

Piety, Practice, and Politics:
Ritual and Agency in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant

By

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Abstract

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Striking changes in the archaeological record of the southern Levant during the final years of the Late Bronze Age have long fascinated scholars interested in the region and period. Attempts to explain the emergence of new forms of Canaanite material culture have typically cited external factors such as Egyptian political domination as the driving force behind culture change, relying on theoretical models of acculturation, elite-emulation and center-periphery theory. While these approaches can be useful in explaining some dimensions of culture-contact, they are limited by their assumption of a unidirectional flow of power and influence from dominant core societies to passive peripheries. As a result, they are unable to adequately explain the wide variety of complex interactions and changes that characterize the archaeological record of the LB IIB southern Levant.

In this dissertation I argue for a new approach to the region and period, one that recognizes the equally important role of the individual in dictating the terms of cross-cultural interaction, as well as the recursive relationship between those individuals and the social structures within which they operate. I hypothesize that instead of simply emulating or adapting to foreign powers, a process of cultural entanglement took place between the Levant and its neighbors. This process resulted in new hybridizing practices emerged and existed in constant state of renegotiation, with participants actively choosing specific cultural elements to adopt, maintain and transform altogether.

To investigate this, I argue that ritual activity is ideally suited to assess such processes, given that it engages with the realm of ideas, making them manifest through practice and accessible through the archaeological record. Incorporating new archaeological evidence from the southern Levant, I evaluate change and continuity within three distinct, yet complimentary lines of evidence relating to ritual activity in the LB IIB: temples and their assemblages, mortuary traditions, and Canaanite “bowl-lamp” deposits. By evaluating change and continuity over time,

each case study examines how identity and relationships of power were facilitated, enforced and negotiated through ritual activity at both local and regional levels.

Abandoning traditional morphological typologies, the results of this contextual study show a remarkable degree of uniformity in ritual practice across the LB IIB southern Levant. I conclude that these overlapping patterns of practice suggest shared emic notions of what specific forms of ritual practice entail, indicating a higher level of cultural cohesion during the period than has been previously assumed. At the same time, the study shows that degrees of local variation in each ritual practice exist as well. This combination of regional patterning and local variation indicates that while a general process of Canaanite cultural coalescence was taking place during the LB IIB, it played out differently in various locales according to local interests. The evidence therefore indicates that this process, along with the emergence of new and unattested ritual practices, is the product of both local agency and the structural conditions within which it operates.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Ia. Overview and Statement of the Problem

While the southern Levant's role as a cultural crossroads has a long history thanks in large part to its geography, during the Late Bronze Age (1550-1150 BCE) unprecedented levels of trade, diplomacy and warfare characterize the region. With North-Syria and Hatti to the north, Egypt to the south, Cyprus and the Aegean world to the west and Mesopotamia to the east, the southern Levant became a diverse zone of cultural exchange and a primary theater of interaction between elements of local Canaanite culture and their neighbors. Indeed, many have described this period as the first true age of international relations in which the "Great Kings" of the time established and maintained formalized ties with their vassal states and each other through an ideology of kinship and the reciprocal exchange of staple and luxury goods.¹

Following what is considered to be period of general prosperity in the Middle Bronze Age, the Late Bronze Age southern Levant is marked by an overall decrease in the number and size of settlements, the destruction or abandonment of fortifications, and a qualitative decline in some aspects of material culture. At the same time, we see the construction of elaborate temples and palaces in urban centers, an increase in imported Cypriot and Mycenaean pottery, as well as the local production and consumption of luxury goods including gold jewelry, carved ivories and faience vessels.² The seemingly contradictory nature of the evidence for both Canaanite affluence and impoverishment has been the cause of much interest and scholarly debate.

During the LB IIB, this situation becomes even more complex, with the introduction of a variety of new objects and architectural styles across the wadi systems of the Negev, at major coastal harbors, and along the Via Maris and Jordan Valley.³ The number of large settlements in the region 161 hectares or more continued to decline; however, the number of small sites 16 hectares or less

¹ Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design : Luxury Arts and An "International Style" In the Ancient Near East, 1400-1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East 1600-1200 BCE* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), William Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, *Amarna Diplomacy : The Beginnings of International Relations* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

² Rivka Gonen, "Urban Canaan in the Late Bronze Period," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 253 (1984), Shlomo Bunimovitz, "On the Edge of Empires - Late Bronze Age (1500-1200 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Thomas Levy (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 237, Harold Liebowitz, "Late Bronze II Ivory Work in Palestine: Evidence of a Cultural Highpoint," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 265 (1987).

³ Ellen Fowles Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom* (Leiden Brill, 2005), 8.

increases sharply in the 13th century.⁴ Mortuary practices and other ritual activities undergo radical changes during this period as well, with new traditions being adopted and others falling by the wayside. The emergence of new forms of material culture and practices during the LB IIB, set against the backdrop of seemingly contradictory evidence for both cultural florescence and decline raises a number of important questions that will be considered in this dissertation: what factors are responsible for the radical changes in some aspects of LB IIB Canaanite material culture, and for continuity in others? To what extent did foreign powers such as Egypt play a role in shaping these changes? What theoretical models are useful in understanding this process and the dynamics of cross-culture contact between Canaan and her neighbors during this time?

In addition to a wealth of archaeological evidence, aspects of Canaan during the Late Bronze Age are illuminated through a variety of textual sources ranging from public monuments to private administrative archives that document the period from a range of perspectives. The majority of these sources, particularly the famed cache of 14th century diplomatic correspondence from Tell el-Amarna, suggest that the southern Levant was composed of subservient vassal kingdoms subject to foreign powers such as Egypt and Hatti at varying points throughout the Late Bronze Age. While fewer records exist documenting the LB IIB, Egyptian kings of the 19th Dynasty claim to have conquered a number of specific geographical and sociopolitical groups in the southern Levant, which they recorded on temple walls, stelae and other objects found both within and outside Egypt.⁵ The vivid recounting in both text and image of Egyptian military conquests over Canaanite polities reinforces a perception of passivity in the face of foreign domination. Such perceptions, derived from the textual record have had a great impact on interpretations of the region's material culture.

Prior Interpretations and Scholarship

With a wealth of textual sources at their disposal, many scholars have occupied themselves with attempting to reconstruct the culture-history of the southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age. The majority of archaeological overviews of the period have adopted a synthetic approach to achieve this goal, using textual sources as a lens for interpreting aspects of the archaeological record.⁶

⁴ Gonen, "Urban Canaan in the Late Bronze Period," 66.

⁵ Michael G. Hasel, *Domination and Resistance : Egyptian Military Activity in the Southern Levant, ca. 1300-1185 B.C.* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 20.

⁶ William Foxwell Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949), K.M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, 4th ed. (London: Ernest Benn, 1979), Robert Merrillees, "Political Conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean During the Late Bronze Age," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 49, no. 1 (1986), Albert Leonard, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: The Late Bronze Age," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 52, no. 1 (1989), Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), Donald Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), Rivka Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, ed. Amnon Ben-Tor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Rivka Gonen, in her thorough overview, sums up the general approach taken by many: "No other biblical era, the First Temple period excepted, is so brightly illuminated by historical sources or provides so firm a historical basis for archaeological investigation."⁷ The narrative established by this culture-history approach also informs many specific studies in architecture⁸, burial patterns⁹ and ritual practice¹⁰, in which observed changes in tradition are often equated with specific historical events of a cross-cultural nature. Egypt has traditionally been viewed as the prime engine driving change in Canaanite society through military conquest, economic exploitation and the establishment of "hegemony" in the region.¹¹ These perceptions are built primarily upon Egyptian historical sources, including accounts of Egyptian military campaigns during the reigns of Thutmose III, Ramesses II, Seti I, and Merneptah aimed at bringing Canaan under Egyptian control. In her seminal study of Late Bronze Age burial practices for example, Gonen attributes shifts in burial types to a segregation in Canaanite society caused by the political and economic domination of the region by Egypt.¹² Similarly, in her work on Late Bronze Age Canaanite religion, Nakhai views changes in Canaanite temple assemblages as the result of Egypt attempting to exploit and subvert the Canaanite ritual process for its own benefit.¹³

Egypt has figured prominently in attempts to explain the apparent contradiction between signs of impoverishment and cultural affluence in the LB IIB southern Levant as well. Bienkowski sees impoverishment and affluence as a localized phenomenon, with cities in the coastal plain and northern valley under Egyptian control flourishing, while others slipped into decline.¹⁴ Knapp, while viewing the phenomenon as one of systemic collapse in which only the strongest

⁷ Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," 211.

⁸ Eliezer Oren, "Governors Residences in Canaan under the New Kingdom: A Case Study of Egyptian Administration," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 14 (1984), Amihai Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*, ed. Aharon Kempinski (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992).

⁹ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), Rivka Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), Garth Gilmour, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 65, no. 2 (2002).

¹⁰ Beth Alpert Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel* (Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2001).

¹¹ For specific studies see James M. Weinstein, "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 241 (1981), Hasel, *Domination and Resistance : Egyptian Military Activity in the Southern Levant, Ca. 1300-1185 B.C.*, Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*.

¹² Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 148.

¹³ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 4.

¹⁴ Piotr Bienkowski, "Prosperity and Decline in LBA Canaan: A Reply to Leibowitz and Knapp," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 275 (1989): 61.

Canaanite polities survived, also cites Egyptian foreign policy as the main force driving changes in Canaanite society and material culture.¹⁵

Only in recent years have archaeologists working on the Late Bronze southern Levant moved away from the culture-history paradigm and concerned themselves with the relationship between internal socio-cultural processes and changes in material culture. Bunimovitz, among the first to do so, states:

Taking the archaeological study of the Late Bronze Age as an example, one can readily see that patterns in the material culture and their changes over time are usually explained by historical events, ignoring that these patterns were created by a social system –Canaanite society- whose behavior and adaptation to a changing socio-political and ideological environment is by no means unique.¹⁶

Taking this into account, Bunimovitz attempts to understand the process of culture change from a systemic point of view. In the face of the economic decline detailed by Knapp, Bienkowski and others, he proposes that the increase in luxury goods, rich burials and the construction of elaborate palaces and temples in urban centers should not be viewed as evidence of general prosperity, but as a strategy of conspicuous consumption aimed at consolidating political power in a weakened state.¹⁷ This idea has been expanded by Higginbotham, who adopts a model of “elite-emulation”, derived from core-periphery theory, in which Canaanite elite living on the periphery of a more “developed” society (Egypt) are thought to have adopted the material trappings of the latter in an attempt to self-identify with and co-opt foreign prestige to enhance their standing at home.¹⁸

The elite-emulation model stands in contradistinction to the widely held theory of “direct rule”, which contends that during the LB IIB, Egyptian soldiers, administrators and craftsmen occupied the southern Levant in higher numbers than ever before, leading to a conspicuous “Egyptianization” of Canaanite material culture. A number of studies conducted by McGovern, Killebrew and Martin relating to pottery and faience production have attempted to prove the “direct-rule” model by showing that the forms and techniques employed by local craftsmen were inherently Egyptian, indicating the craftsmen were either intimately tied to the Egyptian administration at the site, or were Egyptian themselves.¹⁹ The debate

¹⁵ A. B. Knapp, "Independence and Imperialism: Politico-Economic Structures in the Bronze Age Levant," in *Archaeology, Annales and Ethnohistory*, ed. A. B. Knapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 94.

¹⁶ Bunimovitz, "On the Edge of Empires - Late Bronze Age (1500-1200 BCE)," 321.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹⁸ Carolyn R. Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine : Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 6.

¹⁹ Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart J. Fleming, and Charles P. Swann, "The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan: Glass and Faience Production and Importation in the Late New Kingdom" *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 290/291 (1993), Ann E. Killebrew, "New Kingdom

surrounding the nature of Egyptian interaction with the southern Levant, particularly during the Ramesside period contemporary with the LB IIB, continues to occupy a central position in studies dealing with the period's material culture. While differing in the models and strategies attributed to Egypt, each approach in its own way emphasizes Egyptian hegemony in the region to the detriment of local agency, relegating the southern Levant to a passive peripheral backwater of sorts.

Recent scholarship by Bell, Monroe and Sugerman has shifted away from the role of Egypt specifically, and focused on the impact of international trade and traders as a way of understanding foreign influence and changes in LB IIB material culture.²⁰ These approaches rely on the same theoretical models of acculturation, elite emulation and modified world-systems theory derived from the fields of economics and anthropology to explain the impetus behind trade, interaction and the significant changes that occur within Canaanite material culture and daily practice during this time. While such approaches can be useful in explaining some contact situations, each is inherently based on the problematic assumption of unidirectional power dynamics between "dominant" core societies imposing themselves upon "passive" peripheries. While proponents of these approaches are correct in asserting that cross-cultural interactions are structured in part by factors including power relations, degrees of cultural complexity and environment, the results of these interactions are by no means pre-determined and are contingent on both unique socio-historical contexts and the prerogatives of local agency.

Many scholars have discussed the limitations of acculturation and center-periphery approaches including their inability to recognize the reflexive relationship between individuals and social structures, even in situations of disproportionate power and domination, colonial or otherwise.²¹ They point out that external factors including foreign interests and influence are all too often

Egyptian-Style and Egyptian Pottery in Canaan: Implications for Egyptian Rule in Canaan During the 19th and Early 20th Dynasties " in *Egypt, Israel and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Gary Knoppers and Antoine Hirsch, *Probleme Der Aegyptologie* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), M. A. S. Martin, *Egyptian-Type Pottery in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant*, vol. 29, Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2011).

²⁰ Michael Sugerman, "Webs of Commerce: The Archaeology of Ordinary Things in Late Bronze Age Israel and Palestine" (Harvard University, 2000), Carol Bell, *The Evolution of Long Distance Trading Relationships across the LBA - Iron Age Transition on the Northern Levantine Coast : Crisis, Continuity and Change* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006), Christopher Monroe, *Scales of Fate: Trade, Tradition, and Transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean ca. 1350-1175 BCE*, vol. 357, *Alter Orient Und Altes Testament* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009).

²¹ For extended critiques of these approaches, see Gil Stein, "Introduction: The Comparative Archaeology of Colonial Encounters," in *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Gil Stein, *School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005), Stephen Silliman, "Agency, Practical Politics and the Archaeology of Culture Contact," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1, no. October (2001), Kent Lightfoot, Antoinette Martinez, and Ann Schiff, "Daily Practice and Material Culture in Pluralistic Social Settings," *American Antiquity* 63, no. 2 (1998), Rani Alexander, "Towards an Archaeological Theory of Culture Contact," in *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change, and Archaeology*, ed. James Cusick (Carbondale, Il.: Center for Archaeological Investigations Southern Illinois University, 1998).

privileged over the equally important role of internal dynamics in shaping interactions. They also note that societies are inherently heterogeneous entities, often with conflicting and circumstantial interests, and consequently cannot be treated in isolation or as cultural monoliths. Such approaches are therefore limited in their application to the southern Levant in the LB IIB, a setting and period that demand a more comprehensive methodology, and are unable to adequately explain the wide variety of complex interactions and changes that occur within the archaeological record at this time.

New Perspectives and Approaches

Recognizing these limitations, this dissertation outlines a more nuanced theoretical approach for understanding change and continuity in the archaeological record of the Late Bronze southern Levant. Specifically, it re-evaluates dynamic changes in material culture during the LB IIB by placing an emphasis on local agency, practice and identity formation. In it, I argue that the realm of ritual activity is ideally suited for such a study, given that ritual engages with the realm of ideas, making them manifest through practice.

In southern Levantine sites, which acted as points of cross-cultural articulation through land based and maritime trade throughout the Bronze Age, such an approach is particularly useful. At Tell Nami for example, unique burial practices have been found that incorporate Anatolian and Aegean elements such as pithos burials and Thera style pumice offerings. The fact that one such interment also possessed both a Hittite signet ring and an inset Egyptian scarab ring provides a striking example of the local re-contextualization of material culture and practice.²²

Similarly, cultural continuity in the face of external pressures can be just as active a choice as selective change and adaptation. The northern Levantine city of Ugarit, which appears to have been semi-subservient to the Egyptians and Hittites in the first and second halves of the Late Bronze Age respectively, incorporated many foreign artistic motifs into their local glyptic art. The traditional iconography of Ugarit's dynastic royal seals, however, remained entirely unchanged, and Late Bronze Age examples were carved to identically match those that had been used during the preceding Middle Bronze Age.²³ Here continuity in practice has clear ties to legitimacy on the local level and is an active choice, raising questions regarding cultural maintenance in the face of domination or perhaps attempts to maintain neutrality between two great (and often conflicting) powers. Tel Nami and Ugarit then, while differing in relations, resources and spheres of influence provide corollary examples: from the most private to most public of settings, both change

²² Michal Artzy, "Incense, Camels and Collared Rim Jars: Desert Trade Routes and Maritime Outlets in the Second Millennium," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 13 (1994): 129.

²³ Itamar Singer, *A Political History of Ugarit* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 611-12, B.R. Kabatiarova, "Ugaritic Seal Metamorphoses as a Reflection of the Hittite Administration and the Egyptian Influence in the Late Bronze Age in Western Syria" (Bilkent University, 2006), 84.

and continuity result from the interplay between structured external interactions and active choices dictated by local agency.

Investigations into changes in practice, specifically ritual practice, therefore form the basis of the study to follow. Ritual practice is arguably one of the most indicative factors for evaluating change and continuity in culture contact settings, given that it is highly resistant to change, and when change does occur, it is often related to the construction and maintenance of social and political boundaries.²⁴ The recent work of Nakhai, Keswani, Green, and others demonstrates that ritual practice is not only highly accessible through the archaeological record, but has potential to illuminate facets of lived experience unattested elsewhere.²⁵

In the following study, I propose that new ritual practices may have emerged as the result of the interplay between external factors such as cross-culture contact, and internal dynamics facilitated through local agency. Instead of a unidirectional flow of power and influence, from center to periphery and dominator to dominated, I explore the possibility that a process of cultural entanglement took place between the Levant and its neighbors during the LB IIB. I hypothesize this process resulted in new hybridizing ritual practices that emerged and existed in constant state of renegotiation, with participants actively choosing specific cultural elements to adopt, maintain and transform altogether.

To investigate this, I focus on three distinct, yet complimentary lines of archaeological evidence for ritual activity in the LB IIB: temple architecture and assemblages, mortuary practice, and Canaanite “bowl-lamp” deposits. While each practice would have engaged multiple spheres of Canaanite society in its own way, the selection ranges from more public (temple worship) to more private (individual burial) settings, providing a broad spectrum of activity that cross-cuts age, gender, kinship, religion, and socio-economic status. Change and continuity within practices are noted with respect to inter- and intra- site geographic distribution, and display a remarkable degree of uniformity across the LB IIB southern Levant. These overlapping patterns of practice suggest shared emic notions of what specific forms of ritual practice entail, indicating a higher level of cultural cohesion during the period than has been previously assumed. At the same time, this study shows that degrees of local variation in each ritual practice exist as well. This combination of regional patterning and local variation indicates that while a general process of Canaanite cultural coalescence was taking place during the LB IIB, it played out differently in various locales according to local interests. The evidence therefore

²⁴ A. B. Knapp, *Society and Polity at Bronze Age Pella: An Annales Perspective* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), John Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan" (University College London, 2006), 84.

²⁵ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, Priscilla Keswani, *Mortuary Ritual and Society in Bronze Age Cyprus*, Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology (London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing ltd., 2004), Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan".

indicates that this process, along with the emergence of new and unattested ritual practices, is the product of local agency and the structural conditions within which it operates.

Ib. Dissertation Structure and Overview of Chapters

Chapter two explores the theoretical concepts and questions above in detail. In it, I assess the origins, strengths and shortcomings of the various models and positions that have been used to explain changes in Canaanite material culture and ritual practice. I discuss the merits of acculturation theory, elite-emulation, center-periphery/world systems theory, as well as processes of hybridization, ethnogenesis, and transculturation in terms of their applicability to the LB IIB southern Levant. Building on these models, I suggest new directions of approach and lay out the dissertation's overall methodology. Traditional typological approaches often ascribe cultural identity on the basis of one or more potentially arbitrary formal characteristics. Abandoning this method, I outline a holistic, context-based approach that examines the formal, functional and ideological dimensions of ritual assemblages, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical model.

Chapter three discusses the evidence for temples, sanctuaries and cultic paraphernalia in the LB IIB southern Levant. After a review of prior approaches and typologies, I present evidence from multiple sites across the region, with special attention paid to both the formal and contextual properties of the cultic structure and assemblage. I build upon and in some cases challenge the conclusions of Oren, Wimmer, Higgenbotham, and others by calling into question both the use of simplistic typologies based solely on architectural groundplan, as well as the ascription of foreign influence in so called "Egyptian-Style" temples made along the same lines. Instead, I follow Daviau's approach to Bronze Age household archaeology to temple assemblages and installations, contextualizing ritual activity through broad and overlapping object-type categories.²⁶ These categories illuminate a spectrum of activities related to the temple, and through their comparison across sites, broader patterns in ritual activity that crosscut traditional typologies may be observed.

In Chapter four, I apply a similar approach to the burial practices and funerary assemblages of the LB IIB southern Levant. In addition to a general discussion of theoretical approaches to mortuary archaeology, I cover prior treatments of the subject by Bloch-Smith, Gonen, Gilmore and others, analyzing the basis upon which their burial typologies and ethnic attributions have been made.²⁷

²⁶ P. M. Michele Daviau, *Houses and Their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine : Domestic Activity Areas and Artifact Distribution in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993).

²⁷ Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Jar Burials," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, ed. Eric M. Meyers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, Gilmore, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine."

Using these prior categories, I present the archaeological evidence from a variety of sites for what have been considered a wide diversity of burial customs directly influenced by Egypt and other foreign powers. By comparing these burials to those found in neighboring regions, the high degree of foreign cultural influence exerted on LB IIB mortuary ritual is called into question. Instead of categorizing burials by formal attributes that may or may not have been culturally relevant in antiquity, I proceed by approaching the burial assemblage as a whole and attempt to identify functional properties that relate to ritual activity involved in the preparation, interment and maintenance of the dead. In doing so, I show elements of cultic practice that cross-cut traditional typologies, highlighting the degree of complexity involved in the process, as well as emic notions of death and the afterlife that appear to have been shared across the region.

In Chapter five, I address a phenomenon exclusive to Canaan in the LB IIB known as the “Bowl-Lamp” deposit. This curious ritual practice, which involves the burial of a number of vessels (often bowls) around a lamp is poorly understood and has been interpreted as a type of foundation deposit by Petrie, McAllister, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni among others. Due to the rather sudden and unprecedented introduction of the practice, prior interpretations have viewed it as intrusive, and have sought an origin or inspiration for the practice in neighboring regions, Egypt in particular. After presenting the archaeological evidence by site for these deposits including new material from the sites of Tel es-Safi and Ashkelon, I review the evidence for similar practices in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia. By comparing the form and intended function of deposits across cultures, I show the ascription of a foreign origin for the practice (Egypt especially) to be highly problematic. In terms of the meaning and function of these purported deposits, I also call their common attribution as building foundation deposits into question, by analyzing their distribution within sites and the particular buildings within which they have been found. In doing so, this analysis sheds new light on a little understood Canaanite ritual practice and may indicate the emergence of a purely Canaanite ritual tradition in the LB IIB.

In the concluding chapter six, the results of the theoretical framework, methodology and applications outlined above are evaluated. Quite unlike the acculturation or emulation theories espoused by prior scholarship, I show that some of these practices were “hybridizing” in that they existed in a constant state of renegotiation throughout the Late Bronze Age, actively choosing specific cultural elements to adopt, maintain or transform altogether. Others emerge without precedent, and appear to be linked to the genesis of new ritual practices during the LB IIB. In both cases, the origins of these practices can be traced to the interplay between the unique historical circumstances of the period, and the prerogatives of individuals who chose to create and participate in them.

By comparing the final distributions of these three forms of differing yet interrelated ritual activity, this study provides insight into both unique local

practices and regional interconnections among the dynamic, heterogeneous polities of the LB IIB southern Levant.

Chapter II: Theoretical Approaches to Culture Contact

“What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These “in-between spaces” provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood- singular or communal- that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.” - Homi Bhabha ²⁸

IIa. Prior Approaches to Cross-Cultural Interaction in the LB IIB Southern Levant

The importance of understanding culture contact in antiquity stems from the fact that no human society has ever existed for a significant period of time in isolation from others. Communication, interaction and conflict between cultures play important roles in a culture’s development, influencing not only the course of history, but also its conceptions of society, the individual and others. At its core, culture contact is defined by “otherness”, interactions with “outsiders” that stimulate change and adjustment. These interactions can vary widely, from trade and exchange between peers, to violent encounters and colonial suppression. In each case, however, contact and interaction provide opportunities for reflection, adjustment, resistance and accommodation by challenging the *status quo*. Much in the same way that a chemical reaction can reveal some of the attributes of its component materials, culture contact provides a potent lens through which world views, identities and the processes that shape them can be illuminated and better understood.

Given the broad spectrum of contexts and interactions, it is no wonder that a unified theory of culture contact has yet to emerge in archaeology.²⁹ Unlike chemical interactions, culture contact involves unique actors, contexts and circumstances, the outcomes of which are by no means predetermined. Access to labor, resources, finished goods, services, and technological know-how may provide the impetus for culture contact, as well as a desire for security and knowledge of foreign intentions and capabilities.³⁰ A host of social and ideological factors, both implicit and explicit, also have a hand in stimulating and guiding the process. The scale upon which culture contact and its effects manifest also varies considerably, affecting the individual, the state and all orders of society in-between. At the most basic level, these interactions are carried out by agents who are influenced by prevailing political and economic contexts, making them subject to systemic and highly

²⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.

²⁹ Edward Schortman and Patricia Urban, "Culture Contact Structure and Process," in *Studies in Culture Contact : Interaction, Culture Change, and Archaeology*, ed. James G. Cusick (Carbondale, Il.: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 1998), 102.

³⁰ Jerry Bently, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History," *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996): 752-56, Schortman and Urban, "Culture Contact Structure and Process," 108.

idiosyncratic factors.³¹ Archaeologists face an additional challenge in interpreting what is an inherently dynamic process through the static archaeological record. As a result, interpretive models for understanding culture contact are as numerous and vary as widely as the circumstances they seek to understand. The most basic and fundamental difference in these approaches lies in their definition of what culture actually is, and the process by which it changes.

In light of its position as a major crossroads of the ancient world, the history of the Levant is a history defined by cross-cultural interaction. While the LB IIB brought Canaanite culture into ever-closer contact with the Hittites, Cyprus, the Aegean and Mesopotamia, it was Egypt, by way of its proximity and long-standing relations, that continued to exert major influence in the region. Many of the changes in Canaanite art and architecture during this time appear, at least on the surface, to have parallels in contemporary Egypt during the 19th Dynasty. Prior to this point, Egyptian-style artifacts found in the Levant had largely been limited to portable, high value objects and Egyptian-style architecture did not extend north of the Gaza strip. The question of what may properly be considered “Egyptian” and “Non-Egyptian” in this context is a problematic issue that will be examined later in the chapter. It is noteworthy, however, that the types and frequency of these objects and architectural styles increase sharply during the LB IIB across the wadi systems of the Negev, at major coastal harbors, and along the Via Maris and Jordan Valley.³²

This dissertation addresses significant changes that occur in Canaanite material culture and practice during the LB IIB and attempts to understand the causal factors and circumstances that underscored their development. Much has been written about this period from a variety of perspectives and theoretical positions, some explicitly stated, and others implicitly assumed. These approaches have traditionally employed concepts like acculturation or elite emulation, situating the motivating force behind culture change outside the southern Levant. In this chapter, I will survey a number of key works that have dealt with this topic, mapping the theoretical positions that underpin them. After discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, I propose a new methodology that uses ritual activity as a lens through which the effects of culture contact may be effectively analyzed.

“Direct Rule” models and Egyptian Hegemony in the LB IIB

One of the earliest explanatory models for Egyptian-Canaanite relations in the Late Bronze Age remains one of the most popular, and stems from a general consensus on the nature of Egyptian-Canaanite relations established by Alt, Albright

³¹ James Cusick, "Introduction," in *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change and Archaeology*, ed. James Cusick (Carbondale, Il.: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 1998), 5.

³² Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 8.

and others in the 1940s. Alt was the first to propose that the Egyptian kings of the 19th and early 20th dynasties established a system of direct rule over the southern Levant during the LB IIB.³³ Using texts and the excavated material of the time, Albright similarly argued that the southern Levant remained an integral part of the Egyptian empire throughout the Late Bronze Age that was governed directly by Egypt. Rebellions, while frequent, never lasted long and were put down quickly through military force.³⁴ This position was later elaborated by Weinstein, who divided the Egyptian presence in Palestine into three distinct phases: the rise of the Egyptian empire during the LB I, political and economic domination during the LB IB-IIA, and finally military occupation during the LB IIB. In this third and final phase, Weinstein takes the position that the increase in Egyptian influence in the material culture of the LB IIB southern Levant is the result of a dramatic shift in Egyptian imperial policy at the outset of the 19th Dynasty. Unlike the last kings of the 18th Dynasty who appear to have taken a largely hands-off approach in their dealings with the southern Levant, Weinstein contends that the 19th Dynasty was no longer satisfied with simply exploiting the Levant politically and economically. Instead, he claims Egyptian administrative and military personnel moved into the region to counter Hittite ambitions and a rising tide of unrest, establishing a permanent presence there in higher numbers than ever before.³⁵ According to this rationale, it is the increased presence of Egyptians themselves and the effects of direct military occupation that accounts for the changes in southern Levantine material culture during the LB IIB.

This approach, which is attractive in its reconciling of the textual and archaeological record, has been widely accepted by many scholars, and remains popular today.³⁶ In her 2005 book, Morris writes: "Far better suited to explain the suddenness of this change (in the LB IIB) is James Weinstein's theory, namely that the material trappings of Egypt's empire only become visible after the introduction of a policy shift on the part of the 19th Dynasty rulers."³⁷ Morris expands on Weinstein, citing the fact that there is in fact no textual or archaeological evidence

³³ Albrecht Alt, *Agyptische Temple in Palastina Und Die Landnahme Der Philister* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1943).

³⁴ Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, 99.

³⁵ Weinstein, "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment," 17-18.

³⁶ Oren, "Governors Residences in Canaan under the New Kingdom: A Case Study of Egyptian Administration," Patrick E. McGovern, *Late Bronze Palestinian Pendants* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), Itamar Singer, "The Political Status of Megiddo VIIa," *Tel Aviv* 15-16 (1988-1989), ———, "Merneptah's Campaign to Canaan and the Egyptian Occupation of the Southern Coastal Plain of Palestine in the Ramesside Period," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 269, no. 1-10 (1988): 2. William G. Dever, "The Late Bronze Age-Early Iron I Horizon in Syria-Palestine: Egyptians, Canaanites, 'Sea Peoples,' and Proto-Israelites," in *The Crisis Years: The 12th Century B.C. From Beyond the Danube to the Tigris*, Ed., ed. W.A. Ward and M.S. Joukowsky (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1992), 101, Knapp, "Independence and Imperialism: Politico-Economic Structures in the Bronze Age Levant," 94, Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 8-17.

³⁷ Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 18.

for any substantive change in the number or nature of Egyptian troops and administrators stationed in the region from the 18th to the 19th Dynasty. Instead, she proposes that a new 19th Dynasty policy aimed at making Egyptian holdings in the southern Levant self-sustainable was instituted, causing the trappings of empire to become visible for the first time. Despite this variation in explanation, Morris holds to the basic theoretical premise outlined by Weinstein: "The present study abides by the rule that the wider the range of Egyptian and Egyptian-style artifacts discovered at a Syro-Palestinian site, the greater the probability that the Egyptians themselves had at one time been resident."³⁸

The approach forwarded by Weinstein and his adherents has very much to do with the objectives of their research, and their approach to the nature of culture itself. In these works, the authors concern themselves with reconstructing the culture-history of the LB southern Levant, that is to say, the periodization of historical events in the region and the temporal and geographic extents of the cultures that participated in them. This approach finds its roots in the 1930s with Alexander Lesser, who was among the first to recognize that cross-cultural interaction was a universal constant in the human experience, and that societies could not be understood in isolation. He developed the concept of the "social field" in which societies are inextricably linked in weblike connections.³⁹ Culture, according to Lesser and his contemporaries, existed as an abstraction derived from human behavior; a shared mental construct composed entirely of ideas, beliefs and values. This theoretical position has been described as the "normative" approach, where a series of cultural norms are assumed to exist within a social group, and are reflected in and by the material by-products of that group, even after it has ceased to exist.⁴⁰

Following this rationale, these ideas are thought to radiate outward from a culturally homogeneous center and are passed on, evolving through time with succeeding generations. Changes in material culture then, are likewise assumed to follow regular patterns over time and space, resulting in the construction of neat cultural phases. "Culture" in this context, is almost synonymous with "object" and the processes involved in its creation. As a result, the normative approach relies heavily on exhaustive descriptions of ceramic assemblages, decorative motifs, lithic types, architectural forms, methods of manufacture and their purported changes over time in the attempt to define, describe and order peoples in antiquity. Indeed, the establishment of absolute chronologies and the accumulation of data with which to fill them are hallmarks of the approach.⁴¹ Any discontinuities in this regular

³⁸ Ibid., 17.

³⁹ Alexander Lesser, "Social Fields and the Evolution of Society," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17 (1961).

⁴⁰ Kent Flannery, "Culture History Vs. Culture Process: A Debate in American Archaeology" in *Contemporary Archaeology: A Guide to Theory and Contributions* ed. Mark Leone (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press 1972), 103.

⁴¹ Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 288.

pattern are thought to be the result of environmental factors or interactions with outside peoples. In the case of the LB II southern Levant, Weinstein, Morris and others hold that discontinuities in the archaeological record must be the result of outside influence, and that the increased presence of Egyptian and Egyptian style objects are indications of the presence of Egyptians themselves, the instigators of such change.

There are a number of problems with the culture-history approach as applied to the LB IIB southern Levant. For one, the culture traits that figure so prominently in taxonomies, such as pottery types could be quite arbitrary, and may not have been perceived or valued in antiquity. According to Binford, the approach not only fails to achieve a true explanatory level of how cultures operate, but it generates inaccurate analogies between them through its reliance on single variables, i.e. the transmission of ideas through time and space.⁴² While Weinstein's article was one of the first to systematically integrate the archaeological record of the LB IIB into his model of Egyptian-Canaanite cross-cultural interaction, his interpretation of that record, as well the interpretations of those who ascribe to it, remain largely reliant on the textual record.

An abundance of textual sources, including administrative archives discovered at Ugarit, Tell el-Amarna, and Hattusas, can be read to suggest that the Levant's role in the complex network of trade and exchange that characterized the Late Bronze Age was, for the most part, a subservient one.⁴³ In the LB IIB, records of Egyptian campaigns into the region reinforce the idea of a loose confederation of Canaanite vassal kingdoms, subject to foreign powers like Egypt and Hatti at varying points throughout the period. Without a robust interpretive framework to provide an alternative explanation, accounts of Canaanite passivity in the face of foreign domination have often been accepted uncritically. Parallels between Egyptian and Canaanite material culture have been cited as evidence of Egyptian hegemony in the southern Levant despite a host of differences in form and context. The specific details of Merneptah's campaigns into the southern Levant, laid out in his reliefs at Karnak and the Merneptah stela are generally accepted as historical fact, despite their propagandistic nature.⁴⁴ The long established Egyptian ideology of conquest was known, even by Egyptian contemporaries, to portray events through an idealized Egyptian lens. The Kadesh reliefs of Ramesses II for example, show how a

⁴² Lewis Binford, "Archaeological Systematics and the Study of Culture Process," *American Antiquity* 31 (1965): 204-05.

⁴³ See Gary M. Beckman and Harry A. Hoffner, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999), Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts : From Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (Munster Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).

⁴⁴ See the debate between Yurco and Rainey over the nature of the Merneptah reliefs and stela: Frank Yurco, "Merneptah's Canaanite Campaign," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 23 (1986), Anson Rainey, "Rainey's Challenge " *Biblical Archaeology Review* 17, no. 5 (1991), Anson Rainey, "Israel in Merneptah's Inscription and Reliefs," *Israel Exploration Journal* 51, no. 1 (2001).

military stalemate abroad could be depicted as a resounding victory at home.⁴⁵ The Amarna correspondence, often cited as evidence of an extended network of highly dependant Egyptian vassal kingdoms that continued into the 19th Dynasty, also reflects Egyptian bias in interpretation. Putting the inherent problem of applying earlier texts to a later period aside for the moment, the degree of Egyptian control and Canaanite dependence during the LB IIA has been problematized by many scholars, who suggest pleas for goods and assistance may have been part of a Canaanite strategy to profit from Egyptian anxieties abroad.⁴⁶ An angry letter from Kadashman-Enlil of Babylon complaining that his greeting gifts to Egypt had been presented as tribute provides an excellent example of how Egypt recontextualized politics abroad to suit its image at home.⁴⁷

This is not to say that Egyptians were not present in the LB IIB Southern Levant, nor to refute the fact that on occasion they engaged in military action in the region. The examples above, however, serve as reminders that we should be cautious about inferring too much about the nature of Egypto-Canaanite relations from texts and using them as a baseline for interpreting the archaeological record. For example, Singer has argued for an Egyptian administrative presence at Megiddo at the end of the Late Bronze Age on the basis of the famous 12th Century BCE hoard of ivories discovered there. In addition to the fact that Egyptian inscriptions were found on some of the ivories, Singer maintains that no Canaanite ruler would have been able to amass such wealth under Egyptian rule, and concludes the annex in which they were found was, in all probability, an Egyptian treasury.⁴⁸ In a recent article, however, Feldman points out that Singer's analysis centers almost entirely on the sparse inscriptions and does not take the archaeological context or stylistic attributes of the ivories into full account. She shows how the deposition and context of the ivories indicate they were disposed of in a ritual manner, and makes a compelling case for their initial collection by a local ruler capitalizing on the political instability of the 12th century.⁴⁹ Her alternative and more plausible explanation highlights the potential pitfalls of relying solely on the textual record as a basis for interpretation.

In his work on contextualizing the uses of imported pottery, Huckel highlights the fact that most research on the Late Bronze Southern Levant centers on a scholarly "meta-narrative" that privileges fragmentary documentary sources

⁴⁵ The battle was displayed in reliefs at five prominent locations: the temples of Abydos, Karnak, Luxor, Abu Simbel and the Ramesseum. Hans Goedicke, Anthony Spalinger, and Scott Morschauser, *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh* (Baltimore, Md.: Halgo, 1985).

⁴⁶ Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East 1600-1200 BCE*, Cohen and Westbrook, *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*.

⁴⁷ Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East 1600-1200 BCE*, 221. Another well known letter from a Babylonian complains that his sister was thrown into the Egyptian Royal Harem after being given in marriage to Amenhotep III.

⁴⁸ Singer, "The Political Status of Megiddo VIIa," 108.

⁴⁹ Marian H. Feldman, "Hoarded Treasures: The Megiddo Ivories and the End of the Bronze Age," *Levant* 41, no. 2 (2009): 191-92.

over material culture. This normative framework serves to distract scholars from addressing the complex patterning in the material culture of the period.⁵⁰ Hazel sums up the problem with these traditional approaches:

For the most part, archaeologists working in the southern Levant have relied heavily on Egyptological secondary literature describing military campaigns without carefully investigating the nature of these documents and the Egyptian perception of events. This is especially evident in theories proposed for a number of transition periods.⁵¹

With this in mind, the present study shifts from emphasizing texts in interpretation to reexamining the archaeological record. The archaeological record, in and of itself, has the ability to provide information about such encounters from an unbiased and qualitatively different perspective than texts, which have tended to form the primary basis for our understanding of these interactions.⁵²

Processual Approaches, World-Systems Theory and Elite Emulation

Facing several drawbacks to the culture-history approach, particularly in situations of cross-culture contact, many archaeologists including Stewart, Bennett, Strong and others grew frustrated with the lack of conceptual tools at their disposal. They echoed earlier concerns that normative concepts applied to archaeology seemed to bear little relation or relevance to actual cultural processes taking place.⁵³ In his seminal 1965 article "Archaeological Systematics and the Study of Culture Process" Binford sets out the need for a new conceptual framework to fully understand cultural processes and in doing so, understand their interaction with one another. For Binford, culture was not a shared set of ideas, but a system of extrasomatic adaptive subsystems; that is, the varying means by which societies integrate with one another and their environments. Culture by this rationale is not shared, but is actively participated in and affected by the interaction of these subsystems.⁵⁴

If culture then is to be viewed as a system dependant on multiple variables akin to an engine and its component parts, an appropriate "multivariable" approach must be taken in its interpretation. Here Binford lays out the basis of his theoretical

⁵⁰ Miles G. Huckle, "The Local Dimension in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant: A Case Study Using Imported Pottery," in *Archaeological Perspectives on the Transmission and Transformation of Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Joanne Clarke (Oxford: The Council for British Research in the Levant, Oxbow Books, 2005), 59.

