Texts in the City: Monumental Inscriptions in Jerusalem's Urban Landscape

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And the sign said,
the words of the prophets
are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls
And whispered in the sounds of silence.
Lyrics by Paul Simon, The Sound of Silence
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1. Introduction

In October 2017, we were invited to join a TOPOI seminar entitled 'Size Matters – Extra-Large Projects in the Ancient World' hosted at Freie Universität in Berlin. The discussions addressed recent theoretical work on the topic of monumentality. We were chosen to address the specific topic of monumental writings in the ancient southern Levant. A key take away from the week's discussion was that while 'size matters', monuments are much more than large buildings. Monuments and monumental writings function as portals that connect times and spaces and sites where memories are constructed and commemorated. Perhaps no southern Levantine monumental structure illustrates this quality as well as the temple in Jerusalem. This structure was destroyed in 587 BCE, and yet, its religious and cultural importance led to its rebuilding in 515 BCE. Although this second structure was then destroyed in 70 CE, many communities still revere its legacy. The Western Wall, which is one of the remaining retaining walls of the Second Temple has become, in its own right, a focal point of pilgrimage and prayer. The power of this structure in the imagination of many communities also led to the construction of Christian and Muslim religious structures in Jerusalem that pay homage to elements of this ancient Israelite temple (Ousterhout 1990; Amitzur 1996). Most notably the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock both commemorate and claim this space in tribute to the ancient temple of Solomon (Grabar 1959).

When we considered how best to adapt these fruitful discussions of monumentality to our own area of specialty, we decided to focus upon key monumental

writings from the time of the First Temple. We noted incongruity between the highly technical terminology used to described monuments and their inscriptions, and the more theoretical focus of our discussions at the 'Size Matters' seminar. Typically, scholars of Northwest Semitic languages employ several characteristics to define a text as monumental: 1) monumental inscriptions are professionally written in stone and are connected to people of power, and 2) they memorialize individual achievements as well as royal-sponsored projects.[1] Recent studies, however, have brought increased theorizing over what the terms *monumental* and *monumentality* imply about the nature and function of monumental objects and their relationships to materials, places, and memory (Osborne 2014; Scarre 2011; Parker 2003; Harmanşah 2011; Wu 1995). They move the study of monuments and monumental texts beyond the observation that *monuments* are somehow bigger than other spaces, objects, and structures. This more theoretical approach investigates what physical, material, historical, and social factors cause this difference. As such, scholars emphasize that the adjective *monumental* does not necessarily refer to a materially large object, but rather to an object or place that stands out because of its execution, meaning, and impact on viewers (Pauketat 2014; Rigney 2004; 2010). It is true that structures that we consider to be monumental typically are built in a more spectacular manner, and are often feats of technical skill. Yet, there may be nothing materially different between them and the other structures or objects around them. For example, the destroyed space of the Temple Mount no longer held the two ancient Jewish temples in 638 CE. And yet, the associations of this space with key figures in Islamic history and the legacy of the two temples led early Umayyad caliphs to build monumental structures on this very site. As this example shows, the monumentality of structures and objects may instead derive from their complex histories and the value that past and present communities ascribe to them.

In the following essay, we outline how recent theory on spatiality, materiality, visual design, and memory might be applied meaningfully to the study of the corpus of monumental inscriptions from the Iron Age Levant. After synthesizing

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1 See most notably the use of the category 'monumental' in the various editions of Northwest Semitic inscriptions in Hallo, W./Younger, K./Hoffner, H. (eds.) (2000), Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World, Leiden: Brill. Hallo defines monumental texts quite expansively as texts created "for all time, whether royal or private, building or votive or mortuary, weights or seals, rediscovered on their original tone and metal surfaces or preserved in copies on clay and papyrus" ("Introduction: The Bible and the Monuments," Context of Scripture, volume 2, xxiv). However, in the field of Northwest Semitics, inscriptions in stone that are not seen as royal tend to be classified as non-monumental. For example, the Iron Age inscriptions found in the family tomb complexes at Khirbet el-Qom and Khirbet Beit Lei, which are also from Iron Age Judah are not classified as monumental texts in the majority of studies. Perhaps because they are written in a way deemed less professional and planned they have been studied as graffiti and exemplars of 'popular' or vernacular writing.

key scholarship in the study of monumentality, we introduce five points on monumentality and apply them to two well-known inscriptions from Iron Age Jerusalem: The Royal Steward Inscription and the Siloam Tunnel Inscription (switch the order to reflect the order of our discussion in the article) both of which are dated to the late 8th-early 7th centuries BCE. The first inscription that we examine – the Royal Steward Inscription – was placed over the doorway of an elite tomb in the Silwan necropolis outside of Jerusalem. This text mentions the tomb owner and his female consort, both non-royal figures (*Silw* 1) (Avigad 1953: 137–152; Ussishkin 1993: 247–254; McCarter 2000; Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2004: 403–405; Renz 1995: 264–265; Suriano 2018: 201–205). The second inscription – the Siloam Tunnel inscription – does not name any one person, but celebrates a feat of engineering: the completion of an underground water channel in Jerusalem (Aḥituv 2005: 15–20; 2008: 19–25; Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 499–506; Younger 1994). While we might assume that this commemorative text was placed in a large public space, it was inscribed onto the interior rock surface of an underground water tunnel in the City of David – a place not easily accessible for the majority of audiences.

Both inscriptions were cut from local limestone, were professionally executed, and commemorated non-royal figures. And yet, they had vastly different functions and were set in very different settings. The more cursive script style and the location of the Siloam Tunnel inscription inside of a tunnel led some to categorize it as a monumental graffito (Schniedewind 2004: 72–73). As William Schniedewind (2004: 73) adds about the Siloam Tunnel Inscription, "[...] this inscription is not a simple graffito. Although not a royal inscription, the wall on which it appears was carefully prepared and its letters are elegantly carved into the hard limestone." The Royal Steward Inscription, by contrast, is less cursive in script style, and was placed in a more accessible location on the lintel of a tomb entrance. Yet, we begin our study by emphasizing that both inscriptions were not installed in publicly prominent locations typical of royal monumental inscriptions.

A focus upon the spatiality, materiality, and visual design of these two inscriptions also offers a different perspective into the 'palace-temple' paradigm. The 'palace-temple' paradigm tends to limit monumentality to those texts produced by elites (or the institutions that they represent) which are set into stone in spaces designed for large viewing audiences. Our approach differs by examining how the Royal Steward and Siloam Tunnel inscriptions functioned as part of the urban landscape of Jerusalem and how their design indexed professional expertise. Monuments curate memories and experiences, which means that such texts also monumentalized non-royal stories and memories in ancient Judah. In different ways, these two texts monumentalized their respective spaces by creating a type of linguistic urban space within the capital city of Judah.

The point that we hope to establish is that *scale – not size – matters.* For this reason, we argue for a broader perspective on monumentality that includes *scale,*

space, spectatorship, graphic design, and materiality. This essay, then, ultimately makes a methodological argument, namely, that an object's monumentality proceeds from its site of display in a larger setting, its interactions with people, and the way in which it affects time in the sense that it stimulates memories that people carry away with them.

