vases with non-burned infant bones. Burial of the urns in all periods was very simple. A hole was dug for the urn and after it was placed it was surrounded with a layer of lime (but this custom was ended by period 4). Sometimes a small vase or other pottery was placed next to the urn.[246] Urns were of a very common type, often a krater shape, but also a type without handles. The top of the urn was covered with a cup or bowl or plate, or sometimes closed by a small top. Urns were covered with soil which eventually raised the level of the ground of the necropolis and created a steeper slope (making interference with older deposits more likely). Entire layers of ash and broken urns were created in this way. Such interference led to attempts to protect the tomb with steles marking the grave.

An unusual feature of this site is that at different areas different ages of children were buried. Newborns to 8 years were divided into 4 sections based on age, and adults were buried separately. This age division is also found at the Phoenician sites of Carthage and Achziv (see appendix A). Unlike many other reports Riis gives estimated ages and gender based upon unburned bone remains and sex specific funerary goods. Assignment of gender based upon funerary goods is fallible. At Kamid el-Loz, Lebanon, and Tell Mazar I, for example, comparison was made of gender assignment based upon goods and upon anthropological analysis. The conclusions agreed in 70% of the cases.[247] Only twice at Hama were found mixed remains of a child and an adult. Newborns were often not burned but placed in a vase or krater entire.[248] Riis states that cremation was done in the

[246] P. J. Riis, *Hama, Fouilles et Recherches, 1931-1938,* 1-11.
[247] Bachelot and Fales, *Tell Shiukh Fawqani, 1994-1998* , 1118.
[248] Riis, *Hama, Fouilles et Recherches, 1931-1938,* 30-36. The numbers given by Riis are as follows: of 358 total deposits 217 were deposits of adults. 41 deposits are claimed for ages 13-18, which were only determinable by bone, not having specific funerary objects. For children 100 burials were noted, of which 32 were newborn or stillborn. He gives percentages of 61% adults with 47% male and 52% female, 11%

cemetery but does not say why he believes this. He states that the funerary goods were often impacted by the heat of cremation. The bones of sheep, goats, and sometimes dogs were found mixed with the ash and human remains in the urns. Objects of gold, silver, and bronze were included: personal items such as jewelry, weapons, spindle whorls, etc. were included in the urns. Some evolution of object form is observed, but little change of object type over time. Although earlier burials tended to be more elaborate and contain more items, the types of funerary offerings included remained rather stable over time. A partial exception was deposits from Period 4, which did not include any weapons, gold or silver items, or bronze bowls (this may reflect more poor burials).[249]

Carchemish

Of all of our sites perhaps the most well known is Carchemish. Carchemish is mentioned in the archives of Mari, and in the second millennium an Amorite king of Carchemish, Aplahanda, is known from cylinder seals found at Ugarit and Acemhöyük as well as from the Mari texts.[250] The city was captured by the Hittite King Šuppiluliumas I in the 14th century and became a center of the Hittite empire.[251] It is worth noting that for centuries thereafter Carchemish strongly maintained its cultural and ethnic connection with the vanished Hittite empire, including continued use of the hieroglyphic Luwian language for state inscriptions through the 8th century BCE. This connection also

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adolescents and 28% children. In light of the high child mortality rate reflected in contemporary sites, this might suggest that many child graves have vanished, or additional burial sites have not been uncovered.

[249] Riis, *Hama, Fouilles et Recherches, 1931-1938*, 30-36, 35-37

[250] Horst Klengel, *Syria, 3000 to 300 B.C.: A Handbook of Political History* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992), 70-71. Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, (*MesCiv*12; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 283,406-407, 508. A number of letters from the court of the king of Carchemish to the king of Mari exist. Listed in Heimpel as A.2133, 26 533, 26 534, 26 281 and 26 537, these letters attest to diplomatic and trade connections, and inform the king of Mari of the death of Aplahanda and proclaim the continued fidelity of his son.

[251] Klengel, *Syria, 3000 to 300 B.C.: A Handbook of Political History*, 120.

included the ruling dynasty of the 12th and 11th centuries, which was descended from Šuppiluliumas I. This dynasty was formed when the last Hittite viceroy of Carchemish, Kuzi-Tešub, claimed the title of king after the Hittite collapse and emphasized his rights as the great-great-great-grandson of Šuppiluliumas I. Twelve generations of rulers followed this event until the final conquest of the city by Assyria in 717.[252] Carchemish was bordered by Kummuh to the north and by Arpad/Bit Agusi to the south-west, with Śam'al to the north-east. The earlier territory claimed by Kuzi-Tešub gradually shrank, until by 858 it was largely surrounded by territory belonging to Bēt-'Adini.[253] That state was overtaken and dismantled by Assyria in 853. Carchemish paid tribute to Assyria and retained its line of rulers, declining to join the anti-Assyrian confederacy headed by Urartu in 738. By 717 however, Sargon II accused King Pisiris of conspiracy, defeated the city and deported the royal family and portions of the local population.[254]

Like Zincirli (Śam'al) and Gōzān, monumental buildings, walls, and gates were often decorated with carved orthostats which included impressive figures of animals and humans – men, women, warriors, prisoners, and royalty – as well as divine figures, all of which owed much to the influence of Hittite style. Additionally, free standing "portal lions" guarded entrance ways (a feature also found at Zincirli). While the occupation of the city dates from the Chalcolithic period, much of the monumental art dates to the Iron

[252] Dominik Bonatz, "Syrio-Hittite Funerary Monuments: A Phenomenon of Tradition Or Innovation," in *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (ed. Guy Bunnens; Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 202. See the collected Carchemish inscriptions in Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I,*, 72-197. Carchemish has yielded the largest corpus of Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions. Alessandra Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance: The Stone Reliefs at Carchimest and Zincirli in the Earlier First Millennium BCE* (BSAW; Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2011), 10-14.
[253] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 165-183; and Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, 10-14.
[254] Klengel, *Syria, 3000 to 300 B.C.*, 217-218; also Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia Volume II: Historical Records of Assyria from Sargon to the End*, Vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 4. The description of the deportation can be found in the Sargon Prisims from Nimrud (Calah/Kalhu) as well as the Annals. See Gadd, "Inscribed Prisims of Sargon II from Nimrud," 180-181. See also Oppert, *Annals of Sargon*, 21-56.

Age, from the tenth century through the eighth centuries BCE. These works attest to the power of the king to both protect and glorify the city, and a number of the carved slabs also include descriptive inscriptions in Luwian hieroglyphic script.[255] Burials at Carchemish are attested extending back to the Chalcolithic period. The lengthy habitation at this site provides an extensive field of data related to changes in burial practices over a long period of time.

Excavation of the "Acropolis mound" of Carchemish was begun in 1911 by D. Hogarth and expanded by R.C. Thompson and T. E. Lawrence as well as L. Woolley. The Acropolis contains remains extending from the Neolithic to the Byzantine period. Excavations on the south-east mound (the Acropolis being composed of two distinct sub mounds) exposed Chalcolithic graves with interment in large jars located under the floors of buildings. In these early burials no grave goods were found (graves 1–11), but in the upper stratum pot burials that were contemporary with the Early Bronze cist graves (graves 12–21) small vases, bowls and cups as well as beads and other personal items appear. The most characteristic pottery shape of these graves is the "champagne vase" – so called because if its similarity in shape to modern champagne glasses (see Figure 27). We can compare this with large numbers of this type of pottery also found at Tell Ahmar (Til Barsip).[256]

[255] Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, 19-54; and Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I*, 639.
[256] Leonard Woolley and R. D. Barnett, *Carchemish Report on the Excavations at Jerablus on Behalf of the British Museum: Part III Excavations in the Inner Town* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 205-217.

Figure 27: "Champagne vase" type vessels from Bronze Age cist graves at the Carchemish Acropolis
Leonard Woolley et al., *Carchemish* (Oxford: University Press, 1952).

Other Early Bonze Age burials were made in stone cist graves (KGC 1–15), where each body was laid in a contracted position on its side, with grave goods including bronze blades and pins along with cups, bottles and bowls. These gifts varied from just a few pottery items to one grave (KCG 9) that held 60 pots as well as two bronze axes and four spears, a dagger, a chisel, and beads.[257] Because the later pot and the cist burials are contemporary (found side by side in the same stratum) but are culturally distinct, Thompson and Woolley both concluded that the pot burials are city "natives" of the Early Bronze Age, and that the cist graves represent Hittite incomers. These graves were also part of the same stratum which held the earliest fortifications of the site and the creation of large public buildings (palaces and temples). We should clarify here that none of these pot burials are cremations. They are inhumations or secondary burials. Late Bronze Age burials were fewer (only three found) and found in compartments of the inner town wall, with a related cemetery being found eight miles to the south at Amarna. Forty test pits created by Campbell did not yield any sub-floor Late Bronze graves. All Iron Age burials

[257] Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish Report on the Excavations at Jerablus on Behalf of the British Museum*, 218-221.

except one (the "Golden Grave" discussed below) were located outside the city.[258] This parallels the shift in Iron Age Israel and elsewhere in Aram from Late Bronze Age burial under houses to Iron Age burial outside the city.

The Yunus cemetery of Carchemish

Despite many difficulties and setbacks, the British Museum's expedition to Carchemish at the beginning of the 20th century yielded a great deal of valuable data. Over several periods from 1878–1881, 1911–1914, and 1920–1940 the British (and later the Germans) worked extensively in the area. Particularly productive was the work of David Hogarth, Reginald Thompson and Leonard Woolley, who unearthed major monuments and inscriptions, as well as the cemeteries that are of greatest interest to us here.[259] Woolley's work was begun in 1913 and was interrupted first by WWI, and then by the takeover of the area by Turkey. Most of the objects from the initial excavation which had been stored at nearby Jerablus were lost in transit to Istanbul. In addition many of the graves in the area had already been disturbed for various reasons (the same cemetery had been used during the Hellenistic period and into the Christian era as well) or had been plundered by local inhabitants. Another area of interest to the investigation lay below an Islamic graveyard, which prevented Woolley and his team from excavating.[260]

In addition to the shift from burial within the city during the Bronze Age to extramural burial in the Iron Age, we also are presented again as elsewhere in Aram with

[258] Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish Report on the Excavations at Jerablus on Behalf of the British Museum*, 222-223.
[259] Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume II*, 9. Some of these major discoveries include inscriptions from the temple of the storm god, the "Long Wall" of sculpture, the "Processional Entryway" and the "Royal Buttress"
[260] Leonard Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," AAA 26 (1929): 11-14.

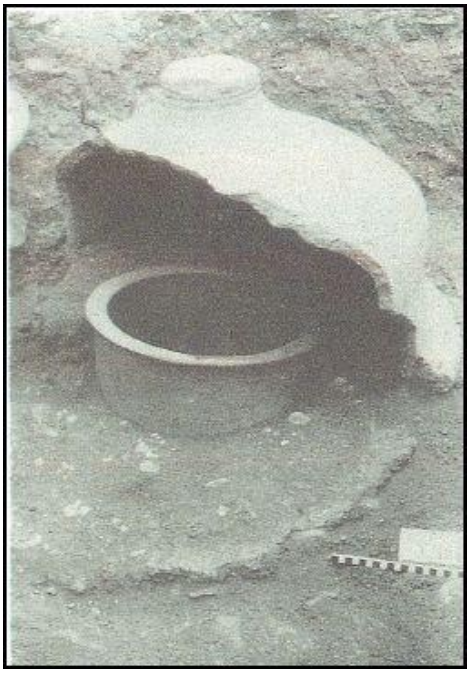
an increasing incidence of cremation burials during the Iron Age.[261] Woolley's careful descriptions of the 148 burials he uncovered enable us to construct a detailed picture of cremation practices at this site. Excavations in the city proper yielded pottery fragments of the same type as the kraters used in the cemetery. These can be dated to the reconstruction of the city following a great fire in the 12th century, and the same type persisted up to the 7th century destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. This gives a broad range of dates for the cemetery as well, which can be further narrowed by the presence of imported Cypriote vases found in five burials. These vases date the section of the cemetery excavated by Woolley to the early part of the 7th century. Woolley states that the section of the cemetery that was unreachable due to the presence of Islamic graves over that area of the site was probably earlier than this.[262]

In addition to the many burials several important monuments were discovered. Above ground at the Yunus site were recovered "three or four large offering tables" of basalt and of limestone, carved with a socket (perhaps) to receive a funerary stele and with "cup-hollows" which were interpreted by Woolley as places for offerings. Also recovered was a fragment of a basalt slab with a human figure in relief and a limestone "altar" (Woolley's words) with a linear hieroglyphic inscription (cut in half and re-used later as a Byzantine tombstone). In addition, two small limestone steles were uncovered,

[261] See for example Paola Sconzo, ""the Grave of the Court Pit": A Rediscovered Bronze Age Tomb from Carchemish," PEQ 146 (2014): 3-16.

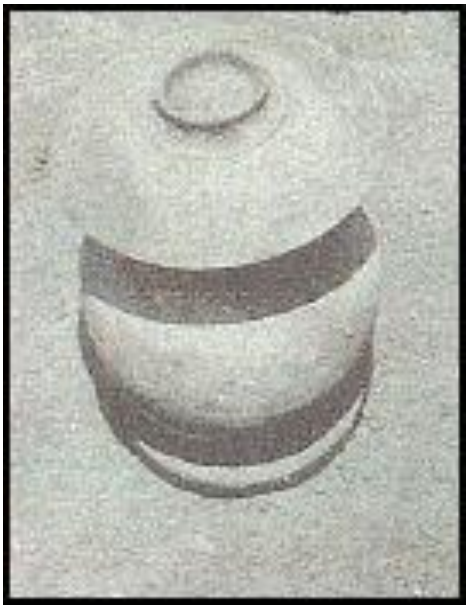
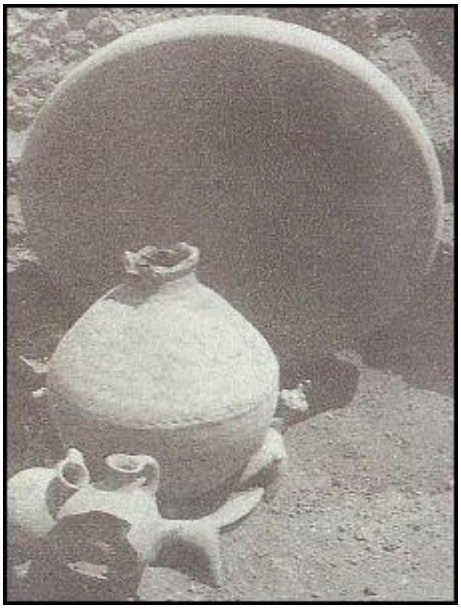
[262] Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," 17-19. See also chapter 13 "The Pottery Sequence" in Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish Report on the Excavations at Jerablus on Behalf of the British Museum: Part III Excavations in the Inner Town*, 251. Woolley's typology and metholodogy have been critiqued by a number of later scholars, including various aspects of his work at Alalakh (tell Achtana) and al-Mina (Tyre) as well as Ur (for example Amir Sumaka'i Fink, *Late Bronze Age Tell Achtana (Alalakh): Stratigraphy, Chronology, History* (Oxford: Oxford Archaeopress, 2010), 157, and Joanna Luke, *Ports of Trade: Al Mina and Geometric Greek Pottery in the Levant* (Oxford: Oxford Archaeopress, 2005), 81. For an excellent recent work on pot typology see Ruth Amiran, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land; from its Beginnings in the Neolithic Period to the End of the Iron Age* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970; 1969), 305. Woolley's plates in this instance can be compared to Amiran's Imported Cypriot ware from Iron IIA-C from Ajjul, Megiddo, and Carmel.

each showing a seated figure. These figures hold objects in their hands. One the first stele the figure holds what appears to be a cup and a dagger. On the second stele the figure holds a vase. Woolley interprets these as being images of the dead, and if so this is very much in line with the steles and inscriptions described in chapter 6.[263] The style of these monuments has connections with material from Tell Ahmar (Til Barsip) as well as with funerary steles found at Maras.[264]



Figures 28 and 29: Bath burials at Yunus cemetery, Carchemish.
Leonard Woolley et al., "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," AAA (26) 1939: plate 6.

[263] Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," 14.
[264] Hawkins, "Karkamish and Karatepe: Neo-Hittite City-States in North Syria," 1302.

Figures 30–31 Simple pot burial (left) and Boy's burial with terra-cottas (right) at Yunus cemetery, Carchemish. Leonard Woolley et al., "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," AAA (26) 1939: plate 8.

Woolley distinguishes between two types of cremation burial at Yunus Carchemish – "pot burials" and "bath burials" The two are almost identical except that for bath burials a large tub or "bath" is inverted over the cremation urn and any related grave goods or offerings, rather than the smaller krater type pot.[265]

The basic form of both of these types of burial involves the cremation urn being placed upon a platter of pottery or stone, and then covered by a shallow bowl or basin. Over this is inverted a larger jar, bath or krater. Alternatively the opening of the urn is covered by a small clay platter, and a larger krater is inverted over it. A third method is the placing of the urn and platter cover inside a krater and inverting a larger krater over this.[266] One other variation on this arrangement is the urn being set into the bath which is covered with a top (perhaps wooden) cover that is then piled with stones. The basic

[265] Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," 17.
[266] Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," 15.

pattern is clear – the burnt bones are collected in an urn and small personal items are placed with the ashes and bones. Bodies are not completely burnt, but the bones remain sufficiently intact to visually determine if the individual was a child or an adult.[267] The mouth of the container is covered with another item (a bowl or plate). Additional pottery is used to surround the urn above and below to protect it from disturbances.

Other objects associated with the burials included clay pots and personal possessions. For children, feeding bottles and terra cotta figurines of horses and horsemen for boys, and female figurines for girls, were present. Lacking the ability to assign gender to cremated children the assignment of sex here is only based upon the assumption that these figurines were typically associated with male or female burials. Adult burials included small personal items – cylinders and seals, fibulae and pins, beads and kohl pots, spindle whorls, knives, arrow-heads, bracelets, and amulets. Gaming pieces and shells were also found placed with the gathered burnt bones of the dead. These items were placed directly on the ashes of the dead, seemingly while still hot, as some of the items showed signs of charring but were not destroyed.[268] This effect was also seen in burials at Tell Shiukh Fawqâni.

A word should be said here about the inclusion of spindle whorls in these graves. Items portrayed on Hittite and Neo-Hittite funerary steles often relate to regeneration and renewal. Female figures are sometimes shown holding the distaff and spindle. The word

[267] For comparison, modern cremation processes typically use temperatures of 760–980 °C (1,400–1,800 °F) to ensure complete reduction of remains –including bone- to ash, while P. Akkermans estimates temperatures of 450- 800°C for the double cremation at Tell Sabi Abyad. These temperatures as with these finds at Carchemish, left skeletal remains and did not destroy goods such as jewelry or scarabs. Akkermans and Smits, "A Sealed Double Cremation at Middle Assyrian Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria," 252; National Funeral Directors Association, "Cremation FAQ," n.p. [cite 26 June, 2014]. Online: http://nfda.org/planning-a-funeral/cremation/160.html . At Tell Shiukh Fawqani normal cremation temperatures were estimated at 700-900°C. Canci, "Human Remains From Tel Shiukh Fawqani; Anthropological Report," 1109-1118.

[268] Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," 15-16.

for this in Hittite is ^{GI}*šḫuiša*, and can be derived from the word *ḫuiš* "to live."[269] The lowly spindle may be more than a simple household object, but may symbolize the hope of an afterlife. Spindle whorls are also found in Phoenician contexts. These items have also been found in the graves of children on Early Iron Age Cyprus, which might also have a symbolic rather than practical connection.[270] Spindle whorls are also found with Judean/Israelite burials but are typically interpreted there as common items of practical use and not symbolically associated with life and renewal as they might be in this Neo-Hittite context.

One of the most elaborate of these graves contained items of Egyptian origin. The urn and its cover (in this case a bronze bowl) were, unusually, covered by three inverted kraters instead of the usual single covering. This burial contained the remains of an adult and a child and amulets of Pasht Harpokrates, Sekhet and the Horus hawk, and a scarab, in addition to beads, cylinders, and other items. This can be compared to Judean/Israelite grave goods discussed above.[271] We can also compare these finds with Egyptian flasks and amulets and seals from Deve Hüyük as well as with the large number of Egyptian scarabs and cartouches found in Phoenician graves.[272]

A single Iron Age cremation burial was found within the walls of Carchemish. It has been called the "Golden Grave of Carchemish" for the golden objects included in the grave. This burial was unique in many ways. The burial urn was a simple, coarse pot – poorer in craftsmanship and materials than the kraters of the Yunus graves, and yet the goods associated with the burial were far richer than these. Gold beads and decorative

[269] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 314.
[270] Steel, "Differential Burial Practices in Cyprus at the Beginning of the Iron Age," 199-204.
[271] Woolley, "The Iron-Age Graves of Carchemish," 31.
[272] See appendix A.

pieces, ivory, lapis lazuli (39 figurines of gold and lapis), and bronze objects were all present, some melted and destroyed by fire (also attested by a large amount of wood ash in the bottom of the pit with the urn) but some seemingly placed intact into the urn after the cremation. The grave dates to the last building level below the Roman construction and is located within a room of a walled fort. This site is very close to the cemetery, raising the question of why the burial was not taken there. Woolley's proposal is tantalizing: he believed that this represented the royal grave of one of the last rulers of the city who died during the siege of Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar in 604 BCE. At that time access to the cemetery was cut off and perhaps only the simple coarsely made pot was readily available to contain the burial, yet the personal riches of this individual were with him (or her).[273] It is a speculative but reasonable interpretation. If true it is the dramatic exception which illustrates the rule of burial outside the city walls during the Iron Age.

Deve Hüyük

The site of Deve Hüyük must be considered along with the evidence from Carchemish. Deve Hüyük is located in modern Gaziantepe near the Syrian-Turkish border. The material recovered from the site was part of a salvage operation undertaken by T. Lawrence and C. Woolley in response to massive looting and selling of grave goods from burials which had been exposed by the cutting of the Berlin to Baghdad railway in 1913.[274] Despite the richness of the finds (especially of the later cemetery) the usefulness of the site is limited due to the fact that most of the items were not found in

[273] Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish Report on the Excavations at Jerablus on Behalf of the British Museum*, 250-257.
[274] P.R.S. Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Huyuk* (eds. A. R. Hands and D. R. Walker; BAR IS 87; Oxford: Biblical Archaeology Review, 1980), 1.

situ but were bought from the looters, who were then questioned regarding the provenance of the material. As at Tell Shiukh Fawqâni two separate cemeteries were uncovered, of separate date and type. While there are clear distinctions between the type of pottery and goods associated with each section, it is not certain that all items were correctly attributed, as Woolley and his team had to rely upon information given to them by the looters/sellers of the items.

Deve Hüyük I is the earlier cremation cemetery, with the majority of graves dating to the 8th century BCE As at Hama, this cemetery fell out of use not long after the Assyrian conquest. A large number of cinerary urns are attested. Much of the pottery is plain ware jugs and bowls. Egyptian and Phoenician influence appears yet again in the form of amulets, beads and seals. A "Bes vase" was also discovered. This vessel had the face of the Egyptian god – protector of households, mothers and children, and patron of dance, music, and fertility – on the side of the vessel. This earlier cemetery yielded fewer goods than the later, and P.R.S Moorey calls the pottery of the site of "no great significance, except as further illustration of the Late Iron Age pottery current in the Carchemish region."[275] Small male and female figurines and horse and rider figures were also found at Deve Hüyük I. As at Yunus, these were associated with the burial of children. Cylinder seals were found more commonly at Deve Hüyük I than Deve Hüyük II. By the Archameid period of the inhumation cemetery rings and stamp seals had become more common than cylinder seals. Several items related to the cremation cemetery are of particular interest. A bulla inscribed in Hittite hieroglyphics was

[275] P.R.S. Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Huyuk*, 11.

uncovered, as well as a Cappadocian seal dated by style to 1950–1800 BCE. Other seals from Deve Hüyük I included typical Neo-Assyrian and provincial Aramean styles.[276]

Deve Hüyük II is the later inhumation cemetery and can be dated to the Persian period. Burials here range roughly from 480–380.[277] While this is a later period than the primary concern of this work, brief mention is useful for comparison. Deve Hüyük II yielded a wide variety of goods, including iron swords and spears, bronze arrowheads (no weapons at all were reported from the earlier cremation cemetery), coins, horse bits, imported Greek pottery, Egyptian pottery (so called "New Year's flasks" which were often given as gifts to celebrate the New Year), and jewelry (bracelets, anklets, and earrings of gold, silver and bronze).[278] These items allow firm dating, and the weapons may mark the cemetery's association with a Persian military installation.[279] The construction of the stone cist graves of Deve Hüyük II is also distinctive, and Moorey draws comparisons for these with the West Iranian funerary tradition.[280] The greater number and variety of goods from the later cemetery may reflect the difference between inhumation, where the body could be laid out with larger items, versus cremation where only a few small personal objects were able to be included with the ashes and bones of the deceased. Although we do regularly find pottery left outside cremation urns other types of grave goods were not arranged this way.

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[276] P.R.S. Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Huyuk*, 105-106.
[277] P.R.S. Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Huyuk*, 5-8.
[278] A number of these "New Year's flasks" are found in museum collections. They are classified based on the inscriptions many bear, which invoke various divinities to grant the recipient long life and prosperity in the New Year. Examples of these flasks can be found in the Freer-Sackler Smithsonian Museum of Asian Art (http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/singleObject.cfm?ObjectNumber=F1907.11), the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art (http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/5532740), and Emory University in Atlanta, Ga (http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2011/12/soundbites_carlos_new_year.s_bottle.html). See also Dorothy Philips, "Greetings for the New Year" MMAB 4 (1945). n.p [cited 5 May 2014]. Online: http://www.metmuseum.org/pubs/bulletins/1/pdf/3257169.pdf.bannered.pdf.
[279] Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Huyuk*, 56-57.
[280] Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Huyuk*, 8-9.

Aramaic Funerary Practices in Egypt

It is worth venturing further afield in both chronology and geography to further illustrate just how flexible Arameans were in their approach to funerary customs. We have seen wide variation within the territory of Aram. Such variation may be due to a mixing of ethnic groups within the territory – Neo-Hittites, Arameans, and Assyrians. This may also show wide acceptance and adaptation/adoption of different burial practices. We cannot always tell what ethnic group is associated with particular burials.

Illustrating this same flexibility are the late Persian/early Ptolemaic period Aramaic coffins from Saqqara and Aswan in Egypt. The 14 terracotta coffins belonging to three family groups portray unexceptional Egyptian style and iconography, but have Aramaic inscriptions added to them. They have a mix of Aramaic and Egyptian names within the family group. The Aswan sarcophagi include three sandstone coffins. These also show standard Egyptian iconography, but the Aramaic inscription is upside-down if the coffin is stood upright. In Egypt the upside down position of writing or inscription is meant as a sign of cursing. On another coffin the inscription is placed on the sole of the foot of the coffin, which is also a position normally reserved for inscriptions regarding enemies.[281] The inscriptions are short, usually only the name of the deceased. The traditional iconography and mummification show that these Aramaic individuals and families living in Egypt readily and without modification adopted Egyptian burial practices.

The abnormality of the placement and orientation of the inscriptions in a way that to Egyptians would be a serious mistake indicates that the sarcophagi belonged to

[281] Bezalel Porten and John Gee, "Aramaic Funerary Practices in Egypt," in *The World of the Aramaeans II: Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (eds. P. Daviau, J. Wevers and M. Weigl; Sheffield: Sheffield, 2001), 270-279.

immigrants who had not fully absorbed all of the nuances of the Egyptian culture. It was not the native Egyptian elements of these families who were responsible for these texts, nor an Egyptian who had adopted Aramaic as a *lingua franca*. That both terracotta and sandstone coffins are present show that both more and less wealthy Aramaic residents of Egypt approached the assimilation of burial customs in the same manner.

The evidence for Aramaic burial practices in Egypt offers some parallels to the narrative of the death of Jacob and of Joseph in Genesis 49:29–50:15 and Genesis 50:24–26. The bodies of both men are treated in standard Egyptian fashion. Though the narrative proclaims both Jacob and Joseph's continued attachment to Canaan and their desire to have their bones returned there, no deviation is indicated from customary Egyptian embalming and mourning customs. The narrative illustrates certain values of the Hebrew text. It is not the treatment of the body itself that is as important as the final resting place being with kindred and ancestors. These seem to be similar to values we have uncovered in our Aramaic evidence. Great variety in the treatment of the dead is acceptable, but in almost every case (exceptions being probable cases of disease or execution) care is taken to treat the body with respect, and to recognize the individuality of the dead by including personal items in the grave.

This willingness by Aramaic speaking peoples to accept a variety of different funerary practices is reinforced in the presentation by B. Porten and J. Gee of five Aramaic steles. Unfortunately the provenance of all of them is unknown. Because of their uncertain origin and since they take us somewhat far afield in time (to the Persian period) and place we won't examine these in detail, but they are worth mentioning. These monuments are the Brussels stele (probably from Saqqara), the Salt stele (discovered by

Henry Salt and first published in 1836) the Vatican stele, the Berlin stele (destroyed during WWII but with a squeeze remaining) and the Carpentras stele.[282] Like the Saqqara and Aswan sarcophagi these steles show a mixture of Aramaic and Egyptian names and indicate intermarriage between Arameans and Egyptians. The iconography is standard Egyptian with slight modifications of the human figures, particularly in hairstyle to indicate Semitic peoples. The deities invoked and the forms of the inscriptions are all standard for Egyptian funerary practice.[283]

The Egyptian evidence supports the claim that Aramaic speaking peoples were very flexible in their requirements for burial. What is particularly surprising about the Egyptian Aramaic sarcophagi and monuments is the lack of change in form or reference to reflect the culture or belief system of the deceased and their family. There is no reference to Aramaic or Neo-Hittite gods, and none of the type of language that we find on other Aramaic funerary inscriptions. There are no requests for sacrifice on behalf of the deceased and no warnings against disturbing the body. While it is true that intermarriage with Egyptians had occurred and so these families were mixed, the fact that the inscriptions were in Aramaic and placed in non-standard locations on the sarcophagus shows that they were not fully acclimated to the subtle norms of Egyptian burial practice. Despite this fact Egyptian gods and goddesses were invoked and no attempt was made to reference Aramaic gods. By comparison, when Egyptian sarcophagi were used in Phoenician burials the hieroglyphs and imagery were usually retained, but new and distinctively Phoenician religious and biographical elements were added to personalize

[282] See also Stanley A. Cook, "Notes on Semitic Inscriptions," PSBA 26 (1904): 32-35 and Ian Mathieson et al., "A Stela of the Persian Period from Saqqara," JEA 81 (1995): 23-41, as well as William H. Shea, "The Carpentras Stela: A Funerary Poem," JAOS 101 (1981): 215-217.
[283] Porten and Gee "Aramaic Funerary Practices in Egypt," 283-293.

the coffin.[284] Here the personal and family names, plus very slight modifications of the human figures, were the only attempts made to impose Aramaic distinctiveness upon the Egyptian template.

Conclusion: Burial Practices in Aram

Because burial practices are so intimately connected with beliefs about the afterlife, one might expect more rigidity, more retention of ritual than is found in this survey of practice within Aram. Variation is attested within single sites at the same time period, in a single site across time, and between sites. Some of this variation is probably due to the presence of a variety of ethnic groups mixed within the area who each are burying their dead in accordance with their own custom, but it also is clear that practices could shift, be altered, or adapted quite readily. The primary consistency throughout the territories of the Aramaic/Neo-Hittite kingdoms is the inclusion of pottery with burials, and the most common interpretation is that these originally contained provisions for the dead (in several cases food residue has been recovered). This is not absolute, however. While such offerings are almost universally found in Phoenician and Israelite burials, Aram shows less consistency (see appendix A for the Phoenician data). Pottery offerings were sometimes replaced by animal offerings, with the inclusion of the head and limbs of food animals in the grave being somewhat common, and in some cases only small personal items were found. The extent and regularity of the practice of including pottery offerings does illustrate that the phenomenon is not restricted by territorial, ethnic, or linguistic boundaries.

The general picture of burial practices in Aram shows the following general pattern: 1) During the Bronze Age interment and burial under floors was the most

[284] See appendix B for the Phoenician sarcophagai.

common pattern. 2) During the Iron Age transition and Iron I some cremations were present and sometimes still placed under floors, but cremation and external burial became more common. 3) During the Iron Age II period burial in external cemeteries became the norm, and in some places cremation became standard practice. 4) At the end of the Iron Age and into the Babylonian Persian period inhumation again became the norm and burial was still in external cemeteries. Jar burials, pit burials, cist burials, built structure burials, and cremations are all attested for Iron Age Aram. As we will see in our examination of Aramaic funerary texts from Śam'al and other Aramean states the funerary monuments in this area owed much to Hittite influence.

How do we interpret the data for the usage of cremation and inhumation among the Aramaic speaking peoples? It is reasonable to construe this as Hittite/Anatolian influence, particularly since the site of Carchemish and other Neo-Hittite states remained so strongly connected with that empire and culture. This general view is supported by K. Spronk, who cites elaborate funeral rites upon the death of a Hittite king, wherein the king is represented in a statue and the body is burned together with funeral offerings.[285]

Schloen and Fink argue that cremation would indicate a Hittite or more generally Indo-European view of the afterlife as opposed to that of the Levant and Mesopotamia, and that "in the West Semitic tradition cremation serves to extinguish the soul – a horrible fate…"[286] Schloen does not make clear on what he bases this claim. He only says that this is "amply attested" in the Hebrew Bible. This is not the case. Schloen may be

[285] Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 130-131. Such offerings continued after the burial, with the bones of the kings being gathered and laid to rest in a building called the "stone house." See Alexei Kassian, Andrej Korolev and Andrej Sidel'tsev, "The Sub-Ritual of Conciliation" in *Hittite Funerary Ritual* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002), 20-21. This of course is rather different than the cremation practices we find in Aram.

[286] Schloen and Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," 11.

basing his claim on the mandate of burning for certain offenses and a negative interpretation of the cremation of Saul (for example Gen 38:24; Lev 20:14 and 21:9; Josh 7:15 and 24–25 and 1 Sam 31:12). S. Mazzoni rejects Hittite influence as the reason behind cremation based upon the southward extension of the cremation burials and their continued development after the decline of the empire. In addition many important sites where cremation is attested are clearly tied to an Aramean presence, including Hama, Tell Halaf, and Tell Shiukh Fawqani.[287]

The view that cremation was opposed to West Semitic religious concepts and is therefore evidence of "foreign influence" is also challenged by P. Bienkowski. His reexamination of burials and cremations at Alalakh, Carchemish, Hama, Rasm et-Tanjara, Azor, Khaldeh and other sites has led him to believe that cremation was practiced at least sporadically since the second millennium BCE. Cremation was not unheard of prior to Neo-Hittite, Phoenician, or Greek influence, it was simply much rarer. Bienkowski argues that considerations of space and hygiene had as strong an influence upon burial practices as did custom and belief.

Could the practice of cremation in Aram be connected with Phoenicia? Phoenician influence is attested in Aram by the presence of Phoenician personal names, as well as Phoenician manufactured goods.[288] Bloch-Smith indicates that following the two examples of Phoenician cremation from the 11th century (Akhziv and Azor), incidence of cremation in the Levant increased to the end of the Iron Age along the coast

[287] Tenu, "Assyrians and Aramaeans in the Euphrates Valley Viewed from the Cemetery of Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Syria)," 85-88.
[288] Edward Lipiński, "The Phoenicians," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East Vol 2*, (ed. Jack M. Sasson; New York: Charles Scribner, 1995), 1321-1333. The evidence is not only concerning the spread of language but personal names as well, such as Dagan-milki and and Elimilk showing up as far east as Assyria. See also appendices A and B.

and the Jezreel Valley from Khaldeh in the north to Tell-er-Ruqeish in the south. Most cremation burials date from the 10th through the 8th centuries.[289]

Bienkowski denies that the practice arrived with the advent of the Sea Peoples but acknowledges a possible "Indo-Aryan" connection. It was not only Hittite/Anatolian or Phoenician cultural centers that practiced cremation: in Greece also after 1200 BCE both cremation and inhumation were practiced, with cremation being the preferred rite. In fact it may have been from Greece that the practice first came to Phoenicia.[290] There were a variety of points of entry for the practice of cremation, but it became a distinctive form of burial in Aram. Very probably in the long history of movement of populations and trade interactions there was not a single moment at which cremation was introduced to these territories but rather many points of contact with and adoption of the custom.

Bienkowski's point remains that burial forms are influenced by practical considerations such as space, and personal considerations such as the particular status of the individual concerned. Lacking written documentation for the reason behind this change we can only make several informed speculations. The shift from inhumation to cremation and back again to inhumation may be related to a change in custom and belief regarding proper burial practice related to the influx of a new group or groups. It may also be a shift related to practical considerations, such as crowding in existing cemeteries and the need for creation of new spaces to bury the dead, but again there is no clear evidence for this. We have both cremation and inhumation cemeteries at several locations

[289] Bloch-Smith, "Bronze and Iron Age Burials and Funerary Customs in the Southern Levant," 111-112., Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 53.
[290] Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 133. See also Sally C. Humphreys, *The Family, Women and Death: Comparative Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 78-119 for a discussion of family tombs and monuments in classical Greece (a bit later than our discussion). Both cremation and inhumation were practiced by the Greeks in varying proportion at different times.

and it is not at all clear that overcrowding was a factor in the relationship between burial practices at these cemeteries. [291] Cremation may have become better known and accepted as a form of burial as contact with cremation-burying peoples increased.

Another speculation is this: inhumation under floors in homes meant that the bodies of kindred were "safe" from any sort of desecration within the realm of private homes. When and if the need arose to create new or external cemeteries, the reduction of bodies to bone and ash by cremation prior to burial in external cemeteries would disallow disturbance by animals. The shift back to inhumation may have been later linked to a wish to revive "old ways" – a sort of collective nostalgia that regularly occurs in long established societies (for example as has been seen in Rome and Egypt at various points in their histories). Lacking written documents specifically laying out the motivations for specific burial practices we cannot know what lies behind these changes.

Final Comments on the Mortuary Evidence from Iron Age Israel and Aram

Having completed our survey of the burial practices of Israel/Judah and Aram, what can we conclude?

Bloch-Smith writes:

> The various burial types…were suggested to be the practice of different cultural groups known through biblical or extra biblical texts to have inhabited the region. Simple and cist burial was practiced by the inhabitants of the coastal and lowland regions (including the Jezreel, Beth Shan and Jordan River Valleys) who were collectively referred to in the Bible as "Canaanites." Jar burial was introduced into the region from the north, and all examples were from sites along the central

[291] The spread of the practice of cremation in the modern West – England is a good example – can be traced to just such factors. Both cultural changes and practical needs were involved in this change, as well as the influence of strongly motivated individuals. The need for space, concern regarding the spread of disease, and ideological /religious values all played a part. While this is not to suggest any parallel reason for the Late Bronze/Iron Age changes, the modern example shows us that even strongly held beliefs about the proper disposal of the dead can change under practical need, and that belief changes can follow and justify the practical need. Brian Parsons, "Cremation in England, Part I: The Early Years (1874-1885)," n.p. [cited 5 May 2014]. Online: http://www.iccfa.com/reading/2000-2009/cremation-england-part-1-early-years-1874-1885.

> and northern coast, the contiguous northern valleys and the Transjordanian plateau. Egyptians interred their dead in pit graves, cist graves and anthropoid coffins at Egyptian occupied sites. Assyrians buried their dead in bathtub coffins. Phoenicians cremated and inhumed their dead at sites along the coast….The indigenous highland population…buried their dead in caves, and by the eighth century BCE the Judahites buried their dead in bench tombs. The correlation between the distribution patterns of the various burial types and the settlement of different cultural groups known from the Bible, extra-biblical texts and inscriptions is very high.[292]

Bloch-Smith makes a strong claim here that is not entirely substantiated. Israel shows a distinction between the burial practice of landed families or the wealthy who buried their dead in caves and cut tombs, and the common people who were buried in pit, cist, or jar graves. Specific practices may have been more common among certain ethnic groups, but were not confined to these groups. Additionally the entire claim for Egyptian influence related to pit and cist graves is unconvincing. Throughout Israel and Aram certain burial types appear together – simple and cist graves, jar and anthropoid coffin burials, cremations and simple inhumations, and cave and bench tombs. Another factor contributing to the diversity of burial types is wealth and status. Binford and Bloch-Smith argue that differences in burial practices reflect differences in social status, for example higher status or wealthy individuals being buried in cist vs. simple graves.[293] We have also seen distinctions in Israel among bench tomb types which may reflect more about wealth and the use of resources than about ideology.

The variation in the Aramaic speaking territories has more to do with the diversity of cultural and ethnic influences that passed into the area. Some of this diversity was due to groups moving into the area – for example the Hittite influence was not picked up from outside and imported alone, but was brought into the area by peoples who settled and

[292] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 55.
[293] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 57.

made their lives there. They come with a complete set of cultural markers, including language and other features. The Aramaic language of the funerary inscriptions discussed below was brought by those who settled permanently in the area. Other customs, such as the inclusion of Egyptian protective amulets seen in such a variety of contexts, were easily adopted from outside cultural influences. These small items were easily imported and traded. By comparison we see a willingness to adopt a variety of foreign burial practices *en toto* without modification in the evidence from Aramaic burials in Egypt.

In both Israel and Aram there are instances of multiple bodies buried in the same grave. The evidence from cave and bench tombs as well as textual evidence from the Hebrew Bible confirms that the norm was for family groups to be buried together. There was also a related custom that dictated that individuals with the closest of bonds – such as parent-child or husband-wife – could be buried together, not just in adjoining graves, or in the same cave or tomb, but even in the same urn, jar, or pit. Abercrombie marks this phenomenon, which expands beyond Israel and Aram to Phoenicia as well. Male and female pairs have been found in an Achziv cist grave – a "warrior" (based on weapons present with the skeleton) and a female, two male female pairs at Ashod (burials 1060 and 1129), a female and an unsexed skeleton at Farʿah (burial 124), and three pairs at Lachish (burials 521, 4002, and 6006). A late Bronze grave at Megiddo (25) also held one female and one unsexed skeleton.[294] Such a custom might be in play with such burials as the male and female cremation at Tell Sabi Abyad. This idea is also supported by the fact that in many of the cist graves with multiple burials a child is buried with an adult. For example, in a cremation burial at Tell er-Ruqeish 2 individuals, one an infant or child, were buried in the same location.

[294] John Abercrombie, "A Short Note on a Siloam Tomb Inscription," BASOR 254 (1984): 61-62.

Deir el-Balah in has a number of good examples. At Deir el-Balah coffins held 2 to 6 individuals, with one usually being an adult. Tomb 114 held 2 adults, an 18–25 year old and a 4 year old. Tomb 116 yielded one male with another young male or female plus teeth from 2 older adults and an adolescent. Tomb 118 held a 25–40 year old man and a 25–30 year old woman. In one double pithos jar burial at Tell es Saidiyeh an adult, an infant, three more skulls, and additional bones were discovered.[295]

Offerings for the Dead

We have described throughout our discussion of burial practices in Israel and Aram the very frequent inclusion of small objects of Egyptian manufacture or design. Most frequently these were scarab seals. There small stones were rounded on top with incised lines to represent the wings and head of the beetle. The scarab is flat on the bottom and carved with a vast variety of designs – some purely decorative, some as personal seals, and some with Egyptian motifs, cartouches, or borrowed hieroglyphs. These scarabs were often pierced to be worn on a string or chain, or mounted in a metal setting.

Moscati writes: "The frequent discovery of scarabs and amulets in...tombs in the East and West is the most obvious evidence of the prestige enjoyed by Egyptian magic...the universal adoption of the scarab as a symbol connected with regeneration in this life and in life after death, and also as a seal, demonstrates the extent of Egyptian influence on Phoenician culture."[296] While Moscati is specifically discussing Phoenician culture here, the same can be said for Israel and Aram, although I am hesitant to agree

[295] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 30-53; also Abercrombie, "A Short Note on a Siloam Tomb Inscription," 61-62. The Deir el-Balah graves are dated to the Late Bronze Age by Abercrobie but classed by Bloch-Smith with Iron Age burials.
[296] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 394.

with Moscati that the scarab symbolism of regeneration was taken wholly into these cultures. Given the popularity of these items in everyday life, one might ask whether we are seeing these items used as protective amulets for the dead, or if these are included in grave offerings simply as valued personal objects. Moscati argues that the inclusion of the names of Egyptian deities such as Ra, Amun, Horus, Ptah, and Maat, as well as the names of Pharaohs (who were seen as being protected by the hieroglyphs) prove that it was the protection that was being specifically sought. This is further highlighted by the motifs of other types of amulets – the eye of Horus, Isis the nourisher, Ra, Bess, Anubis, etc. Even the animal figures that appear – the cat and monkey – have protective functions in Egyptian mythology.[297]

The custom of leaving pottery with the body of the dead is one of the strongest commonalities between Aramaic and Israelite/Judahite burials. Most commonly this is interpreted as offerings for the dead – the pottery left behind is not just dishes, personal objects of the dead, but contained provisions for the dead. While actual food remains within the pots are rare, animal bones of livestock representing deliberate selection of sections of the body are widely found in all burial types representing Aramaic as well as Phoenician contexts. Such offerings are specifically mentioned in Aramaic inscriptions. On occasion these bones have been found under a covered dish with a knife (in case one needed further clues of their purpose there).[298] Pots, however, cannot speak. Our best option for understanding the meaning of this is from texts, both biblical and inscriptional. For the moment we will only note the pervasive presence of pottery with the dead.

[297] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 394-403.
[298] Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 105.

Discussion of the meaning of leaving pottery with (presumably) food must wait for consideration of the texts, particularly the biblical material and the Aramaic inscriptions.

CHAPTER 4: ISRAELITE TOMB AND FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS

The data make it clear that while customs for the treatment of the body varied widely within Israel/Judah and Aram (and between them as well), certain common values were in play. Respectful treatment of the body and the preservation (at least in the short term) of individuality were important, and gifts for the dead were a central part of this. In the process of burial the individual was remembered and cared for. A dead person did not become just an inanimate body, but retained aspects of individuality in death. The living reaffirmed their continued connection to the dead by respectful treatment of the body and the placement of gifts and personal objects in the grave or with the body. The placement of gifts such as pottery, which likely contained food and drink, supports the suggestion that because the gods were not in the business of caring for the human dead, it is the humans who must do so. We can now begin work on a second type of evidence, the inscriptional material. When placed in conjunction with the mortuary archaeology we can hope to gain a firmer grasp of the "why "of Iron Age funerary practice, and not only the "what."

Ketef Hinnom

The first set of inscriptions we have to discuss for Israel are the most striking. As related in chapter 1 the Ketef Hinnom tombs and bone repositories, located across the Hinnom valley from Mt. Zion, have yielded extraordinary finds. Most important of these are the two silver amulets bearing inscriptions that were discovered in the repository of Burial Chamber 25. These have garnered a great deal of attention due to their close relationship with the biblical text. The tomb fits well into the typology of rock cut bench

tombs found near Jerusalem. Burial Chamber 25 is one of five chambers that surround a central hall. The tomb includes benches with carved headrests hewn along the sides of the walls.[299] Dating to the late 7th or early 6th century, the amulets constitute the oldest extra-biblical attestations of a biblical passage – the priestly benediction of Numbers 6:24–26, which is found on both scrolls. Other sections of the inscriptions also have close biblical parallels.

Both of these items were created in the same way. The amulets are in the form of tiny scrolls, with the words being etched onto very thin sheets of silver and then rolled up to be worn as amulets.[300] That we find these two very similar amulets with slightly variant readings suggests that they were not unique items produced or commissioned for a single person, but were part of a genre of Israelite/Judahite amulets. Two items are not sufficient to prove this, but it is suggestive especially in light of the known later use of such amulets in the Jewish tradition. In this section we will first discuss the amulets themselves with their translation, and then tackle the rather complex question of their use as items of magic or of prayer.

[299] G. Barkay et al. "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," BASOR 334 (2004): 43-44.
[300] Lewis, "Job 19 in Light of the Ketef Hinnom Inscriptions and Amulets," 105-110.

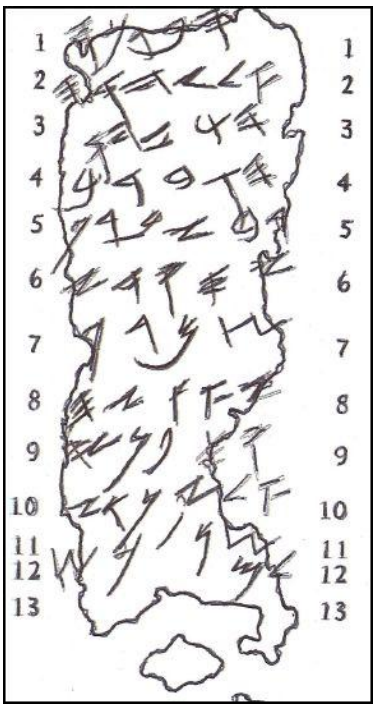

Figure 32: Ketef Hinnom amulet line drawing
Gabriel Barkay, "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," BASOR 334 (2004): 63.

Ketef Hinnom I

The difficulty with translating the Ketef Hinnom amulets lies in their very small size and the fact that they were lightly etched into a very thin silver sheet, which was then rolled up into a tiny scroll. In addition to this the script of the letters has been described as "extreme" or "free" cursive, which also makes interpretation more challenging. Barkay interprets some of the unusual letter forms and misplaced strokes as being due to the item being written quickly and under the assumption that it would not be read again. The item was made to be rolled up once and not unrolled and re-read. We cannot know whether this means that the amulet was made specifically for funerary use or whether it was worn also in life. The application of new imaging technology developed by the West Semitic Research Project of the University of Southern California has allowed Barkay and his

team to re-affirm many of the original conclusions regarding the scrolls and their dating and to offer an updated translation based upon clearer images of the letters.[301]

Below is the reconstructed Hebrew and translation for Ketef Hinnom I proposed by G. Barkay et al.[302]

1… יהו

2……

3[ל שמר]גד

4 הברית ו

5 [ה]חסד לאהב

6 [מצ] ושמרי [ו]

6 alt [מצ] שמרי [י]ו

7 [ותו]

8 [.] ת העלם

8 alt [.]נ תה על

9 [פ] ברכה מכל [ה]

10 ח ומהרע

11 כי בו גאל

12 ה כי יהוה

[301] Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 46. See also G. Barkay and others, "The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom," NEA 66 (2003): 162-171 for a description of the work done in 1994 by the WSRP in making images of the inscriptions through new photographic and computer imaging techniques available to scholars.

[302] Barkay et.al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 61.

13 [ו] שיבנו [מ]

14 צור יבר

15 ו] יהוה [ך

16 [י] שמרך [י

17 יהוה [א]ר

18 פנ[יו]...

1…]YHW..

2

3 the grea[t…who keeps]

4 the covenant and

5 [g]raciousness toward those who love [him]

(alt) those who love [hi]m

6 and those who keep [his commandments…

7….]

8 the Eternal (?) […] *

*this is Barkay's reconstruction

9 [the?] blessing more than any

10 [sna]re and more than Evil

11 For redemption is in him

12 For YHWH

13 is our restorer [and]

14 rock. May YHWH bles[s]

15 you and

16 [may he] keep you

17 [may] YHWH make shine

18 [his face]…

There are several points at which interpretation is affected by the reading of the inscriptions. The new photographic data discussed by Barkay et al. largely reinforces earlier readings. The opening line (per Smoak) has been written in a "more crude fashion" than the lines that follow, which is significant if it indicates that the line was written secondarily, after purchase of the amulet. This first line may be a personal name, another blessing formula, or part of the Tetragrammaton.[303] Lines 2–7 closely parallel Dan 9:4 and Neh 1:5 as well as Deut 7:9:

הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד לְאֹהֲבָיו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מצותו

"The faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy to them that love him, and who keep his commandments." Protection and deliverance for those who are loyal to YHWH is an idea also found in a number of Psalms, such as 5:12, 34:24, and 91:14.[304]

Line 8 requires some discussion. Only the three letters העל are certain in this line. The first letter of the line could either be a *tāw* or *sādê*. The letter following the *lāmed* could be a mêm, giving us "eternity." Anything further would require more uncertain reconstruction, as Barkay has done in yielding "The Eternal" as a title. Barkay reads line nine as "more than any" but B. Halpern reads as "from every."[305] The use of the definite

[303] J. D. Smoak, "May YHWH Bless You and Keep You from Evil: The Rhetorical Argument of Ketef Hinnom Amulet I and the Form of the Prayers for Deliverance in the Psalms," JNER 12 (2012): 212.
[304] Smoak, "May YHWH Bless You and Keep You from Evil: The Rhetorical Argument of Ketef Hinnom Amulet I and the Form of the Prayers for Deliverance in the Psalms," 213
[305] Baruch Halpern, personal communication, April 2014.

article before רע in line 10 should be noted for the emphasis it gives the word, perhaps changing the emphasis from a particular evil or various evils in general, random negative occurrences, to a larger concept of Evil as a collective idea or a personified force.[306] The antithesis and contrast to line 10 is found in lines 11–13: "for redemption is in him, for YHWH is our restorer…" Yardeni reads this slightly differently "for YHWH will restore him."[307] In line 14 צור "rock" is restored, although the *ṣādê* is not clear. It is a reasonable reconstruction based upon "rock" as a well known epithet of YHWH. Parallels are found in the wording of a number of psalms of petition that use appellatives of YHWH such as "rock" and "refuge." These psalms ask for protection from unnamed evil as well as from specific dangers such as sickness, slander, and enemies. In addition requests for blessings in the Psalms, such as "be gracious to me" and "let your face shine upon us" are also similar to the wording of the priestly blessing.[308] Lines 14–18 are clear and unchanged from earlier treatments. Compare Numbers 6:24:26, a blessing which is still in use today:

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ

יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

May YHWH bless you and keep you

May YHWH make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you

May YHWH lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

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[306] Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 41-70.
[307] Ada Yardeni, "Remarks on the Priestly Blessing on Two Ancient Amulets from Jerusalem," VT 41 (1991): 176-185.
[308] Smoak, "May YHWH Bless You and Keep You from Evil: The Rhetorical Argument of Ketef Hinnom Amulet I and the Form of the Prayers for Deliverance in the Psalms," 202-236. See Ps 144, 28, 31, 71, as well as Ps 6, 80, and 67. See also 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 22:32; Isa 26:4; Hab 1:12; Deut 32:30 and many other examples. Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 60-61.

