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CONTENTS

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations are taken from *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed., 8.4.2.

ACW   Ancient Christian Writers

ClAnt   *Classical Antiquity*

ClQ   *Classical Quarterly*

GR   *Greece & Rome*

HSCP   *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*

Hesperia   *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*

HR   *History of Religions*

ICAANE   International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

IEJ   *Israel Exploration Journal*

JSOT   *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*

JANER   *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*

JEA   *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

JNES   *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

LHBOTS   Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies

LIMC   *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*

NumC   *Numismatic Chronicle*

PW	Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft
ScrTh	*Scripta Theologica*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*

The *Lactans* and the Lachrymose

The Nursing Virgin as Intercessory Type in an Early Coptic Monastic Context

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Abstract: The Marian iconographical type of the *Maria lactans* shows the seated Virgin offering her bared breast to the infant Christ child on her knee. Often understood to indicate Mary's literal nourishment of Christ's physical body, the *lactans* type seems to have proliferated disproportionately in Egypt during the late Antique period. Several 7th-century examples of the *Maria lactans* type are found at Apa Jeremias, a Coptic Monophysite monastery, in Saqqara, Egypt. Because of the human-centered nature of Christ in the *lactans* image, it is a surprising choice for a Monophysite context. This paper suggests that *penthos*, an ascetic practice of holy weeping that originated in the earliest practices of Egyptian desert monasticism, acts as a mediator between these monks and the *Maria lactans* image. Through the intimate confluence of milk and tears, the *Maria lactans* type became an image of intercession for the penitent ascetic praying before it.

Although the Cult of the Virgin Mary is often considered a largely Medieval phenomenon—particularly in art and other devotional representations—its roots had already started to take hold in the centuries immediately following the birth of Christianity. Veneration of the Virgin was being explored textually by the fourth century, drawing from sources like the Protoevangelium of James (second century CE), and Origen (d. ca. 253 CE) is thought to have coined the title "Mother of God" for Mary in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* even in the third century.[1] Thus, various types of Marian iconography originated

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1. John McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary and Inter-religious Contexts in the

from the textual and spiritual discussion about and reverence for this holy figure in both eastern and western Christianity. One such type is the *Maria lactans* or, in Greek, the *Galaktotrophousa*, showing the seated Virgin offering her breast as nourishment to the infant Christ on her knee. Often understood to indicate Mary's literal nourishment of Christ's physical body—the fleshy mechanism for his great salvific act—the *lactans* type seems to have proliferated disproportionately in Egypt during the Late Antique period.[1]

One such Egyptian example of *Maria lactans* images was excavated from the seventh century Apa Jeremias monastery at Saqqara, Egypt (fig. 1 and 2). The representations of Mary and Christ were painted in fresco on the walls of several individual cells. The frescoes show the Virgin Mary, enthroned and nimbed, offering a bared breast to the rather large and mature-looking Christ child on her lap. This location is somewhat unusual for *lactans* images, considering that the monks who lived and worshipped there likely followed the Monophysite tradition of Christianity, which emphasized the exclusively divine (that is, not simultaneously divine and mortal) nature of Christ.[2] This uniquely human depiction of the Virgin and her divine Son—that of the infant at his mother's breast—then, must have had a particular significance for the monks at that monastery to have merited multiple representations of it and private venues for its devotion.

A potential mediator between these monks and the *Maria lactans* is the ascetic practice of *penthos* that originated in the earliest practices of Egyptian desert monasticism. *Penthos* was a kind of holy weeping that touched on "a core element of desert spirituality," that of compunction or sorrow for the sins of oneself and others.[3] *Penthos* was practiced as part of a monk's ongoing and acute acts of penance; it is thus a key aspect of monastic repentance and divine forgiveness of sin. The shedding of these holy tears was also an unusually affective practice in the deeply ascetic and bodily-denying milieu of desert monasticism, and it is this largely unexplored aspect of *penthos*, alongside its repentant objective, that may connect it to the *Maria lactans* type.[4]

Fifth-Century Church, in *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, ed. Chris Maunder (London: Burnes and Oates, 2008), 1; 9.

1.   Sabrina Higgins, "Divine Mothers: The Influence of Isis on the Virgin Mary in Egyptian Lactans-Iconography," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 3-4 (2012): 73.

2.   Elizabeth S. Bolam, "The enigmatic Copt *Galaktotrophousa* and the Cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt," in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 14.

3.   William Harmless "Remembering Poemen Remembering: The Desert Fathers and the Spirituality of Memory," *Church History* 69, no. 3 (2000): 490.

4.   Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 491; see Andrew Mellas, "Tears of Compunction in John Chrysostom's *On Eutropius*," *Studio Patristica* 83 no. 9 (2017): 162 for

Figure 1: Maria lactans from cell 1725, ca. sixth to seventh century CE, Monastery at Apa Jeremias, Saqara, Egypt, Coptic Museum, Cairo.

Figure 2: Maria lactans from a cell wall, ca. sixth to seventh century CE, Monastery at Apa Jeremias, Saqara, Egypt, Coptic Museum, Cairo.

Contemporary writings of desert monastics and relevant theologians, the larger Egyptian cultural and Christian environment in which the images were produced, and early Marian veneration point to the possibility that the seventh century Apa Jeremias *Maria lactans* frescoes were in conjunction with monastic devotion. The affective nature of *penthos* makes it well suited to accompany the sweet and intimate moment depicted in these images of Mother and Child, which, in tandem with that tearful devotion, become particularly pertinent images of intercession for the ascetic Monophysite monk.

The Monastic Environment

As mentioned above, the monastic setting of the *Galaktotrophousa* frescoes is, at first glance, a rather unusual one; Monophysite Christians emphasized the divine rather than the human Christ, and monasteries were distinctly and strictly male spaces. Monophysite Christianity, which during the seventh century was largely synonymous with Coptic Christianity, believed that Christ did not have a dual nature; even during his earthly ministry when he took on a human body, his nature was (and remains) exclusively divine, not simultaneously human and

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further discussion of the affective nature of *penthos* and the paucity of literature on the subject.

divine.[1] After the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE, Coptic Christians diverged from the determined orthodoxy and, despite calls of heresy, maintained their theology of Christ's single divine nature.[2] Thus, an image of the infant Christ receiving bodily nourishment from his human mother seems an unusual scene for this Monophysite monastic context.[3]

However, the placement of these images in the Apa Jeremias monastery, alongside the potential genesis of this image type and specific teaching from monastic fathers, suggests that the figure of the nursing Mary was of particular importance for these monks. At Apa Jeremias specifically, multiple tombstones in the monastery cemetery include references to the Virgin Mary, suggesting that Marian devotion was more common here than perhaps in other comparable contemporary Christian groups.[4] Within the monastery, as mentioned, the frescoes are placed in individual cells. A monk's cell was a deeply important location for his personal spirituality.

The practices and, indeed, very existence of Coptic monks like the ones at Apa Jeremias were borne from the tradition of the early Desert Fathers—figures such as St. Antony the Abbot, Arsenius the Great, and, most pertinently to this paper, Abba Poemen who, in the third and fourth centuries, ventured into the harsh environ of the Egyptian deserts in pursuit of proximity to God via deep spirituality, continued penance, isolation, and often extreme asceticism.[5] The writings and teachings of these early monks were compiled into a text known as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*

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1. Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica, "Monophysite Christianity," Encyclopedia Britannica, July 31, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/monophysite

2. Derek Krueger, "Mary at the Threshold: The Mother of God as Guardian in Seventh-Century Palestinian Miracle Accounts," in *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, ed. Leslie Brubaker and Mary B. Cunningham, 31-38, (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011) mentions several contemporary stories and writings that brand Monophysites as heretics, including John Moschos's *Spiritual Meadow*, wherein a Monophysite woman is able to enter the tomb of the Holy Sepulcher only after she renounces her belief and takes the Chalcedonian Eucharist.

3. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 2005, 14. Bolman states here that it is assumed that these *lactans* frescos were created in a Monophysite environment; that is, the environment of the monastery where Monophysite beliefs were held.

4. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 2005, 17. Bolman also suggests in this article that "if a survey of the principle textual source for the monastic life [the *Apophthegmata Patrum*] is any indication, early Coptic monks were certainly not devoted to the Virgin Mary," further emphasizing the unique focus on Mary at the Jeremiah monastery. However, in Elizabeth S. Bolman's "Theodore, 'The Writer of Life,' and the Program of 1232/1233," in *Monastic Visions, Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Anton at the Red Sea*, ed. Elizabeth S. Bolman, 37-76 (Cairo: American Research Center in Cairo), 2002, Bolman says that "the Copts are well known for their particular devotion to the Virgin Mary." An exploration of this discrepancy is beyond the scope of this paper. Coptic veneration of Mary will be addressed in more detail below.

5. Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 485.

(The Sayings of the Desert Fathers) and translated into many languages, including Coptic; this widespread text informed later monastic beliefs and practices including those in the monasteries at hand.[6] Many sayings from the fathers as recorded in the *Apophthegmata* speak to the importance of the monk's cell, where the *lactans* frescoes are found in Apa Jeremias. One writing counsels the monk to "stay in your cell, for your cell will teach you everything."[7] St. Antony (d. 356 CE) similarly said that "as a fish must return to the sea, so must we to our cell, in case by staying outside, we forget to watch inside."[8] It is likely, then, that the monks spent a significant amount of time in their cells, praying and pondering on their interior state. The other common activity of the cell-bound monk was weeping. Evagrios of Pontos (d. 399 CE), as quoted in the *Apophthegmata*, guided the time in the cell by suggesting to the monks that "when you sit in your cell, recall your attention, and remember the day of your death and will see that your body is decaying," during which ponderings on the sorrow and strife of the mortal world and the souls in hell, "the tears cannot cease to flow."[9] According to Abbot Isaiah, ultimate departure from "the world of men" is to be achieved "by sitting along in your cell, weeping for your sins."[10]

It is in this most personal and privately sacred space where the confluence of the Virgin's milk and the ascetic's tears would have occurred. Given the recorded importance of staying and weeping in the cell, the placement of this image of the Virgin must have been intentional for, as Elizabeth Bolman claims, "virtually everything in the intentional communities of early monasticism was charged with meaning."[11] The frescoed cell is, literally and figuratively, where the ascetic practice of *penthos* connects the monks' weeping to Mary's nursing in an act of joint compunction and intercession.

Penthos: Tears of Penance

The practice of *penthos* was introduced to monasticism by the early Desert Fathers as part of their rigorous programs of penance for the sins of oneself and of the world at large.[12] *Penthos* as a term and practice derives from the second

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6.   Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 485.

7.   Hannah Hunt, *Joy-bearing Grief: Tears of Contrition in the Writings of the Early Syrian and Byzantine Fathers.* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 43.

8.   *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks,* trans. Benedicta Ward. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 8.

9.   *Desert Fathers*, 12.

10.   Hunt, *Joy-bearing Grief*, 46.

11.   Elizabeth S. Bolman, "A Staggering Spectacle: Early Byzantine Aesthetics in the Triconch," in *The Red Monastery Church: Beauty and Asceticism in Upper Egypt.* ed. Elizabeth S. Bolman. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 129.

12.   Kimberly Christine Patton, "'Howl, Weep and Moan, and Bring It Back to God': Holy

beatitude, which promises, "blessed are the sorrowing [*penthountes*] for they will be comforted," and largely focuses on the idea of compunction.[13] While weeping and lamentation were often acts associated with women, monks were allowed and encouraged to shed holy tears because of the male example of weeping created by Jesus in the Bible.[14] Many theologians—monastic and otherwise—discussed the efficacy of tears as part of the processes of penance and repentance. *Penthos*, according to John Chrysostom (d. 407 CE) is or begins as an "expression" of the awareness of sin and eventually allows for a "return to God across the abyss of sin and despair."[15] Weeping that accompanied prayer was the result of Christ touching the striving eyes of the monk, and the subsequent tears were thought to be a source of joy for God.[16] John Climacus (d. 649 CE) suggested that tears signified the presence of the Holy Spirit with the penitent monk and that weeping was an indication of a joyful reunion with God, like that of a child to a parent, after sinning and engaging in penance.[17]

This second point that John Climacus makes refers to the most pertinent and widespread interpretations of tears, which considers their assistance in, as well as the signification of the process of penance, repentance, and, ultimately, divine forgiveness. Tears of *penthos* not only "signif[ied] repentance" but, according to Origen, also "incline[d] God to mercy" when offered with proper intensity and "prolonged prayer."[18] Evagrios of Pontos also suggested that prayers would receive more divine help when offered with "fountains of tears" because when you "pray

Tears in Eastern Christianity," in *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination*, ed. Kimberly Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley, 255-273 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 262.

13.   Matthew 5:4. Discussion of the *penthos* in relation to this verse can be found in Harmless, Remembering Poemen Remembering," 491 and Irénée Hausherr, *Penthos in the Christian East* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1982), vii. Hunt, *Joy-bearing Grief,* 16 mentions John Chrysostom's distinction between *penthos* and compunction: *katanuxis* (compunction) is an indication of becoming aware of sin, whereas *penthos* is an expression of that awareness.

14.   Patton, "'Howl, Weep and Moan,'" 259, discusses how weeping was often connected to death and "female lamentation" and that mourning in the context of death (rather than sin) was "largely the province of women." Page 260 mentions Christ as a "male paradigm for weeping."

15.   Patton, "'Howl, Weep and Moan,'" 258.

16.   Bishop Kallistos Ware, "'An Obscure Matter': Mystery of Tears in Orthodox Spirituality," in *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination*, ed. Kimberly Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley, 242-254 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 243 quotes Evagrios of Pontos' saying that "the Lord rejoices greatly when you pray with tears"; pg. 244 quotes St. Mark the Monk on tears being a gift from Christ's touch..

17.   Michael J. McClymond, "Holy Tears: A Neglected Aspect of Early Christian Spirituality in Contemporary Context," in *The Spirit, the Affections, and the Christian Tradition*, ed. by Coulter Dale M. and Yong and Amos (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 93; Hunt, *Joy-bearing Grief*, 103.

18.   Patton, "'Howl, Weep and Moan,'" 262.

with tears…all you ask would be heard."[19] Tears, then, especially those that accompany prayer, seem to have had a kind of intercessory power inherent in them that aided prayer and helped it to fall on merciful divine ears.[20] Abba Poemen (d. 450 CE), mentioned previously as one of the early patriarchs of desert monasticism in Egypt, was a particularly well-beloved figure and perhaps the greatest monastic proponent of *penthos*; almost half of the sayings in the *Apophthegmata* that mention *penthos* come from him.[21] Several of these sayings support the notion of intercessory tears: he suggested that "the one who wants to pay the ransom for sins pays for them with tears"; when asked by a charge how to address his sins, Poemen told him that "he who wishes to purify his faults purifies them with tears and he who wishes to acquire virtues, acquires them with tears; for weeping is the way the Scriptures and our Fathers give us, when they say "Weep!" Truly, there is no other way than this.'"[22]

Abba Poemen's personal and pedagogical emphasis on weeping also makes a connection to the Virgin Mary that other accounts of weeping do not. A story in the *Apophthegmata* tells of Abba Poemen being roused from a state of ecstasy by another monk and telling him that "my thoughts were with the St. Mary the Mother of God when she stood beside the Cross of the Saviour and wept. And I too wish that I could always weep as she did."[23] In this account, which one scholar describes as having "an almost late medieval flavor to it" with its affective devotion to and veneration of the Virgin, Poemen makes a direct connection between weeping and the *Theotokos*.[24] This distinctly monastic episode that combines weeping with the veneration of Mary in an unusually affective manner once again suggests a potential connection between weeping and another rather affective image of the Mother and Son, the *Galaktotrophousa*. In this image, as in Poemen's vision of the Crucifixion, Christ is joined to his mother through holy liquid as he was in other important moments in his life: at the wedding of Cana, wherein the liquid miracle requested by Mary introduced Christ as the divine incarnate *Logos*, and on the cross when blood and water poured from Christ's side before his grieving mother.[25]

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19. Ware, "'An Obscure Matter,'" 244.

20. Many writings and sayings, such as those from the *Apophthegmata* and John Climacus' *Ladder of Divine Ascent* clarify that the tears must be offered earnestly, purposefully, and with great humility; tears for show or for excessive grieving are harmful rather than helpful.

21. Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 491.

22. Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 491; Ware, "'An Obscure Matter,'" 245; Poemen, 119, in Benedicta Ward, translator, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1975), 184.

23. Ware, "'An Obscure Matter,'" 243.

24. Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 491.

25. John 2:1-11 tells the story of Christ turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana; John 19:34 tells that Christ shed blood and water from his side wound after it was pricked by

Figure 3: Isis and Harpocrates ("House of the Child"), wall painting from the southern wall of House B50E, ca. fourth century CE, Kelsey Museum of Arhaeology, Michigan.

In the case of the nursing virgin, too, the scene is witnessed by the devout—and weeping—monk, shedding his own form of holy fluid.

THE *VIRGO LACTANS*

The genesis of the image of the nursing Virgin Mary is uncertain, despite the type being widespread for much of Christian visual history. Much of the scholarship concerning the origins of the *Galaktotrophousa* suggests that the type has its root in images of the Egyptian goddess Isis nursing the infant Horus, which scene proliferates in sculpture and fresco, as in the fresco of Isis *lactans* at Karanis (Kom Oshim) Egypt, (fourth century CE, fig. 3). Visually, the depictions of Isis and Mary are quite similar—the mother exposes one breast to the infant son ensconced on her lap—leading many to support the notion of an ancestral link from the Pagan image to the Christian.[26] The location of early *lactans* images also supports this notion; the first uncontested paintings of this type of Mary and Christ are those found in Egypt in the seventh century—including the monastic images at hand—further suggesting that the type has specifically Egyptian roots.[27] The similarities between images of Isis and Mary nursing extend beyond their visual similarities: the assigned meaning and purpose of the act and results of nursing are comparable between them as well.

The tradition of the Isis images elevated the new form they took as depictions of Mary and Christ; the Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*s reflect the "long-standing associations between royalty and nursing" that was established by the Isis images, as this female deity was, before Mary, also called the Mother of God.[28] Furthermore, salvific and life-giving elements of both Mary's and Isis's milk have been ascribed to the images: one scholar suggests that as Isis points her breast toward her divine and all-powerful child, she "indicat[es] the *mythos* that she is the source of divine

the lance.

26.   Gawdat Gabra and Marianne Eaton-Krauss, *The Treasures of Coptic Art in the Coptic Museum and Churches of old Cairo*, A Supreme Council of Antiquities Edition (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006), 42; McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary," 11; Higgins, "Divine Mothers," 72; Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 2005, 19.

27.   Higgins, "Divine Mothers," 73.

28.   Bolman "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 19; McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary," 9.

life"; it is from her that nourishment flows to her child and to "her devotee" and, through this nourishment, she acts as "their *Soter*."[29] This idea of salvific milk transfers to Mary as her breast, too, nourishes the Christ child and, subsequently, the supplicant to the image.[30] Indeed, the title *Galaktotrophousa* itself, meaning "she who nourishes with milk" speaks to this purpose of Mary.[31]

As mentioned above, the *lactans* frescoes in the Apa Jeremias monastery were produced and venerated in a Monophysite context, making the very human aspects of this type an incongruous choice. However, the proposed origin and substance of the Virgin's milk explain how and why this image is better suited for a Monophysite group than, perhaps, another type of Marian image might be. In the second century, Clement of Alexandria explained that, because of Mary's virginal status, she was unable to produce the milk necessary to nourish her child; the milk, then, according to Clement and fellow Alexandrine Cyril (d. 444 CE), came from God as the *Logos* itself and was thus entirely and always divine.[32] As divine food and Word, Mary's milk did not adulterate Christ's divinity, allowing him to maintain his requisite Monophysite status of being purely divine while still being nourished at his mortal mother's breast.[33]

Mary's milk as devotionally and redemptively nourishing indicates another important aspect of the *Virgo lactans* type: its Eucharistic implications, which are particularly present in Coptic contexts.[34] Elizabeth Bolman cites early texts that attest to the "significance of milk and the ritual of the baptismal Eucharist," to highlight the Eucharist implications of the image.[35] Newly baptized initiates took a special Eucharist of milk and honey between taking the bread and the wine; according to the *Canons of Hippolytus*, this Eucharist was a type not only for the sweet flesh of Christ but also for the milk drunk by an infant, as baptism indicated a new life and rebirth.[36] The *lactans* imagery in the Red Monastery, in Sohag, Egypt, may be interpreted as a literal reconfiguring of the Eucharist: depicted in

29. McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary," 11.

30. McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary, 11, also suggests that the Isis type where she indicates her son with her breast is "the original subtext for" the *Hodegetria* icon type.

31. Bolman, "A Staggering Spectacle," 142.

32. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 17; Bolman, "A Staggering Spectacle," 144, also mentions Cyril of Alexandria's claim that Mary received the milk in her breasts in heaven.

33. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, I. VI, 39, 2-40, I, ed. H.-I., in *Clément d'Alexandrie, Le pedagogue* (SC, 70), ed. Henri Marrou (Paris: éditions du Cerf, 1960-70), 183-5; Cyril of Alexandria, "Discourse on the Virgin Mary," BMO 6782, fol. 31a, 1-2, in *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt,* ed. E. A. Wallis Budge (London: British Museum, 1915), 719, via Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa." 2005, 17.

34. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 19.

35. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 17.

36. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 18.

Figure 4: Maria lactans from the Red Monastery Church, ca. 550-600 CE, Sohag, Egypt.

one of the semi-domes in the monastery's church, the nursing Virgin is surrounded by a host of angels, reflecting the contemporary belief that angels participated in their own heavenly Eucharistic liturgy and descended to attend earthly liturgies when they were performed (ca. 550-600 CE, fig. 4).[37] The image of Mary nursing as a Eucharistic pertains closely to Mary's role as intercessor, activated by the weeping monastic supplicant. Taking these considerations of Mary's holy effluvia alongside the broader interpretations of the *Galaktotrophousa* type, the Apa Jeremias *lactans* frescoes become images of the intercessory Mother to not only Christ, but also the monks and, indeed, all of humanity.

Tears and the Intercessory Mother

A fraction of papyrus from the third-fourth century, found in Egypt, holds what is thought to be the first prayer to the Virgin Mary, in Latin called the *Sub Tuum Praesidium or Beneath Thy Protection* (University of Manchester Greek P 470, fig. 5). This particular fragment, likely originated from a Coptic tradition because of its location in Egypt, carries the invocation, "Mother of God (hear) my supplications: suffer us not (to be) in adversity, but deliver us from danger."[38] This Coptic prayer to Mary suggests that, in a larger context, devout Egyptian Christians prayed to Mary—specifically in her aspect as a mother—for assistance and protection. Therefore, it is apparent that Mary was being conceived of as an intercessor in this period and context. The combination of *penthos* as monastic penitential action and the *Virgo lactans* type in the setting of the monastery together figure Mary as a particularly potent intercessor for souls.

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37.   Bolman, "A Staggering Spectacle," 144; 140.

38.   Translation from C.H. Roberts, Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester, Volume III, Theological and Literary Texts (Nos. 457-551). (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1938).

https://www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/view/MS-GREEK-P-00470/1. Bolman, "Theodore," 2002, 57 mentions that the Copts are well known for their particular devotion to the Virgin Mary."

