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The Makings of an Event: Encountering the Battle of Kadesh through Time

By

Lindsey June McCandless

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Marian Feldman, Co-Chair
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Professor Rita Lucarelli
Professor Gary Holland

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ABSTRACT

The Makings of an Event: Encountering the Battle of Kadesh through Time

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Lindsey June McCandless

Doctor of Philosophy in Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Marian Feldman, Co-Chair
Professor Francesca Rochberg, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines the packaging and presentation of the Battle of Kadesh as a meaningful Event to both a local Egyptian and a wider Near Eastern audience at pivotal moments in time. In 1275 BCE the Egyptian pharaoh, Ramses II, faced off against the Hittite king, Muwatalli, at the northern Levantine citadel of Kadesh along the border between the two great empires. This confrontation remains one of the most well studied battles of pre-classical times as a result of the lavish attention with which Ramses II commemorated it upon his temple walls in Egypt. Still visible today at Abu Simbel, Abydos, Karnak, Luxor, and the Ramesseum are the monumental reliefs depicting Ramses II charging into the chaotic fray of combat on his chariot. All around him Egyptian troops attack the Hittite army beside the Orontes River, which circumscribes the fortified citadel of Kadesh.

Event is capitalized in this dissertation to refer to the ongoing construction and understanding of the Battle of Kadesh as embedded within specific social contexts. Such an approach emphasizes the temporal duration of Events, arguing that a crucial component of Events is their continued resonance in the material (archaeological and/or historical) record. This dissertation focuses upon three encounters with the Battle of Kadesh reliefs through time to demonstrate the Battle's Event-status: The initial carving of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the temple walls of the Ramesseum during the reign of Ramses II; the later addition to the Ramesseum of the Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty negotiated in the twenty-first year of Ramses II's reign; and lastly, the Neo-Assyrian army's encounter with this corpus on their campaign in the Theban region during the seventh century BCE.

This dissertation argues that the physicality of the reliefs has the effect of creating (as opposed to reflecting) the Battle of Kadesh. In asking how the internal elements of the reliefs communicate with one another and how the reliefs communicate with their surrounding environment, this study demonstrates that meaning is constantly negotiated through the broader social, ideological, and physical world. In so doing, it recognizes the role the reliefs play as active participants in various social and temporal settings, and it evaluates their efficacy as imperialistic and diplomatic tools utilized during the reign of Ramses II and the reigns of the Neo-Assyrian kings in constructing royal ideologies.

Chapters 5-7 of this dissertation landscape the reliefs at the aforementioned moments in time in order to examine their shifting resonances. This includes a description of the permanent changes to the physical landscape of the Ramesseum (such as the addition of the Silver Tablet Treaty to the temple walls or the weathering of the stone surfaces), as well as the appearance of temporary objects (such as festival accouterment) that would impact how the reliefs mean to different audiences. Likewise each chapter describes the cultural and political expectations of each audience in order to demonstrate that Events comprise the encounter between both the landscape of the relief corpus and the different audiences that visit them. These diverse encounters reveal precisely how much an Event's meaning can change through time, highlighting how modern historical reconstructions of the Battle of Kadesh are just one more stage in the Event's making.

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INTRODUCTION

How does a happening become an Event? What happens when that Event is encountered by a later, “other” culture? This dissertation addresses such questions through an examination of the packaging and presentation of the Battle of Kadesh as a meaningful Event to both a local Egyptian and a wider Near Eastern audience at pivotal moments in time.

In 1275 BCE, Ramses II, pharaoh of Egypt, encountered Muwatalli, king of the Hittites, at the northern Levantine site of Kadesh along the border between the two great empires (Fig. 1). This confrontation remains one of the most famous conflicts of pre-classical times precisely due to the lavish attention with which Ramses II commemorated it upon his temple walls in Egypt. Still visible today at Abu Simbel, Abydos, Karnak, Luxor, and the Ramesseum are the monumental reliefs depicting Ramses II charging into the chaotic fray of combat on his chariot (Fig. 2). All around him Egyptian troops attack the Hittite army along the banks of the Orontes River, which circumscribes the fortified citadel of Kadesh.

Event, here used as a capitalized noun, refers to the ongoing creation and understanding of the Battle of Kadesh (also capitalized to signal its status as a construct) as embedded within specific social contexts. This dissertation focuses upon three such moments of construction: the initial creation of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the Egyptian temple walls during the reign of Ramses II (1279-1213 BCE); the later addition to the Ramesseum of the Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty negotiated in the twenty-first year of Ramses II’s reign; and lastly, the seventh century BCE Neo-Assyrian engagement with this corpus, as evidenced by their palatial decorative programs and royal inscriptions.

In asking *how* the internal elements of the reliefs communicated with one another and *how* the reliefs communicated with their surrounding environment, this dissertation adopts the premise, fundamental to dialogism, that meaning is not static. Rather, through ongoing communication meaning is constantly negotiated within (although not resolutely determined by) the broader social, ideological, and physical world. These shifting meanings are ultimately constrained by the physicality of the reliefs in their durability, monumentality, iconography, color, and architectural and geographical placement. Consequently, this study argues that the reliefs themselves can act as a window through which to access their own role in the construction of the Event of the Battle of Kadesh at the three aforementioned moments in history.

This dissertation begins with a brief introduction to New Kingdom Egyptian temple layout and iconography, followed by a visual description of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs (comprising both images and texts) at the Ramesseum. This section focuses upon not only iconography but also the architectural placement of the reliefs on the temple walls; the visual relationship between their textual and pictorial components; and the effects of color, medium, and depth of incision upon their visibility. It also addresses how lighting and viewing angles may have impacted an audience’s experience of the reliefs at different periods in time. Following the visual analysis is a brief summary of the content of the Battle of Kadesh Poem, Bulletin, and captions. This section further introduces the reader to the elements of the textual corpus by providing a discussion of their respective lengths, architectural locations, and script.

The scholarly review highlights how over a century of scholarship has previously approached the Battle of Kadesh inscriptions and iconographic corpus. It divides Kadesh scholarship into several main categories—textual analysis, historical analysis, and art historical analysis—as an organizational framework for elucidating prominent themes and goals in earlier works. This includes important editions, historical compendiums, and artistic studies of the reliefs from scholars in the fields of Egyptology, Near Eastern Studies, and Hittitology.

The methodology clarifies this dissertation’s focus upon the reliefs themselves as opposed to the historical battle. It also develops the theoretical approaches employed in this study, tackling first and foremost the question of how Events are created. In so doing, it distinguishes between happenings and Events and examines how Event construction is cultivated through both time and space. By shifting the emphasis from the historical battle to the reliefs, the methodology additionally draws upon materiality studies that focus upon the agentive and interactive qualities of objects to access how the reliefs participated within their landscapes. Here I defend the understanding of the Kadesh reliefs as co-participants in the construction of an Event (along with the audiences who encounter them), arguing that the materiality of the reliefs actively impacts the creation (as opposed to the reflection) of the Battle of Kadesh.

By asking how the reliefs mean to the various audiences that encounter them, as opposed to what they mean, this dissertation acknowledges the shifting resonances of the material corpus over long periods of time. It suggests that the specific socio-political, historical, geographical, and architectural contexts explain why “different properties of a material object will come into high relief or recede into the background at different times, places, or within different frames or horizons of expectations.”¹ The methodology section of this dissertation also develops an understanding of landscape as a multi-layered framework in which to situate the activity of Event creation. The social, political, historical, geographical, topographical, and architectural features of landscapes all impact the trajectories of audiences leading to and from the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, their viewing experiences, their sensory perceptions, and their socio-historical expectations in encountering the monumental Battle tableaus. As such, landscapes serve as a cohering framework for examining the meaning-making implications of the two-dimensional representational landscape of Kadesh in the reliefs and the larger three-dimensional architectural and geographical landscape in which the reliefs are situated.

This dissertation adopts David Armitage’s concept of “serial contextualism” to define and defend its temporal and geographical scope and to explain how the moments in history drawn together here are “neither artificially punctuated nor deceptively continuous.”² The methodology concludes by expanding the chronological parameters of

¹ Marian H. Feldman, “Beyond Iconography: Meaning-Making in Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean Visual and Material Culture,” in *The Cambridge Prehistory of the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean*, ed. A. Bernard Knapp and Peter Van Dommelen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014a), 337.

² David Armitage, “What’s the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the Longue Durée,” *History of European Ideas* 38 (2012): 497.

the Battle of Kadesh to include demonstrable engagements with the reliefs well after their initial creation on the Egyptian temple walls, which allows modern scholarship to ask new and provocative questions of the material uniquely afforded us by the durability of the reliefs and the material evidence of their continued allure.

Landscapes change through time as dynasties fall out of power and the sandstone architecture of the Ramesseum weathers and collapses into ruin. Each subsequent chapter of this dissertation begins with a description of the physical changes made to the Battle of Kadesh relief corpus at the Ramesseum before introducing the different audiences who encounter it.³ Chapter 5 thus begins with a description of the Ramesseum at the moment when the reliefs were first inscribed on the temple walls during the reign of Ramses II. It includes a description of the architectural layout and decorative program of the entire temple complex in order to situate the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in their larger physical and visual context. It also situates the Ramesseum in the broader geographical and topographical landscape of the western bank of Thebes, before introducing the Egyptian priests, temple personnel, and laymen who would be admitted into the outer courtyards of the Ramesseum during festival celebrations.

Chapter 5 then focuses upon the landscape elements of the Ramesseum during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, an annual celebration of the cult of Amun that involved the procession of divine statues from the Temple of Amun at Karnak on the eastern bank of Thebes to several western bank temples before visiting the Ramesseum. Here I suggest

³ I have chosen the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum to be the corpus for this dissertation for several reasons. Their placement on the interior of the first and second pylons means that audiences were restricted to specific encounters with the reliefs (during festivals—see below). At the same time access to the reliefs was not so restricted that only a handful of priests would have ever encountered them. The Ramesseum was also “connected” to other Theban temples through the processional network of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley. This enables a productive examination of an expanded but concrete landscape for the Battle reliefs that encapsulates temple decoration on both the eastern and western banks of Thebes (see Chapter 5). In order to attest to their resonance through time, the Kadesh reliefs needed to be situated in a region of Egypt that was continuously inhabited for thousands of years; Thebes certainly fulfilled this criterion. Lastly, I chose to focus on the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum because they are in good standing today and the Ramesseum itself has been restored so that one can experience many of the architectural spaces as they once stood in antiquity. Selecting the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum was also a process of omission: The reliefs at Abydos, while extraordinary in their execution, are incredibly fragmentary and thus provide scant material for visual analysis; access to the reliefs at Abu Simbel was so restricted that it would be difficult to justify the presence of non-Egyptian (or even non-priestly) audiences; the monumental reliefs on the exterior of the first pylon at Luxor are alas unaccompanied by the Silver Tablet Treaty or the Marriage Stele and thus preclude a discussion of the visual dialog between diplomatic and martial propaganda (see Chapter 6); and lastly, the Karnak reliefs, while accompanied by a well-preserved version of the Silver Tablet Treaty, only remain in palimpsest form; it is therefore unclear how visible they would have been to later audiences.

that how the reliefs meant to a contemporary Egyptian festival audience was informed by the sensory overload of the festival atmosphere and the itinerary of the processional network—which focused the attention of the audience on the central axis of the temple courtyards, physically drew the audience through multiple courts and halls in the Ramesseum, and occasioned visits to multiple temple complexes in the context of the multi-day celebration. In Chapter 5 I further suggest that the emphasis of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley upon the cult of Amun and the rejuvenation of pharaoh would be implicated in the communicative mechanisms of the relief corpus at the Ramesseum.

Sixteen years after Ramses II fought Muwatalli along the banks of the Orontes River he participated in a peace treaty with Hattusili III. On both the Temple of Amun at Karnak and the Ramesseum Ramses II commissioned the inscription of the Silver Tablet Treaty in close proximity to his Battle of Kadesh reliefs. The peaceful political climate initiated between Ramses II and Hattusili III was manifested in the materiality of the Treaty itself, which, through its visual dialog with the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the same temple, renegotiated the meaning of the Event within the larger context of international connectivity during the Late Bronze Age.

The Silver Tablet Treaty and a subsequent diplomatic marriage between Ramses II and the daughter of Hattusili III occasioned the arrival of the Hittite princess, her retinue, and Hittite soldiers in Ramesside Egypt. Chapter 6 of this dissertation thus considers the impact of the diplomatic inscription in the first courtyard of the Ramesseum upon both a later-thirteenth century Egyptian and Hittite audience. Here the tension between the martial Battle reliefs and the diplomatic Treaty encapsulates the multivalency of the Battle of Kadesh for the respective audiences: Its meaning was renegotiated by the succession of diplomatic relations between the Hittite and Egyptian empires, but with an emphasis upon Ramses's supremacy on the battlefield for an Egyptian audience; a Hittite audience may have chosen to focus instead upon the parity nature of the Silver Tablet Treaty.

By situating the Battle of Kadesh and the Silver Tablet Treaty in the context of Late Bronze Age international relations, this chapter examines the reception of the Event in a broader geographical sphere, analyzing how the Event resonated outside the borders of Egypt. For a Hittite audience, how the reliefs meant was thus heavily informed by the fragility of Hatti's eastern borders. In particular, the rise of the Middle Assyrian empire in northern Mesopotamia threatened Hittite relations with their Levantine vassals by steadily acquiring territory from the collapsed Mittani empire.

The analysis of these Late Bronze Age political altercations between the Egyptian, Hittite, and Assyrian empires is crucial for disentangling how the later Neo-Assyrian reception of the Battle of Kadesh was impacted by the Middle Assyrian interactions with both the Egyptians and the Hittites in the thirteenth century BCE. In 671 BCE, six centuries after the Kadesh reliefs were first carved on the walls of the Ramesseum, the Neo-Assyrian ruler Esarhaddon and his army marched south through the Levant and invaded Egypt, advancing as far as Memphis before being repelled by the Kushite pharaohs. Several years later Esarhaddon's successor, Assurbanipal, again sent troops to the "Land of *Muṣri*;" this time the Assyrian forces reached Thebes, which they conquered and looted. While looting the temples in Egypt's religious capital, Assyrian soldiers would have witnessed the monumental Battle of Kadesh reliefs, still prominently displayed on the exterior surfaces of the Temple of Amun at Karnak and the Luxor

Temple. But the Theban landscape was much changed since the thirteenth century and although archaizing trends in the architectural landscape harken back to the glory days of Egypt's past, the contrast between its earlier imperial splendor—so evocative in the massive Battle scenes of Ramses fighting in a foreign landscape—and the contemporary dilapidation of the Ramesseum would have been unavoidable. For the Neo-Assyrian army, the age of the Kadesh reliefs would further heighten Assyria's rise as the “new” imperial presence in the Levant. Esarhaddon's rock-cut stele at Nahr el-Kalb, adjacent to the steles carved there by Ramses during his thirteenth century campaigns in the region, additionally signals the way that the Neo-Assyrian kings developed their royal rhetoric to benefit as both “inheritors” and “usurpers” of the New Kingdom Egyptian imperial identity.

When the Neo-Assyrian army brought their Egyptian loot back to the Assyrian heartland, they expanded the seventh century audience of the Battle of Kadesh well outside of the confines of Thebes to include the elite inhabitants of the northern Mesopotamian capital cities. At Nineveh, Assurbanipal commissioned palace reliefs of his Battle of Til Tuba in the same narrative compositional tradition as the Battle of Kadesh reliefs from the Theban temples, with crowded and chaotic fighting between Assyrian and Elamite forces spilling over the banks of the River Ulai. This renegotiation of the Battle of Kadesh composition, along with the visual dialogue created between Esarhaddon and Ramses's imperial markers in the Levantine landscape, demonstrates the resonance of the Event well beyond the place and time of its creation.

The conclusion of this dissertation synthesizes the different stages of Event-making for the Battle of Kadesh to demonstrate how diverse and dynamic the meaning-making components of the relief corpus have been (and continue to be) for the different audiences. For a contemporary Egyptian audience it was their architectural placement on the temple walls, which incorporated their viewing experience into a festival landscape; for the Hittites it was the Battle reliefs' visual dialogue with the Silver Tablet Treaty; and for the Neo-Assyrians it was the age and the imperial content that significantly determined how the Battle reliefs meant. The conclusion additionally emphasizes the duration of the impact of Events, acknowledging that the resonance of Events through time affects the meaning of other Events, further destabilizing their meaning. Thus in reexamining how we, as modern scholars, assess the specific resonances of Events in evolving times and with shifting audiences, the conclusion again returns to the materiality of the relief corpus itself, tracing the changes of the physical landscape and utilizing the constraining forces of the physicality of the reliefs to anchor the social, political, and historical influences that invariably impact how the Event means to each new audience.

CHAPTER 1. HOUSING THE BATTLE OF KADESH: THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF EGYPTIAN TEMPLES

Before introducing the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum, this dissertation begins with some general remarks about the form and function of typical cult temples in New Kingdom Egypt. Both of these aspects enabled and constrained the size of the surfaces on which the Kadesh reliefs were inscribed, their placement within the overall decorative scheme, and the themes of their content. Of equal importance is the manner in which the architectural layout of the temple impacted the visibility of the reliefs and the constituency of their audiences in different time periods. While temples varied greatly in terms of size and the prominence of their respective cults, the architectural format of Egyptian temples remained remarkably consistent from the New Kingdom onwards, facilitating a generalized introduction to their layouts.⁴

The word for temple in ancient Egyptian, *ḥwt ntr*, translates literally as “mansion of the god.” Temples, therefore, were not intended to serve as a congregation meeting- or assembly-place but rather to house the statue of a deity (or deities).⁵ As dwellings of the immortal gods, it is not surprising that temples were made out of stone and other durable materials so that they would last for eternity.⁶ It is also not surprising that their basic architectural structure in many ways derives from contemporary domestic architecture.⁷ The tripartite domestic arrangement of porch, broad hall, and shrine translated neatly into the temple forecourt, hypostyle hall, and sanctuary.

The location and precise cardinal orientation for each temple were carefully selected and ritually prepared.⁸ Temples built near the Nile were often situated on “an east–west axis according to local cardinal directions as determined by the river.”⁹ The orientation of temple processions would then replicate the daily path of the sun god on his “journey across the world, rising above the pylons in the east, moving through the columned halls and courts where its image appears under the lintels and architraves, and setting finally in the west, where the inner sanctuary was situated.”¹⁰

The proper temple entrance stood well in front of the entrance pylon, and comprised landing quays, gates, kiosks, and processional avenues, which connected the

⁴ Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 25.

⁵ Alexander Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture*, vol. 3, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 181.

⁶ “In most periods mortar was used only sparingly in stone construction, and temple walls were built by laying down courses of blocks which were carefully fitted together at their joining surfaces and only dressed on their outer surface once the wall was completed.” Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 41.

⁷ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 176.

⁸ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 34.

⁹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 36.

¹⁰ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 78.

outer walls of the temple to the quay.¹¹ These outer walls commonly took the shape of a large entrance pylon—a rectangular tower with a slanted face on either side of the entrance gate.¹² Ancient Egyptian documents describe pylons as “luminous mountain horizons of heaven,” written pictographically in the hieroglyphic script as twin mountain peaks flanking a rising sun.¹³ The extensive surface area of the pylons readily facilitated the inscription of monumental battle reliefs, shallowly carved in sunken relief and painted in bright colors. Yet uninterrupted vantages of such surfaces in the courtyards surrounding these pylons were uncommon. Alexander Badawy describes wooden flagstaffs that stood even taller than the pylons and “were erected in front of the inside prismatic recesses in the battered faces and held vertically upon a stone base by wooden or stone brackets protruding from the upper part of the wall.”¹⁴ Atop these poles large flags “floated gaily.”¹⁵ At temples such as Abu Simbel and Luxor, pairs of colossal statues of pharaohs were erected to watch over the main entrance.¹⁶ Often line drawings of the monumental, sprawling battle reliefs of Ramses II and Seti I exclude the visual impact of the statues, obelisks, columns, and flagstaffs that were placed immediately in front of pylons (Fig. 3).¹⁷

Behind the entrance pylon stood the temple forecourt. Temple forecourts (such as at the Ramesseum) were often surrounded by a columned or pillared portico but otherwise were left open to the sun. They served as a transitional zone that demarcated the exterior, public areas of the temple from the interior chambers of the god's personal domain.¹⁸ Along with the exterior temple walls, forecourts were commonly decorated with scenes of war and violence—where pharaoh always triumphed as the undisputed victor.¹⁹ Additionally, festival or religious scenes accompanied such martial imagery, but “nothing of the divine mysteries is revealed in these scenes which were to be seen by the populace.”²⁰

The proper temple frontage was the back of the forecourt, occasionally indicated by a raised portico with screen walls.²¹ Behind this stood the hypostyle hall, transversely

¹¹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 54.

¹² Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 177-178.

¹³ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 178.

¹⁴ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 178.

¹⁵ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 178.

¹⁶ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 178.

¹⁷ See, for example, G.A. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1976), fig. 9. His line drawings of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs from Abu Simbel obfuscate the impact of the wide pillars that would partition any view of the composition.

¹⁸ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 63.

¹⁹ “The function of these scenes is largely apotropaic, providing visual examples of the defense of the temple against its enemies—the forces of chaos which existed beyond the sacred precinct.” Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 46.

²⁰ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 179.

²¹ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 179.

oriented to the central axis of the temple.²² The hypostyle hall would have been roofed but lit by clerestory windows.²³ In the Nineteenth Dynasty in particular pharaohs commonly built additional hypostyle halls in front of initial halls.²⁴ The ancient Egyptians referred to the hypostyle hall as “the hall of appearance” because during festivals, the divine bark carrying the statue of the god traveled out of the sanctuary through the hypostyle hall to receive offerings.²⁵ It was also where a new pharaoh celebrated his coronation.

Thus, the walls and columns of the hypostyle hall were decorated with scenes commemorating these coronations and festivals, along with images of gods representing the different districts (nomes) of Egypt and *rekhyt* birds ideographically symbolizing the people of the state (see Chapter 5). Badawy describes these scenes as often “marked with the kinetic opposition of the performers striding in toward the god who strides out, giving the whole composition an eternal dynamism focused on the *naos* [inner sanctuary] which is enhanced by the contrast of moving light and shade that enliven an already vivid coloring and gilding.”²⁶

Unlike the hypostyle hall, the inner sanctuary—which was the most sacred and restricted part of the temple—would have been shrouded in darkness and accessible only to priests and pharaohs. In the sanctuary, the chaos of the outer world and even the general attendees of the public festivals “gave way to the world of the divine, where king and deities interact.”²⁷ It was here, behind closed doors at the very back of the temple, that the statue of the god lived. At each threshold of the temple the statue was protected by imposing doorways, which also demarcated the liminal points of the temple and served as important components of ritual processions.²⁸

In the majority of Egyptian temples, the ceiling and columns supporting it gradually decreased in height as they approached the inner sanctuary. At the same time, the floor level gradually increased in elevation as it approached the back of the temple.²⁹ Symbolically, this emulated the marshy environs of the earth mound that the Egyptians believed rose out of the primeval waters at the beginning of time. “The gradual rise in the floors in conjunction with the lowering height of the ceilings and the dynamic focusing toward the rear express architectonically the fact that the *naos* is the ‘heaven’ described by inscriptions.”³⁰ The painted reliefs covering the walls of the sanctuary

²² Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 179.

²³ The roofs were supported by papyriform columns.

²⁴ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 180.

²⁵ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 182.

²⁶ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 182.

²⁷ Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 171.

²⁸ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 67.

²⁹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 77.

³⁰ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 182. “In the world of giant metaphors which was the Egyptian temple, each element in the overall architectural programme played a role in symbolizing some aspect of the origins and function of the cosmos itself.” Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 76.

displayed purification and offering rites that took place daily there.

Rarely did this central arrangement of forecourt, hypostyle hall, and sanctuary stand in isolation. Often surrounding this central portion of temples stood storerooms (where cultic equipment was stored), vesting chambers, and other areas necessary for the daily rituals in the temple.³¹ Additionally, outside the temple structure stood sacred lakes, storage magazines, granaries, administrative offices, kitchens, and workshops, which were all directly affiliated with the maintenance and propagation of the cult.³²

The Ramesseum: A Mansion of Millions of Years

The ancient Egyptians referred to the Ramesseum as a “Mansion of Millions of Years” (*hwt nt ḥḥ n rnpt*), a term that has commonly—but erroneously—been translated as “mortuary temple” in Egyptological scholarship.³³ Mortuary temples, according to our modern understanding, are responsible for housing burial rites and the deposition of the deceased; in ancient Egypt these activities took place in tombs.³⁴ As early as the First Dynasty, when the royal burials were located at Abydos in an area referred to as the Umm el-Qa’ab, tomb complexes incorporated the dual functions of burial of the body and cult for the deceased.³⁵ Large walled enclosures that housed the cult of the deceased pharaohs were placed at the edge of cultivation adjacent to the tombs that housed the burials.³⁶ In the Eighteenth Dynasty, tomb and temple were physically separated when pharaohs began building tombs in the Valley of the Kings apart from elaborate temples they erected on the other side of the Theban massif at the edge of cultivation.³⁷ These

³¹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 68.

³² See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the temple complex at the Ramesseum.

³³ Gerhard Haeny, “New Kingdom ‘Mortuary Temples’ and ‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Byron Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 87.

³⁴ “The term ‘mortuary temple’ does not equate to any one Egyptian expression, but is a modern phrase which attempts to stress... the well-being of the deceased king... The function of mortuary temples exhibits changes over the millennia, but it seems clear that they were not involved with the actual burial rites of the kings who built them.” Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt: A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 73.

³⁵ See Eva-Maria Engel, “The Royal Tombs at Umm el-Qa’ab,” *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008): 30-41 for a recent synthesis of the royal tombs at Umm el-Qa’ab.

³⁶ Laurel D. Bestock, “The Early Dynastic Funerary Enclosures of Abydos,” *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008): 42-59 provides an overview of the funerary enclosures at Abydos.

³⁷ It is Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty versions of these temples, such as Seti I’s temple at Gurna, the Ramesseum, and Ramses III’s temple at Medinet Habu that were first and most prominently referred to as mortuary temples. Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 87. From monumental inscriptions and administrative documents, we know that the ancient Egyptians referred to these temples, respectively, as: “The Temple (called) ‘Seti-Merneptah-is-Glorious’ in the Estate of Amun on the West of Thebes”, “The Temple of Usermare-Setepenre (called) ‘United-with-Thebes’ In the Estate of Amun on the West of Thebes”, and “The Temple of Usermare-Meriamon

temples differed from the Old Kingdom temple-tomb complexes, which celebrated only the cult of the pharaoh and rarely included images of Egyptian gods. Instead, the New Kingdom temples on the western bank of Thebes demonstrate a marked shift by including temple decoration where various deities are attended to and worshipped by the deceased.³⁸

Not all of the New Kingdom temples built on the western bank of Thebes are identified as Mansions of Millions of Years, nor does all of our evidence of Mansions of Millions of Years refer to temples on the western bank. In fact the oldest known reference to a Mansion of Millions of Years comes from an inscription on a Thirteenth Dynasty statue from Karnak.³⁹ Two hundred years later the next reference dates to the reign of Ahmose, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the New Kingdom, at the quarries at Tura, just south of modern Cairo.⁴⁰ Ahmose wrote of extracting the lustrous limestone from the quarry that he reopened “for his Mansions of Millions of [Years].”⁴¹ This inscription reveals that Mansions of Millions of Years were not in fact synonymous with mortuary functions because Ahmose referred to building a plurality of them—yet “We would expect a king to have only one mortuary temple somewhere near his Theban tomb.”⁴² Thutmose III likewise called the *Akh-Menu* chapel that he built in the Temple of Amun at Karnak’s main sanctuary area a Mansion of Millions of Years and Amenhotep III also referred to his extensive construction at the Luxor Temple as a Mansion of Millions of Years.⁴³

Seti I, who erected the great hypostyle hall at the Temple of Amun at Karnak, gave it the name “Glorious is Seti-Merneptah,” the same title with which he designated his Mansion of Millions of Years at Gurna.⁴⁴ While no inscriptions directly refer to the

(called) ‘United-with-Eternity’ in the Estate of Amun on the West of Thebes.” Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 88.

³⁸ See, for example, the Eighteenth Dynasty reliefs of Hatshepsut in her temple at Deir el-Bahri, where she is portrayed as a male pharaoh, offering *nw* jars to Horus.

³⁹ Auguste Mariette found the statue at Karnak: Auguste Marriette, *Karnak, étude topographique et archéologique, avec un appendice comprenant les principaux textes hiéroglyphiques découverts ou recueillis pendant les fouilles exécutées à Karnak*, (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1875), pl. 8r. The inscription informs us that the pharaoh gave the statue to the vizier *Ij-mr* and granted permission that it be placed “in the House of his Lord in the Mansion of Millions of Years (named) ‘Satisfied-in-the-ka-of-Sobekhotep’ (*m pr nb.f m t3 hwt nt hḥ n rnpt ḥtp-k3-sbkḥtp*).” Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 89.

⁴⁰ Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 89.

⁴¹ “*R ḥwwt.f nt ḥḥw m* The line of text is broken but a nearby parallel text from the reign of Amenhotep III allows us to supply *rnpt* with a high degree of certainty.” Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 89.

⁴² Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 89.

⁴³ Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 108. The term was also used to designate his “*Djeser-Ahket*” temple built late in his reign in between the temples of Hatshepsut and Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri. Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 96.

⁴⁴ Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 110.

hypostyle hall as a Mansion of Millions of Years, Seti did write elsewhere that he “executed the work in his Mansion of Millions of Years in the forecourt of Karnak.”⁴⁵ On Seti’s temple at Abydos, which he dedicated principally to the god Osiris, he was more explicit. On the shrine at the rear of the temple commemorating Ramses I, Seti inscribed “Made as his memorial for his father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Menpehtyre, the son of Re Ramses, making for him a Mansion of Millions of Years on the side of the lords of eternity.”⁴⁶

Ramses II named more temples Mansions of Millions of Years than any other pharaoh. The Ramesseum is designated as such on vine jars and in titles of the Ramesseum’s temple administration, as is his temple at Abu Simbel.⁴⁷ At Ramses II’s temple at Abydos, an inscription on the doorway of the chapel he built for the bark of his father describes how the chapel resides in “my [Ramses’s] Mansion of Millions of Years.”⁴⁸

In compiling textual references for the idiom, Gerhard Haeny has convincingly determined that “Mansion of Millions of Years” was a non-restrictive term that referred to rooms, chapels, and entire temple complexes with diverse layouts and decorative schemes that transcended the specific celebration of the royal cult.⁴⁹ But as previously alluded to, during the New Kingdom the celebration of the royal cult itself began to transcend the traditional mortuary complexes of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. New Kingdom temples on the western bank of Thebes did indeed incorporate a prominent emphasis upon cult celebration into their decorative scheme and likely incorporated the propagation of their patron’s cult into the festivals and activities that took place within them. But the royal cult also began to be celebrated in a multiplicity of temples and even geographical locales;⁵⁰ moreover, it was incorporated into and subsumed under a broader religious ideology—a context that undoubtedly bore weight upon the themes and motifs chosen to decorate the Mansions of Millions of Years on the western bank of Thebes.⁵¹ Our understanding of the precise function of Mansions of Millions of Years, if indeed there is one, is far from complete. Haeny believes that they derived from the shelters that covered personal statues placed inside state temples to ensure that the deceased was guaranteed a continuous supply of offerings for the *k3*.⁵² Nigel and Helen Strudwick

⁴⁵ Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 111.

⁴⁶ Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 113, fig. 42.

⁴⁷ G.A. Gaballa, “Some Nineteenth Dynasty Monuments in Cairo Museum,” *Le Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 71 (1972): 129-133, fig. 1.

⁴⁸ Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 119.

⁴⁹ A comprehensive list of the Mansions of Millions of Years referents is provided in Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years.”

⁵⁰ As early as the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, an inscription dating to the reign of Ahmose discusses his preparations for the cult of his grandmother, the Queen Tetisheri and refers to a tomb, cenotaph, and pyramid temple located in Thebes and Abydos. Barry Kemp, “Abydos,” *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* 1 (1973): 28-41.

⁵¹ As compared with Old Kingdom mortuary temples in pyramid complexes, which were focused explicitly on the cult of the deceased pharaoh.

⁵² Haeny, “Mansions of Millions of Years,” 126.

believe that the term refers only to the intended permanence of the structure, not its intended purpose.⁵³ This dissertation acknowledges such ambiguity in the function of Mansions of Millions of Years; it also refrains from using the term mortuary temple to describe any of the temples on the western bank of Thebes. Instead this dissertation regards them more generally as “temples” or “temple complexes,” and it uses the modern designation “Ramesseum” to indicate the name that Ramses himself used to refer to the temple complex in question, “Ramses-United-with-Thebes.”

The Ramesseum, as a Mansion of Millions of Years, was more than just a cult center for Ramses II; first and foremost it was a temple to Amun, and the most prominent ceremonies held within it were in honor of the patron creator god of ancient Thebes.⁵⁴ As a center for the cult of Amun it maintained economic and religious significance throughout the year. The colossal statues inhabiting several of the Mansions of Millions of Years along the western bank of Thebes (including the Colossi of Memnon and the statues in the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu) served as mediators where the prayers of private Egyptians were aimed at the greatest of the gods.⁵⁵

The importance of the Ramesseum’s economic production and the great size of its storerooms and workshops were also directly related to the wealth and prominence of the cult of Amun.⁵⁶ Storerooms were filled with perishable items such as grains,⁵⁷ honey, incense, and oil while bakeries and butcheries were incorporated among textile production centers and comprised an important activity in the workshops.⁵⁸ The extensive kitchen and bakery rooms south of the main temple provided food for the festivals and also the daily liturgical offerings.⁵⁹ Additionally, they contributed meat, oil, beer, bread, cake, and fat rations for the extensive population of craftsmen and employees working at the royal temples and tombs on the western bank.⁶⁰ For the Ramesseum’s

⁵³ Strudwick and Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt*, 72-73.

⁵⁴ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 322. These included the Opet Festival and the Beautiful Feast of the Valley.

⁵⁵ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 99. The ‘hearing ears’ in Theban temples served a similar function.

⁵⁶ Ramses III, for example, granted 20 percent of the vast income of the Temple of Amun at Karnak to his temple at Medinet Habu. Guy Lecuyot, “The Ramesseum (Egypt), Recent Archaeological Research,” accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.archeo.ens.fr/IMG/pdf/ramesseum.pdf>. Ramses II inscribed the architrave in the hypostyle hall of the Ramesseum with: “Build up supplies in the foodstores until they reach the sky, let the treasure store be filled with electrum, gold, royal linen, and all sorts of precious stones.” “The Ramesseum.”

⁵⁷ Holes in the vaulted ceilings of the storerooms at regular intervals were used for the pouring of grain into them.

⁵⁸ Christian Leblanc, “The Recent Excavation and Restoration Works at the Ramesseum,” *Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest*, last modified May 9, 2011, <http://www.mafto.fr/2011/05/the-recent-excavation-and-restoration-works-at-the-ramesseum/>.

⁵⁹ “The Recent Excavation.”

⁶⁰ “The Recent Excavation.”

workforce and the recipients of its provisions, the flourishing economic output of the complex would not only accord well with the military success of pharaoh, it would result to a large degree from it. And lest that connection was in danger of being forgotten, the temple complex prominently displayed the Battle of Kadesh reliefs to remind its priests, craftsmen, and festival attendees of the economic prosperity resulting from Amun's accord and Ramses's military success (see Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 2. THE BATTLE OF KADESH RELIEFS AT THE RAMESSEUM: IMAGERY AND INSCRIPTIONS

The Battle of Kadesh Imagery

First Pylon

The exterior of the first pylon at the Ramesseum lies in ruins, but the interior surface has been restored to a height of ten meters or more and a width of fifty-three meters, preserving the monumentality of the Ramesseum temple's entrance.⁶¹ Its sandstone blocks vary in shape and size; horizontally laid courses are occasionally punctuated with a vertically oriented stone. The upper left quadrant of the northern wing was destroyed in antiquity, but the southern wing—standing in better repair—is preserved to a minimum height of sixteen courses (with some portions restored as high as twenty-four courses). The smooth surface of the sandstone no longer retains any of its original painted decoration; instead, the monolithic rust color of the sandstone emphasizes the chiseling of the sunken reliefs, which cover its entire surface. In the early morning light while the pylon is backlit from the rising sun the incised reliefs are all but invisible from a distance of ten feet or more, but from midday onwards the sun sinks into their contours and contrasts the shadowed incisions from the dull orange-colored stone.

Ramses II covered the interior surface of the first pylon at the Ramesseum—presently divided by a monumental Ptolemaic gateway—with images from his famed Battle of Kadesh.⁶² On the northern wing the imposing image of pharaoh enthroned in his military camp is followed, on the southern wing, by two additional depictions of Ramses charging into combat on his chariot, his bow readied (Fig. 4 and 5). All of these figures face rightwards (south), orienting the viewer to the direction of the action in the massive tableau (left to right). The imposing gateway, reaching nearly the full height of the original pylon, partitions the action so that no vignettes traverse the two wings (Fig. 6). As a result the northern and the southern wings present distinct activities, which are united by the consistent size and orientation of their compositions and by the figures of Ramses, which dominate both wings and draw the eyes of the viewer from left to right across the entire pylon.

The surface of the northern wing remains in remarkably good condition with very little defacement. The composition radiates outwards from the central vignette containing the enthroned Ramses II (Fig. 7). With two fan-bearers behind him, he wears a *khepresh* crown and displays his right hand open on his lap while his left hand holds a staff. Ramses faces twenty-one Egyptian officials who receive his council; the first among them reaches his open palm upwards towards Ramses in a gesture of deference.

⁶¹ For a summary of recent excavations and restoration efforts at the Ramesseum, see Chapter 5 and Christian Leblanc, “The Recent Excavation and Restoration Works at the Ramesseum,” *Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest*, last modified May 9, 2011, <http://www.mafto.fr/2011/05/the-recent-excavation-and-restoration-works-at-the-ramesseum/>.

⁶² For an architectural introduction to the Ramesseum, including the first pylon, see Chapter 5.

Above the row of officials another figure in a chariot carriage turns to bow towards Ramses while three men guide his horses towards the pylon entrance. To the bottom right of Ramses's throne, four Egyptians beat two foreigners who raise their hands in a plea for mercy (Fig. 8a and 8b). Abutting the Ptolemaic entrance, neat columns of the Bulletin's hieroglyphic text fill the upper right corner of the northern wing (Fig. 9).

A single line of hieroglyphs vertically bisects the northern wing, separating the Bulletin text, the enthroned Ramses, and the vignette of the foreigners being beaten from the activity in the Egyptian military camp inscribed to the left. Here crowded scenes of mundane camp life activities abound, such as the organization of foodstuffs into piles, the starting of a kitchen fire, and the arrival of donkeys with baskets of supplies on their backs (Fig. 10). A dense overlapping row of shields borders the camp along three of its sides. Enemy horses breach the upper boundary of the camp, leaping to combat, where the pylon begins to crumble away (Fig. 11). Along the left boundary of the camp, three columns of hieroglyphs separate the protective shields from several rows of Egyptian soldiers marching rightwards, each row led by a single chariot. Underneath the camp, two neat overlapping files of soldiers carry shields and march towards the fighting on the southern wing of the first pylon (Fig. 12).

On the southern wing, the structure of the composition devolves into the fluid, chaotic momentum of combat. The sweeping diagonal line of the Orontes River cuts across the wing from the bottom left to the upper right corner, where it encircles the citadel of Kadesh near the edge of the composition (unfortunately the upper portions of the citadel no longer remain) (Fig. 13). The water was once painted a bright arresting blue,⁶³ but currently the banks of the Orontes—which span two to three feet in width and are carved in relatively thin low relief—can be difficult to distinguish from the outlines of the attacking figures alongside (and sometimes inside) the River.

Left of the Orontes, two nearly identical figures of Ramses II on his chariot ascend the pylon towards the citadel of Kadesh (Fig. 14). In each vignette Ramses stands on his chariot platform, wearing the *khepresh* crown, and readies his bow and arrow. In front of him his two horses charge forth at a flying gallop (the space underneath their legs filled with the fallen Hittite cavalry). The action swarms around the figures of Ramses so that infantry and cavalry collide with a greater density and fluidity near the figures of pharaoh on his chariot than anywhere else in the composition.

The bottom of the two figures of Ramses on the southern wing stands four courses (approximately five feet) above the present ground level of the first courtyard. The back of Ramses's torso and the front edge of his crown—along with his horses' chests and tails—are carved in a deep sunken relief that accentuates their contours in the afternoon sun (Fig. 15). Two cartouches fill the space between his brow and his readied bow. A falcon flies immediately above Ramses's head, its wings open in a gesture of protection.

Each of Ramses's horses wears a double-plumed headdress. Twelve short columns of hieroglyphs comprise a lengthy caption in front of the galloping horses immediately before the Orontes River plunges to their right (Fig. 16). To the left of this

⁶³ We know this from the roofed-over exemplar on the interior of the second pylon at the Ramesseum where the blue paint of the Orontes is preserved in several portions of the River.

lower chariot extensive defacement renders the details of the fighting unintelligible beyond the occasional chariot wheel or horse torso. The combat appears to have persisted underneath the lower chariot but these courses are poorly preserved. Immediately under the hind feet of Ramses's horses, the chevron notching of the Orontes River flows horizontally towards the Ptolemaic gateway. Here the river is at its narrowest, barely two feet wide. In the water and on the land all around the galloping horses, Hittite soldiers lie dead—presumably crushed under trampling hooves or pierced by an arrow from Ramses's bow.

On the southern wing the upper figure of Ramses charges towards the citadel of Kadesh. The Levantine citadel is carved on the same horizontal plane and separated from Ramses's chariot by the initial plunge of the Orontes River (Fig. 17a and 17b). A single row of enemy soldiers stands at the defense of Kadesh inside its moat. Small figures of horses flail in the water of the Orontes trying to broach the city. Immediately underneath the city moat, an un-carved area on the surface of the pylon contrasts with the density of the rest of the composition. The citadel itself is carved in shallow relief; at seven meters above the ground of the first courtyard its height reduces its visibility—even when one stands directly at the base of the pylon. These shallow contours of the citadel contrast with the deep incisions delineating Ramses's torso and the chest and flanks of his horses in the upper chariot vignette. Even when the reliefs were covered in paint the effect would have strongly accentuated the figures of Ramses and his horses in the afternoon light.

In the upper section of the Orontes, which separates the figure of Ramses from the citadel of Kadesh, dead soldiers and horses float between the banks while their drowning companions reach for rescuing hands along the shore (Fig. 18). Underneath the citadel of Kadesh, ranks of Hittite soldiers march in orderly fashion towards the fighting. In the midst of the Hittite army, at the bottom right corner of the composition, two figures on a chariot abscond from the battle while looking back over their shoulders at the lower figure of Ramses (Fig. 19). These men are barely a third of pharaoh's size yet they are carved more deeply than any other figures on the pylon besides Ramses. This highlights the small chariot, particularly when one steps back from the pylon into the courtyard. A caption of eleven short columns of text immediately above the vignette names one of the figures as the "vile chief of Hatti."

The southern wing is preserved to its greatest height in the upper left corner, immediately adjacent to the Ptolemaic gateway. Here the upper half of the wall is decorated with five orderly rows of Hittite chariots pulled by galloping horses that face left away from the battle (Fig. 20). (In the afternoon light, the deeper incising of the galloping horses renders them more prominent than the chariots so that they almost look like rider-less horses fleeing the combat). The evenness of their spacing in each row is distinguished from the tumult of the centralized battle action by the relative sparseness of decoration in this upper portion of the southern wing. A thin, double horizontal line separates these chariots from the fighting below.

Second Pylon

The southern wing of the second pylon at the Ramesseum is completely destroyed, but on the interior of the northern wing, recessed behind an Osiride-pillared portico, a second version of the Battle of Kadesh decorates the sandstone wall (Fig. 2).

The combat scenes are all that survives: the citadel of Kadesh, the Orontes River teeming with drowning horses and soldiers, Ramses advancing on his chariot, and a fluid clamor of Hittite and Egyptian cavalry and infantry. The protection of the portico has preserved remnants of the original paint on the reliefs. Soft blue pigment survives on large swathes of the Orontes River and Ramses's chariot frame (Fig. 21). On numerous horses the dark red pigment distinguishes the animals from the lighter, orange-skinned Hittite army—particularly in the drowning chaos inside the banks of the Orontes (Fig. 22 and 23). Here a modern audience is provided a glimpse of how color and incision would have worked in tandem on the reliefs: bright colors emphasized iconographic features in lower lighting (particularly when the reliefs were untouched by the morning sun), while deep incisions (such as the outline of Ramses's figure and those of his horses and chariot) would have accentuated noteworthy figures in the visually discombobulating action. On the majority of the northern wing, the remaining carvings reveal a palimpsest composition where originally two figures of Ramses on his chariot (similar to the first pylon) were later reduced to one (Fig. 24 and 25).

The visibility of the northern wing is partitioned by four Osiride pillars and one lotus-form column, all of which stand approximately six feet in front of the reliefs (Fig. 26). When a visitor stands inside the second courtyard, the three northernmost Osiride pillars and the lotus-form column create three frames for the composition. The right opening is filled by the blue, swooping Orontes River, which plunges downwards from the upper right corner of the wing and then travels horizontally along the bottom of the wall out of the frame to the left (Fig. 27). Drowning soldiers reach for help along both banks and several are pulled out of the water by enemy forces. Towards the bottom of the opening a small vignette depicts the prince of Aleppo being resuscitated while held upside down by the ankles after nearly drowning in the Orontes (Fig. 28). Only when one approaches the surfaces of the pylon and stands in between the pillars can the Orontes River be seen to encircle the citadel of Kadesh in the upper right corner of the composition (Fig. 29). Here the city is much diminished in proportion to the rest of the composition.

The central opening between the pillars contains the chaotic jumble of combat: soldiers and horses and chariots collide in contorted postures (Fig. 30). An earlier version of the scene framed Ramses on his chariot approaching the upper banks of the Orontes. The overlapping Hittite and Egyptian armies, now devoid of their bright paint, no longer obscure the deep chiseling of Ramses's prominent torso and chariot wheel framed perfectly by the Osiride pillars (Fig. 31).⁶⁴ Underneath the fighting the Orontes River flows horizontally and along the very bottom of the composition Hittite chariots gallop leftwards, carrying three Hittite soldiers apiece.

The left opening frames a deeply incised figure of Ramses on his chariot, his bow drawn, galloping rightwards towards the battle *mêlée* (Fig. 32). A sun disk with two *uraei* sits directly above his *kheprêsh* crown and a small figure of a lion leaps alongside the wheel of his chariot (Fig. 33). Columns of hieroglyphs surround Ramses's torso and

⁶⁴ Likely the overlaid figures of soldiers in combat were more effective at covering the figure of Ramses when the paint was fully preserved.

the Orontes flows horizontally beneath his chariot wheel. Above the sun disk, horizontal blue lines partition a double row of Hittite chariots.

The left edge of the second pylon's northern wing is destroyed and nothing remains of the northern wall of the second court, but Kitchen (following Kuentz) believes the Bulletin was carved on the interior northern wall of the court adjacent to fragments of a camp scene that Kuentz initially identified there.⁶⁵

Unlike the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the first pylon, it is impossible to view the entire composition on the remains of the second pylon without visual interruption. At a distance of ten feet from the wall, the Osiride pillars block the majority of one's sightline, while the portico roof casts deep shadows over the upper courses of the reliefs for much of the day. Standing in between the pillars, one is too close to the surface of the pylon to take in the entirety of the composition on the northern wing. Yet even in the open courtyard of the first pylon the entirety of the composition is so expansive that no one could observe every detail (iconographic feature, texture of stone, color pattern, inscription) at once, even if such an objective activity were in fact possible. It is precisely the goal of this dissertation to examine how different audiences encountered these Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum in different contexts and at different times in order to determine "how, from among a concert of bundled qualities, some qualities gain prominence and produce effects in particular social situations."⁶⁶ In other words, by understanding the reliefs as active participants in their multi-layered (geographical, architectural, temporal, religious, social, political) landscape, this dissertation reveals which material qualities and iconographic elements "gain prominence" and construct the Event of the Battle of Kadesh with Egyptian, Hittite, and Neo-Assyrian audiences (see Chapter 4).

The Battle of Kadesh Inscriptions

Accompanying (and in some cases directly framing or interposing) the monumental Kadesh images on the temple walls at Abydos, Abu Simbel, Karnak, Luxor, and the Ramesseum, Ramses II commissioned textual accounts to commemorate the campaign. These inscriptions have been extensively collated, translated, and analyzed grammatically elsewhere.⁶⁷ This section provides an introduction to the content of the Kadesh inscriptions and the form of the texts: their length, script, and architectural location at the Ramesseum. Even though only a small percentage of an Egyptian audience could read the hieroglyphs, the texts would have served an important

⁶⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical: Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments*, vol. 2, Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999a), 127; Charles Kuentz, *La Bataille de Qadesh*, vol. 3, (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1928-1934), pl. XVI.

⁶⁶ Marian H. Feldman, "Beyond Iconography: Meaning-Making in Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean Visual and Material Culture," in *The Cambridge Prehistory of the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean*, ed. A. Bernard Knapp and Peter Van Dommelen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014a), 3.

⁶⁷ For a summary and review of seminal publications, see Chapter 3.

iconographic function in the way that they punctuated, bounded, and organized the imagery on the first pylon.

In 1903, James Henry Breasted divided the textual accounts of the Battle of Kadesh into three principle forms: the Poem (a lengthy, poetic version of the conflict), the Record (a shorter, “official” report), and the Reliefs (scenes from the Battle accompanied by short captions).⁶⁸ Charles Kuentz, in his 1928-1934 edition of the textual material, used the same tripartite division, although he referred to the Record as the Bulletin.⁶⁹ Scholars have commonly accepted this classification,⁷⁰ with the noted exception of Sir Alan Gardiner who finds the term “Poem” an erroneous description of the lengthier narrative account of the campaign (which he believes has no metrical sections) and thus replaces it with the Literary Record.⁷¹ Gardner also believes that the Bulletin is “no more than one of those legends which serves to explain the accompanying reliefs” and thus groups it with the other captions and the images that they accompany into the Pictorial Record.⁷²

Kenneth Kitchen agrees with Gardiner that the Poem is more accurately considered the Literary Record.⁷³ He disagrees with Gardiner, though, that the Bulletin is merely an extended caption: “It commonly accompanies the scene of the King receiving news of the Hittites’ proximity from the two captured spies—but not always.”⁷⁴ Instead, Kitchen follows Breasted’s tripartite division of the texts, acknowledging the Epigraphs and relief scenes as a distinct category from the Bulletin. This dissertation also adopts the tripartite division of the textual accounts of Kadesh, employing the following labels: the Poem, the Bulletin, and the captions.

⁶⁸ James Henry Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh: A Study in the Earliest Known Military Strategy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Publications, 1903).

⁶⁹ Kuentz, *La Bataille de Qadesh*.

⁷⁰ Such as, for example, Anthony J. Spalinger, “Remarks on the Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramses II: The ‘Bulletin,’” in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*, ed. Hans Gödicke, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985b), 43-75; Raymond O. Faulkner, “The Battle of Kadesh,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Institutes, Abteilung Kairo* 16 (1958): 93-111; William J. Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh. A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom*, vol. 2, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁷¹ Sir Alan H. Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

⁷² Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 3. G.A. Gaballa also accepts Gardiner’s dual categories, literary and reliefs, in her visual analysis of the Kadesh imagery (*Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 114).

⁷³ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 5.

⁷⁴ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 7. Also, Kitchen points out how the Bulletin contains “much that is *not* pertinent to the scene to which it is commonly attached.” Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 7-8.

The Bulletin

The Bulletin inscription of the Battle of Kadesh is preserved twice at Luxor,⁷⁵ once at Abu Simbel, fragmentarily at Abydos, as a palimpsest at Karnak,⁷⁶ and twice at the Ramesseum,⁷⁷ although the version on the second pylon of the Ramesseum is mostly lost. On the temple walls, the Bulletin is often inserted as closely as possible to the relief images, particularly to the scenes at the Egyptian camp, where it occasionally frames the scene from above. The account covers just one day of fighting; it includes the sequence of activities that immediately precede Ramses's self-proclaimed heroic fighting and provides details of the combat itself. The Bulletin begins with the date of the Kadesh campaign in the fifth regnal year of Ramses II, explicitly referring to the campaign as Ramses's second. The account then sets the scene in the hilly lands south of the citadel of Kadesh early in the morning on the day of the fighting. Ramses travels northwards towards the town of Shabtuna where he interrogates two Shashu spies, who provide false intelligence as to the current location of the Hittite king (who is never named in any of the versions of the Bulletin or Poem but instead is referred to only as "the vile chief of Hatti"). The spies inform Ramses that the Hittite king was north of Tunip when instead—according to the narration of the Bulletin—he was ready and waiting for the Egyptian army along with infantry and chariotry from a host of neighboring lands (Bulletin, 13-20).

Because of the false intelligence, Ramses travels northwards again and pitches a tent "north of Kadesh on the west side of the Orontes."⁷⁸ There, Hittite scouts are captured and confess the real location of the Hittite king and the extensive lists of allies who accompany him (including Carchemish, Arzawa, Ugarit, Lukka, Khaleb, and Kadesh itself).⁷⁹ Ramses commands his officials to summon the rest of his army (which, the Bulletin informs us, is currently still south of Shabtuna) to his aid (Bulletin, 74-76). At the same time, the Hittite army crosses "the ford south of Kadesh [and] charged into his Majesty's army as it marched unaware."⁸⁰ The Egyptian army falters as a result of this attack and the Hittite army surrounds the followers of Ramses who were with him at his camp.

In response, the Bulletin describes how Ramses dons his armor and weapons, mounts his horse, 'Victory in Thebes,' and sets out into battle alone, where "His majesty slew the entire force of the Foe from Hatti... as well as all the chiefs of all the countries that had come with him."⁸¹ The Bulletin compares Ramses in the heat of battle to several

⁷⁵ At Luxor Temple, the bulletin remains on the exterior of the first pylon and on the exterior western and southern sides of the forecourt.

⁷⁶ At the Temple of Amun at Karnak, a palimpsest of the Bulletin survives on the exterior of the southern wall of the hypostyle hall.

⁷⁷ At the Ramesseum, the Bulletin is well preserved on the upper right quadrant of the northern wing of the interior of the first pylon; fragments remain on the left border of the northern wing of the second pylon.

⁷⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 60: Bulletin, 31-33.

⁷⁹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 61: Bulletin, 44-45.

⁸⁰ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 61: Bulletin, 78-81.

⁸¹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 62: Bulletin, 95-100.

Egyptian deities such as Seth and Sekhmet, as well as to a griffin.⁸² He causes the Hittites to “fall on their faces, one upon the other, as crocodiles fall, into the water of the Orontes.”⁸³ The Bulletin ends by reiterating that Ramses triumphed alone, “for my infantry and my chariotry had deserted me; not one of them stood looking back... Everything that my majesty has told I did it in truth, in the presence of my infantry and my chariotry.”⁸⁴

The Poem

The Poem account was inscribed along with the Bulletin in hieroglyphs at Abydos,⁸⁵ Luxor,⁸⁶ Karnak,⁸⁷ and across the first courtyard from the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the eastern face of the northern wing of the second pylon of the Ramesseum. Additionally, hieratic copies of the text have been discovered on Papyrus Sallier III (of which Papyrus Raifé is a join) and Papyrus Chester Beatty III.⁸⁸ The Poem does not accompany the Kadesh reliefs at Abu Simbel. On the other temples, its lengthy composition was usually placed away from the fighting scenes on separate interior or exterior walls; Gardiner thus suggests that the artisans were forced to omit the Poem at Abu Simbel because of the reduced interior space of Abu Simbel’s temple complex.⁸⁹

The Poem begins with a declaration of victory for Ramses over the land of Hatti and a list of the enemy’s allies.⁹⁰ This is followed by a laudatory description of Ramses II, comparing him to Seth and Montu and Atum (and later Sekhmet), as well as “firm-hearted like a bull ready for battle” (Poem, 13), and “with a heart that is like a mountain

⁸² “I was after them like a griffin.” Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 62: Bulletin, 106-107.

⁸³ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 62: Bulletin, 105.

⁸⁴ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 62: Bulletin, 108-112. Earlier, the audience is informed that, “His majesty was alone, none other with him.” Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 62: Bulletin, 104-106.

⁸⁵ At Abydos the Poem was inscribed on the exterior of the northwest temple wall.

⁸⁶ The Poem was inscribed three times on the Luxor temple: on the exterior of the first pylon, on the east and southwest walls of the Ramesside court, and on the exterior of the western wall of the court built by Amenhotep III.

⁸⁷ At the Temple of Amun at Karnak, fragments of the Poem remain on the southern exterior wall of the hypostyle hall.

⁸⁸ See Chapter 3, in particular Anthony J. Spalinger, *The Transformation of an Ancient Egyptian Narrative: P. Sallier III and the Battle of Kadesh*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002). For an edition of the Chester Beatty III Papyrus, see Sir Alan H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, (London: British Museum Press, 1935). Papyrus Sallier III is BM EA10181,11. Papyrus Chester Beatty III is BM EA10683,3.

⁸⁹ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 4.

⁹⁰ While the list of Hittite allies overlaps with those mentioned in the Bulletin, in particular Arzawa, Lukka, Naharin, Dardany, Carchemish, Khedy, Ugarit, and Kadesh, the Bulletin includes additional allies such as Khaleb and Inesa that are not mentioned in the Poem.

of copper” (Poem, 23) who has perfect form, strong instincts, and who “brings home his followers, rescues his soldiers” (Poem, 25). After the lengthy encomium, the Poem commences its narrative with Ramses II preparing his troops for the journey northwards in his fifth regnal year past the fortress of Sile towards the Valley of the Pine (Poem, 30-37). Along the way, the Poem informs us that all the leaders of the foreign lands that Ramses marched past trembled in his presence and brought him gifts. After many days he reached the hilly land surrounding Kadesh and crossed the Orontes River with his army’s first division. The additional divisions of Pre, Ptah, and Seth were all marching at varying distances behind. Like the Bulletin, the Poem then revealed that the vile foe from Hatti was nearby, just northeast of the town of Kadesh, with his extensive allies. The chief of Hatti “had left no silver in his land. He had stripped it of all its possessions and had given them to all the foreign countries in order to bring them with him to fight.”⁹¹

It was deep in the midst of his army that the Hittite king stood; he “did not come out for fear of his majesty” (Poem, 68). The Hittite army attacked from the south, weakening the Pre division, which was unprepared for a battle. The Poem locates Ramses north of Kadesh at this time, on the western side of the Orontes. When he is told of the attack, he grabs his weapons, mounts ‘Victory in Thebes,’ and charges off against the Hittite army, “being alone by himself, none other with him” (Poem, 82). Ramses confronts 2,500 enemy chariots—so the Poem tells us—with no aid from his own troops who have deserted him: “I keep on shouting for them, but none of them heeds my call” (Poem, 114-117). Instead, he appeals to Amun, asking, “What are these Asiatics to you, O Amun, the wretches ignorant of god? Have I not made for you many great monuments, filled your temple with my booty, built for you my mansion of Millions-of-Years?”⁹²

Ramses’s prayers were of course answered and Amun provided him the strength and valor to overwhelm the enemy, single-handedly, in combat. While fighting, Ramses called out to his troops: “None among you is worthy of trust? Is there none among you whom I helped in my land? Did I not rise as lord when you were lowly, and made you into chiefs by my will every day? ... I have banished all evil from the land... No lord has done for his soldiers what my majesty did for your sakes... As the *ka* of my father Amun endures, I wish I were in Egypt, like my fathers who did not see Syrians and did not fight them abroad!”⁹³

According to the Poem, Menna (Ramses’s shield-bearer) endured the enemy onslaught with his pharaoh, although he too expressed intimidation at the enemy forces. It was not until the evening that the rest of the Egyptian army returned to the camp. They found the plain of Kadesh strewn with enemy bodies and praised Ramses extensively for his prowess in the day’s fighting, describing him as “protector of Egypt, curber of foreign lands, you have broken the back of Hatti forever.”⁹⁴

On the second day Ramses again “was ready to fight like an eager bull; I arose against them in the likeness of Montu, equipped with my weapons of victory... I charged

⁹¹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 64: Poem, 53-56.

⁹² Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 65: Poem, 97-100.

⁹³ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 67-68: Poem, 172-185, 188-190.

⁹⁴ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 69: Poem, 249-250.

their ranks fighting as a falcon pounces, the serpent on my brow felled my foes.”⁹⁵ The Poem is vague as to whether or not his troops accompanied him, mentioning that Ramses “marshaled the ranks for battle” (Poem, 276) at dawn but then never referred to their aid in the ensuing fighting. The Poem is explicit though that the Hittite king wrote to Ramses to request that he cease his attack. Ramses assembled his officers who upon hearing the words that the Hittite king had written, recommended that Ramses cease his attack: “There is no blame in peace when you make it” (Poem, 329). Ramses agreed and journeyed back southwards to Egypt, having “crushed all lands through fear of him” (Poem, 335). The Poem ends with Ramses’s return to Egypt where all the gods welcomed him back to his capital, Pr-Ramses. He was given praise and all the lands submitted to him for eternity.

The Captions

The last group of inscriptions describing the Battle of Kadesh were the short and medium-length captions that scribes directly interposed into the monumental images on the temple walls. Sometimes the captions were neatly inscribed in hieroglyphic registers, as on the first pylons at the Ramesseum and the Luxor Temple, and sometimes they were rendered on hasty, slanting groundlines, as on the second pylon at the Ramesseum.⁹⁶ In many instances, the content of the captions describes the nearby iconography. For example, accompanying the figure of a reclining lion adjacent to the royal pavilion in the camp at Abu Simbel, a scribe wrote a short epithet followed by the lion’s name: “The living lion, follower of His Majesty, ‘Slayer of his Enemies’.”⁹⁷ In some instances the caption is longer, functioning to identify characters well known to us from the Bulletin and the Poem. On the first pylon at Luxor, the caption “The wretched Chief of Khatti standing (looking) back (in) fear of His Majesty” accompanies the figure of the Hittite king absconding from the battle in the lower left of the composition.⁹⁸

Occasionally, these captions introduce characters or scenes in the images previously unmentioned in the Poem or the Bulletin. On the second pylon of the Ramesseum, artists rendered the prince of Aleppo, a Hittite ally, turned upside down while being saved from drowning by his soldiers. Adjacent to his upturned figure is written: “The wretched Chief of Khaleb being emptied (of water) by his soldiers after His Majesty had thrown him into the water.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 69 (Poem, 278-281).

⁹⁶ The visual affect of these differing styles was marked. Where the captions were neatly aligned with the imagery and surrounding texts, they receded into the composition and visually assimilated with the Bulletin (if nearby). Conversely, when they were etched into open space around the action as on the second pylon at the Ramesseum, their appearance was visually disruptive.

⁹⁷ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 35: R2.

⁹⁸ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 41: R41.

⁹⁹ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 41: R40. Another important scene only hinted at in the Bulletin and not mentioned at all in the Poem is described in caption R8, where two Hittite spies are bastinadoed to reveal the true location of the Hittite king. At the Ramesseum, this scene occurs to the bottom right of the enthroned figure of Ramses II in

The caption that has garnered the most scholarly attention describes a large contingent of foot soldiers and cavalry who approach the combat scenes in the Kadesh reliefs as reinforcements for the Egyptian army (R11, according to Gardiner's classification system). These Na'arn are explicitly named in captions from at all five sites, yet nowhere are they mentioned in either the Bulletin or the Poem. At the Ramesseum, the long explanatory caption separates the neatly organized rows of soldiers from the Egyptian camp on the northern wing of the first pylon:

The coming of the Ne'arin of Pharaoh from the land of Amor. They found that the host of the Khatti enemies hemmed in the camp of Pharaoh on its western side... the army of Amun in which Pharaoh was had not yet ended the pitching of the camp, and the army of Pre and the army of Ptah were marching and ... had not yet arrived from the wood of Robawi. And the Ne'arin broke into the camp of Pharaoh, and the servants of His majesty killed [the Hittites] and did not allow one of them to escape, their hearts being confident of the great strength of Pharaoh.¹⁰⁰

The following scholarly review describes how different scholars interpret the overlapping and divergent content of these inscriptions, along with their metrical and stylistic elements. What is most important in the context of this dissertation is whether or not these compositions were performed orally at festivals and ceremonies in Egyptian temples. Evidence for this can be found in the genre, content, and style of the Battle of Kadesh inscriptions and is discussed at length in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. Such performances would make the content of the Kadesh inscriptions available to non-literate Egyptian (and foreign) audiences who entered temple complexes during festival times and would have impacted their encounters with the Kadesh reliefs on the temple walls.

the camp on the northern wing of the first pylon and is accompanied by the following caption: "The coming of Pharaoh's scout bringing two scouts of the Fallen one of Khatti into the Pharaoh's Presence. They beat them to make them say where the wretched Fallen one of Khatti was." Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 37.

CHAPTER 3. SCHOLARLY REVIEW

Introduction

Since 1903, when the Egyptologist James Henry Breasted published his self-proclaimed “realistic account”¹⁰¹ of the conflict between Ramses II and Muwatalli at the northern Levantine citadel of Kadesh, myriad scholars have endeavored to establish the historicity of the inscriptions and images alike. Egyptologists, Hittitologists, and Near Eastern scholars, motivated by Breasted’s reconstruction of the Kadesh military sequence, have produced philological, historical, and art historical scholarship of impressive magnitude. Not only does this interest cogently demonstrate the continued resonance of the relief corpus, it also provides a crucial body of knowledge (including textual collations and translations, grammatical analyses, photographs and line drawings of difficult-to-access palimpsests) that paves the way for new scholarship.

Many scholars, readily acknowledging the propagandistic role of the monumental reliefs, struggle with how to measure their historical accuracy, and, moreover how to assess what inaccuracies might mean. By focusing on the historicity of the Kadesh reliefs, scholars rarely address their geographical or architectural location and how this affected the viewing experiences of their potential audiences. While adeptly analyzing the iconography of the monumental battle scenes, these studies often decontextualize the reliefs from their social, temporal, and physical landscapes. As a result, they have reduced the “meaning” of the reliefs to their two-dimensional content and have regarded this meaning as unchanging.

The following review of Egyptological and Near Eastern (including Hittite) scholarship does not aim to be comprehensive but rather to synthesize the last 110 years of Kadesh research by elucidating prominent goals, themes, and approaches. In particular, it highlights how scholars throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have privileged textual materials and emphasized the historicity of the reliefs. The subsequent methodology section of this dissertation will then demonstrate how my own approaches to the corpus of Battle of Kadesh reliefs draw from and expand upon this vast body of scholarly works.

Important Editions and Translations of the Battle of Kadesh Inscriptions

While Breasted provided a scholarly overview and reconstruction of the fighting at Kadesh in 1903, several decades passed before comprehensive editions and translations of the textual accounts described in Chapter 2 were published. Accompanying many of the translations were philological analyses that were embedded in discussions of historical reconstruction. In 1929, Sélim Hassan published *Le poème dit de Pentataour et le rapport officiel sur la bataille de Qadesh*, where for the first time the textual variants of the Poem in its monumental versions as well as the hieratic manuscripts Papyrus Raifé

¹⁰¹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical: Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments*, vol. 2, Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999a), 21.

and Papyrus Sallier III were collected.¹⁰² The first volume of the publication is a traditional collation of all the variants, while the second volume provides a paleographic, philological, and historical commentary. The commentary is since outdated by Spalinger's *The Transformation of an Ancient Egyptian Narrative: P. Sallier III and the Battle of Kadesh* (see below), but Hassan's publication remains a helpful resource for determining exactly which signs and spelling variants are preserved at which sites.

Shortly after Hassan's publication, Charles Kuentz produced the seminal early edition of the Kadesh Poem, Bulletin, and captions.¹⁰³ For over fifty years renowned scholars such as Sir Alan Gardiner,¹⁰⁴ Alan Shulman,¹⁰⁵ John Schmidt,¹⁰⁶ and G.A. Gaballa¹⁰⁷ all used Kuentz's edition in their own research and scholarship on Kadesh material. In particular, Gardiner employs Kuentz's textual collation to produce his comprehensive translation and commentary of all of the textual materials in *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramses II*. He also readily indebts himself to Breasted's "masterly" monograph, viewing Kuentz's ameliorations as the result of having more versions of the texts at his later disposal.

Gardiner's extensive commentary accompanying his translation is focused less upon philological analysis and more upon historical reconstruction and vocabulary.¹⁰⁸ This commentary is accompanied by a detailed positivist interpretation of the military narrative that is focused upon reconstructing Ramses's campaign trajectory. Gardiner makes explicit his belief in the historical accuracy of the pictorial and literary battle accounts in his discussion of their production: "The pictorial record will have been entrusted to a designer with outstanding graphic talent, and for the verbal record (with which we have here almost exclusively been concerned) a specially erudite and competent scribe will have been employed. Both will have worked in close collaboration relying, of course, upon the information given by the army officers and others who had been personally present at the great battle."¹⁰⁹

Kenneth Kitchen's multi-volume *Ramesside Inscriptions* provide a new hieroglyphic edition of the Kadesh Bulletin and Poem along with extensive notes and

¹⁰² Sélîm Hassan, *Le poème dit de Pentataour et le rapport officiel sur la bataille de Qadesh*, vol. 1 and 2, (Le Caire: Impr. Nationale, 1929).

¹⁰³ Charles Kuentz, *La Bataille de Qadesh*, (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1928-1934).

¹⁰⁴ Sir Alan H. Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960); Sir Alan H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, (London: British Museum Press, 1935).

¹⁰⁵ Alan R. Shulman, "The N'm at the Battle of Kadesh," *Journal of Archaeological Research Center in Egypt* 1 (1962): 47-52.

¹⁰⁶ John D. Schmidt, *Ramesses II: A Chronological Structure for His Reign*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

¹⁰⁷ G.A. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1976).

¹⁰⁸ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 47.

comments.¹¹⁰ Most helpfully, Kitchen provides the reader with an annotated bibliography of earlier scholarly editions and translations, historical interpretations, and topographical reconstructions. He synoptically reviews the Bulletin and the captions along with the Literary Record (Poem) to provide a historical summary of Ramses's campaign to Kadesh. He proceeds from the belief that "We must first see what facts and claims are given us by the actual text (and scenes) of these three sources for the campaign and battle, taking them separately at first."¹¹¹ Here again, despite the varying and propagandistic nature of the different texts and images, their presumed second-order relationship to real historical events is never questioned. Instead Kitchen reads the Literary Record, Bulletin and captions against one another, privileging one at times over the others in producing his "resultant reconstruction of the battle of Qadesh."¹¹²

The ancient military historian Anthony Spalinger contributed a major philological study to the field of Egyptology in 2002 with the publication of *The Transformation of an Ancient Egyptian Narrative: P. Sallier III and the Battle of Kadesh*. He believes that "The reverberations of Kadesh were also felt within the literary milieu of Ramesside society"¹¹³ and therefore focuses his publication on the literary aspects, linguistic peculiarities, and grammatical intricacies of the poetic account of the campaign. Spalinger provides a line-by-line analysis of the hieratic copy of the text, pointing out grammatical, linguistic, and formal divergences from the monumental versions of the Poem.¹¹⁴ In his historical commentary, Spalinger also argues that because the Poem and Bulletin "attempt a historical explanation of the ensuing military problems by attempting a causal explanation for them, there is no reason to label such interpretations as

¹¹⁰ Kenneth A Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical: Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. 2, Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999b) and Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom*, vol. 2, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) and Anthony J. Spalinger, *The Transformation of an Ancient Egyptian Narrative: P. Sallier III and the Battle of Kadesh*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002) both use the Kitchen edition.

¹¹¹ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 5.

¹¹² Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 42.

¹¹³ Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, ix.

¹¹⁴ In the second section, he addresses the controversies concerning the dating and provenance of the papyrus manuscript. Here, Spalinger dates P. Sallier III to the reign of Merneptah for orthographic reasons and outright rejects Von der Way's dating of the papyrus to the ninth year of the reign of Ramses II (the scribe writes Ramses's name *Rc-ms-sw* in the colophon, an orthographic change that took place after the twenty-first year of Ramses's reign). Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, 87, 114. In his translation of the colophon of the hieratic manuscript, "This composition was [made/written] in regnal year 9, second month of harvest, of/for the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Wosermaatre Setepn[re], lph, the son of Re, Ramesses-mery-amun, lph,... given life forever and ever like his father Re..." Spalinger wants to restore the opening word (usually translated as "written," *sš*, or "made," *ir*) as "copied," *sphr*. Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, 106-107.

unreliable.”¹¹⁵

Scholars widely agree that Poem and the Bulletin are unique compositions with varying scopes, forms, and messages (see Chapter 2). The shorter of the two texts, the Bulletin, addresses only one day of fighting and omits any discussion of Ramses’s journey to or from Kadesh, or the second day of fighting. The Poem, on the other hand, provides detailed topographical descriptions of Kadesh and the locations of the advancing Egyptian divisions. It also contains lengthy passages lauding the piety, beauty, and military might of Ramses II. Pharaoh’s own bravery and willingness to fight are directly juxtaposed with the cowardly motivations of the Egyptian army who abandon him on the battlefield.

Scholarship has focused extensively on the divergences between these two accounts as well as the motivation for their production. Breasted first commented how the Bulletin “is not as full as the Poem on the marches and dispositions of the two armies, but it narrates fully the inside story, which led Ramses to make his incautious advance to the north of Kadesh, furnishing an account of the earliest military ruse known in history. On this last, the Poem is discreetly silent.”¹¹⁶ Ultimately, Breasted sees a single motivating factor driving both compositions: the desire to portray the strength and might of the pharaoh. Thus, Breasted believes that historical details were only included if they supported this purpose, explaining why the Egyptian army was “mentioned only as they serve to lead up to and explain the isolation of the king, which necessitated his desperate attack upon the enemy. Once the supreme moment is reached, the king receives the entire attention and the army is only referred to in order to use their flight and cowardice as a foil against which to contrast the splendid courage of the king.”¹¹⁷

Gardiner conversely understands the Pictorial Record and the Literary Record to communicate unique messages, each tailored to their specific medium. Instead of a singular motivation to portray the supremacy and valor of Ramses, he believes that “There are some things which lend themselves only to literary expression, while there are other things which clamour loudly for visual representation.”¹¹⁸ As a result, “Neither of the two kinds of record is complete without the other,”¹¹⁹ so that “The Literary Record deals admirably with the battle on the emotion and conceptual plane, just as the Pictorial Record deals with it on a factual plane.”¹²⁰

Like Gardiner, Hans Gödicke divides the accounts of the Battle of Kadesh into a Pictorial and a Literary Record. He argues that the speeches made by Ramses towards

¹¹⁵ Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, 153.

¹¹⁶ Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*, 85. “Where the Poem states that Ramses ‘halted’ on the ‘north of the city,’ the Record states that he ‘arrived’ on the ‘northwest of the city’ and that he ‘camped there,’ a slight discrepancy which only increases our confidence in the two sources by showing that they are independent of each other.” Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*, 106.

¹¹⁷ Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*, 86.

¹¹⁸ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 47.

¹¹⁹ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 52.

¹²⁰ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 53. Spalinger also believes that “Both texts differ as a logical result of their particular orientation.” Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, 155.

his army in the Literary Record (the Poem) were inserted into the text later and demonstrated Ramses's motivations for creating the literary account in the first place. Gödicke believes that at a later point in Ramses's reign, "There must have been unrest in the military (and possibly also some civilian) establishment and doubts about the total loyalty of its members towards the Pharaoh."¹²¹ Thus, well after the Kadesh reliefs were inscribed on the temple walls, Ramses would have responded to this unrest by creating a Literary Record that simultaneously bolstered his own military skills and undercut the reputation of the army by calling attention to their cowardice in the heavily propagandized reliefs.¹²²

Miriam Lichtheim additionally believes that the function of the Poem was to highlight the heroism of Ramses in combat, though she does not believe that it was written at a later date than the Bulletin. She sees each text as complementary; the Bulletin was a "factual" account composed of narrative details (such as how Ramses was lead astray by the Shasu spies), while the Poem only contained enough narration at its beginning to effectively frame the heroism of pharaoh.¹²³ Lichtheim has produced a recent translation of the Kadesh inscriptions in her New Kingdom volume of *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, where her commentary attempts to reconcile the differing literary accounts to produce a historically consistent military sequence. She also focuses on the structure and metrics of the compositions, arguing that the stylized and metrical form of the Poem was responsible for its manipulation of the facts, "But the facts themselves are nevertheless presented in the details of the relief scenes, their captions, and the prose narrative [the Bulletin]."¹²⁴

Lichtheim insists that the Poem, or at least its central section, is indeed poetic and was meant "to be read as a metrical composition."¹²⁵ Here she eschews all earlier translations besides that of Raymond Faulkner, which was also rendered as a metrical composition.¹²⁶ Lichtheim is particularly interested in the function of the poetic account: "I see in the poetic centerpiece of the Poem a variant, or subspecies, of poetry invented in the New Kingdom. In the earlier periods, poetry had been employed for laudation, reflection, and instruction; in the Kadesh Battle Poem we encounter poetry in the service of narration."¹²⁷ Here Lichtheim is not trying to assert that the poetic form celebrating Ramses's military successes is a New Kingdom innovation. Rather, "What is new is that the poem should be more than a brief song of triumph that sums up the narration and

¹²¹ Hans Gödicke, "The 'Battle of Kadesh': A Reassessment," in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*, ed. Hans Gödicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 114.

¹²² Gödicke, "A Reassessment," 113-114.

¹²³ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 59.

¹²⁴ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 59.

¹²⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 58.

¹²⁶ Raymond O. Faulkner, "The Battle of Kadesh," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Institutes, Abteilung Kairo* 16 (1958): 93-111. Faulkner provides translations of the Poem and Bulletin as an appendix to his analysis of Kadesh military strategy.

