



## **“THE ENIGMA OF THE HYKSOS”\***

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### **ERC ADVANCED GRANT WORKSHOP AT THE 11<sup>TH</sup> ICAANE IN MUNICH (@LMU) 6<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2018**

**DIRECTED BY MANFRED BIETAK AND SILVIA PRELL**

This workshop focuses on a major research question in Near Eastern History and Archaeology: The origin of a large Western-Asiatic community which settled since the late 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in the Eastern Nile Delta and gained control over Lower Egypt and finally over the northern half of the country, the so-called “Hyksos” – “Rulers of the Foreign Countries.” From where they came from and under which circumstances they migrated, how they rose to power and how they ruled are focused research questions. Other matters to be investigated are their way of rule, the reasons for their downfall and finally in which way they had their impact on Egypt of the New Kingdom. These research objectives are addressed in eight research tracks by predominantly young researchers in humanities and sciences at the Austrian Academy, Institute of Oriental and European Archaeology and at the Bournemouth University (UK). In addition the team is supported by external researchers. The first results will be presented within this workshop and show to some extent very unexpected perspectives.

## Workshop (WS14) “The Enigma of the Hyksos” - Schedule and Abstracts

times	Friday 06.04.2018
9:00 - 9:30	Marta D’Andrea: Before the Cultural <i>Koiné</i> : Contextualizing Interculturality in the “Greater Levant” during the Late Early Bronze Age and the Early Middle Bronze Age
9:30 - 10:00	Manfred Bietak: Tracing the Origins of the Hyksos Elite of Egypt as seen from a Comparative Study of Sacred and Palatial Architecture
10:00 - 10:30	Silvia Prell: So-called “Warrior Burials” in the Fertile Crescent
10:30 - 11:00	Silvia Gómez-Senovilla: Urban Morphology and Urban Syntax at Tell el-Dab’a
<b>11:00 - 11:30</b>	<b>Coffee</b>
11:30 - 12:00	Anna Wodzińska: Tell el-Retaba during Second Intermediate Period. Pottery and People
12:00 - 12:30	Sarah Vilain: Is Imitation the Sincerest Form of Flattery? New Light on Local Productions Inspired by Cypriot Wares at Tell el-Dab’a during the Second Intermediate Period
12:30 - 13:00	Cydrisse Cateloy: Imported Levantine Amphorae at Tell el-Dab’a: A Volumetric Approach to Reconsider the Maritime Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean
<b>13:00 - 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
14:00 - 14:30	Christina Stantis & Holger Schutkowski: Bioarchaeological Investigations of Hyksos Identity and Origins
14:30 - 15:00	Nina Maaranen: Hidden in Bones - Tracking the Hyksos across the Levant
15:00 - 15:30	Jozef Hudec: The Second Intermediate Period Cemetery at Tell el-Retaba
15:30 - 16:00	Arianna Sacco: Connecting the Dots: Using Network Analysis to Examine the Second Intermediate Period
<b>16:00 - 16:30</b>	<b>Coffee</b>
16:30 - 17:00	Anna-Latifa Mourad: The Transformation of the Egyptian Storm God in the Second Millennium BC
17:00 - 17:30	Elisa Priglinger: “One ticket to Egypt please!” – Possible Reasons for Human Migration during the First Half of the Second Millennium BC
<b>17:30 - 18:00</b>	<b>Discussion</b>

## ABSTRACTS

### **Before the Cultural *Koiné*: Contextualizing Interculturality in the “Greater Levant” during the Late Early Bronze Age and the Early Middle Bronze Age**

*Marta D’Andrea – Sapienza Università di Roma*

The relation between the socio-cultural complexes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia BC in the Near East is of great importance for understanding the formation of the Middle Bronze Age society. Although a uniform socio-cultural scenario – generally connected with the formation of Amorite kingdoms – would appear in the Near East only from the 19<sup>th</sup> century BC, there is a growing body of evidence for inter-regional connections across the entire Near East already during Early Bronze IV and the early Middle Bronze I, that is, several centuries before the so-called “Amorite *koiné*.” Moreover, scholarly consensus is growing that increased human mobility across the Levant fostered interaction between different areas already during the late Early Bronze Age and the early Middle Bronze Age.

In this paper, taking the view from the Levant, it will be argued that, in several regional areas, the ancestry of some elements of the material culture that would typify the fully developed Middle Bronze Age later on can be tracked in features and practices that appeared for the first time during Early Bronze IV and early Middle Bronze I. Subsequently, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors leading to increased inter-regional interactions and cross-regional mobility will be analysed. This way, it will be possible to eventually propose some hypotheses on mechanisms influencing the formation of a common socio-cultural language in the “Greater Levant” in the following, more developed phases of the Middle Bronze Age.