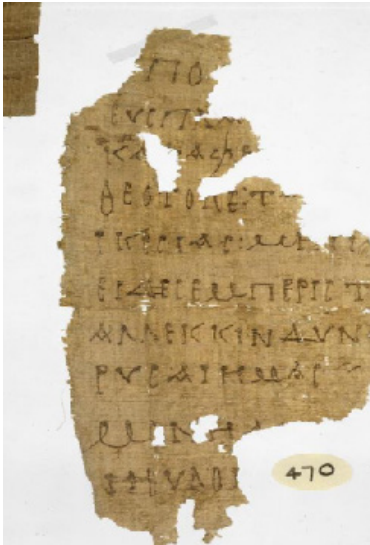In both *Maria lactans* frescoes found at Apa Jeremias, the Christ child seated on his mother's lap is distinctly un-childlike: he is disproportionately large in comparison to his young mother, and his heavily browed face, grasping hands, and lush head of hair seem more mature than would be expected on a suckling infant. Mary's nourishing of this "infant" Christ, then, may be extended to her nourishing of all humanity, encapsulated and synecdochized in the holy man-child, as she both holds and administers the divine and salvific power of the *Logos* on her lap and through her breast. This universal intercession between Mary and Christ as she saves the lives of all those implied in the Child— as Isis does for Horus before them—becomes personalized to the monk through the practice of *penthos*.[39]

Figure 5: Prayer to Mary, ca. third to fourth century CE, Egypt, University of Manchester Greek P 470.

As previously discussed, the *Galaktotrophousa* frescoes at Apa Jeremias are found in two individual cells in the monastery. It is here that the monk would engage in his most fervent prayer and most heartfelt weeping for grief, penitence, and hope for forgiveness—in front of the figure who, as Cyril of Alexandria put forth, was "the mother of all the monks and all the nuns."[40] In this intimate context of a monk weeping before the nursing Virgin as if to his own mother, the monk himself becomes like the Christ child on the holy lap, maintained by her loving care and cleansed by the baptismal nature of her divinely gifted milk. Clement of Alexandria deemed the Virgin's milk the "drink of immortality" having "the same composition of as the flesh and blood of Christ"; it was the milk "which the Lord promises the just, to show clearly that the *Logos* is at one and the same time alpha and omega, the beginning and the end."[41] The monks' simultaneously sweet and bitter tears, shed in hopes of drawing toward salvation and onto the lap of the nursing Mother, bring the divine and salvatory blood of Christ to the mundane space of the monk via the pictorial milk that is also Christ's flesh and blood. And as the tears mystically elevate the monk and, if shed with proper humility and

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39. McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary," 11.

40. Cyril of Alexandria, "Discourse on the Virgin Mary," BMO6782, fols. 32b1-32b2; Bolman, "Theodore," 57.

41. Clement of Alexandria, Paed. I. VI, 36, 174-5 via Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 17.

purpose, propel him up the divine ladder and closer to God, they allow him to meet the blood in that liminal space between earthly and divine, held by Mary and broached by the weeping supplicant and the divine infant Christ.[42]

The intercessory implications of tears, specifically in the context of affective monastic *penthos*, make this practice one that, by nature, aligns it with the intercession of the Virgin Mary made pictorially present and theologically accessible through the *Maria lactans* type. Placed in the Monophysite Coptic context of an all-male monastery, the two frescoes of this image of Mary at Apa Jeremias in Saqqara, Egypt make this alignment explicit and personal for the devout monks, as, through their prayerful tears, they approach the seat of Mary's throne and her body as the throne of Christ, and themselves are cleansed and nourished by the same divine fluid that gave Christ life in his mortal body. Kimberly Patton says, in her exploration of writings and practices of *penthos*, that is "to weeping, and weeping alone [that] God will pay attention."[43] The intercession of Mary before both the penitent and before Christ belies that claim. In the dual intimacy of penitent weeping and nursing a child, monk and Mother are brought together to allow the tears of *penthos* to enliven and embody Mary's intercessory role and to "pay for [sins] with tears," co-present as they are with holy milk and saving blood.[44]

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42.   St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Archimandrite Lazarus Moore. (New York, Harper and Row: 1959), 7:7 discusses this point. The purpose and specifications of holy tears are discussed in many places throughout this treatise; Krueger, 31 discusses early seventh century Palestinian texts that put Mary forth "not as an open and concave space, but rather as the threshold of space, the *limen* separating the sacred and profane."

43.   Patton, "'Howl, Weep and Moan,'" 262.

44.   Harmless, "Remembering Poemen Remembering," 491, quotes Abba Poemen: "the one who wants to pay the ransom for sins pays for them with tears…Weeping: that is that path the Scriptures and our Fathers handed down to us."

Nabataeans, Dogs and Tuna

Chamber Tomb Faunal Remains and their Association with Rome and Egypt

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Abstract: Faunal remains from Wadi Mataha, Site 16, were identified and analyzed to provide explanations for the presence and significance of animal remains found in Nabataean tombs. This analysis provides essential information on the Nabataeans of Petra, a people that left a shortage of literary and written works from which to piece together their history and culture. This research centers on the remains of domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) and skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) found in burial site 16. Analysis of the remains indicates their inclusion in the tomb was the result of cultural exchange or shifts in the Petra region, based on political, economic, and religious relationships the Nabataeans had with Rome and Egypt at the time—specifically between the second century BCE and the late first century CE.

Studying the type, distribution, and use of animals in past cultures is an important and effective way to gather archaeological data. The way animals were used in ancient cultures can provide crucial insights into diet, resources, climate, ritual, and trade, as well as a given culture's relationships with other civilizations. The Nabataeans of Petra, Jordan, have few first-hand or secondary written accounts about their culture, thus, faunal analysis is a useful and necessary study that can help uncover previously unknown information about Nabataean culture. Unfortunately, few have studied Nabataean faunal remains, and even fewer have discussed the possible connections between the faunal assemblage and the various cultures that influenced the Nabataeans. This leaves a gap in faunal interpretations and explanations, which requires more research that considers cross-cultural

connections, and how that played a part in the appearance and use of animals among the Nabataeans of Petra.

The Nabataeans settled in the region around the fourth century BCE and thrived there until at least the fourth century CE. As a nomadic people, they originally wandered the desert with herds of animals in search of food and water sources. By the second century BCE, they became a sedentary people and developed a complex, stratified society with kings and queens, sophisticated hydraulic systems, standardized currency, and impressive monuments. They also developed agriculture and animal husbandry, domesticating goats, sheep, camels, and other animals which were utilized for food, transportation, raw materials, sacrifice, or grave goods. Due to their location in the desert, and their available resources— particularly their dependable water supply—the Nabataeans became an influential center of travel and trade throughout the region. They built trade relationships and alliances with the surrounding cultures, two of the most prominent being Egypt and Rome.[1]

These relationships with Egypt and Rome played a crucial role in the economic growth and success of the Nabataeans, who borrowed from these cultures in architectural styles, worship, and the manufacturing of currency. Egypt and Rome also influenced the Nabataeans in seemingly smaller ways—for example, the appearance, distribution, and use of animals in Nabataean burials. The present study deals with faunal remains from a burial site in Wadi Mataha known as Site 16, a region of Petra which lies north of the main city center. The remains were excavated in 2008 and stored in Brigham Young University's Museum of Peoples and Cultures. The faunal bones were identified, documented, and analyzed from 2020 to 2021, with the primary aim to understand more about the Nabataeans' use of animals, specifically those found in burial contexts. Though there were many different animals identified from the assemblage at Site 16, the focus of this research is on the fish bones recognized as Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), and domesticated dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*). This research demonstrates how the Nabataeans' relationship with Egypt and Rome affected the material remains found in the burials and supplies previously unknown information about the Nabataean culture regarding specific diet and mortuary practices.

When the Romans took over the Nabataean Kingdom in the first century CE, this led to an exchange of Roman culture in Petra and the whole of Jordan. The presence of Skipjack tuna found in Site 16 can be explained through this increase in Roman influence in the area, as seen through archaeological and historical

1.   Philip C. Hammond "Cult and Cupboard at Nabataean Petra." *Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (1981): 27–34.
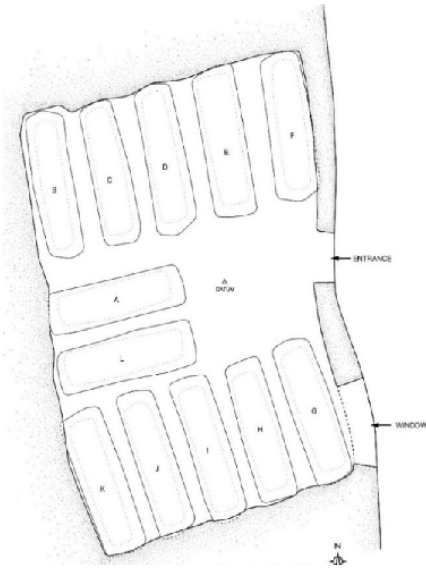
Figure 1: Site 16 layout with loculi A-L John-son, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126..

accounts addressed in this article. The Egyptians were also a large cultural and political power in the area at the time of the Nabataeans, and the Nabataeans are known to have worshipped Egyptian gods such as Isis, and to have followed some Egyptian practices. The inclusion of dog paw bones in the Site 16 burials can be attributed to the Egyptian's mortuary practices at the time that included dogs—an especially dominant Egyptian practice at the time of the deposition of the dog bones at Site 16,[2] deposited around the first century BCE.

Site Background

Wadi Mataha is a region just north of Petra, Jordan, where many Nabataean tombs and burial sites are located. Site 16 is in the Jebel al Mudhlim region in the northern drainage of Wadi Mataha.[3] Site 16 is a rock-cut tomb which houses twelve loculi (otherwise known as chamber tombs), which were cut into standing stone in the floor. These loculi are designated A through L, starting in the back of the chamber and proceeding clockwise around the tomb (fig. 1 and 2). Generally, the loculi had three levels of stratigraphy, known as a stratigraphic unit (SU), SU 1 being the closest to the surface, SU 2 being in the middle, and SU 3 being the furthest down, and thus the earliest in deposition (not accounting for any possible natural or cultural formation processes which may have occurred.) One outlier is loculus I, where a fourth stratigraphic level was recorded, which is a layer of soil deposited below the Nabataean burials found in SU 3. The Site 16 tomb is cut from the surrounding rock at 2 meters above the Wadi bed and must be accessed through cut handholds to reach the entrance of the tomb. From East to West, the tomb is 4.6 meters wide, from north to south is 6.5 meters long and is 2.7 meters high.[4]

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2.   Salima Ikram, "The Loved Ones: Egyptian Animal Mummies as Cultural and Environmental Indicators." In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on the Archaeozoology of Southwestern Asia and Adjacent Areas*, pp. 240-248. 2005.

3.   David Johnson, "A Nabataean Chamber Tomb and Carved Block in the Wadi Mataha, Petra, Jordan." In *Studies on the Nabataean Culture I: Refereed Proceedings of the International Conference on the Nabataean Culture*, pp. 119-126. 2013.

4.   Dana Blackburn, "An Archaeological Exploration of the Role of Votive Offerings in a Nabataean Burial." *Studia Antiqua* 8, no. 1 (2010): 35-45.

Figure 2: Site 16 loculus A with artifact findings and placements. Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126.

During the excavation of the loculi at Site 16, 38 adults, 9 adolescents, and 13 children were found buried, along with numerous other grave goods including pottery which was dated to periods ranging from the Late Hellenistic (c. 200–31 BCE) to the Middle Nabataean periods (c. 27 BCE– 100 CE).[5] Site 16 specifically was utilized by the Nabataeans for the burial of individuals. Because the tomb is located two meters above the Wadi bed, the medium and large mammals found in Site 16 were likely intentionally placed by the Nabataeans, as opposed to wandering in and dying of natural causes. The same does not necessarily apply to the rodents, birds, or reptiles found in Site 16 as they would have been able to enter the tomb on their own, though one should not dismiss the possibility of their having had intentional cultural significance. Some of the grave goods found in Site 16 may have been used as votive offerings, as they have depictions of various Nabataean deities such as Dhushares, Harpocrates, Hermes, Isis, and Allat.[6] The items excavated included glass, metal, lithics, stones, and most significantly for this research—animal bones. Based on the findings of black glazed ware fusiform and Nabataean fine wares which included a piece of dark red painted ware, the Site 16 tomb was dated between the second century BCE and the late first century CE.[7]

DATA PRESENTATION

The assemblage of faunal bones identified and recorded from Site 16 is from loculi A, C, I, J, and L. In loculi A and C, faunal bones were present in stratigraphic units 1, 2, and 3. From loculus I, stratigraphic unit 4 had faunal remains that were identified and recorded. Loculi J and L had faunal remains from stratigraphic unit 3. In Wadi Mataha, SU 3 is where the Nabataean human remains are generally found in any given burial, therefore, any faunal remains found in SU 3 are more likely to have been intentionally buried with the individual(s) upon their death.

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5.   Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126.
6.   Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126.
7.   Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126.

Animal bones found in SU's 1 and 2 are found deposited above the graves and were possibly placed there after the original burial for a ritual feast or votive offering, or are the result of discarded animal remains, or animals that entered the tomb and died.

Overall, 463 faunal bones were identified from Site 16. loculus A had the majority of the faunal bones, with 434 bones. Loculus C had 8 bones identified, loculus I had 5 faunal bones, J had 4, and L had 12 bones. Skipjack tuna, *Katsuwonus pelamis*, is the best-represented species identified, comprising 32.82% of the assemblage. The domesticated goat, *Capra aegagrus hircus*, is also well-represented with 19% of the bones from the assemblage. Domesticated dogs were a significant find as well, comprising 7.77% of the faunal remains. The rest of the identifiable faunal bones present in this assemblage were from domesticated sheep, *Ovis Aries*; rodents, identified as Sundevall's jird (*Meriones crassus*), and birds. 4 medium mammal bones, 140 small mammal bones, and 30 bones that were labeled unidentified mammal complete the assemblage. Though all the species identified in the faunal assemblage were analyzed, the focus of this research is on the domesticated dog bones and the skipjack tuna found in Site 16.

Fish Findings

The fish bones found in the faunal assemblage at Site 16 were identified as Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) (Fig. 3). Skipjack Tuna has been found in other faunal assemblages from Nabataean sites in Jordan as well, such as in excavations done at Ez-Zantur.[8] Petra is over 100 km from the Red Sea and approximately 200 km from the Mediterranean coast.[9] Despite these distances, because Petra was a major center of trade during the peak of the Nabataean Kingdom, particularly for spices, frankincense, and myrrh, (a trade route which spanned the Mediterranean coast to Southern Arabia) many materials were available in Petra that the Nabataeans did not have direct access to. As evidenced by the Site 16 fauna analyzed here and confirmed by other research,[10] one of the resources that was traded into Petra was fish.

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8.   Jacqueline Studer, "The World of the Nabataeans: Animal Exploitation in the Nabataean World." Volume 2 of the International Conference the World of the Herods and the Nabataeans held at the British Museum, 17–19 April, 2001: 251-272.; Jacqueline Studer, "Like a Fish out of Water: Fish in the Diet of Classical and Medieval Populations in the Petra Region (Jordan)." *ResearchGate*, January 2008: 281-293, here 282.

9.   Studer, "Fish out of Water," 282.

10.   Studer, "Fish out of Water," 281-293; Jacqueline Studer, "Roman Fish Sauce in Petra, Jordan. In: W. Van Neer (Ed.), Fish Exploitation in the Past. Proceedings of the 7th Meeting of the ICAZ Fish Remains Working Group." *ResearchGate*, January 1994: 191-196; Wim Van Neer and S. Thomas Parker. "First Archaeozoological Evidence for Haimation, the 'Invisible' Garum." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35, no. 7 (2008): 1821–1827.
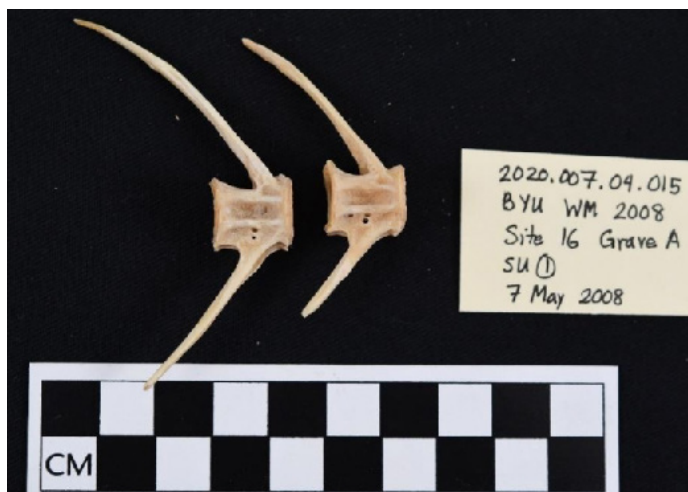
Figure 3: Skipjack tuna complete trunk vertebrae, Site 16 loculus A SU 1.

Though a secondary source of food among the Nabataeans, fish was an important part of the diet of those in higher socioeconomic classes. One of the faunal assemblages analyzed at Ez-Zantur was dated from the first century BCE to the first century CE, from the time of the independent Nabataean Kingdom to Rome's conquest of Petra. This assemblage at Ez-Zantur included 134 identified fish remains, with Scombridae the most common family of fish at 34% of the faunal total. Within the Scombridae family, Skipjack tuna was the main fish species represented in the assemblage.[11] By the Late Roman period, Scombridae was outnumbered by other families of fish. However, the Skipjack tuna was still the main tuna taxa exploited, and overall numbers had increased from what they were in the Nabataean period as fish became more commonly consumed in the region during the Roman periods. These findings are also echoed by the faunal assemblages found at Jabel el-Khubta, Avdat, and Tell Hesban in Jordan. All the fish found in the faunal assemblages from these sites were identified as being traded from the Red Sea.[12]

The Nabataeans were not the only culture that relied on fish for a part of their subsistence. Fresh fish and fish products were in high demand throughout the Roman Empire during the Roman periods. Fish sauce in particular was a delicacy used frequently by the Romans during the Nabataean and through the late Roman periods.[13] There were different kinds of sauces that varied in quality and affordability, and different species of fish were used for each. A fish sauce known as *muria* is likely to have been in demand in the Petra region. Skipjack tuna and other

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11.   Studer, "Fish out of Water," 283.
12.   Studer, "Fish out of Water," 281-293.
13.   Studer, "Fish out of Water," 281-293.

tuna species were used in the production of *muria*, which removed the innards of the tuna to create the sauce.[14] *Muria* was thought to have been less affordable, indicating that those who lived in the Petra region and consumed *muria* may have been of a higher socio-economic class. *Haimation* was another high-quality fish sauce, which was made with the gills and entrails of tuna, to which salt was added. [15] *Haimation* may have been consumed by those in the Petra region as well, as evidenced by the increased amount of tuna bones found in Petra and the surrounding regions from the Nabataean to late Roman Periods.

Haimation has also been found in excavations at Aila, a port city on the southern coast of Jordan by the Red Sea, known today as Aqaba. Excavations done at Aila indicate that tuna sauces like *haimation*, (argued to be the highest-quality fish sauce in the ancient world) were not imported or made from the Mediterranean or the Black Sea, but were produced at ports in and near Aila from fish caught in the Red Sea.[16] Aila and the surrounding region were controlled or inhabited by the Nabataeans until the Romans annexed Petra and seized control of the area.[17] Aila was likely a large port by the first century CE, as Strabo describes it as a *polis*, a city-state in ancient Greece.[18] Aila produced large amounts of courseware pottery through the first to fourth centuries CE, which was filled with various goods, and then exported to other regions throughout the Negev and Jordan, including Petra. This courseware was filled with different types of marine products which included tuna.[19] This port was likely an important source of trade while the Nabataeans controlled it and became an important asset to the Romans once they conquered the region and could use the port as a means of producing fish sauce which they traded to other regions.

Historical and archaeological evidence indicates that fish was an important part of Nabataean life and of the cultures that influenced them, particularly from around the first century BCE through the Late Roman period and beyond. Though it appears many Nabataeans did not consume fish in large amounts and only used it as a secondary source of food, trade with Rome and other regions where fish was in higher demand led to fish and fish products gradually becoming a more

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14. Studer, "Roman Fish Sauce," 191-196.

15. Thomas H. Corcoran, "Roman Fish Sauces." *The Classical Journal* 58, no. 5 (1963): 204–210.

16. Wim Van Neer and S. Thomas Parker. "Evidence for Haimation." 1821–1827; Corcoran, "Roman Fish Sauces," 204-210, here 205; S. Thomas Parker, et al. *The Roman Aqaba Project Final Report, Volume 1: The Regional Environment and the Regional Survey*. Vol. 19. The American Schools of Oriental Research, 2014: 1-384.

17. Strabo, H.C. Hamilton, W. Falconer, "Strabo, Geography." *Perseus Digital Library*. George Bell & Sons, n.d. 16.4.18.

18. Strabo et al. "Strabo, Geography." 16.2.30.

19. Parker et al. *Roman Aqaba Project*, 1-384.

important part of the diet in Petra. Especially as the Romans grew in influence over the Nabataeans and eventually annexed Petra, fresh fish and fish sauce became dramatically more popular in the area. The increase in tuna and fish found in Nabataean archaeological sites is likely also due to the Romans conquering the region and turning Aila into a larger-scale fishing port, from whence they shipped tuna and fish sauces to northern regions such as Petra.

The tuna fish bones found at Site 16 are evidence that fish became important for reasons outside of popular diet as well. It is likely the tuna bones found in these burials are the result of the Nabataean people holding mortuary feasting rituals. The Nabataean people regularly visited burials from among their dead, would hold feasts, and leave behind items such as incense, perfumed oils, and material goods that would "impress and entertain" the dead.[20] Among the items given were the remains of funerary feasts that were placed in the individual graves to provide food offerings and commemoration for their dead.[21] As fish became more accessible in the Petra region due to Roman dietary and economic influences, tuna fish would have become a viable choice for Nabataean individuals when holding mortuary feasts for their departed.

The prevalence of tuna in the loculi at Site 16 are only found in SU's 1 and 2, during or after the time the Romans annexed Petra and seized control of other regions like the fishing port at Aila, and into the Late Roman period and beyond. This suggests that tuna may not have been a very common dietary or ritual choice in the Wadi Mataha region until the Romans gained more power and cultural influence in Petra. Understanding the context surrounding animals and their use in subsistence and ritual in the Petra region and the surrounding influential cultures is key to understanding why and how certain species of animals were deposited in Nabataean graves. The use of fish by the Nabataeans was certainly influenced by the Romans and their subsistence patterns and can explain the prevalence of Skipjack tuna in the Site 16 tomb in Wadi Mataha.

DOMESTIC DOG

Perhaps the most interesting and unexpected faunal finding at Site 16 was the consistent pattern of dog paw bones found in the burials. In total, 36 dog bones were found, which made up 7.77% of the faunal remains from Site 16. One complete paw was found in situ in loculus A, stratigraphic unit 3 (Fig. 4),[22] where the associated human remains were found as well. These bones were from the

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20.   Megan A. Perry, "Sensing the Dead: Mortuary Ritual and Tomb Visitation at Nabataean Petra." Syria, no. 94 (2017): 99–106.
21.   Megan A. Perry, "Sensing the Dead," 99–106.
22.   Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126.