2. Are there monumental writings in Ancient Israel and Judah?

It might be helpful to begin by asking why these two inscriptions should be considered monumental texts. As discussed, the terminology of monumental appears frequently as a general way to characterize lapidary texts from the Iron Age Levant written in local alphabetic scripts and that are from a royal provenance. Importantly, several studies do use the terminology of monumentality as a way to characterize the production of the objects (Naveh 1982a: 198; 1968: 68–69). For instance, Joseph Naveh (1987: 3) differentiates "memorial" texts from the shorter texts that might also serve a commemorative function (i. e., "graffiti," "votive," or "burial inscriptions of epitaphs"):

> Memorial stelae were erected by kings and rulers to glorify their deeds which are sometimes described as the fulfillment of divine will. Despite their subjective nature, these inscriptions contain important historical data. Here, too, we find curses against whosoever would damage the monument or deface the inscriptions (Naveh 1987: 3).

Christopher Rollston offers a more robust definition, describing monumental texts as those which are professionally written and are commissioned by elites:

> The term "monumental inscription" is often used to refer to inscriptions commissioned by kings and high officials and which were intended to be permanent, enduring and (to some degree) public. Often these inscriptions were carved into stone. Within monumental inscriptions, the scribe or stonemason who was doing the chiseling would attempt to ensure that the lines of the inscription were fairly straight, of approximately the same length, and with fairly consistent spacing between the letters. The letters of a monumental inscription are normally carefully formed, in terms of the morphology and the stance of the letters. (Rollston 2016: 114)

Other studies use this terminology to describe the audience of these inscriptions. In his efforts to classify the different types of inscriptions from the Levant, Alan Millard (1972: 99) characterized monumental inscriptions in the following way: "These are texts intended for public display as enduring records. As it happens,

the Siloam Tunnel Inscription alone can be counted a worthy representative of its class in Hebrew." Seth Sanders (2009: 139), however, notes the unusual location of this inscription and describes it instead as a "hidden memorial to anonymous collective experience." He observes,

> Rather than identifying themselves with the ruler and addressing an anonymous audience in the king's voice, they identify themselves as texts: *spr* or *dbr*. They tell the stories of independent professionals who mediate images and languages: craftsmen and prophets […] skilled communicators quickly adapted the monumental styles and scripts to represent different types of agents: the collective craft, religious and kin groups to which they themselves belonged (Sanders 2009: 161).

He views the Siloam Tunnel Inscription as a new type of monument that appears in the 8th century that focuses on the achievements of non-royal protagonists and is written in a narrative style (Sanders 2009: 161).

As these examples show, the secondary literature in our field indicates that the designation monumental is defined in different ways. In some cases, it is applied to lapidary inscriptions without much discussion of what this terminology implies about the ontology and function of these texts and what makes them monumental. This is especially apparent in those studies that categorize the Siloam Tunnel Inscription as a monumental text and compare it to those royal monumental inscriptions from regions neighboring Israel and Judah (see Rollston 2016: 139). Alternatively, other studies connect its importance to the auspices of royal public projects. Commenting on the importance of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription, Lawrence Stager and Philip King (2001: 220) state, "At the south end of the tunnel, not far from the Pool of Siloam, a *monumental* Hebrew inscription was incised on a specially prepared wall panel of the tunnel" (italics ours). Several sentences later, they continue, "Surprisingly, the *monumental* inscription does not bear the name of King Hezekiah in whose reign the tunnel was certainly constructed" (italics ours).

We also note that when we turn to the script of these two texts it is not always clear what is meant by the designations 'lapidary' or 'monumental'.[2] For this reason, Vanderhooft's definition of monumental is especially refreshing because he includes those inscriptions typically designated as 'graffiti'. He observes that such graffiti "use a type of monumental script, or a rough version of it" (i. e., the Judean tomb texts from the sites of Khirbet el-Qom and Khirbet Beit-Lei) (Vanderhooft 2014: 110). Vanderhooft's approach has the added benefit of including inscriptions

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2 Indeed, Naveh questioned the development of a distinct Hebrew lapidary script, arguing that the script overall moves to a more cursive style regardless of the medium of the inscription (e. g., hence, the cursive letter forms on stone inscriptions from the Moabite Stone [1982b: 66–69]).

on a range of durable materials (i. e., metal, ivory, and clay) that were crafted to make such statements about the power or status of their owner (Vanderhooft 2014: 109). His observations form a helpful starting point because they reevaluate the heuristic value of the terminology monumental vs. lapidary.

We would expect the designation lapidary script to refer to the style of script used in stone inscriptions, or to a style of script that developed from the practice of writing in stone. The inscriptions under consideration here, however, demonstrate that in certain cases monumental inscriptions attest to the use of a more cursive style. This raises the question of whether or not the choice of a more or less cursive script is a reflection of aesthetic, the function of the text, the level of training of the mason, or some other social, political, or cultural dynamic. While some classify the Siloam Tunnel inscription within the category of royal inscriptions, several studies observe that its cursive script style more closely resembles the script style of non-lapidary texts of tomb graffiti.[3] Yet, it is executed in a way that suggests that it was a meticulous and planned inscription and it is a commemorative text (Schniedewind 2004: 72–73).

Other much less complete texts that contain very little content, on the other hand, are identified as monumental or of a royal provenance, mainly due to their medium (stone) and their less cursive style (i. e., the Ophel Inscription; the 'City of David' inscription; the Samaria Stele) (Naveh 1982a: 195–198; 2000: 1–2; Cross 2001: 44–47; Sukenik 1936: 156). The assumption is that such texts come from a royal provenance and are therefore monumental. However, when we turn to the corpus of funerary inscriptions carved in stone in tombs and caves from the same period (8th-7th centuries) we see a tendency to classify these inscriptions as graffiti rather than monumental texts (Khirbet Beit Lei and Khirbet el-Qom) (Naveh 1979; Mandell/Smoak 2016). All of this raises the more fundamental question: what makes one stone inscription a graffito and another stone inscription a monumental text? In the following section, we give further definition to what the terminology of monumentality conveys about the social function of these texts by focusing upon scale, space, spectatorship, graphic design, and materiality. By

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3 See the comments by K.A.D. Smelik about the script of the inscription, "It is important to note that the text was not written in monumental but in a cursive script. This points to a person who was accustomed to write on papyrus or on shards (ostraca). It is unlikely that the stonemasons had this experience." (Smelik 2011: 105). John Healy makes similar observations about the script of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription: "There are certain tendencies to a more cursive style, but almost all our sources are inscribed on stone and pots and we have very little information about writing on soft materials. A good example of a stone inscription is the Siloam tunnel inscription (eighth century BC), which is probably meant to be a formal monumental inscription but actually contains many cursive features, with down-strokes curving to the left. The cursive form seems to have been normal and there may have been no Hebrew tradition of royal inscriptions requiring a monumental script." (Healy 1990: 226).

bringing these aspects of monumentality into the discussion, we show how the adjective monumental refers to the ability of objects to transcend space and time and consequently live in the memories, emotions, retellings, reenactments, and biographies of their audiences. They continue to be relevant because they compel their audiences to write biographies about them or to graft them into personal, familial, or cultural narratives.

a. Scale

The corpus of inscriptions from the southern Levant is much smaller in number and is less impressive in overall size and execution than the wealthier regions of the ancient Near East. Indeed, one might ask the question of whether or not those inscriptions that scholars deem monumental are truly so in comparison to the much larger and voluminous corpora in Egypt, Anatolia, Syria, and Mesopotamia.[4] To this we point to our study of monumentality more broadly, which underscores that *scale, not size*, matters. *Monumentality is not a matter of size, but scale in significance to surrounding objects, spaces, and texts and their cultural importance.* The monumentality of the buildings, objects, and inscriptions from the Iron Age southern Levant reflects the political development of the region into small territorial states.

