



## **The Crossroads III** **A Stranger in the House.**

Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age

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Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague

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## Keynote Speakers





**“Human instincts, canine intelligence, and monkey features”:  
the Gutians and other “mountain people” in Mesopotamian  
and 20th century scholarly perspectives**

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Living in a quintessential “flatland” formed by Tigris, Euphrates and their tributaries, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia were impacted by the linearity of their landscape in multiple ways. The surrounding mountain lands, from the Zagros mountains of Western Iran and the Taurus mountains of southern Turkey to the Lebanon, represented a geographic antithesis to their homeland, exuding fascination that is reflected in historical texts, myth and epics throughout time. Magical places such as the Cedar Forest of Lebanon, the Silver Mountain in Anatolia or the kingdom of Aratta in the Iranian highlands reflected Mesopotamia’s interest in exotic raw materials. But they also instilled fear, reflected in terrifying figures such as Humbaba, scorpion men, and numerous other demons. Not infrequently populations living outside of Mesopotamia were depicted as inferior, less civilized and occasionally described in derogatory, almost ‘racist’ terms.

A key example for the latter can be found in characterization of the Gutians, a population group in Western Iran, in sources from the later third and early second millennium BC. Much of what we know—or infer—about them comes from literary as opposed to historical sources, and accounts of them can be less than flattering. In the “Curse over Agade,” the famous Ur III literary composition that rationalizes the fall of the Akkadian Dynasty (2300-2150 BC) in ideological terms, the Gutians are avengers, unleashed against the dynasty of Akkad in retaliation for Naramsin’s destruction of the Ekur, Enlil’s temple at Nippur. Their description as quasi-beasts with animalistic features reflects the fears and apprehensions against foreigners that must have been present in ancient Mesopotamia and which this literary composition uses in highly propagandistic terms.

Reviewing the available contemporary historical data for it is relatively clear that post-Akkadian literary and historiographic sources (not the least the

Sumerian King List, which relates that a Gutian period that lasted more than a century) overstated the impact of this invasion. Archaeological sites have shown no clear evidence of a Gutian invasion or interregnum. This did not stop notable scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, from identifying occupation levels on archaeological sites or items of material culture as Gutian, often using stereotypes that echo the ancient Mesopotamian sentiment.

In my paper I will revisit the scale and impact of the “Gutian invasion” in light of more recent historical and archaeological evaluations, paying particular attention to the way in which scholars have tried to identify and classify Gutian material culture.

## **Metics, Workers, Soldiers, Tribes, Traders & Slaves: Points of Interaction with Non-Babylonians**

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From Old Babylonian texts, we have not only a limited number of ways to determine what corresponds to our modern idea of “foreignness” (chiefly through ethnonyms, place of origin, and onomastics), but relatively confined contexts in which this information was deployed (lists of workers, slave sales, dispersed personal names). That being the case, we are left with the bits and pieces with which one could really write only a functionalist account of non-Babylonian economic roles, i.e., via the “project identities” named by this talk’s title. Our sources give virtually no inflection (positive or negative) as to the ethnic, social, or political identities of these people, except insofar as they suggest them, at a very general level, an underclass of sorts. This talk will first review the evidence for these roles and assess what types or degrees of personhood they indicate for resident aliens. Then, in a second half of the talk, I will turn my attention to the conceptual construction of “strangers/strangeness” in the Old Babylonian period—what it meant to talk about “enemies,” “aliens,” and “others” in the contexts where the relevant terms (e.g., *ahû*, *nak(ā)ru*, *ubāru*, etc.) appear in period letters. A comparison will be made between the starkly different evaluative senses in which people from other lands and with other languages were and were not recognized as legal, social, and economic actors; and those through which concepts of “outsiderness” were otherwise constructed.

## **The Contact Zone along the Middle Euphrates during the Late Bronze Age: Movement, Interaction, and Transaction**

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What is a foreigner? How can we distinguish them from locals in a multilingual and multicultural society as it is attested in our written sources from Late Bronze Age Syria, when only very seldom native terms for “foreigner” occur? Among important sites such as Alalah, Amarna, Ugarit and Nuzi the town of Emar provides textual evidence to the study social, legal and economic systems in the Late Bronze Age during a period of ca. 200 years. Situated along the Middle Euphrates in the land of Ashtata its archives, along with those from Ekalte, Azû and Basiru hint at external contacts within the diplomatic and economic network of the Great Empires, first being under Mittanian and then under Hittite control a change that is also reflected in the layout and format, palaeographic and grammatical features etc. of the cuneiform texts discovered at various sites along the Middle Euphrates. Regarding the overall topic of this third crossroads conference on the understanding of foreignness in ancient societies one may ask how we can detect those foreigners in our archives coming from a site at the crossroads between Mesopotamia and the Eastern Mediterranean. What is local and what can be clearly labeled as foreign and in which contexts do we find foreigners / foreignness? How do local societies interact with foreigners and where can we detect those contacts within our written documentation which hardly reflects the spoken local language, a North-West Semitic tongue.



## **A reluctant servant: Ugarit under foreign rule during the Late Bronze Age**

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Since their discovery in the 1950s, the epigraphic finds from Ugarit's "international archive" provided a unique insight into the relationship between the Hittite kingdom and its rich vassal on the Syrian coast. It quickly became clear that this interaction, which seemed to be relatively easy and uncomplicated during the first decades of Hittite dominance, became quite troublesome towards the mid of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The recently published Akkadian texts from the so-called "House of Urtenu" provide now ample new evidence about the worsening of the relationship between vassal and foreign overlord in the final phase of the Late Bronze Age, conveying the impression that the last kings of Ugarit regularly tried to shirk their obligations towards the Hittite suzerains and their representatives.

This paper will offer an updated overview on this latent conflict, analysing the occasions which prompted the Hittite reprimands and discussing the geo-political background which set the scene for this quite exceptional situation.

## **“The Men of Ura are a Heavy Burden Upon Your Subject!”: The Administration and Management of Strangers and Foreigners in Ugarit**

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The Late Bronze Age city of Ugarit has long been identified as a location of ancient cosmopolitanism, where different people from around the eastern Mediterranean and Near East met and interacted. Given the longstanding excavations of the site, the voluminous textual record that has been recovered, and the long history of scholarship, the site offers a unique opportunity to explore the dynamics of “foreignness” in a Late Bronze Age context where the presence of foreigners was, if not normative, expected. Using insights from critical theory derived from the discipline of Geography, this paper explores how, in Engin Isin’s terms, the city is not where difference is found but rather where difference is made (labeled and reified), especially through what Julie Young has called “spatial practices and technologies of governance.” Through the examination of locations of every day encounters, this paper shall explore how foreigners are recognized as such, how their relations with non-foreigners are managed (explicitly and implicitly), how different scales of self and otherness are created and maintained, how these constructed identities are naturalized, and what modalities emerge or are imposed to mediate these relationships. Rather than seeking to identify a monolithic approach to foreignness, by examining different examples of micropublic interactions (such as in moments of palatial administration), this paper seeks to untangle some of the multi-scalar and multi-semiotic aspects of foreignness at Ugarit.

