

Kuntillet ^cAjrud: A Case for Critical Revision

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ABSTRACT

Abstract

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Kuntillet ^cAjrud is an archaeological site with data in objects, images and texts that kept scholars on both sides of the hermeneutical divide busy. The secular/nihilistic orientated archaeologists are trying to connect the dots on both image and text to what they have already chose to see regarding the text: that the text is a late post-exilic creation and archaeology in their view is uncovering the “true Israel and their religion and their pantheon”. The other view is biblically textual-based, a position supported by other extra-biblical sources of literacy in all periods of the Levant in nearly all Ancient cultures continuously, and not only after the sixth century BCE. The hazard to prove earlier writings’ existence archaeologically is the preservation ability of writings materials used that leads to meagreness of data, not the reality of its existence. Kuntillet ^cAjrud is not only an Ashera site but also a Baal site, mentioning the word “prophet”; included an eschatological text with elements similar to Habakkuk 3 (520 BCE) and the Divine Warrior motif in Kajar 4.2. Ceramics (pithoi) came from Jerusalem, Samaria and even further north. Was Ashera written on the pithoi in Jerusalem or on Kuntillet ^cAjrud? Ashera also appeared on plaster-texts. Scholars are divided how it should be interpreted: that Ashera is a cultic place, gameboard, goddess or name of person. The 3rd person singular pronoun added to the name can be shown also at Ebla and Ugarit. However, consensus of nihilists preferred to read “his [Yahweh’s] Ashera”. It was found in this article that a revision of all data rather points to the fact that the Ashera of the Addressee is in mind just like at Khirbet el Qōm where it reads “his [Uryahu’s] Asherah, not that of Yahweh. It does not deny that idolatry was exercised here but as the prophets (early = Amos, Hosea, Isaiah) all condemned Ashera and Baal worship on mountains near Tema, at Samaria, so this continued also with the later prophets Ezechiel and Jeremiah around the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BCE and continuing to 586 BCE. The iconography at the site had strong connections to Greek Vase art, especially the particular connection to one cow and calf motif dating to ca. 520 BCE. Nimrud Ivories are dated not only in the 9th century but from the 9th to the 6th century BCE as the scholars reminded us. Textiles at Kuntillet ^cAjrud were in abundance, especially linen and also wool. The prophets like Ezechiel indicated the importance of textiles for the idolaters of that era. Whereas nihilistic archaeological-priority scholars find support at Kuntillet ^cAjrud for Yahweh having a consort and proving their stance that Israel religion transformed from polytheism to monotheism, the opposite view in this article uses their excellent data to prove that the biblical texts (that not only originated after the exile) are text and data connected to such an extent that archaeology cannot be done without a text on the tel. The Lachish III pottery debate leaves open a 800 BCE date or a 597 BCE date (favored by this writer) and Kuntillet ^cAjrud are filled with these types of ceramics. Radiocarbon dating does not only indicate a 800 BCE date but as Schniedewind indicated may even touch the 10th century BCE. Phoenician influence at the site led Singer in her confrontation with ca. 800 BCE scholars (early Lachish III dating scholars) to move the timing about 50 years later around 730 BCE (herself also an early Lachish III dating

scholar). The gods at this site included: Yahweh; Ashera; Ba'al; and the Egyptian god Bes and as a trading post with cultic and entertainment facilities for the visitors, they specialized in Phoenician, Israelite, Egyptian, Greek and other visitors to the water sources at this hill. Kuntillet °Ajrud is so relevant for biblical studies, that networks are set up by nihilist female archaeologists to make a quest for the historical Ashera and to raise the issue whether the biblical text have pushed Yahweh's wife out of the picture in the past, setting up for them the agenda, in this day and age with LGBTQH agitations and world transgender legal jurisdiction consensus, also woman ordination contra the biblical text, to try to "set free" Ashera image in the modern world. On the other side of the divide, all the fingerprints of idolatry on mountains as complained by the early and later prophets, over a long period, especially the prophets Ezechiel and Jeremiah, are at this site. At the end of the research, after working with the conventional theory that Teman and Shomron are cities of Teman and Samaria, another theory became more appealing, namely that it refers to persons on the basis of Rabbi Redak's exegesis of Jeremiah 49:7 and Obadiah 9 for linking Teman to a person as Genesis 36:11 did. Extending Redak's method it was found that at least three people in various stages of Israel's history were called by the name Shomron. Instead of F = Kajr3.9: "May he [functionary] bless you to Yahweh of Teman [(conventionally a city)] and to his [(Yahweh's)] Asherah" rather read F = Kajr3.9: "May he [functionary] bless you to Yahweh of Teman [(a person)] and to his [(Teman's)] Asherah". The same is the case with Yahweh of Samaria. The result is that the conventional application that Yahweh had a consort no longer is the only interpretation of the syntax and semantics of the inscriptions.

Keywords: iconography; Ashera worship; Baal worship; prophetism; textiles; Teman and Shomron as persons

INTRODUCTION

For nearly thirty years scholars enjoyed shocking faithful biblical believers with the postulate that Yahweh had a wife (originally) and that pluralism prevailed first and only later monotheism became a fashion based on the inscriptions of Kuntillet °Ajrud.¹ For a long time revisionistic historiography was not possible since the original data was sent back to Egypt in whose territory the inscriptions were found. Now the scholars are divided in two camps; those early scholars with their para-doctrinal² position that

¹ The name of the site Kuntillet Ajrud is كونتيلة حجرود in Arabic. It is in the northeast side of the Sinai peninsula. This site was investigated by Tel Aviv University by Ze'ev Meshel in 1975/76. A main building was found that is divided into two rooms.

² A para-doctrinal concept is one that is contra the harmonious view of the whole content of the Massoretic text and that is in fact in conflict with the overall concepts of this canon or any of its books. For over two centuries now scholars think that operating with a hermeneutics of suspicion and setting aside or substitute the text with anthropological extra-biblical or archaeological data from the tel is progressive and anyone operating with the text harmonizing the tel data is biased. To be para-doctrinal and anti-Massoretic textual were seen as advance in knowledge. A fake theology outside the parameters of the text were concocted like this theory of Yahweh's consort that scholars even tried to carry into the biblical text as proper given. The biblical text however, denounced these para-biblical positions through the prophets and writers of the Massoretic text. Pluralism and the worship of Baal or Asherah were condemned in the highest degree. It was not the rule but a degeneration from the rule. Anyone in current science trying to make para-doctrines a rule, is degenerative and not progressive. Schniedewind is negative of any value from the textual sources: "Unfortunately, the literary sources (both biblical texts and near eastern texts) have very little to say that can definitely be applied to the settlement history of Kuntillet °Ajrud." The principle in this article is: "Two men sat behind bars – the one saw mud, the other

Yahweh had a wife Asherah³ and a set of scholars who re-read the inscriptions and data

one stars.” One example will suffice: Braulik demonstrate how scholars thought Israelite religion is polytheism that became monotheism in Wellhausen’s post-exilic times but that before that time God may have had a consort Asherah. G. Braulik, "The Rejection of the Goddess Asherah in Israel: Was the Rejection as Late as Deuteronomistic and Did it Further the Oppression of Women in Israel?" In: *The Theology of Deuteronomy* / Braulik Georg. - Vallejo, CA: Bibal Press, 1994. 165-182. See also S. I. Johnston 2004: 402. It is this kind of rational that tries to advocate woman ordination blaming the text as prejudiced against females. In D. Kosnik’s work, looking for the vanquished goddess Ashera in Israelite Religion accusing the biblical text writers of suppressing the female out of religion, a number of methodological problems emerge. The citation from Jeremiah 44:17-18 is a complaint against the Queen of Heaven and secondly, dating not to 780 BCE but 597 BCE. Dever claimed that Ashera was worship throughout the monarchy (Dever, 2001: 97). This is biblical despite his denial of the biblical text on a tel. The problem was earlier, since it is present already after the entry into Canaan (ca. 1410 BCE) as the book of Joshua indicated. As is correctly indicated by the publication of Johnston et al, that none of the religions were untouched by the other cultures and their religions. Constantly God warned Israel throughout their history to stay away from integration or conflation with other cultures on any level, marriage or religion. This book proves what happened when they did not follow His guidance.

³ M. S. Heiser and other scholars are noticing correctly that there is evidence of plurality in the Old Testament in linguistic grammatical terms e.g. Psalm 82; evidence also from the Dead Sea Scrolls; a divine council is mentioned; many expressions in the Old Testament pointing to a plurality. However, the plurality Heiser is seeking to explain from polytheism in surrounding religions is not the reality of the Old Testament since the New Testament plurality in the Trinity, Father Son and Holy Spirit is what is embedded also in the Old Testament with reference to each in expressions like Spirit, Spirit of God, Son of Man, Ancient of Days; verbs with singular for nouns with plural like Elohim. The divine council has nothing to do with polytheism but is a common expression in both Old and New Testament of God having an Investigative Judgment in Heaven with created beings brought in as a kind of jury over His decisions and plans with this earth and universe. Throughout the prophets the Rib oracles must be understood within this domain. Parallelomania has caused a number of scholars like M. Heiser; S. I. Johnston; D. Kosnik; M. Smith (Ugarit); D. Dimant (Qumran) to run to the Levant comparisons in Umwelt religions and then to superimpose those theologies on the Bible and suggest that it represented the real Israelite religion and that the biblical text is some kind of propaganda of a sectarian kind. The problem with such reasoning is that they do not want to accept the truth of the text but want to use extra-textual evidence to construe what they actually want the text to be replaced with, inscriptions like Kuntillet cAjrud; Khirbet el-Qōm; Deir cAlla and Asherah constructions from a multiplicity of extrabiblical texts, realizing that the biblical text is opposed to these constructions but nevertheless want to minimize the biblical text and maximize the Ashera, Baal-theology and the polytheism, as well as the role of women in the Levant. They are trying to have a quest for the historical Ashera or Baal or polytheism and in the light of modern jurisdiction of equality and tolerance in diversity and pluralism on the basis of ecumenism and integration, wish to revive that old spirit in modern times. They refer back to William Dever and his discussions as a kind of “father” of this trend (see Kosnik 2014). The biblical text describing the true religion as envisaged by God for Israel is the only religion in the Levant that did not permit woman ordination and Kosnik’s concern for this situation that the text pushed out Asherah out of Israelite true worship is fundamentally correct although for the wrong reason. Kuntillet cAjrud scholars are caught in a stream of ideas regarding the biblical text and its data, archaeology and its data, the theory of Wellhausen about the date of the origin of the biblical text and the support they begin to see for claims it is making, albeit in their post-exilic form it appears. The Quest for the historical Moses is necessary because the text in their mind only post-date the 6th century BCE. The Quest for Ashera is necessary for the same reason (J. -M. Hadley 1997). What is surprising to some scholars is that the post-exilic biblical data is supported by pre-exilic archaeological data regarding Ashera (J. M. Hutton 2010 talks about the ‘local manifestations of Yahweh’; also H.-P. Müller, 1992 with his ‘Volksreligion’; cf. P. Beck, 2000 who focused on local traditions and external influences between the 10th and 8th centuries BCE). The Quest for the historical Israel, raised by Dever (W. Dever 1995) was exactly this link that is supportive between archaeological data and biblical claims (also W. Dever 1984, using the inscriptions from Kuntillet cAjrud or Khirbet el Qōm), but the biggest problem is the denial of any literary activity before that date, trying to make it oral (G. J. Wearne speaks of the ‘emergence of Northwest Semitic Literary Texts only in the first millennium BCE). This search for the true Israel is dealt with in two basic ways: either the Bible is the glasses through which the identity of the true Israel is defined or extrabiblical data

