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This was my term research paper for a New Kingdom Egypt history class taught by Dr. Greg Mumford, so it is a little lengthy.

Egypt's Interactions with Pastoral Nomads in the Sinai, Negev, and Transjordan

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Egypt from ancient times interacted with peoples and territories beyond its own borders in periods of both wartime and peace. Sometimes the interaction was military in nature involving the conquering of peoples and territories, or through political and cultural influences (such as when establishing authority over vassals and Egyptianizing them), through trade, and sometimes through diplomatic correspondence (such as the Amarna letters) and exchanging gifts with foreign dignitaries. The character of Egypt's interactions with Canaan, particularly in the New Kingdom period (ca. 1550-1070 B.C.), was one of primarily "domination and resistance" as one scholar has phrased it (Hasel 1998: 2). Egypt expanded its empire into Canaan and further north into Syria during the New Kingdom, where at its northerly border it was primarily kept in check by the powerful Hittite empire and also the kingdom of Mitanni.

The southern Levant including the region of Transjordan (hereafter referred to as Palestine) was often milked for its resources by Egypt, some of which it obtained for itself via mining expeditions for copper and turquoise, and others which it obtained as tribute from its vassals (Hasel 1998:100, 115). Egypt's interests in Palestine also lay in its strategic importance as being the major land bridge to the rest of Asia, especially northward toward Syria and Mesopotamia, along the major trade routes. As a result when things got out of order in these regions the Egyptians put down the rebellions without mercy because it jeopardized their interests (Hasel 1998: 91). Early Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaoh Thutmose III claims to have won the loyalty of a coalition of 330 rebellious princes of cities throughout Canaan and Syria, led by the Syrian King of Kadesh, after he defeated them at the Battle of Megiddo in 1457 B.C. Thutmose III thereafter created three topographical lists among the reliefs at Karnak in Egypt of at least 119 cities which he had defeated throughout the Levant at that time. These military victories solidified the Egyptian presence in the Levant at the beginning of the New Kingdom and greatly expanded the Egyptian empire.

There were however some groups that were non-city dwellers and semi-nomads in the midst of and on the fringes of Egypt's Levantine empire that were often hard to control. These groups may generally be described as Bedouin, though in certain locales they took on more specific designations like 'Shasu'. When they stirred up trouble Egypt had little problem engaging them in battle and defeating them but they often were a source of concern for Egypt and its vassals alike. There however were also peaceful relations and sometimes cooperation between these Bedouin and the Egyptians at various times. It is these various interactions that will be considered below and their significance in illuminating the historical background of semi-nomadic peoples in the Negev, Sinai, and Transjordan. It is also the contention of the author that significant numbers of these Bedouin existed in the southern Levant during the Egyptian New Kingdom period and that their identity can be illuminated by Egyptian and Biblical texts as well as the archaeological record.

Large groups of semi-nomads were present in the Transjordan during the second millennium B.C. as can be evidenced by references in Egyptian texts, which will be considered below, and by observing the comparatively small amount of early permanent settlements and cities in that territory when considered in light of settlements in Cisjordan (Canaan), indicating that the population there did not live primarily in fixed settlements. This is especially true to the south of the Wadi Hasa and the Dead Sea in the region of ancient Edom. Some archaeologists such as Steven Rosen have postulated that on the basis of scant evidence for semi-nomadic remains, and especially lack of permanent settlements, that if no remains are found then the region must have been uninhabited (Levy and Holl 2002: 94-95). This has led to various reconsiderations of literary references to people inhabiting these regions in ancient texts, particularly from the Bible, which conclude that nation-states such as Edom did not in fact exist any earlier than the 7th century B.C., when a unified Edomite state and its cities are firmly attested. Therefore some conclude that stories of interactions with 'Edom' as an entity between the 15

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centuries B.C. in the books of Exodus and Numbers (depending on the chronology adopted) are anachronistic. Any nomads admitted to have been in the region at one point or another during that period are also considered as being small in number and unrelated to the later Edomite state.

Without here going into a defense of the biblical narrative it is to be insisted by the author that evidence does indeed exist for an Edomite and semi-nomadic presence in the Transjordan from other sources that occur much earlier than the 7th century B.C. There is also evidence for early interactions between semi-nomadic or tribal peoples in the southern Levant with Egyptians in the 13th-12th centuries B.C. in the Arabah/Jordan rift valley. These attestations go beyond just Edom and the Transjordan and also

apply to the Sinai, Negev, and Northern Arabia yet do not always involve the evidence of nationality or statehood. Though not everything is known at this time about the various aspects how these semi-nomads lived and where they were located, a sizeable body of data can be amassed on the topic and the literature on this subject is ever-growing as more excavations and reports ensue.