## **Are You an Egyptian? Are You a Stranger?**

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Egypt and the Near East. Interaction between these two regions is attested from the earliest days when the first political centres started to develop in both parts of the ancient world. For this period, our information on Egyptians living “abroad” is very limited. We can hardly hope to obtain a complete picture of both the daily life of an individual and the foreign policy of the Egyptian rulers based on the evidence we currently have at our disposal. The interpretation of the Egyptian policy towards the Near Eastern polities and their peoples is hence largely dependent on the interpretation of the character of the Egyptian (or Egyptianizing) objects discovered in Near Eastern sites. The same holds true for the Near Eastern perspective as well. During the third millennium BCE, the picture provided by the limited number and much formalized character of the Egyptian written evidence is often supplemented by iconographic and archaeological sources. Moreover, there are practically no ancient Near Eastern records mentioning Egyptians living “abroad”.

It is only in the second half of the second millennium BCE, when the written evidence – both Egyptian and non-Egyptian – becomes sufficient to provide a more detailed account on the Egyptians living “outside the Egyptian borders”. In my talk I will address the question of evidence of Egyptians living in the Near East. The Egyptian sources provide us only with one part of the story – the Egyptian one. But I will rather pay attention to the evidence provided by Near Eastern written documents, mentioning Egypt and especially Egyptians, being part of local communities. This evidence will be set against the perspective provided by official sources, preserved on both sides.



## Abstracts





**Made by whom? Egyptian ceramic forms in the south Levant**

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Although Syro-Palestinian vessels or their imitations, found in various contexts from the Fourth and early Third Millennium Egypt, are well-known and studied, their opposite Early Bronze I and II counterparts – Egyptian ceramic forms found in the south Levant – are much less explored. Both older and recent archaeological excavations (*e.g.* in En Besor, Tell es-Sakan, Tell Lod, Tell Ma' haz, Taur Ichbein, Atlit, Nahal Tillah, Afridar, Lahav, Halif terrace, etc.) have yielded a variety of undoubtedly Egyptian-inspired vessels, predominantly bread forms, but also tubular jars, bell-shaped bowls, etc. The main aim of this poster is to compare these findings with the available parallels in Egyptian ceramic production of the same period and to explore the diverse interpretations; namely, the possible presence of Egyptian potters abroad versus a simple inspiration by a foreign ceramic production. Unlike the Syro-Palestinian ceramic imports in Egypt that were almost exclusively of elite nature and were designated for the upper social class, the Egyptian-like vessels in the south Levant were often very rough, domestic pottery pieces meant for every-day use; something that would point to either a short- or long-term Egyptian military or economic presence in this region requiring provisions of food.

## **Integrating the Immigrant: Examining the Social Implications and Interactions of Foreign Specialists Settling Abroad**

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The cultural contacts that crystallized during the early second millennium BCE resulted in the increased mobility of individuals between regions, spurring the exchange of numerous foreign practices between Egypt and western Asia. Past studies have investigated the movement of foreigners as merchants, mercenaries, and prisoners of war, as well as the diplomatic exchange of foreign specialists between international courts. However, only recently have studies begun to consider new models for exploring the social implications embedded within the process of integration, examining the crucial interaction between non-locals and their local counterparts. Investigating these interactions raises a number of critical concerns for the study of immigration in the archaeological record: At what point does a foreigner become a local? How might the local reception of and interactions with foreigners affect an immigrant's ability to contribute to the community? When does this outsider's specialized practice cease to be viewed as such and become incorporated into the local repertoire? This paper will explore the blurring of these boundaries through the continuous process of identity negotiation that occurs among individuals on the ground within local communities.

Taking a more holistic approach to this question of human interaction, technological transmission, and practice, we will present two case studies incorporating both textual and archaeological evidence of foreign and local specialists interacting in diverse settings. Situated in the regions of central Anatolia and the eastern Nile Delta, the case studies will investigate how interactions between local and immigrant practitioners worked to both maintain and transform aspects of foreign and local identities within the community. We argue that the study of the presence of non-local practices and specialists is one way to begin probing the issue of who was a foreigner, how that foreign identity and practice was maintained (or not), and how long



this distinction between foreigner and local would have persisted. By accepting that practices reflect specific decisions made by an individual that was part of a larger community, we re-focus the discussion on the immigrants themselves, considering the human networks through which knowledge transfer may have traveled and how identities may have been transformed in the process. Furthermore, we explore the social implications and significance inherent within the maintenance of these practices, and how these affect the local community as a result of interaction and integration.

## **How can we track the origins of foreign cults in Egypt: The example of Avaris/Tell el-Dab'a**

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The temples of the Western Asiatic community at Tell el-Dab'a during the late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period display Near Eastern sacred architecture. In a comparative study, it became more and more apparent that temple types can be gender related. Their typology has a specific meaning leading not only to a rough identification of the divinities to whom the temples belong. The details in architecture from which only the basic plans are preserved give also a hint about the origin of the cults involved in form of cluster charts. The combination of foreign temple types is an additional source of information. The study seems to show that the spiritual homeland of the carriers of the Hyksos rule in Egypt and their predecessors of the 14th Dynasty is situated northeast of the upper Euphrates river, the region in which since the 3rd millennium the Hurrians lived. Also very specific burial customs show into the same direction.

**About “egyptianity” and “foreignness” in literary texts. A context-sensitive lexical study.**

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Many interesting studies have already been published about the relations between Egypt and its neighbours. We have become used to consider foreigners' place in literature through the filter of royal epigraphic texts, where narratives of military campaigns, and royal decrees play a prominent role. Data coming from texts of everyday life, dealing with practical, economical or juridical matters also shed an interesting light upon this issue. Iconography and archaeology have of course also been taken into account. Foreigners in literary texts have also been discussed among others. I once more would like to return to this question, through a lexical study. I here propose to examine literary texts from the New Kingdom, including wisdom texts and miscellanies. I will present a context-sensitive lexical analysis of qualifiers and expressions related to foreigners, including the distribution of the classifiers. In so doing, I will situate the respective places of Asiatics, Nubians and Libyans on the Egyptian's mental map and I will retrace the chronological evolution of these connections. Indeed, if the core corpus of the study will be the New Kingdom texts, I will also take into account the diachronic perspective. Besides contributing to the identification of common stereotypes about foreigners that found their way into literary texts, this study focuses on the evolutionary process of both concepts of “egyptianity” and “foreignness”, and on the economy of the continuum they bind. The final aim will thus be to provide new elements in light of a corpus-based study in order to solve – at least partially – the dichotomy between ongoing stereotypes and actual individuals.

