

**‘A LAND WHOSE STONES ARE IRON AND FROM WHOSE
HILLS YOU MAY MINE COPPER’: METALLURGY, POTTERY,
AND THE MIDIANITE-QENITE HYPOTHESIS**

by

JACOB EDWARD DUNN

(Under the Direction of Baruch Halpern)

ABSTRACT

Located in the arid margins southeast of the land of Israel both Midian and Edom rose to prominence as a result of their exploitation of the rich copper resources in and around the Wadi ‘Arabah and by controlling the major trade routes traversing this region. This thesis focuses largely on the Midianite connection to metallurgy at Timna[‘] where an impressive amount of Midianite ware and a tent-shrine much like the biblical tabernacle were discovered. Additionally, this thesis will also explore the origin of the allochthonous motifs on the Midianite ware and the cultural background of the Midianites. The methods employed in this work are largely transdisciplinary in nature, as text, archaeology, and anthropology will be used to give new dimension to the Midianite-Qenite Hypothesis.

INDEX WORDS: Midianites, Qenites, Edomites, Israel, Shasu, Metallurgy, Yahweh, Wadi ‘Arabah, Timna[‘], Tabernacle, Qurayyah Painted Ware, Hurrians, Kassites, Mitanni, Aegean, Ancient Near East, Hebrew Bible

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BA, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2011

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the late Selden B. Marth, Beno Rothenberg,
and Frank Moore Cross, Jr.

“He asked for water; she gave milk.
In a *lordly vessel* she proffered ghee.”

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INTRODUCTION

Moses' journey to Midian and his marriage to Zipporah, the daughter of the Qenite priest of Midian, has always mystified and intrigued biblical scholars. Advocates of the Midianite-Qenite Hypothesis¹ have opined that Midian was *the* location where Moses learned of the desert dwelling, fiery deity² Yahweh—the god of Jethro or Reu'el—and that for this reason this story was foundational to the Mosaic history contained in the epic sources JE.³ Conversely, P utterly rejects and expunges Moses' Midianite connection, and furthermore, portrays the Midianites as the archenemies of Israel (Numbers 25; 31).⁴ While Deuteronomy does not share P's outward hatred of the Midianites, it does not once mention them nor does it ever refer to Moses' Midianite-Qenite father-in-law or wife, Zipporah. This absence of the Midianite-Qenite traditions from Deuteronomy is extremely strange, especially in light of the centrality of Mount Horeb in the Deuteronomic tradition (Deut 1:2, 6, 19; 4:10–20; 5:2–5; 9:8–21; 18:15–16; 28:69; cf. 'Sinai' in Deut 33:2) and in the older JE version, in which Moses leads his father-in-law's flock to Horeb in the desolate wilderness of Midian (Exod 3:1). Whatever

¹ The first to write about this was the German scholar, F. W. Ghillany, who published his theory under the pseudonym 'Richard von der Alm' (Theologische Briefe an die Gebildeten der deutschen Nation, I [Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1862], pp. 320–22, 480–83). For a review of the adherents of the Midianite-Qenite Hypothesis, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 2 (2008): pp. 131–153.

² See Jacob E. Dunn, "A God of Volcanoes: Did Yahwism Take Root in Volcanic Ashes?" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 38, no. 4 (2014): pp. 387–424 and references cited within.

³ For an overview of the Documentary Hypothesis, see Richard E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1987).

⁴ Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 202.

the reason may be for Deuteronomy's eschewal of Midian, there is reason to believe that the Midianite tradition rests on a historical foundation and it is very ancient. Indeed, it is difficult to understand why the biblical authors felt the need to include such an apparently controversial detail about Moses' life unless there is some historical kernel lying at the heart of this tradition.

In addition to the narratives about Moses' Midianite-Qenite in-laws and the possible Midianite origin of Yahweh, further evidence for the influence of the Midianite traditions on the historical development of ancient Israel is gleaned from the oldest fragments of Hebrew poetry⁵ which associate Yahweh with regions of Edom and Transjordan:

יהוה בצאתך משעיר בצעדך משדה אדום

Yahweh, when you went forth from Se'ir,
When you marched forth from the field of Edom...
(Judg 5:4)

יהוה מסיני בא זרח משעיר למו הופיע מהר פארן ואתה מרבבת קדש

Yahweh came from Sinai,
And he dawned from Se'ir to them;
He shone from Mount Paran,
And he came from Meribat Kadesh⁶
(Deut 33:2)

⁵ On the antiquity of Judges 5 and Deuteronomy 33, see F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 3–4. For the antiquity of Habakkuk 3, see W. F. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Dedicated to T. H. Robinson*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950): pp. 1–18.

⁶ Admittedly, 'Meribat Kadesh' is only possible with textual emendation; see Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited," pp. 131–153; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Second Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), p. 392. Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*, p. 344) renders this as "And he came to Meribath Kadesh." For a different reading of Deut 33:2, see Cross and Freedman, *Yahwistic Poetry*, pp. 66, 72, n. 8. The reference to Meribat Kadesh in Deut 32:51 may be borrowed from 33:2 which mentions *mēribat qādeš*.

אלוה מתימן יבוא וקדוש מהר־פארן

...

תחת און ראיתי אהלי כושן ירגזון יריעות ארץ מדין

God⁷ came from Teiman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran ...
I saw the tents of Kushan under affliction,
The tent curtains of the land of Midian trembled
(Hab 3:3, 7)

Teiman, the toponym in parallelism with the mountainous region of Paran evoked immediately above in Hab 3:3, is also known from Pithos B at Kuntillet 'Ajrud; the graffito reads: "I bless you by Yahweh of Teiman and his Asherah."⁸ *Tēmān* (*taw* preformative + *y-m-n* 'south') probably referred to an eastern district in Edom or it meant "South, country of the South."⁹ In any case, this inscription provides valuable extra-biblical evidence for Yahweh's association with the region of Edom. Hab 3:7 also makes explicit mention of the land of Midian || Kushan. *Kūš* or its byform *Kūšān* is the name of a south Transjordanian district and is an element in the Midianite tribal league.¹⁰ The other geographic areas—Edom / Se'ir / Paran—referred to in the ancient Hebrew poems above include the desolate and mountainous terrain located both east and west of the Wadi 'Arabah.¹¹ It is worth noting that Egyptian topographic lists from the 14th–13th centuries BCE link Se'ir (*Šá-ʿ-ra* / *Šá-ʿ-ra-ra*) with the Shasu bedouin of Edom (*'A-du-*

⁷ The use of אלוה here fits well with the idea that Yahweh may have originally been a cultic name of ʾĒl—ʾĒl being the patron deity of the Midianite league in the south. See Cross, *CMHE*, p. 71.

⁸ Ze'ev Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012).

⁹ E. A. Knauf, 'Teman,' *Anchor Bible Dictionary* VI, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): pp. 347–348. For Teiman in the Hebrew Bible, see Gen 36:11, 15, 42; Jer. 49:7, 20; Ezek. 25:13; Amos 1:12; Obad. 1:9.

¹⁰ W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), p. 205, n. 49; Cross, *CMHE*, p. 204.

¹¹ G. W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 417; A. F. Rainey, "Whence Came the Israelites and Their Language?" *Israel Exploration Journal* 57, no. 1 (2007): pp. 55–56.

ma).¹² In the same Egyptian list the Shasu are also associated with the toponym *Yhw3*, which some scholars take to be the earliest reference to the god Yahweh.¹³ In regard to these Egyptian texts Karel van der Toorn writes: “... this ‘Yahu in the land of the Shosu-beduins’ is to be situated in the area of Edom and Midian... By the 14th century BC[E], before the cult of Yahweh had reached Israel, groups of Edomites and Midianites worshiped Yahweh as their god.”¹⁴

Edom’s particular importance and early influence on ancient Israel is also made clear in various biblical prose accounts. The story of Esau (= Edom) and Jacob (= Israel) in Genesis immediately comes to mind (25:19–34; 27:1–45).¹⁵ The story details that when Esau is born he comes out all red (*’admônî*) and covered in a hairy cloak (*’aderet šē’ār*, 25:25), details that tacitly link Esau, the preeminent brother, to the geographic regions of Edom || Se’ir. Later in the same story Esau returns from the field and he is faint so he entertains Jacob for some of the red stuff (*hā’ādom hā’ādom*) that he is cooking, and “upon this was his name called Edom” (25:30). The Edomite genealogical lists in Genesis 36 establish links between Esau, Edom, and Se’ir as well. Here, too, Edom’s early predominance over Israel is highlighted by the reference to the “kings [who] reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites” (36:31), a datum reinforced

¹² Rainey (2007): pp. 55–56; Papyrus Anastasi VI, lines 51–57, *ANET*, p. 59. Papyrus Harris I from the reign of Ramesses III reads: “I have destroyed the people of Seir among the Shasu tribes, I pillaged their tents [using the Semitic term *’ohel*] ...” See R. Givon, *Les Bédouins Shosou des documents Egyptiens: Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui* 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), pp. 134–137.

¹³ Michael C. Astour, “Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Lists,” in *Festschrift Elmar Edel in Ägypten und Altes Testament*, ed. Manfred Gorg (Bamberg: 1979): pp. 17–19; Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 269–273.

¹⁴ Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Ugarit, and Israel: Continuity & Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), p. 283. He also remarks, “... Though in the Egyptian texts *Yhw* is used as a toponym, a relationship with the deity by the same name is a reasonable assumption. Whether the god took his name from the region or vice versa remains uncertain.”

¹⁵ I find it interesting that this story appears in the same chapter as Midian’s genealogy (Gen 25:1–4).

by the early mention of the ‘chiefs of Edom’ in the ‘Song of the Sea’ (Exod 15:15).¹⁶ In spite of this, these notices have long been seen as anachronistic and subsequently have been rejected by scholars who place the Edomite kingdom in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE.¹⁷ Nevertheless, if the biblical traditions pointing to the importance of Edom and Midian in Israel’s proto-history have any merit whatsoever, there must have been something particularly special and magnetic about this arid region.

Most relevant and central to the larger thesis in the pages that follow is that many of the Edomite / Midianite regions located along the Wadi ‘Arabah and no doubt referred to in these biblical and Egyptian texts were extremely rich in copper ore. In reflection, it is possible that the fraternal struggle between Esau (the Edomites) who dwelled in ‘the mountain-country of Se‘ir’ (*har Šē‘îr*) and Jacob (the Israelites / Judahites) who settled in Palestine proper revolved around Edom’s control of copper resources as well as major trade routes in NW Arabia and the ‘Arabah during the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age.¹⁸ Local tent-dwelling Shasu tribes such as the Midianites or Qenites,¹⁹ a mysterious tribal group known in the Hebrew Bible as itinerant metalworkers and incense traders,²⁰ may have exploited these prolific copper resources from the end of the Late Bronze Age

¹⁶ For the early date of Exodus 15, the ‘Song of Miriam,’ see Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, pp. 31–33.

¹⁷ William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 28.

¹⁸ Nelson Glueck (“The Boundaries of Edom,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 11 [1936]: pp. 141–157 [144, 146–47], and “The Civilization of the Edomites,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 10, no. 4 [1947]: pp. 77–84, [81]) may have been one of the first to suggest this.

¹⁹ Roland de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel: From the Beginnings to the Exodus and Covenant at Sinai*, transl. D. Smith (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd Ltd., 1978), p. 334. It is worth mentioning that Cain (*Qayin*), the patronym of the Qenites, is cursed to wander the land, ‘...you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth’ (Gen 4.12), which fits well with the Shasu bedouin who dwell in the land of Edom.

²⁰ W. F. Albright, ‘Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition,’ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963): pp. 8–9; Richard S. Hess, ‘Cain,’ *ABD*, Vol. 1: p. 806; Baruch Halpern, ‘Kenites’ in *ABD* IV, p. 18; Glueck, “The Boundaries of Edom,” pp. 147–148.

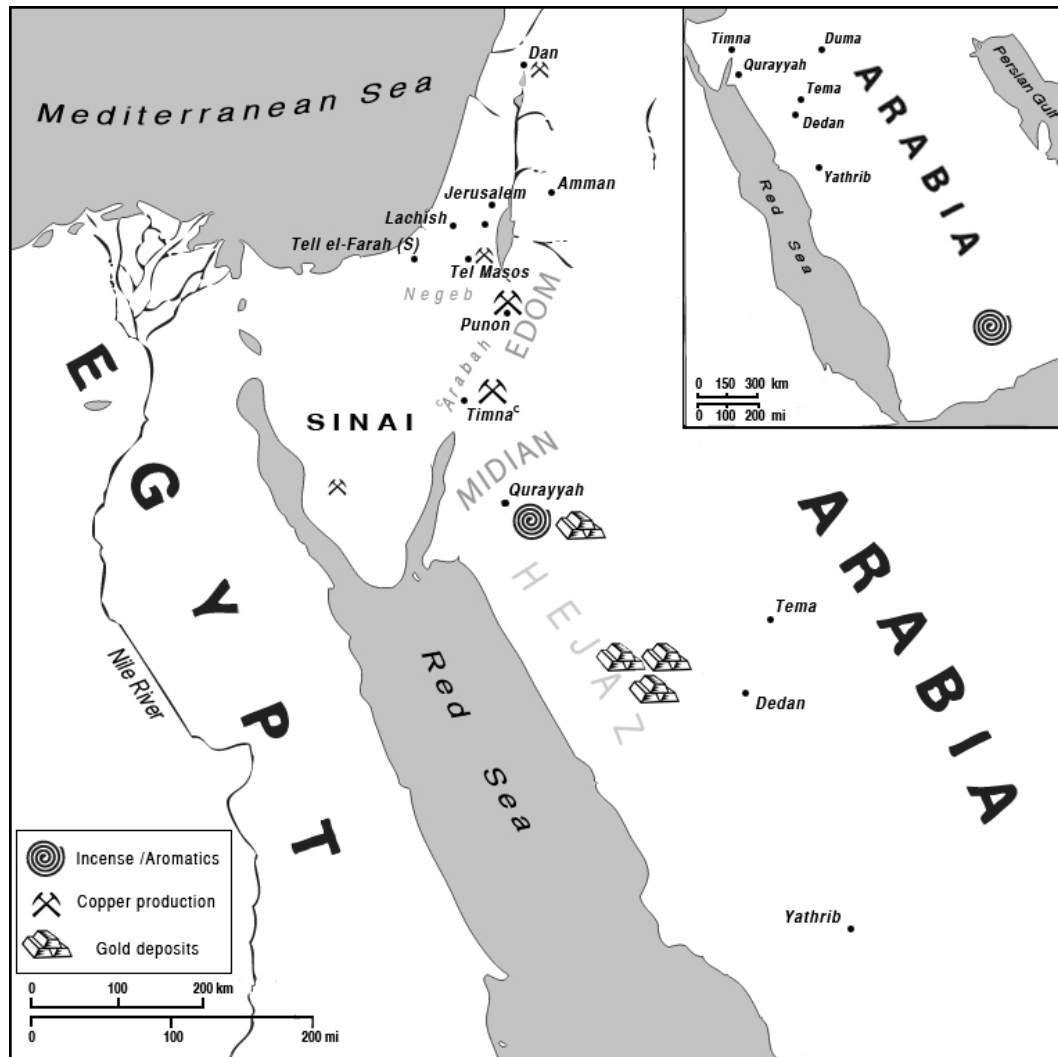


Figure 1: Map showing many of the important metallurgical centers and trade commodities of Midian and Edom.

onward.²¹ Edomite or Midianite sites such as Khirbat en-Naḥas (Arabic ‘ruins of copper’) in the Wadi Feinan / Faynan (= *pînōn*, Gen 36:41 / *pûnōn*, Num 33:42–43) and Timna^ʿ Valley (Wadi Meneʿiyeh = *timnāʿ*, Gen 36:12, 22, 40) are in fact two of the largest copper bearing sites in ancient Edom.²² Both *timnāʿ* and *pînōn* are mentioned in the list of the chiefs of Edom (Gen 36:40–41), and Ramesses II mentions *pwnw* (that is, **Pûnô* or

²¹ For evidence of early metallurgy in this region, see E. Ben-Yosef, T. E. Levy, T. Higham, M. Najjar, and L. Tauxe, “The Beginning of Iron Age Copper Production in the Southern Levant: New Evidence From Khirbat al-Jariya, Faynan,” *Antiquity* 84 (2010): pp. 724–746.

²² Geologically, Timna^ʿ and Kh. en-Naḥas belong to the same copper deposit, but over millions of years the Arabian plate has moved to the NE along the Dead Sea Rift zone.

**Pônô*; cf. the loss of the final *n* in the Gk name *Phainô*) as one of the regions inhabited by the Shasu bedouin.²³ Interestingly, Feinan (*pînôn* / *pûnôn*), above, can be explained by means of Arabic *ḥaynān*, ‘to have long, beautiful hair,’²⁴ so like *Šē‘îr* (‘hairy one’) Feinan refers to a region according to its thick vegetation or trees.

That said, archaeological data concerning the itinerant, tent-dwelling societies who are mentioned in the bible and who were deeply involved in extractive copper metallurgy along the Wadi ‘Arabah was almost nonexistent until the early 1970s. One of the main reasons for this dearth of archaeological data was the peripheral location of these archaeometallurgical sites in relation to biblical Israel—the Land of the Bible—as well as political and religious sensitivities in areas of excavation especially related to the biblical Edomites and Midianites. NW Saudi Arabia, the epicenter of Midianite culture, has been off-limits for this type of research. Transjordanian archaeology also suffered due to political tensions between Israel and Jordan. Archaeological research on the Edomites was also geared towards the highland sites rather than the lowlands where Kh. en-Naḥas is located. Fortunately, archaeological excavations and surveys in the Negev (Israel), Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have since brought to light the material culture and religion of the Edomites and their predecessors, the Midianites or ‘proto-Edomites.’

Nelson Glueck and Beno Rothenberg were two of the pioneering figures in this respect. Glueck originally discovered Edomite and Midianite ware,²⁵ though he did not at first realize that the two wares were typologically different and dated to different time periods: the Iron II and the Late Bronze IIB–Iron I, respectively. Glueck initially based

²³ E. A. Knauf, ‘Punon,’ in *ABD* V: pp. 556–557; Manfred Görg, “Punon—ein weiterer Distrikt der Š3šw-Beduinen?” *BN* 19: pp. 15–21.

²⁴ E. A. Knauf, ‘Feinan, Wadi,’ in *ABD* II: pp. 780–782.

²⁵ Nelson Glueck, “Some Edomite Pottery from Tell el-Kheleifeh, Parts I and II,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 219 (1967): pp. 8–38.

his identification on the vessels' geographic overlap in the southern 'Arabah and Transjordan; he also found the vessels' beautiful geometric motifs to be similar. During the 'Arabah Expedition of the 1960s Rothenberg systematically excavated and surveyed Timna' Valley in the southern 'Arabah,²⁶ a site that Glueck had merely surveyed in 1935.²⁷ In addition to a small Late Bronze Age Egyptian mining temple dedicated to Hathor, a tent-shrine, the only one of its kind ever found, was discovered along with a large amount of the same bichrome ware from Tell el-Kheleifeh that Glueck had previously labeled Iron II 'Edomite' ware. Although Rothenberg initially adopted Glueck's typology, he re-dated the decorated pottery from Timna' to the late 14th–12th centuries BCE on the basis of its association with New Kingdom Egyptian inscriptions found in the Hathor Temple (Site 200).

Around the same time that Rothenberg had made his discoveries at Timna', P. J. Parr, G. L. Harding, and J. E. Dayton (1968)²⁸ surveyed a site called Qurayyah in NW Saudi Arabia. Qurayyah was an urban oasis that sat at the head of the Arabian incense routes and it was also the gateway to the largest gold mine in NW Arabia, the *Mahd al-Dhahab*, the legendary 'cradle of gold,'²⁹ located midway between Mecca and Medina in the rugged Hejaz mountains. Yet even Midian itself, the location of Qurayyah, was a land renowned for its prolific gold deposits.³⁰ In addition to a large citadel, fortifications, and

²⁶ Beno Rothenberg, *Timna: Valley of the Biblical Copper Mines* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).

²⁷ Nelson Glueck, 'Explorations in Eastern Palestine, II,' *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 15 (1935): pp. 1–53.

²⁸ P.J. Parr, G.L. Harding, & J.E. Dayton, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968," *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London* 8/9 (1970): pp. 219–241.

²⁹ Gene W. Heck, "Gold Mining in Arabia and the Rise of the Islamic State," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 3 (1999): pp. 364–395; Karl S. Twitchell, *Saudi Arabia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 247–250.

³⁰ Heck (1999), pp. 367–368; Richard F. Burton, *The Gold-Mines of Midian and the Ruined Midianite Cities: A Fortnight's Tour in North-Western Arabia* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1878).

irrigation works, the same decorated bichrome pottery discovered at Timna³¹ by Rothenberg was found all over the surface at Qurayyah, and at least one kiln for its production was discovered. Once petrographic analysis and neutron activation analysis (NAA) was conducted on the sherds from Timna³², results traced the ware's manufacture to the pottery workshop at Qurayyah.³¹ Since Qurayyah and Timna³² fit rather nicely with the scholarly consensus on the floruit of Midianite culture during the 13th–12th centuries BCE and the location of biblical Midian in NW Arabia,³² the decorated bichrome ware was differentiated from Glueck's Iron II 'Edomite' pottery and was instead called 'Midianite' ware.³³ Finally, in light of the ceramic evidence from Qurayyah and Timna³⁴, Rothenberg suggested that Midianite smelters and metalworkers from NW Arabia worked alongside Egyptians in a Pharaonic enterprise at Timna³⁴.³⁴ It was only after the Egyptians had vacated the area that the Midianite metalworkers installed a tent-shrine over the derelict foundation of the Hathor temple, a feature that for Rothenberg recalled the biblical Tabernacle.

As for the Midianite ware or Qurayyah Ware³⁵ discovered at the sites above, although Rothenberg dated it to the late 14th–12th centuries BCE recent studies of the ware have lowered its date to the 13th–10th centuries BCE. Since the stratigraphy of the

³¹ A. Slatkine, "Comparative Petrographic Study of Ancient Pottery Sherds from Israel," *Museum Ha'Aretz Yearbook* 15-16 (1974): pp. 101-111; B. Rothenberg and J. Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," in *Midian, Moab, and Edom: The History and Archaeology of the Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, JSOT Supplement Series 24, ed. John F.A. Sawyer and David J.A. Clines (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 65–124. For NAA, see J. Gunneweg, T. Beier, U. Diehl, D. Lambrecht & H. Mommsen, "'Edomite', 'Negevite' and 'Midianite' Pottery from the Negev Desert and Jordan: Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis Results," *Archaeometry* 33 (1991): pp. 239–253.

³² Lawrence E. Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. M. D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 142–148.

³³ Although later it was cautiously re-named 'Qurayyah Painted Ware.'

³⁴ In my opinion, however, there is not enough evidence to indicate that the Egyptians and the Midianites worked together in a cooperative fashion. One may posit a fierce struggle between the local Shasu tribes and the Egyptians over the control of copper resources in the Wadi 'Arabah.

³⁵ For an excellent discussion on Midianite ware, see Rothenberg and Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," (1983): pp. 65–124.



Figure 2: Midianite ware from Timna' in the Wadi 'Arabah. Decorations include zoomorphic motifs and geometric patterns (Image after Stager, 1998).

Hathor Temple at Timna' is highly disturbed, Lily Singer-Avitz³⁶ opines that the pottery belongs to the latest phase of the shrine—the 'Midianite-tent phase'—during the time of Ramesses V, ca. 1150 BCE. Sherds of Midianite ware are also turning up in well secured Iron II 'Edomite' contexts at sites like Kh. En-Nahas and even Timna',³⁷ tentatively suggesting that a cultural continuum existed between Edomite and Midianite culture.³⁸ This should not come as a surprise, though, especially in light of the ancient biblical poetry (above) pointing to the emergence of Yahweh and his people from Edom / Se'ir / Teiman / Midian / Paran (Judg 5:4; Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3, 7). That said, Midianite ware was

³⁶ Lily Singer-Avitz, "Section F: The Qurayyah Painted Ware," in D. Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994), Volumes I-V* (Tel Aviv: University Press, 2005), pp. 1280–87.

³⁷ Thomas E. Levy, "Ethnic Identity in Biblical Edom, Israel, and Midian: Some Insights From Mortuary Contexts in the Lowlands of Edom," in *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, ed. D. Schloen (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2008): pp. 251–261.

³⁸ Perhaps the absorption of the Edomite kingdom into the Nabatean kingdom may serve as an anthropological analogy for the disappearance of the Midianites in the Iron I.

made of well-levigated, high-fired clay covered with a pinkish-buff light colored slip. It was then painted with various geometric decorations in various shades of brown, black, yellow, and red. Many of the vessels and sherds recovered additionally contained representations of birds and humans, birds being the most common zoomorphic motif. Without doubt, these geometric and pictorial representations on Midianite ware provide a window into the socio-religious and symbolic world of the Midianites—important data that was not available to the earliest adherents of the Midianite-Qenite hypothesis. Most significant, and most often overlooked, is the fact that the largest concentrations of Midianite ware occur at archaeometallurgical sites in the Wadi ‘Arabah; so far, the largest amounts of sherds collected outside of Qurayyah in NW Arabia have been from Timna³⁹ and Kh. en-Naḥas in ancient Edom.

Finally, recent excavations by Thomas Levy at the Iron Age copper production center of Kh. en-Naḥas, located in the aforementioned ancient mining district of Feinan (Edom), have overturned the long-held chronology of Israel’s neighbor, Edom. The old chronology situating the Edomite kingdom in the 8th through 6th centuries BCE was based on tenuous evidence from sites such as the Edomite capital of Buṣayra (= Boṣra, see Amos 1:12) located on the Edomite plateau, and it was assumed that the rise of the Edomite kingdom was concomitant to the rise of the Neo-Assyrian empire.³⁹ Yet Levy’s work at Kh. en-Naḥas has not only revealed that Edom arose at a much earlier date than was previously thought but that the burgeoning of the Edomite kingdom was instead contingent upon industrial-scale copper metallurgy. Utilizing high-precision radiocarbon

³⁹ P. Bienkowski, “Iron Age Settlement in Edom: A Revised Framework,” in *The World of the Aramaeans II: Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul Eugen Dion*, eds. P. M. M. Daviau, J. W. Wevers, & M. Weigl, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 325 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001): pp. 257–69.

dates, Levy has identified two peaks in copper production: during the 12th–11th and the 10th–9th centuries BCE, respectively.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the resumption of copper production in Wadi Feinan / Kh. en-Nahas began at a time when maritime trade with Cyprus (*Alashiya*), the leading copper producer in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age, began to languish. This resurgence of copper production in the Wadi ‘Arabah, according Erez Ben-Yosef *et al.*,⁴¹ was initiated by local, semi-nomadic tribal societies such as the Shasu of Se‘ir who are mentioned in the Egyptian documents discussed above.

For all the reasons sketched above, this work is entitled: ‘*A Land Whose Stones Are Iron and From Whose Hills You May Mine Copper*’: *Metallurgy, Pottery, and the Midianite-Qenite Hypothesis*,” after Deut 8:9, a line from the section of Moses’ farewell speech to the Israelites. Here Moses describes the qualities of the land into which Yahweh their God is leading His chosen people after their exodus from Egypt and long sojourn in the wilderness. However, before beginning this thesis I would like to state what I mean by the terms ‘Israel,’ the ‘exodus,’ and the ‘wilderness.’ In no way do I entertain the idea that *all* the details provided in the biblical text are ‘historical’ or ‘authentic.’ As my adviser would say, “all attempts at history writing are in some sense a ‘fiction.’” That said, I am not a biblical maximalist nor do I believe that a unified Israelite conquest of Canaan took place. I tend to favor the indigenous ‘Canaanite’ model for the emergence of early ‘Israel.’ On the other hand, I believe that there bi-directional

⁴⁰ See T. E. Levy, E. Ben-Yosef, and M. Najjar, “New Perspectives on Iron Age Copper Production and Society in the Faynan Region, Jordan,” *Eastern Mediterranean Metallurgy and Metalwork in the Second Millennium BC: A Conference in Honour of James D. Muhly*, ed. V. Kassianidou and G. Papasavvas (Nicosia: Oxbow Books, 2012): pp. 197–214; T. E. Levy, R. B. Adams, M. Najjar, A. Hauptmann, J. D. Anderson, B. Brandl, M. A. Robinson, and T. Higham, “Reassessing the Chronology of Biblical Edom: New Excavations and 14C Dates From Khirbat en-Nahas (Jordan),” *Antiquity* 78 (2004): pp. 865–879.