¹²⁷ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 58.

should itself be narrative. That is to say, in the Kadesh Battle Poem we encounter a genre not hitherto found in Egypt: the epic poem.”¹²⁸

Lichtheim’s assertion that the central portion of the Poem was written in metric verse is a controversial one. Breasted, who originally named the Poem, did not intend to indicate that it was a metrical composition: “The entire so-called Poem does not differ in form from the Record and is not, in the opinion of this present writer, essentially different from the accounts of their victories left by other Pharaohs, such as those of Merneptah and Ramses III, all of which, like the Poem, show no poetic form, but in style are poetic, florid, and highly colored—a style which may be traced in similar prose reports of victories as far back as the twelfth dynasty.”¹²⁹ Both Gardiner¹³⁰ and Spalinger¹³¹ agree with Breasted, while Faulkner shares Lichtheim’s opinion and composed his 1948 translation of the Poem in verse.¹³² Kitchen concurs with Gardiner that the Poem should be referred to as the Literary Record because the entirety of the composition is not poetic, but he also believes that it includes “extensive poetical sections, besides pure prose sections, and other sections in high narrative style, intermediate between prose and poetry.”¹³³ For example, Kitchen believes that the “entire climactic section is almost wholly cast in poetical form, mainly in parallelistic 2-line couplets, occasionally using a tricolon.”¹³⁴

Historical Scholarship

Beyond such analyses of the Kadesh inscriptions, scholars have also focused their efforts upon reconstructing a historical narrative of Ramses’s campaign to Kadesh. This includes reconstructing the general sequence of the fighting, locating topographical features and ancient place-names in the modern Levantine landscape, as well as elucidating military tactics and accouterments. Prevalently, historical scholarship has privileged the textual materials (Poem, Bulletin, and captions) over the relief images in their attempts to reconcile the different evidence and accounts of the fighting with a historically reconstructed meta-narrative.

The purpose of Breasted’s early account of Ramses’s campaign to Kadesh was to provide military historians with data and information about wars dating to pre-classical

¹²⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 59.

¹²⁹ Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*, 84.

¹³⁰ “There is no justification for thinking that any part of [the Poem] was written in verse.” Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 2.

¹³¹ “Most certainly, the Poem was regarded as a literary narrative. It was not a poetical composition... but rather a length historical presentation replete with the expected narrative verbal forms of a story.” Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, ix. “The narrative of the Poem being a secular one, a ‘pure’ piece of Egyptian literature, and overtly propagandistic (albeit with pious overtones), it seems less likely that P. Sallier III would have been housed in a temple.” Spalinger, *P. Sallier III*, 111.

¹³² Faulkner, “The Battle of Kadesh,” 93-111.

¹³³ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 5.

¹³⁴ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 7.

times.¹³⁵ He intentionally omitted extensive grammatical analysis and political discussion in order to make the material accessible to non-Near Eastern scholars: “My purpose is only to make clear the military maneuvers involved in the battle.”¹³⁶ Indeed he provides a detailed historical reconstruction of battle sequence and military maneuvers in the fighting. Additionally he provides an extensive topographical analysis—including a discussion of the modern location of Kadesh, the hill south of Kadesh (where Ramses camps the night before reaching Kadesh), and Shabtuna.

While outdated, Breasted also provides an extensive literary review of nineteenth century scholarship on the Kadesh inscriptions. He credits Champollion with first understanding the import and nature of the Poem, and De Rougé for writing the first textual and literary discussion of the Poem. He also praises his predecessor Adolf Erman who wrote an overview of the “incidental occurrences and of the life depicted in the reliefs,”¹³⁷ and a wine merchant by the name of Chabas who first collated the Ramesseum and Abu Simbel versions of the Bulletin.

In 1962, Alan Shulman used Kuentz’s editions of the Poem, Bulletin, and captions to focus his historical study specifically on the enigmatic Na’arn troops depicted in the Kadesh reliefs.¹³⁸ Many scholars have speculated as to the identity of the Na’arn, but Shulman’s aim was to “reconstruct these troop movements, utilizing only the documented sources.”¹³⁹ In comparing other references to Na’arn forces in the reign of Merneptah (from Karnak), Shulman asserts that, “In none of these occurrences does N’rn appear to be the name of a special unit or body of troops, or contain any real technical connotation. It was merely an Asiatic word for soldiers, and was so used by the Egyptians.”¹⁴⁰ Many scholars, such as Kitchen, agree with Shulman’s conclusion, although his opinion is still contested by others.¹⁴¹

In 1982, Kitchen published a historical monograph on Ramses II titled, *Pharaoh Triumphant, The Life and Times of Ramesses II*.¹⁴² The book was written for a popular audience, but it provides a lively account of the international relations in the Near East during the reign of Ramses II. In the second chapter on “War and Peace,” Kitchen contextualizes the northern Levantine conflict in the larger political sphere, particularly vis-à-vis Hittite territorial ambitions and the rise of Assyria. This larger Near Eastern arena is addressed at length in the sixth chapter of this dissertation, where I examine the reception of the Battle of Kadesh among an internationalized (Hittite) audience.

¹³⁵ Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*.

¹³⁶ Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*, 81.

¹³⁷ Adolf Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, (Tübingen: Laupp, 1885), 696-701; Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh*, 83.

¹³⁸ Shulman, “The N’rn at Kadesh,” 47-52.

¹³⁹ Shulman, “The N’rn at Kadesh,” 48. This included not only the Poem and Bulletin and captions but also letters from Ramses to Hattusili III.

¹⁴⁰ Shulman, “The N’rn at Kadesh,” 52.

¹⁴¹ See, for example, Gödicke, “A Reassessment,” 77-121. This source is described at length below.

¹⁴² Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant, The Life and Times of Ramesses II*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1982).

One of the more controversial accounts of the Battle of Kadesh is Hans Gödicke's reassessment of the fighting in his 1985 edited volume, *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*.¹⁴³ Gödicke's stated intent is to evaluate the "reasons that inspired Ramesses II to 'publicize' this event far beyond any other in his reign—an event beyond anything that occurred during ancient Egypt's long history."¹⁴⁴ He was particularly concerned with the timeframe for when the reliefs were actually placed on the temple walls: "When the representations were finally made, they could hardly influence the reaction to an event which at that time was years past."¹⁴⁵ Rather, Gödicke believes that the Kadesh reliefs (particularly the inscriptions) were generated for a specific military audience that was fomenting unrest well after the conflict was said to have occurred. He takes the lack of evidence for international and local reactions to the fighting to infer that "The immediate military consequences of the confrontation did not have lasting significance."¹⁴⁶ This is crucial to his central thesis that no "historically significant" battle was actually fought in the environs of the northern Levantine city, and that the Kadesh Poem and Bulletin were fiction serving as propaganda. Gödicke believes instead that the Kadesh reliefs reveal that Ramses conducted a decimato on his own army "as punishment for the dastardliness of the Pre-corps when it panicked at the unexpected appearance of a Hittite chariot host on a reconnaissance mission."¹⁴⁷ As a result, Gödicke asserts that Muwatalli never actually faced Ramses in combat but rather disengaged after he was impressed by how sternly Ramses treated his own troops. Few scholars support Gödicke's decimato argument, but his thesis that the "Event" of the Battle was something constructed post-facto through the propagandistic reliefs inscribed on various temple complexes across Egypt is crucial to this dissertation's understanding of Events as created through the processes of their retelling (see below).

Spalinger's 2005 monograph, *War in Ancient Egypt*, examines the technological, political, and social impact of war in New Kingdom Egypt with an emphasis upon the socio-political institution of the military.¹⁴⁸ While he purports to avoid historical surveys, his in-depth coverage of military logistics is often contextualized in specific historical conflicts (Chapter 13 is titled, for example, "To Kadesh and After").¹⁴⁹ Spalinger often relies on the Kadesh reliefs for precise historical information about the Nineteen Dynasty Egyptian military while asserting but not defending their historicity: "It is reasonable to

¹⁴³ Gödicke, "A Reassessment," 77-121.

¹⁴⁴ Gödicke, "A Reassessment," 77.

¹⁴⁵ Gödicke, "A Reassessment," 78.

¹⁴⁶ Gödicke, "A Reassessment," 80.

¹⁴⁷ Gödicke, "A Reassessment," 106.

¹⁴⁸ Anthony J. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

¹⁴⁹ Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, xiii. These are often either numerical, such as troop sizes in specific battles, speed of marches, calories consumed, or "the probable level of population at this time in conjunction with the actual number of arm-bearing men"; or economic, such the developing elite status of the *maryannu*, the food intake, and rates of pay for soldiers etc.

use these depictions as a model for reconstructing the actual set-up of the royal army.”¹⁵⁰ Unfortunately, Spalinger never ties these reconstructions into broader discussions of the social functioning of the military in Egypt. Rather, one is left with little sense of how the military interacted with specific pharaohs, either endorsing or undermining their reigns.

Art Historical Scholarship

Art historical scholarship addressing the Battle of Kadesh reliefs varies significantly in the scope of its inquiry, ranging from discussions of the development of narrative in Egyptian art to in-depth iconographic analyses of specific visual elements in the reliefs (such as military accouterment).¹⁵¹ Several studies trace the composition and style of the Kadesh reliefs to Amarna Period and post-Amarna Period antecedents. Others synthesize the Kadesh reliefs into larger discussions of Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty battle narratives. A common trend throughout the following scholarly works is the privileging of the historical accuracy of the Kadesh inscriptions, to which the content of the images is often compared.

In 1976, G.A. Gaballa published *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, where he traces the development of narrative in Egyptian art from the Pre-Dynastic Period through the Late Period. He focuses much of his monograph on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty narrative fighting scenes. Gaballa bases his definition of narrative upon the Oxford Dictionary’s “tale or story,” and thus defines his corpus as images that “tell a story.”¹⁵² He is interested in why scenes of combat suddenly come to occupy large swathes of Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty temple walls and believes that “The absence of the war scenes from the XVIIIth dynasty temples is not entirely due to coincidence.”¹⁵³ Rather, Gaballa asserts that, “The reason must be sought in the circumstances that surrounded the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty and the emergence of the XIXth.”¹⁵⁴ Thus, he situates the Ramesside reliefs in a historical (and at times, teleological) sequence in which he heavily emphasizes the political consequences of the Amarna revolution.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, 105. For example, in his breakdown of the activity and layout of the military camps in the environs of Kadesh, he derives from the reliefs that pharaoh’s tent was centrally located and rectangular in shape. Additionally, in the fighting vignettes, the reliefs reveal to Spalinger that, “The oxen of the Hittites pull wagons with six spokes.” Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, 105.

¹⁵¹ For the former, see G.A. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1976). For the latter, see Anthony J. Spalinger, “The Battle of Kadesh: The Chariot Frieze at Abydos,” *Ägypten und Levante* 13 (2003a): 163-199.

¹⁵² “A story is a specific event carried out by particular characters in a particular place at a particular time.” Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 5.

¹⁵³ Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 99.

¹⁵⁴ Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 99.

¹⁵⁵ “In ultimate result, the Amarna movement had dealt a great blow to the authority and prestige of kingship in Egypt... [So] in a rather defensive manner [the king] sought to assert his power and stress his effective godhead. One of the ways of displaying his valour was on the battlefield. Therefore the traditional theme of the king smashing the heads of his enemies was expanded to show the king in the act of achieving victory in the

After Akhenaten jeopardized the inviolability of the pharaonicity, Gaballa understands Ramesside art as a means of reasserting the legitimacy and effective rulership of pharaoh. The visual implication of this, according to Gaballa, is that in Ramesside battle scenes it was not the isolated, solitary figure of the pharaoh but instead the impressive activity of multitudes engaged in combat that captured the audience's attention.

Unlike other scholars who prefer the technical execution of Seti I's battle reliefs to those of his successor, Gaballa addresses Ramses II's Kadesh reliefs at length, claiming that "The scenes of the battle of Qadesh constitute, undoubtedly, the zenith of all previous attempts and ventures of the Egyptian artist to give a specific rendition of a specific event."¹⁵⁶ He provides a detailed "meta" iconographic analysis by combining vignettes from the best-preserved examples at Luxor, the Ramesseum, and Abu Simbel. He divides the narrative into two units, the camp and the battle, which are separated visually from each other in each of his exemplars by their placement on separate pylon towers or in different registers. He situates his discussion of the content of the reliefs in a historical overview of the conflict between Ramses II and Muwatalli based heavily upon the textual sources.¹⁵⁷ Gaballa stresses that whenever orientations in the reliefs deviated from the written narrative the conventions of ancient Egyptian art are to be blamed.¹⁵⁸

The other seminal art historical publication addressing the Kadesh reliefs was written by Henriette Antonia Groenewegen-Frankfort in 1951, titled *Arrest and Movement, an Essay on Space and Time in the Art of the Ancient Near East*.¹⁵⁹ This book examines the rendering of space and time in Near Eastern art, ascribing cultural rather than aesthetic motivations to such renderings. Like Gaballa, Groenewegen-Frankfort begins her section on Egyptian art with the Pre-Dynastic Period, but unlike Gaballa, Groenewegen-Frankfort ends abruptly with the reign of Ramses III, insisting that, "The next ten centuries were absolutely barren of new ventures [in rendering space

field. It is true that the result of any one of his depicted wars was a foregone conclusion, i.e. victory, nevertheless it was important to show him actually working for this victory. And after the idea of the king became involved in actual, rather than symbolic, events had become familiar to the Egyptian eye during the Amarna age, it now became possible for the king to be seen involved in actual events. Thus, to my mind, it is no mere coincidence that the first war scenes involving the king belong to Horemhab, an immediate successor of the Amarna kings, in his *Speos* at Gebel el-Silseleh." Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 99-100.

¹⁵⁶ Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 118.

¹⁵⁷ "Now that we have a fairly clear idea about the various aspects of the battle, it will be easier to understand the pictorial documentation of the event." Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 116.

¹⁵⁸ "Now when the artists came to translate these events into reliefs they met with a certain amount of difficulty resulting on the one hand from the difference in nature of expression between art and literature, and on the other from the conventional methods of Egyptian art in particular." Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 119.

¹⁵⁹ Henriette Antonia Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement, an Essay on Space and Time in the Art of the Ancient Near East*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951).

and time] in either painting or relief, in tomb or temple.”¹⁶⁰ Her discussion of “The Development of the Royal Reliefs and the Triumph of Monumental Statement” heavily emphasizes the quality and innovations of monumental art during the reign of Seti I. At Karnak, “not only gently trivial or recurring events are given ‘actuality’ but the tensest episodes of history: for the first time real battle scenes appear as part of a coherent narrative.”¹⁶¹ She continues: “Time and again we find the triangle formed by the king in his chariot and his prancing horses balanced by an inverted triangular composition. But this decorative grouping has been turned in every case, as we shall see, into a concrete event while the units themselves are not mere successive stages of a complex happening, naively enumerated with total disregard of their spatial coherence, but are often joined in an epic way.”¹⁶²

Groenewegen-Frankfort juxtaposes Seti’s reliefs with the reliefs from the reign of Ramses II, where “The very acreage of the battle reliefs testifies to a loss of quality: the inner tension dissolves in discursive description; and we find the rambling inventiveness of artists preoccupied with content alone; symbol and actuality are no longer related.”¹⁶³ Yet in her critical formal and iconographic analysis of Ramses’s Kadesh reliefs,¹⁶⁴ Groenewegen-Frankfort readily admits that originality could be found in the intent of the artists employed by pharaoh to “give a faithful pictorial record of an historical event.”¹⁶⁵ Lastly, like Gaballa, Groenewegen-Frankfort emphasizes the impact of Amarna art upon the reign of Ramses II.¹⁶⁶ This Amarna ‘naturalism,’ coupled with the new emphasis

¹⁶⁰ Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 141.

¹⁶¹ Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 121.

¹⁶² Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 121.

¹⁶³ Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 127-128.

¹⁶⁴ Groenewegen-Frankfort describes the Kadesh reliefs on the first pylon of the Ramesseum, for example, as “discursive, untidy; the transfer pattern of the royal chariot, awkwardly placed, fails to be impressive; the solid phalanx of the unbeaten Hittite king across the river remains a dead mass; the two seem unrelated. Not even a wealth of new realistic details, especially in connection with drowning figures, can atone for a complete lack of dramatic tension. Artistically speaking, the scene is a failure.” Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 136.

¹⁶⁵ Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 128. In her discussion of the role of the Orontes River in the Kadesh compositions, Groenewegen-Frankfort commented that, “Ramesside artists, once embarked on their course, boldly plunged into the difficulties of rendering aquatic scenes. They had to, because both in the topography of the battle and in the actual fighting the river Orontes played an important part.” Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 132.

¹⁶⁶ “The effort at Amarna to break away from the ban of such registers by treating big tracts of wall as a vague spatial unit in which different stages of an event—such as a royal visit or a royal reward—could find their natural allocation, was not followed up in Seti’s time perhaps because the logical sequence of events was less clearly indicated in this way. Ramesside artists, driven by the necessity of depicting the configuration of extremely complex battle tactics, were apparently less concerned with chronological than with topographical clarity.” Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 132.

upon historical accuracy, ultimately comprised the cultural motivations with which Groenewegen-Frankfort was able to “understand” the Kadesh reliefs.

In 1965 the ancient Egyptian art historian, William Stevenson Smith, published *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East*.¹⁶⁷ A large section of the study focuses on the composition of wall scenes in the Bronze Age Mediterranean, including Aegean, “West Asian,” and Egyptian wall decoration. For the Egyptian compositions Smith emphasizes the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty battle scenes, drawing heavily upon Groenewegen-Frankfort’s analysis in *Arrest and Movement*. Smith situates the Nineteenth Dynasty “experimentation with landscape details” in the lineage of Horemheb’s temple at Gebel Silsileh (which, according to Smith, “formed a model for the Ramesside temples of the Cataract region”¹⁶⁸) and Tutankhamun’s funerary chest.¹⁶⁹ He believes that “The most interesting thing about the Ramesside battle scenes for our purposes of comparison is the way in which topographical features are suggested and figures are associated with landscape elements and buildings.”¹⁷⁰ Smith discusses Seti I’s battle reliefs from the Temple of Amun at Karnak in great detail, finding them technically and stylistically superior to those of Seti’s son and successor, Ramses II. “In the case of the earlier fighting at Kadesh in the preceding reign of Sety I, a dramatic tension was established between the confusion of the battle and the fortified town on its wooded hill.”¹⁷¹ Yet in assessing the historicity of the reliefs, he writes that Ramses was more precise in his depictions of Kadesh, which “indicate the real position of the town. It lay in the valley of the Orontes, on a mound where the river is joined by a small tributary before continuing northwards to the Lake of Homs.”¹⁷² For all of the technical quality of Seti I’s reliefs, they failed to “indicate the actual topography. In fact Kadesh was shown as a typical mountain stronghold.”¹⁷³

In Smith’s art historical compendium, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, he again includes a lengthy discussion of the visual merits of Seti I’s battle scenes on the walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak.¹⁷⁴ Smith provides formal and iconographic analysis to demonstrate how “A sense of dramatic conflict was achieved in a more topical narrative style than had hitherto been contemplated by an Egyptian artist.”¹⁷⁵ Implied in this discussion is that the inferior quality of the Ramses’s own battle reliefs warranted their scant mentioning.

¹⁶⁷ William Stevenson Smith, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

¹⁶⁸ Smith, *Interconnections*, 168.

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Interconnections*, 168.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, *Interconnections*, 168.

¹⁷¹ Smith, *Interconnections*, 171.

¹⁷² Smith, *Interconnections*, 171.

¹⁷³ Smith, *Interconnections*, 171.

¹⁷⁴ *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* was originally published in 1958, but substantial bibliographic revisions were made in 1981 by William Kelly Simpson.

¹⁷⁵ William Steven Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 215.

Gay Robins's *The Art of Ancient Egypt* also omits a discussion of the Kadesh reliefs of Ramses II.¹⁷⁶ In her chapter "The Glories of the Empire: The New Kingdom III," she provides a detailed visual analysis of Seti's reliefs at the Temple of Amun at Karnak and of Ramses III's reliefs at Medinet Habu, focusing on the propagandistic and religious implications of their content. "The battle scenes can be read a number of ways. Like the motif of the smiting king, they work to preserve the inner purity of the temple by keeping out impure, malign influences. They ensure, on a cosmic level, the survival of the ordered world. They display to the viewer the might of the king and his central position in the world. In addition, their specificity gives them another dimension as an account of actual events and of victories of a particular king."¹⁷⁷ The fifth chapter of this dissertation expands upon Robins's discussion of the implications of the placement of the reliefs to argue that adjacent scenes on temple walls can communicate in tandem to both intensify and alter the impact of their iconography.

Along with art historians, historical scholars have also focused on the imagery of the reliefs, but to address historical questions. The military historian Anthony Spalinger, for example, dedicates a lengthy chapter in Gödicke's *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh* to the artistic representations of the campaign.¹⁷⁸ He believes that the monumental Kadesh reliefs allow for "a more careful analysis of all events leading up to, and including, the armed conflict itself."¹⁷⁹ In his essay, he divides the reliefs into four main episodes: the camp scene where the Hittite army attacks, the conference scene where Ramses beats the spies and confers with his officials, the "stand" of Ramses where he charges against the Hittite enemy in combat, and the reception scene where Ramses receives the spoils of victory. Just like Gaballa, Spalinger provides a detailed comparison of the episodes at Luxor, Abu Simbel, and the Ramesseum. His discussion of these scenes is premised upon a "correct" version to which each exemplar corresponds with varying degrees of accuracy. Spalinger measures this accuracy by how closely the images overlap with the textual accounts of the campaign narrative. For example, Spalinger believes that, "The Hittites are depicted solely on their chariots when attacking the Egyptians; no infantry are present" because this was explicitly emphasized in the Poem.¹⁸⁰

Spalinger's 2003 article, "The Battle of Kadesh: The Chariot Frieze at Abydos" provides the most detailed visual analysis of the Kadesh reliefs to date.¹⁸¹ He focuses specifically on the chariot friezes at Abydos, describing both individual motifs and

¹⁷⁶ Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁷ Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, 178.

¹⁷⁸ Anthony J. Spalinger, "Notes on the Reliefs of the Battle of Kadesh," in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*, ed. Hans Gödicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985a), 1-42.

¹⁷⁹ Spalinger, "Notes of the Reliefs," 4.

¹⁸⁰ Spalinger, "Notes of the Reliefs," 3.

¹⁸¹ Spalinger, "The Chariot Frieze," 163-199.

compositional patterns.¹⁸² Spalinger ascribes agency and creativity to the artisans who created the reliefs in his response to the question: “How much can we trust the pictorial evidence?”¹⁸³ He believes that “The artists themselves were allowed a degree of freedom in choosing their presentation”¹⁸⁴ and that the differences in the details that he catalogues (such as the number of reigns used by the charioteers, the inclusion/omission of spears, the postures of the cavalry and infantry, even the grips of axes and sickles) all “reflect a desire to be realistic.”¹⁸⁵

In particular, Spalinger understands the artists’ desires to be realistic as a means of explaining the presence of the Na’arn troops marching to Ramses’s aid. This group of soldiers, marching towards the Egyptian camp from the lower left corner of the composition (on the first pylon of the Ramesseum), are named by a caption but omitted from the Poem and Bulletin texts (see above). “True the poem does not mention them, but the pictorial representations do, and we moderns... cannot overlook this point. The Na’arn and their crucial role in supporting the king when the Hittite chariots suddenly attacked his camp is a given fact of the visual report.”¹⁸⁶ Spalinger describes the depiction of the Na’arn troops to be an exceptional instance of pictorial supremacy over the textual record of the battle, but he provides no reasoning for why the accounts vary.

Betsy Bryan more directly addresses the varying content of the Kadesh images and textual accounts in her paper “The Disjunction of Text and Image in Egyptian Art.”¹⁸⁷ She explicitly problematizes the relationship between ancient Egyptian art and texts, suggesting that, “Egyptian art communicates without text and with it.”¹⁸⁸ Egyptian art, according to Bryan, was created for multiple constituencies with varying degrees of literacy.¹⁸⁹ “It is a significant point in this example that the small number of elites who could read would not have interpreted the monuments of Ramesses II in the same way as the vast public... We cannot estimate with any certainty the degree to which the owner of a monument depended on the separate and combined messages of art and inscription. We

¹⁸² “By limiting myself to one portion of the scenes I hope that I have been able to highlight some of the aspects, not only of the Egyptian artistic possibilities, but also of Egyptian accuracy.” Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 191.

¹⁸³ Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 189. Here he expresses an opinion commonly voiced throughout his work: “By and large accuracy of representation remains our key dilemma in assessing the Abydos reliefs, and for that matter, all of the other ones associated with Egyptian warfare.” Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 191.

¹⁸⁴ Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 168.

¹⁸⁵ Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 169-171. “The changes are minor even though they reflect to no small extent the reality of chariotry, drayage in particular.” Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 167.

¹⁸⁶ Spalinger, “The Chariot Frieze,” 165.

¹⁸⁷ Betsy M. Bryan, “The Disjunction of Text and Image in Egyptian Art,” in, *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. 1, ed. Peter Der Manuelian (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1996).

¹⁸⁸ Bryan, “The Disjunction of Text and Image,” 164.

¹⁸⁹ Bryan, “The Disjunction of Text and Image,” 166.

are safe, however, in assuming that all those who viewed a monument did not take away the same message.”¹⁹⁰

Crucially, Bryan does not want to read the Kadesh Poem or Bulletin against the reliefs in order to elucidate a historical reconstruction of the campaign. Rather, she understands that “Ultimately text and image speak to two distinct audiences with the appropriate message of royal display and power.”¹⁹¹ In so doing, she explicitly critiques scholars such as Roland Tefnin who were “not sensitive to the dissonance conveyed by the Kadesh reliefs placed next to the accompanying legends and War Bulletin.”¹⁹² Bryan’s paper significantly informs how the fifth chapter of this dissertation addresses issues of literacy in Egyptian festival audiences. Instead of assuming that non-literate and literate audiences would experience the Kadesh reliefs in the same way, the chapter speculates as to the impact of oral performances of the Kadesh inscriptions and suggests how familiarity with the content of the inscriptions would lead audiences to “see” the reliefs differently.

Susanna Heinz’s structural account of the iconographic elements in New Kingdom battle reliefs, *Die Feldzugsdarstellungen des Neuen Reiches: eine Bildanalyse* (2001), breaks the battle reliefs down into individual motifs and postures.¹⁹³ She performs a structural and “vector-oriented” analysis of the composition of the narrative images, complete with grids and canons of proportion. From the reigns of Horemheb to Ramses III,¹⁹⁴ she provides a compendium of battle relief scenes (that she breaks down into pre-battle, battle, and post-battle or booty collecting/counting) as well as diagrams helpfully displaying their specific location on temple walls. Indeed her monograph effectively represents the motival layout of the elements of the reliefs in their architectural context. Her extensive analysis of New Kingdom war compositions demonstrates that there was no standard layout for such scenes but rather that they were uniquely created for their specific architectural contexts. Heinz engages minimally in discussions of historicity, but does suggest—in referring to the order and segmentation of Seti I’s campaigns on the walls of the Karnak Temple—that a tribute scene was added in between battles from the same campaign to create visual diversity.

Near Eastern Scholars

Near Eastern scholars have also written extensively about Ramses’s activities at Kadesh, primarily as a vehicle for discussing the implications of war and/or diplomacy in the field of international relations in the Late Bronze Age. Like their Egyptologist counterparts, Near Eastern scholars are also largely interested in the historical veracity of the battle as a means for elucidating strategies of interaction between the Egyptian and the Hittite empires or Egyptian imperialism in the Levant.

¹⁹⁰ Bryan, “The Disjunction of Text and Image,” 167.

¹⁹¹ Bryan, “The Disjunction of Text and Image,” 164.

¹⁹² Roland Tefnin, “Image, écriture, récit: A propos des représentations de la Bataille de Qadesh,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 47 (1981): 55-76.

¹⁹³ Susanna C. Heinz, *Die Feldzugsdarstellungen des Neuen Reiches: eine Bildanalyse*, (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001).

¹⁹⁴ There are line drawings as well of earlier Eighteenth Dynasty battle fragments.

International relations during the Late Bronze Age have been a topic of interest for Mario Liverani, who examines the interactions between the regional units of the Late Bronze Age through the lens of Polyani's redistributive and reciprocal frameworks in *Prestige and Interest* (1990).¹⁹⁵ The second part of this publication focuses on "War and Alliance." Here, Liverani contextualizes the rhetoric of isolation versus coalition in both conflict and peacetime allegiances. Liverani specifically discusses the Kadesh inscriptions as an example where the enemy coalition—with all their impressive numbers—is qualitatively inferior to the powerful, capable, and singular pharaoh and thus doomed to failure.¹⁹⁶ Liverani demonstrates how "The topos of the enemy 'coalition'" has a long history in Egyptian propaganda, from Thutmose III's first campaign against "330 chiefs, each one with his army" to the Hittite army with their allies at Kadesh, to Ramses III's conflict with the Sea Peoples.¹⁹⁷ According to Liverani, "As soon as the ideological nature of the topos is pointed out, it becomes immediately evident that the 'historical' base in the various episodes is largely disguised."¹⁹⁸

For Liverani, then, the "historical inaccuracies" in the Kadesh reliefs can be explained by prevalent ideological underpinnings as to how conflict and valor are conceptualized in the Late Bronze Age. He emphasizes that even the most minute of details in the reliefs are meticulously connoted, including the way the Hittite king does not fight directly like Ramses does but rather remains protected behind his own soldiers, or the way the Hittite chariots are rendered carrying three soldiers as opposed to the "normal/fair" number of two."¹⁹⁹ Liverani's interest in the *rhetorical* aspects of the narrative is expanded upon in Chapters 5 and 7 of this dissertation where I discuss the impact of the Battle of Kadesh upon both Egyptian and Assyrian models of kingship in their respective royal propaganda.

In Marc Van de Mieroop's "popular" *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (2007), he informs the reader that he is explicitly writing a history without events.²⁰⁰ In other words, his aim is to create a social history of the eastern Mediterranean from approximately 1500 to 1200 BCE. Van de Mieroop here emphasizes the social infrastructures of the time over events for "none of them singly altered the system in a fundamental way."²⁰¹ Instead, he uses peer polity networks as a way of describing the development of the international system in the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean. Van de Mieroop believes that this system grew because of close coexistence and interaction (be it competition, exchange, imitation etc.) between states that led to the development of great similarities in these societies. Thus for Van de

¹⁹⁵ Mario Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C.*, (Padova: Sargon, 1990).

¹⁹⁶ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 117-119.

¹⁹⁷ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 118. See Chapter 7 for a discussion of Ramses III's Battle against the Sea Peoples.

¹⁹⁸ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 118.

¹⁹⁹ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 118.

²⁰⁰ Marc Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007a).

²⁰¹ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 4.

Mieroop, “It is impossible to interpret the singular without using a broader framework. Can one really grasp the history of a state like New kingdom Egypt without employing a set of general ideas regarding ancient states?”²⁰²

Yet even with such an explicit mission statement Van de Mieroop finds it impossible to refrain from addressing the thirteenth century BCE showdown between Ramses II and Muwatalli. In his chapter laying out the primary actors of the Late Bronze Age Near East, there is a section entitled “The Road to Qadesh” where he asks, “The unique richness of the sources [on the battle of Kadesh] presents a challenge to the historian, however: was the battle itself unique or just its depiction?”²⁰³ Van de Mieroop’s separation of the depiction of the fighting from the historical battle itself impacts the methodology of this dissertation, which regards the reliefs as a distinct corpus in their own right. Van de Mieroop continues: “Ramesses used literary and iconographic motifs that appear in other Egyptian royal displays as well, but the great amount of detail sets his accounts apart. Do we just read them as a more precise depiction of what was usual in military clashes, or was the battle of a special making?”²⁰⁴ It is precisely the making of the Battle Event that this dissertation focuses upon, examining how literary and iconographic motifs, but also the architectural placement of the reliefs, the Theban landscape, and socio-historical factors all impacted how the relief corpus “made” the Event for different audiences.

Elsewhere Van de Mieroop’s skepticism towards those who uncritically accept the reliefs as historical sources is even more blatant.²⁰⁵ He cautions the reader from reading the Kadesh inscriptions as a literal reconstruction of the battle and suggests, instead, that “The written accounts and images are a very good source, however, on the practices of glorifying war that were the rule at the time. They show a sophisticated and well-conceived use of rhetorical and visual devices that served to stress the greatness of Egypt’s success and especially Ramesses’ role in it.”²⁰⁶

In Van de Mieroop’s recent *A History of Ancient Egypt* (2011) he draws on his background in Near Eastern history to situate the conflict at Kadesh in a broader historical and political framework.²⁰⁷ He discusses the conflict between Ramses and Muwatalli in the context of Amarna Period (fourteenth century BCE) and early Nineteenth Dynasty international boundaries. “Supiluliuma campaigned heavily in Syria towards the end of his reign (possibly as a retaliation for the death of his son on his

²⁰² Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 6.

²⁰³ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 38.

²⁰⁴ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 39.

²⁰⁵ Elsewhere (in his 2007 *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000-323 BC*), Van de Mieroop makes clear that that at Kadesh he believes “Egypt lost the engagement, and subsequently Ramses II limited his control to southern Palestine, where he drew a firm and fortified boundary.” Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000-323 BC*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007b), 143. Thus it is natural that he would view the Kadesh reliefs as historically inaccurate.

²⁰⁶ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 129.

²⁰⁷ Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2011).

journey to Egypt to marry a queen of that country)", and his son, Mursili II, "asserted Hittite dominance as far south as Qadesh."²⁰⁸ Van de Mieroop also discusses the strategic value of the site of Kadesh as a commercial and military crossroads: "This city had great strategic value as it controlled the crossing of two highways of northern Syria; the only inland road that ran from north to south along the Orontes River, and the west-east road from the northern Lebanese coast to the interior."²⁰⁹

Again Van de Mieroop understands that the conflict between Ramses and Muwatalli stands out as a result of the amount of attention lavished upon it, not due to any actual heroic feats accomplished by Ramses.²¹⁰ Rather, he believes that "It may be more important to see Qadesh as an indication of a changing eastern Mediterranean world, one in which Rameses was perhaps more successful as diplomat and architect of a new imperial structure than as warrior."²¹¹ (Chapter 6 further engages with the role of Ramses as diplomat after he participates in the Silver Tablet Treaty with Hattusili.) Van de Mieroop consistently emphasizes Ramses's mastery of propaganda as opposed to military strategy. "Ramesses's self-presentation [as opposed to the length of his reign or his military conquests] is what explains his fame. In texts and images he portrayed himself as a great warrior, who single-handedly gained victories."²¹²

Amélie Kuhrt, in her two-volume history of the ancient Near East, is equally unswayed by Ramses's claims to victory in his monumental reliefs.²¹³ Making strong use of a variety of ancient Near Eastern textual sources, she explains that "The sober reality [of the Battle of Kadesh], which Hittite and Ugaritic documents make quite clear, is that neither side made much in the way of territorial gains."²¹⁴ She continues to suggest that, "Hittite power was, above all, strengthened in the Levant by Egyptian attempts to expand once again beyond the region of Kadesh—an attempt brought to naught by the resounding defeat inflicted on Ramesses II by Muwatalli at the battle of Kadesh. The defeat left the Hittites in definitive control of the Damascus area, which had been one of the frontier regions of the Egyptian empire."²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 219. "It is unlikely that the armies of the great kings [Sety I and Muwatalli] confronted each other directly, however: Sety's reference to battle against the Hittites is very vague and does not mention the Hittite ruler." Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 220.

²⁰⁹ Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 219.

²¹⁰ "How special was the Battle of Qadesh? Perhaps it is only the amount of attention that Ramses paid to it that sets it apart, which scholars interpret in various ways. Some say the king wanted to discredit the army in a power struggle at home and showed the soldiers as cowards whom he personally saved. Others think the king really changed the course of the battle and wanted to explain the army's safe return. He certainly seems to have believed the story." Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 221.

²¹¹ Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 214.

²¹² Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 213.

²¹³ Amélie Kurht, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC*, vol. 1 and 2, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

²¹⁴ Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 214.

²¹⁵ Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 258.

Hittite Scholars

Kurht is not the only scholar to emphasize the value of Hittite sources in Late Bronze Age historical reconstructions.²¹⁶ Such scholarship is aided by a two-volume collection of the diplomatic correspondence between Ramses II and Hattusili published by Elmar Edel (who trained as both an Egyptologist and a Hittitologist) in 1994.²¹⁷ The letters, composed in Hittite and Akkadian, were recovered from the capital Hattusa and recount the intimacies of Egyptian-Hittite relations in the later decades of Ramses's reign.²¹⁸ Several letters between Ramses and Hattusili and Puduhepa (Hattusili's wife) speak of peaceful relations between the two Late Bronze Age rulers and the diplomatic marriage of Ramses to the daughter of Puduhepa and Hattusili III.²¹⁹

In 1997, Edel also published a comprehensive edition of the Silver Tablet Treaty in both its hieroglyphic and Akkadian forms.²²⁰ He re-collated both texts, producing line drawings and photographs of the hieroglyphic exemplars. His transliterations and translations include an extensive textual apparatus and commentary for troublesome passages. Chapter 6 of this dissertation uses this translation in its discussion of the impact of the Silver Tablet Treaty upon the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh at the Ramesseum, particularly for a Hittite audience.

Edel refrains from much historical analysis, although his comments do address diplomatic activity between Egypt and Hatti in the time before the Treaty. Gary Beckman's translations of Hittite diplomatic texts, including treaties and letters, likewise avoids excessive historical background, but does provide an excellent introduction to the

²¹⁶ Besides Liverani and Van de Mierop, see also Amnon Altman, *The Historical Prologue of the Hittite Vassal Treaties*, (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2004); Johan De Roos, "Materials for a Biography: The Correspondence of Puduhepa with Egypt and Ugarit," in *The Life and Times of Hattušili III and Tudhaliya IV*, ed. Theo P.J. Van den Hout and C.H. Van Zoest (Leiden: Nederlands Institute voor het Nabije Oosten, 2006), 17-26; Horst Klengel, *Hattuschili und Ramses*, (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2002); Jana Mynarova, "From Amarna to Hattusas: Epistolary Traditions in the Amarna and Ramesside Correspondence," in *My Things Changed Things. Social Development and Cultural Exchange in Prehistory, Antiquity, and the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Marikova Vlckova, Jana Mynarova, and Martin Tomasek (Prague: Charles University Press, 2009), 111-117.

²¹⁷ Elmar Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache* (Bd. I Umschriften und Übersetzungen; Bd. II Kommentar), (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).

²¹⁸ See Chapter 6 for a lengthy discussion of the content of the letters and their archaeological context.

²¹⁹ Harry A. Hoffner, Jr. has recently published a collection of letters from the Hittite capital, which includes English translations of a handful of letters between Ramses II and Puduhepa: Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

²²⁰ Elmar Edel, *Der Vertrag zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattusili von Hatti*, (Berlin: Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 1997).

structure and form of Hittite treaties.²²¹ Beckman also provides recent translations of other Late Bronze Age Hittite sources that mention Hittite encounters with Egypt before the reign of Ramses II (such as Mursili II's Annals and Suppiluliuma's Deeds) in Mark Chavalas's 2006 edited collection *Historical Sources in Translation: The Ancient Near East*.²²²

This dissertation is indebted to the above scholarship, including studies that have meticulously reconstructed the historical details of the battle of Kadesh. These works will be drawn upon extensively in the pages to follow; however, this dissertation shifts the focus from the historical battle to the monumental battle reliefs, arguing for their understanding as active participants in the construction and presentation of the Event.

²²¹ Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2nd ed., (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

²²² Gary Beckman et al., "Hittite Historical Texts I," in *Historical Sources in Translation: The Ancient Near East*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas (Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 215-252.

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY: MAKING AN EVENT

What is an Event?

In recent decades, the call of differing intellectual traditions has inspired scholars to write both histories of events and histories without events. Annales School scholars, for example, following Fernand Braudel, deride an event-based history as one where “The life of men is dominated by dramatic accidents, by the actions of those exceptional beings who occasionally emerge, and who often are the masters of their own fate and even more of ours... What they are really speaking of is the intercrossing of such exceptional destinies, for obviously each hero must be matched against another. A delusive fallacy, as well all know.”²²³ Annalists understand structures—the large, socio-political engines generating robust cultural and economic trends—to be the most crucial element of history. For many of these “structuralist” scholars, events and structures are dialectical forces in history: to give credence to one is to render the other impotent.²²⁴ Other scholars, such as Hayden White, counter the Annalists’ charge that an eventful history unduly dramatizes historical narrative and turns history into a theatrical spectacle. White wonders how anyone could suggest that “dramatic events either did not exist in history, or if they did exist, were by virtue of their dramatic nature not a fit object of historical study?”²²⁵ Unfortunately, these arguments concerning what events do—and do not do—have rarely corresponded with robust and nuanced definitions of the term.²²⁶

Here, I attempt to redress this lack. In this dissertation, Event as a capitalized noun refers not to an initial occurrence or happening (whose importance is variously

²²³ Fernand Braudel, “The Situation of History in 1950,” in *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 11. Marc Van de Mieroop, in his structuralist compendium of the Eastern Mediterranean during the reign of Ramses II, likewise asserts that “The events of history—individual battles, treaties and so on—will thus be less important [than cultural elements shared between the Eastern Mediterranean cultures of the Late Bronze Age] as none of them, singly, altered the system in a fundamental way.” Marc Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007a), 4.

²²⁴ See, for example, how Mario Liverani understands the structural arrangements of the Near East during the Late Bronze Age to be impervious to specific political movements. Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 3-4.

²²⁵ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 32-33. See also Hayden White’s discussion of Braudel in his essay “Storytelling: Historical and Ideological,” in *The Fiction of Narrative, Essays on History, Literature, and Theory 1957-2007*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 275.

²²⁶ Noted exceptions include the works of William H. Sewell, *The Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005) and Slavoj Žižek, *Event: A Philosophical Journey through a Concept*, (Brooklyn and London: Melville House, 2014)—both of which I draw inspiration from in my own definition of Events below.

ascertained), but instead to the process of its retelling. In so doing it places a post-positivistic emphasis upon the dynamic quality of Events resulting from their being understood anew by different audiences in different physical and socio-historical landscapes.

This approach, focusing upon an Event's persistent resonance through time, contravenes the claims of the Annalistes that the importance of events is exaggerated—if not entirely fabricated—by historians. But this approach also diverges from scholars who only evaluate the immediate impact of events upon their contemporary audiences. For example, the historian William Sewell argues that events are important precisely because of their initial capacity to disrupt structures.²²⁷ In his *Logics of History*, an enumeration on the value of structural analysis in historical scholarship, he argues that structures are crucial to understanding history—as long as one sees their potential for change through both expected and unexpected events. He applies the work of Marshall Sahlins to develop a concept of an event that is structurally transformative when deriving from a novel occurrence.²²⁸ For Sewell, it is precisely the novelty of an event that accounts for its ability to disrupt the continuity of structures.

According to Sewell's definition, the Battle of Kadesh fails on several accounts to achieve event-status. Despite Ramses's claims that he was victorious on the battlefield, most scholars agree that the conflict did not upset the political or geographical status quo. Nor was the presentation of the battle novel. As this dissertation discusses in Chapter 5, both the textual accounts and the relief images had many precedents in content and style. Rather, I suggest that Events can be important even if they are not structurally transformative by establishing horizons of meaning (see below); nor do they have to be novel to make an impact on—or resonate with—various audiences. Thus to defend the use of the Battle of Kadesh as an Event, I present here a re-working of the term.

In this dissertation, Event refers foremost to “an occurrence that is remarkable in some way—one that is widely noted and commented upon by contemporaries.”²²⁹ Julius Caesar's Crossing of the Rubicon, for example, in 49 BCE, was appreciated and extensively remarked upon by Roman historians. His act of insurrection on his march to Rome was lauded by Roman citizens and, to counter the Annalistes, played no small part in the demise of the Roman Republic and the subsequent rise of the Roman Empire, altering the course of history. The widespread remark of this action, as evidenced by the historical record, is what sets it apart from the occurrences of thousands of other individuals who have crossed the Rubicon at one time or another but whose crossings are alas unwritten in the pages of history.²³⁰

Here, though, Events are additionally distinguished by the demonstrable measurement of their impact through time. Consequently, it is not enough that authors such as Suetonius included Caesar's Crossing as part of their imperial history of the

²²⁷ Sewell, *Logics of History*, especially 227-228.

²²⁸ Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 202, 215, 218.

²²⁹ Sewell, *Logics of History*, 226.

²³⁰ This example was first selected by Edward H. Carr in *What is History?*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 9.

Roman Empire. What makes Caesar's Crossing of the Rubicon an Event is precisely its resonance throughout the ages, where even today the expression "to cross the Rubicon" has become synonymous with passing the point of no return. The first criterion for an Event then is that it must not only begin with a widely-reported "bang" but also reverberate demonstrably in the material (archaeological and/or historical) record, both during the moment of its creation as well as far into the future, where it is not forgotten in the vicissitudes of time.

Such resonance, however, is not unchanging. Rather, the ongoing construction of an Event is embedded in evolving social and temporal contexts in which the Event's resonance necessarily evolves as well. Events comprise an encounter between an audience and a landscape in which the Event-corpus (here the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum) is situated. But because Events persist through time, their audiences necessarily change, and the scope, physical features, and socio-historical layers of the landscape of Events change as well. This dynamic quality of Events can only be accounted for if one abandons the objectivist tradition of historical scholarship that regards Events as comprised of "Facts, like semi-impressions, [that] impinge upon the observer from the outside, and are independent of his consciousness."²³¹ In other words, Events are not a series of facts "prior to and independent of interpretation."²³² Nor are they an unbiased retelling of these facts (if such unbiased-ness did indeed exist).²³³ Such a monolithic understanding of Events deprives scholars of important insights concerning how Events are conceptualized differently by evolving audiences through time (see below).²³⁴

This second criterion for Events—that they are dynamic—accounts for why they must be studied diachronically in order to better understand the changing landscapes and audiences that comprise their construction. However, in attempting to access the multivalent ways that Events resonate with various audiences during different time periods, it can be just as unhelpful to define the building blocks of Events in the relativist tradition where "All we can say is that the world is as we perceive it; the world exists as a series of meanings for us, and although we can look at the generation of meaning in the mind or society, we cannot look at the relationship of meanings to the world."²³⁵ To describe all meaning of Events as relative would deny the enduring material building

²³¹ Carr warns his readers against this pitfall in *What is History?*, 6.

²³² Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity' Question and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.

²³³ See Novick, *That Noble Dream*, for an extensive summary of the evolution of objectivist trends in American historical scholarship from the nineteenth century CE onwards, including critiques and responses.

²³⁴ What is the impact, for example, of reliefs carved into masonry that is freshly cut and brightly painted as compared with reliefs on edifices that stand in various states of disrepair? What visual nuances might stand out to an Egyptian audience that are invisible to foreign eyes? Such questions are at the heart of this dissertation and will be examined thoroughly below.

²³⁵ Christopher Gosden, *Social Being and Time*, (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 1994), 10.

blocks of Events—be they reliefs or monuments, documents or art—their due credit in Event construction. Indeed the shifting resonances of The Battle of Kadesh, while multiple and dynamic, are not subjectively arbitrary or infinite. Rather, they are ultimately moored in the physical form of the reliefs themselves, which survive to this day on Egyptian temple walls. While The Battle of Kadesh is created anew with each audience’s encounter with the monumental temple reliefs, it is the durable physicality of the reliefs that anchors these encounters in shifting political, cultural, and historical landscapes, providing us with a coherent corpus in which to access the construction of the Event through deep historical time. The third criterion for Events thus recognizes that the shifting meaning of Events is constrained by the materiality of the corpus.

This dissertation proceeds from a perspective that suggests that the relationship between the fighting at the northern Levantine citadel of Kadesh in the thirteenth century BCE and the Battle of Kadesh Event constructed on the Egyptian temple walls is complex, problematic, and perhaps ultimately inaccessible in the ancient material record. What *is* accessible in this case, and what is equally compelling, is an examination of how that Event reverberates forward in time—how different audiences encountered the reliefs at the Ramesseum at pivotal moments in history and created the Event anew in those encounters. Thus, instead of focusing upon the historicity of this conflict, this dissertation examines how the Battle Event resonates through time, how it stands out through its own unique pattern and strategies of unfolding—all geographically, historically, and socially contingent. To put it slightly differently, in this dissertation the Battle of Kadesh is not a sum total of historical details, accurately or inaccurately reflected, in the monumental reliefs. Rather it is *how* such buildings blocks are used, accentuated, ignored, intensified, selected, or subverted. This enables us to examine how the Battle of Kadesh was encountered and reciprocally how it informed audiences hundreds and even thousands of years after Ramses and Muwatalli faced off along the Orontes River.

Such an approach is not without its potential pitfalls. It is easy to fall into the trap of overemphasizing the figure of the historian (a cultural product) in the creation of Events. For example, Edward Carr asserts that “The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context... The only reason why we are interested to know that the battle was fought at Hastings in 1066 is that historians regard it as a major historical event.”²³⁶ Here Carr implies that historians make decisions based upon their own reasons and that it is the whims of historians that determine how Events are created and remembered. By emphasizing instead the participatory role of the reliefs, this dissertation demonstrates that regardless of the human ingenuity and skill that contributed to their initial creation and/or interpretation, it was the reliefs themselves (particularly their durability and monumentality) that anchor the Event throughout thousands of years of history and provide its exceptional resonance.

²³⁶ Carr, *What is History?*, 9.

How Events Mean

In Christopher Pinney's contribution to the volume *Materiality*, he critiques scholarship that over-inscribes agency onto the human subjects and/or interpreters by problematizing the relationship between culture and material production on the one hand, and history and material production on the other. Too often, he argues, "The artifact is eviscerated in the all-powerful context of history or culture."²³⁷ Pinney specifically criticizes studies²³⁸ that focus on the social life of objects in order to reify the distinction between subjects and objects: "Endowing objects with quasi-human characteristics by conceding them a 'life' and multiple careers ultimately reinscribes culture's potency through its ability to infinitely recode objects."²³⁹ In other words, he is criticizing the notion of object biographies that, while they may transcend multiple generations, are still written by the human agents who inscribe the objects with their meaning in the first place. Pinney is also criticizing the notion that meaning and value are an entirely extrinsic, culturally constructed assessment. Rather, Pinney would prefer that objects wrote their own autobiographies: "If the understanding of images' 'social life' stresses their malleability, their suppleness in the face of changing time and place, I would like to reintroduce the presence, 'tension' ... or 'torque' of the image."²⁴⁰

James Henry Breasted, an Egyptologist writing about the Kadesh reliefs over 100 years ago, also recognized such torque and presence in their monumental forms:

No incident in Egyptian history is so impressed upon the mind of the traveler in Egypt as this battle between the forces of Ramses II and those of the Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes, in the [thirteenth] century before Christ. The young king's supreme effort to save himself and his army from destruction is so often depicted and in such graphic pictures upon the walls of the great temples, that no visitor, not even the most blasé "globe trotter" can ever forget it... this dramatic event [is] so prominent that it attracts the attention of even the most casual visitor over and over again.²⁴¹

Such an account demonstrates the potency of the impact of the Battle reliefs upon a modern audience, despite their being inscribed on the temple walls over 3,000 years ago. It also supports Pinney's argument that objects are never fully assimilable to any specific context.²⁴² Rather, the reliefs transcend the moments when the fighting occurred and

²³⁷ Christopher Pinney, "Things Happen: Or, From Which Moment Does That Object Come?" in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 259.

²³⁸ Such as Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²³⁹ Pinney, "Things Happen," 259.

²⁴⁰ Pinney, "Things Happen," 268.

²⁴¹ James Henry Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh: A Study in the Earliest Known Military Strategy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903), 82.

²⁴² Pinney, "Things Happen," 269.

even the moments when they were inscribed upon the temple walls. For over three millennia the reliefs have participated in their landscapes, contributing to the political, architectural, and geographical contexts in which they reside. It is precisely this enduring presence that provides scholars with the opportunity to access shifting meanings and resonances manifested and anchored in their material form.

This understanding of the reliefs as active participants in their ever-changing landscapes deliberately contradicts the notion that the reliefs are passive, empty vessels in need of a human subject to provide their interpretation. It also contradicts an interpretation of the reliefs that is static and unchanging in meaning (scholars, in decontextualizing the iconographic content of the reliefs from their material form as well as from their social, temporal, and physical landscapes, have tended to view the historical “meaning” of the reliefs as singular and unchanging). Rather, in asking *how* the reliefs mean instead of what they mean,²⁴³ the communicative properties of the reliefs (embodied in their material form) can be understood as dynamic, contextualized by shifting landscapes and audiences.

In different contexts, formal properties (including, but not limited to, the iconography) of the reliefs are emphasized or ignored, but again the range of meanings of the reliefs is constrained and guided by their physical form. Meaning, then, becomes something that “is an active, continually shifting process rather than a static, inherent entity.”²⁴⁴ It is produced in the “shifting encounters between humans and the material arts, in which different properties of a material object will come into high relief or recede into the background at different times, places, or within different frames or horizons of expectations.”²⁴⁵

Marian Feldman derives this understanding of meaning from Webb Keane’s concept of bundling, which emphasizes that formal qualities “Must be embodied in something in particular. But as soon as they do, they are actually, and often contingently (rather than by logical necessity), bound up with other qualities—redness in an apple comes along with spherical shape, lightweight, sweet flavor, a tendency to rot, and so forth. In practice, there is no way entirely to eliminate the factor of copresence, or what we might call *bundling*.”²⁴⁶ The implication that physical properties such as redness cannot be present without a tangible form that binds them to other physical properties helps to explain how different contexts and different systems of values can highlight different qualities that are embodied in the same object, which then “can become

²⁴³ A question first posed by Marian H. Feldman, in her article “Beyond Iconography: Meaning-Making in Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean Visual and Material Culture,” in *The Cambridge Prehistory of the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean*, ed. A. Bernard Knapp and Peter Van Dommelen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014a), 337-351.

²⁴⁴ Feldman, “Beyond Iconography,” 338-339.

²⁴⁵ Feldman, “Beyond Iconography,” 337.

²⁴⁶ Webb Keane, “Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things,” in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 188.

contingent but real factors in its social life.”²⁴⁷ In other words, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs comprise more properties than just their iconography, and these material properties, moreover, are inextricably linked. Audiences therefore have experienced and continue to experience the iconographic subject matter of the monumental Kadesh battle reliefs bundled with such qualities as architectural placement, form, and shape; narrative composition; style; medium; function; production technologies; size; and portability (or there lack of), “all of which, it is important to remember, point to human practices, skills, knowledge, and horizons of expectation.”²⁴⁸ Origin itself should be included in the list of bundled qualities of the Kadesh reliefs—it is brought to the fore later in the first millennium BCE when foreign audiences produce their own battle reliefs in an “Egyptian” compositional tradition—as should monumentality.²⁴⁹ Monumentality is more accurately a bundling of physical qualities in its own right. According to Alessandra Gilibert, “What makes artifacts ‘monumental’ in the first place is their permanence (large scale, durable materials, sheer weight) and their visibility.”²⁵⁰ The monumentality of the reliefs creates a potentiality for large audiences who can collectively view the images at the same time, and establishes the prominence of these images within the first courtyard of the Ramesseum (covering the interior of the first pylon, it is impossible for the reliefs not to be seen by anyone exiting the first courtyard). Moreover, the durable materials of the monumental reliefs stabilize their viewing experience through time even as other physical, social, and political aspects of their landscape change. This durability is brought to the fore in the seventh century BCE when the endurance of the reliefs in a shifting Theban landscape still provides a potent encounter for a Neo-Assyrian audience.

This dissertation employs the concept of bundling not only to expand upon the understanding of the communicative properties of the Kadesh reliefs, but also to “yield proposals for resonances and values of fluctuating intensities at different times, places, and contexts.”²⁵¹ Feldman proposes that “It is in deducing value and resonance across conjunctions of properties that we can begin to access *how* objects meant.”²⁵² By examining how the reliefs meant at pivotal junctions in history, this dissertation explores how the Event of the Battle of Kadesh was constructed and conceptualized by different audiences through time.

²⁴⁷ Keane, “Signs,” 188.

²⁴⁸ Feldman, “Beyond Iconography,” 339.

²⁴⁹ Feldman, “Beyond Iconography,” 339. This will be addressed in the seventh chapter of this dissertation, which focuses upon the Neo-Assyrian reception of these reliefs.

²⁵⁰ Alessandra Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 2. Gilibert quotes from Criado to further emphasize that a monument “is visible through space and... maintains this visibility through time.” Felipe Criado, “The Visibility of the Archaeological Record and the Interpretation of Social Reality,” in *Interpreting Archaeology: Finding Meaning in the Past*, ed. Ian Hodder et al. (London: Routledge, 1995), 199; Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art*, 2.

²⁵¹ Feldman, “Beyond Iconography,” 338.

²⁵² Feldman, “Beyond Iconography,” 344

Where the Meaning of Events Resides: Landscape

How does one determine which specific qualities of the reliefs resonate with their audience at a given time? One begins by reinserting the reliefs in their landscapes—by understanding to the best of one’s abilities the architectural, geographical, topographical, cultural, political, religious, and temporal contexts that impact how the reliefs were encountered and valued—while at the same time recognizing that the reliefs themselves were active participants in these fluctuating landscapes and that their material properties were an important and enduring constituent of their landscape contexts. The English word “landscape” derives from the Middle Dutch *lantscap*, which was first used in the sixteenth century CE to refer to a parcel or tract of land, but quickly came to connote a painted or drawn picture of scenery.²⁵³ Therefore, from its initial usage, landscape indicated a man-made object embedded in a system of cultural values. But this understanding of the term has evolved dramatically over time, and in recent decades scholarship has advanced our understanding of what landscapes are and what landscapes do, creating new potentialities for how landscapes help to explore how Events are constructed. Here I develop an understanding of landscapes synthesized from the works of archaeologists, art historians, Near Eastern scholars, and social theorists that will be employed throughout this dissertation to determine the scope of landscapes’ involvement in Event construction.

In the introduction to *Landscape and Power* W.J.T. Mitchell advocates for the transformation of landscape from a noun into a verb to capture the processes by which social identities are shaped and developed and the practices by which cultural power is expressed.²⁵⁴ Such activities accentuate the cognitive dimension of landscapes that map over places and often serve as a person’s first encounter with a place.²⁵⁵ The Near Eastern historian Piotr Michalowski expands upon Mitchell’s notion of landscape as a cognitive encounter through his use of “mental maps,” a concept that Michalowski himself derived from Foucault’s exploration of how civilizations create metaphors of power, knowledge, history, and geography.²⁵⁶ Like Mitchell’s landscapes, Michalowski’s mental maps are culturally contingent and overlay the notions of place that we carry in our heads.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ “Landscape,” last modified June 4, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/landscape. This connection expresses the popularity of landscapes in Dutch paintings at the time.

²⁵⁴ W.J.T. Mitchell, “Introduction,” in *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed., ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1.

²⁵⁵ Mitchell, “Introduction,” 1.

²⁵⁶ Piotr Michalowski, “Mental Maps and Ideology: Reflections on Subartu,” in *The Origin of Cities in Dry-Farming Syria*, ed. Harvey Weiss (Guilford: Four Quarters Publishing Company, 1986), 129-56; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

²⁵⁷ Specifically, Michalowski argues that the precise location of Subartu in Sumerian and Akkadian sources fluctuated from period to period and it is impossible to allocate trans-

Defining a landscape begins with the creation of its physical dimensions and borders, but as Mitchell and Michalowski reveal, to do so is to mentally map everything inside those borders, to value and judge and correlate and perceive based upon one's cultural frameworks and assumptions. As Allison Thomason has noted with reference to Near Eastern landscapes, "The language of geography and landscape, the metaphors used to describe and depict places, are arbitrary constructions defined by and reliant upon the cultural milieu in which they are issued... Landscape, whether in map, textual, or pictorial form, is an imagining, a construct of the human mind rather than a precise mapping of physical reality."²⁵⁸

Landscapes, beyond constructs of the human mind, are culturally constructed; they are laden with the political, cultural, and historical baggage of those who encounter them. As Simon Schama explains in *Landscape and Memory*, "All of our landscapes are imprinted with our obsessions."²⁵⁹ Landscapes can never be culturally neutral or untouched by humanity for "The very act of identifying a place (even as wilderness), presupposes our presence and along with us all of the heavy cultural backpacks that we lug on the trail. The wilderness does not locate itself, does not name itself."²⁶⁰

Yet to acknowledge that landscapes are culturally constructed—defined, understood, traversed—is not to reduce them to submissive receptacles of human knowledge. Stephen Lumsden refutes the idea that landscapes in Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs are "simply something that can be objectively measured, an absolute, a passive container."²⁶¹ Rather, he regards the spatial dimension of landscapes as a medium instead of a container for action, fully implicated and irreducible from the action itself. Lumsden draws heavily from the works of the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who advocates for an active role of space in social processes.²⁶² Lefebvre's examination of the production of space disentangles space as both a medium of social relations and also as a material product that can impact social relations. It is precisely this reciprocal and socially implicating component of space that Mitchell adopts in his definition of landscape and that other scholars have advocated as a way to understand how landscapes directly impact those who inhabit them. This agentive notion of landscape is also popular in modern anthropological scholarship where, for example, Anna Agbe-Davies examines commercial practices through the lens of landscapes that shape and are shaped

historical coordinates for the city in Mesopotamian references. He creates the concept of mental maps in response to the "empirical focus" in Assyriology upon geographical features, place names, and polities, arguing instead that almost all use of space and geography in Sumerian and Akkadian literature is figurative and requires cognitive mapping.

²⁵⁸ Allison K. Thomason, "Representations of the North Syrian Landscape in Neo-Assyrian Art," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 323 (2001): 65.

²⁵⁹ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, (New York: Vintage Publishing, 1995), 18.

²⁶⁰ Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 7.

²⁶¹ Stephen Lumsden, "The Production of Space at Nineveh," *Iraq* 66 (2004): 187.

²⁶² Lumsden, "The Production of Space," 187-89.

by the circulation of people and items within them.²⁶³ Such an understanding expands upon landscape's initial definition as a man-made object embedded in a system of cultural values: through a landscape's ability to physically shape social processes and activities, it creates its audience as much as its audience creates the landscape.

In concrete terms, though, what constitutes a landscape? There are geographical coordinates, the elevation of the topography, the geological formations, the flora and fauna, and the built environment, all simultaneously impacting and impacted upon by the inhabitants moving through the landscape. Ömür Harmanşah rightly warns against a "modernist dissection of landscape into its discrete components of the natural, the cultural, or the imagined."²⁶⁴ But landscape analysis must include at some stage the identification of individual features and qualities and physical attributes that impact the cognitive mapping of a landscape, that contribute to the designation of its borders, and that figure prominently into the processes of place-making.²⁶⁵ To blend, as Harmanşah suggests, "the micro-geology of place with the cultures of place that are woven around it, and the stories told about it,"²⁶⁶ one must first understand the geography and topography, the history and politics, and the cultural or religious narratives that all contribute to the process of landscaping.

The intent of landscaping the Kadesh reliefs throughout the following chapters, then, is to simultaneously recognize the diversity of landscape components while understanding that one ultimately experiences these constitutive elements as irreducible from one another. Lumsden advocates for such an understanding that interweaves the social, historical, and spatial elements with spaces defining the social activities and historical processes within them as much as the activities and processes define the spaces.²⁶⁷ This dissertation likewise eschews any understanding of landscape that ultimately isolates either its material or social or symbolic properties, for just as with other types of material objects, one engages with the qualities of landscapes all bundled together.

This irreducibility of landscape is exemplified in James Brady and Wendy Ashmore's (1999) examination of water and caves in Mayan landscapes. By situating the cosmological and the physical in one landscape, they uncover a relationship between the royal Mayan palace Dos Pilas and ritual caves. Brady and Ashmore argue that while a casual observer may not see that these built and unbuilt elements existed within the same

²⁶³ Anna S. Agbe-Davies and Alexander A. Bauer, "Rethinking Trade as a Social Activity: An Introduction," in *Social Archaeologies of Trade and Exchange: Exploring Relationships among People, Places, and Things*, ed. Anna S. Agbe-Davies and Alexander A. Bauer (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2010), 13-28.

²⁶⁴ Ömür Harmanşah, "Stone Worlds: Technologies of Rock-Carving and Place-Making in Anatolian Landscapes," in *Cambridge Prehistory of the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean*, ed. A. Bernard Knapp and Peter van Dommelen (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 388.

²⁶⁵ Processes of place-making are "the processes of making places at culturally significant locales." Harmanşah, "Stone Worlds," 388.

²⁶⁶ Harmanşah, "Stone Worlds," 390.

²⁶⁷ Lumsden, "The Production of Space," 189-90.

landscape, for the Mayans this was indeed the case, with even the simplest of Mayan houses containing symbols and connotations of water and rock elements. This unified landscape arena, with its restricted access and its propagation of royal authority, ultimately manifested social differences, religious structures, and political relationships.²⁶⁸

The irreducibility of landscapes does not imply that they cohere into uniform units. Rather, “The constitutive elements of landscape are profoundly contextual and always comprise something different and unexpected in every case considered.”²⁶⁹ In other words, not only does each person who encounters a landscape discern its borders and its features a bit differently (based upon factors such as the social, religious or political context in which they participate in the landscape and their geographical orientation into, out of, or through the landscape), but the dynamic quality of landscapes also means that every landscape also changes through time. Such an understanding corresponds with Timothy Ingold’s phenomenology of landscapes: “That they are experienced, that their extent and meaning are mutable through space and time, and that they are created through a potent combination of people, history, and geographical emplacement.”²⁷⁰ Janet Richards discusses the landscape of ancient Abydos in such a dynamic context.²⁷¹ For Richards, Abydos was not just a sacred site but also a landscape where political structures and social inequalities were created and perpetuated and evolved through time. Understanding landscapes dynamically helps her account for how landscapes gather things in their midst, how “Associations, experiences, and histories become repositories of memory, concrete and complex arenas of common engagement over space and time.”²⁷²

In her essay, Richards asks of Egyptian landscapes, “How did the ancient Egyptians, the inhabitants of these landscapes, perceive, use and interact with them?”²⁷³ To do justice to her query, one must first concede that it is impossible to stand in Egyptian ruins today and to experience their landscapes as the ancient Egyptians did over three millennia ago. At the Ramesseum, for example, it is not just that the physical topography has changed significantly—paved roads now connect the tombs and temples of the western bank of Thebes, which currently stand in marvelous ruin—but that modern visitors contain a different historical appreciation for the site; a different set of cultural expectations; and view or visit the temple under different physical, social, and temporal

²⁶⁸ James Brady and Wendy Ashmore, “Mountains, Caves, Water: Ideational Landscapes of the Ancient Maya,” in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 124-145.

²⁶⁹ Peter Van Dommelen, “Complex Histories,” *Archaeological Dialogues* 17, No. 1 (2010): 39.

²⁷⁰ Timothy Ingold, “The Temporality of Landscape,” *World Archaeology* 25 (1993): 153.

²⁷¹ Janet E. Richards, “Conceptual Landscapes in the Egyptian Nile Valley,” in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 83-100.

²⁷² Richards, “Conceptual Landscapes,” 84.

²⁷³ Richards, “Conceptual Landscapes,” 84.

conditions. (Indeed, modern visitors enter the temple from where the northern wall of the first courtyard once stood; the entrance portal in the first pylon has been filled in by conservation efforts to protect the structural integrity of the pylon.) Moreover, even the senses that one uses to experience a landscape are historically and culturally contingent. According to Yannis Hamilakis, the “Historicity and cultural specificity of the senses make claims by some archaeologists that because we share the ‘same’ body with humans in the past, we can have access to their phenomenological thinking, entirely unattainable and hugely problematic.”²⁷⁴ Instead, he advocates for understanding “in each context, the social and material conditions which enabled and activated specific, often diverse, sensorial regimes.”²⁷⁵

This dissertation proceeds from the belief that it is precisely these shifting social and material conditions that are worthy of our better understanding. It bears repeating that neither the impact of the reliefs nor the meaning of the Event that they help construct can be disentangled from the landscape in which they are embedded. Landscapes situate the materiality of the reliefs by providing a three dimensional physical and temporal domain in which the audience and the relief corpus interact. These landscapes both tether the Event to, and embed the Event in, its physical, historical, and cultural environs, and account for how these environs impact the resonance of the reliefs and how the Battle of Kadesh was encountered by the temple visitors. In the pages below, landscape ultimately serves a multi-dimensional framework for exploring how the Battle of Kadesh Event engages with its surroundings, how it is set in the figural and representational landscape of Kadesh, and also how the Event is situated in the spatial and temporal landscape of the placement of the reliefs. This landscape is embedded in the cultural, political, and religious expectations of its audience, but it also contributes to the social activities that take place within it.

In the ensuing attempts to landscape the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum at pivotal moments in history, this dissertation highlights just how much is lost in an iconographic analysis of the reliefs from partitioned vignettes in art historical text books, completely decontextualized as they are from their physical, topographical, geographical, social, political, and religious landscapes. To the extent that it is possible it attempts to resituate the Kadesh reliefs in the socio-spatial networks that the ancient Egyptians, Hittites, and Neo-Assyrians viewed them in—accounting for cultural, historical, and religious contexts, as well as for the surrounding decoration and architectural features of the Ramesseum and other monuments or edifices that would have been visited or viewed in tandem with Ramses II’s temple.

Specifically, this dissertation begins by contextualizing the monumental Kadesh reliefs in their architectural landscape at the Ramesseum on the western bank of Thebes. Chapter 5 includes a description of the size and location of the walls on which the reliefs are located, acknowledging the material properties of the colors of paint and type of stone used in construction and how it impacted not only the creation but also the weathering of

²⁷⁴ Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 118.

²⁷⁵ Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses*, 118.

the reliefs through time.²⁷⁶ It also contains a description of the temple in its larger geographical landscape, including nearby architectural and topographical features. Each chapter of this dissertation then landscapes the reliefs at a specific moment in time by addressing the many non-permanent elements incorporated into the geographical landscape that would have accompanied the reliefs (such as military spoils or foreign tribute displayed after conquests abroad, music escorting processions through the temple courtyards and halls, the effect of lighting at different times of day and night, accouterment and flora that would have been present only during specific seasons or festivals, etc.).²⁷⁷ These temporary fixtures and objects could demarcate space, restrict the visibility of the reliefs, and impact the types of activities that were performed at the temples.²⁷⁸

Temporary fixtures were not the only way in which the physical appearance of the temples and the reliefs changed through time. “Even long after they were initially built, Egypt’s temples often continued to grow—with succeeding kings striving to outdo their predecessors in expanding, embellishing and enriching the gods’ homes.”²⁷⁹ Additionally

²⁷⁶ “Natural materials express their age, as well as the story of their origins and their history of human use. All matter exists in the continuum of time; the patina of wear adds the enriching experience of time to the materials of construction.” Juhani Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons), 34.

²⁷⁷ At the seventh pylon of the Temple of Amun at Karnak, for example, scholars have digitally reconstructed large wooden flagstaffs atop the towers of the pylon, which would have been anchored into stone bases and would have carried colorful cloth flags. “Seventh Pylon,” last modified 2008, <http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/feature/PylonVII>. Digital Karnak based the size and the shape of the flagstaff upon “representations of these features found at temples and tombs. These show the poles as reaching above the height of the pylon and tapering as they rise.” “Seventh Pylon.”

²⁷⁸ For example, Richard Wilkinson describes the royal and private statues placed in the temple outer courts as “the most important items of temple furniture.” Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 62. Such statues could receive offerings and act as intermediaries with the gods, and they could also connect specific pharaohs with the content of the temple walls. Additionally, many visitors to Egyptian temples made votive offerings that ranged from “simple beads and trinkets to finely carved and painted statues and stelae.” Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 99.

²⁷⁹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 34. “Even after the formal temple decoration was completed, many other small inscriptions or scenes were often carved over the original decorations or in the spaces between them in the form of graffiti.” Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 47. Additionally, there are “countless shallow holes scraped into the outer walls of temples by devout individuals wishing to take away a small part of the sacred building—albeit only dust—for the purposes of healing and devotion.” Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 99.

the temples were looted, disassembled for their building materials, or re-inscribed by later pharaohs who wished to take credit for building or maintaining them.²⁸⁰

What Events Do

As the landscapes changed, so would the meaning of the reliefs for their respective audiences. It is precisely in examining Events' shifting resonances through time that their durable significance is revealed: that again and again Events change "the very frame through which we perceive the world and engage with it,"²⁸¹ creating "new horizons of meaning."²⁸² The metaphor of horizons—as opposed to singular points—reflects the dynamic values and understandings of Events along a continuum of meanings, how their bundled qualities sometimes receded, sometimes came to the fore, in different times and with different audiences. But the span of a horizon also accounts for the expansive range of an Event's impact that ricochets forwards in time, and the scope and intensity of an Event's impact in creating a new frame of reference for everything that comes after it. Caesar's Crossing of the Rubicon has thus created an enduring precedent for historians seeking out "points of no return" in situations of political change (Caesar is supposed to have uttered the words "*alea iacta est*," or "the die is now cast" upon the moment of his crossing).

This dissertation emphasizes several mechanisms for how Events create such horizons of meaning, all of which are grounded in the materiality of the reliefs. The first of these is "dialogism," referring to the process by which meaning accumulates through the evocation of words, terms, ideas, and phrases previously expressed. Bakhtin coined the term to explain how "When social actors speak, their words are not merely their own but reflect their engagement in a broader ideological and verbal world."²⁸³ Therefore, the meaning of a text or speech is developed through "its refraction of the social horizon."²⁸⁴ The concept of dialogism thus situates the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in a temporal relationship with earlier propaganda, where, for example, the toponym of Kadesh acquired a symbolic value through its earlier uses in the inscriptions of Thutmose III and the narrative battle scenes of Seti I (see Chapter 5). As a result of this, Ramses's Battle of Kadesh reliefs contain added meaning through their evocation of these earlier references to Kadesh, dialogically participating in and expanding upon the semantic content (or intent) of the northern Levantine toponym through time.

Dialogism also helps to account for how factors such as genre, form, and style impact the meaning of the reliefs. Royal inscriptions in ancient Egypt, for example, were originally displayed visually as propaganda.²⁸⁵ Our earliest examples are primarily

²⁸⁰ Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples*, 34.

²⁸¹ Žižek, *Event: A Philosophical Journey*, 12.

²⁸² Žižek, *Event: A Philosophical Journey*, 30.

²⁸³ William F. Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 202.

²⁸⁴ Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices*, 202.

²⁸⁵ Christopher J. Eyre, "Is Egyptian Historical Literature 'Historical' or 'Literary'?" in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 416.

pictorial accompanied by a short epigraph; however, the expanded form (such as the Battle of Kadesh Poem) embody “more than an expanded label” to adopt a documentary format.²⁸⁶ It was in the early Middle Kingdom that narrative royal inscriptions first appeared, around the same time as the primary *belle lettres*.²⁸⁷ Narrative royal inscriptions became an integral platform for the demonstration of military might and valor against Egypt’s foreign enemies to key audiences associated with temples and the festivals they hosted.

In the Kadesh inscriptions, the use of the pharaonic address and popular eulogies in particular evoke the genre of the Königsnovelle, dating back to the Twelfth Dynasty. The Königsnovelle comprises a conference, pharaonic address, and response by troops or officials.²⁸⁸ Prominent literary antecedents include the Kamose Stele and the annals of Thutmose III.²⁸⁹ Many compositional efforts are of course intentional, and it is likely that the authors of the Kadesh inscriptions were intentionally evoking earlier Königsnovelle exemplars (particularly the first annal of Thutmose III). But as Mark Freeman points out, “The way we tell is suffused with conventions, with schematic, even stereotypical, renditions of the personal past, derived from countless sources, many of which are external to one’s own personal experience.”²⁹⁰ In other words, our communication may draw upon expressions or genres of whose scope we are not even aware.

But the meaning of an Event can serve as a dialogical precedent in its own right, refracting a set of expectations forward for future Events. The seventh chapter of this dissertation discusses how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum established a precedent for martial imagery on temples on the western bank of Thebes, which was subsequently harnessed by Ramses III on his temple at Medinet Habu (where he covered the exterior of his entrance pylon with monumental reliefs of his Battle against the Sea Peoples). Likewise, Neo-Assyrian royal rhetoric dialogically perpetuated the imperial conquest of the Levant portrayed in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, which established the landscape of the Levant as imperial proving grounds for subsequent Near Eastern empires.

While dialogism refers specifically to the “internal dynamic in the discourse of a

²⁸⁶ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 416-417. “The earliest continuous royal inscriptions were ‘legal’ texts: royal protection decrees, where the documentary form served as a display that was more than just publication at the door of the temple.” Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 417.

²⁸⁷ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 417.

²⁸⁸ See Antonio Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel,’” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 277-296.

²⁸⁹ Hans Gödicke, “The ‘Battle of Kadesh’: A Reassessment,” in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*, ed. Hans Gödicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 80. Chapter 5 of this dissertation discusses the impacts of the genre of the Kadesh inscriptions upon a well-read audience in greater depth.

²⁹⁰ Mark Freeman, “Telling Stories: Memory and Narrative,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Redstone and Bill Schwartz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 265.

single speaker,²⁹¹ the texts and images of the Kadesh reliefs—as active participants in their landscapes—would also “dialogue with” other physical features in their landscapes. This caused them to both accumulate and refract meaning through these spatialized relationships. In this dissertation “dialogue” refers to a visual as opposed to verbal discussion, emphasizing how spatial relationships express visual “conversations” through proximity and patterns of movement. The architectural placement of the reliefs in particular becomes imbued with meaning as it establishes visual dialogs between the Battle of Kadesh reliefs and nearby elements in the Ramesseum’s decorative scheme. These visual features then communicate in tandem with the Kadesh reliefs, whose meaning is transformed through their participation in a visual dialogue.

In the sixth chapter of this dissertation, the addition of the Silver Tablet Treaty—an Event in its own right—to the walls of the first courtyard of the Ramesseum demonstrates the reciprocal impact upon meaning that visual dialogues can have. The monumental Battle of Kadesh reliefs in the same courtyard reconfigure the significance of the Treaty on the temple walls (perhaps undermining the parity clauses). At the same time, the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh is itself reconfigured by the presence of the Silver Tablet Treaty (which mitigates the enduring enmity between Egypt and Hatti and embodies a political climate where treaty-making is a more productive maneuver than war between “Great Kings”).