saying that the inscriptions do not say Yahweh had a wife, but still trying to cling to the para-doctrinal positions as well, like Na'aman et al. Other revisionistic scholars like Schniedewind suggested that the consensus idea that this site was a shortlived one of a couple of decades should be substituted with the acknowledgement of pottery and 14C dating pointing to an early occupation even in the Iron Age A or 10th century BCE. As far as chronology of this site is concerned, scholars can now be divided between those with a minimalist approach and those with a maximalist approach. This article is revisionistic historiography reconsidering the pottery used for dating, inscriptions, contextual hermeneutics brought to the texts, semantics and grammatical aspects regarding this site and related matters. One particular new aspect is contributed here that was not discussed by Othmar Keel when he did his work on the mother and cow motif

is the glasses through which that is done. Scholars then reason that after the 6th century both the Bible and archaeology has something to say on these matters but before the 6th century based only on archaeological data and extrabiblical texts (C. Uehlinger 1997). Paralellomania is the superimposition of an Umwelt religion or language or culture on the Bible or Israelite religion to understand it better (M. Dijkstra 1995). For example, Ugaritic literature (T. Binger 1997; K. Koch 1988 with Ashera as 'Queen of Heaven'; J. G. Taylor, 1990), Hittite literature, Nuzi tablets, Amarna tablets, Canaanite inscriptions, Aramaic inscriptions, Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions and culture is superimposed on any phrase or phenomenon dealt with in the Bible, as seemingly identical or borrowed, claiming that the Bible is post-exilic and these traditions earlier (cf. the scholars' contributions in S. Johnston, 2004; P. McCarter 1987, A. Lemaire 2015; O. Loretz 1992; see also the comparison of the use of a 3rd person pronoun to gods at Ebla and Ugarit and Kuntillet 'Ajrud by P. Xella 1995). One needs to see the fallacy in the methodology to properly renovate the situation and renovation is indeed a priority. Many of the scholars are ontologically non-believers and thus epistemologically aligned to their lifestyles: permissive, liberal, careless regarding taboos, prohibitions, admonitions in the biblical text, secular and openly nihilistic or atheistic. Their methodology will not allow the biblical text to navigate them through their science. They find Wellhausen's theories very helpful supporting their lifestyle since a book that is full of late propaganda and descriptive narratives hundreds or thousands of years after the event cannot prescribe to them. With a kind of "secular theology" they construct their opinions about the true Israel as polytheistic as Kuntilet 'Ajrud is confirming for them, for example Yahweh in their thinking had a wife or consort (J. Hadley talking of a 'Hebrew' goddess in ancient Israel when the biblical text indicate that she is an intrusion from Phoenicia, thus not Hebrew), They blame the 6th century biblical text that it robbed Yahweh from his consort and woman in the religious society from their woman ordination (G. Braulik 1994). Monotheism is only a late invention for them (R. K. Gnuse 1997 "emergent" meaning it did not exist from the beginning). The fallacies of Wellhausen's methodology as Arabist is not any concern for them. They use his ideas as prooftext, evidence, given, unchallenged. The precision of biblical chronology is not a subject they wish to enter into and stay away from. The evidence of that precision from Umwelt literature does not appeal to them. The references to sources from the earliest times with Moses in the time of Thutmose III as George Mendehall wants us to believe, is of no interest to them. Thus, they cry foul when they read the biblical text and they applause when they read the inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud or Khirbet el Qōm or Deir 'Alla. In fact, networks are online set up to "rescue" Ashera from her biblical "closet" situation and to make the meant of the ancient text a mean for modern society with their similar pluralistic, ecumenical, polytheistic embraced integrative models in a jurisdiction of equality emphasis honoring LGBTQH not as "temple prostitutes" as the prophets would say, but as equal true believers. The publications of Kosnik (2014) and Johnston (2004) and contributors there who are signing up to all the above, is very illuminating. There are two sets of scholars: "two men sat behind bars: the one saw mud, the other one stars." It is a very important question that A. Shmuel (2006) asked: "Did God really have a wife?" Z. Zevit (2001) used a very useful word: "parallactic approach" which is viewing an object from two different points. This writing is no exception. Every aspect that was discussed in archaeology regarding Ashera at Kuntillet cAjrudd was discussed by prophets like Jeremiah and Ezechiel. Dever is correct in claiming that this cult existed throughout the Monarchy but more than that, ever since the entry into Canaan dated in strict biblical chronology to 1410 BCE as the book of Joshua chapter 1 indicated. This mixture of jurisdiction with semioses, fusion, pluralism led to paralactic conditions in Israel.

in the Ancient Near East.⁴ In fact, this example is so crucial that the matter of dating of

⁴ O. Keel, (1980). *Das Böcklein in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes im Lichte eines altorientalischen Bildmotivs* V.IRAT III-KEE 1980.1 (Böcklein). One of the greatest criticisms that can be levied against iconographical studies in the modern world, especially iconography of the Ancient Near East, is the amount of speculation that is surfacing up during the research.

1. Images that look the same are thrown into a thematic reservoir and then they cover a period of two and a half millennia apart and in between.

2. From this data tank, a focus is made in the analysis on one selected theme: bull hunting.

3. All the “bull-hunting” scenes are then brought together. A written text is searched for giving an answer as to what is happening in the scene, for example Amenhotep III hunting scarabs.

4. Hermeneutics of that one link between text and image is then superimposed upon other images over this long period of two millennia and a half, as if nothing has changed, no dogma development or degeneration in ideology has taken place. It is treated as if it is static and not fluid. There were no secularism or orthodoxy or piety currents involved. Affluence had no effect on people to change their lifestyle values and confessional beliefs.

5. Somehow what is needed is a kind of nexus between the date of the images used; the form or shape of the images used; the text descriptions of detail about the images; explanation as to what the geographical location has to do with the images (Egypt, Palestine, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Elam etc); if there is a cultural loaning as to why, how and to what extend the acculturation happened; why this particular image became attractive to the area it was found for those inhabitants. The text descriptions of the detail about the images also include biblical descriptions since the Old Testament is also a reliable Ancient Near Eastern source. Archaeological data regarding the dating and other aspects of culture and religion should be also brought into the discussion. In a certain sense the perception of scientists as to what “true archaeology” is, led to an epistemology in the sciences that struggled with positivism for longer than half a century. The disruptive effects of the Second World War led to a shift in the paradigm of the sciences that affected also the “science” of archaeology. From a normativism hunted for and fought about in the pre-War era, the epistemology shifted then towards anormativism and relativism. The focus blurred with the increasing demand that everything is relative and non-prescriptive, and that eclecticism is the only method that will permit an accommodative approach to the sciences. Science became the art of the beholder. The Gestalt approach became popular meaning that only after ten seasons in the field of archaeology, the theorist has now the license to firstly, so strongly belief in a fragmented part of the reality that, secondly, it gives the theorist the permission to deny any other reality claimed by outside texts and, thirdly, to superimpose this fragmented extrapolation over the “unearthed section” of the tel, making claims like: “no destruction layer was found at the date indicated by the Masoretic Text”. Modern Iconographical research suffers from the same Gestalt syndrome in its methodology. Revisionism is imperative. Ironically, although the iconographical researchers and archaeologists work with Ludwig Wittgenstein’s fluidity to start off with, they end with a dogmatism or frozen concept that becomes a norm in itself. Schniedewind (2013) raised the issue of the problem of historiography from the standpoint of using the text, biblical or Ancient Near Eastern or a combination of both to eclectically pick-and-choose data from archaeology to construct a historical narrative of the past of the site (Schniedewind 2013: 143). The problem with Finkelstein and supporters seems to be that they methodologically dated Lachish III pottery to 701 BCE (only) cancelling the 605-586 BCE earlier dating by Holliday et al and then using this self-created “stability” to select a biblical prooftext closest to it searching for a king with strong contact in the Negev. This textual choice then in turn becomes the “glasses” through which the 14C is interpreted, the pottery as a whole and then all the other data are aligned to this *terminus pro quo* and *terminus ad quem*. The absence of destruction layers caused them to look for a few decades of occupation only. The biblical text is not given opportunity to speak holistically for itself but is also a scooping up of explicit Negev involved kings. Secular scholars then went a step further to set aside the holistic core message of the biblical text and only work with a self-constructed polytheism to monotheism history-of-religions-approach that find eager readers in current popular ecumenical circles. What Schniedewind does is to pin-point the fallacy of the minimalist approach of allocated occupation to the site of Kuntillet ʿAjrud and enlarge it with overlooked data from the same site to end with a maximalist occupation period stretching from the tenth to the eighth century BCE contra Finkelstein, Singer et al working only with an eighth century BCE period.

Lachish III pottery and also the dating of the site will be reconsidered.

