



Editorial Introduction

It is my pleasure as the guest editor for this issue of *The Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* to introduce to our readership fascicle 7.1, which focuses specifically on the Sinai Peninsula. The Sinai Peninsula is a vast region, encompassing around 60,000 square kilometers with hundreds, if not thousands of archaeological sites, only a relatively small sample of which have been explored fully. The Sinai has long attracted Ancient Egyptians, Levantines, and more recent people to it, whether as a dwelling place, an area rich in desirable resources, a defensive region, a refuge, a holy site, a destination for pilgrimages, or simply the means by which merchants, emissaries, armies, and others travelled from one region to another. Hence, focusing one issue of *The Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* on the Sinai Peninsula seemed a quite appropriate venue for the theme of Ancient Egypt's interactions with its neighbors. We are also very grateful to all interested parties, both present in and absent from this volume, for their invaluable contributions to our local through global explorations, clarifications, and greater understanding of the rich heritage of the Sinai Peninsula, which forms both a key land bridge between northeast Africa and southwest Asia and an important region its own right.

The individual and joint contributors include, in alphabetical order, Dr. Elsayed Abdel Alim (Inspector of North Sinai, Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt), Dr. Orly Goldwasser (Professor, Hebrew University, Jerusalem), Rexine Hummel (Research Adjunct, The University of Toronto), Dr. Hesham Hussein (Inspector of North Sinai, Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt), Dr. Gregory D. Mumford (Associate Professor, The University of Alabama at Birmingham), Dr. Eliezer D. Oren (Professor, Ben-Gurion University, Beer Sheva), and Dr. Sarah H. Parcak (Associate Professor, The University of Alabama at Birmingham). The sites, topics, and time periods under discussion include (1) a late Old Kingdom anchorage and fort site in el-Markha Plain, South Sinai, (2) a Middle Kingdom copper smelting site in el-Markha Plain, South Sinai, (3) a satellite remote sensing survey of el-Markha Plain, South Sinai, and the neighboring Red Sea region, to locate potential new sites (especially other circular forts like the one at Ras Budran), (4) some royal seal-impressed jars from New Kingdom forts and sites in North Sinai (and the broader significance of these sealings in Egypt's New Kingdom empire, the "Ways of Horus," its infrastructure, and marine units), and (5) the prior through new findings at a Saite Period fort at Tell Kedwa/Qedwa in Northwest Sinai (including this area's broader role in the "Ways of Horus"). In addition, the editor provided (6) an overview introducing the exploration and findings by multiple individuals and projects in the Sinai Peninsula, incorporating a chronological narrative of our changing perceptions regarding the Sinai, its people, its resources, and its diverse and changing roles as a destination for turquoise, copper, and other things, as a transit route between Egypt and the Levant, and in connecting Arabia, the Negev, Levant, East Mediterranean, and Egypt.

In essence, these seven authors and the six papers have pulled together a wide range of original materials and findings concerning the Sinai Peninsula, spanning collectively the Predynastic through Ptolemaic-Roman periods and featuring South Sinai, North Sinai, and the Negev. The six articles also mention or discuss in passing other pertinent sites and projects in adjacent regions outside the Sinai: *e.g.*, Mersa Gawasis; Wadi al-Jarf; Ayn Soukhna; Kom el-Qolzoum; Gebel Abu Hassa; Gebel Mourr; Tell er-Retabeh; Tell el-Maskhuta; Tell Defenneh; Beer Sheba; Arad; Wadi Feynan and Tayma' Oasis, among other places.

However, it should also be acknowledged that the Sinai Peninsula itself contains numerous other recent and on-going important projects that are not featured directly in this issue of *JAEL*, including, amongst many other sites and researchers, such archaeological and related projects on Prehistoric through Roman-Byzantine sites as Ayun Musa (SCA/MoA), surveys in central Sinai (F. Eddy; F. Wendorf), el-Tur (SCA/MoA), Feiran / Firan / Fayran / al-Fira'un (A. Hafiz; P. Grossman; A. Reichert; G. Suliman; M. A. Tarik), Hammam Pharaon (SCA/MoA), Serabit el-Khadim (C. Bonnet; F. Le Saout; M. Resk; D. Valbelle), Tell Abu Seifah (Sile) (SCA/MoA), St. Catherine's Monastery (N. Drandakis; G. Galavaris; K. Weitzmann), Tell

el-Borg (J. K. Hoffmeier), Tell el-Fadda (C. Vogt), Tell el-Farama (Pelusium) and Tell el-Farama West (M. Abd el-Maksoud; P. Ballet; J.-Y. Carre-Maratray; A. El-Taba'i; P. Grossmann), Tell el-Ghaba (P. Fuscaldo; S. Lupo), Tell el-Heboua (M. Abd el-Maksoud), Tell el-Herr (Magdolos) (C. Defernez; B. Gratien; E. Louis; D. Valbelle), Tell el-Kana'is (J.-Y. Carre-Maratray; S. Favre; H. Jaritz; G. Nogara; M. Rodziewicz; G. Wagner), Tell el-Mahrad (SCA/MoA), Tell el-Makhzan (Pelusium) (M. Abd el-Samie; J.-Y. Carre-Maratray), Tell el-Moufariq/Moufarig (M. Abdallah; A. M. Ahmed; P. Ballet; A. William), Wadi Gharandel (SCA/MoA), Wadi Hummur (M. Resk; P. Tallet), and Wadi Maghara (M. Chartier-Raymond). In addition, many other significant sites and projects involve the Islamic and related periods. Hence, at best, one may acknowledge our indebtedness to the aforementioned projects and researchers, and many others not listed here, who have striven to excavate, record, and resurrect our knowledge of the Sinai Peninsula.

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