



IDENTITY AND MONUMENTALITY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EARLY BRONZE AGE LANDSCAPE ON THE LEBANESE COAST

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ABSTRACT

This article will discuss the role of monuments in the construction of the Early Bronze Age (EBA) landscape on the Lebanese coast. The discussion focuses on Byblos, where an extensively excavated EBA town plan shows evidence of at least seven temples and a monumental town wall. Nearby contemporary sites that followed markedly similar building activity phases during the period will also be examined. Finally, we will argue that the construction of these buildings and the communal activities they facilitated were integral to the social organization of groups along this part of the Lebanese coast.

Temples and related monumental architecture were the nexus of labor and social ties, integrating both the hinterland and participants in overseas and overland exchange networks, most visible in Egypt but also likely including Syrian, Mesopotamian, and Anatolian communities. We show that Byblos was composed of several neighborhoods built around temples, where people participated in events that served to integrate local communities while simultaneously providing a stage for competitive display. Further, we will present evidence that the temples served as venues for these social acts and stimulated contact with emerging powers such as Egypt, which delivered prestige and status to local elites fostering the development of political hierarchies apparent in the following periods.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of densely settled 'Urban' landscapes consisting of numerous fortified sites is considered a hallmark of Early Bronze Age II–III Levant. For the central and southern Levant, numerous commentators have described this earliest experiment in urbanism and usefully summarized its characteristics.¹ There is broad agreement on the physical traits of these newly built fortified settlements, and several models for their socio-political and economic organization have been posited. Among the common models is that of hierarchically controlled city-states, where fortified cities control territories of varying size.²

Traditionally, these models have been framed around economic organization and are underlain by evolutionary assumptions.³ These tend to view urbanism as the natural outcome of a long-term process of settlement nucleation that began in the Neolithic and was underpinned by technological innovations and gradual agricultural intensification to cope with population growth and resource imbalance to manage risk. Others have proposed heterarchical models which view these communities as structured through kinship organization, taking forms such as corporate villages or house society models, among others.⁴ Fewer attempts have been made to explain the process, causality, and pathways

to these new forms of complexity. Greenberg points out the lack of self-aggrandizing architecture and durable prestige goods during the EB II and argues that this may indicate a focus on community over individuals, seeing these developments as a reaction to the emergence of inequality late in the EB I.⁵

This paper proposes an alternative model for the causality, development, and organization of EB II–III Levantine ‘urban’ societies, emphasizing the role of ritual monumentality and managed agricultural production in the development of the EBA landscape and emerging socio-political hierarchies. Byblos and its surrounding region during the EB III will be used as a case study, though the question remains how distinctive the Lebanese coast is compared to the contemporary developments in the Southern Levant. The site represents one of the most extensively excavated for the period in the Levant and provides a nearly complete EB III settlement plan. Additionally, the surrounding area is one of the most intensely investigated in Lebanon, thanks to several recent excavations and survey projects that provide a new regional context within which the data from Byblos can be examined.

Our discussion is based on four interconnected themes. First, a comparison of architectural units at Byblos with those from the nearby sites of Tell Fadous-Kfarabida and Tell Koubba suggests that the development of the settlement landscape, within what might be termed the Byblos hinterland, emphasized monumental construction undertaken in pre-planned, large-scale, and near-simultaneous episodes at sites across the region, rather than reflect organic growth. Second, monumentality was primarily focused on ritual architecture (temples and associated structures), though administrative and defensive architecture were also important foci. Third, the EB III settlement of Byblos was composed of distinct neighborhoods, each comprising a temple and closely associated buildings. Finally, the overall organization of the settlement and the differential distribution of Egyptian objects suggest that neighborhoods represent distinct socio-political or kinship units with potentially varying regional and international interests. Byblos, and other major Levantine sites of the period, are often represented as single entities in hypothesized political structures and exchange networks. We argue for a more complex and possibly internally competitive socio-political structure at the site.

MONUMENTALITY AND SACRED ARCHITECTURE AS DRIVING MECHANISMS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Monumentalization underpinning the formation and maintenance of social groups is a common theme, cross-culturally, and has been discussed as a feature of Near Eastern Societies since at least the Neolithic period.⁶ Ritualized monument construction drives the development of cooperative labor parties and has been discussed as a strategy for reinforcing hierarchical structures in small-scale societies where power is temporary, fluid, and conferred by consensus of the larger group.⁷ Similar frameworks have been drawn upon for the EBA Levant to explain the construction of Levantine EBA ‘defensive walls.’⁸

Greenberg and Askhenazi argued that the cooperative labor investment of groups, organized around ritual (seasonal) gatherings, was essential to the Early Bronze economy and most visible through the building of defensive walls erected partly or entirely around settlements.⁹ Although ritual architecture is not dealt with in depth in their work, they suggest that temples are important as entities around which the periodic labor needed to construct walls could be ritually sanctioned.¹⁰ Building on this notion, the archaeological record of the EBA Southern Levant is full of examples that suggest that monumental building projects were equally if not primarily vested in sacred architecture, including at Khirbet ez-Zeraqon with its three temples, and at Megiddo, with its large temple built during the latter EB I.¹¹ Likewise, EB III Byblos, with at least *seven* contemporary temples distributed throughout the settlement, demonstrates that ritual monumentality was a primary driver of the formation of the Early Bronze Age Landscape on this part of the northern Lebanese coast, embodying and motivating social change. Another dimension relevant to our understanding of these themes, as evidenced by recent excavations at Tell Fadous-Kfarabida and Koubba, is the primary role of these sites in the management of large-scale systems of communal agriculture that very likely focused on olive and grape.¹² This work will consider the role of the temple in administering this system and its utilization in labor mobilization and monumentalization.

BYBLOS: CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The non-stratigraphic and otherwise problematic nature of the excavations at Byblos has been discussed by numerous authors, leading to the impression amongst scholars that the site has little new information to contribute to regional debates.¹³ Attempts have been made over the years to sort through stratigraphy and documentation with varying degrees of success.¹⁴ Jean Lauffray's 2008 publication greatly improved the availability of information on the Early Bronze Age levels of the site, and his architectural plans and thorough descriptions, together with previously unpublished notes by Dunand, offer a much more complete picture of the EBA settlement layout.¹⁵ Crucially, his work gives much greater context to the originally published data, providing new interpretive options. Rather than dismissing the usefulness of Byblos because of what is lacking, the large body of material available and remarkably complete overview of Early Bronze Age town planning should encourage us to explore the data at levels that are viable, which will lead to important new insights.

Byblos remains one of the most extensively excavated archaeological settlements in the region, particularly for the Early Bronze Age, yielding temples, auxiliary buildings, streets, and alleys. Andrew Bevan's work on Egyptian stone objects and Marwan Kilani's study of the Late Bronze Age have shown that Dunand's recording system can be used to trace published objects to their find spots.¹⁶ For objects not specifically mentioned as *in situ*, at least their location within a 10x10m square can be identified and used to trace patterns of artefact distribution (used consistently in the second Byblos excavation volume).¹⁷ Vertical stratigraphic control is far more problematic because the site was dug in 20 cm spits; this, along with extensive rebuilding in the ancient past, has led to the mixing of archaeological material from various periods. Analysis of the material shows a tendency for earlier artifacts to 'migrate' vertically into later deposits, likely due to the extensive reuse of buildings (the same can be seen with typologically Early Bronze ceramics in later layers).¹⁸ Crucially, however, objects generally remain within the approximate area of original deposition. Therefore, their horizontal distribution can still reveal interpretable patterns if considered carefully against the available stratigraphic information.

Considering the limitations of the methods and available documentation, we lack the details neces-

sary to investigate most buildings on an individual level. Therefore, we apply a 'neighborhood' approach to better understand Byblos as a settlement during the EB III. Neighborhood studies have been utilized to argue for heterarchical models in the formation of urban landscapes.¹⁹

EARLY BRONZE II–III: MONUMENTALIZING BYBLOS AND ITS LANDSCAPE

By the start of the EB III, Byblos and its sacred spring had already been a focus of ritual activity for millennia. Thousands of jar burials dating from the 5th and 4th millennium BCE were found at the site.²⁰ The first vestiges of monumental communal architecture are already visible during the 4th millennium BCE, with the creation of a stone 'footpath' that ran between elevated areas to the southern border of the sacred spring. The feature has close parallels to a contemporary structure, normally interpreted as a wall, at Sidon-Dakerman.²¹ At the end of the EB I, a monumental wall with internal buttresses seems to have been built around the sacred spring, partly covering the older footpath, though its exact dating remains contested.²²

Following these developments, a phase called the 'proto-Urban' phase by Lauffray features a building with several EB II vessels stored as a group, an element which finds very close parallels in the southern Levant²³ (FIG. 1), suggesting that the phase dates to either the very late EB I or very early EB II, around 3200–3000 cal BCE (ECL 1). The date suggested by the *in situ* ceramics places new building activity at Byblos in line with similar developments across the central and southern Levant.²⁴ The proto-urban plan is unclear due to incursions from later activity, but this initial building phase seems to have comprised clusters of buildings with courtyards encompassing a wide area without external walls.

