

# DEPOSIT F (NOS. 15121–15567) IN THE OBELISK TEMPLE AT BYBLOS: ARTEFACT MOBILITY IN THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE I–II (1850–1650 BC) BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE LEVANT

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**Abstract:** *Deposit f (nos. 15121–15567), found in the sanctuary of the Obelisk Temple at Byblos, remained – unexpectedly – rather underrated in Egyptological and Near East studies, lying in a ‘no-man’s-land’ straddling between Egypt and the Levant. Notwithstanding, it includes a high number of key objects over a total of 455 artefacts for understanding Middle Bronze Age I–II (1850–1650 BC) Egyptian material culture in contact. Three main questions remain open: the dating of this deposit; the type of deposit; and the material production of its objects, whether they were manufactured in Egypt and imported or locally produced. The deposit includes also a vast array of faience figurines (294) typically manufactured in the (late) Middle Kingdom Egypt. Through a preliminary analysis, mainly based on the published material, the paper aims at providing a more comprehensive picture of the archaeological context of the deposit, including the nature of the artefacts placed in it. In particular, the corpus of faience figurines seem to have been manufactured in Egypt and imported in the Levant as a result of the frequent relations between the two areas during the Middle Bronze Age.*

**Key words:** *Byblos, Obelisk Temple, Middle Bronze Age, deposit, faience figurines, Egyptian material culture*

The so-called ‘Temple of the Obelisks’<sup>2</sup> is located in the heart of the ancient city of Byblos, southeast of a sacred well, which groups together two other major religious complexes: the Balaat-

Gebal Temple (‘The Lady of Byblos’) on the north-west and the *Enceinte Sacrée*<sup>3</sup> on the west. The ‘Temple of the Obelisks’ was erected at the dawn of the second millennium BC over the ruins of an older temple, dated to the third millennium BC, usually referred as ‘L-shaped Temple’.<sup>4</sup> The Obelisk Temple closely follows the outline of this earlier structure, partially reusing its blocks, architectural elements, and foundations. In particular, the sanctuary of the second millennium temple was erected over building XIV of the L-Temple complex. The name ‘Temple of the Obelisks’ was given by scholars to the second millennium complex in order to differentiate it from the third millennium structure and refers mainly to the exceptional number of obelisks brought to light in its courtyard. However, it should be noted that obelisks were employed in the foundations of the second millennium temple as well as in the threshold of the sanctuary; therefore it cannot be excluded that some obelisks were already used in the third millennium structure.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the designation ‘Obelisk Temple’ adopted to indicate only the MBA complex is not particularly accurate. The discovery of figurines in bronze evoking the iconography of Resheph<sup>6</sup> in the layers of this temple have led modern scholars to believe that it may have been devoted to the god of war, death, and plague, but several doubts remain over such an interpretation.<sup>7</sup> The deposit nos. 15121–15567,<sup>8</sup> found in the sanctuary of the Obelisk Temple, remained – unexpectedly – rather underrated in Egyptological studies,<sup>9</sup> lying in a ‘no-man’s-land’ between Egypt and the

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<sup>2</sup> SAGHIEH 1983, 1.

<sup>3</sup> SALA 2007, 51–58.

<sup>4</sup> JIDEJIAN 1968, 20–21.

<sup>5</sup> Other obelisks are re-used in the pavement and walls of the second millennium BC building, JIDEJIAN 1968, 36.

<sup>6</sup> The assumption that Resheph was the main deity of the temple is mainly based on a misinterpretation of the Egyptian god Herishef with Resheph, see LIPINSKI 1995, 67–8; LIPINSKI 2009, 219; SALLES 1998, 70.

<sup>7</sup> SCANDONE MATTHIAE 1981, 61–80. Contra see XELLA 1994, 197; MÜNNICH 2013.

<sup>8</sup> The group of objects was published by DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 741–781; vol. I, pls. 93–113. In the description of the group (p. 741) and in the following references, Dunand labelled it 15121–15566. However, the last object included in the group is no. 15567 (*trouvés parmi les figurines précédentes*, DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 781).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. PINCH 1993, 79.

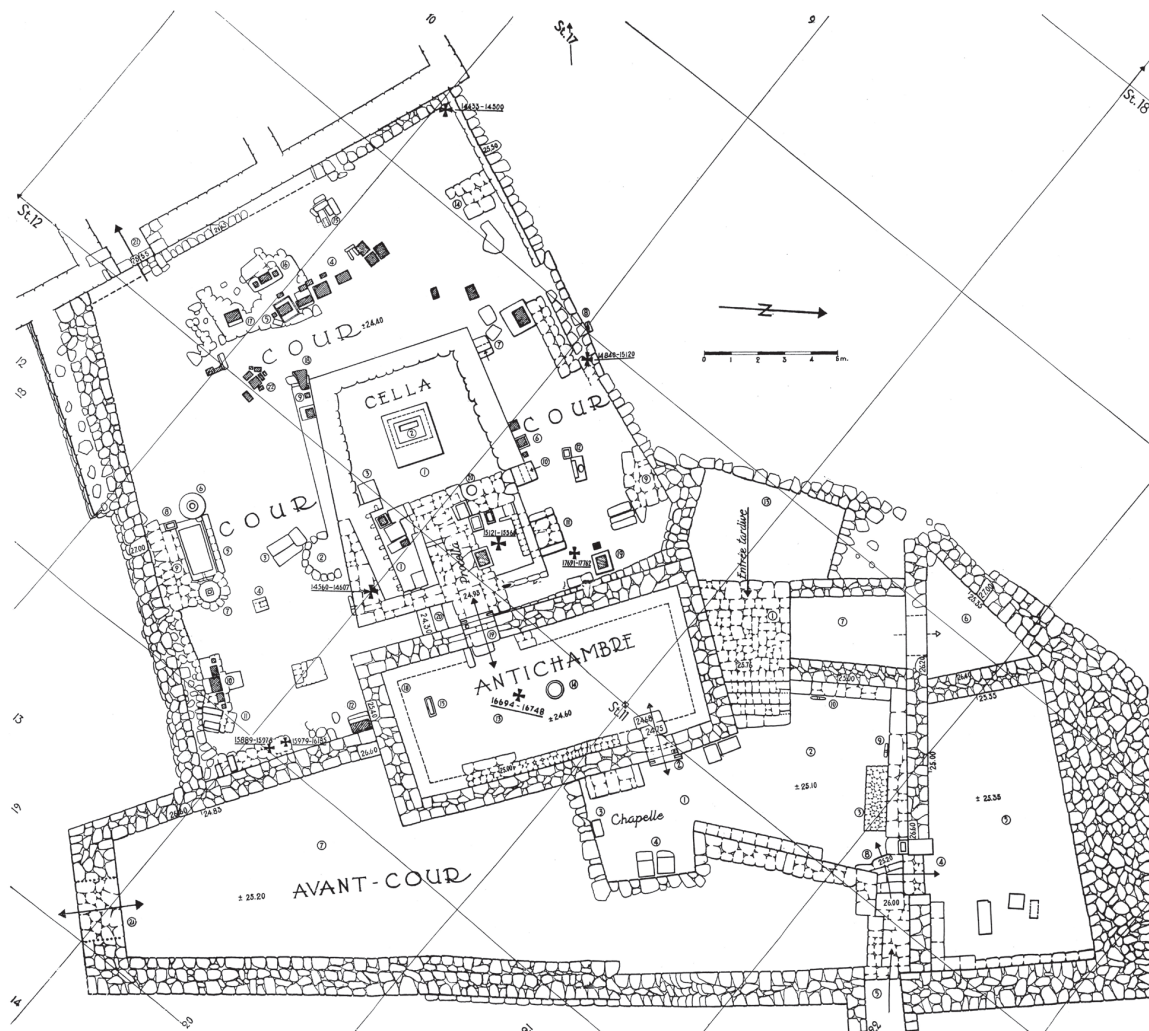


Fig. 767. — LE TEMPLE AUX OBÉLISQUES DANS SON DEUXIÈME ÉTAT.

Fig. 1 Plan of the Obelisk Temple during the MBA phase, from DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 640–641, fig. 767.

Levant.<sup>10</sup> This is unfortunate as it includes a high number of key objects, including an unparalleled large assemblage of figurines in faience, from which it is possible to draw a more accurate picture of the material culture of Middle Bronze Age Egypt and its contacts with external areas.<sup>11</sup>

#### The archaeological context of the deposit *f* (items nos. 15121–15567)

The Obelisk Temple (see Fig. 1) comprised an external trapezoidal forecourt and an antechamber situated before an approximately square court enclosing the sanctuary. Groups of obelisks made

of limestone and sandstone occupied the square court; they were found fallen, standing, or reused inside architectonic features of the building, such as walls, thresholds, and floors. The largest batch of obelisks (26) were found still standing in the southwestern part of the square court, erected on rectangular or square bases and following an irregular alignment. The sanctuary stands in the centre of the square court, erected upon a platform. It is divided into two halves: an irregular square *cella* (sanctuary) on the west and a rectangular *pro-cella* (antechamber/courtyard) on the east. The main element in the *cella* is a stone pedestal, which may once have supported a monu-

<sup>10</sup> WEINSTEIN 2001.

<sup>11</sup> WEIN 1963, 21–25.

mental cult object. The *pro-cella* is divided into three parts: a central flagstone pathway leading to the *cella* and two tiny irregular antechambers to the right and to the left of this passage. On the right of the pathway is the base for an obelisk; while on the left of this passage, on slightly higher ground, are several aligned rectangular niches, which were probably used for offerings.<sup>12</sup> In the *pro-cella* two large deposits of objects were uncovered:

1. Deposit nos. 15121–15567 located in a pit beneath huge paving stone slabs of the north-eastern corner of the room (see plan in Fig. 1);
2. Deposit nos. 14560–14607 located in a pit dug in the south-western corner and covered by stone slabs which formed the floor of the room.<sup>13</sup>

Six other deposits of objects were uncovered in the whole Obelisk Temple complex.<sup>14</sup> Several objects found in these offering caches belong to or show influence from Mesopotamian, Aegean, Egyptian and Anatolian traditions. In particular, deposit 15121–15567 consisted of a large number of different objects, for a total of 455 artefacts. The vast majority of these artefacts are represented by a homogeneous corpus of 294 faience miniature models representing human beings, animals, hybrid creatures, fruits, vegetables and inanimate objects, such as jars and vessels. Another representative category from this deposit are 90 figurines (88 human beings and 2 horned bovinds)<sup>15</sup> made of bronze or copper alloy found in a pottery vessel “*ce pot à moitié rempli d’un magma de*

*bronze, compact, formé par quatre-vingt-dix figurines amalgamées les unes aux autres par l’oxidation [...] (nos 15477 à 15566 [sic])*”.<sup>16</sup> Other objects belonging to this deposit include models made of stone (mainly human beings); toilet vessels in alabaster; cuboid rods in steatite (?)<sup>17</sup> with the usual small animals pegged on the top of them; tablets and beads; boxes; and pottery vessels of different shapes and sizes (see list in the *Appendix*).<sup>18</sup>

Three main issues are connected with this deposit and in general also with every other large deposit found at Byblos: a) the dating, b) the type of deposit, and c) the production place of the objects contained in it. However, since most of the objects from deposit 15121–15567 are closely related to the material culture of late Middle Kingdom Egypt – especially the faience figurines,<sup>19</sup> which are typical of Egypt and rarely known outside Egypt and Nubia –<sup>20</sup> a closer analysis of the diagnostic objects allows for a reassessment of issues *a-c* above.

