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WACE AND BLEGEN

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A.J.B. Wace (left) and C.W. Blegen (right) at Mycenae, 1950

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POTTERY AS EVIDENCE FOR TRADE: THE LEVANT FROM THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER ORONTES TO THE EGYPTIAN BORDER

I invite you to raise stone anchors fore and aft, with a supply of spares upright amidships, and set out east from Cyprus. We may have to row hard against wind and currents to reach the Levant coast, and on the way, remember, where there is trade there are pirates. We land with a map for guidance (Fig. 1). But such maps, as Lisa French pointed out, can be treacherous. This map, in particular, should be labelled "handle with care."²

1. It contains no hint of mountains or the desert way to Mesopotamia and the vastness of Asia, a journey not accomplished by horse and cart, or even by camel, but by caravans on foot and donkey-back. Whether using the best ways through desert or mountains the trade routes needed secure supplies of water and food, and protection from attack by land pirates.

2. It is not a distribution map of all places where Aegean pottery of the Bronze Age has been found (about 90 are known between Al-Mina/Sabouni at the mouth of the River Orontes and the frontier between Israel and Egypt at Rafah, 640 kms. south). Moreover, dots on a distribution map do not say whether the find-spots of pottery in major cities are large (more than 100 pots), as at Ugarit, Tell Abu Hawam, Gezer, and Tell el-'Ajjul, or minimal, as at Karkhemish or Emar on the Euphrates. Neither do dots distinguish between periods and phases of the Bronze Age.

3. We must bear in mind changes in frontiers since 1939, a consideration that cannot be put aside when considering the progress of archaeological research since 1939. A casual glance at the map may give the impression that trade between the Aegean and the Levant took place mainly in the south. This is true to a degree, for exploration and excavation were stimulated by the early search for historical confirmation of Biblical truth. Since the foundation of Israel in 1948 excavation has continued with accelerated desire to interpret its archaeology.³ Aegean scholars acknowledge the contribution of Israeli archaeologists to all branches of research, but we also remember that parts of Palestine are tragically closed for research (Tell el-'Ajjul, Tell Ta'annek, Tell el-Far'ah N). Further north, in the land of Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Kumidi, Arqa, cities mentioned in the Amarna correspondence, there is no light at all. Modern and ancient cities of Lebanon, overwhelmed by invasion and civil war, are not likely to be open to research for a very long time. East of the Orontes valley, exploration and excavation have continued discoveries begun before 1939, and surprises happen. Tell Mardikh, about sixty kilometres south of Aleppo, known to a few before 1939, was not revealed as ancient Ebla until 1964.⁴

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The coastal Levant experienced movements of people, goods and ideas long before contacts were made with the Aegean, for they lived with the power of Ebla, Mitanni and Babylon at their backs, and their feet in a sea with no island horizon to tempt long-range marine ventures (Cyprus is rarely visible from the Levant shore). Towards the end of the seventeenth century B.C. the Hittite advance from Anatolia culminated in the destruction of Babylon by Mursilis I (1620-1595 B.C.). This brought Alalakh, Ugarit, and the north Levant coast within range of Hittite influence and ambition. From the south, Egyptian needs for timber, goods from Mesopotamia, and extra manpower influenced the politics of coastal and inland cities (Ugarit, Byblos, Qatna), leading to positive control by garrison and the manipulation of client states after the re-establishment of central government in the Eighteenth Dynasty. In the Nineteenth Dynasty confrontation between



Egypt and Hatti reached its climax at the battle of Qadesh in Year 5 of Ramesses II (1274 B.C.). Varying versions of the stalemate treaty are known from Hattusa (Boghasköy) in Anatolia, at the Taurus River north of Raimt¹ and in the temple of Amun at Karnak.

Many sites, grand and modest, experienced destruction one or more times at the end of the MBA, and early in the Iron Age. Some were immediately rebuilt (the South Palace at Ras Ibn Uba, and early in the Iron Age). Some were re-occupied after a period of abandonment (Karkhemish, Bassit, Tell Hani, Ashdod). Some were re-occupied after a period of abandonment (Karkhemish, Bassit, Tell Hani, Ashdod). Some, like Alalakh and Ugarit, were never re-occupied. Strong points maintained by the Egyptians in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth dynasties experienced damage but survived (Beth Shan, Megiddo, Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Tell esh-Shari'a, Tell el-Faraj S).