The next phase at the site, labeled 'Sableux' by Lauffray because of the use of sandstone (called ramlah, locally), represents the first phase of large-scale building at Byblos and the establishment of the EB III settlement pattern.²⁵ The phase can be dated to the early EB III (ca. 2800 BC, ECL 3) based on comparative analyses of *in situ* ceramic assemblages found in building XXVII.²⁶ This assemblage of vessels includes combed cooking pots, platter bowls, radially burnished bowls and juglets, and can be placed during the early EB III phases as defined at Arqa and Fadous Kfarabida.²⁷



FIGURE 1: The late EB I-II (ECL 1) phase at Byblos with *in situ* Metallic Ware vessels stored in one of the buildings as published by Dunand (1958, PLCCVI).

Immediately following the 'Sableux' is the phase called 'Grosses Fondations,' marked by the presence of massive foundations and the use of ashlar blocks in larger buildings.²⁸ The architecture of this phase is mirrored at Fadous-Kfarabida, where it starts at roughly 2700 BCE.²⁹ During this phase, the 6-meter thick internally buttressed 'fortification' wall of Byblos is built.³⁰ Likewise, a new fortification wall at Fadous-Kfarabida can be attributed to this time,

along with a large-buttressed enclosure wall at Tell Koumba.³¹ Greenberg and Ashkenazi have recently pointed out the tactical weaknesses of these walls suggesting their construction was at least in part aimed at promoting social cohesion and the projection of power.³² Notable at Byblos is that buttresses are otherwise used in association with sacred spaces and architecture, suggesting that the addition of an internally buttressed 'fortification

wall' may have served to mark out the whole settlement as sacred. Although not conceived as a ritual space, the same might have applied to EB III Tell Yarmouth (Palace B1), which provides a striking parallel to internal buttresses marking the monumental enclosed space.³³ Many of the buildings at Byblos dating to this time contain stone bases adjacent to the walls and in corners of the rooms, presumably as supports for wood pillars that likely supported an upper story.³⁴ This feature is associated with settlements on the Lebanese coast and attested at least from Arqa to Byblos and as far as Tyre, for the remainder of the EBA.³⁵ Byblos, Fadous-Kfarabida, and Koubba constitute a region where buildings were primarily built of stone, in contrast to other parts of the Lebanese littoral (e.g., Arqa and Sidon) where mudbrick was preferred.

A final reorganizational phase of the late EB III, continuing into EB IV (ECL5–6; Old Kingdom Dynasties 4–6), was called by Lauffray '*Piqueté* I–IV.'³⁶ During this phase, existing temples were modified into even more monumental structures (L-shaped temple, Ba'alat Gebal temple; Western temple/sacred spring), and new temples were erected in the vicinity of older sacred structures (e.g., the Tower temple in the southwest).³⁷ Temples were often surrounded by larger free-standing structures, including many columned halls.³⁸ In general, buildings with larger rooms are created. A similar construction phase can be seen at Fadous-Kfarabida (phase IV), during which a major reorganization took place at the site, with earlier buildings infilled to accommodate new larger ones, including a columned hall (Building 3).³⁹ The material culture associated with these buildings at Fadous-Kfarabida suggests they had an administrative function.

As shown above, architectural forms, and to some extent, the phases of building activity at Byblos, are closely mirrored by those at Fadous-Kfarabida and Koubba, perhaps indicating they were planned and undertaken as broadly contemporaneous episodes of monumental building activity and did not reflect hundreds of years of organic growth. The C¹⁴ data, settlement plan, and sequence that emerged during excavation work at Fadous-Kfarabida further support this idea by showing that the settlement was carefully laid out in an initial EB III phase and reorganized later by infilling existing buildings.⁴⁰ The buildings of this initial phase are preserved to a height of up to 2 meters, suggesting that the infilling was fast. The evidence suggests that major building

events in the region took place as defined episodes when the prevailing social conditions allowed for the organization and mobilization of large-scale cooperative labor parties.

BYBLOS: A NEIGHBORHOOD APPROACH

Early Bronze III Byblos is distinguished from other contemporary central and southern Levantine sites by its large number of temples, suggesting ritual architecture played a key role in monumentality at the site. This large number of temples might be mirrored at other contemporary sites, but these were rarely excavated over such extensive areas. The main temples show evidence of continued reconstruction and investment, including the addition of ashlar masonry ('Grosses fondations' phase), the reorganizing of courtyards, and the addition of new buildings.⁴¹ One can postulate that a large part of the site must have been given over to ritual activity. Likewise, a significant section of the 1.5-hectare site of Fadous-Kfarabida seems to have been given over to buildings of a public character, and this public building might, in fact, have been used to administer affairs as part of the Byblos hinterland.⁴² Koubba has thus far not produced any clear evidence for domestic architecture.

The current evidence suggests that Byblos and known EB III sites in the surrounding region were dominated by ritual and or public/administrative contexts. Unlike Arqa or Sidon, clear evidence for domestic architecture remains elusive, save for one example from Fadous-Kfarabida. We cannot exclude a domestic role for some of the numerous buildings found at Byblos since the excavation methods employed there limit our understanding of their function in many cases. In the context of the EB III, categorization into ritual, public, or domestic spaces perhaps fails to fully capture the fluidity and dynamism of building use at the site. Looking at the plan of Byblos shows that most buildings were organized into several clusters and closely associated with a temple, suggesting linkage to the temple's activities.

Neighborhoods are integrative socio-spatial bodies lying somewhere between the household and the settlement.⁴³ As such, neighborhoods represent a useful unit of analysis for investigating social interactions, one not generally considered for the period and region. Byblos is often treated as a single entity when discussing its role in the region or as an intermediary in interregional exchange.⁴⁴

The layout of the EB III site with its apparent clusters of buildings alternatively suggests the site was composed of several distinct socio-political or kinship groups with potentially varying regional and international interests.

From the Early EB III onward, the town plan of Byblos shows several densely built-up neighborhoods arranged around a central spring and lake (FIG. 2). The main neighborhoods can be visualized as islands within a network of streets and alleys, each dominated by a sacred building. We define a neighborhood as a cluster of buildings surrounding a temple and separated from each other by main streets running through the town of Byblos. The main streets lead to one of the gates in the town wall and/or are particularly wide. The neighborhoods are composed of house clusters spatially related to the temple, oriented towards it, or have their closest access to it. The temples are usually located directly on the street at important intersections, facilitating access and highlighting their prominence in the design of the site plan. Conceptualizing the site in this way yields at least seven major neighborhoods (FIG. 2), which we will number 1 to 7, moving clockwise from the center of the site.

Neighborhood 1 comprises the 'Western temple,' closely linked to the sacred spring (FIG. 2.1). This temple complex grew from its EB I–II antecedents and includes a courtyard and small temple edifice with associated buildings. House clusters surround this temple to the west and northwest.

Neighborhood 2 (FIG. 2.2) is found to the north and extends around the Ba'alat Gebal temple. Large residences from the Piqueté I–IV, including a building rich in Egyptian stone vessels, are associated with this temple.⁴⁵ The excavated segments of the site's monumental wall enclose this neighborhood on the north. The wall in this section contained a gate to a small sandy beach northwest of the site. The wall extended beyond this neighborhood, but whether it encircled the whole settlement remains unclear, as walls of the period are sometimes discontinuous.⁴⁶ The Ba'alat Gebal temple, and the household units surrounding it, saw several rearrangements during the Early Bronze Age, becoming incrementally monumental throughout the EB III ('Grosses Fondations'; Piqueté I–II).⁴⁷

Neighborhood 3 (FIG. 2.3), located just east of Byblos' center, contains the L-shaped temple on its northwestern corner. Neighborhood 3 is further

demarcated by a major street on the east and the sacred spring and lake on the northwest. Across a road, a small number of buildings to the north abut the city wall; we suggest these may have belonged to this cluster because they are oriented towards the L-shaped temple and further separated from Neighborhood 4 and its temple (see below) by a small alley. The L-shaped temple saw several reconstruction phases, and its architecture included a triple temple of Syrian 'in-antis' style in the early EB III period ('Grosses Fondations' phase), like those from Syria, and Megiddo and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon in the southern Levant.⁴⁸ Its extensive courtyard featured a monumental wall with internal buttresses.

