



EGYPT AND THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

FROM THE LATE FOURTH THROUGH THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BCE

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INTRODUCTION

The first iteration of the Egyptian state emerged in the late fourth millennium and survived into the late third millennium BCE. This first pharaonic state, however, was not monolithic. During this period, Egypt experienced ongoing complex developments in social and political organization that impacted all levels of Egyptian society. These changes are most evident in the transition to the pyramid-building society of the 3rd and 4th Dynasties, but periods of far-reaching change can also be detected throughout the Early Dynastic Period (1st–2nd Dynasties), the later Old Kingdom (5th–6th Dynasties), and the First Intermediate Period. So too did Egypt's relationships with the outside world change across this first millennium of state-level organization.

As one of the earliest state-forming societies whose reach can be seen across the Mediterranean world, Egypt's interaction with its neighbors has been of great interest to scholars inside and outside

of Egyptology for more than a century. Over the last 15 years, new textual evidence has emerged, while the application of archaeological sciences has given new life to legacy data. Importantly, recent developments in the absolute chronology of the third millennium coupled with new archaeological data from all parts of the Mediterranean, have started a new wave of reassessment of the synchronisms, nature, and intensity of Egypt's relationships with its northern neighbors.

Given these developments, it was timely to convene a cross-disciplinary dialogue through an international conference showcasing the latest research on interactions between Egypt, the Levantine and Aegean worlds in the late 4th–3rd millennium (Late Early Bronze I – EB IV/Intermediate Bronze Age). Each region was represented by a different institutional partner which hosted invited papers related to the questions of Egypt's interaction with that region. The conference was held in a fully

online format that allowed for global participation in real time.

THE CONFERENCE

The conference was conceived of and organized by the editors and institutional partners including the Centre for Ancient Cultural Heritage and Environment (CACHE) at Macquarie University hosting online from Sydney, The W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (AIAR) hosting online from Jerusalem, the *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* (JAEI) hosting online from Amman, and the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) hosting online from Cairo. The authors represented their respective institutions, while Dr. Pearce Paul Creasman represented JAEI and Dr. Louise Bertini represented ARCE.

Over four days—20 May, 24 May, 27 May, and 2 June 2021—32 invited papers were presented, representing 50 contributors from seventeen countries. Participants included PhD candidates, early and mid-career researchers, and senior scholars. Overall, 635 people attended the conference free of charge, representing 39 countries and the dedicated Twitter account amassed 310 followers in a short space of time. The abstracts of papers presented during these sessions are in the Appendix below.

Overall, *Egypt and the Mediterranean World* was a ground-breaking event, and we sincerely thank everyone who supported the conference and participated in many and various ways. It brought together archaeologists, historians, and scientists working across Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean to present and discuss data and broad themes that crossed geographical and disciplinary boundaries. The Zoom webinar format enabled people from politically disparate locations to meet and share their work in a free and neutral environment.

THE PUBLICATION

This volume collects sixteen papers that ultimately derived from the presentations and discussion during the conference. They are all significant contributions to wider debates on state formation and the role and impact of trade in the emergence of complex societies. Each provides new historical, archaeological, and scientific data uniquely drawn from across the region by a wide range of specialists, and helps develop the rich mosaic of interconnections between Egypt and its Mediterranean neighbors.

In his paper, Matthew J. Adams focuses on the three temples *in antis* of Stratum XV Megiddo, offering an updated interpretation that derives from the data collected by the excavations of the Tel Aviv University Megiddo Expedition from 1993–2010. He argues for an Intermediate Bronze Age date for the complex, traditionally dated to the Early Bronze Age III, on the basis of stratigraphy and finds. His conclusions go further, offering a new understanding of the complex in a broad Northern Levantine context and demonstrate its connections with Egypt during the late 3rd millennium. Overall, his reassessment offers a new cutting-edge perspective on this phase of the cultic complex of Megiddo and opens the door to new research paths on southern Levantine networks to the north and Egypt to the south during this period.

Samuel Atkins and Yuval Yekutieli review Egypto-Levantine connectivity in the EB I based on new data from excavations at two sites in the Negev. They convincingly show Egyptian trading connections deep into the Negev Highlands during the EBI through the analysis of ceramics at Erani, Mitzpe Sde Hafir and Yeroham-Nahal Avnon. The presentation is the initial publication of material from Mitzpe Sde Hafir.

Whereas the focus often falls on Byblos, Maria Eugenia Aubet presents the results of her recent excavations at the Early Bronze Age site of Tyre, a remarkable site on a rocky island with no arable land. The data presented paint a picture of an island citadel with a protected harbor and storage facility, which imported everything it needed, but also played a significant role in the international sea trade of the period. The paper also underscores the likelihood of fresh Early Bronze Age data from Tyre, including Egyptian material and combed two-handled ceramic jars, possibilities that further nuance local and interregional relationships.

Maria Giovanna Biga builds on important work she began with P. Steinkeller on the identification of “Durugasu” in the Ebla archives as Egypt or a place in the Egyptian Delta. It summarizes the findings of that ground-breaking work, and provides new discourse on a hitherto unknown trade in live animals from Egypt to Ebla in the form of monkeys. The question of an exchange in live animals across the eastern Mediterranean region is only now the subject of academic debate, into which this paper delivers historical sources of previously unseen animal movements.

Marta D'Andrea takes as her task the reassessment of the contacts between Egypt and the Southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age IV (Intermediate Bronze Age), specifically noting the lack of chronological resolution for this period. The paper seeks to expose assumptions in scholarship on this subject and to take a fresh look at the evidence. It illustrates well the chronological/stratigraphic problems of defining the EB IV, its subphases, and the dates thereof. Clearly this period is not well understood, especially since the new Levantine chronology has given it a longer chronological horizon. Furthermore, these issues highlight the problems of anchoring radiocarbon dates between sites.

Michel de Vreese and Kamal Badreshany examine the EB III settlement landscape of Byblos, bringing many new insights to the study of urban neighborhoods, while providing a satisfying context for the major changes noted in the study of the near hinterland to Byblos's north. The paper is a significant new contribution to the archaeology and role of Early Bronze Age Byblos. Many have tried over the years to make sense of the early excavations and this paper takes the reader into a fresh space with a holistic assessment of the promontory as a ritual precinct, with the additional reflections based on new excavations in the region.