CONDITIONS ON ARRIVAL

From the seventeenth century onwards the foreign trader (I assume that the initiative in overseas trade came from outside the Levant) found himself in flourishing polities whose urban, rural and commercial activities were meshed into a long-established prosperous network of internal and external exchanges of goods and techniques. One brilliant result of continuous study and translation of the archives of Ugarit has been the revelation of Levant organisation of industry and commerce.⁵ City states and kingdoms were maintained by agriculture, and by trade at short and long range. The agricultural elements supported a redistributive system of rations in return for services rendered, while trade encouraged the development of apparently free exchanges by licensed traders, operating within what may have been a market economy, involving banking and loans on a modern scale. Much of the tradition and working methods originated in Mesopotamia, and the stimulus to preserve them came from the benefits of exchanges protected by inter-city and inter-state agreement. All the inhabitants of the Levant profited in one way or another from organised trade, but none more than the two principle organisers, the Palace and the Temple, and their operators, the *tankari*, whose status seems almost comparable with that of the herald in mediaeval Europe. Any trader from Cyprus or the Aegean, therefore, would have been able to find, agents ready to assist him to find a slot in a ready-made organisation, and, been able to suggest that Ugarit may have been a major clearing house for Aegean trade.⁶

THE TRADE

Evidence from both the Aegean and the Levant shows that in the MBA a few Minoan trading ventures were made, but no regular trade followed. In LM IB/LH IIA, contact was tentatively renewed. The types and decoration of pots from this period suggest joint Minoan-Mycenaean exploration rather than separate trade missions. Once again this did not immediately stimulate regular trade. The first positive Aegean export drive to the Levant came in LH IIIA, beginning in LH IIIA1, reaching high levels in IIIA2, and continuing to an unspecified time in LH/LM IIIB. This was a Mycenaean enterprise, dispatching ceramic exports in considerable bulk to Cyprus. As Cadogan has emphasised, Cypriotes had been trading with the Levant long before the Aegean element appeared. Aegean pottery in the Levant is almost always a minor accompaniment to LC I and II pottery. Moreover the Ulu Burun wreck demonstrates the importance of Cypriote pottery in trade beyond Cyprus.⁷ The fall-off of Aegean pottery (not of Cypriote) coincided with increased limitation of Aegean wares, apparently in an effort to continue the supply of goods which became an accepted part of daily life. The fall-off, also noticeable in Cyprus, was probably due to failing supplies in the Aegean, rather than turbulence in the Levant. Had the goods been available, the inhabitants of the Levant would have bought them. Civil chaos and threats of war in the Near East never stopped the supply of exotic luxuries from Rapallo, Genoa and Venice to the Levant in medieval times, or of champagne and French fashions to Beirut today.

CONTEXT OF FINDS

The contexts amply demonstrate the supportive relationship between Palace and Temple in the Levant, which allowed a constant trickle of exotic goods from the upper levels of society to modest and poor people. In settlement sites Aegean goods have been found in palatial or official areas, as at Alalakh, Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, Kamid el-Loz, Hazor, Beth Shan, Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, and Tell el-Shari'a. These contexts include official warehouses and domestic storerooms, as at Minet el-Beidha and Tel Yina'am. When Aegean pottery appears in such circumstances, it is also likely to be found in well-to-do houses, as at Ugarit, Sarafand or Hazor. It also appears in shrines or temples attached to palaces, as at Kamid el-Loz, Beth Shan, or Lachish. Small shrines in isolated or special conditions also received Aegean pottery, as is shown by finds at Qatna (which may have been attached to a palace), Tel Mevorak (south of Haifa), Tell Deir 'Alla, Amman Airport Temple, and Lachish Fosse Temple.

As in Cyprus Aegean pottery was particularly appreciated for funerary use. Indeed, it might be informative to list tombs dating to LB II which do not contain at least one imported pot, almost always with a generous offering of LC imported wares: Base Ring, White Slip, Shaved Ware. The contexts, then, are similar to those found in Cyprus, which suggests that in both areas there was a ready market for imports which were different from the local wares. Moreover, as many have pointed out, most of the pots found are suitable containers for small quantities of liquid or soft unguent, perfumed, it is assumed, by Aegean herbs and flowers, prepared in Mycenaean factories for a market that knew neither soap, deodorant or perfume preserved by alcohol.⁸

