



SYNCHRONISMS AND SIGNIFICANCE: REEVALUATING INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN MIDDLE KINGDOM EGYPT AND THE SOUTHERN LEVANT

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ABSTRACT

The relationship and interconnections between Middle Bronze Age Palestine and Middle Kingdom Egypt have long been the subject of continued debate, influenced by changing perspectives on the nature of the Middle Bronze Age and evidence regarding the chronological synchronisms and correlations between the two regions. Difficulties in understanding this relationship are augmented by the extreme paucity of existing data that may shed light on the problem. This article reexamines current available data that allow synchronisms to be made between Palestine and Egypt during the early second millennium BCE, and suggests possible conclusions concerning the nature of this relationship and the significance of the continuing scarcity of evidence for Egyptian interaction with the southern Levant.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the Middle Bronze Age in the southern Levant, its level of development, its international interconnections, and its chronological synchronisms, particularly with ancient Egypt, has long been subject to continued scholarly debate. The understanding of probable interaction between Palestine and Egypt during the Middle Bronze Age and Egyptian Middle Kingdom has changed drastically since the early twentieth century and still remains highly unsatisfactory, influenced by changing perspectives of the nature of the Middle Bronze Age and evidence for the chronological correlations between the two regions. In the southern Levant, Middle Bronze Age I¹ is an ambiguous period, both in terms of its internal level of development and degree of urbanism, but also regarding the synchronisms between Palestine and Middle Kingdom Egypt, which therefore affects understanding the interconnections between the two regions.² During the past half century, continued excavation and subsequent interpretation have altered this knowledge, yet current understandings remain plagued by interpretative problems, stemming in great part from the relative paucity of information available for analysis. Compared to other eras both before and after, the evidence for this relationship during the Middle Bronze Age is notable for its scarcity, and what little evidence that does exist provides only a few datum points.

In particular, two primary issues stand forward for consideration: 1) the connections that may be made between

archaeological data in Palestine and Egypt and the subsequent chronological correlations derived from them, and 2) the implications that these synchronisms then have for the ensuing relationship (or lack thereof) between the two regions. Here, the relative lack of data pertaining to the first point hinders proper evaluation of the second one. If the synchronisms between Egypt and the southern Levant are not clearly established, then any understanding of the nature of their interaction becomes subject to vagaries of chronological confusion that then impinge on the ability to link developments and progressions in one region to those occurring in the other.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Over thirty years ago, in his highly influential article published in 1975, J. Weinstein asserted—against the prevailing view of most scholarship until then—that there was little or no Egyptian presence in or interaction with the southern Levant at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age.³ He maintained that the lack of Egyptian interest in Palestine stemmed, to a great degree, from the fact that there was little or nothing there to interest it. At the time of this analysis, scholarly consensus generally viewed the MB I in Palestine as a very short period in a region occupied by a semi-nomadic population, possessing few cities or large settlements, and marked by a relatively undeveloped culture; only in the following MB II did large cities

and an urban character appear.⁴ Under the circumstances dictated by knowledge at the time, Weinstein’s perspective of the undeveloped nature of the region, together with the prevailing correlations that placed the beginning of MB I contemporary with the first rulers of the Middle Kingdom, provided a plausible explanation for the lack of intensive Egyptian interest.

Weinstein then made the further observation that evidence suggested that minimum trade or other contact tended to exist between the regions when Egypt was strong and Palestine weak, and that this situation changed when this power dynamic was reversed. To Weinstein, based on contemporary knowledge, this phenomenon seemed somewhat paradoxical, but also highly significant. His final comment in the article, therefore, noted that “future analyses of Palestine’s relations with Egypt in the Middle Bronze Age should take this phenomenon into account.”⁵

In the more than three decades that have elapsed since Weinstein’s article, much of this assessment of Egyptian disinterest in Palestine has dominated the field, despite increased knowledge of the more complex nature and urban development of MB I, evidence for its longer chronological span lasting almost two centuries, and more nuanced assessments of distribution of Egyptian artifacts throughout the eastern Mediterranean.⁶ Yet his observation regarding the significance of the inverse relationship between the degree of contact and the relative strength of each region—an observation that underscores the need for interpretation and explanation as well as continued acquisition of evidence—has not received the same level of attention.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

