Khirbet Qeiyafa: An Unsensational Archaeological and Historical Interpretation

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The article deals with the finds at the late Iron I settlement of Khirbet Qeiyafa, a site overlooking the Valley of Elah in the Shephelah. It points out the methodological shortcomings in both field work and interpretation of the finds. It then turns to several issues related to the finds: the identity of the inhabitants, their territorial affiliation and the possibility of identifying Khirbet Qeiyafa with sites mentioned in the Bible and in the Shoshenq I list.

Keywords: Khirbet Qeiyafa, Casemate walls, Saul, Shoshenq I, Gob, Gibeon

Garfinkel and Ganor have been excavating the site of Khirbet Qeiyafa, overlooking the Valley of Elah in the Shephelah, since 2007, and their work has attracted much attention in the scholarly community. They presented preliminary results very shortly after the beginning of the dig (Garfinkel and Ganor 2008a) and have now published a final report of the 2007–2008 season (Garfinkel and Ganor 2009, hereafter Qeiyafa 1). Short summaries of the results of the 2009–2010 season have also been presented (Garfinkel et al. 2009; Garfinkel, Ganor and Hasel 2011a). Additional studies have dealt with the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon (Misgav, Garfinkel and Ganor 2009; Yardeni 2009; Demsky 2009; Ahituv 2009; Galil 2009; Puech 2010; Rollston 2011; Millard 2011), the identification of the site (Na’aman 2008a; 2008b; Garfinkel and Ganor 2008b), its relative and absolute dating (Singer-Avitz 2010; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010a respectively) and with general issues related to the excavation (Dagan 2009 with a reply by Garfinkel and Ganor 2010; Garfinkel 2011a; 2011b; Garfinkel, Ganor and Hasel 2010; 2011a; 2011b).

Khirbet Qeiyafa features four main occupational phases, dating to the Middle Bronze Age, the late Iron Age I, the late Persian period\(^1\) and the Hellenistic period. The second

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\(^1\) The pottery and coins that have thus far been published date this phase to the first decades of the 4th century BCE (Fantalkin and Tal 2012: 11–12) rather than to the early Hellenistic period as argued by the excavators.
and third phases represent the main stages of activity at the site. Regarding the Iron Age phase, the excavators present five main arguments:

- **Date:** They claim that the site dates to the early Iron IIA, ca. 1025–975 BCE. The \(^{14}\text{C} \) determinations from the site show that the ceramic typology transition from the late Iron I to the early Iron IIA took place in the late 11th century BCE and thus proves the Low Chronology wrong.

- **Construction:** They assert that the Iron Age settlement features a massive casemate wall and two gates—one in the west and one in the south. The casemate wall and the belt of houses abutting it are the earliest known example of such a city-plan, a precursor of urban planning in Judahite cities of the Iron IIB in the 8th century BCE.

- **Site identification:** They allege that the site should be identified with the town of Shaaraim, mentioned in the Bible in connection with the combat between David and Goliath (1 Sam 17:52), in the list of towns of Judah (Josh 15:36) and in the genealogical list of Simeon (1 Chr 4:31). All three texts describe 10th century BCE realities.

- **Identity of the inhabitants:** They maintain that the inhabitants of the site were Judahites. Khirbet Qeiyafa was a Judahite stronghold on the border with the Philistines.

- **State formation:** It is their belief that Jerusalem, Hebron and Khirbet Qeiyafa were the main centres of Judah in the time of King David. A late proto-Canaanite ostracon found at the site was written in Hebrew and attests to a writing tradition (including documentation of historical events) in Judah as early as the beginning of the 10th century BCE.

In what follows we focus on the late Iron I phase at the site and present a different interpretation of the finds.

### Comments on the excavators’ field work method

Modern archaeology calls for a slow, clean operation, with emphasis on stratigraphic details. It is doubtful whether the Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations comply with these requirements. The photograph in Figure 1 (Square N-O33-32, looking south) speaks for itself: It shows a large number of volunteers at work, with almost no sections, and most important—a ditch cut along the inner side of the inner line of the casemate wall, severing any possible close-to-the-surface connection between the fortification and elements next to it; had there been a feeble earth floor close to the surface of the site, it would not have been detected and the relationship between it and the fortification would have been impossible to verify.

The fact that the site is being dug in haste is well-documented by the excavators: in a two-week excavation season in 2007 the dig reached bedrock in two squares along the casemate wall (O-N/32–Qeiyafa 1: 69, Fig. 5.3). The published sections from these squares (e.g., Qeiyafa 1: 277, lowest section, 279, two upper sections) indicate that in these two weeks the excavation penetrated up to 2.5 m, a pace of over 1.25 m per week. As a matter of comparison, in Area K at Megiddo a depth of ca. 4 m was reached in 46 excavation weeks, an average of less than 10 cm per week. Though Megiddo is characterized by a thick stratigraphy, whereas much of the accumulation at Khirbet Qeiyafa features fills,
the comparison is instructive for understanding the difficulty (impossibility?) of tracking minute stratigraphic features—for instance abandoned living surfaces with no pottery on them—in such a hasty operation. Neither do restoration work carried out at the same time as digging (see below) and massive use of a bulldozer promote accuracy.

This is especially critical at Khirbet Qeiyafa—a typical hilly site (a summit and its slopes), where bedrock is sometimes exposed close to the surface. The bedrock slopes quite steeply (in Area B of the excavation it drops 4 m in just 15–20 m—a 20% gradient; Qeiyafa 1: 75, 78–79, and see 85, Fig. 5.41 and sections on pp. 276–278) and unevenly, featuring humps, cavities and depressions (see, e.g., the northern side [left] in the aerial photograph in Garfinkel et al. 2009: 216). According to the excavators, “the bedrock itself usually serves as the floor level on the site [of the late Iron I–I.F. and A.F.], instead of the typical fine levels with ash and house debris” (Qeiyafa 1: 85).

Major filling and levelling operations took place at the site in post-Iron Age times. The pictures of the baulks in Area B show a typical fill in a hilly area, which includes stones, remains of the old settlement and earth (e.g., Qeiyafa 1: 21, Fig. 2.3, 289, Fig. 16.23). Two late Hellenistic coins were found in this area about 1.5 m below topsoil (Qeiyafa 1: 80) and Persian (and in some places Hellenistic) pottery was found deep in all squares, in some of them all the way or almost all the way down to bedrock (see, e.g., Qeiyafa 1: 277, 278, third section from top). Furthermore, 11 of the loci described in the list at the end of the report (Qeiyafa 1: 298–304) as dating to the “Iron Age IIA” also yielded late Persian (or late Persian and Hellenistic) pottery (Sandhaus 2009).