Time irrevocably alters landscapes, but it does not do this in uniform ways. Just as landscapes are not singular, neither are they uniform—in the sense that they do not change in consistent, or even coterminous, ways. Many of the visual dialogues in which the reliefs participate occur with other durable features in the temple landscape (such as other reliefs or statues), which persist through centuries and millennia and provide an enduring conversation with the Battle of Kadesh at the Ramesseum. But at the same time other physical features appear and disappear in short succession, particularly during festival processions and performances (discussed in detail in the fifth chapter of this dissertation) when flowers, *daises*, even people, provide ephemeral but potent visual relationships with the reliefs that impact how they mean.

But just as time acts upon landscapes, altering their physical features as well as their socio-political structures, so do landscapes (and the Events within them) impact the experience of time by generating temporalities (relationships in time). This understanding of how time is produced—or perhaps more accurately, culturally manufactured—provides a new means for examining how different time periods relate to one another. It is at odds with the notion of an abstract timeline distancing the past and the present by a measurable and consistent metric, and, therefore, can be challenging to conceptualize. Hamilakis reminds us, “In modernity, we encounter time as linear and successive, cumulative and irreversible. This is the chronologic and chronometric time—a mentality which is reminiscent of the modernist mode of progress as a linear process of advancing forward.”²⁹² This modern focus on a linear time line “is only one of many conceptions [of time], bound to a single value structure,”²⁹³ that of objectivity. “The

²⁹¹ Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices*, 206.

²⁹² Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses*, 122.

²⁹³ Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices*, 270.

problem is that objectivity is itself a value, a particularly strong one in our scientific tradition, and what it provides by way of supposedly neutral measures are in fact evaluations along one dimension.”²⁹⁴ In response to this bias the linguist William Hanks advocates that we must “recognize that the notion of a unitary time line, moving from earlier to later at a single pace in all places, is itself an artifact of the view from nowhere... At issue here is not whether time as measured by clicks and boxes exists but rather whether it is relevant to the description of communicative practices.”²⁹⁵ In other words, a chronometric, linear timeline may not be the most productive framework for understanding how time operates in the meaning-generating landscape of the Kadesh reliefs.

Instead, Heidegger’s discussion of time provides a constructive entry point for examining how temporalities are generated in this dissertation—particularly his understanding of time as not something conceived of in the mind but experienced in the body. That is to say, time is not a mental, objective ordering-device; it is an aspect of bodily involvement, of physical participation in a given landscape.²⁹⁶ Chris Gosden builds upon Heidegger, suggesting that “If time is generated by the flow of life, then we in fact make time through our actions, through our habits, and routines and cyclical activities. Thus, for every society, time and the temporal referents it imposes are necessarily subjective and culturally specific.”²⁹⁷

According to Heidegger and Gosden then, the landscapes of the Kadesh reliefs provide significant clues as to how audiences understood relationships in time because the materiality of landscapes informs how people moved through and acted inside them. Moreover, the landscapes’ materiality also accounts for their capacity to spatially contain and orient objects and features that evoke different ages (such as the creation of the reliefs on the temple walls, or the physical altering of a geographical feature, or when a particular architectural element gained prominence). In other words, landscapes, in coalescing these objects and features, also coalesce all of their temporalities.

Events participate in such temporalities through their material presence in landscapes. The age of an Event, or the age that it (accurately or inaccurately) evokes, develops temporal relationships with other ages evoked in the same landscape, including the contemporary one. The age of an Event is not intrinsically or always valued; often an Event’s age is un-emphasized by contemporary audiences. But Chapter 7 of this dissertation describes how the age of the Battle of Kadesh was exceptionally resonant with a Neo-Assyrian audience, which valued the Late Bronze Age era of the reliefs’ creation in its own past. Hamilakis cautions against prioritizing a single time period for objects (often their creation) precisely because “as material things, [they] are multi-temporal. Their multi-temporal instances include all other moments in which these fragments became the center of sensorial attention, and acted as participants in corporal

²⁹⁴ Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices*, 203.

²⁹⁵ Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices*, 270.

²⁹⁶ Gosden, *Social Being and Time*, 7; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, reprint ed., (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008).

²⁹⁷ Gosden, *Social Being and Time*, 112.

engagements and interactions.”²⁹⁸ Nancy Munn likewise emphasizes multiple temporalities as a way of conceptualizing how people exist “in a sociocultural time of multiple dimensions (sequencing, timing, past-present-future relations, etc.).”²⁹⁹ According to Munn, “In any given instance, particular temporal dimensions may be foci of attention or only tacitly known. Either way, these dimensions are lived or apprehended concretely via the various meaningful connectivities among persons, objects and space continually being made in and through the everyday world.”³⁰⁰

Here I endeavor to nuance how landscapes manifest this relationship (or series of relationships) between the past and present through their ability to materialize the dimension of time *in* space.³⁰¹ This active embodiment of the “inseparability of space and time” is precisely Bakhtin’s concept of a chronotope, (literally meaning ‘time space’).³⁰² According to Bakhtin, “In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.”³⁰³ It is not surprising then that Bakhtin views time as the “dominant principle in the chronotope.”³⁰⁴ In other words, chronotopes specifically refer to places and activities where time is endowed with special meaning.³⁰⁵ In the seventh chapter of this dissertation I suggest that the chronotope of an encounter can productively be applied to both the Kadesh reliefs and the New Kingdom Levantine steles during the seventh century BCE when they are encountered by Neo-Assyrian soldiers. I acknowledge that Bakhtin himself restricted the designation of chronotopes to “a formally constituted category of literature.”³⁰⁶ But following Hayden White, I believe that chronotopes “function well as effective organizing structures of individual and general social consciousness, beyond the confines of ‘literature’, within the domain of reality we designate by the term ‘history.’”³⁰⁷

The Scope of Events

By focusing on the material properties and resonances of the reliefs, the temporal scope of this inquiry—embedded in the durability of the reliefs—necessarily expands

²⁹⁸ Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses*, 123.

²⁹⁹ Nancy D. Munn, “The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992): 116.

³⁰⁰ Munn, “The Cultural Anthropology of Time,” 116.

³⁰¹ Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: Texas University Press, 1981) 250.

³⁰² Bakhtin, “Chronotope in the Novel,” 84.

³⁰³ Bakhtin, “Chronotope in the Novel,” 84.

³⁰⁴ Bakhtin, “Chronotope in the Novel,” 86.

³⁰⁵ White, *Content of the Form*, 173.

³⁰⁶ White, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 230.

³⁰⁷ White, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 249.

beyond the specific context of their creation on the temple walls. In asking how the Event of the Battle of Kadesh is created and recreated (through time), I argue here that the temporal and geographical scope is embedded in the subject of the Event construction itself. Events, in the definition laid out above, necessarily resonate and change through time. Thus, the following three chapters diachronically analyze how the Event of the Battle of Kadesh is constructed and conceptualized at pivotal moments in history that are woven together by the Event itself.

This understanding of the scope of an Event contrasts with previous historicizing scholarship that has limited its analysis of the battle and its historical and political impact to the reign of Ramses II or the New Kingdom.³⁰⁸ Such works short-change the reliefs the full duration of their resonance and therefore truncate our understanding of the dynamic process of Event-making. In contrast, this dissertation examines the retellings of the Battle of Kadesh by expanding the temporal and geographical scope of analysis to include not just contemporary Egypt but also Late Bronze Age Hittite Anatolia and Iron Age Neo-Assyria (where demonstrable evidence for encounters with these reliefs can be found). In so doing it aims to provide new insights concerning the nexus of interactions and impacts between these civilizations.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in his 1997 article “Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” tackles a similar restructuring of the geographical and temporal scope of traditional fields of academic inquiry. He cogently demonstrates how the geographical boundaries of connectivity during the Early Modern Period in Eurasian history must be reconfigured to account for new modes of contact. Subrahmanyam argues that it is the subject of inquiry—in his case the topic of millennialism—that should define the geographical scope of interactions, not the other way around.³⁰⁹ He emphasizes how mental maps instead of economic mechanisms create such cross-cultural connections and thus crucially influence the geographical scope of connections during the Early Modern Period. Religious themes such as millennialism transcend traditionally isolated regions of Early Modern scholarship and provide productive avenues for reconfiguring our understanding of Early Modern geography.

For example, Subrahmanyam refers to an encounter between the Portuguese

³⁰⁸ I am indebted to Feldman, “Beyond Iconography”; Chikako E. Watanabe, “A Compositional Analysis of the Battle of Til-Tuba, in *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Hartmut Kühne, Ranier Maria Czichon, and Florian Janoscha Kreppner (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 601-12; Oskar Kaelin, *Ein assyrisches Bildexperiment nach ägyptischem Vorbild: zu Planung und Ausführung der “Schlacht am Ulain,”* (Darmstadt: Ugarit-Verlag, 1999) who have all advocated for the resonances of New Kingdom Egyptian battle reliefs in Neo-Assyrian compositions.

³⁰⁹ Millennialism, or *chiliasm* in Greek, refers to “The imminence of a thousand-year ideal society achieved by revolutionary action most often interpreted as the second coming of Christ. In the Middle Ages, individuals of myriad religious traditions anticipated the ultimate battle between good and evil that would proceed a thousand year kingdom in either heaven or earth.” “Millennialism,” last updated June 4, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/millenarianism.

Jesuit Antonio Monserrate and the Mughal emperor Jalal al-din Muhammad Akbar during an Afghani campaign where they discuss the approaching millennium in the Hegiran Calendar, and when the Last Judgment would occur.³¹⁰ “This incident, a trivial one, begins to assume significance when set in its wider regional and supra-regional context.”³¹¹ Millennial fixations occurred across most of the Old World in the 1500’s, and his argument for demarcating new geographical boundaries of connection that incorporate lands such as Portugal and Mughal India is predicated upon the linkage of powerful ideological emphases on millennialism.³¹² This “Akbar-Monserrate conversation points to the permeability of what are often assumed to be closed ‘cultural zones’, and the existence of vocabularies that cut across local religious traditions, here the heterodox Sunni-inflected Islam represented by Akbar, and Monserrate’s zealous Counter-Reformation Christianity.”³¹³ Here the expanded geographical scope of analysis in the Early Modern Period and the emphasis upon South Asian and European connections is directly contingent upon the subject of millennialism itself.

This dissertation likewise expands the temporal and geographical scope of the Battle of Kadesh Event to access crucial resonances that exist outside the confines of earlier inquiries. The ideology of millennialism created new and concrete “connections” throughout lands that were commonly viewed as isolated during the Early Modern Period. Likewise the Event of the Battle of Kadesh provides a new avenue for exploring connections between Egypt and its Near Eastern neighbors in the decades and centuries that follow the placement of the Battle reliefs on the Egyptian temple walls.

Yet Subrahmanyam is correct to be mindful that in forging new discourses and realms of connectivity, “The brunt of our argument is not to negate the notion of difference and to reduce the Eurasian landscape to a flat terrain.”³¹⁴ For while new subjects of inquiry may necessarily expand the dimensions of traditional (and often anachronistic) geographical and temporal boundaries of analysis, little is gained from such analysis without serial contextualism, or “the reconstruction of a sequence of distinct contexts in which identifiable agents strategically deployed existing languages to effect definable goals.”³¹⁵

The historian David Armitage created the concept of serial contextualism as an

³¹⁰ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected History: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997): 746.

³¹¹ Subrahmanyam, “Connected History,” 747.

³¹² Subrahmanyam, “Connected History,” 746-747.

³¹³ Subrahmanyam, “Connected History,” 748.

³¹⁴ Subrahmanyam, “Connected History,” 759.

³¹⁵ David Armitage, “What’s the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the Long Durée,” *History of European Ideas* 38 (2012): 495. Such serial contextualism is exemplified in Subrahmanyam’s analysis when he writes, “If at times [millennialism] was used to build a state, as with Shah Ismail, or to consolidate a phase of rapid geographical expansion, as with Sultan Selin, it was at other moments used to challenge the state in significant ways... [Millennialism] was thus a force to be reckoned with, and a potent and complex political strategy, in the sixteenth century not only in the Mediterranean but further east, indeed as far as Southeast Asia.” Subrahmanyam, “Connected History,” 754-755.

imperative component of his “transtemporal” historical approach. In his 2012 article “What’s the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the Long Durée,” Armitage attempts to reconcile big history with questions of meaning and intention central to intellectual history by emphasizing “mechanisms of connection between moments... [and] questions of concrete transmission, tradition and reception.”³¹⁶ He juxtaposes his transtemporal history with “the traditional history of ideas, which assumed but did not investigate how ideas travelled materially and institutionally across time.”³¹⁷

The Kadesh reliefs, whose continued resonance demonstrably influenced local and foreign audiences well beyond their moment of creation, provides us with precisely such material and impetus to examine how Events are constructed and reinterpreted through deep historical time and large geographical space. Even into the first century BCE, the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus was referencing descriptive accounts of the monumental scenes.³¹⁸ Diodorus wrote a lengthy account of Egypt, providing modern audiences with the most extensive literary record of its customs and history since Herodotus.³¹⁹ On the walls of a peristyle court from “a monument of the king known as Ozymandias”³²⁰ (the Ramesseum), Diodorus describes images of pharaoh:

Represented in the act of besieging a walled city which is surrounded by a river, and of leading the attack against opposing troops; he is accompanied by a lion, which is aiding him with terrifying effect... On the second wall... are wrought the captives as they are being led away by the king; they are without their privates and their hands... The third wall carries every manner of relief and excellent paintings, which portray the king performing a sacrifice of oxen and celebrating a triumph after the war.³²¹

By examining the reliefs not as reflections of a historical happening but rather as participants in the ongoing creation of an Event, the scope of inquiry in this dissertation

³¹⁶ Armitage, “What’s the Big Idea?,” 495.

³¹⁷ Armitage, “What’s the Big Idea?,” 495.

³¹⁸ C.H. Oldfather does not believe that Diodorus ever made it south of Memphis during his visit to ancient Egypt in 59 BCE: “[Diodorus] may have ascended the Nile as far as Memphis, in connection with which city he mentions a shrine of Isis... all the other details of his account of that marvelous land could have been gathered from his literary sources.” C.H. Oldfather, introduction to *Library of History*, by Diodorus Siculus (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), xiii. “He is generally held to have drawn primarily upon Hecataeus of Abdera, who visited Egypt early in the 3rd century B.C., for his account of the customs of the Egyptians... He also mentions what is told by the priests of Egypt and natives of Ethiopia, and it is entirely possible that many a detail was picked up by personal observation and inquiry.” Oldfather, introduction to *Library of History*, xxvi.

³¹⁹ Oldfather, introduction to *Library of History*, xxi.

³²⁰ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, vol. 1, Books 1-2.34 (Loeb Classical Library No. 279), trans. C.H. Oldfather, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 1.47.

³²¹ Diodorus, *Library of History*, 1.48.

necessarily expands (both geographically and temporally) to diachronically incorporate their resonance as it persists through time. To explore how the Battle of Kadesh Event is constructed and conceptualized by tracing its resonance in a way that is “neither artificially punctuated nor deceptively continuous”³²² requires that each chapter adopts such serial contextualism, or nuanced examination of the historical, political, cultural, and physical encounter with the reliefs. It is in this manner that the following chapters examine the thirteenth century Egyptian and Hittite encounters and the seventh century Neo-Assyrian encounter with the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum.

³²² Armitage, “What’s the Big Idea?,” 495.

CHAPTER 5. LANDSCAPING THE CREATION OF THE EVENT: THE BATTLE OF KADESH AND THE BEAUTIFUL FEAST OF THE VALLEY

Introduction

This chapter considers the creation of the Battle of Kadesh Event at the moment when the Kadesh reliefs were carved onto the temple walls of the Ramesseum during the reign of Ramses II.³²³ It examines how the reliefs mean in the context of the festival landscape of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, when large swathes of the Egyptian population were allowed to enter the Ramesseum and encountered the reliefs in the heightened multi-sensorial experience of the religious celebration. The processional route of the festival also served to landscape the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum in the broader decorative scheme and architectural space of the temple complex, along with the decorative programs of other temples visited throughout the festival, including the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Seti I's temple at Gurna, and Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri. Additionally this chapter examines how the oral performance of the Battle of Kadesh Poem during such a festival would anchor the images into a singular, narrative trajectory that recounts details and activities not rendered in the reliefs at all, and emphasizes visual elements that would not otherwise stand out.³²⁴

The chapter begins with an overview of the western bank of Thebes during the reign of Ramses II, describing the physical landscape of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs as it expands outwards from their locations on the interior of the first and second pylons of the Ramesseum complex. The physical landscape incorporates elements from the built and non-built environment that—along with the reliefs themselves—persisted long after the reign of Ramses II (and in many cases still endure to this day). This includes the architectural layout of the Ramesseum temple complex along with the content and visual

³²³ While scholars such as Anthony Spalinger, Kenneth Kitchen, and Donald Redford have attempted to date more precisely the years in which the Kadesh Reliefs were added to Abu Simbel, Abydos, Luxor, Karnak, and the Ramesseum, for the purposes of this dissertation I attribute their creation more generally to the reign of Ramses II (after, of course, his fifth year). See Anthony Spalinger "Dating of the Kadesh Reliefs," in *Five Views on Egypt*, (Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 2006), 137-156; "Historical Observations on the Military Reliefs of Abu Simbel and Other Ramesside Temples in Nubia," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 66 (1980): 83-99; "Early Writing of Ramesses II's Names," *Chronique d'Égypte* 83 (2008): 75-89; Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Historical Observations on Ramesside Nubia," in *Ägypten und Kusch: Fritz Hintze zum. 60 Geburtstag*, ed. Erika Endesfelder et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1977), 213-25; Donald B. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt: Seven Studies*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).

³²⁴ I discuss narrative in greater detail below. Here, briefly, I understand narrative to encapsulate "a structure of relationships by which the events contained in the account are endowed with a meaning by being identified as parts of an integrated whole." Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 9.

impact of its decorative program. The physical landscape of the reliefs also includes the surrounding topographical and architectural features that are visible from the Ramesseum, and the broader geographical landscape of the reliefs with respect to the political and cultural borders of ancient Egypt. These landscape elements were not unchanging; indeed, Ramses's successors built their own temples on the western bank, and architectural additions were made to the Ramesseum itself in Graeco-Roman times.³²⁵ Still, the physical landscape provides a level of continuity for audiences who have visited (and continue to visit) the reliefs through the millennia, prominently impacting the accessibility and viewing experience of the Kadesh reliefs.

The impact of architecture, as the phenomenologist Juhani Pallasmaa has argued, is “not to create strong foreground figures or feelings but to establish frames of perception and horizons of understanding... It is needed to provide the ground and projection screen of remembrance and emotion.”³²⁶ It is in this durable context of providing “frames of perception” that this chapter initially explores how the architectural layout of the Ramesseum directly implicated the viewing context of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in conjunction with the temple's larger decorative program. G.A. Gaballa, in his treatment of Nineteenth Dynasty war scenes on the temple walls, points out that these narrative battles must be situated in the overall subject matter and manner of presentation of the reliefs decorating the temples: “We must emphasize from the outset that the main theme [of temple decoration] is religious. Endless rites performed by the king in front of different deities occupy the walls of the temple, wall after wall, in an apparently dull and repetitive manner.”³²⁷ This is indeed the case at the Ramesseum where the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the interior of the first and second pylons were surrounded by processional scenes depicting The Beautiful Feast of the Valley, offering scenes, princes and princesses processing in celebration of Ramses's *heb-sed* festivals, and scenes where Ramses is enthroned before the gods.

In order to access how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs participated in the Ramesseum's larger decorative scheme, this chapter overlays its description of the physical landscape of the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum with the temporal festival landscape of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley in the Nineteenth Dynasty. During the festival the Egyptian populace would follow processions of musicians, dancers, and priests carrying statues of the gods in barks through the outer courtyards and hypostyle hall of the Ramesseum. In such a context, this chapter explores how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, demonstrating the warrior aspect of the pharaonicity in large swathes of fluid motion, would recede to the background and harmonize with the music, dancing, oral performances, and ritual emphasis of the festival.

Moreover, the processional trajectory of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley activated a landscape network that connected multiple temple complexes on the eastern and western banks of Thebes so that the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum were viewed in

³²⁵ Likewise multiple walls and ceilings later fell into disrepair.

³²⁶ Juhani Pallasmaa, “Space, Place, Memory, and Imagination: The Temporal Dimension of Existential Space,” in *Spatial Recall*, ed. Marc Treib (London: Routledge, 2009), 21.

³²⁷ G.A. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1976), 98.

close succession with reliefs at the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Seti I's temple at Gurna, and Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri. At Karnak in particular, where both Seti I and Thutmose III include the city of Kadesh in their conquests recorded on the temple walls, the political connotations of the northern Levantine city are expanded to include an historical (and indeed symbolic) dimension of pharaonic imperial power. Thus, in reconstructing the multiple tiers of the landscape of the Kadesh reliefs during the reign of Ramses II, it becomes evident that *how* these Battle reliefs mean to a contemporary Egyptian audience transcends their two-dimensional iconography to encompass the architectural, visual, olfactory, and auditory features, as well as the somatic experiences, along the processional trajectory of a festival landscape.

The Western Bank of Thebes in the Nineteenth Dynasty

Like his Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Dynasty predecessors, Ramses built a large temple complex west of the Nile, which he named "Ramses United with Thebes"³²⁸ (Fig. 34). This temple stood apart from his tomb, KV 7, which is located in the Valley of the Kings on the other side of the Theban Massif.³²⁹ Between the Ramesseum and the soaring cliff face, smaller rocky outcrops are dotted with private (elite) burials from the New Kingdom. From south to north these include the Qurnet Mura'i (east of Deir el Medina), Sheik 'abd el-Qurna and the Asassif (east of Deir el-Bahri), and Dra Abu el-Naga (west of Seti I's temple at Gurna). These outcrops in no way diminish the abruptness of the cliffs that rise vertiginously hundreds of feet into the air west of the cultivation, where the rich green of irrigated fields clamors to a halt against the relentless desert. Early eastern light tints the cliffs a pinkish gold, while in bright midday sunlight the sandstone reflects a uniform, yellow-brown hue; in the later afternoon and evening the rock is stained a duller buff shade of brown.

When Ramses began construction on the Ramesseum complex in 1277 BCE,³³⁰ there were already dozens of royal temples on the western bank of Thebes abutting the cultivated plains (Fig. 35). Two kilometers northeast of the Ramesseum stood Seti I's temple at Gurna; its large, colonnaded structure lay adjacent to Dra Abu el-Naga, along with a smaller temple for Amenhotep I and Ahmose Nefertari to the southwest. Directly

³²⁸ The full title is "The House of Millions of Years of User-Maat-Re Setepenre (called) 'United-with-Thebes' in the estate of Amun on the West of Thebes." Gerhard Haeny, "New Kingdom 'Mortuary Temples' and 'Mansions of Millions of Years,'" in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Byron Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 88. This is commonly abbreviated to "the Ramesseum" in modern scholarship. (The Napoleon expedition called it the Memnonium.)

³²⁹ Alexander Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture*, vol. 3, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 321-322. Since the reign of Amenhotep I at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who built his tomb in the Valley of the Kings and a temple just south of Dra Abu el-Naga approximately one kilometer away, this practice of separating tombs and temples was enacted to elude grave robbers and became *de rigueur* for New Kingdom pharaohs.

³³⁰ Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 182.

west of Dra Abu el-Naga, Mentuhotep II, Hatshepsut, and Thutmose III carved temples into the sandstone cliffside behind the Asassif at Deir el-Bahri. Southwest of Deir el-Bahri stood the workman's village of Deir el-Medina, and farther south still a small Eighteenth Dynasty temple on the site of Medinet Habu; the massive palace complex that Amenhotep III erected at Malkata marked the southern boundary of construction on the western bank. Amenhotep III also built a temple just north of Medinet Habu in the flood plain itself, its entrance flanked by two seated colossal sandstone statues of pharaoh (the Colossi of Memnon). Amenhotep III's temple on the western bank of Thebes was the largest temple ever built in Egypt—measuring 700 by 550 meters—and the Colossi of Memnon rose high enough above the flood plain to be visible from the exterior of the Ramesseum.

The Ramesseum stands on a plot of land once nestled in between the temple complex of Thutmose IV to the southwest and a small temple built by Amenhotep II to the northeast. The complex of Thutmose IV comprised two outer pylons, a portico followed by a peristyle court, and an inner sanctuary oriented around a transverse hall. Amenhotep II's temple once contained a court surrounded by a portico but was dismantled in antiquity for its building materials so that little remains today. Just west of the temple of Amenhotep II, immediately outside the northern enclosure wall of the Ramesseum, stood the Chapel of the White Queen. Petrie gave it its name after he recovered a white limestone bust of Merit-Amun (a daughter and royal wife of Ramses II) at its site.³³¹ More recent excavations, beginning in 1994, discovered that the chapel was first built during the reign of Akhenaten, and that it was once composed of a ramp, a court, and building with a double-vaulted ceiling.³³²

The Ramesseum: Architecture as a “Frame of Perception”

In antiquity, the Ramesseum was directly connected to the Nile via a manmade canal and quay that abutted an enclosure wall surrounding the entire complex.³³³ It is oriented East–West at the edge of the flood plain, facing across the river to the large state temples on the eastern bank of Thebes. The complex in its entirety measured 220 meters in width (North–South) and more than 280 meters in length (East–West) comprising a main temple, a smaller secondary temple, an attached palace, mud brick workshops, kitchens, butcheries, storage vaults, houses, schoolrooms, and a treasury, all inside an enclosure wall.³³⁴ Ground plans of the main temple reveal a cant in its East–West axis,

³³¹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 182, believed that the Chapel of the White Queen would have been completed during the later reign of Ramses II, making it a near contemporary of the Ramesseum itself, although Christian Leblanc discovered that there was a structure already standing there before the Ramesseum was built.

³³² Christian Leblanc, “The Recent Excavation and Restoration Works at the Ramesseum,” *Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest*, last modified May 9, 2011, <http://www.mafto.fr/2011/05/the-recent-excavation-and-restoration-works-at-the-ramesseum/>.

³³³ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 183.

³³⁴ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 183-185. The Ramesseum complex has been extensively explored and excavated since the arrival of Napoleon's expedition at the end

producing a slightly trapezoidal shape. This may have resulted from efforts to align the temple with the foundations of an earlier chapel for Ramses's mother, Tuya,³³⁵ while simultaneously orienting the Ramesseum's pylons with those of the Luxor Temple across the Nile.³³⁶

Any evidence of a processional way or forecourt leading from the quay to the monumental entrance pylon has been completely lost under modern cultivation. The exterior of the pylon lies in ruin as well, collapsed from millennia of flooding, which undermined its foundations. Recent preservation efforts³³⁷ have reassembled most of the interior of the first pylon, providing modern audiences with the opportunity to experience its imposing architectural form and to view the Battle of Kadesh reliefs that decorate its interior surface.

The dense activity in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the interior of the first pylon is neatly bisected by the entrance portal.³³⁸ The Ramesside entrance was replaced in the Ptolemaic Period; presently the portal is filled to prevent collapse (Fig. 6). Inside the first pylon is a large open-air court measuring forty-three meters long and fifty-three meters wide. Unfortunately, little else beyond the first pylon remains of the first courtyard so it is difficult to contextualize the Battle of Kadesh reliefs among the rest of the courtyards' wall decorations.³³⁹ In antiquity, eleven Osiride pillars lined the northern wall of the courtyard, uncharacteristically representing Ramses alive and vigorous rather than

of the eighteenth century BCE. Jean-Francois Champollion visited in 1829, and the site was studied in 1844 by Carl Richard Lepsius and again by Sir Flinders Petrie and James Quibell in 1899. Howard Carter and Émile Braise excavated at the site for almost a decade at the turn of the twentieth century (between 1900 and 1908). More recently, the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt (SCA), the Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest (MAFTO), and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) have carried out ambitious restorations and conservation at the site. See "The Recent Excavation."

³³⁵ This chapel was built during the reign of Seti I. Additionally, traces of a late Middle Kingdom tomb were found underneath the northeastern corner of the Ramesseum.

³³⁶ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 186.

³³⁷ "The Recent Excavation." The *Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest* website contains a 2011 update on the MAFTO/ CNRS restoration and valuation of the Ramesseum complex (which began in 1991). Also see Christian Leblanc, "The Ramesseum: A Model for Conservation and Presentation of Heritage," *The Getty Conservation Institute*, last modified Summer 2008, http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/23_2/feature5.htm

³³⁸ The website recounts the efforts by the SCA and INSIGHT to protect the first pylon, including the installation of drainage into the surrounding agricultural fields to divert water from the rising water table, and the clearance of the entire length of the first pylon "in order to study the state of preservation of the courses still hidden under centuries of alluvium."

³³⁹ The portal itself has been filled in in modern times to support the pylon.

³³⁹ Small portions of the Battle of Kadesh Poem still exist on the eastern face of the northern wing of the second pylon.

mummiform. On the southern side of the court two rows of columns fronted the entrance to the palace annex. Unlike the rest of the court, the palace was built out of mud brick; its double entrances flanked a window of appearances where Ramses II himself could appear during ceremonies. The palace annex comprised a large, columned entrance hall, followed by a throne room and ancillary rooms, and several residences at its rear.³⁴⁰

In the southwestern corner of the first court, on the exterior of the badly damaged remains of the second pylon, survive scant traces of the Silver Tablet Treaty—the peace accord between Ramses II and Hattusili III (see Chapter 6). In front of its inscription (facing across the open expanse of the courtyard to the Battle of Kadesh reliefs) once stood the two granite statues described by Diodorus in his account of the temple.³⁴¹ The smaller of these two statues represents Ramses's mother, queen Tuya. She is wearing a vulture headdress and sheath dress common in the Ramesside Period.³⁴² The remains of the larger statue were once a part of the famous monolithic colossus of Ramses II, celebrated in Shelley's poem *Ozymandius*. The statue would have reached eighteen meters in height, making it the largest freestanding statue ever discovered in Egypt. At such a height the colossus would have towered above the temple pylons and been visible from great distances; presently, alas, only broken portions of the head and torso lie collapsed and recumbent in the courtyard. A ramp ascends past the toppled statue of Ramses into the second court underneath a frieze of baboons. To the right of the ramp (in the northwestern corner of the first courtyard) the Kadesh Poem once covered the exterior of the northern wing of the second pylon.

³⁴⁰ This palace complex was very similar to the one at Seti's temple at Gurna. In the palace throne room there would have been a false door stele that provided a means for the dead pharaoh to journey from his tomb in the Valley of the Kings to the temple for festivals and celebrations.

³⁴¹ "Besides the entrance are the statues, each of a single block of black stone from Syene, of which one, that is seated, is the largest of any in Egypt, the foot measuring over seven cubits, while the other two at the knees of this, the one on the right and the other on the left, daughter and mother respectively, are smaller than the one first mentioned. And it is not merely for its size that this work merits approbation, but it is also marvelous by reason of its artistic quality and excellent because of the nature of the stone, since in a block of so great a size there is not a single crack or blemish to be seen. The inscription upon it runs: 'King of Kings am I, Ozymandias. If anyone would know how great I am and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works.' There is also another statue of his mother standing alone, a monolith twenty cubits high, and it has three diadems on its head signifying that she was both daughter and wife and mother of a king." Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, vol. 1, Books 1-2.34, (Loeb Classical Library No. 279), trans. C.H. Oldfather, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 1.47. Again, it is unlikely that Diodorus himself visited the temple; rather, his description dates more probably to time of Hectaeus of Abdera in the third century BCE. For a discussion of Diodorus's appropriation of Hectaeus of Abdera's observations, see C.H. Oldfather, introduction to *Library of History*, by Diodorus Siculus, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), xxvi.

³⁴² Upon its pedestal the statue reached nine meters in height.

To anyone entering the first courtyard, the large space would provide for a variety of viewing angles of the reliefs. Besides the porticoes on the northern and southern walls (none of which remain today) the space was open to the air and unobstructed. In order to view the entire composition of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs (particularly the upper quadrants containing the citadel of Kadesh and the activities in the military camp), one must stand at least ten meters from the interior of the pylon. At this distance, though, only the figures of Ramses on his throne and in his chariot, along with the horses pulling his chariot, are prominently visible. Even in the afternoon light, which heightens the contrast of the sunken reliefs, one must stand no more than five meters from the reliefs to clearly distinguish the smaller figures participating in the camp activities on the northern wing and the fighting on the southern wing. The bright pigments of the composition in antiquity would have enhanced the visibility of the figures; even so, from the far side of the courtyard only the figures of Ramses would have been easy to distinguish.

No matter where one stood in the first courtyard pharaoh's heroic presence would have been imposing. The colossus would have towered above, casting prominent shadows throughout the afternoon, and the pillars of Ramses and the Window of Appearances would further signal the vigorous presence of pharaoh. Literate priests and elite visitors could recognize and perhaps read portions of the Kadesh Poem in the northwest corner of the courtyard that emphasize Ramses's strength and vigor in battle.³⁴³ While the content of the Poem would be unreadable to a non-literate Egyptian audience attending a festival or performing repair-work in the courtyard, the 360-degree decorative focus on the vigorous and triumphant pharaoh would be unavoidable.³⁴⁴

The decoration scheme from the second courtyard presents a different, more religious and ceremonial context for the Kadesh reliefs on the interior of the second pylon. The second pylon opens onto the second courtyard at the Ramesseum, which is surrounded on all four sides by a portico. On the eastern and western sides of the court the portico is supported by mummiform Osiride columns (Fig. 26). The double row of columns holding the portico aloft on the northern wall also stands today; their round shafts are covered with colorful presentation scenes. To the rear of the court, three ramps ascend to the elevated floor underneath the western portico and through entrances into the grand hypostyle hall. The central entrance was once flanked by two granite statues of Ramses but today only the head of the northern statue and the lower portion of the

³⁴³ See Chapter 2 for a summary of the content.

³⁴⁴ Even non-literate Egyptians would likely recognize the significance of the cartouches lining the battle reliefs. Referring to a stele discovered at Abydos and republished by Anthony Leahy (1989), Betsy Bryan wrote that "The mixture of hieroglyphic forms with artistic compositional principles... would therefore have been readable: not as to the specific royal names, but rather as to the iconographies of king and divinity as well as the meaning of their placements and gestures." Betsy Bryan, "The Disjunction of Text and Image in Egyptian Art," in *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. 1, ed. Peter Der Manuelian (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1996), 161.

southern statue remain in the temple.³⁴⁵ Granite was used as well to line the side entrances flanking the main axial entrance into the hypostyle hall.

The remains of the western wall of the second court preserve images of the divine retribution of pharaoh and Ramses's coronation before Amun and Thoth. Accompanying these scenes, a ceremonial procession of his sons traverses the wall. Here, the religious role of pharaoh, his divine accord, and the importance of the temple structure in the festival activity were depicted in perpetuity.³⁴⁶

The southern wing of the second pylon lies in ruins, but the interior of the northern wing has been reconstructed to present the Kadesh reliefs recessed behind the Osiride portico. Immediately above the Battle of Kadesh reliefs (separated by a double register line) were harvesting and offering scenes from the Festival of Min. Framed between the Osiride pillars are depictions of priests releasing four birds to carry royal tidings to the four corners of the world (Fig. 36). Behind them a procession of priests carry statues of royal ancestors. In another opening between the pillars a framed figure of Ramses sickles a sheaf of grain to offer to Min. Paint residue on the Osiride pillar shafts preserves images of Ramses presenting offerings to various deities. The ceiling in between the Osiride pillars is decorated with large cartouches containing Ramses's titulary (Fig. 37).

Unlike the first courtyard (where the expanse of reliefs on the first pylon was visually uninterrupted and prominently contributed to the theme of Ramses's heroic vigor) in the second courtyard the fighting scenes are recessed behind the portico, partitioned and partially obscured from view by the Osiride pillars, and share a third of their wall space with the registered reliefs depicting the Festival of Min. Far more prominent in the second courtyard are the offering scenes decorating the pillars and the coronation and procession scenes on the western wall, where the figures of Ramses's sons were partitioned but not obscured by the columns. In this courtyard the Event of the Battle of Kadesh was no longer just about the military might of Ramses the individual but also about the divine accord supplied to the ordained and deserving pharaoh.

The hypostyle hall at the Ramesseum serves as an architectural microcosm of the primeval marshes at the time of creation. The ground level rises at its entrance with the help of three ramps, and the maze of columns represents the dense reeds in the marshy plant beds that were common in the Egyptian Delta (Fig. 38). The hall was once filled with six rows of eight columns reaching up to ten meters in height.³⁴⁷ These columns lined the central axis of the hall, and were topped with open lotus capitals (Fig. 39). The

³⁴⁵ Belzoni removed the bust of the southern statue during his work at the site to where it now resides in the British Museum.

³⁴⁶ See below. At the Ramesseum, the second court served as a transitional area between the "outer and inner parts of the temple [which] reflects the intermediate status of festivals, in which the ritual performance was more open than the rites conducted in the innermost rooms." Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 171.

³⁴⁷ Today thirty-four out of the original forty-eight columns have been restored.

columns dividing the side rows were capped with closed blossoms. The darkened hall was lit only by clerestory windows in an effort to mimic the dark marshes of creation.³⁴⁸

The southern wing of the eastern wall of the hypostyle hall contains martial-themed reliefs akin to those on the first and second pylons. Here, instead of Kadesh, the campaign against the northern Levantine city of Dapur (in Tunip) from year eight in Ramses's reign occupies the southern half of the eastern wall (Fig. 40). Troops storm its fortress with ladders while Ramses approaches the citadel on his chariot. Figures of his sons join him in the fighting. The northern wing of the eastern wall of the hypostyle hall contained images of Ramses's mother, Tuya, and his great wife, Nefertari, shaking sistrum rattles in accompaniment with the processions that would have traveled through the hall. On the southern wing of the western wall of the hypostyle hall, Ramses opens his hands to receive purified water from a goddess and then receives investiture from Amun and Mut. On the northern wing of the western wall Ramses's son process along the dado, while above them, Ramses receives the blue (*khepre*) crown from Amun, Khonsu, and a lion-headed goddess. The northern wall of the hypostyle hall (standing in poor repair today) once contained seven niches for shrines.³⁴⁹ The decorative scheme of the hall echoes the second court, reinforcing (and reenacting) the ritual activity that took place at the Ramesseum during festival processions. Owing to both the quality and quantity of preservation of the hypostyle hall's wall reliefs, the integrated message of rulership expressed in the decoration manifests with potent clarity. The martial imagery from Dapur becomes intertwined with the festival activities on the walls of the hypostyle hall, culminating in Ramses's receiving of the *khepre*, or war, crown. Amun provides investiture upon Ramses because of his efficacy in both battle and in cultic performance.

Behind the main hypostyle hall stand two smaller columned halls, the outer serving as the hall of barks for the Beautiful Feast of the Valley and the inner serving as the hall of the litanies. Both of the smaller halls contained eight papyriform columns. The hall of barks was named for the images of eight divine and royal boats that decorate its walls. The eastern wall of the hall of barks contains scenes from the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, including images of priests carrying the sacred bark. On the western wall of this hall, Ramses's coronation is celebrated with an image of pharaoh seated below an *jšd* tree (sacred to Heliopolis) in front of an enthroned Atum (patron of kingship). Seshat inscribes his titulary on the leaves while Thoth stands in accompaniment (Fig. 41).³⁵⁰

The hall of barks is additionally referred to as "the astronomy room" on account of its astronomical representations on the central aisle of the ceiling (Fig. 42). The three astronomical registers depict a liturgical calendar, including the list of decans and planets, the lunar calendar itself, and constellations visible from the northern hemisphere. Prominently, the figures of Sothis and Orion are depicted in boats, signifying the beginning of the Egyptian year. Such imagery places the reign of Ramses II at the core of cosmic order. This interior space was not open to the public, even during festivals, and its decoration was too important to the preservation of *Maat* to include any of the chaotic—and potentially threatening—elements of war on its walls.

³⁴⁸ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 186.

³⁴⁹ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 348.

³⁵⁰ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 348.

Behind the hall of barks stood a hall with an equal layout and size: the hall of litanies. Today the hall of litanies is almost completely destroyed, but its remains include decorations on its eastern wall of an extensive list of offerings to the Egyptian pantheon alongside images of Ramses burning incense to the gods Ptah and Sekhmet and making libations to Re-Horakty.³⁵¹ On the surviving columns images of the gods are depicted in their own shrines to signify that they are residing in the foundation of the Ramesseum.

Immediately north of the hall of barks and the hall of litanies stood two sets of dual bark chapels. The chapels north of the hall of barks were entered through the western wall of the hypostyle hall and their entrance was once gilded in metal sheets.³⁵² Immediately south of the hall of barks and the hall of litanies stood a vestibule followed by a small hall also accessible through the western wall of the hypostyle hall.

To the west of the hall of litanies once stood an additional eight-pillared hall that was flanked by a solar chapel to the north and a chthonian complex to the south.³⁵³ The hall opened onto the axial sanctuary that was supported by four pillars in a square plan. Alas everything behind the hall of litanies, including bark shrines for the Theban triad and Ramses II, has long since disappeared down to its foundations. These foundations for the sanctuary (and its lateral chapels) were excavated from 1997 until 2002 by the Franco-Egyptian team of the Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest under the directorship of Christian Leblanc, revealing the original plan for this most sacred, and restricted, area of the temple.³⁵⁴

A second, smaller temple abutted the main temple at the Ramesseum and shared the northern wall of the hypostyle hall. It was dedicated to Tuya and built by Seti I; the temple was oriented in the same direction as the larger complex. Excavations immediately south of the main temple also revealed a large economic and administrative complex including the temple bakeries, kitchens, and living quarters for an attendant (Fig. 43).³⁵⁵ The kitchens and bakeries comprised over thirty rooms organized symmetrically; each room contained between two and five ovens.³⁵⁶ In these rooms excavators retrieved hundreds of clay pots, dishes, and bread molds. Recent excavations carried out in between the mud-brick palace and the kitchens/bakeries uncovered a school complex of seventeen small rooms adjacent to an open-air terrace. Hundreds of *ostraca* were discovered inside the complex, many containing hieratic literary texts.³⁵⁷

Underneath piles of rubble surrounding the Ramesseum complex excavators discovered the remains of an impressive processional path along the northern, western, and southern edges of the complex. This path was bordered on either side by sandstone

³⁵¹ Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 348.

³⁵² Badawy, *History of Egyptian Architecture*, 348.

³⁵³ “The Recent Excavation.”

³⁵⁴ “The Recent Excavation.”

³⁵⁵ “The Recent Excavation.”

³⁵⁶ “The Recent Excavation.”

³⁵⁷ This educational center is the first recovered on the western bank of Thebes that is associated directly with a Mansion of Millions of Years, although it is unlikely that it was unique. “The Recent Excavation.”

sphinxes.³⁵⁸ Along the western path the sphinxes were carved with human heads while along the northern path they were in the shape of recumbent jackals atop pedestals shaped like chapels. Inside the northwestern corner of the processional path stood a monumental mud-brick storage unit of twelve rooms oriented around what is widely accepted as the temple complex's treasury.³⁵⁹ This treasury contained a portico with twenty-eight columns, which led to a stairway ascending to a stone *dais* at its western end.³⁶⁰ Jean-Claude Goyon discovered markings on the surface of the *dais*, suggesting to him that it may have once stood beneath a kiosk made of perishable materials where Ramses attended ceremonies and received gifts or tribute (which were subsequently stored in the treasury).³⁶¹ Willem Hovestreydt, on the other hand, referencing parallels from Amarna,³⁶² suggests that instead the kiosk was used to roof the statue of a god.

Little remains of the treasury at the Ramesseum today, but New Kingdom comparanda—particularly the treasury from Medinet Habu—may provide important clues as to its decoration and function.³⁶³ Deiter Arnold has identified five treasury

³⁵⁸ Guy Lecuyot, “Que cache le cavalier de déblais du Ramesseum? État de la question et perspectives,” *Memnonia I*, (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l’Institut français d’Archéologie orientale du Caire, 1991), 109-118 and pls. XXVI-XXIX. The sphinxes were recovered from pits and even graves surrounding the temple. These sphinxes were four meters long, 3.6 meters high, and 1.6 meters wide.

³⁵⁹ In 1976, Jean-Claude Goyon was the first to identify the treasury at the Ramesseum. This identification was supported by the discovery of a lintel in the treasury complex inscribed with the name of the official, Pyay, who used the title *jmy-r šn*’. Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Ramesseum X, Les Annexes Nord-Ouest*, (Cairo: Centre d’étude et de documentation sur l’Ancienne Egypte, 1976), 199. It is additionally supported by Ramses’s construction of treasuries at the temples he built in Abydos and Abu Simbel as well as Diodorus’s first century BCE account of the Ramesseum.

³⁶⁰ Willem Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors and Hidden Treasure: Some Aspects of Egyptian Temple Treasuries from the New Kingdom,” in *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman Te Velde* (Egyptological Memoirs), ed. Jacobus Van Dijk (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1997), 202. Today, the stone pedestal of the throne still remains. A dissenting opinion, expressed by Erika Schott, does not dispute the existence of a treasury at the Ramesseum but rather its specific location; she believes that it was located just to the east of the treasury complex identified by Goyon. Erika Schott, “Das Goldhaus im Grab des Nefer-renpet,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 29 (1978): 127-132.

³⁶¹ Goyon, *Le Ramesseum X*, 209-212.

³⁶² These include a scene from the tomb of Meryre that depicts a statue under the kiosk stationed in the magazines behind the granary: Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of el Amarna*, vol. 1, (London: Gilbert and Rivington), pl. 25.

³⁶³ Hovestreydt, in his discussion of temple treasuries, argued that the treasuries at Medinet Habu and the Ramesseum must have been decorated similarly due to the extensive overlap in the temples’ decorative and architectural programs. Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors,” 188. A wall fragment from the remains of the Ramesseum treasury resembles the decoration from the south wall of room twelve from the treasury complex at Medinet Habu, supporting his claim. Wolfgang Helck, “Zum Grab des Osymandias,

complexes in New Kingdom temples: Thutmose III built a treasury at Karnak, Seti I and Ramses II built treasuries at Abydos, Ramses II built another one at Abu Simbel, and Ramses III included a treasury in his temple at Medinet Habu.³⁶⁴ In the Medinet Habu treasury, Ramses III presents captive foreigners and spoils from war to Amun, Mut, and Khonsu.³⁶⁵ A similar scene exists in Ramses II's treasury at Abu Simbel, where Ramses II offers spoils and leads two rows of prisoners before the seated figure of Amun.

The presentation of prisoners to the gods after a successful campaign is a common motif in New Kingdom temple decorations, with examples dating to the reigns of Tutankhamun/Horemheb, Seti I, Ramses II, Merneptah, and Ramses III.³⁶⁶ Unexpectedly, the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum do not include such a presentation scene, nor does a presentation scene exist in the Kadesh reliefs at Luxor and the (admittedly fragmentary) reliefs at Abydos. At Karnak, Ramses is accompanied by his sons in the presentation of *jnw* before the gods,³⁶⁷ while only at Abu Simbel is the scene inextricably linked to the Kadesh tableau itself.

On the treasury at Medinet Habu, the presentation of prisoners and *jnw* to the Theban triad is not accompanied by any battle scenes. If the treasury at the Ramesseum

Diodor I 47/9,” in *Opus Nobile: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Ulf Jantzen*, ed. Peter Zazoff (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag 1969), 63-68.

³⁶⁴ Dieter Arnold, *Wandrelief und Raumfunktion in ägyptischen Tempeln des Neuen Reiches*, (Berlin: Hessling, 1962), 83-88.

³⁶⁵ Epigraphic Survey, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, *Medinet Habu*, Volume 5, The Temple Proper, Part I: The Portico, the Treasury, and Chapels Adjoining the First Hypostyle Hall with Marginal Material from the Forecourts, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pls. 316-334.

³⁶⁶ Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors,” 191. An inscription describes Tutankhamun presenting *jnw* to the Theban triad on the exterior eastern wall of the Cour de la Cachette in Karnak. A scene decorating the interior eastern wall of the court in between the ninth and tenth pylons at the Karnak temple shows Horemheb leading rows of bound prisoners to the Theban triad and is described as him again presenting *jnw*. (The style of the costume and wig of pharaoh indicated that this scene was likely usurped from Tutankhamun).

³⁶⁷ *Jnw*, the perfective passive participle of the verb to bring, literally translates as “that which has been brought.” Scholars have debated the connotations of this, suggesting that it refers to either tribute or gifts (or both). Mario Liverani prefers to use the neutral term “supply.” Mario Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C.*, (Padova: Sargon, 1990). Diamantis Panagiotopolis suggests that *jnw* often has “a special connotation as gift rather than tribute,” although he acknowledges that “there are a few isolated examples, depicting emissaries from subjugated countries only, which obviously refer to delivery of tribute.” Diamantis Panagiotopolis, “Keftiu in Context: Theban Tomb-Paintings as a Historical Source,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 20 (2001): 270. At the end of the Amarna Period, scenes in private tombs where the tomb owner presents *jnw* to the pharaoh cease to exist. “It would seem, then, that in the reign of Tutankhamun the motif of the presentation of *jnw* to the king was replaced by a variation on this scheme in which the king is presenting *jnw* to the gods, and that the change occurred almost without a perceptible break.” Hovestreydt, “Secret Doors,” 196.

is decorated similarly, then a presentation scene adorning its walls would likely signal a connection with the prominent nearby Battle of Kadesh reliefs from the first and second courtyards of the main temple structure. This would ideologically bind these distinct spaces within the temple complex. It would also substantiate Hovestreydt's assertion that "already in the New Kingdom, the temple treasury was not merely a utilitarian structure but an essential part of the temple."³⁶⁸ The treasury stored the spoils of war that pharaoh accumulated on campaigns, tethering the military and economic vitality of Egypt. At the Ramesseum, the treasury is not visible from the interior of the temple courtyards, nor is it in close proximity to the Kadesh reliefs themselves. But the treasury of the temple stood near the processional path along the northern and western edges of the Ramesseum complex, and visitors to the temple might witness the delivery of the spoils of war in its environs. The *dais* in the treasury complex also suggests that ceremonies of some sort took place there, either focused upon the cult of the pharaoh, the gods, or both, and to which a select audience of priests or elite members of the army would be present.

Egyptian Audience

*We shall arrive at no real understanding either of the past or of the present if we attempt to operate with the concept of an abstract individual standing outside society.*³⁶⁹

To understand how patterns of movement within the Ramesseum complex networked particular elements of the decorative scheme (particularly during festival time), and how and when access was allocated to specific courts and halls and rooms, we must first confront *who* comprised the Egyptian audience at the Ramesseum during the reign of Ramses II before proceeding with our exploration of the corresponding festival landscape of the Kadesh reliefs at the temple. Even restricting our analysis to the reign of Ramses II we must acknowledge that the audiences were multiple and varied depending upon the festival activities taking place within the Ramesseum on a given day or week. For while access inside the first and second courtyards of the temple complex was certainly restricted, on such festival occasions the audience would have expanded beyond the small number of temple priests and pharaoh himself.

Most days any Egyptian could enter through the enclosure wall of the temple complex—which served to delineate the secular and sacred space—and gain admittance to the large open courtyard in front of the first temple pylon.³⁷⁰ The presence of persons congregating at the exterior of Egyptian temples is documented in the "countless shallow holes scraped into the outer walls of temples by devout individuals wishing to take away a small part of the sacred building—albeit only dust—for the purposes of healing and

³⁶⁸ Hovestreydt, "Secret Doors," 203.

³⁶⁹ Carr, *What is History?*, 41. This individual is "at once a product and an agent of the historical process, at once the representative and the creator of social forces which change the shape of the world and the thoughts of men." Carr, *What is History?*, 68.

³⁷⁰ Byron Shafer, "Temples, Priests, and Rituals: An Overview," in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Byron Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 5.

devotion.”³⁷¹ Access beyond the first pylon was limited to priests and the royal family, except on festival days when some “representative commoners” were invited into the open-air courts behind each of the two pylons.³⁷² We know that these representatives congregated around the interior courts of the temples in order to witness the procession of the statues of the gods because temple decoration often includes the hieroglyphic sign of the *rekhyt* bird (representing the people of Egypt)³⁷³ carved onto walls and columns of inner courtyards and hypostyle halls “to indicate where the common people were allowed to stand.”³⁷⁴ Such entrance was never permitted beyond the hypostyle hall, which demarcated the transition to enclosed and increasingly restricted temple rooms and sanctuaries.

During Ramses’s lifetime, visitors to the Ramesseum and its staff ranged widely in socio-economic status and correspondingly in degrees of literacy. The male priests who spent the most time at the Ramesseum certainly belonged to the upper class of Egyptian society.³⁷⁵ Since the Old Kingdom, priests were granted their position by pharaoh as an act of reward, as a form of bribery for wealthy benefactions, or as a way to incur political favor.³⁷⁶ Priests rarely served their position full-time and pharaohs often complained about the priests’ lack of competency in performing religious ceremonies.³⁷⁷

A *hm-ntr* priest, or servant of god, had complete access to the sanctuary in the temple where the divine image was housed. He was responsible for controlling access to the temple complex, performing ceremonies and rituals, and preparing and delivering the offerings to the gods.³⁷⁸ During the reign of Thutmose III, the position of high priest (*hm-ntr tpy*, or “first servant of god”) was no longer fulfilled by the town governor (as

³⁷¹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 99.

³⁷² Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 5.

³⁷³ The sign is in the shape of a lapwing bird with human arms in an upraised position.

³⁷⁴ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 98; Lanny Bell, “The New Kingdom ‘Divine Temple:’ the Example of Luxor,” in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Byron Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 164-170. See, for example, Ramses’s temple at Abydos, the hypostyle hall at Luxor, and the upper court of Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahri. The dedication text from the hypostyle hall at the Temple of Amun at Karnak also indicates that commoners were welcome there during festivals.

³⁷⁵ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 11. In the Old Kingdom, elite women could hold the title *hmt-ntr*, or female servant of the god, most commonly for female goddesses such as Hathor, but this position was no longer in existence in the New Kingdom.

³⁷⁶ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 9. This was the case at least for those in prominent cult centers; the vizier most likely arranged many of the less strategic appointments.

³⁷⁷ Wolfgang Helck, “Priester, Priesterorganisation, Priestertitel,” *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* 4 (1986): 1091. This is not to say though that priests were illiterate. Many upper-level priests received scribal training and thus could read religious texts and temple inscriptions.

³⁷⁸ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 10. Originally this position was held by a government official who also maintained the administration and work force of the temple complex.

often occurred during the Old and Middle Kingdoms) but instead was appointed to a trusted official, prince, or wealthy benefice.³⁷⁹ By the Ramesside Period, prominent priesthoods were accruing power and gaining hereditary successions.³⁸⁰

While *hmw-ntr* oversaw the ritual activities of the temple on a daily basis and during festivals, the *hrj-hb(t) hrj-tp*, or chief lector priest, was responsible for the recitation of prayers, incantations, and divinations.³⁸¹ *Hnk* priests, or suppliers, attended specifically to the mortuary statues of deceased pharaohs and their families. Additionally, there were *jt-ntr* priests (whose title meant literally “father of the god”) who both served as the craftsmen of the temples and processed in front of the statues of the gods on festival days when the statues left their sanctuaries. Their job included the spilling of purifying water on the ground in front of the traveling statues.³⁸²

Another type of priest in New Kingdom temples was a *w'b* priest. *W'b* priests rotated in and out of service; during their month-long commitment their job was to hold the statue of the god during festival processions.³⁸³ In the months that *w'b* priests were not on duty in the temple they still maintained administrative functions for the temple complex. For the *w'b* priests who carried the statues in the processions, and for the *jtwntr* who processed in front of the divine statues on festival days, festivals served as an important context in which they visited the temple interior.

Beyond the priests, temples were staffed by *hntjw-s* (often translated as “tenant landholders”).³⁸⁴ Temple estates also employed beekeepers, fishermen, herdsmen, fowlers, brewers, butchers, bakers, weavers, carpenters, builders, scribes, archival clerks, metal-smiths, artisans, singers, dancers, musicians, and farmers.³⁸⁵ To be sure, the majority of individuals holding such positions were not granted daily access to the interior of the temple complexes. Yet each day they based their livelihood at the temple complex. At the Ramesseum they worked in kitchens or storehouses surrounding the impressive main temple structure, and perhaps even traveled down the processional path on their way to work. When they were allowed to enter the temple courtyards and hypostyle hall during festivals, or perhaps while performing maintenance in anticipation of a festival, the monumental Battle of Kadesh reliefs would be difficult to ignore. And

³⁷⁹ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 13

³⁸⁰ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 92. An illuminating example of the tension resulting from the increased power and autonomy of priesthoods during the Ramesside Period can be seen in the rise to power of Bekenchons, the High Priest of Amun during the reign of Ramses II. Bekenchons’ father was a Second Priest of Amun and two of his sons served as mayors of Thebes. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Ramarai, in the position of High Priest of Amun in Thebes. Yet after Ramarai held the priesthood, the position passed to a different family, likely the cause of political dispute.

³⁸¹ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 15. Lector priests were also present at oracles.

³⁸² Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 15.

³⁸³ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 15. *W'b* priests could also serve as the horologists who determined the dates and times for the festivals and daily rituals in the temples.

³⁸⁴ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 12.

³⁸⁵ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 92.

even after the festival was over memories of the reliefs would persist in the context of the influx of wealth and resources allocated to the temple.

As audience constituencies varied at the Ramesseum throughout the reign of Ramses II, so too did their understanding of the monumental Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the temple walls. Literate priests and members of the social elite had opportunities to gain familiarity with the Kadesh Poem and Bulletin inscriptions from the first courtyard, while illiterate “commoners” still may have recognized the large cartouches with Ramses’s titulary decorating the bottom casings of the first pylon. *Hm-ntr* priests would visit the inner sanctums of the Ramesseum on a regular basis while other religious personnel only entered the temple on festival occasions, along with the general audiences. Ultimately all of these factors would impact the viewing experience of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum; however, I suggest that the choreographed procession of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley provided a unifying (although by no means identical) experience with which to access how the Battle of Kadesh Event meant to the socially stratified festival audience.

Festival Context

This section of the chapter explores how festivals, serving as a catalyst for conscribed movement and sensorial experiences, activate specific temporal and spatial networks in which the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were landscaped during the reign of Ramses II. While acknowledging the myriad potential networks and associations that could arise for the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum (such as the other Battle of Kadesh reliefs at Abydos, Abu Simbel, Karnak, and Luxor; the large body of narrative battle reliefs from other temples built by Ramses II in Nubia at Amara West, Beit el-Wali, and Derr; and battle reliefs created by his predecessors—especially his father—across the Egyptian landscape), here festivals serve as a concrete and important activity in ancient Egyptian society that physically connected multiple spaces within a temple complex through processions and that ideologically contextualized the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in the broader discourse of the relationship between pharaoh and the gods.

In this dissertation, festivals are defined as people moving through landscapes, engaging in activities signaled as different and special in order to celebrate political, mythological, astronomical, or agricultural phenomena.³⁸⁶ As a type of ritual performance, “Festivals are dramatic, in that [they have] a structure and [are] compelling. [Their] structure is that of a separation from the everyday, a state of suspension, and a return that is also a separation from whatever was disclosed in the state of suspension from the everyday.”³⁸⁷ Some of these festivals were celebrated throughout

³⁸⁶ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 25. Such a definition draws from Stephan Feuchtwang’s understanding of ritual activities (such as festivals) that act as “a boundary marker, marking itself out as different from other action and from linguistic and logic meaning. Ritual action creates a space and a time that is distinct from other kinds of standardized or conventional action.” Stephan Feuchtwang, “Ritual and Memory,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Redstone and Bill Schwartz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 285.

³⁸⁷ Feuchtwang, “Ritual and Memory,” 281.

Egypt while others were specific to certain regions or certain astronomical sightings. Most were observed on an annual basis but some were celebrated monthly or at irregular intervals.³⁸⁸ These festivals could occur within a single temple or, in the case of the Opet Festival or the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, include processions that visited multiple temples.³⁸⁹ Songs were sung along the processional route, beer and bread were brewed for the gods, commoners were allowed to pose questions to the deities in the barks, and people stayed awake celebrating well into the night.³⁹⁰

Processions were an important component of most festivals, with the statue of a god—enshrined in its bark—carried out of its sanctuary by priests. From the sanctuary, the bark containing the statue of the god traveled through the inner shrine rooms and the hypostyle hall to the outer courts (it could also travel out of the temple entirely beyond the forecourt and temple enclosure to exterior roads and quays).³⁹¹ This route was often lined with stations for the bark to rest during the procession where mythological stories were re-enacted and offerings were received.³⁹²

Processions comprised linear movements of a group of people “through chartered space to a known destination to . . . bear an esteemed object, perform a rite . . . or visit a shrine.”³⁹³ Processions structured festivals by forcing the attention of the audience towards the central axis of the temple halls and courtyards and by guiding the audience through these spaces. In so doing, processions served as a crucial mechanism for binding

³⁸⁸ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 25. The majority of festivals accorded with the solar calendar but some corresponded with the different phases of the moon.

³⁸⁹ For a detailed discussion of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, see below. The Opet Festival was celebrated during the second month of *Akhet* (inundation), when the statue of the god Amun of Karnak, along with his divine consort Mut and their son Khonsu, would travel from the temple precincts at Karnak to Luxor Temple (two kilometers to the south). For a comprehensive and diachronic discussion of the Opet Festival, see the University of Chicago Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey, *The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall*, (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1994).

³⁹⁰ This understanding of New Kingdom festivals is derived from a hymn to Amun surviving on Papyrus Leiden I 350, Strophe 60. See the translation by Hellmut Brunner, “Egyptian Texts,” in *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. Walter Beyerlin (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 23.

³⁹¹ Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 27.

³⁹² Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals,” 28.

³⁹³ “The chartered nature of a procession is often emphasized by the use of ‘stations’ where the procession stops and rituals are performed.” Alessandra Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 107. Robyn Gillam, whose research focuses on performance in ancient Egypt, similarly defines processions as “an event that moves along a prescribed path, but at appointed places the procession halts and performances are played.” Robyn Gillam, *Performance and Drama in Ancient Egypt*, (London: Duckworth, 2005), 78.

together “place, performance, and public.”³⁹⁴ As a result, processions not only conscribe visual parameters in which to landscape the temple reliefs, but also serve as an apparatus to explore the co-constitutive properties of landscape and audience—particularly the temple architecture, decorative elements, and festival attendees.

This is the result of several factors. First of all, festival processions impacted the architectural layout of the temple and the features and structures included in the complex. Courtyards for example, were prominently incorporated into temple architecture to serve as “interspaces” (or buffer-zones), where audiences were allowed to enter the sacred boundary of the temple without accessing the restricted sanctuaries where the cult statues were housed.³⁹⁵ These courtyards provided a key vantage for dramatic festival entrances and exits at the adjacent pylons.³⁹⁶ Their size and dimensions determined the type and number of audience permitted, as well as the audience’s sight lines and level of mobility within the space.³⁹⁷

Additionally, architecture reciprocally informed the processions, reinforcing tropes of performance such as the demarcation of the inside versus the outside and the public versus the secret.³⁹⁸ “Thus the experience of the visitor coming from outside was one of inward progression, underlined by the [decreasing] absolute height and dramatized step by step by an attentive use of buffer zones, thresholds, platforms, ramps, staircases, lighting, and monumental artwork.”³⁹⁹ The architecture not only informed activity and movement but also mimicked cosmic order and creation through the raising of the floor level and the restricting of ambient light as one progressed inwards to emulate the primeval mound of creation (see Chapter 1).

Temple reliefs further reinforced the maintenance of order with the depiction of festival activities that took place in the respective courtyards and halls.⁴⁰⁰ The presence of these images on the temple walls “incorporates and integrates physical and mental structures, giving our existential experience a strengthened coherence and significance.”⁴⁰¹ Carved onto the architectural setting of the festival processions, the reliefs acted as permanent, “mimetic agents that recreated the [festival] event in the mind

³⁹⁴ Alessandra Gilibert, “Death, Amusement and the City: Civic Spectacles and the Theatre Palace of Kapara, King of Guzana,” in *Kaskal: Rivista Di Storia, Ambienti e Culture del Vicino Oriente Antico*, vol. 10, ed. Stefano de Martino et al. (Firenze: Logisma Editore, 2013), 36.

³⁹⁵ Gilibert, “Death, Amusement,” 47.

³⁹⁶ Gilibert, “Death, Amusement,” 49.

³⁹⁷ Carolyn Routledge, “Parallelism in Popular and Official Religion in Ancient Egypt,” in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, ed. Gary Beckman and T.J. Lewis (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), 230-32.

³⁹⁸ Gillam, *Performance and Drama*, 150.

³⁹⁹ Gilibert, “Death, Amusement,” 45.

⁴⁰⁰ See, for example, the Beautiful Feast of the Valley procession scenes that decorate the hall of barks at the Ramesseum.

⁴⁰¹ Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of The Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2012), 13.

of the beholder.”⁴⁰² This would be particularly effective for priests and elite personnel who visited the inner sanctum of the Ramesseum regularly. The festival context and the processional route would constantly be evoked by the images of processions in the hypostyle hall and the hall of barks, recreating the processional ambience and network.⁴⁰³

“Due to their immediacy and pathos, large-scale ceremonies and ritual spectacles are especially powerful means for the negotiation of power and ideology; on the other hand, their nature is ephemeral and their effects prone to fading.”⁴⁰⁴ The architecture of the Ramesseum and the reliefs carved into its stone walls counter this; they are “by definition enduring, built to outlive.”⁴⁰⁵ Festival processions and the temple reliefs thus serve as “two facets of a complementary communication strategy. Ritual spectacles are powerful means by which to negotiate and reinforce power, but their pathos and effect tend to fade rapidly once the event is over: monumental art, surrounded by an aura of permanence, counteracts the ephemeral nature of ritual performances, anchoring them in space and time. At the same time, ritual performances can recharge [the temple reliefs] with meaning.”⁴⁰⁶ The following analysis of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley examines precisely how its multi-sensorial context and processional network “recharged” the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the interior pylons of the Ramesseum with meaning for the festival attendees.

The Beautiful Feast of the Valley

Hb nfr n jnt, or “The Beautiful Feast of the Valley,” was a lunar festival that celebrated the goddess Hathor who appears at the western mountains to greet the deceased.⁴⁰⁷ As a post-harvest festival, it celebrated the “bringing of life from death,” and attempted to prevent decay through the offering of nourishment (food and drink) to

⁴⁰² Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art*, 4.

⁴⁰³ Perhaps the images of Nefertari and Tuya shaking a sistrum would recall the music and noise accompanying a recent procession through the hypostyle hall.

⁴⁰⁴ Jan Assmann, *Stein und Zeit: Mensch und Gesellschaft im alten Ägypten*, (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1991), 13-14. See also Elizabeth DeMarrais, Luis Jaime Castillo, and Timothy Earle, “Ideology, Materialization, and Power Strategies,” *Current Anthropology* 37 (1996): 15-31.

⁴⁰⁵ Assmann, *Stein und Zeit*, 14.

⁴⁰⁶ Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art*, 133.

⁴⁰⁷ Janusz Karkowski, “Notes on the Beautiful Feast of the Valley as represented in Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahari,” in *50 Years of Polish Excavations in Egypt and the Near East: Acts of the Symposium at the Warsaw University*, ed. Janusz Karkowski and Stefan Jakobielski (Warsaw: Zakład Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej, 1992), 155-166; Georges Foucart, “La belle fête de la vallée,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 24 (1924): 1-209; Manfred Bietak, “Das schöne Fest vom Wüstentale: Kult zur Vereinigung mit den Toten in der thebanischer Nekropole,” in *Rituale Identitätsstiftende Handlungskomplexe*, ed. Georg Danek and Irtraud Hellerschmidt (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 23-36; Siegfried Schott, *Das schöne Fest vom Wüstentale: Festbräuche einer Totenstadt*, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1953).

the deceased.⁴⁰⁸ This act of emergence may have been celebrated throughout Egypt from as early as the Old Kingdom,⁴⁰⁹ but the Theban festival itself—where Amun traveled from his temple at Karnak to the western bank where Hathor dwelt—likely began during the reign of Nebhetepre Mentuhotep II at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.⁴¹⁰ It was celebrated during the second month of *Šemu* (harvest), when the statues of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu would travel from their respective temple precincts at Karnak to the western bank along with large retinues of priests, performers, and festival attendants.⁴¹¹ On the western bank the statues visited Hathor sanctuaries such as the chapel to Hathor at Deir el-Bahri, shrines of other deities, and temples erected by various pharaohs.⁴¹²

The Beautiful Feast of the Valley became the most important festival celebrated on the western bank in Thebes and the temples there were built specifically to accommodate the traveling barks of the Theban triad.⁴¹³ By the reign of Ramses II, the festival had come to include connotations of rejuvenation and renewal for pharaohs

⁴⁰⁸ Betsy M. Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge in Egyptian Tomb Painting,” *Studies in the History of Art*, 74 (2009): 25. “With the Beautiful Feast’s focus on the cemeteries on the western bank of Thebes, it came to be associated not only with Hathor of the necropolis, but also Osiris, the god of the earth and regenerative vegetation.” Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 25.

⁴⁰⁹ Bell, “New Kingdom ‘Divine Temple,’” 136-37.

⁴¹⁰ Schott, *Das schöne Fest*, 94; Dieter Arnold, “The Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri,” in *Hatshepsut, from Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine Roehrig (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 137. Mentuhotep II built a temple into the cliff face at Deir el-Bahri, immediately across the river from Karnak, which “was built as a staging ground for ceremonial events and the focal point for the festival.” Elaine Sullivan, “Processional Routes and Festivals,” *Digital Karnak*, last modified 2008, <http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/assets/media/resources/ProcessionalRoutesAndFestivals/guide.pdf>. But it is not until the reigns of Thutmose III/Amenhotep II when the name of the festival first appears in Theban Tomb (TT) 129 (the name of the tomb-owner is unknown) and in TT 56 (Userhat). Schott, *Das schöne Fest*, 123. The festival ended in the late Twentieth Dynasty when an earthquake destroyed parts of the temples that Hatshepsut and Mentuhotep II erected at Deir el Bahri. “Processional Routes and Festivals.”

⁴¹¹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 95. According to Schott, it began on the first day of the new moon, and was thus tied to the lunar (not solar) calendar. Siegfried Schott, *Altägyptische Festdaten*, (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1950), 107.

⁴¹² From an inscription in the Ramesseum’s hypostyle hall we know that the barks of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu spent the night at Ramses II’s temple. Also, graffiti at Deir el-Bahri from Ramses II’s reign demonstrate that the barks stopped there on their way to the Ramesseum. Marek Marciniak, “Encore sur la Belle Fête de la Vallée,” *Etudes et Travaux* 5 (1971): 53-64.

⁴¹³ Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt: A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 78.

whose cults were celebrated in the temples that the bark visited.⁴¹⁴ At the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, “the renewal of the royal function” and the close relationship between Amun and pharaoh is emphasized. This relationship became increasingly important in the New Kingdom when older festivals and cultic performances were re-organized into “an elaborate state ‘theatre’... The purpose of this theatre was at once religious and political: long-established divine festivals were redesigned to showcase the ruler as the link between the gods and humanity in a fashion much more emphatically public and carefully choreographed than before.”⁴¹⁵ At the Beautiful Feast of the Valley this choreography was enacted by pharaoh himself along with priests and “choirs of singers and musicians as well as servitors who moved the offerings.”⁴¹⁶ Dancers were also present in the processional train and at the entrances to birth-house shrines where Hathor was worshipped.⁴¹⁷

From Hatshepsut’s Chapel Rouge at Karnak and her temple at Deir el-Bahri,⁴¹⁸ reliefs depicting the festival provide our most detailed representation of The Beautiful Feast of the Valley during the New Kingdom (Fig. 44).⁴¹⁹ At Deir el-Bahri, Hatshepsut and her nephew Thutmose III appear with the gods in Karnak before they depart from the temple on the eastern bank of Thebes. The barks are depicted processing to the river, followed by images of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III accompanying them across the Nile. Their retinue—filling four boats—comprised priests, soldiers, court officiants, divine standards, and royal statues.⁴²⁰

Two offering scenes follow the river crossing—one at the landing on the western bank of Thebes and one inside a bark shrine located along the long causeway leading to Deir el-Bahri.⁴²¹ When the barks are finally depicted inside the temple there, Hatshepsut and Thutmose III are again present to greet them, accompanied by the fanfare of torch-bearers, dancers, and singers. The reliefs show Hatshepsut alone making offerings to

⁴¹⁴ In the Hathor shrine at Deir el-Bahri (*Djeser-djeseru*), the goddess is often depicted in her cow form “protecting and nourishing” pharaoh. Monika Dolinska, “Temples at Deir el-Bahari in the New Kingdom,” in *6. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung, Function und Gebrauch altägyptischer Tempelräume. Leiden 4.-7. September 2002*, ed. Ben Haring and Andrea Klug (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 77.

⁴¹⁵ Gillam, *Performance and Drama*, 67-68.

⁴¹⁶ Gillam, *Performance and Drama*, 154.

⁴¹⁷ Gillam, *Performance and Drama*, 155.

⁴¹⁸ At Deir el-Bahri the reliefs occupy the eastern and northern walls of the upper terrace of Hatshepsut’s temple.

⁴¹⁹ Karkowski, “Notes,” 161. Schott, *Das schöne Fest*, 118, 109. Inscriptions accompanying the reliefs reveal that the barks of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu spent the night at their bark shrines at Hatshepsut’s temple before visiting Thutmose I’s temple (*Khenemet-ankh*) on their way back to Karnak. Texts from several Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tombs also record the participation of Thutmose I’s temple in the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, such as TT 84 (Iamunedjeh) and TT 49 (Neferhotep).

⁴²⁰ “Processional Routes and Festivals.”

⁴²¹ Karkowski, “Notes,” 155-160. At the bark shrine, Hatshepsut burns incense while dancers entertain.

Amun in the court and in the bark chamber.⁴²² Janusz Karkowski believes that during Hatshepsut's reign, the bark of Hathor was carried out of its chapel to meet the bark of Amun and join the procession and partake in the festival rituals, thus "confirming the divine descent and authority of the pharaoh."⁴²³

Private tombs such as Theban Tomb (TT) 38, belonging to Djoserkaresoneb, are also decorated with libation and burnt offering scenes from the Beautiful Feast of the Valley.⁴²⁴ After this first day of festival activity, the Theban populace, who had thus far accompanied the bark to the western bank and along its processional way and even into the open courts and terraces of the temple at Deir el-Bahri, would likely disperse to visit the cults of their own ancestors along the Theban necropolis. The living would make offerings to the deceased and remain at the tombs for several days, feasting and drinking.⁴²⁵

During the reign of Hatshepsut, reliefs from Deir el-Bahri and the Chapel Rouge indicate that the divine barks returned to the eastern bank of Thebes along the very route from which it arrived, making stops at the same way stations at Deir el-Bahri on the journey.⁴²⁶ Hatshepsut and Thutmose III once again accompany the barks across the Nile and all the way inside the Karnak Temple precincts. The Beautiful Feast of the Valley thus served to connect the landscape of the western bank of Thebes with the landscape on the eastern bank of Thebes (where most Thebans lived) through its processional activity, as well as physically connecting the living and the dead through the ritual activities in private tombs. It was a time of sensorial extravagance, feasting, celebration, and focus upon the rejuvenation of pharaoh and his legitimation through his connection with Amun.

Karnak

During Ramses II's reign, he likely accompanied the divine barks from the commencement of their journey on the eastern bank of Thebes to his western bank temple as his Eighteenth Dynasty predecessors Hatshepsut and Thutmose III portrayed themselves doing.⁴²⁷ This visit to Thebes from his Delta capital would in and of itself

⁴²² Scenes from Hatshepsut's Chapel Rouge at Karnak depict the female pharaoh and her nephew Thutmose III making offerings to Amun's bark and priests processing with the bark on their backs during the same festival.

⁴²³ Karkowski, "Notes," 164.

⁴²⁴ Strudwick and Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt*, 80. The popular banquet scenes in New Kingdom private Theban tombs probably also represent the Beautiful Feast of the Valley.

⁴²⁵ "Processional Routes and Festivals."

⁴²⁶ Dolinska, "Temples at Deir el-Bahari," 77. In the sole reign of Thutmose III and in the reign of his successor, Amenhotep II, private tombs no longer mention Hatshepsut's temple in the context of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley; Thutmose III's *Djeser-akhet* temple at Deir el-Bahri replaces it in the festival procession. By the reign of Thutmose IV, though, references to the *Djeser-djeseru* (Hatshepsut's temple) return.

⁴²⁷ Georges Legrain estimated that the width of the bark in Ramses's reign was almost seven feet, including the bodies of the priests carrying the five poles. Georges Legrain, "Le logement et transport des barques sacrées et des statues des dieux dans quelques

mark the festival time as a special and important occurrence. At the Temple of Amun at Karnak, the Beautiful Feast of the Valley began in the sanctuaries at the rear of the complex, where the barks would acquire the statues of the gods.⁴²⁸ The entourage of priests would then process outwards along the East–West processional axis through the *Akhmenu* and sixth pylon (built by Thutmose III). It would travel past the fifth pylon, the *Wadjet* hall, and the fourth pylon (all built by Thutmose I); then through the third pylon (built by Amenhotep III) to enter the hypostyle hall.⁴²⁹ Here dancers and musicians and the festival audience would accompany the procession out of the Temple of Amun’s western gate or the Quays of Mut or Khonsu to the Nile.⁴³⁰ The Temple of Amun at Karnak is also where the festival audience would first encounter images of pharaoh attacking Kadesh and textual accounts of campaigns against the city. These references to the Levantine polity include Ramses’s Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the exterior of the southern wall of the hypostyle hall, as well as Seti I’s reliefs on the exterior of the northern wall of the hypostyle hall and Thutmose III’s annals on the interior of his peristyle court behind the sixth pylon.

Thutmose III (1479-1425 BCE) recorded sixteen of his Levantine campaigns in a year-by-year format on the walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. The first of these annals (from the twenty-third year of his reign) is the longest and most detailed and covers his famous victory at Megiddo against “the wretched foe of Kadesh” and other northern Levantine princes.⁴³¹ Here Thutmose describes his march northwards past the fortress of Sile up into the Levant to fight a coalition of northern Levantine princes who

temples égyptiens,” *Le Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 13 (1917): 1-76.

⁴²⁸ See Elaine A. Sullivan, “Visualising the Size and Movement of the Portable Festival Barks at Karnak Temple,” *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 19 (2012): 1-37 for a detailed reconstruction of processional itineraries through the Temple of Amun at Karnak at festival times.

