ABSTRACT

BROWN, STEPHANIE HOPE. A Reevaluation of Iron Age Fortified Sites on the Eastern Kerak Plateau. (Under the direction of S. Thomas Parker).

This thesis is concerned with the nature of ten Moabite fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau in central Jordan. Based largely upon an attempted synthesis between the archaeological record of the eastern Kerak Plateau and the Hebrew Bible, scholars believed for many years that there existed a fortified Moabite frontier, made up of contemporary fortified sites that ran north/south along the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau as part of a larger system of defense against a threat from the eastern desert. During the past thirty years some scholars have begun to doubt the validity of this idea. However, if the original interpretation is incorrect, what then is the nature and function of these Iron Age fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau? This thesis attempts to answer that question.

In comparison to other regions in Jordan the Kerak Plateau has seen little archaeological research. Several surveys have recorded many sites but few have been excavated. The ten sites examined in this study were surveyed and published by S. Thomas Parker in his *Limes Arabicus* Project. However, this survey was conducted over twenty years ago when there were very few sites that could offer stratified sequences of Iron Age ceramics to aide in the initial dating of the sites. Since then several Moabite sites have been or are being excavated, mostly north of the Kerak Plateau, and several regional surveys have reported Iron Age ceramic evidence at various sites in the region, providing more evidence of Moabite ceramic typology. Therefore, in light of this more recent research, this thesis focuses on the reexamination of ten Iron Age fortified sites surveyed by the *Limes Arabicus* Project and their associated ceramics. Being able to date these fortified sites more closely
makes it possible to address important questions relevant to the nature and function of these sites, the rise and fall of Moab as a state, and Moab’s relationship with Assyria.
A Reevaluation of Iron Age Fortified Sites on the Eastern Kerak Plateau

by
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History

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BIOGRAPHY

I haven’t written a biography for myself since I was in the sixth grade, so we’ll see how this goes. I guess the real challenge in writing an autobiography is figuring out how to sum up the experiences and emotions of a lifetime into mere words. Currently I don’t have more than a couple of pages to accomplish this task, so I’ll have to stick to the highlights. I’ve decided to mention the experiences, places, and the people that have taught me some of life’s most important lessons.

I grew up in Asheville, North Carolina; a city nestled deep inside the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains that has a reputation for attracting people with “alternative” lifestyles. Not surprisingly, growing up in such a culturally, racially, spiritually, and sexually diverse place taught me a great deal about tolerance, respect, and acceptance - three virtues that I consider to be essential in a world that seems to get smaller every day.

When I was young, maybe seven or eight years old my sister and I loved to play with Barbies together, and we each had a horse for our respective Barbie. Sadly, one of the legs broke off of my Barbie’s horse. In an attempt to manipulate my sister, I told her that three-legged horses were much cooler than four-legged horses, and that I would trade horses with her (being the generous sister that I was). She readily accepted my offer, scarcely believing her good luck. The guilt of my nasty trick has stayed with me, and it was my sister, Laura, who taught me that there is always someone who looks up to you, and that you should always act in a way that sets a good example for others.
Another virtue that I learned at a young age was commitment to hard work. When I was thirteen years old there was nothing in the world that I wanted more than a dog. My father, a fair and reasonable man, told me that I could have a dog if I made straight “A’s” for the entire school year. I worked hard, and brought home “A’s” on every report card, until the end of the year. By that time, I had started to slack off, thinking that it wouldn’t make a difference - that I would still bring home the necessary grades to get a dog. However, as one might expect, when my effort decreased so did my grades, and I didn’t get that dog. My father taught me, that you should sprint the last stretch of a race, and that you can’t win if you stop before the finish line.

I did not remain dogless forever. The first thing that I did when I moved into my first apartment was get a dog of my own, soon to be followed by another three dogs. My dogs (Abby, Ringo, Bella, and Dixie) have taught me about unconditional love. Furthermore, they taught me that when you live in present (as dogs seem to do) there is nothing more beautiful than what is right in front of you.

Throughout my life I have learned the importance of family. I really don’t believe that I could have been blessed with a more wonderful family, and I have never felt unloved or alone. However, during my college years and since, I have learned that the definition of family extends beyond the people to whom you are biologically related; and that some of the best families are the ones that you get to choose (Dorothy and Mark – you both know what you mean to me).

Lastly, I have travelled a good bit in my life. Though I have spent many wonderful vacations in Europe or at some island resort, most of my time out of the country has been
spent in the Middle East, specifically in Jordan. The Jordanian people have taught me the
importance of hospitality, and that true wealth has nothing to do with money. Additionally,
the landscape of Jordan has taught me that nothing will make you realize your own
insignificance more than the vastness of the desert.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people that contributed to this work, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few of them. The archaeological fieldwork that I conducted in Jordan in the summer of 2009 allowed me an incredible opportunity to familiarize myself with the fortified sites examined in this thesis, as well as to study Iron Age ceramics currently being excavated from sites in Moab. This fieldwork would not have been possible without the financial assistance of CAORC (Council of American Overseas Research Centers). I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Porter, Dr. Christopher Tuttle, and the rest of the staff of ACOR in Amman for all of their assistance.

A number of scholars shared with me their knowledge and time. Dr. Randy Younker, Dr. Gerald Mattingly, Dr. Debra Foran, and Dr. Bruce Routledge all allowed me to examine their unpublished ceramic finds from their respective excavations. Dr. Karen Borstad not only lent me her car, but also accompanied me on several of my trips to visit sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau. Dr. Joseph Greene assisted me at the Harvard Semitic Museum by allowing me to study the ceramic evidence from Maxwell Miller’s Survey of the Kerak Plateau. Finally, Dr. Benjamin Porter helped me to date the ceramic evidence from several of the sites in this study.

Lastly, I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. S. Thomas Parker, Dr. Ronald Sack, and Dr. Carol Meyers, for offering their thoughtful insights and suggestions. Among all of the people listed in these acknowledgements, there is one man without whom this thesis would not exist - Dr. S. Thomas Parker. I would like to thank him for chairing my
committee, for reading countless drafts and proposals, for always being available to offer
advice or suggestions, for introducing me to Jordan and to archaeology, and finally for being
someone that I can look up to and respect, and whose example I can continue to follow
throughout my career.
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Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the nature of ten Moabite fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau in central Jordan. Based largely upon an attempted synthesis between the archaeological record of the eastern Kerak Plateau and the Hebrew Bible, scholars believed for many years that there existed a fortified Moabite frontier, made up of contemporary fortified sites that ran north/south along the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau as part of a larger system of defense against a threat from the eastern desert. During the past thirty years some scholars have begun to doubt the validity of this idea (see chapter four). However, if the original interpretation is incorrect, what then is the nature and function of these Iron Age fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau? This thesis attempts to answer that question.

This introduction begins by presenting an overview of the research, including its goals and methodology, then offers a summary of the region’s natural environment and its climate. Finally, it suggests some possible alternatives to the above-mentioned claim that there was a fortified Moabite frontier made up of contemporary sites.

In comparison to other regions in Jordan the Kerak Plateau has seen little archaeological research. Several surveys have recorded many sites but few have been excavated. The ten sites examined in this study were surveyed and published by S. Thomas

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Parker in his *Limes Arabicus* Project. However, this survey was conducted over twenty years ago when there were very few sites that could offer stratified sequences of Iron Age ceramics to aid in the initial dating of the sites. Since then several Moabite sites have been or are being excavated, mostly north of the Kerak Plateau (e.g., Dhiban, Wadi ath-Thamad, Tell Madaba, etc.) and several regional surveys have reported Iron Age ceramic evidence at various sites in the region, providing more evidence of Moabite ceramic typology. Therefore, in light of this more recent research, this thesis has reexamined ten Iron Age fortified sites surveyed by the *Limes Arabicus* Project and their associated ceramics.

There were a few obvious challenges to this research. The first was the present condition of these sites, which are relatively small. Some have suffered dramatically from modern development, in some cases greatly altering the surrounding landscape even in the twenty years since Parker’s survey. Furthermore, illicit digging and/or stone-robbing has in many cases further damaged the sites’ architectural features. This rapid deterioration was an important factor in the decision to reexamine them while it was still possible.

A second problem was simply the challenge of interpreting surface ceramic evidence. Nevertheless, reexaminations of the existing surface collections in light of the greatly improved knowledge of Iron Age pottery has suggested the temporal parameters of Iron Age occupation at these sites.

These ten fortified sites (Figure 1.1) were chosen on the basis of their geographic proximity in the upper Wadi Mujib, their identification by the *Limes Arabicus* Project as a

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“fort,” and the recovery of a significant number of Iron Age sherds from each site. The ten sites are Qasr ed-Daba’a (Parker’s site 194), Khirbet Thamayil (Parker’s site 456), Qasr Saliya (Parker’s site 2), Qasr Abu el-Kharaqa (Parker’s site 110), Qasr el-‘Al (Parker’s site 124), Khirbet ‘Arbid (Parker’s site 464), esh-Sharif (Parker’s site 477), Khirbet Medeinet ‘Aliya (Parker’s site 149), Parker’s site 7, and Parker’s site 57. Many of these were mentioned in Glueck’s survey as well as Miller’s *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau* and a few of them were resherded in the 1990s by Bruce Routledge.

Several ongoing excavations in Moab, including Dhiban, Tall Madaba, and the Wadi ath-Thamad project, now permit closer dating of Iron Age pottery (usually called “Moabite”) from this region. However, because these are current excavations no complete typology has been published. The differences between contemporary Moabite ceramics and Ammonite ceramics farther north are greater than previously thought. Therefore, the only way to interpret Moabite pottery is in light of current excavations in Moab. Fortunately, the author was able to study ceramic collections from Dhiban, Tell Madaba, and Mudaybi as well as consult their respective directors prior to the examination of the ceramics from the ten sites in this study. Therefore, the dates given for these ten sites reflect the author’s knowledge of this unpublished material.

Both Iron I (ca. 1200-1000 B.C.E.) and Iron II (ca. 1000-539 B.C.E.) periods are represented in the ceramic collection from these sites. The sherd count represented in Table 1.1 was published in Parker’s final report of the *Limes Arabicus* Project and includes diagnostic as well as non-diagnostic sherds. The diagnostic sherds were shipped back to the U.S. while non-diagnostic sherds were discarded after the field reading. Of these ten sites, the
author was able to locate and examine the diagnostic sherds for seven. The three sites whose associated ceramic evidence could not be examined are: Parker’s site 57, Qasr el-‘Al and Qasr Abu el-Karaqa. Because the author was not able to locate the sherds associated with these three sites, no closer dating of the sites can be provided. However, the *Limes Arabicus* Project offered broad general dates that were consistently accurate. Therefore, it can be assumed that the general dates assigned to the sites can be trusted.

The Iron Age in central Jordan is generally dated to ca. 1200-539 B.C.E.³ It is further divided into two periods, Iron I and Iron II; and the shift from Iron I occurs around ca. 1000 B.C.E. The Iron II period is then further divided into three periods: Iron IIA (1000-900), Iron IIB (900-700), and Iron IIC (700-539). Moab is one of the small polities that formed in the southern Levant at the end of the Iron I/beginning of the Iron II period. Though there are significant debates concerning when this occurred in Palestine (either in the ninth or tenth century B.C.E.),⁴ there is currently not enough evidence from Moab to give a more specific date. The term “Moab” refers to a geographic area in central Jordan and “Moabites” to the people that lived within that area, both before and after Moab experienced its statehood during the Iron II period.⁵

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Moab lay in what is now the central part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. (Figure 1.2) The geography of Jordan is quite diverse. Its western border is a large rift valley, through which runs the Jordan River. This valley runs from the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) in the north, through the Dead Sea, all the way south to the Gulf of Aqaba. At one point at the Dead Sea this valley reaches the lowest elevation on earth, c. 400 m below sea level. East of the Jordan Rift Valley the elevation steadily rises until reaching a plateau that is sharply divided from east to west by four expansive valleys (Arabic “wadis”). These wadis from north to south are: Wadi Yarmuk, Wadi Zerqa, Wadi Mujib, and Wadi el-Hasa. East of the plateau there is a vast desert that extends east to Jordan’s border with Iraq. Throughout Jordan’s history the plateaus between the Rift Valley and the eastern desert have been most suitable for human settlement.

Moab is bordered on the west by the Dead Sea and to the east by the Syrian (or Arabian in the south) desert. Moab itself can be divided into two distinct geographic areas, Northern and Southern Moab, separated by Wadi Mujib. Although this thesis will discuss evidence relating to Northern Moab, its main focus will be on Southern Moab/the Kerak Plateau (between Wadi Mujib to the north and Wadi el-Hasa to the south), specifically the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau.

The Kerak Plateau is surrounded to its north, south, and west by sharp, deep cliffs created by wadis to its north and south and by the Rift Valley to its west. These wadis make access to the plateau from these directions extremely difficult. The northeast border of the Kerak Plateau is also difficult to access. Here, Wadi Mujib and its tributaries (including Wadi ed-Daba’a) wrap themselves around the northeastern edge of the Kerak Plateau, creating
many smaller wadi systems that form a significant barrier around the northern half of the eastern border. In contrast, the southern half of the plateau slopes more gradually eastward from ca. 1200 m (the highest point of the plateau, located in its southwest quadrant) to ca. 650 m (the elevation of the desert plateau), making access to the plateau from the desert relatively simple. However, any traveler would be forced to deal with the difficulties of desert travel, such as lack of vegetation and water, that in a way form their own sort of barrier to the accessibility of the Kerak Plateau.

The eastern border of the Kerak Plateau has two main geographic features: the southern Wadi Mujib/Wadi ed-Daba’a drainage system, discussed above, and the Fajj al-‘Useikir. The Fajj is a large valley, with a wide flat floor, that runs northwest from the desert onto the plateau. The Fajj is flanked by high ridges divided by small wadis draining into the Fajj. Several Iron Age sites lie on some of these high points, a few of which will be discussed later (Chapter 4).

The Karak Resources Project, under the direction of Gerald Mattingly and John Wineland, conducted an environmental study of the Kerak Plateau. One of the most illuminating aspects is its study of the relationship between the plateau and agriculture by analysis of soils on the Kerak Plateau. The project generated a map (Figure 1.3) that ranks the local soils with a number 1-12. The number 1 represents the extremely rocky soil found in the wadis while the number 12 is the sandy soil found as one travels east into the desert. The mid-range numbers represent soil best suited for agriculture. The map shows that all ten

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sites in this study are associated with soil number 12, indicating that the soil near these sites is extremely sandy and not well suited for agriculture.\(^7\)

Jordan’s climate also plays a large role in dictating the best areas for human settlement. Though the Yarmuk, Zerqa, and Jordan Rivers all may be tapped for irrigation, rainfall has the most influence over settlement patterns. Jordan experiences two distinct seasons per year: cold rainy winters and hot dry summers. Rain falls for a few months during winter. The Kerak Plateau averages about 700 mm \textit{per annum}. However, the amount of rainfall quickly drops off as one moves toward the eastern plateau, where for example el-Lejjun receives only 200 mm.\(^8\) The transhumant Bedouin of today and of antiquity have dealt with these rainfall patterns by moving their herds to graze seasonally. However, agriculturalists were concentrated in areas of sufficient rainfall.