⁵¹ Hasel, *Domination and Resistance : Egyptian Military Activity in the Southern Levant, Ca. 1300-1185 B.C.*, 1.

⁵² Michael Dietler, "Consumption, Agency, and Cultural Entanglement: Theoretical Implications of a Mediterranean Colonial Encounter " in *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change and Archaeology*, ed. James Cusick (Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press 1998), 289.

⁵³ P. Martin, "The Revoution in Archaeology," *American Antiquity* 36 (1971): 2.

⁵⁴ Binford, "Archaeological Systematics and the Study of Culture Process," 205.

framework in which taxonomies should be partitioned in order to show variability among artifacts and isolate causally relevant factors. Categories are based on common structural or functional properties and are then observed through the lenses of various systems and situations of systematic change. By seeking out regular and stable relations between these causative factors, he contends the goal of the process will be achieved; the expression of common attributes pertaining to cultural processes.⁵⁵ In other words, “processual” archaeology holds that there is a patterned regularity in the archaeological record reflective of the patterned interaction of a society’s subsystems and their environment. It seeks to understand this interaction by isolating causal factors within societies and seeking out regular and stable relations between them; in short, establishing rules of interaction or cultural “laws”⁵⁶ In this way, archaeology is able to provide its own explanatory models for cultural change, and is no longer reliant on the historical narrative for explanation.

Since Binford’s time, such approaches have been adapted for use in the Levant with varying degrees of success.⁵⁷ In terms of the LB IIB, two derivatives, “world systems/core-periphery theory” and “elite emulation” have increasingly come into use. Binford’s definition of culture as process, its shift in objective from description to explanation, and its emphasis on environmental and social factors accounting for culture change, paved the way for a systemic explanation of cultural interaction in which two or more cultures interact in predictable ways depending on the endogenous and exogenous factors respective to each. Such a system emerged with Immanuel Wallerstein’s 1974 “The modern world system,” an economic model describing the spread of capitalism. The main tenets of Wallerstein’s model state: (1) the nature of inter-societal contacts and effects are determined by the structural position of a society within inter-regional political and economic systems; (2) systems of interaction are characterized by inequalities allowing one side to turn interactions to their own benefit; (3) “core” societies exploit “periphery” societies, taking raw materials and labor which they sell back as finished goods; and (4) semi-

⁵⁵ Ibid.: 209.

⁵⁶ Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 392-418. Ian Hodder, "Theoretical Archaeology: A Reactionary View " in *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, ed. Ian Hodder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 6. Binford’s approach requires that individual artifacts be viewed in terms of the various subsystems within which they operate. Binford’s functional classificatory system identified three general classes within which artifacts reflect past social systems: the “technomic” dealing with humans’ adaptation to their environment, the “socio-technic” relating to the maintenance of social systems and group identity, and the “ideo-technic” pertaining to a culture’s ideological constructions. A particular object’s “style” then, can be seen as its formal quality intersecting all three of these classes. Hodder, Shanks and Tilly and others critiqued this approach for its overly deterministic methodology and functionalist definition of culture, laying the foundations of the post-processual school of thought. M. Shanks and C. Tilley, *Social Theory and Archaeology* (London: Polity Press, 1993), 12.

⁵⁷ see Thomas Levy, "Preface," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Thomas Levy (London: Continuum, 2003).

peripheries mediate these relations between core demands and the flow of resources masking true power relations between the two.⁵⁸

While peripheries fill a highly specialized function in Wallerstein's "world system," the fundamental attributes of the system (i.e. asymmetrical power relations and systems of exchange between active and dominant "core" societies and weaker, passive "peripheral" societies) were adopted by many of the social sciences to form the basis of "core-periphery" theory. Among the advantages of these approaches is that they show local events cannot be solely understood by local conditions and contexts. The actions of all parties are constrained and conditioned by processes on a macro-regional scale, Considering a society's position in the overall structure is therefore vital for understanding interaction on all levels. The system is appealing in that it links politics, economy, geography and ideology into a unified construct that addresses developmental dynamics of complex societies at an inter-regional scale.⁵⁹ As a result, it has enjoyed wide ranging applications across the archaeology of the ancient Near East.⁶⁰

One approach that specifically attempts to explain changes in material culture from the perspective of core-periphery theory is the concept of "elite emulation". This model, which holds that societies on the periphery of more prestigious or powerful cultures derive legitimization by emulating aspects of those cultures has been applied to the LB IIB southern Levant by Carolyn Higginbotham. In her book, Higginbotham suggests that aspects of Egyptian material culture were adopted and adapted by local Canaanite elites in an attempt to tap into an iconography of power and prestige associated with Egypt. She contends that

⁵⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New-York: Academic Press, 1974).

⁵⁹ Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall, "Comparing World-Systems: Concepts and Working Hypotheses," *Social Forces* 71, no. 4 (1993): 854. For a review of World Systems approaches in Archaeology, see Thomas D. Hall and Christopher Chase-Dunn, "The World-Systems Perspective and Archaeology: Forward into the Past," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 1, no. 2 (1993). The application of Wallerstein's economic model to the ancient world was challenged by Carl Polanyi and others who, like Marx and Weber, dichotomize between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies. Polanyi's work based on the strong political conviction that function of the economy should be to strengthen social relationships and eliminate conflict in the allocation of wealth which should conform to the values of each society. He drew a sharp distinction between reciprocity/gift exchange for social maneuvering and true capitalistic trade-for-profit's sake, and claimed Wallerstein's categories were not applicable in understanding premodern societies. These positions became entrenched in what was known as the Substantivist vs. Formalist economic debate. In more recent years, Scholars including Monroe have shown this to be a false dichotomy, with multiple systems (capitalist and otherwise) operating simultaneously in antiquity. See Monroe, *Scales of Fate: Trade, Tradition, and Transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean ca. 1350-1175 BCE*.

⁶⁰ Examples include Guillermo Algaze, *The Uruk World System : The Dynamics of Expansion of Early Mesopotamian Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), Christopher Edens, "Dynamics of Trade in the Ancient Mesopotamian "World System"," *American Anthropologist* 94, no. 1 (1992).

changes in material culture and an increase in “Egyptian-style” objects are the result of local elite emulation, not a shift in Egyptian imperial policy or increase in troops and administrators during the LB IIB:

This core-periphery model does not presume a particular pattern of military or economic domination. Rather it stresses the sociological and ideological dimensions of imperialism from the perspectives of both the centers and the peripheries. Both parties derive legitimation from their participation in the imperial system.⁶¹

Unlike the culture-history approach, Higginbotham’s use of elite-emulation then, attempts to understand Egyptian-Canaanite relations through a systemic understanding of culture and inter-culture contact. Her methodology, which incorporates both text and the archaeological record, evaluates the evidence for either a “direct-rule” or elite-emulation model based on a series of predetermined expectations. Under direct-rule, Higginbotham argues that the architecture of Pharonic installations in the southern Levant and the variety of artifacts found in them should closely resemble those found in Egypt itself. Egyptian material culture should also be unevenly distributed at southern Levantine sites, limited to centers of Egyptian control. On the other hand, in the event of elite-emulation, Egyptian objects and architectural attributes would be more evenly distributed and confined to a narrower variety of types. These objects would be primarily prestige goods and hybrid items displaying Egyptian influence found in ritual or mortuary settings.⁶²

While innovative in its approach and departure from Weinstein’s widely accepted hypothesis, it is in the expectations elicited above that Higginbotham’s model begins to encounter difficulties. Morris for example, points out that Higginbotham’s assertion that direct rule by Egypt would translate into purely Egyptian-style archaeological remains is highly problematic. According to Higginbotham, the closest parallel for direct rule during the New Kingdom was Egyptian policy towards Nubia, in which a series of Egyptian fortresses erected during the Middle Kingdom were reoccupied as the kings of 18th and 19th dynasties reasserted control over the region.⁶³ She holds that if the same policy of direct rule was in effect in the southern Levant, a similar pattern of “purely Egyptian” contexts should exist (a hypothesis in keeping with her highly processual approach). Morris disagrees, citing a combination of historical precedents and environmental factors that made Egypt’s colonial enterprise in Nubia unique, and one that required equally unique strategies in its administration. She states that it is misleading to assume an Egyptian military base should possess a thoroughly Egyptian style material culture, especially when indigenous material culture always existed side by side with Egyptian style artifacts. Given the high cost of transporting items from Egypt, she

⁶¹ Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine : Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery*.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12.

continues, the items with which military bases would have been supplied were almost certainly obtained from local populations.⁶⁴ The discovery of an Old Assyrian trading colony at the Anatolian site of Kanesh illustrates this fact nicely: were it not for cuneiform texts detailing transactions and the nature of the trade, we would not know Assyrian traders were present and that such activities took place. The Assyrians living at Kanesh inhabited structures and used items common to Anatolia, rendering them otherwise invisible in the archaeological record.⁶⁵ The example serves as a cautionary tale against assuming a direct correlation between foreign presence and foreign material culture.

The hard and fast rules set forth by Higginbotham are questionable both in their applicability, and in situating each model in terms of a totalizing “either, or” scenario. Higginbotham’s methodology sets up a questionable dichotomy in which no room is left for regional variation or approaches to contact. Her approach eliminates the possibility that a combination of direct-action on the part of Egypt, elements of Canaanite elite-emulation, and a variety of other unexplored factors, may have contributed to overall relations between the two. The result is the failure of the evidence to adhere to either strictly defined regimen, forcing Higginbotham to conclude that “Both the textual and the archaeological evidence fail to provide a perfect correlation with the expectations for either the Direct Rule or the Elite Emulation model.”⁶⁶ While Higginbotham attempts to explain this by suggesting aspects of both models may have been at play, the false dichotomy inherent in her research design is never transcended and thus a satisfactory explanation remains elusive.

Interrogating “Egyptianization,” Direct Rule, and Elite Emulation

A contributing problem to the methods outlined above centers around the attempt to ascribe specific cultural identities to material culture. Higginbotham’s methodology is geared towards building typologies of “Egyptian-Style” architecture, pottery and objects that tend to privilege the distribution of distinct types, rather than contexts in which multiple lines of evidence converge. This point is recognized by Morris⁶⁷ who critiques the elite-emulation approach, but is herself unable to push the boundaries of the framework forward and ends up falling back on the pots=people paradigm. Morris’ typologies, dividing Egyptian-style material into the categories of architecture, statuary, inscriptions, pottery, non-prestige goods and prestige goods are equally problematic, not only in the loosely defined qualifications of each category, but in the way they are operationalized. For Morris, four out of five

⁶⁴ Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 12-14.

⁶⁵ Amelie Khurt and Fergus Millar, *The Ancient Near East C. 3000-330 BC* (London: Routledge, 2006), 91, M.T. Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-State and Its Colonies* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1976).

⁶⁶ Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine : Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery*, 129.

⁶⁷ Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 15.

of these categories should be present at a site in order for it to qualify as an Egyptian fortress. Her reasoning for these categories and her methods of assessment are not elaborated, however. Indeed, while both Higginbotham and Morris present exhaustive synthetic studies of the literature and archaeology pertaining to Late Bronze Age Canaanite-Egyptian relations, the interpretive methodologies they employ respectively for understating that evidence are grounded in and limited by narrow definitions of what culture is, why it changes through contact and interaction and how those changes are manifested in the archaeological record.

As a result of this reliance on acculturation, both Morris and Higginbotham encounter problems when attempting to define what may or may not be properly considered “Egyptian.” While Higginbotham does not lay out a specific set of criteria, she follows Betsy Bryan’s work on Egyptian motifs in Late Bronze Age Palestinian ivories, citing them as an instance of elite-emulation, in which an iconography of power was adopted by local elites in the 12th century.⁶⁸ This schema follows Helene Kantor’s earlier work on style, categorizing and ascribing cultural identities to ivories based on the degree of foreign influence observed in each example.⁶⁹ Morris adopts a similar approach, explicitly dividing materials into three distinct categories: (1) “Egyptian” objects imported from Egypt itself, (2) “Egyptian-Style” objects that are perfect imitations, but are made locally, and (3) “Egyptianizing” objects that are adaptations or reworkings of Egyptian motifs that differ from the canon of Egyptian artistic traditions.⁷⁰ Christine Lilyquist has critiqued this approach and Bryan’s use of “Egyptianizing” iconography as a medium for exploring the relationship between Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age. She rejects Bryan’s conflation of artistic similarity and degree of culture contact, raising questions as to what constitutes Egyptian or Canaanite in the first place.

Recognizing that art objects, even when originating elsewhere, acquire new meanings in new cultural contexts, she concludes that these similarities in material culture and iconography have less to do with exported notions of empire and more to do with cultural integration.⁷¹ Marian Feldman has similarly taken issue with attempts to pigeonhole the cultural “identity” of art objects and craftsmen, which often ignore questions of purpose, context and patterns of consumption. In her book, she explores the role of artistic hybridity in consciously binding disparate elites through Late Bronze Age “international artistic *koine*.” She shows that such objects, like those found in the quasi-independent kingdom Ugarit, are capable of

⁶⁸ Betsy M. Bryan, *Art, Empire, and the End of the Late Bronze Age* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996). Higginbotham, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine : Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery*, 9.

⁶⁹ Helene Kantor, "Syro-Palestinian Ivories," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15, no. 3 (1956): 153-74.

⁷⁰ Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 15.

⁷¹ Christine Lilyquist, "The Use of Ivories as Interpreters of Political History " *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 310 (1998): 31.

occupying multiple levels of significance simultaneously and can be manipulated in order to negotiate status through cultural ambiguity and mutual prestige.⁷²

The process by which these hybrid or Egyptianizing objects, forms and styles come into existence is often referred to as “Egyptianization”, a process synonymous with the concept of acculturation. Pioneered in the 1930s, acculturation remains a powerful and popular explanation for culture change, used by culture-history approaches and center-periphery theory alike. The concept holds that in cases of contact between societies of different levels of complexity, influence is unidirectional, flowing from more to less complex societies, with the former influencing, transforming or even ultimately destroying the later. The acculturation model holds that the greatest impact occurs between societies differentiated by size, complexity and military might. The “weaker” or “less complex” society will undergo greater changes than the larger, and these changes will ultimately result in the abandoning of distinctive traits and adoption of aspects of the stronger culture.⁷³

Edward Spicer elaborated on the concept in his 1962 “cycles of conquest” that dealt with changes within Native American culture confronting the conflicting interests of mining towns and missions. He makes an important distinction between contact situations that use force and those that do not, labeling them “directed” or “non-directed” interactions. Spicer believed a society encountering a more complex and powerful culture in a colonial setting faced four possible outcomes: (1) *Incorporation*: The reworking of new ideas into indigenous contexts; (2) *Assimilation*: the loss of traditional culture and adoption of the new; (3) *Fusion or Syncretism*: the creative meshing of elements of both new and old; and (4) *Compartmentalization*: “code-switching” or the alteration of behavior according to context.⁷⁴ In the case of direct-rule and elite-emulation models, each would describe Egyptian imperial activity during the LB IIB in terms of a “directed” interaction if not a colonial encounter altogether. While each model differs in its specifics, each adheres to the fundamental principle of acculturation, in which the nexus of change and accommodation lies solely within the “less-complex” society, in this case, Canaan.

Despite its utility in explaining elements of some culture-contact situations, the concept of acculturation (and in this case Egyptianization) has come under heavy and sustained criticism for its numerous shortcomings. The limitations of acculturation and world systems approaches have been explored at length, including their assumption of unilinear power dynamics between a dominant core and passive periphery and their inability to recognize the reflexive relationship

⁷² Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design : Luxury Arts and An "International Style" In the Ancient Near East, 1400-1200 BCE*.

⁷³ See Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville Jean Herskovits, "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation," *American Anthropologist* 38 (1936). in which they said acculturation should cover all forms of cross-cultural contact, regardless of power relations and relative complexity.

⁷⁴ Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest : The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), 567-76.

between individuals and social structures, even in situations of disproportionate power and domination, colonial or otherwise.⁷⁵ Not only does an overemphasis on external factors such as power dynamics and environment overlook the equally important role of internal dynamics in shaping interactions, but it ignores the fact that societies are inherently heterogeneous entities, often with conflicting and circumstantial interests, and thus cannot be treated as cultural monoliths, nor be expected to conform to scripted patterning in situations of cross-culture contact. Dietler discusses these limitations at length:

“Unfortunately, these models tend to suffer from a magnification of all the problems associated with world-systems theory in general, problems such as a tendency to favor mechanically reductionist, structurally over determined explanations and to emphasize the core’s role in determining processes on the periphery... In general, the effect of world-systems models in archaeology has been less heuristic than Hallucinogenic: they have caused otherwise sensible scholars to see things that are not there and to ignore crucial developments in some areas in an effort to impose structures that, in their uniformity, deny the fundamental historicity of colonialism.”⁷⁶

At their core, acculturation, elite-emulation and world-systems theory suffer from a singular reliance on positivist assertions that cultures and forces that act upon them can be isolated, quantified and compared with other “regular” patterns that interact in predictable ways. Power relations are seen as entrenched, with little attention paid to the role of the individual, strategies of resistance or the important role of human agency.⁷⁷ While Higgenbotham, Morris and others are correct in asserting that interactions are *structured* by factors like power relations, degrees of cultural complexity and environment, the results of said interactions are by no means pre-determined and are contingent on both unique socio-historical contexts and the prerogatives of local agency. Such approaches are therefore limited in their application to the LB IIB southern Levant and are unable to adequately explain the wide variety of complex interactions and changes that occur within the archaeological record of the Levant at this time.

⁷⁵ James Cusick, "Historiography of Acculturation: An Evaluation of Concepts and Their Application in Archaeology," in *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change and Archaeology* ed. James Cusick (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press 1998), 136-39, Schortman and Urban, "Culture Contact Structure and Process," 104-05, Silliman, "Agency, Practical Politics and the Archaeology of Culture Contact," 192, Stein, "Introduction: The Comparative Archaeology of Colonial Encounters." Chris Gosden, *Archaeology and Colonialism : Cultural Contact from 5000 B.C. To the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7.

⁷⁶ Dietler, "Consumption, Agency, and Cultural Entanglement: Theoretical Implications of a Mediterranean Colonial Encounter," 297.

⁷⁷ Gil J. Stein, "From Passive Periphery to Active Agents: Emerging Perspectives in the Archaeology of Interregional Interaction," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 903.

Iib. New Approaches to Cross-Cultural Interaction in the LB IIB Southern Levant

With the strengths and shortcomings of these prior approaches in mind, the following discussion attempts to resituate the changing material culture of the LB IIB southern Levant by placing an emphasis on local agency, practice and identity formation. According to Dietler, in order to move beyond the established paradigm, we must begin by recognizing that the adoption, appropriation or modification of material culture is not a phenomenon that takes place at the macro-level. Instead, it is a dynamic process of creative transformation and negotiation acted out by groups and individuals engaged in a wide range of competing interests and strategies embedded in local politics, cultural perceptions and world views.⁷⁸

Agency, Hybridity, and Cultural Entanglement

The role of the individual, key for understanding the dynamic and reflexive nature of culture contact, is missing from the unidirectional concept of acculturation. Agency theory attempts to remedy this by resituating the individual within the social structural constraints and circumstances within which they operate. Applications in archaeology ultimately stem from Giddens's concept of structuration and Bourdieu's "Theory of Practice,"⁷⁹ however, Silliman notes that perspectives on agency theory tend to fall into two distinct categories: on the one hand, there are those who see agents as rational actors seeking to advance personal economic, symbolic or political interests.⁸⁰ This view is problematic, however, as such motives are frequently treated as being universal, and individuals do not always act in accordance with their best interests. The second viewpoint holds that individuals act meaningfully in historical and social circumstances only partly of their own making. From this perspective, individual choices are contextualized through preexisting rules and resources, but that also provide opportunity. Their actions can be intentional and strategic, but at the same time, unconsciously follow routine and adhere to social norms. In this way, social agents are both constrained and enabled by social structure.

Following this second approach to agency, culture contact situations may be structured by factors such as asymmetrical power relations and degrees of cultural

⁷⁸ Dietler articulates this concept nicely: "People use alien contacts for their own political agendas, and they give new meanings to borrowed cultural elements according to their own cosmologies. Foreign objects are of interest not for what they represent in the society of origin but of their culturally specific meaning and perceived utility in the context of consumption. Hence, the colonial encounter must be contextualized in the conjuncture of the different social and cultural logics involved." Dietler, "Consumption, Agency, and Cultural Entanglement: Theoretical Implications of a Mediterranean Colonial Encounter," 299.

⁷⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), A. Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979).

⁸⁰ Silliman, "Agency, Practical Politics and the Archaeology of Culture Contact," 192.

complexity; however, the results of such encounters are not deterministic. Interaction is shaped both by systemic factors as well as the motivations of the individuals involved.⁸¹ An emphasis on agency at the local level then, acknowledges that the presence of foreign elements in material culture and practice are never the result of a passive process of acceptance, but are selectively recontextualized into fluid and pre-existing systems of meaning.

Bhabha explores this concept in his seminal work *The Location of Culture* concluding that all meaning is produced via the transmission of ideas through an intermediary “third space” which is itself contingent on individual context and circumstance. He notes that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this space, making claims of inherent cultural originality or purity untenable: “It is in that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that insure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew.”⁸²

Stockhammer follows Bhabha in showing how hybridization and the concept of agency are intimately intertwined.⁸³ Both are rooted in individual experiences and their connection to the creative process explains the heterogeneity of the results of the process. Cultural transformations, such as the one that took place in the LB IIB southern Levant, can be viewed through the lens of hybridization, but hybridity defined as a specifically post-colonial phenomenon.⁸⁴ That is to say that hybridity, as an active, conscious process that is participated in by multiple actors on multiple scales differs substantially from the passive and wholly reactive process of “Egyptianization” or elite emulation. Hybridity as defined by these latter approaches is crippled and particularly dependent on the existence of a problematic counterpart: cultural purity. As Stockhammer cautions, “Hybridity can only exist in opposition to purity; if we speak of hybridity, we must accept the existence of purity.... Every discipline which argues about hybridity has to define what it means to be pure.”⁸⁵

By defining hybridity as an active process of engagement in which foreign elements are selectively recontextualized into new systems of meaning, however, the importance of defining and distinguishing between “pure” contexts, a

⁸¹ Stein, "From Passive Periphery to Active Agents: Emerging Perspectives in the Archaeology of Interregional Interaction," 903-04.

⁸² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 37.

⁸³ Philipp Stockhammer, "Questioning Hybridity," in *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization a Transdisciplinary Approach*, ed. Philipp Stockhammer (Heidelberg: Springer, 2012), 3.

⁸⁴ Stockhammer acknowledges three dimensions of hybridity: (1) The construction and perception of hybridity- and purity as its opposite- by different individuals or groups who have built structures or ideologies upon them in order to maintain or enforce asymmetric power relations; (2) hybridity as a metaphor for a scientific approach that aims at analyzing and deconstructing asymmetric power relations resulting from assumptions of cultural purity; and (3) Hybridity as the basis of a methodological approach for the analysis of trans-cultural encounters.

⁸⁵ Stockhammer, "Questioning Hybridity," 2.

preoccupation of the later approaches, is rendered moot. From this perspective, objects, regardless of their origin, may occupy multiple intersecting levels of meaning. Even those that are foreign in origin and manufacture necessarily become culturally hybridized through their patterns of use and the new meanings ascribed to them. In this way the boundary between Egyptian vs. non-Egyptian material culture becomes yet another false dichotomy in the understanding of Late Bronze Age Egyptian-Canaanite relations. Hybridity in this case is treated not as a symptom of cross-cultural interaction, but as the essence of such interaction itself. This process is better referred to as a form of “cultural entanglement.”⁸⁶

The impetus to hybridize or innovate may also take on a markedly political nature in situations of forced or directed interaction, such as in the case of the LB IIB southern Levant. According to Bhabha, “the transmutations and translations of indigenous traditions in their opposition to colonial authority demonstrate how the desire of the signifier... can be deeply engaged in the post-colonial struggle against dominant relations of power and knowledge.”⁸⁷ Cultural resistance in these settings can also take the form of maintenance of tradition and the refusal to adapt. In his work on the native lithic traditions at Rancho Petaluma in early colonial California, Stephan Silliman convincingly shows how the continuation of such traditions in the face of newer materials and technologies served as a form of cultural resistance against acculturation.⁸⁸ A third strategy exists in rearticulating cultural elements into a whole that is neither one nor the other, but something else entirely, which serves to undermine the status quo and re-negotiate the terms and territories of both. This process involves the genesis of new forms of practice, in which tradition is invented, often to reconcile the past with the present, or to reinvent it altogether. Again, Bhabha:

The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The “right” to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are in ‘the minority.’ The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past, it introduces other incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition.⁸⁹

In evaluating the circumstances behind changes in Canaanite material culture during the LB IIB, these new approaches have much to offer, both in terms of a

⁸⁶ Dietler, "Consumption, Agency, and Cultural Entanglement: Theoretical Implications of a Mediterranean Colonial Encounter," 291.

⁸⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 33.

⁸⁸ Silliman, "Agency, Practical Politics and the Archaeology of Culture Contact."

⁸⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2.

nanced understanding of culture-contact and by providing methodological tools with which to analyze it. The present work will attempt to build on these and prior approaches by questioning the often assumed dynamics of culture-contact between the southern Levant and her neighbors, and the way those interactions are manifested in the archaeological record. It proposes new insights may be gained through the following methodology.

Ritual as Practice and Methodology

The limitations of acculturation and center-periphery approaches have been discussed above, including their inability to recognize the reflexive relationship between individuals and social structures, even in situations of disproportionate power and domination, colonial or otherwise. An overemphasis on external factors including foreign interests in the region overlooks the equally important role of internal dynamics in shaping interactions. Societies are inherently heterogeneous entities, often with conflicting and contingent interests. As such they cannot be treated as cultural monoliths. Changes in the material culture of the LB IIB southern Levant have been explained through acculturation or elite-emulation, with Egypt serving as the sole agent in the region, imposing itself on Canaan through military hegemony, cultural superiority, or a combination of the two.

While the number of objects imported from Egypt or possessing parallels with Egyptian material culture does increase during in LB IIB, their presence alone does not indicate Egyptian hegemony in the region. Like the Megiddo ivories, these objects must be properly situated in both the local contexts in which they are found, as well as in relation to the broader host of changes and cross-cultural interactions taking place during the period.

With this in mind, the following study re-evaluates changes in the material culture of the LB IIB southern Levant by placing an emphasis on local agency, practice and identity formation. Instead of a unidirectional flow of power and influence, from center to periphery and dominator to dominated, it explores the possibility that an active process of cultural entanglement took place between the southern Levant and its neighbors in which individual foreign elements were selected and recontextualized into existing Canaanite systems of meaning and practice. At the same time, it anticipates the genesis of new, localized practices that emerged as the result of the interplay between external factors such as cross-culture contact, and internal dynamics facilitated through local agency. These “hybridizing” practices would have existed in a constant state of renegotiation, the agents behind them actively choosing specific cultural elements to adopt, maintain or transform altogether.

To do so, it explores three complimentary lines of inquiry that center on aspects of Canaanite ritual practice during the LB IIB. Recent treatments of ritual activity in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean have demonstrated not only the accessibility of ritual in the archaeological record, but its potential to illuminate

facets of lived experience unattested elsewhere.⁹⁰ To use Cusick's term, this work highlights the potential for "hidden transcripts" of resistance and accommodation in the situations of culture-contact.

A definition of what does and does not constitute ritual activity is difficult to define, and may even be counter-productive. Verhoeven follows Bowie in pointing out that constructing particular categories of activity based on European languages and cultures is problematic, and just like interpretations of the archaeological record, the categories we construct may have had little or no meaning in antiquity.⁹¹ Definitions, however, even when incomplete, can provide useful starting points for discussion. Tambiah provides the following useful, if somewhat programmatic definition of ritual:

Ritual is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition).⁹²

While ritual may be characterized by tradition and the repetition of performative action, it is important to note that the process is not a static one, and involves actors and the socially constructed environments they operate within. It can serve to perpetuate ideas and values, however, the power it derives from creating and reinforcing legitimacy can also be a potent tool, harnessed through the creation of new forms of ritual activity. Green has shown that ritual plays a particularly dynamic role in constructing, reinforcing and transforming the relationships between individuals and institutions, thus effecting future outcomes. In his analysis of burial practices at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, he argues that rituals are, in essence, social performances that take part in the creation and reinforcement of meaningful social norms and values, and that the settings in which they take place, (temples, burial grounds, etc.) provide the terrain for these values to be renegotiated and reevaluated into "tradition."⁹³ Ritual then holds an important reflexive place with regard to society: it is both a product and reflection of it, but at the same time plays an important role in its formation and evolution.

⁹⁰ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, Keswani, *Mortuary Ritual and Society in Bronze Age Cyprus*, Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan".

⁹¹ Marc Verhoeven, "The Many Dimensions of Ritual " in *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, ed. Timothy Insoll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 116, F. Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 22.

⁹² S.J. Tambiah, *A Performative Approach to Ritual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 119.

⁹³ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 66-67.

Many approaches to understanding ritual exist,⁹⁴ however, given that the emphasis of this study is to examine the relationship between individuals and the complex, intercultural environment within which they operate, the most effective way of doing so is to examine specific practices by real social actors.⁹⁵ This study therefore takes an agency centered practice-oriented approach to the study of ritual, in which it is acknowledged that only through the performance of activities is ritual given meaning. It follows Bourdieu in stressing the active and recursive interplay between social practice, rules and norms, as well as the agency of individuals who responsible for recreating those practices, either implicitly or explicitly.⁹⁶

This approach to ritual then, as an often personal and performative act, provides a way to access local prerogatives archaeologically, and by assessing changes within them over time, allows for a better understanding of the relationship between local agency and the broader structural dynamics of cross-cultural contact.

Three forms of ritual practice centering on temples, mortuary traditions and Canaanite bowl-lamp deposits, are examined in the chapters that follow. Within each tradition, changes that occur during the LB IIB have been attributed to foreign influence, often on the basis of formal similarities in material culture. The contexts and functions of these new forms of practice within Canaanite systems of meaning have often been left unexplored, however. Instead of forcing archaeological data into a preconceived theoretical model or text-based narrative, this study addresses the archaeological evidence for each sphere of practice from both formal and functional perspectives, noting change and continuity within them. In doing so, it takes a bottom-up approach from the perspective of daily practice, addressing both structural considerations and evidence for agency exercised on the local level.

Geographic distributions of these changes are also taken into account. It is well known that trade and contact occurred from north to south along the coast, Via Maris and Jordan Valley. Sugerman has additionally suggested that east-west river drainages continued to be used as trade routes into the Late Bronze Age.⁹⁷ The present study accounts for both using three broad focal areas: the southern Levantine coast, inland highland sites and those within or closely relating to the Jordan Valley. Moving north to south in each case, these three broadly defined zones of interaction take the geography of the region into account unlike previous attempts to define the extent of and relations between Late Bronze Age polities. The result is a cross-cutting division of the region from both north to south, and east to

⁹⁴ Verhoeven lays out a wide variety of approaches to the study of ritual, including intellectual, emotional, functional, symbolic, structural, cognitive, marxist, relational, performance and practice oriented approaches. Verhoeven, "The Many Dimensions of Ritual," 122.

⁹⁵ S.J. Shennan, "After Social Evolution: A New Archaeological Agenda?," in *Archaeological Theory: Who Sets the Agenda?*, ed. N Yoffee and A Sherratt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 58.

⁹⁶ Verhoeven, "The Many Dimensions of Ritual," 123.

⁹⁷ Sugerman, "Webs of Commerce: The Archaeology of Ordinary Things in Late Bronze Age Israel and Palestine", 128-31.

west into relevant sub-regions that which account for any number of possible dendritic networks between and among sites. The distributions of the three lines of evidence both establish and inter-corroborate regional patterns that indicate shared concepts in ritual practice. At the same time, local variations in those practices are accounted for, and demonstrate agency exercised at the local level. Similar practices from neighboring cultures are also evaluated in each case, providing a comparison to assess the validity of acculturative and emulation based arguments.

As these rituals cross-cut the most public and private of settings, the results have the potential to illuminate the intersection between local practice, regional conceptions, and cross-cultural contact, effectively bridging the gap between agency and the structural conditions within which it operates. In doing so, this approach provides new insight into change and continuity within Canaanite practices and material culture during the LB IIB.

Chapter III: Temples, Sanctuaries and Cultic Paraphernalia

IIIa. Approaches to Temples and Sacred Space in the Late Bronze IIB

Studies of the temples of Syria-Palestine have traditionally focused on classification and the construction of typologies according to formal traits and properties.⁹⁸ One of the key problems with such typologies is that they are categorically based on similarities and differences in form alone. Little attention is paid to the relationships between patterns of objects, installations and contexts that provide insight into the variety of activities that took place within their walls. Instead, singular and potentially arbitrary traits serve as the basis of comparison between temples, and changes in those traits over time are often attributed to foreign influence. In the case of the LB IIB, attempts to characterize Canaanite temples as displaying Egyptian or Syrian “influence” reinforce an acculturative understanding of how change occurred in the material culture of the period.

Temples, like the burials and ritual deposits explored in the chapters that follow, provide us with liminal spaces in which prescribed activity takes place, often using specific objects at specific times for an intended ideological purpose. These activities break from the patterns of everyday life, and may have been designed to stand in counter-distinction to those patterns. In this way, ritual activity, as symbolically charged action, becomes both a part of and increasingly separate from other facets of lived experience. The fact that such activity engages with the unseen realm of ideas, means that often such ideas must be made manifest through buildings, installations, images and objects, as well as their intersecting patterns of use. These objects and spaces in turn perpetuate, challenge and influence the ideas they embody in a continuous and recursive cycle.⁹⁹ For these reasons, formal aspects of temples are intrinsically linked to their function, and both must be taken into account when drawing comparisons or assessing change and continuity over time.

This chapter builds on prior typological approaches by addressing these issues as they apply to the temples of the LB IIB southern Levant. In the following analysis, formal properties continue to play an important role, however, the focus is shifted to account for combinations of objects, installations and elements that fulfilled specific cultic functions. Each temple is analyzed in depth, looking at the total assemblage, with architectural form being only one of several variables in

⁹⁸ G. R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," 222-32, Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 169-83.

⁹⁹ See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1998). Also Robb's discussion of the "Extended Artefact" in John Robb, "The Extended Artefact and the Monumental Economy: A Methodology for Material Agency," in *Rethinking Materiality: The Engagement of the Mind with the Material World*, ed. Elizabeth Demarrais, Chris Gosden, and Colin Renfrew, *McDonald Institute Monographs* (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research 2004), 133.

question. This data is followed by an investigation of previous typologies with consideration given to foreign traditions and possible influences.

From there, the overall distribution of objects, installations, their use in ritual and relationship to one another are considered. Daviau's approach to Bronze Age household archaeology, which applies broad and overlapping categories of use to artifact assemblages, provides a good model for how to explore the relationship between distributions of objects and the activities they were involved in.¹⁰⁰ Such an approach must be highly modified, however, before being applied to temple assemblages in an attempt to contextualize ritual activity. Objects, especially those used in ritual settings, often occupy multiple and simultaneous spheres of meaning over the course of their lifetimes.¹⁰¹ The weapons, administrative seals and items of personal adornment found in the LB IIB temples below are clear examples, having been recontextualized as devotional objects. This study recognizes that such categories were fluid and overlapping in antiquity, and whenever possible attempts to determine the contextual use and intention behind an object or installation in the particular temple within which it was found.

Two additional obstacles complicate the process of drawing comparisons between temple assemblages. The first stems from the fact that both the archaeological record and excavation methodology are imperfect, making comparisons based on the absence or frequency of specific objects problematic at best. The second relates to the nature of LB IIB temples specifically, in that many were built upon the foundations of earlier temples, and reused objects from earlier periods. This fact complicates the use of some temple objects in assessing change over time at a particular site. While a quantitative analysis of LB IIB temple assemblages is therefore problematic, comparisons can still be drawn from the presence of certain items across sites, as well as groupings of particular objects and installations that indicate similarities in practice.

With this in mind, the following study charts both the distribution of particular objects and installations among LB IIB temples as well as the relationships between sets of objects in order to understand broader regional patterns of ritual behavior. This analysis also controls for changes over time, by focusing on functional installations unique to specific phases of a temple, noting change and continuity from the LB IIA into LB IIB when present. On this basis, degrees of similarity, change and continuity in both the formal and functional attributes of LB IIB temples are charted across time and space, allowing for the broader question of which theoretical models may apply to such changes to be properly regarded.

¹⁰⁰ Daviau, *Houses and Their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine : Domestic Activity Areas and Artifact Distribution in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages*.

¹⁰¹ Shanks and Tilley, *Social Theory and Archaeology*, 114.

Through this emphasis on context, components, ritual use and geographic distribution, the chapter identifies a striking number of formal and functional similarities between the temples of the LB IIB southern Levant that effectively cross-cut traditional typological distinctions between them. Such similarities suggest that in the LB IIB, both the form and ritual function of the temple shifted towards regional standardization, while at the same time retaining elements of local variation in construction and practice.

IIIb. Late Bronze IIB Temples in Context

Temples dating to the LB IIB have been discovered at multiple sites throughout the southern Levant ranging from port cities along the coastal littoral to sites in the Jordan Valley. Many of these temples were built upon the foundations of earlier temples and incorporate aspects of the old into the new, such as at the area H temple at Hazor. Others, however, were without precedent, and were founded during the LB IIB, such as the temple from area P at Lachish. In the discussion that follows, evidence from these temples is presented geographically from north to south, beginning with sites on or near the coast including Tell Abu Hawam, Tell Nami, Tel Mevorakh, Tell Qasile, and Jaffa. From there, we move inland and examine temples at Hazor, Megiddo, Shechem, Lachish, and Tel Sera. Finally, temples from Beth Shean, Pella, and Tell Deir Alla, all sites on the edges of the Jordan Valley, are discussed. In this way, commonalities between temples in the north, south or any of the three distinct geographical zones above may be more easily accounted for.

Tell Abu Hawam

A harbor town situated at the crossroads of the via Maris and roads leading inland to Megiddo and Beth Shean, Tell Abu Hawam was .7 hectares in size, rising 9 meters above the surrounding plain, and is now located some 800 meters from the coast on the Kishon river.¹⁰² The site was first excavated by R.W. Hamilton, who divided the Late Bronze occupation of the site into four phases: stratum Va and Vb dating to the LB IIA and LB IIB, and Stratum IVa and IVb dating to the LB IIB-IR I.¹⁰³ While there continues to be some disagreement over the chronology and exact dating of the end of Level V, subsequent revisions now place it at the end of the LB IIB.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Jacqueline Balensi, "Revising Tell Abu Hawam," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 257 (1985): 65. Thomas Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine" (Wilfrid Laurier University, 1984), 69.

¹⁰³ R.W. Hamilton, "Excavations at Tell Abu Hawam," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 4 (1934).1-2.

¹⁰⁴ B. Maisler, "The Stratification of Tell Abu Hawam on the Bay of Acre," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 124 (1951): 21, Balensi, "Revising Tell Abu Hawam," 68, M. Artzy, "The Carmel Coast During the Second Part of the Late Bronze Age: A Center for Eastern Mediterranean Transshipping," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* no. 343 (2006): 47.