⁴¹ E. Ben-Yosef *et al.* (2010): pp. 743–744.

influences on ancient Israel and that there were strong allochthonous elements within early Israelite society that cannot be explained by one anthropological model of Israelite emergence. Therefore I strongly believe that some type of exodus event occurred but it was on a much smaller scale than described in the biblical text. Perhaps the memory of the exodus derives from the flight of the Hyksos from the Nile Delta. Maybe it was only the Levites or a 'Moses group' who participated in an exodus; or perhaps different proto-Israelite groups told of their separate experiences under Egyptian domination and all their stories were totalized and compressed into one overarching narrative account. Among these proto-Israelite groups we may even locate the Midianites since Midian appears to have been closely involved with 'Israel' from a very early point. And as we now know, during the Late Bronze Age and early Iron I Egyptian hegemony spread to various regions south of Palestine including the Wadi 'Arabah and NW Arabia, areas the Midianites are known to have frequented. As for the 'wilderness' period following the exodus, I believe that there was some degree of consciousness among certain levels of early Israelite society that various tribal components of 'Israel' derived from the southern wilderness, that is, from Edom and Midian. But in no way did the twelve-tribe league develop or emerge solely from the pastoral nomads of the desert. Yet Israel's god Yahweh emerged from the southern wilderness and human agency is the only real explanation for the importation of this new religion into the land of Israel. So who were these mysterious people that brought Yahweh from Teiman, Paran, the steppe of Edom, Sinai, Midian, and Kushan? In all of this perhaps one of my weaknesses is that I give the Pentateuchal authors too much historiographic credit. Nevertheless, I do not support the idea that the wilderness tradition involving Israel's sacred desert tent-shrine and Moses'

Midianite in-laws was fabricated, although certain fictional and hyperbolic elements are certainly at play. For example, the 38 or 40 years that Israel wanders aimlessly in the wilderness around Qadesh cannot be taken literally. Rather, these wanderings may be interpreted as a series of disjointed and vestigial memories belonging to a pastoral-nomadic / itinerant element within the backgrounds of ancient Israelite society. Likewise, the historicity of the miraculous feedings of the people with quail and manna in the wilderness is impossible to access, but these accounts may only derive from the simple memory of the hunger pangs associated with travel along the hostile desert highways. Even the tradition about Yahweh's mountain sanctuary in the southern wilderness and the great theophany that Israel experienced there may be grounded and 'brought down to earth,' so to speak. So my work here is aimed at unearthing the kernel of truth and archaeological 'realia' potentially underlying the biblical accounts. Having said all of that, the over-arching method employed in this thesis is transdisciplinary in nature and combines archaeology with text. Chapter 1 explores the pattern of distribution and heavy concentration of Midianite ware at metallurgical sites in Edom and its possible association with the Qenites. Chapter 2 of this thesis is devoted to the tent-shrine discovered at Timna⁶ and possible parallels to the biblical Tabernacle. Discussions surrounding this tent-shrine will also figure into several other chapters of the larger thesis. Chapter 3 explores the possible Hurro-Aegean / Anatolian influences on the decorations of the Midianite ware.

CHAPTER 1

The Distributional Significance of Midianite Ware at Metallurgical Sites and the Itinerant Qenites

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the distributional significance of the ‘Midianite’ ware at archaeometallurgical sites and concomitant shrines in the southern Levant. Prior research has suggested that these handsome, decorated wares were valued for their social significance and their votive function; and furthermore, that various modes of exchange such as trade and gift-exchange contributed to their distribution.⁴² While these mechanisms certainly played a role in the outward distribution of Midianite ware from its original source in NW Arabia, they do not satisfactorily explain why its largest concentrations were being consumed at industrial-scale metallurgical sites in and around the Wadi ‘Arabah in ancient Edom / Midian. This chapter focuses on the archaeometallurgical sites in the ‘Arabah that have revealed the highest concentrations of Midianite ware and it proposes that Midianite metalworkers—the Qenites—were associated with its manufacture, consumption, and distribution.

⁴² Juan M. Tebes, “Pottery Makers and Premodern Exchange in the Fringes of Egypt: An Approximation to the Distribution of Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” *Buried History* 43 (2007): pp. 11–26.

In recent years, researchers seeking to distance themselves from biblical associations have understandably shied away from ‘ethnic’ or ‘tribal’ labels⁴³ for the Midianite ware and have instead called it ‘Qurayyah Painted Ware’ (QPW) or ‘Hejaz-Ware.’⁴⁴ While it is true that ‘pots do not equal people’⁴⁵ and ethnic identity cannot be unequivocally established by stylistic or typological criteria alone, it is not untenable that this ware belonged to a particular cultural or tribal group like the Midianites, or even to the Qenites, a Midianite subgroup.⁴⁶ The geographical distribution of this ware and its heavy concentration in the peripheral copper mining regions of the southern Levant speaks a great deal about the identity of its producers / consumers. While honestly very little is known about who exactly manufactured the ‘Midianite’ ware at Qurayyah, the group responsible for consuming and dispersing the ware was clearly associated with copper metallurgy and was itinerant in nature. Even if more than one social group was involved in this process of dissemination, whoever these people were they straddled the interface between NW Saudi Arabia, Edom, and the Negeb,⁴⁷ and they frequented the caravan routes in southern and central Palestine. Lawrence E. Stager writes:

⁴³ J.J. Bimson and J.M. Tebes, “Timna Revisited: Egyptian Chronology and the Copper Mines of the Southern Arabah,” *Antiquo Oriente* 7 (2009): pp. 75–118; Lily Singer-Avitz, “Section F: The Qurayyah Painted Ware,” pp. 1280–87; Jan Kalsbeek and Gloria London, “A Late Second-Millennium B.C. Potting Puzzle,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 232 (1978): pp. 47–56, see p. 49. For a critique of fashionable skepticism towards ‘ethnicity’ and the archaeological record, see 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: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 116–17.

⁴⁴ Peter J. Parr (“Contacts Between Northwest Arabia and Jordan in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages” in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, ed. A. Hadidi [Amman: 1982], pp. 127–133, and “Pottery of the Late Second Millennium B.C. from West Arabia and its Historical Implications” in *Araby the Blest*, ed. D.T. Potts [Copenhagen: 1988], pp. 73–89) calls the pottery ‘Qurayyah Painted Ware,’ but he still accepts it was made by the Midianites; Ernst A. Knauf (“Midianites and Ishmaelites” in *Midian, Moab, and Edom*, pp. 147–162) suggested ‘Hejaz-Ware.’

⁴⁵ Israel Finkelstein, “Pots and People Revisited,” in *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present*, ed. N. A. Silberman and D. Small (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 224; cf. Knauf, “Midianites and Ishmaelites,” p. 156.

⁴⁶ Halpern, “Kenites,” p. 20.

⁴⁷ Tebes, “Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” p. 19.

The distribution of Midianite painted pottery, from its production centers in northern Arabia (Midian), to a wide range of settlements in the Negeb, the Arabah, and beyond, first rather nicely the locale and routes of a people known from their metal-smithing and caravaneering. The floruit of this distinctive pottery is precisely the era in which most biblical historians (quite independently of this ceramic evidence, which has only recently come to light) would date the Israelite Exodus from Egypt, their sojourn through Midian and Transjordan, and their settlement in Canaan in the late thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE.⁴⁸

In line with Stager above, Kenton Sparks observes that “if the Midianite traditions in the book of Exodus and Judges go back to the early Iron I period... then those who made this pottery are in the right places at the right time.”⁴⁹ Admittedly, a certain amount of reliance is placed on biblical associations, but we may ask why the biblical authors would have made up such traditions in the first place. The biblical poetry discussed in the main introduction of this thesis points to the importance of Edom, a land extremely rich in copper ore.

In light of its many unique properties and non-local character, the ware in question belonged to a late second-millennium BCE semi-nomadic culture existing outside of known Egyptian, Canaanite, Phoenician, Mycenaean, Cypriot, Philistine, and Israelite ceramic traditions. This leaves only a limited number of known itinerant social groups inhabiting and peregrinating between NW Saudi Arabia, southern Transjordan, and the southern ‘Arabah during the 13th–12th centuries BCE that this pottery could have belonged to, one of which were the biblical Qenites. However, if the assignment of an ethnic or social identity to the producers / consumers of the Midianite ware is as tenuous as scholars have previously stated, then the first step of inquiry should be directed at what the distribution of the ware in archaeometallurgical contexts can tell us about its

⁴⁸ Stager, “Forging an Identity,” (1998), p. 148.

⁴⁹ Kenton L. Sparks, “Israel and the Nomads of Ancient Palestine,” in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), p. 14.

respective producers / consumers, and furthermore, its specific function. Was Midianite ware intended as a trade or prestige item, or was it created for a specific symbolic function, and by whom was it created? It is only when this has been accomplished that it will be appropriate to turn to the textual traditions regarding the Midianites and Qenites contained in the Hebrew Bible, alert for convergences.

1.2 The Distribution of Midianite Ware

In their article about the sherds of the Midianite bowls found at the Yotvata fortress in the southern ‘Arabah, Jan Kalsbeek and Gloria London⁵⁰ discuss the manufacturing techniques and the firing technology used to create the vessels:

Even though it appears that simple firing techniques were practiced, all our pots are well fired, implying that the technique was under control... One may wonder if there is a connection between the pyrotechnology of metal-working (since metallurgy could well have been known to these people) and pot firing.⁵¹

The fact that at least one pottery kiln connected with the manufacture of these wares was discovered at Qurayyah⁵² presents a strong argument against open firing, and it also supports that the firing process was under control. Although they point out a possible connection between the pyrotechnology of metallurgy and pot firing, Kalsbeek and London go so far as to suggest that the “pattern of distribution of the [Midianite ware] does not appear to be significant, for within the Timna‘ Valley the ware is distributed among all types of sites, both shrines and metalworking.”⁵³ Not only is this statement incorrect, it is precisely this combination of sites—both metalworking and cultic—that

⁵⁰ Kalsbeek and London, “Potting Puzzle,” pp. 47–56.

⁵¹ Kalsbeek and London, p. 53. For a view against an early connection between pottery kilns and metallurgy, see P. T. Craddock, “From Hearth to Furnace: Evidences for the Earliest Metal Smelting Technologies in the Eastern Mediterranean,” *Paléorient* 26, no. 2 (2000): pp. 151–65.

⁵² On the evidence of pottery manufacture at Qurayyah, see Peter J. Parr, “Qurayyah,” *ABD* V, pp. 594–96; P.J. Parr, G.L. Harding, & J.E. Dayton, “Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London* 8–9 (1970): p. 240.

⁵³ Kalsbeek and London, p. 54.

may point to the social identity of the producers / consumers and to the original function of the vessels. In this regard, William Dever's discussion of an archaeological 'assemblage' is instructive:

An assortment of contemporaneous archaeological artifacts and their contexts, found together in a consistent pattern of association and distributed over a particular and well-defined geographic region. Such an assemblage, when documented from enough excavated sites and thereby distinguished from other assemblages, is usually said to denote an 'archaeological culture,' particularly if the assemblage can be shown to be distinctive, new, or intrusive. The assemblage can then often be confidently attributed to a known 'ethnic group.'⁵⁴

Keeping Dever's definition in mind as the distributional significance of Midianite ware is assessed below, the largest assemblage of the ware—outside of Qurayyah in Midian—was found at Timna' during the 'Arabah Expedition. This datum in itself is significant because, aside from Kh. en-Naḥas, the Timna' Valley was the largest copper mining and smelting center in the southern Levant. Such a heavy concentration of Midianite ware at Timna' may be taken to suggest a major level of involvement of its producers / consumers in the metallurgical operations at the site. Rothenberg opined that both the Midianites from Qurayyah and the Amaleqites from the Negev highlands were partners with the Egyptian New Kingdom at the end of the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron I.⁵⁵ As noted previously, Rothenberg based his hypothesis on the finds at the Hathor Temple (Site 200, see below). Numerous objects bearing inscriptions and cartouches dating to the 19th–20th Dynasties were found interspersed with Midianite ware. As for the Amaleqite presence at Timna', Rothenberg based this hypothesis on the presence of 'Negebite' pottery and 'coarse hand-made' wares that are thought to have originated in the Negeb

⁵⁴ Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know?*, p. 115.

⁵⁵ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 63. There is no solid evidence that the Midianites were actually partners with or employed by the Egyptians in the mining/smelting operations at Timna'. The Midianites may have been the original occupants of the Timna' Valley and eventually they came into conflict with an encroaching Egyptian presence.

mountains. This ware was also made locally at Timna⁶, as is evidenced by the slag temper used in its manufacture. According to Juan Tebes there is no evidence to rule out that the same group of people made both the Midianite ware and Negebite ware.⁵⁶

Site 200 is the most well known site at Timna⁶. There, Rothenberg discovered an Egyptian mining temple dedicated to the goddess Hathor.⁵⁷ Although the stratification of this mining temple was highly disturbed,⁵⁸ 25% of the sherds collected were ‘Midianite,’⁵⁹ and Rothenberg’s team was able to ascertain strong evidence of a Semitic tent-shrine in the latest phase of the Egyptian temple (Iron I, ca. 1150 BCE). Masses of decayed red and yellow cloth made of both wool and flax with beads woven into it were discovered lying at the periphery of the shrine (all along walls 1 and 3), and stone-lined post-holes were found along with fragments of acacia wood and numerous copper rings and copious fragments of copper wire knots (probably for suspending the tent-curtain).⁶⁰ Rothenberg characterized this tent-shrine as belonging to the Midianite metal-workers who returned to the Timna⁶ Valley to continue their work after there was no longer any Egyptian presence at the site.⁶¹ Additionally, evidence of a workshop for casting ritual objects was uncovered during the Midianite phase of the shrine,⁶² along with a rich hoard of metal objects that included specially chosen ore nodules and several anthropomorphic

⁵⁶ See J.J. Bimson and J.M. Tebes, “Timna Revisited: Egyptian Chronology and the Copper Mines of the Southern Arabah,” *Antiquo Oriente* 7 (2009): p. 98.

⁵⁷ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), and *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna* (London: 1978).

⁵⁸ See Singer-Avitz, “The QPW,” p. 1281. As noted in the introduction, Singer-Avitz argues that because of the disturbed nature of the stratigraphy of Site 200, it is not clear if the Midianite ware was in use as early as the 13th century and may have only come into use in the 12th century BCE.

⁵⁹ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 155.

⁶⁰ Michael M. Homan, (*To Your Tents, O Israel!: The Terminology, Function, Form, and Symbolism of the Tents in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, Vol. 12 [Brill: 2002], p. 118) has shown that aside from Ramesses II’s battle-camp, this tent-shrine serves as one of the best parallels to the biblical Tabernacle. He points to the red-color of the textiles—which match the color of the Tabernacle’s curtain—and to the acacia wood used for the tent poles. See Chapter 2 below.

⁶¹ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 151. This would have been around the time of Ramesses III.

⁶² Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, pp. 192-93.

and zoomorphic figurines. The most notable of these objects were the gilded bronze snake that calls to mind the *Neḥushtan* made by Moses himself in the Hebrew Bible (Numbers 21:8; 2 Kings 18:4), and the male fertility figurine.⁶³ As for the Midianite ware that comprised 25% of the sherds collected here in the shrine, the majority of the vessels were miniatures, suggesting that they were votives. Rothenberg originally suggested that these were votive gifts to Hathor, but there is no indication that they were intended for the Egyptian goddess. In light of the bronze serpent and male fertility figurines, it is possible that the Midianites worshiped a male deity associated with metallurgy.

Hidden above Site 200 on top of the red Nubian sandstone formation, called ‘King Solomon’s Pillars,’ is Site 198. Sherds of Midianite ware along with a *maṣṣēbāh* positioned atop a flat offering table with a shallow cup mark carved into its surface were found sheltered inside a triangular-shaped niche formed by a fallen slab of stone resting against the mountain face. A small amount of slag and charcoal were also discovered here. Based on these finds, Rothenberg interpreted Site 198 as a small shrine connected with ritual casting.⁶⁴ Approximately 50 meters north of Site 198 is Site 199. Scattered human bones suggest that this was a burial place. One complete Midianite jug was found here. Aside from Sites 198, 199, and 200, about a dozen other sites at Timna⁶ yielded

⁶³ For these metal objects, see Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, pp. 147, 320, pl. 11, fig. 53. In Numbers 21, the Israelites are wandering in the area of Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, perhaps somewhere near the Wadi ‘Arabah and the site of Timna’. It is interesting that Moses acts as a metal-smith several times and is identified with ‘Qenite’ in-laws. On reflection, I wonder if the fire and cloud that rested over the Tabernacle (Num 9:15–23) was concomitant with ritual casting. The cloud and fire appear closely aligned with the (priestly) act of metalworking. P uses several metallurgical terms in his narratives concerning the Tabernacle, including רקע “hammer, plate” (Num 17:1–4, in which Eleazar—the priest(!)—turns the incense censers into a hammered altar cover), and YHWH commands Moses to make two silver trumpets of מקשה “hammered work” (Num 10:2), amongst other usages. Although it may be a redactional feature, it is fascinating that Hobab the Midianite (or Qenite), Moses’ father or brother in-law, appears in such close proximity to a narrative concerning metalworking (Num 10:29). For more biblical connections to the tent-shrine at Timna⁶, see Chapter 2.

⁶⁴ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), pp. 118–119.

sherds of Midianite ware, and most of these sites showed signs of metallurgical operations and cultic activity.

Sherds of Midianite ware were found at Site 2 in all stratigraphic levels near the smelting furnaces, slag heaps, and workshops.⁶⁵ A very large amount of sherds were discovered upon the tall hill overlooking Site 2 (Area F), which Rothenberg identified as a Midianite *bāmāh* ('high place') on the basis of its location and the character of the finds.⁶⁶ The excavation at Area F produced a large amount of beads made from various fine materials, several small copper spatulas and needles, perforated Red Sea shells, ostrich eggshells, goat and ibex horns, copper rings, and small iron armlets. Rothenberg further suggested that Area F functioned as a site of ritual casting, writing: "it seems likely that the metallurgical operations, which undoubtedly took place here, were an integral part of the actual ritual and it would appear that the Midianites, the makers of the similar copper votive gifts found in the Hathor Temple [Site 200], were the worshipers at this site."⁶⁷ The cultic character of Site 2 is reinforced by the discovery of a small Semitic shrine at Area A, which was built adjacent to the copper smelting installations. An altar sits at the shrine's center, and a rich deposit of ashes, animal bones, fruit kernels, and Midianite sherds were found around it. At the western-end of the shrine a libation bowl carved into a limestone block is situated in front of five *maṣṣēbôt* standing in a row. On the opposite side next to the entrance is a low stone bench, which was probably an offering bench. Although the shrine did not produce any finds like Area F, a thin layer of

⁶⁵ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 78.

⁶⁶ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), pp. 114–117; Rothenberg and A. Lupu, "Excavations in the Early Iron Age Copper Industry at Timna (Preliminary Archaeological Report)," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, Bd. 82, H. 2 (1966), pp. 131–132.

⁶⁷ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 116.

metallurgical waste was discovered underneath the northeastern wall of the structure,⁶⁸ suggesting that some type of metallurgical operations took place before it was constructed.

At copper smelting Site 34, the largest smelting camp in the Timna Valley, sherds of Midianite ware were collected from amongst an area riddled with large slag heaps.⁶⁹ At the north-eastern edge of the site, natural rock steps lead up to a man-made platform measuring 3 x 3 meters; at its base, several large and small shallow cup marks were carved into the natural steps. In light of the libation bowls and rock altar found here, Rothenberg interpreted this area as another *bāmāh*, writing, “Bamah A, towering high above Nahal Nehushtan, conspicuous from afar, could well have been an inspiring place of worship.”⁷⁰ This seems to be a sound interpretation. Additionally, Site 30 at Timna yielded Midianite sherds along with several very large tuyère-ends and strong fortifications.⁷¹ Recent excavations here by Erez Ben-Yosef *et al.*⁷² have suggested that metallurgical operations were taking place at Site 30 as early as the second-half of the 12th century BCE. “The archaeological evidence indicates that this sophisticated enterprise was initiated by a local, seminomadic tribal society with possible foreign components (indicated mostly by the Qurayyah Painted Ware [= Midianite ware]).”⁷³ A few Midianite sherds have been discovered in the renewed work at the site in well-dated contexts, so the excavator dates them to the Iron II (10th century BCE). While it is

⁶⁸ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), pp. 112-114.

⁶⁹ Rothenberg and Glass, “The Midianite Pottery,” p. 79.

⁷⁰ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 117. Apparently, a rider and his camel are etched into the altar.

⁷¹ Rothenberg notes that these tuyère-ends found at Site 30 are similar to those found by the Sinai expedition in 1969 at the large copper-smelting camp near Bir Nasib; they were dated to the early New Kingdom, i.e. the 19th Dynasty (Rothenberg, *Timna*, p. 66).

⁷² Erez Ben-Yosef, Ron Shaar, Lisa Tauxe, and Hagai Ron, “A New Chronological Framework for Iron Age Copper Production at Timna (Israel), *BASOR* 367 (August 2012), pp. 31–71, see especially pp. 46, 63–65.

⁷³ Erez Ben-Yosef *et al.* (2012), p. 64.

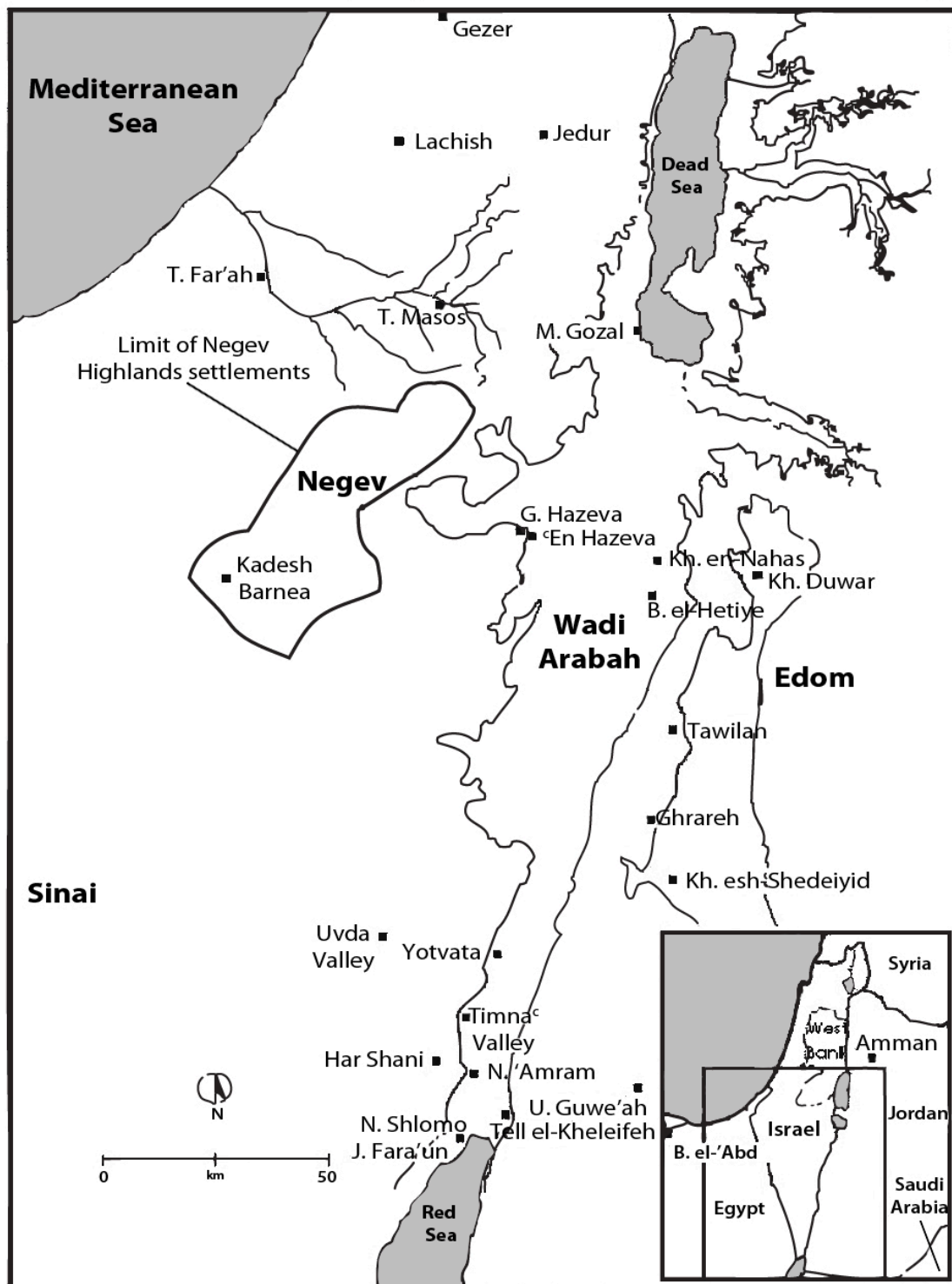


Figure 3: A map showing the wide distribution of Midianite ware. Note its high concentration at sites in or near the Wadi 'Arabah (Image after Tebes, 2009). The ware was carried all the way from Qurayyah in NW Arabia, which illustrates how far pottery traveled in antiquity.

possible that these sherds were stray finds or represent a later reusing of the ware, these finds comport well with appearance of Midianite ware during the 10th century BCE at Kh. en-Naḥas (see below).

Aside from the main sites listed above, various others highlight a connection between Midianite ware and metallurgical activities at Timna'.⁷⁴ Sites 3, 13, 14, 15, 185, and 419 produced a large number of sherds during the 'Arabah Survey, and traces of metallurgical activities were visible.⁷⁵ Both material and decoration are identical to the Midianite sherds found at the aforementioned sites at Timna'.⁷⁶

Several other archaeometallurgical sites besides Timna' are worth mentioning. At Nahal 'Amram⁷⁷ (formerly Wadi 'Amrani), located only a few kilometers away from Timna' and just west of the 'Arabah, Midianite sherds of the same style found at Timna' were discovered at copper smelting site 33.⁷⁸ Traces of metallurgical activities were also discovered at Tel el-Kheleifeh, located at the NE head of the Gulf of Aqabah, along with multiple sherds of Midianite ware and a jug with geometric decorations reminiscent to the designs on the examples from Timna'.⁷⁹ During a 1932 survey at Kh. en-Naḥas⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), pp. 65–66.

⁷⁵ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 66.

⁷⁶ Rothenberg and Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," pp. 79–80.

⁷⁷ Note the name 'Amram, the name of Moses' and Aaron's father, a Kohathite Levite (Exod 6:18–20). The origin of the naming of Wadi 'Amram is unknown. It could have been a later association, or it may be early. For recent research here, see U. Avner, H. Ginat, R. Shem-Tov, B. Langford, A. Frumkin, S. Shalev, S. Shilstine, S. Pilin, R. Arav, U. Basson, and O. Shamir, "Ancient Copper Mines at Nahal Amram: A New Study," *Negev, Dead Sea, and Arava Studies* 6, no. 4 (in Hebrew, 2014): pp. 99–112.

⁷⁸ N. Glueck, "The Negev," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 22, no. 4 (1959): p. 91, see fig. 8, and "Archaeological Exploration of the Negev in 1959," *BASOR* 159 (1960): pp. 12–14; Rothenberg and Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," p. 75.

⁷⁹ For the metallurgical evidence at Tel el-Kheleifeh, see Glueck, "Archaeological Exploration of the Negev in 1959," p. 14. Glueck's 1959 publication does not mention the Midianite ware. However, G.A. Wright included a picture of this jug in his 1959 publication (Wright, *BA* 22/4 [1959]: p. 104, fig. 16a). Rothenberg and Glass write, "...the Midianite sherds found at or near Tel el-Kheleifeh—apparently on the surface—attest to the probable existence of a pre-Israelite settlement related to 13th–12th cent. BC Midian" ("The Midianite Pottery," p. 76). Contrary to Rothenberg, Bimson says there is no evidence that the Midianite ware was found on the surface by Glueck at the site: see Bimson and Tebes (2009), p. 89 fn. 67.

(‘ruins of copper’ in Arabic) in the Faynan copper-ore district of southern Jordan (= Punon, see introduction), a similar sherd of Midianite ware was found. Since the initial excavation of Kh. en-Naḥas, recent excavations here by Thomas Levy have produced several dozen Midianite sherds.⁸¹ Significantly, a metalworking building was discovered in Area S, along with Midianite sherds and an Egyptian scarab of the New Kingdom Third Intermediate Period type (ca. 1200-1100 BCE.).⁸² Just below the find point of the scarab a high-precision radiocarbon date from Locus 356 in Stratum S4 seems to support some activity in the 12th century BCE, apparently related to cooking.⁸³ Midianite sherds have also been found in stratigraphic levels yielding high-precision radiocarbon dates in the 10th century BCE, the period when the bulk of the metallurgical operations took place at Kh. en-Naḥas.⁸⁴ If the sherds and metallurgical activities do indeed date to the Iron II at Kh. en-Naḥas, then where do we draw the line between Edomite and Midianite culture? Did the Midianite league become part of the Edomite chiefdom? This would certainly account for the disappearance of the Midianites during the end of the Iron I, and it would also explain why Midianite ware appears in Iron II Edomite contexts.