## **The relations between Upper and Lower Egypt in the 4th Millennium BC. A view from Tell el-Farkha**

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The importance of Tell el-Farkha is very clear from the beginning. A great Lower Egyptian culture complex, contemporary with Naqada IIB-IIC, was erected on the Central Kom. Items found inside confirmed both the significant role played by the Lower Egyptian elite and their relationship with the Southern Levant and Upper Egypt. In Naqada IID1 first Upper Egyptian settlers arrived to Tell el-Farkha, they built the monumental edifice on the Western Kom and huge storerooms on the Central one. These buildings and all the settlement was destroyed (Naqada IIIA1) by the next group of Southerners, probably connected with another political centre. The dominant issue could be the control over trade routes leading to the Levant. The newcomers were the constructors of the oldest Egyptian mastaba and founders of the administrative-cultic centre. A few smaller mastaba-graves, from the first part of Naqada IIIB, were also uncovered. In the middle of Naqada IIIB few graves were build on top of walls separating the monumental mastaba from the rest of settlement. In the same time golden figurines (discovered few years ago) were hidden. All these changes are connected with the reign of Iry-Hor from Dynasty 0. It seems possible, that the third group of Naqadians, appeared at Tell el-Farkha, but they could be regarded as continuators of the predecessors. Mastaba-graves were still used and the pottery and other artefacts did not change. They rebuilt and still used the monumental storage from the Central Kom, as well as administrative-cultic centre. The period between Naqada IIIA and middle of IIIB seems to be the time of competition between the most influential Naqadian protokindoms. In the middle of the First Dynasty western part of Tell el-Farkha was abandoned. It seem that town changed its role: from the capital of a part of the Eastern Delta to a provincial settlement of only economic significance. At the same time, changes can be seen at the Tell el-Farkha cemetery. Some of the Protodynastic mastabas were cut by other burials. It could be proof that new settlers came in the second part of the First Dynasty.

**Not so vile? Rhetoric and reality in Egyptian-Levantine relationships in Sinai in the Old and Middle Kingdoms**

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Egyptian official text and image traditionally described and presented the peoples of the southern Levant using specific rhetoric, hyperbolic language, and canonized visual representation designed to highlight the concept of “Asiatic” subjugation to Egyptian sovereignty. However, while the majority of public monuments and official accounts frequently provided this formal rhetoric, excoriating the “vile Asiatic” in a manner consistent with the Egyptian worldview, there is also evidence that suggests that the reality of Egyptian relationships with southern Levantine peoples did not always conform to the official policy of bellicosity and disdain, and further, that the nature of this relationship changed over time in accordance with contemporary geopolitical circumstances. Evidence indicates that the more specific the interaction and/or contact with “Asiatics,” the further the language and presentation moved from the official rhetoric of “vileness,” providing a range of perception of southern Levantine peoples that may more accurately reflect the complexity and reality of Egyptian-Levantine relationships and interactions. Specifically, the inscriptions found in Sinai dating to the Old and Middle Kingdoms that provide both textual and visual description of foreigners from the southern Levant reveal significant differences in the view and treatment of “Asiatics” in each period that can be linked with changes in southern Levantine developments. Examination of these inscriptions from both Old and Middle Kingdom, together with analysis of contemporary developments in the Bronze Age southern Levant, provides further insight into the interconnections between these regions.

**Strangers in the house (?) The foreigners in Tel Erani, Israel**

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Tel Erani is a well-known archaeological site located at the northern edge of the Negev. It covers an area of about 24 ha making the site as one of the biggest EBA settlements in Southern Levant. For many years scholars believed that the mound covers the remains of the ancient city of Gat. This was a reason why Israeli scholar S. Yeivin began his excavations at the site in the mid-50's. Yeivin failed to prove that Tel Erani, at the time of his work called Tel Gat, was a Philistine city but he unearthed a large walled EB 1 settlement. Beside the locally made pottery and small finds Yeivin found a large group of objects typical for Egyptian Naqada culture. Basing on his finds Yeivine proposed a theory saying that Egyptian king Narmer captured the Tel Erani but was later expelled by locals. Unfortunately Yeivin never fully published his works leaving a space for different interpretations.

Trying to understand the nature of Egyptian-Near Eastern relations, in 2013, almost 60 years after first excavations of the Tel Erani a Joined Polish-Israeli Team begun its works at the site, reopening Yeivin's trenches. Our work led to the discovery of Egyptian trading post located in the Southern Levantine town where a small society of foreigners were living side by side with local community.

During our presentation we will discuss the results of the recent excavations conducted by Jagiellonian University and Ben Gurion University at Tel Erani, showing the evidences how foreigners were co-existing at the site with local community and how it is reflected in archeological material.

## **When in Elam Do as the Elamites. How the Adaptation of Mesopotamian Cultural Traits Helped Shape the Elamite Identity**

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Of old, a patchwork of different peoples and cultures existed within the territory of Western Iran, subjected to political and military dominance and/or influence from neighbouring Mesopotamia. As a result of a continuous interaction and balancing between foreign (Mesopotamian) and local (Elamite) traditions, values and influences in political, legal, economic and administrative matters, this basic duality of cultures evolved throughout the 2nd millennium BCE, to resolve only at the very end of this millennium into a unilingual Elamite society. This interaction between Elamite and Mesopotamian cultures and its eventual resolution is a fascinating evolution that can be observed at the level of families, households and individuals, both in a private and an institutional context, as is shown by the documentary texts found in Susa, Haft Tepe, Tall-i Malyan and Chogha Gavaneh.

In this paper, I will focus on the legal and administrative customs and practices as revealed in the legal and administrative formulas used in the Susa contracts. Notwithstanding the fact that the Mesopotamian influence is pervasive in Western Iranian bureaucracy and administration from the dawn of the 2nd millennium BCE onwards, which is reflected, amongst other things, in the language used for bureaucratic and administrative purposes, viz. Akkadian, the legal and administrative formulas used in the contracts throughout the whole 2nd millennium BCE seem to be for a great part typically local. Some, although written in Akkadian, reflect local legal practices, such as the river-ordeal and the *esip tabal* practice in the lease contracts, which are found in Mesopotamia only in the Laws of Hammurabi, or the practice of driving in the *sikkatu* mentioned in the loans, sales and leases. Others include Elamite expressions, such as the still enigmatic *kiden* of Inšušinak mentioned in the penalty clauses, the *mesû* and *hašlu* lawsuits, and various expressions with *sukki(r)*, the Elamite word for king.

It is clear that this is neither just a question of a simple transfer of formulas nor a comparison of two legal systems. The use of Elamite phrases and expressions as well as Akkadian phrases and formulations only used in texts from Iran (but not in texts from Mesopotamia) proves we are dealing with a bilingual and bicultural society. Both the adoption and adaptation of the transmitted Akkadian formulas and the introduction of Elamite expressions—no doubt used to fill the gap not covered by the Mesopotamian ones—will be analyzed in order to determine their precise use and meaning in a new bilingual and bicultural legal and administrative Susian context.

