

# The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna Researches in the Arabah 1959–1984: Vol. 1

Beno Rothenberg

Twenty-five years of intensive fieldwork and research in the Arabah have produced an unprecedented amount of information about the past history of the Arabah and the adjacent areas of Sinai, North-western Arabia and the Negev. This volume is the first of four which will fully present the findings of the Arabah Expedition, throwing new light on the archaeo-metallurgical history of this area of extreme importance for the early history of mining and metal technology.

The discovery of the Ramesside mining temple, dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Hathor, was a turning point in the history of the Arabah research. The identification through this discovery of the large scale copper mining and smelting operations in the Arabah as Egyptian industries, where Egyptian mining expeditions worked together with local inhabitants, the Midianites from North-western Arabia and the Amalekites from the Negev mountains, has meant fundamental changes in the culture-historical concepts concerning the areas adjacent to the Gulf of Eilat-Aqaba.

The old ideas of King Solomon's Mines and the Solomonic copper smelters on the shores of the Red Sea have had to be completely changed in the light of this new archaeological evidence which proves that the south-western Arabah came into the sphere of influence of the Pharaohs of New Kingdom Egypt.

The identification of a Midianite phase of the Timna Temple with numerous unique votive gifts, like the superb 'brazen serpent', is of considerable significance also for the Biblical story at the time of the Exodus.

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