

EGYPT AND THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

FROM THE LATE FOURTH THROUGH THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BCE

ZOOM CONFERENCE FOUR SESSIONS 18 . 20 . 24 . 27 MAY 2021

Day 2 20 May 2021 Cairo

Hosted by The American Research Center in Egypt



Program (subject to change)

Session 1 (2 hours)

7:00 London; 8:00 Cairo; 9:00 Jerusalem/Beirut/Amman; 16:00 Sydney

7:00 GMT Welcome and Introductions

7:10 GMT *Prestige and Petrography: Reexamination of Tomb U-j Jars*

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

7:30 GMT *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), and Roman Gundacker (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

7:50 GMT *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)

8:10 GMT *Egypt, Byblos, and Megiddo in the EB IV*

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

8:30 GMT Discussion (30 mins)

Break (1 hour)

9:00 London; 10:00 Cairo; 11:00 Jerusalem/Beirut/Amman; 18:00 Sydney

Session 2 (2 hours)**10:00 London; 11:00 Cairo; 12:00 Jerusalem/Beirut/Amman; 19:00 Sydney**

- 10:00 GMT** *Social History of Cultural Interaction from Non-Elite Context: Paleoethnobotanical and Isotopic Evidence*
Amr Khalaf Shahat (University of California, Los Angeles)
- 10:20 GMT** *Status of Race and Syro-Palestinian Combed Ware in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty*
Miroslav Bárta (Charles University, Prague)
- 10:40 GMT** *Presence of the Imported Combed Ware at Heit el-Ghurab: Use and Importance*
Anna Wodzińska (University of Warsaw)
- 11:00 GMT** *The Curious Contents of Combed Ware Storage Jars from Giza*
Margaret Serpico (University College London), Richard Newman (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), and Karin Sowada (Macquarie University)
- 11:20 GMT** Discussion (30 mins)

Abstracts

Prestige and Petrography: Reexamination of Tomb U-j Jars

Mary F. Ownby
University of Arizona

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.

**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 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. A. 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.

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.

**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.

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.

**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 shows the fragments of imported vessels, their exact context and discusses their use at the site and general importance.

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 life-cycle.

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.