The space inside the casemates should be viewed accordingly (Qeiyafa 1: 88, Figs. 5.48: 96, 5.75: 95). In this case, too, late Persian (or late Persian and Hellenistic) material was
found in the entire depth. Two olive pits that provided a calibrated $^{14}$C date in the second half of the 4th century BCE and in the Iron Age were found on (or close to) bedrock in Casemate 214, under two olive pits that gave dates in the Middle Bronze Age (Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010a). Late Persian pottery was retrieved from the accumulation of stones inside this casemate all the way down to bedrock (Qeiyafa 1: 277, second section from bottom, Locus B189, 279 top section, Locii B189, B198a).

It goes without saying that such a difficult stratigraphic situation can be properly interpreted only in a meticulous excavation.

**Date: relative and absolute**

Singer-Avitz (2010) demonstrated that the pottery assemblage assigned by the excavators to the early Iron IIA should, in fact, be labelled as late Iron I (contra Garfinkel et al. 2011a: 190–191). The excavators of nearby Beth-Shemesh are of the same opinion, comparing the Khirbet Qeiyafa assemblage to the pottery of their Level 4, which closes the late Iron I sequence at the site (McCarter, Bunimovitz and Lederman 2011: 189).

Finkelstein and Piasetzky (2010a) explained why averaging the $^{14}$C determinations from Khirbet Qeiyafa (some of which did not come from clean contexts) is an erroneous procedure: averaging is legitimate only when one can safely assume that the samples originated from the same event. The Khirbet Qeiyafa results can only indicate the span of activity at the settlement—between the second half of the 11th century and the 10th century, no later than 915 BCE (Fig. 3, including the two additional determinations published by Higham et al. in press, which are in line with the older ones). This means that the $^{14}$C results from Khirbet Qeiyafa correspond to many determinations published in the last few years that put the transition from the late Iron I to the early Iron IIA not-too-late in the second half of the 10th century BCE (Fig. 2; for an update, see Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2011).2 In other words, Khirbet Qeiyafa has no bearing on the Iron Age chronology debate.3

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2 Two statements of the excavators of Khirbet Qeiyafa regarding radiocarbon results obtained before their work at this site should be corrected. (1) They claim that samples for $^{14}$C dating Iron Age strata were taken mainly from northern sites (e.g., Qeiyafa 1: 15; Garfinkel et al. 2011a: 188). Yet, samples from the southern sites of Lachish, Tel Zayit, Tell es-Säfi, Tel Miqne, Beth-Shemesh, Tel Aphek, Tel Qasile and Atar Haroa (in the Negev Highlands) were included in the Iron Age models (Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010b); they comply with the results from northern sites. (2) In their opinion, one cannot fix the beginning of the Iron IIA by dating samples taken from strata that belong to the later stage of this period. Yet, the models (ibid.) include the early Iron IIA strata of Dor D2/8c, Lachish V, Rehov VI and Atar Haroa. Unpublished dates from early Iron IIA Megiddo H-7 and Q-5 (Stratum VB of the University of Chicago excavations) comply with these dates.

3 Garfinkel et al. (2011a: 191) report the finding of black juglets at the site. Thus far, black juglets have not been found in late Iron I strata. Assuming that this is the case (so far they have not been presented), this may hint that the settlement was established in the late Iron I and ended in a transitional late Iron I/early Iron IIA phase, which post-dates classical late Iron I settlements such as Tel Qasile X and Beth-Shemesh 4 and pre-dates classic early Iron IIA settlements such as Lachish V and Arad XII (and thus, for the time being, this phase is unknown at any other site). This, too, has no bearing on the chronology debate; according to the latest $^{14}$C determinations (Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010b) the site could have been destroyed/abandoned in the second half of the 10th century, that is, in the very early Iron IIA.
Construction

The casemate-wall

The casemate system dates to the late Iron I and is the most elaborate such fortification from this relatively early period found thus far in the southern Levant. Presenting it as matchless, however, is incorrect. Casemate-style walls had already been introduced during the Middle Bronze Age IIC (Burke 2008: 61–63). A fully developed casemate wall from the later part of the Late Bronze Age has recently been discovered in Stratum 6 at Tell Zerā‘a in Jordan (Vieweger and Häser 2010).

Casemate-like fortifications are known in middle Iron I Tell el-Umeiri (Herr and Clark 2009; for the date, see Finkelstein 2011a) and in Khirbet ed-Dawwara northeast of Jerusalem, which was built in the middle-to-late Iron I (Finkelstein 1990; more on this region below). More elaborate casemate walls are known at several late Iron I sites in Moab—el-Lehun, Khirbet Mudeyine Mu‘arrajeh, Khirbet Mudeyine Aliya and Khirbet el-Mu‘ammariyya (Homès-Fredericq 1997; Olavari 1977/78; Routledge 2000; Ninow 2004 respectively; for the phenomenon, see Finkelstein and Lipschits 2010). An early Iron IIA casemate fortification was unearthed at Tell en-Nasbeh (for the date, see Finkelstein...
2012). The Khirbet Qeiyafa casemate wall has its roots in a well-established tradition of fortified sites that seems to have originated in the northern part of the country (see below).

**Excursus I: The problem with the ‘Hellenistic city-wall’**

According to the excavators, in the Hellenistic period a new, solid city-wall, between 1.1 and 2 m in width, was built over the casemate wall (Garfinkel and Ganor 2009: 76, Fig. 5.18).

Y. Dagan (2009) suggested that this “Hellenistic wall” was a modern fence that was constructed in the first half of the 20th century. He based this observation on two arguments: (1) Inspector of Antiquities Baramky, who visited the site in 1932, described ruins on the summit of the hill (pictures in Qeiyafa 1: 5, 30, 110–111) without any reference to the imposing peripheral wall; (2) testimony of a villager from the nearby village of Beit Natif, that in his childhood days a family from the village purchased the land of Khirbet Qeiyafa and prepared it for planting an orchard and for habitation. One should add a third argument (observed by N. Na’aman): the surrounding wall in question gives the ruin an impressive silhouette that can be seen from afar, including the main road in the Valley of Elah (picture in Qeiyafa 1: 27, Fig. 3.4). The fact that none of the scholars who criss-crossed Palestine in the early 20th century in search of biblical sites—such as Gustav Dalman, Albrecht Alt and William Foxwell Albright—mention the site⁴ lends support to Dagan’s observation that the wall was built after 1932.

Indeed, the surrounding wall (at least its upper courses) is constructed as a modern stone fence built in haste rather than an old fortification system (Fig. 4): first, it does not have a uniform width (in Area B it changes from ca. 1.1 to ca. 2 m in a 20 m-long section –Qeiyafa 1: 76, Fig. 5.18). Second, it is sloppily built, with no real courses and with no

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⁴ Not to mention Bliss and Macalister, who, in 1898–1900, excavated Tell Zakariyeh (Azekah), overlooking Khirbet Qeiyafa.
attempt to close gaps between the stones and/or pseudo courses (pictures in Qeiyafa 1: 30, 110–111). Third, a picture of a section cut through the wall (Qeiyafa 1: 78, Fig. 5.21) shows that both its faces lean inward rather than stand upright (compared to the upright position of the outer faces of the casemate wall).5

All this does not present a problem for interpreting the history of the site, as the casemate wall could have continued to be in use in the Hellenistic period, as indeed hinted at by the finds (Garfinkel et al. 2009).