DATE AND TYPES OF POTTERY FOUND

No MH pottery has yet been identified, but a few exports of MM are known or reported at Alalakh (?), Ugarit, Hama, Byblos, Beirut (a particularly fine cup seen in 1972), Hazor, and Akko. To date no LM I/LH IA exports have been verified. The few examples known of LM IB and/or LH IIA tend to come from important cities: Alalakh, Ugarit, Byblos, Ta'anek, Gezer, Lachish, and Tell el-'Ajlul. A small sherd from a LH IIA jar at Amman was found in the foundation trench of a unique temple together with FS 179 of LH IIB1. The greatest spread and density lasted from LH IIA2 to an unspecified time in LH/LM IIB. During this time pottery of LM IIA and IIB did not entirely disappear, as is seen, for example, at Ugarit, Beirut, Tell Abu Hawam, Tell Far'ah (N), Amman, Tell Deir 'Alla, Khirbet Judur, and Lachish. Imported pottery of LH IIB, and of local manufacture, has been found at Ras Ibn Hani (settlement), Tell Sukas (tombs), Byblos (tombs), Sarafand (settlement), Tel Keisan (settlement), Beth-Shan (Level VI), Ashdod (settlement) and Tel Miqne (settlement), a large quantity, very high quality and locally made). The origin of the imported ware of LH IIB middle appears on visual estimate to be Cypriote. Continued contact with the Aegean is suggested by the similarity of ceramic development and fashion in both areas (Tel Keisan, Beth Shan, Tel Miqne). At present no imported pottery of the early phase of LH IIB has been identified. This may point to a total lack of Aegean exporting activity during that phase. Publication of the important sequence of LH IIB pottery from Mycenaean would help to clarify this.

SHAPES

Among more than 50 shapes identified the most common closed shapes are the piriform jar (FS 45 and related types), square-sided alabastron (FS 94-95), stirrup jar (FS 166, 171, 178, 179-182), and vertical flask (FS 189). Open shapes are less numerous, but commoner than used to be thought. The shallow cup (FS 220), kylix (FS 256-257), shallow bowl (FS 295 and derivatives) can all be found. In contrast with Cyprus, the pictorial krater (FS 53-55) has been found in palaces and domestic contexts as well as in tombs, as we know from Alalakh, Ugarit, Byblos, Tell Abu

Hawam, Gezer, Amman, Lachish and Tell el-'Ajlul. The living were perhaps reluctant to forfeit enjoyment of these outside vessels. Conical rhyta (FS 199) and whimsical forms (perhaps made to order, or to fill a special need), are known at Ugarit, Minet el-Beidha, Kamid el-Loz, Lachish and Tell el-Shari'a. It is impossible to estimate the quantity of Aegean pottery, because a spread of sherds as distinct from pots can be misleading. Ugarit is generally reckoned to have been the largest importer (and possibly re-exporter), but J. Balensi's work at Tell Abu Hawam may present a different conclusion.

THE END OF THE TRADE

In the Levant, as in Cyprus, evidence of pottery at the end of the Bronze Age (in LH/LM IIB) shows that Aegeans and others were now moving east (economic migrants, or refugees from political upheaval?), and came to settle by force where they had once traded, as at Ras Ibn Hani, Sarafand, and Ashdod. They were not always well received and were partly at least responsible for the destruction and abandonment of successful towns and cities. Other factors (earthquake, punitive action by Egyptian forces, inter-city disputes) caused disaster and abandonment for centuries (earthquake possibly at Ugarit, and certainly at Tell Deir 'Alla). But where settlement was achieved, contact with the home country was maintained. This is reflected in the similar shapes and parallel patterns of the early Iron Age in the Aegean, Cyprus and the Levant. Piriform jars, square-sided alabastra, stirrup jars and vertical flasks based on Aegean originals continued to be made long after the last imports arrived. Recent excavations at Tel Miqne, where immediate predecessors of, and models for, Philistine pottery have been found, illustrate this point. Even Midianite/Quraya wares made in the distant Hejaz, have strongly marked Aegean features of decoration.

NOTES ON SITES (Fig. 1, nos. 10-51)

Over a hundred sites are known to have imported Aegean pottery. The estimate of pots found is approximate, based on published information, study of excavated material, and informed guesswork. Any estimate for sites still being excavated cannot be even approximate. LH is preferred to Myc to describe pottery periods, but the terms are interchangeable. FS can be found in Furumark, 1941, pp. 583-643; see also Mountjoy, 1986. At all sites on the map Cypriote pottery, and derivatives of Aegean pottery of LH IIB have been found. The symbol ">" indicates that the number of pots exceeds the following numeral. "LH IIA to IIB" indicates finds of pottery from within LH IIA to an unspecified time within L IIB.⁹ Coordinates are from J. Baines and J. Malek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford 1980, and the 1988 edition of *Times Atlas of the World*.