Smoak argues that this blessing was chosen for its connection with the priesthood and temple, and represents an attempt to capture and transfer some of that power for the benefit of the owner of the amulet.[309]

Ketef Hinnom II

Below is the reconstruction for Ketef Hinnom II, also based on the work of Barkay et al.[310]

1 ה/ו ברך ה

2 [א] ליהו[ה]

3 העזר ו

4 הגער ב

5 [ר]ע יברך

6 יהוה י

7 שמרך

8 יאר יה

9 [ו]ה פניו

10 [אל]יך וי

11 שם לך ש

12 [ל]ם

[For PN, (the son/daughter of) xxxx]

1 h/hu

[309] Smoak, "May YHWH Bless You and Keep You from Evil: The Rhetorical Argument of Ketef Hinnom Amulet I and the Form of the Prayers for Deliverance in the Psalms," 218-219.
[310] Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 68.

2 May h[e]/sh[e] be blessed by YHWH

3 the warrior (alt: helper) and

4 and the rebuker of

5 [e]vil: May

6 YHWH bless you

7 keep you

8 May YHWH make

9 his face shine

10 upon you and

11–12 grant you p[ea]ce.

We notice first here that the introduction and beginning of line 1 is largely reconstructed as a formulaic name pattern. The reading is tentative due to corrosion and the fact that the tops of the letters are all cut off. The new photographic evidence has secured the reading of the lāmed in line two and the rest is certain. In line 3 the root העזר is interesting, being another important divine epithet of YHWH as the divine helper or warrior, and is one attested in a number of theophoric biblical names, both Hebrew and Aramaic.[311]

The Power of the Written Word and the Biblical Evidence for Protective Words

There is fairly strong evidence that the amulets were meant to serve a protective purpose. The name of YHWH is invoked as protection in these inscriptions, and YHWH is called upon both to help and to protect the wearer against evil. The Ketef Hinnom

[311] Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 64-65. Among these theophoric names are אלעזר Elazar (Ex. 6:23); אליעזר Eliezer (Gen. 15:2), עזריהו Azaryahu (1 Kg. 4:2), and the short form עזריה Azaryah (II Kg. 14:21), and עזריאל Azriel (Jer. 36:26), and the short form עזראל Azre'el (Ezra 10:41). Heriberto Haber, "Theophoric Names in the Bible" JBQ 29 (2001) 56-59. One must of course not forget to include Hadadezer of Damascus.

amulets are significant in that they are the first evidence from the Iron Age of the name of God being invoked specifically for protection. While the amulets may have been worn in life for protective purposes, here perhaps the hope is that the protection will extend after death. The context of the amulets is an elaborate burial complex (5 chambers) which yielded over a thousand objects.[312] That silver, a precious metal, is used serves as further evidence that this was the tomb of a wealthy family.

Belief in the power of the written word, in this case unseen and unspoken, but existing and effective, is not new.[313] It is, in fact, the foundational assumption upon which most of the funerary inscriptions that we will discuss are based. Parallels can be drawn with later incantations that were also inscribed onto small amulets to be worn. Amulets from the 4th to 6th century C.E., for example, were often inscribed in Aramaic, as well as Hebrew and Syriac, onto thin sheets of gold or other metal and also were designed to be folded or rolled into a small scroll. Such items have been found in Aram, the Levant, Asia Minor, and less frequently in Mesopotamia. In kind with the Ketef Hinnom amulets, nearly all of the 14 amulets published by J. Naveh and S. Shaked include the personal name of an individual, use the name or titles of YHWH (often with added mention of angelic beings), and seek blessings, healing, protection, or the banishment of demons.[314] The use of amulets in the early Israelite and later Jewish tradition has a continuous history from the ancient world to the current day, and words

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[312] Gabriel Barkay, *Ketef Hinnom: A Treasure Facing Jerusalem's Walls* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1986), 31-37.

[313] The examples that spring to mind here of course are the Arslan Tash amulets, which seek protection by El, Asherah, Baal and others against several demonic entities. The incantation addresses the demonic deities directly and bids them to be gone. Frank Moore Cross and Richard J. Saley, "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century BC from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria," BASOR 197 (1970), 42-49. Naveh and Shaked also include an impressive array of magic bowls from late antiquity along with amulets in their work Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1998), 304.

[314] Joseph Naveh, "Hebrew Graffiti from the First Temple Period," IEJ 51, (2001): 194-207.

from the Torah, particularly Psalms, are frequently used for this purpose.[315] Such protective amulets became so common and well accepted in the Christian era that rabbinic teaching classified them as either "recognized" and accepted or unproven. Circumstances were also set forth for their appropriate usage.[316]

For most funerary inscriptions the primary audience is other people. The inscriptions are directed towards later generations who might move a stone or defile a grave. The divine power(s) are only called upon in a secondary sense to enforce the curse against anyone who might desecrate the grave. Here though, YHWH is invoked directly.[317] This makes the amulets somewhat different in nature than the tomb and coffin inscriptions that we will address.

The biblical text also sheds light on this matter. The power of the written word is acknowledged in particular in Job 19:21–24, in which Job wishes that his words were "inscribed on a scroll with iron chisel and lead, engraved on rock forever." In an interesting interpretation T. Lewis wonders if this passage represents a wish by Job that

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[315] See an early example in "Amulet 13" published by Naveh and Shaked, which cites Exodus 15:26 and is meant to protect against demons and disease. Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 99.

[316] Eli Davis, "The Psalms in Hebrew Medical Amulets," VT 42 (1992): 173-178. The most comprehensive work on amulets in late antiquity is, of course Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*. See also Roy Kotanksy, "Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets from Syria," IEJ 41 (1991): 267-281 for additional examples.

[317] Invocations to the deity on behalf of another are found in shortened form in the Lachish letters, where they also parallel introductions from Ugaritic letters. The most common form is: "May YHWH cause my lord to hear tidings of peace/tidings of good/to be in good health." Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 212-214. Later letters express similar sentiments, such as those from Elephantine "May the God of Heaven seek after the welfare of our lord…and give you favor…may you be happy and healthy…Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 212-214. The Ugaritic texts most commonly ask "May the gods guard you, may they keep you well." Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 235-253. Here one might argue that the primary audience are living humans. While the invocations may be a sincere religious expression, just as important is that the person know that he or she is being prayed for. A similar phenomenon is found in modern Christian churches, where intercessory prayer is valued. Telling the subject of your prayers that you are praying for him or her is socially important and conveys concern. Other letters do not include invocations in their polite greetings. Letters to Sargon II for example, merely wish "good health" and the Amarna letters have the writer metaphorically throwing himself in the dirt before the feet of his lord. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I*, 262; and Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 262-277.

apotropaic words had been inscribed on his behalf, in similar form to apotropaic inscriptions such as the Ketef Hinnom amulets, that such an item might have protected him from the traumas that afflicted him. Lewis argues that the images of chisel, lead, and rock best reflect the production of such items as the Ketef Hinnom amulets and the creation of rock-cut grave inscriptions.[318]

Supporting Lewis's idea of biblical reflections of amulets and inscriptions is the suggestion from J. Smoak that Psalm 12 has the foundation of its imagery in the making of amulets:

אִמְרוֹת יְהוָה אֲמָרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת כֶּסֶף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לָאָרֶץ מְזֻקָּק שִׁבְעָתָיִם

> The utterances of YHWH are pure utterances, silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times in the earth

Smoak states that some types of Iron Age smelting furnaces were sunk partially into the ground, which would explain the otherwise odd idea of silver being refined "in the earth" Coupled with this is the presence of the terms "*šmr*" and "*nṣr*" found in the next two lines):

אַתָּה־יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְּרֶנּוּ מִן־הַדּוֹר זוּ לְעוֹלָם

You O YHWH will guard them; you will protect him from this generation forever.

In addition to the Ketef Hinnom amulets, Smoak lists four Phoenician/Punic amulets that also use combinations of the words "bless" "guard" and "protect."[319] This adds to the evidence that the Ketef Hinnom amulets fit well into a genre of protective amulets. The

[318] Lewis, "Job 19 in Light of the Ketef Hinnom Inscriptions and Amulets," 109.

[319] J. D. Smoak, "Amuletic Inscriptions and the Background of YHWH as Guardian and Protector in Psalm 12," VT 60 (2010): 421-432. Smoak's examples are: 1) a bronze amulet from Tyre inscribed with the words "*šmr*" and "*nṣr*" 2) a silver band from Tharros Sardinia with "*šmr*" "*nṣr*" and "*brk"* 3) a Punic gold band from Carthage with "*šmr*" and "*nṣr*" and 4) a Phoenician band including "*šmr*" and "*nṣr*" from Moraleda de Zafayonna (Spain). See also Philip C. Schmitz, "Reconsidering a Phoenician Inscribed Amulet from the Vicinity of Tyre," JAOS (2002): 817. For the En Gedi inscription see P. Bar-Adon, "An Early Hebrew Inscription in a Judean Desert Cave," IEJ 25 (1975): 226-232.

Ketef Hinnom amulets are an Israelite take upon a broader type. Compare also the frequent finds of Egyptian type amulets in Aramaic, Israelite, and Phoenician graves. These amulets are also often described as having a protective function. If we accept the Ketef Hinnom amulets as protective in nature, either in life or procured by relatives and placed in the grave at the time of burial, here is a uniquely Israelite "take" on a common type.

The Ketef Hinnom Amulets as Prayer or Magic, for the Living or for the Dead

The next question to ask is whether the invocation is on behalf of the dead or of the living. Were the Ketef Hinnom amulets made for living people as protection and then put in the grave as a valued personal item just like any other amulet or piece of jewelry described in chapters 2 and 3, or were they funerary items bought for and placed with the dead only? If the second option is the case we reach an interesting point. This could mean that YHWH was expected to care for the dead – that he is trusted not only as a god of the living with no interest in the fate of a person after this life, but a god whose power and concern extend beyond the grave. Such a suggestion would contradict our overall claim that in both Israel and Aram the divine powers were viewed as being uninterested and of no help to the dead.

This would have been a major theological development. The archaeological and literary evidence indicates that common belief was that the dead needed human support in the form of grave offerings, and that the gods and goddesses were not responsible for the care of the dead. Amulets and scarabs (also discussed above) may have been part of these offerings, magical methods of protection. The Ketef Hinnom amulets are sometimes classified as "magical" protective items.

Much can be said on what is meant by this. Understanding the distinction between the perception of magic and religion in the Bible has sometimes been framed as a difference between what Israel and Judah do (religion) and what foreign peoples do (magic). It has also been viewed as a difference between what is done at the behest or command of YHWH (such as the miracle/magic of Aaron and Moses) versus what is attempted by human will. S. Dolansky defines magic as "an act performed by a person (as opposed to theophany or direct act of God) with or without attribution to God, that has no apparent physical causal connection to the (expected or actual) result."[320] One might also employ the framework that magical incantations seek to control the universe through human means. Magic assumes that if the words are said and the ritual is followed, the desired result will be achieved. Magic seeks to tap into the generalized power underlying the universe and is not dependant upon a lord-subject relationship between the divine and the human, although divine names are also used in incantations.

Prayer by contrast can be viewed as a humble beseeching of the deity to grant a request. Faith as a corollary to prayer is confidence in the benevolence of a god who hears. Do the Ketef Hinnom amulets represent magic, or faith in a god who does take an interest in human individuals beyond death? Perhaps it lies somewhere between the two. Because the answer is rooted in intent and perspective we cannot answer this question, but only agree with J.D. Smoak's assessment that that "there may have been more functional fluidity between incantations and prayers in ancient Israelite religions than previously understood."[321] This issue of human care of the dead and its place in the

[320] Shawna Dolansky, *Now You See It, Now You Don't: Biblical Perspectives on the Relationship between Magic and Religion* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 1-14.
[321] Smoak, "May YHWH Bless You and Keep You from Evil: The Rhetorical Argument of Ketef Hinnom Amulet I and the Form of the Prayers for Deliverance in the Psalms," 202-236. The condemnation of

theology of Israel will be raised again when we examine the biblical text for clues to the status of the dead in Israel and Judah

Line 4 of Ketef Hinnom 2 calls YHWH – "the rebuker" or "the one who rebukes" – a term that appears in later Hebrew and Aramaic incantation texts that invoke the divine power to ward off danger and evil. A. Yardeni calls the priestly blessing "appropriate for use in magical contexts because of its inner structure." The three verses of Ketef Hinnom 2 create a pyramid type structure with an increasing number of words from 4 to 5 to 7 in each of the three verses, and the name YHWH is used three times. The total number of letters is 60, which also has a magical connotation.[322] Despite this the priestly blessing "May YHWH bless you and keep you" is phrased much more like a request, a beseeching or prayer. Whether it is magical incantation or prayerful invocation, the boundary is unclear.

Silwan

Silw I: "The Royal Steward Inscription"

As with Ketef Hinnom, Silwan has both important archaeological data as well as inscriptional material. Along with Ketef Hinnom the tombs of the necropolis of Silwan have been discussed in some detail in chapter 2 along with our consideration of bench tombs in Judah. We now turn to the inscriptions from these tombs, all of which come from the so called "monolithic" tombs of that necropolis. The first inscription was

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magic in the Hebrew bible is wide ranging – see for example Exod 22:18, Lev 19:31,20:27, Deut 18:9-12, 2 Kgs 17:17, 21:6, 2 Chr 33:6, Isa 19:3, 47:12-14, Jer 27:9, Ezek 13:18-20, Mic 5:12, Nah 3:4. The reasoning behind this is often unstated but often linked as part of a condemnation of foreign religious practices. In the prophetic works statements are sometimes made regarding the ethical issue of the use of magic to harm others. The traditional Christian and Jewish interpretation is that the root of the condemnation of magic in the biblical text is that it is a sin of pride: an attempt to control the forces of the universe rather than to humbly ask help from the creator.

[322] See also Isa 17:13, Nah 1:4, Ps 106:9, Ps 18:16, and Zech 3:2. Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," 65. Yardeni, "Remarks on the Priestly Blessing on Two Ancient Amulets from Jerusalem," 185.

discovered in 1870 by Charles Clermont-Ganneau on the façade of Tomb No. 35. Clermont-Ganneau had it cut out of the rock and sent to the British Museum, where it remains today. Being badly damaged in antiquity when the tomb was in use as a hermit's dwelling, the inscription is very difficult to read (see Figure 33).[323] The translation given below is based upon the work of N. Avigad. As will also be seen with the Aramaic inscriptions, these Hebrew inscriptions highlight the fear of desecration of the tomb. They have a rather different set of concerns than the Ketef Hinnom amulets. This concern dovetails with the archaeological record, which in almost every case shows care taken for the arrangement of the body and associated objects. There are two types of exceptions. In Aram and Israel we have seen cases of violent death or possible disease in which the bodies were not carefully attended to. Secondly in Israel the repository allows for the disturbance of older bones and objects after a more or less lengthy period of time when they were placed in the repository pit.

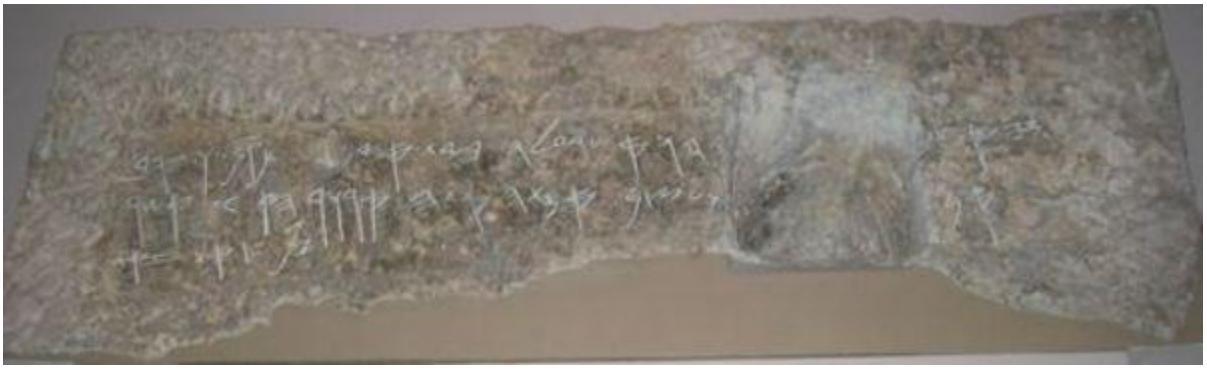

Figure 33 "Royal Steward" inscription from Silwan
Mnamon Project, n.p. Online:
http://lila.sns.it/mnamon/index.php?page=Esempi&id=8&lang=en#75.

[323] Nahman Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," IEJ 3 (1953): 138-139; Mnamon Project, "'Royal Steward" Inscription from Silwan (Image)," n.p. [cited 26 May 2014]. Online: http://lila.sns.it/mnamon/index.php?page=Esempi&id=8&lang=en#75.

As discussed both in chapter 2 and chapter 5, the Silwan tombs illustrate a change from the traditional burial of many related individuals in a single cave or tomb. Several of the Silwan tombs were intended for the use of only one or two people. It is one of these, the "Royal Steward's Tomb", that we will address first. This inscription is dated to about 700 BCE based on comparison to the Siloam inscription. The epigraphy is very similar, although the Siloam inscription is defective where this inscription is *plene*.[324]

זאת [קברת]יהו אשׁר על הבית אין פה כסף וזהב

[כי]אם [עצמתו] ועצמת אמתה אתה ארור האדם אשׁר

יפתח את זאת

This is [the tomb of] –yahu who is over the house. There is no silver or gold here

[on]ly [his bones] and the bones of his female slave with him.

Cursed be the person who opens this [tomb].[325]

The phrase *ʼšr ʻl hbyt* "Who is over the house" is a well known title of an official of the palace. The phrase occurs in the Joseph story (Gen 37–50) as well as in 1 and 2 Kings (1 Kgs 16:9; 1:3; 2 Kgs 18:8), and 2 Chr 26:21. While this title can have a more plebian domestic meaning, it most commonly designates a royal official. This title is also attested in extra biblical seals and seal impressions. A 7th century scarab from the Hecht collection is inscribed "To Yiddo who is over the house" (although the first letter of each line is missing). Two bullae from the 7th–6th centuries BCE read "to Adoniyahu who is over the house" and a third reads "to Nathan who is over the house" (These last three

[324]Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village,"n150.

[325]F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 508.

items were from a group of 255 items which came into the Jerusalem antiquities market in 1975).[326]

A very good biblical connection can be made for this inscription. Avigad and Dobbs-Allsopp point to Isa 22:15, which includes both a rock cut tomb and one who is "over the house." Shebna (Shebaniah), the name from this passage, is a good but hypothetical fit for the missing name here. Shebna is criticized by Isaiah for building a grand rock-cut tomb. [327]

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת לֵךְ־בֹּא אֶל־הַסֹּכֵן הַזֶּה עַל־שֶׁבְנָא אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבָּיִת׃

מַה־לְּךָ פֹּה וּמִי לְךָ פֹּה כִּי־חָצַבְתָּ לְךָ פֹּה קֶבֶר חֹצְבִי מָרוֹם קִבְרוֹ חֹקְקִי בַסֶּלַע מִשְׁכָּן לוֹ׃

Isa 22:15–16

"Thus says YHWH of hosts: Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is master of the household, and say to him: What right do you have here? Who are your relatives here, that you have cut out a tomb here for yourself, cutting a tomb on the height, and carving a habitation for yourself in the rock?"

This does not necessitate that the name on the Silwan tomb must be Shebna. This name could be almost any theophoric name ending with –yahu.

Several comments can be made regarding the wording of the inscription. The reading *qbrt*, tomb, in this inscription is reconstructed based upon another Silwân inscription (below) and also upon its use in several places in the Hebrew Bible. The word for man here is *adm* instead of *ish*. *Adm* is translated as "person" above. This is unusual

[326] Scott C. Layton, "The Steward in Ancient Israel: A Study of Hebrew ('Asher) 'Al-Habbayit in its Near Eastern Setting," JBL 109 (1990): 633-649.

[327] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 508; Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," 137-152; also Lawrence Mykytiuk, "Sixteen Strong Identifications of Biblical Persons (Plus Nine Other Identifications) in Authentic NorthWest Semitic Inscriptions before 539 BCE" in *New Inscriptions and Seals Relating to the Biblical World* (eds. Meir Lubetski and Edith Lubetski; Williston, Vt: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 51.

in the Hebrew but comparable to Phoenician inscriptions[328] Significant here is the use of the term *'mt* for the woman who was intended to share the tomb with the deceased. While Dobbs-Allsopp here renders the word as female slave, it is clear that the relationship was of central importance for the builder of this tomb. Rather than a communal, family tomb the inscription makes it clear that only two were intended to lie here. This inscription and the relationship which it signifies compares with the 14th century Elamite tomb inscription for the site of Haft Tepe, Iran, which also uses the term: "Tepti-ahar, king of Susa [made] a statue of himself and his amātu whom he loves."[329] The term is a lower status designation than wife *'mt* is a servant or slave (traditionally phrased "handmaid"). The fact that this tomb is intended for her as well as for him indicates that she is a concubine/wife of singular importance to the creator of this tomb. Avigad points out Exodus 21:7–11 which addresses the case of a Hebrew girl sold into this sort of marriage and protects her rights. He suggests that the Silwan tomb represents such a relationship.[330] While one cannot tell if the benches in this tomb were originally carved as a double resting place, it is not unlikely, as Silwan tombs 10 and 42 have such double trough niches.[331]

In this inscription the claim is that there is nothing worth stealing in the tomb, no valuable metal (compare with the Aramaic Neirab II and the Phoenician Ahiram, Tabnit, and Eshmunazar inscriptions).[332] Notice that more than half the inscription is devoted to discouraging grave robbers, first by the statement that nothing of value is in the tomb, and second by a general curse against anyone who opens the tomb. Aside from this we

[328] Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," 144.
[329] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 509.
[330] Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," 145.
[331] Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan*, 247-250.
[332] For the Aramaic material see chapter 6. For the Phoenician see Appendix B.

only find the name and title of the tomb's occupant. The notice regarding the *'mt* is actually incorporated into the claim that the tomb is not worth robbing because it holds only bones. The inscriptions from Judah show a clear belief that a curse is appropriate and effective against vandalism. The claim of the "Royal Steward" that no rich goods are placed in the grave indicates that the placement of such goods was customary at the time. Archaeological evidence confirms that in Iron Age graves in Israel and Judah grave items (most commonly pottery) were almost always present. While many graves contain only a few simple pots, richer finds have been located, for example in the repositories of the very well known tombs of Ketef Hinnom.

No specific curses are mentioned here or in the Khirbet el-Qom inscription. Also, unlike our evidence from Phoenicia and Aram, neither Yahweh nor any other god is called upon to enforce the very generalized curse. The curse formula against disturbing the grave is widespread across Israel, Phoenicia, and the Aramaic states and persisted into the Islamic period.[333] The inscriptions addressed here are not the only examples. These curse formulas have strong parallels in commemorative building inscriptions, particularly of Assyrian rulers, but Neo-Hittite examples can be found as well (for example at Til Barsip). Such monuments often include a biographical statement of achievements and conclude with an injunction and curse against anyone who removes, defaces or covers the commemorative writing.[334]

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[333] See also for example Second Temple Jewish tomb inscriptions, a 2nd-3rd century Palmyrene sepulchral inscription, and as late as 937 C.E. an Arabic tomb-inscription from Jerusalem, all of which prohibit the opening of the grave and/or curse the one who does so. Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," 137-152.

[334] A great many Assyrian royal inscriptions contain such curses. The bilingual Tel Fakhariyah statue is a good example and mirrors some of the curses of the Sefire inscription. See Dion, "Image et Ressemblance en Araméen Ancien (Tell Fakhariyah), "151-153 and Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*, 265. A Luwian example from Tell Barsip also calls for the god Tarhunza

Silw2 –Silw 4

The other inscriptions from Silwan are much more fragmentary but we will include them nonetheless as a matter of completeness and to avoid confusion

Silw 2 is also inscribed on the façade of Tomb 35 on a separate panel. This inscription refers to the lateral chamber which was located next to the outer chamber belonging to the "Steward." The inscription is as follows:

חדר בכתף הצר[יח

The room at the side of the burial cha[mber]

The final word הצריח is also found in three Nabatean inscriptions from Petra (two are funerary inscriptions). The word clearly indicates a burial place but can also be a cultic room. Compare also Judges 9:46–49, the odd story of Abimelech and the burning of the men of Shechem in a צריח. The term is also found in 1 Sam 13:6, where the people seek to hide from the Philistines in such a place. Because the term only occurs four times in these three verses, the biblical context is difficult to determine. Here the inscription may indicate to visitors the presence of a second chamber, the resting place of another person, which is not visible from the entrance. While it is on the same tomb, the script is in a different style than that of the "Royal Steward" inscription and was probably created at a different time.[335]

Silw 3 is a very fragmentary inscription discovered by Clermont-Ganneau above the entrance to the "Tomb of Pharaoh's Daughter." The entire middle section was

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to "become like a lion, may he swallow down his head, wife, and child" for any who erase the name of Hamiyata. Bunnens, *A New Luwian Stele and the Cult of the Storm-God at Til Barsib-Masuwari*, 17.

[335] Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," 137-152.

destroyed leaving only the last letter, *resh*, fully preserved, preceded by part of another letter, either *daleth*, *qoph*, or *resh.*[336]

Silw 4 is from tomb No. 34, and also discovered by Clermont-Ganneau. It was first copied and published by A. Reifenberg. Carved above the entrance to the tomb, much of this inscription had also been destroyed. At the time of Ussishkin's 1968–71 survey the whitewash covering the inscription was removed so that it could be more easily examined, but per Ussishkin it "suffered further damage at the hands of the villagers of Silwan during our survey"[337] The short inscription is as follows:

]קברת ז[זאת

]אשׁר יפ[תח...

[This is] the tomb of…whoever ope[ns] (this tomb)…

Silw 4 has much in common with Silw 1. The inscription can be viewed as holding the same essential features but in condensed form. The two crucial elements are the name of the deceased and the prohibition against disturbing the grave, which can be inferred from the partial line "whoever opens." Even this very fragmentary inscription preserves part of a curse formula against opening a tomb. It follows a close parallel with Silw 1 in both content and style, and it may have been created by the same craftsman.[338] Here *qbrt* is in feminine form. Dobbs-Allsopp speculates that as the feminine is most commonly used of royal tombs a distinction of quality is being made here.[339]

[336] Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan*, 242.
[337] Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan*, 243-246. Ussishkin does not further elaborate on the damage done. We should also be aware of the very poor relationship between Ussishkin's team and the villagers, as discussed in chapter 1.
[338] Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan*, 243-246.
[339] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 511.

The Silwan inscriptions are much more straightforward and require comparatively less discussion than Ketef Hinnom above or the Khirbet el-Qom material which will be presented below. What we learn from these is related to the fear of desecration and robbing of the tomb or grave. We find almost identical wording in Aramaic and Phoenician inscriptions (see below chapter 6 and appendix B). We have a clearly expressed belief that a curse is appropriate and effective against such vandalism. The claim of the "Royal Steward" and its Aramaic and Phoenician parallels that no rich goods are placed in the grave indicates that such was indeed a custom at times.

Khirbet el-Qom

Each site holds a unique set of data. The Ketef Hinnom amulets allow us to make connections to the biblical text and show a faith in YHWH which may extend to care after death. The Silwan inscriptions portray a more worldly concern for the preservation of the grave and its contents from defilement. Like Silwan, the Khirbet el-Qom tombs are not communal but are identified as the resting place of particular individuals. Like Ketef Hinnom, one of these tombs also attests to faith in YHWH, but perhaps in a much less biblically orthodox fashion than the Ketef Hinnom amulets.

Khirbet el-Qom has been identified with Makkedah (of Joshua 12:16 and 10:28) or Shaphir (of Micah 1:11 and Joshua 15:8).[340] It is located about twelve miles west of Hebron, towards Lachish. The site was occupied beginning in the late 10^{th}–9^{th} century, with the cemetery and its inscriptions dating to the 8^{th}–7^{th} century.

Khirbet el-Qom was excavated by W. Dever in 1967–71 as a salvage operation. Dever had acquired a large amount of Iron II pottery as well as bronze and stone objects from a Jerusalem antiquities dealer. Included in this material was the inscription "Qom 1"

[340] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 189.

which had been cut out of its tomb. These items made Dever aware of large scale looting in the area. After identifying the point of origin of these items, work began to document what remained of the site.[341] The excavation was undertaken on behalf of the Department of Antiquities and sponsored by Hebrew Union College. Dever states that during this time he observed nearly a hundred robbed tombs, and thousands of pieces of pottery were seen in the village or later at antiquities dealerships.

Following Dever's initial work excavation of the site continued in 1971 under the direction of John S. Holladay, who uncovered fortifications from the 10th–9th centuries BCE which were comparable to Tell Beit Mirsim and Tell 'Eitun. In addition to the discovery of Iron Age material, occupation of the site extending from the Chalcolithic through the Hellenistic period was confirmed. The fortifications and long period of occupation during the Iron Age suggested to him that this was part of a system of fortified cities of Judah (perhaps Shaphir).[342]

There are no recorded Late Bronze Canaanite remains at this site. A small number of Chalcolithic and Early Bronze sherds were discovered, and a negligible amount of Hellenistic and Roman material. The "overwhelming" majority of pottery (per Dever) was from the Iron Age, with small amounts dating from the 10th century, increasing to the 9th century, and greatly increasing to the 8th and 7th/6th centuries. Iron II ceramic forms are documented, as well as Cypriote "Black-on-Red" ware.[343]

[341] Dever, *Who were the Early Israelites and Where did they Come from?*, 65.
[342] John Holladay, "Khirbet El-Kom," RB 78 (1971): 593-595.
[343] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 50.

Qom 1 (Tomb 1)

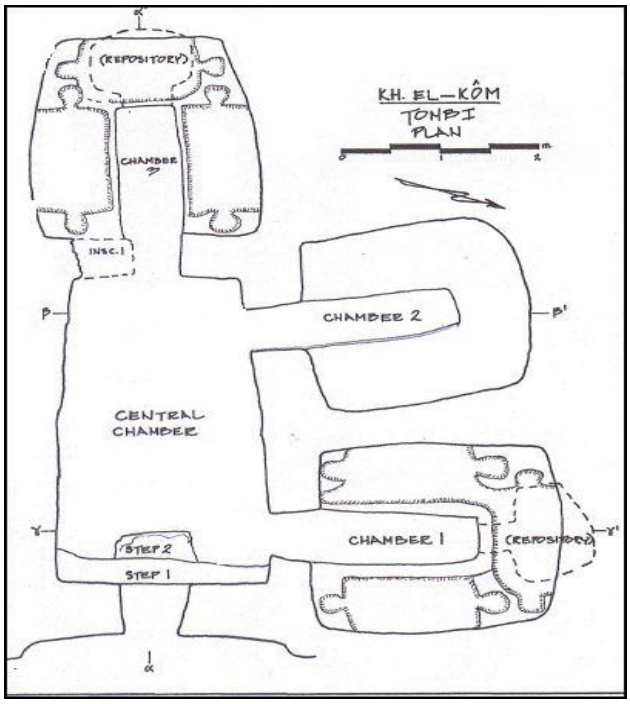

Figure 34: Khirbet el-Qom Tomb 1
William Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet el-Kom," HUCA 40–41 (1969–70): 143.

Tomb 1 was composed of a central chamber entered by two steps and three burial chambers branching from the central room. One of the first inscriptions from Khirbet el-Qom to come to the attention of Dever and other scholars was cut from this tomb. Each chamber included benches with carved niches for the head and feet. Chambers 1 and 3 also contained repository pits. The inscription was removed from its original position on the west wall of the central chamber (chamber 3 of tomb 1) and is broken at the bottom right (see Figure 35).[344] The deeply cut letters are painted with black paint. This inscription is dated to the first part of the 7th century. The tomb also contained other

[344] Neta Dror, "Khirbet el-Qom Burial Inscription: "(Belonging) to Ophai Son of Nathanyahu (is) this Chamber" (Image)," n.p. [cited 26 may 2014]. Online: http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/galleries/viewItemE.asp?case=14&itemNum=375271.

graffiti and inside the entrance was a sunburst design. [345]

The inscription reads:

לעופי בן

נתניהו

החדר הזה

(Belonging) to Ephai (Ophai) son of Nethaniah (Nethanyahu)(is) this chamber. These names are familiar. The name Ophai occurs in Jer 40:8. Nethaniah is found 23 times in the HB, 18 of which are in Jeremiah. The name is also found on an 8th–7th century BCE jar handle from Tell en-Naṣbeh.[346] Although this inscription is short, it illustrates that in this period some tombs were being constructed for the use of only one person. The inscription along with Silwan, and more which we will see below, further confirms that by this period distinctive burial patterns in Israel and Judah (the bench tomb) were accompanied by theophoric names formed with the divine element YHWH. The Ketef Hinnom amulets also relate to this body of evidence for the religious element associated with these burials.

[345] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 142.
[346] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 152.

Figure 35: Burial inscription Khirbet el-Qom: "(Belonging) to Ophai son of Nathanyahu (is) this chamber"
Neta Dror, n.p. Online: http://www.imj.org/imagine/galleries /viewItemE.asp?case=14&itemNum=375271.

Qom 2 (Tomb I)

This second inscription from Tomb 1 is much like the first. It was painted over the doorway of chamber 3 of Tomb 1 with black paint

לעו.. בן נתניהו

(Belonging) to Epahi (Ophai) son of Nethaniah (Nethanyahu)

Or (per Dever)

לעו.. בת נתניחו

(Belonging) to ….daughter of Nethaniah

The inscription is very unclear and the name has been debated. Lemaire and others are certainly influenced by the first inscription above, and so reconstruct something very

close to the carved inscription.[347] The paint is badly smudged, but Dever reads בַּת instead of בֶּן and so reconstructs a family tomb with the burial of a brother and sister. Dever only mentions that the caves were badly looted and no reference to skeletal remains is made. It would appear that no material evidence is available to verify Dever's suggestion.

These two simple inscriptions contain no theological statements and no threats or curses, only a simple statement of ownership or description of who is laid to rest here.[348] These two inscriptions, along with the "Royal Steward" inscription, as well as Qom 3 below, provide strong evidence that in some cases tombs were intended for permanent use by only one or two occupants. We have noted earlier that the retention of individuality, at least in the short term, was a clear feature of Iron Age burial in Israel (as well as in Aram and Phoenicia). In Israel and Judah bodies were intended to lie undisturbed on their benches along with their personal objects and offerings for a period of time before being moved to a repository. Here is another step, that of never intending for the bodies to be removed.

[347] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 405-408.

[348] Naveh provides a quite creative and entertaining scenario much removed from this train of thought. Several inscribed cut stone blocks of unknown provenance were purchased by the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem. One inscription reads "Cursed be ʿOfay son of Netan[yahu]" and another reads "[ʿO]fay son of N[etanyahu]. Assuming these inscriptions refer to the same person as Qom 1 and 2, Naveh speculates that this Ophai (ʿOfay) was the leader of a band of bandits or refugees who used the cave as a hide out and marked their territory in this way. The curse inscriptions are then from a rival group who dwelt in other nearby caves! Naveh, "Hebrew Graffiti from the First Temple Period," 194-207.

Qom 3 (Tomb 2)

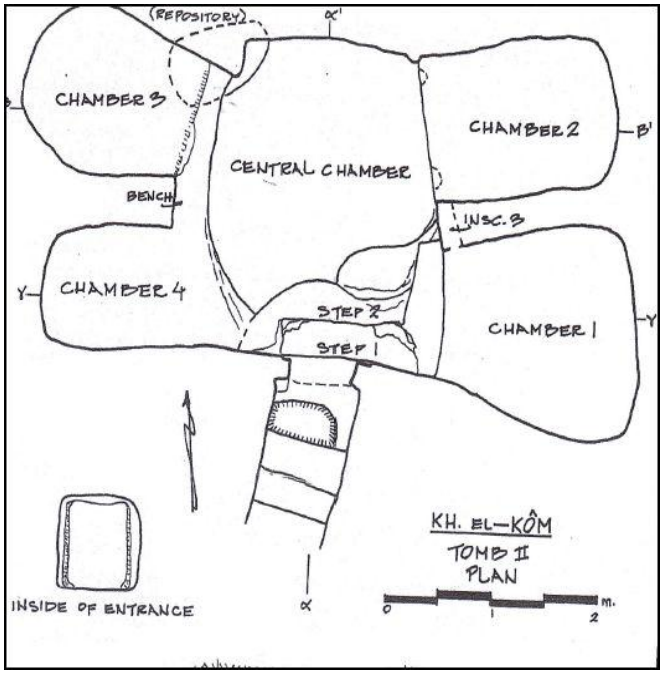

Figure 36: Khirbet el-Qom Tomb 2
William Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet el-Kom," HUCA 40–41 (1969–70): 147.

Tomb II is composed of a central chamber with 4 side chambers arranged in a somewhat symmetrical "butterfly" shape. The cutting followed the natural seam of the rock. Those who looted the tomb reported bones in all of the side chambers and a large amount of pottery, but Dever's expedition found very little remaining.[349] An inscription had been removed from the east pillar between chambers 1 and 2 of Tomb 2, and like Qom 1 was traced back to this site. The rock is naturally cracked, and the surface was not smoothed well in preparation for the carving. In places it is nearly impossible to distinguish between a letter stroke and a natural line in the rock. The inscription dates to the last quarter of the 8th century. It is this inscription that will require the most comment

[349] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 146-149.

due to the difficulty of reading the very damaged and unclear letters, as well as for the unusual nature of the text.

The inscription does not stand alone. Accompanying the inscription is an upside down hand symbol.[350] Dever states that this would at first appear to be a later "Hand of Fatima" (an Islamic talisman) but from the placement in relationship to the inscription it appears that the two go together (see Figure 37). Also the tomb had not been opened after its final use in the 8th–7th century B.C. before being looted in modern times. The open palm as a good omen is found at a very early period in Egypt and Mesopotamia. If its association here with the inscription is correct, this is the earliest known example of this motif in Hebrew art.[351] We may connect the use of the term *yād* in the sense of a monument or memorial as used in the Hebrew Bible. 1 Sam 15:12 describes Saul creating a *yād* without further comment. 2 Sam 18:18 is the well known incident of Absalom setting up a *yād* as a memorial because he had no son to follow him, and Isa 56:5 contains the promise that YHWH will give to the faithful eunuch a place better than sons or daughters. None on these verses are very clear as to the nature of what a *yād* is but the usually interpretation is that this is a monument of some kind. Perhaps the use of the term was not only figurative, but a reference to an actual image of a hand on such a monument.[352]

[350] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 408-412.
[351] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 169. Dever calls the open right hand the "Hand of Fatima" in Islamic contexts, but the "Hamsa" symbol today is also the "Hand of Mary" to Christians and the "Hand of Miriam" to Jews. The reference to honored women in the three different traditions is notable.
[352] Judith Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," VT 37 (1987): 60-61.

Figure 37: Burial inscription from Khirbet el-Qom "Uriyahu" Neta Dror, n.p. Online: http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/galleries /viewItemE. asp?case=14&itemNum=375273.

The problems with the text are many. The difficulty of interpretation of this inscription is in part due to the numerous scratches in the rock, and that some letters are incised twice but not exactly in the same manner. J. Tigay writes: "Epigraphists studying the inscription are forced to decide which signs to disregard as lexically meaningless repetitions or scratches."[353]

Despite the problems numerous scholars have made attempts at a translation, including Naveh, Mittmann, Zevit, Lemaire and Miller.[354] We will provide here a few different translations and also give other suggestions by these scholars.

Below is the reading and translation of Dobbs-Allsopp:

אריהו העשׂר כתבה

ברך אריהו ליהוה

ומצריה לאשׂרתה הושׁעלה

[353] Jeffrey H. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (HSS 31; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 29.
[354] Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," 50.

לאניהו

לאשׁרתה

ר...ה

Uriah the rich commissioned it.

Blessed was Uriah by YHWH

and from his enemies by his Asherah he has delivered him.

(Written) by Oniyahu

…by his Asherah…[355]

The name Uriyahu is a well known Hebrew name, and is found in Jer 26:20. The alternate forms ʾUriah and ʾUriel are frequent both in the biblical text as well as in the Lachish letters, at Ein-gedi seal and on the Samarian "name list."[356] Notice here that Dobbs-Allsopp and others (Lemaire, Zevit and Miller) discern a final two lines, badly damaged and difficult to read. In their view these lines include the name of the scribe as well as another reference to "his asherah" although others do not discern this line, faint and damaged as it is.[357]

The most controversial line of this inscription is line three, which Dobbs-Allsopp has rendered "Blessed was Uriah by YHWH, and from his enemies by his Asherah he has delivered him." Certainly the influence of the famous Kuntillit ʿAjrûd graffiti is present in this translation, as well as in the translations of A. Lemaire and J. Naveh, who render line 3 of this piece "Blessed be Uriahu by YHWH and by his asherah; from his enemies

[355] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 408-414.
[356] 2 Sam 11-12, 1 Kgs 15:5, 1 Chr 11:41, Ezra 8:33, Isa 8:2, 1 Chr 6:24, 1 Chr 15; 2 Chr 13:2
[357] Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," 60; André Lemaire, "Khirbet El-Qom and Hebrew and Aramaic Epigraphy," in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (eds. S. Gitin, J. Wright and P. Dessel; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 231-232.

he saved him" and "Blessed be Uriahu by YHWH my guardian and by his Asherah. Save him."[358]

Another suggestion for interpretation comes from M. O'Connor, who argues for the poetic form of the inscription and makes a number of useful comparisons with the Biblical text in his argument for the use of the vocative, though generally the vocative *lamed* is better attested in Ugaritic than in Hebrew.

Uriah the prosperous : his message:

May you bless Uriah, O YHWH, and from his enemies, O Asherata, save him[359]

While it does not have major bearing upon the fundamental meaning of the inscription in the way that Dever's readings, for example do, I prefer O'Connor's choice of the English word "prosperous" here over "rich" for the translation. Using the English "rich" focuses upon material wealth, whereas the choice of "prosperous" can imply bounty in all areas of life for which Uriah is thankful. This is appropriate for an epitaph in a way that the English "rich" is not. Additionally being rich in material goods is not something that would be declared on a tomb – it would seem an invitation to robbers.

Dever has a rather different reading, although he seems to later back off of this earlier highly divergent reading in a later article, where he says "If we accept the interpretation of Lemaire and Naveh concerning the Khirbet el-Qom inscription 3, the word "asherah" appears in 8th century Judah in precisely the same grammatical and conceptual

[358] André Lemaire, "Khirbet El-Qom and Hebrew and Aramaic Epigraphy,"

[359] M. O'Connor, "The Poetic Inscription from Khirbet El-Qom," VT 37 fasc 2 (1987): 224-230. Z. Zevit concurs with O'Connor in the use of the vocative. Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," 58. Regarding the poetic form of the inscription, Ranier Kessler notes the overlap between this vocabulary and that of Psalm 112, but only goes so far as to claim the same literary and cultural background for both.[359] While the overlap is not unique enough to warrant a claim of influence of one upon the other, it is beneficial to put the Psalm into dialogue with the inscription. This is particularly notable as Psalm 112 describes the good life of a good man who is blessed by God and who has powerful or "mighty" descendents. It would be a fitting epitaph.Rainer Kessler, "Khirbet El-Kom und Psalm 112-ein Fall von Intertextualität," VT 61(2011): 677-684.

association, that is, in a reference to "YHWH and his Asherah" (as Kuntillet ʿAjrûd).[360] We discuss his earlier reading here as it highlights the way in which competent scholars can come to highly divergent readings of this text. This alternate reading begins with the second word of the first line. The second letter of the second word of the inscription is difficult to read. Naveh and Mittmann ignore the letter, and as can be seen in Dever's reading below he reads a *qoph*. This then led Dever to emend the fourth letter to a *bet* to yield *hqšb* as can be seen below.[361]

אריהו הקשב כתבה

ברך אריהו ליהוה

ומארר יד לאשר תההוֹשׁ עלה

לאניהו

(Belonging to) 'Uriyahu. Be careful of his inscription!

Blessed be 'Uriyahu by YHWH,

And cursed shall be the hand of whoever (defaces it)

(Written by) 'Oniyahu [362]

Instead of שׁר as "prosperous" or "wealthy" Dever gives the hiphil singular imperative of קשב "to pay attention to" and instead of "from his enemies, (by his) Asher" he gives "cursed shall be the hand of whoever (defaces it)."[363] With this interpretation Dever suddenly transforms the most controversial tomb inscription from

[360] William Dever, "Asherah, Consort of YHWH? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," BASOR 255 (1984): 255.
[361] Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," 55.
[362] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom,"158-168.
[363] Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kom," 159 This follows a very familiar and widespread prohibition. See Hayim Tawil, "The End of the Hadad Inscription in the Light of Akkadian," JNES 32 (1973): 477-482.

Judah and brings it squarely into the realm of the name formula plus the curse against anyone who might deface the inscription, although we must certainly view this as only one of several major variant interpretations of a very difficult inscription.

We can notice also the last word of line one כתבה is given as "commissioned" by Dobbs-Allsopp, "his message" by O'Conner, and "his inscription" by Dever. Hadley states that *ktb* used as a noun is not otherwise attested in pre-exilic Hebrew. Hadley writes that instead *miktāb* was used, and suggests this as a suffixed qal form instead.[364] Line three is the most problematic line. It contains the most "shadow writing." This line is also certainly the most loaded with potential theological import. The reading ומצריה לאשׁרתה הושׁעלה from Dobbs-Allsopp above is rather close to that posited by Lemaire, Zevit and Miller.[365]

The phrase "From his enemies" ומצריה can be compared to Deut 33:7, Jer 46:10 and Ps 105:24. Several scholars (Miller and Lemaire) have struggled with the placement of the phrase לאשׁרתה, wishing to reposition this to gain an antecedent of YHWH and to conform to the formula "Blessed by YHWH and his Asherah" from Kuntillet ʿArjud.[366] A further question arises regarding the phrase לאשׁרתה and its final possessive suffix. This is important because pronominal suffixes are not attested with personal names in Hebrew. This would bear on the question of whether the Asherah here is the "wife" (a person, a goddess) of YHWH or a cultic object. In that case we would expect the possessive suffix. This same construct "his Asherah" is also found at Kuntillit ʿAjrûd.

[364] Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," 53.
[365] Lemaire, "Khirbet El-Qom and Hebrew and Aramaic Epigraphy," 231-238.
[366] Hadley, "The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription," 55; also Lemaire, "Khirbet El-Qom and Hebrew and Aramaic Epigraphy, " 231-238.

Two instances of the construction in such closely related contexts is significant but does not solve the question of whether Asherah was a person (goddess) or a thing (cultic object).

The center of controversy is, of course, whether or not we have here a reference to a goddess consort of YHWH. This has long been argued not only from the Kuntillit ʿAjrûd graffiti but from such biblical texts as Deut 16:21, Judg 6:25, 1 Kgs 15:13 1 Kgs 16:33 and others.[367] The Hebrew Bible presents the term Asherah in a negative way and equates it with religious impurity and idolatry. However there is no agreement upon whether the references are to a cultic object or to a goddess or to both. Agreement is not even reached over the very existence of these references. Dever, for example, says: "It is well known that the Hebrew Bible contains some 40 veiled references to the cult of the old Canaanite fertility deity Asherah…" and yet Lipiński says: "It seems that no biblical passage mentions the goddess Atirat or her emblem."[368] The problems with parsing the issue are many. When Dever says "veiled references" he is referring to the fact that biblical references to the goddess, cult or cultic item have been profoundly altered by passing through the filter of the biblical writers. Nowhere do we have an unambiguous description of the cultic item asherah and its usage in a cultic context nor do we have anything produced by archaeological exploration which can be concretely identified as such. As for the goddess, this also presents a problem of identification. The symbolism and mythology for a number of goddesses, particularly ʿAnat and Astarte, are fused and

[367] See also 2 Kgs 23:6; 2 Kgs 17:10; 2 Kgs 21:3,7 and Jer 17:2.
[368] Dever, "Asherah, Consort of YHWH? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," 21 and Edward Lipinksi, "The Goddess Atirat in Ancient Arabia, in Babylonia, and in Ugarit," OLP 2 (1972): 116. cited in Dever, "Asherah, Consort of YHWH? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," 21. The Lipiński article was unavailable to me at the time of writing.

overlap. Dever even goes so far as to suggest that Asherah, ʿAnat, and Astarte may have all been "projections of the great Mother Goddess"[369]

Taken together, the Qom 3 inscription and the Kuntillit ʿAjrûd evidence (along with the unclear but important biblical references) suggest that some segments of Israelite society did pair YHWH with a goddess, Asherah, and that this tomb inscription is an example of a memorial inscription giving thanks to this divine pair for their blessings and protection. Alternatively the pairing was made between YHWH and an important cultic object through which the blessings of YHWH were believed to be conveyed. This seems an unlikely pairing, and Dever makes the excellent point that is does not seem logical to parallel YHWH and a cult object in this way, as if on equal footing.[370] This conclusion still does not resolve one of our pressing questions. Does the inscription refer to blessing and protection only during the life of Uriah, as given by Dobbs-Allsopp and others, or do we follow Dever and O'Connor in the present tense, and argue that YHWH (and perhaps Asherah) was expected to care for the dead as well as the living. There is no way to determine if past or present tense was intended.

[369] This fusion is particularly seen in Egypt with "Qudshu" "The Holy One" depicted nude with lotus or lily blossoms and standing upon a lion. One such New Kingdom plaque indeed gives all three names – Qudshu, Astarte, and ʿAnat. Dever, "Asherah, Consort of YHWH? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," 21. As for Dever's suggestion of a "Mother Goddess" one might be wary of such a broad stroke. While there is plenty of evidence for goddesses who had mother aspects, the existence of such a generalized deity is much more speculative.

[370] Dever, "Asherah, Consort of YHWH? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," 30.

"The Stone-Cutter's Inscription" (unprovenanced, likely Khirbet el-Qom)

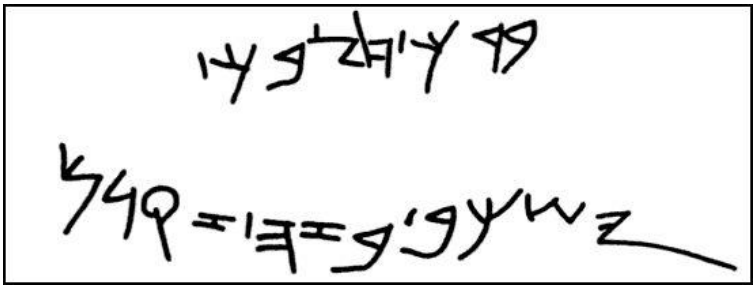

Figure 38: Stone-cutter's inscription
R. Deutsch and M. Heltzer, *Forty New Ancient West Semitic Inscriptions* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication 1994), 28.

Our next inscription is unprovenanced, having been acquired from an "Arab peasant" (Deutsch's words) from the Hebron area. We offer it here because the origin of the slab is claimed to be Khirbet El-Kom, and this is very likely the case. The item is of chalkstone which is identical to that occurring at the Khirbet el-Kom tombs. The epigraphy likewise is almost identical with the letters of the Khirbet-el-Kom inscriptions, dating from the second half of the 8th century. [371] The likelihood is very high that this piece did originate at the Khirbet el-Qom site but this cannot be authenticated. Unlike other Khirbet el-Qom inscriptions it cannot be fit back into a section from where it was clearly removed.

The opening line is well agreed upon. It is a blessing upon the stone cutters or a stone cutter. If this inscription is a tomb inscription, as is often assumed, the blessing upon, or even mention of, those who built the tomb is highly unusual. While we can compare of course the Siloam tunnel inscription where stone-cutters are also mentioned, there the context is of the progress of the work itself, so it is more understandable that the

[371] Robert Deutsch, *Forty New Ancient West Semitic Inscriptions* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center, 1994), 28.

craftsmen would be mentioned. As it appears in this (probable) tomb inscription the phrase is quite odd. We would expect instead that the labor and space for this inscription would instead be devoted to giving the name of the deceased, invoking a blessing upon him or her, or a curse against anyone who would defile the tomb. There is a blessing given here in kind with the Ketef Hinnom amulets and the Qom 3 inscriptions, but no divine name is associated with it nor is a personal name of the deceased given. Deutsch's translation is below:

ברך חצבך

יׁשכב בזה זקנמ

Bless your stone-cutter(s)"

In this will rest the elders" (or "put for resting")[372]

To this point we have worked with the assumption that group tombs in Israel were used by family groups. This assumption is supported by archaeological data on living arrangements for extended family as well as demographic information for the age and gender of the bones in tombs, which are distributed in a way that most reasonably reflect family groups. Additionally biblical references consistently link such tombs with kinship groups. Elders in the text are respected but not infallible members of the community. This is the first appearance of *zqnm* in a Hebrew inscription and there is no direct biblical reference to tombs of the elders.[373] In light of this the reference to a tomb for the elders is very strange if the term is used in a way which is similar to the biblical text. The presentation of the elders in the Pentateuch is associated with a variety of designations,

[372] Deutsch, *Forty New Ancient West Semitic Inscriptions*, 28-29

[373] Deutsch, *Forty New Ancient West Semitic Inscriptions*, 28-29. See also John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions: Volume I Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 57-58.

such as “the elders of Israel” (Ex 3:16; Josh. 20:6, 24:1; 1 Sam 4:3 etc), “the elders of Judah” (1 Sam. 30:26, 1 Sam 4:3 etc) or “ the elders of the people” (Num. 11:16). Also mentioned are “elders of the tribes” (Deut. 31:28 and “elders of the city” (Deut 21:3; Ruth 4:2 etc).[374]

The Hebrew Bible represents the elders as being involved in various levels of negotiations and decision making in times of both peace and conflict. Despite the reduction of local authority by the institution of the monarchy there remained throughout the period of the monarchy a place for such traditional local leadership.[375] An elder was a high status position marked not necessarily by age but by family connection and power.

