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Egyptian Worshippers in Canaanite Sanctuaries: Cultural Negotiation in Temples and Paraphernalia from the LB IIB–IA IA Southern Levant

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Abstract

The long-lasting Egyptian-Levantine interactions reached a climax in the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze IIB (the Ramesside age). Temples and temple paraphernalia at the hubs of the Egyptian presence in Canaan assumed a primary role in the transcultural encounter between local Canaanites and stationing Egyptians, consistent with their function of assuring communities' identity and cohesion through the set of cultic objects and performed rituals, and of conveying cultural messages among the forms of material culture. Selected Egyptian facets were incorporated in the architectural arrangement and cultic apparatus of Canaanite sanctuaries that Egyptians frequented (at Beth Shan, Lachish, and Jaffa), intermingling with and renovating local traditions and resulting in a strong mixture of Canaanite and Egyptian traits. This indicates a main way through which the meeting, mixing, and cultural negotiation between Canaanites and the foreign dominating power acted in LB IIB southern Levant, and demonstrates a gradual, successful process of intercultural dialogue and inclusion (of Egyptians within the indigenous cultural and social world), which took place in these south-Levantine communities.

1. Introduction

Egyptian-Levantine interconnections exhibit a long-lasting history, starting since the 5th millennium BCE desert travels across the northern Sinai. Such material and nonmaterial interactions reached a climax in the Late Bronze Age (henceforth LBA) Southern Levant; namely during the LB IIB (the Ramesside age). Egyptians imposed a more direct form of political governance with the establishment of first-tier Egyptian administrative centers and garrisons, followed by an increased physical presence of Egyptians in the Land of Canaan (not only army, but also officials, merchants, artisans, temple personnel).[1] Anyhow, Egyptian domination was not a simple bipolar relationship between dominators and dominated, but a multi-faceted and mutual political and socio-economic system, in which local elites and Egyptian agents jointly participated.[2] Such a scenario stirred the intensity and stimulated the research of new ways and settings of interaction to support intercultural encounters between natives and foreigners at the hubs of the Egyptian presence in Southern Levant.

Temples, with related paraphernalia, ritual practices, and worshipped gods, assumed a primary role in this process of meeting, mixing and intercultural dialogue between Canaanites and Egyptians. On the one hand, religious syncretism became an effective mean of territorial and ideological control by Egyptian representatives over south-Levantine communities.[3] On the other hand, local Canaanite political and religious elites adopted selected Egyptian religious customs in sanctuaries that Egyptians were used to frequent.

Religious architecture and cultic equipment are, thus, a privileged observatory to detect how the Egyptian-Canaanite interface acted and was inflected in LB IIB Southern Levant. Temples of Beth Shan, Lachish, and Jaffa, falling within the sphere of strong Egyptian influence and control, and related paraphernalia, give evidence of this ongoing process of cultural negotiation.[4] The article will cope with these sanctuaries, their innovative spatial arrangement, architectural details, and their peculiar, mixed Egyptian-Canaanite religious apparatus, which indicate the processes of cultural mixing, assimilation and entanglement acting in these south-Levantine communities between indigenous Canaanites and the foreign dominating power.

2. Canaanite Temples and Temple Paraphernalia as Expression of Cultural Entanglement

An extremely varied panorama characterizes Canaanite religious architecture during the LBA. The monumental, symmetrical *migdôl*-temples of Syrian tradition, locus of authority and legitimation of the local elites, remain standing in some inland important Canaanite centers, as Hazor, Megiddo, Shechem, which kept a more independent position in the face of Egyptian imperialism.[5] Beside this group, a new local architectural tradition emerges in the LBA Canaanite milieu, including an ensemble of non-monumental irregular-style temples, with long-room plan and off-axis/bent-axis access.[6] The prodromes of such a tradition date back to the LB I wayside temple of Tel Mevorakh and the LB I Temple 58066 at Beth Shan,[7] as well as to the LB IB Fosse Temple I at Lachish.[8] In the Fosse Temple I, as in the LB II temple of Tell Deir Alla, a row of columns supported the roof and divided the long-room cella into aisles. The same architectural feature is observed in the LB IIB Lion Temple at Jaffa, though in this case the adoption of columnar supports could reveal a different (external) root (see below, § 2.4), linked to the presence of Aegean/"Sea People" merchants serving under the Egyptian rule.

A further category is represented by a few sacred buildings dated to the LB IIB and Iron Age IA (or LB III), so far represented by the temples of Beth Shan VIII–VI and the Summit Temple of Lachish VI, identified as "Temples with Raised Holy-of-Holies."[9] The latter ones exhibit a tripartite ground plan, consisting of a vestibule, a squared main hall with two central columns, and a raised narrowed sancta sanctorum approached by a staircase, and they incorporate a series of architectural details of Egyptian character. Such a layout is reminiscent of Egyptian architectural types (such as the private chapels at Amarna or the small shrines at Deir el-Medina)[10]—which perhaps exerted some influence—but the undisputedly un-Egyptian nature of these Canaanite temples is now ascertained, especially since they were dedicated to local deities. On the other hand, the substantial mixing of indigenous and Egyptian traits in both building features and related finds point to the apparent entangled character of these sanctuaries, where expatriate Egyptians also venerated local deities through mechanisms of religious syncretism and cultural assimilation. This situation has been detected also in the unique Fosse Temple at Lachish.

The article will deal with these sacred buildings by analyzing architectural elements and design, cult objects, and associated rituals, to underline the incorporation, combination, and entanglement of selected Egyptian facets within the local Canaanite religious milieu, as well as the underlying mechanisms of social engagement. Temples were, in fact, the place for activities that assured community identity and cohesion through the set of cultic objects, performed rituals, and worshipped deities, and a powerful setting of conveying cultural messages among the forms of material culture.[11]

2.1. Beth Shan: Temples of Levels VIII to VI

At Beth Shan, the transition to Levels VIII–VII[12] marks the shift from an Egyptian outpost to an Egyptian stronghold and administrative center, when the whole town was re-organized according to a new urban layout and new buildings employing Egyptian features and construction methods were erected.[13] The temple too was involved in this overall refurbishment, adhering to the Egyptian architectural style. The retrieval of both stelae and model bread offerings[14] demonstrate as well the worshipping of the deities within the local temples by expatriate Egyptians living in the garrison, and the presence of Egyptian priests performing daily offering rituals for the gods. Though identifying the deities of these sanctuaries remains problematic, their attribution to the local pantheon throughout the whole period seems to be ascertained (the god Mekal could be venerated, as his well-known stele indicates, as well as female deities such as Anat or Astarte, as the "Ashtoreth of the Two Horns" stela

would indicate; see below). It is likewise ascertained, however, that such deities were assimilated with Egyptian gods through mechanisms of religious syncretism and cultural assimilation.[15]

Architecture

While until the end of Level IX the sanctuary preserved a purely local character, the temple of Level VIII–VII (1072) was reconstructed with a new layout (Fig. 1:a), introducing and combining Egyptian-style architectural elements, as Egyptian frieze stones, blue color painting, or bin-like installations (in the north- and southwestern corners of the main hall). Moreover, as is typical of Egyptian architecture, the walls were made of mud bricks devoid of stone foundations. The building consisted of three rooms, asymmetrically placed in this earlier phase: an anteroom with a bent-axis approach, a main squared hall (1072) lined with benches, which gave access through a brick staircase to the raised, narrowed sancta sanctorum (1068) with a podium and a basin or bin, in turn flanked by a small chamber (perhaps a treasure room). Two central columns on the main broad axis supported the roof,[16] while an altar for burnt offerings, typical of Canaanite sanctuaries, was found north of the building. The temple was rebuilt along similar lines in the Iron Age IA (LB III), in Level VI (Temple 1032), though the sancta sanctorum and its podium, the seven-stepped staircase, and the mud-brick altar in front of it, now definitively lay on the middle axis of the building (Fig. 1:b).[17]

Finds[18]

The temple of Levels VIII–VII (1072)[19] yielded the largest collection of Egyptian-style furniture (57%),[20] along with a percentage of hybridized artifacts (around 7%),[21] thus pointing to the strong religious interaction and religious syncretism between local people and foreign Egyptians.[22] Significant evidence of both Egyptian-style and hybridized items is verifiable for the personal ornaments as well, for a total of 53%.[23] Data indicate the presence of a community of Egyptians permanently resident at the site and using their own objects (imported but above all locally produced) within a different cultural milieu.