Excavations in Palestine in recent decades have provided a limited, yet crucial, set of data that outline basic synchronisms between Palestine and Egypt, and from that, enable the delineation of chronological parameters. The primary sites for establishing synchronisms between Egypt and the southern Levant are Tell el-Daba in the Egyptian Delta, Ashkelon on the southern coast of Palestine, and Tel Ifshar, located further to the north and slightly inland on the coastal plain (Figure 1).⁷ In addition, recent excavations at Tell el-Burak in southern Lebanon have yielded additional evidence that may help establish correlations, pending further publication of these data.⁸

In Palestine, only two data sets provide evidence for interaction between Egypt and the southern Levant in MB I. These are: 1) Egyptian pottery and a group of clay sealings found in Phases 14 and 14/13 from excavation of the gates and ramparts at Tel Ashkelon, and 2) sherds and one complete vessel of Egyptian Marl C fabric from Phases A-C at Tel Ifshar. Both data sets have been published, although not comprehensively in final site reports; these materials may then be linked to seriation sequences in Egypt, particularly from the Tell el-Daba excavations, to establish a relative synchronization for the local

phases and strata in which they were found.

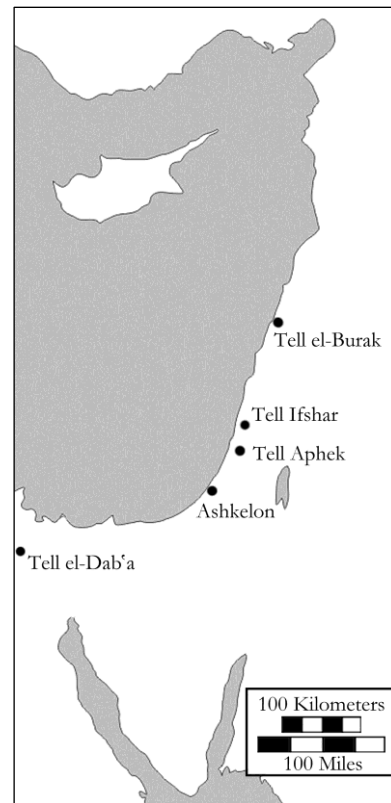


Figure 1: Map of the eastern Mediterranean showing the location of sites mentioned in the text

Ashkelon

The Egyptian material at Ashkelon comes from a series of strata relating to the gate and fortifications at the north of the site.⁹ The corpus consists of a small number of ceramic types, including water vessels (*zirs*), storage jars, ring stands, bowls and cooking pots;¹⁰ a group of more than forty clay sealings were also found in a sealed deposit in the filling of the Phase 14 moat.¹¹ On the basis of the ceramic evidence and the clay sealings, Ashkelon Phase 14—the earliest gate and the dry moat—is equated with Tell el-Daba G/4 (and perhaps the latter part of Tell el-Daba H), while the second gate of Phase 13 is correlated with Tell el-Daba G/1-3.¹² The Middle Bronze Age pottery found in these phases links the Ashkelon gate Phases 14 and 13 to Aphek Phase 2-3 and Aphek Phase 4, or late 3-4, respectively (Table 1).¹³

The absolute chronology associated with these synchronisms then suggests that Ashkelon Phase 14 dates to the first half of the eighteenth century BCE, and the late Twelfth Dynasty, while Phase 13 falls into the middle to late eighteenth century and is contemporary with early Dynasty Thirteen.¹⁴ This correlation links the overall Palestinian MB I development, as represented by the Aphek ceramic sequence, to this chronological framework as

well. The Ashkelon data suggest that late Aphek Phase 2 and the transition from early MB I to the later phases of MB I also took place during the first half of the eighteenth century BCE;

accordingly, the second half of MB I (Aphek Phases 3 and 4) is contemporary with the end of the eighteenth century and the early Thirteenth Dynasty.

<u>Ashkelon Phase</u>	<u>Tell el-Daba</u>	<u>Aphek Phase</u>	<u>Suggested Date</u>	<u>Dynasty</u>
Phase 14, Gate 1	Late H, G/4	Late Phase 2, Phase 2-3	1800 – 1750 BCE	Late 12 th Dynasty
Phase 13/14, Moat Deposit	G/4	Phase 3	1775 – 1750 BCE	12 th -13 th Dynasty
Phase 13, Gate 2	G/1-3	Phase 3-4	1750 – 1725 BCE	13 th Dynasty

Table 1: Chronological and stratigraphic correlations for the data from Ashkelon.

