

Branislav Anđelković

*Department of Archaeology
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade
B.Andelkovic@f.bg.ac.rs*

**Hegemony for Beginners:
Egyptian Activity in the Southern Levant during the
Second Half of the Fourth Millennium B.C.***

Abstract: After a modest start in the mid-20th century, thousands of Protodynastic Egyptian objects have been unearthed and identified as such in the Southern Levant, including *serekh*-signs of several Dynasty 0 (Narmer, "Double Falcon", Ny-Hor, Iry-Hor, Ka), and 1st Dynasty (Hor Aha) pharaohs. The explanatory models presented so far fail to integrate the totality of the archaeologically manifested parameters, especially considering the impact of the last fifteen years of finds and their contextual and other analysis, into the proper semiotic matrix. The conundrum of Egyptian activity in the Southern Levant displays, at the same time, features of a small-scale trading partner, a colonizer, and a suzerain. Egyptian pottery of local origin provides an indication of a south-north flow of the Egyptian daily-life repertoire of pottery types, or rather their contents, between the Egyptian-related sites, that clearly demonstrates an Egyptian distribution system operating on an intra-regional level in the Early Bronze IB Southern Levant. The 'Egyptian phenomenon' is far from being unique since reestablishment of a similar geopolitical pattern, only on a considerably greater scale, can be recognized during the New Kingdom – the Egyptian province in Asia.

Key words: Egypt, Dynasty 0, Canaan, Early Bronze IB, paleopolitics, province, copper

* The present paper is a shortened and up-to-date version of a public lecture delivered September 11, 2009 at the Sterling Memorial Library Lecture Hall. Yale Egyptological Institute in Egypt and Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Yale University. I am indebted to J. C. Darnell, C. Manassa, E. Braun, E. C. M. van den Brink and R. Gophna who, in various ways, helped make this paper possible. The present author is participating in the project no. 177008 of the Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Serbia.

Egyptian-Levantine Protodynastic interaction: brief history of research

For more than six decades after the first systematic archaeological project in an ancient tell in southern Palestine (*cf.* Petrie 1891), Egyptian-related archaeological finds were still limited mostly to the 18th to 20th Dynasties and later artifacts. It was due to Yadin's (1955) foreshadowing article that certain much earlier contacts between Egypt and the Southern Levant started to gain slightly wider attention from the professional community.¹ Aside from being an archaeologist Yadin was also a lieutenant general and Chief of Staff, and that probably affected the development of his view of "Egypt's military penetration" and "the subjugation of the peoples of Palestine" (Yadin 1955, 10, 16).² Promising support for Yadin's theory soon followed: in 1959 a *serekh* of Narmer, the last king of the Egyptian Dynasty 0 (*cf.* Anđelković 2002, 84 n.33)³ was unearthed at the Tel 'Erani (Yeivin 1960; *cf.* Braun 2011). Apart from removable Egyptian artifacts – including the Egyptian bullae made of local clay – the Egyptian architecture, *i.e.* "an Egyptian building", was identified at Tel 'En Besor during the 1970s excavations (Gophna 1995, 14). A situation "comparable to that of contemporary 'En Besor" was also discovered at Tel Ma'ahaz (Amiran and van den Brink 2001). Over the next few decades, a variety of Egyptian Protodynastic artifacts, both imported and locally-made, were unearthed at an ever-growing number of sites (Brandl 1992; Anđelković 1995; Gophna 2008). Tel 'Erani⁴ became "the generally accepted center of early Egyptian activity in southern Canaan" (Levy, van den Brink, Goren, and Alon 1995, 28; *cf.* Beit-Arieh 1984, 23). Meanwhile, another center of Egyptian activity in the Southern Levant "which rivals or complements Tel 'Erani" was uncovered – namely, excavations on the Halif Terrace revealed large quantities of Egyptian prestige goods, as well as further "evidence of possible

¹ However, the existence of the Egypto-Levantine early relationship has been known "from the Egyptian side" for decades (Dessel 2009, 130 with references).

² Despite the fact that Yadin's "interpretation of Narmer's palette is untenable" (Wright 1985, 251 with references), he got it right (Egyptian military presence in southern Palestine) but for the wrong reasons (*cf.* Levy and van den Brink 2002, 24).

³ A dividing line between the last Protodynastic king Narmer (Dynasty 0) and the first Early Dynastic king Hor Aha (1st Dynasty) has been drawn by the overgrown volume, complexity and extent of the entire social, economic and political organization, namely, overall Egyptian empire management and logistics, that significantly exceeded the previous Naqada-rooted parameters (Anđelković 2004, 541; Anđelković 2011b, 31).

⁴ According to Yekutieli (2006, 225, 238-239) the fact that Tel 'Erani was a major Canaanite economic and political center "may have been one of the reasons Egyptians colonized the region" in Early Bronze Ib2, 3200-3050 B.C.

administrative functions" (Levy, van den Brink, Goren, and Alon 1995, 28; *cf.* Levy *et al.* 1997). Another important site, Tel Lod, yielded a significant, albeit proportionally small, less than 10%, quantity of Egyptian and Egyptian-related pottery (van den Brink 2002, 297) including the largest assemblage of *serekhs* for any site outside the Nile Valley: 7 of Narmer, 1 of Ka, 1 of Iry-Hor, and 1 unidentified – totally 10 *serekhs* (van den Brink and Braun 2002).⁵ However, the best nominee for the main Egyptian settlement/center was yet to come: the salvage excavations at Tell es-Sakan in 1999 revealed a fortified city dating to the Protodynastic period, including "dwellings and installations such as hearths, kilns and a silo", that illustrate building techniques "typical of contemporary Egypt" (Miroschedji and Sadek 2008, 2028). The approximate date of the foundation of this large site, characterized by almost exclusively Egyptian-related artifacts, is *ca.* 3300 B.C. (Miroschedji and Sadek 2005, 157).

Over the past five decades after the first Narmer's *serekh* was unearthed at Tel 'Erani, many new discoveries have been made, indicating a strong Egyptian presence. From some 40 sites known so far (Fig. 1),⁶ thousands of Protodynastic Egyptian artifacts in the Southern Levant became known, both those made in Egypt, and those of Southern Levantine origin, including *serekh*-signs of Narmer's predecessors "Double Falcon", Ny-Hor, Iry-Hor and Ka, as well as a single *serekh* of his successor Hor Aha.⁷

⁵ Although some twelve *serekh* fragments from Lod were originally registered (van den Brink 2001, 88), two of them turned out to be rather dubious fragments, so the final number at present is ten (E. C. M van den Brink, personal communication, August 20th, 2009).

⁶ In addition to the already mapped sites (Anđelković 1995, 8 Map. 1) we should mention: Tel Aphek, Tel Dalit, Tel Lod, Tell es-Sakan, Amaziya, "Nesher"-Ramle (el-Hirbe) (Burial caves F-55 and F-355, three imported Egyptian jars; Avrutis and van den Brink 2010). An additional number of sites "with attested Egyptian merchandize", including *inter alia* Horvat Shovav, Teluliyot Batash and Giv'atayim, is suggested by Gophna (2008). A number of Egyptian objects were found at Bâb edh-Dhrâ' in the Dead Sea Plain (Braun 1993, 124). Tell Abu al-Kharaz, in the central part of the Jordan Valley, produced "two Egyptian cylindrical jars" of Naqada IIIB date (Fischer 2000, 225). A fragment of Egyptian relief carving (the 'Bet Yerah Palette') that "antedates its find context by some centuries" was found in a secondary depositional context at Tel Beth Yerah (Wengrow 2008-2009, 32).