Hermann Genz and Alexander Ahrens offer an overview of the importance of Tell Fadous-Kfarabida on coastal Lebanon, along with an insightful discussion of objects likely from Egypt found at the site. Evidence from EB III Tell Fadous-Kfarabida demonstrates connections with Egypt within the context of Byblos as the primary trade node in the region. The nature and main features of the site are outlined and discussed, along with evidence for administrative systems and the importance of its 10km proximity to Byblos itself. Importantly, the work presents the likelihood of perishable exports which do not easily survive in the archaeological record.

Haskel Greenfield and Eleuterio Sousa address the question of the role of metallurgy in the rise of complex society through the analysis of cut marks on animal bones. The paper compares archaeological and zooarchaeological data from EB Egypt and the southern Levant, differentiating between flint/stone tool cut marks with those made by copper tools, using various forms of microscopy. The paper offers observations about elite and every-day use of metal and stone tools, trade, and highlights the

evidence from zooarchaeology as an additional analytical tool.

Mathilde Jean and Kamal Badrashany team up to present an important overview of the state of research on Levantine ceramics imported into early Egypt. The paper aggregates the existing published data from Egypt starting with Cemetery U at Abydos and proceeding through to the Early Dynastic Period at Helwan. The authors present a convincing case that embraces morphology, surface finish, petrography, and geoscience for a zone of production in the central Levant. Comparisons are then made with petrography from broadly parallel phases in the central Levant in order to clarify the origin of a corpus of imports in Egypt.

Johannes Jüngling and Felix Höflmayer offer a detailed critique of the bases for the historical chronology of the 3rd and 4th Dynasties, adding a brief update on the radiocarbon situation on correspondences with the Levant. Their focus on a range of historical sources for the number, order, and regnal years of 3rd Dynasty kings reminds the reader of the on-going historical uncertainty of this period. They further consider the issue of the biennial cattle count for the 4th Dynasty. A radiocarbon summary then rounds out the contemporary picture in a holistic way.

The Tale of Sinuhe forms the basis of Anna-Latifa Mourad-Cizek's contribution. Mourad interrogates the well-known tale from the Middle Kingdom to examine the experience of Egyptians associated with foreign expeditions as described in texts from the Old and Middle Kingdom. The question is raised as to whether the Old Kingdom experience of travelers abroad formed source material for the later classic work.

Itzak Paz revisits the ongoing debate about the nature of the Egyptian presence in the southern Levant during the late EB IB / Dynasty 0. The approach taken interrogates theoretical models against the archaeological evidence, in particular highlighting the spatial differences of Egyptian patterns of occupation, residence, and engagement at a "household" level in the region. The conclusions suggest a somewhat antagonistic and unwelcome Egyptian presence, underscoring earlier interpretations that the Egyptian presence was a hostile move on the part of the emerging Egyptian state.

Metoda Peršin presents an examination of little-studied applied potmarks on ceramic vessels from Lebanon and imported vessels from Egypt. Her

work reveals the benefits of a contextual analysis of these potmarks to further understand their function(s) and enhance knowledge of exchange practices. Different marks in their combinations represent a specific graphic system understood in Lebanon, but likely not comprehended by the Egyptian recipients of jars. With potmarks applied at the point of manufacture, the author contends that they represented a form of local brand of location or content.

Maura Sala presents *aegyptiaca* and egyptianising material from EB II Tell el-Farah North and Jericho that had not been previously published, providing fresh insights into the material. With particular focus on these sites, she examines exchange between Egypt and the Levant, noting that Egyptian and south Levantine relations in the EB II requires a significant reassessment in the light of new data and scientific analyses.

The team of Karin Sowada, Wilma Wetterstrom, Geraldine Jacobsen, Fiona Bertuch, and Margaret Serpico tackle the nature and preservation of contents from a corpus of imported combed jars found in Giza tombs, now housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The archaeology of the jars is examined to assess questions of royal patronage, ancient use and reuse, residue preservation and the impact of modern interventions. The work includes an examination and radiocarbon case-study of the contents of one jar to help answer the question of why, surprisingly, so few visible residues are found inside the jars from this corpus.

Rounding off the contributions, Valentina Tumolo and Kamal Badrashany present a dataset of combed ware vessels from Khirbet ez-Zeraqon in the northern reaches of the southern Levant and measure its regional importance in light of ceramic studies from other sites. Thin-section petrography is used to demonstrate the same shift in raw materials evident in the northern Transjordan and central Levant, adding to our understanding of regional technological change and the *chaîne opératoire* from the perspective of a single site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank all of the host institutions for their participation in this project and especially, Pearce Paul Creasman and Louise Bertini for facilitating their cooperation. Pearce Paul is further to thank for taking on the task of publishing the papers resulting from the conference herein.

The Conference was held free of charge for presenters and participants, but relied on financial contributions behind-the-scenes to ensure its success. CACHE provided funding for web hosting the event, ticketing and the administrative support of Dr. Alice McClymont. The Center for the Mediterranean World (American Archaeology Abroad) provided on-line technology support and editing services, while the Australian Research Council Future Fellowship Grant FT170100288 'Pyramids, Power and the Dynamics of States in Crisis' held by Dr Karin Sowada funded the graphic support provided by Mr. Anthony Dakhouli and other elements of the Conference.

Finally, we are extremely grateful to Viviana Moscovitch of The Center for the Mediterranean World for the hard work of copy editing and formatting of the final articles.

APPENDIX: ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED

EGYPT, BYBLOS, AND MEGIDDO IN THE EB IV

Matthew J. Adams (W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research)

The Stratum XV Triple Temple Complex at Megiddo has been the subject of debate concerning its date since it was first uncovered by the University of Chicago in the 1930s. Generally, an Early Bronze Age III date became the status quo interpretation, but several problems with this date are apparent. First, there was already significant EB III stratigraphy at the site consisting of a well-planned palace, elite quarter, and temple complex. The construction of the triple temple complex completely put this EB III palatial phase out of commission. Therefore, if an EB III date for the temples is preferred, then a completely new urban plan was envisioned within that period – a phenomenon not seen elsewhere at EB III palatial centers. Second, it leaves a significant gap in architectural occupation at the site during the EB IV/Intermediate Bronze Age, a period for which Megiddo has produced a significant amount of material culture. A solution presented itself with the Tel Aviv University Megiddo Expedition's discovery of a cache of Egyptianized pottery below the temple complex. Originally thought to have come from underlying EB IB strata, ongoing excavation at the site and a refinement of the stratigraphy of the cultic area lead the present author to argue that the pottery cache was a foundation deposit associated with the Stratum XV Triple Temple Complex, and

that typologically the cache fits well Egyptian foundation deposits from the late Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period, in turn supporting an EB IV/IB date for the construction of the Megiddo Triple Temple Complex.