10. Karkhemish, Carchemish, Karkhemis, Jerablus. 36.49N, 38.01E. S Turkey. LH IIA2, IIB. 6 sherds (temple).
11. Alalakh, Tell Atchana. 36.13N, 36.24E. Turkey. MM, LH IIA/LM IB, LH IIA2, IIB. > 50 pots (palace, temple, city, tombs).
12. Emar, Meskene. 36.02N, 38.06E. Syria. LH IIB. 2 sherds (settlement).
13. Basit. 35.52N, 35.48E. Syria. LH IIA, IIA to IIB, IIB middle (settlement). Excavation in progress, directed by P. Courbin.
14. Ugarit, Ras Shamra. 35.35N, 35.45E. Syria. MM IIA, LH IIA/LM IB, LM II, LH IIA and IIB, LM IIA, IIB. > 400 pots published from Ugarit and Minet el-Beidha (palace, temple, city, tombs). Excavation in progress, directed by M. Yon.
15. Minet el-Beidha, port of Ugarit. See Ugarit.
16. Ras Ibn Hani. See Ugarit. Syria. LH IIA to IIB, IIB middle. Palace, city. Excavation in progress, directed by Lagarde, Bounni and Saliby.

17. Tell Sukas. 35.25N, 35.55E. Syria. LH IIIA2 to IIIB, IIIC middle (?). > 60 pots (settlement, tombs).
- 18-21. Sites in Cyprus involved in Aegean trade, and the settlement of Aegeans at the end of LC II, and in early LC III.
22. Qatna, Mishrifeh. 34.50N, 36.52E. Syria. LH IIIA2. 2 pots (temple).
23. Arqa. 34.55N, 36.03E. Lebanon. LH III. 1 sherd (city). Excavation halted in 1974.
24. Qadesh, Tell Nebi Mend. 34.34N, 36.33E. Syria. LH IIIA2, IIIB. City. Excavation in progress directed by P. Parr.
25. Byblos, Jbail. 34.08N, 35.38E. Lebanon. MM IIA, IIB, LH IIA/LM IB, LH IIIA to IIIB, IIIC middle. Five MM pots, LH quantity unknown (city, tombs).
26. Beirut, Beyrouth. 33.53N, 35.30E. Lebanon. MM IIA (one pot), LH IIIB. > 10 pots. MM II cup on the map comes from a tomb in the Khargi cemetery.¹¹
27. Kamid el-Loz, Kumidi. 33.37N, 35.49E. Lebanon. LH IIIA1, IIIA2, IIIB. > 40 pots (palace, temple, city). Excavation directed by Hachmann and Kuschke halted in 1973. Conical rhyton, hedgehog askos, kylix and psi figurine were found in the LBA temple.
28. Sidon, Saïda. 33.32N, 35.22E. Lebanon. LH IIIA2, IIIB. > 30 pots (city, tombs).
29. Sarafand, Sarafend, Sarepta. 33.26N, 36.16E. Lebanon. LH IIIA2, IIIB, IIIC middle. > 50 pots (settlement, tombs). Excavations by J.B. Pritchard halted in 1973.
30. Tyre, Sour. 33.16N, 35.12E. Lebanon. LH IIIA2, IIIB, IIIC middle. Quantity unknown (city). Excavations directed by P. Bikai halted in 1973.
31. Tel Dan, Tel el-Qadi. 33.15N, 35.39E. Israel. LH IIIA2, IIIB. > 10 pots (tomb). A pictorial amphoroid krater was found in Tomb 886.
32. Akko, Archo, Acre, St. Jean d'Acre. 32.55N, 35.04E. Israel. LM IIIA1-2, LH IIIA, IIIB, IIIC middle. > 15 pots (city, tombs).
33. Hazor, Tell el-Qedah, Tell Waggas. 32.59N, 35.33E. Israel. MM II(?), LH IIA/LM IB, LH IIB, IIIA2, IIIB. > 50 pots (city, temple).
34. Tel Keisan. 7 kms. southeast of Akko. Israel. LH IIIB, IIIC middle. Quantity not known (settlement).
35. Tell Abu Hawam. 32.48N, 35.04E. Israel. LH IIIA2 to late IIIB. > 800 pots (city, temple, tombs). Excavation in progress directed by J. Balensi.
36. Tel Yina'am. 32.43N, 35.27E. Israel. LH IIIA2. > 5 pots (city). Excavation in progress directed by H. Liebowitz. Two stirrup jars of LH IIIA2 were found in a storeroom.
37. Megiddo, Tell-el-Mutesellim. 32.35N, 35.11E. Israel. LH IIIA2, IIIB. 40 pots (?; city, temple, tombs).
38. Beth Shan, Beth Shean, Beisan, Tell el-Hosn. Israel. 32.30N, 35.30E. LH IIB(?), IIIA to IIIB, IIIC middle. > 50 pots (palace, city, temple, tombs).¹² Excavation renewed by A. Mazar.
39. Tell Ta'annek, Tannach, Tell Tinnak. 32.32N, 35.13E. West Bank. LH IIA/LM IB, LH IIIA2. > 40 pots (city). A restored bridge-spouted jar was found in a destruction level, thought to be connected with the campaign of Tutmosis III, Year 23. It is very similar to one from Zakro, Crete, LM IB in fabric and decoration.¹³
40. Tell el-Far'ah (N). 32.13N, 35.16E. West Bank. LH, LM IIIA1-2, IIIA2. > 10 pots (city, tombs).
41. Tell es-Saidiyeh. 32.16N, 35.35E. Jordan. LH IIIB. > 10 pots (tombs). Excavations in progress, directed by J. Tubb.
42. Tel Aphek, Tell Ras-el-Ain, Anitipatris. 32.06N, 34.56E. Israel. LH IIIA2, IIIB. > 10 pots (palace, city). A LH IIIB late stirrup jar was found in a building destroyed in the reign of Ramesses II.