### **Tracing the Origins of the Hyksos Elite of Egypt as seen from a Comparative Study of Sacred and Palatial Architecture**

*Manfred Bietak – Austrian Academy of Sciences*

Within the ERC Advanced Grant “The Hyksos Enigma” comparative architectural studies in search for parallels of temple- and palatial architecture at Tell el-Dab’a reveal that the decision makers of the Hyksos elite surprisingly did not draw their concepts from the coastal Levant. Most of the parallels cluster in northernmost Syria and Mesopotamia. Especially the region northeast of the Euphrates River comes more and more into focus. This brings about considerations that the leading class may have come from a different region than the ordinary bulk of people of Western Asiatic origin in Avaris which all together caused the Hyksos rule in Egypt, as their material culture seems more aligned with the middle coastal Levant.

### **So-called “Warrior Burials” in the Fertile Crescent**

*Silvia Prell – Austrian Academy of Sciences*

So-called “warrior tombs” are burials including one or more metal weapons, which can be accompanied by other grave goods like personal items and pottery. The earliest examples are known from Early Bronze Age south eastern Anatolia from where the custom spreads via Northern Syria into Mesopotamia and the Levant. Often laid down as single burial they become quite common in the

Middle Bronze Age in the Levant as well as in the Eastern Delta of Egypt. Common weapons occurring in tombs are daggers, axes and spearheads; within the enclosed sets regional and chronological diversity is distinguishable. Despite the local deviation an overall concept seems to underlie this custom, which unifies the different regions for which this practice can be documented. In turn, in the Late Bronze Age the occurrence of this custom became limited to sites in the Southern Levant, before the practice was abandoned. Understanding the function and context of the interment of weapons as an ethnic marker and their cultic, ritualistic and religious associations might, together with a plot of their occurrences through time and space, help understanding migration patterns and ethnicity of the people performing this kind of funerary custom.

### **Urban Morphology and Urban Syntax at Tell el-Dab'a**

*Silvia Gómez-Senovilla – Austrian Academy of Sciences*

The study of houses and households is not anymore in its infancy in Near Eastern and Egyptian archaeology, but the internal disposition of unearthed sites or the lack of enough excavated surface makes the identification of individual house units and clusters a challenging task. Notwithstanding some difficulties, the study of morphological categories of the compounds combined with a proper analysis of the internal disposition and the density of streets and houses can help to observe internal variability and unit division.

The approach envisaged for this study encompasses a morphological analysis of the street network and houses at Tell el Dab'a over its different periods. The examination of the street pattern and the disposition of the physical features of clusters and compounds can guide our understanding of internal divisions and potential neighbourhoods. Next to urban morphology, that can provide the first step towards the study of the use of space at Tell el-Dab'a, a spatial approach is also indispensable. Spatial analysis can shed light into the internal organisation and division of the settlement, as well as proxemics, the human use of space. The lack of public connections, the presence of *cul de sacs*, winding lanes, specific orientations or the placement of burials next or within the compounds can offer an idea about the intra-settlement organisation, opening the gate for connecting this variability with wider social, political and economic processes in Egypt and the Near East.

### **Tell el-Retaba during Second Intermediate Period. Pottery and People**

*Anna Wodzińska – Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw*

Tell el-Retaba is located in the middle of Wadi Tumilat in the eastern Nile Delta, approx. 35 km west of the modern town Ismailia. Based on recent work of the Polish-Slovak Archaeological Mission we know that the site was occupied during the Second Intermediate Period, especially in its very early stage, which means the early 15<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Large fragments of a cemetery and adjacent domestic dwellings dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> Dynasty were discovered. Pottery taken as evidence proves that the Second Intermediate Period settlement was occupied until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

The pottery from Tell el-Retaba is a very good material for dating and it can tell us more about the people who used it. It seems that ceramic vessels were mostly produced locally according to the local tradition associated with the Hyksos. The material shows a variety of forms, but in comparison to the corpus found in Tell el-Dab'a is rather less prominent.

It is interesting to note that the pottery from Tell el-Retaba dramatically changes at the beginning of the New Kingdom. The change can be clearly associated with the new political situation. However, it seems that the pottery was still used by the same local community.

