

“EAST OF THE JORDAN”

Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures

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“EAST OF THE JORDAN”

TERRITORIES AND SITES OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

by

Burton MacDonald

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“EAST OF THE JORDAN”
Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures

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Contents

| | |
|---|------|
| List of Figures | vi |
| List of Tables | vi |
| Abbreviations | vii |
| Acknowledgments | viii |
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 2 Biblical Site Identification: History and Methodology | 9 |
| 3 Natural Environment | 21 |
| 4 Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, Bela (=Zoar)— the “Cities of the Plain”—and Lasha | 45 |
| 5 Exodus Itineraries: Routes and Related Sites East of the ‘Arabah, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan | 63 |
| 6 Settlement of the Israelite Tribes East of the Jordan | 101 |
| 7 Ammonite Territory and Sites | 157 |
| 8 Moabite Territory and Sites | 171 |
| 9 Edomite Territory and Sites | 185 |
| 10 Gilead Territory and Sites | 195 |
| Appendix: List of Biblical Site Identifications for Jordan | 209 |
| References | 213 |
| Indexes | 275 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|---------|--|-----|
| Fig. 1 | Situation Map of Jordan | 22 |
| Fig. 2 | Major Morphological Units | 24 |
| Fig. 3 | Major Wadis | 28 |
| Fig. 4 | Rainfall Map | 32 |
| Fig. 5 | Soils | 35 |
| Fig. 6 | Plant Geographical Territories | 37 |
| Fig. 7 | The Dead Sea Region | 46 |
| Fig. 8 | Exodus Itineraries East of the 'Arabah, the Dead Sea and the Jordan | 64 |
| Fig. 9 | Israelite Settlements "Beyond the Jordan" | 102 |
| Fig. 10 | Ammonite Territory and Sites | 158 |
| Fig. 11 | Moabite Territory and Sites | 172 |
| Fig. 12 | Edomite Territory and Sites | 186 |
| Fig. 13 | Gilead: North and South of the Jabbok | 196 |

List of Tables

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|----|
| Table 1 | Mean Monthly Temperature in °C | 30 |
| Table 2 | Precipitation in mcm | 30 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| ASGA | Archaeological Survey of Greater 'Amman |
| DH | Deuteronomistic History |
| JVS | Jordan Valley Survey |
| LXX | The Septuagint |
| MI | The Mesha Inscription/The Moabite Stone |
| MT | The Massoretic Text |
| NAB | The New American Bible (1986, 1991) |
| NJB | The New Jerusalem Bible (1985) |
| NOAB | The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books (1991) |
| NRSV | The New Revised Standard Version Bible (1991) |
| OL | Old Latin |
| P | Priestly writer |
| REV | The Revised English Bible (1989) |
| SGNAS | Southern Ghors and Northeast 'Arabah Archaeological Survey |
| WHS | Wadi al-Hasa Archaeological Survey |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present work stems, in part, from an interest in the archaeology of Jordan that goes back to the late 1970s when I worked as an area supervisor at Bab adh-Dhra', an Early Bronze Age site on the eastern side of the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression (see Chapter 2). My interest at the time (as it continues to be) was not merely archaeological but also biblical since my training was primarily in Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis on the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures. A reading of that body of literature convinced me of the importance of the area "east of the Jordan" (1 Kings 17.3) relative to biblical peoples, places, and events.

One cannot do archaeological work in Jordan for long and have an interest in biblical studies without raising questions relative to the location of the biblical places and events that are so much a part of the narratives, for example, of Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and the major prophets. And this interest is one that Christians, Jews, and Muslims share. But it is not only the student of the Bible who wishes to know the identity of the site that he/she is surveying and/or excavating. All archaeologists will, at one time or another, ask the question, "What was the name (or, What were the names....) of this site during its periods of occupation?"

Abel (1967), Glueck (1934; 1935; 1939a; 1951), and Simons (1959) produced major works on biblical site identification that are of relevance to areas east of the Jordan River. There is much in these volumes that is of value and, thus, they will be referenced throughout this work. These volumes, however, were completed before the late 1960s, a period that can be seen as a watershed as far as archaeological work in Jordan is concerned. Moreover, the segments of these works that deal with areas in Transjordan depend, to a large extent, on Glueck's own archaeological survey work, namely, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine," in the 1930s and 1940s. This work, however, is now dated and does not reflect current archaeological reality. For example, Glueck posited that the Early Iron history of South Gilead and Ammon paralleled that of Moab and Edom, "a flourishing period between the thirteenth and eighth centuries B.C., and a period of increasing deterioration culminating in final ruin probably during the first part of the sixth century B.C." (1939: 269; see also his 1934: 81–83; 1935: 137–40; 1951: 423). In the 1960s and 1970s, Glueck revised somewhat his

position on the archaeological histories of Ammon, Moab, and Edom in the light of new archaeological data (1970). However, his positions on the location of biblical sites continue to be repeated in biblical atlases and geographies. Furthermore, Glueck’s excavation of Tall al-Khalayfi in the spring months of 1938–1940 (1938a; 1938b; 1939b; 1940; 1965b) led him to identify the site with biblical Ezion-geber (Num 33.35–36; Deut 2.8; 1 Kings 9.26; 2 Chr 8.17; 20.36), date it to the tenth century, and associate it with Solomon (1970: 109–10). However, Pratico’s reassessment of Glueck’s excavated material and reports on the site has led him to date it no earlier than the eighth century B.C. (1982; 1985; 1992). But the identification of Ezion-geber with Tall al-Khalafyi, as if the site dated to the time of Solomon, is still made (see, for example, Pritchard 1987: 224).

Beginning in the late 1960s, archaeological excavations and survey projects have revealed an archaeological history for the area “east of the Jordan” that is, in many cases, at variance with Glueck’s scenario. For example, the results of Mittmann’s survey work in northern Jordan in 1966–1967 (1970), Ibach’s work in the Hisban region in 1973, 1974, and 1976 (1987), McGovern’s survey and excavations in the Baq’ah Valley just north of ‘Amman beginning in 1977 (1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1989; 1992; 1993; 1997), Miller’s survey of the al-Karak plateau in 1978, 1979 and 1982 (1991), the writer’s work between 1979 and 1983 along the south bank of Wadi al-Hasa (1988), in the Southern Ghors and Northeast ‘Arabah in 1985 and 1986 (1992), and in the Tafila-Busayra region beginning in 1999, and Jobling’s work in the 1980s (1989) in the al-‘Aqaba to Ma’an region caused many to question Glueck’s conclusions relative to the archaeological history of Jordan. Moreover, numerous excavations, the results of which will be referred to repeatedly in this work, over the past thirty years provide results for specific sites that are not in keeping with Glueck’s survey results for these same sites (see, for example, Sauer 1985; 1986). This all leads to the need to reassess biblical site identification in Jordan in the light of recent findings. This reassessment is evident in the work of such scholars as Aharoni (1979), Bartlett (1989), Dearman (1989b), Hübner (1992a), Kallai (1986), Knauf (1991a; 1992a), Lemaire (1981; 1987a; 1992a; 1992b), MacDonald (1994a), Miller (1983; 1989a; 1991), Mittmann (1970; 1995), and Peterson (1980). The work of these researchers and their positions on the identification of specific biblical sites will be mentioned frequently in subsequent chapters.

The area “beyond the Jordan toward the east” (Josh 12.1) is pivotal in the first book of the Bible. For example, in the stories about Abraham and his nephew Lot, the latter, after separating from his uncle, settled among

the “cities of the Plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom” (Gen 13.12), a region generally associated with the area east of the Dead Sea. It is from this area that the four eastern kings took Lot (Genesis 14) and to where Abraham subsequently returned him (Gen 14.16). Both Abraham and Lot are main figures in the stories of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19.1–38) and after this event it is in the same general area that the biblical writer sets the narrative of Lot’s fathering of Moab and Ammon (Gen 19.30–38). Later on in the Genesis’ account, the inheritance of Esau, Isaac’s son and Jacob’s twin brother, is said to be in the land of Edom (27.39). Moreover, Esau becomes the eponymous ancestor of the Edomites (36.8–9). Reconciliation between Jacob, upon his return from Paddan-aram (31.18), and Esau takes place in Transjordan (32.1–33.20). And in the final chapter of the book, one tradition has Joseph holding a seven day period of mourning for his father Jacob “beyond the Jordan” (50.10).

It is “on the east side of the Jordan” (Deut 4.41; 1 Chr 6.78) that the biblical authors place most of the events associated with the wanderings of the Israelites, under the leadership of Moses, after their departure from Kadesh-barnea (Num 20.1–29) until their arrival “in the Plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho” (Num 22.1). The area “on the east side of the Jordan” (Deut 4.41; 1 Chr 6.78) is where the Israelite tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh are said to have settled permanently. Moreover, it is the homeland of several of Israel’s enemies, for example, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.

This volume is intended as a reference tool for all those interested in the location of Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures’ territories and sites east of the Jordan. To this end, it presents the arguments for and against such locations. For example, the location of the site of Heshbon, the capital of the Amorite king Sihon (Num 21.26), is one that is debated. This is due, to a large extent, to various approaches to the biblical text. The writer will present various opinions relative to the site’s location and choose what appears to be the best candidate based on information provided by the biblical text (and sometimes extra-biblical literary information), toponymic considerations, and archaeology (see Chapter 5). On the other hand, the event of the death of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11.17) is generally acknowledged to have taken place at Rabbath-ammon, the capital of the Ammonites (see Chapter 7). The presentation will, thus, be straightforward.

Of course, there can be different approaches to the identification of biblical sites “from the Jordan eastward” (2 Kings 10.33) and the present work is just one of these approaches. The present approach is one that attempts to treat all the territories and sites of the Old Testament/Hebrew

Scriptures in Transjordan in a systematic fashion. It will, thus, follow the order of the canonical books of the Bible.

One of the assumptions of this volume is that the biblical text was written for a religious rather than an historical purpose. This, however, does not deny that there is history contained in the Bible. History, however, in the writer’s opinion, is generally used in the Bible as a vehicle to convey religious beliefs.

Another assumption of this work is that the authors and editors of biblical texts wrote both to inform, and to shape the ideas of, their contemporary audience. They thus provided narrative contexts that had meaning for their readers. A story that refers to Sihon (Num 21.21–32) or Jephthah (Judges 11), for example, would be set in a territory or at a site known to the writer and his audience rather than at a site necessarily occupied during the time of the person in question.

My experience in the field of Near Eastern archaeology has led me to the general conclusion that the biblical stories about Transjordanian places and events best fit into the Iron II period and later. This conclusion comes from a general knowledge of the results of current archaeological work throughout Jordan and specifically from my archaeological survey work south of Wadi al-Hasa (MacDonald et al. 1988), in the Southern Ghors and Northeast ‘Arabah (MacDonald et al. 1992), and in the Tafila-Busayra region (beginning in 1999). The findings of the above-listed surveys indicate that there are few, if any, Late Bronze Age materials and a paucity of Iron I Age materials in the areas surveyed. On the other hand, the Iron II Age is well-represented in all these areas. Thus I was forced to question the traditionally held opinion that the Moses-led group, on its way from Egypt to the land of Canaan, passed through/around Edom (and Moab) during the Late Bronze-Iron I periods (MacDonald 1994b). On the basis of recent archaeological work, I concluded that a Moses-led group would have encountered little, if any, opposition if it had passed through the territories in question during the periods traditionally associated with this event. However, recent archaeological evidence indicates that opposition to such a passage would be understandable during the Iron II period. Thus, the narratives relative to the exodus best fit the settlement history of the area during the Iron II rather than the previous two archaeological periods. Similarly, the narrative of Israel’s defeat of Sihon and the capture of his capital city of Heshbon would fit better the archaeological history of this site during the Iron II rather than the Late Bronze–Iron I period (see Chapter 5). This does not mean that the present writer denies that there are older traditions behind the biblical narratives. However, the texts in question were

most probably written in light of the settlement conditions that prevailed in the Iron II period and probably towards the end of that period. Thus, the assumption here is that although the biblical writer may have used material that predates his time, he set that material into a context, namely, the Iron II and later periods, that would be meaningful to his readers.

The method of treatment, as mentioned previously, chosen for this work is one that follows the order of the canonical books of the Bible. Thus, after a treatment of the history of biblical site identification, especially as it pertains to the area of Transjordan, the methodology that I employ is set forth (Chapter 2). This methodology, of course, is dependent on the work of many others, including as mentioned previously Abel, Glueck, and Simons, who have sought to identify the location of biblical sites both west and east of the Jordan River. Such dependency is acknowledged throughout the work.

I think it is important to locate biblical sites in their natural environment since this will hopefully help the reader understand why a group would choose to camp and/or settle where it did. To this end, Chapter 3 treats the natural environment of Jordan. It was the environment that determined to a large extent a particular biblical group's destiny, political structures, natural borders, and so forth. And the question will invariably be asked, "has the environment changed since this area/site was settled in antiquity?" I think that it has! The evidence for such a position is presented in this chapter.

Some of the earliest mentioned sites located "east of the Jordan" are Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (=Zoar) (and the associated site of Lasha), that is, the "cities of the Plain" (Gen 13.12) associated, as indicated previously, with Abraham and Lot. These sites are the subject of Chapter 4. In this and subsequent chapters, various scholarly opinions will be presented as to the location of the sites and territories in question. I will present these opinions and take a position relative to each site and territory's location based on textual, toponymic, and artifactual grounds.

The stories of the exodus itineraries of the wandering Israelites follow next in the canonical books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. To a large extent, these itineraries deal with routes and related sites east of Wadi 'Arabah, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan River. They are treated in Chapter 5.

It is in Transjordan that the Israelite tribes are said to have settled first before crossing the Jordan River. Indeed, as mentioned previously, three tribes, namely, Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, are not allocated territory west of the Jordan and remain as settled populations of Transjordan. The intent in Chapter 6 is to determine the territory and sites in which the biblical writers posit that these tribes lived, either temporarily

or permanently. The reader must keep in mind that the biblical writer, in assigning a territory and sites to Reuben, for example, may have been motivated by religious and nationalistic purposes.

The Israelites had competitors for territories and sites east of the Jordan. These competitors included the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites. Where is the territory that the Bible sees as the possession of these groups? And what are the sites that the biblical authors posit as places, that is, towns and villages, that these groups possessed? Chapters 7–9 are devoted to answering these questions.

Finally, the toponym Gilead appears frequently in the biblical text, either in relation to the Israelite tribes or to one of its neighbors located “east of the Jordan.” It is treated in Chapter 10.

The Appendix, “East of the Jordan Sites and their Identification,” serves as a summary of the conclusions of the work.

Spelling of Arab toponyms in this study is based on the transliteration system used by The Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre. It follows a system adopted by the United Nations, by the Board on Geographic Names (a division of the United States Defense Department), and by the British Permanent Committee on Geographic Names whose aim is a consistent method of writing Arabic names in English based on formal Arabic.

Spelling in this work also follows the conventions outlined in Zaghloul (1988) and the practice of the most recent volumes of the *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* and *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*. The most frequent examples of this practice are Tall for Tell and Khirbat for Khirbet. Diacritics are not used, except where the name is taken as an Arabic word. Similarly, general references are spelled Tell and Khirbet, unless the place names are taken directly from printed works. The most obvious exception to this practice is the spelling of place names from quoted works. For example, biblical quotations are generally taken from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (NOAB), eds. B. M. Metzger and R. E. Murphy (New Revised Standard Version), New York: Oxford University, 1991. One example will suffice: In NOAB the spelling is Medeba while the standard translation of the Arabic toponym is Madaba. The reader will thus find two spellings for the toponym.

Eusebius’ *Onomastikon* is referred to frequently throughout the work. All references are from Klostermann’s edition, *Eusebius: Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1904, 1966).

Site coordinates found in the Appendix are those of the Universal Transverse Mercator. These coordinates are generally taken from *JADIS* (*The*

Jordan Antiquities Database and Information System): A Summary of the Data, ed. G. Palumbo, Amman: Department of Antiquities of Jordan and the American Center of Oriental Research, 1994.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL SITE IDENTIFICATION: HISTORY AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is methodology, specifically the scientific study of texts, toponyms, and artifactual evidence employed in the identification of biblical sites. First, I will review the efforts of pilgrims and researchers to determine the location of biblical settlements and sites where biblical events took place, giving special emphasis to the region east of the Jordan River. In addition, I will consider several of the pitfalls in biblical site identification as they pertain to Jordan.

HISTORY OF BIBLICAL SITE IDENTIFICATION RELATIVE TO JORDAN

The fall of Jerusalem and with it the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 understandably resulted in a decreased number of Jewish pilgrimages to the land of the Bible. These events did not bring the tradition of such pilgrimages to an end (Mazar 1975), however, as rabbis encouraged them to help keep alive the hope of national rebirth (Alexander 1974: 29, 341 n. 43).

In the first centuries of the common era, Christian pilgrims also journeyed to Palestine in search of sites of biblical significance, and with the recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, these pilgrimages gained special importance (Wilkinson 1977; Hunt 1984; Silberman 1995: 11). At this time, biblical sites were identified primarily as a stimulus to religious sentiment (Bliss 1907: 40–41).

The first serious attempts at biblical site identification were made possible by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (A.D. 263–339), and Jerome, a monk of Bethlehem (ca. A.D. 345–420). Eusebius prepared the *Onomastikon* (Klostermann 1966), an alphabetical index of all the names of towns mentioned in the Bible, which Jerome translated from Greek into Latin in the early fifth century (Bliss 1907: 41; Wilkinson 1977: 1–2). The Madaba Mosaic Map, dated to the second half of the sixth century and intended for pilgrims, is another good indication of early Christian interest in the location of biblical sites (Saller and Bagatti 1949; O’Callaghan 1953; Avi-Yonah 1954, 1977; Gold 1958; Donner and Cüppers 1977; Wilkinson 1977; North

1979: 85; Piccirillo 1989a: 91–93; 1993: 997–99; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998). With the advent of Islam in the seventh century, Muslim travelers also became interested in the location of biblical sites (Le Strange 1965; Duri 1990). And when the Crusaders brought the Holy Land under Christian rule between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, biblical site identification was given new impetus (Bliss 1907: 75). During the early part of Ottoman control of biblical lands (A.D. 1516–1918), however, efforts to identify biblical locations nearly ceased.

The primary goal of early explorers was to find the places where holy events had occurred. Once found, or thought to have been found, the sites were simply described for those at home (Ben-Arieh 1972: 82). This trend continued until the early nineteenth century when, beginning with Napoleon's invasion of Palestine in 1799, the Holy Land was rediscovered. For many scholars, this event marks the advent of the modern era in Palestine and in the entire Middle East; in the opinion of Ben-Arieh, for example, Napoleon's invasion was a turning point in the knowledge and study of the region (1972: 83).

Clarke (1810–23), one of the new group of explorers, arrived in Palestine with the British fleet after the defeat of Napoleon at Acre in 1799. His interest was in locating the sites of biblical history through first-hand comparison of the biblical landscape with scriptural sources (Silberman 1995: 13). During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, he was followed by a number of explorers to Old and New Testament sites, including Seetzen (beginning in 1802), Burckhardt (in 1810–1812), Buckingham (in 1816), and Irby and Mangles (in 1817–1818).

Seetzen traveled extensively in Jordan. He understood the importance of Arabic place names in identifying ancient sites and thus was able to see many ancient names in their Arabic guise (King 1983: 4). He recognized the New Testament period site Macherus in the Arabic toponym *Mukawer* (Seetzen 1854–55, 1859), and discovered the remains of ancient Gerasa (= Jarash) and Philadelphia (= 'Amman) (King 1983: 4).

Burckhardt (1822), best known for his rediscovery of Petra, traveled through Jordan disguised as an Arab sheikh. He moved Arabic toponymy an important step forward by following a careful system of transcription for Arabic names, something Seetzen had not done (Ben-Arieh 1972: 84; Rainey 1978: 1). Burckhardt, along with Seetzen, initiated the modern topographical study of Palestine (King 1983: 4).

Robinson and Smith brought to the field both profound biblical scholarship in philology and linguistics and a thorough knowledge of Arabic. Trained in Hebrew and Greek as well as in biblical studies, Robinson ar-

gued that in order to study the country it is essential to recognize the relationship between its physical background and its historical development. Smith was a former pupil of Robinson and a natural linguist fluent in the spoken dialects of the eastern Mediterranean. During his ministry in Beirut he translated the Bible into Arabic.

Robinson and Smith joined forces in Cairo in 1838, planning to travel extensively through Sinai to Palestine in order to study both the physical and historical geography of the Holy Land. They hoped to identify as many biblical sites as possible (King 1983: 2), and succeeded in matching dozens of names from the Bible and post-biblical sources with those used by the native population. Their three-volume report on this trip (Robinson and Smith 1841) made use of Smith's detailed linguistic notes on Arabic toponyms (Smith 1841a; 1841b). This extensive gazette of place names, including the results of journeys Smith made independently, appears as an appendix in only the first edition of the 1841 Robinson and Smith publication. In Kampffmeyer's opinion (1892: 12), the gazette is the most reliable witness to Arabic toponymy in Syria-Palestine compiled during the entire nineteenth century.¹

The work of Robinson and Smith (1841; Robinson, Smith et al. 1856) is generally recognized as foundational for the study of nineteenth century Palestine, and Robinson is often called the "father of research" on the country (Ben-Arieh 1972: 85). His knowledge of ancient sources enabled him to formulate some linguistic rules governing the transformation of place names (Rainey 1978: 2; Silberman 1995: 13). At this stage in the exploration of Palestine, however, Robinson and others failed to recognize the importance of tells, which they thought were natural formations (Ben-Arieh 1972: 85; King 1983: 3–5).

Guérin (1868–75), who visited Palestine on five occasions between 1852 and 1875, followed Robinson in attempting to identify biblical sites by means of details in the landscape. Like his predecessor, however, he failed to recognize the significance of tells (King 1983: 5). After 1863, the map of the Holy Land that Guérin produced replaced Robinson's equally incomplete archaeological and topographical maps (Ben-Arieh 1972: 88).

Working in Palestine in 1868, Palmer (1871; Conder 1881) recorded every geographic term he could collect. Due to his efforts, the Survey of Western Palestine (Conder and Kitchener 1881–83) is a major witness to the toponymy of the area in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Conder (1889) began the Survey of Eastern Palestine in 1881 but political circumstances prevented its completion (Rainey 1978: 2; King 1983: 8).

Merrill (1881) and Schumacher (1888; 1889a; 1889b) explored Transjordan at the end of the nineteenth century. Schumacher, a German engineer, mapped Transjordan over a twenty year period, thus completing Conder's work. Sometimes Schumacher worked for the Palestine Exploration Fund, at other times for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land, organizations that came into existence in 1865 and 1877 respectively. To a large extent, Schumacher's mapping activities were made possible by Turkish Railways, which employed him as an engineer-surveyor (Ben-Arieh 1972: 90–91). Steuernagel (1927) later reworked the place names in Schumacher's lists.

Brünnow and von Domaszewski (1904–1909) and Musil (1907–1908), at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries respectively, carried forward site identification work in this region. The latter, especially, recorded the toponyms of his time with care and competence (Knauf 1991a: 282).

While the search for biblical sites during the nineteenth century depended on information in the written sources, and on contemporary Arabic place names which often preserve the memory of ancient names, a new ingredient was added during the first half of the twentieth century. Beginning in about the 1920s, the significance and stratified nature of tells came to be generally recognized. Ceramic dating had been developed to the extent that the main archaeological periods could be distinguished, and archaeological evidence began to be emphasized in discussions of biblical site identification (Miller 1983: 120).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, research institutes in Jerusalem began to organize intensive field trips for the study of topographical and archaeological problems. The work of the *École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem*, founded in 1890, resulted in the comprehensive, two-volume work of Abel (1967) in 1933 and 1938 on the geography of Palestine. Dalman and Alt led annual excursions for the German Evangelical Church's *Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes*, founded in 1902. Glueck's work on behalf of the American Schools of Oriental Research (established in 1900) during the 1930s and 1940s (1934; 1935; 1939a; 1951) was of special importance for biblical site identification in Jordan. Klein, Maisler (Mazar), and Yeivin were among the leading Jewish scholars of this period, and their publications and surveys contributed to a wider understanding of toponyms (Rainey 1978: 2).

With the blossoming of archaeological research in Jordan during the past thirty-five years, a number of researchers have turned their attention to the relationship between new discoveries and the location of biblical

sites. Among these scholars are Aharoni (1979), Bartlett (1989), Dearman (1989), Hübner (1992a), Kallai (1986), Knauf (1991a; 1992a), Lemaire (1981; 1987; 1992a; 1992b), MacDonald (1994a), Miller (1983; 1989a; 1991), Mittmann (1970; 1995), Ottosson (1969), and Peterson (1980). The work of these researchers and their positions on the identification of specific biblical sites will be mentioned frequently in subsequent chapters.

PRINCIPLES OF IDENTIFICATION

Three factors come into play in the identification of an ancient settlement: 1) topographical and historical information derived from ancient written sources; 2) analysis of the site's name, development, and preservation in the area; and 3) artifactual evidence recovered by excavation and/or survey (Grollenberg 1956: 19–20; Aharoni 1979: 124; Miller 1983: 119–20).

Topographical and Historical Information Derived from Ancient Written Sources

A researcher must begin with the biblical text(s), both early and late, in which the name is mentioned. One must first examine the Massoretic Text (MT) in which the toponym is preserved, keeping in mind the latest advances in the study of Hebrew phonetics and morphology. Interpretation can be controlled by the version(s) used, and this is especially true of the older manuscripts of the Septuagint (Rainey 1978: 12).

Each biblical text dealing with a particular site must be examined critically. It must be studied in relation to all other texts dealing with that site since identification cannot be made without consideration of the relationships among neighboring locations. The biblical text has undergone changes during the long period of its transmission, and despite the care taken in the process of transmission, some errors affecting place names may have crept into the text. This is especially true of place names that are mentioned only once in the Bible and in which occupation ceased prior to their mention (Aharoni 1979: 115). In cases where several copies of the same list are preserved, it is possible to trace the errors that have crept into the text during its transmission.

The study of biblical texts will often locate a site only generally, since they seldom provide exact geographical details. Though a text will sometimes supply information about a site that helps identify it, for the most part sites are mentioned only in lists of geographical names or incidentally

in relation to some other matter without their locations being accurately fixed. Aharoni cautions that in the case of boundary lists and roads, one ought not to expect a perfectly clear geographical arrangement (1979: 125).

A biblical text must not always be viewed as contemporaneous with the events, peoples and places with which it deals. For example, the biblical narrative of the Israelites' defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon (Num 21.21–26; Deut 1.4) may or may not recount an actual historical event. The biblical exegete must therefore attempt to determine a date of origin for the narrative in which the site is mentioned, as well as the biblical author's intention in using the narrative. Researchers must evaluate critically the periods in which, according to the text, a particular settlement was in existence (Aharoni 1979: 128). However, the usefulness of biblical passages in identifying sites does not depend solely on their historical accuracy; even novelists provide precise geographical information about the people and events in their books.

To augment the biblical information on a site's location, geographers must look for topographical information in documents earlier than, contemporary with or later than the biblical text. Such a search can be fruitful since there is a great deal of information about ancient Palestine in documents of all kinds, including cuneiform tablets (see e.g., Luckenbill 1926; 1927; Pritchard 1969), commemorative stela such as the Mesha Inscription (see e.g., Dearman 1989), ancient records of travel, and so forth.

Records of Egyptian campaigns in Palestine and Syria (see e.g., Pritchard 1969; Ahituv 1984) may provide information about a site and its location. These records contain lists diligently compiled by chroniclers who accompanied pharaohs on their expeditions to conquered towns. Similarly, scribes often accompanied Assyrian conquerors, and their annals provide a further source of information on site location (Grollenberg 1956: 20). The Egyptian and Assyrian documents are contemporaneous with the settlements and events they describe, and they have therefore not undergone the transmission history that the biblical text has experienced. In their use, however, a geographer must be acquainted with the principles adopted by chroniclers, who were usually scrupulous about details, for transcribing foreign names (Grollenberg 1956: 20).

The Targums (Alexander 1974) and Talmud (Neubauer 1868) attempt to identify biblical sites since the location of some sites had a direct bearing on *halakah* (McNamara 1972: 34), and their identifications must be taken into consideration. One must be cautious, though, since apparently the Targums and Talmud identified sites with places in existence in their time in order to make the scriptures intelligible to their contemporaries (Alexander

1974: 5; McNamara 1972: 34). The Jewish writer Flavius Josephus (ca. A.D. 37–100) deserves special mention since his work contains a great deal of geographical information that may help in the task of site location (Möller and Schmitt 1976).

In their biblical commentaries, early Christian writers passed on various traditions about biblical sites. These traditions were collected by Eusebius, who wrote on the geography of the Bible and eventually compiled the *Onomastikon*, which provides information about the name of the site during his time and frequently gives the distance(s) between biblical sites and other locations better known to his contemporaries. For example, the *Onomastikon* locates Esbus (= Heshbon) in the mountains, a distance of twenty Roman miles from Jericho (84: 3–5). Jerome, in translating Eusebius' index into Latin, enriched it with explanatory material and made occasional corrections, though he omitted some places that Eusebius notes. The *Onomastikon*, and Jerome's translation and emendations to it in his *Liber Locorum*, thus provided the western world with a guide to the land of the Bible (Bliss 1907: 42; Grollenberg 1956: 20; Wilkinson 1977; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 71). In addition, the testimony of the pilgrim Egeria, dated to about A.D. 400, and the accounts of visits of Peter the Iberian to the monastery on Mount Nebo in the fifth century are important works for locating the sites associated with the last days of Moses (Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 72–78).

The *Notitia Dignitatum* is a list of all high offices in the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire, dated to the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries. Its toponyms and information on the distribution of army units along the eastern Roman frontier makes it of value in the location of biblical sites (Mann 1976: 8; Dodgeon and Lieu 1991: 340).

The Madaba Mosaic Map reveals that Christians in sixth century Palestine were interested in biblical site location (Saller and Bagatti 1949; O'Callaghan 1953; Avi-Yonah 1954, 1977; Gold 1958; Donner and Cüppers 1977; Wilkinson 1977; North 1979: 85; Piccirillo 1989a: 91–93; 1993: 997–99). The map can therefore be helpful in site identification.

Bliss (1907: 42–43, 107–10) and Grollenberg (1956: 20) cite the German Dominican Burchardus de Mont Sion (1896) whose work *A Description of the Holy Land*, written about 1283, can be of value for site identification (Grabois 1982). Burchardus knew all the earlier onomastics and descriptions and had a complete command of the Arabic language. He made many journeys on foot throughout the Holy Land and contributed greatly to the knowledge of Palestine.

Finally, the work of early Arab geographers must be considered, as they frequently had an interest in biblical places (Le Strange 1965).

Aharoni (1979: 125–28) counsels researchers to be cautious when handling sources whose avowed aim is the identification of historical sites. He asserts that one cannot always trust the traditions available to these writers, though their work contains valuable mentions and descriptions of contemporary place names.

Analysis of a Site's Name, Development, and Preservation in the Area

In the area of Semitic studies, toponymical research focused on the survival of biblical names in the contemporary Middle East (Kampffmeyer 1892) in order to determine the phonetic and linguistic processes to which place names were subjected during the course of their transmission.

A study of contemporary Arabic place names is necessary for biblical site identification since modern Arabic toponyms in Jordan and Israel are thought to continue the tradition of biblical names. Containing important historical, linguistic and cultural information, they are quite possibly the most important resource for site identification. Geographers must therefore consider the results of toponymic investigations of the origin, development and transmission of biblical site names into contemporary Arabic place names.

In the biblical text, the language of place names is Hebrew. Since biblical Hebrew is similar to the earlier Canaanite language of Palestine, there would be little difference in the geographical names transmitted between the Bronze and Iron Ages in Palestine. But Hebrew was replaced to a large extent by Aramaic during the Persian and Roman periods and, after the beginning of the Islamic period, Aramaic was in turn replaced by Arabic. Many names, including place names, would have altered as a result of changes in the spoken languages. Some modifications had to do with differences in the pronunciation of certain consonants while others derived from different methods of word formation in Aramaic and Arabic. Kampffmeyer (1892) established the rules governing these changes by comparing ancient and modern geographical names in cases where the identification was certain, and explaining the changes in terms of linguistic and phonetic laws. Kampffmeyer drew on the work of Smith (1841a; 1841b), Palmer (1881), and the Palestine Exploration Fund Map (which is based on the work of Smith and Palmer) to determine the exact Arabic spelling and pronunciation. To the works which Kampffmeyer used may now be added the material assembled by the Survey Department under the British Mandate, along with the list of antiquity sites published by the Mandatory De-

partment of Antiquities, based upon the investigations of its own regional supervisors (Aharoni 1979: 118–19).²

By studying a complete corpus of contemporary Semitic place names from Lebanon, Wild (1973) established a sound stratigraphy for the toponyms of Syria and Palestine that distinguishes a Canaanite, an Aramaic, and an Arabic stratum. Knauf has refined but not altered this stratigraphy for Jordan by introducing substrata such as “pre-standard Arabic” (1991a).

Due to transcription problems, the original form of a toponym is not always certain. A researcher must avail herself/himself of the many important resources outlined above in order to bridge the gaps among the Canaanite/Hebrew, Aramaic, and later Arabic toponymy (Rainey 1978: 12).

Categories of Biblical Toponyms. Although it is not always possible to arrive conclusively at the origin and meaning of toponyms, many of them can be explained with reasonable certainty. On the basis of scholarly explanations, researchers have attempted to classify biblical toponyms. Due to the nature of the evidence, and since more than one interpretation is possible, there are a variety of classification systems.

Borée (1930) carried out important work on the collection, analysis and classification of Canaanite and Israelite geographical names from Palestine (Rainey 1978: 5–6; Aharoni 1979: 129 n. 3). Prior to Borée, Gray (1902) provided a fourfold classification of place names: 1) those originating in religious ideas or practices (Beth-baal-meon/Baal-meon/Beth-meon, Beth-bamoth, and Penuel); 2) those derived from the natural or artificial features of a place ('Arabah, Argob, al-Jubeihah, and Sela'); 3) those derived from names of trees, plants, and animals (Abel-shittim and Beth-nimrah); and 4) those derived from social, political, and industrial characteristics of a place, e.g., 'Ir, Kiriath, Zoar, and ar-Rabbah. More recently, Aharoni classified biblical place names on the basis of their meaning and origin as: 1) divine names (Beth-baal-meon/Baal-meon and Baal-Peor); 2) names of men or clans (Penuel); 3) definition of a region or an area, i.e., names which describe the nature of a site and its surroundings (Mizpah/Mizpeh, Rehoboth, and Kedemoth); 4) agricultural features such as soil (Tob, Madmen, and Beth-jeshimoth); 5) special buildings (Mahanaim and Succoth); 6) general characteristics (ar-Rabbah and Zoar); 7) names of animals (Nimrin); and 8) names of plants (Abel-shittim; Aharoni 1979: 108–10).³ Rainey's (1978: 6–7) categories of place names are similar to Aharoni's. Knauf, on the other hand, organizes Near Eastern place names on the basis of land formation, flora, fauna, land usage, social and political status, religious status, and historical events (1992a: 602–3).

Important cultural, social and religious information is contained in toponyms (Gray 1902; Knauf 1992a: 601–2). Knowledge of the category into which a toponym falls can often help in determining the nature of a site and, therefore, its location.

Continuity and Transference of Toponyms in the Ancient Near East. There is general agreement among those who study the toponymy of the ancient Near East that the names of towns and villages have been preserved with amazing consistency (Grollenberg 1956: 19). In this connection, Aharoni states, "this continuity of the settlement was in force throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages, in spite of long intermissions in the respective histories of various settlements" (Aharoni 1979: 105). Aharoni thinks there are two main reasons why the names of places and regions were preserved in Palestine over thousands of years with surprisingly few changes: 1) during the various periods of its history the country's residents spoke Semitic languages more or less closely related to one another; and 2) in spite of the changes that took place in the population's composition, there was usually a continuity of settlement so that each new wave of residents inherited the older names from its predecessors (1979: 107). It is this continuity of place names up to the present day that has made possible most of the certain biblical site identifications.

But not every name that appears on a map of Palestine is attached to the tell or ruin whose archaeological remains suit the period of the historical town. There are instances where the name has been transferred to a nearby location (Grollenberg 1956: 19). Aharoni (1979) and Rainey (1978) hold that it is possible to establish two rules relative to the transference of toponyms. The first rule states that the name may be preserved at a nearby geographical feature; the original site may have undergone a change of name but the ancient name may still be found in the vicinity. For example, the ancient name may have been transferred to a nearby ruin or tomb, to a nearby village or to a local stream bed. The second rule of toponym transference states that the name may have transferred to a younger site. People moving to new settlements may take the old name to their new location. Such transference was common in Palestine from the Hellenistic period onwards when social and political developments allowed people to leave the safety of tells and settle in plain areas nearby (Rainey 1978: 10; Aharoni 1979: 123–24; Miller 1983: 125). A good example of name transference is the fact that ancient Jericho was situated on Tall al-Sultan and the name is now preserved in the village of al-Riha close by (Rainey 1978: 10; Miller 1983: 125). Aharoni is of the opinion that this shift seldom took place over a distance of more than a few miles and that the new settlement, along with

the old name, was generally located on land that belonged to the previous settlement (1979: 123–24).

Transference of ancient names to new sites is done intentionally in the modern state of Israel. An ancient name may be applied to a new site for reasons of nostalgia; for example, the modern city of Arad bears the name of an ancient site located around 10 km away at Tel Arad. Sometimes an ancient name is given to a site in the mistaken belief that this is the correct identification (Rainey 1978: 11–12; Miller 1983: 125). A good example of this is the use of the ancient name Kiriath Gath in the mistaken belief that Tall Seh Ahmed al-‘Areini represents Philistine Gath (Miller 1983: 125).

Artifactual Evidence

The third step in identifying a site is considering the available archaeological information, for there must be agreement between the results of toponymic investigation and archaeological findings. Specifically, for an archaeological site to be proposed as the identification of a biblical settlement, two requirements must be fulfilled: 1) the period(s) of occupation of the site, as determined by excavation and/or archaeological survey, must conform to the appearance of the settlement in written sources (for example, an archaeological site proposed as a place listed in the Mesha Inscription [dated to ca. 830 B.C.] must have evidence of occupation from at least the latter part of the ninth century B.C.); and 2) the site must match the expected size and nature of its settlement (Aharoni 1979: 128; for example, according to the Mesha Inscription, the Moabite king is said to be from Dibon; therefore, the archaeological site proposed as the location of his capital should be of considerable size).

PITFALLS IN BIBLICAL SITE IDENTIFICATION RELATIVE TO JORDAN

Baly (1987) points out the pitfalls with the identification of biblical sites east of the Jordan River. He contends that biblical writers, who lived for the most part in Cisjordan, had little or no personal knowledge of the land east of the Jordan. They spoke of it as outsiders with only second-hand knowledge. They could see the land, at least the western extremities of it, across the Jordan, but always from a distance. Moreover, biblical writers often wrote about the area in a prejudiced manner (Baly 1987: 124), as the land of their enemies, that is, the land of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, and so forth. In addition, as Noort points out, “a large number

of Old Testament texts depict Transjordan as historically, geographically, and ideologically constituting a foreign country” (1987: 125).

There is some validity to the warnings of Baly and Noort. Nevertheless, biblical writers and editors knew the land east of the Jordan as one in which Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh settled. They often had very precise information (for example, town lists and border descriptions [Aharoni 1979: 252; Budd 1984: 341]) of the places in which these tribes lived and what were considered their territorial possessions. And they often had knowledge of routes through the land to the east (Noth 1968: 243; Budd 1984: xxviii; Miller 1989a: 580).

CONCLUSIONS

Biblical texts on the geography of the Jordan eastward frequently have a long tradition behind them, for it was in this territory that Gad, in the words of the Mesha Inscription, “lived in the land of 'Atarot forever” (line 10). However, the most certain biblical site identifications are those that depend upon the preservation of ancient names (Aharoni 1979: 128–29). Name preservation at a particular site cannot be viewed in isolation, however, and there must be agreement among the modern toponym, the written source(s), and the archaeological evidence. But absolute proof is not required since this can rarely be achieved in any aspect of ancient study (Miller 1983: 119).

Since biblical maps, atlases and commentaries reveal that scholarly opinion on biblical site identification tends to be accumulative rather than critical and self-corrective, we need to re-examine the identification of sites and territories previously accepted as received opinion.

NOTES

¹ Robinson and Smith resumed their work fifteen years later during a trip from Beirut to Cairo (Robinson, Smith et al. 1856).

² See Aharoni (1979: 119–23) for an outline of the main principles governing the changes that take place as geographical names are transmitted through the centuries.

³ Gray (1902) and Aharoni (1979) use many more place names as examples of their categories; the examples provided here refer only to sites located east of the Jordan River. There is, of course, overlapping in the examples Gray and Aharoni use.

CHAPTER 3

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

To a large extent, the natural environment of a country or region determines the destiny of its people. It often determines the country's economic base, its political relations, the location of its farms, villages, towns and cities, the routes of travel, and even, at times, its national borders (Laney 1988: 11). A thorough knowledge of Jordan's natural environment helps to situate biblical events, peoples, and thought, since it was the setting for events described in the Bible as taking place east of the Jordan River. Here lived Ammonites, Amorites, Arameans, Edomites, Gadites, Gileadites, Manassehites, Moabites and Reubenites, building houses and developing communities, planting crops, worshipping god(s), burying their dead.

In this chapter, I will describe the natural environment of Jordan, beginning with the country's location among the nations of the Middle East. Following Bender (1974), I divide the country into five morphological units and provide a description of each. The chapter covers Jordan's climates, soils, and plant geographical territories and their interrelationships, and concludes with a brief description of the mineral raw materials and natural animal resources most important in biblical periods.

LOCATION

Encompassing an area of about 9,250,000 hectares (Ahmad 1989: 43), Jordan is situated in the northwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf. It constitutes part of the west-central segment of the Fertile Crescent and is thus on the land bridge between Egypt to the southwest and Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq and northeast Syria, to the east and northeast (fig. 1). Due to its location, Jordan has a very diversified morphology (Bender 1974: 6).

GEOMORPHOLOGY

From west to east, the land of Jordan is divided into three main geographical units: the Dead Sea Rift Valley, the Transjordanian Plateau, and



Fig. 1. Situation Map of Jordan.

the desert. Bender (1974) points out that the landscape is more complex than this division suggests, that it actually divides the country, from east to west, into five major morphological units (fig. 2): 1) Northeastern Desert (which is in turn divided into the Northeast Jordanian Plateau Basalts and the Northeast Jordanian Limestone Plateau); 2) Azraq-Wadi Sirhan Depression; 3) Central Desert Areas of East Jordan; 4) Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben; and 5) Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression (Bender 1974: 6–11).

Northeastern Desert of Jordan

Located east of Mafrq-Azraq-Wadi Sirhan, this area forms two morphological units, the Northeast Jordanian Plateau Basalts and the Northeast Jordanian Limestone Plateau.

The Northeast Jordanian Plateau Basalts, frequently referred to as the Hauran or in Arabic as *Harrat ash-Shaba*, meaning Black Desert, is the southern extension of the Jabal al-Drouz-Basalt-Highlands. It begins about 15 km east of Mafrq and extends for 160 km towards the east, covering an area of about 11,000 km² in Jordan. Many isolated hills and long rows of volcanoes interrupt it. Elevations reach more than 1100 m in the northnorthwest at the northern border of Jordan. From here the land falls in height towards the southsoutheast, over a distance of approximately 50 km in the direction of the Azraq Depression, to about 550 m. From there, over a distance of approximately 150 km, elevations decrease even more, to about 500 m towards the eastern edge of Wadi Sirhan (Bender 1974: 6). Lava flows make the area almost inaccessible.

The Northeast Jordanian Limestone Plateau, the second morphological unit of the Northeastern Desert of Jordan, is a monotonous, flat, stony desert that extends eastward from the Black Desert beyond the eastern borders of Jordan. Small scarps formed by more resistant beds of the Tertiary sedimentary sequence occasionally interrupt it. The land rises in all directions from the eastern margin of the plateau basalts, with elevations of about 625 m approximately 10 km westnorthwest of the H4 pump station of the International Petroleum Company pipeline. The plateau forms a flat, dish-like depression: westward to the basalt shield up to more than 700 m; southeastward, over a distance of about 120 km, to altitudes of about 750 m; eastward and northeastward, over 60–80 km, to altitudes of about 800 m; and northward and northwestward, over 100 km, to altitudes of about 750 m at Roumana in Syria. The area contains many flats, frequently more than 10 km long but rarely more than 1 km wide (Bender 1974: 6–7).

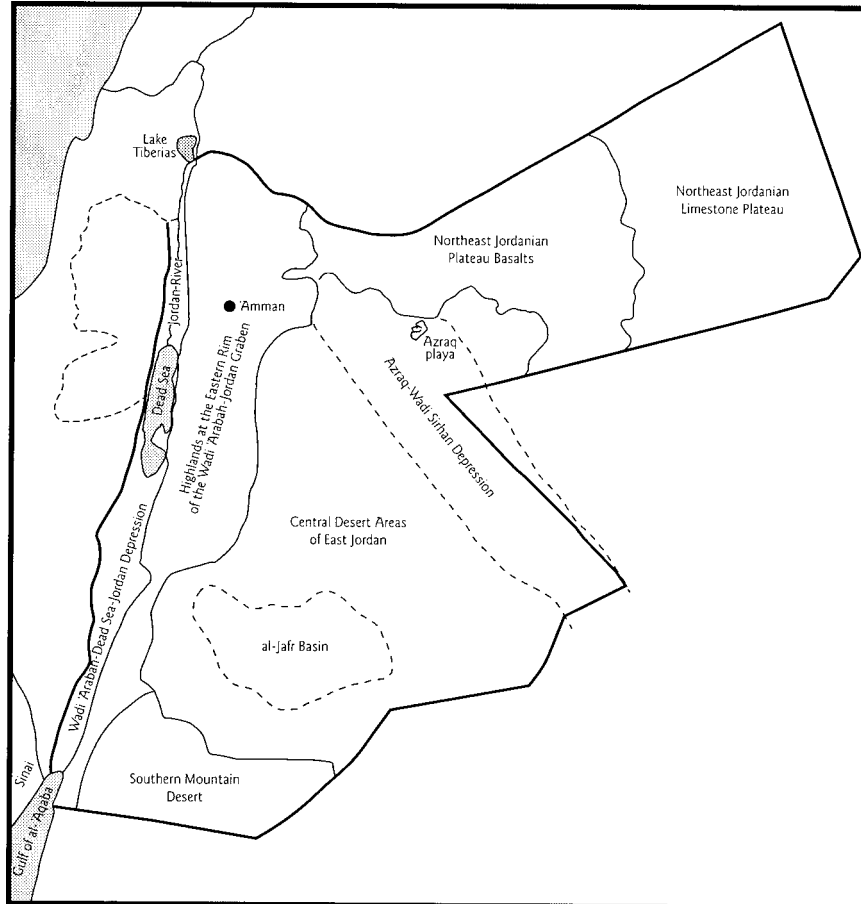


Fig. 2. Major Morphological Units.

Azraq-Wadi Sirhan Depression

This is a clearly defined morphological unit that begins at the southern rim of the Jabal al-Drouz basalt shield and borders the Northeastern Desert of Jordan on the west. It extends across the Azraq oasis to the southeast, crosses the Jordan-Saudi Arabia border after 80 km, and runs southward, east of the border, for more than 300 km as far as the area of Al-Jauf in Saudi Arabia. The lower elevations of this unit, about 500 m, occur in the northwestern part of the depression. The axis of the depression gradu-

ally rises towards the southeast to about 700 m. The catchment area of the wadi systems, which are oriented towards the northeast and drain into the depression, extends westward for more than 100 km into the Central Desert Areas of East Jordan (Bender 1974: 8). In antiquity, the Wadi Sirhan Depression was one of the main routes from northern and northeastern Jordan into Saudi Arabia (Baly 1974: 31).

Central Desert Areas of East Jordan

The third morphological unit of Jordan also represents a distinct landscape. It is bordered in the north and east by the catchment area of the Azraq-Wadi Sirhan Depression; in the southeast by the Tubeiq Highlands. To the south it reaches as far as the Ras an-Naqb escarpment; and in the west it extends as far as the eastern slopes of the highlands along the eastern side of Wadi 'Arabah. The region forms a cuesta topography, the cuesta scarps being partly "drowned" in masses of detritus rock of the arid weathering cycle. The horizontal or gently dipping sedimentary complex that comprises this unit is in most cases covered by calcareous-siliceous detritus, which mainly consists of fractured, sharp-edged cherts. Chert detritus covers hundreds of km² and is known as the flint-strewn desert, in Arabic, *Hamada*. In the south, the cuesta landscape subsides to elevations of about 850 m towards the depression of Al-Jafr, a flat, oval, dish-like depression with a catchment area of about 150 km southeast–northwest in length and about 100 km southwest–northeast in width. The center of the Al-Jafr Depression is partly occupied by a mud flat covering an area of 240 km². From the Al-Jafr mud flats, the limestone plateau of the Central Desert Areas of East Jordan rises southeastward and southward to the Tubeiq Highlands, which occupy about 10,000 km² of southeast Jordan. Due to the scarcity of water, extremely high summer temperatures, and inaccessibility, even nomadic Bedouin avoid these highlands. They are the least explored area of Jordan (Bender 1974: 8).

The limestone plateau of the Central Desert Areas of East Jordan ends southwest of the Al-Jafr Depression at the Escarpment of Ras an-Naqb. This escarpment reaches altitudes of about 1,700 m above sea level at Jabal Darb al-Haj, approximately 40 km southwest of Ma'an. From there it continues southeastward with a gradual fall in elevation across the village of Ras an-Naqb towards Hitiya where the elevation of the escarpment is about 1000 m. It can be traced farther towards the east and then towards the eastnortheast for about 60 km (Bender 1974: 9).

Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben

Near Ras an-Naqb, the difference in altitude from top to base of the escarpment is about 600 m over a distance of 1000 m. From the southern end of this escarpment, there is an impressive view of the Hisma, located to the south and the Highlands of Ramm, located to the southsoutheast. The latter are steep sandstone massifs, partly resting on the exposed granitic socle, which rise up to heights of 600 m out of the mud flats and out of the flat, detritus-filled basins. They represent the southern part of the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben that border the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben for approximately 400 km (Bender 1974: 9).

The Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben, frequently referred to both as the Mountain Ridge and Northern Highlands East of the Rift (Bender 1975) and the Transjordanian Plateau, slope gently towards the central plateau in the east, while they are very steep towards the Dead Sea Rift in the west. For example, in the area south of al-Karak, they fall from 1305 m above sea level at Jabal Dabab to 410 m below sea level, the level of the Dead Sea, within a distance of 13 km.

These narrow, elongated highlands widen north of Madaba at the Belqa (= al-Balkha), Arda'a, and 'Ajlun Mountains, from less than 25 km to about 50 km in east–west extension. Formed by relief inversion of structurally uplifted areas, distinctive contours include the Sweileh structure (by northnortheast striking), the 'Ajlun Mountains (structurally uplifted as well as morphologically high), the Irbid Basin (by depressions, the erosion cutting deeply into the limestone plateau in the east from the base level of the Jordan Graben headward), inset and elevated terraces, and basalt lava flows (Bender 1974: 9).

Structural movements within and in the vicinity of the Graben have until recent geological times continually lowered the base level of the wadis and perennial rivers draining to the west. The relatively high surface runoff has caused excessively active erosion. The Yarmuk and az-Zarqa Rivers as well as Wadis al-Mujib and al-Hasa are impressive examples of this.

The Yarmuk and az-Zarqa/Jabbok Rivers along with Wadis al-Mujib/Arnon and al-Hasa/Zered, all flowing towards the west in these highlands, have generally been designated as natural divisions of the country (Aharoni 1979: 36–41).¹ They are seen, at least occasionally, as political, ethnic, and/or administrative boundaries. While these rivers/wadis served as major geographical divisions, they were also the main water-carrying sources for the region (fig. 3).

Besides these four main geographical dividers in the Mountain Ridge and Northern Highlands East of the Rift, there are a number of other important east to west flowing wadis that provide water resources for the area. The most important of these are: 1) Wadis al-'Arab, al-Taiyba, Ziqlab, al-Yabis, Kufrinja, and al-Rajib (between the Yarmuk and the az-Zarqa/Jabbok); 2) Wadis Shu'ayb, Kufrein, Hisban, Zarqa Ma'in, and al-Heidan (= al-Wala) (between the az-Zarqa/Jabbok and the al-Mujib/Arnon); 3) Wadis Ibn Hammad, al-Jarra, al-Karak, I'sal, and Numayra/Hudeira (between the al-Mujib/Arnon and al-Hasa/Zered); and 4) Wadis Feifa, Umruq, Khanazir, Dahal, Fidan/Faynan/Dana, Abu Sakakin, Musa, al-Taiyba, Dilaaha, and al-Yutm (south of Wadi al-Hasa) (fig. 3). There are, moreover, many other wadis in the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben which flow in a north-to-south or south-to-north direction.² It is along these major and minor wadis that most of the biblical sites located east of the Jordan River are found.

Much of the country's agricultural activity took place in these wadis. However, they were important not only for agriculture, as modern archaeological exploration has demonstrated, but also for communication, for all travelers and messengers passed through these wadis.

Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression

This fifth morphological unit, a landscape distinct from the other physiographic provinces of Jordan, is part of the East African-North Syrian fault system that is recognizable for about 6,000 km. It is a north-south linear feature with significantly lower elevations than the highlands to the east (Bender 1974). It extends about 360 km from the Gulf of al-'Aqaba to Lake Tiberias/Sea of Galilee. The main part of this depression averages 15 km in width (Bender 1974: 10).

The Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression gradually rises from the Gulf of al-'Aqaba over a distance of about 80 km up to altitudes of about 250 m above sea level in the area of the Jabal al-Risha watershed. From there it continues in a NNE direction and falls gently towards the Dead Sea, the elevation of which was 410 m below mean ocean level in 1993 (Frumkin et al. 1994: 315). At this level, the Dead Sea is approximately 80 km long and on average 15 km wide. Its maximum depth, which is north of the Lisan Peninsula, is around 330 m.³ Thus, the deepest point of the whole depression is about 740 m below sea level. Within the 105 km-long course of the Jordan Valley (Al-Ghor with the valley floor Al-Zhor), the

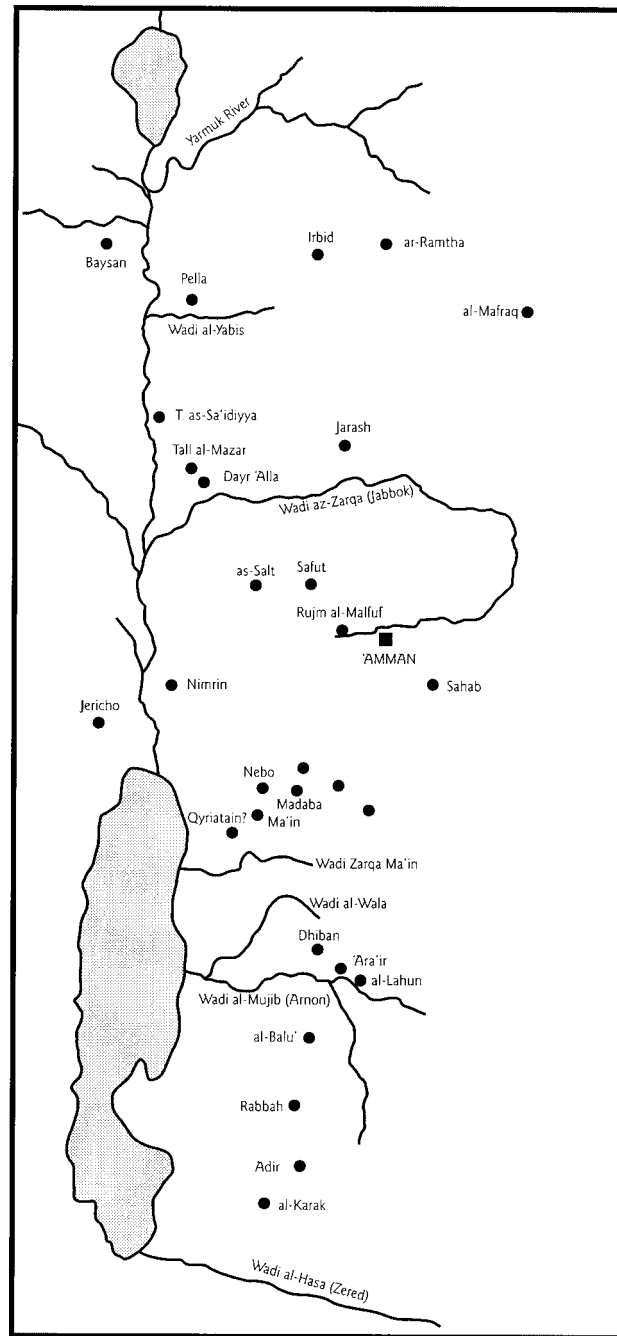


Fig. 3. Major Wadis.

depression rises in elevation from 410 m below sea level to 210 m below sea level at Lake Tiberias (Bender 1974: 6–11).⁴

The Jordan River is a significant feature of the Rift Valley. It rises to the northeast of Jordan at the foot of Mount Hermon, entering and exiting Lake Tiberias and continuing southward where it empties into the Dead Sea. It is joined along its course on its east side by two major and many minor tributaries. Within Jordan proper, the river flows through al-Zor, a secondary valley well below the levels of the Lisan marls (Baly 1974: 27).

The Dead Sea receives water not only from the Jordan River but also from a number of tributaries that enter it from the east. It is generally divided, even on modern maps, into two basins: 1) the large, deep northern basin; and 2) the smaller, shallow southern basin. Until the 1970s, these basins were separated by a boot-shaped peninsula known as the Lisan. A very shallow strait lay between the Lisan and the western shore. In contrast to the northern one, the southern basin was never very deep and in past decades its depth has not exceeded 5 m. A drop in Dead Sea level during the last two decades has caused it to detach from the northern basin and to dry up (Neev and Emery 1995: 8, fig. 1:3; 9, fig. 1:4). Presently, only artificial evaporation pans used by the potash and bromine plants are found in the area of the southern basin (Adler 1985: 3).

CLIMATE

Present Day Climate

The main characteristics of Jordan's climate reflect the transitional location of the country between the Mediterranean climate to the west and arid climates in the east and south (Anonymous 1984: iv). There is a great variety in temperature (Table 1) and precipitation (Table 2) from one morphological unit to another.

The Middle East year may be divided into three seasons: 1) summer, from mid-June to mid-September; 2) rainy season in the cooler half of the year, extending roughly from mid-October to mid-April; and 3) transitional seasons which comprise the remainder of the year (Anonymous 1984: iv). There are normally five continuous months from the first week in May to the first week in October without any rain at all (Baly 1974: 43). The transitional seasons are characterized by two important phenomena, desert storms and the sirocco (Baly 1974: 51) which Arabs refer to as *khamisin*.

Climatologists such as Emberger, Koppen, and Thornthwaite divide Jordan into diverse climatic regions (Anonymous 1984: ix–x, 129–32). It

Table 1: Mean Monthly Temperature in °C. From “Climatic Atlas of Jordan,” Meteorological Department, Jordan’s Ministry of Transport, 1971 (Ahmad 1989: 8).

| <u>Month</u> | <u>Rift Valley</u> | <u>Uplands</u> | <u>Eastern Deserts</u> |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| January | 14 | 4–8 | 10 |
| February | 14–16 | 4–8 | 10–12 |
| March | 16–2 | 8–10 | 12–14 |
| April | 20–24 | 12–14 | 16–18 |
| May | 26–28 | 14–20 | 20–26 |
| June | 28–32 | 18–22 | 22–28 |
| July | 30–32 | 20–24 | 26–30 |
| August | 30–32 | 20–24 | 26–30 |
| September | 28–30 | 24–28 | 18–22 |
| October | 26 | 16–20 | 20–22 |
| November | 20–22 | 12–14 | 16–18 |
| December | 14–16 | 6–10 | 10–12 |

Table 2: Precipitation in mcm. From “The Annual Report, 1987,” Water Authority of Jordan (Ahmad 1989: 7).

| <u>Water Basin</u> | <u>Precipitation</u> 1986-87 | <u>Volume</u> Long Term Average |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yarmuk Basin | 500 | 440 |
| az-Zarqa Basin | 890 | 910 |
| Eastern Basins Adjacent to the Jordan River | 870 | 860 |
| Azraq Basin | 790 | 830 |
| al-Mujib Basin | 770 | 890 |
| al-Hasa Basin | 200 | 480 |
| al-Jafr Basin | 410 | 480 |
| Eastern Basins Adjacent to the Dead Sea | 340 | 330 |
| North Wadi 'Arabah Basin | 250 | 490 |
| South Wadi 'Arabah and Red Sea Basins | 250 | 350 |
| South Desert Basin | 90 | 90 |
| Wadi Sirhan Basin | 250 | 250 |
| Hammad Basin | 1090 | 900 |
| TOTAL | 6700 | 7300 |

is sufficient for our purposes, however, to follow Bender and divide the country into a Mediterranean, a semi-arid, and an arid zone (1974: 11–15; see also Ahmad 1989: 6). This classification does justice to the transitional location of the country.

The Highlands at the Eastern Rim of Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben as far south as ash-Shawbak are dominated by a Mediterranean climate, which ranges from subhumid (>600 mm precipitation per year; average January = 3°C, average August = 27°C to 33°C) to semi-arid (precipitation between 300 and 600 mm a year; average January = 3°C to 7°C, average August = 30°C to 35°C) (Bender 1974: 187). From April to October this climate has dry summers with an average maximum annual temperature of 38.8°C; from November until March it is winter with an average minimum annual temperature of 0.5°C.

The average annual rainfall in the Mediterranean zone is 300 mm or more: in the northern area of Qweilbeh/Abila, 350–450 mm; at as-Salt, 700 mm; at Jabal 'Amman (the part of the plateau in the center of the city), 375 mm; the 'Amman airport at Marka 268 mm (Harlan 1981: 158); in the Hisban region, 400 mm; at Na'ur, 525 mm; in the al-Karak region, 350 mm; at al-Mazar, 375 mm; at ash-Shawbak, 300 mm. In the south, rainfall is sufficient to permit no more than a single line of villages along the rim (Baly 1974: 61).

There is a wide transition zone east and south of the areas with a Mediterranean climate and running to the fully arid climate that characterizes the desert areas of East and South Jordan. In this semi-arid transition zone, the average annual maximum temperature is +40°C, and the average annual minimum temperature is -1.6°C; the average annual rainfall is between 50 and 300 mm (Baly 1974: 61). The segment of this zone, which is immediately east of the highlands and at times close to the fields and farming villages, is often referred to as steppeland and is more often pastoral than agricultural. In times of drought, the Bedouin moved from the desert to these steppes where dry grass provides pasture land (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 62).

The arid or desert zone of Jordan receives less than 50 mm precipitation per year (fig. 4). Moreover, the distribution is extremely erratic from year to year, and there is a strong tendency for much of it to come in heavy storms during the transitional seasons (Baly 1974: 61–62).

About 90% of Jordan receives less than 200 mm of precipitation per year which is totally dissipated by evaporation. Only about 14% of the mean annual rainfall is exploitable: 70% drains toward the Jordan Valley,

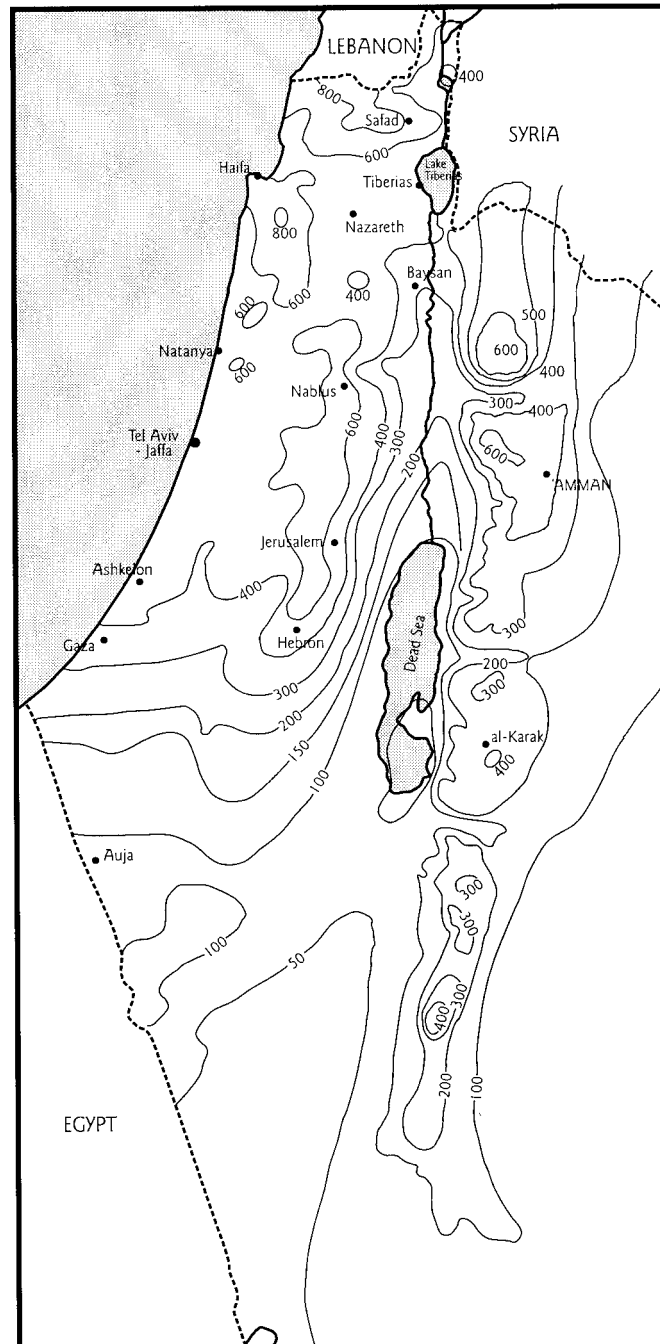


Fig. 4. Rainfall Map.

Dead Sea, and Wadi 'Arabah; the remaining 30% can only be utilized by drilling wells (Anonymous 1986: i). At least 300 mm of rainfall per year is necessary for sustainable agriculture (Issar 1995: 351).

Ancient Climates

Evidence suggests that the present climate is not indicative of past climates in all periods. Knowledge of ancient climates in different periods is important since climate change can have a direct effect upon what plants can grow in a specific area. This in turn will affect the natural animal resources in the area, as well as the availability of land for farming and/or pasturage. In other words, climate affects soil productivity, and changes in climate can lead to prosperity or famine.

Since our interest here is climatic conditions in biblical periods, we must recognize that paleoclimates are far from well understood. Consequently, all claims concerning climate are tentative, and subject to change as new data become available.

The changing level of the Dead Sea over time is an indicator of climatic variations. Citing evidence from the salt caves of Mount Sedom located at the southwestern end of the Dead Sea and correlating this with other studies on Holocene climates, Frumkin et al. (1991; 1994) posit that the EB I–III period in Israel was the moistest period during the last 6000 years. According to their findings, the level of the Dead Sea rose to at least 300 m below sea level during the EB I–III period, indicating increased precipitation throughout the Dead Sea drainage basin (Frumkin et al. 1991: 198; 1994: 325–26). Subsequently, there was a drop of nearly 100 m to about 400 m below sea level in the span of a few centuries from 2400 to 2000 B.C. In the opinion of Frumkin et al. (1991; 1994), this drop suggests an arid period similar to the present climate, perhaps even more arid. Raban and Galili (1985) also have evidence of an increase in the level of the Mediterranean Sea during this time. This indicates a warm climate since the melting of the polar ice caps affected the level of the Mediterranean Sea but not the level of the Dead Sea (Issar 1995: 354). Issar (1995: 354) and Weiss et al. (1993) contend that a warm, dry period contributed to the collapse of the empires of the Middle East around 2000 B.C.

This dry period continued until about 1200 B.C. in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (Frumkin et al. 1991: 198; 1994: 325–26). Stiebing (1989) argues that the Late Bronze Age probably ended as a result of climate change. His evidence includes such indicators of past climatic conditions as pollen,

tree rings, and lake levels (dated by radiocarbon, tree ring chronology, and other scientific dating methods). According to Stiebing, there is evidence for a series of narrow tree rings, indicating poor growing conditions between ca. 1300 and 1000 B.C. He also finds indications of a change from Mediterranean to Saharan vegetation at the end of the Late Bronze Age, which suggests a shift from a relatively moist to a much drier climate (1989: 186). This period was succeeded by even lower Dead Sea levels, reaching approximately 395–400 m below sea level between the tenth and seventh centuries B.C. Thus there are indications of a slightly drier climate relative to preceding centuries (Frumkin et al. 1991: 198). According to a recent study of isotopes from tamarisk wood buried in the Roman siege ramp at Masada, the climate became colder beginning sometime between 300 and 200 B.C. These new data match other observations which point to the conclusion "that about two thousand years ago the climates of the areas bordering the desert of the Middle East were colder and more humid" (Issar and Yakir 1997: 104; see also Issar 1990). The period in question coincides with the Roman occupation of the Near East. There is evidence of a rise in the Dead Sea level, also indicative of a moister climate, during the first century B.C. and continuing into the first two centuries of the common era (Frumkin et al. 1991: 198–99; Heim et al. 1997; Bruins 1994).

SOILS AND CROPS

There are a variety of soil types related to the various morphological units and climate zones of the country. The main soils are Red Mediterranean, Yellow Mediterranean, Yellow Steppe, and Grey Desert (fig. 5).⁵ In addition, there are several other associated soils (Bender 1974: 192–93; Anonymous 1986: 134; Ahmad 1989: 46–47).