Figure 4: Complete Domestic dog paw in situ at Site 16, loculus A SU 3. Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126.

rear left foot, which included the metatarsals, the proximal, middle, and distal phalanges, the proximal sesamoids, and the carpal bones. Originally, both jackal and Arabian wolf were considered candidates for the bones found in Site 16, as these species would have been found in Petra at the time. However, these species were ruled out because the size and structure of the bones did not match those of a jackal or Arabian wolf. A possible caveat is the muscle attachments found on the dog metatarsals, which were more similar to a gray wolf than a modern dog upon comparison. However, this is not surprising to find in a domesticated dog from over 2,000 years ago, as dogs shared many more wolf-like characteristics because their survival would require more muscle and a larger build than their modern counterparts.[23]

The complete dog paw from loculus A SU 3 was not an isolated occurrence of canine remains in the graves. Loculus A had two other dog metatarsal bones as well, though these were from the right rear foot. Loculus A is not the only Site 16 burial with remains from *Canis lupus familiaris*, as loculi L and C also contained dog remains. In loculus L, four metatarsal bones and one phalange from the right rear paw were identified. In loculus C, two metatarsals and one phalange were found, which also came from a rear right paw.

There are not many reports from faunal assemblages excavated in the Petra region, and even fewer mention any remains of a canine. However, there is evidence of a canine in a few faunal assemblages that were previously studied. One is from the site of Ez-Zantur, which was from a small hill located in a domestic quarter in the city of Petra. The few dog bones that were found did not have any butchery marks on the bones, indicating that they were not included in the diet

23.   Darcy F. Morey, "The Early Evolution of the Domestic Dog." *American Scientist* 82, no. 4 (1994): 336–47.

of the Nabataeans, but were there as pets.[24] Another site provides evidence of dogs being kept domestically by the Nabataeans. To the Northeast of Wadi Musa was a domestic place of residence for the Nabataeans, known as Area I. A team was excavating Byzantine occupations when they reached a Nabataean domestic building, which collapsed due to an earthquake. In the remains of this dwelling, they found the family dog, whose skeleton was discovered crouched in a niche in the wall, that died there when the house fell on him during the earthquake.[25] This discovery at Wadi Musa indicates that domesticated dogs were part of Nabataean society, perhaps including their use as pets or household dogs. Due to the lack of butcher marks found, they were likely used for other utilitarian purposes like hunting, guarding Nabataean homes, or watching over and herding their animals. However, Site 16 also suggests that domestic dogs may have had other uses in Nabataean society—being used for votive offerings in Nabataean graves.

There is more evidence of domestic dogs in burial contexts from the Nabataean crypt in tower tomb 303, which is located at Ath-Thughrah in Petra.[26] This site includes an underground burial chamber, where the remains of dogs were found among other animal and human remains. Based on some C14 dating of human bone and charcoal, use of the tomb was dated to between the third and second centuries BCE, and the first century BCE to the second century CE.[27] Evidence shows that the dog and goat bones were swept aside to the northwest corner of the chamber with the human bones and that the chamber was utilized as a dump two different times. The report from tomb Th303 included the identification of 91 fragments of dog bones, with an overall count of 11 dogs. There was one male, three juveniles, one individual less than six months, and seven fetuses present in the assemblage. The report states that "…the best represented anatomical parts are the skull, anterior limb and foot…The presence of these dog remains scattered all over the chamber is difficult to explain."[28] Though this chamber was a dumping ground, as opposed to an intentional human burial chamber like at Site 16, the high representation of foot bones is of note.

This example demonstrates that the use of dogs in burial contexts is not isolated to Site 16 in Wadi Mataha. The inclusion of dogs in burials seems to be a purposeful inclusion and was likely a practice in other Nabataean burials as well.

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24.   Studer, "Animal Exploitation," 251-272.
25.   Hammond, "Cult and Cupboard," 27–34.
26.   Isabelle Sachet, Nathalie Delhopital, Charlène Bouchaud, C. Tomé Carpentier, "The Hellenistic-Nabataean Crypt in Tower Tomb 303 at ath-Thughrah in Petra. Results of the Archaeological and multi-disciplinary Studies." Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan 57 (2013): 141-165.
27.   Isabelle Sachet et al., "Hellenistic-Nabataean Crypt," 145.
28.   Isabelle Sachet et al., "Hellenistic-Nabataean Crypt," 156

Especially given that one of the most prevalent dog bones from Site Th303 were dog paw bones—which is the only anatomical part from a dog that is found at Site 16—there may have been symbolic significance for the inclusion of dog paw bones for the Nabataeans, and a specific purpose for their use in burials. This inclusion in Nabataean burials may have been the direct result of Egyptian practices which included dogs in their own burials.[29]

The only bone that had evidence of burning from Site 16 was from a domestic dog metatarsal, one of the 4 metatarsals that were found in loculus L in SU 3. Despite the signs of charring which often indicates the butchering of an animal, this bone does not have any clear butcher marks, meaning it may not have been killed for food, but was perhaps burned as a votive offering. None of the other dog paw bones from any loculi or SU at Site 16 show any clear evidence of butchering either, so this is not surprising. However, none of the other dog bones are charred, so this find is singular. It is unclear why only one bone in the assemblage has evidence of burning, and why it would be from a dog metatarsal. It may be the result of a burial/feasting ritual, votive offering, or charm that the Nabataeans placed with the human remains during burial—a practice that was done by the Nabataeans, which may have extended to burning individual bones.[30]

Because of the evidence this assemblage and other faunal studies provide,[31] it appears that dogs were not used for subsistence (lack of butcher marks, dogs found in dwellings, etc.) but were likely used as pets, and it is more likely that this dog's metatarsal was burned for ritual purposes—as opposed to being cooked for food. The complete dog paw found in loculus A SU 3 may have been a symbol of the Egyptian god Anubis, which symbolized mummification and the afterlife.[32] Out of all 36 dog bones found in Site 16, the only anatomical part of the dog found are rear paw bones, indicating there was purposeful selection by the Nabataeans for this exact part of the dog. The Nabataeans may have been following Egyptian tradition in the form of burying beloved pets with them, though why they specifically selected burial with exclusively the rear dog paws is uncertain and will require further research.

The dog bones from Site 16 were present in SU's 1, 2, and 3. SU 3 is dated to approximately the first century BCE, at a time when the Nabataeans traded and had political associations with the Egyptians. The Nabataeans borrowed from

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29. Salima Ikram, "Man's best friend for eternity: dog and human burials in ancient Egypt." *Anthropozoologica* 48, no. 2 (2013): 299-307.

30. Megan A. Perry, "Sensing the Dead," 99–106.

31. Isabelle Sachet, "Hellenistic-Nabataean Crypt," 141-165; Hammond, "Cult and Cupboard," 27–34; Studer, "Animal Exploitation," 251-272.

32. Johnson, "Nabataean Chamber Tomb," 119-126, here 4.

many Egyptian symbols of religion and worship, having idols and names of gods that overlapped with their Egyptian neighbors. As their cultures intermixed, the Nabataeans would have encountered new burial traditions associated with their gods Anubis and Wepwawet who were represented by jackals and dogs in Egyptian culture. These were deities of travel, either for safe passage through the desert, or were utilized to journey to the afterlife in peace.[33] Dogs have been included in Egyptian graves since the pre-dynastic periods, though their inclusion and the meaning behind it are yet to be interpreted. By the Greco-Roman periods the practice had become very popular, and the number of burials in Egypt that had dogs in them as either pets or votive offerings increased. In earlier Egyptian history, it was only the wealthy or those with royal ties who appeared to have dogs in and around their burials. However, around the time of the Nabataeans, this popular burial rite extended to most Egyptian socio-economic classes, and pilgrims would often use dogs in burials as votive offerings to the gods.[34] The burial of dogs in Egyptian tombs, catacombs, and pits as votive offerings became very common in the Late Period and the Greco-Roman era, from 650 BCE to 398 CE.[35]

This practice of burying dogs in tombs or burials, either as pets or votive offerings likely extended to the Nabataean culture as seen in Wadi Mataha Site 16. Dog paw bones were deposited in the loculi of Site 16 around the first century BCE to the first century CE, which correlates to a time when there was a strong Egyptian influence in Petra, and when the Egyptians had a prevalence of animal cults. These cults practiced the placement of dog totems in many forms, either from once living dogs or through stelae or statuary figures. These gifts were given to allow the deceased safe travels in the afterlife, or as a token of the giver's prayers and wishes for eternity. It was thought that once living dogs may have been more effective as votive offerings, as opposed to their counterparts made from metal and wood. The Egyptians believed they had a "…direct path to the god's ear as they had once been living, breathing emissaries of the god on earth, and consequently more worthy of immediate attention."[36] Dogs being significant in the Egyptian afterlife was a belief that may have transferred to Nabataean burial practices as a result of their proximity to Egypt and their interconnected cultures.

The inclusion of the dog paw bones in Site 16 Wadi Mataha can be explained through the practices and beliefs of surrounding cultures that were influential in the development of Nabataean culture. The Egyptians had a cultural influence on the Nabataeans with their worship of deities and the implications of certain

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33. Ikram, "Man's Best Friend," 299-307.
34. Ikram, "Man's Best Friend," 299-307.
35. Ikram, "The Loved Ones," 240-248.
36. Ikram, "Man's Best Friend," 300.

ritualistic practices. The placement of dog paw bones in the loculi at Site 16 were most likely intentional, based on the selection for only one anatomical part of the dog being found within the burials. The Nabataeans may have placed the bones in the graves as a gift to the deities Anubis or Wepwawet to ensure safe passage to the afterlife for the deceased, or they may have used the bones to send their own prayers for the afterlife.

Conclusion

The Nabataeans of Petra were a culture that developed in the center of some of the biggest and most well-known civilizations in history. Their ties with Rome and Egypt spanned far and wide, in political, economic, and cultural spheres. While architecture, pottery, water systems, and other aspects of Nabataean culture have been studied more extensively by archaeologists and have been tied to other cultures that were influential during the time of the Nabataean kingdom, faunal analysis in the Nabataean world has often been overlooked. The few faunal studies done on the Nabataeans ignore the influence of other cultures outside of the Petra region. They focus instead on internal shifts dealing with the environment, nomadism vs. sedentism, and subsistence strategies through time, in a unilinear fashion considering only the Nabataeans and their own culture. However, understanding the presence of faunal remains in Petra requires a study of the surrounding and influential cultures outside of Petra at the time as well. The faunal assemblage from Site 16 in Wadi Mataha cannot be studied as a single entity unto itself, as this restricts the interpretations that can be made about the faunal assemblage, the appearance of certain species, and their significance in Nabataean culture.

The appearance or prevalence of certain species of animals represented in a faunal assemblage can give a lot of information on what kinds of socio-political or economic alliances the culture may have had, and it is no different with the Nabataeans. The dog paw bones present in Site 16 burials are, so far, an isolated discovery in Petra that can only be explained through understanding outside cultures and their influence on Petra. Subsistence changes, like an increase and change in fish representation, can also be explained through understanding the surrounding culture's subsistence patterns, like the Romans bringing an increase in fish consumption with their growing influence in the Petra region. The faunal remains at Wadi Mataha Site 16 demonstrate that while some of the animal remains are likely the result of environment or internal culture—rodents, birds, goats, and sheep—some of the faunal remains could only be explained through researching the surrounding cultures of the Nabataean world.

Akhenaten's Religious Reforms

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Abstract: Akhenaten, king of Egypt ca. 1349–1332 BCE, fundamentally changed the face of religion within his kingdom. Central to these changes was the worship of the single deity Aten (manifested as the sun disc). Abruptly after the end of his reign, we see a return in Egyptian art to the full pantheon of gods and the erasure of Akhenaten from Egyptian records. This essay explores what is known about Akhenaten's reforms today and argues that more research needs to be done to understand his contributions to Egyptian religion.

The reign of King Akhenaten played a pivotal role in Egyptian history, but it was quickly obscured by his successors. His reign from ca. 1349 to 1332 BCE drastically changed many aspects of Egyptian culture, especially concerning religion.[1] After his death, Akhenaten's religious reformation came to an end. Succeeding kings, including Tutankhamun, undid much of his work and even erased him from the records of the kings.[2] However, the legacy of Akhenaten's changes quietly lived on.

Akhenaten was born during the Eighteenth Dynasty in the New Kingdom Period (ca. 1550–1292 BCE). His progenitors had fought off the Hyksos, non-Egyptians, who had ruled Egypt for about a century. By the time Akhenaten's father,

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[1]   Throughout this paper the term *religion* will be used. It will not be used in the modern sense of dogma and orthodoxy, but to describe the mythology and rituals that were part of Egyptian life. *Religion* will be used in conjunction with the cult of Aten and Atenism to describe Akhenaten's reforms.

[2]   Krystal V.L. Pierce, "Egypt's New Kingdom," in *A Bible Reader's History of the Ancient World*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, Brigham Young University, 2016), 108–10.

Amenhotep III, was in power the dynasty had reunited Upper and Lower Egypt.[3] Akhenaten was born Amenhotep IV, but as part of his reforms, he changed his name to reflect the deity he worshiped, Aten. With the introduction of Aten, Akhenaten deemphasized the worship of the other gods; however, it is unclear whether he was a true monotheist or whether he practiced a form of henotheism (the emphasis of one god above all others) like the worshipers of Amun-Ra.[4] After his death, Akhenaten's reforms were quickly reversed by the kings Tutankhamun and Seti I, who were especially responsible for the counter-revolution. Tutankhamun was most likely a son of Akhenaten and was born Tutankhaten, however, following his father's example, he changed his name as part of a restoration of traditional Egyptian religion. Following Tutankhamun's short reign, Seti I took the extreme step of removing Akhenaten's name from lists of Eighteenth Dynasty kings.[5]

Akhenaten's religious reforms can be categorized under the umbrellas of innovations upon earlier Egyptian religion and new, theretofore unseen religious elements. These areas indicate that Akhenaten's reforms were not created entirely ex nihilo, but rather through influences around him. This paper will explore the nature of Akhenaten's reforms and use them to argue that more research must be conducted concerning religion after his reign to understand how he influenced Egyptian religion after his lifetime.

Pre-Atenism Influences

First, portions of Atenism show similarities with the worship of sun gods in earlier Egyptian religion. Over time, religious beliefs are bound to change according to the needs of the society around them. Egyptologist Donald Redford described this as a sort of "mystical magma" that was constantly changing how the gods interacted with humanity.[6] In this way, the worship of Aten evolved from the veneration of sun gods among many gods to the sole worship of the Aten sun disk. Before Akhenaten's rule, the sun disk often symbolized the vehicle of the deity rather than the sun god himself.[7] Over time the disc became more important and it evolved to the point that Akhenaten declared that the sun was the deity itself rather than its vehicle or symbol.[8] Historian Ronald Ridley explains the change stating, "The Egyptians were used to anthropomorphic deities: human forms, although often with animal heads. Even in this case, they shared eyes and mouth

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3.   Pierce, "Egypt's New Kingdom," 103–7.
4.   Donald Redford, "Akhenaten: New Theories and Old Facts," BASOR, 369 (2013): 26.
5.   Pierce, "Egypt's New Kingdom," 110.
6.   Redford, "New Theories," 11.
7.   Donald Redford, "The Sun-disc in Akhenaten's Program: Its Worship and Antecedents," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 13 (1976): 51.
8.   Redford, "New Theories," 27.

with humans. The Aten, in contrast, was simply a disk (or orb).”[9] Aten's image as the sun disk deified was quite different from the traditional gods' human-like personages, but it is apparent that his form came from the increasing attention that the disc received over the human form of the sun god.[10] Additionally, this change from an anthropomorphic sun god to the sun disk meant that the god was no longer represented three-dimensionally as a statue but was rather produced two-dimensionally as a disc.

In addition to the visual changes to the sun god, *The Great Hymn to Aten* is often cited as an example of both Akhenaten's sun disk theology and his monotheism. Hymns praising the gods were not unusual in ancient Egypt and many hymns have been found dedicated to a number of gods.[11] In contrast to these hymns, *The Great Hymn* boldly declares Akhenaten's reforms,

> Beautifully you appear from the horizon of heaven, O living Aten
> who initiates life—
> For you are risen from the eastern horizon and have filled every land
> with your beauty…
> For although you are far away, your rays are upon the earth and you
> are perceived….
> O sole god, without another beside him!
> You create the earth according to your wish, being alone…[12]

Akhenaten's belief in a single god is quite apparent in these lines from the hymn. Aten is not just one of the gods but the sole god. Interestingly, he does not appear as just the god of Egypt, but the god of the entire world, which idea had been introduced with the worship of Amun.[13] The hymn also emphasizes the power of Aten's light upon the world as well as Akhenaten's role in revealing the god.[14] The sun disk is no longer the symbol or vehicle of a god but is the divinity itself. It is Aten, the sun disk, who created the world and who maintains it through the power of his rays each day. Scholars Molefi Asante and Shaza Ismail argue that in making these changes, "The originality of Akhenaten must be found in the turning of the rays of the sun into a physical reality. He gave the world a creator who had

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9.   Robert Ridley, *Akhenaten: A Historian's View* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2019), 137.

10.   Redford, "Sun-disc," 48–9.

11.   Jan Assmann, "Theological Responses to Amarna," in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford*, ed. Donald B. Redford, Gary N. Knoppers, Antoine Hirsch (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 180.

12.   Translation of *The Great Hymn* found in Ridley, "The Cult of the Aten," 125–6.

13.   Eric Hornung, "The Rediscovery of Akhenaten and His Place in Religion," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 29 (1992): 49.

14.   Ridley, "The Cult of the Aten," 127–8.

physical hands that reached within the range of humanity. ”[15] Aten was a simple, physically observable god that all of Egypt could recognize as ruler of the earth. Even if Akhenaten had not declared Aten the only god he would have surely ruled over any others as Re and Amun had done before.

As is clear in the excerpt from *The Great Hymn* above, Akhenaten's religion was light-oriented. Thus, Eric Hornung concludes,

> It has always been evident that Akhenaten suppressed all the richness and complexity of the Osirian netherworld, of the nocturnal journey of the sun so elaborately presented in the *Amduat* and the *Litany of Re* (to mention only compositions probably known to Akhenaten) … When the sun rises in the morning, all the living in their houses and all the dead in their tombs are awakened from out of their deep sleep. All the world is thus oriented to the East, while the West, the realm of the dead since time immemorial, has fallen into oblivion.[16]

This was a massive change in a society that bore many visible reminders of the afterlife. Pyramids, funerary temples, and coffin texts all directed the Egyptians' minds toward death and the experience that followed it. This change in religion was probably disconcerting to elements within Egyptian society that were associated with traditional religion—especially the priesthoods of gods who were now condemned by the monarchy.

Religious Innovation

Another facet of Akhenaten's religious reforms was changes made to ritual acts. Artwork from his reign shows him and his queen performing a ritual welcoming of the sun (Aten) in the east. They are depicted holding scepters in a traditional gesture towards Aten, yet the rituals and symbols in the art have changed. No longer is a god the focus of the image but it is Akhenaten himself.[17] Homes within Amarna have been found with religious stela depicting the royal family as their focus. As Aidan Dodson observes, this shows that in Atenism it was only the royal family which worshipped Aten while the rest of Egypt worshipped the family. This is in stark contrast to religion before Akhenaten's reforms when all people were free to worship the gods in temples and at personal shrines as they pleased.[18]

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15. Molefi Asante and Shaza Ismail, "Akhenaten to Origen: Characteristics of Philosophical Thought in Ancient Africa," *Journal of Black Studies*, 40, no. 2 (2009): 302.

16. Hornung, "Rediscovery," 48.

17. Arlette David, "Akhenaten as The Early Morning Light: Revisiting the 'Consecration' ritual in Amarna," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 52 no. 1 (2016): 93–5.

18. Aidan Dodson, "The Horizon of the Aten," in *Amarna Sunrise: Egypt from Golden Age to Age of Heresy*, (Cairo, NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014), 116–7.

Arlette David states, "Remarkable is the way Aten's rays strike through buildings, furniture, offerings, and people, only to stop in front of the royal couple. Instead of placing Aten above the king, the scene is organized to emphasize the eastern origin of the rising sun and the beams of light cutting through all toward the royal couple."[19] In this way, the king's connection to Aten as his revelator to the world is emphasized. Thus, Arlette David asserts, "Akhenaten modified the particularities of an ancient ritual gesture in order to adapt it to the new Atenist cult and its radiant focus…"[20] Similarly, within Akhenaten's temple architecture, the balustrades and stairs joined to altars show differences from those under previous rulers. For example, Akhenaten's temple was decorated with ritual scenes while most others were not. The depictions on the balustrades show the royal family performing rituals within the temple while Aten shines upon them.[21] Stairs and balustrades had taken on new importance as Atenism's focus on light called for new architecture. In general, temples and altars were much more open, allowing the rays of the sun, Aten's power, to envelop the cult rituals.[22]

Depictions of the king with the queen sitting upon his lap have been found, which image does not appear in Egyptian art until Akhenaten's reforms. Like many things from Akhenaten's reign these carvings are an anomaly—similar artwork is not found during the reign of other Egyptian kings.[23] Similar designs have been found in other parts of the Near East, but these depictions often represent sexual intercourse while Akhenaten's do not.[24] It is theorized that the carvings symbolize the transmission of kingship from king to child with the queen acting as the child, or that it symbolizes a god-queen paradigm (i.e., divine power passing from a god to the royal family as symbolized by the queen).[25] Whatever the meaning may be, the image of the queen sitting on the king's lap is an example of the ideas that influenced Akhenaten's reforms.

Changes in ritual acts, temple architecture, and artwork are all examples of changes made by Akhenaten and his cult of Aten; however, the impact of his reforms continued after his death. Jan Assmann observes that after Akhenaten, a new idea is seen within traditional Egyptian worship: that of the *Ba*. Assmann describes this as the essence of the gods that permeated all that came from them.

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19.   David, "Early Morning Light," 96.
20.   David, "Early Morning Light," 99.
21.   Ian Shaw, "Balustrades, Stairs and Altars in the Cult of the Aten at el-Amarna," *JEA*, 80 (1994): 116.
22.   Shaw, "Balustrades," 116–17.
23.   Arlette David, "A Throne for Two: Image of the Divine Couple during Akhenaten's Reign," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, 14 (2017): 1.
24.   David, "Throne for Two," 4.
25.   David, "Throne for Two," 5–6.

Ba was not a being itself, but its influence is felt by all, much like Aten's rays.[26] Just as Akhenaten was influenced by traditional hymns, sun worship, and even foreign artwork, so too did Akhenaten leave his fingerprints upon the reinstated Egyptian religion in the form of *Ba*.

Analysis

Detailed analysis of the cult of Aten's influence is limited to the Amarna period because no evidence of Aten worship has been found before or after that time. As mentioned above, scholars agree that Tutankhamun restored the worship of the gods that Akhenaten had neglected, but beyond Assmann's exploration of the *Ba* as an evolution of Aten,[27] no scholarly research regarding the connection between Atenism and the *Ba* was evident. As mentioned above, Tutankhamun and Seti I are credited with sweeping Akhenaten's reign under the rug, but that is the extent to which they are spoken of in conjunction with Akhenaten. It has been made clear that the cult of Aten was influenced by older, more traditional elements of Egyptian religion,[28] and it seems farfetched to conclude that the *Ba* of the gods is the only clear remnant. It is important that more research be done to understand the nature of Tutankhamun and Seti I's religious restorations. Even if these kings were successful in overturning almost every bit of Atenism, what they chose to emphasize can explain what they considered most dangerous about Akhenaten's reforms. This knowledge will help deepen the understanding of how Akhenaten, directly and indirectly, influenced religion in Egypt.