One of the key questions in this context is who or what is the “foreigner” or “other”? Are we dealing with a primarily Akkadian (or Akkadianized but in se foreign) society with Elamite (local) elements or a primarily Elamite (albeit Akkadianized but in se local) society with Akkadian elements?



## **Hatti and the Outside World**

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Textual and archaeological evidence pertaining to the Late Bronze Age Hittite Empire (c. 1650–250 BCE) attest to continuous contact between the Hittite homeland (“the Land of Hatti”) and the lands beyond. Numerous studies have focused on the nature and intensity of Hatti’s contacts with the outside world, the degree of “foreign” influence on “Hittite” culture, and to a lesser extent, on the attitudes towards foreigners in Hatti. These studies have produced contrasting results. In secondary literature, Late Bronze Age Anatolia has often been described as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic periphery receptive to influences from the outside, particularly from Syria and Mesopotamia. The Hittite Empire has been credited with an openness and tolerance towards foreigners and foreign cultures seemingly uncharacteristic of its counterparts in the ancient Near East. However, despite this prevailing view of Hittite attitudes towards foreigners, there is also a tendency in some studies to see a sharp distinction between Hittite and foreign (or between civilized and barbarian), which is not borne out by the available textual evidence. Moreover, archaeological investigations have revealed that the material traces of Hatti’s dealings with the outside world have been relatively scarce on the ground.

The present paper aims to extract from the Hittite sources their writers’ perception and representations of their “homeland” and their characterizations of “foreignness.” The discussion will bring to the fore methodological and empirical challenges in studying “foreignness” in Hittite society, concentrating on the discrepancy between the textual and archaeological evidence, the difficulties in unraveling native notions of identity, and the use of the term “Hittite” in reference to cultural traits or groups of people.

## **A Sumerian Stronghold. Does the temple in Old Babylonian Nippur welcome foreigners?**

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In this paper, we will investigate if and how the temple of Nippur, an allegedly very conservative institution allows foreigners in its midst, as priests or other personnel, and/or as devotees. Within the group of foreigners, we look at outsiders from other cities (including Larsa and Babylon, the respective political capitals), as well as from outside Babylonia.

Before addressing these questions, we must first establish if and how we can identify these foreigners, and formulate the restrictions of our inquiry accordingly. The linguistic character of the personal names does not necessarily correspond to the identity of the individual and the origin of an individual is not systematically indicated. And of course, the written documentation does not cover all the aspects of the temple activities. Having acknowledged these limitations, we can look for trends and situate these against the background of Babylonian traditions. Nippur has never acquired political independence under the rule of a local king. However, it seems to own considerable political power because of its position as the religious capital, being the city where Enlil has his temple, the Ekur. In other cities, children of the king installed as high priest(ess): does this happen in Nippur? How else does the king execute his influence in Nippur? Do we see outsiders under the clergy and the devotees in the temple administration? And can we identify individuals from outside Babylonia in the temple administration? In the archives from Dur-Abi-ešuh, Kassite soldiers appear, but how do they relate to Ekur, which is managed in Dur-Abi-ešuh from Abi-ešuh's reign onwards?

## **Egyptians as foreigners in the Western Desert during the Early Dynastic period.**

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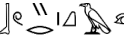
The Egyptians representation of foreigners can be traced to the earliest period of pharaonic history. During the Early Bronze Age/Dynasty One, there was an active intent to separate those groups or regions who did not fall within the developing ideological and iconographic ideals promulgated by the Egyptian elite. In contrast to this, with the expansion of Egyptian interests away from the Nile Valley into the neighbouring desert regions, the evidence for the Egyptians as foreigners in these geographical areas is lacking. This paper will present evidence to convey that, during the Early Dynastic period, the Egyptians were foreigners in the Egyptian Western Desert. This specific case study focusses on an array of archaeological, iconographic, and ideological evidence which indicates that prior to Dynasty Three the expanding Egyptian interest into this region meant that though they did not present themselves as foreign, even though they were conducting activity in a geographical area that was not yet part of the Egyptian state.

Interactions with the indigenous peoples of the Western Desert, especially in Dakhleh Oasis, conveys the reliance the Egyptians had on others as foreigners in a non-Egyptian region. These interactions seem to have been generally symbiotic, contrasting Egyptian interactions within other regions close to the Nile Valley, such as the Sinai. As non-natives of the Western Desert, the foreignness exhibited by the Egyptians belies the true nature of their initial presence in this region, and can be linked to the articulation of the dominant ideological conventions and iconographic expressions promulgated by royalty and the elite during the Early Dynastic period.

## How Language Illustrates Cultural Change: Semitic Loanwords in the Second Intermediate Period and New Kingdom Egypt

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Foreigners appear in Egypt in a multitude of contact scenarios during the second millennium BCE. Those contacts left various footprints, one of them being the extensive evidence of foreign lexical items that appear in texts of the period. Loanwords surface in a wide variety of texts and indicate diverse cultural transfers. Some borrowings attest to material commodities and show the introduction of realia into the Egyptian lexicon, some to social roles and others to more abstract properties, such as the word  (Semitic \*brq) “to shine/sparkle” describing the king’s sparkling eyes in a praise. Lists of Ancient Egyptian loanwords have been compiled and their etymologies traced and debated. However, all attestations are yet to be recorded in their context systematically with their orthographical varieties. In the framework of the research project “*Classifying the Other: The Classification of Semitic Loanwords in the Egyptian Script during the New Kingdom*,” (ISF grant 735/17, PI Prof. Orly Goldwasser), attestations of loanwords in Egyptian texts are collected and analyzed thoroughly for their linguistic and metalinguistic context. The “story” of each loanword is told both by examining its integration into the Egyptian lexicon, script, and morpho-syntax, and by studying its metadata. The digitization of the loanword corpus is done by using *iClassifier* (©Goldwasser/Harel/Nikolaev), a platform created for systematic analysis of classifiers in Egyptian. Based on newly digitized data, the acculturated lexicon of Second Intermediate Period and Early New Kingdom Egypt will be analyzed so to study how the written repertoire illustrates cultural change. Survey of institutional and non-institutional writing (e.g. school environment and royal administration vs. private texts) introducing, promoting and sometime canonizing language change will be conducted. Examples will demonstrate the sociolinguistic distribution of the foreign lexicon so to examine possible language contact scenarios, such as bilingualism or direct/indirect contacts with foreign populations. The data is to be shared online in “BRT- *A digital lexicon of Semitic loanwords in Egyptian*.”