Founded in the 14th/13th century, the LB settlement consists of an oval fortification wall surrounding residential complexes with two monumental buildings in the east and west respectively. While the site was destroyed at several points during the Late Bronze Age, the fortifications and buildings were rebuilt towards the end of LB IIB including the western monumental structure "Building 50" which appears to have functioned as a temple. This rectangular structure was built along an E-W axis with a small entrance room attached to the east and a possible niche in the west. Four external buttresses on each side supported the northern and southern walls, and four large stones in two rows served as column bases supporting the roof of the cella. A pit in the center was lined with stones and plaster, possibly used for libations.¹⁰⁵ In the following stratum, another rectangular structure was built over the LB IIB temple, this time with a small room and limestone pillar in the east of the structure. Vincent holds the temple plan was a hypostyle room with an altar and elevated niche similar to the fosse temple at Lachish, however, the level of preservation is too poor to confirm this hypothesis.¹⁰⁶

Objects

Objects from both phases of the temple were difficult to differentiate and were grouped together by the excavators. The majority of objects were found in the western end of the temple. Perhaps the most important object discovered was a 16cm. tall gilded bronze statue of a seated male wearing a tall, conical headdress. The figure, possibly a deity, was positioned with arms and hands over its knees with the left hand closed, perhaps around a staff or standard. Many Mycenaean, Cypriot, Late Helladic III and Minoan wares were found at the site, including three Base-Ring bull rhyta, three ram's head goblets, a lion rhyton, and another shaped like a woman's head. Three faience cylinder seals and three made of steatite were found, along with various beads and pendants- one in gold of a human figure. Other finds included a pair of bronze cymbals, two statuette arms, two mace heads, a late Helladic III figurine fragment, a grape cluster model, the modeled head of a lioness, an ivory handle shaped like a horn, two faience gaming pieces, a flint knife, bronze chisel and two bronze nails. Vessels types included jugs, lamps, bowls, goblets, cups and amphorae, as well as the fragments of an alabaster vase with a papyrus flower design.¹⁰⁷

Tell Nami

First settled in the MB IIA period, this port city was abandoned shortly thereafter, and was resettled sometime in the 13th century BCE. A Late Bronze Age cemetery and sanctuary built on the summit of the peninsula were discovered east

¹⁰⁵ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 180, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 75.

¹⁰⁷ Hamilton, "Excavations at Tell Abu Hawam," 49-52, 57-58, 60, 63-64, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 75-77, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 143.

of the tell.¹⁰⁸ The LB IIB cultic precinct consisted of a large semi-covered courtyard (10 x 6 meters) containing four flat stones in a square configuration and a large basalt pedestal and basin. The courtyard also appears to have been paved with broken ceramic incense burners.

Objects

Objects found in the cultic precinct include Cypriot and Mycenaean IIIb2 imported pottery, a rare seven-spouted lamp, a ritual offering tray or *kernos*, pieces of pumice and a triton shell that may have been used in a ritual context. Other finds include many pieces of bronze, silver and gold scrap, which attest to the importance of metal recycling at the site.¹⁰⁹

Tel Mevorakh

Tel Mevorakh is located in the Sharon plain on the south bank of the Taninim River. The tell is just under a hectare in size, twelve meters high at its highest point, and according to Stern, may have been a single purpose ceremonial site in the Late Bronze Age used by travelers along the Via Maris. A temple sequence dating to the LB IB (Stratum XI), LB IIA (Stratum X) and LB IIB (Stratum IX) was found within a contemporary stone temenos wall built upon the site's Middle Bronze Age rampart.¹¹⁰ The temple itself changed little over the span of three phases, the best-preserved level being stratum XI, a 10 x 5 meter rectangular structure built of mudbrick on stone foundations on an east-west orientation. The walls and floors of the temple were thickly plastered, and a stepped altar (1 x 1.5 x 1 meters) was built into the north-west corner with five steps leading to its top from the east. A rectangular notch, perhaps used for storage, was cut into the south side of the altar and half of a storage jar was sunk into one of the altar's lower surfaces. A stone libation table with two small depressions carved into it was also found in a secondary context at Tel Mevorakh, and is similar to those found at the contemporary Hazor area H temple.¹¹¹

In the southern corner of the steps, a depression in the plaster may have held a column helping to separate the altar and platform from the rest of the cella. A low plastered platform ran along the western wall of the cella, terminating in two rectangular plastered tables in the south-west corner of the cella. Plastered benches

¹⁰⁸ Michal Artzy, "Nami: Second Millennium International Maritime Trading Center in the Mediterranean," in *Recent Excavations in Israel: A View to the West*, ed. S. Gitin, *Archaeological Institute of America Colloquia and Conference Papers* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, 1995), 19-22, Artzy, "The Carmel Coast During the Second Part of the Late Bronze Age: A Center for Eastern Mediterranean Transshipping," 50.

¹⁰⁹ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 143, Artzy, "The Carmel Coast During the Second Part of the Late Bronze Age: A Center for Eastern Mediterranean Transshipping," 51.

¹¹⁰ Ephraim Stern and *Excavations at Tel Mevorakh (1973-1976) Part 2, the Bronze Age* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University 1984), 31.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

also ran along the north, south and east walls, however, the south-east corner of the temple was not fully excavated.¹¹² In front of the southern bench, the remains of a drainage system were found, and given the southern slope of the plastered floor, it has been proposed sacrifices may have taken place here.¹¹³ The roof appears to have been supported by a large column base which was found in the center of the room, near an empty pit. In the final phase of this temple, the platform was enlarged and lined with stone walls.

Objects

Most objects associated with the temple were found on surfaces in the vicinity of the platform. Finds included a 20cm. bronze snake, a pair of bronze cymbals, two Mittani cylinder seals, spear and arrowheads, two identical cups but one made of alabaster and another clay, a bronze knife with a curved blade, a ring decorated with a palmette, and two faience gaming disks. Over a dozen chalices and cups were found, many decorated with images of fish and goats. Several jars, jugs, bowls, lamps and juglets including imported Mycenaean and Cypriot pieces were found as well.¹¹⁴

Tell Qasile

Tell Qasile, a site approximately 1.6 hectares in size, lies on the northern bank of the Yarkon river two kilometers east of the coast.¹¹⁵ A temple dating to the first occupation of the site in the 12th century BCE was discovered at the tell, the first in a series of three temples (stratum XII-X) built at the site. The site and temples have traditionally been described as Philistine, however, the LB IIB/IR I date and strong parallels in design make the Stratum XII temple worth mentioning here. The structure consists of a single square room 6.4 x 6.6 meters, constructed of mudbrick walls without stone foundations. Low plastered benches of mudbrick appear to have run along all four walls with a sandstone slab creating the threshold of an entrance in the center of the eastern wall.¹¹⁶ Opposite this entrance was a raised plastered altar reached by a flight of steps. While the western extent of the stratum XII temple was disturbed by later construction, it is highly likely there was a small storage room behind the altar as in the following stratum XI, and in contemporary temples at Beth Shean and Lachish. The layout of the area surrounding the temple was the same in stratum XII and XI, with courtyards to the north, east and west of the temple, and by IR I Stratum X, the east wall of the temple was replaced by a new anteroom, also lined with benches.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Ephraim Stern, "A Late Bronze Temple at Tell Mevorakh," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 40, no. 2 (1977): 89.

¹¹³ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 144.

¹¹⁴ Stern, "A Late Bronze Temple at Tell Mevorakh," 91.

¹¹⁵ Amihai Mazar, "A Philistine Temple at Tell Qasile," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 36, no. 2 (1973): 42.

¹¹⁶ ———, "Additional Philistine Temples at Tell Qasile," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 40, no. 2 (1977): 82.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 84.

Objects

Several artifacts were discovered on the floor of the temple including a number of small offering bowls and an unusual cylindrical Philistine vessel dating to the Iron I period¹¹⁸ An ivory knife handle with a section of iron blade held in place with rivets was also recovered, and is one of the earliest iron artifacts found in Israel. Finds from the following stratum XI included a full size clay mask, bird and animal figurines, a triton seashell used as a horn, a bird-shaped cosmetics box and hundreds of faience beads.¹¹⁹

Jaffa

A small LB IIB sanctuary was discovered near the stratum III citadel in area A at Jaffa. The sanctuary measured 4.4 x 5.8 meters, and had a plastered floor. Much of the material remains unpublished; however, a preliminary assessment based on recent pottery readings suggest that the temple is not Egyptian as has been previously assumed. The ceramics recovered within it appear more Canaanite than Egyptian, and with a great deal less Egyptian material than was discovered in the gate area twenty meters away.¹²⁰

Objects

Among the objects recovered from the sanctuary were two bowls, a broken scarab with the name of Queen Tiy, and the embalmed skull of a lion that had once been decorated with amulets and precious stones.¹²¹

Hazor

Hazor is situated in the southwest corner of the Huleh plain at the foot of the upper Galilee mountain range some 15.5 kilometers north of the sea of Galilee. The site is strategically located at a crossroads controlling passage between Sidon and Beth Shan as well as the route between Megiddo and Damascus. The tell itself is approximately 540 meters long, and 260 meters wide at its widest point, and rises some forty meters above the surrounding plain. A vast rectangular lower city lies to the north-east, comprising some 80 hectares.¹²² Hazor is therefore unique, not just as a northern transitional site between Syria and Palestine, but by way of its sheer

¹¹⁹ Mazar, "Additional Philistine Temples at Tell Qasile," 83.

¹²⁰ Burke, Aaron. Personal correspondence, January 12, 2012

¹²¹ J Kaplan and H Ritter-Kaplan, "Jaffa," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavation in the Holy Land*, ed. E Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 655-59, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 151. Aaron A. Burke, " Early Jaffa: From the Bronze Age to the Persian Period," in *The History and Archaeology of Jaffa*, ed. Martin Peilstocker and Aaron A. Burke (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, University of California Los Angeles, 2011), 69.

¹²² Yigael Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 15.

size: over sixteen times larger than the average Canaanite city and thought to contain over 40% of the population during the LB II.¹²³ Two strata date to the Late Bronze Age occupation of the site: stratum II, which dates to the LB I, and stratum IB & IA which date to the LB IIA and IIB respectively. Out of fourteen total excavated areas at Hazor, four were found to contain temples, many rebuilt several times over the course of the history of the site. For the purposes of this study, the temples in areas C and H are examined as each provides an excellent example of transition from the LB IIA to the LB IIB. Recent debates over the nature of the monumental structure in Area A, thought by Ben-Tor to be a palace are discussed as well.

The Area C "Stelae" Temple

A small rectangular temple with two phases of construction (LB IIA –LB IIB) was discovered on the inner slope of the rampart in the southwest corner of the lower city. In the first phase, built directly upon the rampart, the mudbrick structure measured 2.5 x 3.5 meters, was oriented on an east-west axis, and had a door centered in the eastern wall. Directly opposite the entrance was a one-meter wide semi-circular niche cut into the western wall. Benches of rough stones with large smooth stones for outer faces ran along the south and east walls, and a "waster" jug was found in the center of the niche, perhaps used for drainage or libations. Two well dressed stones found along the northern wall may also serve as offering tables.¹²⁴ In the LB IIB, the structure was almost identical, with the exception of the cultic niche. Here a raised, sloping platform was built into it in three phases. The entrance was also altered, with the addition of a small forecourt and entrance in the south, creating a bent-axis path to the temple's main cella.¹²⁵

Objects

In the stratum IIB temple, a pair of bronze cymbals in a small bronze bowl were found in the northwest corner of the cella; however, the vast majority of finds come from the later stratum IIA temple.¹²⁶ In this phase, ten small devotional stelae were found positioned in a semi-circle around the back of the niche. The stelae varied in size from 65 to 22cm., but were imbedded in such a way that they all stood at about the same height. Only the central stela was decorated, having been inscribed with the image of two arms reaching up to a crescent-and-disk symbol with small circles hanging below like tassels. Under the upright stela, a small lion orthostat and an unused stela were discovered. The decapitated statue of a seated man was also found in the niche. This figure, is depicted with bare feet and head, wearing a long tunic and inverted crescent pendant. It appears to have been set up

¹²³ Gonen, "Urban Canaan in the Late Bronze Period," 68, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 126.

¹²⁴ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 19, Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 68.

¹²⁵ Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 71.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 69, Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 67-69.

in conjunction with the stela and may have represented a divinity, ancestor or perhaps the officiate at the temple. In his right hand, he held a bowl and his left rested in a fist upon his knee.¹²⁷ A roughly finished basalt slab lay in front of this assemblage, perhaps acting as an offering table. The unused stela, along with several others found in the vicinity of the temple, indicate much of the cultic furnishings in stratum IA had been reused from stratum IB.

Other finds from the temple included small bowls, miniature votives, a glass scepter handle, a mace head, three rough basalt human figures, a phallus shaped stone, and possibly part of a potter's wheel.¹²⁸ A silver plated bronze cult standard was also found nearby, placed in a special jar, which was covered with three ceramic bowls. The standard was once thought to depict a woman holding snakes in her upraised hands, however, after being subjected to X-ray radiography, it appears the design is a highly stylized geometric pattern of lines.¹²⁹ A small clay mask with no perforations was also found, perhaps used in conjunction with one of the statues. A similar mask was found in the area D cistern and others have been found at Enkomi and Kition.¹³⁰

The Area H "Orthostat" Temple

As in area C, a series of superimposed temples were discovered in the northern tip of the lower city against the earthwork rampart in area H. The temple sequence begins in the MB II and ends in the LB IIB with the only major architectural shift taking place between the LBI and LB IIA. In each case, the temples were of the *Migdol* variety, with a broad first chamber that supported flanking towers and an inner cella with at least two column bases to support the roof.¹³¹ Each temple was built of mudbrick on stone foundations along a north-south orientation with its entrance to the south. Opposite the entrance, a cultic niche was set into the back wall of the cella.

In the stratum II LB I temple, the floor of the cella was built from large cobblestones covered in a layer of plaster and packed clay. A partition wall parallel to the niche was built, sectioning it off from the cella while allowing access from the west. To the west of the niche, a raised platform and bench ran along the northern wall to the west. Wide benches (1.5 meters in diameter) also ran along the southern wall, flanking both sides of the entrance to the cella. Two basalt door sockets were also found *in-situ* in the entrance to the cella, indicating it was accessed at one time through a set of double-doors.¹³² A central entrance porch lay before the cella,

¹²⁷ Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 72, P. Beck, "Stone Ritual Artifacts and Statues from Areas A and H," in *Hazor III-IV: An Account of the Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavation, 1957-1958* Text ed. A. Ben-Tor (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society 1989), 323-27.

¹²⁸ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 24.

¹²⁹ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 131.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 130, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 24.

¹³¹ Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 75.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 80.

flanked on both sides by identical smaller rooms that may have been towers.¹³³ The temple was fronted by an inner and outer court, separated by a “gatehouse” consisting of an inner room and porch to the south. This “gatehouse” was also surrounded by benches, had a threshold of three basalt stones, and two square raised platforms which perhaps served as offering tables. At the center of the courtyard between the temple and gatehouse lay a large rectangular platform that may also have been an altar, given the large quantities of ash and animal bones found upon it. Other features and installations in the courtyard included a semi-circular installation and drainage channel to the east of the platform, and to the west, a mudbrick potters kiln filled with twenty miniature votive vessels. A long room, possibly a storage room, also ran to the north of the kiln.¹³⁴

By Stratum IB in the LB IIA, the northern sections of the temple remained the same for the most part, however, a third broadroom “porch” was added, making it a three roomed temple on a single axis.¹³⁵ In the center of the cella were two basalt column bases and between them, a deep pit built of courses of fieldstones that may have been linked to storage, drainage or libations. Pits found on either side of the niche in this phase indicate that it may have been screened off by wooden poles. In the former porch, now central rooms, the room to the west was divided in two, probably to support a staircase leading to the roof. The new outer porch, built atop the outer courtyard was smaller than the width of temple, but bricks were well-bonded to the main structure. A basalt door socket on the western side of the entrance to the central hall indicates the hall was sectioned off from the porch by at least one set of doors. Column bases flanking the door in the LB IIB may have been reused from this stratum. In the inner court outside the temple, a basalt obelisk with a slab at its base was found near the western entrance, and a large platform with a basalt slab with a square depression in its corner was found- perhaps ritually linked to the entrance and exit of the courtyard.¹³⁶ In LB IIB stratum Ia, the same overall plan was in use, with a niche in the back, which was now cordoned off by a small wall separating it for the rest of the cella. Benches lined the east west and south walls, with groups of vessels found *in-situ* upon them. It was in this final level that a series of basalt orthostats, probably reused from earlier strata, lined the walls of the cella creating a continuous band around it.¹³⁷

Objects

While many objects in the later temples probably originated in earlier strata, objects in the stratum II temple included a basalt bowl found on the bench atop the platform west of the niche, and a favissa containing broken vessels, incense stands, a clay inscribed model liver, and two figurines. One figurine was of bronze, and

¹³³ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 32.

¹³⁴ Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 79-83, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 32-33.

¹³⁵ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 171.

¹³⁶ Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 83-87.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87-91.

interestingly had only half of its features on one side of the body modeled. The other was of silver leaf and was of a common tall crowned goddess. A bronze plaque depicting a Canaanite dignitary was also found here- perhaps once part of a larger procession along the wall.¹³⁸

Stratum Ib held few objects, most likely due to extensive reuse in stratum Ia. A broken cylinder seal, two broken libation tables and discarded pottery including zoomorphic vessels were found in this level. A decapitated seated basalt figure was also found in a favissa in the center of the cella. The statue, similar to the one found in the Area C "stela" temple, is depicted in traditional Syrian style holding a cup in its right hand.¹³⁹ Not surprisingly, Stratum Ia, dating to the LB IIB, contained the majority of objects. In the cella in front of the niche, a basalt incense altar measuring .5 x .5 x .7 meters was discovered. The altar's upper section was decorated with a disk in a square frame, with a four-rayed emblem in its center. Two long depressions were carved below, as well as on the flanking sides. A large stone basin was found to the west, and to the south two basalt libation tables were found. One table had a deep rectangular depression on one half, a shallower one on the other half, while the other had a deep rectangular depression in its corner, and a shallow one in the adjacent corner. A huge earthenware crater was found accompanying each table, flanking both sides the altar. A basalt carinated crater was found with a Mycenaean running spiral carved upon it was also discovered in stratum IA, along with a great number of dipper juglets and bowls. Another offering table with four circles and two rectangles surrounding a central depression was also recovered, and may have originally sat atop a wooden stand, since burnt wood was found beneath it.¹⁴⁰

In the western part of the room, nineteen cylinder seals were found, one bearing the four-ray emblem over a presentation scene, as well as a faience scarab inscribed with the name of Amenhotep III.¹⁴¹ Four bronze figurines were found: one "peg" type with a pointed base, a snake, a female and a bull. Also another seated decapitated basalt statue was found, but this time with without an emblem. A full 1.9 meter lion door-jamb orthostat was uncovered in a pit, as well as the torso of a statue, which was found in front of the temple. This statue held a stick and sword, stood on the back of a bull and wore a four-rayed circular pendant similar to the other examples found in the temple.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 34.

¹³⁹ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 127.

¹⁴⁰ Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 93, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 43.

¹⁴¹ It should be noted that these scarabs were popular in later periods as well, as seen at Lachish and Beth-Shean.

¹⁴² Yadin, *Hazor : The Head of All Those Kingdoms* 94.

Building 7050: The Area A Canaanite "Palace"

A section of this impressive structure was first uncovered by Yadin in 1958 during excavations of Hazor's acropolis. Observing the building's monumental nine-foot-thick stone walls, he identified it as the Middle Bronze Age palace of Ibni-Addu, a king of Hazor mentioned in the royal archive found at Mari.¹⁴³ The building remained unexcavated until the 1990s at which point a wealth of pottery and other objects from the 14th -13th centuries BCE were found, securely dating the structure to the end of the Bronze Age. Building 7050, as it is now designated, appears to have been constructed during LB IIA, and used into LB IIB until it was destroyed along with the rest of the Hazor acropolis during the first half of the 13th Century BCE.¹⁴⁴

The massive 35 x 40 meter structure was built of mudbrick on stone foundations laid out along a central axis with an entrance to the east. Its interior consisted of a 12 x 14 meter central chamber flanked by two symmetrical sets of rooms to the north and south. To the west of the central chamber, thought to have been a throne room by Ben Tor, was a long thin room that ran along the back of the chamber. This room was separated by an interior wall and contained a bathtub-like installation for holding liquids. To the east, the chamber opened onto a double columned portico reached by a descending set of stairs. These stairs, along with orthostats that lined the interior chamber and two massive column bases that supported the portico were carved from fine grain basalt.¹⁴⁵ Two additional rooms flanked the portico to the north and south, projecting outward from the temple in a way that recalls the "migdol" style towers of the LB IIB Megiddo VIIA temple. Beyond the portico, a large columned courtyard extended to the east, some 30 x 30 meter square, and was paved with pebbles and small stones, in a fashion similar to that used in the building's interior. At the center of this courtyard was a stepped altar, which was positioned in line with the building's central axis.¹⁴⁶

The axial layout of the building, location of the courtyard altar and presence of tower like structures flanking the portico, all features often seen in the temples of LB Syria-Palestine, have lead Sharon Zuckerman to question whether building 7050 really served as a palace at all.¹⁴⁷ Citing parallels with the location of royal cultic precincts at Megiddo and Ugarit, Zuckerman argues that the placement of building 7050 on the acropolis makes it an ideal candidate for a Canaanite temple. Its

¹⁴³ Amnon Ben-Tor and M. T. Rubiato, "Excavating Hazor: Part II: Did the Israelites Destroy the Canaanite City?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 25 (1999): 26.

¹⁴⁴ Sharon Zuckerman, ""The City, Its Gods Will Return There" Toward an Alternative Interpretation of Hazor's Acropolis in the Late Bronze Age," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69, no. 2 (2010): 178.

¹⁴⁵ Amnon Ben-Tor, "Hazor Excavation Reports: The 1996 Season," The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, <http://hazor.huji.ac.il/>.

¹⁴⁶ ———, "Hazor Excavation Reports: The 1997 Season," The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, <http://hazor.huji.ac.il/>.

¹⁴⁷ Sharon Zuckerman, "Where Is the Hazor Archive Buried?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 32 (2006): 35.

structural similarities to temples such as the Hazor area H temple or Ba'al temple at Ugarit stand in stark contrast to palaces such as those from Mari, Qatna, Alalakh and Nuzi. She points out the building lacks the large number of subsidiary rooms used for administration and living space found at such palaces. Instead, building 7050 is an isolated structure that stands alone, just like temples of the Late Bronze Age. Other features, such as the rear room and "bathtub" installation may have had a ritual function relating to the cultic niche and libation installations found in temples. On this basis, she argues building 7050 has more in common with the temples of the Late Bronze age than palaces, and that it likely served a cultic function at Hazor.¹⁴⁸ Ben Tor has disputed this claim, maintaining that the building's almost identical construction to the nucleus of the palace at Alalakh, along with a number of storage pithoi found within it, indicate that the building is indeed a palace.¹⁴⁹ Others continue to support his conclusions and the idea that building 7050 served a ceremonial, administrative, and judicial purpose.¹⁵⁰

Objects

A great many objects were recovered from building 7050, including a number of cuneiform tablets dating to the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. These tablets may have come from an as-yet undiscovered royal archive (or archives) at the site, and attest to the importance Hazor during both periods. In the building's central room, a seated bronze figurine and four bronze bull figurines were discovered. The subsidiary rooms to the north also contained rich finds, including a jewelry box with finely worked ivory inlay, a large number of beads carved from precious stones, ten cylinder seals, two finely worked 30cm. bronze statues, a sickle sword, an Egyptian battle axe, several knives and over one hundred bronze armor scales.¹⁵¹ Just outside the portico, a large anthropomorphic statue was found. This statue, the largest yet discovered in Israel, was carved from basalt, and incorporated a 30cm. wide bowl into its composition. The statue's torso is also decorated with a circle filled with rays and a crescent,¹⁵² emblems often seen in association with Canaanite ritual practice. In the courtyard, a bronze cobra and figure of a deity were found, as well as a large stone statue of a deity.¹⁵³ The nearby discovery of a lioness orthostat indicates the building may have been flanked by a pair of lionesses in the Syro-Mesopotamian style.

¹⁴⁸ Zuckerman, ""The City, Its Gods Will Return There" Toward an Alternative Interpretation of Hazor's Acropolis in the Late Bronze Age," 172-78.

¹⁴⁹ Amnon Ben-Tor, "Ceremonial Palace, Not a Temple," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 32 (2006): 8.

¹⁵⁰ R. Bonafil and A. Zarzecki-Peleg, "The Palace in the Upper City of Hazor as an Expression of a Syrian Architectural Paradigm " *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 348 (2007): 40-42.

¹⁵¹ Ben-Tor, "Hazor Excavation Reports: The 1996 Season."

¹⁵² Ben-Tor and Rubiato, "Excavating Hazor: Part II: Did the Israelites Destroy the Canaanite City?," 36.

¹⁵³ Amnon Ben-Tor, "Hazor Excavation Reports: The 1995 Season " The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, <http://hazor.huji.ac.il/>.

Megiddo

Rising some 40 to 60 meters above surrounding plain, the city of Megiddo covers an area of approximately six hectares, and is strategically located to control passage along the Via Maris where the wadi 'Ara enters the Jezreel Valley. Like Hazor, this major urban site exhibits a tremendous amount of continuity from the Middle Bronze into the Late Bronze Age. Temple 2048 in area BB is an excellent example of this continuity, having been founded as early as Stratum X or XXI in the MB IIa/MB IIb.¹⁵⁴ The earliest temple consisted of a single large room built of three-meter thick rubble walls with a northern entrance placed between two towers. The layout is reminiscent of temples at Hazor area H and Gezer, commonly referred to as the *Migdol* temple variety, complete with a cultic niche opposite the entrance.

Several changes were made to the temple in Stratum VIII dating to the LB IIA, however, the plan remained the same for the most part. A column base found between the "towers" indicates supports were present there, perhaps for the roof of a small entrance porch. The floor of this level was unfortunately destroyed by later construction, however, it is interesting to note the eastern tower was reconstructed late in this phase using fine ashlar masonry.¹⁵⁵ The main room of the eastern tower was divided by a wall into two thin parallel chambers during this reconstruction, while the western tower remained a single square room. This pattern is also seen in the LB II temples at Hazor, and in both cases, the addition may relate to the construction of a staircase leading to the temple's roof.¹⁵⁶

In Stratum VIIb, the first phase of the LB IIB, the temple was leveled and rebuilt, however, the plan remained the same with some minor changes. The interior of the temple underwent major renovations with the replacement of the niche with a raised offering bench or dais over a meter high along the temple's back wall. Large rectangular stone "bath" or libation container with a limestone drain was installed and number of basalt slabs were set into the temple's newly plastered floor, one with round depressions carved into it that may have been an offering table.¹⁵⁷ Stratum VIIa held the same general plan as preceding temples, however, the walls in this final phase were of very poor construction and only half the thickness of the previous ones. A niche was re-built into the rear wall opposite the

¹⁵⁴ Claire Epstein, "An Interpretation of the Megiddo Sacred Area During the Middle Bronze II," *Israel Exploration Journal* 15 (1965): 204.

¹⁵⁵ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 171, I. Dunayevski and A. Kempinski, "The Megiddo Temples," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins* 89 (1973): 184, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 46.

¹⁵⁶ The towers also have different widths, supporting this idea.

¹⁵⁷ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 134. This phase of the temple was also contemporary with room 3013 in the palace, which contained a raised platform reached by a small set of stairs. While no objects were recovered from the room, it is likely this room was a palace shrine of some sort.

entrance, and a stone and mudbrick platform or dais elevated the niche and entire southern wall of the cella. This raised platform and niche was reached by a flight of six basalt steps set up in the south-east corner of the temple.¹⁵⁸

Objects

Objects from the stratum VIII temple were few, but included a bronze figurine in the smiting pose and bronze cult standard similar to one from the Hazor area C temple. Other bronze objects including three cymbals, a blade, three spear-heads, two arrowheads, a chisel, bowl and toggle pin were found, along with several beads and a steatite scarab.¹⁵⁹

The floor of the VIIb temple had few objects upon it aside from six square basalt blocks and a single round one that may have served as offering stela.¹⁶⁰ Many objects found in the following VIIa temple were probably reused from this stratum. Two statuettes, one of a bronze female torso, another of a seated Egyptian official (Thot-Hotep, an official under Sesostris III and attributed to an earlier Stratum XV structure) were found built into the platform. The gold-covered bronze forearm of another figurine was found on the floor. Other finds included a faience cylinder seal, bronze crescent cylinder seal, silver "Astarte" pendant, a bronze and faience ring, a faience bead, red stone stamp seal, faience gaming piece, bronze cymbal, two bronze spear heads, bronze chisel, basalt mortar, and fragments of gold foil. A clay liver model was also found, as well as a horde of beads and pendants buried in the platform. Pottery included flasks, bowls, cup-and-saucers, lamps, bowls, juglets, jars and chalices. A bronze peg figurine, female pottery figurine cupping her breasts, and the head of another figurine were also found.¹⁶¹

Shechem (Tell Balatah)

Located in the central highlands north of Jerusalem, Shechem was a prominent city-state in the Middle Bronze which was destroyed at the end of the MB IIC period, but resettled early in the LB IB.¹⁶² The site controlled a major crossroads in northern Palestine covering approximately 4 hectares and rising 21 meters up from the surrounding plain. Temple (IIb) in strata XVI-XII was built on the site of an MB fortress temple sometime around 1450 BCE and remained in use until 1200 BCE. While the Late Bronze strata were severely damaged by later construction, the general plan of the temple, a singular rectangular room 16 x 12.5 meters, was still discernable.¹⁶³ Built of rough stone walls approximately two meters thick, the

¹⁵⁸ Gordon Loud, *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935-39*, vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 29.

¹⁵⁹ Epstein, "An Interpretation of the Megiddo Sacred Area During the Middle Bronze II," 216.

¹⁶⁰ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 52.

¹⁶¹ Loud, *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935-39*, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 54-55.

¹⁶² Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 140.

¹⁶³ Robert J. Bull, "A Re-Examination of the Shechem Temple," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 23, no. 4 (1960): 114-15.

interior was plastered with two sets of steps in the back corners leading to a raised platform. An exterior courtyard in front of the temple contained a stone altar and large standing stone or *massebah*.¹⁶⁴

Objects

Aside from pottery sherds dating to the Late Bronze Age, very little was recovered from the temple due to the poor state of preservation. A red alabaster mortar and pestle, an alabaster mace-head, a faience cylinder seal inscribed with a tree motif and two well preserved LB bowls were found in association with the LB temple, however.¹⁶⁵

Lachish

Lachish lies on the border between the Shephelah and southern highlands, some thirty kilometers to the southeast of the coastal city of Ashkelon. It is one of only a few major cities in the area, consists of 9 hectares upon a square shaped mound, and lies along the ancient route from the coastal plain to the Hebron Hills.¹⁶⁶ After the destruction of the Middle Bronze Age city, the settlement declined rapidly and its fortifications fell out of use. It was here, in the moat or *fosse* of the MB rampart that the first in a series of Canaanite temples was founded in the LB I around 1450 BCE. The temple, which may have begun as a roadside sanctuary for travelers, underwent two major renovations in the LB IIA and LB IIB respectively as activity and settlement increased at the site.¹⁶⁷ By the LB IIB, a second temple had been constructed at the site, this time on the mound itself in area P. References to Lachish during the reign of Amenhotep II and in the Amarna letters highlight the increasing importance of the city over the course of the Late Bronze Age.¹⁶⁸ By the end of the 13th century, however, the mound was thoroughly burned and the city was reduced to ruins.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ G. Ernest Wright, *Shechem : The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 95-100.

¹⁶⁵ Bull, "A Re-Examination of the Shechem Temple," 119.

¹⁶⁶ David Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, 5 vols., vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 94. Finkelstein estimates its territory at 990km- some 6000 people. By the LB IIB (Level VII), there was a revival in prosperity and Lachish became a rich and densely populated city, perhaps the largest city after the destruction of Hazor in 13th Century BCE.

¹⁶⁷ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 146. Finkelstein first posed the idea that temple may have served pastoral nomads, while Bietak suggested it might be an Egyptian style mortuary temple associated with nearby graves. This latter proposal is problematic however, given that no other examples of such mortuary temples exist in the southern Levant.

¹⁶⁸ Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 327-31. See EA 287, 288, 328, 329, and 335.

¹⁶⁹ David Ussishkin, "Level VII and VI at Tel Lachish and the End of the Late Bronze Age in Canaan," in *Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages: Papers in Honor of Olga Tufnell*, ed. J.N. Tubb (London: Institute of Archaeology, 1985), 216.; Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 147.

The "Fosse" Temple

In addition to the great number of objects found *in-situ* within the temple and in surrounding *favissae*, the Lachish fosse temple was in use throughout the Late Bronze Age, making it important for understanding shifts and transitions in material culture within the period. *Fosse Temple I* (1515-1450 BCE) consisted of a small 5 x 10 meter hall a small rooms to the north and another to the west, which opened directly to the hall itself. These small rooms may have served as storage areas or even living quarters. The temple was oriented on a north-south axis, and was built with 60 centimeter thick rough stone walls. Two stone bases along the long axis of the building may have supported wooden columns to hold up the roof. The temple cella was accessed via entrances in the east and west walls, each at a bent axis- 90 degree angle to a raised cultic platform running along the temples southern wall, which served as the temple's focal point.¹⁷⁰ The .3 x .60 x 3.5 meter platform was constructed of stone and clay with three rectangular sections projecting out from it to the north. The central projection was raised in the sense it was the same height as the platform, while the two side projections were lower, being only half the height of the platform. It has been suggested that these projections either held cult images and offerings for three different deities, or three different kinds of offerings for the same deity.¹⁷¹ The eastern side of the platform had a rectangular cavity cut into it, which may have served as a storage cupboard. A similar cavity was cut into the platform of the LB IIA Tell Mevorakh temple, and may have served a similar function. Two buried jars were found in front to the altar, the first with its base removed, and the second (which replaced the first) seems to have been perforated. This kind of drainage installation is seen elsewhere, and perhaps was used for libations and small offerings; in this case, animal bones were discovered inside. In addition to the altar, a small mudbrick bench ran along the central portion of the west wall of the cella, and was probably used to hold offerings.¹⁷²

Fosse Temple II (1450-1350) was rebuilt sometime in the LB IIA, dated by a scarab of Amenhotep III found in its foundations and enlarged to 10 x 10.4 meter with two new rooms in the north and south.¹⁷³ The width of the walls was increased to 1.2 meters and was built of rough stones. In this stage, the ceiling was held by four central columns, and three rows of benches were built for offerings along the northern and eastern walls. Only the position of the dais remained the same, now a single platform with no projections, but retaining a small rectangular "storage" area cut into it on the west side. In this phase, an anteroom (room A) was added to the main entrance in the north, while two other entrances to the cella existed in the

¹⁷⁰ Olga Tufnell, Charles H. Inge, and G. Lankester Harding, *Lachish II (Tell Ed Duweir) : The Fosse Temple* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 36-43, Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 179.

¹⁷¹ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 99.

¹⁷² Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *Lachish II (Tell Ed Duweir) : The Fosse Temple*, 36-39.

¹⁷³ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 179.

southern wall on either side of the platform.¹⁷⁴ In front of the platform was a curbed hearth of plaster and clay containing ashes and an inverted bowl. Offering benches ran along the north, south and eastern walls, with two additional rows of smaller benches to the north and east, and a second smaller bench to the west. These mud-plaster benches were 20-30 centimeters in height, 40 centimeters in width, and many bowls were found *in-situ* beside or upon them. To the south, a large subsidiary room containing benches and a column base was connected to the cella. This room (room F) also had a private entrance and may have served as a separate shrine.¹⁷⁵

Fosse Temple III (1350-1250), dating to the LB IIB, was quite well preserved having been buried under debris and had walls preserved to a height of three meters. This temple retained the same general plan as its predecessor, built along the same foundations and using identical construction techniques. Four column bases were placed in the same locations as the fosse II temple, an elevated dais was set into the southern wall and three rows of offering benches again lined the north, east and west walls.¹⁷⁶ In this phase, however, a second room was added to the south of the cella (room E), separated from room F by a thin stone wall. The raised platform was also further elaborated in two phases: the first consisted of a semicircular platform 2.25 x 2.5 meter wide and .6m high recessed halfway into the wall.

In the second phase, a mudbrick altar was built projecting out from the face of the platform and was reached by three steps along the western side. The platform was plastered and raised slightly, with a layer of mudbricks that created a shelf running along the back of the niche. In front of the platform was a hearth in the same place as before, but now with two depressions. Another "cupboard" was cut into the platform's western side, however, this time, it contained lamps. In front of this cupboard at the foot of the stairs was a tall tubular libation stand punctured with two holes at its base. Fragments of a perforated bowl were found inside it, which may have acted as a cover. The east side of the platform held a large four-handled pottery bin. Three additional niches were also built approximately one meter above the floor into the eastern wall, the central niche being larger than the other two.¹⁷⁷ These three niches recall the original tripartite altar in the Fosse I temple, and again may have been related to multiple offerings or deities. Evidence of subsidiary buildings and open courtyards were found surrounding the temple, as well as ritual *favissae* from which many of the temples most interesting finds originate.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Mazar points out that that the southern entrance to the west of the altar may be a stratigraphic error on the part of the excavator, seeing as it is the entrance to a room in the temple's third and final phase.

¹⁷⁵ Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *Lachish II (Tell Ed Duweir) : The Fosse Temple*, 37-40.

¹⁷⁶ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 179.

¹⁷⁷ Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *Lachish II (Tell Ed Duweir) : The Fosse Temple*, 40-42. Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 109.

¹⁷⁸ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 179.

Objects

Given its extremely long lifespan, it is not surprising that a great number and wide variety of objects were found associated with the fosse temples, many *in-situ*. In terms of pottery, vessels associated with the production or storage of food dominated the assemblage, including pilgrim flasks, kraters, chalices, goblets and cooking pots.¹⁷⁹ While imports from Cyprus, Egypt and the Aegean were present, the vast majority of vessels were locally made, most of which were simple bowls: of the 522 vessels found in the temple's first phase, 422 were bowls. Even more were found in later phases as they began to be mass-produced, with over 700 bowls found in the temple's final phase.¹⁸⁰ Given that these bowls were found in on or around the temple benches, it appears they were intended to hold offerings, most likely in the form of food.

Several other finds give some indication of the types of activities that took place within the fosse temple. In the temple's first phase, several knucklebones were found near the platform, each from the right foreleg of a young animal.¹⁸¹ Additionally, many of the vessels found near the end of the platform were dipper juglets. Two stone beads, an onyx/gold bead and a gold bead were recovered from outside the temple, as well as a "hyksos" style scarab, a star pendant, and a fragment of a gold toggle pin. An 8.3cm statue of a male deity was also found just outside of the temple. Similar objects were found in conjunction with the temple's second phase, including twenty-one beads, a bone inlay of a human head, the ivory lid of a toilet spoon with a duck pegged to it, two sheet gold pendants, two steatite scarabs, one faience scarab, and a bronze arrowhead.¹⁸²

In the temple's third phase, many ivory objects were found upon the raised platform. These appear to have been devotional objects, including a perfume flask in the shape of a woman, part of a box depicting bulls and lions, a statuette, calf, three antelope heads, a duck, six scepter rods, two toilet spoons and three lids, a comb and two bowls. One human and one lion pottery figurine, a gold sheet pendant with a rosette, a gold earring, thirty beads, eight scarabs and five cylinder seals were also found. Glazed pendants in flower and shell shapes, a grape cluster and fish design were also found.¹⁸³ Outside the east wall of the temple, fragments of a decorated ewer were recovered from a refuse pile used in conjunction with the temple. Dating to the 13th century, the ewer is unique, both in its depictions and dedicatory inscription. A series of deer, ibex and what may be a lion wind their way around the ewer's circumference, accompanied by a stylized tree-of-life motif. The alphabetic

¹⁷⁹ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 147.

¹⁸⁰ Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *Lachish II (Tell Ed Duweir) : The Fosse Temple*, 77-79. Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 100. It also is worth noting that a large cave on the southern slope served as a potter's workshop making identical vessels to those found in the temple.