Anthropologist Thomas Levy, who has carefully studied the semi-nomadic settlement and travel patterns of Bedouin in the Levant in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age as well as modern Bedouin, argues that with new evidence from recent observations concerning Bedouin tribes that “leave no archaeological fingerprint and yet are documented in both ethnohistorical and historical sources,” we can now be more confident that indications of the presence of semi-nomadic peoples from literary sources in regions that lack explicit archaeological evidence of nomadic settlements can still be considered trustworthy (Levy and Holl 2002: 95-96). The migrations of these peoples as pastoral semi-nomads were most likely seasonal and they did not stay fixed in one place, therefore their remains are often difficult to trace. Levy however cites several possible factors which may contribute to missing finds of actual remains including not knowing what to look for and lack of systematic surveys, especially in Edom, which lead to “unrepresentative sampling of the archaeological record” (Levy and Holl 2002: 96). With these considerations in mind the author will discuss some actual remains which have been found which may significantly contribute to the evidence for semi-nomadic peoples in the southern Levant, as well as references from several ancient literary sources, in order to arrive at a more complete view of what can be known of these peoples.

The earliest references to the Transjordan are found in the Egyptian execration texts of the 19th century B.C., which were primarily written on pottery sherds. In the Mirgissa (c. 1870 B.C.) and Berlin (c. 1850 B.C.) series of execration texts the region of ‘Shutu’ is mentioned as being in Transjordan with several local rulers in succession mentioned by name. The possibility of the name Shutu being related to the biblical “sons of Sheth” (Numbers 24:17) as a synonym for Moab has been raised with some plausibility (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992: 21). The Brussels execration texts (c. 1800 B.C.) as well as the ancient Egyptian story of Sinuhe (c. 1900 B.C.) also mention the region of ‘Kushu’ in Transjordan. Interestingly, Sinuhe in the story meets a leader from the land of Kushu named Ya’ush, whose name is the same as one of the sons of Esau in the Bible (Genesis 36:5, 14) and may reflect a name that was common in Transjordan (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992: 21).

The biblical text may also be of some help in identifying this ‘Kushu’ when it mentions the “tents of Cushan [or Kushan]” in parallel to “the tent curtains of the land of Midian” (Habakkuk 3:7), where Midian is generally understood as being in northwestern Arabia below Edom, which suggests that Kushan [a plausible cognate of ‘Kushu’] and Midian were located near or adjacent to one another (and thus that Kushan is to be understood as the region of Edom). The semi-nomadic pastoralist, and probably tribal, population of the peoples in this region of Kushu is also hinted at by the Egyptian execration texts in that, “we find ‘chiefs’ (*wrw*) of clans (*whywt*) of Kushu (later Edom), compared with ‘rulers’ (

hq3w

) of Shutu" (Bienkowski in Bienkowski 1992: 3). The story of Sinuhe and the execration texts show an early Egyptian awareness of these peoples in Transjordan, in the lands of Shutu and Kushu, and may even suggest contact with them around that time. Some contact with Egypt in Transjordan during this early time period may also be seen through cultural and material contributions such as one example of a box of Egyptian form and style, inlaid with ivory, which was found in Pella (south of the Sea of Galilee) dating from the Middle Bronze Age (Kitchen in Bienkowski: 1992: 23).

Later, at the beginning of the New Kingdom in Egypt, from the time of Thutmose III (ruled 1479–1425 B.C.) the itinerary on the topographical lists at Karnak of his campaigns in Palestine includes, according to Egyptologist Donald Redford, cities in the Transjordan as well as a possible mention of Dibon (*Tpn*) which later became Moab's capital city (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992: 25). Though the etymological interpretations of the itinerary data from the topographical list is somewhat scanty the Transjordan route seems to be the best suggestion so far and it would give "a clear route through Jordan from south Syria to the edges of Edom c. 1450 BC, in the Late Bronze Age" (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992: 25). Another topographical list inscribed on Amenhotep III's (1386-1349 B.C.) temple at Soleb in Nubia mentions a number of cities and regions conquered during campaigns, including six "lands of the Shasu," referring to a people who are a nomadic group mentioned many times in association with the Transjordan, Sinai, and the Negev.