Ifshar

The Ifshar corpus of Egyptian ceramic material, consisting of sherds and one complete vessel, was found in Phases A-E at one location at the site—Area C—and therefore, like the material from Ashkelon, provides only a very limited data set, representing a minimum of eight to a maximum of twelve vessels total.¹⁵ Most of the sherds are from vessels with fairly long chronological ranges, and are also, by and large, fairly common forms, which provides challenges in establishing precise dates for these data. The sherds from Phase A and Phase B in particular possess a considerable range in date, from the latter part of the reign of Senwosret I through the late Twelfth Dynasty and into the Thirteenth.¹⁶ From this, the excavators suggest a date sometime in the mid-Twelfth Dynasty, in the time frame of the reigns of Amenemhet II through Senwosret III (1911 – 1850 B.C.E) for the period of the transition to Phase B.¹⁷ In addition, the

complete bottle made from Marl C fabric from Tel Ifshar, associated with Phase C, may be dated on typological grounds between late in the reign of Amenemhet II through Senwosret III (ca. 1890 – 1850).¹⁸ Overall, then, the excavators correlate Phases A-C of Tel Ifshar and especially the transition to Phase B with the reign of Amenemhet II through Senwosret III, or the early to middle nineteenth century.¹⁹

The local pottery found in these phases at Tell Ifshar includes sherds of Levantine Painted Ware, which dates relatively early in the typological sequence of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine, consistent with Aphek Phases 1-2. Most recent analysis, therefore, places Ifshar Phase B coeval with Aphek Phase 2.²⁰ This results in the correlation between the earlier phases of MB I with the early to middle part of the Twelfth Dynasty, with a chronological range in the middle of the nineteenth century BCE (Table 2).

<u>Ifshar Phase</u>	<u>Aphek Phase</u>	<u>Suggested Date</u>	<u>Dynasty</u>
Phase A	Phase 1	Early nineteenth century	Early-mid 12 th Dynasty
Phase B	Phase 2	1900 – 1850 BCE	Mid-12 th Dynasty
Phase C	Phase 2	1890 – 1850 BCE	Mid-12 th Dynasty

Table 2: Chronological and stratigraphic correlations for the data from Tel Ifshar.

Radiocarbon Dating

Adding to the archaeological material is the evidence prov-

ided by radiocarbon dating, although, again, at present data is available from only a few sources. The C¹⁴ information primarily comes from Tel Ifshar in Palestine, Tell el-Daba in Egypt, and

Tell el-Burak in southern Lebanon.

Dates from Tel Ifshar, based on a selection of cultigens from the site, predominately from Phases B-C, suggest that the beginning of MB I in Palestine should be placed no earlier than 1920 BCE, and is probably, in fact, somewhat lower.²¹ This would equate the early phases of MB I to the first half of the nineteenth century, which is consistent with the archaeological data from the site. This correlation is also consistent with the radiocarbon dating from Phases 1 and 2 at Tell Burak in southern Lebanon, which are also dated to approximately 1900 BCE and the first half of the nineteenth century, respectively.²² This chronology, however, does not fit well with the lower dates assigned to the archaeological material from Tell el-Daba or its synchronisms with the material from Ashkelon, as interpretation of the latter calls for the early part of MB I to be moved approximately fifty to one hundred years lower, to the first half of the eighteenth century or even later, as outlined above (Table 1).

DISCUSSION

Clearly, therefore, some discrepancy exists between these data sets, with subsequent implications for the synchronisms between Egypt and Palestine. The Ashkelon data suggest that the earlier phases of MB I are to be correlated with the latter half of the Middle Kingdom and into the early Second Intermediate Period. In contrast, evaluation of the Ifshar material places this synchronization considerably earlier, with the early part of MB I coeval with the early to middle Twelfth Dynasty, which seems to be corroborated by the radiocarbon dates.

While further resolution of this problem waits on the discovery and analysis of additional data, this discrepancy in chronology and synchronization may be somewhat mitigated by allowing for the following considerations: 1) The Ashkelon Phase 14 material correlates with late Aphek Phase 2, or even the transitional Phase 2-3,²³ which places this material towards the very end of the formative MB I phases in Palestine, and 2) the material from the Moat Deposit, presumed to be a combination of Phase 14 occupational material deposited together with Phase 13 material during the Phase 13 filling of the Phase 14 moat, is equated with late Aphek Phase 3-4, or even the transitional MB I – MB II Aphek Phase 4.²⁴ As such, this clearly provides only a *terminus post quem* for the filling of the moat. The beginning date of the previous phase, Phase 14 (late Aphek Phase 2), in which the moat and first gate were constructed, and which predates this filling material, is not yet established, and its subsequent duration likewise remains unclear.