This also means that the monumentality of an object or inscription is partially determined by its audience or, perhaps better, the interactions between an object and its audience. Indeed, while the majority of monumental inscriptions are found on large stones, we should be careful not to exclude those inscriptions of smaller scale written on permanent and enduring media that allow their words to transcend space and time. An object's monumentality is not located in or determined by its size. Rather, as James Osborne (2014: 4) stresses, "we can only consider an object's monumentality in the context of its relationship to the community of which it forms a part". This means that in certain cases the tiniest of objects may be considered monumental precisely because the ascription of monumentality is always a negotiation between the object's agency and the agencies of groups of people over time (Osborne 2014: 13). We might point to the two silver amulets discovered at the site of Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem to illustrate this point. Although they contain microscopic inscriptions on their surfaces contemporary audiences have monumentalized their meaning by incorporating their significance within wider narratives about the history of writing in ancient Judah (Barkay 1992; Barkay/Vaughn/Lundberg/Zuckerman 2004). Despite their tiny sizes, they have become monumentally significant to contemporary discussions of the composi-

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4 See the discussion of the comparison of monuments and monumental inscriptions in Israel and
   the wider Near East in Hallo (2000).

tion of the biblical texts, the study of Hebrew epigraphy, and reconstructions of Israelite religion (Smoak 2016).

This also means that when we look at inscriptions or those texts embedded into monumental structures, we should consider their scale and social capital. We might pay greater attention to the scale of a text in relation to the physical structure into which it was set. And, when possible, we might ask how such inscriptions dominated the physical surface or structure of their built settings. We can ask how their placement and display on specific buildings sought to monumentalize the spaces in which such buildings sat. We can contrast such busy text-displays with those texts placed on key architectural junctures, or that are marked as monumental in the way that they are set apart, either in isolation from other texts or by key iconography. We can look to the way in which the Behistun trilingual inscription of Darius stands apart visually and materially from its environs. Its height and location suggest that it was designed for a viewing rather than a reading audience. Travelers would have perceived this inscription as it emerged from the natural rock formations, thus reminding them of the power of Darius to carve the landscape.

b. Space

Monuments employ their surrounding landscapes to project their meanings (Glatz 2014). There is often an inextricable relationship between monuments and their natural settings. As Goldhahn writes, monuments

> help to shape the perception of the landscape. At the same time as the monument is materialized in the landscape, the landscape is materialized in the monument. This dialectic process is essential; the materials used in monument construction – wood, earth, turf, sand, fire cracked stones, ash charcoal, seaweed, beach sand, snails, etc. – are gathered from specific places in the landscape and are incorporated into a new composite construction in the form of the monument" (Goldhahn 2008: 59).

They shape the perception of the natural topography of a region by making landscape and place communicate to audiences. As we will demonstrate, both the Royal Steward and Siloam Tunnel inscriptions were set into stages that purposefully integrated both natural and constructed landscapes.

When we examine the choices underlying the placement of inscriptions into monumental structures, it is clear that the scale and layout tend to be determined by a concern for both present and future audiences. In his study of pre-historic monuments, Chris Scarre (2011: 16) writes,

> Locations were chosen to draw attention both to the monument itself and to the place where it was built […] these may already have been places of mythological or sacred significance, or locations of assembly and ceremonial performance. The construction of monuments gave those associations novel and enduring form.

His approach takes seriously the spatial relationship between monuments and their audiences and leads us to consider how *monuments and monumental inscriptions generate viewing spaces and choose their audiences*. Those monumental inscriptions placed in public spaces – roads, plazas, parks, etc. – were designed with a broader and more dynamic viewing audience in mind. As Greg Woolf (1996: 25) emphasizes, "[…] monuments do imply a sense of posterity, of viewers and readers to come, whose progress through the public spaces or along the public roads where monuments were often set up, might be arrested, and who might then pause to read, and to remember". This approach has the advantage of anticipating the transformation and changes in the natural, built, or social environment that might strip away or strengthen the social weight of a monumental text. We can look to the change in meaning of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription which, once 'discovered' and brought to the surface in 1880, has for many scholars become iconic of Hezekiah's preparations for siege as well as literacy, scribalism, and the royal chancellery in Jerusalem. That is, it is now valued by the academic community for different reasons than its original inception.

c. Spectatorship

This brings us to our next point, that the bodies that interact with monuments and monumental inscriptions play active roles in shaping their meanings. Ultimately, it is the audiences of monumental texts that give them enduring meaning – with a change in a generation, monuments can derive new and sometimes unintended meanings. The people who engage with monumental inscriptions bring with them memories and the knowledge of landscapes, terrain, and travel, which become connected to their experiences of such texts. Monumental inscriptions differ from other text types because they are designed to represent a place where multiple hands, minds, and memories converge. Once they are formed and embedded into a physical space, they become a point of reference that connects the present to past generations, landscapes, and power structures. In this way, a monumental inscription freezes time in the sense that it displays in one time and place the process of controlling, harnessing, and building the natural landscape into an object. The transformation of a natural landscape into a built environment also indexes the ability of a community to compress time into a single display.

d. Graphic design

We have alluded to the ways in which monuments and monumental inscriptions create a dialectic between their graphic design aesthetics and their physical settings. This dialectic works to transition the experience of viewers from the realm of landscape and built environment to the realm of memory. Now we will address in more specific detail how this process occurs. That is, how an audience's experience with the combination of the space of the monument and its graphic design forges a memory that transcends time and space. By graphic design we mean the compositional elements of a text (e. g., shape, color, texture pattern, and script) that communicated its function, value, and provenance to audiences (see Kress/ van Leeuwen 1996; Thomas 2014: 60; Mandell/Smoak 2018).

There is a tendency, however, to study the graphic design of monumental inscriptions for what they might be interpreted to reveal about script development, regional variation, and political ideologies. These are important questions, but they tend to neglect that design refers to many facets of the visual aspects of a text. A good design is one that holds in tension the knowledge and expertise of the designer with the expectations of any given audience. The design represents the meeting point between three interests: the person who commissioned the text, the designer, and the audience (Smith/Schmidt 1996). Moreover, the design of an inscription brings together economic forces, artistic choice, and technological expertise.