The Shasu, mentioned only in Egyptian texts, were semi-nomadic Bedouin who lived in tents and raised small cattle (Weippert in Cross 1979: 32). Among several Egyptian texts the Shasu are clearly attested all the way from North Sinai and the Negev well into Syria up to Kadesh, often wandering on the fringes of territories although sometimes also seen within or near cities (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992:26; cf. Bienkowski and Millard 2000: 265). During the reign of Amenhotep II (1427-1421 B.C.), the son of Thutmose III, he reportedly captured a large number of Shasu from Palestine and some Apiru nomads as well. From Amenhotep II's second campaign the tally on the list of captives reads, "3600 Apiru, 15,200 Shasu" (Hoffmeier 1996:113). We can infer from this that the Shasu were not a small nomadic group, and that they had a significant presence in southern Palestine despite being spread out across many regions. References to the Shasu in texts, inscriptions, and reliefs continue to reoccur up until nearly the end of the New Kingdom.

Many Shasu were considered bandits, scoundrels, and societal outcasts by the Egyptians and often came into military contact with them in the Sinai, Negev, and central Canaanite hill country (Bienkowski and Millard 2000: 265). As possible societal outcasts they, like other semi-nomadic groups such as the Apiru (or Habiru), may possibly be compared to the groups of discontented citizens of Israel mentioned in the Bible which followed David into the wilderness in order to

form a loose confederation headed by an appointed leader. The relevant passage reads, "Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them" (1 Samuel 22:2). In other contexts the Shasu seem to be more tribal in description, perhaps having a common ethnicity and identity.

One of the lands mentioned on the Soleb list of Amenhotep III is *sr'r* with a probable reading of Seir (an ancient reference to Edom), therefore reading "Shasu of Seir", which is an interpretation accepted by many scholars (Kitchen in Beinkowski 1992: 26; Weinfeld in Miller, Hanson, and McBride 1987: 304). Even more interesting in the Soleb list, and a much discussed reference, is the reading

t3 šsw yhw

("Yhw in the land of the Shasu") concerning which Raphael Giveon suggested that the toponym *Yhw*

is the tetragrammaton of the God of Israel, Yahweh ("Le nom est le tétragramme"; Giveon 1971: 26). This is a fascinating suggestion because of the biblical references to Israel's contact with people from the Transjordan region, namely Midian, who knew the name of Yahweh (Exodus 3:1; 18:1, 10-11). This possible connection is accepted by many scholars and may show a worship of Yahweh and contact between Israel and Midian at an early period. This also would encompass Midianites under the broad Egyptian term 'Shasu' as Bedouin if they can be associated with

t3 šsw yhw

, although scholars understand and interpret this connection and its significance in many different ways. Moshe Weinfeld has suggested that

Yhw

"indicates here the name of the region where the deity was worshipped, or it may indicate the name of the tribes that call themselves after this deity" (Weinfeld in Miller, Hanson, and McBride 1987:304). Still it must be said that these Shasu regions have not been located with absolute certainty as of yet.

From the reign of Ramesses II (c. 1279-1213 B.C.) onward the references to Transjordan increase significantly and the first real explicit references to Moab and Seir appear (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992: 26). Ramesses II described himself as one "who plunders the mountain of Seir with his valiant arm" with parallel mentions to Shasu in context. Ramesses II is known to have campaigned in Transjordan, including in Moab and Seir, and obviously considered it significant enough to raid or conquer the territory (Kitchen in Bienkowski 1992: 27). The mention of Moab by Ramesses II is taken to be evidence of a state at that time (Strange in Adams 2008: 285). Some of the motives for Ramesside involvement around this region will be mentioned below.

The first reference to 'Edom' as an entity (as opposed to the more ancient 'Seir'), along with clear mentions of the Shasu coming from that region, comes from the time of Ramesses II's son and successor Merenptah around 1206 B.C. A much quoted passage from Papyrus Anastasi VI that took place in the eighth year of Merenptah reads, "We have finished with allowing the Shasu clansfolk of Edom to pass the fort of Merenptah that is in Succoth ['Tjeku'], to the pools (brkt) of Pi-Atum of Merenptah that (is/are) in Succoth, to keep them alive and to keep alive their livestock" (Gardiner in Beinkowski 1992: 27). This shows a peacetime relationship between the Egyptians and the Shasu Bedouin who are coming down to Egypt from Edom to find water and pasturage for their flocks during some difficult circumstance, probably in this case drought or famine. This is similar to the biblical story of Jacob sending his sons to Egypt during a time of famine saying, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die" (Genesis 42:2). The parallels between the two texts of it being a matter of life and death are clear.