Red Mediterranean soils, whose formation depends to a large extent on the specific conditions of the Mediterranean climate, cover extensive areas in the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben. They are found, for example, in the Irbid-Ramtha and Sweileh depressions as well as from 'Ajlun in the north to ash-Shawbak in the south (Bender 1974: 187; Ahmad 1989: 46). In flat locations, they are well suited for the cultivation of cereals, tomatoes, melons and tobacco; in mountainous areas, they are suitable for the cultivation of grapes, olives, kernel- and stone-fruits, as well as for forestry (oak, pine varieties; Bender 1974: 189).

Yellow Mediterranean is a transitional type of soil between the Red Mediterranean and the Yellow Steppe (Moormann 1959). It is confined to

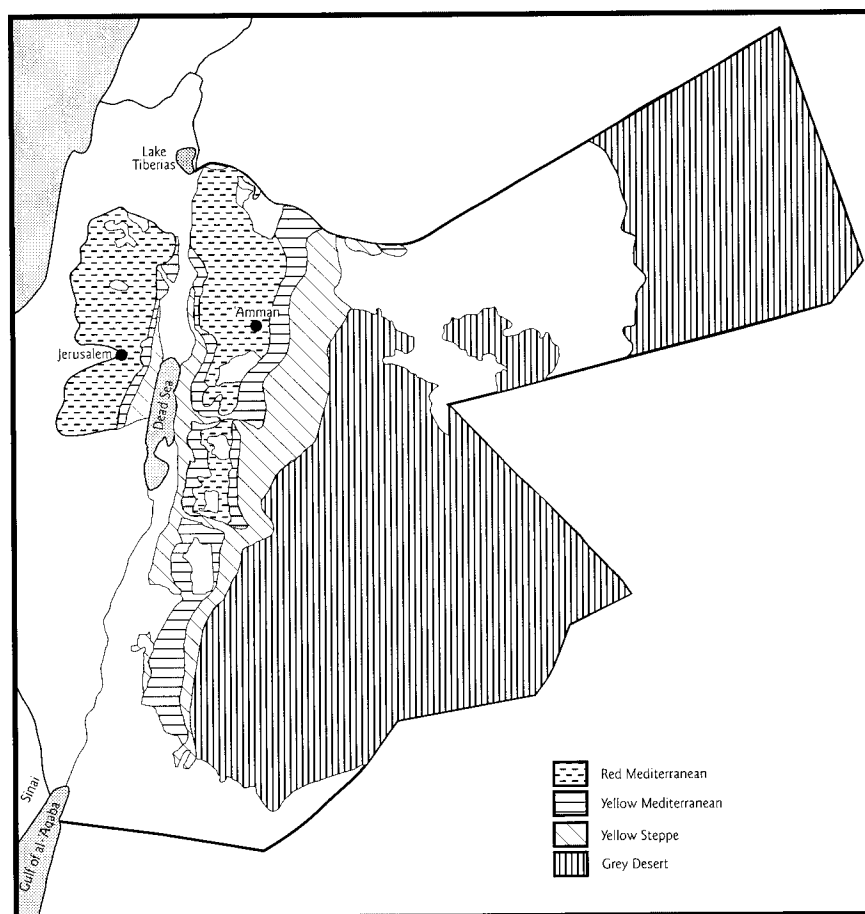


Fig. 5. Soils.

the cooler zone of the semi-arid climate with annual precipitation between 250 and 350 mm. It can be observed in narrow strips on both sides of the Jordan-Wadi 'Arabah Graben and on the eastern side of the highlands east of the Rift, as well as in the southern extension of these highlands between ash-Shawbak and Ras an-Naqb (Bender 1974: 189). This type of soil can be used for cereal production, applying the dry-farming system and also for grazing. With irrigation, more intensive cultivation would be possible (Bender 1974: 189).

Yellow Steppe soils cover a more-or-less wide belt east of the Yellow Mediterranean soil. They are found in the warm, semi-arid Mediterranean

climate zone, which extends from Syria in the north to the escarpment of Ras an-Naqb in the south. There are also yellow steppe soils on both sides of the Jordan-Wadi 'Arabah Graben, south of the az-Zarqa River and Ghor Faria, which are associated with undeveloped skeletal soils on wadi gravels and exposed bedrock (Bender 1974: 189–90). They are also found in the area between Mafraq and al-Jiza east of 'Amman. Yellow steppe soils are used for barley production and/or pasture land, and their yields, as with Yellow Mediterranean soil, can be improved by intensive irrigation (Bender 1974: 190).

Grey Desert soils (Sierosem) develop in areas with <150 mm precipitation/year, which occupy more than half the total territory of Jordan. These soils are associated with dense flint pavement, which is widespread in east Jordan and are also called Hamada or Hamada-Yerma. They are generally poorly developed and shallow because of chemical weathering under desert conditions and severe wind erosion. They contain seldom more than 0.5% organic matter, and without irrigation, provide only poor sites for grazing (Bender 1974: 190–92).

PLANT GEOGRAPHICAL TERRITORIES

Jordan can be divided into three plant geographical territories or regions (fig. 6): the Mediterranean, the Irano-Turanian, and the Saharo-Sindian. Each territory is characterized not only by its flora and vegetation but also by its climate and soils (Zohary 1962: 51). In addition, there are Sudanian flora and vegetation at the outlet areas of some watercourses into the lower Jordan Valley and Dead Sea (Zohary 1962: 53; Danin 1995: 24–26).⁶

The Mediterranean territory, characterized by a sub-humid Mediterranean climate, is readily recognizable by its flora and vegetation. Its most typical soil variety is Red Mediterranean. However, rendzina, basalt, and sandy soils also occur. It includes a long belt of the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben extending as far south as the heights of Edom (Zohary 1962: 51). Its boundaries with the adjoining Irano-Turanian territory cannot be precisely drawn because the Mediterranean vegetation of the eastern and southern margins, which border on steppes and deserts, has been subject to heavy human devastation. Plants from adjacent territories have been able to penetrate the area, and there is a fairly broad transition belt of mixed flora and vegetation in these borderlands. With the exception of this transition belt, the territory is generally characterized by forest and maquis climax communities (Zohary 1962: 51).

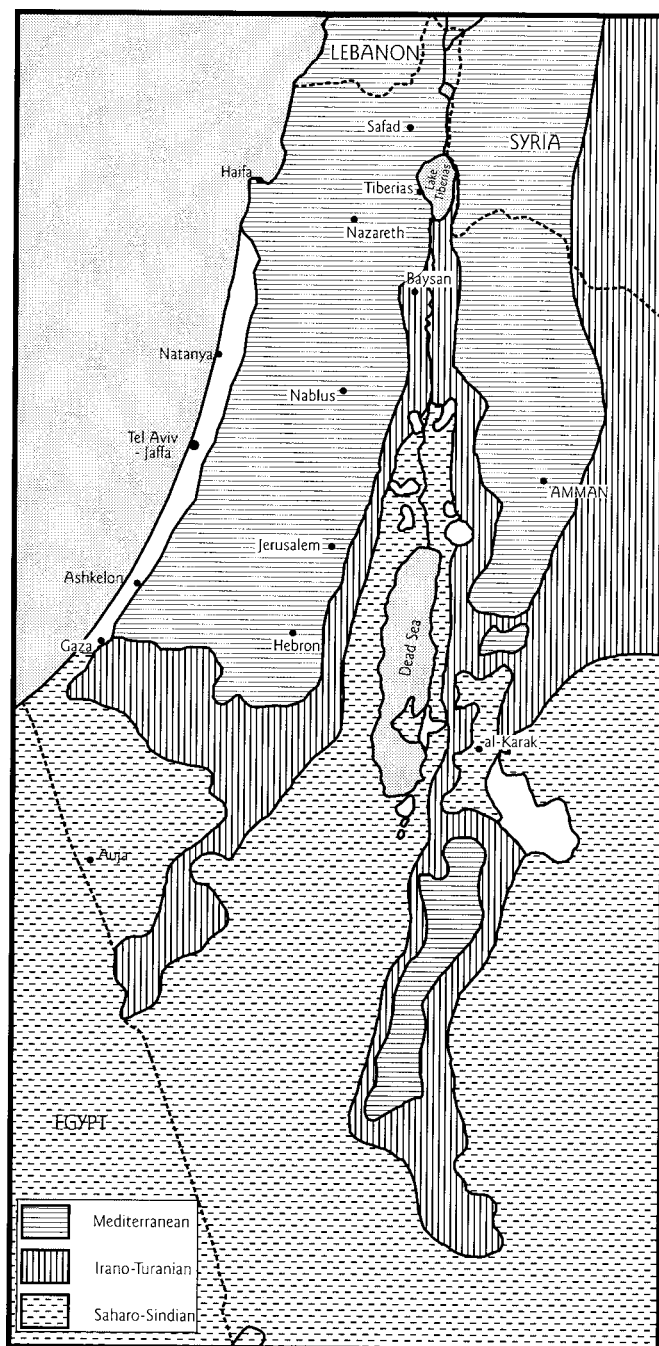


Fig. 6. Plant Geographical Territories.

Bender suggests that the Mediterranean territory was probably all wooded prior to the early historical periods when deforestation started. He cites copper-ore smelting as one reason for the deforestation (1974: 11). Harlan, however, posits that the plateau proper, especially in the southern part of the territory, does not receive adequate rainfall to support a forest or even a woodland (1985: 128; 1988: 44). The woodlands have generally retreated in the Middle East due to land clearing, overgrazing, charcoal production, and harvesting firewood (Harlan 1981: 163). Nevertheless, *Quercus aegilops* and *Pinus halepensis* are still to be found in the 'Ajlun district north of 'Amman. In the mountainous area between at-Tafila and ash-Shawbak, scattered specimens of *Quercus coccifera* ssp. *calliprinos* and *Juniperus phoenicea* cover the steep slopes (Bender 1974: 11; Harlan 1988: 43).

The Irano-Turanian territory encircles the Mediterranean from south, east and west, merging with the Syrian Desert in the northeast. Its annual precipitation varies from 350 to 200 mm. The rainy season is somewhat shorter and the rainfall less evenly distributed than in the Mediterranean territory. The main soil variety of this region is Yellow Steppe. Vegetation comprises herbaceous and dwarf shrub communities, with almost no arboreal climax. Agriculture is very poor, unstable, and almost entirely confined to plains and valleys (Zohary 1962: 51).

The Saharo-Sindian territory is the largest of the three plant geographical territories of Jordan, covering more than half the total area of the country. It includes east, south and northeast Jordan as well as a narrow spur within Wadi 'Arabah, protruding northwards from the Gulf of al-'Aqaba. The boundaries this territory shares with the Irano-Turanian territory are vague. The Saharo-Sindian has a typical desert climate with a short rainy season and a long, hot, dry summer. Annual precipitation varies from 25 to 200 mm. The main soil variety is Grey Desert. Agriculture is altogether lacking, except in oases or flooded wadis. Vegetation is extremely poor and mainly confined to depressions, wadis and runnels. In the limestone-, marl-, chert- and basalt-deserts of North and Central-East Jordan, particularly in the wadi courses, *Artemisia* sp., *Zygophyllum dumosum*, *Chenola arabica*, *Suaeda vermiculata*, *Traganum nudatum*, and *Anabasis articulata* are still to be found. In the sandstone desert and in the wadis crossing the granitic basement of southeastern and southern Jordan occur mainly *Haloxylon persicum*, *Traganum nudatum*, *Zilla spinosa*, *Ferula* sp., and a few *Acacia tortilis* (Zohary 1962: 51, 53; Bender 1974: 15).

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water

The critical natural resource of Jordan is water (Harlan 1988). It is chronically in short supply. Harlan asserts that “the water supply ... determines the abundance and distribution of other resources such as plants and animals available for hunting-gathering cultures, the crops that can be grown by farmers, and the animals that can be reared by nomads” (1988: 40). The primary source of water is rainfall; secondary sources, all of which ultimately depend on rainfall, are springs, wells, flowing streams, and moisture stored in the soil (Harlan 1988: 40).

Natural Raw Materials

Bender lists the mineral raw materials of Jordan as: 1) hydrocarbons: a) oil, gas, and asphalt; and b) bituminous rocks; 2) metallic ores: a) copper; b) manganese; c) iron; and d) chromium, nickel, uranium, pyrite; 3) non-metallic ores: a) phosphate; b) apatite; c) baryte, feldspar, mica, quartz, glass sands, rutile, and mineral painting pigments; d) semi-precious stones; e) sulphur and gypsum; f) clay; g) rock salt, potassium salt, and salt of the Dead Sea; and 4) building material: a) decoration stones; b) building stones; and c) raw materials for Portland cement (1974: 146–73; see also Ahmad 1989: 48–60).

The Dead Sea was a major source of commercial bitumen in the ancient Near East (Hammond 1959: 40; Forbes 1964: 29–30; Bender 1974: 146; Sperber 1976). Its specific product is true bitumen, which explains the classical references to asphalt, and justifies applying the name asphaltic lake to the Dead Sea (MacDonald 1992a: 20).

In the Faynan area of Jordan (Hauptmann 1986a: 415; Hauptmann and Weisgerber 1987: 421), there are two different ore horizons: mixed manganese and copper ores, and only copper ores. A team from the German Mining Museum in Bochum, West Germany investigated these resources and their associated technologies during various archaeological periods (Bachmann and Hauptmann 1984; Hauptmann, Weisgerber, and Knauf 1985; Hauptmann 1986a; Hauptmann and Weisgerber 1987; Hauptmann 1989). Hauptmann and Weisgerber (1987) contend that copper production in the area extends from the Chalcolithic Period up to the thirteenth century A.D. The periods of greatest importance for this production

were the Chalcolithic, Early and Middle Bronze, Iron I, Iron IIC, and Mamluk (Hauptmann and Weisgerber 1987: 421–24). In Hauptmann's estimation, the Faynan region may represent the oldest large-mining area for copper in the Near East known to date (1986a: 416). Not only was copper produced in the area but there is also evidence of the export of copper ores from the region during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Periods (Hauptmann 1989).

There are iron ore deposits with only limited possibilities for exploitation present at Wardeh, some 35 km northnorthwest of 'Amman in the southern 'Ajlun District (Van den Boom and Lahloub 1962: 6; Torrente 1967: 5; Basha 1968: 3; Coughenour 1976; 1989). The predominant pottery Coughenour collected at the site, which shows evidence of both mining and smelting, is Ayyubid-Mamluk (1976: 73, 75). Glueck (1951: 232) and Bender (1974: 157) are in general agreement with this date since they attribute mining activity in the area to the Medieval and Crusader periods respectively.

Thin layers and lenses of clays rich in kaolin are widespread in the upper part of the massive white sandstones of the Lower Cretaceous in Jordan. Bender identifies notable clay deposits of great thickness near the village of Mahis, about 17 km westnorthwest of 'Amman, and near Ghor Kabid, approximately 25 km north of the northern end of the Dead Sea. The clays from both locations are well-suited for the production of ceramics (Bender 1974: 168).

De Vaux notes the exploitation of salt by the Qumran community in antiquity (1961: 68). More recently, rock salt has been produced in small quantities in the area of the Azraq Depression. There are practically unlimited amounts of rock salt in the area of the Lisan Peninsula where the rock salt body occupies about 35 km² of the central part of the peninsula. Bender estimates the amount of rock salt dissolved in the Dead Sea at about 12,650 million tons. Also dissolved in large quantities in the same body of water are potash and magnesium salts (Bender 1974: 168–72). This potash is commercially exploited by the Arab Potash Company located at the southeast side of the Dead Sea immediately north of as-Safi. The local population still mine salt from the Dead Sea using methods which have probably not changed in centuries.

Decoration stones in the form of marbles are quarried between al-Jiza and al-Hasa both east and west of the Desert Highway; the marbles are in fact massive, hard, dense limestones. Travertine is another valuable decoration stone found in the Jordan Valley. A possible quarry site for this mate-

rial is located about 10 km south of Dayr 'Alla where good, polishable quality travertine exists in thick beds (Bender 1974: 172).

Since wood is a scarce and expensive commodity, a large number of rock types have been used as building stone through the millennia. Sandstone has been used extensively in building; however, the tombs and theater in Petra are good examples of how poorly resistant to corrosion this type of stone is. Basalts have also been used extensively for construction, especially in the northeast of the country, for example, at Umm al-Jimal. Caliche was used in Jarash for pillars and square stones. Oolitic limestone is easily workable and served as the material for many structures. Oyster limestone can be seen in many ruins in the 'Amman area, for example, in the decorated façades of Qasr al-Mushatta, an Umayyad palace (Bender 1974: 172–73).

Natural Animal Resources

Jordan is presently almost devoid of wild animals (Ahmad 1989: 66). There are some gazelle in the southern part of the country and boar inhabit the natural vegetation of the Jordan Valley. Small animals such as foxes, hedgehogs and hares are seen occasionally throughout the country. Hyenas are heard at night, and locals still tell stories of the presence of wolves. Due to decreased water levels (Ahmad 1989: 72–77), the many species of birds that once stopped at the Azraq Oasis on their migratory paths have diminished significantly. In contrast to the present dearth of wildlife, nineteenth century travelers reported that gazelle were common on the upland plains; ibex were sighted on the escarpment, and wild boar and leopards in the canebrakes; hyenas and jackals scavenged kills; doves were abundant and rock partridge (*Caccabis saxatilis*) could be found in the plains, at least in the ruins of ancient towns and villages; fish were abundant in the streams (Harlan 1982; 1985; 1988). In Harlan's words, "the picture presented is one teeming with animal life. It was a pleasant, fat land" (1988: 45).

In an earlier time, the uplands undoubtedly supported herds of wild cattle and wild horses (onagers); deer would have been more common in the woodlands; lion and cheetah would have been present as predators; jackals and hyenas would have scavenged kills; and wild camels would have roamed the deserts and semi-deserts (Harlan 1985; 1988: 45). Today, this abundance of wildlife has given way to the domesticated animal, to camels, donkeys, goats, and sheep, and the streams are populated only by miniature fish.

CONCLUSIONS

In antiquity, Jordan was a land bridge between the great geographical regions of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and influenced by both. On many occasions it came under the direct control of Egyptians, Israelites, Arameans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Thus the peoples of Jordan during biblical periods did not live in isolation.

Descriptions of the morphological units of Jordan provide an overview of the areas of the country where habitation was possible during biblical periods. These descriptions, along with information on past climates, soils, flora, fauna, and other natural resources, make it clear why people lived mainly in the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben and the northern segment of the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression.

A knowledge of paleoclimates helps us understand the environmental conditions people faced in this area of the Near East, just as analysis of soils and the flora that grew in them provides a view of the available food, pasturage, firewood, shade, and so forth. These crops, along with information on the other natural resources of different segments of the country, provide insight into the economic base of the peoples who lived “beyond the Jordan” (Gen 50.10, 11; Deut 3.8; *et passim*) or “across the Jordan” (John 1.28; 10.40) in biblical periods.

NOTES

¹ The modern name for these rivers/wadis is followed by the biblical name (see the following chapters).

² Many of these wadis change names throughout their course. The names used here generally come from what the wadi is called at its western extremity as indicated on “The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Archaeological Maps)” (Scale 1:250,000) (Jordan National Geographic Centre and the Directorate of Military Survey with the cooperation of the Department of Antiquities, 1978–1982).

³ Until about 1975, Lynch’s 1848 measurement of approximately 398 m for the depth of the Dead Sea was accepted as valid (Adler et al. 1985).

⁴ Distances and elevations given for Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea are only approximate. The lengths of both, as well as their elevations, change depending upon precipitation, evaporation, and the amount of water taken from them as well as from the wadis and springs which feed them. The level of the Dead Sea has dropped appreciably in recent decades: Bender (1974) and “The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Archaeological Maps)” (1979) give -392 m; Amiran et al. (1970) give the September 1960 level as -397.37 m; Adler et al. (1985) give -400 m; while Frumkin et al. (1994: 315) give -410 m as the level of the Dead Sea. The level continues to drop. The same is true of Lake Tiberias, the level of which is generally given as 210 or 212 m below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. However, Amiran et al. (1970) give its elevation as 206.46 m below sea level, with a maximum depth of 44 m, on May 26, 1961.

⁵ The description of soil types given here follows Bender (1974) who in turn depends on the work of M. Baker, Jr., Inc. and Harza Engineering Company, in the Jordan Valley in 1955 and in the Azraq area beginning in 1955 (1958); Moormann (1959) in East Jordan; Willimott et al. in a part of Wadi al-Hasa

in 1962 (1963) and in the area of Al-Qatrana in 1963 (1964); and Gruneberg (1967) in close cooperation with the Soils Department of the Natural Resources Authority of Jordan beginning in 1962 (Bender 1974: 185).

⁶ For the purpose of phytogeographical analysis, Danin (1995: 26–27) divides Jordan into four main districts: Gilead (#28), 'Amman (#29), Moab (#30), and Edom (#31). He also places the western segments of Jordan in districts shared with Israel: Kinneret Valley (#18); Beth Shean Valley (#19); Lower Jordan Valley (#23); Dead Sea Valley (#24); and 'Arabah Valley (#25). In each district he posits flora from the various plant geographical provinces: Mediterranean; Mediterranean and Irano-Turanian; Irano-Turanian; Saharo-Sindian; Thermophilous, including Sudanian, Tropical, and Subtropical; and Other Chorotypes.

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CHAPTER 4

SODOM, GOMORRAH, ADMAH, ZEBOIIM, BELA (= ZOAR)—THE “CITIES OF THE PLAIN” —AND LASHA

INTRODUCTION

Sodom and Gomorrah are famous biblical sites. Along with Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (= Zoar) (Gen 14.2), they are called the “cities of the Plain” (Gen 13.12) and are known in popular as well as scholarly circles as places of depravity. They are generally associated with the Dead Sea but their precise locations are not easily pinpointed (fig. 7).

Those who interpret the Bible literally see Sodom and Gomorrah, along with Admah and Zeboiim, as actual places God destroyed because of the immorality of the inhabitants. For those interpreters, God spared Bela (= Zoar) because of Abraham and Lot. Others see the Sodom and Gomorrah saga as an etiology that accounts for the Wasteland along the shores of the Dead Sea (Irvin 1978: 28; Gunkel 1987: 93) or as “a purely mythical tale” (Gaster 1969: 161). Following the position of a number of commentators, I view the Sodom and Gomorrah narratives as recounting an actual natural catastrophe to which were added Israelite and non-Israelite traditions along with the authors’ perspectives on punishment and God’s justice (see, for example, Clapp 1936: 907–9; Von Rad 1972; Westermann 1981: 362; Rast 1987: 196; Loader 1990: 47–48). Our primary interest in this chapter is locating the sites which the first storytellers and later the biblical writers had in mind in their narratives of devastation. Since Lasha is associated in Gen 10.19 with four of the cities of the Plain as the last point on the Canaanite border description, it will also be treated here.

THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN IN BIBLICAL AND OTHER TEXTS

Four of the five cities of the Plain appear for the first time in the Bible in the description of the territory of the Canaanites, the original dwellers of the Promised Land, whose land “extended from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha” (Gen 10.19). The western Canaanite boundary thus extended along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea from Sidon in the north to Gaza in the south. One would expect the boundary to turn

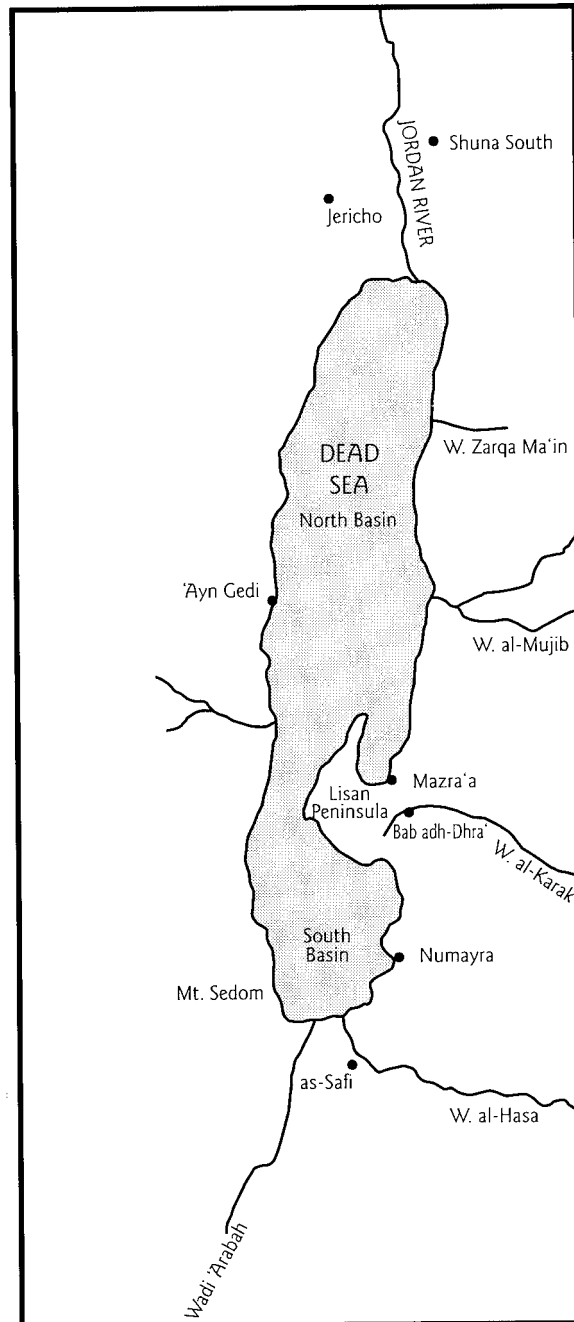


Fig. 7. The Dead Sea Region.

eastward towards the shores of the Dead Sea where the cities of the Plain were seemingly located (Aharoni 1979: 76). The boundary went from here “as far as Lasha.”

Genesis 13 narrates the separation of the patriarch Abram/Abraham from his nephew Lot because their possessions were so great that the land could not support both of them living together (v 6). The point of separation was Bethel (or between Bethel and Ai) (Gen 13.3) in the hills to the north of Jerusalem and northwest of Jericho. From here large stretches of the surrounding area are visible (Speiser 1964: 97; Abel 1967, 1: 371–72; Von Rad 1972: 172). Abram permitted Lot to choose where he wished to live and Lot picked “all the plain of the Jordan” (v 11) because it “was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar; this was before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah” (v 10).¹ Thus, Abram settled in the land of Canaan, presumably the land described in Gen 10.19, while Lot “journeyed eastward” (v 11) and settled “among the ‘cities of the Plain’ and moved his tent as far as Sodom” (v 12). In this text, “all the plain of the Jordan” would appear to be, at least in part, the Jordan Valley between the Sea of Galilee in the north and the Dead Sea in the south (Van Seters 1975: 117). Neev and Emery see it encompassing a more extensive area, including the entire scope of the Dead Sea basin from near the Yarmuk or az-Zarqa Rivers in the north to the Amazyahu fault escarpment immediately south of the Dead Sea (1995: 123). Simons thinks the indication that Abraham settled in the land of Canaan while Lot journeyed eastward and moved his tent as far as Sodom rules “out particularly any close geographical connection between Sodom and *jebel usdum* on the western shore of the Dead Sea” (1959: 223). From this text, the cities of the Plain would appear to be in the Jordan Valley (however extensive it may be) and east of the land of Canaan. The location of the cities of the Plain, however, cannot be deduced from this text alone.

Genesis 13 is, in fact, an introduction to the tradition on Lot that has a Transjordanian origin and which is centered on the history of Sodom and Gomorrah. The tradition was probably originally independent of the Abraham cycle (de Vaux 1971: 164). Its purpose is to prepare the reader for the presence in Transjordan of two descendants of Lot who are close relatives of Israel, namely, the Moabites and the Ammonites (Gen 19.30–38) (Speiser 1964: 97).

Genesis 14 narrates a campaign of four eastern kings against the rebellious kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (= Zoar). The rebels joined forces in the Valley of Siddim, that is, the Dead Sea

(v 3),² which contained bitumen/slime pits (v(v) 10–11). After the rebels’ defeat, the victorious kings took Lot hostage (v(v) 11–12). Abraham came to his nephew’s assistance, defeated the alliance of the eastern kings (v 15) and rescued Lot (v 16).³

The presence of bitumen/asphalt/slime pits in the valley of the Salt or Dead Sea is in agreement with Josephus’ designation of this body of water as “Lake Asphaltitis” (*Ant* 1.9; *JW* 3.10.7). There are also ancient and modern witnesses to the presence of bitumen/asphalt in and along the Dead Sea (Strabo; Diodorus; Josephus [*JW* 4.8.4]; Klein 1880: 251; Harland 1942; 1943; Neev and Emery 1995: 143). Tar seepage associated with border faults in the Wadi ‘Arabah-Jordan Graben is normal (Neev and Emery 1995: 141–43). However, this phenomenon is not restricted to a particular area of the Dead Sea and thus is not especially helpful in locating the cities of the Plain in which the rebellious kings joined forces and from which they fled into the mountains to the east and/or west of the Dead Sea.

Abram/Abraham, living by the oaks of Mamre (Gen 13.18) at Hebron, interceded with God not to destroy the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18.16–33). And it was from Mamre that Abraham’s visitors left to go to Sodom (Gen 18.22) where they received hospitality from Lot (Gen 19.1–3).⁴ Moreover, it was presumably from the same area that Abraham, after the destruction of the cities, “looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain” (Gen 19.28). On the basis of this text, Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the Plain appear to be located around the southern segment of the Dead Sea (Van Seters 1975: 117).

It would seem that the area described as “all the Plain” and “all the land of the Plain” in Genesis 19, verses 25 and 28 respectively, is located at the southwestern, southern, and/or southeastern segments of the Dead Sea. Neev and Emery are even more specific and, on the basis of the narrative, locate Sodom and Gomorrah in the south basin of the Dead Sea (1995: 123–24). They would place Admah and Zeboiim in the same general area since the kings of these two cities cooperated in the alliance against the eastern kings (Gen 14.2–3). Due to the geography of the area, such cooperation would be difficult, in the opinion of Neev and Emery, if Admah and Zeboiim were located in the north basin (1995: 124).

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is described in Gen 19.24–25: “The Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah *sulfur and fire* from the Lord out of heaven; and he *overthrew* those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground” (emphasis added). The destruction is also described in Gen 19.28 in which Abraham “looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain

and saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.” Deut 29.23 describes the resulting devastation: “all its soil burned out by sulfur and salt, nothing planted, nothing sprouting, unable to support any vegetation.” In all cases, the Bible attributes the results to God.

God spared Zoar out of favor to Abraham and Lot.⁵ It was here that Lot and his two daughters came (Gen 19.23) before moving (“for he was afraid to stay in Zoar” [Gen 19.30]), and Lot “went up out of” it with his offspring and settled in a cave in the hills surrounding the Dead Sea to the west and east (Gen 19.30). Genesis 19 goes on to relate the birth of the ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites as a result of incest between Lot and his daughters (vv 31–38). This Israelite tale was told partly to ridicule these racially related but rival nations, and partly to give folk etymologies for their names (MacDonald 1994a: 37).

Efforts to locate the cities of the Plain are assisted by other biblical texts. For example, when the Israelites encamped in the Plains of Moab (Num 22.1; 26.3, 63; 31.12; 33.48, 49; *et passim*), that is, in the area across from Jericho northeast of the Dead Sea (see Chapter 4), there is no mention of Sodom, Gomorrah, or any of the other cities of the Plain (Lagrange 1932: 513). Thus they would seem to be located elsewhere. Furthermore, when Moses went up from the Plains of Moab to Mount Nebo and the top of Pisgah (see Chapter 4) from where the Lord showed him the Promised Land (Deut 34.1–4), his view apparently included the area to the north towards Gilead (see Chapter 9) as far as Dan; the land to the northwest including Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh; Judah to the west as far as the Western Sea, that is, the Mediterranean; the Negeb to the southwest; and “the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar” (Deut 34.3). Moses’ view certainly took in Jericho below him to the west. Zoar would appear to be well south of where he was standing, rather than immediately below him. Finally, in Isaiah’s oracle against Moab, Zoar appears to be on that country’s frontier (15.5). This too would place the site in some distant region of Moab.

Some scholars, on the basis of biblical texts, have found support for a northern (Power 1930; Simons 1959: 222–29) as well as a southern (Lagrange 1932; Harland 1942, 1943; Neev and Emery 1995) location for the cities of the Plain. Others hold that three of the cities, namely, Sodom, Gomorrah, and Zoar, are located in the southern segment while Admah and Zeboiim may be located north of the Dead Sea (Albright 1924; 1926; Kyle and Albright 1924: 286; Kraeling 1956: 71; Astour 1966: 72–73; Van Seters 1975: 117). Genesis 13, for example, appears to favor a location north of the Dead Sea since it is from somewhere between Bethel and Ai that Abram

and Lot viewed the plain of the Jordan (Power 1930; Van Seters 1975: 117). Other biblical texts, for example, Gen 10.19; Num 21.1; Deut 34.1–4; and Isa 15.5, appear to support a location farther south in what is presently the southeastern plain of the Dead Sea, and/or south of the Dead Sea (Lagrange 1932).

Extra-biblical texts provide useful information about the cities of the Plain, especially Sodom, and about their demise, as well as indications of the cities’ location. Recounting information about 13 local cities including Sodom, which he gathered from people living near Masada on the western shore of the Dead Sea, the first century B.C. Roman writer Strabo writes of the “oft-repeated assertions of the local inhabitants, that there were once thirteen inhabited cities in that region of which Sodom was the metropolis ... and that by reason of earthquakes and of eruptions of fire and of hot waters containing asphalt and sulfur, the lake burst its bounds, and rocks were enveloped with fire; and, as for the cities, some were swallowed up and others were abandoned by such as were able to escape” (*Geography* 16.2.44). Strabo asserts that earthquakes, fire, and other disasters destroyed the cities. Significantly, he states that some of the cities were swallowed up while the remains of others, abandoned by their inhabitants, are still in existence.

Philo speaks of the same destruction by lighting and flaming thunderbolts—“ruins and cinders and brimstone and smoke, and the dusky flame still arises as though fire were smouldering within”—which could still be seen in Syria in his day (*De Vita Mosis* 2.56–58). Josephus writes of the kings who came against Sodom and “pitched their camp at the vale called the Slime Pits ...; and now, upon the destruction of the city of Sodom, that vale became the Lake Asphaltitis” (*Ant* 1.9), that is, the Dead Sea (*Peutinger Table* 9; Avi-Yonah 1954: 40). In *The Jewish Wars*, Josephus also associates Sodom (4.8.2; 4.8.4) and Zoar (4.8.4) with Lake Asphaltitis and relates how traces of the destroyed five cities are still to be seen (4.8.4).

Tacitus describes a plain not far from a lake or Jewish Sea, which was once fertile and the site of great cities, which were devastated by lightning. He comments further that traces of this disaster still exist and that the very ground looks burnt and has lost its fertility (*Histories* 5.7). The *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or 34.26) locates a cavalry unit of the Roman army at Zoar, giving the site’s location as the southeast end of the Dead Sea (Seeck 1876: 73).

The Targums do not give identifications for Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim. This may be because the rabbis thought the cities had been

overcome by catastrophe, vanishing from the map so as to have no contemporary equivalent (Alexander 1974: 57, 181). Eusebius places Bela (= Zoar), which in his day was called Zoara and was the location of a Roman military camp, next to the Dead Sea (42.1–5). He places Sodom, without greater precision, next to the same sea (150.10–11). Jerome, for his part, in his commentary on Isa 15.5, places Zoar on the border of Moab and thus apparently southeast of the Dead Sea (Neubauer 1868: 256).

Zoar is called the “city of palms” in various versions of the Talmud, which locate it southeast or on the east shore of the Dead Sea (Neubauer 1868: 256). The Madaba Mosaic Map places “Bela also Z[oar now] Zoora” at the southeastern extremity of the Dead Sea. It locates a sanctuary of “Saint Lot” in the mountains immediately to the north of Zoar (Saller and Bagatti 1949: 194–95; O’Callaghan 1953; Avi-Yonah 1954: 42 and pl. 4; 1977; Gold 1958; Donner and Cüppers 1977).

The Gaulian bishop Arculf visited the Holy Land at the end of the seventh century. About his visit to the Dead Sea he reports that “its length as far as Zoari in Arabia measures five hundred and eighty stades, and its breadth, as far as the environs of Sodom, one hundred and fifty stades” (Meehan 1958: 89).⁶ It appears that Arculf’s description is from a position at the northwestern end of the Dead Sea. If so, then Zoar in Arabia ought to be located at the southern extremity and Sodom along the eastern shore of the sea.

Le Strange summarizes the scholarly debate on the part of Arab geographers relative to the location of Zughar (= Zoar) (1965: 286–87). One side of the debate places the site at the northern end of the Dead Sea, near Jericho, with the result that the Zoar of Lot has been identified with Tall ash-Shaghur, not far to the east of the Jordan ford.⁷ Le Strange states, however, that Arab geographers were unanimous in placing Zughar at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, thus confirming the position of Josephus, followed by Eusebius and Jerome in the *Onomastikon*, who speak of the Dead Sea as stretching from Jericho in the north to Segor in the south. According to Arab geographers “Zughar lay near the Dead Sea, one or two days’ march from Jericho, three days’ from Jerusalem, one from Ma’ab (near al-Karak), and four from the head of the Gulf of al-’Aqaba. From all of which it is impossible that a town opposite Jericho, across the Jordan Ford, can be intended” (Le Strange 1965: 287).

Clearly, extra-biblical texts are almost unanimous in placing Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (= Zoar) south or southeast of the Dead Sea.

TOPONYMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The meaning of a place name may help locate a site. The toponym Admah comes from the Hebrew word *adamah*, and it is generally translated as "earth," "ground" (Borée 1930: 35), "red arable soil," or "cultivable, plantable ground" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 13). Bela, based on the root *blh*, means "be worn out, decay" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 128), "destroyed" (Van Seters 1975: 116), or "to devour" (McNamara 1972: 203). Bela, another name for Zoar meaning "be small," "be insignificant" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 811; *Ant* 1.11.4), suggests the size of Zoar was the basis for its name (Gray 1902: 3318). Gomorrah is based on the root '*mr* which means "be deep," "copious (water)" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 717) and "stretch over," "cover up," including by water (Borée 1930: 39). Gaster thinks the biblical writer chose the name Gomorrah "simply because that name suggests a Semitic word *gh-m-r* meaning 'submerge'" (1969: 161). The toponym Sodom is probably related to the Arabic *sadama* meaning "fasten," "fortify," "strengthen" (Borée 1930: 27). Zeboiim means "hyenas" (Gray 1902: 3316). The meanings of these toponyms are very general, and thus not helpful in locating the cities of the Plain.

However, there may be some help available from the investigations of toponyms in the Dead Sea area. There is, for example, an Adamah/Adam (= Tall ad-Damiyya) on the east bank of the Jordan, 40 km north of the Dead Sea. It is famous as a ford (Josh 3.16) as well as a place where landslides block the flow of the river (Phythian-Adams 1934: 138). It is located at a point where Wadis Farah and az-Zarqa meet the Jordan River from the west and east respectively (Wright and Filson 1956: 65; Aharoni 1979: 34). This may be the same site as the Admah of our texts (Kyle and Albright 1924: 286; Astour 1966: 72; Van Seters 1975: 117) or it may simply preserve the name of the site of interest here. Moreover, there is a place, at the southwestern extremity of the Dead Sea along the western side of its southern depression, called *Jabal Usdum* or *Jabal Sudum* by the local population (Kraeling 1956: 71), and generally translated into English as Mount Sedom, where pillars of salt can still be seen. This name is undoubtedly transmitted from the biblical Hebrew name Sodom (Abel 1967, 2: 467; Neev and Emery 1995: 123). The name Zoar appears as an inhabited place during the Roman, Byzantine, and early Islamic periods, and extra-biblical texts invariably locate it at the southeast extremity of the Dead Sea near or at present-day as-Safi (Kraeling 1956: 71). Neither Gomorrah nor Zeboiim are attested in the area's toponyms, though Astour suggests the latter may

be equated with the city of *Sa-bu-ma*, located in the middle Jordan Valley (1966: 72–73) of the Amarna Tablets (274.6).

There is both toponymic and textual support for locating Sodom and Zoar in the southwest and southeast areas of the Dead Sea respectively. On the other hand, the biblical name Admah, and possibly the name Zeboiim, may be preserved north of the Dead Sea. A possible resolution of the evidence locating the cities of the Plain both north and south of the Dead Sea may come from seeing the biblical narratives as combining two independent traditions about the destruction of these cities (Astour 1966). There may have been a northern tradition that knew only of the destruction of Admah and Zeboiim and a southern one that knew of the annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah (Astour 1966: 72–73; Van Seters 1975: 117). Similarly, biblical tradition may have originally centered only on a pair of cities, namely, Sodom and Gomorrah (see, for example, Rast 1987).

LOCATING THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN: ARCHAEOLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL, AND CLIMATOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Though textual and toponymic investigations provide important indications about the location of the cities of the Plain, they are inconclusive. To obtain greater geographical precision, our attention must turn to the results of archaeological, geological, and climatological explorations in the area of the Dead Sea. Over the past seventy years a great deal of archaeological survey and excavation work has taken place both north and south of the Dead Sea where textual and toponymic investigations appear to locate the cities of the Plain.

Among scholars who locate the cities of the Plain in the southern area of the Dead Sea, there are some who posit that Sodom, Gomorrah, and other cities have been submerged by rising waters (Blanckenhorn 1896: 51–59; Albright 1924: 7–9; 1926: 58; 1935: 135–36; Kyle and Albright 1924: 283–84, 291; Glueck 1935: 7–8; Harland 1942: 31; 1943: 42; Wright 1957: 50).⁸ However, Baney’s underwater archaeological survey in the area produced no positive results (1962), and this position now receives little support (Kraeling 1956: 71; Simons 1959: 227–28; Rast 1987: 193; Neev and Emery 1995). Some authors hold that the cities were the victims of earthquake activity that has left them concealed forever (Clapp 1936: 339–43; Wallis 1966: 145; Harris and Beardow 1995: 358–59). Similarly, Blanckenhorn suggests the cities were so utterly destroyed by earthquakes that no trace of them survives (1896: 56). These theories are also generally rejected (see, for example, Rast 1987: 193; however, see Harris and Beardow

1995) since the textual evidence, both biblical and extra-biblical, indicates at least some visible remains.

The early results of archaeological work carried out by the Pontifical Biblical Institute between 1929 and 1938 at the Late Neolithic-Chalcolithic period site of Tulaylat Ghassul (Mallon, et al. 1934), around 5 km from the northeast corner of the Dead Sea, led Power to locate the cities of the Plain in this area (1930). He found support for his position in the textual evidence. Lagrange (1932) disagreed with Power's position and Glueck (1951), who carried out extensive survey work in the area in the late 1930s and early 1940s, did not support it either. However, the University of Sydney's work at Tulaylat Ghassul between 1975 and 1978 (Hennessy 1989a) and again beginning in 1994 (Bourke et al. 1995; Bourke 1997) reveals that the site suffered considerably from earthquake activity. This form of destruction matches biblical descriptions of the demise of the cities of the Plain.

The East Jordan Valley Survey carried out extensive archaeological work in the area northeast of the Dead Sea in 1976 (Yassine, et al. 1988). The results from this work do not corroborate the Genesis narrative of the destruction of cities. Moreover, Prag excavated both Tall Iktanu (1989b, 1991) and Tall al-Hammam (1991) in the same area while Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine excavated Tall Nimrin farther to the north (Flanagan and McCreery 1990; Flanagan, et al. 1992; 1994).⁹ Finally, the Archaeological Survey of the Hesban Region included Tall Iktanu and other nearby sites in its coverage (Ibach 1987). All this survey and excavation work immediately northeast of the Dead Sea has not pinpointed the location of the cities of the Plain.

However, archaeological investigation in the regions immediately southeast and east of the Dead Sea provide more encouraging leads in the effort to locate the cities. First, Kraeling correctly points out that there is no suitable site for habitation along the southwestern shores of the Dead Sea since, with the exception of the one at 'Ayn Gedi in the vicinity of *Jabal Usdum*, the brooks there are salty (1956: 71). Similarly, Rast concludes, relative to archaeological finds along the southwestern shore over the past thirty years, "none of these ruins or the periods they represent helps to explain the Sodom tradition, or offers a primary location for it" (1987: 192).¹⁰ The situation along the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea is entirely different. Here, starting with Wadi Ibn Hammad at Ghor al-Haditha in the north to Wadi Khanazir in the south, there is a line of wadis entering the area from the plateau to the east that brings abundant water to the southeastern plain. It is on this plain, both in antiquity and presently, that agro-pastoralism and its consequent habitation was and is possible (McCreery

1980; Donahue 1981: 140–41; Harlan 1981: 155–59; 1982; 1985; MacDonald et al. 1992). It is also here, and especially in the area from the Lisan Peninsula southward, that there are archaeological remains that may help in locating the cities of the Plain (Rast 1987: 192–97). This area is especially rich in archaeological finds from the Pottery Neolithic, Late Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Roman/Nabataean, Byzantine, and Islamic periods (Albright 1924, 1926; Mallon 1924; Frank 1934; Glueck 1935; Rast and Schaub 1974, 1978, 1980, 1981; Frolich and Lancaster 1985; King et al. 1987; Rast 1987; MacDonald et al. 1987; 1992).

Albright (1924: 8–9; 1926: 58; 1935: 134–36), Kyle (1928; see also Kyle and Albright 1924), and Mallon (1924) carried out joint explorations and soundings along the southeast coast of the Dead Sea in 1924. As a result of this work, Albright, followed by Glueck (1935: 7–8), and Harland (1942: 31–32), posited that Zoar, Sodom, and Gomorrah are now submerged by the waters of the Dead Sea but were at one time located on Wadis al-Hasa, Numayra, and I'sal respectively (Kyle and Albright 1924: 285–86). Albright understood the Early Bronze Age site of Bab adh-Dhra' to have been a sanctuary of Sodom and Gomorrah (1924: 7; 1935: 126–37; Kyle and Albright 1924: 280). As for Admah and Zeboiim, he placed them at Wadis adh-Dhra' and al-Buqrasheh respectively, in which case they too are submerged by the waters of the Bay of al-Mazra'a (1926: 58). Albright did, however, leave open the possibility that these two cities may be located farther north in the plain of the Jordan (1924: 8; 1926: 58).

Rast finds possible locations for at least two cities of the Plain (1987: 193–97) in ruins from the Early Bronze Age, especially at Bab adh-Dhra' and Numayra (15 km to the south). The first and more important of these sites was occupied throughout the Early Bronze Age while the second was inhabited in the EB III period (ca. 2500–2350 B.C.) only. Thus for approximately one hundred fifty years, there was a thriving civilization along the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea (Rast 1987: 194). The two towns were abandoned ca. 2350 B.C. Numayra shows evidence of destruction by fire while Bab adh-Dhra' has ruined and abandoned structures along with evidence of demolition of the upper part of the town wall, some of which was exposed to fire (Rast and Schaub 1981: 16–18; Schaub 1993: 134).

Rast sees the destruction of these two cities giving rise to non-Israelite, Transjordanian traditions which Israel took up in the latter half of the Iron Age (for a similar dating see Loader 1990: 48). He locates Sodom at Bab adh-Dhra' and Gomorrah at Numayra (1987: 195–96), in part because Bab adh-Dhra' was the larger and more important city in antiquity, as was Sodom in relation to Gomorrah. Rast finds support for his identification in

Donahue's opinion (1980: 50; 1981: 153; 1985: 135–36, 139) that two severe earthquakes occurred, about fifty years apart, near the end of the third millennium B.C., that destroyed segments of both Bab adh-Dhra' and Numayra. The second quake resulted in the final and total abandonment of Numayra while only a seminomadic existence continued at Bab adh-Dhra' which was also abandoned shortly thereafter (Donahue 1980; 1981; 1985; Rast and Schaub 1980; 1981; Coogan 1984). Subsequently, the area along the southeast plain of the Dead Sea remained uninhabited for more than a thousand years, until the Iron II period (MacDonald 1992b; MacDonald et al. 1992; N. Lapp 1994).

The evidence of destruction at Bab adh-Dhra' and Numayra fits the evidence of devastation throughout the Levant (Wright 1961: 86; Kenyon 1979: 117–19; Issar 1995). Mesopotamia suffered similar devastation around the end of the EB III period (Weiss et al. 1993).

In support of Rast's argument, Neev and Emery posit that the first part of the one thousand year period of abandonment of the area could be explained by an extremely dry climate during the latter part of the EB IV period and a very wet climate, lasting for about eight hundred years, during the Middle and Late Bronze periods (1995: 144–45, 148). During the latter two periods, according to Neev and Emery, the level of the Dead Sea rose by nearly 100 m to about 300 m below sea level. This rise in water level would have flooded the agricultural land in the Dead Sea basin. Brines flooded the Lisan Peninsula and the depression south of the Dead Sea as far south as the foot of the Amazyahu fault escarpment.

Neev and Emery relate the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah to "geologic-tectonic activity of vast areas with resulting submergence of soils or destruction of settlements" (1995: 121). Comparing the biblical description of the Sodom and Gomorrah event with available geological, climatological and archaeological knowledge of the region, they conclude that it could have happened only at the end of EB III (1995: 121–22).

Although in agreement with Rast on many details relative to the cities of the Plain, Neev and Emery place Zoar, Sodom and Gomorrah in the south basin of the Dead Sea. Specifically, they place Zoar at Bab adh-Dhra' (1967; 1995: 109, 127, 150); the city of Sodom, which they think was thoroughly destroyed by a great earthquake, near Mount Sedom (1995: 128) on toponymic grounds; and Gomorrah near the city of Sodom on the plain of that name (1995: 150). They locate the pillar of salt associated with Lot's wife either in the tall, rock salt layers on the east flank of Mount Sedom or near the east flank of the Lisan Peninsula (1995: 130).¹¹ As for the other two cities of the Plain, Admah and Zeboim, Neev and Emery

suggest they could have existed in the south basin though they are not explicitly mentioned in the context of the destruction (1995: 123–24). Their location of Admah and Zeboiim in the south basin is based on the Genesis 14 account of their alliance against eastern kings, which would be difficult if they were located in the region of the north basin due to the geography of the eastern side of the Dead Sea (Neev and Emery 1995: 124). For Neev and Emery, then, the biblical description of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah refers specifically to the depressed part of the south basin (1995: 124).¹²

Neev and Emery’s location of Zoar at or near Bab adh-Dhra’ is based on their contention that in the first century Zoar was a seaport (1995: 132). It had to be located on the shore and north of the east–west Roman road that Trajan paved in A.D. 106 or near the head of the Bay of Mazra’a, the only natural deepwater haven (1995: 132–33). In Neev and Emery’s opinion, if Zoar were at as-Safi it could never have functioned as an efficient harbor (1995: 133). But if “that is Zoar” is a gloss, it may not help identify the location of Bela.

Neev and Emery understand two expressions in Genesis 19—“sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (v 24) and “smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace” (v 28)—as “products of light fractions of hydrocarbons escaping from underground reservoirs and igniting upon reaching the surface” (1995: 140), as a result of earthquake activity (1995: 121). This position has been argued by Clapp (1936: 907–9) followed by Harland (1943: 48–49).

Many commentators, influenced especially by extra-biblical texts, locate Bela (= Zoar) at as-Safi at the eastern end of Wadi al-Hasa in the southeastern plain of the Dead Sea (Albright 1924: 8–9; 1926: 58; 1935: 134–36; Glueck 1935: 8; Harland 1942: 31–32; Aharoni 1979: 35, 443). More specifically, some scholars locate it at Khirbat Sheikh ‘Isa immediately south of Wadi al-Hasa and modern-day as-Safi (De Luynes 1874, 1: 247–51; Klein 1880: 253; Musil 1907; Mallon 1924: 436–39, especially 438 n. 2; Frank 1934: 204–5). Albright’s 3 m deep sounding at this site, however, uncovered nothing earlier than the Byzantine period (Albright 1924: 4; Kyle and Albright 1924: 283, 291). The Southern Ghors and Northeast ‘Arabah Archaeological Survey (SGNAS) collected Early Bronze, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic period sherds (MacDonald et al. 1992: 104, 249) while King et al. report Byzantine sherds from Khirbat Sheikh ‘Isa (1987: 448, 456). Finally, Waheeb’s 20 × 4 m trench at the site uncovered a wall built of well-dressed stones along with a large number of Late Islamic, Byzantine, and Nabataean sherds (1995: 555). There seems to be

little doubt that the site was Byzantine–Early Islamic Zoar(a)/Zughar or Sughar. Nevertheless, there is no archaeological support for settlement in the area before the Roman/Nabataean and Byzantine periods. The Early Bronze sherds recovered by excavations and surveys probably come from the extensive EB I–III cemetery at ancient as-Safi and Tawahin as-Sukkar/Qasr al-Tub(ah) (MacDonald et al. 1992: 61, 64, 249; Waheeb 1995). While it is reasonable to locate Zoar at Khirbat Sheikh 'Isa, there is no support for locating Bela there. And the possible gloss “that is Zoar” (Knauf 1992c: 654) may be the only connection between the two sites.

Scholars have searched for the remains of the Church of Saint Lot depicted on the Madaba Mosaic Map (Saller and Bagatti 1949: 194–95; O’Callaghan 1953; Avi-Yonah 1954; 1977; Gold 1958; Donner and Cüppers 1977) in the vicinity of the southern end of the Dead Sea. They believe the church commemorates the events of Gen 19.30–38. Donner and Knauf (1985; 1986) thought they found a possible location for the site at a small hermitage, which Frank (1934; see also Alt and Wickert 1935) first discovered in 1932 in the north cliffs at the mouth of Wadi al-Hasa. Now, however, it seems clear that the site depicted on the Madaba Mosaic Map is Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata confidently called Lot’s Cave/*Kahf Lut*.

The SGNAS first reported the site of Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata in 1987 (MacDonald et al. 1987). On the basis of the architectural and other artifactual remains at the site, SGNAS team members questioned whether or not the site was indeed the “sanctuary of St. Lot” (MacDonald et al. 1988; 1992: 104; MacDonald and Politis 1988). Politis began to excavate the site in 1988 (1989) and has continued his work there (1990; 1992a; 1992b; 1993a; 1993b; 1994; 1995). He dates the substantial structures at the site between the Byzantine and Early Abbasid periods (around the fifth–ninth centuries). These structures are remnants of a monastery complex consisting of “a three-apse basilica church built around a cave, a large arched reservoir with a water-catchment system, domestic and kitchen areas, and terraced fields surrounding the settlement” (Politis 1993a: 336). Inscriptions found at the site mention Saint Lot. Pilgrims would have undoubtedly been shown the cave in which Lot lived with his daughters, suggesting that Byzantine religious leaders thought Lot came from the southern part of the Dead Sea, and that Sodom was located there.

LASHA

Although Lasha is not listed as one of the cities of the Plain, it appears along with four of these cities in the description of the territory of the

Canaanites (Gen 10.19). The toponym Lasha is found only in Gen 10.19. Since it probably comes from the Semitic root *ls* ‘ meaning “bore,” “drill,” “perforate” (Borée 1930: 26), the name does not help identify its location.

Jerome (*Quaest.* in Gen 10.19) identifies Lasha with the hot springs of Callirrhoe (= az-Zara Oasis) on the east coast of the Dead Sea below Zarqa Ma‘in, famous in Jewish and Christian tradition as the place where Herod the Great sought healing (see Josephus *Ant* 17.6.4). Supposedly Jerome is following Pseudo-Jonathan which has “as far as Callirrhoe” completing the quotation of Gen 10.19 and substituting Callirrhoe for biblical Lasha (Simons 1959: 94–96; McNamara 1972: 193; Alexander 1974: 181–82, 185). There is, however, no archaeological support for such a location (Donner 1963: 60–62; Westermann 1984: 524; Strobel 1989; 1997: 271–72).

By emending the toponym, Wellhausen equated Lasha with Laish, that is, Dan of Judges 18.27 (1876: 403–4), a convincing identification since it provides the northeastern point of the Canaanite territory and completes the boundary description of Gen 10.19 (Abel 1967, 2: 368). However, it is not located in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

CONCLUSIONS

Although there is support in biblical texts for locating the cities of the Plain both north and south of the Dead Sea, the majority of the texts favor a southern location for these cities. Extra-biblical texts are unanimous in locating the cities, particularly Sodom and Zoar, in relation to the southern basin of the Dead Sea.

Toponymic considerations support the location of Sodom at Mount Sedom on the western shore of the southern basin of the Dead Sea. However, this is for the most part at variance with the texts as well as with agro-pastoral possibilities in the area, and the name may have transferred from the eastern to the western shore of the Dead Sea. There is also toponymic support for locating Admah and possibly Zeboiim north of the Dead Sea. The place name Zoar seems continually to have been associated in biblical and extra-biblical texts with the southeastern segment of the Dead Sea, though its identification with Bela is probably due to a textual gloss and is not supported by the archaeological record.

With the exception of earthquake activity at Tulaylat al-Ghassul, there is little archaeological support for locating the cities of the Plain north of the Dead Sea in the southeastern Jordan Valley. However, archaeological findings in the southeastern plain of the Dead Sea are promising for the

location of Sodom and Gomorrah. Evidence of earthquakes at Bab adh-Dhra' and Numayra matches biblical and extra-biblical accounts of the destruction of the cities of the Plain. These sites were in ruins when the biblical texts were written and the traditions behind them established. Early Bronze Age cemeteries at Bab adh-Dhra', as-Safi, Feifeh, and Rujm and Khirbat Khanazir add to the impression of death and devastation in the area. The barren environment of the region reveals that it suffered a catastrophe, and suggests why biblical writers locate the cities there. However, the archaeological evidence to date does not permit the precise location of the five cities of the Plain in this region, nor the identification of Sodom with Bab adh-Dhra' and Gomorrah with Numayra or vice versa. It is possible that we have a combination of Judean and Israelite traditions of destruction of sinful cities south and north of the Dead Sea respectively.

NOTES

¹ The expression "in the direction of Zoar" (Gen 13.10) may be a marginal gloss (Speiser 1964: 97). Moreover, the identification of Bela with Zoar in Gen 14.2, an historical place during at least the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods, may also be a gloss (Knauf 1992c: 654).

² The expression "that is, the Dead Sea" is a gloss. The "Valley of Siddim" may refer to a time when the lower basin of the Dead Sea was not covered with water.

³ This depiction of Abraham as a successful military leader is not in keeping with the usual portrayal of Israel's ancestors as peaceful herders; it links Abraham with the great figures of history, and adds military glory to his reputation (Astour 1966: 65; Van Seters 1975).

⁴ The distance from Mamre to the southern end of the Dead Sea is ca. 70 km.

⁵ Biblical writers must have known about one settlement in the Dead Sea region in their time. This would explain why they posited that Bela (= Zoar), a small place, is spared destruction. And it is generally in the area of as-Safi that past visitors to the southeast plain of the Dead Sea say such a settlement existed (MacDonald et al. 1992: 1–3).

⁶ According to Arculf's reckoning, the Dead Sea measured around 107.30 (north–south) × 27.75 (west–east) km.

⁷ Glueck found only a small number of medieval and comparatively modern Arabic sherds at Tall ash-Shaghur (1951: 392). East Jordan Valley Survey team members collected possible Iron I, a few Iron II, Ayyubid/Mamluk (dominant), modern, and unidentified sherds at the site (Yassine, et al. 1988: 192). Moreover, they state that the site was settled for the first time during the Ayyubid/Mamluk period (1988: 203).

⁸ Abel sees Admah and Zoar submerged by water due to seismic activity (1967, 2: 238–39, 466).

⁹ Excavations are ongoing at Tulaylat Ghassul, Iktanu, Tall al-Hammam, and Tall Nimrin.

¹⁰ See Neev and Emery (1995: 125–26) for a contrary position that archaeological investigations along the west flank of the south basin of the Dead Sea indicate habitation in the area at the eleventh century B.C. fortress at Meẓad Gozal (Aharoni 1964) as well as the Chalcolithic temple and the seventh century B.C. settlement at 'Ayn Gedi. Aharoni writes of his soundings in 1964 at Meẓad Gozal, an Edomite fort that he dates to the eleventh to tenth centuries B.C., on the shore of the Dead Sea near the northern tip of Mount Sedom, noting the fort was destroyed by fire (Aharoni 1964). He does not associate the site with any of the cities of the Plain.

¹¹ Harland (1942: 23) locates the Pillar of Salt and its association with the legend of Lot's wife at *Jabal Usdum*.

¹² Neev and Emery (1995: 124–25) make much of the supposed five Early Bronze Age sites that Rast and Schaub (1974) reported in the southeast plain of the Dead Sea, though Rast no longer argues this position (1987). Moreover, the Southern Ghors and Northeast 'Arabah Archaeological Survey's work in the area (MacDonald et al. 1987; 1992) and the Expedition to the Dead Sea Plain's excavations at Feifeh and Khirbat Khanazir (N. Lapp 1994; MacDonald 1995) have revealed Early Bronze Age cemeteries at as-Safi, Feifeh, and Khirbat and Rujm Khanazir. These projects have shown, however, that there is no evidence of Early Bronze Age settlements at any of these sites. The main structure at Feifeh, probably a fort, is Iron II in date (N. Lapp 1994), and this is probably the age of the “tower” at Rujm Khanazir (MacDonald et al. 1987; 1992). Archaeological investigations have not uncovered any evidence indicating that the site was destroyed. Thus, Van Hattem's position that “Feifeh is a strong candidate for Sodom” is untenable (1981: 90).

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CHAPTER 5

EXODUS ITINERARIES: ROUTES AND RELATED SITES EAST OF THE 'ARABAH, THE DEAD SEA, AND THE JORDAN

INTRODUCTION

Our interest here is in those portions of the exodus itineraries that deal with routes and sites east of Wadi 'Arabah, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan River. To this end, after some general comments about the composition, sources, and historical value of the biblical Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Judges in which these itineraries are found, we will focus on the five main wilderness-itinerary texts: Num 20.14–21, 22 (and 21.4); Num 21.10–20; Num 33.35–49; Deut 2.1–26; and Judg 11.14–26. In these passages, biblical writers describe routes and stopping places in their stories of Israelite wanderings, conquests, and settlement east of the Jordan. Despite conflicting information about the exodus itineraries as they pertain to Jordan, biblical authors must have had some ideas about travel routes through Transjordan. Our goal is to locate, as far as possible, the routes and stopping places they describe (fig. 8).

THE EXODUS ITINERARIES IN NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY, AND JUDGES

Three of the wilderness itineraries of interest here are found in the Book of Numbers, which, as literary and historical criticism reveal, is a complex accumulation of traditions rather than simply a factual account of Israel's journey from Sinai to the border of the Promised Land. The Book of Numbers is part of a larger literary whole, continuing a story begun in the Books of Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus. The story is completed with the death of Moses, narrated in Deuteronomy (34.1–12) and the settlement of the tribes in Cisjordan, told in Joshua (Budd 1984: xviii). At the core of the tradition is the historical fact of Israel's presence in the land of Canaan, which Numbers partly explains.

The Book of Numbers lacks many elements that modern historians require. There is no information about the use of sources close to or contemporary with the period described, no indication of annals, chronicles,

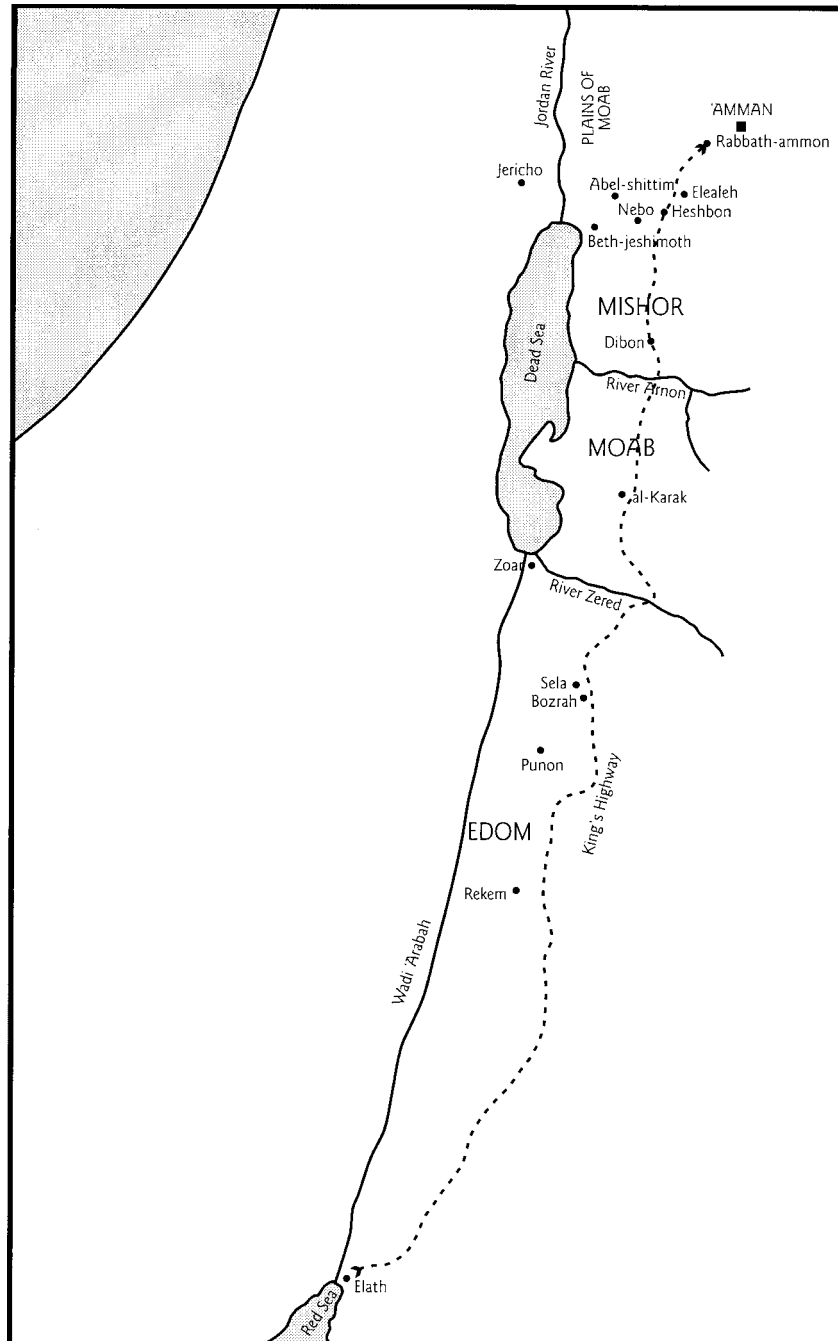


Fig. 8. Exodus Itineraries East of the 'Arabah, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan.

inscriptions, nor is there a firm background of dates that can be matched with the known history of the second half of the second millennium B.C. Such history as the Book of Numbers preserves is mediated by earlier narrative tradition; there is no independent witness from the priestly (P) text (Budd 1984: xxvii). Consequently, though Numbers is of interest to historians, conclusions drawn from the text are necessarily tentative and provisional (Budd 1984: xxvi).

The priestly revisions of tradition found in the Book of Numbers belong to that movement in Judaism that originated in Babylon in exilic times, and that brought about a resettlement in Palestine beginning at the end of the sixth century (Budd 1984: xix). Numbers is thus a fresh presentation of tradition that incorporates older material, and occasionally interpretative comment, while at the same time providing a distinctive theological structure (Budd 1984: xxii).

The Books of Deuteronomy and Judges are part of the Deuteronomistic History (DH) (McKenzie 1992: 160) found in the Books of Deuteronomy-Kings (Von Rad 1966: 12; Martin 1975: 5; Mayes 1985: 10; Weinfeld 1991: 13, 1992: 3). This history, composed after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., is far more than a new edition of an existing work (Martin 1975: 5). Its author made use of a variety of sources to create a new history of Israel embracing Moses, the conquest, the Judges, and the monarchy (Mayes 1985: 11–12). Of special importance for the present study is the text's acknowledgement that the crossing of the Arnon (Deut 2.24–25), and not merely the Jordan, as in older sources (Weinfeld 1991: 13), begins the realization of the divine promise of the land.

The Book of Deuteronomy is a mosaic of traditional Pentateuchal material (Von Rad 1966: 12), and depends on these traditions and their revision according to Hezekiah and Josiah's principles of reform (Weinfeld 1991: 1). Although many theological ideas in Deuteronomy reach back to early years, the book is in general a "distillation of the teaching of priest, prophets, and wise men ... presupposing the long existence of that teaching in Israel" (Mayes 1979: 81). The language of the book resembles most closely that of the seventh century and later in Judah, and its general historical background is found in the latter years of the Judean kingdom. Thus, the book must be seen in the context of the last decades of the kingdom of Judah (Mayes 1979: 81).

The Book of Judges presents "history as a recurrent cycle of typical occurrences" (Martin 1975: 5; Mayes 1985: 12). Its author made use of various sources upon which he imposed his own viewpoint and/or particu-

lar theological ideas (Martin 1975: 5). In these sources were stories of past tribal heroes and people who played a judicial role in Israelite society (Martin 1975: 5).

RELATIONSHIP AMONG NUM 20.14–21, 22 (AND 21.4); NUM 21.10–20; NUM 33.35–49; DEUT 2.1–26; AND JUDG 11.14–26

There is a lack of consistency in the Bible's presentations of Israel's journey from Kadesh to the Plains of Moab. For example, while Num 20.14–21 and Judges 11.17–18 indicate that the Israelites did not cross through Edomite territory, Deut 2.1–9 seems to imply that they traveled peacefully through the territory of both Edom and Moab (see especially Deut 2.4, 8, 9; Bartlett 1989: 91; Miller 1989a: 583). The conflict here can partly be accounted for by the fact that biblical writers did not know the exact route taken by the Israelites, though they realized that only by detouring around the desert could the Israelites avoid Edomite and Moabite territory (Miller 1989a: 584–85).

Commentators have had difficulty constructing an actual route based on Num 21.10–20. Miller calls the text "a geographical hodgepodge totally incomprehensible in terms of the geographical realities of southern Transjordan" (1989a: 587). Davies sees Num 21.10–13 as a literary and geographical conflation of Numbers 33 and Judges 11 (1983). In a similar vein, Mittmann concludes that the text is a late redactional piece with pronounced deuteronomistic influence (1973). Nevertheless, there may be a plausible itinerary in Num 21.10–20 (Seebass 1997).