**a. Dating:**<sup>21</sup> One of the main issues is that Maurice Dunand, who supervised the excavations in Byblos from 1928 to the 1970s, failed to provide a clear stratigraphy. Dunand excavated the whole city in rigid horizontal levels (‘levées’) of 20 cm: therefore, the whole stratigraphy of Byblos is based on 42 arbitrary horizontal removals each of 20 cm (*levées* XLII), descending from 28 m (the peak of the rocky ridge west of the Baalat-Gebal temple) down to 19.60 m (virgin soil) above sea level.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the absence of a traditional stratigraphic methodology has made it extremely

<sup>12</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 644–645, fig. 767.

<sup>13</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 741–766, esp. 741, fig. 767; SAGHIEH 1983, 19–20.

<sup>14</sup> JIDEJIAN 1968, 38.

<sup>15</sup> Some are nudes with emphasised sexual attributes, some wearing a short kilt, helmet or conical cap; some are equipped with one or two sticks, a weapon or a missing item, cf. ARUZ, BENZEL and EVANS 2008, 52–53, cat no. 23; cf. NEGBI 1976, 17, fig. 20.

<sup>16</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 775.

<sup>17</sup> Dunand described the object as ‘*calcaire metamorphique*’ (see below n. 49).

<sup>18</sup> A description and a selection of images/drawings in DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 741–781; vol. I, pls. 93–113.

<sup>19</sup> MINIACI 2019.

<sup>20</sup> For the Levant, see below n. 127–130. Other sites in the Near East may attest a similar use of faience figurines in the EBA–MBA. For instance, the graves 5–6, 8, 11, 17 of Assur in the Ur III period (c. 2112–2004 BC) contained

animal models and a small bowl of faience (HALLER 1954, 8–9); nonetheless the style is non-Egyptian. For Syria, see MAZZONI 1987, 69, fig. 3 (Ebla). Faience animal miniatures in the Near East are privileged in the form of pendant amulets rather than three-dimensional figures, see MOOREY 1999, 175.

<sup>21</sup> I adopted the ‘Low Chronology’ concerning the Levant in this paper: MB I = ±1900–±1710 BC, MB I/II = ±1710–±1680 BC; MB II = ±1680–±1580 BC; MB III = ±1580–±1500 BC, based on BIETAK 2002 and HÖFLMAYER, KAMLAH, SADER, DEE and KUTSCHERA 2016. See also the volume edited by BIETAK and CZERNY 2008. For Egyptian synchronisation, late Middle Kingdom approximately corresponds to the mid-MB I (1850/1800 BC) and MBI/II (1680 BC); Second Intermediate Period starts more or less around the MB II, in 1650 BC and ends with the late MB III, in 1550 BC.

<sup>22</sup> LAUFFRAY 1995.

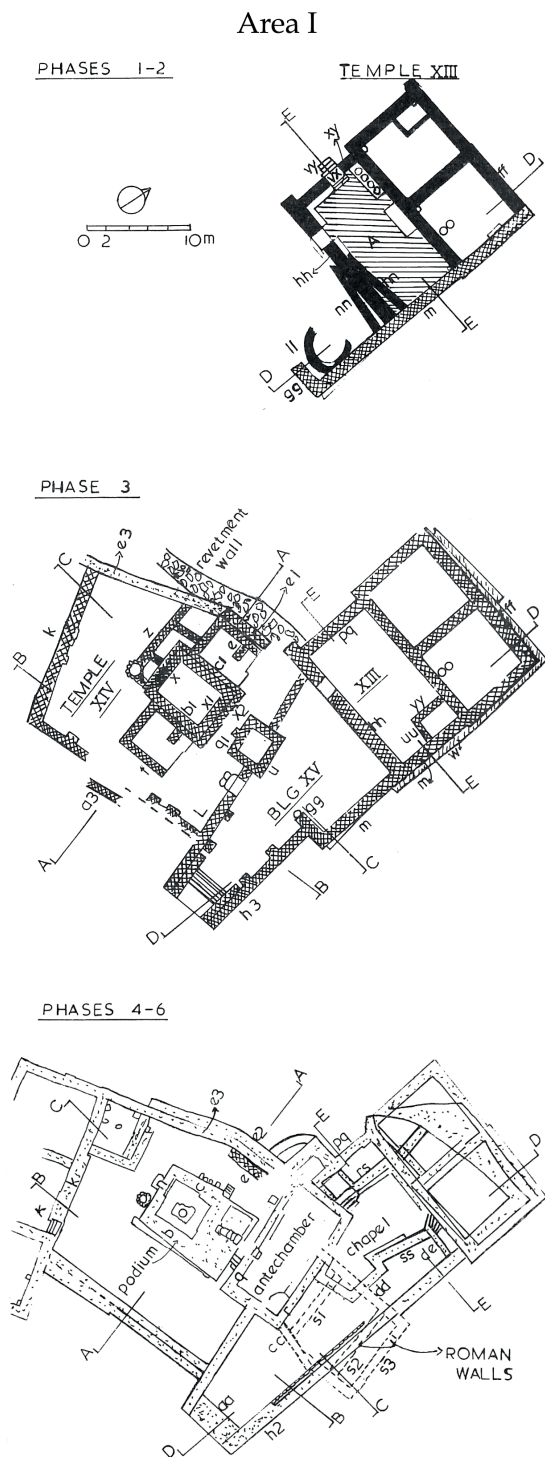


Fig. 2 Plan of the different phases of use of the Obelisk Temple, from SAGHIEH 1983, fig. 7.

difficult to assemble all the finds together in a coherent, sequential sequence. The highly problematic nature of the stratigraphy has forced scholars to combine types of finds with architectonic features in order to tentatively reconstruct correct chronological sequences.<sup>23</sup> As for the Temple of the Obelisks ('area I-unit G'), Muntaha Saghieh attempted a detailed reconstruction of the third millennium levels<sup>24</sup> and identified 6 phases of use (see Fig. 2):

- *Phases 1–2*: Phases 1–2 (c. 2600 BC, corresponding to the Egyptian Third and Fourth Dynasties) mainly relate to the first construction of the L-shaped Temple in the eastern part of the complex, and other scattered traces of architectural activities;<sup>25</sup>
- *Phase 3*: Only in phase 3 (c. after 2200 BC, corresponding to the end of the reign of Pepi II onwards, end of the Sixth Dynasty) was building XIV constructed on the top of which the sanctuary of the second millennium temple would be erected (see phases 4–6). Building XIV in phase 3 consisted of three *cellae in antis* aligned on an eastwards axis;<sup>26</sup>
- *Phase 4*: At the end of phase 3, a fire appears to have ravaged the temple and a thick layer of ash covered the ruins.<sup>27</sup> The exact extent of the phase of abandonment of the site is unknown, but after phase 3 a new sanctuary was built over the ruins of the third millennium BC building XIV and, although its external layout substantially remained unchanged, its internal structure underwent some significant transformations: the three *cellae* of the former sanctuary were replaced by a hypaethral (open to the sky) sanctuary built on an elevated podium, partitioned with a *cella* and *pro-cella*.<sup>28</sup> The construction of this sanctuary belongs to phase 4, which can be placed around the beginning of the second millennium BC. A lapis lazuli cylinder seal found near the floor (in terms of Dunand's levels at 24.60m above sea level) of the phase 4 sanctuary<sup>29</sup> represents one of the key finds, dating between the Ur III phase and the early First Babylonian Dynasty (2112–1800 BC).<sup>30</sup>
- *Phases 5–6*: In phases 5–6 the temple continued to be used with little change from the pre-

<sup>23</sup> FINKBEINER 1981.

<sup>24</sup> SAGHIEH 1975 and 1983.

<sup>25</sup> SAGHIEH 1983, 15–16.

<sup>26</sup> SAGHIEH 1983, 16–18.

<sup>27</sup> SAGHIEH 1983, 16–17.

<sup>28</sup> SAGHIEH 1983, 18.

<sup>29</sup> DUNAND 1937–39, vol. II, 313, no. 4183; vol. I, pl. 34.

<sup>30</sup> DOSSIN 1969, 248–250; MOORTGAT 1969, 68–69.



vious phase (4) and its architecture remained substantially the same; it probably continued running its activities without interruption. In terms of Dunand's levels, phases 5 and 6 occupy the layers formed between 24.80 m and 25.20 m above sea level. A chronological anchor for phases 5–6 is provided by the find of a limestone obelisk placed against the northern wall of the sanctuary<sup>31</sup> bearing the following hieroglyphic inscription in two columns: '[1] *Beloved of Herishef, Abi-shemu, prince of Byblos, renewed in life* [2] [...] *Kukun, son of Rwqq ('the Lycian') justified*'.<sup>32</sup> A prince of Byblos called Abi-shemu has often been identified with a contemporary of Amenemhat III (1842–1797 BC), through the occurrence of his name on one of the artefacts from royal tomb II at Byblos, which gives: 'Yapi-shemu-abu, son of Abi-shemu'. Due to the occurrence in the same archaeological context of an item bearing the name of Amenemhat III, Abi-shemu has been synchronised with the reign of this pharaoh and his son, Yapi-shemu-abu, with that of his successor, Amenemhat IV.<sup>33</sup> Although such a synchronism is not always accepted,<sup>34</sup> in general, the materials from phases 5–6 of the temple can be linked with objects found in royal tombs I–III, whose burial equipment are dated to c. 1850–1550 BC (from the late Middle Kingdom, reign of Amenemhat III, to the Hyksos Period, i.e. Fifteenth Dynasty).<sup>35</sup>

The deposit 15121–15567 lay between 24.40 m and 24.60 m above sea level (*levée XVIII*), according to Dunand's division of artificial horizontal levels, and is located just below the floor of phase 4 and therefore included in the late third millennium layers (see Fig. 3). However, no objects inside this deposit seem to date earlier than the EB IV (2100–2000 BC), but stylistically and typologically all

<sup>31</sup> Beirut, National Museum, DGA 17917; DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 878, no. 16980; vol. I, pl. 32:2. Photo in ANONYMOUS 1998, 68.

<sup>32</sup> ALBRIGHT 1959, 33 (whose dating to around the early Twelfth Dynasty is too high).

<sup>33</sup> MONTET 1928, 174 f.; ALBRIGHT 1964, 39, 43.

<sup>34</sup> The identification of Abi-shemu with the person living in the years of Amenemhat III/IV is far from being definitively proven, see KOPETZKY 2016; AHRENS 2011a, 35.

<sup>35</sup> SCHIESTL 2007, 265–271; KOPETZKY 2015, 393–412; MOURAD 2015, 168–169; see discussion in KOPETZKY 2016 and KOPETZKY forthcoming.

