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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BORDERLANDS
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARAM IN THE IRON I–II
(CA. 1150–750 BCE)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

by

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this study is the cultural and historical processes which occurred in northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria in the Iron I and the early part of the Iron II (ca. 1150–750 BCE). During the early first millennium BCE, these territories were fertile ground for military conflicts between Israel and Aram-Damascus, experienced rapid shifts in political control, and were home to numerous indigenous communities that faded from the scene without leaving any historical documentation behind. No comprehensive attempt to sketch the settlement history and material culture of these regions has hitherto been conducted, and therefore their distinct culture and history often ignored by scholars, or alternately, embedded within the political history of the elites of the Damascus Oasis (“el-Ghouta”) and the Samaria Highlands.

Three periods in the history of northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria are treated in this study: (1) before the emergence of Israel and Aram-Damascus, the mid-12th–10th centuries BCE; (2) throughout the initial encounters between the locals and the new foreign rulers of the territorial kingdoms in the late 10th and early 9th centuries BCE; and (3) during the political transformations that characterized these regions in the late 9th–8th centuries BCE. Its main goal is to provide a comprehensive description of the archaeology of the local communities during each one of these stages and subsequently to attain an “internal perspective” of the events and processes that befell the territories in question before and after the rise of the territorial kingdoms. Most of the scholars who treated the expansion of Israel and Aram-Damascus to northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria, generally describe the locals as passive participants in the process, or as belonging to the same social milieu as the elites of the Samaria Highlands. However, this view was established—whether directly or indirectly—on an uncritical reading of biblical narratives that had been committed to writing hundreds of years after the events they

described and from an obviously Judahite perspective. At best, these texts contained some lines of north-Israelite ideology, but they too cannot be taken for representing the local culture.

The research questions of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. What did the socio-political organization of the indigenous communities in the research area look like before the emergence of Israel and Aram-Damascus?
2. Which cultural and historical processes facilitated the political supremacy of Israel and Aram-Damascus over local communities of the borderlands?
3. What happened in the borderlands when the political interests of the territorial kingdoms intersected, or when historical circumstances precipitated the political superiority of one of them vis-à-vis the weakening of the other?

Previous studies, which endeavored to answer similar questions, were often established on a very limited archaeological database. Even in the case of regions that are known to be under-explored (e.g., the Hauran), the limited data have hardly been summarized in any comprehensive or critical fashion; this seems to constitute a significant obstacle to the understanding of the local societies. Consequently, at the core of this study I decided to present previously unpublished data from the Tel Aviv University excavations of Tel Hadar, a multi-layered site on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (Section B), to compile a catalog of all the known Iron Age sites in the research area (Section C), and to highlight important elements of the material culture of excavated sites (Section D). Following the presentation of this database, I discuss the cultural and historical processes that occurred in the borderlands between Israel and Aram (Section E).

Excavations at Tel Hadar as a Case-Study for a Community between Israel and Aram

The first part of the study includes a presentation of previously unpublished data from the Tel Aviv University excavations at Tel Hadar, a small 2.5 hectares tell-site on the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee (for the history of research, see Chapter 6). The excavations of the site revealed a detailed stratigraphic sequence dated from the Bronze and Iron Ages (Chapter 7), which demonstrated that settlement discontinuity in architecture was frequent (Table 1).

A similar picture emerged from the meticulous analysis of the ceramic assemblages revealed at the site (Chapter 8) which illustrated its fragmented settlement history (Table 2). Moreover, the analysis showed that the main periods of activity at Tel Hadar are mostly parallel to periods of low settlement activity at Hazor (e.g., in the Iron I). However, it is clear that the downfall(s) of Hazor cannot be the only factor that encouraged the settlement of this community, as Strata V and IV of Tel Hadar were seemingly built nearly 200 years after the destruction of Stratum XIII at Hazor. It is possible, then, that the resettlement of the site was influenced by geopolitical processes which occurred in southwestern Syria. As for the Iron II phases, it is now clear that the site was repopulated only towards the end of the period and that its reoccupation was short, as evidenced by complete vessels found on Stratum III floors. The following phase had a brief lifespan as well and probably represents people who attempted to rebuild the settlement. In the preliminary publications, the final abandonment of the site was dated to the late 8th century BCE, due to its association with Tiglath pileser III's campaigns. The ceramic analysis, nonetheless, suggests that Tel Hadar, and perhaps other nearby sites, were abandoned earlier.