Among the hybridized objects, the so-called Mekal Stela from Level VIII must be mentioned.[24] The monument bears the depiction of Ramesses-User-Kepesh, possibly an Egyptian governor of the city during the 19th Dynasty, in front of the god Mekal.

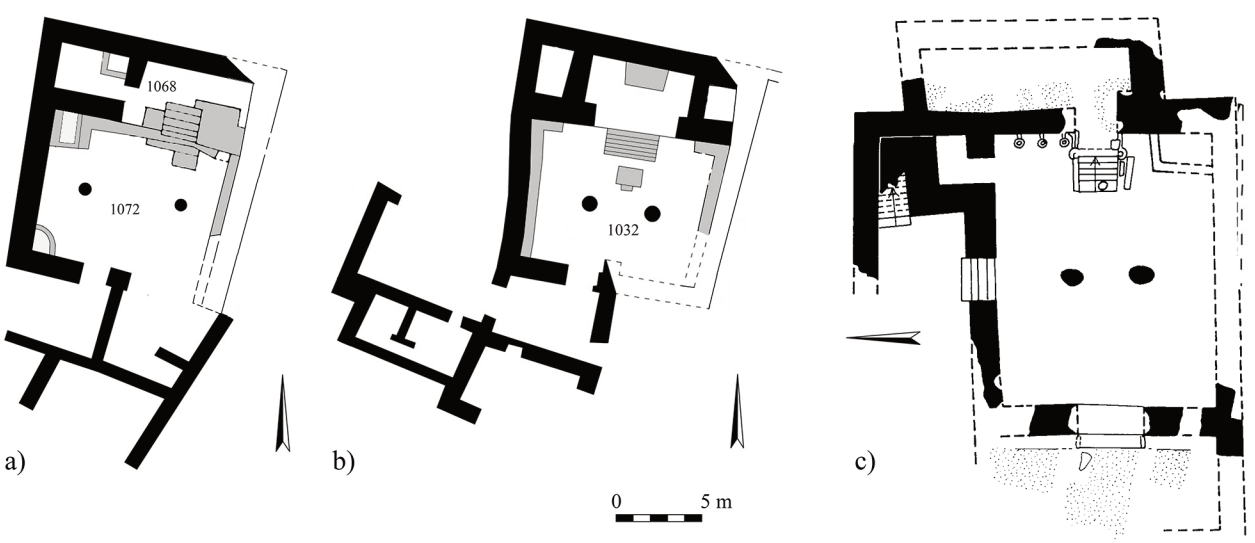

Figure 1: a) Beth Shan/Tell el-Husn, Temple 1072 from Level VII (after Mullins 2012, fig. 5). **b)** Beth Shan/Tell el-Husn, Temple 1032 from Level VI (after Mullins 2012, fig. 10). **c)** Lachish/Tell ed-Duweir, the Summit Temple from Level VI (after Mazar 1992, fig. 29).

Figure 2: a) The Mekal Stela from Beth Shan, Level VIII (after Thompson 1970, pl. V) and **b)** the Stela of Mamy from Ugarit/Ras Shamra (after Yon 1991, fig. 8).

Figure 3: Gold pendant depicting goddess Ashtoreth from Beth Shan, Level IX (after Keel - Uelingher 2010, fig. 106, redrawn by G. Tucci).

This kind of stela featuring a dignitary or high official in front of a deity is quite uncom-mon in the Levant,[25] especially since the Canaanite god is dressed and portrayed in an Egyptian way, thus representing a remarkable example of religious syncretism (Fig. 2).[26] Another Egyptian-style stela was retrieved inside the main hall of Temple 1072: it depicts a woman worshiping a goddess holding an ankh in her right hand and *was*-scepter in her left hand, possibly the goddess Ashtoreth,[27] in turn assimilated with the Egyptian goddess Hathor (cf. Fig. 3). Once more, a local deity was featured in an Egyptian way and, here, adored by a local worshipper.

A military bronze standard from Level VII, covered in gold leaf and decorated with the head of a goddess in Egyptian style,[28] and a small basalt model of a throne, represent two other significant examples of hybridized objects.[29] The throne is of particular interest, since it suggests an Aegean inspiration in its shape, but it appears decorated with Egyptian symbols[30] (Fig. 4): it bears engraved

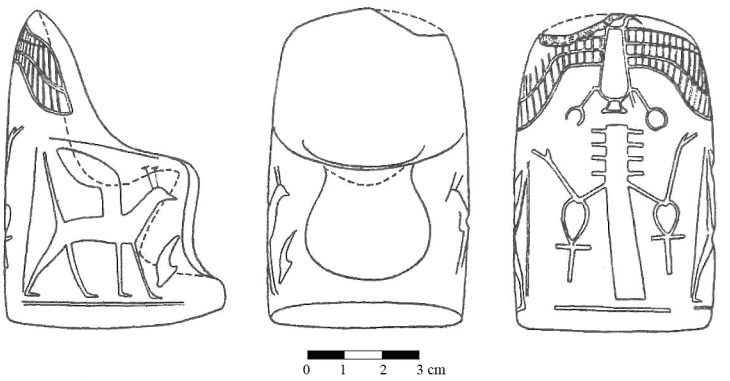

Figure 4: Basalt throne from Beth Shan, Level VII (after James and McGovern 1993, fig. 104:1).

depictions of a winged creature, sphinxes or griffins, while a falcon, with outstretched wings and talon, and a *djed*-pillar, with ankhs in its arms, are carved on the back. The item thus reflects a double cultural influence, both Aegean and Egyptian, exemplifying the climate of strong cultural interrelation and interconnectivity between the regions of eastern Mediterranean at the turn of the 2nd millennium BCE.[31]

Jewels of various types (faience, carnelian and gold pendants; rigid rings of various sizes; metal earrings) were found in the temple area. Among these, many are local (47%), but a larger percentage is Egyptian or Egyptian-inspired (53% in total). Among these, the category of pendants in faience, with motifs of clear Egyptian origin but of probable local manufacture,[32] is particularly interesting. Likely, Beth Shan was a center of production for jewelry and luxury items: in fact, in the open area adjacent of temple area, two stone molds for jewelry production were found.[33]

In Level VI, the remarkable attestation of Egyptian artifacts continues, though percentages are more difficult to define.[34] As far as concerns jewels and personal ornaments, statistics seem to be more reliable: 56% of Egyptian-style items vs. 44% of local pieces.