Most of the sites examined by this study lie even further east than el-Lejjun, and receive less than 200 mm of rain each year. A rainfall map of the Kerak Plateau (Figure 1.4) shows that the zone of fortified sites surveyed by the \textit{Limes Arabicus} Project falls between the 100 and 200 mm rainfall lines. Dry farming usually requires at least 200 mm of rainfall per year. This, along with the associated sandy soil discussed above, suggests that this area is quite marginal and could not normally sustain significant agriculture.

An important consideration for this study is variations in regional climate during the past three thousand years. In other words, can we assume the marginality of the eastern

\(^7\) “Virtual Karak Resources Project: Environmental Study.” <www.vk rp.org>

Kerak Plateau based on current climatic conditions? Currently, there is not enough evidence about the climate history of the eastern Kerak Plateau specifically, but there is more evidence from the southern Levant in general about regional climate. These include studies of pollen cores in both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, the rise and fall of the Dead Sea level, lithobiont weathering of archaeologically buried limestone, and finally the oxygen isotope levels in snails from the Negev.\(^9\)

These studies produced varying results concerning climate in antiquity. However, they did agree on a few basic claims. First, the last significant wet phase in the southern Levant ended prior to the Iron Age (some studies suggest that a dry phase began during the mid-third millennium B.C.E.). Second, the studies agree that since the middle of the second millennium B.C.E. the southern Levant has experienced climatic conditions broadly similar to today. Therefore, modern data with regard to regional rainfall is relevant in understanding settlement on the eastern Kerak Plateau.\(^10\)

As mentioned above, the *Limes Arabicus Project* published evidence from all ten of the fortified sites examined in this thesis. Several other scholars have also studied some of these sites. However, there is not a clear consensus as to their nature and function. The very fact that all the sites are fortified, located atop hills that command excellent views of the surrounding areas, and that several include apparent watchtowers implies that their function is at least partially defense. However, this analysis will suggest previous notions of a fortified

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\(^9\) Routledge, *Intermittent Agriculture*, 56.

\(^10\) Ibid., 56-60.
frontier that secured the entire Kerak Plateau as the eastern frontier of the Moabite kingdom at any time during the Iron Age is simply incorrect.

This thesis will begin in chapter two by reconstructing the history of Moab from the available literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources. Chapter three will summarize what is currently known with regard to Moabite ceramics and how that knowledge has permitted a closer dating of the ceramic evidence from the ten fortified sites surveyed by the *Limes Arabicus Project*. Chapter four will examine the ten sites in detail and will offer a more precise date for their construction and occupation. Finally, chapter five will attempt to synthesize the material by placing the sites within their respective historical environments and will then put forth several suggestions as to their natures and functions.

When scholars such as Glueck, Parker, and Miller studied these sites their explanation for the Iron Age fortified sites along the eastern desert frontier was plausible. However, now that knowledge of Moabite ceramics permits closer dating, one finds that only a few of these sites were contemporary and that their functions seem to vary based on their size, architecture, and period of occupation.
Chapter 2

The Sources

This chapter will analyze primary sources, including literary, epigraphic, and archaeological, relevant to Iron Age Moab. It will also review some pertinent secondary literature. It will proceed diachronically from the earliest to the latest and will include Egyptian references to Moab, the Hebrew Bible, epigraphic sources from Moab itself, Assyrian sources, and one classical reference to Moab. The chapter then turns to the archaeological evidence about Moab. This section will also proceed chronologically with the earliest surveys through current excavations in Moab. Because this thesis is focused mainly on Iron Age settlement on the eastern Kerak Plateau, this chapter will focus only on archaeological surveys carried out in this area. However, in an attempt to synthesize the history of Moab it will discuss excavations of Iron Age sites from all areas of Moab. Finally, this chapter will discuss some of the major contributions to the study of Moab by modern scholars.

Ancient Literary and Epigraphic Sources

The earliest known references to Moab are Egyptian Execration Texts from the Middle Bronze Age (nineteenth and eighteenth centuries B.C.E.). These mention the “rulers of the Shutu” among a list of Egyptian enemies.¹¹ The Shutu are commonly equated to the Sheth, a people akin to the Moabites mentioned in Numbers 24:17, “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.

¹¹ Georges Posener, Princes et Pays d’Asie et de Nubie (Bruxelles: Fondation égyptologique Reine Elisabeth, 1940), 88-90.
It shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites.” This does not mean that the Shuttu of the Bronze Age were the same people as the Moabites of the Iron Age, but only that the biblical author saw them as related.\textsuperscript{12} It is uncertain whether this passage from the Execration Texts actually refers to the inhabitants of what would later be called Moab.

King Tuthmosis III (ca. 1482-1450 B.C.E) of Egypt continued a long history of campaigns in and occupation of the Levant. Dating to this period is the “Palestinian List” that seems to include among its list of toponyms: Dhiban (\textit{tipun}), the Wadi Mujib (\textit{ubir}), and Kerak (\textit{harkur}).\textsuperscript{13} This might suggest that Tuthmosis III passed through what would later be called Moab during one of his campaigns in Palestine

In the temple of Luxor are two references to Moab from the reign of Ramesses II (ca. 1304-1237). Ramesses II made several campaigns in the Levant, conquering much of it for Egypt. One of the inscriptions in the temple of Luxor reads,

\begin{quote}
Town which the mighty arm of Pharaoh, life, prosperity health, plundered in [the] land of Moab: B\{w\}trt.
Town which the mighty arm of Pharaoh, life prosperity health, plundered: \textit{yn}?, in the mountain of \textit{mrn}.
Town which the mighty arm of Pharoh, life prosperity health, plundered, of \textit{tbnw}.
\end{quote}\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Donald Redford, “A Bronze Age Itinerary in Transjordan” \textit{Journal for the Study of Egyptian Archaeology} 12 (1982), 55-74.
This inscription shows that there was in fact a place known as Moab as early as the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, we know little more than this because of the limitations of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. Routledge notes that the inscription is very generic. Ramesses II stands before a captured city, whose iconographic symbol could represent any Levantine fortified town whose inhabitants are “Syrians.” This common generic iconographic representation used for foreigners in Ramesses II’s Asiatic campaigns suggests the isolation Egypt experienced for so much of its history.

The locations of the specific towns are debated. Based on the generic nature of the inscription, B[w]trt could have been anything from a simple nomadic settlement to a fortified town; but it is likely that the “Moab” of the reign of Ramesses II was very different from the Moab that emerged in the Iron Age.\(^\text{15}\) However, the simple fact that Moab is listed among groups like the Hittites and the Mitanni may imply that there was more to Moab than small settlements. It at least implies that Moab (or the territory that would become Moab by the thirteenth century) played a role in Egyptian foreign politics sufficient for recognition among the accomplishments of Tuthmosis III and Ramesses II.\(^\text{16}\)

The Balu’ Stele should be mentioned among the Egyptian sources. Though discovered in Moab, the Egyptian influence on it is unmistakable. This large basalt stele most likely dates to the end of the Bronze Age or the early Iron Age and probably came from Qasr al-Balu’ on the Kerak Plateau.\(^\text{17}\) The inscription has four lines of script that cannot be read due to exposure and erosion. The scene depicted on the stele might be of an


\(^{17}\) Ibid., 231.
inauguration or introduction of a human chief or ruler by a lower god to a higher god. All three characters in the scene are dressed in Egyptian style. The goddess on the left wears the crown of Osiris and carries the ankh- symbol. The god on the right wears the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt and is carrying a scepter, which he appears to be giving to the man. The man, depicted as a Shasu,\(^{18}\) wears a beard as well as a typical Shasu headdress. On the man’s shoulders are ancestral symbols of the crescent moon and the sun merging with the crescent moon. Weippert and others originally dated the finished stele to the tenth century because the symbol of the moon and sun merging was not used in northern Syria until then. However, because the Egyptian introduction scene is found in earlier Egyptian art Weippert does suggest that this stele could be a provincial copy of an original dated as early as the reign of Ramesses II. The copy could have then been mixed with later Syrian god emblems.\(^ {19}\)

Though the historicity of many parts of the Hebrew Bible is questionable, it is the only written source that offers alleged evidence into Moab at the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age (ca. 1200 B.C.E.). The biases of the Hebrew text become very clear in its account of Moabite origins: “Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. The firstborn bore a son, and named him Moab; he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammi; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day.”\(^ {20}\) While the humor of this story might be lost on a

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\(^{18}\) The Egyptian word for a Bedouin or nomad. This word was used by Egyptians to describe transhumant peoples of southern Jordan. See Amelie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East: c. 3000-330 BC*, vol.1 (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 320.


\(^{20}\) Genesis 19:36-38.
modern audience, it would have been clear to its original Hebrew audience. The story was an insult geared to denigrate two particular groups of people because of their ethnic background. The humor of the story continues with a slight change in the vocalization of the Hebrew. If one pronounces the *mo* as *me* then the word becomes אַמְדָא "from the father."\(^{21}\)

There is more to be gained from the Hebrew account of the origin of the Moabites, and this has to do with the genealogical closeness of the Hebrews to the Moabites as well as other Northwest Semitic groups. Routledge presents a pattern of genealogical closeness between the Hebrews and neighboring tribes.\(^ {22}\) He explains that much of Genesis focuses on creating the genealogy that leads to Jacob/Israel, who is seen as the father of all of the tribes of Israel. In this complex genealogy, beginning with Adam, one eventually gets to Terah, Abraham’s father. Terah, according to the historicity of the Hebrew Bible, was the single character that moved his family from Ur (in Mesopotamia) to the Levant.\(^ {23}\)

Routledge then points out that many of the Semitic peoples that had close relations with the Hebrews in the Hebrew Bible are genealogically within three generations of Terah.\(^ {24}\) A few examples are the Hebrews themselves (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/Israel), the Moabites (Haran, Lot, Moab), the Ammonites (Haran, Lot, Ben-amm), the Edomites (Abraham, Isaac, Esau/Edom), the Qedarite Arabs (Abraham, Ishmael, Kedar), and the Kingdom of Damascus (Nahor, Kemuel, Aram). But in spite of this close ethnic connection the Hebrew Bible portrays the Moabites in a very negative fashion. Genealogical closeness was perhaps more

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\(^{22}\)Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 43.  
\(^{23}\)Genesis 11:31.  
\(^{24}\)Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 43.
feared by the Hebrews than geographical closeness (like that of the Philistines), because it was the people that were most ethnically and culturally similar to the Hebrews that presented the greatest threat—assimilation.  

The Hebrew Bible also suggests that not all relations between Moab and Israel were bad. One such example occurs in 1 Kings 11:7, where the author writes that Solomon “built a high place for Chemosh” (the Moabite god) in Jerusalem. Other books in the Hebrew Bible imply interconnectedness between Israelites and Moabites. The Book of Ruth for example is set during a famine in Judah, when a family from Bethlehem goes to Moab in search of food. Regardless of the historical truth of Ruth’s narrative, the story implies that Moab would have been a logical place to search for food to help sustain foreigners in a dire situation. Also, 2 Kings 3:4-5 asserts that King Mesha of Moab was required to deliver 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams as tribute to the Israelite court. Although the precise numbers certainly raise suspicion, it seems clear that the author of this text knew Moab to be a region where animal husbandry was prevalent and successful.

The Book of Ruth also tells the story of a Moabite woman whose marriage to Boaz resulted in the birth of King David’s ancestor. This narrative was once thought to be pre-exilic, possibly tied to the “period of the Judges (ca. 1200-1020 BCE),” or some other peaceful time when such a marriage between an Israelite man and a foreign women would not be criticized and the offspring produced in that marriage would be considered

25 Ibid., 43.
26 Parker, Final Report, 14.
27 Ibid., 14.
legitimate.\textsuperscript{29} However, other scholars now date this narrative to the post-exilic period on the basis of its linguistic traits.\textsuperscript{30} Because mixed marriages were not recognized by Judeans after their return from the exile, this narrative, suggesting that Israel’s greatest king came from a mixed marriage, likely served as a social criticism of this policy.

The Hebrew Bible also helps to define the often-changing borders of ancient Moab, which included all of the Kerak Plateau. However, Moab’s territory was not fixed throughout its history; Moab sometimes included territory north of the Wadi Mujib extending sometimes as far north as Wadi Hesban. This region between Wadi Hesban and Wadi Mujib was disputed territory. Moab must have frequently occupied this region northeast of the Dead Sea since it was called throughout the Hebrew Bible “the plains of Moab.”\textsuperscript{31} Furthermore, Dhiban, Moab’s capital under King Mesha, is north of Wadi Mujib, implying that his territory extended at least this far north.

Ammon and various tribes of Israel also contested this land at times. Because this territory changed hands so many times, the local population must have had conflicting loyalties; and therefore early historical claims to this land would have been important to the inhabitants. An essential part of the Israelite claim to the territory revolves around the Amorite King Sihon of Heshbon. According to the Israelite conquest narrative in Deuteronomy 2, the Amorites conquered the territory north of Wadi Mujib before the Hebrews arrived. In this account the Hebrews passed through Moab without engaging in

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
battle and avoided Ammon altogether. King Sihon, however, refused to let the Hebrews pass through his territory, so the Hebrews seized Heshbon.\(^{32}\) This tradition gave the Israelites a legitimate claim to the disputed territory. The historicity of this claim is problematic to say the least, as no Late Bronze and only scant Iron I evidence has been excavated from Tell Hesban, usually identified as biblical Heshbon.\(^{33}\)

There are four accounts in the Hebrew Bible of the Israelite route from Egypt during the exodus: Numbers 21:10-20, Numbers 33:5-49, Deuteronomy 2, and Judges 11:12-28. Though these accounts are inconsistent as to whether or not the Israelites travelled through or around Moab, it is obvious that the author(s) of Judges wanted to lay claim to this land east of the Dead Sea, because The Judges account of the exodus clearly and consistently defines the northern border of Moab’s territory.

Thus says Jephthah: Israel did not take away the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites, but when they came up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. Israel then sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, “Let us pass through your land”; but the king of Edom would not listen. They also sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained at Kadesh. Then they journeyed through the wilderness, went around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, arrived on the eastern side of the land of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab.\(^{34}\)

\(^{32}\) Joshua 12.


\(^{34}\) Judges 11:15-18.
The Hebrew Bible lists many Moabite toponyms in passages that focus on raids and battles with the Moabites. These biblical texts include Amos 2:1-3, Isaiah 15-16, and Jeremiah 48. Note that most of the toponyms in these passages lie north of Wadi Mujib, perhaps implying that the biblical authors were not as familiar with the Moabite settlements of the Kerak plateau.

Of all of the written sources mentioning Moab, the most illuminating is the Mesha Inscription, or Moabite Stone (Figure 2.2), an inscription carved into a stone stele. In 1868 this stele was discovered in Dhiban, just north of Wadi Mujib. The stele was discovered intact, but before it could be transported the local Arabs broke it into pieces. Fortunately, a mold of the stele had already been made, making reassembly relatively simple; and the complete stele today resides in the Louvre.

The stele is carved on basalt and is dated to ca. 830 B.C.E. This date comes from a reference to King Mesha of Moab in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kings 3:4-27), dated after 849 B.C.E. Based on the contents of the stele one would assume that it was written during the latter part of Mesha’s reign, or ca. 830 B.C.E. The inscription is written in the Moabite language which, like most other Northwest Semitic languages, is very similar to Hebrew. Given so few written sources mentioning Moab, this inscription is absolutely crucial to the history of Moab in the Iron Age.