If this inscription indicates a separate tomb for “elders” as a social group it has an odd disconnect from the established expectation of burial with family members which appears both in the biblical text and the archaeological record. Elders were not cut off from their families or clans. At Silwan we saw that upon occasion the honor of separate/special burial relating to a high social status may have outweighed the traditional value of family tomb burial. This makes sense in the case of the Silwan tombs, where high officials who had spent their lives in the capital city may have wished to be laid to rest there, where their identity and status had been made, rather than return to a hometown tomb. This does not make sense in this case. If the elders of this inscription were elders of the city and lived there and were established with their families from which they drew their influence, why create a separate tomb? Why not bury the elders in

[374] Hanoch Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel: A Study of a Biblical Institution* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 8. Reviv notes the “pan-tribal pattern” presented in the pre- and early-monachic narratives which strive to create an impression of unity.

[375] Reviv suggests that one of the reforms of Jehoshaphat was the incorporation of the elders into a court of appeal including levites, priests, and elders, thus reducing the resentment that might arise from the consolidation of royal power. Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 103-105.

the family tomb? The nature of the position meant that elders were not imported from without, but their reputation and influence grew from within their family and clan. As H. Reviv points out, in most cases the settlement and the social unit coincided – there was close congruence between territory and family/tribal structure.[376] Lacking more evidence, particularly the tomb with which the inscription was associated, these are difficult questions to answer.

A. Lemaire solves the problem with a different reading of the text that dispenses with the issue of elders altogether. Lemaire gives:

Blessed be your stone-cutter

may he rest here (in his) old age

Lemaire argues that there is no compelling reason to read a plural for חצבך, and he also sees no reason for a plural זקנמ, "elders" versus "old age." He wonders why there is no article if some specific elders or a specific elder were/was intended (that is, what is the reference) and prefers the reading "in his old age."[377] If Lemaire is correct regarding the reference to "old age" rather than to "elders" we have another reference here to one of the common factors in what we will call a "good death" which is found in the biblical text and which we will discuss in the next chapter – death in old age, at the "right" time. We then might read this as an epitaph for a particular stone cutter, though one might wonder why a personal name was not given. Could we posit a tomb for a family of stone cutters? Was their own resting place the best advertisement for their work? Since this inscription was cut from its original place, we are unable to draw further information from the tomb to which it belonged.

[376] Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 51.
[377] Lemaire, "Khirbet El-Qom and Hebrew and Aramaic Epigraphy," 233.

Khirbet Beit Lei: Hebrew Graffiti from a Chamber Tomb

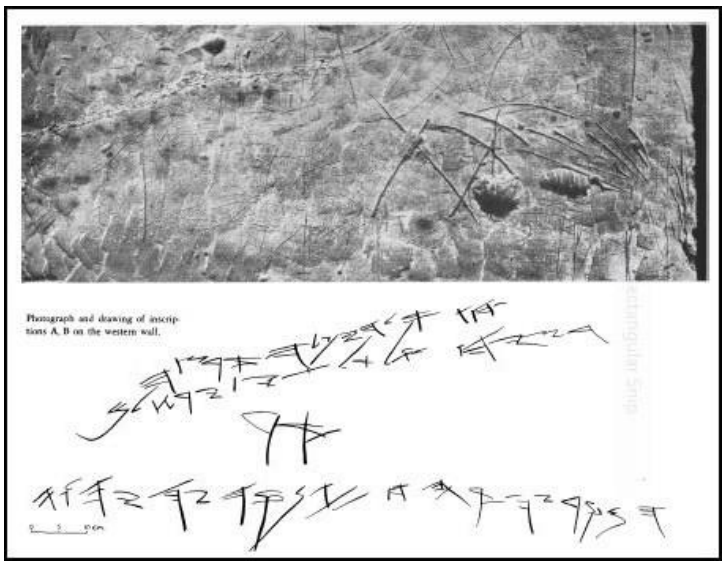

Figure 39: Photograph and drawing of inscriptions on the Western Wall of Khirbet Beit Lei
Joseph Naveh, "Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave," IEJ 13 (1963): plate 13.

The last set of inscriptions to be considered is somewhat different in nature than our earlier material. Rather than being a formal tomb inscription, the Khirbet Beit Lei inscriptions are graffiti found in an Iron Age IIC tomb. In addition, the connection between the writing and the burials in this cave is not at all certain, so any conclusions drawn must be tentative. We include the discussion due to the importance of the inscriptions for revealing faith in Israel and Judah. These inscriptions provide important additional information that can be juxtaposed with Ketef Hinnom, Qom 3, and the biblical text, and if they are associated with the Iron Age burials here they are of tremendous interest to us.

Khirbet Beit Lei is located about 8km east of Lachish and only about 5km from Khirbet el-Qom. These limestone cave tombs were discovered during road construction in 1961. The tombs consist of a rectangular ante-chamber and two burial chambers with

three benches each. Human bones were found on the benches, along with small bronze objects – a ring, an earring, and a plaque. The burials and form of the tomb are quite typical for Iron Age bench tombs in Israel and Judah. What is unique are the words and images found there. Images inscribed upon the walls include three human figures, two ships, and circles. In addition to the primary inscription presented below the letters ארר appear in the cave at least four times, and are probably part of a curse inscription or multiple curses.[378] Dobbs-Allsopp separates out seven separate inscriptions, with 1,2,3, and 4 being short curse inscriptions. His BLei 5 is parallel to Inscription A treated below and BLei 6 is parallel to inscription B below, but he gives very different readings from scholars such as Gibson and Naveh. BLei 7 is very short, on the southern wall of the antechamber and given as הושע [י]הוה "save, O YHWH".[379] We will focus here on the two longer inscriptions. The lightly scratched inscriptions are difficult to read, and the rough surface of the cave makes the task more difficult, so again we will give several alternate readings.

Bienkowski dates the inscriptions to about 500 BCE on orthographic and paleographic grounds, but Naveh disagrees, stating that the script fits with the cave as characteristic of the pre-exilic period, and along with Cross gives a 6th century date.[380] Some of the expressions of the inscription have biblical parallels that are often viewed as being comparatively late. The phrases הרי יהודה and אלהי ירושלם are found once in

[378] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions: Volume I*, 57-58; and Joseph Naveh, "Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave," IEJ 13 (1963): 74-92.
[379] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 126-132.
[380] Frank Moore Cross, "The Cave Inscriptions from Khirbet Beit Lei," in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honor of Nelson Glueck* (ed. James A. Sanders; New York: Doubleday, 1970), 299-304.

Chronicles. Particularly the form of the name of Judah used here, יד without the final *he*, also appears frequently in later contexts, such as storage jars of the Persian period.[381]

The two most complete and important inscriptions are given below.

Inscription A (following Gibson and Naveh):

יהוה אלהי כל הארץ ה

רי יהד לו לאל[ה]י ירשלם

YHWH is the God of the whole earth.

The mountains of Judah belong to him, the God of Jerusalem.

Dobbs-Allsopp and Cross read:

[אני] יהוה אלהיכה ארצה

ערי יהדה וגאלתי ירשלמ

I am YHWH your God. I will treat with favor the

cities of Judah, yeah I will redeem Jerusalem[382]

Cross finds אני in a gap before the right margin, but this is not visible in photographs and Miller, who also viewed the inscription in person, did not see this either. In line one the difference between אלהי כל הארץ ה and [אני] יהוה אלהיכה ארצה depends upon the existence of a second lamed in the phrase and the question of the division of הארץ. In line two the initial *ayin* is uncertain. Concerning the reading of לו לאל[ה]י or וגאלתי only the first and last letters are clear and the *aleph* and *lamed* are also agreed upon.

Inscription B:

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[381] Piotr Bienkowski, "Some Remarks on the Practice of Cremation in the Levant," *Levant* 14 (1982): 251; Walter Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 251; also "Naveh, Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave," 74-92.

[382] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions;* also Cross, "The Cave Inscriptions from Khirbet Beit Lei," 299-304.

המוריה אתה חננת נוה יה יהוה

The (mount of) Moriah thou hast favored, the dwelling of Yah, YHWH[383]

Here Dobbs-Allsopp and Lemaire, along with Miller, read:

פקד יה אל חנן נקה יה יהוה

"Attend, YH, gracious God! Acquit, YH, YHWH"[384]

They clearly read a rather different group of letters, particularly at the beginning of the line.

The question we must ask ourselves is how closely are these inscriptions connected with the function of the cave as a burial place. These lines were inscribed on the walls of the antechamber of the tomb and are accompanied by a wide variety of other letters and drawings which may not have been completed at the same time. The lines were scratched into the limestone with a stylus of some sort, and are clearly not "official" tomb inscriptions. One can suggest that the statements of faith contained here are made either by purposeful visitors to the tomb, and connected with the burials, or that they are incidental, left by those who used the cave as a temporary shelter.[385] If they are viewed as part of the funerary context of the cave, the connection between this statement of the sovereignty of YHWH over the whole earth and over Jerusalem, with the final rest of one of the members of the community, is very important. If such is the case it represents an intersection between political religious sentiment, faith that YHWH will watch over the nation, and private acts of devotion to the dead. Here YHWH is not asked to bless or

[383] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions: Volume I*, 57-58. Naveh also agrees with this reading but separates each line and treats them as three separate inscriptions. Naveh, "Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave," 74-92.
[384] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 129-31; Naveh, "Hebrew Graffiti from the First Temple Period," 194-207.
[385] Naveh, "Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave," 74-92.

watch over the dead specifically, but faith is expressed in the goodness of YHWH to the nation. This faith is not phrased in relation to monarchy or to tribes but to geography; to the mountains and cities of Judah.

Conclusion: Hebrew Funerary inscriptions

Our study of Hebrew funerary inscriptions illustrates a continuing reverence for the God of Israel in death as in life. Ketef Hinnom, Qom 3 and Khirbet Beit Lei all attest to a faith in the power of YHWH in life. It is possible that this faith could extend to YHWH's care in death as well, but there is no clear way to determine this. The stone cutter's inscription may also be added as among those that invoke a blessing, although no divine name is given. There is another issue we must consider as well. With the possible exception of Qom 3, no other god or goddess apart from YHWH is mentioned in these funerary inscriptions. The repeated use of the name YHWH is important. He is called upon to bless the deceased (or the living) in Qom 3 and in the silver amulet from Ketef Hinnom. Another blessing, without the name of the deity, is invoked for the stonecutters of the unprovenanced (prob. Khirbet el-Qom) inscription. The graffiti at Khirbet Beit Lei is a powerful expression of joy and faith, which is very grounded in place. YHWH is associated closely here with Judah, Jerusalem, and Moriah.

The personal names associated with these inscriptions are also telling. Silw 1 is a theophoric name ending in –yahu. If the name is Shebna/Shebaniah, as has been suggested, it is attested biblically as well as at Arad. Qom 1 has the well-attested theophoric biblical name Nethaniah or Nethanyahu (also found at Arad and Gezer). The other name on this tomb, Ephai or Ophai is not theophoric but is found in Jer. 40:8. The

theophoric biblical name Uriah is found in Qom3 and also Arad.[386] Oniyahu is yet another theophoric name with the element –yahu. All of this evidence is consistent with the work of J. Tigay on Israelite names as found in a wide range of inscriptions from seals, ostraca, vessels, graffiti, and other material. He found a striking paucity of names which could be clearly categorized as both Israelite/Judahite and polytheistic (with the caveat that most evidence pertains to the eighth century and later). A total of 557 personal names with YHWH appear in inscriptions. 77 occur with the element El, as compared to only 35 "plausibly pagan theophoric names in Israelite inscriptions." Most of these were from Samaria and Arad. Approximately 87 additional names are listed as possible but improbable Israelite pagan names.[387] Tigay concludes: "In any case, our evidence implies that there was not much polytheism of any kind, mythological or fetishistic."[388]

The nature of the tomb inscriptions, that they are labor intensive and often limited by space, means that the concerns they convey are at points different than the concerns conveyed by the much longer biblical texts. Archaeology and the biblical texts suggest the importance of grave goods or offerings for the dead, but this is not indicated in the inscriptions, and certainly not in the explicit way that it is in the Aramaic funerary texts. The texts and the inscriptions show the importance of YHWH in the life of Israel and Judah, something that is not as well shown by bones and grave goods. Silw 1, Silw 4, and Qom 3 (as translated by Dever) as well as the possible curses in the Khirbet Beit Lei cave, all share the same concern for grave robbing and defilement of the grave as will be seen in the Aramaic and Phoenician texts. The dread of defilement of the grave in the

[386] Yohanan Aharoni 1919-1976, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," BA 31 (1968): 1-32; Tigay, *You Shall have no Other Gods*, 114.
[387] Tigay, *You Shall have no Other Gods*, 47-86
[388] Tigay, *You Shall have no Other Gods*. 114.

biblical text is primarily reflected in the idea of desecration of the body and the lack of a tomb or peaceful final resting place as a great curse. As marked in our introduction to this work we need multiple genres of evidence – archaeological, inscriptional, and textual – to fully understand the treatment of death in Israel and Aram.

CHAPTER 5: THE BIBLICAL TEXTS CONCERNING DEATH IN ISRAEL AND JUDAH

In addition to the mortuary archaeology of Israel and Judah which we have addressed in chapter 2, and the inscriptions discussed in chapter 4, we have another major source for the treatment of death in Iron Age Israel. Biblical texts offer us a wealth of information regarding both the practical response to death – burial and mourning customs – as well as the emotional and spiritual response to death. Aram lacks anything comparable to this complex text. The overarching focus of this work is specific and individual death: each grave, each inscription, represents a unique life. We must find a way to integrate this focus with the mass of material related to death that is available to us in the Hebrew Bible. In keeping with this the majority focus for our exploration of the Hebrew texts will first and foremost be narratives of individual death and dying as a life event. We will do this by concentrating our attention upon the narrative books of the Hebrew Bible. We will also consider the fate of the soul and the afterlife as expressed in the narrative books, and how this relates to the veneration of the dead. These texts will not only add living color to the associated archaeological and inscriptional sections of this work but will also enable us to connect all three elements together.[389]

References to death, burial, and the response to death in the Hebrew Bible originate from a variety of sources over a wide time period. As we sift through the evidence it is important to consider the source and perspective of each text. We will see that the treatment of death in the narrative episodes is directly shaped by the purpose of

[389] The presentation of death as found in the wisdom literature and prophetic material certainly merits further consideration. Much of this material however treats death in a more universal or abstract way and full treatment of this body of texts would lead us quite far away from our central theme of burial and the treatment of the dead. We look forward to preparing a full investigation of this material at a later time.

the text and the larger narrative of which it is a part.[390] There are a number of ways in which we might approach the biblical texts related to death. We might logically follow the order in which the texts are written and follow the presentation of death as it is presented in our sources from J and E through the Priestly source and the Deuteronomistic material. This, however, would at a number of points necessitate separating material that is closely related (for example stories of the patriarchs have important material contributed by J, E, and P as well). For something on the order of 2,500 years J, E, P and D have been entwined together to create a fuller story than does each separate source. In addition separating the material by sources would only be reorganization and would not ultimately impact what we learn from these texts about death in Iron Age Israel and Judah.

We do not know if J (the southern source) or E (the northern source) was composed first, but they were both written during the period of the divided kingdom and were most likely combined by an editor (RJE) after the destruction of the northern kingdom in 722. P presents the priestly alternative to the history presented in RJE. D, which takes up most of the book of Deuteronomy, is placed during the reign of King Josiah (about 622 BCE). It is part of a longer work, the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr). Dtr contains older source material, and we distinguish Dtr1, which was written under King Josiah, from Dtr2, an edition that was prepared during the Exile and which

[390] B. Childs makes a brief note regarding the development of scholarly views of the biblical approaches to death, noting various approaches from a "developmental" perspective in which the theology of death was thought to have changed in a consistent way through time in the Hebrew Bible, to a comparative approach which emphasized Ancient Near Eastern parallels, and finally G. von Rad and others' placement of priority on the impact of the cult. Brevard Childs, "Death and Dying in Old Testament Theology," in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (eds. John H. Marks and Robert McClive Good; Guilford, Connecticut: Four Quarters, 1987), 89-91. I don't take any of these approaches here, although the importance of ancient Near Eastern parallels cannot be denied. As much as possible I have attempted here to allow discrete sections of text to speak for themselves separately first before attempting to construct a pattern for the whole.

attempted to address the perceived causes of this disaster.[391] Finally the joining of all of these parts together has its most likely setting in the community as it attempted to reconstruct itself after the exile.[392] As this chapter proceeds we will also give the textual sources making up each narrative episode as it is addressed.

While it is crucial to understand the strands of source material which make up the text as it now stands, we must not disregard the final shape of the text. Each piece is woven together into a rich final tapestry. While the Hebrew Bible is made of many diverse pieces, they are pieces of a great whole that tells a coherent story. The overall shape of the story flows forward. Later pieces are shaped by earlier narrative. Coherent does not mean uniform or lacking in diversity and even contradictions. The biblical story of people approaching death with one another includes expressions of grief and love, deathbed speeches (real or envisioned) meant to influence the living, issues of inheritance and continuity, and elements of ritual. The story of people approaching death before YHWH includes elements of peace, fear, trust, anger and hope. We find all of these as we approach our texts. Overall we can discern several major motifs involved with the treatment of death in the text. Death is at times inflicted as a punishment, but peaceful death can be a reward for a good life. Beyond this, texts related to death always serve to support the purpose of the larger narrative.

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[391] Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed,*1-31. Friedman provides extensive evidence for distinguishing among the major sources and establishing their dating and chronological relationships. Major categories of evidence include linguistic data (earlier and later stages of the development of Hebrew), terminology (our ability to separate sources by recurring lexical items), consistent content and themes, the narrative flow of texts (continuity), the connection of these sources with other parts of the Bible that can be dated – such as Jeremiah with D and Ezekiel with P, the relationship among these sources and of the sources to historical events, and finally the consistent convergence of all of these types of evidence.
[392] Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 242.

Opening Scenes: Death Enters the World, Death as a Link in a Chain

Death is the earliest threat and the earliest curse found in the texts of the Hebrew Bible (this is from the J source and includes Genesis chapters 2 and 3 as now arranged). In Genesis 2:15–17 YHWH warns the archetypal man: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil do not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you will die." In Gen 3:2–3 Eve repeats the threat to the serpent, the most "crafty" of creatures, who denies its truth. After the (seemingly) inevitable occurs and the guilty humans are judged, punishment is pronounced: "By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you will return" (Gen 3:19).[393] Here in myth the fundamental question of death is addressed. Here death enters the world. While death is the conclusion of the curse, we still must address the meaning of the phrase "on that day you will die." This is often interpreted as an immediate threat: that the humans will drop dead on the very day on which they eat of the fruit, which of course does not come to pass. R. Friedman points out that the lack of punctuation in the text renders the phrase ambiguous, and the phrase may only mean that the humans will be rendered mortal. In fact this is probably the correct interpretation. 1 Kgs 2:37 and 2:42 also uses this phrase with the meaning "on that day your fate (of death) is sealed." Another interesting point is that the other tree, the tree of life, is not originally forbidden.[394] Before death even enters the world, the possibility of immortality is present and available.

[393] This motif of the forbidden thing that is left unguarded and in plain sight can be found in many forms, from the story of Pandora's box to the many variants of the popular story "Beauty and the Beast." In every case it seems that temptation is irresistible and both new knowledge and new pain follow the transgression.
[394] Richard E. Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 17-25.

Only after the transgression occurs are humans expelled from the garden, and this banishment is for the express purpose of preventing access to the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is mentioned again in Gen 3:22–23: "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore YHWH God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken" Only after the taking of the forbidden fruit is the divine decision made to remove the tree of life from the reach of humankind. In this verse the reason given is the prevention of humans from becoming like the Divine. The cutting off of Adam and Eve from the Tree of Life is a necessary part of the enforcement of the punishment of death (or mortality) occasioned by the transgression of eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Bad (or evil).

Death is a punishment and a curse, and here it enters human experience as an expectation. Humans do not simply die like animals with no foreknowledge. They expect death, they wait for it, and they know it will come to be.[395] It is brought into reality with the murder of Abel. Cain is told "And now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand" (Gen 4:11). Only a few verses later, in Gen 4:23, Lamech appears to brag about a murder of his own and compares himself to his great-great-grandfather Cain. Thus the first references to death in the Hebrew bible are first punishment, and next directly associated not with natural or peaceful death, but with murder. These powerful myths set a stage for the idea of a flawed and violent humanity, but a humanity which nonetheless engenders sympathy.

[395] This, it could be argued, is the true punishment: knowledge of our own unavoidable mortality.

After this dramatic entrance other early notices of death in the Hebrew Bible appear at first glance to be rather formulaic (Gen 5:1–32 and Gen 11:10–32).[396] While it is true that the notices of individual deaths in the genealogies that bridge the gap between mythic "creation" time and the legendary world of the patriarchs are less dramatic, they still serve an important purpose. Death is the great curse and murder is its herald, but it is also a marker of life, a signpost of change as the generations progress. Beginning in Genesis 5 the genealogy of the Book of Records gives the length of days of life for male ancestors prior to and following the fathering of an heir. Each notice ends with the simple note "and he died." The purpose served here appears to be continuity: each member is a link in a chain. We have seen this continuity in the archaeological record with the burial of many generations in a single tomb. Here the idea is translated into text. The long lives described relate to the legendary/mythological fabric of the genealogy. Two of the primary purposes of such genealogies are to bridge the gap between mythic and real time, and to set a framework for time.[397] Even if the time is vague and seemingly implausible, the point is that there is a chain of ancestors from some beginning point to "now" and that this framework of the past is punctuated by crucial events – the founding of cities, the Deluge, Babel. The long lived ancestors have a mythic character. The focus of these genealogies is not upon the individual but the chain of the genealogy which links mythic time with what can be considered real time.[398] Noah is the last link in this particular chain, but his death notice is separated by the combined P and J flood narrative. It does not appear after Gen 5: 32 (where we might expect it in the Book of Records or *Toledot*

[396] We should note that these genealogies, often called the Book of Records and the Records of Shem, belong to a separate source and are incorporated into the J source. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed,* 40-50.
[397] Yigal Levin, "Understanding Biblical Genealogies," *Cur*BS 9 (2001): 6-7.
[398] Compare J's geneology in Gen 36:31-43 which also uses the simple phrase "and PN died".

"Generations"), but in Gen 9:28, immediately after the incident of Noah's drunken exposure and his cursing of Canaan the son of Ham and his blessing of Shem and Japheth. The notice for Noah is moved in order to accommodate the composite flood story and its aftermath.

The genealogy of Genesis 10 puts peoples and nations in relationship with each other. Along with another set of genealogical records, the Records of Shem (Gen 11:10–26) Gen 10 does not give individual death notices. Instead it gives the years of life before and after the birth of children. This formula also serves to emphasize the importance of continuity and connection between generations. A change occurs with the record of the deaths of Haran in Ur (P source, Gen 11:28) and of Terah in Haran (R source, Gen 11:32), the respective grandfather and father of Abraham. Here more information is given and we have a tie to a specific place. As we compare the format and purposes of these genealogies the reason becomes clear: in this narrative we have drawn near to the time of an important character, one whose individual personhood and actions are central to the narrative. Because of this the record of Abraham's direct ancestors becomes more detailed. At this juncture place becomes important in the larger narrative. We need to know where Abraham was from, where his people were rooted and buried, and thus where the starting point of the great journey of the patriarch begins.

The Good Deaths of the Patriarchs and the Punishment of Moses and Aaron

So far the treatment of death in the Genesis narratives as it emerges from the mythological mists is basic and straightforward; a way to move generations forward and to root a story. As we come to know more and to care more about the characters of our narrative, the specter of death becomes more personal. Death, however, is not something

to be brooded upon (at least not until Ecclesiastes). The emphasis upon the present life is clear in the Hebrew Bible. If after the narrative of Adam and Eve death is inevitable and present within a much reduced time frame than that presented in the early genealogies (on the order of 120 years rather than many hundreds) how does the text soften the blow as we read about the righteous ancestors? There are specific elements related to the deaths of the patriarchs that serve as consolation to the engaged reader. The presence of these elements constitutes a good or honorable death. This good death confirms that the individual in the narrative was (at least upon overall judgment) righteous.

This is an idea that will persist throughout the biblical texts, as well as one that is present in the presentation of death in the Aramaic inscriptional material. In this way death becomes less of a punishment and instead transforms into a natural end to life that can be accepted more easily. These elements are fairly straightforward – death at old age, burial in the family tomb or burial place, and knowing that one will be followed by children and grandchildren. Another important element of good death is retention of mental abilities, which is often expressed by a death-bed speech that highlights the ability of the character to interact with and influence the living. It is worth noting that both in the biblical accounts and the Aramaic material the retention of the powers of sight, speech, and thought up to the time of death are given high importance. Compare the notice in Deut 34:7 for Moses that "his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force diminished" as well as the Aramaic stele of Sʾi-gabbari the priest from Neirab (see chapter 6).[399] We will address these texts below in this chapter and in chapter 6.

Such elements of good death are attested in many texts. They cut across source divisions and seem to have been a persistent and widespread set of ideas. Just a few

[399] By contrast Gen 27:1 and 1 Sam 3:2 note the loss of sight of Isaac and of Eli.

obvious examples include Gen 15:15; 25:7–11; Ps 91:16; Isa 53:10; 65:20 and Zech 8:4).[400] Proper burial is important and is part of a good death. Being buried in the tomb of one's fathers (or at all) is a blessing, just as being left unburied is a curse (Deut 28:25–26; 1 Kgs 13:22; 14:10–11; and Jer 16:4).[401]

We can see these themes clearly as we follow the narratives of the patriarchs, particularly in the expression of the P source. Genesis 23 records the death of Sarah in old age (127 years is in rough parallel with the 120 years set out in J in Gen 6:3 as the limit of the human lifespan) and the purchase of a burial cave by Abraham. With this purchase in Hebron Abraham goes from being a "stranger and an alien" to having "a possession" in the land. This is a crucial point: the first moment in the text as it is now arranged when burial serves a purpose for the living. What was hinted at in the notices for Haran and Terah becomes explicit here. Possession of a burial place and the interment of family establish a claim, perhaps to ownership, but certainly to residence, to belonging, to a sense of permanence (recall the earlier discussion of burial places and land rights).[402] The death of Sarah is also the first account which gives details about her burial. We know Sarah. We went with her in her travels, suffered with her in her barrenness, laughed with her in her blessings. Now we see her grave, a named place, a cave. We also have a touching moment of grief and of comfort later in the story: "And Isaac brought her (Rebekah) to his mother Sarah's tent. And he took Rebekah, and she

[400] Klaas Spronk, "Good Death and Bad Death in Ancient Israel According to Biblical Lore," SSM (2004): 990.
[401] Spronk, "Good Death and Bad Death in Ancient Israel According to Biblical Lore," 992, Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 112.
[402] Friedman notes that the story of Sarah's death and burial is bracketed by the notice that it is at Hebron, and that this establishes the title to property here and is the basis of Israel's return to the land after the sojourn in Egypt. He also states that this story is connected with the status of Hebron as an Aaronid priestly city. Richard E. Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 80.

became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was consoled after his mother's death" (Gen 24:67). The phrase "brought her to his mother Sarah's tent" creates a connection between Sarah and her daughter-in-law, even from beyond the grave. This can be seen as another way in which a continuing relationship is created between the living and the dead. Grief is acknowledged, but so is comfort, love and the continuation of life in the constitution of a new family. This also provides an acknowledgement of the past immediately before the description of Abraham's taking of a second wife, Keturah.

The death of Abraham in Gen 25:7–11 continues to establish the theme of burial providing a root in the land and also provides the fullest description of the good death which we will see coming into play again and again. "This is the length of Abraham's life, one hundred seventy-five years. Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. After the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac." This is a description of a cave burial much like those described in chapter two. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. The repetition four times that Abraham was very old is significant, as is the exact description of the place of the cave and the note that Sarah was buried there also. Finally, both Isaac and Ishmael bury their father. This is the only time that these two brothers are pictured in cooperative action together. This narrative includes most of our aspects of a good death – advanced age, proper burial with kin, and knowing that generations follow after you. A further connection is formed here. Abraham is buried with Sarah and is buried by his

children in the cave that he has bought. Now there are two ancestors to reinforce the Cave of Machpelah as a possession.

The death notices of the patriarchs all fall into this good death category. This is in accord with the respected place held by the forefathers in the eyes of later Israel. After Abraham follows Isaac. Gen 27:1 states that Isaac's eyes were dim. While this does not fit well with the theme of the good death ideal, it serves another important function. Blindness becomes the element that makes the deception of Rebecca and Jacob possible. Isaac believes he is dying and wishes to bless his eldest before his passing. The importance of the final blessing here is clear. Nineteen times in Gen 27:2–41 some variation of the word blessing is used. Eighteen of these are directly related to the final blessing. The repetition is almost overwhelming and builds to a crescendo of passion as the deception is revealed.

The blindness of Isaac is not given much significance as a burden or curse in the story aside from its use in fooling the old man. It is also not directly a part of the curse of the process of death and dying. Much occurs between this episode, where Isaac believes he is imparting a final blessing, and the account of his death in Genesis 35. Genesis 27 is the J story of Isaac's attempt to bless Esau. Following this is material from J, E, and P concerning Jacob's travels, his encounters with the divine, his marriages, the increase of his goods and household, and finally his return home. Thus many chapters elapse before the P account of Isaac's death in Gen 35:29: "So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." This final compilation thus gives the impression of many and full years between the first time that Isaac believes he is dying and his death, when in actuality there is no J account

of the death of Isaac to go with the account of the attempted blessing. The death notice is only in P. Notice here the continuation of the theme that Isaac was old at the time of his death and that he was buried by both sons. As in the Abraham story, here two sons come together to honor their father with proper burial, even when those two are deeply divided, just as were Isaac and Ishmael.

The vast majority of death notices in the Hebrew Bible are for men. The patriarchal narratives are by comparison relatively well balanced. There are in addition to the notice for Sarah two further important death notices of women in Genesis. The first is for Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah. The second is Rachel, the favored wife of Jacob. Both occur in close proximity to each other in the text. Both occur while on the journey, and both are connected with a physical marker of the grave.

Genesis 35:8 marks the death of Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, who is mentioned but not named in Gen 24:59. This comes from E after the building of an altar at Beth-El by Jacob. Deborah is buried beneath a tree which is afterwards called the Oak of Weeping. It is interesting that just before this, in Gen 35:4, Jacob buries the "foreign gods" and earrings beneath another oak tree near Shechem. This is an odd parallel of action (we can also compare the first interment of the bones of Saul and his son under an oak at Jabesh in 1 Sam 31:13). There have been various speculations as to the purpose of its inclusion.[403] A connection might be found with Judg 4:5 which describes another Deborah, the prophet/judge who habitually gives judgment to the people under a palm between Ramah and Bethel. This is yet another association with a tree marking an

[403] One suggestion is that bringing the death of the nurse into the story highlights the absence of Rebekah herself: that is that after the deception of Isaac and the departure of Jacob we never hear anything further and must assume that she did not live to see the reunification of her family. Gary A. Rendsburg, "Notes on Genesis XXXV," VT 34, (1984): 361-366.

important place. It is possible that these two stories are connected and the story of the death of the nurse is a way to acknowledge a place to which the name "Deborah" was attached. The place may have had two different legends attached to it. It is also possible that the author of E is deliberately removing the original identity of the place with the judge Deborah.[404]

It is very shortly after this that the death of Rachel is recorded. Just as we find two instances of burial under trees associated together (one human, the other of "foreign gods"), we also have in Gen 35:1–20 multiples of the action of setting up stone altars/pillars/monuments juxtaposed with a death and burial. Jacob builds an altar, then Deborah dies and is buried under the Oak of Weeping. Next Jacob consecrates a pillar to the honor of El who had spoken to him at Bethel. Just a few verses later Rachel dies in childbirth, and he sets a pillar up to mark her grave: "and Jacob set up a pillar (מַצֵּבָה) at her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day." These three monuments serve separate functions – two religious and one memorial – but the duplication of action is interesting, particularly when paired with the two burials under trees. The phrase "unto this day" is frequently used as a marker of origin stories for place names, landmarks, or customs.[405] The same phrase is used in a reverse sense in the story of the punishment of Moses in Deut 34:5. Instead of being marked and remembered, of the grave of Moses "no one knows his burial place to this day."

While sacred pillars, מַצֵּבָה, are found in a wide variety of textual and archaeological contexts, the setting up of such a pillar over a grave in the Hebrew Bible is

[404] Richard E. Friedman, personal communication, February 26, 2015.
[405] See for example Gen 26:33; Deut 10:8; Jos 4:9, 5:9, 7:26, and 8:29; Jdgs 1:26, 6:24, 10:4 and 8:12; and 1 Sam 618 as well as many others. For a detailed study of the use of the phrase see Jeffrey Geoghegan *The Time, Place, and Purpose of the Deuteronomistic History: The Evidence of "Until this Day"* (ed. David C. Jacobson et al.; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006).

found only here. A related narrative of course is the story of Absalom in 2 Sam 18:18. In that episode his pillar is directly related to his lack of descendents, and so being called "by his name" serves to save his memory after his death since he does not have sons who can perform the duties towards the dead. This at first appears to be in contradiction to 2 Sam 14:27, which assigns three sons to Absalom. Lewis suggests that these unnamed children may have died early deaths, but there is no direct evidence for this. Such a suggestion would resolve the contradiction. Also interesting is the use of the phrase *hazkîr šĕmî* "to remember my name" in this passage, which parallels the usage of the rook *zkr* in the Hadad and Panamuwa inscriptions, where it is often translated "to invoke" the name.[406] In this case however the pillar does not explicitly mark a grave but is more in line with the Aramaic memorial stele that we will address in chapter 6.

As we continue to follow the path of the patriarchs we find greater complexity in the death narrative of Jacob. This narrative is a compilation of sources, and rather complex. The entire episode as it currently exists spans three chapters and includes material from P, E, and R, as well as an old poem that may have been adopted by the author of the J text.[407] This poem becomes a deathbed blessing that encompasses a vision of the tribes of Israel directed to their eponymous ancestors.

This compiled section adds one further element of good death – the positive element of retaining one's faculties. Although like Isaac his eyes are dim with age, Jacob's mental acuity and power of speech are retained. Also like Isaac, Jacob gives a final blessing to his descendents. In this case his grandsons, the sons of Joseph (Gen 48:

[406] Compare also the Assyrian text: "I have invoked your name with the spirits of the dead; I have invoked your name with the funerary offerings" (CAD E, 400a). Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 118-119.
[407] Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, 114-115.

8–21) are blessed as well as the sons of Jacob (or the tribes in the form of their eponymous ancestors). The death of Jacob is also taken up here in E. Jacob states that he is dying and places Ephraim over Manasseh. P continues the story in Gen 49:29–33, in which Jacob asks to be buried in the cave of Machpelah.[408] The statement emphasizes the family roots there: the cave holds not just one or two relatives but many kindred and multiple generations. We are again reminded that the place was bought as a possession for a tomb. "There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah, his wife. And there I buried Leah. The field and the cave in it were a purchase from the children of Heth" (Gen 49: 30–32). J picks up the story in Gen 50:1–11 and relates the embalming of Jacob and the mourning for him according to Egyptian custom.

There are several currents of purpose in this text which the death narratives of Jacob (and Joseph) support. The poem in its setting is a reflection of a vision of the tribes of Israel and emphasizes their strong interrelationship. The second is a reminder of the importance of Canaan and the claim upon Canaan after the long Egyptian sojourn. This claim is expressed as a longing for return, even in death. The right to this place is expressed by the burial cave that holds generations of ancestors. This narrative is preparation for the episode of the return.

In Gen 50:5 Joseph relates Jacob's request regarding his burial in a slightly different way. In this passage Jacob desires to be buried (according to Joseph) "In the tomb that I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan." This is more general phrasing, but P picks up again with "And his sons did so for him, as he had commanded them"

[408] Richard E. Friedman and Shawna Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity Part Four: Life, Life-After-Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity* (edited by A. Avery-Peck and J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 35-59. Most source divisions here follow Friedman's work particularly as set forth in Friedman, *The Bible With Sources Revealed*.

(Gen 50:12) and again inserts the specific claim that Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah.

The death notice of Joseph is found in Gen 50:24–25. Here the deathbed speech is much shorter and to the point: "I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." So Joseph made the Israelites swear, saying, "When God comes to you, you shall carry up my bones from here. And Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt." Like Jacob, Joseph also is embalmed in Egypt with the intent that his body would be returned to Canaan (E source). These deathbed speeches serve to advance key ideas or plot elements. We might also suggest that such speeches attest to the continued mental clarity of the character. While this may not be one of the primary purposes of the text, the idea does fit with the value that the righteous are blessed with the retention of their faculties up to the time that death approaches. We will see this dual function with the final speeches of Joshua, Moses, and David.

Here the speech at the end of Genesis prepares the way for the next major episode of the larger drama: the Exodus. Such speeches also serve to reinforce the continued authority of the elder generation over the younger. Not only do the blessings given in the death scenes hold great emotional and psychological power, but in practical matters as well authority is reinforced: Jacob "commands" his sons and Joseph makes the children of Israel "swear."

According to Exod 13:19 (E) the bones of Joseph are carried out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus and in Josh 24:32 they are buried at Shechem. Shechem is about 50

miles north of Machpelah. It is stated that Jacob had bought the land from Hamor the father of Shechem. The related narrative in Genesis 33 and 34 makes no mention of this. This is probably an attempt to create a patrimony in Shechem for the house of Joseph by claiming the purchase of the land by one ancestor and the burial of another there.

The issue of Shechem is far more complex than a simple patrimony however, and this comment regarding the burial of the bones of Joseph could relate to a number of issues. First entering the story in Gen 33:18–35:31 with the tragic story of the abduction of Dinah, Shechem is also the site of a report of covenant renewal in Josh 24:1–27. The place is closely related to issues of kingship. It is the location of the first brief flirtation of Israel with kingship (Gideon) in Judg 8:22–23 and the disastrous attempt by Abimelek to rule in Judg 9:1–9:57. Shechem is the place where Rehoboam meets with the people as he seeks to affirm his kingship (1 Kgs12:1–19). Finally Shechem is the first capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, "built" by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:25). The claim for the burial of the bones of Joseph here highlights the importance of this place in the corporate life of the nation.

Moses and Aaron

If good death is defined as a specific set of circumstances, the opposite of these circumstances can be understood to constitute bad death, or death as punishment. After the mythic tale of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, death as punishment is secondary to other themes throughout the patriarchal narratives. This begins to change with the death narratives of the Exodus story as it extends through the books of Leviticus and Numbers. Death as punishment again comes to the foreground.

Two closely related and quite strange incidents are recorded that describe the destruction of individuals offering censers of incense before YHWH. The first occurs in Lev 10:1–9 (with mention also in Num 3:2–4 and 26:61). Here the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu are consumed by fire for offering "strange fire" before YHWH which he had "not commanded them." The divine fire that consumes them is connected with that which consumes the offering on the altar immediately before this in Num 9:22–24.

The word for the offending offering here is *zārāh* – "strange", "alien", or "loathsome." No other explanation is given for what makes the offering offensive, but it is clear that a crucial ritual boundary has been crossed. R. Friedman makes the important note that at this highest level of ritual it is not the intention that matters (as is also seen in the case of the death of Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6) but a wrong action can be met with immediate death as punishment. The cryptic prophecy of Moses in Num 10:3 sheds little light upon the matter, but Friedman states that this may relate to the greater burden placed upon those close to YHWH. This may create a connection with the later punishment of Aaron and Moses which we will discuss below.[409] The aftermath of this incident paints the response to these shocking deaths. Aaron is silent after the words of Moses. Other kin of Aaron are called to carry the burned bodies outside the camp. Restrictions are made upon mourning. Aaron and Eleazar and Ithamar, the immediate family, are forbidden to tear their clothes or loosen their hair as a sign of mourning. The command is made on pain of death and the wrath of YHWH against the entire house of Israel. This is not that mourning for Nadab and Abihu is completely forbidden, but that Aaron and his remaining sons are anointed priests and so forbidden to engage in normal acts of mourning. Num 3:2–4 states that Nadab and Abihu have no children to follow them. It is

[409] Richard E. Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 340-343.

unclear if this is simply a way to explain the fact that Eleazar and Ithamar had taken over priestly duties or if it is intended to reinforce the idea of punishment for Nadab and Abihu as not only death, but the end of their own line (see the section on *karet* below).

The rebellion of Korah and of Dathan and Abiram (in its current form) also contains the elements of improper offering of incense and death by fire as a divine punishment. The story is found in Num 16:1–40 and is also referenced in 26:10–11 and 27:3. In addition the incident is mentioned in Deut 11:6 and Ps 106:17. This is a combined story of two rebellions with two different issues. In the first (from J) Dathan and Abiram express resentment at the leadership of Moses and are swallowed up by the ground for their rebellion. Here death is the punishment and the guilty parties literally go down to Sheol without all the needless inefficiency of actual death and burial. The second story is primarily from P and concerns the issue of the priesthood.[410] While the sons of Aaron are priests but offer incorrect sacrifices in Leviticus 10, here the major issue is the restriction of the priesthood to the line of Aaron and the ability to make offerings to YHWH at all. The leader of the rebellion is Korah, a Levite. The 250 "leaders of the congregation" are called "well known men" and their tribal affiliation is not listed, but Moses says: "Here now, you Levites! Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel?...He has allowed you to approach him, and all your brother Levites with you; yet you seek the priesthood as well?" (Num 16:8–10, P source). Moses challenges the Levites to a test that is explicitly related to the issue at hand: the presenting of incense. In the P story fire comes from YHWH and consumes the 250 men offering incense, presumably including Korah (a segment which is likely

[410] David Wright. "Numbers" in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible New Revised Standard Version* (eds. Michael Coogan et al.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 209-210.

influenced by the story of Nadab and Abihu).[411] In the J story of Dathan and Abiram, the earth opens and all of the rebels "go down alive to Sheol." In the final redaction of these episodes the combination of the two makes it appears that Korah is also swallowed by the earth.[412]

This involvement of God with the individual deaths of Moses and Aaron is parallel with the Adam and Eve story. Once again death is at the specific decree of YHWH. The time, place and manner of death occur specifically at the word of YHWH and not through a prophet. Both sets of deaths are punishments for transgressions against the immediate divine command (that is, not given through another but from the mouth of God). It is a distinctive feature of the narratives related to Moses that YHWH speaks in the first person at length. Nowhere else is such an immediate verbal style presented over such a prolonged section of text, with the phrase וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר occurring 127 times between Exod 6:10 and Deut 32:48.

Both Moses and Aaron die on a mountain far from any family tomb. While Numbers 20:24 (P) specifically states that Aaron will die "because you rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah", the "you" here seems to be directed at both men. Aaron is clearly being punished, but we are never told why Aaron is held responsible along with Moses for the transgression (though later interpretation proposes that this was because the staff used to strike the rock was Aaron's, or because Aaron was the "mouth" of Moses and did not intervene in the situation). Propp claims that the priestly telling of Num 20:1–13 serves to shift guilt to Moses and away from Aaron and reflects the division between the Aaronid and Mushite priesthoods. This is particularly striking in

[411] David Wright. "Numbers", 209-210.
[412]Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed, 268-270.*

20:12 with the phrase "Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not trust me…'" Deut 32:51 also states "because BOTH of you broke faith with me." In Exod 17:1–7, which for Propp is the same incident, there is no suggestion of wrongdoing or punishment at all.[413] Deut 32: 48–52 and Num 27:12–15 reinforce the idea that Aaron's death is for the same reason as Moses'. Deut 10:6 only states the fact of the death and burial of Aaron at Mosera (in the area of Mt Hor) and the succession of his son Eleazar to his place as priest without further elaboration.

It is interesting that "all the house of Israel" (Num 20:29) mourns for Aaron for thirty days. Comparison should be made with the mourning of "all the house of Israel" for the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Sam 7:2. It is also found several times in 1 Samuel 7 and 2 Samuel 3, once in Jer 9:26, and six times in Ezekiel: 3:7; 54; 11:15; 12:10; 20:40; 36:10; and 37:16. The similar phrase "all Israel" is used very frequently to denote large and important gatherings, military or legal actions, or decrees.[414] The richest concentrations of the phrase are found between Deuteronomy and 2 Chronicles, but "all Israel" is only used on a handful of occasions in relation to mourning. This rare comment that "all Israel mourned" is found for the prophet Samuel in 1 Sam 25:1 and for the son of King Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 14:3 (and later in the Apocryphal books – see below). We suggest below that for Samuel, at least, the mourning of "all Israel" serves as a substitute for the honor of the dead given by biological children. We might apply the same idea

[413] William Propp, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and its Mythological Background* (ed. Frank More Cross; HSM 40; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 59-69.
[414] Just a handful of the 145 instances of the phrase: Deut 1:1, 5:1, 13:11, 21:21, 27:9, 31:7, 31:11, and 32:45. Jos 3:7, 4:14, 7:24, 8:15, 8:33, 10:15, 10:29. 1 Sam 2:22, 3:20, 13:4, 14:40, 17:11, 18:16. 2 Sam 2:9, 3:12, 3:21, 3:37, 5:5, 8:15, 10:17. This should be sufficient to show the pattern of usage, which remains consistent through the books of Kings and Chronicles.

here. The people of Israel are the legacy of Aaron, of Moses, and of Samuel, they are the ones who will remember their political/religious father.

The death of Aaron on Mount Hor is also narrated in Num 33: 38–39. Cross attributes this section (Num 33:3–49) to "a document in P's possession, a list of stations from Egypt to the Plains of Moab…the document was actually preserved intact in Numbers 33: 5–49."[415] The section details an itinerary for the travels of Israel from Egypt to Moab, but in the midst of the narration is the comment that "...Aaron, the priest went up into Mount Hor at the word of YHWH and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt…and Aaron was one hundred twenty-three years old when he died in Mt Hor."

Moses is punished for his disobedience in the matter of the waters of Meribath-Kadesh (Deut 32: 48–52 and Num 27:12–15 P). Deut 1:34–37 however connects the punishment of Moses and of all the people with the incident of the spying out of the land, with only Caleb of that generation being granted entrance into the land (in this source – Dtr1). Deut 3:23–28 simply states that "Yahweh was angry with me on your account." In Deuteronomy 32:48–52 (R) and 34:4–8 (v. 4 is Dtr1, vv. 5–7 is J, and v. 8 is P) Moses is directed to Mount Nebo, just as Aaron died on Mount Hor. This gives us multiple sources related to the death of Moses – the independent source mentioned above, P (for the Numbers account), Dtr1 for Deut 4:21–22, R for Deut 32:48–52, and a combined narrative of Dtr1, J, and P for the Deut 34: 4–8 notice.[416] All of these concur in the direct presence of the hand of YHWH in directing the death of Moses. The son of Aaron,

[415] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 308. Also Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed,* 303-304.
[416] Richard E. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, 303-368.

Eleazar, is present in the Numbers 20 account and there is a formal ceremony of transfer of the position of Aaron to him. Biological offspring are missing from the picture in the rest of these narrative segments, so there is no image of burial by children or among kindred, although mourning does take place for 30 days (Deut 34:8). Deut 34:1–8 further remarks "no one knows his burial place."

There is more to this idea of death as punishment to be examined in the case of Moses. The text regarding the death of Moses is rather complex. Moses is a singular character. Although he is punished for his transgressions, he is unlike any other character in his relationship to God. The description of his continued functionality, that "his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated" (Deut 34:7), is part of this complex picture. It is a feature of good death that runs counter to the idea of punishment. We can also mark the motif of the final grand speech, here done *par excellence,* as the entire book of Deuteronomy is essentially framed as a farewell speech of Moses. Hence we may need to revise the idea of death as punishment in regard to Moses. The element of death as punishment is present, but so are classic elements of good death. The righteousness of Moses is rewarded by long life, vigor, and the formal mourning of his death; but death as punishment is also present. Despite his old age the life of Moses is cut short. He will not see the completion of what he has devoted so many years to achieving, nor will he have a tomb where remembrance can continue. Death is punishment, but for Moses it is not death itself but the inability to see the fulfillment of the decades of striving which death brings. We can recall that the words of the judgment are not "you will die" but that "you will see it with your eyes but will not cross over there" (Deut 34:4) and "…he vowed that I should not cross the Jordan and that I should not enter the good land that YHWH your

god is giving for your possession" (Deut 4:21). Death itself is not the primary punishment but the means by which the judgment is completed.

A similar theme is found in the punishment of all Israel for their disobedience in the wilderness (Num 14:20–24). They will also fail to reach the longed for goal. This punishment carries the same elements of bad death that are imposed upon Moses and Aaron – death in the wilderness which forbids the completion of the goal of the wilderness travels, no burial among ancestors, and no place for children and descendents to return to. While it might be argued that this lack of proper and permanently marked burials is simply a function of the wilderness setting of the story, the length of time spent in the wilderness is specifically connected with the punishment of an entire generation there being consumed by death. This death in the wilderness is punishment. The bodies of this generation will be lost forever, their memory not sustained for children and grandchildren by their presence in the family tomb. This is a bad death and accords with the idea of death as punishment for disobedience.

The Question of Karet

Before we leave the Five books of Moses we must address a related issue of divine punishment which emerges first briefly in Genesis and then with greater frequency in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. Our focus thus far has been upon the idea of death as a divine punishment as presented in the Hebrew Bible. We should not overlook then the importance of the concept of *karet. Karet* means to be "cut off" and in modern Judaism is usually referred to as "extirpation." The interpretation of rabbinic Judaism has been that this is premature death which comes as a punishment from God before the age of 50 or

60.[417] We consider the term here because *karet* has often been interpreted as meaning the punishment of death imposed by YHWH. *Karet* can be used in the phrase to cut a covenant or simply to reference the act of physically cutting something off, but very often the word has a strong message of punishment or destruction.

Karet occurs 18 times in the five books of Moses, all in P, though we will see that the term is used elsewhere with somewhat different implications. In P the term is used to describe the punishment for violations of specific categories of law. For J. Milgrom these categories include sacred time, sacred substances (the ingestion of blood and improper conduct regarding sacrifice), purification rituals, illicit worship, and illicit sex.[418]

While death as a divinely decreed punishment is a reasonable interpretation for what *karet* is in many cases, in others it is unclear. Milgrom proposes two possibilities. The first is the cutting off of the line; that the offending person will not have offspring to follow him or her. This may not necessarily mean a shortening of that person's physical life, but that ultimately that person's family line will not continue. Secondly Milgrom suggests that *karet* may mean one will not be allowed to join the ancestors in the afterlife (though he does not clarify what this might mean). He supports this by the claim that the antonym to *karet* is the positive "to be gathered to" one's kin or fathers, as seen in Num 20:24; 27:13; 31:2; Gen 15:15; 47:30 and Judg 2:10.[419] R. Friedman states "no one is certain what this meant" but goes on to suggest that this may mean to die without heirs or not to be buried in the ancestral tomb.[420] Both of these are of course central ideas in the discussion of bad death and death as punishment as discussed in this chapter. I would like

[417] Ta-Shma, Israel Moses. "Karet." *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 11:806-807.
[418] Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 65-67.
[419] Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 65-67.
[420] Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 61.

to suggest another interpretation of *karet*, which is spiritual severance from one's community and people. We will look more closely at *karet* and how it relates to death as a punishment in the Hebrew Bible.

The first instance of *karet* is clear. Genesis 9:11 makes the promise that never again will all flesh be destroyed by the waters of a flood. Here death and utter destruction have been decreed and it is also unmistakable that this is from the hand of God. The promise is that such disastrous punishment will not be imposed upon the world again. The second usage is also important because it is very unclear that death is meant, and it uses *karet* with the implication of being separated from the people, congregation or community. This occurs in Gen 17:14 and is the covenant of circumcision with Abraham. The covenant includes the warning that for the uncircumcised man "that soul will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant. Here the way the word soul, *npš* is used together with the phrase to be "cut off from his people" suggests not so much death and destruction but separation. While *npš* is sometimes associated with death (as in the wisdom literature where YHW is asked to save the soul from the pit, and in the Aramaic inscriptions where the soul of the deceased requests offerings) in the vast majority of references in the Hebrew Bible the word *npš* is used in ways which mean the inner self: the heart, the mind, and the life essence.[421] Both Gen 9:11 and 17:14 are from the P source. We can make a distinction between being simply "cut off" or "cut off from the earth" which means death, and phrases such as to be "cut off from his/their people/from among his/their people", "cut off from the congregation", "cut off from Israel", and "cut off from my presence." This second set of usages often co-occurs with the term *npš*

[421] Man is a "living soul" (Gen 2:7); the soul of the father wishes to bless the son (Gen 27:4; 27:19); the soul of one person longs for another (Gen 34:3; 34:8; 1 Sam 18:3); people swear upon the life of their soul (1 Sam 25:26). Soul can mean life, and if one "takes" another soul it means to kill them (1 Sam 24:11).

"soul" and I believe indicates separation or spiritual severance from the people of Israel even if there are no outward consequences.[422] One is no longer part of the community when one's soul is *karet*. Instances in which this is the implication include violations such as the keeping or eating of leavened bread during the Passover, defilement of the Sabbath, eating of peace offerings while unclean (and other violations of sacrificial protocol), sexual sins involving incest, and menstruation.[423]

One interesting comment made by R. Friedman is that many of these are violations that may occur without the knowledge of the congregation; no one may ever know that they took place. The proclamation of cutting off then serves to show that divine punishment occurs even if in human terms there are no consequences. I would draw from this that such a proclamation of *karet* might also be an attempt to exonerate the congregation from association with guilt brought by these actions or responsibility for such a person who commits them. If one is spiritually cut off from the community then that community does not bear collective responsibility for that person's sins. As these may be private and undiscoverable sins this is a way of relieving a responsibility that cannot be discovered and so cannot be rectified. Most striking is Num 15:30–31: "But the soul who does presumptuously, whether he is born in the land or a stranger, the same YHWH reproaches; and that soul will be cut off from among his people." This verse figures into later interpretation that *karet* includes offenses for which there is no excuse of ignorance or accident; that willful transgression is part of the nature of the offense.

The statements regarding a person being cut off from the congregation are clustered in the priestly material of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Beginning in Joshua

[422] For example: Exod 12:15; Exod 12:19; Exod 31:14; Lev 7:20; Lev 7:21; Lev 7:27; Num 15:31; Num 19:13. All of these are P.
[423] See note above, and also Lev 20:17 and 20:18

we have a return to the idea of *karet* as death destruction, and we find the term used in a wide variety of situations. Here *karet* can be used not only of divine punishment but of human action as well (for example the Canaanites in Josh 7:9, Joshua in Josh 23:24, David in 1 Sam 24:21, Saul in 1 Sam 28:9, and Jezebel in 1 Kgs 18:4). The context of all of these instances means destruction and death, not separation.