In Chapter 9, I bring preliminary observations on selected finds from the Tel Hadar excavations (e.g., stone items, terracotta figurines, glyptic) that contribute to the understanding of additional aspects of daily life in the ancient settlement, including an unpublished Aramaic inscription.

TABLE 1: GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY OF TEL HADAR

Area AS	Area AN	Area B	General Stratum	Ceramic Phase	Remarks
AS-1	AN-1	B-1	-	Ottoman Period	Cemetery
AS-2a	###? AN-2	B-2a	### II/I	Early Iron IIB?	A substantial change in the layout of the residential quarter in Area AN; possible desertion of the residential quarter in Area AS; construction of domestic units above the “inner fortification”; re-use of the “outer fortification” wall; partial destruction/rapid abandonment.
AS-2b	### AN-3	### B-2b B-3	### III	Final Iron IIA	Renewal of activity at the site; construction of residential quarters in Areas AN, AS and B; construction of the “outer fortification wall”; re-use of the “inner-fortification wall”; partial destruction/rapid abandonment.
AS-3	### AN-4	B-4	### IV	Late Iron I	Construction of a “public quarter” in Area AN; ash layers and installations in Areas AS and B; reuse of the “inner fortification wall”; destruction.
Unexcavated	AN-5	Gap	V		Renewal of activity at the site; construction of silos and isolated domestic remains in Areas AN; re-use of the “inner fortification wall.”
	### AN-6	### B-5	### VI	LB I (probably beginning in the MB III)	Foundation of the site; construction of the “inner fortification wall” and the “round tower” in Area B; accumulation with restorable vessels in Area AN; destruction.

TABLE 2: STRATIGRAPHIE COMPARÉE OF IRON AGE SITES IN NORTHEASTERN ISRAEL

Stratum	Ceramic Phase	Tel Kinneret	Et-Tell	‘En Gev	Hazor	Tel Rehov	Megiddo
Gap	Iron IIC	I	Gap	Gap	Gap	II?	III
II/I	Early Iron IIB?	II	V	MII?/KII	IV V VI VII	III	IVA
		III					
III	Final Iron IIA	IV (Fritz’s excavations)					
Gap	Late Iron IIA	Gap	Gap	Gap	IX X	V	VA–IVB/Q-4 Q-5
	Early Iron IIA						
IV	Late Iron I	IV (Münger <i>et al.</i> ’s excavations) V	VI	MV?/KIV	Gap	VI	VB
V	Late Iron I	VI	+	-	XII/XI Gap XIII XIV XV XVI	D-6 D-7 D-8 D-9 D-10 D-11 None	VIB VIIA VIIB VIII IX X XI
Gap	Early Iron I	Gap					
	LB III						
	LB IIB						
	LB IIA						
	LB IB						
VI	LB IA MB III	VII					

The Settlement History of Northeastern Israel and Southwestern Syria in the Iron Age

Following the analysis of the material culture of a local community, I reviewed archaeological data concerning the settlement history of northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria in the Iron Age. In order to systematically organize the data, I compiled a catalog of all the surveyed and excavated Iron Age sites in the research area (Chapter 10). More than 300 sites are included in this catalog, and these provide substantial and quantifiable data for discussing the synchronic

and diachronic patterns of settlement activity in the regions under discussion. Chapters 11–16 are dedicated, then, to a detailed review of the archaeology of six regions that included in the borderlands between Israel and Aram (the Lebanese Beqa‘, the Hula Valley and the Korazim Plateau, the area around the Sea of Galilee, the Golan Heights, the Hauran, and the Irbid Plateau). In addition to the results of field surveys and excavations, I also presented and discussed the short-lived radiocarbon results published from the research area (Chapter 17).