This paper returns to this issue to place the architecture of the Triple Temple Complex properly into its Northern Levantine EB IV world as temples in *antis*, and to consider Northern Levantine and Egyptian contacts from the unique perspective of Megiddo.

CONTACT BETWEEN EGYPT AND CRETE IN THE 3RD/4TH DYNASTY: AN EARLY MINOAN II VESSEL FROM MENDES, EGYPT

Matthew J. Adams (W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research), Christopher Hale (O.P. Jindal Global University), and Peter Tomkins (University of Leuven)

Of the varied projects of the Pennsylvania State University excavations at Mendes excavation project, one focused on an extensive stratigraphic sondage through a mound upon which the New Kingdom temple was built (Field AJ). The mound was shown to be a tell of its own comprised of the Old Kingdom temple complex, adjacent domestic and production buildings, and provincial cemetery. At present, the stratigraphic sondage has revealed continuous remains from the early First Dynasty through the First Intermediate Period. One of the phenomena observed at the site is the construction of a large mudbrick platform in the 5th Dynasty, understood to be the base for the temple of the Banebdjed, around which grew a large provincial cemetery (Field AJ, Phase III). The entire site was dramatically destroyed, and the tombs looted in the late 6th Dynasty.

In the remains of a building preceding the construction of the temple (Field AJ, Phase IV), dated to the 3rd/4th Dynasty, a vessel was discovered bearing a number of Cretan typological and technological features indicative of an Early Minoan II date. In this paper, we present the context of this unique vessel, review Aegean parallels, consider issues of chronological synchronization, and initiate a broader discussion of Egyptian and Aegean contact in the mid Third Millennium BCE.

MULTI-PROXY RESIDUE ANALYSIS OF LEVANTINE COMBED VESSELS FROM THE EARLY OLD KINGDOM

Sophia Aharonovich (Macquarie University), Ailish Schneider (University of Sydney), and Karin Sowada (Macquarie University)

Flat-based ceramic jars with vertical loop handles and a ‘combed’ exterior surface, are a well-known type associated with Levantine commodity exchange (Thalmann, Sowada 2014). Based on petrographic results from samples of 4th Dynasty Combed jars from Giza, Sowada, Ownby & Wodzinska (2019) concluded that the vessels originated in the Byblos region. The jars probably arrived in Egypt from Byblos by maritime trade routes (Sowada 2009). However, the original commodities transported to Egypt from the Levant are not known with certainty. In this paper, we present preliminary results of multi-proxy analysis of organic and botanical residues from the jars sampled in the petrographic study.

Ten sherds from different vessels were analysed in Macquarie University laboratories. To detect and identify pollen grains, diatoms, and phytoliths, we utilized Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) images. For residue analysis, we used Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS). In six sherds we did not detect traces of botanical residue using SEM images. Four other samples suggest the presence of *Olea Europaea* (Olive), *Ziziphus* sp. (Jujube), and *Salvia Sativa* (Sage) pollen grains. The data also show detectable levels of various n-alkanes and fatty acids, indicating that the major source of the organic residue derives from plant origins.

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CORRELATING EGYPTO-LEVANTINE CONNECTIVITY IN CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGE PROFILES BETWEEN TEL ERANI AND THE NEGEV HIGHLANDS

Samuel Atkins (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

The role of nomadic pastoral tribes in the Egypto-Levantine interaction sphere of the late 4th millennium southwestern Levant has been often acknowledged, but rarely examined in detail. New data on the subject has been acquired from recent excavations by Ben-Gurion University at Mitzpe Sde Hafir and by the Israel Antiquities Authority excavations at Yeroham – Nahal Avnon, two late EB I sites in the Western Negev and Central Negev Highlands respectively. The study of the new data has revealed two zones of complex and transformational nomadic encounters with sedentary societies at a pivotal phase of Egypto-Levantine connectivity. A comparative multivariate statistical analysis of ceramic assemblage profiles from these two desert sites along with phases of Egypto-Levantine colonial relations at Tel Erani has revealed unexpected correlations, with consequent chronological and social-evolutionary implications. Viewed within a holistic frame that considers the overall material morphology of these sites, the interplay between Nomadic agency and Egyptian socio-economic and cultural influence in the region was evidently stimulative in the formation of new structures of desert-sown interaction.

TYRE: AN INTERMEDIATE HARBOUR IN INTERREGIONAL TRADE

Maria Eugenia Aubet (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

The founding of a small, fortified center on the island of Tyre in the Early Bronze Age cannot be explained without hypothesizing the complicity of a continental center on the nearby coast. The island is rocky with no arable land, however, the Early Bronze Age settlement there has provided a notable volume of combed storage jars as well as remains of cereals, olive pits and grapes. As a maritime outpost of a continental center controlling a fertile plain, the island was ideally situated along the navigable Mediterranean current coming from the Nile Delta up the coastal Levant and in an excellent intermediary position between the southern Lebanese coast, the Bay of Akko and Egypt.

STATUS OF RACE AND SYRO-PALESTINIAN COMBED WARE IN THE FIFTH AND SIXTH DYNASTY

Miroslav Bárta (Charles University, Prague)

In this paper, I explore the phenomenon of the status of race in connection with imported and/or imitated Syro-Palestinian ceramic wares in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty. Several Old Kingdom tombs from Abusir feature well-preserved genuine imported as well as imitated pottery jars in the burial chambers of their respective owners. The social status of these persons as reflected through their individual titles and the reasons behind their decision to include these vessels in their burial chambers will be discussed and interpreted.