The study of graphic design and the visual display of texts in the modern period offers us a vocabulary and methodology to better understand the multi-modality of ancient monumental writings. Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress (2008: 174) describe design as "the practice where modes, media, frames, and sites of display on the one hand […] and the characteristics of the audience on the other are brought into coherence with each other". This definition is important because it stresses that the non-linguistic, or 'paragraphemic' aspects of a text (i. e., the choices in layout, materiality, and overall graphic design) are not ancillary to the linguistic content of a text, but rather are an inseparable part of its message. The study of the design of the scripts on these inscriptions should also pay close attention to how the design of the text intends to interact with the text's other modes, including display, color, shape, and size. As Jennifer Dickson (2015: 508) explains,

> Visual cues such as text formatting, font choice, and choice or manipulation of orthography and writing systems produce complex indexical meanings that are part of the "content" of a piece of writing, just as intonation, volume and prosody become part of the contextually embedded meaning of a spoken utterance.

The Siloam and Royal Steward inscriptions are, in their present form, unaccompanied by any image. As will be discussed, the variation in cursive script style in these inscriptions and other monumental writings of this period should be included as an aspect of their design, rather than a mere indication of their date or provenance (e. g., from a professional vs. non-professional milieu). We would argue that their script style was an equally important factor in their design as the words of these texts. We look to recent work on writing that considers the script ideologies at play in a text, which consider graphic variation to be "a socially relevant communicative practice" (Spitzmüller 2012: 256). In other words, the choice of script style was determined by the text and its audience. For this reason, we include the iconicity of script style as a communicative property of these inscriptions (Sebba 2015: 208–227). The script employed was identifiable as one used in official and royal projects and in administrative bureaucratic communication. When used in these more local displays of power, this script style signaled high status and social prominence.

e. Materiality

A focus upon the materiality of inscriptions offers a corrective to the tendency to study such texts only for what they reveal about the development of script traditions and the history of literacy in ancient Judah. Materiality refers to "an approach that prioritizes the physicality (material) of objects or sites and examines the relationships between people, objects/monuments and actions, allowing the exploration of social networks and meanings" (Williams/Kirton/Gondek 2015: 13). Materiality encompasses both a focus upon how writing or inscribing a material was a material act as well as the way in which written things became material artifacts after they were inscribed (Berti/Bolle/Opdenhoff/Stroth 2017: 3–4). This approach calls for a more holistic examination of a monumental text as an 'object'. It also means thinking more broadly about how such monumental writings functioned as "social agents" (Gell 1998: 17–19).

A focus upon materiality also paves the way for greater emphasis upon the planning and production of monumental objects and inscriptions. Monuments and monumental inscriptions encode messages about the relationship between professional skill and the power of those who erect them by commandeering labor and raw materials. Stone monuments and monumental inscriptions give enduring voice to the ability to draw together knowledge, resources, and skill into one place and time. As Kyle Keimer (2015: 193) observes,

> Those who control the knowledge of working with such a stone (i. e., the kings who commission the masons) make specific statements about their legitimacy, power, and permanency precisely because they are able to have such a hard stone

sculpted and incised. The results are not only pieces of art, but they also further the rhetoric of the monarch, both through the shape and display of the object itself and in the inscription that is incised into it.

As we discuss below, a focus upon the materiality of monumental inscriptions has the added benefit of reframing the study of these texts from the standpoint of their professional manufacture. While there is a tendency to connect such texts to royal auspices, more effort needs to be directed toward understanding them as stages where technological advances, professional skill, organized labor, *and individual and collective agency* was expressed.
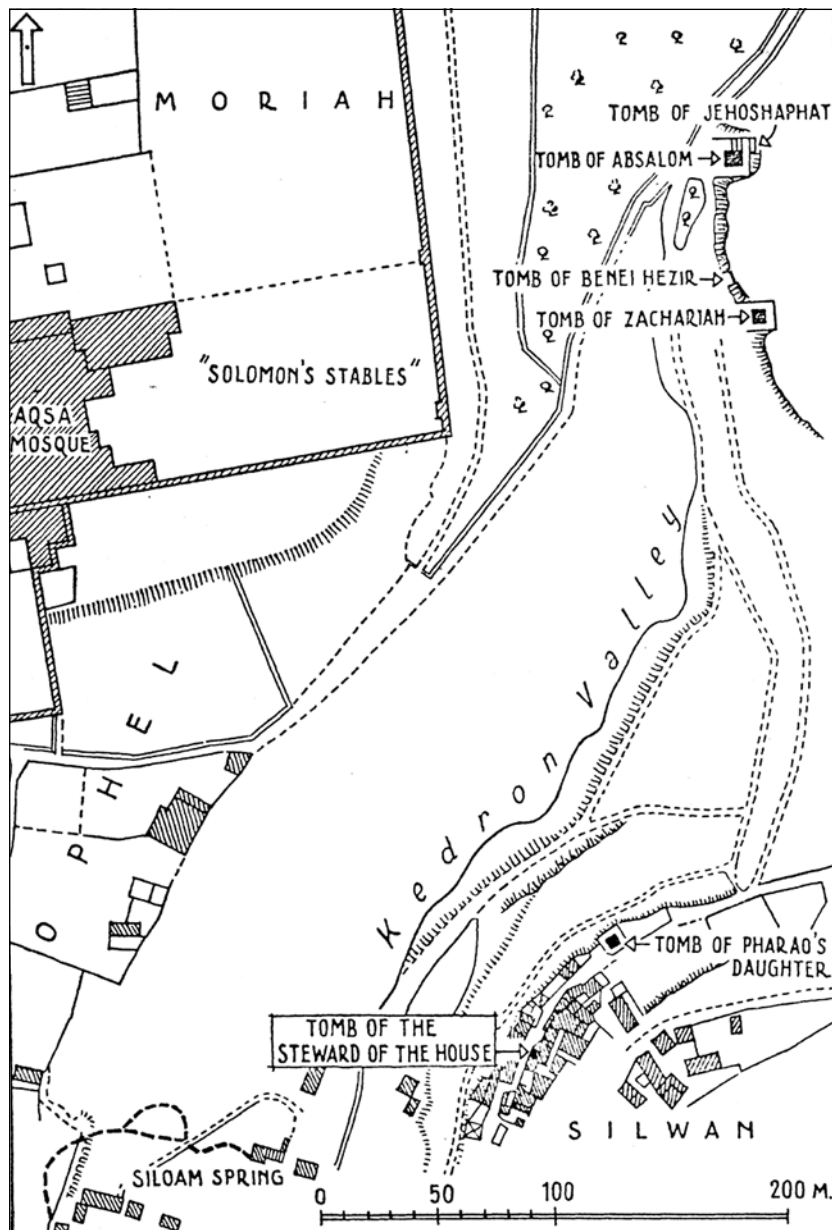
3. The monumentality of the Royal Steward inscription

The Royal Steward inscription is a monumental funerary epitaph for a Jerusalem official discovered over the lintel of a tomb east of the ancient Iron Age city. In 1870 Clermont-Ganneau's explorations outside of Jerusalem led him to this inscription (1899: 305–313; see also Diringer 1934: 106). The tomb is part of a larger complex of burials on the eastern slopes of the Kidron Valley across from the Ophel Hill and the City of David. This necropolis was used by Judean elites during the period of the late monarchy. The inscription was carved into the outer-façade of a tomb complex preserved in the modern-day village of Silwan (Ussishkin 1993: 247–254). The relationship between the city of the dead and spaces of the living elite of Jerusalem was a by-product of the way in which these burial complexes mirrored elite compounds on the other side of the Kidron Valley.