¹⁸¹ Tufnell, Inge, and Harding, *Lachish II (Tell Ed Duweir) : The Fosse Temple*, 93-94.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, plates 2-4, 28.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, plates 29-37. Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 111.

inscription has been translated as “Mattan. An offering to my Lady ‘Elat,” further indicating the vessel’s association with the temple.¹⁸⁴

The Area P Temple:

In the 13th century BCE, construction continued on the western side of the city, and it was here, on the summit of the tell, that a new temple dating to LB IIB level VI was built. Unlike the isolated fosse temple, this temple lay at the city’s urban core surrounded by public buildings, and may have been integrated into a palace.¹⁸⁵ The temple was built on an east-west orientation, consisting of three rooms built along a straight axis: an ante-chamber, main cella and raised naos. The walls were built of mudbrick on stone foundations 1.75 meters thick, and the floor was built of well laid bricks and plaster. The cella, which measured 16.5 x 13.2 meters was accessible from two directions: the poorly preserved main entrance through the ante-chamber to the west, and from a second entrance lined with three chalk slabs leading from a subsidiary room in the north.¹⁸⁶

Two round limestone pillar-bases were found in the center of the cella, along with ten charred cedar beams from the roof they once have supported. Three round chalk column bases were also found *in-situ* along the northern half of the east wall, each attached to the wall by a plastered brick pier. Pieces of three octagonal chalk column shafts with square capitals were found nearby, which most likely sat upon these bases for decorative effect. Directly to the south, a stone installation 1.1 meters high occupied the south-east corner of the cella, and was covered with many layers of plaster, indicating the installation probably contained a liquid.¹⁸⁷ In the opposite north-east corner, a small L-shaped storeroom was built into the wall. This room contained the remains of many storage jars and bowls, as well as seven pottery stands, all related to the daily functioning of the sanctuary.¹⁸⁸ Painted plaster fragments (black, red, white, blue and yellow) were found amidst the rubble in the cella as well, indicating that sections of the temple had been brightly painted at one time.

¹⁸⁴ Ruth Hestrin, "The Lachish Ewer and the 'Asherah," *Israel Exploration Journal* 37, no. 4 (1987): 214.

¹⁸⁵ David Ussishkin, "Excavations at Tel Lachish, 1973-1977 : Preliminary Report," 5 (1978): 10-12. ———, "Area P: The Level VI Temple," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. David Ussishkin (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 220-21, 24.

¹⁸⁶ Ussishkin, "Excavations at Tel Lachish, 1973-1977 : Preliminary Report," 13-14. It is interesting to note that cedar wood was imported for temple and unique mudbricks were used in its construction which contrast with the techniques and materials used in the Area S pillared building. There, local wood, poorer quality local mudbrick and Glycimerous shells (Bar-Yosef Mayer says these are used in constructing floor foundations) were used. It has been suggested that this difference may indicate Egyptian influence in temple construction, however the correlation is far from clear.

¹⁸⁷ ———, "Area P: The Level VI Temple," 229-38.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

In the center of the cella's eastern wall, an impressive monumental stone staircase jutted out into the cella and led to the raised naos. This staircase consisted of seven steps, identical to the staircase in the Stratum VI temple at Beth Shean. On both sides of the staircase were stone slabs resting on column bases next to the fifth step. These appear to have supported some sort of parapet or veil over the staircase. At the top of the stairs was a poorly preserved naos and secondary room, which perhaps served as a storage area. Both rooms appear to have been paved with stones and were plastered over. The storage room was considerably lower than the Naos, and may have required a second set of stairs to access it.¹⁸⁹

Objects:

The temple was apparently thoroughly looted prior to being burned, and most of the sparse finds recovered were found near the L-shaped storeroom. Fragments of an ivory plaque or box, box fragments and sherds from a Mycenaean chariot vase (IIIA2-IIIB) were discovered, in addition to several beads, pendants, a scarab, a bronze chisel, and painted ostrich egg fragments. Collections of broken metal objects were also found, indirect evidence that metalworking may have taken place within the temple. Among them, a crumpled beaten gold plaque depicting a naked goddess standing on horse was found as well. This goddess has been identified as Astarte. She is commonly depicted in conjunction with the god Reshef, who is also depicted in a graffito from the site. He is depicted as holding a lance, with streamers trailing from his conical headdress in a fashion similar to that found at Beth Shean and in Egypt.¹⁹⁰ Evidence for the harvest tax (*smr*) has also been found at Lachish in the form of inscribed hieratic bowls. These bowls, which have also been found at Tell el-Far'ah (south), Tel Haror, Tel Sera and Deir el-Balah, may have served as receipts for payment of taxes in the form of grain. It is possible such transactions took place within the Area P temple.¹⁹¹

Some of the most interesting discoveries at the site came from osteological samples collected in and around the temple: In addition to goats, cattle and pigs, bear, lion and leopard bones were also found. Fish bones show contact with the coast remained in place until the temple was destroyed along with the rest of the acropolis at the end of the LB IIB.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 117.

¹⁹⁰ Ussishkin, "Area P: The Level VI Temple," 266-67.

¹⁹¹ Stephan Wimmer, "Egyptian Temples in Canaan and Sinai " in *Studies in Egyptology : Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, ed. Sara Israelit-Groll (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1990), 1090, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 149.

¹⁹² Ussishkin, "Excavations at Tel Lachish, 1973-1977 : Preliminary Report," 21, Paul Croft et al., "Archaeozoological Studies," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. David Ussishkin (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 2254-490.

Tel Sera (Tell esh-Shari'a)

Tel Sera is located in western Negev some twenty kilometers to the northwest of Beersheba on the road to Gaza. The site was inhabited during the MB II, during which time a palace with a large rectangular hall, additional eastern rooms and 2-meter thick walls was constructed. This palace (designated stratum XII) remained in use until the 15th century BCE. Shortly thereafter, a large structure with stone foundations and a courtyard was built in area A. This building, which dates to the 14th Century BCE (stratum XI), was thought by the excavator to be a cult center, as many *favissae* were uncovered nearby.¹⁹³

Following this structure in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE (stratum X-IX) another large structure was built on the ruins of the previous cultic structure, this time using brick foundations. The use of brick foundations in Egyptian construction techniques is well attested, as is Egyptian influence in the region. The building contained plastered offering benches and a central platform with a plastered stone basin in front of it, perhaps intended to receive libations. Several *favissae* mixed with pottery and animal bones dating to this period were also found in the vicinity of the structure, attesting to its probable cultic nature.¹⁹⁴

Objects

Favissae from throughout the sanctuary's lifespan were filled with large amounts of pottery including painted goblets, cylindrical stands and imported Cypriot White Slip pottery. These vessels were most likely linked to ceremonies performed within the sanctuary, which required the ritual disposal of the vessels. Indeed, large heaps of ash mixed with pottery and animal bones were found within the hall, and hint at the kinds of activities which took place there. Other objects including Egyptian alabaster vessels, pomegranate shaped pottery vessels, ivory objects, cylinder seals and scarabs and numerous Cypriot and Mycenaean vessels.

In the temple's final phase, Egyptian Hieratic ostraca bowls, like those found at Lachish, were found as well. These bowls record large quantities of grain taken to the temple or storehouse, and may be linked to Egyptian systems of taxation. It is interesting to note, however, that no Cypriot or Mycenaean forms were found in this final phase, perhaps indicating a break in trade relations at the end of the 13th Century BCE. Indeed, the Canaanite settlement including the temple and residency of local governor (building 906) are destroyed by fire at the end of stratum IX.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Eliezer Oren, "Ziglag: A Biblical City on the Edge of the Negev," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45, no. 3 (1982): 166.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: 165.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: 165-66.

Beth Shean

The site of Beth Shean was occupied almost continuously from the Neolithic on owing to its strategic location between the Jezreel and Jordan valleys. The initial excavations carried out by Rowe presented a number of chronological problems that required later re-dating the Late Bronze strata at the site. These strata can be divided into five distinct phases, over which time two major temples were constructed upon the acropolis near the fortification wall. The first of these strata (stratum IX\R3) dates to the LB IA and contained the first phase of a temple that would eventually be rebuilt several times over the next 500 years.¹⁹⁶ In its initial phase, the temple consisted of a 14.6 x 11.7 meter mudbrick structure that was oriented on an east-west axis. The walls were built of mudbrick on stone foundations, and the structure was divided into three sections: an ante-chamber, cella and trapezoidal naos, giving the structure an asymmetrical design similar to the Tel Mevorakh and Lachish fosse temples.¹⁹⁷

Following the abandonment of the LB IA temple, a second structure measuring 15 x 10 meters was built on top of it. This structure, also poorly understood, dates to the LB IB (Stratum IXB/R2) and appears to have been part of a larger religious complex of buildings at the site. This temple also consisted of three sections built on a straight axis: a large antechamber entered from the south-west corner, a narrow hall leading to the temple's cella, and the cella itself. The hall leading to the cella lay in the middle of the ante-chamber's back wall, and had a pole-socket at its center, perhaps used for screening off the cella at intervals.¹⁹⁸ A small niche was cut into the cella's back wall opposite the corridor, which may have held a cult image. While there is no evidence of columns, they are probable given the temple's large size. The temple opened onto a large enclosed courtyard entered from the south by a set of stairs and accompanying "guardroom".¹⁹⁹ A closed courtyard to the south has alternatively been described as an "inner sanctuary" by Rowe and as the entrance hall to a palace by Lee.²⁰⁰ A series of rooms built to the north and south of the temple were found to contain offering bowls, kraters and Egyptian style vessels, and a monumental hall and cult room to the east may also date to this stratum. In the 14th century BCE (stratum IXA), the cult compound was rebuilt with some changes made to the western half. The eastern half of complex was made up of two parts: a large hall with steps leading to an altar/platform and a northern room with thick walls and a niche and anterior space on its eastern side. The central courtyard contained brick installations that may also have served as altars. Rooms

¹⁹⁶ Robert Mullins, "Beth Shean During the Eighteenth Dynasty: From Canaanite Settlement to Egyptian Garrison" (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002), 31-33.

¹⁹⁷ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 136.

¹⁹⁸ Alan Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-Shean* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia University Press, 1930), 14.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8, Amihai Mazar, "Tel Bet She'an 1989/1990," *Excavations and Surveys in Israel 1991* 10 (1992).

²⁰⁰ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 58.

along the southern side of the complex also had a ritual function, one being lined with benches and another containing a stone roasting pit. These rooms lay just to the north of the city's double outer wall.²⁰¹

In the 14th and 13th centuries BCE (Stratum VIII/VII) the plan of the Beth Shean temple complex changed yet again. During this phase, a large temple some 14.9 X 14.2 meters in size with 1.5 meter thick walls built on rubble foundations was built, which Rowe referred to as the "Amenophis III" temple.²⁰² This temple was built in two phases along a north-south axis, and consisted of an ante-chamber, a main pillared hall, and an elevated cella with a small subsidiary room. While generally rectangular in shape, the temple's walls were not laid at right angles, which causes the structure to taper slightly to the south. The pillared hall and cella were accessible via the ante-chamber to the south which was in turn accessed from the west, creating a 90 degree bent axis approach. The cella was elevated 1.5 meters, and was reached by a set of seven stairs, similar to the staircase found in the area P temple at Lachish. Benches ran along the north and east walls, and most likely along the west as well. A rectangular container or bin was built into the northwest corner of the main hall and a semi-circular one was built into the southwest corner. An additional room to the south showed evidence of burning and may have been a cooking or storage area. Other features in the temple include a small brick altar that was found behind the eastern column and may have been used for burning incense. A residential quarter was established to the southeast of the temple, along with a massive structure to the southwest that Rowe called a Migdol fortress.²⁰³

In the temple's final phase dating to the 12th century BCE (Stratum VI) much of the city was rebuilt. Many Egyptian inscriptions dating to the reign of Ramesses III were found on doorjambs and lintels at the site, and Egyptian architectural elements such as stone "T" shaped thresholds were incorporated. This was true of the temple as well, which was rebuilt in this period with Egyptian lotiform columns.²⁰⁴

Objects

Finds from Stratum IX included a miniature votive bowl and pot, as well as a number of basalt weights. A basalt orthostat depicting a lion and dog is associated with this stratum, as is the "Mekal Stela" which was dedicated by the Egyptian

²⁰¹ Mullins, "Beth Shean During the Eighteenth Dynasty: From Canaanite Settlement to Egyptian Garrison", 44-57.

²⁰² Alan Rowe, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), 6.

²⁰³ Ibid., 10, Frances W. James, Patrick E. McGovern, and Anne G. Bonn, *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan : A Study of Levels VII and VIII*, University Museum Monograph, 85 (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 6.

²⁰⁴ Rowe, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan*, 13-21. Other administrative buildings were found to the north, including building 1500 or the "Governor's house", a 23x22m. building that consisted of a main hall surrounded by rooms on all sides.

Pareemheb for his father. This stela is interesting in that it is executed in Egyptian cult style, but depicts offerings being made to the Canaanite god Mekal or Reshef, often identified with Mesopotamian god Nergal and the Egyptian god Seth.²⁰⁵

Among the objects associated with strata VIII/VII, a unique basalt model of a throne was found, decorated with winged griffins on its sides, a vulture on the back, Djed pillar beneath with arms and ankh symbols hanging from each elbow. A model table painted with a checkerboard pattern was also found. A bronze dagger with wood inlay handle, as well as a Hittite style axe were found in the temple's cella. Many figurines made of clay and faience, some depicting goddesses like Astarte were found in the central room and cella as well. Scarabs, amulets, seal rings of Amenhotep III, Hatshepsut and Amenhotep IV were found, along with many other finds including pottery duck heads, cylinder seals, beads, amulets, spear and arrowheads, weights and glass and faience bottles.²⁰⁶ A cylindrical object with the head of a boar was found under the east wall of the entrance, and two pottery snakes, one coiled on a base, the other on a plaque, were found outside the temple. Lee suggests the deity worshipped at the temple may have been Astarte/Hathor. A statue of Horus from the succeeding temple, however, raises some doubt in this regard.²⁰⁷ A foundation deposit discovered under the steps held many similar finds including cylinder seals and pendants. While found in later strata, three basalt royal Egyptian stelae probably also date to this period. In one, Seti I discusses military action against a rebellion and the nomadic Apiru, and in another, the titles and honorifics of Ramesses II are laid out.²⁰⁸

Pella

A sequence of six temples ranging from the MB IIC to the Iron II periods was discovered at Pella, and included an impressive monumental MB Migdol style temple similar to the one discovered at Megiddo. Very few finds were discovered from within the temple itself, however, several plastered pits filled with vessels and connected to one another by ceramic piping were found, and appear to have been linked to a type of libation ceremony in the region.²⁰⁹ In the LB II, the temple was rebuilt along the same general lines, however, the two flanking towers of the Migdol temple were not rebuilt, and the cella was enclosed at the back of the temple by a wall. A series of three pillars running along the main hall's central axis appear to have held the temples roof in place.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ F. James and A. Kempinski, "Beth Shean," in *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. M. Avi-Yonah (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 209-13.

²⁰⁶ James, McGovern, and Bonn, *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan : A Study of Levels VII and VIII*, 221-32.

²⁰⁷ Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 65.

²⁰⁸ Rowe, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan*, 6-21.

²⁰⁹ Evidence of this libation ceremony was also found at Megiddo, and at both locations, libation installations and funnels are linked with mortuary practices.

²¹⁰ Ben Churcher, "The Discovery of Pella's Canaanite Temple," *Pella in Jordan*(2003), http://www.astarte.com.au/html/pella_s_canaanite_temple.html.

Objects

Objects from the temple included jewelry, weapons, furniture inlay, fenestrated stands and a votive snake. A one-meter high ceramic cult stand decorated with humans, vegetation and animals was found in the temple's naos, and may have been an object of veneration. Other ceramics included bowls, jugs and jars decorated with the sacred tree motif, as well cultic vessels and imported ceramics. A life size basalt head and a cultic representation of the god Reshef were also found.²¹¹

Tell Deir 'Alla

The temple built at Deir 'Alla was rebuilt three times over the course of the Late Bronze Age, and it is the fourth and final phase dating to the LB IIB that is best known. Although only partially excavated and poorly understood, the plan in this phase includes a thick-walled cella with two pillar bases, and an elevated platform, and additional surrounding storerooms. The temple appears to have been part of a larger complex, with a courtyard and "treasury" building nearby.²¹²

Objects

The "treasury" building is particularly interesting in that it contained twelve clay tablets, some inscribed with dots and others written in an undeciphered script. The dots may be a system of accounting, and it is probable the tablets are linked to the temple administration. Other finds included a number of fenestrated pottery shrines, ritual vessels, beads, a gold ring, cylinder seals, bronze armor plating, and a fragment of a faience vase bearing the cartouche of Queen Tauseret. Tauseret reigned in the beginning of the 12th century BCE, and the fact that trade continued in the Jordan valley during this time has been used to argue the date of the end of the Late Bronze Age should be pushed forward.²¹³

IIIc. Problems in Typology and the Question of Foreign Influence

With such great diversity in the archaeological record, creating meaningful typologies for understanding differences and similarities in LB temples has proven

²¹¹ S. Bourke et al., "Preliminary Report on the University of Sydney's Sixteenth and Seventeenth Seasons of Excavations at Pella (Tabaqat Fahl) in 1994/1995," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 42 (1998): 194-201, S. Bourke, "The New Pella Bronze Age Temple: The Largest "Migdol" Ever Found.," *Occident and Orient* 192, no. 4 (1999): 57-58, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 138.

²¹² H. J. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir 'Alla: The Late Bronze Age Sanctuary* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters Press, 1992), 23-37.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 163-66, 87, pl. 4b. There is also questionable evidence for the existence of Late Bronze Age temples in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. In the case of Jerusalem, the architectural elements are probably from a later period and not a temple. At Ashkelon, monumental Egyptian style architecture and a seal with the gods Re and Ptah were found. Mention of a temple of Ptah at Ashkelon in an inscription from the Megiddo Ivories may indicate a temple was once at the site.

to be a difficult task. One of the earliest typological schemas, adapted by G.R.H. Wright from earlier work on Mesopotamian temples, was based entirely on building shape and entrance location. This classification divided temples into three broad categories: “Langbau” structures, rectangular buildings with an entrance in one of the short walls, “Breitbau” structures, with an entrance located in one of the long walls, and finally “Knickachse” or “Herdhaus” structures which combined elements of the two previous types, creating a bent-axis approach. The problems and limitations of this approach were recognized by Wright, especially with regard to the temples of the Late Bronze Age, many of which do not fit easily into the categories above.²¹⁴ More recent attempts to create typologies of LB temple types have expanded significantly on this early classificatory system. Rivka Gonen for example, employs the following four-fold typology based on overall temple plan:

1. “*Migdol*”(tower) temples: This type supposedly has its origins in the Middle Bronze Age with early examples found in North-Syria. It is typified by thick walls and two towers flanking the entrance, which are built along a straight axis opposite a bench or niche built into the temples back wall. Early examples of this type have been found at Tel Haror, Shechem and Pella, with later examples extending into the LB IIB at Megiddo, and Hazor. All exhibit parallels with contemporary Syrian temples at Alalakh and Ugarit.²¹⁵

2. “*Square*” temples: Sometimes referred to as *Quadratbau* temples, only four examples of this type have been found to date. They come from Hazor, Mt. Gerizim, Rujm al-Henu East, and a location near the Amman Airport. Poor preservation and a lack of clear examples have lead some to question if the square temple type is actually a classifiable group.²¹⁶ Each temple has a central courtyard surrounded by thin walls that divide it from a set of outer walls with a single entrance near a corner. In the case of Hazor, Mt. Gerizim, and Rujm al-Henu East, the remains are poorly preserved, with only the rich finds at the Amman structure attesting to a possible cultic nature. As a result, the function of this “type” is poorly understood, with interpretations ranging from shrines built by non-sedentary groups to Egyptian inspired treasuries.²¹⁷

3. “*Egyptian*” temples: Gonen identifies this type as temples she believes exhibit Egyptian influence in their layout and construction. At Beth Shean for example, temples from stratum IV appear to have parallels with shrines from Tell el-Amarna, including a bent axis approach, papyrus-style capitals, an elevated naos, column bases in the floor, T-shaped thresholds, and inscriptions naming Ramesses II. At Lachish, a temple in Area P with a similar layout was discovered, and dedications and inscriptions at Timna are decidedly Egyptian in nature.²¹⁸ Nakhai follows Gonen

²¹⁴ Wright, *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine*, 228.

²¹⁵ Gonen, “The Late Bronze Age,” 223.

²¹⁶ Mazar, “Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age,” 182-83.

²¹⁷ Gonen, “The Late Bronze Age,” 228.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 229.

in stating: "Domination by Egypt was reflected in the construction of Egypto-Canaanite temples at sites ranging from Beth Shean in the Jordan Valley to Lachish in the Shephelah."²¹⁹ While Egyptian contact and influence in the region is unquestionable, the nature of that contact, domination or otherwise, with reference to these temples will be explored in depth later in the chapter.

4. *Other temple types*: Encountering the same limitations in her formal typology as Wright, Gonen opts for a catch-all category which includes the "fosse" temple of Lachish, the "stela" temple at Hazor as well as the temples at Tell Mevorakh and Kamid el-Loz.²²⁰

Other scholars, such as Mazar, have attempted to further refine our understanding of the Late Bronze Age temple in the southern Levant. His work differs from Gonen in that it is more comprehensive, extends into the Iron Age, and comes to different conclusions regarding foreign influence. It is notable, however, that he employs an almost identical typological schema to Gonen's work. Mazar uses the same basic categories and examples as Gonen, but re-labels them *monumental symmetrical temples*, *"square" temples*, and *temples with raised holy-of-holies*, respectively, dividing the final miscellaneous category into *temples with indirect entrances and irregular plans* and *small temples with direct access*.²²¹ Despite their extensive analyses of temple plans, orientation and dimensions, both Mazar and Gonen encounter limitations and exceptions in their typologies, calling the utility of such categories, as well as their applicability to the ancient world, into question. This issue is made even more problematic by a recent reanalysis of the Hazor acropolis by Sharon Zuckerman, in which she argues the monumental "Hazor palace" discovered in area A should be reinterpreted as a temple.²²² If this is the case, the structure would not only represent the largest Late Bronze temple found to date in the southern Levant, but one that was part of a much larger ceremonial complex, complete with ancillary rooms, courtyards and subsidiary buildings that further complicate attempts at typological distinctions. The evidence behind these typological distinctions therefore warrants closer examination in the sections that follow.

The Amman Airport Building and other "Square Temples"

The typology of Late Bronze Age Temples put forth by Gonen and others includes a so-called "square" temple type. From 1966 to 1976, Basil Hennessey excavated a curious structure dating to the LB IIB, which was discovered during bulldozer work on the construction of the airport outside Amman. The structure

²¹⁹ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 119.

²²⁰ Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," 231.

²²¹ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 169-83. In discussing the square temple type, Mazar finds the evidence problematic, and concludes there is little reason to believe such a type existed.

²²² Zuckerman, "'The City, Its Gods Will Return There' Toward an Alternative Interpretation of Hazor's Acropolis in the Late Bronze Age," 172.

was built in three phases, each of them following the same general plan of a 15 x 15 meter square building with walls that were up to two meters thick. Six identical rooms surrounded a central square room, which the excavator took to be a temple cella. In the building's second phase, the floor was paved over with irregular slabs, and it was during this period of use that the majority of the finds date. The central room included a large cylindrical burnt stone or altar that was surrounded by ash, burnt bone and several spear points. Foundation stones were discovered, as well as several bits of gold jewelry, cylinder seals, beads, an ivory duck head, blades from daggers, spears and an impressive Egyptian *Khepesh* sword. Local and imported Cypriot, Mycenaean, and Midianite wares were found, and show the building is not older than LBI.²²³

The purpose and function of this building are far from clear. Similar finds including a *Khepesh* sword have been made in a tomb at Khirbet Judur near Hebron, and the fact that there is no cooking ware present at the site indicates a non-domestic function for the building. The excavators believed the large amounts of ash and bone discovered in the building's central room were the result of burnt offerings, and on this basis ascribed a cultic function to the building.²²⁴

The Amman Airport Building is similar in size and plan to three other enigmatic and roughly contemporary structures. The first was found in Area F at Hazor in the eastern section of the lower city. It appears to have been constructed during the MB IIC and remained in use until the LB II. Like the Amman airport structure it, consists of an 18 x 18 meter perimeter wall surrounding a central room 4 x 4 meters in size. The temple's entrance is in the southwest corner of the building, and its floor was covered by thick white plaster. The cultic nature of the building first becomes clear in stratum IB, where a large 2.5 meter stone "altar" with two collection receptacles was found. Cattle bones found surrounding the altar indicate the receptacles may have been used to catch blood from sacrifices or some other liquid libation.²²⁵

The third "square" temple was discovered at Mt. Gerizim (Tananir) and again consists of an 18 x 18 meter exterior wall inclosing several chambers and a 9 x 9 meter central room. At the center of the room was a stone base interpreted by the excavator as a *Massevah* or cultic standing stone. While the objects from the building have not been fully published, the excavators describe vessels that may have been used in ritual activities.²²⁶ On this basis and on the basis of its similarity to the Amman airport structure, it was also thought to be a temple. The fourth and final example is another enigmatic structure discovered at Rujm al-Henu East some 650

²²³ G. R. H. Wright and John Basil Hennessy, "Excavation of a Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 108 (1966): 155-62. Vronwy Hankey, *A Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman* (London: British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem], 1974), L. Herr, "The Amman Airport Structure and the Geopolitics of Ancient Transjordan," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 46 (1983).

²²⁴ Herr, "The Amman Airport Structure and the Geopolitics of Ancient Transjordan," 225-26.

²²⁵ Yigael Yadin, *Hazor; the Schweich Lectures* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 98-100.

²²⁶ Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," 183.

meters south of the Jebel al-Hawayah burial caves in Jordan. This building is comparable to the Amman airport structure in that several internal cross-walls define a central room, however, the overall structure is more rectangular than square (23 x 33 meters).²²⁷

There are several problems with the idea of a square temple type. At the Amman airport structure, the presence of a pile of burnt human bones found under a nearby pile of stones complicates the issue considerably. This discovery has led many to propose human sacrifice took place at the site; however, were this true, it would be the sole example of such practice in the entire Late Bronze Levant. The sheer number of burnt individuals found at the site, 1127 adults, some of them still partially articulated, indicates the structure may have served a role in mortuary practices rather than as a temple devoted to a deity. Herr posits that the building was a Hittite outpost used for cremation burials.²²⁸ While evidence for this interpretation is lacking, the presence of LB IIB tombs nearby and indications of Hittite influence at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh is noteworthy.²²⁹

At Hazor, it is also worth noting that the square structure in area F is not only very poorly preserved, but given its location, is more likely to be part of a rebuilding of the Middle Bronze Age palace than a rare form of temple. Similarly, the structure at Mt. Gerizim, while similar in shape, differs substantially in its architecture from the other two, employing thinner walls and staircases. What is more, the central altar or standing stone is more likely to be a pillar base which held up the roof of the central room, which was substantially larger in size. While the pottery is unavailable, a domestic attribution for this structure seems more plausible, as was first proposed by Albright.²³⁰ At Rujm al-Henu East, while the structure is certainly monumental in nature and appears similar to the Amman Airport Building, its attribution to the period and thus the "square temple" type is based almost entirely on three MB/LB sherds taken from the central room. Other LB sherds, including some from the LB II/IR I transition were recovered; all were mixed with material from much later periods, however. The structure is also rectangular, and the central room backs against one of the outer walls, attributes not seen in the other examples.²³¹ For this reason, along with a lack of finds and the very poor state of preservation, identifying the Rujm al-Henu building as a "square-temple" is quite problematic.

Overall, while the actual functions of these buildings remain enigmatic, the fact that only four examples exist and that they differ so widely in their contexts

²²⁷ Patrick E. McGovern and Robin Brown, *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Central Transjordan, the Baq'ah Valley Project, 1977-1981* (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1986), 11.

²²⁸ Herr, "The Amman Airport Structure and the Geopolitics of Ancient Transjordan," 126.

²²⁹ Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 159.

²³⁰ W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), 92.

²³¹ McGovern and Brown, *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Central Transjordan, the Baq'ah Valley Project, 1977-1981*, 11.

casts serious doubt on any connections between them. For these reasons, the existence of a specific “Square Temple” type based on form alone seems highly unlikely.

“Egyptian Style” Temples

Another temple type employed by many is the so-called “Egyptian” or “Egypto-Canaanite” style temple.²³² These comparisons are based largely on the fact that there is a remarkable degree of similarity between the Area P temple at Lachish, and the temple at Beth Shean. Both structures consist of an antechamber, 2-pillared hall, and stone staircase leading to a raised cella and subsidiary storage room. In keeping with diffusionist ideas of culture change, the origins of these new temple types were sought in the “core” societies that surrounded and influenced the southern Levant during the LB IIB. Rowe was the first to draw parallels between the form of temple G at Tell el-Amarna and the temples at Lachish and Beth Shean.²³³ Like the two Levantine examples, the Amarna chapels have an ante-chamber, raised cella reached by a staircase, and two columns that stood in the center of the main hall. It was thought that the Levantine examples were derived from this model. Comparisons between “Egyptian chapels” such as those at El Kab and building 50 at Tell Abu Hawam have also been made²³⁴

There are several problems with this interpretation, however. Temple G at Amarna was built in the Late 18th Dynasty and predates the Levantine temples by quite some time. While the chapels at Amarna had open courtyards with half-roofs, the Levantine examples were fully roofed, creating a radically different experience for those in attendance. Ottoson notes that if this were not the case, the walls in the Levantine temples would not have withstood the rain, and there was no evidence of a drain in either temple.²³⁵ What is more, the comparison is made with a temple from the distant single period capital of Amenhotep IV or Akhenaten, best known for his radical redefinition of Egyptian art and architecture, not to mention his deviation from traditional religious practices.

A more useful comparison between Levantine and Egyptian temples can be made with the Egyptian temple at Timna, a site located twenty kilometers north of the gulf of Aqaba, and beyond the cultural sphere of Late Bronze Age Canaan. The site is arid and is located at the base of Mt. Timna, which rises some 432 meters above the surrounding valley. The area is rich in copper ores that were exploited as early as the Chalcolithic Period and well into the Bronze and Iron Ages. At site 200

²³² Examples include Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," 229. Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 122, Suzanne Richard, *Near Eastern Archaeology : A Reader* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 135, Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions : An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Academic 2007).

²³³ Rowe, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan*, 6.

²³⁴ Balensi, "Revising Tell Abu Hawam," n.15, Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 143.

²³⁵ Magnus Ottoson, *Temples and Cult Places in Palestine* (Stockholm: Uppsala University, 1980).

in the Timna Valley, an Egyptian temple dedicated to the goddess Hathor and dating from the 14th to 12th centuries BCE was uncovered. Five distinct layers of occupation were uncovered, the one dating to the LB IIB (Stratum IV) possibly having been commissioned by Seti I or Ramesses II. The temple consisted of a 9 x 7 meter open court built of sandstone and limestone against a large limestone outcropping. A small cella 2.7 x 1.7 meters in size was built of white limestone inside the court against the outcropping. Two stone square bases at the corners of the cella probably supported sculpted Hathor heads, which were reused in a later temple. At the back of the cella a niche the size of a human was carved into the rock, and may have contained a cult statue. The entrance to the temple was most likely directly opposite the cella, but is not preserved.²³⁶

Many objects that were reused in later temples most likely date to the Stratum IV temple. These include incense altars and two flat, rectangular offering tables, one with grooves around its edges. Offerings from all phases of this temple were very Egyptian in character. They included pottery, stone and alabaster vessels, faience beads, rings stands, wands, glazed bowls and vases, glass, gold ornaments, animal figures, scarabs, seals, Hathor figurines and plaques- many with inscriptions dating to the reign of Seti II.

It is interesting to note that while this temple is contemporary with the "Egyptian-Style" temples of the Levant and holds similar external economic incentives for Egypt, the temple form and types of finds within it differ radically from those found at Lachish and Beth Shean. In his review of Egyptian style temples in Canaan and Sinai, Stephan Wimmer takes the approach that "Only a sanctuary where Egyptian architecture was predominant and/or Egyptian worship can be traced, should be termed an "Egyptian temple."²³⁷ He concludes that with the exception of Timna, Byblos, Serabit el Khadem and perhaps Gaza, no textual or archaeological evidence exists for Egyptian-style temples or worship in the southern Levant. He points out that cultic conceptions and architecture are particularly linked in Egyptian temples, including axiality, decreasing room height and illumination. While Canaanite temples may incorporate individual Egyptian elements into aspects of their design, Wimmer concludes this does not alter their overall character, which remains ultimately Canaanite in nature.

This is not to say that Egyptians did not maintain a physical presence in the southern Levant. Monumental and devotional stela from Beth Shean for example, remove any doubt of an Egyptian presence at the site. The nature of that presence, however, as well as the influence it exerted over ritual practice, may be called into question. It should be noted that the images of deities found at these sites are

²³⁶ Beno Rothenberg, *Timna; Valley of the Biblical Copper Mines* ([London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 130-31, Lee, "The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine", 122, Beno Rothenberg and H. G. Bachmann, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna* (London: Institute for Archaeo-Metallurgical Studies [and] Institute of Archaeology, University College, London 1988).

²³⁷ Wimmer, "Egyptian Temples in Canaan and Sinai ," 1065.

uniformly Canaanite. This fact is clearly emphasized by offerings such as the Mekal stela, a devotional stela commissioned by an Egyptian in the Egyptian style for the worship of a Canaanite god. What is more, closer inspection shows the finds and installations from these “Egyptian-style” temples are characteristically in keeping with those of other “non-Egyptian” style Canaanite temples. It is to these similarities in form and function that we will now turn.

IIId. Comparative Analysis and Conclusions

Of all the formal typologies presented here, the most basic has been the division between so-called “Langraum” and “Breitraum” temples. Lee uses this formal division to propose a functional difference between the two. Breitraum temples have offering benches, he states, while the langraum temples do not. He goes on to say that the reason for benches is to set out offerings, not for displays of cult. Langraum temples in his opinion acted as cult centers for official use only, while Breitraum temples with benches may have had a more public character.²³⁸ While this idea is an attractive one, it does withstand close scrutiny. In the case of the Langraum temples at Lachish and Mevorakh, both were major structures in which benches figured prominently. Lee contends both temples were built outside the settlement, and may have been used by travelers, however, the divergence from his formal typological division is left unexplained. More complex typologies including “Square” and “Egyptian-style” temples proposed by Gonen and others equally suffer under closer examination, as they center on only one of many formal factors involved in the expression of religious identity during the LB IIB.

Abandoning traditional typologies, the objects found in association with the LB IIB temples above have been grouped into six broad categories: tools and weapons, personal adornment, storage and offering vessels, statues and figurines, administration, and objects related to ritual and divination. The color-coded results, arranged by site and object are tabulated in tables 1-6. While we are unable to equivocally state that these categories held meaning in antiquity, they provide a general and convenient way to assess the distribution of specific objects across sites. In doing so, it becomes clear that the ritual use of a number of specific object types crosscut the traditional formal typologies above.

For example, while the LB IIB temples of Beth Shean, Hazor Area H, and Tel Mevorakh have been classified as “Egyptian”, “Migdol” and “other” respectively; snake figurines of bronze or clay have been found at each site. The Megiddo and Lachish fosse temples have been separated on similar typological grounds, despite the fact that each contained a similar assortment of beads, rings, jewelry and “Astarte” style pendants. Other examples of objects that cross traditional boundaries are embossed metal plaques, perhaps once used in decoration, found in the Hazor area C and Lachish area P temples. Mace heads and chisels were found at Tel Abu Hawam, with parallels at Hazor area C and Megiddo respectively. Spear and

²³⁸ Lee, “The Late Bronze Age Temple in Palestine”, 132.

arrowheads make up part of the assemblages of the Beth Shean, Megiddo and Tel Mevorakh temples, and a combination of both cylinder-seals and scarabs were found at Hazor area H, as well as the Beth Shean and Lachish fosse temples. The Tell Abu Hawam, Tell Qasile and the Lachish Fosse temples each contained clay animal figurines. Other ritual objects like small clay masks were found at Hazor area C and Tell Qasile, while scepter or wand handles were found at the Hazor area C and the Lachish fosse temples. Bronze cymbals, perhaps once used temple rituals have also been found in the temples at Tell Abu Hawam, Megiddo, and Tel Mevorakh.²³⁹ Individually, these comparisons tell us little, however, when taken as a whole, a web of interconnections emerges that hints at more unified ritual practice across previously established temple “types” (See diagram 1). They may also help inform ritual contexts that are less clear. While the debate over the nature of building 7050 on Hazor’s acropolis continues, the discovery of several bronze statuettes, snake and bull figurines, weapons, jewelry, carved ivories and cylinder seals would seem to support Zuckerman’s hypothesis that ritual activity was taking place within its walls.

A similar approach is taken to interpreting temple furnishings and installations, the results of which are tabulated in table 7. Unlike objects that may have been reused in later periods, these installations form an integral part of the temple itself, providing the opportunity to track changes over time, from the LB IIA into the LB IIB. As with the temple objects discussed above, a great many installations and functional similarities crosscut traditional typologies. In general, these temples possess thick walls, and most share the general *in antis* plan of an isolated rectangular structure with the focus of activity taking place at the end of a central axis. In many examples, offering benches line the walls, stone offering tables are positioned in the temple’s interior, as well as installations linked to libations or drainage. Specific installations related to ritual practice also cross traditional typological boundaries. For example, at both the Tell Mevorakh and the Lachish area P temples, pillars were installed next to the raised altar. These may have supported a canopy above the altar, or were used to shield it from view at specific times. A secondary altar was built to the left of the main platform both at Tel Mevorakh and Megiddo, an installation also seen at the Hazor area H temple during the LB IIA. At both Tel Mevorakh and the Lachish fosse temple, asymmetrical niches were built into one side of the altar platform that in one case, were used to store lamps.

Of even greater significance, there appears to be a distinct and radical change in the conceptual design of the central altar which begins at the end of LB IIA, cumulates in the LB IIB, and continues into the Iron I period. This change introduces what may be described as a “stepped altar” with a set of stairs leading to the focal point of the temple for the first time. This innovation is first seen at Tell Mevorakh at the end of the 14th C. and is then introduced at Megiddo, Beth Shean, and the

²³⁹ Interestingly, Similar patters appear the LB I, the offering of miniature pottery at Hazor Area H and Beth Shean for example.

Lachish Fosse temple during the LB IIB. In each of these examples, this shift in design is clearly apparent when compared to the earlier LB IIA versions of the temples. Steps leading to a raised altar are also found in the LB IIB temples of Lachish Area P, Shechem, and the LB IIB/IR I temple at Tell Qasile. It is interesting to note that at the Hazor area C temple, the major innovation from the LB IIA to the LB IIB was also the introduction of a raised altar platform in the cultic niche. This may have also been the case at Tel Abu Hawam, however, the evidence in this case is less clear. It is possible that room 3013 in the Megiddo "palace" along with the steps leading up to it may have served as a shrine or some other ritual function. In any event, the introduction of stepped altars during the LB IIB is a shared attribute across multiple sites, and all pre-existing typologies.

What does the introduction of a stepped altar and shift towards an elevated altar platform in the LB IIB represent? Given their wide distribution across sites and their centrality within the temple, it is likely such modifications relate to a change or refinement in ritual practice. Assuming the focus of attention, perhaps a cult statue or emblem, was placed upon the altar at the top of these stairs, the change in elevation may be a symbolic "raising-up" of a deity, or attempt to further separate degrees of the sacred and profane. In either case, this clear demarcation of space is interesting, and is made explicit in each example. It also seems likely that the steps leading to the altars were not functional per se, but served as an inclined set of offering benches. This idea is supported by objects found *in-situ* upon the steps, as well as a ring carved into the bottom step of the Lachish area P temple.²⁴⁰ This would have maximized space as well as made offerings more visible to those in attendance. It is also possible that the introduction of stepped altars served an increasing need to differentiate offerings through their proximity to the divine. Offerings may have been divided by type or by the status of the individuals making them, with differences in practice according to the particular deity in question. Increased differentiation in the temple raises many questions about the nature of ritual practices that took place there, as well as the status, class, gender and roles played by those who took part in them.²⁴¹

Overall, these crosscutting functional parallels, while not uniformly present in each unique example, allow us to identify key similarities in form and function. Many temples share several specific functional attributes: at Tel Mevorakh and the

²⁴⁰ The function of this ring remains unclear, however it likely served as the base for an incense stand or offering table. In either case, its central location on the staircase would have impeded regular foot-traffic.

²⁴¹ M.V. Seton-Williams notes a clear innovation in temple architecture during the Late Bronze Age. He states that the principal of the three-roomed shrine remains, but notes that the inner shrine becomes elevated, and is separated by a central courtyard. He states that these shrines more closely resemble Mesopotamian examples than Egyptian ones. They were smaller than either, and also were not consistent in orientation, nor in close proximity to the palace. Parallels can also be found in the contemporary Mycenaean world as well: see A. Harif, "Coastal Buildings of Foreign Origin in Second Millennium B.C. Palestine," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 110 (1978), E. Stern and E. Yamauchi, "Mycenaean or Canaanite?," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 43, no. 1 (1980).