43. Gezer, Tel Gezer, Tel Jazari, Tell Jezer. 31.53N, 34.56E. Israel. LH IIA/LM IB, LH IIIA1, IIIA2, IIIA-B, IIIB. 20-30 pots (city).
44. Tell Deir 'Alla. 32.12N, 35.37E. Jordan. LH IIIB, LM IIIB. 5 pots (temple). Excavation continuing, directed by H. Franken.
45. Amman. Airport site. 31.57N, 35.56E. Jordan. LH IIA, IIB, IIIA to IIIB, LM IIIB. 50-60 pots (temple).
46. Sahab. 31.52N, 36.00E. 10 km SE of Amman. Jordan. LH IIIA2/IIIB, including a sherd from a pictorial amphoroid krater. Quantity not known (settlement, tomb).
47. Ashdod, Istdud. 31.48N, 34.38E. Israel. LH IIIA2 to IIIC. > 50 pots (city).
48. Tel Miqne, Ekron. Israel. Excavation in progress, directed by T. Dothan.
49. Khirbet Judur. Near Hebron. West Bank. LH IIIA2, IIIB1, LM IIIA1. 19 pots (tomb).
50. Lachish, Tell-ed-Duweir. 31.33N, 34.51E. Israel. LM IB, LH IIA, IIIA to end IIB, IIIC(?). About 200 pots (palace, temple, city, tombs). Excavation directed by D. Ussishkin. A cup (LH IIA, FS 262) was found close to the altar of Fosse Temple I.
51. Tell el-'Ajjul, Gaza (?). 31.30N, 34.28E. Gaza Strip. LM IB/LH IIA/IIIB, IIIA2 to IIIB. > 70 pots (palace, city, tombs).
52. Tell esh-Shar'a, Tel Sera'. 31.24N, 34.40E. Israel. LH IIIA2, IIIB. > 20 pots (palace, city).

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NOTES

¹ Before beginning my talk I have three things to say. First, I enthusiastically join Gerald Cadogan in wishing Lisa French much happiness and success as Director of the British School at Athens. Her presence as co-host to this conference, organised by the British School at Athens and the American School of Classical Studies, completes a very fortunate coincidence of time, place and person. Second, I offer my tribute to Alan Wace and Carl Blegen. To Alan whose teaching and encouragement set me on the sherd-strewn path of Aegean prehistory; to Carl for his kindness to me and other green students, no matter how busy he was. Third, I want to thank the people of Greece who for over a hundred years have welcomed us, foreign students and scrabblers in their earth, to the common European home of the culture we all share.

² The map, made with the help of David Smyth, was originally planned for a lecture on trade with the Levant from the Orontes to the Egyptian border. The illustrations on the map refer only to sites in that range. The lecture on Egypt was added later, leaving no time to prepare drawings of imported Aegean pottery from the Nile Valley.