The western gate

The western gate area, including the gate chambers (see Qeiyafa 1: Figs. 5.30 and 5.33), yielded late Persian pottery and coins. All three oldest coins found at the site were retrieved from the gate’s passageway (Farhi 2009: 238). In addition, there are several indications for a Hellenistic construction phase in the gate. First, Hellenistic Tabun B245 was built over one of the walls of the gate in Square R31 (Qeiyafa 1: 80, Fig. 5.24, 83, Fig. 5.34a–b); in other words, when the tabun was built, the southeastern chamber of the gate went out of use. Two Alexander Jannaeus coins were found in the vicinity of this tabun. Second, Installation B246 in the northeastern chamber of the gate may have been added at a later stage in the life of the gate. Third, at a certain stage, the gate’s entrance was blocked; the southern chambers of the gate were also blocked, possibly at the same time (Qeiyafa 1: 82, Fig. 5.31). The blockage of the gate shows more than one construction phase (Qeiyafa 1: 81, Fig. 5.25).

The idea that the western gate was originally constructed in the Iron Age is based on four arguments:

1. The entrances to the casemates change orientation at this spot: they are located on the northern side of the casemates unearthed to the north of the gate and on the southern side of the casemates found to the south of the gate.
2. The excavators reported a thin Iron Age layer in the gate passageway (Qeiyafa 1: 91), but no details were given.
3. They argue that in the gate area two periods of activity—in the Iron Age and the Hellenistic period—are represented by two drainage channels (e.g., Qeiyafa 1: 81, Fig. 5.25) and two thresholds. They state that the northern drain (B282) was found below the above-mentioned thin Iron Age layer (Qeiyafa 1: 91) and that the cover-stones of the Hellenistic drain (B244) are higher than the original floor of the gate.

Drain B282 was opened along 1 m and Iron Age finds were retrieved from it (Qeiyafa 1: 217). Drain B244 yielded Hellenistic pottery.

Sherds found inside drains are probably residual of what had been washed through them and hence cannot be taken as an indication for the original period of construction. The cover-stones of the two drains are indeed laid in slightly different levels.6 But more noteworthy is the fact that the large lower threshold of the gate is not stretched across the

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5 Incidentally, the blockage of the western gate, dated by the excavators to the Hellenistic period, is built differently, in a more solid construction (Qeiyafa 1: 92, Fig. 5.61; 96, Fig. 5.72; compare the two sections on the right and left in 107, Fig. 5.111).

6 From east to west, 321.71, 321.45 and 321.16 for the cover-stones of Drain B282, versus 321.89, 321.51 and 321.70 for the cover-stones of Drain B244.
full width of the entryway; rather, a space of ca. 0.4–0.5 m was left on both sides, between
the gate’s outer piers and the threshold. These spaces perfectly fit the course of the two
drains; had there been only one drain, why leave space on both sides of the threshold?

The thresholds, too, present several problems. The original, monolithic threshold
(Qeiyafa 1: 113, Figs. 5.119 and 5.120, 114: Fig. 5.121) seems to be dislocated, as it would
make the doors close on the outer side of the outer piers—which would render the gate
vulnerable (noted by Ze’ev Herzog during a visit to the site; see pictures in Qeiyafa 1:
114, Fig. 5.121, 115). The practice with Iron Age gates was to close the gate on the inner
side of the outer piers (see plans in Herzog 1986: 89, 97, 100, 136, 138, 140, 144, 146,
149—preserved door sockets are marked in blackened circle). Therefore, the threshold
may be a reused one, not in its original location. The excavators’ later threshold is made
of several large stones (Qeiyafa 1: 80, Fig. 5.24, 112, Fig. 5.117). Comparing the pictures
of the gate before and after the removal of the blockage (Qeiyafa 1: 81, Fig. 5.25, and
Qeiyafa 1: 112, Fig. 5.117 respectively) raises the possibility that the ‘upper threshold’ is
no more than the lower course of the blockage system (No. 3 in the first picture).

To sum up this issue, an Iron Age gate (with the lower threshold in a proper place)
must indeed have been located here. It could have been severely damaged, or much of it
could have been thoroughly cleaned and reused in the Hellenistic period. In any event,
the gate as seen today seems to belong to a post-Iron Age phase at the site.

The ‘southern gate’
The excavators identified a second, ‘southern gate’, according to two very large boulders
observed on the outside of the casemate wall (Qeiyafa 1: 110–111, Figs. 5.113–5.116).
This area was then excavated (Garfinkel et al. 2009: 218). The excavators describe a
late Iron I layer to the east of the gate and evidence for “extensive Hellenistic building
activities” over the gate. A four-chambered gate was restored in this area immediately after the excavation. A detailed description of the ‘southern gate’ has not yet been published.

In this case, too, the layout of the entrances into the casemates (on the western end of the casemates located to the west of this spot and on the eastern end of the casemates to the east) hint at the existence of a gate. But examining the aerial photographs of the remains at the end of the dig (Garfinkel et al. 2009: 219, Fig. 5 here) versus the aerial photograph of the gate after restoration (Fig. 6), and looking at the remains in the field, reveals a more complicated story.

First, the restoration of the gate goes far beyond the actual data uncovered during the excavation: evidence for some of the piers of the gate is lacking; in the eastern wing of the gate the central pier is restored from a wall that blocks the gate’s entryway; and in the western wing the inner (northern) pier does not exist and the central pier is restored from a short stub.

Second, the supposed gate was erected over rock-cut and built installations: rock-cut cup-marks can be seen in the southeastern ‘chamber’, near the passageway of the restored gate. Likewise, the northwestern sector of the restored gate is built over installations and cup-marks that can be seen in the aerial photograph of the area taken at the end of the excavation; most do not exist in the restored gate. The central pier of the eastern wing seems to have been built over what looks like another installation. Had there been a four-entry gate here, it was built over installations that should then be dated to the Middle Bronze Age, or to an early phase of the late Iron I settlement. This case, too, demonstrates how the hasty, less-than-meticulous excavation impeded full understanding of the stratigraphy and history of occupation at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

Can Khirbet Qeiyafa be identified?

Garfinkel and Ganor first suggested identifying Khirbet Qeiyafa with biblical Azekah, probably tending (wrongly) to then date the pottery of the site to the Iron IIB–C. That Tell Zakariyeh is Azekah is a certainty.