⁷ Totally thirty-three pottery-incised *serekh*-signs have been discovered in the Southern Levant so far (E. C. M van den Brink, personal communication, June 3rd, 2012; *cf.* van den Brink 2001, 88-89, Appendix A.a). Horus Crocodile and two unidentified rulers have also been mentioned in regard to the view that "Soreq basin *serekhs* belong to a time span perhaps associated with the reigns of as many as seven Egyptian rulers" (Braun, van den Brink, Gophna and Goren 2001, 70). The *serekh* serve to represent the monarch's royal authority (*cf.* O'Brien 1996), and in the case mentioned above probably indicates the presence of a state-related administrative

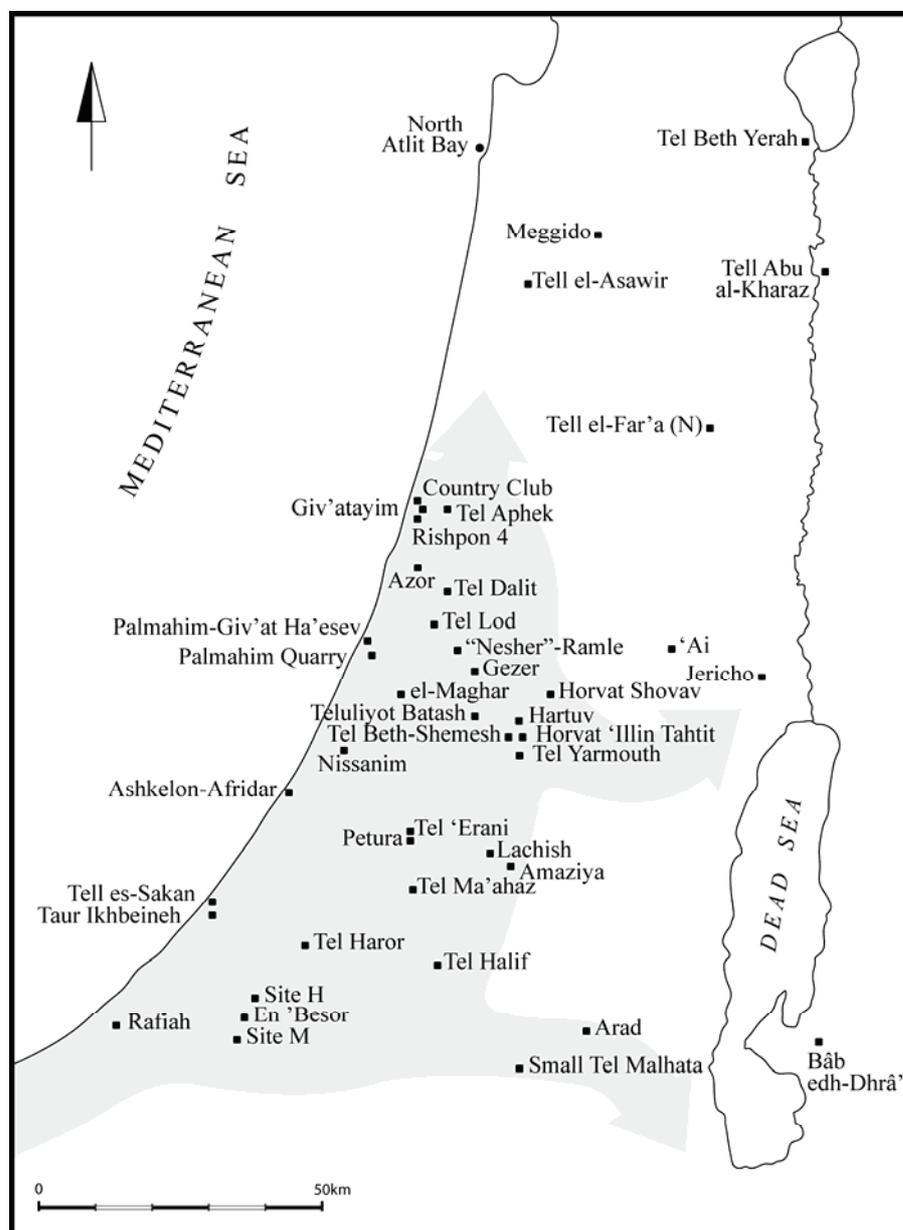


Fig. 1. Egyptian Dynasty 0 Province of the Southern Levant.

system connected to economic activities, such as goods production, distribution, taxation, and the like. Note that royal *serekh*-signs are found not only on storage jars from Egypt, but also on locally produced Egyptian vessels from the Southern Levant.

Modeling Egyptian activity in the Southern Levant

Egyptian activity in the Southern Levant during the second half of the fourth millennium B.C.⁸ so far can be categorized by five primary models (Anđelković 1995, 67-68 with references; Anđelković 2002, 76-81; Levy *et al.* 1997, 6-7; Kansa 2001, 52-58; Levy and van den Brink 2002, 4-6; Dessel 2009, 131-135, 143-146; *cf.* Adams 2002), none of which necessarily excludes certain components of one or more of the others.

(1) The Military Penetration Model, Conquest Model, Naked Force Model and the Imperialist Model are terminological variations that stand for the thesis that the Southern Levant was dominated by Egyptian military power. While one can hardly doubt that the troops of the Egyptian Crown protected the state's interests – let us remember that many Protodynastic monuments "focus on foreign relations, aggression, and the assertion of order" (Baines 1999) – back up forces must have been present on a relatively small-scale, because Dynasty 0 Egyptian military capability had no serious opponent⁹ in the ideologically and politically unfocused, sparse population of the late Early Bronze I Southern Levant. However, that a certain danger did exist, and that Egyptians did not feel safe (due to bands of plunderers, or some competing 'third side' interested in the Southern Levantine territorial riches?), seems to be demonstrated by three successive defensive mud-brick city walls, the latest 3.8 m thick, at Tell es-Sakan.

(2) The Commercialization Model, Commerce Model, and Merchandise Diffusion Model, all share a view of Egyptian-South Levantine interaction as purely economic, based on complex exchange, reciprocal trade and commerce. However, large, medium and small Egyptian settlements with almost entirely Egyptian archaeological material, along with the sites containing a significant amount, between 20-40%, of Egyptian-related finds, especially daily-life kitchen utensils and sickles (van den Brink 2002, 297; Rosen 1988, 114), imply

⁸ Egypto-Levantine intersocietal relations have a long history, even since the terminal Paleolithic (Anđelković 1995, 23-24 with references). The Egyptian presence in the Southern Levant during the 4th Millennium B.C. had three phases: (1) a small scale commerce existed at the Late Chalcolithic/incipient EB IA transition; (2) at the second half of EB IA, Egyptians were exploring the southern Levant and consolidating their positions there; (3) the outcome was establishing of the permanent large-scale Egyptian presence at EB IB (Anđelković 1995, 72), or as Dessel put it (2009, 135): (1) sporadic contact; (2) entrepreneurial exploration; (3) direct settlement.