I (am) Mesha, son of Chemosh-[…] , king of Moab, the Dibonite-my father,-(who) made this high place for Chemosh in Qarhoh […] because he saved me from all the kings and caused me to triumph over all my adversaries. As for Omri, (5) king of Israel, he humbled Moab many years (lit., days), for

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Chemosh was angry at his land. And his son followed him and he also said, “I will humble Moab.” In my time he spoke (thus), but I have triumphed over him and over his house, while Israel hath perished forever! (Now) Omri had occupied the land of Medeba, and (Israel) had dwelt there in his time and half the time of his son (Ahab), forty years; but Chemosh dwelt there in my time.

And I built Baal-méon, making a reservoir in it, and I built (10) Qaryaten. Now the men of Gad had always dwelt in the land of Ataroth, and the king of Israel had built Ataroth for them; but I fought against the town and took it and slew all the people of the town as satiation (intoxication) for Chemosh and Moab. And I brought back from there Arel (or Oriel), its chieftain, dragging him before Chemosh in Kerioth, and I settled there men of Sharon and men of Marharith. And Chemosh said to me, “Go, take Nebo from Israel!” (15) So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all, seven thousand men, boys, women, girls, and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for (the god) Astar-Chemosh. And I took from there the […] of Yahweh, dragging them before Chemosh. And the King of Israel had built Jahaz, and he dwelt there while he was fighting against me, but Chemosh drove him out before me. And (20) I took from Moab two hundred men, all first class (warriors), and set them against Jahaz and took it in order to attach it to (the district of ) Dibon.

It was I (who) built Qarhoh, the wall of the forests and the wall of the citadel; I also built its gates and I built its towers and I built the king’s house, and I made both of its reservoirs for water inside the town. And there was no cistern inside the town at Qarhoh, so I said to all the people, “Let each of you make (25) a cistern for himself in his house!” and I cut beams for Qarhoh with Israelite captives. I built Aroer, and I made the highway in the Arnon (valley); I built Beth-bamoth, for it had been destroyed; I built Bezer—for it lay in ruins—with fifty men of Dibon, for all Dibon is (my) loyal dependency.

And I reigned [in peace] over the hundred towns, which I had added to the land. And I built (30) […] Medeba and Beth-diblathen and Beth-baal-méon, and I set there the […] of the land. And as for Hauronen, there dwelt in it […] And] Chemosh said to me, “Go down, fight against Hauronen. And I went
down [and I fought against the town and I took it], and Chemosh dwelt there in my time…\textsuperscript{36}

The Mesha Inscription is important in biblical scholarship because it is one of the few ancient sources that describes in detail actual encounters with the Israelites from an extrabiblical point of view and that references their supreme god, Yahweh. Routledge deals with the larger significance of the Mesha inscription. First he explains the state of the small polities in the Levant at the beginning of the Iron II period.

These polities are neither strictly kin-based, nor marked (especially in their early phases) by significant administrative specialization or class stratification. Before fitting such polities within the confined parameters of particular ideal types (whether these be ‘chiefdoms,’ ‘states,’ ‘secondary states’ or ‘peer-polities’), we must work to understand the locally relevant forms that political and social developments take within these polities.\textsuperscript{37}

The issue of labeling these proto-states is dealt with extensively by Younker, who discusses the state/tribe debate in relation to Moab. He cites the general differentiation between a tribe and a state, claiming that tribes are “egalitarian, multi-community societies integrated through kinship. Economy is usually based on agriculture and pastoralism rather than hunting and gathering.”\textsuperscript{38} A state, however, displays a large amount of “ethnic plurality” and does not focus as much on kinship. A state would also contain urban centers, political bureaucracy, and perhaps a standing army. After defining these terms, Younker presents a

This relatively simple model lists characteristics that most scholars would claim to define a state. Most are referenced in the Mesha inscription: for example, fortifications, water systems, and road building. But Younker then disputes this definition by systematically presenting examples of these traits in pre-state societies across the globe. Therefore he argues that defining Moab’s statehood involves more complexity than is found in simple distinction between tribe and state.\(^{39}\)

The Mesha Inscription is unique in capturing the moment in history when a particular tribal ruler (Mesha of Dibon) attempted to justify his conquest and rule over other geographic areas with tribal diversity. One such way that he justifies his rule is to claim divine intervention by the Moabite god, Chemosh, on whose behalf Mesha led his armies to victory over the Israelites. There is no evidence in either the Hebrew Bible or in the Mesha Inscription that other Moabite kings had done this before on such a large scale, which makes Mesha himself important. Routledge argues that Mesha goes beyond validating his own reign to, inadvertently, reform the model of “governance” in the southern Levant at the transition to the Iron II period from a kingdom based on kinship to one that could manage a more ethnically diverse area. He also argues that looking at the inscription in this way helps to further illuminate archaeological and epigraphic sources, not only for Moab, but possibly for neighboring regions as well.\(^{41}\)

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 240.  
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 240.  
In addition to the Mesha Inscription there is one other inscription fragment that is clearly written in the Moabite script. This was found at Kerak in 1958. Note that Reed and Winnett’s translation of the king’s name as k]msyt is based on their assumption that he was Mesha’s father.

…k]msyt.mlk.m’b.h… …K]msyt, king of Moab, the…
…t.kms.lmb’r.ky.h… …of Kemosh (to serve) as an altar (?) because he…
…nh.whn.sty.t… …his…And behold I made…

Moab is also mentioned in fourteen Assyrian documents dating from the late eighth to late seventh centuries B.C.E. The earliest, dating to 728 B.C.E. is from a building inscription of the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III, that lists Moab’s king, Salamanu, as well as the kings of Judah, Ammon, and Edom among the states paying tribute to the Assyrian Empire. From this it is reasonably assumed that Moab submitted to Tiglath-Pileser III in 734-732 B.C.E. on his campaign to aid Ahaz Judah. Though most of these documents suggest that Moab was a loyal client state that paid tribute, Sargon II’s Prism A of ca. 713 B.C.E. lists Moab among several client states in alliance with the king of Ashdod to throw off the Assyrian yoke. “Then [to] the rulers of Palestine, Judah, Ed[om], Moab, (and) those who live (on the islands) and bring tribute [and] tamartu – gifts to my lord Ashur – [he (Aziru, king of

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43 Miller, Kerak Survey, 10.
45 Routledge, Moab in the Iron Age, 201.
Ashdod) spread countless evil lies to alienate (them) from me (Sargon II).” But after Sargon II’s campaign against Ashdod in 712 B.C.E. Moab once again appears on the list of tribute-paying client states, implying that their resistance was short-lived.

According to the Assyrian documents it appears that Moab maintained its autonomy throughout Assyria’s years of domination. Moab retained its own king and its tribute was organized by *serani* (who travelled to the Assyrian capital to pay its state’s tribute) instead of by imperial Assyrian provincial officials. In fact, only one of the Assyrian documents (Nimrud Letter no. 10025) uses the title *shaknu* (an official administering an Assyrian province) to refer to an official from Moab.

The Assyrian texts also indicate the nature of Moab’s tribute to Assyria. Nimrud Letter no. 2765 mentions delivery of horses by officials from Moab, Ammon, Egypt, and Judah. Also, Prism B states that during the reign of Esarhaddon (681-669), Moab’s King Musuri transported building materials to Ninevah.

Three other texts refer to an eastern threat to Moab. One of these, probably of the mid-late eighth century, informs the Assyrian king about a raid on a Moabite city by men of *Gidir*-land. On the Rassam Cylinder, Assurbanipal (669-627 B.C.E.) records a number of victories over Yaite the Qedarite.

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48 Ibid., 203.
He persuaded the inhabitants of Arabia (to join) him and then plundered repeatedly those peoples which Ashur, Ishtar, and the (other) great gods had given to me to be their shepherd and had entrusted into my hands. Upon the oracle-command of Ashur and Ishtar, (I called up) my army and defeated him in bloody battles inflicting countless routs on him (to wit) in the giru of the towns of Azaril (and) Hirata (-) kasaia, in Edom, in the pass of Iabrudu, in Beth-Ammon, in the district of Haurina, in Moab, in Sa’arri, in Harge, in all the inhabitants of Arabia who had revolted with him, but he escaped...

The third text, Cylinder B, mentions the defeat of ‘Ammuladdi, king of Qedar. According to this text ‘Ammuladdi was responsible for carrying out raids on the kings of the Westland. Ashurbanipal gives credit for the victory to Moab’s king, Kamosh’asa. “Kamosh’asa, a vassal of mine, defeated him [‘Ammuladdi] in open battle. ‘Ammuladdi [and] the rest of his people, who [had flad before the might of Assur], he captured with [his own] hands, bound them hand and foot with iron fetters and sent them to Nineveh into my presence.”

We have established that Moab and Assyria generally had a relatively good relationship and that Assyria allowed Moab to maintain its autonomy as long as tribute was paid. A client state could request help from Assyria but then ran the risk of losing more of its autonomy. Small conflicts between settlers and nomadic pastoralists in this region were common throughout history. However, the simple fact that that the “western kings” chose not only to cooperate with each other but also to involve Assyria in the above referenced problems with the Qedarites speaks to the magnitude of these conflicts.

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53 Ibid., 338-339.
The fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C.E.\textsuperscript{55} and rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (612-539 B.C.E.) led to much change in the Levant. Few sources mention Moab after the fall of the Assyrian Empire. The Jewish historian Josephus (first century C.E.) implies that Moab survived the collapse of Assyria. He claims that Nebuchadnezzar campaigned against Moab and Ammon in the twenty-third year of his reign, or 582 B.C.E.\textsuperscript{56} The fall of the Moabite Kingdom during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign is echoed in Jeremiah 48:46.

\begin{quote}
Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh have perished,
For your sons have been taken captive and your daughters into captivity.
\end{quote}

This passage by a more contemporary source might lend some credence to the historicity of the tradition preserved by Josephus, i.e., that the kingdom of Moab disappeared in the early sixth century.

**Archaeological Sources**

The Kerak Plateau has seen little archaeological research. During the nineteenth century, while much of the Levant was explored archaeologically, the Kerak Plateau was largely neglected. This was the result of its isolation and the lack of security on the plateau. Although nominally part of the Ottoman Empire since the sixteenth century, the Kerak Plateau was largely independent of Ottoman rule until the late nineteenth century. There are several accounts of western travelers, including early archaeologists, being apprehended and

\textsuperscript{55} Harold W. F. Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), 118.

\textsuperscript{56} Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 10.181.
held for ransom. The accounts of these early travelers are important for two reasons: they sometimes recorded sites that have since been lost to modern development and they present scholars with vivid accounts of life on the plateau during that time.\textsuperscript{57}

In 1924 William F. Albright made a trip to the Kerak Plateau on his “Expedition to Moab and the Dead Sea.” Albright visited the sites of Faqu’, Adir (where he found a supposed early Iron Age temple), Rabbah, Khanzirah, and Kerak. Albright also discovered painted ceramic ware that he claimed was uniquely Moabite.\textsuperscript{58} With the discovery of the Balu’a Stele in 1930 archaeological interest in the Kerak Plateau picked up; and within four years there were soundings by J. W. Crowfoot at Balu’a, at Adir by Albright, and the first season of Nelson Glueck’s “Explorations in Eastern Palestine,” which focused on this region.\textsuperscript{59}

Glueck’s survey was ground-breaking in that he not only recorded and described sites but also collected and analyzed surface ceramics. This led Glueck to make broad generalizations concerning the history of human settlement in central Jordan.\textsuperscript{60} In his first published report in 1934 he draws a number of conclusions. First, there was a strong Bronze Age occupation in Moab between the twenty-third and eighteenth centuries, perhaps destroyed by the Hyksos. Second, this was followed by a gap in settlement attested at most

\textsuperscript{57} Parker, \textit{Final Report}, 18.


\textsuperscript{60} Miller, \textit{Kerak Survey}, 16.
sites he visited (except Jalul, el-Misna, and el-Medeiyineh) that lasted from the eighteenth until the thirteenth centuries. Third, there was a highly developed Moabite civilization during the Iron Age. He concludes that the Iron I period was by far the richer and that by the second half of the Iron II period Moab was in decline, a situation that he attributed to the destruction of many Moabite cities by Jehoram of Israel and Jehoram of Judah during Mesha’s reign. Fourth, he claims that the Moabites never recovered from this weakness and that the region of Moab was unoccupied from the seventh or sixth century until the Nabataeans arrived in the fourth century B.C.E.\(^{61}\)

In Glueck’s third report he claims that the Moabites were concerned about an eastern threat, based on his discovery of a line of forts, including a group on the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau extending from Muhai in the south to Khirbet el-Medeiyineh in the north. He also identifies similar north/south lines of forts in Ammon and Edom and suggests that this eastern threat was most likely the desert-dwelling nomadic Arabs.

In a word, the necessity of protecting the e. frontier of Edom, Moab, and ‘Ammon, compelled the construction of a line of defenses along the e. border of each of these countries, which for all intents and purposes might just as well have been constructed by one central authority. The fear of invasion from the desert regions to the east was common to all of the political entities that occupied the fertile sections of the Transjordan plateau lands, to which the Bedu always looked longingly, and into which the Bedu always raided as soon as the central political authority weakened and could no longer hold them in check.\(^{62}\)

\(^{61}\)Glueck, \textit{Explorations in Eastern Palestine I}, 81-83.
The first major Moabite site to be excavated was Dhiban, just north of the Mujib on the Dhiban Plateau. Excavations were carried out between 1950 and 1953 under the direction of Fred Winnett, William Reed, and Douglas Tushingham.\(^{63}\) William Morton then excavated three more seasons in the late fifties and early sixties.\(^{64}\) In 2004 Bruce Routledge, Benjamin Porter, and Danielle Steen began renewed excavation at the site.\(^{65}\) While the site has yielded evidence of occupation from the Paleolithic through the modern periods (with a break during the Middle to Late Bronze Age), this thesis will discuss only relevant Iron Age material. Especially notable are dramatic changes at Dhiban at the transition from Iron I to Iron II (ca. 1000 B.C.E.). Excavation thus far revealed three large building projects: an enlargement of the site bounded by a city wall, tower, and retaining walls; a possible gateway; and “Mesha’s Palace,” a 20 m x 43 m building. Though precise dates for these projects cannot be determined from available evidence, the excavators date them to Mesha’s rule based on the great building projects mentioned in the Mesha Inscription.\(^{66}\)

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\(^{66}\) Porter et al., “Power of Place,” 318.
Also at Dhiban are many Iron Age tombs, most reused many times for several generations.\(^\text{67}\) Most date to the Iron IIB period, perhaps suggesting a larger population at that time. Throughout the site there is a lull, and in some areas, evidence for abandonment, in the late Iron II period, the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E. This corresponds with the period of Assyrian domination and then decline in the region. Therefore the excavators suggest that during the Iron Age Dhiban experienced its highest point of prosperity associated with the public building initiated by Mesha in the second half of the ninth century.\(^\text{68}\)

During the 1960s and 1970s Emilio Olàvarri conducted soundings at Aroer on the northern bank of Wadi Mujib, and at Khirbet Medeinet el-Mu’arräjeh\(^\text{69}\) on the northeastern edge of the Kerak Plateau. At Aroer Olàvarri excavated a small (ca. 50 x 50 m) ninth century fort within a casemate wall.\(^\text{70}\) Khirbet Medeinet el-Mu’arräjeh was a defended settlement constructed in the Iron I period. The double-walled settlement lay behind a dry moat, limiting access to a land bridge at the south end of the site. The site is well suited for defense of the northeastern frontier of the Kerak Plateau. Miller suggested that defense may have been its primary *raison d’être* since it lies outside the primary agricultural zone and is not close to any major roads.\(^\text{71}\)

In 1979 Denyse Homés-Fredericq began excavations at Khirbet el-Lehun, located near Aroer, just north of Wadi Mujib. Lehun is a fortified, easily defendable site that

\(^{67}\) Winnett and Reed, *The Excavations at Dhiban*, 57-60 and Tushingham, *The Excavations at Dhiban*, 86-105.