This call for additional research is logical when made with the assumption that Akhenaten was motivated by sincere religious devotion because this idea requires more evidence than what is currently available; however, not all scholars agree that that was the basis for his actions. A conservative example of this is Egyptologist Donald Redford's conclusions in "Akhenaten: New Theories and Old Facts." He argues that rays seen emanating from Aten in artwork are not examples of blessings from the sun disk rather they are pointers intended to highlight "rhetorical figures, not tenets or beliefs."[29] Akhenaten stripped away everything that had made Egyptian religion a religion.[30] He ended the worship of the traditional gods and closed their temples. Redford does not go so far as to say that Akhenaten was not

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26. Assmann, "Theological Responses," 185–86.
27. Assmann, "Theological Responses," 185–86.
28. Redford, "Sun-disc," 51; Assmann, "Theological Responses," 180; David, "Early Morning Light," 99.
29. Redford, "New Theories," 28.
30. Redford, "New Theories," 26.

acting out of religious conviction but is clear that he does not consider the cult of Aten a full-fledged religion.[31]

Other skeptics of Akhenaten's religiosity have gone further with their arguments. Egyptologist Cyril Aldred considered the king's reforms to be motivated by more profane than sacred concerns. He argues that Akhenaten was looking to capitalize on the income that the various temples brought to their respective gods and priesthoods, and the best way to do that was to introduce a monotheistic religion with the king at its head.[32] Aldred also does not consider the changes to hymns and art to be original.[33] Scholar Robert North[34] recognizes Aldred's contributions to the study of Akhenaten but does not agree with his conclusions. In his view, Akhenaten did act primarily out of religious devotion.[35]

Despite Aldred and North's arguments, Atenism should be considered a full-fledged religion rather than the skeleton of one, and Akhenaten's religious devotion should be accepted. Akhenaten's reforms were a radical departure from traditional Egyptian religion, but all the forms of religion were still present. A god was still worshipped and its attendant cult performed rituals just as before.[36] True, there was a loss of myths,[37] but hymns to Aten carried teachings about the god in a way similar to the myths. It is also unlikely that Akhenaten was motivated by the desire to create a royal monopoly. As Robert North states, "The decline of polytheistic cult was not merely an incidental result of his decision to get financial control into his own hands. He was not an economic manipulator, but at most was guilty of neglecting the way in which his officials exploited financially a reform which he himself had intended to be religious."[38] While this paper has not delved outside the realm of religion during Akhenaten's reign it has explored the great lengths that were taken to bring about religious changes in Egypt. Would such an effort have been expended if it was not sincere?

In conclusion, Akhenaten's religious reforms did not develop within a vacuum. The cult of Aten is a fusion of traditional Egyptian religion and new, unique beliefs introduced by Akhenaten. The worship of the sun had gained particular importance throughout the Eighteenth Dynasty and Akhenaten furthered this movement with the introduction of the cult of Aten. He proclaimed Aten the universal god that overshadowed all creation, just as the sun did. He introduced

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31.   Redford, "New Theories," 26–9.
32.   Robert North, "Akhenaten Secularized?," *Bib*, 58, no. 2 (1977): 247.
33.   North, "Secularized," 253.
34.   I learned Aldred's argument from Robert North's paper, "Akhenaten Secularized?"
35.   North, "Secularized," 257–58.
36.   David, "Early Morning," 93–6.
37.   Redford, "New Theories," 29.
38.   North, "Secularized," 257.

innovations in rituals and religious art that had no forerunners in Egyptian society, and that died with him. While much has been done to research and understand Akhenaten's reforms and the influences that led to those reforms there is no similar information regarding the influence that Akhenaten had on Egyptian religion after his reign. Tutankhamun and Seti I both actively undid many of his reforms and sought to restore traditional Egyptian religion, but as Assmann argued there were elements of Atenism that survived.[39] It is improbable that the only surviving remnant was the *Ba*, and it is important to recognize these other beliefs or rituals that continued after the return to traditional religion. Doing so will enhance our understanding of Egyptian values and beliefs and how even unpopular ideas can influence the culture around them. In this way, Akhenaten's legacy will continue to live on throughout the ages to come.

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39.   Assmann, "Theological Responses," 179–91.

Propagation vs Intrusion

Islamic Influences in Medieval Georgia

Jake Hubbert

Jake Hubbert is earning an MA in Anthropology with an emphasis in Ancient Near Eastern archaeology from Brigham Young University. His current research interests include the Nabataeans and more recently the ancient and medieval Caucasus and he hopes to pursue doctoral research in one of those fields.

Abstract: Georgian medieval art and architecture have received little to no attention from western scholarship but have emerged in recent years as a significant field of study. Because of Georgia's Christian ties, most historians profess that the culture of medieval Georgia was therefore relatively unaffected by the early and later Islamic conquests but was instead largely influenced by the Byzantine and Eastern Christian world. However, I do not agree with this position and believe that the archaeological record demonstrates a certain level of influence from the Islamic world as evidenced in medieval Georgian art and architecture. In this paper, I will demonstrate the Islamic influence by examining religious iconography as well as secular art. To make this analysis, I examine examples of traditional Georgian architecture and art from the Georgian Golden Age and demonstrate the influence of Islamic cultural elements in the development of Georgian art and architecture.

The political landscape of the emergent medieval Georgian nation among the predominant Islamic emirates is a relatively new field for western scholars. The medieval Georgian polity, led by King Davit IV Aghmashenebeli, rose to power in the late eleventh and early twelfth century CE.[1] Since 645 CE the central and eastern portions of medieval Georgia had been under the suzerainty of Islamic forces. However, after Davit IV Aghmashenebeli ascended to the unified medieval Georgian throne, the monarchy increased its utility of architecture, images, and objects to convey their regional power within their political, social, and religious

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1. Rusudan Mepisashvili, *Gelati*, (Tbilisi: The Georgian Council, 1965), 21.

spheres. The monarchy constructed a variety of churches, monasteries, and academies that held royal patron images, religious scenes, and objects.[2] While many of those objects, frescos, and buildings were Christian in nature some Islamic elements may be observed.

Christianity's power as poised against the influence of Islamic kingdoms was a major focus for the medieval Georgian monarchy. Georgian kings and queens consistently placed objects of Islamic political power in their churches.[3] Despite the intense focus on Christian symbols, medieval Georgian artists and craftsmen began to adopt inherently Islamic motifs into their art and objects. However, investigation into the Islamic visual influences in medieval Georgian art has been neglected by most western scholars.

The position held by Georgian and western scholars alike has been that Georgian art and architecture were either not influenced, or received very little, from the Islamic world. Art historians, historians, and archaeologists have maintained this stance; however, I argue that there are Islamic visual influences that are extant in the art and architecture of medieval Georgia. Rusudan Mepisashvili claims that "The artistic development of Georgia did not undergo any radical changes" during the Arab occupation of Georgia.[4] Richard Ettinghausen states that "The arts of medieval Georgia seem to have been less affected by the techniques and themes of Islamic art."[5] Cyril Taumanoff discusses the political history of the Caucasus and specifically that of Georgia in his chapter in the *Cambridge Medieval History*.[6] He states that Caucasia was devastated by the Arabs, due to the numerous revolts and conflicts that occurred in the first century of Arab rule.[7] He also says that "nobles and peasants began removing in large numbers to the [Byzantine] Empire."[8] Taumanoff, however, does not make an explicit statement on the cultural situation with the influx of the Arabs and the outflow of native Georgians to the Byzantine Empire, but he does mention the economic revival under the early Arab

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2.   Robert Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles: The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 279-280.

3.   Jake Hubbert, "Transforming Religious and Monarchial Power: The Iron Gate of Ganja within the Gelati Monastery," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 10 (Forthcoming 2023).

4.   Rusudan Mepisashvili, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia*, (USA: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 99.

5.   Richard Ettinghausen et al., *Islamic Art and Architecture* 650-1250, (USA: Yale University Press, 2003), 296.

6.   Cyrill Taumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia" in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. J. M Hussey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 598-637.

7.   Cryil Taumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," 607-609.

8.   Cryil Taumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," 609.

Caliphates.[9] Grigor Suny focuses his history on the Arab rulers and Emirs' political control of major centers and trade routes but argues that the periphery was left unaffected.[10] Suny's history seems to suggest that the periphery areas were beyond the possible influences of the central cities, such as Tbilisi, since they remained under local Georgian authorities.

The basis of this claim stems from a religious bias as well as the lack of extensive archaeological excavations and material evidence. As a Christian country since the fourth century CE, Georgia has had major ties to the Eastern Christian world. Due to this religious relationship, most historians recognize the strong influence of the Christian East, while excluding significant impacts from the Islamic world. The majority of sites analyzed by the academic community are Christian, such as churches, monasteries, or shrines. These Christian sites are important and represent a large part of the cultural identity of medieval Georgia, however, the archaeological record at large deals with the broader picture of the day-to-day lives of the individuals who lived during the medieval era and should therefore be included in any comprehensive analysis.

This essay will cover the Golden Period in medieval Georgian history, which spans from the late tenth to the early fourteenth century CE, as well as major developments of Islamic visual influences in Georgia. I address several visual Islamic themes; Islamic portraiture, sacred geometry, *horror vacui*, and architectural elements used in both domestic and defensive structures. I address these influences in art, architecture, and objects to demonstrate the impact of Islamic visual influences in medieval Georgia.

The Georgian Medieval Period

Leading up to the medieval Georgian Golden Period the area of the eventual Georgian Kingdom was composed of several fiefdoms ruled by eristavis, or local lords, some of whom were subservient to the king in Kutaisi. In centuries prior, various kings had attempted to unify the major fiefdoms of Georgia, Egrisi in the west on the coast of the Black Sea, Kartli in the center, and Kakheti in the east. The Georgian people were made up of multiple different cultures and peoples with different languages which made its unification difficult. The Arab geographer and historian, Al-Masudi (896-956 CE), reported that seventy-two nations lived within the range of the Caucasus.[11] Al-Masudi concluded that the spread of

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9.   Cryil Taumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," 609.

10.   Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 30-38.

11.   Al-Masudi, *El-Masudi's Historical Encyclopedia: Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems,* (London: Harrison and Co., 1841), 401.

Islam was slow and difficult because so many of the peoples and villages in the Caucasus were isolated.[12] The Caucasus provided a diverse landscape that allowed multicultural groups to dwell together, but these diverse peoples were often not unified unless through a military confederation. Al-Masudi demonstrates the diverse cultural landscape that existed in medieval Georgia that provides a backdrop for understanding the Islamic visual influences and their adaptations in the medieval Caucasus.

When King David came to power in the late eleventh century CE, Georgia was a fragmented nation. In the East, Byzantium controlled the coast of the Black Sea north to Abkhazia and west into Lazica. Georgian nobles controlled most of the land in the central part of Georgia or what was known as Iberia. Whereas the western regions of Georgia and parts of Azerbaijan were controlled by the Arab Emirs, with Tbilisi as their capital. But in 1121 CE, the battle and subsequent victory by King David against the Islamic forces at Didgori in Tbilisi ended Arab rule in Georgia.[13] It was from this great accomplishment that King David's name, the Builder, was derived; however, the exact translation of the Georgian word აღმშენებელი (*Aghmshenebeli)* literally translated means the *re-builder* or *restorer*.[14] After the unification of Georgia, King David the Builder set out on a new construction scheme and constructed new churches and monasteries, one of which was the Gelati Monastery, which became a symbol of Georgian virility and culture to rival its neighboring countries and empires in spiritual and academic achievement.[15] Therefore, the churches and monasteries were symbols of unity amongst Georgians as well as the emerging power of Georgia against its suppressors.

Islamic Visual Influences in Medieval Georgian Art

Frescos

The frescos at the Gelati Monastery provide some of the best examples of the development of Georgian art and the potential influences of Islam. Firstly, it is important to understand that the monastery was constructed at the end of the Islamic occupation of Georgia, thus representing the culmination of a possible Muslim artistic influence of over three hundred years upon Georgian culture, religion, and politics. Because of the monastery's Christian importance, patrons continued to fund portraits and artwork for several hundred years ranging from the twelfth to

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12. Al-Masudi, *Historical Encyclopedia*, 400-402.
13. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 34.
14. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 34.
15. Rusudan Mepisashvili, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia*, (USA: Thames and Hudson, 1979).

Figure 1: Main church, Davit Narin's [oor-trait. Gelati Monastery, Rusuda Mepisashvi-li, Gelati, (Tibilisi: Georgian Council, 1965), 24.

the eighteenth century CE.[16] Along with the commissioning of portraits, wealthy patrons would provide funding for the painting and restoration of portraits and biblical scenes.[17] This patronage was important because although a biblical scene or portrait could be commissioned by the same individual, the styles between these two genres were noticeably different. Significantly, the portraits carry more Islamic or even Ghavanid-Persian artistic influences, whereas the biblical scenes follow a traditional Byzantine-Georgian canon.

This difference in artistic styles can best be demonstrated by the frescos associated with burial chambers and the main cathedral within the Gelati Monastery. One example comes from the lower part of the southeastern wall of the eastern burial chamber from the southern entrance which hosts a painting of King David VI Narin from the thirteenth century (fig. 1). The portrait demonstrates a rounded face with slim almond-shaped eyes that are acutely angled at the ends and distinct facial hair and eyebrows. These features were contemporary with Islamic styles from the thirteenth century CE. The portrait of David VI Narin is next to another of King David VI Narin with similar features that mirror those of his earlier portrait. A comparative Islamic example comes from the Lashkari palace, which dates to the eleventh and twelfth centuries and specifically the throne room that has numerous individuals depicted in frescos. The similarities between the frescos at Lashkari and Gelati are demonstrated through the facial features (i.e., a rounded face with almond-shaped eyes).[18] On the northern wall of the main cathedral at Gelati, there are several figures with Ghavanid-Persian type mustaches and facial shapes. The faces of the male figures are more rounded than other figures depicted in religious scenes, and their eyes are almond-shaped, which were additional tendencies in some figural depictions

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16. Rusudan Mepisashvili, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia.*
17. Rusudan Mepisashvili, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia.*
18. "A Symbolic Khassakiyya: Representations of the Palace Guard in Murals and Stucco," in *Islamic Art, Architecture and Material Culture New Perspectives*, ed. Margaret Graves, (Oxford: BAR International Series, 2012), 83.

Figure 2: Fresco of Queen Tamar, her son Lasha from Betania Church, twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Rusudan Mepisashvili. The Arts of Ancient Georgia (U.S.A.: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 140.

in Islamic art. Many of the figural frescos from the Gelati Monastery are dressed in the royal garb of Georgia, which is similar to Byzantium's royal dress, but the visual representations of the facial features and the facial hair have some Islamic influences possibly coming from Persia. The religious imagery, however, retains the Byzantine canonized forms from previous centuries and is very much in the Eastern Christian Orthodox fashion.

The emerging period of the Gelati Monastery (eleventh to twelfth century CE) also saw the construction of multiple other churches and monasteries that utilized the same style of portraiture as the Gelati Monastery. An example is the Church of Betania which began construction in the late twelfth century CE and was finished in 1207 CE. The Betania church is located fifteen kilometers west of Tbilisi in the Vere River valley. Like in the Gelati Monastery, the Church of Betania also has numerous frescos adorning its walls. Specifically, on the lower part of the north wall of the sanctuary of Betania, there is a fresco of Giorgi III, King (Queen) Tamar, and Giorgi IV Lasha (fig. 2).[19]

The three figures (two males, and one female) are depicted with rounded Islamic and Persian faces with almond-shaped eyes as well as thin-curved eyebrows. Like the frescos at the Gelati Monastery, the Church of Betania also demonstrates

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19.   King Tamar ruled during the twelfth century but was additionally the only woman in Georgian history who received the title of King instead of Queen.

Figure 3: Detail of "Buzurgmihr Masters the Game of Chess," Folio from the First Small Shahnama (Book of Kings) New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

a connection to both Islamic-Persian and Byzantine cultures. Furthermore, a similar fresco is also observed in a small church chamber from the Vardzia Complex, from the late twelfth century. This fresco also demonstrates the difference between the portraits of individuals represented and the religious iconography. Both figures demonstrate rounded faces with eyes and facial hair that was more Near Eastern in origin than Georgian. These external examples help to demonstrate that the secular imagery, especially of the Georgian nobility, held more Islamic and Persian influences than the religious iconography which tried to retain a religious Byzantine canon.

Illuminated Manuscripts

The Islamic style of portraiture was additionally employed in both secular and religious illuminated manuscripts. Religious illuminated manuscripts followed the established Byzantine canon just as the frescos did especially in the biblical scenes they would represent. However, texts such as epic poems or scientific codices were not bound to such stylistic rules and thus artists could experiment with styles that were not Christian in origin. For example, an illuminated manuscript of *Mahmud of Ghazni at his court receives a robe from Caliph Al-Qadir* painted by Rashid-al-Din Hamadani. In this illuminated manuscript multiple figures have similar facial hair to the portrait of David VI Narin in his old age. The facial hair is further demonstrated by later Persian paintings, such as in *Buzurgmihr Masters the Game of Chess*, from Iran dated to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century CE (fig. 3). These examples help demonstrate the continuous use of specific facial hairstyles in Islamic lands during the time of the Georgian golden period.

Beyond poetical and historical documents, astrological texts also demonstrate the use of Islamic visual styles by medieval Georgian astronomers. Astronomy in medieval Georgia was historically more advanced than some may realize. The ruins of old observatories, fragments and remains of astrological instruments, and numerous manuscripts and books are the treasures to be rediscovered by modern

Figure 4: A figure illustration from an Islamic astronomical text. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

scholars according to Irakli Simonia.[20] Because Georgia had long-standing relations with Muslim scientists as part of the early Islamic Caliphate and then as an independent nation, it is logical to assume that the study and science of astronomy would have had some significance. This study is further demonstrated by the various illuminated manuscripts that now lay in the national archive of Georgia. One such manuscript will be discussed here. In brief, though astronomy did not originate with the Arabs, it was certainly through them that the study progressed at such a swift rate during the medieval era in Europe.

Astronomy, or astrology as it was once known, was actively practiced by Georgians in the medieval era. Medieval Georgian astrologers created various illuminated manuscripts that have striking similarities to those created by Arab scholars. It is believed that Georgian and Muslim astronomers may have worked side by side in conducting various celestial calculations during and after the Islamic occupation of the Caucasus. Therefore, the Islamic instruments' influence upon Georgia at this time was demonstrated through both the art of astrological science and illuminated manuscripts. One of the best-illuminated manuscripts with important astronomical elements came from an astrological treatise dating back to 1188 CE. It contains a zodiac sign of Leo as well as two other important aesthetically styled figures (fig. 4).[21] Two major aspects are important to note about them. The human figures were done in the Persian style with rounded faces and rounded angular eyes. Additionally, the very use of these types of figures in this astronomical treatise is indicative of Islamic-Persian influences. For example, a similar Persian astronomical text, illuminated with figures and animals as constellations as well as the figures that depict both the zodiacs Leo and Sagittarius are nearly identical to

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20. Irakli Simonia, "Little Known Aspects of the History of Georgian Astronomy," *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage*, 4 (2001).

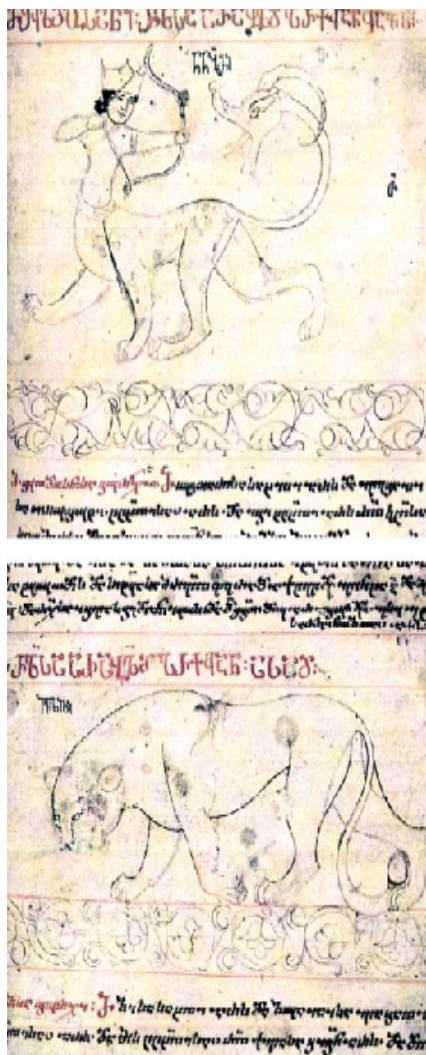21. Rusudan Mepisashvili, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia*.

later Persian astronomical treaties, such as Abu Maʻshar who lived and worked from the tenth to eleventh century CE (fig. 5).

These figurative works are important because they suggest that while a strong Christian image was pushed by the medieval Georgian monarchy, visual elements from Islamic populations were gaining popularity. The frescos from Gelati and Betania compared to those at Lashkari certainly demonstrate similarities that do not exist in other Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox churches outside of Georgia during the Georgian Golden Age. The illuminated manuscripts and astronomical treatises also suggest that scientific influences from Islamic lands were also permeating the medieval Georgian social realm. Specifically, in how facial features, facial hair, and some aspects of dress are depicted in both mediums. These figurative elements that have been discussed in this section are only one part of Islamic influences that are further demonstrated by visual elements in medieval Georgian churches and defensive architecture.

Figure 5: Pages from a Georgian manuscript on astrology, ca. 1188 CE, Rusudan Mepisashvili, Arts of Ancient Georgia, 286.

Islamic Influences Upon Medieval Georgian Architecture

Medieval Georgian Churches

The medieval Georgian monarchy commissioned several churches and monasteries during the Golden Period in Georgia, such as the Gelati Monastery and Betania, which have been discussed above. This section discusses two other smaller churches that have exterior embellishments that may suggest an origin from Islamic architectural embellishments. Specifically, these embellishments take the

Figure 6: Altar block from Gveldesi Church, eighth to ninth centuries CE, Alpago-novello, Adriano et all. Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia.

Figure 7: View of exterior architectural embellishments on the church at Chiatura. Photo by Jake Hubbert.

form of decorative motifs that are unique because they incorporate intricate designs and are clear examples of *horror vacui*, or the fear of empty spaces, typically within art and decoration. The altar block from the Church of Gveldesi, from the eighth or ninth century, and the façade rosette on the southern exterior of the Cathedral of Chiatura, from the eleventh or twelfth century, are the two primary examples discussed here. The architects and artists who adorned the masonry of the two churches with their various Christian symbols and decorations chose to include the popular Islamic eight-pointed star or *Al-Khatam* in Arabic. This symbolism appears on the southern façade of the Cathedral of Chiatura (fig. 6) and the altar block of the church of Gveldesi (fig. 7) and indicates the tendency toward an adoption of eastern symbolic traditions as noted by the prominent Georgian art his-

torian, Vakhtang Beridze, in his book *The Treasures of Georgia*.[22] I support Dr. Beridze's claim that from the eighth to twelfth century there were tendencies which lean toward eastern and, as I suggest, specifically Islamic traditions. Since the *Al-Khatam* also appears as architectural embellishments at both churches, I believe that the Islamic influence was growing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE. In an article about Georgian masonry and stone carving, author Natela Aladasvhili notes that the seventh and eighth centuries were times of transition for Georgian art.[23] Previously the heavy Byzantine-Christian influences were the most

22.   Vaxtang Beridze, *The Treasures of Georgia*, trans. Bruce Penman, (London: Century Publishing, 1983).

23.   Natela Aladashvili, *Monumental Sculpture of Georgia*, (Moscow, 1957).

prominent in Georgian art but, I argue, that the Islamic invasion during the late seventh century CE would have led the people of Georgia to various other religious ideas and visual artistic influences and have given the political elite a desire to try new artistic styles.

