

Another interesting insight relates to the production of “Philistine Bichrome” ware outside Philistia. The analysis of pottery from Dan indicates that most of the vessels from the site were not produced in Philistia, but in the vicinity of the site. This may now be added to previous evidence from Dor and Tel en-Nasbeh for the existence of production centers of Aegean-inspired pottery in areas in which there is no evidence for Aegean settlement.

The most significant set of conclusions relates to the LDRP, suggesting that most of these vessels were produced in Philistia, with production centers at Tel Safi, Ashdod, and possibly Ashkelon and Ekron. The high firing temperatures and the specifically selected clays which mainly characterize amphoras and kraters indicate a standardized industry, aimed for export from the coastal production centers to inland markets (p. 203).

Part 5 presents a summary of the book, with a diachronic synthesis of the evolution of decorated pottery in Philistia. Ben-Shlomo argues that during the early Iron I period, the production of Philistine pottery must have been carried out by Philistine potters, yet “the option that traditional Canaanite potters living in the Philistine cities also produced Philistine pottery cannot be altogether dismissed” (p. 207). The continuation of local kiln shapes also supports this notion. The influence of local potting traditions is clearly evident in the “Philistine Bichrome” vessels, which also show Cypriot and Egyptian influence. After the end of the Iron I, the pottery of Philistia is red slipped, reflecting less Aegean-inspired traits and more standardization of form and decoration. Ben-Shlomo suggest that the loss of regional traits seen in the Philistine pottery of the early first millennium B.C.E. is a side effect of other processes of standardization not stemming from Philistia, but relating to the rise of centralized states in Judah and Israel.

While this book will not be the final word in the study of Philistine decorated pottery, it is an important stepping stone in the study of ceramics in Philistia. The crucial role of provenance studies in answering questions concerning ancient society and economy has been already well acknowledged in the archaeology of Israel. However, the analysis and publication of many pottery assemblages still is carried out using typology alone, without any accompanying provenance studies, residue analysis, or study of manufacturing techniques. Unquestionably, the potent combination of typology and provenance studies presented in this book, as well as in Ben-Shlomo’s other recent works (e.g., Ben-Shlomo et al. 2008), will continue to be used to gain better insights into the Philistine migrant society of the Iron I period and its encounters with local populations, with resulting complex processes of cultural transmission and change.

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***Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context*, edited by Ron E. Tappy and P. Kyle McCarter. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008. xii + 140 pp., 26 figures, 1 DVD. Cloth. \$37.50.**

Only in the study of ancient Israel would a 22-letter inscription—and an abecedary at that—generate an entire monograph. And yet that is exactly what the slender volume before us represents. The reason for this is obvious: while the number of inscriptions from the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (especially the latter) dated to the eighth century onward is rather significant, the epigraphic evidence for the tenth century (the period of David and Solomon) remains meager. Accordingly, the discovery of an inscribed bowl from

Tel Zayit in the Judean Shephelah, found in a 10th-century archaeological context, spurred major interest in 2005. The swift publication of the inscription by Ron E. Tappy, P. Kyle McCarter, Marilyn J. Lundberg, and Bruce Zuckerman in this journal in 2006 (*BASOR* 344 [2006]: 5–46) allowed scholars to study the abecedarium in fine fashion. The first two authors apparently saw fit to produce the monograph under review, repeating much of the same information contained in the original *BASOR* article, and with additional contributions by Christopher A. Rollston, Seth L. Sanders, and David M. Carr.

Each of the authors is an expert in his field, and thus one finds full and complete coverage of the topics at hand. The five essays are as follows: Tappy, “Tel Zayit and the Tel Zayit Abecedarium in Their Regional Context” (pp. 1–44); McCarter, “Paleographic Notes on the Tel Zayit Abecedarium” (pp. 45–59); Rollston, “The Phoenician Script of the Tel Zayit Abecedarium and Putative Evidence for Israelite Literacy” (pp. 61–96); Sanders, “Writing and Early Iron Age Israel: Before National Scripts, Beyond Nations and States” (pp. 97–112); and Carr, “The Tel Zayit Abecedarium in (Social) Context” (pp. 113–29).

A special bonus to this volume is the accompanying DVD Digital Pictorial Archive, which provides 56 exquisite color photos of the tell, the findspot, and most importantly, the bowl and its inscription, including, for example, four slightly different images of the sequence of letters *mem* through *šade*, taken by Zuckerman and Lundberg. Some of these photos appear in black-and-white in the book itself, though the color photos in the DVD are naturally to be preferred. (The disk also includes a 57th image, viz., a black-and-white drawing of the site plan, by Tappy, also included in the book on p. 3.)

While reading the essays (especially the first three), I found myself asking over and over again: Do we really need all this information? Does all this information actually stem from the discovery of this simple inscription? Does the unearthing of an abecedarium at Tel Zayit, for example, merit a 36-page essay on the question of literacy in ancient Israel? Obviously, I understand the intense interest in such subjects as (a) how and when writing developed in ancient Israel, (b) the manner in which literacy and statecraft interacted in the 10th century, and (c) how and when and under what circumstances various biblical books may have been composed—and the essays by Sanders and Carr speak to these points with style and clarity—but I kept repeating the above questions nonetheless.

I include here a few specific remarks. The following comment by McCarter (p. 47), regarding the spread of the Phoenician alphabet to speakers and writers of Hebrew, Moabite, Aramaic, etc., is in need of modification:

[D]ependence on the Phoenician development seems to be the only way to explain the inconvenient adoption of a 22-letter alphabet by scribes recording these

inland dialects. This adoption happened not only in the south with the Hebrew script, which managed its 23 consonantal phonemes with 22 graphemes by the expediency of using a single sign for both *šim* and *šin*, but also in the north with the Old Aramaic script, which represented its 26 consonantal phonemes with the same 22 signs.