2.2. Lachish: the Fosse Temple

The flourishing of Lachish throughout the LBA is strictly connected with the development of Egyptian policy and control in southwestern Levant. The refurbishment of some buildings, as well as the profusion of Egyptian finds starting from the 14th century BCE, reflect precisely the Egyptian imperial influence on the town since the late 18th Dynasty. The Amarna age at Lachish marks, in fact, the rise of a local elite strongly connected with the Egyptian court through patronage relationships,[35] thus intensifying the exposure to a range of Egyptian customs. The impressive assemblage of Egyptian finds and the modification of temple plan in the Fosse Temple since the LB IIA both attest to the growing Egyptian impact and entanglement with the Egyptian culture.

Architecture

While the earliest LB IB building reflects an original re-elaboration of a local tradition (Fig. 5:a),[36] the Fosse Temple underwent a radical change in the LB IIA, during the reign of Amenhotep III, when the sanctuary was rebuilt adhering to an Egyptian-inspired architectural style.[37] The reconstruction of the temple, in use until the end of LB IIB,[38] can be placed—generally speaking—within the framework of the wide-ranging building program promoted by Amenhotep III in connection with his first jubilee festival, in order to reinforce his power and territorial control. Temples were dedicated to the pharaoh, to his personification as one of the Egyptian deities, and to his wife worshiped as Hathor. In fact, the cultic equipment of Fosse Temple II and III exhibits a strong mixed Canaanite-Egyptian character (see below), associated with both a local goddess, probably Elat (a deity venerated in the earliest temple as well), and an Egyptian goddess, Hathor, in turn linked to queen Tiye deified by her husband Amenhotep III.[39] Such a peculiar dual cult offers one of the most exemplificative cases of religious entanglement in LB II Canaanite sanctuaries: an Egyptian royal cult entangled with a local deity. More significantly, Egyptian agents feasibly introduced such an association of the temple goddess with Hathor/Tiye in order to reinforce local loyalty to the Egyptian dominance. On the other hand, the persistence of this dual cult up to the end

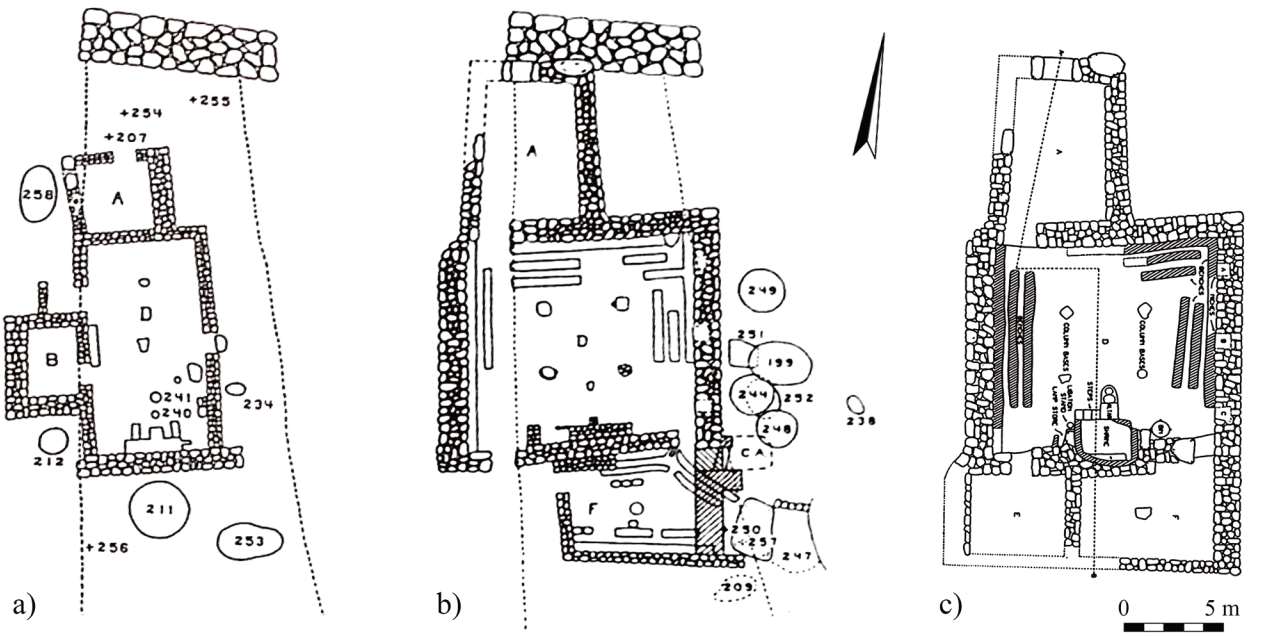

Figure 5: Lachish/Tell ed-Duweir, the Fosse Temple. **a)** LB IB Fosse Temple I. **b)** LB IIA Fosse Temple II. **c)** LB IIB Fosse Temple III (after Bietak 2002, figs. 2-4).

of LB IIB attests to the active role of native population in this syncretistic process and the choice of local elite to keep strengthening its connection with Egypt.[40] The religious sphere represented a prominent setting to implement this political and, above all, cultural process.

Fosse Temple II (Fig. 5:b)[41] had a squared cella with four columns and stepped benches along the western, northern and eastern walls, while a podium was placed against the southern wall. The temple was accessible through a corner entrance, via an anteroom adjoined to the northwest corner of the building; while two auxiliary rooms were added to the south,[42] possibly a treasury/repository behind the cult focus.[43] This squared, four-columned plan is unusual for Canaanite temple architecture. Rather, as suggested by M. Bietak, is reminiscent of the layout of Egyptian New Kingdom houses, employed as well in palace throne rooms and, particularly, in memorial and funerary architecture:[44] tombs, buildings connected with jubilee festivals, and funerary temples. This layout appears in the Fosse Temple precisely at the time of the first jubilee of Amenhotep III, possibly revealing the purpose to adhere to the canons of contemporary Egyptian memorial and funerary architecture. The specific location of the temple outside the town also could indicate a connection with a funerary cult, linked to the neighboring cemeteries: the number of containers to produce and consume food and drink, the presence of rows of benches, and the high amount of animal bones would point to the use of the temple as a place of congregation for funerary meals (as performed in Egyptian funerary chapels).[45] Such a destination of the Fosse Temple as a "mortuary temple"[46] could now find an appealing parallel in the MB III "temple" at Sidon: a ceremonial building for communal rituals and commemorative practices of funerary nature, linked to the nearby necropolis.[47] This peculiar (funerary) destination would explain the adoption and adaptation, in Fosse Temple II–III, of a plan borrowed from Egyptian memorial and funerary architecture, though not specifically from funerary chapels. The sanctuary would thus represent an interesting example of what Stockhammer has defined "relational entanglement": a foreign form employed for a specific local function.[48] Fosse Temple I should serve the same purpose of Fosse Temple II–III, the cult focus *inter alia* being situated in the same place in all the three phases.[49] The

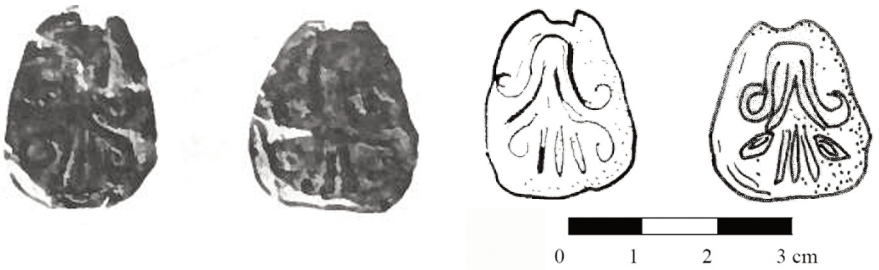

Figure 6: Gold plaquettes from Fosse Temple II at Lachish (photo after Rowe 1940, pl. XXVI: 6-7 and drawing by G. Tucci).