A final consideration of the references made to Shasu, who appear to have been the dominant nomadic group mentioned in the Egyptian texts, appears under Ramesses III (c. 1184-1153 B.C.) who records about himself in Papyrus Harris I, "I destroyed the Seirites, the clans of the Shasu, I pillaged their tents, with their people, their property, and their livestock likewise, without limit..." (Erichsen in Beinkowski 1992:27). This again clearly ties the Shasu to the Transjordanian area of Edom, still here referred to as Seir. This reference under Ramesses III may be the last significant reference to the Shasu in the New Kingdom before Egypt's Levantine empire collapsed and receded. It has been noted by Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen that this raid on Seir by Ramesses III (and the prior raid under Ramesses II) may have been related to the interests and concerns of the Egyptian's copper mining expeditions at Timna, near the Red Sea, which will be discussed further below (Kitchen in Beinkowski 1992:27).

Before we move on however, can we better identify these semi-nomadic groups mentioned above with any more specificity than what the Egyptian texts provide us? It is to be suggested that references in Biblical texts and archaeological material discovered in the Sinai, Negev, and Transjordan may shed some further light on the identity of these peoples. Now, before the archaeological evidence is looked at, it should be considered at this point whether a common identity can be discerned for the semi-nomadic pastoralists in Transjordan by means of any political structure. It is often thought that there were no united kingdoms or nations such as Moab or Edom formed among the peoples in Transjordan until well into the Iron Age, but that any inhabitants in those regions prior to that time were simply loosely coupled semi-nomadic tribes. Kenneth Kitchen however gives an argument for the possibility of a "tented kingdom" among these peoples, as he specifically refers to Edom as being such a kingdom consisting "mainly of pastoralists" (Kitchen 2003:212).

Kitchen cites evidence from the Assyrian king list that mentions "17 kings who lived in tents" in

the early second millennium B.C. who were “in effect sheikhs of the steppe,” and also cites a phenomenon around the same time in Babylonia of non-sedentary rulers acting along side city-based rulers (Kitchen 2003:196; Kitchen in Beinkowski 1992: 21, 23). He even adduces evidence from the small “agro-pastoral communities” making up the Egyptian state in the First and Second Dynasties to make the case that “mass urban sites” and monumental structures are not required for the presence and existence of a state (Kitchen 2003:196). Ernst Knauf admits that the formation of tribal states is “a phenomenon well attested in Near Eastern history from at least the 2nd millennium BC to the present” and even calls Edom such a tribal state, and yet he still presumes Edom’s formation as a state to be dated to the 7th century BC (Knauf in Beinkowski 1992: 52; cf. Kitchen 2003: 547, fn.105). Other scholars also, while acknowledging the presence of early tribal peoples in Transjordan, do not believe them to have consisted of united “tribal kingdoms” before the Iron Age (Hasel 1998:162). It is difficult to prove whether such states existed either way from the existing archaeological evidence other than through inferences in Egyptian literary texts and the biblical records, such as the Edomite king list in Genesis 36:31-39 and references to kings in Edom and Moab (Numbers 20:14; 21:26). However it is precisely the notion that a people cannot have a king or kingdom without sedentarization and the presence of cities which Kitchen convincingly disputes (Kitchen 2003:196-197) and says that it is “unreliable as negative evidence” to cite semi-nomadic pastoralism as a reason for precluding state formation (Kitchen in Beinkowski 1992: 23).

There is one archaeological find however from the region of Moab which may provide evidence of a king ruling there in the 12th century BC which supplements Ramesses II’s mention of Moab. This evidence comes from the Balu’a Stele which depicts a king or prince standing between two deities in typical Egyptian fashion and iconography (in Beinkowski 1992: Dearman, 71; Kitchen, 29; and Miller, 78). Interestingly enough it has been noted that the appearance and headdress of the king is similar to the depiction of Shasu peoples common in Egyptian reliefs (in Beinkowski 1992: Mattingly, 60; and Miller, 78; cf. Weippert in Cross 1979: 32). This is considered an important piece of evidence by many scholars for determining the early origins of Moab and shows a possible Shasu nomad component.