Lachish Fosse temple for example, the overall ground plan differs. We see, however, similar combinations and placement of raised platforms, stepped altars, libation installations, storage areas, and asymmetric altar niches or “cupboards”. These similarities across sites may allow us to reconstruct an idealized idea of what an LB IIB Canaanite temple “should” be: such a temple would consist of an antechamber leading to a columned hall from which a separate storage room would branch off. Plastered installations for libations or ablutions would be built into the halls far corners, and a number of benches would line its walls. A raised platform reached by a centralized staircase for offerings would serve as the temples focal point, and a secondary altar would be built into the wall on one side. At the foot of the platform, buried jars would collect liquid libations. An asymmetric cupboard would be cut into the side of the altar/staircase for the purpose of holding lamps. In addition to decorative pillars, one or more pillars attending the staircase would be present, most likely for the purpose of intermittently draping or shielding the cut image from view.

While such a reconstruction is purely hypothetical, it illustrates the fact that the temples of the LB IIB southern Levant had more in common with one another than has been previously assumed. This contextual analysis of form and function shows that previous types, including so-called “Egyptian-style” temples, had closer ties with one another, and remained distinctly Canaanite throughout their use. While there is no argument that Egypt maintained a high level of influence in the region, it was only one of many factors contributing to changes during the LB IIB. From the archaeological evidence, it is clear that what few Egyptian parallels can be drawn were highly re-contextualized and incorporated into preexisting Canaanite norms and practices.

The results of this chapter also suggest that increasing standardization in temple form and function during the LB IIB was the result of shared emic notions of what a temple should be and how it should function. At the same time, degrees of differentiation in how those ideas were executed speak to local agency and the unique constraints and prerogatives of the communities who maintained them. In this way, temples were able to adjust, accommodating the needs of the increasingly diverse population that characterized the LB IIB southern Levant.

Chapter IV: Mortuary Ritual and Practice in the LB IIB Southern Levant

IVa. Late Bronze IIB Mortuary Traditions and Prior Scholarship

The archaeology of mortuary ritual and practice are particularly popular subjects for those interested in tracing change and continuity within a given society. This is not without good reason; not only is treatment of the dead ubiquitous, given the fact that death is a universal facet of the human experience, but the contexts and assemblages of burials provide unique insights into specific and significant events which occurred in the past. As a result, burial customs have often been viewed as a microcosm of the societies in which they function, a litmus test for determining general cultural change and continuity over time.

This chapter presents the evidence for mortuary ritual and practice in the Late Bronze IIB southern Levant. The period is characterized by a number of radical shifts in burial practice and the introduction of several new burial “types” that have traditionally been defined on the basis of formal features and attributed to outside influence. Adopting an approach that incorporates both the formal and functional features of LB IIB burials, I identify commonalities in ritual practice that cross-cut these traditional typologies. On this basis, I argue that these changes are neither the result of an influx of foreigners, nor local elite-emulation, but represent the selective adaptation of specific foreign traits, re-contextualized for use in local systems of meaning and practice.

Theoretical Approaches to Mortuary Archaeology

A number of analytical approaches to the archaeology of death and burial have emerged and evolved over the years. In their 1981 book on the archaeology of death, Chapman and Randsborg group these approaches into three general categories: the “normative” approach, which is concerned with chronology and/or typology, the “social organization” approach, which attempts to understand mortuary practice as an indicator of other social phenomena (rank, status, etc.), and finally the “rationalist-idealist” approach which concerns itself with the ideas, beliefs and religious interpretations surrounding death and burial.²⁴² This general division of approaches has been maintained by scholars like Williams, who retained the same basic categories over twenty years later, rebranding them “culture-historical approaches”, “social complexity/organizational approaches”, and “examinations of the role of memory, time and ritual”, respectively.²⁴³

²⁴² Robert Chapman and Klavs Randsborg, "Approaches to the Archaeology of Death," in *The Archaeology of Death*, ed. Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-24.

²⁴³ H. Williams, "Introduction: The Archaeology of Death, Memory and Material Culture," in *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies*, ed. H. Williams (London: Plenum Publishers, 2003), 3.

Early archaeologists such as Childe and Kenyon, who concerned themselves with defining the origins, limits and chronological sequence of cultures across the ancient Near East, pioneered the normative/culture-historical approach in analyzing mortuary remains. While useful in creating typologies and attempting to draw cultural or temporal boundaries, it has been shown that the use of funerary remains for these purposes often results in skewed or inaccurate interpretations, such as mistakes in assessing the extent of cultural homogeneity or diversity in a specific region.²⁴⁴

The shortcomings of the culture-historical approach were first laid bare in the 1960s by Binford and other practitioners of the emerging processual school of thought.²⁴⁵ Drawing on the fields of anthropology and sociology, it was argued that archaeology should not be a subset of history, but should be viewed as a social science in its own right, uniquely capable of answering questions pertaining to the structure of society, and changes within it, over long periods of time. Over time this emphasis on reconstructing the social, ideological and economic mechanisms by which a society functioned in the past developed into a set of empirical hypotheses, each focusing on the role of the environment, technological adaptation and culture contact in the evolution of cultural systems and sub-systems. Mortuary evidence, which is not only readily available in the archaeological record, but also crosscuts socio-political, religious and economic aspects of culture, became increasingly relied on to test these hypothetical models.²⁴⁶

Comparing their results with ethnographic parallels, Binford and others theorized that different facets of the deceased's social persona were not only expressed symbolically through mortuary ritual, but would vary according to the relative status and roles they had held in life.²⁴⁷ Tainter took this position even further, introducing a number of typological and statistical methods for assessing mortuary data, focusing not on the burial assemblage itself, but on the collective energy expended in the interment of a particular individual. He theorized a direct correlation existed between the amount of energy expended in the preparation, construction, and rituals surrounding a burial and the social standing of the deceased.²⁴⁸ This analytical approach often referred to as the "Saxe-Binford

²⁴⁴ David Ilan, "Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age: A Reflection of Canaanite Society and Ideology," in *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* ed. Stuart Campbell and Anthony Green (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), 1-2.

²⁴⁵ Lewis Binford, "Archaeology as Anthropology," *American Antiquity* 28 (1962).

²⁴⁶ Chapman and Randsborg, "Approaches to the Archaeology of Death," 2-6.

²⁴⁷ Lewis Binford, "Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential" in *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, ed. J.A. Brown, *Memoirs for the Society of American Archaeologists* (1971). A.A. Saxe, "Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices" (Michigan University, 1970). W.H. Goodenough, "Rethinking "Status" And "Role": Towards a General Model of the Cultural Organization of Social Relationships," in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications and Frederick A Praeger, 1965).

²⁴⁸ J.A. Tainter, "Mortuary Practices and the Study of Prehistoric Social Systems," in *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Volume I*, ed. M.B. Schiffer (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 121.

research program” remains active and influential today, both in American archaeology and in the archaeology of the ancient Near East.²⁴⁹

Like the culture-history approach, the processual approach to mortuary archaeology is not without its shortcomings and analytical pitfalls. As early as the late 1960s, many of the explicit and implicit assumptions underlying the processual position were being called into question; among them, approaches to dealing with funerary remains.²⁵⁰ Ucko, in a seminal paper dealing with ethnographic interpretations of burial practices, showed there was a high degree of variability not only in the treatment of the dead, but in the cosmological beliefs surrounding them. His warning, that burial practices are complex and change rapidly without clearly expressed reasons, illustrates the problem in basing interpretations of social status and afterlife beliefs solely on mortuary evidence.²⁵¹

In addition to taking issue with processual archaeology’s definition of culture, the means by which culture change takes place, and its reliance on positivist models and data-driven methods, later “post-processual” theorists followed Ucko in objecting to the use of mortuary data to reconstruct the social organization of ancient societies. They point out that, while the act of burial may in cases reflect aspects of the status and social standing of the deceased, it is just as likely to mask, subvert or renegotiate that status.²⁵² The fact that a mortuary assemblage is the result of ritual activity, and not of normative socio-cultural behavior, has further shown burials and the rituals associated with them to be an imperfect measure of society.²⁵³ That said, however, the importance of burials and mortuary ritual in the greater framework of society should not be underestimated. As with all ritual activity, the act of burial itself is not passive, and has the potential to play an active role in creating, reproducing, and negotiating social distinctions and status. This key concept, that rituals and their participants exist in a dialectic relationship in which past traditions are drawn upon, maintained or re-contextualized in order to reinforce, subvert, or negotiate the politics of the present, provides the basis for framing the following analysis of LB IIB mortuary practices.

²⁴⁹ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 59.

²⁵⁰ See chapter 2 for an extended discussion of processual, and post-processual positions

²⁵¹ P.J. Ucko, "Ethnography and Archaeological Interpretation of Funerary Remains," *World Archaeology* 1 (1969): 262-80.

²⁵² Ian Hodder, "Postprocessual Archaeology," *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 8 (1985): 1-26.

²⁵³ E-J Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations and the Interpretations of Mortuary Remains* (Oxford: BAR Int., 1982), 36-68. M. Parker Pearson, "Mortuary Practices, Society and Ideology: An Ethnoarchaeological Study," in *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, ed. Ian Hodder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 100-01. Aaron Brody, "New Perspectives on the Archaeology of Death in the Southern Levant: A Cognitive Interpretive Approach to Late Bronze Age Burial and Mortuary Ritual " (2009), 1.

Prior Scholarship and Interpretive Framework

As has been touched on previously, the primary tension underlying cultural-historical, processual and post-processual approaches to the archaeology of ritual stem from a core disagreement over the nature of culture itself. From the processual perspective, culture lies at the intersection between any number of individual systems composed of both cultural and non-cultural phenomena. The general strategy used to understand it, then, is to isolate each system and study it individually.²⁵⁴ It is thought that in this way, observable changes taking place within a particular variable, being interdependent with all other cultural systems, can be instructive about the whole. This programmatic approach presupposes a definition of culture that is inherently static, passive and unchanging, except under the influence of external stimuli. The processual approach to mortuary practice therefore rests on the assumption that as long as a society keeps its system of socio-religious values, and as much as its burial customs form an integral part of this system, these customs will remain stable and unchanging.²⁵⁵

Studies of burial customs in the Late Bronze and Iron Age southern Levant remain strongly rooted in the normative/culture-historical and processual approaches.²⁵⁶ Gonen for example, in her 1992 study, draws the conclusion that a marked continuation of burial customs is indicative of overall conservatism in social tradition, and correspondingly, changes observed in the treatment of the dead are suggestive of a "generally open and innovative society."²⁵⁷ While some scholars working on Levantine mortuary ritual have acknowledged the role of ritual in terms of time, stages and rites of passage in their work, there remains a general absence of studies that incorporate the role of agency, social reproduction and ritual performance in studies of death and burial in the southern Levant.²⁵⁸ An exception to this is Green's work on the LB-IR I cemetery at Tell es-Saidiyeh, in which he takes a decidedly critical stance vis-a-vie the general processual approach to mortuary archaeology:

The dynamic role of funerary and mortuary activities in maintaining, reinforcing and transforming social relationships, and legitimizing or denying power and authority, demonstrate the inadequacies of processual

²⁵⁴ Kent Flannery, "Culture History V. Cultural Process: A Debate in American Archaeology," in *Contemporary Archaeology: A Guide to Theory and Contributions*, ed. Mark Leone (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 103-04.

²⁵⁵ A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology : Race, Language, Culture, Psychology, Prehistory* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948), 401-02.

²⁵⁶ Examples include: Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, Gilmour, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine."

²⁵⁷ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 4.

²⁵⁸ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 56. See Ilan, "Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age: A Reflection of Canaanite Society and Ideology."

approaches, which tend to treat mortuary contexts as passive measures of social differentiation.²⁵⁹

Green joins a number of recent studies that have sought to overcome the processual/post-processual divide by attempting to forge a middle path, one which draws upon the analytical strengths of processual methods while at the same time accepting the recursive relationship between ritual activity and the agents who perform it.²⁶⁰ In the same spirit, this chapter follows these studies in taking a markedly different and more theoretically nuanced approach to the study of mortuary customs; in this case, applied to those of the LB IIB southern Levant. The conventional wisdom, that the treatment of the dead is the most conservative of all cultural practices, is rejected for lack of evidence, as is the assumption that culture is inherently static and unchanging unless subject to external stimuli. Instead, drawing on structuration theory as well as Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, this chapter adopts a definition of culture that recognizes the fluid and dynamic interplay between both structural facets of culture (external influences) as well as the prerogatives and actions of social agents who participate in re-negotiating and perpetuating the system.²⁶¹

Moving away from mortuary typologies that ascribe cultural affiliation on the basis of formal attributes, the following study addresses changes in LB IIB mortuary practice through an agency centered approach that evaluates both the formal properties of burials as well as the ritual practices that accompanied them. I begin by identifying evidence for change and continuity in the nature and distribution of burial assemblages leading into the LB IIB. From there, I focus specifically on the emergence of burials that use pithoi, storage jars or anthropoid sarcophagi to contain the bodies of the deceased. Following the processual impulse to equate culture change with external influences, these "container" burials have often been regarded as belonging to foreigners in the region.²⁶² While there is no doubt that foreigners were present at times in the LB IIB southern Levant, the identification of many of these attributes as "foreign" is suspect, as demonstrated through a comparison between mortuary traditions of neighboring cultures. What is more, these attributes are only one of many elements, ritual or otherwise, that comprise

²⁵⁹ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 61.

²⁶⁰ Brody, "New Perspectives on the Archaeology of Death in the Southern Levant: A Cognitive Interpretive Approach to Late Bronze Age Burial and Mortuary Ritual ." Keswani, *Mortuary Ritual and Society in Bronze Age Cyprus*. Gordon Rakita and et al, eds., *Interacting with the Dead : Perspectives on Mortuary Archaeology for the New Millennium* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida,2005). Nicola Laneri, "Performing Death : Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean" (Chicago, 2007). Susan L. Braunstein, "The Meaning of Egyptian-Style Objects in the Late Bronze Cemeteries of Tell El-Far`ah (South)," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 364 (2011).

²⁶¹ See discussion of these concepts in chapter 2. Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

²⁶² Gilmour, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine," 112.

the sum total of each burial assemblage, and thus they provide insufficient grounds for such an identification.

By identifying specific ritual practices that cross-cut previously established typologies, however, I show that the “foreign” elements that are present in these burials are highly recontextualized into local Canaanite systems of meaning and practice. Much like the temples of the previous chapter, these burial types had more in common with one another than has been previously assumed.

IVb. Late Bronze IIB Mortuary Traditions in Context

As is the case with pottery and domestic architecture, many of the varied mortuary traditions characteristic of the Late Bronze Age southern Levant have antecedents in the earlier Middle Bronze Age. Key among these burial types are communal burial caves, individual pit burials, and intramural burials within the boundaries of a settlement. While each type continued into the Late Bronze Age, Rivka Gonen in her 1992 survey of LB burial practices in the southern Levant notes the dwindling and eventual disappearance of intramural burial over the course of the Late Bronze Age along with the establishment of formal cemeteries outside settlements. By the LB II, intramural burial appears to have been abandoned altogether; however, a wide range of other burial types either continue to be practiced, or emerge for the first time. In addition to an assortment of “foreign” burials (see discussion below) Gonen divides the burials of the Late Bronze Age into two basic categories: burial caves containing multiple interments, and pit burials, containing individual interments.²⁶³

While Gonen’s comprehensive analysis identifies important changes taking place in mortuary ritual at the outset of the LB IIB, her categorical divisions are problematic given that they are based on singular formal properties of burials such as container type, and do not take their contextual or functional aspects into full account. As a result, a number of examples cross-cut her burial typology when viewed from the perspective of mortuary ritual. Several cave burials for example, include benches or loculi that are intended to isolate individuals or small groups, despite their communal nature. Examples of larnax and anthropoid coffin burials, generally used for the burial of individuals in the respective cultures from which they originate, have been found to contain multiple interments.²⁶⁴ Instead of focusing on the formal properties of burials, the following analysis adopts a new approach, emphasizing the contextual relationship between mortuary assemblages and the rituals that accompanied them. In doing so, the dynamics underlying continuity and change in mortuary traditions within the LB IIB can be better

²⁶³ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 34-35.

²⁶⁴ See respectively, L. Vance Watrous, “The Origin and Iconography of the Late Minoan Painted Larnax,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 60, no. 3 (1991), L. Kuchman, “Egyptian Clay Anthropoid Coffins,” *Serapis* 4 (1977-78).

understood. It highlights the adoption of unique practices and the crystallization of new traditions following the heightened internationalism of the preceding years.

Continuity in LB IIB Mortuary Practice

The practice of burial in communal caves is well attested in the Late Bronze Age and continued from the Middle Bronze where it served as the most common form of burial.²⁶⁵ Newly cut burial caves were rare in the Late Bronze age, with a preference towards the reuse of earlier MB, EB and even Chalcolithic period burial caves. In these naturally occurring, or preexisting caves from earlier periods, there appears to have been no attempt at standardization in dimensions or layout. While burial caves were always located outside of settlements, they were usually in close proximity, either on the slope of the tell such as at Megiddo and Lachish, or a short distance away, such as at Beth-Shean and Shechem.²⁶⁶ Burial caves of the period have also been found quite a distance from any known settlement; this may be the result of an incomplete understanding of settlement activity in the area, however.

With only a few exceptions at Megiddo, Tell el Far'ah (N) and Khirbet Rabud, each cave hosted multiple burials, often with the bones of earlier occupants disturbed, or swept to the side to make room for new interments. There appears to have been no preferential or distinctive treatment on the basis of age or sex. Grave goods consisted mainly of items used in everyday life such as flints, grindstones metal tools and weapons, as well as ceramic vessels. Locally produced ceramics made up the vast majority of grave goods, with smaller amounts of imported pottery present as well. Imports generally made up only 1-2% of the pottery assemblages in LB I burial caves at Megiddo, Beth-Shean and Bahan, rising to 8.5-14% in burial caves dating to the end of the LB IIB at Megiddo and Safed. This gradual increase in imports coincides nicely with the expansion and maturation of the international system over the course of the Late Bronze Age. In caves dating to the LB II from Lachish and Nahalat-Ahim, imports accounted for 44 and 50% of the pottery respectively.²⁶⁷

While the practice of cave burial declines somewhat over time, it is still practiced widely by the LB IIB, especially in proximity to settlements where the tradition had been established in earlier periods. At Megiddo and Beth Shean for example, burial caves from the LBI, LB IIA and LB IIB have been found in close proximity to one another, making a strong case for the continuity of tradition at these major population centers. Similarly at Lachish, Tel Rehov, Gezer, Beth Shemesh, Gibeon, Ashkelon and possibly Hebron, burial caves from the LB IIB are preceded by interments from the LB IIA, often in the same caves. Safed, Tel Jedur, Khirbet Rabud, Ataisi Cave, Damun Cave and possibly Tel Regev also have cave

²⁶⁵ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 9.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

burials dating to the LB IIB, and it is possible that earlier examples may exist at these sites as well.

Intramural burial, or burial within a settlement was another burial practice that carried over from the MBII into the Late Bronze age in the southern Levant. Primarily reserved for infants and children, the body of the deceased was often placed in a jar and buried under the floors or courtyard of a house. In the Late Bronze Age, the practice was expanded to include some adult interments, but was mostly limited to settlements where the tradition had been established in earlier periods. Examples of intramural burial in the Late Bronze Age are found at Megiddo, Tell el-Ajjul, Tell el-Farah (N), Ashkelon and Ta'anach.²⁶⁸ With the exception of Ashkelon, these burials differ significantly in character from extramural burials, in that the practice is limited almost entirely to young children and all but disappears by the LB IIB. It will therefore not form a major part of the current study.

The third general type of burial to pass from the MB IIB into the LB IA and beyond was the simple pit burial. Common in the first half of the Late Bronze Age, this burial type becomes especially prominent on the coastal plain, and is found extensively in dedicated extramural cemeteries. The majority of pit burials are simple pits cut into the earth or rock, on average two meters in length, and approximately one meter deep. Most contain a single occupant, and more elaborate versions, built from rectangular pits lined with mudbrick or stone, often possessing a mudbrick or stone slab roof are commonly referred to as "cist" burials. Similar distribution, assemblages and the fact that both cist and plain pit burials are found together at sites including Tell Abu Hawam, Khirbet Humra and Tell Ridan, indicate that cist burials may simply be more elaborate version of pit burials.²⁶⁹

Burial goods found accompanying cist and pit burials include a variety of local vessels. Utilitarian wares like cooking pots, lamps and craters are rarely included. Imports such as Cypriot Base-Ring juglets, Mycenaean stirrup and piriform jars are also common grave goods, and range from 33%-50% of the total burial assemblage in the LB IIB at sites such as the Acco Persian Garden and Tell el-Ajjul. Simple bronze ornaments and toggle pins were common items in pit/cist burials, with luxury items made of gold, silver, ivory, glass, and faience being more rare. The quantity and quality of other grave goods varied by site: the pit burials at Tell Abu Hawam, Tell el 'Ajjul, Palmahim, and Tell el Far'ah (S) for example, have generally less non-ceramic grave goods than those at Tel Nami, Tell es Sa'idiyeh, Khirbet Humra and the Acco Persian Garden.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Aaron Brody, "Late Bronze Age Intramural Tombs," in *Ashkelon 1: Introduction and Overview*, ed. Lawrence E. Stager, J. David Schloen, and Daniel M. Master, *Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 516.

²⁶⁹ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 17.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

While burial orientation varied extensively among and within cemeteries containing cist/pit burials, a general preference to place the head of the deceased to the west can be observed at Tell Zeror, Tell es Sa'idiyeh, Khirbet Humra, and Deir el-Balah. As with cave burials, a number of sites where LB IIB pit/cist burials were found contained pit burials dating to earlier periods. Pit burials from the LB IIA were found at Sidon, Gesher Ha-Ziv, Tel Ridan and Tell Abu Hawam, and at Tell el-Ajjul. Pit burials from the LB I were found at Tell el Fara (s), and at Tel el-Ajjul, pit burials were a common practice from the MB II to the end of the Late Bronze Age. The cemeteries at several other sites such as Tel Bira, Afula, Tell es-Saidiyeh, Tell Nami, Tel Zeror, and Deir el-Balah, however, date solely to the LB IIB. Pit burials continue unchanged into the Iron I Period.²⁷¹ Taken together, the establishment of these new cemeteries, changes in the use and distribution of cave burials and the emergence of several new modes of burial, indicate a marked shift in the mortuary traditions of the LB IIB southern Levant.

Change in LB IIB Mortuary Practice

Gonen's 1992 study highlights a particular trend in burial distribution patterns between traditional pit and cave burials throughout the Late Bronze Age, cumulating in the LB IIB. Her analysis reveals that over time, the practice of cave burial declined and receded from the coastal littoral into the eastern mountains and valleys, where it was slowly replaced by the use of pit and cist burials. By the LB IIB, pit and cist burials had spread along the coastal plain and into the hill country with the construction of new cemeteries. Cave burials were increasingly limited to the hill regions and urban population centers where the practice had been maintained for generations.²⁷² The possible factors, historical and otherwise, behind this shift and other changes in the LB IIB will be discussed in depth later in the chapter; however, first a number of other new developments that characterize the mortuary traditions of the LB IIB must be considered.

Purpose-Built Burial Caves and Tombs

In addition to the standard burial caves already discussed, a number of purpose-built burial caves possessing unique features linked to the rituals and practices associated with them emerge during the Late Bronze Age. This process results in several unique types by the LB IIB.²⁷³ Beginning in the LB I, we see a divergence in cave burials that begin to shift away from the traditional communal precedent set in the MBII and practiced elsewhere in the region during the Late Bronze Age. In these caves, multiple niches or "loculi" were carved out for individual

²⁷¹ Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, 26.

²⁷² Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 36.

²⁷³ Gonen also discusses rare instances of "built tombs" found at Tel Dan, Aphek and Megiddo. In general, they are corbelled structures with inward inclining walls which have been compared to Mycenaean Tholos tombs in their construction. In each instance however, construction techniques vary greatly and in the case of Aphek, the damage is so extensive as to make a meaningful comparison difficult if not impossible. For this reason they have been omitted from the present study.

and occasional double interments. While the grave goods and funerary assemblages are very similar to those of the standard cave burials of the time, this development is significant in that it represents a radical departure from the basic communality inherent in standard cave burials. Loculus burials of this type have been found at Tell el-Ajjul, Dothan, Megiddo and Lachish.

A related burial cave type, also found at Lachish, is the “bilobate” burial cave. In this example, the isolation of the body is achieved by digging a tomb with two distinct chambers, separated from one another by a long buttress protruding from the back of the wall. The plan is therefore distinctly kidney-shaped. Additional examples have been found at Jerusalem and Palmahim. A third and final type of purpose-built burial cave, very much like the preceding two, is a cave in which shelves or benches have been cut into the rock or earth on either side, often with only a channel or pit left in the center to facilitate movement in and out of the chamber. These bench tombs are found primarily along the coastal plain, running from Sidon down to Tell el-Farah (S) with additional examples found at Sarepeta, Lachish, Tell Eitun and Tell el-Ajjul. Of the sixteen known examples, nine come from the LB IIB Cemetery at Tell el-Farah (S), where the bench tombs are interestingly found among standard pit/cist burials dating to the same period.²⁷⁴

While Gonen separates these later purpose-built burial caves on the basis of form, they also appear to possess important functional similarities. Each example shows increasing differentiation of the deceased, separating individuals or small groups of individuals through the use of benches, chambers and loculi. While access to the dead and the interment of new bodies in a tomb most likely remained in the hands of a select group, the increased attention paid to physical differentiation among the dead in the LB IIB is notable. This principle is also reflected in several of the other developments and changes in mortuary practice during the period.

LB IIB “Container” Burials: The Double-Pithos/ Storage Jar Burial

Among the more striking burial “types” that emerge in the LB IIB are those in which the body is interred within a container. These burials took two primary forms: the double-pithos/storage jar burial and the anthropoid coffin.²⁷⁵ Both types are associated almost exclusively with the pit/cist style of LB IIB burial, and acted as an additional protective barrier, demarcating the body from its immediate

²⁷⁴ The bench tombs from Tell el-Farah (S) have often been compared to contemporary examples from Cyprus, and are often cited in debates surrounding the influx of foreigners in the LB IIB. See J.C. Waldbaum, “Philistine Tombs at Tell Fara and Their Aegean Prototypes,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 70, no. 4 (1966).

²⁷⁵ Two 15th century burials from the Acco Persian Garden and Gezer can also be considered container burials: both take the form of a burial larnax, such as those linked to secondary burial practices in Crete. The two examples extremely rare, and vary considerably. At Gezer, the larnax was rectangular, discovered in a burial cave and contained 12 children and an adult. At Acco, the larnax was of the “bathtub” variety, was discovered in a pit, and contained a single individual. Gilmour, “Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine,” 113-16.

surroundings. The intramural burial of infants in jars was a common practice during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.²⁷⁶ The presence of adult container burials in extramural cemeteries at the end Late Bronze Age represents a unique development, however, as adult burial in containers had not been practiced in the region since the Chalcolithic period.²⁷⁷ For that reason, these burial types warrant special attention.

Double-pithos/storage jar burials from the LB IIB southern Levant have not been found in great numbers, but undisturbed examples are far and few between. Differing from the jar burials used to inter infants and children, this burial type is reserved for adults and generally consists of two large pithoi or storage jars placed mouth to mouth, creating an enclosed space within which the body of the deceased is placed. At Azor, a cemetery containing graves dating from the LB IIB to the Iron IIA was discovered in area D. At least sixteen of these burials were found to date to the end of the Bronze Age, ranging from simple individual pit burials to more elaborate cists containing multiple individuals. Among them were at least eight examples of jar burials, in which the deceased was placed in either a single jar, or two positioned end to end, the upper part of one having been cut off to facilitate interment of the body. An assemblage of jars, bowls, jugs and craters were found in the jar burials as well as lamps that in at least on instance were nested in a bowl.²⁷⁸ Later excavations in area A uncovered nine additional tombs dating to the LB IIB-Iron I, which included at least one other double-pithos burial. As in area D, one of the vessel's rims was removed and inserted into the other to create the enclosed burial. The area A burials were also made up of number of standard pit graves, mudbrick cist graves and cist graves covered with kurkar stone slabs, representing a wide diversity of practice in a small area.²⁷⁹

Approximately sixty storage jar burials were found at Tel Zeror which, according to the excavator, date to the Late Bronze, Iron, and Hellenistic periods. While the published evidence dating the various tombs at the site is limited, a number of comparisons with the tombs at Azor can be drawn. Like Azor, the deceased were interred within pairs of jars joined to one another at the rim or shoulder. Those jar burials confirmed as dating to the LB IIB-Iron I were found alongside regular pit burials and cist graves dating to the same the same period.²⁸⁰ In addition to a sharing a diversity of burial types in close proximity, the construction of cists at Azor is also very similar to the methods employed at Tel

²⁷⁶ David Ilan, "Burial Techniques," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* ed. Eric M. Meyers (New York 1997), 385.

²⁷⁷ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 21.

²⁷⁸ David Ben-Shlomo, "The Cemetery of Azor and Early Iron Age Burial Practices," *Levant* 40, no. 1 (2008): 36. See also, Trude Dothan and Moshe Dothan, *People of the Sea : The Search for the Philistines* (New York; Toronto Macmillan 1992), 114-15.

²⁷⁹ Ben-Shlomo, "The Cemetery of Azor and Early Iron Age Burial Practices," 1, Avina Buchennino, "Azor," *Israel Antiquities Authority* 118 (2006): 1-3.

²⁸⁰ Kiyoshi Ohata, *Tel Zeror 3: Report on the Excavations of the Third Season* (Tokyo: Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan, 1970), 71-74.

Zeror.²⁸¹ What is more, both sites contained burials in which large bowls were intentionally placed over the stomach of the deceased, perhaps as a form of symbolic protection.²⁸² The osteological report also revealed that many burials were of children or infants.²⁸³

Similarly, at Tell Nami at least two double-pithos burials and several jar burials were found interspersed among a wide variety of other burial types dating to the LB IIB-Iron I transition. These types included pit graves as well as cist graves built from mudbrick or stone.²⁸⁴ At Tell el-Farah (N) an adult burial was found enclosed within the sherds of a storage jar in an area that had not been previously occupied. The head pointed east, additional jars were placed at the foot of the burial, and a dipper juglet was also found next to the body. On the basis of the shape of the burial jar, the burial was dated to the 13th century²⁸⁵

Only a single double-pithos/storage jar burial was found at Kfar Yehoshua, however, it is the most complete example of this practice that we have in the LB IIB. The jars were placed end-to-end, having had their rims and necks removed in preparation to receive the body, a process also observed at Azor. The individual appears to have been a forty-year-old male who was interred in a supine position with his head to the south. In addition to a gold ring found on one of his fingers, the man was buried with three decorated lentoid flasks, one of which was placed at his waist, and the other two at his head along with unidentified lumps of burned earth. On the southern burial jar a small bowl, chalice and crater were found. The crater contained a number of objects including a bronze bowl, bronze knife, sickle blade and sheep/goat bones. Lumps of burnt earth were found around the jars along with the bones of an ox.²⁸⁶

Double pithos/storage jar burials dating to the LB IIB have also been found at number of sites in Syria and Jordan. Near Amman at the site of Jebel al-Qusur, several examples were discovered along with an anthropoid coffin in a tomb.²⁸⁷ In the cemetery at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, thirty-seven double pithos/storage jar burials

²⁸¹ Ben-Shlomo, "The Cemetery of Azor and Early Iron Age Burial Practices," 48.

²⁸² *Ibid.*: 32.

²⁸³ Ohata, *Tel Zeror 3: Report on the Excavations of the Third Season*, 73-74.

²⁸⁴ Michal Artzy, "Tell Nami Land and Sea Project 1985-1988," *Israel Exploration Journal* 40 (1990): 76, ———, "Eight Years Later," *C.M.S. News* 20 (1993): 10, M. Artzy, "Burial Practices at Tel Nami," in *Graves and Burial Practices in Israel in the Ancient Period*, ed. Itamar Singer (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 128.

²⁸⁵ R. de Vaux and A.M. Steve, "Tell El-Fara," *Revue Biblique* 55 (1948): 573-74. Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 143.

²⁸⁶ A. Druks, "A "Hittite" Burial near Kfar Yehoshua," *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society* 30 (1966): 213-20, Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," 142-43.

²⁸⁷ Moawiyah Ibrahim, "The Collared-Rim Jar of the Early Iron Age," in *Archaeology in the Levant: Essays for Kathleen Kenyon*, ed. Peter Moorey and Peter Parr (Warminster: Aris and Phillips Limited, 1978), 122, N.35.

were found, most dating to 13th and early 12th centuries BCE.²⁸⁸ Like the examples from other large cemeteries at Nami and Zerror, these burials were interspersed with other pit and cist burials at the site, with no evidence of clustering by type. In fact, pit and double pithos/storage jar burials have a very close spatial relationship at Sa'idiyeh, with the two laid out side by side in segmented rows, again with no apparent differentiation by "type."²⁸⁹ Six additional double pithos/storage jar burials have also been recently discovered at Tell Fekheriye in northern Syria, also interspersed among other burial types, including mud-brick cist burials. In order to secure these burials, bricks were placed between the jars and sides of the pit to hold them in place. Bartl notes that as at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, the bones of sheep or goats were intentionally placed into the shaft of the grave or on top of the fill, practices that clearly have a connection to rituals begin performed during the burial process. These burials are particularly interesting in that some were intramural burials found under the floors of Middle Assyrian domestic structures.²⁹⁰

LB IIB "Container" Burials: The Anthropoid Coffin Burial

The second type of container burial in the LB IIB, the so-called "anthropoid coffin" burial, is in many ways similar to the double-pithos/storage jar burials. With their striking features and unique execution in clay, these anthropoid clay coffins have been the matter of much discussion since their initial discovery in at Beth Shean in 1922. This burial type, which has been found at several sites in Israel/Palestine, the Transjordan highlands, Nubia and possibly northern Syria is traditionally dated to the LB IIB/IR I transition, and is commonly associated with Egyptian funerary practices.²⁹¹ Indeed, by the New Kingdom, the style of the Egyptian coffin had changed from rectangular to anthropoid, and such coffins were constructed from wood, stone and clay. The clay coffins took on a cylindrical shape, having been built up with coils of clay in the same manner as large storage jars. When the clay was leather hard, a faceplate was cut out, giving the coffin a distinctive "slipper" shape, and allowing the body access to the interior.²⁹² While the

²⁸⁸ Jonathan Tubb, "An Aegean Presence in Egypto-Canaan," in *Egypt. The Aegean and the Levant*, ed. W. Vivian Davies and Louise Schofield (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 143. ———, "Sea Peoples in the Jordan Valley," in *The Sea Peoples and Their World: A Reassessment*, ed. Eliezer Oren (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 2000), 186. Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 96-101. For associated pit burials, see James B. Pritchard, *The Cemetery at Tell Es-Sa'Idiyeh, Jordan* (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1980).

²⁸⁹ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 219.

²⁹⁰ Peter Bartl, "A Late Bronze Age- Iron Age Graveyard and Other Burials at Tell Fekheriye," http://www.fekheriye.de/pdf/2010_C_Burials_report.pdf, Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 217.

²⁹¹ Kent Bramlett, "Eastern Front: The Transjordan Highlands in Late Bronze Age Hegemonic Conquest" (Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2009), 179-82. Bramlett cites an unpublished example dating to the Iron I period found in excavations outside Aleppo.

²⁹² Eliezer D. Oren, *The Northern Cemetery at Beth Shan* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 133, Lisa Sabbahy, al-Misri Mathaf, and A. Majlis al, *Anthropoid Clay Coffins* (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities Press, 2009), 9.

general form of LB IIB anthropoid coffin burials in the southern Levant may have been inspired by Egyptian practices (mainly the coffin itself) many of the most critical elements in the burial assemblage are decidedly un-Egyptian, and represent a unique Canaanite practice that emerged at the end of the Late Bronze Age.

In 1922, Fisher discovered approximately twelve anthropoid coffins in the northern cemetery of Beth Shean, first described by Père Vincent. Rowe later discovered three more in 1926. The coffins found at Beth-Shan were placed in roughly rectangular tombs, and those discovered in 1926, were placed in three rectangular niches within a tomb, two of which were slightly elevated above the floor. In total, over fifty coffins in eleven burials dating to the LB IIB were found at Beth Shean, most of them in such a fragmentary state that only a few could be reconstructed.²⁹³ As with many of the coffins, decoration was limited to the face, hands and often arms sculpted upon the lid with applied clay. Most of the coffin lids at Beth Shean were of the so-called “naturalistic” variety, in which the artist appears to have attempted to retain a semblance of the proportions of the human form. Others were of the so-called “grotesque” type in which the arms, hands and facial features are highly and intentionally exaggerated, using thin lines of applied clay to denote features. Unlike many of the other coffins found in the southern Levant, none of the Beth Shean coffins were furnished with handles, or depicted facial hair. Many of the associated finds came from within the coffins themselves, including pottery dating to the LB IIB-IR I transition. Most interesting among the finds was an ovoid piece of gold foil, pierced at each end, apparently used to cover the mouth of the deceased.²⁹⁴ A face-mask belonging to a coffin lid was also found on the surface of Tel Midrash near Beth Shean²⁹⁵.

Two anthropoid coffins, both dating to the LB IIB, were discovered at Lachish in disturbed tomb 570, which had been cut into the side of the MB fosse. Both examples are of the “naturalistic” style, and one is decorated with what appears to be a pseudo-hieroglyphic inscription depicting the Egyptian deities Isis and Nephthys. While this is the sole example of an inscribed anthropoid coffin from the southern Levant, examples of pseudo hieroglyphic inscriptions on coffins can also be found in Egypt, such as those found in the 20th Dynasty tomb of Iurudef, in which illegible inscriptions were written from the foot to the middle of the coffin by individuals who apparently could not write.²⁹⁶

At Tell el-Farah (S), two anthropoid coffins were found by Petrie during his excavations in 1928-29 and belong to a group of five roughly square rock-cut tombs, each accessed by a small descending staircase. A wide bench was created on three

²⁹³ Trude Dothan, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir El-Balah* (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979), 102.

²⁹⁴ W. F. Albright, "An Anthropoid Clay Coffin from Sahab in Transjordan," *American Journal of Archaeology* 36, no. 3 (1932): 298.

²⁹⁵ Dothan, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir El-Balah*, 101.

²⁹⁶ Wolfram Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt: Life in Death for Rich and Poor* (London: Duckworth, 2003), 92.

sides of the tomb by cutting out the center portion of each wall, and in two instances, a second smaller chamber was added at the back of the first. It was in this smaller chamber of tomb 552 that an anthropoid coffin was found, with another in the main chamber of tomb 562. Fragments of a coffin without a lid were also recovered from chamber tomb 935.²⁹⁷ Both coffins are of the cylindrical “B” type with no delineation of shoulders, and have lids depicting rough faces with short beards and arms with clasped hands in the “grotesque” style. Pottery, including early Philistine wares, dates the burials to the LB II-IR I transition, and the finds included seals, bronze and iron objects, as well as a scarab of Ramesses II.²⁹⁸ It should be noted that the set of five rock-cut tombs from which the coffins came were of such a monumental nature that Petrie referred to them as the “tombs of the lords of the Philistines”. While the idea that anthropoid sarcophagi were a unique form of Philistine burial enjoyed much traction up until the 1980s, it is now generally acknowledged that Oren’s work at Beth Shean was key in showing that anthropoid coffins are an indigenous development in the pre-Philistine LB IIB that continues into the Iron I.²⁹⁹

Perhaps the most prominent example of a site containing anthropoid coffin burials in the southern Levant is the LB IIB/IR I cemetery at Deir el-Balah. Prior to excavations in 1972, the site was extensively looted, flooding the antiquities market with scarabs, pottery, figurines, stone and metal artifacts, and jewelry made from gold, faience and carnelian.³⁰⁰ Some fifty anthropoid coffins and lids were eventually recovered from the site, and excavations revealed an additional four anthropoid coffin burials, which were found *in-situ*. These four burials are crucial for our understanding of this burial type, in that they represent the only examples in which the complete burial assemblage was found intact and undisturbed. Using information gleaned from looters, the excavators were able to reconstruct a general plan of the cemetery, which consisted of clusters of two to four anthropoid burials surrounded by simple pit burials and the occasional brick lined cist grave.³⁰¹

Pottery in the burials was divided into two clear groups; one placed inside the vessel, the other placed just outside of it. Those outside the vessel consisted of large storage jars often placed strategically at the head of the burial, and accompanied by Egyptian, Canaanite and Mycenaean vessels. Vessels placed inside the burials tended to be smaller Cypriot, Canaanite, Mycenaean and Egyptian types dating to the 13th Century BCE, and were often placed near the hands or head of the deceased.³⁰² In each case, at least one of the outer storage jars placed at the head of the burial was at a higher elevation than the rest, and was covered (or at one point

²⁹⁷ Dothan, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir El-Balah*, 101.

