

CULTURAL & MATERIAL CONTACTS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Proceedings of the International Workshop
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PREFACE

These Proceedings are the results of the workshop *Cultural & Material Contacts in the Ancient Near East*, held at Torino the 1st and 2nd December 2014. The workshop, organised by Phd and Master Students of the University of Torino, was devoted to young scholars involved in the trending topic of the material and cultural contacts in the Ancient Near East between the 2nd millennium BC and the Parthian and Sasanian Periods. Scholars from many countries (Italy, France, England, Poland, Canada, Hungary, etc.) chose to participate to the call for papers, proposed by the Organizing Committee. The high number of participants has obliged us to select the papers and to open a larger poster session. During the two workshop days the high level of the talks was judged very promising by the participating professors, auditors and contributors and pushed us to publish it rapidly. Now this purpose has been achieved in only one year and a half after the workshop. We are proud of it also because we know that young scholars need publications to grow and to improve their carrier. We know also that usually the first papers trace a deep line in the research and in the history of each scholar. For this reason, we are glad for have given to them the chance of reaching this purpose and we are pleased that their name will be associated to this workshop. The papers, divided here in their respective sessions, show innovative approaches about archaeology, history and philology of the Ancient Near East in an integrated methodology, showing the complexity of the cultural and material contacts of this period and area.

The editors wish to thank the Centro Scavi e Ricerche Archeologiche di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia (CRAST) and the Università degli Studi di Torino (UniTO) for the publication grants and the Fondazione Fondo Ricerca e Talenti for the financial support of the workshop. We thank also the Scientific Committee – Profs. S. de Martino, C. Lippolis and V. Messina – for their work and their precious help in the reviewing of the papers. We are grateful also to the three chairpersons of the workshop sessions who have moderated and stimulated the debate: Prof. C. Mora (Università di Pavia) for the 2nd millennium, Prof. L. Peyronel (IULM – Milano) for the 1st millennium and Prof. P. Leriche (CNRS, Paris) for the Post-Assyrian Period. We would like to thank Dr. C. Greco, Director of the Museo Egizio di Torino, who has kindly open the workshop the 1st December 2014 and nevertheless, we would like to appreciate the contributors who have actively participated to the conference and, with their papers, to the publication.

The Organizing Committee

Enrico Foietta, Carolina Ferrandi, Eleonora Quirico, Francesca Giusto, Mattia Mortarini, Jacopo Bruno & Lorenzo Somma

* * *

Questi atti sono il risultato del workshop internazionale *Cultural and Material Contacts in the Ancient Near East*, tenutosi a Torino l'1 e il 2 dicembre 2014. L'evento, organizzato da dottorandi e studenti dell'Università degli Studi di Torino, è stato espressamente rivolto a giovani studiosi interessati alla problematica dei contatti materiali e culturali nel Vicino Oriente antico tra il II millennio a.C. e l'età partico-sasanide.

Numerosi ricercatori provenienti da diversi paesi (Italia, Francia, Inghilterra, Polonia, Canada, Ungheria, ecc.) hanno scelto di partecipare al call for papers proposto dal Comitato Organizzativo. L'alto numero delle richieste ci ha obbligato a compiere una selezione tra i numerosi contributi pervenutici e ad aprire una più ampia sessione poster. Il livello degli interventi che hanno avuto luogo durante i due giorni del workshop è stato giudicato in maniera positiva dai professori presenti, dagli uditori e dai partecipanti e ci ha incoraggiato a pubblicarne gli atti il più rapidamente possibile. Questo obiettivo è stato raggiunto dopo solo un anno e mezzo. Sappiamo, infatti, che i giovani studiosi hanno bisogno di pubblicazioni per crescere e migliorare la propria carriera accademica e siamo coscienti del fatto che generalmente i primi lavori costituiscono un punto di riferimento importante per il proprio percorso di ricerca. Siamo dunque felici e orgogliosi di aver potuto dare ai partecipanti l'opportunità di presentare al pubblico accademico i loro primi e proficui lavori.