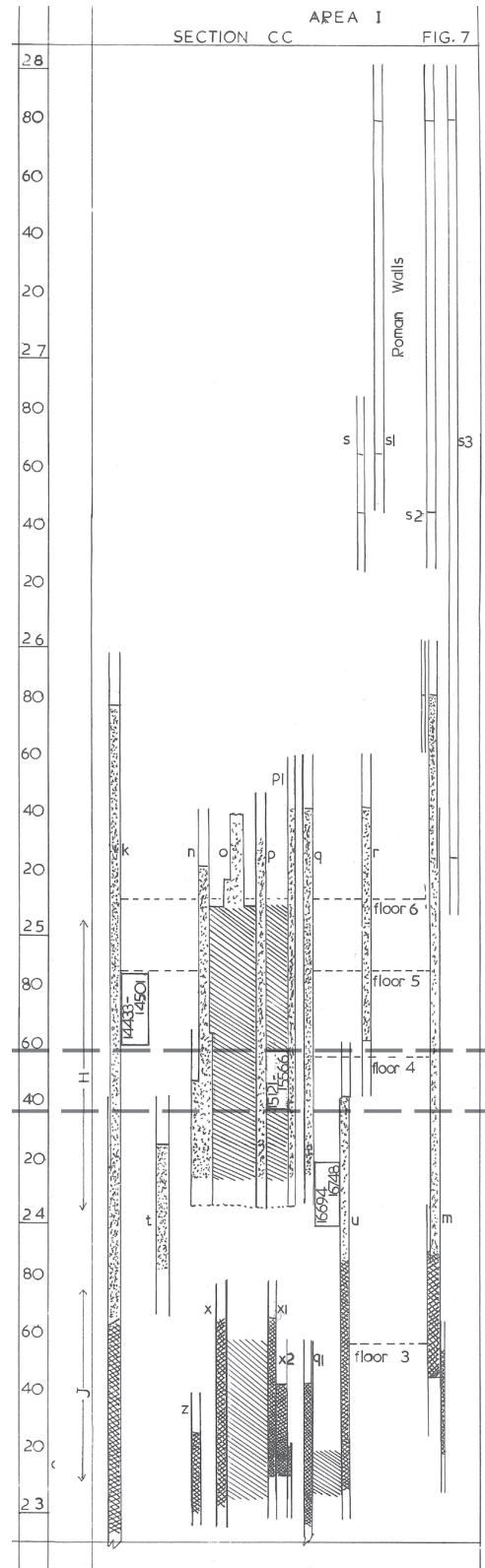


Fig. 3 Vertical stratigraphy of the Dunand's excavations in the 'area I' of the Obelisk Temple (highlighted the level of the deposit *f*), from SAGHIEH 1983, fig. 7.

belong to the first half of the second millennium. This has led scholars to suppose that deposit 15121–15567 represented an intrusive cut of MBA activities into the third millennium levels, as the stone slabs of the floor could have been easily removed in order to accommodate a group of objects into a pit. The second millennium Obelisk Temple (phases 4–6) seems to have been in use almost throughout the whole of the Middle Bronze Age, from c. 2000 BC to 1550 BC (in terms of Egyptian chronology from the Middle Kingdom to the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period, i.e. Twelfth–Fifteenth/Seventeenth Dynasties).<sup>36</sup> Although the chronological limits of deposit 15121–15567 can be broadly defined, the time range of c. 450 years proposed is probably too great even for a deposit (for the type of deposit see below, issue *b*) which may contain materials ranging from different and extended time-spans; at least, part of the deposit was amassed there at a single point in time.<sup>37</sup> For the faience (and the bronze) figurines, Dunand was explicit in his belief of their chronological synchronism: i.e. that all these objects had been placed in the deposit on a single occasion: “*Il a été rencontré une masse compacte immédiatement au-dessous d’une grosse dalle du sol de la pro-cella du Temple aux obélisques [...]. Ces pâtes émaillées paraissent avoir été enfouies toutes en même temps et forment un lot homogène. Presque toutes les figurines de bronze sont désespérément identiques les unes aux autres. L’enfouissement de ces deux séries d’objets relève apparemment d’une seule et même cérémonie*”<sup>38</sup>

*Redefining a. Dating:* The group of the faience figurines may offer a more secure chronological base. This particular type of figurine, made in faience with a distinctive glaze and representing a range of themes, is characteristic of 1850–1650 BC Egypt and occasionally found outside the country itself. The only exceptions where significant quantities of figures have been found outside Egypt are

Byblos and Kerma (and a few isolated cases in lower Nubia, Syria (?), and the Levant).<sup>39</sup> Although a few examples can be placed in the early/mid Middle Kingdom (2000–1850 BC), a case-by-case analysis of the Egyptian faience figurines in context indicates that over 75%<sup>40</sup> is associated with diagnostic materials of the late Middle Kingdom (1850–1650 BC).<sup>41</sup> The range is even narrower for those cases where it is possible to provide a more precise chronological anchor of 1800–1700 BC. In the early Second Intermediate Period (1650–1600 BC), faience figurines are very rarely attested in Egypt and seem to be used as a sort of ‘legacy’ from the previous generation, since they are usually deposited broken, pierced, or reworked.<sup>42</sup> By the end of the Second Intermediate Period (1550 BC), this type of faience figurines completely disappears from documented archaeological contexts<sup>43</sup> and they are no longer visible in the material culture of Egypt; new types of faience figurines using a different technical composition, method of manufacture, and motifs were introduced in the New Kingdom Egypt.<sup>44</sup> Outside Egypt, a number of faience figurines close in shape and type with those of late Middle Kingdom Egypt, were found in the tumuli of Kerma, which date between the early Second Intermediate Period and the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, c. 1650–1500 BC.<sup>45</sup>

Other artefacts from the deposit contain dating elements that point to a late Middle Kingdom (1850–1650 BC) date for the main deposit of objects in the *pro-cella*:

- The bag-shaped jar (no. 15476), in which the bronze figurines were found, has a wide aperture and a flat base of a type attested at Avaris and at Sidon in the late MB I phase (1800–1700 BC);<sup>46</sup> similar bag-shaped jars were produced in Egypt from around the time of Amenemhat III (ca. 1850–1800 BC)<sup>47</sup> to the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty (1700 BC).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>36</sup> BOU-ASSAF 2008, 54, fig. 1; PINNOCK 2007, 125–126; NEGBI 1976, 130.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. SALA 2007, 49; FINKBEINER 1981, 13–69.

<sup>38</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 953.

<sup>39</sup> MINIACI 2019. For the Levant examples, see below n. 127–130; for Syria, see MAZZONI 1987, 69. However, Nubian material culture was heavily influenced by Egypt especially in the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period, BOURRIAU 2001, 10.

<sup>40</sup> This statistic excludes the examples from Byblos.

<sup>41</sup> MINIACI 2019. Cf. also KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, 165–174.

<sup>42</sup> MINIACI 2019. See for instance the case of the truncated-leg female figurine found in the tomb 3248 at Mostagedda, BRUNTON 1937, 120, pl. LXXI.3248

<sup>43</sup> MINIACI 2018a.

<sup>44</sup> PINCH 1993.

<sup>45</sup> MINIACI 2019; LACOVARA 1987, 51–74.

<sup>46</sup> BADER 2003, 34, fig. 4; BADER, FOSTNER-MÜLLER, KOPETZKY and DOUMET-SERHAL 2009, fig. 1.

<sup>47</sup> BADER, FOSTNER-MÜLLER, KOPETZKY and DOUMET-SERHAL 2009, 81.

<sup>48</sup> SCHIESTL and SEILER 2012, 592.





Fig. 4 Steatite/limestone (?) figurine of a standing human figure with lion's mane and ears, usually identified with Aha/Bes, Dunand's no. 15377. Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut.

– The funnel-shaped bowls with in-turned rim (no. 15743) in the Levantine and Syrian area are not attested before MB I (1800 BC), when carinated bowls gave way to a large diffusion

of in-turned rim bowls with slightly concave walls and sometimes a disk base. This type of bowl is well documented in a closed context of the late MB I: Favissa F.5238 at Tell Mardikh.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> NIGRO 2002, 109–111, pl. 52.70.



Fig. 5 Steatite (?) cuboid rod(s), Dunand's no. 15462. Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut.

- The steatite (?)<sup>50</sup> seal no. 15378<sup>51</sup> representing a seated human figure with a long garment on a base inscribed with a decorative coil pattern and an inscription reading: *imy-r pr, Wsir nḥ-nfr*; ‘estate overseer, the Osiris Ankhnefer’ is typical of the late Middle Kingdom Egyptian seal production,<sup>52</sup> although both the name and the title are rather unusual (see below, issue c).
- The steatite/limestone (?) figurine of a standing human figure with lion’s mane and ears, usually identified with Aha/Bes, no. 15377<sup>53</sup> (see Fig. 4) represents a typical motif from Egyptian material culture that appeared during the late Middle Kingdom. Although already attested in a few instances during the Old Kingdom,<sup>54</sup> three-dimensional representations of the Aha/Bes entity are unknown before 1800 BC.<sup>55</sup> However, the stylistic features of no. 15377, with large facial features (eyes, nose and mouth) and pronounced musculature, are comparable with none of the examples found in Egypt, but with an ivory openwork inlay from Alaca Höyük found during the 1936 excavations in Anatolia.<sup>56</sup> The object is dated by the excavator to a very approximate early second millennium BC (“in the deepest layer of the Hittite period”).<sup>57</sup>
- The steatite (?) cuboid rod(s) (probably part of a single object), nos. 15462–15463,<sup>58</sup> and nos. 15379–15383 (see Fig. 5) surmounted by small pegged animal figurines in the same material, finds an almost identical parallel with the glazed steatite cuboid rod MMA 26.7.1275a–j.<sup>59</sup> The long sides of both artefacts bear motifs in raised relief, showing a baboon with a flaming torch and a *wedjat*-eye, a crocodile, a striding lion and a wild cat; the short sides are decorated with the representation of a round-eared animal. Both rods have on their upper part a row of three-dimensional animals secured by pegs representing turtles, lions, frogs, and crocodiles. Unfortunately, MMA 26.7.1275a–j is unprovenanced, although it was sold by the dealer Maurice Nahman at the beginning of Twentieth century together with a large assemblage of faience figurines typical of late Middle Kingdom Egypt.<sup>60</sup> According to Ludwig Keimer, the entire group of objects was found

<sup>50</sup> DUNAND (1950–1958, vol. II, 767) uses the term ‘calcaire métamorphique’ for the following six entries of his catalogue, nos. 15377, 15378–15383 + 15462–15463: a hybrid human-leonine figure, a carved seal, small figurines of a frog, turtle, crocodile, and lions (x2) all bearing a small peg on the base and two joining (?) pieces of a cuboid rod. In Egypt, the most common material for this type of object was steatite; therefore, it is possible to assume that Dunand used the term ‘calcaire métamorphique’ to indicate steatite objects with a faded glaze.

<sup>51</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. I, pl. 95; vol. II, 767. Beirut, National Museum DGA 1761.

<sup>52</sup> MARTIN 1971, no. 329.

<sup>53</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. I, pl. 95; vol. II, 767.

<sup>54</sup> ROMANO 1989, vol. II, 5–14, cat. nos. 1–3, to which can be added some other doubtful examples from stamp-seal amulet motifs: QUIRKE 2016, 498; and one parietal representation: EL-KHADRAZI 2007, 111.

<sup>55</sup> QUIRKE 2016, 357–363; MINIACI 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations 13186; ARUZ, BENZEL and EVANS 2008, 148, no. 87.

<sup>57</sup> KOŞAY 1944, 31, pl. 44 (AL/A88).

<sup>58</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. I, pl. 95; vol. II, 772.