Now, to consider the regions further south of Moab, including Edom, Midian, and the Negev, the reasons that the Ramesside Pharaohs may have been interested in these areas, which consequently propelled them to conquer the territory of Edom/Seir and control trade routes in the area west of the Arabah, should be explored. Egypt was often wont to exploit natural resources in the Sinai and Negev, including the Arabah, and therefore would send mining expeditions to such locations as Serabit el-Khadim, in the Sinai, and Timna, in the Arabah/Jordan rift valley (Rothenberg 1972: 14; Jasmin in Beinkowski and Galor 2006: 144-145). This seems to have been an especially pressing need during the Egyptian’s wars with the Hittites due to Cyprus, the largest copper exporter in the Ancient Near East, becoming solely loyal to the Hittites (Mumford: per. com.). The site of Timna in the southern Negev became a major copper source for the Egyptians (though not on the scale of Cyprus) in order to obtain more of the precious resource, and the nearby territory of Seir was possibly conquered to

discourage any interference with the mining activities from the local population.

It is in fact however while at the copper mines of Timna that the Egyptians came into contact with the indigenous population, who worked alongside them and were possibly forced to assist the Egyptians with their mining efforts. In the Late Bronze Age Timna laid along the copper trade route going through the Wadi Arabah, in the south, that eventually connected in the northern part of the Negev with Tel Masos (where copper metallurgical installations have been found), which also participated in the copper trade as a buffer to the rest of Canaan (Jasmin in Beinkowski and Galor 2006: 145). This trade enterprise appears to have been another avenue through which local Bedouin tribes interacted with Egypt because, "Tel Masos was also an interface site for the nomads in control of this trade: the meeting place between nomadic groups living in the semi-arid Negev and the Wadi Arabah, on the one hand, and the sedentary inhabitants of the Mediterranean zone to the north, on the other" (Jasmin in Beinkowski and Galor 2006: 145). This indicates a possible participation of the nomadic Bedouin in this area in Egyptian mining and trade efforts, whether willingly in doing business with them or forcibly. Also at the site of Timna there are clear archaeological attestations to the presence of indigenous peoples there with three distinct forms of pottery that have been discovered, indicating at least two separate indigenous groups at the copper mines (Rothenberg 1972: 63, 116-117, 162; Levy, Adams, and Shafiq 1999: 304).

Beno Rothenberg sought to identify these two groups through a reasonable, though cautioned, association with the Midianites and Amalekites, who are presumed to have lived in the regions on either side of the Arabah near Timna (Rothenberg 1972: 63, 111, 151). At Timna a specific type of decorative bichrome pottery has been identified as being of North Arabian origin and dates to the 13th-12th centuries B.C (Rothenberg 1972: 162; Jasmin in Beinkowski and Galor 2006: 146). This pottery which was discovered during excavations of Timna by Beno Rothenberg was dubbed 'Midianite ware' in keeping with the association of the land of Midian in the Bible with the territory of northwestern Arabia, to the east of the Red Sea. It more recently has been called 'Qurayya ware' due to identifications of a large source of the pottery being from the North Arabian city of Qurayya, which lies along the ancient Arabian incense trade route.

It is also this latter connection which possibly holds a second key to Egypt's interests in the area: the Arabian incense trade. Egypt was a major consumer of incense and in the past had gone as far as Punt, south of Egypt, to obtain it. A connection between Egyptian trade interests and the indigenous peoples in the southern Levant and Transjordan, possibly in dealing with goods originating from Arab territories, may be seen in that the same bichrome 'Midianite ware' pottery from Qurayya in Arabia has been found among many sites along the copper and incense trade routes in southeastern Palestine (moving north) including the island Jezirat Farun, Timna, Khirbet en-Nahas in Edom, Tel Masos, and Tell el-Farah South (Jasmin in Beinkowski and Galor 2006: 146; Levy, Adams, Najjar, *et al.* 2004: 875). The Arabs, or proposed

'Midianites', possibly participated in the distribution of this pottery as well as incense around the 13th-12th centuries B.C., the pottery indicating cross-cultural contact. It also appears that local Bedouin groups (near the Arabah), possibly Amalekites or Midianites, having some connection to this distribution of materials, had significant contact with Egypt at Timna and worked alongside them there. Another association Rothenberg makes concerning a depiction of a local hunt found on a rock engraving at the site of Timnah, involving Egyptians and the indigenous people, involves the suggestion that the indigenous people depicted there may be Shasu, which might further be identified as "perhaps here the Midianites, inhabitants of the southern Transjordan and the Hedjaz" (Rothenberg 1972: 124).