## **Representations of Foreigners in the Battle Reliefs of King Ahmose at Abydos**

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A series of representations of foreigners of Western Asian origin feature prominently among the fragments of limestone raised relief which have been excavated to date in the temples at the base of the pyramid of Ahmose at southern Abydos. Twenty-five years after the first discovery of this battle narrative featuring horse and chariot warfare, a siege, and what may be identified as ships of war, it is important to re-evaluate the identification of a number of small fragments most likely depicting northern enemies. The hairstyles, beards, clothing, weapons and armor shown on some of the few fragments that may be recognized as representing “Asiatics” require a closer look, especially in comparison to known mid- and later 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty representations of warfare, such as the monumental block from Deir el-Bahri now in the Metropolitan Museum (MMA 13.180.21), the fragments from the Thutmose II/III memorial temple at Thebes published by Bruyère, and the decorated chariot body of Thutmose IV in Cairo.

## **Archaeological correlates of Assyrian presence in Anatolia in the Middle Bronze Age**

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The extent to which ‘foreigners’ can be detected in the archaeological record has been a long-standing question. The material correlates of foreign vs. native identity – when ‘identity’ itself is riddled with complexities – are often elusive and highly prone to misinterpretation. This paper will situate the seemingly extraordinary case of Kültepe-Kanesh within the wider context of such debates by questioning the often-reiterated notion that generations of Assyrian expatriates living at the site left no trace in the archaeological record outside of cuneiform documents. It will focus specifically on how pottery has featured as the principal category in shaping narratives of an all-Anatolian material culture for Kanesh, and consider why the published repertoire of Kültepe ceramics require a drastic reconsideration. How secure a proxy does Kültepe’s pottery really constitute for assessing foreign (in)visibility?

## **The Egyptian Presence in the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age: A Minimalist View**

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The southern and central Levant (Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon) during the Late Bronze Age is often described as being under complete Egyptian hegemony with only a few moments when Egyptian control waned, such as during the Amarna period. This somewhat simplistic model envisages a territory with defined borders that was under Egyptian domination. A critical analysis shows that for the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, very little evidence supports the notion of Egyptian imperial control or actual presence in the region. Even for the Thutmosid period, archaeological evidence that would allow reconstructing Egyptian presence in the region is ambivalent. It is only from the Ramesside time onwards that archaeology unequivocally speaks for physical presence of Egyptians in the southern Levant. Contrary to the common perception that the entire region fell under Egyptian domination soon after the end of the Second Intermediate Period, actual Egyptian presence can only be substantiated for a few strategically located sites. This paper critically examines the evidence for Egyptian hegemony in the southern Levant, both from an archaeological and a textual point of view. It also explores to what extent we can reconstruct actual physical presence of people with an Egyptians identity in the region.

## **An Egyptian's footprint: Members of the Egyptian administration and military in LB I Southern Levant**

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Egyptian soldiers and officials brought objects into the Southern Levant while they were on duty abroad. Presumably, some of these objects were supposed to stay in the region, whereas others remained there for multiple random reasons there. But, these two groups of people were not the only ones exporting items from Egypt into the Southern Levant, because non-Egyptians and Egyptians without an affiliation to the king could do it as well. Thus, how is it possible to distinguish objects imported by members of Egyptian institutions from Egyptian items of different origin and can this distinction be made at all?

Theories used in anthropological studies offer a vehicle to solve the question about the possible affiliation of an object's importer. The concept of object itinerary reconstructs an ideal itinerary of items tied to their contacts with humans and affordance deals with the variety of options to use an object, which are determined by the physical properties of an object. Finally, cultural appropriation describes processes that objects which are alien to their cultural context are exposed to. A combination of all three concepts represents a useful approach to better interpret foreign items that were brought by a specific group of people to a region with another cultural background.

A considerable number of research projects examined the involvement of the Egyptian state in LB I Southern Levant (18th dynasty until the Amarna Period). For a long time, the Egyptological perspective was highly influenced by contemporary and later Egyptian written sources as biographies, annals, topographical list and so on. This tendency justifies looking at the evidence, again. To do so, this writer established a method by joining the three theories mentioned which endeavors to fulfill two requirements. First, the influence of written sources shall be minimized within the analysis of the archaeological evidence, because merging these from the beginning would probably cause an interpretive bias of evidence. Nevertheless, a combination of philological



and archaeological results at a later point is desirable to strengthen certain research outcomes or to reconsider those. Second, this method allows for a new perspective on material that has already been analyzed previously. It will be applied Egyptian material in LB I contexts in order to trace Egyptian soldiers and officials in the Southern Levant during that period.

Furthermore, this paper will provide prospects on potential of studies derived from the theoretical concepts of cultural appropriation and affordance by considering the interactions between Egyptians and southern Levantines, the handling of foreign objects and the perception of Egyptian objects.

**“If it is your intention that a sincere friendship exist, send much gold!” - Mapping and contextualizing metal related (loan)words in the Bronze Age Levant.**

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Metals and related items and skills have been crucial commodities in the Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean trades and interactions during the whole Bronze Age, as attested by both archaeological and in written sources. It is hardly a chance that Uluburun shipwreck’s cargo consisted mostly of copper and tin ingots, while it has long been suggested that words like Sumerian *tabira* referred to itinerant metalworkers, a phenomenon also attested in other regions and periods. It is therefore not surprising to observe that, in Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean, words for and related with metals have often foreign origins and can appear as loanwords across various languages over large distances. Examples like Gr. *khṛṛsōs* = “gold” ~ Hitt. *ḫarašu* = “bronze” ~ Akk. *ḫurāšu* = “gold” ~ Ugr. *ḫurāšu* = “gold” ~ Hbr. *ḫāruṣ* = “gold” or the possible relation between Proto-Indo-European *\*r(e)udh* = “copper” ~ Sumerian *URUDU* = “copper” are well known. Others, like the word(s) for “tin” in Egyptian, instead, have attracted much less attention, if any at all.

Moreover, and more important, these words have been analysed usually in isolation, and often just as anecdotal evidence, while there has been no attempt to combine together the information they provide into a coherent linguistic and socio-historical picture encompassing the whole region.

My paper aims at filling this gap, by analysing and contextualizing words for metals and selected related terms in multiple Near Eastern languages. First, I will reassess the current literature on such terms, integrating it with new evidence and combining the data into a general regional, cross-linguistic frame. My focus will be primarily on the languages of the Bronze Age, although later attestations will also be considered when the relevant words can be argued to have a Bronze Age origin. Then I will explore the structure of the resulting linguistic network, trying to identify donor and recipient

languages, patterns of diffusion and temporal frames. Finally, I will discuss these data in relation with archaeological evidence and historical sources, in order to identify the socio-historical context, and hopefully at least some of the socio-historical vectors, behind the diffusion of these words. The final goal of the presentation will be to show that linguistics, and loanwords in particular, can be a precious additional source in the study of the commercial and socio-cultural networks connecting the whole area, and along which “foreign” commodities, items, skills, people and words were exchanged.