There are a large number of references to YHWH and his judgment of *karet* throughout the rest of the narrative books of the Hebrew Bible in which the judgment most logically means death as well as the cutting off of the family line. YHWH "cuts off" the enemies of David (1 Sam 20:15; 2 Sam 7:9). We will see in our discussion below that the family of Eli is *karet* for his failure to control his sons in 1 Sam 2:31, and "there will not be an old man in your house." YHWH also proclaims that he will cut off the houses of Jeroboam and Ahab. These verses will be discussed in the section related to 1 Kings below. Cutting off as a punishment of destruction and death is found in the wisdom literature as well as in a large number of instances in the prophetic books, where again it is presented as a punishment of God. As noted in our introduction the more abstract presentation of death as presented in this material merits separate consideration and will be more fully addressed in a later work on this matter.

Death Notices Serving the Purpose of the Narrative

The episodes involving death in the narrative sections of the Five books of Moses have purpose within the narrative and reveal a specific perspective regarding what it means to be punished or rewarded by the manner and time of death. The same is true as we examine the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings. The same themes recur again and again. These are adapted in each episode to best serve the narrative.

We learn in Josh 24:29 that Joshua is buried "in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah." While the land is newly occupied in the narrative, the point is made that Joshua has an inheritance נַחֲלָה there already. This is repeated at the beginning of Judges (Judg 2:8–9). Burial in the land of inheritance reinforces that a group belongs in that land, even if have we stopped short of claiming that this means that the land belongs to them. This is a point that was made in chapter 2, and that re-emerged with the narratives of Jacob, Joseph and the cave of Machpelah versus the burial place at Shechem. Joshua is the first burial in the land and signifies the end of the Exodus period. Joshua as a righteous person achieves the benefits of a good death. We are repeatedly told that Joshua has reached a great age at the time of his death (Josh 23:1; 24:29; Judg 2:8), yet he also is portrayed as retaining the force to make an eloquent speech to the people. He explicitly addresses his death: "I am about to go the way of all the earth" (Josh 23:14).

We find a cluster of burials at the end of the book of Joshua. Joshua is buried "in his own inheritance", the bones of Joseph are buried at Shechem, and Eleazar the son of Aaron is buried "at Gibeah, the town of his son Phinehas which had been given to him in the hill country of Ephraim" (Josh 24:33). All of these reinforce the point that Gibeah and Shechem are given to the Levites (see Josh 21:1–41). Taken together these notices all support the intent of the entire book of Joshua: the land now belongs to Israel both by conquest and by inheritance. This is now a land that holds the bones of generations. We begin to see that death notices in the Hebrew Bible serve a purpose far beyond simple remembrance and beyond a way to close the narrative of a character's life. Death and burial notices can attest to the righteous life of an individual and strengthen a claim to land.

They can also reinforce other points of the narrative. One obvious example is found in the reports of the deaths of the Judges. Each death serves as an opportunity to repeat the narrative point made by the deuteronomistic structure that Israel in this period is in a nearly continuous state of apostasy. Judges 2:19 reports "But whenever the judge died, they would relapse and behave worse than their ancestors, following other gods, worshiping them and bowing down to them. They would not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways." The notice for the first judge sets the pattern: "So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel son of Kenaz died. The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH; and YHWH strengthened King Eglon of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of YHWH" (Judg 3:11–12). For Ehud we have "The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH after Ehud died (Judg 4:1). The narrative of Deborah: "And the land had rest forty years. And the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of YHWH" (Judg 5:21–6:1). It is well known that this repeated, set phrase serves to reinforce a negative view of pre-monarchic Israel as well as to stitch together diverse stories pertaining to different tribes into a seemingly cohesive whole.[424] The notices create negative continuity: the cycle of relapse into civil and religious disorder after the death of each judge illustrates that this is the underlying "base" state of Israel prior to the monarchy. These death notices in Judges create continuity in another way also. They suggest that the tribes were already united as parts of a greater whole.

[424] Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (ed. David N. Friedman; AB 6; Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 338; C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges, with Introduction and Notes, and Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings, with an Introduction and Appendix* (New York: KTAV ,1970); Victor Harold Matthews, *Judges and Ruth* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 270; Andrew H. Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges* (SBT Second Series 29; London: SCM, 1974), 156; Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (OTR 4; London: Routledge, 2002), 144.

One of the most colorful narrative sections of the book of Judges revolves around the warrior-hero Gideon (also called Jerubaal, possibly due to some conflation of stories). Just as episodes related from the life of Gideon are quite vivid, the death notice for Gideon is comparatively detailed. It combines the elements set out above for good death: death at old age, children to follow you (although we will see ultimately Gideon is left without descendants), and burial in the family tomb, with the elements of the waywardness of Israel following the death of the judge. On first reading it seems clear that Gideon has been rewarded with the blessings of a good death which are accorded to the righteous. This may not be all that it seems however. This notice does something else as well. It sets the stage for the drama of Abimelek which is to follow. "Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had many wives. His concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelek. Then Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash at Ophrah of the Abiezrites. As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites turned away again…" (Judg 8:30–33).

In a way the episode of Abimelek turns the good death of Gideon on its head. All of the sons of Gideon die by the hand of their own brother, who himself ultimately meets a miserable end. We can view this from two different perspectives. Either we see the death of Gideon as a good death and closing the story of his life, which makes the episode of Abimelek and his destruction of his brothers unrelated to any judgment of Gideon as righteous or not, or we can see a relationship between the sin of Gideon and this failure of his line. If we take this latter view we are returned to the idea of *karet*. In Judg 8:22–28 two important things occur: Gideon declines the offer of kingship, and he creates an ephod from the gold that had been taken by the people as spoils of battle. The

ephod is placed in his town of Ophrah and "all Israel prostituted themselves to it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family." This comment is placed closely before the story of Abimelek's murderous rise to power. One might speculate that here is a subtle suggestion that the wiping out of the family of Gideon has its roots as punishment for the creation of this item and its incorporation into the religious life of the people. This is of course only speculation, and we lack sufficient evidence to fully support such a claim.

Other judges have simple notifications. Tola son of Puah: "Then he died and was buried at Shamir" (Judg 10:2). Jair the Gileadite: "He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys and they had thirty towns, which are in the land of Gilead, and are called Havvoth-jair to this day. Jair died, and was buried in Kamon. The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH…" (Judg 10:4–5). "Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in his town in Gilead. After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. He had thirty sons…then Ibzan died, and was buried at Bethlehem. After him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. Then Elon the Zebulunite died, and was buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun. After him Abdon son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons…Then Abdon son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried at Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites in the land of Ephraim" (Judg 12:7–15). These notices, created in a similar format and each connecting the judge with his territory by giving the place of burial, suggest broad settlement in the land (or at least in the north). They reaffirm the idea that the "fathers" of Israel are buried here, each in his own place. For some of these judges the place of burial notice is almost all that remains of the memory of a great

leader.[425] Like the genealogies of Genesis, the death notices in Judges provide continuity and a sense of unity. They support the theme of the narrative that a wayward people are only sporadically brought to heel by the efforts of a few chosen leaders. The judges are generally viewed as righteous and so peaceful death and proper burial is the norm.

The natural foil for this, of course, is the story of Abimelek. Here the unrighteous judge betrays his family and his people. The outcome is violent and dishonorable death with the specific comment that "Thus God repaid Abimelek for the crime he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers…" (Judg 9:56). There is no burial recorded for this villainous character but instead the pointed note "When the Israelites saw that Abimelek was dead, they all went home." (Judg 9:55). While on the surface this simply indicates that the conflict was over, the phrase also creates an image of abandonment of the dead. No one buries or mourns for him and there are no children recorded to carry on his name. He himself has destroyed the kindred of both his mother and his father's people, so there is no reason to expect burial in a family tomb.

Unlike Abimelek, Samson is a hero figure (though a particularly foolish and violent one). While Samson's death, like that of Abimelek, is as dramatic and violent as his life, it is treated very differently. The violent life and death of Samson create vivid episodes in the book. The Samson narrative closes in a way that fits with the representation of his life: in violence and bloody conflict with the Philistines. Unlike Abimelek, however, he dies fighting those classic enemies of Israel and not his own

[425] McKenzie suggests that the notes of the "minor judges" do not belong to the earliest collection of the book of judges. He may be correct that this group was developed or compiled separately from the longer narratives, but gives no hard evidence for his suggestion on the relative date of these sections. John L. McKenzie, *The World of the Judges* (PHBB; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 182. R. Friedman also notes that these accounts contain none of the characteristic language and show no connection with the surrounding material. Richard E. Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, 317.

kindred. This seems to make all the difference: "He strained with all his might; and the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed during his life. Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah" (Judg 16: 30–31). One might wonder if this death – violently, at a young age, and with no children to follow – is a comment upon the reckless violence of the story and his repeated transgressing of the expectations of his people in the matter of women.

We have more of a parallel to the Gideon story than might at first be evident. Overall the colorful narratives of Gideon and Samson are excellent story telling and have little concern for cleaning up and moralizing the deeds of these legendary heroes. In the combined narrative as it now stands Gideon/Jerubaal destroys the altar of Baal at Ophrah, encounters the divine multiple times, fights the battles of Israel, and yet creates an improper object of worship of his own. If we extend Gideon's story beyond his death into the episode of Abimelek, the story ends with a tragedy: the destruction of Gideon's seed, his offspring (this is a very well established punishment or curse motif – compare 1 Sam 24:21; Ps 37:28; Ps 109:13; Jer 7:15; Jer 22:30; Jer 29:30 as well as the Sefire inscription as just one of numerous ANE examples).[426] Samson is a Nazarite, dedicated to YHWH and fighting against the Philistine nemesis of Israel, yet he also makes blatant missteps. Gideon's transgression is the creation of an unorthodox object of worship, Samson's error is twice taking women who have close associations with the enemy. There is no direct moralizing statement here, but Samson's fall is very obviously a result of his

[426] KAI 222 in H. Donner and R. Rollig. *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften Vol. 1* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), 41-42.

transgression of these boundaries. Gideon and Samson ultimately share the fate that their line is ended. We might say that both suffer the punishment of *karet*. Despite this Samson, like Gideon, does receive a proper burial with his family in his ancestral tomb.

Most of the narratives from Judges (aside from that of Abimelek) have some elements of good death, and this certainly makes sense. Despite their flaws the judges and heroes of these narratives are called by YHWH and fight for and serve Israel, thus at least in a general sense qualifying them as being among the righteous. Compare then the profound contrast with another key transitional figure. No less a person than Eli the priest is dramatically cursed with the curse of death. This is the curse against the family of Eli for the grievous corruption of his sons. "See a time is coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that no one in your family will live to old age...no one in your family shall ever live to old age…all the members of your household shall die by the sword. The fate of your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you – both of them shall die on the same day" (1 Sam 2 31–34). Eli is indeed cut off, *karet*, and here this means both the death of the person cursed as well as the end of his line. We can also recall that on that day Eli and his daughter-in-law both die. There is no burial notice, only "He had judged Israel forty years", and leaving off the section "and Israel again did what was evil" which we find in Judges. Eli is very old, but a sad picture is painted. Eli is blind, and so heavy that a mere fall from his seat breaks his neck. "His eyes were set, so that he could not see…Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy." (1 Sam 4:18). The punishment is not for the actions of Eli himself but rather for the behavior of his sons and his failure to respond to their corruption of the sanctuary. Eli

is the high priest. His sons also hold positions in the sanctuary at Shiloh. The holy place and the integrity of the sacrifice are repeatedly defiled by his lustful and greedy children. Eli is aware of this but unable to control his sons and so he is punished (1 Sam 2:12–17; 1 Sam 2:22–25).

The punishment is dire: death and the death of offspring. The issue of blasphemy is indicated with the phrase "cut off from my altar" (the word *karet* is used again here) in 1 Sam 2:33. It is also explicitly described in 1 Sam 3:13. Eli dies, his sons die, and his daughter-in-law dies. Only a grandson is left. The punishment of Eli is for his own family dishonor and corruption, but it is also intimately tied up with the sins and punishment of the nation. The punishment of Eli is tied with the defeat of Israel by the Philistines. The deaths occur just as news of the Philistine victory is brought, and the remaining grandson, the one left "to weep out his eyes and grieve his heart," is named Ichabod. The meaning of the name is said to be related to the circumstances of the defeat of Israel, that "the glory has departed from Israel." This profound punishment of the priest is tied in with the punishment of the nation.

Eli and his protégé Samuel are transitional figures. They usher in a new age for Israel. While Eli dies for the sins of the sons of his body (or rather his failure to respond to this sin), it is his "spiritual son" whom he has brought up and trained in the sanctuary, who takes his place as priest and leader. Samuel replaces Eli at the Tabernacle at Shiloh and performs sacrifices, although he is not a Levite.[427] Eli is both priest and judge as

[427] R. Friedman notes that the criteria for the behavior of a Nazarite is closely related to that required of the priesthood, particularly in prohibitions regarding the consumption of alcohol and being in proximity to a dead body. Only in the matter of long/loose hair for a Nazarite versus bound hair for a priest is there a distinction. Friedman states that the vows of a Nazarite are a way for non-Levites to enter the holy life. Samuel is marked out as a special case – the only incident of a non-Levite becoming not only a Nazarite but also a priest. Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 442-444.

well. Samuel takes on these same roles and in time will add one more: that of kingmaker. Samuel, the last judge and the kingmaker of Israel, has a simple death notice but a powerful one. Although Samuel's sons are also unworthy (though it is not specified in what way), Samuel is not punished for this but dies at a very old age, his tasks complete. He is buried properly and mourned not by the small circle of family, but by "all Israel." "Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him. They buried him at his home in Ramah." (1 Sam 25:1).

This short notice is sandwiched between a dialog between David and Saul in which Saul acknowledges that David has triumphed: "Now I know that you will surely be king" (1 Sam 24:20) and David's acquisition of Abigail as his wife (1 Sam 25:3–42). This death notice signifies the end of the old order, though there are still battles to be fought before David's kingdom is established. The shift is marked by a change in the pattern we expect to find after the death of a judge. Instead of the formula from Judges that "Israel again did what was evil", after this last judge we have decisive action by David, the first dynastic king of Israel: "Then David got up and went down to the wilderness of Paran" (1 Sam 25:1). The death of this last judge does not signify a continuation of the old cycle, because there is now a king who will take the nation in hand. The shadow of the judge still lingers however: David's early career as a charismatic warrior retains some of the values of military leadership found in Judges.

Samuel is buried at his home in Ramah, and this notice of the judge's return to his home territory is in line with the other notices for the judges. Burial at his home in Ramah may merely mean a burial place at that site, but it may also signify the old custom of burial beneath the floor of houses (see chapter 2 for discussion regarding this matter. 1

Kgs 2:34 also notes the burial of Joab "in his own house in the wilderness"). We have also remarked upon how burial in the home territory of the judge further reinforces belonging or (we will take a leap and by this point say it) even ownership of the land. All of this narrative material is consistent with the archaeology of Iron Age Israel.

It is interesting that the corporate term "all Israel" is used frequently in a variety of contexts, but there are only a few times that all Israel mourns a death. As seen earlier in Numbers 20:29, the death of Aaron is mourned by "all the house of Israel," and in 1 Kings 14:13 the son of Jeroboam is mourned by "all Israel". We can also note a much later notice from the Apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees which uses the mourning of "all Israel" to represent the greatness of a character. 1 Maccabees 2:49–70 reports the death of Mattathias: "Now the days drew near for Mattathias to die…and (he) was buried in the tomb of his ancestors at Modein. And all Israel mourned for him with great lamentation."[428]

The corrupt sons of Samuel (and this may echo the corrupt sons of Eli) do not figure here; the text does not state specifically who buries Samuel. Instead of a private burial by family, "all Israel," the children to whom he had devoted his life, mourn for Samuel. This is not the last we hear from Samuel, who speaks to Saul from beyond the grave in the well known necromancy episode of 1 Samuel 28. We will address that narrative in more detail below.

[428] Note all the elements of "good death here": Children, old age, proper burial, and Mattathias also makes a stirring deathbed speech attesting to his mental clarity.The theme of the good death of the righteous person is further continued in the Apocryphal books of Tobit and Judith. Tobit 14: 12-14 tell us that (after a long and pius deathbed speech) "Then they laid him (Tobit) on his bead, and he died; and he received an honorable funeral. When Tobias' mother died, he buried her beside his father…He (Tobias) died highly respected at the age of one hundred seventeen years. Judith 16: 23: "She became more and more famous, and grew old in her husband's house, reaching the age of one hundred five. She set her maid free. She died in Bethulia, and they buried her in the cave of her husband Manasseh and the house of Israel mourned her for seven days."

Death in the Line of Saul

Death is used in a very strong way in the narrative of Saul to emphasize that Saul has fallen and failed. Saul, the rejected king, dies on the battlefield, defeated. Three of his sons die with him. The entire episode heaps humiliation and disgrace upon the house of Saul. He is not peacefully "gathered to his people," nor does he "sleep with his fathers" but instead dies violently, defeated, wounded, and so repulsed by the prospect of death and "abuse" at the hands of the Philistines that he wishes to end his own life (1 Sam 31:3–4). Saul has lost everything. Even his last command to his armor bearer, that he (the armor bearer) kill him, as Saul knows that he was mortally wounded, is refused. Instead of being buried by his sons and kindred, three of Saul's sons lie dead beside him. There is no burial in the family tomb but desecration of all four of the bodies.[429]

The death of Saul and his sons in battle is not a mark of honor as it might have been in another culture. K. Spronk points out the lack of glory accorded to death in battle in the Hebrew Bible. While death on the battlefield is not glorious, particular disgrace is attached to death by a despised enemy. In such circumstances it seems suicide is preferable (Saul in 1 Sam 31:3–4 and Abimelek in Judges 9:53–54). This is quite at variance with (for example) the neighboring culture of Greece, which honored fallen warriors.[430] Saul and his sons are not provided with an honorable burial but are taken by the enemies as proof of their victory. Further emphasis is placed upon this bad death by the exposure of the bodies on the wall of Beth-shan.

[429] There is an incident from 2 Samuel which reinforces the importance of proper burial, even in cases of suicide: Ahithophel the counselor of Absolom hanged himself and was buried in the tomb of his father (2 Sam 17:23). This illustrates that nothing about suicide itself precluded burial in a family tomb.
[430] Spronk, *Good Death and Bad Death in Ancient Israel According to Biblical Lore*, 992-993.

Loyalty to the fallen king is demonstrated by the men of Jabesh-gilead, who take the bodies in the night, burn them, and bury them at Jabesh under a tamarisk tree. The men of Jabesh-gilead then fast seven days for these deaths (1 Sam 31:11–13). The attempt by the men of Jabesh to change the situation results not in the final honor of rest in a tomb but in cremation and burial under a tree. Cremation is particularly unusual in Israelite burial practice, as is clear from both the biblical accounts and the evidence presented in chapter 2 earlier. Such an action in this case may be due to the desecrated and decomposed state of the bodies when they are recovered. Here we are treated to the gruesome details of mortal wounding, suicide (repeated with some variation in 1 Samuel 31 and in 2 Samuel 1) and the desecration of bodies. The choice was made to include and emphasize this material. The involvement of the men of Jabesh-Gilead strikes a poignant note. It reminds us of the promise of Saul's early days, when he first united the tribes and saved Jabesh-Gilead from the depredations of the king of Ammon (1 Sam 11:1–11). It reminds us of the great failure of the once inspiring king.

For R. Friedman 1 Sam 31:1 and 1 Sam 31:8–13, as well as 2 Sam 1:1–16 are part of the same source – part of a great work which extends from Genesis through Kings and is connected with the J text (1 Sam 31:2–7, one version of the death of Saul and his words on the battlefield, is excluded from this source by Friedman).[431] David Firth has recently argued for all of 1 Samuel 27 through 2 Samuel 1 as a single "Accession Narrative."[432] Saul's death is also the only segment from the reign of Saul which is included in the book of Chronicles (1 Chr 10). It also preserves the ugly details of his

[431] Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, 234-236.
[432] David G. Firth, "The Accession Narrative (1 Samuel 27-2 Samuel 1)," *TynBul* 58 (2007): 61-81.

defeat, suicide, and the desecration of his body and those of his sons.[433] What could have been a simple statement that Saul and his sons died in battle against the enemies of Israel becomes another way to emphasize the bad death of a bad king. By placing emphasis upon the successful reigns of David and Solomon, the post-exilic chronicler sought to contrast the failure of Saul with what he saw as the highlight of the monarchy: the reigns of David and Solomon and the building of the temple. The death and desecration of Saul's line will continue in spades, as we will see below.

Saul's sins are cultic in both accounts of his rejection as king: a violation of the protocol of sacrifice in 1 Sam 13:11–14, and violation of the *ḥarem* ban against the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15. The word of divine punishment comes through the prophet Samuel (who had brought similar word of punishment to Eli decades earlier). The punishment relayed by Samuel is not death, however, but loss of the kingship. One might wonder then what purpose in the narrative such a tragic end would serve. We should not discount the obvious point: this story is presented as the history of the earliest kings of Israel and the explanation of the formation of the Davidic dynasty. Recounting the time and manner of death of such a leader would be important and not something likely to be forgotten. The full tale however, including battlefield speeches and the reaction of David to the news, is highly likely to be shaped in order to serve the purpose of the narrative.

Saul's terrible death and the miserable end of the rest of his line provide an underlying judgment for the audience to absorb: Even if YHWH did not decree death for this failed king, the implication is that surely the miserable deaths of himself, his sons, and his kindred provide strength to the argument that the rise of David over the heirs of

[433] Saul Zalewski, "The Purpose of the Story of the Death of Saul in 1 Chronicles X," VT 39 (1989): 449-467.

Saul is not usurpation or treason, but a righteous new king replacing the wicked and rejected one. This is the beginning of a defense of David which will extend throughout the account of his reign.[434] First we find David's response of killing the messenger who brings the news of the death of Saul, and who in this account provides the death blow at Saul's own request (2 Sam 1:2–16). In fact, David's piety of lamentation over the dead king and his son(s) shines even more brightly when placed against the previous disgrace of Saul's death (2 Sam 1:17–27). "Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them; and all the men who were with him did the same. They mourned and wept, and fasted until evening for Saul and for his son Jonathan, and for the army of YHWH and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword" (2 Sam 1: 11–12). David is depicted mourning for his enemy, the rejected king, and this is quickly broadened to encompass the larger political body: the defeat of Israel is mourned as well.

Such signs of mourning are typical of ritual and outward signs of grief that are found in many places in the Hebrew Bible. K. Spronk and R. Albertz both include summaries of verses related to such biblical mourning customs. Lamentation cries and mourning songs are also found in 1 Kings 13:30; Jer 22:18; and Amos 5:16, as well as in 2 Sam 1:17–27 and 3:33–34, and 2 Sam 18:33–19:4. Outward physical signs, including the tearing of clothing and the donning of sackcloth are also found in 2 Sam 3:31 and Jer 6:26.[435] David creates a dramatic scene of mourning, and this will not be the last time that

[434] For a full discussion of the mechanisms and intricacies of this defense, see Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 81.
[435] Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 244; Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 455. In addition to these specific things the neglect and abuse of the body itself is part of mourning. Instead of washing and anointing, there is lying in dust or ashes or placing dust and ashes on the head (Jer 6:26, Ezek 27:30-31). Tearing, covering, or cutting of the hair or beard is also attested (Lev 10:6; Job 1:20; Jer 16:6; Ezek 24:17; Jer 41:5). Law intersects with custom primarily in the prohibition of certain practices. Beating, cutting and fasting are also part of

he uses the public rituals surrounding death both to proclaim his political innocence and to gain the "hearts and minds" of the people.

After the death of Saul and the three princes another son of Saul, Ishbaal (Ishbosheth), becomes king in Gilead with the support of Saul's commander Abner (2 Sam 2:8–10). Ishbaal is eventually assassinated, but it is unclear how long the time period is that elapses between his accession and his death. 2 Sam 2:10 states that Ishbaal reigns for two years, but the comparative comment for David is that David rules seven years in Hebron. The birth of six children to David takes place during this period and according to 2 Sam 3:1 there is "a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." When Ishbaal is assassinated David's response is in line with his earlier displays of public respect for the house of Saul. His punishment for the men who killed Ishbaal includes the mutilation and hanging of the bodies on display at Hebron (much as the bodies of Saul and his sons were displayed by the Philistines). David further publically distances himself from involvement with the death of Ishbaal by having his (Ishbaal's) head buried in the tomb of Abner at Hebron (2 Sam 4:11–12).

An interesting interpretation of this response has been proposed by B. Halpern, who shows that this is not only part of the way in which David seeks to proclaim his innocence in the matter of the assassination. David not only keeps Ishbaal's head, he also does not return the remains of Saul and Jonathan to the family tomb until after the execution of the male heirs of Saul at Gibeon. This, Halpern says, prevents the

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funerary practice: Jer 16:6, 41:5; Lev 19:27; and Deut 14:1 prohibit self-mutilation as a rite of mourning. Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb," 35-53.

development of a royal ancestral cult at Saul's tomb.[436] Secondly, as seen below, the honoring of the dead by their (belated) return presents David in a positive light.

It is implied in 2 Sam 9:3 that only a crippled son of Jonathan is left of this line, but 2 Samuel 21 recounts the sacrifice of two other sons and five grandsons of Saul to assuage the supposed bloodguilt incurred by Saul against the Gibeonites. David orders these deaths, and they conveniently put an end to this dangerous family line aside from the lame son of Jonathan Mephibosheth (Mephibaal) and his son (at least as far as we can determine from the account). By this time we have moved into the source known as the Court History of David. Here David's hand is seen again manipulating death and the public rituals attached to it, although his actions are ultimately defended by the text. The execution/sacrifice/murder of these men is portrayed as a way to end a famine. The motif of exposure of bodies is continued. This is the third time in a short space that we have an incident of further humiliation of the dead by exposure of their bodies. These bodies are also left unburied, only watched over by the mother of two of the dead men. Certainly the destruction of Saul's line has direct political advantage to David, but his orchestrating of the death and concluding treatment of the remains shows a delicate touch. David's final gathering of the bones of the men whose deaths he had ordered, and their return with the bones of Saul and Jonathan to the family tomb in Benjamin in Zela, is one more way in which David uses the rituals connected with death to proclaim his political purity despite the great benefit these deaths provide him. David directly orders these deaths of the sons and grandsons of Saul, yet he honors these same men by returning their remains to the family tomb, even after the dishonor of the exposure of their bodies. Here David carefully moderates his actions in order to control public perception. By ordering the deaths of

[436] Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*, 81.

these men and exposure of their bodies, he honors the claim of the Gibeonites and exhibits his piety: he is willing to go to great lengths to end a famine. He solidifies the loyalty of this group. By restoring the bones to their tombs he is honoring the family of Saul and proclaiming that he has no vengeful pleasure in the deaths of the kindred of his old foe. This episode, that begins with a famine brought by blood guilt, is closed by the burial of the bones and the phrase "After that, God heeded supplications for the land" (2 Sam 21:14). This is a phrase that suggests justification for these bloody deeds. Thus we see that however the segments are parsed by source as the narrative flows from 1 Samuel into the Court History, the overall shape of the narrative is derisive of Saul, his reign and lineage, and supportive of David. Descriptions of death and the circumstances and customs surrounding death are used to support this perspective.[437]

Standardized Death Notices of Kings

The narrative of David also employs the motif of the dramatic final speech. We have already seen this element associated with the death narratives of Jacob, Moses, and Joshua. Such speeches serve to attest to the continued mental capacity of the character even to the end of life (a feature of good death) and are also a strong feature to reinforce themes and to further the narrative. Although he has been punished with continued violence within his house, and at his end is frail and vulnerable to manipulation, David does attain the good death features of dying in old age, with the retention of the faculties of mind and speech. He also has children to follow him and a proper burial. He is able to

[437] One of the best recent books on the complexities of David's career is B. Halpern's work, *David's Secret Demons*, which even includes a chapter titled "King David, Serial Killer."This chapter highlights the importance of the deaths of Nabal, the line of Saul, Abner, Amnon, Absalom, Amasa, and Uriah and the political significance of how these deaths are handled. Particularly interesting is Halpern's argument that much of the narrative related to David's reign was a response to the repeated accusations against him regarding these deaths.

directly pass power to his chosen heir. His final speech also shows the power and influence that the king still retains. The speech is introduced with the words "When the time approached for David to die, he charged his son Solomon, saying: 'I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, be courageous, and keep the charge of YHWH your god…" (1 Kgs 2:1–3). David then proceeds to orchestrate several major actions of Solomon as if from beyond the grave: the assassination of Joab, the reward of Barzillai, and the doom of Shimei son of Gera.[438] His directives to his son combine the force of a father's authority over his son, of a seasoned king's advice to a young prince, and the dying wishes of an old man.

David's burial is not in his ancestral tomb in the territory of his father Jesse in Bethlehem. As the establisher of a dynasty he creates a new family tomb in his new royal city of Jerusalem, which becomes the royal tombs. The language associated with David's death is notable. The formula "to lie with his fathers" is used four times in reference to David: 2 Sam 7:12 (the words of Nathan) 1 Kgs 1:21 (the words of Bathsheba to David); 1 Kgs 2:10 (the death notice itself); and 1 Kgs 11:21 (the news is heard by Hadad of Edom). Later the phrase will be used in death and burial formulas throughout the books of 1 and 2 Kings. David of course will not literally lie with his fathers. He is buried in his capital city of Jerusalem and founds a new place of burial wherein the kings of his dynasty will rest. This phrase is characteristic of DtrH but is also used in J when Israel discusses his own death, and for Moses in Deut 31:6. Halpern and Vanderhooft remark

[438] We can note that Barzillai, the very aged and loyal follower of David, turns down a generous royal offer by saying "Please let your servant return, so that I may die in my own town, near the graves of my father and my mother" (2 Sam 19:37). Ideally one should be buried in the family tomb by one's own children, and even the largess of kings does not override this value.

that the phrase attaches only to "royalty and to Israel and Moses, emblematic men."[439] Jacob/Israel uses the phrase in Gen 47:29–30 and refers to his death "when I lie (or rest or sleep) with my fathers" in Egypt, meaning simply "when I die." His actual burial is to occur later, with the ancestors in the family tomb in Canaan. Likewise in Deut 31:16 where the term is applied to Moses it certainly must be a euphemism for death, as there is no possibility of Moses being buried with his ancestors, as he dies on Mount Nebo in Moab, and the story assumes the ancestors of Moses are left behind in Egypt.[440]

With the monarchy established, death becomes a regular political mechanism of peaceful change in leadership. As kings die the succession moves forward. Early in the monarchy this is messy and dangerous, but as succession becomes established, especially in Judah, death serves as an accepted and fundamental part of the structure of rule.[441] Here we need to momentarily shift from consideration of individual death notices, each of which is very distinctive, to the kings of Israel and Judah as a group who are treated in a fairly standardized way. Beginning with David in 1 Kgs 2:10, the deaths of the kings of Israel and Judah are proclaimed with several variations of a standardized formula. In the case of non-violent death the most common form of the notice begins וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִם־אֲבֹתָיו "and he lay with his fathers" with the royal name after the verb. Other translations of the verb include "to rest" or "to sleep." The phrase "He rested with his fathers" parallels in many ways the phrase "to be gathered to his people" which is used of Abraham and Isaac. Both phrases use verbs that are suggestive of passive quietude. The association with fathers and "people" (kin, ancestors) emphasizes the importance placed upon the

[439] Baruch Halpern and David Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE" HUCA 62 (1991): 183-197.
[440] Halpern and Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE," 183-197.
[441] As was formerly said in France, and applies still in Denmark and England : "The King is dead; long live the King."

connectedness of the generations. In this sense death is not lonely but rather a joining with uncounted others, kindred of many generations.

Two important elements follow the introductory formula. The first is the notice of burial, using the root *qbr*, bury, and following this is the location of the burial.[442] Most commonly for the kings of Judah the burial place is: וַיִּקָּבֵר עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד "and he was buried with his fathers in the city of David." Of thirteen times in which this notice of place of burial in Jerusalem is made, nine times the phrase "with his fathers" is included. In fact all Judean kings after Solomon and prior to Hezekiah include this notice. The kings of Israel have five similar notices of burial in Samaria but do not include the note of burial with the fathers. Halpern and Vanderhooft suggest that this is intended to underscore the contrast between dynastic stability in Judah versus instability in Israel. They also show that the phrase "to lie with his fathers" is not a literal reference to burial of the body in a family tomb but is a euphemism for death, particularly for peaceful death (as has already been illustrated by its use with Jacob and Moses and David). The idea of the peaceful dead joined with the ancestors is so important that it makes its way into language as a standard term for ordinary, peaceful death even when the body is not literally buried with kindred. All of this accords with our archaeological evidence which points toward the custom of burial with multiple generations of related individuals in cave and bench tombs.

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[442] Halpern and Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE," 183-197.For a more detailed discussion of the Solomon to Hezekiah source see also Baruch Halpern, "Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure: Indications of an Earlier Source," in *The Creation of Sacred Literature* (ed. Richard E. Friedman; UCPNES 22; University of California Press, 1981), 35-54; and Richard E. Friedman, "Solomon and the Great Histories" in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology* (ed. Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killebrew; SBLSS 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 171-180.

Other terms, most commonly "and he died" (a neutral phrase also seen frequently in the early genealogies) are used for cases of the violent death of kings.[443] In the cases of the kings of the Northern Kingdom, violent deaths (assassinations) are treated in a consistent way. The burial notices of these kings is suppressed (per Halpern and Vanderhooft), but the coup and death are noted and the source for this information is given as "the chronicles of the kings of Israel," after which the next dynasty is proclaimed. In each case of peaceful or violent death either the disjunction or the continuity of rule is emphasized.[444]

What this tells us about death and burial in Israel and Judah supports archaeological and textual evidence so far. Continued connection with earlier generations was so important that it became disassociated with actual burial and became in itself a term for peaceful death. The connection is exemplified by burial in the correct place and manner – usually in the ancestral tomb. The two elements come together in the death and burial notices of the kings, where peaceful death is followed by proper burial. Even the kings of Judah who do die violently are still, as far as possible, accorded the respect of burial with the fathers.

The variation in the formula beginning with Hezekiah is attributed to a new authorial hand, which alters and shortens the burial formula but which still preserves the elements of proper burial.[445] These later notices give some interesting information: Manasseh and Amon are both buried in the "garden of Uzza," which is connected to the house of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:18 and 2 Kgs 21:26), and Josiah is buried "in his tomb" (2

[443] Halpern and Vanderhooft present the data for the burial formulas of all of the kings of Israel and Judah in very useful table form here: Halpern and Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE," 189-191.
[444] Halpern and Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE," 212.
[445] Halpern, "Sacred History and Ideology," 35-54.

Kgs 23:29).[446] We will pick up with the way in which the deaths of the last kings of Judah are treated below, but first we should address some important intervening material.

Death, Prophets, and the Punishment of Kings

Death comes not only to royalty in the historical books. Particularly associated with the reign of Jeroboam are a series of striking death and burial scenarios which relate to the royal family and to the prophets who play their parts in the drama of the division of the United Kingdom into Israel and Judah. These deaths are tied into the political and religious directions taken by the new kingdoms. 1 Kings 13 opens with a "man of God" (אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים) who arrives from Judah to condemn the new calf shrine of Jeroboam at Bethel. In a dramatic confrontation with the king, the unnamed prophet uses images of the sacrifice of priests and the burning of human bones upon the altar of Jeroboam to envision the destruction of this new, politically motivated holy place (1 Kgs 12:26–29). The much later king Josiah is named in the prophecy of 1 Kings 13, and the incident is intended to foreshadow the account of 2 Kings 23, where the high places east of Jerusalem to the south of the Mount of Destruction are destroyed and covered with human bones. After this Josiah "pulled down that altar (of Jeroboam at Bethel) along with the high place…he saw the tombs there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the tombs, and burned them on the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of YHWH that the man of God proclaimed" (2 Kgs 23:13–16).

Even setting aside the prophecy itself, the entire episode of the two prophets in 1 Kings 13 is bizarre. Why the "old prophet in Bethel" would entrap the "man of God from Judah" is very unclear. The punishment for the disobedience this entrapment causes is

[446] Halpern and Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE," 193-195.

explicit. While death itself would seem to be the most terrifying punishment, the phrase used for this punishment is "your body shall not come to your ancestral tomb" (1Kings 13: 22). After the "man of God" dies by "act of God" for his disobedience (recall the earlier discussion of divine decree of death for Adam and Eve, Moses and Aaron, and Eli), the old prophet buries him, mourns for him, and asks to be buried beside his bones. Again the important issue of burial is raised as the prophet attempts to make amends for his part in the death of the man of God from Judah. He does so by addressing the same mechanism as the punishment: death and burial. Without the intervention of the old prophet the body of the man of God would be left torn and abandoned on the roadside after he is killed by the lion. This exposure of the body adds to the severity of the curse. We have seen the same mechanism at work in the Davidic narratives and will see it again in the curse against the Israelite kings Jeroboam, Baasha and Ahab. Not only violent death is the punishment, and not only no return to the family tomb, but the additional desecration of rotting in the elements and being scavenged by animals is threatened.

The punishment remains that the man of God from Judah is not returned to his family tomb, but instead of allowing the body to be left exposed on the road, the old prophet in Bethel tries to carry out a respectful burial and a proper mourning. He places the body in his own grave, a highly personal and intimate action, and will be buried with him. The two prophets are strangely tied together in this story, and the intimacy in death is reinforced when the old prophet mourns and says "alas my brother" (1 Kgs 13:31). This is a formal type of lamentation phrase, but it also creates a figurative bond of kinship. This created kinship makes the shared grave seem even more appropriate.

The later episode of Josiah's destruction of the shrine at Bethel confirms a continued and intentional connection with this part of the story as well. This tomb of the "man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things", along with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria (2 Kgs 23: 17–18) they do not disturb. In Samaria Josiah "slaughtered on the altars all the priests of the high places who were there, and burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem." (2 Kgs 23:20). While the king does not hesitate to disturb graves in general, he has respect for the bones of these famous prophets. We also learn that the placement of human bones on the altar is a serious defilement that is in parallel with the perverse quasi-sacrifice/murder of the priests in this text. Thus far in the course of 1 Kings 13 we have reference to the corrupting influence of human remains and to the importance of proper burial in the ancestral tomb. The episode and these themes are closely connected with and reinforced in 2 Kings 23.

Chapter 14 continues this very strong theme. Prophets continue to be entwined with the issue and imagery of death. Yet another prophet enters the picture, Ahijah of Shiloh (the same prophet who had originally given Jeroboam the message of the division of the kingdom and his rise to rule over Israel in 1 Kgs 11:29–32), and another curse is pronounced against Jeroboam. This curse, given to the queen of Jeroboam who comes to ask about her child Abijah is this: "I will cut off from Jeroboam every male, both bound and free in Israel, and will consume the house of Jeroboam, just as one burns up dung until it is all gone. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and anyone who dies in the open country, the birds of the air will eat; for YHWH has spoken" (1 Kgs 14:10–11). Notice again the use of *karet* as a divine punishment. This

one specifically entails the desecration of the body and that the body will not rest in a tomb (with almost identical wording applied to Ahab). The point is further emphasized by a prophecy about the sick child. "When your feet enter the city, the child will die. All Israel will mourn for him and bury him; for he alone of Jeroboam will come to the grave, because in him there is found something pleasing to YHWH, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam" (1 Kgs 14:12–14).[447]

It is truly a devastating message – just as we saw in the case of Saul, the punishment of death comes in spades – Jeroboam and his descendents will die and their bodies will be unburied. It is a true refrain of "bad king, bad death." Both kings are anointed by a prophet, and both kings are rejected and punished when they create a violation of cultic matters. In both cases improper sacrifice is at the root of the issue. One might also argue that there is a related issue of kingly abuse of power in taking over something which is properly the domain of the priests. The reason given is classical Deuteronomistic theology: "you…have gone and made for yourself other gods, and cast images, provoking me to anger." (1 Kgs 14:9).[448] Only the innocent child will be properly mourned and buried. Notice that the child does not escape death. The reward of innocence here is not life but only proper burial and mourning. This is the first in a series of dramatic curses against kings of Israel (Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 14:10–11, Baasha in 1 Kgs 16:2–5, and Ahab in 1 Kgs 21:22–24) which are phrased in almost identical ways. The prophecy is death and desecration of the body which will not rest in a family tomb, and

[447] Interestingly the names of the sons of Jeroboam, Abijah and Nadab (1 Kgs 14:1 and 1 Kgs 15:25), are parallel with with the sons of the priest Aaron, Abihu and Nadab (Exod 6:23). R. Friedman points out that not only are the names parallel, but both Aaron and Jeroboam make golden calves. Richard E. Friedman, personal communication, Febrary 26, 2015.

[448] Just a few examples of the Deuteronomistic prohibition against religious infidelity: Deut 5:7; Deut 6:14; Deut 7:4; Deut 8:19; Deut 11:16.

we might include the end of the family line also, as the curse is applied to "anyone" of the family. We should notice similar phrasing regarding such desecration elsewhere, with the alteration that instead of "dogs" we have "beasts of the field." "And your carcass will be meat to all the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth." Deut 28:26 is part of a long and rather gruesome group of curses against anyone who does not "hearken to the voice of YHWH, to observe and to do all his statutes" (Deut 28:15). 1 Sam 17:44–46 uses the phrase twice in the exchange between David and Goliath, to give the enemy's body "unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." Finally Jer 15:3 describes "the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy." These references are certainly to creatures with which the audience would be familiar. Carrion-eating birds, as well as wild and feral canines (dogs, jackals, and foxes) and perhaps pigs and bears and would certainly be among the birds and beasts which might desecrate human flesh by consuming it.

The account of the death of Jeroboam follows very closely on this scene. The Deuteronomist attempts to close the discrepancy between the curse and the actual peaceful death of Jeroboam. The account does report that he "slept with his fathers" (recall the earlier discussion of this term as meaning only peaceful death and not burial specifically), but there is no burial notice. This does not mean that Jeroboam was not buried. While burial notices are part of the norm for kings who died peacefully, here it may have been left out due to the stark contrast which would have been created between such a notice and the bloody prophecy of Ahijah which specifically addresses the punishment of non-burial. Jeroboam leaves a son, Nadab, to succeed him, but he is assassinated and the throne taken by Baasha, who also exterminates the rest of the house

of Jeroboam. The Deuteronomist states that this was "because of the sins of Jeroboam that he committed and that he caused Israel to commit, and because of the anger to which he provoked YHWH, the God of Israel." (1 Kgs 15:27–30).

Here we once more find that the notices of death and burial are shaped to fit with and serve the larger message of the narrative. The wickedness of Jeroboam is brought home over and over in the accounts of the violence wrought upon his family. While the historical record may have been that Jeroboam dies peacefully (slept with his fathers), the narrative tries to support the prophecy and the general idea of punishment by repeatedly pointing out the violent deaths of his progeny and kindred. 1 Kgs 14:19 follows the general format of the report of the death of a king and gives the source material for his reign, which presumably also includes the note of non-violent death. "Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, are written in the Book of the annals of the Kings of Israel. The time that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years; then he slept with his ancestors, and his son Nadab succeeded him.

The prophetic punishment of death without progeny and no burial is repeated again and again in the ruling houses of Israel. The usurper Baasha in his turn receives the prophecy from Jehu the son of Hannani: "Anyone belonging to Baasha who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and anyone of his who dies in the field the birds of the air shall eat." (1 Kgs 16:4). The reason given for the curse reinforces the parallel with Jeroboam: "Because of all the evil that he did in the sight of YHWH, provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and also because he destroyed it." (1 Kgs 16:7). It is interesting however that the house of Baasha is punished both for being like that of Jeroboam and for destroying it.

1 Kgs 16:6 records the death and burial of Baasha in customary language, and includes the notice of his burial at Tizrah. The notice is sandwiched between two mentions of the prophecy of Jehu, as if to remind the reader that the punishment has not been forgotten despite the peaceful end of this usurper. Immediately after this is the record that Baasha and his house in turn are destroyed by another usurper, Zimri who destroys family, children and friends of the king so that "he left him not one pisses against a wall (that is, males) neither kinsfolk or friends" (1 Kgs 16:11). The source material used by the Deuteronomist records the facts of the reigns of the kings and the murders and usurpations which accompanied them. It is the interpretation of these things which the Deuteronomist is using to reinforce his view of divine punishment. It appears that this is done in slightly different ways in each case, but the loss of progeny is emphasized in both the case of Jeroboam and Baasha. If the source provides the "what" the Deuteronomist provides the "because."

Although not prophetically cursed, Zimri also is punished for his bloody deeds "because of the sins that he committed" by being burned up in the fire that he set to destroy the royal palace (1 Kgs 16:18–19). We are not told if Zimri is properly buried after this incident.

Finally, prophetic involvement in the punishment of the Kings (and Queens) of Israel continues with the most famous episode of Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah the Tishbite, who says of Ahab, '"In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your blood…I will consume you, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bound or free, in Israel, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to

anger and have caused Israel to sin.' Also concerning Jezebel YHWH says: 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the bounds of the Jezreel.' Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the air shall eat." (1 Kgs 21:21–24).

There are many prophets, but a single message is reported by the Deuteronomist. The narrator once again explicitly tells us that there was "no one like Ahab to do what was evil" (1 Kgs 21: 25). This set of three nearly identical curses highlights a perceived link by the Deuteronomist between Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab. The later two "continued to walk in the way of Jeroboam and commit the sin which he made Israel to sin" Each king is condemned by prophetic word and the narratives show that the prophecy is fulfilled.[449] The various elements of the punishment of bad death: death by violence and the degradation of the corpse, no proper burial, and the destruction of offspring, are all woven throughout these narratives.

The dramatic fulfillment of the curse upon Jezebel is recorded in 2 Kgs 9:30–37. Sandwiched between her shocking death and the reminder that the curse spoken by Elijah was fulfilled, the words of Jehu, who brings destruction upon the entire royal house of Israel are these: "Care for that accursed woman and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." T. Lewis notes that the term *piqdû* parallels the term used in the Mesopotamian cult of the dead, and states that this is acknowledgement of the rank of Jezebel and permission for the appropriate death rituals to be carried out (although of course in the narrative the point is that this is impossible due to Elijah's curse).[450]

[449] J. Maxwell Miller, "The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars," JBL 85 (1966): 449.
[450] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 120-121.

With the end of the reign of Ahab, we run into a problem. Like brief static over a radio, the account of Ahab's reign and death is momentarily jumbled. 1 Kings 22 tells a complex story of war. "The king of Israel" (unnamed) wishes to go and reclaim Ramoth-Gilead with the aid of King Jehoshaphat of Judah. Prophecy is again closely associated with the story, with conflicting prophetic messages; many of success, but one of failure (1 Kgs 22:5–23). Adding to the complexity of the story, the "King of Israel" (again unnamed) disguises himself, and so is killed in battle. Finally, at the end of this narrative the prophetic punishment spoken by Elijah is fulfilled: "The king died and was brought in his chariot to the pool of Samaria, where the dogs licked up his blood and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, according to the word of YHWH that he had spoken" (1 Kgs 22:37–39). Placed after all of this – the battle, death, and prophetic fulfillment comes the familiar regnal summary and the death notice. "So Ahab slept with his ancestors; and his son Ahaziah succeeded him" (1 Kgs 22:40).

As we have seen, this phrase elsewhere almost invariably indicates peaceful death. Halpern and Vanderhooft follow Miller (and earlier Kuenen and Kittel) in suggesting that the battle narrative of the unnamed king is late and not related to the reign of Ahab at all, but better fits the context of a later king. The death notice of verse 40 shows no knowledge of a violent death of Ahab.[451] The episode of the battle is placed here in order to fulfill earlier prophecy, but it is in conflict with the death notice which

[451] Halpern and Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE," 230-235. Miller notes that Israel and Syria were allies (according to the Assyrian annals) at this time, and there was no need to reclaim Ramoth Gilead as this territory remained with Israel during his reign. Miller traces a plausible scenario in which the two battle accounts of 1 Kgs 20 were transferred from the account of the reign of Jehoahaz and his battle against Ben-hadad, and the third battle is found in the composite account of 1 Kgs 22. The shifting of these accounts explain the rather abrupt ending of 2 Kgs 13: 24-25. Miller suggests that these accounts were taken over and passed on by a circle of northern prophets who wished to enhance the role of Elisha in Israel's military success. Once Jehoshaphat's name became associated with two of the episodes then Ahab naturally followed as the contemporary king of Israel. Miller, "The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars," 441-454.

implied peaceful death. Also adding to the complexity (or confusion) of the matter is the postponement of the prophecy to the reign of Ahab's son in 1 Kgs 21: 27–29 after Ahab repents with seeming sincerity. This is another segment which may be an attempt to explain why the prophecy was not directly fulfilled against Ahab himself. Furthermore Ahab's son Ahaziah does not die exactly as prophesied by Elijah to Ahab. The narrative does make his death, also, to be in accordance with a prophecy, but a different one. Instead of the bloody fulfillment of Ahab's prophecy being visited upon Ahaziah, Ahaziah gets his very own punishment of death, this time for the sin of seeking divine assistance from "Baalzebub", the god of Ekron (2 Kgs 1:2–6). The historical record was that Ahaziah did not, in fact, become food for the dogs or birds so the narrative provides an alternative prophecy. In this way it can be implied that it is not that the prophecy to Ahab was not true, but that it was superseded by another. Again no burial notice is provided. We are simply told that Ahaziah "died according to the word of YHWH which Elijah had spoken" (2 Kgs 1:17).

A series of narrative modifications might be proposed: 1) the curse against Ahab 2) either repentance and the modification of the curse, or after the death of Ahab the realization that the curse was not fulfilled, and so modification of the prophecy to apply to Ahaziah 3) realization that the death of Ahaziah did not fit the prophecy, and so modification with a new prophecy to fit the death of that king. 4) The battle account of the unnamed "King of Israel" is associated with Ahab because it seems to fulfill the original prophecy. The final fulfillment of violent death, cutting off of offspring, and improper burial against the house of Ahab come with the rebellion of Jehu. Seventy sons of Ahab are killed and their heads left in piles at the entrance of the gate of Jezreel (2 Kgs

10:7–10). Later Jehu "came to Samaria, he killed all who were left to Ahab in Samaria, until he had wiped them out, according to the word of YHWH that he spoke to Elijah" (2 Kgs 10:16–17).

As we draw near to the end of the book of 2 Kings the formula of necessity breaks down, not only due to change of authorship or to fulfill theological purpose, but thanks to the interference of history, as Egypt, Assyria, and then Babylon take their turns inflicting damage upon Israel and Judah. There is no death notice for Hoshea, the last king of Israel. Instead there is the notification that he is imprisoned by Shalmaneser, who then besieges Samaria and takes it in the 9th year of Hoshea's reign, and carries away the people of Israel (2 Kgs 17: 4–6 and 18:9–11). Jehoiachin of Judah and his court are carried away to Babylon in 2 Kgs 24:10–12. There is no death notice for this monarch, but 2 Kgs 25: 27–29 reports him living out his days not in prison, but as a guest/hostage of Evil-merodach.

Prophets, Death and the Comfort of Kings

We have examined plentiful evidence that first, death notices serve to support and emphasize the overall point of the narratives in which they are embedded. One element of this includes support for the judgment of an individual's life: righteous or wicked. Such judgments extend across sources from the patriarchs through the kings. As far as possible, good death is reported for the righteous, and death as punishment follows those who transgress. For the kings of Israel, we have seen a great deal of transgression and punishment indeed. We now have the opportunity to address the other side of the coin and turn to the fate of two righteous kings Hezekiah and Josiah. Both of these kings are

portrayed as the best of all of the kings of Judah due to their religious reforms. The two reformer kings are given direct prophecies regarding their deaths.

2 Kings 20 contains the entire episode of the near death experience of King Hezekiah, his reprieve, and his final demise. The parallel to the story can be found in Isa 38 except for the death notice. The episode begins with a blunt announcement by the prophet Isaiah when Hezekiah becomes ill: "Thus says YHWH: Put your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover." (2 Kgs 20:1; Isa 38:1). This is not portrayed as a punishment, but a simple foretelling. Hezekiah weeps bitterly. He asks YHWH to remember that he has "…walked before you in truth and with a perfect heart (heart of peace) and have done what is good in your eyes"

אָנָּה יְהוָה זְכָר־נָא אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ בֶּאֱמֶת וּבְלֵבָב שָׁלֵם וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי

(2 Kgs 20: 1–3; Isa 38:3). While a great deal is present but unstated here, the content of the ellipsis is clear. Hezekiah has been faithful, and bases his claim on an expectation of mutual fidelity from YHWH. When Hezekiah asks YHWH to "remember" what he really means is that YHWH should act to correct an injustice. Hezekiah has "walked before YHWH" and so merits the blessings of long life and a good death, not an early grave. Although these are not specifically promised in the royal covenant (2 Sam 7:1–29), it should be clear by now from our extensive previous discussion that such was an expected benefit of righteousness. 1 Kgs 2:4; 1 Kgs 9:4; and 2 Chr 7:17 also relate specifically to the Davidic covenant and the establishment of the dynasty. It is this particular theology – that the royal house is expected to uphold a covenant and in return will be blessed –

which Hezekiah is drawing upon.[452] Long life and a peaceful death are also usually presented in parallel with offspring to follow you, which is a part of the Davidic covenant – that the royal line will not fail. We should also consider 1 Kgs 3:5–14 in which Solomon is specifically told "If you will walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and commandments as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

This idea of walking before YHWH is also part of other conditional covenant language. In Gen 17:1 Abraham is called to walk before YHWH and be blameless. In 1 Sam 2:30 Eli is told that although his house was meant to walk before YHWH forever, this covenant is now broken because of the wickedness of his sons. A new priest will be called who will "walk before my anointed forever" (1 Sam 2:35).