The Material Culture of Northeastern Israel and Southwestern Syria in the Iron Age

Several chapters in the study focused on selected aspects of the local material culture (architecture, monumental art, and inscriptions). Chapter 18 illuminates several cultural, political, and social aspects of life in urban centers located in the research area. It is clear that the paucity of monumental structures in the regions under discussion hindered in-depth recognition of the enduring changes that occurred in the political and religious institutions of the discussed regions. To-date, no such building is known from the Iron I, but considering that massive fortifications did exist in this period (e.g., Tel Kinneret and Tel Hadar), it is reasonable to believe that monumental structures existed as well but have not yet been found. Similarly, it may be assumed that such a building existed at late Iron IIA Hazor (especially in light of the exposure of elaborate buildings in residential quarters, e.g., Buildings 8158 and 9151), but its exact location is unknown.

In regard of the later stages of the Iron II, it is apparent now that all the three monumental structures known to us (Bamah B at Tel Dan, Citadel 3090 at Hazor, and the “Bit-Hilani” at et-Tell) were erected at about the same time, towards the end of the Iron IIA or the very beginning of the Iron IIB and maintained in use with very little changes until the Assyrian campaigns against Israel and Aram-Damascus in 732 BCE. It appears that the construction of most of these monuments may have been stimulated by the Damascene authorities, but their actual

residents were local rulers who maintained their control during the early 8th century BCE as well, when Israel reimposed its political control over the region.

A review of the limited corpus of monumental artwork found in the research area and nearby regions (Chapter 19) portrays for the remoteness of the local culture from the one that prevailed in the Neo-Hittite/Luwian kingdoms of northern Syria. Such items were abundant in urban centers located in these regions, even in extra-mural neighborhoods. In addition, the individual expressions of monumental artwork in the research area and its vicinity support the low familiarity of the local artists with the production of monumental artwork (e.g., the Tell eṣ-Ṣalahiyeh Orthostat) or reveal the impact of nearby cultures (e.g., the Damascus orthostat, which was influenced from the Phoenician artistic traditions). It seems, therefore, that the local populations favored other types of monumentality, such as the figurative stelae (i.e., the moon/storm-god stelae). Some northern impact (e.g., Gaziantep stele) on these artworks should be considered as well. In certain cases, some similarities can be drawn between the monumental artwork found in the research area and the ones found in the Kingdom of Israel (e.g., volute capitals), but even in this case, the local features are clearly visible.

The distribution of the non-monumental inscriptions in the borderlands between Israel and Aram-Damascus (Chapter 20) showed that in the first development stages of the territorial kingdoms of the southern Levant, literacy among aristocrats (i.e., outside of the king's court) was limited to the core areas of the kingdoms (e.g., Beth-shean Valley) and did not diffuse into remote strongholds (e.g., Hazor). In this case, the absence of such items from Samaria—the capital—is indeed odd, but may derive from the chaotic nature of the excavations carried out at the site in the early 20th century. Evidence of literacy in the research area can be discerned only from the end of the 9th century BCE (e.g., Tel Dan, Hazor, Tel Kinneret, et-Tell, Tel Hadar, and Tel 'En Gev), a trend that is correlated with the expansion of the political control

of Aram-Damascus during the reign of Hazael. He was also responsible for the erection of one of the sole monumental inscriptions found in the southern Levant. As the royal inscription probably served as a symbol of the Damascene control over the Hula Valley, it is hardly surprising that shortly after the re-expansion of Israel into this region the stele was removed from its original location (the canopied structure in the gate complex?) and smashed. Parts of it may have rolled down, probably intentionally, to the residential quarter built next to the city gate and been integrated later within the walls of new houses.