Neighborhood 4 (FIG. 2.4) lies in the eastern part of the site. It contains the 'Oriental' Temple, so named because, like the L-shaped temple, it was built in a Syrian in-antis style with parallels in Syria and the southern Levant.⁴⁹ The neighborhood of this temple extends southeastwards up to the town wall.

Neighborhood 5 (FIG. 2.5), located just south of the site's center, contains the so-called 'sanctuaire meridional.'⁵⁰ This small temple, dating back at least to the late EB III, can be found in the cluster's southeastern corner. This temple developed into the well-known 'Champs des Offrandes' of the early MB period, again highlighting the continuity of sacred spaces into later periods.

Neighborhood 6 (FIG. 2.6), on the southeastern edge of the site, contained the 'Temple Sud' and another small temple with a row of obelisks.⁵¹ This neighborhood is linked to the southeastern gate with direct access to Skhiny Beach, now thought to be Byblos's main port in the period.⁵²

Lastly, Neighborhood 7 (FIG. 2.7) is located on the southwestern edge of the site. In an initial phase of the EB III ('Sableux'–'Grosses Fondations'), the area contained small cultic buildings, including the Southwest Temple.⁵³ The neighborhood extended from these temples to the south and southwest. The Southwest Temple fell out of use and was replaced with the more monumental 'Tower Temple' during the late EB III–IV (Piqueté) phase.⁵⁴ Monumental anchors in the Tower Temple's pavement point to the association of Neighborhood 7 with harbor activities taking place to its immediate south.

THE INTEGRATIVE ROLE OF BYBLOS'S TEMPLES

Pongratz-Leisten has described temples in Mesopotamia as being at the heart of urban life.⁵⁵ The great



FIGURE 2: The seven EB III identified neighborhoods with their temples ('Grosses Fondations': Lauffray 2008, Plate III). The neighborhoods are distinguished by color and numbered 1–7, as discussed in the text.

scope of their remit saw them oversee administrative tasks, learning, healing, and economic activity. The evidence from Byblos and across the central and southern Levant shows that temples are, at least physically, at the very heart of early 'urban' communities.⁵⁶ Given their historically and archaeologically documented role in Mesopotamia and archaeological evidence from the Levant, it is plausible to conceptualize EB II–III Levantine temples as institutions spearheading socio-political and economic change. In rethinking the concept of 'temple economy' for the Bronze Age, Wengrow has also highlighted their multifaceted and integrative

socio-economic role.⁵⁷ Byblos's temples were the monumental embodiment of communal identity and principles, but the evidence presented below also suggests they functioned as integrative hubs for redistribution (ceremonial or otherwise) and trade. In terms of monumentalizing the landscape, temples are ideal entities, as Greenberg and Ashkenazi have suggested, around which periodic and ritually sanctioned labor could be organized.⁵⁸ They further point out that the presence of temples is an important predictor of large-scale fortification work, further suggesting they play a key role in the economy and the organization of cooperative labor.⁵⁹

The appearance of large (often combed) jars during the EB II–III represents a significant socio-economic development in which temples may have played a key role. The jars are the manifestation of an agriculture system thought to focus on olive, a system that intensified during the EB III and played an increasingly important role in local political economies.⁶⁰

Large quantities of ceramics used for storing, transporting, and processing liquid products, like the huge *in situ* vats from Koumba, have been found at Byblos and nearby sites. At Koumba and Fadous-Kfarabida, these vessels have been found in association with a substantial proportion of charred olive, indicating that the EB III sites of the area functioned as nodes for mediating the storage and processing of these agricultural outputs. There is no direct evidence for the involvement of the temple in this activity, but Old Kingdom and later texts do stress the centrality of at least the Ba'alat Gebal temple in interregional interaction.⁶¹ We can theorize that its resulting outputs represented a valuable resource base for provisioning ritual (and other) monumental building projects through associated communal feasting or other redistributive mechanisms.⁶² The presence of these jars in Egypt also shows that they and their contents played a key role in interregional trade networks, and that these continued well into the second half of the 3rd millennium.⁶³

THE DISTRIBUTION OF EGYPTIAN OBJECTS: COMMONALITIES AND COMPETITION

Byblos has yielded the largest EB III assemblage of Egyptian objects in the Levant. Sowada has usefully summarized and synthesized the rich evidence of the period, such as stone vessels, ivory furniture fittings (bovid hoofs), and bifacial flint knives.⁶⁴ Stone vessels, including numerous fragments of prestige types, and flint knives, form the main corpus of Egyptian objects recovered at the site. In Egypt, these objects are status markers, primarily restricted to elite contexts, such as cultic deposits, temple magazines, elite tombs, and installations.⁶⁵ These objects likely carried similar connotations and were used correspondingly in Levantine contexts.

Most of the stone vessels and some bifacial flint knives were associated with the Ba'alat Gebal temple and its environs, and to a lesser extent with the *Enceinte Sacrée*, suggesting their preeminence over other EB III temples at Byblos in terms of Egyptian interaction.⁶⁶

At Byblos, at least 40 bifacial flint knives, or fragments of such knives, can be classified as Egyptian, constituting the largest assemblage of such knives outside of Egypt (see Table 1; FIG. 3).⁶⁷ In fact, outside of Byblos, bifacial flint knives are rare in the Levant and practically unknown after the EB I. From the Lebanese coast, only one example dating from the EB I is known from Sidon.⁶⁸ In the southern Levant, they sporadically occur at sites traditionally associated with Naqada II/III/late EB I Egyptian influence.⁶⁹ Bifacial knives date to the Early Dynastic–Old Kingdom period, with some examples possibly extending to the Middle Kingdom. Their production in Egypt was possibly managed by emerging elites as part of a prestige-goods economy.⁷⁰ The knives are strongly associated with the ritual slaughter of cattle.⁷¹ Their presence at Byblos likely reflects the butchering and carving of bovine meat in ritual settings, suggesting that cattle were an important trade item and that feasting and sacrifice were significant features of Egyptian interactions at the site. Direct evidence for cattle trade between Egypt and the southern Levant is attested for this period.⁷² The presence of these Egyptian bifacial knives suggests that Byblos might have been an important recipient of cattle and associated ritualized feasting.⁷³

BIFACIAL KNIVES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION AT BYBLOS

In contrast to stone vessels, which are mainly associated with the Ba'alat Gebal temple and its surroundings, and to a lesser degree with the *Enceinte Sacrée*, bifacial knives were found throughout the site, often associated with temples but also in other contexts (Table 1; FIG. 4). This distribution shows that the activities represented by these knives were practiced site-wide.

Thirteen knives can be attributed to EB III–IV levels (see Table 1), with the remaining 27 found in post-EBA levels or defined as surface finds. The distribution of most of these knives associates them with elements of the EB III or EB IV plan; this, along with their typology, suggests the knives were originally brought to the site during the EBA. As discussed above, the excavation methods at Byblos make the vertical position of objects difficult to reconstruct. Consequently, some have argued that typologically earlier stone vessels found in later contexts were brought to Byblos in post-EBA periods as heirlooms.⁷⁴ However, rather than applying this argument to typologically earlier bifacial knives