If we follow the chronology provided by 2 Kgs 18:1–2, Hezekiah would only have been about forty at this time. Part of the implication of the prayer of Hezekiah must be understood in the context of the convention that righteousness will be rewarded by long life. Having been faithful and righteous, Hezekiah feels that he is too young to die. In the five books of Moses only in company with Abraham and Moses does Hezekiah dare to negotiate or argue with his god, even if it is in the most subtle and respectful of ways: "Remember now, please YHWH" Hezekiah's prayer is immediately answered via Isaiah: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; indeed I will heal you; on the third day you shall go up to the house of YHWH. I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria; I will defend this city for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David." (2 Kgs 20: 4–6; Isa 38:4–6).

[452] Other related verses include Gen 24:40; Gen 48:15; 2 Chr 6:16; and Jer 26:4. For further work on the language of covenant in the Hebrew Bible see Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings* (Trans. David E. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

Hezekiah is rewarded for his prayer with abundant divine help – healing, extended life, and deliverance for the city. Here there is an added political element – not only are years added to the life of the king, but a promise is made for the protection of Jerusalem from Assyria.[453] Most entertaining is the placid (and self-serving) quote attributed to the king when he learns that the destruction of Judah is only postponed and that some of his sons will be eunuchs in Babylon. "…he thought 'Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?" (2 Kgs 20:19). This prophecy is delayed, and it is not the sons or grandsons but the great-great-grandson who is taken to Babylon (and not as an eunuch, to the best of our knowledge). There is no burial notice for Hezekiah, just the comment that "he slept with his fathers." This may indicate a change in authorship of the book. 2 Chr 32:33 states that Hezekiah is buried "in the ascent of the tombs of the sons of David."[454]

What happens when we have the reverse of our earlier pattern? Instead of a wicked king whose punishment is proclaimed but not carried out in history, what about a righteous king whose promised reward of a good death is denied him? The prophecy of Huldah to Josiah in 2 Kgs 22:15–20 proclaims: "I will gather you to your ancestors (fathers) and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the

[453] Bradley Root provides an interesting discussion of the variations among 2 Kings 18-20 , Isaiah 36-39 and the Qumran *Isaiah Scroll.* Root argues that the role of scribal error in the variations has been consistently underestimated in favor of a view of intentional alteration, and that scribal error is the most simple and most logical explanation for a majority of the differences seen in these texts. Root, Bradley. "Scribal Error and the Transmission of 2 Kings 18-20 and Isaiah 36-39" Pages 51-60 in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R. E. Friedman on His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. Shawna Dolansky; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2008).

[454] Halpern and Vanderhooft, *The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE*, 196-197. Halpern and Vanderhooft's work here is focused upon the authorial history of the books of Kings and includes an impressive array of evidence in addition to the variations of burial notices. This includes Chronicles' change in accession formulae for the kings of Judah, the regnal evaluation formulae in Kings, and the source citation formulae in Kings. While these aspects range futher afield from our focus, the careful consideration of the burial formula is extremely helpful in distinguishing between change in practice and change in authorship.

disaster that I will bring on this place." Compare Judg 2:10 for the only other use of the phrase נֶאֱסְפוּ אֶל־אֲבוֹתָיו, though it is quite similar to the phrase "to be gathered to his people" אֶל־עַמָּיו יֵאָסֵף used of Abraham and Isaac.[455] It is also similar in tone to יִשְׁכַּב PN עִם־אֲבֹתָיו the "sleep with his fathers" which is used in the death and burial formula of the kings. The three idioms, although from different sources, reflect very similar ideas.[456] Driver, Halpern, and others have discussed the possibilities of what "gathering" means. The descent of the soul to the underworld or the laying out of the corpse upon burial benches has been put forth. I believe that this "gathering" is simply a part of the language of death and a direct synonym for "died." Phrases such as "and he died and was gathered to his people" do not represent two events, but a single statement. It is the "positive norm" of peaceful death. We may be able to contrast this to such legal language as being "cut off from his people" as in the earlier discussion of *kerat*.

Huldah gives a prophecy, both of peaceful death and of proper burial, but it is marred by its pairing with a prophecy of destruction for the nation or the city ("this place"). The punishment of Ahab the wicked king is postponed due to his repentance for his sins, and here Josiah the righteous king is explicitly meant to be rewarded for his sincere repentance for the sins of his nation. Again history interferes with the smooth progress of this morality play.

Josiah dies in battle at Megiddo against the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho. Furthermore Josiah dies early. Long life, one of the hallmarks of good death, is denied him. He becomes king at eight years old and reigns thirty years, making him only thirty-eight at the time of his death. Furthermore his rightful heir, Jehoaḥaz, who is anointed by the

[455] Halpern and Vanderhooft, *The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE,* 223.
[456] Halpern and Vanderhooft, *The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE,* 224-225

people, is carried away to Egypt, where he dies. While not a part of our construction of punishment here, exile and death in exile certainly are prominently associated with punishment.[457] Because Josiah is a righteous king, these events cannot be punishment against the reformer king. An alternative explanation is needed, but none is forthcoming. The facts of the reign and end of Josiah are duly recorded. Josiah dies violently, defeated, and at a young age. The only thing that the Deuteronomist can do to soften the blow is to emphasize that Josiah is at least buried in his own tomb. "His servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb" (2 Kgs 23:30). The general consensus of scholarship has been to suggest an exilic construct of the final episode built around a pre-exilic kernel. The record of the prior prophecy existed and could not be erased. The fact of Josiah's violent death also existed and could not be erased. Both were included despite the disjunction that they created.[458]

We cannot leave the discussion without addressing the fate of the last sitting king of Judah, Zedekiah. It is a grim fate indeed. Zedekiah's attempt to escape during the chaos as Jerusalem falls fails: "Then they captured the king and brought him up to the King of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah. They bound him in fetters and took him to Babylon." (2 Kgs 25: 6–7; Jer 39:5-6). Intimately connected with these final narratives of 2 Kings is the book of Jeremiah.[459] Here we have another account of

[457] See Gen 3:23-24, 4:12; Deut 28:36; 2 Kgs 17:5-28; and 2 Chron 36:16.
[458] Halpern and Vanderhooft, *The Editions of Kings in the 7th-6th Centuries BCE*, 221-227.
[459] Here we also learn of the death of another prophet, Uriah. Uriah is executed by King Jehoiakim for conveying a very similar message to that of Jeremiah, and we are told that they "threw his dead body into the burial place of the common people" (Jer 26:23). The use of the term שָׁלַךְ "to cast, to throw" emphasizes that this disposal of the body was made in a disrespectful manner. We do not know anything further about this place of burial for the common people. There is little evidence for large burial places of low status individuals for late Iron Age/Neo-Babylonian Israel (see chapter 2). Another reference to the "graves of

the fall of Judah and the fate of Zedekiah. We learn that Zedekiah is offered some comfort by the prophet Jeremiah. Although the city is condemned to be sacked and burned, Zedekiah himself has a measure of protection:

> You yourself will not escape from his hand but shall surely be captured and handed over to him; you shall see the King of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face; and you shall go to Babylon. Yet hear the word of YHWH, O King Zedekiah of Judah! Thus says YHWH concerning you: You shall not die by the sword; you shall die in peace. And as spices were burned for your ancestors, the earlier kings who preceded you, so they shall burn spices for you and lament for you saying ‘Alas, lord! (Jer 34:3–5)

The prophecy regarding the fall of Jerusalem and the capture of the king (and his nobles) is repeated again and again throughout the book, but only here in Jeremiah is there a promise made of peaceful death.[460] While no promise is made of burial in the royal (family) tomb, the rituals of death – lamentation and the burning of spices – imply continuity and that there will be someone left to Zedekiah who is willing and able to make proper mourning for him. The one earlier mention of burning “spices” in the rituals related to death is that performed for Asa of Judah in 2 Chr 16:14. This verse uses the term בֹּשֶׂם: spice, balsam, balsam tree, perfume, or sweet smell. Jer 34:5 only uses שָׂרַף “burn” with no object.[461] There is no firm archaeological evidence for this practice in a burial context. It is possible that the practice of burning spices or incense took place elsewhere before the body was buried or simply did not leave a mark in the archaeological record.

The prophecy regarding Zedekiah’s capture and being brought before the King of Babylon does play out, but in a far darker way than the prophecy implies. One is left with

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the common people” is found in 2 Kgs 23:6. Such graves would probably be simple pit graves with few grave goods, and it would not be unlikely that evidence of such graves would largely vanish over time.

[460] For example Jer 20:4-6, 21:1-7, 22:1-8, 24-27, 25:15-18, 32:1-5.

[461] Of course a much later and very well known reference to the uses of spices in burial is Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56; and John 19:40.

a sickening feeling that the story suggests that Jeremiah did not reveal all that he knew and that this is an intentional element in the text. The emphasis upon "eye to eye" resonates with what we learn transpires. The same phrase is used earlier in Jer 32:4: "King Zedekiah of Judah shall not escape out of the hands of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be given into the hands of the King of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye." The "eye to eye" meeting results in the greatest of agonies. The king decrees that Zedekiah see his sons killed before him with his own eyes and then he is blinded. (2 Kgs 25:7 and Jer 39:6–7). The mention of eyes in both places foreshadows what is to come.[462]

The final piece that we need to draw out here is the silence of both the final chapter of 2 Kings and of Jeremiah concerning the death of Zedekiah. This chapter of the history does not close with the fall of Jerusalem. A postscript is added in 2 Kgs 25:22–30 regarding the Babylonian-appointed governor Gedaliah and the fate of King Jehoiachin in exile. We might expect some remark on the end of Zedekiah, but there is nothing. The same is true of the book of Jeremiah, which contains extensive material following the sack of Jerusalem. A reasonable assumption would be that Zedekiah dies a miserable captive in Babylon, with no royal burial, no burning of spices and that the text glosses over this in order to create minimal conflict with the prophetic word.

Ancestor Veneration and the Afterlife

In some respects the biblical text offers abundant material related to dying and the response to death. We have reviewed numerous death narratives, deathbed speeches,

[462] This feels like a literary device, the same sort of grim foreshadowing offered by the Dothraki ruler Khal Drago in George R. R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* when he promises the greedy and impatient young Targaryen prince his golden crown, just prior to killing him by having the molten metal poured upon his head.

murders aplenty, notices of deaths and burial and reports of treatment of the recently deceased. The Bible is remarkably quiet about a closely related topic – customs and beliefs related to the ancestors, the dead of previous generations. The question is, why is there plentiful material regarding people dying and being buried, but little about the long ago dead? This is an obvious question to ask in light of the plentiful evidence from Ugarit, Mesopotamia and Aram for ongoing veneration of the dead.

In order to interpret the biblical evidence (or lack thereof) concerning the treatment of ancestors in Israel, we must first determine the nature of that evidence. What is reported and why? One of the longstanding difficulties with the issue of the treatment and perception of the dead in Israel and Judah is the contrast between plentiful archaeological evidence regarding gifts and offerings for the dead and comparative lack of discussion of these practices in the biblical text. R. Friedman and S. Dolansky Overton have made an interesting point regarding the silence of the biblical texts. They argue that the lack of a clear doctrine regarding the afterlife in the Hebrew Bible is a product of its particular development.

Archaeology from Israel and material from neighboring cultures confirms a widespread and well-established practice of ancestor veneration or ancestor homage as evidenced by grave goods, tombs that hold many generations, and texts (such as those from Ugarit and the former Hittite empire) that show concern for feeding or sacrificing for the dead. While many scholars classify this set of practices as a "cult of the dead" and use the term in similar ways both for Israel/Judah and other nations, Friedman and Dolansky Overton are careful not to apply the term to the practices and beliefs in Iron Age Israel and Judah. Friedman understands the term "cult of the dead" to indicate an

organized set of communal rituals for which he does not see sufficient evidence.[463] As can be seen from the evidence presented in the rest of the chapters of this current work it is clear that the dead were not abandoned and forgotten. Care was taken with burial, and the presence of gifts and personal items show continued attachment to the deceased. The dead remained as part of the kinship network, and relationships were maintained, whether we conceive of this as simple remembrance or veneration. This realm of interaction was an important part of the conception of kinship and land rights, as we have discussed at multiple points already. This may also have had a great deal to do with the perceived well-being of the people in the land.[464] It had little to do with the official cult and did not require priests or reference to a central bureaucracy or to the monarchic administration. It was therefore in the interest of the authors responsible for the Priestly and Deuteronomic material to minimize the role of such practices (see below further discussion of what we mean by this). The author(s) of the E source coming from the Shilonite priesthood also shared this motivation.[465]

Additional motivation for the minimization of ancestor veneration is found in the push for the centralization of religious practice experienced under King Hezekiah. This was supported by consolidation of the population into Jerusalem due to the Assyrian threat. King Josiah instituted further reforms which sought to desacralize the outlying countryside and centralize social, economic, political and religious life in Jerusalem. The ultimate result of these factors was the minimization of references to the dead and homage to the dead in these sources. This process of centralization and its impact upon

[463]Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," 35-41.
[464] Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," 35-41; also Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," 94, regarding the function of Ugaritic ancestor cults.
[465] Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 50-81.

the veneration of the dead in Israel has been carefully treated by B. Halpern and is discussed in chapter 2 above.[466] We saw there that the loosening of ties to the dead and to the burial places of the ancestors was an important part of the push to move the population off of the outlying land and to centralize worship at the Jerusalem temple. T. Lewis also states that: "…the biblical texts at our disposal reflect, for the most part, a carefully worked out Deuteronomistic theology of Yahwism. Any traditions which may have contained elements of a cult of the dead only reach us after they have undergone a thorough editing."[467]

For Friedman and Dolansky Overton, the only biblical source (of J, E, P, and D) that does not have a bias against the topic of the afterlife is J. They point out that in J one finds all 9 references to Sheol in the narrative books (Gen 37:35; 42:38; 44:29; 44:31; Num 16:30, 33; 2 Sam 22:6; 1 Kgs 2:6, 9). Eight of the references to *teraphim*, (which for van der Toorn and other scholars are intimately connected with the relationship between the living and the dead) are associated with J texts. Van der Toorn makes a connection between the images, "family gods" and the deified dead, concluding that the images are, in fact deified ancestors. The argument is interesting but (to me) unconvincing.[468] Also in texts related to J are found multiple references to burial in the family tomb with the specific phrasing "he was buried in his father's tomb**.**"[469]

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[466] Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence", 48-54; See particularly B. Halpern's detailed discussion of this process. Halpern, "Jerusalem and the Lineages in the Seventh Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," 26-27.

[467] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 99. Note that Lewis does use the term cult of the dead and strongly supports the view that there was such a cult. His use of the term is retained here although elsewhere "veneration of the dead" or "ancestor homage" is preferred.

[468] The texts cited here are Judges 17 and 18 (5 instances), 1 Sam 15:23 (1 instance) and 1 Samuel 19 (2 instances). These texts have been shown by R Friedman to be closely connected to the J source. The other instances of the word teraphim are found in Genesis 31 (3 instances), 2 Kgs 23:24, Ezek 21:21, and Zec 10:2. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, 382; Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, 402. For

Moving beyond the Torah we find another large group of allusions to the afterlife in first Isaiah, including Sheol, *repha'îm* and *'ittîm*.[470] The *repha' îm* are, for Isaiah at least, ghosts (as in 14:9) – weak and powerless, and this is parallel to the Ugaritic text KTU 1.161 and RS 34.126 (the death of King Niqmaddu/coronation of King Ammurapi).[471] The term is used 8 times in this manner: Job 26:5; Ps 88:10; Prov 2:18, 9:18, and 21:16; as well as Isa 14:9 and 26:14–19. There is, however, another possibility for the term, which is from the root רפא "to heal." Thus the benevolent dead might be seen as "healers." This however is unproven. A better interpretation of the root as related to the dead is probably "benefactors" (per van der Toorn).[472] In other contexts, *the repha' îm* are mighty men of old – giants who formerly dwelt in the land. The same word is used with this meaning 18 times.

Friedman and Dolansky Overton's conclusion is this:

> We therefore advise caution against taking what appears to be a thin distribution of references to afterlife as evidence that there was little belief in it. Similarly we caution against scholarly models of linear progressions, seeing Israel as moving from periods of belief to complete rejection (Job 14:12–14, Ec. 9:5–10) to a final full-blown belief (Dan 12:2 – "Those who sleep in the dust will wake…") The problem with both of these positions is that they do not take sufficient account of the specific background and situation of each of the biblical authors."[473]

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the possible relationship between *teraphim* and the dead see van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 218-224.

[469] See for example Gideon (Judg 8:32), Samson (Judg 16:13), Asahel (2 Sam 3:32), Ahitophel (2 Sam 17:23), Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 21:14). Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence", 35-59.

[470] Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence", 35-59.
Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," 87-101.

[471] The Ugaritic text is interesting for the variety of material it presents. The text invokes a number of "heroes" (rapi´im) who are called by name, and the rituals of weeping and lamentation are represented. These residents of the underworld are meant to escort the deceased king to his new abode. Finally the ritual of offerings is repeated multiple times. The text closes with a blessing: "peace, peace to Ammurapi, peace to his sons, peace to his kinsmen, peace to his house, peace to Ugarit, peace to its gates" (lines 31-34). Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 5-46.

[472] van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 233.

[473] Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," 55.

This leads us to our next question: What can we learn from this minimal textual evidence regarding the treatment of the dead in Israel? Was there believed to be an ongoing relationship between the living and the dead, and if so, what was its nature? A. Porter claims that "To deprive the dead of appropriate ritual and commemoration, or to desecrate their final resting place, is to sever the social relationship between them and the living" [474] Porter also asks the question "Does ritual attention to, or invocation of, ancestors amount to ancestor worship or a cult of the dead?"[475] We might ask how one may differentiate among the motivations for ritual offerings to the dead. Is the object to foster the well being of one who was loved in life into the afterlife? Are offerings made in the hope of pacification of the dead – avoiding the curses and ill effects of the angry and restless dead? While there is some evidence from Ugarit and Mesopotamia of fear that a neglected ghost could become angry (for example invocations to Šamš to "keep the ghosts in check"), there is very little biblical material to suggest the fearful dead.[476] Osborne claims that the text does contain the idea of the spirit of the newly dead as being in a hostile or malicious liminal state prior to becoming a peaceful or beneficent ancestor. However for this the only text he uses is 1 Sam 28:3–25, the raising of the spirit of Samuel. Samuel's words and the response of Saul and the necromancer are very specific to the circumstances of the story and do not support this generalization. Nowhere else in

[474] Anne Porter, "The Dynamics of Death: Ancestors, Pastoralism, and the Origins of a Third-Millennium City in Syria," BASOR 325 (2002): 1-36.
[475] Porter, "The Dynamics of Death: Ancestors, Pastoralism, and the Origins of a Third-Millennium City in Syria," 1-36.
[476] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 38-39.

the text or in tomb inscriptions from Israel is there a suggestion that the dead are malicious.[477]

Remnants and echoes of the subject are found in sources incorporated by these authors. One important example of this is the story of the medium at En-Dor (1 Samuel 28), which we will discuss in more detail below.[478] The biblical material does make reference to necromancy and offerings for the dead (see references below). Less clear, however, is what is meant by these offerings. Are offerings to the dead commemoration, are they solace and nourishment, or are they offerings in hopes of help from beyond, to benefit from some perceived knowledge or power possessed by the dead? R. Albertz distinguishes between a cult of the dead or an ancestor cult in which the dead are treated as divine or semi-divine, and rites and beliefs of living kinsmen who regard the ancestors as simply relatives who are now in another state. Outwardly the rituals associated with these "cults" may look the same, but the first treats the dead as having power and having undergone a change not only of status but of nature, a transformation into the divine. Lewis uses a working definition of cult of the dead as "those acts directed toward the deceased functioning either to placate the dead or to secure favors from them for the present life."[479]

The second is a way of continuing to relate within the kinship framework. In this view the relationship is not a changed one of a petitioner to a god or god-like being, but a continued relationship unchanged from life. Albertz therefore uses the "more neutral

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[477] Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," 39. See also Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," 97-98. This is also noted in chapter 2.

[478] Friedman and Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," 50. For the entire argument for this source and its importance for the development of the final shape of the Hebrew Bible see Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, 402.

[479] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 2.

term" (his phrase) "care for the dead." Albertz also understands the use of the term *ʾelōhîm* in 1 Sam 28:13 and Isa 8:19–20 as descriptive of special status but not of divinity, and specifically states that this status should not be confused with divine status. For Albertz there is no indication in the Hebrew Bible that ancestors were worshipped or transformed into divine beings. He compares the Ugaritic text KTU 1.6, as well as the Ugaritic king list KTU 1.112 and the Phoenician inscription from Pyrgi KAI277 to support the claim that *rpm, ilnym, ilm* and *mtm* are used interchangeably to simply indicate the dead.[480]

Such material as the Hittite royal funerary ritual and the Ugaritic king list, which use similar terms for the dead have been used to support the idea of the divine status of the dead and of a cult. While these documents both imply that deceased royalty acquire a special status upon death which is akin to achieving divinity, we cannot use these texts to directly interpret the biblical evidence. First they predate the biblical text, secondly they apply only to royalty, and thirdly they are associated with a different religious and cultural milieu. In fact, Lewis makes the point that even the Ugaritic king list does not really suggest that the dead kings become like the high gods of the pantheon, and in fact the term may mean only that the dead became a *rpʾ*.[481]

Necromancy

If the dead have power to help or advise the living, the obvious response to this is to contact the dead and make use of this benefit. This is necromancy. When the familial relationship is unchanged by death, and the dead are cared for, a logical step in such a

[480] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 433.
[481] For a discussion of the Ugaritic king list see Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 47-52. For the Hittite material see Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 973 and the discussion in chapter 6 below.

relationship might be the practice of consulting the dead. However necromancy, at least the remnants of the practice that are attested in the Hebrew Bible, does not seem to be closely related to domestic religion, but is the province of professionals. Such a person who calls upon the dead on behalf of the living was called a יִדְּעֹנִי – a "knowing one" – and was said to have a "familiar spirit," an אוֹב. "Knowing one" and "familiar spirit" are almost always found together in the text (see Lev 19:13, 20:6, 20:27; Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28:3–9; 1 Kgs 23:24; 2 Chr 33:36, and Isa 8:19, 19:3, and 29:4).[482] Ezek 13:17–23 is particularly interesting in its depiction of the "hunting of souls" by magical means.

Interestingly "familiar spirit" is from the same root as "father." Schmidt argues that in Akkadian texts the terms *ilu* "god" and *etemmu* "ghost" may reference family/personal gods and deceased relatives (compare Isa 8:19 which uses *mētîm* and *ʾelōhîm* and 1 Sam 28:13–14 which sees Samuel and *ʾelōhîm* coming up from the earth).[483] While there may have originally been a connection with consulting the ancestors, none of the verses in which the practice of necromancy appears suggest family religion.[484] In addition the best clear case of necromancy, that of Saul's consultation of the shade of Samuel, does not involve a kinship relationship. 2 Kgs 21:6 and 2 Chr 33:6 associate such practices with child sacrifice by fire, and 2 Kgs 24:34 adds "images (*teraphim*) and idols." This practice is always treated in a negative fashion.

The most detailed narrative related to necromancy is, of course, 1 Samuel 28. In the set up to this narrative we are first reminded that Samuel, the great prophet and judge,

[482] See also Dolansky, *Now You See It, Now You Don't*, 44-45.
[483] Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," 89-90.
[484] Van Der Toorn also discards the idea of necromancy as being part of the lay or family sphere. All such instances are connected with "professionals."van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 232-233.

has died. Secondly and without transition comes the statement that Saul has removed all "mediums and wizards" וְשָׁאוּל הֵסִיר הָאֹבוֹת וְאֶת־הַיִּדְּעֹנִים מֵהָאָרֶץ – those with familiar spirits and the "knowing ones" – from the land. The word *karet* (הִכְרִית "he has cut off") resurfaces in 28:9 to describe the abolishment of the practice and its practitioners from the lands. The final element of the introduction occurs when we learn that Saul is in great need of divine assistance against the Philistines, but that he has failed to receive an answer by "orthodox" Israelite divination (dreams, the Urim, or by prophets). We can connect this with the motif of Saul as the rejected king. He no longer receives divine help or communication. In his distress Saul seeks out just such a "knowing one" as those whom he has banished on pain of death. This episode provides us with the clearest reference to the familiar spirit as being a dead human, rather than a demonic or other spiritual being, as Samuel is the spirit conjured. We are meant to envision the ghost coming "up" from the ground, just as Isaiah describes one who has a familiar spirit speaking out of the ground and whispering out of the dust (Isa 29:4). It is logical to understand the place of spirits as Sheol, "the pit," and "the earth," all of which are familiar terms associated with the underworld or the grave. Samuel asks: "Why have you disturbed me, bringing me up?" (1 Sam 28:15). This indicates both a state of repose for the dead, as well as a reluctance to return to the world of the living. The use of the verb רָגַז to mean disturb is found elsewhere (with a particular concentration in Isaiah) with a range of meanings, including to be moved, to shake, tremble, agitate, rage, disturb and to trouble, all of which have strong and usually negative implications.

The rest of the episode also resonates with fear and negativity. Samuel's response to Saul is terrifying. It foretells defeat and repeats the prophetic word of rejection that

Samuel spoke in life: "YHWH has turned from you and become your enemy…Because you did not obey the voice of YHWH, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore YHWH has done this thing to you today" (1 Sam 28:17–18). Saul falls to the ground in fear and physical exhaustion. Finally the necromancer states that she has "taken her life in her hands" in order to fulfill the king's demand. It is unclear if this suggests that there is danger associated with calling on the dead or if the necromancer is referring to the ban and punishment for such conjuring of spirits. The overall tone of the episode, and the very fact that this is undertaken by a rejected king who violates his own decree after receiving no response to his "orthodox" attempts at getting help, reinforces the negative perception of necromancy in the text.[485] This episode is so striking that it is used by the Chronicler as the part of the reason for the failure of the line of Saul to retain the kingdom: "So Saul died for his unfaithfulness; he was unfaithful to YHWH in that he did not keep the command of YHWH; moreover, he had consulted a medium, seeking guidance, and did not seek guidance from YHWH. Therefore YHWH put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse." (1 Chr 10:13–14).[486]

So far we have discussed several types of evidence regarding the veneration of the dead. As seen in chapter 2, there is clear and plentiful evidence of offerings both of food and material items buried with the dead. Secondly the relative silence of the biblical text has been identified by some scholars, particularly Friedman and Dolansky Overton, as being a product of the outlook of the authors and editors of the P, E, and D texts who sought to minimize references to veneration of the ancestors. Finally we have clear

[485] My discussion of this passage is very similar to that of T. Lewis. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 104-116.
[486] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 104-116.

references to at least one aspect of interaction with the dead that is clearly cultic (or occult) in nature and is strongly condemned: necromancy.

Now we need to add a third nuance to this growing body of evidence. We must comb through the remaining references to how the living respond to the dead. What we will find is that there is a gradation of actions which range from conventional, accepted and expected burial and mourning patterns, through those things that are judged by some biblical writers to be either excessive or inappropriate by being related to foreign practices. Necromancy is the clearest illustration of such a practice, but it is not only necromancy that is rejected. Among the few remaining references to offerings to the dead is Deut 26:14. This passage requires a statement by a worshiper to the priest that none of the tithe of the produce of the land has been offered to the dead. This indicates both that this was a known custom and that it was for the Deuteronomist something that defiled the tithe. "I have not eaten from it while in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I given any of it to the dead" (Deut 26:14). It is difficult to parse what it is about such actions that make the tithe unacceptable. The idea of uncleanness is present, and so uncleanness associated with death may be the primary issue (compare Num 19:11 and Lev 21:1). Van der Toorn takes a different approach and relates this to an issue of orthodoxy: the feeding and honoring of the dead are themselves taboo for the Deuteronomist and so make such a tithe taboo.[487] There is no explicit explanation to this effect, but such a conflict between the right worship of YHWH and a defiling veneration of the dead may be suggested by Psalm 16.

[487] van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 208-209; also Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 103-104.

This is a rich text. It incorporates themes of offering to the dead as well as language related to land and inheritance. Both themes are rejected in so far as they relate to the dead, and the alternative of reliance upon YHWH is presented: "As for the holy ones who are in the underworld, the mighty ones… I shall not bring their libations of blood, nor take their names on my lips. YHWH is my allotted portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places, yea my inheritance pleases me."[488] While Deut 26:14 and Psalm 16 both provide evidence that feeding the dead and/or making offerings to the dead was a known custom but resisted by some groups of biblical writers, other mourning customs were accepted (lamentations, funerary feasts) or treated with more ambivalence (gashing and extreme expressions of mourning). Gashing, for example, is forbidden in Lev 19:27 and Deut 14:1 but seems to be accepted as a normal part of mourning in Jeremiah 16. It may be that mourning for the recently deceased is viewed differently than ongoing veneration of the ancestors. Such a suggestion would be in accord with the idea that it was not death, burial and mourning, but ongoing attachment to ancestors and family tombs that presented a problem for the authors of E, D, P and the reformer kings.

Jer 16:6–8 speaks of the disruption of normal mourning customs "Both great and small shall die in this land; they shall not be buried, and no one shall lament for them; there shall be no gashing, no shaving of the head for them. No one shall break bread for the mourner, to offer comfort for the dead; nor shall anyone give them the cup of consolation to drink for their fathers or their mothers. You shall not go into the house of feasting (mourning) to sit with them, to eat and drink." Jeremiah does not condemn these

[488] van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 210. The text is difficult.

customs but uses their disruption as a way to illustrate the dire situation of Judah in his time and its coming destruction.

Here *bet marzēaḥ* is the term used for the place of mourning/feasting. The *marzēaḥ* is often understood to be a funerary association, and we see these types of groups extending from the Late Bronze Age into the Roman period. T. Lewis directly relates this institution to the *kispu* rituals of Mesopotamia.[489] Ritual meals on the occasion of a death would be conducted at the house of the *marzēaḥ.* More generally the *marzēaḥ* could be the banquet room for any feast, or even the association of people who engaged in these activities, either of celebration or of mourning. For R. Friedman "The *mrzḥ* refers to banqueting which became regularized, formally or loosely, by virtue of regular membership, schedule, or meeting-place. The occasion of meeting might be sorrowful or joyous, a mourning meal or a holiday feast."[490] The *marzēaḥ* of Jer 16:5 is (for Albertz) in parallel with 16:8, which uses a different word, *mišteh* for feasting. The only other instance of the word in the Hebrew Bible is found in Amos 6:7, which vocalizes the word as *mirzaḥ.* The verse is very vague: "the banquet of the loungers will pass away." It only indicates disruption of the activity and does not shed much light on its

[489] Lewis notes the widespread reference to this institution in Ugaritic and Akkadian texts from Ugarit, as well as Phoenician texts from Carthage and Piraeus, Aramaic texts from Elephantine, Palmyra, Nabatea, and others. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 80-94. For more on the Mesopotamian *kispu* ritual see Akio Tsukimoto, "Peace for the Dead, or *Kispu(m)* Again," *Orient* 45 (2010): 101-109; Miranda Bayliss, "The Cult of Dead Kin in Assyria and Babylonia," *Iraq* 35 (1973): 115-125.

[490] Richard E Friedman, "The MRZH Tablet from Ugarit," *Maarav* 2 (1980): 200. B. Halpern however emphasizes the funerary connections of such organizations. Baruch Halpern, "A Landlord-Tenant Dispute at Ugarit?" *Maarav* 2 (1979): 121-140. Brian Schmidt, however argues that the *marzēaḥ* is only directed towards advancing economic transactions among the social elite, and has "nothing to do with death or ancestor cults and only an occasional connection with funerary concerns. Schmidt's is a minority view. Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," 99. Of the four Ugaritic texts which mention this institution only one gives any firm indication that the purpose of the institution is funerary in nature. In KTU 1.2 (CTA 20.B) Danel invites the shades of the dead to his *marzēaḥ.* See also Patrick Miller, "The Mrzḥ Text." in *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets.* (ed. Loren R. Fisher; AnOrb 48; Rome, Italy: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971), 37-48 and T. L. Fenton, "The Claremont 'mrzḥ' Tablet, its Text and Meaning" UF 9 (1977) 71-76.

meaning.[491] Also interesting here is Amos 6:9, which describes a relative who "makes a burning for the dead" removing the bones from a house to bury (or burn) them. Incidentally this is a very odd verse and it is unclear what is being described. As cremation was extremely rare in Israel and Judah, the literal "burns the dead" is usually amended to "make a burning for the dead" which can be connected to Jer 34:6 and 2 Chr 16:14 (discussed earlier in relation to the prophecy to Zedekiah).

In Jeremiah such rituals associated with death are portrayed as customary, and their disruption as negative events. This may be understood by making a distinction between types of rites: mourning rites are acceptable and expected, and this may include a funerary feast. Another category of secondary care – the feeding of the dead on a regular basis – is treated with more ambivalence, and clearly prohibited are magical rites such as necromancy.[492]

Such signs of mourning as the funerary banquet are typical of ritual and outward signs of grief that are found in many places in the Hebrew Bible. K. Spronk and R. Albertz both include summaries of verses related to such biblical mourning customs. As mentioned earlier in connection with the response of David to the deaths of Saul, Jonathan, and later Absalom, lamentation cries and mourning songs are common and accepted forms of mourning (as found in 1 Kings 13:30; Jer 22:18 and Amos 5:16, as well as 2 Sam 1:17–27; 3:33–34, and 2 Sam 18:33–19:4). Outward physical signs include the tearing of clothing and the donning of sackcloth (also found in 2 Sam 3:31 and Jer 6:26). In addition to these specific things the neglect and abuse of the body itself is

[491] Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 479. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 88.
[492]This draws from Ranier's discussion of Schmidt's three part framework. Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 430-431.

described. Instead of washing and anointing, there is lying in dust or ashes or placing dust and ashes on the head (Jer 6:26, Ezek 27:30–31). Tearing, covering, or cutting of the hair or beard is also attested (Lev 10:6, Job 1:20, Jer 16:6, Ezek 24:17, Jer 41:5). Beating, cutting and fasting are also part of funeral practice (Jer 16:6, 41:5) but Lev 19:27 and Deut 14:1 prohibit self-mutilation as a rite of mourning. Most of these actions have parallels in the Canaanite world. The Baal cycle for example depicts the god El mourning for Baal's death (CTA5.6ff). His actions include putting dust on his head, wearing sackcloth, cutting his skin with a razor and cutting his beard as well.[493]

In concluding the discussion of the veneration of the dead in Israel and Judah, we can begin with a quotation from Lewis:

> A great deal of literature has been written in the past two decades by textual scholars and archaeologists alike that has emphasized the existence of a cult of the dead in ancient Israel characterized by an active existence of the shades, the quasi-deification of the dead, the practice of necromancy, and the post-interment feeding of the dead. According to what has been a broad consensus, texts…and archaeology complement one another and speak with a unified voice that there indeed were cults of the dead in West Semitic religious practice (Israel included)…[494]

As we have seen, not all scholars agree with this assessment. Works such as that of Philip Johnston and Brian Schmidt, have also served to some degree to erode that consensus. While Lewis does affirm the presence of a cult of the dead in Israel and Judah, he has also for many years served as a moderate voice in the discussion, arguing against both Wright and Kaufmann as well as Johnston and Schmidt. Lewis also serves as a

[493] Spronk, *Beautific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, 244; Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 455; Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," 35-53; also Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 100-101.
[494] Lewis, "How Far can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead," 186.

counter to such voices as de Moor and Spronk.[495] Compare K. Spronk, for example, who says that "Unlike, for instance, the Hittites and the peoples of Mesopotamia, the Israelites did not seem to be familiar with a cult of dead, in which the deceased ancestors are venerated and believed to have divine power to help or harm the living." Elsewhere in the same article Spronk calls the veneration of the dead a kind of "hidden heritage" of Israel and Judah which is taken for granted in many stories.[496]

Lewis and van der Toorn, each in their work point out the way in which commemorating the dead serves to maintain the connection between the living and the ancestors. This relates directly to clan solidarity. Van der Toorn, however, goes much further in his claim for the divinization of the ancestors. Van der Toorn draws together an interesting set of evidence relating to the importance of the ancestors in the family. Particularly interesting is his interpretation of personal names which include kinship terms. The idea of kinship terms in personal names as being representative of ancestor veneration is not a new idea – it was suggested in 1898 by H. Winckler, and 100 years later by Lipiński.[497]

These always masculine kinship terms, such as father, brother, and uncle, have previously been suggested as stand in terms for the name of a family god. Such names may also relate to the child being a "namesake" (van der Toorn uses the term "replacement") for a recently deceased relative. These names indicate that the entity referenced is both honored and powerful. Such names in Akkadian and Amorite include

[495] Lewis, "How Far can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead," 186-188; Schmidt, "Memory as Immortality: Countering the Dreaded "Death After Death" in Ancient Israelite Society," 87-101.
[496] Spronk, "Good Death and Bad Death in Ancient Israel According to Biblical Lore," 987. Van Der Toorn also uses the term "hidden heritage" and even makes this the title of his chapter on the Israelite cult of the dead. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 206-235.
[497] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 228-229.

phrases such as "my father protects" and "my father has given to me." Israelite names such as Abjathar/Ahjathar (my Father/Brother is excellent) and Ahiram (My brother is exalted) show veneration of these entities. These names also suggest the kind of powers or benefits that these kindred might confer: knowledge, help, and children are suggested by names such as Abida, Abiezer, Abishua, and Abiasaph. Good judgment and support are also implied by the names Abidan and Ahisamach.[498] However the name Abijah "my father is Yh" may contradict the idea of such kinship names as being related to ancestors and point instead to Yahweh as a reference for the name, at least in this case.

The most relevant point is not whether the dead are weak or strong, dangerous or beneficial, gods or ghosts, but that they are connected within the web of family, clan, and tribe. Remembering the name of the dead, *šumam zakāru*, illustrates this continued connection. Do the dead depend upon the living for sustenance, or do the living depend upon the dead for blessings? Perhaps, just as in living families, the dependencies and connections ebb and flow in both directions.

Conclusion

We have seen that the biblical texts contain a rich variety of evidence concerning the treatment of death in Israel and Judah. This evidence falls into multiple categories. Myth, legend, historical narratives, genealogies and law all contribute to our biblical picture of the treatment of death in Israel and Judah. From these categories we can pull several types of information. The most abundant evidence concerns the very prevalent belief that although death comes to all, the time and manner of its coming can signify either the peaceful end of the righteous or the just punishment of one who transgresses the divine decree. Such a transgression can either be a single moment of disobedience (Adam and

[498]Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 225-231.

Eve, Moses) or a pattern of habitual wickedness (King Ahab). This idea is woven through the biblical narratives from the earliest myths through the accounts of the kings of Judah and Israel. This idea of death as representing justice is so strong that we find attempts in the text to reconcile the actual recognized end of a figure (particularly kings) with the judgment passed upon them by the author of the text (particularly the Deuteronomist). We also find that the mention of burial practices associated with these narrative sections of the Torah are generally in accord with what we have found for archaeology, including family tombs and treatment of the body of the dead.

The presentation of death serves the purpose of the narrative not only in supporting the positive or negative judgment of the text upon a figure but also in emphasizing themes that flow through the text. Good examples of this include the connection with and claim upon the land of Canaan and the later Deuteronomic prohibition against religious syncretism.

What is less clear in the text is the continued relationship between the living and the dead and the idea of an afterlife. Such a continuation of the individual after death and a consequent continued relationship between the living and the dead is suggested by the archaeological pattern of grave goods. It also appears in multiple texts of the Torah, such as the prohibitions against necromancy and the giving of parts of the tithe to the dead, and the narrative of the raising of the shade of Samuel. These references are almost always treated negatively and appear to have been suppressed in some cases.

We have so far built a consistent picture of the treatment of the dead in Israel/ Judah and Aram through archaeology, inscriptions and the biblical text. The archaeological picture for Israel/Judah and Aram have a great number of parallels in

practice and both provide a fairly rich body of information. The inscriptional material for Israel is a fairly small body of material, but this is more than offset by the data supplied by the biblical text regarding death and the treatment of the dead. The biblical material is particularly valuable in that it derives from multiple sources and covers a majority of the span of time of the existence of the united and divided kingdoms. In addition it incorporates a number of different genres – myth, genealogy, narrative, court history, and prophecy. Despite the heavy attention paid to the idea of redaction of the texts and the overlay of an "orthodox" deuteronomistic perspective, this diversity allows us to uncover a wider representation of perspectives than would otherwise be possible.

Over the past century a large number or inscriptions (particularly related to royalty) have been uncovered in Aram, but none of them provide anything like a parallel to the biblical text. It is to these inscriptions that we now turn. We will find that while they lack the volume and complexity of the biblical text they still provide us with strong data regarding the expectations particularly of the upper classes and royalty as they approached the end of their lives. These expectations will have much in common with what we have learned from the biblical texts about the view of death in Israel/Judah and will also support the archaeology and inscriptions which we have already discussed.

CHAPTER 6: NEO-HITTITE /ARAMAIC FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS

Neo-Hittite Funerary Monuments: Veneration of the Dead in Aram

Our concluding discussion of veneration of the dead in Israel provides a useful point of connection for introducing the inscriptional material from Aram. The inscribed stele and monuments from the Aramaic speaking states have close connections with earlier Hittite monuments (as will be discussed below), and the imagery of these Aramaic monuments can shed light upon the status of the dead in Aram of the Iron Age. The question of the treatment of the dead arises in this context just as it does for the material from Israel and Judah and the biblical texts.

We have seen that the situation in Israel is quite complex. While not attested in inscriptions, the provision of offerings is attested in Israel and Judah with very few exceptions in mortuary archaeology. The biblical material also suggests veneration of the dead wherein the relationship between the living and the dead was maintained. In Aram the evidence from inscriptions and monuments is very clear regarding the importance of offerings for the dead. Requests for offerings are made and such rituals are depicted in stone. Such care for the dead is also found in the Hittite material. Antecedents to the ritual of maintaining sacrifices for the good of the dead – often called "feeding the dead" can be found in the widespread *kispu* ritual of Mesopotamia. Legal documents from Susa, Nippur, Nuzi, and Mari attest to the practice, which was often an incorporated aspect of inheritance and adoption contracts. Offering *kispu* for dead parents was considered a crucial part of the obligations of children. It was so important that the lack of such

offerings could cause a family ghost to become malevolent and dangerous.[499] We can also mention here of course the Ugaritic *Tale of Aqhat,* in which the man Daniel needs a son "Who sets up the stele of his ancestral spirits, in the holy place the protectors of his clan; who frees his spirit from the earth, from the dust guards his footsteps."[500] This reference probably encompasses both the act of setting up a memorial stele for a parent as well as the offering of sacrifices for the dead. Also relevant is the Baal cycle, which depicts the goddess Anat as she mourns for Baal. Her actions follow a familiar pattern: she "weeps…bewails and buries him" and then makes a very large sacrifice of buffalo, small livestock, and wild game as "a tribute to puissant Baal."[501]

While the long standing custom of *kispu* in Mesopotamia and the Levant may have had an impact upon our Aramaic evidence, particularly through the conduit of Assyrian influence, similar rituals were also part of the Hittite heritage of these Aramaic states. We see this connection in especial clarity when we compare Hittite and Aramaic/Neo-Hittite funerary steles. We will discuss the Hittite/Luwian steles first as a group, then move on to more detailed investigation of the Aramaic material. One of the distinctive features of the carved steles both in Hittite and "Neo-Hittite" Aramaic contexts is the presentation of either an individual or a couple with a table laden with food and drink. This scene, repeated over and over in slightly varying ways, represents the continuation of connection between the dead and the living. The items portrayed

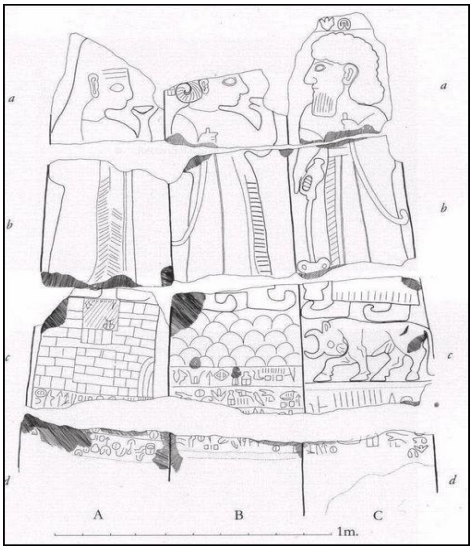
[499] In addition to inheritance and adoption documents we should see for example Šamši-Adad's journey to Mari to carry out the ritual before the ancestors, as well as another text related to Mari – a prophecy of Dagan which reminds the king to carry out the offerings for the dead. Bonatz, "Syrio-Hittite Funerary Monuments: A Phenomenon of Tradition or Innovation," 196; Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 123-125; also Aaron Skaist, "The Ancestor Cult and Succession in Mesopotamia," in *Death in Mesopotamia: XXVI Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (ed. Bendt Alster; Mesopotamia 8; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 123-128.
[500] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 119-120. See also the discussion by T. Lewis in Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 53-71.
[501] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 110-111.

relate to regeneration and renewal – bread, grain, grapes, beer and wine. Interestingly female figures are often depicted holding the distaff and spindle, the word for which in Hittite is ^{GI}*šḫuiša* and can be derived from the *ḫuiš*, "to live." Such spindles are frequently found in graves in Aram as well as in Israel. Male figures sometimes appear with bow and arrows. Compare the Hittite royal funerary ritual which specifies that on day two of the burial rites "if it was the king, a bow and arrows are put into his hand; if it was the queen – a distaff and spindle."[502] Some steles depict another figure, often interpreted as a descendant of the deceased, holding a fan as a symbol of his responsibility for maintaining the sacrifices related to the dead.[503]

The later monuments from Aram show continuity with earlier images and customs, but D. Bonatz proposes a change after the 10th century BCE from images that depict the deceased making offerings to the gods to images of the dead receiving offerings from their descendants. These monuments examined by Bonatz are largely Neo-Hittite in style, and the inscribed steles are in the Luwian language. It is important to discuss these briefly as background material to the Aramaic inscriptions. These steles allow us to make comparisons with the Aramaic material and also to illustrate the cultural intermixing that has already been established by the variation in burial practices in Aram. Bonatz further indicates that the libation to the gods scenes ended as the funerary repast type scene came to the fore. This transition is illustrated by two steles, from Darende and Ispekçir (see Figures 40 and 41). On the first the King of Melid pours out water before the god Šarruma. On the second he performs the same libation for his grandfather and

[502] Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 24.
[503] Bonatz, "Syrio-Hittite Funerary Monuments: A Phenomenon of Tradition or Innovation," 192-193.

grandmother.[504] Could this change indicate that by this point deceased kings were understood to have become like the gods? The Hittite royal funerary ritual does state in the very first line, as a description of death: "If a great [si]n occurs in Hattusa – either a king or queen becomes a god" (and similar wording is repeated at other points in the ritual).[505] This is very suggestive, but also may be a euphemism for death and not a real theological/cosmological belief. If it were the case that royalty became identified with the gods, was this the same for the less important dead?[506]



Figures 40 and 41: **The Ispekçir stele (left) and the Darende Steles (right)**
Tayfun Bilgin "Hittite Monuments," n.p.
Online: http://www.hittitemonuments.com/

[504] Bonatz, "Syrio-Hittite Funerary Monuments: A Phenomenon of Tradition or Innovation," 204-205. See Figures 40 and 41; Tayfun Bilgin, "Hittite Monuments," n.p. [cited 15 September 2014]. Online: http//www.hittitemonuments.com/.

[505] Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 47.

[506] Porter, "The Dynamics of Death:Ancestors, Pastoralism, and the Origins of a Third-Millennium City in Syria," 325. Porter argues that the role of the ancestor is created through the specific processes associated with social treatments of death. The changes wrought by these processes endow the deceased with a new social persona. "Making an ancestor involves more than separating the deceased from the living…It also involves the establishment of differences among the dead, those who qualify for ancestor status and those who do not.There seem to be two different systems, at least in the third millennium for Syria. At Mari, for example, the practice of *kispum* (*kispu)* suggests that most or all members of past generations became ancestors. At Ebla however, the system was more exclusionary. The kings and queens of Ebla entered into a deified-like state. In Israel it appears that there were no distinctions among categories regarding the care of the dead – all were understood to receive the same care. Albertz, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 432; Xella, "Death and the Afterlife in Canaanite and Hebrew Thought," 2060.

The number of such monuments shows that deified or not both royalty and commoners could hope for a memorial in stone. Bonatz counts (as of 2000) 30 statues, 70 carved stele and 13 inscribed-only stele from Aram which can be classified as funerary monuments (many in the Luwian language).[507]

The imagery used on the Aramaic monuments has clear connections with this Hittite tradition, and many contain funerary repast scenes that are very similar to the Hittite monuments described above. There are some departures from the Hittite format in the inscriptional material however. We can compare the concerns expressed in the Aramaic inscriptions with the Hittite/Luwian language monuments from Kululu, Tilsevet and Carchemish. On none of the Hittite steles described by Hawkins in his article "More Late Hittite Funerary Monuments" is there any mention of grave goods other than food offerings, nor are there injunctions against removing or disturbing the body of the deceased, both of which figure in the Aramaic steles. The Hittite monuments describe the good character of the deceased (which we also see in the Neirab II inscription). They also indicate an understanding of the soul or spirit as separate from the body, and the possibility of the individual dwelling with the gods. This is not as clear in the Aramaic material, although there is reference to the deceased eating and drinking with the god Hadad.

The often repeated phrase "I myself recorded/recalled my times" is found in Hittite and Neo-Hittite inscriptions but not in Aramaic. Examples include Carchemish A18b, A5b, A18h, as well as Tilsevet. This phrase may refer to the erection of the stele, but since this occurs in the Tilsevet inscription along with the remark "this stele my

[507] Bonatz, "Syrio-Hittite Funerary Monuments: A Phenomenon of Tradition or Innovation," 189.

children erected in goodness for me" (Tilsevet) it may be that this is an idiom meant to signify "I lived my life" – particularly as it occurs immediately after the introduction of the individual's name.[508]

Below are a few more notable lines from the Hittite inscriptions:

"When I shall go away into the presence of the gods from the rule of Tuwatis" (Kululu1)

"The gods loved my time (?) and they put into me a beloved soul" (Kululu 4)

" I am Ilalis the ruler, the scribe (or "the Ruler's scribe"). By my justice [and] my …to me my children gave (?) and to me(?) good bread…I went away, my children had this stele set up for me"(Kululu 3).[509]

Before we can move to the Aramaic funerary monuments and inscriptions we have another component of Hittite data to consider. The funerary ritual for Hittite royalty, *šalliš waštaiš*, mirrors many of the ideas found on the monuments. It proposes aspects of life that can continue after death, for example that the king will continue to be able to plow his own land.[510] This is a much more positive view of the afterlife than what we have seen thus far.

The Hittite funerary ritual is particularly important because it gives explicit descriptions of ritual and also quotes the liturgical material for the rite. This is precisely

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[508] H. Hoffner notes that the most common terms for the lifespan are such phrases as "long years", "long and wide years" or to "spin" years. A short life is suggested by "short or few years" or "called-in" (recalled) years. Here the term "I recalled my times" does not seem to have the same indication of a short life. H. Hoffner, "Hittite Terms for the Life Span," in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (eds. J. Marks and R. Good; Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1987), 53-56. Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I*, 185-187.

[509] J. D. Hawkins, "More Late Hittite Funerary Monuments," Pages 189-197 in *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Tahsin Ozguc* (Ankara: Tanita Foundation of Anatolian Civilizations Research and Publicationsi, 1989).

[510] Hoffner,Harry, "A Scene in the Realm of the Dead," Pages 191-199 in *Scientific Humanist: Studies in Honor of Abraham Sachs* (eds. Erle Leichty and Maria Dej Ellis; Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1988), 193. The extant copies of this ritual date to the 14th -13th century, and archaisms therein suggest that this was a long-standing and repeated ritual used for centuries. Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 12-14, 649.

what we have been missing in our data thus far. Lacking descriptions and explanations of ritual we can only hope to engage in informed speculation regarding the meaning of grave goods and possible ritual remains. In light of the very close cultural connection between Hittite culture and religion and the Neo-Hittite states it is certainly relevant to consider this material. While the Hittite royal ritual is somewhat removed from the burial practice of common people in the Neo-Hittite states, it clearly connects with our Aramaic monuments. The theme of food and drink for the dead are apparent in the Hadad and Panamuwa text, and the images of the Neirab Se'Gabbari and the Katamuwa steles.

In the Hittite ritual on day 1 and 2 the deceased was offered food and drink, but after the statue was made – on days 7, 8, 10, and 12 to 14 – it was the statue which is given the offerings, as the body was burned on the night of day 2.[511] In this way the body was disposed of before corruption set in, but the funerary rites continued centered around the statue. Identification is made between the individual and the statue – a sort of transfer of identity and personhood from the body of the dead to the stone image. The point of transfer is fairly clear. The statue of the deceased was placed onto the pyre itself and offerings are made to it. The place of burning the body became the place of honoring the statue, which thereafter served as a representation of the dead.[512]

After the burning of the body and after the fire had been extinguished with wine, beer, and *walhi* (and unidentified liquid) a table and a meal were set for those who "helped to gather the bones" and the statue of the deceased was decorated with fruit in the center of the pyre. The ritual also describes further sacrifices of oxen and sheep. Sacrifices were offered to the gods and goddesses, to ancestors, and to the most recently

[511] Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 22-23
[512] Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 265-267

deceased.[513] For 14 days the rites continued, and included further animal offerings, as well as milk and grapes/grapevines/wine, fruit, and oil. Personal items such as clothing were burned and the statue of the dead continued to receive ritual treatment, being moved from chariot to tent to throne. The participants in the ritual continued to eat meals together as part of the rites.

Inscriptions from Śam'al

Having briefly made our connections with the funerary art and rituals that were central to the Hittite background of the Neo-Hittite/Aramaic states, we can proceed to one of the most important sources of Aramaic funerary inscriptional material from Aram: the state of Śam'al. The city which served as the capital of the state (located at the present day site of Zincirli Höyük) was founded towards the end of the 10th century BCE on the site of a small Early/Middle Bronze Age town. The site is located in a valley between the Taurus and Amanus mountains in what is modern day southeastern Turkey in the province of Gaziantep. Sparse evidence of occupation in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age suggests the site was either abandoned or existed only as a very small village prior to being refounded in the late-tenth/early-ninth century. At this time the site was expanded and heavily fortified. Fortifications included a double-wall system that encircled the city. These walls included archer towers spaced at regular intervals on both sets of walls. Not only fortifications but other impressive civic architecture is also attested, including a series of carved orthostats that lined a route from the main gate into the city. Five massive stone lions were also discovered in a pit which date to this time.[514] These

[513]Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 265-267

[514] J. David Schloen and Amir S. Fink, "Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey," NEA 72 (2009): 203-219; Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, 55-96.

impressive public works are usually attributed to the new Aramean dynasty which was probably founded by the ruler Gabbār, whose name is mentioned in the late 9th century Kilamuwa inscription.