⁴²⁹ Seti I erected the hypostyle hall at Karnak but died before its decoration was completed.

⁴³⁰ “Processional Routes and Festivals.” Additionally, Ann Roth has suggested that from the reign of Hatshepsut onwards, the statues may have departed from the Temple of Amun at Karnak through the eighth pylon, erected by Hatshepsut and axially aligned with her temple at Deir el-Bahri. Ann Macy Roth, “Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri,” in *Hatshepsut, from Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. Catharine Roehrig (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 147.

⁴³¹ Faulkner, “The Battle of Megiddo,” 2-15. See also the Gebel Barkal Stele and the Armant Stele for additional accounts of the Battle of Megiddo. A large percentage of a festival audience would indeed be illiterate, but they would still be privy to the content of Thutmose III’s annals by way of performance and popular discourse (see below).

Christopher Eyre suggests that “It is impossible to know how much inscriptions were read. The monuments were, however, intended to serve as historical records.”

Christopher J. Eyre, “Is Egyptian Historical Literature ‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 421.

were waiting for him in the environs of Megiddo. In the nearby city of Yehem he consults with his army to choose which route he will take northwards, deciding unilaterally to advance through the narrow Aruna road.⁴³² With Amun's divine support, the inscription describes how the army reached Megiddo unbeknownst to the enemy and set up camp by the Qina Brook. Thutmose III led his army into combat and overwhelmed the prince of Kadesh and his allies. The annal reports that the defeat would have been resounding except that the Egyptian troops were so consumed with plundering the spoils of war that the prince of Kadesh and several of his allies are able to escape into the walls of Megiddo.⁴³³ In response, Thutmose erected a siege around the city, which caused "the wretched foe and his wretched army" to slink on their bellies before pharaoh in capitulation. Along with the prisoners, the inscription details an extensive list of spoils that his campaign brings back to Egypt.

Scholars have long recognized the dialogic impact of Thutmose III's account of the Battle of Megiddo upon Ramses's accounts of the Battle of Kadesh in both content and style.⁴³⁴ Both campaigns depart from the border post of Sile and take pause on their way northwards in the Levantine cities of Yehem and Shabtuna, respectively. In both accounts, pharaoh makes decisions and acts unilaterally, but always with the explicit support of Amun. In both accounts he also triumphs in spite of his army, which either abandons him entirely or becomes distracted looting the valuables left behind by the fleeing enemy. Even the topography of the two narratives is similar: pharaoh approaches walled cities and sets up camp near the Qina or Orontes River.⁴³⁵

On the exterior of the northern wall of the hypostyle hall Seti inscribed reliefs from his northern campaigns (against the Shasu Beduoin, the Libyans, the Yenoam, the Hittites, and Kadesh). These vignettes include pharaoh attacking fortified cities on his chariot, foreign rulers presenting tribute to pharaoh, and pharaoh presenting the spoils of the campaigns to the Theban triad. The preserved battle scenes are arranged in three

⁴³² "Year 23, 1st month of Summer, day 16, at the town of Yehem. [His Majesty] ordered a consultation with his victorious army, saying thus: 'Yon [wretched] foe of Kadesh has come and entered into Megiddo, and he is [there] at this moment, for he has gathered to himself the chieftains of [all] the countries [which were] subject to Egypt... [As] I [live], as Re loves me, as my father Amun favours, me, as my nostrils are refreshed with life and strength, I will proceed on this Aruna road.'" Faulkner, "The Battle of Megiddo," 3.

⁴³³ "Would that His Majesty's soldiers had not devoted themselves to looting the goods of the foe! They would have [captured] Megiddo then and there while the wretched foe of Kadesh and the wretched foe of this city were being dragged up scrambling to get them into their city." Faulkner, "The Battle of Megiddo," 4.

⁴³⁴ "History itself became an ideological model, to be reenacted. The wording of texts of the early Ramesside period shows a direct literary debt to those of dynasty XVIII, especially those of Tuthmosis III." Christopher J. Eyre, "'Historical' or 'Literary'?" 423.

⁴³⁵ "His Majesty arrived at the south of Megiddo on the bank of the brook Kina... Camp was pitched there for His Majesty... The officers were provided for, rations were released to the retainers, and the sentries of the army were posted, having been told: 'be steadfast and vigilant.'" Raymond O. Faulkner, "The Battle of Megiddo," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 28 (1942): 4.

registers (Fig. 45). Of the upper register on the eastern side of the northern entrance, unfortunately nothing remains. In the bottom two registers Seti combines battle scenes against the Shasu Bedouins and Yenoam with the binding of captives, submission of foreign rulers, and exacting of tribute (Fig. 46 and 47). To the west of the entryway, battle scenes from the northern Levant and Libya remain. In the top register, Seti charges forth in his chariot against the fortified citadel of Kadesh (Fig. 48). His galloping horses crush enemy soldiers in his path as he advances, creating a tangle of bodies in between Seti's chariot and the city. Unlike in Ramses's Kadesh reliefs, here there is no Orontes River, only a handful of trees carved below the city for landscape.

Paralleling Seti's battle reliefs on the northern exterior of the hypostyle hall, Ramses decorated the southern exterior of the hypostyle hall with his own demonstrations of military triumph. Initially he requested a large swath of the wall to be covered with his Battle of Kadesh reliefs, but before this work was completed, scenes from Ramses's later wars in the Levant were carved over the Kadesh tableau.⁴³⁶ Divided into three registers (like his father's compositions), the lowest register west of the entryway contains battle scenes progressing towards a collection of prisoners, a marching scene where the Egyptian troops return to Egypt with the spoils of war, followed by a presentation of the spoils to the god Amun (Fig. 49). In the middle register, another presentation scene accompanies three different poorly preserved battle vignettes. In the top register, there are only disjointed battle scenes. Likewise east of the entryway the bottom register contains a vignette of Ramses in his chariot transporting prisoners back to Egypt while the top register is composed of only battle scenes.

An Egyptian audience who participated in the Beautiful Feast of the Valley year after year during the reign of Ramses II would thus be introduced at the Temple of Amun at Karnak to the wretched foe of Kadesh in New Kingdom imperial rhetoric stretching back two centuries. And in fact, Thutmose III's first annal detailing the Battle of Megiddo is not the only time that he mentions Kadesh. In a terse annal from his thirtieth year, Thutmose III records "arriving at the city of Kadesh; plundering it; hacking down its trees; cutting its grain."⁴³⁷ Such a description—along with Seti's Kadesh relief (where the walled citadel is accompanied by several conifer trees)—would contribute to a richer appreciation of the Kadesh landscape so that Ramses's reliefs would evoke a more comprehensive and detailed topography complete with surrounding forests and agricultural fields.

These "setting" elements were important for another reason. In the Kadesh descriptions and vignettes, they provided a "physical mapping achieved by specific

⁴³⁶ In antiquity, plaster was used to cover the original Kadesh reliefs, and bright paint would have helped mask any of the particularly deep sunk incisions. The palimpsest effect, which is so jarring to the modern visitor at Karnak, would not have been nearly so extreme in antiquity.

⁴³⁷ Anthony J. Spalinger, "A Critical Analysis of the 'Annals' of Thutmose III (Stücke V-VI)," *Journal of the Archaeological Research Center in Egypt* 14 (1977): 42; Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Abteilung 4, Band 3, Heft 9-12: Historisch-biographische Urkunden, (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1907), 689: 7-10.

indicators associated with a known, if foreign, geography.”⁴³⁸ The combination of the Orontes River and the cedar forest located Kadesh irrevocably in the northern Levant, an area where Egypt had been campaigning since at least the fifteenth century BCE.⁴³⁹ The Kadesh landscape accumulated an ideological status precisely because of its specificity; as a real place on the map it could demarcate a pattern of reconquerings that required a physical location to substantiate. By the reign of Ramses II the walled city along the Orontes River was familiar to an Egyptian audience as a particular (albeit ideologized) landscape where pharaoh demonstrated his prowess in battle in a textually or visually rich narrative form. In situating his own Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the same temple as Thutmose III’s annals and Seti I’s reliefs, Ramses contributed to the dialogic status of the toponym of Kadesh.⁴⁴⁰ The confluence and accumulation of imperial rhetoric against the northern Levantine city-state established the ruler of Kadesh as the symbolic head of a persistent coalition of recalcitrants and the leader of revolts that drew pharaoh northwards and tested (thereby confirming) his military efficacy. In this sense Kadesh served as a necessary evil, one to continuously defeat (but apparently never destroy) so as to maintain a pivotal and potent proving ground for endless instantiations of royal propaganda.

This specificity of the Kadesh landscape both contrasted and dialogued with the iconic triumphal reliefs of Thutmose III, Seti I, and Ramses II from the same temple complex.⁴⁴¹ Each set of triumphal reliefs contains the popular motif of pharaoh about to smite a handful of kneeling foreigners with an upheld mace while the god Amun stands before him holding out the scimitar of victory (Fig. 50a and 50b).⁴⁴² This smiting scene, and its corresponding popularity in Egyptian art throughout pharaonic history, strongly

⁴³⁸ Irene J. Winter, “Tree(s) on the Mountain: Landscape and Territory on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sîn of Agade,” in *Landscapes: Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East, Part I: Invited Lectures*, ed. Lucio Milano et al. (Padova: Sargon, 1999), 72.

⁴³⁹ Amenhotep II also recorded military activity in the region on a stele at Karnak: “His Majesty crossed the current of the Orontes... His Majesty raised his arm to see the end of the world.” Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden der 18 Dynastie*, Abteilung 4, Heft 17: Biographische Inschriften von Zeitgenossen Thutmosis 3 und Amenophis 2, (Berlin: J.C. Hinrichs, 1955), 1311: 1, 3.

⁴⁴⁰ This northern Levantine landscape will also be ideologized by the Neo-Assyrians in the first millennium BCE as it becomes a part of their own imperial expansion (see Chapter 7).

⁴⁴¹ Amenhotep II also carved triumphal reliefs onto the southern face of the eighth pylon at the Temple of Amun at Karnak. See Harold Hayden Nelson, *Key Plans showing Locations of Theban Temple Decorations*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), pl. 8. Ramses II also inscribed triumphal reliefs on the exterior western wall of his court at Luxor in Nelson, *Key Plans*, pl. 21.

⁴⁴² Kevin A. Wilson, *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq I into Palestine*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebek, 2005) 2.

evokes the timelessness and enduring aspect of Egyptian material culture.⁴⁴³ Whereas the narrative battle reliefs were only popular throughout the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Dynasties, smiting scenes were produced from the earliest stages of state formation well into the Graeco-Roman era. They contained neither landscapes nor other localizing features, as opposed to the narrative reliefs whose setting elements localized them in both time and place.

In the triumphal reliefs, an inscription accompanies the smiting imagery, including a speech by Amun where the god “extolls the military might of the pharaoh in highly stereotypical language.”⁴⁴⁴ The last element of the triumphal reliefs is a toponym list of the defeated enemies expressed by carving the names of foreign cities in crenelated circles attached to the head and shoulders of bound prisoners.⁴⁴⁵ The prisoners are organized into rows behind the figure of Amun who carries “lead ropes” attached to their collars.⁴⁴⁶

Thutmose III commissioned three sets of triumphal reliefs at the Temple of Amun at Karnak: one pair on the western side of the sixth pylon (along the main east–west axis of the temple), and one pair on either side of the seventh pylon.⁴⁴⁷ The sixth pylon, standing twelve and a half meters high and almost sixteen meters long, marked the entrance to the sanctuary of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. The monumental seventh pylon once reached a height of twenty-six meters and a length of sixty-three meters, and it marked the beginning of the Temple of Amun’s southern processional route. The seventh pylon prominently loomed over festival attendees, priests, and elite and royal visitors when the audience members entered and exited through its gateway. On the western wing of the southern face of the seventh pylon Thutmose III wears the red crown of Lower Egypt and holds a mace in his upraised arm while he clutches the pole to which a group of Asiatic prisoners are tied (Fig. 51). Amun, accompanied by the goddess *Maat*, hands pharaoh the *hpš* scimitar. Both deities hold lead ropes connected to the anthropomorphized toponym list.⁴⁴⁸ The inscriptions accompanying his smiting scenes

⁴⁴³ The smiting scene was first attested during the Gerzean Period (fourth millennia BCE) and appears throughout Egypt from miniature to monumental form in tomb paintings, steles, rock carvings, ivory decorations, and scarabs. Wilson, *The Campaign*, 21-22. Emma Swan Hall, *The Pharaoh Smites his Enemies: A Comparative Study*, (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986) provides a comprehensive diachronic study of the development of the smiting scene through Egyptian history.

⁴⁴⁴ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 18. Specificities are downplayed in the inscription. For example, a triumphal inscription describes Seti I as the one “who smites the chiefs of all foreign countries.” Wilson, *The Campaign*, 19.

⁴⁴⁵ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 2. According to Wilson, a triumphal relief “must include all three elements: smiting scene, inscription, and topographical list. These elements are not confined to triumphal reliefs, of course.” Wilson, *The Campaign*, 16.

⁴⁴⁶ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 3.

⁴⁴⁷ Bertha Porter and Rosalind Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*, vol. 2, Theban Temples, 2nd rev. ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 86, 167, 170-171.

⁴⁴⁸ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 22.

are mostly destroyed, but on the southern side of the seventh pylon, the inscription describes Thutmose III “smiting the chiefs of *Retenu* [Syria], all inaccessible foreign lands...”⁴⁴⁹

Seti’s triumphal reliefs flank the entrance on the exterior northern wall of the hypostyle hall (Fig. 50a).⁴⁵⁰ They are twice the height of the individual battle vignettes, encompassing the bottom two registers. On either side of the entryway Seti wears the red crown of Lower Egypt and holds a mace. The kneeling prisoners in the eastern vignette are a mix of Libyans and Asiatics while on the western side they are primarily Nubian. Amun appears on both sides of the entrance, presenting Seti with the *hps* scimitar; on the western side Amun is accompanied by the goddess of Thebes.⁴⁵¹

On the eastern side of the entryway Amun’s speech addresses each of the four compass points, asserting that the god has brought captives to Seti I from the East, West, North, and South.⁴⁵² Amun has caused all foreign lands to submit to Seti, having set fear in their hearts.⁴⁵³ The god’s speech is not original; the wording matches passages from the Hymn to Victory of Thutmose III and Amenhotep III’s stele at Kom el-Hetan, demonstrating a dialogic prevalence in Egyptian texts.⁴⁵⁴ Several of these place-names are also copies from earlier lists, while others may reflect Seti’s actual campaigns. The scene and inscriptions on the western side of the entryway are nearly identical, with minor variations in wording.⁴⁵⁵

Ramses’s triumphal reliefs mirror his father’s, decorating either side of the exterior of the gateway on the southern wall of the hypostyle hall.⁴⁵⁶ The inscriptions are in poor repair and on the western side the smiting scene overcut the earlier Battle of Kadesh palimpsest (Fig. 52).⁴⁵⁷ On the eastern side, one can still make out the figure of Ramses wearing the red crown and wielding the mace in his upraised arm (Fig. 53). Amun faces pharaoh alongside the goddess of Thebes. The inscriptions include epithets of pharaoh “crushing the Nine Bows and Asiatics”⁴⁵⁸ and Amun’s speech declares that Ramses’s might “encompassed every land.”⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁴⁹ Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 773: 2-4.

⁴⁵⁰ Bertha Porter and Rosalind Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings: The Theban Necropolis, Part 1, Private Tombs*, (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1994), 55-57.

⁴⁵¹ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 24.

⁴⁵² Wilson, *The Campaign*, 20.

⁴⁵³ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 20.

⁴⁵⁴ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 20; James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 3, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 54-55.

⁴⁵⁵ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 20.

⁴⁵⁶ Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, Part 1, 58.

⁴⁵⁷ Wilson describes Ramses on the western side wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt, holding the pole attached to a group of indeterminate ethnicity. Wilson, *The Campaign*, 24.

⁴⁵⁸ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 20.

⁴⁵⁹ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 20.

Like all temples in ancient Egypt, the Temple of Amun at Karnak served as a microcosm of the cosmos, in which “The gods lived and order (*Maat*) prevailed, while outside was the ever present threat of chaos (*isft*).”⁴⁶⁰ The triumphal reliefs were prominently placed on the exterior walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak where they were intended to hold at bay the forces of chaos.⁴⁶¹ The temple walls, covered with images of pharaoh conquering his enemies, “magically held in check those enemies.”⁴⁶² The location of the triumphal reliefs on either side of entryways is significant: when the smiting scenes appear flanking a doorway, the god is always rendered closest to the door as if he were exiting from it, while pharaoh faces towards the door as if entering towards the god. “At the meeting point, the god gives victory to the [pharaoh], who holds back the forces of chaos.”⁴⁶³

This decorative program has implications for the triumphal reliefs of Seti I and Ramses II, which are accompanied at the northern and southern entryways to the hypostyle hall by narrative battle reliefs.⁴⁶⁴ As the battle reliefs approach the doorway, the triumphal reliefs serve as a culminating scene where pharaoh no longer commemorates specific battles but instead defeats “all potential threats to Egypt and [*Maat*].”⁴⁶⁵ The triumphal reliefs “serve as a culmination of the battle reliefs, not in the sense that they summarize the battles, but that they move the battles from the realm of history to the sphere of the idealized. In that sphere, the pharaoh is depicted as having defeated not only those particular enemies, but the entire world.”⁴⁶⁶ In other words, the battle reliefs of Ramses and Seti serve to distinguish the location of Kadesh through particularizing landscape features, but alongside the triumphal reliefs, this northern Levantine polity becomes embedded in the rhetoric of universal dominance. The battle scenes, so near the triumphal reliefs professing pharaoh’s military might over the four cardinal directions, are drawn into a larger message that links specific military victories with an ideological rhetoric of universal imperial power. Here too victory is linked to the patronage of Amun, who—as in the case of Seti I’s triumphal inscription (see above)—forces the foreign lands into submission on behalf of pharaoh.⁴⁶⁷

Thus, at the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Ramses’s Battle of Kadesh reliefs are both *dialogized* by earlier pictorial and textual references to the city-state of Kadesh, and

⁴⁶⁰ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 38.

⁴⁶¹ “The battle inscriptions and triumphal reliefs on the outside walls of the temple not only symbolized this divide, but actually participated in holding back disorder and protecting the temple.” Wilson, *The Campaign*, 38.

⁴⁶² Wilson, *The Campaign*, 38.

⁴⁶³ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 38.

⁴⁶⁴ Much ink has already been spilled on the historicity of these battle scenes and the order in which they should be read; my intent here is not to weigh in on each vignette’s veracity. See, for example, Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*; Spalinger, “Egyptian-Hittite Relations”; Brand, *Monuments of Seti I*.

⁴⁶⁵ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 38-39.

⁴⁶⁶ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 39.

⁴⁶⁷ The triumphal reliefs “celebrate the victory of the king over all foreign nations through the power of Amun.” Wilson, *The Campaign*, 37.

dialogue with the adjacent triumphal reliefs. The Battle Event thus acquires meaning through the ideological content of the reliefs, particularly the location of Kadesh as a northern Levantine polity where Egyptian pharaohs had been campaigning throughout the New Kingdom. But the Battle of Kadesh also accumulates meaning through the architectural placement of the narrative scenes in close proximity to the iconic triumphal reliefs that share the same visual realm (and often the same wall space) as the Battle of Kadesh scenes. Because of this, the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh is refracted along broader temporal and spatial horizons that account for the accumulation of ideological value for the toponym over centuries and the incorporation of the geographical landscape of Kadesh into a broader statement of universal dominance.

Gurna

Throughout the Middle Kingdom and early Eighteenth Dynasty, the statue of Amun traveled from the Temple of Amun at Karnak during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley to the cult complex of the founder of the Middle Kingdom, Nebhetepre Mentuhotep II, at Deir el-Bahri. In the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty, however, Hatshepsut built a three-terraced temple at Deir el-Bahri and “hijacked” the processional route. By the Ramesside Period, the trajectory of the divine barks had become even more elaborate, incorporating visits to an ever-increasing list of royal and divine temples. During the reign of Ramses II, the first stop for the divine barks on the western bank of Thebes was at the temple at Gurna built by Seti I, Ramses II’s father.

Seti I’s temple at Gurna stands less than two miles north of the Ramesseum, immediately southeast of the rocky outcropping known as Dra Abu el-Naga (Fig. 35). Like the Ramesseum, the layout of Seti’s temple also contains two courtyards with a portico at the rear of the second courtyard leading into a hypostyle hall (Fig. 54). This hall was supported by six columns with doors to three chapels on either side of the hall. The rear of the hall contained entrances to five chambers: three for the barks of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu, and two chambers of unknown use. Behind the chambers a sanctuary led to a false door divided by a central pillar. An altar for the sun god stood in an open court adjacent to the northern wall of the hypostyle hall. Immediately south of the hypostyle hall are three chambers whose entrance is decorated with scenes venerating Seti’s father, Ramses I. In the central chamber reliefs portray Seti I offering incense to Amun’s bark during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley. In the same chamber Seti I is represented anointing a statue of his father.⁴⁶⁸

None of these images decorating the sanctuaries and inner chambers of the temple would have been accessible to festival attendees whose admittance during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley was regulated to the outer courtyards and hypostyle hall. But the *hm-ntr* priests performing the festival rituals, the *w'b* priests carrying the barks of the gods, and the *jt-ntr* priests processing before them, would perhaps notice the decorative emphasis on festival activities, false doors, solar cults, and the perpetuation of the cult of pharaoh’s father—all features which are present at the western bank temple complexes of Deir el-Bahri and the Ramesseum (see below). The priests participating in the festival would experience the same decorative scheme year after year so that the iconographic

⁴⁶⁸ Haeny, “‘Mansions of Millions of Years,’” 112.

pattern would be reiterated (and thus reinforced) over time. Networking with the Kadesh reliefs through the festival procession, this religious iconography emphasized a broader understanding of pharaonic identity—one where martial prowess, lineage, and cultic activities all served as important facets of an effective ruler.

Deir el-Bahri

The Beautiful Feast of the Valley attendees who accompanied the divine barks from the eastern bank of Thebes to the mortuary landscape of the western bank would have joined the priests, temple attendants, dancers, musicians, performers, soldiers, and officiants as the barks processed from Seti's temple at Gurna towards Hatshepsut's temple complex at Deir el-Bahri.⁴⁶⁹ Visitors and processions entered the temple complex by means of an avenue of sphinxes opening onto a large courtyard filled with flowers and ponds. In antiquity, the Nile would have reached directly to this processional pathway via a canal where Deir el-Bahri would have been (and indeed still is) a sight to behold.⁴⁷⁰ Unlike other freestanding temples built at the edge of cultivation on the western bank, Hatshepsut's temple was carved directly into the high cliffs that partitioned the tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings.⁴⁷¹ Three large terraces ascended the cliff face where the façade of the temple loomed thirty meters above the processional pathway (Fig. 55).

At the rear of the first terrace, up one flight of stairs from the entrance courtyard, the reliefs from Hatshepsut's trade expedition to Punt covered the temple walls south of the staircase (Fig. 56). They contained images of the sailing voyage to Punt, the reception by the chief and his wife, and the exotic flora and fauna acquired on the expedition—monkeys, panthers, giraffes, ebony, ivory, and trees of myrrh. The temple walls north of the staircase contained scenes depicting Hatshepsut's divine birth. In these reliefs the god Amun assumes the form of Hatshepsut's father, Thutmose I, and impregnates Hatshepsut's mother.⁴⁷² On the second terrace an open-air court contained an altar to the sun god Re. False doors for both Hatshepsut and Thutmose I were carved onto the terrace's western wall, again linking the worship of Hatshepsut to her father. The bark of Amun ascended past the bottom terraces along the central staircase and ramp to the main sanctuary located on the western edge of the uppermost terrace. Here a cavern was dug into the cliffside as a resting place for the bark.

⁴⁶⁹ “Supposedly the temple of Mentuhotep was also visited. Unfortunately... it is difficult to establish the exact itinerary of the festival procession. Probably a direct link existed between the Hathor shrine of Hatshepsut and the middle terrace of her temple.” Dolinska, “Temples at Deir el-Bahari,” 78.

⁴⁷⁰ Arnold, “The Temple of Hatshepsut,” 137.

⁴⁷¹ “We know that Ramesses II contributed to the restoration of ... Deir el-Bahari so we can presume that at least at the beginning of his reign the temple functioned.” Dolinska, “Temples at Deir el-Bahari,” 84.

⁴⁷² Hatshepsut was thus legitimating her reign through a close relationship with the god Amun, but in particular with Amun as her father, situating herself as the rightful heir to Thutmose I.

Hatshepsut's temple is in many ways unique, instigated foremost by her desire to locate it immediately adjacent to Mentuhotep's complex at the base of the cliffs at Deir el-Bahri.⁴⁷³ This prominent location insured that from her reign onwards, the barks of the gods stopped at her temple during the first day of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley. Other western bank temples, such as Seti's temple at Gurna and the Ramesseum (as well as Ramses III's later temple at Medinet Habu), all perpetuated and incorporated key architectural elements from Deir el-Bahri—including open courtyard spaces, an axial sanctuary for the bark of Amun, an altar to the sun god, a false door where offerings were presented to the pharaoh, even a designated space for worshiping royal predecessors.⁴⁷⁴

Such patterns would be emphasized when the temples were visited in close succession. Even though the Ramesseum stands over a mile away from Deir el-Bahri (with no direct line of sight between the temples), during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley attendees and priests would visit Gurna, Deir el-Bahri, and the Ramesseum over the span of several days in the context of an extended celebration. They would process down each temple's sphinx-lined processional way and pass the solar altars as they entered the outer courtyards of the temple complexes.

Both Deir el-Bahri and Gurna would establish expectations for the decorative scheme of the Ramesseum and provide key context (and comparanda) for how the audience encountered the Kadesh reliefs in Ramses's temple's first and second courtyards. These expectations were “shaped by memories... Even when people in the past were encountering a specific feature, thing, event, or being for the ‘first’ time, their contemporary perception[s] of that encounter and its future recollections would have been shaped by previous encounters and experiences of similar nature.”⁴⁷⁵ Upon reaching the first courtyard of the Ramesseum, perhaps the audience would compare Hatshepsut's images of the foreign land of Punt with Ramses's landscape of Kadesh and contrast the diplomatic and imperial nature of reliefs. Or in the broader context of temple decorations on the western bank that emphasized offering scenes, ritual activity, and ancestor worship, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs might distinguish Ramses II's temple complex and signal a unique emphasis in Ramses's propaganda.⁴⁷⁶

Private Theban Tombs

After festival attendees visited the royal temples of Seti I and Hatshepsut, they would proceed to the private tombs of their relatives carved into the cliffs along the western bank of Thebes. During the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, Amun and Hathor

⁴⁷³ The innovation of the terraces likely resulted as a means to cover the piles of stone rubble that Mentuhotep's complex left at the site.

⁴⁷⁴ Haeny, “New Kingdom ‘Mortuary Temples,’” 95.

⁴⁷⁵ Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 118. “The materiality of the world is sensorially perceived through all previous mnemonic experiences, not only of that specific materiality but also of all other materialities and all other experiential encounters.” Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses*, 118.

⁴⁷⁶ Ramses III later decorated his temple at Medinet Habu with scenes from his Battle against the Sea Peoples.

helped “revitalize” not only the current and deceased pharaohs, but also the deceased nobles in the elite private cemeteries of the Theban necropolis.⁴⁷⁷ “Elite tomb chapels of this period show family members communing with their deceased relatives by staying up all night, drinking and singing songs that celebrate the ability of Hathor to resurrect them, a theme that can be traced back to Old Kingdom funeral songs.”⁴⁷⁸ Elite Thebans ensured that family members would continue to visit their tombs by erecting courts and rooms to house banquets during the prominent Theban festivals such as The Beautiful Feast of the Valley.⁴⁷⁹ Families would gather in their relatives’ tombs to eat, partake of communal drinking rituals, and make offerings to the deceased before continuing onwards with the procession.⁴⁸⁰ The statue barks of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu may have even processed through elite cemeteries on their way from Deir el-Bahri to the Ramesseum.⁴⁸¹

Even though the tomb chapel of the royal butler Suemniwet (TT 92) remains unfinished, it contains several representations of banqueting and “brazier-offering” scenes, which were common in elite tombs of the Eighteenth Dynasty and were “intended for viewing by those family members and friends who arrived for the Beautiful Feast [of the Valley].”⁴⁸² In the front room of Suemniwet’s tomb chapel, reliefs portray him alongside his wife offering brazier lights to the gods, followed by attendants carrying additional offerings (Fig. 57).⁴⁸³ Underneath this scene Suemniwet depicted several members of his family joining him in a small banquet. In the reliefs musicians dance and sing along with the family members.⁴⁸⁴ Such banquet scenes not only provide sustenance for the deceased in perpetuity, but serve to connect multiple generations of a single family—both the living and the dead—by representing them simultaneously at a shared feast.⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, the reliefs evoke the presence of family members during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, and in so doing both represent and solicit the offering prayers of the living who have traveled from the eastern bank of Thebes in the context of the festival.

For these family members, the communal drinking rituals and all-night festivities would leave them inebriated (and exhausted) as the festival procession made its way southwards along the western Bank of Thebes. By the time the attendees reached the Ramesseum after multiple days of celebrating, it is reasonable to assume that their movements and/or concentration were impaired.

⁴⁷⁷ Gillam, *Performance and Drama*, 79.

⁴⁷⁸ Gillam, *Performance and Drama*, 79; also see Schott, *Das schöne Fest*, 32-45, 64-93.

⁴⁷⁹ Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 22.

⁴⁸⁰ Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 22.

⁴⁸¹ Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 22.

⁴⁸² Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 22.

⁴⁸³ Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 22.

⁴⁸⁴ Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 22-23.

⁴⁸⁵ Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge,” 23.

Ramesseum

When the festival barks reached the Ramesseum, Ramses would participate in offerings, as well as perhaps take his place in the first courtyard at the Window of Appearances. During his long reign, Ramses's visible presence at the Ramesseum during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley would produce a culminating effect as the barks reached the reigning pharaoh's temple complex. The personhood of Ramses further heightened the festival experience and demarcated it as a special time in which to distinguish feelings, sensations, reactions, and memories. Moreover, as the yearly festival occurred again and again during the six decades of his reign, the sights, sounds, smells, and choreography would evoke memories of earlier celebrations and would accumulate expectations and sensorial experiences in which the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were embedded.

Each year as the barks entered the first courtyard through the monumental entrance pylon at the Ramesseum Egyptians would anticipate sensory overload. The noises of the procession would even precede the appearance of the barks themselves in the form of singers and musicians; often the wives of *w' b* priests played the sistrum or sang during temple festivals.⁴⁸⁶ A popular offering at festivals was flowers, a powerful symbol of the regeneration of life in ancient Egypt.⁴⁸⁷ They were arranged in wreaths, collected in vases in the shape of the *ankh* (life) sign, strung together, or arranged in bouquets.⁴⁸⁸ Pallasmaa, discussing the relationship between sensorial experiences and architecture, asserts that "The most persistent memory of any space is often its smell."⁴⁸⁹ This is because olfaction "cannot be easily controlled, as odor invades bodies at will, and you cannot easily keep it out without blocking breathing too."⁴⁹⁰ The smell of the flowers would thus serve to demarcate the festival time by evoking memories from earlier festival processions, reinforcing the specialness of the celebrations and the unique landscape network of the festival.

The Beautiful Feast of the Valley was also anticipated by local Egyptians as a time when there was an abundance of food. The kitchens at the Ramesseum would be in full use and the smells of baking and meat roasting would contribute to the olfactory atmosphere, reminding the attendees that the produce and grain offerings to the gods were to be subsequently distributed to the local communities.⁴⁹¹ During the three-week Festival of Opet, for example, The Ramesseum served 385 measures of beer, 11,400

⁴⁸⁶ Like their husbands, the wives of the *w' b* priests also served month-long appointments. Shafer, "Temples, Priests, and Rituals," 15.

⁴⁸⁷ "Flowers could be offered as symbols of life and renewal at any time, but a compilation of the floral offerings dedicated in a little under three years at the Great Temple of Amun at Karnak shows the incredible number involved—well over a million offerings each year—and the evident emphasis on this type of offering." Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 97.

⁴⁸⁸ "The Egyptian word for 'bouquet' had the same consonantal structure as that for life." Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 97.

⁴⁸⁹ Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 58.

⁴⁹⁰ Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses*, 117.

⁴⁹¹ Wilkinson, *Complete Temples*, 99.

loaves of bread and cakes, and a variety of meat, fruits, and wine.⁴⁹² During the ten-day Feast of Sokar, the Ramesseum served 1,372 measures of beer and 7,400 bread-loaves and cakes.⁴⁹³ All of this would have been prepared in the royal kitchens and bakeries on the southern side of the temple.

Also impactful upon the sensory experiences of the festival attendees was the choreography of the procession. Yannis Hamilakis describes how “The immense affective impact of [a festival] derives from its multi sensorial qualities in its ability to structure a participatory, transcorporeal landscape... it is not what it stands for; it is not the symbolic significance of [the festival] which has made its affective qualities so powerful but what it does to the bodies of the participants—the kinds of kinesthetic experience it elicits and demands of them.”⁴⁹⁴ The procession of the barks during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley moved slowly, carried by the priests. After entering through monumental first pylon the barks progressed steadily along the central axis of the temple past the two courtyards and hypostyle hall into the smaller hall of barks and hall of litanies before reaching the darkened bark shrines at the rear of the temple. The linear choreography of the procession restricted the attention and gaze of the large number of festival attendees in the un-roofed and undivided forecourts.⁴⁹⁵ The audience would orient their bodies towards the central axis of the first and second courtyards; in the first courtyard they would face the window of appearances on the palace façade of the southern wall or the Osiride pillars of Ramses from the portico on the northern wall. As music and dancers drew the audience’s attention towards the processing barks, the architectural enclosure of the temple structure would recede into peripheral vision.⁴⁹⁶ Like the walls themselves, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs decorating them would also recede into the periphery, remaining a constitutive element of the festival but rarely the focus of direct attention amidst the sights and sounds and smells of the divine procession.

Yet when the audience’s vision and attention wandered from the central procession, or perhaps while they waited for the barks to arrive in a particular court, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were still visible (even though the crowding in the courtyards would obstruct many sightlines to the pylon surfaces). In fact, it was during the anticipatory moments before the procession reached the temple entrance when one would stare expectantly towards the entryway in the center of the first pylon. The Battle of Kadesh reliefs surrounded the portal, and crowds would only block the lower courses of the first pylon (decorated with Ramses’s titulary). The colorful, larger-than-life figure of Ramses enthroned in the military camp on the northern wing of the first pylon, or charging into battle on his chariot on the southern wing, would have been visible from

⁴⁹² Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1985), 235.

⁴⁹³ Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant*, 235.

⁴⁹⁴ Hamilakis, *Archaeology of the Senses*, 193.

⁴⁹⁵ Routledge, “Parallelism,” 30-32.

⁴⁹⁶ “The quality of an architectural reality seems to depend fundamentally on peripheral vision, which enfolds the subject in the space.” Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 14.

anywhere in the courtyard.⁴⁹⁷ In every direction throughout the courtyard, the Battle of Kadesh dialogued with vigorous statues of pharaoh in the prime of his life, perhaps even accompanied by Ramses himself at the window of appearances. Even glancing skywards the colossal statue of Ramses II in the southwestern corner of the courtyard would have dominated the view and cast prominent shade in midday and afternoon sun. Such imagery (communicating in tandem with the Battle of Kadesh reliefs) would reinforce the rejuvenation theme of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley and emphasize the positive outcome of the festival year after year.

As the barks processed inwards through the temple, they may have drawn members of the audience with them from the first courtyard to the second. In so doing, the festival attendees would have witnessed the decorative scheme of both courtyards in short succession. In the second courtyard, the reliefs on the remaining western wall likewise demonstrated Ramses's efficacy as pharaoh and his divine retribution from Amun, but here the decorative scheme also emphasized the ceremonial roles of pharaoh (including the images of his coronation and the procession of his sons). For those waiting in the open space, the pillars and portico would cover the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in shadow—a stark contrast to the sun-lit procession along the open central axis of the second courtyard. The Kadesh reliefs in the second courtyard were only visible to those standing along the second pylon, particularly the attendees trying to escape the heat of the sun under the portico and in between the Osiride pillars in front of the reliefs.

One must bear in mind that the visual encounter with the Battle of Kadesh reliefs was not experienced separately from the olfactory, kinesthetic, and auditory sensations also activated by the festival.⁴⁹⁸ Particularly while one's attention wandered from the procession and glimpsed the reliefs peripherally, he simultaneously heard the festival music and breathed in the smell of the flowers, baking, and crowdedness. In fact, when humans experience heightened emotional states (such as during a festival performance), their sense stimuli shift from the refined sense of seeing towards the more archaic senses of hearing, smell, and touch.⁴⁹⁹ But at all times “The eyes want to collaborate with the other senses. All the senses, including vision, can be regarded as extensions of the sense of touch— as specializations of the skin. They define the interface between the skin and

⁴⁹⁷ Gaballa felt that the narrative battle scenes minimized the visual emphasis of Ramses in his chariot (Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 119) but I disagree. The images of Ramses on his chariot on the first pylon dwarf the ensuing chaos and immediately stabilizes the movement of the action.

⁴⁹⁸ “The perception of sight as our most important sense is well grounded in physiological, perceptual and psychological facts. The problems arise from the isolation of the eye outside its natural interaction with other sense modalities, and from elimination and suppression of other senses, which increasingly reduce and restrict the experience of the word into the sphere of vision. This separation and reduction fragments the innate complexity, comprehensiveness and plasticity of the perceptual system.” Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 43.

⁴⁹⁹ Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 51.

the environment—between the opaque interiority of the body and the exteriority of the world.”⁵⁰⁰

Thus anyone visiting the Ramesseum during a festival would experience the Kadesh reliefs in the context of sensorial abundance. He would smell the food baking in the nearby ovens and perhaps receive portions himself. He would smell the flowers and incense dedicated along the processional way, and the fruits from the persea tree that comprised the garlands worn by participants at the Beautiful Feast of the Valley.⁵⁰¹ He would hear the music and singing and perhaps an oral performance of the Kadesh inscriptions (see below). He would be jostled by the crowds of people drawn together for the procession while trying to catch a glimpse of the dancers and performers. And he would follow the powerful *hm-ntr* priests, the *jt-ntr* priests who accompanied the statues of the gods, and the *w'b* priests who carried the statues in the processions through the courtyards of the Ramesseum. All of this became implicated in the viewing of the reliefs; for a festival audience, sight would have been subsumed under these other sensorial experiences impacting the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs.

Performance

This bundling of sensory perception—particularly vision and hearing—would also occur during an oral performance of the Kadesh inscriptions, perhaps during a festival. Here I suggest that not only literate but also non-literate festival attendees could be privy to content of the Battle of Kadesh Poem and Bulletin as a result of an oral performance of the temple inscriptions. It is easy to forget, as is often the case with dead languages, that “Egyptian literature was oral, in the limited sense that it was for performance, not silent or private reading; it was a social rather than a private activity.”⁵⁰² This performance context, with its auditory focus, significantly impacted how the inscriptions were composed.⁵⁰³ Ultimately the style, purpose, and content could not exist as separate literary features: “The formal devices used to create the purely audial pleasure and effect on its audience, the occasion, and the purpose of the performance all make up a context that is part of the content.”⁵⁰⁴ The survival of inscriptions on temple walls in formal and often hard-to-read placements can easily lead modern audiences to believe that they “transcend ordinary uses of literature, but [the inscriptions] are incomprehensible as text without consideration of their genesis in performance styles, and the occasion of their actual performance.”⁵⁰⁵

Christopher Eyre believes that the placement of narrative royal inscriptions on temple walls and their propagandistic message are strong indications that the texts were

⁵⁰⁰ Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 45.

⁵⁰¹ Phillipe Derchain, “Symbols and Metaphors in Literature and Representations of Private Life,” *Royal Anthropological Institute News* 15 (1976): 8.

⁵⁰² Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 424.

⁵⁰³ Admittedly, “The individual historical inscription may not always be performed, but it takes its style from rhetorical performance. Its fictional context is that of a public recitation, with markedly literary structure.” Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 432-433.

⁵⁰⁴ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 424.

⁵⁰⁵ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 424.

read or performed aloud to Egyptian audiences.⁵⁰⁶ Both the content and the style of inscriptions were “defined by the medium in which the text was published, and by audience reception.”⁵⁰⁷ Additionally, Eyre believes that word and sound choice within the royal inscriptions—including the use of homophony, alliteration, and word-plays—indicate the extent to which authors composed texts to be heard.⁵⁰⁸ Even without ‘metrical’ lines, compositions can demonstrate that an “author exploits to the full devices [the aforementioned] defining features of virtuosity appreciated by the Egyptian audience.”⁵⁰⁹

Assman⁵¹⁰ and Redford⁵¹¹ further associate oral performance with inscriptions such as Merneptah’s Israel Stele⁵¹² that contain the verb *sdd* (to recite), and Spalinger also suggests that this oral tradition applies to Hatshepsut’s report of the expedition to Punt from her temple at Deir el-Bahri.⁵¹³ Several records remain from the Eighteenth Dynasty recounting pharaohs and princes who participated in hunting and shooting demonstrations “that were staged as public performances.”⁵¹⁴ In defense of such oral performances, Eyre argues that the archaic word selection and style of historical inscriptions did “not necessarily imply that their contemporary audience was limited to an educated elite, any more than the fact that they were inscribed in places and formats awkward to read.”⁵¹⁵ To the contrary, whenever the pharaoh “sat in audience, or processed in appearance, or showed himself at the window of appearances, this provided an obvious occasion for royal eulogy and declaration of manifesto, as it provided an occasion for the praise and reward of subordinates.”⁵¹⁶

As a result, festivals (such as the Beautiful Feast of the Valley) at the

⁵⁰⁶ “Egyptian literature was oral, in the limited sense that it was for performance, not silent or private reading; it was a social rather than a private activity.” Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 424.

⁵⁰⁷ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 428.

⁵⁰⁸ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 420.

⁵⁰⁹ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 420.

⁵¹⁰ Jan Assmann, “Verkünden und Verklären,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 313-319.

⁵¹¹ Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History*, (Mississauga, Canada: Benben Publications, 1986), 257.

⁵¹² Spalinger also believes that “In the case of the Israel Stela we can surmise that the occasion was an official court performance after the war was over.” Anthony J. Spalinger, “New Kingdom Eulogies of Power,” in *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück: Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Nicole Kloth, Karl Martin, and Eva Pardey (Hamburg: Buske, 2003b), 423. He disagrees with several of Redford’s examples, though, such as the Medinet Habu account of year eleven. Spalinger, “New Kingdom Eulogies,” 423.

⁵¹³ Spalinger, “New Kingdom Eulogies,” 422.

⁵¹⁴ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 425.

⁵¹⁵ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 433.

⁵¹⁶ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 426.

Ramesseum—with its window of appearances in the first courtyard and processional route through the central axis of the temple—provided an optimal opportunity for the Battle of Kadesh inscriptions to be performed aloud. If such an oral performance of the Kadesh Poem or Bulletin did occur during a festival at the Ramesseum, it would deeply impact how the audience understood the Battle Event. The large audience in attendance, comprising diverse segments of the Egyptian populace, would hear of how the god Amun (perhaps at a festival in his honor) came to the aid of Ramses and provided pharaoh with the necessary strength and courage to overcome the Hittite army: “I call to you, my father Amun...I know that Amun helps me more than a million troops... I came here by the command of your mouth, O Amun, I have not transgressed your command.”⁵¹⁷ Likewise, “I found Amun came when I called to him, He gave me his hand and I rejoiced. He called... ‘I am with you, I your father, my hand is with you, I prevail over a hundred thousand men, I am lord of victory, lover of valor.”⁵¹⁸ To hear such words uttered aloud would powerfully enforce the legitimacy of Ramses’s rulership. It would also substantiate the efficacy of his rule. Viewing the Battle reliefs in such a context would impart the images with a divine motivation; Ramses is campaigning up at Kadesh because Amun requested it of him. Likewise, Amun’s continued support of Ramses throughout the fighting ensures the audience that Ramses is the proper recipient of the pharaonicity and effectively performs his cultic duties in the ritual scenes from the second courtyard.

A performance of the Kadesh inscriptions would further enable a festival audience to “see” the images of the reliefs in a conscribed way. “Sight is the sense of the solitary observer, whereas hearing creates a sense of connection and solidarity.”⁵¹⁹ Standing on either side of the festival procession in the first or second courtyard, taking in the reliefs through peripheral vision, the monumental compositions of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs would have presented a myriad of viewing experiences. But “hearing structures and articulates the experience and... sound often provides the temporal continuum in which visual impressions are embedded.”⁵²⁰ Even if an oral performance of the inscriptions did not occur, those literate audience members familiar with the Poem and the Bulletin would have their viewing experience impacted by their understanding of the narrative structure of the literary accounts. The Poem and Bulletin created a narrative sequence for the Battle Event, ordering the images on the temple walls in both time and space by providing temporal and directional cues.

Here I understand narrative as a specific communicative strategy where the ordering of the content—its form—is deeply impactful upon the meaning of the content.⁵²¹ The form is so impactful that “a set of events must be organized in such as

⁵¹⁷ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 66: Poem, 110-120.

⁵¹⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 66: Poem, 122-128.

⁵¹⁹ Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 54.

⁵²⁰ Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 53.

⁵²¹ See White, *Content of the Form*; Hayden White, *The Fiction of Narrative, Essays on History, Literature, and Theory 1957-2007*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Irene Winter, “Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs,” *Studies in Visual Communication* 7 (1981): 2-38.

way as to inspire a certain type of question in the reader, such questions as: ‘What happened next?’⁵²² The use of narrative in the Battle of Kadesh inscriptions makes the Event “speak itself as a story.”⁵²³ Specifically, it provides a framework wherein the ending and beginning of story are contingently linked, and the different activities and elements of the narrative acquire significance through their placement in the plot structure (emplotment).⁵²⁴

Thus, when the Bulletin describes how before any of the fighting began, “His majesty proceeded northward and reached the northwest of Kadesh [where] the camp of his majesty’s army was pitched and his majesty took his seat on a throne of fine gold to the north of Kadesh on the west side of the Orontes,”⁵²⁵ the audience would understand that the scenes on the northern wing of the first pylon (where the soldiers were setting up camp) occurred before the fighting on the southern wing. But they would also understand the blissful ignorance of the Egyptian troops within the camp, the mindset only fathomable when embedded in a plot structure where an earlier encounter with spies provided false intelligence that the Hittite army was far off still.

The narrative account would also emphasize certain motifs and vignettes in the chaotic swathes of activity in the reliefs, bringing them to the fore as the audience sought out a visual corollary of the narration.⁵²⁶ One is once again reminded of Keane’s definition of bundling, where different contexts bring different physical properties and attributes of an object to the fore, while other contexts render them less prominent.⁵²⁷ In the opening eulogy of the Poem, Ramses II is compared to a powerful wall/rampart (Poem, 11), perhaps causing the audience to draw their eyes across the southern wing of the first pylon between pharaoh on his chariot and the ramparts of the citadel of Kadesh in upper right corner of the composition. Additionally, when the Poem describes how Ramses “charged their ranks fighting as a falcon pounces, The serpent on my brow felled my foes, Cast her fiery breath in my enemies’ faces,”⁵²⁸ the audience would turn their attention to the figures of Ramses on his chariot, resplendent in the *khepresh* crown with its *uraeus* and the protective figure of Re as a falcon in flight above his head.

When the Poem declares that “My shield-bearer saw that a large number of chariots surrounded me, [and] he became weak and faint-hearted,”⁵²⁹ the small figure of the shield-bearer, Menna, standing beside Ramses, would gain prominence within the

⁵²² White, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 12.

⁵²³ White, *Content of the Form*, 2.

⁵²⁴ White, *Content of the Form*, 2, 52, 172-173.

⁵²⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 60: Bulletin, 29-31.

⁵²⁶ Here the goal is not to accredit a primacy of place or content to the textual inscriptions, but rather to suggest that their oral performance affected how an Egyptian audience viewed the images around them, particularly as visual access to the reliefs may have been obstructed by crowds of people, or in the case of the second court, by pylons.

⁵²⁷ Webb Keane, “Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things,” in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 187-188.

⁵²⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 70: Poem, 280-282.

⁵²⁹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 68: Poem, 207-208.

composition. After learning that “The vile chief of Hatti stood in the midst of the army that was with him and did not come out to fight for fear of his majesty,”⁵³⁰ and that while “watching his majesty fight all alone, without his soldiers and charioteers, [the vile chief of Hatti] stood turning, shrinking, afraid,”⁵³¹ the audience would easily identify the small vignette of the Hittite king in the bottom right corner of the first pylon absconding from the fighting on his chariot, his head turned back toward the violence in fear.

Only the Kadesh Bulletin (not the Poem) includes a description of the scene where two Hittite scouts are brought to the Egyptian camp to reveal the true location of the Hittite army:

The camp of his majesty’s army was pitched there, and his majesty took his seat on a throne of fine gold to the north of Kadesh on the west side of the Orontes. Then came a scout who was in his majesty’s retinue bringing two scouts of the Foe from Khatti... His majesty said to them: ‘Where is he, the Foe from Khatii?... They said to his majesty: ‘Look, the vile Chief of Khatti... stand[s] equipped and ready to fight behind Kadesh the Old.’⁵³²

In the reliefs these Hittite scouts are beaten by Egyptian officials to the bottom right of the enthroned figure of Ramses on the northern wing of the first pylon, indicating the necessary measures by which this information was retrieved (Fig. 8a). This passage from the Bulletin also serves to orient the camp scene on the northern wing of the first pylon with the Orontes River on the southern wing of the first pylon and the ramparts of Kadesh in its upper right corner.⁵³³ What could appear as distinct landscapes—separated by the monumental entrance portal in the first pylon—are sequentially linked in both time and space through the narrative of the Bulletin.

It is important to remember that a text’s “‘publication’ as an inscription, with the constraints on form and accessibility imposed by its monumental form—obscures the relationship to the literary background, and to other forms of display by Egyptian kings, which provided more immediate settings for political and propaganda statements.”⁵³⁴ Indeed an educated Egyptian audience would appreciate the Kadesh inscriptions as pertaining to certain genres of texts that contain their own expectations of style, content,

⁵³⁰ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 64: Poem, 65-67.

⁵³¹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 66: Poem, 144-145.

⁵³² Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 60-61: Bulletin, 34-52.

⁵³³ The texts provided other directional cues for the action of the fighting as well. Also from the Bulletin the audience knew to look for the Hittite army as they “cross[ed] the fjord south of Kadesh, [where] they charged into his majesty’s army as it marched unaware.” Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 61: Bulletin, 79-80. Likewise the Poem describes how the Hittites “came forth from the south side of Kadesh and attacked the army of Pre in its middle, as they were marching unaware and not prepared to fight.” Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 64: Poem, 70-73.

⁵³⁴ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 424.

and form.⁵³⁵ The learned literary audience (comprising priests and political elites) would be familiar, for example, with eulogies for pharaohs and would recognize common vocabulary, imagery, and idiomatic expressions from eulogic portion(s) of the Poem.⁵³⁶ Similarly, well-read audiences would recognize that the Kadesh Bulletin, inscribed as it was immediately adjacent to the images of Ramses in his military camp, was composed in a Königsnovelle format.⁵³⁷ The defining characteristics of the Königsnovelle in ancient Egypt are admittedly contentious, but most scholars agree that it contains a pharaonic address or conference.⁵³⁸ This address or conference, as well as other common features such as a response by officials and a recitation of eulogies, all indicate the Königsnovelle's most "salient aspect: namely, the role of performance."⁵³⁹ Here, the learned audience would expect pharaoh's decree to serve as the climax, comparing it perhaps to Thutmose III's declaration of the course to Megiddo in his inscriptions from the Temple of Amun at Karnak (see above).⁵⁴⁰ They would understand and appreciate that the Kadesh Bulletin, in the format of a Königsnovelle, comprised one specific moment in time,⁵⁴¹ a crucial but singular episode derived from the narrative arc of the Poem.

At a broader level, though, an Egyptian audience would appreciate that the goal of New Kingdom royal inscriptions was to "recount events in order to perpetuate

⁵³⁵ Quirke, "Narrative Literature," 265. This audience would also recognize shared cultural attitudes (such as xenophobia) with other types of Egyptian texts.

⁵³⁶ Jan Assmann, "Eulogie, Königs-," *Lexicon der Ägyptologie 2* (1977): 39-46. "It is not remarkable that such eulogies were frequent and that we find them in so many varied settings... Because the king was the center of activity and life of his land, praises to him were commonplace. In fact, these small hieroglyphic eulogies appear to have been ready-at-hand to be inserted into their designated historical narratives so long as the words fit. Thus a stock of encomia was available to any literary artist who was commissioned to draw up a hieroglyphic inscription." Spalinger, "New Kingdom Eulogies," 421-422.

⁵³⁷ While neither Loprieno nor Hermann include the Kadesh Bulletin in their discussions of the ancient Egyptian Königsnovelle, Spalinger makes a compelling case for why it is a clear example of the genre. Anthony Spalinger, "Divisions in Monumental Texts and their Images: The Issue of Kadesh and Megiddo," in *All the Wisdom in the East, Studies in Near Eastern Archaeology and History in Honor of Eliezer D. Oren*, ed. Mayer Gruber and Shmuel Ahituv (Freiberg: Academic Press, 2012), 381-383. He is supported by Beate Hoffmann, *Die Königsnovelle: "Strukturanalyse am Einzelwerk"*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005) and Irene Shirun-Grumach, *Offenbarung, Orakel und Königsnovelle*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993).

⁵³⁸ See Antonio Loprieno, "The 'King's Novel,'" in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 277-296; Spalinger, "Divisions in Monumental Texts," 382.

⁵³⁹ Spalinger, "Divisions in Monumental Texts," 382.

⁵⁴⁰ Spalinger, "Divisions in Monumental Texts," 382.

⁵⁴¹ Loprieno understands the Königsnovelle most broadly as a literary narrative of a single episode in a pharaoh's life ("The 'King's Novel,'" 294).

kingship.”⁵⁴² These inscriptions, including the Battle of Kadesh Bulletin and Poem, were “a selective and purposeful use of narrative.”⁵⁴³ To Antonio Loprieno, texts such as these are not a unique epic genre but rather “represent a digression from the general into the episodic.”⁵⁴⁴ Therefore, they helped the Battle of Kadesh Event (and the Battle of Megiddo Event) function as “dramatic symbol[s] of the king’s accomplishments.”⁵⁴⁵

The inscriptions moreover provide a wealth of information and dramatic emphasis not rendered in the reliefs. The background in the Poem in particular (beginning with the Egyptian army marching northwards), would provide a literate audience with a narrative sequence preceding the scenes on the temple walls. Connected by the same plot framework, details from the inscriptions overlapped with imagery in the reliefs so that, for example, the audience would read of Ramses’s departure from the fortress of Sile⁵⁴⁶ and then view the Egyptian forces advance upon the fortress of Kadesh. Additionally, the camp and fighting scenes became contingently linked to the extensive march from Egypt to the Orontes River, the ease of the soldiers setting up the cooking fires reflective of a confidence acquired when “all the foreign lands trembled before [Ramses]”⁵⁴⁷ on their journey northwards.

Likewise the Poem provides a sequence of activities in the Battle of Kadesh narrative following the fierce fighting on the southern wing of the first pylon (and the northern wing of the second pylon). According to the Poem, Ramses “marshaled the ranks for battle”⁵⁴⁸ at dawn on the second day of his advance, but then the Hittite ruler wrote Ramses a letter suing for peace: “Do not overwhelm us. Lo, your might is great, your strength is heavy upon the land of Khatti... Be not hard in your dealings, victorious king! Peace is better than fighting. Give us breath!”⁵⁴⁹ In response, Ramses “ordered be

⁵⁴² Stephen Quirke, “Narrative Literature,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 265.

⁵⁴³ Eyre, “‘Historical’ or ‘Literary’?,” 416.

⁵⁴⁴ Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel,’” 288. It is widely accepted that both the Kadesh Poem and Bulletin resemble the form of the ancient Egyptian Königsnovelle, where “The incidents leading up the battle all serve as a counterfoil to the appearance of the king, and, in fact, the main emphasis of the two sources centers on the heroism of Ramesses in contrast to the cowardice of his soldiers.” Alan R. Shulman, “The N’rn at the Battle of Kadesh,” *Journal of the Archaeological Research Center in Egypt* 1 (1962): 47. Loprieno does not disagree with this classification for the Kadesh inscriptions but has problematized the broad definition for the genre “traditionally understood to refer to a form of Egyptian narrative which focus on the role of the king as recipient of divine inspiration or as protagonist of the ensuing decision-making process.” Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel,’” 277.

⁵⁴⁵ Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel,’” 288.

⁵⁴⁶ “His majesty passed the fortress of Sile, being mighty like Mont in his going forth, all foreign lands trembling before him.” Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 63: Poem, 30-31.

⁵⁴⁷ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 63: Poem, 31.

⁵⁴⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 70: Poem, 276.

⁵⁴⁹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 71: Poem, 310-320.

brought to me all the leaders of my infantry and my chariotry, all my officers assembled together, to let them hear the matter about which [the Hittite ruler] had written.”⁵⁵⁰ The entire Egyptian council encouraged Ramses to accept the Hittite ruler’s request; subsequently, Ramses returned to his capital with “all life, stability, and dominion being with him,”⁵⁵¹ and “rested in his palace of life and dominion like Re in his horizon”⁵⁵² while he was granted “millions of jubilees forever on the throne of Re, all lowlands and all highlands lying prostrate under his feet for ever and all time.”⁵⁵³ Here the audience at the Ramesseum is provided with an outcome for the chaotic battle action, its success secured and—like the narrative battle reliefs on the Temple of Amun at Karnak adjacent to the triumphal reliefs—its consequence embedded in a broader statement of universal victory and domination. The Kadesh Poem answered the question “What happened next?” by expanding the temporal scope of the narrative and providing information not revealed in the relief images. In so doing it reframed the meaning of the reliefs by contextualizing them as one sequence of activities in a longer story.

Perhaps the greatest “discrepancy” between the inscriptions and the relief images is the emphasis in the Poem and Bulletin of Ramses entering into battle alone, fighting against the entire Hittite army with only Amun at his side (“Behold, Amun gave me his strength, when I had no soldiers, no chariotry; He caused every distant land to see my victory through my strong arm, I being alone, no captain behind me, no charioteer, foot soldier, officer.”⁵⁵⁴) Indeed, after Ramses realizes in the Poem that “My numerous troops have deserted me, not one of my chariotry looks for me; I keep on shouting for them, but none of them heeds my call,”⁵⁵⁵ this becomes a pervasive theme for the rest of the composition. Yet in the fighting scenes on the first and second pylons at the Ramesseum Ramses is surrounded by enemy and Egyptian forces alike.⁵⁵⁶ Egyptian foot soldiers and cavalry participate in the fighting, and on the bottom left of the northern wing of the first pylon, additional Na’arn forces march the aid of the Egyptian army.

Scholars have emphasized that the texts and images vary from one another in ways that highlight the exceptional abilities of the unique communication media.⁵⁵⁷ Gardiner believes that “The Literary Record deals admirably with the battle on the emotion and conceptual plane, just as the Pictorial Record deals with it on a factual plane... neither of the two kinds of [pictorial and textual] record is complete without the

⁵⁵⁰ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 71: Poem, 322-327.

⁵⁵¹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 71: Poem, 332.

⁵⁵² Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 71: Poem, 339.

⁵⁵³ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 71: Poem, 344-345.

⁵⁵⁴ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 68: Poem, 195-199.

⁵⁵⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 65: Poem, 113-115.

⁵⁵⁶ “The serious predicament in which Ramesses II found himself during the battle, as described in the Poem and/or the Bulletin or relief inscriptional legends are largely not evident in the reliefs themselves.” Bryan, “The Disjunction,” 165.

⁵⁵⁷ See Chapter 3. Gardiner puts it most eloquently: “There are some things which lend themselves only to literary expression, while there are other things which clamour loudly for visual representation.” Sir Alan H. Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 47.

other.”⁵⁵⁸ Yet standing in front of the first pylon at the Ramesseum, the images are not necessary (or indeed sufficient) “to exhibit the various incidents of the actual fight, the position of the troops, of the town of Kadesh, of the Egyptian camp, as well as the sufferings of the defeated enemy and so forth.”⁵⁵⁹ It is rather difficult to imagine how an audience would be expected to arrive at a uniform understanding of the geographical relationships between the Egyptian camp, the citadel of Kadesh, the Orontes River, and the sequence of action connecting them (especially when one considers how the direction of combat and the spatial layout of the citadel, camp, and Orontes River vary from exemplar to exemplar and temple to temple).

Rather, the scholar Christopher Pinney more productively understands the relationship between text and images as encompassing “a diverse set of forms, differently constituted. . . Rather than essentializing different expressive modalities these terms express latent potentialities in all cultural production.”⁵⁶⁰ In other words, there is a tension between the opportunities and limitations of meaning in the inscriptions and images that, when experienced in tandem, contribute to the range of understanding of the Event. Because both of the inscriptions and the images of the Battle of Kadesh contributed to the same Event, the audience would be forced to reconcile this tension when listening to an oral performance while standing in front of the relief images. The focus on Ramses’s solitary victory in the inscriptions, for example, may prompt the viewer to hone in on the motif of Ramses in his chariot by letting the swathes of Egyptian soldiers fighting around him fade into the background.⁵⁶¹ Likewise, the evocative vignette of the resuscitation of the prince of Aleppo nowhere appears in the Kadesh Bulletin or Poem. Therefore a viewer might insert the scene in his memory of the oral narrative, or infer it occurring coterminously with the description of the fighting even if it was not explicitly included in the Poem or Bulletin.

⁵⁵⁸ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 52-53.

⁵⁵⁹ Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions*, 47.

⁵⁶⁰ Christopher Pinney, “Four Types of Visual Culture,” in *The Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Chris Tilley et al. (London: Sage, 2006), 135.

⁵⁶¹ Breasted was the first of many to comment on how “neither the Poem nor the Record makes the slightest reference to the arrival of Ramses’s reinforcements.” Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 117. In fact the only extant “evidence of the division of Ptah entering the battle is in the Luxor reliefs (neither the Poem nor the Record mention it).” Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 117. Breasted, who believed that all of the textual and pictorial sources were created with the explicit purpose to demonstrate the might and glory of Ramses, writes that “Once the supreme moment is reached, the king receives the entire attention and the army is only referred to in order to use their flight and cowardice as a foil against which to contrast the splendid courage of the king.” Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 86. Yet here he, like many scholars, falls into the trap of placing undo weight upon the textual sources. To stand in front of the reliefs is to see Ramses’s large image embedded in a battle fought by hundreds of men, Egyptian and Hittite alike.

Conclusion

Landscapes are intertwined. The temple architecture of the Ramesseum, the procession network of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, and the multi-sensorial overload of the festival experience all inflected potent meaning into the Battle of Kadesh Event (which transcended the iconographic and textual content of the reliefs). Festivals served as both impetus and conduit for traversing temples in the form of processions while the architecture served as a medium of spatial dexterity and flexibility. Festival processions were “a unique type of celebration” in ancient Egyptian culture when the image of the god left its sanctuary and the populace was provided unprecedented access to the divine statue and the interior of the temple alike.⁵⁶² Music and dancers drew the audience’s attention towards the processing statue of the god who was carried in his bark by the temple priests through the central axis of the Ramesseum’s courtyards and hypostyle hall. Likewise the procession drew the audience through multiple rooms, chapels, and halls of the Ramesseum, which created extended visual contexts where battle scenes on exterior temple walls would be seen in conjunction with religious and ceremonial reliefs decorating, for example, the interior of a hypostyle hall. Processional networks also connected larger geographical spaces, such as temple complexes on the eastern and western banks of Thebes.

The Battle of Kadesh reliefs, one must remember, were active participants in a landscape, not surrounded by or apart from one. Their dimensions—particularly on the interior of the first pylon—were impressive, and when faced frontally easily fill most of a person’s field of vision. They would arrest the festival audience’s attention during “down time” before or after the procession of the statues, and their imagery would communicate in tandem with the oral performance of the Kadesh inscriptions (that emphasized, framed, organized, supplemented, and contradicted the relief imagery).

Even in the earliest years of their creation on the temple walls of the Ramesseum, time played an important role in how the reliefs meant to their contemporary Egyptian audience. The image of the fortress of Kadesh dialogically embodied the earlier New Kingdom propaganda from the reigns of Thutmose III and Seti I, who recorded their own successes against the northern Levantine city-state on the walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Ramses’s Battle of Kadesh reliefs situate pharaoh in a lineage of efficacious rulers who conquered the troublesome Kadesh. Likewise, throughout the formidable reign of Ramses II, each yearly celebration of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley established a dialogic relationship with earlier festival performances. Set apart from the rest of the year by the specialness of the ambience and religious functions, memories and expectations from the festival time would coalesce through the cyclicity of the processional network. “Notions of time, space, and human relations are inculcated into our bodily being as we grow up.”⁵⁶³ The Event, constructed through the contemporary Egyptians’ encounter with the Kadesh reliefs in a festival landscape, would generate a cyclical temporality that evoked the very festival time in which it was encountered.

⁵⁶² Anthony J. Spalinger, “Festivals,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 523.

⁵⁶³ Christopher Gosden, *Social Being and Time*, (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1994), 16.

CHAPTER 6. DIALOGUING WITH PEACE: TREATY-MAKING ON THE WALLS OF THE RAMESSEUM

Introduction

In 1259 BCE, sixteen years after he fought Muwatalli at Kadesh, Ramses II formalized a new era of peace by signing the Silver Tablet Treaty with Hattusili III, the current Hittite king.⁵⁶⁴ This fostering of diplomatic relations between the preeminent Late Bronze Age empires was subsequently inscribed in relief steles and prominently displayed at the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak.⁵⁶⁵ The presence of the Silver Tablet Treaty, an Event in its own right, permanently altered the physical landscape of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at both temple complexes.⁵⁶⁶ It also created a new visual dialog where the Battle of Kadesh no longer stood in isolation but became part of a sequence of Events in which both the Battle and the Treaty (re)framed the meaning of the other.

Maintaining the Kadesh reliefs from the Ramesseum as its case study, this chapter proceeds in its exploration of Event creation in this new, peaceful landscape. Specifically, it focuses on how the practice of treaty-making (physically manifested by the presence of the Silver Tablet Treaty on the walls of the first courtyard of the Ramesseum) alters the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh Event. The presence of the Treaty supersedes the enmity of the Kadesh reliefs, undermining the longevity of their

⁵⁶⁴ Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul J.N. Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East*, Part 3: Overall Historical Survey, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 98.

⁵⁶⁵ Elmar Edel, *Der Vertrag zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattusili von Hatti*, (Berlin: Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 1997). The Hittites were provided with their own version of the treaty (see below).

⁵⁶⁶ While acknowledging Spalinger, Kitchen, and Redford's efforts to precisely date the Kadesh reliefs in Chapter 5, I explained that for the purposes of this dissertation I would accept their placement on the walls of the Ramesseum more generally during the reign of Ramses II (after year 5). Here it is perhaps important to further specify that I follow Kitchen and Spalinger's assertion that the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were carved onto the walls of the Ramesseum before the Silver Tablet Treaty because of the different spellings of Ramses's nomen in the respective texts (Spalinger, "Historical Observations," 96-98; Kitchen, "Historical Observations on Ramesside Nubia," 213-25). In the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, Ramses's nomen is written *R'-ms-s(w)*, while in the Silver Tablet Treaty his nomen is written *R'-ms-sw*. "Although the spelling of Ramesses II's nomen is not a sharp means of establishing relative chronology for undated reliefs and inscriptions from his reign, Kitchen's conclusion that by Year 21, *R'-ms-sw* was standard is correct." Spalinger, "Historical Observations," 98. See also Anthony Spalinger "Dating of the Kadesh Reliefs," in *Five Views on Egypt*, (Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 2006), 137-156; Anthony Spalinger, "Early Writing of Ramesses II's Names," *Chronique d'Égypte* 83 (2008): 75-89.

rhetoric, but not Ramses's purported successes on the battlefield. It reframes the horizon of meaning for the Battle so that the animosity is not enduring, but rather concluded. The Treaty embodies both the changed political climate where diplomatic participation in the international system is advantageous to even the ruler of Egypt, as well as Ramses's shrewdness in recognizing how to harness the political capital attained through such participation without undermining the singularity of his power as pharaoh.

By placing the Silver Tablet Treaty inscriptions in close proximity to the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Ramses implicated the resonance of the Battle Event in his diplomatic gestures in the Treaty through a visual dialog. Taken alongside the Kadesh reliefs, Ramses's participation in the Silver Tablet Treaty feels high-minded, or even downright generous. The two sets of reliefs in tandem portray a sequence of Events wherein Ramses prevails upon the battlefield against the Hittites and then magnanimously agrees to diplomatic relations (thus preserving the upper hand in the parity agreement).

This chapter also reframes our understanding of the Battle of Kadesh Event through the introduction of a new near-contemporary audience, the Hittites.⁵⁶⁷ In the wake of this burgeoning era of diplomacy, at least two Hittite princesses (along with their large entourages) relocated to Egypt as the new wives of an aging Ramses II,⁵⁶⁸ a Hittite garrison was permanently installed in the Egyptian capital, Pr-Ramses,⁵⁶⁹ and candid and lengthy correspondence between the Egyptian and Hittite rulers (and their wives) in the Akkadian language resumed.⁵⁷⁰

Many of these Hittite royalty and military would have commenced their lengthy voyage to Egypt from the Hittite capital, Hattusa. En route through the northern Levant,

⁵⁶⁷ This chapter introduces and presents evidence for a Hittite audience in Egypt during the later reign of Ramses II below. While it is impossible to place specific Hittite individuals at the Ramesseum with any high degree of certainty, it is reasonable to suggest that Hittite royalty, dignitaries, and even soldiers may have visited the temple complex. It is even more likely that a Hittite audience would have born witness to the nearby monumental Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the exteriors of Luxor Temple and the Temple of Amun at Karnak.

⁵⁶⁸ One of these marriages was also recorded for posterity on steles outside Ramses's temples at Abu Simbel, Amara West, Elephantine, and Karnak. James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 3, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906), 182-186, §415-424. Published fragments of steles from Abydos and Coptos that reference a second Hittite princess betrothed to Ramses after the thirty-fourth year of his reign can be found in Kenneth A. Kitchen and G.A. Gaballa, "Ramesside Varia II," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 96 (1969): 14-28. See also Breasted's translation of the Coptos Stele in Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 187-188, §427-28.

⁵⁶⁹ Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 226.

⁵⁷⁰ Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); Albertine Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter*, 1. Teil., (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989a); Albertine Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter*, 2. Teil., (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989b).

they perhaps would pass through Kadesh itself and witness the imperial steles that Ramses erected (and inscribed) at Nahr el-Kalb, Bet Shean, and Byblos along the way (see below). Subsequently, a larger international landscape became implicated in the Hittite encounter with the Battle of Kadesh reliefs. Likewise, the international system of the Late Bronze Age also became implicated in the cultural and political landscape of this Hittite audience. Shared mental maps, visual language, and martial values, for example, all impacted how the Hittites perceived the Kadesh reliefs.⁵⁷¹

But although this chapter acknowledges the extents of internationalism in the Late Bronze Age, it also recognizes its limitations. While asserting that the shared language of the international system would have made the Kadesh reliefs potent and evocative to a Hittite audience, it also analyzes the Hittite reception through the unique lens of Hittite history, culture, and politics. In so doing it draws evidence from the archives of the Hittite empire including royal annals and inscriptions, edicts, deeds, pleas, treaties, and letters. Ultimately it suggests that the Event, when woven into both the fabric of the international system of the Late Bronze Age and the unique history and politics of the Hittite empire, was deeply embedded in Hittite imperial policies and practices of engagement in the northern Levant. For the Hittites, The Battle of Kadesh evoked the complicated political alliances with their northern Levantine vassals such as Amurru more than it evoked personal hostilities between Ramses and Muwatalli. Likewise, the Silver Tablet Treaty revealed more about Hittite insecurities concerning the expanding Assyrian empire on their eastern border than it did about reconciling their relationship with Egypt.

By situating the Battle of Kadesh and the Silver Tablet Treaty in an international Late Bronze Age context, this chapter expands the examination of the near-contemporary reception of the Event into a broader geographical sphere. Such a foundation is crucial for the seventh chapter of this dissertation, which not only analyzes the Event's reception six centuries into the future (at which point its reverberations are accessible in the Neo-Assyrian textual and material record), but also argues for an understanding of this Neo-Assyrian reception that is triangulated through their history of involvement with both the Egyptian and the Hittite empires in the thirteenth century BCE.

The Physical Landscape: The Silver Tablet Treaty

In his twenty-one years as Pharaoh preceding the Silver Tablet Treaty, Ramses campaigned extensively in the Levant before and after the Battle of Kadesh—victory steles at Nahr el-Kalb and Bet Shean commemorate his northern campaigns in years four, eight, and eighteen of his reign (see below). In none of these campaigns, though, did Ramses celebrate encountering Hittite forces. Indeed by the second decade of Ramses's reign antagonism between Egypt and Hatti seems to have cooled (although unfortunately no direct evidence remains detailing why Ramses and Hattusili III chose to make peace).

The physical presence of the Silver Tablet Treaty on the walls of the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak created a new diplomatic landscape for the Battle of Kadesh reliefs. At the Temple of Amun at Karnak, the Silver Tablet Treaty was

⁵⁷¹ Mario Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 B.C.*, (Padova: Sargon, 1990), especially "Part 2: War and Alliance".

inscribed on the western exterior wall of the southern processional way so that it faced the Kadesh reliefs and Ramses's other battle reliefs on the exterior of the hall at a right angle. At the Ramesseum the Silver Tablet Treaty was carved onto the southern wing of the second pylon so that it stood across the open courtyard from the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the interior of the first pylon.⁵⁷² Statues placed in front of the Treaty inscription would have made the text difficult to read even for those who were literate, but its content was readily apparent in the shape of the inscription. Ramses commissioned all copies of the Silver Tablet Treaty and the inscriptions recounting his diplomatic marriage to a Hittite princess (see below) to be placed inside a carved border mimicking the shape of a freestanding stele. In this way the Silver Tablet Treaty was physically demarcated from surrounding temple reliefs by the presence of its stele-shaped border to anyone who even passingly glanced at it (Fig. 58).

The formalization of peaceful relations into a treaty document accords well with long-established Hittite diplomatic practices. The Hittite kingdom popularly employed treaties with its vassals in western Anatolia and the northern Levant to codify and document their loyalty.⁵⁷³ Both Gary Beckman and Amnon Altman ascribe the potency of the written treaties to the oral oath-taking practice that the texts accompanied; the treaties were not so much legal documents as they were recordings of a legal procedure.⁵⁷⁴

Hittite treaties, written in either Akkadian or Hittite, were referred to by a metonymic designation of the two most important elements of the agreements, the "binding" stipulations (Hittite *išhiul* and Akkadian *rikiltu/riksu*), and the "oath" governing the curses and blessings "by which the contracting parties invoked the gods as witness and guarantors of these provisions" (Hittite *lingai* and Akkadian *māmītu*).⁵⁷⁵ Vassal treaties were explicit about where the tablet was to be stored: in the temple of the principal god of the vassal ruler's pantheon, "where it will literally be under the oversight

⁵⁷² Unfortunately only fragments from the final ten lines of the Treaty were recovered at the Ramesseum by Champollion, but as Breasted asserts, "In spite of the mutilated condition of the two monuments [Karnak and the Ramesseum], the frequent repetitions make restoration certain in almost all cases." Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 163. Translations for the Ramesseum fragments can be found in Jean François Champollion, *Monuments de l'Egypte et de la Nubie: Notices Descriptives*, vol. 2, (Paris: Didot, 1889), 585-586; Samuel Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources*, vol. 2, (London: E. Moxon, 1837-1841), 50.

⁵⁷³ "These vassal treaties, with their explicit threats of divine retribution in the case of violation, were the ideological glue which held the Hittite empire together." Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2nd ed., (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 2.

⁵⁷⁴ See Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*; Amnon Altman, *The Historical Prologue of the Hittite Vassal Treaties*, (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2004). "The vassal was obliged to swear in the presence of numerous deities to observe its provisions. Thus, while the treaty text was a 'binding' by the Great King, it was the 'oath' of the vassal." Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2.

⁵⁷⁵ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2.

of the gods.⁵⁷⁶ Often stipulations included that the treaty was to be retrieved from the temple and read aloud in front of the vassal ruler with a consistent frequency.⁵⁷⁷ Because of this, these treaties did not merely reflect but actually manifested the meaning-making practice of diplomacy in the ancient Near East. The materiality of the tablet, which was persistently referenced and read aloud from, embodied the political connection between the Hittites and their vassals over the lifespans of individual rulers.

Every time a vassal ruler re-read (and thus re-committed to) the oath and stipulations of the treaty, he accepted (and thus reified) the authority of the Hittite king who established the terms of the agreement. This performative capacity of language is explicitly recognized in Speech Act Theory.⁵⁷⁸ It is this very capacity of speech to indicate a course of action that demonstrates how speech acts create power dynamics. The performance by the vassal of his subjugated role in the treaty, and his subsequent acceptance by both the Hittite overlord and the community he governs, establishes that this speech act has what Austin calls “illocutionary force,” or the capacity to define a situation through the performance of an act in saying something.⁵⁷⁹ Therefore, the saying of certain types of words (such as explicit performative utterances: “I promise,” or “I refuse”) is the doing of certain types of acts (such as binding oneself to a promise or establishing obstinacy in a refusal). When these performances are accepted, they create credibility and the illocutionary force of the act gains momentum.⁵⁸⁰

The binding force of these treaties required both the Hittite king’s and the vassal’s participation and acceptance of the “appropriateness” of a speech act.⁵⁸¹ Each time the procedure was performed and accepted (each time the vassal re-affirmed his loyalty to the Hittite king by reading aloud the treaty), both the power of the Hittite king and the authority of the performance were reified.⁵⁸² This established treaty-making as a powerful and effective mechanism for participating in the international system of the Late Bronze Age.

The Hittite vassal treaty structure, oath-taking, and deposition practices had

⁵⁷⁶ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 3.

⁵⁷⁷ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 3. “The text of the treaty presented to the subordinate was engraved in cuneiform upon a tablet of metal (sometimes of silver but more often of bronze or iron). What archaeologists have recovered is in all but one case the file copies written on clay.” Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2.