Finally, further north in the Beersheba‘ Valley multiple sherds belonging to a single Midianite jug were found in what appears to be a copper-working workshop in

⁸⁰ Original survey conducted by Horsfield, Head, and Kirkbright (1932); see Glueck, *BASOR*, 55 (1934), pp. 7-8; Glueck, *AASOR* 15 (1935), pp. 26-30, 129-130, pl. 23, 27A; Rothenberg and Glass, “The Midianite Pottery,” p. 85.

⁸¹ Neil G. Smith and Thomas E. Levy, “The Iron Age Pottery from Khirbat en-Nahas, Jordan: A Preliminary Study,” *BASOR* 352 (2008): pp. 41-91; Levy, et al., “Reassessing the Chronology of Biblical Edom: New Excavations and 14C Dates From Khirbat en-Nahas (Jordan),” *Antiquity* 78 (2004): pp. 863-876.

⁸² Smith and Levy, (2008), pp. 51, 86. High-precision radiocarbon dates place the Area S metalworking building in the 12th-11th centuries BCE. (or as early as the late 12th century?). The relationship between the Egyptians and the makers of the Midianite ware at both Kh. en-Naḥas and the Timna‘ Valley is currently unknown.

⁸³ Levy *et al.*, (2004), pp. 873-74. For evidence for earlier occupation, see E. Ben-Yosef, T. E. Levy, T. Higham, M. Najjar, and L. Tauxe, “The Beginning of Iron Age Copper Production in the Southern Levant: New Evidence From Khirbat al-Jariya, Faynan,” *Antiquity* 84 (2010): pp. 724-746.

⁸⁴ Smith and Levy, (2008), p. 42.

House 314 at Tel Masos, Area H (Stratum II, 12th century BCE⁸⁵) Concerning House 314 at Tel Masos, Juan Tebes writes: “Within several of its habitations, rests of metallurgical activities were visible on the ground, possibly connected to a ritual function, as has been suggested by the appearance of ‘human’ figurines very similar to those found at the Hathor temple of Timna’.”⁸⁶ Perhaps some element of cultural continuity existed between Tel Masos in the north and Timna’ in the south, especially since analysis of the copper objects found at Tel Masos traces the ores to Faynan and Timna’.⁸⁷

In sum, the consistent pattern of distribution and close association of Midianite or ‘Qurayyah Painted Ware’ with metallurgical sites and shrines often associated with the metallurgical operations is not as insignificant as Kalsbeek and London suggest. From the evidence presented above it appears that the metalworkers were using the shrines in some type of way that was concomitant with the metallurgical operations. The connection between cult and metallurgy is especially evident at Timna’ Site 2 (Areas A and F) and Site 200, the mining shrine, where some type of workshop was operated.

⁸⁵ V. Fritz and A. Kempinski, *Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf der Hirbet el-Mšāš (Tel Māsos) 1972-1975, Vols. I-III* (Wiesbaden: 1983), pp. 40-41; Juan Manuel Tebes, “Pottery Makers and Premodern Exchange in the Fringes of Egypt: An Approximation to the Distribution of Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” *Buried History* 43 (2007), p. 17; for the 12th century BCE dating of the Midianite ware at Tel Masos, Singer-Avitz (“The QPW,” p. 1284) points to the work of E. Yannai, *Aspects of the Material Culture of Canaan During the Egyptian 20th Dynasty (1200-1130 BCE)*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Tel Aviv University, 1996), pp. 144–45. Yannai claims that the sherds of Midianite ware found at Tel Masos were mistakenly assigned to Stratum II (10th century BCE), and should be assigned an earlier dating. However, Kempinski (“Tel Masos: Its Importance in Relation to the Settlement of the Tribes of Israel in the Northern Negev,” *Expedition* 20 [1978], p. 33) attributes these sherds to Stratum II and dates them “from the middle to the end of the 12th century [BCE].” He also notes that several sherds of Midianite bowls were found here in Stratum II.

⁸⁶ Tebes, “A New Analysis of the Iron Age I ‘Chiefdom’ of Tel Masos (Beersheba Valley),” *Aula Orientalis* 21 (2003), pp. 63–78, see p. 69. These “figurines” are natural molded stones like the ones found in the shrine at Timna-Site 200, see V. Fritz and A. Wittstock, “Area H,” in Fritz and Kempinski (1983), p. 41.

⁸⁷ Kempinski, “Tel Masos” (1978), p. 37.

In his article on the exchange and distribution of Midianite pottery,⁸⁸ Tebes points out that these wares appear consistently in cultic contexts, administrative buildings, and burial offerings. In light of this pattern of distribution, Tebes concludes that the Midianite ware must have been valued for its social significance as well as for its functional content. Tebes further confirms that the “Midianite wares are strongly related to the Egyptian copper mining activities in the southern Arabah,” and “Quantitatively, both Timna’ and Faynan possess the highest concentration of wares; by contrast, outside these areas the number of vessels that have been found is minimal.”⁸⁹ As for how the wares arrived at sites like Timna’, Tebes rejects out-of-hand Rothenberg’s original thesis that “skilled and experienced metallurgists” transported this pottery to Timna’ from the Hejaz (NW Arabia) and used it in their daily smelting and mining activities.⁹⁰ He writes:

The introduction of Midianite wares into the southern Levant may [instead] be attributed to people straddling the interface between the northern Hejaz, Edom and the Negev. Whereas the evidence found in Qurayyah seems to point to pottery production by the local villagers, the appearance of non-locally made Midianite wares in the southern Levant points to movements of people and/or exchange. The clustering of pottery findings in Timna’ may be evidence that Hejazi people lived in this area... I would suggest that the main agents of distribution of these wares in the southern Levant were a combination of Hejazi villagers and pastoralists that moved between the Hejaz, Edom and the Negev, carrying and exchanging their local painted wares. Thus, Rothenberg and Glass’ proposal that the Midianite potters traveled to Timna’ to make use of their own wares seems to be redundant. It was the consumers, not the producers, who circulated the Midianite wares over such a wide area.⁹¹

Some of Tebes’ insights about the distribution of Midianite ware may have some merit, yet there is no way to be absolutely certain that the producers were not also the consumers in this instance. It is definitely clear that some element of exchange

⁸⁸ Tebes, “Pottery Makers and Premodern Exchange in the Fringes of Egypt: An Approximation to the Distribution of Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” *Buried History* 43 (2007), pp. 11–26.

⁸⁹ Tebes, “Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” pp. 14, 19.

⁹⁰ Tebes, “Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” p. 13; Rothenberg and Glass, “The Midianite Pottery,” p. 115.

⁹¹ Tebes, “Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” p. 19. See also Wood, Bryant G. *The Sociology of Pottery in Ancient Palestine: The Ceramic Industry and the Diffusion of Ceramic Style in the Bronze and Iron Ages*, JSOTSup 103, edited by D. J. A. Clines and P. R. Davies. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.

contributed to the outward distribution of Midianite ware from its original source in NW Arabia,⁹² but a few important questions still remain: 1) why were the largest ‘consumers’ of the ware using it solely at metallurgical sites like Timna‘ and in the Wadi Faynan, and 2), what was their relation to the ‘producers’ of the wares? If Timna‘ and Kh. en-Naḥas were instead trade or administrative centers one might ascertain that these handsome vessels were a highly sought-after luxury item acquired via trade. While various high-quality ceramic imports have been discovered at Tel Masos and even at Kh. en-Naḥas, strikingly no examples of imported pottery other than Midianite ware have been found at Timna‘. It appears that the people working and living at Timna‘ were utilizing these decorated vessels in their everyday lives, in the metallurgical activities, and they were doubling as votive offerings to “an other-worldly power”⁹³ in shrines concomitant with these metallurgical processes. So contrary to Tebes’ assertion that it seems redundant that the Midianite potters traveled from Qurayyah to Timna‘ to make use of their own wares, there are certain indications that its producers and its consumers were part of the same kinship group, and furthermore, that they were itinerant metal-workers / semi-nomads who worked at Timna‘ and seasonally returned to Qurayyah for agricultural reasons.

It is also worth noting that generally potters do not manufacture a decorated tableware carrying symbolic freight for another ‘culture’ or ‘social group’ to use.⁹⁴ It is true that finely decorated Mycenaean and Cypriot wares were imported in large quantities into the Levant, but it is important to note that most of these imported vessels contained

⁹² The Midianites may have been one group responsible for the ware’s distribution, especially since they are portrayed as traveling the caravan trade routes between Transjordan (Gilead) and Egypt (see, e.g., Genesis 37:25ff).

⁹³ But the question of whom these objects were dedicated to is “tantalizingly vague,” see Tebes, “Iron Age Midianite Pottery,” p. 20.

⁹⁴ Private communication with Baruch Halpern (2015).

commodities such as valuable oils and unguents. In other words, they were desired for their contents rather than their function as tableware. In fact, there seems to have been little demand for exotic tableware in the Levant during the end of the Late Bronze Age and Iron I,⁹⁵ as is indicated by small quantities of imported tableware in Canaan. Moreover, the majority of ceramic forms found within the corpus of locally manufactured ‘Aegean inspired’ Mycenaean IIIC:1b / ‘Philistine’ bichrome ware from the Iron I are open tablewares—mostly dominated by bowls—with only a few container forms.⁹⁶ These bichrome decorated tablewares and their monochrome predecessors⁹⁷ were originally ‘ethnically sensitive,’⁹⁸ meaning that they were produced to accommodate Philistine food-ways and they served a special social and symbolic function for the Aegean or Anatolian newcomers to Canaan while effectively demarcating social and ethnic boundaries. At some point in the Iron I, however, Philistine bichrome vessels seem to have been adopted as the luxury tableware and as a sign of status for the entire heterogeneous population of Philistia.⁹⁹ Finkelstein writes, “In other words, decorated Philistine vessels were symbols of status and wealth and therefore cannot be used for ethnic labeling.”¹⁰⁰ He also extends this same argument to Midianite ware. Yet there is really no question that the Midianite ware was valued for its social significance and status by non-‘Midianite’ individuals. The real question is why such a small amount of this

⁹⁵ Yasur-Landau, *The Philistines and Aegean Migration*, pp. 199–200.

⁹⁶ Ann E. Killibrew, a talk given on “Mycenaean and Aegean-Style Pottery in Canaan During the 14th – 12th centuries BC,” *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium B.C.E.*, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, 1997.

⁹⁷ Susan Sheratt, “The Chronology of the Philistine Monochrome Pottery: An Outsider’s View,” in *I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times: Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar On the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, Vol. 1, ed. A. M. Maeir and P. D. Miroschedji (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 361–371.

⁹⁸ Avraham Faust and Justin Lev-Tov, “The Constitution of Philistine Identity: Ethnic Dynamics and in Twelfth to Tenth Century Philistia,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 30, no. 1 (2011): pp. 13–31.

⁹⁹ Shlomo Bunimovitz, “Problems in the ‘Ethnic’ Identification of the Philistine Material Culture,” *Tel Aviv* 17 (1990): pp. 210–22.

¹⁰⁰ Finkelstein, “Pots and People Revisited,” p. 225.

pottery is found, despite its wide distribution, outside of metallurgical sites like Timna⁶ where it is found in its highest concentration. If we cannot say anything about the ethnicity of these people we certainly can say something about their occupation. Thus, the following statement made early on by Rothenberg and Glass regarding the distribution of Midianite ware is preferred:

Since many Midianite sherds have been found in copper smelting camps in the Arabah, and Midian [the Hejaz] itself must be considered an ancient mining center, where gold, silver, and copper ore deposits were exploited in ancient periods on a large scale, the wide distribution of Midianite pottery could well be connected with metal production and trade.¹⁰¹

Rothenberg's original thesis that the pottery was brought to Timna⁶ by itinerant metallurgists from the Hejaz will now be reconsidered, but who exactly were these itinerant metallurgists? In this regard it is now appropriate to turn to the textual traditions regarding the Qenites preserved in the Hebrew Bible to note the convergences between the textual and archaeological pictures.

1.3 Qenites, Midianites, and Amaleqites

According to the Hebrew Bible the Qenites were a tribe or a clan whose lineage was traced to the eponymous ancestor, Cain (*Qayin*). Cain, unlike his brother Abel the pastoralist, is a husbandman (Gen 4:2), a vocation requiring technology such as stone or *metal* tools.¹⁰² After rising up and killing his brother in the field out of jealousy and hatred, Cain lies to Yahweh and he is cursed to wander the land as a bedu in the land east of 'Eden.¹⁰³ Yahweh sets a sign (*'ôl*) for Cain's protection, but we are not told what

¹⁰¹ Rothenberg and Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," p. 115.

¹⁰² This was pointed out to me by Tyler Kelley (private communication, 2015). In smith mythology, it is relatively common for the first smith to also be the first agriculturalist. During the wet season the smith would stay with his crops, but during the dry season he would wander the land in search of metal-rich areas.

¹⁰³ In Arabic, the word *ma'aden* means 'mine,' (i.e., a mine for metal ore); cf. Hebrew *'ēden*.

exactly it is. Nevertheless, Cain is depicted as a ‘civilizing hero’ *par excellence*. His descendants are listed as Enoch, the builder of the first city, followed by ‘Irād,¹⁰⁴ Meḥuya’el, Methusha’el, and finally Lamech, who takes two wives: ‘Adah,¹⁰⁵ his first wife, gives birth to Jabal, the father of all tent dwelling pastoralists, and Jubal, the father of all musicians. Cain’s connection to metallurgy is linked explicitly to Lamech through Zillah, his second wife whose son, Tubal-Cain, is identified as the ancestor of all metalworkers: “As for Zillah, she bore Tubal-Cain, who forged¹⁰⁶ all implements of copper and iron” (Gen 4:22). Halpern has suggested that Tubal-Cain is probably named after Tabal, a center of metallurgy in a SE Anatolia that flourished in the 9th–8th centuries BCE,¹⁰⁷ although its origins probably go back much earlier. Interestingly, a Hittite–Hurrian bilingual inscription discovered at Boghazköy in central Anatolia contains the Hittite logogram for metal-smith, *lu SIMUG*, which is identified with the Hurrian word *ta-ba-li-iš*.¹⁰⁸ The underlying *tabal*, which may be cognate to Tubal, is exposed when the *–iš* suffix is removed.¹⁰⁹ It would appear then that some element within Cain’s genealogy, and therefore the Cainites’ (= Qenites), can be traced to the development of metallurgy somewhere in Anatolia.¹¹⁰ Halpern also notes that there has been widespread agreement

¹⁰⁴ Cp. the spelling of ‘*irad* (Gen 4:18) with ‘*ārād*, a city associated with the Qenites (Judg 1:16). This name may also be related to Eridu in southern Mesopotamia.

¹⁰⁵ A woman of the same name (Adah ‘ornament’) is also listed as the Hittite wife of Esau (Gen 36:2).

¹⁰⁶ The Hebrew word used here is *lōṭēš* ‘sharpen, whet, hammer.’

¹⁰⁷ Baruch Halpern, s.v. “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 17).

¹⁰⁸ Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2013), p. 190.

¹⁰⁹ Richard S. Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1–11* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 26, 53. Ugaritic *tbl* ‘smith’ has the same Hurrian etymology (Dietrich and Loretz, “Hurritisch-ugaritisch-hebräisch *tbl* ‘Schmied,’” *Ugarit Forschungen* 22 (1990): pp. 87-88; and apparently the non-native Sumerian word *tabira* was borrowed from the Hurrian words *tab* ‘to melt,’ *tabiri* ‘metal melter,’ and *tabrenni* ‘(copper) smith,’ see Arnaud Fournet and Allan R. Bomhard, *The Indo-European Elements in Hurrian* (La Garenne Colombes / Charleston, 2010), pp. 2, 15.

¹¹⁰ Interestingly, Midianite ware features distinct painted motifs closely akin to the Mycenaean pottery of Anatolia and the Aegean. Knauf says, “this aspect of Midianite culture justifies the conclusion that there was some element in the society that had roots in the Anatolian/Aegean region, however remote they may

that the etymology of the term ‘Qenite’ implies that the Qenites were itinerant metal smiths.¹¹¹ The eponym *Qayin* (Cain) derives from the Semitic root *q-y-n*, meaning ‘to forge’ or ‘to be a smith.’¹¹² This root is also related to *q-n-h*, ‘acquire, create,’ as a pun is made on Cain’s name: *qānîti ’iš ’et-yhwh*, “I have created a man with [the help[?]] of Yahweh” (Gen 4:1). According to Beeston *et al.* a similarly spelled root is attested in South Arabian (Sabaic) personal, tribal, and clan names at least as early as the 5th century BCE.¹¹³ Additionally, in later Aramaic and Arabic the root *q-y-n* appears with the meaning of ‘smith.’¹¹⁴ A Hebrew term *qayin* means ‘spear’ or ‘lance.’

Albright was the first to note that the term ‘Qenite’ is not an ethnic designation whatsoever and may instead be an occupational title referring to a guild of itinerant metallurgists and craftsmen.¹¹⁵ If indeed the term ‘Qenite’ began as an occupational designation, then by the time the biblical texts were composed it also had an ethnic component.¹¹⁶ In this instance, perhaps a parallel can be drawn between ‘Qenite’ and the term ‘Levite,’ the latter of which may have referred originally to a priestly guild (= ‘one joined [to a sanctuary]’) that later tradition viewed as a kin-group (Gen 29:34; Exod

have been” (Knauf, “Midian,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 817). Rothenberg has posited that the Midianites who were at home in the Hejaz represented an early migration of Sea Peoples to the Arabian Peninsula. See Rothenberg, “Egyptian Chariots, Midianites from Hijaz/ Midian (Northwest Arabia) and Amalekites from the Negev in the Timna Mines: Rock drawings in the Ancient Copper Mines of the Arabah – new aspects of the region’s history II,” *Institute for Archaeo-Metallurgical Studies*, newsletter no. 23 (2003), p. 12, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iams/newsletter>, [last accessed on 12/15/2013]; following Parr, “Late Second Millennium in NW Arabia,” pp. 215-217. This argument was presented earlier by Mendenhall who saw the Midianites as immigrants from Anatolia / the Aegean, see George Mendenhall “Qurayya and the Midianites,” in *Studies in the History of Arabia*, Vol. 3, ed. A.R. Al-Ansary (Riyadh: King Saud University, 1984), pp. 137-145 (144). For the allochthonous motifs on Midianite ware, see Chapter 3 below.

¹¹¹ Halpern, “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 17.

¹¹² Richard S. Hess, “Cain,” *ABD*, Vol. 1, p. 806; Halpern, “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 17.

¹¹³ A.F.L. Beeston, M.A. Ghul, W.W. Müller, and J. Ryckmans, *Sabaic Dictionary (English-French-Arabic)* (Beirut: Peeters, 1982), p. 112; see also Israel Eph’al, *The Ancient Arabs* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), pp. 194, 211, 212, 226, 227; Hess, “Cain,” *ABD*, Vol. 1, p. 806.

¹¹⁴ Hess, “Cain,” *ABD*, Vol. 1, p. 806.

¹¹⁵ W. F. Albright, “Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963), pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁶ Halpern, “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 18.

2:1).¹¹⁷ In any case, if one were to apply an ethnic / cultural identity to the Qenites the group with which the textual evidence most often associates them is the Midianites; for this reason the Qenites are often identified as a Midianite subgroup. Moses' father-in-law or brother-in-law,¹¹⁸ Hobab, is called a Qenite (Judg 1:16; 4:11), whereas Hobab son of Reu'el the Midianite¹¹⁹ (cf. Exod 2:16–18; or Jethro in 3:1; 18:1) guides the Israelites through the wilderness to southern Canaan (Num 10:29).¹²⁰

It is indeed peculiar why some texts refer to Moses' in-laws as Qenite as opposed to Midianite, or vice versa. Since both the Gideon cycle (Judges 6–8) and the apostasy at Baal Peor (Numbers 25 = P) portray the Midianites in a negative light,¹²¹ referring to Moses' family as 'Qenite' may have served to disassociate Moses from a later Israelite antipathy towards the Midianites.¹²² A better explanation, however, is that Moses' family was culturally Midianite and Qenite by profession. In other words, the terms 'Midianite' and 'Qenite' are not mutually exclusive. Interestingly enough, the Qenites and the Midianites never appear side-by-side anywhere in the biblical text, so this may be viewed as evidence for their identification. We can take this argument one step further by noting that both the Midianites and the Amaleqites occur together (Judg 6:3, 33; 7:12), and this

¹¹⁷ This follows the suggestion of my dear friend Tyler E. Kelley. I am truly indebted to Mr. Kelley for his brilliant insights and help with this manuscript.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion on the status of Hobab as **hātān* "brother-in-law," or *hōtēn* "father-in-law" of Moses, see William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 173.

¹¹⁹ Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary*, transl. J. D. Martin, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 77.

¹²⁰ The tradition of Hobab's guidance in the wilderness may also be found in Deut 33:2–3 if Mosheh Weinfeld's revocalization of *'ap hōbēb 'ammim*, 'indeed, he loved his people,' to *'ap hōbāb 'imām*, 'also Hobab was with them,' is accepted (Weinfeld, "The Tribal League at Sinai," *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress Press: 1987), p. 308).

¹²¹ These two stories may actually be related, meaning that one is based on the other. Originally, Midian was an ally of Israel and shared kinship ties; Midian was one of the sons of Abraham (Gen 25:1–2).

¹²² This hostility towards the Midianites is seen most clearly in the Priestly text (Numbers 25; 31). For source division in the Pentateuch, see Richard E. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

same relationship is seen between the Qenites and the Amaleqites (1 Sam 15:6, see below). Since both the Midianites and the Qenites are associated independently with the Amaleqites but never with each other we have a strong argument for Midianite–Qenite homogeneity.¹²³ A final genealogical link between these two groups is seen with Enoch (*ḥănôk* / *ḥănōk*) as both the son of Midian (Gen 25:4) and the son of Cain (Gen 4:17).

To speak more on the subject, in the book of 1 Samuel Saul spares the Qenites during his attack on the ‘city of Amaleq’ because of the kindness they showed to the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt (1 Sam 15:6). Although it is unclear to what exactly this refers, it may be a reference to the Hobab tradition discussed above. Alternatively, it may refer to the peaceful relations between Midian and the Moses group in the wilderness. It is peculiar why a story recounting the destruction of the Amaleqites refers to their cohabitation with the Qenites, unless, of course, the author was basing this account on historical memory and wanted to portray the Qenites as Israelite friendlies whereas the Amaleqites were always the enemies of Israel, a motif that harkens back to Israel’s war against Amaleq in Exod 17:8–16. The close proximity of the war with Amaleq and the arrival of Moses’ Midianite family in the very next chapter (Exod 18:1–27) may also be noted. Moreover, several scholars including M. Kochavi,¹²⁴ I. Finkelstein,¹²⁵ Z. Herzog,¹²⁶ and A. F. Rainey¹²⁷ have argued that *’îr ’ămālēq*, ‘city of

¹²³ Against this, Roland de Vaux (*The Early History of Israel*, p. 331) notes that “there is no other place in the Bible where the Kenites are assimilated to the Midianites or even associated with them,” except for Num 10:29. But this is precisely my point! They never are identified as different tribes and listed side-by-side to prove that the Qenites were one people and the Midianites were another. The Amaleqite connection strengthens my argument here.

¹²⁴ M. Kochavi, “Rescue in the Biblical Negev,” *Biblical Archaeological Review* 6 (1980), p. 27.

¹²⁵ I. Finkelstein, “Arabian Trade and Socio-Political Conditions in the Negev in the Twelfth-Eleventh Centuries B.C.E.,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47, no. 4 (1988): p. 249. He says that *’îr ’ămālēq* was only a ‘nickname’ for the city since it does not appear in any other biblical text.

¹²⁶ Z. Herzog, *Beer-sheba II: The Early Iron Age Settlements* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, 1984), p. 101.

Amaleq,' may be identified with Tel Masos (Kh. el-Meshesh), a non-Israelite site,¹²⁸ although this identification is disputed.¹²⁹ Finkelstein opines that Tel Masos functioned as a major trading hub at the northern extremity of the Arabian incense trading route, and that a revival of the mining and smelting activities at Timna' in the southern 'Arabah brought about economic changes which led to the sedentarization of the local pastoral population.¹³⁰ Knauf similarly views Tel Masos' prosperity as the direct result of it being an important hub, controlling copper production in the Wadi 'Arabah.¹³¹ It will be recalled from earlier in this chapter that excavations at Tel Masos have produced Midianite sherds as well as Negebite ware, two pottery styles that are often found in conjunction with one another—especially at archaeometallurgical sites like Timna' and Kh en-Naḥas.¹³² While Rothenberg originally connected the former ware to the Midianites and the latter to the Amaleqites, once again there is no evidence to rule out that both the rough, locally hand-made Negebite ware with slag temper and the Midianite ware were made by the same people involved in the local production of copper. Nevertheless, it is still interesting that the biblical text points to some social relationship between the Amaleqites and the Midianites–Qenites, one that may be best explained by their involvement in copper production.

¹²⁷ A. F. Rainey, "Early Historical Geography of the Negeb," in Herzog, *Beer-sheba II* (1984): pp. 88–104.

¹²⁸ Tebes, "Iron Age I 'Chiefdom' of Tel Masos," p. 66.

¹²⁹ The identification of 'īr 'āmālēq with Tel Masos is rejected by D. Edelman ("Tel Masos, Geshur, and David," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47, no. 4 [1988]: p. 58).

¹³⁰ Finkelstein, "Arabian Trade," p. 245; for a discussion on Tel Masos' importance in metal trade and production, see Tebes, "Iron Age I 'Chiefdom' of Tel Masos," p. 69–72.

¹³¹ E. A. Knauf-Belleri, "Edom: The Social and Economic History," in: *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, ed. D. V. Edelman (ABS 3; Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1993), pp. 93–118 (112).

¹³² Tebes, "Iron Age 'Negevite' Pottery: A Reassessment," *Antiguo Oriente* 4 (2006): pp. 95–120.

Other textual evidence suggests a geographical connection between the Qenites and the Amaleqites. The Amaleqites frequent the Negeb (Gen 14:7) and the peripheral areas of Palestine (1 Sam 27:8), much like the Qenites. Immediately before Balaam's oracle concerning the Qenite and Amaleq (Num 24:20–21) Se'ir and Edom are mentioned in parallelism (24:18), which is something we see in old poems like the Song of Deborah (Judges 5). Amaleq, the eponymous ancestor of the Amaleqites, is originally from the copper-rich region of Edom. The genealogy in Gen 36:11 (see fig. 4) lists Amaleq last among the six sons of Eliphaz (*ēlipaz* 'my god is [pure] gold'¹³³), the first-born son of Esau, one of the 'chiefs of Edom.' Not only is Amaleq placed last in this genealogy, but also his Hurrian¹³⁴ mother Timna' is a concubine of Eliphaz. So it is clear that the Israelite genealogist deemed Amaleq unfavorable, a historical circumstance that can be attributed to Israelite animosity towards local nomadic tribes exploiting copper in the

¹³³ Alternatively, I wonder if *paz* could be an abbreviated form of Pazuzu, the king of the wind demons known from Babylonian mythology. See Frans A. M. Wiggermann, "The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu," in *Das geistige Erfassen der Welt im Alten Orient, Beiträge zu Sprache, Religion, Kultur, und Gesellschaft* (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007): pp. 125–165.

¹³⁴ Timna' is the sister of Lotan the Horite (*hōrī*). The LXX transcription *chorraios* indicates the pronunciation **hurri* and is most likely cognate to Akk *hurru* (= the Hurrians), see Propp, *Exod 19–40*, p. 749. Against this Hurrian connection, see E. A. Knauf, s.v. 'Horites,' *ABD*, Vol. 3, p. 288. Knauf's explanation of the name by means of Heb. *hōr* 'cave' paints the Horites as troglodytes, that is, 'cave dwellers.' If Hurrian/Mitannian elements do indeed exist in the background of Amaleq's genealogy, this would parallel Cain's connection to Tubal in south-central Anatolia. The Hurrians were known for their metallurgical prowess. Other Anatolian connections may exist in the background of the Edomite genealogies found in Genesis 36 as well. One of Esau's wives, Adah (also the wife of Lamech and half-mother of Tubal-Cain, Gen 4:19–22) is Hittite, and another, 'Aholibamah, the daughter of Zibeon, is Hivvite (or Horite; Gen 36:2; cf. 36:20, 29). It has been suggested that Heb. *hiwwī* (Hivite) derives from *Ḥiyawa* (Ass. *Quwe*), a Luwian speaking Neo-Hittite state near Adana (and Tabal) possibly deriving from an older name for the Acheans/Mycenaeans, *Aḥḥiyawa*— see Billie Jean Collins, *The Hittites and Their World* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), p. 201; Itamar Singer, "The Hittites and the Bible Revisited, in A. M. Maeir and P. de Miroschedji (eds.), *I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times*, Vol 1: (Eisenbrauns: 2006), p. 735. Singer contends that Sea Peoples who migrated eastward from the Aegean preserved this old name, *Ḥiyawa*. If the Hivvites do derive from somewhere in Anatolia or they were part of an eastward land migration of 'Sea Peoples,' it might be worth noting that they are said to be uncircumcised (Gen 34:14). The Philistines were known to be uncircumcised (1 Sam 14:6; 17:26; 18:25; 31:4; cf. Jer. 9:24–25). For more on the topic of circumcision among the Philistines, see Itzick Shai, "Was Circumcision Practiced in Philistia in the Iron Age II?," *Eretz-Israel* 30 (2011): pp. 413–418; Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance*, Approaches to Anthropological Archaeology (London: Equinox, 2006), pp. 147–48.