Between Israel and Aram: Cultural and Historical Perspectives on their Borderlands

The final section in the study summarized the data and put it in a cultural and historical context. In Chapter 21, the contribution of the Tel Aviv University excavations at Tel Hadar to the study of the settlement history and material culture of the single community located in the borderlands between Israel and Aram is examined. A review of functional, and cultural aspects of the material culture at Tel Hadar revealed a prosperous community whose residents maintained cultural interactions with nearby settlements, mostly located on the eastern shore of Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights, but also with the Hauran. In the west, the residents of Tel Hadar interacted mainly with Tel Kinneret, which may constitute the gateway of the former to the Hula Valley and the Upper Galilee (and beyond), as shown by petrographic studies. Nevertheless, there are still many differences between the material culture of Tel Hadar and that of other communities in the same regions during both the Iron I and Iron IIA. For instance, in contrast to the situation in Tel Kinneret, biconical amphorae were certainly not used for cooking purposes at Tel Hadar. In addition, kraters with grooved decoration are seemingly found in substantial quantities only to the east of the Jordan Valley, with only a few examples found in other sites in the southern Levant.

In Chapter 22, I bring a comprehensive analysis of diachronic and synchronic settlement patterns in northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. This examination turned out to be productive in two main aspects: (1) illustrating concentrations of sites that may be equated with socio-political entities (as is the case of the settlements of the Land of ‘Amqi in the Lebanese Beqa’); and (2) demonstrating demographic balance in the size of the population (number of people and families) in the discussed regions in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Based on these observations, it seems possible to conclude that affiliating the diverse population with two social groups that allegedly crystalized at the end of the second millennium BCE (i.e., Aramaeans and Israelites) is unreasonable. In reality, on the long-term—before and after the emergence of Israel and Aram-Damascus—the settlement of northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria was fragmented but resilient.

Chapter 23 outlines the contribution of the archaeological evidence for understanding the historical processes which took place in the borderlands between Israel and Aram in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages (Table 3). My analysis suggests that Late Bronze Age destructions in northeastern Israel and southwestern Syria (e.g., Stratum XIII at Hazor) were seemingly more intense than those in the south (e.g., Stratum VIIB at Megiddo) and they had long-term effects. Some entities seem to have survived the wave of destructions (e.g., the sites of the Land of ‘Amqi in the Lebanese Beqa’ or Tel Abel Beth Maacah and Tel Dan in the Hula Valley), and others were newly established (e.g., the settlements around the Sea of Galilee). The destruction of the late Iron I settlements in the southern Levant was probably a gradual, multifaceted process. The elites of the Damascus Oasis and the Samaria Highlands took advantage of the situation and changed the political and social landscape of the borderlands significantly. In terms of archaeology, the first visible signs for the involvement of elite groups from these regions are the establishment of fortified strongholds in the Hula Valley (Hazor) and the Irbid Plateau (Tell er-Rumeith) in the late 10th/early 9th century BCE. Both settlements experienced

partial destruction, but were quickly rebuilt. These destructions may suggest tension with local groups rather than conflicts between the more powerful territorial kingdoms.

Our ability to date strata to the second half of the 9th century BCE allows a better understanding of the impact of Hazael's reign on the borderlands. It appears that the indirect Damascene rule over these regions was mostly positive, contributed to the development of existing settlements and even encouraged the emergence of local polities. Also the impact of the north-Israelite expansion to the region during the days of Joash and Jeroboam II can be discerned in the material culture. Among the actions that can be attributed to these kings are the destruction of the Kingdom of Geshur (e.g., Stratum III at Tel Hadar) and the renovation of the royal cities at Tel Dan (Stratum II) and Hazor (Strata VII–V). Not enough data to determine their activity in the Lebanese Beqa' is currently available, and the evidence in the Irbid Plateau (e.g., Stratum VIIB at Tell er-Rumeith) could be interpreted in more than one way.

Conclusions

My main conclusions can be summarized in the following points: (1) the formation of the borderlands between Israel and Aram was a gradual process that relied on the weak political structure of these regions after the destruction of the late Iron I entities; (2) it is clear now that Hazael's reign was a crucial era in the history of the borderlands, most likely due to his positive policy towards the local populations; (3) during the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II, Israel re-expanded to the far north. Based on the archaeological evidence, it appears that the policy of these kings towards the local political institutions was diverse; (4) the study of the finds from Tel Hadar and other nearby sites suggests that the material culture of Israel and Aram-Damascus seems to belong to the same cultural milieu, and thus, only rarely were the political transformations in the borderlands expressed in the material culture; and (5) it seems that the majority of the local population, living in the borderlands, did not necessarily acknowledge

their location on the edge of the political rule of the Israelite and Damascene elites and maintained their lifestyle regardless of the political upheavals.