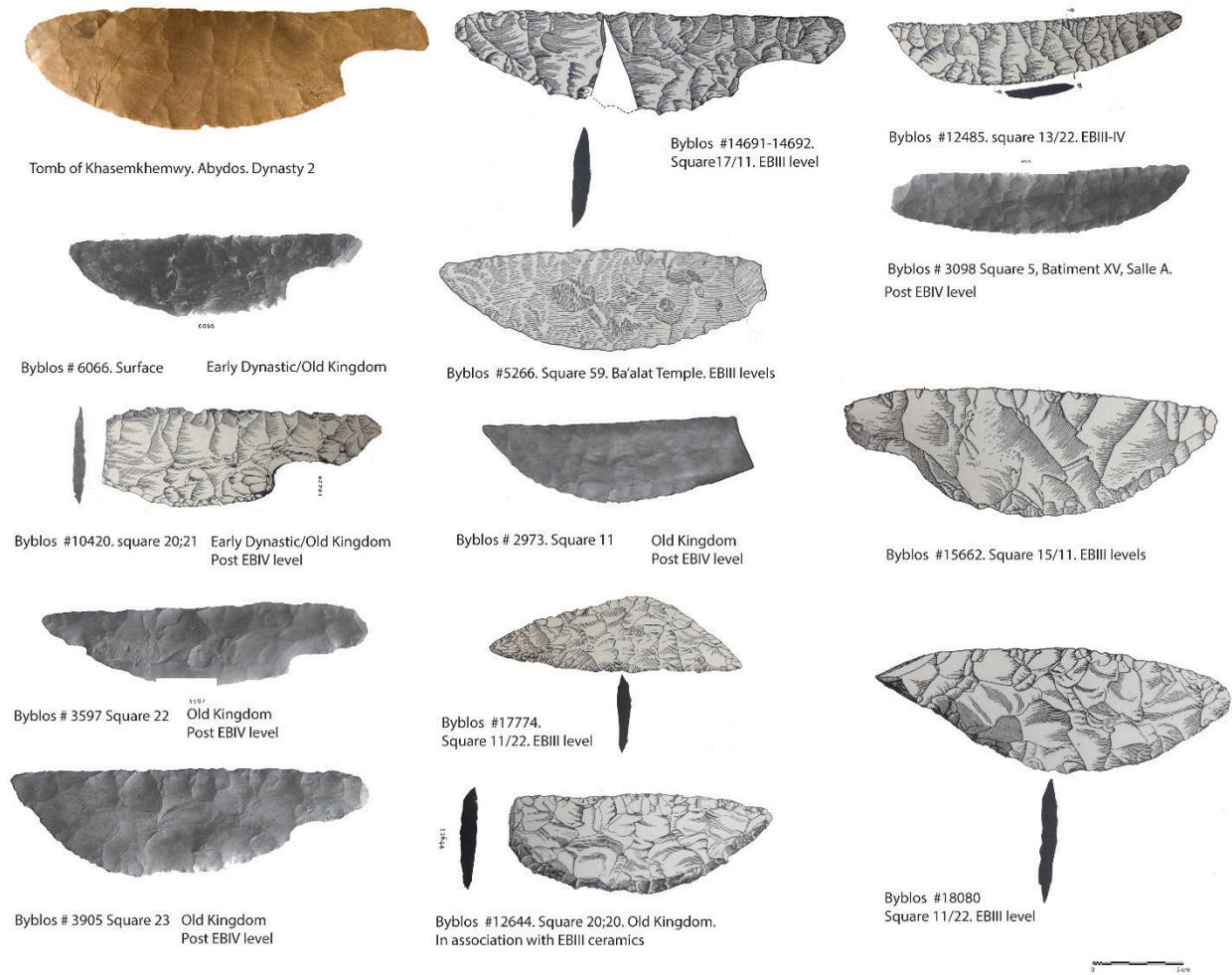


FIGURE 3: A selection of Egyptian bifacial knives from Byblos (after Dunand 1938; 1958). In the upper left corner is the knife from Khasekhemwy's tomb providing close comparison to the earliest types found at Byblos.

found in later contexts, we believe a more plausible explanation is that these and other Egyptian items of high socio-symbolic value found their way into later deposits through long-term use at Byblos or were carefully redeposited during later building activity.⁷⁵

Five knives were found around the Ba'alat Gebal temple, and another seven were found in its associated neighborhood (FIG. 4). Most of these came from later contexts, but two fragmented knives were found together in the corner of one of the Ba'alat Gebal temples rooms (Table 1).⁷⁶ Dunand associated these with 'Salle C' dated to Lauffray's Piquet  phase (EB III–IV). However, the level where the knives were found, at a depth of 22.20–22.00 m, should rather correspond to the temple room underneath, dating from the preceding EB III phase

('Grosses Fondations').⁷⁷ Worth noting is that close to the knives were some other Egyptian objects such as ivory bovid hoofs probably belonging to a small table of a type known from Egypt and having parallels in Early Dynastic contexts.⁷⁸ These knives were thus probably used and stored in the EB III Ba'alat Gebal temple complex together with other Egyptian objects. The number of stone bowls, knives, and other Egyptian objects found associated with the Ba'alat Gebal temple clearly mark it out as a focal point for Egyptian-style cult activity.

In Neighborhood 1, three knives (14741–14743, see Table 1) were found within square 6/10, in the courtyard of the 'Western Temple' associated with the central well (7; 10) (FIG. 4). These knives were found in (secondary) Middle Bronze Age contexts but deposited just above the small EB

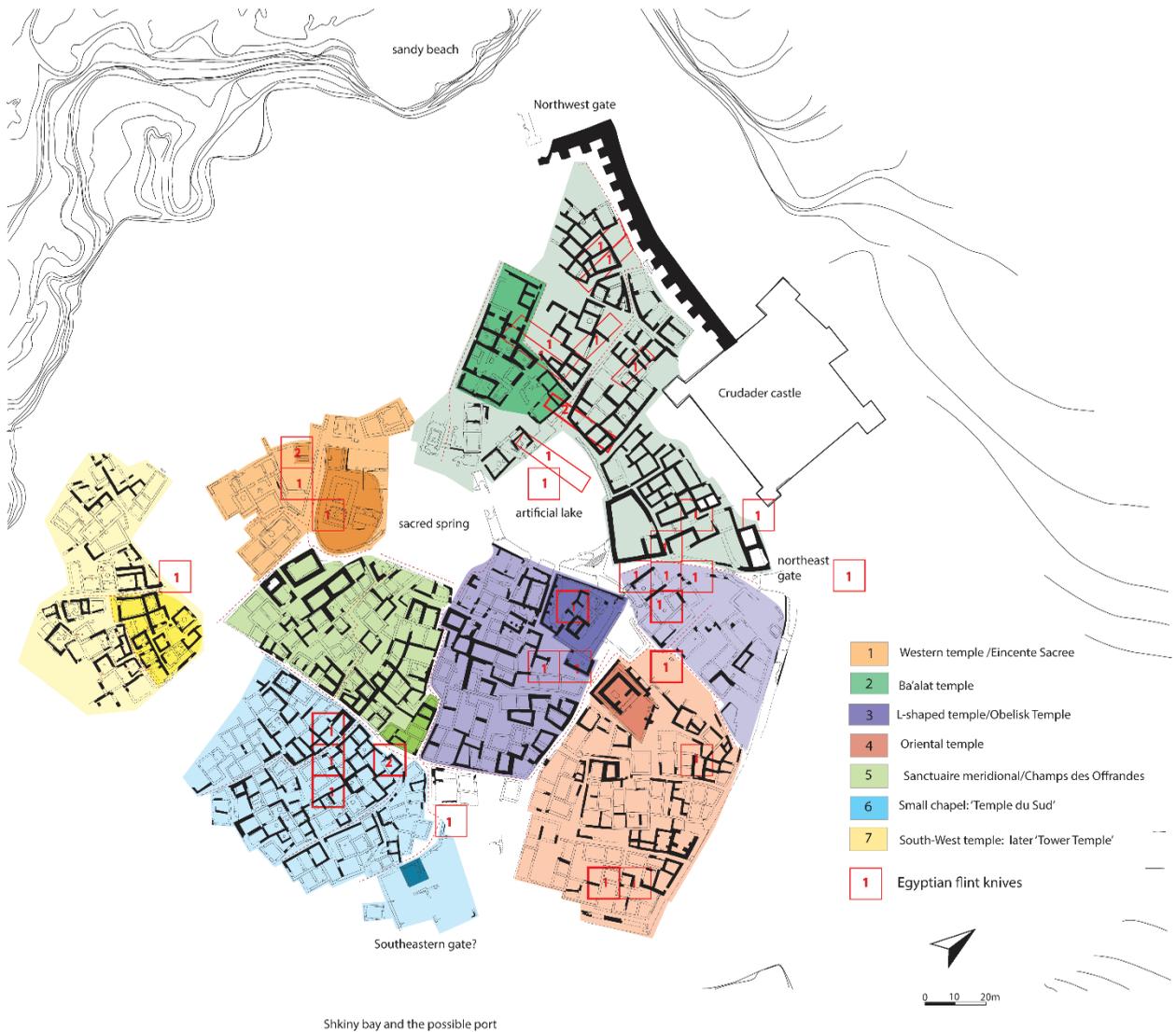


FIGURE 4: The distribution of Egyptian flint knives in the various neighborhoods. A correlation can be seen with several temple precincts. The spatial information, as available, derives from Dunand (1938; 1958) and is further summarized in Table 1.

III structure that Lauffray identifies as a chapel within the triangular courtyard.⁷⁹ Knives were also found in neighborhood 3.⁸⁰ A knife from a clear EB III-IV context was found in the L-shaped Temple courtyard, and two others were found in the vicinity. Several more were found in the L-shaped Temple's associated neighborhood. In Neighborhood 4, a knife (12855) was found in EB IV levels next to the Oriental Temple, with three other examples noted in its associated neighborhood.⁸¹ Two knives were found in EB III-IV layers in a square belonging to Neighborhood 6 but close to the corner of the 'Temple Méridional' of Neighborhood 5.

Additional concentrations of knives were found in Neighborhood 6, one example near its associated temple (FIG. 4). One knife was found in Neighborhood 7, close to the southern 'Tower Temple,' though in a post-EB context.