Wadi ‘Arabah. Amaleq’s association with Timna’ clearly orients him in the vicinity of the ‘Arabah where copper was being exploited by proto-Edomite tribes.¹³⁵ It is also worth mentioning that Eliphaz’s half-brother, Reu’el, is the name given to Moses’ father-in-law, the Midianite priest (Exod 2:18; Num 10:29).¹³⁶ Some scholars have speculated that Reu’el was the clan name of Jethro. Interestingly, the name Reu’el occurs in Edomite at Tell el-Kheleifeh (ostracon 6043, 1) and here Midianite sherds have been found. Knauf notes that the Qenite clan that migrated to the Negev to reside with the people of Judah (Judg 1:16) may have belonged to the Edomite tribe Reu’el before it migrated north to the other side of the Wadi ‘Arabah.¹³⁷

Speaking of Edom and its association with the Qenites and Amaleqites, the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5), one of the oldest poems in the Hebrew Bible dating to ca. 1200–1100 BCE,¹³⁸ references both Edom || Se’ir (5:4),¹³⁹ along with Ja’el, a prominent woman of the Qenite ‘community’ (5:6, 24).¹⁴⁰ The prose version of the poem identifies Heber as one of the sons of Hobab (Judg 4:11) the Qenite (= Midianite, see Num 10:29) who has separated from the other Qenites in the south and pitched his tent in the north near

¹³⁵ In this regard, Amaleq’s name (Heb. *‘āmālēq*) could possibly be related to the $\sqrt{\text{עמל}}$ ‘labor, toil, suffer,’ but with an additional פ suffixed on as some type of ancient determiner. In the Canaanite script a פ would be written as פ , which probably originally symbolized a double-headed axe. While it is extremely speculative, if עמלק is related to the $\sqrt{\text{עמל}}$, perhaps it denotes some type of connection with metallurgy or weapon making. An occupational title may also be supported by the vowel pattern of *‘āmālēq*: the middle vowel is lengthened with a *qāmaṣ* (cp. *ganāb* ‘thief’).

¹³⁶ Reu’el’s Ishmaelite mother, Basemath, ‘pleasant, sweet smelling (fragrance)’ connects her with the incense trade; this parallels Midian’s mother, Keturah ‘frankincense’ (Gen 25:1–2).

¹³⁷ Knauf, *Midian* 1988, and “Reuel,” in *ABD*, Vol. 5, pp. 693–94.

¹³⁸ For the dating of the Song of Deborah, see Frank M. Cross and David N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 3–14.

¹³⁹ “YHWH, when you went out from Se’ir, when you marched from the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and also the heavens poured, the clouds indeed poured water. The mountains melted before YHWH, the One of Sinai, before YHWH, the God of Israel” (Judg 5:4).

¹⁴⁰ For Ja’el as a woman of the Qenite ‘community’ (*heber*), see Baruch Halpern, “The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography,” *Harvard Theological Review* 76, no. 4 (1983): pp. 379–401, and *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 1996), pp. 76–103; Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, Anchor Bible Commentary Series (New York: Doubleday, 1975), n. 11, 16, pp. 96–97.

Edomite Genealogy (Gen. 36:1–19)

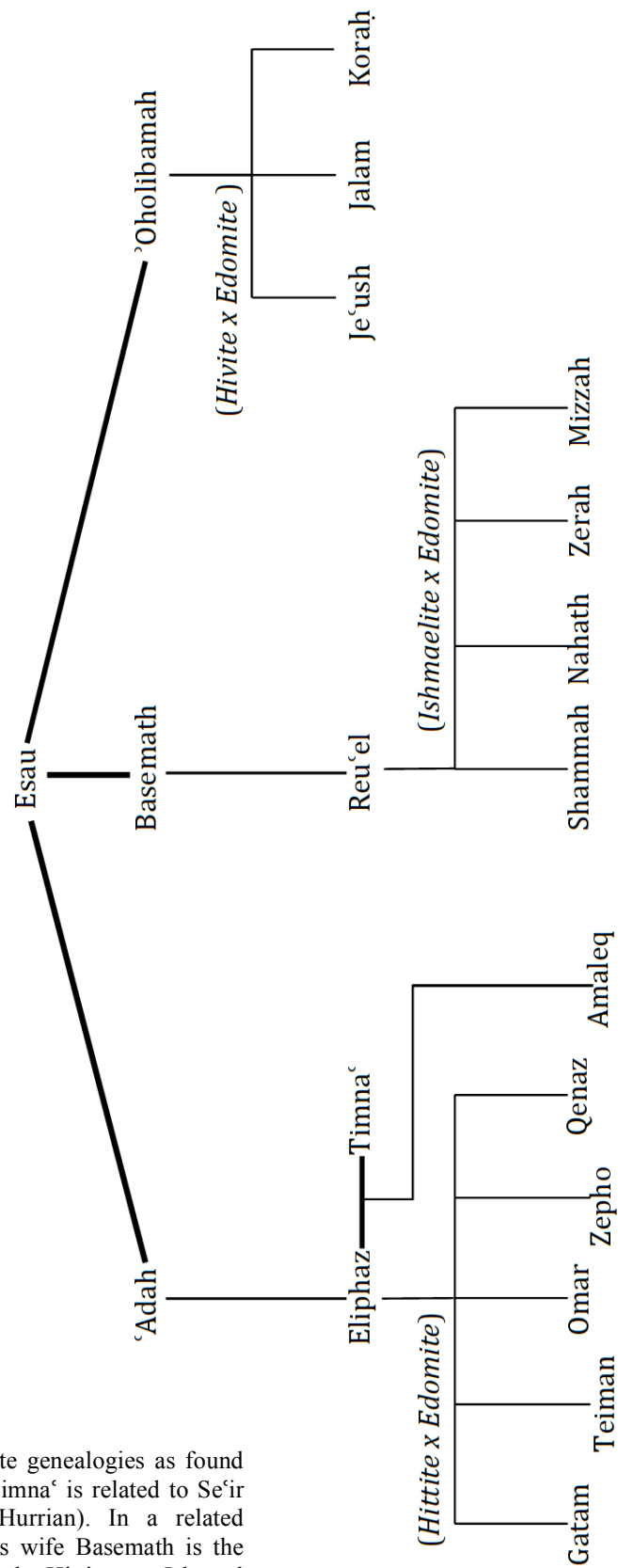


Figure 4: Edomite genealogies as found in Genesis 36. Timna' is related to Se'ir the Horite (= Hurrian). In a related genealogy Esau's wife Basemath is the daughter of Elon the Hittite, not Ishmael (see Gen 26:34–35).

Qedesh,¹⁴¹ near Mount Tabor in the tribal territory of Naphtali.¹⁴² While the prose was written later, Baruch Halpern writes, “Few scholars dissent from the proposition that the poem is premonarchic. As a result, it represents also a virtually unimpeachable source for the study of early Israel.”¹⁴³ In the same vein, the Song of Deborah offers a rare glimpse into the material culture of the Iron I period. Unexpectedly, Ja’el proffers milk in a *sēpel* ‘*addîrîm*, ‘lordly / magnificent bowl,’ to Sisera’, the general of the Canaanite army (Judg. 5:25). Halpern suggests that this vessel is a ceramic krater, possibly decorated with human or animal figures like wares found at Iron I Tell en-Nasbeh (Philistine bichrome?), Tell Beit Mirsim (the Canaanite ibex and palm motif?), and Shiloh.¹⁴⁴ But instead of supplying Ja’el with a foreign vessel-type it is equally plausible that she used her own clan’s tableware. Although it has been suggested that the coarse, hand-made Negebite wares are fitting for a desert-dwelling nomadic people like the Qenites,¹⁴⁵ the Song of

¹⁴¹ Qedesh (or Qadesh-Barnea) is also associated with the Negeb region south of Judah, near the border of Edom (see, e.g., Josh 15:3, cf. 15:23). Interestingly, a large amount of Midianite ware was found at the traditional site of Qadesh-Barnea—Tell el-Qudierat. See Israel Finkelstein, “Kadesh Barnea: A Reevaluation of Its Archaeology and History,” *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): pp. 111–125. See also Lily Singer-Avitz, “The Earliest Settlement at Kadesh Barnea,” *Tel Aviv* 35 (2004): pp. 73–81. Singer-Avitz has shown that the Midianite ware does not date to the Iron IIA (= Substratum 4b) containing the “oval fortress,” but rather to Substratum 4c, which she dates to the 12th century BCE. Therefore, the Substratum 4c settlement at Qadesh-Barnea is contemporary with Tel Masos, Kh. en-Nahas, and Timna’, all sites that have been discussed in this chapter because of the occurrence of Midianite ware and their intimate connection to copper production/trade.

¹⁴² There appears to be a connection between Judges 4–5 and Gideon’s war against the Midianites (Judges 6–8). Geographically, Mount Tabor is an important element in both pericopes. Judg 5:10 (*yôšbê ‘al-middîn*, ‘sitting on rich carpets’) with revocalization may be a pun on *midyân*; Psa 83:10–12 connects Sisera’ with Gideon’s war against Midian.

¹⁴³ Halpern, “The Resourceful Israelite Historian,” p. 379.

¹⁴⁴ Halpern, “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 18. For a good assessment of the pottery assemblages at Tell Beit Mirsim, see Raphael Greenberg, “New Light on the Early Iron Age at Tell Beit Mirsim,” *BASOR* 265 (Feb., 1987): pp. 55–80; for the ‘Philistine’ pottery at Tell en-Nasbeh, see A. Gilboa, A. Cohen-Weinberger, and Y. Goren, “Philistine Bichrome Pottery: The View from the Northern Canaanite Coast,” in A. M. Maeir and P. de Miroschedji (eds.), *I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times*, Vol 1: (Eisenbrauns: 2006): pp. 303–334 (see p. 323). Jack M. Sasson (*Judges 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible Series, Vol. 6D [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013], p. 307) takes ‘*addîrîm* as a superlative and interprets this vessel as a beaker or chalice of utmost worth, so he contends that it tells us more about the quality of Ja’el’s deed than about her wealth.

¹⁴⁵ R. Cohen, “The Iron Age Fortress in the Central Negev,” *BASOR* 236 (1980): pp. 61–79 (see p. 77).

Deborah implies that the Qenites were associated with finely decorated tableware. Since the Qenites are a Midianite subgroup, Midianite ware could have been in Ja'el's possession. Like the pottery-styles enumerated above, Midianite ware is also beautifully decorated with geometric patterns along with human and animal figurines.¹⁴⁶ Temporally, the Midianite ware is contemporary with the Song of Deborah (early Iron I), especially if Singer-Avitz' position is taken regarding the dating of the pottery (12th century BCE). In any case, the fact that a Qenite smith woman¹⁴⁷ proffers a cultic dairy product in a beautiful pottery vessel is highly suggestive of the social and cultic function that Midianite ware may have embodied.¹⁴⁸ It will be recalled that the Philistines were also well known for their magnificent feasts and their beautiful tableware.

1.4 Discussion

Upon returning back to this chapter's original hypothesis the following question arises: If the Qenites are to be viewed as metallurgists of Midianite descent or as a Midianite subgroup, and since the wares have been generally attributed to 'Midianite' potters in the past, is it to the Qenites that the manufacture and consumption of Midianite ware may be traced? It should be emphasized that no evidence of metallurgical activity has been discovered as of yet at Qurayyah, but perhaps future excavations may shed new light on this gray area. Kalsbeek and London observed that these vessels were not made by professional potters involved in the daily or even the seasonal task of potting:

¹⁴⁶ See Rothenberg and Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," pp. 87–96.

¹⁴⁷ The object which Jael uses to assassinate Sisera was in all likelihood a metal-working implement. The **הלמות עמלים** || **יתד** (one object in poetic parallelism) may have been an anvil (cf. Isa 41:7) equipped with a sharp point for hammering/securing it into the ground or a tree-stump.

¹⁴⁸ The only other time that *sēpel* occurs in the Hebrew Bible is when Gideon squeezes the water from the fleece into the bowl (Judg 6:38). This act is most definitely cultic/divinatory; it is Yahweh's sign.

We would interpret the irregularity of typology and the ‘creative’ nature of the decoration as a function of the purpose for which the pots were made—to provide a surface for decorating... It is possible that the ordinary vessels used by these people were made by experienced potters fully exploiting the potential of the large wheel, but the decorated ware was made by specialists using the same tools to produce pots for unusual purposes. These decorated pots may have been the product of a ‘cottage industry’ in the hands of women or fabricated by priests... possibly for cultic purposes... The Yotvata bichrome ware is attractive, and the vessels would have served as respectable votives.¹⁴⁹

The above statement has many implications for this study. First, Kalsbeek and London point out that we are dealing with an unusual ware, perhaps made by women or priests for cultic purposes. In many African societies female potters are often married to or are associated with blacksmiths.¹⁵⁰ In fact, in over two-thirds of societies of Sub-Saharan Africa in which potter castes are documented, pottery making and metal-smithing are paired; sometimes the female potters are even called ‘blacksmith women.’¹⁵¹ In addition, scholarly investigations into metallurgical guilds have shown that metal-smiths are often considered priests or magicians and that ore derived from the earth holds sacred value for the ancient metallurgist.¹⁵² In light of this, it may be significant that Moses’ father-in-law is not only referred to as a Qenite but also as a Midianite priest. Halpern writes, “there are... indications that the Qenites enjoyed a certain status as ritual specialists or as the beneficiaries of a special relationship with Yhwh.”¹⁵³ Thus the Qenites’ connection with metal-working, priestly activities, and the Midianites opens up the possibility that it is to

¹⁴⁹ Kalsbeek and London, “Potting Puzzle,” p. 232. Their observation that the manufacturers of the pottery were not professional potters and lacked skill—i.e., they may have been women or priests working in a “cottage industry”—should have no bearing on the potters’ metallurgical association or level of metallurgical skill. Kalsbeek and London’s observations here also align with Tebes’ thesis of the social significance of Midianite ware (see above).

¹⁵⁰ Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible: The Origins and Structure of Alchemy* (Chicago: University Press, 1979), p. 90.

¹⁵¹ Anne Haour, *Outsiders and Strangers: An Archaeology of Liminality in West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 89–91.

¹⁵² Robert J. Forbes, *Metallurgy in Antiquity*, pp. 62–82; Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 89–90. The very term נחשת “copper/bronze” may be related to the Hebrew root נחש “practice divination, divine, observe signs” (= Piel). See *BDB*, נחש, p. 638 (ii). For connections between metallurgy and Yahwism, see Nissim Amzallag, “Was Yahweh the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?,” *JSOT* 33.4 (2009), pp. 387–404.

¹⁵³ Halpern, “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 19.

them that the Midianite ware, with its high concentration at metallurgical sites and shrines in regions associated with Edom and Midian, should be attributed.

Moreover, in the above statement Kalsbeek and London do not define what they mean by ‘cultic purposes,’ but they note that the vessels would have served as respectable votives. The high proportion of Midianite ware found in the Egyptian-Midianite mining shrine and the ‘high places’ at Timna^c, in addition to its appearance in various other shrines in the southern Levant¹⁵⁴ attests to its cultic function, especially since many of the vessels were small, delicate, or remarkably sophisticated.¹⁵⁵ The various ‘cultic’ functions of the pottery could have included: 1) the transportation of ore nodules from the mines to the smelting installations or for holding crushed ore used to charge the smelting furnaces; 2) vessels for offering sacrifices to the deity or deities protecting the mines and copper production itself; 3) vessels for libations to the gods while constructing and consecrating kilns; 4) and even vessels for the storage of raw ore and cast metal objects. Mesopotamian parallels may be instructive for the relationship between metallurgy and cult. An Assyrian chemical text¹⁵⁶ found in the library of Ashurbanipal prescribes the necessary steps for building a furnace and the alchemical process is highly cultic; some of the steps include consecrating the area of the furnace, offering libations to the ‘minerals’ (= ore?) and making sacrifices to the god or gods overseeing the process. In *The Forge*

¹⁵⁴ South of Timna^c at Har Shani (NW of Eilat), 13 open-air sanctuaries have produced Midianite ware, along with Negevite and Egyptian pottery. See U. Avner, ‘Excavation of an Open Air Sanctuary at Har Shani,’ in *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 2 (1982), pp. 84–85; Tebes, “Iron Age ‘Negevite’ Pottery: A Reassessment,” *Antiquo Oriente* 4 (2006): pp. 95–120, see p. 100. Sherds of Midianite ware were also found in a temple discovered at the Amman airport in Jordan. See V. Hankey, “A Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman Airport: Small Finds and Pottery Discovered in 1955,” in *Trade, Contacts, and the Movement of Peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean, Studies in Honour of J. Basil Hennessy*, eds. S. Bourke and J.P. Descoeudres (Sydney: 1995), pp. 169–185.

¹⁵⁵ For instance, the unique, flat-bottomed ‘incense cup’ discovered at Timna, Site 200, see p. 20 below; Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 155, fig. 47.

¹⁵⁶ R. Campbell Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), and *Chemistry of the Ancient Assyrians* (Luzac: 1925).

and the *Crucible* Mircea Eliade draws attention to R. Eisler's translation of the Assyrian word *ku-bu* that appears in this particular text; it may mean 'fetus' or 'divine embryo' and be symbolically represented by the ore nodules mined from the earth.¹⁵⁷ Certain curiously shaped votive gifts discovered in the Timna' sanctuary may corroborate this ritual practice. Rothenberg even pointed out that these peculiarly shaped ore nodules and stones or fossils must have caught the imagination of the devotees, and that they resemble mother-and-child figurines.¹⁵⁸ Cypriot copper production was also under the auspices of the gods, and in Kition (12th century BCE) copper working was carried out in workshops that were attached to the temple.¹⁵⁹ Sandra Blakely writes, "Man, god, and metals combine in several ways: One is the intersection of manufacturing and ritual space, so that the god is present in the workshop, or a workshop is part of a sanctuary."¹⁶⁰ This intersection of manufacturing and ritual space is seen clearly at several of the Timna' areas.

Although some scholars have overlooked the significance of the heavy distribution of Midianite ware at archaeometallurgical sites and shrines, this chapter has shown that its pattern of distribution does indeed appear to be significant. The evidence may be construed to suggest that the original people who brought the Midianite ware to metallurgical sites in the southern 'Arabah were itinerant metallurgists with close connections to Qurayyah in Midian—probably due in-part to middleman trade and cultural ties to the Hejaz region in NW Arabia. It is possible that these tinkerers were

¹⁵⁷ Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 71–75.

¹⁵⁸ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 186–87.

¹⁵⁹ V. Karageorghis, "Contribution to the Religion of Cyprus in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C.," in *Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium "The Mycenaeans in the Eastern Mediterranean"* (Nicosia: 1973), pp. 105–109; see also T. Stech-Wheeler, J.D. Muhly, K.R. Maxwell-Hyslop and R. Maddin, "Iron at Taanach and Early Iron Metallurgy in the Eastern Mediterranean," *American Journal of Archaeology* 85, no. 3 (1981): pp. 245–268 (p. 256).

¹⁶⁰ Blakely, *Myth, Ritual, and Metallurgy*, p. 201.

‘Midianite’ by kinship or political affiliation and ‘Qenites,’ that is metal-smiths, by profession. These decorated wares were originally not a trade commodity, despite the fact that they were imported from Qurayyah and were not locally made. Instead, they were utilized in the metallurgical operations and served a cultic function for a people deeply entrenched in extractive copper metallurgy. With the Midianite ware we are dealing with a very specific tableware or ‘ritual-ware.’ After making its earliest debut at Timna⁶ in the southern ‘Arabah, the Midianite ware traveled along the network of trade routes linking this region with the rest of the Levant and was deposited away from its original source by Midianite or other traders participating in commercial activity. A high level of exchange took place and these beautifully decorated vessels were prized for their aesthetic and cultic qualities. Perhaps the people who came to secondarily possess the Midianite ware knew of the Qenites as ritual specialists of Yahweh, so that there was a certain mystique associated with the vessels.

Furthermore, aside from Qurayyah and Timna⁶, a broader ‘Midianite’ culture is attested in NW Arabia at the Tayma oasis and more than a dozen other sites along the wadis of the Hejaz mountains.¹⁶¹ Despite these surveys, archaeological evidence in NW Arabia is meager. This dearth of archaeological data in NW Saudi Arabia is one of the main issues we face today in the study of the ANE. Very few systematic excavations have been carried out in recent years because of the current political climate. Qurayyah, the alleged epicenter of the Midianite ceramic industry, has not even been properly

¹⁶¹ Parr, s.v. “Qurayyah,” *ABD*, Vol. 5, p. 595; see also C. Edens and G. Bawden, “History of Teyma’ and Hejazi Trade During the First Millennium B.C.,” *JESHO* 32 (1988): pp. 48–103 (see especially pp. 54–57). At Tayma, another type of pottery very reminiscent to the Qurayyah-ware was found in the same pattern of distribution; it may be a local perpetuation of the Qurayyah-style pottery. It is unknown if these sites in NW Arabia show signs of metallurgical operations, but the pattern observed here suggests that in the future this will prove to be the case.

excavated although work has it that excavations are once again underway.¹⁶² While a good deal is known about Transjordan, we know little about the cultures that existed in North Arabia in the second-millennium BCE and our knowledge of South Arabia far outweighs our understanding of the geopolitical processes and cultures of the northern part of the peninsula.¹⁶³ Additionally, aerial photography and satellite imaging of NW Saudi Arabia has shown innumerable archaeological sites waiting to be surveyed and excavated. Yet little has been done to engage the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in a dialogue to begin efforts to allow foreign-led archaeological research.

To further complicate the problem, there is an alarming disconnect between biblical scholars and archaeologists, especially in the field of Arabian archaeology. From its onset, biblical scholarship has focused largely on the Levant and Mesopotamia. In fact, because of the lack of attention given to Arabia in scholarly training, most biblical scholars exclude Arabia from the orbit of biblical studies. An interdisciplinary approach needs to be implemented in order to bridge this gap in our knowledge, and attempts to organize excavations in NW Saudi Arabia must be made. As the political climate in the Arab world changes, we must take advantage of future opportunities to carry out archaeological research. While it is only with the increase of evidence that questions such as the connection of Midianite ware with Midianite culture can be addressed more fully, it seems that there is still a sufficient amount of convergence to suggest that the Midianite ware is the product of the Midianites, and it was consumed by the Qenites, the smiths later seen as a Midianite sub-group or ethnic group.

¹⁶² Private communication with Peter Parr (2014).

¹⁶³ Oman and Yemen, the two southernmost countries comprising the Arabian Peninsula, have been receptive to foreign-led archaeological research.

CHAPTER 2

The Midianite Tent-Shrine at Timna⁶ as a Possible Prototype For the Biblical Tabernacle

2.1 Introduction

The biblical story tells of the existence of a magnificent tent-shrine—the ‘tabernacle’ (*miškān*) or the ‘tent of meeting’ (*’ōhel mō’ēd*)—during the period of Israel’s exodus from Egypt and subsequent wilderness wanderings. Although J never once mentions the tent, it is important in E (Exod 33:5–11; Num 11:16–29; 12:4–10),¹⁶⁴ and the Priestly source (P) cannot imagine Israel without its central tent-sanctuary and carries it back into the very beginnings of the theocracy,¹⁶⁵ to Mount Sinai, where Yahweh reveals its sacred blueprint (*tabnîṭ*) to Moses in meticulous detail (Exod 25–31). Once this sanctuary is built according to Yahweh’s specifications (ch. 35–40), his presence / glory (*kābôd*) is transferred from his sacred mountain dwelling to the tent with its sacred ark and accouterments (40:34–38), and Yahweh accompanies Israel in a ‘pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night’ during their long march through the wilderness to the land of Canaan (Numbers 10–36) where the sacred tent is once again erected at Shiloh

¹⁶⁴ R. E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* p. 75.

¹⁶⁵ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 36.

(Josh 18:1 = P).¹⁶⁶ Later it is housed inside the Solomonic Temple as a shelter for the ark (1 Kgs 8:4).¹⁶⁷ In this chapter I argue that the biblical tradition of a sacred tent in the wilderness is based on historical memory, but the tent-shrine was not like the lavish version described in the Priestly text, nor was it mobile. The prototype of this ‘authentic’ tent may have been discovered at Timna¹⁶⁸ in the southern ‘Arabah, in ancient Edom or NW Midian.

2.2. The Exodus and the Tabernacle

While the biblical tradition purports the existence of Israel’s early desert tent-shrine, both the historiography and the chronology of the exodus are important starting points for assessing the tabernacle’s historicity. First, traditio-historically speaking it is possible that the exodus from Egypt was originally entirely independent from the wanderings in the wilderness and the sacred tent-shrine at the center of that tradition. At some point, however, these two traditions may have been redacted together to form a composite story.¹⁶⁹ In the same vein, we must also consider the likelihood that the traditions were related, or that multiple exodus events occurred, albeit relatively small ones, and they were all telescoped into one overarching narrative account.¹⁷⁰ Some components of the story may even derive from the Hyksos period.¹⁷¹ This composite exodus account may be compared to the battle against the Sea Peoples reported in the Medinet Habu Year 8 inscription of Ramesses III, which some have suggested is a

¹⁶⁶ The phrase *wayyiqāhālū kol ‘ādat bēnē yisrā’el* gives this passage away as P. Friedman (*Bible With Sources Revealed*, p. 9) notes that *‘ēdāh*, ‘congregation,’ occurs more than one hundred times in the Pentateuch, all in P, without a single exception.

¹⁶⁷ This tent is closer to P’s tent with its cultic implements and ark. The tent in E is *not* a shelter for the ark and it does not contain sacred vessels like P’s tent.

¹⁶⁸ M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, pp. 46–62, 115–129, 137–145, 163.

¹⁶⁹ Propp, *Exodus 19–40, Vol. 2a* (2006), pp. 741–744.

¹⁷⁰ Baruch Halpern, “The Exodus and the Israelite Historians,” *Eretz-Israel* 24 (1993): pp. 89*–96*.

composite account of multiple skirmishes condensed into a single narrative culminating in Pharaonic victory—a “total impression.”¹⁷¹ That said, the stories found in Exodus are based on a combination of oral traditions and old written documents in addition to a wealth of fictional elements and accretions.

Even if we assume some level of historical veracity behind the Exodus traditions we cannot be too certain about the actual date of the exodus since the Bible’s internal chronology¹⁷² is suspect¹⁷³ and we possess no Egyptian documents detailing the flight of a *multitude* of escaped slaves from Egypt,¹⁷⁴ nor do we possess archaeological evidence for this mass movement of people out of Egypt during the Late Bronze Age or early Iron Age.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, scholars willing to admit that such an event happened generally date the exodus to the reign of Ramesses II during the middle to late 13th century BCE,¹⁷⁶ although some scholars instead place it a little later during the reign of Merneptah (1213–1203 BCE),¹⁷⁷ the Pharaoh who boasted: “Israel is laid waste, his seed is not.”¹⁷⁸ If the

¹⁷¹ See Assaf Yasur-Landau, *The Philistines and Aegean Migration at the End of the Late Bronze Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 174–175.

¹⁷² The 15th century BCE date for the exodus is derived from 1 Kgs 6.1: Solomon began building the Temple in the 480th year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt. This puts the exodus around 1446 BCE.

¹⁷³ For problems with the 15th century date of the exodus, see Propp, *Exodus 19–40, Vol. 2a* (2006), pp. 738–739.

¹⁷⁴ We do have documentation of a few slaves escaping, e.g., ‘The Pursuit of Runaway Slaves,’ Papyrus Anastasi V, 19.2–20.6; *ANET*, p. 259.

¹⁷⁵ The exodus group could have been relatively small. Perhaps only the Levites left Egypt, especially since the Levite names Moses, Hophni, Phinehas, and Merari are all Egyptian. See Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, p. 82.

¹⁷⁶ James K. Hoffmeyer, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 126; William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 8–9, 14–15. The name of one of the store-cities, Pi-Ramesses, is often used as evidence that Ramesses was the unnamed Pharaoh of the exodus. See also Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 310. Against a 13th century date for the exodus, see Bryant G. Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th Century Exodus-Conquest Theory,” *JETS* 48/3 (Sep 2005): p. 476.

¹⁷⁷ Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, transl. Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 216 n. 2, 231–232. For a date in the 12th century under Ramesses III, see Gary Rendsburg, “The Date of the Exodus and the Conquest/Settlement: A Case for the 1100s,” *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 4 (1992): pp. 510–527.