⁵⁷⁸ John L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 6.

⁵⁷⁹ Austin, *How To Do Things*, 99.

⁵⁸⁰ John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 62-64.

⁵⁸¹ Austin, *How To Do Things*, 34. For example, the correct context must be properly prepared for the act, the act must be properly and completely executed, and the act must be followed up on in the appropriate manner.

⁵⁸² “There must exist an accepted conventional procedure that includes the correctness of the circumstances and the authority of the individuals invoking the acts” or you get what Austin refers to as a “misinvocation.” Austin, *How To Do Things*, 26.

significant impact upon the both the content and intent of the Silver Tablet Treaty.⁵⁸³ Where deviations occur, it is often the result of the uniqueness of the parity agreement of the Silver Tablet Treaty (as opposed to the vassal relationships codified in the majority of the Hittite treaty corpus).⁵⁸⁴ In contrast to vassal treaties where the Hittite king imposes stipulations and requires that the vassal swear an oath to uphold them, the parity treaty does not include any impositions upon either party.⁵⁸⁵ Rather, each ruler voluntarily assumes certain obligations at will, each in his turn.⁵⁸⁶ For example, both Ramses and Hattusili mutually renounce aggression and mutually agree to extradite fugitives (see below).⁵⁸⁷

These too are speech acts with their own performative, illocutionary force. According to John Searle, every time we say (or write) something, we are essentially asserting it (saying that “I renounce aggression” or “I am a loyal vassal” is really “I assert that I renounce aggression” or “I assert that I am a loyal vassal”).⁵⁸⁸ By making such assertions, these speech acts create credibility when they are accepted. The prominent placement of the Silver Tablet Treaty on the walls of the Ramesseum and the Temple of

⁵⁸³ These vassal treaties commenced with the Hittite king’s name and titles, followed by the historical prologue, where the previous relations between Hatti and the vassal state are recounted and the reasons for the vassal’s loyalty are explicitly laid out. The stipulations followed the historical prologue, with the effect that the gestures of paying tribute and extraditing Hittite fugitives took on a conciliatory air. Occasionally, vassals were also expected to “make a yearly visit to the Hittite court to pay homage to His Majesty in person.” Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 3. The vassal treaties listed all of the divine witnesses (from the Hittite pantheon as well as the pantheon of the respective vassal, if different) who were present at the oath-taking accompanying the deposition of the treaty, and ended with extensive blessings for the vassal ruler who obeyed the stipulations and curses for him who did not. Kitchen and Lawrence suggest that this treaty formula does not in fact originate in Hatti but that it derives from second millennium Babylonia, where, “In the monumental format of their respective law-collections, both Lipit-Ishtar and Hammurabi... follow precisely a format of... title, prologue, laws, blessings/curses; they also include the optional... epilogue, but not divine witnesses, which are never invoked as such in law-collection texts... At some point thereafter, a change came: to conform the format of treaties (as legal instruments) to that of the major law-collections. The Kassite regime that took over Babylon may be thus be credited with this new departure.” Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant*, 101-102.

⁵⁸⁴ Of the thirty-five extant Hittite treaties, the only other Hittite parity treaty that remains is between Paddatissu of Kizzuwatna and a Hittite king whose name has been lost: Catalogue des textes Hittites (CTH) 26. Edition: G. R. Meyer, “Zwei Neue Kizzuvvatna-Verträge,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* I (1953): 112-119. Translation: Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 11-13, No. 1.

⁵⁸⁵ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 4.

⁵⁸⁶ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 4.

⁵⁸⁷ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 4.

⁵⁸⁸ Searle, *Speech Acts*, 64.

Amun at Karnak suggests that knowledge of their content spread through oral tradition and perhaps even performances during festival times (see Chapter 5). Large Egyptian audiences would be confronted by these mutual agreements in a choreographed festival landscape where the acceptance of such reliefs would have been controlled and enforced. Ramses's renunciation of aggression in the Treaty was indeed accepted by Hattusili III—evidenced by the Hittite ruler's willingness to send not only Hittite soldiers to Egypt but also two of his daughters to formalize the diplomatic alliance through marriage (see below).

Part of what makes the Silver Tablet Treaty such a fascinating case study in Late Bronze Age diplomacy is that copies of both the Hittite and Egyptian versions have been discovered. It is the Hittite version, sent to Egypt from Hatti and translated into Late Egyptian hieroglyphs, that is monumentally inscribed on the walls of the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak in the form of relief steles.⁵⁸⁹ Additionally, Hugo Winckler's excavations at Hattusa uncovered two clay cuneiform copies of the Egyptian version of Silver Tablet Treaty.⁵⁹⁰ "It has long been recognized that the phraseology of the hieroglyphic version was non-Egyptian;"⁵⁹¹ the Akkadian copies at Hattusa prove that the Silver Tablet Treaty was composed in the Babylonian *lingua franca* of the Late Bronze Age common in treaties that Hittites made with their non-Indo-European neighbors in the northern Levant.⁵⁹²

In the other two examples of Hittite "twin" treaties recovered from Hattusa, the reciprocal versions of the same treaty were not entirely identical.⁵⁹³ In each pairing, the historical prologues varied, presenting "material special to the local interests of each signatory."⁵⁹⁴ This is likewise the case in the Silver Tablet Treaty, whose hieroglyphic version places Hattusili in the foreground and employs first person clauses for the Hittite king; the Akkadian version does the same for Ramses.⁵⁹⁵ This dissertation, focusing on

⁵⁸⁹ Edition and Translation: Edel, *Der Vertrag*. An earlier English translation can be found in Alan H. Gardiner and S. Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance between Ḫattušili, King of the Hittites, and the Pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6 (1920): 179-205. Gardiner and Langdon use Müller's edition: W. Max Müller, *Der Bündnisvertrag Ramses' II. und des Chetiterkönigs [Khetasira] im Originaltext neu herausgegeben und übersetzt*, (Berlin: W. Peiser, 1902).

⁵⁹⁰ Edition: Edel, *Der Vertrag*; Bruno Meissner, *Der Staatsvertrag Ramses' II. von Ägypten und Hattusilis von Hatti in Akkadischer Fassung*, (Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in Kommission bei G. Reimer, 1917). Translation: Edel, *Der Vertrag*.

⁵⁹¹ Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 180. "Expressions like the epithet 'the strong' (karradu), to 'take hold of' the treaty, 'good peace and good brotherhood' are... quite alien to Egyptian idiom." Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 200.

⁵⁹² Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 180.

⁵⁹³ Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant*, 96. CTH 49 and CTH 52 are the copies of the treaties signed by Suppiluliuma and by the kings of Mittani and Amurru.

⁵⁹⁴ Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant*, 96.

⁵⁹⁵ Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 185.

the landscape of the Ramesseum, will restrict its analysis to the versions that were inscribed on the Egyptian temples.⁵⁹⁶

Hittite treaties always begin with the titles or preamble introducing the king of Hatti and his lineage, but the hieroglyphic versions of the Silver Tablet Treaty begin with a narrative account of the tablet's arrival in Egypt:

Jahr 21, erster (Mont) der Saatzeit, unter der Majestät des Königs von Ober- und Unterägypten Wašmuaria šatepnaria, Sohnes des Re, Riamašeša mai-amana... An diesem Tag befand sich seine Majestät in der Stadt Pi- Riamašeša mai-amana und ... eine Ewigkeit von friedlichen Jahren geben mögen, indem alle Flachländer und alle Berländer für immer unter seine Sandalen geworfen sind, Da kamen der Königsbote, Stellvertreter der Wagentruppe Nemti, der Königsbote [...], [der Königsbote...], [der Bot]e [des] Landes [Ḫatti] N[erikaili (und) Tili-]teššup, der [B]o[te] zwe[iter Klasse] von Ḫatti Ria[mašši (und) [der Bot]e [des Landes Kark]amiš Pijaššili mit der Silbertafel, [die] der Grossfürst von Ḫatti, Ḫattušili, zum Pharao, er lebel, sei heil und gesund, bringen ließ, um Frieden zu erbitten⁵⁹⁷ [bei der Majestät des Königs von Ober- und Unterägypten, Wašmuaria] šatepnaria, Sohnes des Re, Riamašeša mai-amana, dem für immer und ewig Leben gegeben ist wie seinem Vater Re Jeden Tag.⁵⁹⁸

While this passage is unfortunately damaged where it provides the names of the envoys, it indicates that two Egyptian military escorts accompanied the Hittite messengers to Pr-Ramses from Hattusa to deliver the Treaty to Ramses.⁵⁹⁹

This narrative of the Treaty's arrival in Egypt allows us to hypothesize about the process of its creation. Unlike the vassal treaties, which describe a direct swearing of fealty before the Hittite king, the narrative account in the Silver Tablet Treaty suggests that Ramses and Hattusili did not in fact meet in person during the production of the Treaty. Rather, one imagines lengthy letters and envoys (and even royal scribes) traveling between Egypt and Anatolia, with each round of revisions adding months onto

⁵⁹⁶ See Edel, *Der Vertrag*, and Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," for side-by-side translations of the Hittite and Egyptian versions. Due to the incredibly fragmentary nature of the Silver Tablet Treaty at the Ramesseum, I find it necessary to draw upon the inscriptions from Karnak to facilitate any productive discussion of the Treaty's content. I find it reasonable to assume that the general structure and content of the inscriptions were consistent at both the Ramesseum and Karnak. I proceed with the hope (although not the certainty) that variations in phraseology between the two versions do not undermine the general conclusions I draw from the presence of the Treaty at the Ramesseum.

⁵⁹⁷ A common Egyptian idiom, *dbh htpw*, meaning literally to "beg for peace." Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 186. See below for a discussion on the implications of this word choice for Egyptian and Hittite audiences, respectively.

⁵⁹⁸ Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 17, Angabe des Datums 1-3.

⁵⁹⁹ Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 186. The name of the Hittite envoy, T3r-tšb (Tili-teššup), can be reconstructed from the hieroglyphic text below.

the process. I am inclined to agree with the hypothesis Gardiner and Langdon advance that the Babylonian Akkadian text that arrived in Egypt (placing Hattusili III in the foreground) was not identical to, but rather served as the prototype upon which Ramses based his Akkadian version, which he sent to Hattusa.⁶⁰⁰ The Treaty, after much deliberation and consultation among Egyptian ambassadors in Hatti, was finally inscribed upon a silver tablet and delivered to Egypt. Upon its receipt, Ramses commissioned his own Babylonian scribes to compose a counterpart in his name—where he was foregrounded in each of the clauses. This too, would have been engraved in silver, impressed with Ramses’s seal, and sent to Hattusa, where the original version was “deposited at the feet of Tešub” and clay copies were made for the royal archives.⁶⁰¹

When the Silver Tablet Treaty resumes with the titulary and genealogy preamble common to other Hittite treaties, the version on the Egyptian temples begins with Hattusili III, “der Großfürst von Ḫatti, Ḫattušili, der Starke, der Sohn des Muršili, der Großfürsten von Ḫatti, des Starken, der Sohn des Sohnes des Šuppil[uliu, des Großfürsten von Ḫatti, des Stark]en,”⁶⁰² before introducing Ramses as the recipient of the Treaty. The portion that follows is not a historical prologue in the traditional sense, but it does reference an earlier alliance between Egypt and Hatti (“Früher, von Ewigkeit her, was das Verhältnis zwischen dem Großkönig von Ägypten und dem Großfürsten von Ḫatti angeht, so ließ der Gott durch einen Vertrag auf ewig nicht zu, daß Feindschaft zwischen ihnen entsteht”).⁶⁰³ The hieroglyphic text in this section inserts an entire sentence not present in the Akkadian version recovered from Hattusa, referencing Muwatalli’s abrogation of this peace: “In der Zeit des Muwatalli aber, des Großfürsten von Ḫatti, meines Bruders da kämpfte er mi[t Riamašeša mai-amana], dem Großkönig von Ägypten.”⁶⁰⁴ In the subsequent section as well—where each ruler declares allegiance to this new treaty in their respective versions—the lines that mention how Muwatalli “zu seinem Schicksal geeilt war, setzte sich Ḫattušili als Großfürst von Ḫatti auf den Thron seines Vaters”⁶⁰⁵ are omitted from the Akkadian tablets found at Hattusa.⁶⁰⁶

Gardiner and Langdon suggest that Hattusili, in a reconciliatory gesture, omitted

⁶⁰⁰ Gardiner and Langdon, “The Treaty of Alliance,” 201.

⁶⁰¹ Gardiner and Langdon, “The Treaty of Alliance,” 201. These were the clay copies discovered by Winckler in his excavations.

⁶⁰² Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 21: §1, A+ B: 1a-c.

⁶⁰³ Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 21: §2, 4a-d.

⁶⁰⁴ Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 21: §2, 5a-b.

⁶⁰⁵ Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 21: §2, 5c-d.

⁶⁰⁶ Gardiner and Langdon account for the omission of any reference to Muwatalli on the Akkadian copies of the treaty from Hattusa by assuming that it was Hattusili III who chose to redact them, indicating “a certain humility of attitude on the part of the Hittite king.” (“The Treaty of Alliance,” 201). It bears repeating that these references to the conflict between Muwatalli and Ramses in the Silver Tablet Treaty are the primary source for ascertaining the Hittite king’s identity in the Battle of Kadesh; none of the Kadesh relief captions or versions of the Poem or Bulletin actually refer to the Hittite king by name.

reference to Muwatalli's hostilities towards Ramses in the copies that he made of the Silver Tablet Treaty.⁶⁰⁷ I, on the other hand, propose that the references to Muwatalli in the hieroglyphic versions at the Egyptian temples may not have appeared on the original Akkadian tablet that Ramses received in his capital. Given the placement of the Silver Tablet Treaty inscriptions so near to the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at both Karnak and the Ramesseum, Ramses may well have requested the additional passages in the Treaty in order to emphasize the connection with the Battle reliefs. After receiving the "final" Akkadian version of the Silver Tablet Treaty in his court at Pr-Ramses (as described above), one can imagine Ramses instructing his scribes to add in the references to Muwatalli when they copied the Silver Tablet Treaty onto the temple walls at Karnak and the Ramesseum. This may have come as a surprise to a Hittite audience when they encountered the edited version on the Egyptian temple walls, although no accounts of such an encounter remain.

The provisions of the Silver Tablet Treaty begin with a mutual vow to undertake a defensive alliance should either ruler face an enemy in battle. This is followed by various actions to be taken against rebellious subjects and the extradition of fugitives. All of the provisions are worded as reciprocal agreements, except for a clause concerning the succession of the Hittite king. The hieroglyphic version contains the following fragmentary passage where Hattusili is speaking: "Ich werde mei[nem] Schicksal folgen (= sterben), aber Riamašeša mai[-amana], der Großkönig von Ägypten, [soll] ewig (= lange) leben; und [man] soll [in] das [Land] Ḫatti kommen, [um zu verlassen daß sie meinem] Sohn [zu] ihrem herrn [machen], und um nicht zuzulassen [daß sie si]ch [einen anderen zu ihrem Herrn] machen."⁶⁰⁸

In a Hittite vassal treaty the provisions would be followed by a clause containing the deposition or reading-aloud of the text. This clause served as instructions to the vassal ruler informing him how and where to store the tablet in his local temple and when he should retrieve it at regular intervals for the performance of its reading.⁶⁰⁹ Neither the Akkadian nor the hieroglyphic versions of the Silver Tablet Treaty include a deposition clause, but in Egypt the inscription of the Silver Tablet Treaty upon the walls of the Theban temples served a similar function.⁶¹⁰ Ramses's (presumably voluntary) placement of the Silver Tablet Treaty at the Temple of Amun at Karnak and the Ramesseum meant that it was visited regularly during festivals by larger swathes of the Egyptian population. Just like the repeated vassal performances of loyalty, this

⁶⁰⁷ One can see an omission of Muwatalli's name above from Hattusili's genealogy, where instead of listing his grandfather, he skips over Muwatalli and refers to his great-grandfather, Suppiluliuma, instead.

⁶⁰⁸ Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 41: §10, 4-6c. Meissner was the first to argue that this passage "stipulated that Ramesses should recognize as Hattusili's successor the son chosen by that ruler during his lifetime: and he quotes a provision of this kind in the treaty between a Hittite king and Šunaššura, king of Kizzuwadna [KTB 1: 5]... It is clear that both versions differ greatly in their verbal expression." Gardiner and Langdon, "The Treaty of Alliance," 192.

⁶⁰⁹ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 3.

⁶¹⁰ Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant*, 100.

prominent placement of the Treaty increased the audience (and thus the impact) of Ramses's diplomatic speech act.

In the Silver Tablet Treaty, gods from the pantheons of both parties are called upon to act as witnesses after the reciprocal provisions.⁶¹¹ The curses and blessings that follow the divine witnesses are intensified by the extensive list of gods and goddesses who will uphold them:

Was diese Worte des Vertrags angeht, [den] der Großfürst von Ḫatti mit Riama[šeša mai-]amana des Großkönigig [von Ägypten abgeschlossen hat], [die sind] schriftlich (niedergelegt) auf dieser Silbertafel. Die Tausend Gottheiten, seien es männliche Gottheiten, seien es weibliche Gottheiten aus den (Gottheiten) des Landes Ägypten, die sind bei mir als Zeugen, die diese Worte [hör]en.⁶¹²

The hieroglyphic version of the Silver Tablet Treaty does not end with the curses and blessings like other Hittite treaties. Instead, it includes a lengthy description of the silver tablet itself, or more precisely, of the Hittite seals that were engraved in the center of the tablet on either side:

Was in der Mitte der Silbertafel auf ihrer Vorderseite ist: Eine figürliche Darstellung mit dem Bild des Seth beim Umarmen [des Bildes des] Groß[fürsten von Ḫatti] umgeben von einer Randinschrift mit dem Wortlaut: "Das Siegel des Seth, des Herrschers des Himmels; das Siegel des Vertrags, den Ḫattušili abgeschlossen hat, der Großfürst von Ḫatti, des Starken. [Was] innerhalb der Umrandung der figürlichen Darstellung ist: Das Sie[gel des Seth,] [des Herrschers des Himmels]... [Was in der Mitte auf] ihrer Rückseite ist: Eine figürliche Darstellung mit dem Weiblichen Bild [der] Göttin von Ḫatti beim Umarmen des weiblichen Bildes der Fürstin von Ḫatti, umgeben von einer Randinschrift mit dem Wortlaut: "Das Siegel des Sonnengottest der Stadt Arinna, des Herrn des Landes; das Siegel der Puduḫepa, der Fürstin des Landes Ḫatti, der Tochter des Landes Kizzuwatna, der [Priesterin (?)] des Sonnengottes] von Arinna der Herrin des Landes, der Dienerin der Göttin." [Was] innerhalb der umrandung der figürlichen Darstellung ist: Das Siegel des Sonnengottes von Arinna, des Herrn

⁶¹¹ Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000-323 BC*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007b), 220. In the Hittite version of the treaty, the storm god, Teshub, featured prominently, according to his foremost status in the Hittite pantheon. The Hittites had a storm god "in ever major city of the state" and all of these appeared in the treaty.

⁶¹² Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 69: §21, a-c. In the hieroglyphic version, an error seems to occur after the curses and blessings in that an additional provisional clause concerning the amnesty of extradited persons is inserted after the final blessing. Perhaps this was a mistake on the part of an Egyptian scribe or artist who accidentally omitted the provision in its original placement with the other provisions. It is impossible to know whether the same ordering was preserved at the Ramesseum.

jeden Landes.⁶¹³

The description of the seal emphasizes the materiality of the Treaty. While this description is unique in the Near Eastern treaty corpus, the emphasis upon the physical and visual properties of the Treaty is not unprecedented. A Treaty between Mursili II and Talmi-Sharruma of Aleppo, for example, contains a passage that describes how the present tablet is in fact a replacement produced after the original tablet was stolen.⁶¹⁴ Such emphasis on the physical nature of the tablet itself complicates Altman and Beckman's assertion that the treaty text was merely a recording of an oath-taking activity. Rather, the materiality of these treaties embodied, not just reflected, relationship-making across vast physical distances in the ancient world. The Silver Tablet Treaty (both the silver tablet itself and the inscriptions on the temple walls) was a physical contract with illocutionary force: it delimited and defined the diplomatic relationship established in its structure, even though it is unlikely that Ramses and Hattusili III ever came together to swear an oath of allegiance.

The act of inscribing the Treaty on the temple walls, of recording in perpetuity Ramses's acceptance and participation in the diplomatic alliance, materialized the speech act of oath-taking. And as a speech act, the series of oaths in the Silver Tablet Treaty constructed a binding alliance. The illocutionary force of the diplomatic friendship that is promised in the clauses of the Silver Tablet Treaty was literally rendered in stone through the Treaty's inscription upon the walls of the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Its durability and visual prominence sent a powerful message to the Hittite kingdom, and indeed the greater international world, concerning Ramses's acceptance of this new alliance.

For a Hittite audience at the Ramesseum, the presence of the Silver Tablet Treaty opposite the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the first pylon transformed the Egyptian enemy from the two-dimensional battlefield into a friend.⁶¹⁵ Hittite treaties explicitly invoked the language of peace and loyalty and familial relations and the Silver Tablet Treaty was no exception. For those Hittites present in Egypt as a direct result of the new diplomatic relations between the Egyptian and Hittite rulers, the illocutionary force of the Treaty superseded the hostile message of the Battle reliefs.

As a speech act, the Silver Tablet Treaty can have multiple forces depending upon the context of the act and the reception of the audience. To an Egyptian audience as well as a Hittite one, the Silver Tablet Treaty invoked a larger Mediterranean world where diplomacy provided meaningful access to foreign commerce and political stability (see below). The provisions of the Treaty were accepted as genuine and there is no evidence that contravenes an Egyptian audience deeming the Treaty as appropriate (thus contributing to its illocutionary force both internally and abroad). However, by placing the Silver Tablet Treaty in close proximity to the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, Ramses was simultaneously nuancing the message of the Treaty. This visual dialog created a new,

⁶¹³ Edel, *Der Vertrag*, 83: §28, 1-14, §29, 1-14.

⁶¹⁴ Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant*, 99.

⁶¹⁵ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 181.

perlocutionary, force—one that was neither direct nor explicit, but only insinuated.⁶¹⁶ For an audience anxious to be reaffirmed of Egypt’s supremacy, particularly in the context of temple decorations where pharaoh is expected to preserve *Maat* (the cosmic order of the universe) for all eternity, Ramses’s victory at Kadesh diminishes the force of his capitulation to the international culture of brotherly relations throughout the Near East by recasting the gesture in a noble, generous light. When taken as the result of his success at Kadesh, Ramses appears as the dominant force within the “parity” Silver Tablet Treaty. In this new era of diplomacy, how the Battle of Kadesh meant to a local Egyptian audience became implicated in its impact upon the Silver Tablet Treaty. By reframing the diplomatic alliance as a benevolent outcome of an Egyptian victory on the battlefield, Ramses’s participation in the Silver Tablet Treaty became a magnanimous gesture as opposed to a true acknowledgement of parity.

For an Egyptian audience, the placement of the Silver Tablet Treaty so near this embattled, two-dimensional Levantine landscape served to reinforce the Treaty as something the Hittites must have begged for in their defeat.⁶¹⁷ In ancient Egypt, foreigners were, after all, required to “ask for peace (*dbh htp*)” in order to stay alive, as Thutmose III’s account of the siege of Megiddo demonstrates: “Now the princes of this foreign land came out on their bellies to kiss the ground to the might of His Majesty, and to [*dbh htp*] for their nostrils, because of the greatness of his strength and the extent of the power of Amun over all foreign lands.”⁶¹⁸ In the hieroglyphic version of the Silver Tablet Treaty, it is most likely not a coincidence that the ordering of the oaths always makes Hattusili III swear fealty first by asking for peace (*dbh htp*) from Pharaoh.

In Mario Liverani’s discussion of internal and external propaganda during the Late Bronze Age, he argues that such documents are “basically distinct and... require different perceptions and representation[s] of reality”:

On the one hand we have documents addressed to the inner public. These texts range from monumental royal inscriptions to private tomb inscriptions, but have in common a celebrate cause, an underscoring of prestige, a centralized world-view, a disregard for the point of view of the outer world (or the outer partners), with ‘events’ being used as documentary material or as a demonstrative proof in order to establish the author’s political and/or social position... On the other hand we have documents addressed to the outer partners, and constituting the very operative substance of the inter-state relations. These texts range from

⁶¹⁶ Austin, *How to do Things*, 101-106.

⁶¹⁷ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 185-186. Of course, the resounding victory that Ramses portrayed in his Battle of Kadesh reliefs may have been far from the actual outcome of the fighting. Many scholars, such as Amélie Kuhrt, suggest that the result was more likely a stalemate. Amélie, Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC*, vol. 1 (Routledge History of the Ancient World), (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 214.

⁶¹⁸ Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Abteilung 4, Band 3, Heft 9-12: Historisch-biographische Urkunden, (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1907), 662: 8-12, 663: 2. Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 145.

international treaties to letters exchanged between private persons, but have in common an integrative purpose, an underlining of interest, a symmetrical world-view.⁶¹⁹

Instead, I argue that the Silver Tablet Treaty, or more precisely the visual dialog between the Battle of Kadesh reliefs and the Silver Tablet Treaty, remained consistent for both Hittite and Egyptian audiences at the Ramesseum; both audiences witnessed the same “documents.” Rather, it was the diplomatic and martial tension between these reliefs, as well as the different backgrounds and expectations that the Hittite and Egyptian audiences brought to them, that allowed these audiences to understand the reliefs differently. When the Hittites saw the Treaty adjacent to the Battle of Kadesh, its diplomacy overruled the animosity of the earlier thirteenth century military altercation. When the Egyptians saw the same visual dialog, they focused instead upon the Egyptian supremacy preserved in both the Kadesh reliefs and the wording and order of the Silver Tablet Treaty. But neither audience could merely choose one set of reliefs and ignore the other. It is precisely the tension created in their visual correspondence that accounts for the nuances in how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs mean to the post-Silver Tablet Treaty audiences described below.

The Marriage Stele

Thirteen years after he negotiated the Silver Tablet Treaty, Ramses II further cemented diplomatic relations with the Hittites by taking a daughter of Hattusili III as his wife. After she married Ramses II, the Hittite princess was given an Egyptian name, Maat-Hor-Neferure.⁶²⁰ This marital alliance was recorded and prominently displayed on steles (and in the form of relief steles) at Abu Simbel, Amara West, Elephantine, and Karnak.⁶²¹ The best preserved of these was inscribed just south of the terrace in front of the main temple’s façade at Abu Simbel (where Kadesh reliefs decorate the hypostyle hall) (Fig. 59). In the upper portion of the stele there is a seated image of Ramses flanked by gods. The bride-to-be and her father, Hattusili III, approach pharaoh from the right with their hands raised outwards in a gesture of adoration and supplication (Fig. 60). The hieroglyphs, inscribed below, recount how:

The chief of Kheta sent, asking of [Ramses] permanent peace. Then they [came] with [their possessions, and] their splendid [gifts] before them, of silver and gold, marvels many and great, horses to... delight the heart of his majesty, saying: ‘Behold the great chief of Kheta comes, bringing his eldest daughter, bearing much tribute, being everything [...]. They have traversed many mountains and

⁶¹⁹ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 25.

⁶²⁰ The correspondence between Ramses and Puduhepa includes requests for the arrangement of a second marriage, but this is corroborated only by steles from Abydos and Coptos. Kitchen and Gaballa, “Ramesside Varia,” 14-28.

⁶²¹ For Karnak and Abu Simbel, see below. At Amara West, the Marriage Stele was erected in front of the temple. From Elephantine only fragments remain. At Coptos, a heavily broken stele references a marriage between Ramses and a Hittite princess.

difficult ways, that they might reach the boundaries of his majesty... The daughter of the great chief of Kheta marched in [front] of the army [...] of his majesty in following her. They were mingled with foot and horse of Kheta; they were warriors as well as regulars...⁶²²

At the Temple of Amun at Karnak,⁶²³ the Marriage Stele was erected against the southern face of the eastern wing of the ninth pylon.⁶²⁴ On the opposite wing a second stele was erected, which contains a list of blessings bestowed upon Ramses by the god Ptah.⁶²⁵ Both the Silver Tablet Treaty and the diplomatic marriage to a Hittite princess are explicitly mentioned in this list of blessings, suggesting that these steles were erected in tandem.⁶²⁶ In front of the ninth pylon's southern face a fragment of a monumental foot and pedestal is all that remains today of what was once a colossal standing statue of Ramses II.

Another stele from a much later date, also recovered from the Temple of Amun at Karnak, provides unexpected insights into the resonance of the Marriage Stele and suggests that both the Silver Tablet Treaty and the diplomatic marriage to Maat-Hor-Neferure took hold in the Egyptian imagination and never let go. Known as the Bentresh Stele (after the name of the Bactrian princess who falls ill in the inscription), it was recovered in 1820's from a small sanctuary located just outside the main temple complex on its eastern side.⁶²⁷ The inscription on the Bentresh Stele recounts how Ramses traveled to Naharin (Mittani land) to collect tribute. There the prince of Bactria offers his daughter's hand in marriage to Ramses who happily accepts. The Bactrian princess returns with Ramses to Egypt, where she assumes the name Neferure. The inscription continues on to describe how in the twenty-third year of Ramses's reign, he receives an envoy from Bactria revealing that Neferure's sister, Bentresh, has fallen ill. Ramses

⁶²² Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 184-185: §418-421.

⁶²³ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant, The Life and Times of Ramesses II*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips Ltd., 1982), 85.

⁶²⁴ Elizabeth Blyth, *Karnak, Evolution of a Temple*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 158. A second, alabaster stele contained an abbreviated account of the marriage and was placed in the adjacent temple complex for the goddess Mut (to whom the stele was dedicated).

⁶²⁵ Blyth, *Karnak*, 158. A copy of this second stele also stands at Abu Simbel.

⁶²⁶ Blyth, *Karnak*, 158; Ogden Goelet, Jr., "The Blessing of Ptah," In *Fragments of a Shattered Visage: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ramesses the Great*, ed. Edward Bleiberg. (Memphis: University of Memphis Press, 1993), 35-36.

⁶²⁷ Stele Louvre C 284. Edition: Michèle Broze, *La Princesse de Bakhtan, Essai d'analyse stylistique*, (Bruxelles: Fondation égyptologique reine Elisabeth, 1989). Translation: Robert Ritner, "The Bentresh Stela (Louvre C 284)," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ed. William K. Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 361-66. Kim Ryholt, "Imitatio alexandri in Egyptian Literary Tradition," in *The Romance between Greece and the East*, 59-78, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 66. See Ryholt, "Imitatio alexandri" for the location of the Stele and the recent attribution of the sanctuary to Khonsu-who-Exercises-Authority.

sends his royal scribe, Thothemhab, to visit the girl; upon examining Bentresh Thothemhab finds her possessed. When Thothemhab recounts this to Ramses, Ramses turns to the god Khonsu-who-Exercises-Authority (a form of the god Khonsu, the son of Mut and Amun) for help.⁶²⁸ An oracular consultation inspires Ramses to send an image of the god to Bactria, where Khonsu-who-Exercises-Authority magically protects and heals the possessed princess. The prince of Bactria, anxious to have such a powerful deity of his own, initially refuses to return the statue of Khonsu-who-Exercises-Authority to Egypt. Eventually though he has an oracular dream of the image of the god flying off to Egypt and takes it as a sign to return the statue. This return, celebrated in the thirty-third year of Ramses reign (according to the inscription), ends with the erection of the Bentresh Stele itself at the Temple to Khonsu-who-Exercises-Authority.

While the inscription on the Bentresh Stele purports to date to the reign of Ramses II, it has long been realized that this is not in fact a Nineteenth Dynasty composition. Despite its imitation of New Kingdom imperial steles, the Bentresh Stele can be dated orthographically to the early Ptolemaic Period.⁶²⁹ Additionally, the text contains an anachronistic reference to Naharin; the Mittani state had ceased to exist well before Ramses II's reign.⁶³⁰ Moreover, the name of pharaoh on the Bentresh Stele combines aspects of both Ramses II's and Thutmose IV's titulary.⁶³¹ Kim Ryholt suggests that this was an intentional conflation of two rulers who were well known for marrying foreign wives.⁶³²

But the Bentresh Stele, erected a thousand years after Ramses II's diplomatic marriage to Maat-Hor-Neferure, is uncanny in its evocation of the international world of the Near East during the Late Bronze Age. The name of the Bactrian princess married off to Ramses II at the beginning of the Bentresh Stele is a shortened form (Neferure) of the Egyptian name that the Hittite princess acquired upon her arrival in Egypt.⁶³³

⁶²⁸ “This particular form (and function) of the god Chons is first attested in the Ramesside period and had a long history as a god of healing and protection.” Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 66.

⁶²⁹ Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 65-66. Erman dates the Bentresh Stele to the late fourth century BCE based on orthographic parallels with the Satrap Stele of Ptolemy I (which dates to 311 BCE). This date is supported by archaeological evidence that suggests that the sanctuary of Khonsu-who-Exercises-Authority was built after the reign of Nephertites I at the beginning of the fourth century BCE.

⁶³⁰ Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 71. Bactria, of course, is also an anachronism in the inscription because it did not become a formidable political entity until centuries later.

⁶³¹ Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 71.

⁶³² “The five royal names inscribed at the very beginning of the text represent a conflation of the names of Tuthmosis IV (c. 1400–1390 bc) and Ramesses II (c. 1279–1213 bc); the first three names of the royal titulary belong to the former, and the last two to the latter. The rest of the inscription refers only to the names of Ramesses.” Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 71.

⁶³³ Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 72. The content of the Bentresh inscription is clearly modeled on Ramses's Marriage Stele where beyond the similarity of the names of the princesses, an entire line from the inscription is almost a word-for-word copy.

Moreover, diplomatic marriages between Near Eastern rulers were well-documented in Late Bronze Age foreign correspondence—where letters speak not only of the exchange of wives, scribes, skilled personnel, and even gods, but also of shared socio-political structures, material values, imperial aims, literary and visual cultures, and artistic production. Robust evidence for this burgeoning system was uncovered at the Egyptian site of Tell el-Amarna, capital of Egypt during the middle of the fourteenth century BCE, where an archive of diplomatic correspondence contains dozens of letters from the Great Kings of Babylonia, Mittani, Assyria, Arzawa, Hatti, and Cyprus to the Egyptian pharaoh. Included in this archive were hundreds of letters between Egypt its vassal states in the northern and southern Levant—all written on clay tablets in the *lingua franca* of the Late Bronze Age, Akkadian.⁶³⁴ From the reign of Ramses II, another impressive textual corpus was uncovered at Hattusa, the Hittite capital.⁶³⁵ Archaeologists have retrieved some 30,000 clay tablet fragments with cuneiform writing on them from archives associated with the palace and temples there, including lengthy correspondence between Egyptian and Hittite rulers.⁶³⁶

In both archives the Great Kings refer to each other as brothers and speak of their mutual love and respect for one another. These terms of brotherhood between the Great Kings were often more than symbolic. Like the Marriage Stele and the Bentresh Stele, the letters are filled with references to diplomatic marriages and travel arrangements for the brides and their entourages between the courts of the Great Kings. When either a princess or her ruler husband died, new marriage arrangements were immediately designed.⁶³⁷

In this system, each of the Great Kings had his own “matrimonial strategy.”⁶³⁸ Egyptian pharaohs acquired Near Eastern princesses as wives, while refusing to wed their

⁶³⁴ See William L. Moran, trans., *The Amarna Letters*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). 382 tablets in total were recovered from Amarna, thirty-two of which are fragments of myths, epics, syllabaries, lexical lists, god lists, and an amulet. “By the first quarter of the second millennium B.C. knowledge of cuneiform writing had spread far and wide, and Babylonian had become the principal language of a cosmopolitan culture.” Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, xviii.

⁶³⁵ Mark Weeden, “State Correspondence in the Hittite World,” in *State Correspondence in the Ancient World*, ed. Karen Radner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 39-40. The majority of the cuneiform tablets from Hattusa were retrieved from three main archives: In the palace on the citadel mound of Büyükkale, in Temple I and its storage magazines located in the Lower City, and in the administrative “House on the Slope” (“Haus am Hang”). Unfortunately, the habitation of Hattusa during the Iron Age impacted the distribution of the tablet fragments; many appear to have been disturbed from original contexts (dug up, moved around, or used as fill in Phrygian buildings).

⁶³⁶ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 32, 38.

⁶³⁷ See El Amarna (EA) 17.

⁶³⁸ Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History, Society, Economy*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 286.

own daughters into foreign courts.⁶³⁹ Hittites rulers, on the other hand, used diplomatic marriages as a way to strengthen political relations.⁶⁴⁰

Along with foreign princesses, specialists traveled between the courts of the Near East at the behest of the Great Kings in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE. Indeed the correspondence is full of requests for the services of experts who were employed by the various royal courts of the time. Hattusili III, for example, requested a Babylonian sculptor to “make some images to put in my family’s house. My brother, send me a sculptor. As soon as he finishes the statues, I will send him back and he will come to you.”⁶⁴¹ An oft-cited letter from Ramses II refers to an earlier request that Hattusili III made for an Egyptian doctor to assist in the fertility of his sister. Ramses was unabashed in his skepticism: “She is said to be fifty or sixty years old. It is not possible to prepare medicines for a woman who has completed fifty or sixty years so that she might still be caused to give birth.”⁶⁴² In a letter from Hattusili III to a Babylonian king, he mentioned a Babylonian conjuration expert who unfortunately died while residing in the Hittite court. In response to accusations that the conjuration expert was

⁶³⁹ See EA 4 where a Babylonian king quotes from an earlier letter he received from pharaoh: “From time immemorial no daughter of the king of Egy[pt] is given to anyone.” Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 8: 5-6.

⁶⁴⁰ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 286; Samuel Meier, “Diplomacy and International Marriages,” in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 165-173. The diplomatic correspondence between Ramses II and Puduhepa in particular provides insights into the Hittite patterns of accepting and bequeathing royal daughters. In her letters, Puduhepa takes credit for the foreign princesses wed into the Hittite court: “The daughter of Babylonia and the daughter of Amurru whom I the Queen took for myself—were they not indeed something for me to be proud of before the people of Ḫatti? It was I who did it. I took each daughter of a Great King, though a foreigner, as daughter-in-law. And if at some time his messengers come in splendor to the daughter-in-law, or one of her brothers or sisters come to her, are they not also (a source of) praise (for me)?” Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi (KUB) 21.38. Edition: Wolfgang Helck, “Urhi-Tešup in Ägypten,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 17 (1963): 87-97. Translation: Hoffner, *Letters*, 286: 47’-51’. Puduhepa also writes to Ramses that it was the queen herself who instigated the marriage of two of her sons to Babylonian princesses and another to a princess from Amurru. As for the foreign daughters-in-law: “Was there no woman available in Ḫatti? Did I not do this out of consideration for renown?” KUB 21.38. Hoffner, *Letters*, 286: 52’. Also see J. De Roos, “Materials for a Biography: The Correspondence of Puduhepa with Egypt and Ugarit,” in *The Life and Times of Hattušili III and Tudhaliya IV*, ed. Theo P.J. Van den Hout and C.H. Van Zoest (Leiden: Nederlands Institute voor het Nabije Oosten, 2006), 23.

⁶⁴¹ Benno Landsberger, *Sam’al: Studien zur Entdeckung der Ruinenstätte Karatepe*, (Ankara: Türkische Historische Gesellschaft, 1948), 113, note 269.

⁶⁴² Beckman, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 138: No. 22G §6 obv. 15- rev. 5. See also Mario Liverani, “Review of Edel 1976,” *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 51 (1977): 285-286.

detained against his will, Hattusili III wrote: “the woman whom he married is a relative of mine.”⁶⁴³

In the foreign correspondence of the Late Bronze Age, even gods travel among the courts of the Great Kings (just like in the Bentresh Stele). In EA 23, Tushratta writes to Amenhotep III that the goddess Ishtar of Nineveh informed him that she wished to travel to Egypt, “a country that [she] loves, and return.”⁶⁴⁴ As a result, Tushratta “herewith sends her, and she is on her way.”⁶⁴⁵ But he also expresses fear that perhaps pharaoh will try to keep the statue like the prince of Bactria in the Bentresh Stele: “May my brother honor her, (then) at (his) pleasure let her go so that she may come back.”⁶⁴⁶

The fourth century BCE Bentresh Stele inscription thus conjures in keen spirits the diplomatic relations between the courts of the Late Bronze Age Near East and Mediterranean through the transference of princesses, scribes, and even statues of gods. In so doing, it situates the resonance of the diplomatic marriage between Ramses II and Maat-Hor-Neferure in a broader context of connectivity that encompasses treaty-making and even martial encounters. Almost a millennium after his reign, Ramses II was invoked in archaizing propaganda not for his military prowess but for collecting tribute in the northern Levant and taking a foreign wife named Neferure.

For a thirteenth century BCE audience as well, the prevalence of these marriage steles at important state temples across Egypt, especially along with the hieroglyphic renderings of the Silver Tablet Treaty at Karnak, is significant. It indicates that Ramses’s diplomatic efforts were not just “for show,” nor were they solely aimed towards an international audience. Throughout Egypt, temple audiences would be confronted with these accounts of peaceful relations between Hatti and Egypt, which emphasize diplomatic relations as opposed to the martial engagement of the Battle of Kadesh, in a broader internationalized world.

Levantine Steles

However, before a Hittite audience reached the Ramesseum, it would have to pass Egyptian imperial steles that stood throughout Egypt and the Levant and commemorated Egyptian military victories in the imperial landscape. These Levantine steles were erected at Nahr el-Kalb, Bet Shean, and Byblos by Ramses II, and at Kadesh, Tyre, and

⁶⁴³ Beckman, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 143: No. 23 §13 rev. 46-47. See also Leo A. Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 145.

⁶⁴⁴ EA 23. Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 61: 13-15.

⁶⁴⁵ EA 23. Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 61: 17.

⁶⁴⁶ EA 23. Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 61: 22-25. Ryholt points out that the involuntary exile of divine images would have been exceptionally resonant among a Late Period/ Early Ptolemaic Period Egyptian audience who had suffered “a great national trauma initially caused by the large-scale abduction of divine images from Egypt in connection with the Assyrian and Persian occupations of the country.” Ryholt, “*Imitatio alexandri*,” 68.

Bet Shean by his father, Seti I.⁶⁴⁷ They commemorated Egyptian military victories and often contained an image of Egyptian pharaohs from the early Nineteenth Dynasty in martial poses subduing foreigners or worshipping before Egyptian gods. These were not monuments renouncing aggressive tactics and celebrating peaceful relations between Great Kings; they were the physical embodiment of Egyptian acts of imperialism.

A Hittite audience in Egypt would have had ample opportunity to observe these imperial monuments along their journey from Hattusa. Heading south from the Hittite capital, one crosses the Kizil Irmak heading towards Cappadocia, where the road funnels travelers southeast along the Melendiz mountains to the Cilician Gates.⁶⁴⁸ This is one of the only passes from the Hittite heartland into the Amuq plain and the northern Levant, and it would start travelers along the road to Ugarit.⁶⁴⁹ From Ugarit, Hittite travelers could take an East–West road through the Nahr el-Kalb valley, while a popular parallel route to the south ran through the Homs gap from Tell Kazel on the coast to Qatna and Kadesh in the interior.⁶⁵⁰ These East–West routes would join with the main North–South road through the Levant connecting Egypt with Mesopotamia and Anatolia that was later known as the ‘Via Maris.’

Traveling through this Levantine landscape across the ever-contested boundaries of the Hittite sphere of influence, the imperial steles signaled this landscape’s contentious nature as a perpetual battleground between both Hittite and Egyptian imperial aims. The Deeds of Suppiluliuma (written by his successor, Mursili II) emphasize Kadesh in particular as a contested polity in the relations between Egypt and Hatti as early as the fourteenth century BCE, over half a century before the Battle of Kadesh. The Deeds describe how “The Egyptian infantry and horse-troops now came, and they attacked the country of Kadesh, that [Suppiluliuma] had conquered... when I [Suppiluliuma] heard this, I sent forth my own troops and chariots and lords. So they came and attacked [Egyptian] territory, the country of Amka.”⁶⁵¹ As a result, the Levantine steles along with

⁶⁴⁷ For a detailed description and discussion of Ramses II’s stele at Nahr el-Kalb, see Chapter 7. For Ramses’s stele at Bet Shean, see below. For Seti’s imperial stele, see Peter J. Brand, *The Monuments of Seti I: Epigraphical, Historical, and Art Historical Analysis*, (Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 2000).

⁶⁴⁸ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 34-35.

⁶⁴⁹ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 34-35. In the archives at Ugarit, archaeologists uncovered a letter from Puduhepa to Niqmudu III—Ras Shamra (RS) 17.435—where Puduhepa responds to complaints from Niqmudu that “caravans and horses which passed through is country on their way from Hatti to Egypt” did not pay official taxes. De Roos, “Materials for a Biography,” 25.

⁶⁵⁰ David A. Dorsey, “Roads and Highways,” in *Near Eastern Archaeology: A Reader*, ed. Suzanne Richard (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 131-134; John Wilson, “The Way from Jerusalem to Jericho,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 38 (1975): 10-24; Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, (Toronto: Hakkart, 1974).

⁶⁵¹ Edition: Hans G. Güterbock, “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told By His Son, Mursili II,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10 (1956): 41-68, 75-98, 107-130. Translation: Gary Beckman et al., “Hittite Historical Texts 1,” in *Historical Sources in Translation: The Ancient Near East*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006),

the Battle of Kadesh reliefs may have evoked not a singular conflict between Ramses II and Muwatalli for a Hittite audience, but a series of skirmishes, battles, and military activities in the region dating back to the reign of Suppiluliuma I. In so doing, the Battle of Kadesh itself became subsumed into the larger narrative of conflict, conquest, and contestation represented by the Egyptian imperial steles in the northern and southern Levantine landscapes.

Because the Levantine steles demarcated the contested three-dimensional landscape of the northern Levant, they contributed to the landscape network of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs for a Hittite audience—particularly the stele that Seti I erected at Kadesh itself.⁶⁵² Only the upper portion of the basalt stele’s lunette was recovered, but the section that remains contains an image of Seti I, wearing the *atef* crown, standing before Amun-Re and three additional gods. Amun-Re hands him a scimitar, akin to the triumphal reliefs of Seti I at the Temple of Amun at Karnak (see Chapter 5). On Seti’s stele at Kadesh, his imperial success in the Levant was linked through the visual rhetoric of the triumphal reliefs to a broader message of Egyptian dominance in the international arena. As discussed in Chapter 5, this was reinforced by the placement of both Seti’s and Ramses’s Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Temple of Amun at Karnak in close proximity to their respective triumphal reliefs on the same temple walls.

Ramses’s stele at Bet Shean, erected in the eighteenth year of his reign (three years before he participated in the Silver Tablet Treaty), also formed a landscape network with the Battle of Kadesh reliefs back in Egypt.⁶⁵³ In the stele’s lunette, Ramses also replicates features from his triumphal reliefs, including an image of himself offering booty to the god Amun who hands him a scimitar. Underneath the two figures name-rings list the Nine-Bows (canonical enemies of Egypt).⁶⁵⁴ The inscription on the Bet Shean stele is rhetorical and focuses on the valor of Pharaoh as opposed to commemorating a specific Levantine campaign. Still, several of the epithets describing Ramses on his Bet Shean stele (such as “valiant like Montu”) evoke descriptions of

237: A II 21- A III 1.

⁶⁵² Bertha Porter and Rosalind L.B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*, Vol. 7, Nubia, The Deserts and Outside Egypt, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 392.

⁶⁵³ Traveling between Hattusa and Egypt by boat, one would follow the Levantine coastline. From the southern Levantine coast, routes to the interior (towards modern Tell Abu Hawam and Tel Nami) pass the sites in the Jezreel Valley such as Megiddo, Taanach and Beth Shean, and crossed the transverse Jordan Valley. Kristina J. Hesse, “Late Bronze Age Maritime Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: An Inland Levantine Perspective” (Master thesis, Uppsala University, 2008), 38-39.

⁶⁵⁴ Jaroslav Černý, “Stela of Ramesses II from Beisan.” *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958): 75-82. Translation: Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical: Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. 2, Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999b), 27-29.

Ramses II in his Kadesh inscriptions.⁶⁵⁵ Here again the imperial landscape of the Levant is connected to broader messages of pharaonic power as well as the two-dimensional rhetoric of Ramses II's Battle of Kadesh reliefs through both the images and inscriptions on the Levantine steles.

Such imperial messages would form a tension with the Silver Tablet Treaty and the Marriage Stele, which celebrate peaceful relations between the Egyptian and Hittite empires. Taken on their own, these messages appear incompatible, but this martial and diplomatic rhetoric was not experienced in isolation by a thirteenth century audience—Hittite or Egyptian. Visitors to the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak encountered not just the Battle of Kadesh or the Silver Tablet Treaty, but a visual dialog between the reliefs. And it is precisely this dialog that encapsulates the strategies for Ramses's participation in the international system of the Late Bronze Age. Perhaps his greatest speech act was the creation of this visual conversation that established the confluence of martial and diplomatic activities in contested, international landscapes. It certainly contributed to the robust international system, which both established powerful precedents for diplomatic protocol and facilitated the imperial machinations of enterprising Near Eastern rulers—a facet which Assyrian rulers would use to their great advantage (see below).

Hittite Audience

Unfortunately no account remains that places Hittites in the Ramesseum for a festival performance (during the reign of Ramses II or otherwise). We know nothing of the specific contexts in which Hittites visited the temples or experienced the massive battle tableaux.⁶⁵⁶ But Hittite permeations into multiple strata of Egyptian society, including Ramses's royal harem, allow us to infer a Hittite audience at temple complexes where the Kadesh reliefs adorned prominent positions.⁶⁵⁷ Trevor Bryce even hypothesizes that “Ramesses saw to it that his foreign guests were made fully aware of [Egypt's victory], probably by being taken on specially arranged tours of inspection... [of] Ramesses' version of it... emblazoned in both words and picture on the walls of five of the most prominent Egyptian temples.”⁶⁵⁸

Maat-Hor-Neferure, Ramses's Hittite wife, was certainly spending time in Ramses's company because nine months after her arrival in Egypt she gave birth to a daughter, Neferure. In KUB 23.105, Hattusili writes to Ramses: “Couldn't you have

⁶⁵⁵ In the Kadesh Poem, Ramses is compared several times to Montu. See, for example, line 8 where “his strength is like Mont[u] in his hour” or in line 129, where “all I did succeeded, I was like Mont[u].” Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 62, 66.

⁶⁵⁶ See below for a discussion of the Battle of Kadesh in the foreign correspondence between Ramses II and Hattusili III.

⁶⁵⁷ Indeed, given Ramses's proclivity for the Battle of Kadesh as a decorative scheme, Kadesh reliefs may have once adorned temples or the palace in the capital city, Pr-Ramses, where large numbers of Hittite soldiers and the entourage of a Hittite princess were all known to have lived (see below).

⁶⁵⁸ Trevor Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 89.

created a son? But I am very glad with a daughter.”⁶⁵⁹ Additional evidence for their close companionship comes from Sir Flinders Petrie’s excavation of the Royal Harem at Medinet el-Ghurab, where he uncovered a fragment from an administrative papyrus that lists clothing belonging to a Maat-Hor-Neferure. While excavating, Petrie discovered “a remarkable custom: a hole was dug in the floor of a room, and into it personal objects were lowered and burnt, after which the floor was covered again. The items included various personal valuables, such as necklaces, toilet vases, kohl tubes, a mirror, a stool and articles of clothing.”⁶⁶⁰ Janet Politi has suggested that these Nineteenth Dynasty ‘Burnt Group’ burials might in fact represent a burial practice described in the Hittite Laws: “If a man takes his wife and leads [her] away to his house, he shall carry her dowry in (to his house). If the woman [dies] th[ere] (in his house), then he, the man, shall burn her personal possessions, and the man shall take her dowry for himself.”⁶⁶¹ Singer agrees that these deposits inside the houses at Gurob likely belong to Maat-Hor-Neferure and her Hittite retinue in the harem.⁶⁶²

No account of the size of the royal retinue accompanying Maat-Hor-Neferure to Egypt remains, but it is not unreasonable to compare her entourage to that of Giluhepa, a Mittanian princess who married Amenhotep III a little over a century before.⁶⁶³ From correspondence between Giluhepa’s father, Tushratta, and Amenhotep III, we know that she was accompanied by at least 317 attendants.⁶⁶⁴ We also know, from the correspondence between Ramses and Puduhepa and Hattusili III, several details about the travel arrangements for the Hittite wedding party from Hattusa to Egypt. Puduhepa wrote to Ramses that her daughter would be accompanied by troops from Hatti under the control of a Hittite prince,⁶⁶⁵ and that the queen herself would accompany the party as far as the Egyptian border in the northern Levant. Ramses sent instructions to one of his Levantine governors in the border region requesting that he assist the party and its escort once they crossed into Egyptian-controlled lands and “came formally under his protection.”⁶⁶⁶

Accompanying Maat-Hor-Neferure and her entourage were large quantities of livestock and Gasgan prisoners.⁶⁶⁷ In a letter to Hattusili, Ramses informs the Hittite king how two of his Levantine vassals (in Upi and Canaan) had been instructed to oversee the transference of cattle, sheep, and prisoners once the party progressed into

⁶⁵⁹ KUB 23.105. De Roos, “Materials for a Biography,” 24: 3’-4’.

⁶⁶⁰ Itmar Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair in the Hittite-Egyptian Correspondence,” in *The Life and Times of Hattusili III and Tudhaliya IV*, ed. Theo P.J. Van den Hout and C.H. Van Zoest (Leiden: Nederlands Institute voor het Nabije Oosten, 2006), 28.

⁶⁶¹ Translation: Gary Beckman, “Inheritance and Royal Succession Among the Hittites,” in *Kaniššuwat. A Tribute to Hans G. Güterbock on his Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr. and Gary Beckman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 16.

⁶⁶² Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair,” 28.

⁶⁶³ Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair,” 28; see EA 29.

⁶⁶⁴ Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair,” 28; see EA 29.

⁶⁶⁵ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 116.

⁶⁶⁶ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 116.

⁶⁶⁷ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 116.

Egyptian territory.⁶⁶⁸ In a corresponding letter to Puduhepa, Ramses assures the queen that the Gassians would be well received in Egypt, but also warned her to keep them tightly guarded while they remained in Hittite custody so that no harm would come to his future bride or her attendants.⁶⁶⁹

In the upper portion of the Marriage Stele at Abu Simbel, Egyptian artists depict Hattusili himself present at the ceremony, although nowhere in the correspondence between the Egyptian and Hittite rulers do they reference meeting in person.⁶⁷⁰ There is however evidence of Ramses inviting Hattusili to visit him in Egypt after his marriage to Maat-Hor-Neferure: “may my brother come to me and may he carry out the good proposal to visit me, and may one come to the other and may one appear before the presence of the other in the place where His Majesty occupies the throne.”⁶⁷¹ In a follow-up letter that Ramses sent to Hattusili, he quoted a passage from correspondence that he had previously received from Hattusili: “My brother has written to me as follows: ‘the King, your brother, will come to you, and the king, your brother, will carry out the good proposal to visit you, and your brother will come to your side into your land in order to appear in the presence of his brother.’”⁶⁷²

Even though Hattusili’s visit did not transpire, many other Hittites made the trip from Hatti to Egypt during his reign and the reigns of his successors. Throughout the New Kingdom, the Egyptian military was anxious to adopt foreign weapons and skills; they recruited readily from peoples against whom they had previously fought.⁶⁷³ In the capital of Pr-Ramses, archaeologists uncovered evidence of a large Hittite garrison and workshop for repairing weaponry and chariotry equipment.⁶⁷⁴ In the land of Hatti (and elsewhere around the Mediterranean), the charioteers were among the social elite, belonging to a professional class who fought in the most prestigious ranks of the army. It is likely that the Hittite charioteers who moved to the Egyptian capital brought their own craftsmen; the German excavation team at Pr-Ramses uncovered limestone molds for bronze “figure-8” shields of the Hittite variety from a complex described as the

⁶⁶⁸ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 116.

⁶⁶⁹ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 117.

⁶⁷⁰ De Roos, “Materials for a Biography,” 22, footnote 13. Some have taken Puduhepa’s vow to heal the feet of Hattusili III (KUB 15.3) as an indication of his intended voyage to Egypt.

⁶⁷¹ Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache (ÄKH) 4. Also, Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi (KBo) 28.1. Edition: Elmar Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, Bd. I Umschriften und Übersetzungen, (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 22-23. Translation: Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 87: 20’-22’.

⁶⁷² ÄKH 4. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 87: 22’-25’.

⁶⁷³ Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 225.

⁶⁷⁴ Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, 218-219.

“headquarters” of the royal chariotry.⁶⁷⁵ From this large complex, archaeologists retrieved 700 horse studs, many of Hittite or Anatolian origin.⁶⁷⁶ If Ramses’s epistolographic request to Hattusili III for “horses from herds (ANŠÉ.KUR.RA.MEŠ *ša šu-gu5-ul-la-ti*) from the Hittites” was answered affirmatively, then the royal stables in Pr-Ramses would have been full of Hittite horses to use with the Hittite chariots.⁶⁷⁷

Internationalism (and its Limitations) in the Late Bronze Age

In asking how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs impacted this new, Hittite audience, this chapter has framed the visual dialog with the Silver Tablet Treaty (and the Marriage Stele) in the broader landscape of international connectivity in the Late Bronze Age. The international system of the Late Bronze Age, comprising a shared history, *lingua franca*, visual culture, and political infrastructure would have made the Kadesh reliefs potent and evocative to this resulting influx of Hittites in Egypt. In the following section, this chapter examines how the figure of Ramses in the reliefs would have resonated strongly with a Hittite audience who expected similar military and religious functions from their own kings.

The epistolary contact between Ramses and Hattusili III and his wife Puduhepa is particularly informative of the broader diplomatic scope of renewed relations between Hatti and Egypt. A draft of a letter from queen Puduhepa to Ramses II,⁶⁷⁸ written in Hittite and recovered from the capital Hattusa, declaratively states that “Now I know that Egypt and Hatti will become a single country. Even if for the land of Egypt... is not a treaty, the Queen knows thereby how you will conclude it out of consideration for my dignity. The deity who installed me in this place does not deny me anything. He/ She has not denied me happiness. You, as son-in-law, will take my daughter in marriage.”⁶⁷⁹ Here, Puduhepa reveals how the Silver Tablet Treaty (as yet to be negotiated at the writing of this letter) was inextricably linked to the diplomatic marriage between Ramses and Puduhepa’s daughter. In so doing, she evokes the larger international system of the Late Bronze Age, created and maintained through such diplomatic relationships, epistolary interactions, and binding agreements. Performing the oaths of the Silver Tablet Treaty in this light was not a singular speech act. Rather, it was the manifestation

⁶⁷⁵ E.B. Pusch “‘Pi-Ramesses-Beloved-of-Amun, Headquarters of thy Chariotry,’ Egyptians and Hittites in the Delta Residence of the Ramessides,” in *Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, The Egyptian Collection*, ed. Arne Eggebrecht (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1996): 126-145; Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair,” 28.

⁶⁷⁶ Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair,” 28.

⁶⁷⁷ Singer, “The Urhi-Teššub Affair,” 35.

⁶⁷⁸ KUB 21.38. Edition: Edel, *Die Ägyptisch-Hethitische Korrespondenz*, 216-223.

Translation: Hoffner, *Letters*, 281-289. Even though the address of the letter has been broken off, Liverani, *International Relations*, 41; Hoffner, *Letters*, 281; and Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* are all in accord that the Hittite queen is writing to the Egyptian pharaoh. She addresses the recipient with the parity term ‘brother’ and elsewhere in the letter refers to the kings of Babylonia and Amurru in the third person.

⁶⁷⁹ KUB 21.38. Translation: Hoffner, *Letters*, 289: rev. 13-17.

of a larger set of diplomatic practices that involved significant movements of letters, princesses, dowries, retinues, specialists, and soldiers over hundreds of miles.

All of this activity was a result of *both* the Battle of Kadesh and the Silver Tablet Treaty pledged in its aftermath; it would be incorrect to understand a mutual exclusivity of war and diplomatic activities in the Late Bronze Age. The Ramesseum and the Temple of Karnak demonstrate this by displaying both the Kadesh reliefs and the Silver Tablet Treaty in close proximity. The interconnectedness of marriage, gifts, treaties, and letters formed an international system where even war served as another mechanism of engagement. For a Hittite audience, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs would emphasize this point. They would appreciate that the walled citadel of Kadesh drew both the Egyptian and Hittite armies into the northern Levant where they faced off against each other in a contested boundary. The two-dimensional landscape of Kadesh in the reliefs, accentuated by their memories of Seti's imperial stele at the three-dimensional site of Kadesh itself, would thus serve as an internationalized domain through its long and complicated role in both Egyptian and Hittite imperialism.

Scholars such as Mario Liverani and Marc Van de Mieroop—who have been at the forefront of emphasizing the shared political infrastructures and commercial networks of the Late Bronze Age—also articulate shared ideological structures that would facilitate key visual aspects of the reliefs to resonate strongly with a Hittite audience. Liverani in particular situates the rhetoric of the Battle of Kadesh inscriptions into a broader international system, establishing the receptivity of an extended contemporary (and non-contemporary) international audience. For example, the Battle of Kadesh Poem emphasizes that Ramses faced the Hittite army single-handedly: “All countries are arrayed against me, I am alone, there's none with me! ... Not one of my chariotry looks for me; I keep on shouting for them, but none of them heeds my call.”⁶⁸⁰ Hittite texts likewise commemorate victories with stacked odds, such as when Hattusili boasts of victory as Muwatalli's chief of army: “My brother Muwatalli sent me against the Kashka, all of them, but gave me few troops... The enemies' horses were 800 teams and the foot-soldiers were numberless; my brother Muwatalli sent me and gave me (only) 120 teams of horses, and I have not even one foot-soldier.”⁶⁸¹ In the Deeds of Suppiluliuma, Mursili II likewise writes that “In the morning my father drove down from Tiwanzana into the country (while) in the rear his charioteers and six teams of horses were supporting him. And as my father was driving, he came upon the whole enemy at once, and my father engaged them in battle. The gods helped my father... and he smote that enemy.”⁶⁸²

⁶⁸⁰ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 65: Poem, 111-115. Such odds are echoed elsewhere in Egyptian royal rhetoric, where, for example, Amenhotep II “rode on horseback to Hashabu, alone, with no fellow. He came back shortly, and he brought 16 *maryannu*, alive and tied at the sides of his chariot.” Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Abteilung 4, Heft 17: Biographische Inschriften von Zeitgenossen Thutmosis' III. und Amenophis' II., (Berlin: J.C. Hinrichs, 1955), 1304: 10-12.

⁶⁸¹ Edition: Heinrich Otten, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III: Das Bild Der Überlieferung*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1981), 10-11: II 21; 12-13: II 34-37. Translation: Liverani, *Power and Propaganda*, 122.

⁶⁸² CTH 40. Güterbock, “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma,” 76: frag. 15, IV 26-33.

This passage from the Deeds reveals that a Hittite audience would readily accept Ramses's emphasis upon divine support at Kadesh in his inscriptions. Whereas a modern audience might find Ramses's repeated references to how "Amun gave me his strength when I had no soldiers, no chariotry"⁶⁸³ as opportunistic, particularly when inscribed in temples built to celebrate the god's cult, a Hittite audience would be more receptive to Ramses's claim that "Amun helps me more than a million troops."⁶⁸⁴ They would find nothing amiss with the charioteers in the Poem exalting Ramses as "Amun's son who acts with his arms."⁶⁸⁵ And in front of the reliefs, a Hittite audience would recognize and appreciate the protective gesture of the sun god's wings as he flies with Ramses into combat.⁶⁸⁶ But a Hittite audience who could appreciate such rhetoric might be equally insulted by its implications. If, after all, Ramses claims to have acted under the auspices of the Egyptian pantheon, the Hittites would then by implication have been bereft of divine support.

More specifically, Ramses was implicitly asserting that Muwatalli, as the ruler of the Hittites, had lost of the favor of his gods. Such implications for a Hittite ruler were grave indeed; in Mursili's Plague Prayers, composed in the sixteenth year of his reign, he explicitly states that the gods unleashed a plague upon the land of Hatti as the direct result of Suppiluliuma's transgressions.⁶⁸⁷ In the second Plague Prayer in particular,⁶⁸⁸ Mursili refers to how his father broke a treaty with the Egyptians and thus angered the storm-god of Hatti: "Now that the people of Hatti and Egypt were put under oath by the storm-god, it happened that the people of Hatti turned away and suddenly broke the divine oath: my father sent troops and chariots and they attacked Egyptian territory, the land of Amqa."⁶⁸⁹ Mursili invokes the storm god directly, declaring that the "Storm-god of Hatti, my lord... you have allowed a plague into Hatti-land and Hatti-land has been very heavily oppressed by the plague. During my father('s and) brother('s reign) people started to die, and even now that I became priest to the Gods, people continue to die in my days."⁶⁹⁰ Clearly in Hatti as well as in Egypt the divine favor of their respective

⁶⁸³ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 68: Poem, 195-196.

⁶⁸⁴ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 65: Poem, 116.

⁶⁸⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 69: Poem, 241.

⁶⁸⁶ See, for example, the bottom vignette of Ramses on his chariot accompanied by the sun god on the southern wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum.

⁶⁸⁷ Theo Van den Hout, *The Life and Times of Hattusili III and Tuthaliya IV*, (Netherlands: Instituut voor Het Nabije Oosten, 2006), 259.

⁶⁸⁸ Three tablet fragments from Hattusa preserve large portions of this prayer. The only known findspot is for copy B, found in the storerooms of Temple I. Edition: A. Götze, "Die Pestgebete des Muršili," *Kleinasiatische Forschungen* 1, 1929: 161-251. Translation: Kathleen R. Mineck, Theo Van den Hout, and Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "Hittite Historical Texts 2," in *The Ancient Near East*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 263-266.

⁶⁸⁹ Translation: Mineck, Van den Hout, and Hoffner, Jr., "Hittite Historical Texts 2," 264: §4.

⁶⁹⁰ Translation: Mineck, Van den Hout, and Hoffner, Jr., "Hittite Historical Texts 2," 263: §1.

rulers played a significant role in the broader political and socio-economic well-being of the preeminent Late Bronze Age empires.⁶⁹¹

Such beliefs resulted from the overlapping military and religious functions of the rulers of Egypt and Hatti.⁶⁹² Hittite royal inscriptions reveal that the Hittite rulers were just as anxious to emphasize and commemorate their military activity as their Egyptian counterparts.⁶⁹³ It is not coincidence that both Hittite kings and Egyptian pharaohs presented “much of their public personae centered on their role as warriors.”⁶⁹⁴ A Hittite audience at the Ramesseum would thus expect Ramses’s central role in the fighting scenes, perhaps not finding it quite so bombastic as modern scholars. Indeed, along with Egyptians, the Hittites required that “the man who occupied his kingdom’s throne demonstrate to his subjects, allies, and enemies alike his fitness to rule by achieving great successes in the field of battle, matching or even surpassing those of his most illustrious predecessors.”⁶⁹⁵

The Hittite king’s (just like his Egyptian counterpart’s) role as head of the military was supplemented by his cultic/religious responsibilities. This often meant persistent traveling from battlegrounds in the northern Levant and northern and western Anatolia to festival locations across the Hittite hinterland.⁶⁹⁶ These festivals had first and foremost a religious function, but the itinerary the king traveled from performance to performance often included politically strategic cities, where the king could also oversee military and economic provisions.⁶⁹⁷

The Hittite king served as the intermediary between his mortal constituents and the gods of the realm, which meant that he had a “wide range of often extremely time

⁶⁹¹ “A king who neglected his religious duties or offended the gods in some other way, for example by violating an oath, could bring down divine wrath upon his whole kingdom.” Trevor Bryce, “Hittite State and Society,” in *Insights into Hittite History and Archaeology*, ed. Hermann Genz and Dirk Paul Mielke (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 87.

⁶⁹² This is not to say that the Hittite king and the Egyptian pharaoh played identical roles within their respective societies, merely that several of their royal functions would resonate across political borders.

⁶⁹³ But see below for ways in which Egyptian and Hittite royal rhetoric diverged.

⁶⁹⁴ “Military victories—both actual and imaginary—were the focus of public display. The Egyptians carved battle scenes on temple pylons and walls. The Assyrians and Hittites highlighted military achievements in descriptions of the king’s careers.” Marc Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007a), 229.

⁶⁹⁵ Bryce, “Hittite State and Society,” 86.

⁶⁹⁶ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 35.

⁶⁹⁷ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 35. Furthermore, “The high priestly offices in the land were filled by the most elite members of the Hittite administration, beginning with members of the royal family. Thus, Suppiluliuma I appointed his son Telipinu as high priest of in Kizzuwatna... which contained at least two of the most important religious centers in the Hittite kingdom, Kummanni and Lawazantiya.” Bryce, “Hittite State and Society,” 88.

consuming religious duties,”⁶⁹⁸ including the roles that he played in religious festivals.⁶⁹⁹ For many festivals around the land of Hatti, his personal presence was required, a special role that was explicitly stated in several Hittite ritual texts.⁷⁰⁰ In light of this, a Hittite audience at an Egyptian festival at the Ramesseum would fully expect Ramses to be in attendance. Viewing the Kadesh reliefs among the pomp and circumstance of a festival procession and ritual activities (see Chapter 5), they would appreciate how the physical presence of Ramses in his temple united his military, political, and religious power as ruler of Egypt.

The robust system of diplomatic contact and commercial exchange during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE facilitated a Hittite audience in Egypt with a general familiarity with Egyptian history and cultural production. For over a century these two empires had been in close contact with one another so that the gods the Egyptians worshipped would not be strange or new to the Hittites, nor would the preeminent role that Ramses played in Egyptian society. From the Deeds of Suppiluliuma and the Plague Prayers of Mursili II the Hittites would have learned to anticipate the military presence of Egypt in the northern Levant, rendering the general premise of the Kadesh reliefs un-extraordinary. Whether or not they agreed with the Egyptian version of the outcome of the campaign, Hittites would likely accept its use as royal propaganda. War waged and territory acquired in the northern Levant was something that any Hittite king would present in his own royal inscriptions.

But there are fundamental distinctions in the production and dissemination of Egyptian and Hittite propaganda as well, which express the limitations of the international system in the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean. While Ramses copied his monumental Battle of Kadesh reliefs on temple walls across Egypt, Hittite annals emphasized instead seasonal campaigns; the territorial acquisitions where enemies are repeatedly defeated in gestures of conquest take on a symbolic air in their cyclicity.⁷⁰¹ Furthermore, these Hittite campaigns were recorded in cuneiform texts, never in monumental art. According to Liverani, even “If kingship in the Hittite empire had lost its original features and was partly influenced by other kingship ideologies of the

⁶⁹⁸ Bryce, “Hittite State and Society,” 87.

⁶⁹⁹ “Rituals were frequently long and rather complicated. The Great King was meant to communicate directly with the gods.” Caroline Zimmer-Vorhaus, “Hittite Temples: Palaces of the Gods,” in *Insights into Hittite History and Archaeology*, ed. Hermann Genz and Dirk Paul Mielke (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 210-11.

⁷⁰⁰ Zimmer-Vorhaus, “Hittite Temples,” 210-211. A partial solution for the king’s “itinerant cultic responsibility” was found in the dense concentration of temples and cult centers in Hattusa. “However, it still required the constant peregrination of the king and queen (who also held a crucial role in Hittite cults) to the sanctuaries of the land.” Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 313.

⁷⁰¹ See, for example, the repeated confrontations with the Gassians in Suppiluliuma’s Deeds, Mursili II’s Annals, and Hattusili III’s Apology. Likewise, Mursili’s Annals contain multiple northern Levantine uprisings during his reign.

time, it still continued to be more personal compared to Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions.”⁷⁰²

Likewise, Marian Feldman and Caroline Sauvage reveal that “Representation[s] of royal power and authority in the Hittite state rested less on the expression of military might and the physicality of battle... and more on the divine legitimacy and effectiveness of the king to rule his subject people.”⁷⁰³ In their analysis of archeological, textual, and pictorial representations of chariots throughout the Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age, they contrast the representations of Ramses II on his chariot in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs with “The lack of pictorial representations of chariots within the Hittite artistic corpus,”⁷⁰⁴ suggesting that in Egypt and in Hatti these images of chariots “did not bear [the same] rhetorical weight within the royal ideology.”⁷⁰⁵

Unlike the massive battle narratives on Egyptian temples, which reached diverse strata of society (particularly during festivals), Hittite propaganda was designed and addressed solely for the royal family, the court, and state administrators.⁷⁰⁶ For the Hittite ruling class, the king was a hero who espoused the core values constituting the Hittite state; “these values could all be synthesized into one simple idea, namely, ‘justice’ (*para handandatar*), which required the respect of ethical, religious and legal principles.”⁷⁰⁷ As a result, Hittite elites would place significant value upon the role that their king performed in treaty-making, particularly in the context of the Levantine vassal treaties, which throughout the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries established enduring Hittite superiority in the region. This practice of building political allies through loyalty oaths was directly embedded into Hittite royal propaganda—a speech act that established not only the divinely supported and just power of the Hittite king, but also reinforced the very legitimacy of treaty-making as an effective and powerful means of relationship-building during the Late Bronze Age. Thus while an Egyptian audience would be drawn to the large images of Ramses on his chariot in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in the first courtyard of the Ramesseum, swayed by the manifestation of glory and exemplifying heroism and an elite social status,⁷⁰⁸ a Hittite audience might find greater royal bravitas in the political machinations of the Silver Tablet Treaty.

Understanding how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs meant to a near-contemporary Hittite audience also requires an appreciation of how the unique geography of Hittite Anatolia influenced both the political history of the Hittites and “the nature of the Hittite state, shaped by the progressively more successful, although ultimately failed, strategies

⁷⁰² Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 313. “Unlike the fictitious propaganda attested in Egypt and Assyria, Hatti did not need to take such measures.” Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 308.

⁷⁰³ Marian H. Feldman and Caroline Sauvage, “Objects of Prestige? Chariots in the Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean and Near East,” *Ägypten und Levante* 20 (2010): 157.

⁷⁰⁴ Feldman and Sauvage, “Objects of Prestige,” 157.

⁷⁰⁵ Feldman and Sauvage, “Objects of Prestige,” 157.

⁷⁰⁶ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 318.

⁷⁰⁷ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 319.

⁷⁰⁸ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 275.

of the Hittite ruling class for dealing with their environment.”⁷⁰⁹ As demonstrated above, local histories were significantly determined by military, commercial, and diplomatic interactions with other polities during the Late Bronze Age.⁷¹⁰ Yet with all that they shared in common, the states comprising the international system had their own origin stories, languages, cultures, religions, and topographical and ecological environments.⁷¹¹ Even within the international sphere of engagement in the Late Bronze Age, the Hittites’ unique geographical and political placement created a distinctly local landscape in which the Hittite audience interpreted the Kadesh reliefs in Egypt.

In particular, the orientation and proximity of the Hittite empire to the northern Levant played a significant role in the creation of Hittite political identity. If all Near Eastern rulers demonstrated strength and efficacy through conquest, for the Hittites their history of military engagement in the northern Levant constructed a symbolic landscape around Kadesh, Amurru, Ugarit, Carchemish, and Aleppo, representing the stability and prosperity of the empire.⁷¹² Therefore in any Levantine conflict, including the Battle of Kadesh, a Hittite audience would be likely to focus upon the vassal relationships impacted by the fighting. Hittite proximity to the northern Levant also impacted its relations with the empires of the Great Kings (Egypt, Mittani, Assyria) that aimed their imperial expansion efforts into the northern Levant. The long history of Hittite wars against Mittani, Egypt, and Assyria in the northern Levant (see below) minimized the importance of any specific enemy or campaign there and instead cohered the northern Levant into a broad “embattled” region.

⁷⁰⁹ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 35.

⁷¹⁰ Van de Mieroop, *The Ancient Near East*, 149.

⁷¹¹ Van de Mieroop, *The Ancient Near East*, 149.

⁷¹² Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 30. As early as the reign of Hattusili I (1650-1620 BCE), Hittite kings engaged militarily in the northern Levant. Hattusili undertook multiple campaigns in this region where he attacked the capital of the Yamhad kingdom, Aleppo, and captured Alalakh. Hattusili’s grandson, Mursili I, finally defeated and destroyed Aleppo, and in so doing delivered the death knell to the kingdom of Yamhad. He followed this victory by immediately marching his army east to the Euphrates River, and then south to the city of Babylon, which he captured and destroyed. A century and a half later, Suppiluliuma occupied Isuwa and Alshe along the western and northern borders of the Mittani kingdom and then made his way south, reconquering Aleppo, Nuhashe, and Qatna; “but the richest acquisition as a new vassal was the trading city and seaport kingdom of Ugarit.” Kitchen and Lawrence, “Treaty, Law, and Covenant,” 94. See the treaties that Suppiluliuma signed with Tette of Nuhashe and Niqmuđu II of Ugarit in Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 34-35. Kitchen and Lawrence, “Treaty, Law, and Covenant,” 95 also describe how when Carchemish finally capitulated, Suppiluliuma placed his son Piyassilis/Sharri-kushuh on the throne there to serve as a Hittite viceroy. Suppiluliuma also installed a prince in the northern Levantine site of Aleppo and a vassal king at Kadesh. By the end of his reign, Suppiluliuma effectively controlled all of the northern Levant west of the Khabur River.

Amurru

This presentation of the northern Levant as both contested and coalesced, particularly the interrelated political relationships with Kadesh and Amurru, can be seen in the royal annals of Mursili II. Mursili's Ten-Year Annals refer to the political repercussions of the instability during the first decade of his reign, particularly the loss of several Levantine vassals after the death of his father, Suppiluliuma. The northern Levantine revolts of years seven and nine indicate that Hatti likely lost control of Kadesh at this time because after a successful campaign against a coalition of "kings of Nuhashe" Mursili records that the Hittite army traveled south and reclaimed Kadesh.⁷¹³ The Annals claim that Amurru remained loyal to the Hittite crown during the revolt of year seven, but in year nine it reverses its position to ally itself with Kadesh against the Hittite King.⁷¹⁴

Before the Late Bronze Age, Amurru was a name that commonly referred to a broad territory covering much of modern Syria, which was inhabited by the Amorites.⁷¹⁵ By the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE, the term came to have a more restricted meaning, referring specifically to the land in between the central Levantine coast and the Orontes River (Fig. 61).⁷¹⁶ As such, Amurru and Kadesh were close neighbors, linked by the prominent geographical feature of the Orontes River.