When we turn to our key points on monumentality, our first observation considers this text as an integral part of the tomb complex. Viewing this inscription would have entailed a consideration for the larger space of the tomb complex, and its location in the necropolis. We will also address the broader message about the power that its location on the eastern hill would have projected to its audience. First, however, we will address its materiality and scale. The block of limestone that makes up the outer-façade of the tomb measures 8 m in width by 4 m in height. This three-line inscription was set into a panel that was about 1.32 m in length and was engraved above the main entrance of the tomb (Avigad 1953: 137). The placement of the text is significant, as it became the central sign complex that a person would encounter when approaching the inner chamber. The inscription reads

This [is the tomb of PN-]iah, the royal steward. There is neither silver nor gold [he]re, [but] only [his bones] and his concubine's bon[es] w[ith] him. Cursed be the one who opens this (tomb).

Figure 1: Drawing of the Silwan necropolis and Kidron Valley (Avigad 1953, 138; courtesy Israel Exploration Journal)

This inscription memorializes the status of the tomb owner who served "over the house" and offers a warning to those approaching the tomb. Much of the discussion of the inscription surrounds its possible relationship to Isaiah's rebuke of Shebna, one of Hezekiah's officials (Avigad 1953: 151; Willis 1993: 60–67; Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2004: 404; Hays 2010: 558–573; 2015: 233–234). Scholars looked to the prophetic rebuke in Isaiah 22: 15–19 to reconstruct the personal name in this inscription. The relevant parts of the rebuke read,

> [15] Thus the Lord, Yahweh Almighty says:
>   Go, say to this steward,
>   To Shebna the palace administrator:
> [16] What are you doing here and who gave you permission
>   To cut out a grave for yourself here,
>   Hewing your grave on the height
>   And chiseling your resting place in the rock?
> [17] Beware, Yahweh is about to take firm hold of you
>   And hurl you away, you mighty man.
> [18] He will roll you up tightly like a ball
>   And throw you into a large country.
>   There you will die
>   And there the chariots you were so proud of
>   Will become a disgrace to your master's house.
> [19] I will depose you from your office,
>   And you will be ousted from your position.

If indeed there is a connection between this biblical text and the tomb of the Royal Steward then it is possible to read the prophet's rebuke as directed toward the very monumentality of the tomb. Our more cautious view is that the prophet's rebuke, at the very least, admonishes about the practices associated with elite funerary monuments. Matthew Suriano (2018: 100–108) has recently provided fresh analysis of the linguistic aspects of this inscription that addresses the textual landscape created by such writings in this necropolis. As Suriano (2018: 108–110) argues, the references to "here" and "the height" in v.16 point toward the construction of monumental tombs in the Silwan necropolis. That is, the prophet's rebuke captures the way that such a tomb's monumentality was expressed by its spatial setting and its visibility to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He writes,

> unlike other cemeteries, such as those in the Hinnom Valley and the northern necropolis, which were probably obscured in Jerusalem's urban topography because they were largely underground and unobtrusive, the standing monuments of Silwan would have visibly marked ancient Jerusalem's eastern horizon (Suriano 2018: 110).

Christopher Hays stresses that the prophet's rebuke may have also been directed toward the individual nature of such elite tombs, noting, "They are large and characterized by fine stonework and by features reflecting their builders' intention that they be used only for themselves and not for their descendants" (Hays 2010: 561). Such observations are important because they draw attention to the statement that this monumental tomb made within Jerusalem's natural and built environments, that is, how spectatorship played a role in its monumentality. The Silwan necropolis spoke to the power of Jerusalem's nobility to harness and transform the natural landscape into a built space. The monumentality of the tomb was not merely expressed by its *size*, the reference to elites, or the employment of a professional scribe and/or mason to create this text. Its monumentality was also expressed in the space that it occupied as the focal point of the tomb and that tomb's prominent position up on the eastern ridge of the Kidron Valley. The monumentality of the Royal Steward Inscription was also expressed by the integration of natural and constructed landscapes into its edifice.

When we look more closely at Isaiah's rebuke, it is clear that it addresses the way in which such monuments tapped into the associations of both the natural and built space of the necropolis. The language of v.16 relates the constructed "tomb" *(qbr)* to the "height" *(mrwm)* of the ridge and the "dwelling" *(mškn)* to the "rock" *(slʿ)* of the Kidron cliff. The repetition of the word "here" *(ph)* draws further attention to the action that is rebuked – namely, the transformation of the "height" and the "rock" into a "tomb" and a "dwelling". The prophet is critical of the way in which the tomb's monumentality has turned the height of the natural rocks into a spectacle. The prophet is also dismissive of the way in which the tomb's design contributed to its monumentality. Verse 16 invokes technical terminology that refers to the execution of the tomb into the rock of the cliff. The verse repeats the verb "hew" *(ḥṣb)* twice and employs the verb "carve" or "engrave" *(ḥqq)*. This terminology conveys a sense of the design of the tomb as well as its relationship to the natural limestone of the ridge. Although the biblical text does not appear to refer to the inscription on this or other tombs specifically, the use of the verb "engrave" *(ḥqq)* can refer to the act of writing. Seen in this context, the prophet's rebuke is framed as a performance of *counter-monumentality*. After describing the erection of the tomb on the "height" and the "rock," the prophet condemns the official Shebna by using language that is associated with the dismantling of monumental architecture. Isaiah states that Yahweh will "hurl down," "thrust down," and "tear down" Shebna, his station, and his office.

When we return to this specific inscription, its artistically exquisite design upon the lintel of the tomb forms an excellent case study in monumental writing. Graphically, the repetition of carefully executed letter-forms projects a message of order, direction, and stability. Graphic designers would refer to this artistic technique as an effect of "repetitive-expectancy," which creates a 'rhythm effect' and

an appearance of 'organized movement'" (Bradley 2013: 39). These visual aesthetics convey notions of a high-level of planning, ordered progression, and organized movement and control. Moreover, the engraved letters on this lintel are among the largest examples of writing in the corpus of inscriptions from the Iron Age southern Levant. Thus, the artistic design and scale of the letters compel audiences to wonder how much time and effort went into its production.

Again, rather than focus solely upon the material or script or individual that commissioned the text, our analysis also considers how its design and spatial associations contributed to its monumentality. We view the very placement of the inscription in a prominent display setting over the entrance of the tomb to have conveyed a significant part of its monumentality. The inscription begins by identifying the name of the deceased and his title, the Royal Steward or "the one over the house". Our first observation is that the placement of this text above the lintel, or over the house of the deceased, may be a visual play on the title of the interred: "over the house" i. e., a steward. The placement of a text into a prepared space above the entrance of a tomb door lintel is a common feature in extant funerary inscriptions from this region (e. g., the outer door of the Tomb of the Pharaoh's Daughter door lintel and within the family tomb at Khirbet el-Qom, over an interior chamber [Tomb 1]) (Suriano 2018: 101–102; Dever 1970–1971). We would note, however, that the words "who is over the house" in the Royal Steward text are stretched out and fill the exact center of the prepared lintel space. The spacing is unusual in that it separates the definite article from the word "house".