\(^{68}\) Porte et al., “Power of Place,” 318.


\(^{71}\) Miller, *Kerak Survey*, 71.
provides an excellent view into Wadi Mujib. The site produced both Iron I and Iron II materials. The Iron I period included a fort, rebuilt in the Iron II period as a significantly smaller structure which included a tower. Within the walled settlement was a block of houses (n=21), suggesting a substantial population.\textsuperscript{72}

The 1970s and 1980s saw two important surveys of the Kerak Plateau: J. Maxwell Miller’s \textit{Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau} and S. Thomas Parker’s \textit{Limes Arabicus Survey}. Miller’s survey covered most of the plateau and recorded 443 sites. This survey reexamined sites recorded by Glueck, documented other sites, and assembled a comprehensive archive of pottery from the plateau. Miller’s survey identified a large amount of Middle and Late Bronze Age ceramics, seriously contradicting Glueck’s findings. But because this interpretation contradicts evidence as interpreted in neighboring areas Routledge believes that much of Miller’s Middle Bronze and Late Bronze pottery was dated incorrectly and is probably Iron I.\textsuperscript{73} Miller’s view of the Iron Age forts on the eastern edge of the plateau will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

The \textit{Limes Arabicus Project} focused its survey on the eastern edge of the plateau; and though its main focus was on Roman and Byzantine sites, it added greatly to our knowledge of all periods, including many prehistoric sites that had been previously ignored. Consistent with Glueck’s view, this survey found very few Middle and Late Bronze sherds,\textsuperscript{74} perhaps supporting Routledge’s assertion that the Middle and Late Bronze Age ceramic evidence

\textsuperscript{72} Denyse Homés-Fredericq, \textit{Decouvrez Lehun et la Voie Royale / en de Koningsweg} (Brussels: Comité Belge de Fouilles en Jordanie / Belgische Comite voor Opgravingen in Jordanië, 1997), Fig. 41.
\textsuperscript{73} Routledge, \textit{Moab in the Iron Age}, 79.
\textsuperscript{74} Clark, Kouchy, and Parker, \textit{Limes Arabicus Final Report}, 38.
from Miller’s survey was misdated. Parker’s survey is particularly important because it included the ten Iron Age fortified sites that are the central focus of this thesis. Parker concurred with Glueck about the existence of an Iron Age system of forts that guarded the eastern Kerak Plateau from nomadic Arabs.\textsuperscript{75}

In 1933, three years after the discovery of the Balu’a Stele, John W. Crowfoot made the first soundings at Balu’.\textsuperscript{76} Just over fifty years later Udo Worschech began his own excavations at Balu’, revealing occupation from the Early Bronze Age through the Mamlûk period, with peaks of occupation in the Early and Middle Bronze as well the Iron Age. He dated construction of Balu’s famous basalt \textit{qasr} to the Late Bronze Age. Like Dhiban, Balu’ also experienced strong growth during the Iron I to Iron II transition. During the Iron IIA and IIB periods the site expanded east about 200 meters, beyond the earlier defense wall, requiring a new defense wall.\textsuperscript{77} A unique feature of this site is its “Assyrian-Babylonian courtyard house,” so-called because it resembles house types from Assyria and bears no resemblance to the three- or four-room (“pillared”) houses common in Palestine during the Iron Age.\textsuperscript{78} Pottery from the house dates to the Iron IIB and C periods and includes Assyrian-type carinated bowls.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 38-42.
\textsuperscript{76} John W. Crawfoot, “An Expedition to Balu’ah” \textit{Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement} 76-84 (1934).
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
Khirbat al-Mudayna in Wadi ath-Thamad lies in northern Moab, not far from Dhiban. Excavations began in 1996 by P. M. Michele Daviau. It has proven to be a unique site with many unexpected finds. Although founded in the Iron I period, evidence from Khirbat al-Mudayna, like Dhiban, suggests a large-scale period of growth at the transition to the Iron II period. This is evident in building projects such as a six-chambered gate and a small temple with limestone altars. In order to construct the gate older food-storage silos were filled with soil from the Iron I period to provide stability; then the site was fortified.

Khirbat al-Mudayna experienced its peak prosperity during the early Iron II period but in a much more dynamic way than Dhiban. A series of industrial buildings suggest large-scale textile production. Textile tools, such as spindles, loom weights, basalt grinding stones as well as stone basins made up 25% of the artifacts. This level of industrial development in Moab was neither known nor implied in any of the ancient texts and is unattested elsewhere in Moab. However, the sheep and wool of Moab are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible; and it therefore seems reasonable that the Moabites would have made the step to textile production. The scale of this industry at Khirbat al-Mudayna implies a market for these goods. The so-called King’s Highway extending north-south through Moab has traditionally been seen as an Iron Age predecessor to later Nabataean and Roman trade routes (this

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81 Ibid., 310-311.
82 2 Kings 3:4-5.
83 Parker, Final Report, 275.
assumption will be discussed in chapter 5). Its presumed existence in the Iron Age might explain why sites such as Dhiban lay so near the highway.\textsuperscript{84} Under this assumption, Khirbet al-Mudayna was not an ideal place along the trade route from Edom to Damascus, as it lies further toward the eastern desert. However, the export of its textile products is suggested by luxury goods from this period, including wooden furniture, imitation Assyrian palace ware vessels, seals, and the previously mentioned limestone altar, all of which seemingly represent imports that might have been exchanged for the textiles produced there.\textsuperscript{85}

Not much has been published as yet on the excavations at Khirbet al-Mudayna. However, this site casts a new light on Moab and perhaps on Moab’s state formation. It seems that an industry and trade on this scale implies governmental centralization not found in most tribal societies.

Several other archaeological projects in Moab began in the 1990s. One is the excavation at Tell Madaba. Since the modern city lies atop the tell itself, excavations are conducted amidst the urban settlement. This is the site of Iron Age Medeba which, like Khirbet al-Mudayna, Balu’, and Dhiban, also experienced growth and prosperity during the early Iron II period. Textual sources reference the importance of Medeba during the Iron II period. The city is mentioned in the Mesha Inscription as one of the cities that Mesha captured from the Israelites. The city apparently remained under Moabite control because it

\textsuperscript{84} Porter et al., “Power of Place,” 316.
\textsuperscript{85} Daviau and Chadwick, “Shepherds and Weavers,” 311.
is listed as a Moabite city in Isaiah 15:2. A survey of Madaba suggests that it was one of the largest Iron II sites in Jordan.\(^8^6\)

As elsewhere, Medeba seems to decline after the Iron IIB period. In Field B (which yielded most of the Iron Age evidence), Iron IIB remains were sealed by a Late Hellenistic complex. Though the site has not yielded stratified occupation from the Iron IIC period, unstratified Iron IIC ceramics were found among the fills associated with the Hellenistic complex.\(^8^7\)

The Kerak Resources Project (KRP) conducted its regional survey during the 1990s and began excavations at Khirbet Mudaybi’ in 1997. The project is in many ways a continuation of Miller’s survey. Two of the KRP directors, James Pace and Gerald Mattingly, were also a part of Miller’s team and their initial goal was to revisit sites surveyed by Miller to document any subsequent changes at those sites. A later goal was to focus on the southeastern plateau, not covered by Miller or Parker.\(^8^8\)

Excavation revealed three periods of occupation: Iron II, Byzantine, and Islamic. The site is best known for its “proto-Aeolic capitals,” originally discovered by Glueck and rediscovered by the current excavators. These capitals, along with Mudaybi’s four-


\(^{8^8}\) Linton, Gregory, “What Have We Learned About the Karak Plateau Since Nelson Glueck?” Delivered as the Presidential Address for ASOR Southeast Annual Meeting on March 15, 2009, in Greensboro, NC.
chambered gate, imply a connection with a central authority of some kind. The excavators suggest that the fort was built during the Assyrian domination of Moab. An earthquake seems to have destroyed the fort not long after it was built, which explains at least to the excavators the paucity of Iron Age material.  

Lastly, Bruce Routledge conducted important work on the eastern Kerak Plateau. During the 1990s he surveyed several Iron Age fortified sites (including some central to this dissertation) and excavated Khirbet al-Mudayna ‘Aliya. The results from this fieldwork are crucial and therefore will be discussed extensively in chapter 4.  

**Secondary Sources**

Scholarly interpretations of Moab’s history have shifted over the past century. As with most archaeological research focused on the Iron Age Levant, the origins of research in Moab lie within “biblical archaeology.” Therefore, most early archaeologists and historians, such as Glueck, who studied Iron Age Moab (as well as surrounding regions), assumed that the biblical references to Moab were historically reliable. As already acknowledged in this chapter, Glueck advanced the study of Iron Age Moab; but he essentially accepted Moab’s history as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible. For example, while discussing the supposed decline in archaeological evidence from Moab after the eighth century B.C.E., he states that


From the middle of early Iron II Moab entered upon a rapid decline. There is an extreme paucity of pottery from the latter half of EI II. Moab does not seem to have recovered from the destruction wrought by Jehoram of Israel and Jehoram of Judah, although they failed to capture Kir-hareseth because of Mesha’s sacrifice of his eldest son.\textsuperscript{91}

It seems that Glueck interpreted his archaeological fieldwork under the assumption of the essential historicity of the Bible.

A. H. Van Zyl’s 1960 monograph, \textit{The Moabites}, was the first attempt to use both archaeological and literary evidence for a scholarly synthesis focused on the Moabites. The aim is clearly stated in his introduction, “…to scrutinize the history and civilization of the Moabites within the framework of their geographical and historical relationships.”\textsuperscript{92} Van Zyl appropriately uses the archaeological evidence published by Glueck and Albright, the cuneiform and Egyptian texts that reference Moab, and the Mesha Inscription. However, Van Zyl, like Glueck, uses the Hebrew Bible literally when creating his historical narrative. When discussing the Hebrew Bible Van Zyl states, “…the authors of the O.T. [Old Testament] maintained a vivid objectivity. Therefore, the trustworthiness of the O.T. information about the Moabites need not be defended here.”\textsuperscript{93} However, although his historical methodology was fundamentally flawed, his compilation of the sources relevant to Moab is thorough and therefore useful to any study of Moab.

Udo Worschech began work on Moab in the mid-1980s. As the director of the archaeological excavations at Balu’, the site that yielded the Balu’ Steele, Worschech was

\textsuperscript{91} Glueck, \textit{Explorations in Eastern Palestine, I}, 82.
\textsuperscript{92} Van Zyl, \textit{Moabites}, 2.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 5.
interested in the relationship between Egypt and Moab during the Late Bronze Age and, to a lesser extent the Iron Age as well. Worschech argues that Egyptian interest in Moab may have stemmed from its caravan route and/or to prevent Moab from forming an alliance with the Hittite states to the north, if necessary by military force. Regardless, Worschech stresses the need for more stratified archaeological excavations in Moab to procure more evidence of Egypt’s presence and influence in the region.94

Miller, who began his work almost fifty years after Glueck, approached his study of Moab with clearly stated goals and methodologies that indicate he aimed to further archaeological knowledge of the Kerak Plateau. He suggests that the Kerak Plateau remained under-studied during the 1970s and 1980s because “Archaeologists working in Palestine have also tended to concentrate west of the Jordan because of the region’s biblical associations.”95 Miller, unlike Glueck, uses biblical references in a much more critical and thus more appropriate manner. For example, he uses the inconsistencies of the biblical account of “the exodus” that have frustrated biblical scholars for centuries to discern Israel’s political and cultural ties to the region north of the Mujib.96

Routledge’s goals and methodologies differed from earlier scholars. He uses the archaeology of central Jordan to fit Moab into larger theoretical frameworks, namely, those concerned with settlement patterns and state formation in the Iron Age Levant. Routledge’s research goals made his work on Iron Age Moab and central Jordan relevant outside of

95 Miller, Kerak Survey, 17.
96 Miller, “Israelite Journey.”
“biblical archaeology.” He has shown that the study of Moab can provide an excellent case study to address broader research questions.

**The History of Moab**

The various primary sources reveal some details about the history of Moab but only allow a bare outline of its history. Egyptian sources suggest that Moab in some sense had emerged in the Late Bronze Age as a tribal community with small settlements that may or may not have been fortified. No later than the ninth century B.C.E., some sort of Moabite Kingdom had emerged. Under King Mesha in the late ninth century Moab expanded its territory (in which resided different tribes) by military force. During this period there were great building projects; such as roads, towers, water systems, etc. Furthermore, the discovery of large-scale textile production at Khirbet al-Mudayna strongly implies a greater degree of centralization than previously thought. It certainly appears that by this time Moab was a state.

Around this same time, the Assyrian Empire was beginning to conduct its own, notoriously bloody campaigns to conquer its western neighbors in Syria and Palestine. Tiglath Pileser III conquered much of Mesopotamia and the Levant and created a system of client states in which the subject Levantine kingdoms submitted to the yoke of Assyria and paid tribute.\(^{97}\)

It appears that Moab was usually a submissive client state under the Assyrian Empire, until Assurbanipal pulled out of the region sometime after 640 B.C.E.\(^ {98}\) Then Moab

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\(^{98}\) Routledge, *Intermittent Agriculture*, 373.
experienced a brief period of independence until the Neo-Babylonian conquest of the Near East in the early sixth century B.C.E. Though there is no mention of Moab in any Neo-Babylonian source, the Hebrew Bible states that Nebuchadnezzar used Moabite troops during one of his raids on Judah.\textsuperscript{99} Whether or not this is true, it does seem to lend credence to the fact that Moab did exist as a client state of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. However, the archaeological sources insist that soon after its incorporation into the Neo-Babylonian Empire Moab seems to have disappeared as a state, whether by conquest, deportation, or slaughter.

\textsuperscript{99} 2 Kings 24:2.
Chapter Three

The Ceramics of Iron Age Moab

Although Albright first identified “Moabite” ceramics in the 1920s (see chapter 2), a comprehensive Moabite ceramic typology is still lacking. Early excavations in Moab relied on published typologies from neighboring regions, mainly Ammon or Israel. However, recent excavations have suggested that although the Iron Age forms in Ammon, Moab, and Israel may appear to be similar, they evolved as different traditions (see below). Therefore, comparisons among regions, while useful in generating general trends, cannot be used to closely date Moabite ceramics. Only continued excavation and definitive publication of Iron Age sites in the region and use of absolute dating techniques will permit a real understanding of Moabite ceramics. This chapter will review the major publications of Iron Age ceramics from central Jordan on both the Kerak and Dhiban Plateaus, and will summarize current knowledge about Moabite ceramics. This will also clarify the large amount of work still required to create a useful ceramic typology for future fieldwork in the region.