Later, based on their interpretation of the site as having been fortified and equipped with two gates, they proposed identifying it with Shaaraim (according to them, Hebrew for “two gates”; Qeiyafa 1: 8–10; for criticism on this proposal, including the interpretation of the name, see Na’aman 2008a), a place mentioned three times in the Hebrew Bible. In 1 Sam 17:52, after David kills Goliath, the Israelites chase the Philistines “as far as Gath [Gk; Heb. Gai] and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron”. In the list of the towns of Judah (Josh 15:36), Shaaraim appears in the group of towns of the northern Shephelah (the valleys of Nahal

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8 Shaaraim of 1 Chr 4:31 appears in the genealogy of Simeon, which includes sites located farther to the south, and which may reflect realities closer to the time of the author, in post-exilic times.
Figure 5  Aerial photograph of the ‘southern gate’ (Garfinkel et al. 2009: 219).

Figure 6  Aerial photograph of the ‘southern gate’ after restoration (courtesy of Yosef Garfinkel).
Sorek and Nahal Elah), together with well-identified sites such as Eshtaol, Zorah, Zanoah, Adullam, Socoh and Azekah.

The basis of Garfinkel and Ganor’s identification is their conviction that every biblical text reflects the time it ostensibly describes. Consequently, they read 1 Sam 17 and Josh 15 as depicting an 11th or an early 10th century BCE reality: “Our suggested identification of Khirbet Qeiyafa as biblical Shaaraim, a city that is mentioned in the Bible in a historical context only in the late eleventh century BCE [emphasis ours—I.F. and A.F.], has far reaching implications for the biblical texts relating to the period of King David” (Qeiyafa 1: VII). And again: “Both the biblical narrative and the radiometric results from the site provide a date in the early 10th century BCE” (Qeiyafa 1: 12, 14). They even see a 10th century BCE reality in the genealogical list of Simeon in 1 Chr 4: “Generally neglected by scholars is the appearance of the words ‘until the reign of David’, only in the version of the list in 1 Chronicles 4, immediately adjacent to the name Shaaraim. This indicates that Shaaraim was closely associated with King David” (Qeiyafa 1: 10). This uncritical attitude to the text expresses a 21st century relic of the pre-Spinoza approach to the Hebrew Bible.

The two sources that mention Shaaraim—1 Sam 17:52 and Josh 15:36—depict late Iron II realities. Especially important is Josh 15, which—as indicated by both text-criticism and archaeology—represents the administrative organization of Judah in the late 7th century BCE (Alt 1925; Na’aman 1991). While one can argue that 1 Sam 17:52 preserves an ancient toponym, Josh 15:36 certainly cannot be read against the background of a 10th century site that does not include continuous activity in late-monarchic times. Moreover, from the strictly geographical perspective, it is clear that Shaaraim must be located between the Valley of Elah and the Philistine cities of Gath and Ekron, probably in the lower Elah brook area (Dagan 2009), hence the meaning of the name, referring to the approaches of Judah (Na’aman 2008a).

Na’aman (2008b) proposed identifying Qeiyafa with Gob, mentioned twice (2 Sam 21:18–19; or three times—verse 16 there) in reference to heroic acts against the Philistines. Needless to say, this suggestion cannot be verified; still, it is appealing for two reasons:

(1) These stories form an early layer in Samuel, which may depict old traditions related to the time of the founder of the Davidic Dynasty (Isser 2003; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 53–57). Indeed, Gob is not mentioned in the detailed list of 7th century BCE towns of Judah in Josh 15.11

(2) It would provide the missing toponym—the place of encampment of the Israelites—in the 1 Sam 17 account (see below).

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9 Galil’s (2009) proposal to identify the site with Netaim of the genealogy of Judah (1 Chr 4:23) is not discussed here as this late material cannot be taken as reflecting 10th century BCE realities.

10 Na’aman (2008b: 5) sees Gob as a Philistine stronghold. This is not required by 2 Sam 21:18–19, while 2 Sam 21:16 is too garbled to reach a conclusion.

11 This makes Garsiel’s main arguments against Na’aman’s identification (2011)—that Gob is not mentioned in any other biblical source and that it is illogical that three battles occurred in one place—invalid.
Identity of the inhabitants and the territorial affiliation of the site

Khirbet Qeiyafa overlooks the western entrance to the Valley of Elah, 10 km east of Tell es-Sāfi, the location of Philistine Gath, and 37 km as the crow flies to the southwest of Jerusalem (Fig. 7). As indicated in the title of this section, there are two questions here: the identity of the inhabitants and their territorial-political association.

Who were the inhabitants of Khirbet Qeiyafa?

Assigning identity to the inhabitants of an early Iron Age site solely on the basis of the archaeological record is notoriously difficult, as most traits can be interpreted in more than one way (e.g., Finkelstein 1997; Dever 2003; Faust 2006). The people who lived at Khirbet Qeiyafa could have considered themselves affiliated with the population of the highlands to the east, and in this case they may be seen as Judahites/Israelites; with the local people of the Shephelah—late Canaanite of sorts; or with the people of the lowlands in the west, that is, with the mix of late Canaanite and Philistine population characteristic of this region.12

The finds at Khirbet Qeiyafa do not provide a clear-cut answer to this question. Kehati (2009: 207) and the excavators (Garfinkel, Ganor and Hasel 2010: 46; Garfinkel 2011a: 51) called attention to the lack of pig bones as indicating an Israelite identity of the inhabitants. The absence of pig bones from the faunal assemblage (Kehati 2009) is similar to the situation in (proto-) Israelite highlands sites such as Shiloh, Mt. Ebal and Khirbet Raddana, and different from the situation in the main centres of the southern Coastal Plain (Ashkelon, Tel Miqne and Tell es-Sāfi), in which the ratio of pig bones is exceptionally high (Hesse 1990: 216; Kehati 2009). Several years ago this would indeed have been interpreted as indicating Israelite identity (Finkelstein 1997). Yet, recent archaeozoological research has proven the picture to be more complicated. A lack of pig bones also characterizes the site of Beth-Shemesh in the Shephelah, located six km to the north of Khirbet Qeiyafa (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2009: 123–124). Pig bones are also rare at Iron I sites in other, non-Israelite inland sites in the lowlands, such as Megiddo and Aphek (Sasson in press; Kolska Horwitz 2009: 549 respectively; for additional data see already Hesse 1990: 211). Hence, although this characteristic may hint at highlands affiliation of the population, a lowlands late-Canaanite identity of the people who lived in late Iron I Khirbet Qeiyafa (similar to that of Beth-Shemesh) cannot be ruled out.

The pottery assemblage of the site (Kang and Garfinkel 2009a; 2009b) is typical of a settlement in this location—the Shephelah between the Coastal Plain and the highlands (Singer-Avitz 2010). It shows certain Western traits, mainly in the appearance of Ashdod ware vessels (Kang and Garfinkel 2009b); it lacks other Western traits, mainly late-Philistine forms such as the ones known from Stratum X at Tel Qasile; and similar to the situation at other sites in the Shephelah, it lacks forms popular in the highlands.