### **Is Imitation the Sincerest Form of Flattery? New Light on Local Productions Inspired by Cypriot Wares at Tell el-Dab'a during the Second Intermediate Period**

*Sarah Vilain – Austrian Academy of Sciences*

The excavations at Tell el-Dab'a, led from 1966 onwards, showed that ancient Avaris was a major harbour town and a trading centre of international importance. As a testimony of extended connections with the Eastern Mediterranean, the site has produced the largest collection of Middle Cypriot pottery in Egypt. However, apart from genuine imports, the excavations also yielded an unequalled assemblage of local vessels imitating Cypriot prototypes or inspired by them. Whereas Cypriot imports at Tell el-Dab'a are attested from Phase G onwards, these local productions have their own independent development within the site's stratigraphy. In this paper, we will explore the concept of imitation as well as its economical and socio-cultural implications. The specific characteristics of locally produced vessels will be enlightened, with peculiar attention to manufacturing processes and decoration painting techniques. Through the example of a group of local jugs painted according to the Cypriot *Pendent Line Style*, it will be argued that the increase of local productions in Phase E/3 should be perceived as a sign of a crisis that then affects trading connections at Tell el-Dab'a.

### **Imported Levantine Amphorae at Tell el-Dab'a: A Volumetric Approach to Reconsider the Maritime Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean**

*Cydrisse Cateloy – Panthéon Sorbonne University / UMR 7041 – VEPMO*

During the Middle Bronze Age, a new class of ceramic transport container appeared in the Levant: the so-called 'Canaanite jar'. This innovating shape is seen as one of the first amphorae ever traded through the Mediterranean Sea. It derived from Early Bronze Age Levantine combed jars, with ovoid body and flat base that were already imported into Egypt, but were not yet really well-fit for maritime transportation. By the time Tell el-Dab'a became a main port entry for Levantine goods, the morphology of this ceramic container has evolved and a great number was imported to Egypt.

The Levantine amphorae development is closely related to maritime trade and the intensification of Mediterranean exchanges served to shape the container outlines to better suit the cargo holds of merchant ships. Given that the morphology of a ceramic type, such as amphorae, may be somehow inherent to economic change, it may be enlightening to reconsider studying certain aspects of this material – as for instance its capacity – to reassess our general knowledge about commercial networks and trade modalities. Indeed, although it is a central feature that allows to appreciate the merchantable quantity of the goods stored inside, the inner volume of amphorae has been hardly examined so far.

At Tell el-Dab'a, the assemblage of Levantine amphorae is one of the greatest and well-documented collections available. Besides, several vessels are fully restored and numerous still have a complete profile that facilitates volume estimation. Therefore, a volumetric approach on this unique material will enable some relevant re-evaluations about ancient trade.

## **Bioarchaeological Investigations of Hyksos Identity and Origins**

*Christina Stantis & Holger Schutkowski – Bournemouth University*

Research track 7 of the Hyksos Enigma project focuses on characterizing the Hyksos in comparison with other Egyptian and Near Eastern populations through the study of their skeletal remains. With collaboration from universities and museums worldwide, RT7 seeks to integrate paleopathology, ancient DNA, stable isotopes, and morphological studies on the human remains from Tell el-Dab'a and other Levantine sites to pinpoint similarities (and differences) across the region.

This presentation highlights the aims of this research track and the preliminary work that has been carried out by those on the RT7 team, with a special focus on stable isotope analyses. Strontium ( $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ ) and oxygen ( $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ) analyses will elucidate childhood residence of individuals, while carbon, nitrogen, and sulphur ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ,  $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ ) will provide clues about cultural groupings related to diet and socially- and ecologically- mediated food access. Though isotope analyses on this scale will take time to provide statistically meaningful insights, we discuss our experiences of baseline collection, initial collection endeavors, and research expectations to set the stage for what evidence we might provide regarding “the Hyksos Enigma”.

## **Hidden in Bones - Tracking the Hyksos across the Levant**

*Nina Maaranen – Bournemouth University*

Though the term Hyksos commonly refers to the rulers of the Egyptian Second Intermediate Period, it is also used to describe the larger population from which these rulers rose from. Archaeological, artistic and textual sources suggest a Levantine origin to the ‘Hyksos people’, however, whether this was a single homogenous group or several groups from a wider area, has remained uncertain.

Non-metric traits, also called epigenetic or quasi-continuous traits, are normal variations of the human skeleton that remain hidden during life. The traits, though seemingly random in a single person, often have a genetic component that links biologically closely related people together, enabling an exploration of biological affiliations not only within, but also between populations.

As a non-invasive method, non-metric trait analysis can be used to study biological closeness when there is no wish or possibility to use DNA analysis. An increasing number of non-metric trait analyses are being conducted to skeletal human remains, creating trait distribution maps for a wider exploration of biological closeness. As part of the Hyksos Enigma project, non-metric traits from skeletal human remains from Tell el-Dab'a, the ancient Hyksos capital of Avaris, are recorded. The results help to understand familial relationships within the site but also compare the site and its subgroups to Levantine sites, potentially offering new insight into the Hyksos origin and the wider migration of people in the Levantine area.