The name Śam'al, meaning north, may suggest that the city belonged to a northern branch of the Yu'addi tribe of which Gabbār was chief or ruler. [515] We should also note a colossal statue of a king that had been erected in the early ninth century and deliberately buried in the aftermath of a great fire in about 670 BCE. Major later finds also attest to the continued prosperity of the state. In addition to the well known Kilamuwa (Kulamuwa) orthostat, richly decorated palaces were adorned with a large number of carved orthostats. These works depict musicians and banqueting scenes, military processions, hunting images, and sphinx creatures with human heads. We can compare these works with those of Tell Halaf (Gozan) and Carchemish.

These palaces can be briefly listed as follows: Hilani IV is associated with the reign of Bar-Rakib from 733–713, and Hilani III, has been dated to the second half of the reign of Bar-Rakib or later and was destroyed by fire sometime between 676–671 BCE. Hilani II was built shortly after the destruction of the earlier complex. Hilani I was also destroyed in 676–671, after which an Assyrian palace was built on its ruins.[516] It is clear that the royal building programs, including defensive walls and palaces, dominated the structure of the city. In addition, all of our inscriptions which we will address below are either royal or closely associated with the royal court. It is useful therefore at this point to

[515] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 694; and Schloen and Fink, *Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey*, 203-219; Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 239.

[516] Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, 55-92. See also Dominik Bonatz, "Art," Pages 205-242 in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (ed. Herbert Niehr; HOS 106; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 205-242. For the excavation reports see J. David Schloen and Amir S. Fink "Zincirli Expedition" OIAR (2006-2007) : 109-113 and Schloen and Fink, *Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey*, 203-219.

set forth the king list (as established by Lipiński) for chronological reference as we proceed (see Figure 42 below).[517]

Reconstructed Royal Lineage of Śam'al

900–880	Gabbār
880–870	Bānihu
870–850	Hayyā(n)
850–840	Sa'īl
840–810	Kilamuwa
810–790	Qarli
790–750	Panamuwa I
750–745	Bar-Ṣūr
745–740	Usurper
740–733	Panamuwa II
733–713	Bar-Rakib

Figure 42: Reconstruction of Royal Lineage of Śam'al (based upon the Kilamuwa inscription, the annals of Shalmaneser III, the Hadad inscription, the Panamuwa inscription, and the first Bar Rakib inscription). Adapted from Edward Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their History, Culture, Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 247.

Śam'al held the key to a major pass over the Amanus mountains through which travel and trade between the Mediterranean and the upper Euphrates River passed. In addition to the importance of its location for trade, the area had a great many natural advantages, such as readily available timber from the mountains and a climate which

[517] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 238-247.

allowed rain-fed agriculture and the pasture of livestock, as well as abundant wild game.[518]

At this site as at others there can again be seen the mixing of Aramean and Hittite elements. There were at least two components of the population; the Aramaic *Y'dy*, whom Lipiński equates with the *b'rrm* of contemporary texts, and the Luwian population probably designated by the term *mškbm* in the Kilamuwa inscription.[519] The independent kingdom of Śam'al lasted only from approximately 900 to 713 BCE, at which time it was annexed by Assyria. The native dynasty was removed and an Assyrian governor was installed. No large scale destruction is present at this time, so it appears that the annexation was, for an Assyrian takeover, comparatively non-violent. The original citadel wall was replaced by a narrower wall during the period of direct Assyrian rule, but otherwise the city was little altered. Likewise, when the Assyrian empire began its collapse in the latter part of the seventh century, the city was not destroyed but evacuated. Most of the population, both Assyrian rulers and Aramean subjects, as well as all movable goods, were taken from the city. The later history of the site shows only a small area of occupation in the Persian period and no evidence of occupation after the Greek conquest.[520]

A Note on Dialects

Śam'al contains by far the largest number and most important funerary monuments and inscriptions from the Aramaic territories. We have a number of major monuments from Śam'al to consider: the Hadad inscription, the Katamuwa stele, the

[518] Schloen and Fink, "Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey" 203-219.
[519] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 235-236.
[520] Schloen and Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," 1-13; and Schloen and Fink, "Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey," 203-219.

Panamuwa inscription, and the Bar Rakib inscription KAI216 (one of several from this king). While closely related in content and not far separated in time, these pieces do have linguistic distinctions that it is best to note before proceeding to each item. Regarding the Aramaic material in general Greenfield has this to say:

> It is useless to speculate about the Aramaic language in the last quarter of the second millennium when the Arameans make their entry on the stage of history. Nor is anything to be gained by assuming the existence of a vague "Northwest Semitic" common language, of which Aramaic was a part, for this early period. All the material available points to the logical assumption that the Arameans spoke a clearly recognized language when they are identified in the sources as Arameans.[521]

The most detailed historical study of the language of the Zincirli monuments is probably still Paul-Eugène Dion's 1974 work *La Langue de Yau'di*, although he focuses primarily upon the Hadad and Panamuwa inscriptions (later discoveries being as yet unavailable to him). He states that the language of Śam'al is most often in accordance with the other NW Semitic dialects attested in the 9th–8th centuries, that the unity of dialects is more apparent in the syntax (which is "virtually identical" with Old Aramaic) than the morphology, which can reflect stylistic variation.[522] Dion focuses upon contact between "Yaudine" and Old Aramaic and Canaanite, and sees also traits which were unique to the first half of the first millennium. For Dion this suggests that by 1400

[521] Jonas C. Greenfield, "The Dialects of Early Aramaic," JNES 37 (1978): 93. Greenfield notes that while H.L. Ginsberg and E.Y. Kutscher recognized several dialects of early Aramaic, many handbooks continue to approach the language as an undifferentiated whole.

[522] Paul-Eugène Dion, *La Langue de Yau'di: Description et Classement de l'Ancien Parler de Zencirli dans le Cadre des Langues Sémitique du Nord-Ouest* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1974), 319-322. Dion's very long French work is sometimes difficult to follow in its organization, especially for non-native readers. His very concise English article presents the major conclusions of the book and is most helpful. Paul-Eugène Dion, "The Language Spoken in Ancient Śam'al," JNES 37 (1978): 115-118.

Canaanite was separating from Aramaic and Śam'alian, and by about 1000 Śam'alian was "becoming increasingly independent" from Aramaic.[523]

In the area of Zincirli alone inscriptions in three distinct dialects have been uncovered (in addition to the Akkadian represented by the well known Esarhaddon Stele). These have been identified as "Samalian" (represented by the Hadad and Panamuwa inscriptions), Old Aramaic (the first Bar Rakib inscription), and Phoenician (the Kilamuwa inscription).[524] While there are identifiable and systematic variations, the dialects found at Zincirli are so similar that one must hunt for the distinctions rather than remark upon the similarities.[525] Out of 37 linguistic phenomena of Samalian which are not common to (all) North-West Semitic dialects of the time, 22 isoglosses are shared between Samalian and Aramaic. The majority of traits which distinguish Samalian from

[523] Dion, *La Langue De Yau'di*, 319-343; Dion, *The Language Spoken in Ancient Śam'al*, 118.

[524] Schloen and Fink, "Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey," 203-219. In addition, Dennis Pardee identifies the newest recovered stele, the Katamuwa inscription (found in 2009), as a new dialect in part based upon noun morphology (the m.pl.abs noun ywmn [line 10] and possibly ṣwd/rn and krmn [line 4]) and the absence of the definite article on any substantival form.Dennis Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," BASOR 356 (2009): 51-71.

[525] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 52-53. But consider Kaufman's caution concerning the use of isoglosses "The second approach to classification – the approach most often used by students of Semitic – is to assemble a list of isoglosses distinguishing between the dialects/languages in question…Typically such an argument runs: "This dialect does not have features x, y, and z of language A. It does have features i, j, and k of language B. Therefore it is language B." While the clustering of isoglosses for Kaufman allows us to categorize dialects, he warns against the assignment of equal weight to all such isoglosses. Stephen Kaufman, "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects," Pages 45-47 in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 45-47. One might also suggest that a short text may have idiosyncrasies due to the scribe or other factors which may falsely appear as isoglosses.
A few examples of recognized issogloses are as follows: The 1.c.s independent pronoun is ʾnk in Phoenician and Samalian and ʾnh in Old Aramaic, and the particle wt- is a form showing only in Samalian and the variation of dialect found on the Katamuwa stele. Words with original ḍ show as q in Aramaic and as ṣ in Phoenician. Opinion varies as to what primarily distinguishes Śam'alian from Aramaic. For Pardee the primary positive isogloss of Samalian is the marking of the m.pl.abs. nouns with –w (for nominative case) or –y (oblique case –accusative or genitive) without a following consonant. Dion, "The Language Spoken in Ancient Śam'al,"115-118. Dion gives such examples as the retention of case-distinction in the masculine plural and the lack of any definite article. Dion, however states that "the only significant innovation peculiar to Śam'alian is the loss of final *–n* or *–m* on the masculine plural ending", with other peculiarities being due to archaisms.

Aramaic between the 9th and 8th centuries indicate a continued connection but a period of autonomous development from about 1000 BCE.[526]

Interestingly, the Samalian king Bar Rakib set up his memorial inscription for his father Panamuwa in Samalian but his own inscriptions (such as KAI216 and KAI218) are in a dialect that Greenfield calls "Mesopotamian Aramaic" (elsewhere called Old Aramaic) which is much closer to that used by his Assyrian masters.[527] The Neirab inscriptions as well are in this dialect, which fits with the style and content of the steles which have clear Assyrian/Babylonian influence, but show features that suggest a transition from Old to Official or Imperial Aramaic.

[526] Dion, *La Langue de Yau'di*, 338-341.
[527] Greenfield, "The Dialects of Early Aramaic," 95. For Greenfield: "The most distinctive features of this dialect are phonological: two emphatic consonants are not found in the same vocable..." Kaufman also uses the term. For him "Mesopotamian Aramaic" broadly included texts from Mesopotamia up to the Aramaic incantation from Uruk (possibly the Selucid Period). Ilsung Yun, "A Case of Linguistic Transition: The Nerab Inscriptions," JSS 51 (2006): 20.

The Hadad Inscription (KAI 214)

Figure 43: The Hadad Monument
West Semitic Research Project, n.p.
Online:
http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/ancient_texts/ hadad.jpg

After this somewhat lengthy but nonetheless important introduction, we can now move to our first major Aramaic funerary inscription from Śam'al, which is frequently referred to as the Hadad statue. Early archaeological work in Zincirli was undertaken between 1888 and 1902. Five campaigns were sponsored by the Berlin Museum and the newly founded *Orient-Comité* under the direction of Felix von Luschan and Carl Humann. The Hadad monument was discovered in 1890 at Gerçin, which is only 7 km

from Zincirli, and the statue now resides in the Staatliche Museum in Berlin. Gerçin may have been the site of a royal necropolis during the reign of Panamuwa I (based upon the discovery of the Panamuwa inscription) but the site has not been excavated thus far.[528] In addition to this inscribed Hadad monument Gerçin has also yielded another large (2.85 meter tall) basalt statue of Hadad with a horned headdress. Several other large statue fragments have also been unearthed here.[529]

The inscription that concerns us is carved into a large statue of the god Hadad (see Figure 43).[530] The statue itself makes an imposing figure – a deity with an oversized head wearing a crown or cap, on which appear the same type of "horns" as are frequently found on the figures of kings and deities throughout Mesopotamia, as well as a stylized beard. The arms have been broken off but originally were bent at the elbows and stretched out in front of the god. The statue is cracked in several places. We learn from the inscription that the statue was dedicated by King Panamuwa I (790–750 BCE). The inscription is written in the Samalian dialect of Aramaic in the first half of the 8th century. This dating is determined both by its close relationship in orthography to the Sefire treaty as well as to the accepted dating of the reign of Panamuwa I.

The inscription is quite long and complex. The Hadad text is the first document from Zincirli that differs linguistically from the earlier Phoenician (but palaeographically diverges very little). The dialect is still not the same as standard Old Aramaic. Dion proposes that the distinct and local usages of the language are a mix of conformity and

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[528] Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, 55; André Lemaire and Benjamin Sass, "The Mortuary Stele with Samʾalian Inscription from Ördekburnu Near Zincirli," BASOR 369 (2013): 57-136. Gerçin was also the find site for a number of other large monuments.
[529] Niehr, "Religion," 183-185.
[530] John C. L. Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II: Aramiac Inscriptions* (London: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1975), 60; West Semitic Research Project, "Hadad Statue (Image)," n.p.[cited 21 May 2014. Online: http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/ancient_texts/hadad.jpg .

originality – for example the increased use of *matres lectionis* – the use of *vav* and *yod* in the interior or words, and the use of *alef* and *yod* to indicate final /ê/. The scribes accepted certain Aramaic innovations but also expressed a fair amount of liberty in the conventions of their writing.[531]

The opening section includes a number of well-known themes, such as the claim of divine bestowal of legitimacy, aid, and favor upon the king from the time of his youth.[532] The ending section provides a number of hypothetical instances of injustice and violence among kindred and a command not to engage in such bloodthirsty behavior. Our interest here lies in the section that provides instructions for offering sacrifices on behalf of the deceased king. The inscription claims that through this sacrifice the dead will be able to "eat and drink" with the god Hadad, to whom the statue is dedicated. Here remembrance and sacrifice are linked with the welfare of the deceased.

The relevant section comprises lines 14 to 18 and reads as follows:

ו[ה]קמת נצב הדה זן ומקם פנמו בר קרל מלך

יאדי ומן אן חד לפנמו בני יאחז [חט]ר וישב על משבי ויסעד אברו ויזבח

הדד זן [פא] יא[מ]ר את נשי ויזבח [הדד ז]ן פכא יזבח הדד וזכר אשם הדד או

כא פא יאמר [תאכל נב]ש פנמו עמך ותש[תי נ]בש פנמו עמך עד יזכר נבש פנמו עם

[ח]ד[ד] בים .....באה זא יתן ל[הדד וי]רקי בה שי להדד ולאל ולרכבאל ושם

14….I have raised a statue for this Hadad and a place for Panamuwa, son of Qarli, King

[531] Dion, *La Langue de Yau'di*; and Dion, "The Language Spoken in Ancient Śam'al," 115-118.
[532] Hayim Tawil, "Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zakir, and the Nerab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions," *Or* 43 (1974): 40-65. Compare as just one of many examples the new Luwian stele from Til Barsip: "The gods gave to me my paternal succession…these gods loved me to fullness…"Bunnens, *A New Luwian Stele and the Cult of the Storm-God at Til Barsib-Masuwari*, 14-15.

15 of Yau'di. Now (if/whoever among) one of Panamuwa's sons should grasp [the scept]er and sit on my throne…and maintain power and do sacrifice

16 To this Hadad and should say "By thee I swear", and do sacrifice to [this Hadad] whether in this way he does sacrifice to Hadad and invokes the name of Hadad or

17 in another, let him say "may the soul of Panamuwa [e]at with you, may the soul of Panamuwa drink with you." Let him keep remembering the soul of Panamuwa with

18 Hadad; in the days…this…let him give to [Hadad] and may he look favorably upon it as a tribute to Haddad and El and Rakkabel and Shamash …. [533]

The inscription contains several scribal errors (for example דדד instead of הדד in line two, and חלבתי instead of חלבבת י in lines 10 and 12) but none in our section of interest. The text includes a few interesting features, such as the use of א instead of ה as a *mater lectionis* (as in שתא in line 9) and the assimilation of [י] to [t] (as in יתמר in line 10) As with the Phoenician Kilamuwa and the Aramaic Sefire treaty [b] is sometimes substituted for [p]. Prothetic א is quite common.[534] Here feminine plural nouns end in ת as in Canaanite rather than the expected Aramaic ending ן. A few vocabulary items show a connection to Canaanite as well, such as אמ גם, הרג, זר, חלל, ישר, כרת, and מקמ. [535]

The inscription also calls down misfortune upon anyone who neglects to fulfill this request/obligation, including being unable to eat or sleep, being filled with nameless terror, and finally ending by being murdered by his (or her) own kinsmen (a motif that arises again later in the inscription): "may (Hadad) not allow him to eat because of rage,

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[533] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 67-68. also H. Donner and R. Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften Vol. 1.* (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1966), 39-40; and Dion, *La Langue de Yau'di*, 26-32.
[534] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 60-64.
[535] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 62-64.

and sleep may he withhold from him in the night, and may terror be given to him…my kinsmen or relatives…put to death…"[536]

This inscription does not serve only as a memorial stele. The latter part of the stele gives directives for future members of the dynasty to refrain from conspiracy and violence against one another. It is quite interesting that beginning with the line "(if or from among) one of Panamuwa's son's should grasp the scepter…" the tone of the inscription becomes much more conditional. The idea here of "grasping" the scepter by the new king contrasts with "being given" the symbol of kingship by the gods, as was claimed by Panamuwa. Only if the new king fulfills all of these obligations of sacrifice and right behavior is his reign justified. If the conditions are not met a curse rather than a blessing is invoked upon the descendant.

While the statue is an image of Hadad and it is to Hadad that the required sacrifices are made, other divinities are also mentioned, including El, Resheph, Rakkabel, and Shamash. The hope expressed is that the deceased king will eat and drink with Hadad in a positive construction of the afterlife. This idea of the dead eating and participating in ritual meals is well attested in Babylonia and Ebla as well as in banquet scenes on many other Neo-Hittite and Aramaic steles.[537] This item is dedicated by the king himself. It is not a funerary monument per se, which would normally be dedicated by the son of the deceased, but rather a votive object. In the well-attested and longstanding tradition of royal monuments throughout Mesopotamia the king sets forth the accomplishments and prosperity of his reign. This item crosses genres, however, in that in addition to being a votive object it also gives direction for the proper honoring of the soul of the king after

[536] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 68-69
[537] Seth L. Sanders, "The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katumuwa Stele," BASOR 369 (2013): 49.

his death. Finally the statue acts as a guide or law as it sets forth expectations for the proper behavior of generations to come. This statue is much more than a funerary monument, and more than a votive object. It is both at once and also a writ of behavior for future generations. This is a somewhat different application of the theme of the connection between generations which has been explored thus far. Not only is the later generation required to continue sacrifices on behalf of their ancestor, but in the interest of protecting the royal line the behavior of members of the royal family towards one another is constrained under threat of a curse.

The Katamuwa (Kuttamuwa) Stele

The Katumuwa stele (sometimes vocalized Kuttamuwa) is an 8th century funerary stele discovered at Zincirli. The earlier German excavation of the mound from 1888–1902 first uncovered the capital city with its mix of Hittite/Luwian and Aramaic elements.[538] Over a century later The Neubauer Expedition, sponsored by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, began new excavation work in 2006. The stele was discovered in the 2009 season (see Figure 44).[539]

[538] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, 233-234. Good examples of this include the 1888 discovery at nearby Ördekburnu of a stele written in Aramaic script but including three hieroglyphic Luwian signs and religious terms of Anatolian origin, and the 1888 discovery at Karaburçlu of a stele with a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription.

[539] University of Chicago Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, "The Katamuwa Stele," n.p. [cited 25 May 2014]. Online: https://zincirli.uchicago.edu/page/inscriptions.

Figure 44: The Katamuwa stele
University of Chicago Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, n.p.
Online: https://zincirli.uchicago.edu/page/inscriptions.

It is the most detailed NW Semitic funerary inscription from this period, and also the first discovered in an undisturbed context. No human remains were found, so this was a chapel of remembrance rather than a grave, but vessel fragments were uncovered near the monument. This evidence supports the existence of funerary monuments separate from the body of the deceased, as is also suggested by the statement from the Panamuwa inscription that the King of Assyria created an image "by the way." Other statues have also been interpreted in this way, as for example those in the cult room at Tell Halaf, some of the statues found at Gerçin, and a very early statue of a "deified king" outside the

southeastern wall of Palace J at Zincirli. All of these have places for offerings (cup marks or flat surfaces) and are viewed as being part of a funerary practice whereby the image represents the deceased and food and drink are presented to it. This is also supported by the Hittite funerary rituals which emphasize the transference of a crucial essence or "soul" from the dead to the image and thus the ultimately superfluous nature of the body in the funerary cult.[540]

The Katamuwa stele is a basalt stele that is about 99cm tall, 72cm wide and weighs approximately 160 kg. It was found in its original location against a wall of a small room and with its fixing tenon still inserted into a flagstone base. The monument was accompanied by a nearby footed stone bowl that is similar to one carved upon the stele.[541] The stele was oriented towards the east, which is the same direction as the grave next to *hilani I,* as well as the two grave statues at Tell Halaf. The mention of the sun god Shamash in the inscription may reinforce a connection with the rising sun, as pointed out by H. Niehr.[542] This major god is also mentioned in a very large number of inscriptions and treaties, and his inclusion here may not be so much due to his links to funerary belief and practice but simply to his overall importance in the pantheon. Ugaritic texts, however, do emphasize the role of Shamash in relationship with the dead and the underworld. It is he who ensures that offerings to the dead are received by them, so the suggestion that here Shamash is specifically related to the funerary context may have merit.[543]

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[540] Niehr, "Religion," 183-191.
[541] Schloen and Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," 5.
[542] Niehr, "Religion," 183.
[543] See discussion by Lewis in *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 38-46.

The letters of the inscription are comparatively large and deeply carved. Because the stele was so close to the surface the upper part had been damaged by agricultural activity (plowing) which infringed upon a winged sun-disk at the top of the stele. Otherwise the inscription is "almost perfectly preserved. [544]

Dennis Pardee situates the dialect of this inscription between Samalian and Old Aramaic. It is best placed in the third quarter of the 8th century, with an identification of the Panamuwa of line one with Panamuwa II.[545] This inscription represents an intersection of the Hittite/Luwian tradition and the local Aramaic culture. Katamuwa (or Katimuwa or Kuttamuwa), along with Kilamuwa and Panamuwa, is a name of Luwian origin and attests to the continued connection with Anatolian culture. The image as well bears close connections with Neo-Hittite steles.[546] We can further compare this inscription with the Katuwas inscription discovered by Woolley at Carchemish. While the Katuwas inscription is in Luwian and is a building inscription at the gates of the city, it also emphasizes the prosperity brought by the king to his people.[547] The point here is that

[544] Schloen and Fink," New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," 356; Schloen and Fink, "Searching for Ancient Samʾal: New Excavations at Zincirli in Turkey," 203-219; See also Eudora Struble and Virginia Herrmann, "An Eternal Feast at Śam'al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli," BASOR 356 (2009): 15-49 for a very detailed description and images of the stele.

[545] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 54.

[546] Sanders, "The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katumuwa Stele," 35-55. Both Luwian and Aramean names (including the names of kings) and cultural elements are present in ancient Śam'al. In this stele we find the Luwian goddess Kubaba, and Hadad of the Vineyards is parallel to Tarhunt (the storm god) of the Vineyard. Katamuwa is also a Luwian name. The definition of Luwian itself is somewhat nebulous. It cannot be identified specifically or solely with Hittite culture and itself shows shifts and developments over time. In addition there is some question as to just how "Aramaic" the "Aramaic tradition" is, with some scholars questioning if the Śam'al dialect is actually Aramaic rooted in the Euphrates area, or instead an unattested branch of NW Semitic. See Schloen and Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Śam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," 9.

[547] Richard Hess, "Katuwas and the Masoretic Text of Kings: Cultural Connections between Carchemish and Israel," in *New Inscriptions and Seals Relating to the Biblical World*, (eds. Meir Lubetski and Edith Lubetski ; Williston, Vt: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 171-181.

the cultural continuity is very strong. We have language change but not dramatic cultural shift.

Of particular interest is the reference on this stele to the continuation of the individual beyond physical death. One interpretation of this stele is that the soul, spirit, or essence of a person resides in the memorial stele itself and in this form partakes of a sacrificial feast along with a number of named gods and goddesses. In this inscription the statement is made that the *nbš* of the deceased remains within the stele, and in Aramaic and Hebrew npš comes to denote the monument itself.[548] Other references to the soul or spirit of the deceased eating and drinking in the Aramaic corpus include the Hadad inscription and the Panamuwa inscription.

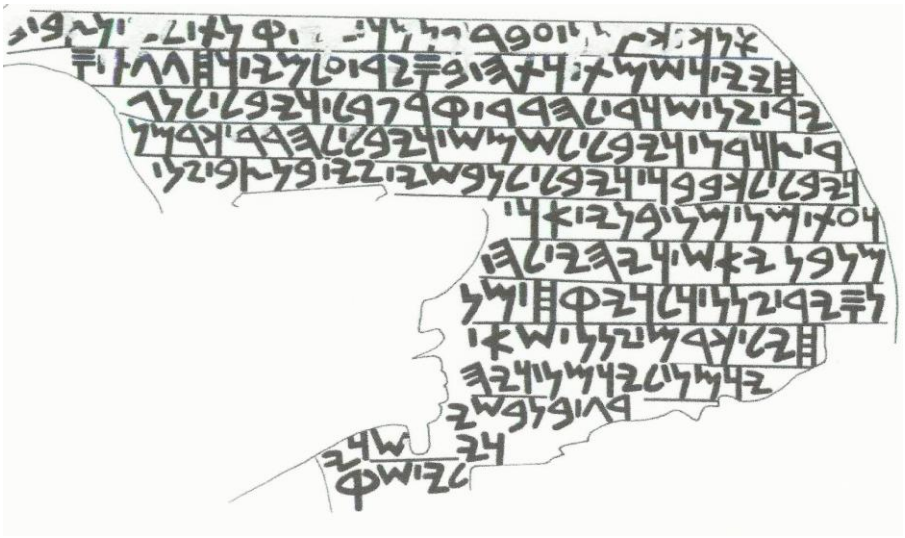

Figure 45: The Katamuwa stele inscription
Dennis Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli"
BASOR 356 (2009): 53

Following is the Katamuwa stele inscription with translation:

ʾnk ktmw ʿbd pnmw [zy] qnt l[y] nṣb b

ḥyy wšmt wth bsyr/d ʿlmy wḥggt s

[548] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 62.

yr/d zn šwr lhdd qr/dpd/rl wybl lng

d/r ṣwd/rn wybl lšmš wybl lhdd krmn

wybl lkbbw wybl lnbšy zy bnṣb zn

w'ṯ mn mn bny ʾw

mn bny ʾš wyhy lh

nsyr/d znn wlw yqḥ mn

ḥyl krm znn š'

ywmn lywmn wyh

rg bnbšy

wyšwy

ly šq[549]

I am Katamuwa, servant of Panamuwa, who commissioned for myself (this) stele while still living. I placed it in my eternal chamber and established a feast (at) this chamber. A bull for Hadad QR/DPD/RL, a ram for NGD/R SWD/RN , a ram for Shamash, a ram for Hadad of the Vineyards, a ram for Kubaba, and a ram for my "soul" that (will be) in this stele Henceforth, whoever of my sons or Of the sons of anybody (else) should come into possession of This chamber let him take from the best (produce) of this vine(yard) (as) an offering Year by year. He is also to perform the slaughter in (proximity to) my soul And is to apportion for me a leg-cut. [550]

[549] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,"53

Sanders proposes that while the dialect and carving style are distinctive and local, we can make valuable comparisons with West Semitic votive inscriptions of the Late Bronze Age and later that begin "This is the object which (personal name) dedicated to (divine name). A. de Hemmer Gudme cites a long and a short formula found on multiple such items from Mt. Gerizim "That which PN offered for himself, his wife and his sons" and "That which PN offered for himself, his wife and his sons for good remembrance before the god of this place"[551]

Also useful for comparison are the royal monuments of the 9th and 8th centuries (such as the Kilamuwa inscription, also from Zincirli).[552] These monuments begin with an identifying introduction and describe the accomplishments or actions of the ruler. [553] Many of these monuments and inscriptions show particular concern with continuity. Curses are invoked upon those who might deface, remove or destroy the monument or inscription (we will see this in many other inscriptions but not this one).[554] Also important is the injunction to respect the stele and continue the offerings, regardless of

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[550] Sanders, "The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katumuwa Stele," 36-37.

[551] Mt. Gerizim is just one example of a place where a large number of votive items have been found. Such Aramaic items have also been recovered at Tell el-Mashkuta in Lower Egypt, Teima, and Palmyra. Such items extend in date from the late Bronze Age through the Byzantine period, attesting to the long duration of the votive tradition. de Hemmer Gudme, Anne K., *Before the God in this Place for Good Remembrance: A Comparative Analysis of the Aramaic Votive Inscriptions from Mount Gerizim* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 52-78. See for example also the many votive inscriptions from the 2nd century C.E. from Palmyra, some of which include similar phrasing "for my life and the life of my father/sons/wife/ etc." (Inv 12:44:5, Inv 11:20:5, and Inv 1:5:2, for just a few examples). Delbert Hillers and Eleonora Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 176, 213, 225, 333, 364-365.

[552] A few well known examples include the Zakkur inscription from Hama (an Aramaic inscriptions which dates to the 8th century BCE) and the Karatepe inscriptions (a Phoenician inscriptions which dates to the 8th century BCE). Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 229-245; also the Kilamuwa inscription from Śam'al (Aramaic/Phoenician aspects to the script, dated to the 9th century BCE)

[553] Sanders, "The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katumuwa Stele," 43-44.

[554] The prohibition against erasing, changing, hiding, or destroying an inscription is well known in Aramaic and in Akkadian. SeeTawil, "The End of the Hadad Inscription in the Light of Akkadian," 477-482..

whether there is any previous relationship between the creator of the stele and whoever later may possess the stele or site.

In line two the term for erecting the stele, *šm* (*wšmt*), is the same as that used by Bar Rakib for his setting up a stele for his father, and is synonymous with *qwm* (*hqmt)* used in the Hadad inscription. In both cases the term is followed by the naming of who the monument is for. This monument is placed *bsyr/d*: "in the chamber." The archaeological context for this phrase is clear, as the item was found *in situ*.[555]

The list of deities invoked here is similar to that of the Hadad inscription, except that Rašap is not included. This deity does reappear in a section of the Panamuwa inscription which also invokes these same gods. The unusual addition here is the inclusion of Kubaba, an Anatolian goddess and the patron deity of Carchemish.[556] Her inclusion is another indicator of the cross-cultural composition of these steles from Samʾal. Kubaba is also paired with the distinctive Śamʾalian deity Rakib-el in another funerary stele inscription, the Ördek-burnu stele, discovered just 18km away from Zincirli.[557]

The image on the Kutamuwa stele is common to Anatolia and Aram between the 10th and 8th centuries BCE. The depiction of a robed figure seated before a table bearing food and drinking vessels appears on roughly 50 known steles. Such scenes represent the

[555] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 59;
[556] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 61-62. See for example the Carchemish inscriptions that are dedicated to and/or mention this goddess in Hawkin's corpus of Luwian inscriptions. Inscription A6 calls upon Kubaba to avenge if her name is erased (or the inscription is defiled) and A18e is a dedication to this goddess. A14a and b (10th century) call upon Karhuhas and Kubaba to witness against any who destroy the monument. A11a (10th century) credits the favor of Tarhunzas, Karhuhas and Kubaba for the king's prosperity. There are many others – most of the Carchemish inscriptions of any length mention these and other Hittite/Luwian deities. Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions Volume I*, 80-224.
[557] Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia," 1290. See also Lemaire and Sass, "The Mortuary Stele with Samʾalian Inscription from Ördekburnu Near Zincirli," 124.

continuation of life. The imagery is not limited to Aramaic or Neo-Hittite contexts. These elements also appear on the Phoenician sarcophagus of Ahiram (see appendix B).[558] On this stele Katamuwa is seated on a low stool before the banquet table and holding a cup in one hand. The other hand grasps an object that is usually described as a conifer or cone. This object is also found on Hittite steles as well as in Assyrian art, where it is often found in the hands of the "genii" bird-men. In other instances the cone might be replaced by a flower, a wheat stalk, or grapes.[559]

Two parallels to this monument should be mentioned here. The first is a stele found near the southwestern outer wall of Hilani I. Known as Zincirli 90, the stele is associated with an empty cyst grave, and depicts a banquet scene with a female primary character. The style of the stele dates it to the late eighth–early seventh century. The proximity to the palace may suggest that this was a member of the royal family, but this is far from certain.[560] The second is the stele from Ördek-burnu (mentioned above). This stele was discovered being used to make felt by the local populace by Felix von Luschan in 1888. The inscription and image are badly worn, but the carving clearly shows another banquet scene, this time with two figures sitting across from one another at a table, possibly one a man and one a woman. Comparison of the orthography with other inscriptions from Śam'al yield a date close to the Kilamuwa and Hadad inscriptions, and so has been dated to about 820–760 BCE.[561]

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[558] Sanders, "The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katumuwa Stele,"45.
[559] Struble and Herrmann, "An Eternal Feast at Śam'al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli," 15-49.
[560] Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, 93.
[561] Lemaire and Sass, "The Mortuary Stele with Samʾalian Inscription from Ördekburnu Near Zincirli," 57-136.

The inscription on the Ördek-burnu is so worn that it is extremely difficult to discern, but Lemaire and Sass have produced the following reconstruction:

*[’]n**k…..n…….y…***

…..bn**y **blḫ(btḫ)…..w**bḫlbbh

….ys‘d **h** ‘**l** **zn**n **lyh

*n**y** **ʾs[m]..s…bh**rb** w**b**ny*

…h..h’ lrkb ʾl ’lh

y** nʿm **wḫny h’ lkbb ’r**m** **ly

*s**l’** mnh **brkb’l š’***

yn lym wkbb š’**yn* **lym

wbmqm mlky š’ y**n l**y

wzy <y> hny ’šm** py **th**y **nbš**h**….l

I [am PN]….[562]

….my sons in….and in (the) kingship/succession

….he will affirm….on this. Let him

Do good for the na[ame]….by the sword. And my sons

….(be) he to Rakib’il the/my god

Agreeable and gracious/will placed (be) he to Kubaba of Aram. Let him

Present an offering: for Rakib’il two sheep

for the Day, and for Kubaba two sheep for the Day.

And in the royal necropolis ([resting]place of the kings) two sheep for me.

And he who will do good for the name of Piya-X let his soul be – [563]

[562] Lemaire and Sass, "The Mortuary Stele with Samʾalian Inscription from Ördekburnu Near Zincirli," 124. In this transcription bold font indicates more clear letters.

In addition to the obvious relationship of the images on the steles, the reference to Rakib'il connects with the Hadad, Panamuwa and Bar Rakib inscription, and Kubaba with the Katamuwa inscription. The request for sacrifice also mirrors the Hadad and Katamuwa pieces.[564] The reference to "my sons" and the kingship (compare the Hadad inscription) along with the reference to a royal necropolis suggests that this was a royal monument.[565]

On this stele we find again the word *nbš* employed, though it is unclear if the departed or the current audience is the reference. The use of the term *npš* to designate such a personal monument has been used to support the idea of transference of the soul into the stone, and the Hittite funerary rituals certainly add substance to the idea in this Neo-Hittite Aramaic context. It has been suggested that the soul is viewed as residing not only in the stele, but in the more precise location of the image.[566] We must be careful of this, however, as many other inscriptions contain very similar imagery but are commemorative of particular events and are not explicitly funerary in nature, such as the Bar Rakib stele and the Kilamuwa stele. An image related to the text and representing the individuals involved (both human and divine) at the head of royal inscriptions was also standard practice in Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian monuments as well which were

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[563] Lemaire and Sass, "The Mortuary Stele with Samʾalian Inscription from Ördekburnu Near Zincirli," 124.

[564] Slightly further afield we can note the Dagan steles from Ugarit. These are *peger* – funerary steles – and also explicity mention sacrifice. Like the Hadad statues the sacrifices are to a god (in this case Dagon) but are on behalf of the owner of the stele. These steles are KTU 6.13 and 6.14. Stele A reads "Stele which Aryal (?) has offered to Dagon: a mortuary offerning of a sheep and an ox for food." Stele B reads: "Mortuary offering which Uzzenu offered to Dagon his lord; a sheep and an ox as an inviolable offering." Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 72.

[565] Lemaire and Sass, "The Mortuary Stele with Samʾalian Inscription from Ördekburnu Near Zincirli," 57-136.

[566] Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 51-71. Pardee is using J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions Vol. 2* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 744-749. Pardee is drawing from the entry for *npš* –as referring to the soul/spirit/ of a person as well as the monument to him or her and/or the image on the monument. The division and precise relationship among these meanings is very unclear.

not funerary in nature. We should be cautious in attributing such a specific spiritual meaning to a common image of this type.

The Hadad and Katamuwa inscriptions have introduced several important features of Aramaic funerary inscriptions. The importance placed upon continued sacrifice on behalf of the dead is one obvious features of these texts, and this also fits with the Hittite/Neo-Hittite cultural background of Aram. This continued remembrance created an ongoing relationship between the living and the dead in a similar fashion as we have seen in our discussion of the Hebrew Bible material.

The image also plays an important role as part of the total package of such monuments. These images, whether of a god or a human king or courtier, reinforce the inscription in a way not seen for inscriptions from Israel and Judah. The Aramaic material indicates that both royalty and commoner desired to be memorialized in stone. As in Israel, in Aram also it was not only royalty who prepared elaborate burials with formal inscriptions. This will be further supported by our next set of inscriptions – another royal monument from Śam'al and a pair of priestly monuments from Neirab.

The Panamuwa stele (KAI 215)

The Panamuwa inscription is like the Hadad statue in that it is not solely a memorial, but serves several functions at once. This is a memorial to the deceased king Panamuwa II by his son, Bar Rakib, but it also proclaims the loyalty of the house of the king to Assyria, and reaffirms the legitimacy of the current king. The Panamuwa inscription, carved upon the torso of a large statue, was found in 1888 at Tahtali Panari (also written as Tahtali Pinar or Tahtaly Bunar) which is about 3km northeast of Zincirli. The statue was discovered during one of the first German expeditions to Zincirli under

Carl Humann and Felix von Luschan. While the monument may have been originally located in the necropolis at Gerçin, it was found in an Islamic cemetery, upside down and being reused as a gravestone, so this cannot be confirmed[567]

Figure 46: The Panamuwa stele
West Semitic Research Project, n.p.
Online:
http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/ancient_texts/panamu.shtml

This dedicatory monument was set up by King Bar Rakib for his father Panamuwa II, and is written in the Samalian dialect of Aramaic (see Figure 45).[568] This inscription also does not conform strictly to the memorial or dedicatory genres but has a mixture of elements. S. Parker writes:

[567] Simon B. Parker, *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions : Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 84.
[568] West Semitic Research Project, "The Panamuwa Stele (Image)," n.p. [cited 21 may 2014]. Online: www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/ancient_texts/panamu.shtml .

> The opening sentence of the inscription is neither that of a memorial inscription ("I am so and so, king of such and such") nor that of a dedicatory inscription ("The X that so and so set up/built/made, etc., for such and such a god"). It begins with the name of the author in the third person and states that he set up this monument for his father. The distinctive introduction serves the distinctive purpose. This is neither a typical memorial inscription nor a typical dedicatory inscription, but a memorial dedicated by the son to the father.[569]

It is exceptional good fortune that we have monuments from successive monarchs and their officials that allow us to trace developments in style and language over several generations. While the earlier Hadad inscription used primarily Phoenician paleographic conventions, the Panamuwa inscription of Bar Rakib begins to show more Aramaic features, such as the z shaped *zayin* and a shorter left stroke on the *ghimel*. Like the Hadad inscription some of the final long vowels are written *scriptio defectiva*.[570]

The monument is broken, but it is a statue of the king, with the top half missing and much of the left hand portion of the inscription also missing. Such statues of human form were common as dedicatory objects. Often the dedicant would have the statue created in his or her own form and placed in the temple, a practice that dates back to the Sumerian period in Mesopotamia. We have a number of excellent Phoenician examples as well which extend into the Hellenistic period.[571] The stele records the murder of Barṣur, father of Panamuwa II, and the rise and achievements of Panamuwa himself. The monument records the death of Panamuwa at Damascus in 733/732 (this being the same campaign in which Assyria replaced King Pekah of Israel with King Hoshea). Bar Rakib further describes the honoring of his father's service to Assyria by Tiglath-Pileser III. Bar Rakib claims not only that the Assyrian king honored his father, but that he and his

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[569] Parker, *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions*, 85.
[570] Dion, "The Language Spoken in Ancient Śam'al," 115.
[571] Daniel Vainstub, "A Phoenician Votive Inscription on a Figurine from Stageira and the Root TN.'" Pages 345-390 in *Phéniciens d'Orient et d' Occident*. (Ed. André Lemaire, B. Dufour, and F. Pfitzmann. Paris: CIPOA, 2014).

officials mourned his death as well, formally and publically. We are not told how his death occurred other than that it was while travelling with the Assyrians. We are informed that Tiglath-Pileser set up a monument for Panamuwa I. In this inscription we again have the phrase "may his soul eat and drink" (although this is reconstructed).

Below is the relevant section – lines 16–20 (Gibson) or lines 54–68 (following Younger here)[572]:

וגם מת אבי פנמו בלגרי מראה תגלתפלסר מלך אשור במחנת גם [בכיה מראה תגלתפלסר מלך אשור

ובכיה איחה מלכו ובכיתה מחנת מראה מלך אשור כלה ולקח מראה מלך [א]שור.....[תאכל ותשת

י נבשה והקם לה משכי בארח והעבר אבי מן דמשק לאשר ביומי שר.....[ובכ]

יה ביתה כלה ואנכי ברכב בר פנמ[ו בצ]דק אבי ובצדקי הושבני מרא[י תגלתפלסר מלך אשור על משב]

אבי פנמו בר ברצר ושמת נצב זן [לאב]י לפנמו בר ברצר ומלכת בט.....

16 Then my father Panammu died while following his lord Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, in the campaigns; even [his lord Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, wept for him]

17 And his brother kings wept for him, and the whole camp of his lord, the King of Assyria, wept for him. His lord, the King of Assyria, took….. [may] His soul [eat and drink]

18 and he set up an image for him by the way, and brought my father across from Damascus to Assyria. In my days all his house [wept] for him

[572] Also Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 39-40.

19 Then I Bar Rakkib, son of Panummu, because of my father's righteousness and my own righteousness, did my lord [Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria] make to sit [upon the throne]

20 of my father Panammu, son of Barṣur; and I have set up the statue for my father Panammu, son of Barṣur and I have become king in……..[573]

The inscription becomes broken and difficult after this point but the inscription does end with a final calling upon Hadad, El, Rakib-El ("Charioteer of El"), the lord of the house, Shamash, and all the gods of Yauʾdi. Younger reads "before the tomb of my father, Panamuwa" in line 72 (also in the Aramaic in Gibson but left untranslated) which further sets the inscription in a funerary context.[574]

The Panamuwa inscription is firmly situated in the line of royal Aramaic inscriptions, and gives us further information regarding the royal family. The concerns expressed in the inscription are in line with those of the Hadad inscription. The style of the inscribed statue shares the same blocky type of carving as the Hadad inscription but is also in line with inscribed Assyrian statues and may owe something to Assyrian influence. The impact of Assyria on this and other small Aramaic kingdoms is apparent in art and iconography as well as in the political and military shaping of the history of these states. This inscription describes formal mourning by the Assyrian king and the creation of a statue for the fallen Panamuwa. This phrase "and he set up an image for him by the way, and brought my father across from Damascus to Assyria" probably indicates that the monument was left at the location where Panamuwa died and then the body was

[573] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Vol. II*, 80-81; Dion, *La Langue de Yau'di*, 40-42.
[574] K. L. Younger, "Panammuwa and Bar-Rakib: Two Structural Analyses," JANES 18 (1986): 96-99. See Javier Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra* (EPRO 79; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 43 for discussion of the names of the gods.

brought to Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser may have been honoring the traditions of the Aramaic king by creating such an image, and this is supported by the close association of the phrase "may his soul eat and drink" with the mourning and creation of the image, a phrase and an image that were closely associated with Aramaic/Neo-Hittite burials. The public mourning for Panamuwa II included the king, the camp, and other royal dignitaries associated with this campaign (brother kings). If Younger is correct in his reconstruction of a line "before the tomb of my father, Panamuwa" we might interpret this to mean that the bones of the dead king were eventually returned to his own city. If Neo-Hittite funerary rites were followed another possibility emerges. It could be the image (rather than a rotting dead body) that was transported from Damascus to Assyria after appropriate funerary rites, and it is this image which Bar Rakib refers to as "my father."

The Panamuwa inscription and Bar Rakib inscription KAI 216

Figure 47: The Bar Rakib inscription (KAI 216)
West Semitic Research Project, n.p.
Online:
http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/ancient_texts/barrakkib.shtml

Closely connected with and of a similar form to the Panamuwa inscription is the Bar Rakib inscription KAI 216 (see Figure 46). This inscription is sometimes called Bar Rakib I and sometimes Bar Rakib II, depending upon how one terms the Panamuwa inscription.[575] We will only discuss this inscription briefly, since it gives little direct information regarding funerary rites or the beliefs associated with them. It is useful to bring up, however, as an illustration of the way in which inscriptional genres can be blurred, which is an important point for several other inscriptions. K. Younger argues that the form of this inscription is in the "memorial genre," although it is not explicit in the inscription that it is funerary in nature and it lacks a curse formula at the end. [576]It is dated to shortly after the Panamuwa inscription (733–727).[577] It is not surprising that the two share phrasing, form and themes in common, as they were both created by Bar Rakib.

אנה בררכב

בר פנמו מלך שמאל

עבד תגלתפליסר מרא רבעי ארקא

בצדק אבי ובצקי הושבני

מראי רכבאל ומראי תגלתפליסר על כרסא אבי

ובית אבי [ע]מל מן כל

[575] West Semitic Research Project, "Bar Rakib III Stele," n.p. [cited 21 May 2014]. Online: www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/ancient_texts/barrakkib.shtml .

[576] Another example of such a situation where the purpose of an item is subject to interpretation is the inscribed Phoenician plate from Pyrgi which dedicates a shrine to Astarte. This has been interpreted by G. Knoppers as a funerary dedication. He argues that the shrine was built in memorium of a deceased and then deified individual, although the goddess is clearly given honor in the inscription. Gary Knoppers "The God in His Temple": The Phoenician Text from Pyrgi as a Funerary Inscription," JNES 51 (1992): 105-120).

[577] Younger, "Panammuwa and Bar-Rakib : Two Structural Analyses," 100.

ורצת בגלגל מראי מלך אשור

במצעת מלכן רברבן בעלי כסף ובעלי זהב

ו אחזת בית אבי

והיטבתה מן בית חד מלכן רברבן

והתנאבו אחי מלכיא לכל מה טבת ביתי

ובי טב לישה לאבהי מלכי שמאל

הא בית כלמו להמ

פהא בית שתוא להמ

והא בית כיצא

ואנה בנית ביתא זנה[578]

I am Bar Rakib

Son of Panamuwa, King of Śam'al,

The servant of Tiglath-Pileser, lord of the four quarters of the earth,

On account of the loyalty of my father and on account of my loyalty,

My lord Rakib-El, and my lord Tiglath-Pileser caused me to reign upon the throne of my father

And the house of my father profited more than all others.

And I ran at the wheel of my lord, the King of Assyria, in the midst of powerful kings, lords of silver and lords of gold,

And I took control of the house of my father,

And I made it better than the house of any powerful king

[578] Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 40.

And my brother kings were desirous of all that is the good of my house
But there was not a good house for my fathers, the kings of Śam'al
They had the house of Kilamuwa
And it was a winter house for them;
And it was a summer house for them
But I built this house.[579]

The Panamuwa inscription was a memorial of Bar Rakib for his father, and this inscription the king created for himself. In both inscriptions the monarch is concerned to express the loyalty of himself and his father – his "house" – to Assyria, as well as to express their trials and accomplishments. In both the phrase "ran at the wheel of my lord/his lord the King of Assyria" describes the loyalty and service given to the Assyrian monarch. K. L. Younger calls the Bar Rakib inscription "memorial" because of the introduction "I am Bar Rakib."[580] While it is true that this is a standard way of introducing a funerary inscription we have the same phrase by the same king in the Panamuwa stele. In that instance the memorial is to the deceased Panamuwa II created by the still living Bar Rakib. Therefore it is not a given that the Bar Rakib inscription is a funerary monument (to be fair Younger may be using the term "memorial" in a wider sense of monumental inscriptions). When we consider that the inscription ends with the creation of a palace, it would seem more logical to place this inscription in the class of building dedications. M. Miller however argues that "the term 'memorial inscription' is to be preferred rather than 'building inscription'…since it is apparent that the primary purpose of these texts was to memorialize the royal builders and only secondarily to

[579] Younger, "Panammuwa and Bar-Rakib : Two Structural Analyses," 91-103.
[580] Younger, "Panammuwa and Bar-Rakib : Two Structural Analyses," 99-100

commemorate the buildings themselves."[581] A similar crossing of genres is seen in the Phoenician Eshmunazar coffin inscription (see appendix B), which devotes considerable space to the recounting of temple building projects. With this we see that the two genres go hand in hand. Kings inscribed gates, temples and other monuments so that the ruler would be remembered and they also inscribed these deeds upon their coffins so that the deeds would be recalled. The practice of such royal inscriptions is long standing and widespread. See for just a few examples the statue of Idri-mi of Alalakh, the inscriptions of Azitawadda of Adana, the royal inscription of Tākil-ilišu of Malgium, the foundation inscription of Yahdumlim, and numerous Assyrian royal inscriptions.[582] This close association of these two genres is also reinforced by the fact that in both building inscriptions and funerary texts the injunction against defacement is common and often backed up by a curse.[583] The common theme that connects both funerary monuments and building inscriptions is that of permanence and remembrance of the individual.

Evidence from Bēt-Gūš: The Neirab inscriptions

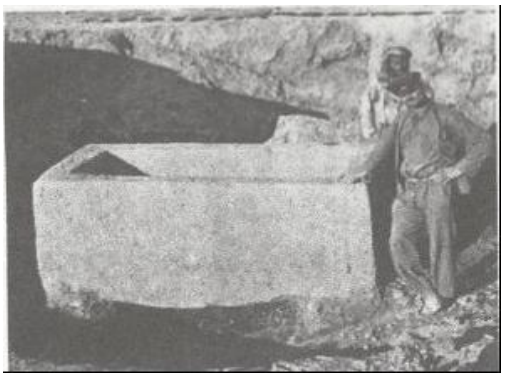
Moving from Śam'al we return now to the territory of Bēt-Gūš and the necropolis of Neirab (already discussed in chapter 3) and revisit the two funerary steles that were recovered there. Recall that in 1889 construction work uncovered a basalt sarcophagus from a tumulus at the southern edge of the village of Neirab (located about 7km SE of Aleppo). The sarcophagus contained two individuals, one probably male and one determined as female (though this identification was on the basis of jewelry).[584] In 1926–

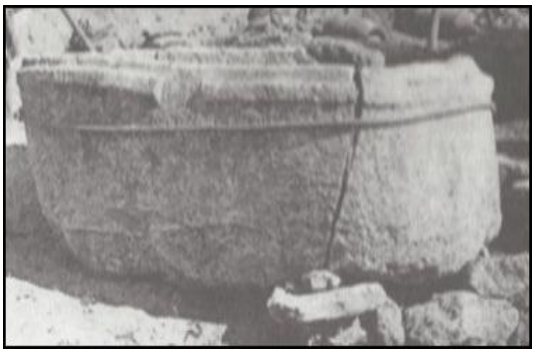
[581] Miller, "The Moabite Stone as a Memorial Stela," 9.
[582] Tawil, "The End of the Hadad Inscription in the Light of Akkadian." 477-482.
[583] Miller, "The Moabite Stone as a Memorial Stela," 9-18. Miller notes the Kilamuwa, Barrakib and Zakir (Aramaic) inscriptions, as well as the Azitawadda of Karatepe inscription and the Yehimilk (Byblos) inscription, all of which he puts into consideration with the Mesha stele (Moab).
[584] Niehr, "Religion," 190-191.

1927 another large basalt sarcophagus was uncovered in another trench cut into the necropolis (see Figures 47 and 48). Two years after the first sarcophagus two early 7th century Aramaic inscriptions were discovered in the same tumulus, one north and one south of the original position of the sarcophagus. The steles and the first sarcophagus were very close in proximity and also somewhat separated from the rest of the cemetery, and so these items are often viewed as connected. However, the cemetery had suffered major disruption at several points, and so it is possible that these items were not in their original places. In the earlier chapter on Aramaic burials Iron Age material recovered very near this area was described: large jars, one of which contained the skeleton of a 23–year old child (Trench A), as well as lance points, iron hinges, bone blades, and terracotta figures. All of these were in the area of the find of Ganneau's basalt sarcophagus.[585]

The discovery of two very similar basalt steles and two large basalt sarcophagi is rather suggestive, even if the second sarcophagus is not in immediate proximity to the steles. It was in a roughly east-west line with them, being in the center of the necropolis while the first sarcophagus and the two steles were on the western edge.[586]

[585] Carrière and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926, " 126-132.
[586] Abel and Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem: Effectuées à Neirab du 12 Septembre au 6 Novembre 1927," 187-206.





Figures 48 and 49: Two basalt sarcophagai recovered from the necropolis at Neirab. On the left is the first discovered (near the two steles). On the right is the second discovered in the middle of the necropolis. B.Carrière and A. Barrois, "Fouilles de l'Ecole Archéologique Française de Jérusalem Effectuées à Neirab du 24 Septembre au 5 Novembre 1926," *Syria* 8 (1927): 134.