⁹ The fortification at Tel 'Erani seems to be among the earliest in Palestine but "comparisons between the Bronze Age walled towns of Palestine with the archaic states of Egypt and Mesopotamia (...) may be like comparing apples and oranges" (Levy and van den Brink 2002, 24).

that these artifacts were used by Egyptian settlers¹⁰ who tried to sustain their traditional way of life, despite what their individual responsibilities and duties in the Southern Levant, their new home, might be. Their undivided participation in the Egyptian bureaucratic system is confirmed by state-related administrative artifacts such as royal *serekhs*, cylinder seals and seal impressions. Moreover, as suggested by the North Sinai survey results, "the economic balance of the colony was negative", or in the other words "the maintenance of the colony demanded from [the] Egyptian state much more than what it earned from it" (Yekutieli 1998, XXII-XXIII). Sporadic small-scale trade, scarcity of potential merchandise on both sides, and not particularly wealthy native 'customers' living in a small villages, can hardly offer sound 'commercial' reasons even for trade diaspora or "small trading enclaves" (Kansa 2001, 54), let alone for the prolonged presence of "a permanent large-scale network of Egyptian communities" (Dessel 2009, 151).

(3) The Colonial Model and World System Colonial Model both suggest that the Southern Levant was an Egyptian domain, but while the former perceives it as "a non-self-governing territory", "ruled by Egyptians" (Anđelković 1995, 70), the later defines it through the "indirect modes of economic exploitation" (Levy *et al.* 1997, 6). According to Miroschedji and Sadeq (2005, 163-165), "the Egyptian colonial territory" was distinguished by two¹¹ different areas: a 'core area' of permanent Egyptian installation, stretching up to *ca.* 25 km north/northeast of Tell es-Sakan, with "an almost exclusively Egyptian material", from which "the administration of the Egyptian colonial territory was conducted"; and a 'peripheral area' of colonial Egyptian presence, covering roughly "the coastal plain and the Shephela region south of the Yarkon river" where a number of sites hosted an "important Egyptian contingent, for all or only part of the year". However, the evidence at Tel Lod (about 15 km southeast of Tel-Aviv) of bread molds and so-called 'lotus-bowls' "made from loessial clay, the source of which is the southern region of Canaan", provides "an indication of a direct south-north flow" of certain 'specialized' pottery types (van den Brink 2002, 287, 299), that rather point toward the territorial compactness of the Egyptian presence and activities in the Southern Levant,¹² from Tell es-Sakan approximately to

¹⁰ Egyptian and Levantine ceramic production was "divided along ethnic lines" and each attended "to the needs of their respective communities" (Dessel 2009, 128).

¹¹ The rest of Palestine would make a "third area" with "regular trading contacts with Egyptians, who could occasionally, or seasonally, send small groups of traders there" (Miroschedji and Sadeq 2005, 165).

¹² The general frame of the Egyptian domain in the Southern Levant, be it either a colony (as a non-self-governing territory) or province, is not directly related to a greater or lesser Egyptian-Levantine ratio at any particular location within the

Yarkon river and Nahal Poleg area (*cf.* Brandl 1992, 444; Anđelković 1995, 8 Map 1). The strong tendency of the Naqada culture/elite to expand its power beyond its borders, or rather to expand both its power *and* borders,¹³ was early recognized by Kaiser (1957, 74) who accordingly labeled it "Kolonialkultur". As correctly noticed by Brandl (1992, 447-448), the colony "served the Egyptian interests in the Mediterranean, and as such should be seen as an extension of the settlement along the Pelusiatic branch of the Nile and the North Sinai coast", or as Porat put it (1986/87, 118) it was "an extension of Egypt and not just under Egyptian influence". Indeed, the Southern Levant territory was practically an extension of the Egyptian settlement along the northern Sinai coast – the North Sinai land route was its "vital life vein" (Yekutieli 1998, XIX) – that too (see below) makes it an Egyptian province rather than a colony.

(4) The Dynamic-Tension Model, 'Mastermind' Model, and Distance-Parity Model offer a theoretical framework that is primarily concerned with socio-political and hegemonic power relations. Such an approach (*cf.* Dessel 1991) perhaps defines motives which lay behind the 'Egyptian phenomenon' in the Southern Levant, but when it comes to "a limited period of direct Egyptian settlement" (Dessel 2009, 144), *i.e.* actual Egyptian presence on the ground, it rather turns to (and merges with) some/any of the other models.

(5) The Émigré Model suggests one-way population movements from Egypt to the Southern Levant, that may have been purposefully directed and controlled by a powerful entity such as the Egyptian state, or, less probably, were uncoordinated settlements of Egyptian people. As stated by Gophna (1976, 32) "Egyptian pottery did not reach Canaan as commercial imports (...) but was part of the household equipment of Egyptians coming to stay in southern Canaan".¹⁴ Establishing an Egyptian émigré community could alternatively constitute "a means for the utilization of excess population" (Dessel 2009, 131).

It should be noted that the purpose of the Egyptian presence is often confused with the form by which it was implemented. For instance, the distinction between commerce and colony models has been blurred by the assertion that "a state-sponsored colonial program" is introduced to establish

territory under control (*cf.* Redford 1990, 30), as is well demonstrated by the similar well-documented historical situations.

¹³ As we have already stated elsewhere, that is exactly why every subsequent political entity, from Upper Egyptian proto-nomes to the all-Egyptian early state/Egyptian empire, encompassed a larger territory in comparison to its precursor (Anđelković 2006, 600; Anđelković 2011b, Fig. 3.3).

¹⁴ Low Nile floods *ca.* 3200 B.C. (Hassan 2000) may have caused substantial population movements.

and maintain "asymmetric trading relations between Palestine and Egypt" (Kansa 2001, 56). This clearly demonstrates that the 'Egyptian phenomenon' in the Southern Levant is a complex, multi-layered construct of various but still somehow related issues. The nature of Egyptian activity in the Southern Levant¹⁵ is to be fully perceived only through the selective integration of these five models – that bring into focus various aspects such as power imbalance, sociocultural identity differences, economic interests, access to strategic raw materials, population movements encompassing immigration and direct settlement, and political subservience – into a comprehensive new interpretation of specific spatiotemporal form: the Egyptian Dynasty 0 province of the Southern Levant.¹⁶

Egyptian finds in the Southern Levant

Numerous Protodynastic Egyptian finds in the Early Bronze IB Southern Levant include almost every class of artifact (*e.g.* Anđelković 1995, 25-56): architecture (fortifications, embankments and buildings), a tremendous amount of pottery, alabaster vessels, palettes, stone and copper tools and weapons, seals and seal impressions, amulets, jewelry, figurines, Nilotic fauna – large freshwater molluscs (*e.g.* Nile shells have been found at Petura, *ca.* 2 km east of Tel 'Erani: see Braun and van den Brink 2008, 655), fish bones of Nile perch (dried specimens transported as provender), Nile catfish spikes (used as small harpoons), etc.