Preface

Gli interventi raccolti in questo volume, suddivisi conformemente alle diverse sessioni del workshop, mostrano approcci innovativi circa l'archeologia, la storia e la filologia del Vicino Oriente antico. L'integrazione di diverse metodologie e discipline ha permesso infatti di indagare in maniera più esaustiva la complessità dei contatti materiali e culturali nel Vicino Oriente tra il II millennio a.C. e il l'età partico-sasanide.

Gli editori desiderano ringraziare il Centro Scavi e Ricerche Archeologiche di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia (CRAST) e l'Università degli Studi di Torino (UniTo) per i contributi che hanno permesso questa pubblicazione e la Fondazione Fondo Ricerca e Talenti per il supporto finanziario per il workshop. Si ringrazia inoltre il Comitato Scientifico – formato dai proff. S. de Martino, C. Lippolis e V. Messina – per il lavoro e il prezioso aiuto nella revisione dei testi. Siamo grati inoltre ai presidenti delle tre sessioni del workshop che hanno introdotto e stimolato il dibattito: la prof.ssa C. Mora (Università di Pavia) per la parte del II millennio a.C., il prof. L. Peyronel (IULM – Milano), per la sessione del I millennio a.C. e il prof. Leriche (CNRs, Parigi), per il periodo post-assiro. Desideriamo in aggiunta ringraziare il dott. C. Greco, Direttore del Museo Egizio di Torino, che ha gentilmente acconsentito ad aprire la prima giornata del workshop e, infine, tutti i partecipanti che hanno contribuito alla buona riuscita di questo workshop con i loro interessanti lavori.

Il Comitato Organizzativo

Enrico Foietta, Carolina Ferrandi, Eleonora Quirico, Francesca Giusto, Mattia Mortarini, Jacopo Bruno & Lorenzo Somma

INDEX

Session 1.

THE INTERNATIONAL PERIOD: COURT GIFTS, IMPORTATIONS, TRADES AND CRAFTS IN THE 2ND MILLENNIUM BC

VIOLETTA CORDANI, Exchange and Use of Iron in the Old Assyrian Period. The Anatolian Perspective	p.	3
MARCO DE PIETRI, Relationships between Egypt and Karkemish during the 2 nd Millennium BC: A Brief Overview	»	9
ANGELO DI MICHELE, From Babylonia to Assyria: Reflections and Considerations on the Nabû Temples.	»	16
FEDERICO MANUELLI, What Remains when Contact Breaks Off? Survival of Knowledge and Techniques in the Material Culture of the Peripheral Regions of the Hittite Empire after Its Dissolution.	»	26
VALENTINA OSELINI, Traces of Elamite and Mittani Culture in the Hamrin Basin: The Case of Fine Pottery in the Kassite Contexts of Tell Yelkhi	»	36
GIULIA SCAZZOSI, Interconnections and Trade in Late 2 nd Millennium BC Mesopotamian Temples: The Case of the Kassite Temple of Enlil at Nippur	»	46
BERNHARD SCHNEIDER, Remarks on the Archaeology of the Kassite Ekur of Nippur, Including Some Lapis Lazuli Findings in Context	»	54
GIULIA TUCCI, New Kingdom and Southern Levant: Egyptian Finds in Coastal Sites during the Late Bronze Age	»	63

Session 2.

TRADES, DEPORTATIONS, MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLE AND OBJECTS IN THE 1ST MILLENNIUM BC

LUISA BONADIES, Cultural Exchange in the Stone Vessels Production of the First Millennium B.C.E.	»	73
PETRA M. CREAMER, A Comparison of Resinous Artifacts in the Ancient Near East	»	83
LUIGI MALATACCA, Movements of Fibers, Dyes and Textiles in First Millennium BC Babylonia (Neo- and Late-Babylonian Periods).	»	91
SURESHKUMAR MUTHUKUMARAN, Tree Cotton (<i>G. arboreum</i>) in Babylonia	»	98

Session 3.