CRAFTING COMMUNITIES INTO CONTACT: INVESTIGATING THE PRODUCTION AND USES OF STAMP SEALS IN EGYPT AND CRETE DURING THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BCE

Nadia Ben-Marzouk (Tel Aviv University)

Eastern Mediterranean exchange networks of the third millennium BCE saw the movement of goods and people, as well as the development of new practices. One such practice to gain prominence in Egypt and on Crete is the use of stamp seals. Though miniature in size, glyptic provides a window into the construction of new practices and identities in a community. This paper critically investigates the stamp seals in Egypt and on Crete during the third millennium, seeking to better understand the appearance of similarities and differences in each corpus. While previous research has debated the extent to which each regional assemblage was influenced by the other, this paper builds on a prior proposal that glyptic specialists from Crete were in direct contact with individuals in Egypt, suggesting similarities were more than superficial. Production techniques, form, iconographic motifs, and consumption practices will be surveyed, as well as non-glyptic material engaged in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of the nature of contact between communities. It is argued that these regional assemblages may have evolved alongside one another, reflecting local participation in an interregional community of exchange during the late third millennium. The implications of such contact will be explored.

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA IN THE 24TH CENT. BC ACCORDING TO THE TEXTS OF THE CITY OF EBLA, SYRIA

Maria Giovanna Biga (*Università degli Studi "La Sapienza" di Roma*)

In a number of articles that appeared between 2012 and 2017, Maria Giovanna Biga, studying the types of materials that were exchanged between the kingdom of Ebla and that of Dugurasu, hypothesized that Dugurasu could be identified as a place in the Delta of Egypt. This proposal was positively received by a number of scholars. Archi (A. Archi, Egypt or Iran in the Ebla Texts, *Orientalia* NS 45 (2016), pp. 1-49) questioned this hypothesis, arguing that Dugurasu is none other than the land of Turkish which, according to him, is to be sought in northwestern Iran.

This issue is of importance for the history of relationships of Syria and Egypt, and the nature of international trade during the late third millennium BC.

For this reason, M.G. Biga and P. Steinkeller recently offered in the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* a systematic examination of the data bearing on the question of Dugurasu's identity and location. They studied in detail the materials traded between Ebla and Dugurasu. In addition, the city of DULU was identified as an intermediary between Ebla and Dugurasu, with all the data pointing to an identification of DULU with the city of Byblos. This presentation will discuss in detail the materials traded, presenting the results of the Biga-Steinkeller study, in addition to some new texts.

DECONSTRUCTING THE PUTATIVE EGYPTIAN COLONIAL SYSTEM IN SOUTHERN LEVANT AT THE END OF THE FOURTH MILLENNIUM BC

Marcin Czarnowicz (*Jagiellonian University in Kraków*) and Eliot Braun (*W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem*)

Since the first traces of a 4th-millennium-BCE Egyptian settlement were found in southern Levant at Tel Erani by Shmuel Yeivin, various scholars have suggested interpretations of the nature of relations between the two regions. Presently, the most popular interpretation assumes that a newly born Egyptian state tried to establish a colony in the region in order to exploit its resources. Copper, olive oil and wine were exported to Upper Egypt via localities in the Delta region to fulfill a demand by the local nobility for luxury goods. The hypothesis

states that Tell es-Sakan was the center of the colony directly controlled the southern coastal plain, the northern Negev and the southern Judean Shephela (piedmont).

Although the nature of the relations between Egypt and southern Levant has been at the center of scholarly debate for almost seven decades, the theoretical foundations of this relationship has not been thoroughly discussed. In this paper we discuss the definition of "colonization" within the context of that time and place. We suggest a new methodological background for understanding the Egyptian presence in southern Levant at the end of 4th millennium BCE which suggests a much reduced "colonial" experience.

CONTACTS BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE SOUTHERN LEVANT IN THE EARLY BRONZE IV PERIOD: AN OPEN QUESTION

Marta D'Andrea (*Università degli Studi "La Sapienza" di Roma, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità*)

According to revised absolute chronologies (increasingly accepted, though not yet unanimously), the Early Bronze Age IV in the southern Levant spans from ca. 2500 BCE to ca. 1920/1900 BCE, a period corresponding to the late Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, and the very beginning of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt.

Earlier, scholars assumed that Egyptian raids during the late Old Kingdom played a role in the demise of southern Levantine fortified settlements of the Early Bronze III period. Later, contacts between the two regions were framed within the hypothesis of commercial contacts related to trade of southern Levantine copper with the late Old Kingdom Egypt with virtually no evidence of contacts afterwards until the early Middle Kingdom. But what do we really know about southern Levantine-Egyptian interconnections in the Early Bronze IV period? How much does the lack of chronological resolution in the sub-phasing of the EB IV impact are current ability to understand these contacts?

This paper briefly reviews textual, pictorial, and archaeological evidence traditionally considered as evidence for southern Levantine-Egyptian interactions in the EB IV, outlining the current state of research. Taking the view from the southern Levant, it re-examines the local developmental trajectory to discuss how recent archaeological research may reenvision the way we understand this non-urban era. Moving from these insights, it

discusses how the archaeological evidence may fit into newly proposed interpretations of Levantine-Egyptian contacts during this period.

THE NEGEV AND SURROUNDING DESERTS DURING THE LATE 3RD MILLENNIUM BCE: AN UPDATE FROM THE SOUTH

Zachary C. Dunseth (Brown University)

This paper summarizes the results of the nearly decade-long Negev Highlands Research Project, an interdisciplinary study of the desert settlement phenomena of the fourth and third millennium BCE at the macro- and microscale. Using a battery of geoarchaeological methods, this work has focused on identifying subsistence strategies, evaluating desert metallurgical activities, establishing a high-resolution radiocarbon framework, and reconstructing settlement patterns at four sites: two central sites, Ein Ziq and Mashabe Sade, and two smaller sites, Nahal Boqer 66 and Nahal Nizzana 328. In parallel to our work, other researchers in the southern deserts of the Negev, Jordan, and Sinai have contributed much to the understanding of the period, including the study of desert waterscapes, iconography, and copper sourcing. Altogether, the results of these studies enable a new discussion about desert societies and the role of the larger economies of Egypt and Syria in the arid south during the long 3rd millennium BCE.

THE *hkr nswt* AND THE ROLE OF LUXURIA IN EGYPTIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE LEVANT DURING THE LATE OLD KINGDOM

Andres Diego Espinel (CCHS CSIC)

The aim of this paper is to offer a new interpretation of the Egyptian term *hkr-nswt*, proposing its connection to Egyptian diplomatic practices in the Levant. This expression, usually translated as “royal ornaments” or “royal insignia”, seems to refer more precisely to both the most precious items intended for the royal consumption and the institution devoted to their elaboration, management and keeping. Prosopographical evidence indicates that the *hkr-nswt* was tightly connected to the Egyptian Treasury (*pr-ḥd*) and was related to either exotica collected in foreign regions or luxuria crafted in/for the royal palace, as is the case of some textiles, gold jewels or unguents.