Dhiban was the first major excavation in Moab to produce a detailed ceramic publication. Winnett deals only briefly with the ceramics from the first season of fieldwork at Dhiban (1950-51). He explains that the first season yielded few significant stratified deposits. He does note that

Iron Age sherds occurred sporadically at all levels in the debris on the east side of the mound, in the tower, and in the stratified area at the southeast corner. Besides red-burnished, brown-burnished, and black burnished ware, there were fragments of
black-burnished perfume juglets, and sherds painted with red bands over a cream slip.\textsuperscript{100}

Reed’s publication from the second season at Dhiban (1952) provides more details on the ceramic evidence. He explains that many vessels from Dhiban were identical to forms found in Palestine and in East Jordan; however, he mentions that some forms are “distinctive and cannot be given an absolute dating until the history and the pottery of Moab become better known.”\textsuperscript{101} This implies that Reed uses the ceramic typologies from neighboring regions in his analysis.

The 1952 season focused on the area near the southeastern gateway and the tombs and therefore did not produce a site-wide sequence of occupation. Reed asserts that the pottery was in accord with Glueck’s conclusions concerning Moab during the Bronze and Iron Ages. He reconstructs a substantial Early Bronze Age settlement at Dhiban based entirely on the presence of unstratified Early Bronze Age pottery. He recognizes no occupation during the Middle and the beginning of the Late Bronze Ages. Reed does suggest that the site was reoccupied around the Late Bronze/Iron Age transition, based on a few Late Bronze and Iron I sherds; but there was not enough evidence to determine the nature of occupation at Dhiban during the Iron I period. Reed’s group of late Iron I pottery includes two burnished bowls painted in bands of red and black (Figure 3.1). He notes that these bowls resembled some of Glueck’s early Iron I Edomite bowls from Tawilan, though it must be stressed that Glueck dated these unstratified bowls based on their similarity to unstratified forms from his survey of Moab. In addition, later excavations at Tawilan suggest that the site

\textsuperscript{100} Winnett and Reed, \textit{Excavations at Dhiban}, 24.  
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 51.
of Tawilan was not occupied until the late Iron II period.\textsuperscript{102} Therefore Reed’s dating of this form to the late Iron I period is not completely reliable as these bowls were found in tombs along with many Iron II forms.\textsuperscript{103}

Reed considers two other sherds as late Iron I or early Iron II. The first is described as a “fine buff ware” decorated with orange and black horizontal lines and an orange lattice decoration. The second sherd exhibits the same lattice decoration near its rim in addition to a series of small orange-red dots around its neck (Figure 3.2:5,13) These sherds are from an unstratified context near the tombs at Dhiban but Reed compares them to sherds that Glueck published from Edom with a “trellis pattern.” Glueck also dated his “trellis patterned” sherds to the early Iron I period.\textsuperscript{104}

The Iron II ceramic corpus from Dhiban’s second season was substantial and suggests settlement in the early Iron II period until the late 7\textsuperscript{th} or early 6\textsuperscript{th} century, when Reed suggests that Dhiban was abandoned. Most of the Iron II pottery from both the tell and the tombs was assigned to the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{105} Reed claims that most of the Iron II ceramics have parallels on both sides of the Jordan, at such sites as Tell Beit Mirsim, Tell en-Nasbeh, Lachish, Beth-shemesh, Beth-zur, Megiddo, and Hazor in Palestine, and Amman, Sahab, and Meqabelein in Jordan. The Dhiban tombs yielded three complete forms that have no close

\textsuperscript{103} Winnett & Reed, \textit{Excavations at Dhiban}, 53.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 51.
parallels: a water jar (Figure 3.3:1), another jar (Figure 3.3:5), and a handmade cooking pot (Figure 3.3:3) whose associated carbonized grain dated to about 850 B.C.E.  

Published two decades after his work at Dhiban, Tushingham’s report on the 1952-53 season of excavation attempts to work through some of the discrepancies apparent in earlier reports. Tushingham provides a more nearly complete picture of the history of occupation at Dhiban and numerous sherds from that season. Though he was able to identify Iron Age walls, most ceramic evidence derived from fill layers. Still lacking sufficient stratified ceramic evidence from the region, he dates his pottery largely by parallels from other regions.  

Morton excavated Dhiban in 1955, 1956, and 1965 but published only a few short articles. Although the goal was to excavate the Iron Age complexes referenced in the Mesha Inscription, he did not publish any ceramics from these seasons and offers little in the way of physical sherd descriptions. He states that early Iron I (ca. 1200 B.C.E.) sherds, including carinated bowls, collar-rimmed storage jars, and “a few thick, gritty, unevenly fired sherds with black interiors which are customarily assigned to the beginning of the Iron I period” appeared within the Iron II strata. 

Morton also gives little attention to the Iron II ceramic evidence, even though he claimed that it was the dominant period excavated. This ceramic assemblage was characterized by decoration of red wash and burnish, often accompanied by white paint with

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106 Ibid., 54.  
107 Tushingham, *Excavations at Dhiban*.  
109 Ibid., 240.
black line borders. He also mentions a pattern of red painted bands interspersed with black
lines on a tan slip found on either the outside or inside of ceramic vessels. He also suggests
that one unique Iron II sherd, an extremely thin sherd of Samaria ware, might indicate a
relationship between Israel and Dhiban in this period.\textsuperscript{110} However, basing such an assertion
on a single sherd seems highly questionable.

Renewed excavation of Dhiban began in 2004 by Bruce Routledge, Benjamin Porter,
and Danielle Steen. However, only the first of three excavation seasons has been published to
date. The first season focused on the Islamic period and did not publish any Iron Age
pottery.\textsuperscript{111} However, a substantial amount of unstratified Iron II pottery has been recovered
from classical period fills. Most of these Iron Age ceramics are dated to the Iron IIB period
based on parallels in Palestine.\textsuperscript{112} The project is excavating near some of the same areas that
Morton dug in the 1950s but has found little from the Iron I period. However, it has
recovered a lot of Middle Islamic pottery. Much of the coarse ware from this later period
appears at first glance to be similar to Iron Age coarse ware. Since little was known about the
Middle Islamic period in Jordan in the 1950s, it is possible that Morton and others
misidentified some Middle Islamic sherds as Iron I “thick, gritty, unevenly fired sherds.”\textsuperscript{113}

Emilio Olàvarri published some Iron Age ceramics from Aroer in 1965. He claims
that the assemblage from Aroer was similar to that from Deir ‘Alla in Ammon. He notes

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 241.
\textsuperscript{111} Benjamin Porter, Bruce Routledge, Danielle Steen, Carla Parlsow, Lidewijde de Jong, and
\textit{Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan} 49 (2005), 207.
\textsuperscript{112} Personal communication with Bruce Routledge.
\textsuperscript{113} Personal observation of the ceramic assemblage currently being excavated at Dhiban.
significant differences between the ceramics of Aroer and of the same period in Palestine. This includes burnishing by hand at Aroer, reserved “aux vases d’usages relevé.” Furthermore, he assumes that the red-slipped and burnished ceramics were imports from Palestine, in contrast to the usually white-slipped local ware at Aroer. These generalizations regarding the coarse nature of Moabite ceramics seems valid at some sites. However, many Moabite sites have yielded burnished red-slipped wares, implying that if Aroer imported its red-burnished pottery, it might not necessarily have come from as far away as Palestine.

In the ceramic evidence published from Khirbet Medeinet el-Muarrajeh (KMM), Olàvarri notes the total absence of painted sherds and imported ceramics. A white slip is typical; and all jars were wheel-made, simple, and practical. The style of burnishing at KMM was previously unknown. Olàvarri also observes that the entire ceramic corpus from KMM was different from those from Aroer and Madaba. One surprising feature was the absence of large storage jars typical of the Iron I period. He suggests that perhaps this was a Palestinian form that did not reach Moab during Iron I. However, he did note his excavation of KMM was limited in scope.\(^{115}\)

Olàvarri published three carinated bowls from KMM (Figure 3.4:4-6). He notes that their white slip was typical of Iron I Moabite ceramics. Their flat bases are similar to other carinated bowls from Jordan, such as those from the last phase of Late Bronze Aroer as well from the Iron I (first half of twelfth century) Madaba tomb and Dhiban. However, the bowls

\(^{115}\) Olàvarri, “Sondeo Arqueologico en Khirbet Medeineh,” 141-142.
from KMM exhibit more pronounced carination and shorter necks. Olàvarri dates them to the second half of the twelfth century and the first quarter of the eleventh century.\footnote{Ibid., 14}

Olàvarri also published three examples of cooking pot rims. The first type (Figure 3.4:1) is 30 cm in diameter with an inturned neck typical of the latter part of Iron I (first half of the eleventh century), it survives in Palestine into Iron II. He also asserts that the pots with small diameters in (Figure 3.4:2-3) are characteristic of KMM. He claims that typologically this form belongs to Iron II not Iron I, noting that the vessel in Figure 3.4:3 appears at Dhiban, where it is dated by the excavators from the ninth to sixth centuries. However, Olàvarri reports that these two jars were found in good Iron I stratigraphic contexts at KMM and thus actually date to the Iron I period.\footnote{Ibid., 142.}

Olàvarri concludes that this ceramic corpus was homogenous and dates to the final period of occupation of the fort. It differs from typical Late Bronze II ceramics from Jordan, for example, from the tomb at Madaba and from Aroer. On the other hand, he argues for the absence of typical elements introduced into Palestinian ceramics in the last third of the eleventh century (e.g., red slip, hand burnishing, etc.) Olàvarri therefore dates the ceramic evidence from KMM between ca. 1125-1050.\footnote{Ibid., 143.}

In 1983 Olàvarri reports that for the most part he recovered the same types of ceramics published earlier. The dominant forms were large storage jars and kraters, with fewer numbers of jars, “kettles,” and bowls. Some sherds identified as collared-rim storage jars were used to date the associated pottery to the Iron I period. On the other hand, the

\footnote{Ibid., 14}
\footnote{Ibid., 142.}
\footnote{Ibid., 143.}
characteristic “collared rim” of the Palestinian models were lacking in *pithoi* from KMM, leading him to conclude that this form evolved separately in Moab.\(^{119}\)

Homès-Fredericq’s work at Lehun also yielded much Iron Age material. Unfortunately, like other excavators in Moab, she dates her ceramics by parallels outside Moab. She states that, “Other potsherds of the Iron I and II assemblage belong to a local tradition known as Moabite (alternatively labeled “Ammonite or “Cypro-Phoenician”).\(^{120}\) This suggests that Homès-Fredericq believes that the scholarship up until the late 1980s considered all the “local traditions” of the Levant to be equivalent.

The Iron Age assemblage from Lehun included large storage jars, cooking pots, bowls, and jugs. Homès-Fredericq does admit that dating the Iron Age ceramics from Lehun was difficult because she recognized little change over time in the ceramic tradition. She characterizes the Iron Age ceramics as relatively thick, primarily reddish and brownish-yellow in color. Decoration was rare and often consisted of brown-red linear and geometric motifs (Figure 3.5).\(^{121}\)

Though the first soundings at Balu’ were done in the 1930s, their publication was of little help in this analysis. J. W. Crowfoot published a selection of pottery but without much descriptive detail from his soundings at Balu’ah. Lacking many stratified sites in Jordan for ceramic comparisons, he probably compared vessel types to ones from Palestine. He dates

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\(^{121}\) Homès-Fredericq, *Decouvrez Lehun*, 161.
the pottery from the top meter of soil near the north town wall to the “Middle Iron period.” Crowfoot claims that the ceramic evidence beneath this first layer was homogeneous and dates it all (excluding two Late Bronze Age sherds) to the early Iron I period. He asserts that the ceramics from Balu’ah were of much poorer quality than those from Palestine. 122

Worschech published a preliminary study of Iron II pottery after his first season of excavation at Balu’ in 1986. Worschech published a series of bowls, jars, cooking pots, jugs and juglets, fine bowls, kraters, bases, plates, and decorated body sherds and cited parallels from Hesban, Aro’er, and Balu’. However, he does not include a discussion or typology, promising these at a later date (Figure 3.6). 123

Worschech later published collared-rim storage jars, one found *in situ* in a pure Iron II context. This was an important find because the collared-rim storage jar had not previously been reported south of Wadi Mujib, though he does not mention the “*grand jarres de stockage*” mentioned by Olávarri (see above). Worschech speculates that these jars may have been imports from “Eastern Palestine.” He also mentions that the appearance of these jars in an Iron II context is remarkable in itself, since this jar was thought to date only to the Iron I period (Figure 3.7). 124

In a later publication Worschech published Assyrian-type carinated bowls from the Iron IIB-C period among Iron IIB-C period pottery inside the “Assyrian-type house” from

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122 Crowfoot, “An Expedition to Balu’ah,” 79.
This is significant because, if this pottery is dated correctly, it might indicate that Balu’ was occupied right up to, if not into, the Persian period.

P. M. Michèle Daviau’s research at Khirbat al-Mudayna on the Wadi ath-Thamad began in 1995. She collected almost 3,000 sherds from the surface of the tell and concluded that the ceramic assemblage was similar to those south of the Mujib. She also claims that late Iron II pottery at Khirbat al-Mudayna was significantly different from pottery of the same period in Ammon. Daviau identifies several Iron II lamps within the alleged “Moabite sanctuary” at Khirbat al-Mudayna. One of these lamps appeared to be of Judean style, although without chemical analysis its origin cannot be determined. She also identifies several jars, shallow bowls, and jugs, as well as a Judean style decanter and a white-slipped funnel or chalice (Figures 3.8 and 3.9). Although a complete ceramic study awaits the end of excavation, Daviau offers some general observations about the ceramics from Khirbet al-Mudayna. She claims that the Moabite coarse wares at Khirbet al-Mudayna have little in common with similar vessels from either Ammon or Palestine. Some of the most unique vessels are kraters and ovoid storage jars, which can have two, three or four handles. Jars, juglets, bottles, and Cypro-Phoenician jugs also appear in the corpus (Figure 3.10 and 3.11). Among the fine wares are imitation Assyrian palace wares; but most common is an eggshell ware, decorated by burnishing with painted black and white bands on the body.

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125 Worschech, “City Planning,” 145.
claims that the ceramics from Khirbet al-Mudayna are from a Moabite tradition and that this is clearly identifiable when compared to the vastly different Ammonite tradition at Jalul, only 5 km away.\textsuperscript{128}

Tell Madaba also remains under excavation and therefore a complete treatment of its ceramic evidence remains unpublished. However, some ceramics from the excavation appear in preliminary reports. Harrison et al. published a cache of Iron IIB period (ninth/eighth century B.C.E.) pottery (Figure 3.12) from Field A from trash deposits superimposed over a Bronze Age context. This pottery is generally very coarse with little decorating or wheel burnishing. The date is based on a lack of Iron IIC pottery attested from neighboring Ammonite sites such as Tell Jalul, Tell Hisban, and Tell al-‘Umaryi. Harrison et al. conclude that the pottery was most similar to sites south and west of Madaba, including Khirbet al-Mudayna.\textsuperscript{129}

Field B at Tell Madaba produced much Iron II pottery similar to that from Field A and thus also dated to the ninth/eighth and early seventh centuries B.C.E. A preliminary report of the Field B material begins to classify these ceramics from the site. Like the Field A corpus, the Field B pottery is characterized by an absence of the wheel burnish associated with Iron IIC ceramics. There was, however, frequent application of white slip and fine ware bowls and jugs, painted in reddish brown and black bands (Figures 3.13 & 3.14).

