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Acknowledgments

We must begin by thanking the participants of the conference “At the Margins: Interconnections of Power and Identity in the Ancient Near East,” held at Brown University on October 3–4, 2019, the purpose of which was to explore different perspectives on the concept of marginality in the ancient Near East and Egypt, as well as interrogate the classic core-periphery model in this area of study. For the conference, we invited fourteen speakers from around the world with expertise across a number of territories and time periods. Organizing a conference of this magnitude would not have been possible without the support of our community at Brown and our scholarly community at large.

“At the Margins” was filled with the excellent work from Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, Alvise Matessi, Pınar Durgun, Claudia Glatz, Valeria Turriziani, Lorenzo d’Alfonso, Alexander Ahrens, Peter Dubovský, Ellen Morris, N. İlgi Gerçek, Daniel Fleming, Gojko Barjamovic, Avraham Faust, and Ann Shafer. These scholars not only contributed to the growing corpus of scholarship shaping frontier studies in the ancient Near East and Egypt but also engaged in stimulating conversation that certainly influenced this volume. We consider ourselves



FIGURE 0.1. *The organizers and participants of “At the Margins: Interconnections of Power and Identity in the Ancient Near East” at Brown University, October 3–4, 2019. Back row (left to right): Valeria Turriziani, Alvise Matessi, Avraham Faust, Megan Lewis, Ann Shafer, İlgi Gerçek, Lorenzo d’Alfonso, Pınar Durgun, Daniel Fleming, Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, Gojko Barjamovic, Alexander Ahrens. Front row (left to right): Ellen Morris, Peter Dubovský, Sara Mohr, Christian Casey, Shane M. Thompson, Claudia Glatz, Carl Walsh.*

lucky to have been able to bring such scholarship to Brown, and we thank all of our presenters for making this conference as successful an event as it was.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the completion of this volume. It is nothing short of miraculous that publication was able to proceed on time with very few complications. However, the pandemic has brought to light a number of inequities in academia including a lack of diversity in authorship in scholarly publications. This volume is no exception. Without proper support in academia and in other professions, diverse members of the workforce have struggled the most, and many of them have been pushed out. We very much wished we could have included all of the papers from the conference in this volume. While this already was going to be difficult to achieve, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible. We believe that the contributions to this volume are excellent, and we are proud to have served as their authors’ editors. However, this belief does not overshadow the sadness we feel for the lack of inclusion in this volume and the circumstances from which it came.

The conference was generously supported by several sponsors inside and outside of Brown that we are more than happy to thank: the Department of Egyptology and Assyriology, the Program in Early Cultures, the Cogut Institute for the Humanities, the Charles K. Colver Lectureships and Publications Fund, the Program in Judaic Studies, the Program in Middle East Studies, the Department of History, the Brown University Graduate Student Council, the Department of Classics, the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, the Department of Religious Studies, the Department of Comparative Literature, the American Academy of Religion, and the American Research Center in Egypt. These sponsors were responsible for the funding that allowed us to bring such a global group of scholars to campus and put on a truly enjoyable conference.

Institutional support is essential, but it is the individual people who truly gave vitality to “At the Margins.” We thank Matthew Rutz (Brown University, Egyptology and Assyriology) and Saul Olyan (Brown University, Religious Studies) for their help in crafting the description for this conference and in securing funding. “At the Margins” would not have had the global reach it had without the work of Megan Lewis of the YouTube channel Digital Hammurabi. Megan graciously volunteered her time and expertise to both film and live-stream the conference for those who were unable to be in Providence, bringing these important conversations to a wide scholarly and public audience. Accessibility was a priority for us in planning this conference. Project Visiting Scholar, run by Pinar Durgun, offers an accessibility checklist and certification for conferences and other academic gatherings. We are proud to have been the first Project Visiting Scholar–certified accessible conference. We are indebted to Christian Casey, our coorganizer for this conference, for his work in bringing “At the Margins” to life. He also served as an early copy editor for this volume, providing proofreading and offering kind help with those authors for whom English is not their first language. Finally, but most importantly, we thank Nicole Vadnais (Brown University, Religious Studies) for her tireless work in managing funds and ensuring all of our participants had transportation and accommodations. Without Nicole, there truly would not have been a conference.