The following issues are important to consider at Kuntillet [°]Ajrud: archaeological detail about the site; inscriptions; date of the Lachish III pottery whether it is early eight century BCE or 597 BCE [or both?]; function of the site as caravanseraï or cultic site [or both?]; two suffixes added to a pronomen Asherah and my own added data leading to a revision of the hermeneutics of the site.

Articles on Kuntillet [°]Ajrud are coming from the press nearly yearly. The greatest contribution of the latest articles are that they all begin to contribute a good overview or synthesis of the knowledge of the site. There is only one aspect that became the orphan of the study, and this is also the case with the Nimrud Ivories, Lachish III pottery, Deir [°]Alla inscription dating and that is the dating of the site. Scholars discuss these as if it is a token that it should be dated to ca. 800 BCE. There are controversial aspects at each of these sites that brought forth in the history of the data interpretation two sets of scholars at each site: an early dating that became conventional and a late date ca. 600 BCE. Those who like the 800 BCE date will compare with the listed sites above utilizing the scholars that date it 800 BCE and those who prefer a later date at 600 BCE will site the scholars that dated all these sites in the list to 600 BCE and not 800 BCE.

Scholars that want to do orthographical chronology or glotto-chronology, will then work within this vicious circle that they select their 800 BCE scholars at all these sites and then allocate the text to that site or comparative sites, and then transfer the knowledge they can get through analysis and comparison to the site under discussion and speak very learned. If they would have chosen the scholars that dated it later to 600 BCE they would have dated the shapes of the letters also in 600 BCE and also sounded learned. There are scholars who discuss the problems of radiocarbon dating and others who run away with data they wish to cling to. To cite a quantity of scholars accepting the view is not going to make the view truth. Conventionalism is what the name says: convenient date selected in interim discussion. Finally, assessments and revisionism are at play with a broader focus active.

Discussions on the site has been in dispute on many issues: discussion pertaining to the inscriptions were on what dialect was used (Hebrew, Phoenician⁵ or not); what order the writings were placed on pottery,⁶ stone or plaster; evidence of contraction;⁷

⁵ A. Lemaire, "Date et origine des inscriptions hébraïques et phéniciennes de Kuntillet [°]Ajrud." *Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico* 1 (1984), 131–143.

⁶ Some scholars view the writing in Kajr3.1 over the two Bes figures as relational in that they are deliberate and meaningful intending to represent Yahweh and his Asherah (B. Schmidt 2002: 111) but others indicate that issue was more a case of spatial considerations and design and nothing related to meaning attached (Wearne, G. J. 2015: 44-45 at footnotes 50-51) on the basis of other overlapping cases where Kajr3.8 overlap the abecedaries on Pithos B and Kajr3.6. This is crucial when one consider how many articles and books already appeared on the issue that one has a pictorial representation of Yahweh and his so-called consort. The issue is whether the image and text are related as chaos or design. Scholars may need to go back to the drawing board before they make hasty conclusions.

the role of the pronominal suffix added to another suffix to the word Asherah;⁸ what “Asherah” is: place, person, divine epithet, mediator⁹; whether Yahweh is said to have a wife/consort or not; the short and long form of “year”; the comparison of inscriptions of Kuntillet ‘Ajrud with Deir ‘Alla inscriptions¹⁰ and also that of Khirbet el Kom;¹¹ the relationship between the inscriptions and iconography, namely, whether the Bes figure is Yahweh and the lyre playing woman is Asherah, or not. Kajr 4.2 is in the context of eschatological thinking and the Divine Warrior Motif.¹²

Discussions pertaining to the pottery is still ongoing:¹³ since the large bulk of

⁷ A number of scholars have paid attention to the word “year” that is short instead of long šnt instead of št; on that contraction of the diphthong for the name Teman as simply tmn rather than tymn. Wearne 2015: 68 wants to cancel the dialectical velocity of spelling forms and ascribe it to a probable scribal error. If tradition is accepted that Moses wrote both Job and Exodus then the spelling of this same name has two forms with Moses: a short form tmn in Job 9:9 and a long form tymn in Exodus 26:18. Scholars do not understand the influence of bilingualism or multi-lingualism on ancient societies. The ‘machine-production’ expectation as standard for analyzing the text, is a modern technological overture in digimodernism. I have examples where I spelled with two forms.

⁸ See Na’aman 2011: 305 is a description in condensed form of the discussions on this matter (cf. Hess, 1996; Zevit, 2001, 363-366 with their theory of a double suffix; with Tropper, 2001, 100-102 and his theory of a secondary extension of the relational suffix; and his own favorite to reject that the final -h represents the third person possessive (“his Asherat” [= l’šrth]), in favor of the interpretation that ‘šrth is the form of the goddess’ name and that the two inscriptions should read ”to YHWH of Samaria and to Asherata. [= l’šrth]“ The issue was discussed at length by many scholars: Angersorfer (1982); Dever (1984); Dijkstra (2001); Emerton (1999); Freedman (1997); Frevel (1995); Hadley (2000); Kosnik (2002); Loretz (1992); Mandell (2012); Merlo (1994); North (1989); Puech (2015); Shmuel (2006); Wearne (2015); Xella (1995, 2001). The theory I propose is that the suffix does not refer to Yahweh but to the person addressed in the inscription. Asherah belongs to a human who is part of the narrative of the text.

⁹ The mediating role of Asherah by some scholars is designed on the basis of a defective translation of the Khirbet el-Qōm inscription as “Blessed is Uriahu by YHWH for through Asherata He saved him from his enemy” (see Na’aman 2011: 305-306 and Keel/Uehlinger, 1998, 236-244; Parker 2006, 87-91). My diagram of the transliterations indicated my own more literal corrective translation: “Uryahu the prosperous, his inscription, I bless Uryahu to Yahweh and from his enemies to his Asherah, save him”. The enemies are those who want to destroy his Asherah and not a case that Asherah will mediate for him against his enemies. The text do not support their surmise. The “mother-goddess” motif is not supported by this text but that Uryahu had two gods, Yahweh and an Asherah is clear. The fact that Ugarit had mediating roles for their goddesses is an example too remote to this text to superimpose those characteristics over the goddess at this site or at Khirbet el-Qōm. Some scholars thought it was a personal name; others a divine epithet; still others a cult-place name; a tree associated with Yahweh and in one article by Vermaak, it is demonstrated that it could mean a game board (Vermaak 2001).

¹⁰ In both cases polytheism is mixed with traditions of biblical narrative, namely, Bileam the son of Beor; in both cases prophecy can be found; both sites had benches; both sites had loomweights.

¹¹ Loretz, O., "Aschera, eine Frau an der Seite Jahwes: Die Entwicklung des bildlosen jüdischen Kults im Lichte der ugaritischen Textes sowie der Inschriften aus Khirbet el-Qōm, Kuntillet ‘Ajrud und Tell Miqne." In: *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte*, vol. 7, (1992): 147-198. Dever, W. G., "Archaeology and the Ancient Israelite Cult: How the Kh. el-Qōm and Kuntillet ‘Ajrud ‘Asherah’ Texts Have Changed the Picture." In: *Eretz-Israel - Frank Moore Cross Volume / Cross Frank Moore*. - Jerusalem : Israel Exploration Society, 1999, 9-15.

¹² Compare the observations listed by Wearne 2015: 102-122. The biggest problem is methodological parallelomania: the pathological tendency to superimpose upon a text data with similar words or phrases from another text, earlier or later but not from the same time-continuum or spatial connections.

¹³ Singer-Avitz, L., “The Date of Kuntillet ‘Ajrud.” *Tel Aviv* 33 (2006), 196–228. _____, “The Date of Kuntillet ‘Ajrud: A Rejoinder.” Singer-Avitz, L. (2009). *Tel Aviv* 36, 110–119 © Friends of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 2009 DOI 10.1179/204047809x439488. Singer-Avitz, L. Forthcoming. A Phoenician Vessel Group Dated to the Iron IIB Period from Tel Beersheba. EI (Hebrew).

pottery from the site is said to have Lachish III characteristics, immediately the Lachish III pottery dating is an issue. Some scholars allocated it to 597 BCE and other scholars to 701 BCE. Other scholars pointed out that there is not much difference between pottery from 597 BCE and 701 BCE so that continuation/duration consistency should be in place: not either/or but both with all in between.

Reports on radiocarbon dating are given by those who favor an early Lachish III dating as been the same but others pointed out to some items like the straw¹⁴ to be in the middle of the ninth century BCE. He also stressed a continuation/duration view that the site was occupied all the way through from the days of Solomon. Other scholars has a minimalist view of occupation period for the site.

Evidence on connections with Deir °Alla inscriptions opens up its own set of dilemmas in dating. Even here, there are reasons to consider an early date 800 BCE or a later date 597 BCE or a duration view dating from ca. 800 to ca. 597 BCE. Some scholars considered the Persian period.

Explorations surrounding the iconography at the site brought in a host of problems with it: where to find comparisons; which culture to give preference; the role of Bes in the Levant; the comparison of Bes and the cow-and-calf motif with Nimrud Ivory examples; the metallic tree with two ibexes; the lotus flower motif; the lyre player.¹⁵

Comparisons leaning on the Nimrud Ivories tend to forget that dilemmas in Nimrud Ivory dating are exactly the same as for Kuntillet °Ajrud and Deir °Alla, namely that there is a late dating to 597 BCE; an early dating to 830 BCE and a durations dating from 830-597 BCE.¹⁶

As far as archaeological method is concerned, one can say that there is sometimes a circular argument involved where archaeologists are using the consensus of another site to date their own not realizing that the other site is burdened with the same dilemmas as their own. Just because conventionalism allocated one choice within the wide range of options, the comparative scholars go for that allocation as the date and allot their own data also to that date. From maximalism originally they shift and become minimalistic. The minimalistic view is then canonized and a sense of dogmatism is argued with. This is where the problem starts.

Discussions on the archaeology pertains on: the structures at the site and their

Singer-Avitz, L. 2002. Arad: The Iron Age Pottery Assemblages. *Tel Aviv* 29, 110–214. Finkelstein, I. "Notes on the Historical Setting of Kuntillet °Ajrud," *Maarav* 20/1 (December 2015). Freud, L. (2008). "The Date of Kuntillet °Ajrud: A Reply to Singer-Avitz." (2006). *Tel Aviv* 35: 169–174.