Egyptian-oriented choice since the LB IIA, the late 18th Dynasty, was motivated, on the one hand, by the intensifying exposure to the Egyptian culture and customs, in a period when Egyptians had firmly established their control on the coast. On the other hand, it was determined even by a physical presence of Egyptians at the site: a number of Egyptians agents stationing in the town for administrative purposes, most likely tax collection.

Finds

The second and third phases of the Fosse Temple exhibit a growing presence and probable attendance of the sanctuary by both a population connected with the Egyptian court and Egyptians themselves.[50] The performed cult appears to be significantly influenced by Egyptian customs, as attested by the presence of Egyptian-style objects: 86% from Fosse Temple II and 53% from Fosse Temple III. More specifically, Fosse Temple II yielded 17% of Egyptian-style personal ornaments, increasing up to 21% in the last phase of temple life. To this group, the 33% of jewels and 58% of personal ornaments defined as hybrids or hybridized by style or production[51] must be added.[52]

The increasing attestation of hybridized artifacts from phase II to phase III also must be noted. Two gold plates with palmettes engraved in repoussé from Fosse Temple II deserve particular attention[53] (Fig. 6). Pendants in the form of palmettes are often difficult to distinguish from pendants in the form of open lotus flowers; the distinction here proposed is based not only on the iconography of the pendant but also on its production technique. Examples falling in this category, quite limited and mostly confined to the LB II, are all made of gold leaf with repoussé decoration or engraving. Thus, an iconographic motif of clear Egyptian origin[54] is realized through a technique that can be defined as fully local. Comparisons, not numerous, all come from sites with a strong Egyptian presence.[55]

2.3. Lachish: The Summit Temple

As indicted by the refurbishment of the Fosse Temple, during the late 18th–19th Dynasties Egyptian influence deeply affected inhabitation at Lachish. Such an influence increases during the first half of the 12th century BCE (Level VI), when the city reaches its zenith under the aegis of the Egyptian empire and inhabitants of Lachish assumed further Egyptian customs. New buildings—the Summit Temple near the top of the mound and the Egyptian-type granary—were built incorporating Egyptian architectural features, and anthropoid clay coffins with hieroglyphs were employed in burials.[56]

Architecture

The layout of the Summit Temple of Level VI recalls the contemporary Temple 1032 of Beth Shan, likewise intermingling Canaanite and Egyptian features. An earlier phase of the temple possibly dates to Level VII: partial remains of a public building with a similar size and outline were detected beneath the Level VI temple.[57]

The temple of Level VI displays a symmetrical ground-plan, consisting of three units with entrances aligned along the central axis of the building,[58] and ascending the slope from west to east: a stone-paved vestibule (3203), a nearly rectangular main hall (3146; 16.50 × 12.20 m), and a raised, narrowed sancta sanctorum (3153) accessible by means of a monumental seven-stepped stone staircase (Fig. 1:c).[59] Two round, roughly hewn limestone bases stood on the broad axis of the hall, holding the

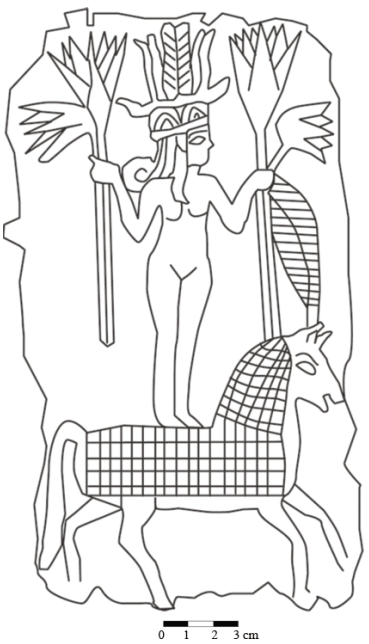

Figure 6: Gold plaquettes from Fosse Temple II at Lachish (photo after Rowe 1940, pl. XXVI: 6-7 and drawing by G. Tucci).

columns that supported the roof. A wide doorway in the northern wall of the latter led into a side room, with a square niche into the northeastern corner; while a small chamber opening into the north-eastern corner possibly served as a storeroom (most of the cultic equipment was found here). Finally, additional subsidiary units formed an annex on the sloping ground northeast of the temple complex.

The building exhibited lavish construction materials (cedar of Lebanon beams, even partly gilded; high-quality kiln-fired mud bricks; painted plaster); and various Egyptian-style architectural features:[60] the mud-brick floor in the main hall and small storeroom; three octagonal columns framing two cultic niches against the eastern wall of the hall; the staircase with balustrade-like slabs leading to the sancta sanctorum; flowered capitals; and finally, the use of wall paintings. The Egyptian influence on the temple is thus apparent, though the sanctuary was dedicated to local deities (as some depictions from the temple itself indicate; see below). Moreover, some hieratic inscriptions on votive bowls, most probably originating from Level VI, would document a harvest tax (*šmw*) paid to an Egyptian religious institution established on site and feasibly related to the local temple: a way of economic exploitation by the Egyptian authority through the religious establishment.[61]

Finds

In the Summit Temple of Level VI, the presence of Egyptian-style items is about two-thirds of the total objects.[62] Both Egyptians stationed at the site and local people would have equally and simultaneously frequented the worship place. The discovery of a gold plaque with a naked female deity standing on a horse (Fig. 7),[63] as correctly noted by I. Koch, represents, in fact, a clear evidence of the strong religious syncretism operating within the temple milieu.[64]

Stone slabs retrieved inside the temple[65] are somehow peculiar objects, pointing to a certain level of iconographic combination. The slabs with engraved graffiti seem to be a local production, as are the portrayed deities,[66] although some motifs, such as the figures represented in profile or the representations of chariots, recall an Egyptian iconographic register.

Among personal ornaments, numerous Egyptian-style objects depicting Egyptian motifs and imagery stand out (about 60%); namely, numerous necklace elements and pendants. At the same time, many of them exhibit the characteristic, local, flat back, thus representing a possible local re-elaboration as well.

Within this context of a strong mixture between Canaanite and Egyptian religious traditions, three "lamp-and-bowl" deposits found in the temple area[67] are likewise noteworthy. The appearance of such a ritual practice has been connected with the Egyptian presence in the country; in fact, the practice is attested to in sites that housed Egyptian forts or governor's residencies (Haruvit, Deir el Balah, Tell Jemmeh, Tel Sera', Tel el Hesi, Gezer, and Aphek).[68] The proper Egyptian lamp-and-bowl deposits, nonetheless, were always accompanied by inscribed objects, miniaturized tools, or material used in building.[69] The ones attested to in Canaan cannot be thus considered as purely Egyptian; they represent, indeed, another example of adoption, and domestication, of an Egyptian cultural facet within the local milieu.[70]

2.4 Jaffa: the Lion Temple

In the mature phase of LBA, Jaffa was undoubtedly inhabited by a cosmopolitan population, according to its role of a major Egyptian fortress frequented by ships arriving from all over the eastern Mediterranean. In such a framework, and within the context of the intensifying Egyptian imperial control in LB IIB Canaan, the so-called Lion Temple at Jaffa/Yafa el-ʿAtiqa displays a different kind of cultural entanglement. It appears, in fact, specifically connected to the presence of Aegean/"Sea People" soldiers, and possibly merchants, serving in Jaffa among the Egyptian personnel (occurring in Egypt since the 14th century BCE). The building, dating to the LB IIB, was located within the Egyptian fortress of the 19th Dynasty (Level IVB/phase RG-4a), when the town worked as a garrison for stationing Egyptian troops and granaries for the Egyptian army were established. In this age, Ramesses II rebuilt the gateway to the Egyptian fortress, adding the portal façade with his name and titles. Both the Ramesses Gate and the Lion Temple remained in use until the mid-12th century BCE.[71]