Other displays of Islamic artistic traditions included the use of *horror vacui*. *Horror vacui* also appeared on other architectural elements on or within medieval Georgian monasteries or churches. For example, the decoration around windows or even various rosettes which adorned the façades of churches and monasteries. The Georgian monastery

Figure 8: An architectural embellishment from the Georgian monastery at Kara Dagh, Turkey, ca. thirteenth century CE. Rusudan Mepisashvili. Arts of Ancient Georgia.

at Kara Dagh, near Antioch, from the thirteenth century, displayed these elements before its destruction. This site also incorporates intricate patterns and designs of possible Islamic nature on multiple pieces. One such piece is a façade rosette which contains interlocking weaves, similar to Celtic knots, around what possibly might have been a sun piece with small rays extending from it (fig. 8). Therefore, this example is one of many that demonstrate Islamic and eastern influences through multiple mediums in the religious art and architecture of medieval Georgia.

Fortresses of Medieval Georgia

Fortresses in Georgia represent a collection of varying styles and designs from ancient to modern which range from ancient Greek and Roman constructions to Arab, Ottoman, and Soviet Russian. Many fortresses have had multiple layers of different conquerors who overbuilt the original structures one upon the other. This has made it difficult to determine the various architectural features of Georgian fortresses. However, the many fortresses and military structures in Georgia represent the constant military life of Georgia which was an important aspect of medieval Georgian history and culture. In this short section, I will discuss the fortress at Akhalkalaki, which, I believe, demonstrates Islamic associations via extant architecture.

The Fortress at Akhalkalaki is significant because of the extant mosque at its center. The city was founded in the early to mid-eleventh century CE and resides at a very strategic point between Georgia, Armenia, and Turkey and has therefore

Figure 9: Mosque in the Akhalkalaki fortress. Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons.

been an area of contention ever since.[24] For example, the Seljuk sultan, Alp Arslan, sacked the city soon after Akhalkalaki's initial founding sometime between 1066-1068.[25] Throughout its history, the city, and subsequently its fortress repeatedly switched ownership between Armenia, Turkey, and, eventually, Russia. However, at some point in the fortress's occupations, a mosque was built within its walls (fig. 9). The mosque has no significant distinguishing features except for its offset orientation compared to the rest of the fortress. Such an orientation must have accommodated Islamic directional prayer towards Mecca. Additionally, the structure has a single dome roof that is common to some early Ottoman mosques, such as the famous Green Mosque, as well as the qibla wall is recognizable with its mihrab niche. Unfortunately, there are no extant remains of a minaret or other separated areas for cleaning that would further denote that the structure is a mosque. Architecturally, the mosque is constructed of the same local stone as most of the rest of the fortress and is constructed in a similar manner where stones are roughly hewn to create a basic fit with some exterior finishing. Similar construction methods and materials suggest that the same people who built the fortress also built the mosque and so the two may be contemporaneous.

This mosque and its location along the central southern border of Georgia is also significant because this area was and is noted for its native Muslim populations.[26] Unfortunately, without further archaeological work, the mosque cannot be dated, but since the city and the incursions by the Seljuks occurred during the Georgian Golden Period it provides important insights that are not available elsewhere. The modern city of Akhalkalaki is currently positioned southeast of the fortress, but satellite images demonstrate that there was an extensive town to the north of the fortress. The possible location of this village makes logical sense as a defensive position since it is on a small plateau between the Kirkhbulaki and Paravani rivers that allowed entry from only the fortress' end. Such a position

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24. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 34.
25. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 34.
26. Hrant Ter-Abrahamian, "Islam in the southern Caucasus," *Iran and the Caucasus* 11 (2007): 127.

might help explain why in *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, the historic record of the various Georgian kings, the scribes recorded that Akhalkalaki had no walls.[27] Thus, the fortification was a major focal point of the town since it was its main defensive system. The mosque within the main fortress complex suggests that the defenders were predominantly Muslim. To what extent the mosque served the city to the north is currently unclear, but it is possible that it also served the village's population especially since it is large enough to accommodate a sizeable congregation.

Though the monarchy of unified medieval Georgia ruled Javakheti, which included Akhalkalaki, there seems to have been a local Muslim population as well that lived with enough liberties to construct a mosque. Not only is this fortress indicative of Islamic influences among medieval Georgian architecture, but also suggests that while the monarchy sought to propagate a strong Christian image, other cities and economic centers, such as Akhalkalaki retained Islamic identities.

Islamic Influences on Medieval Georgian Objects

Medieval Georgian artists used some of the same Islamic visual influences on the objects they made as I have demonstrated in the art and architecture of the period. Specifically, the use of *horror vacui* and the use of color are two notable influences on the objects of medieval Georgia. In this section, I briefly discuss what Islamic influences affected such objects as triptychs and pottery. I have chosen these two for their stunning visuals as well as for their importance in both the secular and religious spheres in medieval Georgia. Thus, by these two types of objects, I demonstrate again the effects of Islamic visual influences upon multiple aspects of medieval Georgian life.

Triptychs and Icons

The Khakhuli Triptych, Gelati, twelfth century CE, is a very strong Christian religious symbol (fig. 10). At its center is an enameled piece of the Virgin Mary and around the central portrait are several other Christian symbols such as crosses and portraits of saints from the period. The specific Islamic influence, however, is in the detail of the background. The background is an intricate working of vines. The vines are not inherently Islamic since the visual arts of both the Byzantine and Islamic worlds used this motif; however, it is the intense use and pattern work of the vines that I argue is Islamic in nature. When Islamic artists would utilize *horror vacui*, they would seek to not only fill empty space but "they would let it play a decorative role of its own and by doing so accord it a positive character."[28]

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27.   R. Met'reveli and S. Jones, *Kartlis Tskhovreba,* (Tbilisi: Artanuji, 2014), 155.

28.   Richard Ettinghausen, "The Taming of the Horror Vacui in Islamic Art," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 123 (1979): 16.

Figure 10: Khakhuli Triptych, Tbilisi Georgia. Courtsey of the National Museum of Georgia.

The medieval Georgian artists who created the Kahkhuli Triptych were employing the Islamic method and ideology of *horror vacui* by filling the space with an intentional pattern.

Traditionally, Byzantine triptychs did not use *horror vacui* in their triptychs or icons. There are some amounts of gold work used but nothing that compares to the complexity and detail found in the Khakhuli triptych among gold icons and icon frames. For example, an Icon book cover from about 1100 CE has similar elements to the Khakhuli Triptych (precious stones, a central figure or portrait, and some background decoration), but the level to which the empty spaces are filled pale in comparison. Furthermore, the background is simpler in design.

Pottery

There are multiple sites where pottery was produced in Georgia during the medieval period. First is the capital, Tbilisi, which remained the seat of the Arab Emir until 1122 CE when it was conquered by King David the Builder. The second is the site of Rustavi, 16 kilometers southeast of Tbilisi, which was the seat of the local Eristavi or provincial ruler. These two sites are important because of their locations and evidence found through archaeological excavations demonstrate their

Figure 11: A contemporary Islamic scraffito plate. Mariln Jenkins, Islamic Pottery a Brief History, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 12: Medieval era Georgian fine ware scraffito plate ninth to tenth centuries. Nodar Bakhtadze, Ceramics in Medieval Georgian.

similarities in the design of glazed wares similar to those developing in northern Syria and the Islamic world during the same period.

The samples selected for my comparison were taken from a study conducted by Miriam Avissar and Edna J. Stern, members of the Israel Antiquities Authority, from their handbook on Crusader wares. Additionally, I will be taking the suggestion of Ettinghausen who wrote *Islamic Art and Archaeology* to investigate the relation between medieval, specifically the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Syrian Scraffito Glazed wares and possible Georgian contemporaries.[29] However, I will expand this comparison beyond what Ettinghausen had first conjectured by using examples from both the sites in Tbilisi and Rustavi.

From Tbilisi, multiple vessels such as plates and vases have been excavated. The primary decorative method was inscribing patterns into a white-slipped clay and then applying a colorful transparent glaze on top.[30] This method produced vegetal or figural motifs with varied colors and designs (fig. 11). The figures included human and animalistic forms. From Avissar's and Stein's handbook, what they call *Al-Mina* wares, hold close similarities in style and production to those in Georgia. From examples given in their texts, the incision into a white-ware pottery and covered in a colorful transparent glaze is evident.[31] Both the use of design and

29. Richard Ettinghausen, "The Taming of the Horror Vacui in Islamic Art," 296.

30. Nodar Bakhtadze, *Ceramics in Medieval Georgia*, (Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauris, 2013), 39.

31. Avissar and Edna J. Stern, *Pottery of the Crusader, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Periods in Israel*, (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1997).

method leads me to conclude that strong Islamic influences altered the ceramic production in Georgia.

The medieval pottery from Rustavi also demonstrates similarities to the *Al-Mina* wares. Specifically, the Sgraffito-type glazes where the colors run naturally together (fig. 12).[32] Additionally, the fine ware ceramics from Rustavi also demonstrated vegetal designs like the *Al-Mina* wares.[33] During the medieval period, ceramics coming from Italy also bore similar characteristics to the Syrian *Al-Mina* wares, especially regarding their use of color and sometimes decoration.[34] The distinct relationship between the Islamic caliphates and the medieval Georgian Kingdom was the use of the turquoise blue color in some of their ceramics. For example, a glazed bowl was unearthed which dates to the ninth or tenth century CE from a site in Rustavi and was decorated with a dark blue background with lighter circles of blue in the foreground. I argue that the bowl from Rustavi, as well as most of the glazed ceramics from medieval Georgia, are indicative of Islamic influences on the manufacturing and production of pottery from the ninth to eleventh century CE.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated that the influence of the Islamic world was far more intertwined into the artistic and cultural fabric of medieval Georgia than previously emphasized in scholarly Georgian research. Furthermore, the Islamic influences also suggest that the propagation of a strong Christian monarchy as established by Kind David the Rebuilder gradually adopted more and more elements from Islamic populations. The Islamic world influenced both the religious and secular lives of the people of Georgia over time beginning with the mentioned Islamic conquest of the region in 654 CE and especially in the Georgian Golden Age between the eleventh and fourteenth century CE. Amongst the various churches, cathedrals, and monasteries, places such as Gelati demonstrate an incorporation of Persian-Islamic methods for painting nobles in its wall frescos, while simultaneously holding onto a Byzantine canon for its more Christian religious subjects. Other religious symbols and sacred geometry used in Islamic art, such as the *Al-Khatam*, were utilized on altar blocks and church facades such as at the Mgvime Church at Chiatura.

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32.   Avissar and Edna J. Stern, *Pottery of the Crusader, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Periods in Israel.*

33.   Nazi Pachikashvili, *Ancient Rustavi*, (Georgia: Cezanne Publishing House, 2014).

34.   Avissar and Edna J. Stern, *Pottery of the Crusader, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Periods in Israel.*

The secular Georgian world was especially influenced by the magnificent art style of *Dar al-Islam*. Illuminated manuscripts of both science and fiction were heavily reflective of Islamic art of the medieval period. Additionally, the Islamic-influenced pottery styles from the medieval crusader periods in the Near East had contemporaries in Georgia during the same time. And finally, the fortresses and homes of the people who lived in Georgia during the various periods of Islamic occupation or later under its influences utilized Islamic architectural attributes such as the pointed arch and decorated exterior brickwork. The previous stance by many modern scholars on Georgian art and archaeology has been that the Islamic world had little to no influence upon the core culture of medieval Georgia. However, I argue that this perspective needs revision. Christianity certainly dominated the religious life of medieval Georgia, but the historical records do not give counts of exact Muslim populations in Georgia, only clues to the fact that Islam must have been a significant minority. The artistic and architectural examples cited in the paper thus demonstrate that the Islamic world had a significant influence upon medieval Georgia in both its religious and secular cultural evolution.

Immersive Rituals in the Qumran Community and Early Christianity

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Abstract: The baptismal rite performed by John the Baptist finds many similarities with the immersive rituals performed at the Qumran community, as detailed in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This has led many to assume that the Qumran immersive rituals were a prototype of Christian baptism. However, this paper will show that Christian baptism evolved naturally within its first century Jewish context, and the intersections of thought and practice between the rituals are nuanced. A careful analysis ultimately reflects different understandings of the ritual's purpose and effect.

For many scholars, John the Baptist has been a fitting candidate as a possible point of connection between Christianity and the community at Qumran.[1] The Dead Sea Scrolls have proven to be of major interest to scholars because they illuminate modern understanding of Second Temple Judaism (ca. 500 BCE to 70 CE) and the context of the emerging Jesus Movement. Debates have shifted in many areas of biblical study on account of the scrolls, especially concerning matters of potential influence on Christian baptismal rites. The task of this essay is to elucidate the significance of ritual purification in Second Temple Judaism and to examine the relationship between the Qumran community and John the Baptist. I will compare and contrast John's baptism with the rites practiced at Qumran to show that the similarities between the rituals are nuanced, but the two groups had significantly different understandings concerning the purpose and effects of ritual immersion.

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1. Most recently, Joel Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018).

Ritual washings were a ubiquitous rite in the ancient world and a regular practice for the observant Israelite. According to biblical law, the children of Israel were commanded to wash themselves to rid themselves of impurities (e.g., Lev 1:9, 15:27; Deut 23:11). The Torah consistently uses the word *rāḥaṣ* to refer to both everyday washings of the body as well as ritual washings. These washings were not isolated to the priestly caste but were required of all individuals.[2] Leviticus 15:31 holds a key to understanding the emphasis of purification rituals when it says, "Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, so that they do not die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst." All Israelites were obligated to be aware of their ritual status because any defilement of the sacred would threaten the destruction of the nation. This collective significance is also evident in Lev 11:44 where God says, "For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy." What is translated as "sanctify yourselves therefore," is a single word in Hebrew, *wəhiṯqaddištem*. This word is conjugated in the second masculine plural form, indicating that the injunction addresses the entire nation of Israel as the audience. Their condition did not just have an individual effect on their eligibility to enter sacred spaces but was a matter that affected the community as a whole.[3] Thus, every Israelite was engaged in general purification rituals involving water, and the rites took on a highly significant role to maintain the holiness of the sanctuary.

Though the root raḥaṣ is used in reference to the cleansing of impurity with water, it is not specifically indicated whether these washings were aspersions, affusions, or immersions.[4] Oftentimes, the commands to wash seem to preclude immersion. For example, in Exodus 30:19, Aaron and his sons are commanded to wash their hands and feet with water. Because the text only specifies the priests' hands and feet as the objects of the verb, it seems clear that the individual is not engaging in a full body immersion. Later rabbinical texts often employ the Hebrew root *taval* for full immersion, but in the Hebrew Bible *taval* primarily indicates the dipping of an object or a body part.[5] Immersion rituals likely did not gain significant traction until the first century BCE.

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2.   Jonathan D. Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 29.

3.   See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 945–946; Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford, 2000), 25.

4.   In a religious context, aspersions, affusions, and immersions are methods of baptism or washing. Aspersion is the sprinkling of water, affusion is the act of pouring water, and immersion is the total submersion under water.

5.   See Lev 4:6, 17; 9:9; 14:6, 16, and 51.

The sudden emergence of the *miqveh* in the Second Temple Period reflected this rise in immersive rites. *Miqvaôt* are Jewish ritual baths. These stepped installations allowed the participant to submerge him or herself in water to achieve ritual purification. In a location where water was a limited resource, access to these pools was limited. Even still, archeologists have excavated many *miqvaôt*, dating to the Hasmonean period and later, in notable locations within Judea and Samaria.[6] *Miqvaôt* are not mentioned specifically in any text from this time, but an understanding of both the historical record and the material culture aids in the attempt to reconstruct the history of these cultic features.

Many stepped pools have been excavated at Khirbet Qumran, and most scholars identify these installations as miqvaot. The inhabitants of the community routinely immersed themselves in the purifying water that ran through these pools. Josephus writes that the Essene sect, a group many scholars consider to be those living at Qumran, rose early and bathed frequently with water to purify themselves.[7] Interestingly, only a single text from Qumran specifies immersion as the means for purification.[8] The instructions read, "[Whatev]er comes in contact with semen, whether a person or any vessel, shall be immersed (*taval*); and whoever bears it [shall immers]e; and the garment upon which it (the semen) is, as well as the vessel which bears it, is to be immersed (*taval*) [in wat]er."[9] The presence of miqvaot, however, suggests that the washings in Qumran at this time were generally immersive and were a foundational feature of their faith.

Following the discovery of Qumran and the publications of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some New Testament academics largely dominated the scholarly conversation, viewing the ancient community as a forerunner of Christianity. The early discussion on the interesting similarities between the theologies and practices of John the Baptist and Qumran was heralded by W. H. Brownlee, who was among the first to suggest that there was an actual historical connection between the two.[10] He proposed that John, upon the death of his parents, was sent to be reared by the Essenes in the wilderness, where he became acquainted with their sectarian thought and practices. According to Brownlee, John later abandoned the community to preach his new gospel of repentance and pave the way for the Messiah.

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6.   See Ronny Reich, *Miqwaòt (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods* (Jerusalem: Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society, 2013).

7.   Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1959), 2.8.121–161.

8.   Yonatan Adler, "On the Origins of Tevilah (Ritual Immersion)," *TheTorah.com*, 19 April 2017, https://thetorah.com/article/on-the-origins-of-tevilah-ritual-immersion.

9.   4QToharot A [4Q274] 2 I, 4–6 (J. M. Baumgarten, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* [ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2014], 316–317).

10.   W. H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," *IBC* 9 (1955): 71–90.

Brownlee cataloged the similarities he observed: he noted John's priestly lineage, his ascetic way of life in the wilderness, and his natural proximity to Qumran in the Judean desert. He further compared their similar theologies, eschatological thought, messianic expectations, and baptismal practices.

Ultimately what compromises Brownlee's hypothesis is that his purpose was not to prove a direct relationship between John and Qumran, but to offer a composite picture of the Baptist that would enlighten our understanding of him. While he conceded that he does not intend to construct a historically-critical biography of John, Brownlee surpassed reasonable conclusions in offering a quasi-narrative backstory of John the Baptist, complete with private thought processes and inner conflicts.[11] Ultimately, any supposition that the Qumran community directly influenced John enters the realm of speculation.

John Pryke responded directly to Brownlee's adoption hypothesis, claiming that John's history and views actually support the contrary.[12] Pryke examined the same evidence as Brownlee (the exegesis of Isa 40:3, similar ascetic lifestyles, the situation in the wilderness, washings and purity rites, etc.), but he reached a different conclusion. That is, John was a uniquely distinct figure and his preachings and baptisms were a departure from the sectarian lifestyle. He argued that John stands in mainstream Judaism and that his understanding and execution of baptism differed significantly in character from the purity rites performed at Qumran.[13] He rightly saw John working within the context of many similar groups in the Judean wilderness but with an independent message of his own (a view which finds itself in agreement with others who advocate for a link between the two communities).[14] There are noteworthy resemblances of Qumran thought and practice in John's ministry, but ultimately a collage of correspondence is not sufficient evidence to prove a direct association. The evidence does, however, show that the differences are significant and that John the Baptist was an independent figure from Qumran, engaged within a shared religious milieu.

John's immersions, viewed through a Jewish lens, no doubt paved the way for the Christian tradition, but whether or not he was influenced by the Qumran community is in question. From the scholarly literature, it is apparent that the relationship specifically between the immersion rites at Qumran and the ones practiced by John the Baptist has been contested over the years. Some argue that "the only thing John's baptism and the Essenes' baths of immersion had in common

11.   Brownlee, "John the Baptist," 73–74.
12.   John Pryke, "John the Baptist and the Qumran Community," *RevQ* 4 (1964): 495.
13.   Pryke, "John the Baptist and the Qumran Community," 496.
14.   See C. H. H. Scobie, "John the Baptist," in *The Scrolls and Christianity*, ed. Matthew Black (London: SPCK, 1969): 69.

was their ritual use of water for immersion."[15] This may be an overstatement, but the general implication remains sound. There are multiple points of intersection between the Qumran rituals and John's immersions, but their similarities and differences are complex. It must be kept in mind that the similarities between the communities do not prove an immediate connection between John and Qumran, nor does it imply that the Qumran lustrations were in any way a prototype for Christian baptisms as John's baptisms were.

One aspect of the ritual immersion that is consistent in both communities is the importance of repentance. The members of the Qumran community emphasized the significance of contrition with regard to ritual purifications. In their minds, the water itself did not confer purity, but a penitent and humble heart was necessary to be purged from uncleanliness.[16] The Community Scroll, a foundational text for their society, reads:

> Unclean, unclean shall he be. For as long as he despises the precepts of God he shall receive no instruction in the Community of His counsel. For it is through the spirit of true counsel concerning the ways of man that all his sins shall be expiated, that he may contemplate the light of life. He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the spirit of holiness uniting him to His truth, and his iniquity shall be expiated by the spirit of uprightness and humility. And when his flesh is sprinkled with purifying water and sanctified by cleansing water, it shall be made clean by the humble submission of his soul to all the precepts of God. Let him then order his steps {to walk} perfectly in all the ways commanded by God concerning the times appointed for him, straying neither to the right nor to the left and transgressing none of His words, and he shall be accepted by virtue of a pleasing atonement before God and it shall be to him a Covenant of the everlasting Community.[17]

The emphasis on repentance continues in the text, reading, "These may not enter into water to [be permitted to] touch the Purity of the holy men, for they will not be cleansed unless they have turned from their wickedness."[18] Similarly, John the Baptist believed that baptism without repentance was fruitless and clearly bound up in the idea of forgiveness.[19] The earliest accounts refer to him preaching a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3). From

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15.   Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 222.

16.   It is worthy to note that though sin did result in ritual impurity, not all ritual impurity was the result of conscious sin.

17.   1QS III, 6–12. (Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* [ed. Geza Vermes; New York: Penguin Books, 1997], 100–101).

18.   1QSa 13–14.

19.   Stegemann, *Library of Qumran*, 219.

these parallels, one recognizes that both parties understood that without a pure heart and a genuine turn from unrighteousness, this choreography of cult would prove unavailing.

While both communities stressed the significance of repentance prior to immersion, the impetus behind it differed. The immersions practiced at Qumran were largely to cleanse the individual from physical impurity, whether by external contaminant or sin.[20] This finds itself in line with the Jewish tradition of the day. The Gospels, however, make no mention of John's baptism being a process to become ritually pure. His baptism was preceded by a confession of sin (Mark 1:5) just as the Qumran rites often were, but the lack of reference to contamination or uncleanliness suggests that they were regarded as something distinctly different.

Another way in which the immersion practices of John and Qumran differ is in the number of participants involved. At Qumran, *miqvaôt* had steps leading down into the water, allowing the impure person to walk into the pool, enter the water, and come up cleansed—without the assistance of another.[21] The directives for washings found at Qumran reflect the instructions from Leviticus,[22] also indicating that the individual was to immerse himself or herself in the water, apparently without the assistance of another.[23] John's baptism stands in obvious contrast. The New Testament records John entering the water alongside the baptismal candidate to administer the baptisms. The participation of both an officiant and a recipient in John's baptism and later Christian baptisms reflects a notable difference in how the ritual was experienced and perceived.