The relationship between the spatial arrangement of this and other tombs of this period and dwellings is well established. As Suriano (2018: 105) writes, the Royal Steward is claiming the space of the tomb, the house of the dead. We think, moreover, that the placement of the tomb owner's title, even if incidental, in the central space of the lintel ("over the house") would have created a stronger connection between this text and the status of the person that this tomb represented. Their responsibilities in life filled the focal point of this inscribed space, immediately over the doorway of their tomb. In this way, the display location of the inscription gave non-linguistic expression to the very language found in the text.
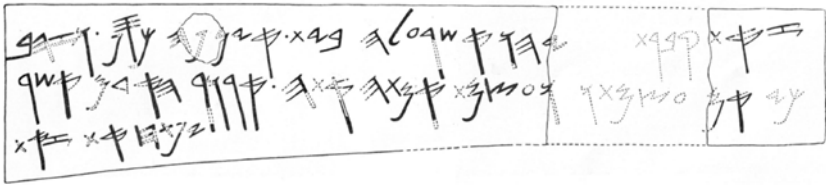
We now turn to the internal graphic design elements, including the arrangement of the letters, and how they impact the scale of the words set into the lintel inscription. The mason who produced the inscription bannered the text into (nearly) two straight lines of well-arranged alphabetic letters. Thinking about this from the perspective of visual culture demands that we think about the opposition of empty and full spaces and the execution of letter forms and scribal marks as displays. The letters are grouped into word units through the opposition of empty and full spaces. We also observed that there appears to be an interest in spacing

the words of the text so that they stretch across the carved space of the lintel. This arraignment produces an image that is dense with writing while the downwards vertical stokes of certain letter forms pull the eye down to lower lines of text, thus creating an image of continuous script. The shape, spacing, and slanting of the letters blurs the line between art and writing as the eye is drawn to the aesthetics of certain letters. For instance, the elongation of the tails on the letters *alef*, *resh*, *waw*, and *resh* that make up the word "cursed" (*'rwr*) produces an image of a word that stands taller than the other words in the inscription. We also note that these letter forms appear to be straighter. While we can of course attribute this to a phase in script, thinking about writing as a part of the monumental design of the tomb requires us to think about non-literate audiences, who may have only recognized this word, which is attested in other tomb contexts (e. g., Beit Lei). The graphic design of these specific letters has the effect of bolding the word in a way that is analogous to the use of all caps in the word 'STOP!'

People who interacted with the inscription had to lift their heads and eyes to see the words. The inscription was out of their reach above the doorway to the tomb. The prominent position of the inscription *over* the doorway combined with the width of the inscription conveyed messages about social hierarchies and boundaries. The vertical height of the letters on the inscription converged with the height of the inscription on the lintel to convey the power of the individual buried within the tomb. The ontology of the inscription as one well-designed large slab of limestone gave enduring testimony to the deceased's ability to stand in a position above those whom he commissioned to construct the tomb. The inscription's location over the doorway placed the words of the deceased in a hierarchical relationship to those who read them.

In death, as in life, "the one over the house" spoke authoritatively to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If there is indeed a connection between this tomb and Isaiah's rebuke of Shebna, the prophet's condemnation to "hurl down," "thrust down," and "tear down" the royal steward take on added meaning against the background of the display setting of the inscription. We are not suggesting that the prophetic attack refers to the inscription specifically. But the reference to Yahweh "tearing down" Shebna from his office would have taken on concrete meaning against the backdrop of the inscription displayed over the tomb. Indeed, it becomes easy to imagine that the inscription might have been the concrete target of the threats to "hurl down," "thrust down," and "tear down" when we consider the way that it identified the tomb with "the one over the house". Generally speaking, the prophet's rebuke counter-monumentalizes the inscription by decrying "the one who is above".

Figure 2: Drawing of the Royal Steward Inscription (Avigad 1953: pl. 9; courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society)

When we move to the script of this inscription, it is typically described as written in a 'monumental' or 'lapidary' style, which implies an opposition to ink-based and more ephemeral writings. However, the extant inscriptions from Judah during the 8th century are marked by their increasingly curved execution.[5] In addition, certain letters exhibit a 'tick' on their right-hand side that originated in the stroke of a stylus using ink, which carried over to certain stone inscriptions. For example, the *'alef* on the Siloam Tunnel Inscription has no tick, but it is written with two horizontal and nearly parallel strokes; the bottom stroke on the right stops at the vertical stroke. The *zayin* is written with a tick and the *mem*, *nun*, and *kaf* curve upwards. These features of the script style of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription contrast noticeably with certain features on the Royal Steward Inscription. For these reasons, we see a breakdown in the terminology used for stone and monumental inscriptions, which display varying degrees of a cursive script style (see Cross 1962a: 18). For example, while the Royal Steward text is written in a more cursive script than the Ophel Stone Inscription (see Figure 2), it is not as cursive in style as the Siloam Tunnel Inscription. For this reason, we must return to Naveh's observation that the letters used in these inscriptions exhibit a range of cursive/ non-cursive forms, or what he called "formal styles" (Naveh 1987: 8; see also the comments on cursive vs. lapidary script in Keimer 2015: 204–206). This variation was conditioned by the skill of the scribe/mason, the type of text, and, equally important, *the desired aesthetic or graphic design of the inscription*. As Kyle Keimer (2015: 197) emphasizes,

> […] each inscription has captured in stone the subjective decisions of the mason responsible for its production […] When the technology and practicality behind the production of an inscription are considered, it becomes possible to comment on

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5 This is the hallmark feature that most identify as signaling the appearance of an 'Old Hebrew' script and the age of script differentiation along national and linguistic lines. Because this script is first found on the Moabite stela the degree to which this was a marker of national identity at this early stage can be debated. Most notably, we point to the fact that the curve of the *kaf*, *mem*, and *nun* in the Moabite Stone are diagnostic features that differentiate this script from those written using the Phoenician script.

why a script appears a certain way and not just how an inscription looks and what the inscription itself says.

To this, we would add that scripts are not neutral vehicles of communication, but work with the linguistic modes of a text to convey meaning (Spitzmüller 2012: 256–260).

In some cases, the letter forms that are cursive and akin to what we would expect of a script conditioned by the social context and technologies used to produce a text. In the field of linguistics, it is accepted that a dialect can operate in various registers (i. e., the situational variation that can occur within a language variety) (Biber and Finegan 1994: 6). Perhaps we might also consider how the 'registers' of script selected for such purposes were determined by the social setting of the text and its material, rather than limiting the 'cursive' or 'non-cursive' or 'lapidary' vs. 'cursive' debates to the date of the text or the technologies used to create it.

The above discussion also points to the need for further consideration of how scripts encode and convey more than chronological and political messages. Script styles possess not only diachronic information, but they are informed by individual decisions about their aesthetics and desired function and other considerations (see Zuckerman/Swartz Dodd 2003; Kaufman 1986). The moment of the execution of writing is, after all, reflective of the choices that individuals made to create a text. This means that regardless of the intention of the person funding or sponsoring these texts, their design was largely the product of those crafting such objects.[6] Those people producing such inscriptions worked backwards, so to speak. They visualized the desired effect that the words, script, medium, and viewing space would have upon an audience.

