



INTRODUCTION: MOVEMENT AND MOBILITY BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE SOUTHERN LEVANT IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BCE

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The second millennium BCE in the ancient Near East saw increased interactions and interconnections between Egypt and the regions of the southern Levant. Mobility and movement between and among these regions were key factors in the exchange of ideas, technologies, and values and, therefore, were essential components of the evolution of both societies. The archaeological record provides a wealth of material for reconstructing expressions of cultures, identities, status, and economic ways of life based on questions of mobility.

Approaches to the material culture and to the questions of mobility engendered by them are many and varied. Who and what moved and why? How was movement accomplished, and how did mobility change? What facilitated it? What purpose or goal was accomplished, and what outcomes were produced for and by the participants? On a metalevel, mobility may also apply to agility in scholarship, as new data and significant revisions to the understanding of old data might dramatically change the landscape of interpretation. This is most

apparent in the wave of new radiocarbon dates that have changed the structure of our absolute chronologies of both regions and realigned old synchronisms. The examination of these questions and issues related to movement and mobility are important for understanding historical development in both Egypt and the southern Levant. This volume brings together papers presented at or inspired by a session dedicated to these issues organized by the editors at the 11th ICAANE meetings in Munich in spring 2018. Each of these papers finds a unique trajectory through the lens of movement and mobility to provide new perspectives on the interactions between Egypt and the southern Levant in the second millennium BCE.

Although varied in style, approach, presentation, and topic, the papers in this collection may be divided into two broad categories. These include studies that either 1) examine movement of peoples, objects, and ideas, or 2) address the impact of higher-resolution chronologies in the second millennium BCE. While each individual paper addresses a specific topic in one of the two categories above, and

thus stands alone in its own right, when considered together as a whole, the volume reflects significant developments in scholarly thinking about Egypt and the southern Levant, and—significantly—the nature of the disciplines and methodologies used to examine them. Therefore, each paper also belongs in a third category: one that proposes shifts, movement, and mobilities in conceptual approaches to the second millennium in modern scholarship and academic thought.

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLES, OBJECTS, AND IDEAS

Historically, archaeological analysis of the second millennium BCE—or any other era—has focused predominately on the material culture, architecture, and other physical, tangible, and visible manifestations of human development in the ancient Near Eastern world, for the simple reason that these items are most easily identifiable in the archaeological record. More recently, analysis also has extended to tracking the peoples that moved the objects, built the architecture, and created the sites. Thus, mobility between Egypt and the Levant may include, and likely is not limited to, the movement of peoples, objects, commodities (which may also include objects), and ideas. Within each broad category lies a host of others. The first category—people—may include, for example, armies, refugees, immigrants and emigrants, merchants, migrants, and traders—both individual and for the so-called state—and slaves/captives. Thus, there is movement of peoples by choice and movement of peoples by force, which although perhaps related, arguably may leave different physical traces.

Objects represent a category almost too broad to work with unless broken down into smaller and more manageable groups. These include the traditional material culture of ceramics, weapons, scarabs, beads, jewelry, a vast and varied corpus of other materials, small objects, and more. Commodities may include the objects just noted, but also include foodstuffs, animals both domestic and exotic/foreign, drink, natural resources (timber, stone, metals), and, of course, peoples, which then creates a problem of overlapping categories and the resultant challenges of analysis that may accompany that. Finally, examination of these categories of tangible objects and living creatures leads to the examination of the movement of ideas, as it is unlikely that movement of peoples, objects, and commodities occurred without some sort of intellectual contact and accompanying acceptance,

rejection, or change to go with them. Whether positive or negative, contact wrought by mobility brings knowledge of that object or person with it and produces a result, which may or may not be identifiable in the remains available for study. Examination of any or all these topics then produces further understanding of the relationships between Egypt and the southern Levant.

In her examination of so-called Egyptian vessels in non-Egyptian regions, Bouillon shows that many of these vessels, long used to examine and establish Egyptian foreign trade and Egyptian activity in the southern Levant, are in fact not Egyptian at all; rather, their origins should be placed in the regions in which they have been found. Citing many distinctive features of production and other stylistic elements, Bouillon's identification of many of these objects previously thought to be indicators of Egyptian trade or military activity suggests they were instead locally produced. This holds significant implications for understandings of Egyptian-southern Levantine relationships, as these vessels may no longer then be used to ascertain the degree of Egyptian presence, control, or domination in the region, with the result that many previous understandings of the historical relationships between Egypt and the southern Levant must be changed, adapted, or perhaps even discarded. Rather than a scenario of Egyptian military and/or political domination, or even Egyptian influence, the narrative may instead be one of greater autonomy on the part of Levantine polities, or perhaps a more intertwined connectivity between multiple polities and regions, of which Egypt was only one player, albeit a powerful one.

Study of movement of objects and peoples continue with Jeske's and Streit's papers. In the former, the means of analysis focuses on Egyptian functionaries and their movements within the newly established empire in the southern Levant. Using specific mobile objects, Jeske is able to model the mobility of these functionaries, and thereby to reassess the level of direct intervention by Egypt in the daily maintenance of its empire in its early days in the 18th Dynasty. Like Bouillon's analysis, the paper asks again to what degree did Egypt in fact concern itself with the southern Levant in the second millennium BCE.