## **Deportation Policies and Foreigners in Late Bronze Age Egypt**

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Deportation—as forced migration in general—has been an understudied topic in Egyptology. While (mass) deportations have been well-researched in connection with the Neo-Assyrian Empire, comprehensive studies into this matter are lacking for ancient Egypt. Based on my doctoral research on deportations in Egyptian pharaonic history, I will discuss some results related to Egyptian Late Bronze Age deportation policies. At the centre of the talk will be evidence from Egypt's imperial age, the so-called New Kingdom (c. 1550–1069 BCE). As such, the New Kingdom presents a great opportunity to investigate the political economy of deportations. We can trace the movement of the deportees, reconstruct why they were deported in the first place and, in some instances, see what subsequently happened to them upon their arrival in Egypt. The main source of deportees, as captives, seems to have been war, while inter-state treaties and vassal obligations appear as another means to acquire people from abroad. For instance, the bigger part seems to have been utilized as labourers in the Egyptian economy, most prominently in production facilities of temples in both Egypt and occupied Nubia, whereas some entered the service of high-ranking officials as domestic servants. As a result of Egyptian imperialism there was an extensive movement of people from different origins throughout the Egyptian, Nubian and Levantine regions which. By correlating the information conveyed by the source material with demographic and economic data, it is possible to approach an assessment of the economic impact of Egyptian deportation policies, especially over the *longue durée* and in comparison with other periods of Egyptian history. Deportation seems to have been an essential part of New Kingdom policies and possibly even contributed to Egypt's rise as a regional great power. In this context, a brief discussion of the ideological function of the foreigner in the Egyptian Late Bronze Age economy is also included.

## **Nubian troops and musicians in Egyptian military of the New Kingdom: A Reappraisal**

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The aim of this paper is to re-evaluate the roles of Nubians of various ranks in Egyptian army of the New Kingdom by analyzing written, visual and archaeological attestations. During the New Kingdom there is a significant increase of the number of foreigners in Egyptian military. Soldiers from the Mediterranean, Syria-Palestine and Nubia are well attested in written and visual sources and Nubian troops are known to have been part of the Egyptian military since the Old Kingdom. Nubian soldiers are depicted as part of the Egyptian army on both New Kingdom temple reliefs and on the walls of private tombs and request for Nubian troops from Meluhha and Kaši is attested in 8 Amarna letters (EA 70, 95, 108, 112, 117, 127, 132 and 133). Military ranks such as *hry pḏt n K3š*, *hry pḏt Nḥsyw*, *hry Nḥsyw* and *hry Nḥsyw n k3 T3-sty* are also well attested and count around 20 bearers (18th to 20th dynasty). These men were so far not discussed regarding their identity. Furthermore, men named P3-nḥsy “Southerner/Nubian”, with other military titles, are also attested (*mr mšc*, *mr mšc wr*, *t3y sryt n s3 ḥk3 Jwnw*, *ḥ3wty n pḏt n pr-c3*, *sš nswt n p3 mšc*, *sš nfrw n nb t3wy*, *hry jḥw*, *hry ktḥn*). Egyptian army during the New Kingdom is also followed by Nubian drummers, as attested on temple reliefs and on walls of the private tombs. It will be argued that doubts expressed regarding the military skills of the Nubians are not justified when all the available data is taken into account.

**Ethnic enclaves: A modern understanding of how migratory groups preserve ethnic identity as a potential explanation for the Libyans' retention of a non-Egyptian identity in the late New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period.**

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It is increasingly accepted that the Libyans who entered Egypt during the late New Kingdom and who rose to power during the Third Intermediate Period retained, at the very least, some of their original non-Egyptian ethnic identity. Despite the evidence for this, as well as that revealing the presence of foreigners generally within the Egyptian population across the dynastic era, there has been no explanation of the mechanisms by which the Libyans would have been able to retain this non-Egyptian identity. Such a lack of explanation is significant given the hostility that Egyptian culture showed towards other cultures and its status as the dominant culture within Egypt. It is particularly important given that the arrival of many of the Libyans in Egypt is believed to have been as prisoners-of-war following the various invasions of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Dynasties, who were supposedly 'indoctrinated' in Egyptian culture according to the inscriptions recording the Libyans' capture. This paper will address this gap through reference to a modern sociological explanation for how migrants can retain their ethnic identities after settling within an area with a very dominant culture, 'ethnic enclaves'. Ethnic enclaves are a modern explanation for the ways in which migrants into areas where there is an existing dominant culture seek to gather together and as a result often preserve and even enhance their minority identity. Using the mechanism of 'ethnic enclaves' this paper will seek, therefore, to provide some explanation for the Libyans' retention of a distinctly non-Egyptian identity after their arrival into Egypt.

## **The metaphorization of foreign rulers as allies or enemies in the Hittite diplomatic texts**

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It is well known that the Hittite kings, from the reign of Šuppiluliuma I onwards, had an efficient diplomatic exchange with rules of other Countries. In the diplomatic texts (i.e. treaties, international decrees and verdicts, and international correspondence), issued to maintain the diplomatic dialogue, these foreign rules are conceptualized, under different circumstances, as allies or as enemies. These concepts are often expressed by metaphors.

Metaphor is not here intended traditionally as figure of speech but, according to the so-called Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (see *Metaphors we live by*, 1980), as the result of a cognitive process. Metaphor is thus “pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (Lakoff – Johnson 1980, 3). Two are the outcomes of this theory that are mostly important for the study of the Hittite documents: the first is that metaphors are not only features of literary works but are present at every level of the language (oral or written), therefore it is possible to find them in every textual genre.

In this paper, I will present the metaphorical expressions used to convey the concept of foreigners as allies or enemies, in particular I will try to answer the following questions:

- how are foreign rulers metaphorized as allies or enemies?
- are different metaphorical expressions employed in different texts?
- are different metaphorical expressions used according to the dating and/or the language of the texts?

I also intend to show that the metaphorization of the ideas of alliance and enmity played a specific role in diplomacy as well as in the domestic policy of the Hittite kings.

## **Foreign Names or Names of Foreigners: The Northern Presence in the Southern Levant in the 2nd Millennium BCE**

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The lecture deals with the personal names of northern origin, mainly Hurrian and Indo-Aryan, attested in the southern Levant around the mid-2nd millennium BCE, and it poses the question of whether such names testify to a northern presence in the region.

On the one hand, Egyptian and locally-found documents, mostly dating to the 15th – mid 14th centuries, reveal a significant number of northern names, recorded among the populace and the ruling class as well. On the other hand, some of these anthroponyms have West-Semitic, namely, local patronymics. Considering that the northern names under discussion were common in areas under the domination of Mittanni, relevant to this inquiry are the large number of Mittannian-style cylinder seals, and, although on much restricted scale, other artifacts of northern origins, primarily clay figurines, which have also been found in the region in the same period, i.e. the early Late Bronze Age. The distinctive style and designs, which exhibit indigenous features, displayed by many of the Mittannian seals and by some figurines, as well as the provenance tests conducted on the latter, strongly argue for their local production. The issue at stake here, then, is whether the written and material evidence from the southern Levant reflects the presence of actual northerners, or a contemporary local Zeitgeist, which seems to have favored and even emphasized northern, perhaps Mittannian cultural traits during the early stages of the Egyptian dominance in the southern Levant.