The distribution of these flint knives is important in illustrating and reinforcing the association between various temples and their neighborhoods. The number of knives associated with a temple is a predictor of the number found in its postulated neighborhood. The varied designs among Byblos's temples, the plan of the site with its discrete building clusters, and the differential distribution of artifacts,

such as the Egyptian stone vessels in the Ba'alat Gebal temple, support the idea of institutional differentiation and, therefore, of social heterogeneity among the site's inhabitants. At Byblos, various regional actors and a range of cultural affiliations were juxtaposed, creating an environment where competitive peer-polity interactions could develop. The knives, however, also serve to connect the various temples and neighborhoods to particular forms of feasting or ritual practice, probably involving cattle, linking the inhabitants by common threads despite varying regional and international interests.⁸²

CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITY AT BYBLOS

In a recent work on Late Bronze sacred architecture in the Levant, Susnow estimates that the Middle Bronze Temple of the Obelisks at Byblos, with its large courtyard, could have welcomed a sizeable amount (47%) of the population living at the settlement for festivities and offering events.⁸³ The figure is significantly higher than other Middle Bronze Age settlements considered in his study. The courtyard of the preceding L-shaped Temple was equally impressive in scale, and these only represent one of the seven temple precincts known from EB III Byblos. This suggests that during the Early Bronze Age, Byblos and its temples had the capacity to accommodate a population far greater than that of the site itself, suggesting the temples were also intended to serve people from the surrounding area and, perhaps, illustrious international guests.

The construction of the temples and other monumental architecture would have required the pooling of aggregate labor from nearby communities, bolstering community identity and hierarchies. Communal activities at the constructed temple would have further magnified these impacts. Evidence for the production and movement of oil and wine at a regional level and the distribution of bifacial flint knives at Byblos already highlighted above suggest these events may also have involved redistribution and communal consumption of oil, wine, and cattle meat.

In his recent study, Susnow suggests that Canaanite cultic spaces played multiple integrative roles, as the houses and residences of deities but also as venues for hosting feasts and commensal meals based around sacrifices.⁸⁴ Although Susnow's study focuses on Canaanite temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, Byblos exhibits continuity in

sacred architecture, suggesting the template for the monumentalization and utilization of sacred space originated in the EBA.

The evidence from Byblos presented above shows that seven distinct neighborhoods emerged during the EB III, each with its own developmental trajectories, motivations, and networks. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of Egyptian material culture, especially stone bowls, shows that some temples (e.g., Ba'alat Gebal) were preeminent in external interactions (in this case, with Egypt). We suggest that these temples and their associated neighborhoods embodied kin-groups or other units of socio-political organization that communally invested in sacred and other forms of monumental architecture. Key events for the community were linked to the temple, and it functioned as a depot for important objects.

The intensification, beginning in EB III, of monumental building and other communal events such as feasting and sacrifice underpinned the formation and maintenance of community identity and drove the development of the EBA landscape in this part of Lebanon. At Byblos itself, exchange networks with Egypt and Syria/Anatolia provided opportunities for interregional trade, which served to enhance the status of particular temples and the individuals and groups associated with them in an increasingly competitive environment.

The texts and archaeological evidence suggest that the Ba'alat Gebal Temple and its neighborhood were the focal points for Egyptian exchange from the EBA onward.⁸⁵ The development of interregional exchange networks enhanced the social status, influence, and power of associated individuals. Perhaps the representatives of other neighborhoods, like those associated with the Syrian-influenced 'L-Shaped' and 'Oriental' Temples looked north and east toward Syria to advance their own positions and access to resources, as evidence shows was the case by the Middle Bronze Age.

Monumental building, ritual activity, and communal feasting provided opportunities for competitive behavior. As an individual, a clear drawback to not participating in these events would be forgoing their associated social, material, and ideological rewards, including the expansion of social networks that ultimately improve access to resources and are important for mitigating risk in times of stress or duress.⁸⁶

The plan of Byblos clearly shows that larger monumental ‘residences,’ monocellular buildings, and temples emerge toward the EB IV.⁸⁷ Lauffray argued for the dominance of several households over what we have here identified as distinct neighborhoods.⁸⁸ Signs of social inequality already emerge during the EBA III across the central and southern Levant.⁸⁹ This indicates that the establishment of elites and, eventually, MBA kingship at Byblos was gradual and perhaps rooted in competitive environments as described above.

CONTEMPORARY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Developments in the region of Byblos (including at Fadous-Kfarabida and Koubba) are mirrored in other parts of the Lebanese coast. Numerous similarities exist between the architecture of the Byblos region and EBA contexts at Tell Arqa, Sidon, and Tyre. For the EBA at Arqa, no clear architecturally distinctive sacred monumental buildings could be identified based on layout or associated artifacts.⁹⁰ The limited extent of the exposed area and position of the sounding in a more peripheral part of the site suggest that ritual building might still be uncovered as work progresses toward the center of the site.

According to Thalmann, two buildings of interest from phase 18A (ECL4) suggest a ‘hierarchization’ in space, though he ultimately argued for a domestic context.⁹¹ Building 18.40 featured a large mudbrick bench that might have been used for communal activities, but it is not an uncommon feature in Levantine buildings. Notably, this room also contained a remarkably high-quality metallic-ware jar with radial pattern burnishing and net and figurative cylinder seal impressions decorating the body and base. Another room, thought to be for communal activity (18.05), contained a central pillar and a worked and coated floor opening onto the street.⁹²

EBA Sidon shows no direct evidence of monumental architecture but large buildings and facilities for large-scale grain storage were uncovered, and the site attests to sacred architecture in later periods, starting from the Late Bronze onward, suggesting that earlier EBA temple-like buildings might have been present at the site, but not yet excavated.⁹³ A large structure was uncovered at Tyre, at the highest point on the island, which the excavator suggests may represent the first vestiges of sacred architecture at the site.⁹⁴

As sites elsewhere on the Lebanese coast also provide architectural evidence for substantial storage structures, we suggest that monumental building projects and the associated management of agricultural commodities played a key role in shaping EB III political and economic landscapes throughout the area.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

A fresh look at the evidence from Byblos reshapes our understanding of the Early Bronze Age in this part of the Levant. Developments at Byblos during the EB II–III encapsulate region-wide phenomena simultaneously occurring across the landscape at several sites. Byblos was an exceptional place, recognized well beyond its surrounding region for its sacred character. Beginning in the EB III, the inhabitants of the site and region capitalized on its privileged location by extensively monumentalizing the site, creating new communal contexts for ritual activity and trade along with new opportunities for enhancing the status of communities and/or individuals. These themes offer a dynamic framework within which to comprehend the development of the EBA landscape and the changing regional and interregional interactions. In small-scale societies, which often lack coercive means of control, ritual serves as a functional alternative to political power, driving, through related monumental building projects, the regular establishment of cooperative labor parties, useful for developing and reinforcing community identity and hierarchical structures.⁹⁵

The almost complete absence of Egyptian objects outside of Byblos during the EB III and the fact that the ‘Combed Ware’ jars found in Egypt during the Old Kingdom appear to have been produced in the Byblos region suggest that interregional contact took place mainly at Byblos, with the Ba’alat Gebal temple as a particular focus point.⁹⁶ At Byblos, the concentration of Egyptian durable prestige goods in this temple highlights its prominence in mediating the interactions with Egypt based on ritualized gift exchange.⁹⁷ Other temples, such as the L-shaped Temple (and the succeeding Temple of the Obelisks) and Oriental Temple, show Syrian-inspired designs that may likewise distinguish their communities as arbiters of contact with parts inland, like Syria and other Levantine sites, such as Megiddo Level J-7 and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, where similar temples are present.⁹⁸

Moving into the EB IV, emerging evidence, including from Ebla texts, places Byblos as a key intermediary in trade networks linking Egypt, the Levant, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia.⁹⁹ The EB IV at Byblos shows increased evidence of social differentiation in the form of larger buildings interpreted as elite residences, a process that begins to take shape during the Late EB III. In an increasingly competitive environment, winners emerged, in the form of communities, families, or individuals, buffered by the status gains made through developing interregional exchange contacts.¹⁰⁰ The increasingly outward-looking focus resulted in the gradual detachment of Byblos from the nearby landscape and the communities that inhabited them, as evidenced by the decline or

abandonment of key sites. A further indication is the cessation or drastic decline in the production of Combed-Ware vessels on the Lebanese coast south of Arqa, which were an integral part of the system of communal agriculture underpinning activity in the EB II and III.¹⁰¹

The EB IV, often interpreted as a period of economic collapse, might be primarily characterized as a contraction of corporate will to engage with the ideological frameworks that encouraged monumental building activity. In the case of the region of Byblos, during the EB IV, this activity was left to a handful of individuals at the site focused on fostering interregional networks at the expense of relationships with regional communities and the monuments that once brought them together.¹⁰²

TABLE 1: Egyptian bifacial knives as published from Byblos and associated stratigraphic information as aggregated from Dunand (1938; 1958) and Laufray (2008).