Despite the existence of the hybrid pottery (Brandl 1989, 376),¹⁷ that often represents an Egyptian potter experimenting with Southern Levantine forms¹⁸ (*cf.* Levy *et al.* 1997, Fig. 27a,b) – a tendency well known from Egyptian

¹⁵ Although the present author, like several other colleagues, previously perceived an Egyptian Protodynastic presence in the Southern Levant as colonial (*e.g.* Brandl 1992; Anđelković 1995; Anđelković 2002), with a steadily growing corpus of finds and their contextual analysis a new picture emerged - identifying the 'Egyptian phenomenon' as the Egyptian Dynasty 0 province of the Southern Levant.

¹⁶ A similar geopolitical pattern, but to a considerably greater degree, was to be restored with the Egyptian province in Asia, when Canaan was annexed to Egypt (*e.g.* Redford 1990; Bar, Kahn and Shirley 2011), *i.e.* absorbed into the "powerful Egyptian empire of the New Kingdom" (Sparks 2002-2003, 49).

¹⁷ Hybrid vessels production was irregular and localized: such hybrids as Levantine "holemouth jars and storage jars made in local Egyptian ware have been documented only at the Halif Terrace and at Tel el-'Erani in the EB IB" (Dessel 2009, 113, 127).

¹⁸ As indicated by Dessel (2009, 128) "the importation of Egyptian vessels had no perceivable effect on the Levantine industry".

adoption of the Palestinian ledge-handled jars in Naqada IIc: soon to be transformed into Egyptian wavy-handled jars – the Egyptian ceramic industry in the sites in the Southern Levant "was kept very separate from the Levantine industry" (Dessel 2009, 126).

The quest for copper

Aside from archaeologically visible artifacts and materials, there are many goods that are hard to detect. Paradoxically, these are not perishable organic products alone, but rather are made of solid metal which was mostly been robbed in antiquity or recycled in subsequent periods (Anđelković 1995, 21). If copper was one of the main Egyptian strategic interests in the Southern Levant, it was, as well as gold, too valuable to be left behind or abandoned, but has been recycled. The modest excavated amount, *e.g.* the copper harpoon and awl from Tel 'En Besor which are "products of the well-developed Egyptian metal industry of the Protodynastic period" (Gophna 1995, 226),¹⁹ or the copper axe of "Late Gerzean Egyptian type" from Tel 'Erani (Yeivin 1975, 97), by no means reflects the amount of copper in circulation. The term 'recyclable exports' can be introduced (Anđelković 2002, 81) for such type of archaeologically invisible phenomena (*cf.* Kraft 1996).²⁰ The "recycling of copper and the exploitation of less copper-rich ores", that point to the growing demand for copper that may have exceeded the supply in the Early Bronze Age, is affirmatively suggested by Golden (2002, 235). In Locus 102/105 at the Halif Terrace several finished copper tools and the remains of metallurgical activities have been found, including awls, crucible fragments, 'raw' or unrefined copper and red and green cuprite and malachite, similar to ores from Feynan: it is not by chance that many of the artifacts found in the very same locus also have a clear association with the Egyptian presence at the site, including two clay seal impressions "which are commonly interpreted as representing administrative involvement" (Golden 2002, 226-227). As far as more northern sites are concerned, Stratum IVa at Tel Lod, with a sizeable quantity of Egyptian finds, yielded fragments of "two small clay crucibles used for copper smelting or melting" (van den Brink 2002, 291). And again, as noted by Golden (2002, 227) "it is likely that Egyptian interests in the southern Levant included the copper industry". It seems that Egyptians also kept their eyes on the "copper road" between Arad and the Sinai sites (Amiran

¹⁹ One can't help but wonder: were they produced by Egyptians in Egypt proper, or by Egyptians in the Southern Levant?

²⁰ But archaeologically largely undetectable goods are also slaves and cattle (Yekutieli 1998, XIV; *cf.* Kansa 2001, 58).

and Ilan 1993, 82), or rather the southeast Wadi Araba/the greater Aqaba area sites, *e.g.* Wadi Feynan, Tall al-Magass and Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan (*cf.* Czarnowicz 2011). As suggested also by Russell Adams (in Dessel 2009, 133 n.3, 143 n.21) "Egyptian expansion into the Southern Levant might well be linked to the search for copper ores".

Tombs, temples and ports

There are a few additional questions concerning the Egyptian presence in the Southern Levant that should be mentioned. In contrast to Egypt proper, no formal Egyptian cemeteries of the kind we are used to in Egypt have yet been discovered in the Southern Levant. There are a number of Southern Levantine burial caves with Egyptian finds, like in Tell el-Asawir, Azor (*e.g.* van den Brink, Gophna and Ovadiah 2007) and "Nesher"-Ramle (el-Hirbe) (Avrutis and van den Brink 2010), but we can by no means define them as Egyptian tombs. A so-called "Egyptian-Style" tomb was unearthed in 1994 at the Halif Terrace (Levy *et al.* 1997, 14-16), but its chronological position with two phases of use, atypical plan and lack of grave goods, hardly justify such determination (*cf.* Braun and van den Brink 2008, 658-659).

In an attempt to understand the puzzling question of the missing Egyptian cemeteries in the Southern Levant in *any* period, we should perhaps reach for some Ancient Egyptian literary references. In *The Tale of Sinuhe*, "a funerary Autobiography" that was composed in the first half of the 12th Dynasty, we witness Sinuhe's dramatic return from foreign lands/"a substitute Egypt", to the enduring security of real Egypt, where the king resides as "the political and ideological centre of Egyptian culture and the representative of all its values";²¹ the king enjoins Sinuhe to return for burial in Egypt – "an ultimate homecoming"²² (Parkinson 2009, 21-24, 36-37):

"Return to Egypt! (...)
For today you have already begun to be old, have lost your virility,
and have in mind the day of burial,
the passing to blessedness. (...)
Your death will not happen in a foreign country;
Asiatics will not lay you to rest; (...)
This is too long to be roaming the earth!
Think of your corpse – and return!"

²¹ King - the Divine Ruler acting as an eternal promise to nullify chaos, enemies and death - seems to be a key ideological issue in the transformation of Predynastic Egypt (Anđelković 2011c).

²² Note the pattern: Egypt-Retjenu-Egypt (Parkinson 2009, 23).

Accordingly, it is possible that the Egyptian population was simply buried in Egypt proper,²³ their homeland and the center of the 'civilized' world, surrounded by lands of chaos beyond the order of the gods (*cf.* Campagno 2008).

There is no evidence for Egyptian Dynasty 0 temples in the Southern Levant but, aside from Hierakonpolis (Locality HK29A, an early ceremonial center, Naqada IIcd) and Elephantine, there is hardly any evidence for contemporaneous temples in Egypt proper either. A fragmented faience baboon statuette "which the Egyptian settlers brought from their homeland to sustain them in an alien and unfamiliar environment", that at the same time "may indicate the existence of a small shrine within the confines of Egyptian Building A" was found at 'En Besor (Gophna 1993, 31; for the Protodynastic baboon symbolic see Hendrickh, Eyckerman and Förster 2008, 376-377).