12 The numismatic evidence from Khirbet Qeiyafa of the late Persian period (Farhi 2009) exhibits the same characteristics—a meeting point of two minting authorities (Philistia and Judah). This feature is rarely documented at other Palestinian sites (Fantalkin and Tal 2012: 12, n. 29).
such as collared-rim jars. In short, the pottery only points to the obvious—the specific location of the site between the highlands and the Coastal Plain. The excavators refer to the fact that the pottery at Khirbet Qeiyafa was “mostly locally made” (Qeiyafa 1: 14) as an indication of its being Judahite. In fact, the pottery is typical of the brown soils that appear in the area of Khirbet Qeiyafa but also to its west, and of soils that are typical of the southwestern Shephelah and the southern Coastal Plain (Ben-Shlomo 2009, see especially Table 8.2). Obviously, the inhabitants of Khirbet Qeiyafa must have obtained the vessels for their every-day use from nearby workshops. The Valley of Elah area may have been the location of workshops that produced the later lmlk storage jars (Goren et al. 2004: 284–285); production in this area could have been an older tradition.

The language of the late proto-Canaanite ostracon found at the site was identified by Misgav et al. (2009) as Hebrew. Yardeni believed that the language is uncertain, “perhaps Hebrew” (2009: 259–260). Ahituv (2009) noted that the inscription may have been written in Hebrew. Demsky went the extra mile and argued that “the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon joins other epigraphic finds that shed light on the basic and formal education in Early Israel...it also exemplifies the educational curriculum, in bringing a list of terms of divine and human authority...” (2009: 128). Galil (2009) took the maximalist view, arguing that the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon was written in Hebrew in the late Canaanite script, and that it proves the ability of Israelite scribes to compose complex literary texts as early as the beginning of the 10th century BCE. Likewise, Puech (2010) saw the ostracon as an administrative document that supplies evidence for the establishment of the monarchy (Saul) and that can be interpreted as a “témoin du passage de la judicature à la monarchie” (ibid.: 183).

Rollston (2011) poured cold water on most of these interpretations, stating that “...some have argued that it [the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon–I.F. and A.F.] is written in Hebrew...there are no discernible features in the ostracon that mandate such a

Figure 7  Map showing the location of Khirbet Qeiyafa in relation to Jerusalem, Gath and places mentioned in Rows I–II of the Shoshenq I list.
conclusion...the script of this inscription is certainly not Old Hebrew, nor is it the immediate precursor of the Old Hebrew script” (ibid.: 67). Millard (2011: 12) is of the opinion that the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon “reveals nothing directly about the kingdom of David and Solomon! Since there is no proof the text is written in Hebrew rather than Canaanite, we cannot say it is an Israelite product”. Schniedewind, too, states that the inscription is not Hebrew (in a message to IF, January 19, 2010). One may wonder if the identification of the site as an Israelite fortress from the time of the ostensibly great and well-organized Davidic ‘empire’ has not influenced the identification of the language as Hebrew (see, e.g., Misgav et al. 2009: 256).

In any event, almost all known late proto-Canaanite and the slightly later ‘post proto-Canaanite’ inscriptions (for the latter term, Benjamin Sass, personal communication) found in excavations come from the Shephelah and southern Coastal Plain, with a special concentration around Gath (Finkelstein, Sass and Singer-Avitz 2008; the only such inscription found in situ in the highlands is the Khirbet Raddana handle13). The territory where late proto-Canaanite inscriptions are found was the hub of the Late Bronze III Egyptian administration in Canaan, hence the concentration of the inscriptions in this territory may reflect a long-term, continuous administrative and cultural tradition in the south (ibid.).

To sum up this point, the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon does not shed clear light on the identity of the inhabitants of the site.

The territorial association of Khirbet Qeiyafa

In the late 11th to late 10th century BCE, the area of Khirbet Qeiyafa could have been dominated either by a Philistine city-state to its west or by an emerging highlands territorial formation to its east. Gath reached its peak prosperity and power in the late Iron IIA, in the 9th century BCE, as is evident from both the archaeological findings and the special attention given to it by Hazael in the second half of that century (Maeir 2004). Archaeology has not yet indicated the status of Gath in the late Iron I, and documentary evidence for this period is lacking. Ekron, located somewhat farther away, ca. 15 km to the northwest of Khirbet Qeiyafa, was a prominent power in the northwestern Shephelah in the Iron I. Judah of the 10th century BCE may be seen as still depicting an “Amarna-like” territorial reality (Na’aman 1996; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 31–59). This means that Jerusalem dominated mainly the territory of the southern highlands, though it could have been engaged in affairs on its borders with the territorial formations to its west, including Gath (compare Abdi-heba’s involvement with Qiltu = Keila–Na’aman 2010; for the contemporary territorial polity in the highlands to the north of Jerusalem, see below).

The only clue to the territorial affiliation of the site comes from its architectural tradition. We refer to the phenomenon of a hilly settlement surrounded by a casemate wall

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13 The provenance of the five inscribed arrowheads from the antiquity market, said to have been found at el-Khadr near Bethlehem, is not clear. It is noteworthy that other inscribed arrowheads originated, or are alleged to have originated, in Lebanon.

14 The excavators of Khirbet Qeiyafa refer to articles by Finkelstein and by Lehmann as if they argue for an occupational gap in Judah in the 10th century BCE (Garfinkel et al. 2011a: 177, 190). Yet, these authors maintained that Judah and Jerusalem of that time is characterized by weak settlement activity, not an occupational gap (e.g., Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 50–53; Lehmann 2003: 130–136).
with houses (some pillared) using the casemates as their back broadrooms. Iron I–early Iron IIA casemate sites of this type are known only in the inland parts of the Levant, in Ammon (Tell el-Umeiri–Herr and Clark 2009), Moab (el-Lehun, Khirbet Mu'deyine Mu'arrajeh, Khirbet Mu'deyine Aliya and Khirbet el-Mu'ammariyya–Homès-Fredericq 1997; Olavari 1977/78; Routledge 2000; Ninow 2004 respectively), the highlands north of Jerusalem (Khirbet ed-Dawwara and Tell en-Nasbeh–Finkelstein 1990; 2012 respectively; for possible additional sites, see below) and some of the sites in the Negev highlands (for the larger sites in this region, see Meshel and Cohen 1980; Meshel 1994). No site of this type has thus far been found in the lowlands. This comes as no surprise if one takes into consideration the fact that this site-layout best fits hilly environments (Finkelstein 1988: 250–254). Hence, from the architectural/layout perspective it is reasonable to affiliate the builders of Khirbet Qeiyafa with the highlands.

