



Review

K. DUISTERMAAT AND I. REGULSKI, EDITORS

INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN
Proceedings of the International Conference at the Netherlands-Flemish
Institute in Cairo, 25th to 29th October 2008

K. Duistermaat and I. Regulski, Editors

Pecters, Leuven, 2011

Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 202

ISBN: 978-90-429-2451-2. 597 pp.

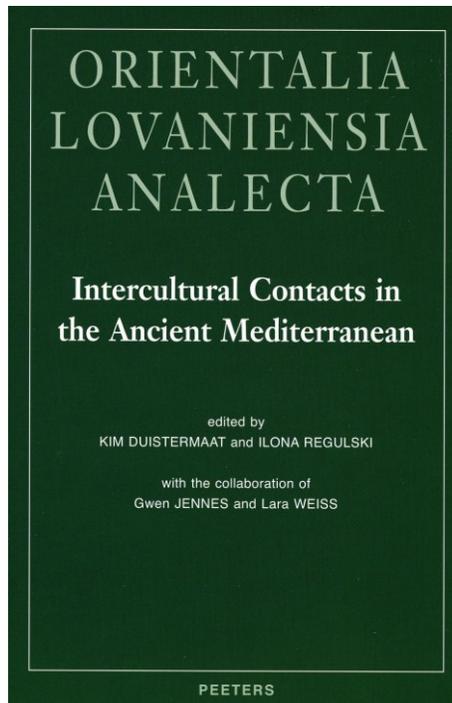
Reviewed by Mary F. Ownby
University of Arizona

A SELECTIVE REVIEW OF THE SECTION

MATERIAL EVIDENCE FOR CONTACT: CERAMICS, IMPORTS AND IMITATIONS

Editorial Note: Due to the late receipt of this book from the publisher, and the fact that two general reviews of the work have now already appeared, JAEI has chosen to review only one section of the book - that regarding ceramic, imports and imitations - in more depth than has been done elsewhere.

This section of *Intercultural Contacts in the Ancient Mediterranean* (pages 183 to 378) focuses on evidence of contact between different areas of the eastern Mediterranean from a specific perspective in which information provided by excavation, iconography, and pottery - particular imports and their copies - is presented. The discussion begins with the recent excavations of several sites in Syria. The article contributed by J. Bretschneider and K. van Lerberghe describes the results of several seasons of excavation at Tell Tweini, a site located along the southern coast of Syria. As stated by the authors, this site was significant due to trade, particularly between Cyprus and the city-states of Syria. Excavated remains also indicate its role in the movement of objects even



further afield to upper Mesopotamia. Tell Tweini was first inhabited in the early Bronze III period (c. 2600-2400 BC). In the Middle Bronze Age, the site was influenced by the large city-state of Ugarit that had broad interconnections. Tombs from this period at Tell Tweini provide evidence for burial rituals in the Middle Bronze Age and the importance of contact with Cyprus. The site's connection to Ugarit continued in the Late Bronze Age when the fate of that city also befell Tell Tweini. However, this site appears to have suffered a conflagration before Ugarit and was fairly quickly reoccupied in the early Iron Age I. The archaeological remains described by the authors for this period are significant as they seem to suggest some cultural continuity. Changes to the site's architecture and layout are attributed to Assyrian influence and occupation during

the Iron Age II period. Overall, the importance of this chronological discussion of occupation phases at Tell Tweini lies in the discovery of archaeological remains from all of these periods, while other nearby sites such as Ugarit lack evidence from several key periods. The authors have shown that Tell Tweini was important for bringing Cypriot imports to the Levant, a not wholly unsurprising situation given the proximity of this part of Syria to the island. Clearly, continued work at Tell Tweini will reveal additional information on the interconnections of this region and its importance for understanding the cultural history of the northern Levant.