Another significant point is that the earliest phases of MB I, corresponding to Aphek Phase 1 and early Phase 2, while identified at Tel Ifshar, are not—to date—present at Ashkelon. Nor have they been found at Tell el-Daba; the Palestinian sequence there starts with the presence of already developed MB I material, coeval to Aphek Phase 2. The presence of a

monumental gate and fortification system at Ashkelon, however, strongly implies the existence of settlement at the site or in the surrounding region that pre-dated this construction, as the resources and labor necessary for this architectural construction would, by necessity, have been derived from these sources. Before a complex architectural system may be built there first must be population and organizational systems capable of constructing it. Although evidence for earlier MB I settlement has not yet been found at Ashkelon, it seems reasonable to suggest that earlier MB I phases exist in the vicinity of Ashkelon or at the site itself that correspond to the earlier MB I material represented by Aphek Phase 1 and the early part of Phase 2. Consequently, the disparity between the low dates suggested by the Ashkelon data and the higher chronology indicated by the Tel Ifshar material need not necessarily be quite as extreme as it appears initially.

SYNCHRONISMS AND INTERCONNECTIONS

The dominant discourse regarding the Egyptian-Palestinian relationship in the Middle Bronze Age since the mid-1970s has been influenced by Weinstein's assertions that Middle Kingdom Egypt virtually ignored the southern Levant, in great part because of the undeveloped nature of MB I Palestine.²⁵ When Weinstein wrote his seminal article, other than evidence derived from a few excavations at some of the major tel sites in Palestine, such as Megiddo, Jericho, and Tell Beit Mirsim, very little was known about Middle Bronze Age society and development in Palestine. Most notably, none of the sites just mentioned possess the full sequence of MB I phases, and much of the evidence from Jericho and Megiddo consists predominately of mortuary remains, which are of less value in deriving information regarding nature of settlement systems and patterns, or societal organization.²⁶ To earlier scholarship, based on these data, it appeared that MB Palestine did not achieve any significant level of urban organization until quite late in MB I or even into MB II, at which point Egypt itself was in decline, diminishing the level of Egyptian-Palestinian interaction that might be expected to occur and leading to Weinstein's observations of the apparently paradoxical inverse relationship between the two regions.

The prevailing synchronisms of the time that placed the beginning of MB I coeval with the first rulers of the Twelfth Dynasty and contemporary evaluation of some of the available Egyptian textual and pictorial evidence bolstered this understanding. Interpretation of the Execration Texts, for example, with their lists of various cities and their rulers in Palestine, viewed them as describing a region with little by way of urban culture or complex social and political organization until relatively late in MB I.²⁷ Likewise, the famous description of the "land of Yaa" in "The Tale of Sinuhe" and Sinuhe's numerous adventures there, combined with the correlations that placed that text in early MB I rather than the Intermediate Bronze Age, served to emphasize this same point in the minds of some

scholars.²⁸ And finally, early twentieth century analysis of the painting in Tomb No. 3 belonging to the nomarch Khnumhotep III at Beni Hasan,²⁹ contemporary with the reign of Senwosret II, which depicts a group of Asiatics bringing goods to Egypt, interpreted these individuals, led by the “patriarchal” figure of Abi-Shai and carrying their belongings on donkeys, as representative of the nomadic character of Palestine.³⁰

Based on the synchronisms derived from the current data, however, the primary developmental phase of MB I Palestine (Aphék Phase 2) is coeval with the middle pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty rather than with the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. Concurrently, the clear evidence for strong growth and maintenance of urbanizing society in Palestine during these early phases of MB I merits a re-assessment of the apparent lack of Egyptian interaction with the region.³¹ The revised correlations and evidence from MB I Phase 2 in Palestine clearly indicate that local systems had begun to achieve considerable strength and complexity early in the era.

By the middle of the strongly established and powerful Twelfth Dynasty in Egypt, MB I Palestine, rather than exhibiting a relatively undeveloped landscape, was well on its way to establishing strong complex urban systems throughout the region, comprised of large organized centers surrounding by growing supporting networks.³² This is illustrated by the fortifications at Ashkelon, the large public buildings at Tel Ifshar and Aphék, and other manifestations of urban development throughout the southern Levant, together with the growth of numerous smaller sites throughout Palestine. Additional evidence may also be derived from the account of the return to Egypt of two ships laden with goods and resources in the Mit Rahina inscription, which enumerates the notable events that took place during one year in the long reign of Amenemhet II.³³ While the two cities mentioned in the text are most likely to be located in the northern Levant, there is also some discussion of materials derived from Palestine as well, which serves to reinforce the perspective of growing urbanism in the region.