Regarding the highlands in the late Iron I there are two alternatives: Judah or the early north Israelite territorial entity that emerged to its north. Affiliating Khirbet Qeiyafa with Judah is the more logical possibility from the strictly geographical proximity point of view. It should be clear that the years given in the biblical text to the founders of the Davidic dynasty (40 years each) are typological and hence there is no way to accurately date David and Solomon except by putting them in the 10th century (e.g., Ash 1999: 24–25). Consequently, if Khirbet Qeiyafa is affiliated with a Judahite formation, it could have been built by whoever ruled in Jerusalem before the Davidides, or by the founder of the Davidic dynasty. Yet, affiliating Khirbet Qeiyafa with Judah and Jerusalem is not free of difficulties. First, the Judahite highlands were sparsely settled and demographically depleted at that time (Ofer 1994); hence, from the manpower perspective, direct rule by a Jerusalem monarch as far west as Khirbet Qeiyafa and the organization of a complicated construction project there are questionable (compare the situation in the Amarna period). Second and no less important, no contemporary elaborate building activity is known in the highlands of Judah, including Jerusalem. In other words, in this case Khirbet Qeiyafa would be the only elaborately-constructed site thus far found in Judah.15

The other possibility is to affiliate Khirbet Qeiyafa with the north Israelite territorial formation that seems to have emerged in the late Iron I in the highlands north of Jerusalem. In several other places one of us (e.g., Finkelstein 2002a; 2006) suggested reconstructing such an entity, with its hub in the area of Gibeon–Bethel, according to archaeological finds, pre-Deuteronomistic biblical material on the House of Saul (which probably originated from 8th century northern traditions–Finkelstein and Silberman 2006b) and the Shoshenq I Karnak relief. It could have stretched over large territories west and east of the Jordan River, possibly as far north as the Jezreel Valley, and its growing power could

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15 Garfinkel, Ganor and Hasel (2011a: 191) suggest that in the 10th century BCE Judah was dominated by three major administrative centres: Jerusalem, Hebron and Khirbet Qeiyafa. This assertion is based on the biblical testimony, not archaeology: the Stepped Stone Structure plus the Large Stone Structure in Jerusalem (the only elaborate buildings in Jerusalem ascribed to the 10th century BCE) in fact date to a later phase in the Iron Age (Finkelstein et al. 2007; Finkelstein 2011b contra E. Mazar 2009; A. Mazar 2006; 2010; Faust 2010) and Hebron did not reveal clear evidence for the late Iron I.
have been the reason for the Shoshenq I penetration into the heart of the highlands—an incursion unusual for Egyptian pharaohs.

At first glance, the proposal to affiliate Khirbet Qeiyafa with a late Iron I north Israelite territorial formation may sound somewhat far-fetched—mainly because of the location of the site quite far to the southwest,\(^\text{16}\) and because of the natural (Iron IIB–C influenced) tendency to affiliate the Shephelah with Jerusalem. But it has several arguments in its favour:

1. To differ from Judah, this territorial formation was densely inhabited and hence had no manpower problem. Compared to less than 20 late Iron I sites with a total built-up area of no more than 10 hectares in the highlands south of Jerusalem, most of them small, the area between Gibeon and the Jezreel Valley had over 200 sites, characterized by a clear size-hierarchy, with a total built-up area of over 100 hectares (based on Finkelstein 1988: 332–333—in the past quarter century the numbers have not changed significantly).

2. The area of the Gibeon–Bethel plateau features several contemporary casemate walls. The middle-to-late Iron I and early Iron IIA fortified site of Khirbet ed-Dawwara exhibits a strong casemate-like wall and pillared houses adjacent to it, some using the casemates as their back broadrooms (Finkelstein 1990). The inner casemate wall of nearby Tell en-Nasbeh was probably constructed in the early phase of the Iron IIA (Finkelstein 2012). Iron I–early Iron IIA Khirbet et-Tell (‘Ai’) may also feature casemate-like construction on the margin of the settlement (Finkelstein 1988: 253). At Gibeon, elements that look like a casemate wall were uncovered in the northwest of the mound (Area 10; Pritchard 1964: 35, Figs. 19, 21; 1963: Fig. 1).\(^\text{17}\) The pottery from the layers inside the ‘casemate’—probably coming from fills below the floor—dates to the Iron I (Pritchard 1964, Fig. 36: 7–14, see location of the loci in Fig. 21). Hence, this area, unlike Judah, presents evidence for public construction of casemate fortifications in the late Iron I and the period immediately thereafter. In fact, it features a dense system of such fortifications over a surprisingly small area—the only casemate walls or casemate-like walls thus far unearthed west of the Jordan that are contemporary with the fortification at Khirbet Qeiyafa (to differ from Garfinkel et al.’s reference to the Iron IIB, 8th century BCE casemate walls of Beth-Shemesh, Tell Beit Mirsim and Beer-sheba).

3. The presence of what seems to be an exceptional number of bronze and iron items at Khirbet Qeiyafa (Garfinkel 2011b: 27*) is in line with finds at contemporary highland sites located north of Jerusalem, such as Bethel, et-Tell and Khirbet

\(^{16}\) But see parallels in the biblical account of two early North Israelite kings who besieged Gibbethon of the Philistines (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15, 17), located somewhere in the northern Shephelah (summary in Peterson 1992), as well as in the involvement of Shechem in the affairs of Keilah (Qiltu) in the southeastern Shephelah and possibly Rubutu in the northern Shephelah (see below) in the Amarna period (\textit{EA} 280, 289).

\(^{17}\) We are grateful to Omer Sergi, who drew our attention to this find.
Raddana, and in opposition to the situation in Philistia (Gottlieb 2010; there is not enough data for Judah). 18

(4) Affiliating the northeastern Shephelah with the Gibeon–Bethel polity would explain the origin of the biblical memory about King Saul’s presence in Adullam (1 Sam 22:1) and the Valley of Elah; without north Israelite attendance in this area, there is no geographical or historical logic in these accounts. This would also shed light on the topographical setting of the battle in the Valley of Elah:

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them (1 Sam 17:1–3).

The most straightforward geographical logic is that the Philistines camped to the south of the valley, somewhere between Socoh and Azekah, 19 while the Israelites camped to its north, with the valley between them. The description of the Philistine camp fits a place to the south and in front of Khirbet Qeiyafa.

The story as read today is no doubt Deuteronomistic in language; in addition, it shows elements of Homeric genre (Finkelstein 2002b; Yadin 2004; cf. contra Frolov and Wright 2011) and seems to portray Goliath as a 7th to 6th century BCE Greek hoplite (Finkelstein 2002b; cf. contra Stager 2006; Thompson 2006; King 2007; Hoffmeier 2011). But it may have been based on an earlier layer—e.g., on the tradition in the heroic stories in Samuel regarding the killing of Goliath by Elhanan (2 Sam 21:9)—a layer that may be the earliest in the book (Isser 2003: 28–34, passim; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006a: 53–57). The fact that the story does not name the Israelite camp is telling—seemingly showing that certain details were no longer remembered when the text was put in writing, possibly regarding places that were no longer inhabited at that time. In any event, the date of this tradition and the manner of transmission are less important for this discussion; what is important is the geography of the account as known in the time of the Deuteronomist.