In this light, the pottery recovered from excavations at the site of Tell Kazel, as carefully described by L. Badre, is also making great contributions to clarifying the interconnections of Late Bronze Age Syria. The site has long been acknowledged as significant for trade between the Mediterranean coast and inland Syria due to direct access through the Homs Gap. However, the height of Tell Kazel was in the Late Bronze Age when it was an important city (known as Sumur) in the Amurru kingdom and often fought over by the Hittites and Egyptians. The imports found at the site in the temple area from this period reveal why these two empires sought to control it and its economic power. In Phase 6, Cypriot pottery was the most numerous, comprising 75 percent of the imports, and included seven different wares that were the most common to be exported to the Levant. White Shaved ware juglets were locally imitated at Tell Kazel. A large and diverse collection of Mycenaean pottery was also found and contributes significantly to understanding Greek exports to the Levant in the Late Bronze Age. The next phase, lower part of Phase 5, is still within the Late Bronze Age period. The Cypriot imports comprise similar wares to those from the previous phase and the White Shaved ware copies continue to be produced. The Mycenaean pottery also resembles those types found in the earlier phase. At this point, the site was abandoned and the next phase, the upper part of Phase 5, is dated to the transitional Iron Age I providing important data on this poorly understood period. The author discovered that initially, imports were scarce, probably due to the trade embargo instated by the Hittites, and local imitations of Cypriot and Mycenaean types were present. However, Handmade Burnished ware made locally, as verified petrographically, mostly superseded the imports. It was found alongside the wheel-made lustrous Grey Wares that include imports and probably local imitations. Overall, the pottery repertoire indicates that after the destruction of the site, most likely by Sea Peoples, it was subsequently resettled, undoubtedly by the same groups who had lived there before. In fact, the Iron Age I Phase shows the reuse of walls built at the end of the Late Bronze Age. The thorough presentation of the pottery that precedes the destruction of Tell Kazel highlights the importance

of such material in understanding how this volatile period affected trade and encouraged local imitation.

The contribution by van Wingenarden explores the role of Mycenaeans from mainland Greece in Late Bronze Age intercultural contact. The focus is specifically Egyptian artifacts found at Mycenae, such as the Amenhotep III faience plaques, and Mycenaean objects found in Egypt, such as pottery. In order to assess the significance of these long-distance contacts, a perspective is taken based on Material Cultural Studies that view objects as active participants in redefining the context they are placed into based on their materiality. To clarify the material role of imported objects, artifacts found in Greece and Egypt before and after the Mycenaean palatial period are examined. Dating to the Late Helladic I and II period are twenty Mycenaean small storage jars that were found at fourteen sites in Egypt. These pots had a wide circulation and some were deposited long after their production and distribution. Along with their general decorative designs and hard ceramic fabric, van Wingenarden sees the vessels themselves as valuable, not necessarily their contents. During this same period are twenty Egyptian objects discovered at eight sites in mainland Greece. Most of the artifacts are alabaster containers and faience objects, both materials that are not available in Greece. Along with imports from the Levant, the impression is the circulation of prestige items between a few Mycenaean centers. Overall, it appears exotic materials that could not be associated with particular locations were circulating in small numbers. This appears to continue into the Mycenaean palatial period when thirty Egyptian objects are found at twelve sites in Greece. However, the artifacts, while still made of stone and faience, are typically inscribed non-utilitarian objects. In this case, the writing is associated with an exotic geographically specific area. Mycenaean pottery in Egypt in this period has been found widely distributed at 36 sites. Once again the vessels are mostly closed forms with simple decoration that continue the earlier tradition of being non-specific exotic pottery. This applies also to those from Amarna that number as many as 600 vessels used throughout the city. This diachronic materiality perspective leads van Wingenarden to see these objects as low-value manufactured items that moved around the Eastern Mediterranean in small numbers. As such, they indicate that Egypt and Greece regarded each other as exotic and distant localities, but not as consistent or significant trade partners. This study shows that by using a materiality perspective insight on how different cultures viewed each other can be gained.

The intercultural contacts between these two regions were further explored by Burns who examined the influence of imports and the contexts in which they were used in Greece. The style of the objects is significant and how it communicates information through consumption. The consumption of foreign