¹⁷⁸ *ANET*, pp. 376–378.

13th century date for the exodus is accepted and the wilderness wanderings with their central tabernacle were originally part of the exodus from Egypt, then it would follow that the tabernacle stood some time during the late 13th–mid 12th century BCE. However, scholars altogether denying any real credibility to the Exodus tradition and to the period of the wilderness wanderings have, by extension, rejected the existence of the tabernacle.¹⁷⁹

2.3 The Tabernacle as Priestly Invention

Since Graf and Wellhausen advanced the argument that the sacred tent-shrine in P was modeled on Solomon's Temple and that the tabernacle was ultimately a post-exilic fabrication by the hand of P in order to furnish a 'historical' background to the fictitious period of wilderness wanderings,¹⁸⁰ the credibility of the tabernacle has been severely damaged.¹⁸¹ In other words, P's tabernacle was a 'pious fraud.' Understandably so, the quixotic details about the Levites dismantling the tent-shrine, carrying with them its metal-plated poles, its heavy embroidered curtains, and its other sacred furnishings and then setting the entire thing up again at every itinerary station make P's version difficult to accept. P, then, seems to be describing a later stationary shrine and retrojects it into the wilderness period. If the tent P envisions were portable, it would require an immense amount of orchestration, organization, and technology concomitant with an urban setting. The ox carts supplied to the Gershonite and Merarite Levites for the transportation of the tent (Num 7:6–8) would have been quite incompatible with the rugged terrain of the

¹⁷⁹ Israel Finkelstein and Neil A. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Sacred Texts* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), pp. 48–71.

¹⁸⁰ First argued by Karl H. Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: 1866), p. 30; Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin, 1883), p. 39.

¹⁸¹ Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel!*, p. 3.

wilderness and are best fitted for wide roadways regularly maintained by government administrations such as those during the Israelite and Judahite monarchies, or the Egyptians during the New Kingdom.¹⁸² Such an example may be noted—the Via Maris—which began in Egypt and traversed the coastal plains of the Eastern Mediterranean coastline linking Canaan with Anatolia and Mesopotamia.

Furthermore, the lavish and ornate character of P's tabernacle and the desert soil upon which it stood are a strange contrast indeed.¹⁸³ One thing is for certain: if the tabernacle ever existed in real time and space in the desert it would have embodied a much more austere appearance.¹⁸⁴ Cross writes: "The richness and sophistication of the Priestly tabernacle which make it conform ill with our notions of a desert tent-shrine, fit ideally into the context of Davidic Jerusalem."¹⁸⁵ For Cross, the Priestly tradent drew instead on old Temple archives and naïvely used them in his reconstruction of Israel's sacred desert tent-shrine. So P was not purposefully constructing a 'pious fraud' like Wellhausen had argued, but rather P's description reflects an actual tent-shrine that dates to the period of the monarchy. More specifically, Cross believed that P's tent-shrine was modeled after the Tent of Yahweh erected by David in a conscious imitation of an older Canaanite model of the Tent of 'El.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Ox carts are depicted in the land battle relief from Medinet Habu (see Yasur-Landau, *The Philistine and Aegean Migration*, pp. 175–178, see fig. 5.65) so long distance migrations with wagons were possible. Yet the 'Sea Peoples' (= Philistines?) would have utilized well-traveled routes such as the Via Maris.

¹⁸³ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 39.

¹⁸⁴ Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel!*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ Frank Moore Cross, Jr. "The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research," *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times: Proceedings of the Colloquium in Honor of the Centennial of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jerusalem 14–16 March 1977*, ed. A. Biran (Jerusalem: The Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion 1981): pp. 169–178, and *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 72.

¹⁸⁶ For further discussion on Ugaritic and Hittite mythology and the Tabernacle, see Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel!*, pp. 94–99.

Conversely, Haran has contended that the Priestly tent is based on an even older tradition that has its roots at Shiloh,¹⁸⁷ a salient pre-monarchic shrine, but not a temple,¹⁸⁸ that housed the original tabernacle of Israel's nomadic period. While it is certainly possible that the tent-tradition from Shiloh is authentic, its connection to the actual tent of Israel's wilderness wanderings is suspect. Once again, one cannot escape the fact that P's tent was extremely unrealistic in terms of a desert tent-shrine. The amount of precious metals used in its construction would have created a whole host of problems along the desert routes, such as the aforementioned issue with portability, and furthermore, it would have been an ideal target for nomadic raids. Haran also notes that, "however clear the connection is between P's tabernacle and Solomon's temple there is actually no reason to suppose that P's description is altogether a later retrojection."¹⁸⁹ Therefore, some aspects of P's tent may contain a minute substratum of ancient and authentic tradition. These elements were largely eclipsed by P's later details of great magnificence: gold, silver, bronze, and dyed wools—all of which Haran calls a 'fiction.'

Even Wellhausen himself pointed out that the lavish desert tent-shrine so central to P was also mentioned in one of the older 'Jehovistic' sources (= JE), but it was not J.¹⁹⁰ Friedman has argued that it is indeed the E source that refers to the 'tent of meeting' (*'ōhel mō'ēd*), not J,¹⁹¹ but as Haran points out, E never once calls it the 'tabernacle' (*miškān*).¹⁹² So even independently of P the old epic tradition knows of a sacred tent-shrine, but unlike P's tent, which is set up within the camp and housed the ark, the tent in

¹⁸⁷ Menahem Haran, "Shiloh and Jerusalem: The Origin of the Priestly Tradition in the Pentateuch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): pp. 14–24.

¹⁸⁸ This view is complicated by the occurrence of *hēkal yhwh* in 1 Samuel (see further below).

¹⁸⁹ Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple services in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 125.

E is pitched outside of the camp and it was primarily empty,¹⁹³ a common characteristic of nomadic societies.¹⁹⁴ Here the people came out to Moses from the camp to seek the word of Yahweh, for oracles or prophetic visions (Exod 33:7–11). Haran writes:

... the real, historical tent of *mô'ēd* was apparently quite different [from P's tent]. Though no mention of it is made in the Former Prophets, its main features are so 'realistically,' so sensibly delineated in E(D) that it is hardly possible to regard them as an arbitrary invention. We are, therefore, obliged to give priority in this matter to the evidence of E (and D). Thus we may conclude that the real tent of *mô'ēd* was an old institution of the Yahwistic religion, which took shape in prophetic circles, and that its true nature is to be found in the descriptions given by E(D). It is possible to understand how this institution came to be so completely absorbed into P's tabernacle that its original form was obliterated and only the name, *'ōhel mô'ēd*, remained as an appellation of something else. Whereas if this institution had from the first been an integral part of the temple we should be completely at a loss to explain why E(D) saw fit to remove it from there.¹⁹⁵

In sum, the tent in P was based on a combination of elements: its earliest substratum was based on an authentic and earlier tradition of a desert tent-shrine obscured by a later veneer manufactured from Temple archives, a possible tent-sanctuary at Shiloh, the Tent of Yahweh erected by David, Ugaritic and Hittite mythology, or possibly even Egyptian parallels such as the war tent of Ramesses II.¹⁹⁶ So to some extent P is acting as a historian, albeit a naïve one, but there are many polemical overtones to P as well so we must be cautious about assessing P's motives and antiquarian intent. What is clear, though, is that P's opulent tent did not stand pitched in the wilderness. It may have stood in the Temple¹⁹⁷ because it was largely a product of the monarchy. On the other hand, E's

¹⁹⁰ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 36.

¹⁹¹ Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* p. 75.

¹⁹² Haran, *Temples and Temple services in Ancient Israel*, pp. 260–275.

¹⁹³ Meaning it did not house the ark. The ark is not mentioned in E.

¹⁹⁴ Haran, p. 270. Haran believes the tent in E has nothing at all in common with a temple, the opposite picture of P's Tabernacle.

¹⁹⁵ Haran, p. 275. The connection here to D stems from the mention of the tent of *mô'ēd* in Deut 31:14–15. However, Friedman (*The Bible with Sources Revealed* [New York: HarperCollins, 2003], p. 359) identifies this passage as E.

¹⁹⁶ Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel!*, pp. 129–137.

¹⁹⁷ Richard E. Friedman, "The Tabernacle in the Temple," *Biblical Archaeologist* 43 (1980): pp. 241–248. For further discussion, see Homan, pp. 167–177.

rustic, empty tent outside of the camp was much more likely to exist in the wilderness period. Were one to accept that the tent in E is a more ‘authentic’ and ‘historical’ portrayal of the actual desert tent-shrine in use during Israel’s proto-history, can anything at all be said about its prototype? In this regard a tent-shrine dating to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age and one located in the neighborhood of Israel’s ‘wilderness wanderings’ through Sinai / Paran / Midian / Edom (Num 10:11–21:9; Deut 2:1–8) may shed light on the origin of the memories underlying the biblical tabernacle.

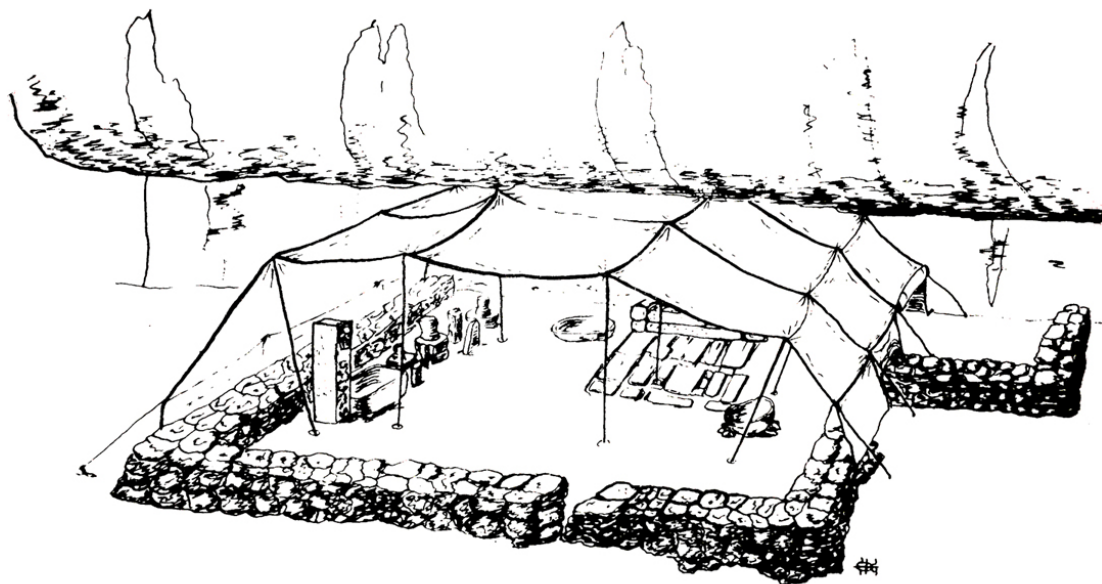
2.4 The Midianite Tent-Shrine at Timna⁶

The Midianite tent-shrine at Timna⁶ is the only discernable Semitic tent-sanctuary ever discovered in ancient Israel.¹⁹⁸ During archaeological excavations of the Hathor temple (Site 200) Rothenberg’s team found masses of decayed reddish and yellow cloth with beads woven into the fabric. The material consisted of a mixture of wool and flax and it was found all along walls 1 and 3 of the derelict New Kingdom mining sanctuary. Other evidence for the tent-shrine included fragments of acacia wood,¹⁹⁹ post-holes, and over one hundred fragments of copper rings and wire for some type of tent-canopy that was erected once the Egyptians had abandoned metallurgical operations at Timna⁶ some time in the first half of the 12th century BCE.²⁰⁰ Although the stratigraphy of the temple site was highly disturbed, most scholars who have studied the site are in agreement that the Midianite tent-phase probably represents one of the later phases in the occupation of

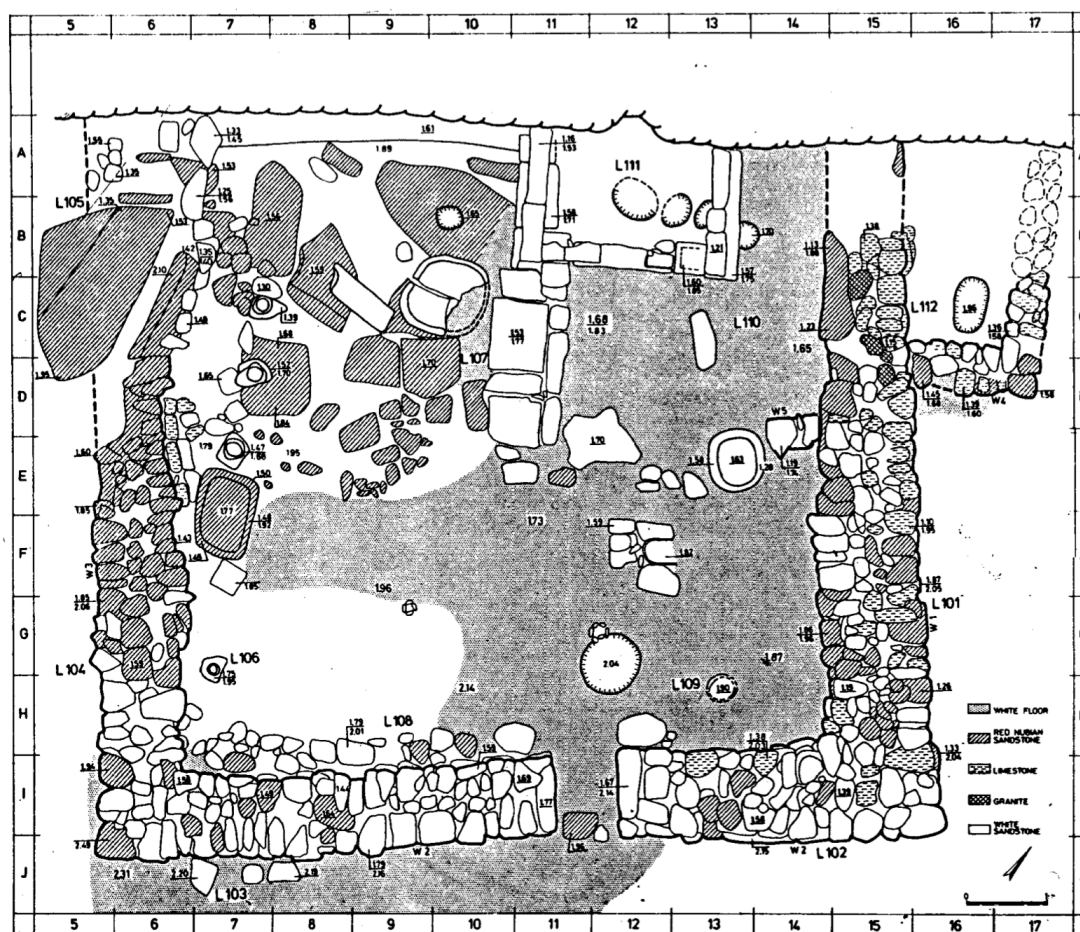
¹⁹⁸ Homan, *To Your Tents O Israel!*, p. 118.

¹⁹⁹ Ella Werker, “Wood,” *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, ed. B. Rothenberg (London, 1988): pp. 232–35.

²⁰⁰ Rothenberg, *Timna*, pp. 151–52, fig. 44. Rothenberg’s excavation of Site 200 revealed a number of Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions including those of: Seti I, Ramesses II, Merneptah, Seti II, and Queen Twosret of the Nineteenth Dynasty, as well as Ramesses III, Ramesses IV, and Ramesses V of the Twentieth Dynasty (pp. 163–166).



Figures. 5, 6: Above, an artist's recreation of the Midianite tented-shrine at Timna'. Note the *maṣṣēbôt* and the sandstone basin along the wall on the left, and the 'cell of the priest' on the top right. Below, the floor-plan of the Midianite shrine, Stratum II; images after Rothenberg (*Timna*, 1972).



the temple.²⁰¹ Based on his own interpretation of the site's archaeological strata, Rothenberg dated the Midianite tent-shrine (Stratum II) no later than the middle of the 12th century BCE, and he further suggested that this Midianite place of worship could be connected with "the actual tent-shrine of Israel's desert wanderings, the 'tent of meeting,' the Tabernacle."²⁰² I will return to this further below.

Meanwhile, in addition to the tent superstructure pitched over the temple's court, the character and the layout of the Egyptian shrine were drastically altered by the Midianite metalworkers at Timna'.²⁰³ Various architectural elements of the preexisting Hathor temple were modified and repurposed. A low stone offering bench was built against sections of walls 2 and 3, and a row of *maṣṣēbôt* were erected here with a sandstone basin. Multiple round incense-altars, similar to those found at Serabit el-Khadem,²⁰⁴ were incorporated into the row of *maṣṣēbôt* and were obviously in secondary use by the Midianites. A square pillar bearing representations of Hathor in her bovine form was also integrated into the row of *maṣṣēbôt*, but interestingly enough, it showed signs of intentional effacement. Most of the Egyptian votives left for Hathor were also discarded on the exterior of the shrine, and many of the hieroglyphic inscriptions were effaced and removed. A large amount of bones, mostly of young goats and sheep, were found within and around the shrine, suggesting that animal sacrifices took place here. Fireplaces on the floor of stratum II indicate on-site consumption of the animals, a ritual

²⁰¹ Lily Singer-Avitz, "Section F: The Qurayyah Painted Ware," in David Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994), Volumes I-V* (Tel Aviv: University Press, 2005), pp. 1280–87.

²⁰² Rothenberg, *Timna*, pp. 128, 184.

²⁰³ For the following, see Rothenberg, *Timna*, pp. 150–155.

²⁰⁴ For a general overview of the site, see G. D. Mumford, "Serabit el-Khadim," in *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, ed. K. A. Bard (New York: Routledge, 1999): pp. 722–725. No Midianite ware is attested at Serabit el-Khadem, and the site is associated with turquoise mining.

practice not associated with the Egyptian cult of Hathor.²⁰⁵ A small annex located outside the central courtyard but still contiguous with the Midianite shrine was interpreted to be the ‘cell of the priest.’²⁰⁶ During the Midianite occupation of the site the tented-shrine also served as some type of casting workshop. This intensive metallurgical activity left its mark on the shrine, as nearly all of the surfaces or ‘floors’ of Stratum II were covered in an olive green-grey ‘residue’ (known as verdigris) from the breakdown of the metallurgical fragments and copper artifacts mixed with ash deposits.²⁰⁷

Midianite ware comprised 25% of the pottery assemblage discovered in the Egyptian-Midianite shrine, of which most of the vessels were miniatures. A metal hoard containing several miniature bronze phallic figurines²⁰⁸ and a beautiful figurine of a horned caprovid was found.²⁰⁹ Most notably, near the naos of the shrine a gilded bronze snake was found.²¹⁰ A number of scholars including Rothenberg himself have remarked that this cultic item in particular recalls the biblical story about Moses and the bronze serpent he creates in the wilderness (Num 21:6–9, E).²¹¹ In any case, the discovery of this bronze snake sheds light on an active snake cult that was associated with the sacred tent-shrine constructed by Midianite metalworkers, that is, Qenites, working at Timna. Not long after the tent-shrine was erected the site was abandoned altogether, apparently some time in the second half of the 12th century BCE. An earthquake and related rock-fall may have been responsible for the final destruction of the shrine.

²⁰⁵ Hanan Lernau, “Mammalian Remains,” in B. Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna* (1988): pp. 246–252 (see 252).

²⁰⁶ Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, p. 273.

²⁰⁷ Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, p. 271–272.

²⁰⁸ Rothenberg, *Timna*, pl. XVII–XVIII.

²⁰⁹ Rothenberg, *Timna*, fig. 97. It is unclear if this zoomorphic figurine is a ram (from the genus *Ovis*) or an ibex (genus *Capra*).

²¹⁰ Rothenberg, *Timna*, pl. XIX–XX.

²¹¹ Cf. 2 Kgs 18:4, in which Hezekiah destroys this bronze snake connected with Moses.

Thus the discovery of a Midianite tent-shrine dating to the precise time period following the exodus from Egypt—the late 13th or first half of the 12th century BCE—and located in the general region of Israel’s wilderness wanderings opens up the possibility that the biblical account(s) preserved an authentic tent tradition. At this juncture I would like to turn to the *’ōhel mō’ēd* in E in order to discuss its possible Midianite prototype: the tent-shrine discovered at Timna’.

2.5 Was E’s Tent Found at Timna’?

Although the majority of scholars understand the first mention of E’s sacred tent to be in Exod 33:7, I strongly disagree. Conversely, the first appearance of *the* tent in E is directly connected to Moses’ reunification with his Midianite father-in-law, Jethro, at the sacred mountain in the wilderness. Yet in order to meet Jethro Moses leaves and goes out²¹² from the camp where they kiss and Moses does obeisance to his father-in-law. After asking one another their welfare both Moses and Jethro enter *the* tent (*hā’ōhel*, Exod 18:7),²¹³ which once again is located outside of the camp and not within it. The reader is left guessing what tent this is, especially because no mention of this tent whatsoever precedes this passage. P’s tabernacle is not even mentioned until Exodus 25. Could it be that this is the first introduction of the sacred tent-shrine, the tabernacle, the tent of meeting? While some commentators have suggested that this was Moses’ own domicile,²¹⁴ both the attachment of the definite article to *’ōhel* and the level of cultic

²¹² The Hebrew reads: *wayyēšē’ mōšeh liqra’t hōtnō*. So Moses went out from the camp to meet Jethro.

²¹³ This phrasing utilizes the directive *hē*: *wayyābō’ū hā’ōhēlāh*, which is also found in Gen 18:6; Exod 33:8, 9; Num 11:26; and Judg 4:18 (all these having to do with tents).

²¹⁴ Propp (*Exodus 1–18*, p. 630) ultimately concludes that this is Moses’ own tent but this is incorrect. Sacrifices are offered here (18:12), a point that militates against Propp’s interpretation. Rashbam (Carasik, *The JPS Miqra’ot Gedolot*, Exod 18:12, p. 141) thought that the sacrifice is eaten in Moses’ own tent. This

interaction surrounding this tent rendezvous suggest that this was indeed the sacred tent, the tent of Meeting.²¹⁵ Blenkinsopp remarks, “In view of what then transpired, it is probably a tent-shrine similar to the wilderness tent in which Joshua bin Nun officiated as oracle priest (Exod 33.11).²¹⁶ Here Jethro officiates and offers sacrifices to the deity, followed by a cultic feast²¹⁷ in which Aaron and the elders also participate (18:12). Following the pericope about Moses and his Midianite father-in-law, Jethro, the next place that the tent is mentioned in E is when Moses pitches *the* tent (*hā’ōhel*) outside of the camp, far away, and only then did he call it the *’ōhel mō’ēd* (Exod 33:7). According to Propp the attachment of the definite article to *’ōhel* in 33:7 implies that this is “the famous tent of which you’ve [already] heard, namely, Meeting Tent,”²¹⁸ the *’ōhel mō’ēd* of P (Exodus 25ff). It is precisely this tent that anyone seeking an oracle from God comes, a motif that echoes Moses’ earlier conversation with his father-in-law about how the people have come to him to enquire of God, i.e., for oracles and judgments (18:15). Since the tent in 18:7 and 33:7 is preceded by the definite article, is located outside of the camp, is connected with cultic activity, and both pericopes belong to E, a case is made for identifying *the* tent that Jethro and Moses enter as the tent of meeting, the *’ōhel mō’ēd*.²¹⁹

has to be the tabernacle. Even Abraham and his ‘divine’ guests feast under a tree, not Abraham’s own tent (Gen 18:1–8).

²¹⁵ Surprisingly, Propp (*Exodus 1–18*, p. 625) does not catch or comment on the definite article here, although he mentions it in 33:7 (see below). Ibn Ezra (*The JPS Miqra’ot Gedolot*, Exodus 18:7, p. 139) says this is the Tent of Meeting, but calls it Moses’ tent (cf. his comment on 18:12, *ibid.* p. 141).

²¹⁶ Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah”: p. 131. Yet there is no reason to assume that this tent is different than the *’ōhel mō’ēd* of Exod 33:7–11.

²¹⁷ They eat *leḥem*, probably not ‘bread’ in this case, but its general meaning is ‘food,’ including meat (cf. Arabic *lahm*, ‘meat’)—see Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, p. 631. That they eat meat is suggested by *zēbāḥīm*.

²¹⁸ Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, p. 599. Conversely, Cassuto (*A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967], p. 420) sides with Rabbinic interpretation (e.g., Ibn Ezra’s longer comment) and thinks *hā’ōhel* refers to Moses’ own tent. This interpretation is incorrect, and this would also imply that Moses lived outside of the camp and cohabitated with Joshua who did not leave the tent (33:11).

²¹⁹ Some scholars have commented on chronological issues surrounding Exodus 18. For a discussion, see Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, pp. 627–628.

In retrospect, the fact that Jethro the Midianite priest performs the sacrifices after he and Moses enter the tent may suggest that E's tent was a Midianite sanctuary.²²⁰ Based on the Midianite priest's appearance at the sacred mountain and his sacrificial act in Exod 18:12, Noth opined that the Midianites were the first and the authentic custodians of this cult.²²¹ Rothenberg, too, pointed out the significance of Moses' meeting with Jethro, although he now had the archaeological evidence from Timna' in view:

In the light of the Timna discoveries, it seems at least plausible to consider the tented-shrine, the Ohel Mo'ed [sic], of Israel's nomadic desert faith to be somehow connected with the relationship between Moses and Jethro, who was not only a priest (*Exodus* 3:1) and advisor of Moses (*Exodus* 18:13–27) but also performed sacrifices and took part in a sacred meal 'before Yahweh' (*Exodus* 18:12).²²² (Italics original)

Without doubt, the plethora of animal bones and Midianite votive ware discovered in the tent-shrine at Timna' is an enticing avenue for correlating the Timna' tent with the biblical one. Nevertheless, although a curious connection between the tent-shrine and the Midianites exists both in the biblical account and at Timna', drawing further parallels with the biblical text bolsters Rothenberg's speculations.

For example, in E Moses builds an altar and sets up twelve *maššēbôt*²²³ at the foot of the sacred mountain (Exod 24:4).²²⁴ Despite the fact that no tent is mentioned here in Exodus 24, Moses first establishes the temenos of the sacred precinct by erecting cultic architecture. In other words, he is preparing this precise location for something special, a sanctuary of some kind. It is therefore not coincidental that E's narrative is then interrupted by P's instructions for the tabernacle, which are given to Moses upon the

²²⁰ De Vaux (*Early History of Israel*, pp. 335–337) notes that the place where Jethro offers a sacrifice could be a Midianite sanctuary, but he does not consider the setting of the tent for this cultic act, but rather he has the mountain in mind.

²²¹ Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, p. 138 fn. 395

²²² Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 184.

²²³ The MT reads *maššēbāh* but multiple manuscripts (Gk, Sam.) read *'ābānīm* 'stones.'

²²⁴ The twelve *maššēbôt* represent the twelve tribes of Israel, an anachronistic feature of E's account.

mountain that overshadows this makeshift shrine (Exodus 25–31). When E finally resumes with the golden calf incident in chapter 32, the very next chapter follows with the notice that Moses pitches the *'ōhel mō'ēd* far away (*harḥēq*) from the camp, a detail that corresponds to the location of the mountain²²⁵ itself and the sacred precinct he had established earlier in 24:1–4.²²⁶ In sum, the shrine Moses establishes in 24:4 is most likely the same site where he later pitches the tent a distance from the camp in 33:7.

Most importantly, however, is that Moses' priestly actions in Exodus 24 fit well with the archaeological evidence from the Midianite tent-shrine at Timna'. Firstly, the tent-shrine at Timna' contains *maṣṣēbôt* and sandstone basins, just as the sacred precinct set up by Moses contains *maṣṣēbôt* and *'aggānôt* 'basins' for the blood of sacrificial animals (Exod 24:4–6). One of these sandstone basins was even discovered in the row of standing stones erected in the court of the Midianite tent-shrine. Furthermore, just as the sacred precinct in E is established by Moses at the foot of the sacred mountain (24:4), the Timna' shrine is also situated at the foot of *har timnā'* and abuts against 'King Solomon's Pillars.' Another factor to consider is the peculiar location of Site 200, the Egyptian-Midianite shrine, within the Timna' Valley. Although it is situated almost in the center of the mining and smelting areas of Timna', the sanctuary itself is located some distance outside of all the main Late Bronze-early Iron Age smelting camps. This somewhat isolated location corresponds with the position of the temenos with its *maṣṣēbôt* and

²²⁵ Even though Israel encamps *neged* 'in sight of' or 'opposite to' the mountain, it is still located at a distance (Exod 19:2b). The Hebrew reads: *wayyôṣē' mōšeh 'et-hā'ām liqra't hā'ēlōhīm min-hammaḥāneh wayyityaṣṣēbū bētaḥtīt hāhār*: "and Moses brought the people out from the camp to meet the deity and they stationed themselves at the foot of the mountain" (Exod 19:17).