(5) The affiliation of Khirbet Qeiyafa with the north Israelite polity may provide an explanation for its end in destruction and/or abandonment as a result of the Shoshenq I campaign. One of the targets of the Egyptian campaign seems to have been the

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18 Note that the architecture of a domestic cult-place and its cult paraphernalia unearthed at Khirbet Qeiyafa seem to be comparable mainly to finds at northern sites, such as Tel Qiri VIII (Garfinkel 2011b: 21*; Garfinkel, Ganor and Hasel 2011b: 8–9). Another type of find that should be mentioned is inscriptions. The only late proto-Canaanite inscription from the hill country was found at Khirbet Raddana, located in the territory dealt with here (for the inscription, see summary in Sass 1988: 60–61; 2005: 44–45; for the site, see Lederman 1999; for a reevaluation of its date, see Finkelstein 2007). Theoretically speaking, three more sites that produced late proto-Canaanite inscriptions (Izbet Sartah, Beth-Shemesh and Khirbet Qeiyafa) could have been located in the territory of the north Israelite entity.

19 Ephes dammim/Pas dammim, read by many as a toponym (e.g., Driver 1913: 138; McCarter 1980: 290; Na’aman 2008b: 3), probably means ‘before blood was shed’, that is, before the beginning of the battle (we are grateful to Ran Zadok for this interpretation).
early north Israelite entity north of Jerusalem (e.g., Finkelstein 2002a; 2006; 2007).\(^{20}\)
The decline of this polity may have opened the way for Philistine expansion to the east; Judah probably managed to expand to the west and rule this area only after the destruction of Gath by Hazael, about a century later (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006: 31; Fantalkin 2008: 29–32).

**Excursus II: Comments on two toponyms in the Shoshenq I list**\(^{21}\)

Applying the principle of *boustrophedon* to Rows I–II in the Shoshenq I list,\(^{22}\) one obtains the following sequence, after the ‘Nine Bows’ and an introduction of the ‘Copy of A[siatic (name)s]’: Nos. 11→12→13 (Row I) →26→25→24→23 (Row II). Except for Nos. 11–12, the identification of the toponyms is quite certain, creating a logical route from the Shephelah to the highlands: Nos. 11→12→Rubutu (13 = in the northern Shephelah [Khirbet Hamideh near Latrun?])\(^{23}\) → Aijalon (26 = Yalo) → Kir(?)iaathaim = Kiriath-jearim (25 = Deir el-Azar)\(^{24}\) → Beth-horon (24 = Beit Ur) → Gibeon (23 = el-Jib) (Fig. 7).

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\(^{20}\) Wilson’s recent thesis (2005), that the campaign was conducted against Jerusalem alone, in accordance with the biblical sources, must be rejected outright.

\(^{21}\) We are grateful to Dan’el Kahn, Shirly Ben-Dor Evian, Deborah Sweeney and Orly Goldwasser for their useful advice. Needless to say, the responsibility for the ideas expressed here rests with us alone.

\(^{22}\) B. Mazar’s (1957) suggestion to apply the principle of *boustrophedon* to the first section of the Shoshenq I list has been accepted, for instance, by Helck (1971: 238–245), Aharoni (1979: 323–330) and Rainey (in Rainey and Notley 2006: 185), but was rejected by other scholars (e.g., Herrmann 1964; Kitchen 1986: 444; Ahlström 1993), who argued that the *boustrophedon* arrangement is not used in other Egyptian topographical lists (as well as in Shoshenq’s Rows VI–XI). Yet, the *boustrophedon* pattern was used occasionally in Egypt during different periods (as demonstrated by, e.g., Fischer 1977; Rosati 2003). Moreover, despite using New Kingdom ‘triumphal’ phraseology (Kitchen 1986: 435, n. 55), the Shoshenq I list is a unique text, and hence can hardly be compared to older lists (e.g., Kitchen 2009). According to Na’aman (1998: 251), the *boustrophedon* principle should not be applied to Shoshenq’s list, but those who produced the inscription mistakenly copied the second row upside down, implying that the *boustrophedon* reading of Rows I–II is credible. All in all, even without subscribing to B. Mazar *boustrophedon* theory, such a reading for Rows I–II remains the best option.

\(^{23}\) We follow scholars who distinguish between this Rubutu (also mentioned in the Amarna letters), which should be identified in the northeast Shephelah, and a town of this name mentioned in a letter from Ta’anach, which is located in the north (for history of research and a different opinion, see Na’aman 2000). The fact that Ta’anach is mentioned in No. 14 in the Shoshenq list does not demand identifying No. 13 as the northern Rubutu once the *boustrophedon* reading is applied for Rows I–II.

\(^{24}\) Toponym No. 25 (*qdṯm*) has been read by the majority of scholars as Kiriath-jearim, while some prefer to read it as Gittaim. The latter has been identified either at Ras Abu-Humeid (near Ramleh) or at el-Burj = Horvat Tittora (near Modi’in). In our opinion, the reading of Kiriath-jearim remains the most plausible option, although the reading of Gittaim (probably located at el-Burj and not at Ras Abu-Humeid) cannot be ruled out. The discovery of an impressive late Iron I/early Iron IIA building, which had been violently destroyed, at Deir el-Azar strengthens the interpretation of No. 25 (*qdṯm*) as Kiriath-jearim (we are grateful to Gabriel Barkay for providing us with information regarding his yet unpublished excavation at the site). This destruction may correspond to the destruction/abandonment of Khirbet Qeiyafa and to the wave of abandonment of sites in the Gibeon–Bethel area in the early Iron IIA (e.g., Finkelstein 2002a).
A number of identifications have been proposed for Nos. 11–12. No. 11 was taken mainly as Gaza (G[dt]), while No. 12 was interpreted as either Gezer or Maqqedah (e.g., B. Mazar 1957; Ahituv 1984: 97–98; Kitchen 1986: 435; Rainey [in Rainey and Notley 2006: 185]). According to Na’aman (1998: 252–254), No. 11 could be restored as Gezer, while No. 12 relates perhaps to Makaz, mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:9 together with Shaalabim and Beth-Shemesh in relation to the northern Shephelah.

In the definitive edition of Shoshenq I’s Karnak list, what seems to be preserved of Toponym No. 11 is only the -g- (followed by -A- sign) at the beginning and the sign for foreign lands at the end (RIK III: Pls. 2–4). Moreover, it seems that only a relatively short name could fit in the broken space between these signs. Müller (1906: Pl. 76) noted that during his inspection of the inscription an -m- sign was visible after the -g-, and this was accepted by Simons (1937: 180), who read No. 11 as g-m-?. Due to the current state of preservation of the inscription, Müller’s reading of Toponym 11 cannot be verified. All one can say with certainty is that this relatively short toponym starts with -g-. In other words, although the identification of Toponym 11 with Gaza or Gezer remains an option, other geographically suitable and relatively short toponyms that begin with the same consonant are equally plausible. This includes Gob, suggested by Na’aman (2008b) as the ancient name of Khirbet Qeiyafa. If Müller’s reading is correct, it would increase the likelihood of such a reading, due to a possible interchange between /b/ and /m/, often attested in Semitic languages (cf. Murtonen 1990: 85–87, passim; Lipiński 2001: 117). As mentioned above (n. 10), the biblical text does not require interpreting Gob as a Philistine (rather than Israelite) stronghold.