## **The Second Intermediate Period Cemetery at Tell el-Retaba**

*Jozef Hudec - Slovak Academy of Sciences*

The Polish-Slovak research in Tell el-Retaba started in 2007. By then, the tell was known as a site of New Kingdom forts and Third Intermediate Period settlements, which have allegedly alternated a settlement at Tell el-Maskhuta in a period of local hiatus. Recent excavations have significantly changed and expanded the view on historical development at Tell el-Retaba and beyond. In the years 2010 to 2017, almost 45 Second Intermediate Period tombs have been discovered on site by the

Polish, Slovak and Egyptian excavations. These tombs are dating to a broad time span from the very late 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty to the very beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty and thus, can be divided into several phases. Due to time and working constraints, not all of the discovered graves have been examined and documented so far; likewise not all the skeletons of buried individuals have been documented.

Anthropological examinations have been completed so far on a group of more than 30 individuals. The majority of these individuals were adults. In the group of adults, a majority of male individuals stands out, however, some individuals had to be labelled as inconclusive. In the group of deceased men, there is a slight predominance of younger individuals, while, on the other hand, there is a higher number of older women in the female group. The majority of the children died at the age of four years and below.

A set of incomplete anthropometric data has been obtained. However, the skull dimensions could be measured only with a fraction of the individuals, therefore, the results cannot be generalized. Despite the relatively poor condition of skeletal remains, nevertheless some conclusions about their appearance and way of life were possible.

### **Connecting the Dots: Using Network Analysis to Examine the Second Intermediate Period**

*Arianna Sacco – Leiden University*

The Second Intermediate Period is a part of Egyptian history during which Egypt was divided politically and culturally, with groups of foreigners playing a crucial role. The Hyksos Dynasty, of Levantine origins, ruled the north, while in the south archaeological evidence suggests the presence of Nubians (i.e. the Pan-grave culture).

There is still much debate regarding the definition of different regions and how they interacted with each other. How did these regions influence one another? How did their relationships evolve from the end of the Middle Kingdom to the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period? What were the contributions of foreigners to the culture of Egypt during this period?

In this paper, I focus on the methodology that I use to investigate these issues in my PhD research. I will show how examining the material culture of the Second Intermediate Period through network analysis can contribute to further understanding of this period. For this paper, I will illustrate my methods using an analysis of stone vessels and beads.

### **The Transformation of the Egyptian Storm God in the Second Millennium BC**

*Anna-Latifa Mourad – Austrian Academy of Sciences*

The dynamic network of interlinked trading powers and agents of the Middle and Late Bronze Age Near East featured not only the complex interactions of people and groups, but also of concepts and ideologies. Among the most prominent were those related to storm deities, whose roles included the control over weather phenomena and the sea, as well as links to kingship and diplomacy. As the paper discusses, the increasing Egyptian encounters with these concepts during the Middle and New Kingdoms evidently led to the transformation of the Egyptian storm god. Through the progression of cultural, social, and political events from Dynasties 12 to 19, certain elements in the conceptualisation of Seth were influenced and inspired by Near Eastern perceptions of the storm deity, the reasons for which are explored in the talk. Those of the late Twelfth to Fifteenth Dynasty were particularly instrumental in this transformation, with evidence indicating that the process of Seth's syncretisation with a Near Eastern storm god had already initiated before the New Kingdom.

**“One ticket to Egypt please!” – Possible Reasons for Human Migration during the First Half of the Second Millennium BC**

*Elisa Priglinger – Austrian Academy of Sciences*

Human mobility has always been an integral part of a society. There are many reasons to leave a place and at least as many to settle in a particular other one. For a better understanding of this phenomenon, it is necessary to investigate the different possible push and pull factors and, most notably, their mutual interaction. Not every movement equals migration, and not all who have sought a new home have come to stay forever. These are aspects that we also need to look at, if we want to get closer to questions of ancient mobility. This contribution will present as a case study the influential dynamics leading to migration towards Egypt during the first half of the Second Millennium BC. Its interdisciplinary approach considers climate and environmental studies as well as theoretical reflections on identity and ethnicity. It also raises the question of how long one is regarded as "foreign" and when an individual is considered one of them. Last but not least, the question must also be discussed to what extent such movements can be detected in material culture, exploring the analysis of archaeological remains for the study of human migration in the past.