²²⁶ If the tent in 18:7 is the *'ōhel mō'ēd*, then the current narrative may be out of order and Jethro's visit would follow 33:7–11, i.e., after Moses had pitched the 'tent of meeting' where he would have then met his father in law.

’aggānōt (24:1–4), the sacred precinct that may have served as the site where Moses later pitched the tent far outside of the camp in E (33:7).²²⁷

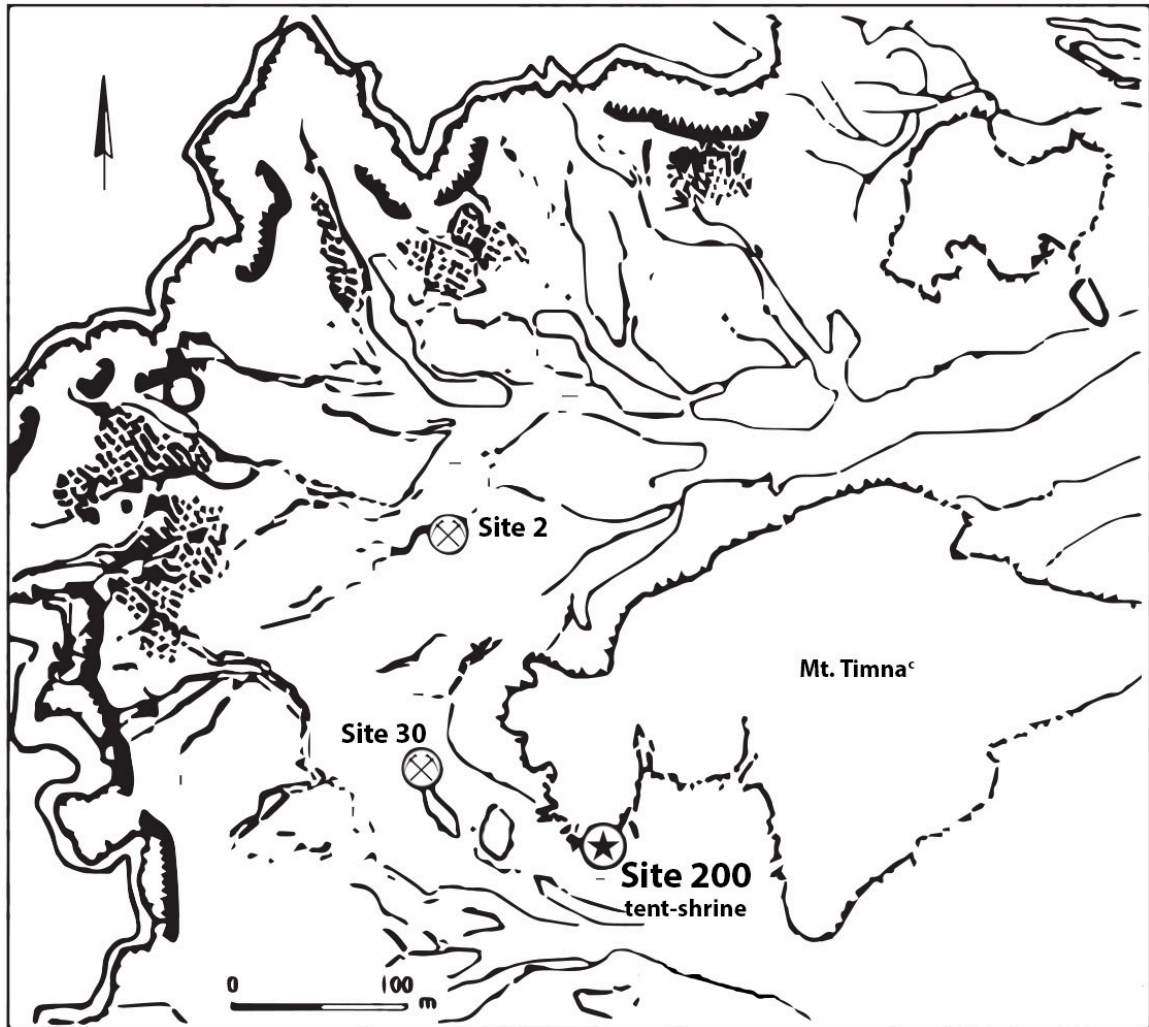


Figure 7: A map showing Site 200, the Egyptian-Midianite shrine, in relation to the major smelting sites in Timna Valley. Note the location of Site 200. The sanctuary is built up against King Solomon’s Pillars and sits at the base of Mt. Timna, corresponding to the location of the shrine / tent of meeting set up by Moses in the biblical account. Image after Rothenberg (*Timna*, 1972).

²²⁷ In P, the tent is set up inside of the camp. See, e.g., Num 1:50ff.

In light of all the parallels highlighted above one may then ask if the tent-shrine at Timna^c could be the original tabernacle that was eventually abandoned and fell into ruin when the Midianites left the site. Of course this would require that the people did not actually carry the tent with them through the remainder of their journey through the wilderness to the land (contra P). Against this hypothesis, Josh 18:1 (= P)²²⁸ claims that the *’ōhel mō’ēd* was set up at Shiloh after the Israelites entered the land (also cf. Psa. 78:60),²²⁹ but this notion is challenged by the fact that 1 Samuel twice mentions the *hēkal yhw̄h* (‘temple of Yahweh,’ 1 Sam 1:9; 3:3).²³⁰ And it has been pointed out that both the LXX^B and 4QSam^a do not contain mention of the sons of Eli lying with the women serving at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (1 Sam 2:22).²³¹ This line could possibly be borrowed from Exod 38:8 (= P), in which the women who serve at the door of the Tent of Meeting are mentioned in nearly the exact Hebrew phrasing as 1 Sam 2:22.²³² Conversely, if a tent ever existed at Shiloh as some evidence would suggest, the Israelites did not carry it with them through their long and arduous journey through the wilderness. P probably knew of Shiloh as an important shrine and conflated his tabernacle with the Canaanite version that may have stood there. Wellhausen, too, noticed that although the ark and tabernacle are inextricably linked in the Priestly text (see, e.g., Exod 26:33; Num 7:89; etc.), only the ark is removed from Shiloh (1 Sam 4:3–4) while its sacred tent enclosure is nowhere to be found; when the ark is finally returned by the Philistines it is

²²⁸ Once again, the phrase *wayyiqāhālū kol ’ādat bēnē yiśrā’ēl* gives this passage away as P.

²²⁹ Cross believes that Psa. 78:60 provides evidence that a tent-sanctuary once stood at Shiloh (Cross, “The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research,” p. 174).

²³⁰ P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 8, Anchor Yale Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 1980), p. 60.

²³¹ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 31; McCarter, *I Samuel*, p. 81; Marc Brettler, “The Composition of 1 Samuel 1–2,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116, no. 4 (1997): pp. 601–612 (see 608–609).

²³² *Haššōb’ōt ’āšer šab’ū petah ’ōhel mō’ēd* (Exod 38:8). One of the questions that is unclear and one that could benefit from further study is the amount of late redaction present in the book of Samuel.

returned to Kiryat-ye'arim (1 Sam 7:1–2), and it does not reside in a tent until David's time (2 Sam 6:17).²³³ In sum, while in P the tent accompanies Israel throughout its duration in the wilderness and enters the land where it is installed at Shiloh, it is extremely doubtful that the *desert* sanctuary was ever portable, casting further doubt on the arrival of the sacred tent in the land. On the other hand, it is questionable whether or not E's tent ever arrived in the land, nor is it made clear that it was anything special like P's tent. In fact, E's tent is never mentioned again after Deuteronomy 31, and its absence all throughout the period of the Judges and throughout the period of the monarchy may confirm that the tent was abandoned and ultimately perished in the wilderness where it was born, only to be discovered nearly 3,000 years later by an archaeological excavation at Timna', a site long exploited for its rich copper deposits by local nomadic proto-Edomite or Midianite tribes.

2.6 Discussion

Surprisingly, the discovery of a tent-shrine at Timna' has had little impact on biblical scholarship concerned with the Midianite-Qenite hypothesis. While Rothenberg was the most vocal about the relationship of the Timna' shrine and the tabernacle of biblical tradition, Michael Homan has recently suggested that this Midianite tent-shrine has many parallels to the Priestly tabernacle.²³⁴ He points to the red pigment of the tent fabric found along the shrine's walls, which parallels the color of the tabernacle's curtain (Exod 26:1, 14), so in this case the dyed-wools Harran has claimed were a fiction of the

²³³ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 31.

²³⁴ Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel*, pp. 118–120. See also R. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 202.

Priestly tabernacle may have a basis here at Timna²³⁵. Since stone-lined socket-holes were found, Homan further suggests that the acacia wood was used for the tent poles just as acacia wood was used for the poles of the biblical tent (26:15). It will be recalled that although the empty and austere tent in E may reflect a more authentic desert tradition, P may still contain genuine details of the tabernacle as well. Yet P's polemical nature and questionable antiquarian intent make this difficult to ascertain. If P does contain vestiges of this more ancient tent-shrine found in E, most of the original details were obscured by P's embellishments. While gold and silver were expectedly absent from the Timna²³⁵ shrine, the large amount of copper rings and wire used to suspend or join the tent-curtain together may be included in P's description of the tabernacle's covering. Here *qarsê nêḥōšet*, 'copper hooks,'²³⁷ were used to join the curtains together (26:11). Staubli²³⁶ has perhaps put forth the strongest argument in favor of a Yahwistic connection to this Midianite tent-shrine by connecting it with the Shasu of whom the Midianites belong. While it goes without question that more than one tent-shrine existed in this part of the world during this time, the fact that none like it has ever been discovered in the myriads of past and ongoing excavations in ancient Israel is quite remarkable indeed.²³⁷

That said, multiple details from both the Priestly (P) and Elohist (E) accounts found in Exodus and Numbers find uncanny historical correlates at Timna²³⁵. Here we have a Pharaonic enterprise corresponding to the Egyptian setting of the Exodus story. A reference to metallurgy is first made upon Moses' return to Egypt from Midian when he and Aaron are told by Yahweh to take handfuls of soot from a *kîbšān*, 'smelting kiln,'

²³⁵ Haran, *Temples and Temple services in Ancient Israel*, p. 125.

²³⁶ Thomas Staubli, *Das Image der Nomaden im Alten Israel und in der Ikonographie seiner sesshaften Nachbarn* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1991), p. 231.

²³⁷ For tents and the archaeological record, see Homan, *To Your Tents O Israel!*, pp. 47–59.

and to scatter it in the air (Exod 9:8, 10 = P) resulting in the plague of boils. In addition, the location of Timna⁶ in the southern ‘Arabah provides the perfect Late Bronze–early Iron Age alibi for Israel’s ‘wanderings’ in the wilderness around Edom and Midian, and possibly even for Israel’s lengthy encampment at the sacred mountain of the theophany: Sinai-Horeb. But in E the mountain is explicitly called Horeb (*hōreb* > √ *h-r-b* = ‘dry up, be desolate, desert’), which may be a related form of ‘*ārābāh* ‘desert, wilderness,’ from the √ ‘*-r-b*, ‘be arid, sterile.’²³⁸ The mountainous landscape of the Timna⁶ Valley, which opens eastward toward the Wadi ‘Arabah, and the multiple *bāmôt* ‘high places’ connected with some form of hilltop ritual casting discovered there may have provided some degree of backdrop to the Sinai-Horeb theophany with its burning fire and thick smoke billowing from the summit “like the smoke of a *kībšān*” (Exod 19:18; cf. 9:8, 10). This sacred mountain is also the exact setting where Moses’ Midianite father-in-law meets him and officiates a sacred feast and sacrifice to Yahweh after they enter *the* tent. These details concerning the visit of Moses’ Midianite father-in-law should not be seen as anything other than authentic and historical. For what was the point of adding these obscure details to a story about ‘Israel’ in the wilderness? It is therefore not coincidental that Midianite ware was found at nearly every mining and smelting camp in the Timna⁶ Valley, as well as in the strata of the Midianite desert tent-shrine erected atop the abandoned New Kingdom mining shrine dedicated to Hathor, the bovine goddess. If I may speculate here, the Israelite memory of Aaron’s apostasy and his making of the golden bull-calf (Exodus 32 = E) probably derive from Midianite antipathy towards bovine imagery connected

²³⁸ Tyler Kelley suggested this relationship (personal communication, 2015). For the meaning of ‘arid, parched,’ see 𐤁𐤓𐤁 IV in *BDB*, p. 787i. The interchange of the voiceless/voiced pharyngeal fricatives 𐤁 and 𐤂 is not foreign to Hebrew. Interestingly enough, the term ‘*ārābāh* actually never appears in E, or in J for that matter. Yet both P and D contain ‘*ārābāh*, but only D refers to both ‘*ārābāh* and *hōreb*.

with Hathor, ‘the Golden One,’²³⁹ or possibly her son, Ihy, whose name means ‘calf.’²⁴⁰ When the Midianites erected their tent-shrine over the foundations of the Hathor shrine they even effaced images of Hathor in her bovine form and purged all of the votive offerings left for the goddess by the Egyptians. While the biblical story of the golden calf (E) is clearly polemic against Jeroboam’s construction of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:28–30),²⁴¹ the distant event at Timna’ may have survived in the collective memory of the northern ‘Mushite’ Levites²⁴² at Shiloh, who, after all, may have had some connection, real or perceived, to Moses their ‘guild father’²⁴³ and therefore to the Midianite priesthood.²⁴⁴

One of the more interesting parallels between Timna’ and E’s account is the bronze snake discovered near the naos of the Midianite tent-shrine, an object which recalls the *sārāp* ‘burning one’ of bronze that Moses creates in the wilderness (Num 21:6–9). We have discovered many examples of bronze snakes from all over Israel, but the snake from the Timna’ shrine is one of the finest in terms of workmanship and quality. This is obviously not the same snake Moses created, but more importantly Moses is clearly acting as a metal-smith. As a matter of fact, in many related stories Moses and Aaron act as metal-smiths, a feature that can best be explained by a metallurgical setting like Timna’ or some other archaeometallurgical site located in the Wadi ‘Arabah. Aaron

²³⁹ *The Oxford Essential Guide to Egyptian Mythology*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 158.

²⁴⁰ Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), pp. 132–133.

²⁴¹ Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, pp. 70–74.

²⁴² For recent scholarship on the Mushites, see Mark Leuchter, “The Fightin’ Mushites,” *Vetus Testamentum* 62 (2012): pp. 479–500.

²⁴³ For Moses as the ‘patron-saint’ of the Levite caste, see van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, p. 303.

²⁴⁴ For an alliance between the Mushite Levites and the Midianite priesthood, see Cross, *CMHE*, pp. 200–206. A possible connection to the Midianite priesthood may be noted in the name Abiathar (*‘ebyātār*). Moses’ Midianite father-in-law, the priest of Midian, was Jethro (*yitrô*—Exod 3:1; 18:1) or Jether (*yeter*—Exod 4:18). Perhaps this is an ancestral call back to the Midianite family of Moses, their guild-father.

as the maker of the golden calf parallels Moses as the maker of the copper snake. The Priestly tradent also knows of a tradition of Moses making silver trumpets (Num 10:2) and atop Sinai Moses somehow burns his face²⁴⁵ (Exod 34:29–35), a detail that may be attributed to Moses' occupation as a metalworker:²⁴⁶

It is the same with the blacksmith at his anvil, planning what he will make from a piece of iron. The heat from the fire sears his skin as he sweats away at the forge. The clanging of the hammer deafens him as he carefully watches the object he is working take shape. He takes great pains to complete his task, and will work far into the night to bring it to perfection (Sir 38:28).

Lastly, one may wonder if the fire and cloud that rested over the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–38; Num 9:15–23 = P), or the pillar of cloud that stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting (Exod 33:7–11; Num 11:24–25; 12:4–10 = E) were concomitant with ritual metalworking and casting. The cloud and fire appear closely aligned with the priestly act of metalworking. P uses several metallurgical terms in his narratives concerning the tabernacle, including the root *r-q-* 'hammer, plate' (Num 17:1–4) in which Eleazar the son of Aaron turns the incense censers into a hammered altar cover, and once again Yahweh commands Moses to make two silver trumpets of *miqšāh* 'hammered work' (Num 10:2). Although it may be a redactional feature, it is fascinating that Hobab the Midianite (or Qenite, cf. Judg 4:11), Moses' father-in-law or brother-in-law,²⁴⁷ appears in such close proximity to a narrative concerning metalworking (Num 10:29). The metallurgical workshop under the shade of the Midianite tent-canopy may have been the source of the divine fire and cloud that was closely linked to the biblical tabernacle, the

²⁴⁵ William H. C. Propp, "The Skin of Moses' Face—Disfigured or Transfigured?," *CBQ* 49 (1987), pp. 375–86 (385–86).

²⁴⁶ Bernardus D. Eerdmans, *The Covenant at Mount Sinai: Viewed in the Light of Antique Thought* (Leiden: Burgersdijk & Niermans, 1939), pp. 1–31.

²⁴⁷ Once again, whether Hobab was the brother-in-law (**hātān*) or father-in-law (*hōtēn*) of Moses, see William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, p. 173.

tent of meeting. As pointed out above, some level of background of the Sinai theophany with its thick smoke and fiery character may derive from mountaintop casting installations which are attested at Timna²⁴⁸.

In closing, if any of the above elements at Timna²⁴⁸ have found their way into the 'Israelite' tales about the exodus from Egypt, the wanderings in the wilderness, and the theophany at Sinai, it is because some element of the early Israelite and possibly even Mushite priesthoods at Shiloh and Dan (and possibly at Arad, too)²⁴⁸ traced their historical roots to the Midianite or Qenite priesthood.²⁴⁹ It is not coincidence that Jonathan *ben* Gershom, the son of Moses, was a Levite priest at Dan, and at Tel Dan a metal workshop (Courtyard 7026) dating to the 12th century BCE was discovered in Stratum VI.²⁵⁰ Since Hobab the Midianite or Qenite kinsman of Moses guides the Israelites through the wilderness to the land of Canaan (Num 10:29–32; cf. Judg 1:16; 4:11), perhaps the memory of the sacred Midianite desert tent-shrine entered into biblical consciousness this way.

²⁴⁸ Benjamin Mazar, "The Sanctuary at Arad and the Family of Hobab the Kenite," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1965): pp. 297–303; Cross, *CMHE*, pp. 200–201. However, I think a direct association of the Qenites with Arad itself is a bad reading of Judg 1:16.

²⁴⁹ A possible etymological relationship between *dān* ('judge') and *midyān* (√ *d-y-n*²) exists. Also, Dan, who is said to abide on his ships (Judg 5:17) and who had not been allotted any land among the other tribes of Israel (Judg 18:1) may be connected with the Denyen (Egyptian *Dnyn*), one of the group of 'Sea Peoples' who have been traced to Adana (Phoenician *Dnnym*) located in Cilicia in SE Anatolia. See Eric H. Cline and David O'Connor, "The Mystery of the Sea Peoples," in *Mysterious Lands*, eds. D. O'Connor and S. Quirke (London: UCL Press, 2003): pp. 107–138 (see 115); Yigael Yadin, "And Dan, Why Did He Remain in Ships?" *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1 (1968): pp. 9–23.

²⁵⁰ Thomas E. Levy, 'You Shall Make for Yourself No Molten Gods': Some Thoughts on Archaeology and Edomite Ethnic Identity," in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of Richard E. Friedman on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. S. Dolanksy (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008): pp. 241

CHAPTER 3

Exploring the Possible Hurro-Aegean Origin of the 'Midianites' and Their Painted Wares

3.1 Introduction: Midianite Ware

As a reminder, a characteristic bichrome-style of pottery that dates to the 14th–12th centuries BCE²⁵¹ (and even to the Iron II)²⁵² has been discovered at numerous sites in the arid desert regions often associated with the Midianites/Qenites of the Hebrew Bible, a people known for their metalworking and caravaneering.²⁵³ One of the more prominent locations where this pottery was found is Timna' (formerly Wadi Mene'iyeh), an archaeometallurgical site situated in the southern 'Arabah northwest of Eilat. Both petrographic analysis and neutron activation analysis (NAA) have shown that this decorated ware was manufactured at or near Qurayyah in NW Saudi Arabia,²⁵⁴ the

²⁵¹ Beno Rothenberg, *Timna: Valley of the Biblical Copper Mines* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).

²⁵² Juan M. Tebes, "Pottery Makers and Premodern Exchange in the Fringes of Egypt: An Approximation to the Distribution of Iron Age Midianite Pottery," *Buried History* 43 (2007): pp. 11–26; Thomas E. Levy, "Ethnic Identity in Biblical Edom, Israel, and Midian: Some Insights From Mortuary Contexts in the Lowlands of Edom," in *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, ed. D. Schloen (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2008): pp. 251–261.

²⁵³ Lawrence E. Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. M. D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 148.

²⁵⁴ A. Slatkine, "Comparative Petrographic Study of Ancient Pottery Sherds from Israel," *Museum Ha'Aretz Yearbook* 15-16 (1974): pp. 101–111; B. Rothenberg and J. Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," in *Midian, Moab, and Edom: The History and Archaeology of the Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, JSOT Supplement Series 24, ed. John F.A. Sawyer and David J.A. Clines (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 65–124. For NAA, see J. Gunneweg T. Beier, U. Diehl, D. Lambrecht & H.

heartland of the Midianites. For these reasons the ware was originally labeled ‘Midianite,’ but since then it has also been called by its more neutral term ‘Qurayyah Painted Ware.’²⁵⁵ While scholars have long pointed to the allochthonous decorative influence on these painted vessels, little explanation has been given as to why these foreign designs were so attractive to the producers/consumers of these wares, a people who were deeply entrenched in extractive copper metallurgy and who both lived and roamed in the arid margins of the southern Levant. In this chapter I will investigate various decorative and typological aspects of ‘Midianite’ ware in hopes of elucidating the cultural background of the group(s) associated with its use and manufacture.

3.2 A Brief Look at the Literature

In order to begin this inquiry into the Midianites and their unique painted pottery it is first necessary to briefly review the scholarly literature on the issue. Dayton and Aharoni have suggested a possible relationship between Midianite decorations and those of Hurrian pottery from Nuzi.²⁵⁶ However, due to the perceived chronological and geographical dissonance of Hurrian parallels, scholarly attention has instead shifted to the Eastern Mediterranean wares of the Late Bronze Age, such as Bichrome, Minoic, Mycenaean, and Cypriot wares.²⁵⁷ Dayton, for example, also thought that Midianite ware

Mommsen, “‘Edomite’, ‘Negevite’ and ‘Midianite’ Pottery from the Negev Desert and Jordan: Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis Results,” *Archaeometry* 33 (1991), pp. 239–253.

²⁵⁵ Lily Singer-Avitz, “Section F: The Qurayyah Painted Ware,” in David Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994), Volumes I-V* (Tel Aviv: University Press, 2005), pp. 1280–87.

²⁵⁶ J. E. Dayton, “Midianite and Edomite Pottery,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1972): pp. 25-37; Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979 [1967]), p. 205, and *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel: From the Prehistoric Beginnings to the End of the First Temple Period*, First ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982 [1978]), p. 139.

²⁵⁷ Tebes (2007), p. 12.

could have developed from the same earlier Mycenaean source underlying Philistine ware.²⁵⁸ Rothenberg has contended that the Aegean-style decorative motifs on the Midianite ware viewed along with possible depictions of Midianites wearing headgear and tasseled kilts in an engraving at Timna⁶ suggests that the Midianites were an early migratory wave of Sea Peoples.²⁵⁹ Similarly, Mendenhall has opined that the Aegean decorative features on the Midianite ware “justifies the conclusion that there was some element in the society that had roots in the Anatolian/Aegean region, however remote they may have been.”²⁶⁰ Thus Mendenhall saw the Midianites as Anatolian interlopers who impressed themselves upon a pre-existing Semitic stratum.²⁶¹ Peter Parr has also drawn attention to the Aegean-style motifs on the Midianite ware, opining that:

It is now generally agreed that [Midianite ware] is related to a family of style, of hybrid origin, which was current throughout the Aegean and East Mediterranean world, including the Levant and Egypt, in the Late Bronze Age; and that in some way [it] is an imitation of these western fashions... the actual mechanisms by which the Aegean or East Mediterranean influences found a home and took root in this corner of the Arabian Peninsula demand further discussion if the early history of the region is to be elucidated.²⁶²

In the same vein, Parr has observed that the Midianite ware is certainly not an imitation in the sense that the end product is far from being a copy. It is a distinctive original that hybridizes Aegean motifs with indigenous Arabian motifs found in rock art, including the

²⁵⁸ Dayton (1972), p. 28.

²⁵⁹ Rothenberg, “Who were the ‘Midianite’ copper miners of the Arabah? About the ‘Midianite enigma,” in Th. Rehren, A. Hauptmann & J. Muhly (eds.), *Metallurgica Antiqua*, (= Der Anschnitt, Beiheft 8, Bochum, 1998): 197–212; and “Egyptian Chariots, Midianites from Hijaz/ Midian (Northwest Arabia) and Amalekites from the Negev in the Timna Mines: Rock drawings in the Ancient Copper Mines of the Arabah – new aspects of the region’s history II,” *Institute for Archaeo-Metallurgical Studies*, newsletter no. 23 (2003), p. 12, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iams/newsletter> (last accessed on 8/25/2014);

²⁶⁰ George E. Mendenhall, “Midian,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* IV, pp. 815–818.

²⁶¹ Mendenhall, “Qurayyah and the Midianites,” in: *Studies in the History of Arabia*, Vol. 3, ed. A. R. Al-Ansary (Riyadh: King Saud University), pp. 137–145; and “Cultural History and the Philistine Problem,” in: *The Archaeology of Jordan and Other Studies*, eds. L.T. Geraty and L.G. Herr (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1986), pp. 525–546 (see p. 545).

²⁶² Peter J. Parr, “Further Reflections on Late Second Millennium Settlement in North West Arabia,” in: *Retrieving the Past: Essays on Archaeological Research and Methodology in Honor of Gus W. Van Beek*, ed. J.D. Seger (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), pp. 213–218 (see p. 214).

ostrich and camel.²⁶³ Parr further notes similarities between Midianite ware and Philistine ware, although the latter “is a good century later in origin than the [Midianite] ware, on present evidence, and that it is quite different in terms of technology and shape; it is only in the matters of stylistic conception, shared motifs and artistic individuality that the two wares invite comparison.”²⁶⁴ A final possibility discussed by Parr is that the Midianites were of ultimate Aegean origin.²⁶⁵ Basing his analysis on Mendenhall’s earlier work, Parr has suggested that the producers of the Midianite ware were immigrants from the Aegean—an early group of Sea Peoples who were somehow intimately involved with the Egyptians—probably as middlemen in the incense trade. He also notes a more tempting avenue suggesting that these immigrants who settled at Qurayyah and who eventually made their way to Timna⁶ and other related sites were metallurgical specialists rather than professional potters.²⁶⁶ Most recently, Juan Tebes thinks it is likely that Eastern Mediterranean influence on the Midianite ware came first via the Mycenaean wares and later through the Philistine pottery.²⁶⁷ Lastly, various other scholars have pointed to Aegean motifs present on Egyptian faience,²⁶⁸ especially since a large amount was recovered from Rothenberg’s excavation of the Egyptian-Midianite mining shrine at Timna⁶.

²⁶³ Parr (1996), p. 214; E. A. Knauf, *Midian. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens am Ende des 2. Jahrtausends v.Chr.*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), p. 23. Most recently, see Tebes, “The Symbolic and Social World of Qurayyah Pottery Iconography,” (2014), pp. 163–201.

²⁶⁴ Parr (1996), p. 216.

²⁶⁵ Parr (1996), p. 216.

²⁶⁶ After Jan Kalsbeek and Gloria London, “A Late Second-Millennium B.C. Potting Puzzle,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 232 (1978): pp. 47–56.

²⁶⁷ Tebes, “The Symbolic and Social World of Qurayyah Pottery Iconography,” p. 188.

²⁶⁸ K. A. Kitchen, “Sheba and Arabia,” in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. L. K. Handy, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East, Vol. 11 (Leiden: Brill): pp. 126–153.

Now that I've sketched the scholarly debate surrounding the foreign motifs on Midianite ware, let us now turn to the characteristic features of Midianite ware.

3.3 Possible Hurro-Aegean Features of Midianite Ware

While most of the scholarly discussion on Midianite ware has centered on the foreign decorative motifs painted on the ware, much less has been said about its shapes.²⁶⁹ For this reason I would first like to draw your attention to a unique hyperboloid²⁷⁰ Midianite 'beaker-style' cup discovered in Stratum II of the Midianite tent-shrine at Timna²⁷¹ (see fig. 8.1).²⁷¹ It comes as a great surprise that no one has yet pointed out that the shape of this cup is virtually unparalleled in the ceramic repertoires of the southern Levant or NW Arabia.²⁷² The closest known parallels to this cup's concave shape are Late Helladic (LH) IIIA1–LH IIIC cups or Late Minoan spouted bronze and ceramic cups—minus the spout—from Crete (see fig. 8.2).²⁷³ Further afield, a close parallel is also attested among the Haftavan Early/Late VIB 'Urmia' wares²⁷⁴ of the second millennium BCE discovered in the Lake Urmia basin of NW Iran, not far from the border of Turkey and located on the periphery of the Hurro–Mitanni kingdom (see

²⁶⁹ See Tebes (2007), pp. 13, 15; Kalsbeek and London (1978).