Num 33.1–49 is the longest and most complete of the wilderness itineraries. Its presentation of the route was borrowed from the repertoire of the Israelite royal court. Its aim is to describe the route, and camping places along it, that the Israelites supposedly followed after their departure from Egypt *en route* to the border of the land that God had promised (Noth 1968: 242). According to Davies (1979), it represents a coherent and unified text rather than a composite of the itinerary segments presented earlier in the Exodus-Numbers narrative. The text probably describes an actual route widely known in ancient times (Noth 1968: 243; Budd 1984: xxviii; Miller 1989a: 580).

Deuteronomy 2 combines competing traditions regarding Israel's encounter with the peoples of Transjordan. As a result, it is not an entirely coherent itinerary of the journey from Kadesh to northern Moab. It does make clear, however, that the Israelites passed through, rather than around,

Moab proper (Snaith 1967: 276–77; Miller 1989a: 583). Jephthah's response in Judges 11 represents another "deuteronomistic" version of the Israelite journey through Transjordan. There are significant differences between it and the version in Deut 2.1–26.

Clearly, it is not possible to take all these texts and produce a coherent route. The different traditions of P and DH are not reconcilable, and efforts to make sense of them will result in failure due to their geographical inconsistencies. Nonetheless, biblical writers had a general sense of possible routes and sites along them, which we will attempt to identify.

THE TEXTS

Num 20.14–21, 22; 21.4

Commentary: Num 20.14–21 recounts Moses' request of Edom (v(v) 14, 19) to pass through its land by way of the King's Highway (v 17). Moses made the request from Kadesh, which is said to be "on the edge" of Edomite territory (v 16). The request was denied "so Israel turned away from them," the Edomites (v 21). It would seem from this passage that Israel detoured around Edom to the east. Num 20.22 merely notes that the Israelites set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. Num 21.4, which has the Israelites at Mount Hor rather than Kadesh, appears to refer to the same request denied in Num 20.21 for it states that the Israelites set out from Mount Hor "to go around the land of Edom."

This text poses several problems. First of all, it is far from proven that a king of Edom existed as early as the time of Moses. There is no archaeological evidence of a large population and towns in Edom at such an early date (Bienkowski 1992; MacDonald 1992b; 1994b). This difficulty is not lessened by the biblical tradition that states that there was no king in Edom (1 Kings 22.47) at the time of King Jehoshaphat of Judah (870–846 B.C.). Moreover, according to 2 Kings 8.20, Edom was freed from the control of Judah and had its own king only under the reign of Joram of Judah (848–841 B.C.). Even if there were temptations to revolt in order to acquire independence before this date, Edom was only, from the beginning of the Judean monarchy until the middle of the ninth century, a territory dependent upon the Judean kingdom.

Secondly, the text of Num 20.16 presents Kadesh as a town on the edge of Edomite territory. This would be strange for the Mosaic period since an Edomite presence in the eastern Negeb is attested to by several

sites, including a shrine at Horvat Qitmit and an Edomite ostrakon at Horvat 'Uza only at the end of the seventh or beginning of the sixth century B.C. (Beit-Arieh and Cresson 1985; Beit-Arieh 1995). Although an Edomite seal of *Qaus/Qos* and a sherd with some letters were found previously at Tall 'Aro'er in the Negeb (Biran and Cohen 1976: 139, pl. 28:B; Biran 1982: 162, pl. 23:B; Naveh 1985), the ostrakon furnishes the first clear and direct historical evidence for Edomite penetration into the Negeb (Bartlett 1972; Aharoni 1981: 146–47), which otherwise is only hinted at in the Bible (2 Kings 24.2; Ezek 35.6). There is even more evidence of Edomite presence in the form of an Edomite shrine at Horvat Qitmit (Beit-Arieh 1995b). Besides these sources, there is also evidence of Edomite pottery in the Negeb at such late Iron Age sites as Tall Malhata, Tall 'Ira, Tall 'Aro'er, Tall 'Arad, and Tall Masos (Beit-Arieh and Cresson 1985: 100; and see Chapter 9).

The text probably reflects the situation at the end of the seventh or beginning of the sixth century when Edom moved, at a time when Judah was weak, into the eastern Negeb (see Chapter 9). This would have led to hostility, or perhaps increased hostility, between Judah and Edom at the end of the monarchial period (Briend 1987: 42). Thus the text describes a particular geographical and cultural situation, rather than an historical condition at the end of the Late Bronze or beginning of the Iron Age.

Site Identification: Kadesh, the King's Highway, Mount Hor, and “the land of Edom” are places and regions mentioned in Num 20.14–21 and 21.4. Their location needs to be determined. The land of Edom is considered more fully in Chapter 9.

i) Kadesh (Num 20.14, 16, 22): Kadesh is said to be “a town on the edge of your territory” (Num 20.16), that is, Edomite territory. It was from Kadesh that the Israelites came to Mount Hor (Num 20.22) from which “they set out by way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom” (Num 21.4).

Although the Targums, for the most part, make no attempt to locate the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert (Alexander 1974: 195–96; Davies 1979: 16), they consistently identify Kadesh with Petra (= Rekem) (Alexander 1974: 198; Davies 1979: 16–18) and Kadesh-barnea with Rekem Ge'a (Alexander 1974: 190–98). They locate Rekem (= Petra = Kadesh) on the borders of, but outside, the Land of Israel (Alexander 1974: 194–95). Josephus, however, makes no mention of this tradition (Davies 1979: 17).

Eusebius follows the Targums in identifying Kadesh with Petra (= Rekem) in the land of Edom (112: 8). Moreover, he adds that Miriam

died and was buried there (112: 9–11), and that it was the place where Moses struck the rock to provide water for the people (Ex 17.1–7; Num 20.2–13).

Despite these assertions from antiquity, Kadesh is generally located today at either 'Ayn Qadeis (Davies 1979: 74–77, 88, 113 n. 58) or about 8 km to the NNW at 'Ayn al-Qudeirat (Woolley and Lawrence 1914–1915; Simons 1959: 136, *et passim*; Abel 1967, 1: 306, 2: 412; Cohen 1993: 843), “the richest and most centrally located of a group of springs on the southern edge of the Negev” (Aharoni 1979: 70). Located west of Wadi 'Arabah, it is of no further concern here.

ii) King's Highway (Num 20.17; 21.22): The King's Highway has been identified with the main Transjordanian north–south route from Irbid to the Gulf of al-'Aqaba (see Aharoni 1979: 44 map 3). It traversed the area referred to in Chapter 3 as the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben, and was located west of the modern Desert Highway as well as west of both the Ottoman *Darb al-Hajj* and the Roman *Via Nova Triana*.

The name “King's Highway” appears only in the Bible. This may not be an official designation for the route; it could have been called merely “the highway” (Num 20.19). Its northern section is called “the Road to Bashan” (Num 21.33; Deut 3.1) since it went from Heshbon, capital of King Sihon, to Ashtaroth, capital of King Og of Bashan (Aharoni 1979: 55).

iii) Mount Hor (Num 20.22, 23, 25, 27; 21.4; 33.37, 38, 39, 41; 34.7, 8; Deut 32.50): The Israelites set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor (Num 20.22), which was “on the border of the land of Edom” (Num 20.23; see also Num 33.37) where Aaron died (Num 33.39). Since Kadesh is also said to be “a town on the edge of” Edomite territory (Num 20.16), there is a close geographical relationship between Kadesh and Mount Hor. It does not appear, however, that either site is in Edomite territory. Moreover, Mount Hor cannot be a great distance from Arad in the Negev since the king of Arad, when he heard that Israel was coming, came out to do battle (Num 21.1; 33.40).

A tradition dating at least to the time of Josephus has the death of Aaron taking place on one of the mountains surrounding Petra, the metropolis of the Arabs of Arabia (*Ant* 4.4.7), which the Targums identify with biblical Kadesh. Eusebius is aware of this tradition for he also locates Mount Hor east of the 'Arabah near Petra, which he identifies with Kadesh. He states that until his time the rock Moses struck when his people asked for water was visible in this region (112: 10).

Modern Arabic names in the vicinity of Petra embody traditions about important events of the post-Sinai period of the wilderness wanderings (Alexander 1974: 198), for example: 'Ayn Musa where Moses is said to have struck the rock; Wadi Musa in which the waters from this spring flow through Petra and on to the 'Arabah; and of course Mount Hor, the site of Aaron's death (Alexander 1974: 198). Alexander thinks these traditions developed to explain the entrance (*as-Siq*) at Petra and associate it with Num 16.31–32, which relates how the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and all their goods after Moses had finished speaking to the people (1974: 198–99).

Burckhardt was aware of these traditions. Disguised as a Bedouin in 1812, he was able to see the city of Petra on the pretense of offering a goat as sacrifice to the prophet Aaron (1822: 419–31; see also Palmer 1871: 433–35).

Biblical traditions about the area around Petra persist to the present. For example, the Mountain of Aaron (*Jabal Nabi Harun/Jabal Harun*) (elev. ca. 1350 m), to the southwest of the main segment of Petra and visible from it, is the location of a tomb, the upper portion of which is a white mosque¹ said to belong to Aaron. From this location one is able to look down on the 'Arabah and across it to the eastern Negeb. However, the tomb is most likely a refurbished Byzantine church, dating to the time of Justinian (A.D. 527–565), which commemorated the death of Aaron and the passing of the mantle to his son Eleazar (Num 20.28) (Abel 1967, 1: 388–89; see also Peterman and Schick 1996: 477–78).

The difficulty in accepting a mountain in the neighborhood of Petra as the location of Mount Hor is that Petra is not on the “edge”/“border” of Edom but in Edom. Petra and vicinity would have been at the western edge of Edomite territory only in the city's formative years. The text, however, appears to be late and dated to a time, possibly the seventh or sixth century, when the Edomites had expanded westward into the central Negeb. Moreover, Mount Hor is closely associated with Kadesh, which is probably located at 'Ayn al-Qudeirat. Thus, a location west of the 'Arabah and in the neighborhood of Kadesh should be sought for Mount Hor (Davies 1979: 91). For this reason, as well as the fact that Mount Hor cannot be located far from Arad, no further consideration will be given to this site.²

Num 21.10–20

Commentary: The places mentioned in Num 21.10–11 are part of a list found in Numbers 33, a priestly redaction. Even if there are ancient

elements conserved in Num 21.12–20, the text is composite and the date late. The outline provided in v(v) 12–13, “From there they set out, and camped in the Wadi Zered. From there they set out, and camped on the other side of the Arnon,” does not permit retracing of the ancient itinerary that the Moses-led group would have followed (Briend 1987: 43). Nevertheless, an attempt must be made to identify the sites the biblical writer/editor had in mind.

Site Identification: The Moses-led group, according to Numbers 21, set out from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea “to go around the land of Edom” (v 4). On the way at an unspecified place, Moses made a serpent of bronze so that those bitten by poisonous snakes would not die (v 8). Then “the Israelites set out, and camped in Oboth” (v 10). From Oboth they went successively to Iye-abarim, Wadi Zered, Arnon, Waheb in Suphah, Ar, Beer, Mattanah, Nahaliel, Bamoth, and finally “to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah that overlooks the Wasteland” (v 20). Our task here is to identify, as far as possible, the sites that the biblical writer had in mind.

i) Oboth (Num 21.10–11; 33.43–44): The biblical text locates Oboth after an unspecified place at which Moses made the serpent of bronze (possibly Punon = Faynan, a copper mining and smelting area; see below), after leaving Mount Hor. It places Oboth before Iye-abarim. According to Bartlett, the toponym Oboth can mean “water skins” (1989: 49–50). Pope, however, translates the place name as “ghosts” (1977: 173; see also Borée 1968: 47).

A number of authors have located Oboth at the oasis of al-Weibeh (Musil 1907/08, 2.2: 202–4) on the west side of Wadi 'Arabah across from Faynan (Simons 1959: 259–60; Abel 1967, 2: 400–401). The oasis is at a crossroads for travel coming to/from al-'Aqaba, Wadi 'Arabah, Petra, and Gaza (Musil 1907/08, 2.2: 202; Abel 1967, 2: 400–401). About the only support for the location of Oboth at Al-Weibeh is that it would be a suitable camping ground (Simons 1959: 259–60). The problem with the location, however, is that it demands an inexplicable detour to the west, given the general northeast direction of the Israelites traveling toward the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben (Davies 1979: 90; Ferch 1992d: 7). While admitting that no precise identification of the site can be made, Davies opts for Wadi al-Weibeh as its most probable location though he acknowledges it is rather close to Khirbat Faynan (1979: 118 n. 53), which he identifies with Punon, 16 km to the north.

Based on his translation of Oboth as “water skins” and the context of both Num 21.10 and 33.44, Bartlett suggests a location between Punon or somewhere in Wadi 'Arabah and Moab, possibly in northern Edom between Dana and Wadi al-Hasa. He sees the location as possibly al-'Aynah on the north bank of Wadi al-Hasa and thus in Moabite territory (1989: 49–50). From the context of both Num 21.11 and 33.44, however, it would appear that Iye-abarim is the first Israelite camping spot in the territory of Moab. On the basis of this information plus Num 21.4 (“to go around the land of Edom”), Num 21.10–11 locates Oboth outside both Moab and Edom. Num 33.44, on the other hand, probably locates the site in Wadi 'Arabah and/or in northern Edom.

ii) Iye-abarim (Num 21.11; 33.44): The first and second elements in the toponym Iye-abarim may be translated as “heap of stone, of rubble” and “the opposite side” respectively. Thus, the biblical writer could be thinking of ruins on the other side of Wadi 'Arabah or the Dead Sea, or generally in Transjordan. The text seems to provide some geographical information as it states that Iye-abarim is “in the wilderness bordering Moab toward the sunrise” (Num 21.11). However, as Seebass contends (1997: 257), “toward the sunrise” is probably a gloss, a position supported by the indication in Num 33.44 that Iye-abarim is located in the territory of Moab.

Eusebius places Gai, the LXX reading of Iye-abarim in Num 33.44, near Petra (62: 17–18), which in his day was called *Gaia*. Such a location is in line with the tradition of Eusebius' time that associated all important events of the post-Sinai period of the desert wanderings with Petra (Alexander 1974: 198). The Madaba Mosaic Map, on the other hand, has an Aia in the mountains to the east of the Dead Sea and south of Charachmoab (= al-Karak) (Avi-Yonah 1954: 41 and pl. 3). Most commentators have sought an actual site for Iye-abarim. However, since the only indication in the text is that the Israelite encampment appears to be north or northeast of Oboth “in the wilderness bordering Moab toward the sunrise,” commentators have sought a suitable location along what they perceive to be an actual route. Glueck (1939a: 68–69 n. 224) favored Khirbat al-Mudayna on Wadi al-Hasa as the location of the site, and several current biblical atlases (see, e.g., Beitzel 1985: map 25 [86–87] and map 27 [94] and Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1993: 48) and some commentators (Aharoni 1979: 202; Mattingly 1992e: 588) follow this opinion. There is, however, neither an indication in the text as to the precise geographical location of the site nor a toponymic relationship between the name Khirbat al-Mudayna and Iye-abarim that would support such an identification. Nor is there an archaeologi-

cal basis for locating the site here, since despite Glueck's contention this site was not likely in existence in either the Iron II or Persian periods. Van Zyl locates Iye-abarim in the desert to the east of Moab, somewhere to the south of Wadi al-Sultani (1960: 62).

Other authors have seen a toponomic similarity between the first element in Iye-abarim and 'Ay, a modern settlement on an ancient site, located ca. 10 km southwest of al-Karak (Abel 1967, 1: 379; Davies 1979: 90; Miller 1991: 109; however, Avi-Yonah [1954: 41] considers the identification unlikely). This identification is supported by Donner's report (1964: 90) of surface pottery dated to Iron Age II and Miller's (1991a: 109) of ceramics from the Iron I, Iron II, and Iron IIC/Persian periods at the site.

Pope makes a novel suggestion relative to the location of both Oboth and Iye-abarim, which he translates as "ghosts" and "ruins of the departed" respectively (1977: 173; see also Borée 1968: 47 and 90). In his opinion, the sites in question are to be found on the border of Moab where there are dolmen concentrations (1977: 173). In support of Pope's position and his understanding of "toward the sunrise" as a gloss, there are hundreds of EB I–IV tombs, if not dolmens, between Wadi Khanazir and Bab adh-Dhra' (Schaub 1973; Rast and Schaub 1974; Frolich and Lancaster 1985; Schaub and Rast 1989; N. Lapp 1994; MacDonald et al. 1992; 1995), that is, both south and north of the western extremity of Wadi al-Hasa, the traditional border between Edom and Moab. The biblical author could have known this area as a place of burial, thus the designation "ghosts" and "ruins of the departed." Placing both Oboth and Iye-abarim in the southeast plain of the Dead Sea has merit relative to Wadi Zered and Num 33.44–45 (see below).

iii) Wadi Zered (Num 21.12; Deut 2.13–14): Eusebius locates the Zered River "in a deserted place" (92: 10). The Madaba Mosaic Map depicts a river within deep cliffs flowing east to west south of Charachmoab (= al-Karak). The name of the river, Zared, is almost completely preserved (Avi-Yonah 1954: 42 and pl. 3; Abel 1967, 1: 489). It appears that the Madaba Mosaic Map identified Wadi Zered with Wadi al-Hasa. The Talmud, on the other hand, identifies the River Zered with Wadi al-Karak (Neubauer 1868: 21).

Today Wadi Zered is generally identified with Wadi al-Hasa (Glueck 1934: 4; Simons 1959: 52, 260; Abel 1967, 1: 489; Aharoni 1979: 35; Briend 1987: 43; Lemaire 1987: 60) although by some with hesitation (see, e.g., Davies 1979: 92). The reason for this identification is that the parallel between the crossings of Wadi Zered (Deut 2.9–13) and Wadi Arnon (Deut 2.18–24) identifies the former with no smaller a stream than Wadi al-Hasa (Simons 1959: 260).

There are a number of objections to the identification of Wadi Zered with Wadi al-Hasa, based on the assumption that Num 21.10–20 describes an actual route that a traveling group would have taken. For example, Smith (1915: map 30) and Van Zyl (1960: 62) identify Wadi Zered with Wadi al-Sultani, a southeastern branch of Wadi al-Mujib while Neev and Emery identify the Zered with Wadi Tarfawiya, a north-flowing tributary of Wadi al-Mujib midway between the Dead Sea and the Desert Highway (1995: 7, fig. 1:2; 8, fig. 1:3; 109, fig. 4:15; and 137–38). (They may have the same wadi in mind as Van Zyl.) Bartlett holds that the identity of the Valley of Zered must remain uncertain. He sees it as possibly the upper end of Wadi al-Hasa near Qal'at al-Hasa, which is immediately west of the Desert Highway, or perhaps the upper reaches of Wadi al-Nukheila, which flows north along the east side of Moab to join Wadi al-Mujib (1989: 53). Miller sees difficulties in associating the Zered with the al-Hasa (1989b: 29–30). Despite these opposing views, Wadi al-Hasa is probably the biblical Zered.

In this connection, note that several commentators see "the Wadi of the Willows" (Isa 15.7) as Wadi Zered (Simons 1959: 52, 260; Baly 1974: 233; Clements 1980: 153; Ellison 1988: 1067; Ferch 1992b: 920). Herion, moreover, identifies the "Brook of the 'Arabah" (Amos 6:14) with Wadi Zered (1992: 1082).

iv) Arnon (Num 21.13, 14, 24, 28; Judg 11.18, 22, 26): The Israelites left the encampment in Wadi Zered to camp "on the other side of the Arnon, in the wilderness that extends from the boundary of the Amorites" (Num 21.13). The Arnon is almost unanimously identified with modern Wadi al-Mujib (De Saulcy 1854: 421; Smith 1915: map 29; Glueck 1939a: 115; Rudolph 1958: 263; Simons 1959: 52; Abel 1967, 1: 177; Davies 1979: 92; Watts 1985: 231; Dearman 1989b: 58), the most spectacular wadi in Jordan. Biblical writers designated it as "the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites" (Num 21.13) and as "the border of Moab" (Num 21.15; see also Num 22.36 and Judg 11.18). In the Bible, the Arnon probably designates more than the main branch of Wadi al-Mujib (Dearman 1989b: 58).

Wadi al-Mujib is a perennial stream that has its source near the Roman legion fortress of Lajjun located around 16 km northeast of al-Karak. From there it flows in a northwesterly direction for a distance of around 25 km before it turns to the west and flows another 25 km, finally emptying into the Dead Sea at Ras al-Ghor. It and its many tributaries drain most of the Moabite plateau to the north and south of its gorge.

v) Waheb in Suphah (Num 21.14): Although the Hebrew word *whb* means “watershed,” it is understood here as a place name. It introduces a poetic fragment from the “Book of the Wars of the Lord” (Christensen 1974) into the Transjordanian itinerary of the Israelites. The Septuagint and the Old Latin read Zoob for Waheb, assuming the Hebrew reading Zahab, which is the name of a place in Deut 1.1. The site cannot be identified, though it is generally seen to be an unspecified place or region near the Arnon (Simpson 1988: 1002; Ferch 1992e: 865).

vi) Ar/Ir (Num 21.15, 28; 22.36; Deut 2.9, 18, 29; Isa 15.1; Amos 2.2): Ar/Ir of Moab means literally “city”/“city of Moab.” Thus it may refer to the principal city, that is, the city of Moab. It is probably one with Ir-Moab of Num 22.36, Kir of Isa 15.1 (Simons 1959: 435; Clements 1980: 152; Watts 1985: 230), and Kerioth of Amos 2.2 (Andersen and Freedman 1989: 289) since Moabite *‘ar* and Hebrew *‘ir* are dialectal variants of words meaning “city” (Andersen and Freedman 1989: 289). In Deut 2.9, 29, Moab and Ar seem to be synonymous. If so, Ar could be the name of both a specific city and the region of Moab.

Num 21.15 does not locate Ar with any precision. It does, however, associate it with the Arnon and the slopes of its wadis (presumably tributaries of the Arnon) along the border of Moab. Num 21.28 also appears to associate Ar of Moab with the Arnon.

If Ir-Moab and Ar of Moab are one, then the city ought to be located at the extremity of the boundary of Moab, which in the mind of the biblical writer is formed by the Arnon (Num 22.36). According to Deut 2.18, moreover, Ar seems to be located on the boundary of Moab, that is, on the Arnon. It would appear that biblical writers did not know exactly where Ar/Ar of Moab or Ir was located. They thought it was a city of Moab and that it lay on or close to the Arnon which they designated as the northern border of Moab (Num 21.13). But they also use it as a synonym for Moab.

Because of the geographical imprecision of the texts, authors who see Ar/Ar of Moab as referring to a specific site have identified it with several different archaeological ruins and/or settlements. Among them are: a) Khirbat al-Balu' (Miller 1989a: 593–94; Mattingly 1992a: 321);³ b) Ar-Rabba/Rabbath Moab/Ancient Areopolis (Delitzsch 1867: 323; Tristram 1873: 124; Ewald 1874: 236; Conder 1883: 402; Musil 1907/08, 1: 332 n. 1; Procksch 1930: 209; Olivier 1989);⁴ c) Khirbat al-Mudayna 'Alya, where Wadi al-Lejjun flows into Wadi al-Mujib (Van Zyl 1960: 73 [tentatively]);⁵ and d) Khirbat al-Misna' (Van Zyl 1960: 72 [tentatively]).⁶ Other authors insist the location of the site is unknown. Simons holds that Ar is the name

of a region and equivalent to Moab (1959: 435). I do not accept any of these suggestions as the location of Ar/Ir of Moab; I believe the term refers to the capital city of Moab as well as to Moab itself, and the capital city would have been Dibon.

vii) Beer (Num 21.16): The Hebrew word *be'er* means "well" (Borée 1968: 21). On its own, this translation is not very helpful in locating the site; in context, however, it would seem to indicate a place where water was available to the Israelites.

Many commentators assert that Beer is located in Wadi ath-Thamad since the term "ath-Thamad" refers to all sorts of cavities containing stagnant water left from the winter rains (Koenig 1963: 13 n. 47). In such places one may dig and easily find water. This particular Wadi ath-Thamad is supposedly the only possible place north of Wadi al-Mujib where an adequate water supply is available for a large number of people and, thus, Beer is located there according to Glueck (1934: 13), Simons (1959: 436), and Abel (1967, 1: 461; 2: 217). More specifically, Van Zyl holds that Beer is located in this wadi at Khirbat al-Mudayna (1960: 85–86). Scholars tend to identify Beer of Num 21.16 with Beer-elim of Isa 15.8 (Simons 1959: 262, 436; Watts 1985: 231). The latter name means literally "well of terebinths" and such trees grow in Wadi ath-Thamad.

Davies' position that no particular well is obviously the site of Beer (1979: 92) appears reasonable since the site could have been any place north of the Arnon where water was available. For the storyteller knew that people would have to stop for water somewhere along the way, and if no particular place was known, why should he not call the place "Beer"?

viii) Mattanah (Num 21.18, 19): The itinerary of Numbers 21 is continued in v 18a with the expression "from the wilderness." This seems to be a continuation from v 13, which reads "in the wilderness." Thus, v(v) 14–15, a quotation from "the Book of the Wars of the Lord," and v(v) 16–18a, a fragment from the "Song of the Well," appear to be insertions from ancient poetic collections. Though the Hebrew word *Mattanah* means "gift"/"donation" (Gray 1903: 290; Borée 1968: 38), it is understood here as a toponym.

Mattanah is generally identified with Khirbat al-Mudayna on Wadi ath-Thamad (Glueck 1934: 13; Simons 1959: 262; Van Zyl 1960: 85–86; Abel 1967, 2: 381). Van Zyl thinks, moreover, that Beer (Num 21:16) and Mattanah may be located at the same site (1960: 86). On the basis of the present evidence, it is impossible to know what site the biblical writer had in mind.

ix) Nahaliel (Num 21.19): The Hebrew word *nahali* 'el may be translated as "valley (wadi) of El (God)." Therefore, it probably refers to a valley/wadi rather than to a specific town or village. According to the context, it ought to be located between the Arnon and the Plains of Moab across from Jericho. Eusebius locates it near the Arnon (136.4).

Nahaliel has been identified variously with Wadi Zarqa Ma'in (Conder 1883: 141, 144; Smith 1915: map 29; 1972: 561–62 [tentatively]; Wright and Filson 1956, pl. 9; Davies 1979: 92), which flows into the Dead Sea 29 km north of the Arnon; possibly with Wadi Habis (Abel 1967, 2: 217), an upper branch of Wadi Zarqa Ma'in, and with Wadi Eskheileh, the central stream of the Wadi al-Mujib system, because it has been thought that the name Nahaliel is preserved there (Davies 1979: 92). Simons holds that the site's location is unknown (1959: 262). Based on the meaning of the site name, it is not difficult to understand how the healing springs of Wadi Zarqa Ma'in could be seen as a sign of divine presence and/or favor (Davies 1979: 92). The wadi is thus a good candidate for the location of Nahaliel.

x) Bamoth (Num 21.19, 20): The name means "high place" (Borée 1968: 47) and so ought to refer to a site associated with the sanctuary of a deity. The deity is not identified.

Eusebius identifies Bamoth only in a very general manner as an Amorite city on the Arnon, which was a Reubenite possession (44. 6–7). Some commentators have seen the Bamoth of Num 21.19–20 as Bamoth Ba'al, that is, "the high place of Ba'al," of Num 22.41 and Josh 13.17 (see, e.g., Simons 1959: 262, 265; Abel 1967, 2: 261; Davies 1979: 92) as well as the Beth Bamoth of the Mesha Inscription (line 27) (see, e.g., Abel 1967, 2: 261; Davies 1979: 92; Dearman 1997: 209).

If Bamoth is the Bamoth Ba'al of Num 22.41, then it ought to be located in a place that overlooks the Israelite encampment in the "Plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho" (Num 22.1). Similarly, according to Josh 13.17, it ought to be located on the tableland or "the Mishor." If Bamoth of Num 21.19–20 is one with Beth Bamoth in the Mesha Inscription, the context of the latter allows no precise location (Simons 1959: 265). About all that Num 21.19–20 tells us about Bamoth's location is that it is north of Nahaliel and south of "the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah that overlooks the Wasteland."⁷

Simons, who sees Bamoth and Bamoth Ba'al as one, thinks the site of Khirbat al-Queiqiyeh, located south of Mount Nebo, meets the requirement of the biblical texts (1959: 265). Abel is of the opinion that the dolmen sites of al-Queiqiye and Maslubiye were regarded as ancient sacred places

which gave their name to the nearby site of Khirbat al-Queiqiyeh, and in agreement with Simons, sees it as a possible location for Bamoth (= Bamoth Ba'al) (1967, 2: 261; see also Musil 1907/08, 1: 267–69). It appears that the site cannot be more precisely identified.

The identification of “the valley lying in the region of Moab” (Num 21.20) depends to a great extent upon the identification of Pisgah, and will therefore be treated at the end of the discussion on Pisgah.

xi) Pisgah (Num 21.20): The expression “the top of Pisgah” occurs in Num 21.20 as well as in Num 23.14, Deut 3.27, and 34.1, while “the slopes of Pisgah” occurs in four passages (Deut 3.17; 4.49; Josh 12.3; 13.20). One text, Deut 34:1, indicates that Mount Nebo and “the top of Pisgah” are the same. On the basis of these texts, Pisgah can be located in that region of Moab which “overlooks the Wasteland” (Num 21.20), in “the field of Zophim” (Num 23.14), “opposite Jericho” (Deut 34.1), and in a place that provides a view in all directions including the Jordan and Gilead (Deut 3.27; 34.1). Its slopes are said to be east of the Sea of the 'Arabah, that is, the Dead Sea (Deut 3.17; 4.49; Josh 12.3). Thus it must be a high hill or mountain east of Jericho and at the northern end of the Dead Sea, from which one can view the surrounding countryside without obstruction.

Ras al-Siyagha (elev. 710 m) to the northwest and Mukhayyat (elev. 790 m) to the southeast are two important peaks of the Mount Nebo ridge (Piccirillo 1990a: 29; 1992b). The ridge is bordered on the north by Wadi 'Uyun Musa and on the south by Wadi Afrit, both of which drain into the southeastern Jordan Valley. It provides a dramatic view of the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea. Both Ras al-Siyagha and Mukhayyat are good candidates for the location of Pisgah. However, the former is preferable since the toponym Pisgah comes from the Hebrew *pasag*, which means “split/cut off” and Ras al-Siyagha has the appearance of being cut off or projecting from the plateau to the west of Madaba, especially if viewed from the east.

Most scholars agree that Pisgah is Ras al-Siyagha (Simons 1959: 75, 263; Abel 1967, 1: 379–84; Ottosson 1969: 116; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 110). This choice is in keeping with early Christian tradition for it was on Ras al-Siyagha that the Byzantines chose to build their fourth-century church and monastery and later their sixth-century basilica as a memorial to Moses (Saller 1941; Corbo 1967; 1970; Piccirillo 1976; 1989b: 569–70; Alliata 1990; see also Abel 1967, 1: 384; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998). Ras al-Siyagha is presently the site of a Franciscan church and monastery (Piccirillo and Alliata 1998). On the basis of the textual, toponymic and archaeological information available, it can be concluded with some confidence that “the top of Pisgah” and “the slopes of Pisgah” are located at Ras al-Siyagha.

xii) “The Valley lying in the region of Moab” (Num 21.20): “The Valley lying in the region of Moab” would appear to be associated with Pisgah. Thus Wadi 'Uyun Musa, meaning literally “springs of Moses,” immediately north of the ridge on which Ras al-Siyagha is located, is a good candidate for its identification.

xiii) Wasteland (Num 21.21; 23.28): The Hebrew word *jeshimon* is used to designate a “desert” or “Wasteland” in Deut 32.10 and Isa 43.19 (Simons 1959: 22). In Num 21.20 and 23.28 the term may be translated either in this general sense or as a toponym, as in various contemporary English versions of the Bible (see n. 7). The passages in Deuteronomy and Isaiah suggest that the area or specific location must be visible from the top of Pisgah and the top of Peor respectively, perhaps in the area northeast of the Dead Sea in what is designated as the “Plains of Moab” (see below). The lack of agricultural possibilities in the area is well-described by the Hebrew word *jeshimon*.

Num 33.35–49

Commentary: Num 33.1–49 probably describes an actual route widely known in ancient times (Noth 1968: 243; Miller 1989a: 580), running from the northern end of the Gulf of al-'Aqaba, along the east side of Wadi 'Arabah, onto the Transjordanian Plateau north of Wadi al-Mujib (Noth 1968: 245). Our primary interest here is verses 35–49.

Site Identification: The itinerary under discussion includes Ezion-geber (and the associated site of Eloth/Elath), Mount Hor, Zalmonah, Punon, Oboth, Iye-abarim/Iyim, Dibon-gad, Almon-diblathaim, Mountains of Abarim, Nebo, Plains of Moab, Beth-jeshimoth, and Abel-shittim. Since three of these sites, namely Mount Hor (see n. 2), Oboth (see above, Num 21.10–11), and Iye-abarim (see above, Num 21.11), have been treated previously, our attention here will focus on possible locations for the other sites.

i) Ezion-geber (Num 33.35–36; Deut 2.8; 1 Kings 9.26; 22.48; 2 Chr 8.17; 20.36): The earliest mention of the toponym Ezion-geber occurs in Num 33.1–49. The Israelites camped at Ezion-geber (v(v) 35–36) on their way from Egypt to the border of the land of Canaan, before setting up camp in the Wilderness of Zin (= Kadesh) (v(v) 36–37). In another exodus itinerary in Deut 2.1–25, Ezion-geber is mentioned along with Elath (v 8) in the context of a peaceful Israelite passage through Edomite territory. King Solomon is said to have “built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom” (1 Kings

9.26). Moreover, 2 Chr 8.17 has Solomon at "Ezion-geber and Eloth on the shore of the sea, in the land of Edom." From here apparently, "ships went to Ophir with Solomon's servants in them" (2 Chr 8.18). It is said that Jehoshaphat's ships, built in Ezion-geber (2 Chr 20.36) and intended for passage to Ophir, "were wrecked at Ezion-geber" (1 Kings 22.48).

These texts supply important though general geographical information relative to the location of Ezion-geber and Eloth/Elath, suggesting that both sites were located on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom and that at least one of them, Ezion-geber, was a shipbuilding port from which ships went off to Ophir⁸ and Tarshish (1 Kings 22.48; 2 Chr 20.36).⁹ There is no indication, however, as to their precise location on a particular shore of the sea, and whether or not they were located east or west of the 'Arabah. Since the two sites are linked in the texts, they will be treated together.

Josephus locates Ezion-geber "not far from the city of Aelana" (= Aila) (*Ant* 8.163). He also remarks that it was located in the Egyptian Bay of the Red Sea (*Ant* 8.6.4). Eusebius (62.15–16) places it near the Red Sea and Aila, and identifies it with a place called Aisia or Asia. It is important to note that neither Josephus nor Eusebius identify Ezion-geber with Aila.

On toponymic grounds, scholars located Ezion-geber at the oasis of Ghadyan, which has a good supply of water (Robinson and Smith 1841, 1: 250–51; Palmer 1871: 523; Smith 1915: map 8 [tentatively]; Borée 1968: 90; cf. Glueck 1935: 41 n. 97). This identification has generally not found favor since the oasis, located in a small wadi leading to Wadi 'Arabah, is some 32 km north of the Gulf of al-'Aqaba and there is no evidence that the gulf extended this far north in recent millennia (Glueck 1935: 41). Moreover, Glueck found no pottery remains earlier than the Nabataean period at the site (1935: 41).

Phythian-Adams locates Ezion-geber at al-Meniyyeh (1933; 1934: 187–88), a smelting site on the west side of Wadi 'Arabah (Glueck 1935: 42–44) in what is now known as the Timna Valley (Rothenberg 1972: 18; 1988: 2; Aharoni 1979: 36). This identification must be rejected because it, like Ghadyan, is too far from the sea (Glueck 1935: 45).

More recently, scholars have identified Ezion-geber with Tall al-Khalayfi (Frank 1934: 243–44; Glueck 1935: 48, 1938b; 1939a: 3, 7; 1965b; 1970; Sellin 1936: 123–28; Simons 1959: 342; Abel 1967, 2: 216, 320; Aharoni 1979: 434), a site that Frank discovered in 1932 (1934: 243–44). Tall al-Khalayfi is located about 500 m north and about midway between the eastern and western shores of the Gulf of al-'Aqaba/Eilat in the former no man's land between Jordan and Israel. Glueck excavated the site during

three campaigns between 1938 and 1940 (1938a; 1938b; 1939b; 1940) and suggested that it was built west of Elath during the time of Solomon. He dated it between the tenth and fifth centuries B.C. (1970: 109–10). Glueck's dating of the Tall al-Khalayfi, however, has recently come under close scrutiny. Practico has re-examined the excavated pottery and posited that the site dates from the eighth to the sixth centuries with some material from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. (1982; 1983; 1985). Thus, it cannot be Solomonic. There is little in the way of archaeological evidence at the site to indicate that it was in any way associated with sea trade. Little protection from storms exists for boats at the northern end of the Gulf of al-'Aqaba.

Some scholars have sought the location of Ezion-geber at Jezirat Fara'un ("Island of the Pharaohs"), an island some 12 km south of modern Eilat on the west coast of the Gulf of al-'Aqaba. Rothenberg, for example, argued for this identification in 1961, based on discoveries at the site, including: 1) Iron I period sherds (the same Midianite and Negeb-type ware that he found in the Timna smelting camps [see Rothenberg 1988: 92–96] and possibly Iron Age II sherds; 2) evidence of a well-built harbor on the landward side; 3) evidence of a casemate wall of cyclopean character, with traces of defensive towers projecting into the sea; and 4) the fact that the island is the only natural anchorage in the northern part of the Gulf of al-'Aqaba/Eilat (1972: 203–7). He sees it as an original Egyptian mining port (1961: 86–92, 185–89; 1965: 18–28; 1972: 202–7), an identification previously made by De Laborde (1836: 290) and von Schubert (1839; 2: 379). Jezirat Fara'un is thus a good candidate for the location of Ezion-geber.

ii) Eloth/Elath (Deut 2.8; 1 Kings 9.26; 2 Kings 14.22; 16.6; 2 Chr 8.17; 26.2): Though Eloth/Elath does not appear in Numbers 33, it will be considered here because of its close geographical and textual association with Ezion-geber.

Eloth, which means "palm trees," appears to be distinct from Ezion-geber (Deut 2.8; 2 Chr 8.17). King Azariah of Judah rebuilt it and restored it to Judah (2 Kings 14.22).¹⁰ 2 Kings 16.6 appears to concur with 1 Kings 9.26 in placing Eloth/Elath under the control of the Edomites after Judah's expulsion.

Strabo notes that Aelana/Aela was a city 1260 stades from Gaza and situated near the head of the Arabian Gulf (*Geography* 16.2.30).¹¹ He indicates that from Aelana merchants took seventy days to reach the southern Arabian Peninsula whence they acquired frankincense and myrrh (*Geography* 16.4.4). The Peutinger Table, a fourth century road map of the

Roman Empire, locates Aila fifty Roman miles¹² from Phara(n), that is, the Feiran oasis in Wadi Feiran in south Sinai, and sixteen from Dianam (Weber 1976; Finkelstein 1979). Eusebius identifies Aila as an important seaport and base camp of the Tenth Roman Legion on the Red Sea at the edge of Palestine, noting that it was formerly called Ailath (6: 20).

Glueck thinks that Eloth was Ezion-geber's successor and thus that Tall al-Khalayfi is to be identified with it (1939a: 7). Bartlett appears to be of the same opinion when he writes, "Elath may perhaps be identified with the site of Tell el-Kheleifeh" (1989: 46). Several scholars, however, see classical Aila as the successor of biblical Eloth, and identify it with modern al-'Aqaba or with a site just to the northwest of Eloth (De Laborde 1836: 290; Robinson and Smith 1841: 251; Palmer 1871: 523; Smith 1915: map 8; Frank 1934: 244; Simons 1959: 342; Abel 1967, 2: 311–12; Aharoni 1979: 434). It is now supposedly covered with sand.

Parker's recent excavations in the modern town of al-'Aqaba uncovered evidence of occupation from at least the first century B.C. to the seventh century A.D. (1996; 1997a; 1997b). While this excavation is probably in the process of uncovering the Aila of classical sources, there is no evidence that the site existed during the Old Testament period. Unless the text is dated to the end of the period, Parker's excavated site cannot be the Eloth or Ezion-geber of the Bible.

Deut 2.8 presents Elath and Ezion-geber as two distinct places. It may provide geographical information when it states that the Israelites left behind the Route of the 'Arabah, Elath, and Ezion-geber. If the text gives these places in a particular order, indicating that the Israelites left Ezion-geber, Elath, and the Route of the 'Arabah, then Jezeirat Fara'un could indeed be Ezion-geber and Tall al-Khalayfi could be Eloth/Elath.

It is only at Ezion-geber that shipbuilding is said to have taken place (1 Kings 9.26; 2 Chr 20.36; see also 1 Kings 22.48). Eloth is said to be on the shores of the Red Sea but is not associated with shipbuilding. Thus, the inland site of Tall al-Khalayfi is a good possibility for Eloth/Elath's location. In time this site was replaced to the south by Aila of the classical sources (Parker 1996; 1997b) and then by Ayla, still farther south, of the Islamic period (Khouri and Whitcomb 1988; Whitcomb 1989; 1990; 1994; 1995). This fits the textual, toponymic and archaeological evidence.

iii) Zalmonah (Num 33.41–42): The biblical writer seems to locate Zalmonah, which may mean "dark" or "shady," between Mount Hor and Punon. Otherwise, no indication of its location is given in the text. Aharoni (1979: 202) sees the name preserved at the Roman fort of Calamona in the

Notitia Dignitatum (Seeck 1876: 74.43) but also places it tentatively at al-Salmaneh (1979: 443), a wadi entering the 'Arabah from the east between Faynan and the Dead Sea.¹³ Davies finds the equation of Zalmonan and Calamona unlikely (1979: 90).

Abel places Zalmonah at Bir Madhkur (1967, 2: 216). However, this identification has little support since Glueck, who reports finding extensive Nabataean/Roman ruins, a well, a reservoir, and a small spring at Khirbat and Bir Madhkur, found no pottery earlier than the Nabataean period there (1935: 35–37). Although Glueck sees Khirbat and Bir Madhkur as marking the Nabataean caravan route in the 'Arabah, giving direct access to Petra to the southeast and to al-'Aqaba and Faynan to the south and north respectively (1935: 36), there is no evidence that it was a stopping point during the Iron Age. Thus Simons (1959: 259) and Davies (1979: 90) are probably correct in positing that Zalmonah's location is unknown.

iv) Punon (Num 33.42-43): Punon/Pinon is generally associated, on toponymic grounds, with the well-known mining and smelting area of Faynan on the east side of Wadi 'Arabah (Seetzen 1854-55, 3: 17; Glueck 1934: 32; 1935: 32–36; Simons 1959: 259; Abel 1967, 2: 216; Noth 1968: 245; Weippert 1971; Aharoni 1979: 202; Davies 1979: 90; Bartlett 1989: 50; Miller 1989a: 581; Seebass 1997: 257).

The route that the biblical writer envisages would likely not have gone as far east as Khirbat Faynan, as some authors suggest; it would have passed by the western reaches of Wadi Faynan immediately west of 'Ayn Fidan. (The narrative of the poisonous snakes of Num 21.4–9 could be associated with the same area.)

Hauptmann et al. of the German Mining Museum, Bochum, carried out archaeometallurgical explorations and mining-archaeological studies in the Wadi Faynan region beginning in 1983. On the basis of this work, Hauptmann et al. (1985) have posited ore and metal production in the area in the Prepottery and Pottery Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age IIB and IIC, Roman, and Islamic periods (Hauptmann and Weisgerber 1992; Najjar et al. 1995). The largest copper production in the entire Near East outside Cyprus was concentrated in the Faynan area, especially at the two smelting sites of Khirbat Faynan and Khirbat an-Nahas during the Iron Age IIB and IIC periods (Hauptmann et al. 1985; Knauf and Lenzen 1987; Hauptmann and Weisgerber 1992: 63–64). Thus, routes to and from the area would have gone in all directions.

Begun in 1994, the work of the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History in Wadi Faynan has added immeasurably to our

knowledge of the region (Barnes et al. 1995; Barker et al. 1997; 1998; Findlater et al. 1998; Finlayson and Mithen 1998; Freeman and McEwan 1998; Wright et al. 1998), revealing that the Bronze, Iron, Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine, and medieval Islamic were major periods of settlement in the area. The Bronze and Iron Age developments it has documented are of particular interest for biblical studies.

The identification of Punon with the Faynan region is probably correct since it has textual, toponymic and archaeological support.

v) Oboth (Num 33.44) and vi) Iye-abarim/Iyim (Num 33.44–45): Oboth has been treated previously as a site in Num 21.10–20. Its location in the area between Wadi Khanazir and Bad adh-Dhra' matches the Exodus itinerary.

Iye-abarim has also been treated previously in the itinerary of Num 21.11 where it is said to be "in the wilderness bordering Moab toward the sunrise." In Num 33.44–45, however, Iye-abarim is said to be "in the territory of Moab." The name of the site is given only as *Iyim*, meaning "ruins," in Num 33.45. Following Pope's suggestion (1977: 173), Iye-abarim/Iyim could be any "ruins," even "graves" and/or concentrations of dolmens in the territory of Moab south of the Arnon. This could be a reference to the numerous graves/tombs in the Southeast Plain of the Dead Sea. A location of the site at the modern village of 'Ay, however, also fits the itinerary (see, e.g., Miller 1991: 109 and above on Num 21.11).

vii) Dibon-gad (Num 33.45–46): Dibon-gad (Num 33.45–46), Dibon (Num 21.30; 32.3, 34; Josh 13.9, 17; Isa 15.2, 9; Jer 48.18, 22), and Daibon of the Mesha Inscription (lines 21 and 28) are generally seen as the same site, and are almost universally identified on toponymic and geographic grounds with modern Dhiban, located on the plateau 5 km north of the Arnon (Musil 1907/08, 1: 376–80, 382 n. 10; Smith 1915: map 29; Glueck 1934: 1, 51; 1939a: 115; Noth 1935: 248; 1944: 50; 1960: 157; 1968: 240, 245; Winnett 1952: 7–8; Rudolph 1958: 263; Simons 1959: 117, 132 *et passim*; Van Zyl 1960: 77–80; Winnett and Reed 1964: 66; Abel 1967, 2: 304–5; Ottosson 1969: 80, 85; Baly 1974: 233 n. 1; Aharoni 1979: 202; Davies 1979: 90; Dearman 1989a: 171; Miller 1989b: 28; Hübner 1992a: 143; Ahlstrom 1993: 416; Dearman 1997: 206; Seebass 1997: 257; Weippert 1997: 23). (Dhiban may also be the *tpun-tpnieu* of Egyptian sources [Redford 1982a; 1982b; Miller 1989b: 13; Kitchen 1992: 25].) Eusebius identifies the site as a very large city near the Arnon (Klostermann 1966: 76), which matches the location of modern Dhiban.

According to its excavators, the earliest occupation at Dhiban may encompass EB II–IV; there is no evidence of either Middle or Late Bronze occupation (Winnett and Reed 1964: 66; Tushingham 1992: 195). Excavators also found pottery characteristic of the early Iron Age but no structures can yet be associated with it. The Iron II period is represented by two stages of a major gateway, a city wall standing to a height of 3.5 m, many cisterns, and a necropolis east of the tell (Winnett and Reed 1964: 66–67; Tushingham 1992: 195). Dhiban was also an important site “during the medieval and early Arab, the Byzantine, the Roman-Nabataean ... Periods” (Winnett and Reed 1964: 66).

There is ample toponymic and archaeological evidence for the identification of biblical Dibon with the site of Dhiban. The discovery of the Mesha Inscription at the site (Dearman 1989a) confirms this identification.

viii) Almon-diblathaim (Num 33.46–47): Almon-diblathaim is the next stop on the Num 33.35–49 itinerary, a suitable resting place between Dibon-gad and the “Mountains of Abarim.” Because the Hebrew *diblathaim* is a dual form, a twin site is sought as the location of Almon-diblathaim, which is generally understood to be the Beth-diblathaim of Jer 48.22.¹⁴

Simons (1959: 261) and Abel (1967, 2: 242, 269) identify Almon-diblathaim (Num 33.46–47) and Beth-diblathaim (Jer 48.22) with the twin sites of Khirbat ad-Deleilat al-Gharbiyya and Khirbat ad-Deleilat ash-Sharqiyya respectively. The former is a completely ruined site commanding a junction of three roads 4 km north of Libb at which Glueck collected Nabataean, Byzantine, and medieval Arab sherds (1939: 137). From ad-Deleilat ash-Sharqiyya, which is also a ruined site, Glueck reports Iron I–II, as well as Nabataean, Byzantine, and medieval Arab sherds (1934: 32). Van Zyl, who sees Almon-diblathaim and Beth-diblathaim as the same, identifies Almon-diblathaim with ad-Deleilat ash-Sharqiyya, near ad-Deleilat al-Gharbiyya (1960: 86; see also Aharoni 1979: 202, 430), apparently on the basis of Glueck’s reported pottery reading. Noth, however, argues that Almon-diblathaim remains unknown (1968: 245).

Because of the dual form of the names Almon and Beth-diblathaim, the twin sites of Khirbat ad-Deleilat al-Garbiyya and ash-Sharqiyya appear to be suitable identifications. This conclusion is supported by their geographical location relative to the Num 33.35–49 itinerary, as well as archaeological evidence for occupation of at least one during the Iron Age.

ix) Mountains of Abarim (Num 33.47–48): Baly translates the *harei-ha ‘abarim* of Num 33.47–48 as “the heights beyond” or “distant heights.” He understands the expression as a very vague and general one for “the

land over there" (1987: 124). In other words, these are the heights from which Moses viewed the promised land, where he died, and was buried.

Some geographical information, probably in the form of a gloss, is given in Num 33.47. "The Mountains of Abarim" are said to be "before Nebo" (NRSV), "east of Nebo" (REV), "opposite Nebo" (NAB), or "facing Nebo" (NJB) (Num 33.47). In Deut 32.49 the expression "mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo" (Deut 32.49) appears to place "mountain of the Abarim" and "Mount Nebo" in apposition. Thus, Eusebius identifies the mountains of the Abarim with Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab across the Jordan opposite Jericho (16: 24–25).

It is from the mountains of the Abarim that one can view the southern Jordan Valley, the northern end of the Dead Sea, the mountains to the north as far as as-Salt, and the eastern side of the Judean hills both north and south of Jerusalem. The Mountains of Abarim would be located on Mount Nebo where the road passed from Dhiban to the "Plains of Moab" (Simons 1959: 261; Baly 1974: 220–21; Aharoni 1979: 202; Davies 1979: 18 n. 52; Geraty and Running 1989: 3; Miller 1989a: 581).

x) Nebo (Num 33.47): Nebo, a Semitic word which is apparently associated with the Babylonian god *Nabu* (Borée 1968: 65), is the name of both a geographical feature called Mount Nebo (Deut 32.49; 34:1) and a village/town. Since the geographical feature was treated in association with Pisgah (Num 21:20) and the Mountains of Abarim (Num 33.47–48), we will focus on the village/town (Num 32.3, 38; 33.47; Isa 15.2; 46.1; Jer 48.1, 22; 1 Chr 5.8; MI line 14).

The village of Nebo is depicted in the Bible and in the Mesha Inscription as a city of Moab that Israel once occupied. Eusebius describes it as a "deserted village" in his time (the fourth century A.D.), located eight Roman miles south of Esbus (= Heshbon) (136: 12–13). The biographer of Peter the Iberian knew a village by that name on the mountain of Nebo, which was inhabited by Christians (Saller and Bagatti 1949: 3, 208, 215).

Nebo is generally identified with Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Musil 1907/08, 1: 347 n. 3; Noth 1944: 43; Saller and Bagatti 1949: 207–17; Simons 1959: 132, 435; Van Zyl 1960: 89; Abel 1967, 2: 397–98; Ottosson 1969: 87; Baly 1974: 232; Kallai 1986: 442; Holladay 1989: 354–55; Miller 1989b: 28; Piccirillo 1990a: 34; Harrison 1996a: 4; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 110, 113, 221), a site located around 3 km to the southeast of Ras al-Siyagha. Others locate it at (or tentatively at) Khirbat 'Uyun Musa (see, for example, Aharoni 1979: 44; see Dearman 1997: 207–8 for identification of the site at either Khirbat al-Mukhayyat or Khirbat 'Uyun Musa).

One of the main reasons for locating Nebo at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat is that it is the only major ruin in the Mount Nebo region with significant Iron Age remains (Ottosson 1969: 87; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 113). Conder surveyed the site in 1881 (1889: 191), Musil in 1901 (1907/08: 334–40), Glueck in 1934 (1935: 110–11), and the Danish Palestine Foundation beginning in 1992 (Mortensen 1992, 1993). This last group found the area very rich in archaeological sites, including megalithic platforms from the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age, tombs possibly from the same periods, and Iron II and Byzantine sherds (Mortensen 1992, 1993). The Franciscan Archaeological Institute began to excavate the site in 1935 (Saller and Bagatti 1949; Piccirillo 1990a: 34), uncovering three churches and a monastery, along with evidence of a Byzantine settlement at the tell and nearby (Saller and Bagatti 1949; Piccirillo 1989d; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 221–44). The contents of two tombs Ripamonti cleared in the 1960s illustrate the history of Nebo in the Iron Age II period (Saller 1966: 185, 295–96), especially between the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. (Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 124). Piccirillo and Alliata summarize the archaeological finds at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat by stating that “the village was inhabited from the Middle Bronze II up to the Arab epoch, with a gap for both the Late Bronze and the Iron I periods” (1998: 244). Khirbat al-Mukhayyat is thus the best candidate for the location of the Nebo in Num 33.47.

xi) Plains of Moab (Num 33.48–49): The expression “Plains of Moab” appears twelve times in the Bible (Num 22.1; 26.3, 63; 31.12; 33.48–50; 35.1; 36.13; Deut 34.1, 8; Josh 13.23). De Vaux attributes these texts to the Priestly writer, making them late (1973: 118). A great deal of geographic information is provided as to the location of the Plains of Moab. They are located “by the Jordan opposite Jericho” (Num 26.3, 63); “across the Jordan from Jericho” (Num 22.1); “by the Jordan at Jericho” (Num 31.12; 33.48, 50; 35.1; 36.13); and “beyond the Jordan east of Jericho” (Josh 13.32).

Eusebius places the “Plains of Moab” beside Mount Peor, which in his opinion, is alongside the road going from Livias (= Tall al-Rama), in the Jordan Valley, to Esbus (= Heshbon) (12: 20–25). The Plains of Moab include the area at the southern extremity of the Jordan Valley between the Jordan River and the mountains to the east. They extend from the northeastern side of the Dead Sea towards the north (Noth 1960: 156; Dearman 1989b: 58), possibly as far as Wadi Nimrin (Glueck 1951: 366, 395; Simons 1959: 50; Van Zyl 1960: 113, 115–116; Abel 1967, 1: 281; Aharoni 1979: 34; Geraty and Running 1989: 3).¹⁵

xii) Beth-jeshimoth (Num 33.49): The general location of this site is indicated in the texts. Beth-jeshimoth and Abel-shittim are noted as the southern and northern extremities respectively of the Israelite camp east of the Jordan, across from Jericho in the "Plains of Moab" (Num 33.49). Beth-jeshimoth appears again in the description of the land that the Israelites are said to have conquered east of the Jordan (Josh 12.3). It subsequently becomes the inheritance of the tribe of Reuben (Josh 13.20). In these texts, Beth-jeshimoth is seen in relation to the Dead Sea and the foot of the slopes of Pisgah, and said to be one of the towns on the frontier of Moab (Ezek 25.9).

The word Beth-jeshimoth means "house of devastation/destruction" (Borée 1968: 77). The second element in the name is preserved at four sites: Khirbat Sweimeh, Rujm and Tall al-'Azeimeh, and Wadi al-'Azeimeh (Glueck 1951: 398–402), in the southern segment of the Plains of Moab. Since the original name was eventually shared by several sites (Glueck 1943: 25), the biblical site must be identified on archaeological rather than toponymic grounds.

Eusebius describes a site called Bethsimerth that is generally seen as the equivalent of biblical Beth-jeshimoth. In his day it was called Isimuth and was located opposite Jericho and about ten Roman miles south near the Dead Sea (48: 6–8). This description is not precise enough to pinpoint its location. Moreover, by the time of Eusebius the name Beth-jeshimoth could have migrated from its original location.

Glueck found Middle Chalcolithic, Iron Age I–II, Roman and later pottery at Tall al-'Azeimeh along with the foundations of a wall of undetermined age. He believes the entire area may be enclosed in a wall (1951: 401–2). According to Glueck, Tall al-'Azeimeh occupies a strategic position on a track leading from the southeastern end of the Jordan Valley to the Madaba area and is the only possible site along Wadi al-'Azeimeh which can be identified with Beth-jeshimoth (1951: 402). The East Jordan Valley Survey team found Iron II and possible or probable Iron II pottery at four sites: 'Azeimeh South, Mweis, Mweis North, and 'Azeimeh Camp, along Wadi 'Azeimeh. Specifically, the team reported Iron II pottery at 'Azeimeh South, presumably Tall al-'Azeimeh (Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim 1988: 193). Unlike Glueck, they found no Iron Age I sherds in the region of Wadi 'Azeimeh.

The majority of scholars follow Glueck (1943a: 24–25; 1951: 402) in locating Beth-jeshimoth at Tall al-'Azeimeh (Noth 1953a: 121; 1968: 245; Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 124; Simons 1959: 118; Van Zyl 1969:

89; Wevers 1969: 145; Aharoni 1979: 34, 432; Davies 1979: 118 n. 52; Zimmerli 1983: 15; Kallai 1986: 442; Dearman 1989a: 193; Miller 1989a: 582; 1989b: 27; Dearman 1997: 206) rather than at Khirbat Sweimeh (Mallon 1929: 218–20; Abel 1967, 2: 69, 275; Borée 1968: 77; Ottosson 1969: 124) or Rujm al-'Azeimeh. The reason for Glueck's choice is that he found no sherds earlier than the Roman period at either Khirbat Sweimeh or Rujm al-'Azeimeh (1951: 399–400).

From the south, Tall al-'Azeimeh overlooks the wadi of the same name. It is less than 3 km eastnortheast of Khirbat Sweimeh and less than 0.75 km eastsoutheast of Rujm al-'Azeimeh (Glueck 1951: 400–401). On the basis of geographical information in biblical texts, toponymic data, and archaeological findings, Tall al-'Azeimeh is a good choice for the location of Beth-jeshimoth.

xiii) Abel-shittim/Shittim (Num 33.49; 25.1; Josh 2.1; 3.1; Mic 6.5): Abel-shittim is associated with Beth-jeshimoth as the northern extremity of the Israelite camp in the Plains of Moab (Num 33.49). It appears that Abel-shittim and Shittim (Num 25.1; Josh 2.1; 3.1; Mic 6.5) are one and the same. Simons, however, has difficulty with this equation since he understands Shittim with the definite article to designate a small region, namely, the whole of the area covered by the Israelite camp, while Abel-shittim is one extremity of the camp (1959: 268).

It was while camped at Shittim that “the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab” (Num 25.1). From Shittim Joshua sent out spies to “view the land, especially Jericho” (Josh 2.1) and from here Joshua and all the Israelites set out to cross the Jordan (Josh 3.1). God asks the people to remember what happened at Shittim (Mic 6.5).¹⁶

Abel-shittim may be translated as “meadow”/“pasturage” of “acacias” (Gray 1902: 3315; Borée 1968:81). The name, which designates a fertile area, is well-suited to the agro-pastoral possibilities of the southeastern plain of the Jordan Valley. However, it has not been preserved in any of the place names there. Moreover, since biblical designations are insufficiently precise to pinpoint its location, one must turn to archaeology in an effort to identify the site. Eusebius locates Shittim only generally, placing it beside Mount Pisgah (154: 10).

The earlier tendency was to identify Abel-shittim with Tall al-Kefrein (Albright 1926: 49; Mallon 1929: 220, 223–24; Abel 1967, 2: 234) because the site was judged to be a fortress, and Iron I and II sherds were reported there (Glueck 1951: 371–74). However, Abel-shittim is now generally located at Tall al-Hammam on Wadi al-Meqta'a, the eastern extension of Wadi

al-Kefrein, 2.5 km to the southeast (Glueck 1943a: 13–18; 1951: 378, 382; Simons 1959: 268; Van Zyl 1960: 94; Noth 1953a: 29, 142; 1968: 196; Aharoni 1979: 429; Davies 1979: 118 n. 52; Miller 1989a; 1989b: 27; Briend 1990: 19). The reason for choosing Tall al-Hammam rather than Tall al-Kefrein is that the former is, in the words of Glueck, “the most outstanding and impressive site in the entire area of the Plains of Moab, with the possible exception of Tall Iktani” (1951: 379).

Tall al-Hammam appears to be a very large and strongly built Iron Age I–II fortress completely enclosed by a strong outer fortification wall (Glueck 1951: 379). The East Jordan Valley Survey reports Iron I–II sherds as dominant at the site (Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim 1988: 192, 197–98). Prag’s 1990 work at the site indicates that relative to the northeast tell at Hammam “the most prominent ruins are probably of the Iron Age II and Persian periods, when it appears to have been strongly fortified. These remains were recorded in some detail by Glueck, who dated them to the Iron Age 1 and 2 periods” (1991: 60). Tall al-Hamman is a good, though not certain, candidate for the location of Abel-shittim.

Deut 2.1–26

Commentary: Deuteronomy 2 has the Israelites traveling south along the western border of Edom as far as the Gulf of al-'Aqaba, then north along the 'Arabah, and finally through Moabite territory immediately to the east of the Dead Sea (Deut 2.1–13, 28–29; Snaith 1967: 276–77). According to this itinerary, there is a peaceful passage through Edom (v(v) 4, 8), transit “along the Route of the Wilderness of Moab” (v 8b), crossing of “the boundary of Moab at Ar” (v 18), and no encroachment on the land of the Ammonites (v 37).

Site Identification: Mount Seir, Route of the 'Arabah, Elath, Ezion-geber, Route of the Wilderness of Moab, Ar, Wadi Zered, Arnon, Heshbon, and the Wilderness of Kedemoth are all of importance in this text. However, since Elath, Ezion-geber, Ar, Wadi Zered, and the Arnon have been treated previously, they will not be discussed here. Mount Seir will be treated in relation to Edom (see Chapter 9).

i) Route of the 'Arabah (Deut 2.8): The Hebrew word *arabah* means “dry land” (Simons 1959: 49), “desert” or “waste country” (Gray 1902: 3314), and is used as a synonym for desert (Aharoni 1979: 35). In a broad sense, it can designate that part of the Rift Valley that extends from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the Red Sea in the south (Josh 12.3) (Aharoni

1979: 41). Bender, as noted in Chapter 3, refers to it as the “Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression” (1974: 6–11). Frequently, however, the 'Arabah designates a less extensive area of the Rift Valley, namely, that portion from the Dead Sea to the northern tip of the Red Sea at al-'Aqaba/Eilat; this is the area usually signified in modern usage (Simons 1959: 49; Aharoni 1979: 35). The Dead Sea or Salt Sea is also called the “Sea of the 'Arabah” (Deut 3.17; 4.49; Josh 3.16; 2 Kings 14.25).

The “route of the 'Arabah” would presumably be the road in the 'Arabah joining Elath/Eloth and Ezion-geber on the Gulf of al-'Aqaba/Eilat with Judah, the Dead Sea, and Edom and Moab in the northwest, north, and northeast respectively (Bartlett 1989: 39).¹⁷

ii) Route of the Wilderness of Moab (Deut 2.8): After traveling along the route/road of the 'Arabah, the Israelites changed directions and went “along the route of the wilderness/desert of Moab” (Aharoni 1979: 55, 203 map 14). It would seem that the wanderers turned northeast to a route in the eastern segment of Moab in what is now the steppeland region (see Chapter 3). This route would be in the area bordering the two morphological units that Bender refers to as the “Central Desert Areas of East Jordan” on the east and the “Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben” on the west (1974: 6–11). It would be east of the King's Highway (Num 20.17; 21.22), treated above. Activity in this zone is more often pastoral than agricultural. The Route of the Wilderness of Moab would most probably parallel or follow the same track as the ancient *Darb al-Hajj* route, the Ottoman railway, and/or the modern Desert Highway. It would avoid the major settled areas of Moab as well as the deeply cut, east–west flowing wadis to the west, which made traveling difficult at any season of the year and virtually impossible in the rainy season (usually from late November to March; see Chapter 3).

In Deut 2.1–25, the relationship of the Israelites to the Moabites parallels their relationship to the Edomites, that is, no engagement in battle and no taking of territory since God has given Ar (Moab) to the descendants of Lot (v 9). Here again, the Israelites appear to pass peacefully through Moabite as they did through Edomite territory (v(v) 8, 29).

iii) Heshbon (Deut 2.24, 26, 30): Up to this point in the Deuteronomy 2 itinerary, God has commanded the Israelites not to engage the descendants of Esau (v 5) and the descendants of Lot, that is, Moab (v 9) and Ammon (v 19) in battle. The situation now changes. God tells the people to engage King Sihon the Amorite of Heshbon in battle and take possession of his land (v 24). The conflict comes only after King Sihon refuses the

Israelites' request to pass peaceably through his land, paying for food and water (v(v) 27–30).

On the basis of biblical data, Heshbon can be located generally on the central Transjordanian plateau (Deut 3.10; 4.43; Josh 13.16) east of the Jordan River between Wadi Arnon in the south and Wadi Jabbok in the north (Deut 2.24; Josh 12.2). It is mostly west of both the territory of the Ammonites (Josh 12.2) and "the Wilderness of Kedemoth" (Deut 2.26). It is related to such well-known and confidently identified sites as Medeba (= Madaba) and Dibon (= Dhiban) (Num 21.30). From biblical sources, nothing more definite can be posited about its location.

Eusebius places Heshbon, which in his day was called Esbus, in the mountains of Gilead ca. twenty Roman miles from the Jordan across from Jericho (84: 1–5). The Talmud locates it at Housban/Hisban (Neubauer 1868: 21).

From a toponymic point of view, there is no doubt that the modern village and associated tell of Hisban, situated in a rolling plain ca. 9 km north of the modern town of Madaba and ca. 20 km southwest of 'Amman, bear the biblical name. The question is whether the biblical name has remained at the same site down through the centuries or migrated to modern Tall Hisban from some nearby or even distant location.

Andrews University excavated Tall Hisban for five seasons from 1968 to 1976 (Horn 1969; 1972; Boraas and Horn 1969; 1973; 1975; Lugenbeal and Sauer 1972; Sauer 1973; Boraas and Geraty 1976; 1978; 1979; Geraty 1983a; 1983b; 1992; 1993; 1997; Geraty and Merling 1994; Ibach 1987). In 1978, Baptist Bible College continued the excavation of a Byzantine church at the site. Other than some Late Bronze Age sherds, the excavators uncovered no remains earlier than the Iron Age I period when there was probably a small, unfortified village at the site, dated to the twelfth–eleventh centuries and dependent on an agrarian-pastoral economy (Geraty 1992: 182; 1997: 20). Although there is evidence of the site's habitation during the tenth–eighth centuries, the best-preserved Iron Age remains date to the seventh–sixth centuries. The archaeological record indicates "a general prosperity and continued growth, probably clustered around a fort" (Geraty 1997: 20–21; see also Geraty 1992: 182). This settlement may have come to a violent end (Geraty 1992: 182; 1997: 21). There is no evidence for occupation during the Persian period but the site was reoccupied in the Late Hellenistic period. Habitation at Hisban continued throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods when it reached its zenith (LaBianca 1989: 264–67; Geraty 1992: 182–83; 1997: 21).¹⁸

A problem with the location of biblical Heshbon at Tall Hisban is the apparent discrepancy between the archaeological evidence and the biblical account of the Israelite capture of the site from the Amorite king Sihon (Num 21.21–35; see also Deut 2.26–35). The site's conquest, as narrated in the Bible, would have taken place, according to traditional dating, around the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the twelfth centuries B.C. However, the archaeological evidence does not support the location of an Amorite capital city at Tall Hisban in either the Late Bronze or Early Iron Ages.

A solution to this problem can be found in the consensus among critics that the prose segment of Num 21.21–35 belongs to a late Deuteronomistic stratum of the Pentateuch while the poetic portion (v(v) 27b–30) originally had nothing to do with the conquest of Heshbon (Miller 1983: 124). Thus, from a literary critical perspective the narrative is either legendary (van Seters 1980: 117–19; Timm 1989a: 175; 1989b: 94–95) or anachronistic (Miller 1983: 124). Further, biblical writers may have set their narratives at sites that were known to them and their readers, as was the practice of writers of the Palestinian Targumim of the Pentateuch (Alexander 1974: 5).

In conclusion, with few exceptions, commentators identify Tall Hisban with biblical Heshbon (Noth 1935: 248; 1944: 51, 53; 1968: 240; Simons 1959: 117, 121, 298, 449; Van Zyl 1960: 92; Abel 1967, 2: 348–49, 424; Ottosson 1969: 86; Baly 1974: 233 n. 11; Peterson 1980: 622–24; Aharoni 1979: 436; Boling 1985: 25 [tentatively]; Geraty and Running 1989: ix; Miller 1989b: 28; Timm 1989a: 175; Knauf 1990; Lemaire 1992a: 68* [tentatively]; Weippert 1997: 23).¹⁹ Some scholars look for biblical Heshbon at another site, for example, Jalul (Horn 1976; 1982: 10, 11; Ibach 1978; Boling 1988: 47 [tentatively]), or understand Heshbon as more than the name of a city and primarily the name of a region (Merling 1991). Despite these dissenting voices, it appears almost certain on textual, toponymic and archaeological grounds that the biblical site of Heshbon is to be identified with Tall Hisban.

iv) The Wilderness of Kedemoth (Deut 2.26; Josh 13.18; 21.37; 1 Chr 6.79): It was from “the Wilderness of Kedemoth” that Moses sent a message to King Sihon of Heshbon requesting permission to pass through his land (Deut 2.26–27). Kedemoth is one of the towns of Reuben (Josh 13.18) assigned along with its pasture lands to the Merarite families, as a levitical city (Josh 21.37; 1 Chr 6.79).