CULTURAL CONTACTS, CIRCULATION OF IDEAS, TRADES AND INNOVATIONS IN THE ACHAEMENID, SELEUCID AND PARTHIAN PERIODS

ILARIA BUCCI, New Religious Images from Hatra. Unpublished Pictorial Graffiti from the Iraq Museum, Baghdad	»	109
SÉGOLÈNE DE PONTBRIAND, Europos-Dura at the Convergence of Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman Architectures: The case of Governor Lysias' Residence	»	118
MAHDOKHT FARJAMIRAD, Burial Customs during the Seleuco-Parthian Period of Iran; Greek or Local Culture?	»	129
ALEKSANDRA KUBIAK, Some Reflections on the Continuity of Mesopotamian Religious Traditions in Partho-Roman Hatra and Palmyra	»	138
ENRICO MARCATO, <i>Nny dy htr'</i> : The Characterisation of the Goddess Nanaya in the Pantheon of Hatra, as to Epigraphic Evidence.	»	141
GIULIO MARESCA, Notes on Eastern Iran during Post-Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian Period: A Preliminary Reappraisal of the ISMEO Excavations at Qal'a-ye Tepe and Qal'a-ye Sam in Sistan	»	148
ALESSANDRO POGGIO, Impressions of Power: 'Greco-Persian' Seals in Perspective	»	157
FABIANA RAIANO, Pottery from Kojtepa: Joint Uzbek-Italian Archaeological Mission in Samarkand Area	»	164
MAJA RZEPLIŃSKA, Terracotta Riders - a Powerful Image That Lasted through Dynasties	»	170

GIULIA TUCCI

NEW KINGDOM AND SOUTHERN LEVANT: EGYPTIAN FINDS IN COASTAL SITES DURING THE LATE BRONZE AGE

ABSTRACT

Throughout almost four centuries, from mid 16th to mid 12th Century BC, a noteworthy political and trading centrality in the Ancient Near East is located on Eastern Mediterranean. Southern Levant's coastal plain, is affected by the Egyptian New Kingdom's political and economic pressure and crossed by the Mycenaean and Cypriote exchanging routes.

This context of strong diplomatic and commercial interactions, meaningfully described by textual sources as the el-Amarna correspondence, contributes to the development of a frame characterized by rich cultural exchanges. Beyond artefacts and materials, even ideas are commonly shared.

Therefore, through highlighting the distribution of Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects over the main coastal sites of the Southern Levant, the aim of the present paper will be a proposal to delineate the New

Kingdom's presence and its exploitation of foreign territories.

The analysis will be supplied by a brief comparison related to the main Syrian and Lebanese coastal sites.

KEYWORDS

New Kingdom, southern Levant, Late Bronze Age, Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects, cultural contacts

The material culture of the Late Bronze Age in southern Levant (fig. 1) includes a rich repertoire of Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects, imported or locally produced¹.

The coastal plain of the southern Levant is fundamentally affected by the Egyptian New Kingdom's political and economic pressure, beyond the evidences of Mycenaean and Cypriote imports, being the Eastern Mediterranean a focal trading point during this period. This framework of remarkable diplomatic and commercial interactions, well known from textual sources (as the el-Amarna archives), is characterized by manifold cultural exchanges: alongside objects, even ideas are commonly shared².

During the Late Bronze Age a territorial control was achieved through the creation of functional "districts": limited areas under a direct Egyptian control, usually economic and productive zones of interest. Coastal plains and harbors as well as small local reigns linked to Pharaohs by an oath of allegiance and through taxation/tribute collected once a year by the Egyptian army, and border areas where Pharaohs operated whenever rebellions took place³.

Actually, economic advantages reaped by Egypt from a permanent occupation of southern Levant were limited. It was rather the geographic position of the region to guarantee a control over the main trading routes, as the Horus Way (fig. 2) and the *Via Maris* along with the coastal plain and the Kings's Highway.