²⁷⁰ The term 'hyperboloid' is taken from Prudence M. Rice, *Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook*, Second Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 219, Fig. 7.6

²⁷¹ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 155 fig. 47 (5). Rothenberg calls this a "sophisticated incense vessel." To my knowledge, no residue analysis has been conducted on this cup.

²⁷² For a representation of pottery typologies in the Levant, 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);

²⁷³ For these LH shapes, see P. A. Mountjoy, *Mycenaean Pottery: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 1993) pp. 78 fig. 176, 83 fig. 188, 86 fig. 202, 89 fig. 220, 91 fig. 229, 94 fig. 243; Oliver Dickinson, *The Aegean Bronze Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 122 fig. 5.16 (5).

²⁷⁴ Michael R. Edwards, "The Pottery of Haftavan VIB (Urmia Ware)," *Iran* 19 (1981): pp. 101–140 (see fig. 7, p. 117). According to Edwards this 'beaker' shape is the most distinctive vessel form, but he notes close parallels from Godin Tepe and Dinkha Tepe III (pp. 109–110). The Haftavan Early VIB wares are typically dated ca. 1900–1600 BCE, and the Late VIB to 1600–1450 BCE. The Haftavan Late VIB ware is decorated with birds and human figures.

fig. 8.3). It will be recalled that some scholars have previously suggested, on the basis of decorations alone, a link between Midianite ware and pottery from Nuzi, a predominantly Hurrian city of the Mitannian kingdom that forged powerful international connections, especially during the Amarna Period.²⁷⁵ This high level of internationalism is evidenced in part by the possible Aegean inspiration behind Nuzi ware's characteristic light-on-dark decorations, as well as 'International Style' wall paintings exhibiting Egyptian Hathor head designs and the Syrian palmette.²⁷⁶ According to Tebes, however, "Hurrian pottery was too far away from the Midianite pottery's geographical and chronological distribution to be a direct influence."²⁷⁷ Conversely, Hurrian enclaves known as *ḥōrî*, Ḥorites, may have existed in Edom during the Late Bronze Age.²⁷⁸ Interestingly enough, in the Edomite/Se'irite genealogies we are told that Timna' is the sister of Lotan the Ḥorite, a connection that is important for the reason that excavations at Timna' have produced the highest concentration of Midianite wares other than Qurayyah, their source. Thus Hurrian influence may have been much closer in time and location to Midianite ware than previously thought.²⁷⁹

Now turning to the decorations of this Midianite cup, despite its damaged status the preserved designs show parallels to both Aegean-style and Iranian wares of the

²⁷⁵ As told in the Amarna letters (EA 17–30).

²⁷⁶ Martha A. Morrison, "Nuzi," *ABD* IV, p. 1156.

²⁷⁷ Tebes 2007, p. 12; following E. A. Knauf, "Horites," *ABD* III, p. 288.

²⁷⁸ Gen 36:20–30. See George E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Tenth Generation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 158; see also William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Vol. 2A*, Anchor Yale Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 2006), p. 749; Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2013), p. 112. Against the Hurrian identification of *ḥōrî*, see Knauf, "Horites," *ABD* III, p. 288; R. de Vaux, "Les Ḥurrites de l'histoire et les Horites de la Bible," *RB* 44 (1967): pp. 481–503.

²⁷⁹ In the Amarna letters (EA 285–290) we also have late 14th century references to Abdi-Khepa, a Jerusalem chieftain. Although the first element of this compound name is clearly Semitic, the second element, Khepa(t) or Ḥeba(t), is the name of the Hurrian mother goddess. See K. van Bekkum, *From Conquest to Coexistence: Ideology and Antiquarian Intent in the Historiography of Israel's Settlement in Canaan*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 140.

second millennium BCE. The main decoration in the metope is a bird (an ostrich²⁸⁰), which is depicted standing up and facing left with outspread wings, a round head, one single-dotted eye, a very short beak, and a two-toed foot. This avian motif reappears on the opposite side of the cup. The top and bottom circumference of the vessel are decorated with horizontal geometric bands comprised of triglyphs and metopes filled with an oblique (or St. Andrew's) dotted cross motif (※), one of the hallmarks of Midianite ware. Interestingly enough, this dotted cross motif is found primarily on Midianite vessels decorated with birds. This same design also appears on examples of Late Cycladic ware from Akrotiri on Thera (Santorini), Cypriot White Slip (see fig. 9.3), and Cypro-Geometric ware.²⁸¹ What is most striking about the vessel from Akrotiri is the combination of the bird motif with the oblique dotted cross (see fig. 9.2), just like the Midianite ware, a factor that is suggestive of some level of Aegean influence on the designs and shape of this Midianite cup from Timna⁶.

As for the Iranian parallels, similarly decorated buff wares from burials at Giyan Tepe (Giyan II ware, 1600-1400 BCE)²⁸² in Iran's Lorestān province contain a combination of geometric motifs with ostrich-like birds (see fig. 8.5).²⁸³ The birds are usually depicted laterally, standing up, and facing right, yet some face left. Although the bird motif on the aforementioned Midianite cup is enclosed in a frieze by diagonal, latter-like lines, most of the Midianite jugs decorated with birds enclose them with paneled-net

²⁸⁰ Rothenberg and Glass, "Midianite Pottery" (1983), p. 99.

²⁸¹ The dotted cross motif seems to have been used infrequently. See, e.g., the bowl labeled Late Cypriote I in the collection at the Princeton University Art Museum.

²⁸² R. C. Henrickson, "Giyan I and II Reconsidered," *Mesopotamia* 18–19 (1983): pp. 195–220.

²⁸³ One such example can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Gallery 404; AN 51.25.25); and another at Walters Art Museum, Baltimore MD (AN 48.2395).

designs (see fig. 8.5),²⁸⁴ just as the birds on the Giyan II ware. In addition, some of these Iranian birds contain eye-like dots on their bodies, a feature that is found on multiple Midianite birds.²⁸⁵ Lastly, the fanned out tail feathers of birds on Midianite ware are also a feature of the Iranian parallels but not of the Aegean examples.

Further possible Aegean connections can be seen in another deep cup that was found at Timna' Site 2, but it is much different in shape than the one found in the Timna' sanctuary (see fig. 9.1; cf. fig. 8.1). The cup from Site 2 has a flat base and begins with slightly flaring walls that straighten about halfway up the cup. While the shape of this cup is nothing to remark about, the geometric designs on the vessel are what make the cup interesting and worthy of comparison to Aegean motifs. Rothenberg originally drew attention to the geometric motifs on this particular cup, but he seems to have underappreciated their full value:

A complex design is applied to [this cup], consisting of long narrow bichrome triangles with an 'eye' in the upper end, enclosed on three sides by dark brown double lines. A line of crosses and dots in brown, between two red lines, drawn in the upper part of the cup, adds a particular attraction to this design.²⁸⁶

When we look more closely, however, the long and narrow tapering bichrome triangles appear to be degenerate or schematic forms of the whorl/murex shell design that appears on many different examples of LH IIIA–C vessels, including the concave beaker-style cup.²⁸⁷ The dotted circle (the 'eye') at the top of the triangles may be the stylized aperture of the murex shell. Purple dye in the ancient world, most famously 'Tyrian purple' of

²⁸⁴ Rothenberg and Glass (1983), pp. 92, Fig. 7:4-5, 96 Fig. 11:1.

²⁸⁵ Rothenberg and Glass (1983), pp. 92, Fig. 7:3, 96, Fig. 11:1-2, 99.

²⁸⁶ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), p. 109.

²⁸⁷ During the LH IIIB, the whorl-murex shell design began to be portrayed vertically. For some variations of the whorl shell on Mycenaean pottery, see P. A. Mountjoy, "The LH IIIB and LH IIIC Early Pottery of the East Aegean–West Anatolian Interface," (2013): p. 580.

Phoenicia, derived from the mucosal secretions of certain species of the murex snail.²⁸⁸ In Judg 8:26 we are told that the Midianite kings wore purple garments (*bigdê hā'argāmān*), so perhaps the Midianites stained their robes dark purple with murex dye. If the biblical text preserves an authentic portrayal of Midianite royal garb and my interpretation of this motif is correct, we may have a convergence between the biblical text and archaeological data.²⁸⁹

Additionally, several sherds of Midianite ware with schematic human figures have been found in the southern Levant: one resembling a 'cyclops' or bird was found at Timna' in the Egyptian-Midianite shrine (see fig. 9.4),²⁹⁰ the same place as the concave beaker-cup discussed above; two other potsherds were discovered at Barqa el-Hetiye in the southern extremity of the Faynan copper mining district;²⁹¹ and the last sherd was found at Qurayyah,²⁹² the epicenter of the Midianite ceramic industry. A common theme of these sherds is that the human figures appear to have hair²⁹³ or are wearing headgear.²⁹⁴ As Tebes notes, "circle-shaped heads with 'hair' do not appear in the

²⁸⁸ For murex dye, see Deborah Ruscillo, "Reconstructing Murex Royal Purple and Biblical Blue in the Aegean," in: *Archaeomalacology: Mollusks in Former Environments of Human Behavior*, ed. Daniella E. Bar-Yosef Mayer (9th ICAZ Conference, Durham: 2002): pp. 99–106; R. R. Stieglitz, "The Minoan Origin of Tyrian Purple," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 57, no. 1 (Mar., 1994): pp. 46–54.

²⁸⁹ Mendenhall, "Qurayya and the Midianites," p. 137. In light of the purple garments worn by Midianite kings, Mendenhall writes: "It would be interesting if *murex* shell heaps were to be found along the shore of the Gulf of 'Aqaba, or the Red Sea (emphasis original)." Yet one need not necessarily comb the shores of 'Aqaba in search of murex shell middens; the evidence for their use may be on this cup in plain view.

²⁹⁰ Rothenberg, *Timna* (1972), pp. 155–162, pl. 101, fig. 47:4; Rothenberg and Glass, "Midianite Pottery," (1983) pp. 86–100, fig. 7:1 (see p. 92).

²⁹¹ Volkmar Fritz, "Vorbericht über die Grabungen in Barqa el-Hetiye im Gebiet von Fenan, Wadi el-Araba (Jordanien) 1990, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 110, no. 2 (1994): pp. 125–150, Abb. 12:13; Tafel 7:D; Andreas Hauptmann, *The Archaeo-metallurgy of Copper: Evidence from Faynan, Jordan, Natural Science in Archaeology* (Berlin: Springer, 2007), fig. 5:47; Tebes 2014, pp. 164–81.

²⁹² Parr, Harding, & Dayton (1970), pp. 229, 238, fig. 16:10; Tebes 2014, p. 166, fig. 4.

²⁹³ Fritz (1994): p. 148.

²⁹⁴ Tebes (2014): p. 164.

Levantine human figures of the Bronze and Iron Ages.”²⁹⁵ Dayton has observed a similarity between the Midianite sherds from Qurayyah and Timna‘, and a ‘Nuzu’ (i.e., Hurro-Mitannian) sherd discovered at Brak in the upper Khabur region of NE Syria depicting two longhaired men.²⁹⁶ Moreover, both Rothenberg and Glass describe the motif on the sherd found at the Timna‘ sanctuary (Site 200) as a “strange human figure” wearing “strange head-gear.”²⁹⁷ There are definitely similarities between the human figures on Midianite ware and the depictions of warriors on Late Bronze Age pottery originating from Cyprus and the Aegean (see fig. 9.5),²⁹⁸ and Philistine pottery of the southern Levant,²⁹⁹ especially with regard to heads with feathered hats (headgear) and bird-like beaks. And according to Yasur-Landau, during the LH IIIC feathered helmets, spiky headdresses, and ‘hedgehog’ helmets became extremely popular among warriors. In sum, it seems that Midianite ware alone among other pottery traditions from the southern Levant and the wider ANE shares this mode of representation of human figures with Hurro-Aegean decorative traditions.

Finally, a number of Midianite bowls discovered at both the Timna‘ sanctuary (Site 200)³⁰⁰ and Qurayyah³⁰¹ display the interlocking or running scroll motif very reminiscent of those found on Late Helladic I–III ware and Philistine pottery.³⁰² Without doubt, the linked scroll motif recalls waves on the surface of the sea.³⁰³

²⁹⁵ Tebes (2014): p. 168.

²⁹⁶ Dayton (1972), p. 32, pl. IV. For this original work, see M. E. L. Mallowan, “Excavations at Brak and Chagar Bazar,” *Iraq* IX (1947): pl. LXXVIII no. 12.

²⁹⁷ Rothenberg 1972, p. 155; Rothenberg and Glass (1983), p. 99.

²⁹⁸ Yasur-Landau (2010), pp. 151–53, 180–86, cf. “fishermen” or “oarsmen,” pp. 90–91; Tebes (2014): pp. 168, 171.

²⁹⁹ Stager and Mountjoy (2007): pp. 53–54, figs. 3, 5, 8–9; Tebes (2014), p. 171.

³⁰⁰ See Rothenberg and Glass (1983), p. 88, fig. 3.2, 4.

³⁰¹ Parr, Harding, & Dayton (1970), p. 231, fig. 15 (2); Dayton (1972), see Plate IV.

³⁰² According to Mountjoy (2003, p. 65), the “quirk” (= the scroll) came into the Mycenaean ceramic repertory from Crete in LH I-IIA, but it is even older, stretching back to the Early Minoan period. The

3.4 Discussion

At this juncture, while space does not permit a deeper foray into the sources of influence upon Midianite ware, some tentative conclusions may be reached: The ware's decorative and typological features seem to have been inspired by various sources of 'foreign' influence, some clearly coming from the Aegean, probably through Anatolia. While *Aegean* motifs predominate on Midianite ware and serve as the closest parallels with regard to chronological and geographical proximity, Hurro-Mitannian influence should not be ruled out. Hurrians were known to be present in Anatolia during the latter-half of the second millennium BCE, especially in Cilicia³⁰⁴—ancient Kizzuwadna—where the Denyen/Danuna of Ḫiyawa, a 'Mycenaeanized state' known in Assyrian sources as Quwe, are also situated.³⁰⁵

Furthermore, during the Late Bronze Age Hurrian groups with strong Anatolian connections may have been present as far south as Edom/Se'ir as the biblical references to ḥōrî, the Ḫorites, seem to indicate. While we must be cautious about the biblical text, within the genealogical background of the Edomites lay Hittite and Hivite/Horite elements.³⁰⁶ It has been suggested that Hebrew ḥiwwî, Ḫivvite, derives from Ḫiyawa (Ass. *Quwe* > *Huwe > Hebrew ḥiwwî), a Luwian speaking Neo-Hittite state in the Adana Plain that possibly derived from an older name for the Acheans/Mycenaeans:

quirk motif is attested from the Dodecanese (see M. Benzai, "Mycenaean Pottery Later than LH IIIA:1 from the Italian Excavations at Trianda on Rhodes," in: *Archaeology in the Dodecanese*, ed. Søren Dietz & Ioannis Papachristodoulou, The National Museum of Denmark Dept. of Near Eastern and Classical Antiquities [Copenhagen: 1988, pp. 39–54] to the Ionian Islands during the Late Helladic III period (C. Souyoudzoglou-Haywood, *The Ionian Islands in the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, 3000–800 BC* [Liverpool: University Press, 1999], p. 104); and according to Ben-Shlomo (2010, p. 160) quirks are one of the most common geometric motifs on Philistine pottery.

³⁰³ For maritime connotations on the Philistine pottery, see Ben-Shlomo (2010), p. 163.

³⁰⁴ Hurrian names appear in Cilicia. See Michael C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 37–44.

³⁰⁵ Ann E. Killebrew and Gunnar Lehmann, "The World of the Philistines and Other 'Sea Peoples,'" (2013): pp. 1–17.

³⁰⁶ Gen 36:2; cf. 36:20, 29.

Aḥḫiyawa.³⁰⁷ It will be recalled that Halpern has also suggested that Tubal-Cain, the “fashioner of every implement of bronze and iron,”³⁰⁸ is probably named after the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Tabal, a center of metallurgy in south-central Anatolia that flourished in the 9th–8th centuries BCE,³⁰⁹ although its origins probably go back much earlier. Interestingly enough, a Hurro-Hittite bilingual inscription discovered at Boghazköy (Hattuša) in central Anatolia contains the Hittite logogram for metal-smith, *lu SIMUG*, which is identified with the Hurrian word *ta-ba-li-iš*.³¹⁰ The underlying *tabal*, which is most likely cognate to Tubal, is exposed when the *-iš* suffix is removed.³¹¹ It would appear then that some element within Cain’s genealogy, and therefore the Qenites whom are a Midianite subgroup, can be traced to the development of metallurgy somewhere in Anatolia. Thus a combination of Hurro–Anatolian and Aegean influences on Midianite ware is not out of sync with the known historical circumstances of the Levant during the mid to late second millennium BCE.

We also know that various non-Semitic groups began to roam and settle in the Eastern Mediterranean basin during the Late Bronze Age, especially in search of metal resources and trade contacts.³¹² These groups were not just reaching the littoral of the

³⁰⁷ Billie Jean Collins, *The Hittites and Their World* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), p. 201; Itamar Singer, “The Hittites and the Bible Revisited, in A. M. Maeir and P. de Miroshedji (eds.), *I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times*, Vol 1: (Eisenbrauns: 2006), p. 735.

³⁰⁸ Gen 4:22.

³⁰⁹ Baruch Halpern, s.v. “Kenites,” *ABD*, Vol. 4, p. 17; see also Mendenhall, “Qurayya and the Midianites,” p. 140.

³¹⁰ Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2013), p. 190.

³¹¹ Richard S. Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1–11* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 26, 53. Ugaritic *tbl* ‘smith’ has the same Hurrian etymology (Dietrich and Loretz, “Hurritisch-ugaritisch-hebräisch *tbl* ‘Schmied,’” *Ugarit Forschungen* 22 (1990): pp. 87-88; and apparently the non-native Sumerian word *tabira* was borrowed from the Hurrian words *tab* ‘to melt,’ *tabiri* ‘metal melter,’ and *tabrenni* ‘(copper) smith,’ see Arnaud Fournet and Allan R. Bomhard, *The Indo-European Elements in Hurrian* (La Garenne Colombes / Charleston, 2010), pp. 2, 15.

³¹² Doniert Evelyn, “Materials and Industries,” in: *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, ed. E. H. Cline (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 387–404 (see p. 391)

Levant during the Late Bronze Age, but they actually penetrated far into its interior. In 1955, during construction efforts at the Amman airport in Jordan a Late Bronze Age *Quatrabau* temple was discovered accidentally. Excavations of this structure produced a rather large cache of Mycenaean pottery, approximately 50-60 vessels,³¹³ one of the most significant deposits of imported Aegean ceramics found in the Levant, and by far the largest in Transjordan.³¹⁴ Other finds included heirloom Egyptian vessels, Hyksos scarabs, gold-leaf jewelry, bronze weapons, cylinder seals, beads, bones, and other local pottery.³¹⁵ The cylinder-seals were of Syro-Mitannian style, one being of Kassite origin and bearing a cuneiform inscription dating to the early Late Bronze Age.³¹⁶ Relatedly, a bead inscribed with cuneiform from the Kassite period turned up in a previous excavation.³¹⁷ The temple architecture itself and foundation trench can be traced to Mesopotamia where the non-Semitic Kassites exercised political hegemony during the Late Bronze Age.³¹⁸ Additionally, due to the large amount of adult human bones found in the structure, Herr suggests that it functioned as a crematorium and associates it with an

³¹³ V. Hankey, "A Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman: 1. The Aegean Pottery," *Levant* 6 (1974): pp. 131-159.

³¹⁴ Gert Jan van Wijngaarden, *The Use and Appreciation of Mycenaean Pottery in the Levant, Cyprus, and Italy* (Ca. 1600-1200 BC) (Amsterdam University Press: 2002).

³¹⁵ V. Hankey, "A Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman Airport: Small Finds and Pottery Discovered in 1955," in S. Bourke and J.P. Descoeudres (eds.), *Trade, Contacts, and the Movement of Peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean, Studies in Honour of J. Basil Hennessy* (Sydney: Meditarch, 1995), pp. 169-185.

³¹⁶ W. A. Ward, "Cylinders and Scarabs from a Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 8/ 9 (1964): pp. 47-55; G. W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), p. 265.

³¹⁷ L. G. Herr, "The Amman Airport Structure and the Geopolitics of Ancient Transjordan," *BA* 46, no. 4 (1983): pp. 223-229 (see pp. 227). Hankey (1995, p. 174) says that the cylinder seal was described as a bead.

³¹⁸ Herr (1983), p. 227; E. F. Campbell Jr. and G. E. Wright, "Tribal League Shrines in Amman and Shechem," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 32, no. 4 (1969): pp. 104-116 (see 111).

Indo-European and possibly Hittite cultural sphere since cremation was not a Semitic practice.³¹⁹

But what makes this temple and its rich finds most relevant to our discussion is that among its small assemblage of local pottery were several decorated Midianite bowls and sherds³²⁰ of the 13th century BCE. In view of the aforementioned Hurro-Anatolian/Aegean decorative motifs and shapes within the corpus of Midianite ware, and furthermore, in light of the non-Semitic character of the Amman airport temple with its rich confluence of imported objects and Midianite ware, the evidence seems to confirm that the people who both manufactured and consumed the Midianite ware had strong cultural connections to the Aegean, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia. The temple's connection to the Kassites, a mysterious Hurrian-like people originally from the Zagros Mountains of Lorestān province, Iran,³²¹ is also of particular interest. Multiple biblical references connected with Midian refer to *Kūšān*³²² or *Kūš/Kūšūt*,³²³ and the Kassites are known as *Ka-aš-šū* and *Ku-uš-šu* in various Akkadian documents.³²⁴

In order to tie all of the evidence I've presented here together, Ahlström's suggestion that during the LB II people from the north migrated south to Transjordan should be seen alongside Herr's argument that an Indo-European population, perhaps Hittites, gained control of this region of Transjordan during the 14th century BCE after

³¹⁹ L. G. Herr, "Excavations of a Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman, 1976," in *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 48 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983); for argument of human sacrifice, see J. Basil Hennessy, "Thirteenth Century BC Temple of Human Sacrifice at Amman," in E. Gubel and E. Lipiński (eds.), *Studia Phoenicia 3: Phoenicia and Its Neighbors* (Leuven: Peeters, 1985), pp. 85-104.

³²⁰ Hankey (1995), p. 182, Fig. 11, pl. 14:4; Rothenberg and Glass (1983), p. 85; Tebes (2007): p. 19.

³²¹ Arnaud Fournet, "The Kassite Language in a Comparative Perspective with Hurrian and Urartean," *The Macro-Comparative Journal* 2, no. 1 (2011): pp. 1-19. However, the origin of the Kassites is still debated.

³²² Hab 3:7 || *midyān*. W. F. Albright, *ARI*, p. 205, n. 49; Cross, *CMHE*, p. 204.

³²³ Num 12:1, a story connected with Moses' wife who is a Midianite (cf. Exod 2:16-21).

³²⁴ Fournet, "The Kassite Language," p. 3.

their conflict with Egypt. However, I would amend Herr's suggestion to include Hurro-Mitannian and/or Kassite elements. In addition, Dayton's earlier proposal that a trade route linked the E Mediterranean basin with the Hijaz region, including Qurayyah, and stretched from Amman to the north also adds to this picture. In his opinion, these links were effected through the kingdom of Mitanni to the north Syrian coast and various other trading ports.³²⁵ Thus it seems that this influx of various non-Semitic peoples into the southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age left a major imprint on the Midianite ceramic tradition of NW Arabia and Edom.

³²⁵ Dayton, "Midianite and Edomite Pottery," p. 32.

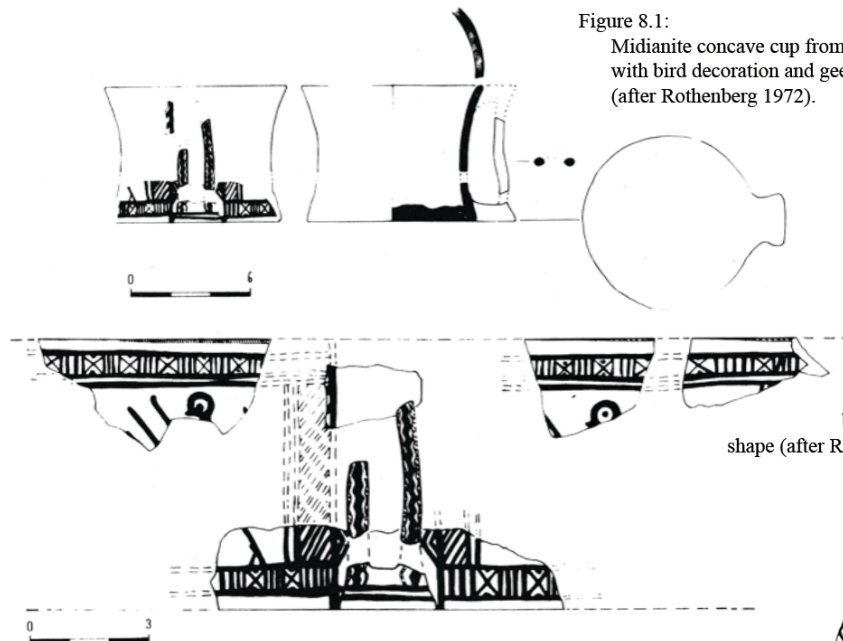


Figure 8.1:
Midianite concave cup from Timna^c
with bird decoration and geometric motifs.
(after Rothenberg 1972).

Figure 8.4:
Below, Midianite jug with
bird decoration and similar
shape (after Rothenberg and Glass 1983).



Figure 8.2:
Late Helladic III concave cups, FS 226
(after Mountjoy 1993; Dickinson 1994).



Figure 8.5:
Below (right), jug decorated
with an ostrich-like bird flanked
by net-pattern, from Giyan
Tepe II, Luristan province, Iran
(Walters Art Museum,
Baltimore, MD).



Figure 8.3:
Haftavan VIB "Urmia Ware" beakers
(after Edwards 1981).



Figure 8.6:
Midianite sherds of a juglet from Timna^c
depicting a bird flanked by a net pattern
(after Rothenberg and Glass 1983).

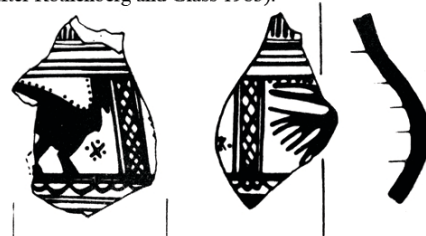


Figure 9.1:

Left, Midianite cup from Timna^c with murex/whorl shell design and dotted cross (after Rothenberg 1972); Cf. center and right, various whorl shell designs on Late Helladic wares (after Mountjoy 2013)

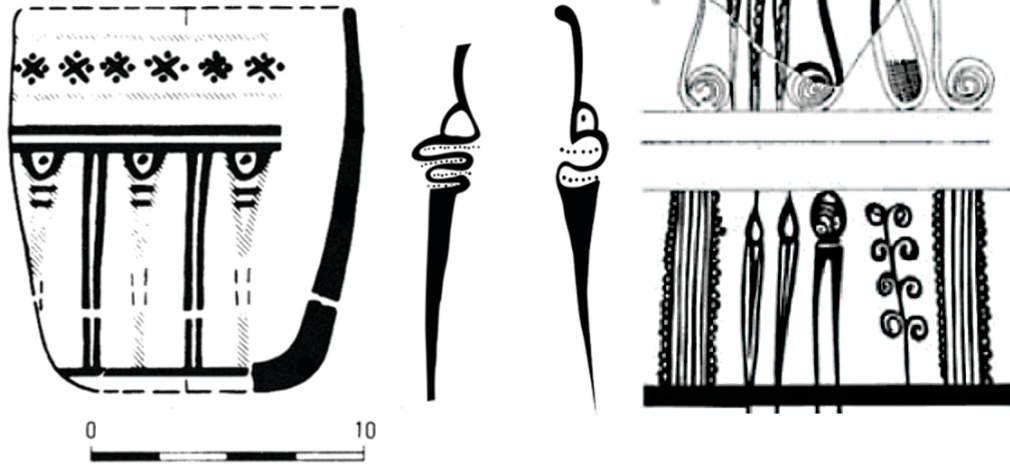


Figure 9.2:

Below, bird motif with oblique dotted cross on Late Cycladic vessel from Akrotiri.



Figure 9.3:

Below, Cypriot 'milk bowl' with similar dotted cross motif.