According to the Bible, Kedemoth is located north of Wadi Arnon/al-Mujib (Deut 2.24). Since it is described as the Wilderness of Kedemoth it should be sought in the desert and/or steppe area on the eastern fringes of

the good agricultural land (see Chapter 3). In Josh 13.15–21 it is associated with securely located sites in the tableland/*Mishor*, such as Madaba and Heshbon.

In his study of geographical names, Aharoni places Kedemoth in that category that describes the geographical location of a site (Aharoni 1979: 109). Indeed, the toponym is based on the Hebrew root *qdm*, which means "front"/"east" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 823; Borée 1968: 48). Eusebius is of little help in locating Kedemoth, merely restating the relevant information in Deut 2.26 and Josh 13.18 (114: 5–6).

Commentators such as Ottosson (1969: 123) and Kallai (1986: 441) posit that the location of Kedemoth is uncertain. Nevertheless, a number of scholars, some tentatively, have located it at four different sites: 1) Qasr az-Za'feran [Glueck's Qasr az-Za'feran I] (Glueck 1934: 30–31; Wright and Filson 1956: 125; Simons 1959: 118, 262 [the twin ruin of Qasr az-Za'feran I and II]); Cohen 1962c: 4 [or at Khirbat ar-Rumeil]; Abel 1967, 2: 69, 74, 217, 415 [the twin ruin of Qasr az-Za'feran I and II]); 2) Qasr Saliya (Van Zyl 1960: 75; Anderson 1964: 2; Peterson 1980: 682; Boling and Wright 1982: 342; 1992: 10–11; Boling 1985: 25; Dearman 1989a: 184; 1989b: 63); 3) Khirbat ar-Rumeil (Cohen 1962c: 4 [or at Qasr az-Za'feran]); and 4) Khirbat 'Aleiyān (Aharoni 1979: 202, 203 map 14, 438; Pritchard 1987: 231; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1993 maps 52, 108 and 113).

Qasr az-Za'feran, Khirbat ar-Rumeil and Khirbat 'Aleiyān are located northeast while Qasr Saliya is southeast of Dhiban. All are in the steppe region. Peterson (1980) generally agrees with Glueck (1934) relative to the pottery and associated occupation at Qasr az-Za'feran I and II. Parker is more detailed. He sees both sites as watchtowers. At his Qasr az-Za'feran A (presumably Glueck's Qasr az-Za'feran I), Parker collected Modern, Umayyad, Late Roman, Nabataean (predominant), Iron II and Iron I sherds (1976: 23). From Qasr az-Za'feran B he reports Late Roman IV, Early Byzantine, and Iron II (predominant) sherds (1976: 23). Parker thinks Qasr az-Za'feran A may be Iron Age (1986: 44–45).

Based on the architectural remains, as well as the large quantities of Early Iron I–II pottery at the site, Glueck calls Khirbat ar-Rumeil an Early Iron I–II fortress (1939a: 118–22). Parker, who classifies the site as a watchtower, collected only Iron I and Iron II sherds at the site (1976: 23; 1986: 43). According to Parker's findings, the latter period was by far predominant at the site (1976: 23; 1986: 43). Peterson, however, reports pottery representing occupation during only the ninth–eighth centuries B.C. at Khirbat ar-Rumeil (1980: 681).

Glueck sees Khirbat 'Aleiyān as a fortified site at which there was a thriving settlement during Early Iron I and II as well as during the Nabataean period (1939a: 116–17). Glueck (1934: 35–36) reports Iron Age I–II and Nabataean sherds; Parker notes Iron I, Iron II (predominant), Nabataean, Late Roman, and Ayyubid/Mamluk sherds (1976: 23; 1986: 48); while Anderson (1964) posits Late Bronze occupation at Qasr Saliya. Parker suggests the site was founded in the Iron Age and grew into an extensive settlement (1986: 48).

On the basis of biblical data, toponymic considerations, and archaeological findings from the four sites in question, it is impossible confidently to identify one as the location of Kedemoth. There appear to be Iron I and/or Iron II remains at each site. Furthermore, Khirbat al-Mudayna in Wadi ath-Thamad has, for the most part, the same occupational history as the four sites discussed above. It is also located in the border area between the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben and the Central Desert of East Jordan. It is immediately northeast of Khirbat ar-Rumeil and the twin sites of Qasr az-Za'feran I and II, and thus is as viable a location of Kedemoth as the sites proposed above.

Van Zyl chooses Qasr Saliya as the location of biblical Kedemoth since it is the most easterly of the sites and, therefore, could have been called Kedemoth (1960: 75). His argument is valid, and Qasr Saliya is a good candidate for the location of Kedemoth.

Judg 11.14–26

Commentary: According to Judg 11.14–26, the Israelites turned south as far as the Gulf of al-'Aqaba in order to avoid crossing Edomite territory, and then came north again well to the east of Edom and Moab (v 18). They came in from the desert north of the Arnon gorge from which they sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, king of Heshbon (v 19). This passage indicates that neither Edom nor Moab granted Israel permission to pass through its land (v 17). The Israelites thus “went around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, arrived on the east side of the land of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab” (v 19). A battle ensued between Israel and Sihon, and the former was victorious (v(v) 20–23).

Site Identification: Sites in this text include the Arnon (v(v) 13, 18, 22, 26), the Jabbok (v(v) 13, 22), Heshbon (v(v) 19, 26), and Aroer (v 26). The Arnon and Heshbon have been treated. The land of Edom and the land

of Moab are territories the Israelites went around, rather than passing through, to camp on the other side of the Arnon (v 18). These lands will be treated in the chapters on Edom (Chapter 9) and Moab (Chapter 8). Our current focus is the Jabbok and Aroer.

i) Jabbok (Gen 32.22; Num 21.24; Deut 2.37; 3.16; Josh 12.2; Judg 11.13, 22): The Jabbok first appears in the Bible in the narrative of Jacob’s return from Haran to be reconciled with his brother Esau who lived in the land of Seir, the territory of Edom (Gen 32.3). Jacob, along with his two wives, two maids, and eleven children, crossed the ford of the Jabbok before meeting Esau (Gen 32.22).

In the context of Israelite settlement east of the Jordan, the Jabbok is consistently designated as a boundary: 1) between King Sihon the Amorite and the Ammonites (Num 21.24; Josh 12.2); 2) of Ammon (Deut 2.37; 3.16); and 3) between Israel and Ammon (Judg 11.13, 22).

The Jabbok is almost universally identified with Wadi az-Zarqa (Noth 1935: 234; Simons 1959: 52; Abel 1967, 1: 174–75; de Vaux 1967: 121; Aharoni 1979: 23 map 2). It is one of the four major streams/wadis of Jordan (see Chapter 3). It begins near the ‘Amman Citadel at Ras al-‘Ayn (elev. 758 m) and flows in a northeasterly direction as far as the modern city of az-Zarqa. From there it turns northwest, then west, and finally southwest until it meets the Jordan (elev. -350 m) just north of Damiyeh, ca. 37 km north of the Dead Sea. Its total length is ca. 100 km.²⁰

ii) Aroer (Num 32.34; Deut 2.36; 3.12; 4.48; Josh 12.2; 13.9, 16; Judg 11.26; 2 Sam 24.5; 2 Kings 10.33; 1 Chr 5.8; Jer 48.19): The territory that the Israelites took from Sihon stretched from Aroer on the edge of Wadi Arnon as far as Gilead (Deut 2.36; 3.12), while the land that they took from Sihon and Og went from Aroer as far as Mount Sirion (= Hermon) (Deut 4.48; Josh 13.9). Specifically, the territory of King Sihon who lived at Heshbon started at Aroer in the south (Josh 12.2). The victories of Hazael against Israel from the Jordan eastward started from Aroer, which is by Wadi Arnon (2 Kings 10.33). Clearly, Aroer is located on the edge of Wadi Arnon/al-Mujib, at the southern extremity of Israelite possessions east of the Jordan.

The Mesha Inscription depicts Aroer as one of the towns the Moabite ruler built; as in the biblical texts, it is here associated with the Arnon (line 26). Eusebius, in keeping with the biblical data, places Aroer on the bank of Wadi Arnon (12: 5–6).

There seems to be little doubt that the biblical toponym Aroer is preserved at ‘Ara’ir on the northern bank of Wadi Arnon, 3 km southeast of

Diban and 4 km east of the Madaba-al-Karak highway. Moreover, the biblical site is located there as well (Brünnnow and von Domaszewski 1904/05, 1: 32; Glueck 1934: 49; Noth 1935: 248; 1944: 41, 50, 53; 1968: 240; Rudolph 1958: 265; Simons 1959: 299, 348, 363; Van Zyl 1960: 76–77; Abel 1967, 2: 69, 250; Gray 1967: 132; Snaith 1967: 333; Ottosson 1969: 80; Olávarri 1975: 98; Aharoni 1979: 430; Dearman 1989a: 185; Holladay 1989: 359; Miller 1989a: 583, 1989b: 28; Pienarr 1989; Hübner 1992: 143; Dearman 1997: 206).

Burckhardt visited 'Ara'ir during his 1812 travels through Jordan (1822: 372–75). 'Ara'ir was one of the sites Glueck surveyed during the first year of his *Explorations in Eastern Palestine* (1934: 49): He describes the site as possibly a fortress, the outer walls of which likely belong to the Iron Age (1934: 50). However, information about 'Ara'ir's archaeological history comes primarily from Olávarri's work there during three seasons between 1964 and 1966 (Olávarri 1965; 1969; 1975; 1993). According to Olávarri, the site was never a town or settlement but rather a strategically positioned fortress guarding the King's Highway where it crossed the Arnon (1975: 98). He suggests that 'Ara'ir was occupied at the end of the third and beginning of the second millennium B.C., with a gap in its occupation during the Middle Bronze period, then renewed habitation at the end of the Late Bronze and beginning of the Iron Age. Olávarri saw evidence of houses and strong walls that formed part of the Israelite fortress during the Iron Age, leading him to believe Mesha conquered this fortress and built a new one over it. The new structure occupied an area of 50 m² with exterior and interior walls measuring 2.00 and 1.50 m respectively. An additional double defense wall was erected on the northwest side of the site, the side facing the plain. 'Ara'ir was abandoned between the seventh and third centuries B.C. (Olávarri 1975).

Scholars are virtually unanimous on three points: 1) the site of 'Ara'ir fits the geographical indications in the texts, both biblical and extra-biblical, relative to Aroer; 2) 'Ara'ir preserves the toponym Aroer; and 3) the archaeological remains at 'Ara'ir are consistent with the literary evidence on Aroer. Thus, the site of 'Ara'ir is the location of biblical Aroer.

CONCLUSIONS

Though they provide very little precise information about the route, Num 20.14–21, 22, and 21.4 describe Israel setting out from Kadesh and then from Mount Hor, both on the border of Edomite territory. The people

are forced "to go around the land of Edom" since permission was not granted to pass through Edomite territory along the King's Highway.

In the second itinerary passage, Num 21.10–20, Mount Hor is again a starting point for the passage via Transjordan. The route taken, however, bears little resemblance to the one outlined above. Many stopping points along the way, for example, Oboth, Iye-abarim, Beer, and Nahaliel, appear to be general indicators rather than precise places. One wonders how familiar the itinerary writer was with the geography and topography of Transjordan.

Num 33.1–49 makes the most sense of all the itineraries and indicates an actual route. In Num 33.35–49, Israel travels from Ezion-geber on the Gulf of al-'Aqaba, north through the 'Arabah, camping at Kadesh and Mount Hor ("on the edge of the land of Edom"), past the eastern side of Wadi 'Arabah and the Dead Sea, up onto the Transjordanian Plateau, presumably south of the Arnon, then to Dhiban, Mount Nebo, and the Plains of Moab at the northeastern end of the Dead Sea across from Jericho.

In Deut 2.1–25, Kadesh is again a starting point for the passage through Transjordan. From here, after skirting Mount Seir for a long time, Israel travels through the territory of Esau/Edom, leaving behind the 'Arabah, Elath and Ezion-geber. This appears to be a detour rather than a direct route. Israel then goes through Moabite territory "along the Route of the Wilderness of Moab," crosses the Arnon, presumably its eastern extension, and possibly the boundary of Moab in the mind of the writer, approaching the frontier of the Ammonites where the people camp at Kedemoth and send a message to King Sihon of Heshbon. The passage is vague and confusing, and indicates that the writer had very little knowledge of possible routes through Transjordan.

Judg 11.14–26 also reveals the writer's scant knowledge of actual travel possibilities in first millennium Transjordan. It locates the people at Kadesh from where they set out to detour around the land of both Edom and Moab. It has them camped north of the Arnon, outside Moabite territory, whence messengers are sent to King Sihon of Heshbon.

On the basis of textual and literary study of these texts plus archaeological evidence from biblical sites identified with confidence, we may conclude that the passages in question probably date to the end of the Iron II period. Only then were most of the identified sites occupied; there is little or no evidence of their occupation during either the Iron I or early Iron II Age.

NOTES

¹ There are various interpretations of the inscription dating the mosque: Palmer states that “over the door is an inscription, stating that the building was restored by Es Shim’ani, the son of Mohammed Calaón, Sultan of Egypt, by his father’s orders, in the year 739 of the Hijrah” (1871: 435); Peake notes that the inscription “states that the shrine was built by Shimaani, son of Nasir Muhammed Lalauni in AH 728” (1958: 82, 135); and Philby writes that “an Arabic inscription gives the date of the construction of the building as AH 900 (the last figure is, however, scarcely legible, and it may be anything from 900 to 909 = A.D. 1495 approximately)” (1925: 9).

² Although positive identification of the location of Mount Hor is impossible, certain authors have placed it at Jabal Madurah, 24 km northeast of Kadesh (Roth 1992: 287). Simons has difficulty with this location since it is too far within Edomite territory (1959: 258). On the basis of Deut 10.6, where the location of Aaron’s death and burial is given as Moserah, Abel sees Mount Hor as one of the peaks of Moseroth (1967, 1: 387; see also Simons 1959: 258). Aharoni suggests that a height named ‘Imaret al-Khureisheh, which is on the road to Arad and which towers over an important road junction 13 km north of Kadesh-barnea, deserves consideration as the location of Mount Hor (1961: 141; 1979: 202, 436).

³ Khirbat al-Balu’ is located south of the Arnon at the head of Wadi al-Balu’ and ca. 11 km northeast of Ar-Rabba. Glueck visited the site in 1933 and reported pottery from the late Early Bronze to medieval Arabic (1934: 55–56). Crowfoot carried out soundings at the site in the same year (1934). His work produced slight evidence of Early Bronze sherds and evidence of remains from the Iron Age to the Roman period. Miller surveyed the site in 1978. He collected large quantities of sherds spanning the Early Bronze to the Late Islamic period on the north and south banks of the wadi where the ruins of the site are spread (Miller 1991: 41–43). Worschech, who began excavations at the site in 1985, reports settlement during the Late Bronze and early Iron I period in the area just southwest of what is presently designated the Qasr. He found evidence of the settlement’s expansion to the east and north of the Qasr during the Iron II period. In fact, Worschech reports Iron Age pottery all over the site with the exception of the area near the Mamluk settlement (Worschech, Rosenthal, and Zayadine 1986: 292).

⁴ Ar-Rabba, which Knauf translates as “metropolis [of the region]” (1992a: 602), is located at an important highway junction on the main or King’s Highway on the central al-Karak Plateau. Brünnow and von Domszewski (1904/05, 1: 46–51, 54–59) and Musil (1907/08, 1: 370–75) were among the early explorers who visited the site before Glueck. The latter reports that he did not find a sherd from the Early Iron Age or earlier at the site (1934: 62). The Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau, however, reports a few possible Late Bronze as well as Iron Age, Iron I, Iron II, and Iron IIC/Persian among the numerous sherds collected at the site (Miller 1991: 65).

⁵ Khirbat al-Mudayna ‘Alya is located on a northeast–southwest oriented promontory with steep sides all around except at the southwest end where Wadi al-Lajjun flows into Wadi al-Mujib ca. 7 km east-southeast of al-Smakiyyah (Miller 1991: 74). Glueck (1934: 52–53, 63, 82, 98 pl. 12) visited the site and characterized it as an Iron Age fortress. Miller describes it as a walled settlement encompassing an area ca. 275 × 110 m that may have served “a primarily military function” (1991: 74). Among the sherds which he collected at the site were twelve from the Iron I period (1991: 74). Recent archaeological soundings at the site led the excavators to date the site provisionally to the early tenth century B.C. (Routledge 1995: 236).

⁶ Khirbat al-Misna’ is located on a low hill ca. 2.5 km northeast of Ar-Rabba. Glueck reports several walled compounds and numerous sherds all around the site. He found a large number of Bronze and Early Iron Age sherds on the north side of the mound (1934: 62–63, 102 site plan). Miller reports Late Bronze, Iron Age, Iron I, and Iron II among the sherds that the Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau collected at the site (1991: 64).

⁷ The NRSV and NJB read “overlooks the Wasteland” and “overlooking the desert” respectively, while the REV and NAB read “overlooking Jeshimon” and “overlooks Jeshimon” respectively.

⁸ Ophir is generally identified with Somalia.

⁹ The location of Tarshish is a matter of debate. See Baker (1992) for a summary.

¹⁰This assertion is based on the fact that Azariah’s father Amaziah defeated the Edomites (2 Kings 14.7) who had successfully revolted against Judah during the reign of King Jehoram (2 Kings 8.20–22).

¹¹A stade/stadium measures 185 meters/607 feet. Strabo locates Aelana/Aela/Aila 233 km from Gaza.

¹²A Roman mile is 1,480 meters. Aila would thus be 74 km from the Feiran oasis in the Sinai.

¹³There is an eastern branch of Wadi Feifeh called Wadi Salim on “The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Archaeological Map),” Sheet 2 (Scale 1:250,000).

¹⁴Beth-diblatthaim of Jer 48:22 and the Bet Diblaten of the Mesha Inscription (line 30) are generally seen as the same site (Simons 1959: 261; Van Zyl 1960: 86 n. 9; Abel 1967, 2: 269; Dearman 1997: 209; for a discussion of the problem and possible solutions see Dearman 1989a: 187).

¹⁵Davies thinks that the Plains of Moab are “either in Wadi Hesban itself or farther to the west at the point where it enters the Jordan Valley” (1979: 36). This location appears too restrictive.

¹⁶The Wadi Shittim or “the valley of the acacias” of Joel 3.18 appears to be associated with Judah (Wolff 1977: 83–84).

¹⁷Aharoni (1979: 58), however, refers to the route that ran along the ‘Arabah south of the Dead Sea connecting Zoar with Elath on the Gulf of al-‘Aqaba as “the way of the Reed Sea” (Ex 13.18; Num 14.25; 21.4; Deut 1.40; 2.1). He refers to a route going from Kadesh-barnea to Tamar on the west side of the ‘Arabah as the “way to the ‘Arabah” (1979: 203 map 14).

¹⁸See LaBianca (1989) for a summary of the findings of earlier explorations and recent multidisciplinary inquiries at the site. See the same publication and Geraty (1992) for a bibliography (up to 1989) on the site and its vicinity.

¹⁹To these references may be added the multiple contemporary commentaries on the Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so forth which make the same identification.

²⁰Redford (1982a; 1982b) translates as “stream” number 92, ‘*Abil II*, of a toponym list of Thutmose III, which he understands as a description of a route leading due south from Damascus to the regions of Moab and Edom. According to Redford, the stream in question is Wadi az-Zarqa (1982a: 119, 1982b; see also Kitchen 1992: 23–35). This is an early (ca. 1450 B.C.) reference to the geographical feature under study.

CHAPTER 6

SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELITE TRIBES EAST OF THE JORDAN

INTRODUCTION

Several texts treat the settlement of the Israelite tribes, that is, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, east of the Jordan River (fig. 9). They generally deal with at least two of the tribes and in several instances with the three tribes together, and present diverse points of view about the territories and sites of the Israelite tribes settled east of the Jordan. Rather than treating each tribe separately we will consider them as they appear in the texts in question, and follow the order of the texts in the Bible.

The Book of Numbers contains three texts, 21.21–35; 32.1–42; and 34.14–15, dealing with the settlement of the tribes east of the Jordan. In the Book of Deuteronomy, there are two on this topic: 3.3–17 and 29.7–8. Additional relevant texts, namely Josh 12.1–6; 13.8–31; 17.1, 5–6; 18.7; and Judg 11.21–22, 26, are part of the work of the Deuteronomistic historian (Phillips 1973: 2). Finally, 1 Chr 5.1–23 is important for our present purpose. Since general comments on Numbers, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History appear in Chapter 5, discussion here will be restricted, for the most part, to the texts noted above.

The Books of Chronicles are generally dated to the Persian period (538–333 B.C.) and more specifically to the fifth (Myers 1965: lxxxvii–vix; North 1990: 363–64) or fourth century (Klein 1992: 995). They are a parallel version of Israel's history in Genesis through Kings, but they differ considerably from the Deuteronomistic History. The books' author (Myers 1965: lxxxvi–vii; North 1990: 364; Klein 1992: 993–94) rewrote, edited, quoted and supplemented material from the Pentateuch, Samuel and Kings in efforts to shore up the Jewish community of Judah beset by opposition and despair (Myers 1965: lxxxvi).

Several texts deal with the Israelite cities of refuge and the Levitical towns east of the Jordan. Deut 4.41–43 and Josh 20.8 describe the former while Josh 21.27–39 (and 1 Chr 6.39–66 [6.54–81]) treat the latter. Penuel is not among those sites the Israelites settled; however, it will be treated at the end of this chapter as a site related to Israelite activities and interests beyond the Jordan.

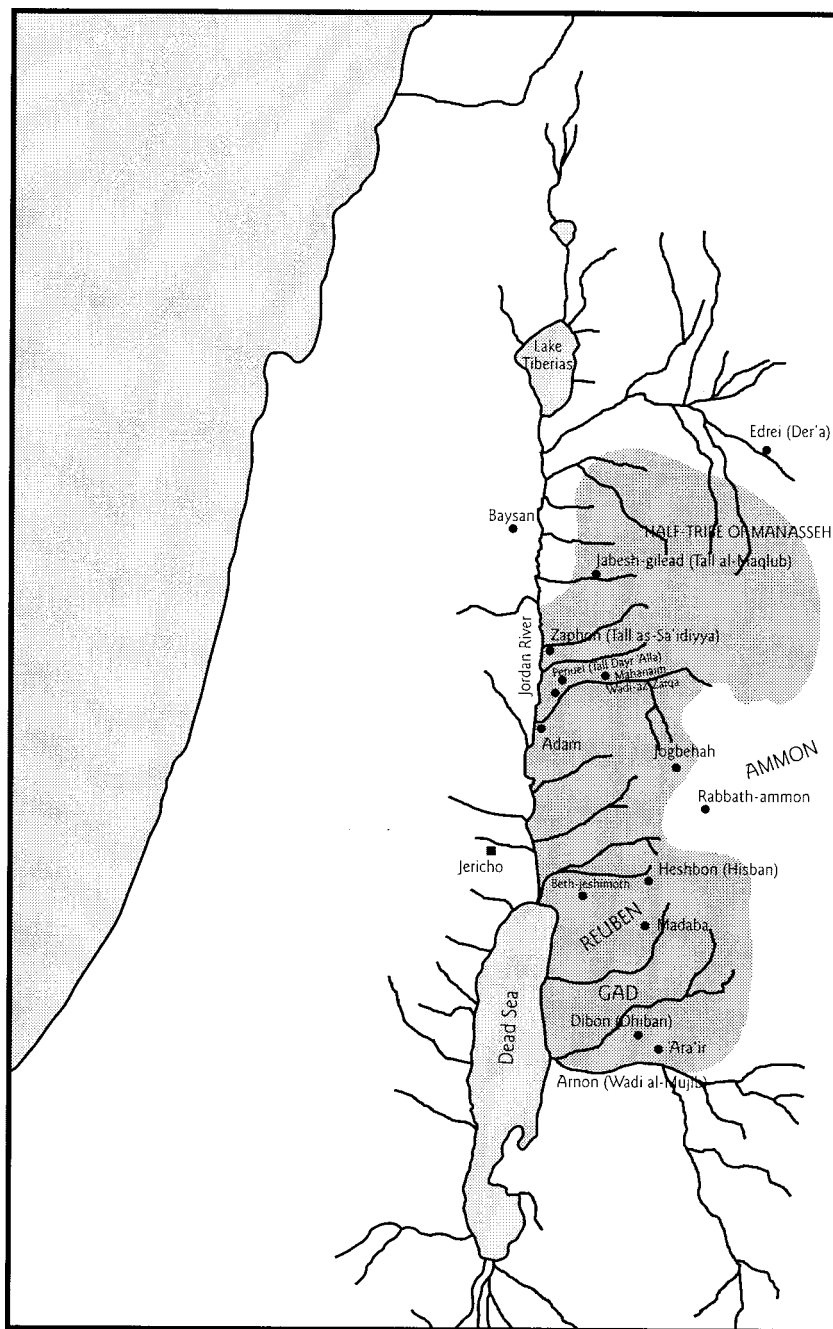


Fig. 9. Israelite Settlements "Beyond the Jordan."

TEXTS FROM NUMBERS

Num 21.21–35

Commentary: The purpose of Num 21.21–35 is to vindicate Israelite settlement in Transjordan. The passage narrates in a general way how the Israelites gained possession of territory in Transjordan and Bashan by defeating King Sihon of the Amorites and gaining “possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as to the Ammonites” (v 24). It also recounts Israel’s defeat of King Og of Bashan, and the resulting “possession of his land” (v 35). Num 21.21–35, which comes at the end of the itinerary narrative in Num 21.10–20, is not a single unit. It contains linking and summarizing statements (v(v) 21, 31), a narrative of Israel’s confrontation with King Sihon of the Amorites and capture of his territory (v(v) 22–26), the “taunt song against Heshbon” (v(v) 27–30), the capture of the villages of Jazer (v 32), and the battle against Og and possession of his land (v(v) 33–35).

The taunt song against Heshbon, which recounts the Israelite tribes’ capture of Heshbon along with the defeat of Moab, is probably an ancient text and a witness to war in Transjordan. Both its ultimate origin and the date of the song’s campaign are uncertain (Budd 1984: xxix).

Site Identification: Sites singled out in Num 21.22–26, 32–34 include the King’s Highway (v 22), Jahaz (v 23), the Arnon (v(v) 24, 26), the Jabbok (v 24), Heshbon (v(v) 25, 26, 34), Jazer (v 32), the Road to Bashan (v 33), and Edrei (v 33). In addition, Heshbon (v(v) 27, 28, 30), Ar of Moab (v 28), Arnon (v 28), Dibon (v 30), and Medeba (v 30) are mentioned in the taunt song against Heshbon. Heshbon and the Arnon appear twice in the text. Most of these sites have been treated in Chapter 5; our focus here is on Jahaz, Jazer, Edrei, and Medeba.

i) Jahaz (Num 21.23; Deut 2.32; Josh 13.18; 21.36; Judg 11.20; Isa 15.4; Jer 48.21, 34; 1 Chr 6.78): Jahaz, and its alternative spelling Jahzah, is the site where the initial battle between the Amorites, represented by Sihon of Heshbon (Num 21.26), and the Israelites took place (Num 21.23; 21.32; Deut 2.32; Judg 11.20). According to Num 21.23, it is located in the wilderness “which extends from the boundary of the Amorites” (Num 21.13), that is, on the eastern edge of the settled area. It is one of the towns that Moses is said to have given to the Reubenites as an inheritance (Josh 13.18). In the oracles against Moab, however, it appears to be a possession of Moab (Isa 15.4; Jer 48.34), and in lines 19–20 of the Mesha Inscription, it is said to be one of the places the Moabite king took from the Israelites. In summary,

Jahaz ought to be located north of the Arnon/al-Mujib on the western edge of the desert. It would appear to be associated with the “Wilderness of Kedemoth” (Deut 2.26; Josh 13.18; 21.37; 1 Chr 6.79). The site was once an Amorite possession that became a town of the Reubenites who, in turn, lost it to the Moabites during the time of Mesha. It was later devastated (Isa 15.4; Jer 48.21, 34), probably by the Assyrians.

Eusebius locates Jahaz between Madaba and Dhiban (104: 11). There are no further references to Jahaz in early Christian, post-biblical Judaic, or medieval Islamic literature.

Commentators propose several different archaeological sites for the location of Jahaz, including: Jalul (Wright and Filson 1956: 124; Abel 1967: 2: 354); Khirbat Iskandar (Rudolph 1958: 263; Bernhardt 1960: 155; Abel 1967, 2: 354 [if there are Iron Age remains]); Libb (de Vaux 1967; Simons 1959: 118 [possible]); Khirbat al-Mudayna on Wadi ath-Thamad (Dearman 1984: 122, 1989b: 63, 1992b: 612; Aharoni 1979: 187, 308 [tentatively]; Boling 1985: 25 [tentatively]); Khirbat 'Aleiyān (Van Zyl 1960: 80); Khirbat ar-Rumeil; Umm al-Walid (Musil 1907/08, 1: 107 and 122 n. 1; Smith 1915: 29–30); Qasr Saliya; Rujm al-'Aliya; and Khirbat al-Taym. Glueck posits a number of these sites, namely Khirbat al-Mudayna, Khirbat 'Aleiyān, Khirbat ar-Rumeil, and Qasr Saliya (Rujm al-'Aliya may also be added), as part of the frontier defenses on the eastern border of Moab during the Iron Age (1939: 117–23). With the exception of Jalul, Khirbat Iskandar, Khirbat al-Mudayna, and Umm al-Walid, these and other proposed sites have yet to be excavated.

Since the site's location is uncertain, scholars have suggested several possibilities, rather than only one, as candidates for the location of Jahaz. Dearman, for example, posits both Libb and Khirbat Iskandar, because of their location on the King's Highway, as well as Khirbat al-Mudayna as likely choices (1984; 1992b: 612; 1997: 208–9); Smelik suggests Khirbat al-Mudayna, Khirbat ar-Rumeil, and Khirbat 'Aleiyān as possible locations (1992: 76); Kallai proposes Qasr Saliya, Khirbat 'Aleiyān, and Khirbat ar-Rumeil (and Rujm al-'Alya) (1986: 440–41); Peterson (1980: 659–60) opts for Libb, al-Mudayna, and 'Aleiyān as the best candidates; and Grohman (1962) cites Jalul, Khirbat al-Taym, and Umm al-Walid as the most likely locations.

Jalul is a viable candidate for the location of Jahaz because it is located at the edge of the desert, as indicated in Num 21:23, and it has evidence of Iron II occupation (Herr et al. 1994: 158–63). However, this is true of several candidates for Jahaz. In addition, Jalul does not match the location Eusebius gives for Jahaz.

Khirbat Iskandar fits the location for Jahaz that Eusebius provides, though it does not agree with the Bible's geographical indications. Architectural remains at the site date almost exclusively to the EB IV period (Richard 1989; 1993; Richard and Long 1995). The site was abandoned following this period, that is, some time after 2000 B.C. (Richard 1993: 652; Richard and Long 1995: 83–84). Since “[o]nly a smattering of sherds from the Late Bronze, Iron Age, and Roman-Byzantine period has come to light, and none in a stratified context on the mound” (Richard and Long 1995: 84), Khirbat Iskandar is a poor candidate for the location of Jahaz.

Libb is presently the site of a modern village. It fits Eusebius' geographical information and has an abundance of Iron Age pottery (Glueck 1934: 32). However, it does not match the Bible's description of the location of Jahaz.

Khirbat al-Mudayna is a fortified, predominantly Iron II site (Glueck 1933; 1934: 13–14; Daviau 1997) on the edge of the desert between Madaba and Dhiban. It is thus an excellent candidate for the location of Jahaz (see Dearman 1984: 122, 1989b: 63, 1992b: 612, 1997: 208–9). However, Khirbat ar-Rumeil, located just south of Khirbat al-Mudayna, is also an excellent choice for Jahaz since it displays the same characteristics. Moreover, Glueck characterizes the site as one of the most, if not the most, perfectly preserved examples of an Early Iron I–II fortress in eastern Palestine (1939: 118). He collected large quantities of Early Iron I–II sherds both inside and outside the ruins (1939: 122). Parker classifies the site as a watchtower (1976: 23; 1986: 43). He found only Iron Age sherds at the site with Iron II by far the dominant period represented (1976: 23; 1986: 43; see also Daviau 1997).

Khirbat 'Aleiyān is located ca. 8 km northeast of Dhiban. It is a series of ruins from which Glueck reports quantities of Early Iron I–II sherds, including some particularly fine painted ware (1939: 116–17). However, Ji found no diagnostic sherds earlier than the Iron II period at the site (1997: 499). As noted above, Van Zyl proposes this site as the location of Jahaz (1960: 80).

Umm al-Walid is not a good candidate for the location of Jahaz, since it is a predominantly Roman, Byzantine, and Umayyad site (Glueck 1934: 10–12; Parker (1976: 23; 1986: 41–43; Haldimann 1992).

Clearly, there is no scholarly consensus on the location of Jahaz/Jahzah; the debate continues. Peterson does not see compelling evidence for selecting one rather than another of the three sites he proposes (1980: 659–60). His choices for the location of Jahaz are based on their Iron Age remains, fortifications, and proximity to the desert. In the final analysis, Peterson

opts for Khirbat al-Mudayna as the location for Jahaz (1980: 659–60), a good candidate for the site’s location though certainty is not yet possible.

ii) Jazer (Num 21.32; 32.3, 35; Josh 13.25; 21.39; 2 Sam 24.5; 1 Chr 6.81; 26.31; Isa 16.8, 9; Jer 48.32; 1 Macc 5.8): According to Num 21.32, Jazer was a possession of the Amorites that the Israelites captured, while Num 32.3 identifies it as a place the Reubenites and Gadites desired. Jazer was among the towns that Moses is said to have allotted to the Gadites, who rebuilt it (Num 32.35). It is listed as Gadite territory (Josh 13.25) and as a Levitical city (Josh 21.39; 1 Chr 6.81); and it is cited as one of the places where Joab took the census in Transjordan (2 Sam 24.5). David found men of great ability in Jazer in Gilead (1 Chr 26.31), thus associating the site with the district of Gilead (see Chapter 10). Jazer appears in the oracles of both Isaiah (16.8, 9) and Jeremiah (48.32) against Moab, and so it would appear to be a Moabite possession. Finally, Judas Maccabeus is said to have crossed the Jordan and taken Jazer and its villages (1 Macc 5.8).

Josephus states that Judas seized Jazer, took the wives and children captive, burned the city, and then returned to Judea (*Ant* 12.8.1). Eusebius places the city ten Roman miles west of Philadelphia, fifteen from Heshbon, and at the source of a large stream that flows into the Jordan (104.13, 18–19). The crusader Marino Sanuto provides geographical information about Jazer, noting that “the brook Arnon rises on Mount Pisgah, and enters Jordan below Jaazer” (1897: 33).

Several sites have been proposed as the location of biblical Jazer. They include: 1) Beit Zerah (Conder 1889: 91); 2) Khirbat Jazzir (Driver 1909: 563; Simons 1959: 119–120, 437; Abel 1967, 2: 357; Gray 1967: 134; de Vaux 1967: 135; Boling and Wright 1982: 344; Budd 1984: 246; Boling 1985: 25); 3) Khirbat/Qasr as-Sar (Seetzen 1854/55; Merrill 1881: 484; Van Zyl 1960: 94 [or near Na’ur]; Aharoni 1979: 437 [tentatively]; Kallai 1986: 268 [or another site slightly to the west in the region]; Kasher 1988: 28 n. 12); 4) Khirbat as-Sireh (Landes 1956: 37; Van Zyl 1960: 94); 5) al-Yadudeh (Schultze 1932: 68; De Groot 1934: 149; and Noth, in some of his earlier writings [1935: 248, 250 n. 2, 1944: 32]); 6) near Na’ur or in the district of Na’ur without further precision (Noth 1959: 65–71; Van Zyl 1960: 94; Ottosson 1969: 80; Baly 1974: 221 n. 12, 227); and 7) Yajuz (Oliphant 1880: 223–35; Cheyne 1901, 2: 2340–41) or Kom Yajuz (Cohen 1962b: 806).

Many of these sites are not serious candidates for the location of biblical Jazer. For example, all the archaeological remains from Beit Zerah are, in Ibach’s opinion (1987: 209), from the Byzantine period, while most

of the sherds that Peterson found at Khirbat/Qasr as-Sar belong to the Arabic period along with a single ninth/eighth century B.C. bowl, which is scant evidence for occupation during the Iron Age (1980: 631; see, however, Glueck 1939: 153–55). Similarly, archaeological remains from Khirbat al-Yadudeh are from the Roman (an inscription) and Byzantine (a church) periods (Piccirillo 1989e; see also Glueck 1934: 6 and Kallai 1986: 269) while those from Yajuz are also from the Roman and Byzantine periods (Glueck 1939: 177). Although Glueck reported a preponderance of Early Iron I sherds from Kom Yajuz (1989: 178–79), most of the sherds Peterson collected at the site were modern along with three late Iron II vessels and two seventh/sixth century B.C. storage jars (1980: 637).

Landes (1956: 37) and Van Zyl (1960:94) tentatively suggest that Jazer be identified with Khirbat as-Sireh, situated ca. 2 km northeast of Khirbat as-Sar. In favor of this identification, Landes argues that the location of the site fits the distances to Heshbon and 'Amman provided by Eusebius. Landes also bases his identification on the note in Eusebius that at Jazer there was a large river emptying into the Jordan River. He found evidence for the source of this river at the “fountain” of Jazer. Moreover, according to Landes, Khirbat as-Sireh is near the large spring called 'Ayn as-Sir, which flows into Wadi as-Sir, which, in turn, flows into the Jordan by way of Wadi al-Kafrein.

There are several arguments against this identification. Relying only on Eusebius can lead to false conclusions when it comes to biblical site identification, since this early Christian author is often unreliable about distances between sites (Peterson 1980: 641). Moreover, there is no ceramic evidence of occupation at Khirbat as-Sireh during the Iron Age (Peterson 1980: 640), nor is there any resemblance between the modern name as-Sireh and the biblical name Jazer. For these reasons, it is impossible to follow Landes in identifying biblical Jazer with Khirbat as-Sireh (Peterson 1980: 638–41). Simons thinks, moreover, that Landes overlooks the possibility that the ancient settlement along with its name may have transferred to a nearby site during the Hellenistic period (1959: 120 n. 82).

There are topographical, linguistic, Eusebian, and archaeological grounds for identifying Jazer with Khirbat Jazzir. De Vaux reports ceramic evidence from both the Iron and Hellenistic periods at the site. Simons (1959: 119–20), along with de Vaux (1967: 135), points out that nearby Khirbat al-Suq was the site's Hellenistic successor. He thinks, however, that the ancient name is better preserved at 'Ayn Jazer, close to Khirbat al-Suq, than at Khirbat Jazzir.

Khirbat Jazzir is located 4 km south of as-Salt. It is at the head of Wadi Shu'ayb, which flows into the Jordan River, and thus fits Eusebius' description of Jazer's location. 'Ayn Jazer is located less than 1 km from Khirbat Jazzir. This could be the Byzantine Azer, which preserves the biblical name and which Eusebius associates with Jazer (de Vaux 1967).

Based on the available evidence, there seems to be little doubt that Khirbat Jazzir is the best candidate for the site of biblical Jazer. It matches the biblical and extra-biblical literary information, it is toponymically viable, and there is archaeological evidence of settlement during the Iron Age.

iii) Edrei (Deut 1.4; 3.1, 10; Num 21.33; Josh 12.4; 13.12, 31): Information from biblical texts indicates that Edrei is in the north in the ancient kingdom of Og. Edrei is one of the capitals of King Og of Bashan (Deut 1.4; Josh 12.4; 13.12). It is also the place to which Og came to do battle with the Israelites (Deut 3.1; Num 21.33) who are said to have taken all the land of Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei (Deut 3.10). Edrei was one of the towns allotted to Machir son of Manasseh (Josh 13.31).

Most scholars see a toponymic relationship between the Syrian town of Dera'a, located on a tributary of Wadi Yarmuk ca. 100 km south of Damascus on the present Jordanian-Syrian border, and the biblical toponym Edrei (Simons 1959: 124; Abel 1967, 2: 72; Aharoni 1979: 433; Weippert 1997: 33). Boling is tentative about this identification, locating the biblical site “at or near Dera'a in the valley of the Upper Yarmuq” (1988: 42).¹

Albright sounded the site of Dera'a in 1925. In sections made in the debris from the ancient site, he collected sherds representing all ages from the Early Bronze down to the present. Early Iron sherds were particularly well represented in his collection (1925: 16). Dera'a is a good candidate for biblical Edrei, with textual, toponymic, and archaeological support.

iv) Medeba (Num 21.30; Josh 13.9, 16; 1 Chr 19.7; Isa 15.2; 1 Macc 9.3, 6): As we have noted, the toponym *Medeba* appears for the first time in the Bible in the “taunt song against Heshbon” (Num 21.27–30). It is also frequently associated with the *Mishor*, the “tableland” or “flat country,” which is generally recognized as the plain area between Heshbon in the north, the Arnon in the south, the Dead Sea escarpment in the west, and the desert in the east (Noth 1935: 248 n. 2; Rudolph 1958: 263; Simons 1959: 63–64; Gray 1967: 132; Baly 1974: 229). For example, “all the tableland from Medeba” is part of the allotment Moses gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh, the Reubenites, and the Gadites (Josh 13.8–9), specifically to the Reubenites (Josh 13.16). The Ammonites camped before Medeba in

preparation for their battle with David (1 Chr 19.7). According to Isaiah's oracle concerning Moab, Medeba appears to be one of the Moabite towns destroyed (15.2), probably by the Assyrians. The family of Jambri from Medeba came out and seized John Maccabeus, the brother of Jonathan, and his possessions (1 Macc 9.36).

Medeba and its land appear in the Mesha Inscription first as an Israelite possession (lines 7–8); later, Mesha claims to have built Medeba (line 30), presumably after he took it from the Israelites.

Josephus mentions Medeba frequently in the *Antiquities*. He repeats the 1 Macc 9.35–42 narrative about the conflict between the Maccabees and the Jambri family of Medeba that took place ca. 160 B.C. (13.1.2). Later, in 129/28 B.C., according to Josephus, John Hyrcanus captured Medeba after a six-month siege, in his attempt to gain control of a segment of the commercially important King's Highway (13.9.1). Apparently Medeba remained under Hasmonean control down through the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.) (*Ant* 13.15.4). Hyrcanus II offered Medeba, along with other Hasmonean-held towns his father Alexander had taken from the Arabians/Nabataeans, to the Nabataean king Aretas II in return for assistance in the civil war against his brother Aristobulus (*Ant* 14.1.4).

Eusebius notes that Medeba is a city of Arabia near Heshbon (128.19–20). In a similar vein, the various geographers of the Roman-Byzantine period assigned Medeba to the Roman province of Arabia (Piccirillo 1992a: 657). The Mishna locates biblical Medeba at the modern site of the same name (Neubauer 1868: 252).

There seems to be little doubt that the biblical name and site of Medeba are found presently at the modern town of Madaba (Tristram 1873: 319–28; Musil 1907/08, 1: 113–23; Noth 1935: 237, 1944: 53; Simons 1959: 117, 345, 435; Van Zyl 1960: 88; Abel 1967, 2: 381–82; Aharoni 1979: 439; Piccirillo 1990a; 1992a; 1997). There is complete toponymic correspondence between the ancient and modern names.

The modern town of Madaba is located 30 km southwest of 'Amman amid the fertile plains of the central Jordanian plateau at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben. The ancient settlement, which is buried to a large extent by the modern town, lies on a natural rise created by branches of Wadi Madaba, which flows eventually to Wadi Zarqa Ma'in. One notable aspect of the site is that it is not near a perennial water source.

Regular excavations on the tell of Madaba began between 1965 and 1968 and again beginning in 1979 (Piccirillo 1992a: 657; 1997: 394). In addition, Harrison carried out a systematic collection of surface sherds at the site in 1993 (1996b), identifying material from as early as the Early

Bronze Age (Harrison 1996b: 19). The only witness to occupation of the site from the thirteenth to the tenth centuries B.C. is two tombs discovered to the east and south of the tell (Piccirillo 1992a: 657; 1997: 394; Harrison 1996a: 12–13). Madaba appears to have flourished over the course of the Iron II period (Harrison 1996a).

Summary: Num 21.21–35 restricts Israelite settlement east of the Jordan to a small area. The land that the people occupied extended from Wadi Arnon/al-Mujib in the south to Wadi Jabbok/az-Zarqa in the north, the boundary of the Ammonites (v 24). It extended as far east as the "wilderness"/desert (v 23). No mention is made of the western boundary. According to this text, Israelite territory does not appear to have extended into the "Plains of Moab" (see Chapter 5). There is general notice that Israel settled in all the towns of the Amorites, in Heshbon and its villages (v 25), and in Jazer and its villages (v 32). The text notes in a very general and summary fashion that the people took possession of the land of King Og of Bashan (v 35).

Num 32.1–42

Commentary: Num 32.1–42 is filled with discrepancies. There are indications that the chapter is not a literary unit but rather composed of various elements, presumably from different periods (Noth 1968: 235).

The text deals with Moses' allotment of land in Transjordan to Reuben and Gad (and the half-tribe of Manasseh) on condition that they help the other tribes in the battle for Canaan (v(v) 20–22, 28–30). Jazer appears in the text as both a district and a specific site. In the first segment of the text (v(v) 1–5), the land that the Reubenites and Gadites desire is described in a general sense as "the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead" (v 1). Specific sites in these two areas include Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon (v 3). Later in the text, the territory Moses allotted "to the Gadites and to the Reubenites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh" appears to be much more extensive for it includes "the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, the land and its towns, with the territories of the surrounding towns" (v 33). The text enumerates Gadite towns, namely Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, Atrothshophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran (v(v) 34–36), and Reubenite towns, namely Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, Nebo, Baal-meon, and Sibmah (v(v) 37–38). The two tribes in question are said to have rebuilt and given names to these towns (v 38).

In Num 32.3 the Gadites and Reubenites are described as jointly interested in a total of nine sites in the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead. However, in v(v) 34–38 the Gadites are said to have rebuilt eight sites while in v(v) 37–38 the Reubenites are said to have rebuilt six, for a total of fourteen sites. The five additional locations include Aroer, Atroth-shophan, Jogbehah, Beth-haran, belonging to the Gadites, and Kiriathaim, belonging to the Reubenites. Budd thinks the reason for the discrepancy is that the Priestly writer added a selection of towns in verse three to the list in v(v) 34–38, omitting others that were no longer familiar (1984: 342). Surprisingly, Medeba does not appear in this text.

Num 32.33 introduces the half-tribe of Manasseh as a partner of the Reubenites and Gadites in Moses' allotment of territory in Transjordan. This introduction is followed up at the end of the chapter with notice that "the descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, captured it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were there" (v 39). In v 40, however, Moses is said to have given Gilead to Machir. Finally, Jair, another son of Manasseh, is said to have captured villages and renamed them Havvoth-jair while Nobah captured Kenath and its villages (v(v) 41–42).

The initiative taken by Machir and Jair in the conquest of Gilead (Num 32.39, 41) stands out in the treatment of the inheritance of the half-tribe of Manasseh relative to the allotment given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. This initiative is unique for tribes located east of the Jordan. While Num 32.34–38, containing the oldest traditions of Gad and Reuben (Budd 1984: xxx), appears to imply a peaceful occupation of the land, Num 32.39 has the descendants of Manasseh capturing Gilead and dispossessing the Amorites who lived there. The text goes on to recount how Jair the son of Manasseh and Nobah went and captured specific towns and their villages (v(v) 41–42). Of course, the biblical text states that "Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of Manasseh, and he settled there" (Num 32.40).

Scholars generally agree that Numbers 32 dealt originally with only two tribes, Gad and Reuben, and that Manasseh represents a later addition to the chapter (Gray 1903: 427; Bergman 1936: 234; Noth 1968: 240–41).

Budd (1984; see also Noth 1968: 235) thinks that Numbers 32 is part of a Yahwistic Transjordanian tradition. He posits there were two main pieces of traditional material available to the Yahwist: 1) the list of cities in v(v) 34–38, which likely derived from archives and ultimately from Gadite and Reubenite sources; and 2) traditions on the tribe of Manasseh related to the area in question, which the Yahwist preserved in v(v) 39, 41–42 (1984: 341). Thus according to Budd, the Yahwist was aware of Gadite, Reubenite, and Manassite traditions about Transjordan and felt obliged to make use of them (1984: 341).

Site Identification: A number of the sites in Num 32.1–42, namely Aroer, Dibon, Jazer, Heshbon, and Nebo, are treated in Chapter 5. The land of Gilead will be treated later. This section will therefore focus on locating the “land of Jazer” (v 1); Ataroth, Nimrah, Elealeh, Sebam, and Beon (v 3); Atroth-shophan, Jogbehah, Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran (v(v) 34–36); Kiriathaim, Baal-meon, and Sibmah (v(v) 37–38); and Havvoth-jair and Kenath/Nobah (v(v) 41–42). Since Sebam (v 3) and Sibmah (v 38) are understood to be the same site, they will be treated under Sebam. Beon (v 3) and Baal-meon (v 38) are also considered the same site, and will be discussed together.

i) The land of Jazer (Num 32.1): According to Num 32.1, the Reubenites and Gadites desired the “land of Jazer” and the “land of Gilead” since they were good places for cattle (Num 32.3). In Num 32.1, Jazer is identified as the name of a district while in Num 21.32; 32.3; *et passim*, it is the name of a principal town.

The location of the land of Jazer depends to a large extent on the location of the town of Jazer. Thus, de Vaux, in keeping with his location of Jazer at Khirbat Jazzir, places the land of Jazer in the Wadi Shu'ayb and Wadi Azraq basin (1967; see also Gray 1967: 134). Noth, consistent with his placement of Jazer near Na'ur or in the district of Na'ur (1959: 65–71), locates the land of Jazer farther southwest in the territory at the entrance to the valley that emerges into the Jordan Valley as Wadi Kafrein (1968: 236–37). Ottosson locates it in the area where the hill country of Gilead gives way to the plateau of the *Mishor* (1969: 68). Baly appears to place it in the same general area since he states, “the district is that broad, rather gentle, hill country, rising to over 3,000 feet (900 m) in height, which lies between 'Amman and Na'ur, and evidently thought of as distinct from Gilead (Num 32.3 and Josh 13.25)” (1974: 221). Budd (1984: 343) and Snaith (1967: 330) place the land of Jazer farther to the north, as the northern half of the area between Wadis Arnon and Jabbok. In keeping with our identification of Khirbat Jazzir as Jazer, the land of Jazer should be located in Wadi Shu'ayb and the Wadi Azraq basin.

ii) Ataroth (Num 32.3; 32.34): Ataroth first appears as one of the places that the Reubenites and Gadites desired (Num 32.3). They came to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation (Num 32.2), and requested that Ataroth and several other places be given to them as possessions (Num 32.5). Later in the narrative, the town becomes part of the allotment of the Gadites who are said to have rebuilt it (Num 32.34).

From the context of Numbers 32, Ataroth would appear to be within either the land of Jazer or the land of Gilead (Num 32.1). It is associated

with such places as Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon, which the Reubenites and Gadites also desired (Num 32.3). It is associated with some of these towns plus Aroer, Atroth-shopan, Jogbehah, Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran as the inheritance of the Gadites alone (Num 32.34). Geographical indications in the biblical texts locate Ataroth either in the area between the Arnon in the south and 'Amman in the north on the Transjordanian plateau or in the Plains of Moab. It is not possible to locate Ataroth precisely on the basis of the biblical data alone. Eusebius follows the biblical data, indicating that Ataroth was formerly an Amorite city that became a Gadite possession (12. 27–28).

The Mesha Inscription relates Ataroth to the territory of the Gadites. The places mentioned in the inscription appear to be located in the *Mishor*, that is, the tableland north of the Arnon and at least as far north as Medeba (line 30). Thus, Ataroth should be identified with a site in this region. The Inscription also states that the Gadites lived in the land of Ataroth forever (line 10) and that Israel rebuilt Atarot for himself (line 11). Mesha fought against Ataroth, took it, and killed its entire population (line 11). Thus, while biblical data indicates that the Israelites took possession of Ataroth from the Amorites (Num 32.23), the Mesha Inscription suggests the Gadites lived there peacefully and rebuilt the town, which was later devastated by Mesha.

Since the toponym *Ataroth* translates as “corrals” (Borée 1968: 48; Knauf 1992a: 602), its meaning does not identify its location; in an area where cattle graze there would likely be many corrals. The Hebrew toponym *Ataroth* is preserved at the modern Arabic sites Khirbat and Rujm 'Atarus, and at the mountain by the same name (Tristram 1873: 290; Musil 1907/08, 1: 399 n. 1; Noth 1968: 240). However, it is at Khirbat 'Atarus, located ca. 14 km northwest of Dhiban on the west slope of Jabal 'Atarus that the biblical site is generally located (Tristram 1873: 285; Glueck 1939: 135; Alt 1926: 33; 1953; Noth 1944: 43, 50; 1959: 27–28; 1960: 157; 1968: 240; Simons 1959: 132; Van Zyl 1960: 84; Schottroff 1966: 173–79; Snaith 1967: 330; Abel 1967, 2: 255; Ottosson 1969: 80; Baly 1974: 233 n. 11; Aharoni 1979: 431; Budd 1984: 343; Niemann 1985; Kallai 1986: 249; Dearman 1989a: 177; Miller 1989b: 28; Hübner 1992: 143; Dearman 1997: 208; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 56).

Khirbat 'Atarus is situated on a high point on the ridge that forms the watershed between Wadis Heidan and Zarqa Ma'in. Glueck thinks it was once a walled settlement but there is nothing left of it now except a mass of shapeless ruins. He reports collecting a large number of Early Iron I–II sherds at the site (1939: 135).

Khirbat 'Atarus is a good candidate for the location of biblical Ataroth, agreeing with both biblical information and the Mesha Inscription. The preservation of the biblical name at the site and archaeological remains from the Iron Age are also evidence for this choice.

iii) Nimrah (Num 32.36)/Beth-nimrah (Josh 13.27): Gray (1902: 3316) and Borée (1968: 77) translate *Nimrah* as "leopard" while Knauf renders *Beth-nimrah* as "pantherville" (1992: 602). The biblical toponym is preserved at Tall Nimrin (Glueck 1959: 368; Simons 1959: 122; Van Zyl 1960: 43 n. 1; Abel 1967, 2: 278), which is located on the south side of Wadi Shu'ayb where it enters the Jordan Valley. Eusebius merely states that Beth-nimrah belonged to the Gadites and that it is located across the Jordan near Livias (48: 16–17).

Commentators generally see Nimrah and Beth-nimrah as one and the same, and identify it with Tall Bleibil (Albright 1926: 48; Mallon 1929: 96; Abel 1931: 214–15, 1967, 2: 70, 278; Mallon, Koeppel, and Neuville 1934: 150; Noth 1935: 249; 1944: 51; Glueck 1951: 124, 370; Simons 1959: 122; Gray 1967: 135; de Vaux 1967: 135; Noth 1968: 240 [tentatively]; Aharoni 1979: 112–14, 432; Kallai 1986: 266; Hübner 1992: 143 n. 77).

Tall Bleibil is located on the north side of Wadi Shu'ayb about 1.5 km northeast of Tall Nimrin. It is situated so that it dominates the approaches to and from the Jordan Valley and the highlands to the east (Glueck 1951: 370). Glueck reports that the site was occupied during the Iron Age I–II, after which it was completely abandoned, "never again to be reoccupied" (1951: 124). He found no visible building remains on the rectangular hill-top where Tall Bleibil is situated though he does report that from the air the site looks as if it had been surrounded by an outer fortification wall (1951: 370).

Tall Nimrin appears to be a better candidate for the location of biblical Nimrah/Beth-nimrah than Tall Bleibil. Glueck reports occupation at Tall Nimrin "from the Roman through the medieval Arabic period" (1951: 124). Although the Hebrew toponym *Nimrah* is found at Tall Nimrin, Glueck, followed by many commentators, opts for Tall Bleibil as the ancient site on the basis of his pottery collection. This would seem to be a case of an incorrect identification obtaining the status of accepted scholarly opinion.

Before the archaeological investigations of Glueck, however, a number of explorers located Nimrah/Beth-nimrah at Tall Nimrin. Among those who proposed such an identification are Merrill (1881: 384–86) and Conder (1883: 402, 404). More recently, Butler locates the biblical site at either Tall Nimrin or Tall Bleibil (1983: 165).

The East Jordan Valley Survey team reports Early-Middle Bronze, Iron I, and Iron II among the sherds it collected at Tall Nimrin (Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim 1988: 192, 198), and with “the possible exceptions of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, the survey indicates that Tall Nimrin was occupied continuously from approximately 2000 B.C. to the present” (Flanagan and McCreery 1990: 136). Excavations have followed up this survey work (Flanagan and McCreery 1990; Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine 1992, 1994). From the 1993 excavations alone, it is evident that MB II, Iron I, Iron II, Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, and Ayyubid/Mamluk are the principal periods represented in ceramic collections (Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine 1994: 222). Iron II vessels were the most common types excavated during the 1993 season. This pottery dates from the ninth–sixth centuries B.C. (Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine 1994: 224). The Iron I pottery, belonging to the late eleventh–tenth centuries B.C., was concentrated in one area (Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine 1994: 224).

Based on the preservation of the toponym at the site along with convincing archaeological evidence from the Iron I and especially from the Iron II period, it appears that the preferred location of Nimrah/Beth-nimrah is Tall Nimrin rather than Tall Bleibel. Tall Nimrin, moreover, suits the imprecise geographical indications of the texts as convincingly as Tall Bleibel.

iv) Elealeh (Num 32.3, 37; Isa 15.4; 16.9; Jer 48.34): Elealeh appears first, followed by eight other sites, as desirable to the Reubenites and the Gadites (Num 32.3). It is later singled out as one of the towns in Reuben’s possession that the Reubenites are said to have rebuilt (Num 32.37). It appears in the oracles of Isaiah (15.4, 16.9) and Jeremiah (48.34) against Moab as a place suffering devastation, probably at the hands of both the Assyrians and Babylonians. It must have been a Moabite possession, though it is not mentioned in the Mesha Inscription as one of the towns the Moabite ruler took from the Israelites.

Elealeh is always associated with Heshbon in the Bible, with the latter always coming first. According to Num 32.3 and 37, Elealeh would seem to be located in either the northern extremity of the *Mishor* (“tableland” or on the Plains of Moab. The former location appears more probable.

The toponym *Elealeh* may mean “the lofty place” (Reed 1972: 19), indicating the site’s geographical setting. But the name could also be a compound of the name for God (*El*) and the verb *‘alah* and could, according to Reed, mean something like “whither God ascends.” Reed opts for the former of the two possible meanings (1972: 19).

Eusebius locates Elealeh one Roman mile from Eshbus (= Heshbon). He states that Elealeh was a large town during his time (84: 10–13).

The Hebrew *Elealeh* is preserved in the archaeological site of El-'Al located 3 km northeast of Tall Hisban (Warren 1869: 289; Tristram 1873: 352; Merrill 1881: 240; Conder 1883: 138; 1889: 16–19; Glueck 1934: 6; Abel 1967, 2: 312). Moreover, the biblical Elealeh is generally located at this site (Robinson 1856: 551; Conder 1889: 16; Noth 1935: 248; 1944: 51; 1968: 240; Rudolph 1958: 263; Simons 1959: 132; Van Zyl 1960: 93; Snaith 1967: 331; Abel 1967, 2: 312; Ottosson 1969: 86; Reed 1972: 19; Baly 1974: 233; Aharoni 1979: 434; Budd 1984: 343; Watts 1985: 231; Miller 1989a: 28; Holladay 1989: 362; Hübner 1992: 141).

The site of El-'Al is impressive since many walls and building foundations are still clearly visible. Though Glueck found no Bronze Age sherds at the site, he did find numerous Early Iron I–II, some Hellenistic, and quantities of medieval sherds among the ruins (Glueck 1934: 6). Reed, from his 1962 soundings at the site (1964, 1965, 1972), reports that the present walls may have been reused from the Iron Age, and that the debris against the lower walls contained pottery predominantly from the Iron I and Iron II periods (1972: 23). There are also Iron I and Iron II/Persian sherds among those Ibach collected at the site (1987: 11).

There appears to be little doubt that the archaeological ruin of El-'Al is the location of the biblical site of Elealeh. The site's relation to Heshbon in both the biblical texts and Eusebius, the preservation of the Hebrew toponym at the site, and the archaeological evidence all support this position.

v) Sebam (Num 32.3)/Sibmah (Num 32.38; Josh 13.19; Isa 16.8, 9; Jer 48.32): Following the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, Budd reads the Sebam of Num 32.3 as Sibmah (Num 32.38; *et passim*) (1984: 343). The MT has Sebam, the Syriac (Peshitta) has Sebah, and Targum Onkelos has Simah (Snaith 1967: 337). Thus, Sebam and Sibmah are discussed here as the same site.

Like Elealeh, Sebam/Sibmah is always associated with Heshbon in biblical texts. It appears to be in the *Mishor* (Josh 13.16–21). Moreover, it is apparently located in a vine-growing area (Isa 16.8, 9; Jer 48.32). If the reading is Sibmah, then the site is possibly Khirbat Qarn al-Qibsh located about 5 km westsouthwest of Hisban on Wadi Salma (Noth, 1953: 52; Simons 1959: 118; Van Zyl 1960: 91; Abel 1967, 2: 458; Ottosson 1969: 87–88; Baly 1974: 233; Holladay 1989: 362). The soil at this site is suitable for cultivating vines (Van Zyl 1960: 91).

Glueck reports settlement remains in the form of remnants of a great wall at Khirbat Qarn al-Qibsh, located on a high, flat-topped hill. On the

basis of the ceramics at the site, he posits habitation between 2200 and 1800 B.C., from the thirteenth to eighth centuries and to a lesser extent down to the sixth century B.C., and then during the Nabataean period (1935: 111).

There is no unanimity on the location of Sebam/Sibmah. For example, Simons (1959: 118) thinks that the height of al-Karmiyeh (“vineyards”), northeast of Hisban, may also preserve the memory of “the vines of Sibmah” (Isa 16.8, 9; Jer 48.32). Conder (1889: 221), followed by Musil (1907/08, 1: 355, 356 n. 3), posits Khirbat Sumiye/Sumia, located 3.5 km to the northwest of Hisban, as the site of Sebam/Sibmah. Other commentators, while admitting that the site is located in the area around Heshbon (Jones 1991: 16 n. 1), think its location is unknown (Snaith 1967: 331; Wüst 1975: 160; Budd 1984: 343; Kallai 1986: 441–42; Holladay 1989: 362). This judgement is sound.

vi) Beon (Num 32.3)/Baal-meon (Num 32.38; Ezek 25.9; 1 Chr 5.8)/Beth-baal-meon (Josh 13.17)/Beth-meon (Jer 48.23)/Baeon (1 Macc 5.4): Beon (Num 32.3), Baal-meon (Num 32.38; Ezek 25.9; 1 Chr 5.8), Beth-baal-meon (Josh 13.17), and Beth-meon (Jer 48.23) are probably the same site (Gray 1902: 3312; Van Zyl 1960: 87; Abel 1967, 2: 259; Ottosson 1969: 87; Baly 1974: 233), and are treated as such. To these names may be added Baeon (1 Macc 5.4).

Beon appears as one of the towns that the Reubenites and Gadites wanted for pasturing their cattle (Num 32.3), while Baal-meon is a place the Reubenites are said to have rebuilt (Num 32.38). In Ezekiel’s oracle against Moab, Beon is a place in Moab taken by “the people of the East” (25.10). Beth-baal-meon is one of the towns of the Reubenites in the tableland (Josh 13.17) while Beth-meon is a town in the Jeremian oracle against Moab upon which judgement has come (48.23), probably at the hands of the Babylonians at the end of the seventh century. Finally, Baeon is one of the places in Transjordan which Judas Maccabeus attacked and destroyed (1 Macc 5.4).

Baal-meon appears twice (lines 9, 30) in the Mesha Inscription as one of the places the Moabite king built. He made a reservoir in it.

Simons understands Baeon (1 Macc 5.4) as a tribal name rather than a toponym (1959: 405). Tedesche and Zeitlin, on the other hand, understand it as a toponym (1950: 110). The Hebrew toponym *meon* is probably preserved in the name of the modern village of Ma’in (Zimmerli 1983: 15–16). It also most likely appears in the last part of the name of Wadi Zarqa Ma’in. Gray thinks that *beth*, which survives in the toponym Beth-baal-meon, probably referred originally to the temple of the god Baal, and that the name

eventually came to be used of the town/village in which the temple stood (1902: 3312; see also Knauf 1992a: 603).

Eusebius claims to know the site of biblical Baal-meon. He describes it as a large village 9 Roman miles from Esbus (44.20–21 and 46.1–2).

Sherds from the Byzantine and Arabic periods are the earliest pottery that Glueck reports from Ma'in (1934: 33), located ca. 8 km to the south-west of Madaba. Piccirillo sees the site as a mainly Byzantine settlement in antiquity. He reports, however, that remnants of Nabataean sculpture can still be seen there (1989c: 376).

Seetzen, unlike Tristram (1873: 316–18), Conder (1883: 139, 1889: 176–78), and Musil (1907/08, 1: 397–99), did not visit the modern village of Ma'in. He nevertheless identified it on toponymic grounds with biblical Beon/Baal-meon/Beth baal-meon/Beth-meon (1854/55). He is followed in this identification by a long list of commentators (including Noth 1935: 248; 1944: 44, 51; Rudolph 1958: 263; Van Zyl 1960: 87; Abel 1967, 2: 259; Gray 1967: 133; Snaith 1967: 331; Wevers 1969: 145; Baly 1974: 233; Aharoni 1979: 431; Budd 1984: 343; Dearman 1989a: 175–76; 1997: 208; Allen 1990: 67; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 56, 127).

Although the toponym *Meon* is probably preserved at modern Ma'in, there is no archaeological evidence of settlement at the site during the Iron Age. Since geographical indications in the text are imprecise, our conclusion must be that the location of Beon/Baal-meon/Beth-baal-meon/Beth-meon/Baeon remains unknown.

vii) Atroth-shophan (Num 32.35): Atroth-shophan is mentioned only once in the Bible (Num 32.35), listed among the towns of the tableland the Gadites are said to have rebuilt (Num 32.34–35).

As for Ataroth (Num 32.34, *et passim*), the first part of the toponym Atroth-shophan is thought to be preserved in the modern Arabic names 'Atarus as in Jabal, Khirbat, and Rujm (Ottosson 1969: 80).

Since Ataroth is generally located at Khirbat 'Atarus, some commentators locate Atroth-shophan at Rujm 'Atarus (Tristram 1873: 290; Van Zyl 1960: 84 [who reads 'Atroth Shuphim]). The latter site is situated less than 3 km to the northeast of the former.

Glueck describes Rujm 'Atarus, located on a high hill providing a clear view especially towards the east, south, and west, as a strong Early Iron I–II fortress (1939: 135–36). He thinks the fortress measured ca. 19 × 18 m and served as protection for the larger site of Khirbat 'Atarus as well as guarding the tracks leading to and from Wadi Zarqa Ma'in (1939: 136).

There are others, however, who say that Atroth-shophan cannot be identified because geographical indications in the text are imprecise (Simons

1959: 132; Abel 1967, 2: 356; Noth 1968: 240). Certainly we can draw no conclusions about the site's location based on their order in Num 32:1–42. Nevertheless, since the first part of the name is probably preserved at Jabal, Khirbat, and Rujm 'Atarus, and the archaeological remains at both Khirbat and Rujm 'Atarus are compatible with the textual information, Rujm 'Atarus may well be Atroth-shophan. This is so especially if Khirbat 'Atarus is Ataroth.

viii) Jogbehah (Num 32.35; Judg 8.11): Jogbehah is another town allotted to and rebuilt by the Gadites (Num 32.35). It appears, along with Nobah, in the narrative of Gideon's pursuit of the Midianite army east of the Jordan (Judg 8.11), which locates Jogbehah to the west of a caravan route Gideon took to attack the army.

The Hebrew toponym *Jogbehah* is based on the Hebrew *'bh* "to be high" (Gray 1902: 3314; Borée 1968: 101). The toponym may convey something about the site's geographical situation: perhaps picturesquely indicating the situation of the town itself or a lofty, natural feature in the neighborhood (Gray 1902: 3314).

The biblical toponym *Jogbehah*, along with the site itself, may be preserved in the Arabic place name and site of al-Jubeihah (Noth 1935: 238; 1968: 240; Simons 1959: 132, 295; Abel 1967, 2: 365; Snaith 1967: 333; de Vaux 1967: 134; 1973: 123; Baly 1974: 223–24; Wüst 1975; Aharoni 1979: 437; Kallai 1986: 296–97; Lemaire 1981: 55; Hübner 1992: 143 and n. 73). The modern site of al-Jubeihah is presently in the greater 'Amman area known as Jubeihah, north of the University of Jordan and southeast of the town of Suweileh.

Glueck describes the archaeological site of al-Jubeihah as a *rujm malfuf* located on a rise on the north side of the Suweileh-'Amman road (1939: 172). As Gray suggests, the rise on which the site was located may have contributed to its name. The walls of the *rujm*, built of massive limestone blocks, were about 2 m thick and were preserved in Glueck's time to an average of three courses high. Glueck assigns the *rujm* to the Iron Age on the basis of its relation to other *rujm malfuf* structures in the Greater 'Amman area. He sees this date supported by several Early Iron I–II sherds that he collected at the site (1939: 172).