²⁹⁸ Albright, "An Anthropoid Clay Coffin from Sahab in Transjordan," 299.

²⁹⁹ Oren, *The Northern Cemetery at Beth Shan*, 138.

³⁰⁰ Trude Dothan, *Deir El-Balah : Uncovering an Egyptian Outpost in Canaan from the Time of the Exodus* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2008), 4.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁰² Dothan, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir El-Balah*, 98.

had been covered by a bowl). This common element is an important feature shared with other burial types of the period, and will be examined later in the chapter.

In addition to pottery, burial 114, the first to be uncovered, contained a great many bronze objects, including three bronze knives, a bronze jar, strainer and bowl as well as a bronze mirror. Quite interestingly, the coffin contained not one, but three adults skeletons and one of a child. All appear to have been interred at the same time, and there is no evidence of reburial as a secondary treatment. Several gold amulets, carnelian beads and rings (one bearing the name of Ramesses II) were also recovered. Tomb 116, while seemingly undisturbed, was found in a great state of disarray, and appears to have been looted in antiquity. The coffin was intact, however, as was the requisite storage jar with covering bowl placed at a higher elevation above the head.³⁰³ Like burial 114, anthropoid burial 118 contained more than one occupant. In this case two adults, a man and a woman, were buried together with an extremely rich assortment of gold necklaces, pendants, amulets, pendants and rings, bearing both Egyptian and exclusively Canaanite motifs. An elaborate bronze wine set, mirror and cosmetic spoon were interred alongside the dead, as well as two storage jars, one elevated and covered, at the head of the burial. Burial 301, a fourth anthropoid burial found near the settlement of Deir el-Balah, had the same characteristics as the previous three, including at least two elevated storage jars at its head.³⁰⁴ The scarabs, finger rings and seals of all periods are contemporary, and date to no earlier than the reign of Ramesses II.³⁰⁵

Anthropoid coffin burials dating to the LB IIB have been found in Jordan as well. The characteristic lid and several body fragments of an anthropoid coffin were found in the village of Sahab, some twelve kilometers to the south-east of Amman. They were discovered in a cistern-like tomb, roughly two meters square and 1.6 meters high, cut from the solid rock of the hillside. While the coffin itself was badly damaged, its lid was discovered completely intact, with molded features echoing similar coffins found at Beth Shean and elsewhere. Curiously, in this example functional handles were incorporated into the representation, forming the ears and beard of the face, with a fourth in the region of the forehead. Corresponding handles were discovered around the rim of the coffin itself, used perhaps to secure the lid in place. Coffin fragments included at least three large additional handles for transport and a body sherd decorated with a rectangular incised design.³⁰⁶ Additional burials were found at the site of Pella, along with beads, scarabs, alabaster objects, Mycenaean and Philistine pottery firmly dating the burials to the LB IIB-IR I transition.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ ———, *Deir El-Balah : Uncovering an Egyptian Outpost in Canaan from the Time of the Exodus*, 36.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁰⁵ ———, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir El-Balah*, 99.

³⁰⁶ Albright, "An Anthropoid Clay Coffin from Sahab in Transjordan," 297.

³⁰⁷ Khair Yassine, *Archaeology of Jordan : Essays and Reports* (Amman, Jordan: Department of Archaeology, University of Jordan, 1988), 38.

IVc. Gravegoods, Ritual and Provisioning for the Dead in the LB IIB

In discussions of the new burial practices that emerge in the southern Levant during the LB IIB, emphasis has traditionally been placed on classifying burial types on the basis of morphological form, and to trace the foreign “origins” of these new developments.³⁰⁸ As a result, ritual and functional traits that potentially unify these new practices have often been overlooked in the quest for cross-cultural comparanda. Upon closer inspection of the ritual activities that accompanied these burials, similarities in their basic mortuary program, as well as specific ritual components can be identified that cross-cut traditional mortuary typologies. Such similarities in practice hint that there may be more to recommend them as a homogenous group unified through specific ritual practices than outlying examples of foreign influence.

To begin, it is notable that at every site where multiple double-pithos/storage jar burials have been found, those burials have been interspersed with other burial types. At Sa’idiyeh, there is evidence that burials were laid out in paired rows, perhaps indicating kinship or family groupings. This system of organization did not differentiate between burial “types,” however, and double-pithos, pit and cist burials were laid out together. If the use of double pithoi or jars in burial is assumed to be a “foreign” practice, it would seem that this foreign population living at Sa’idiyeh (and other sites for that matter) was fully integrated, perhaps intermarrying with the local population.³⁰⁹ While we know that foreigners did live in the southern Levant during the LB IIB, the presence of new material and practice, cannot be automatically ascribed to them. Many foreign peoples living abroad in antiquity, such as the Assyrians in Kanesh, are known only through texts and are archaeologically invisible, having adopted local customs and material culture.

A more plausible explanation then, may be that the use of pithoi and jars was a single variable element in Canaanite mortuary practice, whose importance lay in the function they performed, and not their form. Both cist and jar burials act to create a defined space, physically and perhaps ideologically protecting those interred within them. In this way, the choice to use pithoi or jars as opposed to building a brick-lined cist may have had more to do with resources at hand than expressions of ethnic identity. This idea is supported by the fact that double pithos /jar burials are never found in cists, and that no other differences between the types can be defined. Bartl notes that at Tell Fekheriye, the offerings made and types of pottery contained within both types were almost identical in material and

³⁰⁸ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 124-44, Gilmour, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine," 112-19.

³⁰⁹ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 219.

composition.³¹⁰ This appears to have been the case at Sa'idiyeh as well as Nami, Azor and elsewhere.

Strong parallels in practice can also be found in the use of anthropoid sarcophagai. According to Morris, double-pithos or double jar burials may have been a substitute for coffin burials in some cases.³¹¹ She is not alone in equating the two practices: Tubb notes "the functional similarity between the double-pithos container and the anthropoid clay coffin, known to have been used by the Philistines, seems undeniable".³¹² Here Tubb comes to the correct conclusion using the wrong premises, given that the theory of a Philistine connection to anthropoid burials has long since been abandoned.³¹³ Tubb notes that grave goods in the double-pithos burials at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh "were placed both inside and around the outside of the pithoi, and, for the most part, these were strongly Egyptian in character". He notes that, "the grave goods were very cosmopolitan in nature, including Cypriot, Mycenaean and Egyptian vessels as well as carnelian jewelry and bronze items...appear similar to goods found in the burials found at Deir el-Balah and other anthropoid coffins in the Delta and southern Levant."³¹⁴ Such finds are paralleled in the materials found in the double pithos /storage jar burial from Kfar Yehoshua as well. In addition to containing similar items, both types have been found together at Jebel al-Qusur in Amman and display similar patterns of use.³¹⁵ Many double pithos /storage jar burials from Sa'idiyeh (Tombs 76, 39/207, 209, 228) contained multiple interments like those found at Deir el-Balah, and in the same combinations: either an adult with an infant, or a male and female couple.³¹⁶

Perhaps the most striking parallel in Canaanite mortuary ritual can be seen at multiple sites and cross-cutting all previous types. Here we see the emergence of a standardized funerary installation, consisting of one to three large storage jars placed upright at the head or foot of the grave, each with an accompanying cover bowl and dipper juglet. This combination was always positioned at a higher elevation than the grave so that the rim of the jar would have protruded above the surface. In the case of cist tombs, it is often built into the structure of the grave itself,

³¹⁰ Bartl, "A Late Bronze Age- Iron Age Graveyard and Other Burials at Tell Fekheriye."

³¹¹ Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism : Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 776.

³¹² Jonathan Tubb, "Preliminary Report on the Fourth Season of Excavations at Tell Es-Sa'idiyeh in the Jordan Valley," *Levant* 22 (1990): 103.

³¹³ See Oren 1973, Negbi 1991; 1998; Gonen 1992; Gilmour 1995, Stager 1995, Hasel 1998, Bloch-Smith and Nakhai 1999, van der Steen 2004, Killebrew 2005, and Morris 2005.

³¹⁴ Bramlett, "Eastern Front: The Transjordan Highlands in Late Bronze Age Hegemonic Conquest", 204. ; Jonathan Tubb, "Tell Es Sa'idiyeh: Preliminary Report on the First Three Seasons of Renewed Excavations " *Levant* 20 (1988): 73-80.; Tubb, "Preliminary Report on the Fourth Season of Excavations at Tell Es-Sa'idiyeh in the Jordan Valley," 38-42, 103.; Trude Dothan, "Anthropoid Clay Coffins from a Late Bronze Age Cemetery near Deir El-Balah (Preliminary Report 2)," *Israel Exploration Journal* 23 (1973): 135-39.; discussion in Oren, *The Northern Cemetery at Beth Shan*, 143.

³¹⁵ Ibrahim, "The Collared-Rim Jar of the Early Iron Age," 122, n. 35.

³¹⁶ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 218.

and may have served as both a marker and way to provide libations to the dead.³¹⁷ It is interesting to note that in most LB IIB cemeteries burials do not overlap, nor do they touch one another, indicating their location was marked or was somehow visibly identifiable at the surface. Above ground installations such as these may have fulfilled such a purpose.

This practice of including jar installations in burials first emerges during the LB I, and becomes increasingly standardized towards the end of the 13th century. At Ashkelon, a mudbrick cist grave containing the body of a woman was discovered with just such an installation built into it. The stratigraphic position of the accompanying dipper juglet indicates the pithos was intended for use by those outside the tomb after the burial had been sealed.³¹⁸ Similarly at Azor, pit burial D80 contained an adult skeleton in the supine position, and a wealth of grave goods including an upright storage jar installation of the type described above.³¹⁹ This was also the case in eleven rectangular pit burials found at Tell Abu Hawam. The graves held individual and multiple interments, with two or three storage jars placed at the feet of the deceased. The jars were of the Canaanite variety, with straight shoulders and a stump base, contained white-shaved dipper juglets and were covered with Cypriot milk bowls.³²⁰ Three examples of this practice have also been found at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Tombs 385, 369, and 24). Due to erosion and silting, the original cemetery surface is difficult to trace, however, in each example, the storage jar is placed at a higher elevation than the burial, and rises above the level of the surrounding stone or mudbrick structure.³²¹ An example of a jar installation is known from the chamber tombs at Megiddo.³²² At Tell el Farah (N), the placement of a storage jar and dipper juglet at the foot of the jar burial from the site, indicates the practice was carried out there as well. This is certainly true of the burials at Tell Fekheriye, where nine examples of the installation were found built into the corners of mudbrick cist tombs at the site. In these examples, local Middle Assyrian vessels were used, including nipple-based goblets and a white frit bowl, painted with black drops around the rim.³²³ The use of these same installations in conjunction with anthropoid coffins at Deir el-Balah is also highly significant, and has been detailed above.³²⁴

³¹⁷ Possible funerary stela or markers have been found at Deir el-Balah and Tel el Ajjul as well. See Dothan, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir El-Balah*, 155-57.

³¹⁸ Brody, "Late Bronze Age Intramural Tombs," 523.

³¹⁹ Ben-Shlomo, "The Cemetery of Azor and Early Iron Age Burial Practices," 34.

³²⁰ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 86.

³²¹ Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant: The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 304.

³²² Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, 76.

³²³ Bartl, "A Late Bronze Age- Iron Age Graveyard and Other Burials at Tell Fekheriye." The painting of this frit bowl echos the color and patterning of Cypriot White slip bowls used at Tell Abu Hawam for the same purpose. Such a similarity may be a coincidence however.

³²⁴ Bloch-Smith notes a strong correlation between storage-jars and dipper-juglets in burials of the 13th Century BCE. This could extent the practice to sites including Lachish, Tell Ridan, Gesher ha-Ziv, the Acco Persian Garden and 'Afula among others. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, 77.

The fact that this specific ritual practice or ritual “kit” cross-cuts all traditional burial types and possesses such a wide geographic distribution, is remarkable. Not only does it show that certain elements of mortuary tradition were common across the LB IIB southern Levant, but it hints at the common emic conceptions about death and the afterlife that underscore them. At the same time, it is interesting to note the regional variation seen at Tell Abu Hawam and Tell Fekheriye, where locally available Cypriot and Middle Assyrian vessels were used towards the same end. This may also support the idea of a similar process being at work at Deir el-Balah, where the incorporation of anthropoid coffins and libation installations speaks to shared regional conceptions as well as local agency and variation.³²⁵

This idea of a shift towards a more unified set of ritual practices during the LB IIB, is further supported by the fact that the installations, perhaps used to provide libations to the dead on a regular or semi-regular basis,³²⁶ are not present in the cist tombs at Megiddo, Tell el-‘Ajjul or Tell el-Far’ah (S). These urban communities had practiced pit/cist burial interments since the MB II on, and may have opted to maintain existing traditions over adopting changes that were occurring elsewhere.³²⁷

It is also notable that while individual burials across the region contain a wide variety of culturally specific objects including scarabs, cylinder seals, carnelian jewelry, Cypriot and Mycenaean pottery, this high degree of internationalism also binds them together as a group. At Tell el Farah (s), statistical analysis of the rich and varied objects buried with the dead failed to show specific foreign affiliations or elite emulation, but instead showed a pronounced internationalism with foreign objects incorporated into distinctively Canaanite practice.³²⁸ Similarly at Tell Nami, a single grave from locus 69 contained the skeletons of two adults and a child who were interred along with three bronze incense burners (perhaps one for each of the deceased), two bronze scepters, a bronze wine set, a faience box, silver rings, gold beads and other luxury items. The burial also contained a Hittite signet ring and an inset Egyptian scarab ring, the combination of which provides a striking example of

³²⁵ In her dissertation “The Middle and Late Bronze Age Tomb Complex at Ashkelon, Israel: The Architecture and Funeral Kit,” Jill Baker makes a similar case for standard funerary assemblages in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Published at the time of writing under Jill L. Baker, *The Funeral Kit : Mortuary Practices in the Archaeological Record* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012).

³²⁶ J.W. Ribar, “Death Cult Practices in Ancient Palestine” (University of Michigan, 1973), 53-54. In addition to laying animal bones atop graves, the consistent use of lamps in burials seems to be another shared attribute in Canaanite mortuary practice. Green notes their ubiquitous use in cist tombs, and Bartl notes small carinated bowls with smoke residue were consistently set into the niches in tombs at Fekheriye.

³²⁷ Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 19.

³²⁸ Braunstein, “The Meaning of Egyptian-Style Objects in the Late Bronze Cemeteries of Tell El-Far’ah (South),” 13-16.

the local re-contextualization of foreign material culture into Canaanite systems of meaning.³²⁹

These examples of shared conceptions and practices indicate burial practices of the LB IIB traditionally separated on the basis of form have more in common with one another than previously assumed, and are more likely variations of specific ritual practices than outlying examples of foreign influence. They provide an example of how shifting the emphasis from form to function may reveal specific sets of ritual practices that cross-cut traditional typologies.

The question remains, however, how are we to understand the processes and motivations behind these new developments? Was a process of acculturation or elite-emulation taking place as put forth by Gonen, Gilmore, Higginbotham and others, or was the process more akin to cultural entanglement and hybridization? In order to assess whether these unique practices and new modes of burial in LB IIB mortuary tradition were the result of foreign influence, Egyptian, Hittite or otherwise, we must now turn to those respective traditions.

IVd. The Question of Foreign Influence

The emergence and proliferation of container burial types at the end of the Late Bronze Age has raised questions with regard to the origins of the practice, and how it came into being. The easiest, and therefore most common explanation, involves the influx of foreign influence in the region, if not foreign peoples themselves, bringing new traditions that account for the observable changes present in the LB IIB. As discussed in Chapter two, this model of culture change, while providing an easy explanatory narrative, is hindered by its base assumption that cultures are inherently static entities reliant on external stimuli to effect change. It is no surprise then that upon observation of a new phenomenon an immediate attempt is made to find the “origin” of the practice in a preexisting, often neighboring, culture.

In the case of double-pithos/storage jar burials, similar practices have been documented in contemporary Anatolia, where burial in ceramic jars or pithoi appears to have been a common Hittite practice. Hittite jar burials have been found inland and along the coastal plain, and the double-pithos burial from Kfar Yehoshua has been compared with examples from both Alishar Huyuk and Bogazkoy.³³⁰ As a result, the view that LB IIB double-pithos/storage jar burials in the southern Levant

³²⁹ Artzy, "Burial Practices at Tel Nami," 129, Monroe, *Scales of Fate: Trade, Tradition, and Transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean Ca. 1350-1175 BCE*, 16.

³³⁰ Druks, "A "Hittite" Burial near Kfar Yehoshua," 213-20, Itamar Singer, "The Hittites and the Bible Revisited," in *"I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times" Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* ed. Aaron Maeir and Pierre de Miroschedji (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 741.

are a Hittite practice and are evidence of immigration has enjoyed great longevity.³³¹

Singer, however, rightly questions this view, and states that no ethnic label should be attributed to the practice.³³² He points out that even in Anatolia the practice is not that common: "even at Alishar Huyuk, which has the largest concentration, it only represents about one-third of the excavated graves." One would not expect such a low percentage if the practice was originally a Hittite one. The evidence at Alishar Huyuk could be used to support an equally valid counter-argument, that the jar burials found at the site are evidence of a separate cultural identity perhaps "foreign" to the cultural norms of Hatti. Indeed, the distribution of burials reaches far to the south, with a number of examples in Egypt. Petrie discovered examples of double-pithos (double ziyeh) burials in the Delta cemetery of Goshen/Saft and other examples in the cemetery at Gheyta.³³³ In any event, the claim that double-pithos/storage jar burials have a cultural origin in Hatti is highly problematic, especially when this burial "type" is identified solely on the basis of a single formal attribute. Burial traditions in general are complex, with assemblages that reflect any number of intersecting spheres of meaning and practice. As such, comparisons in practice are irreducible to a single feature, and require broader analysis of both formal and functional elements.³³⁴

With regard to the emergence of our second container burial type, the clay anthropoid coffin, the same unilinear reasoning has often been applied, this time with Egypt viewed as the cultural progenitor, introducing the practice to the LB IIB southern Levant. Again, the fact that Egypt had a presence in the region is uncontested, and it is clear some Egyptian ideas and esthetic tastes were adopted in this form of burial. The nature of that presence, however, and the reasons behind the use of Egyptian elements, are far less straightforward and again cannot be explained adequately by so called Egyptian hegemony in the region, acculturation on the Egyptian periphery, or elite emulation.

It is also clear that clay coffins were used in Egypt during the Egyptian New Kingdom. At the site of Nebesheh, eight miles to the southeast of Tanis, Petrie discovered a group of rectangular burial chambers containing pottery coffins, the best example coming from tomb 17, which contained a pottery coffin with a well-

³³¹ Piotr Bienkowski, "Some Remarks on the Practice of Cremation in the Levant," *Levant* 14 (1982): 83. Gonen, *Burial Patterns and Cultural Diversity in Late Bronze Age Canaan*, 30. Bloch-Smith, "Jar Burials," 207-08. Jack Holladay, "Towards a New Paradigmatic Understanding of Long-Distance Trade in the Ancient Near East: From the Middle Bronze II to the Early Iron II - a Sketch," in *The World of the Aramaeans*, ed. P.M. Michèle Daviau, John Wevers, and Michael Weigl (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). Gilmour, "Foreign Burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine," 117.; Bramlett, "Eastern Front: The Transjordan Highlands in Late Bronze Age Hegemonic Conquest", 202.

³³² Singer, "The Hittites and the Bible Revisited," 741.

³³³ William Matthew Flinders Petrie and John Garrow Duncan, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities* (London: Office of School of Archaeology University College, 1906), 37, 43, 56, 64.

executed lid.³³⁵ A second site containing earthenware coffins was found near Tell el-Yehudiyeh, by Naville and Griffith in 1887-88. A mile and a half from the Tell, they discovered eight tombs consisting of earthenware coffins laid upon rough platforms of stone and sand, surrounded by a simple mudbrick casing, with two lines forming a false arch at the top. Offerings, vases, etc. were placed around the coffin, which was then filled with stones and sand. The coffins lay in rows, were painted and had the same cylindrical form with the removable face-plate, some with arms and hands molded on them.³³⁶ Two scarabs of Ramesses III were found, supporting a dating to the LB-IR transition. On the basis of this evidence, Albright sums up the situation as follows:

We have, therefore, every reason to regard our class of anthropoid coffins [in Palestine] as imitated from the Egyptian models of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Who the imitators were, whether they made the first pseudo-Egyptian coffins in Palestine or in Egypt, whether they belonged to one race or to many races, escapes us completely. The problem seems at present insoluble.³³⁷

While such ambiguities continue to exist, again, a closer look at the evidence calls the possibility of an Egyptian origin for the practice into question. For one, a number of these coffins had hieroglyphic or pseudo-hieroglyphic inscriptions painted on them, not unlike the inscribed example from Lachish. According to Albright, one inscription yields the personal name ?-ti-r-su-na-ya (f.) reminiscent of the Hurrian name *Tulpunaya* in the syllabic form used by Egyptians to spell foreign names and words.³³⁸ The coffins are almost identical to the examples found far to the north at Beth-shan and the fact that most examples of this type come from the Delta region strengthens the idea that these Egyptian examples had closer cultural ties to what was going on in the southern Levant than to traditional Egyptian practices. Indeed, descriptions of the tombs at Tell Yehudiyeh closely parallel the burial practices at Deir el-Balah, and the pottery found at Nebesheh had excellent parallels with Tell el-Farah (S). Even more telling was the fact that these burials, like the ones from the southern Levant, did not include ushabtis, a key part of Egyptian New Kingdom funerary ritual. Indeed, it is in the overall program of burial and its associated rituals, not the adoption of similar aesthetic forms, where differences and similarities in underlying cultural conceptions become most clear. In the sections that follow, a discussion of contemporary mortuary traditions in Egypt and Syro-Mesopotamia will assess these differences and similarities in practice.

³³⁵ Flinders Petrie, Francis Llewellyn Griffith, and Alexander Stuart Murray, *Tanis Part 2 : Nebesheh and Defenneh* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1888), 20, pls. I, III, XVI.

³³⁶ Edouard Naville and Francis Llewellyn Griffith, *The Mound of the Jew and the City of Onias, the Antiquities of Tell El Yahudiyah* (London: Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1890), 15-17, 42-48, pls. XII-XV.

³³⁷ Albright, "An Anthropoid Clay Coffin from Sahab in Transjordan," 306.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*: 303.

Egyptian Mortuary Traditions

Unlike burials of the first half of the New Kingdom, which were characterized by the inclusion of objects from everyday life, Egyptian burials from the time of Ramesses II contained only objects specifically produced for burial. Coffins, amulets, ushabtis and funerary papyri were produced for elite burials, while the poor were often buried with no grave goods at all.³³⁹ While several undisturbed elite burials dating to the 18th Dynasty have been found, very few exist from the 19th Dynasty. An exception is the tomb of Sennedjem, a courtier and “servant in the place of truth”, whose tomb contained around twenty burials in total, each interred within an individual coffin. Multiple burials had become increasingly common by the 19th Dynasty, and several of the burials in Sennedjem’s tomb included coffins brightly decorated with parts of the “Book of the Dead.” Canopic boxes as well as boxes filled with ushabtis were found among the grave goods of some burials, and Sennedjem himself was equipped with a funerary bed, pottery vessels and staves and architectural instruments.³⁴⁰

The burial customs of the poor during the Ramesside period are better indicators of the changes that characterize 19th Dynasty Egyptian mortuary practice. At Bubastis, some 210 New Kingdom burials were uncovered. Instead of the everyday objects that characterized burials of the 18th Dynasty, these later burials contained only three general types of burial goods: jewelry, shabtis, and coffins. Most burials were placed in a rough pottery coffin or shaft, and nine burials contained rough clay shabtis that were stored in a pottery jar positioned either at the head or feet.³⁴¹ Coffins made of wood were also present, as well as nine vaulted underground chambers that appear to have functioned as family tombs. Many amulets, scarabs and Wadjet eyes in particular, also often accompanied the body as a form of protection. While clay anthropoid pottery coffins, also called “slipper coffins” are found in Egypt (discussed above) they are rare, and appear to be limited to the periphery of the country. Some high quality examples exhibit the same decorations found in contemporary wooden coffins.³⁴² At Bubastis, burial 195 was placed in a pottery “slipper coffin” with a scarab inscribed with Setep-en-amun (chosen one of Amun) near the left hand. At the foot of the coffin were two vessels.³⁴³

These burials, like those found in the southern Levant, often differ considerably from other Egyptian modes of burial. In the case of the anthropoid coffins from Tell el-Yahudiyeh, many pottery vessels were placed near the burials, a

³³⁹ Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt : Life in Death for Rich and Poor*, 66.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁴¹ Ahmad El-Sawi, *Excavations at Tell Basta : Report of the Seasons 1967-1971 and Catalogue of Finds* (Prague: Charles University, 1979). Sabbahy, Mathaf, and Majlis al, *Anthropoid Clay Coffins*.

³⁴² Shafiq Farid, "Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Antiquities Department at Kom Abu Billo," *Annales du Service des Antiquities de l'Egypte* 61 (1973): 22-24.

³⁴³ El-Sawi, *Excavations at Tell Basta : Report of the Seasons 1967-1971 and Catalogue of Finds*, 90-91, figs. 221-24, 19.

practice that stands in sharp contrast with the vast majority of burials from elsewhere in the country, which contained no pottery at all. This dearth of grave goods in common 19th Dynasty burials is a marked shift from the Middle Kingdom, where even the poor would include objects from everyday life in their burials.³⁴⁴ The inclusion of pottery, and absence of ushabtis³⁴⁵ highlight the unique quality of burials in northern Egypt and Canaan in which pottery and possible libation installations formed major components of the ritual and burial assemblage. What is more, the treatment of the body between Egyptian and Canaanite traditions varied considerably. Not only was there rarely, if ever an attempt at mummification in the southern Levant, but many so called “Egyptian” style burials, such as those from Deir el-Balah, contained multiple bodies in the same coffin, an idea that would have been repellant to the common Egyptian, as it is diametrically opposed to the latter’s religious tradition requiring the sanctity and preservation of the individual body.³⁴⁶ It appears therefore, that while formal similarities exist between the two traditions, they are, at their core, very different on several fundamental levels.

Mesopotamian and North Syrian Mortuary Traditions

As early as the Ur III period, texts hint at a relationship between the kinds of gifts one was able to present to the gods of the underworld and the reception one would receive upon arrival. It would seem that from an early stage, proper burial, including the provisioning of the deceased with the items they would need, played an important role in the transition to an “afterlife”.³⁴⁷ By the 14th-13th century BCE, burial in jars, especially in the double-pithos fashion, had become common at a number of sites in Mesopotamia, including the city of Mari. At Mari, Parrot discovered a great number of double-pithos burials cut into the deposits above the MB Palace. He notes the burials contained a variety of objects that demonstrated contact throughout the Ancient Near East, illustrating Mari’s continued role as a key link between Syria and Mesopotamia. The burials were laid side by side in at least two rows oriented west-east, attributes that echo the contents and distribution of the double-pithos burials discovered at Tell es-Sa’idiyeh.³⁴⁸ The Mari examples then, in addition to those found across the southern Levant and Egypt, extend the

³⁴⁴ Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt : Life in Death for Rich and Poor*, 90.

³⁴⁵ See foil figurines in a bowl-lamp deposit from Megiddo for a possible connection. Robert Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer : 1902-1905 and 1907-1909* (London: Published for the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund by J. Murray, 1912), 433-34.

³⁴⁶ Wrapped “bitumen” burials were found at Tell es-Saidiyeh where some of the dead appeared to also be wrapped in linen with traces of bitumen; a possible attempt at mummification (Pritchard, *The Cemetery at Tell Es-Sa’idiyeh, Jordan*, 42-44, 88. Eveline van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition : The Central East Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters 2004), 66.). It has been suggested that the burials are influenced by Egyptian tradition, but other aspects, as with other LB IIB burials, are most decidedly un-Egyptian.

³⁴⁷ Stuart Campbell, Anthony Green, and eds., *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East*, vol. 51, Oxbow Monographs (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), iix.

³⁴⁸ A. Parrot, "Les Fouilles De Mari: Troisième Campagne (Hiver 1935-6)," *Syria* 18 (1937): 81-84. Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 222.

distribution range of the double pithos burial over a very wide geographic area, and cast additional doubt on a Hittite origin for the practice.

In Northern Syria, cemeteries containing double-pithos burials have been found, and several interesting connections between this mode of burial and the afterlife can be inferred from a number of Ugaritic texts. In the Baal Epic for example, (I AB:V:12-13) the entrance to the underworld is within a mountain named *KnKny*, an apparent reference to the Ugaritic and Canaanite words for storage-jar (*knkn*).³⁴⁹ Jar burials are also possibly referred to in the Tale of Aqhat (I D:147 or AQHT C), which states: *yqbr nn b[m]dgt bkn[kn]* or “he buries him in a dark place(?), in a jar”.³⁵⁰ As elusive as these texts are, archaeological comparisons between jar-burials and the corbelled intramural tombs preferred at Ugarit can also be drawn.

The functional concepts underlying the cist tomb and that of the larger chamber tomb appear to be closely related, both appearing in the northern Levant and Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC.³⁵¹ The presence of possible libation installations in the LB IIB burials of the southern Levant draws comparisons to similar practices that may have been carried out at Ugarit during the same period. In the first season of excavations at Minet el Beida, Schaeffer discovered a great number of vaulted chambered tombs built beneath residential structures, most likely communal structures used by an individual family. Many of these tombs contained interesting features that Schaeffer interpreted as funerary offering installations.³⁵² They included pits and jars set into the floor, as well as niches where offerings or lamps may have been placed. Pits, gutters and ceramic pipes ran from upper rooms to holes in the ceilings of many of these tombs, perhaps part of an elaborate system of providing provisions for the afterlife.³⁵³

The tombs at Ugarit have been the primary archaeological evidence for the cult of the dead in Syria-Palestine. No other collection of tombs in the Levant displays the same extensive and complex installations for provisioning the dead as those found by Schaeffer. The first and only real treatment of the material was published by Schaeffer in 1939, and thoughts on the Ugaritic cult of the dead were

³⁴⁹ James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 139, Ilan, "Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age: A Reflection of Canaanite Society and Ideology," 136.

³⁵⁰ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 136. Wayne Pitard, "The Ugaritic Funerary Text Rs 34.126," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 232 (1978): 33.

³⁵¹ Ilan, "Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age: A Reflection of Canaanite Society and Ideology," 13.

³⁵² This idea seems to be supported by several Ugaritic texts which make mention of the continued nourishment of the dead : Claude Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra- Ugarit*, Schweich Lectures 1936 (London: Oxford University, 1939), 53-106. T.J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 39 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 95-98.

³⁵³ Claude Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Minet-El-Beida Et De Ras Shamra: Deuxième Campagne (Printemps 1930): Rapport Sommaire," *Syria* 12 (1931).

laid out earlier in his 1936 Schweich Lectures.³⁵⁴ Here Schaeffer described five different cultic elements related to the provisioning of the dead: (1) underground pits beside tombs, fed via vertical ceramic pipes or horizontal gutters;³⁵⁵ (2) “windows” into the tomb—very much like niches, but open to the surrounding earth (i.e. without stone backing); (3) ceiling holes, in which libations were thought to have been poured, keeping the vault from having to be opened;³⁵⁶ (4) large store-jars, which were found buried beside the entrance to some tombs, mainly LIV and IV; and (5) “libation tables,” normally a large flat stone with a groove running around its sides leading to a spout of sorts.

Pitard, in his extensive reanalysis of the Ugaritic tomb material, rejects many of these so-called libation installations, linking them to simple drainage systems used in the domestic structures of the city. He points out that for the first several years of excavation at Minet el-Beida, Schaeffer was under the misimpression that he was excavating a giant Bronze Age necropolis, leading him to misinterpret the function of many structures and installations at the site.³⁵⁷ Indeed, much of what Schaeffer later took to be libation installations around the tombs at Ugarit may also be simple sumps, drainage and water storage systems used by the house. While Pitard may be correct that longer drainages crossing multiple rooms, are more likely utilitarian rather than cultic, the function of the installations found in tombs II and L remain unclear.³⁵⁸ Here, much shorter conduits face away from the tombs in question and lead to pits adjacent to the tombs. Based on the depth of these installations, and the fact that they face away from the tomb, Pitard suggests they may be vestigial structures from an earlier period. This does not explain why similar installations were found at two different tombs, however, nor is the fact that the conduits face away from grave proof they are utilitarian. Indeed, the short conduits

³⁵⁴ ———, *Ugaritica 1*, Mission De Ras Shamra 3 (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1939), 53. Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit*, 46-56.

For other treatments of these tombs and installations, see L. Wächter, *Der Tod Im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1967), 184. Ribar, "Death Cult Practices in Ancient Palestine", 48-50. J.C. de Moor, "Rapi'uma--Rephaim," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88 (1976): 331. Pitard, "The Ugaritic Funerary Text Rs 34.126," 71-72. K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, *Alter Orient Und Altes Testament* 219 (Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1986), 142-45. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 97-98. Wayne Pitard, "The "Libation Stations" Of the Tombs at Ugarit," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 57, no. 1 (1994). as well as excavations after Schaeffer, J. Margueron, "Quelques Réflexions Sur Les Campagnes D'automne," *Syria* 54 (1983). O. Callot, *Une Maison À Ougarit: Étude D' Architecture Domestique*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit 1 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1983). J.F. Salles, "Deux Nouvelles Tombes De Ras Shamra," in *The Centre De La Ville: 38ème-44ème Campagnes (1978-1984)*, ed. M. Yon, *Ras Shamra-Ougarit 3* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1987).

³⁵⁵ Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Minet-El-Beida Et De Ras Shamra: Deuxième Campagne (Printemps 1930): Rapport Sommaire," 1-2, pl. XIV: 2,1. Claude Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Ras-Shamra: Quatrième Campagne (Printemps 1932): Rapport Sommaire," *Syria* 14 (1933): 106-07, pl. IX, 4.

³⁵⁶ Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit*, 51.

³⁵⁷ Pitard, "The "Libation Stations" Of the Tombs at Ugarit," 22-23.

³⁵⁸ Claude Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Ras-Shamra: Cinquième Campagne (Printemps 1933): Rapport Sommaire," *Syria* 15 (1934): 112, fig.3; 15, fig.4. J. Courtois, "L'architecture Domestique À Ugarit Au Bronze Récant," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 11 (1979): 130, fig. 11.

may have collected libations poured upon the covering stones of the dromos, which were then collected in the associated pits. The pipes also appear similar to Mesopotamian "arutu" pipes, which are known to have provided the dead with water.³⁵⁹ For that reason, a cultic function is not ruled out.

In terms of the cultic "windows" Schaeffer describes them as being used in conjunction with the associated pits.³⁶⁰ Tombs like Ras Shamra IV do indeed have pits but appear to be sealed from the surface. Still, windows in tombs III and V at Minet el-Bedia and Tomb II at Ras Shamra each have a jar placed on the exterior side of the window. Pitard suggests that instead of offerings to the dead, they may have been foundation deposits, because they were enclosed by the tomb superstructure and would not have been accessible from the outside.³⁶¹ In terms of the ceiling holes, Schaeffer says they were built for the purpose of pouring libations, either constructed with the tomb, or pierced afterward. Pitard claims that these holes are not built into the structure, but are simply where one or two stones have been removed, with no consistent pattern between tombs. He attributes the holes to tomb robbers who lifted them up to access the tomb, and pilfered its contents.³⁶²

This is problematic, however: if the stones were lifted out of place solely for the purpose of granting access, why would they not still be near by? One would think hypothetical looters would move stones the shortest distance possible and leave them. While in some examples this is indeed the case, (tomb XXXI), and many tombs were clearly damaged by looters, in others it is not. In many cases, Schaeffer's plans show no evidence of "missing" capstones moved to one side. What is more, it does not explain the small, well-crafted hole penetrating tomb L at the intersecting corners of four ashlar blocks in its roof. Whether created during or after the construction of the tomb, the hole is intentional and clearly functional. A pit in the floor of the tomb also lies nearby below it. Because of this, the hole cannot be readily explained as one used by looters, and seems to have served an intentional purpose with the in conjunction with the pit below. Pitard dismisses this idea, incorrectly attributing the intentionally carved hole to the space left under the "missing" capstone, again presumed to have been taken by looters. He points out that the floors above the tomb were 30-60cm above the dromos, and no evidence of a pipe connecting the floor to the ceiling has been found. Still, the presence of the hole, windows and jars are not adequately explained, and a ritual function still appears quite probable.

The fourth element of ritual paraphernalia mentioned by Schaeffer (and perhaps most intriguing in terms of the present discussion) was the placement of large storage jars at the entrance of tombs IV and LIV. In tomb LIV, three such jars

³⁵⁹ A. K. Sjöberg, "Beiträge Zum Sumerischen Wörterbuch.," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His 75th Birthday, April 21, 1965*, ed. H Güterbock and T Jacobsen, *Assyriological Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965), 63-64.

³⁶⁰ Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit*, 39-40.

³⁶¹ Pitard, "The "Libation Stations" Of the Tombs at Ugarit," 29.

³⁶² *Ibid.*: 30-31.

were placed at the entrance leading Pitard to doubt their cultic function due to their size. He proposes they are simply storage jars.³⁶³ Their size, however, may be attributed to the fact that this was a communal tomb. Also, placing food storage jars for the living in such close proximity to a tomb seems unlikely and ill advised. One jar sits in front of tomb IV which Pitard concedes may have been cultic in function. While he favors an interpretation as foundation deposit, given that the vessel appears to lie below the floor, this relationship is anything but clear, aside from the obvious relation to the adjacent tomb. Notwithstanding a better explanation, a cultic function for these large vessels is still likely, and their placement at the tomb entrance recalls similar jars placed at the head of the LB IIB burials under discussion.³⁶⁴ According to Pitard:

All of the remains identified by Schaeffer as funerary installations designed to allow the living to provide water and or food for the dead from outside the tomb are better and more reasonably interpreted as mundane items, unrelated to the cult of the dead. There simply is no published archaeological evidence that a regular ritual of feeding of the dead was performed around any of the tombs at Ugarit.³⁶⁵

While Pitard is right to question the evidence presented by Schaeffer, this is hardly a fair assessment on the whole. There are many elements present that remain unexplained adequately, and as such, Schaeffer's general hypothesis, that a system was in place to provide libations to the deceased, remains plausible. Pitard's arguments center on a lack of evidence for a connection between Schaeffer's ritual elements both inside and outside the tomb. Pitard rightly notes Schaeffer's lack of detail in his excavation reports, however, and what he cites as a "lack of clear evidence" may very well be a lack of proper publication. Indeed, there is a high probability that if such evidence was discovered, it may have been overlooked or not recorded. If the pipes in question were organic, they may have decomposed, or if metal, would have been looted along with the tombs. This is speculation, however;

³⁶³ Claude Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Ras Shamra-Ugarit: Neuvième Campagne (Printemps 1937): Rapport Sommaire," *Syria* 19 (1938): pl. XXI, 1. Pitard, "The "Libation Stations" Of the Tombs at Ugarit," 33-34.