There is clear evidence, however, that ancient Hebrew possessed 25 phonemes, and that one subdialect possessed 26! I refer to the fact that the letter פ represented both /h/ and /ħ/, while the letter צ represented both /ʕ/ and /ǵ/ (see most importantly Blau 1982, with a convenient summary in Rendsburg 1997). In addition, the Gileadite dialect retained the phoneme /t/ (see Rendsburg 1988a; 1988b). In short, McCarter’s evaluation of the situation requires restatement. Happily, the full set of Hebrew consonantal phonemes is presented by Sanders on p. 102.

More disquieting is the following illustrative comment by Rollston (pp. 63–65):

Much is known about the lexemes and morphemes in Iron Age Northwest Semitic. However, because the inscription from Tel Zayit is an abecedarium, it has no lexemes or morphemes. There is a substantial body of literature focusing on affixes (prefixes, suffixes, infixes) and syntagms in Iron Age Northwest Semitic. However, because the Tel Zayit inscription is an abecedarium, it contains no affixes and no syntagms. Much is also known about the orthography of Iron Age Northwest Semitic inscriptions. However, because the Tel Zayit inscription is an abecedarium, it provides no orthographic data. Of course, because the Tel Zayit inscription is an abecedarium, nothing can be deduced about aspects of morphology, such as the means of pluralizing (for example, nouns, adjectives, verbs), or about the means of determining forms (for example, prepositive article or postpositive article). In sum, although there is much paleographic data in an abecedarium, there is a distinct dearth of linguistic data.

Rollston then proceeds to discuss the individual cases of /d/, /t/, and /d/ in Northwest Semitic, after which he returns with another paragraph (pp. 66–67):

In sum, when working with texts that contain Northwest Semitic lexemes and morphemes, we can make determinations about phonological isoglosses; however, *in an abecedarium there are no lexemes and morphemes* (etc.); therefore, there is no secure basis for discussion of phonological isoglosses. To be sure, we can state that the Tel Zayit Abecedarium is alphabetic Iron Age Northwest Semitic with 22 consonants, but to be able to make this statement is of truly modest usefulness. That is, the data that are the desiderata for making determinations about the linguistic classification of an Iron Age Northwest Semitic language (or

dialect) are simply not present in an abecedar. We need lexemes and morphemes for this task, and we simply do not have them.

Do we really need all this prose to tell us what we already know—or don't know!? To be honest, one feels like screaming from the mountaintop: "This is only an alphabet!"

Having said that, though, one cannot understate the importance of this discovery within the interrelated areas of the history and archaeology of ancient Israel, on the one hand, and biblical studies, on the other. As both Sanders and Carr emphasize, this inscription—limited as it is—offers valuable information concerning the development of writing during the much-debated 10th century. If a lowly outpost in the Judaeen Shephelah attests to writing (limited or otherwise) during the period of David and Solomon, then one may assume, with all due caution, that the capital city of Jerusalem would have possessed, *qal wa-ḥomer*, scribes and priests linked to palace and temple capable of producing (significant) literary and administrative texts. As the readers of this review no doubt are aware, a second 10th-century inscription was unearthed at Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Judaeen hills in 2008. This epigraph contains five lines, and while the text is difficult to read and has only recently been published, those responsible for the *editio princeps* confirm the presence of the words מלך 'king', שפט 'judge', and עבר 'work' (Misgav, Garfinkel, and Ganor 2010). Taken together, the Tel Zayit abecedar, the Khirbet Qeiyafa inscription, and the Gezer calendar (also from the 10th century) demonstrate that writing was well established in 10th-century Israel—certainly sufficiently so for some or many of the works later incorporated into the Hebrew Bible to have been composed at this time. David Carr says it best, perhaps, when he writes, "The discovery of the Tel Zayit Inscription proves just how dangerous it can be to base arguments about early ancient history on *gaps* in the historical record. Therefore, I believe that other scholars and I were ill advised in reading too much into the relative absence of data for writing in the 10th century B.C.E." (p. 125).

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- The final publication of the Persian and Hellenistic pottery from the Joint Expedition to Shechem, a storied project conceived and overseen by G. Ernest Wright from 1956 to 1973, is long awaited and bittersweet. While the site was chosen for the traditional reason of its importance to biblical history, the excavators conceived and carried out an innovative approach to excavation. Wright followed his teacher W. F. Albright in the belief that fills mattered as much as floors and that sherds deserved the same level of scrutiny as whole vessels. As a result, the Shechem excavators pursued a rigorous daily agenda of excavation combined with detailed onsite pottery study, during which they carefully examined and documented all fragments from every soil locus encountered.
- Wright believed that the Shechem Expedition's methodological rigor would allow for thorough ceramic typologies securely anchored to stratigraphic chronology, and he envisioned an ambitious publication series with seven separate volumes treating the site's ceramics, beginning with Chalcolithic/Early Bronze (Strata XXIV–XXIII) and ending with Persian/Hellenistic (Strata V–I). Since there were few serious typological studies of pottery of any period when the Shechem excavations began, such a series would have made a tremendous scholarly contribution. Paul Lapp, one of Wright's graduate students, along with his wife Nancy, took on the challenge of defining the pottery from the Persian and Hellenistic periods, eras which up to that time had been largely ignored by archaeologists. Indeed, the Shechem Hellenistic pottery figured prominently in Paul Lapp's book, *Palestinian Ceramic Chronology, 200 B.C.–A.D. 70*, and that book, published in 1961, became a fundamental resource for archaeologists working at sites throughout Israel and Jordan, validating Wright's belief in the utility of the Shechem team's approach.
- Edward Campbell's meticulous presentation of the site's stratigraphic and architectural remains in Shechem III