This volume would not have been possible without the guidance of our editors at the University Press of Colorado, Darrin Pratt and Allegra Martschenko. Their knowledge and care are what made the process of publishing this work as smooth as it could have been. As well, we are grateful for the insightful comments from the reviewers who took the time to carefully read this volume and offer their expertise in helping make the contributions as strong as possible. We are also indebted to our indexer, Raleigh Heth, as well as the typesetters and formatters at UPC for their time and expertise.

Abbreviations

- CAD Gelb, Ignace J., et. al. 1956–2010. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. 21 vols. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- CT De Buck, Adriaan. 1935–2006. *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*. 8 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- CTH *Catalogue des textes hittites*.
- D Chassinat, Emile and François Daumas. 1934–2007. *Le temple de Dendera*. 12 vols. (XI and XII by S. Cauville). Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale.
- DG Gauthier, Henri. 1925–31. *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*. 7 vols. Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale pour la Société royale de géographie d'Égypte.
- EA Moran, William L. 1991. *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Edfou* De Rochemonteix, Maxence, and Emile Chassinat. 1897–1934. *Le Temple d’Edfou*. 14 vols. Le Caire: Institut français d’archéologie orientale.
- Esna* Sauneron, Serge. 1959–82. *Le temple d’Esna*. 8 vols. Le Caire: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale.
- KBo* *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*.
- PT* Sethe, Kurt. 1908–22. *Die ägyptischen Pyramidentexte*. 4 vols. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.
- RIM* Frayne, Douglas. 1990. *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods*. Vol. 4, *Old Babylonian Period: 2003–1595 B.C.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- RIMA* *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods*.
- RIMB* *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods*.
- RINAP* Grayson, A. Kirk, and Jamie Novotny. 2012. *The Royal Inscriptions of 3 / 1 Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part I*. The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period Volume 3 / 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Urk.* Steindorff, Georg, ed. 1904–61. *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*. 8 vols. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.
- Wb* Erman, Adolf, and Hermann Grapow. 1926–71. *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*. 7 vols. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

**Power and Identity at the Margins
of the Ancient Near East**

SARA MOHR AND SHANE M. THOMPSON

As scholars of the ancient world, we find our work is often described as bringing some aspect of the past to life, as taking long-dead people from distant regions and bringing them into our world in a way that shows we are all human. Our modern era's history of discussion reveals this lofty goal in our tendency to repeat notions related to history's propensity for repetition. It is true that larger concepts such as war and peace, power and resistance, and urban and rural pull a thread of connection between many different peoples and places. These themes are often at the root of the Big Questions tackled by historians. However, as modern people influenced by the current state of our world, we can struggle to move beyond the structures that currently define our history. This is perhaps most true for borders, including those that are physical, conceptual, or even metaphysical. Sarah Maza (2017), in her work on how we study and think about history, notes that due to our modern perceptions and modern history, when we seek to answer Big Questions, we are often tempted to limit these studies to easily definable areas that mimic our modern nation-states. In laying down borders and boundaries, we inevitably end up defining frontiers and margins. As

we hope to show in this volume, margins and frontiers are where the big themes of history find themselves pushed and pulled into new contexts and new frames of mind. As Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett (2011) write, “If frontiers are spaces of narrative closure, then borderlands are places where stories take unpredictable turns and rarely end as expected” (338).

The title of this collection, “At the Margins,” implies that the “margins” are identifiable locations, physical spaces where people and cultures lived and thrived, often in the shadow of neighboring powers. If so, where are these locales and what qualities do they possess that warrant their inclusion together in such a collection? For our purposes, the margins exist at the edges of powerful entities. Usually, these marginal locations are included in our mental maps—and actual maps—of the territories that these entities control. With their inclusion, political, economic, and cultural hegemony is typically assumed. In reality, these marginal lands coexist alongside fuzzy and ever-changing conceptions of borders that cannot be neatly drawn on a map (see, for e.g., Michalowski 1986). Power and identity are fluctuating conceptions that can change alongside these borders in the face of a single historical moment. The essays in this collection show this, largely demonstrating that these locales warrant individual examination.