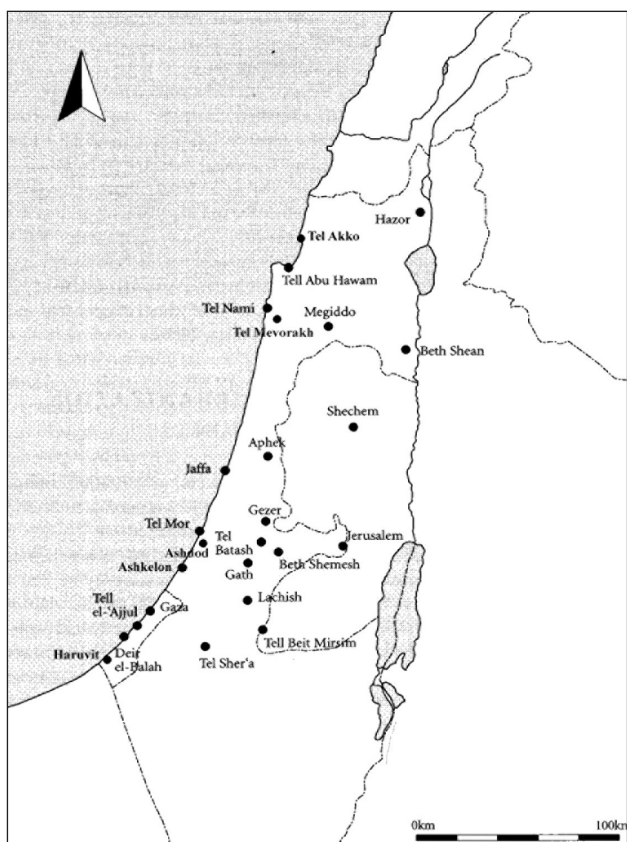


Fig. 1 - Map of the major Late Bronze Age sites of southern Levant (after Panitz-Cohen 2014, fig. 36.1; drawing by the author).

¹ KILLEBREW 2005, 65.

² For a general idea of the Late Bronze Age cultural framework see FELDMAN 2015, 33.

³ For a further and interesting focus on taxes collection methods and forms see MORRIS 2015.

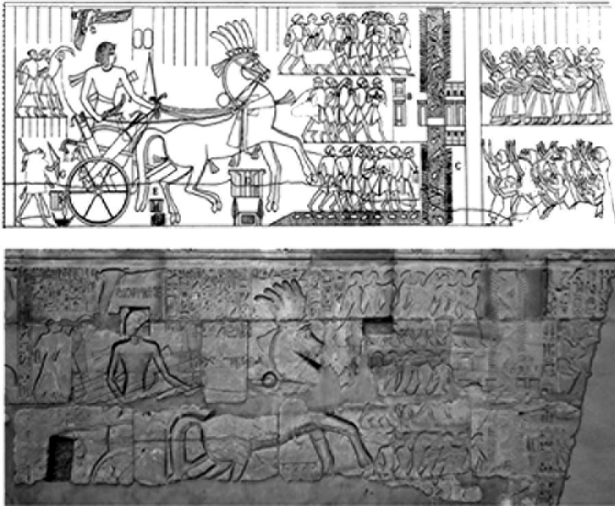


Fig. 2 - Seti I's relief of the "Way of Horus" (after Gardiner 1920, pl. 11).

In order to achieve a better control over the conquered territories, Egyptians divided Asiatic regions into three provinces: the province of Canaan had its capital at Gaza, while Syria, the ancient province of Amurru, had the capital at Simyra/Tell Kazel, and Lebanon, ancient Upe, had Kumidi/Kamid el-Loz⁴.

I. HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

I.1. *A Brief Historical Introduction*

Egypt's involvement into Levantine dynamics during the XVIII Dynasty's early years is limited to modest military incursions and to the exploitation of local resources. A different trend is visible since the reign of Thutmose I (1504-1492 BC)⁵, during which a big amount of military forces were employed for the borders' expansion, the alliances and treaties with neighboring regions and taxation system as well as tribute collections from vassal kingdoms were improved. Egyptian control over Syria and Palestine is consolidated under Thutmose III (1479-1425 BC), through different military campaigns recorded in his Annals⁶.

