

their designs. However, these scarabs also display Levantine motifs, scenes, and figures performing gestures inspired by Syrian cylinder seals, which have no meaning in the Egyptian religious sphere. Also, the scenes reflecting Egyptian religious beliefs that occur on Egyptian Middle Kingdom scarabs are conspicuously absent on the Canaanite scarabs. These facts argue against the adoption of Egyptian religion in Canaan, suggesting instead the imitation of Egyptian forms and their integration into the Canaanite cultural sphere.

Such Canaanite scarabs were imported in great numbers into Egypt during the Hyksos Period, whereas scarab production in Egypt is only attested in the eastern Delta. The Egyptian scarabs display royal names, names and titles of officials, and designs imitating Canaanite Middle Bronze Age scarabs, suggesting that they were produced at Tell el-Dab'a, most probably by artisans of Canaanite origin. As mentioned above, the foreign identity of the kings whose names appear on these scarabs is indicated by their birth names, of west Semitic origin. The corpus of Egyptian scarabs of the Second Intermediate Period is much smaller than that of the Canaanite scarabs of this period. They have been found at a number of sites in southern Canaan, but are almost completely absent in northern Canaan.

In sum, the evidence does not point to a uniform "Hyksos culture" extending from the eastern Delta into southern Canaan or reflecting Hyksos control over this region. While the pottery found in sites in the eastern Delta dating to this period reflects a mixture of Egyptian, Canaanite, and Canaanite-style ware of Egyptian manufacture, Canaanite ware predominates at all southern Canaanite sites. Moreover, the complete absence of Hyksos Period Egyptian inscriptions in southern Canaan strongly argues against Egyptian domination there, in contrast to the situation during the New Kingdom, when monuments found in Canaanite Late Bronze Age contexts attest clearly to an Egyptian Empire in Asia. Nevertheless, the evidence for strong cultural and commercial ties between Egypt and southern Canaan during the Hyksos Period is rich and abundant, and it is clear that close relations existed between the two regions.

References:

Ben-Tor 2007a, 187–92; Cohen-Weinberger and Goren 2004; Holladay 1997; McGovern and Harbottle 1997; Oren 1997.

Tell el-Yahudiya Ware / Anat Cohen-Weinberger

Tell el-Yahudiya ware refers to a distinct group of pottery named after the site of Tell el-Yahudiya in the Egyptian Nile Valley. The group, which was first identified by Sir William Flinders Petrie, and which he called "black incised pottery of foreign type," aroused the curiosity of scholars already at the time of its discovery in Egypt in the late nineteenth century and continues to be the focus of scholarly research today. The distribution of Tell el-Yahudiya pottery is in Egypt (in the northeastern Delta, along the Nile and the Red Sea coast, in the Dakhleh Oasis, and in the northern Sinai Peninsula), in northern Sudan as far south as Kerma, and in Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Cyprus. It first appeared in the late Middle Bronze Age IIA (ca. 1800 BCE), reaching a peak in the Middle Bronze Age IIB (1680–1530 BCE) and disappearing, except for limited occurrences, in the early Late Bronze Age. These periods are parallel to the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, the Second Intermediate ("Hyksos") Period, and the early New Kingdom, respectively.

Tell el-Yahudiya ware is distinguished by its special decorative technique. The decoration was produced by pricking the surface of the vessels with a multi-toothed comb or, less prevalently, with an awl, to create depressions. The depressions were then filled with a white substance (calcium carbonate), still preserved on many of the vessels, producing an interesting contrast between the vessels' dark surfaces and the light filler. The decorative motifs were usually incised before being filled with the pricked depressions, which were arranged inside the motifs in straight and diagonal rows, in herringbone patterns, or randomly. The motifs themselves were usually arranged in horizontal bands (friezes) delineated by incised lines, but other decorative schemes were also employed, such as lozenge patterns. The plain areas and bands were usually burnished. The most common motifs are geometrical, among these, triangles, squares, trapezoids, and lozenges. There are also masterpieces featuring naturalistic motifs, such as flora, fauna, and human figures. The vessels are covered with a black, grey, red, brown, or yellowish slip. The characteristic Tell el-Yahudiya decoration occurs mainly on juglets belonging to the types common during the Middle Bronze Age (of oval, piriform, biconical, or cylindrical shape), but is also found on bowls, kraters, jugs, zoomorphic (fish- and bird-shaped) and anthropomorphic vessels, juglets decorated with modeled heads, and fruit-shaped vessels. The decorative style of Tell el-Yahudiya pottery imparts