Number	Object number	Short description	Period	Measurements (cm)	Location (Square and depth (Lévee))	Notes on location	Reference
1	2973	Bifacial knife. Handle broken	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 15 Width 5.4	Square 11; Levee 9	Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 189-190; Plate CXII
2	3056	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	11.2×3.9×0.6	Square 56 Levee IX	Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 195, fig. 182; Plate CXI
3	3098	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 16.4 Width 3.4	Square 5 Levee IX	Bâtiment XV, salle A. Levée XI (de la côte 26.00 a la côte 25.80) Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 228; Plate CXII
4	3349	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom		Square 10 Levee XVI (2500-24.80)	Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 228; Plate CXII
5	3597	Bifacial knife. Short handle. Complete	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 18 Width 4.6 (max.) Thickness 2 (max.)	Square 22 Levee XVI (25.00-24.80)	Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 246; Plate CXI
6	3883	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 9.3 Width 4.3 (max.) Thickness 0.9	Square 8 Levee XX (24.20-24.00)	Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 269; Plate CXII
7	3905	Bifacial knife. Short handle. Complete	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 19.4 Width 5.7 Thickness 0.9	Square 23 Levee XX (24.20-24.00)	Post EB IV	Dunand 1938, 271; Plate CXI
8	5266	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 17.8 Width 5.7 Thickness 1.2	Square 59 Levee XXIX 22.40-22-20 Bâtiment XVIII (24-158) or predecessor.	EB III. Burnt phase Ba'alat Gebal temple. Corner Room C. Should be earlier phase (Piqueté I underneath Piqueté III final room 158 (Laufray 2008, 369; Fig. 120; Plate XIII).	Dunand 1938, 355, 358, fig. 281
9	5267	Bifacial knife. Fragmentary	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 8.5 Width 6.2 Thickness 0.7 (max.)	Square 59 Levee XXIX 22.40-22-20. Bâtiment XVIII (24-158) or predecessor.	EB III. Burnt phase Ba'alat Gebal temple. Corner Room C. Should be earlier phase (Piqueté I underneath Piqueté III final room 158 (Laufray 2008, 369; Fig. 120; Plate XIII).	Dunand 1938, 355
10	6062	Leaf shaped knife. Complete	Naqada II-III/EBI	Length 19 Width 3 Thickness 1.1 (max.)	Surface		Dunand 1938, 403; Plate CXI
11	6066	Bifacial knife. Short handle. Complete	ED	Length 15.2 Width 4.2 Thickness 0.75	Surface		Dunand 1938, 404; Plate CXII

Number	Object number	Short description	Period	Measurements (cm)	Location (Square and depth (Lévee))	Notes on location	Reference
12	6550	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12 Width 4.3 Thickness 0.7	Surface		Dunand 1958, 424; Plate CXII
13	6948	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 20.2 Width 3.2 (max.)	8; 25 surface		Dunand 1958, 53; Plate CLXXXVI
14	7515	Bifacial knife. Fragmentary. Leaf shaped handle	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 10.2 Thickness 4.1 (max.)	u-wall		Dunand 1958, 108; Plate CLXXXVI
15	7475	Bifacial knife. Handled broken	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 13.1	7; 18 u-wall	Lake; later level.	Dunand 1958, 104; 136; fig. 128; Plate CLXXXVI
16	7694	Bifacial knife. Handled broken	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 11.2	8; 23 Levee 2	Post Early Bronze level	Dunand 1958, 136; Fig. 128
17	10420	Bifacial knife	ED	Length 15.5 Width 5.6 (max.)	20; 21 Levee 7	Post Early Bronze level	Dunand 1958, 493; fig. 398
18	11235	Bifacial knife. Broken in two	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 13	16; 23 Levee 9	Post Early Bronze level	Dunand 1958, 428; fig. 456
19	12485	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 16 Width 3.4 (max.) Thickness 0.6 (max.)	13; 22 Levee 12 (25,80-25,60)	Temple oriental: Piqueté I-III (EB III-IV) Courtyard at level 25.90 (Laufray 2008, 415)	Dunand 1958, 528, 527, fig. 600; Plate CLXXXVI
20	12644	Bifacial knife. Handled missing	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 14.3 Width 5.6 (max.) Thickness 0.85	20; 20 Levee 12 (25,80-25,60)	Associated with EB II-III ceramics	Dunand 1958, 540, 566; fig. 639
21	12855	Bifacial knife. Point and handle missing.	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 13.2 Width 7 Thickness 1	16; 13 Levee 13 (25,60-25,40)	Associated with Piqueté I level Temple meridional. EB III (Laufray 2008, 402-404)	Dunand 1958, 555, 556; fig. 639
22	12856	Bifacial knife. Convex handle	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12.3	16; 13 Levee 13 (25,60-25,40)	Associated with Piqueté I level Temple meridional. EB III (Laufray 2008, 402-404)	Dunand 1958, 566; fig. 639
23	13093	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 14.4 Width 4 Thickness 0.9 (max.)	13; 18 Levee 14 (25,40-25,20)	Post EB IV/MBA level L-shape/Obelisks Temple (Laufray 2008, Plate XI).	Dunand 1958, 574, 566; fig. 639
24	13241	Bifacial knife. Extremities missing	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 7.5	18; 15 Levee 14 (25,40-25,20)	Post EB IV level (Laufray 2008, 411)	Dunand 1958, 585
25	14005	Bifacial knife. Handled missing	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12.6	8; 11 Levee 16 (25,00-24,80)	MBA level (Laufray 2008, 189-328).	Dunand 1958, 655; fig. 773

Number	Object number	Short description	Period	Measurements (cm)	Location (Square and depth (Lévee))	Notes on location	Reference
26	14061	Bifacial knife. Fragmentary	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12.7 Width 4.2 (max.)	10; 23 Levee 16 (25,00-24,80)	Post EB IV level road (Laufray 2008, 420; Fig. 232).	Dunand 1958, 660, 661; 730, fig. 869, Plate: CLXXXVI
27	14197	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 4.9 Thickness 0.7 (max.)	13; 19 Levee 16 (25,00-24,80)	Post EB IV/MBA level L-shape Temple (Laufray 2008, Plate XI).	Dunand 1958, 672, fig. 799
28	14741	Bifacial knife. Short handle	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 15.5 Width 6 Thickness 1.7	6; 10 Levee 18 (24,60-24-40)	Post EB IV level (MB) courtyard West temple (Laufray 2008, 325-330).	Dunand 1958, 723, 672, fig. 799
29	14691/ 14692	Bifacial knife. Two fragments	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 8.2 Width 4.9 Thickness 0.7 /	17; 11 Levee 17 (24,80-24,60)	EB III level (Piquet� I) (Laufray 2008, 402; fig. 219)	Dunand 1958, 718, fig. 854
30	14742	Bifacial knife. Handle missing	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 17.7 Width 8.2 (max.) Thickness 0.8	6; 10 Levee 18 (24,60-24-40)	Post EB IV level (MBA). Courtyard West Temple (Laufray 2008, 325-330).	Dunand 1958, 723, fig. 860
31	14743	Bifacial knife. Handle preserved	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 10.3 Width 7.3 (max.) Thickness 0.7	6; 10 Levee 18 (24,60-24-40)	Post EB IV level (MBA). Courtyard West Temple (Laufray 2008, 325-330).	Dunand 1958, 723
32	14795	Bifacial knife. Handle is broken	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12.2 Width 4.5 Thickness 1.2	10; 28 Levee 18 (24,60-24-40)	NW gate. Below EB IV (Piquet�) (Laufray 2008, 307; thus EB II-III).	Dunand 1958, 730, fig. 869
33	15662	Bifacial knife. Short handle	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 20.2 Width 7 Thickness 1.3	15; 11 Levee 18 (24,60-24-40)	EB III level (Piquet� I) (Laufray 2008, 402; fig. 219)	Dunand 1958, 790, fig. 897
34	15743	Bifacial knife. Fragmentary	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 13.3 Width 6.1 Thickness 0.8	7; 10 Levee 19 (24,60-24-40)	Post EB IV level (MBA). Courtyard West temple (Laufray 2008, 325-330).	Dunand 1958, 792, fig. 900
35	15678	Bifacial knife. Tip and part handle missing	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 11.7 Width 6.1 (max.)	16; 11 Levee 18 (24,60-24-40)	EB III level (Piquet� I) (Laufray 2008, 402; fig. 219)	Dunand 1958, 792, fig. 900
36	16546	Bifacial knife. Short handle	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12 Width 4.2	9; 22 Levee 20 (24,40-24,20)	Post EB IV level (Laufray 2008, 421; Fig. 233)	Dunand 1958, 838, fig. 953, Plate: CLXXXVI