Streit tackles similar issues of official Egyptian presence in the empire, with a detailed survey of archaeological data concerning the presence of Egyptians in the southern Levant during the empire

period. Specifically, she reassesses the traditional interpretations of Egyptian official architecture (governor houses, fortresses, temples, etc.) and Egyptian artifacts (inscriptions and pottery). Her conclusions parallel Jeske's in seeing a very small amount of direct intervention in the early days of the empire (18th Dynasty), with a pronounced increase in the second half of the empire. Linked with proposed chronological shifts (discussed in more detail below), Streit's analysis notes decided differences between Late Bronze Age strata at the sites and uses this for examination of evidence for the presence or absence of peoples from LB I to LB II, and hence changes in human mobility over time, associated with changes in Egyptian approaches to governance within its empire. This reflects movement and mobility on multiple levels: movement of peoples over time, changes in architectural practices as these shifts to accommodate demographic changes, and reevaluation of ways in which Egyptian "imperialism" may be understood and examined in second millennium context in the southern Levant.

Finally, Sala and Tucci use entanglement theory to assess temple paraphernalia at ostensible Egyptian cult sites in imperial territory. Their conclusions see "Egyptian" sanctuaries as loci of transcultural encounters and cultural appropriation in which negotiating new identities of local elites as imperial subjects took place. In so doing, their paper draws attention to more complex, and complicated, means by which Egyptian interaction took place with the southern Levant, and examines the exchanges of ideas and beliefs.

CHRONOLOGICAL SHIFTS

Discussion of movement and mobility between Egypt and the Levant in the latter part of the second millennium BCE, whether of peoples, objects, ideas, or some combination of all these, also requires understanding of the chronological synchronisms and correlations between the two regions. Simply put, if we do not know when we are comparing, we cannot possibly know what to compare. An inability to compare correctly, for whatever reason, then hinders all subsequent archaeological and historical interpretations.

It is often difficult to identify the transition between the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in the southern Levant; the distinction between the two

periods was originally formulated on the basis of historical paradigms, and forcing the archaeological data into them has proved essentially nonsensical. The archaeological transition (if one is, indeed, appropriate) is conventionally placed with appearance of Cypriote White Slip pottery in the Levant. These conventional understandings place the transition from the southern Levantine Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age at ca. 1550 BCE, contemporary historically with the 18th Dynasty and the beginning of the New Kingdom in Egypt. Notably, this transition also has always been linked to the historical accounts of the Egyptian expulsion of the Hyksos and the idea of subsequent Egyptian imperial expansion into the southern Levant, as indicated by Egyptian-style architecture and Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects found throughout the southern Levant. Inherent in this chronological conundrum is the comparing of apples to oranges—history to archaeology—as though they are the same thing. Apples *can* be compared to oranges, if an independent method common to both is used. In this analogy, radiocarbon dating can provide the bridge for comparing two otherwise relative chronologies with little else in common, except speculative linkages.

Recent radiocarbon data suggest that the chronology of the Middle Bronze Age-Late Bronze Age transition in the southern Levant should be raised significantly, by almost a century, synchronizing the beginning of the southern Levantine Late Bronze Age with the Egyptian Second Intermediate Period, and placing the bulk of the 18th Dynasty, and all its activities, in LB II, rather than at the beginning of the era. This disconnects the previously held historical narrative and synchronisms between eras and dynasties, and, therefore, this proposed temporal movement has immense and significant implications for the entire second millennium BCE, whether it is from the Egyptian or the southern Levantine perspective. Should these new dates prove correct, this will require re-analysis of the Egyptian presence in the Levant and the evidence for it, requiring a reexamination of the relationships between the objects, peoples, and ideas discussed above.

Some of these issues are seen in Höflmayer's and Webster et al.'s papers. Höflmayer notes that with the proposed change in dates, the traditional link between the presumed expulsion of the Hyksos and

many destruction layers in the Late Bronze Age southern Levant may very well be incorrect, thus requiring a re-interpretation of New Kingdom Egyptian activities vis-à-vis the southern Levant. Likewise, Webster et al.'s analysis of the relevant strata from Lachish also illustrates the type of re-evaluation for Egyptian activity at crucial southern Levantine sites that may foreshadow the type of re-analysis required at other sites to accommodate this proposed chronological movement.

CONCEPTUAL SHIFTS

In addition to these mobilities of peoples, objects, commodities, knowledge, ideas, and chronologies in the ancient world, the papers in this volume highlight the conceptual mobility of scholarly knowledge. They present new approaches, new knowledge, and new data and fundamentally suggest new ways of thinking. The nature of archaeological research is such that it constantly produces new data, or additional data that inform older data. This gives rise to new ideas, new approaches, and new technologies used in turn by new peoples, as younger scholars enter the field. This in turn calls for movement and mobility of scholarly thought in order to accommodate, or at least to discuss, these new finds, new methodologies, and new interpretations, which in itself is a form of modern intellectual mobility.

In sum: Sala and Tucci's discussion of belief and entanglement, Bouillon's re-examination of certain vessels found throughout the southern Levant, Streit's examination of objects, architecture, and strata at Lachish, Jeske's discussion of Egyptian functionaries and objects, and Höflmayer's and Webster et al.'s discussions of chronologies all require conceptual shifts in examination, interpretation, and subsequent understanding of Egyptian presence, activities, and influence on the southern Levant that differ—at times significantly—from those traditionally held. As such, when viewed together, the papers collected in this volume not only have discussed specific topics of movement and mobility between Egypt and the southern Levant in the second millennium, but they consciously or unconsciously also emphasize the shifts and changes of modern ideas and knowledge that must accompany ongoing reassessment of time, data, and interpretation. By publishing them in this volume, we hope both to provide new insights on interconnections between Egypt and the Levant in the second millennium, and to open these subjects for further discussion with the understanding that scholarship in the field must also allow for shifts in its own perspectives and approaches to the past.