Re-assessment of much of the older Egyptian textual evidence in light of this understanding also supports this perspective. The current correlations indicate that the “The Tale of Sinuhe” should be considered contemporary with the Intermediate Bronze Age, rather than early MB I, serving to dampen the fervor regarding whether the description of the “land of Yaa” does or does not describe the landscape of Middle Bronze Age Palestine. Furthermore, while the Execration Texts certainly may aid in the identification of toponyms in Palestine, they shed more light on Egyptian attitudes towards foreigners than they do in regard to elucidating the probable political and social character of MB I Palestine.³⁴ Finally, the Beni Hasan tomb painting, which is invaluable in providing actual visual representation of the inhabitants of contemporary Palestine, is also of limited use for determining social organization. Making generalizations about the social and political order of an entire region based on the

description and depiction of 37 individuals—of whom only fifteen appear in the painting itself—and who are themselves perhaps idealized within Egyptian canonical iconography, clearly vastly oversimplifies the processes of societal complexity. By contrast, however, the depiction in the Beni Hasan tomb painting of a duckbilled axe, which is a type fossil for early MB I, serves to further reinforce the correlations between these early MB I phases and the middle rulers of the Twelfth Dynasty.

Therefore, while the assertion that Egypt largely ignored its neighbor to the northeast still appears largely valid, even in light of the two—extremely small—data sets from Tel Ifshar and Ashkelon, and the evidence for interaction derived from the Mit Rahina text, the accompanying view that this phenomenon resulted in part from the undeveloped nature of Palestine can no longer be the compelling explanation. Clearly, if the current synchronizations are correct, there most certainly was “something” in Palestine contemporary with the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty. By the early to middle phases of MB I and continuing into the transition in MB II, the southern Levant clearly possessed complex and thriving urban systems. The relevant issue therefore is not whether there was Egyptian interaction with the southern Levant—the data provide evidence for commercial interaction, albeit on a very limited scale—the more pertinent question is why this interaction remained so minimal.

If Egypt did interact with Palestine to any significant degree, it is remarkable that so little evidence for this contact exists, despite increasingly widespread excavation at Middle Bronze Age sites in the southern Levant, and evidence for the urbanizing character of MB I. If, however, as indicated by the continuing paucity of material, Egypt did generally disregard Palestine in MB I, a reasonable explanation for this phenomenon is required. Was this rather minimal degree of interaction determined by the level of Palestinian development in MB I, or were there other factors dictating Egyptian policy and subsequent actions, or did it perhaps derive from a combination of these factors? What interpretation may be given to explain the lack of interaction between these two neighboring and contiguous regions for a period of almost two centuries during the second millennium BCE?

While evidence relating to Egyptian interest in the southern Levant remain meager and are subject to discrepancies in interpretation, as outlined above, the small but distinct data sets from Ashkelon and Tel Ifshar indicate a certain degree of Egyptian interaction with Palestine in early MB I, most probably of a commercial nature.³⁵ Yet, when compared to the amount of Egyptian material and other evidence for Egyptian interaction with other regions of the ancient world during the Middle Kingdom, such as that found in the northern Levant, as well as the evidence for intensive Egyptian activity in Nubia, the overwhelming impression that Egypt generally ignored its neighbor to the northeast remains difficult to discount.

The recent analysis of the material from Tel Ifshar has prompted the investigators to question whether this relative lack of Egyptian material is indeed indicative of an absence of Egypt in Palestine or whether the ceramics from that site instead represent the “tip of an iceberg,”³⁶ and the bulk of evidence pertaining to this relationship still remains to be discovered through future excavations. Given the nature of the majority of the data from that site—simple sherds from common Egyptian vessels—this point is, to be sure, highly relevant. Until recently, plainware sherds of Egyptian marl fabrics, such as those found at Tel Ifshar, might have gone entirely unnoticed in most Palestinian excavations, due to a combination of the sheer bulk of excavated pottery produced at these sites and the general ignorance of Egyptian pottery held by most excavators in the southern Levant.³⁷ Given those factors, it is highly probable that additional Egyptian ceramics and further evidence for commercial relations might be uncovered, particularly at sites that might have acted as participants in linked networks throughout the region.