Maria Giovanna Biga’s recent identification of the toponym Dugurasu with Egypt in some

Eblaite tablets offers new insights on the diplomatic and trading connections between Egypt and its Levantine neighbours during the late Old Kingdom (6th Dynasty). According to data from the Ebla state archive, different products were sent by the court of Dugurasu/Egypt to Ebla as payment and/or recognition of the giving by Ebla of materials such as lapis lazuli and tin, among others. The bulk of the Egyptian gifts comprised some of the main items that formed the *hkr-nswt*: textiles, gold and other luxury materials (e.g., semi-precious stones).

Considering the Eblaite data connected to the products given by Dugurasu/Egypt and other pieces of evidence coming from Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, it is possible to suggest that the main, if not all, diplomatic gifts were managed by the Egyptian State as *hkr-nswt* items. On the other hand, these gifts fit well within Near Eastern diplomatic practices attested during the 3rd millennium BCE, pointing toward the integration of Egypt into the diplomatic procedures of the region.

IN THE SHADOW OF BYBLOS: THE AEGYPTIACA FROM TELL FADOUS-KFARABIDA

Hermann Genz (American University of Beirut) and Alexander Ahrens (German Archaeological Institute, Damascus Branch)

During the Old Kingdom, Byblos emerged as one of the main ports of trade between Egypt and the Levant. This is not only suggested by textual references in the Egyptian record, but also by a surprisingly large number of Egyptian objects dating to the Old Kingdom from Byblos. However, various chronological and contextual problems hugely diminish the value of the aegyptiaca from Byblos for the reconstruction of the relations between Egypt and the Levantine coast.

Excavations at Tell Fadous-Kfarabida undertaken between 2004 and 2016 help establish a more secure chronology for the Early Bronze Age in Byblos. As the site is only 12 km north of Byblos, it certainly must have been in the economic and political orbit of Byblos. In this paper the few aegyptiaca from Tell Fadous-Kfarabida are presented, and the relationship to Byblos is discussed. As Fadous-Kfarabida lacks a good natural harbor, it is very likely that the aegyptiaca retrieved reached the site via Byblos.

THE ADOPTION OF QUOTIDIAN METALLURGY
IN EGYPT AND THE LEVANT: A COMPARATIVE
ZOOARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Haskel J. Greenfield (University of Manitoba and St. Paul's College) and Eleuterio (Luther) Abreu De Sousa (Macquarie University)

Most studies of the spread of copper and bronze metallurgy across the Near East have relied upon the relatively few metal finds that have survived. Further, most of these are from mortuary contexts and indicate little about daily life activities. In recent years, a new method that circumvents the biased metallurgical record has been developed using microscopic groove analysis on zooarchaeological remains. In this paper, we present and compare our data from the southern Levant and Egypt to begin assessing the nature of the spread of metallurgy between the two regions. The paper will present the method, followed by a presentation of the data from the southern Levant, and finally from Old Kingdom Egypt. The results allow an initial assessment of the relative importance of stone versus metal tools in different parts of the eastern Mediterranean for quotidian activities, such as meat processing.

EARLY DYNASTIC/OLD KINGDOM EGYPT AND THE
EARLY BRONZE AGE LEVANT: ANCIENT HISTORY AND
NEW RADIOCARBON DATES IN DIALOGUE

Felix Höflmayer (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Johannes Jüngling (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Roman Gundacker (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Radiocarbon dating and Bayesian analysis have revolutionized our perspective on Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Egyptian interconnections with the Early Bronze Age (southern) Levant. A short Early Bronze II duration and the early end of (most) urbanized sites around 2500 BCE (instead of 2300/2200 BCE) has called for renewed analyses of the mechanisms behind the rise and fall of early urbanism during the first half of the 3rd millennium BCE.

This paper summarizes and updates previously published radiocarbon models for the Levant and Egypt using the most up-to-date IntCal20 radiocarbon calibration curve, recent improvements in understanding of (limited) regional offsets, and new understandings of Egyptian reign lengths during the Old Kingdom. Based on this coherent chronological framework we outline the history and development of Egyptian-Levantine interactions during the 4th and early 3rd millennia BCE.

THE NORTHERN LEVANT, A COMMERCIAL PARTNER OF
ANCIENT EGYPT? A PETROGRAPHIC VIEW

Mathilde Jean (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Contacts between Ancient Egypt and the Levant have been a main issue of archaeological research in the eastern Mediterranean for decades. Pottery is an essential tool to investigate this question, as many Levantine ceramics were discovered in Egyptian contexts (both in Upper and Lower Egypt). Recent research aims at determining the provenance of those Levantine imports: southern or northern Levant? From which region or site?

This paper focuses on the identification of northern Levantine imports to Egypt during the third millennium BCE. The study is based on pottery assemblages from 7 northern Levantine sites: Tell Arqa (reference site), Tell Bseise and Tell Laha (Akkar plain), Enfeh and Byblos (Lebanese coast), Ras Shamra and Qatna (western Syria). Petrography is the main analytical method, along with technological, typological and chronological comparison.

The results of northern Levantine analyses are compared to published data on Levantine imports in Egypt. Several hypotheses on provenance and chronology of Levantine imports in Egypt are then set forth in order to offer new insights on trade relations between the northern Levant and Egypt during the third millennium BCE.

TALES OF DESTRUCTION AND DISASTER: THE END
OF THIRD MILLENNIUM BC IN THE CENTRAL AND
NORTHERN LEVANT AND ITS REGIONAL IMPACT

Melissa Kennedy (The University of Western Australia)

Scholars have frequently described the end of the 3rd millennium BC as an era of 'collapse' and settlement disruption. In the southern Levant, this horizon is distinguished by the disintegration of the walled-town culture of the Early Bronze Age II–III (ca. 3200–2600/2500 BCE) and a return to small-scale ruralism during the Early Bronze Age IV (ca. 2600/2500–2000 BCE). Whilst in the northern Levant settlement continued relatively unchanged. A variety of differing hypotheses have been posited to account for these changes—with aridification, earthquake and population movements all cited to account for the decline of the southern Levantine Early Bronze Age. This paper will focus on the destructions of settlements in the central and northern Levant (the Lebanese coast and western inland Syria) at the end of the 3rd millennium

BCE, exploring the potential causes, as well as the wider regional impact these destructions had on the surrounding regions, such as Egypt and the southern Levant.