The steles were acquired in 1891 by Charles Clermont-Ganneau after "long and difficult negotiations".[587] The two steles are of black basalt, and each contains both a figure and an inscription. Each stele commemorates the life and death of a priest of the moon god at Neirab. The first priest is Sin-zer-ibni. The carving on this stele shows a standing figure wearing a long robe and facing to the right. The head of the man is surrounded by the inscription. The right hand is raised in the traditional gesture of blessing or worship, and the left hand is holding a fringed piece of cloth. Clermont-Ganneau conjectured at the time of discovery that the beardless face and "soft" and "fat" features were those of an eunuch.[588] The second stele, which was dedicated by Si'-Gabbari the priest, shows a banquet scene with the primary figure (who also appears to be beardless) seated at a table and holding a cup and another, smaller figure attending to him

[587] Charles Clermont-Ganneau, "Deux Steles de Nerab," CRAI 40 (1896): 118; also Yun, "A Case of Linguistic Transition: The Nerab Inscriptions," 21.
[588] Clermont-Ganneau, "Deux Steles de Nerab," 118-120.

(see Figures 49 and 50).[589] The figures associated with the inscriptions (one standing with upraised hands on the first inscription and one seated, on the second inscription) are clearly Assyrian influenced in their style, although Clermont-Ganneau draws parallels with Egyptian funerary scenes.[590]

The deities mentioned are also Babylonian/Assyrian, although the moon god Sin is called by the West Semitic appellation Sahar "The Vigilant."[591] In addition the theophoric names of both priests incorporate the element Sin. Sin-zer-ibni means "Sin has created a seed" and Si'-gabbari means "Sin is a warrior."[592] These two inscriptions represent a transitional phase between Old Aramaic and Official Aramaic.

[589] Niehr, Herbert, ed., *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), Plate XIX; Frank Raux, "Stele of the Priest Si'-Gabbari (Image)," n.p. [cited 25 May 2014]. Online: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/stele-priest-si-gabbor.
[590] Clermont-Ganneau, "Deux Steles de Nerab," 118-120.
[591] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 93-94.
[592] Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, 44-46. See also Stephen Kaufman, "Si'Gabbar, Priest of Sahr in Nerab," JAOS 90 (1970): 270-271.

Neirab I

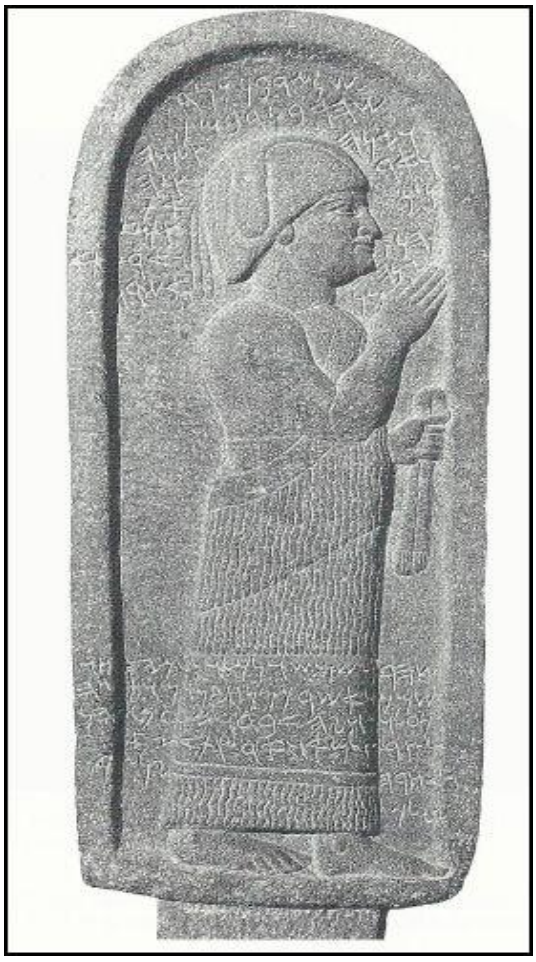


Figure 50: Stele of the Priest of Neirab Sin-zer-ibni
Herbert Niehr, *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), Plate XIX.

The text of the Neirab I stele, dedicated to the Priest Sin-zer-ibni of Neirab, reads as follows:

שנזרבן כמר

שהר בנרב מת

וזנה צלמה

וארצתה

מן את

תהנס צלמא

זנה וארצתא

מן אשרה

שהר ושמש ונכל ונשך יסחר

שמך ואשרך מן חין ומות לחה

יכטלוך ויהאבדו זרעך והן

תנצר צלמא וארצתא זא

אחרה ינצר

זי לך

Sin-zer-ibni, priest

Of Sahar at Neirab, deceased

This is his picture

And his grave

Whoever you are

Who drag this picture

And grave

away from its place

May Sahar and Shamash and Nikkal and Nušk pluck

Your name and your place out of life, and an evil death

Make you die; and may they cause your seed to perish. But if

You guard this picture and grave

In the future may yours be guarded[593]

H. Neihr remarks upon the similarity in formatting between the Neirab steles and the Kuttamuwa stele, with an initial proclamation of the name of the deceased and then a reference to the monument itself.[594] Bar Rakib also begins his inscriptions with the statement "I am Bar Rakib" and in the Panamuwa inscription he goes on to mention the creation of the monument.

A few comments should be made regarding the morphology of this stele. In line seven וארצתא, which is given as "and his grave" by Gibson and Donner, should probably be "sarcophagus" as per J. Teixidor as well as many others. "Sarcophagus" is a more common translation and is related to Biblical Hebrew *ʾereś,* Ugaritic *ʾršš*, and Akkadian *eršu*.[595] None of these, however, have the specific meaning of sarcophagus. In Hebrew this reference is to a couch and can be a marriage bed or a bed of sickness (Ps 132:3; Ps 41:4; Song 1:16). Only by extension of this is the final, eternal "couch" – coffin or sarcophagus – derived. Gibson, Donner and others take "grave" from "earth" – Akkadian *ereṣtu*, which can carry the specific meaning of burial ground.[596]

The curse against defilement or destruction encompasses both the grave and the stele. The find of the stele in the necropolis of Neirab indicates that unlike the funerary chapel of Katamuwa the grave and the stele were originally placed together. In addition the inscription reads "this is his picture and his grave." This is not parallelism but a reference to two separate items.

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[593] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 95; also Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 45.
[594] Niehr, "Religion," 127-200.
[595] Yun, "A Case of Linguistic Transition: The Nerab Inscriptions," 23.
[596] Yun, "A Case of Linguistic Transition: The Nerab Inscriptions," 23.

Another interesting lexical item here is צלם, used three times here (and once in the Neirab II inscription). The term is usually translated as "image" or sometimes "picture." As with our other inscriptions the image is again given prominence here. The word צלם is used in the Hebrew Bible in Genesis 1:26–27 and in 5:1–3, where it refers to the likeness of God in man as well as the likeness of a son (Seth) to his father (Adam). We find the term again in Gen 9:6, another reference to the image of God in human beings.[597] Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible the term is sometimes used negatively to refer to objects of "foreign" worship (also the golden mice and "swellings" of 1 Sam 6).[598] Older inscriptions commonly use *nṣb* (KAI 201, 202, 214 – the Hadad inscription, and 215 – the Panamuwa inscription), which indicates that צלם is a later entry into the Aramaic lexicon, but the 9th century Tell Fakharīya inscription argues against this.[599]

The primary concern of the Neirab I inscription is the preservation of the stele and grave from movement or destruction. As with the Judean inscriptions from Silwan, there are really only two primary elements of the inscription – the naming of the deceased and the curse against anyone who interferes with the grave. The Neirab II stele will also highlight this concern, but in addition will provide insight into another point of interest to us – namely what is meant by a good death. We will see that the criteria for a good death in Aram are almost identical to what is found in the Hebrew Bible.

[597] Dion notes the parallel usages of *ṣlm* and *dmwt* in the Tell Fakharīya inscription and in Gen 1:26-27 and 5:1-3. Dion, "Image et Ressemblance en Araméen Ancien (Tell Fakhariyah)," 151-153.
[598] Examples include Num 33:52, 2Kgs 11:18, 2Chron 23:17, Ps 39:6, Eze 7:20, 16:17, 23:14, and Amos 5:26.
[599] Dion, "Image et Ressemblance en Araméen Ancien (Tell Fakhariyah)," 151-153.

Neirab II (KAI 226)

Figure 51: Stele of the Priest of Neirab Si'-Gabbari
Raux, Franck. n.p. Online: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/stele-priest-si-gabbor

The second inscription is as follows:

שאגבר כמר שהר בנרב

זנה צלמה בצדקתי קדמוה

שמני שם טב והארך יומי

ביום מתת פמי לאתאחז מן מלן

ובעיני מחזה אנה בני רבע בכונ

י והום אתהמו ולשמו עמי מאן

כסף ונחש עם לבשי שמוני למען

לאחרה לתהנס ארצתי מן את תעשק

ותהנסני שהר ונכל ונשך יהבאשו

ממתתה ואחרתה תאבד

Si'-gabbari, priest of Sahar at Neirab

This is his picture. Because of my righteousness before him

He afforded me a good name and prolonged my days

On the day I died, my mouth was not closed to words,

And with my eyes I was beholding children of the fourth generation; they wept

For me and were greatly distraught. They did not lay with me any vessel of silver or bronze; with my garments (only) they laid me, so that

In the future my grave should not be dragged away. Whoever you are who do wrong

And drag me away, may Sahar and Nikkal and Nusk make his dying odious, and may his posterity perish. [600]

This translation is largely followed by Teixidor, with the only alterations being the replacement of "sarcophagus" for "grave", "shroud" for "garments", and "rob" for "drag away." We find תהנס in Neirab I as well, and it is probably from *ns'* "to lift" but a connection with Hebrew *nss* "to flee" or Aramaic *'ns* to demolish, rob or compel" has also been put forth. The shift from second to third person in the final lines can be viewed as part of the style of invoking such curses.[601]

[600] Gibson, *Texbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume II*, 97; also Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 45.

[601] Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, 46; and Yun, "A Case of Linguistic Transition: The Nerab Inscriptions," 24. Compare the persistence of this form in later (5^{th}-4^{th} century) and widely spread inscriptions, for example from Keseçk Köyü in Cilicia and Daskyleion in Phrygia. Edward Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics Vol. I* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1975), 146-153.

We also have a letter of appointment that likely pertains to this same priest. The letter is from Nabû-pašir (probably a provincial governor) to Sargon II of Assyria. That a letter regarding this individual would be sent to the king attests to the high status of his position. His duties are described: "Se'gabbari, the priest of Neirab, a servant of the king, together with Nuri-S[in] the prefect and Dadi-ibni, a servant of the governor of A[rpa]d [.....] fro[m M]elid…. let them accept and assign […where]the king my lord [a]sked, and let him go to his duty and invoke blessings upon the king my lord before Sin and Nikkal."[602] This helps to explain the obvious Assyrian/Babylonian style of the stele. This priest is "on assignment" and is not necessarily a native of the area.

In addition, imitation of Assyrian style was a way to proclaim one's loyalty, as we have seen in the Bar Rakkib monuments where both language and style are modified to give homage to the king's Assyrian lord. Another example of such imitative flattery can be found in the biblical references to the practices of kings Aḥaz and Manasseh in 2 Kgs 16 and 21, which have been interpreted as a type of religious catering to the Assyrian overlords.[603] We cannot know the place of origin of this priest, but it is clear that he was affiliated with Assyrian cultural and political domination, although his language is Aramaic and his location is in the heart of Aram.

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[602] Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I*, 149. Letter 189 from Parpola's collection reads: "[To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-pašir. Go]od he[alth to the king, my lord]! May Sin [and Nikkal] bless the king, my lord! Se'gabbari, the priest of Neirab, a servant of the king, together with Nuri-S[in] the prefect and Dadi-ibni, a servant of the governor of A[rpa]d [.....] fro[m M]elid [….(break) let them accept and assign […where]the king my lord [a]sked, and let him go to his duty and invoke blessings upon the king my lord before Sin and Nikkal."

[603] Teixidor points out that in the image that accompanies the very short inscription of KAI218 the king is dressed in Assyrian style. Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, 43. We have also noted earlier the modification of language by this king between the stele dedicated to his father and those created for himself. Compare KAI 215, 216, 217 and 218. See Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 1-54. For a nuanced discussion of the extent of imitation of Assyrian cultural and religious practices in Judah see Mordechai Cogan, "Judah Under Assyrian Hegemony: A Reexamination of Imperialism and Religion," JBL 112, (1993): 403.

Beyond the simple concern for maintaining the integrity of the stele and the grave, Neirab II reflects upon the life and the death of the priest Si'gabarri. This stele claims for the priest a righteous life, and the reward of the gods to him was length of years and a good death. The stele describes the elements of such a life and death. First is dying with a good name – a good reputation, honor. Also important was retaining functions such as cognitive abilities and speech. The retention of physical and mental capabilities is valued because it is not a given. Living to old age is a blessing, but the infirmities that so often accompany it are a curse. The priest has seen generations of children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren be born and grow in his life. The blessing of living to see multiple generations is also found in multiple places in the Hebrew Bible (for example Ps 128:6, Isa 53:10, Gen 50:23, and Job 42:16).[604] Finally he was sincerely mourned by family at his death.[605] All of these have direct parallels in the Hebrew Bible as things which comprise a good death. Si'gabarri has been blessed with long life accompanied by the blessings of continued cognitive/verbal abilities and a loving connection to generations of family.

Here good death is in contrast to that described by the Egyptian vizier Ptah-Hotep: "O sovereign, my lord! Oldness has come; old age has descended…The eyes are

[604] Tawil, "Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zakir, and the Nerab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions," 63-64. Tawil also points to several Akkadian phrases of similar nature, such as "May the king my lord hold his grandchildren in his lap; and may he see the gray hair in their beards."

[605] H. Tawil claims that this good name is beyond respectability and instead signifies fame or renown. He follows royal Akkadian and Aramaic inscriptions and seems to overlook that this is not a royal monument but a priestly one. I believe he far exceeds the reasonable bounds for a "good name" here. "A good name" at its core means that all who speak of this individual speak well of him. For a king, this does mean fame – great works worthy of remembrance. For the priest and layman this would mean something quite different – a good name is one of honor and respect and good deads but not famous works. Tawil, "Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zakir, and the Nerab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions," 40-65.

weak, the ears are deaf…and the mouth is silent and cannot speak"[606] Tawil offers a number of other examples from Akkadian texts which address the idiom of the mouth being "heavy", "seized" or "closed", either for medical of psychological reasons."[607]

The same sentiment is found in the inscription of Nabonidus at Harran, in which the very aged queen mother Adda-Guppi says: "I saw even my great-great grandchildren up to the fourth generation all in a state of good health." She also speaks of "long days, years of heart's ease...the sight of my two eyes is clear, I am excellent in understanding, my hand and both feet are sound, well chosen are my words, meat and drink agree with me, my flesh is goodly, glad is my heart." The inscription continues with an account of the royal treatment of the queen mother after death, with mourning rituals and precious stones being left in her tomb.[608]

While there are close parallels between the Nabonidus inscription and the Neirab II stele, the two differ in this last point. Si'-gabbari claims that no grave goods are included in the grave. The statement "no vessel of silver or bronze" does not exclude ceramic items, which were by far the most common type of grave vessel, so the body may have been buried with the usual assortment of pottery.[609] The further modification that "with my garments (only) they laid me" however could be taken to support the view that this priest is claiming that he has nothing with him in the grave. However, I suspect that the correct interpretation here is instead that when the priest says "nothing" he means

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[606] Tawil, "Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zakir, and the Nerab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions," 60-65; Battiscombe Gunn, *The Instruction of Ptah-Hotep and the Instruction of Ke'Gemi: The Oldest Books in the World* (London: John Murray, 1906), 42.
[607] Tawil, "Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zakir, and the Nerab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions", 61-63.
[608] C. J. Gadd, *The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus* (Ankara: The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1958), 49-53.
[609] By comparison see Nadav Na'aman, "The Recycling of a Silver Statue," JNES 40 (1981): 47-48 for a text from Alalakh that indicates the common practice of including silver as part of the grave goods.

nothing worth stealing – no metal objects or other precious goods. I do not believe that this is intended to indicate that there were no offerings or ceramic ware at all. This statement directly parallels the inscription of the Royal Steward at Silwan, which states that only bones are to be found in the grave. There too the meaning is most likely only that there are no valuable metal objects.

Comparing the two Neirab inscriptions we find that both are priests of Sahar (Sin) at Neirab. Both monuments were found at the same place and are dated to the same time period. Both place importance upon the image – "his picture" Both provide injunctions against disturbing the grave, and expect the curses to be enforced by the gods Sahar, Nikkal and Nusk. Inscription 1 adds Shamash to the divine mix. Both use the idea of carrying, dragging or lifting (to take away) the monument or remains, which is also found in the Phoenician Eshmunazar inscription (see appendix B). Both Neirab I and II invoke the curse of a miserable death and the cutting off of generations. This destruction of posterity should be compared with our earlier discussion of the biblical term *karet*.

The frequent curse formula against disturbing the grave is widespread across Israel, Phoenicia, and the Aramaic states and persisted into the Islamic period.[610] These formulas have strong parallels in commemorative building stele, which often included a biographical statement of achievements and concluded with an injunction and curse against anyone who removes, defaces or covers the commemorative writing.[611]

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[610] See also for example Second Temple Jewish tomb inscriptions, a 2nd-3rd century Palmyrene sepulchral inscription, and as late as 937 C.E. an Arabic tomb-inscription from Jerusalem, all of which prohibit the opening of the grave and/or curse the one who does so. Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," 137-152.

[611] A great many Assyrian royal inscriptions contain such curses. The bilingual Tel Fakhariyah statue is also a good example and mirrors some of the curses of the Sefire inscription. See Dion, "Image et Ressemblance en Araméen Ancien (Tell Fakhariyah)," 151-153; and Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*, 265. A Luwian example from Tell Barsip also calls for the god Tarhunza to "become like a lion, may he swallow down his head, wife, and child" for any who erase the

Such curses were extremely common, but we can close here with two inscriptions for comparison. These two make a good comparison due to the shared funerary nature of the inscriptions, the clear Assyrian influence upon the Neirab steles, and because they are particularly descriptive in their language. While we will refrain from a detailed discussion of these, the relevance to the Neirab inscriptions, as well as other funerary texts from Israel and Phoenicia is immediately clear.[612]

The first is the inscription from the tomb of Queen Yaba, wife of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727) from the palace at Nimrud.

> By the command of Shamash, Ereshkigal, and the Anunnaki, the great gods of the Netherworld, mortal destiny caught up with Queen Yaba in death, and she travelled the path of her ancestors. Whoever, in time to come, whether a queen who sits on the throne or a lady of the palace who is a favorite of the king, removes me from my tomb, or places anyone else with me, or lays hands on my jewelry with evil intent, or breaks open the seal of this tomb, let his spirit wander in thirst in the open countryside. Below, in the netherworld let him not receive with the Anunnakku, any libation of pure water, beer, wine or flour as a takallu-offering! May Ningišzida and Pituh-idugallu, great gods of the Underworld, impose on his corpse and spirit restlessness for all eternity.[613]

The second inscription is a small baked clay cylinder which is a copy of an inscription that describes the respect given to Shamash-ilni the Dakurite by King Ashur-

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name of Hamiyata. Bunnens, *A New Luwian Stele and the Cult of the Storm-God at Til Barsib-Masuwari*, 17.

[612] A few further examples of Aramaic inscriptions that are a bit later and somewhat further afield can also be included here for comparision. 1) The Keseçek Köyü Inscription (from the valley of the Cydnus river in Cilicia – estimated from the 4th century BCE) from the Yale Babylonian Collection: "Nanašta has erected this figure in front of an oak. Respect the precinct of my tomb, which belongs to the same. And whoever injury does to this figure, may Sēhr and Shamash search for him." 2) The Daskyleion Inscription (Hisartepe – Phrygia, estimated 5th century BCE): "These are the images which Elnāp son of Ashyāhū has made for his tomb. I adjure thee by Bēl and Nabû! May the man who along this way will be going do no harm! 3) The Sardis Inscription (bilingual in Lydian and Aramaic – estimated 4th century BCE): "…this is the stele and the cave, the tree of the holy place and the dromos which leads towards the tomb…belonging to Mane, son of Kumli, the Sirukaean. And whomever to this stele or to the cave or to the tree in front of the dromos of this cave – in short whoever destroys or brings damage to anything, then may Artemis of Koloe and the one of the Ephesians shatter his garden, his house and his inheritance, his acquest, ground and water, and everything that is his!" All of these inscriptions are written in an "Eastern form of Imperial Aramaic." Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics Vol 1*, 146-171.

[613] Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed*, 82.

etil-Ilâni of Assyria (626–618) by the return of his remains to his homeland. We can compare this respect shown by the Assyrian king to the portrayal of the behavior of Tiglath-Pileser towards his vassal Panamuwa. We should also notice here the phrase "whoever you are, whether prefect, or a ruler or a judge" which parallels the Phoenician Eshmunazar inscription. The idea of the destruction of offspring is also found in the Tabnit inscription (also Phoenician). Finally, the curse that calls upon Marduk, Nergal, and Nebo has a very similar flavor to both Neirab I and Neirab II. The inscription and translation are as follows:

Kimaḫḫu ša Šamaš-ib-ni mâr ^{m}Da-ku-ru(?) ša Ašur-etil-ilâni^{mêš} šar ^{mât}Ašur

ri-e-mu ir-ša-aš-šum-ma ul-tu ki-rib[š'adê]-e a-na biti ^{m}Da-kur mâti-šu

ú-bil-la-aš-šum-ma ina kimaḫḫi ina ki-rib bîti ša dûri ša la di-ni ú-ša-aṣ-li-lu-šu

man-nu at-ta lu-ú ^{amêl}šak-nu lu-ú ^{amêl}ša-pi-ru lu-ú da-ai-nu

lu-ú rubû ša ina mâti iš'-šak-ka-nu a-na kimaḫḫi u e-ṣi-it-ti

šú-a-ti la ta-ḫa-at-tu a-šar-šu ú-ṣur

ṣi-il-li ṭa-a-bi e-li-šu tu-ru-uṣ

a-na šú-a-ti ^{d}Marduk bêlu rabu-ú pa-li-e-ka lu-ur-riq

ṣu-lul-šu ṭa-a-bu e-li-ka li-iš-kun

[šumi]-ka zêri-ka ú ba-la-tu û-me-ka arkûti .....

šum-ma rubû šú-ú lu-u ^{amêl}š'ak-nu lu-ú ^{amêl}'ša-pi-ru lú-ú da-ai-nu

lu-ú šakkanak ša ina mâti ib-ba-aš-šú-ú

ana kimaḫḫi u e-ṣi-it-ti šú a-ti i-ḫa-aṭ-tu-ú

a-šar-šu ú-nak-ka-ri a-na a-šar ša-nam-ma i-liq-qu-ú

ú man-ma a-na li-mut-tum ú-šad-ba-bu-šu-ma i-šim-mu-ú

[d]Marduk bêlu rabu-ú šumi-šu zêri-šu pir' e[mêš]-šiu ú na-an-nap-šu

ina pi-i niše[mêš] li-ḫal-liq

[d]Nabû sa-ni-iq mit-bar-ti mi-na-a-ta û-me-šu arkûti[mêš] li-kar-ri

Nergal ina ti-' šib-ṭu u šag-ga-aš-ti

la i-gam-mi-il nap-šat-šu[614]

The coffin of Shamash-ibni the Dakurite, to whom Ashur-etil-ilâni, King of Assyria,

Showed favor, and from [the mountains] to Bit-Dakur, his land,

Brought him, and in a sarcophagus in the house of the fortress, without contention,

caused him to rest.

Whoever thou art, whether a prefect, or a ruler, or a judge,

Or a prince, who art established in the land, against that sarcophagus and remains

{bones?}

Thou shalt not commit sin. Its place protect,

Good shelter spread over it.

For that, may Marduk the great lord lengthen thy reign,

Place his good protection over thee.

Thy [name], thy seed, and life of their future days, [may he…

If a prince, himself, or a prefect or a ruler or a judge

Or a viceroy, who comes to the land,

Sin against that sarcophagus and remains {bones?}

Alter its place, remove to another place,

Or someone incite him to evil, and he hearken,

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[614] Albert Clay, "Mortuary Inscription of Shamash-Ibni" in *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collection.* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1915), 60-61.

May Marduk, the great lord, his name, his seed, his offspring, his descendents

Destroy in the mouth of the peoples

May Nebo, the oppressor of the adversary,

Shorten the number of his future days

May Nergal from misery, pestilence, and calamity,

Not protect his life.[615]

Conclusion: The Aramaic Inscriptional Material

Aramaic funerary inscriptions and monuments as well as Aramaic burials are characterized by diversity resulting from a varied population in a very small area. The Hittite heritage of Aram is clearly seen in the material from Śam'al, where the Hadad, Panamuwa, and Katamuwa inscriptions all picture an afterlife in which the deceased may commune with the gods and is able to enjoy one of the fundamental functions of life: eating and drinking. The elaborate and carefully created images connect to the belief that the spirit of the deceased person is present in the memorial stele and closely parallel Hittite memorial art. Finally, the importance of sacrifice being carried out by the living on behalf of the dead (seen also in the Ördek-burnu stele) is also consistent with Hittite funerary ritual. The explicit request for continued sacrifice and the expectation of an afterlife is very striking in comparison to material from Israel (as well as Phoenicia). While there is evidence for veneration of the dead in Israel in both text and archaeology, that evidence is subject to interpretation and can be ambiguous. The same can be said for a belief in a happy afterlife. There is no archaeological attestation for the funerary stele type monument in Israel as we have it in Aram which asks for offerings for the dead for

[615] Albert Clay, "Mortuary Inscription of Shamash-Ibni" in *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collection.* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1915), 60-62.

the comfort of the soul in the afterlife. Funerary inscriptions from Ketef Hinnom and Khirbet el-Qom, as well as biblical texts may hint at the hope for peace and protection beyond the grave, but this is not certainly clear.

While the Zincirli material is associated with the royal family and courtiers of that state, our other set of Aramaic inscriptional material from Neirab contains a somewhat different set of concerns. While the Neirab steles were created by members of the priestly class, the issues they were concerned with can be considered more closely related to the common people than to royalty. What we find on the Neirab steles much more closely mirrors the material from Israel and Phoenicia. Here the primary concern was to avoid the desecration of the grave, and the gods are called as witnesses to the curses of the stele. The other very interesting thing about Neirab II in particular is the focus upon both a good life and a good death, in contrast to a good afterlife. This focus is much more clearly parallel to the materials from Israel and Judah, both inscriptional and from the biblical texts.

By this point little more need be said regarding the tremendous number of connections that can be made among funerary inscriptions for Israel/Judah, Aram, and Phoenicia in the Iron Age. We have been fortunate to have access to royal inscriptions for Aram and Phoenicia, as well as inscriptions for the wealthy and powerful and the perhaps not so wealthy for all three peoples. While there are hints of hope for what might be called a happy or peaceful afterlife, particularly in the Aramaic royal inscriptions (which are strongly influenced by Hittite royal theology) and perhaps in the Ketef Hinnom amulets from Judah, the focus for all three cultures is what the deceased did in life, how he or she lived, and the hope for dignified rest in the grave, undisturbed by robbers (or

archaeologists!). It is this hope that the gods are called upon to ensure by the binding power of the curse, sometimes paired with a blessing for future generations who respect the dead. Sometimes the god is not named, as in Israel where the statement is just "cursed be the one who opens this tomb." Sometimes the holy gods, the assembly, are called upon, (as in Phoenicia), and elsewhere (as at Neirab) specific curses are made and specific gods are named. Despite dramatic differences in the religious systems of these peoples, the basic framework for dealing with death and burial was the same.

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APPENDIX A: ARCHAEOLGIAL EVIDENCE OF MORTUARY REMAINS IN PHOENICIA

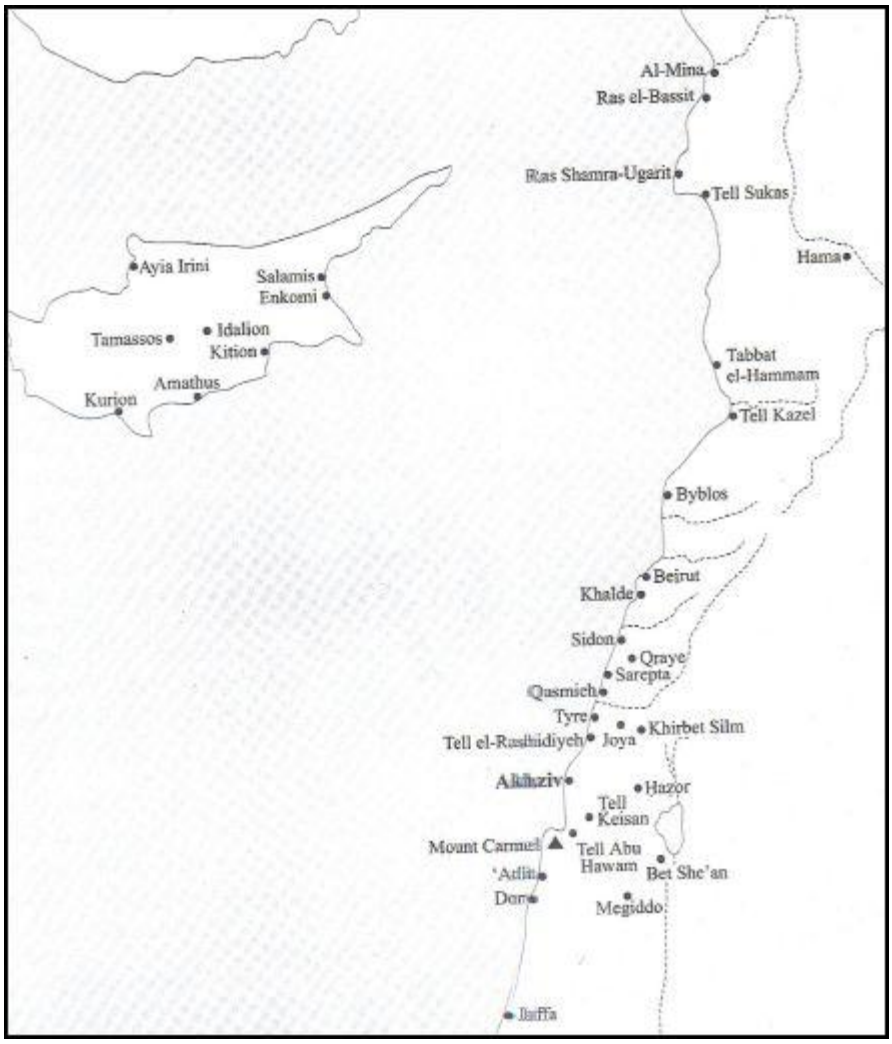

Figure 52: Phoenician sites along the Mediterranean Coast
Michal Dayagi-Mendels, *The Achziv Cemeteries* (Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority, 2002), vi.

Israel and Aram did not exist in isolation nor were they in contact only with each other. These two cultures were closely involved with a third group, the Phoenicians. At multiple points in the discussion throughout this work it has been useful to mark out comparisons with Phoenician burial practice and funerary inscriptions, and so here we

will present a brief set of relevant data for burial practices and funerary inscriptions in Phoenicia. Appendix A will describe some key sites for mortuary archaeology in Phoenicia. Appendix B will deal with funerary inscriptions, primarily from Sidon and Tyre, which share remarkable similarities in some respects with the Aramaic and Israelite material.

There are some difficulties with defining the parameters of what constitutes Phoenicia or Phoenician. "There is no such thing as a clear-cut, broadly accepted definition of the Phoenicians as a people with an acknowledged territory of their own, a sufficiently homogeneous language, and a common historical and cultural background. On the contrary, debate on the subject runs hot, with a whole range of different theses."[616] Nonetheless we boldly soldier on and create a working definition focused upon major cities and a geographic range, commonly taken to extend from the sea to the Lebanon mountains and roughly north to Shukshu (Tell Suqas) and south to Joppa (see map Figure 51).[617] Our primary focus will be on the three most important and well-known Phoenician cities, Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon. Part of the problem is that the centers of Sidon and Byblos and Tyre (as well as Aradus, Berytus, and Sarepta) were not clearly differentiated from the more inland city states prior to 1200 BCE. Even after that period the centers retained their independence in most political matters, but came to be grouped together from a cultural and linguistic point of view. The same group of phenomena (the outstanding feature of which was the invasion of the "Sea Peoples") which factored into

[616] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 24.
[617] Mikhal Dayagi-Mendeles, *The Akhziv Cemeteries: The Ben-Dor Excavations, 1941-1944* (IAAA 15; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2002), vi.

the establishment of Israel and the Aramean states also functioned to concentrate and isolate the coastal cities and strengthen the links among them.[618]

Early documentation from Byblos comes in the form of correspondence between King Rib-Addi and Pharaoh Amenhotep IV. There are also other Egyptian materials relating to Phoenicia, including *The Lamentations of Ipu-wer* and *The Tale of Sinhue.* Materials from after 1200 include *The Journey of Wen-Amon* and the Assyrian annals. Relationships between Byblos and Egypt are well attested in the Egyptian record from as early as the Old Kingdom, with almost every pharaoh of the Old Kingdom sending gifts to the goddess known as the Lady of Byblos. Less documentation exists for Tyre. Josephus cites the Annals of Tyre which have sadly been lost to us.[619]

Trade in timber and shipbuilding made up an important part of the economic relationship between Phoenicia and her neighbors.[620] Probably the most well-known references are the biblical accounts of the interactions between David and King Hiram of Tyre in 2 Sam 5:11. 1 Kgs 5–10, 1 Chr 14:1, 1 Chr 22:4, 2 Chr 2:3, and 2 Chr 2:11 give a detailed account of the materials, men, and goods sent to King Solomon from Hiram of Tyre for the building of the temple. These famous episodes, which emphasize the material wealth, commercial connections, and highly esteemed craftsmanship of

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[618] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 24-25.
[619] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 30-35; Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 5-11, 16-24.
[620] Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 56-70. We can notice also the use of an Egyptian image of Sheshonq I as a gift to the Baal and Baalat of Gebal (Byblos), with the Phoenician inscription "Have offered Ahibaal King of Gebal and the Suzerain of Gebal in Egypt to Baalat and to the Baal of Gebal." René Dussaud, "Les Inscriptions Phéniciennes du Tombeau d'Ahiram, Roi de Byblos," *Syria* 5 (1924): 135-157. It would be remiss not to note here also one of the most famous offerings to Baalat with strong Egyptian connections: the Montet jar. Discovered by P. Montet in his 1921 excavations of the temple, the jar contained a hoard of approximately 1000 objects, including 100 scarabs and seals, along with Egyptian animal figurines and jewelry. Ward and Tufnell place the date of this jar in the latter half of the 22nd century. Also found at this time were fragments of many jars with the seals of most of the Old Kingdom Pharoahs. W. A. Ward and O. Tufnell, "Relations between Byblos, Egypt, and Mesopotamia at the End of the Third Millennium B.C.: A Study of the Montet Jar." *Syria* 43 (1966): 165-241.

Phoenicia, match well with other biblical passages.[621] This is also supported by finds of beautifully crafted items in ivory, ceramics, and metal from Phoenicia which were widely distributed and apparently highly valued throughout the Mediterranean.[622] The emphasis upon trade, and colonization for the express purpose of furthering trade, meant that the Phoenician cities generally strove towards peaceful means of diplomacy. We have a famous (or infamous) biblical example of this policy in the marriage of King Ahab of Israel to Jezebel of Tyre in the 9th century.

The major Phoenician cities of Byblos, Tyre and Sidon came to be distinguished by separate but related civic, religious and artistic traditions, and each generally engaged independently in international relations. The patron god of Tyre was Melqart, who is usually associated with the Baal of the infamous Jezebel of the Biblical texts. The high deities of Sidon were Eshmun and Astarte. These deities will feature in the funerary inscriptional material from Sidon, as twice kings are identified as priests of Astarte. Eshmun is also part of the theophoric name of several kings. Eshmun was a god of healing often associated with Babylonian Tammuz and with similar dying and rising myths (as was Melqart). Byblos was dedicated to Baal Shamaim and the Ba'alat (the Mistress) of Byblos.[623] The kings of Byblos and Tyre served in priestly functions to Baalat and Melqart, presiding over important yearly festivals and civic/religious

[621] See Psa 45:12, Isa 23, and Ezr 3:7, as well as Ezek 28 1-20 as examples.
[622] S. Moscati's beautiful and comprehensive work has a large number of color plates exhibiting the artistic achievements of the Phoenicians throughout their history. Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 765.
[623] This greatly simplifies the matter, as a variety of gods and goddesses appear associated with treaties and steles from all three cities. This simply suggests that while the cities shared many members of the divine pantheon, each had a special devotion to one or two. For further discussion see Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 104-125

ceremonies. Professional and hereditary priests presided over daily and routine functions.[624]

B. Peckham emphasizes the independence and distinctiveness of each city.[625] This can also be seen in the variation in burial customs in Phoenicia, particularly when one compares the uniform cremation cemetery at Tyre with the variety of Achziv and the sarcophagi burials of the Sidonian kings. While we focus here primarily on the largest and most well-known Iron Age centers, the Phoenician emphasis upon trade led to widespread colonization in North Africa, Italy, and throughout the Mediterranean These colonies continued to be centers of commerce and civic life into the Roman period.[626] The Phoenician trading centers shared characteristic features of material culture such as architecture. Cities were built on a promontory overlooking the sea if at all possible, and the style and construction of temples was similar in all Phoenician trade cities. Funerary customs also marked them as Phoenician/Punic, but these also were influenced by and incorporated local elements.

Byblos and Sidon during the Bronze Age

Byblos is located about 37 km north of Beirut. Like Tyre and Sidon it is very well protected, being built on a headland. Byblos is bordered by small waterways to the north and south (as is Sidon). It possesses a spring rising out of the rock into the city. As with other Phoenician sites, excavation of the city is extremely challenging due to the overlay and disruption by later building from Roman to modern times.[627] Bronze Age Byblos is

[624] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 116, 126 In addition to the information from the Tabnit and Eshmunazar sarcophagai, Josephus calls the 9th century Tyrian King Ethbaal a "priest of Astarte" and the 4th century king of the same name is called "priest of the Lady" in an inscription.
[625] Peckham, "Phoenicians and Aramaeans: the Literary and Epigraphic Evidence," 19-44.
[626] For an overview of these sites see Moscati's excellent work. Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 765.
[627] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 142-143

notable for its very large cemeteries (known as *tombeaux archaiques* to their French excavators). These cemeteries contained single-chambered tombs, often round in shape with a dome-shaped roof entered by a square shaft. The tombs often contained a single burial arranged in a crouched position. Another type of cemetery included hundreds of burials in large flat-bottomed, oval jars with included grave goods. These jars typically had looped handles and a combed pattern that was common in Early Bronze Aram and the Levant.[628]

One of the most dramatic early discoveries from Byblos was the royal necropolis discovered by P. Montet. A rock-fall from a cliff southwest of the modern village of Djebeil exposed the tombs dug into the rock which had previously been hidden.[629] The royal necropolis of Byblos was in use from the second millennium through the 9th century BCE, and it was from Tomb V of this site that the coffin of Ahiram king of Byblos was discovered (further discussed with the Phoenician inscriptional evidence). In addition to Ahiram's coffin two other chest-shaped coffins were discovered which had been moved aside to make room for the later burial.[630]

Sidon lies between Tyre and Byblos, being about 77 km south of Byblos with Tyre lying another 38km further south. Unfortunately, the cemeteries of Mugharat Ablun, Ain al-Helwe and Ayyaʿah have been destroyed since yielding their royal coffins in the

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[628] Oren, *The Northern Cemetery of Beth Shan*, 48-49.

[629] L. H. Vincent, "La Nouvel Hypogée de Byblos et l'Hypogée Royal de Gezer," RB 32 (1923): 552-575. The most dramatic find here was an 18th century royal tomb and sarcophagus with massive amounts of grave goods piled up in the tomb – fine middle Minoan pottery, silver items, plaques, rings, and jewelry. The sarcophagus held a male body (though there was some debate regarding this). In addition to very large amounts of goods in the tomb, the sarcophagus itself held a finely made bronze weapon, gold leaf and ivory fragments, perfume bottles, more jewelry including an amethyst necklace, amulets, a gold pectoral, and another chest at the feet of the body. Silver soles of shoes further attest to the richness of this burial. We can bear this in mind when we consider the later royal burials (for example of Tabnit and Eshmunazar) below which claim that no goods were included in the burials.

[630] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 144.

19th century.[631] There has in the past been difficulty with excavating in the city due to the fact that most of the ancient site is covered by the modern city. In 1937 and 1938 P.E. Guiges uncovered Middle Bronze Age graves in the nearby villages of Lebe'a, Kafr-Jarra, and Qrayeh. His excavation uncovered tombs dating from the 18th Egyptian dynasty (1552–1305).[632] After opening a passage full of rock and dirt blocking access to the tomb/sepulture, Guigues discovered a chamber in which multiple bodies had been placed in a fetal position with their heads to the southwest.[633] Other nearby excavations include Roger Saidah's work at Dakerman, a site only about a kilometer from Sidon in 1969. The cemetery at Dakerman was in use from the 14th century BCE to the 1st century CE, and contained several hundred tombs of a variety of types, including stone cist tombs (7th –6th centuries) and terracotta sarcophagi (Late Hellenistic). Moscati claims that the simplicity of the graves and grave goods found indicate that this was a cemetery for middle and lower class people. Also found here were large numbers of Mycenaean, Cypriot, Egyptian, and local pottery. Majdalouna also yielded a 15th century tomb with bronze weapons scarabs and local pottery.[634]

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[631] Lipiński, *The Phoenicians*, 1322.

[632] There is a high and a low chronology in use for the 18th dynasty which differ by 10-20 years. The beginning of the dynasty was the driving out of the Hyksos by Ahmose I and the dynasty ended with the death of Pharoah Horemheb. Here the low chronology is used. Peter Stearns, ed.,"Egypt, c. 3500–332 BCE -the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period (18th–24th Dynasties)" Page 30 in *Encylopedia of World History* (Boston:Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2001), 30. These dates are based upon evidence from Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* and pharonic king lists and coordinated with ancient astronomical observations. See also Ramsey et al., "Radiocarbon-Based Chronology for Dynastic Egypt," 1554–1557 for the use of new radiocarbon data to determine the chronology of ancient Egypt.

[633] P. E. Guigues, "Lebea, Kafer-Garra, Qraye, Necropoles de la Région Sidonienne," BMB 3 (1939): 53-61. While this is an earlier period than our range of focus, the finds were very interesting. The skeletons showed grains of agate cornaline on the bodies. While we have seen multiple cases of old amulets and scarabs in later tombs, the presence of not one or two but 15 scarabs from the 18th dyanasty (including two scarabs engraved with the name of Thutmose III) and the forms of the locally made, white clay pottery secure the dating. In addition to the rich pottery finds and scarabs a particularly interesting find was a small gold plate decorated with a flower design and pierced at the corners so that it could be sewn onto clothing. Guigues compared his finds to Gezer tomb 9 and to the 14th century tombs of Ras Shamra.

[634] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 145.

In 1998 permission was granted to the British Museum to excavate on three acres of land in the downtown area which had been previously set aside by the Directorate General of Antiquities. This "College Site" has yielded a great deal of information about Bronze Age Sidon, including the discovery of over one hundred Middle Bronze Age graves.[635] At the beginning of the second millennium the older occupation level was covered over with sand and designated as a burial ground. The burials attested here were constructed graves lined with stone or mud brick. Grave goods included bronze artifacts, weapons, and jewelry. Most of the graves were of adult males with weapons and of children, with only one adult female burial attested.

Similar burials have been excavated in Lebanon at Tell Arqu, in Palestine at Gesher, Tell Rehov and Kabri, and in Syria at Baghouz. Burial types at Sidon changed over time. Jar burials of individuals in flexed position are most common after 1700. Some of these jar burials also contained bones from other individuals, which for C. Doumet-Serhal argues that the bones were gathered and deposited after natural decomposition had occurred (see later discussion of multiple burials). Most of these individuals ranged from newborn to 13 years old, with one twenty-year-old female also present.[636] This may be due to segregated burial by age, a practice we will see at other Phoenician sites.

After this time there are more frequent multiple burials of two to five individuals. These multiple graves contained animal remains consistent with a funerary meal. [637] Middle Bronze IIA constructed graves held the remains of entire animals, while later

[635] Claude Doumet-Serhal, "Sidon during the Bronze Age: Burials, Rituals and Feasting Grounds at the "College Site," NEA 73 (2010): 114-115.
[636] Doumet-Serhal, "Sidon during the Bronze Age: Burials, Rituals and Feasting Grounds at the "College Site," 120
[637] Doumet-Serhal, "Sidon during the Bronze Age: Burials, Rituals and Feasting Grounds at the "College Site," 119-120

graves contained animals cut into quarters with the "choice" or "symbolic" portion being left in the grave. We should compare this to the Katamuwa stele, wherein the dead commands the living that "He is also to perform the slaughter in (proximity to) my soul and is to apportion for me a leg-cut." Present also were large quantities of cooked animal bones of sheep, goat and cattle, as well as mortars, pestles, and mud-brick ovens located near the grave site which would have been used to prepare the meat. In addition multiple charcoal traces attest to frequent fires lit on the ground in this area. Incense burners were also uncovered at the cemetery site. One puzzling find was a curved channel with sides of gray and white alternating bricks which was found near the burials. Terracotta pipes were also found in a cut to the north of this feature. No practical purpose has been uncovered for this, and Doumet-Serhal interprets this as having been used for an undetermined ritual purpose. Similar 8th century channels have been located at the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens.[638]

Another Middle Bronze Age site is Ruweise near Sidon. Dated to the 18th or 19th century, material from tomb 66 of this site, along with the remains of two individuals, includes scarabs, pottery, a dagger, two axe-heads and three spear-heads with leaf-shaped blades. The pottery – bowls and storage jars, and juglets, some burnished red slip and some plain, has connections with material from the same period found at Megiddo, Jericho, Tell Aviv and Hazor.[639]

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[638] Doumet-Serhal, "Sidon during the Bronze Age: Burials, Rituals and Feasting Grounds at the "College Site," 121-123. Grave goods at the site include silver jewelry – bracelet, anklets, and rings. Items betraying Egyptian influence include scarabs, closed vessels (Egyptian storage jars – the *zîr*) and an alabaster cup. Additionally, a Minoan cup attests to trade with Crete, and a locally-made jar bearing the dolphin motif familiar from Crete as well as other Middle Cypriot imports are present.

[639] OlgaTufnell, "Tomb 66 at Ruweise, Near Sidon," BAS 24 (1976): 5-17; and Yadin, *Hazor II*, 174-plates; Guy, *Megiddo Tombs*, 224 and plates.

Evidence from Phoenicia in the Iron Age

The Necropolis at Tyre

Tyre lies about 35 kilometers (21 miles) south of Sidon, and the territories of the two were divided by the Litani river.[640] The primary Iron Age necropolis of Tyre was discovered in the Al-Bass area in 1990. Like other Phoenician cemeteries it lies outside the city walls. The cemetery was situated on a beach on the coast directly across from the city (about 2km away). Most of the burials here date from the 10th to 7th centuries BCE. The necropolis was under excavation by Spanish teams from 1997–2008, which has yielded hundreds (thus far about 320) of Iron Age Phoenician graves very close to and sometimes disturbed by a later Hellenistic and Roman cemetery.

The remains here have distinctive traits which stand in clear contrast with cremation practices in Aram. The Al-Bass site contained only adult cremations, as compared to the regular finds of children together with adults at sites in Aram and mixed burials in Israel and Judah. We should also compare this to the tophet of Carthage, which held only child cremations, and the cemetery at Achziv, which was adults only. At this period in Phoenicia separation by age was practiced, though this was not the case in the Bronze Age (at least at Sidon) as has been seen from the College Site. Unfortunately we do not know how widespread this rule was, since in many early reports (for example the French excavations at the turn of the last century) sex and age of the skeletons was not determined or noted. Iron Age burials here were remarkably homogenous over a period of hundreds of years as compared to the considerable diversity found in Aram and Israel.[641]

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[640] Lipiński, "The Phoenicians," 1322.
[641] Maria Eugenia Aubet, "The Phoenician Cemetery at Tyre," NEA 73 (2012): 144-146.

M. Aubet distinguishes three types of cremation burials for this site. Single urn graves contain the funerary urn, covered with a flat stone or a plate. Beside the urn are two specific types of jugs – a trefoil-rimmed and a mushroom-like or neck-ridge jug. A drinking cup leans against the urn. Tomb 61 is an excellent example of this type. The second type of burial is the most common at Al-Bass Tyre. It contains two urns placed side by side in the same trench. Both urns pertain to one individual, with the ashes deposited in one urn and the burnt bones and personal possessions in the other. The third type of burial includes groups of urns placed together and arranged as a grouping, with some older than others, and sometimes with evidence that older urns were dug up and rearranged for this purpose.[642]

Figure 53: 7th century Phoenician funerary stele with inscription "Stele of Mlk son of Ashtartga"
Hecht Museum, n.p. Online: http://mushecht.haifa.ac.il/archeology/PHOENIC_eng.aspx.

[642]Aubet, "The Phoenician Cemetery at Tyre," 146-148.

Outward or surface marking of the place of burial is indicated by the remains of wooden imprints at the edge of the gravesite, or in a few cases a small stone stele set up over the grave (see Figure 52).[643] Pebbles and stones on the surface were also used to mark the graves below. The presence of broken pottery on top of the tombs, some of which contained food remains, indicates a funerary meal, and concurs with evidence from Sidon for food preparation at the gravesite. As seen in Aram as well, personal items were included in the funerary urn. In 20 percent of these urns Egyptian scarab amulets were present (something also seen in Aram and Israel). These and other jewelry had fire damage from the cremation. The skulls of some individuals showed bronze imprints from the burned remains of a head ornament. This calls to mind the coffin inscription of Batnoam, Queen mother of Byblos, who states that she was laid out "with a tiara on my head."[644] Bone fragments of sheep, cows, and goats along with burned pottery sherds are also present in the urns. These fragments, as well as the remains of small bonfires lit inside the pit that would hold the urn, indicate funerary rites at the time of burial, which also connect with evidence of earlier practices at Sidon.[645]

Aubet reconstructs the sequence of these rites from the archaeological evidence. First the funeral pyre was lit and with a meal shared at the site by the mourners, after which the pottery and food remains were thrown into the fire. Next the bones and ashes were separated into urns, and some additional small personal objects added. Finally the urns were placed in their designated space – a space remembered and reused by family groups over generations – with the constant feature of the two jugs and drinking cup to

[643] University of Haifa, "7th Century Phoenician Stele (Image)," n.p. [cited 26 May 2014]. Online: http://mushecht.haifa.ac.il/archeology/PHOENIC_eng.aspx.
[644]Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 99-100; Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 2.
[645]Aubet, "The Phoenician Cemetery at Tyre," 149.

accompany the urn. Analysis has confirmed the presence of wax in some of the mushroom shaped jugs which may indicate honey or a similar product. Finally another fire was lit in the pit (sometimes) and when this burned out the pit was closed with stones and sand. A last ritual of eating and drinking took place, with the pottery again being destroyed, this time by smashing over the grave.[646] In a few cases terracotta artifacts were placed on the grave, or a small stone stele was erected. These stele inscriptions provided the name or lineage of the buried individual. For Aubet some of the terracotta objects (for example the model of a temple from Tomb 8) were the only clearly religious objects found at the Al-Bass Tyre cemetery.[647]

Funerary Pottery Collections from Nearby Areas

While burial patterns were very homogenous at the Tyre necropolis and included an extremely standardized set of pottery forms, this was not the case elsewhere in Phoenicia. Greater variation of Iron Age burial practices was found at Achziv, and the evidence of pottery remains from these sites shows some variety in the repertoire of pottery grave goods. S. Chapman has published a catalogue of Iron Age pottery from the cemeteries of Khirbet Silm, Joya, Qrayé and Qasmieh which contain a variety of pottery forms, including lamps and dippers. By contrast with the carefully preserved gravesites of Tyre, the contextual information from these four sites has been lost, and our primary information comes from the pottery collections that were acquired by the American University Museum in Beirut. Excavations at Khirbet Silm were undertaken in the 1920s and 30s and the pottery was acquired by the American University Museum in Beirut in

[646] Compare the Hittite ritual "Then they sm[ash…the vessel against the ground and break it into smithereens. He laments. Women begin wailing." Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev. *Hittite Funerary Ritual* ,757.
[647] Aubet, "The Phoenician Cemetery at Tyre," 153-154.

several lots. Many of the pots from Joya were seized in 1940 after clandestine excavations.[648] Of these the total was 317 of which 115 are jugs. Most are plain ware in simple forms such as lamps and dippers, with the most common decoration being a red band bordered by black lines. These villages would have been influenced by both Tyre and Sidon, and not by Byblos, which is further north. Most of this pottery dates to the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. Red, black, and bichrome painted ware from the late Iron Age are present, as well as red-slip ware. The painted ware comprises 41% of the collection, with plain ware equaling another 40%. Red slip is 10% and the remaining balance consists of small numbers of black-on-red, burnished and fine ware.[649] Lipiński separates Phoenician pottery into three distinct groups. The earliest, dating to about the mid 11th century, is bichrome ware with globular flasks and jugs decorated with concentric red and black circles. The second group, a red on black ware which is often called Cypro-Phoenician ware in dig reports, begins to appear in the early 10th century and can be found in Cyprus, Phoenicia and Palestine. It is decorated with concentric circles and lines in black with a reddish/brown slip. Finally by the 9th century red-slip ware became dominant and the trefoil mouth "mushroom" jugs (as noted above) proliferate.[650] Details such as rivets and ridges on jugs imitated metal work.