The Archaeological Survey of Greater 'Amman team reports four sites that bear the name Jubeihah (Abu Dayyah et al. 1991). At Sites 206 and 208, team members collected Iron Age II sherds. The first site is tentatively identified as a settlement while the second consists merely of sherds, basins, and cupmarks ('Abu Dayyah et al. 1991: 392–93).

At the time of my visit to the area in 1991 all that remained of what was probably the site Glueck refers to were some limestone blocks in an area that is presently mainly residential. It is impossible to say with complete confidence where in this general area the ancient *rujm* Glueck describes was located.

If biblical Jogbehah is not located at al-Jubeihah then it could be identified with a nearby site. Oded (1971: 33–34) and Kallai (1986: 296–97) see Tall Safut as a possibility, and Oded (1971: 33–34) and Hübner (1992: 144 n. 79) suggest Khirbat Umm Oseij, located about 1.5 km northwest of Rujm al-Jubeihah.

The area of modern al-Jubeihah is a good candidate for the location of biblical Jogbehah. The toponym is preserved there, and there are archaeological ruins from the Iron Age in the area. This is probably as much certainty as is possible considering the imprecise textual information.

ix) Beth-haran (Num 32.36)/Beth-haram (Josh 13.27): Since Beth-haran (Num 32.36) is probably the same site as Beth-haram (Josh 13.27) (Neubauer 1868: 247 n. 5; Glueck 195; Van Zyl 1960: 93; Abel 1967, 2: 273; Ottosson 1969: 86; Aharoni 1979: 432), it is treated as such here.

The toponym appears first as the name of a possession of the Gadites who are said to have rebuilt Beth-haran along with several other sites (Num 32.36). It occurs again as one of these cities, this time located in the valley in association with Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon (Josh 13.37).

The Hebrew *beth-Haran(m)* may be translated as "house of the summit/high place" (Borée 1968: 76), and may provide geographic information about the site's location.

If the sites of Josh 13.27, that is, Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, are listed from south to north, one would look for Beth-haram in the Plains of Moab to the south of Beth-nimrah which, as indicated above, is probably located at Tall Nimrin at the mouth of Wadi Shu'ayb.

Eusebius states that the Beth-haram of Josh 13.27 is a Gadite city, and places it near the Jordan. He reports that it was called Bethramtha in Aramaic and later called Livias (48: 13–15); Jerome adds: "by Herod in honour of Augustus" (49: 13). Josephus reports that its name was later changed to Julias (*JW* 2.13.2, 4.7.6).

The Talmud has Beth Ramtha as the modern name of Beth-haram or biblical Haran. Like Eusebius, it locates Beth Ramtha on the Jordan and belonging to the Gadites (Neubauer 1868: 247).

Tall Iktanu, one of the most important archaeological sites in the Plains of Moab (Glueck 1951: 394; Ibach 1987: 22), is the site most often identified with Beth-haran/Beth-haram (Albright 1926: 49; Glueck 1951: 394–

95; Simons 1959: 229; Van Zyl 1960: 92; Ottosson 1969: 86; Aharoni 1979: 432; Kallai 1986: 266). It is located on a large, isolated hill that commands access to both the Plains of Moab to the west and the plateau to the east. It is ca. 0.5 km south of Wadi ar-Rama, as the lower course of Wadi Hisban is called.

Tall Iktanu was visited early on by Merrill (1873: 230, 235–36) and then by Glueck (1951: 394–95), who saw the site as an Iron Age I–II fortress (1951: 394). Glueck found a fortified area of the site at the southeast end of the summit of the hill, where he identified traces of a 1-m thick wall enclosing the area. The sherds Glueck collected at the site range from Middle Chalcolithic to Iron Age with a few Byzantine and medieval Arabic fragments. He collected large numbers of Iron I–II sherds, of which Iron II was predominant, within and immediately around the fortified area (1951: 395). The East Jordan Valley Survey team reports that the site was founded during the Early Bronze Age and has no Late Bronze Age fragments. Team members report Iron I–II pottery at Tall Iktanu North but no Iron Age sherds at Tall Iktanu South (Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim 1988: 191, 193). Relative to the north hill Prag, on the basis of her excavations at Tall Iktanu in 1966, 1987, 1989 and 1990 (1974; 1988; 1989a; 1989b; 1990; 1991), reports that “the majority of the walls visible on the upper part of the main tell appear to be related to the Iron Age/Persian/?Hellenistic fort” (1989a: 35). Furthermore, she writes, “only the north tell appears to have been re-occupied in the Iron Age, apparently in the Iron I period. The construction of a fort, perhaps to be identified as Beth-Haram, is not yet dated but its use may have continued into the Persian/?Hellenistic periods” (1989a: 45).

Other scholars have located Beth-haran/Beth-haram at Tall ar-Rama (Conder 1883: 402; Musil 1907/08, 1: 344, 347 n. 4; Mallon 1930: 220–22; Abel 1931: 219; 1967, 2: 273; Mallon, Koepfel, and Neuville 1934: 149; Noth 1935: 249; 1944: 51; Simons 1959: 122 [tentatively]; de Vaux 1967: 135; Hübner 1992: 140, 143), a high mostly natural mound in the fertile plain of Ghor ar-Rama. The mound is now the location of an Islamic cemetery. Glueck collected large quantities of Roman, Byzantine, and medieval Arabic sherds at the site (1951: 390–91). The East Jordan Valley Survey team posits the site was newly founded in the Iron II period (Yassine, Sauer, and Ibrahim 1988: 198).

The choice for the location of biblical Beth-haran(m) appears to be either Tall Iktanu or Tall ar-Rama. Both sites are located on hills in keeping with the meaning of the toponym. They are both situated on the Plains of Moab not far from one another. Moreover, both sites have Iron II remains, that is, remains generally associated with identified sites in Numbers 34.

Of the two sites, Tall Iktanu is the more imposing. There is nevertheless a long tradition associating Beth-haran(m) with Beth Ramtha or Tall ar-Rama. Though certainty is not possible, Tall ar-Rama is the most convincing site for biblical Beth-haran(m).

x) Kiriathaim (Num 32.37; Josh 13.19; Jer 48.1, 23; Ezek 25.9; and Gen 14.5[possibly])²: Kiriathaim is another place the Reubenites are said to have rebuilt (Num 32.37). It is listed among their towns and located in the tableland (Josh 13.17–19). In the Jeremian oracle concerning Moab it appears as one of the towns that is put to shame (48.1) and upon which judgement has come (48.23) at the hands of the Babylonians. In the latter text, Moab is said to be located in the tableland. Kiriathaim appears in Ezekiel's oracle against Moab as one of the frontier towns that God is said to have given over to "the people of the East" (25.9).

The Mesha Inscription cites Qiryaten, which the Moabite king built (line 10), and which is generally seen as biblical Kiriathaim (Abel 1967, 2: 419; Peterson 1980: 97; Dearman 1989a: 176). From the context of the inscription, it can be concluded that the site is located in the tableland.

The Hebrew toponym *Kiriathaim* means "the two cities." It is the dual form of *Kerioth* (Gray 1902: 3317), suggesting that Kiriathaim consists of two places. Eusebius identifies Kiriathaim with a Christian village 10 Roman miles to the west of Madaba. He calls it by the Latin name *Caraitha* (112: 16–17).

Three sites, namely Khirbat al-Qureijat, Khirbat al-Qureiyeh, and Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, are generally selected as the location of biblical Kiriathaim, primarily on toponymic grounds.

Rudolph (1958: 265), Simons (1959: 214), Abel (1967, 2: 419), and Piccirillo and Alliata (1998: 56) locate Kiriathaim at Khirbat al-Qureijat, which is ca. 9 km westnorthwest of Dhiban and 21 km to the southwest of Madaba. Glueck describes the place as a large, completely destroyed site. He collected small numbers of Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine and medieval Arabic sherds, and numerous modern sherds at the site (1939: 131). On the basis of the lack of Iron Age material, Glueck did not associate the site with any Old Testament place. Moreover, Noth (1935: 251 n. 3) and Van Zyl (1960: 83) question the identification of Khirbat al-Qureijat with biblical Kiriathaim.

Ottosson thinks that indications in the biblical texts and the Mesha Inscription place Kiriathaim near Baal-meon and Nebo. In agreement with Bernhardt (1960: 142–43, esp. n. 26), Kuschke (1961: 24ff), Noth (1953: 79) and Dearman (1997: 208), Ottosson locates the site at Khirbat al-

Qureiyeh (1968: 86–87), located ca. 10 km west of Madaba. Aharoni (1979: 438) tentatively locates Kiriathaim at Qaryat al-Mekhaiyet (= Khirbat Mukhayyat), ca. 5 km westnorthwest of Madaba. Gray locates the site in the vicinity of Madaba without further precision (1967: 133).

Kallai does not accept any of these three locations for Kiriathaim, stating that nothing definite can be said about its identification (1986: 442). This judgement appears sound.

xi) The Territories of the Descendants of Machir son of Manasseh (Num 32.39–42): The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh captured Gilead, dispossessed the Amorites, and settled there (Num 32.39). Jair, another son of Manasseh, captured Amorite villages and renamed them Havvoth-jair (Num 32.41). Finally, Nobah, another descendant of Manasseh, captured Kenath and its villages and renamed it Nobah after himself (Num 32.42).

a) Havvoth-jair (Num 32.41; Deut 3.14; Josh 13.30; Judg 10.4; 1 Kings 4.13; 1 Chr 2.23): The villages that Jair son of Manasseh captured from the Amorites and renamed Havvoth-jair, that is, “villages”/“settlements of Jair” (Num 32.41), are said to be located on the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites in Bashan (Deut 3.14). Josh 13.30 states that the inheritance of the half-tribe of Manasseh includes all the settlements ($n = 60$) of Jair in Bashan. There is no consistency in the biblical information on the location of Havvoth-jair. In Judg 10.4, for example, Jair the Gileadite judge is said to have thirty sons who had thirty towns called Havvoth-jair. These towns are in Gilead. One of the twelve officials of Solomon was Ben-geber in Ramoth-gilead. He administered the villages of Jair in Gilead as well as the region of Argob in Bashan for a total of sixty great cities (1 Kings 4.13). 1 Chr 2.22 states, moreover, that Jair had twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead, and that “Geshur and Aram took from them Havvoth-jair, Kenath and its villages, sixty towns” (v 23).

There appears to be little doubt that the Havvoth-jair are located in Gilead (Simons 1959: 133) and on the border of Bashan (Aharoni 1979: 209). De Vaux places them at the northern extremity of Israelite settlement east of the Jordan, that is, the region between the mountains of 'Ajlun and the Yarmuk (1967: 97; see also Weippert 1997: 25). This is in the area of the plains of Irbid. Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic tradition expanded the territory of Manasseh by having it include the territory of Bashan (Weinfeld 1991: 185).

b) Kenath/Nobah (Num 32.42; Judg 8.11): Nobah was, Gray thinks (1903: 441), a Manassite clan like Machir and Jair. It is possible that the expression “son of Manasseh” has dropped out of the text.

Nobah captured Kenath and named it after himself (Num 32.42). Gideon, in his pursuit of the Midianite army, crossed the Jordan and went up by the caravan route east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army (Judg 8.11). The old name of the place persisted, however, for Geshur and Aram took from Jair and his descendants Kenath and its villages, among other places (1 Chr 2.23). Gray thinks the toponym was retained by later generations because the new name failed to establish itself (1903: 441).

Nobah is associated in Num 32.42 with the half-tribe of Manasseh and thus with the area Havvoth-jair in the northern segment of Gilead between the 'Ajlun mountains and the Yarmuk. In Judg 8.11, however, it is associated with Jogbehah, which is located close to 'Amman. It cannot be assumed that the same site is meant in both Num 32.42 and Judg 8.11 (Gray 1903: 441); the texts may refer to two different sites in two distinct parts of the country.

Lemaire locates the Nobah of Judg 8.11 at Tall Hejjaj, that is, on a route from Succoth and Penuel to Jogbehah (1981: 55). He thinks this is the "caravan route" of Judg 8.11. Mallon, however, proposed an unnamed tall to the north of Suweileh, most probably Tall Safut, as the site's location. Wimmer, Tall Safut's excavator, follows this identification (1992; see, however, 1997). De Vaux thinks that Tall Safut is a possible but unconfirmed location for Nobah (1967: 134 n. 3).

On the premise that Nobah in Judg 8.11 and Num 32.42 are two different sites, Gray locates the Nobah of the latter text at Kanawat, on the western slopes of the Hauran mountains in Syria, which was an important place, at least during the Roman period (Gray 1903: 441). In the final analysis, however, there is no place in Transjordan that can definitely be identified as the site of Kenath/Nobah.

Summary: With the exception of general statements in Numbers 32 that the Reubenites and Gadites desired the lands of Jazer and Gilead (v 1), that they will receive the land of Gilead as a possession (v 29), that the territory of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh included the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan (v 33), and that the descendants of Machir son of Manasseh captured Gilead (v 39), the territory allotted to the Israelite tribes east of the Jordan is very limited. For example, the land of Jazer probably included only the vicinity of Wadi Shu'ayb and the Wadi Azraq basin. Moreover, the towns that the Gadites are said to have rebuilt are restricted to the southern segment of the *Mishor* where such sites as Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, and Atroth-shophan are located, to sites north of ancient Ammon, for example, Jazer and Jogbehah, and to sites in the Jordan Valley to the

northeast of the Dead Sea, namely Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran in the Plains of Moab. The towns that the Reubenites are said to have rebuilt are located in the very limited area of Hisban and Mount Nebo where such sites as Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, Nebo, Baal-meon, and Sibmah are located. Finally, the territory that the descendants of Manasseh possessed included the Havvoth-jair (v 41) and Kenath (v 42).

Num 34.14–15

Num 34.14–15 provides little information about the specific territory of the tribe of the Gadites, the tribe of the Reubenites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (v 14). It states only generally that these tribes “have taken their inheritance beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise” (v 15). It is therefore of no help in determining the specific holdings of tribes east of the Jordan.

TEXTS FROM DEUTERONOMY

Regarding the two texts from the Book of Deuteronomy, 3.3–17 and 29.7–8, on the settlement of the Israelite tribes east of the Jordan, the general historical background is the last years of the Judean kingdom (Weinfeld 1972: 7). This is not to deny that Deuteronomy has antecedents in written collections (Mayes 1979: 81).

The Book of Deuteronomy’s theological treatment of the land, its understanding and its meaning for the faith and life of Israel, is central to our study (Mayes 1979: 81; Miller 1990: 44). The land is understood as the gift of God to Israel (Mayes 1979: 79–81) and “all descriptions of it, of Israel’s relation to it, and of Israel’s life in it grow out of this fundamental presupposition” (Miller 1990: 44). At the time of the Deuteronomist, there was a danger that the land on which the people had lived for centuries would be taken away. This fact and its historical context must be taken into consideration in any discussion of Deuteronomy’s treatment of the settlement of the tribes of Israel east of the Jordan.

Deut 3.3–17

Commentary: The context of Deut 3.3–17 is Moses’ historical overview (Deut 1.1–3.29) of events since the departure from Sinai (Horeb). The text provides an overview of Israelite possessions east of the Jordan, dealing for the most part with districts/regions rather than specific towns/villages, mentioned in Num 32.1–42.

According to v(v) 3–4 of Deuteronomy 3, the Israelites captured all sixty towns of Og of Bashan, the whole region of Argob, and the kingdom of Og of Bashan. In v 8, however, the land the Israelites won east of the Jordan is said to have been formerly the territory of the two kings of the Amorites. The captured land extended from Wadi Arnon in the south to Mount Hermon, that is, Sirion or Senir in the north. This very general and inclusive statement of Israelite possessions east of the Jordan becomes more specific in v 10, which describes the land as including all the towns of the tableland, the whole of Gilead, and all of Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, towns in Og’s kingdom in Bashan. The former land of the two Amorite kings is here broken up into three segments, namely the tableland, the whole of Gilead, and all of Bashan. Moses divided the captured land among the three tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh: 1) the Reubenites and the Gadites received territory north of Aroer (Heb. “territory from Aroer”) on the edge of Wadi Arnon, as well as half the hill country of Gilead and its towns (v 12); and 2) the half-tribe of Manasseh received the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, Og’s kingdom (“the whole region of Argob”) (v 13). There is additional detail about the tribe of Manasseh: 1) Jair the Manassite acquired the region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and he named it Havvoth-jair after himself (v 14); and 2) Moses allotted Gilead to Machir (v 15).

Deut 3.3–17 ends with another description of Reubenite and Gadite possessions in Transjordan, this time including the territorial boundaries of their land: from Gilead in the north to Wadi Arnon in the south, and then up to the Jabbok. The middle of the wadi formed the boundary of the Ammonites (v 16), and the Jabbok presumably formed the northern and eastern boundaries of Reubenite and Gadite possessions. In the west, Israelite possessions east of the Jordan extended from the ‘Arabah, with the Jordan and its banks, from Chinnereth down to the Sea of the ‘Arabah, that is, the Dead Sea, with the lower slopes of Pisgah on the east (v 17).

Site Identification: A number of locations mentioned in Deut 3.3–17, namely Aroer, Pisgah, Arnon, and the Jabbok, have been treated previously (see Chapter 5); the land of Gilead will be dealt with later (Chapter 10). Our focus here is on identifying the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og of Bashan, and Bashan. Since Mount Hermon,³ Salecah,⁴ and Ashtaroth⁵ are not located in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, they are briefly discussed in the Notes.

i) The whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og of Bashan (Deut 3.4, 13–14; 1 Kings 4.13; 2 Kings 15.25): The expression “the whole re-

gion of Argob” occurs three times in Deuteronomy 3 (v(v) 4, 13–14) while the expression “the region of Argob” appears in 1 Kings 4.13. Argob appears as a personal name in 2 Kings 15.25.

In Deut 3.4, the Israelites are said to have captured the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. But in Deut 3.13, the half-tribe of Manasseh received the whole region of Argob; specifically, Jair the Manassite acquired the whole region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites (Deut 3.14). Ben-geber, one of Solomon’s twelve officials in Israel, lived in Ramoth-gilead, and administered the villages of Jair son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead, and the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars (1 Kings 4.13).

The Hebrew toponym *Argob* perhaps designates a rich and earthy soil (Gray 1902: 3314), a meaning that may help locate the region of Argob. The personal name Argob does not assist us, however, as it appears in 2 Kings, in which a man named Argob joined Pekah, a captain in the service of King Pekahiah of Israel, in conspiring against and attacking their leader in Samaria (2 Kings 15.25).

Verses 4 and 14 of Deuteronomy 3 appear to indicate that the “whole region of Argob” is synonymous with the kingdom of Og in Bashan. In Deut 3.13, however, the “whole region of Argob” seems to be a “portion of Bashan” (Simons 1959: 8–9, 13). This also appears to be the meaning of 1 Kings 4.13 where the region of Argob is said to be in Bashan. In the latter text, the villages of Jair son of Manasseh are said to be in Gilead while the region of Argob is said to be in Bashan. This is at variance with Deut 3.14, which identifies Argob with the “villages of Jair” and places them in Bashan rather than in Gilead. In expanding the area of Manasseh to the north, the author of Deuteronomy extended the meaning of the “settlements of Jair” by linking them to the territory of Bashan (Weinfeld 1991: 185). The Deuteronomistic historian followed this lead and in Josh 13.30 placed all the “settlements of Jair” in Bashan (Weinfeld 1991: 185).

The geographical extent of Argob and its relation to Bashan is unclear. The Deuteronomic authors/editors appear to have been uncertain about what territory was included in the whole region of Argob and what was its relation to Bashan. Wherever its location, however, the Deuteronomist understood it to be part of the land of Israel.

The meaning of the Hebrew *hebel*, which the NRSV translates as “region,” is also uncertain. The word could mean a territory, a lot determined by draw, or a confederation. De Vaux (1973) thinks that the Havvoth-jair, that is, the villages of Jair, are identical with the region of Argob. In his

opinion, Argob is the land between the 'Ajlun mountains in the south and the Yarmuk River in the north. De Vaux suggests that this area, the most northerly segment of the land that the Israelites penetrated east of the Jordan, became part of the territory of Machir late in the period of the Judges (1973: 97; see also Bergman 1936: 239).

Simons, on the other hand, places the region of Argob in Bashan (1959: 8), arguing that in the west Argob bordered on the territory of the Geshurites and Maacathites, the present district of Golan. He sees Argob as identical with the “sixty cities” in the kingdom of Og (Deut 3.14a) but distinct from the “villages of Jair” in Gilead (1959: 8). Thus, Simons understands the region of Argob to cover practically “the whole of the southern part of Bashan, from the eastern edge of *el-lega* (Trachon) to the border of the Geshur-Maacath territories, i.e. approximately nahr er-ruqqad” (1959: 9).

Aharoni locates Bashan in the northern district of Transjordan mainly north of the Yarmuk. He understands Argob to be an area of Bashan, probably located at its center (1979: 37, 308 map 23), “evidently the rich and fertile region north of the Yarmuk River” (1979: 314). However, most commentators correctly think the location of Argob is uncertain (see, for example, Thompson 1992: 376) since the biblical author was unclear about its location.

ii) Bashan (Num 21.31–35; 32.33; Deut 1.4; 3.1–14; 4.47–48; Josh 12.4–5; 13.8–12; 13.31–32 [see also 17.1, 5]; 1 Kings 4.13, 19; 2 Kings 8.32–33; 1 Chr 5.11, 16, 23; Ps 22.12; 68.15; Isa 2.13; Ezek 27.6; 39.18; Zech 11.2; Amos 4.1, *et passim*): After dispossessing the Amorites in Jazer, the Israelites turned, went up the Road to Bashan, battled its king at Edrei, and did to King Og of Bashan as they did to King Sihon of the Amorites, killing him and taking possession of his land (Num 21.31–35). Num 21.33 vaguely indicates that Og’s land was “up the Road to Bashan” past Sihon’s.

Num 32.33 states that Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, the land and its towns, along with the territories of the surrounding towns. Deut 1.4 repeats the Book of Numbers’ information that Moses defeated King Og of Bashan, adding that King Og reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei.

Deut 3.1–14 also restates this information, but adds that King Og is an Amorite and that the Israelites took from him and King Sihon the land beyond the Jordan, from Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon, the towns of the tableland, all of Gilead and Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, towns of Og’s kingdom in Bashan (v 10). The Reubenites and Gadites received the territory north of Aroer, which is on the edge of Wadi Arnon, as well as half

the hill country of Gilead and its towns (v 12). Moses gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, Og's kingdom (v 13), as far as the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites (v 14). If the southern half of Gilead is south of Wadi Jabbok, then the half-tribe of Manasseh possessed the northern half of Gilead, north of Wadi Jabbok, along with all of Bashan, the former territory of King Og, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites.

Deut 4.47–48 clarifies the extent of the Israelite possessions east of the Jordan River, stating that the Israelites occupied the land of Sihon of Heshbon and Og of Bashan, from Aroer on Wadi Arnon to Mount Sirion (= Hermon) (Deut 3.9), together with all the 'Arabah on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the 'Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah. King Og, whom the Israelites defeated, lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei (Josh 12.4), ruling over Mount Hermon, Salecah, and Bashan to the boundaries of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of King Sihon of Heshbon (Josh 12.4).

Josh 13.8–12 provides additional information regarding the inheritance of the Israelites relative to Bashan and attributes to Israel the conquest of a much-expanded territory east of the Jordan. The text has the Israelites possessing not only Gilead and territory as far south as Wadi Arnon, but also the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites, all Mount Hermon, all Bashan to Salecah, and all the kingdom of Og in Bashan (v 12). Josh 3.13 is the first of a series of passages in Joshua and Judges that indicate the conquest was not total, that the Israelites did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maacathites. Geshur and Maacath live in Israel to this day.

Joshua 13 states that the inheritance of the half-tribe of Manasseh extended from Mahanaim, through Bashan, the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, and all the settlements of Jair, 60 towns in Bashan, and half of Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei, the towns in the kingdom of Og in Bashan (vv 30–31). The text specifies that these territories were allotted to the people of Machir son of Manasseh according to their clans (v 31), information that is repeated in Josh 17.1, 5.

Golan in Bashan, belonging to the tribe of Manasseh, is one of the cities of refuge named by Moses and Joshua respectively (Deut 4.43; Josh 20.8). The Gershonites, one of the Levite families, received by lot 13 towns from the families of the tribe of Issachar, the tribe of Asher, the tribe of Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan (Josh 21.6; 1 Chr 6.62). Josh 21.27 clarifies this statement: Golan in Bashan and Beeshterah are the two towns of the half-tribe of Manasseh given to the Gershonites as Levitical cities. In 1 Chr 6.71 the two towns listed are Golan and Ashtaroth rather than Golan and Beeshterah.

On the subject of Solomon's administrative officials, Ben-geber in Ramoth-gilead was responsible for the villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead, Argob, and Bashan, a total of sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars (1 Kings 4.13, 19).

King Hazael the Aramean defeated the Israelites from the Jordan eastward, including all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, by Wadi Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan (2 Kings 8.32–33).

1 Chr 5.11 states that the sons of Gad lived beside the sons of Reuben in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah, while 1 Chr 5.16 has them living in Gilead, in Bashan and its towns, and in the pasture land of Sharon to its limits. This information reappears in 1 Chr 5.23, which states that the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land and that they were numerous from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. Formerly the half-tribe of Manasseh was said to live in Bashan as well as in half of Gilead (see Joshua 13).

Several biblical passages describe Bashan as notable for its fertility, strong bulls and cows, mountains, and oak trees. Psalms mentions Bashan's strong bulls (22.12) and its mighty and many-peaked mountains (68.15). Isa 2.13 describes the "oaks of Bashan." Ezekiel speaks of both the "fatlings of Bashan" (39.18) and its "oaks" (27.6), which are said to wail for the thick forest that has been felled (Zech 11.2). Amos 4.1 characterizes the wealthy women of Samaria as "you cows of Bashan."

Taken as a whole, the biblical texts describe Bashan as an Amorite kingdom located north of the kingdom of the Amorite King Sihon of Heshbon. It seems also to have been north of half of Gilead, that is, north of the Jabbok, extending to and including Mount Sirion (Hermon). Bashan was bordered not only by the northern half of Gilead but also by the territory of the Geshurites and Maacathites. It included such cities as Ashtaroth, Edrei, Golan, and Salecah as well as Shaphat (1 Chr 5.12) and Beeshterah. Despite all this information, however, the biblical texts do not pinpoint the territory of King Og of Bashan that Moses is said to have given to the half-tribe of Manasseh. Bashan, Geshur and Maacath seem to be contiguous (Josh 12.5) though their locations are not precisely identified; Bashan, for example, is "up the road" from the kingdom of Sihon (Num 21.31–35).

The toponym *basan* is thought to be a Semitic name that refers to the attractive qualities of the land. Speier interprets the name from the modern, Arabic-dialect form *betene*, meaning "stonefree place good for grazing" (1953: 306; see also Täubler 1958: 230 and Noth 1959: 25). This meaning of the toponym finds support in the Bible (see, for example, Ezek 29.18; Ps 22.13; Amos 4.1).

Despite the imprecise nature of the biblical information on Bashan, it seems to have included land both north and south of the Yarmuk River. Of particular interest is the indication that southern Bashan included the fertile plain area of Irbid, between the Yarmuk River in the north and the northern foothills of the 'Ajlun Mountains immediately north of Tall al-Husn in the south. Southern Bashan would thus be bordered on the west by the Jordan Valley immediately south of Lake Tiberias and on the east by the desert.⁶

c) Summary: According to Deut 3.1–17 the settlement of the Israelite tribes east of the Jordan included the former possessions of two Amorite kings, namely Sihon and Og. Territory occupied included the tableland, the whole of Gilead, and all of Bashan. Specifically, the inheritance of Reuben and Gad included territory bounded: on the south by the Arnon; on the north by the Jabbok; on the west by the Sea of the 'Arabah, the Jordan and its banks, and Lake Chinnereth; and on the east by the Jabbok and the desert. The territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh included part of Gilead and all of Bashan, the whole region of Argob.

2) Deut 29.7–8:

Deut 29.7–8, found in Moses' third address (Deut 29.1–30.20), provides only a general description of Israel's possessions in Transjordan, noting that the Israelites took the land of King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan (v 7) and “gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh” (v 8).

TEXTS FROM JOSHUA

Josh 12.1–6; 13.8–31; 17.1, 5–6; and 18.7 also deal with the possessions/inheritance of the Israelite tribes east of the Jordan. They are part of the Deuteronomistic History that used the original Book of Deuteronomy as an introduction and was written in the light of deuteronomic law (Phillips 1973: 3). The texts from Joshua therefore share the same general background and theology as Deuteronomy.

Texts from the Book of Joshua will be considered in sequence, with sites and/or regions treated in the order of their first appearance. Locations that have been dealt with previously or are the subject of special treatment further on will not be considered here.

Josh 12.1–6

Commentary: Josh 12.1–6 provides general information on Israelite territorial possessions east of the Jordan. Verse 1 summarizes these posses-

sions by stating that they extend from Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon, including all the 'Arabah eastward. This statement is fleshed out in verses 2–5, which reveal that the author has in mind the entire territories of King Sihon and King Og. Specifically, the territory possessed includes the land taken from King Sihon the Amorite who lived at Heshbon and ruled over Aroer, which is on the edge of Wadi Arnon. Sihon's territory extended from the middle of the valley, that is, the Arnon, as far as the river Jabbok, which was the boundary of the Ammonites. In other words, it consisted of half of Gilead (v 2). The western border of Sihon's kingdom was the 'Arabah to the Sea of Chinnereth eastward and in the direction of Beth-jeshimoth, to the Sea of the 'Arabah, that is, the Dead Sea, south to the slopes of Pisgah (v 3). The territory included the land of King Og of Bashan who lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei (v 4) and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and Bashan to the boundaries of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of King Sihon of Heshbon (v 5). Josh 12.1–6 ends by saying that Moses gave all this land as a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh (v 6).

b) Site Identification: Such geographical features as the 'Arabah, the Sea of the 'Arabah, and the Sea of Chinnereth/Lake Tiberias/Sea of Galilee have been treated in Chapter 3 in relation to one of the major morphological units of Jordan, the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression. It only needs to be reiterated here that in the Bible, the word *'arabah*, which means the “desert” or “waste country” (Gray 1902: 3314; Simons 1959: 49), can refer to all or only a portion of the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression (Seely 1992). In modern usage, the 'Arabah generally refers to that portion of the depression that extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of al-'Aqaba/Elath (Simons 1959: 49; Aharoni 1975: 35; Khouri 1981: 216–19).

Josh 13.8–31

Commentary: It is important to note, relative to Joshua 13, that the description of the territory of the Transjordanian tribes lacks boundary delineation. Aharoni thinks the editors of the Book of Joshua had only two types of source material for this area: “town lists and border descriptions based on terminal reference points according to the formulation ‘from X to Y.’” Thus Joshua 13 contains only descriptions of regions with their main population centers east of the Jordan (Aharoni 1979: 252).

Josh 13.8–31 duplicates much of the information discussed previously, though there is additional data on Israelite possessions in Transjordan, as well as some interesting contradictory statements in the text.

Deuteronomy considered land “beyond the Jordan eastward” (Deut 13.8) as part of Israel. In this area, according to Joshua 13.8–31, the land that Moses gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh, the Reubenites, and the Gadites extended from Aroer on the edge of Wadi Arnon and “the town that is in the middle of the valley” (v 9). It included all the tableland from Medeba as far as Dibon, and all the cities of King Sihon of Heshbon as far as the boundary of the Ammonites (v 10). It took in Gilead, and the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salekah (v 11), as well as all the kingdom of Og in Bashan who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei (v 12). This general description is followed by detailed enumerations of the inheritance of the Reubenites (v(v) 15–23), the Gadites (v(v) 24–28), and the half-tribe of Manasseh (v(v) 29–31). Specific areas and towns are spelled out for each allotment.

Among the texts that describe the territory of Reuben, Josh 13.15–23 is by far the most detailed. Reubenite holdings extended from Aroer, on the edge of Wadi Arnon, and “the town that is in the middle of the valley,” and all the tableland by Medeba (v 16). More specifically, the Reubenite territory included Heshbon and all its towns in the tableland; Dibon, Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon (v 17); Jahaz, Kedemoth, and Mephaath (v 18); Kiriathaim, Sibmah, and Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley (v 19); and Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth (v 20). In effect, the Reubenite inheritance included all the towns of the tableland and all the kingdom of Sihon (v 21). Its border to the west was the Jordan and its banks (v 23).

The inheritance Moses gave to the Gadites (v 24) included Jazer, all the towns of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites to Aroer, which is east of Rabbah (v 25). It extended from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir (Heb. *Lidebir*) (v 26), and included Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon in the Jordan Valley (v 27). In addition, the inheritance included the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon, the Jordan and its banks, as far as the lower end of the Sea of Chinnereth, eastward beyond the Jordan (v 27).

Of particular interest here is the indication in Josh 13.25 that Gadite territory included half the land of the Ammonites, since according to Josh 13.10, Israelite territory extended only as far as the Ammonite boundary.

Moses also gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manasseh (v 29), which extended from Mahanaim through all Bashan. In fact, according to the text, it included the whole kingdom of King Og of Bashan, and all the settlements of Jair, sixty towns in Bashan (v 30). In addition, it included half of Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei, the towns of the kingdom of Og in Bashan (v 31).

According to Josh 13.25 the inheritance of the Gadites included all the towns of Gilead, yet Josh 13.31 includes half of Gilead in the inheritance of the half-tribe of Manasseh.

These boundary and site enumerations are not entirely clear concerning the relationship between the possessions of the Reubenites and Gadites. There are inconsistencies: 1) according to Josh 13.17, the Reubenites inherit Heshbon while according to Josh 13.26, the Gadites inherit "from Heshbon;" 2) according to Josh 13.21, the Reubenites inherit "all the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites," while according to Josh 13.27, the Gadites inherit "the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon;" and 3) "the border of the Reubenites was the Jordan and its banks" (Josh 13.23) while the inheritance of the Gadites included "the Jordan and its banks, as far as the lower end of the Sea of Chinnereth, eastward beyond the Jordan" (Josh 13.27). Clearly, one must carefully work out the relationship between Reubenite and Gadite territory and towns.

It would appear from Josh 13.8–31 that, generally speaking, the inheritance of the Reubenites, both on the plateau and in the Jordan Valley, was south of the Gadite inheritance. According to Josh 13.8–28 Reuben occupied the territory between Wadi 'Uyun Musa and the Arnon. Gad settled farther north, roughly speaking between Wadi 'Uyun Musa and the Jabbok. This situation reflects the early occupation of the tribes when Reuben was in his prime (Gen 49.3; Judg 5.16), or at least their early history, for in the ninth century, Reuben seems not to exist anymore: the Mesha Inscription does not mention Reuben. By the latter half of the ninth century B.C., Gad lived in territory once occupied by the first-born of Jacob; it seems that then Reuben was already incorporated into Gad (Bergman 1936: 243).

According to Josh 13.11, the Israelite inheritance included the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites. Josh 13.13, however, states that the Israelites did not drive out the Geshurites or Maacathites but that Geshur and Maacath live within Israel. Due to conflicting biblical information on Israelite territorial possessions east of the Jordan, no clear picture of Israel's possessions can be drawn.

Site Identification: As the above outline indicates, there are many toponyms in this text. A number have been treated previously, but an effort must be made to locate: "the town that is in the middle of the valley" (v(v) 9, 16); Mephaath (v 18); Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley (v 19); Beth-peor (v 20); Ramath-mizpeh (v 26); Betonim (v 26); Mahanaim (v 26); territory of Debir/Lo-debar (Heb. *Lidebir*) (v 26); Succoth (v 27); and Zaphon (v 27). Aroer, which is east of Rabbah, the Ammonite capital, also appears in Judges 11.33 as an Ammonite town that Jephthah defeated, and

will thus be treated as an Ammonite site. The region of the Geshurites and Maacathites (v 11; see also v 13) is not within The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and is therefore treated in the Notes.⁷

i) “the town that is in the middle of the valley” (Josh 13.9, 16; Deut 2.36; 2 Sam 24.5): The Hebrew *ha-ir*, that is, “the town,” in this instance is generally understood as a toponym (Simons 1959: 116). There is thus an anonymous town said to be “in the middle of the valley,” and which appears not to be “Ir-Moab” (Num 22.36).⁸

The most recently proposed candidate for the location of this site is Khirbat al-Mudayna on the south bank of Wadi al-Mujib/Arnon, some 7–8 km west of where the modern road crosses the wadi (Worschech 1986: 26; Worschech, Rosenthal, and Zayadine 1986: 285–87, 290). Although Worschech recently examined the site, it was Musil who first reported it (1907/08, 1: 19, 137). A number of sites have been suggested as “the town” of Josh 13.9, 16. Musil (1907/08, 1: 329–30, 332–33 n. 1), followed by Abel (1967, 2: 69, 351), has suggested Khirbat al-Mudayna at the juncture of Wadi Saliya and Wadi Sa’ideh as its location. Pienarr, on the other hand, thinks that the term *‘ir* in Josh 13.16 can be understood as designating a small “outpost” of the Arnon, which, due to its size, could have disappeared without a trace over time (1989). If so, the site cannot be located.

ii) Mephaath (Josh 13.18; 21.37; 1 Chr 6.79; Jer 48.21): Mephaath is one of the towns that Moses is said to have given the Reubenites as an inheritance (Josh 13.18). It, along with its pasture lands, is one of the Levitical towns of the tribe of Reuben (Josh 21.37; 1 Chr 6.79). In the Jeremian oracle against Moab (48.1–47), Mephaath is said to be one of the towns in the tableland upon which judgement has come (v 21).⁹

It appears, on the basis of Jer 48.21, that Mephaath is located in the tableland. A similar location for the site can possibly be deduced from Josh 13.18 as well. Thus Mephaath should be sought between the Arnon and the area as far north as Heshbon. Its location is associated with such sites as Jahaz and Kedemoth (Josh 13.18) which, as indicated previously, are generally sought in the eastern fringes of the settled area.

Strange as it may seem, both Eusebius and Jerome associate Mephaath with the tribe of Benjamin but locate it in Transjordan next to the desert or in an isolated area. They add that it is a Roman military outpost (128–29: 20–22). The *Notitia Dignitatum* places auxiliary cavalry troops of the Roman army in the camp of Mefaa (Or 37.19), while the Arab historian al-Bakry records the locality as a village of the Belqa’ (= al-Balkha) of Syria (Piccirillo 1990a: 42). It appears that Mephaath should be sought on the fringes of the agricultural land or at the beginning of the steppe. As a mili-

tary outpost, it would appear to be positioned, at least in the Roman period, so as to protect this land from seminomadic pastoralists.

On the basis of toponymic research some commentators see the Hebrew word *mepha'ath* preserved at the modern site of Khirbat Nefa'ah and the ancient site identified with Tall Jawa 1.5 km to the southwest (Musil 1907/08, 1: 352–53, 356 n. 1; Alt 1933: 28–29; Wright and Filson 1956: 125; Van Zyl 1960: 94; Abel 1967, 2: 385; Peterson 1980: 693; Aharoni 1979: 439 [tentatively]; Boling 1985: 25; Kallai 1986: 261; Knauf 1988: 162). Both sites are located southeast of 'Amman.

Daviau, who excavated Tall Jawa for five seasons between 1989 and 1995, dates most of the artifacts and architecture at the site to the Iron II period (1992a; 1992b; 1993a; 1–993b; 1994; 1996). Among the ruins, she identifies an extensive Iron II fortification system consisting of a casemate wall that measures about 7 m thick and appears to surround most of the mound (1993a; 1994; 1996). There are Byzantine and Early Islamic structures as well at the site (Daviau 1993a; 1994; 1996).

Other scholars identify Mephaath with Khirbat Nefa'ah (Musil 1907/08, 1: 352–53, 356 n. 1; Rudolph 1947: 247; Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 519; Noth 1953: 129; Elitzur 1989: 277) and not with its neighbor Tall Jawa, 1.5 km to the south. Musil argued that the site was a suburb of Tall Jawa, and Roman in date though he had no ceramic evidence to support this claim (1907/08, 1: 352). Alt saw support for a Bronze Age date for the site in its ceramics (1933: 28). Peterson identified Iron II sherds at the site but refused to argue for Iron II occupation on the basis of such scanty evidence (1980).

Simons also sees the biblical name preserved in Khirbat Nefa'ah, and considered the archaeological data satisfactory for this location of Mephaath; alternatively, he would seek the site at Tall Jawa (1959: 118). It is possible that the ancient site could have moved, possibly changing names, from Khirbat Nefa'ah to Tall Jawa or vice versa in different periods (Peterson 1980: 693).

Due to recent archaeological discoveries, many scholars have resurrected Germer-Durand's 1896 identification of Umm ar-Rasas as biblical Mephaath. Prior to recent excavations, Palmer (1871), Tristram (1873), Brünnow and von Domaszewski (1904/05, 2: 63–73), Musil (1907/08, 1: 109–10), and Glueck (1934: 39–40) reported on Umm ar-Rasas, located 30 km southeast of Madaba, halfway between the King's Highway and the Desert Road. The archaeological remains at the site, which consists of a very large walled town or fortified camp filled with ruins and cisterns, are primarily Byzantine (Glueck 1934: 39). An area about the same size is

located outside the north wall of the camp (Peterson and Piccirillo 1992: 696). Piccirillo reports ceramics dating to the end of the Iron II Age at the site (1990b). Archaeological work in 1986 uncovered a mosaic with inscriptions in the eighth century Church of St. Stephen at the northern edge of the site. *Kastron Mefa'a*, that is, the camp of *Mefa'a*, is one of the toponyms on the mosaic, and the first element of the toponym, *kastron*, reflects the military nature of the site (Peterson and Piccirillo 1992: 696). These archaeological and toponymic findings clearly identify Umm ar-Rasas as biblical Mephaath (Dearman 1989a: 183–84; 1997: 210; Miller 1989b: 28; Piccirillo 1990a: 42; 1990b).

iii) Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley (Josh 13.19): The valley in this text is usually understood as the Dead Sea valley. Due to the similarity between the first part of the toponym and *az-zara*, the site is frequently located in the hot spring area of ancient Callirrhoe on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, south of the mouth of Wadi Zarqa Ma'in (Abel 1967, 2: 69, 457; Ottosson 1969: 124; Aharoni 1979: 443 [tentatively]; Dearman 1989b: 60 [tentatively]). Simons (1959: 188), followed by Boling and Wright (1982: 342–43) and Kallai (1986: 441), rejects this location since the text indicates a site “on the hill of the valley,” that is, the Jordan Valley, which can hardly refer to a place at the level of the Dead Sea.

Several explorers have visited, described, and surveyed the area of *az-Zar'ah/Callirrhoe*, and Strobel (1989: 634), beginning in 1985, has carried out excavations there. As a result of this work, it is evident that Early Roman and Byzantine are the only two periods of settlement at the site (Strobel 1989: 637–39), and therefore it is not a good candidate for the location of biblical Zereth-shahar.

Strobel has proposed Boz al-Mushelle as the location for the town “on the hill of the valley” (1997: 274, 276 fig. 6). He understands this site as the location of an important Canaanite fortress during the Egyptian hegemony of Ramses II and Ramses III. He bases his opinion on the assumption that biblical Zereth-shahar ought to be in the area between the towns of the tableland and the uppermost watershed of Pisgah. Boz al-Mushelle fits these geographical criteria; moreover, it was located on one of the most important routes of Moab.

Strobel's excavations at Boz al-Mushelle have uncovered pottery in a shaft and nearby dump belonging primarily to the Iron I and Iron II periods. In the area of the fortress and the extensive urban settlement, however, sherds of the Late Bronze period are predominant (Strobel 1997: 274). Thus the site is archaeologically suitable for both a Canaanite and a biblical settlement. It could indeed be the Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley.

iv) Beth-peor (Josh 13.20; Deut 3.29; 4.46; 34.6)/Baal of Peor (Num 25.3, 5)/Peor (Num 23.28; 25.18)/Baal-Peor (Hos 9.10): Beth-peor is probably the same site as Baal of Peor in Num 25.3, 5; Peor of Num 23.28; 25.18; and Baal-Peor of Hos 9.10, the place of a shrine to the fertility god Baal. Van Zyl thinks the toponym could have been the name of a god and that it may be an abbreviation for Beth-baal-Peor (1960: 91).

Beth-peor is associated with the slopes of Pisgah (= Ras al-Siyagha) and Beth-jeshimoth (= Tall al-'Azeimeh) in the Plains of Moab across from Jericho (Josh 13.20). It was "in the valley opposite Beth-peor" (Deut 3.29) that Moses provided the people with an historical review of events from the time of their departure from Mount Sinai to their arrival "beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab" (Deut 1.1–3.29). Beth-peor is said to be "beyond the Jordan," "in the land of King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned at Heshbon" (Deut 4.46). When Moses died in the land of Moab (Deut 34.5) "he was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor" (Deut 34.6). While encamped at Shittim/Abel-shittim (Num 25.1), the Israelites worshipped Baal, the Canaanite god of storm and fertility at the cult center of Peor (Num 23.28; 25.18)/Baal of Peor (Num 25.3, 5)/Baal-Peor (Hos 9.10). Thus Beth-peor/Baal-Peor/Baal of Peor/Peor should be sought in the northwestern segment of the land of Moab, specifically in the area between Ras al-Siyagha and Tall al-'Azeimeh and probably not far from Tall al-Hammam.

Eusebius associates Beth-peor of Josh 13.20 with the Reubenites. He locates it in Transjordan, next to Mount Peor, across from Jericho and six miles from Livias (48: 3–5).

A number of scholars identify Beth-peor with the ruins of Khirbat al-Shech Dschayil, a Roman fort located about 10 km west of Hesban on the slopes of a summit and commanding a good view of the surrounding country (Musil 1907/08, 1: 348 n. 5; Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 125, 770; Noth 1953: 80; 1960: 155; Abel 1967, 2: 278; Gray 1967: 133). This site is probably the same as Khirbat al-Mahatta (Ibach 1987: 16), though Henke rejects this identification and locates Beth-peor at 'Uyun Musa/Khirbat 'Uyun Musa (1959). Other commentators also favor this site (Kallai 1986: 442; Ibach 1987: 16), since Ibach found Iron I pottery there but none at Khirbat al-Mahatta (1987: 16).

The dominant pottery Ibach collected at 'Uyun Musa, a small site at the foot of Mount Nebo, was Iron I. Ibach also collected Iron II/Persian sherds at the site (1987: 160).

Dearman (1989a: 181; 1989b: 60, 1997: 207–8) thinks that of the two sites in question, Khirbat al-Shech Dschayil/Khirbat Muhatta and 'Uyun

Musa, the former, located on the ridge immediately north of 'Uyun Musa, is the better candidate for Beth-peor (though see Dearman 1997: 207–8; Cross 1988: 50–52). Simons states, however, that the location of the site cannot be determined with precision, and that it could be Tall al-Mahatta, Khirbat al-Shech Dschayil (he seems to understand these as two different sites), or Rujm al-Benat (1959: 264). Simons thinks that the “valley opposite Beth-peor” may be Wadi 'Uyun Musa (1959: 264). Miller believes Beth-peor is located on the northwestern edge of the Moabite plateau, that is, west of Tall Hesban and overlooking Wadi 'Uyun Musa (1989b: 28). Certainty is not presently possible.

v) Ramath-mizpeh (Josh 13.26): The toponym *Ramath-mizpeh* is mentioned only once in the Bible (Josh 13.26). It may be translated “watchtower.” The name is so general that any attempt to locate the site on this basis would be conjecture (Otto 1969: 127).

Several commentators locate Ramath-mizpeh at Khirbat al-Sar, around 15 km north of Hesban (Noth 1938; Simons 1959: 121; Kallai 1986: 263). Noth agrees, basing his identification on the idea that the three place names of Heshbon, Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim constitute a north–south boundary line between Reuben and Gad that was added secondarily to the text (1938). Mittmann dismisses this view as speculative (1970: 235–42), and Wüst (1975: 120–32) concludes that Heshbon and Betonim were added to Josh 13.26 to support the larger territorial claims of Gad. De Vaux (1967: 135) locates the site at Khirbat al-Jel'ad, situated between as-Salt and the lower Jabbok, while Gese (1958: 64) and N. Lapp (1993a: 646) locate the site tentatively at Khirbat as-Sireh and 'Iraq al-Emir respectively. N. Lapp contends that of the sites proposed for the location of Ramath-mizpeh, only 'Iraq al-Emir “has both a satisfactory position and evidence of an Iron Age I occupation” (1993a: 646). It seems likely, however, that the biblical author was referring to an Iron II rather than an Iron I Age site.

Although the location of Ramath-mizpeh is unknown, the biblical writer could well have had in mind one of the Rujm al-Malfuf structures in the vicinity of ancient Ammon (Boraas 1971; Kletter 1991; Najjar 1992, 1993; Thompson 1973c; 1975; 1989; Cretaz 1986; Yassine 1988a; Younker 1989). Such a structure is suitable as far as the meaning of the toponym is concerned. Moreover, if the sites in Josh 13.26 are listed in a south-to-north direction, a watchtower in the vicinity of Rabbath-ammon would fit well among Heshbon, Betonim and Mahanaim. Furthermore, the archaeological dating of these structures matches the chronology for this segment of the Deuteronomistic History.

vi) Betonim (Josh 13.26): Indications in the biblical text are not helpful in locating Betonim. Eusebius locates it in Transjordan in a very general way, attributing the site to Gad, and noting that a site by the same name existed in his time (48: 11–12).

The Hebrew toponym *betonim* appears to be preserved at Khirbat Batneh, which is located around 5 km southsouthwest of as-Salt where de Vaux found some Iron Age sherds (de Vaux 1967: 135; see also Glueck 1939: 236). It is thus at Khirbat Batneh that commentators generally and convincingly locate biblical Betonim (Noth 1938: 25–26; 1959: 44; Simons 1959: 121; Abel 1967, 2: 285; Gray 1967: 134; de Vaux 1967: 135; Ottosson 1969: 127; Baly 1974: 224; Aharoni 1979: 433; Kallai 1986: 263; Hübner 1992: 137).

vii) Mahanaim (Josh 13.26, 30; 21.38; Gen 32.2; 2 Sam 2.8, 12, 29; 17.24, 27; 19.32; 1 Kings 2.8; 4.14; 1 Chr 6.80): Mahanaim is an inheritance of the Gadites (Josh 13.26, 30) and is listed as one of the Gadite cities of refuge of the same tribe (Josh 21.38). It lies on the southern border of the half-tribe of Manasseh (Josh 13.30). The toponym appears in Gen 32.2 as the location from which Jacob sent messengers to his brother Esau in the land of Seir (Gen 32.3). It was to Mahanaim that Abner, the commander of Saul's army, took Ishbaal son of Saul (2 Sam 2.8, 12) and to where the same commander fled when Joab pursued him (2 Sam 2.29). David also fled across the Jordan (2 Sam 17.22) and came to Mahanaim (2 Sam 17.24, 27; 19.32; 2 Kings 2.8) when Absalom revolted against him (2 Sam 16.1–23). Mahanaim was the seat of an official of an administrative district of Solomon east of the Jordan (1 Kings 4.14). Finally, Mahanaim with its pasture land on the east side of the Jordan was a Levitical city of the tribe of Gad (1 Chr 6.80).

Geographical information in the biblical and non-biblical texts reveals that Mahanaim is located east of the Jordan and near the Jabbok (Gen 32.22–23). On the basis of Genesis 32 it appears to be located south of the Jabbok (v(v) 22–24) and near Penuel (v(v) 30–31), and should therefore be sought within the allotment of the tribe of Gad.

The toponym *Mahanaim* appears in a tenth century Egyptian topographical list located at the south entrance to the temple of Amon at Karnak (Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 120; Aharoni 1979: 323–25). It appears in the list as one of the cities that Pharaoh Shishak is said to have destroyed during his campaign in Palestine in the fifth year of Rehoboam the son of Solomon (1 Kings 14.25–26; 2 Chr 12.2–12).

Although Josephus makes reference to Manalis (= Mahanaim) in the *Antiquities* he gives no clue as to its location. He notes, however, that the

meaning of the Greek is “camps” (*Ant* 7.10), and the Hebrew toponym *Mahanaim* is a dual form, generally translated as “camps.”

The site of Mahanaim has not been conclusively identified, though a number of archaeological ruins have been suggested for its location, including Tall adh-Dhahab (= al-Garbiyya and ash-Sharqiyya), meaning literally “the hill of gold” west and east, Khirbat Mahne, Tall Hejjaj, and Tall ar-Reheil. Coughenour (1989) and others (for example, Dalman 1913: 71–72; Noth 1938: 55; Mazar 1957: 61; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 27, 98, 99, 108, 109, 110, 113, 120; Aharoni 1979: 439; Slayton 1992: 473) opt for Tall adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya as Mahanaim’s location since it, along with its twin mound of Tall adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya, fits the designation of the toponym as “camps.” Furthermore, the site is located adjacent to the Jabbok and thus in Gilead at the southernmost end of the 'Ajlun region.

Tall adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya is located on the north side of a U-bend in Wadi az-Zarqa. It is connected at its northnortheast end by a narrow land bridge to the 'Ajlun mountains. It is across the wadi from its twin site Tall adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya. The former, the larger of the two sites, has architectural remains consisting of numerous foundation walls that are barely preserved above ground level (Gordon and Villiers 1983: 277). Glueck found several Early Iron I–II sherds on the slope of the site, but he thought they originated from Tall adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya to the south and concluded that the Iron I–II period settlement was located at the eastern rather than the western site (1939: 234). Gordon and Villiers also report Iron Age material from Tall adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya: painted sherds of Iron IB included bowl and krater rims; a broad platter rim and numerous jar rims were from Iron IC; and identifiable Iron II pottery was not common but a figurine head from this phase confirms occupation (1983: 283). Gordon and Villiers found Iron Age sherds dominant at Tall adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya (1983: 283), which, along with its twin mound, served as a gateway to the iron resources of the adjacent 'Ajlun region.

Robinson (1865: 86) follows Moses hap-Parchi (ca. A.D. 1315) (Davis and Gehman 1944: 371) in identifying Mahanaim with Khirbat Mahneh, located around 23 km north of Wadi az-Zarqa along the Roman road that goes from Pella in the Jordan Valley to 'Ajlun. Oliphant (1881: 142–43), Wright and Filson (1956: 125, 223), and Abel (1967, 2: 373–74) accept this identification on toponymic grounds. The site, however, is not a suitable candidate for the location of Mahanaim since Mittmann reports only Byzantine and Arabic occupation (1970: 259).

There are a number of scholars who identify Mahanaim with Tall Hejjaj (Noth 1941: 86; 1955: 19; 1960: 183; 1966: 96; de Vaux 1967: 31; 1978:

585; Ottosson 1969: 127–28, 218; Peterson 1980: 613–14; Weippert 1997: 21, 32), and several others accept this as a probability (Kraeling 1956: 204–06; Grollenberg 1956: 67–68 maps 4, 11, 15, 17; Simons 1959: 232; Mittmann 1970: 222 n. 34; Gray 1970: 139; May 1974: 134; Herrmann 1975: 168; Soggin 1977: 346; Hübner 1992: 177 n. 94).

Noth accepts Tall Hejjaj, located in the hills 4 km to the south of Wadi az-Zarqa, as the best candidate for Mahanaim since, according to his interpretation, it satisfies the requirements of the Jacob story best: it fits with Abner's march to Mahanaim (2 Sam 2.29); it suits the information given for the boundary of Gad (Josh 13.26); and it accords with the possibility of Ahimaaz and the Cushite arriving by different routes that converge north of the city (1941: 86; 1955: 19; 1960: 183; 1966: 96). According to de Vaux, the site was occupied for the entire Iron Age period (1967: 131). However, Tall Hejjaj does not preserve the ancient name nor does it have a twin mound to correspond with the name Mahanaim (Coughenour 1989: 59). It is, furthermore, an unimpressive site that does not suit the roles that the biblical texts attribute to it.

On the "territory of Judah" map, Baly and Tushingham place Mahanaim at Tall ar-Reheil, located around 20 km east of the Jordan Valley and overlooking, from the north, a bend in Wadi az-Zarqa (1971: 115), but they locate Mahanaim at Tall al-Dhahab al-Gharbiyya on a different map (1971: 120). May (1974: 134) and Negenman (1969: 64) suggest the site as a secondary possibility for the location of Mahanaim. Although Glueck reports numerous Early Iron I–II sherds from his visit to Tall ar-Reheil (1939: 224), it does not fit the criteria for the location of Mahanaim (Coughenour 1989: 59).

Though a number of commentators argue that the location of the site is uncertain (Cohen 1962d: 226–27; von Rad 1972: 314; Baly 1974: 223), one can with some confidence locate biblical Mahanaim at the twin sites of Tall adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya and ash-Sharqiyya.

viii) Territory of Debir/Li-debir (Josh 13.26; 2 Sam 9.4–5; 17.27; Amos 6.13): The allotment of the tribe of Gad is said to have run from Mahanaim to the boundary/territory of Debir/Li-debir (translated as "Debir" in the NRSV). Mephibosheth, the only surviving son of Saul, was in the house of Machir son of Ammiel at Lo-debar from where he was brought to David (2 Sam 9.4–5). One of those who came to David's assistance after his flight from Jerusalem to Mahanaim was Machir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar (2 Sam 17.27). Amos uses the word "Lo-debar" in a scornful fashion (6.13).

On the basis of the biblical information, one ought to look for Lo-debar in the hills to the east of Mahanaim rather than in the Jordan Valley (see Josh 13.27).

The toponym *lodebar* (Heb. *Lidebir*) has been used in an effort to locate the site. For example, the site is often identified with Khirbat Umm ad-Dabar (Rowley 1970: 108; Abel 1967, 2: 70, 304; Aharoni 1979: 439 [tentatively]) in Ghor to the south of Wadi al-'Arab, or 'Idbar, located ca. 10 km to the east of Umm Qays. The former is rejected because it is located too far to the north (Lemaire 1981: 49) and the latter because it has no archaeological remains earlier than the Byzantine period (Mittmann 1970: 23–24, 257).

Metzger's (1960) and Mittmann's (1970: 244) suggestions that Lo-debar is to be found at Tall al-Hammah, eastnortheast of Tall Dayr 'Alla, or Khirbat Hamid, 3 km southsoutheast of 'Ajlun, respectively are conjecture (Lemaire 1981: 49). Most authors correctly posit that the location of Lo-debar is uncertain (Simons 1959: 122; Gray 1967: 134–35; Soggin 1972: 158; Butler 1983: 165; Kallai 1986: 264; Miller and Hayes 1986: 175; Lott 1992).

ix) Succoth (Gen 33.17; Josh 13.27; Judg 8.5, 6, 8, 14, 15, 16; 1 Kings 7.46; 2 Chr 4.17; Ps 60.6 [= 108.7]): It was at Succoth that Jacob, after departing from his brother Esau in the neighborhood of the Jabbok, built himself a house and made “booths” for his cattle (Gen 33.17). Succoth is among the places in the Jordan Valley that Moses is said to have given to the Gadites as an inheritance (Josh 13.27). In Gideon's pursuit of the kings of Midian, he crossed the Jordan and sought sustenance from the people of Succoth who refused his request and were subsequently punished (Judg 8.5–16). The burnished bronze vessels and utensils that Hiram made for Solomon's temple were cast in the clay ground of “the plain of the Jordan” between Succoth and Zarethan (1 Kings 7.46; 2 Chr 4.17). In view of the tradition in Gen 33.17, the Vale of Succoth is possibly mentioned in Ps 60.6 [= 108.7] to substantiate claims of ownership east of the Jordan from an early period (Weiser 1962: 440).

The biblical texts clearly place Succoth in the eastern segment of the Jordan Valley, easily accessible from the region of the Valley of Jezreel to the west. They place it in relation to such places as Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, and Zaphon. All four sites are probably listed in a south–north direction. They also place Succoth in the region of the Jabbok.

Shishak's victory march east of the Jordan indicates that Succoth ought to be located to the west of Tall Dayr 'Alla (Mazar 1957). The Jerusalem Talmud locates Succoth 1300 m to the east of Tar'ala, that is, Tall Dayr 'Alla (de Vaux 1967: 130; Franken 1997: 138).

Without certainty we have located Beth-haram/n at Tall ar-Rama, and Nimrah (Num 32.36)/Beth-nimrah at Tall Nimrin. Succoth is most probably located to the north of these sites. The two most popular locations for

Succoth are Tall al-Khisas (Abel 1967, 2: 470; de Vaux 1967: 130, 135; Gray 1967: 135; Franken 1979; Butler 1983: 165; Lemaire 1981: 52–53, 1987b: 49), 2 km north of the Jabbok and 11 km northeast of the Damiyya ford, and Tall Dayr 'Alla (Glueck 1951: 347–48, 350; Simons 1959: 231–32; Ottosson 1969: 128; Rowley 1970: 157; Aharoni 1979: 442; Kallai 1986: 266; Weippert 1997: 22). Glueck put forth the sites of Tall Qa'dan, ca. 0.50 km northeast of Tall Dayr 'Alla, and Tall Umm Hamad, less than 7 km southsouthwest of Tall Dayr 'Alla, as possible locations for Succoth (1951: 349–50). Nonetheless, the debate has centered around the two main sites of Tall al-Khisas and Tall Dayr 'Alla.

Based on the fact that the toponym is preserved at the chosen site and that the meaning of its Arabic name is “mound of booths” (Abel 1967, 2: 470; Lemaire 1981: 52), “booths”/“huts” (Knauf 1992a: 602) or “huts of branches” (Abel 1967, 2: 470), I opt for Tall al-Khisas as the location of biblical Succoth. The archaeological material supports this conclusion, since Glueck reports some LB II and large numbers of Iron Age I–II sherds at the site (1951: 312). Furthermore, there is no problem from a geographical point of view with the location of Succoth at this site.

x) Zaphon (Josh 13.27; Judg 12.1): Besides being cited as one of the possessions of the Gadites in the Jordan Valley, Zaphon appears in the Book of Judges as the place to which the men of Ephraim came to complain against the fact that Jephthah did not call upon them to fight against the Ammonites (12.1).

The Hebrew meaning of *Zaphon* as “north” is used in Job 26.7 and Isa 14.13, indicating that it ought to be located to the north of its associated sites, Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, and Succoth.

Josephus mentions Saphoth (*Ant* 13.12.5) as the site of the battle between Alexander Janneus and Ptolemy, which he places at the Jordan River. The site may be identified with biblical Zaphon (Lemaire 1981: 55). The Jerusalem Talmud (*Shebi 'it* 1 × 2) identifies Zaphon with 'Ammata, that is, modern-day Tall 'Ammata where Wadi ar-Rajib enters the Jordan Valley.

Zaphon is generally identified with Tall as-Sa'idiyya (Simons 1959: 299–300; Abel 1967, 2: 70, 448; de Vaux 1967: 135; Aharoni 1979: 34, 288, 443; Butler 1983: 165–66; Tubb and Chapman 1990: 94). Glueck, however, prefers Tall al-Qos (1951: 352–53), located on the north side of Wadi al-Rajib and a little more than 5 km north of Tall Dayr 'Alla. LB II and Iron Age II sherds were among those he collected at the site (1951: 352). The East Jordan Valley Survey team supports this identification by reporting Iron I and II sherds at the site (Ibrahim, Sauer, and Yassine 1976: 50, 56). Kallai concurs (1986: 264 and 266 n. 345).

The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania under the direction of Pritchard from 1964–1967 and the British Museum under the direction of Tubb from 1985 to the present have uncovered extensive remains at Tall as-Sa'idiyya from the Iron Age period (see esp. Pritchard 1980; 1985; Tubb 1989; 1997). These remains support the choice of Tall as-Sa'idiyya as the location of biblical Zaphon.

c) Summary: The Reubenite towns listed in Josh 13.8–31 are located in the area from the Arnon in the south to Heshbon in the north as well as in the Plains of Moab. They are thus in the eastern, central and western segments of the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben and in that segment of the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression immediately northeast of the Dead Sea. Gad's possessions are located to the north of Reuben's as far as Mahanaim in the highlands as well as in the northern segment of the depression. The half-tribe of Manasseh's allotment includes half of Gilead and all Bashan, that is, the northern segment of the highlands (see Chapter 3).

Josh 17.1, 5–6

Josh 17.1–13 deals with the allotment made to the tribe of Manasseh. Only information on the portion of the allotment that is east of the Jordan is of interest here. That data, however, is extremely general. Manasseh is said to be the firstborn of Joseph (v 1). To Machir the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan (v 1), which is on the other side of the Jordan (v 5). Verse 6 repeats that the land of Gilead was allotted to the rest of the Manassites.

Josh 18.7

Josh 18.7 is another brief and vague statement concerning the inheritance of Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. It merely restates Josh 13.8 to the effect that the inheritance that Moses gave these tribes was “beyond the Jordan eastward.”

TEXTS FROM JUDGES

Judg 11.21–22, 26

In his dispute with the king of the Ammonites (Judg 11.12–28), Jephthah, a mighty warrior and the son of Gilead (Judg 11.1), states that

God gave Sihon and all his people into the hands of Israel. As a result, Israel occupied all the land of the Amorites, extending from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan (v(v) 21–22). The text provides more detail when it states that "Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the towns that are along the Arnon" (v 26). The sites and/or territories mentioned in Judg 11.21–22, 26 have been treated previously.

TEXTS FROM 1 CHRONICLES

1 Chr 5.1–23

1 Chr 5.1–23 is another text dealing with the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh and their dwelling places. A descendant of Reuben, namely Bela son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel, "lived in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal-meon" (v 8). He "also lived to the east as far as the beginning of the desert this side of the Euphrates, because their cattle had multiplied in the land of Gilead" (v 9). Finally, the descendants of Reuben are said to have "lived in their tents throughout all the region east of Gilead" (v 10). 1 Chronicles 5 envisages the descendants of Reuben as Bedouin roaming the desert (v 9) east of Gilead (v 10). The sons of Gad lived beside the descendants of Reuben "in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah" (v 11). Moreover, they are said to have "lived in Gilead, in Bashan and in its towns, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon to their limits" (v 16). The Chronicler draws upon Deut 3.10 for his description of the territory in which the sons of Gad lived: "The members of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land; they were very numerous from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon" (v 23). He thus has the three tribes occupying the territory east of the Jordan from Aroer (1 Chr 5.8) in the south to Mount Hermon (1 Chr 5.23) in the north.

The possessions of Reuben's descendants listed here are repeated from Num 32.38 in which Moses is said to have given Nebo and Baal-meon to the Reubenites. However, while Num 32.34 attributes Aroer to Gad, 1 Chr 5.8 makes it a possession of a descendant of Reuben. According to the Mesha Inscription all three places are in the possession of the Moabites by the end of the ninth century (Myers 1965:37; Dearman 1989a). The situation remains the same at the time of Jeremiah (48.1, 19, 23) in the last quarter of the seventh century.

b) Site Identification: Most of the sites and/or regions indicated in 1 Chr 5.1–23 have been treated previously. We now need to consider "the

pasture lands of Sharon.” Since Baal-hermon is not located in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, it will be treated as a note along with Baal-gad.¹⁰

Pasture Lands of Sharon (1 Chr 5.16b): 1 Chronicles 5 posits that the sons of Gad lived beside the sons of Reuben (v 11) in the land of Bashan (v 12), in Gilead (v 15), and “in all the pasture lands of Sharon to their limits” (v 16b). The name Sharon appears as *s-r-n* (No. 21) in the topographical list of Thutmose III, and Aharoni thinks context identifies Sharon as the pasture lands in 1 Chr 5.16b (1979: 110).

Sharon is also mentioned in the Mesha Inscription (line 13), though there is no indication of its location other than a general understanding that the inscription lists places located between Wadi Arnon in the south and Madaba in the north.

The generally accepted position is that since the Hebrew word *Sharon* means “flat country” and is practically equivalent to *Mishor*, it is properly identified with the Mishor of Reuben (Simons 1959: 123; Abel 1967, 1: 430). If so, we have an indication of Gad’s expansion towards the south in conjunction with Reuben’s demise.

CITIES OF REFUGE AND LEVITICAL TOWNS

Deut 4.41–42 states that “Moses set apart on the east side of the Jordan three cities to which a homicide could flee, someone who unintentionally kills another person.” The three cities in question, Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan, belong to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh respectively (Deut 4.43). Further, at the time of Joshua the Israelites are said to have set aside the three cities for the same purpose (Josh 20.8). There are also Levitical towns: 1) two towns from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan and Beeshterah, along with their pasture land (Josh 21.27); 2) four towns of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer, Jahzah, Kedemoth, and Mephaath, all with their pasture lands (Josh 21.36–37); and 3) four towns out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer, all with their pasture lands (Josh 21.38–39). (See also 1 Chr 6.39–66 [6.54–81] on the Levitical towns.) Bezer, Golan in Bashan, and Ramoth in Gilead are towns on both lists.

The majority of these cities of refuge and Levitical towns have been treated previously. Bezer, the Bozrah of Jer 48.24, will be treated along with the sites of Moab while Ramoth in Gilead will be treated in Chapter 10. Since Golan in Bashan¹¹ and Beeshterah¹² are not located within The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, they will be discussed in the notes.

The four Levitical towns of the tribe of Reuben, namely Bezer, Jahzah, Kedemoth, and Mephaath, are located on the eastern edge of the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben. They are just at the edge of the steppe region and ordered in a north-to-south direction. The four Levitical towns of the tribe of Gad, namely Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer, are located in the central segment of this same morphological unit. They too, with the exception of Jazer, are located in a north-to-south direction.