Yet, again, even at the two sites where Egyptian ceramics have been excavated, the corpus of material is extremely small, is limited to specific and relatively isolated locations at those sites, and is comprised of sherds of basic and/or common vessels. Items indicative of exchange in luxury items or made of higher value materials remain absent. Even the sealings from Ashkelon would have been used in connection with basic and/or bulk commodities, rather than high value goods. This fact remains highly significant for establishing the nature of the contact and/or exchange between Egypt and Palestine, and the significance that poses for understanding the economic direction and development of both regions. The minimal and prosaic nature of the Egyptian materials implies a low-level exchange, and one of relatively little intensity, both in terms of frequency and in the amount of goods being transferred. When compared to the vast amount of goods and materials being transshipped to and from the northern Levant, and acquired from Nubia, such as, for example, the materials received from both regions cited in the Mit Rahina inscription, the interaction with Palestine appears minor and inconsequential by comparison—from the Egyptian perspective.³⁸

For Palestine, however, the impact of this exchange may have been extremely different. As demonstrated by the current synchronisms, this exchange was contemporary with the early to middle phases of MB I in Palestine, a period in which the larger urban sites achieved greater size, differentiation, and presumed power, and when, concurrently, the small network of supporting sites in the countryside increased in density and organization, giving rise to the mutually symbiotic relationship between urban centers and rural hinterlands.³⁹ Even a small amount of contact with a developing region, particularly regarding economic, exchange, and support systems for a burgeoning urban culture, would have significant impact on that growth.⁴⁰ The Egyptian materials found at Ashkelon point to interaction with the larger,

and in this case, predominately coastal, trading centers developing in Palestine, while the ceramics at Ifshar may also indicate the existence of systemic network growth along the coastal regions as well.⁴¹

Here, the examination of this relationship as just one part of a larger interconnected system of interacting regions and polities, in which the activities and development of both Egypt and Palestine were themselves influenced by interaction and contact with other regions, provides further perspective. Egypt’s interaction with Palestine represents only one aspect of Egyptian activity in the broader world. For Egypt, despite the growing complexity and organization of Middle Bronze Age Palestine, the goods and resources to be acquired from it pales in comparison with those that could be exploited from Nubia, or from locales in the northern Levant. When Egypt was at the height of its strength and power, it concerned itself with those more powerful and resource-rich regions, both for purposes of economic exploitation of the former and for diplomatic and commercial interaction with the latter, with lesser attention to the comparatively resource-poor region of Palestine on its northeastern border.

What little Egyptian trade with Palestine that did occur, which appears to have consisted of the exchange of relatively low-value commodities, remained quite minimal on the broader scale of interconnections in the ancient world. Yet, while this interaction left—to date—only minor evidence of exchange at Palestinian sites, it may very well have held great significance for Palestinian development. The external influence derived from this relationship may have spurred further growth in the region, particularly in local systems, while simultaneously, Palestine was also free to develop those systems and networks that provide the backbone of a stable urban society without excessive interference from the Egyptian power.⁴²

As Egypt declined, the increasingly strong and stable systems in Palestine, as illustrated by the growth of Ashkelon, Aphek, and Ifshar, were able to increasingly participate in international trade and interaction, including intensified trade with Egypt, accounting for the increase in Egyptian material in Palestine in the later MB I contemporary with the Thirteenth Dynasty. Concurrently, the amount of Thirteenth Dynasty interaction slowly decreased in the previous areas of primary interest as Egyptian stability and power declined. Egyptian materials found in the northern Levant decreased throughout the ensuing Thirteenth Dynasty, while simultaneously Egypt abandoned its Nile fortresses and eventually withdrew from its position of power and control in Nubia.⁴³

The synchronisms between Egypt and Palestine, together with the evidence provided from the continuing and persistent absence of data for interaction in MB I, indicate that Egypt’s strength, on the one hand, exercised to great degree in regions outside the southern Levant, actually may have encouraged the growth of MB I culture in Palestine. Egypt’s subsequent slow

decline during the Thirteenth Dynasty, on the other hand, then allowed for Palestine to capitalize on its increasing strength derived from that previous exchange, thereby leading to its greater development in MB II. This relationship, while still demonstrating an inverse character, thus no longer appears

paradoxical; instead, the synchronizations between Egypt and the southern Levant leads to new understanding of the significance of the interactions between the two regions and suggests further avenues of exploration.