The common employment of Isaiah 40:3 in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in connection with John's teachings has led some to believe that they shared a similar interpretation regarding the coming of the Messiah.[24] However, there are distinct differences in the ways the Qumran community and the gospel writers use the passage. An apocalyptic *kērygma* is evident in the Gospel authors' framing of John's role and teachings in connection with Isa 40:3. The Septuagint (LXX) is cited

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20.   See 4QToharot A [4Q274] and 4QToharot Bb [4Q277].

21.   James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 331.

22.   4Q514 I, 1–6: "And he shall bathe and wash on the d[a]y of [his] uncleanness . . . and on the day of their [cl]eansing all those who are unclean of days shall bathe and wash in water and shall become clean." This passage corresponds with the instruction found in Lev 14:8: " He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes...and wash himself in water, that he may be clean."

23.   According to the Hebrew Bible, priests were involved in purification rites, but the active participation of a priest in the washing of another individual is nowhere indicated. Instead, the text implies that individuals washed themselves, either through methods of affusion or bathing.

24.   Brownlee, "John the Baptist," 73.

exactly in describing John as "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him" (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4). The LXX places the voice in the wilderness. The Qumran community, however, took a different interpretive approach to this passage of scripture as they read it in light of their location in the Judean desert. In 1QS 8:13–16, the voice calls "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."[25] The Community Rule, therefore, does not locate the unidentified voice in the wilderness, but rather calls for the preparation of the way in the wilderness.[26] This in turn serves to justify the establishment of a wilderness community.[27] Nothing suggests that John intended to establish a desert community or recruit his disciples to remain with him in the wilderness. Rather, the allusion to Isaiah 40:3 marks John's mission with a sense of eschatological urgency. The difference in hermeneutical emphasis shows that the two were not related on this matter.[28]

Although the lustrations at Qumran and by John the Baptist were not strictly initiatory, as later Christian baptisms could be characterized, there are intimations of an entrance into a covenant community through ritual cleansings. In *The Faith of Qumran: The Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Helmer Ringgren writes that although the immersive rituals at Qumran were an everyday feature of the society, they were also considered part of the process to join the covenant fellowship.[29] It is apparent that through some act of ritual cleansing, the residents of Qumran believed that man "may take his place in the host of the holy ones and enter into fellowship with the congregation of the sons of heaven."[30] These people believed that salvation itself was joining with this holy council. Angels and saved human beings constituted a great heavenly community, and its manifestation on earth was to be found at Qumran. These specific immersive practices, however, were features of a much larger and longer process of admission that included training and probationary periods, as well as a communal feast.[31] The change that was brought

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25.   1QS VIII 13–16 (M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook with N. Gordon, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* [ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2014], 24–25).

26.   Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 26–28.

27.   Taylor, *The Immerser*, 28.

28.   It also cannot be assumed that John himself ever used the Isaian passage in his own ministry. Because the text is cited by the writers of the New Testament, Christian exegetes may have had their own purposes in connecting the prophecy to John.

29.   Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, 127–128.

30.   1QH III, 21–22.

31.   Josephus gives an account regarding the admission of neophyte members in his description of the Essenes: "Those desiring to enter the sect do not obtain immediate admittance. The postulant waits outside for one year; the same way of life is propounded to him and he is given a hatchet, the loin-cloth which I have mentioned, and a white garment. Having proved his continence during this time, he draws closer to the way of life and participates in the purificatory

about by the immersions was therefore a cultic purity to maintain the holiness of the community and its members, but the rituals themselves were not accompanied by the same soteriological thrust as Christian baptisms later were. In other words, the ablutions practiced at Qumran were sacral, but they were not sacramental.

This community's conception of a divine society at Qumran parallels John's vision of the kingdom of heaven. The first report of direct speech by John is found in Matt 3:2, where he says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This passage reveals John as one who understood that the need for repentance was due to the impending arrival of the Day of the Lord. For John, baptism was unequivocally connected to preparation for admission into the kingdom of heaven. John's baptisms, therefore, were unique in the preparatory aspect of their purpose.[32] Baptism by water was not complete on its own but rather anticipated a more powerful saturation with the Holy Spirit by one who was greater than he (Matt 3:11–12).

Early Christian baptism then evolved from John's preparatory rite to a more developed initiatory and transformative sacrament. Stephen Ricks notes that, although the difference between the purpose of baptism as preparatory as opposed to initiatory is subtle, it can be summarized by saying "while John's rite prepared his disciples to become part of the kingdom of God, Christian baptism was the means by which one actually became part of the kingdom."[33] Early Christian baptism also differed from the lustrations at Qumran in that they were thought of in connection with death and rebirth.[34] The cleansings at Qumran are described as purifying, but nowhere does it speak of the ritual in terms of passing from death to life. It is clear that early Christians also thought of baptism as a regenerating force; Christ is accorded the following words in John 3:3–5: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The act of total submersion under the water is therefore understood uniquely by early Christians as a symbolic act representing the death, burial, and rebirth of the individual as a new and transformed creature (see, for instance, Rom 6:3–5).[35]

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baths at a higher degree, but he is not yet admitted into intimacy. Indeed, after he has shown his constancy, his character is tested for another two years, and if he appears worthy he is received into the company permanently," *War* 2.8.7.137–38.

32. Stephen D. Ricks, "The Doctrine of Baptism: Immersions at Qumran and the Baptisms of John, the Earliest Christians, and Book of Mormon Peoples," in *By Our Rites of Worship: Latter-day Saint Views on Ritual in History, Scripture, and Practice*, ed. Daniel Belnap (Provo, UT: Deseret Book, 2013), 161.

33. Stephen D. Ricks, "The Doctrine of Baptism," 162.

34. Helmer Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 124–125.

35. On total immersion baptism in early Christianity, see Didache 7.1–3, in which baptism

When assessing the purification rites of John the Baptist and the Qumran community, the relationships that can be established are almost always differences. There was no larger baptism movement to which the two belonged, but they both used immersion because purification was important in their shared historical-theological context. Proximity is not enough to convince one that the two groups were exclusively connected in any way. Each parallel must be interpreted and analyzed within its wider historical situation.[36] Whether John was directly or indirectly influenced by the community at Qumran, he did not work in a vacuum and was naturally influenced by the general milieu and Jewish culture he was born into. Additionally, to reduce the ritual washings recorded in the Old Testament and performed at Qumran to mere adumbrations of Christian baptism would be to deny both the original context and rich culture of Judaism as well as the uniqueness of John's baptism. While John may well have connected his baptisms with the general use of washing for ritual cleanliness outlined in the Mosaic law, it was not necessarily connected to the extensive and much more frequent use of immersion among the Qumran covenanters. John's repentance-oriented baptisms were thus employed for different ends and in different ways. The reviewed similarities and differences bring one to the conclusion that the sacrament of Christian baptism evolved naturally within the context of its first century Jewish setting and also that John's baptism was understood in unique and distinct ways from the immersions at Qumran. It seems to be the consensus that although John the Baptist's relationship to the Qumran community cannot be proven decisively, we can be assured that the texts provide us with a wealth of knowledge in our strivings to appreciate the background and message of the New Testament.

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by affusion is presented as an exception.

36.   See Jorg Frey, "Critical Issues in the Investigation of the Scrolls and the New Testament," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 517.

Insights on the Relationship Between Qos and Yahweh during David's Reign in the Books of Chronicles

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Abstract: The Edomite deity Qos is largely shrouded in mystery. At best there are theophoric names that tie him to the land of biblical Edom. Most scholars continue to classify Qos as the patron deity of the Edomite Kingdom. Other than this scant information, there is little to no new data. As such theophoric names become the most viable data in exploring Qos's dominion, role, and place within the Southern Transjordan. Specifically focusing on the theophoric names as well as a comparative methodology, Qos can be accurately reconstructed as a storm deity during the tenth century BCE. Because of this, the inhabitants of the Southern Transjordan may have experienced syncretism in the form of Yahweh-Qos relations. It is for this reason that we have the anomaly in Chronicles *kushiyahu*, which reads *Qos is Yahweh*.

Edomite studies have been revived in recent years following the trend of postmodernism which focuses on less represented demographics. The relationship between Edom and Israel has received scholarly attention both in theology and historicity during various epochs in both of their narratives. New archeological evidence suggests that Edom, near Judahite territory, shared many political, cultural, economic, and religious similarities.[1] The Hebrew Bible, our main source of

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1. Diana Vikander Edelman, "Edom: A Historical Geography," in *You Shall Not Abhor An Edomite For He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, ed. Diana Vikander Edelman, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 1–12; Itzhaq Beit Arieh, "The Edomites in Cisjordan," in *You Shall Not Abhor An Edomite For He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition,* ed. Diana Vikander Edelman, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 33–40; John R. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites* (Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield, 1998), 67–71; Bradley L. Crowell, *Edom at the Edge of Empire: A Social and Political History* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020), 45–96.

political information on the Edomites during the Iron Age,[2] expresses a strained relationship with Edom.[3] It also spends an extensive amount of time expanding on the relationship between the two societies, tracing them back to the sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:30).[4] John Bartlett proposes that Judah and Edom's familial description is not historically accurate; moreover, Judah and Edom shared an economic relationship that arose during the seventh and eighth centuries.[5] Others claim that the Jacob and Esau story preserves a more ancient, religious relationship. Understanding that both Yahweh and Qos have southern origins explains how these two deities have such strikingly similar qualities. These scholars postulate that the relationship between Israel and Edom can be seen in their respective deities: Qos and Yahweh; that is that Qos and Yahweh were the same deities at their inceptions[6] and that Israel and Edom are called brothers because of their shared religious heritage.

The purpose of this study is to examine biblical evidence concerning Yahweh's southern origins, as well as epigraphic attestations regarding Qos to demonstrate that Qos and Yahweh became synonymous by the early monarchic period, being distinct before that: Yahweh was a metallurgy deity and Qos was a storm deity. The assimilation between the Edomite deity Qos and the Israelite deity Yahweh (both being the same deity) will be shown in the theophoric name of David's ark bearer, found in the book of Chronicles. These theophoric vestiges in the books of Chronicles are the only biblical pericopes that preserve the divine name Qos.

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2.   Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 37.

3.   Edom represents a major part of Israel's formative history including narratives that outline their common origin (Jacob and Esau [Gen 25:30, 32:3, 36:1, and 26:8]), later treaties between the two societies' kings (2 Kgs 3:9), and eventually being condemned and slandered in the prophetic literature (Jer 49:7, 17, 20, 22; Ezek 25:12–13; 32; 29; Joel 3:9; Obad 1). Bruce C. Cresson coined the term "damn Edom theology" to describe this later Edomite polemic; Bruce C. Cresson, "The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism," in T*he Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, ed. James M. Efird (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 125–48.

4.   Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 84–90.

5.   Bartlett is of the opinion that Edom cannot be traced back to Esau and that many of the connections associated with Edom (i.e. Esau being red and the genealogy of Edomite Kings in Gen 36) are literary creations that seek to coherently explain Edomite origins through the egocentrism of the Israelites. Bartlett and his conclusions have been treated in more recent studies regarding the compositional nature of Gen 36, which outlines the genealogy of Esau. Dustin Nash has proposed that Gen 36 was composed in an effort to distinguish Edom and Israel in the Southern Transjordan in the early monarchy, where both their material cultures suggest that there were not many differences between the two societies. Dustin Nash, "Edom, Judah, and Converse Constructions of Israeliteness in Genesis 36," VT 68 (2018): 111–128.

6.   Martin Rose, "Yahweh in Israel—Qaus in Edom?" *JSOT* 4 (1977): 30; Nissim Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" *JSOT* 33 (2009): 391–392; Justin Kelley, "Toward a new synthesis of the god of Edom and Yahweh" *Antiguo Oriente: Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios de Historia del Antiguo Oriente* vol. 7 (2009): 266.

Though many modern scholars and commentators relegate Chronicles to nothing more than a theological exercise with no claim to historicity, I maintain that though Chronicles was redacted in the post-Babylonian exile, it preserves preexilic monarchic narratives. Therefore, Chronicles is an accurate representation of Qos within the Israelite tradition. I will argue these postexilic texts preserve the idea that Qos and Yahweh's assimilation was apparent by the early monarchical period.

As for terminology, there are various definitions of *Edomite* such as political, cultural, and territorial. For this study, I will use *Edomite* as a cultural demarcation relating to Qos.[7] It is synonymous with *Southern Transjordan*. Bradley Crowell gives a brief description of Edomite geography and explains why Edom's borders fluctuate more than other polities.[8] Because of this border fluctuation, it is more appropriate to speak of Edomite influence rather than Edomite political authority or territory. Perhaps Edomite culture even reached the shrine at Horvat Qitmit which, at one point, was under Judahite rule.[9] For this reason, Qos will be equated with Edomite culture throughout this study.

The Splintered Divine

Before examining the evidence of Qos worship and influence in the Southern Transjordan, it is important to locate the geographic and cultural scope of this study. As Uehlinger emphasizes concerning the development of Yahwism, it would be a mistake to assume that simple evolutionary processes led to a monolithic idealized Yahwism or to identify all people as a national cult.[10] Different traditions and manifestations of Yahweh appear in the Hebrew Bible. In Spencer Allen's

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7.   J. Andrew Dearman, "Edomite Religion. A Survey and an Examination of Some Recent Contributions," in *You Shall Not Abhor An Edomite For He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition,* ed. Diana Vikander Edelman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 119–123. Dearman delineates many different stratifications to define *Edomite*. Dearman explains the problems with connecting Edom with Qos and vice versa. He states that the reasoning is circular, "Textual references are evidence for a veneration of Qos that can be called Edomite religion in all three of the senses named above, regardless of earlier forms of Edomite religion or of other cultic practices contemporary with the veneration of Qos. In fact, Qos veneration is a primary indicator of Edomite religion for scholars, even though the equation of Qos and Edom is essentially part of a circular argument (Qos=Edom; Edomite=Qos veneration)." "Edomite Religion," 120–121.

8.   Crowell, *Edom at the Edge of Empire*, 48–50.

9.   Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, "The Edomite Shrine at Horvat Qitmit in the Judean Negev Preliminary Excavation Report," *Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University* 18.1 (1991): 114; James Dixon Douglas and Merrill Chapin Tenny, eds., *The New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 291.

10.   Christoph Uehlinger, "Beyond 'Image Ban' and 'Aniconism'," in *Figurations and Sensations of the Unseen in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* eds. Brigit Meyer and Terje Stordalen (London: Bloomsbury Academic 2019), 105–106.

seminal work, he refers to this as the *Splintered Divine*.[11] That is to say that there are multiple manifestations of Yahweh and one should think in terms of a *poly-Yahwism*.[12] Kuntillet Ajrud demonstrates this exact phenomenon: more than one manifestation of Yahweh existed within the geographical boundaries of Israel, specifically mentioning "Yhwh of Teman".[13] The diversity of deities means that the study of Qos and Yahwism must be restricted to the southern/Edomite area. All of this is to say that southern Yahwism (however monolithic or diverse it might be) was in contact with the Edomite culture in its southern territories.

Yahweh

Much is known about Yahweh considering he is the main deity of worship in the Hebrew Bible. The focus of this section will be the hypothesis that Yahweh originated from Southern Transjordan. Judges 5:4–5, Habakkuk 3:3, and Isaiah 63:1 all suggest that Yahweh is of southern/Edomite origins. Judges 5:4–5 preserves an ancient vestige about the origins of Yahweh יהוה בצאתך משעיר בצעדך משדה אדום (LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, ESV) where Yahweh is said to be from the Seir, which is surrounding the Wadi al Hasa that would become synonymous with Edom.[14] Habakkuk 3:3 also preserves this ancient tradition, אלוה מתימן יבוא וקדוש מהר־פארן (God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran) in which Yahweh is said to be from Teman, a region in Edomite territory.[15] Robert Miller claims that the poetic variants in the Hebrew Bible (Hab 3:3 and Judg 5:4–5) are ancient in nature and reflect a Yahwistic cult originating in the Edomite region.[16] Though these vestiges do not

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11.   Spencer Allen, T*he Splintered Divine: A Study of Istar Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine multiplicity in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Degruyter, 2014).

12.   Uehlinger, "Beyond 'Image Ban and 'Aniconism,'" 106.

13.   Z. Meshel, Israel Carmi, and Dror Segal. "Proceedings of the 15th International 14C Conference," eds. G. T. Cook, D. D. Harkness, B. F. Miller and E. M. Scott. *RADIOCARBON* vol. 37 no. 2 (1995): 205-212. Z. Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border,* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012).

14.   Crowell briefly reviews the difficulty of locating Seir. Many of the earliest attestations of Seir are found in Egyptian documents from the New Kingdom. Crowell, *Edom at the Edge of Empire*, 97–99.

15.   Burton MacDonald, *East of the Jordan: Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures,* (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000), 193; See also Roland de Vaux, "Teman ville ou region d'edom?" *RB* vol. 76 no. 3 (1969): 379–385; Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 40.

16.   Robert D. Miller, *Yahweh: Origin of a Desert God*, ed. Ismo Dunderberg et al. (Göttingen :Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 104; Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 41-60. Miller summarizes as such: "Indexing the variants, there are six registers:
1. Yahweh came from Seir
2. [god] came from Teman
3. [god] came from Paran
4. [god] came from Sinai

describe any relationship between Yahweh and Qos, they conclude that Yahweh originated in the Southern Transjordan.

To establish that Yahweh and Qos were distinct before the tenth century, it is necessary to describe Yahweh's role theologically. Nissim Amzallag was the first to propose the idea that Yahweh was originally a metallurgy god focusing on Yahweh's neglected link to copper in the Hebrew Bible.[17] That the copper industry reached an all-time high in the Southern Transjordan during the tenth century BCE is a given, though it was constantly exploited even beginning in the Chalcolithic period.[18] Amzallag demonstrates that Yahweh is a metallurgy god by explaining that the first mention of Yahweh as a divine epithet, occurs in reference to Cain's birth (Gen 4:1). Amzallag further states that "Cain is the common name for smelters in ancient Canaanite," and that Tubal-cain is the "father of every smith" (Gen 4:22). Furthermore, Cain is the progenitor of the Kenites, who have been separately identified as Canaanite metallurgists. Lastly, Amzallag mentions that these Kenites came from Bozrah, in Edom proper.[19] The following examples, then, are not surprising: עיני ואראה והנה ארבע מרכבות יצאות מבין שני הרים וההרים הרי נחשת ואשב ואשא (And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass, Zech 6:1); Zechariah sees chariots coming out from between mountains of bronze. In Ezekiel 40:3, Ezekiel proclaims he sees a divine being whose appearance is of bronze והנה־ איש מראהו כמראה נחשת (behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass). Both previous examples are implicit. Ezekiel 22:20 is more explicit in Yahweh's role as a metallurgy deity. He is depicted working with a furnace: ובדיל אל־תוך כור לפחת־עליו אש להנתיך כן אקבץ באפי ובחמתי והנחתי והתכתי אתכם קבצת כסף ונחשת וברזל ועופרת (As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you) as well as Isa 54:16 הן אנכי בראתי חרש נפח באש פחם (Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire) in which Yahweh is described as the creator of metalworkers. Amzallag concludes that such parallels in the text are not popular metaphors but rather they reflect long traditions as well as deep knowledge of metallurgy.[20] After establishing that Yahweh is a metallurgy

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5. [god] came from Edom

6. [god] came from the desert

17.   Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" 394; Miller, *Yahweh: Origin of a Desert God*, 149–193.

18.   Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" 390; Crowell, *Edom at the Edge of Empire*, 84–90. Esp. 84–85.

19.   Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" 393.

20.   Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" 394.

deity located in Edom, he concludes that Yahweh worship was prominent in Edom and that Qos is a divine epithet for Yahweh.[21] Nevertheless, this theory presupposes that Yahweh preceded Qos and that Qos entered into the Edomite region later and that Qos adopted Yahweh's attributes, similar to Martin Rose's proposal. Importantly Amzallag establishes that Yahweh's metallurgic qualities can at least be located as far back as the Bronze Age,[22] before the monarchic period.

There is, however, biblical evidence that suggests that Yahweh was a storm deity in the oldest sections of the Hebrew Bible. Amzallag does not treat this inconsistency. As such, a definitive conclusion cannot and should not be made without first attempting to reconcile Yahweh's metallurgic reconstruction with biblical evidence. Frank M. Cross critiques the difference in form between poetry and prose to demonstrate that storm elements, which are prose, have been imposed on the poetic text at a later date, a conclusion that Kelley agrees with.[23] In an earlier work, Frank M. Cross and David Freedman conclude that most Yahwistic poetry, at the latest, can be dated to the tenth century, due to orthography, morphology, and archaic forms of pronominal suffixes.[24] Frank M. Cross provides a substantial platform on which the antiquity of the poetry of Judg 4:4–5 and Hab 3:3 is preserved while adhering to the most compelling evidence for a metallurgic Yahweh before the tenth century.

Qos

Due to lack of evidence, there is no consensus on how old Qos veneration in Edom is. Recent excavations at the Edomite capital Bursaria and the rise in popularity of specific theophoric names suggest that Qos rose to prominence in the Edomite region during the eighth century.[25] Martin Rose claims that Qos is not native to the region of Edom and that Qos entered Edom around the seventh and eighth centuries.[26] Subsequently, according to Rose, Yahweh proceeded Qos in Edom, concluding that Yahweh and Qos are not of the same origin nor the same tradition. The strength of Rose's arguments comes in the distinction between the two deities. John Bartlett responded to Rose's criticism by claiming that Qos most likely entered the region earlier than Yahweh, stating that Qos is a geographic deity

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21. Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" 392.

22. Amzallag, "Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" 403.

23. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion in Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 100–101, 163–166; Kelley, "Toward a new synthesis," 260.

24. F. M Cross and David Noel Freeman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 27–35.

25. Crowell, *Edom at the Edge of Empire,* 314–319.

26. Rose, "Yahweh in Israel—Qaus in Edom?" 29.

tied to the land rather than to the people.[27] Miller lists more than fifty theophoric Edomite King names from the ninth century, arguing that the amount of theophoric names in the ninth century is not conducive to Qos entering the land in the seventh century.[28] Miller points out that Qos is not just a deity worshiped in the royal house but rather a deity worshiped across the Edomite population and that the theophoric Qos element is prominent into the eleventh and tenth centuries.[29] Israel Knohl concludes that the rise in Qos attestations is due to a rise in literacy rather than a rise in popularity.[30] Knohl also provides the most compelling and concrete argument concerning the antiquity of Qos, citing lists in Rameses's II topographical lists where multiple q-s prefixes are attested in Edomite territory.[31] Based on the occurrence of Qos within clan names, he concludes that Qos worship can be traced to at least the thirteenth century and that it does take place in the southern Edomite territory.[32] Knauf, without placing a date, concludes that Qos worship was popular before his eighth century popularity.[33] There is substantial evidence to demonstrate that Qos worship and veneration existed within Edomite territory before the tenth century. Qos is a deity rooted in the land. Though they may originate in the same territory, the jurisdictions of Qos and Yahweh are different.

Again, to establish that Yahweh and Qos were distinct before the tenth century, it is necessary to define Qos's role. The evidence to define Qos and his abilities is scarce, thus, there are various interpretations regarding the nature of this deity. The most straightforward, as well as the oldest assessment, deduces that Qos was

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27. John R. Bartlett, "Yahweh and Qaus: A Response to Martin Rose," *JSOT* 4 (1977): 29.