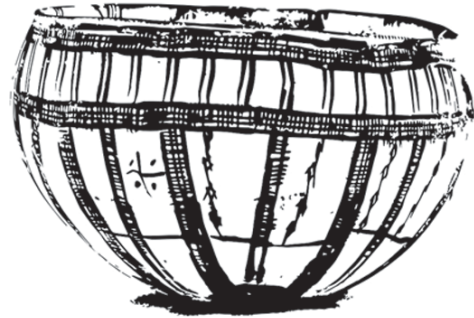


Figure 9.4:

Left, human figure from Midianite sherd from Timna^c (after Rothenberg 1972).

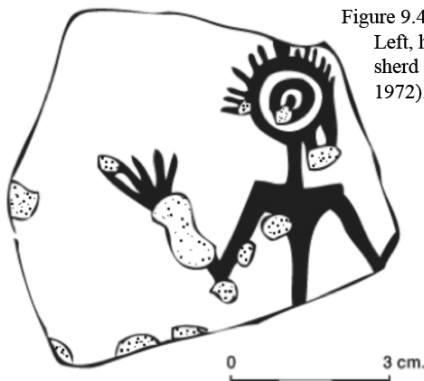


Figure 9.5:

Right, warrior from Kynos. Note the spiky headgear and large cyclops-like eye. (after Dakoronia and Mpougia 1999)



CONCLUSION

In our journey we have come a long way. We began in Chapter 1 by examining the high concentration of ‘Midianite’ ware or ‘Qurayyah Painted Ware’ at archaeometallurgical sites in or near the Wadi ‘Arabah. Although in the past commentators have questioned the association of this decorated ware with the Midianites of the Hebrew Bible, there is powerful evidence suggesting that we no longer need to be so cautious. Firstly, we know that the ware was manufactured at or near Qurayyah in NW Arabia, a region considered to be the heartland or ‘home-base’ of the Midianites of the Hebrew Bible. Secondly, the prolific occurrence of the Qurayyah ware at nearly every smelting camp in the Timna‘ Valley and its close association with the metallurgical installations there confirms that the consumers of the ware were intimately connected to extractive copper metallurgy. Pots do not equal people, but if any biblical group fits the ware’s geographical distribution as well as its floruit in the 13th –12th centuries BCE, it would be the Qenites, a guild of itinerant Midianite metalworkers who seem to be closely aligned with the Amaleqites of the Negeb. Amaleq’s direct link to Timna‘ through his genealogy in Genesis 36 is not some arbitrary notice either. On some level genealogies are symbolic and serve some ideological purpose, but Amaleq’s close relationship to the Midianites-Qenites and to one of the largest copper bearing sites in the southern Levant is noteworthy.

Furthermore, while previous researchers such as Juan Tebes have suggested exchange mechanisms of some kind for the broad diffusion of Midianite wares in the

southern Levant, gift exchange and trade are not adequate models for explaining why the ware occurs in its highest concentration at archaeometallurgical sites like Timna'. This is not to suggest that reciprocity and trade played no role whatsoever in the ware's outward distribution from Qurayyah, but commercial activity directly related to itinerant metalworking and incense trade seems to be the main mode of the ware's distribution. Therefore I strongly support the opinion that Rothenberg's original hypothesis was correct: the itinerant Midianite metalworkers at Timna' carried their decorated wares from Qurayyah to Timna' to use them in the metallurgical operations. So in this case the producers of the ware were very closely related to those who consumed it at Timna' and surrounding archaeometallurgical sites, yet more research needs to be conducted at Qurayyah in order to fully answer the question of Midianite ethnicity. In sum, the ware's wide distribution can be attributed to the movements of an itinerant people known for their metalworking and caravaneering.

Admittedly, one of the limitations of this study is that we do not possess any extra-biblical proof for the existence of the 'Midianites' or the 'Qenites' during the Late Bronze or early Iron I periods; however, the archaeological data from Timna' and related archaeometallurgical sites speaks much louder than the sheer silence of the epigraphic evidence on these nomadic groups. It will be recalled that Late Bronze Age Egyptian records refer to the Shasu of Se'ir and the Shasu of *Yhw3* in the general region of Edom and N. Sinai. Without doubt, the Midianites-Qenites and the Amaleqites are to be located among these tent-dwelling Shasu nomads.

Moreover, just like their Midianite predecessors and neighbors the earliest 'Edomites' were also entrenched in extractive copper metallurgy. Edomite sites such as

Kh. en-Naḥas in the Faynan copper mining district have even produced Midianite sherds dating to the Iron II. Since the Midianites are thought to have disappeared as a socio-political entity during the Iron I period and it was also precisely during this time, according to Levy's research, that the Edomite polity began to develop, I would suggest that the Midianites be viewed, more or less, as proto-Edomites. Culturally speaking, both Edom and Midian appear to be cut from the same cloth. It is not surprising that Glueck originally mistook the Midianite ware for Edomite pottery. Geographically the wares overlapped, and their geometric decorations were similar.³²⁶ 'Negebite' ware is also found alongside Midianite and Edomite wares in a very similar pattern of distribution, a feature that is important because it shows continuity and cultural connections existed between Edom and Midian.³²⁷ In sum, due to the shifting political and socio-economic systems of the Iron I period the Midianite league was largely absorbed into the Edomite chiefdom. Whether this was due to conflict (Gen 36:35), the loss or interruption of Midian's monopoly over caravan trade (Judges 5),³²⁸ or other processes, is not known with any certainty. At the same time Edom's neighbor 'Israel' was beginning to develop in the Canaanite hill-country. In stride with this development the biblical account suggests that some faction of the early Midianite-Qenite tribes had migrated much

³²⁶ For the decorated Edomite pottery from Busayra and its distribution, see Piotr Bienkowski, "Edom During the Iron Age II Period," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000–332 BCE*, edited by Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 782–794, Fig. 52.4.

³²⁷ Even as late as Jeremiah's time the known territory of Midian and Edom seem to overlap: "Flee, turn back, get down low, inhabitants of Dedan! For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time when I punish him" (Jer. 49:8). Dedan has been identified with the al-'Ula oasis (Meda'in Salih) in NW Arabia, located approx. 300 km SE of Qurayyah and 110 km SW of Tayma'. The desert oasis of Tayma' has also produced Midianite ware and similarly decorated pottery.

³²⁸ Schloen, J. D. "Caravans, Kenites, and *Casus Belli*: Enmity and Alliance in the Song of Deborah," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993): pp. 18–38.

further north into Canaan than the remainder of the groups who remained in the south (Judg 1:16; 4:11).

Much of the conversation in Chapter 2 about the biblical tabernacle or tent of meeting surrounded the discovery of the Midianite tented-shrine at Timna'. It cannot be overstated that nothing remotely like it has ever been discovered in the archaeological record of ancient Israel. Certainly other tents existed in the history of ancient Israel and the wider ancient Near East, but the tent at Timna' is quite special because of its unique historical context and the level of preservation of the archaeological material. For reasons well understood, when Rothenberg initially discovered the Midianite tent-shrine at Timna' it occurred to him that it could be related to the actual desert tent-shrine described in the biblical tradition, a tent closely connected with Moses' Midianite father-in-law, Jethro. The 'crown jewel' of this tent-shrine was a small bronze snake figurine with a gilded head found near the naos, an object that recalls the Neḥushtan made by Moses in the wilderness (Num 21:8–9). Rothenberg had also uncovered a large amount of decorated Midianite ware in conjunction with a Pharaonic Egyptian enterprise dating to the 19th Dynasty, the general time period of the Israelite exodus from Egypt.

Not only does the Midianite–Egyptian presence at Timna' correspond with the general consensus on the chronology of the exodus, but the geographic position of Timna' also fits nicely with the region of the wilderness 'wanderings' and the mountain of the theophany tradition, that is, in the easternmost Sinai, the southernmost Negeb—the land of Edom || Se'ir || Paran || Teiman (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4–5; Hab 3:3–7)—all of which may have been part of the Midianite cultural sphere during the Late Bronze Age. These 'wanderings' described in the biblical account probably derive from ancient yet

disjointed memories of itinerant Shasu tribes frequenting the stop-over stations along the southern caravan routes connected with incense and metal trade. In direct relation to the industrial metalworking carried out by these people, the profuse exhaust billowing from the array of smelting furnaces ablaze within the smelting camps of Timna‘ Valley may have supplied the hyperbolic framework for both the Sinai-Horeb theophany and the closely related pillar of cloud connected with the sacred desert tent-shrine of proto-Israel. It is not mere coincidence that the Sinai theophany is described in terms of an incandescent ‘smelting furnace,’ a *kībšān* (Exod 19:18). Sinai-Horeb can then be interpreted as Yahweh’s forge much like the Greek god Hephaestus.³²⁹ In this regard, before Yahweh came to be worshiped within the borders of Canaan-proper he may have been a god of fire and metallurgy, a Midianite-Qenite smith god whose cult largely took shape at Timna‘.

Moreover, the eleven-day journey by way of Mount Se‘ir from Horeb to Qadesh Barnea‘ (= Tell el-Qudeirat³) in Deut 1:2 corresponds extremely well with the geographic location of Timna‘ in the southern ‘Arabah. The distance lying between ‘Ein el-Qudeirat and Timna‘ is less than 90 miles (see fig. 3), which breaks down to a leisurely average of just over eight miles per day.³³⁰ Donkeys would have served as the beasts of burden for

³²⁹ The cult of Hephaestus was originally based on Lemnos, an island in the NE Aegean, but he is said to have also dwelled on Mount Aetna where his volcanic forge was located. For Hephaestus in Greek mythology, see François Frontisi, “Gods and Artisans: Hephaestus, Athena, Daedalus,” in *Greek and Egyptian Mythologies*, ed. Yves Bonnefoy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): pp. 84–90. Although in the past I have argued that Yahweh may have originally been a god of volcanoes (Dunn, “A God of Volcanoes,” *JSOT* 38.4 [2014]), I am growing more skeptical of this connection. Volcanic imagery may certainly have had some influence on the description of the theophany, but I see metallurgy as a more direct influence on the Sinai traditions associated with a Midianite-Qenite tribe of smiths with whom Moses is associated.

³³⁰ Cf. Hoffmier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, pp. 119–124, who proposes a distance of 165–220 miles for the distance between Qadesh and Sinai (= Horeb) by using a minimum formula of 15 miles of travel per day. However, this methodology has its inherent flaws. Hoffmier is forcing anthropological data to fit his scheme. There is no certainty that these people used camels as pack animals. Donkeys move at a slower pace than camels and require more water, food, and frequent stops. Furthermore, just because 15 miles per

the Shasu nomads transporting incense, spices, copper, gold, decorated ceramics such as the Midianite ware, and various other goods along the inhospitable desert highways.³³¹ Bearing a full load the ass is capable of traveling between 2 to 2.5 miles per hour for a maximum distance of 15 miles per day,³³² so this puts Timna' well within the range of the eleven-day journey from Horeb to Qadesh—if, of course, the precise location of the mountain was known to the writer,³³³ and if Qadesh can be identified with 'Ein el-Qudeirat in the first place.³³⁴ Although we must approach any itinerary supplied in the Hebrew Bible with caution, it is worth noting that two nearly complete Midianite vessels and 18 body sherds have been discovered at 'Ein el-Qudeirat from the possible 12th century BCE occupation of the site,³³⁵ a datum that may highlight an existing cultural and

day was possible does not necessitate that the group traveled that far. They may have broken 15 miles into two days of travel (c. 8 miles each day). Travel with herd animals would have slowed their pace considerably.

³³¹ W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940), p. 257.

³³² Peter R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries: The Archaeological Evidence* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), p. 12; Anatoly M. Khazanov, "Specific Characteristics of Chalcolithic and Bronze Age Pastoralism in the Near East," in *Nomads, Tribes, and the State in the Ancient Near East: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, Oriental Institute Seminars 5, ed. J. Szuchman (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2009), p. 123.

³³³ We are led to believe that the location of Horeb was known up until the monarchy, during the time of Elijah's pilgrimage to the sacred mountain (1 Kgs 19:8). The 40 days and 40 nights it takes Elijah to reach Horeb is clearly symbolic and mirrors Moses' 40 days on the mountain and Israel's 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

³³⁴ For a different but nearby location of Qadesh-Barnea', see Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary*, p. 106; Henry C. Trumbull, *Kadesh-Barnea: Its Importance and Probable Site* (New York: Scribner, 1884); see also S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 5–6. All of the above are in favor of 'Ain Qadish as Qadesh Barnea'.

³³⁵ Singer-Avitz, "The Earliest Settlement at Kadesh Barnea," *Tel Aviv* 35 (2004): pp. 73–81; Israel Finkelstein, "Kadesh Barnea: A Reevaluation of Its Archaeology and History," *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): pp. 111–125. High precision radiocarbon dates have also shown a pre-Iron IIA occupation of the site (substratum 4c), placing it some time in the 11th or 12th century BCE. See also Tebes, "Iron Age Midianite Pottery," p. 16. Moreover, a large amount of Negebite ware—the ceramic type frequently found alongside Midianite ware and one that Rothenberg linked with the Amaleqites—has also turned up at 'Ein el-Qudeirat in Iron IIA contexts (10th century BCE), but apparently none has yet been found in the Iron I (= substratum 4c). Yet the Negebite wares are notoriously hard to date because they are not a 'diagnostic' type used for dating relative ceramic finds. Interestingly enough, the Amaleqites who are one of the groups tightly associated with the Midianites–Qenites in various biblical accounts are also linked to Qadesh (= Qadesh-Barnea' = 'Ein el-Qudeirat?), which is called 'Ein Mishpat, the 'spring of judgment' (Gen 14:7). The theme of judgment around a water hole or spring is also seen with the episode of Massah and/or Meribah (Exod

chronological link between this desert oasis and Timna' to its southeast. However, the identification of 'Ein el-Qudeirat as Qadesh-Barnea' is still far from settled. It is true that the spring there supplies a plentiful amount of water, but proving that the Midianite ware belongs to the 12th century BCE substratum 4c occupation is difficult. As a further matter, Singer-Avitz' contention that 'Ein el-Qudeirat "served as a way station on the copper trade route leading to the Mediterranean coast"³³⁶ is not substantiated by the archaeological data. In fact, no evidence of copper-working or copper objects dating from the Iron Age I have been found at 'Ein el-Qudeirat that would suggest a direct connection to the metalworking industry at Timna' or Kh. en-Naḥas.

At this juncture I would then like to suggest an alternative for the site of Qadesh Barnea': Tel Masos, one of the largest sites in the Beer-sheba' Valley.³³⁷ Tel Masos (*Tell el-Meshash*) sits near the border of Judah and Edom and exhibits a lacuna in Late Bronze Age occupation, but settlement activity resumes during the early Iron I period (c. 1200 BCE, Stratum III).³³⁸ Multiple water wells and natural springs in the vicinity of the site supplied the earliest inhabitants of Tel Masos with water on a year-round basis. The earliest Iron I settlement of Stratum III was expanded and reached its peak in Stratum II

17:1–7; Num 20:1–13; Deut 32:51; 33:8). Immediately following the quarrel at Massah and Meribah in Exod 17:1–7 Amaleq comes and fights against Israel in the vicinity of Horeb (17:8–16).

³³⁶ Singer-Avitz, "Kadesh Barnea," pp. 73, 79.

³³⁷ Noth (*Pentateuchal Traditions*, p. 133) and Kempinski ("Tel Masos," pp. 31–32) have identified Tel Masos as Hormah (see also Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites?*, pp. 78–79), but I earlier suggested in Chapter 1 that Tel Masos could be related to 'ir 'āmālēq 'city of Amaleq' of 1 Sam 15:5. The identification of Tel Masos with Qadesh does not necessarily contradict this connection because the Amaleqites are connected with Qadesh in Gen 14:7. In addition, the 'city of Amaleq' is not even the real name of the city, but more of a nickname. Interestingly enough, Stratum II was destroyed some time in the latter half of the 11th century BCE, a time period corresponding to Saul's destruction of 'ir 'āmālēq in 1 Sam 15:5–9. In the biblical account Saul's army also captures the Amaleqite king, Agag, and the spoils that are taken include cattle (15:9). The animal remains recovered from Tel Masos III-II indicate that the early inhabitants herded cattle for a livelihood, and the construction of a highly developed complex of buildings near the main entrance of the site suggests the existence of a central government (Kempinski, pp. 36–37). So here we have several points of contact between the biblical narrative and the archaeological picture of Tel Masos.

³³⁸ Kempinski, "Tel Masos," pp. 29–37.

(c. 1150–1050 BCE). Four-room houses are the basic domestic unit of Stratum II and the center of the settlement is enclosed by a circular belt of buildings on the edge of the tell. Following the work of Finkelstein, Kempinski remarks that, “this method of fortification arose from early forms of defense. It is also found in nomadic camps, which tend to be encircled by a chain of tents, protecting the center of the camp.”³³⁹ Thus the architectural layout of the Iron I settlement at Tel Masos may reflect the ‘resedentarization’ of the Shasu nomads from the southland. Furthermore, the site is situated at the confluence of several major caravan routes leading NW toward Beer-sheba’, N toward Hebron, NE toward ‘Arad, and SE toward the ‘Arabah. It will be recalled from Chapter 1 that Midianite and Negebite sherds were found in House 314 (Area H = Stratum II) at Tel Masos, and both of these wares are closely associated with the major copper producing sites of the ‘Arabah. In fact, evidence of cultic activity connected with metalworking was found in this building as well as several other areas at Tel Masos (Areas A and C). The chemical analysis of these metal objects proves that the copper derived from Timna’ or Kh. en-Naḥas. So could Tel Masos be Qadesh, one of the earliest settlements of the proto-Israelites? Just as ‘Ein el-Qudeirat fit within the 11 days journey from Horeb to Qadesh, Tel Masos also fits nicely the distance given by the biblical text³⁴⁰ and it additionally sits at the gateway to Hebron in the Judean hills and the Wadi Eshkol just to the north. Tel Masos’ strategic location is important because it further corresponds to the position of Qadesh in the Spies account in Num 13:26, a notice which seems to place it at

³³⁹ Kempinski, “Tel Masos,” p. 35. For a discussion on the possible nomadic origin of the circular enclosure of buildings around the perimeter of Iron I ‘Israelite’ settlements, see Israel Finkelstein, *Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988). For a critique of Finkelstein’s theories, see Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites?*, pp. 162–165.

³⁴⁰ Admittedly, a certain level of reliance is placed on the identification of Sinai-Horeb with Timna’. Perhaps we will never know the location of the mountain of the theophany, but as I have pointed out numerous elements of metalworking underlie the biblical account. The Midianite tent discovered at Timna’ in an archaeometallurgical context seems very convincing to me.

a comfortable distance south of Hebron in the wilderness of Paran (cf. Numbers 20).³⁴¹

The distance lying between Tel Masos and Hebron is less than 25 miles, whereas the distance separating 'Ein el-Qudeirat and the Judean Hills is more than twice that. For all of these reasons I would suggest that instead of 'Ein el-Qudeirat Qadesh-Barnea' may be identified with Tel Masos, an important way station on the copper trade route leading from the copper-mining areas of Timna' to southern Judah and beyond.

In regard to the contacts between the biblical account and the archaeological discoveries at Timna', unfortunately no scholar has succeeded in demonstrating that these connections were more than the vacuous imaginings of Rothenberg. Rothenberg himself was not a formally trained biblical exegete, and although he realized some powerful connections he did not have the tools to explore them on a more meaningful level. Even Homan, whose work is dedicated to the Tabernacle and other tents in the ancient Near East, allots only a page's worth of discussion to the Midianite tent-shrine at Timna'. However, in this laconic treatment Homan does venture to note a few parallels with the biblical Tabernacle, but he does not look outside of the Priestly source for this comparison. In fact, Homan does not even differentiate between the tent in E and the tent

³⁴¹ The placement of Qadesh in Paran is found in P (Num 13:26), while the references to Hebron and the Negeb are apparently J (13:22). See Friedman, *The Bible With Sources Revealed*, pp. 262–263; see also Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, pp. 130–136. So while this geographic location of Qadesh in the Spies story may be a product of the Redactor, it seems that both P and J may have originally agreed on the geographical position of Qadesh—that is, south of Hebron and located in the Negeb where the Amaleqites dwell. This makes sense because both P and J are 'southern' sources so they were largely concerned with the territory around Judah. Moreover, in the bizarre account found in Genesis 14 Qadesh (= 'Ein Mishpat) is seemingly located near El-Paran, by the wilderness (14:6–7), a feature that corresponds to the link between Paran and Qadesh in Num 13:26. The mention of Ḥaṣaṣon-tamar (14:7) in the same breath suggests a location west of the Dead Sea for Qadesh since the former is identified with 'Ein-gedi (2 Chron 20:2), east of Hebron near the Dead Sea. Strikingly, there are a large number of parallels between the Spies story of Numbers 13–14 and the narrative account of Genesis 14. For example, both of these narrative accounts mention Paran, Qadesh, Eshkol, the Amorites, the Amaleqites, Hebron, or Mamre (which is in or very close to Hebron). In addition, according to E Qadesh was in the Negeb near Shur (Gen 20:1), and we are told that Saul smote the Amaleqites from Havilah to Shur (1 Sam 15:7), and it will be recalled that the Amaleqites are residents of Qadesh (Gen 14:7).

in P. In this regard my work on the tent-shrine at Timna⁶ is important for several reasons. Although I am not the first commentator to suggest that the rustic and vacant tent in E is more authentic than P's lavish version, I am the first to argue that the Midianite tent-shrine at Timna⁶ may have been the exact prototype of the tent of meeting mentioned only a handful of times in E. This is also not to say that P's tent was altogether a late retrojection, but it should be recognized that the ancient historical kernel of the desert tent-shrine underlying the Jerusalemite version, if that is even the case, was eclipsed by P's priority for opulence. P on the other hand may have been describing a tent-shrine during his time, not an earlier one. P's antipathy toward Midian also distances the institution of Israel's earliest tent-shrine from the people it may have originally belonged—the Midianites. In an ironic twist, here P narrates the assassination of an Israelite man and a Midianite woman inside the *qūbbāh* of the sacred tent (Num 25:6–17), the tent of meeting. And with P's final war against Midian (Numbers 31) any Midianite connection to early Israel is annihilated before the people even reach the border of Canaan.

Polemic against Midian aside, the high concentration of Midianite votive ware in a tent-shrine marked by a high-level of animal sacrifice, *maṣṣēbôt*, sacrificial basins, and metallurgy may reflect the Midianite-Qenite involvement with the Israelites at Timna⁶. But what do I mean when I use the term 'Israelite'? Here I use the term loosely, and I certainly do not envision the Israel of the twelve-tribe league but rather as a network of Shasu tribes exploiting the rich copper deposits of the Wadi 'Arabah and bringing spices and plant resins north along the 'incense road.' Among these proto-Israelite Shasu tribes we can confidently locate the Midianites, Qenites, and the Amaleqites. Eventually, it

seems that some of the constituents of this southern tribal league settled down and integrated into the growing population of the central hill-country during the 13th and 12th centuries BCE. Once again, this may be reflected in the biblical account about the separation of Heber the Qenite (Judg 4:11). Interestingly enough, the place where Heber pitches his tent is located in the far north near Qedesh-Naphtali in the hill country, not too distant from Dan. Without doubt, the settlement of Canaan during the end of the Late Bronze Age and early Iron I was a complicated process that requires an equally complex model to explain. Thus the Midianite-Qenite hypothesis and the ‘settling down’ of the Shasu bedouin cannot alone account for the demographic changes attested in the highlands during the early Iron I period.

Finally, Chapter 3 of this thesis was an inquiry into the origin of the seemingly foreign motifs found on Midianite ware. While a few commentators in the past had noted that these decorations were similar to those of Hurrian pottery from Nuzi, other scholars skeptical of this correlation looked instead to the Aegean or Bichrome wares for the possible sources of inspiration behind Midianite ware. While it is clear that Mycenaean/Aegean elements influenced the Midianite decorations to some degree, the Hurrian connections are not as problematic when the biblical report of the Horites residing in Se’ir / Edom is taken seriously. This allochthonous Hurrian influx into the southern Levant is buttressed by New Kingdom references to ‘the land of Hurru’ (*h-r*), an area associated with the Shasu bedouin of the hill country and Transjordanian Uplands during the time of Seti I.³⁴² The growing Hurrian population in the Levant is further

³⁴² Meindert Dijkstra, “Origins of Israel Between History and Ideology,” in *Between Evidence and Ideology: Essays on the History of Ancient Israel Read at the Joint Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study and the Oud Testamentisch Werkgezelschap Lincoln, July 2009*, ed. B. Becking and L. L. Grabbe (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 52.

supported by the appearance of Hurrian names such as the aforementioned Abdi-Ḫepa(t) of Jerusalem. Shamgar ben 'Anat, the judge of Israel who is associated with Ja'el the Qenite (Judg 3:31; 5:6) possesses a Hurro-Semitic name. The Hurrian name *ši-mi-ga-ri*, “[the god] Shimig has given,” is attested at Nuzi.³⁴³ Within the Edomite genealogy we can locate several non-Semitic elements, such as the Hittite and Ḫivvite (or Ḫorite) wives of Esau. Even Amaleq's mother Timna' is a daughter of Se'ir the Ḫorite, i.e., she is Hurrian. Furthermore, Cain's genealogy connects Tubal-Cain with Tabal in south-central Anatolia, as well as Hurrian terminology for metalworking (*tab* “to melt”). That so many of these genealogical connections exist is suggestive of some level of historical reality underlying the non-Semitic elements found within the Edomite and Qenite genealogies. The existence of Hurro-Mitannian enclaves within the vicinity of Timna' in the southern 'Arabah may account for the foreign influence seen on Midianite ware. Thus it would follow, if my interpretation is correct, that Hurrian-related groups penetrated as far south as Qurayyah in NW Arabia, the production-center of the Midianite ceramics. Future research at Qurayyah will hopefully shed light on the origin of Midianite culture and its foreign interconnections.

Moreover, it will be recalled that Midianite ware was discovered further north at the Amman airport temple in southern Transjordan. In light of the international character of this Late Bronze Age temple, with its large cache of Mycenaean pottery and strong Syro-Mitannian connections, Dayton thought that Transjordanian trade links were carried out under the auspices of the Mitannian kingdom. Perhaps there is some merit to this statement, since at its zenith the kingdom of Mitanni stretched from Kizzuwadna (Cilicia)

³⁴³ See F. Charles Fensham, “*Shamgar ben 'Anath*,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 3 (1961): pp. 197–198; See also Roberg G. Boling, “*Shamgar*,” in *ABD* 5: pp. 1155–1156. The name Sisera' is also of foreign origin. Like Shamgar, Sisera' is also connected to Ja'el the Qenite.

in the west to Nuzi in the east. During this same period the mysterious Kassites with their Hurrian-like language³⁴⁴ had gained control of southern Mesopotamia, a time when trade relations between Mitanni and Kassite-ruled Babylonia appear to have flourished. The appearance of Kassite and Syro-Mitannian material culture at the Amman airport temple may support these good relations. Among this confluence of foreign connections the appearance of Midianite ware is significant. Midian's genealogical link to Abraham (Gen 25:1–2) traces some aspect of Midianite culture to Ur in southern Mesopotamia³⁴⁵ (Gen 11:31), which, as noted above, was under Kassite control from the end of the Middle Bronze II through the end of the Late Bronze Age. Yet Abraham is also connected with Harran in southern Anatolia, which was part of the kingdom of Mitanni. So to a large degree the biblical tradents were aware of some cultural connections to these regions, however remote these memories may have been. Midian, being a son of Abraham, is therefore linked genealogically with the people of the northeast—nomads from Hurrian country—groups who had migrated to Canaan in search of new frontiers and mineral resources, *'to a land whose rocks were iron and from whose hills copper could be mined.'* Here I would like to conclude with a quote from Joseph Blenkinsopp:

It should not be necessary to apologize for presenting these considerations about religious and ethnic origins as a hypothesis. In a sense, all our knowledge of the past is hypothetical and probabilistic, and the task of the historian is always that of coming up with a better hypothesis, one which provides a more complete and adequate explanation of the complex of data available than any other currently on offer. What therefore I have tried to do in this study is not just elevate a mere possibility... into a serious probability,

³⁴⁴ Fournet, "The Kassite Language," pp. 3–4, 18. Fournet notes that the Kassite language has clear connections to Hurro-Urartian. In fact, Hurrian and Kassite are so close that they can be used to shed light on the other language, but Fournet remarks that it is not clear if Kassite should be considered a separate language or as a dialect of Hurrian. In this second case, Kassite appears to be a phonetically archaic form of Hurrian.

³⁴⁵ Some, however, have suggested 'Ur-Kasdim was Urkesh, a Hurro-Mitannian city located in NE Syria in the foothills of the Taurus Mountains. See Patricia Berlyn, "The Journey of Terah: To Ur-Kasdim or Urkesh?" *Jewish Biblical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2005): pp. 73–80.

but to argue that this hypothesis provides the best explanation currently available of the relevant literary and archaeological data.

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