a unique beauty and quality, attesting to the potters' tremendous investment; some scholars even see their efforts as an attempt to create a "brand name" and become commercially recognizable. The varied motifs on these vessels are a reflection of the culture of the period, when widespread ties, accompanied by reciprocal cultural influences, existed between Egypt and the Levant. Thus, for example, Nilotic motifs, such as lotus buds and birds, appear alongside Aegean motifs, such as the "running spiral" and dolphins. The motifs and styles exhibit creativity, personal expression, and, in some cases, even humor.

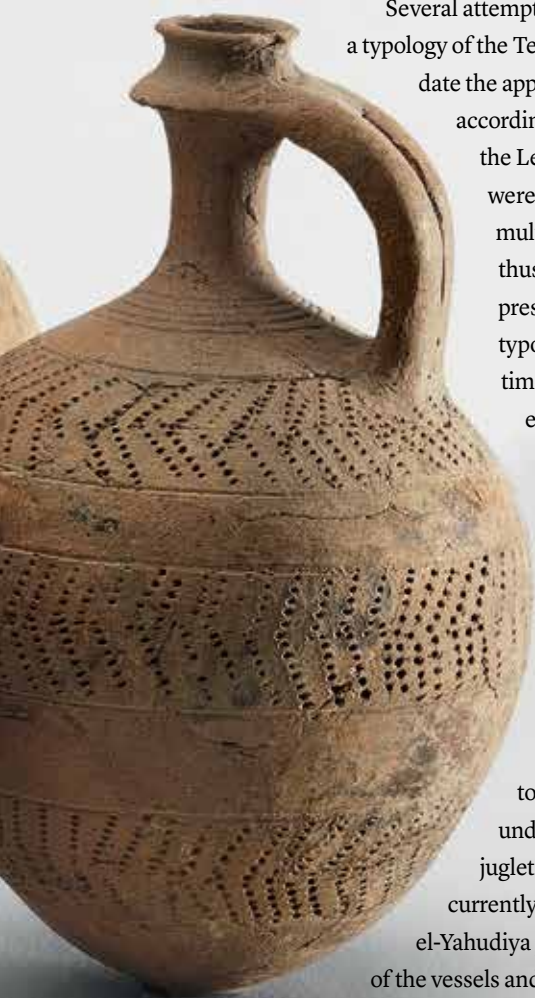
Several attempts have been made to produce a typology of the Tell el-Yahudiya juglets and to date the appearance of the different types according to geographic region. In the Levant, most of these juglets were found in tombs used for multiple burials over long periods; thus scholars have been hard pressed to reconstruct their typological development over time. Excavations of the Austrian expedition to Tell el-Dab'a in the eastern Delta, the site identified with the Hyksos capital Avaris, revealed impressive quantities of Tell el-Yahudiya juglets. Most of these juglets were also found in tombs, but in a clear stratigraphic sequence, which contributed greatly to the excavators' ability to understand the development of the juglet types and their decoration. The currently accepted typologies of the Tell el-Yahudiya juglets rely upon both the shape of the vessels and their decoration. Certain types are typical of certain geographical regions; for instance, there are Egyptian types, Palestinian types, and types characteristic of Egypt and the northern Levantine coast, referred to as Levanto-Egyptian types. These types evolved over time and thus can be used for dating assemblages and reconstructing cultural and commercial

ties between the different areas in which they were distributed along a diachronic axis, including, of course, ties between Egypt and the Levant.