Along with the land route, there was a maritime route along the Southern Levantine coast, part of the route stretched between the Eastern Nile delta and the Phoenician coast. Such a thesis is supported by a number of finds: the Egyptian knife found lying on the sea-bottom near the shore at Yavne-Yam; about 2 km north is an Early Bronze I site Palmachim-Giv'at Ha'esev²⁴ that probably served as "a navigational landmark to signal mariners sailing along the coast"; while "the heavy ash remains may be explained as the remnants of bonfires used to direct boats to safe anchorage in the sandy estuary of Nahal Soreq" (Gophna and Liphshitz 2009, 139). Furthermore, a ceramic Early Bronze I jar of a hybrid type, "made of alluvial Nile clay", containing 18 large Nile shells, that probably fell off an Egyptian sea craft, was retrieved from the seabed, 700 m off the coast, at a depth of *ca.* 12 m, in North Atlit Bay, south of Haifa (Sharvit, Galili, Rosen and van den Brink 2002), another well known anchorage point.

The Egyptian Dynasty 0 province in the Southern Levant

Due to perfect timing, the Early Bronze I mostly village-based chiefdoms created a sort of gap between the collapsed Chalcolithic societies and nascent urban sites of Early Bronze II, whereas the expanding Dynasty 0

²³ Pottery comparison indicates that the best parallels to Egyptian assemblage, at least as far as Tel Ma'ahaz is concerned, are found in the ceramic repertoires of the Delta sites such as Minshat Abu Omar (Grave Group 3b), Tell el-Fara'in/Buto and Tell Ibrahim Awad (Amiran and van den Brink 2001, 47).

²⁴ Note that Palmachim Quarry produced a *serekh* of "Double Falcon" - the name compartment was filled with punctures, whereas two small vertical strokes stand for the birds - (Braun, van den Brink, Gophna and Goren 2001, 69-70, Pl. 4.3a).

Egyptian state firmly and rapidly progressed up its core civilization evolutionary trajectory.

As said before, Egyptian pottery of local origin, uncovered at Tel Lod but produced at the sites with differing degrees of Egyptian affiliation up to 80 km southward, provides an indication of a direct south-north flow of "a rather limited 'repertoire' of certain 'specialized' Egyptian pottery types",²⁵ such as bread molds and small and medium-sized 'lotus' bowls (van den Brink 2002, 299). Not in disharmony with "hints" that there was a local "small-scale redistributive economy" at the Halif Terrace (Kansa and Levy 2002, 204), this pattern clearly demonstrates the presence of an Egyptian "(re)distribution system operating on an intra-regional level" (van den Brink 2002, 299) at Egyptian-related sites in the Southern Levant. At a newly-discovered settlement and silo complex at Amaziya (*ca.* 9 km east-south-east of Tel Lachish), the large-scale silo complex was associated to "the existence of a polity exercising some sort of regional control" and again "a small but highly significant assemblage of imported Egyptian pottery and other Egyptian-style vessels" was found (Milevski, Braun, Varga and Israel 2012).

In the light of the overall evidence, Egyptian Dynasty 0 activity in the Southern Levant is to be seen as the establishment, maintenance and exploitation of the earliest known Egyptian province there, in many aspects similar to the Egyptian province of Canaan that would reappear during the New Kingdom. Accordingly, the Southern Levantine 'exports' to Egypt, especially copper, olive oil and wine are to some extent to be interpreted as taxes (paid by Egyptian settlers?) or tribute (paid by the south Levantine population?). The Egyptian Dynasty 0 state directed and supported the process of settlement plantation – Egypt simply extended her frontiers as far as logistically possible at the given moment. It is significant that the center of Egyptian Dynasty 0 activity was the fortified city Tell es-Sakan, some 500 m to the north of Tell al-'Ajjul. It seems that it is not due to chance but rather to well established tradition that in the Gaza area was the capital of the Egyptian province of Canaan in the New Kingdom, where "the chief governor of Canaan resided" (Mazar 1990, 236).

Like any other nation-state (*cf.* Anđelković 2008; Anđelković 2011a; Anđelković 2011c) Egypt subdued and controlled its neighbors' territories for any or all of the following reasons: (1) the resources and products, including those which passed through them; (2) the manpower available therein; (3) the strategic location of these territories; and (4) the living space afforded there (Redford 1990, 2). Given the Egyptian need for copper, olive oil, wine and slaves, both male and female (*cf.* Kansa 2001, 58), endemic rivalry with

²⁵ Specialized "foreign production, responsible for the ceramic needs of an émigré community" was identified at the Halif Terrace (Dessel 2009, 6).

Hither-Asia and control of transit corridors, and finally the large amount and repeating domestic context of Egyptian artefacts that have been found in the Southern Levant, it seems that all four mentioned aspects were present.²⁶

The golden age of the Egyptian Dynasty 0 province lasted for several generations. As already stated elsewhere (Anđelković 1995, 72), a sharp increase of the level of political and socio-economic organization, population growth and founding of the large walled towns in the Southern Levant, a shift of Egyptian interest to Lebanon and Syria, or some internal events in Egypt proper, such as an inner political unrest, might have caused the abandonment and withdrawal from the province.

The Egyptian, or rather Naqadian-style, experiment in assimilation of the local population, assisted by acculturation (the hybrid pottery as far as the Southern Levant is concerned?), that turned out to be successful in Lower Egypt and Lower Nubia, eventually failed in the Southern Levant, because, while Lower Egyptians and Lower Nubians were both Nilotic populations as were the Naqadians themselves, the Southern Levantines belonged to another, northeastern Mediterranean cultural sphere.²⁷ Unlike Nubia, the Southern Levant always remained alien to the Egyptians – they were "strangers in a strange land" (Sparks 2002-2003).

Let me add a few words on the employed terminology. Provincial entities are created with a view to organizing and integrating conquered territories into the political matrix of the domineering power. Whether we should talk of Egypt's *province* of the Southern Levant, or Egypt's *occupation* of the Southern Levant instead, or if the Egyptians in charge can be understood as viceroyalty, governors, senior military leaders, or overseers "who put the fear of Horus into the foreign lands" (Redford 1990, 5), is a matter for scholarly discussion, but does not change the essence of manifested hegemonic power – Egypt rules!

To conclude this paper I will borrow the words of the eminent archaeologist Flinders Petrie, who is best known for his work in Egypt, but who devoted the last fifteen years of his life to digging in southern Palestine (Sparks 2002-2003, 48): he offered a meaningful definition of southern Palestine, which is described as "Egypt over the border".

²⁶ Note that the Egyptian conquests in the Levant during the New Kingdom were mostly carried out in order to guard the main routes to Lebanon and Syria, and for the gains from the economic exploitation of the occupied territory: "Wood, oil, wine, wheat, cattle, copper, slaves and concubines" (Mazar 1990, 236).

²⁷ According to Amiran and Ilan (1993, 82), in "respect to its spiritual life, Arad belonged to the north Syrian Irano-Mesopotamian world, despite its strong commercial ties with Egypt".