<sup>59</sup> FISCHER 1968, 32–33, no. 92, pl. 9; KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, 163–164, no. 9; OPPENHEIM, ARNOLD, ARNOLD and YAMAMOTO 2015, 201–202, cat. no. 132; QUIRKE 2016, 102, 413–414.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. MINIACI 2019.



in a single vaulted brick tomb unearthed by Bedouins at el-Matariya (the ancient Iunu, the Greek Heliopolis, now in the northern part of modern Cairo) and dating to the Middle Kingdom. Although the provenance of objects from el-Matariya is highly questionable,<sup>61</sup> the combination of the cuboid rod with faience figurines is an expected pattern in the assemblages of the late Middle Kingdom. For instance, in pit tomb 315 from Lisht North, a glazed steatite cuboid rod (MMA 15.3.39–deacc.) with a pegged lion miniature (MMA 15.3.36) was associated with a faience figurine of a hippopotamus (MMA 15.3.38–deacc.) and of a human figure (Brooklyn Museum 61.164) in a clear late Middle Kingdom context.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, from the late Middle Kingdom Ramesseum tomb no. 5, an ivory cuboid rod was associated with a group of faience figurines.<sup>63</sup> Another late Middle Kingdom cuboid rod comes from the village of Lahun.<sup>64</sup> Other comparable steatite rods can be found in the Fitzwilliam Museum, E.426.1982 and E.2.1986, although both of undocumented provenance,<sup>65</sup> but of Egyptian manufacture beyond doubt and very similar in design to the cuboid rods from the Byblos deposit.

- The steatite kohl container in human form (no. 15374; see Fig. 6)<sup>66</sup> represents a motif typical of ancient Egypt and attested since the end of the third millennium.<sup>67</sup> The container, shaped in the form of a kneeling female figure on an oval base holding a rimless kohl pot between her hands with a cap of hair covering the forehead and a single pigtail hanging down the shoulders with details of plaiting incised, finds very close parallels in late Middle Kingdom examples: the statuette Cairo CG 18582;<sup>68</sup> the statuette from the Hoffmann collection.<sup>69</sup>
- The series of barrel, spheroid and cylindrical beads (nos. 15469–15472)<sup>70</sup> found in the Byblos deposit have some parallels with the series of beads from cemetery A at Harageh, which

dates from the time of Senwosret III to the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty (1900–1650 BC).<sup>71</sup>

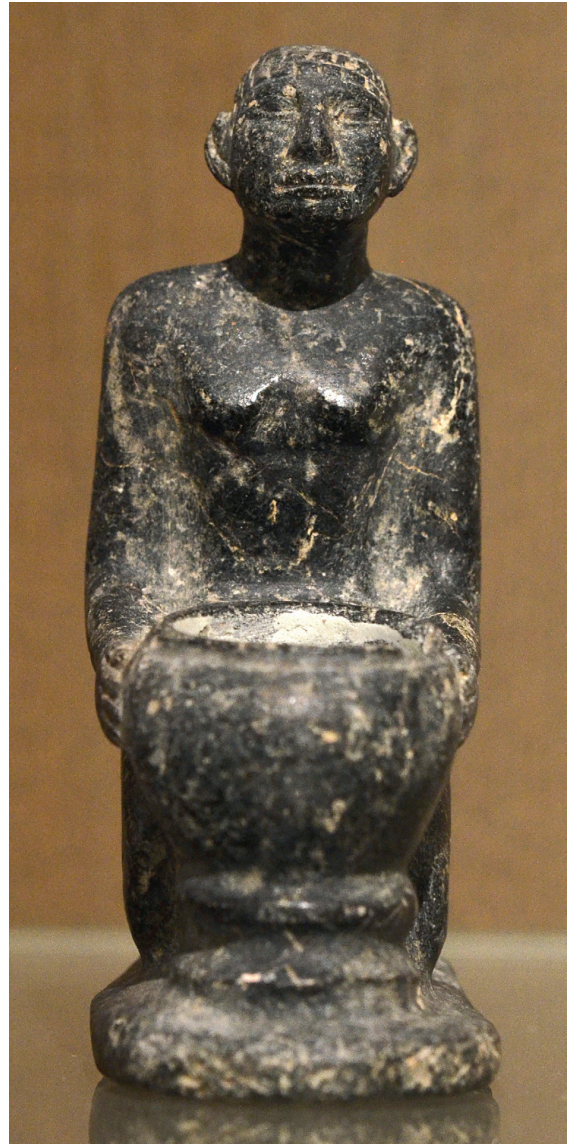


Fig. 6 Steatite kohl container in human form, Dunand's no. 15374. Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut.

<sup>61</sup> MINIACI 2017, 239–240.

<sup>62</sup> MINIACI 2019.

<sup>63</sup> QUIBELL 1898, pl. 3.18; see discussion in QUIRKE 2016, 97–104; MINIACI 2019.

<sup>64</sup> PETRIE 1890, pl. 8.11.

<sup>65</sup> BOURRIAU 1988, 115, cat. no. 104a, b.

<sup>66</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. I, pl. 94; vol. II, 766.

<sup>67</sup> SAAD 1951, 24, pl. XXIVa, b (tomb I H 5); SAAD and AUTRY 1969, 131, pls. 46–47.

<sup>68</sup> VON BISSING 1904, xxvii, 121, pl. 9; BÉNÉDITE 1911, vol. I, 56, pl. 24 (here numbered as CG 18382).

<sup>69</sup> LEGRAIN 1894, 18–19, no. 44, with fig. For other Middle Kingdom examples, see KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, 147–150; BOURRIAU 1988, 139, cat. no. 140.

<sup>70</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 772–773, fig. 877.

<sup>71</sup> Gabbro spheroid bead Byblos no. 15469 = Harageh tomb 154, ENGELBACH 1923, pl. 53, 79R (in amethyst); Carnelian barrel bead Byblos no. 15471 = Harageh tomb 17, ENGELBACH 1923, pl. 52, 73O. For an overview of the cemetery, see MINIACI 2013–14.

– The last diagnostic element – with a more problematic dating – is represented by the 90 bronze or copper alloy figurines found in jar no. 15476 (see above). Most are solid-cast figurines of standing or striding male human beings wearing an elongated headdress, similar to the Egyptian white crown, or a conical helmet; some are nude with emphasised genitals, others wear a short kilt, while some have arms at the sides or hold a stick or an undefined item in one hand (belonging to the so-called Type II/class A: ‘*Byblo-Egyptian group*’).<sup>72</sup> Others are made of flattened sheet bronze silhouetting the frontal representation of a figure with an elongated hat and face in profile (belonging to the so-called Type II/class B: ‘*Byblo-Egyptian group*’).<sup>73</sup> Twenty-two figurines are classified by Negbi as Type II/class A: ‘*Byblo-Syrian group*’,<sup>74</sup> as they present less marked Egyptian traits, i.e. the elongated headdress is replaced by short hair. As these solid-cast figurines have tangs projecting from below the feet they were meant to stand upright on bases, perhaps of clay or wood, which were not preserved in the deposit. Only one of the figurines presents more distinctive Egyptian traits, representing a Bes-like entity (no. 15477)<sup>75</sup> wearing a kilt and standing on a rectangular base with a short undecipherable inscription. Two other figurines represent horned bovines (nos. 15565–15566). This type of bronze figurine is certainly of Levantine production, as they do not find any precise parallel within Egyptian material culture, although the elongated hat, the posture, and the proportion may suggest Middle Kingdom Egyptian motifs as sources of inspiration.<sup>76</sup> The study carried out by Ora Negbi on the bronze figurines of the Levant offers a close dating to the late EB IV to late MB I (2000–1750 BC) for the *Type II: ‘Byblo-Egyptian group’*; and a slightly broader range for the *Type II: ‘Byblo-Syrian group’*, spanning EB IV–early MB II (2100–1650 BC; in terms of Egyptian relative chronology from the First Intermediate Period to the end of the Middle

Kingdom). However, the dating proposed by Negbi, and unquestioningly followed by other scholars,<sup>77</sup> is based on an overall analysis that does not take into consideration detailed analysis of each context and also of the stylistic variations within each broad category. For instance, the figurines classified as *Type II: ‘Byblo-Egyptian group’* include nearly seven hundred items from different find spots at Byblos (such as the deposits in the ‘Temple syrien’, ‘Champ des offrandes’, ‘Enceinte sacrée’, etc.). The deposits from Byblos are not of a narrow date but instead they range from the late third to the first half of the second millennium. Only eight figurines of this type do not come from Byblos but from other sites in Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Cyprus (Negbi 1976, 22). Apart from Megiddo (Negbi 1976, 160, nos. 1173–74) and Tell Soukas (no. 1171), which offer a mid-MB I–MB II chronological range,<sup>78</sup> the remaining six figurines are of unknown provenance or uncertain context (Negbi 1976, 160, nos. 1169–1177). Therefore, the dating proposed by Negbi is of no help in narrowing the chronological range. Further comparative research into the composition of the Byblos deposits may help in arriving at a more precise chronological range for the use of this type of bronze figurine.

In conclusion, the key elements for deposit 15121–15567 may be dated with a certain degree of confidence to a restricted phase of the material culture of Egypt and the Levant (1850–1650 BC: late Middle Kingdom = mid-MB I–MB I/II), with the exclusion of the bronze figurines that at the moment are ‘floating’ in a wider time span. The absence of inscribed Hyksos material (after the early MB II, i.e. after 1650 BC) in the deposit<sup>79</sup> may be another good chronological anchor, representing the *terminus ante quem* for the formation of the deposit.<sup>80</sup> However, redefining the dating for these objects does not necessarily imply that the deposit was created in the same time-range: scholars have strongly warned against an immediate synchronisation between Middle Kingdom Egyp-

<sup>72</sup> NEGBI 1976, 22–24.

<sup>73</sup> NEGBI 1976, 26.

<sup>74</sup> NEGBI 1976, 21–22.

<sup>75</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. I, pl. 110; vol. II, 775.

<sup>76</sup> HANSEN 1969, 283–284.

<sup>77</sup> ARUZ, BENZEL and EVANS, 52–53.

<sup>78</sup> NEGBI 1976, 29, table 5.

<sup>79</sup> NEGBI and MOSKOWITZ 1966, 23.

<sup>80</sup> However, the absence of certain diagnostic Hyksos object types from deposit *f* does not necessarily mean proof of absence: a well-defined set of diagnostic types for the material culture in the Levant during the MB II–LBA transition is far from securely established.

tian material and its find context in the northern Levant.<sup>81</sup> Several Middle Kingdom objects of Egyptian manufacture and found in the northern Levant may have actually arrived there only later, as the result of looting actions in Egyptian temples, cultic installations, and tombs happening during the Second Intermediate Period with the aim of bringing into the Levant ‘exotic foreign’ items.<sup>82</sup> Also the absence of Hyksos material does not exclude *a priori* that the deposit may have been formed after 1650 BC: objects of earlier contexts may have been gathered together at a later date. Nonetheless, the consistency of the object dating (ca. 1850–1650 BC) and the high uniformity of object types (384 figurines – in faience and bronze –) seem to speak against a wide chronological gap between the object production and deposition and against a possible provenance from looted contexts. Faience figurines can be hardly considered as a one of the targets of looters, as they were neither considered luxury products (see below, issue *b*), like stone vessels or metal items for instance, nor iconographic emblems of power, as they were not placed in the highest/ruling class Egyptian burials.<sup>83</sup> Also, the number of faience figurines found in the other sites of the Levant is rather limited to be considered targeted objects for power display.<sup>84</sup>

**b. Type of deposit:** Unfortunately, the description of the archaeological context of this deposit provided by Dunand and published in his volume is rather vague:

‘Les objets se trouvaient amoncelés à même la terre et mélangés à elle, sans protection aucune. Mais la dalle de couverture reposait sur un grossier débord des fondations du mur nord de la procella et sur une pierre placée au-dessous du passage médian, en sorte que sa pression ne portait pas sur les objets délicats qu’elle recouvrait [...]. Les animaux se rencontraient dans toutes les positions, comme s’ils avaient été jetés là. Cependant

la boîte de terre cuite no 15468 et la poterie 15476 qui renfermait les figurines de bronze 15477 à 15566 avaient été déposées convenablement, celle-ci avec son couvercle en place’.<sup>85</sup>

From the short description of the archaeological context and from the type and quantity of artefacts, deposit *f* can be defined as a ‘structured deposition’, a term often interchangeably used in archaeology for indicating ‘ceremonial’, ‘ritual’, ‘symbolic’, ‘formal’ and ‘intentional’ assemblages.<sup>86</sup> A structured deposit stresses intentionality through an act of deposition, involving specific anthropogenic processes, and creating a relationship between the ideology/belief and the deposition of the material itself. Therefore, it was not an occasional accumulation of objects in a layer.