TABLE 3: SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN EXCAVATED IRON AGES SITES IN THE RESEARCH AREA.

Key Site	Region	Ceramic phases and settlement activity						
		LB III	Early Iron I	Late Iron I	Early Iron IIA	Late Iron IIA	Final Iron IIA	Early Iron IIB
Tell Hizzin	The Lebanese Beqa'	Settled			Settled			Unknown
Tell Kamid el-Loz		Town###			-			Settled?
Tell el-Ghassil		Town###			Settled			
Tel Dan	The Hula Valley and the Korazim Plateau	Town			-		Fortified city###	
Tel Abel Beth Maacah		City?			Fortified stronghold?			
Hazor		-	Village	-		Fortified city###		
Tel Kinneret		-		Fortified city###	-		Fortified town###	Fortified city###
Et-Tell	Around the Sea of Galilee	-		Settlement activity###	-		Fortified city###	Weak activity?
Tel Hadar		-		Fortified town###	-		Fortified town###	Weak activity?
Tel 'En Gev		-		Settlement activity###	-		Fortified town###	Weak activity?
Tel Dover		-		Settlement activity###	-		Active	
Tell 'Ashtara		The Hauran	Major city###			Unknown		
Tell el-Fuḥḥar	The Irbid Plateau	Active		-			Active	
Tell Irbid		Fortified city###			Fortified city?		-	
Tell er-Rumeith		-				Fortified stronghold		
Tel Rehov	The Beth-Shean Valley	Town			Major city###			Fortified stronghold###
Megiddo	The Jezreel Valley	Major city###			Major city###		-	Major city###

- Destruction/rapid abandonment (i.e., complete vessels were found on floors with or without evidence of fire).

3. שינויים נוספים במרחב חלו עם התפשטותה המחודשת של ממלכת הצפון לצפון-מזרח ארץ-ישראל ודרום-מערב סוריה בתקופת שלטונם של יואש וירבעם השני. הממצאים מאזורים אלו מלמדים כי מדיניותם של המלכים הישראלים כלפי האוכלוסיות המקומיות לא הייתה הומוגנית: יישובים אחדים באזורי הגבול הוחרבו וננטשו (לדוג' א-תל); אחרים נפגעו אך היישוב בהם חודש (לדוג' תל דן); אחדים ננטשו במהירות ולא שוקמו (לדוג' תל הדר); והיו שכמעט ולא נפגעו (לדוג' חצור).
4. בחינת הממצאים מתל הדר ומאתרים אחרים באזור המחקר הראתה כי יש דמיון בתרבות החומרית של ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק: ניתן לראות זאת בחפצי היום-יום (לדוג' כלי החרס) ובארכיטקטורה המונומנטאלית (לדוג' כותרות אבן מעוטרות). יתר על כן, ברור כעת שמספר מבנים מנהליים שימשו הן תחת שלטון ממלכת ישראל והן תחת שלטון ארם-דמשק (לדוג' מצודה 3090 בחצור). מכאן, שרק לעיתים רחוקות השינויים הפוליטיים המהירים באזורי הגבול קיבלו ביטוי של ממש בתרבות החומרית (למשל פירוק כותרות האבן המעוטרות ממצודה 3090 בחצור או שבירת כתובת תל דן), ובמקרים בודדים אלה ניכר שמדובר באירועים בעלי משמעות סמלית.
5. מרבית העבודות הקודמות שעסקו בנושא המחקר דנו בתהליכים התרבותיים וההיסטוריים שהתרחשו באזורי הגבול מנקודת המבט של האליטות השלטוניות בממלכות הטריטוריאליות, וכך התייחסו למיקום הגאו-פוליטי של הקהילות המקומיות—בגבול שלטון של אליטות ישראליות וארמיות—כגורם משמעותי בזהות תושביהן. אלא שסביר להניח שרוב האוכלוסיה כלל לא הייתה מודעת לכך שהיא ממוקמת בקצה שלטון הפוליטי של אליטות ישראליות ו/או ארמיות ומרבית המקומיים ניהלו את חייהם ללא התייחסות לשינויים הפוליטיים "הגדולים". אין בהבחנה זו כדי שלילה של השפעת הממלכות הטריטוריאליות על אזורי הגבול. כפי שקרה פעמים רבות לאורך ההיסטוריה, לעיתים המגעים בין נציגי האוכלוסיה המקומית והשליטים הזרים הביאו לפריחה כלכלית ותרבותית, ובמקרים אחרים הם נכשלו והמיתו חורבן על המוסדות הפוליטיים המקומיים.