IMPORTED COMBED WARE FROM THE ABYDOS TOMBS OF WENI THE ELDER AND HIS FAMILY

Christian Knoblauch (Swansea University, Wales & University of Michigan Middle Cemetery Project) and Karin Sowada (Macquarie University)

A 2010 article reported on a corpus of supposedly imported Combed Ware vessels found in contexts of the late Fifth and Sixth Dynasties in the Abydos Middle Cemetery. At the time, apart from some unique finds from sites like Elephantine, Edfu and Meydum, the 11 vessels described in that paper were the largest group of Combed Ware vessels of this date found outside the Memphite region, increasing by approximately one-third the total number of true imports recorded from Egypt for this period. In the decade since the publication, a number of important new studies on Combed Ware in both Levantine and Egyptian contexts have appeared. At the same time, work on the Abydos material has continued and the corpus has grown to more than 20 vessels. The current paper evaluates the Abydos corpus in light of this new work with the goal of identifying the likely origin of the vessels, Combed ware workshop traditions, and the nature of late Old Kingdom foreign relations at the end of the Early Bronze Age.

‘THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME’? TRAVELS, TRAVELERS, AND TROPES FROM THE OLD TO THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

Anna-Latifa Mourad (Macquarie University)

The Tale of Sinuhe is one of the most frequently attested pieces of literature that has survived from the Pharaonic Period. Its exploration of Sinuhe’s encounters with courtly affairs, border crossers, and Levantine lands and peoples, has been well-studied. However, how novel was the tale in its representation of travel to the northeast? This paper focuses on travel and travelers, as mainly preserved in Old to Middle Kingdom textual material relating to Egyptian-Near Eastern relations. Examining similarities and differences across time, it questions whether Old Kingdom transregional agents and activities, as well as their representations, influenced the emergence of tropes on border transgression and foreign entities. It further discusses how periods of increased connectivity may have impacted concepts

of travel, distance, geography, and cross-border social relations, and whether such concepts were temporally transmitted in spite of the political shifts in Egypt from the late 3rd to the early 2nd Millennium BCE.

EARLY DYNASTIC AND OLD KINGDOM COPPER IN EGYPT: LATEST DATA, OPEN QUESTIONS

Martin Odler (Charles University, Prague), Jiří Kmošek (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna), Marek Fikrle (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), and Yulia V. Erban Kochergina (Czech Geological Survey)

Recent years have brought to light the first substantial corpora of data on the provenance of ancient Egyptian copper of the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom periods (Kmošek et al. 2018; Odler and Kmošek 2020; Rademakers et al. 2018). Besides establishing Sinai and the Eastern Desert as the major sources of copper in ancient Egypt at this time, the corpora also opened new questions, commented upon already by Ben-Yosef 2018. We would like to frame these datasets into the wider context of the statistical population (i.e. total counts) of all known Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom copper artefacts, and the limited subset of data already analysed (and data published on the ore sources), raising the question of the statistical representativeness of the available information. Some published and unpublished case studies of particular artefacts will clarify our main argument: currently, a patchwork of data is available, representing a few odd pieces of a giant mosaic. Although the systems of the Early Bronze Age were scaled down in comparison to the trade and exchange systems of the Late Bronze Age, supra-regional exchange of precious materials must have existed already in fourth millennium BC, including metals. Application of the techniques of natural sciences is vital in uncovering these “invisible connections”, especially in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age, specifically as detailed sources such as the Amarna Letters or the annals of Amenemhat II are lacking. The possibilities and limits of the natural sciences on the one side, and on the other the limitations of the historical and archaeological evidence, must be realized and accounted for in truly interdisciplinary research.

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PRESTIGE AND PETROGRAPHY: REEXAMINATION OF TOMB U-j JARS

Mary F. Ownby (University of Arizona) and Ulrich Hartung (German Archaeological Institute, Cairo)

The Abydos cemetery tomb U-j is well-known in Egyptology and its contents have been thoroughly studied. However, the imported vessels, though examined chemically and petrographically, remained an enigma. A reexamination, utilizing the more complete understanding of Levantine raw materials achieved over the past 30 years, has suggested the jars are true imports. Most appear to derive from a number of places in Palestine, with some also possibly from Lebanon. The high diversity of fabrics could indicate jars were acquired from many places in order to fulfill the Egyptian "order". Further, some vessels that do not have good Levantine parallels may also represent potters creating jars to fulfill the request. While the exact nature of early trade between Egypt and the Levant remains unclear, it seems likely that being buried with foreign jars of many shapes, indicating the ability to acquire vessels from throughout the Levant, conferred some amount of prestige on the tomb owner. Finally, these results can now be put into a fuller context in relation to later imported jars, whose petrographic study suggests Lebanon became a prime trade partner for goods.

A NOTE ON SOME THEORETICAL, CULTURAL AND SPATIAL ASPECTS OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN LEVANT DURING THE LATE 4TH MILLENNIUM BC

Yitzhak Paz (Israel Antiquities Authority)

The Egyptian presence in the Southern Levant in the late 4th millennium BCE has been intensively studied for several decades with researchers covering every aspect of material culture, relative and absolute chronology, socio-political and economic implications, and more. The nature of the physical Egyptian presence at the southern Levant has been characterized by scholars in various scales that from maximal (military and/or colonial occupation, focusing on the establishment of Egyptian enclaves within local settlements) to minimal (purely commercial activity with almost no physical presence of Egyptians). The geography-based tripartite scheme in which the Egyptian presence in the land of Israel is reconstructed according to the analysis of spatial distribution of Egyptian finds seems to best reflect the situation to date.

The current paper focuses on the nature of the Egyptian presence in the late 4th millennium BCE by pointing out some theoretical, cultural, and spatial aspects, based on old and new finds from sites like Tel Lod, Al-Maghar and 'En Esur. The study of various settlements located north of the Besor basin (in which Egyptian physically resided) may point towards a short-time foreign presence that had no dramatic influence on local population and did not change the nature of local "Canaanite" settlements.