*Redefining b. Type of deposit:* Deposit *f* can hardly be considered a foundation deposit for the building itself;<sup>87</sup> the main reason comes from the fact that objects of the same type (except for faience figurines) were found in the higher levels, smashed, broken, and scattered over the sanctuary floor in phases 5–6 corresponding to Dunand’s *levée XVI*, 25.00–24.80 m (cf. nos. 13999–14002). Therefore, this evidence suggests that the objects from deposit *f* belong to the ‘life’ of the temple (phases 5–6) rather than to its ‘birth’. This also creates a chronological interplay between phases 5–6 of the temple’s life and the objects in deposit *f* (see above, issue *a*). Evidently, the deposit was actually formed during temple use phases 5–6, around 1800–1550 BC, which cut into earlier levels.

Negbi and Moscovitz advanced the idea that the deposits of Byblos, including 15121–15567, were created with the purpose of ‘hiding valuable objects’ accumulated in the phase of use of the temple – probably immediately before its disuse/destruction – and hidden with the purpose of protection and storage, as a sort of treasure or capital reserve.<sup>88</sup> In fact, they observed that most of the items were not scattered in the ground but stored

<sup>81</sup> HELCK 1976; WEINSTEIN 1974; 1975. Also the ceremonial mace of king Hetepibre found at Ebla/Tell Mardikh, often used to establish a more precise chronological anchor, may be a later reuse/recycled object, see also comments in NIGRO 2009. See also comments in ESPINEL 2002, 110–111 for the Old Kingdom in Byblos.

<sup>82</sup> AHRENS 2011a; 2015; 2016.

<sup>83</sup> MINIACI 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. PFÄLZNER 2014, esp. 150; recent excavations in the ‘Tomb VII’ at Qatna have brought to light large quantities of Middle Kingdom Egyptian material, including jewellery and stone vessels, and only a single miniature of a faience (?) hippopotamus. See also below n. 128.

<sup>85</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 741.

<sup>86</sup> On the use of this term in archaeology and a critique, see GARROW 2012.

<sup>87</sup> NEGBI and MOSKOWITZ 1966, 22.

<sup>88</sup> NEGBI and MOSKOWITZ 1966, 23.



and sealed in clay jars; moreover most of these jars contained different types of metals – including, bronze, copper alloy, silver, and gold (mainly as gold foil) – which were considered to be largely precious raw materials at that time.<sup>89</sup> However, deposit 15121–15567 includes not only bronze items but also faience and pottery artefacts, which were made of common and inexpensive components.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the interpretation of deposit 15121–15567 as a storage place for ‘currency’ objects needs further research to be proved.

The most common deposit found in a cult building are those defined as votive offerings, which are related to the custom of placing small objects in shrines, such as institutional or personal gifts to the gods, with the intention of blessing or appeasing a deity.<sup>91</sup> When the ex-votos had come to fill all the available space, they were removed in order to create room for new items, but, since it was considered sacrilegious to recycle, discard, or destroy votive objects, they were usually carefully deposited either in the foundations of rebuilt shrines or buried in pits within the temple precinct.<sup>92</sup> Although this may seem the most linear approach (*lectio facillior*), there are two evident setbacks: **1.** analogous faience figurine types found in Egypt are, unexpectedly, almost absent from cult contexts during the late Middle Kingdom,<sup>93</sup> but are predominantly found in funerary contexts;<sup>94</sup> **2.** the faience – and bronze – figurines show a uniform style that does not support a wide temporal development.<sup>95</sup>

**1.)** The presence of the Egyptian faience figurines in a temple deposit of the Middle Bronze Age in Egypt is rather anomalous: the only exception could be a fragmentary faience hippopotamus (Louvre E 12695) found at Elephantine in a large deposit (*cachette*) of cult objects attached to the western wall of the New Kingdom Satef temple. The *cachette* contained groups of objects of different epochs, from the Middle Kingdom<sup>96</sup> to the

Third Intermediate Period.<sup>97</sup> All the other documented find-spots of faience figurines in Egypt in the Middle Kingdom are overwhelmingly from funerary contexts (over 80%) with several doubtful cases from settlement contexts.<sup>98</sup> The almost total absence of Middle Kingdom faience figurines in Egypt from temples and shrines is rather remarkable, especially in comparison to the extensive use of faience figurines in cult contexts of the Early Dynastic Period. In third millennium shrines and temples, hundreds of faience (some very similar in shape and motif to those of the second millennium) figurines<sup>99</sup> have been found scattered everywhere, on floors, in pits, as local foundation deposits, and embedded in the walls.<sup>100</sup> Certainly, Middle Kingdom temples have survived to a lesser extent in comparison with those of the third millennium BC; nonetheless they are not completely absent from the archaeological record, even though their state of preservation is generally far poorer. Richard Bussmann has stressed a political switch which may have occurred from the third to the second millennium in shrine/temple policy.<sup>101</sup> While royal presence in third millennium cult structures is not prominent and state control appears to be relatively low/absent, in the second millennium the state became more involved in the running of temples. The main principle of second millennium temples was based on the exclusion of individuals, in order to create exclusive access and privilege. This change is mirrored also in the distribution and pattern of votive objects: while third millennium shrines were crowded with votive figurines, Middle Kingdom temples favoured other types of offerings, like stelae or sizable statues. Small votive figurines – when present – were confined to external areas outside the enclosure walls.<sup>102</sup>

However, it must be acknowledged that a sporadic (?) use of faience figurines of the late Middle Kingdom type is attested in cult contexts, notably

<sup>89</sup> NEGBI 1976, 127.

<sup>90</sup> MINIACI 2018b.

<sup>91</sup> PINCH and WARASKA 2009.

<sup>92</sup> TIRIBILLI 2018, x; DAVIES 2007; EIGNER 2003; KEMP 2006, 121–123.

<sup>93</sup> BUSSMANN 2017.

<sup>94</sup> Less than 1% of faience figurines were securely attested in a domestic environment, see for instance Memphis in GIDDY 2016, 18–19.

<sup>95</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 953 (see above). Cf. PINNOCK 2012, 96.

<sup>96</sup> Within the time range of the Middle Kingdom, a large number of objects can be dated to the late Middle Kingdom (object no. doc. 636), DELANGE 2012, 304–305.

<sup>97</sup> A limestone model of a ram Khnum may be stylistically dated to the Thirtieth Dynasty (object doc. no. 711; DELANGE 2012, 302–303).

<sup>98</sup> MINIACI 2019.

<sup>99</sup> Figurines were also found in other materials such as ivory, mud and clay, BUSSMANN 2011.

<sup>100</sup> BUSSMANN 2010.

<sup>101</sup> BUSSMANN 2017, 78–81.

<sup>102</sup> PINCH 1993, 248–53.



in sanctuaries and temples peripheral to Egypt, such as Serabit el-Khadim, Gebel Zeit, Mirgissa and Faras.<sup>103</sup> Probably, the difference in the manner late Middle Kingdom faience figurines were distributed comes down to one of geographical distinction, between central and peripheral areas (as Egypt was the main production centre, it must be considered the central area of this geographical model).<sup>104</sup> Apparently, after the third millennium, central areas favoured other types of offerings and disregarded figurines, while peripheral areas still held traditional customs and included figurines in temples. In this respect, since Byblos may represent a peripheral area to Egypt, the use of faience figurines in the temple could not be considered exceptional but in line with a continued use in temples outside Egypt. However, the funerary aspect of these faience figurines is rather unforeseen, as in the previous times in Egypt they were rarely deposited in burials.

The predominance of funerary context for faience figurines in Egypt during the Middle Bronze Age lends some support to William Albright's suggestion made in 1957 that the Temple of Obelisks was primarily a mortuary shrine.<sup>105</sup> Albright paralleled the Obelisk Temple with the later *bēt bāmôt* (the 'High Places') in Israel, i.e. open air cult installations set on a natural hilltop or on an artificial raised platform, often furnished with standing stones (*maṣṣēbôt*) and sacrificial altar(s).<sup>106</sup> According to Albright,<sup>107</sup> the *bāmôt* were also featured by funerary aspects, playing an important role in 'fertility cult' and popular piety,<sup>108</sup> the symbolic stones or stelae erected in these buildings aimed at commemorating an important/heroic defunct.<sup>109</sup> In Albright's view, the burial of the deceased was not necessarily placed inside the *bāmāh* but in its neighbourhood, as the *bāmāh* represented the place of cult detached from the interment.<sup>110</sup> The Obelisk Temple perfectly fits the general lines of such an architecture: it was an open sky structure with an altar in its centre, erected over a platform; the obelisks, which can be compared with the *maṣṣēbôt* or stelae, were occasionally inscribed for deceased persons (*m<sup>c</sup>3-ḥrw* = justified), stressing the funerary aspect of the

structure; the absence of burials below the temple clearly indicates that the structure was not intended as a mortuary temple *stricto sensu* (i.e. a burial place). Nonetheless, the deceased venerated in the temple could have been buried in the neighbourhood: for instance, the obelisk of the 'deceased' prince Abi-shemu is located at short distance from the tomb of a homonymous prince, called Abi-shemu, probably the same person.<sup>111</sup> In such a perspective, the massive presence of faience figurines in a temple featured by mortuary connotations is more in line with the archaeological evidence coming from Egypt, Nubia and also from other sites of the Levant (Beirut, Qatna, Sarafand), where faience figurines were predominantly found in funerary contexts.<sup>112</sup>

2.) The uniform style of faience figurines may be explained either with a very limited production time-span (which could occupy less than the proposed window of 200 years) or with the fact that the deposit could have been achieved in a single-time operation intended to group and bury together specific objects. On analogy with *favissae* F.5237–38, P.9308 of Ebla, Frances Pinnock has suggested that the votive deposits found in the temples of Byblos may not represent a casual unification of diachronic objects belonging to temple furniture or treasures but rather one single operation of an artificial collection of objects with ritual purpose, such as meals or ceremonies connected with achievement and renewal of the town's life through the royal prerogative or its ancestor cult.<sup>113</sup> Faience figurines – or their remains/fragments – were not documented by Dunand in the floor levels of the Obelisk Temple, strengthening the impression that they were intended for the ritual purpose of being buried under the temple in a single operation.

In conclusion, deposit *f* does not seem to be a 'standard' votive deposit, grouping discarded temple ex-votos, buried under the floor to make way for new votive objects in the active sacred area, but a homogenous group of objects gathered for a specific purpose, probably in connection with the funerary sphere or linked to practices of ancestor/important deceased veneration.

<sup>103</sup> MINIACI 2019.

<sup>104</sup> MINIACI 2018b; forthcoming.

<sup>105</sup> ALBRIGHT 1957, 252.