objects brought the Mycenaean palatial states in contact with the well-established trade networks and prestigious gift giving in the Eastern Mediterranean. It also undoubtedly spurred their own quick development as exporters of finely made textiles and perfumed oil. Further, the author suggests these imported exotica to Greece would have played a role in power negotiations if their access was controlled. Foreign objects found in the Argolid are more numerous than elsewhere in Greece, especially at Mycenae. Burns proposes that this indicates imported objects received increased value due to the control over their acquisition, use, and distribution. When such imports were buried with the deceased, they acquired a new importance as they could no longer be displayed or circulated. For example, in Tomb 55, which contained many valuable objects, were found a Predynastic Egyptian diorite jar and a carved elephant ivory tusk. The images on the tusk appear to combine Egyptian and Levantine iconography that could have been interpreted in many ways at Mycenae. Such combined styles were noted on an ivory mirror that joined Syrian and Aegean motifs. A glass pendant and a bronze pendant both have a shape that combines an Egyptian papyrus tuft with a Minoan ivy design. Their discovery in Tomb 55 and other tombs in Greece indicate their importance as hybrid objects evoking styles from throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, including Mesopotamian type pendants of an earlier date. Images of sphinxes and griffins also show the combination of both Aegean and Levantine motifs. In fact, a sphinx on a ring from the tomb is carved wearing an ivy-papyrus pendant. Together these exotic looking objects indicate a connection to foreign lands that may have taken place outside the daily palace administrative system and thus been beyond their control. The author has put forward a perspective on these objects that suggests control over imports is key in understanding their distribution and appearance in particular contexts.

A more prosaic approach was taken by Ownby and Smith in the analysis of Canaanite jars found at the site of Memphis, Egypt. Their focus was on petrographic examination of these vessels, a technique that facilitates the identification of the clay and inclusions used to make ceramic objects. This information is related to geological maps and geographic distributions of raw materials to suggest a provenance. The analysis of the vessels focused on identifying the provenance of the Middle and Late Bronze Canaanite jars and assessing if differences in trade partners were related to political changes between these two periods. The somewhat technical discussion of the petrographic groups revealed that the jars derived from several areas in both periods. During the Middle Bronze Age, jars at Memphis were found to have come from the Akkar Plain in northern Lebanon, coastal Lebanon and Palestine, and an inland area in northern Lebanon. The LBA Canaanite jars were established to have been

produced in the Haifa Bay of northern Palestine and the coastal area of Palestine, the Akkar Plain, northern coastal Syria, coastal Lebanon, and southern coastal Cyprus. Clearly, there are differences between the jars imported in both periods. Ownby and Smith suggest this is due to political and economic changes that took place in the Late Bronze Age. The acquisition of Levantine territory by the Egyptians ensured they could now control the movement of goods in the jars to Egypt and this increased production of jars in coastal Lebanon and Palestine. The production of jars in the Akkar Plain also continued, although differences in the raw materials may suggest their manufacture took place at a different site, possibly the Egyptian administrative center of Tell Kazel. The discovery of Canaanite jars from Syria indicates their new prominence in trade that probably related to the movement of tin and copper around the Eastern Mediterranean. Likewise, is the appearance of jars from Cyprus, which was also probably due to economic motivations. One notable difference was the lack of imported jars in the LBA from southern Palestine and inland Lebanon. This may have been due to the removal of a Levantine-Egyptian population in the Delta at the start of the LBA who may have desired commodities from these areas. Overall, the application of scientifically derived data further confirms the complicated relationship between political and economic activities that may affect the participants in intercultural contacts.

While the previous paper examined Levantine imports in Egypt, Ahrens' contribution discussed the significance of Egyptian objects in the Levant during the MBA. Firstly, the discovery of a Middle Kingdom statue of a nurse at the site of Adana in southeast Turkey, which was originally interpreted as evidence of this woman in Cilicia, has been reexamined in light of more recent finds of Egyptian objects in the northern Levant. Thus, the statue has a clear funerary purpose that indicates it was likely made and used in Egypt, only later arriving at Adana. This example is typical of the other royal and non-royal Egyptian objects often found in the Levant in contexts later than their manufacture date. These objects have been interpreted as exotica acquired by Levantine rulers that sought to connect themselves to Egyptian power through possessing Egyptian objects and adapting Egyptian iconography. Acquiring such rarified objects also increased their prestige and reaffirmed their social status. The prevalence of Egyptian iconography on Levantine artifacts suggests displaying foreign designs was significant to maintaining status and ties with elites. The examination of Egyptian objects at four northern Levantine sites illustrates these suppositions. Material from Byblos/Gubla attests to long term contacts with Egypt that resulted in the importation of objects and emulation by Byblite rulers through the adoption of Egyptian titles. Ras Shamra/Ugarit was also a significant harbor that acquired many

Egyptian objects in addition to creating Egyptianizing artifacts, including a vase with decoration combining Egyptian and Ugaritic motifs. The site of Tell Mardikh/Ebla also had Egyptian objects in a palatial context along with Egyptianizing ivory carvings that were probably placed on a piece of furniture that was prominently displayed. At Tell Mišrife/Qatna Egyptian imports and iconography on local objects were found in the palace and several areas of the city. Ahrens suggests the presence of these objects and the copying of Egyptian iconography represents elite local emulation in order to display their power and prestige. This was important to confirm their social rank both to other elites and to those of lower rank. This study provides much needed clarification on Egyptian objects in the Levant and suggests a motivation for their presence.