¹⁴ W. Schniedewind 2016.

¹⁵ There is evidence of Phoenicians, Egyptians, Assyrians/Babylonians, Greeks (see cow and calf motif in the Iconography Diagram here) at this site.

¹⁶ In the section on the iconography there is a citation of M. Mallowan and L. G. Davis, 1970, 1 indicating that the city fell in the hands of the Babylonians and the Medes in 614 and 612 BCE and later with the Medes.

comparisons in the area, whether fortress¹⁷ or storage rooms;¹⁸ comparison to structures at Deir ʿAlla (also benches);¹⁹ loomweights (both at this site and Deir ʿAlla);²⁰ textiles and their abundance at Kuntillet ʿAjrud;²¹ biblical related inscriptions at both Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Deir ʿAlla;²² water resources at the site;²³ whether the function of the site was a traders' post,²⁴ or caravanserai,²⁵ or cultic center,²⁶ pilgrimage

¹⁷ The ground-plan of the Kadash Barnea fortress resembles that of Structure A at Kuntillet ʿAjrud as well as that of Tell el-Kheleifeh, although the Kadash Barnea and Tell el-Kheleifeh complexes are much larger (Cohen and Cohen-Amin 2004: 197; Cohen and Bernick-Greenberg 2007: 12; Hadley 2000: 110).

¹⁸ Naʿaman 2011: 317 “for the gifts brought to her [Asherah] by her believers, and to accommodate the cultic personnel.”

¹⁹ As far as food is concerned and Ezechiel’s complaint of the adultery of the apostates, Ezechiel 18:11 states “even has eaten upon the mountains and defiled his neighbor’s wife”. Ezechiel 18:15 included also eating with lifting up the eyes to idols in the context of harlotry. In Ezechiel 16:23-26 the whoredom took place “and has opened your feet to anyone that pass by.”

²⁰ From the year 612 BCE with Josiah’s reform of apostasy of Asherah worship on mountains came the account “And he broke down the dedicated treasure buildings [sic!] within the House of YHWH, where women weave coverings for Asherah” (2 Kings 23:7)“ Naʿaman 2011: 317-318. “This and other examples would account for the unusual abundance of textiles found at the site, which were possibly sold to believers to hang upon the sacred tree (Naʿaman/Lissofsky, 2008, 198-199; also Ackerman, 2008).” It was correctly interpreted that the archaeological evidence of Kuntillet ʿAjrud supports this textual historical account of the events in that year since loom weights and textile fabrics were found at the site, especially the clothing in abundance. “Approximately 120 pieces of cloth – mostly linen, a few made of wool –were uncovered at the site,” (See J. H. Boertien, "Asherah and textiles." *Biblische Notizen*, vol. 134 (2007): 63-77. Also cf. Naʿaman 2011: 300; A. Sheffer; A. Tidhar, "Textiles and Basketry at Kuntillat ʿAjrud." *Atiqot: English Series*, (1991) vol. 20, 1-26). In Ezechiel 13:18 the complaint is that the females of the apostates “sew pillows of all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls“. There is room for some fashion shows and entertainment. Some suggested cultic regalia. Ezechiel had a problem with females involved in apostate religious practices involving fabrics and fashion in Ezechiel 13:8-12; 13:18; 13:21; 23:15.

²¹ That there was a weaving space similar to Deir ʿAlla is explained by some scholars since loomweights were found at both sites. cf. J. Boertien, 2007. Naʿaman felt that the unusual abundance of textiles found at the site were possibly sold to believers to hang upon the sacred tree (Naʿaman/Lissofsky, 2008, 198-199; also Ackerman, 2008). Noteworthy is the worshippers in the iconography upon one pithos indicating their sense of fashion and if one page through C. Lepsius drawings for the same period, the colorful draperies compared very well.

²² The blessings of Yahweh is mentioned at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and at Deir ʿAlla the vision of Balaam bar Beor is mentioned.

²³ Schniedewind pointed out strongly to the importance of water at this site and that “it provide a convenient stop along the trade route with ample water supplies for the caravans.” Schniedewind, (2013): 135. Schniedewind also cited Ze’ev Meshel admission that it was a source of perennial water in an arid region.

²⁴ Meshel, 2012: 69a stated that “ʿAjrud was a space where they ”dispensed blessings on passing travellers, and even engaged in weaving, as indicated by the loom, linen and wool found at the site.“ This option is very promising since it is in line with what one see of the status quo of females in apostasy on mountains in the books of Jeremiah and Ezechiel. Woman ordination is not in the true religion of Israel but only with surrounding nations. However, in Jeremiah and Ezechiel is evidence of the role of woman in worship on mountains in the context of apostasy and the Asherah cult amid clothing, eating practices, fornication, and tree worship. The cultural environment of these cult practices included Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians and others. Ezechiel 16:28 added that “you have played the whore also with the Assyrians” and Ezechiel 16:29 included the Babylonians “in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea. This is in the context of 605 to 597 BCE.

²⁵ Meshel, 2012, 67a. See also Y. Thareani-Sussely, “Ancient Caravanserais: An Archaeological View from ʿAroer.” *Levant* 39 (2007), 123-141.

site-theory²⁷ or fortress; “Holy tree site theory;”²⁸ Holy Mountain of God theory²⁹. Restaurant-like objects at the site³⁰ Ezechiel 13:11 and 13:15 is dealing with eating on the mountains in the context of adultery and apostasy.

Comparative biblical texts selected for discussion were from Amos, Hosea,³¹ Jeremiah³² and Habakkuk 3 (eschatological text).³³ Jeremiah is a 597 BCE text just like Ezechiel and Habakkuk is a Persian period text. Amos and Hosea will be for scholars who work with an early dating at Kuntillet ^cAjrud.

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE PROPHETS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

²⁶ See Hadley, 1993; Schmidt, 2002: 96, 98-99; Meshel, 2012: 68b-69a.

²⁷ Na³aman 2011: 315; Axelson, 1987: 62-63; Weippert, 1988: 625; Dijkstra, 2001: 22; Meshel, 2012: 68b.

²⁸ Na³aman 2011: 317; Day, 1986, 403-406 who explained that Ashera was connected to tree-like sculptures; Ganghoff, 1999; 2001; Na³aman and Lisovsky, 2008; Singer-Avitz, 2009: 111 feels that this theory can neither be verified nor contradicted. The sacred tree caused the site to be abandoned, according to Na³aman. “Various cultic sites that have been excavated in Israel and Judah that centered around a sacred tree” (Na³aman and Lisovsky, 2008, 195-198; cf. Kottsieper, 2002).

²⁹ Na³aman 2011: 316.

³⁰ Na³aman 2011: 300 citing (Sitry, 2012). “The excavation also revealed pieces of wood from items of furniture, eating utensils and weaving tools used by the site’s occupants.

³¹ Hosea was a prophet that lived in the times of Isaiah. His wife was fully engaged in adultery and mixed religions. Baal worship was a problem.

³² Jeremiah is a chronological and historical book and many archaeological finds and seals supported the names mentioned in the Book and dates from 628-586 BCE and beyond are relevant for this prophet.

³³ Scholars in their dealing with the inscriptions employed Habbakuk 3 for one text that is difficult to interpret. H = KA 4.2 = Kaja4.2 is a text in Phoenician script that was found on the floor near a bench. There is no reference to any of the gods Baal or Asherah in this text but the name of God is used. The plural is the shortened form and needs discussion elsewhere since the Phoenician scribe tend to shorten words similarly to what Japanese and Korean teenagers are doing with their messaging to each other. The *nun-paragogicum* is also important to mention as additions to most future forms of the verbs (Wearne 2015: 85 at footnote 6). The text has a “prophetic genre” appearance and is classified by some scholars as an eschatological text. In the discussion of the text, Wearne considers the text to be a theophany similar to biblical texts (Wearne, 2015, 84-90). He considers the expression in the text “Eloah comes from Teman” or “Eloah will come from Teman” [ours] as linked the best to Habakkuk 3:3. If Teman is a person, as is explained in this writing, and not a place, then some judgment is pronounced over Teman and his practices of idolatry. This is an interesting text that needs a separate dealing elsewhere. Habakkuk 3 is the Second Coming of Christ portrayed in the Old Testament. It is the end of history and transition time of eternity. Jeremiah constantly warned in his sermons and speeches about the destruction of all cities in Judah and the Negev in destructions of 605 BCE; 597 BCE; 586 BCE and finally in the eschaton. The good ones were taken smoothly in 597 BCE but the bad one’s remaining were suffering in 586 BCE due to their idolatry.

Those who want to date Lachish III pottery in the eighth century BCE, early or late, will find in Micah and Amos strong support for their view that problems were around Teman and Samaria in those days. Micah complained about Samaria in Micah 1:6 and the problems in those days were graven images and the worship thereof. Micah also complained about Teman which the Lord wanted to destroy (Micah 1:12). Amos complained about Samaria for they were swearing by the sin of Samaria saying: “Your god, O Dan, lives” and also of the south area Beersheba the same (Amos 8:14). Eight century hermeneutics are applied for the contextualization with the biblical literature and outside literature of this site by these Lachish III pottery dating scholars.

However, another appealing situation appears. Teman is also mentioned by Ezechiel 20:46 [he is to prophecy against it and at Kuntillet °Ajrud the word “prophet” = אַבְנֵי אֲבִיבָה appears, see Inscription Kajr4.5 line 2 in this article] and Samaria was a problem in Ezechiel 23:3-8 “and Aholah [Samaria] played the harlot when she was mine and she doted on her lovers on the Assyrians her neighbors which she clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses....Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt”. The inscriptions mentioned Samaria and Teman explicitly (see Diagram texts at C = Kajr3.1; D = Kajr3.6; F = Kajr3.9; G = Kajr4.1). The theory that is conventionally entertained is that these are places. Below another theory will be considered as well, namely whether they are the names of persons?