During the reigns of Amenhotep II (1428-1397 BC) and III (1388-1351/50 BC) the involvement of the Egyptian power in the Levant was increased by a solid inter-dynastic diplomacy: the territory was affected by the division between Mitanni in the North and Egypt in the South.

The Amarnian-period, during which Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton (1351-1334 BC) ruled Egypt, is well documented by the correspondence of capital's archives discovered at Tell el-Amarna. Those letters dated to the reign of this Pharaoh and to the last years of his

predecessor, when the correspondence was brought in the new city as regarding ongoing business⁷.

During the XIX Dynasty, from Sethi I (1290-1279/8 BC), the Egyptian interest on Levantine territories is renewed until Ramsess II's (1279-1213 BC) conquests, which brought him to face the Hittite power at Kadesh (1275 BC ca.), the threat with the Hittites was followed by a peaceful period⁸.

Merneptah (1213-1203 BC) as Ramsess III (1183/82-1152/51 BC) respectively fronted the Sea People, while since the reign of Ramsess IV (1152/51-1145/44 BC) the control over Levantine territories was progressively reduced⁹.

I.2. *The Archaeological Framework of Southern Levant during Late Bronze Age*

The beginning of Late Bronze Age is characterized by a demographic decreasing, followed by a reduction in number and size of settlement along with the retraction of them on the coastline¹⁰.

During this period, except for major sites, the lack of fortifications is noteworthy¹¹, while another important feature in city-planning was the position of the palace. It is no longer standing on a central point but built in the proximity of the city-gate, preserving just an administrative function, while new fortresses or residencies in Egyptian-style plan were currently housing the new governor of the city representing a different kind of power. This new urban development, along with some examples of orthogonal plants, was more frequent in southern sites, being influenced by Egyptian acculturation. Along the coastal line, nominally the *Via Maris*, a series of fortresses and residencies were raised in order to protect this important route. From the 13th century the Egyptian presence on the territory seems more urgent with a new flourishing of such structures along the main routes.

The principal cultic places in southern Levant remain in use from the previous period with the typical

⁴ For the identification of the two cities see HACHMANN, BOESSE 1983, 28; see also DUNAND, SALIBY 1957, 3.

⁵ The dates here illustrated are based on VON BECKERATH 1997.

⁶ PRITCHARD 1969, 234.

⁷ LIVERANI 1998.

⁸ FISCHER 2014, 570.

⁹ The issue pertaining the end of the Egyptian domination over southern Levant is quite debated. It is possible that, at least, since Ramsess VI (1142/40-1134/32 BC) Egyptians retained some kind of military control over the Land of Canaan, while from Ramsess VII (1134/32-1126/23 BC) these territories yield minimal evidences of an Egyptian involvement. For further insights on the issue see BRANDL 2004, 61; MUMFORD 2007, 144; WEINSTEIN 1981, 22.

¹⁰ GONEN 1984, 70.

¹¹ MATTHIAE 1997, 147. The explanation proposed for this phenomenon is to operate a contrast in case of internal rebellions.



Fig. 3 - Stone *stela* from the Cemetery of Deir el-Balah, Jerusalem, Israel Museum. IMJ 82.2.864.

“broad room” structure, but from the 13th century, contemporary to the growing Egyptian influence in some strategic city, an architectural typology combining local tradition and Egyptian features was set¹².

The archaeological records pertaining to a permanent Egyptian occupation in Palestinian coastal towns during the Late Bronze age are ambiguous. The situation is certainly curious, suggesting an Egyptian presence beyond military installations¹³. Further than architectural remains, it is possible to remark the widespread diffusion of Egyptian or Egyptian-style objects (locally made imitations).

The aim of the present paper, originated from a wider discussion exposed in the author’s MA thesis¹⁴, is pointing out different typologies of Egyptian finds connected to their archaeological contexts in the main sites of the coastal southern Levant, to delineate

settlement patterns and foreign territory exploitation during the New Kingdom.