4. A monumental feat: The Siloam Tunnel inscription

The Siloam Tunnel Inscription was placed in a subterranean tunnel on the interior wall of a public works project under the City of David. The text commemorates the technological feat of a group of workers who tunneled a water system from the Gihon Spring to a large public pool on the southern end of the Iron Age city (Younger 1994: 551). The inscription does not mention any one person by name, but instead it commemorates the creation of the tunnel (Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 397). It celebrates the moment when the two teams of workers, working from opposite ends of the tunnel, met each other underground (Sasson 1982: 113; Faust 2000: 5). The inscription reads,

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6 For further discussion of the motivations behind certain script choices, see Lehmann (2008) and Keimer (2015: 209).

[…] the breaking through. And this was the manner of the breaking through: While [the hewers were wielding] the pick, each one toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be tunnel[ed through, there was hea]rd the sound of each one calling to his fellow, for there was a fissure in the rock on the right and [on the left]. At the time of the breakthrough, the hewers struck, each to meet his fellow, pick against [p]ick. And then the waters flowed from the spring to the pool for twelve hundred cubits. And a hu[nd]red cubit was the height in the rock above the heads of the hewer[s].[7] (Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 499)

The location of the inscription in a subterranean setting has caused substantial discussion about its function (see Garbini 1969; Parker 1994; Shea 1988; Sanders 2009: 139).

If we speak of the inscription as a display, it was certainly a display for the workers and those with knowledge of the tunnel, but not a display for the public at large (Parker 1997: 39). Why, then, do we classify this inscription as monumental? This was a hidden text and in this way it stands apart from the majority of texts that many scholars deem monumental. Given the monumental nature of creating this water tunnel, we might have expected the inscription to have been located outside of the tunnel, at its entrance perhaps, or next to the pool to which it leads. The inscription is located about 6–7 m inside the southern end of the tunnel. This location challenges assumptions about the spectatorship of monumental writing involving audiences that encountered them in large, urban spaces.

Indeed, the few scholars who do not classify the inscription as a monumental inscription do so precisely because it makes no mention of a king or an official who might have commissioned its production or organized the labor for the tunnel. While there is some evidence that a second inscription might have been planned for that purpose, the content of the inscription indicates that it functioned for a more narrow audience (see comments in Rendsburg/Schniedewind 2010: 191). It marks a specific moment in time when the masons cutting through the eastern ridge of the capital city managed to meet (Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005: 397). We emphasize at the outset that the setting of the inscription within the tunnel captured an important element in its monumentality. It is set within the technological feat itself and as a result a large part of its monumentality derives from its physical embeddedness within the technological feat that it describes.

The fact that the inscription does not mention a royal figure, an elite, or deities does not negate its monumentality. Here we have a text that narrates a *monumental feat*. That is, the inscription commemorates one of the most significant technological advances in tunneling technology in the ancient world (for a description of

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7 For key treatments, see Schniedewind (2004: 72–73); Aḥituv (2005: 15–20; 2008: 19–25); Dobbs-Allsopp et al. (2005: 499–506); Younger (1994).

the engineering, see Gill 1991; Lancaster/Long 1999; Frumkin/Shimron 2006; Sneh/
Weinberger/Shalev 2010). The tunnel that the workers cut into the rock of the City
of David was the longest tunnel produced in the Near East to that point in history.
It measures a total of 533 m in length (about 1700 ft.), making it significantly lon-
ger than any of the tunnels from the Levant dating to the same time period (for
a description of the tunnel, see Ussishkin 1976; 1995). The water tunnel at the site
of Gibeon by comparison only measures about 50 m in length and is the second
longest water tunnel in Israel during the Iron Age (Frumkin/Shimron 2006: 228).
Similar tunnel projects carried out in Assyria used a method of connecting inter-
mediate shafts in order to form long tunnels (Aḥituv 2008: 22).

The Siloam tunnel was an extraordinary accomplishment because it did not
use shafting to connect the different parts of the tunnel but instead only relied
upon acoustic sounding between a surface team and the subterranean teams for
the entire route of the tunnel. The project required expertise in acoustic technol-
ogy, hydrogeology, and architecture. The labor not only involved two teams cut-
ting toward one another from two different sides of the City of David, but also a
surface team who used acoustic tools to direct the subterranean teams toward the
desired outlet. In addition, the tunnel evidences expertise in the use of plaster on
the floor and sidings of the tunnel in order to mitigate the potential loss of water
in the karstic rock. All of this highlights the great technological advance that this
tunnel represented (see Parker 1994). The inscription was not a commemoration of
the construction of a tunnel only, but also of a significant technological advance-
ment that involved the pooling of tremendous expertise and labor for a project
that would bring significant benefits to the citizens of the city.

An emphasis upon the great technological feat of the tunnel shapes the way
that we look at the function of the inscription. While it is tempting to describe
the inscription as a retelling or narrative of the tunneling project, we note the
importance that references to expertize knowledge play in the text. The inscription
repeats references to the technologies, tools, and professionals involved in the proj-
ect: "breakthrough", "picks", "excavators", "struck", etc. In this way, the inscription
is not so much a description of the story of the tunneling as it is a description
of the completion of the project and testament to the expertise and technologies
involved (for similar suggestions, see Parker 1997: 39; Younger 1994: 552–553).[8] The
inscription celebrates the sophisticated technology and professional labor that
was brought together for the project, highlighting the final moment when water
flowed from the Gihon to the Siloam Tunnel. Particularly noteworthy in this

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8 So, Parker (1997: 39), "The inscription is told from the point of view of someone caught up in the
  success of the project (the actual meeting of the two parties) and impressed by its scale (the mea-
  surements). The structure and content of the inscription betray both an emotional engagement
  in the outcome and a sense of pride in the success of an exceptional technical achievement."

regard are the references to the use of acoustic technology in the inscription. The inscription recalls the "sound" of the workers that the excavators heard in the tunnel as they tunneled. Here we have – if Frumkin and Shimron and others are correct – a commemoration of the sophisticated use of acoustic technology to guide the excavators (Frumkin/Shimron 2006: 232; see also Puech 1974: 201–202).

As we noted above, the inscription is not so much a story or narrative of the project as it is an overture to the tools, technology, and professionals involved in the project. It does not tell us who commissioned the project, when, or why, but rather speaks to the people who made it. Important also is the way that the inscription draws specific attention to measurements. Line three refers to the acoustics that the workers heard while they were still *three cubits* apart. Line four alludes to knowledge of directionality: *north and south*. Line four describes the length of the flow of water *(one thousand two hundred cubits)*. Finally, line four describes the height of the rock above the heads of the excavators as *one hundred cubits*. In this way, the last line of the text commemorates the accomplishment of the surface team to communicate with the excavators some hundred cubits below. As this description of the text reveals, the monumentality of the inscription lies in large part in the way that it celebrates and commemorates pioneering expertise in engineering, hydraulics, and acoustic technology. The tunnel was a monumental feat that involved the pooling of the highest level of professional skill for the creation of the longest tunnel in the region. The location of the inscription *within* the tunnel in which the breakthrough took place formed an important part of the way that this aspect of its monumentality was expressed (see Aḥituv 2008: 23). The inscription's monumentality was expressed by its location at the meeting point of the different professional teams and the outcome of their labors.