The prophet Ezechiel described about profane wall graffiti in the sanctuary of his time: “So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.” (Ezechiel 8:9) dating to 591 BCE. (See the iconography of the plaster texts on the walls³⁴ at this site). Describing the situation between 591-588 when his wife died (Ezechiel 24:1) he said in 16:16-19: “And of your garments you took, and decked your high places with divers colors, and played the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so. You have also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made to yourself images of men, and did commit whoredom with them, And took your brodered garments, and covered them: and you have set mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave you, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed you, you have even set it before them for a sweet savor: and thus it was, said the Lord God.” Textiles, cult-related textiles, harlot business enterprise, meals, connected with wall-graffiti about gods for the period 605-588 BCE is what we get from the prophets and they connect to the fingerprints (textiles, meals, wall-graffiti, cultic deviations) from Kuntillet °Ajrud?

From the same period came the words of Jeremiah 17:2: “While their children remember their altars and their Asherim groves by the green trees upon the high hills.” Asherim by green trees upon high hills? Explicitly from 606-588 BCE. Furthermore there was a trend among the people that they should run or migrate to Egypt to escape the coming war predicted by the prophets. Said Jeremiah around 588 BCE in Jeremiah

³⁴ Scholars are asking these days whether the texts were graffiti or deliberate.

42:14: “Saying, ‘No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell.’ So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.”

A further appealing situation would be that Teman is not the name of a place, city or region, but the name of a person mentioned in Obadiah as: “And shall be dismayed your mighty men, Teman [person] in order that every man be cut off from the mountain of Esau from killing” (Obadiah 9). Rabbi Redak (12th century) interpreted this Teman in Obadiah as a person. Jeremiah 49:7 can also be interpreted as a person as Redak did with the use of Teman in that verse. “Is there no more wisdom in Teman [person]? Counsel is lost from the sons, their wisdom has spoiled”. If the theory of Teman as a person in Jeremiah can be maintained and this is applied in the contemporaneous inscriptions at Kuntillet ^cAjrud, the re-reading of these texts brings a total new scenario to the front.

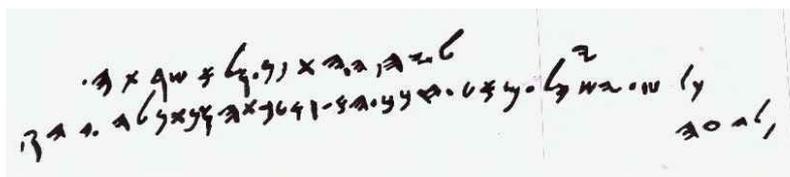
D = Kajr3.6: “I have blessed you to YHWH of Teman and his Asherah.” Meaning that the sender has blessed the receiver to Yahweh of Teman [(person)] and his [(Teman’s)] Asherah.

F = Kajr3.9: “May he [functionary] bless you to Yahweh of Teman [(a person)] and to his [(Teman’s)] Asherah”.

G = Kajr4.1: “May [he] bless days and may he dwell a plai[n][.....] a winevat may he be to Y[ahweh of]Teiman [(person)] and to his Asherah (praises) Yahweh of Teman [(person)] did good he set the vine [and the fig tre]e. Yahweh of Teman [(person)] has..” In the light of this one can also investigate whether the spelling of Samariah in the Canaanite Inscriptions justified Samariah to be called Shomron, or is Shomron also a person just like Teman?

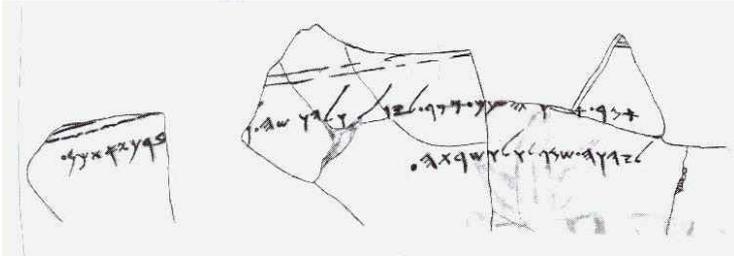
The theory of Rabbi Redak in the 12th century that Jeremiah 49:7 with the use of Teman refers to a person just like his interpretation of Obadiah 9 on the basis of Genesis 36:11 as a grandson of Esau, provides the legitimacy for us to extend his method to Shomron as well, that Shomron refers to a person on the basis of Genesis 46:13; Numbers 24:64 and 1 Chronicles 7:1. Between the two theories then, that Teman and Samaria are cities or persons, the last-mentioned seems to be making more sense at Kuntillet ^cAjrud.

INSCRIPTIONS FOUND AT KUNTILLET ^CAJRUD



Kajr3.9 (Pithos B left of Kajr 3.6) Above iconography of procession of 'worshippers'(?)³⁵

1.] י [התרשאן.נמתה הוהיל
2. והי הל ותמו . התפ סאו אה ונח . לאמ . לאשי . רשא לכ
3. הבבלכ



Kajr3.1 (Pithos A; Bes) 'Epistolary' elements in the text

- . סכתא . ת. כר ב . לו . השעוילו . ילהיל . רמא . קלמה . ער.א . רמא .
. התרשאלו . נרמש . הוהיל



Kajr1.2 (Stone Basin) Dedicatory text

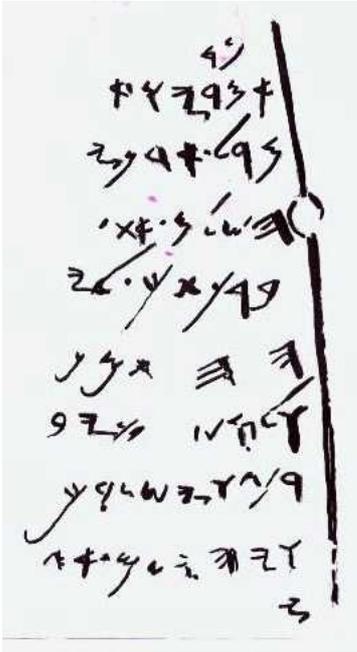
והיל אה דרב הנדע ונב וידבעל



Kajr4.4. (Ba^cal text)

1.] ° [
2. לקב . לעב . עמשיו
3.]י.מה[

³⁵ Typing Hebrew with the software was a major source of frustration since it was found to be Hebrew unfriendly. It is not 100% with satisfaction thus. However, it is close to that. Most drawings were redrawn from the work of G. J. Wearne (2015).



Kajr3.6 (Pithos B; 'Requisition slip' (G. J. Wearne 2015: 65)

1. רמא
2. א. וירמא
3. ינדא. ל. רמ
4. תא. מלשה
5. יל. תכרב
6. ןמת [.]. הוה
7. בי. התרשאלו
8. ךרמשיו ךר
9. נדא. מע יהיו
10. י

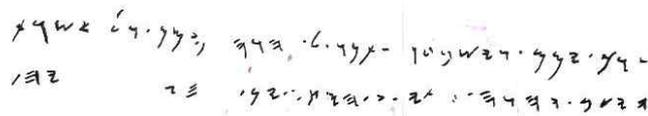
Kajr3.11 ה] גבא [

ת ש ר ק

Kajr3.12 ת ש ר ק צ ע פ ס י ט

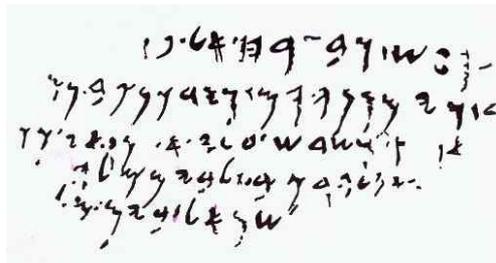
Kajr3.13 ת ש ר ק צ ע פ

Kajr3.14 ת ש ר ק צ ע פ ס נ מ ל כ



Kajr4.1 (Plaster Text)

1. התרשאלו . נמיתה...הוהיל . ונתיו...ועבשיו . ממי . קרא
2. ...ההי...ני . בציה . י...נמיתה . הוהי . בטיה



Kajr4.2 (Plaster Text) At the entrance: Eschatological or prophetic text
(cf. Habakkuk 3 [520 BCE])

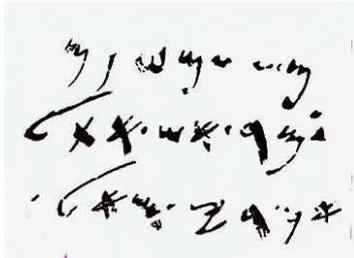
1. מרב . לא . הרזבו . שערב
2.]מנבפ . וכדיו . נסמיו .ר[
3.]מלא . ילע . שדק . קרא[
4. המחלמ . סיב . לעב . דרבבל וכה
5. המחלמ סיב . לא . משך

“prepare to bless Baal on the day of battle”



Kajr4.3

1. [...]
2. [...] דלה
3. [...] נהדיל
4. [...] ב... תואנ אשד . קסא . הנני
5. [...] יב..ל ... ש
6. [...] ש[...].שיו[...].הל
7. [...] סרה סרמו הדש . ניק . תחש



Kajr4.6

1. ממש מעל . ם]
2.]ל תא מא . רמא]
3. לאו . ירמא]