II. EGYPTIAN MATERIAL IN SOUTHERN LEVANT

II.1. *Statuary and Relief*

Egyptian statues and reliefs in southern Levant are quite few, if compared to other Egyptian and Egyptian-style artifacts. In particular, it is important to remind royal and private statues, as well as *stelae* and reliefs dated to XIX and XX Dynasty, representing together more than those from I to XVIII Dynasty. Beyond royal monuments, the lack of substantial archaeological Egyptian monuments pertaining military and administrative personnel stationed in the country is an interesting feature, but this situation should not be interpreted as a virtual absence of Egyptians bureaucrats and military officers in Palestine in this period¹⁵. Complete or fragmentary stone statues were unearthed in the excavations of four sites in southern Levant: Hazor, Beth Shean, Ashdod and Timna¹⁶; a number of complete or fragmentary *stelae* was found in different Late Bronze sites: five from Beth Shean, five from Deir el-Balah (fig. 3), one from Tell Chinneret/Tell el-‘Oreime, and others from the east bank of the Jordan river¹⁶.

II.2. *Stone Vessels*

The majority of imported stone vessels found in the Levant appears to be of Egyptian origin, basing on comparisons with catalogues of materials recovered from Egypt itself and considering manufacturing techniques. Egyptian stone vessels are realized in a variety of materials, however the most common is usually called alabaster, although it should be better defined as calcite or gypsum¹⁷.

Regarding the manufacture technique, the main distinctive criterion is that Egyptian items have been manufactured hollowing out the interior using a drill, while local southern Levantine examples have interiors hollowed using flat-bladed chisels presenting typical marks.

Although most Egyptian stone vessels bring no inscriptions, a small percentage carried hieroglyphics naming the Pharaoh or members of royal family, while extremely rare ones showed private individu-

¹² See the temples of Beth Shean and Lachish in MAZAR 1990, 252.

¹³ BRYAN 1996, 36

¹⁴ Not yet published.

¹⁵ WEINSTEIN 1981, 14.

¹⁶ TUCCI forthcoming.

¹⁷ SPARKS 1996, 55.

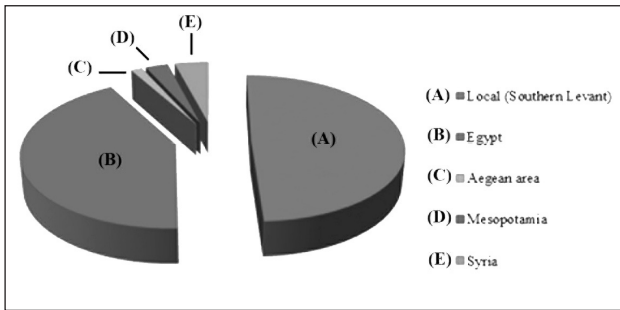


Fig. 4 - Preliminary statistics regarding the provenance of a selected *corpus* pertaining Late Bronze Age southern Levantine jewelry (Author's Ph.D. research).

als names. These kinds of vessels have been mainly found in temples and tombs¹⁸.

Egyptian stone vessels found in southern Levant were imported as luxury items or arrived in their final settings as gifts or through tribute-exchanging mechanism.

II.3. Metals

One of the most representative classes of Egyptian metal-working is weaponry (arrowheads, spearheads, daggers). The importance of this kind of data is highlighted by the depictions of different types of weapons and vehicles on Egyptian war reliefs. The *corpus* of bronze vessels retrieved in southern Levant is mainly found in funerary contexts, and showed most consistent parallels in Egypt itself¹⁹.

II.4. Ivories

Most of the Egyptian ivory objects are toilet objects (as cosmetic-spoons or combs), and few bowls and boxes. Although a small part of these items has been analyzed, test results suggest that hippo ivory was preferred for the manufacture of vessels and small objects, despite elephant ivory, mainly used for furniture inlay.

An identification for the provenance of raw material, when not recognizable through analysis, is usually connected to the shape of the object itself.

The analysis of Egyptian and Egyptian-style ivories from the Levant therefore demonstrates a certain kind of techniques and artistic patterns transmission, thus documenting how and where Egyptian art participated in Levantine art²⁰.