³⁶⁴ Schaeffer also mentions the presence of "libation tables", or large flat stones with a groove running around the edge leading to a spout, that were found in the rooms above the burial chambers, but sometimes in other rooms as well. Claude Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Minet-El-Beida Et De Ras Shamra (Campagne Du Printemps 1929): Rapport Sommaire," *Syria* 10 (1929): 287; Pl. LI, 4. Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Ras-Shamra: Quatrième Campagne (Printemps 1932): Rapport Sommaire.," 107: pl. XIII, 3, Claude Schaeffer, "Les Fouilles De Ras Shamra-Ugarit: Sixième Campagne (Printemps 1934): Rapport Sommaire," *Syria* 16 (1935): 147; pl. XXIX, 30. Callot has claimed however that these are actually fragments of oil presses, and are not cultic in function (Callot, *Une Maison À Ougarit: Étude D' Architecture Domestique*, 206-09. While this may be the case, it certainly does not explain away other elements of mortuary ritual, which did exist.

³⁶⁵ Pitard, "The "Libation Stations" Of the Tombs at Ugarit," 34.

all we have are the words of the excavator that a connection existed, and barring evidence to the contrary, it is not unreasonable to take him at his word.³⁶⁶

Pitard opposes drawing a connection between Ugaritic materials and parallels to nearby cultures, including Canaan in the LB IIB. He states, "Scholars must not only examine the parallels between Ugaritic culture and that of Palestinian Canaan and later Israel, but also the differences between them."³⁶⁷ In this respect, he is entirely correct. As noted above, intramural burial was uncommon in Late Bronze Age Canaan, and had all but vanished by the LB IIB. Only a handful of vaulted tombs similar to those at Ugarit have been found at Dan, Aphek and Megiddo, and all were built outside settlements. We have also seen, however, that the morphological attributes of a mode of burial are secondary to the function, ritual and otherwise, that they served. Just as Egyptian elements were selectively incorporated into the container burials of the LB IIB southern Levant, but functioned in a very different way, LB IIB container burials bear little resemblance in form to the vaulted tombs of Ugarit. Similarities between the type and probable function of ritual libation installations found at Ugarit, however, may shed light on the underlying ideas behind this new practice to the south.

Ve. Conclusions

This chapter has presented the evidence for new modes of burial and the practices associated with them in the LB IIB southern Levant, weighing the potential influences, factors and explanations for their emergence. Many prior studies discussed above have claimed that the general shift from cave burials to pit burials, along with the emergence of clay anthropoid coffins, are the direct result of Egyptian influence in the region and emerge as a response to the disorder, destruction and abandonment of settlements following the establishment of Egyptian hegemony in the region.

As detailed in chapter two, while foreign influence has a role to play in the dynamics of cultural entanglement, it cannot entirely account for the changes that occur in the material culture and ritual practices of LB IIB Canaan. Such developments derived not only from the great international powers of the time, but were also the result of individual prerogatives at the local level. This has proven especially true for the changing mortuary traditions of the LB IIB, where a clear emphasis is placed on the individual treatment of the dead across previously established burial "types". While cave burials retain their communal nature, the refinement of niches, benches and loculi speak to a new emphasis on differentiation and preserving the integrity of the individual, or in cases, small groups of individuals. This trend is also reflected in the shift towards individual pit burials, and the emergence of "container burials" which used storage jars, double-pithoi or

³⁶⁶ Plastered ritual deposits that were possibly connected with piping at Pella may provide an interesting comparison. See discussion in chapter 2.

³⁶⁷ Pitard, "The "Libation Stations" Of the Tombs at Ugarit," 35.

anthropoid coffins to delineate the space around the deceased and shield the body from its environs. By shifting emphasis from the formal to the functional properties of these burials, new shared practices, which cross-cut traditional typologies, have also been identified. These include a locally diverse yet regionally consistent set of cosmopolitan objects, as well as common ritual installations most likely linked to the pouring of libations for the dead. It is highly likely that these efforts to preserve the integrity of the body, as well as provide provisions for it after death, are directly related to changing attitudes about death and the afterlife in the LB IIB.

While individual aspects of the mortuary program, such as anthropoid coffins or libation installations may have been partially inspired by foreign influences like Egypt and Ugarit, they not only were highly modified and re-contextualized for Canaanite purposes, but are only one of many integrated aspects of the mortuary assemblage and process. They therefore cannot be used in isolation to ascribe acculturation or elite emulation processes to Late Bronze Canaanite society. Moreover, the rituals and program of burial practiced in these neighboring areas differ drastically in form and function from the burials in the LB IIB southern Levant. It would appear these developments are uniquely Canaanite, and that aspects of local and foreign mortuary practices were selectively maintained, adopted or transformed according to the needs of the local community. A similar process has been observed by Braunstein at Tell el-Farah (S), in which a comparison of the overall burial program showed those burying their dead at the site followed strictly Canaanite traditions, despite the fact the assemblages contained some Egyptian objects and features. She shows that the population of Tell el-Farah selectively adopted these foreign elements, but according to a different systems of meaning.³⁶⁸ Braunstein also explores the possibility that some of the burials were not Canaanite at all, but belonged to Egyptian officials stationed at the site. If this was indeed the case, these officials then also engaged in a process of creating a “hybridizing” identity, adopting distinctively Canaanite modes of burial.³⁶⁹ This would seem to apply to the jar burials and anthropoid sarcophagi at sites like Deir el-Balah or Tell Nami as well; even if we assume these burials belong to foreigners living in the region on the basis of container alone, the objects and ritual installations associated with them show those foreigners were buried in accordance with Canaanite systems of meaning.

The evidence, then, indicates these developments are quite in keeping with processes of cultural entanglement and hybridization: localized traditions with ties across the southern Levant emerged during the LB IIB, borrowing from the past, the present, and neighboring cultures, while actively negotiating and redefining Canaanite, and perhaps even foreign identities through sets of unique hybridizing objects, ideas and practices.

³⁶⁸ Braunstein, "The Meaning of Egyptian-Style Objects in the Late Bronze Cemeteries of Tell El-Far`ah (South)," 24.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 28-29.

Chapter V: Canaanite “Bowl-Lamp” Deposits

Va. Canaanite “Bowl-Lamp” Foundation Deposits

Canaanite “bowl-lamp” deposits have been discovered at multiple sites in the southern Levant, dating typically to the second half of the Late Bronze Age, with evidence of limited continuation into the Iron I. They take the form of an assortment of ceramic vessels, deposited one within the other, which are found buried together near or in some cases under, the foundations of buildings. For this reason, they have traditionally been interpreted as a form of foundation deposit. While the types, number, and orientation of vessels in these deposits can vary considerably, the majority consist of simple bowl and lamp combinations, hence the term used to describe them collectively.

Bowl-lamp deposits were first encountered by Petrie and later Bliss at Tell el-Hesi during the 1890s. This was followed by Macalister’s discovery of similar deposits at Gezer. Macalister dated the emergence of these deposits to his “second Semitic period” (ending with the Egyptian 18th Dynasty) and states they are most prominent around the time of the “third and fourth Semitic periods” (ending with the establishment of the United Monarchy).³⁷⁰ Over time, additional deposits of the same kind have come to light at numerous sites, including examples from Tell Jemmeh, Beth Shemesh, Pella and additional examples at Gezer, which allowed Dever to confirm Macalister’s tentative dating of the practices’ cultural flourish to the end of the Late Bronze Age. In more recent years, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni have incorporated numerous other examples from the sites of Aphek, Haruvit, Bir el ‘Abd, Tell Sandahanna, Tel Sera, Tel Gerisa, Deir el-Balah, Tel Miqne, Tel Zakariya and Lachish. On the basis of vessel typology, they have been able to further refine the time-span in which these deposits were laid to between the thirteenth and first half of the eleventh centuries BCE.³⁷¹

The practice of laying bowl-lamp deposits in the LB IIB has remained enigmatic since its discovery over a century ago. Petrie, Bliss and Macalister offer interpretations of the meaning behind the practice that are discussed at length later in the chapter. Their conclusions are speculative, however, and were based on the limited data at their disposal. In more recent years, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni have suggested the deposits are Egyptian in inspiration, as their appearance coincides with the LB IIB and the widely accepted idea of Egyptian hegemony in the region during that time. Such an interpretation is in keeping with the acculturation and emulation-based approaches detailed in previous chapters. Like those approaches, the assumption that foreign influence provided the inspiration for bowl-lamp

³⁷⁰ Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer : 1902-1905 and 1907-1909*, 434.

³⁷¹ S Bunimovitz and O Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," *Israel Exploration Journal* 43, no. 1 (1993): 99-119, ———, "Lamp and Bowl Foundation Deposits in Areas P and S," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)* ed. David Ussishkin (Tel Aviv: , 2004), 1152.

deposits is highly problematic and rests on specific, narrow interpretations of the archaeological evidence. By assuming a foreign origin for the practice, the active role of Canaanite society in performing and perpetuating these rituals is effectively undermined and not taken into account. This chapter attempts to build on prior approaches by resituating the known evidence for bowl-lamp deposits using an agency centered, contextual approach. It explores the possibility that bowl-lamp deposits may have been an indigenous form of ritual activity, and in doing so, questions their conventional classification as a form of “foundation deposit”.

Approaching Foundation Deposits and Building Rituals

The term “foundation deposit” is commonly used in archaeological literature to describe a wide variety of objects associated with the construction, renewal or dedication of a building. These objects are usually interred within a structure’s walls or foundation to mark the occasion in question.³⁷² Such deposits are intrinsically linked to architecture in that they may act to commemorate, sanctify or protect the act of construction, the structure, and those who inhabit it. While the rituals and ceremonies that accompanied these deposits are often unknown or poorly understood, traces can be gleaned from the textual and archaeological record. Archaeology can be particularly useful in determining the sequence of ritual activities related to building practices on the basis of stratigraphy. Certain ceremonies may take place before construction, others may be carried out during the building process, and dedicatory ceremonies may be performed once construction is complete. The building’s ritual lifecycle may then continue with ceremonies of renewal performed at regular intervals or when the need should arise. Finally, the destruction or abandonment of a building can often constitute a ritual act in itself, with ceremonies marking the end of its period of use. It is without doubt that in the absence of texts or other corroborating evidence, key elements of a given building’s ritual cycle will be forever lost to us. These may include music, incantation or any number of other performative actions that leave no trace in the archaeological record. The discovery of ritual deposits can still provide valuable insight into the overall traditions of a culture and mindset of those who carried them out, while acknowledging that they represent only part of a more complex, incomplete picture.

In the broader scope of ritual activity, building rituals and foundation deposits in particular can inhabit multiple spheres of meaning and experience. It is interesting to note that while the act of laying a foundation deposit may be overtly public in nature (such as in modern “corner stone” laying ceremonies), the later experience of the deposit lies at the opposite end of the spectrum, and is essentially a private one. This is because any ceremony, regardless of pomp or extent, exists only for a limited period of time. In the case of a foundation deposit, after it has been laid in place, its very existence is then intentionally obfuscated. It is buried, bricked

³⁷² Gwendolyn Leick, *Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 113.

over or hidden from view. In most cases, no outward sign is made of its presence, and the deposit is known only to the participants (thought to include, at times, divinities) and those informed through cultural norms and/or oral tradition. In this way, the extended experience of a ritual deposit is able to both engage the collective while directly accessing the individual in whom knowledge of the deposit exclusively resides. The practice can be seen as an inversion of the artistic, iconic process: instead of making an ephemeral idea manifest in an object, an object is relegated to the realm of ideas and memory through ritual action.

When performed across a wide geographic range, these rituals speak to shared emic conceptions of practice that influence and help structure the choices made by individuals on the local level. At the same time, the local execution of that practice, choices in materials and quantities used, the locations of deposition, and amount of energy expended are particular to each unique set of circumstances, and are a reflection of agency at the local level.

Prior scholarship dealing with Canaanite bowl-lamp deposits has focused on vessel typologies and the regional distribution of sites along the coastal littoral and Jordan Valley where they have been found. An attempt to analyze the *intra-site* distribution of the deposits, that is to say, a full analysis of the deposits' relation to buildings in a given site, and to one another, has yet to be made. What is more, the wide variation and distribution of specific deposit types, combinations of vessels and possible meanings associated with them also have yet to be addressed. Recent excavations at Rehov, Tel es-Safi and Ashkelon have revealed a number of bowl-lamp deposits, adding considerably to the corpus of known examples. The lingering questions about the origin, function and meaning of these deposits, in combination with new data from three additional sites makes the following thorough reanalysis of the evidence both timely and relevant.

After presenting the archaeological evidence for bowl-lamp deposits, the question of foreign influence or a foreign origin for the practice will be addressed through a comparison of contemporary Egyptian, Hittite, and Syro-Mesopotamian practices. From there, a comparative analysis of both inter- and intra-site distributions will be considered, as well as vessel type, number and orientation in each example. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results, which indicate that the laying of bowl-lamp deposits was a uniquely Canaanite ritual practice, and may have served an ideological function beyond that of a "foundation deposit".

Vb. Canaanite "Bowl-Lamp" Deposits in Context

Bowl-lamp deposits dating to the LB IIB have been discovered at eighteen sites throughout the southern Levant ranging from port cities along the coastal littoral to sites in the Jordan Valley. In the discussion that follows, evidence is presented geographically from north to south, beginning with sites on or near the coast including Tel Gerisa, Ashkelon, Deir el-Balah, Haruvit, and Bir el Abd. From

there, examples found at inland sites such as Aphek, Gezer, Ekron, Beth-Shemesh, Tel es-Safi, Tell Zakariya, Tell Sandahanna, Lachish, Tell el Hesi, Tel Sera and Tell Jemmeh. Finally, deposits found at Tel Rehov, Pella, and Tell es-Sai'idyeh in the Jordan Valley, are discussed. In this way, correlations between deposit locations or compositions in the north, south or any of the three distinct geographical zones above may be more easily discerned.

Tel Gerisa

A decorated bowl covering a lamp made of identical high straw-temper clay was found next to one of the walls of a building (Locus 1151) at Tel Gerisa. As with many deposits elsewhere, the lamp bore no evidence of having been used.³⁷³ The deposit seems to have been associated with a monumental structure dating to the Late Bronze Age that occupied the center of the mound. This building possessed a large paved northern courtyard, and a southern residential wing divided into several rooms by two cross walls. Its courtyard and regularity in construction indicates it was an important public building, perhaps a palace.³⁷⁴

Ashkelon

In recent years, a great number of bowl-lamp deposits have been found at the port city of Ashkelon in two areas of the site, both dating to the LB IIB. In grid 50, three deposits of lamps covered with chalices (with stands lopped off) were found under the courtyard surfaces of a large structure associated with the LB IIB. In Grid 38, many examples were found in square 74, again lining an interior courtyard of a large LB IIB structure that may have been residential in nature. These deposits were laid during or immediately following the construction of these walls, and a large number of foundation deposits were cut into phase 23 surfaces, to be later covered by the phase 22 floors of the building. It is notable that all such deposits were found next to walls but not beneath them, suggesting the walls existed prior to their interment. These deposits were found under the floors of all of the rooms of the structure, with the exception of Room #1.

In the north-east corner of room #2, pit 74.1236/1237 contained a bowl-lamp deposit oriented towards the west. In the south of room #3, pit 74.1231/1232 contained a lamp oriented towards the west that was covered by a large painted sherd from an LB bichrome juglet. Along the western edge of room #4, pit 74.1208/1209 contained a lamp and fragments of what may have been a bowl above it. The vast majority of these deposits, however, were lined up along the southern and eastern edges of plaster courtyard/ room #5. Moving southwest to northeast, pit 74.1105 excavated in 2007 contained two bowl-lamp-bowls and a bowl-lamp deposit. The lamps in these deposits were oriented south, north and

³⁷³ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 118-19.

³⁷⁴ Zeev Herzog, "Tel Gerisa," *Israel Exploration Journal* 34, no. 1 (1983): 56. Samuel R. Wolff, "Archaeology in Israel," *American Journal of Archaeology* 98, no. 3 (1994): 491-92.

north respectively. While initially thought to have cut a later phase 22 floor 74.1101, the lower elevation and lack of plaster flooring in this area indicates this pit was in fact cut from phase 23 surface 74.1182 and was later plastered over along with the other deposits in the room. To the east, pit 74.1256/1257 contained a bowl-lamp oriented to the north, and pit 74.1227/1228 contained a bowl-lamp-bowl oriented to the east. Moving north along the western side of wall 74.1229, pit 74.1201/1179 contained a bowl-lamp, an unusual bowl-lamp-bowl-bowl-lamp and finally a bowl-lamp-bowl, all oriented with their spouts pointed north, and with at least one lamp showing signs of use. The final deposit to the north was found in pit 74.1200/1180 and consisted of a LB carinated bowl covering a lamp oriented to the north. Overall, lamp orientation in relation to architecture and the intrasite distribution of deposits at Ashkelon does not appear to have been culturally significant.

It is interesting to note that despite the arrival of the Philistines at Ashkelon circa 1175 BCE, the practice of laying bowl-lamp deposits continued at the site.³⁷⁵ Deposits using Philistine “bell-shaped” bowls were found near a plastered shrine in Grid 38, and two deposits were found in Grid 50, with each was an article related to chariotry: one contained an ivory chariot pommel, and in the other, a lynch pin in the shape of the “Ashdoda” goddess. In all, fifteen bowl-lamp deposits were recovered from the Iron I strata at Ashkelon in addition to other vessel-pit deposits that included kraters, pilgrim flasks, stirrup jars and strainer jugs. The vast majority of these deposits were found in grid 38.³⁷⁶ While slightly later in date and differing in cultural context, these finds have interesting implications for our understanding of the purpose and meaning behind bowl-lamp deposits. With the exception of Gezer, more bowl-lamp deposits have been found at Ashkelon than any other site in the region. This new evidence presents an important contribution to our understanding of the practice overall.

Deir el-Balah

A deposit consisting of two bowls and a lamp was discovered below floor 426 of stratum VII in the northeastern corner of building 1131, a monumental construction referred to as the “commander’s house” that dates to the reign of Ramesses II. Both bowls were plain with flattened bases, and appear to have been wasters as they are warped and cracked. The lamp was well made, however, and is of the typical LB IIB type. None of the vessels displayed signs of burning or other signs of use.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ This continuity in practice is also seen in the Iron I strata at Ekron. See below.

³⁷⁶ Seymour Gitin, “Philistines in the Books of Kings,” in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* ed. Andre Lemaire; Baruch Halpern; Matthew J. Adams, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 331. Adam Aja, “Philistine Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age I” (Harvard University, 2009), 382.

³⁷⁷ A. E. Killebrew, P. Goldberg, and A. M. Rosen, “Deir El-Balah: A Geological, Archaeological, and Historical Reassessment of an Egyptianizing 13th and 12th Century B.C.E. Center,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 343 (2006): 115. Trude Dothan and Tamar Nahmias-Lotan, “A Lamp and Bowl Deposit,” in *Deir El-Balah: Excavations in 1977-1982 in the Cemetery and*

Haruvit (Haruba)

An Egyptian bowl containing a lamp was found under a wall of the Egyptian fortress at Haruvit (Haruba A-289) in the north Sinai and an Egyptian cup nearby may have been associated with the deposit. The deposit relates to the second phase of the fort built at the end of the 19th Dynasty.³⁷⁸

Bir el 'Abd

Bunimovitz and Zimhoni cite Oren as mentioning a bowl-lamp deposit that was found under the fortress foundations at Bir el 'Abd. The deposit is thought to date to the end of the 18th Dynasty.³⁷⁹

Aphek

At Aphek, a single deposit was recovered from near the north-eastern corner of room 1104 the Palace VI "governor's residency". It appears to be a typical bowl-lamp-bowl formation, however, the top most bowl is an imitation Cypriot White-Slip bowl.³⁸⁰

Gezer

In area V3 at Gezer, Macalister uncovered a series of seven deposits: two under the jambs of a door, two at the ends of walls, two in internal corners, and one under another internal corner of a building. In area V4, an additional eight groups that were south of a large thick wall were found. A number of olive presses were found in the vicinity, indicating the area may have been used as a courtyard. While Macalister did not record the exact positions nor the composition of each deposit he encountered, he gives a detailed account of each type he uncovered and mentions that the combinations included stands and range in number from two to seven vessels per group in the widest variety of combinations found to date. Unfortunately, he notes that several deposits were encountered at the outset of the excavation, and not realizing what they were, they were not recorded at first.³⁸¹

Settlement ed. Trude Dothan and Baruch Brandl, *Qedem Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2010), 111.

³⁷⁸ For an overview of these sites, see Eliezer Oren, "The 'Ways of Horus' In North Sinai," in *Egypt, Israel, Sinai: Archaeological and Historical Relationships in the Biblical Period* ed. Anson Rainey (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1987). Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 108.

³⁷⁹ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 108.

³⁸⁰ Pirhya Beck and Moshe Kochavi, "A Dated Assemblage of the Late 13th Century BCE from the Egyptian Residency at Aphek " *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985). Mosheh Kokhavi and Miriam Tadmor, *Aphek in Canaan : The Egyptian Governor's Residence and Its Finds* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1990), xx.

³⁸¹ Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer : 1902-1905 and 1907-1909*, 435. Also mentioned in second, fourth and fifth quarterly report of the excavation of Gezer- PEFQSt (1903)

In one example, a particular lamp was not only unused, but had not been fired, while others showed signs of blackening. Sand and wood ashes were also found in two of the deposits, similar to examples from Tell el-Hesi, which Petrie noted were filled with fine earth. He also mentions examples with a kind of lime plaster smeared and presses into the cracks of lamps, perhaps as a form of waterproofing for a liquid offering.³⁸²

During the renewed excavations of Gezer by Hebrew Union College, five additional deposits were discovered. The first, in field I Stratum 5a (under floor 3009, near the western side wall 3011a) was an inverted bowl covering a lamp, and another bowl was found beside it. The second was an inverted bowl over a lamp at the junction of walls 25093 and 25084 under floor 25091. A third bowl-lamp deposit was found in field VI stratum 6b, near the granary area and also consisted of a lamp covered by a bowl. The fourth deposit consisted of two bowls, two lamps and a chalice which were found in Field VI to the east of wall 36009. The fifth and final deposit was found in field VI stratum 5b and was made up of five vessels: a bowl-lamp-bowl deposit, with two smaller bowls resting against its sides. This final group was found in a pit in the south-east corner of the "northwest house" at the base of wall 5053.³⁸³

Tel Miqne (Ekron)

Only two examples of bowl-lamp deposits have been found at Tel Miqne. The first was found near the south-east corner of the central hall of stratum V building 350, which the excavators date to the 11th century, and believe to be a palace or temple. It consisted of a classic bowl-lamp-bowl with circular decoration on the inside of both bowls, similar to types of decoration seen at Gezer. The second took the form of a bowl covering a lamp, and was found outside the southern wall of stratum VIB, building 351, which is dated to the 12th century BCE.³⁸⁴ Mazow groups these deposits with two similar deposits found under walls that utilized craters and in one instance contained fish bones.³⁸⁵ While Mazow associates deposits with new construction, Aja notes that the true bowl-lamp deposits were found next to walls and not beneath them, indicating they may have been placed there after the building had been completed and could have served a different purpose.³⁸⁶

³⁸² Ibid., 435-37.

³⁸³ William G. Dever, H. Darrell Lance, and G. Ernest Wright, *Gezer I: Preliminary Report of the 1964-66 Seasons* (Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College Biblical and Archaeological School, 1970), 23, 76, 90, 106. Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 118.

³⁸⁴ Trude Dothan, "Ekron of the Philistines, Part I: Where They Came from, How They Settled Down and the Place They Worshipped In," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16, no. 1 (1990): 29-30.

³⁸⁵ Laura Beth Mazow, "Competing Material Culture: Philistine Settlement at Tel Miqne-Ekron in the Early Iron Age" (University of Arizona, 2005), 444.

³⁸⁶ Aja, "Philistine Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age I", 384.

Beth Shemesh

At least five bowl-lamp deposits have been discovered at the Beth Shemesh. The first was a lamp covered by a bowl, which lay under the threshold of the entrance to building 86 of stratum IV, dating to the LB IIB. It is possible this deposit may have contained additional bowls and a lamp. The second, consisting of six bowls, two lamps and two chalices was found in locus 406 of stratum III. Unfortunately the relationships between the vessels are unspecified, however, the report mentions a lamp was found inside one of the bowls, and that some bowls were used to cover others. The third deposit was made up of a classic bowl-lamp-bowl. In room 118, two bowls and a chalice formed a fourth deposit. A fifth, consisting of three bowls, a chalice, and a lamp was found in the southeastern corner of Room 459 of Stratum III.³⁸⁷

Tel es-Safi

A number of bowl-lamp deposits have been discovered at Tel es-Safi in recent years, especially in area E, stratum E4, which has been dated to the end of the Late Bronze II. This stratum, which was excavated over seven seasons has three phases which include a large public building. The earliest phase (E4c) appears to be the LB IIA, consisting of fragmentary plaster floors, followed by main building 66323 in phase E4b. The building appears to be public in nature, the remains of which were uncovered in at least twelve squares, with an excavated extent of at least 12 x 15 meters. The plan revolves around a central courtyard (originally with 6 pillar bases) and a plastered floor along the western side.³⁸⁸

As of 2006, five bowl-lamp deposits have been found within the rooms of the large LB building that occupies the area, along with a cow skull, dagger, and complete jar that may have served ritual purposes.³⁸⁹ In Room 68023, a single lamp acted as a foundation deposit for the pillar bases, and a lamp placed in a bowl was

³⁸⁷ Elihu Grant, *Rumeileh: Being Ain Shems Excavations* vol. I, Biblical and Kindred Studies (Haverford, PA: Haverford College, 1931), 49. ———, *Rumeileh: Being Ain Shems Excavations* vol. II, Biblical and Kindred Studies (Haverford, PA: Haverford College, 1932), 22, ———, *Rumeileh: Being Ain Shems Excavations* vol. III, Biblical and Kindred Studies (Haverford, PA: Haverford College, 1934), 59. Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 113-14. For another possible deposit, see Elihu Grant, *Beth Shemesh (Palestine); Progress of the Haverford Archaeological Expedition* (Haverford, Pa: Biblical and Kindred Studies, 1929). Pl. 49.

³⁸⁸ Iitzhaq Shai, Joe Uziel, and Aren Maeir, "The Architecture and Stratigraphy of Area E: Strata E1-E5," in *Tell Es-Safi / Gath I: The 1996-2005 Seasons*, ed. Aaron Maeir, *Aegypten Und Altes Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming). The public is comparable to building 475 at Tel Batash where pillars were used to separate rooms, a feature of public buildings. The Safi building is comparable in size to the building at Ashkelon and uses the same stepped architecture, following the contours of the tell. Information courtesy of Aren Maeir and the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. Courtesy of Aren Maeir and the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project.

discovered adjacent to wall 60815. In Room 84507, a lamp laid into a bowl (84506) was found in the corner of Wall 57018 and Wall 84408, and a two bowls laid atop a lamp (94407) were found along Wall 57018 in the southwest corner of the room. An additional example was found in the north of the building, but the details are not included in the final report. Finally, Room 84010 contained a rare bowl covering three lamps (84003) in the southeast corner of the room. All in all, deposits at Safi appear to have been associated with the central courtyard, however, almost all of the rooms had at least one deposit.

Tell Zakariya ('Azeka)

The exact number of deposits found at Tell Zakariya is unknown, however, Bliss and Macalister describe at least one example near a wall foundation that consisted of a carinated bowl, containing a lamp covered by a bowl of equal diameter, then covered by another inverted bowl of wider diameter. Here the bottom carinated bowl was filled with fine earth, and the inner upper bowl was filled with compact soil. They note that in other deposits, ash replaced the fine soil.³⁹⁰

Tell Sandahanna (Maresha)

The exact number of deposits from Tell Sandahanna is also unknown, however, Bliss and Macalister make mention of a lamp found between two bowls at the site.³⁹¹

Lachish

At Lachish, eight examples of bowl-lamp deposits were found in two excavation areas. In Area S, Level VII, two bowl-lamp deposits were uncovered. The first was found against the western wall of room 3782 under the destroyed southern end of a bench or earlier wall. The deposit consisted of a classic bowl-lamp-bowl with perfectly aligned rims. The second, in locus 3757 consisted of a bowl with a lamp inside it, next to the foundation of the southern wall and its junction with another wall. A third bowl-lamp deposit was found on the lime floor of what may have been a courtyard near wall 1020 and consisted of two bowls, containing a lamp. In Level VI of Area S, a deposit was found in locus 3831 against the bottom course of the northern wall of hall 3612. While much of the wall was in the baulk, the visible portion indicates there may have been a doorway here. This deposit is comprised of five vessels: a bowl-lamp-bowl covered with another inverted bowl that matches and meets the circumference of the first bowl (enclosing

³⁹⁰ Frederick Jones Bliss, Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, and Richard Wunsch, *Excavations in Palestine During the Years 1898-1900* (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1902), 151-52. Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 112.

³⁹¹ Bliss, Macalister, and Wunsch, *Excavations in Palestine During the Years 1898-1900*, 151-52, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 112.

2 vessels). A final bowl is laid on end, enclosing the four vessels. Another bowl-lamp-bowl deposit was found here in the corner of square C8 as well.³⁹²

In Lachish's Area P, three deposits were found to the north east of the LB IIB temple. This area contained many wall fragments and patches of flooring contemporary with and slightly earlier than the temple itself. In locus 3383, a deposit consisting of six bowls and one cup-and-saucer was found 1.5 meters from a wall adjoining the northeast corner of the temple above a pit filled with broken pottery. Atop the cup-and-saucer was a bowl covered by another inverted bowl. Next to this group and touching it was a bowl with a smaller bowl inside it. Two other bowls were found in a fragmentary state, and their exact position is unknown. In Locus 3335, two deposits were found near the remnants of an LB wall. The first consisted of a lamp covered by a bowl with a hole in its base, then covered by another inverted bowl. It seems to have been buried next to the foundation when built. The second also consists of a lamp covered by a bowl found east of the same wall along the bottom course.³⁹³

In each instance the bowls and lamps are made of similar clay, and occasionally bear signs of soot. Sets of bowls appear almost identical and may have been made by the same potter. In some cases, the rims are painted red, and often have a small disk base. It also appears that the bases of some of the bowls from level VI had cracked and were sloppily repaired with coarser clay. This parallels Macalister's observation of lime plaster repairs at Gezer. Generally, a shift from low ring bases to flat disk bases was observed from Level VII to VI along with open bowls, which are present in the earlier, but absent in the latter.

Tell el-Hesi

At Tell el-Hesi, Petrie first encountered two bowl-lamp deposits near the south wall of his so called "Pilaster Building." Each consisted of a pair of bowls, one inverted atop the other.³⁹⁴ Several more deposits were found next to the foundations of walls City Sub IV and City IV in Bliss' later excavations. It is notable that in only one case was a deposit found under the foundation of the wall. Each consisted of a bowl lined with fine earth, containing a lamp, and covered by a second bowl.³⁹⁵

³⁹² Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "Lamp and Bowl Foundation Deposits in Areas P and S," 1147-48, Gabriel Barkay and David Ussishkin, "Area S: The Late Bronze Age Strata," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. David Ussishkin (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 363, 68, 72, 74-80, 401.

³⁹³ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "Lamp and Bowl Foundation Deposits in Areas P and S," 1148-49, David Ussishkin, "Area P: The Late Bronze Age Strata," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. David Ussishkin (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 202, 04.

³⁹⁴ William Matthew Flinders Petrie, *Tel El Hesi (Lachish)* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1891), 23, 34.

³⁹⁵ Frederick Jones Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities; or, Tell El Hesi Excavated* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund 1894), 84.

The plan and construction of this pilaster building itself is interesting: it consists of a central courtyard with two openings in each of its three sides. The walls were constructed of mudbrick laid over yellow sand, similar to construction practices known from Egypt. Similarly, Egyptian style doorjambs were apparently used in some of the entrances. According to Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, Bliss' later excavations showed that Petrie's building was actually the courtyard of another structure built in the same fashion. The architecture resembles the inner court of "governor's residencies" at Tel el-Far'ah (south) and buildings 1700 and 1500 at Beth Shean.³⁹⁶

Tell Jemmeh (Gerar)

Three lamp and bowl deposits were discovered during Petrie's excavations of building JF in stratum JK. Two were found next to the western wall of room JC. The first consisted of a bowl containing a lamp, covered by two additional bowls. The second consisted of a bowl with an inverted bowl on top of it. In the NW corner of room JD, a third deposit was found consisting of a bowl with a smaller bowl, containing a lamp, covered by an inverted bowl. Petrie specifically states the deposits held burning lamps, extinguished by the upper bowls and believes they were a replacement for child sacrifice.³⁹⁷ Over eighty sets of flint sickles were also found nearby.³⁹⁸ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni believe that while Petrie attributed these deposits to an earlier building, their position in relation to the level of nearby wall foundations probably means they were buried under the floors and date to the end of the Bronze age.³⁹⁹

Tel Sera (Tell es-Shari'a)

At Tel Sera, several stacked Egyptian-style bowls were found along with a cup-and-saucer bowl, in one corner of the Stratum IX "governor's residency."⁴⁰⁰ While the exact use of cup-and-saucer bowls is unknown, they are thought to have been a form of lamp or incense burner, and are generally found in Egyptian and southern Levantine cultic contexts.⁴⁰¹ In this case, it appears that a cup-and-saucer

³⁹⁶ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 110. Bliss, Macalister, and Wunsch, *Excavations in Palestine During the Years 1898-1900*, 151.

³⁹⁷ William Matthew Flinders Petrie, *Gerar* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1928), 6-7.

³⁹⁸ A large cache of flint blades was also found in close proximity to the bowl-lamp deposits discovered in grid 38 at Ashkelon.

³⁹⁹ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 110.

⁴⁰⁰ See Oren, "Ziglag: A Biblical City on the Edge of the Negev," 166, ———, "The "Ways of Horus" In North Sinai," 39-41.

⁴⁰¹ Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity : An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel, 1300-1100 B.C.E* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 147, Joe Uziel and Yuval Gadot, "The 'Cup-and-Saucer' Vessel: Function, Chronology, Distribution and Symbolism," *Israel Exploration Journal* 60, no. 1 (2010): 47-49.

bowl was substituted for the traditional lamp, a possible local variation on the regional practice.⁴⁰²

Pella

At Pella, seven bowl-lamp deposits were discovered in a single building from Area III. The first two were found under paving F23 and took the form of a classic bowl-lamp-bowl, and a rare bowl with two lamps. The only other instance of multiple lamps can be seen at Safi. The third, a bowl covering a lamp, was found in the courtyard of the building against wall F14. Under this wall, four additional deposits were discovered, three taking the form of a bowl covering a lamp, and one consisting of an upright bowl and lamp inside it.⁴⁰³

Six new deposits were discovered recently from trench XXXIIAA, three associated with the foundation trench of a large stone wall dating to the late 13th-12th century BCE.⁴⁰⁴ The structure is massive and appears to be public in nature, with a carefully stone-paved floor; however, its function has yet to be determined. An additional three deposits were discovered next to a wall flanking a six-meter wide pebble-paved courtyard. Each deposit contained at least one bowl and one lamp, although in two occasions, two bowls containing one lamp were found. Each deposit is also associated with fine grey ash that revealed little through flotation. In the opinion of the excavator, it is possible the ash may be made up of burnt bone. The bowls were made of a heavy brown fabric, and are either hemispherical in shape or low sharp carinated forms with a low ring foot. The lamps consist of standard open types that are quite shallow.

Tel Rehov

Recent excavations at Tel Rehov in area D have also revealed Bowl-Lamp deposits dating to the LB IIB. In the process of widening the section, new remains from previously discovered strata D-11 to D-1 (LB II - Iron Age IIA), were exposed. The earliest building remains in the enlarged part of the section dated to the twelfth century BCE in stratum D-7. Two bowl-lamp deposits were found in conjunction with the building, which was covered with a thick accumulation of brick debris. The local pottery is typical of the first half of the twelfth century BCE, although unlike nearby Beth-Shean, Egyptian forms at the site are rare.⁴⁰⁵

Vc. Interpretation of the Deposits and the Question of Foreign Influence

⁴⁰² see publication: Ziklag 2001

⁴⁰³ Anthony McNicoll, Robert H. Smith, and John Basil Hennessy, *Pella in Jordan I: An Interim Report on the Joint University of Sydney and the College of Wooster Excavations at Pella, 1979-1981* (Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1982), 56.

⁴⁰⁴ Bourke, Steven. Personal correspondence, April 15th, 2012

⁴⁰⁵ Amihai Mazar, "Tel Rehov," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 119(2007).

As the examples above illustrate, the laying of bowl-lamp deposits was a wide-ranging ritual practice across the southern Levant during the LB IIB. But how are we to understand the rather sudden appearance of such a unique practice across multiple sites? Classic explanations for the emergence and significance of bowl-lamp deposits typically fall along diffusionist lines, that is to say, the tradition is often accredited to an outside influence. According to Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "The appearance of lamp-and-bowl deposits in the period of growing Egyptian presence in Palestine – and the geographic area in which it was concentrated – implies Egyptian cultural influence expressed in the placing of foundation offerings." They go on to say that while the deposits cannot be defined as Egyptian per-se, they should be regarded as an "Egyptian inspired local Canaanite custom".⁴⁰⁶ In order to properly assess whether bowl-lamp foundations were the product of foreign influence or were an indigenous expression of Canaanite ritual practice, a closer look at similar traditions of Egypt itself is required.

Egyptian New Kingdom Foundation Rituals

Building foundation rituals were widely practiced across Egypt, and deposits associated with them come from almost every period of Egyptian history. A wide variety of objects were employed at different times, and in different locales. Some items, such as model mud-bricks, bovine sacrifices and combinations of grinders and grindstone remained constant over the course of 2000 years. Others items, such as faience devotional plaques, model tools, amulets and scarabs were subject to change and variability over time.⁴⁰⁷ In almost every case, precious items or items of intrinsic value were not included in the assemblage. Egyptian foundation deposits were also used in a variety of settings and contexts. They have been found in temples, forts, palaces, and tombs, often placed below the corners or angles of a structure. Despite the discovery of a great many foundation deposits in Egypt, there is only one known relief depicting the actual objects themselves, which comes from Denderah and dates to the 5th Dynasty. In it, the king kneels above a pit containing a goose and bovine head while holding two round offering jars in his hands. This ceremony is linked to the foundation of a temple and the installation of a god there, perhaps warranting the precise and special attention to detail.⁴⁰⁸

In terms of the rites and rituals that accompanied the placement of these deposits, little is known beyond the elite sphere where the king himself would participate in sanctifying and dedicating new temples. Examples of the royal foundation ritual exist from several periods, however, the most complete example can be seen at the temple of Edfu. Here, at least ten ritual events are clearly depicted in sequence, in which the king takes an active role in the building process. The activities represented include digging the temples foundation trench, molding the

⁴⁰⁶ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 124.

⁴⁰⁷ James Weinstein, "Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt," (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1973), xxiv.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

first brick and pouring sand back into the trench.⁴⁰⁹ These actions were purely symbolic, however, not unlike modern dedicatory rituals in which officials lay a building's cornerstone or overturn a token shovelful of soil. Other more ritualized stages include the laying of metal and stone plaques in the temple's corners, a purification ritual and a "stretching of the cord" ceremony. This ceremony invoked the assistance of the goddess Seshat, "Mistress of Builders" and was performed in three stages: in the first stage, the four corners of the building were fixed in place astronomically. In the second stage, the king would "stretch the cord" over the ground plan, and in the third, he would perform the act of "loosening the string". These rituals clearly reference the measuring and laying out of foundations, an expression of "ruler-as builder" that can also be found in Mesopotamian expressions of kingship.⁴¹⁰ The tools involved are also clearly linked to planning: a *w3w3t* is used in the final stage of the ceremony, a word etymologically linked both to *w3t* "cord" and *w33*, the verb "to plan".⁴¹¹

During the Old Kingdom, food in the form of grain or bovine sacrifices often appears as foundation deposits. In the Middle Kingdom, new innovations beginning in the 11th and 12th Dynasties lay the foundation (so to speak) for the later practices of the New Kingdom. Much of what we know comes from the mortuary complex of Mentuhotep in which deposits were found under the four corners of the pyramid, the temple platform, and some corners of the princesses' chapels. A wide variety of objects were recovered including models of saucers and pointed beer jars, small circular or conical loaves of bread, building tools and small model mudbricks containing inscribed plaques made of copper/bronze, alabaster or wood.⁴¹² For the first time, these objects carried inscriptions carrying the name of the King or high official who began construction of that building. The inscriptions, as well as the ceremonial molding of bricks by the pharaoh, persisted in Egyptian building rites from the Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period.⁴¹³

In the late 18th Dynasty, deposits become more elaborate and uniform. Like the 11th and 12th Dynasties, most objects are pottery vessels, alabaster ointment jars, model tools, food offerings and beads; however, scarabs, scaraboids, and amulets

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁴¹⁰ It has been suggested that to so-called "rod and ring" motif, ubiquitous in Mesopotamian royal iconography, is in fact a measuring staff and length of rope. See Jeremy A. Black, Anthony Green, and Tessa Rickards, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 152. It is known from the pictorial record that items played important roles in the Egyptian ceremony: the staves marked corners of the building while the cord measured the space in between. The legitimizing power of construction was well known to both Egyptian and Mesopotamian rulers. The Egyptian predynastic "scorpion macehead" in which the king wields a hoe, along with dedicatory statues of Gudea of Lagash holding blueprints of temple plans for example, provide an early and pertinent examples from both cultures.