The next article by Graziadio and Guglielmino examined trade more broadly, between Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean, mostly Cyprus and the Aegean. The period under study, the 14th and 13th centuries BC, saw intense direct trade between these areas and especially between the Aegean and Cyprus based on the movement of Late Helladic pottery. This pottery was then indirectly traded to the Levant. Similarly, Late Helladic pottery and vessels from Crete were directly traded to Italy, as seen at the sites of Scoglio del Tonno and Roca. Imports at Scoglio del Tonno were dominated by Aegean types, while Italo-Mycenaean and Cretan pottery were less common. The same evidence for direct trade was seen at Roca, but here scientific studies of the pottery suggest local copies of Aegean types were also produced. This may suggest a resident population of Aegean potters along with the discovery of a red stone lentoid seal and evidence for Aegean type rituals. Surprisingly, the direct trade of a variety of Aegean pottery from different production areas to these two sites did not lend itself to distribution to the surrounding countryside. In Sicily, the Aegean finds are found in a limited area, primarily at Syracuse and Agrigento. Ceramic and bronze objects of Cypriot origin were also found at these locations. Uncommon Cypriot pottery was found at a few sites in Italy and Sardinia. Along with Cypriot stone anchors at coastal sites, this indicates an independent direct trade network carried out by Cypriot traders. In fact, the authors state that some of the Mycenaean pottery found at several sites in Sicily may have arrived through this trade network rather than directly from the Aegean. Thus, while Mycenaean pottery was probably directly traded to the eastern side of Italy, on the western side and to Sicily, this pottery likely arrived along with Cypriot objects through direct trade from Cyprus. The clarification of these trade networks through the pottery types found at various sites is significant for beginning to understand the types of trade and the range of participants in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The contribution by Gernez examined trade between the Near East and the Mediterranean region through Early and Middle Bronze Age weapons. While spearheads, daggers and axes have a functional purpose, there are influences on their technical and aesthetic styles that may reveal contact or the movement of ideas. Even in the Early Bronze age, weapons appear in similar styles in Egypt and the Levant. Three semi-circular flat Egyptian axes were found at Byblos that may have influenced the Levantine fenestrated axes, although typically inspiration went in the other direction, particularly for the crescent axe and curved sword. This influence increased with the arrival of a Levantine population in the eastern Delta during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. These groups brought a variety of weapons with them and manufactured some in Egypt. However, like the earlier period, the Egyptians only adopted or took inspiration from a few weapons types and did not borrow the entire Levantine weapon repertoire. The situation between the Near East and Cyprus is remarkably different. Early weapons in Cyprus were mostly similar to Anatolian types, but some have a Levantine hafting mode. Levantine type daggers are occasionally found. In the 2nd millennium BC the weapons are distinctly Cypriot in type and Near Eastern weapons or imitations are rare. A few Levantine inspired axes appear around 1650/1600 BC, but otherwise the Cypriot weaponry continues to be unique to the island. The Aegean also maintained their own weaponry traditions with the exception of two types, swords and the slotted spearhead, that seem to be either direct from Anatolia or diffused from this area to the Levant and then found in the Aegean. Finally, the collection of 30 tripartite spearheads found at La Pastora, near Seville, is unique for being the only place outside the Near East for these types. Their local production implies that at some point either artisans saw these weapons or they arrived in Spain, both occurring at a date much latter than their fleret in the Levant. Yet again, this author has revealed the complexities of the interaction between areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, by examining various types of a particular artifact class. An excellent point is made about the adoption of objects or their ability to inspire based on their function, technique (transfer of knowledge), concept (appropriate for imitation), symbol (either benefitted or restricted adoption), trade (movement facilitated transfer of types), and migrations (people carried the knowledge and objects with them).