\textsuperscript{128} Daviau and Chadwick, “Shepherds and Weavers in a ‘Global Economy,’” 311-313.
Some sherds from this context point to a date in the later Iron II period. One example is the S-rim krater (Figure 3.14:20), generally dated to the eighth and seventh centuries. Another indication of a later date is the evolution of the rim profile of folded rim bowls. This form is thought to have evolved from a triangular rim (Figure 3.13:13-14) to a more rounded rim (Figure 3.13:15) around the eight/seventh centuries B.C.E. Also, the rectangular rimmed cooking pot (Figure 3.14:24-25) is usually dated to the Iron IIC period; yet this form was associated with Late Hellenistic pottery and is therefore thought to be residual from an earlier context.\textsuperscript{130}

Most significant to this thesis is Routledge’s analysis of ceramics collected and excavated from several sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau. This will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

The study of the ceramics of Iron Age central Jordan leaves much to be desired. In most excavations conducted prior to the 1990s the ceramics received little attention with only generic descriptions. Excavations since 1990 are doing a better job of publishing their ceramic finds and offering relevant parallels. A better understanding of Moabite ceramics will emerge from continued excavation and definitive publication of Iron Age sites in the region and the use of absolute dating techniques.

Though the current knowledge of Moabite ceramics has serious limitations, it has made it possible to date sites in Moab more closely than was possible just twenty years ago.

The published material presented in this chapter, access to unpublished material from current excavations, and personal communication with excavators working in Moab has allowed the author to date more closely the ceramic evidence associated with seven of the ten sites examined in this study (see chapter four).
Chapter Four

The Iron Age Fortified Sites of the Eastern Kerak Plateau

This thesis focuses on ten Iron Age fortified sites previously surveyed by the *Limes Arabicus* Project.\(^{131}\) This includes both Iron I and Iron II sites selected on the basis of geographic proximity, the quantity of Iron Age sherds collected, and available published material. The ten sites (with their site numbers in Parker’s survey) are: Qasr ed-Daba’a (site 194), Khirbet Thamayil (site 456), Qasr Saliya (site 2), Qasr Abu el-Kharaqa (site 110), Qasr el-‘Al (site 124), Khirbet ‘Arbid (site 464), esh-Sharif (site 477), Khirbet Medeinet ‘Aliya (site 149), Parker’s site 7, and Parker’s site 57. Many of these were visited by Glueck’s and Miller’s surveys and a few were re-examined in the 1990s by Routledge. However, their function and dates continue to be debated.

As mentioned above, Glueck reported a line of fortified sites on the eastern border of Moab that he believed was constructed to protect Moab from an eastern threat attested in both biblical and Assyrian sources. In the past seventy years the validity of this interpretation has been called into question. This chapter will consider these reexaminations, address the nature and function of these ten fortified sites, and offer another reevaluation of Glueck’s interpretation.

In order to address Glueck’s claim, one must first examine the excavated and surveyed forts in Moab, both north and south of Wadi Mujib. Eight fortified sites bordering the Mujib and its major tributaries have yielded Iron I architecture or ceramic evidence:

\(^{131}\) Parker, *Final Report.*
Khirbet al-Mudayna al-‘Aliya (KMA), Khirbet al-Mudayna al-Mu’arradja (KMM), Abu al-Kharaqa, Are’or, Balu’ Khirbet al-Mudayna al-Mujib, ar-Rumayl and Lehun. All of these fortified sites offer commanding views of neighboring wadis and lie within a marginal agricultural zone that receives only between 150-300 mm of rain per year; and most contain fortifications consisting of casemate walls and/or towers (though some of these architectural features may have been constructed during subsequent occupation).132 As KMA and Abu al-Kharaqa are among the ten sites selected for this thesis, they will be discussed in detail later in the chapter. Of the remaining six sites only two appear to have been fortified with a casemate wall during the Iron I period: KMM and Lehun.

The site of KMM exhibits a double wall along its western side as well as a tower-gate complex at its southern end. Olàvarri dates this construction to the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the twelfth century B.C.E. based however on ceramic coarse wares that are difficult to date and could have originated at any time between 1200-1050 B.C.E.133 Routledge dates the occupation of KMM to the late eleventh through the tenth centuries based on his reinterpretation of Olàvarri’s published ceramic evidence from the site.134 The ceramic evidence at Lehun implies that while the site’s original construction might date to the twelfth century, it experienced rebuilding during the eleventh century B.C.E.135

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Iron I forts at KMM (Figure 4.1) and Lehun (Figure 4.2) had domestic structures not only along their casemate walls but also in the central portion of the sites. Homès-Fredericq estimates the presence of ca. 60-80 of these structures at Lehun. Olâvarri only excavated two or three of them at KMM, suggesting the site originally had ca. 25-35.

Three important surveys since Glueck’s have contributed to our knowledge of the ten fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau on which this thesis focuses: Miller’s Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau, Parker’s Limes Arabicus Project, and Routledge’s 1990s survey Intermittent Agriculture and the Political Economy of Iron Age Moab. Each survey published evidence on several of these fortified sites. The ceramic evidence collected from these sites is crucial. Because of the limited knowledge in the 1980s of “Moabite” ceramics, the dating of these fortified sites published by Miller and Parker is broadly accurate but somewhat nebulous. For example, most sites are simply labeled as “Iron I” or “Iron II” and some only as “Iron Age.” In the thirty years since the Parker and Miller survey pottery was originally examined new excavations in central Jordan have contributed to our knowledge of “Moabite” ceramics. The author has re-examined most of the ceramic evidence from the Limes Arabicus Project’s survey associated with these ten sites and therefore is able to date some of the Iron II fortified sites more closely within the Iron II period.

Of the ceramic evidence examined, only Khirbet Medayna ‘Aliya (KMA) seemingly yielded exclusively Iron I sherds. The other fortified site that the Limes Arabicus Project

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136 Homès-Fredericq, Decouvrez Lehun, 65.
137 Bruce Routledge, Moab in the Iron Age, 99.
reported as yielding predominantly Iron I sherds was Qasr Abu el-Kharaqa, whose pottery could not be located, making it impossible to validate that call. However, based on the general accuracy of the *Limes Arabicus* Project’s pottery calls, it seems reasonable to conclude that Abu al-Kharaqa is also primarily an Iron I site. Qasr Saliya also yielded some Iron I pottery; but it may have been represented by non-diagnostic sherds only, because there did not appear to be any Iron I sherds among the ceramic material associated with Qasr Saliya.

**Khirbet Madayna al-‘Aliya (KMA)**

KMA is an Iron I fort that sits on a large peninsula protruding into Wadi Mujib where it joins Wadi Mukheiris (Figure 4.3). This site is thought to be a “sister site” to KMM (discussed above). Their proximity (only five kilometers apart), remarkably similar features, and similar names confused early travelers and archaeologists. They are thought to be contemporary sites, both guarding the northeast border of the Kerak Plateau during the eleventh and tenth centuries B.C.E.\(^{138}\) Routledge excavated KMA in the mid-1990s and concluded that KMA was a single period site dating to around the second half of the eleventh century B.C.E. The unique location of KMA provides almost 360 degrees of natural defense, as its surrounding slopes are extremely steep. The only vulnerable location is a narrow land bridge that provides access to the site from the plateau to the west.

This walled site is of considerable size (ca. 275 x 110 m). The defensive architecture is unmistakable (Figure 4.4). The entire site is enclosed; and the portion of the site designed for habitation is surrounded by a casemate wall, over 4 m wide, which was incorporated into

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\(^{138}\) Miller, *Survey of the Kerak Plateau*, 71.
the architecture of most of the buildings on the site. At the center of the site exists a large
court that is void of architecture. The inhabitants of the site dug a large dry moat (ca. 35 m
long x 19 m wide x 5 m deep) commanded by a massive tower near the land bridge. A 3-4 m
wide road preserved for 147.5 m leads to the site along the northern slope of the promontory.
At the eastern end of the site is a small gate (2.5 m) that Routledge suggests provided access
to three cisterns dug into the steep slopes or in the wadi bottom below.\textsuperscript{139}

The ca. 35-45 domestic structures are of the so-called “pillared” house variety. The
houses were constructed of local, unworked stone, with no use of mudbrick. The construction
is simple, without plaster. Many houses are built in the “four room pattern” while others form
an “L pattern” in plan.\textsuperscript{140}

Routledge stresses the self-sufficiency of the site of KMA. Though he readily admits
that the striking defensive architecture strongly suggests that defense was a serious concern
of the inhabitants, he argues that it was not its only \textit{raison d’être}. In other words the
architecture does not necessarily imply that the primary function of the site and its
inhabitants was military. Therefore, one cannot necessarily conclude from the available
evidence that there was any sort of regular garrison, clearly defined border, or nonmilitary
sites in need of protection associated with this site.\textsuperscript{141}

Routledge also suggests that the site may not be as marginal as it seems. Though the
site exists in a very low rainfall zone, there is access to the perennial waters at the bottom of
the wadi (the region is still “marginal” based on the poor soils and limited rainfall). The

\textsuperscript{139} Routledge, “Seeing through Walls,” 48-49.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 56.
evidence suggests that the inhabitants made use of local resources from the wadi, including freshwater crab, partridge, and timber such as ash and poplar.\textsuperscript{142}

**Qasr Abu al-Kharaqa**

Qasr Abu al-Kharaqa (Figures 4.5 and 4.6) was also interpreted by the *Limes Arabicus* Project as an Iron I fortified site. As mentioned earlier, the author was not able to locate the ceramic evidence associated with this site. The site is ca. 60 x 60 m with a large tower in its southwest corner that still stands to 21 courses (ca. 8 m). There is a large door in the north wall. The LAP survey saw several interior rooms. However when the author visited the site in 2009, the tower was completely filled with rock tumble.

Like KMA, Abu al-Kharaqa has many rooms built against the interior of the curtain wall. Excavation could determine if Abu al-Kharaqa also had a large central courtyard. Outside of the enclosure to the southeast is a cistern that was still in use in the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{143} The site has a spectacular view to its west and northwest, overlooking the upper drainage of Wadi Mujib. The site is directly across a small wadi and within clear sight of Qasr el-‘Al, an Iron II fortified site discussed below. Therefore, even though the *Limes Arabicus* Project’s survey did not report a single Iron II sherd, it seems hard to believe that Qasr Abu al-Kharaqa would not have been reused at all during the Iron II period, unless of course the Iron I fort had been abandoned and the tower was a later addition during reuse in the Nabataean, Roman, and possibly Late Islamic periods.\textsuperscript{144}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{143} Parker et al., *Limes Arabicus Final Report*, 65.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 66.
\end{flushright}
The end of the Iron I period in the southern Levant is characterized by the formation of small local polities. It is during this time that the political polity of Moab first emerges. Though there is little literary evidence of how this transition played out on the eastern Kerak Plateau, the transition there is well marked in the archaeological record. The Iron I sites discussed above, including KMA and Qasr Abu al-Kharga and also KMM, Balu’, Khirbet al-Mudayna ala al-Mujib and Lahun, are examples of the large nucleated sites in Moab during the Iron I (and perhaps the early Iron II) period.¹⁴⁵

By the ninth century the sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau seem to be more dispersed. Both the Limes Arabicus Project and Miller’s Survey of the Kerak Plateau report a larger number of sites that were more often than not isolated structures during the Iron II period in significant contrast to the nucleated compounds of the Iron I period. This general trend is found throughout the Kerak Plateau, where the evidence leads to several conclusions about settlement during Iron II. First, there is more Iron II than Iron I ceramic evidence on the Kerak Plateau. Second, most of the Iron II pottery can be dated to the Iron IIC period (seventh and sixth centuries). Third, the Iron II period reflects an increase in “single-unit” sites.¹⁴⁶

Though most Iron II sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau are these “single-unit” sites, there are a few exceptions: for example, the large fortified complexes of Mhai (Miller’s site 436), Mudyibi’, the esh-Sharif ridge (Miller’s site 238) Qasr el-‘Al (Parker’s site 124), and

¹⁴⁵ Routledge, Intermittent Agriculture, 74.
¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 75-89.
two western villages (Miller’s sites 316 and 355). The esh-Sharif ridge and Qast el-‘Al are among the ten sites in this study and will be discussed below.

The fortified complexes of Mhai and Mudaybi’ are relevant as stark contrasts to most Iron II fortified sites in this study (with the exception of el-‘Al and the esh-Sharif ridge). Khirbet Mudaybi’ (83.5 x 88.75 m) is larger than any of the Iron II sites from the northern part of the eastern Kerak Plateau. The excavations at Mudaybi’, as discussed above, have revealed a late Iron II fortified settlement with a four-chambered gate and two “proto-Aeolic capitals,” probably from the era of Assyrian domination of Moab.\(^{147}\)

Mhai has been visited by explorers and scholars alike since the nineteenth century. By the time Glueck arrived in the 1930s a small settlement had begun among the ruins. When Miller’s team surveyed Mhai, the modern settlement had expanded over and robbed much of the site. However, three main architectural features were still distinguishable: a large tower (ca. 30 x 21 m), foundations of a rectangular wall (60 x 55+ m) that enclosed the summit, and a Nabataean temple.\(^{148}\) Dating the site is problematic because Miller found few diagnostic Iron Age sherds (n= 3 Iron, 1 Iron I, and 1 Iron II); but Glueck reported painted Moabite pottery, which suggests an Iron II date.\(^{149}\)

Of the ten sites examined in this study five can be definitively labeled as Iron II and two more (Qasr el-‘Al and Parker’s site 7) can be tentatively called Iron II. The Limes Arabicus Project dated Parker’s site 7 to Iron II and the author is inclined to accept that reading based on the general reliability of the other readings. However, what remains of the

\(^{147}\) Mattingly and Pace, “Crossing Jordan: By Way of the Karak Plateau,” 153-159.

\(^{148}\) Miller, Survey of the Kerak Plateau, 164.

\(^{149}\) Glueck, Explorations in Eastern Palestine III, 66-70, 72-73, 76, 78,103.
diagnostic ceramic evidence is scant (only six sherds and only one rim); and these sherds are quite eroded. These sherds are clearly of Iron Age ware but no closer dating seems possible. The pottery from Qasr el-‘Al was called simply “Iron” by the Limes Arabicus Project but the report mentions an earlier collection in 1976 that recovered eight Iron II sherds.\footnote{150}{Parker et al., \textit{Final Report}, 67.}

**Site 57**

Parker’s site 57 lies above the east bank of Wadi Mujib overlooking a possible entrance into the wadi. The site is elliptical, unique among the sites in this study. The dimensions of this basalt structure are ca. 31 x 39 m with an outer wall of two rows of blocks preserved to four courses in places. Inside the west end of the enclosure is a platform (ca. 7 x 4 m, with a base ca. 19 x 24 m) of large blocks. Also, at the northern end of the enclosure are traces of an interior wall. A possible cistern lies just west of the enclosure.\footnote{151}{Parker et al., \textit{Final Report}, 60.} Unfortunately, not much more can be said about this site without further study. The Limes Arabicus Project was unable to date the pottery from this site closer than generically “Iron Age.” Because the associated ceramic evidence has not been located, this site cannot be dated more accurately at present.