APPLIED POTMARKS BETWEEN LEBANON AND EGYPT IN THE BRONZE AGE

Metoda Peršin (Freie Universität Berlin)

Although potmarks have been discovered at many archaeological sites in the Near East and Egypt, interpretations of their functions vary. Despite the diversity of techniques used in making potmarks (e.g. incised, painted, impressed, applied), applied potmarks have been especially neglected. It is mostly the so-called "ram's head" applications that have previously attracted some attention, however, these have often been considered as decorative elements rather than potmarks. A recent systematic study of potmarks from Bronze Age contexts in Lebanon has revealed not only that applied marks do exist, but that they appear frequently and come in a variety of forms and sizes. Contacts between

the Levant and Egypt in the Bronze Age are confirmed by both written sources and analyses of archaeological materials, including ceramic vessels, that were exported to Egypt. Some of these vessels bear applied potmarks. This paper aims to integrate the data obtained on applied potmarks from sites in Egypt, as well as other information concerning the connections between Egypt and the Lebanese coast to better understand the function of applied potmarks in the Early Bronze Age Lebanon.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF IMPORTED ARTEFACTS IN ELITE TOMBS OF THE EGYPTIAN EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD

Olivier P. Rochecouste (Macquarie University)

For over 4000 years, ancient Egypt has conveyed its ability to conduct and maintain foreign relations with a variety of cultural groups based within the Fertile Crescent, Arabia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean regions. Evidence of these relations have been known from textual sources such as the Palermo Stone recounting maritime trade with Lebanon and pictorial reliefs depicting representations of expeditions to Punt within Hatshepsut's funerary temple of Deir el-Bahari. However, questions have been asked as to how these relations originated, how they transformed Egypt's social complexity and benefited its people, especially during the Early Dynastic period (c. 3100-2700 BCE) when the first royal rulers emerged to commence the age of Dynastic Egypt.

Information about Egypt's foreign relations and understanding how foreign trade was conducted during this time is limited, but the information we have mostly comes from the study of imported artefacts from Egyptian tombs, especially the royal tombs within the Umm el-Qa'ab cemetery at Abydos. These artefacts come in the form of pottery, stone vessels and semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli, which have been sourced from faraway lands. However, such items are not exclusive to the royal tombs and have been found amongst First Dynasty dated elite tombs in Tell el-Farkha, Saqqara, Helwan and Abu Rawash.

This presentation will discuss what the presence of these artefacts signified for elite and /or non-royal tomb owners during the Early Dynastic period, and how tomb owners may have acquired such foreign provisions. Did they acquire them through the royal administration or through independent means?

These are important questions to ask, especially given that an apparent quantitative decline in foreign mortuary objects is noticed amongst elite tomb assemblages from the 2nd Dynasty onwards. On the other hand, royal tombs gain more notoriety in their mortuary provisions, culminating in the construction of the Step Pyramid of Djoser of the 3rd Dynasty.

RECONSIDERING EGYPTIAN-SOUTH LEVANTINE INTERACTION: NEGLECTED EVIDENCE FROM EB II CONTEXTS AT TELL ES-SULTAN AND TELL EL-FAR'AH NORTH

Maura Sala (Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano)

Interactions between Egypt and the southern Levant in the late Fourth/early Third millennium BCE have been reconsidered variously in recent scholarly literature. Following the growing identification of Egyptian material at key sites (e.g. Tel Yarmuth, Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Bet Yerah), evidence of a more articulated two-way relationship between First Dynasty Egypt and the south Levantine communities during the Early Bronze II has begun to emerge. While a complete reassessment of First Dynasty-EB II relations is beyond its scope, this paper seeks to review key evidence from Tell es-Sultan and Tell el-Far'ah North. Tell es-Sultan is a key site in Egyptian-Levantine exchange because of its proximity to essential raw materials of the Dead Sea basin; Tell el-Far'ah North is the leading centre in the area between the central hills and the Jordan Valley. The analysis confirms the existence of a branched network of commodity trading between Egypt and the southern Levant which was operational at the dawn of the earliest urbanization in the region. This paper considers the amount, range, and find context of Egyptian materials in order to assess the nature and intensity of the relationships between Egypt and these EB II south Levantine communities; and what role may they have played in the development of the first urban-centered society in the region.

THE CURIOUS CONTENTS OF COMBED WARE STORAGE JARS FROM GIZA

Margaret Serpico (University College London), Richard Newman, (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), Karin Sowada (Macquarie University)

Over the years, there has been considerable speculation on the likely contents of Levantine two-handled Combed Ware storage jars imported into Egypt in the Early Bronze Age. Most often, oils and

resins, notably coniferous resin, have been suggested as possible commodities, but apart from analysis by Alfred Lucas in the 1950's, little scientific research has been carried out on the vessels themselves.

As part of a wider investigation of these vessels (led by Dr Karin Sowada, Macquarie University), it has been possible to sample and analyse the contents of a selection of jars from Reisner's excavations at Giza, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. However, during study of the jars, it quickly became apparent that the contents had been disturbed both in ancient and modern times, presenting a number of challenges for scientific analysis and interpretation of the results. This paper discusses the complex mixtures identified in these jars within the framework of this complicated lifecycle.

This work dovetails with ongoing botanical and pollen analyses of the jar contents; study of their archaeological contexts; and petrographic and chemical examination of the clays used in their manufacture. The aim is to provide a wider picture of the Egyptian-Levantine liquid commodities trade during this time, the exchange of valuable natural products, and the role of the jars themselves as symbols of status.