We do, however, note the inherent flaw of our own methodology, examining these locales based on their location “at the margins” of other powers. Thus, the margins exist simultaneously in two ways: (1) as entities with their own history, culture(s), tradition(s), and so on; and (2) as objects of hegemony influenced and/or controlled in some manner by a foreign power. This form of existence shapes and reinforces the local community, operating paradoxically by both separating from and uniting with the controlling foreign power (Baud and Van Schendel 1997).

The question that the title of this collection immediately asks is, “What does it mean to be marginal?” The corollaries to this question are “What does it mean to have power?” and “How do people in marginal locales construct identity in the midst of interaction with expanding foreign entities?” In this volume, Daniel Fleming states that “all of these . . . still define a place by what is outside it, by how it relates to something else, intrinsically larger, that maps a land with lines that we conceive as boundaries” (Fleming, chapter 8 in this volume). He is certainly correct, though we suggest that this manner of study is entirely valid. No city, state, political situation, or social dynamic should be examined with a microscope. Rather, the simultaneous existence of “marginal” sites possessing their own distinct heritage as they also function under the shadow of more powerful entities is a reality that must be taken into account. Thus, it is not at all problematic to accept that the areas studied in this volume operated within multiple frameworks of political and social dynamics, both local and international.

The fairly recent use of “frontier” studies by scholars of the ancient Near East and Egypt has helped elucidate political and social structures in the region

(Rodseth and Parker 2005). The textual examination of social and political structures through the lens of frontier studies is a relatively new approach to scholarship in these fields. Archaeological evidence also assuredly functions to help illuminate these issues, though it is traditionally used in models focused on “empire” and “imperialism” with a focus on the dominant entity (see, e.g., Sinopoli 1994). The importance of these studies to the field is rooted in the ability to examine all sides of the issues. For example, when looking at the social structure of Late Bronze Age Syria, one must look at both the social structure of the Hittite Empire, as well as the social structure of the local Syrian sites. It is only through an examination of all the evidence, both from the imperial center and its frontier sites, that political and social structures can continue to be discovered. As Alexander Ahrens notes in chapter 3 in this volume, “margin-ality” exists in multiple facets, including such manifestations as the ecological, economic, and social. Yet recent studies continue to embrace models such as the “core-periphery,” which inherently suggests a spatial, geographical reality with the powerful entity at the center.

In the study of ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian hegemony, the evidence used to discuss hegemonic interaction comes from the textual and archaeological record. People and wares move across neighboring regions and can either adopt the material culture of their powerful rulers or eschew influence, choosing to assert their own material identities (see, e.g., Glatz 2008). Similarly, language and its use can be utilized as signs of historical power shifts or as signs of resistance to those same powers (see, e.g., Bourdieu 1991; Craith 2007). As frontier studies of the ancient world have evolved, we see more scholarship combining text and archaeology, transgressing traditional academic boundaries despite still relying heavily on models from other fields not always applicable to the ancient Near East (e.g., Barfield 1989; Thomas 1991; White 1991; Whittaker 1994). However, the disciplinary boundaries established by area studies often prevent the kind of discussion and influence facilitated by such a volume. It is our hope that as frontier studies become more entrenched in the study of the ancient world, these disciplinary boundaries between locations and between text and archaeology will continue to fall.

Nevertheless, much work remains to be done in regard to landscapes and ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian hegemony. These landscapes are able to function as nonhuman actors, both keeping communities insular and foreigners out. The authors in this volume address both the dearth of scholarship in this area and make strides in expanding it. Scholars within the field must continue to use all available evidence together to elucidate the realities of these hegemonic interactions. Archaeological and textual evidence should both be used with an awareness of the landscapes from which it arises (e.g., Glatz and Plourde 2011). Texts move as people and material culture move. When examining how this

occurs, we must keep in mind the physical nature of texts and understand their movement across the landscape. These landscapes include natural features such as rivers, deserts, and mountains, as well as man-made structures such as walls (e.g., Braund 1996; Hingley and Hartis 2009; Morris 2010). We must also examine the distances between entities. In the case of the ancient Near East and Egypt, academic boundaries of specialization can make these distances seem much larger than they are, when in fact all of the polities in this volume can be considered neighbors. Finally, the materiality of objects is directly tied to the landscape from which they come. It is not just the form the object takes, but the material itself that can indicate relationships of power and resistance (e.g., Glatz 2012). All of this evidence taken together can help shed light on the power structures from the ancient world.