The close connection between Amurru and Kadesh in Hittite sources is also detailed in the historical prologue of a treaty signed in 1225 BCE by Tudhaliya IV and Shaushgamuwa.⁷¹⁷ Shaushgamuwa was the king of the Amurru and controlled the northern Levantine coast precisely where Egyptian, Hittite, and earlier Mittani spheres of influence intersected.⁷¹⁸ Two versions of this treaty were preserved in the Hittite language in the city of Hattusa—one in draft form and the other only in fragments. In the surviving sections, the treaty emphasizes Shaushgamuwa's loyalty to Tudhaliya IV in protecting the Hittite king and his chosen successor from rival claimants to the throne as well as against the Great Kings of the thirteenth century BCE.

The historical prologue summarizes the relations between the kings of Hatti and the kings of Amurru back to the reigns of Suppiluliuma and Aziru respectively, more than a century earlier:

[Earlier] the land of Amurru had not been defeated by the forces of arms of Hatti. When [Aziru came] to the (great-)grandfather of My Majesty, [Suppiluliuma], in Hatti, the lands of Amurru were still [hostile]. They [were] subjects of the King

⁷¹³ Anthony J. Spalinger, "Egyptian-Hittite Relations at the Close of the Amarna Period," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 1 (1979): 63. Aitakama was subsequently murdered by his son, Ari-Tešup, in a palace revolt (KBo 4).

⁷¹⁴ Spalinger, "Egyptian-Hittite Relations," 67; Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 59-60.

⁷¹⁵ Bryce, *Ancient Syria*, 46.

⁷¹⁶ Bryce, *Ancient Syria*, 46.

⁷¹⁷ CTH 105. Edition: Cord Kühne and Heinrich Otten, *Der Šaušgamuwa-Vertrag*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1971). Translation: Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 103-107.

⁷¹⁸ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 100.

of Hurri. Aziru accordingly gave him (Suppiluliuma) his allegiance, although he did [not] defeat him by force of arms. And Aziru, your (great-great-) grandfather, protected Suppiluliuma as overlord, and he protected Hatti. Later he also protected Mursili as overlord, and he protected Hatti. In no way did he commit an offence against Hatti.⁷¹⁹

Significantly, this reveals not only the long scope but also the key focus of Hittite political memory across the span of political affiliations between Hatti and Amurru during the reign of Suppiluliuma. More than half a century later, this historical prologue emphasized the relations between Hatti and Amurru at a time when Aziru was defecting between both Egyptian and Hittite rulers. According to the “Shaushgamuwa Treaty,” Aziru defected from the kingdom of Mittani directly into an alliance with the kingdom of Hatti; this account, though, stands at odds with Amurru’s alliances attested in the Amarna archive where Aziru wrote to Pharaoh as a vassal in more than a dozen letters. Likewise the historical prologues of CTH 49 (a treaty between Suppiluliuma and Aziru) and CTH 92 (between Hattusili III and Benteshina) claim that Aziru and his father, Abdi-Ashirta, had previously declared allegiance to pharaoh and then personally visited Egypt.⁷²⁰

Additional letters in the Amarna archive expand upon Amurru’s entangled loyalties to the Egyptian and Hittite thrones.⁷²¹ In EA 156, Aziru addresses pharaoh thus: “To the king, my lord, my god, my [S]un: Message of Aziru, your servant. I fall at the feet of my lord 7 times and 7 times. Now as to a(ny) request that the Sun, my lord, makes, I am [yo]ur servant forever and my sons are your servants.”⁷²² In EA 166, Aziru warns pharaoh that “The king of Hatti is staying in Nuhashe, and I am afraid of him. Heaven forbid that he co[m]e into Amurru. If he attacks Tunip, then it is (only) two day-marches to where he is staying. So I am afraid of him...”⁷²³

⁷¹⁹ CTH 105. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 104: No. 17 §3, A i 13-27.

⁷²⁰ “In the time of my grandfather, Suppiluliuma, Aziru, [king of the land of Amurru], revoked [his vassalage (?)] to Egypt and [fell] at the feet of my grandfather Suppiluliuma. My grandfather had [compassion] for him and wrote a treaty tablet for him.” Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* 101: No. 16 §2, obv. 4-6. CTH 92. Edition: Ernst F. Weidner, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien: Die Staatsverträge in akkadischer Sprache aus dem Archiv von Boghazköi*, (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1923), 124-135; Translation: Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 100-103. “Previously [...] the King of Egypt... suddenly became hostile [to My Majesty]. But Aziru, king of the land [of Amurru], came up from the gate of Egyptian territory and became a vassal [of] My Majesty, [King] of Hatti.” Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 37: No. 5 § 2, i 14-20. CTH 49. Edition: Weidner, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien*, 146-149; Translation: Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 37-41. On Aziru’s visit to Egypt, see Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 158.

Aziru wrote to the Pharaoh as a vassal in over a dozen letters.

⁷²¹ See Mario Liverani, “Servant of Two Masters,” in *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, ed. Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van de Mieroop (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 125-46.

⁷²² EA 156. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 242: 1-8.

⁷²³ EA 166. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 254: 21-29.

It seems for a time that Aziru fulfilled this loyalty to pharaoh. But while paying lip service to Akhenaten, Aziru simultaneously began building alliances with rulers of states allied with Hatti, notably Aitakama of Kadesh and Niqmuaddu of Ugarit.⁷²⁴ According to the Amarna correspondence, Suppiluliuma successfully persuaded both Aitakama, the king of Kadesh, and Aziru, the king of Amurru, to switch allegiance from Egypt to Hatti.⁷²⁵ In EA 162, Akhenaten accuses Aziru of being “at peace with the ruler of Qidša (Kadesh). The two of you take food and strong drink together. And it is true. Why do you act so? Why are you at peace with a ruler with whom the king is fighting?”⁷²⁶

In a grand act of defiance, Aziru signed a vassal treaty swearing his allegiance to Suppiluliuma agreeing that he, “Aziru, [must come] yearly to My Majesty, [your lord], in Hatti.”⁷²⁷ The historical prologue from this treaty (CTH 49) further details this switching of sides:

Aziru, king of the land [of Amuru], came up from the gate of Egyptian territory and became a vassal [of] My Majesty, [King] of Hatti. And I, My Majesty, Great King [accordingly rejoiced] very much. Did not, I, My Majesty, Great King, accordingly rejoice very much? ... Because Aziru [threw himself down] at the feat [of My Majesty, and] left the frontiers of Egyptian territory to throw himself [down at the feet of My Majesty], I, My Majesty, Great King, [took up] Aziru and ranked him as king among his brothers.⁷²⁸

But as the Shaushgamuwa Treaty itself recounts: “When Muwatalli, uncle of My Majesty, became King, the men of Amurru committed an offence against him, informing him as follows: ‘we were voluntary subjects. Now we are no longer your subjects.’ And they went [back] over to the King of Egypt.”⁷²⁹

Given Amurru’s history of opportunistically switching alliances between the Hittite and Egyptian empires, it is understandable why the Hittite treaties with Amurru explicitly emphasize Amurru’s enduring loyalty to the Hittite king over the Egyptian

⁷²⁴ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 160.

⁷²⁵ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 304.

⁷²⁶ EA 162. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 249: 22-25. Raymond Westbrook is certain that such activity is “an unmistakable allusion to the celebration of a treaty.” Raymond Westbrook, “International Law in the Amarna Age,” in *Amarna Diplomacy*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 38.

⁷²⁷ CTH 49. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 37: No. 5 §1, i 13.

⁷²⁸ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 37: No. 5 §2, i 18-26. CTH 49. This treaty is preserved both Akkadian and Hittite versions. Editions: (Hittite) Helmut Freydank, “Eine hethitische Fassung des Vertrages zwischen dem Hethiterkönig Šuppiluliuma und Aziru von Amrum,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 7 (1959): 356-81; (Akkadian) Weidner, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien*, 70-75, 146-149. Translation: Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 36-41.

⁷²⁹ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 104-105: No. 17 §4, A i 28-35.

crown. In CTH 49 Suppiluliuma declares that “Whoever is My Majesty’s [friend shall be] your friend. [Whoever] is My Majesty’s enemy [shall be your] enemy. If the King [of Hatti] goes against the land [of Hurri], or Egypt ... [and] you, Aziru, do [not] mobilize wholeheartedly [with infantry] and chariotry, and do not fight him wholeheartedly, you will have transgressed the oath.”⁷³⁰ In CTH 62, Mursili writes: “[If] you commit [...] and while the King of Egypt [is hostile to My Majesty you] secretly [send] your messenger to him, [or you become hostile] to the King of Hatti [and cast] off the authority of the King of Hatti, becoming a subject of the King of Egypt, you, Tuppi-Teshup, will transgress the oath.”⁷³¹ Even in the Shaushgamuwa Treaty, after Tudhaliya’s predecessor (Hattusili III) had signed the Silver Tablet Treaty with Ramses II and peace flourished between the Hittite and Egyptian kingdoms, Tudhaliya reminds Shaushgamuwa that, “if the King of Egypt is My Majesty’s friend, he shall be your friend. But if he is My Majesty’s enemy, he shall be your enemy.”⁷³²

The historical prologue of the Shaushgamuwa Treaty also details the key role that the Amurru’s defection played in the Hittite participation of the Battle of Kadesh. After the historical prologue recounts how the men of Amurru informed Muwatalli that, “we were voluntary subjects. Now we are no longer your subjects,” it continues with the Hittite king’s response: “My Majesty’s uncle Muwatalli and the King of Egypt fought over the men of Amurru. Muwatalli defeated him, destroyed the land of Amurru by force of arms, and subjugated it.”⁷³³ In the context of this historical prologue, Tudhaliya IV is claiming that Ramses and Muwatalli fought at Kadesh for the loyalty of Amurru.

The historical veracity of Hittite treaty prologues must of course be approached skeptically—their purpose, after all, was to create a political rationale for a vassal’s fealty. In narrative form a historical prologue established the necessary context for the Hittite king to demand a continual expression of loyalty and subservience. What is significant here is not the accuracy of this “historical” account, but how the Shaushgamuwa Treaty indicates that the Battle of Kadesh evoked for a Hittite audience the vassal relationship with Amurru.⁷³⁴ Whereas Ramses promoted the Battle as a contest between two Great Kings, a Hittite audience would focus instead on the vassal politics that instigated the conflict. This refocusing would situate the Battle of Kadesh in a century-long political relationship with the northern Levantine polities of Amurru and Kadesh, a relationship that was largely maintained through the loyalty oaths in vassal treaties.⁷³⁵

Likewise, from the Shaushgamuwa Treaty it is clear that the Hittite rulers did not concede defeat at the Battle of Kadesh. To the contrary, the historical prologue explicitly states that when Tudhaliya IV’s “uncle Muwatalli and the King of Egypt [Ramses II] fought over the men of Amurru” the outcome was that “Muwatalli defeated him...”⁷³⁶

⁷³⁰ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 37-38: No. 5 §3, ii 9’-24’.

⁷³¹ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 60: No. 8 §6, B ii 4’-9’.

⁷³² Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 106: No. 17 §11, A iii 46- iv 2.

⁷³³ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 104-105: No. 17 §4, A i 35-39.

⁷³⁴ Weeden, “State Correspondence,” 36.

⁷³⁵ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 142-3.

⁷³⁶ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 104-105: No. 17 §4, A i 35-38.

Another “Hittite” reference to the Battle of Kadesh comes from a letter written by Ramses II (from the Hattusa archive) where he quotes Hattusili III.⁷³⁷ From this correspondence we know that the Hittite king himself was aware of the general content of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs inscribed on the Egyptian temple walls, information he may have obtained from first-hand Hittite accounts that no longer survive (along with Ramses’s correspondence).⁷³⁸ As to be expected, Hattusili III protested against Ramses’s portrayal of pharaoh’s solitary victory at Kadesh, asking “‘Waren keine Heere dort und waren (wirklich) keine Wagenkämpfer dort?’”⁷³⁹

In his response, Ramses remains intent on preserving the account that he displayed on Egyptian temple walls:

Und als die Vorhut des Großkönigs, des Königs des Landes Ägypten, die Stadt Šabtuna erreichte, da kamen zwei Beduinen vom Heere des Landes Ḫatti, und sie gelangten zum König, und sie sagten wie folgt: ‘Der König von Ḫatti befindet sich im Lande Ḫalba.’ Drei Heere rückten auf den Wegen an und waren noch nicht an den Ort gelangt, wo sich der König befand; und der König saß auf seinem Throne auf der Westseite des Orontesflusses, und die Vorhut befand sich in dem Lager, das sie aufschlugen (und) besetzt hielten; und während der König wußte, daß Muwatalli, der König des Landes Ḫatti, aus dem Lande Ḫalba weggegangen war, kannte der König nicht [dessen] Absicht; und der König des Landes Ḫatti überfiel ihn mit seinem Heere und allen Ländern, die sich bei ihm befanden, aber der König des Landes Ägypten bewirkte seine Niederlage ganz allein, obwohl meine Heere nicht bei mir waren, und obwohl meine Wagenkämpfer nicht bei mir waren. Und ich führte die aus diesen Ländern des Landes Ḫatti stammenden Feinde weg ins Land Ägypten angesichts der Söhne des Landes Ägypten und angesichts der Söhne des Landes Ḫatti... Und da du in bezug auf meine Heere sagen könntest: “‘Waren keine Heere dort und waren (wirklich) keine Wagenkämpfer dort?’ (So ware darauf zu sagen:) Siehe, ein Heer von mir befand sich (noch) inmitten des Landes Amurru, ein weiteres Heer von mir im Lande... und ein weiteres Heer im Lande Taminta, wie es den Tatsachen (entspricht).”⁷⁴⁰

Here again it is likely that the Hittite king would have been familiar with Ramses’s propagandistic emphasis upon the stacked odds of his victory. Still, it is likely that Hattusili would chafe against the implications that Muwatalli had lost divine favor in his (purportedly) resounding defeat.

⁷³⁷ ÄKH 24. Edition and Translation: Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, 57-65.

⁷³⁸ Two other letters by Ramses II from the Hattusa archive may also mention the Battle of Kadesh but unfortunately the passages concerning Kadesh are heavily restored (ÄKH 23 and ÄKH 25). See Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, 56-57, 64-69.

⁷³⁹ ÄKH 24. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, 61: 31’. Liverani believes that this query was meant to be taken ironically. Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 119-120.

⁷⁴⁰ ÄKH 24. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, 59-61: 21’-33’.

Assyria Looming

The Battle of Kadesh reliefs evoked for a Hittite audience military engagement, vassal relationships, and a long history of political expansion and instability in the northern Levantine landscape. But Hittite attitudes towards the Battle of Kadesh were also heavily informed by the fragility of their eastern and southern borders. By the middle of the thirteenth century BCE, Hittite control of their northern Levantine vassals was impacted not so much by Egypt to the south but by the rise of the Assyrian empire east of the Euphrates. Not only did the Assyrian empire draw Hittite military forces eastward, it motivated diplomatic gestures (such as the sealing of the Silver Tablet Treaty and the Shaushgamuwa Treaty) in efforts to shore up Hittite allies.

Vassal treaties served as a potent venue for demonstrating the efficacy of the Hittite king's performance, particularly for an international audience.⁷⁴¹ In establishing the fealty of the vassal, the requisite legal and ideological relationships were being upheld. The popularity and success of these loyalty oaths amassed significant authority for the speech acts embodied in the treaties. According to Austin, though, every speech act has unintended (perlocutionary) effects along with the intentional (illocutionary) ones.⁷⁴² Because of this, the vassal treaties were equally illuminating of the Hittite king's vulnerabilities and political insecurities. From the loyalty clauses of the "Shaushgamuwa Treaty" we learn that Tudhaliya IV is particularly concerned about the enmity of Assyria:

Since the King of Assyria is the enemy of My Majesty, he shall likewise be your enemy. Your merchant shall not go to Assyria, and you shall not allow his merchant into your land. He shall not pass through your land. But if he should come into your land, seize him and send him off to My Majesty. [Let] this matter [be placed] under [oath] (for you). Because I, My Majesty, have begun war with the King of Assyria... with alacrity form for yourself an army and a unit of chariotry. This matter shall be placed under oath for you.⁷⁴³

Hittite and Assyrian relations were not always so antagonistic. At the beginning of the second millennium BCE, Assyrian merchants established a trading colony at Kanesh in central Anatolia. This colony period was a time of international cooperation between the Anatolians and the Assyrians who mutually benefited from the exchanges of commodities.⁷⁴⁴ Assyrians exchanged textiles and tin for Anatolian silver in well-

⁷⁴¹ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 41; Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant*, 98. By the thirteenth century BCE, Hittite vassal treaties had become the most popular mechanism for control over the northwest Levant. The Hattusa archives include copies of treaties that Mursili II renewed Aleppo, Ugarit, and Amurru (the last of which is preserved in bilingual versions). Hattusili III and his son Tudhaliya IV additionally renewed treaties with Amurru and Tudhaliya IV renewed treaties with two successive kings of Tarhuntassa. The capital archives also contain a partly preserved treaty between Suppiluliuma II and Niqumdu III of Ugarit.

⁷⁴² Austin, *How to do Things*, 101.

⁷⁴³ Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 106: No. 17 §11, A iii 46- iv 18.

⁷⁴⁴ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 11.

established markets.⁷⁴⁵ After the Old Assyrian Period ended, though, Assyria receded from the international scene and was largely subsumed under the Mittani empire. It was not until the reign of Assur-Uballit (1363-1328 BCE) that Assyria reentered the international arena. Assur-Uballit was the first ruler to proclaim himself king (*šarrû*) of Assyria, and in his correspondence with Akhenaten he is famous for asserting himself into the tier of Great Kings of the Near East by calling Akhenaten his brother and referring to himself as a “Great King.”⁷⁴⁶

In terms of the appropriateness of a speech act, there must exist an accepted conventional procedure that includes the correctness of the circumstances and the authority of the individuals invoking the acts or you get a misinvocation and/or misfire.⁷⁴⁷ Procedures that once existed may no longer exist and procedures may indeed be initiated. Inappropriate persons and circumstances, including the nature of the participants, are not a hard and fast boundary. But if the act is deemed “appropriate” by its respective audience (or audiences), then the illocutionary force of the act gains acceptance and builds momentum. The Amarna letters written by Assur-Uballit appear to be accepted. This acceptance on the part of Akhenaten, one of the most powerful rulers of the fourteenth century BCE, contributed to the illocutionary force of Assur-Uballit’s assertion. Indeed, even though the Babylonians were initially outraged by such posturing,⁷⁴⁸ they too eventually accepted Assur-Uballit’s new stature by taking an Assyrian princess, Muballitat-sherua, as the wife of Burna-Buriash.

For the two decades after Assur-Uballit’s death Assyria again floundered on the international scene, but this changed with the accession to the Assyrian throne of Adad-Nirari I (1307-1275 BCE). During his reign and the reign of his successors, Assyria once again emerged as a major player in the Near Eastern arena of the thirteenth century BCE.⁷⁴⁹ It is at this time when Hittite and Assyrian histories once again began to intersect as a result of their competing imperial ambitions over the crumbling Mittani empire.⁷⁵⁰ According to Adad-Nirari’s royal inscriptions, he successfully captured the Mittani capital, Washukanni: “When Šattuara, King of the land of Ḫanigalbat, rebelled

⁷⁴⁵ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 12.

⁷⁴⁶ In EA 16 Assur-Uballit explicitly refers to himself as “king of Assyria, Great King, your brother.” Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 38.

⁷⁴⁷ Austin, *How to do Things*, 17, 35.

⁷⁴⁸ In EA 9, Burna-Buriash writes to Akhenaten, infuriated that the Assyrian king had written to Akhenaten directly on his own behalf. According to Burna-Buriash, “I was not the one who sent [my Assyrian vassals] to you. Why on their own authority have they come to your country? If you love me, they will conduct no business whatsoever. Send them off empty-handed.” Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 18.

⁷⁴⁹ Eric Cline, *1177 B.C. The Year Civilization Collapsed*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 96.

⁷⁵⁰ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 19. In the fifteenth century BCE, the Mittani state was one of the most powerful entities in the ancient Near East. The Mittani ruled over the Hurrian and non-Hurrian-speaking populations in the northern Levant spreading their reign from southern Anatolia west of Alalakh to the central Euphrates valley.

against me and committed hostilities; by the command of Aššur, my lord and ally, and (by the command) of the great gods who decide in my favour, I seized him and brought him to my city Aššur. I made him take an oath and then allowed him to return to his land. Annually, as long as (he) lived, I regularly received his tribute within my city, Aššur.”⁷⁵¹ Adad-Nirari I thus had a client king on the Mittani throne.

But even in light of Assyria’s prominent territorial gains in Mittani land, and even a century after the Assyrians asserted themselves into the tier of Great Kings in the Amarna correspondence, the Hittites were still unwilling to recognize the Assyrians in brotherly terms. In KUB 23.102, a draft of a letter composed in Hittite, Urhi-Teshub asks Adad-Nirari I.⁷⁵²

Why do you continue to speak about ‘brotherhood’ and about coming to Mt. Ammana? What is it, (this) ‘brotherhood’? And what is it, (this) coming to Mt. Ammana? For what reason should I call you my ‘brother’? Who calls another his ‘brother’? Do people who are not on familiar terms with each other call each other ‘brother’? Why then should I call you ‘brother’? Were you and I born of the same mother? As my grandfather and my father did not call the King of Assyria ‘brother’, you should not keep writing to me (about) ‘coming’ and ‘Great Kingship’. It displeases me.⁷⁵³

In the end, though, Urhi-Teshub did begrudgingly acknowledge that despite their lack of brotherhood, Adad-Nirari had, indeed, “become a great king.”⁷⁵⁴

Adad-Nirari’s letter is an example of what Austin refers to as a speech act misfire: in the long-established convention of Great Kings writing to one another as brothers, here

⁷⁵¹ A.0.76.3. Allison Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115 BC)*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods 1, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 136: 4-14. “It may be significant that even before this, during year 7 of Mursili II’s reign, his annals reveal that the Hittite king did not abandon the battlefield against the Gassians during the Syrian revolt of that year, even though there was report of Egyptian forces in Syria at the time, but his reaction to the Syrian revolt in year nine, when it is likely that Nuhashe was aided by the Assyrians, was more vigorous. Not only did he send his trusted general Inara into Nuhashe to suppress the revolt, but he himself followed closely behind.” Spalinger, “Egyptian-Hittite Relations,” 68.

⁷⁵² According to Hoffner, *Letters*, 322, there is general consensus that the intended recipient of the letter was Adad-Nirari I because it begins by ascribing the defeat of Wasashatta to the Assyrian king, a feat credited to Adad-Nirari I—although Liverani (*International Relations*, 42) prefers Tukulti-Ninurta I. Hagenbuchner (*Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter* 2, 263) and Beckman (*Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 146) agree with Hoffner that the author is Urhi-Teshub (Mursili III), while Liverani asserts that it is Tudhaliya IV.

⁷⁵³ Hoffner, *Letters*, 323-324: 5’-19’. CTH 171 (KUB 23.102). Edition: Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter* 2, 260-264. Translation: Hoffner, *Letters*, 323-324.

⁷⁵⁴ Hoffner, *Letters*, 323-324: 4’.

the “appropriateness” of the speech act was undermined by the authority (or their lack of) of the Assyrian king. In the world of speech acts, one only succeeds in what he/she is trying to do by getting the audience to accept what he/she is trying to do.

Yet during the reign of Adad-Nirari’s successor, Shalmaneser I (1275-1245 BCE), the Assyrians controlled all land east of the Euphrates and used their new territorial acquisitions as a “launching pad” for their northern and western campaigns.⁷⁵⁵ By the middle of the thirteenth century BCE, Tudhaliya IV could no longer deny the encroaching might of the Assyrian army. In 1244 BCE, one of Assyria’s greatest “warrior kings,” Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BCE), ascended the throne.⁷⁵⁶ He followed in the imperial footsteps of Adad-Nirari I by crossing the Euphrates River—the boundary between the Hittite and Assyrian empires after the partitioning of the Mittani kingdom—and set his sights on establishing Assyrian access to the Mediterranean littoral.⁷⁵⁷ To achieve this, Tukulti-Ninurta would need control over the northern Levantine territories in between the Euphrates and the coast.⁷⁵⁸ The closest distance between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean was at its western bend, between Emar and Carchemish, which also provided access to the popular trading emporia of Ugarit, famous for its harbors.⁷⁵⁹ But Ugarit and the kingdom of Aleppo to its east belonged to Hatti at this time, resulting in elevated tensions between the Hittites and the Assyrians during the reign of Tudhaliya IV and his successors.⁷⁶⁰

As a result of this, the Hittite empire was deeply preoccupied with Assyria’s maneuverings into northern Levantine territory. It is likely that Assyria’s take-over of the Mittani empire at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the thirteenth century BCE played no small part in motivating Hattusili III to negotiate the Silver Tablet Treaty with Egypt. With a fast-encroaching enemy to the east, the Silver Tablet Treaty would at least ensure that Hattusili III no longer faced concern about his Levantine vassals from Egypt. Likewise, the Shaushgamuwa Treaty reveals that Tudhaliya IV also participated in treaty-making as a means of shoring up allies and ensuring the loyalty of key Levantine polities.

Above, this chapter discussed how a Hittite audience would “see” not just the polity of Kadesh in the monumental Battle reliefs at the Ramesseum, but rather a broader Levantine landscape comprising a coalition of Levantine states that included Amurru. Likewise, by the later thirteenth century BCE, Hittites in Egypt, when confronted with reliefs depicting the northern Levant, would likely connect the martial imagery to more recent interactions with Assyrian forces. Even though the Battle of Kadesh reliefs do not mention or visually signal an Assyrian presence in the fighting, the northern Mesopotamian empire would be evoked in the Levantine landscape into where it was expanding, and where it was encountered by Hittite forces.

⁷⁵⁵ Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 35.

⁷⁵⁶ Cline, *1177 B.C.*, 96.

⁷⁵⁷ Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

⁷⁵⁸ Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 3.

⁷⁵⁹ Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 3.

⁷⁶⁰ Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 3.

Moreover, these Assyrian imperial practices would themselves reinvigorate the landscape of Kadesh to signal once again a contested boundary. This would add a further tension for a Hittite audience in the visual dialog between the Silver Tablet Treaty and the Battle of Kadesh reliefs. While Hittites in Egypt would be inclined to focus upon the diplomatic messages of the Silver Tablet Treaty over the antagonism of the Battle reliefs (accepting that peace had superseded previous enmity), they might find themselves giving the Battle of Kadesh reliefs a second glance, wondering if or when Hittite forces would confront Assyria at the same citadel.

Conclusion

How the Battle of Kadesh reliefs meant to a near-contemporary Hittite audience was both similar to and distinct from how the reliefs meant to an Egyptian audience. For the Egyptian audience the reliefs participated in the Beautiful Feast of the Valley landscape, engaging with temple reliefs from the Temple of Amun at Karnak and other western bank temples that were visited along the processional network of the festival. Even after the Silver Tablet Treaty was inscribed in the first courtyard at the Ramesseum, an Egyptian audience would understand that its “parity” clauses in fact reinforced Ramses’s supremacy through the ordering of the oaths. When Hattusili asked for peace (*dbh htp*) throughout the Treaty, he was performing the same capitulatory gesture as other Egyptian vassals. For an audience anxious to be assured that Egypt (and its ruler) still maintained special favor with the gods, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in the same courtyard would reinforce Ramses’s divine auspices and reframe his participation in the Silver Tablet Treaty in a magnanimous light.

For a Hittite audience of the later thirteenth century, how the Battle of Kadesh meant was not as an isolated Event but rather as part of a visual dialog with the Silver Tablet Treaty, which subsumed the Battle into the larger political landscape of internationalism in the Late Bronze Age. The tension between the diplomacy of the Treaty and the antagonism of the Battle reliefs embodied a century-long history of extensive context between Egypt and Hatti—maintained through foreign correspondence, commerce, martial encounters, and diplomatic marriages. The fourth century BCE Bentresh Stele demonstrates that almost a millennium later, Ramses’s reign was remembered for its participation in this robust international system not through martial activity but instead his diplomatic marriage to a Hittite princess.

The international system of the Late Bronze Age made much of the content of the reliefs recognizable and potent to a Hittite audience present in Egypt precisely because of the renewed diplomatic ties between the two states. But the Hittite’s unique history and placement within the international sphere of engagement impacted how they encountered the reliefs as well. The northern Levantine landscape in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs signaled endless imperial aggression against Egyptian, Mittani, and Assyrian empires, as well as the ever-contested vassal relationships with Kadesh and Amurru.

The seventh chapter of this dissertation builds upon the nexus of interactions between the Hittites, Egyptians, and Assyrians during the Late Bronze Age to argue that the reverberations of the Battle of Kadesh Event in the Middle Assyrian sphere of influence during the thirteenth century BCE directly influenced how the Kadesh reliefs meant to a Neo-Assyrian audience 600 years later. As demonstrated above, the rise of the Middle Assyrian empire was deeply impacted by its relationships with both Hatti and

Egypt. The rulers of Egypt provided legitimacy to the rising political identity of the Middle Assyrians while Hatti restrained Assyria's burgeoning imperial ambitions.⁷⁶¹ Thus, when Neo-Assyrian forces invaded Egypt in the seventh century BCE and encountered the Battle of Kadesh reliefs on the Theban temples, the landscape of the Event expanded to include not only the geographical distances between Assyria and Egypt, but also the temporal distances between the thirteenth and seventh centuries.

⁷⁶¹ See, for example, EA 15 and EA 16 where Akhenaten receives correspondence from Assur-Uballit describing their relationship as one of parity (Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 37-41). See also KUB 23.102 above, where Urhi-Teshub rejects Adad-Nirari's overtures of brotherhood.

CHAPTER 7. MONUMENTS AND MEMORY: THE BATTLE OF KADESH IN THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Introduction

This chapter examines how the Battle of Kadesh reliefs meant to a non-local, non-contemporary audience: the Neo-Assyrians.⁷⁶² In 671 BCE Esarhaddon led his troops through the Levant—by then mostly a series of Assyrian provinces—across the border into Egypt. The act was unprecedented, marking the first time that Assyria had ever invaded the land of the “Great Ruler of *Muṣri*.” Within the next decade, though, the Assyrian army would enter Egypt twice more, reaching as far as Thebes—where Assyrian royal inscriptions and palace reliefs from the reign of Esarhaddon’s successor, Assurbanipal, portray the Assyrians sacking and looting the Egyptian religious capital and returning to Assyria with vast spoils of war.⁷⁶³

In the first Egyptian campaign during Assurbanipal’s reign, the Assyrian army prevailed against the Kushite pharaoh Taharqa who had reclaimed Memphis after Esarhaddon’s departure.⁷⁶⁴ Taharqa fled to Thebes, and was again ousted by Assyrian forces back to Nubia, where he died in 664 BCE.⁷⁶⁵ After Taharqa’s death, Tanutamun ascended the Kushite throne.⁷⁶⁶ Tanutamun attempted to reclaim Egypt on behalf of the Kushites. But Assyrian sources recount a seventy-four-day march to Egypt where Assyrian troops fought a pitched battle against Tanutamun; the Kushite ruler’s army was defeated and he fled south to Thebes.⁷⁶⁷ Assyrian forces followed him and sacked and

⁷⁶² As I discuss at length below, this Neo-Assyrian audience comprises more specifically the army who invaded Thebes during the reign of Assurbanipal, but also expands to include the elite inhabitants of the Neo-Assyrian capital cities during the seventh century BCE.

⁷⁶³ For Esarhaddon’s campaign, see the Esarhaddon Chronicle, discussed below: Allison Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 85, Chronicle 1. For the campaigns during the reign of Assurbanipal, see Assurbanipal’s Prisms A-E, K, and the Harran Tablets. Editions can be found in Maximilian Streck, *Assurbanipal und die Letzten Assyrischen Könige I-III*, (Leipzig: J.C. Heinrichs, 1919). For an in-depth chronological discussion of the prisms, see Anthony J. Spalinger, “Assurbanipal and Egypt: A Source Study,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 (1974): 316-328.

⁷⁶⁴ Dan’el Kahn, “The Assyrian Invasions of Egypt (673-663 B.C.) and the Final Expulsion of the Kushites,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 34 (2006): 257.

⁷⁶⁵ In his annals preserved on Prism E, Assurbanipal recounts a rebellion of Delta rulers after his first campaign. Hans-Ulrich Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), 91; Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 260. Upon quelling the revolt, Assurbanipal records the slaughter of the inhabitants of Sais and the deportation of its ruler, Necho, back to Nineveh.

⁷⁶⁶ Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 262. Tanutamun was the son of Shabako, Taharka’s predecessor.

⁷⁶⁷ Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 265.

plundered the religious capital of Egypt.⁷⁶⁸

But the Egyptian landscape that the Assyrians encountered in the seventh century BCE was much altered from the time of Ramses II's reign, 600 years prior. A series of social, environmental, and political upheavals around the end of the thirteenth century BCE catalyzed the disintegration of the international system of the Late Bronze Age and turned the Mediterranean world upside down.⁷⁶⁹ Egypt was able to fend off disaster longer than most with the reign of Ramses II's successor, Merneptah (1215-1202 BCE), considered a generally peaceful and prosperous time.⁷⁷⁰ But the Egyptian empire was inevitably drawn into the instabilities of the greater Mediterranean world and the collapse of the international system of diplomacy and exchange. Within a century of Ramses II's reign, Egypt relinquished control over its Levantine vassals and controlled insufficient funds to undertake significant building programs.⁷⁷¹ By the reign of Ramses XI (1099-1069 BCE) famine gripped Egypt and administrative records recount an increase of tomb robberies in the Theban cemeteries.⁷⁷² Pharaoh no longer exhibited the might and power to successfully control a unified Egypt.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁸ Kahn, "Assyrian Invasions of Egypt," 265; Prism E, col. IV, 23.

⁷⁶⁹ See William A. Ward, Martha Sharp Joukowsky, and Paul Astrom, ed., *The Crisis Years: The 12th Century B.C.: From Beyond the Danube to the Tigris, Conference Proceedings, May 16-19 1990, Brown University*, (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 1992). "Considerable debate has been conducted over the nature of the transition between the Late Bronze and Iron Ages... [whether] the abrupt transformations and significant influence [was] from external invaders like the Sea Peoples, or [if] the transition [was] more of a gradual and endogenous process." Peter Akkermans and Glen Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (ca. 16,000-300 BC)*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 361. A helpful synthesis of this debate can be found in Christoph Bachhuber and R. Gareth Roberts, ed., *Forces of Transformation: The End of the Bronze Age in the Mediterranean, Proceedings of an International Symposium held at St. John's College, Oxford on the 25-6th March 2006*, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009).

⁷⁷⁰ Jacobus Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period in the Later New Kingdom," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 306. Battle broke out after his succession (between Seti II and Amenmessu), and the Nineteenth Dynasty ended soon thereafter.

⁷⁷¹ Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 256.

⁷⁷² "An entire dossier of papyri [from the Twentieth Dynasty] contains investigations of accusations and actual occurrences of tomb robberies." Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 245. See, for example, Alexander J. Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty*, (Jonsered: Paul Aströms Förlag, 1994), 213. The lack of political control over Nubia by this time meant no access to sub-Saharan gold; this significantly impacted the increase of looting of royal tombs.

⁷⁷³ Further losses included control over sub-Saharan trade, particularly the gold coming from the mines in Nubia. John Taylor, "The Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BC),"

The ensuing four centuries of Egyptian history are commonly referred to by scholars as the Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BCE).⁷⁷⁴ Centralized rule gave way to political fragmentation and the emergence of new local power centers, particularly in the Delta.⁷⁷⁵ Egypt became increasingly insular while its contacts with the greater Mediterranean world diminished. At the same time a significant influx of foreigners (Libyans in the North, and Nubians in the South) permanently altered the ethnic profile of the population.⁷⁷⁶ It was precisely during this period of political fragmentation in the eighth century BCE that the Kushite kingdom south of Egypt steadily accumulated power and eventually assumed control over Egypt.⁷⁷⁷ In order to establish legitimacy as “Egyptian” pharaohs, the Kushites emphasized their cultural, religious, and ideological connections with the “great eras of Egypt’s past” by adopting royal costume, titulary, and representation styles from the Old Kingdom and early New Kingdom.⁷⁷⁸

This chapter begins by developing the Kushite Period landscape in which the Neo-Assyrians encountered the Battle of Kadesh reliefs. When the imperial might of Assurbanipal’s army reached Thebes, it confronted monuments evoking more than a millennium of Egyptian heritage and material production. Later architectural additions to the eastern and western banks of Thebes (during the Twenty-Second and Twenty-Fifth Dynasties in particular) did not diminish the preeminence of New Kingdom grandeur in the landscape, conspicuously manifested in the monumental triumphal scenes and battle

in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 331.

⁷⁷⁴ Intermediate Periods throughout Egyptian history are characterized by a lack of political unification. Some scholars, such as Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, mark the end of the Third Intermediate Period at 715 BCE (when Shabako conquered, and thus unified, Egypt). Others, such as John Baines and Jaromir Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, rev. ed., (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000), mark the end of the Third Intermediate Period earlier still, with the reign of the first ruler of the Kushite Dynasty, Kashta, in 750 BCE. In any case, “A sound historical framework for these centuries has proved more difficult to establish than for any other major period of Egyptian history. No Pharaonic king-lists include the 21st-25th Dynasties, and the Egyptologist is thus forced to rely more heavily than is strictly desirable on the often garbled excerpts from the [third century BCE] history of Manetho (itself derived chiefly from Delta-based sources and thus offering, at best, an incomplete picture).” Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” 330.

⁷⁷⁵ Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” 330.

⁷⁷⁶ “These, and other, factors had important consequences for the functioning of the economy, for the structure of society, and for the religious attitudes and funerary practices of the inhabitants.” Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” 330.

⁷⁷⁷ Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” 335. In the early eighth century an indigenous Nubian culture developed near the fourth cataract of the Nile. Later in the eighth century, the political and religious power base moved from el-Kurru to Napata (not far from the Gebel Barkal outcrop where a New Kingdom cult center to Amun still stood).

⁷⁷⁸ Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” 338.

narratives from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasties (see Chapter 5). The Battle of Kadesh reliefs, still prominently displayed at the Ramesseum, the Temple of Amun at Karnak, and the Luxor Temple, were thus embedded in a landscape that accentuated Egypt's imperial past through both the enduring presence of the New Kingdom reliefs and the contemporary archaizing trends of Late Period Egypt (see below).

This chapter suggests that the prominence and durability of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in the Theban landscape establish their own spatial and chronological framework that mitigates the vast distances and time between Egypt and Assyria and between the thirteenth and seventh centuries, encapsulating the profound impact that the Battle had upon Neo-Assyrian royal identity. In this sense the landscape of imperialism—both in the two-dimensional representation of the Levantine citadel of Kadesh and the three-dimensional landscape of the Ramesseum in Egypt—crucially impacted how the reliefs meant to the invading Neo-Assyrian army. As an imperial model for the Neo-Assyrian audience, the Battle of Kadesh would evoke Egypt's supremacy during Assyria's ascendance in the Late Bronze Age, particularly Egypt's imperial supremacy in the ever-contested Levant.

Here, imperialism is understood as the expansionist activity undertaken by “states that hold dominion over diverse subject polities of varying scope and complexity.”⁷⁷⁹ Their imperial agendas “extend their control over less powerful polities through conquest, coercion, and/or diplomacy to form large incorporative political and economic systems that transcend local political, social and ethnic boundaries.”⁷⁸⁰ The Neo-Assyrians

⁷⁷⁹ Bradley Parker, “Archaeological Manifestations of Empire: Assyria's Imprint on Southeastern Anatolia,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 107 (2003): 525. “Empires differ from state-level polities in scale, complexity, and internal diversity; thus the political systems that administer empires must work to both integrate and exploit the diversity inherent in supra-local expansion.” Parker, “Archaeological Manifestations,” 525.

⁷⁸⁰ Parker, “Archaeological Manifestations,” 525. Claudia Glatz, though, nuances this notion of imperial control: “Imperialism, like all power-relationships, is a dialectical process. Subordinate societies have access to various means of resistance; imperial cores are neither entirely omnipotent, nor does the relationship have to be exclusively parasitic... subordinate groups—or factions within them—are often willing at least to some degree... As a collection of bi- and multi-lateral relationships empire is always in the making, and therefore subject to continuous modification.” Claudia Glatz, “Empire as Network: Spheres of Material Interaction in Late Bronze Age Anatolia,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 28 (2009): 128. Bradley Parker describes the unique Neo-Assyrian model of imperialism as emphasizing the establishment of agricultural colonies “in newly conquered regions; the use or enforcement of buffer zones between frontier provinces and hostile neighbors; and the discontinuous nature of imperial control.” Parker, “Archaeological Manifestations,” 526. “But the Egyptian empire of the Late Bronze Age and the Neo-Assyrian empire of the first millennium BCE share two key traits: a concern with channeling resources from subject territories to the imperial core for the economic benefit and political perpetuation of a limited segment of the population” and the embarkation of “a process of consolidation to create an overarching political and

encountered the Kadesh reliefs as part of a larger landscape of Egyptian imperialism: The reliefs communicated in tandem with the Egyptian imperial steles erected in the Levant, which the Neo-Assyrians would have passed on their journeys to and from Egypt, and the prominent triumphal reliefs in the Theban region from the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period. Nahr el-Kalb in particular, is discussed as an extension of the imperial propaganda that the Neo-Assyrian army witnessed at Thebes.⁷⁸¹ Indeed it is the Egyptian imperial steles (including Nahr el-Kalb) that most compellingly situated New Kingdom Egyptian imperialism in the Levant for a Neo-Assyrian audience.

I re-emphasize here that this dissertation is not analyzing the historicity of the conflict between Ramses II and Muwatalli, nor is it asserting that the Neo-Assyrians necessarily had any direct knowledge of the thirteenth century altercation in the environs of Kadesh. Rather, in examining the Event as it is re-created through time, this chapter presents a new understanding of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs (particularly those at the Ramesseum, although in this chapter also joining the reliefs from Karnak and Luxor) through the perspective of a Neo-Assyrian audience who may not have appreciated that the reliefs were meant to commemorate a specific and unique military confrontation at Kadesh, but rather incorporated them into the larger pattern of Egyptian imperial and triumphal imagery.

Throughout the centuries since the Late Bronze Age, Egypt evolved in Assyrian royal rhetoric from a land of “brotherly” relations (to whom Assur-Uballit sent diplomatic correspondence in the fourteenth century) to a hostile entity; by the seventh century BCE Egypt was another place on the map to be conquered. Egypt’s glorious past did not mitigate its role as an enemy, and the Neo-Assyrians did to Egypt what they did to all of their enemies by this time: conquer and loot. But in bringing the booty back to Assyria, and in producing their own palace reliefs (such as the Battle of Til Tuba from the North Palace at Nineveh) in the same compositional tradition as the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, the Neo-Assyrian invasions not only expanded the audience of the Battle of Kadesh to include the upper echelons of Assyrian society, they transformed the landscape of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs to include the imperial splendor of the capital cities of the Assyrian empire.

The Architectural Landscape of Seventh Century Thebes

Throughout the Third Intermediate Period, Thebes remained the preeminent religious center in Egypt. The cult of Amun continued to wax in importance, with the positions of both the High Priest of Amun and the God’s Wife of Amun accumulating power at Thebes.⁷⁸² During the Kushite Period in particular, the Theban landscape

economic structure to unite otherwise autonomous regions under the imperial umbrella.” Parker, “Archaeological Manifestations,” 525.

⁷⁸¹ Alas one can only speculate that similar narrative battle scenes (including Battle of Kadesh reliefs) and triumphal iconography once decorated the temple walls that Esarhaddon’s troops encountered at Pr-Ramses and Memphis as well.

⁷⁸² Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” 338. “The god’s wife appears in Theban temple decoration in scenes taken over from kingly iconography, something that had not occurred before. In the chapel of Osiris Ruler of Eternity Shepenwepet is crowned by

harkened back in time, with archaizing features prominent in new architectural additions, providing a strong sense of continuity in temple decorations (see below). The Kushite Dynasty was a time of reunification after almost 300 years of political fragmentation. Rulers and elites were legitimizing their own tenuous political situation by constructing and associating themselves with a selectively glorious and prosperous Egyptian past. A long and unified heritage became historically meaningful for the Kushites to engage with as a result of the contemporary political climate. Their art and architecture thus presented the Kushites—through its conspicuous display of earlier and contemporary elements—as inheritors, successors, and progenitors of a sacred tradition.

Archaizing trends in Kushite material culture were neither revolutionary nor new.⁷⁸³ While the ways and perhaps the degree to which it accessed earlier styles, iconographies, and motifs were innovative, there was in fact a strong precedent for utilizing the past in Egyptian art.⁷⁸⁴ In other words, the practice of archaizing in Late Period art and architecture must be situated in a long tradition of archaizing practices in Egypt. In that sense, Kushite material culture was supporting values and traditions that had long preceded them and that would have been accepted as natural.

The ancient Egyptians highly valued material rendering as a mechanism for religious, political, social, and cultural longevity.⁷⁸⁵ By the eighth century BCE, they had been constructing monumental pyramids, temples, tombs, and statues out of durable materials for over 2,000 years. Egyptian culture constructed a longstanding set of values around qualities of physical permanence. They mummified their dead.⁷⁸⁶ They prized luxury items of gold and gems, as well as hard stones. Instead of tearing down old edifices and building over them, the Egyptians commonly made additions and restorations to earlier architectural projects, commemorating their contributions through inscriptions and ceremonies. Conservation and preservation of material presence were of the utmost importance in ancient Egypt.⁷⁸⁷

Amun-Ra and suckled by goddesses, motifs traditionally relating to the legitimation of kingship and the transference of divine essence.” Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 199.

⁷⁸³ See, for example, the relief images of Taharka on the building he erected by the sacred lake at Karnak. His muscular limbs, broad shoulders, and lower small of his back all derive from Old Kingdom proportions. Likewise, the streamers on his crown were popular in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 216, fig. 257.

⁷⁸⁴ Edna R. Russmann, ed., *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum*, (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 41. See, for example, the Fourth Dynasty reliefs displaying representations of composite stools from the Early Dynastic Period, as well as Amenemhat III’s partiality for a heavy wig bound at the tips, for which an earlier example dates back to the First Dynasty at Hierakompolis in Russmann, *Eternal Egypt*, 41.

⁷⁸⁵ Lynn Meskell, *Archaeologies of Materiality*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 53.

⁷⁸⁶ Meskell, *Archaeologies of Materiality*, 58.

⁷⁸⁷ Meskell, *Archaeologies of Materiality*, 58.

The Theban architectural landscape must be understood then as participating in a value system that esteemed physical permanence and continuity. This value system, having been upheld for over two millennia by the end of the Third Intermediate Period, meant that an incredible amount of art, architecture, and other material culture had been preserved throughout the landscape. Old buildings and complexes were renovated and added to (see below) and triumphal scenes from the New Kingdom were joined by new triumphal scenes on added pylons and gateways, exhibiting a continuation of this prominent Egyptian icon in monumental fashion.⁷⁸⁸ In some cases, older objects were even reintroduced to the landscape, such as in the chapel to Isis erected during the reign of Osorkon III.⁷⁸⁹ In the chapel precinct, contemporary statues were erected alongside New Kingdom antecedents, including a stele of Seti I, statues of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, and additional private statues.⁷⁹⁰ The Theban architectural landscape thus created a connection between the seventh century and a stable, prosperous, and politically unified past. In so doing, it served as a strategy for legitimization in a cultural and political climate where such a motivation was seen as important.

The Temple of Amun at Karnak

Late in the reign of Shoshenq I, the Twenty-Second Dynasty Pharaoh commissioned a new entrance to the Temple of Amun at Karnak. In front of Horemheb's pylon, Shoshenq's ambitious addition included a great court with two pylons.⁷⁹¹ On the southern side of the court, Shoshenq erected a monumental gateway where he recorded his Levantine campaign.⁷⁹² Like his imperial predecessors (in particular Thutmose III, Seti I, and Ramses II), Shoshenq I commissioned an image of himself in a triumphal pose, smiting a handful of kneeling prisoners with a mace before the god Amun and the goddess of Thebes (Fig. 62a and 62b).⁷⁹³ This scene is accompanied by a topographical

⁷⁸⁸ See Chapter 5 for a greater discussion of triumphal reliefs in Egyptian art and the origins of the smiting scene in the Gerzean Period.

⁷⁸⁹ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 198. The chapel stood northeast of the New Kingdom enclosure wall, an area designated as the burial place of Osiris. Much of the decoration of the chapel combines solar and Osiride themes, including the divine birth of Horus in the marshes of the Delta.

⁷⁹⁰ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 198.

⁷⁹¹ The court "incorporated the entrance to a small temple of Ramses III that stood to the south-east of the pylon." Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 198.

⁷⁹² For a translation and lengthy discussion of the inscription and topographical list, see Kenneth A. Wilson, *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq I into Palestine*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebek, 2005).

⁷⁹³ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 198. Like all "true" triumphal reliefs, this image was accompanied by a victory inscription and a topographical list. Despite all of the faces of the prisoners being rendered as "Asiatics", they hold feathers and bows, symbolizing Libyans (westerners) and easterners respectively, and also are named as both Nubians and Asiatics in the accompanying inscription. Wilson, *The Campaign*, 58. On the interior of the "Bubastite Portal", Shoshenq's legitimacy as ruler is ensured through depictions of a bestowal of gifts from Amun, an embrace from Khonsu, and images of Shoshenq

list and an inscription similar to Seti's on the same temple, even adopting the same language in several sections.⁷⁹⁴ Like earlier triumphal inscriptions (see Chapter 5), the text does not reference specific battles; rather, it credits Shoshenq with having “defeated all his enemies and all nations,”⁷⁹⁵ including the Nubians, the Libyans, the Asiatics, and the Mittani. Here, the reference to Mittani—a state that had not existed for over three centuries at the time of the inscription—evokes the idealized nature of the text.⁷⁹⁶ It also demonstrates the persistent trend in Egyptian culture of gaining legitimacy from the past; in the Third Intermediate and Late Periods, this included references to the culturally prolific and imperially successful Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Dynasties.

The Kushite pharaohs, anxious to establish their legitimacy in the Egyptian landscape (and in the Egyptian manner), also undertook ambitious building programs on the eastern bank of Thebes. Taharka in particular extended the entrance to the Temple of Amun at Karnak with a popular new form of colonnade composed of double rows of papyriform columns approaching the entrance.⁷⁹⁷ The central axis columns were linked by intercolumnar screen walls that were decorated with scenes of the royal visit particularly popular in the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁷⁹⁸ Taharka is also credited with a colonnaded approach to the monumental entrance pylon erected by Ramses II at the Luxor Temple.⁷⁹⁹ Such additions to the Temples of Amun at Karnak and the Luxor Temple during the Kushite Period establish the continued prominence of these complexes in the contemporary Theban landscape.

The Battle of Kadesh reliefs, conspicuously displayed on the exterior walls of these temples, would have been maintained in good repair and surrounded by other reliefs and architectural forms that venerated the style and imperial content of the battle narratives. This includes the massive smiting scenes, commanding prominent pylon surfaces and entryways at the most popular monuments in Thebes, which were potent conveyors of Egyptian imperial rhetoric (Fig. 51). Even those not familiar with the Egyptian visual canon would understand the foreignness of the captives—marked in Egyptian art by costume, skin color, hair, and head coverings. For a foreign audience, the battle reliefs in the Theban landscape (including the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum, Luxor, and Karnak) would naturally culminate in these larger-than-life

suckling both Mut and Hathor. Osorkon II, Takelot II, and Shoshenq III all added similar scenes concerning their own legitimacy throughout the Twenty-Second Dynasty.

⁷⁹⁴ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 52. For a translation of the entire inscription, see Wilson, *The Campaign*, 48-57.

⁷⁹⁵ Wilson, *The Campaign*, 57.

⁷⁹⁶ “All references are either to traditional enemies of Egypt or to general geographic regions, which give the text a very... non-historical character.” Wilson, *The Campaign*, 57.

⁷⁹⁷ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 214.

⁷⁹⁸ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 214.

⁷⁹⁹ William Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 234-235. He also built a new building adjacent to the sacred lake at Karnak to host rituals performed at the return of the statue of Amun from its sojourn to Medinet Habu. Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 214.

smiting images of pharaoh. At places like Karnak where Seti I and Ramses II's battle scenes on the exterior walls of the hypostyle hall are immediately adjacent to their own triumphal reliefs on either side of the northern and southern entrances to the hall, this almost sequential relationship between narrative battle and universal dominance would be especially clear (see Chapter 5). As the Neo-Assyrian army looted the prominent temples in the Theban landscape, the pattern of battle scenes and triumphal reliefs occupying prominent entrances and exterior surfaces⁸⁰⁰ would reinforce this connection between Egyptian imperial campaigns and the (universal) might of pharaoh.

For a Neo-Assyrian army preoccupied with their own imperial identity, the Battle of Kadesh would have served as a potent model for imperial practices. After all, here was Egypt, the most powerful empire during the Late Bronze Age, demolishing its enemies in a foreign landscape. Ramses led the combat charge and stood most prominently upon his chariot, bow readied for action. Perhaps the Battle of Kadesh reliefs inspired not only Neo-Assyrian imperial ideology but also actual military activities. According to Liverani, "Models of behavior determine what an event should be, and consequently affect to a large extent how it took place. The narrative of a battle is a cultural product... The battle is enacted according to the ideological model, and then is narrated according to the same model."⁸⁰¹ The Battle of Kadesh may have thus served as a horizon of meaning for the Neo-Assyrian military—informing when and where and how they should execute their imperial agenda.

The Western Bank of Thebes

On the western bank of the Nile, though, the Third Intermediate Period marked a different trajectory in the architectural landscape. During the Twenty-First Dynasty the royal burials in the Valley of the Kings were systematically dismantled when the mummies from the pharaohs and queens of the New Kingdom were removed from their rock-cut tombs and reburied in large (but unobtrusive) caches, which were easier to guard.⁸⁰² At the same time, burial practices in Thebes changed significantly with the disappearance of tomb chapels altogether. Instead, burials were interred in undecorated rock-cut caches.⁸⁰³ An exception to this was the burials of the God's Wives of Amun, who were interred at Medinet Habu in the precinct of the temple of Ramses III.⁸⁰⁴ In their tomb chapels, they are depicted wearing archaizing sheath dresses and tripartite

⁸⁰⁰ Examples include the triumphal reliefs of Shoshenq I on his entrance portal at the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Ramses II's Kadesh reliefs in the exterior of the first pylon at Luxor, and the imagery of the Battle against the Sea Peoples along with the triumphal reliefs from Ramses III's temple at Medinet Habu.

⁸⁰¹ Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 292.

⁸⁰² Taylor, "The Third Intermediate Period," 351.

⁸⁰³ "It may have been thought that unmarked rock-cut chambers were less likely to be robbed." Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 200.

⁸⁰⁴ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 213.

wigs (along with the vulture headdress and double plumes) that were popular in the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁸⁰⁵

Medinet Habu was not the only New Kingdom temple on the western bank to be re-appropriated in the Third Intermediate Period for private burials. Elsewhere the Priests of Montu cut small chamber tombs for their families into the floor of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri.⁸⁰⁶ From Seti's temple at Gurna, Petrie uncovered pots in the storeroom dating to the Saite Period.⁸⁰⁷ And at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, a vast cemetery grew in the storage bays and temple annexes to the north and west of the main temple at the Ramesseum.⁸⁰⁸ These monuments belonged to elite members of the Theban priesthood, as well as their female relatives, musicians, mistresses, and singers.⁸⁰⁹ The first phase of reuse began at the rear of the temple, where "The Ramesside access paths and their ramps were filled in to a depth of 40 to 80 cm to form a large and rectangular terrace, which served as a base for niche-chapels leaning on to the facade walls of the annexes."⁸¹⁰ In other instances, the priests erected chapels, such as

⁸⁰⁵ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 214, fig. 255. "Shepenwepet I initiated a series of tomb chapels built to the west of the eastern fortified gate, and south east of the mortuary temple of Ramesses III... Amenirdis I probably erected a similar mud brick building next to that of Shepenwepet I, but this chapel seems to have been dismantled by Shepenwepet II, who replaced it with a stone-built structure." David A. Aston, "The Theban West Bank from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty to the Ptolemaic Period," in *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Nigel C. Strudwick and John H. Taylor (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2003), 144-145.

⁸⁰⁶ Aston, "The Theban West Bank," 147.

⁸⁰⁷ Aston, "The Theban West Bank," 153.

⁸⁰⁸ Cult activity continued at the Ramesseum throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties when, for example, the prominence of the storage facilities at the Ramesseum appeared in the Turn Strike Papyrus (see above) and Ramses VI engraved his own titulary on the temple walls. Looting at the temple was recorded during the reign of Ramses X and also indicates that at least a portion of the temple complex was still in use by the end of the New Kingdom. These tenth century tombs often used Ramesside structures for covers, so that the economic complex has largely been dismantled. Monique Nelson, "The Ramesseum Necropolis," in *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Nigel C. Strudwick and John H. Taylor (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2003), 90.

⁸⁰⁹ Aston, "The Theban West Bank," 139. "The remains of a round topped stele belonging to Sathorkhenem, daughter of Iput and great-granddaughter of Osorkon I, were discovered in the debris of one of these niche-chapels, set up in the south-west part of the terrace." Nelson, "The Ramesseum Necropolis," 91.

⁸¹⁰ Nelson, "The Ramesseum Necropolis," 90-91. "Opening to the east, these niche-chapels were vaulted and contained an offering table or stela. They were linked with the older storerooms where the shafts were cut via a passage cut through the wall; this passage was walled up after the funerary ceremonies. The majority of the bricks used in these constructions were taken from nearby temples." See Nelson, "The Ramesseum Necropolis," 92, for details of tomb chapel architecture.

those in the northwest court of the annexes. At the temple treasury (see Chapter 5) seated statues made of mud surrounded its eastern and southern walls.⁸¹¹ Egyptians also began to alter some of the original architectural features of the Ramesseum towards the edge of the storerooms (which were themselves additions to Ramesside structures that were filled in at an earlier date).⁸¹²

Of the over 200 tombs that Quibell excavated at the Ramesseum, only four remained undisturbed, suggesting that looting began shortly after the temple was abandoned by the end of the Late Period. Many blocks from the Ramesseum have been recovered from the small temple at Medinet Habu, according with the dismantling of the Ramesseum in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.⁸¹³ Recent MAFTO reports on the northern tower of the first pylon postulate that “The destruction of this magnificent gate goes back to a very old date. The fact to notice that many parts of the temple have been entirely dismantled and reutilized somewhere else supposes that the Ramesseum should have been used as a quarry since the Third Intermediate Period, and particularly by the end of the Ptolemaic Epoch.”⁸¹⁴

These dismantlings created an impression of an architectural complex that had gone out of use and was no longer preserved in the way that the Temple of Amun at Karnak or the Luxor Temple (or even other western bank temples such as Medinet Habu—see below) were. The Ramesseum had become a relic of a bygone era of Egyptian prominence, while the remains of its Nineteenth Dynasty architecture and decorative program reflected an age when Egypt’s wealth, resources, and imperial practices were ideologically and militarily intertwined. Diodorus reveals that the Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum were still largely intact when Hecataeus of Abdera visited the site in the third century BCE.⁸¹⁵

Beyond the pylon...there is a peristyle more remarkable than the former one; in it there are all manner of reliefs depicting the war which the king waged against these he had made a campaign with four hundred thousand foot-soldiers and twenty thousand cavalry, the whole army having been divided into four divisions,

⁸¹¹ Nelson, “The Ramesseum Necropolis,” 91.

⁸¹² “This extension of the necropolis over the processional ways within the enclosure walls is still far from understood, largely because of the mounds of debris established almost as an enclosure.” Nelson, “The Ramesseum Necropolis,” 91-92.

⁸¹³ According to Diodorus, Cambyses boasts of stealing a grand golden circle that used to stand atop the temple; it was likely long-abandoned and had fallen into disuse by the Persian Period.

⁸¹⁴ Christian Leblanc, “The Recent Excavation and Restoration Works at the Ramesseum,” *Mission Archéologique Française de Thèbes-Ouest*, last modified May 9, 2011, <http://www.mafto.fr/2011/05/the-recent-excavation-and-restoration-works-at-the-ramesseum/>.

⁸¹⁵ “[Diodorus] is generally held to have drawn primarily upon Hecataeus of Abdera, who visited Egypt early in the third century B.C., for his account of the customs of the Egyptians.” C.H. Oldfather, introduction to *Library of History*, by Diodorus Siculus, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), xxvi.

all of which were under the command of sons of the king... On the first wall the king, he says, is represented in the act of besieging a walled city which is surrounded by a river, and of leading the attack against opposing troops; he is accompanied by a lion, which is aiding him with terrifying effect.⁸¹⁶

For a Neo-Assyrian audience, the disjuncture between the imperial glory manifested in the reliefs and the disrepair of the temple complex in which they stood would be difficult to ignore. It would highlight the chasm in between Egypt's past and present circumstances, embodying the temporal disjuncture between the era of Egypt's political dominance in the Near East and the current supremacy of the Neo-Assyrian empire.

By the seventh century BCE, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were not the only battle reliefs on the west bank, nor were they the most prominent. At Medinet Habu, Ramses III (1184-1153 BCE) covered the temple walls with images of his own Battle against the Sea Peoples (a coalition of hostile Libyan forces and peoples who arrived from the sea) (Fig. 63).⁸¹⁷ Inscriptions commemorate this campaign from his eighth year, boasting that Egypt succeeded in warding off the Sea Peoples when all others had failed: "No land could resist their army, from Hatti, Kode, Carchemish, Arzawa, and Alashiya [Cyprus] on being cut off at one time. A camp was set up at Amurru. They desolated its people, and its land was like that which had never existed. They were coming forward towards Egypt, while the flame was prepared for them. Their confederation was the Peleset, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denen, and Weshesh, lands united."⁸¹⁸ The inscription accompanied a massive battle tableau comprising heavy fighting in a crowded seascape, as well as reliefs containing images of women, children, and household goods piled onto carts as if the conflict included significant population movements.⁸¹⁹ The compositional use of chaotic motion in the fighting scenes and the prominent iconographic element of the water

⁸¹⁶ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, vol. I, Books 1-2.34 (Loeb Classical Library No. 279), trans. C.H. Oldfather, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 1.47-48.

⁸¹⁷ "Sea Peoples" is a modern translation of the ancient Egyptian *thr*, "un mot d'origine inconnue rarement employé dans les documents militaires égyptiens pour décrire des troupes étrangères." Shirly Ben-Dor Evian, "'They were thr on land, others at sea...': The Etymology of the Egyptian Term for 'Sea-Peoples,'" *Semitica* 57 (2015): 57. "The 12th century was one of major changes throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and the accounts of the Sea Peoples' attacks reflect Egyptian reactions to them. They could envision threats to their territory only in terms of major armies attacking them. Hence, pressure from people trying to enter Egypt from Libya and the north may have been portrayed as military invasions." Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 253-254.

⁸¹⁸ Translation: John A. Wilson, "Battle of Djahy," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed., ed. J.B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 262. For a discussion and overview of the Sea Peoples, see Anthony Leahy, "Sea Peoples," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, vol. 3, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 257-260; Several of these groups of peoples appear as mercenaries in the armies of both Ramses II and Muwatalli on the Battle of Kadesh reliefs.

⁸¹⁹ Van de Mieroop, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 251.

evokes the Battle of Kadesh narrative scenes on the first and second pylons of the Ramesseum. Likewise a vignette from Medinet Habu of a lion running alongside Ramses III's chariot evokes the figure of a lion accompanying Ramses II's chariot on the Battle of Kadesh reliefs from the second pylon at the Ramesseum (Fig. 64).⁸²⁰

At Medinet Habu the entry portal was also flanked on both wings of the first pylon by triumphal reliefs of Ramses III. The mirrored images show Ramses III larger than life and wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt with the mace in his upraised arm and the prisoners bound and supplicant before him (Fig. 65). On the southern side of the doorway Amun stands before him,⁸²¹ while on the northern side the god is the falcon-headed Amun-Re-Horakhty. In both scenes, two falcons fly above Ramses III's head with their wings outstretched in the same protective gesture that Ramses II receives above his chariot in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum, less than a mile away.

During the Third Intermediate Period, the connection between Medinet Habu and the god Amun made the site a desirable cemetery for the God's Wives of Amun: they could insure their own rebirth through their participation in the regular renewal of the god.⁸²² The connection with Amun also made Medinet Habu an important site for the Kushite pharaohs, who expanded the Eighteenth Dynasty temple, which still remained at the site after Ramses III erected his temple in the Nineteenth Dynasty.⁸²³ Shabako built a narrow, long entrance room with a single pylon at its east end.⁸²⁴ Later (probably during the reign of Taharka) a colonnade was erected in front of the pylon with double rows of four columns that were connected by a low screen wall and enclosed by a broken-lintel gateway.⁸²⁵ The wings of the gateway were decorated with triumphal scenes of pharaoh smiting a handful of enemies, while the screen walls contained a foundation ceremony and other scenes.⁸²⁶

On both the eastern and western banks of Thebes, the Neo-Assyrian army would encounter narrative battle reliefs at the temples of Luxor, Karnak, and Medinet Habu in conjunction with massive triumphal scenes of pharaoh smiting foreign enemies before the god Amun. The prominence of these triumphal scenes cannot be overestimated in the

⁸²⁰ See Susanna C. Heinz, *Die Feldzugsdarstellungen des Neuen Reiches: eine Bildanalyse*, (Vienna: Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001), 310-11.

⁸²¹ Unlike other triumphal reliefs, Amun here does not hold a lead rope tethering the prisoners in the southern scene. Wilson, *The Campaign*, 25.

⁸²² Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 214. This was accompanied by the emphasis on regeneration residing in the mound of creation at Medinet Habu.

⁸²³ "The worship of Amun had been taken to Napata in the New Kingdom, and the god had become the Kushite state deity." Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 216.

⁸²⁴ He also probably restored the enclosure wall of the temple. Aston, "The Theban West Bank," 143.

⁸²⁵ "In the Thirtieth Dynasty Nectanebo I re-cut all the cartouches with his own name," but the columned axis at Medinet Habu is nearly identical to that of Taharka's addition to the Temple of Amun at Karnak." Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 216.

⁸²⁶ Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 216. Whereas Wilson, *The Campaign*, 16 believes that Shabako is responsible for the triumphal relief.

Theban landscape of the seventh century. It is not just the dimensions of the images—with smiting figures of pharaoh often two or three times life size—that made it stand out, but also their placement on entrances and other key exterior surfaces of the most important and visually conspicuous temples in Thebes at this time.

The Egyptian imperial reliefs (triumphal scenes and battle narratives) would evoke Egypt's glorious past—particularly the imperial splendor of the New Kingdom when the Egyptian empire was at its height and when many of these scenes were carved on temple walls. This Late Bronze Age past would contrast with the looting and dismantling on the western bank of Thebes of the diminished present. It is precisely this juxtaposition in the landscape that would create a temporality (relationship in time) between these eras and allow the Neo-Assyrians to encounter contemporary Egypt's relationship with its past. When the Neo-Assyrian army reached Thebes, the architectural landscape revealed how the seventh century city regarded its New Kingdom history, how it preserved and attempted to reproduce monuments from that time and in that style. But these efforts at timelessness—rendering obsolete the passage of time between the New Kingdom and the seventh century by using archaizing artistic and architectural techniques, motifs, and styles—were ultimately ineffective against the way that weather and looting and a lack of upkeep impacted many monuments in the landscape. The passage of time would have been all too visible to the invading Neo-Assyrians who encountered a landscape full of remnants of Egypt's past, now diminished. Egypt's imperial power—once preeminent in the Near East—was everywhere commemorated, but no longer present.

Assyrian Audience

According to Assurbanipal's inscriptions, the Assyrian army took one month and ten days to travel to from Memphis to Thebes on campaign.⁸²⁷ It remains unclear if this pace was slowed by additional fighting on the way to Thebes, as Kahn has suggested.⁸²⁸ Forty days, though, is a significant length of time to spend in the Egyptian landscape. During this time, the Assyrian army would have had ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with topographical features and monuments in the landscape.

The Assyrian army was made up of corvée labor and a small number of professional soldiers who comprised the elite corps.⁸²⁹ Court functionaries, who combined political and military titles and activities, led the yearly campaigns along with the king.⁸³⁰ According to Mario Liverani, ninth century BCE military confrontations were fought between armies ranging from as many as 20,000 soldiers per side; seventh century conflicts were even larger.⁸³¹ Thus the number of Assyrian soldiers who traveled to Thebes would have been significant.

When the Assyrian armies brought Egyptian spoils and prisoners back to the

⁸²⁷ Kahn, "The Assyrian Invasions of Egypt," 258; Pauline Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians in Assyrian Art," *Bulletin of Egyptological Seminar* 4 (1982): 16.

⁸²⁸ Kahn, "Assyrian Invasions of Egypt," 258.

⁸²⁹ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 503.

⁸³⁰ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 503.

⁸³¹ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 503.

Assyrian palaces, the exposure to Egyptian imperial ideology expanded to include the royal family, palace dignitaries, foreign emissaries, and other elite members of the Assyrian administration. In *The Architecture of Late Assyrian Palaces*, David Kertai explicitly argues for a revision of modern scholars' understanding of palatial audiences, arguing that, "A large portion of the Assyrian administration can be expected to have had access to the palace on certain locations."⁸³² He divides this audience into several categories, including magnates (literally 'the important ones', or *kabtūti*), scholars, officials in charge of security and the daily functioning of the palace, and the royal family.⁸³³ Likewise, Assyrian inscriptions record visits from emissaries from Gaza, Moab, Judah, and Egypt itself who would have been received in the palace.⁸³⁴ In the palaces the main reception suites—including the throne room—were constructed to hold "sizeable events" of Assyrian functionaries and foreign emissaries.⁸³⁵ According to Kertai, these visits were not a rare occurrence: "Numerous people travelled to and from the Assyrian royal cities on a regular basis... Some visited the palace routinely, while others travelled weeks if not months for a once-in-a lifetime visit to the king and his palace."⁸³⁶ Kertai thus presents a Near Eastern world where many people near and far from the Assyrian capitals had either visited the palaces themselves or knew of a person who had.⁸³⁷

Mario Liverani, too, discusses Assyrian audiences of palatial propaganda in *The Ancient Near East: History Society, and Economy*.⁸³⁸ He acknowledges that the majority of the Assyrian population (comprising farmers in the countryside) would never even visit the capital cities, but he does believe that during festivals many residents of the cities were invited to participate in celebrations that included "parades of prisoners and exotic products."⁸³⁹ Even though they were likely illiterate, these residents were "affected by an effective visual channel," including imperial decorations such as Esarhaddon's glazed bricks from Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud and Assurbanipal's throne-room reliefs from his North Palace at Nineveh (Room M); both depict the Egyptian campaigns mentioned in this chapter's introduction (see below).

For the inner circle of literate Assyrian functionaries and scholars, the process of self-education included reading royal inscriptions but also learning "the ideological subtleties written in them."⁸⁴⁰ This would have included an appreciation of Neo-Assyrian imperial identity that traced its origins to the Middle Assyrian conquests in the northeastern Levant. Chapter 6 outlined how the Middle Assyrian empire steadily

⁸³² David Kertai, *The Architecture of Late Assyrian Palaces*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7.

⁸³³ Kertai, *Late Assyrian Palaces*, 7.

⁸³⁴ Kertai, *Late Assyrian Palaces*, 237.

⁸³⁵ Kertai, *Late Assyrian Palaces*, 237.

⁸³⁶ Kertai, *Late Assyrian Palaces*, 237.

⁸³⁷ Kertai, *Late Assyrian Palaces*, 237.

⁸³⁸ Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History Society, and Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 511.

⁸³⁹ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 511.

⁸⁴⁰ Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 511.

accumulated the vestiges of Mittani territory east of the Euphrates during the late fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE. Assyria's imperial machinations during the Late Bronze Age preoccupied Hittite rulers intent on safeguarding their own imperial acquisitions in the northern Levant; indeed by the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta (1243-1207 BCE) the "Land of Assur" comprised all of the Mittani territory in the Habur east of the Euphrates.⁸⁴¹

It would be several centuries before the Neo-Assyrian state re-emerged from the period of recession and insularity that marked the end of the Late Bronze Age with imperial aims, but here it is important to emphasize how the Neo-Assyrians conceived of their own past—in particular how the imperial conquests between the Zagros Mountains and the Euphrates during the reigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I informed first millennium BCE conceptions about the boundaries of the Assyrian state along with Neo-Assyrian ideologies of conquest and reconquest.⁸⁴² An important document in this regard is the Assyrian King List, whose copies have been found in Assur, Khorsabad, and Nineveh. The King List reveals that, "The office of king was reserved exclusively to... a particular family that was able to trace its lineage back to the rulers of the city state of Assur of the early second millennium BC."⁸⁴³ For the Neo-Assyrians, who conceived of a continuous extension of political identity stretching deep into the second millennium BCE, the Middle Assyrian machinations in the greater Levant during the Late Bronze

⁸⁴¹ See Amir Harrak, *Assyria and Hanigalbat, A Historical Reconstruction of Bilateral Relations from the Middle of the Fourteenth to the End of the Twelfth Centuries B.C.*, (Hildesheim and Zurich: G. Olms, 1987) for a detailed examination of the Assyrian conquest of the Habur region from the reign of Adad-Nirari I until the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I. It is unclear precisely when the Middle Assyrian state first began to acquire provinces. See Radua Llop, "The Creation of the Middle Assyrian Provinces," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131 (2011): 591-604 for a helpful summary of scholarship on the Middle Assyrian provincial system and Akkadian terminology of administrative titulary. "We are not very well informed about how the city of Assur actually took control over the Assyrian heartland, nor do we know the concrete territorial extent of the Middle Assyrian kingdom during the reign of Assur-Uballit." Llop, "The Middle Assyrian Provinces," 598. In fact, Arbail, Ninua, Kalhu, and Kilizu are only mentioned as Assyrian provinces from the thirteenth century BCE. Llop, "The Middle Assyrian Provinces," 600.

⁸⁴² Liverani, *The Ancient Near East*, 505.

⁸⁴³ Karen Radner, "Assyrian and non-Assyrian kingship in the first millennium BC," in *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop, Held in Padova, November 28th-December 1st, 2007*, ed. Giovanni B. Lanfranchi and Robert Rollinger (Padova: Sargon, 2010), 26. For a new edition and translation of the Assyrian King List, see J.J. Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, ed. Benjamin Foster (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004). The Assyrian King List is based on a now-lost list of *limmu* officials. It begins in the quasi-mythological past with the names of seventeen kings "who lived in tents." The thirtieth ruler on the list is Shamsi-Adad, who ruled for thirty-three years and is credited with conquering Assur to found the Old Assyrian Period.

Age significantly impacted how the first millennium rulers began to conceive of their own imperial relationship with the region. In other words, the conquest of the Levant acquired an ideological significance that connected the Neo-Assyrian royal identity to its Middle Assyrian antecedents. But, as I discuss below, this Levantine imperialism also connected Neo-Assyrian kings to New Kingdom Egypt—a time when the Egyptian empire stretched far into the Levantine landscape.

Nahr el-Kalb

When the Neo-Assyrian army marched through the Levant to reach Egypt an initial element of New Kingdom Egyptian imperial rhetoric would have been the imperial steles that were erected in the Levantine region during the second millennium (and early first millennium) BCE (see Chapter 6).⁸⁴⁴ Unfortunately we have no accounts corroborating the presence of the free-standing steles erected by Ramses II and Seti I in the northern and southern Levant by the seventh century BCE. As a result, I discuss them here not as specific elements in the landscape network of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs but as comparanda for the badly-eroded rock-cut steles, which Ramses carved at Nahr el-Kalb and which we do know that Esarhaddon visited (see below). For modern scholars, it is the remains of the free-standing steles—often long-buried or used as architectural fill—that provide a clearer picture of the textual and iconographic elements of the imperial steles. These steles often displayed the triumphal imagery of pharaoh smiting foreign enemies before the god Amun, as seen on Ramses II’s southern relief stele at Nahr el-Kalb (from year ten of his reign) and his stele from Adhlun (near Tyre).⁸⁴⁵ The stele inscriptions could commemorate individual campaigns—such as on Seti I’s first stele from Bet Shean where he recounts a specific series of battles precipitated by the “ambitious chief of Hammath” campaigning in the region of Bet Shean.⁸⁴⁶ This

⁸⁴⁴ Shoshenq erected a stele at Megiddo during his Levantine campaign in the middle of the tenth century BCE. The stele was discovered by Clarence S. Fischer, *The Excavation of Armageddon* (Oriental Institute Communications 4), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), 12-16, fig. 7b, but likely “had been unearthed by Schumacher when he dug a series of trenches, but had not been noticed by him.” Wilson, *The Campaign*, 71. Only a small fragment of the limestone stele remains, including both the prenomen (*Hd- hpr-r st[p n] r*) and nomen (*mr imn Ššnq*) of Shoshenq I. Wilson, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 71. It was later broken into blocks and used as building materials, and thus unfortunately was not found in situ.

⁸⁴⁵ The stele from Adhlun, eighteen kilometers north of Tyre along the coast, originally contained a twenty-line inscription below the iconography of pharaoh smiting enemies before the god Amun-Re. While no cartouche is preserved to positively identify the stele as belonging to Ramses II, Kitchen finds this the most likely scenario given the trajectory of his Levantine campaign in Year 4. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical: Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments*, vol. 2, *Rameses II, Royal Inscriptions* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999a), 135.

⁸⁴⁶ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical: Translated and Annotated: Translations*, vol. 2, *Rameses II, Royal Inscriptions*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999b), 18. Hammath figures prominently in the Levantine landscape of the

inscription serves a similar purpose as the narrative battle reliefs from the Theban temples through its presentation of individual conflicts in specific landscapes. In fact, in the middle register on the eastern side of Seti's battle reliefs on the hypostyle hall at Karnak, he depicts a campaign in the same region recounted on the stele.