It is not possible to record all those who, during my stay in Beirut from 1962 to 1966, and in subsequent years, have helped me in my search for evidence of Aegean relations with the Levant. I particularly wish to thank colleagues in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel, who may remember the time and patience they expended in helping me to rummage in their museums and visit their sites. Colleagues from outside these countries are gratefully, but anonymously, acknowledged. Awni Dajani, Maurice Dunand, Gerald Lankester Harding, Frances James, Roger Saidah and Olga Tufnell are remembered with affection and admiration.

³ Silberman, 1982.

⁴ Matthiae, 1977.

⁵ M. Drower in *CAH II*, part 2, Chapter X, Cambridge 1975; Dalley, 1984; *Circulation of Goods*, 1984.

⁶ Catling, 1980.

⁷ Bass, Pulak, Collon, and Weinstein, 1989.

⁸ Leonard, forthcoming.

⁹ Dothan, 1982. Her excavations at Tel Miqne are stimulating a reappraisal of the events in the Levant at the end of the LBA. On Midianite ware, see ROTHENBURG, 1972, fig. 52; Parr, 1988, pp. 73-89.

¹⁰ For more information, and list of shapes and find-spots, see Leonard, 1985 and 1987. For the chronology of this export, see Warren and Hankey, 1989.

¹¹ Warren and Hankey, 1989, pp. 134-135.

¹² Warren and Hankey, 1989, pp. 164-165.

¹³ Warren and Hankey, 1989, pp. 116, 142.

POTTERY AS EVIDENCE FOR TRADE: EGYPT

I now invite you to take off the running shoes needed for the Marathon along the Levant coast and put on sand shoes.¹ But first, consider how the first Aegean traders (and all evidence shows that these were Minoans) reached Egypt. Two guides are available. First, Homer, *Odyssey*, XIV, 252-257, says "we set sail from broad Crete, running as if downstream before a fresh, good north wind. No harm came to my ships, and we sat free of trouble or disease as the helmsman steered them. On the fifth day we reached the fair-flowing Aegyptus, and there in the river I moored my curved ships." E. Bradford had exactly this experience when, tracing the journeys of Odysseus, he set out from south Crete, near the mercantile harbour town of Kommos.² The second guide is the *Mediterranean Pilot*.³ Chapter I describes the anti-clockwise flow of surface water accelerated by Etesian winds which provides a natural conveyor belt for sailing vessels from Crete, east or south, to the eastern Nile Delta, with a return journey north along the Levant coast using the same surface flow and summer winds. The first contacts between the Aegean and the Near East could have followed this route to Egypt, returning via Byblos, the Syrian coast and Cyprus. In the LBA the Mycenaean developed their own northern route to the Levant via Rhodes and Cyprus, but from southern Crete the easiest route was southeast. New discoveries at Bates' Island, Marsah Matruih, support the existence in the LBA of this route using the Libyan coast as port of call.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the First Dynasty (ca. 3100 B.C.) Lower Egypt (the Delta) and Upper Egypt (from Memphis to the First Cataract at Aswan) were controlled by the monarchy so long as central government was strong enough to maintain an orderly and acceptable social structure. Memphis, at the meeting point of Upper and Lower Egypt, was the capital city during the greater part of Pharaonic rule, except for a period at Lisht during the Middle Kingdom, and at El-Amarna during the reign of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten). Constitutional upsets, perhaps combined with disastrous inundations of the Nile, caused collapse of central government between ca. 2181 and 2133 B.C. (First Intermediate Period), and again between ca. 1786/1759 and 1552 B.C. (Second Intermediate Period), when Egypt fell apart into its constituent regions until a dominating personality reunited the Two Lands. This phenomenon is illustrated at Tell ed-Dab'a in the eastern Delta. Here, towards the end of the Middle Kingdom, an independent Egyptian city with strong Palestinian, Semitic character was established. Whether in the first place the Hyksos arrived by invitation, infiltration, or by invasion, they became the stimulus for the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the memory of their presence affected much Pharaonic foreign policy during the New Kingdom.

Egypt seems to have had no permanent interests west of the Nile until the late Eighteenth Dynasty, when Libyan attacks came out of the desert, but in spite of their insulated view of the outside world, Egyptians were in continuous contact with the Levant. Travel across the desert to the Red Sea, and inland to Mesopotamia is also attested. Timber was sought in Lebanon,⁴ and exotic goods were traded from Mesopotamia and further east (e.g. lapis lazuli). The Hyksos episode inspired the Egyptians to make the Nile Valley safe for monarchy by military action in Syria and Palestine, leading to control of city-states through vassals dependent on Egyptian support, and by treaty with Ugarit, Mitanni and Babylon. The Egyptians, then, were well