<sup>106</sup> NAKHAI 1994; FRIED 2002.

<sup>107</sup> See contra BARRIK 1975.

<sup>108</sup> ALBRIGHT 1957, 243.

<sup>109</sup> Also the sacred trees of the mother goddess were occasionally commemorated in the *bāmāh*.

<sup>110</sup> ALBRIGHT 1957, 247.

<sup>111</sup> Contra see KOPETZKY 2016.

<sup>112</sup> See below n. 126–129.

<sup>113</sup> PINNOCK 2009.

**c. Material production:** The last question concerns the material production of these objects, whether they were manufactured in Egypt and imported or locally produced. When viewed as votive offerings, scholars tend to assume that they were produced in local workshops annexed to a temple and sold as ex-votos to pilgrims visiting the sacred buildings. The existence at Ugarit of non-Egyptian workshops using glazing recipes similar to those used for Egyptian figurines may support the idea of the local production of Egyptianising artefacts at Byblos.<sup>114</sup> On this line, scholars have repeatedly suggested that deposit 15121–15567 may be good evidence that a school of local craftsmen existed at Byblos, who copied works of Middle Kingdom Egyptian minor arts for use in their local cult.<sup>115</sup> In particular, the faience figurines from the deposit were seen as important evidence of objects representative of the MBA ‘Egyptianness’. Dunand was the first to suggest a local prov-



Fig. 7 Faience figurine of a lion, Dunand’s no. 15241 (DGA 941). Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut.

enance for this group and advanced three main arguments in support of his hypothesis: **1.** the great variety of motifs and designs among the Byblos examples contrasting the limited range of subjects and ways of representing them found in Egypt; **2.** the more naturalist expression of the Byblos examples contrasting the more static attitude observed in the Egyptian models (*‘à la statique égyptienne la Phénicie oppose le dynamism des sujets animés’*);<sup>116</sup> **3.** the whitish colour of the faience and the absence of floral and faunal designs on the figurines from Byblos (*‘le ton clair de l’émail et l’absence sur le flanc des animaux de toute notation de la flore des marais’*).<sup>117</sup> Accordingly, also Hansen noted that the Byblos figurines were not characterised by the distinctive bright glaze – and consequently the painted details over the glaze – (point 3), which is almost always present in their Egyptian counterparts. Another element in support of local production is the un-Egyptian styling of certain figurines (point 2) such as, for instance, the pose of the lion no. 15241 (Beirut, National Museum DGA 941; see Fig. 7) with its front paws crossed, which would not occur in Egyptian art until the time of Thutmose III.<sup>118</sup>

*Redefining c. The material production:* In the absence of archaeometric analyses, it is not possible to be certain if the faience figurines from the Byblos deposit represent Egyptian imports or are local copies of Egyptian prototypes.<sup>119</sup> However, there are several points in favour of these faience figurines being Egyptian imports:

– *Close analogy.* Analogy with the models produced in the late Middle Kingdom in Egypt is

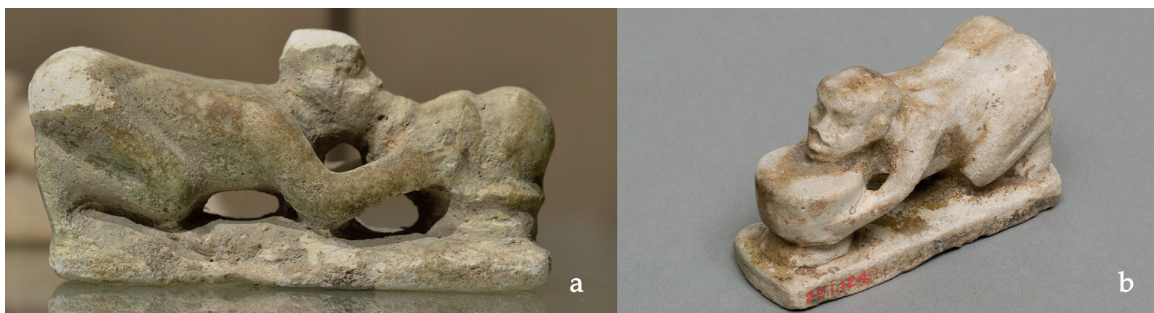


Fig. 8 Faience figurines representing a kneeling human figure; a) Dunand’s no. 15357 (DGA 1709; B.8150) from Byblos. Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut; b) MMA 22.1.124, from Lisht North, Pit 884 © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York – CC0.

<sup>114</sup> CAUBET and KACZMARCZYK 1987, 48.

<sup>115</sup> ARUZ, BENZEL and EVANS 2008, 52; ANONYMOUS 1998.

<sup>116</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 953.

<sup>117</sup> DUNAND 1950–58, vol. II, 953.

<sup>118</sup> HANSEN 1969, 282. Cf. HAYES 1959, vol. II, 135, fig. 72.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. DOUNET-SERHAL 2013.





Fig. 9 Faience figurines representing a human figure carrying a calf on the shoulders; in the upper row: a) Dunand's 15338 (DGA 1715; B.8165) from Byblos; b) Dunand's nos. 15347 (DGA 1750; B.8164) from Byblos; in the lower row: c) British Museum, EA 59397, unprovenanced; d) Boston, MFA 11.1524, unprovenanced. Credits: a-b) Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/ Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut; c) Photo G. Miniaci © Trustees of the British Museum; d) © courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

very stringent and in several instances it comes down to sameness. The Middle Kingdom faience figurines display qualities that are difficult to replicate, mainly due to the fact that they were handmade and their production needed trained skills and mastery over the medium.<sup>120</sup> Without some form of mechanical reproduction using moulding techniques, it would be difficult to achieve a good degree of similarity by hand especially in such very distant places, unless one assumes that trained and skilled Egyptian craftsmen were working in Byblos at that time or that local artisans had Egyptian-made prototypes available to copy. However, this conflicts with the rare attestations of faience figurines in other layers of Byblos and other sites in the Levant (see below).

The faience figurines from Byblos exactly mirror the same variety of designs and motifs of Egyptian examples:<sup>121</sup>

#### Human

Byblos no. 15357 (DGA 1709; B.8150) = MMA 22.1.124 (Lisht North, Pit 884); Bruxelles, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire E.7421 (unprovenanced) [see Fig. 8];

Byblos nos. 15347 (DGA 1750; B.8164), 15338 (DGA 1715; B.8165) = Boston, MFA 11.1524 (unprovenanced); British Museum, EA 59397 (unprovenanced) [see Fig. 9];

Byblos no. 15311 (DGA 1720; B.8145) = British Museum, EA 37298 (Abydos, tomb G 62); British Museum EA 22882, unprovenanced (probably from Lahun, see MINIACI forthcoming) [see Fig. 10];



Fig. 10 Faience figurines representing a grotesque human figure; a) Dunand's no. 15311 (DGA 1720; B.8145), from Byblos. From DUNAND 1950–58, pl. 97; b) British Museum EA 22882, unprovenanced (probably from Lahun, see MINIACI forthcoming). Photo G. Miniaci © Trustees of the British Museum.

<sup>120</sup> MINIACI forthcoming.

<sup>121</sup> All figurines are discussed in MINIACI 2019; here only a few examples have been quoted. 'DGA' numbers are the

current inventory number in the National Museum of Beirut – Directorate General of Antiquities. 'B.' numbers are the numbers given by Dunand after the excavations.



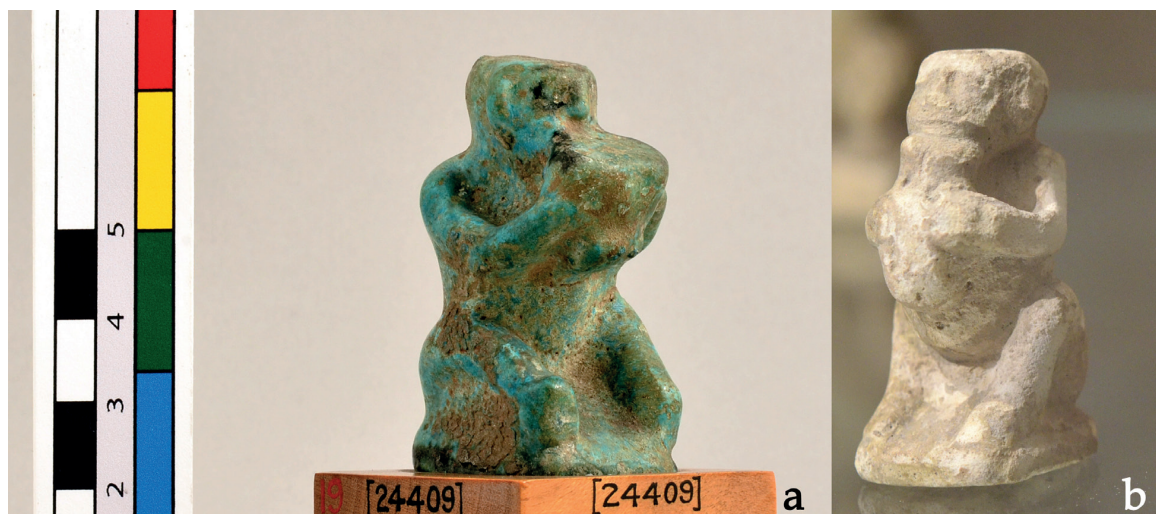


Fig. 11 Faience figurines representing a grotesque human figure; a) British Museum EA 24409, unprovenanced (probably from Lahun, see *MINIACI* forthcoming). Photo G. Miniaci © Trustees of the British Museum; b) Dunand's no. 15316 (DGA 1747; B.8155), from Byblos. Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut.



Fig. 12 Faience figurine of a roaring hippopotamus; a) Dunand's no. 15139 (DGA 907; B.8188) from Byblos. Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut; b) MMA 08.200.37 from Lisht North, Pit 805 © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York – CC0.

Byblos no. 15338 (DGA 1715; B.8165 and no. 15347 (DGA 1750; B.8164) = British Museum, EA 59397 (unprovenanced);

Byblos no. 15316 (DGA 1747; B.8155) = MMA 22.1.286 (Lisht North, Pit 964); British Museum, EA 65679 (unprovenanced); British Museum EA 24409, unprovenanced (probably from Lahun, see *MINIACI* forthcoming) [see Fig. 11];

### Hippopotamus

Byblos no. 15138 (DGA 905; B.8189) = present location unknown (Abydos, tomb 416);<sup>122</sup> British Museum, EA 36346 (unprovenanced); Byblos no. 15139 (DGA 907; B.8188) = MMA 08.200.37 (Lisht North, Pit 805) [see Fig. 12];

<sup>122</sup> KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, 144, pls. 10–11, 416.A.07.106.

Byblos no. 15142 (DGA 906) = Cairo, JE 21366 (Thebes, Dra Abu el-Naga);

### Baboon

Byblos no. 15220 (DGA 960; B.8267) = MMA 15.3.186 (Lisht North, Pit 475) \*not similar but same posture;

Byblos no. 15178 (DGA 938; B.8295) = MMA 08.200.33 (Lisht North, Pit 805);

### Lion

Byblos no. 15304 (DGA 1756; B.8256) = Liverpool, Garstang Museum E 9318 (unprovenanced);

Byblos no. 15302 (DGA 1675; B.8207) = MMA 22.1.178 (Lisht North, Pit 885) [see Fig. 13];

### Dog

Byblos no. 15285 (DGA 924; B.8291) = Brooklyn Museum 14.659 (from Harageh, tomb 56); MMA 08.200.34 (from Lisht North, Pit 805);

Byblos no. 15229 (DGA 919; B.8285) = British Museum, EA 22877 (unprovenanced);

### Fruit

Byblos no. 15446 = British Museum, EA 54673 (unprovenanced);

### Vessel

Byblos nos. 15393 (B.8128), 15404 (DGA 1785; B.8225/B.8125) = MMA 34.1.170 and MMA 33.1.25 (Lisht South, Radim tomb of Senwosret-ankh).