Other Levantine steles contain rhetorical inscriptions, which evoke instead the universalizing language of the Egyptian triumphal reliefs. As discussed in Chapter 6,⁸⁴⁷ Ramses II's stele from Bet Shean contains an image of pharaoh presenting loot before the god Amun who hands him the scimitar. Beneath both figures, name-rings list the Nine-Bows (canonical enemies) of Egypt. The rhetorical inscription below praises the valor of Ramses without making any allusions to specific battles.

Not only did the triumphal iconography and inscriptions on the Levantine steles expand the landscape network for Egyptian imperial rhetoric outside the localized confines of Thebes (or even the boundaries of Egypt), any stele still standing in the Levant would have physically marked the presence of the New Kingdom Egyptian empire. In so doing, the Egyptian steles would establish the Levant as a land-to-be-conquered, where the showdown between Ramses and Muwatalli was just one of dozens of imperial skirmishes that took place between Hittite, Egyptian, Mittani, and then Assyrian empires during the Late Bronze Age.

In examining how the Neo-Assyrian army encountered the Egyptian Levantine steles, this section focuses upon the site of Nahr el-Kalb—where the co-presence of Egyptian and Assyrian rock-cut steles high above the banks of the el-Kalb River demonstrates direct Assyrian knowledge of the Egyptian imperial markers (and an unambiguous Neo-Assyrian interaction with Egyptian imperial rhetoric during the reign of Esarhaddon). In the thirteenth century BCE Nahr el-Kalb delineated a political no-man's-land between the Hittite empire to the north and the Egyptian empire to the south. Its visual conspicuousness as a boundary inspired Ramses II to leave inscriptions at the site during his campaigns in the region. On the rock cliffs above where the river meets the Mediterranean Sea (just northeast of the city of Beirut), Ramses II commissioned three steles to be inscribed above the southern bank.⁸⁴⁸ The earliest stele is the middle carving, from the fourth year of his reign.⁸⁴⁹ It is the best preserved of the three, although time and weather have eroded much of the text below the image of pharaoh. Kitchen has suggested that this commemoration of Ramses's "first victorious campaign"⁸⁵⁰ in the

first millennium BCE as well, particularly in the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III. See Nadav Na'aman, "Province System and Settlement Pattern in Southern Syria and Palestine in the Neo-Assyrian Period," in *Neo-Assyrian Geography*, ed. Mario Liverani (Rome: Universita di Roma, 1995), 103-115, whose article focuses on the Neo-Assyrian provincial system and patterns of settlement in the southern Levant.

⁸⁴⁷ Jaroslav Černý, "Stela of Ramesses II from Beisan," *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958): 75-82; Translation: Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translations*, 27-29.

⁸⁴⁸ Franz Heinrich Weissbach, *Die Denkmäler und Inschriften an der Mündung des Nahr-el-Kelb*, (Berlin and Leipzig: Vereinigung wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1922), pl. XI.

⁸⁴⁹ Photo in James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), fig. 103 right.

⁸⁵⁰ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 3.

Levant was an attempt to regain control of Amurru, over whom the Egyptians lost dominance during the later Eighteenth Dynasty.⁸⁵¹ If this is indeed the case, perhaps the inscription once mentioned Egyptian triumph over Kadesh's Levantine ally during the Late Bronze Age (see Chapter 6). The relief is enclosed inside a carved architectural border whose rectangular form is topped by a cavetto-cornice. The falcon-headed god, Re, wears a sun-disk crown and presents Ramses II with the scimitar of victory; a severely worn hieroglyphic inscription occupies the majority of the space inside the frame. All that remains from the inscription is Ramses's titulary and the dateline: "Year four, fourth month of Akhet, day two."⁸⁵²

The southern stele dates to Ramses's Levantine campaign in his tenth year (Fig. 66a and 66b).⁸⁵³ A figure of Ramses in a triumphal pose stands with a kneeling enemy in hand before the god Amun, who wears a double-plumed crown. This relief is also enclosed by a rectangular frame with a cavetto-cornice. Underneath the cavetto-cornice a winged sun-disc spans the width of the frame.

The northern stele was vandalized in 1860-1861 and little remains.⁸⁵⁴ At one time it contained an image of Ramses smiting an enemy in front of the god Ptah.⁸⁵⁵ It is unclear what year it dates to, but because Ramses's first Levantine campaign—which was commemorated by the middle stele—was in his fourth regnal year, it most likely dates after this time.

The Neo-Assyrian armies that encountered the Egyptian steles at Nahr el-Kalb would understand from their iconography (even if they could not read the texts) that these rock-cut steles indicated the one-time presence of Egyptian imperialism in the Levantine region. But by the seventh century BCE, the landscape of the northern Levant was the arena of Assyrian imperialism: Neo-Assyrian peripheral monuments abounded, the road system they built traversed the region and ultimately connected the provincial administration systems that the Neo-Assyrian rulers had reorganized in conquered territories.

When Esarhaddon stopped at Nahr el-Kalb on his return journey from Egypt, he encountered the steles of Ramses II and experienced how they had left their imperial mark in this one location. He chose to carve his own imperial marker to demonstrate an Assyrian imperial presence in the same locale. The landscape of Nahr el-Kalb thus became an opportunity for Esarhaddon to participate in a visual dialog of imperialism that spanned six centuries and that suggested Assyria's "inheritance" of the imperial might of the New Kingdom Egypt (see below).

To emphasize a connection with the Ramesside steles on the Nahr el-Kalb cliffs, Esarhaddon commissioned the carving of his own rock relief immediately adjacent to the southern Ramesside stele (Fig. 67). Marian Feldman has pointed out that while Esarhaddon's relief "shares a conceptual basis with its Egyptian neighbor—that is, carving a monument to imperial expansion in the living landscape—all other formal

⁸⁵¹ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 2.

⁸⁵² Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 1.

⁸⁵³ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 60.

⁸⁵⁴ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 2.

⁸⁵⁵ Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, 2.

aspects stand out in striking counterpoint to those of [Ramses].”⁸⁵⁶ While the border surrounding the Ramesside stele is rectangular, Esarhaddon’s is curved, and its double border is carved in exceptionally high relief (Fig. 68).⁸⁵⁷ The striding figure of Ramses occupies only the upper portion of his stele, while Esarhaddon’s figure fills the entire height of the stele so that the point of his conical *polos* crown brushes the curvature of the top border. Esarhaddon’s right arm is raised with his finger extending in a pointing gesture. Ann Shafer suggests that this position is “made during prayer and seems to express the king’s humility before the gods;”⁸⁵⁸ the upper portion of Esarhaddon’s torso is surrounded by divine images. A cuneiform inscription fills the bottom third of the composition, superimposed as a band across Esarhaddon’s body. While the inscription is heavily worn, portions detailing Esarhaddon’s successful campaign into Egypt are still legible:

With rejoicing and jubilation, I went into the city Memphis, his royal city, (and) I sat joyfully upon (his) gold-mounted stool. [...] my [...] weapons [...] ... was placed; a message (with) gold (and) silver ... [...] afterwards ... the march [... I] entered and I counted as [booty ... of] his palace, the gods (and) goddesses of Taharqa, king of Kush, together with their possessions [... I ... his] wi[fe], his [cou]rt ladies, Ušanahuru, his crown prince, [...] ... courtiers, his personal attendants, [...], posses[sions], goods, [...] ..., lapis lazuli, ivory, gold-mounted [...] their *openings* [...] ditto, gold (and) silver utensils, and all kinds of stones [fit] for the palace, which were without (number, and) skillfully built [...].I opened their [...] and a chest ... [...] his kingship ... [...] ... mirror [...] ... words [...] king whose bo[x, ...], possessions, ... [...] ... they left them, together with 15 cro[w]ns [...] 30 crowns of wives, ditto [...] good [...], stone [...], baked bricks, stone ..., [in] great number, [... from] the treasury, gold, silver, anti[m]ony, ... which were] without [number], a *saddinu*-garment (made) of byssus, [...] which all ... [...] copper, tin, lead, ivory, [...] ... [...] ... [...] pos]sessions, ..., [...] ..., his [...], his in-laws, his clan, [...] ... stone ..., his [...], and [the sons] of the kings [...] ... [...] ... [...] physicians, diviners, [...] ... [...] carpenters], gold-smiths, metal-workers, [...] ... [...] ... [...] ...⁸⁵⁹

Feldman suggests that Esarhaddon’s relief “captures and expresses a tension felt in Assyria towards its New Kingdom precedent.”⁸⁶⁰ In other words, Assyria is both the inheritor and usurper of Egyptian imperial presence in the Levant. As discussed in Chapter 6, Assyria may also owe its political ascendancy during the Late Bronze Age in

⁸⁵⁶ Marian H. Feldman, “Nineveh to Thebes and Back: Art and Politics between Assyria and Egypt in the Seventh Century BCE,” *Iraq* 66 (2004): 142.

⁸⁵⁷ Weissbach, *Die Denkmäler des Nahr-el-Kalb*, pl. XI.

⁸⁵⁸ Ann Shafer, “Assyrian Royal Monuments on the Periphery: Ritual and the Making of Imperial Space,” in *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter*, ed. Jack Cheng and Marian H. Feldman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 137.

⁸⁵⁹ Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)*, Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 103.

⁸⁶⁰ Feldman, “To Thebes and Back,” 143.

part to Egypt's acceptance of the ruler of Assyria as a Great King. Thus the visual dialog between Esarhaddon and Ramses's reliefs "documents Assyria's relations with Egypt as it constructed its own imperial expression."⁸⁶¹

But Esarhaddon's relief does more than just draw inspiration for its own imperial claim from the supremacy of the New Kingdom Egyptian empire. By visually dialoging with an imperial marker from six centuries prior, it establishes a new chronological framework that abrogated the political ruptures at the end of the Late Bronze Age to create an uninterrupted lineage of imperial conquest in this region. Esarhaddon's relief created a visual bridge across this 600-year rupture, weaving together a specific and strategic chronology that emphasizes the imperial activities of two ancient empires that both physically and ideologically shaped the landscape at Nahr el-Kalb. In the seventh century Theban landscape, Assyrian soldiers encountered Egypt's relationship with its own past. At Nahr el-Kalb the imperial steles of Ramses II and Esarhaddon created a new temporality between *Assyria's* present and Egypt's past.

In the methodology of this dissertation, I adopt Christopher Gosden and Martin Heidegger's understanding of time—that it is not an "Abstract qualit[y] providing the medium of social action, but rather a dimension created through the concrete operation of social [activities]."⁸⁶² In other words, time is manufactured from the flow of life: we make time through our actions and movements, such as marching on campaign.⁸⁶³ Thus for every society, time (and the temporal referents that it imposes) is necessarily subjective and culturally specific. If action generates time, then in order to understand how the Assyrians were experiencing the passage of time and the relationships between different time periods, we must examine how they were physically participating in their landscapes. In light of this the construction of Esarhaddon's relief stele (as an action upon this northern Levantine landscape) creates the temporal framework for understanding the intercultural connectivity at Nahr el-Kalb. When Esarhaddon and his troops stopped at the cliffs high above the el-Kalb River and encountered Ramses's reliefs, the Egyptian steles embodied time as it has left its mark in this one location. Esarhaddon's erection of a stele adjacent to the Ramesside monuments punctuated his own specific temporal encounter with the site. This created a new temporality that transcended vast physical distances between northern Mesopotamia and Egypt and six centuries of political change.

By employing Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope to this Neo-Assyrian encounter, we can further emphasize the significance of this new temporality. A chronotopic encounter is not just any incidental meeting; rather, it is "marked by a higher degree of intensity in emotions and values," where time is endowed with a heightened sense of importance.⁸⁶⁴ In the "encounter" chronotope (as in every chronotope), the spatial and temporal dimensions intertwine so that the significance of the encounter is manifested by the time as it relates to place, or time-in-place (see Chapter 4).

⁸⁶¹ Feldman, "To Thebes and Back," 143.

⁸⁶² Gosden, *Social Being and Time*, 78.

⁸⁶³ Gosden, *Social Being and Time*, 7, 34

⁸⁶⁴ Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: Texas University Press, 1981), 243.

This spatial and temporal emphasis upon the reliefs was clearly emphasized by the Neo-Assyrians themselves. In fact, Esarhaddon was not the first Assyrian king to carve a relief at Nahr el-Kalb. Shafer has suggested that two additional Assyrian reliefs at the site (both extremely worn so that any earlier cuneiform inscriptions are no longer legible) date to the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser I and Shalmaneser III.⁸⁶⁵ If the attribution of the other Assyrian reliefs at Nahr el-Kalb is correct, then Esarhaddon's relief also marks an encounter with Assyria's own imperial past.

Indeed, erecting monuments at the periphery of the Assyrian empire during military campaigns has a long history in Assyrian imperial practice, dating back to the Middle Assyrian Period. According to Ann Shafer, every major ruler of Assyria from Assurnasirpal II to Assurbanipal contributed to the corpus.⁸⁶⁶ The freestanding stele and rock-cut reliefs were located over a broad geographical area, with almost fifty of these monuments extant today (and likely as many again referred to in the Assyrian royal inscriptions).⁸⁶⁷ The Neo-Assyrian peripheral monuments often marked expanding political boundaries and military acquisitions, but in so doing, they also demonstrate a keen familiarity with the monuments (and by extension, the physical boundaries of the empire) of each king's predecessors.⁸⁶⁸ This suggests that the Neo-Assyrian kings "felt the desire or political necessity to engage in that tradition" by erecting monuments in the same landscapes as their predecessors.⁸⁶⁹

Each of these Neo-Assyrian monuments on the periphery of the Assyrian empire shares several key iconographic features: a prominent image of the Assyrian king, divine symbols, and royal inscriptions in annal-form.⁸⁷⁰ According to Shafer, this royal iconography in peripheral landscapes emphasizes that the king himself served as the principal agent of Assyria's growth.⁸⁷¹ In other words, the Assyrian royal imperial responsibility was manifested through the activity of erecting these monuments to

⁸⁶⁵ Ann Shafer, "The Carving of an Empire: Neo-Assyrian Monuments on the Periphery" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1998), 319. According to Shalmaneser III's royal inscription, he claims to have "climbed Mt. Lebanon [and] erected an image of my kingship beside the image of Tiglath-Pileser, great king, my predecessor." Allison Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods 3, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), A.O.102.10, IV. 13-15.

⁸⁶⁶ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 133.

⁸⁶⁷ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 133.

⁸⁶⁸ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 136. For example, at the ideologically charged Source of the Tigris, Tiglath-Pileser I, Tukulti-Ninurta II, and Shalmaneser III all commissioned rock reliefs. Assurnasirpal II also endorsed his visit to the Source of the Tigris in his royal inscriptions. Allison Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859)*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods 2, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 200-201.

⁸⁶⁹ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 136.

⁸⁷⁰ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 136.

⁸⁷¹ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 136.

demarcate the expansion of imperial space through time.⁸⁷²

The chronotope of the encounter becomes even more resonant in examining the rock reliefs at Nahr el-Kalb in the context of Shafer's research on ritual activity at Neo-Assyrian peripheral monuments. She believes that peripheral monuments were not only considered sacred objects, but also as a means for charting the king's movements through the realm were "objects commemorating sacred acts."⁸⁷³ Ultimately, it was the Assyrian king's presence before his own monument (and his own image) that gave it power, and that would have been "the most spectacular moment of all."⁸⁷⁴ The rock-cut steles of Esarhaddon, then, embodied both the activities of royal image-making and ritual encounter, serving to mark Neo-Assyrian imperial conquest in a material way, but also creating "a highly-charged symbolic field of space, tradition and legitimacy."⁸⁷⁵

This ritual encounter of Esarhaddon with his image—combined with the Assyrian king's encounter with Ramses's reliefs at the same site—highlights the nexus of temporal and spatial relationships at Nahr el-Kalb (chronotopes are activities that are embedded in both time and space). This would be reinforced by Neo-Assyrian peripheral inscriptions, which indicate the temporal contingency of further ritual activities at the monuments. Assyrian texts on peripheral monuments often comprise two main sections: a blessing upon those who follow the inscription and read it aloud or preserve it, and a curse upon those who attempt to destroy the monument.⁸⁷⁶ Shafer finds the explicit requests for ritual performances revealing of how the "rituals effected a re-birth or renewal, when former kings' military accomplishments were both acknowledged and relived by future generations."⁸⁷⁷ The ideal audience for these inscriptions, and indeed the ideal agent to perform these rites of renewal, was the contemporary king's intended successor; "In this way, the monument would represent and effect communication from one king to another, thus directly invoking Assyrian tradition and legacy."⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷² Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 140. For example, Tiglath-Pileser III's monuments mark "only those victories that resulted in significant territorial expansions beyond those of [his] ninth century [predecessors]." Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 135.

⁸⁷³ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 133-134. She points to the imagery on the bronze bands from the Balawat Gates that date to the reign of Shalmaneser III: On band 1, the reliefs depict "the moment when the Assyrian king himself reaches the head of the procession and, facing his own image, performs libations... In the process of ritually acknowledging his own image-as-border, the king foregrounds the role of his own divinely sanctioned deeds and accomplishments. Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 144.

⁸⁷⁴ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 151.

⁸⁷⁵ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 133-134.

⁸⁷⁶ Shafer "Monuments on the Periphery," 147.

⁸⁷⁷ "In several cases the viewer is asked to perform rituals on the monument, including washing the monument with water (*mê.MEŠ liramik*), anointing it with oil (*samna.MEŠ lipsus*), and performing sacrifices (*nigâ liqqi*)." Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 147.

⁸⁷⁸ Shafer, "Monuments on the Periphery," 147.

But the encounters at Nahr el-Kalb have crucial spatial implications as well. Turning again to the inscriptions on Neo-Assyrian peripheral monuments, the relationship of the monument and its location to the Assyrian capital is simultaneously embedded in the textual references that utilize the same ritual blessings found in the ritual prescriptions on foundation deposits or building inscriptions in the Assyrian capital.⁸⁷⁹ This provides a “strong symbolic association between the empire’s center and its borders.”⁸⁸⁰ Moreover, it signals the role of the ritual activities at the periphery as a crucial component of the “building of the Assyrian imperial space.”⁸⁸¹

The co-presence in space of the Egyptian and Neo-Assyrian reliefs at Nahr el-Kalb embeds the New Kingdom Egyptian imperial rhetoric into both the temporal and spatial fabric of Neo-Assyrian imperial development in nuanced and multivalent ways. When the Neo-Assyrians reached Nahr el-Kalb, the performative role of Ramses’s steles on the rock cliffs physically shaped the landscape through time. The rock carvings of Ramses II indeed persisted long past their initial making, but the limestone cliffs, exposed to weather and time, expressed the age of the thirteenth century BCE reliefs along with the story of their origin and the history of human interaction with them through the presence of Assyrian reliefs at the same site from the twelfth and ninth centuries BCE.⁸⁸² At the site, “the patina of wear adds the enriching experience of time to the materials of construction.”⁸⁸³ More importantly for a Neo-Assyrian audience, the weathering of the reliefs (perhaps even more than their iconography and inscription) is what made their age stand out. Age (as a bundled quality of the reliefs) may not have otherwise come so prominently to the fore, but it was precisely the age of the Ramesside reliefs that established their importance as “progenitors” of an imperial lineage for the Neo-Assyrians. This resulted not only from the efficacy of Ramses’s imperial agenda in the Levant, but the simultaneous ascendancy of the Assyrian imperial agenda in the northeastern Levant during his reign.

By emphasizing the temporal relationship in Esarhaddon’s encounter with the Ramesside reliefs at Nahr el-Kalb, the Neo-Assyrian imperial presence in the Levant acquires a longevity that it would not have otherwise, adding an entire new (temporal) dimension to the Assyrian notion of universal dominance. The durability of Esarhaddon’s rock-cut relief implies Assyrian supremacy far into the future, but by placing his “new” relief immediately adjacent to Ramses’s Late Bronze Age one, Esarhaddon also demonstrated a “conquering” of sorts over the past, ambiguously evoking a relationship of inheritance or usurpation. Ultimately, though, at Nahr el-Kalb Esarhaddon’s encounter with Ramses’s reliefs wove the passage of time into a place in such a way that the thirteenth and seventh centuries created their own particular narrative of Levantine imperialism, a narrative equally contingent upon Egypt’s New Kingdom past and Neo-Assyria’s present.

⁸⁷⁹ Shafer, “Monuments on the Periphery,” 147.

⁸⁸⁰ Shafer, “Monuments on the Periphery,” 148.

⁸⁸¹ Shafer, “Monuments on the Periphery,” 148.

⁸⁸² Juhani Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2012), 34.

⁸⁸³ Pallasmaa, *Eyes of the Skin*, 34,

From Friend to Foe: The Land of *Muṣri* in Assyrian Sources

The Levant was not only where the Neo-Assyrians encountered vestiges of Egypt's imperial past; in the first millennium BCE it was also where they encountered Egyptian forces who joined anti-Assyrian Levantine coalitions. By the Early Iron Age, the Levant was no longer under the Egyptian and Hittite spheres of imperial control.⁸⁸⁴ Instead, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and palace reliefs describe the region as comprising independent city-states who, while hostile and divided, are capable of forming “encircling coalitions” against the Assyrian army. These coalitions are ultimately defeated when the Assyrian king, manifesting the theme of the one against the many, “prevails over the many representatives of the chaotic world.”⁸⁸⁵

The Assyrian military conquests of the Levant during the ninth through the seventh centuries BCE encountered Egyptian participation in these enemy coalitions that tried to prevent the tides of Assyrian imperial advancement. As a result, Egypt increasingly accumulated the status of enemy in Assyrian art and records. But this transition occurred gradually, over centuries. In fact, during the waning centuries of the second millennium BCE, evidence supports the persistence of diplomatic ties between Egypt and Assyria well after the “collapse” of the Late Bronze Age international system. For example, gifts from the ruler of *Muṣri* (Egypt) are recorded on the Broken Obelisk, an Assyrian monument recovered from the central palace at Nineveh, which most likely dates to the reign of Assur-bel-kala (who ruled Assyria for eighteen years at the beginning of the eleventh century BCE).⁸⁸⁶ Accompanying the image of the Assyrian king holding two prisoners before divine symbols are inscriptions on three of the sides of the Obelisk of campaigns and building endeavors; this includes the receipt of a crocodile (*namsuḫu*) and a large ape (*pagutu*) from the king of Egypt (likely Ramses XI).⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁴ Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC*, vol. 1 (Routledge History of the Ancient World), (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 385. At the end of the Late Bronze Age, the Levant “underwent a radical transformation from a tightly controlled, [vassal] system... to an array of decentralized and entrepreneurial endeavors involving mercantilism [and] colonization.” Marian H. Feldman, *Communities of Style: Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014b), 274.

⁸⁸⁵ Mario Liverani, “The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire,” in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), 311.

⁸⁸⁶ BM 118898. For a translation, see Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia 2*, 99-105. The name of the Assyrian king on the obelisk is not preserved. Rassam, who excavated the obelisk, records finding a figurine with the inscription of Assur-bel-Kala immediately adjacent to the Broken Obelisk.

⁸⁸⁷ For the reading of *namsuḫa* as crocodile, E.A. Wallis Budge derives it from the Egyptian word *emsuḫ* for crocodile. The entire expression reads *nam-su-ḫa amél nâri u-ma-a-mi ša tâmdi rabîte* (“A crocodile, a creature of the river, a beast of the great sea”). E.A. Wallis Budge, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria: The Cuneiform Texts with Translations and Transliterations from the Original Documents*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1902), liii.

During the second half of the eleventh century BCE, the Egyptian pharaoh Psusennes I (1047-1001 BCE) included in his burial assemblage at Tanis a large bead of lapis lazuli containing a cuneiform inscription describing the bead as a gift for the daughter of the vizier of Assyria, Ibašši-ilu.⁸⁸⁸ Whether or not the daughter herself accompanied the bead to Egypt, the object itself indicates that gift exchanges between Egypt and Assyria likely still transpired at this time. Indeed, it is not until the middle of the ninth century BCE that Egypt appears in the Neo-Assyrian records as a participant in the anti-Assyrian coalitions in the Levant.

Several inscriptions from the reign of Shalamenser III signal this shift.⁸⁸⁹ On the Kurkh Monolith (in Shalmaneser's third annal), Shalmaneser describes the Battle of Qarqar.⁸⁹⁰ The inscription details this campaign where Shalmaneser III marched west from Nineveh in his sixth year, crossed the Euphrates and then turned southwestwards, (where he received tribute in Aleppo). It is upon leaving Aleppo that he enters into the realm of Iruhuleni, the ruler of Hamath. Here, Shalmaneser described how he "conquered Adennu, Parga and Argana, his royal cities, carried out his booty, his goods and the treasure of his palaces (and) set fire to his palaces. I departed from Argana and approached Qarqar. I destroyed and set on fire Qarqar, his royal city."⁸⁹¹ The inscription continues to recount Shalmaneser's encounter with a coalition from the central Levant, including thousands chariots, cavalry, camels, and foot soldiers from Adad-idri of Aram-Damascus, Irhuleni of Hamath, Ahab of Israel, Byblos, Egypt (KUR *Mu-us-ra-a-a*), Irqata, Matinu-Ba'ali of Arwad, Usanat, Adunu-Ba'ali of Shiana, Gindibu'u of Arabia, and Ba'asa, son of Rehob, of Amman.⁸⁹² The result of this fighting against the anti-Assyrian coalition was, as expected, decisive:

In the exalted might which Ashur my lord gave me (And) with the strong weapons which Nergal, who goes before me, presented to me, I fought with them. I defeated them from Qar to Gilzau. I slew 14,000 of their soldiers with the weapons (and) rained, like the god Adad, the destructive flood upon them. I

⁸⁸⁸ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100- 650)*, (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2004), 267.

⁸⁸⁹ Shigeo Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859-824 BC) Relating to his Campaigns in the West*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁸⁹⁰ Yamada equates Qarqar with Tell Qarqur, a site seven kilometers south of Jisr esh-Shughur on the eastern bank of the Orontes. Yamada, *The Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III*, 154.

⁸⁹¹ Yamada, *The Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III*, 153: Annal 3, ii, 87b-90a. "It should be noted that the Assyrian outpost of Aribua, established by Assurnasirpal II and probably located on the Orontes only some 10 km north of Qarqar, must have been held by the Assyrians at this time." Yamada, *The Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III*, 156.

⁸⁹² Yamada, *The Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III*, 157: Annal 3, ii, 90b-97. "The geographical extent of the coalition is quite large, including the countries of the whole of central and southern Syria. All these countries were united against Assyrian aggression, which menaced their political and economic independence." Yamada, *The Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III*, 161.

spread their corps[es] (and) filled up the face of the steppe (with them). I (felled) with weapons their huge armies and made their blood flow... The plain became too small to let all their bodies fall (on it). The broad countryside was consumed in burying them. I damned the Orontes River with their corpses as with a causeway. In that battle, I took from them their chariots, cavalry (and) horses broken to harness.⁸⁹³

Shalmaneser III erected the Black Obelisk in 825 BCE in a courtyard in Nimrud to publicly celebrate thirty-one years of triumphant military campaigns.⁸⁹⁴ The obelisk, carved from black limestone, is almost two meters high and its top is stepped like a ziggurat. Five scenes wrap around the four faces of the obelisk, each containing images of rulers from across the Near East presenting tribute to Shalmaneser III. Captions name the rulers and the objects of tribute that they offer: the twin humped camels, a hippo, a rhinoceros, antelope, elephants, and monkeys brought by the king of Egypt (KUR *Mu-uṣ-ri*) in Scene C demonstrate the Assyrian king's ability to acquire exotica from the far reaches of the world (Fig. 69).

In 721 BCE, Sargon II defeated a Levantine rebellion led by the ruler of Hamath, Yaubi'di, who was joined in a coalition by the ruler of Gaza, Hanun, and Egyptian forces.⁸⁹⁵ According to Sargon's annals, the Egyptian ruler sent his *turtānu* (or general),⁸⁹⁶ named Re'u, to aid Hanun.⁸⁹⁷ Re'u escaped after Sargon destroyed the coalition, and Sargon describes following him southwards, fighting Re'u in a pitched battle near Raphiah in 720 BCE. After the Egyptian army withdrew, Sargon celebrates conquering Raphiah and exiled 9,003 of its inhabitants.⁸⁹⁸ This campaign of 720 BCE is also the subject of relief sculptures in Room V of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.⁸⁹⁹ Egyptian forces are emphasized in the representation of the coalition of foreign soldiers with "Nubian" features—broad noses, clean-shaven, and short curly hair on their heads.⁹⁰⁰

The Kushite pharaoh Shabako—who supported the coalition uprising against Sargon II in 721 BCE and the Raphiah revolt in 720 BCE—remained hostile towards

⁸⁹³ Yamada, *The Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III*, 162: Annal 3, ii, 96b-102.

⁸⁹⁴ BM 118885; A.0.102.14. Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia* 3, 62-71.

⁸⁹⁵ Dan'el Kahn, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25," *Orientalia NS* 70 (2001): 11; Annals, 23-57; Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 8.

⁸⁹⁶ Anthony J. Spalinger, "The Year 712 B.C. and its Implications for Egyptian History," *Journal of the Archaeological Research Center of Egypt* 10 (1973): 95.

⁸⁹⁷ Kahn, "Tang-i Var," 11; Cyril J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud," *Iraq* 16 (1954): 179-180.

⁸⁹⁸ Kahn, "Tang-i Var," 11; Spalinger, "The Year 712 B.C.," 95.

⁸⁹⁹ Julian E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716, and 715 BC: Evidence from the Sculptures," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35 (1976): 101, pl. 1; Paul Emile Botta and Eugène Flandin, *Monument de Ninive II*, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849), pl. 88.

⁹⁰⁰ Kahn, "Tang-i Var," 12; Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 8.

Assyria until his death around 707 BCE.⁹⁰¹ From a rock inscription at the Tang-I Var pass in Iran,⁹⁰² Sargon claims that Shabako offered asylum to Iamani, ruler of Ashdod, who revolted against Assyria forces in 712 BCE: “I [Sargon] plundered the city of Ashdod. Iamani, its king, feared [my weapons] and... He fled to the region of the land of Meluhha and lived (there) like a thief.”⁹⁰³ According to Assyrian sources, Iamani imitated Hanno of Gaza’s earlier flight into Egypt in 734 BCE during the reign of Tiglath- Pileser III.⁹⁰⁴ Unfortunately for Iamani, Sargon describes how Shabako’s successor, Shebitku, reversed the Kushite policy of antagonism against Assyria and extradited the king of Ashdod back to Sargon II:⁹⁰⁵ “Shapataku, king of the land of Meluhha (Egypt/Kush), heard of the mig[ht] of the gods Ashur, Nabû, (and) Marduk which I had [demonstrated] over all lands... He put (Iamani) in manacles and handcuffs... he had him brought captive into my presence.”⁹⁰⁶

Sargon’s sudden death in 705 BCE precipitated several years of instability and revolt within the Assyrian realm. When Sennacherib (Sargon’s heir) finally turned his attention to the Levant in 701 BCE, he met Shebitku’s forces in battle at Eltekeh. According to Sennacherib’s royal inscriptions on the Rassam Cylinder,⁹⁰⁷

The governors, the nobles, and the people of Ekron... They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses of the king of the land of Meluhha, forces without number, and they came to their aid. In the plain of the city of Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. With the support of Assur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers and princes.⁹⁰⁸

This third campaign was the subject for various reliefs in Sennacherib’s Southwest Palace at Nineveh. John Malcolm Russell suggests that the throne room was once decorated

⁹⁰¹ Dan’el Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush and the Assyrians,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 31 (2004): 109.

⁹⁰² George Frame, “The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var,” *Oriental Research* 68 (1999): 31-57. “This episode is also recorded several times in Sargon’s inscriptions from Khorsabad. According to the Great Display Inscription lines 95-112, and the Small Display Inscription of Salon XIV, lines 11-14, Iamani fled to Meluhha (Kush).” Kahn, “Tang-i Var,” 3.

⁹⁰³ Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush,” 109; Frame, “The Inscription of Sargon II,” 40.

⁹⁰⁴ Spalinger, “The Year 712 B.C.,” 97; Donald John Wiseman, “Two Historical Inscriptions from Nimrud,” *Iraq* 13 (1951): 84-86.

⁹⁰⁵ Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush,” 109.

⁹⁰⁶ Frame, “The Inscription of Sargon II,” 40.

⁹⁰⁷ Rassam Cylinder, II: 42-45. Translation: Allison Kirk Grayson and Jamie R. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC)*, Part 1, *The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 3/1*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 64.

⁹⁰⁸ Kahn, “The War of Sennacherib,” 23.

with several scenes from this campaign, including “the preparations of the Assyrian army for war, followed by a pitched battle—most probably against the Egyptian-Kushite army in the next scene.”⁹⁰⁹ The outcome of this battle is decisive in the remaining relief fragments: the enemy flees from Assyrian forces and attempts to cross a flowing river.⁹¹⁰

The Seventh Century Showdown: Assyria in Egypt and Egypt in Assyria

By the beginning of the seventh century BCE, Egypt had evolved from a diplomatic ally and a preeminent imperial power in the Near East, to a source of gold and ivory that could best be accessed through Levantine ports,⁹¹¹ to a recalcitrant participant in anti-Levantine coalitions in Assyrian propaganda. The military campaigns in Egypt during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal brought an increased familiarity with the Egyptian landscape and its monuments, but they also returned loads of Egyptian booty to the Assyrian capitals, providing the Assyrian residents of Nineveh and Nimrud with exposure to Egypt’s imperial rhetoric. All of these spoils and prisoners of war further reinforced the Assyrian propaganda that for two centuries had depicted Egypt as a vassal and a provider of tribute.

In 671 BCE, directly after celebrating the *Akitu* festival in Nisan, the Esarhaddon Chronicle describes how Esarhaddon marshaled his troops and marched towards the border of Egypt.⁹¹² A fragmentary annal from Nineveh detailing this campaign poetically

⁹⁰⁹ John Malcom Russell, *Sennacherib’s Palace without Rival at Nineveh*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 160-164.

⁹¹⁰ Kahn, “The War of Sennacherib,” 23.

⁹¹¹ During the Iron Age mercantile organizations within independent city-states controlled Levantine commerce. The region “acted as middlemen in organizing and facilitating trade between Assyria and Egypt.” Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 409. Levantine merchants imported alum (used as a dye for textiles), frit (sought after for its blue pigment), fine linen, and also possibly wine and honey from Egypt into Assyria, and supplied the expanding Assyrian empire with Iron and ivory. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 409. But just as in the Late Bronze Age, Levantine commercial networks did not limit their trade to raw materials. Akkermans and Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria*, 387. The region also produced, exchanged, and exported “well-crafted metal vessels, jewelry, ivory furniture components, and glass objects.” Akkermans and Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria*, 387.

⁹¹² Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 252. This may not have been the first time that Esarhaddon invaded Egypt. The Babylonian Chronicle describes an unsuccessful expedition, which Esarhaddon made to Egypt in 673 BCE. Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush,” 111. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 85: Chronicle 1. In this initial foray into Egypt, according to the Babylonian Chronicle, the Assyrian army was defeated by Kushite forces within Egypt. Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 252; Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush,” 111; Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 85: Chronicle 1, iv, 16. Nowhere in Esarhaddon’s inscriptions, including the Esarhaddon Chronicle, is there any discussion of this expedition. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 127. Herbert Verreth believes that the Babylonian Chronicle and the Esarhaddon Chronicle refer to the same campaign. Herbert Verreth, “The Egyptian

describes his journey from Assyria to the kingdom on the Nile. Esarhaddon and his army:

Traversed the rivers Tigris and Euphrates during their period of flood. Like a wild bull I crossed steep mountains.... (for a distance of) thirty 'miles' of land, from Apqu which is situated on the border region of Samerina to Rapihu on the bank of the Brook of Egypt where there is no river, I let the troops drink buckets of water drawn from wells with ropes and chains. According to the command of my lord Assur, an idea came to my mind and I conceived (the following): I mobilized the camels of all the kings of Arabia and loaded them with [water skins and water containers]. Twenty 'miles' of land, a journey of fifteen days, I marched through [mighty sand] dunes... four 'miles' of land, a journey of two days, I stepped repeatedly on two-headed snakes [... whose touch] is deadly, but continued; four 'miles' of land, a journey of [two days]- yellow snakes spread wings (but continued)...⁹¹³

When he finally entered Egypt, the annal describes Esarhaddon fighting three pitched battles and sacking Memphis.⁹¹⁴

Esarhaddon further commemorates this victory in his inscriptions on steles he erected at Nahr el-Kalb and Zinjirli (ancient Sam'al).⁹¹⁵ On the Zinjirli Stele he describes how he wounded Taharka with his arrows before the Kushite ruler fled back to Nubia: "Moreover, (with regard to) himself, by means of arrows, I inflicted him five times with wounds from which there is no recovery; and (as for) the city of Memphis, his royal city, within half a day (and) by means of mines, breaches, (and) ladders, I besieged (it), conquered (it), demolished (it), destroyed (it), (and) burned (it) with lire."⁹¹⁶ According to Esarhaddon's royal inscriptions, when the Assyrian king victoriously entered Memphis, he "carried off to Assyria [Taharka's] wife, his court ladies, Ushanahuru, his

Eastern Border Region in Assyrian Sources," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119 (1999): 237.

⁹¹³ Karen Radner, "Esarhaddon's Expedition from Palestine to Egypt in 671 BCE: A trek through Negev and Sinai," in *Fundstellen: Gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Alt Vorderasiens ad honorem Hartmut Kühne*, ed. Dominik Bonatz et al. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 306-307: K 3082+ K 3086+ SM 2027. A similar account exists on the Esarhaddon Nineveh Prism: "I (Esarhaddon) overpowered [his...?] troops, his generals, his brothers, his governors and his drivers... from Išhupri to Memphis, a journey of fifteen days." Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons*, 65-66.

⁹¹⁴ Kahn, "Taharqa, King of Kush," 112; Kahn, "Assyrian Invasions of Egypt," 252.

⁹¹⁵ For the Nahr el-Kalb inscription, see above. Barbara Nevis Porter, "Assyrian Propaganda for the West: Esarhaddon's Stelae for Til Barsip and Sam'al," in *Syria in the Iron Age*, ed. Guy Bunnens (Louvain: Peeters Press, 2000), pp. 143-76; Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* 4, 181-186: 98, fig. 5. The Zinjirli Stele is commonly referred to as "Monument A," Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* 4, 181.

⁹¹⁶ Zinjirli Stele. Translation: Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* 4, 195: 98, rev. 40b- 43a. Kahn, "Taharqa, King of Kush," 112.

crown prince, and the rest of his sons (and) his daughters, his goods, his possessions, his horses, his oxen, (and) his sheep and goats, without number.”⁹¹⁷ Before he left Egypt, Esarhaddon appointed new governors of the cities he captured in Lower Egypt (the Delta region) and gave the cities new names.⁹¹⁸

Like his inscription at Nahr el-Kalb, Esarhaddon erected his stele at Zinjirli on the way back to Assyria after his Egyptian campaign.⁹¹⁹ Accompanying the detailed inscription of his defeat of Taharka and his subsequent imposition of “tribute and payment of my lordship on them, yearly, without ceasing,”⁹²⁰ is a depiction of Esarhaddon standing in front of divine symbols. In his left hand he holds a mace and ropes tied to the lips of two kneeling foes (Fig. 70).⁹²¹ The smaller of the two kneeling figures is Ushanahuru, the son of Taharka; he wears a knee-length tunic and a cap-crown with a *uraeus* on its brow.⁹²² His wrists and ankles are shackled and his hand is raised before his face in a gesture of submission.⁹²³ An interesting stylistic feature in the

⁹¹⁷ Zinjirli Stele. Translation: Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4*, 195: 98 rev. 43b-45a. Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush,” 112; See also Esarhaddon’s Nahr el-Kalb inscription, Hans-Ulrich Onasch, *Die sssyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), 25-26: K 8692; 31-32: Bu-91-5-9, 218; The Esarhaddon Chronicle: Grayson *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 85-86: Chronicle 1 iv 23-28; 127, Chronicle 14, 25-26. Esarhaddon’s Nineveh Prism: Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons*, 98-99;

⁹¹⁸ Zinjirli Stele. Translation: Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4*, 195: 98, rev. 45a-46b. Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush,” 112; Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 254. Assurbanipal’s Prism E recounts the renaming of Delta cities by his father: “He (Esarhaddon) has changed the earlier city names and given them new names. He has appointed his servants to kingship, city mayors and governors.” Onasch, *Die Assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, 94: Prism E, col. III, 16. Esarhaddon’s fragmentary octagonal prism, Nin S (BU-91-5-9), recounts the same events. Onasch, *Die Assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens*, 31-32: BU-91-5-9 218. Column B “preserves a list of Assyrian propagandistic names given to Egyptian cities and their governors.” Kahn, “Assyrian Invasions of Egypt,” 254.

⁹¹⁹ The Zinjirli stele was erected at the citadel’s entrance gate, which, according to Porter, was a popular location for public monuments in the western provinces of Assyria. Porter, “Assyrian Propaganda for the West,” 143. See also Daniel Ussishkin, “The Erection of Royal Monuments in City-Gates,” in *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç*, ed. Kutlu Emre et al. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1989), 485-496.

⁹²⁰ Zinjirli Stele. Translation: Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4*, 195: 98, rev. 47a-b.

⁹²¹ Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11.

⁹²² Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4*, 182; Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11. Ushanahuru is accompanied by another Assyrian vassal variously identified as Abdi-Milkutti of Sidon (Porter, “Assyrian Propaganda for the West,” 143) and Ba’alu, king of Tyre, (Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11).

⁹²³ Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11.

rendering of the figure of Ushanahuru is “the double raised ridge on the extended back leg delineating the tibia and fibula,”⁹²⁴ which is a prominent feature of contemporary Kushite statuary.⁹²⁵ It is also, of course, a popular stylistic feature of Neo-Assyrian art that was introduced during the reign of Sargon II and standardized by the reign of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon’s father.⁹²⁶

Similar iconography covers two steles from Til Barsip (modern Tell Aḥmar),⁹²⁷ where along with the Assyrian king and the two prostrate vassals, the figures of Esarhaddon’s two sons—Assurbanipal and Shamash-shuma-ukin—stand on the steles’ side panels (Fig. 71 and 72).⁹²⁸ The royal inscription on Monument B does not mention the Egyptian campaign but instead mentions royal achievements such as the imposition of tribute from Hazael’s successor.⁹²⁹

The imagery of Esarhaddon holding the mace and the lead-rope attached to the prostrate foreigners is of course exceptionally evocative of the Egyptian triumphal reliefs (where the figure of pharaoh smites with a mace in his upraised arm and Amun holds lead-ropes attached to the collars of the bound, anthropomorphized toponym lists) (Fig. 50b).⁹³⁰ While Esarhaddon does not in fact record reaching Thebes—where the triumphal reliefs of Thutmose III, Seti I, Ramses II, Ramses III, Sheshonq I, and Taharka dominate the surfaces of prominent temple walls—it is reasonable to assume that such iconography was also prevalent in the Egyptian Delta cities and the capital Memphis—places that Esarhaddon recounted visiting in his royal inscriptions (including on the Zinjirli stele).

Some scholars, such as William Stevenson Smith, believe that the Assyrian and Egyptian artistic styles developed distinctly; therefore the first millennium BCE emphasis

⁹²⁴ Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11.

⁹²⁵ See, for example, the granite striding statue of Montuemhat recovered from the Karnak cachette. Robins, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, 228, fig. 273.

⁹²⁶ Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11.

⁹²⁷ One of these steles is inscribed, (#97 in Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 179-181) and is commonly referred to as “Monument B.” Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 179. The other has only been “lined in preparation for an inscription.” Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 180.

⁹²⁸ Porter, “Assyrian Propaganda for the West,” 143-76; Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 179-181: 97. According to Porter, “One stele was erected just inside the eastern city gate, while the second stele was erected at the foot of the citadel, approaching the Assyrian palace.” “Assyrian Propaganda for the West,” 144.

⁹²⁹ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period* 4, 180: 14b-15a. Porter though points out how the steles at Til Barsip afford the vassals more dignity than on the Zinjirli stele: “Their hands are raised in a gesture as much of salute as of appeal, and their heads tilt back only slightly, so that they appear to stare woodenly at the king’s belt, not beseechingly at his face. Even the more foreign Egyptian prince, although his kneeling posture emphasizes his subjection, is decently dressed in a tunic and not otherwise demeaned.” Porter, “Assyrian Propaganda for the West,” 159.

⁹³⁰ See the description of the visual elements of Egyptian triumphal reliefs in Chapter 5.

upon accentuated calf muscles in Egypt and Mesopotamia is a coincidence.⁹³¹ Other scholars, such as Holly Pittman, are convinced that in certain cases Neo-Assyrian artistic elements were “based either directly or indirectly on the visual production of... Egypt.”⁹³² Still others, such as Pauline Albenda, argue that ultimately it is impossible to determine the directionality of artistic influence and “whether the artistic conventions of one country influenced the other, is a moot question.”⁹³³

Unlike Albenda, I do not believe that the coincident utilization of shared artistic motifs and conventions is an unproductive area of inquiry. But I do want to emphasize that I am not arguing for a conscious, unidirectional Assyrian appropriation of Egyptian royal accouterment or royal iconography.⁹³⁴ What I believe these shared motifs may signal is that by the seventh century BCE both Egypt and Assyria understood and utilized such imagery as potent and unequivocal expressions of imperial ideology. According to Egyptian and Assyrian royal propaganda, foreigners were enemies that had to be conquered as an expression of mythological order over chaos.⁹³⁵ After Esarhaddon’s campaigning in Egypt, he would be familiar with Egypt’s triumphal reliefs. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that he recognized that he was harnessing iconography in his Zinjirli and Til Barsip steles that evoked Egyptian triumphal reliefs on temple walls in Egypt and Egyptian imperial steles in the Levant landscapes (such as Nahr el-Kalb). Wherever the Assyrian iconography developed its inspiration and evolution, Esarhaddon may have recognized and even endorsed the similarities it shared with Egyptian

⁹³¹ Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, 239.

⁹³² Holly Pittman, “The White Obelisk and the Problem of Historical Narrative in the Art of Assyria,” *The Art Bulletin* 78, No. 2 (1996): 350.

⁹³³ Albenda, “Observations on Egyptians,” 11-12.

⁹³⁴ Indeed, figures of Assurnasirpal II hold a mace in his throne-room reliefs where he flanks the sacred tree.

⁹³⁵ For Egyptian examples, see the triumphal reliefs discussed at length in Chapter 5. In the Neo-Assyrian empire, royal inscriptions juxtapose every positive attribute used for the inhabitants of the Assyrian heartland with negative qualities that define the enemy. Liverani, “The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire,” 309. For example, the bravery (*qurādu*) of the Assyrian army is juxtaposed with the cowardice of the enemies. Liverani, “The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire,” 310. Thus, the interaction between Assyrians and foreigners must lead to the latter’s eradication, which is achieved by conquest resulting in either submission followed by assimilation, or by rebellion followed by eradication. Liverani, “The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire,” 311. War always brings about submission (via conquest and destruction) when “the peripheral human setting is rebuilt both by a transformation of the foreigners, who become homogeneous with the Assyrians, unified in language and purpose... and by the Assyrian presence in the new lands annexed to the cosmos.” Liverani, “The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire,” 312.

This is not to say that there was no place for diplomacy in the Egyptian and Assyrian political realms. Chapter 6 details the extents of Egyptian (and broader Near Eastern) diplomacy during the Late Bronze Age. Rather, the triumphal reliefs and the Zinjirli Stele as examples of imperial ideology necessitated the unequivocal submission of foes.

triumphal reliefs. (It is interesting to consider that Esarhaddon employs such imagery on steles that he erected in Assyria's provinces, reinforcing Assyria's imperial presence in the northeast Levant).

While it may be impossible to prove, it is provocative to query the impact of Egypt's imperial propaganda upon Neo-Assyrian royal rhetoric. Along with Esarhaddon's relief stele carved immediately adjacent to Ramses II's at Nahr el-Kalb, the Zinjirli and Til Barsip steles develop a pattern of engagement with Egyptian imperial rhetoric that suggests that the Neo-Assyrians keenly recognized that the efficacy of such visual rhetoric resulted (at least to a certain extent) from its deployment in the powerful New Kingdom Egyptian empire.

A further strategy for harnessing Egyptian imperial rhetoric in Assyria may occur in the Battle of Til Tuba reliefs from room XXXIII in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh—where Assurbanipal's army defeats the Elamite king Tepti-Huban-Insushnak (Teumman in Assyrian) beside the River Ulai (Fig. 73). The Battle imagery fills the bottom half of three orthostats; above, portions of two remaining registers contain files of prisoners being deported after the campaign (Fig. 74).⁹³⁶ The Assyrians attack the Elamites from the left side of the composition, where the Elamite army is stationed on a raised mound (Fig. 75). As the Assyrian army advances, the Elamite soldiers fall in large numbers before them. They retreat backwards in increasing chaos; the groundlines of the composition dissolve as both armies reach the River Ulai on the right border of the third orthostat. The river traverses the combat from top right to bottom left, its banks filled with fallen soldiers and horses. Within this visually complex scene specific vignettes of Teumann's capture and beheading draw the attention of the viewer and advance the direction of the narrative. The sequence of action initially moves from left to right, but after the crash of Teumann's chariot and his subsequent beheading in the center of the composition, the sequence reverses its direction as Teumann's decapitated head moves back leftwards (where it is displayed to Elamite and Assyrian audiences) (Fig. 76).

In the Battle of Til Tuba reliefs, Assyrians are clearly distinguished from the Elamites by the sophistication of their weapons and military accouterment. The Assyrian soldiers mostly wear pointed helmets and "scale-armor" over their chests. They carry shields and spears or bows and arrows. The Assyrian infantry fight in units of two, with a spearman closely protecting an archer. The Elamites, on the other hand, wear headbands tied behind their heads. Almost all of them carry a bow and arrow on foot, although some ride carts.

The compositional density of the soldiers fighting in the Battle of Til-Tuba reliefs is highly resonant of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs from the Ramesseum, even down to the contorted postures of the fallen soldiers who fill the space horizontally underneath the galloping horses. Likewise, throughout the chaotic fray of combat captions inscribed in small rectangular gaps contribute to the visual density in both sets of reliefs. Such compositional similarities as the density of the imagery and the multi-directional sequence of the narrative implicate the engagement of the viewer. To take in the entire span of Battle of Til Tuba or Battle of Kadesh reliefs, one's eyes must soften so that the

⁹³⁶ John Curtis and Julian Reade, *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum*, Exhibition Catalogue, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 72.

individual figures recede into patterns of motion. But specific vignettes within the fighting serve to draw the viewer closer and refocus one's vision. Upon doing so, one notices how the upside down posture of the Elamite king and his son when their chariot has been overturned is identical to that of the prince of Aleppo on the second pylon at the Ramesseum, who is held upside down by the ankles immediately adjacent to the Orontes River bank in an effort of resuscitation after his near-drowning (Fig. 28).

Despite the powerful compositional similarities between the Kadesh reliefs and the Til Tuba reliefs, both reliefs still “sit squarely within [their] individual artistic tradition[s].”⁹³⁷ In her discussion of this Assyrian artistic tradition, Marian Feldman focuses upon the stylistic components of “small details of execution and the rendering of basic forms, rather than on aspects of composition.”⁹³⁸ The Til Tuba reliefs demonstrate that Egyptian compositional devices could be utilized, but only when “neutralized” by the Assyrian artistic style, with its consistent and coherent “emphasis upon line, detail, and elaboration/ornamentation confined within contours of relatively flat planes... It is a style that effectively combines clarity of form with richness of detail, both of which occur in a repetition that is syncopated by diversity of pattern.”⁹³⁹

Indeed, this Assyrian style is maintained in all Neo-Assyrian visual representations of foreign peoples, objects, and landscapes—such as in the rendering of the Egyptian campaign in the throne room of Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh and Esarhaddon's glazed bricks depicting an Egyptian campaign from Nimrud (see below). Feldman argues that “the strong, coherent, and consistent style produced by the Assyrian state was not simply the expression of a growing empire; rather, it was part of a strategy for maintaining a memory of conquest over the vanquished Other, at the same time neutralizing the Other so it could no longer threaten Assyria.”⁹⁴⁰ As a result, the combination of the “Egyptian” compositional devices and “Assyrian” artistic style in the Til Tuba reliefs harken back to Assyria's complex relationship with Egypt.

If “the consistency and homogeneity of the Assyrian style” generates a “world that looks and feels Assyrian,” then embedding the imperial rhetoric of the Egyptian battle narrative compositions into its visual fabric is a “safe” way of integrating Egypt's imperial past into contemporary Assyrian world dominance. As such, the Battle of Til-Tuba reliefs display a similar visual sophistication to what Esarhaddon engendered at Nahr el-Kalb, where the physical placement of his relief stele in close proximity to Ramses's imperial monument encouraged a multivalent interpretation of the relationship between Neo-Assyrian and New Kingdom imperialism in the Levant.

At Nineveh, the utilization of Egyptian compositional devices would only have been employed if it were “safe;” in other words, if Egypt had been neutralized as an imperial force. Throughout the capital cities of Nimrud and Nineveh, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal decorated prominent architectural surfaces with depictions of Egyptian military campaigns, where Assyrian armies overcome citadels along the Nile River. Along with earlier reliefs from the reigns of Shalmaneser III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib

⁹³⁷ Feldman, “From Nineveh to Thebes,” 142.

⁹³⁸ Feldman, *Communities of Style*, 80.

⁹³⁹ Feldman, *Communities of Style*, 86

⁹⁴⁰ Feldman, *Communities of Style*, 80.

that portrayed Egyptian soldiers as part of defeated coalitions (see above), these seventh century images of besieged Egyptian landscapes reinforced Assyria's supremacy over the once-great imperial power.

In Austin Henry Layard's excavations of the southeast corner of the mound at Nimrud, he recorded finding several fragments of painted bricks.⁹⁴¹ Scholars have dated these bricks to the reign of Esarhaddon (according to iconographic and stylistic features), and David Nadali has recently published a synopsis of their imagery.⁹⁴² According to Nadali, the location of the brick fragments at "Tell of Athur" from Layard's notes refers to Fort Shalmaneser, which would correspond well with its renovation during Esarhaddon's reign.⁹⁴³ Glazed bricks commonly decorated exterior surfaces of Neo-Assyrian architecture, "probably because they were more resistant to the elements."⁹⁴⁴

Layard found eleven fragments of these painted bricks, which he drew in his publications.⁹⁴⁵ Three of these fragments contained elements of combat scenes (including images of Assyrian infantry and cavalry). Assyrian chariots trample fallen enemies under the hooves of the horses while corpses float in what appears to be a riverscape, perhaps the Nile (Fig. 77).⁹⁴⁶ In fragment 3b, a dead Egyptian soldier is pierced by arrows and surrounded by fish (Fig. 78). Other fragments include depictions of a tall tapering tower attached to a series of walls topped by triangular crenellations,⁹⁴⁷ the Assyrian military camp (whose quadrangular shape is typical of Assyrian representations of military camps),⁹⁴⁸ and the deportation of foreign soldiers.

Nadali reconstructs the larger composition based upon a pattern of other Neo-Assyrian battle compositions containing cavalry and infantry attack scenes, a siege, and the escorting of enemy soldiers to the Assyrian king.⁹⁴⁹ Nadali believes that the

⁹⁴¹ Austin H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, (London: British Museum Press, 1853), 164-67; Austin H. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon, a Narrative of a Second Expedition to Assyria during the years 1849, 1850 and 1851*, (London: British Museum Press, 1867), 52-57.

⁹⁴² David Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks from Nimrud: The Egyptian Campaign Depicted," *Iraq* 68 (2006), 109-119.

⁹⁴³ Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks," 109.

⁹⁴⁴ Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks," 109; John Malcolm Russell, *The Writing on the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 96.

⁹⁴⁵ Layard, *Discovery in the Ruins*, pls. 53-54.

⁹⁴⁶ Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks," 11; Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 13.

⁹⁴⁷ At the base of the tower is a small gate. The same type of fortification appears in Ashurbanipal's reliefs from an Egyptian campaign and is reminiscent of the slanting shape of Egyptian temple pylons. Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks," 14. See Richard David Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, (London: British Museum Press, 1975), pl. XXXVI.

⁹⁴⁸ M.G. Micale and David Nadali, "The Shape of Sennacherib's Camps: Strategic Functions and Ideological Space," *Iraq* 66 (2004): 167.

⁹⁴⁹ Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks," 110.

composition of the narrative moves from left to right (beginning with the attack scenes) and then reverses direction to follow the presentation of soldiers before the Assyrian king from right to left. The iconographic remnants of the enemy soldiers, along with the architectural fragments of the besieged city strongly suggest an Egyptian landscape. The prisoners have clean-shaven heads but wear a feather headdress and a loincloth or short kilt (Fig. 79).⁹⁵⁰

In the throne room (Room M) of Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, the king also commemorates an Egyptian campaign (most likely the second during his reign).⁹⁵¹ In between two main entryways to the throne room, the depictions of this campaign once occupied five contiguous stone slabs.⁹⁵² The remaining stone fragments contain two Assyrian sieges against walled citadels; the citadels are connected by a procession of Assyrian soldiers and captive foreign civilians. The landscape around the citadels lacks any trees or plant life, which Albenda suggests indicates an arid climate.⁹⁵³ Along all five slabs, though, a river flows across the bottom band of four (or possibly five) registers. Fish, crabs, and the body of a dead Egyptian soldier fill the water between the banks.⁹⁵⁴ Renderings of the first Egyptian town are preserved only in line drawings, but the second citadel is carved on the extant orthostat.⁹⁵⁵ This citadel stands on a low mound, some distance from the river, and is surrounded by "a high smooth-faced wall containing pylon-shaped bastions."⁹⁵⁶ As infantry attack the citadel with bows and ladders, Egyptian soldiers attempt to defend it from within the walls; elsewhere a single procession of shackled Egyptian soldiers accompanied by Egyptian women are marched out of the slab.⁹⁵⁷ Many of the Egyptian soldiers wear "a fillet with a tall feather on the brow."⁹⁵⁸ All of the women in the scene wear "a tight-fitting cap covering the hair and a wrap-around cloak over their long dress."⁹⁵⁹

The royal display of the Assyrian conquest of Egypt expanded beyond these reliefs in the Assyrian capitals to include the spoils that the Assyrians acquired on their Egyptian campaigns. The introduction of these Egyptian materials into the Assyrian capital greatly expanded the reverberations of Egyptian material culture (and imperial rhetoric) in the seventh century BCE. While undoubtedly some Egyptian art had made its way into Assyria via the Levantine ports in the preceding centuries (particularly from Byblos), the Assyrian accounts of the Egyptian booty were extensive. In an inscription from the city of Ashur, for example, Sargon II includes "twelve great Egyptian horses

⁹⁵⁰ Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks," 111.

⁹⁵¹ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 14.

⁹⁵² Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 46-47, pl. XXXVI;

Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 14.

⁹⁵³ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 14.

⁹⁵⁴ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 14.

⁹⁵⁵ BM 124928.

⁹⁵⁶ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 14.

⁹⁵⁷ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 15.

⁹⁵⁸ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 15.

⁹⁵⁹ Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians," 15.

their like not to be found in the land of Assyria” in a tribute list from Egypt.⁹⁶⁰ Esarhaddon’s inscriptions recount returning to Nineveh with not only Taharka’s queen and son, but also “twenty great golden helmets, a golden cobra and snakes... [and] cunningly constructed vessels of silver, gold, bronze, ivory and ebony.”⁹⁶¹

Assurbanipal’s annals from his prisms include “all the choice goods” pillaged from Taharka’s palace, along with “55 royal statues,” “fine linen and great horses,” and two obelisks made of electrum that he removed from Tanutamun’s temple towers.⁹⁶²

These inscriptions accord well with the Egyptian objects excavated from the Assyrian heartland in first millennium BCE contexts. At Nineveh, three statue-bases inscribed with Taharka’s cartouches were prominently placed in front of the entry gates to the Nebi Yunus arsenal.⁹⁶³ Also from the arsenal a “small bronze and gold statuette of the Egyptian goddess Anukhet” was retrieved.⁹⁶⁴

In his *Discoveries Among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* Layard describes eleven Egyptian scarabs that he recovered from Arban during his first and second expeditions to the region in the middle of the nineteenth century CE.⁹⁶⁵ The hieroglyphs on these scarabs are dubiously Egyptian productions and most likely indicate that the objects are of Levantine production. But Layard also includes in his list of “Egyptian” discoveries in Mesopotamia a clay sealing (originally used as a jar stopper) from Nineveh that contains an impression of Shabako’s cartouche and a figure of the pharaoh in a triumphal pose. Shabako wears the red crown of Lower Egypt and holds a mace in his upraised arm (BM 84527). The remaining surface of the sealing does not contain the enemy that Shabako is smiting, but it does include a hieroglyphic inscription above his cartouche, reading *ntr nfr šbꜣ-kꜣ nb ir iht* (The great god, Shabako, lord of action). Underneath his raised arm, another inscription reads *sz nh hꜣ* (protection and life around him).

Such iconography in the Assyrian capital reveals that Egyptian imperial propaganda had made its way beyond Egypt and the Levant and into the heartland of Mesopotamia. And even though many of the elite and royal residents of Nimrud and Nineveh never visited Egypt themselves, the long and valued history of interaction between Egypt and Assyria, the proliferation of luxury materials across the Near East during the Late Bronze Age, the diplomatic exchanges between Egypt and Assyria until

⁹⁶⁰ Hayim Tadmor, “The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assyria: A Chronological-Historical Study,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958): 78; Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen*, 7.

⁹⁶¹ Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen*, 24-26.

⁹⁶² Onasch, *Die assyrischen Eroberungen*, 94-95: 123; Allison K. Thomason, “From Sennacherib’s Bronzes to Taharqa’s Feet: Conceptions of the Material World at Nineveh,” *Iraq* 66 (2004): 158.

⁹⁶³ Thomason, “From Sennacherib’s Bronzes,” 158; John Malcom Russell, *The Final Sack of Nineveh*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 241.

⁹⁶⁴ Thomason, “From Sennacherib’s Bronzes,” 158.

⁹⁶⁵ Layard, *Discoveries Among the Ruins*, 281-282. These are all housed in the British Museum: BM 103036, BM 103037, BM 103038, BM 103039, BM 103261, BM 103262, BM 103263, BM 103264, BM 103265, BM 103278, BM 103279.

the end of the second millennium, and the tribute and booty collected in the early first millennium BCE (not to mention the direct military encounters in the Levant), all suggests a significant level of familiarity with this Egyptian iconography. If the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were understood by the Neo-Assyrian army primarily as an expression of this imperial propaganda, then we can perhaps allow that their resonance reached all the way to the Assyrian capitals in the seventh century where this resonance becomes reworked into the Neo-Assyrian visual canon as a means of endorsing Assyria's own imperial ideology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has examined several potent ways that a Neo-Assyrian audience would have encountered New Kingdom Egyptian imperial propaganda. Assyrian soldiers who campaigned in Egypt during the seventh century BCE spent months in the Egyptian landscape, encountering Egyptian triumphal imagery and battle narratives on prominent temple walls. In 664 BCE the Neo-Assyrian army reached Thebes and witnessed the Kadesh reliefs in a landscape that preserved and revered its past; The Egyptians undoubtedly cherished their New Kingdom imperial glory and the contemporary Kushite rulers emulated both the style and the iconography of this New Kingdom imperial display in their own additions to the Theban visual and architectural landscape.

At Nahr el-Kalb, Esarhaddon inscribed his own imperial monument adjacent to Ramses's relief steles and thus directly inserted Neo-Assyrian royal rhetoric into a visual dialogue with Egypt's imperial past. The passage of time at the site, visible in the weathering of Ramses's reliefs, emphasized the temporal relationship between the imperial markers. Egypt's power was long gone, no longer a threat to the all-powerful Assyrian empire. Monuments across the Assyrian empire emphasized Egypt's diminished stance by recounting the defeat of Egyptian armies and portraying the capitulation of Egyptian rulers and cities.

But while Egypt came to symbolize an extension of Assyria's periphery, often intertwined in the Levant's recalcitrant military coalitions, Egypt also maintained a unique status in this respect. Its exalted role in the Late Bronze Age was well known to Neo-Assyrian royalty who deeply valued their own Late Bronze Age past and who perhaps remembered Egypt's role in accepting or even supporting Assyria as one of the Great Kings of the Late Bronze Age (see Chapter 6). As such, Egypt's imperial iconography served as a potent inspiration for Assyria's development of its own imperial ideology, making the Levant a crucial landscape for demonstrating imperial power. But here it is important to emphasize that the three-dimensional landscape of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in Thebes was likely more important for the Neo-Assyrian audience than the two-dimensional iconography of Kadesh within the reliefs (whose location in the northern Levant was well known and significant to earlier Hittite audiences but not necessarily to the invading Neo-Assyrian army). Rather, it was the "Egyptian" expression of imperialism that established the Battle of Kadesh reliefs (as embedded in a larger corpus of narrative battle reliefs on Egyptian temples and triumphal imagery on Egyptian imperial steles) as a horizon of meaning for the Neo-Assyrian audience.

Indeed, by the middle of the seventh century BCE, Egypt had evolved from a hostile inimical landscape to one of more nuanced familiarity. After decades of

campaigns within Egypt's borders that resulted in an influx of Egyptian booty saturating the Assyrian capitals, Egypt's triumphal imagery had become embedded in Assyria's own expressions of imperialism (such as the Zinjirli and Til Barsip steles of Esarhaddon). And the compositional tradition of Egypt's New Kingdom battle reliefs (the Battle of Kadesh exemplars from the Theban area chief among them) became a meaningful expression for Assurbanipal to harness in his own display of imperial supremacy in the Battle of Til Tuba reliefs.

CONCLUSION. EVENTS: A REASSESSMENT

This dissertation has generated a new understanding of how we construe ancient Events by demonstrating how the Battle of Kadesh was created through various encounters with the reliefs at the Ramesseum at pivotal moments in time. It has emphasized a diachronic approach to Event construction through an analysis of the reliefs' evolving audiences and landscapes from the moment they were first carved onto the temple walls, to the period of diplomacy between the Egyptian and Hittite empires less than half a century later, to the seventh century BCE when the Neo-Assyrian empire invaded Egypt's borders. The crucial element of time in this dissertation encourages an examination of how both landscapes and audiences change in size, scope, focus, and constitutive elements, so that the Events that arise from these encounters are imbued with a dynamic quality that reciprocally accounts for their shifting resonances and impacts.

Events are created in the encounter between audiences and landscapes—the co-constitutive human, social, political, architectural, material, geographical, and topographical elements of history. Many happenings have never turned into Events precisely because they were not spoken about, recorded, or memorialized in a way that has left a trace in the material (historical and/or archaeological) record. Rather, proper Events are manifested in a material corpus that endures to be accessed by modern scholarship. It is precisely the potent reverberations throughout the material record that render the Battle of Kadesh such an effective case study for Event-making.

But here it is important to emphasize that the reverberations of the Battle of Kadesh are *not* contingent upon the initial conflict between Ramses II and Muwatalli. Indeed, scholars widely agree that the skirmish did not redraw any political borders, nor is there any evidence that it fundamentally upset any vassal relationships. In point of fact, there is nothing inherent that would turn the fighting in the environs of Kadesh into an Event and the only important thing that resulted from the fighting is the construction of the Event itself. Why Ramses focused so intently upon the visual and rhetorical celebration of his conflict with Muwatalli has been widely speculated upon elsewhere;⁹⁶⁶ the emphasis of this dissertation has been upon how this occurred, and how this resonance reverberated forwards in time to create the significance that we now attribute to the Battle of Kadesh.

The Battle of Kadesh reliefs prove a rich corpus for studying Events because their monumentality and durability have facilitated encounters with multiple and diverse audiences over long stretches of time. This dissertation has demonstrated how these varying audiences encounter such a fixed and durable corpus as stone-carved reliefs

⁹⁶⁶ See, for example, Hans Gödicke, "The 'Battle of Kadesh': A Reassessment," in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*, ed. Hans Gödicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 114; Kenneth, A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant, The Life and Times of Ramesses II*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1982); G.A. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1976); Anthony J. Spalinger, "Notes on the Reliefs of the Battle of Kadesh," in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh*, ed. Hans Gödicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985a), 1-42.

through landscapes of widely shifting physical and socio-political dimensions. Local Thebans need only cross the banks of the Nile to reach the Ramesseum, while foreign audiences must travel hundreds (or thousands) of miles to reach the Upper Egyptian temple. Thirteenth century BCE audiences would have visited the Ramesseum in a peaceful, festival climate, while later Neo-Assyrian soldiers would have entered Thebes in an act of war.

In the fifth chapter of this dissertation, the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum are landscaped for an Egyptian audience by The Beautiful Feast of the Valley (festivals being a unique time when larger swathes of the Egyptian population were permitted inside Egyptian temples, which were usually restricted to priests and pharaohs). The festival celebrated the cult of Amun and thus emphasized the pivotal role of Amun in Ramses's victory at Kadesh. The atmosphere of the festival, full of singing and dancing and sensorial overload, would have competed with the viewer's attention so that the reliefs would have receded to the periphery, their bottom courses blocked by the crowd of festival attendees in the first and second courtyards. In this festival landscape, how the Battle of Kadesh Event meant became subsumed into the larger experience of royal rejuvenation, divine endorsement, and the resulting abundance of the cultic celebration.

Additionally, the processional network of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley would have activated visual associations with other temples on the eastern and western banks of Thebes and their respective decorative schemes. At Karnak, Ramses's Kadesh reliefs joined those of his father, Seti I, and Thutmose III's annals to dialogically contribute to the role of Kadesh as a proving ground and a perennially contested borderland. Adjacent to the triumphal reliefs on the same walls of the temple, the Battle of Kadesh became embedded in an imperial message of universal Egyptian dominance, the campaign visually dialoguing with (and thus participating in) the scenes of Ramses's supremacy over all foreign lands.

Meaning altered through visual dialogues also occurred in the sixth chapter of this dissertation when the Battle of Kadesh reliefs were joined in the first courtyard of the Ramesseum by the addition of the representation of the Silver Tablet Treaty—a parity agreement between Ramses II and Hattusili III. This practice of treaty-making created a new visual dialog that reframed the Battle of Kadesh in a broader narrative of international connectivity where even war could be reinterpreted as an act of engagement in the larger system. The Treaty's diplomatic intent established a tension with the military reliefs so that the peaceful relations between the two Great Kings provided a new outcome, and indeed, a new meaning, for the Battle of Kadesh. Through their visual dialog, the Silver Tablet Treaty (an Event in its own right) (re)framed and thus (re)created the Battle of Kadesh through the lens of diplomacy and the web of political relations at the end of the Late Bronze Age. An Egyptian audience would still attend the Ramesseum at festival time, but now they would be confronted with Ramses's diplomatic endeavors alongside his martial propaganda. The presence of the Treaty mitigates the antagonism in the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, suggesting that by the second half of the thirteenth century BCE, the Egyptian rhetoric of power could no longer deny the prestige acquired through diplomatic participation in the international system of the Late Bronze Age. Ramses shrewdly recognized the increased value of diplomatic overtures; moreover, he realized that such efforts of peaceful participation in the international

system could be crafted in such a way as to not lose face within the borders of Egypt.

Reciprocally, the Battle of Kadesh Event also “pushed back” to impact the meaning of the Treaty and the diplomatic alliance. It was likely no coincidence that the two exemplars of the Silver Tablet Treaty were carved in close proximity to the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum and the Temple of Amun at Karnak. The presence of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs insinuated that Ramses entered the subsequent Treaty with the upper hand, despite its parity format. The outside world, with its foreign princesses and luxury goods and even foreign gods was systematically crafted into the Egyptian worldview so that the practice of treaty-making still reinforced Ramses’s preeminence as first-among-equal of the Great Kings.

At the same time, though, the Silver Tablet Treaty sent a welcoming message to Hittite soldiers, emissaries, and princesses who found themselves inside Egypt’s borders as a result of this renewed era of diplomacy and alliance. For this Hittite audience, the landscape of the Kadesh reliefs not only included the Silver Tablet Treaty and the diplomatic marriages between Ramses and two Hittite princesses (commemorated on stele and in reliefs in their own visual dialog with the Kadesh reliefs at Abu Simbel and the Temple of Amun at Karnak), but also the Levantine topography over which they traversed during their journey from Hatti to Egypt. For Hittites who had traveled in between the empires, the citadel of Kadesh in the reliefs would have aroused a stronger sense of place than for an Egyptian audience who had never ventured outside Egypt’s borders. The topographical features, such as the Orontes River, would have evoked memories of their own crossings, and would have further entangled the landscapes of war and peace—the latter manifested in their very presence in Egypt as embodied gestures of diplomacy.

While the sixth chapter of this dissertation emphasized the dynamic influence of visual dialogs upon how Events mean, the seventh chapter focused on how the meaning of Events can be impacted dialogically in their stylistic, thematic, or direct evocation of other Events. We see this in later Egyptian battle reliefs, for example on Ramses III’s temple at Medinet Habu. His Battle against the Sea Peoples reliefs are largely influenced by Ramses II’s Battle of Kadesh reliefs. The Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum established a precedent for such martial content in western bank temples. Their size, their use of motion and chaotic density in the fighting vignettes, and their distinction of foreigners by costume and headgear, are all employed by Ramses III. In so doing, the Battle against the Sea Peoples refracts the social horizon established by the Battle of Kadesh, utilizing the communicative strategies and precedents of the Kadesh reliefs to demonstrate Ramses III’s imperial might, divine endorsement, and thus efficacy as pharaoh of Egypt at a time when the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean were subjected to an increasing amount of population movements, social ruptures, and cataclysmic political changes.

By the seventh century BCE, the landscape of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs—both political and physical—was again altered. Egypt’s supremacy among Near Eastern powers was gone, and its presence in the international arena was vastly diminished. Centuries of political fragmentation initiated looting and dismantling of monuments along the western bank of Thebes, where the Ramesseum was slowly being re-appropriated as a Late Period cemetery. But the New Kingdom was not forgotten in Egypt—a land whose persistent reverence of the past was conveniently aided by the arid

climate that preserved texts, art, and indeed monuments, for millennia. The Temple of Amun at Karnak and the Luxor Temple were continuously used, restored, and added to, so that their presence—along with the Kadesh reliefs on their outer walls—retained prominence in the Theban landscape. The Battle of Kadesh reliefs were now a manifestation of the imperial New Kingdom past that Egyptians revered; the Event was a symbol of glory and grandeur that while no longer present, remained potent in the memories of Egyptian identity.

For the Neo-Assyrian soldiers who conquered Thebes in the seventh century BCE, Egypt was not a *tabula rasa*. When Assyria first joined the international stage during the reign of Assur-Uballit in the fourteenth century BCE, Egypt was preeminent among the cohort of Great Kings. Egypt played a significant role in the rise of the Middle Assyrian empire at this time, participating in the international system of commerce, diplomatic exchange, and correspondence with Assyrian royalty. The Battle of Kadesh reliefs evoked this pivotal era of Assyrian imperial ascension for the Neo-Assyrian kings; Egypt's eminent past manifested in the monumental battle scenes was not to be forgotten even amidst the contemporary dilapidation of the Ramesseum. But this later stage of Event-making, while still indicative of the strong resonance of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs in the seventh century, is not directly contingent upon how the Event meant to earlier audiences. Indeed the Neo-Assyrian audience brought their own values, history, motivations, and expectations to the Theban landscape that did not necessarily overlap with earlier Egyptian and Hittite encounters with the reliefs.

Time acts upon Events, changing the encounters between different audiences and landscapes and thus the Event itself. But Events can also change time, stitching together new temporal relationships through their potent resonance in a landscape. The age of the reliefs is one of their bundled qualities, sometimes receding into the background and sometimes highlighted, so that their oldness (or newness) dialogs with additional time periods displayed in the landscape around the reliefs. In the seventh century BCE, the age of the reliefs came to the fore and evoked an era when Egypt was the imperial superpower in the Levant, not Assyria. The Battle of Kadesh thus generated a new temporality for the Neo-Assyrians between the thirteenth and seventh centuries BCE by creating a visual dialog between the Late Bronze Age and the contemporary era.

For the Neo-Assyrian audience (like the earlier Hittite audience) the landscape of the Kadesh reliefs would have included their journey to Egypt. To reach Thebes, the Neo-Assyrian army traversed their expanding territories in the northern and southern Levant, from where the Egyptian and Hittite empires had long since retreated. Imperial steles and monuments erected during New Kingdom campaigns in this Levantine landscape still manifested the far reaches of the once-glorious Egyptian empire. Nahr el-Kalb—where Esarhaddon carved his own stele adjacent to one of Ramses II's—demonstrates how the Neo-Assyrian rulers constructed their own imperial identity (at least in part) upon key Egyptian rhetorical precedents. During the reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, booty from Egyptian campaigns flowed back to the Assyrian capitals, expanding the landscape of the Battle of Kadesh ever farther afield, where an audience of elite Assyrians experienced Neo-Assyrian royal propaganda such as the Battle of Til Tuba reliefs in the compositional tradition of the Battle of Kadesh at Nineveh.

While this dissertation has made a concerted effort to populate each stage of the Event construction with concrete audiences (Egyptian festival attendees, the Hittite royal

and military elite, the Neo-Assyrian army and inhabitants of the Neo-Assyrian capital cities), there is always the inevitability of generalizing these audiences to present too monolithic an encounter with the reliefs. Each individual will in some sense have his/her own personal landscape for the Event—inflected by previous experiences, biases, preferences, opportunities, and the infinite factors that could impact his/her viewing experience at the Ramesseum. At a certain level, no one will understand the Battle of Kadesh in exactly the same way. This is because of the sheer diversity of ways in which Events can mean, as demonstrated in Chapters 5–7 of this dissertation.

Moreover, Events do not just stand still in time. Even if we could capture all the ways that the Battle of Kadesh meant for a specific audience, that meaning would necessarily change when a new audience encountered the reliefs. The potency of Events causes them to reverberate forwards with the potential to reframe, re-contextualize, and re-temporalize Events that occur long after them. As we have seen in this dissertation, Events “alter the course of subsequent [E]vents”⁹⁶⁷ through dialogism and dialog-ing, that is, in the way that the Event’s reverberations refract the social horizon. Altered meaning works both ways, with later Events reframing earlier Events, and earlier Events establishing expectations or interpretive structures for later ones while simultaneously taking on new resonances and overtones. The Silver Tablet Treaty and even Ramses III’s Battle against the Sea Peoples impact our interpretive framework for the Battle of Kadesh as much as the Battle of Kadesh contextualizes and contributes to our understanding and expectations of these subsequent Events in Egyptian history.

All of these contingencies—of Events impacting the meaning of other Events—further destabilize meaning. But reorienting our approach to ask *how* Events mean as opposed to what they mean allows scholars to anchor their examination in the materiality of the Event corpus. While acknowledging the dynamic, contingent quality of the Battle of Kadesh Event, we can begin with the reliefs themselves to reconstruct as best as we are capable the physical qualities of our corpus. Then, by situating the reliefs in the landscapes in which they participate and analyzing the audiences who encounter them, we can begin to pose resonances of the bundled properties that are “called forth” by the landscapes and audiences. These resonances ground the contingencies of the Event, limiting and anchoring the ways future and prior Events can impact the meaning of the Battle of Kadesh (or an Event of one’s own study).

Again I return to the materiality of the reliefs, particularly their monumentality and durability, to reemphasize that it is the reliefs’ continued presence and potency in the landscape of Egypt that has created and anchored a system of reference for ancient and modern audiences alike. Chapter 4 of this dissertation emphasized that the reliefs are not inert, empty vessels in need of a human subject to interpret them. Rather, the key to understanding their contribution to the Battle of Kadesh is by examining their active participation in their landscape. In so doing, it becomes apparent that the reliefs did not solely communicate through a binary system of texts and images. Rather, factors such as their size and visibility, their architectural placement on the temple walls, the sights and sounds and smells and accouterments of festivals within the temple complex, the geographical proximity of the Ramesseum to other Theban temples, and the weathering

⁹⁶⁷ Hanks, *Language Practices*, 268.

of the reliefs through time all played crucial roles in how the Battle of Kadesh meant to its (r)evolving audiences. But just as the materiality of the reliefs expanded their communication strategies, it also constrained our understanding of the Battle Event. The reliefs have generated and will continue to generate myriad understandings of the Battle of Kadesh, but by studying the physical properties of the corpus and how it participates in its landscape, our understanding of how the Event means at a given time to a given audience will become increasingly intricate.

The materiality of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs additionally implicates a fourth audience in this dissertation: the modern scholar.⁹⁶⁸ While this role in the Event-making process has not yet been explicitly addressed, it should not be underestimated. It is the modern scholarly audience that has selected the Battle of Kadesh Event for study in countless books and articles (including this dissertation). Here I acknowledge that Carr's historian does perhaps play a more significant role in the making of Events than I gave him credit for in Chapter 4 above. Scholars provide the name for the Battle of Kadesh, which just as easily could have been called the Battle against the Hittites, or the Battle for the Northern Levant. Scholars also define the scope and corpus for the study of the Event. This dissertation, for example, incorporates Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs into its examination of the Battle of Kadesh corpus. Such an approach is informed by the modern landscape of higher-education trends towards interdisciplinary studies and the combined instruction of Egyptology and Assyriology within Near Eastern Studies programs.

Implicit in the definition of an Event is not just its resonance through time, but also the persistence of this corpus and its resonance into the present day. In the case of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs at the Ramesseum, it is above all their modern allure that has seduced such a large body of scholars (myself included) into studying them so extensively. Ancient resonances may be stumbled upon serendipitously and unwoven into patterns of acute historical encounters, but this occurs only when a scholar has impetus to orient his/her efforts in such a direction in the first place. Implicit in this focus is the privileging of battles as Event-worthy happenings. There certainly are many other types of Events with robust resonances in the material record unstudied because scholars do not know—or care—to look for them (such as festivals). Also implicit is the modern enchantment with ancient Egyptian history and culture and an educational system that preserves and trains scholars in such knowledge. Ultimately, we only search for and recognize the types of Events in the places in the world where we *want* to find them.

Like every chapter of this dissertation (and every stage of Event-making), the modern encounter with the reliefs comprises a tension between the biases, motivations, and expectations of the audience on the one hand, and the constraining materiality of the landscape and corpus on the other. For a modern audience, the phenomenological experience of the landscape of the Battle of Kadesh reliefs is quite different than it was

⁹⁶⁸ Many thousands of tourists encounter the Battle of Kadesh reliefs each year at the Theban temples, undeniably expanding the resonance of the Event. But so that this modern audience, too, remains concrete, I restrict the following discussion to a scholarly subset.

3300 (or even 2600) years ago. Unlike the more popular tourist sites on the western bank of Thebes such as Medinet Habu, Deir el-Bahri, and the Valley of the Kings, it is easy to find solitude at the Ramesseum. And unlike the sound and light spectacles at the Temple of Amun at Karnak on the eastern bank of Thebes, the Ramesseum is often delightfully quiet. Unless one is unfortunate enough to arrive at the same time as (or with) a tour bus, there are no crowds or noise to approximate the festival atmosphere of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley in the thirteenth century BCE. Rather, the entrance deposits the modern visitor into the first courtyard, where one is left to wander back and forth across the monumental tableau on the interior of the first pylon. No procession distracts one's attention, and the lack of preservation surrounding the first pylon precludes the visual dialogues in which the Battle of Kadesh reliefs once participated with the Silver Tablet Treaty and other decorations from the first courtyard for the Egyptian, Hittite, and Assyrian audiences. For the modern visitor, the Battle of Kadesh stands starkly alone.

Likewise the visual and tactile impact of the reliefs is much changed since the second and first millennia BCE. The bright paint is entirely gone from the surface of the first pylon; on the second pylon, faded patches of blue in the Orontes River and red covering the figures of horses and soldiers provides only intimations of the stark effect of their original colors (Fig. 21-23). Now, it is the depth of the relief contours that highlights certain figures or vignettes, especially after midday when the shadows intensify details otherwise invisible in the soft dawn light. According to Pallasmaa, "The skin reads the texture, weight, density and temperature of matter. The surface of an old object, polished to perfection by the tool of the craftsman and the assiduous hands of its users, seduces the stroking of the hand."⁹⁶⁹ The sandstone walls of the Ramesseum have undoubtedly been worn soft through the ages, but the way the stone absorbs the sunlight so that it appears to glow from within is what makes it so desirable to reach out and touch. Or perhaps it is not so much the weathering of the surface of the walls but their promise of a cool, steadying surface—desirous for any visitor who arrives at the temple during the summer months.

It is not only these phenomenological experiences with the reliefs but also all of the other material evidence that has serendipitously survived that provides modern scholars with an understanding of the Battle of Kadesh Event unavailable to ancient audiences. Once again one is reminded that later stages of Event-making are not beholden to how the Event meant in earlier times. For example, our knowledge of the ancient Egyptian writing systems—one not shared by the majority of the Neo-Assyrian, Hittite, or even Egyptian visitors to the Ramesseum—has mingled with a modern prioritization of textual content to create a version of the Event heavily reliant upon the Poem, Bulletin, and Captions. Likewise, centuries of scholarly efforts provide editions and translations of ancient texts in multiple languages, accounting for modern scholarly literacy in ancient Egyptian, Hittite, and Akkadian (or, perhaps more accurately, the multitude of scripts and stages of languages that these terms comprise). This understanding, shared by only the most adept of scribes in the ancient Near East, allows for the integration of textual materials such as foreign correspondence and treaties and

⁹⁶⁹ Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 62.

royal inscriptions deriving from the Egyptian, Hittite, and Assyrian worlds.⁹⁷⁰

Time, too, weighs heavily upon the modern encounter with the Battle of Kadesh. Modern scholars are indulged by a hindsight not even afforded the Neo-Assyrians; our appreciation of the Event's reverberation through time and space extends well past the seventh century BCE and Mesopotamia and into the classical world through sources such as Tacitus, Diodorus, and Strabo—whose time-honored compendiums provide inspiration and validation for our modern queries.⁹⁷¹ From Diodorus in particular we learn that visitors to the Ramesseum in the Classical Period were equally enchanted by the Battle of Kadesh reliefs:

On the first wall the king... is represented in the act of besieging a walled city, which is surrounded by a river, and of leading the attack against opposing troops; he is accompanied by a lion, which is aiding him with terrifying effect. Of those who have explained the scene some have... maintained that the king, who was exceedingly brave and desirous of praising himself in a vulgar way, was trying to portray his own bold spirit in the figure of the lion.⁹⁷²

⁹⁷⁰ It is unlikely, for example, that any of the Egyptians during Ramses's reign who were fortunate enough to visit the Temple of Amun at Karnak and appreciate the symbolic value that Kadesh played in Egyptian imperial rhetoric from Thutmose III and Seti I's reigns were simultaneously familiar with the symbolic role that Kadesh played in Late Bronze Age Hittite royal inscriptions and propaganda.

⁹⁷¹ In Book 2 of Tacitus' *Annals*, he details Germanicus's visit to Egypt in 19 CE. Tacitus, *Histories*, Books 4-5, *Annals*, Books 1-3 (Loeb Classical Library No. 249), trans. John Jackson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931). In Thebes, Tacitus describes how Germanicus solicits the aid of a local priest to translate an inscription from the reign of Ramses II that boasts about the extensive revenue collected from vassals, the size of the Egyptian army and the expanses of imperial territory (*Ann.* 2.60). See Benjamin Kelly, "Tacitus, Germanicus and the Kings of Egypt (Tac. *Ann.* 2.59–61)," *The Classical Quarterly* 60 (2010): 221-237. Strabo provides a more general account of Thebes in the first centuries BCE and CE—"Where lies in treasure-houses the greatest wealth." Strabo, *Geography*, vol. 8, Book 17 and General Index (Loeb Classical Library No. 267), trans. Horace Leonard Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 17.45. He does not mention the Ramesseum explicitly, but the tombs in the Theban cliffs he refers to look down upon the Kadesh reliefs below: "Above the Mnemonium [The Colossi of Memnon from Amenhotep III's temple, a half mile from the Ramesseum], in caves, are tombs of kings which are stone hewn, are about forty in number, are marvelously constructed, and are a spectacle worth seeing. And among the tombs, on some obelisks, are inscriptions which show the wealth of the kings at that time, and also their dominion, as having extended as far as the Scythians and Bactrians and the Indians and the present Ionia, and the amount of tributes they received, and the size of army they had, about one million men" (*Geography*, 17.46).

⁹⁷² Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, vol. I, Books 1-2.34 (Loeb Classical Library No. 279), trans. C.H. Oldfather (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 1.48.

But again I emphasize that Event construction is not tied to accuracy, and thus its resonance is not impacted by the quantity of “facts” or level of veracity with which a given audience regards it.⁹⁷³ Indeed, despite modern digitization of archives and site plans, GIS and topographical surveys, we do not have a bird’s-eye-view of the Event because we too are just one more stage in its development. Our current encounter with the reliefs is embedded in a modern landscape that capitalizes upon the temporalities it generates between the exotic “ancient” past and a present that revels in the otherness of Egypt’s desert climate and Arab culture.⁹⁷⁴ We are fortified with the publications and translations of over a century of modern Egyptological scholarship, but also must face the possibility that we encounter a reduced corpus of Kadesh reliefs (which may have once decorated temple walls in Memphis and Pr-Rameses). Our modern landscape also contains a refraction of Egyptomania through the ancient classical sources, which have in so many other ways contributed to contemporary educational and intellectual models.⁹⁷⁵

Perhaps most influential to how the Battle of Kadesh means to modern scholars is the deeply embedded socio-cultural value of objectivism.⁹⁷⁶ Here, I refer to an academic

⁹⁷³ The Trojan War is no less an Event for its quasi-mythological content or for the lack of scholarly consensus concerning its setting in the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age Greek world.

⁹⁷⁴ Ever since Edward Said polemicized the objectivity of an “imagined Orient,” much ink has been spilled on how the West has conceptualized the Muslim “other.” See Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). For a comprehensive summary of recent scholarly approaches to Orientalism, see Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies*, (London: Allen Lane, 2006). For an overview of the persistence of Orientalist concepts in European critical theory, see Ian Almond, *The New Orientalists: Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

⁹⁷⁵ See Laurent Bricault, M. J. Versluys, and P. G. P. Meyboom, ed. *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman world: proceedings of the Third International Conference of Isis Studies, May 11-14, 2005*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007); James Stevens Curl, *Egyptomania: The Egyptian Revival, A Recurring Theme in the History of Taste*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); M. J. Versluys, *Aegyptiaca Romana: Nilotic Scenes and the Roman Views of Egypt*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002). For an overview of the evolving role of classical learning in higher education since the Early Modern Period, see Rens Bod, “Introduction: Historiography of the Humanities,” in *The Making of the Humanities: Early Modern Europe*, ed. Rens Bod, Japp Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 7-16; Michiel Leezenberg, “How Comparative Should a Comparative History of the Humanities Be? The Case of the Dutch Spinoza Circle,” in *The Making of the Humanities: Early Modern Europe*, ed. Rens Bod, Japp Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 17-38.

⁹⁷⁶ As Peter Novick points out, objectivity “is not a single idea, but rather a sprawling collection of assumptions, attitudes, aspirations, and antipathies.” *That Noble Dream*, 1.

“commitment to the reality of the past, and to truth as correspondence to that reality.”⁹⁷⁷ Modernity imposes its objectivist desire to know, in an absolute sense, what happened, and to establish the historical relationship between the image and inscriptions of the reliefs and the actual confrontation on the battlefield of Kadesh. This is not an unworthy goal, and this appreciation of how scholars interact with Events provides new insights into the co-constitutive relationship between audiences and their landscapes and how these elements interact in the process of Event-making. But at the same time, such an objectivist approach is not the only way to ascribe meaning to the reliefs, and it is certainly not a consistent or enduring approach to the Event’s meaning. Rather, it is one more stage of the Event’s making, one more audience encountering these monumental reliefs with questions already posed and values already formed.

The approach of this dissertation (examining how Events mean, as opposed to what they mean, or what “really” happened) has significant implications for the study of additional Events in the ancient past whose reverberations are more accessible in the material record than the details of the initial happening—be they military, political, or otherwise. It also provides new opportunities for corpuses of “propagandistic” materials, such as the Assyrian palace reliefs and royal inscriptions, whose historicity has long been debated by Near Eastern scholars. By examining the resonance of campaigns in the Middle Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, a whole new set of questions can be asked about their importance as an Event—specifically their role in creating horizons of meaning that inspired the imperial trajectory of Neo-Assyrian campaigns and the mechanisms of Neo-Assyrian royal propaganda (which emphasized a directionality of territorial conquest that—accurately or not—followed in the footsteps of their Middle Assyrian predecessors and persistently underscored imperial expansion as a demonstration of effective kingship).

Events are not, nor have they ever have been, irrelevant. They may not all topple governments like Caesar’s Crossing of the Rubicon, but they do change the course of history by creating horizons of meaning and generating new temporalities. Events provide pivotal referents around which we base our understanding and interest in the past. They also contribute to the frames of reference in which we build our expectations for future happenings. Events help to construct timelines in our heads that defy chronometric schedules but explain why we may remember important moments that happened years apart in close succession. In other words, Events create audiences as much as audiences create Events.

Because of this, Events offer key insights into the audiences who encounter them, and who value, accept, subvert, challenge, and ultimately create Events anew through each encounter. This dissertation has demonstrated how reconstructing specific socio-historical contexts for Event-making not only clarifies the physical landscape but also makes an argument for considering the evolving expectations and assumptions that each audience brings to their encounter with the relief corpus. However, with all of our attempts to impose meaning upon the monumental images of Ramses in his chariot and the citadel of Kadesh encircled by the Orontes River (informed by our education and by

⁹⁷⁷ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1.

our participation in the modern world, which includes encounters with additional Battles, both ancient and contemporary), we are beholden to the torque of the reliefs. In the fading afternoon light, when deep shadows accentuate the carving of the images and the sandstone pulses with life from the setting sun, we are just as mesmerized—our attention just as captured—as all other audiences who have come before us, consumed by a desire to partake in that which stands so grandly in our midst.

FIGURES

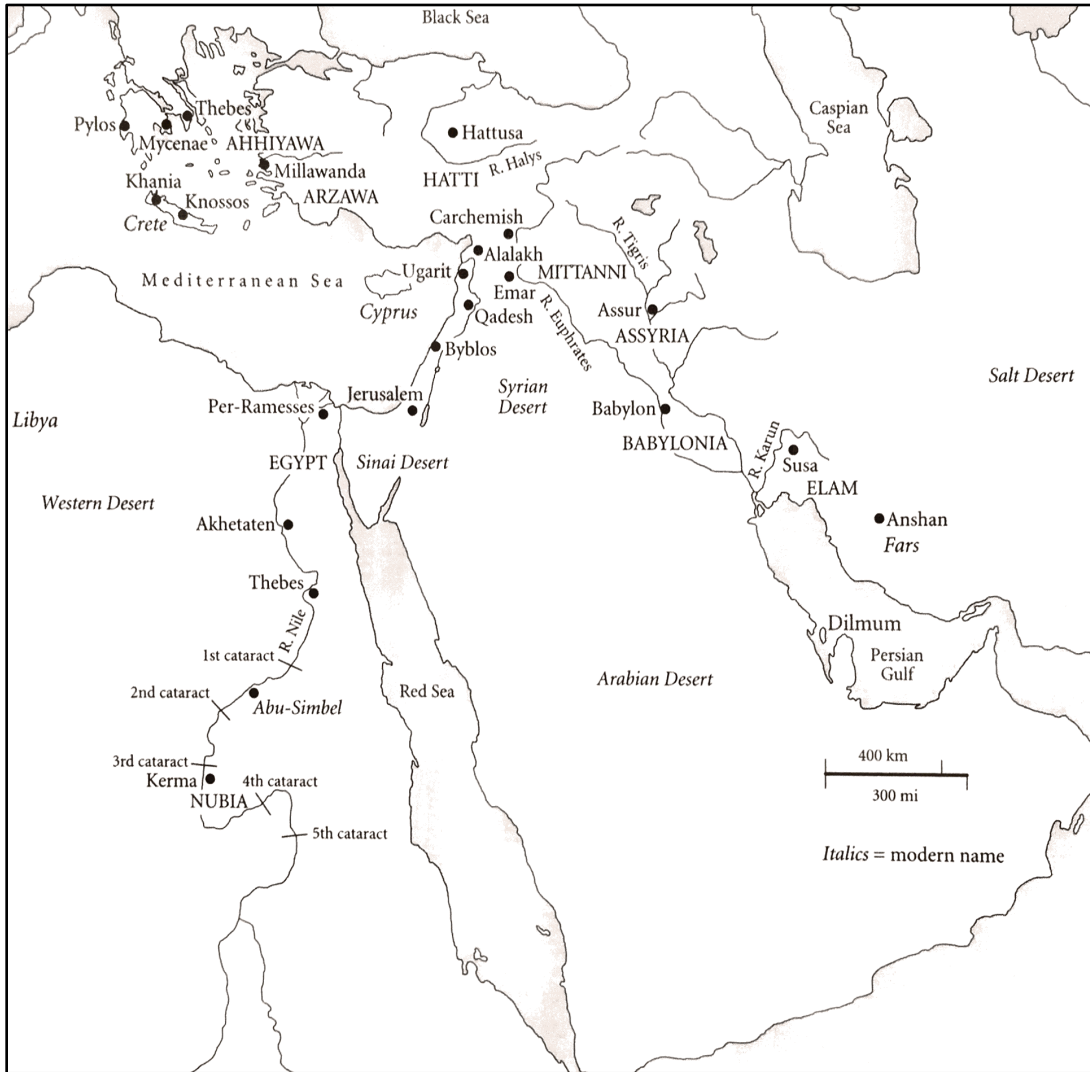


Figure 1. Map of Ancient Egypt and the Near East during the Late Bronze Age. Reproduced from Marc Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007a), Map 1.1.

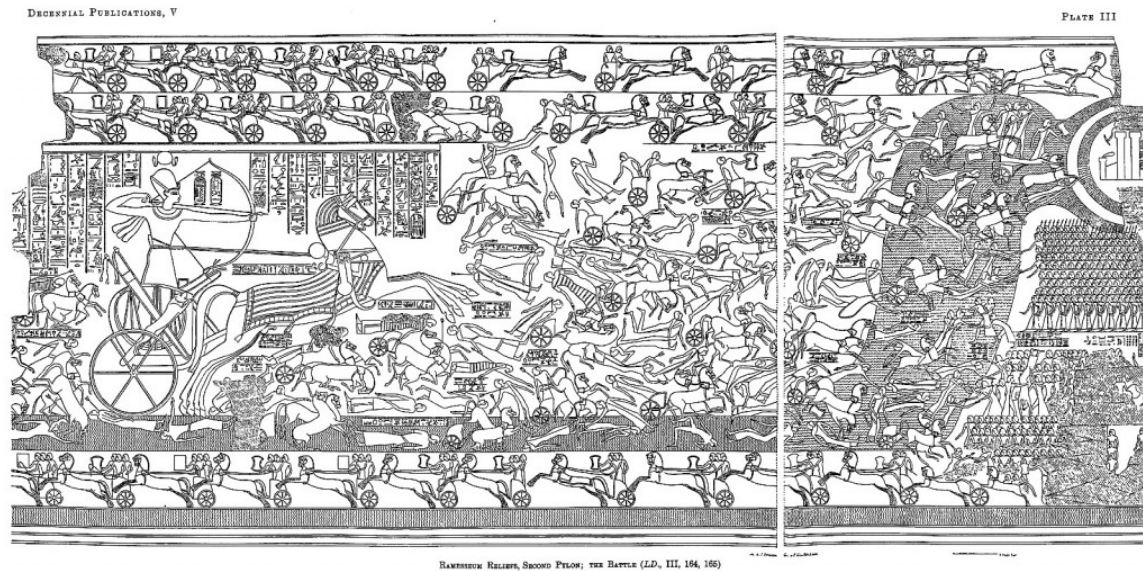


Figure 2. Line Drawing of the Battle of Kadesh Reliefs on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from James Henry Breasted, *The Battle of Kadesh: A Study in the Earliest Known Military Strategy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1903), Plate III.



Figure 3. Obelisk and Statues in front of the Entrance Pylon of Luxor Temple. Photo by Author.



Figure 4. Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 5. Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 6. Entrance Portal in the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 7. The Enthroned Figure of Ramses II on the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 8a. Egyptian Soldiers Beating Shasu Spies on the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.

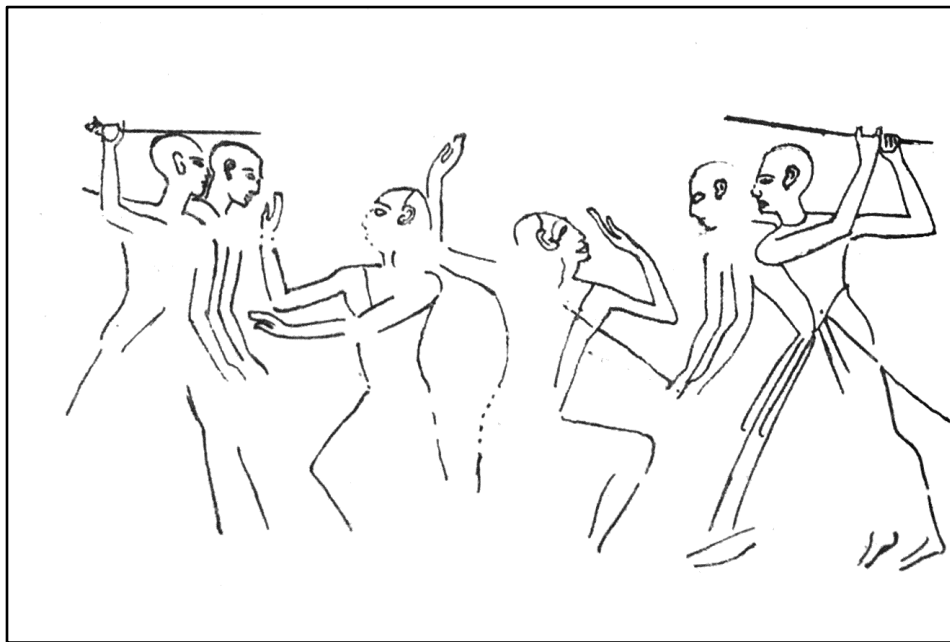


Figure 8b. Line Drawing of Egyptian Soldiers Beating Shasu Spies on the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), Tafel 82.



Figure 9. The Bulletin above the Enthroned Figure of Ramses II on the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 10. Scenes from the Camp on the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 11. The Invasion of the Camp on the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 12. Soldiers Marching Across the Bottom of the Northern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 13. The Citadel of Kadesh on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 14. Two Figures of Ramses II on his Chariot on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 15. Lower Figure of Ramses II on his Chariot on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 16. The Caption Accompanying the Lower Figure of Ramses II on his Chariot on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 17a. Upper Figure of Ramses II and the Citadel of Kadesh on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), Tafel 96a.

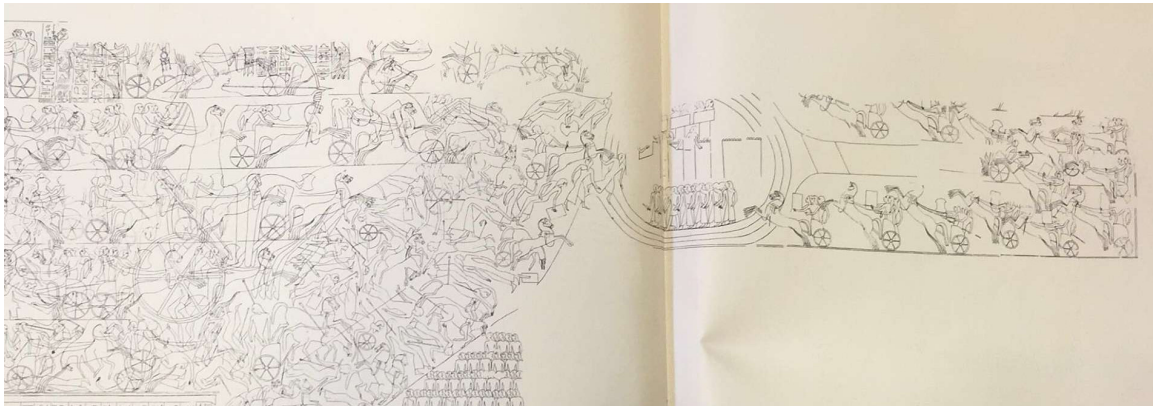


Figure 17b. Line Drawing of the Upper Figure of Ramses II and the Citadel of Kadesh on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), Tafel 96.



Figure 18. Detail of Drowning Soldiers and Horses in the Orontes River on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 19. Muwatalli in his Chariot Absconding from the Fighting on the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 20. Hittite Chariots in the Upper Left Quadrant of the Southern Wing of the First Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 21. Ramses II on his Chariot above the Orontes River on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 22. Detail of a Horse Drowning in the Orontes River on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 23. Detail of Drowning Hittite Soldiers in the Orontes River on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 24. Palimpsest Figure of Ramses II on his Chariot on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 25. Lower Figure of Ramses II on his Chariot in the Bottom Left Corner of the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 26. Osiride Pillars in front of the Battle of Kadesh Reliefs on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 27. The Right Opening in between Two Osiride Pillars onto the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 28. Detail of the Resuscitation of the Drowning Prince of Aleppo on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 29. Citadel of Kadesh in the Upper Right Corner of the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 30. Central Opening in between Osiride Pillars onto the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 31. Palimpsest Version of Ramses II on his Chariot in the Central Opening in between Osiride Pillars onto the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 32. Left Opening in between an Osiride Pillar and a Lotus Column onto the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 33. Detail of a Lion Jumping Alongside Ramses II's Chariot on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 34. An Aerial View of the Ramesseum Complex on the Western Bank of Thebes. Photo courtesy of Sarah Langkamp, © 2004.

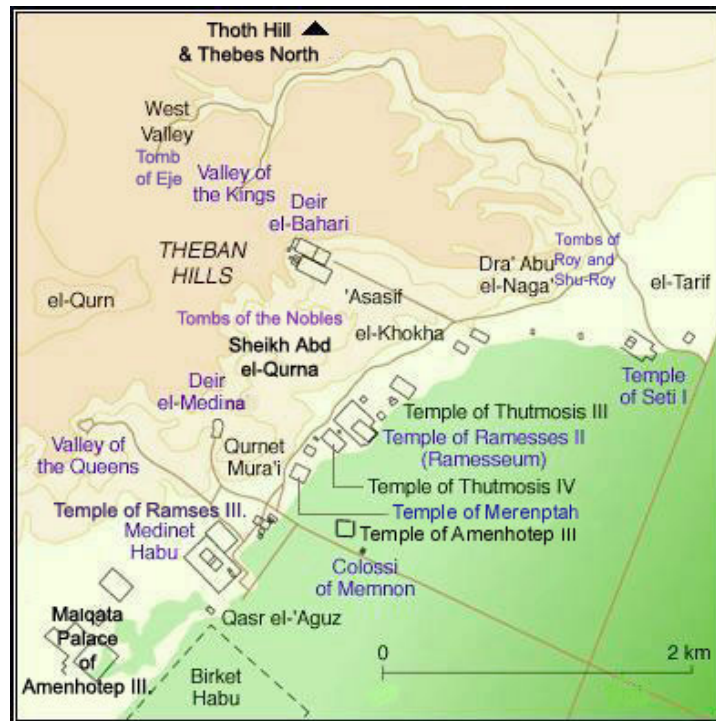


Figure 35. Map of the Western Bank of Thebes. Reproduced from the Theban Mapping Project, <http://www.thebanmappingproject.com> (accessed January 2, 2015).



Figure 36. Detail of Priests Releasing Birds during the Festival of Min on the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 37. Ramses II's Cartouches Decorating the Ceiling in between the Osiride Pillars in front of the Northern Wing of the Second Pylon of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 38. Central Ramp Leading from the Second Courtyard into the Hypostyle Hall of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 39. Lotus-Capital Columns from the Hypostyle Hall of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.

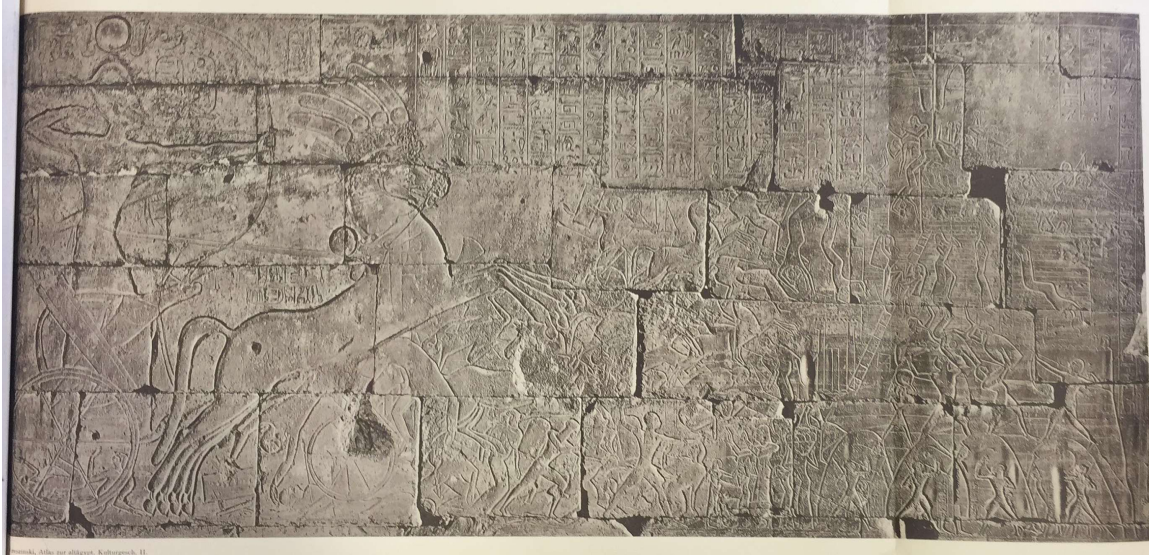


Figure 40. Ramses II's Attack on Dapur from the Eastern Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), Tafel 108.



Figure 41. Seated Figure of Ramses II under an *Jsd* Tree from the Western Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.

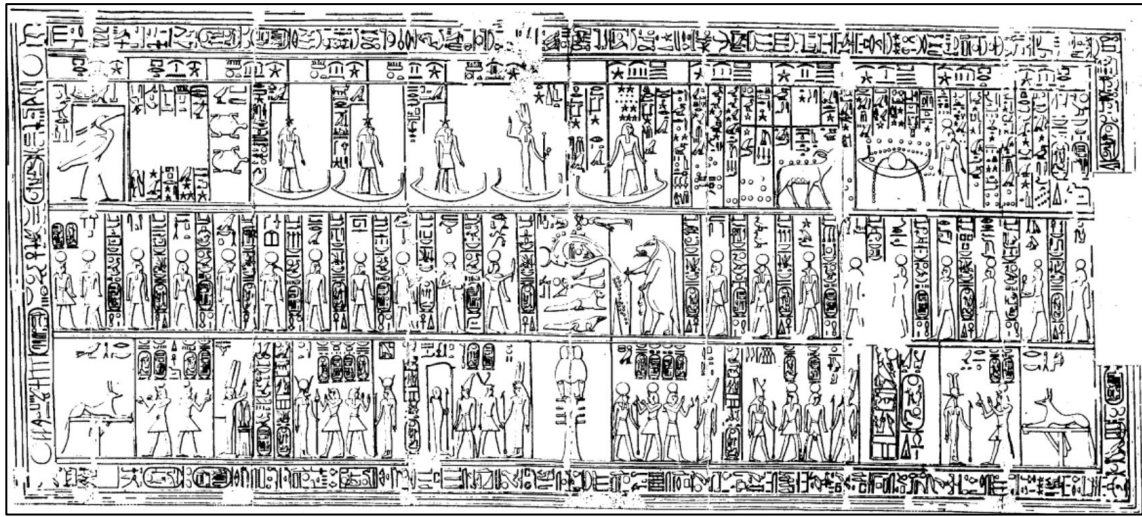


Figure 42. Line Drawing of the Astronomical Ceiling from the Hall of Barks of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from Sir Alan H. Gardiner, "The Problem of Month-Names," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 10 (1955): 23.

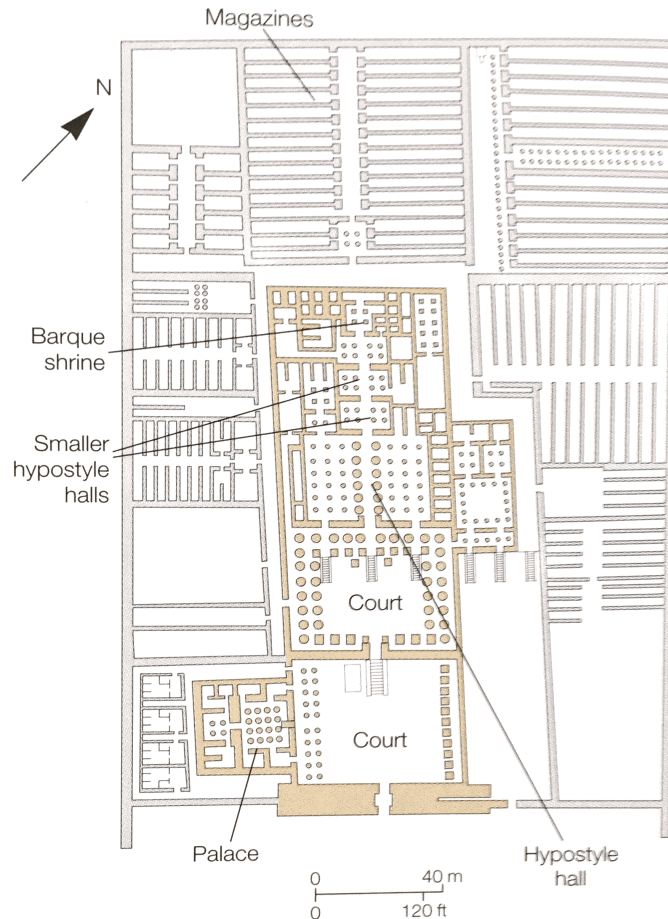


Figure 43. Site Plan of the Ramesseum. Reproduced from Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 182.



Figure 44. Priests Carrying the Bark of Amun during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley from Hatshepsut's Chapel Rouge at Karnak. Reproduced from Elaine A. Sullivan, "Visualising the Size and Movement of the Portable Festival Barks at Karnak Temple," *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 19 (2012): Figure 1.



Figure 45. Seti I Battle Scenes on the Western Side of the Northern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from *Digital Karnak*, © UCLA. <http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/resource/NorthExteriorWall/718> (accessed November 22, 2015).

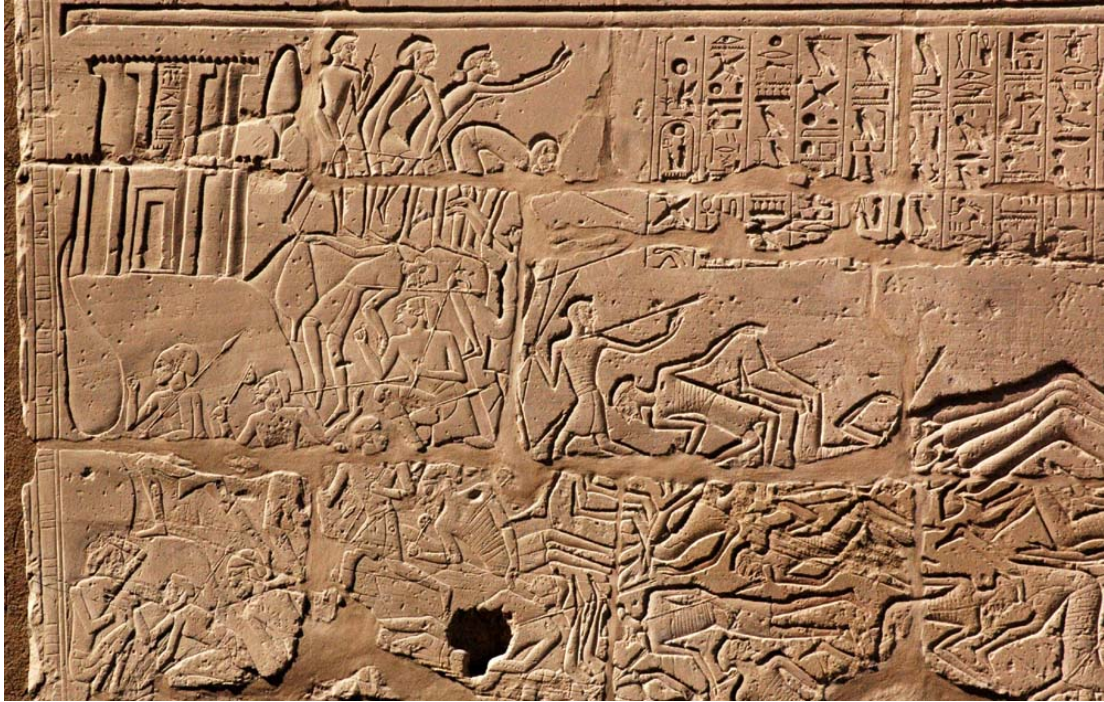


Figure 46. Seti I's Attack on the Shasu Bedouin on the Eastern Side of the Northern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from *The Karnak Great Hypostyle Hall Project*, © The University of Memphis. http://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/tour_hall/seti_scenes.php (accessed November 14, 2015).

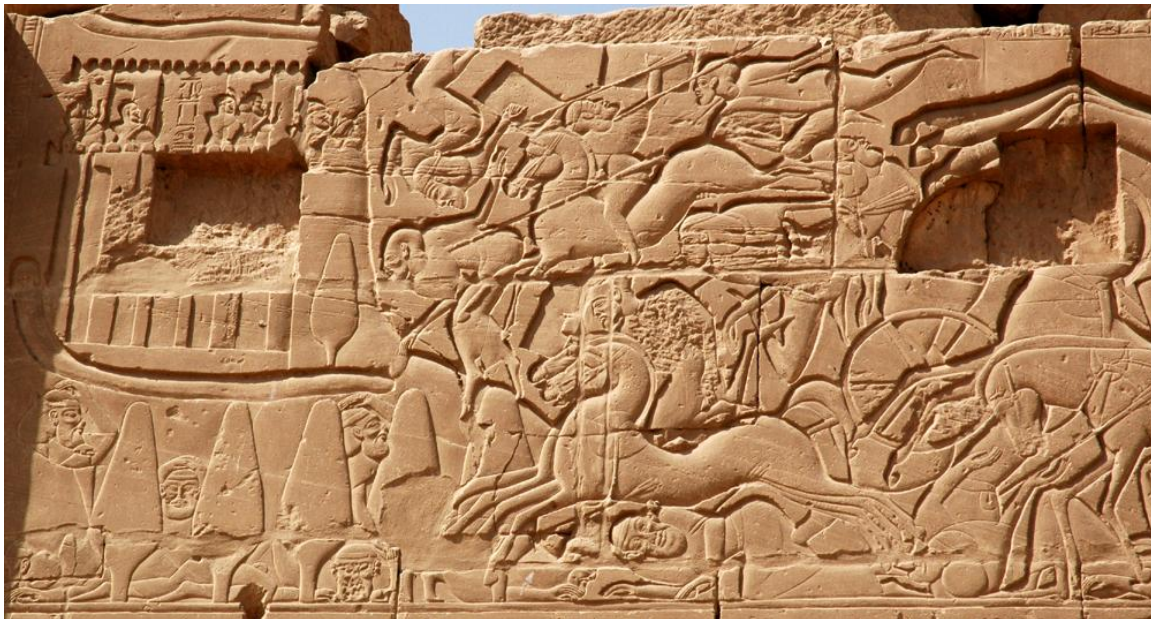


Figure 47. Seti I's Attack on Yenoam on the Eastern Side of the Northern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from *The Karnak Great Hypostyle Hall Project*, © The University of Memphis. http://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/tour_hall/seti_scenes.php (accessed November 14, 2015).

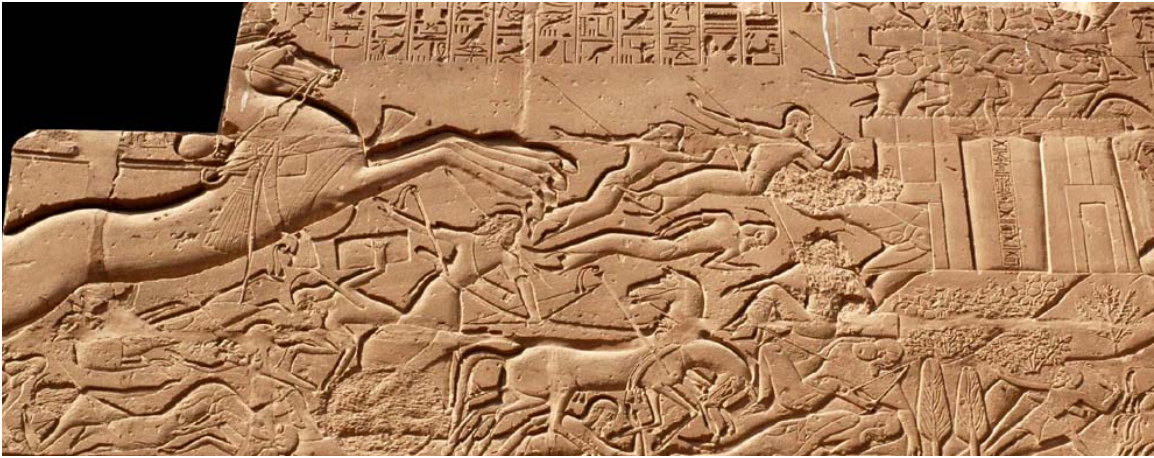


Figure 48. Seti I's Attack on Kadesh from the Upper Register on the Western Side of the Northern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from *The Karnak Great Hypostyle Hall Project*, © The University of Memphis. http://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/tour_hall/seti_scenes.php (accessed November 14, 2015).



Figure 49. Palimpsest of Ramses II's Battle of Kadesh Reliefs and Other Battle Scenes on the Southern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Ramesseum. Photo by Author.



Figure 50a. Triumphal Relief of Seti I on the Northern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Photo by Author.

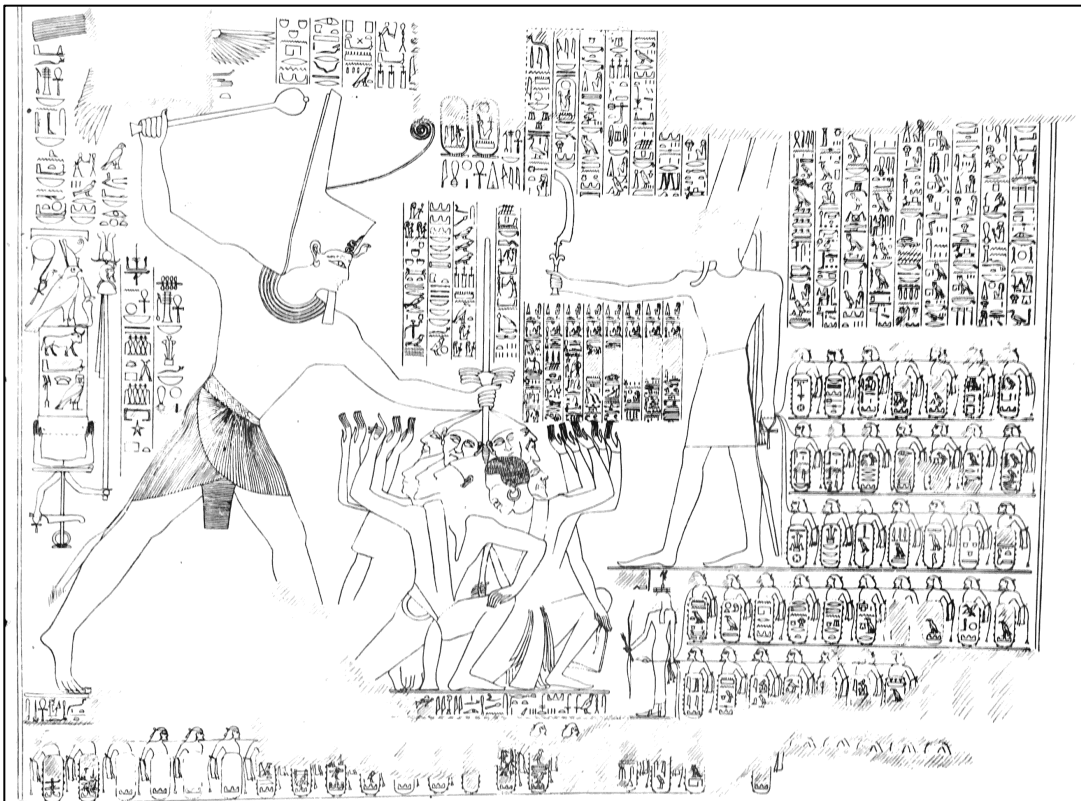


Figure 50b. Line Drawing of the Triumphal Relief of Seti I on the Northern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), Tafel 53a.



Figure 51. Triumphal Relief of Thutmose III on the Southern Face of the Seventh Pylon at the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed January 2, 2016).



Figure 52. Triumphal Relief of Ramses II on the Western Side of the Southern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Photo by Author.



Figure 53. Triumphal Relief of Ramses II on the Eastern Side of the Southern Exterior Wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Photo by Author.

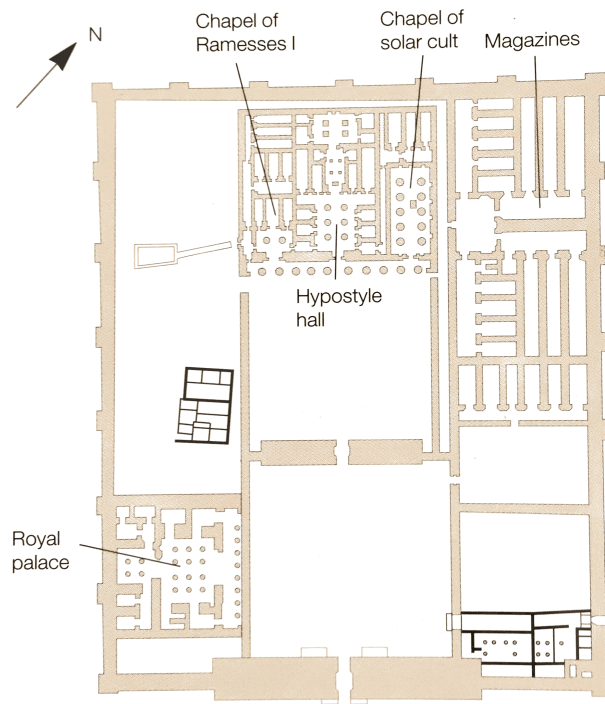


Figure 54. Site Plan of Seti I's Temple at Gurna. Reproduced from Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 173.

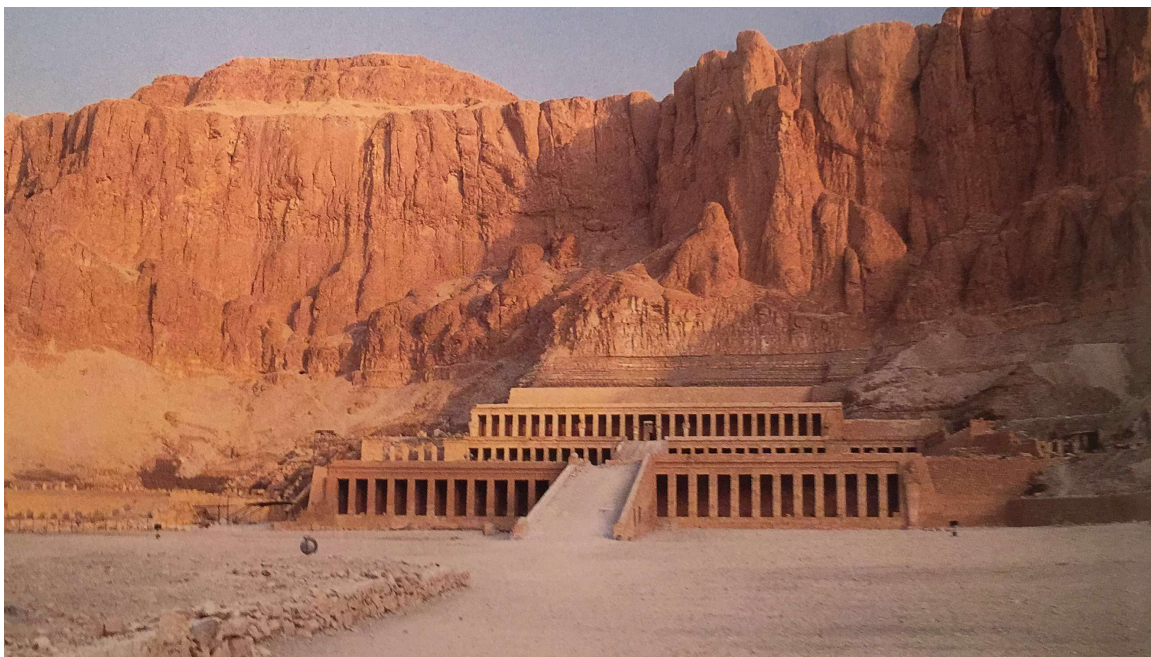


Figure 55. Hatshepsut's Temple at Deir el-Bahri. Reproduced from Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 176.



Figure 56. Detail of the Reliefs from the Trade Expedition to Punt from Hatshepsut's Temple at Deir el-Bahri. Reproduced from William Steven Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), Figure 236.



Figure 57. Figure of Suemniwet and his Wife, Kat, Offering Brazier Lights to the Gods from his Tomb Chapel South of the Doorway (TT 92). Photo courtesy of James Van Rensselaer IV. Reproduced from Betsy M. Bryan, "Memory and Knowledge in Egyptian Tomb Painting" *Studies in the History of Art* 74 (2009): Figure 4.



Figure 58. Silver Tablet Treaty on the Western Exterior Wall of the Cour de la Cachette at the Temple of Amun at Karnak. *The Karnak Great Hypostyle Hall Project*, © The University of Memphis.
<http://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/images/homepage/egyptianhittitepeacetreaty.jpg> (accessed November 14, 2015).



Figure 59. The Marriage Stele of Ramses II and Maat-Hor-Nefereure from Abu Simbel. Photo courtesy of Ahmed Saleh, © 2012.



Figure 60. Detail of the Marriage Stele of Ramses II and Maat-Hor-Nefereure from Abu Simbel. Photo courtesy of Ahmed Saleh, © 2012.

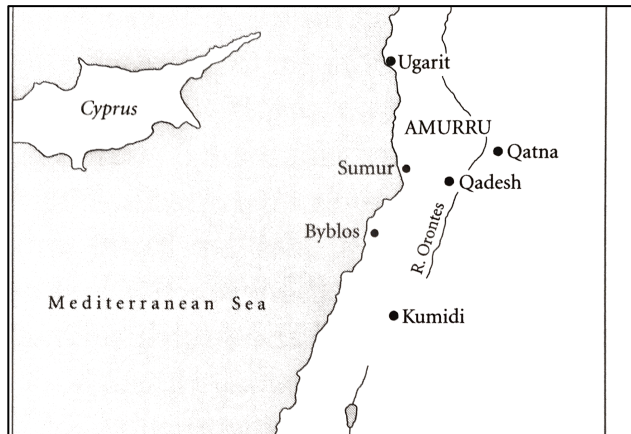


Figure 61. Map of the Northern Levant during the Thirteenth Century BCE. Reproduced from Marc Van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007a), Map. 5.1.



Figure 62a. Triumphal Relief of Shoshenq I from the Bubastite Portal at the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from the Epigraphic Survey, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, *The Bubastite Portal: Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), Plate 2.

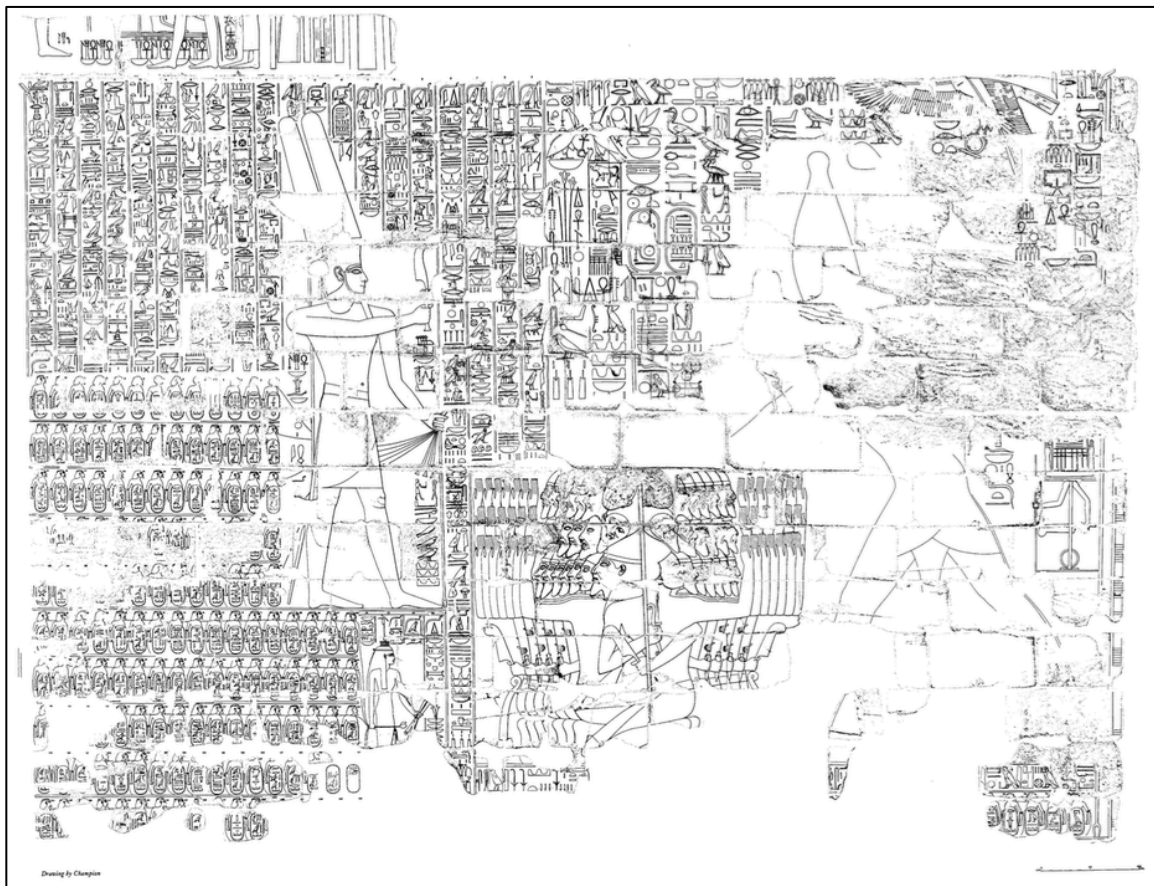


Figure 62b. Triumphal Relief of Shoshenq I from the Bubastite Portal at the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Reproduced from the Epigraphic Survey, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, *The Bubastite Portal: Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), Plate 3.

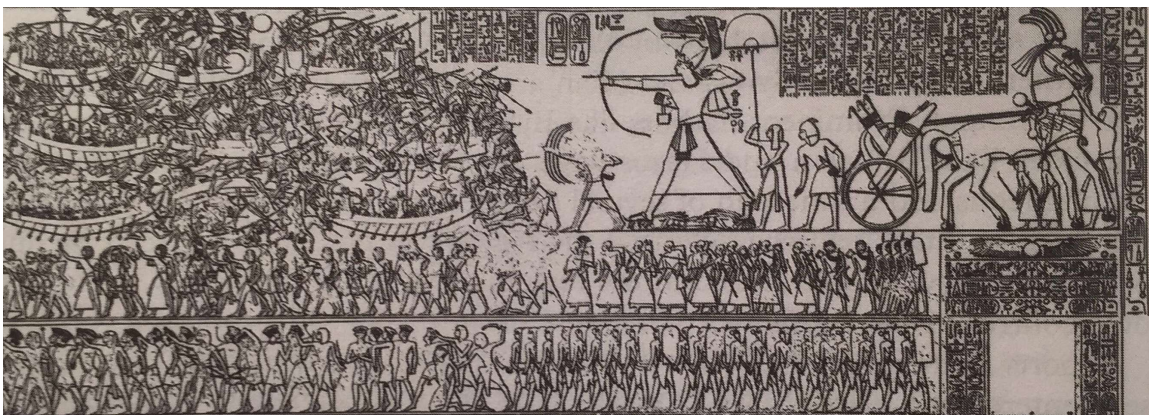


Figure 63. Ramses III's Battle against the Sea Peoples from His Temple at Medinet Habu. Reproduced from the Epigraphic Survey, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, *Medinet Habu*, Vol. 1, Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), Plate 36.



Figure 64. Detail of a Lion Running along with Ramses III's Chariot from his Temple at Medinet Habu. Reproduced from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), Tafel 114b.

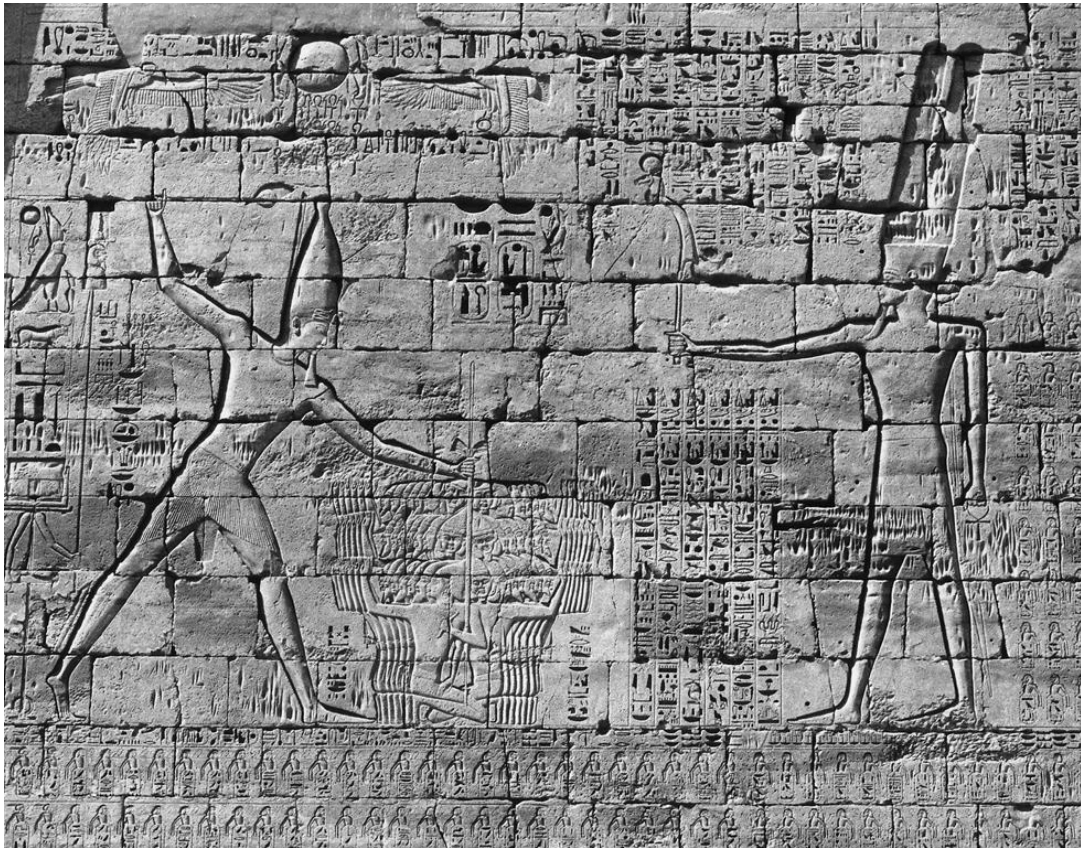


Figure 65. Triumphal Relief of Ramses III from the First Pylon of his Temple at Medinet Habu. Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed January 2, 2016).



Figure 66a. Ramses II's Southern Relief Stele from the Tenth Year of his Reign at Nahr el-Kalb, Lebanon. Photo courtesy of Jona Lendering © 2012. http://www.livius.org/na-nd/nahr_al-kalb/nahr_al-kalb.html (accessed on January 2, 2016).



Figure 66b. Line Drawing of Ramses II's Southern Relief Stele from the Tenth Year of his Reign at Nahr el-Kalb, Lebanon. Reproduced from Franz Heinrich Weissbach, *Die Denkmäler und Inschriften an der Mündung des Nahr-el-Kelb* (Berlin and Leipzig: Vereinigung wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1922), Figure 6.



Figure 67. Side-by-Side Relief Steles of Ramses II (left) and Esarhaddon (right) at Nahr el-Kalb, Lebanon. Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed January 2, 2016).



Figure 68. Esarhaddon's Relief Stele at Nahr el-Kalb, Lebanon. Reproduced from Franz Heinrich Weissbach, *Die Denkmäler und Inschriften an der Mündung des Nahr-el-Kelb* (Berlin and Leipzig: Vereinigung wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1922), Plate XI.

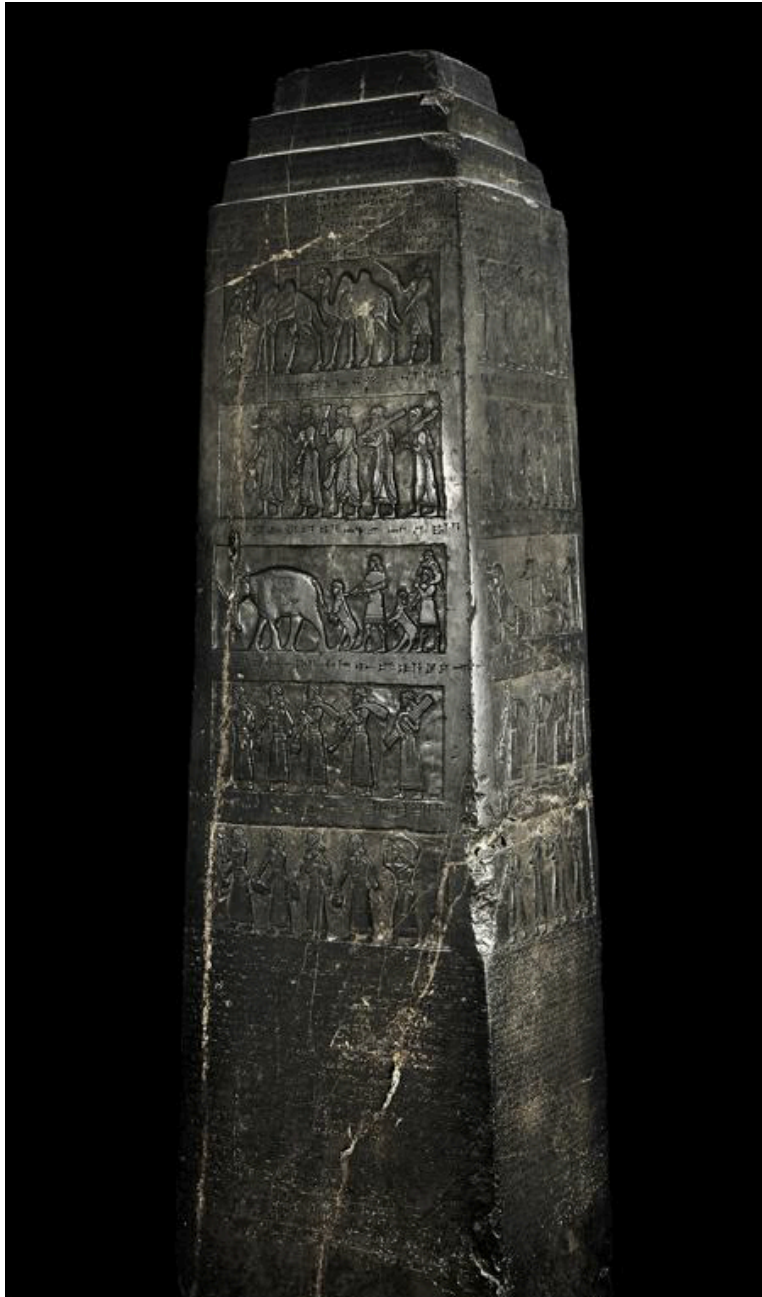


Figure 69. Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III in the British Museum, London. ME 118885. © Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed January 2, 2016).



Figure 70. Esarhaddon's Stele from Zinjirli, in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. VA2708. Photo courtesy of Jürgen Liepe © 2010. Reproduced from Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing), Figure 12.1.

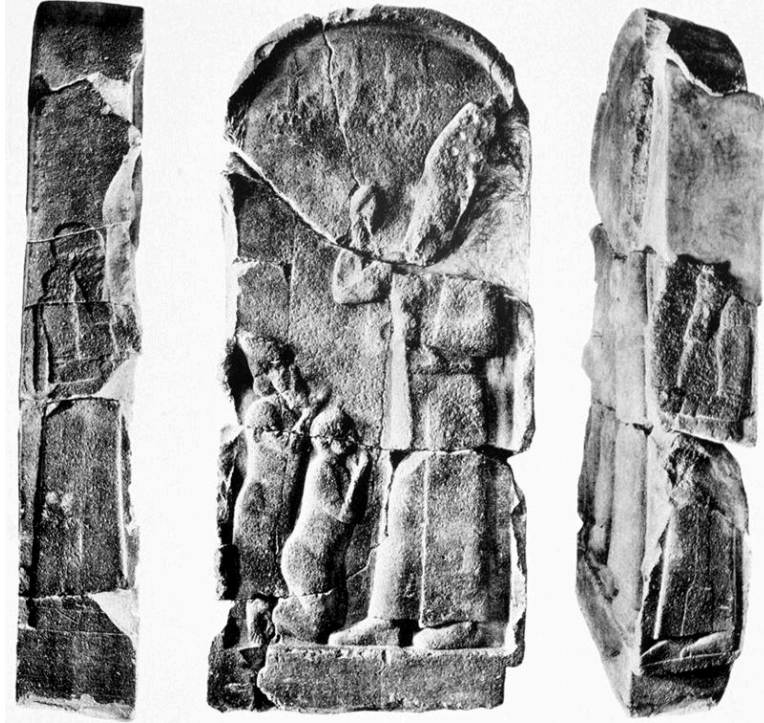


Figure 71. Stele A of Esarhaddon, Accompanied by his Sons Assurbanipal and Shamash-shuma-ukin, from Til Barsip, in the Aleppo Museum, Syria. Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed January 2, 2016).

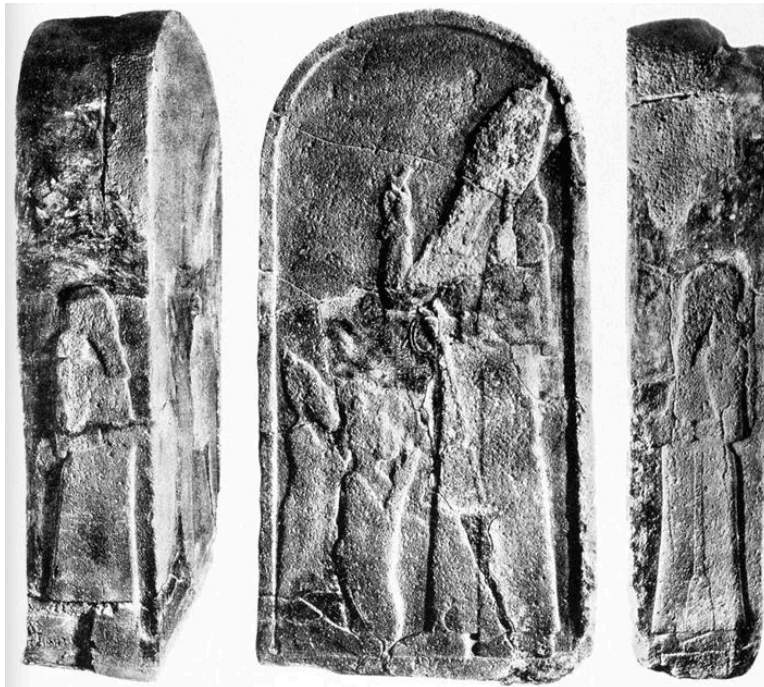


Figure 72. Stele B of Esarhaddon, Accompanied by his Sons Assurbanipal and Shamash-shuma-ukin, from Til Barsip, in the Aleppo Museum, Syria. Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (accessed January 2, 2016).



Figure 73. Assurbanipal's Battle of Til Tuba Reliefs from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, Room XXXIII, in the British Museum, London. ME 124801 a-c. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 74. Orthostat 3 of the Battle of Til Tuba Reliefs from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, Room XXXIII, in the British Museum, London. ME 124801 c. © Trustees of the British Museum.

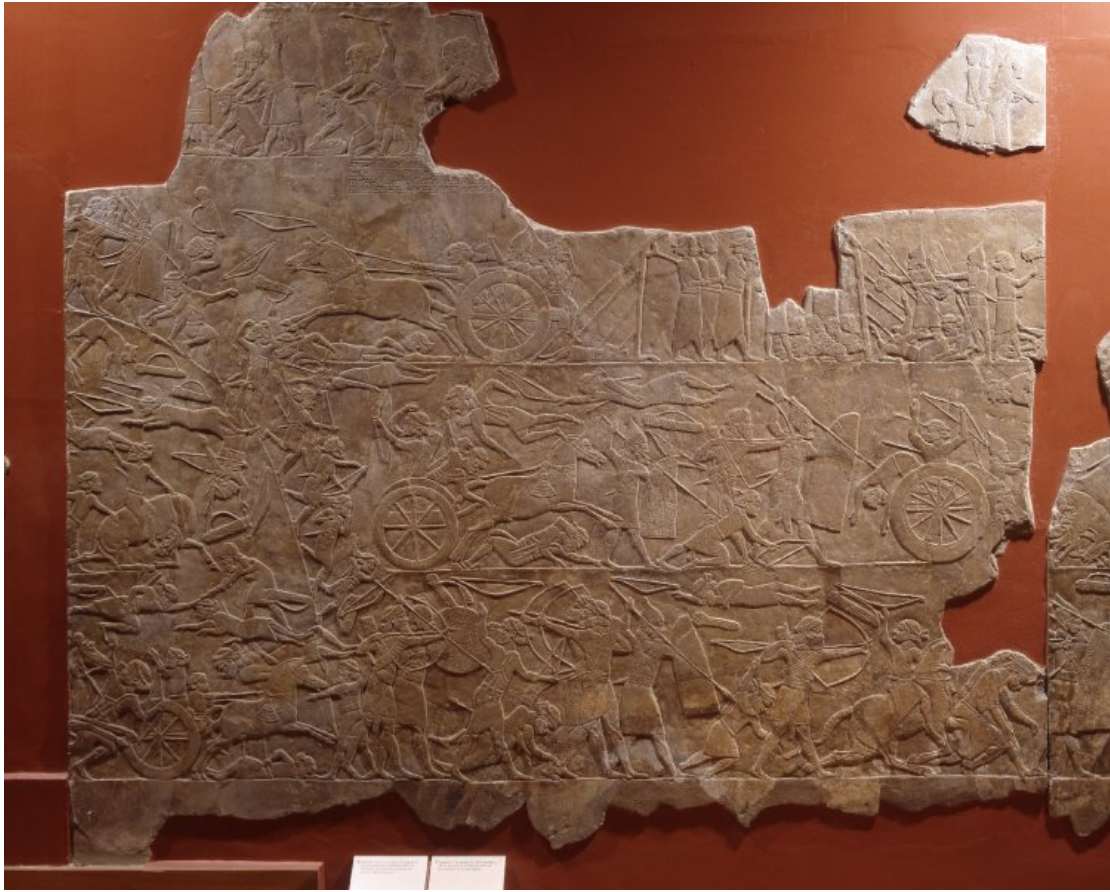


Figure 75. Orthostat 1 of the Battle of Til Tuba Reliefs from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, Room XXXIII, in the British Museum, London. ME 124801 a. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 76. Detail of Teumann's Upturned Chariot from Orthostat 2 of the Battle of Til Tuba Reliefs from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, Room XXXIII, in the British Museum, London. ME 124801 b. © Trustees of the British Museum.

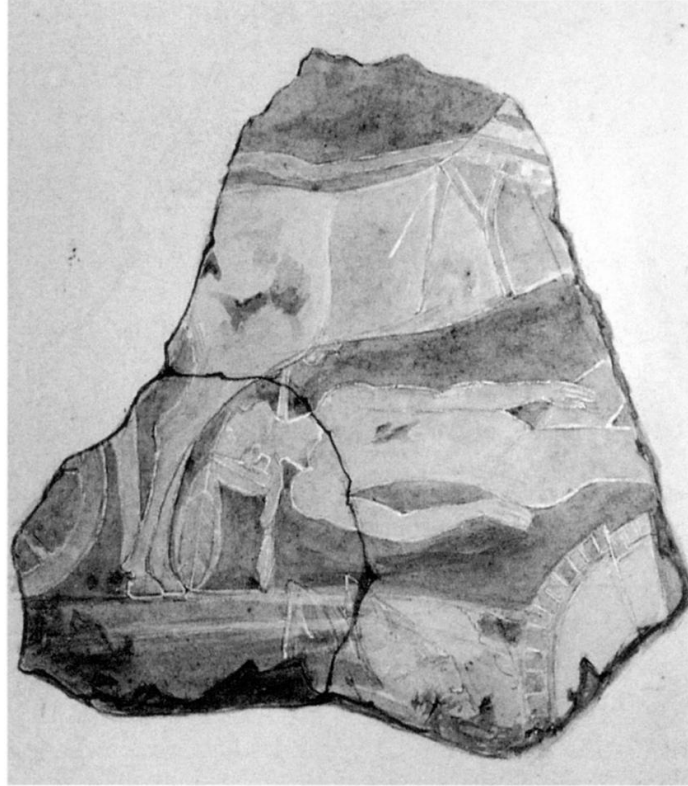


Figure 77. Detail of a Trampled Egyptian Soldier from Layard's Reproduction of a Glazed Brick Fragment from Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. Austin H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: British Museum Press, 1853), Plate 53: 3. Reproduced from David Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks from Nimrud: The Egyptian Campaign Depicted" *Iraq* 68 (2006): Figure 3a.



Figure 78. Detail of a Drowned Egyptian Soldier from Layard's Reproduction of a Glazed Brick Fragment from Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. Austin H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: British Museum Press, 1853), Plate 53: 1. Reproduced from David Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks from Nimrud: The Egyptian Campaign Depicted" *Iraq* 68 (2006): Figure 3b.

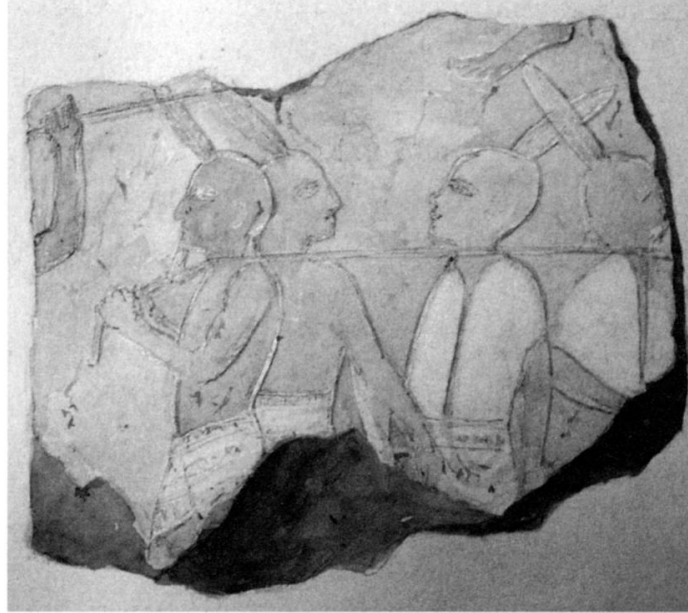


Figure 79. Detail of Egyptian Prisoners with Clean-shaven Heads and Feather Headdresses from Layard's Reproduction of a Glazed Brick Fragment from Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. Austin H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: British Museum Press, 1853), Plare 54: 7. Reproduced from David Nadali, "Esarhaddon's Glazed Bricks from Nimrud: The Egyptian Campaign Depicted," *Iraq* 68 (2006): Figure 2a.

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