Literature

- Adams, Robert McC. 2002. "Edging toward Credible Models: A commentary". In *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through the Early 3rd Millennium B.C.E.*, eds. Thomas E. Levy and Edwin C. M. van den Brink, 523-527. London: Leicester University Press.
- Amiran, Ruth and Ornit Ilan. 1993. "[Arad:] The Canaanite city". In *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land 1*, ed. Ephraim Stern, 75-82. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society – Carta and Simon – Schuster.
- Amiran, Ruth and Edwin C. M. van den Brink. 2001. "A Comparative Study of the Egyptian Pottery from Tel Ma'ahaz, Stratum I". In *Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and Neighboring Lands in Memory of Douglas L. Esse*, ed. Samuel R. Wolff, 29-58. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 59. ASOR books 5. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago -The American Schools of Oriental Research.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 1995. *The Relations between Early Bronze Age I Canaanites and Upper Egyptians*. Centre for Archaeological Research 14. Belgrade: Faculty of Philosophy.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 2002. Southern Canaan as an Egyptian Protodynastic Colony. *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie* 3-4: 75-92.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 2004. "The Upper Egyptian Commonwealth: A Crucial Phase of the State Formation Process". In *Egypt at its Origins. Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams. Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, Krakow, 28th August – 1st September 2002, eds. Stan Hendrickx, Renée F. Friedman, Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz, and Marek Chłodnicki, 535-546. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 138. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters – Departement Oosterse Studies.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 2006. "Models of State Formation in Predynastic Egypt". In *Archaeology of Early Northeastern Africa. In Memory of Lech Krzyżaniak*, eds. Karla Kroeper, Marek Chłodnicki and Michał Kobusiewicz, 593-609. Studies in African Archaeology 9. Poznań: Poznań Archaeological Museum.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 2008. "Parameters of Statehood in Predynastic Egypt". In *Egypt at its Origins 2: Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, Toulouse (France) 5th-8th September 2005, eds. Béatrix Midant-Reynes, Yann Tristant, Joanne Rowland and Stan Hendrickx, 1039-1056. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 172. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters – Departement Oosterse Studies.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 2011a. "Factors of State Formation in Protodynastic Egypt". In *Egypt at its Origins 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, London, 27th July – 1st August 2008, eds. Renée F. Friedman and Peter N. Fiske, 1219-1228. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 205. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters – Departement Oosterse Studies.
- Anđelković, Branislav. 2011b. "Political Organization of Egypt in the Predynastic Period". In *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization*, ed. Emily Teeter, 25-32. Oriental Institute Museum Publications 33. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

- Andelković, Branislav. 2011c. "The Molding Power of Ideology: Political Transformations of Predynastic Egypt". In *Egypt at Its Origins, The Fourth International Conference on Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt, July 26 – July 30, 2011, Program and Abstracts*, eds. Diana C. Patch and Matthew D. Adams, 17. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Institute of Fine Arts.
- Avrutis, Vladimir W. and Edwin C. M. van den Brink. 2010. Finds from a late Early Bronze Age I burial ground at "Nesher"-Ramle (el-Hirbe), Israel, reflecting Egyptian-South Levantine interrelations. *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie* 13-14: 45-59.
- Baines, John. 1999. "Defining social complexity in Early Egypt: Levels of pattering in the evidence". Paper presented at the *World Archaeological Congress 4, 10th-14th January 1999, Cape Town*.
- Bar, Shay, Dan'el Kahn and Judith J. Shirley. (eds.) 2011. *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature. Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Beit-Arieh, Itzhaq. 1984. New Evidence on the Relations between Canaan and Egypt during the Proto-Dynastic Period. *Israel Exploration Journal* 34/1: 20-23.
- Brandl, Baruch. 1989. "Observations on the Early Bronze Age Strata of Tel Erani". In *L'urbanisation de la Palestine à l'âge du Bronze ancien: Bilan et perspectives des recherches actuelles. Actes du Colloque d'Emmaüs (20-24 octobre 1986)*, ed. Pierre de Miroschedji, 357-387. BAR International Series 527 (I-II). Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Brandl, Baruch. 1992. "Evidence for Egyptian Colonization in the Southern Coastal Plain and Lowlands of Canaan During the EB I Period". In *The Nile Delta in Transition: 4th-3rd. Millennium B.C. Proceedings of the Seminar held in Cairo, 21-24. October 1990, at the Netherlands Institute of Archaeology and Arabic Studies*, ed. Edwin C. M. van den Brink, 441-477. Tel Aviv: E. C. M. van den Brink.
- Braun, Eliot. 1993. Some Observations on the Origins and Iconography of a Cylinder Seal from Bâb edh-Dhrâ'. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 290-291: 121-125.
- Braun, Eliot. 2011. "South Levantine Early Bronze Age chronological correlations with Egypt in light of the Narmer serekhs from Tel Erani and Arad: New interpretations". In *Egypt at its Origins 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt", London, 27th July – 1st August 2008*, eds. Renée F. Friedman and Peter N. Fiske, 975-1001. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 205. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters – Departement Oosterse Studies.
- Braun, Eliot and Edwin C. M. van den Brink. 2008. "Appraising South Levantine-Egyptian interaction: recent discoveries from Israel and Egypt". In *Egypt at its Origins 2: Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt", Toulouse (France) 5th-8th September 2005*, eds. Béatrix Midant-Reynes, Yann Tristant, Joanne Rowland and Stan Hendrickx, 643-688. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 172. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters – Departement Oosterse Studies.
- Braun, Eliot, Edwin C. M. van den Brink, Ram Gophna and Yuval Goren. 2001. "New Evidence for Egyptian Connections During a Late Phase of Early Bronze Age I from the Soreq Basin in South-Central Israel". In *Studies in the Archaeology*