Kajr4.5

1.]כ [
2.]אבנה [

TEXT TRANSLITERATED AND TRANSLATED

<i>Text Transliterated (Na'aman 2011)</i>	<i>Text Translated (Na'aman 2011)</i>	<i>Text Transliterated Van Wyk</i>	<i>Text Translated Van Wyk</i>
A -yw	theophoric element	-yw	theophoric element
B <i>lšrr</i> (Jar Inscription = 3x)	“to/of the governor of the city” (Ahituv et al 2012)	<i>lš r = r^c hm[l]k</i>	“belonging to the ruler of R ^c ”
C = Kajr3.1 <i>1^omr · ʔ[xx] · r^c hm[l]k · ʔmr · lyhl[yw] · whyw^cšh · wl[....] brkt · ʔtkm</i> <i>2lyhwh · šmrn · wl^ošrth</i> Pithos A (Scribe 1, Schniedewind 2013: 139))	Kajr3.1 “Message of ʔ[xx], ‘the ki[n]g’s friend’. Speak to Yahēl[yō], and to Yōā ^c sā, and to [...]. I have blessed you by YHWH of Samaria and to Asherata.”	Kajr3.1 <i>1^omr · ʔ[š]r[t]h · h[l?]k · ʔmr · lyhl[] · whyw^cšh · wl[....] brkt · ʔtkm</i> <i>2lyhwh · šmrn · wl^ošrth</i> (Alamo photo)	Kajr3.1 “Said his A[sh]e[r]ta : W[al]k . ³⁶ Said to Yahēl[yō], and to Yōā ^c sā, and to [...]. I have blessed you to YHWH of Samaria and to his [3rd person listed supra’s statue] Asherah.”
D = Kajr3.6 <i>ʔmr · ʔmryw · ʔmr · l^odny · hšlm · ʔt · brtk · lyhwh · tmn · wl^ošrth</i> <i>ybrk · ʔtkm wyšmrk</i> <i>wyhy^cm ʔdn y [d lm?]</i> (Ahituv et al 2012) ³⁷ Pithos B (Scribe 2, Schniedewind 2013: 139)	Kajr3.6 Message of ʔAmaryō: Say to my lord. Are you well? I have blessed you by YHWH of Teman and Asherata. May He bless you and may He keep you, and may He be with the lord of your house (ʔdn bytk).” (Na’aman 2011)	Kajr 3.6 <i>ʔmr · ʔmryw · ʔmr · l^odny · hšlm · ʔt · brtk · lyhwh · tmn · wl^ošrth</i> <i>ybrk · wyšmrk wyhy^cm</i> <i>ʔd[n] by [tk]</i>	Kajr3.6 Message of ʔAmaryō: Say to my lord. Are you well? I have blessed you to YHWH of Teman and his Asherah. May He bless you and may He keep you, and may He be with the lord of your house
E = KA 3:11 1. <i>mš^c?</i> 2. [...] <i>ʔpsqʔʔpl dynšwt</i> Pithos B (2) (Na’aman 2011: 306) (Educational context, Schniedewind 2013:139)	“deliverer”[alphabeth] [.....?]	<i>ʔp ldnšwt</i>	“also to that which is written/ordered/command ed”
F = Kajr3.9 <i>ly[b]rk lyhwh htmn</i>	Kajr3.9 “May he bless you by YHWH of Teman and	Kajr3.9 <i>ly[b]rk lyhwh htmn</i>	Kajr3.9 May he [functionary] bless you to Yahweh of

<p><i>wlʔsrth 2kl ʔsr ʔl mʔš hnn hʔbʔ wʔšpth wntn lh yhw 3klbbh</i></p> <p>Pithos B (3) (Naʾaman 2011: 306)</p>	<p>Asherata. Whatever the ‘favourer of the father and his quiver’ asked from a man – YHW(H) shall give him according to his wish.”</p>	<p><i>wlʔsrth 2kl ʔsr ʔl mʔš hnn hʔbʔ wʔšpth wntn lh yhw 3klbbh</i></p>	<p>Teman and to his [functionary’s] Asherah. All that he asked from a man, favored one of the father and quiver. Also to him Yahweh will give according to his heart“</p>
<p><i>F hnn hʔb wʔšpth (hōnēn hāʾāb weʾašepātō)</i></p>	<p>“the favourer of the father and his quiver” (Naʾaman 2011: 307)</p>	<p><i>hnn hʔb wʔšpth (hōnēn hāʾāb weʾašepātō)</i></p>	
<p>G = Kajr4.1.1 Naʾaman (2011) 1[y]brk · ymm · wysbw [lhm w ...] ytnw · l[y]hwh [h]tymn · wlʔsrth [...] 2hytb · yhwh · hty[mn ...]y hyšb · [h]gpn [whtʔn]h?? h[....] yhw[h] ht[ymn ...]</p> <p>Ahituv (2008) 1) ...y]ʾrk. ymm. wysbʾw[...ytnw. l[y]hwh [] tymn. wlʾsrth[...] 2) ...]hytb. yhwh. hty[mn...y. hytb. ym[m... h[...yhm[...]</p> <p>Zevit (2001) 1) ...]ʾrk. ymm wysbʾw[. wy]tnw. l[y]hwh[.]tymn. wl[...ʾsrt[... 2) ...]hytb. yhwh hty[mn...</p> <p>Ahituv (1992) 1) ...y]ʾrk ymm. yšbʾw[...]tnw. [y]hwh[...tymn. l[...ʾsrt[h... 2) ...]hytb. yhwh[...]</p> <p>Meshel (1992) 2) ...]hytb. yhwh. ht?y?[mn. wʾsrth...]</p> <p>Phoenician Script (Not exclusively Phoenician, Merlo 2013: 377), Scribe 1 [cf. he and taw], Schniedewind 2013: 139)</p>	<p>Kajr4.1 1[May he (God)] bless their days so they may have [plenty] to eat [and ...] recount (praises) to YHWH of the Teman and Asherata. 2YHWH of the Te[man] did good [...], set the vine [and the fig tre]e??. YH[WH] of the Te[man] has [...]</p> <p>Ahituv (2008) 1) [...May] he lengthen19 their days and may they be sated [...may] they recount to [Y]HWH of Têmān and to [his] Asherah[...] 2) [...]YHWH of Têmān, has shown favor [to them (?)...], has bettered their da[ys...]</p> <p>Zevit (2001) «[l]engthen their days and they will be filled, [and they]will give to [Y]HWH Teiman and to Asherat[] do good, YHWH (of) the Tei[man].»</p> <p>Meshel (1992): 1462 “... your (sic!) days may be prolonged and you shall be satisfied... give YHWH of Teman and his ASHERAH ... YHWH of Teman and his ASHERAH favored“</p>	<p>Kajr4.1 1[y]brk · ymm · wysb · r[...y] · yqb · yhwh · ly[hwh] [h]tymn · wlʔsrth [...] 2hytb · yhwh · hty[mn ...]y hyšb · [h]gpn [whtʔn]h?? h[....] yhw[h] ht[ymn ...]</p> <p>(Radovan photo)</p>	<p>Kajr4.1 “May [he] bless days and may he dwell a plai[n][.....] a winevat may he be to Y[ahweh of 38]Teman and to his Asherah (praises) Yahweh of Teman did good he set the vine [and the fig tre]e. Yahweh of Teman has”.</p>
<p><i>hytb yhwh hty[mn m]šy,</i></p>	<p>“YHWH of the Teman did good to my [under]taki[ngs]”</p>	<p><i>hytb yhwh hty[mn m]šy,</i></p>	<p>“YHWH of the Teman did good to my [under]taki[ngs]”</p>
<p>H = KA 4.2 = Kajr4.2 2[....] brš · wbrh · ʔl · br[ʔš] 3[....]r · wmysn · hrm · wydkn · gbnm [....] 4[....] ʔrš · dšdš · ly · ʔbn · sg · wr[ms]</p>	<p>Kajr4.2 “2[....] in earthquake. And when God shone forth in the sum[mit of] 3[....] and the mountains melted and the humps crushed [....] 4[....] he treaded on</p>	<p>Kajr4.2 2[....] brš · wbrh · ʔl · br[ʔš] 3[....]r · wmysn · hrm · wydkn · gbnm [....] 4[....] ʔrš · dšdš · ly · ʔbn · sg · wr[ms]</p>	<p>Kajr4.2 “2[....] in earthquake. And when God shone forth in the sum[mit of] 3[....] and the mountains melted and the humps crushed [....] 4[....] he treaded on</p>

5[....] <i>hkn lbrk · bl · bym</i> <i>mlh̄mh</i> [...] 6[....] <i>l̄sm ʔl</i> <i>bym mlh̄[mh</i>] (Phoenician Script, Scribe 2 [cf. he and taw], Schniedewind 2013: 139)	earth over the stones (<i>eben</i>), moved away (<i>sāg</i>) and tr[ampled] 5[....] he prepared (<i>hēkin</i>) for the blessed one (<i>berūk</i>) of the Lord on the day of battl[e] 6[....] for the name of God on the day of battl[e]”	5[....] <i>hkn lbrk · bl · bym</i> <i>mlh̄mh</i> [...] 6[....] <i>l̄sm ʔl</i> <i>bym mlh̄[mh</i>]	earth over the stones (<i>eben</i>), moved away (<i>sāg</i>) and tr[ampled] 5[....] he prepared (<i>hēkin</i>) for the blessed one (<i>berūk</i>) of the Lord on the day of battl[e] 6[....] for the name of God on the day of battl[e]”
I = KA 4.3 = Kajr4.3 2[xxxx ʔ] <i>hly · yšʔ</i> [...] 3 <i>lydth · whʔ</i> [...] 4[<i>ny · wsq · bn · ʔb[yn]</i> · ʔ[<i>š</i>] <i>dl</i> [....] 5 <i>lbšm · ywn mdʔw</i> [<i>ng</i>] ^ʔ 1 · <i>bd[m</i>] 6 <i>nd · hlp wym</i> [<i>y</i>] <i>bš ʔd</i> [...] 7 [<i>h</i>] <i>rn · bšnt · d[brʔ]</i> r[<i>b · w[h]rb · šht · qyn · š[q]r · wmr̄mh ·</i> [...]	Kajr4.3 “2[... t]ents of Is[raelʔ ...] 3His birth, and he [...] 4A poor and oppressed son of a ne[edy], a poor per[son] 5Their clothing are muddy, his garment defiled with blo[od ...] 6Heap of water has passed and the sea [has dr]ied until? [...] 7[A burn]ing anger in a year of pl[ague], hunger and desolate, the spear destroyed, falsehood and deceit [.....]”	Kajr4.3 2[xxxx ʔ] <i>hly · yšʔ</i> [...] 3 <i>lydth · whʔ</i> [...] 4[<i>ny · wsq · bn · ʔb[yn]</i> · ʔ[<i>š</i>] <i>dl</i> [....] 5 <i>lbšm · ywn mdʔw</i> [<i>ng</i>] ^ʔ 1 · <i>bd[m</i>] 6 <i>nd · hlp wym</i> [<i>y</i>] <i>bš ʔd</i> [...] 7 [<i>h</i>] <i>rn · bšnt · d[brʔ]</i> r[<i>b · w[h]rb · šht · qyn · š[q]r · wmr̄mh ·</i> [...]	Kajr4.3 “2[... t]ents of Is[raelʔ ...] 3His birth, and he [...] 4A poor and oppressed son of a ne[edy], a poor per[son] 5Their clothing are muddy, his garment defiled with blo[od ...] 6Heap of water has passed and the sea [has dr]ied until? [...] 7[A burn]ing anger in a year of pl[ague], hunger and desolate, the spear destroyed, falsehood and deceit [.....]”
3.7 ʔ <i>mny</i>	ʔ <i>bšy</i> Abishai	ʔ <i>bšy</i>	Abishai
3.8 <i>h · šmr̄n</i> [·] <i>šrm</i>	<i>hšmn šrm</i>	“the oil; barley”	“the oil; barley”