Number	Object number	Short description	Period	Measurements (cm)	Location (Square and depth (Lévee))	Notes on location	Reference
37	17774	Triangular knife	ED-Old Kingdom (see Angevin 2015, 9-11)	Length 13.7 Width 4.3 Thickness 0.8	11; 22 Levee 22 (23,80-23,60)	EB III level. Floor of Sableux II-III at 23,25; levée XXIV (Laufray 2008, 147)	Dunand 1958, 956, 955; fig. 1064
38	18080	Bifacial knife	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 19 Width 6.8 (max.)	10; 21 Levee 23 (23,60-23,40)	Piqueté I. EB III level road (Laufray 2008, 420; Fig. 232).	Dunand 1958, 981, fig. 1096
39	18278	Bifacial knife. Tip and large part handle missing	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 16 Width 8.8 (max.)	11; 19 Levee 23 (23,60-23,40)	EB III-IV level Piqueté I-II (Laufray 2008, section plate)	Dunand 1958, 981, fig. 1096
40	18667	Bifacial knife. Short handle	ED-Old Kingdom	Length 12.8 Width 3.3 Thickness 0.7	10; 6 Levee 24 (23,40-23,20)	Post EB III-IV level (Laufray 2008, 183)	Dunand 1958, 1022, fig. 1127

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- 13 Genz 2014, 10; Kilani 2019; Lauffray 1995; 2008; Leriche 1995; Marqueron 1994.
- 14 Saghieh 1983.
- 15 Lauffray 2008. See also Margueron's 1994 observations on understanding 'urban' Byblos.
- 16 Bevan 2007, 77: Fig. 5.6. Kilani 2019; Dunand 1938; 1958.
- 17 Dunand 1958.
- 18 Sowada 2009; Bevan 2007. The same phenomenon can be argued for with chronologically earlier objects collected in the numerous EB IV–MB 'foundation' depots at Byblos. See also note 63 below.
- 19 Pacifico and Truex 2019; Stone 1987. See Lehner 2019 for an application of the neighborhood approach to the settlement at Giza.
- 20 Artin 2010. Overseas contacts, including but not solely with Egypt, are sporadically but well attested from these graves, including ivory or bone human figures well known from contemporary Hierakonpolis (Prag 1986; Quibell 1900).
- 21 Lauffray 2008, 22, Fig. 5 shows the same plan as the original by Saïdah 1972.
- 22 Lauffray 2008, 38: Fig. 11; Dunand 1973, fig. 143, 236–237: Fig. 143. See Chanteau 2014 on the debated chronology of this internally buttressed wall. A very similar internally buttressed monumental wall is associated with Hacinebi in Turkey, dating from the late Chalcolithic-EB I (Stein 2001), suggesting that Uruk-inspired monumental architecture, including internal buttresses (Roaf 1995), might have eventually influenced some of these local developments, as known from contemporary Egypt (Wilkinson 2002). The role of Uruk in Levantine developments remains a relevant theme (Philip 2002) that deserves more detailed consideration based on more recent archaeological developments.
- 23 Lauffray 2008, 30: Fig 1. The vessels show a clear resemblance to SLMW vessels associated with the (early) EB II but actually appear as early as the EB Ib-EB II transition at sites like Beth Yerah and Tel Yaqush (Greenberg and Iserlis 2014, 59; Regev, Paz, Greenberg and Boaretto 2020, 12; Rotem, Iserlis, Höflmayer, and Rowan 2019, 115).
- 24 Greenberg 2019.
- 25 Lauffray 2008. Interestingly, a shift away from burials as communal investment and ritual

NOTES

- 1 Genz 2016; Mazar 1990; Badreshany, Philip and Kennedy 2019; de Miroschedji 2018; Greenberg 2020; Marfoe 1998.
- 2 Mazar 1990; Marfoe 1998.
- 3 Finkelstein 1995; Kempinski 1987; Mazar 1990; Marfoe 1998.
- 4 Chesson 2003; Philip 2001; 2008; Paz 2012.
- 5 Greenberg 2019.
- 6 Miller 2021; Dietrich et al. 2012.
- 7 Miller 2021: 164.
- 8 Greenberg and Ashkenazi 2019; Ashkenazi 2020.
- 9 Greenberg and Askhenazi 2019.
- 10 Greenberg and Askhenazi 2019: 26.
- 11 Genz 2002; Douglas 2011; Adams, Finkelstein and Ussishkin 2015; Greenberg and Askhenazi 2019, 19.
- 12 Genz 2016; Badreshany forthcoming; Badreshany, Philip and Kennedy 2019; Deckers et al. 2021.

- display (during the Chalcolithic–EB I) might be noticed, where the onset of the EB II–III only attests to a single extra-mural burial so far with locally produced vessels as part of the funerary assemblage, currently on display at the AUB museum (Thalmann 2019).
- ²⁶ Dunand 1938, 368–371, 369, fig. 288; Pl. CCVI: vessels 5390–5416.
- ²⁷ For Arqa, see Thalmann 2016, Levels 18E-A; phase S3-2; phase S1. For Fadous-kfarabida (phase III) see Genz 2014, Table 21.2.
- ²⁸ Lauffray 2008.
- ²⁹ Genz 2016, 81; for the absolute dates associated with this phase at Fadous-Kfarabida, see Höflmayer et al. 2014.
- ³⁰ Lauffray 2008, Planche III.
- ³¹ Badreshany et al. forthcoming.
- ³² Greenberg and Ashkenazi 2019; Ashkenazi 2020.
- ³³ Miroschedji 2019, 168; Fig. 10.
- ³⁴ Lauffray 2008, 70. Thalmann 2006b; 2016.
- ³⁵ Thalmann 2006b, 2016, 74. For Tyre, see Aubet 2020. Future excavations may find this architectural style at EB sites in the interior (mountains) and Biq'a valley as well. It is attested at an MB site in the Biq'a (Hanan Charaf, personal communication).
- ³⁶ Lauffray 2008, 279–446; Plan IV combines all of Lauffray's Piquete phases into a single plan. Lauffray calls the Piqueté phases the 'floruit' of urban life at Byblos (épanouissement de la vie urbaine).
- ³⁷ On the so-called Tower temple and its location and possible function, see Frost 1998–1999, 255; Lauffray 2008, 391–395; Kilani 2019, 49
- ³⁸ Lauffray 2008, 375–376.
- ³⁹ Genz and Ahrens 2021, 50.
- ⁴⁰ Genz et al. 2016.
- ⁴¹ Lauffray 2008.
- ⁴² Genz 2011; Genz et al. 2016; Genz and Ahrens 2021.
- ⁴³ Pacifico and Truex 2019, 5; Fargher et al 2019; Truex 2019. This approach integrates the concept of neighborhoods with those of household archaeology to better understand settlement developments in the region, including Egypt: Müller 2015.
- ⁴⁴ Biga and Steinkeller 2021; Greenberg 2020: 91; Marfoe 1987; Sowada 2009.
- ⁴⁵ Lauffray 2008; Bevan 2007.
- ⁴⁶ Ashkenazi 2020.
- ⁴⁷ Lauffray 2008.
- ⁴⁸ Genz 2002; Ussishkin 2015; D'Andrea 2020.
- ⁴⁹ D'Andrea 2020; Genz 2002, 94–96; Genz 2010, 48; Fig. 6.2.
- ⁵⁰ Lauffray 2008, 403–404.
- ⁵¹ Lauffray 2008, 132–133 Fig. 68; 243–244; Fig. 132.
- ⁵² See Francis-Allouche and Grimal 2016.
- ⁵³ Lauffray 2008: 181.
- ⁵⁴ Lauffray 2008, 391–395.
- ⁵⁵ Pongratz-Leisten 2021, 1.
- ⁵⁶ Miroschedji 2019 also argues for the development of competitive lineages with dominant lineages eventually reflected in more central public buildings (so-called 'palaces'), for instance, at Tell Yarmouth. Similarly, Greenberg (2019: 325) discusses this principle, referring to "tell factions" competing during the Late Bronze Age, for instance, at Lachish. Central to our argument at Byblos is that these processes started in a heterarchical way and predominantly reflected in monumental (temple) architecture but had the potential to spearhead one neighborhood faction or lineage group having foremost relevant external exchange contacts. The role of 'networking' in advancing one's social position has been argued convincingly for the Medici (Padgett and Ansell 1993). The roots of these social developments focused on temples can be traced at least to the Early Bronze Age in the Levant.
- ⁵⁷ Wengrow 2013: 291; following Silver 1985; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991; Bevan 2010.
- ⁵⁸ Greenberg and Askhenazi 2019.
- ⁵⁹ Greenberg and Askhenazi 2019, 26.
- ⁶⁰ Badreshany, Philip and Kennedy 2019; Deckers et al. 2021, see also Badreshany et al. 2022.
- ⁶¹ Diego Espinel 2002; see Rainey 2015 for the central role of the Ba'alat Gebal temple in the Amarna correspondence related to Byblos. The central role of the Ba'alat Gebal temple in interregional affairs, as we currently understand, is a particular textual artifact supported by material cultural finds. Most stressed in these texts is the strong link that the Ba'alat Gebal temple, and, as we suggest, its neighborhood, had primarily with Egypt. Ongoing research on the Ebla texts, where Byblos is now most certainly identified as DU/GUBlu (Biga and Steinkeller 2021), might give further evidence of particularly strong links