2. אלו תהליכים תרבותיים והיסטוריים הובילו לעליונותן הפוליטית של האליטות שהתגוררו באזורי הליבה של ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק על יישובי אזורי הגבול?
3. מה קרה באזורי הגבול כאשר האינטרסים הפוליטיים של ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק התנגשו, או כאשר השינויים הגיאוגרפיים במרחב הובילו להתחזקות הפוליטית של אחת מהן לצד היחלשותה של האחרת?

חוקרים שניסו לענות על שאלות דומות בעבר התמודדו עם מסד נתונים מוגבל למדי. על כן, החלטתי להקדיש חלק משמעותי מהמחקר להצגה של חומרים שלא פורסמו בעבר מחפירות תל הדר, תל רב-שכבתי השוכן על הגדה המזרחית של הכנרת (חלק ב'), להרכיב קטלוג ארכיאולוגי מקיף של כל אתרי תקופת הברזל הידועים מאזור המחקר (חלק ג') ולדון באופן מפורט באלמנטים נבחרים של התרבות החומרית באזורי הגבול (חלק ד'). לאחר ביסוסו של מסד נתונים מוצק, אני סוקר היבטים תרבותיים והיסטוריים שונים של אזורי הגבול שבין ישראל וארם בראשית האלף הראשון לפסה"נ (חלק ה').

מסקנות המחקר

הנקודות הבאות מסכמות את מסקנותיו העיקריות של המחקר:

1. תהליך התהוות אזורי הגבול של ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק היה הדרגתי ונשען בעיקרו על חולשת המוסדות הפוליטיים באזור המחקר לאחר גל החורבנות של סוף תקופת הברזל I. את ראשית מעורבותן של הממלכות הטריטוריאליות באזורי הגבול ניתן לזהות בבניית יישובים מבוצרים בסוף המאה העשירית או בראשית המאה התשיעית לפסה"נ. ביטוי ארכיאולוגי אפשרי להתנגדות מקומית לשליטים החדשים באזורים אלה ניתן למצוא באירועי משבר קצרים שזוהו במספר אתרי מפתח (לדוג' שכבה X בחצור בעמק החולה ושכבה VIII בתל א-רומיית' ברמת אירביד). עם זאת, השפעתם של האירועים הללו הייתה מוגבלת ולא נראה שאלו הובילו לשינויים פוליטיים כלשהם.
2. תקופת שלטונו של חזאל מלך ארם-דמשק הייתה פרק זמן מכוון בתולדות אזורי הגבול, בעיקר בשל מדיניותו כלפי האוכלוסיות המקומיות. תחת שלטונו, יישובים רבים, שנהרסו בסוף תקופת הברזל I ונותרו נטושים במהלך שני השלבים הראשונים של תקופת הברזל II, יושבו מחדש (לדוג' תל דן ותל הדר). בנוסף, נראה ששלטונה של ממלכת ארם-דמשק עודד את התפתחותה של ממלכה מקומית סביב הכנרת, שיש לזהותה, ככל הנראה, עם ממלכת גשור. הממצאים הארכיאולוגיים מלמדים שהשלטון הדמשקאי על צפון-מזרח ארץ-ישראל ודרום-מערב סוריה אף תרם רבות להתפתחות התרבות המקומית, למשל, העלייה הניכרת בתפוצת האוריינות באזורי הגבול.