Architecture

If the entrance is correctly placed through the northern short side, the LB IIB Lion Temple[72] exhibits a peculiar layout, perhaps adhering to a broader east Mediterranean milieu. It was a small long-room building (5.8 × 4.4 m), with a white-plastered floor and two round pillar bases arranged on the main axis. The presence of columnar supports on the longitudinal axis, dividing the cella into aisles, is an innovative feature, which developed specifically in the Cypriot religious architecture throughout the end of LBA and the Iron Age I, as evidenced by the temples of Kition Kathari sacred area,[73] or the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaepaphos (13th–12th century BCE). It is thus possible that such an architectural feature was transmitted to this south-Levantine harbor along with the arrival of "Sea People" soldiers and merchants[74] employed under the Egyptian rule. The small size of the building indeed suggests that the latter was a chapel, possibly serving these soldiers and merchants stationing in the city. The presence of Cypriot service vessels, along with cosmetic ones, in the same percentage as the Egyptian ones, would point to this interpretation (see below).

The excavator named the temple after the retrieval of a lioness' skull, unearthed in the SE corner of the structure (along with a scarab of the Egyptian queen Tiye; see below): an interesting find that points once more to the cultural entanglement process operating within this peculiar sacred building. The lion/lioness was, in fact, the sacred animal of one main Syro-Canaanite goddess: Ishtar.[75] Its presence connected to a shrine in turn related to Aegean/"Sea People" soldiers and merchants might thus testify to the ongoing cultural negotiation among the different ethnic groups in Jaffa: indigenous Canaanites, Egyptian dominants, and Aegean newcomers, at the turn of the LB II. The introduction of the lioness' skull within the shrine could be the result of a process of cultural selection and entanglement, joining foreign and local traditions; newcomers might have chosen and introduced this cultic element that was so powerfully evoking for the local west-Semitic religion. This might be a sort of "creative manipulation of symbols"[76] as a basis for the creation of a setting for shared beliefs, intergroup communication, and new social bonds on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a means to allow newcomers to symbolically legitimize their presence by assuming local traditions, rituals and symbols.

Finds

No thorough publication on the finds from the temple area of Jaffa has yet been produced; thus, a statistical evaluation of temple finds, their provenance and attribution is still unrealizable. Some considerations can be drawn, however, from ceramic finds.[77] The ceramic ensemble from the temple area reveals a predominantly Canaanite presence (77%),[78] compared to the Egyptian one (9%);, while most of the Egyptian ceramics have been identified as purely Egyptian, either imported but mostly locally produced.[79] Similarly relevant is the presence of Cypriot pottery (10%), in particular service vessels along with the more typical cosmetic ones, most likely linked to the presence of the Aegean/"Sea People" soldiers and merchants (perhaps of Cypriot origin).[80]

One of the few reported Egyptian discoveries for the temple area is the scarab of Queen Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III,[81] mentioned as well on the lion-hunt scarab discovered in Fosse Temple III at Lachish.[82] As in Lachish, Amenhotep III should played a prominent role in the reassessment of Egyptian imperial control in Jaffa, where inscribed scarabs

Table 1: Summary table of statistics for the Egyptian/Egyptian-style, local Canaanite and hybridized finds from the temples of Beth Shan and Lachish.

		Beth Shan		Lachish		
		Levels VIII–VII	Level VI	Fosse Tempe II	Fosse Temple III	Summit Temple
Paraphernalia/ Furniture	Egyptian-style	57%	20%	86%	53%	69%
	Local	33%	70%	9%	33%	23%
	Hybrid	7%	10%	2%	12%	8%
	Other	3%	—	3%	2%	
Jewelry	Egyptian-style	31%	56%	17%	21%	31%
	Local	47%	44%	50%	21%	31%
	Hybrid	22%	—	33%	58%	6%
Personal Objects	Egyptian-style & Hybrid	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	61%	10%
	Local	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	31%	90%
	Other	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	8%	—

associated with this pharaoh were retrieved.[83] The latter ones were part of the well-known group of commemorative scarabs of this sovereign, connected with special events as the renewal or foundations of public buildings, or the reaffirmation of his power.

2.6. Competing Material and Nonmaterial Culture in Canaanite Temples

The presence of Egyptian items in south-Levantine sanctuaries is recurrent and well attested since the Early Bronze Age: votive gifts chosen by the inhabitants for their value and prestige or offerings to local deities left there by visiting (Egyptian?) worshippers. Such a presence progressively grew during the LBA, along with an intensification of the Egyptian-Canaanite contacts. Yet, these growing interactions resulted not only in an increased presence of Egyptian material in the mature LB II, but, and above all, in a process of cultural negotiation between foreign Egyptians and local Canaanites, which took place at specific south-Levantine centers where Egyptian dominance, presence and influence was stronger. In such a process, the official religious sphere, with its role of conveying concepts, shaping behaviors, and eventually ratifying power legitimation, assumed a crucial role.

In the sanctuaries under examination, the proportions of Egyptian finds are markedly higher than in other contemporary Canaanite temples and point to a stable and diversified Egyptian presence:[84] besides army and merchants, artisans and specialists, who in turn trained local craftsmen, transferring their own knowledge. It is likewise feasible that there was a presence of in situ workshops where Egyptian-style objects were produced by both Egyptian artisans and local workers who operated jointly;[85] therefore, locally produced items belonged in all respects to the Egyptian cultural milieu. Along with Egyptian objects—both locally produced and imported[86]—a percentage of hybridized objects is documented as well, indicating the deep cultural entanglement between locals and Egyptians (Table 1).[87]

Furthermore, the change in the planimetric outline of sanctuaries, at Beth Shan VIII–VI and in the Fosse Temple at Lachish, is quite unusual for Near Eastern temples that basically retained their layout throughout a period. This change points to the transforming character of these south-Levantine communities, undertaking an intercultural discourse between their local culture and the traditions of the

foreign dominating power. The layout of these temples represents ultimately an original development within the framework of local Canaanite religious architecture,[88] but one able to internalize—physically and ideologically—Egyptian models and motifs.[89]

In both their cultic equipment and outline, these sanctuaries thus testify to the thoughtful choice operated by local (Canaanite) elites and foreign (Egyptian) agents in an ongoing cultural dialogue finalized, on the one hand, to receive protection and power legitimation, and on the other hand, to create a shared religious language through cult spaces, ritual objects and religious beliefs.[90] Spatial concepts and cultic paraphernalia were re-arranged through a negotiation process where *selected*[91] Egyptian items and motifs were incorporated and appropriated, intermingling with and renovating local habits, and resulting in a strong mixture and mixing of Canaanite and Egyptian traits.

