

PREFACE BY THE EDITORS

The idea to produce the present volume was born in June of the year 2000. The research schedule of the special research programme SCIEM 2000 (The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 2nd Millennium BC) included from the beginning the archaeology of the Bronze Age in the Lebanon. After years of stagnation due to civil war, some remarkable archaeological enterprises and initiatives have developed over the last few years, which either produced totally new information and insights, or led to a reconsideration of certain well-known sites. Therefore, SCIEM 2000, in close cooperation with the former IFAPO (Institut français d'archéologie du Proche Orient)¹ organised a meeting under the title of "The Bronze Age in the Lebanon", held in the rooms of the IFAPO in Beirut.² Archaeologists working in the Lebanon itself were present, as well as others who are working at sites outside the Lebanon but whose excavations produce material somehow related to the archaeology of the Lebanon. An intensive discussion developed concerning questions of chronology, synchronisation and cultural relationship. Obviously, the term "Lebanon" could not be restricted to the borders of the modern state of that name, but rather indicates a cultural area stretching along the Levantine coast with its archaeological centres Byblos and Sidon, but also towards the north including the region of Ugarit in present-day Syria. Further inland, the site of Tel Mishrife (Qatna), also on Syrian earth, was included. The discussion centred on Bronze Age pottery in its regional variants and its spacious cross linking as an article of trade. For chronological considerations, the correlation of this material with Egyptian data is crucial. Therefore, we are presenting studies dealing with Egyptian topics in this volume as well.

The present volume offers a selection of articles that present both new data and its interpretations and a re-analysis and synthesis of already existing data. In chronological terms, this volume is dealing with the periods ranging from the Early Bronze Age through to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, but its primary focus is on the second half of the second millennium, BC (i.e., Middle Bronze Age to Middle Bronze–Late Bronze Age transition). In geographical

terms, the regions listed in the subtitle comprise the heart of the volume, but its allusion to Egypt, Lebanon and Syria notwithstanding, this volume has implications for the archaeology of the southern Levant, the Aegean, Cyprus and Anatolia, as well.

From the Lebanon, Claude Doumet-Serhal's report on the excavations at Sidon presents an account of the ground-breaking discoveries this site offers and will likely continue to contribute to the understanding of the Early and Middle Bronze Age trade in the eastern Mediterranean and its relations to Egypt and the Aegean. The paper focuses on the Middle Bronze age layers, which can be divided into five distinctive phases. Levantine Painted Ware is present in tombs of phase I and II as well as examples of Egyptian Middle Kingdom pottery. A Minoan cup of MM IIA Cretan origin, found in a phase II layer and thus possibly being amongst the earliest Minoan imports to the Levant is studied in Alexander MacGillivray's annexed article.

The next two articles deal with Byblos and may be seen as most necessary attempts to re-evaluate the rich but unsatisfactorily analysed archaeological harvest from this key site. Yasmine Makaroun Bou-Assaf offers a glimpse into her studies on the architectural traditions of Byblos in the Early Bronze Age, discussing aspects such as materials and construction units, and Jean-Paul Thalmann suggests a synchronization of this site with his own excavations at Tell Arqa. Mostly based on pottery, this study aims to rearrange the Byblos material in a sequence corresponding to the stratigraphy established at Arqa, both geographically and culturally the nearest site.

Regine Pruzsinszky's discussion of the rare Levantine assemblage of cuneiform texts from Kamid el-Loz follows, which emphasises their chronological and historical implications.

Although only tangentially related to the Lebanon, P. Fischer's article on an enigmatic coastal (from Beirut?) import to the Jordan Valley is a convincing case study on the interdisciplinary application of typology and petrography to long-distance trade.

Three contributions from the Italian team excavating at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna by Marco Iamoni, Marta

¹ IFPO (Institut français du Proche Orient) by now.

² The editors on behalf of SCIEM 2000 would like to express their highest gratitude towards Jean-Louis Huot, at the time director of the IFAPO, Jean-Paul Thalmann, Hanan

Charaf and the many other people involved in the planning, organisation and accomplishment of the meeting in Beirut and elsewhere in the Lebanon, for their hospitality, enthusiastic support and perfect organisation.