Often more powerful than the physical map is the mental map—the conceptualization of the space surrounding a known territory, a space that, in some cases, may include places that do not even exist (Michalowski 1986). Territory is of course a geographical notion, but it is also a juridicopolitical one: the space controlled by a specific power (Foucault 1980). The distinction between “here” and “there” has always been of interest to geographers in any capacity, as it is precisely these differences that generate movement of goods, people, and information. For many, the difference between social space and physical space does not exist to the point that no distinction is made between the two. Increasingly, geographers have looked into the role of relative location in the distinction between what is our space and what is theirs. These questions consider places not in terms of their exact locations, but rather in terms of travel costs, distances, and their ability to produce labor and goods (Gould and White 2004). In this sense, from the point of view of power, space and place become equated with people and wealth.

Some places are known from firsthand experience, while other places are little more than just names (see this occurrence, for instance, in the Babylonian Map of the World). These places are often given names as a part of the figurative language of a community and can be used to define the beliefs of a particular group. In some cases, landscape descriptions embody a discourse of empire, while in others the language is meant to undermine such forms of power (Pratt 1982). A relation of dominance is predicated on the relationship between the seer and the seen. Further, bestowing a name on a place can be understood as a civilizing effort undertaken by the dominant power. Before a theoretical landscape is subject to human scrutiny, it is taken to be wild, untamed, and chaotic. The process of exploring this territory involves charting, mapping, and thus bringing the space under cognitive control (Salmond 1982). Certain spatial metaphors are equally geographical and strategic, folded into the bureaucracy and propaganda created by each new imperial structure. Exploring how these names function in

discourse produced by both the powerful and the marginal is essential in understanding the ways in which landscape plays a role in the definition of boundaries.

Further, both local iconographic and monumental depictions, as well the creation of imperial forts and administrative centers, reflect the actualities of foreign rule to frontier communities (see, e.g., Morris 2004). If performative ritual occurs at a location, it further reinforces particular power dynamics such as the high status of the king (see, e.g., Shafer 2007; Ornan 2007; Harmanşah 2007; Gilibert 2011). Most interesting are the attempts by powers to seamlessly insert themselves into the history and traditions of particular sites (note, e.g., the reliefs at Nahr el-Kalb). Large-scale artistic depictions also function to reflect power from a foreign hegemonic entity, placing the king in a continuous act of dominance within monumental narratives (see, e.g., Durusu-Tanrıöver 2019; Morris 2014). This is sometimes seen in the “othering” of foreigners in nonroyal settings such as tombs. Finally, the existence of forts and administrative centers reflects actual control over frontier sites, helping to show which areas were deemed to be of greater importance.

Inherently, this volume pushes back against top-down approaches that characterize the study of marginal locales in the ancient Near East and Egypt. Previous studies largely exist in the tradition of world-systems theory, and work solely within frameworks of “empire” and “imperialism” that prioritize evidence from the powerful entity in hegemonic interactions (see, e.g., Liverani 2017). The reader will note that, while chapters in this volume use these terms, primarily in order to identify different locales, they largely work within the framework of the common critique to Wallerstein’s work: most peripheries also have their own cores.

This manner of research is succinctly summarized by Bradley J. Parker in a recent collection of papers on peripheral locales in the Neo-Assyrian Period: “‘Imperial periphery’ does not simply refer to a group of studies that take areas outside or on the edges of empire. Instead, this title frames a group of studies that take areas outside or on the edges of empire as key to imperial dynamics, thus highlighting the role peripheries played in stimulating or even instigating processes of change” (Parker 2018, 266). While we reinforce that studies of this sort are valuable, we stress the importance of individual examination of these marginal locales. Although previous studies of the margins do indeed highlight the “periphery,” they usually do so in order to obtain more information about the “imperial core.” Here, not only do we examine the marginal locales as the focus, but we also resist the outdated mapping which a core-periphery model insists upon. In sum, we insist that we must examine the nature of individual sites based on their own textual and archaeological evidence in conjunction with that from “the core” (for another example of this, see Tyson and Herrmann 2018).