Imitation as an example of intercultural contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean was explored by Höflmayer with regard to Cypriot Base Ring (BR) ware in Egypt. During the Late Bronze Age, this type of pottery was found throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, but in Egypt the form of the BR jug (Merrillees type II) was copied frequently in stone. The dating of

these vessels in Egypt has been challenging, but an overview of the contexts for the earliest examples suggests they first appear during the reign of Thutmose III. Several examples of mid-18th Dynasty date are discussed and most were found in high ranking burials. The production of the BR-jug stone imitations apparently ceases during the Amarna period. During this short florescence, some of the Egyptian made imitations were sent to the Levant and Aegean. They have been found at Ras Shamra/Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, Kamid el-Loz, Beth Shan, Tell el-Ajjul, and Amman in the Levant, and at Isopata (Crete) and Mycenae. The contexts are burials and date to the same period when the vessels were made in Egypt. They represent trade from Egypt of an obvious imitation of a well-known vessel type that probably carried an important commodity. Surprisingly, the actual pottery BR-jugs from Cyprus are uncommon in Egypt (unlike the Cypriot *bilbil* juglets) and the production of stone copies ended when the ceramic vessels were no longer imported. However, the influence of this imitation clearly continues in stone vessel making in Egypt. Finally, the author suggests that both the stone and ceramic vessels were in fact imitating metal vessels based on their design features. This article provides a unique look at how a single vessel can be interpreted by various cultures and that its use was an important feature of intercultural contacts in a period that saw the height of interaction in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Another example of the influence of a style originating in one area and spreading to another is discussed by Gürtekin-Demir for Lydian Black-on-Red ware in the Iron Age. The use of a matt dark glaze over a bright red slip was employed at several production centers although the vessel shapes and decorative style varied. This variety appears to be chronologically and regionally based resulting in a debate on the origin of the ware. The difficulty arises in distinguishing between imports and local copies. Recently, scientific analyses have suggested the pottery was made in Cyprus based on examples from this area, Al Mina (Cilicia), and Palestine. The Cypriot shapes and decorative style are seen in vessels from the Levant and also on examples from the Dodecanese islands and Crete. However, there was probably local Cilician production and a separate Anatolian tradition. Some vessels appear to attest to a production that combined Cilician and Anatolian decorative styles. The author has carried out a fabric and stylistic study of black-on-red vessels in Lydia suggesting that there were several production areas. The Lydian vessels are characterized by either geometric designs dated to the

7th century BC, or linear designs that appear at the end of the 7th century BC with a florit in the 6th century BC. The geometric designs are found on a variety of vessel shapes, some of which seem to be taken from Greek and Phrygian pottery. Greek influence is also seen in the Lydian use of the compass-drawn pendant concentric semicircle design. However, the black-on-red technique seems to have been part of Anatolian decorative traditions at the time and the execution and overall scheme is Lydian. The later linear designs appear more similar to the Cypriot and Cilician black-on-red decoration and also feature a darker red color and more purplish black matt glaze. The vessel shapes include some Greek and Phrygian types. Greek influence in the decoration is also attested along with local styles. Lydian patterns are seen on pottery throughout the Lydian territory and probably influenced decorative schemes in the surrounding areas including Phrygia. The Anatolian black-on-red pottery received further inspiration from the Cypro-Cilician traditions. The overview provided shows that Lydia occupied a unique position in receiving inspiration for locally produced black-on-red ware from Greece, Phrygia and Cyprus/Cilicia via the greater Anatolian region. Nevertheless, the styles suggest it was the local, more Anatolian inspired designs that played a larger role in the Lydian decorative tradition. This article highlights the complexities of ceramic decoration during the Iron Age and the ease with which different styles were exchanged and locally adapted across a broad area. This created a common ceramic vocabulary that undoubtedly fostered the intercultural contacts of this period in the Eastern Mediterranean.

This collection of ten papers presents a wide range of information on intercultural contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean. While the focus is predominantly on pottery, other artifacts and iconography also play a role in illustrating the great variety and complexity of contacts through time and the various participants. The value of this section of *Intercultural Contacts* is in the utilization of data from several sources, such as archaeology, scientific analysis, and imagery, to provide synthetic insight into interconnections. The other sections of the book have a more varied approach examining theory, immigrants, sea ports, religion, and economy, but some of the core data and base ideas are found in the section on material evidence. The combination of approaches and methods to artifacts in this section makes it unique among the published works on intercultural contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean.