



BRILL

Clay Tablets from Deir 'Alla, Jordan

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tun hätten; dies ist beim zweiten Wort besonders klar: mit der Ausnahme der unverständlichen (weil korrupt; man lese vermutlich *wehappārāšim*) Stelle Nah ii 4b ¹⁾ bezeichnet es immer nur sei es den betreffenden Baum, sei es das daraus geschlagene, hochwertige Bauholz ²⁾, und derselbe Tatbestand ist auch für das Akkadische und Aramäische feststellbar ³⁾. Für *keš* dagegen besteht die Wiedergabe mit "Musikinstrument" durchaus, wenn es sich auch um eine relativ späte und nicht um die häufigste handelt. Auch hier aber gibt es anscheinend keine sonstigen Parallelen.

Wenn wir also die musikalische Übersetzung unserer Stelle beibehalten wollen, und dies ist sowohl durch den Zusammenhang als auch wegen der Unzulänglichkeit der Parallelrezension gerechtfertigt, so bleiben uns zwei mögliche Arbeitshypothesen:

a) Wir lesen den reinen T. M. und übersetzen: "Und mit allen Klappern aus Wacholderholz. . . .";

b) oder wir verbessern mit der LXX, vgl. auch die Vg. *bike-lēi caṣēi berūšim* und übersetzen: "Mit Instrumenten aus Wacholderholz. . . .".

Rome

J. Alberto SOGGIN

¹⁾ Oder sollte man nicht auch hier die Möglichkeit in Betracht ziehen, dass der beschriebene Angriff durch das Spielen von Schlaginstrumenten begleitet worden sei? Doch dies dürfte zu weit gehen!

²⁾ Dafür verweise ich auf die Konkordanzen und Wörterbücher.

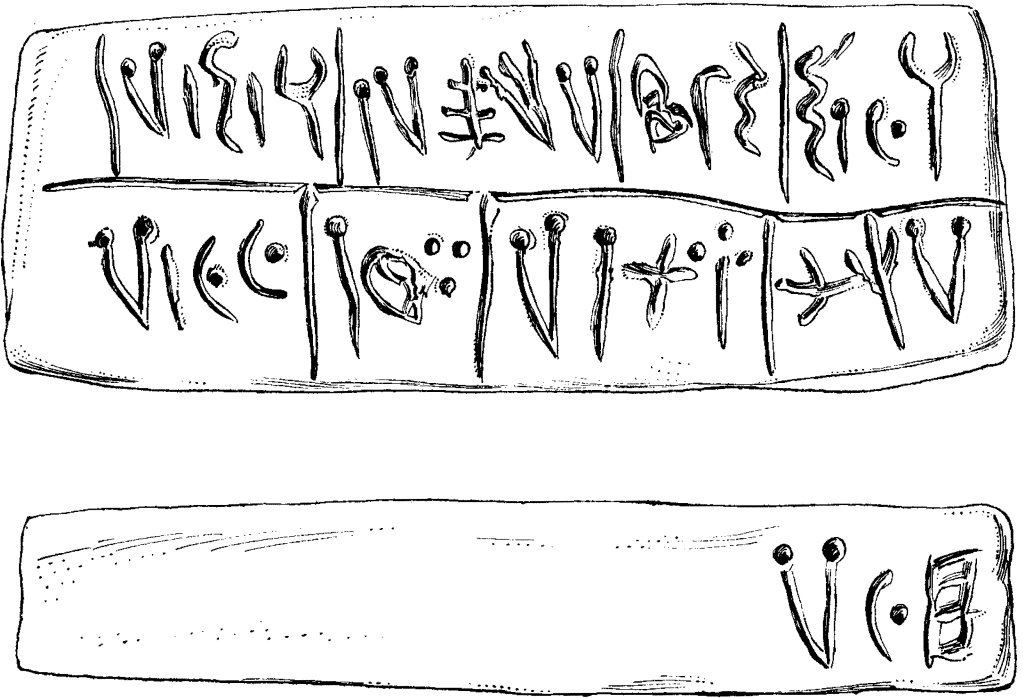
³⁾ Vgl. B. MEISSNER-W. VON SODEN, a.a.O. und J. LEWY, *Wörterbuch über Talmud und Midraš*, z. St.

CLAY TABLETS FROM DEIR 'ALLA, JORDAN

The 1964 season of excavations at Deir 'Alla had officially closed on April 1st when the exciting discovery of two inscribed tablets was made. The find occurred while cutting a trench to link the main excavation area to the Late Bronze Age rooms already opened up further east on the tell in the 1961 season (cf. *V.T.* 1961 Oct. p. 361).

The archaeological context of this find and that of the subsequent tablet which was found two days later will be described fully in the next issue of *V.T.* when the annual report of the excavation is made. Suffice it to say in this note that some eight meters east of the Late Bronze Age sanctuary two rooms were opened up both of which were full of pottery clearly associated with the latest sanctuary. These rooms and the sanctuary were destroyed by earthquake shortly after 1200 B.C. This date is based on the attribution to Queen Taousert of

a cartouche on a faience vase found on the sanctuary floor (cf. *V.T.* 1962, Oct. pp. 378 sq., 464 sq.). The pottery evidence confirms this date. Stratigraphically the find spots of the tablets are to be equated with the sanctuary floor level and they are therefore to be dated to



the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 12th. The additional find of a tablet which had been crushed in the hand of the scribe and thrown away makes it highly probable that the tablets were written in Deir 'Alla.

The first tablet (Reg. no. 1440) is in mint condition (Pl. 1) being written in clear deeply incised characters, on a well smoothed surface. The tablet measures $13 \times 5 \times 2$ cms and the text is divided in two registers with dividing lines between the "words". There are nine groups of letters, one written on the right hand corner of the front side of the tablet.

The second and third tablets (Reg. no. 1441 and 1449) are less well preserved. Their writing is finer and less deeply impressed. No. 1441 is smaller than no. 1440 and it appears that the lower register should be read by turning the tablet upside down. This tablet bears the clear



impress of the scribe's left thumb and three fingers, thus showing how it was held when written and suggesting that the text should be read from right to left at least in this tablet. No. 1449 has lost the



top surface entirely having fallen against a stone on the edge of an earthquake crack. However here too one side had been inscribed and six "words" have been legibly preserved.

These three tablets bear a hitherto unknown type of early and most probably alphabetic script. While some letters have affinities with the Phoenician Byblos script of Aḥiram, there is probably a South Semitic element in this writing. The author of this note hopes that subscribers to *Vetus Testamentum* will appreciate the difficulty of getting out anything more definite in a note written a fortnight after the find, while still in the field and far from libraries and leisure. He acknowledges with pleasure his gratitude to Père DE VAUX, Prof. LAPP, G. LANKESTER HARDING and Prof. DE BOER for suggestions and help both at the spot and telegraphically.

Deir 'Alla 14-4-1964

H. J. FRANKEN