Rothenberg also identified another type of pottery at Timna that occurs at various other sites throughout the Negev, thus dubbed 'Negebite ware', and associated it with the Amalekites (Rothenberg 1972: 63, 117). It is possible that the Biblical references to the Amalekites inhabiting the Negev referred to another semi-nomadic group in the Negev (possibly also interacting at Tel Masos), in which they might have also fallen under the general Bedouin designation of 'Shasu' in Egyptian texts which mention rebellious Shasu in the Sinai/Negev region that were occasionally put down. This association is not certain but it is as good as any given our present data about peoples in the Sinai/Negev region. In summary, due to archaeological excavations at Timna we can perhaps discern Egyptian contact with the Midianites, to the south, and Amalekites, to the north, supported by some archaeological correlatives in connection with Egyptian mining and trade interests along the Arabah.

As a final archaeological consideration Edom will be looked at to discern any significant pre-7th century B.C. remains of the indigenous people. Edom's early inhabitants were increasingly identified with the Shasu as has been seen in the Egyptian texts covered above, and more recently some evidence may have come to light that actually attests these nomads in the archaeological record. Anthropologist Thomas Levy believes that he and fellow excavators have possibly located the first archaeological evidence of the Shasu, which were attested in the aforementioned Egyptian records, dating to the early Iron Age in Transjordan. In the western section of the Faynan district of what was ancient Edom, not far from Khirbet en-Nahas (another Iron Age site) a cemetery in the area dubbed Wadi Fidan 40 revealed 62 tombs with 87 human skeletons discovered amongst them (Levy, Adams, Shafiq 1999: 296).

Although there were not many burial goods found among the graves some copper rings, an iron bracelet, pomegranates, wooden bowls, and a curious Middle Bronze IIB Hyksos style scarab (no doubt passed down) were found in certain graves (Levy, Adams, Shafiq 1999: 299, 301-302). Dating based on a carbon sample taken from one of the pomegranates yielded a calibrated age at approximately 925 B.C., establishing it as one of the few early Iron Age sites in the regions of Edom. The most conspicuous items absent from the burial grounds however

were pottery. This has led to the consideration that this was a burial ground for a nomadic people around that region.

Levy *et al.* state in conclusion to their finds, "The circular character of the Wadi Fidan 40 tombs, the absence of pottery and other indications of a settled population, may be evidence that the individuals interred in the cemetery were part of a mobile, pastoralist society" (Levy, Adams, Shafiq 1999: 306). Citing references from Egyptian texts mentioned above from the time of Merenptah and Ramesses III tying the Shasu to the region of Seir in the early Iron Age Levy *et al.*

surmise that "it is possible this population may be some archaeological evidence of the Shasu known from the Egyptian historical records" (Levy, Adams, Shafiq 1999: 306). This seems to be a reasonable association and correlates well with what we know of this area in the early Iron Age, although certainly more contributions from that site and others in the Faynan district dating to the Iron Age are certainly welcome and are still being investigated. Finally, with this consideration of evidence of peoples in Edom well before the 7th

century they state in summary, "While archaeological evidence supports the crystallization of the 'Kingdom of Edom' in the seventh century BC, this process was probably well underway several hundred years earlier" (Levy, Adams, Shafiq 1999: 305). I believe that with these considerations there can be a reasonable suggestion of an Edomite 'tented kingdom' in the early Iron Age.

To summarize the evidence presented in this paper it is clear from Egyptian records that a sizeable population of semi-nomadic pastoralists existed in the southern Levant, and especially in the Transjordan and Negev, in the second millennium B.C. Egypt came into contact with these peoples at various time and in different circumstances, sometimes through conquest of their territories, sometimes in contexts of resource extraction such as at Timnah, in interactions involving trade, and other times a peaceful interaction with these Bedouin such as the Shasu that came to Egypt in seek of water for their flocks. As has also been demonstrated Biblical texts and archaeological evidence helps to clarify this picture somewhat and allow us to come to a closer idea of the identity, culture, and time periods of these various groups. It is tentatively possible to identify the presence of Midianites and Amalekites from archaeological remains at Timnah, and Shasu with remains at Wadi Fidan 40, as well as some early evidence from Moab of a ruler in the 12th century B.C. which supplements Egyptian records. Egypt's interactions with these peoples that were certainly present during the New Kingdom were often motivated by seeking resources, and incidentally in their quest to do this they have left traces of peoples about which little is otherwise known about them. Archaeology is now at the frontier of this progressive quest to discover more about these peoples and hopefully in the future will reveal more about the interactions of the nomads in the southern Levant with the surrounding nations and their impact on the history of the Ancient Near East.

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