- of Israel and Neighboring Lands in Memory of Douglas L. Esse*, ed. Samuel R. Wolff, 59-97. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 59. ASOR books 5. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago – The American Schools of Oriental Research.
- Campagno, Marcelo. 2008. "Ethnicity and changing relationships between Egyptians and South Levantines during the Early Dynastic Period". In *Egypt at its Origins 2: Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt", Toulouse (France) 5th-8th September 2005*, eds. Béatrix Midant-Reynes, Yann Tristant, Joanne Rowland and Stan Hendrickx, 689-705. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 172. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters – Departement Oosterse Studies.
- Czarnowicz, Marcin. 2011. "A New Look at the Copper Trade during the Early Dynastic Period". In *Egypt at Its Origins, The Fourth International Conference on Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt, July 26 – July 30, 2011, Program and Abstracts*, eds. Diana C. Patch and Matthew D. Adams, 26-27. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art – Institute of Fine Arts.
- Dessel, J. P. 1991. "Egypto-Canaanite Relations in the Fourth Millennium: A View from the Halif Terrace". Presented by invitation at *American Research Center in Egypt Annual Meeting, April 29, 1991, Boston, MA*.
- Dessel, J. P. 2009. *Lahav I, pottery and politics: the Halif Terrace site 101 and Egypt in the fourth millennium B.C.E.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Fischer, Peter M. 2000. "The Early Bronze Age at Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Jordan Valley: A Study of Pottery Typology and Provenance, Radiocarbon dates, and Synchronism of Palestine and Egypt During Dynasty 0-2". In *Ceramic and Change in the Early Bronze Age of the Southern Levant*, eds. Graham Philip and Douglas Baird, 201-232. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Golden, Jonathan. 2002. "The Origins of the Metals Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: Social Organization of Production in the Early Copper Industries". In *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through the Early 3rd Millennium B.C.E.*, eds. Thomas E. Levy and Edwin C. M. van den Brink, 225-238. London: Leicester University Press.
- Gophna, Ram. 1976. Egyptian immigration into Southern Canaan during the First Dynasty. *Tel Aviv* 3/1: 31-37.
- Gophna, Ram. 1993. A Faience Statuette from 'En Besor. *Tel Aviv* 20/1: 29-32.
- Gophna, Ram. 1995. *Excavations at 'En Besor*. Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing.
- Gophna, Ram. 2008. "Center and periphery: the diffusion of Egyptian merchandize in Israel's Central Coastal Plain and Shephelah during Naqada IIIB/C1. A settlement map update". Poster presented at *Egypt at its Origins: The Third International Colloquium on Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt, Sunday 27th July – Friday 1st August 2008, The British Museum, London*.
- Gophna, Ram and Shmuel Lipschitz. 2009. "Palmachim-Giv'at Ha'esev: A Navigational Landmark for Ancient Mariners?" In *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, ed. J. David Schloen, 137-149. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Hassan, Fekri. 2000. "Environmental perception and human responses in history and prehistory". In *The Way the Wind Blows: Climate Change, History, and Human*

- Action*, eds. Roderick J. McIntosh, Joseph A. Tainter, and Susan Keech McIntosh, 121-140. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hendrickx, Stan, Merel Eyckerman and Frank Förster. 2008. Late Predynastic Falcons on a Boat (Brussels E.7067). *Journal of the Serbian Archaeological Society* 24: 371-384.
- Kansa, Eric C. 2001. *Smitten by Narmer: Ethnicity, Economy and Trade in the 4th Millennium BCE Egyptian Presence in the Southern Levant*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Harvard University.
- Kansa, Eric C. and Thomas E. Levy. 2002. "Ceramics, Identity, and the role of the State: The View from Nahal Tillah". In *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through the Early 3rd Millennium B.C.E.*, eds. Thomas E. Levy and Edwin C. M. van den Brink, 190-212. London: Leicester University Press.
- Kaiser, Werner. 1957. Zur inner Chronologie der Nakadakultur. *Archaeologia Geographica* 6: 69-77.
- Kraft, Herbert C. 1996. *The Dutch, the Indians and the Quest for Copper: Pahaquarry and the Old Mine Road*. South Orange, NJ: Seton Hall University Museum.
- Levy, Thomas E. and Edwin C. M. van den Brink. 2002. "Interaction Models, Egypt and the Levantine Periphery". In *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through the Early 3rd Millennium B.C.E.*, eds. Thomas E. Levy and Edwin C. M. van den Brink, 3-38. London: Leicester University Press.
- Levy, Thomas E., Edwin C. M. van den Brink, Yuval Goren, and David Alon. 1995. New Light on King Narmer and the Protodynastic Egyptian Presence in Canaan. *Biblical Archaeologist* 58/1: 26-35.
- Levy, Thomas E. *et al.* 1997. Egyptian-Canaanite Interaction at Nahal Tillah, Israel (ca. 4500-3000 B.C.): An Interim Report on the 1994-1995 Excavations. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 307: 1-51.
- Mazar, Amihai. 1990. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 10.000-586 B. C. E.* New York: Doubleday.
- Milevski, Ianir, Eliot Braun, Daniel Varga and Yigal Israel. 2012. A newly-discovered Early Bronze Age settlement and silo complex at Amaziya, Israel. *Antiquity's Project Gallery*, accessed April 16, 2012: <http://www.antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/milevski331/>.
- Miroschedji, Pierre de and Mo'ain Sadeq. 2005. "The Frontier of Egypt in the Early Bronze Age: Preliminary Soundings at Tell al-Sakan (Gaza Strip)". In *Archaeological Perspectives on the Transmission and Transformation of Culture: A View from the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Joanne Clarke, 155-169. Levant Supplementary Series 2. Oxford: Council for British Research in the Levant – Oxbow Books.
- Miroschedji, Pierre de and Mo'ain Sadek. 2008. "Sakan, Tell es-". In *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* 5, Supplementary Volume, ed. Ephraim Stern, 2027-2029. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society - Biblical Archaeology Society.
- O'Brien, Alexandra A. 1996. The Serekh as an Aspect of the Iconography of Early Kingship. *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 33: 123-138.
- Parkinson, Richard B. (transl.) 2009. *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems 1940-1640 BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Petrie, W. M. Flinders. 1891. *Tell el Hesi (Lachish)*. London: Palestine Exploration Found.

- Porat, Naomi. 1986/87. Local Industry of Egyptian Pottery in Southern Palestine during the Early Bronze I Period. *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 8: 109-129.
- Redford, Donald B. 1990. *Egypt and Canaan in the New Kingdom*. Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press.
- Rosen, Steven A. 1988. A Preliminary Note on the Egyptian Component of the Chipped Stone Assemblage from Tel 'Erani. *Israel Exploration Journal* 38/3: 105-116.
- Sharvit, Jacob, Ehud Galili, Baruch Rosen and Edwin C. M. van den Brink. 2002. "Predynastic Maritime Traffic Along the Carmel Coast of Israel: A Submerged Find from North Atlit Bay". In *Quest of Ancient Settlements and Landscapes: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Ram Gophna*, eds. Edwin C. M. van den Brink and Eli Yannai, 159-166. Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing.
- Sparks, Rachel. 2002-2003. Strangers in a strange land: Egyptians in southern Palestine during the Bronze Age. *Archaeology International* 6: 48-51.
- van den Brink, Edwin C. M. 2001. The Pottery-Incised Serekh-Signs of Dynasties 0-1. Part II: Fragments and Additional Complete Vessels. *Archéo-Nil* 11: 23-100.
- van den Brink, Edwin C. M. 2002. "An Egyptian Presence at the End of the Late Early Bronze Age I at Tel Lod, Central Coastal Plain, Israel". In *Egypt and the Levant: Interrelations from the 4th through the Early 3rd Millennium B.C.E.*, eds. Thomas E. Levy and Edwin C. M. van den Brink, 286-305. London: Leicester University Press.
- van den Brink, Edwin C. M. and Eliot Braun. 2002. "Wine Jars with Serekhs from Early Bronze Lod: Appellation Vallée du Nil Controlée, but for whom?" In *Quest of Ancient Settlements and Landscapes: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Ram Gophna*, eds. Edwin C. M. van den Brink and Eli Yannai, 167-192. Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing.
- van den Brink, Edwin C. M., Ram Gophna and Asher Ovadiah. 2007. Burial Cave 2 in the Azor-Holon cemetery: an Early Bronze Age I tomb with Egyptian finds. *Ägypten und Levante* 17: 59-71.
- Wengrow, David. 2008-2009. Exploring connections: a new fieldwork collaboration at Tel Bet Yerah (Khirbet el-Kerak). *Archaeology International* 12: 31-35.
- Wright, Mary. 1985. Contacts Between Egypt and Syro-Palestine During the Protodynastic Period. *Biblical Archaeologist* 48/4: 240-253.
- Yadin, Yigael. 1955. The Earliest Record of Egypt's Military Penetration into Asia. *Israel Exploration Journal* 5/1: 1-16.
- Yeivin, Shmuel. 1960. Early Contacts Between Canaan and Egypt. *Israel Exploration Journal* 10/4: 193-203.
- Yeivin, Shmuel. 1975. "El-Areini". In *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land I*, ed. Michael Avi-Yonah, 89-97. London: Oxford University Press.
- Yekutieli, Yuval. 1998. *The Early Bronze Age I of North Sinai – Social, Economic, and Spatial Aspects*. Ph.D. dissertation. Ben Gurion University of the Negev. (in Hebrew)
- Yekutieli, Yuval. 2006. The Ceramics of Tel 'Erani. Layer C. *Journal of the Serbian Archaeological Society* 22: 225-242.