- with certain other temples in Byblos, perhaps foremost with the L-shaped later temple of the Obelisks, sometimes identified with Reshef but awaiting further confirmation.
- ⁶² Emberling 2015 describes a similar scenario for the role of feasting and forms of social authority in Mesopotamia.
- ⁶³ Badreshany et al. 2022; Sowada et al. 2020; Sowada et al. 2021; Sowada Ownby and Wodzińska 2020; Sowada Ownby Bárta 2021; Iserlis Steiniger and Greenberg 2019. Significantly, not only combed jar jars for transport seem to have been exported to Egypt. A rim sherd of a combed vat, of Lebanese origin, was found at Heit el-Ghurab (Giza): Sowada Ownby and Wodzińska 2020, Fig. 4a. These have exact parallels at sites such as Fadous and Koubba and suggest that beyond transport, combed ware vessels and their associated economic activity found a place in Old Kingdom Egypt.
- ⁶⁴ Sowada 2009.
- ⁶⁵ For the presence and social role of Egyptian stone vessels at Byblos, see Bevan 2007: 63–75. Some of these Early Bronze II–III objects found their eventual way into later EB IV–MB depots at Byblos (Tufnell and Ward 1960; Philip 1988; Seeden 1980). The foundation depots might be seen as final attestations of these ritually exchanged goods deposited within respective temples at Byblos.
- ⁶⁶ Sowada 2009, Bevan 2007; Montet 1928–1929; Dunand 1938 and 1958
- ⁶⁷ Dunand 1938; 1958.
- ⁶⁸ The Egyptian knife was found in the earliest phase, dated to the EB I (Doumet-Serhal 2006, 293; Fig 2.d; phase I).
- ⁶⁹ Kobusiewicz 2015, 64–65. Angevin 2016. Most of these knives seem Early Dynastic in date. As judged by published drawings and photographs, all the knives seem cruder, in execution, than the finer ripple-flaked Naqada II–III examples. So far, the only example of this earlier ripple-flaked knife type found outside of Egypt originates from the EB Ib tombs of Azor, possibly intentionally fragmented (broken in half) and associated with other Egyptian objects (Ben-Tor 1975, 24: plate 21).
- ⁷⁰ Angevin 2015: detailed analysis of flint working associated with Khasekhemwy’s tomb suggests bifacial knives were part of elite-controlled prestige goods. Perhaps not coincidentally, two of the flint knives ((#6066; 10420) from Byblos (although from a surface context) show particularly good comparison with those from Khasekhemwy’s tomb (Petrie 1902, 8, Pl. XV, group marked V. EA 68775; Angevin 2015: 823: Fig. 5, see Figure 3 this article). Khasekhemwy’s inscription on a stone vessel (again from a surface context: Montet 1928–1929, Diego Espinel 2002 105; Sowada 2009: 10) suggests that these flint knives could have been part of the exchange with Byblos from at least his reign onwards. Considering the prolonged use of Egyptian objects at Byblos as heirlooms, it strongly suggests that these types of knives and associated practices started arriving as early as the stone vessels, brought as gifts in exchange with Early Dynastic Egypt, in any case, as early as the Early Bronze III period (ECL 3; late Dynasty II), c. 2700 BCE, if not earlier.
- ⁷¹ Lajs 2019; Lund 2015; contribution this volume
- ⁷² Arnold et al. 2016; Sowada 2018.
- ⁷³ It would be useful to conduct isotopic studies on the preserved faunal remains from the Dunand excavations in reliable contexts at Byblos to find direct evidence of (imported) cattle from Egypt. Similar studies are planned for the assemblages from Fadous-Kfarabida (Hermann Genz and Canan Cakirlar, personal communication) and Koubba.
- ⁷⁴ Bevan 2007.
- ⁷⁵ Foundation depots must most likely be seen as part of these redepositing events in association with the respective temples. Although most offering depots date to the EB IV and MB I, Lauffray (2008: 182–184) makes significant note of two slightly earlier (EB III-early EB IV) offering depots associated with the Southwest Temple, placed under an altar and in a small room. Unfortunately, the finds associated with these depots are neither further mentioned nor illustrated, but these two depots do show that the principle of burying valuable commodities obtained through exchange and collected at the temples took place from the EBA onward. Thus, the well-known EB IV–MB I depots, which indeed include some earlier EBA objects, must be seen as the culmination of these practices (see note 64).
- ⁷⁶ Dunand 1938, 355–356: find numbers 5266; 6267.

- ⁷⁷ For a review of the stratigraphy, see Lauffray 2008, 228, room 24-96; ‘Grosses Fondations’ phase.
- ⁷⁸ Sowada 2009, Fig. 30; Dunand 1938, 356; 5269; Pl. CXLVI; contemporary ivory hoofs are known from 2nd Dynasty Abu Rawash: Klasens 1959, Pl. 59 C1, fig. 10.1–2; Pl. XXVII. See also Tristant (2008) for more recent results from Abu Rawash, including further evidence of boat burials that might reflect elite concerns with overseas trade.
- ⁷⁹ Lauffray 2008: 203
- ⁸⁰ Dunand 1958, 981, fig. 1096: 18278: EB III–IV; post EB IV: Dunand 1958, 574, 566, fig. 639: 13093; Dunand 1958, 672, fig. 799: 14197.
- ⁸¹ Dunand 1958, 555, 556, fig. 639: 12855.
- ⁸² The association of lithics with temple precincts is also noted for late EB I Megiddo: Shimelmitz Adams 2014. Both lithic manufacture and use are strongly associated with sacrificial animal remains and suggest the strong association of temples with communal processes of food preparation and consumption. At Megiddo, the lithic traditions are of a distinctly local Levantine nature.
- ⁸³ 2021: 266, Table I.
- ⁸⁴ Susnow 2021, 222.
- ⁸⁵ Diego Espinel 2002.
- ⁸⁶ Miller 2021, 167.
- ⁸⁷ ‘Piqueté’ III phase: Lauffray 2008, 286, plan IV.
- ⁸⁸ Lauffray 2008, 445–446.
- ⁸⁹ Greenberg 2019 and Greenberg and Ashkenazi 2019.
- ⁹⁰ Thalmann 2006a, 2016.
- ⁹¹ Thalmann 2016, 27. Thalmann 2013, 259: here, Thalmann argues for a domestic context.
- ⁹² Thalmann 2016, 27.
- ⁹³ Doument-Serhal 2006. The multi-room building is described in more detail in Doumet Serhal 2013 (no page numbers).
- ⁹⁴ Aubet 2020. Bikai 1978.
- ⁹⁵ See Rappaport 1971 for the role of ritual in small-scale societies.
- ⁹⁶ See Genz and Ahrens 2021, 65–66 for the general absence of Egyptian objects outside of Byblos. See Badreshany et al. 2022 for evidence suggesting that interregional contact, as evidenced by combed ware exported to Egypt, took place mainly at Byblos (Badreshany et al. 2022). For the Ba’alat Gebal temple as a particular focus point, see Diego Espinel 2002.
- ⁹⁷ Diego Espinel 2002. Mauss 2016 [1925].
- ⁹⁸ See D’Andrea 2020; Genz 2002 and 2010 for Khirbet ez-Zeraqon; Usshishkin 2015, 94: Fig. 27 for the Megiddo temple.
- ⁹⁹ Biga and Steinkeller 2021; Greenberg 2020: 91; Marfoe 1987; Sowada 2009. Beyond maritime contact, overland routes and the role of non-sedentary (pastoral) segments of society in these exchange networks, particularly with Syria (for instance, Ebla) and the inland southern Levant should not be neglected, see also Porter 2012 on their significance.
- ¹⁰⁰ See also Miroschedji 2019 for a similar argument relating to the southern Levant. See also note 54.
- ¹⁰¹ Badreshany, Philip and Kennedy 2019, Badreshany et al. 2022.
- ¹⁰² Greenberg (2019, 272) describes a similar situation for the Late Bronze Age in the southern Levant, indicating that these patterns may be cyclical.