This chapter and those that follow grew out of the conference “At the Margins: Interconnections of Power and Identity in the Ancient Near East,” held at Brown

University on October 3–4, 2019. This conference brought together scholars of locales in the ancient Near East, sharing only a loose temporal framework and a common interest in places and peoples generally studied through the lens of occupying powers. This volume was assembled in 2020, a year full of unprecedented difficulty for everyone around the world. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic placed pressures on us that were both unexpected and devastating. As a result of the pandemic—compounded with the usual difficulties scholarship faces—this volume features eight contributions of the fourteen that were presented in Providence. Although the remaining six works may not appear in written form, all presenters made essential contributions to the conversation about margins and frontiers in the ancient world, and this volume would not feature work as interesting and enlightening without them.

This volume exhibits the opportunities for investigation that arise when marginal locales and groups are studied on their own terms, both as individual entities with their own culture(s) and history, as well as entities which exist at the margins of other groups. The history of scholarship on borderlands typically focuses on one specific location or time period. Here we deliberately include multiple locations from Egypt and the ancient Near East in order to draw comparison and in an effort to illuminate the possibilities for further study. The authors in this volume both give insight into different methodologies for examining the past and introduce us further to ancient sites that exist not only at the margins of power but at the margins of scholarship. As a collection, this volume responds and adds to previous work concerning cultural transmission, emulation, influence, hybridization, and entanglement in the ancient Near East (see Ashmore and Knapp 1999; van Dommelen and Terrenato 2007; Riva and Vella 2010; van Dommelen and Knapp 2010; Feldman 2015; MacGinnis, Wicke, and Greenfield 2016; Dušek and Mynářová 2019). As a whole, they respond to the question, “How can we understand events and peoples on the borders of politically, economically, and militarily powerful entities?” In using different frameworks and methodologies to examine an array of entities, the investigations that follow provide a solid grounding for further exploration of the topic.

In chapter 2 Avraham Faust opens our investigation by addressing the way surges in settlement and changes from direct and indirect control affected the development of a distinct highland identity in Late Bronze Age Canaan. The formation of new highland identities resulted in the rise of highland kingdoms, transforming the traditional geopolitical structure of the area. Faust highlights the shift from direct to indirect control from the thirteenth century to the eleventh century BCE as a step in showing the stages of the cyclic process of settlement growth. As external changes were made by the Egyptians in Canaan, identities began to shift and transform from the marginal to the core of future developments. The people in Canaan played with their identities according to

historical circumstances, a practice that is common on the fringes of strong imperial control. Faust reminds us that identities are subjective, relational, changing, and numerous.

Using the relationship between northern Levantine elites and their powerful neighbors, Alexander Ahrens in chapter 3 explores the various ways in which the emulation of cultural traits and rejection of other cultural aspects can be identified. These choices reflect how the Levantine elites adapted to and coped with the dependencies imposed on them by the surrounding dominant powers. Ahrens stresses the importance of rejecting the static delineation of boundaries and viewing cultural manifestations as a range from rejection to acceptance. For the northern Levantine elites, there was a choice in when to emulate power and when to assert local identity that was based in the historical moment, meaning subjugation was not static and should not be viewed as such.

In chapter 4, Mahri Leonard-Fleckman explores Iron Age Timnah, a site in the lowlands of ancient Israel. The extant textual sources for Timnah are mainly biblical, with witnesses to Sennacherib's encounters with the region in his third campaign to the West in the eighth century BCE. Despite the textual and archaeological source material for the region, Timnah's social landscape eluded scribal understanding and definition. For Leonard-Fleckman, Timnah takes on a certain liminal space, while also challenging what it means for a social group to take up space. Because Timnah was neither Judahite nor Philistine, its marginal status is held in the eyes of those foreign to it. When sources come from beyond an identity group in question, the fluidity of boundaries is more apparent than we might expect. Through the independent social world of Timnah, this chapter questions what archaeological evidence means for identity, and highlights the importance of questioning where textual narratives come from that describe a specific population and how these narratives inform our understanding.

Alvise Matessi, in chapter 5, examines the changing conceptions of borders and territoriality in Anatolia during the Hittite Old Kingdom and Empire periods, particularly focusing on the use of material culture as expressions of power. Using textual evidence alongside the archaeological, Matessi explores the practices of monument making and glyptic production, and the use of seal impressions with explicit interest in the audiences of these particular mediums. His use of evidence illustrates the changes in Hittite administrative rule that occurred, while also highlighting differing practices and interests on the part of the Hittites toward areas under Hittite hegemony both inside and outside of Anatolia. These shifts and differences in Hittite administrative strategies of sovereignty highlight the realities of hegemonic interests in Hittite-controlled territories, with eventual focus almost exclusively on provincial centers.