NOTES

- ¹ This paper utilizes the following terminology: Intermediate Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age I, and Middle Bronze Age II.
- ² The numerous and competing absolute chronologies for this period in ancient Egypt, which range from ultra-high to ultra-low, augment this problem. The chronological framework utilized herein is derived from I. Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), which represents a middle, or low-middle chronology. Given that the primary focus of this study is that of examination the nature of the interconnections between Egypt and Palestine, however, the absolute chronological dates of specific phases are of lesser concern than determining the relative sequence(s) in this relationship.
- ³ J. Weinstein, "Egyptian Relations with Palestine in the Middle Kingdom," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 217 (1975): 1-16.
- ⁴ W.F. Albright, "Remarks on the Chronology of Early Bronze IV – Middle Bronze IIA in Phoenicia and Syria-Palestine," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 184 (1966): 26-35. For example, in this article, among others, Albright argued for a mere half century duration for MB I, as opposed to nearly two centuries for the ensuing MB II.
- ⁵ Weinstein 1975, 14.
- ⁶ E. Marcus, Y. Porath, R. Schiestl, A. Seiler, and S. Paley, "The Middle Kingdom Egyptian Pottery from Middle Bronze Age IIA Tel Ifshar," *Ägypten und Levante* 18 (2008): 203-219. For discussions and presentations of MB I development, see: S. Cohen, *Canaanites, Chronology, and Connections: The Relationship of Middle Bronze Age IIA Canaan to Middle Kingdom Egypt* (Harvard Semitic Museum Publications, Studies in the History and Archaeology of the Levant, vol. 3, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), P. Gerstenblith, *The Levant at the Beginning of the Middle Bronze Age* (ASOR Dissertation Series 5. American Schools of Oriental Research, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), W. G. Dever, "The Rise of Complexity in the Land of Israel in the Early Second Millennium BCE," in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990. Proceedings of the Second Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Supplement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993). For a discussion of the longer time span for MB I, J. Weinstein, "The Chronology of Palestine in the Early Second Millennium BCE," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 288 (1992): 27-46.
- ⁷ For Tell el-Daba see, for example, M. Bietak, "Egypt and Canaan during the Middle Bronze Age," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 281 (1991): 27-72, M. Bietak, "Relative and Absolute Chronology of the Middle Bronze Age: Comments on the Present State of Research" in M. Bietak (ed.), *The Middle Bronze Age in the Levant. Proceedings of an International Conference on MB IIA Ceramic Material, Vienna, 24th-26th of January 24th - 28th 2001*. (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), 29-42, and M. Bietak, K. Kopetsky, L. Stager, and R. Voss, "Synchronisation of Stratigraphies: Ashkelon and Tell el-Dab'a," *Egypt and the Levant* 18 (2008): 49-60. For Tel Ashkelon, see also L.E. Stager, "The MB IIA Ceramic Sequence at Tel Ashkelon and Its Implications for the "Port Power" Model of Trade," in M. Bietak (ed.) *The Middle Bronze Age in the Levant. Proceedings of an International Conference on MB IIA Ceramic Material, Vienna, 24th-26th of January 24th - 28th 2001*. (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), 353-362, L.E. Stager, J. D. Schloen, D. M. Master, M. D. Press, and A. Aja, "Stratigraphic Overview. 14. The North Slope," in L. E. Stager, J. D. Schloen, and D.M. Master (eds.) *Ashkelon I. Introduction and Overview (1985-2006)*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 215-245, and L. Stager and R. Voss, "Egyptian Pottery in Middle Bronze Age Ashkelon," *Eretz-Israel* 30 (2011): 119*-126*. For Tel Ifshar see Marcus et al. 2008; also E. Marcus, Y. Porath, and S. Paley, "The Early Middle Bronze Age IIA Phases at Tel Ifshar and Their External Relations," *Ägypten und Levante* 18 (2008): 221-244.
- ⁸ F. Höflmayer, F. and J. Kamlah, "Radiocarbon dating the Bronze Age of the Southern Levant: New results and implications for Middle Bronze Age chronology and synchronisms," Paper presented at the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Warsaw, Poland (2012).
- ⁹ Stager and Voss 2011, 120*. Egyptian material was found in four of the five phases of the gates and fortifications, and represents a very limited data set. To date, no other Egyptian material from the Middle Kingdom has been found in other areas of the site.
- ¹⁰ Stager and Voss 2011, 119*.
- ¹¹ Stager 2002; Stager et al. 2011, 224.
- ¹² Bietak et al. 2008; Stager and Voss 2011. For the overall site stratigraphy, in which Ashkelon Phases 14 and 13 are equated with overall site Strata XXIV and XXIII, respect-