Worship places, essential furnishing, and worshipped deities thus remained local, but they took on Egyptian "nuances," demonstrating a gradual, successful process of dialogue and inclusion. Evidence for the participation of Egyptians in the cult is also attested to, as provided by the stelae and four model bread offerings from Beth Shan; in the same way, evidence of Egyptian influence stands out in some ritual practices, like the lamp-and-bowl deposits at Lachish (see above). Last but not least, an Egyptian cylinder seal from Beth Shan even portrays the Egyptian king Ramesses II in the company of foreign gods.[92]

3. Conclusions

The Southern Levant in the LB II–IA IA (LB III) was a crucial arena for transcultural encounters, resulting from the interaction between local people and foreigners coming from eastern Mediterranean. Namely, the Egyptian takeover of Canaan brought about one of the most interesting and active scenarios for cultural meeting, mixing and entanglement in ancient societies, and brought to the emergence of new forms in the south-Levantine material culture through continual and multi-directional mechanisms: from appropriation to domestication, from hybridization to cultural entanglement.

The exposure to Egyptian customs, linked either to a substantial presence (Beth Shan, Jaffa) or to strong political influence (Lachish), affected diversified aspects of life at these south-Levantine communities. However, the adoption of Egyptian material and nonmaterial cultural expressions in the religious sphere was not (or at least not only) an emulation process by local elites.[93] In contexts under consideration, "emulation" is barely perceived and most of the items appear completely Egyptian.[94] On the one hand, such items were feasibly used by Egyptians stationed at the sites; on the other hand, Canaanite political and religious elites embraced Egyptian-style objects, imagery, and spatial concepts to get prestige by adopting an exotic system of symbols[95] and/or to obtain power legitimation by interacting with dominant Egyptians.[96] The appropriation, performance, and consumption of selected Egyptian customs in the religious milieu was primarily the outcome of an intercultural discourse with Egyptians present on the spot. Architectural designs and construction methods, as well as recovered artifacts from the above-mentioned sanctuaries, point to the merging of Egyptian and Canaanite cultic traditions, in settings where the cohabitation between Egyptians and Canaanites thrived a growing entanglement of Egyptian cultural elements with local practices, and the progressive integration of Egyptians within the indigenous cultural and social world. The reception of Egyptian traits, in fact, was not direct, but mostly underwent both a selection and an adaptation process.[97]

In the sanctuaries of Beth Shan, Lachish and Jaffa, local traditions and foreign customs were intermingled in shaping new forms of temple architecture and temple cult, in centers where Egyptians, and/or foreign people serving under the Egyptian rule, frequented local sanctuaries, adored local deities, presented offerings and directly participated in the cult. These sanctuaries hence stood as the outcome of an ongoing cultural dialogue, and of a directed cultural strategy, aimed at creating appropriate settings for transcultural encounters between local Canaanites and ruling Egyptians and, not last, to obtain power legitimation from either side.

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Notes

1 Killebrew 2005, 81; Jasmin 2006, 177.

2 Higginbotham 2000, 132–133; Koch 2018.

3 At the same time, religious syncretism became also a powerful mean of affiliation of local elites to Egyptian court.

4 From the Egyptian side, this cultural entanglement operation had both ideological and functional purposes, since LB II Canaanite temples became places for collecting taxes (Goldwasser 1984, 84; Ben-Tor 2016, 91; Tucci in preparation). Tributes could come in the form of food offerings or precious items, collected within the sanctuaries.

5 In the latter centers, the transition to the LBA, and throughout the different phases of the LBA, did not change the sacred landscape, where MBA temples were renovated, attesting to both a continuing religious authority and a rather strong Syrian-oriented connection, namely at Hazor and Megiddo. Conversely, elsewhere, MBA fortress-temples were dismissed during the LB IB, as was the case of Tel Kittan (Eisenberg 1977, 80), possibly as a consequence of Thutmose III's campaign that established Egyptian supremacy in the Southern Levant.

6 Therefore also called *Knickachse* temples: Mazar 1992, 177–182.

7 Respectively, Stern 1984: 4–9, 28–39, figs. 22-25; Mullins 2012: 128–30.

8 Sala 2018, 354–356. The same typology is attested to during the LB II in the inland, up to Tell Abu al-Kharaz and Tell Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley (respectively, Fischer 1993, 282–283, fig. 4; and Franken 1992, 23–27).

9 Mazar 1992, 173–177.

10 Higginbotham 2000, 294–298; Ussishkin 2004c, 261.

11 In the following paragraphs, Maura Sala has written introductions and sections relating to the architecture, Giulia Tucci has written those relating to the finds and their statistical evaluation.

12 Level VIII represents an earlier phase of Level VII, both dating to 13th century BCE: James and McGovern 1993, 5.

13 Mazar 2011, 156–162.

14 James 1966, fig. 105; Wimmer 1990, 1080; Higginbotham 2000, 225.

15 Mazar 2011, 175; Mullins 2012, 152–153. The veneration of Egyptian deities for themselves seems unlikely (especially since Egyptians were never interested in carrying out a full process of acculturation of local population). Finds from Levels VIII–VI rather indicate the implementation of mechanisms of religious syncretism. Egyptians worshipped local gods, which in fact are depicted in Egyptian-style dress in the mentioned stelae, and which were, in turn, assimilated to popular Egyptian deities.

16 Mullins 2012, 135–142.

17 Mullins 2012, 142–143. Another change concerns the entry wing, where a new anteroom was flanked to the west by an additional court opening to the north; while the sancta

sanctorum was flanked by small chambers on either side.

18 In the analysis of temples finds, and related statistical evaluations, objects have been divided in the three main categories: Egyptian/Egyptian-style (i.e., artifacts of purely Egyptian form and style, either imported or locally produced: Burke and Lords 2010, 2, 10), local/Canaanite, and hybridized. The distinction in relation to the place of manufacture—local or Egyptian—does not appear to be relevant in the contexts under examination, since in first-tier Egyptian administrative centers even locally produced objects were related to a stable Egyptian presence and fully adhered to the Egyptian cultural milieu. Egyptian artisans should work in local workshops alongside indigenous craftsmen, producing objects in all respects Egyptian, as the case of pottery also demonstrates. In fact, in Egyptian centers as Jaffa or Beth Shan (but also Tell el-ʿAjjul, Tel Seraʿ, Deir el-Balaḥ), most of the utilitarian Egyptian-style pottery was locally produced by professional Egyptian potters, using local clay but Egyptian-style technology. Conversely, the number of imported vessels from Egypt was scarce, as well as that of Egyptianizing/hybridized vessels (Martin 2004, 265, 279–280; Killebrew 2005, 11, 67–80; Mazar 2011, 170).

19 The two levels are treated together, since level VIII was an earlier phase of Level VII (see above). Although Egyptians appear at Beth-Shean since the mid-15th century BCE (Level IX/Stratum R-1; LB IB–IIA), the earlier sanctuary still displays a basically local furniture, except for a few finds attesting to the rising Egyptian influence; among them, the gold pendant from Locus 1403 depicting the goddess Ashtoreth (Fig. 3). The latter exhibits Egyptian traits as the *was*-scepter, the garment, and the position, though the manufacture technique (the piriform-shaped plaque) does support a local production.

20 Statistical analysis of the pottery as well has revealed the strong increase of Egyptian presence at the site during the 19th and 20th Dynasties, as compared to the earlier period (Martin 2007, 379).

21 Among the different classes of material retrieved within the temples, the following ones more directly related to cult and ritual have been taken into consideration for statistical evaluation: cultic furniture, personal ornaments and personal items, and jewelry. Finds of doubtful origin or function were excluded from the analysis, while a particular attention has been devoted to objects enlightening processes of cultural entanglement and/or hybridization. The data presented are based on published material.