Luciani, and Daniele Morandi-Bonacossi, treat the local simple ware, decorated and imported ware of the late Middle Bronze and the early Late Bronze ages, and the Early Bronze–Middle Bronze Age transition, respectively. These offer an overview of the relative sequence of this site and its relation to the greater Near Eastern and eastern Mediterranean worlds.

Relations between the north-levantine coast and the eastern Mediterranean world (specifically Egypt) are also emphasised by Jaques Lagarce and Elisabeth Puytison-Lagarce in their article on the Egyptian and Egyptianising finds from Ras Shamra and Ras Ibn-Hani, one of Ugarit's ports.

Lastly, the team working on the finds from Tell el-Dab'a presents a number of important syntheses. David Aston's contribution offers an extensive summary of the scholarship on the so-called Tell el-Yahudiyeh pottery, which is a crucial marker for synchronizing Egypt, the Levant, and Cyprus. Considering the overwhelming amount of vessels available in Syria, the Levant and in Egypt, he argues for a new typology, which will doubtlessly be applied in his (and Bietak's) forthcoming monographic study on Tell el-Yahudieh ware.

Karin Kopetzky's presentation of the MB IIB Hyksos period pottery from Tell el-Dab'a is a long-awaited summary of this key site for this subject. Several types are treated individually, e.g. juglets, including those of the Tell el-Yahudije type, carinated bowls and Canaanite jars. Exhaustive morphological and quantitative analyses allow for detailed insights into the development and alterations of the material. It becomes apparent that the material culture of the Hyksos realm does not have such close parallels in Southern Palestine as is usually assumed, which requires a reconsideration of some of the seemingly well-established historical and geographical features of the period.

Robert Schiestl discusses the local and foreign attributes in the mortuary tradition at a MB IIA cemetery at Tell el-Dab'a, which shows a unique and surprising combination of Near Eastern features in the tomb complexes.

It has to be admitted that some of the results presented at the meeting could not be included into the

present volume for different reasons. Although Leila Badre as well as Hans Curvers and Naji Karam were present at the meeting and gave lectures, none of the exciting excavations of Bronze Age Beirut became manifest in this volume. Michel al-Maqdissi's paper on the "Plaine de Jablé au Bronze Ancien IV. Premières réflexions sur les contacts avec l'Égypte" was a welcome contribution from Syria, whereas a paper by Fadi Beaino, treating of "Mgharet-Hourriye: a cave from the Bronze Age in North Lebanon" expanded the scope of the meeting into spaleological research. Equally regrettable is the absence of Hanan Charaf's investigation of the "Cypriot imports from Middle and Late Bronze Age Arqa", and Tine Bagh's "Painted MB pottery from Egypt and the Lebanese parallels". From the Tell el-Dab'a team, Irene Forstner-Müller presented "Remarks on a scimitar found in a MBII A warrior tomb at Tell el-Dab'a" (to be published elsewhere),³ and Vera Müller undertook a comparison of the well-known *favissae* at Ebla with offering deposits at Tell el-Dab'a. Also Otto Cichotzky's presentation of the SCIEEM 2000 dendrochronological project dealing with cedar wood from the Lebanon should be mentioned.

Last but not least it must be deplored that Manfred Bietak's key-lecture on "Tell el-Dab'a/Egypt, the Aegean and the Levant" did not find its way into this book. However, the interested reader may comfort himself with several articles by the author treating aspects of the topic as e.g. in the "The Synchronisation of Civilisations" conference volumes I, II, III or the "Middle Bronze Age in the Levant" volume,⁴ all appeared in the same "Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean" series as the present volume.

The editors hope that, nevertheless, this book might be a welcome addition to the growing scholarship on interconnections and chronology in the eastern Mediterranean and that the crucial role of archaeology in and around Lebanon for our understanding of the eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age cultures might be appreciated.

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³ I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, A New Scimitar from Tell el-Dab'a, *AHL* 26/27, 207–211.

⁴ M. BIETAK (ed.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, CChEM 1, Wien 2000, 11ff; id., *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millenni-*

um B.C. II, CChEM 4, Wien 2003, 23ff.; M. BIETAK, E. CZERNY (eds.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. III*, CChEM 9, Wien 2007; M. BIETAK (ed.), *The Middle Bronze Age in the Levant*, CChEM 3, Wien 2002, 29ff.