Na’aman’s identification of Toponym 12 with Makaz in the northern Shephelah is a plausible option, since it fits the route to Gibeon. Based on survey results, A. Mazar (1994: 255) suggested identifying biblical Makaz with Ḥorvat Avimor, located on a ridge between the Valleys of Ajalon and Sorek, but other places in the northern Shephelah can also be considered.

Conclusion

Below we summarize our views regarding Khirbet Qeiyafa’s archaeology and history in the order of the list of Garfinkel and Ganor’s interpretations cited at the beginning of this article:

• **Date:** The settlement was established in the late Iron I. It came to an end within this phase, or in a transitional late Iron I/early Iron IIA phase (see Notes 2–3 above). In absolute chronology terms, the settlement could have been built in the second half of the 11th century or slightly later and destroyed/abandoned in the mid- to second

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25 According to Kitchen’s most recent treatment (2009), although M[qaqedah] is possible epigraphically, it would be rather off-track and “M[aresha] might be geographically superior”. But Maresha does not supply evidence for a significant Iron I–IIA settlement (Kloner 2003: 5).

26 Hoch (1994) has convincingly demonstrated that in the vast majority of cases, the Semitic /g/ in clear-cut Semitic words (his level [5] of certainty) are transcribed by Egyptian -q- or -g-.

27 Note also that the LXX form of Gwb does not reflect a geminated b-. We are grateful to Ran Zadok for this observation.
half of the 10th century BCE.\textsuperscript{28} The \textsuperscript{14}C results from the site correspond to the many determinations published in the last few years—determinations that put the transition from the late Iron I to the early Iron IIA not-too-late in the second half of the 10th century BCE. Hence, Khirbet Qeiyafa has no bearing on the Iron Age chronology debate.

- **Construction:** The late Iron I casemate wall of Khirbet Qeiyafa has its roots in northern sites as early as the Middle/Late Bronze Age. Casemate-like walls from the Iron I/early Iron IIA are known in several inland regions in the southern Levant. Especially noteworthy is a group of such fortifications attested over a relatively small area in the highlands of Gibeon–Bethel. The western gate as seen today at Khirbet Qeiyafa represents, in the main, a post-Iron Age occupation of the site. Little remained of the southern gate and in any event, its reconstruction goes far beyond the evidence in the field. The ‘Hellenistic city-wall’ is no more than a modern stone fence.

- **Identification:** The late Iron I settlement cannot be identified with 7th century BCE Shaaraim. Na’aman’s suggestion to identify the site with biblical Gob is the best proposal presented thus far, though it is possible that Khirbet Qeiyafa, which had been destroyed/abandoned as early as the 10th century BCE, is not referred to in the Bible. It is possible that toponym No. 11 in the Shoshenq I Karnak list mentions the same Gob.

- **Identity of the inhabitants:** Based on culinary practices, pottery and the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon, it is difficult to label the identity of the people who dwelt at the site. An affiliation with a highlands polity is more likely in view of the architectural tradition represented at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

- **State formation:** There is no evidence for arguing that Jerusalem, Hebron and Khirbet Qeiyafa were the main centres of 10th century Judah, and there is no reason to state that the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon testifies to a writing tradition, including documentation of historical events, in Judah of that time. Between the two possibilities for the territorial affiliation of Khirbet Qeiyafa with a highlands polity—Judah or an early north Israelite entity—the latter seems to us the more attractive one.

We suggest the possibility that Khirbet Qeiyafa was established as a southwestern outpost of a north Israelite entity that faced the Philistine centres of Gath and Ekron and which threatened the Egyptian 22nd dynasty’s interests in Canaan. We also propose the possibility that the settlement was abandoned during the Shoshenq I campaign. The Egyptian pharaoh’s goal of reviving the Ramesside empire in Canaan implied cooperation with the Philistine city-states, first and foremost for the sake of securing copper-transportation from Wadi Feinan to Egypt (Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006). The tradition of the battle in the Valley of Elah puts the spotlight on the Philistines, who were

\textsuperscript{28} The suggested time-span for activity at the site does not rule out the possibility that the major construction activity there was undertaken a few decades before its destruction. The lack of substantial architectural phases (Garfinkel et al. 2011a: 178, 191) may indeed point in this direction. The two radiocarbon determinations that point to late 11th century BCE activity at the site may represent modest activity prior to the major construction effort; this may be hinted at by several rock-cut features in Area C (see above). As explained at the beginning of this article, the nature of the excavation hinders detection of such architectural phases.
well-known to the Deuteronomistic Historian as potential adversaries of Judah, while in reality the confrontation could have been with Egypt and the Philistines in the service of Egypt (for the same idea regarding the battle of Gilboa, see Finkelstein 2001). According to this reconstruction, admittedly hypothetical, the section in the Shoshenq I list that includes Toponyms 11 = Gob(?), 12 = Makaz(?), 13 = Rubutu, 26 = Aijalon, 25 = Kiriath-jearim(?), 24 = Beth-horon and 23 = Gibeon refers to the southwestern and southern flanks of this north Israelite entity. The fact that no site located a short distance to the west (e.g., Gath, Ekron, Timnah, Gezer, Aphek) appears in the Shoshenq I list is no less telling. Shoshenq I’s targeting of the north Israelite entity resulted in its decline and (somewhat later?) incorporation of its territory into the emerging growing Northern Kingdom.

We cannot close this article without a comment on the sensational way in which the finds of Khirbet Qeiyafa have been communicated to both the scholarly community and the public. The idea that a single, spectacular finding can reverse the course of modern research and save the literal reading of the biblical text regarding the history of ancient Israel from critical scholarship is an old one. Its roots can be found in W.F. Albright’s assault on the Wellhausen School in the early 20th century, an assault that biased archaeological, biblical and historical research for decades. This trend—in different guises—has resurfaced sporadically in recent years, with archaeology serving as a weapon to quell progress in critical scholarship. Khirbet Qeiyafa is the latest case in this genre of craving a cataclysmic defeat of critical modern scholarship by a miraculous archaeological discovery.  

29 This attitude is underlined by Garfinkel and Ganor’s morbid language: “Finkelstein is not only the founding father of low chronology, but also its undertaker” (Qeiyafa 1: 12); “Low Chronology is now officially dead and buried”, with a photomontage of a cemetery (Garfinkel and Ganor’s presentation at the 2008 ASOR meeting–http://qeiyafa.huji.ac.il/qdb/ASOR_2_parts.pdf); and the title of Garfinkel 2011a: “The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism”. 
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