**Qasr el-‘Al**

Qasr el-‘Al and esh-Sharif are two of the five aforementioned Iron II sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau that cannot be called “single-unit” sites. Qasr el-‘Al is a large (ca. 60 x 68 m) fortified site dating to the Iron II period. Unfortunately, the ceramic evidence from the site could not be found, precluding close dating within the Iron II period. Qasr el-‘Al lies east
of Wadi Mujib, overlooking the upper drainage of the same wadi. Its view extends as far as 20 km to the southwest to include Khirbet el-Fityan, a Roman fort built on top of a supposed Iron Age fort.\textsuperscript{152} Glueck considered this site part of his “chain of Moabite fortresses.”\textsuperscript{153} Qasr Abu al-Kharaqa is clearly visible from Qasr el-‘Al and construction of the two sites is very similar. Qasr el-‘Al has a large tower (ca. 16 x 20 m) (Figure 4.7) that still stands to 6 m in some places. The wall enclosing Qasr el-‘Al is ca. 1.5 m thick, and there is evidence of rooms built against the enclosure wall. Some of these rooms are well preserved, and one still retains its lintel in place above the doorway (Figure 4.8). The site also includes many cisterns and caves. Unfortunately, the site has experienced a great deal of modern disturbance and looting. There are many modern burials inside the rock tumble of the tower and even these have been disturbed by looters (Figure 4.9).

**Esh-Sharif**

The site of esh-Sharif (Parker’s site 477) corresponds to Miller’s site 238. However, Miller’s site 238 encompasses: Parker’s site 476 (a cistern that likely provided water to site 477), 477 (the fortified site of esh-Sharif), and 478 (a robbed structure of uncertain function).\textsuperscript{154} Esh-Sharif is the southernmost site in this study. It sits atop a large hill that overlooks the northwest portion of the Fajj el-‘Useikhir, the deep and wide valley that cuts through the hills and wadis of the southeastern Kerak Plateau and provides easy entrance to the plateau from the eastern desert. The site offers extensive views in all directions and includes many ancient sites that line along both sides of the Fajj.

\textsuperscript{152} Parker et al., *Interim Report*, 429-446
\textsuperscript{153} Glueck, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine III*, 101-103.
\textsuperscript{154} Parker et al., *Final Report*, 101.
Glueck called this site, “Qaseir et-Tamrah.” It is enclosed by a wall ca. 2 m thick and up to 3 m high and encompasses an area ca. 60 x 60 m. The site includes a central structure, possibly a tower (ca. 18-20 x 18-20 m) (Figure 4.10). The *Limes Arabicus* Project reports that the central structure was at least two stories high and contained many internal rooms.\(^{155}\) When reexamining the site the internal rooms were obvious. However, there was less evidence of a second story, perhaps because the structure suffered further damage in the almost thirty years between the *Limes Arabicus* Project and the author’s visit in 2009. Outside the central structure is evidence of other buildings and courtyards, including a rectangular two-roomed building northwest of the enclosure in which the rooms are connected by a doorway.\(^{156}\)

Both the *Limes Arabicus* Project Survey and Miller’s *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau* date the ceramics from esh-Sharif as generically Iron Age. After re-examining the ceramics from esh-Sharif collected by the *Limes Arabicus* Project, the author concluded that this site can safely be dated to the Iron II period. A closer date is slightly more problematic because of the lack of *comparanda*, but perhaps a date during the Iron IIB period (late eighth/early seventh centuries) would be appropriate. The ceramic forms appear most similar to those at Dhiban, though the ware is distinctly more coarse and filled with basalt inclusions, typical of Iron II pottery on the eastern Kerak Plateau.

\(^{155}\) Ibid., 101.
\(^{156}\) Miller, *Survey of the Kerak Plateau*, 102.
The remaining five sites fit into Routledge’s model for Iron II settlement in marginal areas throughout the southern Levant. These are Parker’s site 7, Qasr Saliya, Khirbet Thamayil, Khirbet ‘Arbid, and Qasr ed-Dabba’a; all are small, single-unit sites.

**Site 7**

Parker’s site 7 is another site whose associated pottery the author was unable to locate. However, the *Limes Arabicus* Project dated the Iron Age pottery to the Iron II period. The site is a relatively simple rectangular enclosure (ca. 31 x 30 m). The site was constructed for defense with two rows of large stones making up its exterior wall. Inside the enclosure there is a square tower (ca. 7 x 7 m) preserved to six courses in the northeast corner. Also inside the enclosure is a rectangular building (ca. 5 x 12 m) and a possible rock-cut cistern under the enclosure. This fortified site overlooks a road crossing through Wadi es-Su’eida to the south and another wadi to the north.157

**Qasr Saliya**

The construction of Qasr Saliya (Figure 4.11) can be safely dated to the Iron II period, though it should be noted that the *Limes Arabicus* Project found a small number of Iron I sherds, implying perhaps that the Iron II occupation was secondary. The ceramics from Qasr Saliya seem to fit neatly into the Iron IIB range, or the late eighth/seventh centuries. Qasr Saliya is a relatively small site (ca. 19.2 x 25 m) located northeast of the Mujib on a large hill that offers outstanding views to the north, east, and south. The site is constructed

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from large dry-laid stones but lacks a tower. There is a possible entrance ramp on the east side of the site and traces of many rooms inside the enclosure.\footnote{Ibid., 55.}

Outside the enclosure to the south and west are many cisterns and wall traces, perhaps suggesting a small settlement associated with this site. This might contradict Routledge’s notion of dispersal on the eastern Kerak Plateau during the Iron II period. However, the nature of and degree to which this site was used during the Iron II period is unknown. Furthermore, since the \textit{Limes Arabicus} Project treated both the enclosure and extramural settlement as the same site, it is impossible to know whence the Iron I sherds were collected. It is possible that the settlement outside of the fortification was predominately used during the Iron I period but not reoccupied during the Iron II period. Only further survey or excavation can provide clarification.

The next group of sites -- Khirbet ‘Arbid, Khirbet Thamayil and Qasr ed-Daba’a could be pushed into the Iron IIC period. One indicator is the presence at all three sites of “rectangular-rimmed cooking pots,” a form that seems unique to Moab and is attested both from tombs at Dhiban and a sixth century context at Balu’a (Figure 4.12). All three sites were intensely surveyed by Routledge in the mid-1990s. Khirbet Thamayil and Khirbet ‘Arbid were also surveyed by Miller.

\textbf{Qasr ed’Daba’a}

Qasr ed-Daba’a lies just south of the modern Kerak-Qatrana highway and offers a commanding view of Wadi ed-Daba’a where the modern road crosses the wadi. This was a likely crossing point in antiquity as the wadi is very steep and treacherous elsewhere. The
pottery assemblage from Qasr ed-Daba’a is homogenous in nature and is contemporary to pottery from Khirbet ‘Arbid and Khirbet Thamayil.

The site itself is ca. 28 x 27.2 m with a central tower (9.2 x 7.2 m) (Figure 4.13B). The walls of the tower are ca. 1.5 m thick and the interior space is divided into two rectangular rooms. There seems to be a small opening in the enclosure wall at the eastern corner.\(^{159}\) Also within the enclosure is a cistern filled completely with rock tumble and debris.\(^{160}\)

**Khirbet Thamayil**

Khirbet Thamayil lies about five kilometers southwest of Qasr ed-Daba’a on a small promontory that overlooks a wadi system to its east and southeast. Routledge, Parker, and Miller all surveyed this site, and Routledge did several probes. Thamayil is a fortified tower site (ca. 36.7 x 27 m). The exterior wall and the interior tower (ca. 7.5 x 10 m) are constructed from large uncut boulders of limestone and basalt, laid in two rows about 1m wide.\(^{161}\) The tower still stands to ca. 5 m in places and is built against the southwest side of the inner-most of two rectangular enclosure walls (the inner enclosure measures ca. 26 x 16.5 m) (Figure 4.13 (A)). This inner wall was discerned by Routledge’s more intensive survey. A subsequent test probe (1 x 12 m) did not offer very much stratigraphic information.\(^{162}\)

Outside the enclosure is a complex of terraces measuring ca. 80 x 55 m. On the southeastern side of the complex is a secondary terrace (ca. 23 x 18 m). Several depressions

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\(^{159}\) Routledge, *Intermittent Agriculture*, 120.
\(^{160}\) Parker et al., *Final Report*, 74.
\(^{161}\) Ibid., 99.
\(^{162}\) Routledge, *Intermittent Agriculture*, 99-104.
in the northwest quadrant of the complex may be filled cisterns. Miller also reported a slanted rampart about 1 m high, built of fieldstones.\textsuperscript{163} 

Routledge also dug a test probe (1 x 4 m) to examine a walled rectangular space about 14 m southeast of the outermost enclosure. The probe exposed a stratigraphic section 5.6 m in height. Here Routledge found a walled rectangular enclosure (ca. 9 x 10 m) with a double wall on the southwest side. He also noted in the balk two flat-lying limestone slabs, just above the bedrock, superimposed on each other. Fragments of four basalt artifacts were associated with this area. Routledge suggests that the area may have been used for food processing.\textsuperscript{164} 

\textbf{Khirbet ‘Arbid}

Like Khirbet Thamayil, Khirbet ‘Arbid was surveyed by Parker, Miller, and Routledge; and Routledge also conducted several probes at the site. It sits atop a low hill overlooking Wadi ed-Dakakin to its south. To the north and south the site is bounded by small wadis with evidence of terracing. The structure itself (47.5 x 50 m) encloses a small tower (10 x 8.5 m at the base) preserved up to six courses (2.5 m in height). The construction of both the tower and the outer enclosure is of huge, roughly cut limestone slabs and smaller uncut stones (mostly basalt).\textsuperscript{165} The tower sits atop a sort of terrace (15 x 15m) preserved to 7 courses on its southern side (Figure 4.14).\textsuperscript{166}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{163} Miller, \textit{Survey of the Kerak Plateau}, 106. \\
\textsuperscript{164} Routledge, \textit{Intermittent Agriculture}, 104-106. \\
\textsuperscript{165} Parker et al., \textit{Final Report}, 100. \\
\textsuperscript{166} Miller, \textit{Survey of the Kerak Plateau}, 99.
\end{flushleft}
Outside the enclosure described above is an even larger enclosure (45 x 43 x 44.3 x 51m) (Figure 4.15) containing numerous interior walls and rooms. All three surveys found large amounts of Late Islamic pottery, along with Iron IIC ceramics. Most of the Iron Age sherds came from the enclosed area containing the tower (Routledge’s area A). Therefore Routledge opened a test probe in this area aiming to uncover stratified Iron Age remains. However, this and several other test pits led him to conclude that the architectural remains must be associated with the Late Islamic period. He does insist, however, that the large amount of Iron IIC ceramic evidence strongly suggests an occupation of the site in this period, though its nature cannot be determined.\textsuperscript{167}

**Summary**

The Iron II sites discussed in this study have traditionally been called forts. In many ways this is understandable. These sites are enclosed by substantial curtain walls constructed of megalithic boulders, some as casemates. All command good views of the surrounding landscape and usually are intervisible with other apparently contemporary sites. Almost all lie at the highest, most defendable location in their region. Clearly these sites were built with a defensive purpose, but the question remains - what were they defending and from whom?

A striking commonality is the number of sites that are ca. 30 x 30 m. Five of the seven Iron II sites have approximately these dimensions. An enclosure of 30 x 30 m seems too small to call a fort. Perhaps “fortlet” would be a more appropriate term. Some of the towers were divided into small rooms, and there is often some evidence of internal walls

\textsuperscript{167} Routledge, *Intermittent Agriculture*, 106-114.
which may suggest more rooms outside the tower. These small fortified sites would have been big enough to provide shelter for a handful of people, but not big enough to provide permanent or semi-permanent residence for a large military garrison. However, several sites appear to have had cisterns; and there is evidence of terracing near many of these sites. Khirbet ‘Arbid, contemporary to Thamayil and ed-Daba’a, is slightly bigger (47.5 x 50 m), but Routledge posits that a Late Islamic occupation of Khirbet ‘Arbid has completely obscured the original Iron Age architecture.

The relatively small size of these Iron II fortified sites causes one to wonder about their purpose. Glueck suggested that they were a part of a larger system of border forts that guarded the eastern border of Moab (as well as Ammon and Edom) from the nomadic Arabs in the desert. Both Miller and Parker seem to accept this explanation.

These small, fortified sites are not a phenomenon unique to Moab. The Negev also boasts of a large number of small “fortified settlements.” However, the situation in the central Negev does not seem to have much in common with the situation on the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau. Most of the small, fortified sites in the central Negev are generally dated to either the eleventh century or to the period of the United Monarchy (the tenth century). Furthermore, there are very few fortified sites that seem to date to the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries. Kadesh Barnea and Khirbet ‘Uza are two such examples. Both of these sites are relatively large (ca. 60 x 41 m and 53 x 41 m respectively), and appear to be

purpose-built forts. An interesting query does arise when one considers that during the late Iron II period on the Kerak Plateau people are settling and pacifying the desert fringe more intensely with the construction of numerous single-unit fortified sites, while the small tenth century fortified sites in the Negev do not seem to be reoccupied at any other point in the Iron Age after their abandonment around the Iron I/Iron II transition.

The sheer expense of building and manning the fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau speaks to the likelihood of a serious eastern threat. There is textual evidence of such a nomadic threat to Moab in both the Hebrew Bible as well as in Assyrian sources (see chapter two). Ezekiel 25 says, “Therefore, I will lay open the flank of Moab from the towns on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. I will give it along with Ammon to the people of the east as a possession” (Ezekiel 25: 9-10). Though several of the Assyrian inscriptions discussed above (chapter 2) reference an eastern threat to Moab by the Qedarite Arabs, perhaps the most illuminating source is the text of the Rassam Cylinder, in which Assurbanipal records a number of defeats against Yuhaithi’ the Qedarite.

He persuaded the inhabitants of Arabia (to join) him and then plundered repeatedly those peoples which Ashur, Ishtar, and the (other) great gods had given to me to be their shepherd and had entrusted into my hands. Upon the oracle-command of Ashur and Ishtar, (I called up) my army and defeated him in bloody battles inflicting countless routs on him (to wit) in the giru of the towns of Azaril (and) Hirata (-) kasaia, in Edom, in the pass of Iabrudu, in Beth-Ammon, in the district of Haurina,

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in Moab, in Sa’arri, in Harge, in all the inhabitants of Arabia who had revolted with him, but he escaped…

There is clear evidence in the southern Levant, from the Negev, for forts built under the administration of the Assyrian Empire. For example, Arad is tied directly to the royal administration by official letters from the king. Though there is no such documentary evidence to support the possibility that any of the Iron II forts in Moab were tied to the royal administration of the Assyrian Empire, there are perhaps three excavated fortified sites whose size and archaeological remains may suggest significant “state” involvement, whether by the Assyrians or the Moabites themselves. The best example is Khirbet Mudaybi’, whose “proto-Aeolic” capital almost insists on involvement with a central authority. The other two sites lie just north of Wadi Mujib on the Dhiban Plateau and were discussed above as Iron I sites. These are Aroer and Lahun, each of which had an Iron II fort built above the Iron I occupation. At both sites the Iron II occupation was much smaller than the Iron I occupation and suggests that in the Iron II period this sites fall into Routledge’s “single-unit” site category.