PENUEL

Penuel (Gen 32.30, 31; Judg 8.8–9, 17; 1 Kings 12.25; 1 Chr 4.4; 8.25): Penuel appears for the first time (spelled Peniel) in the story of Jacob's wrestling with the messenger of God (Gen 32.24–31). Jacob called the place Peniel, that is, the “face of God/El,” since he had “seen God face to face” (Gen 32.31). Gideon, in his pursuit of the kings of Midian across the Jordan, sought food from the people of Penuel who refused him (Judg 8.8–9). On his return, Gideon punished the people of Penuel by breaking down their tower and killing the men of the city (Judg 8.17). Jeroboam went out from Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and built Penuel. In 1 Chr 4.4 Penuel is cited as the father of Gedor while in 1 Chr 8.25 he is one of the sons of Shashak.

From a geographical point of view, Penuel is the place to which Gideon came after leaving Succoth (Judg 8.5–8). Gideon was traveling west to east. One of the main candidates for the location of Penuel is Tall adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya; I have identified the ruin and its twin, Tall adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya, as Mahanaim.

The position taken here is in agreement with commentators who locate Penuel at Tall Dayr 'Alla (van der Kooij 1986; Briend 1990: 18; Lemaire 1981: 52), a major archaeological site located 4 km north of the bridge over Wadi az-Zarqa. Excavations at the site began in 1960, first under the direction of Franken of the University of Leiden, and since 1978, by that university in co-operation with Yarmouk University. Work to date has revealed that during the Bronze and Iron Ages, Dayr 'Alla was a large sanctuary with auxiliary buildings, including storerooms, workshops and dwellings (Franken 1969, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1997: 137; van der Kooij 1993; van der Kooij and Ibrahim 1989). It was in a sanctuary dated to the eighth century that the excavators uncovered the Dayr 'Alla inscriptions, “proto-Aramaic” texts in which the prophet Balaam son of Beor plays a role (Num 22–24) (Hoftijzer and van der Kooij 1976, 1991; Franken 1964, 1997: 138; Lemaire 1997).

Support for the identification of Penuel with Tall Dayr 'Alla comes from the site's geographical location, history, sanctuaries, and religious inscriptions.

ZARETHAN

Zarethan (Josh 3.16; 1 Kings 4.12, 7.46): Zarethan is said to be beside Adam where the waters of the River Jordan are wholly cut off to permit the Israelites to cross over opposite Jericho (Josh 3.16). It is said to be beside Baysan below Jezreel (1 Kings 4.12). Solomon cast the pots, shovels, and basins for the house of God in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan (1 Kings 7.46 [2 Chr 4.17 reads "between Succoth and Zeredah"]).

Adam is confidently identified with the site of Tall ad-Damiyya, 30 km northeast of Jericho (see Chapter 4); thus, Zarethan should be sought in its vicinity. Further topographical information about the location of Zarethan is given in 1 Kings 4.12: it is said to be "beside Beth-shean" (= Baysan) and below Jezreel. Finally, the vessels Hiram made for Solomon's temple were cast between Succoth (= Tall al-Khisas) and Zarethan. Thus, Zarethan is located in the Jordan Valley in the area between Tall ad-Damiyya in the south and Baysan in the north. The topographical indications, however, are not precise.

Zarethan has most frequently been located at either Tall as-Sa'idiyya (Glueck 1951: 340; Rowley 1970: 169; Tubb 1990: 94) or Tall Umm Hamad (Aharoni 1979: 34, 284 n. 222, 288 map 20 [tentatively]; Kallai 1986: 62 n. 86), two important sites on the east side of the Jordan Valley. Others, however, locate it on the west side of the Jordan River, for example, at Qarn Sartabeh, opposite Tall ad-Damiyya (Abel 1969, 2: 450–51). Lemaire is probably correct when he posits that the site's location is uncertain (1981: 56; see also Ottosson 1969: 216).

CONCLUSIONS

There are various traditions behind the Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and 1 Chronicles' assignment of tribal territories and towns to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Some of these traditions provide only an idealized picture of Israelite possessions east of the Jordan; others are no more than vague generalizations. Num 21.21–35, for example, says only that the land the people occupied extended from Wadi Arnon to Wadi Jabbok, the boundary of the Amorites. The text also states, in a general and summary fashion, that Israel settled in the towns of

the Amorites and that the people took possession of the land of King Og. Num 34.14–15 indicates that the three easterly settled tribes took their inheritance beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise.

Num 32.1–34 provides somewhat more information, positing that the Gadites rebuilt towns in the southern segment of the tableland, north of ancient Ammon, and in the southern segment of the Jordan Valley northeast of the Dead Sea. The towns that the Reubenites rebuilt are located in the area of Heshbon and Mount Nebo. Finally, the descendants of the half-tribe of Manasseh possessed the Havvoth-jair and Kenath, that is, territory in northern Gilead and on the border of Bashan, or the territory north of the Jabbok to the Yarmuk. This last statement is probably a later addition to the text.

Towns such as Dibon, Aroer, and Jazer, which Num 32.34–36 assigns to the Gadites, appear as Moabite sites in other biblical texts. Similarly, towns such as Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, Nebo, and Baal-meon, which Num 32.37–38 assigns to the Reubenites, appear in the Bible as Moabite towns. The Levitical cities of Bezer/Bozrah, Jahzah, and Mephaath of the tribe of Reuben (Josh 21.36–37) and the Levitical cities of Heshbon and Jazer of the tribe of Gad (Josh 21.38–39) also appear as Moabite sites. Seven of these sites appear in the Mesha Inscription as belonging to the Moabites (Dearman 1989a: 171–86). Clearly, there were early traditions of Reubenite possessions east of the Jordan, though by the time of Mesha, Reuben is no longer in existence. According to the latter oracles of Isaiah and Jeremiah against Moab, the Gadites have replaced the Reubenites to be replaced in turn by the Moabites (see Chapter 8).

Deut 3.1–17 provides somewhat more information when it states that the inheritance of Reuben and Gad included territory north of Aroer and half the hill country of Gilead. This territory was bordered on the south by the Arnon, on the north by the Jabbok, on the west by the Sea of the 'Arabah, the Jordan and its banks, and Lake Chinnereth, and on the east by the Jabbok and the desert. The inheritance of the half-tribe of Manasseh included the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the whole region of Argob. The Books of Deuteronomy and Numbers state vaguely that the Israelites took the land of Sihon and Og and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (Deut 29.7–8).

The Book of Joshua also contains general information on tribal allotments east of the Jordan, stating that they include territory from Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon, with all the 'Arabah eastward (12.1–6). Detailed information in Josh 13.8–31 indicates that Reuben is allotted a line of towns on the eastern edge of the highlands, another line on the western edge of the

highlands, and territory in the region of Mount Nebo and in the Plains of Moab. Gad is allotted territory north of Reuben, including half of Gilead, that is, the mountainous area north of Heshbon, half the land of the Ammonites, as far north as Mahanaim to the territory of Debir. Manasseh's allotment includes the other half of Gilead from Mahanaim through all Bashan. While Numbers 32 has Gad's territory south of Reuben's, Joshua 13 has Gad settled north of Reuben.

Joshua contains vague statements concerning tribal holdings east of the Jordan. For example, Josh 17.1 and 5–6 contains the general statement that to Machir the first-born of Manasseh were allotted Gilead and Bashan, while Josh 18.7 merely repeats Josh 13.8, stating that the inheritance Moses gave these tribes was “beyond the Jordan eastward.”

According to Judg 11.21–22 and 26, Israel's allotment is quite restricted. It includes all the land of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok, the southern and northern boundaries respectively, and from the wilderness to the Jordan, the eastern and western boundaries respectively. The territory included Heshbon and its villages, Aroer and its villages, and all the towns along the Arnon.

1 Chronicles 5 speaks of Reuben's descendants who are said to live in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Ball-meon, or to the east as far as the beginning of the desert, or in their tents throughout all the region east of Gilead. Gad lived beside the descendant of Reuben in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah while one-half Manasseh lived from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon.

NOTES

¹ Redford understands the toponymic list of Thutmose III as a description of a route leading due south from Damascus via Edrei (located on the south side of Wadi Yarmuk) to the regions of Moab and Edom (1982a; 1982b; see also Kitchen 1992). Number 91 in the list reads ‘*U-t-r-‘a*, which Redford translates as Edrei (1982a: 119). According to Redford, this is a mid-fifteenth century B.C. reference to Dera'a.

² Mattingly thinks the “plain of Kiriathaim” (Gen 14.5) may be associated with the Kiriathaim in the territory of Reuben (1992f: 85; see also Simons 1959: 214).

³ Mount Hermon = Sirion = Senir (Deut 3.8–9; 4.48; Josh 11.3, 17; 12.1, 5; 13.5, 11; Judg 3.3; 1 Chr 5.23; Ps 42.6; 89.12 *et passim*): Deut 3.9 states that the Sidonians, that is, the Phoenicians, called Mount Hermon Sirion while the Amorites called it Senir. In Song 4.8 and 1 Chr 5.23, however, Hermon and Senir are distinguished from each other (Simons 1959: 41). It is not known whether the three toponyms, Hermon, Sirion, and Senir, refer to the entire Anti-Lebanon range or only to its southern spur, which today is commonly called Mount Hermon in English and Jabal al-Sheikh in Arabic. Simons posits that in extra-biblical documents *Sh-r-j-n* (Ugaritic) and *Sarijana* (Hittite) are names for the whole of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, of which Mount Hermon is the highest and most southerly (1959: 41). The rabbinical name of Mount Hermon was Jabal al-Telg, that is, “Snow Mountain.” The designation Jabal al-Sheikh, however, is more commonly used (Simons 1959: 41).

The toponym Hermon derives from *hrm*, which means “ban,” “taboo,” or “consecrated” in many Semitic languages. In Arabic, *Al-Haram* means a sacred enclosure (Arav 1992b).

Mount Hermon is located in the northern extremity of the land above and to the east of the valley of Lebanon (Josh 11.17). From its base, fed by its melting snow, the Jordan River has its birth. King Og of Bashan is said to have ruled over Mount Hermon (Josh 12.4–5). Before the Israelite conquest, it was known as the home of the Hivites (Judg 3.3). The Deuteronomist considers Mount Hermon the northern boundary of Israelite possessions/inheritance in Transjordan (Josh 12.1) and the Chronicler sees it as the northern border of the half-tribe of Manasseh (1 Chr 5.23). However, as we have noted, this is a literary boundary that never actually existed (de Vaux 1973: 97; see also Bergman 1936: 239 and Weinfeld 1991: 185).

Mount Hermon is known archaeologically for its many temples, twenty of which have been surveyed to date. The mountain appears to have been an ancient cultic center of the Canaanite/Phoenician population. The pottery associated with these temples, however, is late, from the second century B.C. to the seventh century A.D. (Arav 1992b: 159). The Israel Survey's *Map of Lebanon*, 1:250,000 (1982), defines the limits of Mount Hermon as from the Beirut-Damascus highway in the north to Paneas in the south and from Hasbayah in the west to Qal'at Jendel in the east (Dar 1988: 43 n. 1).

⁴ Salecah (Deut 3.10; Josh 12.5; 13.11; 1 Chr 5.11): The territory that the Israelites took from the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, is said to have included all of Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, in Og's kingdom in Bashan (Deut 3.10; Josh 13.11). King Og of Bashan ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan (Josh 12.5). The sons of Gad lived beside the Reubenites in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah (1 Chr 5.11). The latter site, according to the Deuteronomist, is the most easterly point of Israelite territorial possession. Since Edrei, Bashan, and Mount Hermon have all been treated previously, our focus here is on Salecah.

It is generally recognized that Salecah is on the southeastern extremity of the land of Bashan. The modern town of Salkhad, located at the top of an imposing basalt cone in the Jabal Druze range and dominating the entire Hauran region, is the candidate most often put forward as its location (Simons 1959: 122 [tentatively]; Abel 1967, 2: 440; Ottosson 1969: 111–12; Aharoni 1979: 441; Boling 1988: 42). The link between the biblical and modern sites is due primarily to the phonetic similarity of their names. On the basis of present information, the biblical site cannot be located with any certainty.

⁵ Ashtaroth (Deut 1.4; Josh 9.10; 12.4; 13.12, 31; 1 Chr 6.71): Ashtaroth and Edrei appear as twin capital cities of King Og of Bashan (Deut 1.4). Except in Josh 9.10 and 1 Chr 6.71, Ashtaroth is always linked with Edrei. Along with Golan, it is a city of refuge for the half-tribe of Manasseh (1 Chr 6.71). Beeshterah, which in Josh 21.27 replaces Ashtaroth as a city of refuge for Manasseh, may be a variation on the name Ashtaroth (Simons 1959: 205; Abel 1967, 2: 255; Aharoni 1979: 116; Peterson 1980: 577; 1992c).

The toponym Ashtaroth does not appear in the Bible after the narratives dealing with the conquest/settlement. There are, however, references to Ashteroth-karnaim, which played an important role after the conquest (Amos 6.13).

The toponym Ashtaroth is a plural of Astarte, the name of the Canaanite fertility goddess (Day 1992a).

Ashtaroth possibly appears in the Execration Texts, from the end of the nineteenth or early eighteenth century B.C., as one of the cities of Bashan in a list of major places in Canaan (Albright 1941a: 33; Pritchard 1969: 329 n. 8; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 26–27; Aharoni 1979: 146; Day 1992a). It appears again as place No. 28 in a topographical list of Thutmose III, dated to ca. 1468 B.C., which contains detailed information about the land of Canaan (Pritchard 1969: 242; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 33; Aharoni 1979: 154–56, 160; Day 1992b). Ashtaroth is mentioned in the fourteenth century Tall al-Amarna Letters (Letters 197 and 256) as a city-kingdom (Mercer 1939: 582–83, 664–67; Mazar 1961: 18–19; Pritchard 1969: 486; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 35; Aharoni 1979: 160, 172). After this time, Ashtaroth is not mentioned again until the biblical period (Peterson 1980: 579–80).

The biblical site of Ashtaroth is generally located at Tall 'Ashtarah (Schumacher 1889b: 209–10; Albright 1925: 15–16; 1941a: 33; Mercer 1939: 583; Simons 1959: 214; Abel 1967, 2: 72, 255; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 175; Peterson 1980: 580, 584; Aharoni 1979: 431; Kellermann 1981; Kallai 1986: 273; Boling 1988: 42; Day 1989: 47, 1992b). The tall was once an important settlement on the King's Highway in a fertile basaltic tableland.

Schumacher visited Tall 'Ashtarah in 1889. He described the site, the summit of which rose to

around 24 m above the surrounding country, as occupying an isolated position in the plain with an abundance of water nearby. He observed traces of fortifications around the southern and southwestern foot of the mound (1889b: 209). However, Schumacher found that the ruins at the site were not sufficiently extensive to be those of a large city (1889b: 209).

Albright's survey of Tall 'Ashtarath in 1925 uncovered pottery from the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze periods as well as from the first two phases of the Early Iron Age. Although he found sherds dating from Early Iron I, he sees little evidence of an important settlement at the site after the early part of the first millennium B.C. (Albright 1925: 15; 1945).

Albright also collected pottery from the Early and Middle Bronze, Early Iron, Hellenistic-Roman and Arabic at Sheikh Sa'd (1925: 15). He identified it with Karnaim (1925: 15), proposing that the Assyrian district capital was at Karnaim while Ashtaroth was probably destroyed. He suggested the two towns, about 5 km apart, alternated in prosperity and even in existence (Albright 1925: 15). One problem Peterson (1980: 586 n. 24) sees in Albright's suggestion is that the goddess of Karnaim was not Astarte, but Atargatis (2 Macc 12.26), the Canaanite 'Attar-'Ate.

Tall al-Ash'ari, located about 6 km south of Tall 'Ashtarath, is another candidate for the location of Ashtaroth (Simons 1959: 205). Its ruins are more imposing than those of Tall 'Ashtarath (Schumacher 1889b: 209; Albright 1925: 15). Albright identified Early Bronze, Late Bronze, and Hellenistic-Roman pottery at the site. However, he also noted the absence of Early Iron fragments at Tall al-Ash'ari (1925: 15–16), which militates against its identity as Ashtaroth/Beeshterah.

Although there is no connection between the names Ashtaroth and Ash'ari (Albright 1925: 16), Gray hints at a possible relationship between the two (1962: 254) and further suggests that the Ashteroth-karnaim of Gen 14.5 is the same as Ashtaroth (1962: 254). Cohen rejects this proposal (1962a: 255).⁶ Despite the imprecise biblical information on Bashan, Baly attempts to describe it. He understands the territory as bordered on the north by the rocky Wasteland of Al-Wa'arah, some 27 km southwest of Damascus, where the final outflow of al-Leja (Hellenistic trachonitis) basalt covers the foot of Mount Hermon, while the southern limit is not the Yarmuk River but the foothills of Gilead, some 8 km south of the present Irbid-Mafraq road (1974: 213; see also Aharoni 1979: 37). The eastern border would most likely have extended to Jabal Druze/Mount Hauran, probably biblical Mount Bashan of Psalms 68.15 (Simons 1959: 13; Aharoni 1979: 37–38), possibly including Jabal Druze, and Salecah (Simons 1959: 13), while the western boundary would have been the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan north of this sea.

⁷ Region of the Geshurites and Maacathites (Josh 13.11 [see also 13.13]; Deut 3.14; Josh 12.5; 13.2; 1 Sam 27.8; 2 Sam 3.3; 10.6 [10.8 and 1 Chr 19.6–7]; 13.37–38; 14.23, 32; 15.8; 2 Kings 25.23–24 [Jer 40.8]; 1 Chr 2.23; 3.2; 4.19): It is only in Josh 13.11 that the half-tribe of Manasseh, the Reubenites, and the Gadites received an inheritance that included the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites. Other texts, for example, Deut 3.14 and Josh 12.5, suggest that Jair the Manassite acquired territory only as far as the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites. Josh 13.2 states that the region of the Geshurites remains for the Israelites to take, while Josh 13.13 posits that Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or Maacathites but that Geshur and Maacath live in Israel to this day. 1 Sam 27.8 states that David made raids on the Geshurites. The relationship between Israel and Geshur (and Maacath) could not have been unpleasant, however, since Absalom, the third son of David, was also the son of Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur (2 Sam 3.3; 1 Chr 3.2). It was to Geshur that Absalom fled after he killed King David's sons (2 Sam 13.27–38), and from there that Joab brought him back to Jerusalem (2 Sam 14.23, 32; 15.8). In their conflict with David, the Ammonites hired the king of Maacah and one thousand men to fight against the Israelite leader (2 Sam 10.6; see also 2 Sam 10.8 and 1 Chr 19.6–7). 1 Chr 2.23 states that Geshur and Aram took Havvoth-jair, Kenath and its villages, sixty towns, from the descendants of Machir, father of Gilead. Jaazaniah/Jezaniah, son of the Maacathites, was one of those who came to Gedaliah, governor to the king of Babylon, at Mizpah to hear that they need not be afraid of the Babylonian officials (2 Kings 25.23–24; Jer 40.8). Eshtemoa the Maacathite appears in a list of the descendants of Judah (1 Chr 4.19).

Mazar identifies biblical Geshur with the Land of Garu in Amarna Letter No. 256 (1986: 117; see also Pritchard 1969: 486). This position follows the suggestion of Albright who understands Garu, along with its towns, to correspond roughly to modern Golan (1943: 9). It is possible that the Garu-people of Amarna Letter No. 256 are the ancestors of the Geshurites in the Bible (Kochavi 1989: 3).

Ma'oz describes Geshur as covering some 350 km² of the most fertile land in the Golan. He understands the area of ancient Geshur as bounded by Wadi Samakh to the north, the Yarmuk River to the south, Wadi Raqqad to the east, and the Sea of Galilee to the west (1992: 996).

Maachah is the name of one of the sons of Nahor's concubine Reumah (Gen 22.20–24) (Mazar 1986: 118), and also appears as a toponym in the Execration Texts (Posener 1940). Mazar concludes that at least as early as the beginning of the second millennium B.C., the group of Maachah tribes inhabited territory in northern Mesopotamia, which was called by their name (1986: 119).

The regions of the Geshurites and Maacathites are generally bounded by the eastern edge of the Jordan rift on the west, Mount Hermon on the north, the Yarmuk River on the south, and the plateau of Bashan stretching beyond Wadi Raqqad on the east (Mazar 1986: 114). Specifically, Geshur and Maacath lay in the southern and northern segment of the Golan Heights respectively (Simons 1959: 7; Abel 1967, 1: 250; Kallai 1986: 305; Mazar 1986: 114).

The Israelis have conducted archaeological surveys in the Golan Heights since 1967 (Epstein and Guman 1972; Ma'oz 1986; Kochavi 1989). Their work has resulted in the discovery of twenty-seven MB II, eight Late Bronze, and eighteen Iron Age I sites. As in other regions of Canaan, there is a marked decline in the settlement density in the Golan from the Middle Bronze towards the Late Bronze with a revival of occupation around the eleventh century B.C., that is, the Iron I period (Kochavi 1989: 14–15). Following up this work, the Land of Geshur Archaeological Project, begun in 1987, aims to understand the region's settlement patterns and socioeconomic processes during the biblical period, that is, the Bronze and Iron Ages (Kochavi 1989: 1; Kochavi et al. 1992: 32). Excavations at five key sites in the Golan have begun to reveal the occupational history of biblical Geshur.

⁸ For the position that “the town that is in the middle of the valley” and Ir-Moab are the same, see Abel (1967, 2: 69, 351).

⁹ Verses 14–38 of Jeremiah 48 probably date to the threat from Nebuchadrezzar in 601 B.C. in response to Jehoiakim's short-lived revolt (2 Kings 24.1–4).

¹⁰ Baal-hermon appears only twice in the Bible (Judg 3.3; 1 Chr 5.23). In the first text, Baal-hermon is designated as a mountain forming part of Mount Lebanon. The Hivites were among those the Lord left in the land to test Israel; they lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. The toponym appears for the second time in relation to the half-tribe of Manasseh, which is said to have lived in the land and been very numerous from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon (1 Chr 5.23).

Baal-gad occurs only in Joshua where it appears in the description of the land that Joshua took (11.17; 12.7) as well as in the account of the land that Joshua was not able to take but still remained to be possessed (13.5). In all references, Baal-gad is located in the valley of Lebanon and/or below Mount Hermon.

Both *Baal-gad* and *Baal-hermon* are toponyms containing the name of, and probably linked with, the Canaanite, male fertility god Baal.

Simons (1959: 124–25) prefers to take the Baal-hermon of 1 Chr 5.23 as a toponym identical to or as a substitute for Baal-gad (Josh 11.17; 12.7; 13.5). He would locate it at Tall Haush, close to Mount Hermon and about 12 km north of Hasbeija (1959: 277). His rapid surface exploration of the tall in 1953 yielded pottery from the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze as well as from the Byzantine and Arabic periods (1959: 277 n. 232). Haas' visit to the site in 1954 achieved the same results (Kuschke 1954: 129).

On the basis of 1 Chr 5.23, Abel distinguishes between Baal-hermon and Baal-gad. He thinks Baal-hermon refers to a sacred mountain place that could be Iqlim al-Bellan (1967, 2: 259), and he places Baal-gad below Mount Hermon in the Baq'ah, that is, the valley of Lebanon (Josh 13.5; 12.7; 11.17), possibly at Hasbeija (1967, 2: 258).

Aharoni understands the Mount Baal-hermon of Judg 3.3 as the sacred southern peak of Hermon, that is, the region above Dan, the traditional northern limit of the Israelite occupation (1979: 238–39) while Franklyn thinks Baal-hermon may be one of the peaks of Mount Hermon. Franklyn bases his opinion on 1 Chr 5.23, in which the half-tribe of Manasseh dwells in three places, namely Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. Since Senir and Mount Hermon are two peaks in the Anti-Lebanon range, Baal-hermon could be the name of another (Franklyn 1992: 552). Braun, on the other hand, tentatively places Baal-hermon at modern Baneas, that is, at New Testament Caesarea Philippi (1986: 77–78).

¹¹ Golan and Golan in Bashan appear as a city of refuge and a Levitical town (Deut 4.41–42; Josh 20.8; 21.27; 1 Chr 6.71). The toponym appears to be preserved at the site of Saham al-Jaulan (Simons 1959: 205; Boling 1988: 421; Weinfeld 1991: 233), located ca. 15 km northwest of Dera'a in a fertile basaltic tableland. For this reason commentators, some tentatively (for example, Abel 1967, 2: 338–39; Aharoni 1979: 435; Mayes 1979: 159; Peterson 1980: 573–74; Kallai 1986: 471), locate the site there (see Arav 1992a). Schumacher was the first to make this identification although he found no remains earlier than the Christian period (1989b: 92–93).

¹² The Beeshterah of Josh 21.27 is generally seen as the Ashtaroth of 1 Chr 6.71 (Simons 1959: 205; Abel 1967, 2: 255; Peterson 1992c), since they are likely variations on the same name (Peterson 1992c). As noted above in the discussion of Ashtaroth (N. 5), the site is generally identified with Tall 'Ashtarah (Abel 1967, 2: 255) or Tall al-Ash'ari (Simons 1959: 205).

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CHAPTER 7

AMMONITE TERRITORY AND SITES

INTRODUCTION

Information on Ammonite territory and sites comes from three sources: biblical texts, epigraphic material, and archaeology. The biblical information is found, for the most part, in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the Deuteronomistic History (see the introduction to Chapter 5). With careful consideration, Ammonite epigraphic material such as inscriptions, seals and ostraca can be important indicators of Ammonite territory. Caution is necessary regarding other archaeological remains, as well. Some scholars speak confidently of Ammonite, Moabite, and Edomite pottery and architecture, while others are more tentative in their identification of tribal artifacts. Due to the present state of knowledge, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish among Ammonites, Moabites, and/or Edomites, or for that matter among Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Biblical information on Ammonite territory and sites is presented in the context of Israelite territorial possessions and interests east of the Jordan River (fig. 10). Written from an Israelite point of view, we cannot expect this data to be complete, unbiased or sympathetic to the Ammonites.

AMMONITE TERRITORY ACCORDING TO THE TEXTS

Num 21.24, Deut 3.16, and Josh 12.2 state that the Ammonite boundary is the Jabbok while Deut 2.37 indicates the land of the Ammonites is in the upper region of the Jabbok and the associated hill country where its towns are located.

Deut 2.18–19 provides very general information on the Ammonite “homeland” when it states that after the Israelites cross the boundary of Moab at Ar, they will approach the frontier of the Ammonites. This text indicates the territory of the Ammonites is located north of Moab land, that is, north of the Arnon (Num 21.13; 22.36).

Judg 11.13, part of the Jephthah narrative (Judg 10.6–12.7), is more specific about Ammonite territorial possessions, stating that the Ammonites considered their land to extend “from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan.” This is the region which today is referred to as al-Balkha (the

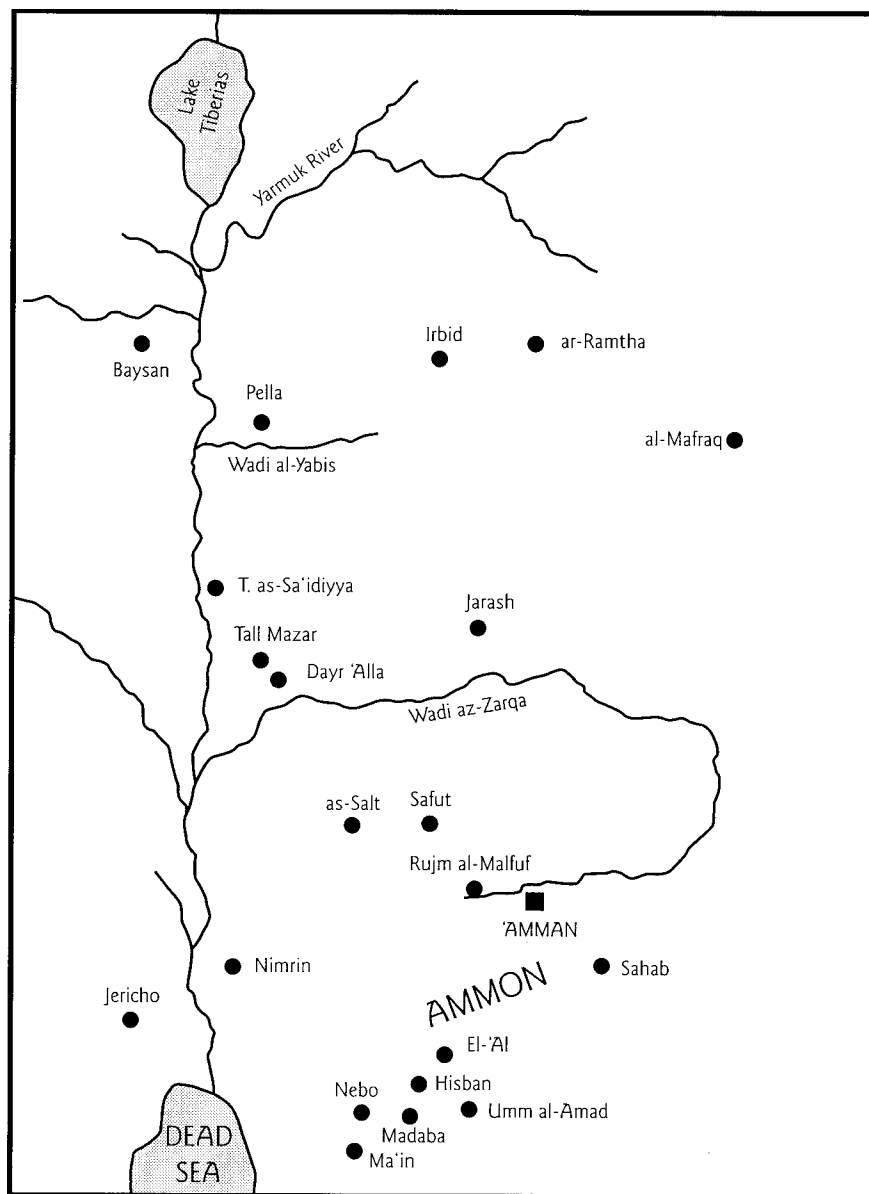


Fig. 10. Ammonite Territory and Sites.

Belqa; Geraty and Running 1989: 3), and extends about 85 km (from Wadi al-Mujib to Wadi az-Zarqa) by about 35 km (from the Jordan River to the desert).

The former inhabitants of the land of the Ammonites were the Rephaim, whom God destroyed so the Ammonites could dispossess them and settle in their place (Deut 2.21). The Ammonites called the Rephaim “Zamzummim” (Deut 2.20).

Biblical writers express two attitudes relative to Ammonite territorial possessions: 1) the Book of Numbers notes the reason the Israelites did not conquer Ammonite land is that the boundary of the Ammonites was strong (21.24); and 2) the Deuteronomist states that the reason the Israelites did not take possession of Ammonite land was because the Lord gave that land to the descendants of Lot (Deut 2.19; see also 2.21).¹

Whatever its boundaries and extent, the territory of the Ammonites was not a static entity, since the Ammonites were an aggressive people who sought to enlarge their holdings. Judg 3.12–13 states that King Eglon of Moab, in alliance with the Ammonites and the Amalekites, went and defeated Israel and took possession of the city of palms, that is, Jericho (Deut 34.3). The Amalekites, nomads of southern Palestine, are out of place in the narrative (de Vaux 1973: 118). It is possible that the Ammonites were involved with Moab in this incident. However, the association here of Ammonites with Moab may be redactional (de Vaux 1973: 118).

Biblical texts indicate that the Ammonites and Israelites competed for territory, especially east of the Jordan River. The Ammonites are said, in the introduction to the Jephthah story (Judg 10.6–12.7), to have “crushed and oppressed the Israelites ... that were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead” (Judg 10.8).² They are, moreover, said to have “crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim” (Judg 10.9). According to 1 Sam 10.27–11.11, Nahash, king of the Ammonites, oppressed the Gadites and Reubenites living beyond the Jordan and besieged Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam 11.1–2). The prophet Amos, in the mid-eighth century, depicts the Ammonites as having “ripped open pregnant women in Gilead in order to enlarge their territory” (1.13). The women referred to are probably Israelite. In the latter half of the seventh century Zephaniah alludes to Ammon’s territorial boastings at the expense of the Israelites (2.8). These biblical texts clearly indicate enmity between Ammonites and Israelites, and explain why their authors are biased against the Ammonites.

EPIGRAPHIC MATERIAL AND AMMONITE POSSESSIONS

Ammonite epigraphic material such as inscriptions, seals and ostraca can be important indicators of Ammonite territory. Caution is required, however, since a script can be used outside its "homeland," and inscriptions, seals and ostraca are frequently found far from their places of origin. A good example of this is the Akkadian cuneiform tablet found at Tawilan in southern Jordan (Bennett and Bienkowski 1995: 67–68). Moreover, there is frequently disagreement among scholars as to ethnicity of a particular script; the Dayr 'Alla plaster texts are a good illustration of this point (Lemaire 1997).

A number of inscriptions point to Ammonite presence in the area of 'Amman. These include three royal inscriptions, namely, the Citadel, Theater, and Statue, plus the Tall Siran Bottle and an engraved cup.

The Citadel Inscription (Horn 1967/68; Shea 1981) found in 1961 is on a large stone slab measuring 24×19 cm. It is fragmentary and consists of eight lines of writing generally dated to the beginning of the eighth century (Millard 1991: 141; Israel 1997: 106; but see Cross 1969 and Puech 1985: 10 for a ninth century date). It was probably originally a monument inscription. The text refers to an Ammonite king who received instructions from the Ammonite god Milcom to carry out the building of some "structures"/"entrances," possibly parts of the citadel or even a temple. It also describes Milcom's curse against those who act hostilely toward the king or defile the structure(s), and his blessings promised for the "structures"/"entrances" and those who frequent them. Zayadine goes so far as to see the text as a dedicatory inscription of a temple to Milcom. He locates the temple on the middle terrace of the citadel (Zayadine 1986d: 19) where the remains of the Roman temple now stand (Kanellopoulos 1994; Koutsoukou et al. 1997).

The Theater Inscription, measuring ca. 87 cm long and 5–17 cm wide, was also discovered in 1961 during the excavation of the Roman theater. Its two lines of writing include the words *bn 'mn[n']* ("Ammonites"). Scholars are nearly unanimous in dating it to ca. 600 B.C. (Millard 1991: 141; Israel 1997: 106).

The Statue Inscription, dated variously between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C. (Puech 1985: 5–9), is one of several statues found in 'Amman. It has an inscription, consisting of two lines on its pedestal which Zayadine reads as "Yerah'azar, son of Sanib" and Puech reads as "Yarih'ezer son of Zakkur, son of Sanip" (1985: 8). The latter is mentioned about 730 B.C. in the Assyrian Annals of Tiglath-pileser III (Luckenbill 1926: 287–88;

Pritchard 1969: 282). The statue probably bears the name of at least one Ammonite king (see Aufrecht 1989: 106).

The Tall Siran Bottle, excavated on the campus of the University of Jordan in northwest 'Amman, bears an inscription made for Amminadab, son of Hissal-el, son of Amminadab, each titled "king of the Ammonites." An Amminadab of Ammon is listed by Ashurbanipal among the kings who paid tribute at the start of his reign, about 667 B.C. (Weippert 1987: 99). He is believed to be the grandfather of the Amminadab for whom the bottle was made. Scholars date the inscription to around 600 B.C. (Zayadine and Thompson 1989: 170; Puech 1985: 12; Millard 1991: 141).

Finally, a cup found in an Iron II tomb at Umm Udhayna in southwest 'Amman is engraved with the name of its Ammonite owner (Hübner 1992a: 30–31). It too is dated to the sixth century (Israel 1997: 106).

A number of seals also provide evidence about the Ammonite "homeland." One tomb in 'Amman yielded the simple seal of Adoni-nur, servant of Amminabad, who was probably the king of Ammon mentioned by Ashurbanipal. A Baalis seal impression, that is, a *bullā*, was found in the excavation of Tall al-'Umayri (Herr 1985; Younker 1985). Baalis was an Ammonite king during the time of Nebuchadnezzar, ca. 580 B.C. (Weippert 1987: 101).

Finally, ostraca, designated as Ammonite and dated to the seventh–fifth centuries B.C. (Jackson 1983; Cross 1986; Aufrecht 1989; Hübner 1992a; Israel 1997), have been uncovered in the excavations of Tall al-Mazar (Yassine and Teixidor 1986), Tall al-'Umayri, and Tall Hisban (Cross 1975; 1986). Moreover, the excavations at Khirbat Umm ad-Dananir and Sahab have produced pottery sherds engraved with Ammonite personal names in a fragmentary condition (Israel 1997: 106). These ostraca provide information on places associated with the Ammonites.

These five inscriptions provide evidence of Ammonite presence in the 'Amman area, especially in the region of the Citadel, from the beginning of the eighth to the sixth century B.C. Moreover, the seals and ostraca point to Ammonite sites or at least presence from Tall al-Mazar, north of Wadi Jabbok, to Tall Hisban in the south during the period from the seventh–fifth centuries B.C. Nonetheless, caution is required when considering a site such as Tall al-Mazar as Ammonite on the basis of epigraphic material alone.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND AMMONITE TERRITORY

Based on the results of archaeological surveys and excavations, researchers have attempted to flesh out the picture that the Bible and epi-

graphic data point relative to Ammonite territory and boundaries. As with epigraphic material, it is often impossible to determine whether artifactual material, such as pottery sherds or architecture, is Ammonite, Moabite, Gileadite, or Amorite. At the present state of research, the ethnicity of archaeological material is difficult, if not impossible, to determine.

As a result of his biblical studies and explorations in Eastern Palestine in the 1930s, Glueck concluded that the north-south extent of Wadi az-Zarqa marked the western boundary of the original Ammonite kingdom. He thought this kingdom consisted of the small, fertile strip on the east side of the wadi and continued to the desert. Glueck extended the territory of the Ammonites south of 'Amman to such sites as as-Sweiwina and Rujm Wasiyeh. The Ammonite towns, in his opinion, were located in the broken upland district on the east side of Wadi Jabbok. He allowed for some westward expansion of the territory, especially in the 'Amman district, to include at least the *malfuf* ("cabbage") towers since he thought they were integrated into the defense system centering upon 'Amman (1939: 246-47).

Glueck's position on the Ammonite "homeland" was generally accepted for decades. In keeping with this position, in the late 1950s and early 1960s German scholars (for example, Gese [1958], Hentschke [1960], Fohrer [1961], Graf-Reventlow [1963]) conducted a number of surveys, especially southwest of 'Amman, with the object of defining more precisely the Ammonite borders in the area. Following Glueck's lead, Gese, the first of these German archaeological surveyors, emphasized that the *malfuf* towers formed a chain or line of border forts (*Grenzfestungen*) between Ammon and the Israelite tribes (1958: 57). Hentschke (1960), Fohrer (1961), and Graf-Reventlow (1963) followed Gese's lead. Each surveyed a small section of the line from Wadi as-Sir to Na'ur and Rujm Fehud, outlining what they believed to be the southern and southwestern Ammonite borders.

There is now much more data on the Ammonites than Glueck and his fellow surveyors had available. This is because beginning in the 1970s, excavations began at Abu Nuseir (Abu Ghanimeh 1984), the 'Amman Airport Structure (Herr 1983; Hennessy 1989b), the 'Amman Citadel (Zayadine et al. 1989; Humbert et al. 1989; Humbert and Zayadine 1989; 1992), "Ammonite" towers (for example, Rujm al-Malfuf North [Boraas 1971] and South [Thompson 1973c], Rujm al-Mekheizin [Thompson 1975; 1984], and Kilda [Yassine 1988a; Najjar 1992, 1993]), tombs in 'Amman; al-Dreijjat (Yunker et al. 1990), Khirbat al-Hajjar (Thompson 1972), al-Meqablein, Rujm al-Henu (Clark 1983; McGovern 1993: 146; 1986; 1983; 1980: 64),

Rujm Selim, Sahab (Ibrahim 1972; 1989), Tall Dayr 'Alla (Franken 1969; 1992a; 1992b; 1997), Tall al-Hammam (Prag 1991), Tall Hisban (Horn 1969; 1972; Boraas and Horn 1969; 1973; 1975; Lugenbeal and Sauer 1972; Sauer 1973; Boraas and Geraty 1976; 1978; 1979; Geraty 1983a; 1983b; 1992; 1997; Geraty and Merling 1994; Ibach 1987), Tall Iktanu (Prag 1989a; 1989b; 1990; 1991), Tall Jalul (Herr et al. 1994), Tall Jawa (Yunker et al. 1990; Daviau 1992a; 1992b; 1993a; 1993b), Tall al-Mazar (Yassine 1984a; 1984b; 1986; 1988; McCreery and Yassine 1997), Tall Nimrin (Dornemann 1990; Flanagan and McCreery 1990; Flanagan, McCreery, and Yassine 1992), Tall Safut (Wimmer 1985; 1987a; 1987b; 1992; 1997), Tall Siran (Thompson 1973b), Tall al-'Umayri (Geraty et al. 1986; 1988; Herr 1989; Yunker et al. 1990; Herr et al. 1991a; 1991b), and Umm ad-Dananir (McGovern 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1989; 1992; 1993: 145–46). These excavations provide a great deal of information about the Ammonite homeland. Moreover new light is being shed on the Ammonite homeland by surveys, mostly by Americans, for example, McGovern in the Baq'ah Valley northwest of 'Amman (1986; 1987), Simmons and Kafafi in the area of 'Ayn Ghazal along Wadi az-Zarqa between the modern cities of 'Amman and az-Zarqa (1988; 1992), Ibach in the Hisban region (1987), and the Madaba Plains Project in the vicinity of Tall al-'Umayri, south and southwest of 'Amman (Geraty et al. 1986; 1987; 1988; 1989a; 1989b; Herr 1989; Yunker et al. 1990; Herr et al. 1991; 1994).

Sauer (1985), Kletter (1991), Herr (1992), and Hübner (1992a) make use of data from these excavations and surveys, together with the results of biblical and epigraphic studies, to present a picture of the Ammonite homeland. Their conclusions are especially relevant for the late Iron II period. Sauer and Herr generally agree on an expanded Ammonite territory. Kletter and Hübner, however, describe a much more restricted homeland, both chronologically and territorially.

Sauer describes the growth of Ammon especially during the period beginning with its status as a vassal of Assyria, then Babylonia, and then Persia (1985: 212). He finds support for Ammonite expansion in the archaeological record in the form of what he terms Ammonite materials such as pottery, inscriptions, sculpture, and tombs in the region of 'Amman as well as at such sites as al-Meqablein, Sahab, Khirbat al-Hajjar, Tall Siran, Tall Hisban, Baq'ah Valley, Tall Dayr 'Alla, Tall al-Mazar, and Tall as-Sa'idiyya. Sauer concludes that during the late Iron II–Persian periods the Ammonites extended their territory as far west as the Jordan River, towards the north into the Baq'ah Valley, and southward as far as Tall Hisban (1985: 212–13).

Herr (1992) thinks it is now possible to draw conclusions about Ammonite boundaries from a chronological as well as a territorial point of view. He applies the terms Ammon and Ammonite to an apparent ethnic group of the central Transjordanian plateau that fits the late Iron II period, arguing that aspects of its material culture and epigraphic remains suggest a coherent, unified nationality separate from other groups nearby. Where distinctive elements of this culture are found in excavations, according to Herr, they are localized to the region north of Madaba and Jalul and south of Wadi az-Zarqa. Thus, this Ammonite culture is present at such sites as 'Amman, especially the Citadel; Sahab; Tall Dayr 'Alla; Tall Hisban; Tall al-Mazar; Tall Safut; Tall al-'Umayri; and Umm ad-Dananir. Specifically, Herr posits that the southern boundary of the Ammonites was in the Madaba-Jalul region. He admits, however, that further excavations, which are just beginning at Jalul, are needed, noting that there is none of the typical Ammonite pottery south of this region in the Iron Age tombs at Mount Nebo. According to Herr, the northern boundary of this Ammonite ethnic group would have been the natural barrier of Wadi az-Zarqa (1992: 175). He admits, however, that the history of settlements in the hilly region between the Baq'ah Valley and Wadi az-Zarqa is still not well known and that further archaeological survey work, followed by excavations, is necessary to elucidate settlement patterns in this region during the first millennium B.C.

In the Jordan Valley, Herr identifies the Ammonite corpus of late Iron II pottery at Tall Dayr 'Alla while there is little of this pottery at Tall as-Sa'idiyya just a few kilometers to the north. Still farther north at Pella, for example, there are no Ammonite pottery forms. Herr concludes that just as for the southern boundary, the northern boundary of Ammonite ceramic forms is well-defined. Since very little of this ceramic corpus has been found at Jericho, Herr argues that Ammonite culture extended to the desert in the east while to the west it stopped at the Jordan River (1992: 175). Based on the dating of Ammonite script and pottery, he dates this Ammonite cultural group to the late Iron II (1992: 175), and finds it difficult to go back much before this period.

Starting with a reassessment of Glueck's, and the general German, position that the Rujm al-Malfuf buildings were fortified towers built as a defense line for the early Ammonite kingdom, Kletter (1991) reviewed the scholarly positions on these towers. After studying their number, function(s), and dates, he concluded that the buildings represent "more or less, the area of the Ammonite settlement and therefore the borders of Ammon during the Assyrian period" (1991: 43), that is, from around 734–732 B.C. to 630–620 B.C., when Assyrian power declined in the west (1991: 6). These bor-

ders, according to Kletter, were compact, well-defined, and easy to defend except on the eastern side, and he notes that “the same borders defined the kingdom of Ammon for a long period” (1991: 43; 40 map).

Hübner locates the Ammonite territory in the western segment of the central Transjordanian plateau, north of a line from Hisban to Mount Nebo as far north as Wadi az-Zarqa which he posits, citing Deut 3.16 and Josh 12.2, was its most probable northern boundary in the Old Testament period (1992: 11, 139 n. 4). According to Hübner, al-Warde, the iron-producing area to the north of the Jabbok, was not Ammonite territory (1992: 150). He sees the southern border of the Ammonite state as probably north of Hisban, Elealeh, Khirbat Masuh, and Umm al-'Amad or south of al-Yadude, Tall Jawa, and Sahab (Hübner 1992a: 141). The western border in the Iron Age was, Hübner posits, in the western area of the Transjordanian plateau in the upper part of Wadi al-Bahhat or Wadi as-Sir. Settlements in this area included Umm al-Qanafid, Khirbat al-Haggar, and Rujm al-Kursi (1992: 142).

Hübner extends Ammonite territory northwestward to include the Baq'ah Valley, including Rujm al-Henu and Rujm al-Hawi, but he does not know just where the Ammonite border in the northwest and west of the hinterland of the Baq'ah Valley was located. He posits that the territories of as-Salt, Khirbat ar-Rasune, and Khirbat Jel'ad were often in Gileadite-Israelite hands (Hübner 1992a: 145). Hübner thinks it likely that Wadi Umm ad-Dananir, which goes in a northerly direction from Khirbat Umm ad-Dananir, and, later, the upper segment of Wadi ar-Rumman was the boundary between Gilead and Ammon (1992a: 145). Khirbat ar-Rumman, according to Hübner, was most likely an Ammonite border location (1992a: 145). The beginning of the steppe or the desert was, in his opinion, the boundary of Ammonite territory in the east (Hübner 1992a: 146). In summary, according to Hübner, Ammon was around 40–50 km (north to south) × around 25–35 km (west to east), with a total territory of around 1300 km². Ammon's neighbors were Moab to the south and southwest; Israel to the north and northwest; and, perhaps, in the northeast the territory of the Aramaeans (Hübner 1992a: 146; 330–31 map).

AMMONITE SITES

Judg 11.33 lists three of the twenty Ammonite towns Jephthah is said to have defeated, namely, Aroer, Minnith, and Abel-keramim. Other Ammonite sites specifically mentioned in the Bible are Jazer (Num 21.24; 1 Macc 5.8);³ Rabbah (= Rabbath-ammon, “the royal city” [2 Sam 12.26])

(Deut 3.11; Josh 13.25; 2 Sam 11.1; *et passim*); "the Water City" (2 Sam 12.27); Ai (Jer 49.3); and Heshbon (Jer 49.3). Heshbon and Jazer are treated in Chapters 5 and 6; the remaining sites will be considered here.

Judg 10.6–12.7 describes a confrontation between the people of Gilead, led by Jephthah, and the Ammonites over territory immediately south of Wadi Jabbok where there is a common border between Gileadites and Ammonites (de Vaux 1973: 75). Although the text describes only general historical, geographical and topographical features (Soggin 1984: 182), the biblical narrator uses the story of the Ammonite defeat "to legitimate the Israelite claim to this part of Transjordan" (Ahlstrom 1993: 403). Indeed, Israelites have been added only secondarily to the passage (de Vaux 1973: 76). The summarizing statement in Judg 11.33 is in line with Deuteronomistic theology (Richter 1966).

Judg 11.33 ends the account of Jephthah's battle with the Ammonites (Judg 10.6–12.7) by stating that "he inflicted a massive defeat on them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty towns, and as far as Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel." The passage provides information on the Ammonite sites Aroer, Minnith, and Abel-keramim. It also makes the very general statement that Jephthah defeated "twenty towns" of the Ammonites, which probably include Aroer, Minnith, and Abel-keramim.

Judg 11.33 does not indicate the direction in which Jephthah was traveling when he defeated the Ammonites, and so Aroer, Minnith, and Abel-keramim cannot be identified with any confidence. However, they are generally placed in the district to the west of 'Amman (Aharoni 1979: 265; Boling 1975: 208) and tentatively identified with a variety of archaeological ruins.

i) Aroer (Judg 11.33; Josh 13.25): The toponym *Aroer* means "juniper" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 735; Borée 1968: 33; Rowley 1970: 17), a translation which is of little assistance in locating the site since this species of tree is found throughout west-central Jordan. Furthermore, there are no contemporary Arabic toponyms in the area of 'Amman that derive from the Hebrew place name *'aro'er*.

The Aroer in question here is not, contrary to the position of Alt (1959, 1: 159 n. 3) and Glueck (1939: 247–49), the one on the edge of Wadi Arnon. It is rather the Aroer which, depending on the translation, is "east"/"toward"/"facing" Rabbah (= Rabbath-ammon) (Josh 13.25).

Abel locates Aroer northwest of 'Amman at 'Argan (= 'Erjan [Arajan]) (Abu Dayyah et al. 1991: 385) or at Khirbat as-Safra, 7 km east of the capital city (1967, 2: 250),⁴ though there is little or no archaeological support for its location at the former site (Abu Dayyah et al. 1991: 387, 389).

Several commentators place Aroer at Khirbat al-Beider (Mittmann 1969; 1970; de Vaux 1973: 124–26; Hübner 1992a: 133, 135 [tentatively]; Alhstrom 1993: 407–8), a tell 5 km north of the 'Amman citadel (= Jabal al-Qal'ah). Glueck describes the site as an impressive, completely walled town dating to the Iron I–II period (1939: 174), while the Archaeological Survey of Greater 'Amman (ASGA) lists the site as a settlement with Late Bronze, Iron II–Persian, and Early Roman remains (Abu Dayyah et al. 1991: 390).

Other places proposed for the location of Aroer include Khirbat as-Smesani (as-Semsaneh) (Kallai 1986: 252 n. 323) or as-Sweiwina (as-Suwewinah) (Glueck 1939: 247). Glueck describes the former as located on a high hill and consisting of walls of large, roughly shaped rectangular blocks and a large quantity of Early Iron I–II sherds (1939: 160). He describes the latter as an extensively ruined Early Iron Age village, 3 km southsouthwest of what was 'Amman in the 1930s (1939: 168–70). Glueck reports that all building remains at the site are constructed of large, roughly hewn flint blocks (1939: 169).

None of these candidates for Aroer is convincing, and Noth (1959: 40) and Simons (1959: 120, 299) are probably correct when they state that its location is unknown.

ii) Minnith (Judg 11.33): Eusebius knew of a place called Maanith four Roman miles from Esbus (= Heshbon) on the way to Philadelphia (= 'Amman) (132: 1–2). Partly on the basis of this information, De Saulcy (1854) proposed Umm al-Qenafid, located on a high hill at the beginning of Wadi Hisban, as the location of Minnith. Alt (1959, 1: 159 n. 3), followed by Ibach, who collected Iron I and Iron II/Persian sherds at the site (1987: 24), and Younker (1992a: 842), opt for Umm al-Hanafish/Umm al-Basatin, ca. 6 km to the northeast of Hisban at the intersection of an ancient route. Most scholars correctly think the site cannot be identified (Simons 1959: 299; Ottosson 1969: 172; de Vaux 1973: 126; Hübner 1992a: 135–36).

iii) Abel-keramim (Judg 11.33): The toponym *Abel-keramim* means literally “pasture/meadow of the vineyards” (Gray 1902: 3314; Borée 1968: 81; Rowley 1970: 1) and would seem to refer to a place where vines were cultivated. This designation is too general to help locate the site since vines can be grown in a number of areas on the central Transjordanian plateau (Herr 1995a).

Eusebius locates Abel-keramim about 7 Roman miles from Philadelphia at a place called Abela (32: 13–16). No site by this name is presently known in the area.

Abel-keramim is sometimes located in a general fashion in the hilly district of the northern al-Balkha (Simons 1959: 299; Ottosson 1969: 172).

Attempts to be more precise result in the choice of Na'ur (Abel 1967, 2: 37, 233–34; Aharoni 1979: 429 [tentatively]), near Na'ur (Redford 1982a: 119), or Khirbat as-Suq (Alt 1959, 1: 159 n. 3), all on the way from Philadelphia to Hisban, as candidates for Abel-keramim's location. Mittmann (1969: 75), de Vaux (1973: 126), and Ahlstrom (1993: 408) identify it with Kom Yajuz, 3.5 km north of Khirbat al-Beider, which they identify with Aroer, though there is no archaeological support for this identification.

Recent archaeological findings have led to the identification of Abel-keramim with both Tall al-'Umayri (Redford 1982a; 1982b) and Sahab (Knauf 1984b; Kafafi 1985: 17; Hübner 1992a: 132–33, 141 [tentatively]). Both Tall al-'Umayri (Geraty et al. 1985; 1986; 1987; 1988; 1989a; 1989b; Herr et al. 1991a; 1991b; 1994; 1996; Herr 1995b) and Sahab (Ibrahim 1989; 1997) have impressive remains from the Iron II period.

Abel-keramim cannot be identified with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, the wine-growing capabilities of the region of Tall al-'Umayri, the discovery of important Iron II remains at the site, including a seal dated to around 600 B.C. containing the name of the Ammonite god Milkom and an Ammonite king Baalis who was ruler during the time of Nebuchadnezzar ca. 580 B.C. (Weippert 1987: 101), make it an appealing candidate for Abel-keramim.

iv) Rabbah (= Rabbath-ammon, "the royal city" [2 Sam 12.26] (Deut 3.11; Josh 13.25; 2 Sam 11.1; *et passim* and "the Water City" [2 Sam 12.27]): Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and took "the royal city" (2 Sam 12.26). Moreover, in a report about the incident to David, he claims that he took "the Water City" (2 Sam 12.27).

The meaning of *Rabbah* is "large" and probably refers to the size of the city. The first element in the toponym appears to have been the origin of its name (Gray 1902: 3318). The second element of the name is *ammon*, indicating that the city in question belonged to the Ammonites.

Rabbath-ammon is invariably identified with the 'Amman Citadel/Jabal al-Qal'ah located in what is today downtown 'Amman (see, for example, Simons 1959: 3, 334, 450, 453; Bright 1965: 325; Abel 1967, 1: 277; 2: 424–25; Aharoni 1979: 441; Dornemann 1983; Humbert and Zayadine 1992: 21; Burdajewicz and Segal 1993). Topographically, the 'Amman Citadel consists of several terraces (Dornemann 1983: 197 fig. 4; Humbert and Zayadine 1992: 216 fig. 1, 217) on which remains from the Iron Age have been uncovered.

Dornemann posits that his soundings at the citadel, north of the upper terrace, must be understood in the context of biblical references to David and Solomon (1983: 172). The materials he excavated span much of the

tenth century B.C. and continue on into the ninth century (1983: 172). Dornemann argues there is evidence of the rebuilding of the city wall, which he dates to ca. 980 B.C., after its capture by David and for a minor rebuilding that took place just before or ca. 900 B.C. (1983: 172). Humbert and Zayadine have confirmed Iron Age II fortifications and dwellings on the citadel's third terrace (1992).

"The Water City" (2 Sam 12.27) was probably a section of the city that supplied it with water. It was apparently separated from the upper city, that is, the citadel area, or the city proper (Abel 1967, 2: 434), and most likely had its own defenses (Simons 1959: 334). Ras al-'Ayn, southwest of the citadel at the source of Wadi az-Zarqa, is an excellent candidate for its location.

v) Ai (Jer 49.3): In the Jeremian oracle against the Ammonites, Ai, which means "ruin," is said to be "laid waste"/"despoiled" (49.3). Its condition causes the prophet to implore Heshbon to "wail," and ought to be associated with the latter site and its vicinity. However, no Ai is known east of the Jordan.

Instead of "Ai is laid waste"/"despoiled," of the NRSV and REV respectively, other translations read "the ravager approaches" (NAB) and "Ar has been laid waste" (NJB). Thus, Ai could be a common name rather than a toponym (Holladay 1989: 368). Certain identification is currently impossible (Bright 1965: 325).

CONCLUSIONS

Several biblical texts place the Ammonites in al-Balkha, in the territory from Wadi al-Mujib to Wadi Jabbok and from the Jordan River to the desert. Other texts describe a much more limited Ammonite territory in the upper region of the Jabbok and the associated hill country. All the texts note, however, that the Ammonites took every opportunity to expand their territory west of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok.

The temporary character of Ammon's boundaries must be emphasized. They fluctuate according to various influences, opportunities, and/or pressures. Ammon moves its boundaries farther to the west, south(west), and/or north(west) as opportunities present themselves, while Ammonite territory shrinks under less favorable circumstances. With the exception of Rabbath-ammon (and its associated "Water City") and Heshbon, it is impossible to identify the Ammonite sites in the Bible with any certainty.

There is little archaeological and epigraphic support for the biblical statement that the territory of the Ammonite extended “from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan” (Judg 11.13). The best we can do is look at the evidence, and see Ammonite territory as comprising a small area such as that which Glueck, Kletter, and Hübner envision or a somewhat expanded territory such as that which Sauer and Herr posit. This latter position comes closest to Judg 11.13 (see fig. 10).

With the exceptions of Heshbon, Jazer and Rabbah, there is little firm evidence for the identification of Ammonite sites. More data is needed before convincing locations for Aroer, Minnith, and Abel-keramim can be announced.

The best information we have about the Ammonites is from the late Iron II period when Ammon was a vassal state of Assyria. This situation may have extended in time to the Babylonian and Persian domination of Transjordan. Little can presently be convincingly stated about the Ammonites during either the Iron I or early Iron II period. The Bible is thus probably describing the Ammonites as biblical writers knew them during the late Iron II Age.

NOTES

¹ The same reason is given to explain why the Israelites are not to take possession of Moabite territory (Deut 2.9). See Gen 19.30–38 on the origin of the Ammonites and Moabites.

² The term “Amorite” is a general rather than a specific designation for the pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land. The terms “Canaanite” and “Amorite” occur in the Old Testament with the same meaning (Noth 1960: 141 n. 1, 162; see also Sayce and Soggin 1979: 113–14).

³ Concerning Jazer as an Ammonite site, the NAB and NJB translation of Num 21.24b indicates that Jazer marked the Ammonite boundary/frontier. (The NRSV and REV, however, translate the text as “for the boundary of the Ammonites was strong” and “where the territory became difficult” respectively.) If their translation is correct, the site would have been, at least for a time, in Ammonite territory. Moreover, Josephus associates the city of Jazer with the Ammonites during the time of the Maccabean Wars (*Ant* 12. 329).

⁴ When early commentators such as Abel and Glueck refer to the “capital city” they mean what is now the city center. In their time (the 1930s and 1940s) the hills of Shmesani, Khilda, al-Jubeihah, and Abu 'Alanda were bare of structures (Abu Dayyah et al. 1991: 363). Today, due to rapid development, most of the sites to which they refer in the area of 'Amman have been destroyed.

CHAPTER 8

MOABITE TERRITORY AND SITES

INTRODUCTION

Information on Moabite territory and sites (fig. 11) comes from three sources: biblical texts, epigraphic material, and archaeology. The Mesha Inscription will be used as a supplement to the Bible in the attempt to delineate Moabite territory and identify Moabite sites.

MOABITE TERRITORY

Biblical writers insist that the Arnon is the northern boundary of Moab (Num 21.13; 22.36; Deut 2.18; Judg 11.18). They also note that Moabite territory south of the Arnon is what the Israelites either by-passed (Num 21.11; Judg 11.18), after requesting permission from the king of Moab and being refused (Judg 11.17), or passed through (Deut 2.8-9) on their journey from Egypt to the Plains of Moab (Num 22.1).

According to biblical texts, at the time of their settlement east of the Jordan, Israel took the land of the Amorites, that is, land “from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan” (Judg 11.22), not the land of the Moabites (Judg 11.15). At this time there was no war between Israel and Moab (Judg 11.25), though there was a struggle for land between Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon, and the Israelites.

Biblical writers restrict Moab to the territory south of the Arnon and thus avoid saying that Israel took Moabite territory. They are keeping God’s commandment to Moses not to harass the Moabites or engage them in battle since God will not give Israel any of the territory of Moab because it is the property of the descendants of Lot (Gen 19.37; Deut 2.9), the nephew of Abraham (Gen 12.5). This is the same attitude taken towards the territory of the Ammonites (Deut 2.19). Biblical writers acknowledge, however, that Moab once controlled territory north of the Arnon as far as Heshbon (Num 21.30). The Moabites lost this land, from Jazer to the Arnon, not to the Israelites but to the Amorites (Num 21.26).

Despite the biblical writers’ positions on Moabite territory, it is Moabites and not Amorites that we read about in the area immediately north of the Arnon. This supposedly former Amorite land, now said to be in Israel’s possession, is consistently referred to as the land of Moab. For the

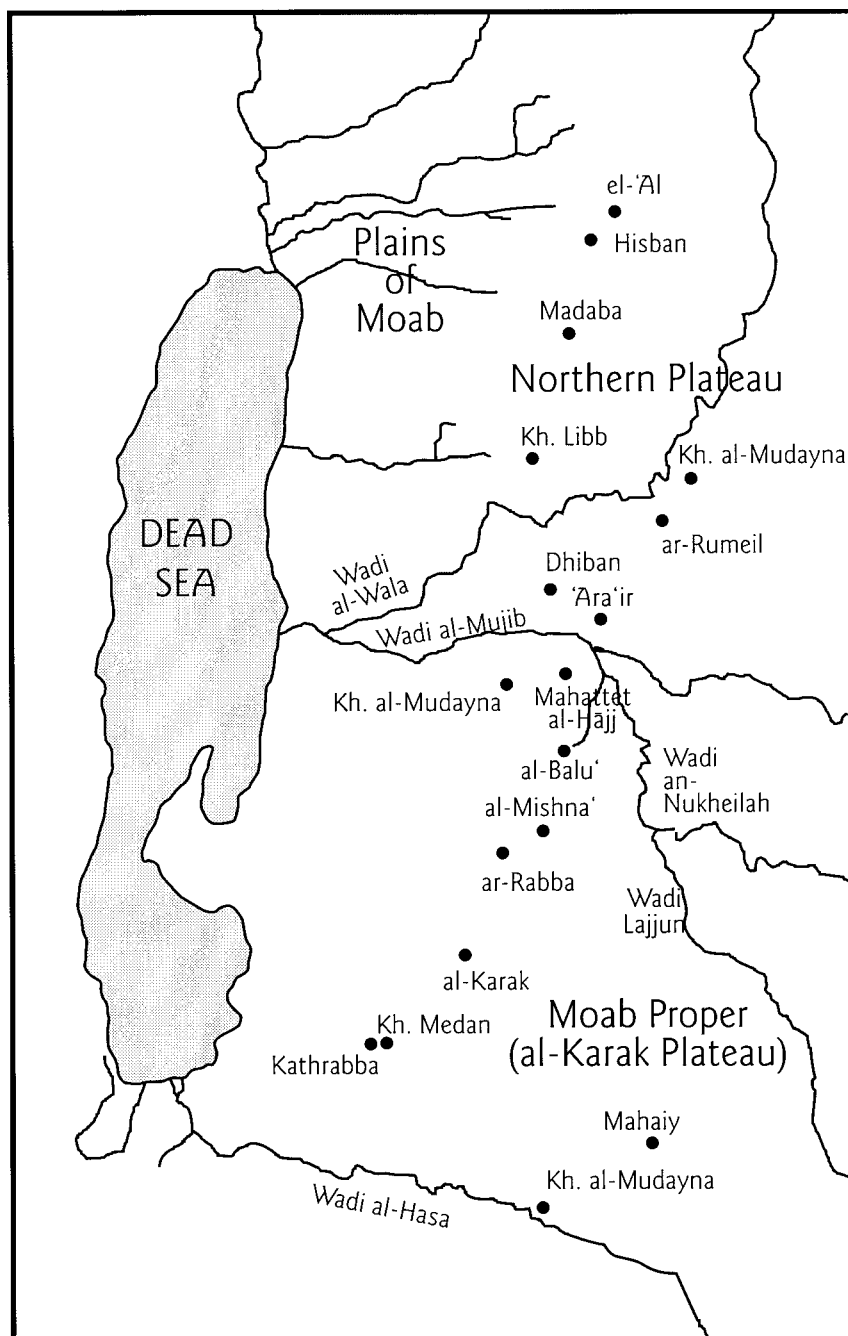


Fig. 11. Moabite Territory and Sites.

Israelites are said to have camped “in the Plains of Moab” (Num 22), that is, the fertile area to the east of the Jordan across from Jericho and immediately northeast of the Dead Sea (see Chapter 5). And it was here that Balak, the Moabite king, invited a Mesopotamian diviner to put a curse on the Israelites (Num 22.1-40). It is here, specifically at Shittim, that the men of Israel began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab (Num 25.1). Moreover, there must have been Moabites in the area since they are said to be in fear of the Israelites (Num 22.3). Clearly, biblical writers knew this area as Moabite territory.

During the period of the Judges of Israel, King Eglon of Moab is said to have taken possession of the city of palms, that is, Jericho (Judg 3.12-30). Upon the murder of Eglon, the Benjaminites do not pursue the Moabites east of the Jordan, that is, towards the Plains of Moab. At this time there is no mention of the Israelite tribes and/or Amorites east of the Jordan. Comments focus on ejecting the Moabites from territory only west of the Jordan River in the area of Jericho (de Vaux 1973: 118). In a story set in the same period, Naomi, her husband, and their two sons “went into the country of Moab and remained there” (Ruth 1.2). Later, Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth returned “from the country of Moab” (Ruth 1.22; 2.6). When Saul pursued David, the latter sent his parents to the king of Moab to keep them safe (1 Sam 22.3-4). The Book of Ruth provides no indication as to where in the land of Moab David sent his parents. It does not seem farfetched to suppose that the area the biblical writer had in mind is immediately north of the Arnon.

David is said to have defeated the Moabites and received tribute from them (2 Sam 8.2-3; 1 Chr 18.2). In fact, according to 2 Sam 24.5, the territory north of the Arnon was a Gadite possession during the time of David. Certainly, during the time of Omri and Ahab, kings of Israel, Moabite territory north of the Arnon was under Israelite control (2 Kings 1.1; 3.5; MI line 9). This was the situation until King Mesha of Moab, who ruled ca. 853-830 B.C., defeated the Gadites (2 Kings 1.1; MI line 9). Mesha states that the Gadites had lived in the land of 'Atarot forever (MI line 10). He took 'Atarot (MI line 11), Nebo (MI lines 16-17), and Jahaz (MI lines 18-19) from Israel. Indeed, the Mesha Inscription (Miller 1974; Drinkard 1989; Mattingly 1989) assumes that the territory north of the Arnon belonged to Moab and credits King Mesha with recovering it from Israelite control. Accordingly, the inscription has the vast majority of Moabite sites located north of the Arnon, including the capital city, Dibon (MI lines 1-2; Dearman 1989a). Moreover, the temple of Chemosh, the Moabite national god, is located in Qarhoh, a quarter of Dibon (MI line 3).

Despite biblical statements to the contrary, Moabite territory included land north as well as south of the Arnon. The territory on the plateau to the north extended, at least during the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah, as far as the sites of Elealeh (Isa 15.4; 16.9; Jer 48.34) and Heshbon (Isa 15.4; 16.8, 9; Jer 48.2, 34–35). It corresponded to what biblical writers call the "tableland" (*Mishor*) or "the tableland by Medeba" (Deut 3.10; 4.43; Josh 13.9, 16–17, 21; 20.8), and in the southeastern Jordan Valley, it included the Plains of Moab. In an earlier period, though, Israel occupied traditionally Moab land north of the Arnon. We do not read of Israel's possession of Moabite territory to the south of the Arnon, traditionally seen as extending to the Zered (= Wadi al-Hasa).

The southern segment of Moab's territory is relatively isolated. It is delineated by the Arnon on the north; the Zered to the south; the Dead Sea to the west; and the desert to the east. Northern Moab, on the other hand, is more open to outside influences.

From an archaeological point of view, insufficient work has been done in the territory both north and south of the Arnon to delineate precisely the extent of Moabite control during particular periods of the Iron Age. Ongoing work at Madaba (Bikai and Daley 1996; Harrison 1996a; 1996b; 1997; 1998) and Khirbat al-Mudayna on Wadi ath-Thamad (Fraser 1997; Daviau 1997) may clarify this situation in regard to northern Moab. The artifactual material from these two sites can now be viewed in relation to previous excavations immediately north of the Arnon at Dhiban, 'Ara'ir, and Lahun (Homès-Fredericq 1992; Homès-Fredericq et al. 1997) as well as to the excavations at Jalul, Hisban, and Tall al-'Umayri.