KA 1.3 = Kajr1.2-1.3 KA 1.3 <i>ʔbdyw · bn · ʔdn</i> · <i>brkh · ʔl · yhw</i>	Kajr1.3 “To/of Obadyo son of Adna, blessed he be to YHW”	Kajr1.3 <i>ʔbdyw · bn · ʔdn · brkh · ʔl · yhw</i>	Kajr1.3 “To/of Obadyo son of lord, bless him unto Yah[weh]”
KA 1.4 Stone bowl rim <i>šbl hlyw / tbl hlyw</i>	Tubal (son of) Halyo”.	<i>tbl hlyw</i>	Tubal of Halyo

³⁶ It is difficult to reconstruct the way suggested by scholars so far. To make the reconstruction sensible and viable follow this rule: Look at the word Asherata in the second line at the end. Measure the size of the word and measure the size of the aleph to the he with missing words in between at the beginning of line 1. See remainder of a tail of a letter? Measure it and compare it with the Asherata in the 2nd line. It appears to be the /r/. The likelihood seems more supportive for the word “Asherata” to have been damaged here. Utilize the Alamy Stock Photo BP5J1D retrieved from <http://www.alamy.com>.

³⁷ The first inscription on **Pithos B** has already been discussed by scholars (e. g., Renz, 1995, 62–63; Dobbs-Allsopp et al., 2005, 293–294; Ahituv, 2008, 320–322). They said that in light of the color photographs published in the new report (figs. 5.38–5.39), the ten-line inscription should be translated as given here (Ahituv/Eshel/Meshel, 2012, 95–97).

³⁸ The angle of the remaining tail is slanted different for the presumed definite article in the original so that questions are raised here as to the correct reading by scholars of this letter. It is not even clear whether it is Yahweh to be read in front of this word since the distance between the yod and he is too wide. A spelling variant here in G = Kajr4.1.1 for Teman where the text reads Teiman instead of Teman were noted by Na’aman (2011); Ahituv (2008); Zevit (2001) and Ahituv (1992).

imported into the open spaces to connect the missing data.⁴³ They appear on Pythos A. The Kuntillet °Ajrud Pithos A iconography is arranged in three registers similar to what one finds on a Greek vase in the British Museum.⁴⁴ A very interesting example from 575 BCE is from the Toledo Museum of Art with two registers of a boar at the top register, just like Pythos A at Kuntillet °Ajrud, and a lion below with a deer on the same level of the lion.⁴⁵

The ibexes that flank the metallic appearance tree are also comparing very well to some Greek pottery. There is the example of the metallic appearance of a similar tree on a vase with four registers.⁴⁶ The floral decoration is very convincing and a lion and deer

ingredients for use in magic or other reasons (Perrot 2013: 321). The headcrown of Egypt was found at Persepolis also. John Curtis and John Simpson (eds), *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East*. London: I. B. Tauris Publishers. 2010, page 413.

"Compared with ancient examples, the figure from the Persian period underwent subtle stylistic changes, particularly noticeable in the softening of the lines of the face; the creature has lost its fearsome leonine characteristics and appears in a very refined way and the numerous curls are arranged symmetrically". The long beards ended in a coil on amulets from Susa and Persepolis [PT 3659] (Curtis J., Tallis, N. *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*. London: I. B. Tauris Publishers. 2005; no. 263). This means that Kuntillet °Ajrud example is earlier than these Persian influences and yet later than the eight century examples. The square beard is important. See K. Abdi, "Notes on the Iranianization of Bes in the Achaemenid Empire," *Ars Orientalis* Vol. 32 (2002), 133-162, 134 figure 1 for PT 3659 (Persepolis Treasury). The other examples of Persian Bes amulets are Iran National Museum nos. 2024 (Persepolis); 2064 (Persepolis); 7631 (Persepolis). The conquest of Egypt by Darius I caused many Egyptians to travel back and forth (Abdi 2002: 137). This source is of great value for the comparison of the Bes at Kuntillet °Ajrud. It may have been the link for a rest-stop for the caravanserai. A catalogue of Bes figures in the Levant is given by Abdi on pages 152-158. There are 142 examples of Bes in the Levant presented. Bes is absent in the Fortification Texts dating between 509-494 BCE but made its appearance in the Persepolis Treasury Corpus (492-460 BCE) (Abdi 2002: 149). Bes gained popularity after Darius I in Persia. See also Barkay Gabriel; Im MiYoung, "Egyptian Influence on the Painted Human Figures from Kuntillet °Ajrud." *Tel Aviv*, vol. 28 2, (2001): 288-300.

⁴³ Read ankh = life as the common expression for courtly messages in Egypt. Understand not friend but Ra the sungod of Egypt. The message is from a messenger from Egypt courting Israelites to move to Egypt in Jeremiah's time due to the Babylonian threat in the country. It was probably shortly before 597 BCE. Individuals that are addressed to consider going to Egypt are yahelyo and yoasa and a third person. The main content of the message of this Egyptian messenger is: "Blessing to you [the three individuals listed] to Yahweh of Samaria [notice the Egyptian spelling form of the word Samaria] and to his [one of the three individuals'] Astarte. Jeremiah 17 complains that in the period before 597 BCE the Israelites and Judeans had Asherim in the country. Jeremiah also warned the people not to run to Egypt for protection against Babylon since it will not help them. The last king Psammetichus III throne name included an ankh: Ankh-ka-Ra.

⁴⁴ London B 300 (Vase). Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/artifact?name=London+B+300&object=Vase>. It dates to 530-520 BCE and is from Vulci.

⁴⁵ Toledo 1970.2. Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1991.10.0879>. It dates to 575 BCE and is a Corinthian column krater.

appears also on the vessel.

The lotus flower on the top of this “tree” or altar like tree, is similar to a Greek amphora.⁴⁷ The decorative motifs follows the same curling trend. The amphora is divided into four registers in which a similar column metallic looking object with a lotus point at the top is flanked by two griffin-like winged birds. One of the best examples of the metallic appearance of the tree is the Chalcidian amphora dating to 530 BCE at Würzburg.⁴⁸

There is an excellent example of a Rhodian Wild Goat ware from East Greece dating to 625 BCE that is divided into five registers with one and five floral motifs but the other three animals. Nearly exactly the same lotus form and the flower form on the Pithos A from Kuntillet °Ajrud can be seen in register five of this example.⁴⁹

The lion creeping up to the boar is similar to an Attic Black on White Greek vase in the British Museum.⁵⁰

DIAGRAM TO COMPARE ICONOGRAPHY FROM THIS SITE WITH OTHERS

Diagram to illustrate the Comparison in Iconography from Israel and Greece

Kuntillet °Ajrud ?	Attic Greek 625-520 BC	Attic Greek 625-520 BC		Persepolis 501 BC
1 Cow and Calf 	2 Lane 1963 	3 Toledo 1952.65	4 Lane 1963	5 Nimrud, Fort Shalmanassar (Keel, 1980: plate 119). 8 th to 612 BCE ⁵¹

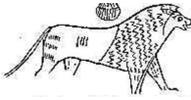
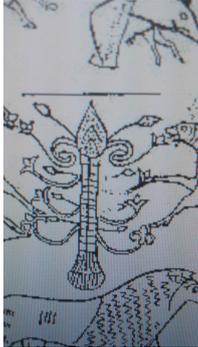
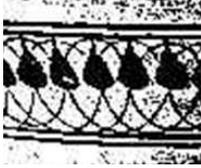
⁴⁶ Louvre E 817. Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1992.06.0012>. It dates to 600-580 BCE and is attributed to the Gorgon Painter.

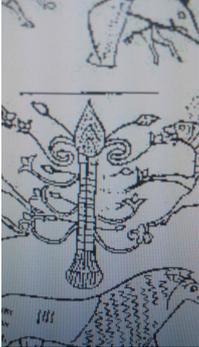
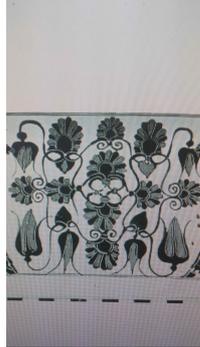
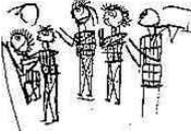
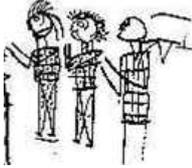
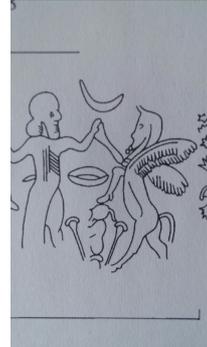
⁴⁷ Malibu 86.AE.52. Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1990.05.0155>. It dates to 570-560 BCE and is an Euboean Black Figure amphora.

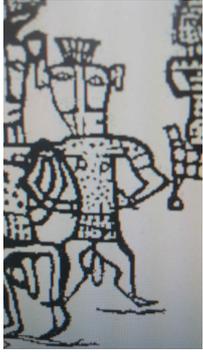
⁴⁸ Würzburg L 146. Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1993.01.0521>. It dates to 530 BCE. It also appeared in publication in Furtwängler-Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei: Auswahl hervorragender Vasenbilder*, Tafeln 101-110. München: Bruckmann, 1902. pl. 102, 1902 (print); and it was rescanned in 1993.

⁴⁹ Malibu 81.AE.83. Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1990.05.0480>. It dates to 625 BCE and comes from East Greece. It is in the J. Paul Getty Museum.

⁵⁰ London B 300 (Vase). Accessed online on the 22th February 2017 at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/artifact?name=London+B+300&object=Vase>. It dates to 530-520 BCE and comes from Vulci.