The script style of the inscription has long taken center stage in discussions of the history and development of a national Hebrew script (see Hendel 1996: 233–237; van der Kooij 1987: 103–107).[9] Many studies note that use of a cursive script in the inscription is unusual, as it deviates from the lapidary style expected on such a stone monument. Vaughn noted that several of the letter forms evident in the inscription most resemble the script of 7th-century BCE Hebrew seals and administrative texts (i. e., the Samaria Ostraca) (1999; cited in Schniedewind 2015: 407). It is also noteworthy that the script style of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription differs from the style of other monumental inscriptions from Jerusalem during the same period (i. e., Ophel Inscription and the fragment of a monumental inscription from the City of David). What we have on the Siloam Tunnel Inscription is a script style that more closely resembles the cursive style used in administrative texts, which reflect the use of ink writing implements. The scribe and/or mason who produced

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9 For further discussion of the paleography of the inscription, see Naveh (1982b: 90–95); Cross (1979: 75).

the inscription adapted the letter forms typical of an administrative style to a stone inscription. The result is a unique *graphic design* that locates an extended text with a lot of technical and professional terminology in a densely compacted rectangular space. The professional expertise demonstrated by the scribe's ability to space out the letters evenly, include word-dividers at the appropriate places, and arrange the text into four lines of equal length paralleled the professional expertise of the engineers who carried out the project. The script style with its wide use of cursive forms gives voice to and celebrates the trade and achievements of a professional elite within the capital city.[10] It gives iconic and concrete voice to the accomplishments of non-royal professionals beyond their own lifetimes.

Perhaps the strongest reflex of the monumentality of the inscription is found in its various discussions and retellings in contemporary scholarship (Parker 1997: 40–42; Stager/King 2001: 220; Schniedewind 2004: 72–73; Hadley 2012). As we noted at the outset of this study, monumental inscriptions define themselves in large part by how effectively they lend themselves to local memories, cultural narratives, and political histories. Such inscriptions possess an ability to transcend time and act as portals that connect past, present, and future audiences. One of the most noticeable features of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription is the way that contemporary scholars connect its importance to the history of the reign of Hezekiah and his conflict with the Assyrian empire in the late 8th century BCE. Even though the inscription itself does not mention the king or its relation to the historical events of this period, its location in the tunnel and its description of the technological feat of bringing water to the city are readily connected to Hezekiah's preparations for an Assyrian siege. Certain studies, however, situate the time frame of this project either earlier than Hezekiah's reign (Reich/Shukron 2011: 147–157; for a summary, see also Russell 2017: 103–105) or later to the reign of Manasseh (Sneh/Weinberger/Shalev 2010: 61–63; see also Knauf 2001: 281–287).

Some of the scholarly discussion tends to overlook the significance of the technological language in the inscription in favor of locating its significance within the broader political and biblical history of the Neo-Assyrian Period. This tendency obfuscates an important part of the inscription's monumentality which is, intimately related to its local and professional import. In this inscription, we have civil engineers commemorating their craft by carving their most monumental professional achievement into the wall of the tunnel. The inscription memorialized the feat by focusing the memory of those who worked on the tunnel upon the final stage of the product and the benefits that it brought to the city. The inscription

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10 See the comments by Rendsburg and Schniedewind (2010: 119), "The writing employed here differs from the standard genres of royal palace and priestly temple writing; rather, the inscription is a work of engineers, craftsmen and labourers whose aim was to commemorate their accomplishment".

did not commemorate a public spectacle, but instead a technological feat that was accomplished by a select group of elite professionals who possessed a specific type of knowledge. This was a closed display text of sorts in that its audience was those professional architects, engineers, laborers, and geologists who collaborated on the project. This display recorded their engineering plans, tools, and labors that were employed in the tunnel. The location of the inscription inside the tunnel formed the appropriate way to celebrate their technical skill. And, while it is commemorative, the inscription also anticipates 'forward-looking relationships', such as the relationship between the tunnel project and the larger needs of the city. In this way, the text connected this specific group of engineers and stone masons to future generations in the city who benefitted from their labor.

5. Conclusion

The present study has sought to add new dimensions to the way that our field defines and describes the monumentality of inscriptions. The terminology of monumental is often applied to stone inscriptions and monuments, however, there is little effort to interact with new theoretical insights about what such terminology conveys regarding their function and evolving meaning. We have also stressed that while most studies agree that the Royal Steward and Siloam Tunnel Inscriptions are monumental texts, there is no real consensus about why that is. Monumentality is defined using the following terminology: public, display, commemorative, expensive, lapidary script, formal script, monumental script, durable, scribal, professional, large, stone, royal, etc. However, there is less consideration for why inscriptions that possess such traits are considered monumental, or how to classify those texts that do not meet these criteria but fulfilled similar social roles. Some studies attempt to connect such inscriptions to royal scribes, or focus on their execution in stone, or highlight aspects of their script. As recent scholarship on monumentality shows, however, monumental texts can be non-royal, non-lapidary, inscribed in a more cursive script, and set within hidden or less-accessible display locations. In order to offer a more integrated approach to monumental inscriptions we have therefore considered the roles that *scale, space, spectatorship, graphic design, and materiality* play in the Royal Steward and Siloam Tunnel Inscriptions to create meaning. These two texts employ writing to shape perceptions of the spaces in which they were installed and to *monumentalize* the technologies and expertise that went into their production.

The Royal Steward and Siloam Tunnel Inscriptions offer different perspectives on the variety of forms that monumental inscriptions might take within an urban landscape. The Royal Steward Inscription gave enduring visual and linguistic expression to the relationship between the Silwan necropolis and the City

of David, the place of Jerusalem's administrative elite. Monumental inscriptions function as microcosms of the convergences of power, skill, technology, and labor. As Sarah Jackson and Joshua Wright (2014:136) summarize, "monuments carry out human intentions and meanings even when their creators are not present, or are long gone [...] They extend the work of people by directing interaction, thought and experiences of the landscapes they inhabit." The ability to engrave monumental structures with Hebrew writing on both ridges of the city made a statement about the boundaries of the city and the ability of the city's elite to harness technology and expertise to shape the landscape. Inscribing the exterior of his tomb formed a most effective way for the Royal Steward to live beyond the *space* and *time* of the capital city. In this way, monumental writing enabled Jerusalem's elite to leave an enduring record of their power over the realms of life and death.

The Siloam Tunnel Inscription showcases a different expression of monumentality. It memorializes the expertise and labor of professionals who cut a massive tunnel under the monumental structures of Jerusalem. It records in stone the highly professional knowledge and skill required to accomplish such a monumental feat. The work of the tunneling had obvious and enduring benefits for the city that were set out in public at the pool. We can think of the effect of the tunnel, the water coursing into the urban space of the city, as the public display of the tunneling feat. The inscription, by contrast, was hidden within the darkness of the tunnel and communicated to a much more narrow audience. Rather than view this location as incidental, we believe that the underground tunnel formed the perfect location for expressing a form of elite professional knowledge – 'knowledge of the guild' – needed to cut such a tunnel. We also view the more cursive script used in this text as another mode by which it communicated to Jerusalem's engineering elite. Once set into stone, this intricate and fluid script gave enduring expression to the professionals able to work in stone in such an advanced manner.

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