22 Mullins 2012, 141.

23 G. Mumford carried out an in-depth "spatial and temporal analysis of the distribution and proportions of Egyptian(izing) artefacts and pottery" from selected sites in Syria-Palestine, during the Late Bronze Age to early Persian Period (Mumford 1998). Concerning Beth Shan, according to his analysis cultic contexts related to Temples 1072 and 1032 yielded the following percentages of Egyptian-type objects (considered here as a whole): 19.9% for Level VIII and 51.1 % for Level VII, 24.7% for Level VI (respectively, Mumford 1998, 3372, 3396, 3436).

24 Rowe 1940, pl. XXVIII:19.

25 The best parallel comes from the Stela of Mamy at Ugarit/Ras Shamra, dated to the same period: Yon 1991, fig.8; Tucci 2016a, 95.

26 Thompson 1970.

27 The so-called Stela of Ashtoreth of the Two Horns: James and McGovern 1993, 250.

28 Rowe 1940, pl. XLVIIA:3.

29 James and McGovern 1993, 179 fig. 104:1.

30 Higginbotham 2000, 262; Mullins 2012, 137.

31 For contacts between the Near East, Aegean and Egypt, see, for instance, Wiener 2013 and Koehl 2008.

32 Egyptian pendants represented gods in the round (Andrews 1994, 14), while local ones were flat on the back.

33 Rowe 1940, pl. LIIIA:8 and pl. LXXIA:5. On the connection between worship places and production centers of personal ornaments, see Tucci 2018.

34 The only possible reference is Rowe's publication, and, as noted by Mullins (2012, 143), finds reported from the temple of this level are

very few. Moreover, part of the artifacts from Level VI temple should be inherited as heirlooms in the temples of the following phase (Level V; Mullins 2012, 144–151).

35 Koch 2018, 26–28.

36 Fosse Temple I, built around the mid-15th century BC, was a bent-axis, long-room building accessible from the west, with a rectangular cella (10 × 5 m), and two adjoining rooms to the west and north. A row of columnar supports arranged on the longitudinal central axis of the cella supported the roof, while a raised platform on the southern back wall marked the cultic focus (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 36–37, 38–39, pl. LXVI). The plan of the sanctuary is quite odd in respect of contemporary religious architecture, but it basically develops a local tradition, that of long-room temples with corner or bent-axis access, attested to first in the LB I wayside temple of Tel Mevorakh and in Temple 58066 at Beth Shan (Sala 2018, 354–356). The connection with the temple of Tel Mevorakh is particularly interesting, since both of the sanctuaries were placed outside the towns and, therefore, did not adhere to the official canons of city temples.

37 Koch 2017, 68. Just the cult focus was kept, in the southern side of the temple.

38 The Fosse Temple was refurbished twice throughout the LB II, in LB IIA (Fosse Temple II) and LB IIB (Fosse Temple III; Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 20–24, 83).

39 Koch 2018, 2728. It is worth mentioning the lion-hunt scarab of Amenhotep III from Fosse Temple III, where the queen Tiye is mentioned as royal wife of the pharaoh (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 22, 69-70, pl. XXXIIB:39), along with a scaraboid of the queen from Fosse Temple II (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 69, pls. XXXIIA:2, XXXIIB:2).

40 Koch 2017, 70–75.

41 Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 37–40, pl. LXVII.

42 We follow the reconstruction proposed by M. Bietak: Bietak 2002, 60.

43 The third phase (Fosse Temple III; Fig. 5:c) was a just refurbishing of the earlier temple, except for the platform, enlarged and partly recessed within the reinforced southern wall: Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 38, 40, pl. LXVIII.

44 Bietak 2002, 63–74.

45 Bietak 2002, 74–77.

46 Ussishkin 2004a, 59.

47 Doumet-Serhal and Shahud 2013. The latter, in turn, recalls the building in the MB I–II sanctuary of Nahariyah and the MB II Sanctuary B2 in Ebla.

48 Stockhammer 2012, 49–56. Another possibility is the connection of the Fosse Temple with an agriculture/nature cult (Koch 2017, 67).

49 Among the finds from Fosse Temple I, it is worth mentioning a silver figurine of god Reshef (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXVI:31) and a gold star pendant (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXVI:15), both associated with local cults. The connection with Reshef is most meaningful relating to a possible funerary destination of this sacred building, which was, in fact, accessible from the west. An appealing parallel comes from Ebla, where the MB II Sanctuary B2, dedicated to the worship of royal ancestors (with cultic acts including offerings, burial of gifts and communal meals), was located in the sacred area of god Rashap (Matthiae 1995, 153–155).

50 Conversely, except for a steatite scarab from the Hyksos period (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXXII:1), a green glazed paste plaque with the cartouche of Amenhotep III (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXI: 7), and the serpentine knob of a stick from Pit 211 (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXIX:24), objects, and pottery as well, from Fosse Temple I were all of local origin.

51 Although there is no evidence of a production place for jewelry at Lachish, traces of an installation for metalworking have been found, with a particular concentration of copper and bronze slags identified as waste from the production of Egyptian blue (Ussishkin 2004, 246), a material probably used in the local manufacture of Egyptian-style pendants. In other sites with a stationing Egyptian presence, blocks of Egyptian blue have been found, such as at Tel Seraʿ (Stratum IX, "Governor's Palace": Oren 1993, 1332): the presence of raw material

infers a local production of objects on site. At Beth Shan a lump of Egyptian blue was found in Level VII (James and McGovern 1993, 151–152, IAA 1936–1684).

52 According to Mumford's analysis (see above, note 23), Fosse Temple II produced 30.4% of non-Egyptian artifacts, 60.9% of Egyptian-type objects and 8.7% of Egyptianizing items, plus 25 Egyptian-type beads (Mumford 1998, 2139); Fosse Temple III produced 37.8% of non-Egyptian artefacts, 48.8% of Egyptian-type objects and 13.4% of Egyptianizing items (Mumford 1998, 2217–2218).

53 Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXVI:6.

54 Carter 1963, vol. II, pls. XVII.

55 Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. XXVI:7, Petrie 1934, pl. XIV:32; pl. XX:141.

56 Tufnell et al. 1958, 131–132, 248–249, pls. 45–46; Ussishkin 2004a, 64. The same practice is known from other sites acting as key Egyptian bases: Beth-Shean, Tell el Farʿah South, Deir el-Balaḥ (Killebrew 2005, 65–66).

57 Ussishkin 2004a, 62; 2004b, 191–198; 2004c, 261. Level VII marks a notable flourishing, differing from the modest settlement of previous LB I–IIA, and evidenced by both monumental architecture and findings. The erection of a new sanctuary near the top of the mound could thus belong to this general city's revival, and would be coherent as well with the contemporary erection of Temple 1072 at Beth Shan.

58 Actually, the front of the vestibule is not preserved, thus the latter could have had an indirect entrance as well, resembling more closely the temples in Levels VIII–VI at Beth Shan.

59 A second staircase should lead also from the vestibule to the main hall: Ussishkin 2004c, 216–260.

60 Ussishkin 2004c, 224, 231–242, 245–246, 257–258, 261–266; Wimmer 1990, 1072.

61 Ussishkin 2004a, 64. Analogous hieratic inscriptions from the first half of the 12th century BCE (the 20th Dynasty), comes from Tel Seraʿ (Goldwasser 1984), seat of a fortress of a local (Egyptian?) governor during the 13th–early 12th century BC (strata X–IX). In fact, a temple (here belonging to the group of local asymmetrical-type temples) stood adjacent to the Egyptian "Residency" (Reade, Barag, and Oren 2017, 11–12). Sherds with hieratic inscriptions likewise linked to tax collection were retrieved at Deir el-Balaḥ and Tell el-Farʿah South (Killebrew 2005, 67), in the latter cases the Amun temple at Gaza being probably the recipient of the deliveries (Wimmer 1998, 100–101). According to textual evidence, the Amun temple at Gaza was the only purely Egyptian temple in the Land of Canaan: "a singular exception, which must and can be explained in that town's function as provincial capital" (Wimmer 1998, 111).