				
6 Hanging figure	7 Lane 1963	8 Toledo 1952.65	9	10
11 Lion mane style 	12 London 1971.11-1.1 	13	14	15
16 Metallic tree top 	17 RISD 28.060 	18 Malibu 81.AE.83 	19 Lane 1963 	20 IM 127914 Nimrud VI ND 375 
21 Lyre player 	22	23	24	25
26 Metallic tree curls	27 Malibu 86.AE.52	28 Louvre E 817	29 Würzburg L146	30 PFS 38 501

				
<p>31 Wedding process? Fashion audience? Asherah worship?</p> 	<p>32 Pony tail figure</p> 	<p>33</p>	<p>34 BM 118121 Nimrud ND 6361 Nimrud Ivories V⁵²</p> 	<p>35 PFS 38 501 Pony tail & papyrus</p> 

41 Between legs 	42 Louvre A 478 	43	44	45
46 Dotted clothing 	47 Toledo1955.225 	48 Malibu86.AE.146 	49 Cyprus Beset ⁵³ Istanbul A.M 3317T 	50 Louvre 012 ⁵⁴ 
 51 Horse rider	52	53	54	55
56 Kuntillet Flowers 	57 Flowers (L 817) 	58	59	60 Flowers PFS 38

				
61	62 Storage room Malibu 86.AE.265 	63 Woolweaving London E 774 	64	65

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⁵¹ More examples are available from Nimrud. ND 6310 (sketch used by Keel); I.N. V. no. 479; I.N. IV. no. 701.

⁵² In *Nimrud Ivories II* it is said: “In determining the chronological sequences of these ivories we have been guided in the first place by the archaeological evidence of location, that is to say by the circumstances of their distribution in the various buildings which have been excavated at Nimrud. The stratigraphic evidence is, unfortunately, not useful in providing us with a terminus a quo, that is an early terminal date, because with few exceptions these precious relics were conserved until the city fell at the hands of the Babylonians and Medes, in the course of two attacks, first in 614, finally, and, this time for ever, in so far as the Assyrian Government was concerned, in 612 B.C. Indeed a large part of these trophies was found lying in the ash and debris of these terrible destructions” (M. Mallowan and L. G. Davies, *Ivories from Nimrud (1949-1963)* (British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1970), 1.

⁵³ Online accessed at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bes>.

⁵⁴ Online accessed at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bes>. Guillaume Blanchard, July 2004, Fujifilm S6900.

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한글초록

쿤틸렛 아이룻이라는 고고학 유적지의 발굴로 데이터가 포함된 물품, 이미지, 그리고 문헌이 발견됨에 따라 해석학적으로 다른 견해를 가진 양(兩) 진영의 학자들 모두 분주한 시간을 보냈다. 비종교적/무신론적 성향의 고고학자들은 이미지와 문헌상의 점선들을 그들이 문헌에서 찾으려고 이미 선택한 사실에 맞추어 연결하려 시도한다. 그들의 견해에 따르면 그 문헌은 바빌론 포로 귀환 후의 것으로 고고학적 발굴에 의해 "이스라엘의 진정한 종교와 그 신(神)의 전당"이 마침내 모습을 드러낸 것이라고 한다. 다른 견해는 성경 본문에 근거를 둔 것으로 성경 이외의 문서 자료에 의해서도, 기원전 6세기 이후로 한정된 것이 아닌 거의 모든 시대에 걸쳐, 거의 모든 고대 문화 지역에서 지속적으로 지지를 받아온 입장이다. 초기 문서의 존재를 고고학적으로 증명하는 데 따르는 위험 요소로는 사용된 문헌의 보존 능력인

데, 실제적인 그 존재가 아닌 빈약한 데이터로 이끌 수 있기 때문이다. 쿤틸렛 아이룻은 “선지자”라는 단어를 언급하고 있으며 단지 아세라 유적지일 뿐 아니라 바알 유적지이기도 하다. 이는 또한 하박국 3장 (기원전 520년)이나, 예루살렘, 사마리아, 혹은 이보다 더 북쪽 지역에서 유래한 카이르 4.2. 세라믹 (피토이)에서 발견되는 “전사(戰士)로서의 하나님”이라는 주제와 유사한 요소를 지닌 종말론적 문헌을 포함하고 있다. 피토이에 적힌 아세라는 예루살렘에서 쓰여 졌는가 아니면 쿤틸렛 아이룻에서 쓰여진 것인가? 아세라는 또한 석고 문헌에도 나타난다. 이것의 해석에 관하여는 아세라가 종교적 장소였는지, 게임판이었는지, 아니면 여신이나 개인의 이름이었는지 등 학자들 사이에 의견이 분분하다. 이 이름과 함께 나타나는 3인칭 단수 대명사는 에블라나 유가릿에서도 나타난다. 그러나 허무주의자들 사이에서는 이를 “그의 [야훼의] 아세라” 라고 읽는 것이 대다수의 의견이다. 모든 데이터를 재고한 결과 언급된 바 아세라는 야훼의 아세라가 아니라 키르벳 엘 코옴에서 처럼 “그의 [우리아후의] 아세라”를 염두에 두고 기록되었다는 사실을 이 논문을 통해 발견하였다. 이는 우상숭배가 행해졌다는 사실을 부인하는 것이 아니라 선지자들이 (초기 선지자 아모스, 호세아, 이사야 등) 모두 테마 부근의 산지나 사마리아에서 행해진 아세라와 바알 숭배를 정죄하였던 것처럼 기원전 597년에 시작되어 586년까지 계속된 느부갓네살 침공 무렵의 에스겔이나 예레미야 등 후기 선지자들도 동일하게 이를 정죄하였음을 알 수 있다. 이 유적지의 도상(圖像)은 그리스의 꽃병 예술 중 특히 기원전 520년 sru의 특정 암소와 송아지 주제와 긴밀히 연결되어 있었다. 니므롯 상아 제품은 학자들의 주장대로 기원전 9세기 뿐 아니라 9세기에서 6세기에 이르기까지 연대를 추정할 수 있다. 쿤틸렛 아이룻은 직물이 풍부했는데 특히 마와 모가 풍부했다. 에스겔과 같은 선지자들은 그 지역의 우상 숭배자들에게 직물이 중요하였음을 지적해 준다. 허무론적 고고학 우선주의 학자들은 쿤틸렛 아이룻에서 야훼 하나님이 배우자가 있었으며 이스라엘 종교는 다신교에서 유일신교로 변화하였다는 그들의 입장을 증명하기 위한 증거를 찾으려 하는 반면, 본 연구에서는 그들의 탁월한 데이터를 사용하여 이와 반대의 입장에서 포로 귀환 후 생성된 본문 뿐 아니라 그 외의 성경 본문에서도 문서와 데이터가 매우 밀접히 연관되어 있으므로 문서가 없이는 텔에 관련된 고고학을 수행할 수 없음을 입증하려 하였다. 라키시 III 도기 관련 논쟁의 경우 기원전 약 800년 경이나 또는 본 저자가 선호하는 대로 597년 경으로도 연대를 추정할 수 있으며 쿤틸렛 아이룻에는 이런 류의 도기들로 가득 차 있다. 방사성 탄소에 의한 연대 추정에 의하면 기원전 약 800년 뿐 아니라 슈니데빈드과 지적인 대로 기원전 10세기까지로도 거슬러 올라 가 연대를 추정할 수 있다. 싱거는 그 발굴지에서 발견된 페니키아의 영향에 의해 기원전 약 800년을 주장하는 학자들(초기 라키시 III 연대 추정 학자들)과의 대결에서 기원전 약 730년경으로 시간을 약 50년간 움직이게 되었다 (그녀 역시 초기 라키시 III 연대 추정 학자이다). 이 발굴지에 나타나는 신(神)으로는 야훼, 아세라, 바칼과 애굽의 신 베스 등이 포함되었으며 방문객을 위한 종교와 여흥의 시설물을 가진 교역항으로서 그들은 이 언덕의 수원(水源)을 찾은 페니키아인, 이스라엘인, 애굽인, 헬라인 및 다른 방문객들을 전문으로 하였다. 쿤틸렛 아이룻이 성서연구에 매우 유용하므로 허무주의적 여성 고고학자들은 그들의 네트워크를 통하여 아세라의 역사성에 대한 탐구, 과거 성경 본문에서 야훼의 아내를 지워버린 것은 아닌지 이슈 제기, 또한 그들 나름의 어젠다에 따라 오늘날 LGBTQH 에 대한 논의와 세계적 성전환 합법화 여론화, 그리고 성경 본문과는 대조되는 여성의 안수 문제 등을 제기하여 근세의 아

세라에 대한 이미지를 “해방”하려는 시도 등을 전개하고 있다. 반면, 논쟁의 반대편에서 살펴 본다면, 이 발굴지에는 오랜 기간에 걸쳐 초기와 후기 선지자들, 특히 에스겔과 예레미야가 책망한 대로, 산에서 행해진 우상숭배의 모든 잔재가 지문처럼 남아 있다. 연구의 막바지에 데만과 쇼므론은 데만과 사마리아의 도시라는 통상적인 학설을 살펴본 후, 더 설득력 있는 학설에 다다르게 되었는데 창세기 36:11의 경우와 같이 데만을 인물에 연결시킨 예레미야 49:7과 오바댜 1:9에 관한 랍비 레닥의 주석에 근거하여 이것이 인물을 가리키는 것으로 본 것이다. 레닥의 방법을 연장함으로 이스라엘 역사의 여러 단계에서 적어도 세 사람이 쇼므론이란 이름으로 불리었음을 알 수 있다. F = Kajr3.9: “그가(기능상의 호칭) 데만(통상적으로 도시를 가리킴)의 야훼와 그의 (야훼의) 아세라에게 그대의 축복을 비노라” 대신 F = Kajr3.9: “그가(기능상의 호칭) 데만(인물)의 야훼와 그의(데만의) 아세라에게 그대의 축복을 비노라”라고 할 수 있다. 사마리아의 야훼도 마찬가지로 경우이다. 본 연구를 통해 야훼에게 배우자가 있었다는 통상적인 적용이 더 이상 그 비문에 대한 구문적, 어의론적 해석이 될 수 없다는 결론에 이른다.

핵심어: 도상학(圖像學), 아세라 숭배, 바알 숭배, 예언학, 직물, 인물로서의 데만과 쇼므론