Branislav Anđelković

Odeljenje za arheologiju, Filozofski fakultet, Beograd

Hegemonija za početnike: egipatske aktivnosti na Južnom Levantu u drugoj polovini četvrtog milenijuma p. n. e.

Arheološkim istraživanjima na južnom Levantu je otkriveno i opredeljeno na hiljade protodinastičkih egipatskih nalaza, uključujući arhitekturu, svakodnevne upotrebne predmete, ali i recipijente sa serek-oznakama više faraona Nulte (Narmer, "Dupli soko", Ni-Hor, Iri-Hor, Ka) i Prve (Hor Aha) dinastije, kao manifestacije državnih ekonomsko-administrativnih aktivnosti. Manji deo artefakata potiče iz samog Egipta, dok je većina proizvedena lokalno. U cilju objašnjenja fenomena egipatskog prisustva u južnom Kanaanu/Palestini sugerisano je više modela (vojno osvajanje, trgovina, kolonizacija, logističko usavršavanje, migracija stanovništva), koji ipak nisu uspeli da integrišu arheološki utvrđene parametre u jedinstvenu celinu, posebno kada se ima u vidu upliv novijih podataka i njihova kontekstualna analiza. Enigma prisustva protodinastičkog Egipta na južnom Levantu, koje sadrži elemente trgovine manjeg obima, nastanjivanja novih teritorija, i državne uprave, biva jasnija kada se ima na umu ponavljanje sličnog geopolitičkog obrasca tokom Novog carstva, u smislu uspostavljanja Egipatske azijske provincije. Mapiranje lokalno proizvedenih egipatskih posuda, tj. njihovog sadržaja, odnosno lokaliteta na kojima je konstatovana svakodnevna egipatska aktivnost, ukazuje na postojanje intra-regionalnog distributivnog sistema, čime se otvara mogućnost definisanja izvorne egipatske provincije na južnom Levantu tokom Nulte dinastije (fig. 1). Među razlozima njenog formiranja, osim širenja moći i teritorije, nije zanemariva ni uloga bakra kao strateške sirovine svog vremena. Egipatsko prisustvo se može objasniti i kao kontinuitet: prvo procesa unutrašnje konsolidacije, a potom ekspanzije Nakada kulture iz matične oblasti u Gornjem Egiptu, prema Donjem Egiptu, Donjoj Nubiji, i južnom Levantu. Za puno sagledavanje dinamike i faza formiranja države u Egiptu, kao i njene interakcije sa perifernim oblastima, reflektovanih u arheološkim nalazima, neophodan je veći upliv saznanja iz paleopolitike, kao ključne analitičke studije vezane za rekonstruisanje i razumevanje ukupnih aktivnosti prethodnih kompleksnih društava u kontekstu svog okruženja.

Ključne reči: Egipat, Nulta dinastija, Kanaan, rano bronzano doba IB, paleopolitika, provincija, bakar

Hégémonie pour les débutants: activités égyptiennes au Levant du Sud dans la deuxième moitié du quatrième millénaire av. J. C.

Des milliers de vestiges protodynastiques égyptiens ont été découverts et classés grâce aux fouilles archéologiques au Levant du Sud; ces vestiges

comprennent aussi bien les vestiges d'architecture, des objets d'usage quotidien, que des récipients comportant des marques serekh de plusieurs pharaons de la dynastie zéro (Narmer, Horus aux "deux faucons", Ny-Hor, Iry-Hor, Ka) et de la première dynastie (Hor-Aha), puis enfin des manifestations des activités économique-administratives de l'État. Une plus petite partie des artefacts provient de l'Égypte même, alors que la plupart sont produits localement. Afin d'élucider le phénomène de la présence égyptienne dans le Canaan du sud/la Palestine, plusieurs modèles d'explication ont été suggérés (conquête militaire, commerce, colonisation, perfectionnement logistique, migration de la population); ceux-ci n'ont tout de même pas réussi à réunir les paramètres archéologiquement fixés dans une seule unité, notamment lorsqu'on prend en compte l'impact des données plus récentes et leur analyse contextuelle. L'énigme de la présence de l'Égypte protodynastique au Levant du Sud, présence incarnée par l'introduction d'un commerce de petite taille, un peuplement des nouveaux territoires et des éléments d'administration de l'État, devient plus facile à élucider lorsque nous avons à l'esprit la répétition d'un modèle géopolitique semblable au cours du Nouvel Empire égyptien, à savoir l'établissement d'une province égyptienne asiatique. Le mapping des récipients égyptiens localement produits, autrement dit de leur contenu, ou des sites sur lesquels a été constatée une activité égyptienne quotidienne, rend compte de l'existence d'un système distributif intra-régional, ce qui ouvre la possibilité de définir la province égyptienne originelle au Levant du Sud au cours de la dynastie zéro. Parmi les raisons de sa formation, l'expansion de la puissance et des territoires mise à part, le rôle du cuivre en tant que matière brute stratégique de son temps n'est pas négligeable. La présence égyptienne peut être expliquée comme une continuité: d'abord du processus de consolidation intérieure, puis de l'expansion de la culture Nagada de la région centrale dans la Haute-Égypte, vers la Basse-Égypte, la Basse Nubie, et le Levant du Sud. Pour une pleine analyse de la dynamique et des phases de formation de l'état en Égypte, puis de son interaction avec les domaines périphériques, indiquée par les vestiges archéologiques, il paraît nécessaire de faire intervenir davantage les connaissances venant de la paliopolitique, considérée comme une étude analytique essentielle et liée à la reconstruction et à la compréhension des activités intégrales des sociétés complexes antérieures dans le contexte de leur environnement.

Mots clés: Égypte, dynastie zéro, Canaan, l'âge du bronze ancien IB, paléopolitique, province, cuivre

Primljeno / Received: 12. 06. 2012.

Prihvaćeno / Accepted for publication: 16. 06. 2012.