28. "Qausab, Qausakh, Qauselef, Qausbin, Qausbarak (one from Beersheba), Qausgad, Qausdakar (on an otherwise Hebrew seal), Qaushad, Qauswahab, Qaushanan, Qaustalal, Qausi, Qausyad (from Maresha), Qausdalay, Qausyada' (from Nippur), Qausyahab (from Beersheba), Qausyayap, Qausnaqam (from Arad), Qausyata, Qausyatab, Qausyata' (from Beersheba), Qauskahal, Qauslakan (from Beersheba), Qauslentsar, Qausla'az, Qausla'at, Qausmalak (from Kh. Tannur), Qausnahar (from Beersheba), Qausnaqam (from Maqqedah), Qausner, Qausnatan, Qausadar (from Beersheba), Qausaz, Qaus'ayar, Qausany, Qausqom, Qausrim, Qausraya', and Qausro'ey (from Tell el-Farah South and Tell Jemmeh)" Miller, Origin of A Desert God, 204–207.

29. Miller, *Origin of a Desert God*, 103–104.

30. Israel Knohl, "Jacob-el in the Land of Esau and the Roots of Biblical Religion," *VT* 67 (2017): 483; See also, D. S. Vanderhooft, "The Edomite Dialect and Script: Review of The Evidence," in *You Shall Not Abhor An Edomite For He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, ed. Diana Vikander Edelman. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). See also E. A. Knauf, *Edom* in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* eds., Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 273–274.

31. Knohl, "Jacob-el in the Land of Esau," 483.

32. Knohl, "Jacob-el in the Land of Esau," 483–484.

33. E. A. Knauf, "Qôs," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Peiter W. van der Horst, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 674–677.

originally a war god and that *qws* represents *bow*, first suggested by T. C. Vriezen.[34] Justin Kelley provides a more in-depth survey of the different views of Qos nevertheless his prevailing theory is that Qos is an Edomite manifestation of the storm deity motif.[35] Dearman suggests that Ba'al, Yahweh, and Qos were all representations of the older Near Eastern storm deity, Hadad. Both Kelley and Dearman cite Arabic counterparts and draw on comparative Semitics to prove their point.[36] Like the Israelite Yahweh and the Canaanite Baal, Qos was also a storm god (as well as a warrior deity).

Two theories have been presented on the original dominion of Qos: war or storm. T. Fahd explains how most war deities acquired storm-like attributes resulting in syncretistic storm-warrior deities.[37] Miller, on the other hand, undermines that Qos was a storm god yet provides no information for another conclusion.[38] Miller appears to be unduly skeptical of etymological arguments, nevertheless, I feel it is unproductive to discredit the scarce evidence we do have. The strongest arguments conclude that Qos does participate in the storm/warrior god motif as opposed to Yahweh, a metallurgy deity.

Qos in the Hebrew Bible

The Deuteronomistic History (the books of Joshua to 2 Kings containing themes specifically from Deuteronomy), its redaction taking place near the sixth century BCE,[39] is very amicable towards Edom despite its rejection of foreign cults. The Deuteronomistic History considers all types of foreign deity worship illegal and anathema to the idealized, state-sponsored Yahwistic cult. Specific pericopes such as 1 Sam 2:2 and 2 Sam 7:22 highlight the ideological struggle between establishing Yahweh as the supreme god while also recognizing the reality of other deities. As is well known, the Deuteronomistic History openly condemns recognition of any foreign deity and devotes time and space to slander and degrade them. In other words, the redactor of Samuel-Kings believes that foreign deities are authentic and genuine threats to Yahweh. Ideologically, it demeans the existence of other gods in Israelite culture (i.e. Asherah). Yet, Edom is described as Israel's brother,

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34. T. C. Vriezen, "The Edomitic Deity Qaus," *OtSt* 14 (1965): 335–343.

35. Kelley, "Toward a new synthesis," 260.

36. Dearman, "Edomite Religion." 126; Kelley, "Toward a new synthesis," 260.

37.   "After the manner of Dhu 'l-Sharā which eclipsed him, Kaws acquired other prerogatives, those of most of the gods of the desert regions, such as the protection of the vegetation by ensuring rain, a prerogative symbolised by the rainbow." T. Fahd, "Ḳaws, Ḳuzaḥ," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, eds. E. Van Donzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat, 11 vols. (Leiden, Brill: 1994) 6:802–804.

38. Miller, *Origin of a Desert God*, 105.

39. F. M. Cross *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion in Israel*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 287.

alluding to the Jacob-Esau narrative.[40] In fact, Deuteronomy contains a description that contradicts a narrative in Numbers regarding passage through Edomite territory. Numbers 20:14–21 describes that when Moses asked for permission to pass through Edom's land, the Edomite king rejected Moses's proposal. In Deuteronomy 2:1–8, the same story is presented but Edom does grant the Israelites permission to pass through their land.[41] As mentioned above, 2 Kings 3 preserves a narrative in which the King of Edom goes with the Kings of Judah and Israel to broker a treaty. There is much discussion about the dating of these narratives, but it suffices to say that the Deuteronomistic History maintains an exclusive affinity for Edom.[42] With that said, it is unclear why Qos is never mentioned in the Deuteronomistic History if it is more accepting of Edom.[43]

The other history of Israelite sovereignty, the book of Chronicles, also lacks explicit references to Qos. Yet the Chronicler's history gives us greater insight into the connection between Qos and Yahweh during the tenth century in the form of theophoric names: Ezra 2:53 *bar-kos* (בְּנֵי־בַרְקוֹס), Neh 7:55 *barkos* (בַרְקוֹס) and possibly Chr 15:17 *kushiyahu* (קוּשָׁיָהוּ). Chronicles has long been considered a non-historical, theologically based text with no contribution to factual history.[44] Nevertheless, the book of Chronicles has been neglected as an accurate source of preexilic Israel. Kalimi argues that the Chronicler saw himself, first and foremost, as a historian (according to our modern-day standards).[45] If such inferences can be assumed, there is no reason to exclude the books of Chronicles as history when it follows the same formulaic pattern as the Deuteronomistic History.[46] Building off of Kalimi's argument, Rainey states that the Chronicler used the same sources as the Deuteronomistic Historian.[47] Kalimi rejects the common characterization

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40.   Deuteronomy 23:7 "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother:" KJV

41.   See Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 90–92 for a larger discussion; Crowell points out how Deuteronomy uses the kingship term *sons of Esau* rather than the political designation Edomites in Numbers. Crowell, *Edom at the Edge of Empire*, 183–185.

42.   According to Bartlett, during the composition of the DH, Judah and Edom had a near brother-like relationship in their politics. For Bartlett, it is this brotherly atmosphere that leads redactors to describe the two societies as brothers; not a legitimate claim of lineage. Edom and the Edomites, 84–86.

43.   Perhaps it is an attempt to validate the inclusion of Obed-edom (1 Sam 6:10–11; 1 Chr 13:13–14), a foreigner who cares for the ark of the covenant. Sara Japhet states that in the Chronicle's version, Obed-edom is described as a loyal Levite. Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 281.

44.   Isaac Kalimi, "Was the Chronicler a Historian?" in *The Chronicler as Historian* eds. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 76.

45.   Kalimi, "Was the Chronicler a Historian?" 82.

46.   Anson F. Rainey, "The Chronicler and His Sources—Historical and Geographical," in *The Chronicler as Historian* eds. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 32–38.

47.   Rainey, "The Chronicler and His Sources," 38–43.

of *midrash* (secondary literature commenting on the Hebrew Bible, that is to say not valuable for history), as the theological implications imposed on the text, and concludes that such a term derives from a rejection of priestly, redactional activities.[48] Taken at face value, the Chronicler should be treated as a serious historian interpreting theology rather than a theologian interpreting history.[49] Narratives that are omitted in the Deuteronomistic History and preserved in Chronicles reflect traditions that are original to the historical account.[50] That is to say that the references to Qos in the books of Chronicles should be considered authentic.

The deity Qos is scarcely documented, if not completely absent, in the Hebrew Bible and is restricted to postexilic texts,[51] though the fact that foreign theophoric names do not appear in Judahite lineage is notable and will be treated later. The few instances the deity Qos is mentioned consist of theophoric names: Ezra 2:53 *bar-kos* (בְּנֵי־בַרְקוֹס), Neh 7:55 *barkos* (בַרְקוֹס) and possibly Chr 15:17 *kushiyahu* (קוּשָׁיָהוּ).[52] The references in Ezra and Nehemiah consist of the Aramaic term for *son* plus the theophoric name *Qos*, resulting in the meaning *son of Qos*. Both are found in genealogical lists recording the exiles who returned from Babylon to Jerusalem. The latter example in Chronicles takes place during David's reign of the United Monarchy while the ark of the covenant is being carried. One of the ark bearers' names is *Kushiyahu* (קוּשָׁיָהוּ), whose name has been postulated to mean *Qos is Yahweh*. Vriezen suggests that this person may have converted to Yahwism from the Qos cult and that his name represents a confession of faith similar to *eli-jah*.[53] This assumes that because he has a theophoric name, he grew up worshiping Qos. However, names suggest a regional affinity more than individual practice. Vriezen rejects this idea stating that the name would contain two proper names which are extremely unlikely. Daniel Block and John Bartlett, assuming that Vriezen's postulation is correct, suggest that it is a syncretistic element in Qos-Yahweh worship. That is to say that the name *Kushiyahu* represents the merging of two deities.[54]

Whether or not *kos* (קוּשׁ) accurately describes a Qos theophoric element becomes the essence of the arguments. [55] The reason for skepticism rests on the

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48. Kalimi, "Was the Chronicler a Historian?" 75.

49. Kalimi, "Was the Chronicler a Historian?" 82–89.

50. Rainey, "The Chronicler and His Sources," 43.

51. Knauf believes that this omission of Qos is because Qos was a divine epithet rather than a personal name. Knauf, "Qôs," 677; Dearman, "Edomite Religion." 126.

52. Vriezen, "The Edomitic Deity Qaus," 332.

53. Vriezen, "The Edomitic Deity Qaus," 352.

54. Daniel Block, *The Gods of the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 42; Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 200–201.

55. Hans Bauer, "Die hebrïschen Eigennamen als sprachliche Erkenntnisquelle," *ZAW* 48 (1930): 74; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, " קוּשָׁיָהוּ ," HALOT 2:1091; Both Bauer and Koehler reject the Qos theophoric element, concluding that the קוּשׁ element is of Persian

difference in the spelling of the theophoric element between Ezra 2:53 *bar-kos* (בְּנֵי־בַרְקוֹס), Neh 7:55 *barkos* (בַרְקוֹס) and Chr 15:17 *kushiyahu* (קוּשָׁיָהוּ). Vriezen does not explain why he assumes *kush* (קוּשׁ) is synonymous with *kos* (קוֹס). Bartlett, more speculative, only suggests that a *Qos* name is a possibility, considering the difference in spelling.[56] A simple dialectic shift may have occurred, nevertheless, it is necessary to locate this dialectic shift to demonstrate that *kushiyahu* preserves a Qos theophoric name. Two of the Qos elements in the theophoric names are spelled *kof-vav-samech* (קוֹס) while the dissenter is spelled *kof-vav-shin* (קוּשׁ). It is commonly known that the change in sibilants from a *samech* to *shin* happened often in the biblical text, especially in foreign names.[57] Basic examples of sibilant shifts include *sin* to *samech* (שׂרף and סרף [Amos 6:10]) and interchanges between *sin* and *shin* (עשק and עשׂק [Gen. 26:20]).[58] Robert Cargill specifically notes, "We should also make particular note of a case of double *shin-samekh* transposition, where סחיש, 'grain that grows from itself,' mentioned in 2 Kgs. 19:29, reverses both of its sibilants as שׂחיס in Isa. 37:30." He continues to mention how foreign names such as Artaxerxes, specifically in Ezra, have two different spellings.[59] As Qos was a foreign name there is substantial evidence that the change from *samech* to *shin* is not without precedent.[60] Both *kush* (קוּשׁ) and *kos* (קוֹס) refer to *Qos*. In which case, *Kushiyahu* was meant to render *Qos is Yahweh*. Thus, Bartlett is proven correct in his hypothesis that *Kushiyahu* conceals a Qos theophoric name.[61] The connection becomes more polemic against normative Yahwism considering that *Kushiyahu* was David's ark bearer. David, a clear Yahweh worshiper, has no quarrel nor hesitation allowing a potential non-loyal Levite to bear the seat of his god. Whatever may be said about the polemic nature, Qos and Yahweh are not opponents by Davidic times, having been distinct earlier in their history. Much as the connection between 'El and Yahweh is both natural and expected in early Israelite history,[62] Qos and Yahweh may have merged earlier in Israelite history during the monarchical period.

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origin meaning "to grant". Knauf states very blatantly that "Kushiyahu '' cannot be connected to Qos. Knauf, "Qôs," 674.

56. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, 201.

57. Robert R. Cargill, *Melchizedek King of Sodom: How Scribes Invented the Biblical Priest-King* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 23.

58. Cargill, Melchizedek King of Sodom, 23.

59. Cargill, Melchizedek King of Sodom, 23.

60. "סכלות ('folly') versus שׂכלות (Qoh. 1:17); סכך ('to cover') versus שׂכך (Exod. 33:22);סור ('to turn aside, depart') versus שׂור (Hos. 9:12); סער ('to storm') versus שׂער (Job 27:21; Dan. 11:40; Ps. 50:3); and several other examples." Cargill, Melchizedek King of Sodom, 23.

61. Bartlett, Edom and the Edomites, 201.

62. Bartlett, Edom and the Edomites, 201.

Conclusions

One of the primary flaws within the discussion of Yahweh and Qos's relationship is the lack of Qos theophoric names in the early chapters of the Hebrew Bible. If a connection between Qos and Yahweh exists before the monarchical period, as Kelley and Amzallag suggest, there should be evidence of both cults' assimilation. If there was a strong religious similarity between Qos and Yahweh, earlier than the monarchical period, Qos theophoric names should be attested in chronologically early biblical texts. For example, Horvat Uza, dated to the sixth century, should have evidence of assimilation between Qos and Yahweh prior to the sixth century.[63]

As is well documented in the Hebrew Bible, an ʿEl cult and Yahweh cult eventually become synonymous.[64] As shown by Israel Knohl, both deities (Yahweh and Qos) existed simultaneously in the Edomite region and claim that ʿEl was the catalyst for their merging.[65] Whether or not ʿEl is the transmission process, Yahweh and Qos were distinct for most of their history until the monarchical period. Whatever the connection between Yahweh and Qos, it is logical to conclude that their assimilation is later than the connection between ʿEl and Yahweh.

The earliest reconstructions of Yahweh support metallurgic dominion. Qos can be reconstructed as a storm deity even before his rise in popularity in the eighth century BCE. Chronicles, which should be considered history that preserves ancient narratives rather than just a theological exercise with no foundation in historiography, preserves Qos theophoric names within the Israelite tradition that are found in the tenth century. The merging of Qos and Yahweh, as shown by the theophoric name *Kushiyahu*, preserved in the books of Chronicles, must have occurred during the Davidic monarchy if one accepts this etymological interpretation of *Kushiyahu*.

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63. Nadav Naʾaman, "A New Look at the Epigraphic Finds from Horvat ʿUza," *TA* 39.2 (2012): 97–98; Itzhaq Beit-Arieh and Bruce Cresson, "An Edomite Ostracon from Horvat ʿUza," TA, 12.1 (1985): 96–101.

64. Tzemah L. Yoreh, *The First Book of God*, BZAW 402 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 259–260.

65. Knohl, "Jacob-el," 482.

Something Borrowed

The Origins of Christian Wedding Rituals

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Abstract: Western Civilization is defined by Christianity, but Christianity is not just a collection of morals and a few books. It, like all religious traditions, is a culture, a people, and an entire world of customs and rituals. The culture of Christianity modeled many of its traditions off those created over the previous centuries by the Jewish and Roman peoples. The wedding traditions presented by Tertullian and Plutarch represent the lives of thousands of people. They describe deeply held religious beliefs and cherished memories. From these two authors, we can deduce that Christians either abstained from, adapted, or participated in the traditions of their peers. When each of these decisions was made the *ekklesia* revealed not only the wedding day itinerary but also the state of Christian theology at that precise moment.

W estern Civilization is defined by Christianity, but Christianity is not just a collection of morals and a few books. It, like all religious traditions, is a culture, a people, and an entire world of customs and rituals. The culture of early Christianity was heavily influenced by the traditions of the Jewish and Roman peoples from previous centuries. In this paper, I will attempt to shed light on early Christian marriage rituals, how they differed from the traditional weddings of the Greco-Roman world during the first and second centuries CE, and what this tells us about the Christian community's developing theology.[1] David G. Hunter and others of today's foremost experts on ancient marital practices have focused

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1.   Many of the earliest converts to Christianity came from Judaism and with them came portions of their culture. This no doubt applies to wedding customs as well but due to the limitations of this paper I will not be able to discuss this aspect of the formation of Christian traditions in a way that would do it justice.

their studies primarily on the sociocultural and philosophical aspects of a long-term marriage, using nuptial logistics as support for their research.[2] While this work is extensive and thorough, it neglects to examine the interaction between early Christianity and Greco-Roman religion, rather it focuses on the developing attitudes toward marriage within each separate community.

Because the Hellenistic world had no real separation between church and state, it was challenging for members of this new religion to decipher how they were meant to live in a society that operated by laws and societal norms which were in direct defiance of their new beliefs.[3] As time went on Christianity began to form its own traditions. From the beginning of the second century forward all Christian weddings had to be overseen by a bishop,[4] and by the fourth century the Christ-believing community, or *ekklesia*, had distinct matrimonial traditions.[5] To explore this interaction, I will turn first to the writings of Plutarch to learn the state of nuptial traditions in the Greco-Roman world. Next, I will review the works of Tertullian, examining the aspects of weddings he felt were confusing or controversial enough to need written clarification. Then I will compare the two to learn which traditional regional elements Christians deemed unholy, which elements were adapted to better fit the new theology, and which, if any, new elements were introduced. From these sources, it is apparent that many aspects of ancient weddings that would typically be associated with Christianity were, instead, taken directly from Greco-Roman traditions.

Plutarch

In the years 18 and 9 BCE, the Roman Emperor Augustus issued three laws that fined unmarried men and women: *lex Iulia de Maritandis ordinibus* (18 BCE), *lex Iulia de adulteriis* (18 BCE), and *lex Papia-Poppaea* (9 BCE).[6] Because state law was filled with religious elements such as this, it is difficult to distinguish where weddings stopped being a legal formality and began acting as a religious ritual. While it is uncertain where this line was drawn extant sources can help piece things together. During this time the responsibility of a husband began to change. Not

2.   Hunter, David G. *Marriage and Sexuality in Early Christianity*. Minneapolis, MN: 1517 Media and Fortress Press, 2018.

3.   i.e., the use of the crown; see below.

4.   Hunter, David G. "Wedding Rituals and Episcopal Power", (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7.

5.   This term which comes from the Greek word "ἐκκλησία" which refers in the New Testament to the Church or a body of Christians (LSJ q.v. ἐκκλησία). This particular usage comes from Engh, Line Cecilie and *Mark Turner. The Symbolism of Marriage in Early Christianity and the Latin Middle Ages: Images, Impact, Cognition*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 94.

6.   Hunter, "Wedding Rituals", 10.

only was he required to produce progeny, but he also needed to be an upstanding and respectful husband.[7] With this change, weddings only grew in importance, however, this did not bring clarity to the associated rituals.

Questions by Plutarch contains some of the most specific details about marriage in the ancient world. Most of these details are placed in a question-and-answer format in which Plutarch answers a series of questions, usually why a certain practice exists, and he responds with possible answers but rarely gives any definitive reason. While the answers he gives are helpful, the information most relevant to this study is found in the questions themselves. For instance, when Plutarch is asked, "Why do they light neither more nor less than 5 torches in the wedding ceremony," we learn information that is often assumed to be common knowledge and thus excluded from the literature. Due to this aspect of ancient literacy, these wedding rituals are not well documented in the corpus of Greek and Latin literature. We are fortunate to have these details preserved in Plutarch's greater collection of *Moralia*.

On the morning of her wedding, a bride in the Roman Empire would begin by picking flowers, already wearing her ring and long white robes. As she prepared, she was surrounded by her mother and sisters, and any other female members of the bridal party. She would place her hair in six curls (*sex crines*) with a dagger which had drawn blood in battle (*hasta caelibaris*), literally translated as *bachelor's spear,* and tie her *tunica recta* with a Herculean knot. Next, she would place a yellow or red veil (*flammeum*) over her head and be crowned with a wreath of the flowers she had picked earlier.[8] She would then be led to her groom and would say to him "*Ubi tu Gaius ego Gaia*," (Where you are Gaius, I am Gaia) and officially enter into the marriage contract.[9] A sacrifice was offered to the gods and the bridal party then shared a joyous breakfast.

When the evening came the bride would be taken from her parents and begin her procession to the groom's home.[10] As the bridal party set out, they would light five torches (cerei) as a symbol of indivisibility, fertility, and reverence for the five

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7.   Veyne, Paul "The Roman Empire" in A History of Private Life, vol. 1: *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 36.

8.   Plutarch. T*he Roman Questions of Plutarch: A New Translation with Introductory Essays and Running Commentary.* Trans. H. J. Rose (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1924), 101.

9.   Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom*., 30.

10.   There seems to have been a spectrum of ways to perform this portion of the ceremony. Some authors claim that the bridal party hosted a faux kidnapping with the bride ceremoniously weeping as she went over to the groom's home. The main explanations for this act are that the bridal party did not want to offend the house gods she was leaving behind or that it was in recognition of the Sabine women. Other authors report processions where there was no fake abduction and the bride simply tried to look mournful as she walked.

gods who oversaw marriages (Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Suada, and Diana).[11] As they walked, the bride held a spindle and distaff as she watched the groom throw nuts to the children and the rest of the party sang the *Talassio*, a song meant to summon the god of marriage by the same name, sometimes the bride would also portray a reluctance to leave her ancestral home.[12] Once everyone arrived at the home of the bridegroom it was the bride's responsibility to anoint the doorposts with oil, fat, and wool garland before she was carried over the threshold.[13] In some areas, such as Plutarch's homeland of Boeotia, the axle of the bridal carriage would be burned to symbolize that she could no longer return to her paternal home.

Upon entering her new home, the bride would touch the ceremonial fire and water.[14] Some scholars believe that she also exchanged fire and water with the bridegroom, but this claim is less substantiated. The two families now joined would eat together.[15] It is unclear if the consummation of the marriage would have occurred directly after the fire and water or following the dinner. The following morning the groom would present the bride to the household gods. She then offered her first sacrifice to the gods of her new home. It was at this point — having exchanged vows, anointed the home, been purified by the fire and water, consummated the marriage, and been accepted by the gods — that she was officially wed to the bridegroom.

This day was both extraordinarily eventful and symbolic for the couple. From the very beginning, the date was chosen to avoid times of ritualistic purification. The *flammeum* was colored red or yellow to represent a flame and was believed to protect the bride from any negative comments from spectators. The bride parts her hair into six parts to have exactly three curls on either side of her head because three was believed to be a magical number. Even the dagger with which she parted her hair represented a union that could only be parted by iron, that is to say, death.[16] As the day progressed and the bridegroom arrived at the home of his bride, they exchanged a set of vows, "Where you are Gaius, I am Gaia" promised the bride. Plutarch postulated "Is it a kind of agreement to begin at once to share everything and manage all in common? The words then mean 'where you are lord and master, I am lady and mistress.'"[17] This connection between Mother Earth and the bride/future mother brings a sense of divine purpose to the nuptials as well.