Daviau's present position is that the border between Ammon and Moab ran just south of Rujm al-Heri, an Iron II fortified settlement just 3 km north of Khirbat al-Mudayna (1997: 225–27). However, texts such as Isaiah 15–16 and Jeremiah 48 indicate that the border of Moab extended farther north to include Medeba, Nebo, Heshbon, and Elealeh within Moab sometime during the seventh century. South of the Arnon, important work delineating Moabite territory is ongoing at al-Balu' (Worschech 1986; 1989; 1990; 1996; 1997), Khirbat al-Mudayna al-Mu'arrajeh (Olávarri 1983), Khirbat al-Mudayna 'Aliya (Routledge 1995a; 1995b) both on Wadi Lajjun, and Khirbat al-Mudaybi' (Mattingly 1995; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c: 365–66).

MOABITE SITES

Moabite toponyms are found in Am 2.1–3; Isa 15.1–9; 6.1–11; Jer 48.1–47; and Ezek 25.8–11.

Texts

i) Amos 2.1–3: Amos reproaches Moab for burning the bones of the king of Edom (v 1). Details of this activity are not provided and no precise date can be given for the action. Unless the text is a later addition to Amos, the burning must have taken place before the second half of the eighth century (Mays 1969: 1; Wolff 1977: 89). Though the deed did not harm Israel, in the prophet's view the action was a crime against Yahweh (Mays 1969: 39–40). He says that as a result of this atrocity, Moab will be defeated militarily and lose its royal power (v(v) 2–3). With the exception of *Moab*, *Kerioth* (v 2) is the only toponym in the text.

ii) Isaiah 15–16: The devastation that Isaiah 15–16 describes was probably due to an incursion of groups from the desert that drove Moabite refugees toward the border of Judah (Watts 1985: 229, 232). Clements posits that there is no clear historical background for the prophecies and little basis for either asserting or denying an Isaianic origin to any of them (1980: 151; see also Holladay 1989: 348).

The chapters in Isaiah may be divided into three segments: i) 15.1–9, the night raid upon Moab and its consequences; ii) 16.1–5, the answer to the request for a place of refuge; and iii) 16.6–11, a lament upon the destruction of the vineyard of Moab (Kaiser 1974: 65–73). Isa 15.2c–7a and 16.6–11 = Jer 48.29–37 (see below). The three segments probably date to the beginning of Hezekiah's reign ca. 718 B.C. (Watts 1985: 228–29).

iii) Jeremiah 48.1–47: Chapter 48 of Jeremiah appears to be a sequence of three oracles: a) v(v) 1–13; b) v(v) 14–38; and c) v(v) 39–45. Later editors expanded each part, especially verses 14–38, with material from Isaiah 15–16. The first half of Jeremiah 48 consists of material only found here while the second half contains many repetitions and reminiscences about Moab found elsewhere, including Isaiah 15–16; Isa 24.17–18; and Num 24.17; 21.28–29 (Holladay 1989: 347). Jeremiah is clearly dependent on the Isaian text (Watts 1985: 229; see also Holladay 1989: 348).

The oracle of Jeremiah against Moab finds its place, along with those against Philistia, Ammon, Edom, and so forth, in the years of his proclamation, that is, the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth centuries B.C. Jeremiah insists that Moab, along with Judah, will suffer destruction at the hands of the Babylonians (Holladay 1989: 364).

iv) Ezekiel 25.8–11: In Ezekiel's oracle (25.8–11), Moab is given into the hands of the same people of the east as were summoned against Ammon (25.3–7; Zimmerli 1983:15). The chronological setting is clearly post-587

B.C. Ezekiel tells Moab that her fortresses will not avail against Yahweh's onslaught while her eastern frontier will be overrun by the nomadic tribes of the desert (Allen 1990:68).

Site Identification

Moabite toponyms found in Am 2.1–3; Isa 15.1–9; 6.1–11; Jer 48.1–47; and Ezek 25.8–11 are: 1) Ar (Isa 15.1); 2) Arnon (Isa 16.2); 3) Aroer (Jer 48.19); 4) Beer-elim (Isa 15.8); 5) Beth-diblathaim (Jer 48.22); 6) Beth-gamul (Jer 48.23); 7) Beth-jeshimoth (Ezek 25.9); 8) Beth-meon (Jer 48.23) and Baal-meon (Ezek 25.9); 9) Bozrah (Jer 48.24); 10) Dibon (Isa 15.2, 9; Jer 48.18, 22); 11) Dimon (Isa 15.9); 12) Eglaim (Isa 15.8); 13) Eglath-shelishiyah (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.34); 14) Elealeh (Isa 15.4; 16.9; Jer 48.34); 15) Heshbon (Isa 15.4; 16.8, 9; Jer 48.2, 34, 45); 16) Holon (Jer 48.21); 17) Horonaim (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.3, 5, 34); 18) Jahaz (Isa 15.4; Jer 48.34)/Jahzah (Jer 48.21); 19) Jazer (Isa 16.8, 9; Jer 48.32); 20) Kerioth (Am 2.2; Jer 48.24); 21) Kir (Isa 15.1) which possibly = Kir-hareseth (Isa 16.7) and Kirheres (Isa 16.11; Jer 48.31); 22) Kiriathaim (Jer 48.1, 23; Ezek 25.9); 23) Luhith (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.5); 24) Madmen (Jer 48.2); 25) Medeba (Isa 15.2); 26) Mephaath (Jer 48.21); 27) Nebo (Isa 15.2; Jer 48.1, 22); 28) waters of Nimrim (Isa 15.6; Jer 48.34); 29) Sela (Isa 16.1); 30) Sibmah (Isa 16.8, 9; Jer 48.32); 31) Wadi of the Willows (Isa 15.7); and 32) Zoar (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.34; and possibly 48.4).

Many of these sites have been identified and treated in previous chapters: Ar/Ir of Moab, used both to designate the capital city of Moab and Moab itself (Chapter 5); Aroer = 'Ara'ir (Chapter 5); Beer-elim/Beer, some undetermined watering place in northern Moab (Chapter 5); Beth-diblathaim/Almon-diblathaim = Khirbat ad-Deleilat al-Garbiyya (Chapter 5); Beth-jeshimoth = Tall al-'Azeimeh (Chapter 5); Beth-meon and Baal-meon, unidentified though the name is probably preserved at Ma'in (Chapter 6); Dibon = Dhiban (Chapter 5); Elealeh = Khirbat El-'Al (Chapter 5); Heshbon = Tall Hisban (Chapter 5); Jahaz/Jahzah = Khirbat al-Mudayna on Wadi ath-Thamad or Khirbat ar-Rumeil (Chapter 6); Jazer = Khirbat al-Jazzir (Chapter 6); Kiriathaim = location unknown (Chapter 6); Madaba = Medeba (Chapter 6); Mephaath = Umm ar-Rasas (Chapter 6); Nebo = Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Chapter 5); Sibmah = location unknown (Chapter 6); Wadi of the Willows = Wadi al-Hasa (Chapter 4); and Zoar = an undetermined site at the southeast end of the Dead Sea (Chapter 4).

i) Beth-gamul (Jer 48.23): Beth-gamul is associated with ten other sites in Jer 48.21–24. All appear to be located in the tableland, and there does not seem to be any geographical order to the sites in the list.

The toponym *Beth-gamul* may be translated as “house of reward” (Rowley 1970: 34), a meaning that does not help in its location. On toponymic grounds Beth-gamul is generally identified with Khirbat al-Jumeil (Glueck 1934: 36; Simons 1959: 450; Van Zyl 1960: 75–76; Abel 1967, 2: 359, 272; Rowley 1970: 34; Aharoni 1979: 432; Clements 1980: 152; Dearman 1989a: 194–95; Elitzur 1989: 271; Holladay 1989: 359), a site located 12 km east of Dhiban in an area suitable for dry-land farming on the eastern edge of the plateau in northern Moab.

Glueck describes Khirbat al-Jumeil as an extensive ruin consisting of a number of low mounds and numerous cisterns, where he collected characteristic Iron I–II Age pottery, some of which he labels Moabite (1934: 36). Recent sherding at the site has found no pottery earlier than the Iron II period (Ji 1997: 499).

Toponymic and archaeological evidence supports Khirbat al-Jumeil as the location of Beth-gamul.

ii) Bozrah (Jer 48.24)/Bezer (Deut 4.43; Josh 20.8; 21.36; 1 Chr 6.78): The Bozrah of Jer 48.24 appears to be Bezer, a city of refuge among the cities of the Reubenites (Deut 4.41; Josh 20.8) and a Levitical town out of the same tribe (Josh 21.36; 1 Chr 6.78). It is certainly not the Edomite capital (Am 1.12; Mic 2.12; Jer 49.13, 22). It appears to be ruined Beser, which Mesha is said to have rebuilt (MI line 27) (Dearman 1989a: 186).

In Josh 20.8, Bozrah/Bezer is said to be “in the wilderness on the tableland” while in 1 Chr 6.78 it is described as being “in the steppe.” Similarly, Jer 48.24 places it in the tableland. The text suggests one should search for the site in the eastern segment of the tableland between Diban in the south and the Madaba region in the north.

The Hebrew word *bozrah* means a fortified place (Gray 1902: 3317; Borée 1968: 51, 108), suggesting a military connection at the site.

The site of Bozrah is generally identified with Umm al-'Amad, located ca. 13 km northeast of Madaba (Simons 1959: 207; Van Zyl 1960: 91–92; Abel 1967, 2: 264; Aharoni 1979: 433; Holladay 1989: 360). Although Glueck reports finding only “several worn EI I–II sherds” among those he collected at the site (1934: 33), Ibach assesses the site as major during the Iron Age (1987: 23–24, 160–67). This, along with its size and location in a wheat-growing area, is support for identifying Umm al-'Amad with Bozrah.

Jalul, located ca. 5 km to the east of Madaba and the largest tall in the region, may be a better candidate for the location of Bozrah (Dearman 1989a: 186). Support for its candidacy comes from the fact that it is more closely related to the traditional territory of Reuben than is Umm al-'Amad. Moreover, ongoing excavations have produced evidence for Iron Age occupation at the site. To date, excavators have found significant numbers of Iron I sherds and some architecture from the same period. Additional architectural remains, including a gate complex and figurines similar to those from the 'Amman area, are dated to the Iron II period (Younker et al. 1993; Herr et al. 1994: 157–63; 1996: 71–75). While there is no direct evidence that Tall Jalul is biblical Bozrah/Bezer, it, along with Umm al-'Amad, is a serious candidate for the site.

iii) Eglaim (Isa 15.8): On the basis of biblical information, Eglaim appears to be a site on Moab's frontier. Eusebius knew of a place called "Aigalleim" 8 Roman miles south of Areopolis at ar-Rabbah (36: 19–21). Abel thinks the name of the Byzantine site is preserved at Rujm al-Gilimeh, 12 km from ar-Rabbah and close to al-Karak (1967, 2: 310–11; see also Simons 1959: 436; Watts 1985: 231). This would fit Eusebius' description of the site's location. Aharoni, however, tentatively locates the site at modern Mazra'a on the east side of the Lisan Peninsula (1979: 35). Clements, while positing the location of the site is uncertain, says it should be looked for in the northwest of the country (1980: 153). Mattingly argues that the site should be located near one of Moab's boundaries, at the extreme opposite of Beer-elim (1992d: 319). As yet, the site has not been found.

iv) Eglath-shelishiyah (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.34): The expression "Eglath-shelishiyah" means "third Eglath" [or Egla] possibly signifying "third heifer" (Holladay 1989: 362). Simons, however, thinks the first segment of the name, Eglath, is "wholly intelligible" and that Shelishiyah "suggests a distorted, inserted marginal gloss, not a place name" (1959: 436). Holladay holds that the toponym refers to a place in the region of the southeast coast of the Dead Sea (1989: 362) while Watts (1985: 231) argues the site is not identifiable. The toponym, if indeed it is one, is repeated in Jer 48.34. This is no help since the Jeremiah text is dependent on Isa 15.5 (see above), and it must be concluded that the location of Eglath-shelishiyah is unknown.

v) Holon (Jer 48.21): The biblical text locates Holon in the tableland along with Jahaz/Jahzah, Mephaath, and eight other sites. Albright argues, on philological grounds, for the identification of Holon with Khirbat 'Alin (1924: 11) and reports Iron Age pottery from the tenth–sixth centuries B.C. at

the site (1925: 9). In agreement with Simons (1959: 449) and Holladay (1989: 359), the position taken here is that the location of the site remains unknown.

vi) Horonaim (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.3, 5, 34): The Hebrew word *Horonaim* is a dual form meaning “the two hollows” (Gray 1902: 3319) or “holes” (Simons 1959: 436). The toponym *Horonaim* appears as Hauronan in the MI (lines 31–32) (Lipinski 1978: 238–40) as a place Mesha claims to have captured.

Horonaim appears to be a route used by Moabite refugees, possibly fleeing towards the Judean border, which provided access to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea and neighboring land. In this context, Isa 15.5 associates Horonaim with Luhith and “the waters of Nimrim.” Isa 15.5 refers to “the road to Horonaim” while Jer 48.5 speaks of “the descent of Horonaim.” A Nabataean inscription from Madaba and a Hebrew contract from the time of Bar Kokhba place Luhith in the southwest quadrant of the Moabite plateau, probably along a road descending from the plateau to circle around the south end of the Dead Sea (Dearman 1992a: 289). Because they provide access to the southeastern segment of the Dead Sea, Khirbat al-Meidan (Dearman 1992a: 289); 'Ai (Dearman 1992a: 289); al-'Iraq (Simons 1959: 436; Aharoni 1979: 436 and Holladay 1989: 355 [the latter two tentatively]); Kathrabba (Dearman 1992a: 289); and Khirbat ad-Dubab (Van Zyl 1960: 64–65) are suggested as the location of Horonaim, as is al-Karak, to the north (Jones 1991: 23; see also Baly 1974: 231). More recently, ad-Dayr, located much farther north on an isolated peak around 4 km northwest of Rakin, has been proposed as Honoraim (Worschech and Knauf 1986: 82; Knauf 1991: 28). Despite this proposal, the most probable location of “the road to Horonaim” or “the descent of Horonaim” is a route from the plateau, possibly from al-Karak, to the southeast plain of the Dead Sea. Thus, al-Karak is a suitable candidate for the location of Horonaim.

vii) Keriioth (Amos 2.2; Jer 48.24). According to Amos 2.2, the strongholds of Keriioth will be devoured. In the Jeremian oracle, Keriioth is one of the towns of Moab upon which judgement has come (48.24).

Mesha states that he brought booty from Ataroth to a sanctuary of Chemosh at Keriioth (MI line 13) (Lipinski 1978: 239). In this case, Keriioth refers to the city of Dibon.

The singular form *kiryah* appears to mean “meeting place” (Gray 1902: 3317) while the plural form *Keriioth* means simply “city” (Knauf 1992a: 602). For this reason, Keriioth and 'Ar, the capital city, are seen as identical since both are dialectal variants of words meaning “city” (Mayes 1969: 39; Andersen and Freedman 1989: 289). Consequently, commentators, myself

included, understand Amos 2.2 to identify Kerioth as a capital city in the prophet’s time (Holladay 1989: 359).

viii) Kir (Isa 15.1)/Kir-hareseth (Isa 16.7)/Kir-heres (Isa 16.11): Based on the meaning of *kir* as “city,” several commentators identify Kir/Kir-hareseth/Kir-heres with the capital city of Moab, which they locate in the upper Wadi al-Karak at what is today al-Karak = Kir-hareseth of Isa 16.7 (Simons 1959: 435; Watts 1985: 230–31) and Kir-heres of Isa 16.11 (Clements 1980: 152). However, there is no convincing evidence that al-Karak was ever the capital city of Moab, though it would certainly have been important during the Iron and other periods to monitor traffic in the wadi by the same name. In fact, the capital city could have been either at Dhiban, as was the case in the time of Mesha, or at ar-Rabbah, strategically located on the King’s Highway.

ix) Luhith (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.5): Luhith and Honoraim are associated in the devastation that overcomes Moab. It is “at the ascent of Luhith,” a route for flight south to Edom (Simons 1959: 436; Watts 1985: 231), that the fugitives weep (Isa 15.5; Jer 48.5). Mittmann thinks Isa 15.5b–8 indicates that the “weepers” went up from the Dead Sea (1982: 177).

A Nabataean inscription from Madaba, dated to the 46th year of the reign of King Aretas IV or 37 A.D., mentions the toponym *Luhithu* (Simons 1959: 436; Mittmann 1982: 177), the site of a military camp whose function was possibly to protect the ascent of Luhith (Mittmann 1982: 177).

The several inscriptions found in a cave of Wadi al-Habra along the western shores of the Dead Sea are in Nabataean, Aramaic and Greek (Yadin 1962), and include a Hebrew contract dated to the time of Bar Kochba and referring to tenants living in 'Ayn-Gedi. Two of the tenants were originally from ha-Luhith which is said to lie by Mahoz-'Agaltain. Mahoza, which means “port” and which appears elsewhere in the document, is referred to as a village in the district of Zoar while 'Agaltain is probably the name of the region (Mittmann 1982: 178). Mittmann thinks the port in question was located in the northern bay of the Lisan Peninsula and Luhith must have been located in the 'Agaltain area (1982: 178).

That Eusebius (122: 28–29) knew of a region called Luith located between Areopolis (= ar-Rabbah) and Zoar does not help us locate Luhith; though they are both in the southern segment of Moab, the two sites are far apart.

On the basis of textual information and explorations along Wadi I'sal, Mittmann understands the “ascent of Luhith” to be an ancient roadway along the south bank of Wadi I'sal, joining the Moabite plateau in the area

of Kathrabba with the Ghor an-Numayra (1982: 180). Mittmann found the remains of both an Iron Age and a Nabataean fort on a plateau above Kathrabba (1982: 180). In Mittmann's opinion, this is the Nabataean military camp of Luhithu mentioned in the Madaba inscription as well as the location of biblical Luhith (1982: 180; see also: Holladay 1989: 356–57; Miller 1989b: 28).

There is no strong archaeological evidence for the identification of Luhith with Kathrabba. Mittmann (1982) reports no Iron Age pottery while Miller identified only one Iron II sherd at the site (1991: 109).

Van Zyl identifies Luhith with Khirbat al-Mudayna ar-Ras in the same general region as Kathrabba (1960: 64–65). There is no strong support, however, for occupation of the site in the Iron Age: Glueck found no Iron Age pottery there (1939: 88) and Miller reports only a single Iron II sherd at the site (1991: 149). Schotroff suggests Khirbat ad-Dubab in the same general area as the location of Luhith (1966: 207), and Miller reports Late Bronze–Iron II/Persian sherds at this site (1991: 148). Recent excavations, however, found no material earlier than Iron II pottery and it was “either out-of-context on the summit or in unstratified accumulations on the terraces” (Bienkowski et al. 1997: 70).

Despite the meager evidence of Iron Age occupation in the region of Kathrabba, Jacobs reports Iron II material at twenty-four sites in her survey of the south ridge of Wadi I'sal (1983: 262). This evidence indicates that the south bank of the wadi was probably used as a route from the Kathrabba region on the plateau to the southeastern plain of the Dead Sea during the Iron II period. This supports the conclusion that the ascent of Luhith was probably along Wadi I'sal and that Luhith was indeed located in the Kathrabba area.

x) Madmen/Dimon (Jer 48.2): The Hebrew word *Madmen* means “dung hill” and it is used in this sense in Isa 25.10 to describe the destruction of Moab. Aharoni suggests that as a toponym, *Madmen* is typical of place names derived from agricultural features (1979: 109).

For “Madmen,” Simons reads “Dimon” or “Me-Dimon” (1959: 449), the latter referring to the “waters of Dimon” (Simons 1959: 436–37). Following Musil (1907, 1: 157, 170), Simons sees the toponym “Dimon” preserved at Khirbat ad-Dimnah (1959: 436–37; see also Abel 1967, 2: 372; Rowley 1970: 11; Aharoni 1979: 439 [tentatively]; LaSor 1986a: 212), located at an altitude of 900 m and commanding access to the waters of Mgeysel, 4 km to the northwest of ar-Rabbah at the head of Wadi Ibn Hammad.

Miller refers to Khirbat ad-Dimnah as a modern village on an ancient settlement site, noting that the modern site has obscured all indications of ancient occupation. He identified only one sherd from the Iron Age at this location and very little in the way of Iron Age settlement in the general area (1991: 52–53). However, Worschech and Knauf discovered ruins to the southeast of the modern village (1986: 70–72). Among the ruins they found substantial evidence of Iron II occupation. The ancient name could have transferred from this site to the modern village, making the archaeological ruins a suitable candidate for biblical Madmen/Dimon.

Some commentators believe that both Madmen and Dimon are plays upon the toponym *Dibon/Diban* (see Holladay 1989: 355). They identify the site with Dibon (LaSor 1986a: 212; Holladay 1989: 355–56).

xi) Waters of Nimrim (Isa 15.6; Jer 48.34): The "waters of Nimrim" are said to be a "desolation" or "desolate" in Isa 15.6 and Jer 48.34 respectively, a clear reference to drought in Moab.

Eusebius identified the waters of Nimrim with Ben-namarin in the district of Zoar at the southeastern end of the Dead Sea (138: 20–21). Jerome placed it on the shores of the same sea with salt waters around it (139: 21–23).

Because of the similarity among Nimrim, Numayra, and Nimrah (of Beth-nimrah), the waters in question are often said to be either those of Wadi an-Numayra in the south or Wadi Nimrin, the western extremity of Wadi Shu'ayb, farther north (Ottosson 1969: 85; Mittmann 1982: 177). Because of the association of the waters of Nimrim with Horonaim and Luhith, the former appears to be the most probable identification (Simons 1959: 436; Abel 1967, 2: 399; Rowley 1970: 126; Clements 1980; Watts 1985: 231; LaSor 1986b: 537; Holladay 1989: 363; Ferch 1992c: 1116).

xii) Brook of the Willows/Gorge of the Poplars (Isa 15.7): This site is generally and properly identified with Wadi al-Hasa (Simons 1959: 52; Rowley 1970: 168; Baly 1974: 233; Clements 1980: 153; see Chapter 5).

xiii) Sela (Isa 16.1): The word Sela, meaning "rock," is indicative of the lofty situation of the site (Gray 1902: 3314). The rock in question does not appear to be the Sela associated with the territory of Edom (2 Kings 14.7; Jer 49.16; Ob 3; 2 Chr 25.12; see Chapter 9). Because of the nature of the terrain in both Moab and Edom, during the biblical period there must have been "numerous sites built on more or less isolated prominences and known by the name Sela'" (Glueck 1939: 26). A site in Moab called Sela has not been identified (Fanwar 1992: 1074).

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the identified sites in Isaiah 15–16 are located in northern Moab, that is, north of the Arnon. From this area Moabite refugees fled to the southeastern plain of the Dead Sea in the area of the western extremity of Wadi al-Hasa. The refugees used routes leading down along Wadis al-Karak and I'sal and then on towards Judah.

Since Jeremiah 48 is at least partly dependent upon Isaiah 15–16, the sites that can be identified with some confidence are all located in northern Moab, save, for example, Luhith, Honoraim, and Zoar, which are located in southeastern Moab. With the exception of Beth-jeshimoth, located in the Plains of Moab, the sites of Ezek 25.8–11 are also located in northern Moab.

It appears that biblical writers were well informed about Moabite sites north of the Arnon, if not about locations in southern Moab.

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CHAPTER 9

EDOMITE TERRITORY AND SITES

INTRODUCTION

Information relative to Edomite territorial possessions is found throughout the Old Testament. Supplemented by recent archaeological discoveries, this information will be used to delineate Edomite territory. Several biblical texts contain toponyms associated with the eastern segment of Edom, and must also be considered (fig. 12).

EDOMITE TERRITORY

Although some writers conveniently describe the territory of Edom as confined to the area between Wadi al-Hasa in the north, Wadi Hisma in the south, Wadi 'Arabah on the west, and the desert to the east (see, for example, Glueck 1970: 161–67; Aharoni 1979: 40), biblical texts appear to include land west of Wadi 'Arabah as Edomite territory. For example, Num 34.3–4 describes the southern border of Israel as extending “from the Wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom” while Josh 15.1–3 has the boundary of the tribe of Judah “reaching southward to the boundary of Edom, to the Wilderness of Zin at the farthest south.” Moreover, the hill country of Seir is identified with Edom (Gen 36.8–9, 21) and the land of Edom is repeatedly referred to as the land of Seir (Gen 32.3; Num 24.18; Josh 24.4; Judg 5.4; 2 Chr 25.14; Isa 21.11; Ezek 25.15). The Bible locates Seir partly in the eastern Negeb (Josh 11.17; 12.7) in relation to the territory of Simeon (1 Chr 4.42–43) and Judah (Josh 15.10; Ezek 35.2, 3, 7, 15). It also uses the name to refer to a great part, if not all, of Edomite territory east of Wadi 'Arabah between the south end of the Dead Sea and the territory of Moab (Deut 2.1, 4, 5, 8, 12, 22, 29) as far south as the Gulf of al-'Aqaba.¹ The land of Edom thus included, at least in certain periods, territory west as well as east of Wadi 'Arabah.

Edomite culture has been elucidated by excavations south of Wadi al-Hasa and east of Wadi 'Arabah at such Iron II sites as: Busayra (Bennett 1973a; 1973b; 1974; 1975; 1976: 252; 1977), Feifeh (N. Lapp 1994), Ghrareh (Hart 1987a; 1987b; 1988), Khirbat an-Nahas (Fritz 1996), Tall al-Khalayfi (Glueck 1938a; 1938b; 1939b; 1940; 1965b; 1970: 106–37; Pratico 1982; 1983; 1985), Tawilan (Bennett 1969; 1970; 1971; 1976; 1984;

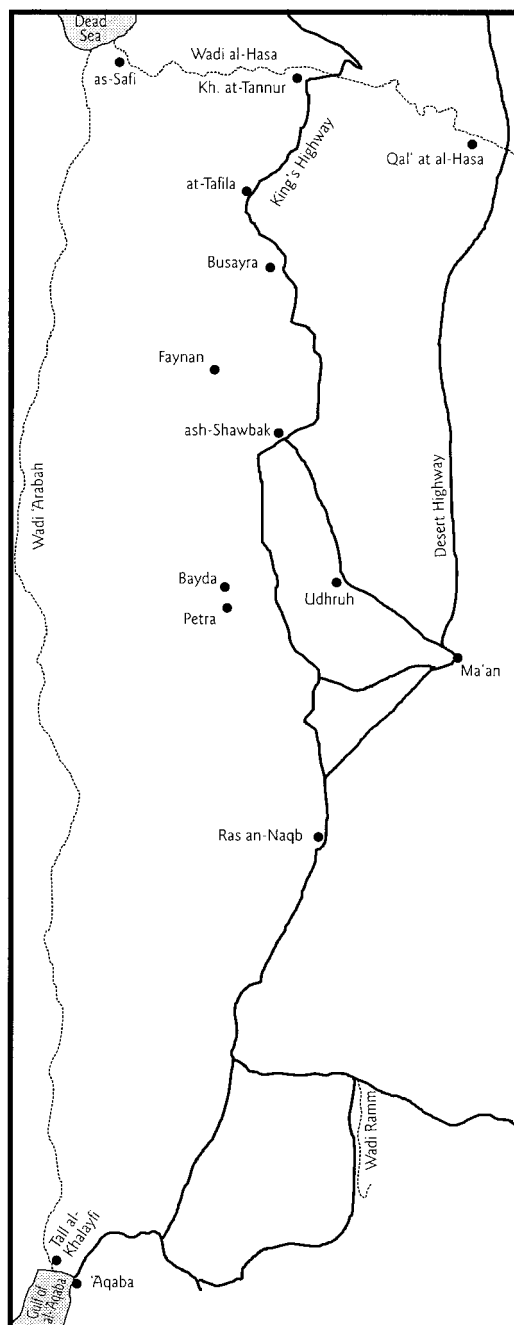


Fig. 12. Edomite Territory and Sites.

Bennett and Bienkowski 1995), and Umm al-Biyara (Bennett 1964; 1966a; 1966b; 1966c; 1976: 252). Pottery (Oakeshott 1983), ostraca, seals and seal-impressions identified as Edomite have come from these sites. For example, Bennett uncovered a clay bulla bearing the name “Qaus-gabr, king of Edom,” one of the Edomite kings mentioned in the Assyrian annals of Esarhaddon (Pritchard 1969: 291). She also found a short ostrakon during her excavation of Umm al-Biyara while Glueck uncovered three ostraca from Tall al-Khalayfi. This epigraphic material indicates the Edomites used a regional variant of the Northwest Semitic script and language.

West of Wadi 'Arabah Edomite cultural material, dating from the eighth to early sixth centuries, has been uncovered at a number of sites, namely, Tel Aroer, Tel 'Ira, Tel Malhata, Horvat Qitmit, and 'En Hatzeva (Beit-Arieh 1995a; Dever 1998: 48–49). Biran and Cohen have unearthed both a seal and an ostrakon at Tel Aroer that contain personal names with the theophoric element *Qos*, the Edomite deity (Biran 1982; Biran and Cohen 1976). On the basis of more than eight hundred cult stands, bowls, figurines, reliefs, and three incomplete inscriptions bearing the theophoric element *Qos*, Beit-Arieh has identified Horvat Qitmit as an Edomite shrine (1995b; 1996). Kochavi (1993: 936) has defined as Edomite 25% of all the pottery from the end of the Iron Age at Tel Malhata, 5 km away. 'En Hatzeva, located around 35 km southeast of Horvat Qitmit in Wadi 'Arabah, is another indication of Edomite presence east of the 'Arabah. The site produced a large variety of ceramic vessels with a cultic character that closely parallels the repertoire of Horvat Qitmit. Moreover, a seal uncovered at the site is inscribed in Edomite script. Other evidence for Edomite presence in the Negeb comes from Ostrakon No. 24 from Arad (Aharoni 1981). Aharoni interprets the document as a summons from the fortress commander at Arad for immediate military reinforcement at Ramat Negeb to defend it against possible Edomite attack. A second ostrakon from Horvat 'Uza, written in Edomite script and dated to the beginning of the sixth century, seems to indicate that it was sent by one Edomite in a position of authority to another, who was at the fortress of Horvat 'Uza or some other site nearby (Beit-Arieh and Cresson 1985; Beit-Arieh 1995b).²

The conclusion to be drawn from this evidence is that Edom included territory both east and west of Wadi 'Arabah. The evidence of Edomite presence in the latter region is dated to the end of the Iron II period (see, for example, Beit-Arieh 1995a: 33).

Texts

Genesis 36, which characterizes Edom as a land in which there were kings before any king reigned over the Israelites (v 31), contains a number of toponyms, namely, Dinhabah (v 32), Bozrah (v 33), the land of the Temanites (v 34), Avith (v 35), Masrekah (v 36), Rehoboth-on-the-River (v 37), and Pau (v 39). Several of these, including Avith, Masrekah and Pau, reappear in 1 Chronicles 1.

Vawter posits that some of the Edomite material in Genesis 36 may be attributed to the Priestly writer's zeal in assembling ancient material and that some of it may reasonably be construed as Edomite rather than Israelite tradition (1977: 366). The editing of the material, whether by the Priestly author or a redactor, is in Vawter's opinion neither thorough nor serious (1977: 366). Knauf (1988) argues for a date for the list no earlier than the sixth century, reasoning that it reflects a situation in the Persian period when Bozrah, Teima, Dedan, and Tall al-Khalayfi were the main centers of government. Bartlett dates the list somewhat earlier, in the reign of Uzziah/Azariah, king of Judah during the first half of the eighth century (2 Kings 14.22), when Edom was a hostile neighbor on the border of Judah and thus of increased interest and concern to Judah (1989: 101).

There is no evidence that Edom possessed any form of monarchical government, dynastic or otherwise, before the ninth–eighth century B.C. Gen 36.31–39 (1 Chr 1.43–50) cannot, therefore, refer to an earlier period. Bozrah, the capital city of Edom, did not exist as an important city before the eighth century B.C. and so its inclusion in the list cannot date before this time. Archaeological remains at other Edomite sites, both east and west of the 'Arabah, also date no earlier than this time.

EDOMITE SITES

Cities or lands associated with “the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites” (Gen 36.31) include Dinhabah, the land of the Temanites, Avith, Masrekah, Rehoboth-on-the-River, and Pau (Gen 36.32–39). In addition, there are the “clans of Esau, according to their families and their localities by their names” (Gen 36.40). The clan names are Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram (Gen 36. 41–43).

In addition to the above toponyms, such names as Sela, Tophel, and Uz are associated with Edomite territory east of Wadi 'Arabah.

A number of the sites considered to be in Edomite territory east of Wadi 'Arabah have been treated previously (see Chapter 5). These include Elath/'Ailon/Elot/Ailath (Deut 2.8; 1 Kings 9.26; 2 Kings 16.5; 2 Chr 8.17; 26.2), Ezion-geber (Num 33.35; Deut 2.8; 1 Kings 9.26; 22.49; 2 Chr 8.17; 20.36), Obboth (Num 21.10; 33.43), and Pinon/Punon (Gen 36.41; Num 33.42–43; 1 Chr 1.54). The toponym *Elath/'Ailon/Elot/Ailath* may lie behind the personal name Elah of Gen 36.41 (Vawter 1977: 375; Bartlett 1989: 46).

i) Avith (Gen 36.35; 1 Chr 1.46): There is no clear candidate, either in Edom or elsewhere, for the site of Avith. Abel identifies it with Khirbat al-Gitte which he locates between Ma'an and al-Basta (1967, 2: 257). Bartlett, on the other hand, following Burckhardt's contention that some hills on the eastern segment of the Moabite plateau were called al-Ghoweythe (1822: 374–75), connects Avith with Moab rather than with Edom. While admitting the identification is far from certain, Bartlett sees this connection as not inconsistent with information in Gen 36.35 to the effect that Avith was the city of Hadad, the son of Bedad, "who defeated Midian in the country of Moab" (1989: 45). Burckhardt's contention is not corroborated by later explorers and thus Knauf (1992d: 530) thinks there is insufficient evidence to speculate about a Moabite origin for the Edomite king Hadad son of Bedad whose city was Avith. The location of Avith is therefore presently unknown (see, for example, Simons 1959: 220).

ii) Bozrah (Gen 36.33; Isa 34.6; 63.1; Jer 49.13, 22; Am 1.12; 1 Chr 1.44): The toponym *Bozrah* means a fortified place and thus refers to the defensive character or feature of the site (Gray 1902: 3317). The identification of the site with the modern town of Busayra, ca. 12 km south of at-Tafila, is generally accepted (see, for example, Seetzen 1854–55, 3: 19; Glueck 1934: 83; Simons 1959: 220; Abel 1967, 2: 287; Aharoni 1979: 433; Bennett 1976; Bartlett 1989: 45–46, 89; Hart and Hübner 1992: 774).

The ancient, as well as the modern, site is located on a projecting spur that has steep ravines in the north, west, and east and is only accessed easily from the south. In addition to its natural defenses, the ancient site is surrounded by a strong wall 6.8 m wide. The site is located just west of the modern highway, which is often referred to as the King's Highway of the Bible (Num 20.17; 21.22), and on routes leading west down into Wadi 'Arabah. It is thought that one reason for the site's location was the copper mines and smelting sites below and to the southwest in Wadis Fidan, Faynan, and Dana (Abel 1967, 2: 287).

Bennett's excavations at the site between 1971 and 1974 revealed an acropolis area with evidence of occupation from the eighth to fifth centuries (Bennett 1973a; 1973b; 1974; 1975; 1977; 1982). Her work supports the identification of Bozrah as the capital of Edom.

iii) Dinhabah (Gen 36.32; 1 Chr 1.43): Dinhabah is said to be the city of Bela son of Beor who reigned in Edom. Eusebius, who locates it in Moab rather than in Edom, places it at either Dannaia, that is, Khirbat ad-Denneh, eight Roman miles north of Ar-Rabba, or at Danaba, at the seventh milestone from Heshbon (76: 10–12). However, there is no archaeological support for either identification (see, for example, Miller 1991b: 43–44 for the former and Ibach 1987: 16 for the latter). The identifications are probably based on an assumed connection between Bela son of Beor, associated with Edom, and Balaam son of Beor, connected to either Moab or Gilead, who was summoned to Balak, the king of Moab (Num 22.2; 24.25) (Bartlett 1989: 96–97). On toponymic grounds but without conviction, Abel thinks the site of al-Basta, near Bir Denne and Wadi Abu Denne, between Ma'an and Petra ('Iraq al-Ganubiye) 12 km to the southwest of ash-Shawbak, may be biblical Dinhabah (1967, 2: 305). Knauf finds none of these identifications satisfactory on both historical and linguistic grounds (1992e: 200). As Simons argues (1959: 220), the location of Dinhabah remains unknown.

iv) Magdiel (Gen 36.43; 1 Chr 1.54): Magdiel is said to be the name of one of the clans of Esau as well as the clan's location (Gen 36.43).

Eusebius, understanding the clan name Magdiel as also a toponym, places it without further comment in Gebalene (124: 22–23), that is, in the northern segment of eastern Edom between Wadi al-Hasa and ash-Shawbak known presently as al-Jabal (Bartlett 1989: 39).³ The site's location is otherwise unknown (Bartlett 1989: 48).

v) Masrekah (Gen 36.36; 1 Chr 1.47): Masrekah is said to be the seat of Samlah, the successor of Hadad and one of the "kings" who reigned in Edom (Gen 36.36; 1 Chr 1.47). The texts do not give its location other than to indicate it is in the land of Edom.

Eusebius locates Masrekah in the Gebalene region (124: 18–19). Abel finds the name preserved in the toponym Jabal al-Mushraq, which is located ca. 36 km southsouthwest of Ma'an near the Nabataean site of at-Telage/Khirbat at-Telajeh (1967, 2: 380–81). Simons accepts this area as the approximate location of Masrekah (1959: 221), and it is probably the best identification of the site.

vi) Mibzah (Gen 36.42; 1 Chr 1.53): Mibzah (MT; LXX Mazar) is the name of one of the clans of Esau but also the clan's location (Gen 36.43).

Eusebius identifies it with Mabsara, a large village of his time located in Gebalene and dependent on Petra (124: 20–21). Simons (1959: 221), however, following Abel (1967, 2: 386), connects the toponym with the *'ir mibsar*, that is, “fortified city,” of Ps 108.10 and understands it as probably referring to Bozrah, the fortress city of the Edomites. This is a valid conclusion.

vii) Pau/Pa'i/Phogor (Gen 36.39; 1 Chr 1.50): Pau is the city of Hadar/Hadad, another one of the earliest Edomite “kings” (Gen 36.39). The MT of 1 Chr 1.50 has *pa'i* while the LXX has *Phogor*. Eusebius renders the toponym *Phogor* (168: 7) which is also the Greek version of the Hebrew *Peor* in Moab (Num 23.28; 25.18; 31.16; Josh 22.17). Bartlett is tempted to think of Pau as derived by error from the well-known Peor in Moab (1989: 49, 97). If this is not the case, the location of the site is unknown (Bartlett 1989: 49). Hübner (1992b: 186) follows Eusebius and locates the site in the region of Gebalene without further precision. Little more can presently be done to identify the site.

viii) Rehoboth-on-the-River (Gen 36.37; 1 Chr 1.47): The Hebrew word *rehoboth* means literally “plazas.” As a toponym it means “spacious/broad place” (Borée 1968; Knauf 1992f: 664).

The NRSV and REV translate the *han-nahar* of Rehoboth-on-the-River as “the Euphrates” while the NAB reads literally “Rehoboth-on-the-River.” The NJB has “Rehoboth-ha-Nahar” with no attempt to translate the *han-nahar*. Thus, the meaning of the toponym is not of help in locating the site. Most commentators have nevertheless sought to find Rehoboth on Wadi al-Hasa rather than on the Euphrates.

Eusebius identifies Rehoboth in his time as a military garrison in Gebalene (142: 13–14), perhaps identifying it with the military station Robatha near Zoara, known from the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Seeck 1876: 73) and Byzantine sources (Abel 1967, 2: 434; Bartlett 1989: 50–51), and located on the Madaba Mosaic Map at the southeast end of the Dead Sea (Donner and Cüppers 1977).

Simons, who understands the “river” in the toponym to be Wadi al-Hasa (1959: 92), sees the name preserved in the mountain, wadi and archaeological remains at 'Ayn Rihab. However, he locates the site at Khirbat Musrab since in his opinion Khirbat ar-Rihab, first reported by Glueck (1935: 101), is too insignificant to be Rehoboth's location (1959: 221).

I found Iron Age sherds at Ras Rihab (= Glueck's Khirbat er-Rihab) (MacDonald 1988: 8, 168–70, 179–80) and there is a spring in the area known today as 'Ayn Rihab (MacDonald 1988: 180). Though both Bartlett

(1989: 51) and Knauf (1991b: 35; 1992f: 664) find the identification doubtful, the area of Ras Rihab is a suitable candidate for the location of Rehoboth-on-the-River (see Zwickel 1985: 33–34).

ix) Sela (2 Kings 14.7; 2 Chr 25.12; Isa 42.11; see also Jer 49.16 and Ob 1.3): King Amaziah of Judah (2 Kings 14.7) (or the people of Judah [2 Chr 25.12]) is said to have killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm (2 Kings 14.7; 2 Chr 25.12). Isaiah has people from as far away as Sela singing for joy at God’s glorious victory (42.11). And God is to bring down the people that live in the “clefts of the rock,” a reference to the Edomites or Sela (Jer 49.16; Ob 1.3).

The Hebrew word *Sela*’ means rock, and picturesquely indicates the lofty situation of a town or natural feature in the neighborhood (Gray 1902: 3314).

In the mountainous area of Edom east of the ‘Arabah, many locations can be described by the term *Sela*. The two most frequently seen as the location of biblical Sela are as-Sila’ (Seetzen 1954–55, 1: 425; Starcky 1966: 886; Baly 1974: 237; Aharoni 1979: 441; Bartlett 1989: 52), between at-Tafila and Busayra, and Umm al-Biyara in Petra (Glueck 1934: 77; 1939: 26, 82; Simons 1959: 364, 437; Abel 1967, 2: 453; Rowley 1970: 146; Moon 1971). The choice of as-Sila’ is based on its proximity to Bozrah, the Edomite capital, and on the fact that it is much more accessible than Umm al-Biyara (Bartlett 1989: 123). It is especially accessible from Judah via the eastern end of the Dead Sea and wadis leading southeastward from there. Moreover, Hart has collected Iron Age II pottery from the site (1986c: 93; see also Lindner 1989a; 1989b). Hart does not approve either site and seeks a third possibility for Sela’s location in the region of Bozrah (1986c: 93). Nonetheless, based on its accessibility and archaeological evidence, modern as-Sila’ is an excellent candidate for biblical Sela.

x) Teman/the land of the Temanite(s) (Gen 36.11, 15, 34, 42; 1 Chr 1.36, 45, 53; Jer 49.7, 20; Ezek 25.13; Am 1.12; Ob 1.9; Hab 3.3; Bar 3.22, 23; Job 2.11; 4.1; 15.1; 22.1; 42.7, 9): Teman is the name of a son of Eliphaz and grandson of Esau (Gen 36. 11; 1 Chr 1.36). It is also the name of one of the clans of Esau (Gen 36.15, 42; 1 Chr 1.53). Husham, one of the early “kings” in Edom was from “the land of the Temanites” (Gen 36.34; 1 Chr 1.45). A number of oracles speak about the devastation God will bring against Teman (Jer 49.20; Ezek 25.13; Am 1.12; Ob 1.9). Habakkuk says “God came from Teman” (3.3), which was reputed for its wisdom (Bar 3.22, 23; Jer 49.7). And Eliphaz, one of the three friends of Job, is a Temanite (Job 2.11; 4.1; 15.1; 22.1; 42.7, 9).

The meaning of the Hebrew word *Teman*, “south,” suggests its general location. Eusebius knew Teman as a region of Edom (96:18).

Glueck identified Teman with Tawilan, a village site just outside Petra (1935: 82–83; see also Rowley 1970: 162) while Simons tentatively matched it with ash-Shawbak (1959: 90). A number of commentators have followed Simons (Cresson 1964: 4–5; Moon 1971). De Vaux has proven, however, that Teman is not used in the Bible as the name of a particular city but is employed frequently to designate a region of Edom, that is, the land of the Temanites (Gen 36.34), which etymologically refers to the southern part of Edom (1969). De Vaux has also pointed out that in the prophetic books, Teman is a poetic designation for the entire land of Edom (1969), a position generally followed today (Bartlett 1989: 40; Bienkowski 1990b: 97; Knauf 1992g: 347; Day 1994: 393).

xi) Tophel (Deut 1.1): Moses is said to have spoken to all Israel beyond the Jordan, on the plain opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel (Deut 1.1), which is generally associated with the Plains of Moab across from Jericho (Num 33.48; 36.13). Following the biblical text, Eusebius locates Tophel in the desert of Transjordan across from Jericho (98: 2–3).

Toponyms such as Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab are thought to refer to sites along the wilderness journey between Paran (= Feiran in the Sinai [Aharoni 1979: 197 map 13, 440]) and the plain immediately northeast of the Dead Sea. On toponymic grounds, some commentators have identified Tophel with at-Tafila, immediately south of Wadi al-Hasa and thus in the northern segment of Edomite territory east of the 'Arabah. Most sites in the list, however, have been identified with places in the Sinai (Bartlett 1989: 53). Cazelles connects Tophel with a region in Moab rather than with at-Tafila because the names' initial consonants differ (1959). Our conclusion must be that the site of Tophel remains unknown.

xii) The land of Uz (Jer 25.20; Lam 4.21; Job 1.1): Uz (Gen 36.28) is listed as a grandson of Seir the Horite who formerly lived in the land of Edom (Gen 36.21; see also Deut 2.12). “All the kings of the land of Uz” (Jer 25.20) are listed in Jer 25.17–26 among those kings and nations, including Edom (Jer 25.21), upon whom God's judgement is to come. This is repeated in Lam 4.21–22 where “O daughter Edom” is said to “live in the land of Uz.” Job lived “in the land of Uz” (1.1) to which the Sabaeans, who are connected with northern Arabia (Bartlett 1989: 41), came to raid (Job 1.15). On the basis of the above textual evidence, the land of Uz is frequently identified with Edom or as the name of a region/district of Edom (Vawter 1977: 371). Day's study (1994: 392–99) placing Uz in southern

Edom near the Arabian border (1994: 394) clearly supports this identification.

CONCLUSIONS

Edomite territory is located both east and west of Wadi 'Arabah, though our interest here is in the eastern segment and its associated sites. Biblical texts provide little precise geographical information for identifying Edomite sites.

NOTES

¹ In the Targums, Seir is the entire mountains of Edom, located east of the 'Arabah (Alexander 1974: 184–85).

² The assumption here is that material culture in general reflects ethnicity and that “ethnic labels,” where attested to by textual evidence, are permissible in proper historical method (Beit-Arieh 1995a; Dever 1998: 46). On this basis, Edom can be said to have extended its territory east of the 'Arabah in the Iron II period.

³ In the Targums, the northern part of Edom is called Gebalene (Alexander 1974: 248).

CHAPTER 10

GILEAD TERRITORY AND SITES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the meaning of the term “Gilead”/“the hill country of Gilead”/“the land of Gilead” (fig. 13). It deals with toponyms that include Gilead in their name, and considers the sites in Gilead mentioned in 1 Maccabees 5.

TERRITORY

In biblical texts, the term “Gilead”/“the hill country of Gilead”/“the land of Gilead” has both a narrow and a broad sense. It can mean land south or north of the Jabbok River, or encompass territory both south and north of the river.

In the Song of Deborah (Judg 5.2–31), one of the most ancient texts on Israelite tribal union (de Vaux 1973: 64), Gilead is said “to have stayed beyond the Jordan” (Judg 5.17) rather than joining in the Israelite battle against the Canaanite Sisera. In this case, the term could refer to a tribe that eventually disappeared to be replaced by Gad, and/or to a region (de Vaux 1973: 64; Weippert 1997: 32). Similarly, in the Jephthah story (Judg 11.1–12.6), which relates an incident between political entities, namely, Gileadites and Ammonites in Transjordan, Gilead signifies an autonomous entity in the mountain zone of the western segment of the Transjordanian plateau to the north of as-Salt and south of the Jabbok (Weippert 1997: 24–25). Khirbat Jel’ad was the ancient center of the region of Gilead as well as of the tribe by the same name (de Vaux 1967; Weippert 1997: 32).

During the time of Saul, the term “Gilead” must have been used to include territory north of the Jabbok since reference is made to Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam 11.1; 31.11; *et passim*), traditionally located north of this river. In the list of Solomon’s administrative districts (1 Kings 4.7–19), Ben-geber is an administrator who has his “residence” in Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 4.13), which is also located north of the Jabbok, while Ahinadab is at Mahanaim (1 Kings 4.14).

The “hill country of Gilead” is where Laban caught up with his son-in-law Jacob who fled Paddan-aram for the land of Canaan (Gen 31.17–25). It was here that Jacob and Laban concluded a covenant and called the

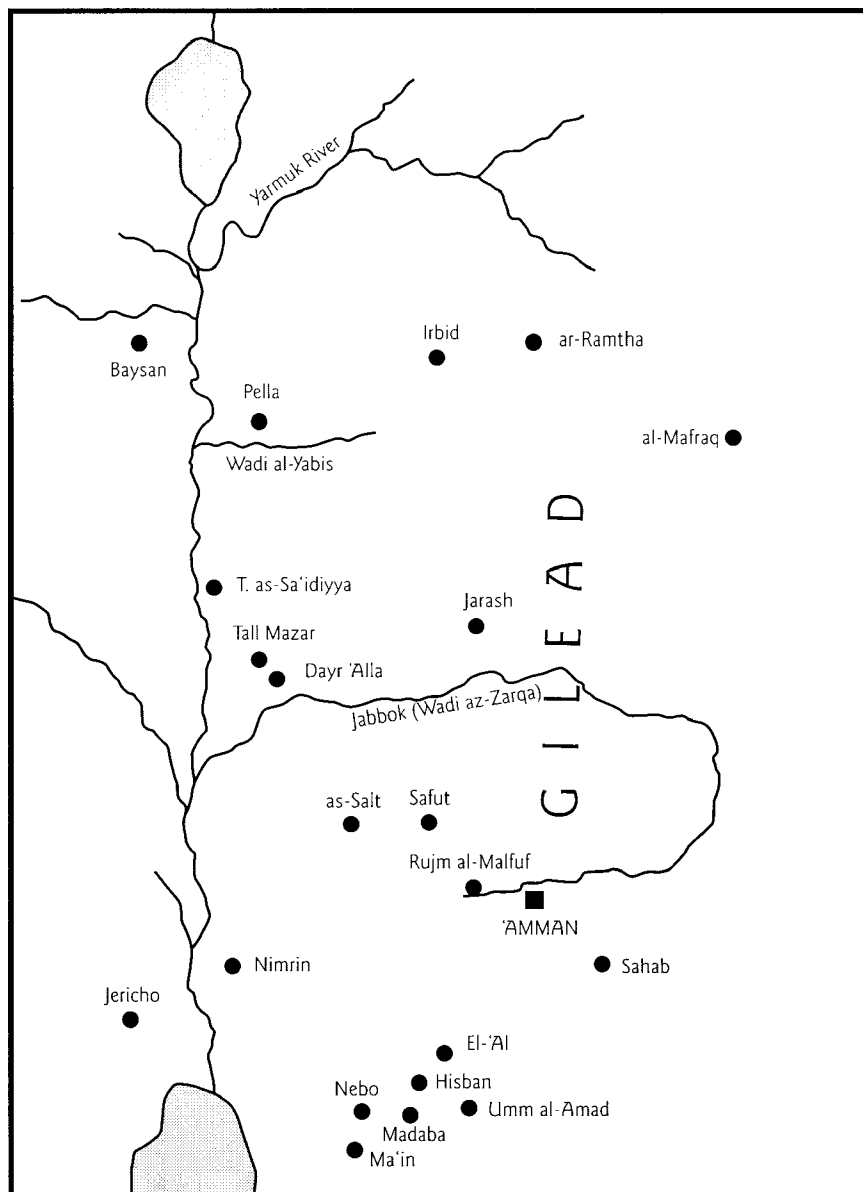


Fig. 13. Gilead, North and South of the Jabbok.

place *Jegar-sahadutha* (Aramaic) while Jacob called the place *Galeed* (Hebrew) (Gen 31.47–48), both meaning “heap of stones.” Jacob called the pillar, which he set up on this occasion as a witness to the treaty, Mizpah (Gen 31.45, 49), that is, “watchpost,” and the place is known as Mizpah-gilead. The story reflects a boundary covenant between the Arameans and Israelites, both of whom laid claim to the area in Transjordan (Gen 31.51–52) (de Vaux 1973: 125; Vawter 1977: 342–43). De Vaux thinks the “hill country of Gilead” in Gen 31. 21, 23 and 25 refers to Jabal Jel’ad, that is, the hill country south of the Jabbok (de Vaux 1973: 133). However, it is hard to envisage the biblical writer conceding land so far south to the Arameans when the general tendency is to expand Israelite holdings in Transjordan at the expense of such groups as the Ammonites and Moabites. It would appear that the “hill country of Gilead” in Genesis 31 refers to an area north of the Jabbok. This is not difficult to justify since such places as Ramoth-gilead and Jabesh-gilead are located in the northern segment of Gilead.

Num 32.1–5 describes the land of Gilead, along with the land of Jazer, as a good place for cattle and a place that Reuben and Gad desired (see Chapter 6). In this text, Gilead must mean an area south of the Jabbok since all the places mentioned in Num 32.3, as well as in Num 32.34–38 (a list of towns that the Gadites and Reubenites rebuilt; see Chapter 6), are generally acknowledged to be in the region between the Arnon and the Jabbok (Budd 1984: 343).

Num 32.39–40 states that “the descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead” and “Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of Manasseh” (see also Deut 3.15 and Josh 17.6). Here, the reference is to Gilead located north of the Jabbok (de Vaux 1967: 127; Budd 1984: 343).

Deut 3.12–13 and Josh 12.2–5 refer to two halves of Gilead divided by the Jabbok. According to the former text, the Reubenites and Gadites took possession of “the territory north of Aroer ... as well as half the hill country of Gilead with its towns” (v 12) while the half-tribe of Manasseh took possession of “the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, Og’s kingdom” (v 13). In the latter text, the rule of the Amorite king Sihon who lived at Heshbon extended from Aroer on the edge of Wadi Arnon as far as Wadi Jabbok or “half of Gilead” (v 2), while the territory of King Og of Bashan included “over half of Gilead to the boundary of King Sihon of Heshbon” (v 5). On the basis of these texts, it is evident that the Jabbok divides Gilead into two halves (Simons 1959: 37; Abel 1967, 1: 276; Ottosson 1969: 83; 1992: 1020; Baly 1974: 219, 221; Aharoni 1979: 37).

Relative to an expanded understanding of Gilead, Deut 34.1 uses the term to describe the land that the Lord showed Moses from the top of Pisgah: Moses is described as seeing "Gilead as far as Dan." The term Gilead is used here to refer to the territory in Transjordan that Israel traditionally claimed (Simons 1959: 37), that is, territory both south and north of the Jabbok. Josh 22.9 uses "the land of Gilead" as parallel to "the land of Canaan." In this instance, "the land of Gilead" means all of Israelite Transjordan, that is, territory both south and north of the Jabbok (Noth 1966: 62; de Vaux 1967: 127; Braun 1986: 76)

1 Maccabees 5 deals with Judas and Jonathan Maccabeus' defensive and punitive measures against the Gentiles in 163 B.C. There are many references in the chapter to Gilead (v(v) 9, 25, 27, 36, 45, and 55) and its towns, namely, Dathema (v(v) 5, 9), Bozrah (v(v) 26, 28), Bosor (v(v) 26, 36), Alema (v 26), Chaspho (v(v) 26, 36), Maked (v(v) 26, 36), Carnaim (v(v) 26, 43, 44), Maapha (v 35), and Ephron (v 46; see also 2 Macc 12.27). Most of these sites are located north of the Yarmuk and thus outside The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In this context, Gilead refers to territory in what is now northern Jordan and southern Syria. Some commentators point out, however, that in the description of these encounters, archaic titles appear, for example, "Jacob" (v 2), "Esau" (v 3), and "Ammonites" (v 6). The biblical writer wants his readers to know that Judas and Jonathan Maccabeus and their followers are engaged in a struggle similar to that of David in order to establish their claims or rights to an ancient heritage.

It can clearly be seen that the term Gilead is not used precisely in the Bible. Originally it designated territory in the region between as-Salt and the Jabbok. Over time, it came to designate the area north of the Jabbok as well. Thus, it can designate all the territory of Israel east of the Jordan River from the Arnon in the south to the Yarmuk in the north. In 1 Maccabees 5 the term even includes parts of what is today southern Syria. Generally, though, Gilead designates the mountainous region from the Yarmuk River in the north to Wadi Hisban in the south, excluding Bashan to the north of the Yarmuk and the *Mishor* to the south of Hisban. Here the land is divided into two halves, both called Gilead, separated by the Jabbok. The halves correspond today to the 'Ajlun region to the north, and northern Belqa (= al-Balkha) to the south of the Jabbok (Simons 1959: 37; Noth 1966: 13–14; de Vaux 1967: 127). The meaning of the term changes according to the domination and aspirations of Israelite tribes east of the Jordan (Ottosson 1969: 199).

The restricted meaning of the term is probably the more primitive one (Grollenberg 1956: 150; Noth 1966: 62; 1959: 25–26; de Vaux 1967: 127;

Mittmann 1970: 212). According to Numbers 32, the tribe of Gad settled in the country of Gilead, that is, between the Arnon and the Jabbok (Noth 1968: 237). But the territory of Gad did not originally extend north of the Jabbok, the ideal limit given to the kingdom of Sihon to which Gad is the inheritor. Today, the mountainous region between as-Salt and Wadi az-Zarqa is called Jabal Gilead, where the name survives in the modern Jabal/Khirbat/'Ayn Jel'ad (Simons 1959: 38; Noth 1959: 21; 1966: 62; 1968: 237; Gray 1967: 134; de Vaux 1967: 128). The territory of Heshbon, including both the country of Jazer (Wadi Shu'ayb basin to as-Salt) and the country of Gilead (Jabal Gilead, from as-Salt to Wadi az-Zarqa) (de Vaux 1967: 28–29), corresponds to the territory of Gad.

GILEAD SITES

The several sites associated with the name Gilead include Mizpah and Mizpah-gilead; Ramoth-gilead; Jabesh-gilead; and Tishbe. Moreover, Wadi Cherith (1 Kings 17.3, 5) is associated with Elijah of Tishbe in Gilead while Elisha, the successor of Elijah, comes from Abel-meholah (1 Kings 19.16). In 1 Maccabees 5, there are nine other sites said to be towns of Gilead: Dathema (v(v) 9, 29); Bozrah (v(v) 26, 28); Bosor (v(v) 26, 36); Alema (v 26); Chaspho (v(v) 26, 36); Maked (v(v) 26, 36); Carnaim (v(v) 26, 43, 44; see also 2 Macc 12.21, 26); Maapha (v 35); and Ephron (v 46). There are also two towns, Caspin (2 Macc 12.13) and Charax (2 Macc 12.17), which are generally placed in this region of Gilead. However, Ephron and Charax may be located in the Land of Tob rather than in Gilead. Since Bozrah and Bosor are located in southern Syria they will not be treated here.

i) Mizpah (Judg 10.17; 11.11, 34) and Mizpah of Gilead (Judg 11.29): Mizpah and Mizpah of Gilead appear prominently in the Jephthah story (Judg 10.6–12.7). They are frequently assumed to be the same place. In the story, the Israelites or perhaps only the Gileadites camped in Mizpah (Judg 10.17), where there was a sanctuary to Yahweh (Judg 11.11), while the Ammonites camped in Gilead (Judg 10.17). It was from Mizpah of Gilead that Jephthah went out against the Ammonites (Judg 11.29). After his victory, he returned to his home at Mizpah (Judg 11.34).

The Hebrew term *Mizpah* means “watchpost” (Gray 1902: 3318) or “vantage point” (Knauf 1992a: 602). It thus provides general topographical information insufficient to pinpoint its location. The addition of Gilead to the toponym gives no more than a very general indication of the location of Mizpah.

Consequently, identification of Mizpah is difficult. Some commentators locate it at Khirbat Jel'ad (Noth 1966: 62; Abel 1967, 2: 390; de Vaux 1967: 131–33; 1973: 125; Baly 1974: 224) while Noth locates it "in the modern *reshuni*, a few miles northwest of Gilead" (1960: 158; see also his 1968: 237). Simons supports the latter position: "There are no adequate data for a precise localization of MIZPAH situated close to GILEAD but the ancient settlement of er-reshuni, west of hirbet gel'ad would answer the requirements" (1959: 229–30). Mittmann, however, locates Mizpah at al-Misrefe near Khirbat Jel'ad (1970: 217 n. 27) while Boling thinks its "location is uncertain but is surely to be sought in the vicinity of Jebal jel'ad and Khirbet jel'ad, south of the Jabboq" (1975: 199).

On the basis of the biblical account dealing with the life and deeds of Jephthah, Glueck would place Mizpah north of the Jabbok. However, he is not able to find any particular site for the location of Jephthah's home (1943: 14). Following Glueck, Lemaire would also place the site north of Wadi Jabbok in the region of Suy, perhaps at Tall al-Masfa, which is located to the northwest of Jarash on the main route to Pella and Wadi al-Yabis (1981: 44).

Unlike de Vaux (1967: 132; 1973: 131–32) and Simons (1959: 230), who see the Mizpah of the Jephthah and Jacob stories as the same place, Glueck places the Mizpah of Jacob in northern Gilead and so does not think the two sites are necessarily the same place (1943: 16).

In support of the location of Mizpah at Khirbat Jel'ad, both Glueck and de Vaux describe the ruins at Khirbat Jel'ad as located on top of a very high hill. According to Glueck, the ruins consist of the remains of medieval Arabic and modern buildings along with a Roman mausoleum situated at the southwest end of the hill. Near the bottom of the hill, on the northwest side, Glueck reports an extensive Roman necropolis. His report indicates cave-cisterns and masses of Byzantine and medieval Arabic sherds along with some Roman and a small quantity of clear Early Iron I–II sherds (1939a: 231–32). De Vaux adds to this description the discovery of several ancient fragments, in particular the base of a column and, on the north flank of the hill, the remains of a rampart. His collected pottery includes some Iron Age and even more Hellenistic and Roman pieces (1938: 416–17). Relative to the location of Mizpah at ar-Rashune, there is no convincing archaeological evidence of its occupation during the Iron Age.

Despite the available evidence, there is no convincing, identifiable location for Mizpah/Mizpah of Gilead. Neither is there proof of its location north or south of the Jabbok. Biblical writers probably did not know exactly where the site was and thus gave it a generic name.

ii) Ramoth-gilead/Ramoth in Gilead (Deut 4.43; Josh 20.8; 21.38 [1 Chr 6.80]; 1 Kings 4.13; 22.3, 4, 6, 12, 15, 20, 29 [2 Chr 18.2, 3, 5, 11, 14, 19, 28]; 2 Kings 8.28 [2 Chr 22.5]; 2 Kings 9.1, 4, 14): Ramoth-gilead/Ramoth in Gilead served as the capital of the sixth Solomonic province (1 Kings 4.13). It was a border town that the Arameans took from Israel in the mid-ninth century, and which the latter, with help from Judah, attempted to recapture during the time of Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22; 2 Chr 18). Ahaziah and Joram, kings of Judah and Israel respectively, waged war against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-gilead (2 Kings 8.28; 2 Chr 22.5). The Syrians wounded Joram there (2 Chr 22.5). At Ramoth-gilead Elisha fomented the revolution of Jehu against Joram (2 Kings 9). The site, “belonging to the Gadites”/“out of the tribe of Gad,” was both a city of refuge (Deut 4.43; Josh 20.8; 21.38) and a Levitical city (Josh 21.38; 1 Chr 6.80).

The Deuteronomistic History relates Ramoth-gilead to Manasseh in Gilead and Argob in Bashan (1 Kings 4.13), suggesting it is located in the north.

The Hebrew *ramoth* means “heights”/“high places”; combined with “Gilead” it should refer to prominent or well-known heights in the region of Gilead. We should look for a site that meets this description.

Eusebius locates Ramoth-gilead on the Jabbok (146: 4–5), probably incorrectly (Glueck 1951: 96 n. 219) since biblical texts seem to place the site north of the Jabbok.

The *ramoth* of Ramoth-gilead appears to be preserved in both the names of the modern town of ar-Ramtha (Smend 1902:158; Hölscher 1906), on the present Jordanian-Syrian border, and the archaeological site of Tall ar-Rumeith (Glueck 1943: 12; 1951: 99–100; Simons 1959: 121, 207), just south of the border. Partly for this reason, commentators have often opted for one or the other as the biblical site’s location.

There is also archaeological support for choosing Tall ar-Rumeith, situated in the fertile plain area just to the southeast of the junction of the 'Amman-Damascus and Irbid-Mafraq highways, as the location for Ramoth-gilead. Glueck reports large numbers of Iron Age I–II sherds at the site (1951: 98). P. Lapp, who sounded the site in 1962 (1963) and excavated it in 1967 (1967; 1968), found that the earliest strata (VIII–V) with ceramic groups whose typology is Syrian date to the tenth–eighth centuries B.C. He posits a massive destruction of the site at the end of Stratum V after which it was not reoccupied until the second century B.C. (P. Lapp 1967; 1968; see also Sauer 1985: 212 and N. Lapp 1989; 1997). The site was primarily a

fort rather than a major settlement (N. Lapp 1989; 1997). Peterson's random sherd collection at Tall ar-Rumeith leads him to affirm the occupation of the site during the eighth century B.C. (1980: 599–600). Thus, the site is frequently identified with biblical Ramoth-gilead (see, for example, Glueck 1943; 1951: 98–99; Noth 1959: 50–51; 1966: 62; Simons 1959: 21, 207; Ottosson 1969: 32–34, 217–18; Mittmann 1970: 225; Oded 1970: 180; Aharoni 1979: 441; Mayes 1979: 159; Peterson 1980: 596–600; Sauer 1985: 212; LaSor 1988: 40; Dearman 1989a: 164; Weinfeld 1991: 232; N. Lapp 1997: 444).

Ar-Ramtha, a modern and ancient site located on an important east–west road between Dera'a and Irbid, as well as on the north–south highway between Damascus and 'Amman, is another candidate for the location of Ramoth-gilead. Glueck reports Iron Age I–II sherds on the east side of the low rise on which the present town sprawls (1943: 11; 1951: 97).

One difficulty with the identification of Ramoth-gilead with Tall ar-Rumeith is the smallness of the site (Lemaire 1981; N. Lapp 1997: 444). It was most probably not much more than a mudbrick fort, measuring roughly 37 × 32 m, and some houses (N. Lapp 1997: 445). An argument against the identification of ar-Ramtha with Ramoth-gilead is its location. For these reasons, and despite the fact that there is no relation between the ancient and modern names, several commentators, myself included, have sought the site at a more imposing location, choosing Tall al-Husn, a large primarily artificial mound located south of Irbid at the northern edge of the 'Ajlun mountains overlooking the vast plain to the north and northeast, as perhaps the best choice for Ramoth-gilead (Albright 1929; Abel 1967, 2: 430–31; de Vaux 1967: 132; Lemaire 1981; Kallai 1986; Weippert 1997: 33). Tall al-Husn is by far the most important site in the area and guarded the approaches to the most fruitful areas of Gilead from the Hauran (Glueck 1951: 96). Glueck reports masses of Iron Age pottery on its surface (1951: 96). Further, Leonard's examination of waterpipe trenches at the tell turned up Iron Age material, while his sounding at one trench uncovered pottery from the same period, "perhaps more specifically Iron II" (1987: 359, 369, 388–89).

iii) Jabesh-gilead (Judg 21.8, 9, 10, 12, 14; 1 Sam 10.27; 11.1, 3, 5, 9, 10; 31.11, 12, 13; 2 Sam 2.4, 5, 12; 21.12; 2 Kings 15.10, 13, 14; 1 Chr 10.11, 12): Jabesh-gilead first appears as the place from which the Israelites procured four hundred young virgins for the men of the nearly-extermiated tribe of Benjamin (Judg 21.8–14). It seems to be outside the land of Canaan (Judg 21.12). To Jabesh-gilead fled seven thousand men

who had escaped from the eye-gouging Nahash, king of the Ammonites (1 Chr 10. 27). Nahash besieged the place (1 Sam 11.1) and Saul came as its deliverer (1 Sam 11.11). When the Philistines killed Saul and his sons and hung their bodies on the wall of Baysan, the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, after traveling all night long (1 Sam 31.12), stole the bodies, burned them at Jabesh-gilead, and buried their bones under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh (1 Sam 31.13; compare with 1 Chr 10.11–12). When David was anointed king over the house of Judah, he was told the men of Jabesh-gilead buried Saul (2 Sam 2.4). Subsequently he asked for a blessing upon the inhabitants of the city (2 Sam 2.5), and took the bones of Saul from the citizens of Jabesh-gilead, burying them in the tomb of Saul's father Kish at Zela in the territory of Benjamin (2 Sam 21.12–14).

It is thought that the toponym *Jabesh*, which means “dryness of the ground” (Gray 1902: 3314) or “well-draining soil” (Edelman 1992a: 594), is preserved in the *yabis* of Wadi al-Yabis (Van Kasteren 1890: 211; Aharoni 1979: 34, 288; Edelman 1992a: 594). The site is accordingly sought near this wadi.

As the word *Gilead* in the toponym *Jabesh-gilead* indicates, the site is located in the land of Gilead. This is not particularly helpful since Gilead included territory both south and north of the Jabbok.

Jabesh in Gilead appears to have been outside and north of Ammonite territory (1 Sam 11.1), a night's march from Baysan and outside Philistine territory (1 Sam 31.11, 12; 1 Chr 10.11, 12). However, biblical texts provide no precise location for the site.

Josephus provides the general information that Jabesh-gilead is a “metropolis” in Gilead (*Ant* 6.5.1). Eusebius locates Jabesh-gilead in the mountains at a village called Iabeis Galaad in the vicinity of the sixth milestone from Pella on the Roman road to Gerasa (= Jarash) (110: 11–13).