Routledge emphasizes an agricultural role in association with some Iron II defended sites. He cites a study of watchtowers and fortifications near Amman that suggests their use primarily for agricultural purposes based on three factors: the physical locations of the sites;

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associated installations; and similar structures from the recent past. He claims that many of the watchtowers near Amman were not in good strategic military locations (i.e., not on hilltops) but rather were on hillsides overlooking arable wadis and did not provide panoramic views of surrounding areas. He also discusses the Greek, Akkadian, and Hebrew words for “tower” (pyrgos, dimtu, migdal) which in all languages include an agricultural building near cultivated land. Finally Routledge cites Greek sources that cite towers, sometimes fortified, on wealthy agricultural estates.

The Iron Age fortified sites surveyed by the Limes Arabicus Project do not fit easily into the model created for the Amman fortifications, mainly because the former are located in agriculturally marginal areas in strategic positions atop hills that afford commanding views, often including nearby towers, and are rarely associated with any other agricultural installations. However, these fortified sites often provide access to shallow tributary wadis and lie within cultivatable land. Furthermore, the largest clusterings on the eastern Kerak Plateau occur on the south side of the Fajj and around Khirbet Thamayil, both areas that provide easy access to wadis. Routledge claims that the clustering of these and other Iron Age sites on the Kerak Plateau would be poor military planning by the Moabites if their nature was purely defensive. He also claims that because of the limited agricultural potential of the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau many fortified sites likely supported a

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173 Ibid., 195.
174 Ibid., 195-199.
175 Ibid., 200.
pastoral lifestyle along with the agriculture practiced by the Moabites. These fortified sites could have secured livestock feed.\textsuperscript{176}

While Routledge makes a compelling argument concerning the tie between agriculture and Iron Age fortified sites, the Iron Age fortified sites surveyed by the \textit{Limes Arabicus} Project could be primarily defensive in nature, as they appear to guard the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau. It seems fairly obvious that the Moabites would select defendable locations also conducive to cultivation, especially since they were occupying such a marginal area. The extensive open space within the defended enclosures as well as the many cisterns at these sites suggest the possibility that domestic herds might have sheltered there in times of insecurity.

As evident from the information presented in this chapter, the ten fortified sites examined in this study vary greatly in size, architecture, and date of occupation. Furthermore, some of these fortified sites may have been state-sponsored, either by the Moabite state or with assistance from the Assyrian Empire. Finally, the reexamination of the ceramic evidence from these sites clearly indicates that the sites were occupied at different points during both the Iron I and Iron II periods. Therefore, all these sites together never formed a fortified border that protected the northern half of the Kerak Plateau at any time during the Iron Age.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 200-201.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

In the 1930s Glueck’s notion of a fortified Moabite frontier on the eastern edge of the Kerak Plateau was plausible. Even the tendency of later scholars working in the 1980s to think of these fortified sites as forming a border to guard the rich agricultural land of the plateau is understandable. After all, these sites are constructed of megalithic boulders; and some have casemate walls and/or towers. All of the sites have outstanding views of the surrounding areas and almost all lie at the highest, most defendable location in their region; and the sites’ expansive views often include other sites. Clearly these sites were built with a defensive purpose.

Burton MacDonald addressed Glueck’s interpretation in an article that reconsidered another of Glueck’s supposed frontier sites on Wadi al-Hasa, Khirbet al-Medeiheh. MacDonald identified some major problems with Glueck’s interpretation for both Edom and southern Moab. He noted that many of the sites among Glueck’s line of forts were not Iron Age but rather dated to the Nabataean, Roman, or Islamic periods. Though most of the sites that he examined were south of Wadi el-Hasa, the same fundamental problem about Glueck’s view arises, namely, that few of these sites were contemporary.

In 1986 James Sauer also critiqued Glueck’s interpretation. He concludes, in agreement with this study, that there was not enough evidence to support a fortified frontier.

developed by the Moabite state in the Iron I period. He suggests that the fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau date to various times during the Iron Age and that they likely served a variety of functions, two suggestions that this study supports.  

Routledge argues and the evidence from this study agrees, that the large nucleated sites of the Iron I period were abandoned, creating a break in settlement. When settlement reappears on the eastern Kerak Plateau in the Iron IIB period, the period of Mesha’s statehood initiatives followed by the period of Assyrian domination of Moab, the sites seem to be of the single-unit variety. This tendency away from nucleation could imply that the eastern Kerak Plateau was more secure during this period, as one might expect during a period when this area fell under first Moabite and then Assyrian control.  

The large nucleated sites of the Iron I period, Khirbet Madayna al-‘Aliya, Qasr el-‘Al (both examined by this study), Khirbet Madayna al-Mu’arradja, Lehun, Aroer, and Balu’a allowed for many people to live inside the fortified walls. Presumably this was for their protection but it would have limited the agro-pastoral activities in which the occupants could have engaged, since the location of these sites seems to be completely strategic and not determined by the quality of the surrounding land. However, during the Iron IIB period the inhabitants of the Kerak Plateau could have lived outside the walls of a fortified site, either in tents or in small domestic dwellings, perhaps with their own land. With a few fortified sites (such as the two examined in this study, Qasr Saliya and esh-Sharif) that seem to date to the

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Iron IIB period to protect the plateau as well as the agro-pastoralists that inhabited the eastern fringe, the entire area would have been more secure.

There is also a significant settlement shift in the mid-seventh century (Iron IIC period), when several small fortified sites were constructed: Khirbet Thamayil, Khirbet ‘Arbid, and Qasr ed’Daba’a (all examined by this study), and also many other small single unit sites. The Iron IIC period on the eastern Kerak Plateau corresponds with the brief period of independence experienced by the Moabites between Assurbanipal’s withdrawal from Moab and the supposed conquest by the Neo-Babylonians. Throughout the Iron II period the increased tendency towards small isolated structures likely served to lay claim to this marginal area and to pacify it against an eastern threat.\(^{179}\)

As mentioned before, Routledge emphasizes the agricultural role in association with some of these Iron Age fortified sites, drawing attention to many agricultural features such as terraces (though the natural terracing of the bedrock near some wadis make man-made terracing unnecessary). He points out that these fortified sites often provide access to shallow tributary wadis and lie within cultivatable land. He also claims that the clustering of these and other Iron Age sites on the Kerak Plateau would be poor military planning by the Moabites if their nature was purely defensive.

However, when discussing agriculture one must keep in mind the type of agriculture that can be practiced on the eastern Kerak Plateau. As explained in chapter one, the line of the ten fortified sites surveyed by the *Limes Arabicus* Project is located between the 100 and 200mm rainfall lines; and in order to dry farm one usually needs at least 200 mm of rainfall

per year. Furthermore, the soil was ranked 12 by the Karak Resources Project, meaning that the soil is extremely sandy. This suggests that this area is quite marginal and could not sustain much agriculture. Therefore, one must consider the role that pastoralism could have played in the region. Here, the position of the fortified sites would make sense. This marginal land was and still is suitable for pastoralists to graze their herds.

All recent surveys of the desert fringe have recorded numerous so-called “ring sites.” Associated artifacts date from late prehistoric periods through the modern period. Today these “ring sites” are often built to fence in sheep/goats and there is no reason to doubt a similar use in antiquity. Such small “fortlets” could have provided security for local pastoralists. The view offered from the tower would have given a shepherd ample opportunity to get his herd inside the fortlet if there was a threat. Furthermore, the tower could have, as Routledge suggests, been used to store fodder as a sort of silo.

Another element relative to the position of the fortified sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau is ‘Ain Lejjun, a perennial water source that today serves the local population near the desert fringe. Overlooking ‘Ain Lejjun and just northwest of el-Lejjun is the Roman fort of Khirbet el-Fityan, excavated by the Limes Arabicus Project. Khirbet el-Fityan lies on the north bank of Wadi el-Lejjun and has a panoramic view of the eastern desert. The four-sided fort is protected by a 1.8 m thick curtain wall. The internal structures that were excavated dates to the Late Roman period, however, excavation revealed that at least one side of the Roman castellum’s curtain wall (D.4:002) was built atop an Iron Age wall, possibly
suggesting an earlier Iron Age fort there guarding the spring. Furthermore, Parker’s “signaling experiment” (which demonstrated the inter-visibility of a group of fourteen Roman forts and watchtower sites) suggests that Khirbet el-Fityan was the key hub among surrounding forts, of which many had associated Iron Age evidence. This seems to underscore the strategic position of Khirbet el-Fityan both as a strategic vantage point and as controlling the area’s main perennial water source, necessary for agriculturalists and pastoralists alike.

Another possible function of these sites relates to trade and protection of trade routes. It has long been assumed that the via nova Traiana, constructed in C.E. 111-114, along an earlier Nabataean trade route, which in turn followed an Iron Age trade route, perhaps even the drk hmlk referenced in the Hebrew Bible. Although this belief is sufficiently widespread to provide the modern popular name of “The King’s Highway,” there is no direct evidence to suggest that the via nova Traiana was in fact a trade route during the Iron Age. In fact, as anyone who has travelled on the modern “King’s Highway” knows, it is a much longer and more difficult way of north-south travel through Jordan. This is because the via nova Traiana traverses several deep wadis, especially Wadi Mujib. Instead, if one just goes a few kilometers east and travels along the desert fringe (where the fortified sites in this study lie) travel is much easier. This does not deny use of the route later taken by the via nova Traiana in the Iron Age, because it runs through the agricultural heartland of the region and connects several major Iron Age sites such as Kerak and Dhiban. However, a north-south

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180 Parker et al., Interium Report, 429-446.  
181 Numbers 21:22.
route a bit further east would avoid the deep Wadi Mujib as did a secondary Roman route and the Late Islamic Haj road centuries later. This would better explain the location of Wadi ath-Thamad well east of the “King’s Highway.” As discussed earlier, Wadi ath-Thamad is a well-known industrial textile site that clearly conducted a great deal of trading (see chapter two). The main disadvantage of the eastern route is that it was much more exposed to raids from the desert, explaining in part the chain of later Roman and Late Islamic forts along its line.

The last question to be addressed is who built these Iron II fortlets and against whom were they defending? As mentioned earlier, there are several references to an eastern threat to Moab in both the Hebrew Bible as well as contemporary Assyrian sources including Ezekiel 25:9-10 and perhaps the most illuminating source, the Rassam Cylinder of Assurbanipal. The Rassam Cylinder is enlightening because it not only demonstrates a clear threat to Moab (and several neighboring states) and names the threat as the people of Arabia (or the Qedarite Arabs); but it implies that Assyria, at least under Ashurbanipal (ca. 668-627 B.C.E.), considered itself to have divine responsibility to protect its western client kingdoms. Ashurbanipal withdrew from the western empire sometime after ca. 640 B.C.E., leaving the Kerak Plateau vulnerable.\(^{182}\) Therefore, the date of some of these Iron II fortified sites might suggest either construction when Moab was under Assyrian tutelage or as a local reaction after the retreat of the Assyrian Empire.

The possibility of any sort of central authority behind the construction of these sites is debatable. The semi-standardization of the architectural plans of the 30 x 30 m sites might

\(^{182}\) Routledge, *Intermittent Agriculture*, 373.
support that view. The fortlets would have been too small to serve as strategic military bases for a large garrison, but they could have served as small outposts housing a small group of soldiers. Regrettably there is no evidence as to the state of Moab after Assyria’s retreat. We do know from the Mesha Inscription and from Assyrian sources that Moab had an army, but the state of this army in the seventh century is unknown.

Furthermore, the size of the Iron II fortlets, as well as their proximity to each other makes them ideal for local families or militia to watch over their homes, water sources, herds, and perhaps terraced fields against the raid of small bands of Qedarite Arabs, with or without the aid of a central authority. The larger sites (ca. 60 x 60 m; e.g., Qasr Saliya and esh-Sharif), however, especially those that may date to the eighth and/or seventh centuries, could have served as military bases built by a central authority, perhaps even with Assyrian aid.

Though Glueck’s grand view concerning the fortified sites was perhaps oversimplified, his general explanation about their purpose may have been correct. It seems that the Qedarite Arabs posed a threat to the Kerak Plateau. However, Glueck’s assumption that all these sites were a part of an single system of defense built by a central authority (perhaps even an international central authority) is quite reductionist and based on the assumption that all the Iron II sites were contemporary, which we now know to be false. The key new elements added to the interpretation of these sites in the seventy years since Glueck is that the sites were not all contemporary and that the possibility of local initiative must be considered. The local semi-nomadic or sedentary population needed to maintain their security and protect
their limited but valuable resources from an eastern threat. Their efforts worked to protect the frontier of the state as well.
Table 1.1 – Ten fortified Sites on the eastern Kerak Plateau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site and LAP Site #</th>
<th>Iron Age Occupation (Sherd count from LAP)</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Tower Dimensions</th>
<th>Interesting Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qasr ed-Daba’a Site # 194</td>
<td>Ir II, 113 sherds</td>
<td>27 x 30 m</td>
<td>9 x 7 m</td>
<td>Two rooms inside tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khirbet Thamayil Site # 456</td>
<td>Ir II, 107 sherds</td>
<td>24.5 x 31.5 m</td>
<td>7.5 x 10 m</td>
<td>Poss. Cisterns inside enclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qasr Saliya Site #2</td>
<td>9 Ir, 10 Ir I, 101 Ir II, 178 UD (Ir?)</td>
<td>19.2 x 25 m</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Traces of internal rooms and cisterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qasr el-’Al Site # 124</td>
<td>Ir, 31 sherds (8 Ir II sherds from 1976)</td>
<td>60 x 68 m</td>
<td>16 x 20 m</td>
<td>Traces of interior rooms, cisterns outside and road (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khirbet ‘Arbid Site # 464</td>
<td>Ir II, 66 sherds</td>
<td>47.5 x 50 m</td>
<td>10 x 8 m</td>
<td>Rooms inside courtyard, Routledge suggests Islamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esh-Sharif Site # 477</td>
<td>Ir, 56 sherds</td>
<td>60 x 60 m</td>
<td>18 x 18 m</td>
<td>Many rooms, cistern outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khirbet Madayna ‘Aliya Site # 149</td>
<td>Ir I, 116 sherds</td>
<td>275 x 110 m</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Many internal buildings (“pillar houses”) and dry moat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qasr Abu el-Kharara Site # 110</td>
<td>Ir I, 109 sherds</td>
<td>60 x 60 m</td>
<td>22 x 18 m</td>
<td>Rooms against curtain wall and inside tower, cistern outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAP Site # 7</td>
<td>Ir II, 18 sherds</td>
<td>31 x 30 m</td>
<td>7 x 7 m</td>
<td>Inside – rec. building, cistern (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAP Site # 57</td>
<td>Ir, 61 sherds</td>
<td>31 x 39 m</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Elliptical w/traces of interior walls, possible cistern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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185 “Virtual Karak Resources Project: Environmental Study.” <www.vkRp.org>
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Figure 3.14 – Iron IIB pottery from Tell Madaba

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