Fig. 13 Faience figurine of a ramping lion; a) MMA 22.1.178, from Lisht North, Pit 885 © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York – CC0; b) Dunand's no. 15302 (DGA 1675; B.8207) from Byblos. From DUNAND 1950–58, pl. 108.



The only peculiarities recognisable in the Byblos examples are a monkey playing a harp (no. 15226 [B.8272]), some exceedingly amorphous human beings (e.g. nos. 15352 [B.8166], 15361 [B.8133]), and the rams (see list below in the *Appendix*). Nonetheless, example no. 15226 finds a very close parallel, in terms of proportion, in a painted limestone figurine of a squatting man playing a harp from the late Middle Kingdom tomb 416 at Abydos.<sup>123</sup> An evocative parallel in faience, although of different proportions, is the figurine of a lion playing a harp (?) in the British Museum (EA 49712; see Fig. 14); the latter, although of unknown provenance and therefore of unknown date, seems to predate the New Kingdom on account of the type of faience and method of manufacture used. One should also note with the previously mentioned lion no. 15241 that, contra Hansen, this pose is rather well known in the Egyptian iconography of late Middle Kingdom faience figurines (therefore well before the time of Thutmosis III); see for instance dog UC 45080 (see Fig. 15).<sup>124</sup> The highly abnormal human beings and the rams are the only categories really absent from the corpus of Egyptian faience figurines known today; although horned herbivorous animals and grotesque creatures are certainly not missing, as attested by the goat or antelope figurine BM EA 37299 (cf. Byblos no. 15260). For the sake of clarity, it must be noted that also some models, such as those reproduced on Dunand's plates 98 (human beings) and 111 (range of vessels), show some variations that are not recorded in Egypt. However, this cannot automatically be considered as a trait of local production, as it could also be due to the fact that such variations have yet to be documented or found in Egyptian contexts. Because these figurines are handmade, the degree of fluctuation and combination within a single type will be very high.

– *Absence of peculiar traits.* Not all of the faience figurines from Egypt express 'stasis' (*point 2*) as suggested by Dunand, since c. 60% of them are represented while performing an action such as roaring, crouching, sleeping, squatting, attacking, holding an object or a person. The same percentage of inactive and performative figures can also be observed in the examples from Byblos, where c. 40% of figu-

rines are represented motionless. The absence of decoration and the pale colour of the faience figurines (*point 3*) from Byblos can simply be due to climatic and storage conditions, as Byb-



Fig. 14 Faience figurine of a lion playing a harp (?), British Museum EA 49712. Photo G. Miniaci © Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 15 Faience figurine of a dog with the fore paws crossed, Petrie Museum UC 45080 © The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology.

<sup>123</sup> KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980, 146, no. 416.A.07.108, pls. 10–11, 13, 17.

<sup>124</sup> BRAULINKSA 2017.



Fig. 16 Faience figurine of a hippopotamus from Byblos no. 15127 (DGA 918; B.8201). Photo G. Miniaci © Ministry of Culture/ Directorate General of Antiquities – National Museum of Beirut.

los's weather is far moister than that of Egypt; nonetheless, several examples found at Lisht from documented archaeological contexts show the same fading of the glaze, a paler colour and comparable lack of decoration. In addition, not all of the faience figurines from Egypt were decorated (including hippopotami), some were simply produced undecorated, i.e. without the application of any black details or motifs over the glaze. At least one faience hippopotamus from Byblos (no. 15127; DGA 918; see Fig. 16) still preserves faint traits of a rosette and lotus flower decoration typical of the Egyptian examples. The absence of very distinctive traits in Byblos examples is emphasised by the analysis of Kerma faience figurines of the same period. Faience figurines found at Kerma or at other sites in Nubia show peculiar features and decorative motifs absent in the examples from Egypt. For instance, a lion figurine (Boston, MFA 13.4229; see Fig. 17) found in room A, in Tumulus K II at Kerma is notable for its glazed quartzite material otherwise unknown in the Egyptian examples. Also the shape of the lion figurine from tomb 336 at Aniba<sup>125</sup> and the scorpions found in corridor B, body PB of

Tumulus K X at Kerma (see Fig. 18) do not find any parallels in the Egyptian corpus. In these cases, their local production may be supposed.

- *Control over production.* The late Middle Kingdom faience figurines in Egypt were somehow connected with and commissioned by those around the palace and places of power. The high number of items found at Lisht, most likely the closest cemetery to the capital Itjtawy, and the high concentration in other key power (economic, religious, and cultural) sites (Abydos and Thebes) with only a limited circulation elsewhere across the country, indicates that their production was not privately managed but was regulated by centralised systems led by wealthy individuals or powerful groups.<sup>126</sup> In Byblos, such a picture is replicated with more intensity: the faience figurines were all found amassed in a single spot, in contrast to the bronze figurines, which were found in other deposits in the city, and spread across the city, the country and in the neighbourhood. Other faience figurines were found in the Levant, such as at Tell el-Ajjul (1),<sup>127</sup> Beirut (4),<sup>128</sup> Qatna (1),<sup>129</sup> Sarafand (1),<sup>130</sup> nonetheless, their number is very circumscribed. Therefore,

<sup>125</sup> STEINDORFF 1935–37, vol. I, 149, pl. 67. All the other figurines are described and illustrated in MINIACI 2019.

<sup>126</sup> MINIACI forthcoming.

<sup>127</sup> PETRIE 1952, 18; BEHRMANN 1989, Dok. 142.f.70.

<sup>128</sup> BADRE 1997.

<sup>129</sup> PFÄLZNER 2011; 2014.

<sup>130</sup> MINIACI 2019.





Fig. 17 Faience figurine of a lion found in room A in Tumulus K II at Kerma. Boston, MFA 13.4229 Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

also the production and consumption of the Byblos faience figurines seems to be strongly centralised. A local production led by workshops annexed to the temple would have implied a much more visible circulation in the city of Byblos and across the country. Also, a local production of these figurines in Byblos would have created some variation, while they all reproduce typical Egyptian motifs (some also exogenous to the Levantine culture) without introducing new local elements, as in Kerma.

In conclusion, the close similarities of motifs, manufacture, shape and posture of the models from Byblos seem to support their importation from Egypt. Other objects from deposit *f* point to Egypt as their original place of production or manufacture (see comments above) such as, for instance, steatite rod (no. 15462–63), stamp seal (no. 15378), and steatite woman holding a kohl pot (no. 15374). Nonetheless this does not imply that all the other elements from the deposit were produced in or imported from Egypt. Indeed, arte-

<sup>131</sup> The lack of precise parallels among Egyptian material is highlighted by the scarcity of three dimensional representations of Aha/Bes (except on faience figurines and a few other examples) known for the first half of the second millennium Egypt, QUIRKE 2016, 357–360.



Fig. 18 Faience figurine of a scorpion found inside corridor B, body PB of Tumulus K X at Kerma. Boston, MFA 20.1731 Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

facts from this deposit seem to display clear Egyptian inspiration but material production outside Egypt, as for instance with the steatite figurine representing Bes (no. 15377), whose design, with large facial features (eyes, nose, mouth) and pronounced musculature, finds no close parallel with any ancient Egyptian figurine.<sup>131</sup> Also, all of the bronze figurines of standing human figures, though probably inspired by Egyptian art, display a clear Levantine and Anatolian influence. In addition, one of these, no. 15477, probably representing one of the archaic forms of Aha/Bes, bears signs on its base that do not resemble pseudo-hieroglyphs – unless they represent ultra-cursive variants – but appear to be ‘meaningless’ scribbles attempting to imitate hieroglyphic inscriptions.<sup>132</sup>

## Conclusion

Regular contacts between Byblos and Egypt are attested since the earliest dynasties,<sup>133</sup> although already in the time of Naqada II – and earlier – Byblos served as a conduit for trade between Mesopotamia and Buto in the western Delta.<sup>134</sup> Since the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty, the city-state of Byblos represented one of the main points of interest in a renewed Egyptian trading connec-

<sup>132</sup> I am grateful to Ben Haring for checking the signs and providing the above suggestions.

<sup>133</sup> PRAG 1986; BEN-TOR 1991, 4; FRANCIS-ALLOUCHE and GRIMAL 2016.

<sup>134</sup> MOOREY 1990.

tion with the Lebanese coast,<sup>135</sup> as glimpsed in the famous tale of Sinuhe<sup>136</sup> and more evident in the annals of Amenemhat II inscribed on a slab of found at Memphis (Mit-Rahina).<sup>137</sup> However, it is only during the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty that contact between Egypt and Byblos became more intense, with Byblos standing out as one of the major commercial partners and political representatives of Egypt on the Lebanese coast.<sup>138</sup> Not only did Byblos's rulers emulate royal Egyptian titulary and administrative titles,<sup>139</sup> adopt the hieroglyphic writing system, embrace certain religious traditions, and exploit Egyptian luxury goods,<sup>140</sup> but they also allowed Egypt to actively interfere in local political affairs.<sup>141</sup>

It is beyond doubt that the bronze figures and some other artefacts from deposit *f* partly emulated and copied artefacts from Egypt, reinterpreting them with a Levantine spin. Following a theoretical model already explored by Carolyn Higginbotham for Ramesside Palestine, the Egyptian-style finds may be evidence of local emulation rather than Egyptian dominion. Due to asymmetrical relations between local low-prestige ruling classes and the powerful and prestigious Egyptian kingship,<sup>142</sup> Levantine elite sought to present themselves through an Egyptian(ising) iconography.<sup>143</sup> Not all the Egyptian motifs should have been slavishly copied, as the main aim was to actively reproduce key elements of the foreign iconography, without fully understanding its symbolism and its 'language'.<sup>144</sup>

Other objects from the deposit *f*, mainly the large group of faience figurines, have a purely Egyptian manufacture. Given the high number of faience figurines found in the deposit *f*, it must be taken into account that their arrival in the Canaanite city and their deposition could have been intentional, playing some kind of role in the contacts

between Egypt and Byblos. This has been often explained as the need of foreign Egyptian objects from the Levantine high class, in order to sustain long-term relations 'immersed in a network of bonds mainly based on the exchange of prestige goods',<sup>145</sup> on the model of LBA gift-exchange.<sup>146</sup> Recently, Karin Kopetzky explained the presence of Egyptian artefacts as a result of their possible misappropriation by Byblos rulers from the scarcely protected Middle Kingdom cemeteries that occurred during the decline of Egyptian power in the late Thirteenth Dynasty–Second Intermediate Period.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, some objects from the Byblos royal tombs show signs of alteration, erasure, and rework which could be seen as evidence of misappropriation. Evidence for such a practice in this period has also been recorded at Avaris, where objects of the Twelfth Dynasty appear in Tell el-Dab'a tombs during phase F (1710–1680 BC), probably as the result of the methodical robbery by the eastern Delta (and Levantine) people to the detriment of the Itjtawy reign, when royal power was eclipsing.<sup>148</sup>

The hybrid core of deposit 15121–15567, made of Egyptianising and Egyptian manufactured products may be incompatible with the idea of prestigious goods to be used in the exchange networks or looted from tombs/temples, and find its cultural context in the growing relations between Egypt and Byblos at the turn of MB I. Faience figurines cannot be listed among the valuable goods: first, they were made of inexpensive raw materials and did not require a particularly sophisticated firing technique; therefore, they were not particularly targeted among the ancient robbers;<sup>149</sup> second, faience figurines in Egypt belong to wealthier members of society, probably those who raised their social level thanks to commercial transactions,<sup>150</sup> but they were excluded among the highest

<sup>135</sup> BREYER 2010, 101–114.