II.5. Faience and Glass

Faience has been recognized as a composite material consisting of a body of sintered ground, quartz or sand grains, covered with an alkaline glaze²¹.

The first working of vitreous and siliceous materials should be connected to emergin copper and soft stones

industries; Egyptian evidences of this phenomenon dated back to the 4th millennium BC²².

Faience local workshops were probably established in southern Levant during the first quarter of 2nd millennium BC, maybe influenced by the Middle Kingdom experimentation. Along with the locally made items, there is a manifold *corpus* of imported objects, including beads, amulets, seals and rare examples of vessels²³; imports consist mainly of Egyptian items, while limited examples came from Mesopotamia²⁴. Non-Egyptian materials issue is pertaining to the lack of chemical analysis possibly helpful in determining faience's origin, and could consequently give the possibility of pointing out regional working differentiations²⁵.

Egyptian glass production, unfrequent before the 18th Dynasty, emerges as a regular high-status industry since 1500 BC, also crafting products useful for Levantine trading. The success of both faience and glass industries into Levantine territories is linked to the possibility, through the addition of colorant minerals, to obtain precious stones imitations (as turquoise and lapis lazuli).

Vitreous Egyptian materials were usually found in cultic contexts, there housed as offerings and votive tributes or in wealthy residencies and funerary furnishings, pointing out an high-ranking *status*.

II.6. Jewelry and Personal Adornments

Despite the numerous Egyptian adornments found throughout southern Levant during the entire Late Bronze Age, statistics point to a wide Egyptian influence during the last phase of this period, corresponding to an increasing activity on the territory during the XIX Dynasty, and these items are commonly attested in those sites that exhibit other Egyptian influences²⁶.

Egyptian jewelry found in Levantine territories may be the result of tribute exchanges or gifts accompanying ties and agreements, as diplomatic marriages or personal equipment of Egyptian personnel working in a foreign country.

Egyptian objects usually found in religious or funerary contexts and also in wealthy houses are: rings, bangles bracelets, plaques and headbands²⁷. Character-

¹⁸ SPARKS 2003, 39.

¹⁹ GERSHUNY 1985.

²⁰ BRYAN 1996, 38.

²¹ NICHOLSON, PELTENBURG 2000, 177.

²² MANTOIAN 2007, 13.

²³ MCGOVERN 1993.

²⁴ MOOREY 1994, 179.

²⁵ KACZMARCZYK 2007, 29.

²⁶ Statistical analysis were made on the basis of around 300 items included in the author's Ph.D. project (fig. 4).

²⁷ HIGGINBOTHAM 2000, 245.



Fig. 5 - Egyptian carinated bowl from Jaffa (photo by K.V. Lords, Burke-Lords 2010, 17).

istic features relating Egyptian jewelry are a common use of gold and the creation of intricate and detailed *cloisonnées* and open-works, clearly visible in those items discovered in southern Levant. Alongside pure Egyptian imports, there was a local Egyptian-style industry producing objects adapted to local élites, tending to emulation and exhibition of a high-ranking position²⁸.

II.7. *Egyptian and Egyptian-Style Pottery*

The New Kingdom Egyptian wheel-made pottery is crafted with a variety of different clays. The surfaces can be smoothed, cream-coated and smoothed, or burnished. Painted decoration, especially in blue, red, yellow and black, was common although there were also molded, incised and “cut-out” motifs²⁹.

The most common Egyptian shapes found in southern Levant are shallow and medium depth bowls, ovoid-shaped jars, carinated jars (Fig. 5) and “flower-pot” vessels.

Pottery is certainly one of the most important evidences attesting an Egyptian presence in southern Levant. Vessels present simple forms and lacking of decoration due to a predominant domestic use, therefore pottery was probably more often locally produced rather than imported from Egypt, so it should be proper to consider this kind of production as Egyptian-styled. Southern Levantine pottery studies suffer the lack of scientific analysis, especially for those sites excavated during the past century or even earlier, likely helpful in pointing out a precise determination of clay provenience.