62 For the earliest phase of the temple (P-1 Building, Level VII), it was not possible to make statistics on the presence of Canaanite, Egyptian, or hybridized objects, as the number of published findings is too limited. Anyhow, it seems that the percentage of Egyptian/Egyptian-style objects grew significantly in the transition to the Ramesside phase (Level VII), when groups of Egyptians settled permanently at the site.

63 Clamer 2004, 21.21:4

64 Koch 2018, 26.

65 Ussishkin 2004c, 253.

66 Depiction of local deities on the stone slabs testifies to the local (Canaanite) character of the cult performed within the temple (Wimmer 1998, 90).

67 Area P, Level P-1: Locus 3171, Pit E and Locus 3335 (Bunimovitz and Zimhoni 2004, 1147). For a typological in-depth, see Bunimovitz and Zimhoni 1993.

68 Curiously, this type of deposit, apparently connected with the foundation of buildings (offerings were always found near foundation walls or under the corners of the rooms), has not been found at Beth Shan so far.

69 Bunimovitz and Zimhoni 2004, 1153.

70 As for pottery in general, however, to date reported finds from the temple area did not allow a comprehensive evaluation on the presence of Egyptian-style items. Among scholars, there are those who postulate that at

least some Egyptian forms were produced on the site (Higginbotham 2000, 76), and those who instead claim that Egyptian influence is hardly detectable and there is no evidence for the adoption of Egyptian technologies (Yannai 2004, 1055).

71 They were destroyed in the late 12th century BCE. Anyhow, the gate complex was rapidly reconstructed following the same layout (level IVA/phase RG-3b) but using grey mud bricks (the color probably deriving from the ash and debris associated with the destruction: Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993, 656; Burke et al. 2017, 105–117, 126–127, table 4, for the right dating of levels IVB and IVA). At the same time, a large mud-brick structure, built with identical grey mud bricks, overlapped the western wall of the Lion Temple (Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993, 658), thus providing a stratigraphical marker for dating the temple itself. The gate complex was finally destroyed around 1125 BCE, the ultimate end of Egyptian rule in Canaan (Burke et al. 2017, 127).

72 Kaplan 1974.

73 Temple 2 of Level IV (Karageorghis and Demas [eds.] 1985: 26–29, plan 8), and Temple 1, 4 and 5 of Level IIIA (Karageorghis and Demas [eds.] 1985: 38–84, plan 4).

74 Not by chance, the use of columnar supports arranged on the longitudinal central axis of the cella will be largely employed in the Iron Age I south-Levantine temples, at Beth Shan (Level V), Tell Qasile (stratum X) and Ekron (Strata V–IV), in the period immediately following the allocation of the so-called Sea Peoples (Sala 2018, 354–361).

75 As clearly attested to by the Ebla sacred area: Matthiae 1994.

76 To use an expression coined by Hitchcock and Maier 2013, 49.

77 The latter were studied by S.J. Miller in the unpublished thesis: *The Lion Temple of Jaffa: Archaeological Investigations of the Late Bronze Age Egyptian Occupation in Canaan*.

78 Percentages are calculated on the basis of finds from loci 2000 and 1200 (elevation of the temple floor).

79 Pierce 2013, 461.

80 As postulated by A. Mazar at Beth Shan (Mazar 2011, 176).

81 Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan 1993, 658.

82 See above, note n. 38.

83 Burke and Lords 2010, 27; Burke et al. 2017, note 120. Two scarabs of Amenhotep III were found in Jaffa (Sweeney 2003).

84 From other key LB II Canaanite towns, which also interwoven relationships, especially trade contacts, with Egypt, Egyptian finds are very scant, and continue to represent chiefly either valuable offers by the faithful or votive gifts to the deity left there by visiting (Egyptian) worshippers. This is the case, for instance, of finds from the temple area at Tell Abu Hawam, where only two Egyptian-style objects were retrieved inside a *favissa* (Gershuny 1981, 39): a grape cluster-shaped pendent in white paste and pale-blue glaze (Hamilton 1935, pl. XXXIX:424), commonly found in Tell el-Amarna contexts; and a fragmentary faience goblet, dated to the beginning of the 19th Dynasty (Hamilton 1935, pl. XXXIX:420). Egyptian finds from the road sanctuary of Tel Mevorakh are equally scarce, including a carnelian bead, three faience game pieces, and an alabaster bowl (Stern 1984 fig. 4:19–21; 7; 22), feasibly semiprecious offerings and votive gifts left by visiting worshippers.

85 According to A. Mazar, Egyptian craftsmen working—permanently or intermittently—at Beth-Shean included scribes, sculptors and engravers of reliefs and inscriptions, potters, wall painters, and possibly experts in faience and glass manufacture (Mazar 2011, 172). Evidence for the presence of Egyptian craftsmen, employing the same procedures and techniques as those in the motherland (Sparks 2007, 88), comes also from Tel Rehov, where a LB IIB installation for metallurgical activities was found. This installation for casting reminds those found in Qantir (Egypt) and displays the typical casting channel of Egyptian installations (instead of the simple pit found in the local ones; Yahalom-Mack 2015, 1–12). According to the author, this is "evidence that Egyptian bronze-smiths were present in Canaan during the period of the 19th and 20th Egyptian Dynasties' occupation" (Yahalom-Mack 2015, 1).

86 Though beyond the scope of the present article,

the mechanisms through which imported Egyptian objects could arrive in the Southern Levant can be noted. Besides those belonging to the system of exchange of gifts, these objects were part of a "kit" that moved together with their owners (Liverani 2008, 161).

87 An additional analysis of consumption processes (where possible) could shed further light on the degree to which these objects were received, incorporated, and eventually domesticated into the local culture.

88 This layout should not be confused with the spatial concept of other Levantine sanctuaries, like that of the *Langraum* tripartite temple introduced in the MBA–LBA Syrian dynastic temples, later on employed in Iron Age royal temples from northwestern inner Syria (Tell Afis, Tell Taʿyinat, ʿAin Dara: Mazzoni 2010; Harrison 2012) to Jerusalem (*contra* Ussishkin 2004a, 63). It is unlikely that a temple type derived from northern Syria would be adopted in south-Levantine centers under the Egyptian control.

89 Ussishkin 2004c, 261.

90 "Through the juxtaposition of various sets and traditions of material culture in one and the same contact situation, material culture is also the medium through which people can communicate with each other, even if they do so only subconsciously" (van Dommelen and Rowlands 2012, 22).

91 Foreign customs, compliant with local traditions and social norms, were adopted, while other ones that did not fit local norms were rejected.

92 Stadelmann 1967, 74–76, 136.

93 As it was the case of other Egyptian-style cultural traits adopted into in the local social sphere, as the goose keeping and consumption in communal feasting (Koch 2014; 2018, 29–30).

94 Conversely, at such sites, the presence of Egyptianized artifacts is scarce.

95 According to paradigms as "core-periphery interaction" or "elite emulation model" (Higginbotham 2000).

96 Koch 2018, 25–26, 28–30.

97 This happened through different mechanisms as domestication, hybridization, and what Stockhammer has defined as "relational entanglement" and "material entanglement (Stockhammer 2012, 46–51).