The origin of the juglet types lies deep in the Canaanite Middle Bronze Age tradition. For this reason, such vessels were already associated with the Hyksos in the pioneering studies on Tell el-Yahudiya conducted by Petrie, who recognized that the origins of this ware lay outside Egypt. Petrie's observation, however, did not prevent other scholars from placing the origin of this pottery in Egypt or Nubia, particularly in view of its widespread appearance in Egypt.

Some time ago, a study employing neutron activation analysis determined that Tell el-Yahudiya ware was first produced in Egypt, as were the first specimens to appear in the Levant. Recently, however, around a century after the discovery of this unique class of vessels, the present author conducted a comprehensive, state-of-the-art petrographic analysis that pointed to the Levantine origin of the group. The study identified numerous production sites for the group throughout Egypt and the Levant. The earliest vessels were manufactured in the Levant in the late Middle Bronze Age IIA (Thirteenth Dynasty) and reached Egypt along with the Canaanite population that settled in the Delta at the time. Shortly thereafter, potters operating in Egypt began imitating this ware, producing it from local Nile clay. Widespread production of Tell el-Yahudiya ware in Egypt only began in the Second Intermediate Period, and at the same time new (Egyptian) forms, unknown in the Levant, began to emerge. The Egyptian types were dominant in Egypt and to some extent even penetrated Canaan, both as locally manufactured products and as Egyptian imports. The production of juglets of the Egyptian type in Canaan accords with additional data that point to an increasing Egyptian influence on Canaan during the Second Intermediate Period, owing to Asiatic settlement in the eastern Delta.

Among the highlights of Tell el-Yahudiya ware discovered in Israel are a head-shaped vessel depicting a bearded male from Jericho in the Judean Desert (fig. 10), a fish-shaped vessel from Poleg in the Sharon Plain (fig. 8), and a falcon-shaped vessel from Ashkelon in the southern Coastal Region (fig. 9). In addition, in 1950 a unique assemblage of Tell el-Yahudiya juglets was revealed in Afula in the Jezreel Valley (fig. 7). The assemblage was discovered in a pit that had been filled with the industrial waste of a local potter or potters, indicating that this had been a



[Fig. 7] Tell el-Yahudiya juglets from a pottery waster pit excavated in Afula. IAA



[Fig. 8] Fish-shaped vessel, Tell el-Yahudiya ware. IAA. 68.32.150



[Fig. 9] Falcon-shaped vessel, Tell el-Yahudiya ware. IAA. 2015-1343



[Fig. 10] Head-shaped vessel, Tell el-Yahudiya ware. IAA. 1932-1366

workshop. Besides a rich selection of complete, fired juglets, the pit also yielded unfired fragments of Tell el-Yahudiya juglets and other types. The appearance among the Tell el-Yahudiya juglets of a range of different rims, decorative styles, and sizes is particularly interesting, as the evidence suggests that all the juglets were produced within a short period of time. To date, this is the only instance in which Tell el-Yahudiya juglets have been found in a direct relation to the workshop in which they were manufactured. The early date of the juglets (Middle Bronze Age IIA), points to Canaan as the first producer of this group of vessels. This conclusion accords with the petrographic analysis of the juglets and of the earliest juglets from the excavations at Tell el-Dab'a.

References:

Aston and Bietak 2012; Cohen-Weinberger 2008; Kaplan 1980; Petrie 1906; Zevulun 1990.

Can Scarabs Argue for the Origin of the Hyksos?

The exact place of origin of the Canaanite population in the eastern Delta during the Second Intermediate Period is still the subject of debate. Chemical and geological analyses of the ceramic imports recovered from this region are inconclusive: while the former points to an origin in southern Canaan, the latter argues for the northern Levant. The evidence from Tell el-Dab'a and other eastern Delta sites suggests that there was more than one influx of Canaanite settlers, and thus, the possibility of more than one