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11. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 2.
12. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 31.
13. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 29.
14. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 1.
15. Rose, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch*, 102.
16. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 87.
17. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 30.

As the ceremony left the bridal home and progressed through the streets exactly five torches were lit.[18] Five as an odd number is as indivisible as the couple should be. Another aspect of this number was that, according to Plutarch, it was considered the ultimate marital number because as a combination of *3*, the first odd, and *2*, the first even, it symbolized the union of man and woman. The number of the torches was also used to appeal to Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Suada, and Diana in hopes that they would bless the union and watch over any children that came from it.

Along with the torches, the people celebrated by singing the *talassio*.[19] This song comes from the Latin word *talasus* which means wool basket. This is likely connected to the bride's carrying of the spindle and distaff as well as the placement of the wool garland on the doorposts. All of these remind one of the Roman literary tradition in which the wives of great heroes spun wool to represent their devotion and excellence as a wife. As the bridal party traveled, they would offer various small sacrifices to the gods in addition to the main sacrifice which would occur at the groom's home.[20]

Before this main sacrifice could begin the bride had to anoint and enter the home, however, she was forbidden to walk over the threshold as she entered.[21] This was avoided by either carrying her or placing her in a cart and wheeling her over. This was done in remembrance of the rape of the Sabine women who first entered their homes under constraint. Additionally, it allowed the bride to give the impression that it was not of her own accord that she would be entering the home where she would lose her virginity. I have already discussed several elements similar to this act of carrying a woman over the threshold, such as the bride portraying herself as unhappy during her procession, giving the impression that the bride did not wish to be married, these aspects can be connected to this idea that a woman of good repute would not desire to have sex. This is an extension of the societal convention that purity and virginity were the marks of a worthwhile woman, without these qualities the bride would have become an outcast for her defilement.

The most important of all these ceremonies was the ritualistic touching of fire and water. Concerning this aspect of the wedding, Plutarch seems less sure of the meaning than in the other instances which have been discussed. William Goodman gives four explanations as to what the purpose of the ritual may have been:

1.   The fire and water acted as a purifying agent for the bride.

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18. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 2.
19. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 31.
20. Rose, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch*, 102.
21. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 29.

2. Fire and water represented masculine and feminine, respectively.[22]
3. "Fire without moisture is without nourishment and dry, while water without heat is barren and inactive; and so male and female apart from each other ineffectual, but their coming together in marriage produces the perfect communal life."[23]
4. Man and wife must share all things, even the bare necessities of life.

Preference for each explanation may have correlated to certain regions or age groups at the time but because all four rationales have some degree of prominence it is likely that during this ceremony thoughts would have turned to more than one of these options.

The entire wedding day was spent performing one ritual after another to appease the marital couple's household gods. It was only in marriages of economic significance (i.e., when a dowry was being exchanged) that formal documentation of the union was required. In the most extreme circumstances, the wedding would have been officiated by the Pontifex Maximus, the highest religious official of the empire.

Tertullian

Nearly a century after Plutarch, Tertullian, nicknamed the Father of Western Theology, became one of the most avid writers of the second and third centuries. He spent his lifetime (155 to 220 CE) writing 33 books concerning Christian apologetics and polemics. From his writings, much knowledge has been gained concerning the practices and concerns of the early Christian *ekklesia*. These concerns included the paying of taxes, sabbath day observance, and the proper way to get married. Because the canonical books of the New Testament say remarkably little about weddings, Tertullian's writings contain some of the best information on the wedding practices in early third-century Carthage (North Africa).

The most important part of any wedding is the bride and groom. It was the responsibility of any young lady who wished to marry to find a spouse of the same religious background. This meant that any potential suitors must be Christian.[24] This was an especially important decision since in early Christian belief a person, man or woman, could only marry once.[25] If your spouse died or if the couple

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22. Plutarch, *Plutarch's Morals*. Translated by William W. Goodman. (Cambridge, England: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1874), 39.
23. Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.*, 1.
24. Tertullian, *On Monogamy*, 7.
25. Hunter, David G. *Ecclesiastical Legislation*, (1517 Media; Fortress Press), 237.

wished to be separated then the couple either had to live the rest of their lives alone or be considered adulterers.[26]

Tertullian is careful to point out that all traditional apparel was optional and decided upon by the bride.[27] If it was the wish of the bride to be fully ornamented, her face would be fully shrouded in a veil. She was meant to be covered as she went to meet the groom and was only revealed once she was standing before her betrothed. Only virgins were permitted to wear the veil as it was intended to shield her from gazing upon men and men from gazing upon her; if the bride and groom had truly maintained their chastity, they should blush upon seeing one another.[28]

If she did not veil her face the couple ran the risk of becoming desensitized from each other and there would be no proof of their purity.[29] During this period, chastity was considered one of the most important qualities a Christian could possess.[30] From the moment of her betrothal, the bride was no longer considered a virgin in the eyes of Tertullian as she was now intending to engage in sexual activity despite having never actually participated in any such activities.[31] Because of this, a betrothed girl or woman who belonged to the churches in Greece or Africa would wear this veil from the time of her betrothal until after the ceremony was completed.

In contrast with this extreme modesty, by the third century, Tertullian claims that "women [had] every member of their body heavy laden with gold."[32] He then reflects on the (unspecified) times when the only jewelry a woman wore was the gold ring which both the bride and groom would wear on the fourth finger of their left hand as a sign of their oath. However, other acts of modesty did persevere. For example, a bride would not have arranged her hair elaborately as an extravagant hairdo was believed to distract from the reason they had all ultimately gathered: to worship Christ.

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26.   Hunter, *Ecclesiastical Legislation*, 238.

27.   Tertullian, *De Corona*, 4.

28.   Tertullian, *On Prayer*, 22.

29.   Tertullian, *On Prayer*, 22.

30.   Tertullian refers to chastity as equally important as righteousness and truth (*De Fuga in Persecutione*, 3.)

31.   To him Eve, as the "Mother of the Living," was never a virgin. (On the Veiling of Virgins: 5) Any references made to the virginal bride will be referencing the modern understanding (i.e., a bride which has not yet had sex). In this paper *virgin bride* is meant to refer to a woman who would be considered a virgin in a modern sense. Unless specified otherwise, any mention of a bride will be referring to this *virgin bride*. (Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins, 5.)

32.   Tertullian, *The Apology*, 6. Tertullian is likely exaggerating as most people would not have been able to afford such accessories. This was most likely done to emphasize his belief that members of the *ekklesia* were abandoning the "good ways of [their] fathers."

While it is unspecified if brides would have worn white, as they do today, the groom was clothed in white to represent "the bright beauty of the unwedded flesh."[33] A white toga was worn to all private ceremonies — namely espousals, marriages, and name-givings — as a form of celebration.[34] Though it would make sense for the bride to be similarly clothed it is unclear if women also wore white. Tertullian references this issue regarding women in two instances. The first is an explanation that it is sinful for men to wear women's clothes and for women to wear men's. The second accuses prostitutes and Ceres-worshipping women of blasphemy for defiling the color of purity by wearing pure white shoes and all-white dresses.[35] With this in mind, it is reasonable to continue with the assumption that the bride also wore white.

Most of the specific aspects of the marriage ritual come from Tertullian's interpretation of the parable of the ten virgins. In this story, ten virgins sit outside a house awaiting the bridegroom.[36] When the groom is approaching, the virgins go to light their lamps but five of the virgins do not have enough oil. They are forced to leave to purchase oil and by the time they return the doors have been shut. Tertullian confirms multiple times that torches played a role in weddings and that it was their interpretation that the light represented their testimony of Jesus as their savior.[37]

The nuptial ceremony became increasingly standardized as time passed. Weddings were officiated by bishops, presbyters, and deacons; moreover, "they [bishops, presbyters, and deacons], plainly, will give husbands and wives as they would morsels of bread."[38] Tertullian attests that there was some form of a nuptial vow, which was most likely the precursor to the regulated set of oaths that were administered during the fourth century. In the early Christian *ekklesia*, it was believed that to be unified by an ecclesiastical leader was to be metaphorically married in the Lord.[39]

Synthesis

The traditions presented by these two men represent the lives of thousands of people. They describe deeply held religious beliefs and cherished memories.

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33. Tertullian, *On the Pallium*, 27. It is unclear whether Tertullian is describing an element which was customary in the community or if he was instead advising that grooms should be clothed in white.

34. Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, 17.

35. Tertullian, *On the Pallium*, 4.

36. Matt 25:1–13.

37. Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, 6.

38. Tertullian, *On Monogamy*, 11.

39. Tertullian, *On Monogamy*, 11.

From these two authors, one can deduce that Christians either abstained from, adapted, or participated in the traditions of their peers, particularly the Pagan Romans. While the origins of these decisions are unknown, the motivations are generally quite clear. To begin our examination, I will first examine the traditions which, according to Tertullian, Christians omitted from their ceremonies. These are the traditions that Tertullian considered to have theological ties to the Greco-Roman cults.

The deliberate abstention from certain Roman traditions can reveal which of these were considered idolatrous by the Christians. The most self-explanatory of all these was the refrainment from blood sacrifice during the morning, procession, evening, and second morning. The flower crown, another, less obvious, ritual seems to have been a matter of contention among Christians. Tertullian was so adamantly against this ritual that he wrote an entire book, *De Corona*, on the topic. In this book, the reader confronts the great conflict of Tertullian's works. In chapter 2 he says, "that what has not been freely allowed is forbidden" while claiming in chapter 4, "If I nowhere find a law, it follows that tradition has given the fashion in question to custom, to find subsequently (its authorization in) the apostle's sanction, from the true interpretation of reason. These instances, therefore, will make it sufficiently plain that you can vindicate the keeping of even unwritten tradition established by custom." This inconsistency significantly weakens his argument against crowns, but this was not his only objection. He also believed that wearing a crown was offensive to their ancestors. By his logic, a bride wearing a crown at her wedding implied that she believed she already had a royal status despite not yet being perfected by Christ. Only those who had already died and were deemed righteous were worthy of crowns. All others were guilty of idolizing themselves.[40] The only possible motive aside from this was the desire to seduce those around them. He described a woman with flowers in her hair as "beauty made seductive."

This logic too applied to the fixing of the bride's hair. By elaborately curling and pinning her hair the bride was adorning herself with a crown, even if it would not be visible under her veil. If her hair was fanciful, she was acting immodestly. The desire to be beautiful was deemed a desire of the flesh. Therefore, the wearing of the *sex crines* was a sinful practice and should not have been worn by a Christian bride. This rebuttal of the crown and *sex crines* is particularly interesting as there is no evidence to suggest that the Romans saw any religious meaning behind the crown and the meaning attached to the hair in the magic number 3 is not mentioned by Tertullian. This begs the question: Did Tertullian understand this and choose to ignore it or was immodesty a bigger concern?

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40.   Tertullian, *De Corona*, 10.

However, not every aspect of a Roman wedding was considered heretical by Tertullian, a strict observer of the faith. These are the elements I will call tradition. These traditions would have had religious connotations to them, but they were not considered to be rooted in idolatry. A great example is the veils worn by Christian brides. Despite having a strong correlation to the yellow or red *flammeum* worn by the Pagan brides, veils were still heavily encouraged by Tertullian. While members of the imperial cult may have connected these veils to the imagery of a flame, Christians chose to believe that the veil protected the bride from corruption, not judgment as the Romans believed.[41]

An even better example is the adaptation of torches. The torches as they are used in the parable of the ten virgins most likely came from a combination of Jewish and Pagan influences but in chapter 29 of *Against Marcion*, when evaluating this metaphor, Tertullian states, "and thus 'to wait for our Lord,' that is, Christ. Whence 'returning?' If 'from the wedding'… for the wedding is his." In the context of the modern wedding, his statements are illogical. The Matthew passage in the New Testament details the story of a bridegroom *approaching* the wedding. This reference to Christ *returning* from the wedding before he goes into the wedding speaks directly to the traditional three-part wedding. If Tertullian is reliable in this instance, then it is clear that the *ekklesia* participated in the procession with the minor adaptation of the torches. The quantity of torches, as far as we can tell, was inconsequential; this would have sufficiently removed any association with the existing Roman symbolism of five torches.

In addition to participating in the general structure of the day, Romans and Christians shared many clothing traditions. This included the white attire, veil, and golden rings, all of which continue to be staple elements in western wedding culture. According to Tertullian, rings were a Roman tradition with no associated religious meaning. According to Christians, rings symbolized an oath between the bride and groom. He does not specify if the rings were exchanged at the betrothal or the wedding ceremony, but he does imply that both bride and groom began wearing them at the same time. These details are not corroborated in any of Plutarch's works, but it is referenced in the works of other authors of the period.[42]

Keeping in mind Tertullian's policy of discarding only rituals, one can reconstruct what a typical wedding day might have looked like for a wealthy Christian couple. To begin, a groom dressed in white would arrive at the bride's home. After the initial vows, the families would sit and eat together. As they traveled the bride would remain veiled and the groom would be throwing nuts to any onlookers.

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41. Hersch, Karen "Gods of the Roman Weddings." In *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010.) 228.

42. Hersch, "The Roman Wedding", 229.

Members of the bridal party may have carried torches to light the way until they met the virgins holding torches. Everyone present would file into the home and the bishop or deacon would begin the final ceremony. The bride would be unveiled, and the couple would proceed to the bridal chamber. They may have sung the *talassio* as they walked, the bride may have anointed her new home before entering, and the groom may have carried her over the threshold but without additional evidence, there is no definitive conclusion. The party most likely prayed and gave thanks during the day, but this too is unconfirmed in these sources.

Conclusion

From its very beginning, the early Christian *ekklesia* distinguished themselves from their Pagan counterparts through thoughtfully evaluated changes in their cultural fabric. This may have been upsetting to the stricter members of the imperial cult but to these pioneers alteration of the traditions of their ancestors was critical as they followed in the footsteps of their Messiah. Many of these early Christians were converts who had spent their youth watching family and friends participate in Pagan rituals. As they began the process of reordering their lives to fit their new theology they risked being shunned by their loved ones and even faced possible execution. The condemnation of the crown, especially, would have separated them from the general populace. This may have been interpreted as disrespectful to the emperor or even as a rebellious act. This risk indicates that these changes did not occur because of laziness or a frivolous whim. Each element that was discarded was heavily debated and ultimately deemed sinful.

Without additional sources to affirm current findings, all conclusions are conjectural. The influence of Jewish customs can also not be underestimated. Many of the new church members undoubtedly came from Pagan upbringings but the earliest of all the converts came from Jewish communities. We know from the letters of Paul that this community had a difficult time leaving behind circumcision and the dietary portion of the law of Moses. Some of these people felt passionate that the Pagan converts should participate in circumcision and other initiatory customs to be accepted into the flock. Persistent traditions such as these inevitably affected the culture of Christianity.

As we have seen Christian wedding ceremonies borrow some—if not most—of their elements from Pagan culture. A more in-depth look at the changes made by early Christians to the wedding ceremony deepens our understanding of other co-opted celebrations such as Saturnalia or the Festival of Eostre by demonstrating these stages of cultural evolution. Understanding these steps in the cultural shift of the West allows us to recognize the patterns which likely helped form other traditions. Because all societies tend to follow similar patterns, this information

can help us understand the spread of Hellenism, the antagonism toward Christians in the third and fourth centuries, colonialism, and Christianity as a whole.

Book Review

Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes, and Empires by Tim Mackintosh-Smith

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> Mackintosh-Smith, Tim. *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019, pp. 656, paperback $18.

British Arabist and widely acclaimed writer Tim Mackintosh-Smith wrote this formidable tome in his adopted country of Yemen, where he has lived for over three decades atop the ruins of an ancient Sabaean city. Writing with his heart on his sleeve, Smith undertakes the daunting task of tracing three thousand years of Arab history, an effort muddled from the start—by his own admission—because to define '*the*' Arabs "would be to try to pin down Proteus" (xvi), the shape-shifting Greek sea god. The word itself, *ʿarab*, also eludes the effrts of historians and philologists alike, because "it seems," he writes, "that when you try to draw meaning from the very bottom of the semantic well, it comes up muddy" (40). Yet nearly 600 pages lie before the reader at this point, and it is not the failure to philologically pin down Proteus that defines this book. In the attempt to put a finger on what it means to be *ʿarab*, Smith furnishes a lucid and up-to-date reconstruction of the Arabian past, which is "certainly less well known and much less knowable" (xviii) than its Ancient Near Eastern and Late Antique neighbors.

Smith's point of departure from previous histories is the recognition that Muḥammad marks the halfway point of Arab history—not the beginning: "The first known ancient inscription mentioning the Arabs dates from 853 BC; I am writing these words in AD 2017; according to tradition, the boy Muhammad was

first recognized as a prophet in AD 582—the precise midpoint between that in-scription and now" (xviii). Thereafter, his book is organized around three waves of Arab unity: the first (900 BCE–630 CE) catalyzed by the coalescence of high Arabic (ʿarabbiyyah), the "rich, strange, subtle, suavely hypnotic, magically persuasive, maddeningly difficult…language that evolved on the tongues of tribal soothsay-ers and poets" (xvii); the second (630 CE–1350 CE) by the "new and thrilling audio-spiritual universe of the Qur'an" (8); and the third (1350 CE–present) by the nationalist movements of nineteenth century Europe. It is exclusively the first wave with which we are concerned here as it relates to the Ancient Near East and Late Antiquity more broadly.

A cursory glance at academic departments in the aforementioned fields is sufficient to note that ancient Arabia is an orphan amidst its prestigious kin of the Levant. However, it is a mistake to neglect the region, as Smith makes the case, that has "preserved, pristine, many of the earliest features of those [Semitic] tongues," which "is another reason to look at both areas together, as a subcontinent in terms of plate tectonics and linguistics" (22). Up until the present, Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula have been, at best, peripheral in Ancient Near Eastern and Late Antique historiography. The reasons are clear. As Smith observes, the academic disconnect between Islamic and pre-Islamic studies, as well as a general tendency of historians to compress the long Islamic and Arab past into "a few prolegomena to a Muslim year zero" (52), has given the impression that these are two discrete and immiscible periods. "Islam began with such a flash," he writes, "that it tends to blind us to what was there before" (xviii). The tides are rapidly changing, however, and this book is a testament to that.

Since the 1970s, Michael Pregill has observed, the field of Late Antiquity has expanded beyond the Roman East, eventually integrating Early Islam into its fold. Recent works by Robert Hoyland (1997, 2001, 2014), Stephen Shoemaker (2012, 2018, 2021), G.W. Bowersock (2012, 2013, 2017), Aziz Al-Azmeh (2014), Emran El-Badawi (2014), Angelika Neuwirth (2019), Greg Fisher (2019), Sean Anthony (2020) and others, have made tremendous strides in this regard. What was once believed to be a cultural vacuum and overwhelmingly pagan milieu of jāhilīyah (pre-Islamic Arabia, lit. 'ignorance') is now more correctly viewed as a 'sectarian milieu,' a time of monotheistic encroachment and well-established Jewish and Christian presence in the peninsula (though the exact nature and extent are un-settled). The subfield of Quranic Studies has also witnessed an explosion in the last two decades, uncovering countless nodes in the historical matrix of that most enigmatic book. Most recently, for example, the possible relationship between the Qur'anic proclamation and the 'last great war of antiquity' has begun to be more thoroughly probed. Looking back in time, or rather, down the deep well of history,

has also been recently facilitated by the collection, digitization, and analysis of Safaitic inscriptions in the basalt deserts of northern Jordan and Southern Syria. Written in South Semitic script and grouped with the Ancient Northern Arabian family, these epigraphic records have only recently begun to come into full light. As recently as 2012, Ahmad Al-Jallad observed that our understanding of these inscriptions was still in its infancy. Since then, he has published *An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions* in 2015, and 2022 will see the release of T*he Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia: A Reconstruction Based on the Safaitic Inscriptions*. In sum, the background and genealogy of this orphaned region of the Levant are continually coming to light and will have ever-increasing ramifications on what we think we know about the Ancient Near East and Late Antiquity.

All this being said, Smith's is the first attempt to piece together the emerging data and weave it into a cogent, tentative, yet fluid narrative. For a concrete example of how Smith has brought emerging data to bear on Early Islamic historiography, we now turn to South Arabia. Before the Arabization of the entire peninsula, powerful kingdoms like Ḥaḍramawt, Ḥimyar, Qataban, and Saba' (believed to be the biblical land of Sheba) thrived in the south. In one of many instances, Smith marshals evidence from their epigraphic records to reveal one of the long-time blind spots for historians. That Islam was "the first attempt in the history of Arabia at a social organization with religion, rather than blood, as its basis" (54) has entered common parlance to the point of it becoming a given. But Early Sabaen inscriptions from the seventh century BCE point to the existence of unions formed in the name of the high god Almaqah, preceding Islam by about a thousand years. Pre-Islamic hydraulic engineers in the region erected an impressive number of irrigation dams, even drilling through a small mountain. These are no small tasks, requiring large-scale political unity for maintenance and quickly fall into disrepair without it, to which the collapse of the Marib dam attests. But the fact remains that unity had indeed been conjured up in the name of a high god, not merely by blood loyalty. Moreover, the word *ḥbl* that is used in an early Sabaic inscription to describe what the communal leader (*mkrb*) helped establish, is the same word that appears in the Qur'an: "and hold fast, all of you together, to the *ḥabl* of Allah and do not be divided among yourselves" (54). Throughout this book, Smith compiles a substantial amount of similar evidence to show that there is a case to be made for continuity between the ancient past and Islam, and down into the present. His thesis for this first section of the book can be summed up by his statement that "when we do take that longer, wider view, we find that Islam was not something that shot up suddenly in Mecca; it is a vast slow growth whose roots lie deep in time and all over the peninsula" (54).

If I may indulge in a bit of metaphorical imagery to close, the Great Mosque of Sanaʿa in Yemen (*Al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr bi-Ṣanʿāʾ*) is an apt emblem of the historical confluences that Smith has attempted to elucidate through narrative. Being one of the oldest mosques in the world, it appears to have been constructed atop the ruins of the Palace of Ghumdan, the residence of the last Ḥimyarite king. This image is appropriately emblematic of the historical picture, revealing the geological sediments upon which Islam was built, and a transectional anatomy of the *Ẓāhir* (outward, manifest) and the *Bāṭin* (inward, hidden). As if to gesture towards this reality, the attic wall of the mosque divulged its manuscript contents during a 1972 restoration project, which turned out to be the oldest Quranic manuscripts to date, and even more striking, palimpsests revealing an erased Quranic text that has since stimulated lively debate still requiring much work to be done. The relationship between Islam, Arabs, and the broader currents of world history call for more attention than ever.

This book is an answer to that call and a welcome contribution to those efforts. Smith's elegant prose and erudition are up to the task of reaching a general audience as well as engaging experts in the fields concerned. It is a first of its kind and stands as an indictment of reductionistic historical dogmas and lazy narratology. Just as Queen Sheba came from the south bearing gifts for Solomon, studies of Ancient Arabia bear gifts for studies of the Ancient Near East and Late Antiquity. But like Sheba, it comes first and foremost "to test [it] with hard questions" (1 Kings 10:1).