In chapter 6, Valeria Turriziani explores the Egyptian vision of the world in terms of what was considered inside and what was considered outside. Using the

lens of divine struggles and encounters, Turriziani shows how religion and symbolism are perceived as strong means of marking the limits, as well as defending the borders of Egypt. In a celebration known as the “day of delimiting the borders,” the daily re-creation of the country is ensured through repeated mythical action and warrior action set against Egypt’s enemies. Further, the association of minor gods with cardinal directions cements their work at the margins of the Egyptian world. In addition to the borders used as an agreement between separate states, mythical and religious boundaries are the place of divine struggle in which cosmographic representations of power and control do the symbolic work of defending people and place.

Peter Dubovský in chapter 7 examines the kingdom of Suḥu, a place that is largely absent in the study of the ancient Near East, on the margins of both Neo-Assyrian power and scholarship. Dubovský asserts that Suḥian inscriptions show both the influence of the Neo-Assyrians and the uniqueness of a separate locale. Specifically, in the elite use of titles, the most powerful in Suḥu negotiated their association with both the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Their mixing and matching of both historical titles and novel titles make those who hold them both similar to and different from those they emulate. Dubovský is also careful to note that these same titles also reinforce an internal hierarchy within the kingdom of Suḥu, adding another dimension to their strategic use.

Chapter 8, from Daniel Fleming, focuses our attention on the city of Emar, a site that always seems to be studied on the edges of someone’s periphery. Rather than further entrench Emar into this relationship, Fleming structures his work around the premise that it is important to study each of these marginal spaces for their own sake despite their consideration as marginal. Before turning to its relationship with Hatti and its administrative center at Carchemish in northern Syria, this chapter explores the archaeological and textual evidence that contribute to our understanding of Emar. While this evidence helps us understand the core of Emar, Fleming shows how the jostling of powers in the region resulted in internal change and innovation in Emar.

In chapter 9, Ellen Morris next examines the marginal landscapes from prehistory to the Late Antique Period of ancient Egypt using the theoretical frameworks of James C. Scott. The marshes, deserts, and mountains of ancient Egypt exist as natural boundaries from Egypt proper to the Levant. Using textual and archaeological evidence, Morris examines how these ecological zones function as areas of refuge, outside of both the physical and economic control of Egyptian administration. Morris’s use of anthropological theory stands as an example of how scholars of the ancient world can apply work from other fields to inform our scholarship. In addition, Morris’s adept comparisons to modern social and political situations illustrate how the work of scholars of the ancient world can also be used by scholars from other disciplines.

The volume concludes with chapter 10, a summary by Eric Trink, including remarks on the contributions, and, notably, examining where scholarship can proceed in the future based on the frameworks proposed here.

We urge scholars to remember that even if their scholarly interests lie in the study of the powerful entities of the ancient Near East and Egypt, the “marginal” sites discussed in this volume directly impact the cultures, politics, and economies of controlling foreign powers. The fuzzy and ever-changing character of border zones that function as “shared spaces” inherently suggests that interactions in these zones produce influence in both directions (see, e.g., Giersch 2001; Gardner 2007). As Rodseth and Parker urge in their collection of essays on “the frontier,” “the frontier separates peoples and brings them into contact; it preserves traditions and generates innovations; it seems both a bathwater and a land of opportunity” (2005, 16). Thus, only by also studying the areas on the fringes of control can scholars attempt to better understand the political, economic, religious, and cultural decisions at the center of such control.

It is our hope that the contributions in this volume lead us to consider new frameworks for understanding such marginal regions in the ancient Near East and Egypt, eschewing the core-periphery model and discussing current theoretical and practical problems in the field of frontier studies. Our aim is that the variety and specificity of perspectives and methods under discussion in this volume will further interdisciplinary exchange as well as underscore the importance of reevaluating the well-established disciplinary practices and assumptions within our fields. We leave it to our readers to decide whether we have succeeded in this approach. In any case, we hope that this serves as another stepping stone for further research and further integration of frontier studies into the study of the ancient world.

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