SOCIAL HISTORY OF CULTURAL INTERACTION FROM NON-ELITE CONTEXT: PALEOETHNOBOTANICAL AND ISOTOPIC EVIDENCE

Amr Khalaf Shahat (University of California, Los Angeles)

The study of cultural interaction between Egypt and other cultures in the Near East and East Mediterranean has been of increasing interest to archaeologists. Meanwhile, the main reliance on textual and iconographic evidence from Egypt has a caveat that is limiting our understanding to elite contexts. Cultural interactions from non-elite contexts (settlements and graves), where textual, iconographic, and lavish material cultures are limited, continues to be less understood, especially in the predynastic. This study presents unpublished datasets of ancient archaeobotanical food remains from the predynastic site of Nag ed Deir and the New Kingdom site of Deir el Ballas in Egypt to address diachronic and regional variation in Egyptian history of cultural interaction. This research also presents a new application of interdisciplinary methods combining stable isotope and nano-archaeology

on ancient desiccated botanical remains to answer questions on cultural interaction from the lens of food as an active agent in the formation of society, economy, and cross-regional relationships. The data will also help future research applying stable isotope in Egyptian archaeology by providing an isotopic baseline for the reconstruction of diet and environmental history. The goal is to contribute to the broader social history of Egyptian cultural interactions with the ancient Near East and Eastern Mediterranean, specifically from under-researched non-elite contexts.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND RE-USE OF COMBED JARS FROM OLD KINGDOM GIZA

Karin Sowada (Macquarie University) and Wilma Wetterstrom (Ancient Egypt Research Associates & Harvard University)

Many imported Combed jars were found by George Reisner in and around tombs of the Egyptian elite during the 1907–42 Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition on the Giza plateau. The Museum of Fine Arts (Boston) holds the largest number of such jars outside Egypt, which have been the subject of intensive study for the last three years as part of a wider project examining trade and foreign relations during the Old Kingdom.

Over the decades, many assumptions have been made in the literature about the contents of the jars, with wine, olive oil and cedar or coniferous resins proposed. Very limited scientific analysis has been conducted. Yet to date, these questions are not resolved, owing to the ephemeral nature of what remains inside the vessels. Many jars retain no signs of contents visible to the naked eye, while others contain only a small amount of loose material.

This paper discusses the archaeology of the jars and their contents, arguing that although they were status markers for elite burials, jars were used more than once prior to deposition. Moreover, the quality of the data inside the vessels has been affected by multiple post-excavation interventions. A case study of the contents of one jar, MFA 47.1662, is presented to highlight the problematic nature of the archaeological data. As a result, techniques of micro-analysis using GC-MS and examination of phytolith and pollen samples offer the most promising opportunities for unravelling this complex story.

KHIRBET EZ-ZERAQON IN ITS REGIONAL CONTEXT:
A REAPPRAISAL OF THE EB II-III EVIDENCE IN LIGHT
OF RECENT STUDIES

Valentina Tumolo (Durham University) and Kamal Badreshany (Durham University)

Following a recent stratigraphic re-evaluation of the site of Khirbet ez-Zeraqon made in light of new radiocarbon data, the archaeological evidence from the site further delineates the characteristics of the Early Bronze Age II-III transition in northern Transjordan.

This paper presents an overview of the settlement transformations and the changes in material culture that occur through the EB II and III at Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, with a particular emphasis on the organisation of pottery production and the development of a large repertoire of Combed Ware storage and transport vessels. Data will be presented that demonstrates the integration of the site within the wider phenomenon of Levantine Combed Ware pottery production and the developing exchange networks of the eastern Mediterranean world during the Early Bronze Age. The evidence from Khirbet ez-Zeraqon offers additional insights for investigating the socio-economic changes that affected the Southern Levant in this period. In turn, this will contribute to a greater understanding of dynamics underpinning the relationship between Egypt and the Levant during the Early Bronze Age.

TOWARD A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF EARLY BRONZE
AGE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE LEBANESE COAST:
PUTTING TOGETHER OLD AND RECENT DISCOVERIES

Michel de Vreeze (Durham University) and Kamal Badreshany (Durham University)

In this paper we reexplore the relationship between Egypt and the Lebanese coast during the Early Bronze Age in light of evidence from recent excavations as well as of new work on artifact assemblages in the region. The role of Byblos as hub for Egyptian activity in Lebanon during the Bronze Age is well-known, but new data further illuminates the nature of these early interactions. We aim to contextualize the significance of Byblos-Egypt interactions within the wider EB settlement landscape of the Lebanese coast. We argue that the influence of Byblos grew, in part, due to longstanding mutually beneficial exchange networks with Egypt where were centered around Byblos's temples. Despite changing economic fortunes in the region, the key cultic role of Byblos continued into later

periods with the site remaining a focal point for local communities and for Egyptian attention.

PRESENCE OF THE IMPORTED COMBED WARE AT HEIT
EL-GHURAB: USE AND IMPORTANCE

Anna Wodzińska (University of Warsaw)

The settlement of Heit el-Ghurab is located at Giza directly south of a massive Wall of the Crow. The site has been extensively investigated since 1989 by Mark Lehner (Ancient Egypt Research Associates), revealing a large settlement with clearly divided sections with groups of people responsible for different activities inhabited the various settlement quarters (the gallery system, so-called Eastern and Western Towns, etc.). The material culture associated with the settlement shows differential wealth among its inhabitants, however, the presence of some "luxurious" artefacts does not necessarily mean "luxurious" use. Among many Egyptian ceramics, fragments of imported Combed Ware jars have been identified, including a large krater of Lebanese origin. Complete imported vessels are known from the tombs of prominent people buried in Giza and elsewhere during this period and their value in Egypt seems to be well-documented. However, the Heit el-Ghurab settlement tells a different story. This paper describes the types of imported vessels found at the site and seeks to address the role they have there in relation to other sites where such pots were found. The paper show the fragments of imported vessels, their exact context and discusses their use at the site and general importance.

EGYPTIAN-SOUTHERN LEVANTINE INTERACTION ON THE
FRINGE OF THE DESERT: A VIEW FROM THE NEGEV
HIGHLANDS

Yuval Yekutieli (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

Surveys, excavations, and rock-art research carried out by BGU teams in the Northwestern Negev Highlands have revealed substantial activities bearing witness to interconnections between the region's local population and Egypt during the Fourth and Third millennia BCE. These interconnections demonstrate what we propose to understand as two different patterns: exchange activity focused on products and crops produced within the area, and trade routes that crossed the region, along which products made in other regions were transported.

The first pattern existed in the region during the Fourth millennium BCE (Early Bronze 1b), while it

was inhabited by a local population that traded with agents from the Egyptian colony located further north, towards the Mediterranean coast. This was most dramatically evidenced in our survey and excavations at the site of Mitzpe Sde Hafir, which probably served as a regional barter trade center.

The second pattern occurred during the Third millennium BC (Intermediate Bronze Age - IBA), when copper shipments from Feinan to Egypt passed through the region. New indications for this activity—beyond the already known IBA sites in the region—are rock-art scenes and icons carved along the routes and some pottery scatters.