On the other hand, evidences of an “imitation” of Egyptian shapes for an ordinary daily use, but locally made, could witness the presence of Egyptian communities actually living in southern Levantine sites³⁰.

II.8. *Scarabs and Seals*

Scarabs provide a significant evidence in the comprehension of Egypt-Levant relations, in particular during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Scarabs were used in Egypt as sealing tools for the central administration and obviously as amulets, a function that was transmitted in the Levant. Therefore the exportation of Egyptian scarabs in the southern Levant was not only an expression of trade contacts, but a manifest Egyptian cultural influence³¹.

The prototypical scarab is an oval seal provided of an inscribed face and a back carved into the shape of a dung beetle. Most of southern Levantine scarabs are made in faience or steatite, which was often glazed, although other stones were also used including carnelian, turquoise, lapis lazuli, serpentine, rock crystal, amethyst and jasper. Scarabs are ubiquitous and were found in almost every site of the period, usually in a large number. A wide range of designs is attested on the carved face: the most common are Egyptian deities, but is not uncommon for the New Kingdom the depiction of the king smiting a foreign captive. Inscriptions also occur on scarabs, and royal names are very frequent.

As others Egyptian materials in southern Levant, scarabs dating to the XIX Dynasty are much numerous than those of previous periods, both witnessing an intensification of the Egyptian presence and a meaningful growth of emulations by local élites.

Stamps and cylinder seals are rather uncommon and patterns are similar to those attested for scarabs³².

III. BRIEF PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Egyptian New Kingdom armies conquered southern Levant more for its strategic position, being a bridge to northern territories as Lebanon and Syria or inland territories such as Mesopotamia, than for its resources.

The sovereignty over Palestine allowed also a control over main trading routes, as significantly demonstrated by the line of fortresses built along the *Via Maris*: Haruvit, Deir el-Balah, Tell el-‘Ajjul, Tel Mor and Jaffa represent perfect examples of architectural complexes built in Egyptian-style. Moreover, the establishment of a permanent occupation helped

²⁸ Regarding the controversy about local vs foreign workshops see the author’s article “Foreign Artisans or “Exotic” Influence? The Case of southern Levantine jewelry during the Late Bronze Age” (in preparation).

²⁹ WODZINSKA 2010, 55.

³⁰ WEINSTEIN 1981, 22.

³¹ BEN-TOR 2011, 24.

³² HIGGINBOTHAM 2000, 249.

collecting periodical taxes and tributes throughout a verified system. On the other hand, such a straight presence brought Egyptians to maintain security and a peaceful climate between Palestinian city states. This is clear from textual sources, such as the Amarna correspondence.

The Egyptian administration divided conquered territories into different provinces: the coastal capital of the land of *Kan'an* was Gaza, where was probably erected a fortress and a temple dedicated to Amon according to Papyrus Harris I, although that archaeological evidence suffered the lack of a punctual documentation because of the problematic *status* of that city nowadays.

Archaeological evidences from main coastal sites demonstrate an increase of Egyptian presence during XIX and XX Dynasties, as illustrated by the finds previously described. An interesting data is the big amount of Egyptian and Egyptian-style pottery and daily-used objects, which demonstrate the presence of

a permanent Egyptian personnel, not necessary élites but members of a community working for Egyptian central administration.

Syrian territories were comprised in the Amurru province, which capital Tell Kazel/Simyra holds evidences of an Egyptian presence since the reign of Thutmose III. During the Late Bronze Age Syria was an advanced and wealthy area: here New Kingdom exploited local trade networks through a sensitive management, leaving local governors on their thrones along with a periodical checking performed by itinerant Egyptian inspectors.

Lebanon consisted in the Upe province, with its capital city at Kamid el-Loz/Kumidi. At this moment we are not able to figure out a clear picture for this region during the Late Bronze Age. Certainly the conquest of Lebanon gave access to its coastal harbors and to a conspicuous number of economic resources, while certain sites were used as outposts helping military expeditions to the North.

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Session 2.

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