Attempts to locate Jabesh-gilead are heavily influenced by Eusebius' statement about the site's location. Thus the site is frequently located at Tall al-Maqlub (Merrill 1818: 440; Noth 1953b; 1959: 49–52; 1960: 167 n. 3; 1966: 62; Simons 1959: 315; Ottosson 1969: 195–96; Mittmann 1970: 214; Aharoni 1979: 379, 437; Lemaire 1981: 44–45; 1987: 49 [tentatively]; Briend 1990: 18; Edelman 1984; 1992a: 594–95; Hübner 1992a: 169) or Dayr Halawa/ad-Dayr (Robinson 1856: 319; Steuernagel 1927: A.156; and Abel 1967, 2: 352), the hill-site immediately westsouthwest of Tall al-Maqlub and overlooking Wadi al-Yabis from the south.

Archaeologically, there is evidence of Iron Age I and II occupation at Tall al-Maqlub when the site was a large fortified town and the neighboring

hillsides were first terraced for agriculture (Mabry and Palumbo 1988: 278; 1997: 366). However, neither Glueck (1951: 223–24) nor the Wadi al-Yabis Survey (Mabry and Palumbo 1988: 279; Palumbo 1994: 2.66–67) report remains earlier than the Roman period at Dayr Halawa/ad-Dayr.

Despite Eusebius' statements on the location of Jabesh-gilead, commentators frequently place it at Tall al-Meqberekh and/or its twin site of Tall Abu al-Kharaz, located 300 m to the east (Glueck 1951: 268–75; 1943b; McKenzie 1965: 407; see also Baly 1981: 442). The tells are located just north of Wadi al-Yabis at the eastern edge of the Jordan Valley and ca. 4 km from the Jordan River. Tall Abu al-Kharaz, the higher of the two sites, provides an excellent view of Baysan. Excavations and survey work at the site have documented Late Bronze I–II and Iron II remains (Fischer 1991; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996; Mabry and Palumbo 1988), while soundings at Tall al-Meqberekh have uncovered 3 m "of stratified Late Bronze and Iron Age deposits" (Palumbo et al. 1993: 307; see also Mabry and Palumbo 1988 and Palumbo and Mabry 1992: 7).

Older identifications for Jabesh-gilead include Khirbat Miryamim (Merrill 1881: 325; Oliphant 1881: 160–61, 174) and Kufr Abil (Van Kasteren 1890: 211–12), neither of which is currently accepted.

Relative to the archaeological remains, there is no reason to choose the twin sites of Tall al-Meqberekh and Tall Abu al-Kharaz over Tall al-Maqlub as the location of Jabesh-gilead. Since all three sites were occupied during the Iron Age, the identification of Jabesh-gilead with Tall al-Maqlub stands and falls with Eusebius' statement.

iv) Tishbe in Gilead (1 Kings 17.1; 21.17, 28; 2 Kings 1.3, 8; 9.36): The ninth century prophet, Elijah, was a Tishbite from Tishbe in Gilead (1 Kings 17.1)

Tishbe in Gilead is frequently located at either Listib/al-Istib in the northwest 'Ajlun mountains (van Kasteren 1890: 207–11; Lemaire 1981: 44) or at Khirbat Umm al-Hedamus which lies 2 km to the east (Mittmann 1970: 222 n. 34, 230 n. 59 [tentatively]; Thiel 1990: 134). The former identification is based on the suggestion of a metathesis between the Hebrew *Tishbe* and the Arabic *al-Istib* (Glueck 1951: 226; see Abel 1967, 2: 486). There is the popular association of the name Elijah with the vicinity of Listib, as evidenced in the toponym *Mar Ilyas*, located about 0.50 km to the southeast of Listib (Glueck 1951: 226).

One difficulty with locating Tishbe at Listib/al-Istib is that the site was almost certainly not occupied before the Roman-Byzantine period (Glueck 1951: 218; Simons 1959: 360; Mabry and Palumbo 1988: 279).

However, Mittmann thinks the name could have moved to Listib/al-Istib from Khirbat Umm al-Hedamus (1970). Archaeological support for Mittmann's position comes from the Wadi al-Yabis Survey's 1989 surface collection and 1990 sounding of the site (Palumbo 1992: 25–32). This work confirmed Mittmann's (1970: 68) reading of the surface pottery as Iron Age, the major period of occupation, especially the ninth century (Palumbo 1992: 32). Glueck believes the connection of Elijah with Listib and the nearby site of Mar Ilyas may rest upon the memory that the prophet was at home in this region (1951: 218, 227). Simons asserts that "at best ... listib and mar eljas may be taken as approximate indications of the location of TISHBEH" (1959: 360). Ottosson is less certain, stating only that "Elijah's home probably lay in northern Gilead" (1969: 34). This is probably the best assessment possible given current data.

v) Wadi Cherith (1 Kings 17.3, 5): After God's announcement to Ahab about a drought in Israel, God told Elijah to hide by "Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan" (1 Kings 17.3, 5). There, at least for a time during the drought, Elijah drank from the wadi and ravens fed him (1 Kings 17. 6, 7).

The Hebrew word *cherith* means "cutting." This is not very helpful in locating Wadi Cherith since there are several deep-cut wadis flowing westward to the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression from both northern and southern Gilead (see Chapter 3).

The expression "east of the Jordan" in 1 Kings 17.3, 5 probably refers to territory outside Ahab's jurisdiction, since the king wanted to meet and be reconciled with the prophet in order to bring the drought to an end (1 Kings 18.7–16). Eusebius' vague statement that Wadi Cherith is across the Jordan (174: 16) probably indicates that he did not know the wadi's location.

The wadi in question is often tentatively identified with Wadi al-Yabis since Elijah was from Tishbe, which is frequently located in that region of Gilead (Abel 1967, 1: 484–85; Ottosson 1969: 230 [tentatively]; Rowley 1970: 45; Briend 1990: 8; Younker 1992b: 899). Glueck identifies Wadi Cherith "with one of the easternmost branches of the Wadi el-Yabis in the highlands of North Gilead" (1951: 219), while Simons writes, "there are no data allowing us to identify the nahal in question, as long as no trace of its proper name has been found" (1959: 360). This is a sound conclusion.

vi) Abel-meholah (Judg 7.22; 1 Kings 4.12; 1 Kings 19.16): Gideon's forces surprised the Midianites and the latter fled "as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererath, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath" (Judg 7.22). In conjunction with such well-known sites as Taanach, Megiddo,

Baysan, and Jezreel, Abel-meholah next appears as part of Solomon's fifth administrative district (1 Kings 4.12). It is also the place from which comes Elisha, the successor of Elijah (1 Kings 19.16).

The Hebrew *abel-meholah* means "the meadow of the dancing" (Borée 1968: 81; Rowley 1970: 1), suggesting an agricultural location. Eusebius locates Abel-meholah 10 miles from Scythopolis (= Baysan) at Bethmaela (34.21–22). In his translation of Eusebius, Jerome adds "to the south," that is, south of Scythopolis (35.19).

The site has proponents for its location both west and east of the Jordan River. Relative to its eastern location, Glueck opts for Tall al-Maqlub, overlooking Wadi al-Yabis from the north (1951: 213–17, 220–23, 377–78). Ottosson also chooses a site east of the Jordan. Following Noth (1959: 52–60), he places Abel-meholah at Tall Abu al-Kharaz (1969: 217; see also Noth 1959: 60). Other commentators, on the basis of the description of Solomon's fifth district, opt for a western location for the site. Edelman (1992b: 11), following Simons (1959: 294), Abel (1967, 2: 234), and Aharoni (1979: 313, 429), thinks that Tall Abu Sus, in the western ghor 15 km south of Baysan is the best candidate, based on the descriptions in Judg 7.22 and 1 Kings 4.12. This is a reasonable location for the site.

vi) Tabbath (Judg 7.22): In relation to Judg 7.22, Aharoni (1979: 284 n. 222 [tentatively]), Abel (1967, 2: 474), and Simons (1959: 293) locate Tabbath at Ras at-Tabat above Wadi Kufrinja in the 'Ajlun region.

When the Gentiles attacked the Israelites of Gilead in an attempt to destroy them, the Jews fled to Dathema and from there sent a letter to Judas Maccabeus and his brothers requesting help (1 Macc 5.9). Judas and his brother Jonathan responded to the request for assistance. In 163 B.C. they crossed the Jordan on a three-day journey into the wilderness where they met Nabataeans who reported that the Jews had been shut up in Bozrah, Bosor, Alema, Chaspho, Maked, Carnaim, and other towns of Gilead (1 Macc 5.26). Judas went to the stronghold of Dathema (1 Macc 5.29) and then took Maapha (1 Macc 5.35) and Chaspho, Maked, Bosor, and the other towns of Gilead (1 Macc 5.36). He also conquered Carnaim (1 Macc 5.43–44; 2 Macc 12.21–26), and on the return to Judah, he took the town of Ephron (1 Macc 5.46–51). These towns, now part of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, are of primary interest here. Thus, sites in southern Syria will not be considered; these include Bozrah (= Busra ash-Sham [Simons 1959: 425; Abel 1967, 2: 286; Rowley 1970: 40]), Bosor (= Busr al-Hariri [Abel 1967, 2: 241; Baly 1974: 216]), Alema (= 'Alma [Simons 1959: 334; Abel 1967, 2: 241]), Chaspho (= al-Muzeibir [Abel 1923: 519; Simons

1959: 423–24] or Khisfin [Grollenberg 1956: map 31]) (see also 2 Macc 12.13–16), Maked (= Tall al-Jemid [Abel 1923: 519] or Tall Miqdad [Rowley 1970: 112]), and Carnaim (= Sheikh Sa'd [Abel 1923: 519; Simons 1959: 425; Rowley 1970: 44; Aharoni 1979: 438]). Many authorities read Alema for the Maapha of 1 Macc 5.35 (Metzger and Murphy 1991: 198 AP).

vii) Dathema (1 Macc 5.9, 29): Dathema is the fortress to which the Israelites of Gilead fled when the Gentiles attacked them. One should look for it in the vicinity of Bozrah and Bosor. Possible locations include al-Husn (Glueck 1951: 96), ar-Ramtha (Metzger and Murphy 1991: 197 AP), and Tall Hamad in the plain of Hauran (Abel 1967, 2: 303; Rowley 1970: 51). Simons follows the latter identification because of the site's ancient city walls and suitable location as a place of refuge (1959: 425). Because of the frequent confusion of the Hebrew *daleth* and *resh*, the site's name may be preserved at ar-Ramtha, a good candidate for the location of the site.

viii) Maapha (1 Macc 5.35): Maapha is another city that Judas is said to have plundered and burned with fire. Some authorities read *Alema* for *Maapha* (Metzger and Murphy 1991: 198 AP). Abel places it at Beit Ras in northern Jordan (1923: 519). However, the site has not been identified.

ix) Ephron (1 Macc 5.46; 2 Macc 12.27): The city of Ephron is located east of the Jordan, on the route Judas and the Israelites took on their return from Gilead to Judah. Judas asked permission to pass through the town but the inhabitants refused his request, following which he destroyed the town, passing through it over the bodies of the dead (1 Macc 5.48–51). The town is generally identified with at-Taiyiba, at the head of a wadi by the same name, west of Irbid (Abel 1923: 520–21; 1967, 2: 318–19; Simons 1959: 425; see also Goldstein 1976: 532 map 7; 1983: 515 map 6). Based on the preservation of the name and the geographical indications, at-Taiyiba is a suitable location for Ephron.

x) Charax (2 Macc 12.17): Charax is the final city Judas encountered *en route* to rescue the Israelites of Gilead from the Gentiles. It appears to be located in the region of what the Jews called Toubiani (2 Macc 12.17), perhaps the people of Tob (1 Macc 5.13). The biblical writer places it 95 miles/750 stadia from Caspin/Chaspho. Simons locates it at al-Karak, 20 km northwest of Bozrah/Busra ash-sham, which he maintains is close enough to at-Taiyiba to be within the Toubi region (Simons 1959: 424–25). Goldstein says the text does not refer to a place named Charax but alludes to a “palisaded camp,” that is, a fortress palace, at 'Iraq al-Amir, west of 'Amman (1983: 440; also see Smith 1992 and Abel 1923: 515). It was the seat of the Tobiad dynasty in Ammonitis (Lapp 1983; Villeneuve 1988;

Will, Larché and Zayadine 1991; Zayadine 1997). This is an imaginative possible location for Charax.

THE LAND OF TOB

The land of Tob appears five times in the Old Testament: Judg 11.3, 5; 2 Sam 10.6, 8; 1 Macc 5.13. Jephthah fled to the land of Tob (Judg 11.3), and it was there that the elders of Gilead went to bring him back to fight against the Ammonites (Judg 11.5). The Ammonites hired men of Tob (2 Sam 10.6) to fight against David (2 Sam 10.8). The Israelites sent a letter to Judas Maccabeus stating that all their kindred in the land of Tob had been killed (1 Macc 5.13). Moreover, the Jews who are called Toubiani (2 Macc 12.17) are perhaps people of Tob.

The context of 2 Sam 10.6 places the land of Tob in northern Jordan. The city list of Thutmose III has a place called *t-b-y* and Amarna Letter No. 205 mentions *Dubu*. These toponyms are generally considered to be biblical Tob (Simons 1959: 91; Abel 1967, 2: 10; de Vaux 1973: 125; Aharoni 1979: 115; Ahlstrom 1993: 400).

The name Tob, meaning “good,” may be preserved in one of the *tayibeh* names of Jordan. The site that matches the literary data is at-Taiyiba (Simons 1959: 91; Abel 1967, 2: 10; Ahlstrom 1993: 400), identified in this work with Ephron (1 Macc 5.46; 2 Macc 12.27), and located in northwestern Jordan between Wadi az-Zarqa and the Yarmuk River.

CONCLUSIONS

Originally, Gilead referred to the mountainous region south of the Jabbok, known today as Jabal Jel'ad. Over time, the term came to be used for the mountainous region north of the Jabbok, today's 'Ajlun region. The Bible refers to two halves of Gilead divided by the Jabbok. In 1 Maccabees 5 the term Gilead is used to designate the northern segment of what is today The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and southern Syria.

Most of the sites studied in this chapter are located in the northern segment of Gilead. They are generally found in the western segment of the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression, an area in which rainfall is plentiful and in which agricultural activities can successfully be pursued.

APPENDIX

LIST OF BIBLICAL SITE IDENTIFICATIONS FOR JORDAN

| <u>Biblical Toponym</u> | <u>Modern Arabic Name</u> | <u>UTME/UTMN</u> |
|-------------------------|---|------------------|
| Abel-keramim | Tall al-'Umayri(?) | 7733/35297 |
| Abel-meholah | Tall Abu Sus; west of Jordan River | - |
| Abel-shittim/Shittim | Tall al-Hamman(?) | 7537/35257 |
| Adam | Tall ad-Damiyya | 74034/355498 |
| Admah | Unidentified | - |
| Ai | Unidentified | - |
| Almon-diblathaim/ | Kh. ad-Deleilat al-Garbiyya and | 7652/35019 |
| Beth-diblathaim | Kh. ad-Deleilat ash-Sharqiyya | |
| Ar/Ir | Dhiban; capital city of Moab | 7635/34888 |
| Argob, region of | Unidentified; but in the north of Jordan | - |
| Arnon | Wadi al-Mujib | - |
| Aroer (on Arnon) | 'Ara'ir | 7679/34854 |
| Aroer (in Ammon) | Unidentified | - |
| Ataroth | Kh. 'Atarus | 7531/34965 |
| Atroth-shophan | Rujm 'Atarus(?) | 7550/34984 |
| Avith | Unidentified | - |
| Baal-meon/Beon/ | Unidentified | - |
| Beth-meon/ | | |
| Beth-baal-meon/ | | |
| Bacan | | |
| Baal of Peor/ | Unidentified | - |
| Baal-peor | | |
| Bamoth/ | Unidentified | - |
| Bamoth Ba'al | | |
| Bashan | Land both south and north of the Yarmuk | - |
| Beer/Beer-elim | No particular site but where water is available | - |
| Bela (that is, Zoar) | Unidentified; but in SE plain of the Dead Sea | - |
| Beth-diblathaim | Kh. ad-Deleilat al-Garbiyya and | 7652/35019 |
| | Kh. ad-Deleilat ash-Sharqiyya | |
| Beth-gamul | Kh. al-Jumeil | 7748/34879 |
| Beth-haran(m) | Tall ar-Rama | 75032/352434 |
| Beth-jeshimoth | Tall al-'Azeimeh | 7468/35197 |
| Beth-nimrah/Nimrah | Tall Nimrin | 74826/353262 |
| Beth-peor | Unidentified | - |
| Betonim | Kh. Batneh | 7561/35450 |
| Bezer/Bozrah | Tall Jalul | 7707/35131 |
| | or Umm al-'Amad | 7748/35206 |
| Bozrah, city of Edom | Busayra | 749600/3404000 |
| Brook of the Willows | Wadi al-Hasa | - |
| Charax | 'Iraq al-Amir(?) | 76022/353426 |
| Dathema | Ar-Ramtha(?) | 2192/36065 |

210 / “East of the Jordan”

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Dimon/Madmen | Kh. ad-Dimnah | 7574/34653 |
| Debir/Li-debir | Unidentified | - |
| Dibon/Dibon-gad | Dhiban | 7635/34888 |
| Dinhabah | Unidentified | - |
| Edrei | Dera'a; in Syria | - |
| Eglaim | Unidentified | - |
| Eglath-shelishiyah | Unidentified | - |
| Elealeh | El-'Al | 7677/35240 |
| Eloth/Elath | Tall al-Khalayfi | 6918/32705 |
| Ephron | At-Taiyiba | 7552/36039 |
| Ezion-geber | Jezirat Fara'un(?) | - |
| Gilead, land of | Territory north and south of Wadi az-Zarqa | - |
| Gomorra | Unidentified; probably along SE side of Dead Sea | - |
| Havvoth-jair | Between Jabal 'Ajlun and the Yarmuk | - |
| Heshbon | Tall Hisban | 7660/35219 |
| Holon | Unidentified | - |
| Horonaim | Al-Karak | 7575/34529 |
| Iye-abarim/Iyim | In SE plain of the Dead Sea between Wadi Khanazir and Bab adh-Dhra' | - |
| Jabbok | Wadi az-Zarqa | - |
| Jabesh-gilead | Tall al-Meqberekh, | 74370/358793 |
| | Tall al-Maqlub, or | 7523/35883 |
| | Abu al-Kharaz | 74431/358789 |
| Jahaz/Jahzah | Kh. al-Mudayna in Wadi ath-Thamad(?) | 77597/349869 |
| Jazer | Kh. Jazzir | 7572/35460 |
| Jazer, land of | In Wadi Shu'ayb and Wadi Azraq basin | - |
| Jogbehah | Al-Jubeihah | 7698/35457 |
| Kedemoth | Qasr Saliya(?) or a nearby site | 7773/34838 |
| Kenath/Nobah | Unidentified | - |
| Kerioth | Dhiban; capital city of Moabites | 7635/34888 |
| King's Highway | Main N-S route from Irbid to al-'Aqaba; in the Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben | - |
| Kir/Kir-hareseth/ Kir-heres | Capital city of the Moabites | - |
| Kiriathaim | Unidentified | - |
| Luhith | In the area of Kathrabba | 7502/34480 |
| Luhith, ascent of | Along Wadi I'sal | 7421/34546 |
| Maapha | Unidentified | - |
| Madmen/Dimon | Kh. ad-Dimnah | 7574/34653 |
| Magdiel | Unidentified | - |
| Mahanaim | Tall adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya and Tall adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya | 7533/35642 7534/35643 |
| Masrekah | Jabal al-Mushraq area | - |
| Mattanah | Unidentified | - |
| Medeba | Madaba | 7648/35124 |
| Mephaath | Umm ar-Rasas | 7774/34888 |

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|---|--|----------------|
| Mibzah | Busayra, capital city of the Edomites | 749600/3404000 |
| Minnith | Unidentified; but in 'Amman region | - |
| Mishor | Plateau between Arnon and Heshbon | - |
| Mizpah-gilead/ Mizpah of Gilead | Unidentified | - |
| Mountains of Abarim | On Mount Nebo | - |
| Nahaliel | Wadi Zarqa Ma'in | - |
| Nebo | Kh. al-Mukhayyat | - |
| Nimrah/Beth Nimrah | Tall Nimrin | 74826/353262 |
| Nimrim, waters of | Wadi an-Numayra | - |
| Oboth | In SE plain of the Dead Sea between Wadi Khanazir and Bab adh-Dhra' | - |
| Pau/Pa'i/Phogor | Unidentified; but in northern Edom | - |
| Penuel/Peniel | Tall Dayr 'Alla | 74713/356542 |
| Peor | Unidentified | - |
| Pisgah | Ras al-Siyagha | 7581/35180 |
| Plains of Moab | NE side of the Dead Sea | - |
| Punon | Faynan | 7391/33911 |
| Rabbath-ammon | 'Amman Citadel/Jabal al-Qal'ah | 77745/353925 |
| Ramath-mizpeh | A Rujm al-Malfuf structure in vicinity of 'Amman(?) | - |
| Ramoth-gilead/ Ramoth in Gilead | Tall al-Husn | 7707/35979 |
| Rehoboth-on-the-River | Ras Rihab | 7462/34263 |
| Route of the 'Arabah | Main N-S route in Wadi 'Arabah between the Gulf of al-'Aqaba and the Dead Sea | - |
| Route of the Wilder- ness of Moab | Close to what is now the <i>Darb al-Hajj</i> , Ottoman Railway, and/or Desert Highway | - |
| Sea of the 'Arabah | Dead Sea | - |
| Sebam/Sibmah | Unidentified; but in the area of Heshbon | - |
| Seir | Mountains of Edom east of the 'Arabah | - |
| Sela (in Moab) | Unidentified | - |
| Sela (in Edom) | As-Sila' | 74648/340841 |
| Sharon, pasture lands | Mishor (see above) | - |
| Shittim | See Abel-shittim | - |
| Sibmah/Sebam | See Sebam/Sibmah | - |
| Sodom | Unidentified; probably at SE side of Dead Sea | - |
| Succoth | Tall al-Khisas | - |
| Tabbath | Ras at-Tabat | - |
| Teman, land of | Entire land of Edom | - |
| Tishbe in Gilead | Unidentified but in northern Gilead | - |
| Tob, land of | Between Wadi az-Zarqa and Yarmuk River | - |
| Tophel | Unidentified | - |
| Town that is in the middle of the valley | Unidentified | - |
| Uz, land of | In southern Edom near the Arabian border | - |
| Valley lying in the ... | Wadi 'Uyun Musa | 7592/35189 |

212 / “East of the Jordan”

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--------------|
| Wadi Cherith | Unidentified | - |
| Wadi Zered | Wadi al-Hasa | - |
| Wadi of the Willows | Wadi al-Hasa | - |
| Waheb in Suphah | Unidentified; but probably near Arnon | - |
| Wasteland | Northeast of Dead Sea in the Plains of Moab | - |
| Zalmonah | Unidentified | - |
| Zaphon | Tall as-Sa'idiyya | 74271/357322 |
| Zarethan | Unidentified | |
| Zeboiim | Unidentified; but possibly N of Dead Sea | - |
| Zereth-shahar | Boz al-Mushelle(?) | |
| Zoar (that is, Bela) | Unidentified; but at SE plain of Dead Sea | - |

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INDEX OF BIBLICAL TOPONYMS

- Abel-keramim 166–170, 211
 Abel-meholah 199, 205, 206
 Abel-shittim 17, 79, 87–90, 138
 Adam 52, 149
 Admah 5, 45, 47–53, 55, 57, 59, 60
 Ai 47, 49, 166, 169
 Alema 198, 199, 206, 207
 Almon-diblathaim 79, 84, 85, 176
 Ammon 1–3, 91, 95, 125, 140, 150, 161–165, 170, 174–176
 Ar-Rabba 75, 98, 99, 190
 Ar/Ir 74, 75, 176
 'Arabah 1, 4, 5, 17, 23, 25–27, 30–32, 35, 36, 38, 42, 43, 57, 61, 63, 69–71, 79, 80, 82, 89, 90, 94, 97, 99, 109, 126, 129, 131, 132, 145, 148, 150, 151, 185, 187–189, 192–194, 208
 Argob 17, 123, 126–128, 130, 131, 150, 201
 Arnon 27, 65, 70–77, 83, 84, 90, 91, 93–98, 103, 106, 108, 110, 112, 113, 126, 128–135, 145–147, 150, 151, 157, 167, 170, 171, 173, 174, 176, 182, 183, 197–199
 Aroer 95–97, 110–113, 124, 125, 128, 130, 132, 133, 135, 146, 150, 151, 166–168, 170, 176, 187, 197
 Ashtaroah 69, 128, 129, 132–134, 152, 153, 155
 Ataroth 110, 112–114, 118, 119, 124, 179
 Atroth-shophan 110–113, 118, 119, 124
 Avith 188, 189
 Baal of Peor 138
 Baal-gad 147, 154, 155
 Baal-hermon 130, 146, 147, 151, 154, 155
 Baal-meon 17, 110, 112, 117, 118, 122, 125, 146, 150, 176
 Baal-peor/Baal of Peor 138
 Baean 117, 118
 Bamoth 71, 77
 Bamoth Ba'al 77
 Bashan 69, 103, 108, 110, 123, 124, 126–133, 145–148, 150–155, 197, 198, 201
 Beer 71, 75, 76, 97, 176
 Beer-elim 76, 176, 178
 Beeshterah 129, 147, 148, 152, 153, 155
 Bela 5, 45, 47, 51, 52, 57, 60
 Beon 110, 112, 113, 117, 118
 Beth-baal-meon 17, 117, 118, 133
 Beth-diblathaim 84, 85, 99, 176
 Beth-gamul 176, 177
 Beth-haram 120, 121, 133, 143, 144
 Beth-haran 110–113, 120–122, 125
 Beth-jeshimoth 17, 79, 87, 89, 132, 133, 138, 176, 183
 Beth-meon 17, 117, 118, 176
 Beth-nimrah 17, 110, 112–115, 120, 125, 133, 143, 144
 Beth-peor 133, 135, 138, 139
 Bethel 47, 49
 Betonim 133, 134, 139, 140
 Bezer 147, 148, 150, 177, 178
 Bosor 198, 199, 206, 207
 Bozrah 147, 150, 176–178, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 198, 199, 206, 207
 Brook of the Willows 182
 Canaan 4, 47, 63, 79, 110, 152, 154, 195, 198, 202
 Carnaim 198, 199, 207
 Caspin 199, 207
 Charachmoab 72, 73
 Charax 199, 207
 Chaspho 198, 199, 206, 206
 Chinnereth 126, 131–134, 150
 Cities of the Plain 3, 5, 45, 47–50, 52–61
 Damascus 99, 108, 151, 152, 153
 Dan 49, 59, 155, 198
 Dathema 198, 199, 206, 207
 Dead Sea 1, 3, 5, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47–61, 63, 72–74, 76–78, 82, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 95, 97, 99, 108, 125, 126, 132, 137, 145, 150, 173, 174, 176, 178–182, 185, 191–193, 205, 208
 Debir 133, 135, 142, 151
 Di-zahab 193
 Dibon 19, 75, 84, 91, 103, 110, 112, 113, 124, 133, 150, 173, 176, 179, 182
 Dibon-gad 79, 84
 Dimon 176, 181, 182
 Dinhabah 188, 190

- Edom 1–4, 36, 43, 66–71, 73, 79, 89, 90, 94, 95, 97, 99, 151, 175, 180, 182, 185, 187–190, 192–194
- Edrei 103, 108, 126, 128–130, 132–134, 151, 152, 212
- Eglaim 176, 178
- Eglath-shelishiyah 176, 178
- Elealeh 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 125, 150, 165, 174, 176
- Eloth/Elath 79, 81, 82
- Ephron 198, 199, 206, 207, 208
- Ezion-geber 2, 79–82, 90, 97, 189
- Gad 3, 5, 20, 110, 111, 126, 130, 131, 134, 139, 140, 142, 145–152, 157, 195, 197, 199, 201
- Gaza 45, 71, 81, 99
- Gerar 45
- Gerasa 10, 203
- Geshur 123, 124, 128–130, 134, 153, 154
- Geshurites 123, 126–130, 132–135, 153, 154
- Gilead 1, 6, 43, 49, 77, 91, 96, 106, 110–113, 123, 124, 126–134, 141, 145–148, 150, 151, 153, 154, 159, 165, 166, 190, 195, 197–208
- Golan 128, 129, 147, 148, 152, 154, 155
- Gomorrhah 3, 5, 45, 47–49, 50–53, 55–57, 60
- Haran 95, 110–113, 120–122, 125
- Havvoth-jair 111, 112, 123–127, 150, 154
- Hazeroth 193
- Hebron 48
- Heshbon 3, 4, 14, 15, 69, 86, 87, 90–95, 97, 103, 106–110, 112, 113, 115–117, 125, 129, 130–135, 138, 139, 145–148, 150, 151, 166, 167, 169–171, 174, 176, 190, 197, 199
- Holon 176, 178
- Horonaim 176, 179, 182
- Iye-abarim/Iyim 72, 73, 79, 83
- Jabbok 27, 91, 96, 103, 110, 112, 126, 129, 130–132, 134, 139–141, 143, 144, 146, 150, 151, 157, 161, 162, 165, 166, 169–171, 195, 197–201, 203, 208
- Jabesh-gilead 159, 195, 197, 199, 202–204
- Jahaz/Jahzah 105, 176, 178
- Jazer 103, 106–108, 110, 112, 113, 124, 125, 128, 133, 147, 148, 150, 166, 170, 171, 176, 199
- Jazer (land of) 110–113, 124, 197
- Jericho 3, 15, 18, 47, 49, 51, 76–78, 85, 87, 88, 91, 97, 125, 138, 149, 150, 159, 164, 173, 193
- Jezreel 143, 149
- Jogbehah 110–113, 119, 120, 124, 125
- Jordan 1–7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19–21, 23, 25–27, 29–31, 34, 36, 38–48, 50–52, 55, 59, 63, 65, 69, 71, 74, 77, 78, 80, 85, 87–91, 94–96, 99, 101, 106–115, 119–161, 164, 166, 169–171
- Jordan River 1, 5, 9, 19–21, 27, 29, 30, 52, 63, 87, 91, 101, 107, 108, 129, 144, 149, 152, 157, 159, 164, 169, 173, 198, 204, 206
- Jordan Valley 29, 32, 36, 40, 41, 43, 47, 53, 54, 60, 78, 85, 87–89, 99, 112, 114, 115, 121, 125, 131, 133, 134, 137, 141–145, 149, 150, 164, 174, 204
- Kadesh-barnea 3, 68, 98, 99
- Kedemoth 17, 90, 91, 93, 94, 97, 104, 133, 135, 147, 148
- Kerioth 74, 122, 175, 176, 179
- King's Highway 67–69, 90, 96–98, 103, 104, 109, 137, 153, 180, 189
- Kir/Kir-hareseth/Kir-heres 180
- Kiriathaim 110–112, 122, 123, 125, 133, 150, 151, 176
- Laban 193, 195
- Laish 59
- Lake Tiberias 27, 29, 42, 131, 132
- Lasha 5, 45, 47, 58
- Li-debir 142
- Lo-debar 135, 142
- Luhith 176, 179, 180–183
- Maacathites 123, 126–130, 132–135, 153, 154
- Maapha 198, 199, 206, 207
- Madmen 17, 176, 181, 182
- Magdiel 188, 190
- Mahanaim 17, 129, 133–134, 139–143, 145, 147, 148, 151, 195
- Maked 198, 199, 206
- Masrekah 188, 190
- Mattanah 71, 76

- Medeba 6, 91, 103, 108, 109, 111, 113, 133, 174, 176
 Mephaath 133, 136, 147, 148, 150, 176, 178
 Mibzah 190
 Minnith 166, 167, 170
 Mishor 77, 93, 108, 112, 113, 115, 116, 125, 147, 174, 198
 Mizpah 17, 154, 197, 199, 200
 Mizpah-gilead 197, 199
 Moab 1–4, 43, 49, 51, 66, 72–79, 83, 85–91, 94, 95, 97, 99, 103, 104, 106, 109, 110, 113, 115, 117, 120–122, 125, 135, 137, 138, 145, 147, 150, 151, 154, 157, 159, 165, 171, 173–177, 179–183, 185, 189, 190, 191, 193
 Mount Hermon 29, 126, 128–130, 132, 133, 146, 150–155
 Mount Hor 67–71, 79, 82, 97, 98
 Mount Nebo 15, 49, 77, 78, 85, 86, 97, 125, 139, 150, 151, 164, 165
 Mount Peor 87, 138
 Mount Pisgah 89, 106
 Mount Sodom 32, 52, 56, 59, 61
 Mount Seir 90, 97
 Mountains of Abarim 79, 84, 85, 86
 Nahaliel 71, 76, 77, 97
 Nebo 15, 49, 77–79, 85, 86, 97, 110, 112, 113, 122, 125, 139, 146, 150, 151, 164, 165, 173, 174, 176
 Negeb 49, 67–70, 80, 185, 187
 Nimrah 17, 110, 112–115, 120, 125, 133, 143, 144, 182
 Nimrim 176, 179, 182
 Nobah 111, 112, 119, 123, 124
 Oboth 71–73, 79, 84, 97, 189
 Ophir 79, 99
 Paddan-aram 3, 195
 Paran 193
 Pau/Pa'i/Phogor 191
 Peor 17, 78, 87, 133, 135, 138, 139, 191
 Pinon/Punon 64, 79, 82–83, 189
 Pisgah 49, 71, 77, 78, 86, 87, 89, 106, 126, 129, 132, 133, 137, 138, 198
 Plains of Moab 3, 49, 66, 76–79, 85, 87–89, 97, 99, 110, 113, 115, 120–122, 125, 138, 145, 151, 171, 173, 174, 183, 193
 Rabbah 17, 133, 135, 165–168, 170, 178, 180, 181
 Rabbath Moab 75
 Rabbath-ammon 3, 140, 166–168, 170
 Ramath-mizpeh 133, 135, 139
 Ramoth-gilead 123, 127, 130, 195, 197, 199, 201, 202
 Rehoboth-on-the-River 188, 191
 Road to Bashan 69, 103, 128
 Route of the 'Arabah 82, 90
 Route of the Wilderness of Moab 89, 90, 97
 Sea of Chinnereth 132, 133, 134
 Sea of Galilee 27, 47, 90, 132, 153, 154
 Sea of the 'Arabah 90, 126, 129, 131, 132, 150
 Sebam 110, 112, 113, 116, 117
 Seir 90, 95, 97, 140, 185, 193, 194
 Sela 17, 176, 182, 188, 192
 Senir 126, 130, 146, 151, 154, 155
 Sharon 130, 146, 147
 Shittim 17, 79, 87–89, 99, 138, 173
 Sibmah 110, 112, 116, 117, 125, 133, 176
 Sodom 3, 5, 45, 47–60
 Succoth 17, 120, 124, 133, 134, 143, 144, 148, 149
 Suph 193
 Taanach 205
 Tabbath 205, 206
 Tarshish 79, 99
 Teman 188, 193
 Tishbe 199, 204, 205
 Tob 17, 199, 207, 208
 Tophel 188, 193
 Uz 188, 193
 Valley (lying in the region of Moab) 71, 77, 78
 Valley of Siddim 47, 60
 Wadi Cherith 199, 205
 Wadi Jabbok 91, 110, 129, 150, 161, 162, 166, 169, 197, 200
 Wadi of the Willows 74, 176
 Wadi Yarmuk 108, 151
 Wadi Zered 70, 71, 73, 74, 90
 Waheb in Suphah 71, 74
 Wasteland 45, 71, 77, 78, 99, 153
 Water City 166, 168–170
 Wilderness of Kedemoth 90, 91, 93, 104

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Wilderness of Zin 79, 185 | Zered 27, 70, 71, 73, 74, 90, 174 |
| Zalmonah 79, 82 | Zereth-shahar 133, 135, 137, 138 |
| Zaphon 120, 133, 134, 143–145 | Zoar 5, 17, 45, 47, 49, 50–53, 55–60, 99, |
| Zarethan 143, 149 | 176, 180, 182, 183, 191 |
| Zeboiim 5, 45, 47–53, 55–57, 59 | |

INDEX OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

- | | |
|---|--|
| Abu al-Kharaz, Tall 204, 206 | Beit Zerah 106 |
| Abu Sus, Tall 206 | Belqa (= al-Balkha) 26, 136, 159, 198 |
| Aila/Ailath 79–82, 99, 189 | Bir Madhkur 83 |
| Ajlun 26, 34, 38, 40, 123, 124, 128, 133, | Bleibil, Tall 114, 115 |
| 143, 145, 198, 202, 204, 206, 208 | Boz al-Mushelle 137 |
| Al-'Aqaba 27, 38, 69, 71, 79–83, 89, 90, | Busayra 2, 4, 185, 189, 192 |
| 94, 97, 99, 132, 185 | Callirrhoe 59, 137 |
| 'Aleiyān, Kh. 93, 94, 104, 105 | Dana 27, 71, 189 |
| Al-'Alya, Rujm 104 | Danaba 190 |
| 'Amman 10, 31, 36, 38, 40, 41, 43, 91, 95, | Ad-Dayr 179, 203, 204 |
| 107, 109, 112, 113, 119, 124, 136, 160– | Dayr 'Alla, Tall 41, 143–145, 148, 149, 163, |
| 164, 166–169, 178, 201, 202 | 164 |
| 'Amman Citadel 95, 162, 167–169 | Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata 58 |
| 'Ammata, Tall 144 | Dayr Halawa/ad-Dayr 203, 204 |
| Arad 19, 68–70, 98, 187 | Dedan 188 |
| 'Ara'ir 96, 97, 174, 176 | Ad-Deleilat al-Garbiyya, Kh. 85, 176 |
| 'Argan (= 'Erjan) 167 | Ad-Deleilat ash-Sharqiyya, Kh. 85 |
| Aroer, Tel 95–97, 110–113, 125, 126, 129, | Ad-Denneh, Kh. 190 |
| 130, 132, 133, 135, 146, 150–152, 166– | Dera'a 108, 151, 155, 202 |
| 168, 170, 176, 187, 197 | Desert Highway 40, 69, 73, 90 |
| Al-Ash'ari, Tall 153, 155 | Adh-Dhahab al-Garbiyya, Tall 141, 142, |
| 'Ashtarāh, Tall 153, 155 | 148 |
| 'Atarus, Kh. and Rujm 113, 114, 118, 119 | Adh-Dhahab ash-Sharqiyya, Tall 141, 148 |
| 'Ayn Fidan 83 | Dhiban 84, 85, 91, 94, 97, 104, 105, 113, |
| 'Ayn Gedi 54, 61 | 122, 174, 176, 177, 180 |
| 'Ayn Rihab 191 | Edom 1–4, 36, 43, 66–71, 73, 79, 89, 90, |
| Al-'Azeimeh 88, 138, 176 | 94, 95, 97, 99, 151, 175, 180, 182, 185, |
| Azraq Basin 30, 112, 124 | 187–190, 192–194 |
| Bab adh-Dhra' 1, 55–57, 60 | El-'Al 116, 176 |
| al-Balkha, (= the Belqa) 26, 135, 157, 167, | 'En Hatzeva 187 |
| 169, 198 | Faynan 27, 39, 40, 71, 82, 83, 189 |
| Al-Balu', Kh. 75, 98, 174 | Feifeh 60, 61, 99, 185 |
| Baneas 155 | Feiran/Phara(n) 81, 99, 193 |
| Baq'ah Valley 163–165 | Gebalene 190, 191, 194 |
| Al-Basta 189, 190 | Ghadyan 80 |
| Batneh, Kh. 140 | Al-Gitte, Kh. 189 |
| Baysan 149, 203–206 | Ghor al-Haditha 54 |
| Beit Ras 207 | Ghor an-Numayra 180 |

- Ghrareh 185
 Gulf of al-'Aqaba 27, 38, 69, 79–81, 89, 94, 97, 99, 132, 185
 Al-Hajjar, Kh. 163
 Hamad, Tall 144, 149, 207
 Hamid, Kh. 143
 Al-Hammam, Tall 54, 60, 90, 138, 163
 Al-Hasa 2, 4, 27, 30, 40, 43, 55, 57, 58, 71–74, 174, 176, 182, 183, 185, 190, 191, 193
 Hasbeija 154, 155
 Hauran 23, 124, 152, 153, 202, 207
 Haush, Tall 154
 Hejjaj, Tall 124, 141, 142
 Hisban, Tall 2, 27, 31, 92–94, 116, 117, 121, 125, 161, 163–165, 167, 168, 174, 176, 198
 Horvat Qitmit 67, 68, 187
 Al-Husn, Tall 131, 202, 207
 'Idbar 143
 Iktanu, Tall 54, 60, 120, 121, 163
 Iqlim al-Bellan 155
 'Ira, Tel 68, 187
 'Iraq al-Emir 139
 Irbid 26, 34, 69, 123, 131, 153, 201, 202, 207
 Iskandar, Kh. 104, 105
 Al-Jabal 190
 Jabal 'Amman 31
 Jabal Druze 152, 153
 Jabal Gilead 199
 Jabal al-Mushraq 190
 Jabal al-Qal'ah 167, 168
 Jabal al-Sheikh 151, 152
 Jabal al-Telg 152
 Jabal Usdum/Sudum 52, 54, 61
 Al-Jafr Basin 30
 Jalul 92, 104, 163, 164, 174, 178
 Jarash (= Gerasa) 10, 41, 200, 203
 Jawa, Tall 136, 163, 165
 Jazzir, Kh. 106, 107, 108, 112, 176
 Al-Jel'ad, Kh. 139
 Jezirat Fara'un 80, 81
 Al-Jubeihah 17, 119, 120, 170
 Al-Jumeil, Kh. 177
 Al-Kafrein, Tall 89, 107
 Kanawat 124
 Al-Karak 2, 26, 27, 31, 51, 72–74, 96, 98, 178, 179, 180, 183, 207
 Kastron Mefa'a 137
 Kathrabba 180, 181
 Kenath 111, 112, 123–125, 150, 154
 Al-Khalayfi, Tall 2, 80–82, 185, 187, 188
 Khanazir, Kh. and Rujm 27, 54, 60, 61, 73, 83
 Al-Khisas, Tall 144, 149
 Kilda 163
 Kom Yajuz 106, 107, 168
 Kufr Abil 204
 Lahun 174
 Libb 85, 104, 105
 Lisan Peninsula 29, 40, 55–57, 178, 180
 Listib/al-Listib 204, 205
 Livias (= Tall ar-Rama) 87, 114, 120, 138
 Ma'an 26, 189, 190
 Macherus 10
 Madaba 6, 9, 15, 26, 51, 58, 72, 73, 78, 88, 91, 93, 96, 104, 105, 109, 110, 118, 122, 123, 137, 147, 163, 164, 174, 176–181, 191
 Mafrag 23, 36, 153, 201
 Al-Mahatta, Kh. 138, 139
 Mahne, Kh. 141
 Ma'in 27, 59, 76, 109, 113, 117, 118, 137, 176
 Al-Maqlub, Tall 203, 204, 206
 Malhata, Tel 68, 187
 Mar Ilyas 204, 205
 Al-Masfa, Tall 200
 Masuh, Kh. 165
 Al-Mazar, Tall 31, 161, 163, 164
 Mazra'a 55, 57
 Megiddo 205
 Al-Meidan, Kh. 179
 Al-Meniyeh 80
 Al-Meqberek, Tall 204
 Mezad Gozal 61
 Mgeysel 181
 Miryamim, Kh. 204
 Al-Misna', Kh. 75, 99
 Al-Misrefe 200
 Al-Mudaybi', Kh. 174
 Al-Mudayna, Kh. 72, 75, 76, 94, 98, 104, 105, 106, 135, 174, 176, 181

- Al-Mudayna al-Mu'arrajeh, Kh. 174
 Al-Mudayna 'Alya, Kh. 75, 98
 Al-Mudayna ar-Ras, Kh. 181
 Muhatta, Kh. 138
 Al-Mukhayyat, Kh. 86, 122, 176
 Musrab, Kh. 191
 An-Nahas, Kh. 83, 185
 Na'ur 31, 106, 112, 168
 Nefa'ah, Kh. 136
 Nimrin, Tall 17, 54, 60, 87, 114, 115, 120, 144, 163, 182
 Numayra 27, 55, 56, 60, 180, 182
 Palestine 1, 9–18, 65, 81, 86, 96, 105, 141, 159, 162
 Pella 141, 164, 200, 203
 Petra 10, 41, 68–72, 82, 190, 192
 Qa'dan, Tall 144
 Qarn al-Qibsh 116, 117
 Qaryat al-Mekhaiyet 123
 Qasr Saliya 94, 95, 104
 Qasr as-Sar 106, 107
 Al-Qos, Tall 145
 Al-Queiqiyeh 77
 Al-Qureijat, Kh. 122
 Al-Qureiyeh, Kh. 122, 123
 Qasr az-Za'feran I and II 94, 95
 Ar-Rabbah 17, 178, 180, 181
 Rakin 179
 Ar-Rama, Tall 121, 122, 144
 Ar-Ramtha 201, 202, 207
 Ras al-'Ayn 95
 Ras an-Naqb 25, 26, 36
 Ras Rihab 191
 Ras al-Siyagha 78, 86, 138
 Ras at-Tabat 206
 Ar-Rasune, Kh. 165
 Ar-Reheil, Tall 141, 142
 Rift Valley 23, 29, 30, 90
 Ar-Rihab, Kh. 191
 Robatha 191
 Rujm al-'Aliya 104
 Rujm al-Benat 139
 Rujm al-Gilimeh 178
 Rujm al-Hawi 165
 Rujm al-Henu 163, 165
 Rujm al-Heri 174
 Rujm al-Kursi 165
 Rujm Malfuf, North and South 119
 Ar-Rumeil, Kh. 93, 94, 104, 105, 176
 Ar-Rumeith, Tall 201, 202
 As-Safi 40, 52, 57, 58, 60, 61
 As-Safra, Kh. 167
 Safut, Tall 120, 124, 163, 164
 Sahab 161, 163–165, 168
 Saham al-Jaulan 155
 As-Sa'idiyya 144, 145, 149, 163, 164
 Salecah 108, 126, 128, 129, 130, 132, 133, 146, 151, 152, 153
 Salkhad 152
 As-Salt 31, 85, 108, 139, 140, 165, 195, 198, 199
 Al-Sar, Kh. 139
 As-Sila' 192
 Ash-Shawbak 31, 34, 36, 38, 190, 193
 Al-Shech Dschayil, Kh. 138, 139
 Sheikh 'Isa, Kh. 57, 58
 Shmesani 170
 Siran, Tall 160, 161, 163
 As-Sireh, Kh. 106, 107, 139
 As-Smesani/as-Semsaneh, Kh. 167
 As-Suq, Kh. 168
 Suweileh 119, 124
 Sweimeh, Kh. 87, 88
 As-Sweiwina/as-Suwewinah 162, 167
 At-Tafila 38, 189, 192, 193
 At-Ta'yiba 207, 208
 Tawahin as-Sukkar 58
 Tawilan 160, 185, 192
 Al-Taym, Kh. 104
 Teima 188
 At-Telage/Telajeh, Kh. 190
 Timna 80, 188
 Transjordan 1, 3–6, 12, 19, 47, 63, 66, 72, 97, 103, 106, 110–112, 117, 124, 126, 128, 131, 133, 135, 138, 140, 152, 166, 170, 193, 195, 197, 198
 Tulaylat Ghassul 54, 59
 Al-'Umayri, Tall 161, 163, 164, 168, 174
 Umm al-'Amad 165, 177, 178
 Umm al-Biyara 187, 192
 Umm ad-Dananir, Kh. 161, 163–165
 Umm Hamad, Tall 144, 149
 Umm al-Hanafish/Umm al-Basatin 167
 Umm al-Hedamus 204

- Umm Oseij, Kh. 120
 Umm al-Qanafid 165
 Umm Qays 143
 Umm al-Qanafid 167
 Umm Udhayna 161
 Umm al-Walid 104, 105
 'Uyun Musa, Kh. 78, 86, 134, 138, 139
 Wadi Afrit 78
 Wadi al-'Arab 143
 Wadi 'Arabah 1, 5, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30–32, 34, 36, 38, 42, 63, 69, 71, 79, 80, 82, 90, 94, 97, 109, 132, 145, 148, 185, 187–189, 194, 208
 Wadi Arnon 73, 91, 93, 95, 96, 110, 126, 128–130, 132, 133, 147, 150, 151, 167, 197
 Wadi al-'Azeimeh 88
 Wadi Azraq 112, 124, 212
 Wadi al-Bahhat 165
 Wadi al-Balu' 98
 Wadi Faynan 83
 Wadi al-Habra 180
 Wadi al-Hasa 2, 4, 27, 43, 57, 58, 71–74, 174, 176, 182, 183, 185, 190, 191, 193
 Wadi Hisma 185
 Wadi Ibn Hammad 54, 181
 Wadi I'sal 180, 181
 Wadi al-Kafrein 107
 Wadi Khanazir 54, 73, 83
 Wadi Kufrinja 206
 Wadi al-Lejjun 75
 Wadi al-Mujib 73–76, 79, 98, 135, 159, 169
 Wadi Musa 69
 Wadi Nimrin 87, 182
 Wadi al-Nukheila 73
 Wadi an-Numayra 182
 Wadi al-Rajib 145
 Wadi Raqqad 154
 Wadi Shu'ayb 108, 112, 114, 120, 124, 182, 199
 Wadi as-Sir 107, 162, 165
 Wadi Sirhan 23, 25, 30
 Wadi al-Sultani 72, 73
 Wadi ath-Thamad 75, 76, 94, 104, 174, 176
 Wadi Umm ad-Dananir 165
 Wadi 'Uyun Musa 78, 134, 139
 Wadi al-Yabis 200, 203–206
 Wadi az-Zarqa 95, 99, 141, 142, 148, 159, 162–165, 169, 199, 208
 Wadi Zarqa Ma'in 76, 109, 117, 118, 137
 Al-Warde 165
 Al-Weibeh 71
 Al-Yadude 165
 Yajuz 106, 107, 168
 Az-Zara Oasis 59
 Zin 79, 185
 Zughar/Sughar 51, 58

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

- Gen 10.19 45, 47, 50, 59
 Gen 12.5 171
 Genesis 13 47, 49
 Gen 13.12 3, 5, 45
 Genesis 14 3, 47, 57
 Gen 14.2 45, 48, 60
 Gen 14.5 122, 151, 153
 Gen 18.16–33 48
 Genesis 19 48, 49, 57
 Gen 19.1–3 3, 48
 Gen 19.23 49
 Gen 19.24–25 48
 Gen 19.28 48
 Gen 19.30–38 3, 47, 58, 170
 Gen 19.37 171
 Gen 22.20–24 154
 Genesis 31 197
 Gen 31.17–25 195
 Gen 31.45 197
 Gen 31.47–48 197
 Gen 31.51–52 197
 Gen 32.2 96, 140, 153, 155
 Gen 32.3 96, 140, 148, 185
 Gen 32.22 96, 140
 Gen 32.24–31 148
 Gen 32.30 148
 Gen 32.31 148
 Gen 33.17 143

- Genesis 36 188
 Gen 36.8–9 185
 Gen 36.11 192
 Gen 36.15 192
 Gen 36.21 193
 Gen 36.28 193
 Gen 36.31 188
 Gen 36.31–39 188
 Gen 36.32 188, 190
 Gen 36.33 189
 Gen 36.34 192, 193
 Gen 36.35 189
 Gen 36.36 190
 Gen 36.37 191
 Gen 36.39 191
 Gen 36.41 189
 Gen 36.42 190
 Gen 36.43 190
 Ex 17.1–7 69
 Num 20.2–13 69
 Num 20.14–21 63, 66–68, 97
 Num 20.16 67–69
 Num 20.17 69, 91, 189
 Num 20.19 69
 Num 20.22 67–69, 97
 Num 20.23 69
 Numbers 21 70, 76
 Num 21.1 50, 69
 Num 21.4 67, 68, 71, 83, 97
 Num 21.4–9 83
 Num 21.10 63, 66, 70, 71, 73, 79, 83, 98, 103, 189
 Num 21.10–11 70, 71, 79
 Num 21.10–13 66
 Num 21.10–20 63, 66, 70, 73, 83, 97, 103
 Num 21.11 71, 72, 79, 83, 84, 171
 Num 21.12 71, 73
 Num 21.13 74, 75, 103, 157, 171
 Num 21.14 75
 Num 21.15 74, 75
 Num 21.16 75, 76
 Num 21.18 76
 Num 21.19 76, 77
 Num 21.19–20 77
 Num 21.20 77, 78
 Num 21.21 4, 14, 79, 92, 103, 110, 150
 Num 21.21–26 14
 Num 21.21–35 92, 103, 110, 149
 Num 21.22 103
 Num 21.23 103
 Num 21.24 96, 157, 166
 Num 21.26 3, 103, 171
 Num 21.27 108
 Num 21.28 75
 Num 21.30 84, 91, 108, 171
 Num 21.31–35 128, 130
 Num 21.32 106, 112
 Num 21.33 69, 108, 128
 Num 22.1 3, 49, 77, 87, 171, 173
 Num 22.1–40 173
 Num 22.3 173
 Num 22.36 74, 75, 135
 Num 23.14 77
 Num 23.28 138, 191
 Num 24.17 175
 Num 24.18 185
 Num 25.1 89, 138, 173
 Num 25.3 138
 Num 26.3 87
 Num 31.12 87
 Numbers 32 111, 113, 124, 151, 199
 Num 32.1 110, 112, 113, 126, 150, 197
 Num 32.1–42 110, 112, 125
 Num 32.1–5 197
 Num 32.3 86, 106, 111–113, 115–117, 197
 Num 32.33 111, 128
 Num 32.34 96, 111–113, 118, 146, 150, 197
 Num 32.34–38 111, 197
 Num 32.35 106, 118, 119
 Num 32.36 114, 120, 144
 Num 32.37 115, 122, 150
 Num 32.37–38 150
 Num 32.38 116, 117, 146
 Num 32.39 111, 123, 197
 Num 32.39–40 197
 Num 32.41 123
 Num 32.42 123, 124
 Numbers 33 66, 70, 81
 Num 33.1–49 66, 79, 98
 Num 33.35 2, 63, 66, 79, 84, 85, 97, 189
 Num 33.35–36 2, 79
 Num 33.35–49 63, 66, 79, 84, 85, 97
 Num 33.37 69
 Num 33.39 69

- Num 33.41 82
 Num 33.41–42 82
 Num 33.42–43 82, 189
 Num 33.44 71–73, 83
 Num 33.44–45 73, 83
 Num 33.45–46 84
 Num 33.46–47 84
 Num 33.47 85, 86
 Num 33.47–48 85, 86
 Num 33.48 87, 193
 Num 33.48–49 87
 Num 33.49 87, 89
 Num 34.3–4 185
 Num 34.14–15 125, 150
 Deut 1.1 74, 125, 138, 193
 Deut 1.1–3.29 125, 138
 Deut 1.4 14, 108, 128, 152
 Deuteronomy 2 66, 89, 91
 Deut 2.1 63, 66, 79, 89, 91, 98, 185
 Deut 2.1–9 66
 Deut 2.1–25 79, 91, 98
 Deut 2.1–26 63, 67, 90
 Deut 2.4 66
 Deut 2.8 2, 79, 81, 82, 91, 171, 189
 Deut 2.9 73, 75, 170, 171
 Deut 2.12 193
 Deut 2.13–14 73
 Deut 2.18 73, 75, 157, 171
 Deut 2.19 159, 171
 Deut 2.24 65, 92, 93
 Deut 2.26 91–93, 104
 Deut 2.26–27 93
 Deut 2.26–35 92
 Deut 2.32 103
 Deut 2.36 96, 135
 Deut 2.37 96, 157
 Deut 29.1–30.20 131
 Deut 29.7–8 131, 150
 Deut 3.1 69, 108, 128, 131, 150
 Deut 3.1–14 128
 Deut 3.1–17 131, 150
 Deut 3.3–17 125, 126
 Deut 3.4 126
 Deut 3.8–9 151
 Deut 3.9 129, 151
 Deut 3.10 92, 108, 146, 152, 174
 Deut 3.12 197
 Deut 3.12–13 197
 Deut 3.14 123, 127, 153
 Deut 3.15 197
 Deut 3.16 157, 165
 Deut 3.17 77, 90
 Deut 3.27 77
 Deut 32.10 78
 Deut 32.49 85
 Deut 32.50 69
 Deut 34.1 49, 50, 77, 87, 198
 Deut 34.1–4 49, 50
 Deut 34.5 138
 Deut 34.6 138
 Deut 4.41 3, 101, 147, 155, 177
 Deut 4.41–42 147, 155
 Deut 4.41–43 101
 Deut 4.43 92, 129, 147, 177, 201
 Deut 4.47–48 129
 Deut 4.48 96
 Josh 2.1 89
 Josh 3.1 89
 Josh 3.16 52, 90, 149
 Josh 9.10 152
 Josh 11.3 151
 Josh 11.17 152, 154, 185
 Josh 12.1 2, 101, 131, 132, 152
 Josh 12.1–6 101, 131, 132
 Josh 12.2 92, 96, 157, 165, 197
 Josh 12.2–5 197
 Josh 12.3 77, 87, 90
 Josh 12.4 108, 128, 129, 152
 Josh 12.4–5 128, 152
 Josh 12.5 130, 152, 153
 Joshua 13 129, 130, 132, 133, 151
 Josh 13.2 153
 Josh 13.5 155
 Josh 13.8 108, 129, 132–134, 145, 151
 Josh 13.8–12 129
 Josh 13.8–31 132–134, 145, 151
 Josh 13.9 84, 96, 108, 135, 174
 Josh 13.11 134, 152, 153
 Josh 13.13 134, 153
 Josh 13.15–21 93
 Josh 13.16 92, 108, 116, 135
 Josh 13.17 77, 117, 122, 134
 Josh 13.18 93, 103, 104, 135
 Josh 13.19 116, 122, 137

284 / “East of the Jordan”

- Josh 13.20 87, 138
 Josh 13.21 134
 Josh 13.23 87, 134
 Josh 13.25 106, 112, 133, 134, 166–168
 Josh 13.26 134, 139, 140, 142
 Josh 13.27 114, 120, 134, 142, 144
 Josh 13.30 123, 127, 140
 Josh 13.31 108, 134
 Josh 13.32 87
 Josh 15.1–3 185
 Josh 15.10 185
 Josh 17.1 129, 145, 151
 Josh 17.1–13 145
 Josh 17.6 197
 Josh 18.7 145, 151
 Josh 20.8 101, 129, 147, 155, 177, 201
 Josh 21.27 101, 129, 147, 152, 155
 Josh 21.27–39 101
 Josh 21.36 147, 150, 177
 Josh 21.36–37 147, 150
 Josh 21.37 93, 135
 Josh 21.38 140, 147, 150, 201
 Josh 21.38–39 147, 150
 Josh 21.39 106
 Josh 22.9 198
 Josh 24.4 185
 Judg 3.3 151, 152, 154, 155
 Judg 3.12–30 173
 Judg 5.17 195
 Judg 5.2–31 195
 Judg 5.4 185
 Judg 7.22 205, 206
 Judg 8.5 143, 148
 Judg 8.5–8 148
 Judg 8.8–9 148
 Judg 8.11 119, 123
 Judg 8.17 148
 Judg 10.17 199
 Judg 10.4 123
 Judg 10.6–12.7 157, 159, 166, 199
 Judges 11 4, 66, 135, 146
 Judg 11.1 145, 195
 Judg 11.1–12.6 195
 Judg 11.3 208
 Judg 11.5 208
 Judg 11.11 199
 Judg 11.12–28 145
 Judg 11.13 96, 157, 170
 Judg 11.14–26 63, 66, 95, 98
 Judg 11.15 171
 Judg 11.17 171
 Judg 11.18 74, 171
 Judg 11.20 103
 Judg 11.21–22 101, 145, 151
 Judg 11.22 171
 Judg 11.26 96, 145
 Judg 11.29 199
 Judg 11.33 165
 Judg 11.34 199
 Judg 12.1 144
 Judg 21.8 202
 Judg 21.8–14 202
 Judg 21.12 202
 Ruth 1.2 173
 Ruth 1.22 173
 1 Sam 10.27 159, 202
 1 Sam 11.1 159, 195, 202, 203
 1 Sam 11.11 202
 1 Sam 22.3–4 173
 1 Sam 27.8 153
 1 Sam 31.11 203
 1 Sam 31.12 203
 1 Sam 31.13 203
 2 Sam 2.4 202, 203
 2 Sam 2.5 203
 2 Sam 2.8 140
 2 Sam 2.29 140, 142
 2 Sam 3.3 153
 2 Sam 8.2–3 173
 2 Sam 9.4–5 142, 143
 2 Sam 10.6 154, 208
 2 Sam 10.8 154, 208
 2 Sam 14.23 153
 2 Sam 17.24 140
 2 Sam 17.27 143
 2 Sam 21.12 203
 2 Sam 21.12–14 203
 2 Sam 24.5 96, 106, 135, 173
 1 Kings 2.8 140
 1 Kings 4.12 149, 205, 206
 1 Kings 4.13 123, 126, 127, 130, 195, 201
 1 Kings 4.14 140, 195
 1 Kings 4.7–19 195
 1 Kings 7.46 143, 149

- 1 Kings 9.26 2, 79, 81, 82, 189
 1 Kings 12.25 148
 1 Kings 17.1 204
 1 Kings 17.3 1, 199, 205
 1 Kings 18.7–16 205
 1 Kings 19.16 199, 205
 1 Kings 22 67, 79, 82, 201
 1 Kings 22.48 79, 82
 2 Kings 1.1 173
 2 Kings 1.3 204
 2 Kings 8.28 201
 2 Kings 8.32–33 128, 130
 2 Kings 9 201
 2 Kings 9.1 201
 2 Kings 10.33 3, 96
 2 Kings 14.7 99, 182, 192
 2 Kings 14.22 81, 188
 2 Kings 14.25 90
 2 Kings 15.10 202
 2 Kings 15.25 126
 2 Kings 16.5 189
 2 Kings 16.6 81
 2 Kings 24.1–4 154
 2 Kings 25.23–24 153, 154
 1 Chronicles 1 188
 1 Chr 1.36 192
 1 Chr 1.43 188, 190
 1 Chr 1.43–50 188
 1 Chr 1.44 189
 1 Chr 1.45 192
 1 Chr 1.46 189
 1 Chr 1.47 190, 191
 1 Chr 1.50 191
 1 Chr 1.53 190, 192
 1 Chr 1.54 189, 190
 1 Chr 2.23 123, 124, 153, 154
 1 Chr 3.2 153
 1 Chr 4.19 154
 1 Chr 4.4 148
 1 Chr 4.42–43 185
 1 Chr 5 146, 147, 151
 1 Chr 5.1–23 101, 146, 147
 1 Chr 5.8 96
 1 Chr 5.11 128, 130, 152
 1 Chr 5.16 130
 1 Chr 5.16b 147
 1 Chr 5.23 130, 146, 151, 152, 154, 155
 1 Chr 5.8 86, 95, 117, 146
 1 Chr 6.39–66 101, 147
 1 Chr 6.71 129, 152, 155
 1 Chr 6.78 3, 103, 177
 1 Chr 6.79 93, 104, 135
 1 Chr 6.80 140, 201
 1 Chr 6.81 106
 1 Chr 8.25 148
 1 Chr 10.11 202, 203
 1 Chr 10.11–12 203
 1 Chr 18.2 173
 1 Chr 19.6–7 153, 154
 1 Chr 19.7 108, 109
 1 Chr 26.31 106
 2 Chr 4.17 143, 149
 2 Chr 8.17 2, 79, 81, 189
 2 Chr 8.18 79
 2 Chr 18.2 201
 2 Chr 20.36 79, 82
 2 Chr 22.5 201
 2 Chr 25.12 182, 192
 2 Chr 25.14 185
 2 Chronicles 18 201
 Job 1.1 193
 Job 1.15 193
 Job 2.11 192
 Ps 22.12 128
 Ps 42.6 151
 Ps 60.6 143
 Song 4.8 151
 Isa 2.13 128
 Isaiah 15–16 174, 175, 182, 183
 Isa 15.1 75, 175, 176, 180
 Isa 15.1–9 174, 176
 Isa 15.2 84, 86, 108, 176
 Isa 15.2c–7a 175
 Isa 15.4 103, 104, 115, 174, 176
 Isa 15.5 50, 51, 176, 178, 179, 180
 Isa 15.6 176, 182
 Isa 15.7 74, 176, 182
 Isa 15.8 76, 176, 178
 Isa 15.9 176
 Isa 16.1 176, 182
 Isa 16.2 176
 Isa 16.7 176, 180
 Isa 16.8 106, 116, 117, 176
 Isa 16.11 176, 180

- Isa 21.11 185
 Isa 24.17–18 175
 Isa 25.10 181
 Isa 34.6 189
 Isa 42.11 192
 Isa 43.19 78
 Jer 25.20 193
 Jer 25.21 193
 Jer 40.8 153, 154
 Jer 48.1 86, 122, 175, 176
 Jer 48.1–47 174, 176
 Jer 48.2 174, 176, 181
 Jer 48.3 176, 179
 Jer 48.5 176, 179, 180
 Jer 48.18 84, 176
 Jer 48.19 96, 176
 Jer 48.21 103, 104, 135, 176–178
 Jer 48.21–24 177
 Jer 48.22 84, 176
 Jer 48.23 117, 176, 177
 Jer 48.24 147, 176, 177, 179
 Jer 48.29–37 175
 Jer 48.31 176
 Jer 48.32 106, 116, 117, 176
 Jer 48.34 103, 115, 174, 176, 178, 182
 Jer 49.7 192
 Jer 49.13 177, 189
 Jer 49.16 182, 192
 Jer 49.20 192
 Lam 4.21 193
 Lam 4.21–22 193
 Bar 3.22 192
 Ezek 25.8–11 174, 175, 183
 Ezek 25.9 87, 117, 122, 176
 Ezek 25.13 192
 Ezek 25.15 185
 Ezek 27.6 128
 Ezek 29.18 130
 Ezek 35.2 185
 Hos 9.10 138
 Am 1.12 177, 189, 192
 Am 2.1–3 174–176
 Am 2.2 75, 176
 Ob 3 182
 Mic 2.12 177
 Mic 6.5 88, 89
 Hab 3.3 192
 Zech 11.2 128, 130
 1 Maccabees 5 195, 198, 199, 208
 1 Macc 5.4 117
 1 Macc 5.8 106, 166
 1 Macc 5.9 206, 207
 1 Macc 5.13 207, 208
 1 Macc 5.26 206
 1 Macc 5.29 206
 1 Macc 5.35 206, 207
 1 Macc 5.36 206
 1 Macc 5.43 206
 1 Macc 5.43–44 206
 1 Macc 5.46 206–208
 1 Macc 5.46–51 206
 1 Macc 5.48–51 207
 1 Macc 9.36 109
 2 Macc 12.13 199, 206
 2 Macc 12.17 199, 207, 208
 2 Macc 12.21 199, 206
 2 Macc 12.21–26 206
 2 Macc 12.26 153
 2 Macc 12.27 198, 207, 208

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- American Center of Oriental Research 7
 Andrews University 92
 Archaeological Survey of Greater 'Amman 119
 Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau 98, 99
 Azraq-Wadi Sirhan Depression 23, 25, 26
 British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History 83
 British 145
 Central Desert Areas of East Jordan 23, 25
 Citadel Inscription 160
 Climate:
 Ancient 32, 34
 Arid 31
 Holocene 32
 Mediterranean 29, 31
 Present 29

- Semi-arid 31
- Danish Palestine Foundation 86
- Deuteronomistic History 101, 131, 140, 157, 201
- East Jordan Valley Survey 115, 121, 145
- École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jerusalem 12
- Explorations in Eastern Palestine 1, 96, 162
- Franciscan Archaeological Institute 86
- German Mining Museum 39, 83
- German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land 12
- Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben 23, 26, 27, 31, 36, 42, 109, 145, 148, 208
- Land of Geshur Archaeological Project 154
- Liber Locorum* 15
- Lot's Cave 49, 58
- Madaba Mosaic Map 9, 15, 51, 58, 72, 73, 191
- Madaba Plains Project 163
- Mesha Inscription 19, 20, 77, 84, 86, 96, 99, 113, 114, 122, 171, 173
- Natural Resources:
- Animal 41
 - Bitumen 39, 48
 - Clay 40
 - Copper Ore 39, 40
 - Iron Ore 40
 - Manganese 39
 - Mineral Raw Materials 39, 40, 41
 - Salt 40
 - Stone 40, 41
 - Water 39
- Northeastern Desert of Jordan 23
- Notitia Dignitatum* 15, 82, 191
- Onomastikon* 6, 9, 15, 51
- Palestine Exploration Fund 12, 16
- Peutinger Table 81
- Plant Geographical Territories:
- Irano-Turanian 36, 38, 43
 - Mediterranean 36, 38, 43
 - Saharo-Sindian 36, 38, 43
 - Sudanian 36, 43
- Pontifical Biblical Institute 54
- Priestly Text 65, 70, 87, 111, 188
- Soil:
- Grey Desert 34, 36, 38
 - Red Mediterranean 34, 36, 43
 - Yellow Mediterranean 34–36
 - Yellow Steppe 34, 36, 38
- Southern Ghors and Northeast 'Arabah Archaeological Survey 2, 4, 58, 61
- Statue Inscription 160
- Survey of Eastern Palestine 11
- Survey of Western Palestine 11
- Tafila-Busayra Archaeological Survey 2, 4
- Tall Siran Bottle 160, 161
- Talmud 14, 73, 91, 120, 144
- Targums 14, 50, 68, 69, 194
- Theater Inscription 160
- University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania 145
- University of Leiden 148
- Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression 23, 27, 28, 29, 42, 205
- Wadi al-Hasa Archaeological Survey 2, 4
- Wadi al-Yabis Survey 203, 204
- Yarmouk University 148

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