## **Assessing Foreignness and Politics in the Late Bronze Age Levant**

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This paper addresses the modes of political sociability in the Late Bronze Age Levant, focusing in particular on the political agency of foreigners in their different historical and social manifestations (i.e., *ḫabiru*, messengers/ambassadors, merchants) and the socio-political spheres they interacted with in local society. Sociologically speaking, insiders and outsiders to social systems and communities operate through varied and situational codes of sociability, based on and expressed by, for instance, the circumstance of belonging to a kinship group or to a concrete political body or not, which creates positive situations of assistance and reciprocity or negative situations of partial or full rejection and opposition (and the negotiated possibilities in-between these poles). During the Late Bronze Age, instances of hospitality, alliance and subordination were among the key scenarios for dealing positively with and understanding outsiders, as an integral part of the shared codes of political sociability in the East Mediterranean and in Southwest Asia of the period. In the present communication, these practices and situations are analyzed in the contemporary textual evidence (i.e., letters from El Amarna, Ugarit, etc.) from the perspective of social anthropology and sociology with the aim of contrasting the theoretical definitions of hospitality, alliance and subordination with those potentially expressed in the textual evidence from the Late Bronze Age.

**“...Equipped with all their weapons and given instructions for battle”: Foreign Mercenary Activity in Bronze Age Egypt.**

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Perpetual military campaigns and power struggles between the major Near Eastern Empires dominated historical activity during the Bronze Age. Various conflicts, including war between the Egyptians and the Hittites, combating invading outsider groups, and the military campaigns for control over the Levant, reveal that manpower was undoubtedly a necessity. The foundation for mercenary employment begins in this tumultuous atmosphere. The Near Eastern empires sought to hire contingents from the outside peripheries of organised society. In particular, the Egyptian pharaohs were well known for incorporating foreign groups, such as the Shardana, Medjay, and the Nubians into their armies.

The essential questions the poster addresses are the following; what specific roles did foreigners have within the structure of the Near Eastern armies? When are they considered enemies of the state and when are they allies? And lastly, how should a mercenary ultimately be defined in this time frame? The methodologies include contextualising the sources that refer to outside military contingents in the Egyptian armies, in order to distinguish if and when such groups should be considered mercenaries. The sources are then compared with the iconographic representations of foreigners, as well as the material record that suggests non-Egyptian practices took place in military contexts.

This poster addresses one of the fundamental ways in which foreigners and organised society interacted during the Bronze Age. It illuminates how foreigners were perceived, as well as how they were used for military gains. The records of conflict exemplify the first instances of when armies relied on foreign hires, a phenomenon that then resonated throughout antiquity.

## **The Foreigners on the Mound: Egyptian Presence at Tel Lachish during the Late Bronze Age**

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Written sources of the Late Bronze Age, such as the el-Amarna texts report a sequence of three rulers at Lachish, depicting the city as a flourishing regional centre at that time, intimately connected with the Egyptian pharaoh. However, the precise nature of the Egyptian presence of the site remains subject to debate, with written evidence and archaeological remains only partly agreeing with each other. This paper examines the archaeological evidence of Egyptian presence at the site of Tel Lachish. Different lines of evidence can be considered reflecting Egyptian population at the site, including architectural evidence such as the two temples with Egyptian influences (Fosse Temple and Acropolis Temple), burials practices (Anthropomorphic coffins), the ceramic assemblage and as well as small finds such as jewellery and scarabs. The nature of the assemblages will be compared to local material culture and cultural practice, reconstructing possible modes of Egyptian presence at the site, the possible interaction with the local population and diachronic development of the city of Lachish. A detailed chronological frame sets this development in relation to the development of political relations between Egypt and the southern Levant, highlighting circular arguments which have dominated the past research at the site. Further, aims and future excavation strategies of the Austro-Israeli Expedition at Tel Lachish will be outlined, discussing the potential of the site for future research.

**“A foreign plague, not of the flesh of the city Aššur:” Šamši-Adad I as a foreign king and his visual strategy of legitimization and unification**

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This paper examines the seals belonging to Šamši-Adad within their archaeological, historical, and iconographic context, aiming to understand how Šamši-Adad employed seal imagery and inscription as tools of political legitimization as a foreign king.

As an Amorite, Šamši-Adad was perceived as a usurper and illegitimate ruler even in antiquity. On a stone tablet from Aššur, Puzur-Sin, who claims to have gained the throne of Aššur by deposing a successor of Šamši-Adad, scornfully emphasizes the foreign, i.e. non-Assyrian, origin of the king and boasts about restoring a native dynasty and customs to the City. However, a close reading of the material and textual record from his 30+ year reign suggests that Šamši-Adad successfully created a politically unified entity across Upper Mesopotamia by employing a unifying ideology expressed through text and image. Rather than imposing a new and foreign structure, his administration combined the preexisting political and ideological infrastructures of the region with the cultural memory and traditions of the Akkadian, Ur III, Old Assyrian, and Old Babylonian worlds. This strategy appears to have outweighed the king’s foreignness, presenting him as a legitimate ruler and allowing him to be included in the Assyrian King List after his death.

Impressions of seals bearing Šamši-Adad’s name draw heavily from earlier traditions of seal iconography, carving style, and royal epithets. By focusing on these seals, this paper explores the role of tradition, cultural memory, and visual representation as tools for navigating foreignness, gaining political legitimization, and forging royal ideology in the early second millennium BC.

**Depicting the Others: Late Bronze Age Southern Levant's Cultural Identity and Adornment from the Egyptian View. Reality vs. Perception.**

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The Egyptian presence in Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age is to be considered as rooted and capillary on the territory. Nevertheless, by excluding some written sources as the Letters of el-Amarna, it is practically impossible to evaluate local perceptions and representations of who populated the region during this period. In fact, Southern Levant presents an extreme lack of human depictions and iconographies, thus Egyptian direct witnesses become very useful to provide a vivid picture of society and its prominent historical protagonists.

“Asiatics” depictions on reliefs, paintings and Egyptian artifacts, give us a quite punctual idea of who the Levantines were and what they wore during this period. The paper means to focus on the analysis of the personal ornaments by which “Asians” are identified and represented, as well as on the function of ethnic, cultural and identity markers these items represent in the depictions.

An iconographic and stylistic analysis will try to show the association between images and objects through material culture findings in and extra context, though bearing in mind the asymmetric vision the Egyptians had in perceiving themselves and representing other people, sometimes far more distant than it appeared.