תקציר

נושא המחקר

מחקר זה עוסק בתהליכים התרבותיים וההיסטוריים שהתרחשו בצפון-מזרח ארץ-ישראל ובדרום-מערב סוריה (להלן, "אזורי הגבול") בתקופות הברזל I ובחלקה המוקדם של תקופת הברזל II (1150–750 לפסה"נ). בראשית האלף הראשון לפסה"נ אזורים אלו היו הזירה העיקרית שבה התחוללו העימותים הצבאיים בין ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק, אך גם מקום מגוריהן של אוכלוסיות שלא הותירו אחריהן תיעוד כתוב. עד כה לא נעשה אף ניסיון מקיף לשרטט את ההיסטוריה היישובית והתרבות החומרית של קבוצות אלה. במרבית המקרים התהליכים הייחודים להן לא אובחנו כלל, או לחילופין, הוזכרו בקצרה במחקרים שעיקר עניינם היה ההיסטוריה הפוליטית של האליטות של הרי שומרון ונווה-המדבר של דמשק.

מטרות ושאלות המחקר

המחקר מתמקד בשלוש תקופות שונות בהיסטוריה של צפון-מזרח ארץ-ישראל ודרום-מערב סוריה: (1) טרם צמיחת ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק, מאמצע המאה ה-12 ועד ראשית המאה העשירית לפסה"נ; (2) במהלך המפגשים הראשוניים בין האוכלוסיות שהתגוררו באזורי הגבול ושליטי הממלכות הטריטוריאליות, בסוף המאה העשירית וראשית המאה התשיעית לפסה"נ; ו- (3) לאורך התהפוכות הפוליטיות שאפיינו את האזורים הללו במאות התשיעית והשמינית לפסה"נ. מטרתו העיקרית של המחקר היא לתאר באופן מפורט את הארכיאולוגיה של קהילות אזורי הגבול במהלך כל אחד מהשלבים הנזכרים לעיל, ועל ידי כך לבחון את התהליכים התרבותיים שפקדו אותן ואת סביבתן.

רוב החוקרים שתיארו בעבר את תהליכי ההתפשטות של ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק התייחסו בדרך כלל לאוכלוסיות המקומיות כמשתתפות סבילות בתהליך, או כחלק מקבוצות האליטה של הרי שומרון או נווה המדבר של דמשק. עם זאת, גישה זו נשענת—באופן ישיר או עקיף—על קריאה לא ביקורתית של טקסטים מקראיים שהועלו על הכתב מאות שנים אחרי האירועים אותם הם מתארים ושמייצגים נקודת מבט יהודאית מובהקת. במקרים אחדים ניתן לזהות בטקסטים אלו גם אידאולוגיה צפון-ישראלית, אך גם זו מתארת את התרבות וההיסטוריה של אזורי הגבול מנקודת המבט של השלטון המרכזי.

את שאלות המחקר ניתן לסכם בנקודות הבאות:

1. כיצד נראה הארגון החברתי-פוליטי של הקהילות המקומיות בצפון-מזרח ארץ-ישראל ודרום-מערב

סוריה טרם צמיחת ממלכות ישראל וארם-דמשק?

אוניברסיטת תל אביב

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח ע"ש לסטר וסאלי אנטין

ביה"ס למדעי היהדות וארכיאולוגיה ע"ש חיים רוזנברג

החוג לארכיאולוגיה ותרבויות המזרח הקדום ע"ש יעקב אלקוב

הארכיאולוגיה של אזורי גבול בין ישראל וארם

בתקופות הברזל I–II (1150–750 לפסה"נ)

חיבור לשם קבלת התואר "דוקטור לפילוסופיה"

מאת

אסף קליימן

בהנחיית

פרופ' ישראל פינקלשטיין ופרופ' בנימין זאס

כרך א : טקסט

הוגש לסנאט של אוניברסיטת תל אביב

אב תשע"ט