- ively, see Stager et al. 2011.
- ¹³ Stager et al. 2011, 217. For discussion of the Aphek ceramic phases see P. Beck, "Area A: Middle Bronze Age IIA Pottery" and "The Middle Bronze Age IIA Pottery Repertoire: A Comparative Study," in M. Kochavi, P. Beck, and E. Yadin (eds.), *Aphek-Antipatris I. Excavation of Areas A and B. The 1972-1976 Seasons*, (Monograph Series No. 19. Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University. Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2000), 173-254.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 217; Stager and Voss 2011, 125*.
- ¹⁵ Marcus et al. 2008, 213.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.* 206.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.* 213; Marcus, Porath, Paley 2008, 238.
- ¹⁸ There is some debate whether this bottle should be assigned to Phase C or Phase E, although generally the former context is favored, which is the conclusion utilized within this paper. See discussion in Marcus et al. 2008, 210-213 and E. Marcus, "Dating the Early Middle Bronze Age in the southern Levant: A Preliminary Comparison of Radiocarbon and Archaeo-Historical Synchronizations," in M. Bietak (ed.) *The Synchronization of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. II. Proceedings of the SCIEEM 2000 - EuroConference, Haindorf 2nd of May - 7th of May 2001*, (Wien: Verlag des Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003), 95-110.
- ¹⁹ Marcus et al. 2008, 213.
- ²⁰ Marcus, Porath, Paley 2008, 237; Marcus et al. 2008:213. The excavators then correlate Phase E at Tel Ifshar with the Ashkelon moat deposit.
- ²¹ Marcus 2003, 104.
- ²² Höflmayer and Kamlah 2012.
- ²³ Stager et al. 2011, 217.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.
- ²⁵ Weinstein 1975. See also discussion in Marcus et al. 2008, 203 and 214-216.
- ²⁶ Cohen 2002.
- ²⁷ Albright 1966:30; see also discussion in D. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1992).
- ²⁸ See, for example, the discussion of this issue in A. Rainey, "The World of Sinuhe," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972):369-408. The heated debate between scholars regarding the extent to which "The Tale of Sinuhe" reflects a nomadic or an urbanized society has been long and rancorous and subject to considerable revision as the length of the periods in question and their correlations with the Egyptian Middle Kingdom remained in flux.
- ²⁹ P.E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan I* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1893), Pls. 28, 30-31.
- ³⁰ G.E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (London: Westminster, 1962), 46. See also discussion in Cohen 2002, 45-46.
- ³¹ S. Cohen, *Cores, Peripheries, and Processes: Urbanization in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages in the southern Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).
- ³² Cohen 2002; Cohen forthcoming.
- ³³ H. Altenmüller and A.M. Moussa, "Die Inschrift Amenemhets II. aus dem Prah-Tempel von Memphis. Ein Vorbericht," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* (1991) 18: 1-48.
- ³⁴ Cohen 2002, 49; A. Ben-Tor, "Do the Execration Texts Reflect an Accurate Picture of the Contemporary Settlement Map of Palestine?" in Y. Amit, E. Ben-Zvi, I. Finkelstein, and O. Lipshits (eds.), *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 80.
- ³⁵ Marcus et al 2008; Marcus, Porath and Paley 2008; Bietak et al. 2008; Stager and Voss 2011.
- ³⁶ Marcus et al. 2008, 214-216.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 214-215.
- ³⁸ Compare, for example, the lists of items enumerated in the Mit Rahina inscription; also, from later in the reign, the vast amount of goods transshipped from the Nubian fortresses.
- ³⁹ Cohen 2002; Cohen forthcoming.
- ⁴⁰ Cohen, forthcoming.
- ⁴¹ E. Marcus, "Amenemhet II and the Sea: Maritime Aspects of the Mit Rahina (Memphis) Inscription," *Ägypten und Levante* 17 (2007): 137-190.
- ⁴² Cohen forthcoming. This is opposite of the case, for example, provided by the strong Egyptian presence in Palestine in EB I, which may have inhibited the local systems from developing sufficiently to support the urban culture of the time.
- ⁴³ K. Ryholt, *The Political Situation in Egypt During the Second Intermediate Period c. 1800-1550 B.C.* (Copenhagen: Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 20, 1997).