## **The Egyptians' ambivalent relationship with foreigners: the case of the prisoners of war**

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This paper will discuss the presence, role and social function of foreigners in Egypt during the New Kingdom (about 1500-1000 BC). While foreigners in Egypt were a constant presence throughout the entire Pharaonic era, during the New Kingdom their forced installations as prisoners of war contributed in a significant way to the growth of the Egyptian population. The focus on the treatment of prisoners of war during the New Kingdom – a theme that I have investigated in my PhD dissertation – shows that the sources acknowledge and emphasize “foreignness” when it comes to enemies to be subdued, but they are silent once the foreign people are incorporated into the Egyptian society. In fact, the prisoners after the deportation were immediately transformed into workers and acquired a status not different from that of the Egyptians of humble extraction, with whom they shared their tasks of artisans, servants or masons. Some official sources, redacted for propaganda purposes, underline the importance of a rapid “egyptization” of these people, obtained by forcing them to abandon their language and learn Egyptian, a necessary and irreversible process.

But beyond the propagandistic proclamations, what information on the presence of foreigners in Egypt are provided by the sources? How does they inform us about the relationship between

Egyptians and foreigners living in the country?

This paper will suggest that there is a stark difference in the ways in which Egyptians described the foreigner outside of Egypt and the foreigner within Egypt. In the first case, the foreigner was at best a stranger element and often an enemy to be fought, in the second case it was an integral part of the society. The “external” foreigner is represented according to precise iconographic codes and epithets that make it easily recognizable in contrast to “the Egyptian being”. Conversely, the “Egyptianized” foreigner reveals himself as such only through his name. In the Pharaonic ideology, foreigners

represented the Nine Bows against which the Egyptians fought to maintain the order of the Maat, a mission that the deity attributed to the Pharaoh. The relationship between the Egyptians and these foreigners was thus regulated by a dualism that scholar Loprieno has synthesized using two antithetical concepts: topos and mimesis. The topos considers the Egyptians as superior to “others”, while the mimesis expresses the daily practice of relations with foreigners that goes beyond the violent relations underlying the topos. Referring to this theory, and using prisoners of war as a case study, this paper will investigate Egyptians’ ambivalent relationship with foreigners.

## **The foreign trade of Tell el-Dabʿa during the Second Intermediate Period**

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The archeological site of Tell el-Dabʿa, ancient Avaris, sheltered Near Eastern populations from the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty until the end of the Second Intermediate period. These foreigners could be seen as the origin for the domination of the delta by the dynasty of the Hyksos. During the Second Millennium BC, the site owes its importance to its strategic position at the easternmost Nile branch, at a short distance of only about 30-40 km from the Mediterranean Sea. The extensive exploration of the site highlighted that Avaris was an active trading centre, as testified by the discovery of large amounts of imported goods. This presentation will explore the evolution of trade at Tell el-Dabʿa during the Second Intermediate Period through the study of the foreign ceramics discovered at the site. We will pay a specific attention to Cypriot and Levantine imports and focus on clues of interruption or disruption in trade. In addition to genuine imports, the excavations yielded an unparalleled corpus of local vases inspired by foreign wares. The specific characteristics of locally produced vessels will be addressed as well as their economic implications. These considerations are developed in the research track – “Trade and Crisis analysis” – as a part of the ERC Advanced Grant “The Enigma of the Hyksos” directed by M. Bietak (Austrian Academy of Sciences).



## **Cultural identity as research approach: conceptualizing the semantic field of 'othering'**

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What does one see/perceive in oneself and someone else? What does one let show? Why? Does this happen consciously / unconsciously, deliberately / involuntarily, due to situative / former experiences? How and why does the perception and image change or does a facet of identity become more important / visible / helpful / hindering in different spatial contexts, in different situations and in different social respectively figurational contexts? Many of these questions can never be unequivocally answered due to the nature of the preserved sources from the Eastern Mediterranean Area of Connectivity. This holds true for a much wider scope of ancient contexts, as these issues are likely to be a matter of thought, oral communication and personal notekeeping, which are less likely to enter the preserved archaeological record, whether as textual, pictorial or material source. Similarly, the expression of one's thoughts, sense of belonging etc. tends to be displayed by ephemeral or perishable means rather than durable ones: e.g., fleeting facial expression, make-up, textiles, ornaments or hairdos. Nevertheless, it seems quite certain that these issues were similarly important as nowadays, though not necessarily similar in kind. Despite the difficulties attached to their research, it is therefore indispensable to ask how they might be tackled. This circumscribes concisely the incentive for my current research project at the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires at Helsinki University: Its aim is to develop new perspectives and research questions for contexts of ancient cross-regional mobility and consequently shifting structures and dynamics within existing communities. To achieve this, I will instrumentalise inherently necessary anachronisms, which can also help to sensitise for similar, though perhaps less apparent anatopism or anaculturisms in modern or further historical contexts. What I refer to is the simple fact that we have to use terms from modern times and languages in order to study and understand ancient phenomena, else we cannot present and discuss them.

For the Crossroads Conference, I will take up the specific semantic field of 'othering'. The way people interact with each other based on the perception of the other as in/outgroup member is certainly not limited to cross-regional cultural issues, but may apply to various facets of one's identity. However, contexts which include persons perceived by themselves or others as 'foreigners' are more likely to provide reflexions of the ancient discourse in the preserved record. The paper will provide first insights on how research approaches developed from the modern key terms of 'foreignness', 'strangeness', 'alterity', 'othering' and 'exotism' may help to open up additional research angles for examining cross-regional and cross-cultural interaction and identity perceptions.

## **Foreign-Indigenous Interactions in the Late Bronze Age Levant: Tuthmosid Imperialism and the Origin of the Amarna Diplomatic System**

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This paper sets out to investigate foreign-indigenous interactions within 18th-Dynasty Egyptian imperialism by charting the evolution of the Egyptian political and economic engagement with the northern Levant from the first phase of territorial expansion, culminating with the reign of Tuthmosis III, to the development of the diplomatic system of the Amarna archive under Amenhotep III. More specifically, it has never been questioned how the world of the Amarna letters originated in the first place, but it is clear that this world did not exist at the time of Tuthmosis III. In fact, the geopolitical situation in the Levant in the 15th century BC was radically different from a century later: while Tuthmosis III campaigned systematically between Canaan and the Middle Euphrates region, Amenhotep III no longer had this necessity, and military activity was limited to a few, targeted operations. The analysis of textual evidence including not only the Egyptian royal inscriptions and the Amarna letters, but also contemporary archives from the Egyptian provincial center in Lebanon at Kamid el-Loz and from the Syrian kingdom of Qatna, is expected to elucidate how 18th-Dynasty Egypt coerced and/or negotiated with the indigenous realities in order to attain its own political and economic interests, and at the same time maintain regional stability. The working hypothesis is that the Amarna diplomatic system originated as a geo-political solution to the combination of the foreign imperial forces of the time—mainly Egypt, Mittani, and Hatti—and the indigenous, political and economic dynamics of the northern Levant.

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