<sup>136</sup> WASTLHUBER 2013.

<sup>137</sup> ALTENMÜLLER and MOUSSA 1991; MARCUS 2007; ALTENMÜLLER 2015.

<sup>138</sup> BROODBANK 2013, 362–364; FORSTNER-MÜLLER and KOPETZKY 2009.

<sup>139</sup> KOPETZKY 2016.

<sup>140</sup> TEISSIER 1995, 2–3.

<sup>141</sup> ALLEN 2008.

<sup>142</sup> HIGGINBOTHAM 1996, 155; 2000.

<sup>143</sup> AHRENS 2011b, 301.

<sup>144</sup> AHRENS 2011b, 290.

<sup>145</sup> In fact, the Egyptian objects found in the royal tombs mainly consist of selected objects of restricted variety: prestige goods, such as pectorals, pendants, bracelets and rings, rather than domestic artefacts, FLAMINI 2010, 157.

<sup>146</sup> PFOH 2009; FLAMINI 2010; WASTLHUBER 2013.

<sup>147</sup> KOPETZKY 2016, 157.

<sup>148</sup> FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2008, figs. 97a.7, 8; 97b.10. Cf. the burial equipment of the royal tombs of the Third Intermediate Period at Tanis is greatly augmented with objects looted from the New Kingdom (1500–1069 BC) royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes.

<sup>149</sup> MINIACI 2018b.

<sup>150</sup> MINIACI 2017; 2019.

levels (including royalty) of Egyptian society; therefore, they were not carrying any ruling/power ideology. From this perspective, the large group of faience figurines found at Byblos may indeed represent an import from Egypt by wealthy people (either Egyptians or Levantines) involved in commerce and exchange, who sailed to Byblos from Egypt and brought with them these symbolic protective (?) images. According to the customs of MBA Egypt, these figurines (single or in small groups) would have been placed with the deceased in a burial. The deposit of all these figurines in a single spot inside a cult structure, as the Temple of Obelisks, can be due to a (single?) symbolic event happening in Byblos during the MB I-II, which may be connected to a certain extent with the funerary sphere as well.

**Summary of the artefacts from deposit 15121–15567 (discussed in points 1–3):**

*A. Faience figurines, listed according to type<sup>151</sup>*

**A.1 = 17 standing hippopotami** of various lengths, ranging from 5.9 cm (min.) to 19.9 cm (max.) and heights from 3 cm (min.) to 10.4 cm (max.)

(nos. 15121–15137)

**3 roaring hippopotami** of various heights, ranging from 3.5 cm (min.) to 19.2 cm (max.)

(nos. 15138–15140)

**12 seated/crouching hippopotami** of various lengths, ranging from 5.9 cm (min.) to 19 cm (max.) and heights from 2.5 cm (min.) to 6.3 cm (max.)

(nos. 15141–15152)

**A.2 = 8 Ipi/Taweret figures** of various heights, ranging from 4.5 cm (min.) to 19.2 cm (max.)

(nos. 15153–15160)

**A.3 = 1 hippopotamus standing on a plinth** (length 6.3 cm × height 3.5 cm)

(no. 15161)

**A.4 = 67 baboons/monkeys** of various heights, ranging from 4.1 cm (min.) to 8.3 cm (max.). Most are represented seated with their arms on their legs and hands on their knees. A few hold either a vessel (no. 15216), a baby monkey (nos. 15217–15218, 15225, 15227), a musical instrument (no.

15226, probably a harp?), an indistinct object (no. 15220 bis), or are shown bringing their hand(s) to their mouth (nos. 15219–15220, 15222, 15224) (nos. 15162–15227)

**A.5 = 7 crouching cats** of various lengths, ranging from 5.6 cm (min.) to 7 cm (max.) and heights from 3 cm (min.) to 5.2 cm (max.)

(nos. 15228, 15230–15231, 15233–15235, 15251)

**A.6 = 5 standing dogs** of various lengths, ranging from 3.9 cm (min.) to 7.5 (max.) and heights from 2.6 cm (min.) to 6.1 cm (max.)

(nos. 15229, 15237–15240)

**13 sitting or crouching dogs** of various lengths, ranging from 6 cm (min.) to 7.5 (max.) and heights ranging from 3.5 cm (min.) to 4.6 (max.)

(nos. 15232, 15236, 15242–15248, 15257, 15267, 15305, 15308)

**2 dogs lying down on their side**, length 7.2 cm × depth 3.7 cm × height 2.7 cm (no. 15285) and 6.4 cm × 2.6 cm × 2.9 cm

(nos. 15285–15286)

**A.7 = 7 sitting/crouching cows/bovines** of various lengths, ranging from 4.8 cm (min.) to 13.5 cm (max.) and heights from 2.5 cm (min.) to 3.8 cm (max.)

(nos. 15261, 15264, 15280–15284)

**A.8 = 10 sitting/crouching rams** of various lengths, ranging from 6.2 cm (min.) to 9 cm (max.) and heights from 3.4 cm (min.) to 5.2 cm (max.)

(nos. 15269–15277, 15279)

**A.9 = 15 hedgehogs** of various lengths, ranging from 4.6 cm (min.) to 10.1 cm (max.) and heights from 2.6 cm (min.) to 5.3 cm (max.)

(nos. 15287–15301)

**A.10 = 5 lions.** No. 15302 stands on its hind legs (height 8.7 cm); no. 15303 is represented standing (length 8.8 cm × height 5 cm); while no. 15304 walking and roaring (length 5.1 cm × height 3.3 cm)

(nos. 15241, 15244, 15302–15304)

**A.11 = 52 grotesque human characters with dwarfish features** of various heights, ranging from 3.8 cm (min.) to 10.5 cm (max.)

(nos. 15309–15360)

<sup>151</sup> In the absence of a close first-hand inspection, only preliminary suggestions about these figurines can be

advanced here, based on published photographic records, drawings and the written description provided by Dunand.



These figurines have often been identified as representations of dwarves (DASEN 1993, 137); however, they do not seem to properly follow the conventional ancient Egyptian iconography of dwarves. The figurines represent deformed men: bald, with a flat head, protruding abdomen, short legs and arms, as well as prominent – and often exaggerated – sexual attributes. Dunand's definition, '*figurine grotesque*', is probably the most appropriate. The connotative feature of each figurine is either its posture or its action; rarely are these 'human grotesque figurines' portrayed static. According to the observations made by Dunand, only nos. 15330, 15332 apparently represent a female figure. A standing figure, sometimes bent at the knees or crouching, holding his protruding belly with both hands (nos. 15309–15311; 15313; 15314 – but squatting; 15315; 15319; 15321; 15323; 15331 – with one hand on the belly, the other in the hair; 15348; 15354–15355, 15359 – all three supine).

A standing figure holding on object, frequently a vessel, in front of his belly. In some instances the object is raised to the mouth (nos. 15316–15317, 15322 – holding a vessel to the mouth; 15344 – holding a vessel; 15320, 15324, 15326, 15329, 15341 – holding an indistinct object; 15325, 15351 – holding a globular object; 15340 – holding a dish; 15343 – holding a musical instrument; 15357 – kneeling with a vessel in front of his face).

A standing figure with hands in various positions (nos. 15312 – with one hand below the chin and the other on the backside; 15327 – with one hand towards the ear and the other on the knee; 15330, 15332, 15337 – with both hands in the hair, apparently female; 15333 – with hand folded in front of the breast).

Figure carrying/holding in the hands or on the shoulders an animal, an infant, or a smaller human being (nos. 15318 – holding a monkey on the shoulder; 15335 – with an infant; 15336 – holding a lamb in the hands; 15338, 15347 – carrying a lamb/ram on the shoulder; 15339 – carrying a lamb on the shoulder; 15342, 15353 – with an indistinct animal/human being; 15346 – carrying a small human being on the shoulders).

Figure wearing a head ornament, wig or headdress (nos. 15345, 15352).

Groups of figures (nos. 15334, 15360).<sup>152</sup>

**A.12 = 1 human being** with no dwarfish features, although of grotesque aspect (no. 15361), height 5.1 cm

**A.13 = 8 female figures, so-called truncated ladies**, of various heights, ranging from 11.1 cm (min.) to 11.9 cm (max.)<sup>153</sup> (nos. 15362–15372)

**A.14 = 17 indistinct animals.** Nos. 15251–15254 have the appearance of a lion or wild cat; no. 15257 of a cow or bovine; no. 15260 of a goat. No. 15278 may belong to the hybrid creature type, as it seems to have human legs and a head similar to that of a ram with horns and an elongated snout (nos. 15249–15252, 15255–15256, 15258–15260, 15262–15263, 15265–15266, 15268, 15278, 15306–15307)

**A.15 = 4 grape models** of various lengths, ranging from 7 (min.) cm to 9.1 cm (max.) (nos. 15446–15449)

**A.16 = 4 cucumber models** of various lengths, ranging from 7.7 cm (min.) to 11.3 cm (max.) (nos. 15450–15453)

**A.17 = 2 models of bridge-spouted jars** (nos. 15387–15388)

**A.18 = 26 models of vessels of different shapes** (nos. 15384, 15389–15413)

**A.19 = 3 models of bowls** (nos. 15414–15416)

**A.20 = 4 models of lids** (nos. 15417–15420)

**B. = a kohl container** in the shape of a human female figure holding a kohl pot in black stone (no. 15374)

<sup>152</sup> To this list it must be added: nos. 15328, 15349–15350 which have no particular features; nos. 15356, 15358 which are tablets representing these grotesque figurines (these two do not count in the total number of 50). DASEN 1993, 282–284, cat. nos. 150–190.

<sup>153</sup> See also MORFOISSE and ANDREU-LANOË 2014, 287–288, cat. nos. 213–232.

**C. = terracotta vessel shaped as a human female figure**  
(no. 15375)

**D. = human figure** in black stone  
(no. 15376)

**E. = a steatite human figure** with a lion's mane and ears, probably representing the hybrid entity Aha/Bes<sup>154</sup>  
(no. 15377)

**F. = a seal of a seated man** with a hieroglyphic inscription (no. 15378)

**G. = 2 cuboid rods** (no. 15462–15463) + the small pegged animals (nos. 15379–15383) belonging to them

**H. = 2 calcite vessels** (nos. 15385–15386)

**I. = Beads**  
(nos. 15421–15446; 15469–15472)

**J. = Various elements**  
(nos. 15454–15461, 15464–15465)

**K. = Handle of a dagger**  
(no. 15466)

**L. = Ivory decorative inlay** (?) with rounded circles  
(no. 15454)

**M. = Terracotta box**  
(no. 15468)

**N. = Pottery vessels**  
(nos. 15473–15476)

**O. = 89 bronze figurines + 1 bronze model of a male warrior** with a lion face/mask (no. 15477)  
(nos. 15478–15566)

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<sup>154</sup> Cf. ARUZ, BENZEL and EVANS 2008, 148.

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