Evidence from Achziv

Achziv is the most southern of our Phoenician sites, being currently about 25 km south of Tyre. Biblical references to the city are found in Josh 14:44, as well as in Josh 19:24–29 and Judg 1:31–32, where it was allotted to the tribe of Asher but not conquered

[648] Chapman, "A Catalogue of Iron Age Pottery from the Cemeteries of Khirbet Silm, Joya, Qraye and Qasmieh of South Lebanon," BAS 21 (1972): 55-194.
[649] Chapman, "A Catalogue of Iron Age Pottery from the Cemeteries of Khirbet Silm, Joya, Qraye and Qasmieh of South Lebanon," 55-194.
[650] Lipińksi, "The Phoenicians," 1324.

at that time. The city is not named in 1 Kgs 9:1–13 but was included within the territory which was part of the agreement between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre. The city was occupied from the Middle Bronze Age, destroyed in the Late Bronze, and reoccupied and rebuilt shortly after that time. Achziv was thereafter occupied continuously through the Hellenistic Age. The height of its development was the 10th–6th centuries, after which a decline was experienced during the Persian period.[651] Excavation of the cemeteries at Achziv was originally undertaken during the 1940s by Immanuel Ben-Dor in response to looting of the area. Excavations continued sporadically over the course of the next sixty years under Moshe Prausnitz and others, and most recently under the direction of Eliat Mazar. The cemeteries surround the tell to the north, south and east, with the sea to the west. Pottery finds date from the 10th century BCE through the end of the Iron Age.[652] In addition to both tombs and cremation burials, the site possesses the only known Phoenician crematorium. The crematorium was a round structure of about 14 feet in diameter. It contained a plastered wind tunnel which entered the building through a window facing the ocean. Pottery from the strata below the crematorium dates to the 10th century, and that found near the structure dates to the 7th century. Prausnitz describes the presence of "well known red ceramics from Phoenician tombs" from the 7th–6th century.[653]

This site has yielded a wide variety of burial forms. Some of the earlier tombs at Achziv were dug below ground and built of ashlar blocks, while later tombs (7th century and later) transition into rock cut instead of built construction. The earlier tombs also

[651] W. Prausnitz, "Communication de Mr. W. Prausnitz," RB 72 (1965): 544-547.
[652] Eliat Mazar, "Achziv Cemeteries: Buried Treasure from Israel's Phoenician Neighbor," BAR 36 (2010): 35-36.
[653] Prausnitz, "Communication de Mr. W. Prausnitz," 544-547.

have the interesting feature of a hole in the roof slab through which it has been put forth by Mazar and others that liquids could be poured for the nourishment of the dead. Similar holes have been found at Ugarit and at Enkomi, Cyprus from the 14th–13th centuries. After the 10th century BCE the holes were no longer created and (according to Mazar) the dead were "fed" from jars brought into the burial chamber. As at Tyre the areas around the tombs contain the remains of fires and smashed pottery.[654] The Achziv tombs also were used over long periods of time – some for over 400 years. The dead were laid on the floor on their backs along with grave goods and offerings. While Israelite tombs often contained repositories to collect older remains, Phoenician tombs lacked these. Older remains were gathered in piles rather than being placed in pits. Mazar also describes a trend which she calls "privatization" – separating individual burials. This trend began with the practice of surrounding a burial with a row of stones, and continued with the development of benches along walls (10th century). Later the use of sarcophagi and burial in carved loculi was adopted.[655]

Also in keeping with the evidence from Tyre and with the pottery collections discussed above, three vessels were present at almost every burial in close proximity to the deceased. At Achziv the most common set is a trefoil rim jug, a "mushroom" type jug, and a dipper juglet. Most of these were local and not imported. The other finds in this cemetery were extremely rich and varied. Clay statues and models of objects, humans and animals, weapons, jewelry (common bronze anklets were also present here), masks, scarabs, and amulets were all present. We again encounter here two more items with the

[654] Mazar, "Achziv Cemeteries: Buried Treasure from Israel's Phoenician Neighbor," 36. Perhaps compare with the Hittite royal funerary ritual where wine is poured out and the vessel is broken. Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 22.
[655] Mazar, "Achziv Cemeteries: Buried Treasure from Israel's Phoenician Neighbor," 36-38.

name of Thutmose III – a scarab with the hieroglyph of Amun-Re and the cartouche of the Pharaoh, and a small rectangular plaque with his cartouche on the right and Ptah on the left.[656] Compare these to the similar items from Tell Halaf and from Jericho as already seen.

The cremation burials at Achziv date from the 7th to 6th centuries BCE and are intermixed with trench interments. These urns were buried either individually or in sets of two. The urns were either local kraters or imported from Cyprus. As at Tyre there are stones marking some of the burials. These stones also show evidence of fires being lit near them. As at Tyre stones mark some of the burials. The stones do not carry inscriptions but some are carved with simple figures – a circle on top of a triangle or a cross. This is the figure of Tanit/Ashtoreth (see also stones from Carthage with the same symbol). All cremations at this site are of adults. Mazar proposes an interesting theory. She says:

> It seems to me probable that the cremated adults were the firstborn, both male and female, who as "firstlings" belonged to the god. The firstborn lived a normal life among their families, but upon their death they had to undergo purification by fire on their way back to the bosom of the god. This was also the reason why their burials did not contain offerings attesting to their identity and status, as was done in regular burials, since their status in the afterlife was their very belonging to the god.[657]

Mazar does not elaborate upon the foundations for this theory but it appears to be strongly influenced by the idea of *pidyon haben* and the biblical texts of Exod 13:13–16, Exod 34: 19–20, Num 3:45–47 and 2 Kgs 3:27. Shelby Brown sees no direct Phoenician

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[656] Mazar, "Achziv Cemeteries: Buried Treasure from Israel's Phoenician Neighbor," 36-38. Scarabs were not always manufactured in Egypt, as shown by the 9th century scarab seal from Khaldeh, which uses Egyptian signs out of context and imperfectly copied. Such a phenomena is also found at Megiddo where hieroglyphs were used as a decorative motif and with little regard to meaning. W. Culican, "A Phoenician Seal from Khaldeh," *Levant* 6 (1974): 195-198.

[657] Mazar, "Achziv Cemeteries: Buried Treasure from Israel's Phoenician Neighbor," 47.

evidence for the firstborn as a particular sacrifice, and this is not described in the early historical sources either, although it has sometimes been assumed by scholars.[658]

Other Iron Age Cemeteries from Phoenicia

While we have good information from the College Site Bronze Age excavations at Sidon, the Iron Age information from that city is much less accessible. As mentioned earlier, the "Royal Necropolis" of Sidon – distributed along a line of hills inland of the city – have been largely destroyed by quarrying. The tombs were rock-carved and usually included a shaft entrance. It was in the Mugharat Ablun section that the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar was found; that of Tanit comes from Aya. The oldest chamber and shaft tombs in this area are from the 7th century. Later tombs had vaulted ceilings and niches and finally we encounter large chambers with painted walls and painted decorations. [659] The necropolis of Tambourit to the southeast of Sidon probably belonged to that city. A tomb carved out of the rock has been excavated there. This tomb yielded a Greek geometric pyxis as well as locally made pottery which dates this tomb to the late 9th century BCE.[660] From Cyprus tombs have been excavated at Amathus from the 8th century BCE and from Salamis the "Royal Tombs" from the 7th century BCE. Both of these sites have given us unique grave goods, such as a large chalice shaped vessel with red and black slip from Amanthus, and ivory furniture such as headboards and bronze plaques from Salamis. These items show very high levels of artistic achievement and were influenced by Egyptian motifs.[661]

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[658] Susanna Shelby Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context* (JSOT/ASOR MS 3; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 26-27.
[659] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 146.
[660] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 145.
[661] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 155-159.

Carthage

The most shocking and controversial funerary evidence for Phoenicia comes from the North African Phoenician colony of Carthage. It is here that the most famous "tophet" or large cremation cemetery for infants and very young children, is located. North of the sanctuary of Tanit and Baal Hamon at Salammbô lies the tophet which, according to many scholars, contain large numbers of urns with the ashes and bones of children who were supposedly sacrificed to the gods. Also present were urns containing the bones of lambs which have been interpreted as substitute sacrifices (compare Exod 13:13–16 Exod 34: 19–20 and Numbers 3:45–47 and E. Mazar's theory of the cremation of the firstborn at Achziv above).[662]

Tyrian settlers founded "New Town" (qart ḥadašh) in (by tradition) 814 BCE to take advantage of the many natural resources of the place and to supply the increasing demand of Assyria for trade and tribute.[663] The history of the excavations at Carthage is quite lengthy and complex. "There were clandestine excavations, and excavations condemned to remain unknown because they were not published at the right moment; the excavations were then forgotten…meanwhile the material lodged in the site storerooms and museums was also forgotten, and the mountain of objects continued to grow as the years passed."[664] The early excavations at Carthage were undertaken by a number of French archaeologists in the late 1800s through the 1920s, with the Americans F. Kelsey and D. Harden working alongside the French with the establishment of the Franco-

[662] Lipińksi, "The Phoenicians," 1328.
[663] Josephus refers to the "great exactness" of the public writings of the Tyrians (alas lost to us) and states that: "…Therein it was recorded the temple was built by king Solomon at Jerusalem, one hundred forty-three years and eight months before the Tyrians built Carthage." Josephus Flavius, "Against Apion," Pages 773-812 in *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (trans. William Whiston; Paris: Hendrickson, 1987), 780. The classical sources bring down to us the story of the sister of King Pygmalion of Tyre (814-803) fleeing the city to found the colony. Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 54.
[664] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 172.

American Committee for the Excavation of Carthage in 1925. Periodic investigations of the site continued through the 30s and 40s. A renewal of interest occurred in 1975, when increasing destruction of the ancient site led to the involvement of UNESCO and the Tunisian government, and multiple national archaeological teams again descended upon the site.[665]

The term tophet is also known from the Bible (Jer 7:32–33) and the sacrifice of the firstborn from Mic 6:7, 2 Kgs 21:6, and Isa 57:5. The Judean tophet is recorded as finally being destroyed under the reign of Josiah in 2 Kgs 23:10. See also the prohibition against such sacrifice in Lev. 18:2; 20:2–5, and Jer 19:4–6.[666] The biblical accounts associate human sacrifice with Molech (possibly not a god but a term for the sacrifice) or Baʿal. The inscribed steles from Carthage are dedicated to Baʿal Hammon or Tannit.

The Carthage tophet was used for a very long period. Over the centuries the empty areas of the cemetery were filled with burials, after which new burials were added among the old until there was no more room. At least twice large areas were leveled and covered with a layer of earth or sand to create fresh ground for new burials.[667]

[665] For a fuller account of the history of excavation see Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 335.
[666]Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 112-113, 175.
[667] Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 72.

S. Brown states:

> These cemeteries reveal concrete, physical evidence of the theoretical similarity and even interchangeability of human and animal sacrifices, since both children and animals were buried together and commemorated with similar monuments. Carthage provides the best evidence for the nature and practice of this rite and its importance to Phoenician religion…The sacrificial cemetery at Carthage is the largest ever found and the one with the longest span (from roughly 750 to 146 BC), and it has produced the largest number of known monuments commemorating child and animal sacrifices: over seven thousand steles of the late period alone have been excavated during the past century.[668]

For those burials that do represent sacrifice (and not all do, as we will see below) there is a blurring of the lines between votive and funerary inscriptions which is similar to what has been seen in the Aramaic inscriptional material. The funerary urn with the remains is also a votive object. The remains constitute both the burial of a person and a devoted object. The inscriptions upon these urns make it clear that the sacrifice is a fulfillment of a vow made or a thanksgiving offering for blessings received from the gods. The practice of such sacrifice is attested in early historical sources spanning from the 5th century BCE to the 5th century CE. These sources include Philo of Byblos, Sophocles, Plato, and the Annals of Ennius, though these earlier sources are short fragments and are lacking in detail. Diodorus Siculus in the 1st century and Cleitarchus in the 3rd century CE provide more detailed information, though they wrote at a later date. These later authors describe various permutations of such sacrifices, including the choice of sacrifice by lot, the buying of the children of the poor for sacrifice, and the placing of children in the sloping arms of a statue, from where they would fall into a fire. The deity is sometimes not identified, and sometimes named as Cronus, (though the chief god of

[668] Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 14.

Tyre and Carthage was Melqart who was often associated with Greek Hercules).[669] Until the tophet at Carthage was discovered these accounts were generally taken with a degree of suspicion as being written by the enemies of Carthage.

The pendulum has swung from an early interpretation of the tophets of Carthage and other areas as being "normal" child burial grounds to the idea of them being overwhelmingly representative of sacrifice. This is exemplified by S. Brown, who argues throughout her important work on late Carthaginian child sacrifice that all of the steles represent sacrifices, even if urns without steles may represent natural deaths. Only at the end of her conclusion does she nuance her claim by saying "we do not know whether all tophet burials represent sacrificial victims, or when and why steles were dedicated."[670]

Recent investigation into the skeletal remains recovered from this cemetery has produced some evidence against such a broad characterization. When the contents of 384 urns were evaluated for age at death and evidence of trauma, it was discovered that no trauma was evident (although burning alive and other traumatic causes of death such as suffocation would not show up as trauma on bone analysis). The ages of the children represented the spectrum of expected infant and child mortality from natural causes. This age spectrum includes a significant representation of prenatal remains – either late miscarriages or still births. This can be determined by the neonatal dental line, which separates the enamel formed before and after birth.[671] These burials alone make it clear that not all of the burials in the tophet were sacrifices (only live beings were suitable for

[669] Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 21-265. Also descriptions by Plutarch, Curtius Rufus, and Pliny.
[670] Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 115.
[671] J. Schwartz et al., "Skeletal Remains from Punic Carthage Do Not Support Systematic Sacrifice of Infants," *PLoS ONE* 5 (2010): 1-12.

sacrifice). Instead what is seen is that late miscarriages and stillbirths were not simply discarded but were treated in the same way as other child cremation burials.

These urns are described as "individually decorated but poorly fired red clay."[672] The urns sometimes held the remains of multiple individuals, but in a pattern such that no more than two complete skeletons were present, although individual teeth or small bones of other individuals sometimes were gathered up from a pyre and included in an urn by chance. The bones, amulets and other objects have uneven charring and sometimes minimal damage from heat. Also present were occasional small burnt branches with the ash. This is consistent with the known pattern of Phoenician funeral pyres which were made of branches and twigs, and not the raging sacrificial infernos described by the ancient writers.[673] The urns included often contained amulets and occasionally small vessels were placed in or near the urns. Each urn was topped with a lid, lamp, or bowl and was placed in a pit. These pits were sometimes lined and topped with stones.

Prior to the 9th–8th centuries BCE there were no monuments to these cremation burials. The early monuments, or "cippi" which date from the 8th to 4th centuries BCE were usually of sandstone, and sometimes were decorated with a face. They were usually not inscribed. The terms cippi and stele are sometimes used interchangeably, but for Carthage usually cippi indicates an earlier monument and stele a later monument. A major change appeared after the 5th or 4th centuries with the introduction of gabled, inscribed stele made of limestone. These later monuments had a wide variety of

[672] J. Schwartz et al., "Skeletal Remains from Punic Carthage Do Not Support Systematic Sacrifice of Infants," 1-12.
[673] J. Schwartz et al., "Skeletal Remains from Punic Carthage Do Not Support Systematic Sacrifice of Infants," 1-12.

decorations and motifs, including the Tanit figure, the hand figure, the crescent disc, and the Caduceus, as well as sheep images, human forms, votive baetyls, and others.[674]

Another feature which counters the idea that the Carthage tophet was primarily a sacrificial burial site is the inclusion of personal items and particularly the inclusion of small vessels such as are seen in almost every burial discussed so far. Such inclusions, as well as the evidence presented above, take us far from the realm of sacrifice and delivers us soundly into standard burial practice. The inclusion of animal remains (primarily sheep, goats or birds) in these burials is also seen in cremation burials in Aram. There they are interpreted as funerary offerings or funerary meals. Here they are interpreted as sacrifices equal to that of human children. Admittedly however when urns with only animal bones and no human remain are discovered it is suggestive of a substitute sacrifice – a *mlk ʾmr* as found on a votive stele from Carthage and one from Cirta.

The lack of early inscriptions gives no evidence that these are sacrifices, and we cannot and should not generalize from later votive inscriptions. Finally the great numbers – many thousands of burials – prohibits the conclusion that these were all sacrifices. Moscati further states that Tanit and Baal Hammon, the two deities most commonly mentioned on the steles, are not characterized as bloodthirsty gods, but as actually having a positive role in the protection of children. He takes a very different view than Brown. Moscati argues that the tophets were places for the burial of children who had died from any number of causes, and the dedications, the "offering" of the children, was the offering of the perished child into the protection of the deity (though he does not deny the

[674] Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 16-7. Various excavators have attempted to create typological and chronological sequences for the burials and monuments at Carthage, but these systems diverge widely. See also Moscati's discussion of the iconography of the Phoenician/Punic stele. Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 304-327.

possibility of occasional human sacrifice).[675] Finally we can recall that nearby Cyprus as early as the 11th century confirms the establishment of separate burial sites for infants and children. These were not cremation burials, but jar burials with modest grave offerings, although a few instances of cremation have been excavated there. In the comparatively few instances where a child is buried in a family tomb the burial is still sometimes separated, not placed in the burial chamber itself but in the entrance shaft.[676] The cremations at Achziv were of adults only which further illustrate an age-based separation in normal burial practice.

Moscati's view disregards or reinterprets the quite strong language of sacrifice on some of the steles because it does not agree with his view of the use of this tophet, just as Brown disregards the evidence presented above against the tophet as a place of sacrifice. I suggest a middle road. The conclusion we can draw from this evidence is not that the earlier claim for the tophet as a place for the remains of sacrificed infants is wrong, but that the new evidence indicates a far lower frequency of such sacrifice. The majority of these urns represent natural deaths. This is actually in better accord with other ancient sources which represent human sacrifice as a rare and desperate action undertaken only under the pressure of an intense need.

While Carthage represents the most well known Phoenician/Punic tophet, there are a number of similar sites. In addition to the Carthage material child cremation cemeteries with steles have come to light in Hadrumetum and Cirta in North Africa (centuries later than the Carthage tophet), as well as at Motya, Sicily and many other Phoenician colonized settlements. Multiple sites in Sardinia have also been discovered,

[675] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 124.
[676] Steel, "Differential Burial Practices in Cyprus at the Beginning of the Iron Age," 199-204.

such as Tharros, Sulcis, Monte Sirai, Bithia, and Nora. The inscriptions on these steles were fairly standardized, with the name of the dedicant and his or her genealogy, along with the name of the god to whom the sacrifice was made. Sometimes other material is included, such as the comment that the offering was made to fulfill a vow or a curse against disturbing the monument.[677] The tophet was a "standard" feature of many Phoenician colonial towns, with other adult necropolises, both underground tombs and cremation cemeteries, used in conjunction with the child burial places.[678] These sites extend beyond our scope in both time and geography, but are certainly deserving of their own volume.

The South-Eastern Cemetery at Atlit

As we conclude this survey of Phoenician mortuary archaeology there is one final site which bears mention. An early excavation of the site of Atlit, on the coast south of modern Haifa, has yielded a rich group of Phoenician tombs. The interpretation of the finds at Atlit is challenging. The site contains multiple mixed archaeological strata and these strata were greatly altered and disturbed by building activity during the period of the Crusades. In order to reach the Phoenician graves one must first navigate these intricate layers of building and habitation. Below the so called "Pilgrim's castle" lies a medieval seaport, and below a fort at the south-east corner of the land-wall of this seaport are the rock hewn Phoenician shaft graves. The graves were used over a period of four centuries, which is consistent with the process of reuse and continued use seen at other

[677] Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context*, 29.
[678] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 120. The tophet at Motya includes several levels of urns from the 7th to the 3rd centuries BCE include terracotta figures and masks. Motya also contains another adult cremation necropolis. Moscati makes note of the necropolises of almost every colonial site, and usually notes a tophet along with other types of burials.

sites. Cremation is sometimes seen as a hallmark of Phoenician burial, but we have seen at the Bronze Age Sidon site as well as at Achziv that inhumation was also regularly practiced. The royal burials which make up the majority of the inscriptions which we will consider in appendix B are also inhumations. Atlit adds to this picture. Earlier cremation burials are present at the site, but the 6th century to Hellenistic burials are primarily shaft grave inhumations.

Material in the shaft tombs was frequently disturbed by later burials. Earlier burials were pushed aside into adjoining spaces and mixed with even older material. All of this was further disturbed by later Templar building activity. C. N. Johns makes a claim for use of the graves from approximately 900 BCE, but this seems to be based upon a very few Iron Age sherds found in the tombs (this report is from 1931 and so dating methods were less reliable). The earliest significant pottery were Attic black-figure lekythoi from the 6th century. Fourteen graves were excavated, which included roughly 100 burials. Another 11 graves were not excavated at the time.[679] Each tomb was intended to have a cover stone protecting the burial in the shaft, with rocks and fill above it, but these covers were often missing or destroyed. When a new burial was made the shaft was meant to be emptied and the cover stone lifted, the burial made and then the cover replaced and the shaft re-filled, but this process was frequently neglected. [680]

The majority of finds from the Phoenician tombs (including easily datable objects such as coins of the 4th century) were from the Persian to the Hellenistic age. What we can learn here, and what is of interest, are the consistencies found between these Phoenician burials and earlier sites. Like the Iron Age cremation necropolis at Tyre, these

[679] C. N. Johns, "Excavations at Atlit (1930-31)," QDAP 2 (1932-33): 41.
[680] Johns, "Excavations at Atlit (1930-31)," 58.

inhumation graves were remarkably uniform in some respects. Just as the Iron Age cremation cemetery contained at least three items – two jugs and a bowl in every grave – here multiple examples of a particular type of two-handled amphora with a pointed base were found in every tomb. While most were found in fragments, findings in at least one intact tomb were arranged in a particular way at the head and feet of the deceased.

Other grave goods are also familiar from earlier burials, such as the kohl box and jewelry – bracelets, rings, earrings, necklaces, beads, etc. Interestingly, anklets on women were always placed on the right ankle. Javelin and arrow heads were included with burials for men.[681] Particularly common were scarabs and Egyptian amulets of a protective nature, including the deities Khnum, Sekhmet, Ptah, Seker, Osiris, Shu, Isis and Horus, Thoth (small figurine), Ta-urt (inscribed pendant) and Anubis. Also frequently found were images and amulets of the protective eye. Animals also appear on pendants – the bull, hare, ram, lion, and dog-faced ape all are attested images here.[682]

Conclusion

Phoenician burial practices of the Iron Age included both inhumation and cremation, just as was the case in Aram. Phoenicia is often viewed as a territory in which cremation dominated as a burial form, most likely because of the very famous cremation cemetery at Carthage. However we see that here as in other areas of the Levant inhumation was primarily practiced during the Bronze Aage, and only after the dawn of the Iron Age did cremation become widely practiced. Inhumation continued to be practiced along with cremation throughout the Iron Age. As in Israel/Judah and Aram inhumation types also varied and included jar burials, pit/cist, and tomb burials. The

[681] Johns, "Excavations at Atlit (1930-31)," 47-50.
[682] Johns, "Excavations at Atlit (1930-31)," 47-50.

excavation of multiple royal tombs as well as multiple large common cemeteries allows us to understand the differences between the burial practices of royalty and commoners. Grave goods of food and drink contained in pottery vessels, as well as personal items such as weapons and jewelry, were provided for the deceased. As in Israel and Aram, imported Egyptian articles were very commonly included in graves. Also as in Israel and Aram, pottery was included in most graves, both inhumations and cremations.

One of the primary distinctions found between Phoenician and Israelite and Aramean burials is the frequent division of Phoenician cemeteries by the age of those who were buried there. The other major issue, of course, is whether these child cemeteries represent incidents of human sacrifice, and if so to what extent this practice occurred. In this matter both archaeology and inscriptional/textual evidence assist us. The one balances the other, as we have inscriptions which support the presence of child sacrifice in some cases, but material analysis which leads to the conclusion that most of the burials in these tophets were natural deaths.

APPENDIX B: PHOENICIAN FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS

Our final group of evidence concerns the funerary inscriptions from Phoenicia. Most of these inscriptions are from the royal families of Byblos and Sidon. These have given a broader range of dates than what we have available from Israel and Neirab, and span most of the Iron Age period. It is therefore interesting to see that the language concerning fear of defilement of the grave spanning this entire period is so similar to that found in 87th century inscriptions from Judah and Aram. Like the Silwan Royal Steward inscription from Judah and the Neirab funerary steles, these inscriptions often proclaim that nothing of value is in the coffin (excepting Queen Batnoam). They forbid and curse the opening of the tomb. Like the royal funerary inscriptions of Śam'al they share the concern with the continuity of the royal family and each member's place among the generations. This, of course can be connected with the biblical concern with connection to the ancestors and the gathering of each generation to those before it.

We also find that the coffins and sarcophagi that contain these texts express a variety that in its own way is in keeping with the variation we have seen in burials throughout Israel, Aram, and Phoenicia. As in Israel and Aram we find that the specific form of the tomb or coffin is less important than the care taken to provide respect for the body. Individual style and choice is apparent, and again the prominent influence of the Egyptian arts is seen.

The Coffin of King Ahiram of Byblos (KAI 1)

Our first piece of evidence from Phoenicia is the coffin of Ahiram, king of Byblos. This coffin was discovered in 1923 at Byblos by Pierre Montet. A recent landslide had revealed a group of royal tombs under the cliffs of Byblos. Three coffins were discovered in one chamber, two older coffins on either side of the Ahiram coffin.[683] The tomb had already been looted prior to the time of Montet's excavation. The inscription is carved upon the side edge of the lid of a massive decorated limestone coffin which includes an elaborate funerary scene.[684] Even this very elaborate royal coffin limits itself to only two primary elements in the inscription: the identity of the deceased and the prohibition and curse against disturbing the dead.

The massive coffin includes two carved lion heads extending from each end of the bottom of the coffin, and one on each end of the lid (see Figure 53).[685] The scene on the sides of the coffin has a table set before the king to receive gifts from mourners or his court. The shape of the coffin and the scenes depicted are not Egyptian in style, but reflect a more northern Syrian tradition. On the top of the coffin the king holds a drooping lotus, and his son faces him holding an upright lotus. The drooping lotus indicates that the king is deceased. Traces of paint reveal that the images were painted in red, brown and black.

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[683] Lehmann, Reinhard G. "Calligraphy and Craftsmanship in the Ahirom inscription: Considerations on Skilled Linear Flat Writing in Early First Millennium Byblos," *Maarav* 15 (2008): 119-164).
[684]Beirut National Museum, "The Sarcophagus of King Ahiram," n.p. [cited 9 March 2014]. Online: ://beirutnationalmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ahiram.jpg.
[685] Beirut National Museum, "The Sarcophagus of King Ahiram," n.p.

Figure 54: Sarcophagus of King Ahiram of Byblos
Beirut National Museum, n.p. Online:
http://beirutnationalmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ahiram.jpg.

The limestone was quarried in an area not far from the city.[686] Items found in this tomb include pottery of Mycenaean and Cypriot origin and fragments of two alabaster vases with the name of Ramses II (1303–1213 BCE) on them. A partial Mycenaean ivory plaque was also found in the shape of a griffin eating a bull. This can be compared with the Enkomi ivories from the 13th12th centuries.[687] The inscription has been dated by J. Gibson to the 11th century BCE, but by Charles Torrey to the 13th century.[688] Later scholarship has generally agreed upon a dating of about1000 BCE, based upon comparison with features found in other inscriptions, such as the Yehimilk

[686] Beirut National Museum, "The Sarcophagus of King Ahiram," n.p.
[687] Dussaud, "Les Inscriptions Phéniciennes du Tombeau d'Ahiram, Roi De Byblos," 135-157.
[688] John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 12-13; Charles C. Torrey, "The Ahīrām Inscription of Byblos," JAOS 45 (1925): 269.

(KAI 4), Elibaal (KAI 6) and Shipitbaal (KAI 7) inscriptions.[689] This coffin represents Phoenician royal burial practice in the Early Iron Age.

The inscription extends over both the rim and the lid of the coffin. The letters on the rim are fairly even in height, but on the lid they become progressively smaller and narrower.[690] There is some discrepancy as to the name of the son of the deceased. Gibson reads Ittoba'al and Lidzbarski gives Ethba'al. These are probably influenced by the Hebrew name of the 9th century king of Tyre and Sidon and father of Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31). René Dussaud, who originally published the inscription, renders the name [Ipphe]sba'al, Torrey reconstructs Pillesba'al. Both Dussaud and Torrey see a ס in the damaged name. Torrey interprets the meaning of this theophoric name as being derived from the Assyrian root *palâsu:* "to look upon with favor, kindness, mercy."[691] The element is attested in a number of Assyrian names.

Below is the inscription and translation:

ארן זפעל [א]תבעל בן אחרם מלך גבל לאחרם אבה כשתה בעלם

ואל מלך במלכם וסכן בס[כ]נם ותמא מחנת עלי גבל ויגל ויגל ארן גן תחתסף חטר משפטה

תהתפך כסא מלכה ונחת תברח על גבל והא ימח ספרה לפף שבל

Coffin which Ittobaal, son of Ahiram, king of Byblos, made for Ahiram, his father, when he placed him in the house of eternity. Now if a king among kings or a governor among

[689]Edward M. Cook, "On the Linguistic dating of the Phoenician Ahiram Inscription (KAI 1)," JNES 53 (1994): 33-36. Cook notes a number of features that had been put forth to justifiy an earlier dating for the inscription (by G.Garbini) and shows by comparison that these do not require an earlier date than the already accepted 1000 BCE. These include the form of the relative pronoun, the final radical of final-weak verbs, the absence of the definite article, the form of the 3rd masculine singular pronominal suffix, the infix-t forms of the verb, the conditional particle ʾl, and the form of the name ʾḥrm. See also Edith Porada. "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram." JANES 5 (1972): 355-372.

[690] Lehmann, "Calligraphy and Craftsmanship," 126.

[691] Torrey, "The Ahīrām Inscription of Byblos," JAOS 45 (1925): 271. Josephus also records an Ithobalus of Tyre (not Byblos) – a priest of Astarte who murdered the previous king and established a new dynasty. Josephus Flavius, *Against Apion,* 781.

governors or a commander of an army should come up against Byblos and uncover this coffin, may the scepter of his rule be torn away, may the throne of his kingdom be overturned, and may peace flee from Byblos! And as for him, may his inscription be effaced….[692]

Note that no satisfactory reading of לפף שבל has been proposed. Gibson suggests that פף could be a reduplication of "mouth" and שבל the name of something used to erase or destroy.[693]

Also connected with this burial is a warning scratched into the shaft of the tomb containing the coffin.

לדעת

הן יפד לך

תחת זן

"Beware! (or "know!") Behold there is disaster (ruin, misfortune) for you under this!" [694]

Dussaud speculates that this final warning was put in place as the shaft was completed and being filled in. The writing is much less smooth and finished in form than the coffin inscription but the forms of the letters are identical.[695] The inscription is in line with the pattern of warnings against removing bodies, grave goods or grave markers which are attested in Hebrew and Aramaic burials as well as in numerous other

[692] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 14; Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 1. R. Lehmann argues for a different translation of the final words. He sees *lpp šrl* instead, and claims that the final line is "and as for him, one should cancel his registration concerning the libation tube of the *šarla* sacrifice." This creates a number of problems, not least of which is the creation of a previously unknown type of ritual with a new loan word from Hittite-Luwian supposedly derived from Anatolian practice. Lehmann accepts these problems because he is absolutely convinced that the middle letter of *š_l* is a resh and not a bet. Lehmann, "Calligraphy and Craftsmanship," 123-125.
[693] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 16.
[694] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 17; Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 1.
[695] Dussaud, "Les Inscriptions Phéniciennes du Tombeau d'Ahiram, Roi de Byblos," 135-157.

monuments such as the Kilamuwa stele. The injunction against moving or defacing monuments or markers is not limited to funerary inscriptions, of course. The broadly encompassing phrases from other inscriptions meaning generally "anyone" is here paralleled with "a king among kings or a governor among governors or a commander of an army should come up against Byblos." This is directed against foreign powers who might invade the city and defile the grave for political reasons rather than any general person or grave robber. As part of this perspective one of the curses is that the grave disturber's own inscription will be in turn effaced. This is also directed at a ruler who would make such public monuments, although we have seen of course that private citizens could have inscriptions as well. These hereditary rulers of Byblos were apparently not above wishing turmoil and violence upon their own city as a means of causing trouble and punishment for any new ruler who defaces the coffin.

Grave Inscription from Cyprus

Included here for its pertinence to our discussion (it is Phoenician, a funerary stele, and dates to the Iron Age) despite its unknown provenance, is an inscription discovered in the Cyprus museum and published by A.M. Honeyman in 1939. The somewhat damaged stone is 40cm tall and 44–47cm wide. The stone is not typical of Phoenician sites but does occur in South East Cyprus. The epigraphy places it in the 9th century.[696] J. Teixidor correctly warns against making overly strong claims for this piece regarding the Phoenician presence in Cyprus. He points out that inscriptions from this period are often called either Old Hebrew or Phoenician based upon their location, but that the texts themselves can be difficult to differentiate linguistically. Thus when we designate early inscriptions as Hebrew or Phoenician we are actually saying more about

[696] A. M. Honeyman, "The Phoenician Inscriptions of the Cyprus Museum," *Iraq* 6 (1939): 104-108.

the ascribed origin based upon location and archaeology than we are about language. He goes so far as to call it "unsound to speak of the people responsible for the early Cypriote inscriptions as having been Phoenicians." and further states "I would simply say that they were Levantine Semites."[697] Lipińksi disagrees, however, and says that this inscription "implies the existence of an organized and sizeable Phoenician community on the site for some time already."[698] The common alphabet used throughout Phoenicia, Israel, Edom, Moab and other nations of the Levant probably did originate with Phoenicia and was thereafter adapted to the particular needs of each nation.[699]

While caution is advisable, particularly with items of unknown provenance, we can point to other evidence that taken together gives us probable cause to place the Phoenicians on Cyprus at this time even if for Teixidor this does not amount to enough to make a claim for Phoenician colonization (as opposed to trade and presence) before the 8th century. Trade was regular between the island and the coast, and by the tenth century Tyre was the major power of this area of the coast. Cyprus is only about 105km (65 miles) from the coast. In addition to the inscription found by Honeyman, a ninth century votive bowl has been found in situ that has an inscription in the same language. The ninth century temple of Kition on Cyprus is called the "Phoenician temple" based upon its strong architectural relationship with the mainland.[700] There is a preponderance of supporting evidence that this inscription, found in an area in which Phoenician influence

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[697] Javier Teixidor, "Early Phoenician Presence in Cyprus: Analysis of Epigraphical Material," in *The Archaeology of Cyprus: Recent Developments* (ed. Noel Robertson; Park Ridge, NJ: Noyes Press, 1975), 123.

[698] Lipińksi, "The Phoenicians," 1324.

[699] This can be seen in the variations among such important early material as the Gezer calendar (Israel), the ʻIzbet Ṣarṭah abecedary (Canaan), and the Mesha stele (Moab). The claim for the Phoenician origin of the alphabet is based in part upon the close connection of the Phoenician cities with the earlier Egyptian – based Canaanite syllabary and its early use to write the name Baʻalat. Peckham, "Phoenicians and Aramaeans: the Literary and Epigraphic Evidence," 22-23..

[700] Teixidor, "Early Phoenician Presence in Cyprus: Analysis of Epigraphical Material," 123-124.

is clear, inscribed with the language used by the Phoenicians, and naming a god known to be worshiped by the Phoenicians (under the guise of Baal Melqart of Tyre), is indeed a Phoenician marker.

Below is the text and translation presented by Gibson:

הא אי מפת והאש אש

ם לקבר זא כעל הגבר זא

שי ויאבד ה[ספר] זא אית הא[ש

בן יד בעל ובן יד אדם וב[ן

ח]בר אלם.....ל.. י ל

אית.....ש

. ני.....שם..י

1 This is no magistrate or ruler that is

2 Placed in this tomb which is over this man

3 He who [de]files [this] sar[cophogus will be for]gotten and will perish

4 Whether by the hand of Ba'al or by the hand of man or by

5 [the hand of the as]sembly of the gods[701]

For comparison following is Gibson's reconstruction

1….there is nothing of note. And as for the man who…

2 (and comes upon) this grave, if (he should open what is) over this man

3 (and)…his…and should destroy this [inscription], (that) man

4 …….(be it) by the hand of Baal or by the hand of man or by (the hand)

[701] Honeyman, "The Phoenician Inscriptions of the Cyprus Museum," 107.

5 ……. (the whole) company of the gods…..[702]

The first two lines are unclear and only tentatively reconstructed, but lines 3–5 contain another clear curse against disturbing the grave. Again a large portion – half the inscription – is devoted to the prohibitive curse. Baal and the "company of the gods" are called upon to punish the grave robbers, this time with erasure and oblivion.

The Sarcophagus of King Tabnit of Sidon (KAI 13)

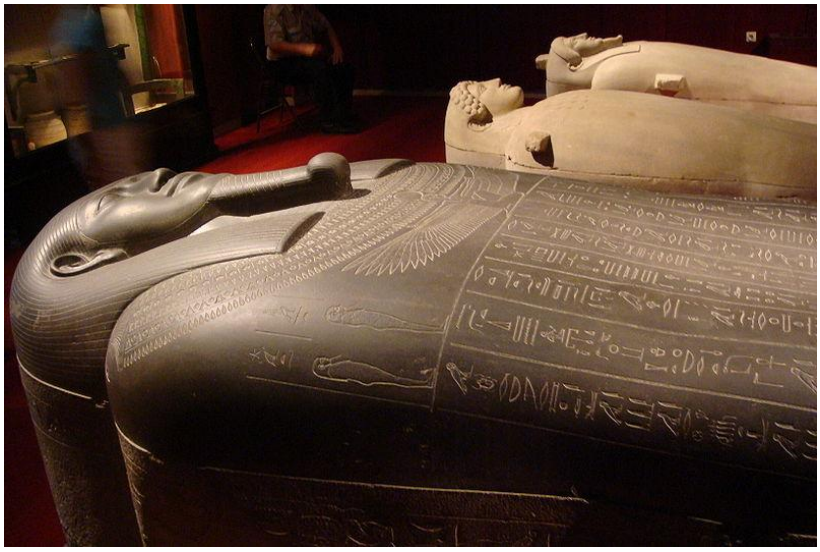

Figure 55: The Sarcophagus of Tabnit of Sidon
Istanbul Museum, n.p. Online:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarcophagi_in_the_Istanbul_Archaeological_Museum.JPG.

The Tabnit inscription is carved onto the base of a black basalt sarcophagus excavated from a necropolis in Sidon in 1887 by M. Clermont Ganneau and announced by G. Perrot in June of that year. The sarcophagus is of Egyptian origin, and like the Ahiram coffin has an earlier Egyptian inscription. The sarcophagi of Tabnit father of Eshmunazar and of his son are very similar (see Figures 54 and 55).[703] The material and

[702] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 28-29.
[703]"Sarcophagus of King Tabnit (Image)," n.p. [cited 25 May 2014]. Online: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarcophagi_in_the_Istanbul_Archaeological_Museum.JPG.

style of the coffins are almost identical, as are the hieroglyphs. The two heads are depicted in similar fashion. A third sarcophagus was found at the same time as the Tabnit and Eshmunazar sarcophagi. This coffin contained a female body but the coffin was unfinished and undecorated.[704]

The same curses are employed almost word for word but the Tabnit inscription has been described as being more concise and having a more "pure" style, with very fine syntax. The inscription still has many errors, just as does the Eshmunazar sarcophagus. The eight lines are inscribed on the top and side of the coffin so that a grave robber would be obligated to actually break apart the curse in order to violate the coffin.[705]

The inscription was begun on the side of the coffin in an attempt to preserve the earlier hieroglyphs.[706] The 11 vertical lines of hieroglyphs on top of the sarcophagus are a copy of chapter 72 of the Egyptian book of the dead, which was meant to give food and freedom to the dead. Inside the cover another inscription is also engraved from the book – this same passage is also found in the pyramid of Teti of the 6th dynasty.[707]

The date for the rule of Tabnit and his son Eshmunazar II is placed in the early part of the 5th century. This has been contested, with very early dates of the 11th and 7th centuries (for example by Halevy) being proposed. As early as 1887 Berger and Maspero argued for a late Persian or early Hellenistic date for this coffin, arguing that Tabnit and Eshmunazar were members of a line of subservient kings placed on the throne after

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Also compare later sarcophagi from Sidon which show more Greek influence – such as the "Lycian" sarcophagus, the "Satrap's" sarcophagus, the "Weepers" sarcophagus, and Alexander's sarcophagus (all 4th century). It appears that later production of sarcophagai in the Greek style was very common in the 5th and 4th centuries at Sidon, and groups have also been found at Carthage. Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 146, 292.

[704] Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 292.

[705] P. Berger and G. Maspero, "Le Sarcophage de Tabnith Roi de Sidon," RA 10 (1887): 1-10.

[706] Joseph Derenbourg, "Quelques Observations sur Le Sarcophage de Tabnit, Roi de Sidon," CRAI 31 (1887): 339-342.

[707] Berger and Maspero, "Le Sarcophage de Tabnith Roi de Sidon," 1-10.

Alexander captured the city in 332. This was based in part upon the announcement by M. Heuzey of the find of Egyptian objects near the sarcophagus with the name of Psamtik III (also spelled Psammetichus or Psammeticus) the last Pharaoh of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty of Egypt (526 BC to 525 BC) (which would support the earlier date), but also of money from Ptolemy I (367—283).[708] The current consensus follows a middle course and accepts sometime in the 5th century as the best approximate date.

Lipiński notes Akkadian loan words in both the Tabnit and the Eshmunazar text, pointing out in line five *mšr*, meaning a precious object, from Akkadian *mašrû* – riches, and in the Eshmunazar text *mdt* as Akkadian *maddattu*, tribute.[709]

אנך תבנת כהן עשתרת מלך צדנם בן

אשמנעזר כהן עשתרת מלך צדנם שכב בארן

ז מי את כל אדם אש תפק אית האדן ז אל אל ת

פתח עלתי ואל תרגזן כ אי אר לן כסף אי אד לן

חרץ וכל מנם משר בלת אנך שכב בארן ז אל אל תפת

ח עלתי ואל תרגזן כ תעבת עשתרת הדבר הא ואם פת

ח תפתח עלתי ורגז תרגזן אל י[כ]ן ל[ך] זרע בחים תחת שם

ש ומשכב את רפאם[710]

I Tabnit, priest of Astarte, king of the Sidonians, son of

Eshmunazar, priest of Astarte, king of the Sidonians, lie in this

coffin. Whoever you are, any man at all, who come upon this coffin, you must not

[708] Berger and Maspero, "Le Sarcophage de Tabnith Roi de Sidon," 1-10.
[709] Edward Lipiński, "From Karatepe to Pyrgi: Middle Phoenician Miscellanea," RSF 2 (1974): 56.
[710] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 100-105.

open up (what is) over me nor disturb me; for they did not gather together silver for me, they did not gather together

gold for me nor any riches whatsoever, but only I myself lie in this coffin. You must not open up

this coffin. You must not open up

(what is) over me nor disturb me; for such an act is an abomination to Astarte. But if you in fact open up (what is) over me and in fact disturb me, may you have no seed among the living under the sun nor a resting place with the shades![711]

The curse here includes not only death and the destruction of the family line (as in Neirab) but also the very punishment of the shade or soul, which will be denied rest with the shades in the underworld. Here the divine figure mentioned is Astarte, a goddess who held a strong center of worship in Sidon and Byblos. Notice that the royal family of Sidon used the title priest of Astarte as an important part of their identity. The defilement of the grave is called an abomination to Astarte, and it is presumably she who is expected to enforce the curse against the grave robbers.

The Sarcophagus of King Eshmunazar of Sidon (KAI 14)

The young Sidonian king Eshmunazar II, son of Tabnit, seems to have died at a comparatively young age, as in his inscription he calls himself the "son of a short number of days" and an "orphan." His sarcophagus was also made in Egypt of black basalt, but appears to have been unused prior to the burial of this king (see Figure 55).[712] This inscription has been dated to the latter 5th or early 4th century by some, but as late as the

[711] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 100-105.
[712] Frank Raux, "Sarcophagus of Eshmunazar II, King of Sidon (Image)," n.p. [cited 25 May 2014]. Online: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/sarcophagus-eshmunazar-ii-king-sidon.

Ptolomaic period by others.[713] It was discovered in 1855 and is now in the Louvre. The rock-cut tomb containing the sarcophagus was shallower than that which contained Tabnit's coffin, and could be entered from ground level. The inscription was begun on the body of the coffin but due to a number of mistakes it was discontinued after a few lines and incised upon the lid.[714]

Figure 56: The Sarcophagus of Eshumunazar of Sidon
Franck Raux, n.p. Online: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/sarcophagus-eshmunazar-ii-king-sidon.

The very long inscription repeatedly implores that the grave remain undisturbed, and this imprecation and threats take up well over half of the inscription. The remainder

[713] C. R. Conder, "The Date of Eshmunazar's Coffin," PEQ 22 (1890): 38-39.
[714] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 105.

of the inscription describes his achievements and those of his regent-mother, particularly in temple building. Here again there are important variant translations of the line. Lipiński reads a segment of line 3 and of lines 12–13 as *bnm sk ymm ʿzrm*. "With the sleep of a deaf (man) I must break off the days (of life).[715] Gibson redivides the line and reads *bn msk ymm ʿzrm* "son of few days, the smitten one" (see below). Of interest here is Lipiński's proposed use of the verb *nm*, sleep, which he understands to be the sleep of death, and which he compares to Psalm 76:6.[716] While this is plausible, we can find parallels to Gibson's arrangement, certainly in the biblical formula for giving the age of a person as "being the son of X days"

Below is the portion of the text which is relevant to the discussion:

בירח בל בשנת עסר וארבע למלכי מלך אשמנעזר מלך צדנם

בן מלך תבנת מלך צדנם דבר מלך אשמנעזר מלך צדנם לאמר נגזלת

בל עתי בן מסך ימם אזרם יתם בן אלמת ושכב אנך בחלת ז ובקבר ז

במקם אש בנת קנמי את כל ממלכת וכל אדם אל יפתח אית משכב ז ו

אל יבקש בן מנם כ אי שם בן מנם ואל ישא אית חלת משכבי ואל יעמ

סן במשכב ז עלת משכב שני אף אם אדמם ידברנך אל תשמע אדנם כ כל ממלכת ו

כל אדם אש יפתח עלת משכב ז אם אש ישא אית חלת משכבי אם אש יעמסן במ

שכב ז אל יכן לם משכב את רפאם ואל יקבר בקבר ואל יכן לם בן וזרע

תחתנם ויסגרנם האלנם הקדשם את ממלך [ת] אדר אש משל בנם לק

[715] Lipiński, "From Karatepe to Pyrgi: Middle Phoenician Miscellanea," 56-57.
[716] Lipiński, "From Karatepe to Pyrgi: Middle Phoenician Miscellanea," 56-57.

צתנם אית ממלכת אם אדם הא אש יפתח עלת משכב ז אם אש ישא אית

חלת ז ואית זרע ממל[כ]ת הא אם אדמם המת אל יכן לם שרש למט ו

פר למעל ותאר בחים תחת שמש כ אנך נחן נגזלת בל עתי בן מס

ך ימם אזרם יתם בן אלמת אנך כ אנך אשמנער מלך צדנם בן

קנמי את כל ממלכת וכל אדם אל יפתח עלתי... (skip lines 14–19)

ואל יעד עלתי ואל יעמסן במשכב ז ואל ישא אית חלת משכבי לם יסגרנם

אלנם הקדשם אל ויקצן הממלכת הא והאדמם המת וזרעם לעלם[717]

1 In the month of Bul, in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Eshmunazar, King of the Sidonians

2 Son of King Tabnit, king of the Sidonians, King Eshmunazar, king of the Sidonians, spoke and said: I have been seized

3 Before my time, the son of a (short) number of days, a smitten one, an orphan, the son of a widow; and I lie in the box and in this grave

4 In the place which I built. Whoever you are, be you ruler or be you commoner, let none such open up this resting-place or

5 Seek anything in it, for they did not lay anything in it; and let none such lift up the box in which I lie or carry me

6 Away from this resting-place to another resting-place! Even if men speak to you, do not listen to their talk. For should any ruler or any

[717] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 105-109.

7 commoner open up (what is) over this resting-place, or lift up the box in which I lie or carry me away from

8 This resting place, may they have no resting-place with the shades, and may they not be buried in a grave, and may they have no son nor seed

9 To succeed them, but may the holy gods deliver them up to a mighty ruler who shall have dominion over them, so that they

10 Perish, both (that) ruler or that commoner who opens up (what is) over this resting place or who lifts up

11 This box, and the seed of that ruler or those commoners. May they have no root below nor

12 fruit above nor renown among the living under the sun. For I am to be pitied; I have been seized before my time, the son of a (short)

13 number of days a smitten on, an orphan I, the son of a widow….[skipping lines 14–19]

20 ….Whoever you are, be you ruler or be you commoner, let none such open up (what is) over me

21 Or uncover (what is) over me or carry me away from this resting-place; and let none such lift up the box in which I lie, lest

22 These holy gods deliver them up so t hat both the ruler or those commoners and their seed perish forever.[718]

There is a large amount of repetition present in this inscription. The command "do not open" appears four times, and the command "do not move or disturb" is repeated three times. As with the Ahiram coffin we see that the curse formula here has political

[718] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 107-109; Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 3.

overtones. Again we find the claim that there are no valuable goods to attract a thief. Like the Neirab inscriptions we have reference to carrying away of the monument or coffin, and the curse against the "seed" or descendents of the one who defiles the grave is also present. Additionally here we have the threat of no burial at all. The specific gods are not named here but as a group are referred to as "the holy gods".

The Coffin of Queen Batnoam of Byblos (KAI 11)

Figure 57: The Coffin of Queen Batnoam of Byblos
Beirut National Museum, n.p. Online: http://www.welcomelebanon.eu/2011/12/muzeum-narodowe-w-bejrucie-national.html.

This inscription is later (4th century) than most of our material, but is very relevant in the continuity it has with earlier coffin/sarcophagi inscriptions. Batnoam was the mother of King Azbaal of Byblos. This inscription is carved in one single line in very small letters on a white marble coffin. This coffin has no additional decoration, a simple, pure white marble as compared to the earlier Egyptian anthropomorphic coffins of Sidon

and the much earlier decorated coffin of Ahiram of Byblos.[719] This indicates that it was not Egyptian in origin, as anthropomorphic sarcophagi persisted in Egypt into the Christian era. Hellenistic influence for this design is also unlikely in this instance, as most Greek coffins were also carved and decorated in some fashion. This coffin does not seem to fit well with the existing artistic traditions of the area, particularly for persons of high rank. While the style of the coffin is quite different than what one might expect, the inscription has a similar first person introductory formula to the inscriptions of Eshmunazar and Tabnit. Also similar is the emphasis upon the royal priesthood. Tabnit is titled "Priest of Astarte, King of the Sidonians" and here the husband of Batnoam, King Paltibaal is titled "Priest of the Mistress." בעלת was a particular title for the primary goddess of Byblos, so the Sidonian king was probably not a priest of the same cult. The priestly functions of the royal family appear to have been similar in both cities and are something distinct from what we find in Israel and Aram, where the kings made offerings to the gods but were not considered high priests of the cult.

Below is the text and translation:

בארן זן אנך בתנעם אם מלך עזבעל מלך גבל בן פלטבאל כהן בעלת שכבת

בסות ומראש עלי ומחסם חרץ לפי כמאש למלכית אש כן לפני

1 In this coffin lie I Batnoam, mother of King Azbaal, king of Byblos, son of Paltibaal, priest of the Mistress,

[719] "Coffin of Queen Batnoam (Image)," n.p. [cited 26 May 2014]. Online: http://www.welcomelebanon.eu/2011/12/muzeum-narodowe-w-bejrucie-national.html.

2 in a robe and with a tiara on my head and a gold bridle on my mouth, as was the custom with the royal ladies who were before me.[720]

The reference to "golden bridle" is interesting as golden mouth pieces have been recovered from several burials, including a cremation burial at Azor. As noted above, a similar mouthpiece was also found with the LBII temple cremation remains at Amman.[721] Related to these mouthpieces or "bridles" are a number of gold funerary masks that have been asserted to be from the area of Byblos and Sidon, but none are of secure provenance, and they cannot be confidently dated. Some of these are quite naturalistic in their modeling. These masks now reside in the Louvre or in private collections. Tentative dating places them from the 6th to 4th centuries BCE. Compare also the Hittite funerary ritual "A lip-cover of gold is placed over the lips of the deceased and eye-covers of gold over his eyes."[722]

Funerary Inscription of Abdosir (Cyprus)

Our final inscription is also comparatively late (3rd century). It is the only inscription copied by R. Pococke at Kition in 1738 to have survived. The text was inscribed upon a white marble tablet (30x10cm).

The text and translation follows:

אנך עבדאסר בן עבדססם בן חר מצבת

למבחיי יטנאת על משכב נחתי לעלם ולא

[720] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 99-100; Donner and Rollig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* , 2.
[721] Ben-Shlomo, "The Cemetery of Azor and Early Iron Age Burial Practices," 40.
[722] Curtis, "Gold Face-Masks in the Ancient Near East," 226-231. See also Moscati's section on masks with many excellent plates. While masks are found in funerary contexts they are also found in connection with temples and sacred places and may have had a variety of uses. Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, 354-369. Kassian, Korolev and Sidel'tsev, *Hittite Funerary Ritual*, 23.

שתי לאמתעשתרת בת תאם בן עבדמלך[723]

I Abdosir, son of ‘BDSSM, son of Hor, set up

a pillar while I was still alive (to be) over my resting-place for

ever; also for my wife Amotashtart, daughter of Toam, son of Abdmilk[724]

The name Abdosir means servant of Osiris. Notice here yet another Egyptian connection with the name of the grandfather Hor, a shortened form of an Egyptian theophoric name.[725] The family of the wife in this inscription all have Semitic names. The obvious comparison here is to the late Persian or early Ptolemaic period Aramaic coffins from Saqqara and Aswan in Egypt discussed above, where another family blended Egyptian and Semitic elements. In that case the mix was Egyptian and Aramaic, here we have Phoenician and Egyptian. Commonly, of course, the commemorative stele is set up by the son of the deceased, but in this case the individual provides this for himself and his wife. (Compare 2 Sam 18:18, Kutamuwa and others). Also the commonly used Phoenician term for the funerary stele, *masebot* is comparable to the Hebrew.[726]

[723] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 133.
[724] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 133.
[725] This name also appears on two bilingual pillars from Malta from the second century. John Pairman Brown, *Israel and Hellas* (BZAW 231; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 119-120). One can also note many other examples of this sort of international/Egyptian influence – for example the 10th or 9th century bowl from a tomb at the necropolis of Crete which contains a dedication to the god Amun engraved in Phoenician. Lipińksi, "The Phoenicians," 1324.
[726] Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III*, 133-134.