⁴¹¹ Alexander Badawy, *Ancient Egyptian Architectural Design : A Study of the Harmonic System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 9.

⁴¹² Weinstein, "Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt," 34.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 41.; ———, "Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt," 13.

were added to the list.⁴¹⁴ New contexts that incorporated foundation deposits included statues, obelisks and palaces. In a foundation trench in the north palace at Malkata, forty or so model bowls and dishes were recovered, many labeled in hieratic on the inside with the names of varieties of bread, wine and beer.⁴¹⁵ The placement of deposits becomes increasingly important during the 18th Dynasty. In tombs of the Valley of the Kings, a series of five deposits were arranged in a square formation outside of the tomb's entrance. This practice may be linked to corner foundation deposits laid in temples or ceremonies relating to the sealing of the tomb. During the reign of Thutmosis III, a special niche was cut from a pit with many deposits, and contained models and other special items. By the 19th Dynasty, the presence of model tools in foundation deposits begins to drop, as does the quality of such items. The pottery included in the deposits is very basic and, by the time of Ramesses III, was often excluded altogether. Deposits during this time often involved an architectural component, and were encased in brick-lined pits which could be partitioned into sections. At the Ramesseum complex, two deposits were partitioned vertically, and a deposit from a funerary temple at Qurneh was divided into sections horizontally.⁴¹⁶

It is notable that very few Egyptian foundation deposits from the Ramesside period have been found outside of Egypt. Those that do exist, such as two from Gebel Barkal, are similar in form to those known from Egypt.⁴¹⁷ This, along with architectural similarities in the plans and construction of frontier outposts in Nubia and the Sinai, indicates that New Kingdom building practices did not differ substantially on the imperial periphery.⁴¹⁸ Given the longevity and general consistency found among Egyptian foundation deposits, we would expect a high degree of correlation between Egyptian deposits and those of LB IIB Canaan if the former served as a model for the later as Bunimovitz and Zimhoni propose. Few such parallels exist, however. They follow Dothan in tentatively drawing a parallel between a layer of sand found in a bowl from a deposit at Deir el-Balah and the Egyptian practice of building on sand foundations. While Macalister reported an ashy soil-like substance in some of the deposits from Gezer, its presence appears to be the exception rather than the rule, and its connection to Egyptian practices are far from clear.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁴ Weinstein, "Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt," 93.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 103. William C. Hayes, "Inscriptions from the Palace of Amenhotep III," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 10, no. 2 (1951): 89. One of the most elaborate examples from the 18th Dynasty comes from the temple of Horus of Miam at Aniba in lower Nubia. The fragmentary remains consist of eighty-eight miniature pottery vessels, and twenty-six model implements, all molded from clay. Small alabaster inscribed saucers may have also held green malachite for temple anointing.

⁴¹⁶ Weinstein, "Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt," 230-31.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 226.

⁴¹⁸ Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, 803-27.

⁴¹⁹ It should also be noted that, in addition to being a weak parallel, the use of clean sand in laying foundations is hardly exclusive to Egypt; from the Early Dynastic period on, Mesopotamian temples and sacred structures were often founded upon a thin layer of sand, including the later neo-

As the discussion above illustrates, Egyptian foundation deposits were radically different: they utilized a very different range of objects for a set of specific foundation ceremonies that have no parallels in the Canaanite bowl-lamp deposits of the southern Levant. As Bunimovitz and Zimhoni concede, it is interesting the deposits are found at the “Egyptian” forts of Bir el-‘Abd, Haruvit and Deir el-Balah where one would expect foundation deposits of the Egyptian variety.⁴²⁰ Egyptian style deposits, or evidence of them, have been found at Aphek⁴²¹ and at Beth Shean, an archetypal Egyptian “garrison” in the region. Miniature vessels and ornaments were found in the Level VII/VIII temple much more in keeping with Egyptian practice so much so that McGovern refers to Beth Shean as an Egyptian “island” in the midst of a Palestinian “sea.”⁴²² The fact that no bowl-lamp deposits were discovered at either site is notable,⁴²³ and would seem to support the idea that such deposits belong specifically to the Canaanite culture of the LB IIB.

Overall, the evidence indicates that a more complex dynamic is at play than the simple adaptation of Egyptian practices for Canaanite use. It also raises the question as to whether bowl-lamp deposits are related to foundation rituals, or perhaps another practice altogether. Before addressing these questions, however, other contemporary traditions from which this enigmatic practice may have drawn inspiration will be addressed.

Hittite, North Syrian and Mesopotamian Foundation Traditions

As in Egypt, hoards, offering and foundation deposits have a long and complex history in North Syria and Mesopotamia. At Tell Brak, ritual deposits containing precious objects and carved “eye-idols” were found in great numbers buried in pits within the 3rd millennium temple there.⁴²⁴ Examples of concealing valuables can be drawn from every period: precious items hidden in pits and vessels were found at the Early Dynastic palace of Mari, in the Akkadian palace of Tel Asmar, and at Ugarit. With the exception of Gudea of Lagash, whose cylinder inscriptions record foundation hymns granting limited insight into the process, inscriptions describing the building process and events leading up to it are almost non-existent prior to the second half of the second millennium BC.⁴²⁵

Babylonian temples of Gula, Ninurta and Ishtar of Agade. RS Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 15.

⁴²⁰ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, “Lamp-and-Bowl’ Foundation Deposits in Canaan,” 124.

⁴²¹ An Egyptian faience foundation plaque similar to those used in the dedication of Egyptian temples was found in a secondary context at the site, perhaps indicating an Egyptian temple had been constructed at the site. It is equally probable that the plaque made its way to the site by other means.

⁴²² James, McGovern, and Bonn, *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan : A Study of Levels VII and VIII*, 243.

⁴²³ Two caches of jewelry, gold and electrum ingots were discovered east of the two central column bases in the level V southern temple- both were found contained in pottery vessels, but it is unclear if they were sealed under the columns or deposited later.

⁴²⁴ Dominique Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 47.

⁴²⁵ Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 7.

Along the eastern Mediterranean coast, a series of forty deposits dating to the Middle Bronze Age were discovered at Byblos. Each contained an assortment of metal figurines, tools, weapons, jewelry and cultic items, most of which were sealed in ceramic jars topped by bowl-shaped lids.⁴²⁶ Similar items were found scattered on the floors of associated buildings, almost all of which appear to be cultic structures including the *Temple syrien* (Temple of Ba'alat Gebal), *Temple aux obelisques* (The Resheph temple), *Champ de offrandes*, and *Enceinte sacree*. Instead of offering or foundation deposits, however, Negbi and Moskowitz interpret these features as hordes from temple treasuries, buried for safekeeping in advance of the disaster that struck Byblos at the end of the 18th century BC.⁴²⁷

This interpretation, while attractive, appears unlikely given some of the deposits' more interesting characteristics. In addition to the fact that they were recorded at multiple elevations in each area, indicating extended use over time, in some cases they appear to have been intentionally dug into the earlier strata of the site. In the case of the *temple syrien*, several deposits were dug down into the founding layers of clean sand from the Early Bronze Age temple that preceded the Middle Bronze rebuild. Deposits 2000 and 2064 for example, discovered just outside the structure, were sunk into a massive block also dating to the Early Bronze Age, which was perhaps used as an altar.⁴²⁸ In the *temple aux obelisques* deposit 14840 was similarly sunk into an Early Bronze Age threshold. Deposits 14433, 15889, and 15979, while found leaning against the walls of the Middle Bronze temple and covered with stones, penetrated down to a column base and pilaster from the Early Bronze temple as well.⁴²⁹

While Negbi and Moskowitz note the objects contained within these deposits were constructed from precious materials using a high degree of craftsmanship and were no doubt valuable, the idea they may have been a ritual offering (as opposed to a hoard) is supported in that a secondary function of such offerings was often to take such valuable items out of circulation. In her work on hoards and deposits in Bronze Age Mesopotamia, Bjorkman draws a distinction between the two on the basis of retrieval: hoards are utilitarian in nature holding objects for later retrieval, whereas foundation deposits and others are not, given their intended permanence.⁴³⁰ While there undoubtedly would have been some blurring between

⁴²⁶ See Pierre Montet, *Byblos Et L'egypte : Quatre Campagnes De Fouilles a Gebeil 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924* (Paris: Geuthner, 1929), pl. LX. for a representative example.

⁴²⁷ O Negbi and S Moskowitz, "The 'Foundation Deposits' or 'Offering Deposits' of Byblos," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 184 (1966): 21.

⁴²⁸ Maurice Dunand, *Fouilles De Byblos: 1926-1932*, vol. I (Paris: Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1939), 83-85., ———, *Fouilles De Byblos: 1933-1938*, vol. II (Paris: Libraire d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1954), 346.

⁴²⁹ Dunand, *Fouilles De Byblos: 1933-1938*, fig. 1007. Also see deposit 15121 (———, *Fouilles De Byblos: 1933-1938*, 741, fig. 67.) which was found under the paving stones of the Middle Bronze procella.

⁴³⁰ Judith Kingston Bjorkman, "Hoards and Deposits in Bronze Age Mesopotamia" (University of Pennsylvania, 1994), 28.

these categories in antiquity, the fact that these deposits were interred at different points over a long period of time and contained primarily non-utilitarian objects fits Bjorkman's latter category.

Even more interesting is the consistent incorporation of previous Early Bronze Age architectural elements into the deposits. Creators of the Byblos deposits apparently went to great lengths to dig down and connect with elements from the earlier temple. The significance of such an act would seem to be an attempt to establish a symbolic link with the past, in turn sanctifying and legitimizing the sacred space of the present. This "knitting" of the past and present is important to understanding the reuse of sacred space. Indeed, the only true building ritual text we have from Mesopotamia deals with this very issue.⁴³¹ In the event a temple's walls fell into ruin, protocol dictated that a brick was to be removed from the old temple and lamentations and offerings were to be made to it until demolition was complete and new foundations had been laid.

As in Egypt, the establishment of new public structures in northern Syria and Mesopotamia was a highly politicized activity. In choosing the location for a temple, shrine or sacred space, the builder was faced with an initial choice of building on either previously occupied or unoccupied land. Either may be attractive depending on a builder's aims and prerogatives. For example, Tukulti-Ninurta II of Assyria sought to establish Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta "where no house or (other) dwelling was, no mound or earth was piled up, no bricks had (ever) been laid."⁴³² Conversely, later Neo-Babylonian kings like Nabonidus went to great lengths to build directly upon the foundations of earlier temples, even competing with their predecessors to establish their works upon the oldest foundations possible.⁴³³ These intentions were often made explicitly clear on the foundation deposits themselves, taking the form of inscribed "foundation pegs" or tablets. Sargon II wrote that he inscribed his name upon tablets of gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, lapis lazuli and alabaster which were deposited into the foundations of Khorsabad, and indeed, tablets of gold, copper, silver, lead and magnesite were found under the walls of the city.⁴³⁴

Two Hittite texts from Bogazkoy in their description of the rituals for founding a temple give some insight into the use of pegs as a foundation deposit. They reveal the need to symbolically anchor the structure into the earth. The officiant is directed to deposit several sets of objects under the house, among them, a one-mina sheet of copper, four bronze pegs, and one small iron hammer. While anchoring the copper to the earth with the pegs and hammer, he is to say: "Just as this copper is secured, (as) moreover it is firm, even so let this temple be secure! Let

⁴³¹ F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1921), 9, Obv. 1-2, 13-16. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Appendix A, No. 43.

⁴³² See *KAH*, 2, No. 60, 95-97; *CAD*, E, 188b. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Appendix A, No. 12.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

it be firm upon the dark earth!"⁴³⁵ If, in this case, the copper sheet represents the area of the building, then the pegs anchoring the corners can be seen as being quite similar to other deposits found in the corners of rooms.⁴³⁶

In addition to tablets and pegs, bowls figured prominently in many foundation deposits. At the Early Dynastic cemetery at Ur, pits were dug at several points under walls and in the shafts of royal tombs and lined with mats. Food offerings were placed within ceramic containers that were then, in turn, covered with large, ribbed "Bell" jars.⁴³⁷ Evidence of building deposits is rare in Assyria and Kassite Babylonia. The examples we do have, such as a deposit of the Middle Assyrian King Adad-Nirari, took the form of inscribed tablets indicating the patron of the work done and were deposited within recesses of the structure's mudbrick foundation. A notable later adaptation of this practice, however, was observed at Assur in the northwest corner of Shalmaneser III's "Binnenhaken." Here, a gold tablet from Shalmaneser I and two silver tablets from Tukulti-Ninurta I were discovered in a sand foundation bedding within an upright bowl sunk into the ground. A second inverted bowl was placed atop the first, and the two were then apparently laced together via holes drilled through their rims. This deposit was then covered with a larger bowl, and the whole installation was buried.⁴³⁸ In this case, the role of the bowls appears to have been purely functional, serving to creating a distinct space for the deposits and a barrier from the surrounding elements. While removed geographically and temporally from Late Bronze Age Canaan, the parallels are striking, and the possibility of functional similarities should be taken into account.

There are also a number of objects with building or standard inscriptions from the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods identified as "bowls" in the British Museum. According to Ellis, however, these are not bowls but are the rounded ends of *sikkatu* foundation pegs.⁴³⁹ The museum's "Aramaic incantation bowls" are true bowls, however, excavated by Layard at Babylon and Nippur. At Nippur, many examples were found in the ruins of houses and the inscribed texts seem to imply they were placed at the four corners of the house.⁴⁴⁰ Each was inscribed with magical texts for the purpose of dispelling or in rare cases invoking the influence of spirits. In most cases the bowls were discovered buried upside-down, often in pairs with one inverted atop the other. While the very late date (7-8th centuries CE) precludes any real connection with the Canaanite deposits, it is interesting to note

⁴³⁵ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 356.

⁴³⁶ Ellis has made this argument in comparing the ritual to the Mesopotamian practice of laying "peg" deposits. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 72.

⁴³⁷ Leonard Woolley, "The Excavations at Ur 1925-1926," *American Journal of Archaeology* 6 (1926): 397.

⁴³⁸ Walter Andrae, *Die Jungeren Ishtar-Tempel in Assur* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935), 51. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 97-98.

⁴³⁹ Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 124.

⁴⁴⁰ James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1913), 26-29, 40-41 and Nos. 13 and 28. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 125.

the similarities in practice and the potential for alternative explanations of function and meaning.

In summary, there are a great many examples from the ancient Near East in which the composition and placement of deposits provide strong parallels with the deposits found in LB IIB Canaan. While general functional and ideological similarities between the practices may exist, as with Egypt there is no indication that the Canaanite examples evolved or were adapted from a specific Hittite, Syrian or Mesopotamian model. It is interesting to note that while it is clear bowl-lamp deposits appear to have been a unique, indigenous phenomenon in the LB IIB, the parallels with Near Eastern practices far outweigh those with Egypt. This again illustrates the potential pitfalls of acculturation and cultural diffusionism when applied under the assumption of Egyptian hegemony in the region.

Vd. Comparative Analysis

If we abandon the simple explanation that bowl-lamp deposits, like other changes in LB IIB Canaanite material culture and practice, emerged through acculturation and outside influence, how are we to understand their function and meaning? A comparative analysis of all known examples, including their context, orientation, composition as well as their distribution among and within specific sites should shed some light on the matter. It is unfortunate that in many cases, the exact number, location and composition of bowl-lamp deposits at a given site were not recorded by the excavator. In the analysis that follows, and in the interests of providing a conservative estimate of the total number of deposits, when “several” deposits have been mentioned in a report with no additional details, I have interpreted this to mean “more than two” and for the purposes of the statistical analysis that follows, recorded the number at three.

An additional question arises with complex deposits that are placed at the same time and in close proximity to one another. How are we to know the full extent of a bowl-lamp deposit? In the cases of Gezer, Beth Shemesh and Ashkelon, how are we to differentiate between a single large deposit and multiple smaller ones next to one another? To address this question, I have reduced the unit of measurement to the lowest common denominator. Given central positioning and an overwhelming majority of deposits containing a single lamp, and extremely rare examples of multiple lamps, it is not unreasonable to make the lamp our primary unit of division. It is clear from examples at Ashkelon and Safi that a single lamp could act as a foundation deposit, although admittedly the numbers of such deposits are complicated by the fact that their ritual function may not have been immediately apparent to the excavators. The primacy and centrality of the lamp in bowl-lamp deposits is further supported by the fact that while the number and variation of associated vessels varies, in only a small percentage of examples is a lamp not present. In four individual cases, a stand (Gezer), cup and saucer (Lachish and Tel Sera) and chalice (Beth Shemesh) appear to have been used in the place of a lamp,

but given that each could arguably fulfill the same function as a lamp, it appears they are acting as a proxy, with the same conceptual idea in mind.

If we include these four examples, the only remaining exceptions to the lamp-centrality rule consist of examples where two bowls were buried, one covering the other. These examples are very rare, and account for less than 4% of the assemblage. In the remaining 96% we see several variations; however, each is oriented around a single lamp. This pattern suggests that complex examples where several bowl-lamp deposits were buried next to one another, and most likely at the same time, can be differentiated by the number and position of lamps present. The seemingly complex deposits with multiple bowl-lamp combinations found side by side at Gezer and Ashkelon should therefore not be viewed as single large deposits, but can be divided into smaller units. In each case, these smaller units are paralleled in deposits elsewhere, supporting this idea.

With the lamp-centrality principle established, the total corpus of deposits comes to at least ninety-eight unique examples from eighteen different sites, with many more unaccounted for. In the comparative analysis that follows, deposits have been coded to take vessel type, order, number and orientation into account. Bowls are denoted as “b” with inverted bowls listed as “d”. Lamps are similarly denoted “l”, stands “s”, chalices “ch” and cup-and-saucer vessels “cs”. The order of stacked vessels is listed from top to bottom, with associated vessels (i.e. a bowl clasped to the side of a deposit, or a vessel laid next to it) separated by a “ / .” Thus, a deposit that consists of a lamp within a bowl, covered by an inverted bowl, and clasped by a third bowl, is recorded as: “dlb/b.”

In order to test the idea that order and orientation of the vessels may have been less important than the actual number of vessels, the typology may also be coded by numerical groups. Those proposed in this study are labeled “basic” (1-2 vessels) “simple” (3 vessels) “average” (4 vessels) and “complex” (5 or more vessels). These groups have been color-coded on the graph below, as have groups that involved additional vessel types (stands, chalices and cup-and-saucer vessels) in order to account for any potential significance therein. These cross-cutting divisions allow for a greater degree of control in determining if number or use of an additional vessel type was culturally significant. The results are tabulated by type, grouping, number and site in figure 45.

Ve. Interpretation and Conclusions

Interpreting the data above, which includes new material from the sites of Ashkelon, Tel es-Safi, and Rehov, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Site Distribution

In their analysis of bowl-lamp deposits, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni observe that the majority of sites where they have been found are scattered along the coastal

plane, in the Yarkon basin, Shephelah and Western Negev with negligible examples coming from North Sinai and the Jordan Valley. This pattern remains fairly constant with the addition of Rehov in the Jordan valley, and Ashkelon and Safi, which are located in the relative center of the previously known distribution. Both Bunimovitz and Zimhoni attribute this pattern to the Via Maris and Via Horus, two trade routes utilized by the Egyptians along the Canaanite coast and up the Jordan Valley respectively, in keeping with their theory of an ultimate Egyptian origin for the practice.

The addition of Ashkelon, with its proliferation of bowl-lamp deposits, highlights an alternative perspective. On closer examination, sites in which bowl-lamp deposits have been found are not necessarily connected via North-South running trade routes, but instead appear linked from east to west via a series of river drainages running from the hill country to the coast. Deir al Balah, Jemmeh and Tel Sera link to the Besor river drainage and can be thought of as an independent group. Likewise, Ashkelon, Hesi, Lachish, and Tel Sandahanna comprise a second group to the north. Gezer, Safi, Ekron, Beth Shemesh, and Azekah, while lacking a coastal site (for the moment) share a drainage, as do Tel Gerisa and Aphek to the North.

It would seem that the distribution of bowl-lamp deposits has just as much to do with access to the coast via drainages as with north-south trade routes. This is the case in Sinai, and the examples coming from the northern Jordan Valley would have had access to the coast via the Jezreel valley and Akko plain. The absence of deposits at Megiddo complicates this theory, in that the site served as a point of articulation between the coast and sites such as Rehov and Pella on the edges of the Jordan valley. At nearby Beth Shean, the absence of bowl-lamp deposits is also notable, and warrants further investigation. It has been suggested that deposits at Beth Shean may not have been recognized and recorded during excavation, a possible explanation for the lack of deposits at Megiddo.⁴⁴¹ In either case, it is difficult to argue from absence, and the possibility of bowl-lamp deposits at both sites cannot be ruled out.

In investigating type-variety per site, it is interesting to note that the number of types increases in each site proportionally to the number of deposits discovered. That is to say, that while the practice is spread over a very wide area, it is remarkably consistent overall. Common types are repeated at multiple sites, and in similar percentages. The most popular by far, is the basic bowl-lamp-bowl deposit and other groupings of three, which comprise on average one third of the types at each site, and 20% of the entire assemblage. That said, some evidence for regional variation also exists. At Beth Shemesh for example, the systematic addition of a chalice to deposits may speak to a form of local preference, or additional steps in the ritual process. At Pella, a decided preference for simple bowl-lamp deposits can be seen, and the use of stands is exclusive to Gezer. Likewise, chalices took the place of

⁴⁴¹ Bunimovitz and Zimhoni, "'Lamp-and-Bowl' Foundation Deposits in Canaan," 124.

bowls in the grid 50 building at Ashkelon. While it remains to be seen whether regional variation by drainage can be demonstrated, the existence of local preference appears to be well attested.

Intra-site Distribution:

In his Gezer report, Macalister notes that the deposits are almost all placed either in the corner of rooms, or under the thresholds of doorways. This placement pattern has been the common rule of thumb, echoed by Bunimovitz, Zimhoni and others, and is key to the interpretation of bowl-lamp deposits as foundation deposits. Macalister notes in his report, however, that several of the deposits he encountered were found in the middle of the room and not along the walls or corners. He explained these exceptions to the rule as the result of ruined walls that once covered them and were removed without a trace. In addition to the fact that this is a highly unlikely scenario, new examples from Safi and Ashkelon show us that bowl-lamp deposits laid in the middle of rooms are more common than originally thought. A similar placement in the center of a room is present at Tel Jemmeh, however, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni dismiss it as an exception to the rule.

This practice, now known from at multiple sites, has serious implications for the identification of bowl-lamp deposits as foundation deposits. In the construction sequence of buildings from the LB IIB southern Levant, foundation trenches were first dug into the earth and laid with stone or mudbrick upon which the walls would be laid. For a deposit to be placed in the middle of a room, the walls would already have to be in existence, calling the sequence of events into serious question. This fact, in conjunction with Macalister's observation that the vast majority of deposits at Gezer (as at Ashkelon and elsewhere) were not laid under the building's foundation, but are in fact beside it, against the inner face of the wall, raises the question as to whether or not this is indeed a ritual practice related to the foundation of a building. Given this, and the varying strata in which such deposits have been found, a more likely scenario is that the majority of the deposits were laid sometime after the building's foundation. The regular replastering of floors, a practice well known in antiquity, would have easily obscured earlier deposits cut into it. Indeed the laying of such deposits may have even been related to this very practice.

In comparing examples from eighteen sites, deposit locations within a given structure appear not to be oriented by way of cardinal direction, nor by way of the direction of the spout of the lamp. Deposits were found along different walls and corners, and lamps pointed in sufficiently random directions to indicate that their orientation was not culturally significant. Interestingly, however, a hitherto unattested pattern has come to light with the addition of new examples from Safi, Ashkelon and Pella. At these sites, as well as the sites of Gezer and Tell el-Hesi, a distinct pattern of bowl-lamp "clustering" within a particular structure or around a building's central courtyard is clearly apparent. The fact that these deposits are often associated with large, public buildings like the one at Pella has been noted; however, their placement within these buildings has not been taken into account. It

now appears that the laying of bowl-lamp deposits was not a general Canaanite building practice as previously thought, but may be related to a specific ritual function played by the rooms and courtyards containing such deposits. Indeed, in addition to the sites already mentioned, deposits from Lachish, Ekron and Jemmeh have been found either in or in close proximity to known shrines/temples, so the association is not unreasonable.

Another commonly touted aspect of bowl-lamp deposits echoed by Stager Bunimovitz, Zimhoni and others is that the lamps show no signs of having been used. It is unclear how this fact was established, as Petrie specifically mentions burnt examples from Jemmeh, and Bliss and Macallister note the presence of soot and ash in deposits from Lachish and Tell Zakariya. Recent examples of burnt lamps from Safi and Ashkelon provide confirmation that at least some lamps were used at some point prior to their interment, opening the possibility that burning of the lamp may have played a part in the interment ceremony. While that remains a possibility, it seems likely that the lamp played a different ideological role in the deposit, and that its use or disuse prior to interment may not have been important.

Function and Interpretation

The context and intra-site analysis of bowl-lamp deposits has raised the question as to whether their nature was related to the foundation of a building, or perhaps another devotional or commemorative practice. Weinstein defines foundation deposits as a votive offering placed in or beneath the foundations of a building or in its vicinity at the time of its founding. As such, votive offerings inserted in or beneath the structure after its dedication do not qualify as true foundation deposits.⁴⁴² In the case of the deposits from the LB IIB southern Levant, we have seen ample evidence to suggest that they were laid at some point after the building's foundation.

Petrie was the first to propose a connection to the foundation of a building, with McAlister expanding the theory to explain them as an alternative to child sacrifice. This theory was based on Macalister's excavations of earlier periods at Gezer, which revealed several infant burials interned in jars under the floors and foundations of houses. Similar burials dating to the Middle Bronze Age have been found at other sites as well. On the basis of a medical examination showing the skeletons were not stillborn⁴⁴³, McAlister concluded the infants were sacrificial victims, killed to commemorate and sanctify the construction of a new building.

In each case, however, there is no supporting evidence for this conclusion, and given the high rate of infant mortality in the ancient world, a specific burial practice seems the more logical explanation. Infant jar burials are known from Mesopotamia as early as the Ubaid and contemporary examples have been

⁴⁴² Weinstein, "Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt," xix.

⁴⁴³ The methods used to arrive at this conclusion are unclear in the report.

discovered in Cyprus, as well.⁴⁴⁴ What is more, many of the Middle Bronze age infant burials were accompanied by grave goods, raising doubts as to whether they were killed as sacrificial victims. In one case, several bowls, lamps and an assemblage of ten small foil figures cut from bronze and silver and four tiny silver bowls were discovered.⁴⁴⁵ Macalister interpreted these figures as “models” of infant sacrifice, and as such, he saw this deposit as the key link between the practice of “infant sacrifice” and later “lamp and bowl groups/deposits”. This explanation for the practice has been largely dismissed, and may have been influenced by the biblical account of Canaanite child sacrifice. To date, there is no hard evidence that child sacrifice was ever practiced in Canaanite culture. The idea of the bowl-lamp deposit as a foundation deposit, however, remains the most widely accepted explanation today.

In conclusion, there appears to be little reason to equate bowl-lamp deposits with “foundation” deposits. Evidence from the sites detailed above indicates that bowl-lamp deposits were interred at different times after a structure was already complete, and most likely relate to a specific and ongoing devotional practice. The deposits may mark a significant event in the life of the devotee, such as birth or death in the family, or could be other individual or collective expressions of piety, accompanied by rituals and ceremonies now lost to us. The idea of a devotional explanation for the deposits is further supported by their centralized intra-site distribution, mainly clustered in the courtyards of one or two specific buildings. It seems probable these courtyards served a unique ritual purpose, one not indicated by a temple plan or architecture, but specifically by the activities that were carried out therein. Lamps were often found in LB IIB burials, sometimes with such regularity at sites like Tel es Sa’idiyeh that they may have formed a part of the burial ceremony. In light of this fact a connection with burial or the commemoration of the dead may be a more plausible explanation for the function of bowl-lamp deposits.⁴⁴⁶

Whether this practice was intended to connect with the past in the way the deposits at Byblos appear to have done is unknown, however, the intentional burial of a hidden deposit remains a highly individualized act, in that it commits the objects in question solely to the memories of those involved with the process. In this way, such practices differ substantially from all other forms of worship. It is clear the vessels themselves played one role or another in the ceremony, and perhaps their interment may be a form of ritual disposal. While much new evidence has emerged since the time of Petrie, Bliss, and Macalister, in many ways the bowl-lamp deposit remains enigmatic and intriguing. Regardless of their exact function and meaning, the evidences strongly suggests that the practice of laying bowl-lamp

⁴⁴⁴Richard F. S. Starr and Nuzi; *Report on the Excavation at Yorgan Tapa near Kirkuk, Iraq*, vol. I (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937), 286. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 39.

⁴⁴⁵ Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer : 1902-1905 and 1907-1909*, 434.

⁴⁴⁶ Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, 72-73, Green, "Ritual and Social Structure in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Southern Levant : The Cemetery at Tell Es-Saidiyeh, Jordan", 232.

deposits did not derive from direct Egyptian, Hittite, or Mesopotamian influence, but instead was a uniquely Canaanite expression of ritual practice.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

Via. Conclusions

The goal of this study has been to achieve a better understanding of changes that occur in the archaeological record of the LB IIB southern Levant, as well as the driving forces behind them. Prior approaches to the region and period have typically relied on theoretical models of acculturation, elite-emulation and center-periphery theory to explain significant shifts in Canaanite material culture during this time. I have argued that while such approaches can be useful in explaining some aspects of culture-contact, each assumes the existence of dominant core societies and passive peripheries engaged in a unidirectional flow of power and influence. While these approaches are correct in asserting that cross-cultural interactions are structured in part by factors including power relations, degrees of cultural complexity, and environment, I have argued that they only account for part of the dynamic process of culture-change, and that the results of these interactions are equally contingent on local choices, prerogatives and constraints. With that in mind, this study re-situates the process of culture-change at the intersection of external influences and the application of local agency with the aim of re-evaluating changes in the material culture of the LB IIB southern Levant.

In order to explore these questions, ritual activity has served as the basis of inquiry, in light of its general resistance to change in situations of culture contact, and the heightened socio-political significance of changes that do occur. I have argued that when viewed as a form of social practice, ritual activity is well suited for the task, in that it engages with multiple levels of community. These include individual, site-specific and regional conceptions of practice that are accessible through the archaeological record. Three specific forms of ritual activity have been examined in this study: temple rituals, mortuary practice and ritual deposits. These rituals cross-cut the most public and private of settings, and taken together, help illuminate the intersection between local practice, regional conceptions, and cross-cultural contact. In doing so they effectively bridge the gap between agency and the structural conditions within which it operates. Abandoning previous typological approaches that categorize and ascribe ethnic identity on the basis of singular and potentially arbitrary formal characteristics, the evidence for each has been reanalyzed using a contextual approach that takes formal, functional and ideological factors into account.

In the paragraphs that follow, the results of these individual inquiries are summarized and the final regional distributions of these three differing yet interrelated forms of ritual activity are compared. The intersecting patterns of ritual behavior are then discussed, providing insight into both unique local practices and regional interconnections between the dynamic, heterogeneous polities of the LB IIB southern Levant.

Temples and Cultic Assemblages

In this chapter, traditional typologies based almost exclusively on architectural ground-plan were expanded upon by shifting the emphasis from temple forms to the host of activities that took place within them. This was achieved by contextualizing both ritual installations and cultic assemblages and by observing their overlapping local and regional distributions. In doing so, a number of new observations could be made on ritual activity as well as on the function of architectural elements, installations and objects from the temples .

A striking number of functional similarities were found to crosscut traditional formal typologies. LB IIB temples including Mevorakh, Lachish Fosse III, Hazor Area H, Lachish Area P, and Beth Shean VII were found to share a number of key elements such as stepped altars, secondary altars, sunken store-jars, ancillary storage areas, cupboard niches, and draping pillars. Most striking is the distinct and radical shift in the conceptual design of the cella itself beginning at the end of LB IIA and cumulating in the LB IIB. This shift takes the form of an elevated cella, now reached by a set of “stairs” for the first time, at the majority of LB IIB sites. The increased elevation and steps almost certainly denote a shift in ritual practice, perhaps in relation to the elevation of a cult statue with offerings placed on the steps below, maximizing space while making explicit the visibility and proximity of offerings to the divine explicit. What is more, the placement of these elements with regard to one another is generally consistent. While not completely present in each unique example, these crosscutting parallels transcend the bounds of traditional formal typologies, and reveal key functional similarities, allowing for a fairly detailed “ideal” notion of what an LB IIB Canaanite temple should embody.

The idea of an underlying regional conception in how a temple should function is further supported by the assemblages of objects found within each temple. These objects, when categorized according to the intersecting spheres of practice they occupied in antiquity, show a remarkable degree of regularity from site to site. The analysis highlights the use of cymbals, snake figurines, masks, and the offering of weapons, jewelry and libations, which cross-cut traditional typologies and demonstrate similarities in patterns of use. At the same time, degrees of differentiation in how those ideas, objects and installations were executed speak to local agency and the unique constraints and prerogatives of each community. In this way, temples were able to adjust, accommodating the needs of the increasingly diverse population that characterized the LB IIB southern Levant.

Burial Patterns

In this chapter new modes of burial and the practices associated with them in the LB IIB southern Levant were considered, along with potential influences, factors and explanations for their emergence. Again, emphasis was shifted from the formal properties often used to typologize or ascribe ethnicity to functional and ideological

properties relating to mortuary ritual. This allowed new practices that cross-cut traditional typologies in the LB IIB to be identified.

Across the wide spectrum of mortuary activity, there is a notable shift away from communal burial and a new emphasis on the differentiation and preservation of the integrity of the individual, or in cases, small groups of individuals that may have been family units. This phenomenon can be seen in the development of carved burial niches, benches and loculi, as well as in individual pit burials, and “container burials” which used storage jars, double-pithoi or anthropoid coffins to delineate the space around the deceased, shielding them from their surroundings. While separated on the basis of form in prior typologies, it is argued here that form is only one of several interrelated aspects of mortuary ritual, and may have had more to do with locally available resources than foreign influence or ethnic attribution. While individual aspects of the mortuary program, such as anthropoid coffins or libation installations may have been partially inspired by foreign influences like Egypt and Ugarit, they not only were highly modified and re-contextualized for Canaanite purposes, but are only one of many integrated aspects of the mortuary assemblage and ritual process.

Additionally, burials of the LB IIB often include a diverse yet regionally consistent set of cosmopolitan objects, as well as common ritual installations most likely linked to the pouring of libations for the dead. These installations, consisting of jar and dipper juglet placed at the head or foot of a burial and covered with a bowl, are particularly significant, in that they cross-cut previous typologies showing connections in practice and underlying systems of meaning.

“Bowl-Lamp” Deposits

Drawing on new material from the sites of Ashkelon, Tel es-Safi, Rehov and Pella, this chapter reevaluated examples of Canaanite “bowl-lamp” deposits taking into account vessel type, number and orientation as well as their intra- and inter-site distribution. The results show remarkable consistency in the practice, with common types repeated at multiple sites, and in similar percentages. While the number and orientation of vessels vary widely, it is clear that a single lamp served as the focal point of each deposit, the prior use or orientation of which appears not to have been significant in antiquity.

Citing vast differences in the foundation rituals from Egypt, Hatti and Mesopotamia, this chapter argued against the common idea that the practice is inspired by or imported from a neighboring foreign power. Comparisons with the traditions of neighboring powers, as well between southern Levantine sites where they occur, show the practice was highly standardized, unique, and has no known parallels elsewhere. On this basis, it is argued that bowl-lamp deposits appear to have been a purely Canaanite innovation. On the basis of their intra-site distribution, the chapter calls the deposit’s identification as “foundation deposits” into question, and suggests they may have served a different ritual function.

Evidence indicates bowl-lamp deposits could be laid at different times after a structure was already complete, and most likely relate to a specific and ongoing devotional practice. The deposits may mark a significant event in the life of the devotee such as a birth or death in the family, or may be individual or collective expressions of piety, accompanied by rituals and ceremonies now lost to us.

The idea of a devotional explanation for the deposits is further supported by the discovery that such deposits were not a uniform part of the building process, but were clustered in the courtyards of one or two specific buildings. It seems probable these courtyards served a unique ritual purpose, one not indicated by a temple plan or architecture, but specifically by the activities that were carried out there. Evidence for the practice has been found at eighteen sites and is remarkably consistent, focusing primarily on a lamp and one to three associated bowls. Local variations have also been discovered at particular sites, highlighting local agency in the context of broader regional practice.

Regional Distributions and Implications for Future Research

In keeping with the theory of an ultimate Egyptian origin for changes in Canaanite material culture and practice during the LB IIB, scholars such as Gonen, Bunimovitz and Zimhoni have linked changes in Canaanite material culture to the Via Maris and Via Horus, two trade routes utilized by the Egyptians along the Canaanite coast and up the Jordan Valley. The distribution patterns presented by this study call this theory into question. With the addition of new evidence from Ashkelon, Safi, Rehov and Pella it can be argued that the distribution of bowl-lamp deposits may have more to do with access to the coast via drainages than with north-south trade routes, at least in the south. This pattern would seem to support Sugerman's contention that the dendritic east-west networks that characterized the Middle Bronze Age southern Levant remained intact during the Late Bronze Age. It also supports the idea that bowl-lamp deposits were an entirely Canaanite development, and were independent of foreign influence transmitted along well established trade routes. A similar case may be made when looking at the distribution of burials across the LB IIB southern Levant. The fact that anthropoid coffin burials are found far to the east of the Via Maris and Jordan Valley does not extend the boundaries of Egyptian suzerainty and influence, but instead highlights the fact that such burials, while borrowing and recontextualizing some Egyptian elements, constitute a highly unique and regional practice.

Overall, the regional distributions of the three forms of ritual activity examined in this study display a remarkable degree of intersecting uniformity across the LB IIB southern Levant. We have seen that temples, their cultic assemblages and installations had more in common with one another than not, that increasingly individualized burial practices took different forms while serving the same protective and sustaining functions, and that while the composition of Canaanite bowl-lamp deposits greatly varied, the percentages of those variations across multiple sites was largely uniform. The overlapping of these patterns of

practice indicates shared emic notions of what temple worship, burial and the laying of bowl-lamp deposits entail, indicating a higher level of cultural cohesion in the LB IIB than has been previously assumed.

At the same time, this study has shown that degrees of local variation in each ritual practice exist as well. Temples of the LB IIB, while adhering to common functional traits particular to the period, were highly idiosyncratic structures that were built to suit local needs and maintained elements from previous iterations. While the majority of bowl-lamp deposits consist of a lamp and two bowls, at Beth Shemesh, the systematic addition of a chalice to deposits may speak to a form of local preference, or additional steps in the ritual process. Anthropoid coffins, double pithos/jar burials and cist tombs, while serving the same ritual functions, differ in their method of delineating space around the deceased. Given the overlapping distributions of these burial types that were undifferentiated in the cemeteries they shared, it seems the use of a cist tomb, pithos or anthropoid coffin in burial had more to do with individual prerogatives and resources on hand than with ethnicity or cultural affiliation.

Returning to the question of how we are to understand the sudden changes that occur in LB IIB Canaanite material culture, the broad regional patterns illustrated above along with instances of local variation indicate that while a general process of Canaanite cultural coalescence was taking place during the LB IIB, it played out differently in various locales according to local interests. The evidence therefore indicates this process, along with the genesis of new and unattested ritual practices like bowl-lamp deposits, is the product of both local agency and the structural conditions within which it operates.

While the interests of foreign powers such as Egypt contributed to the unique historical circumstances of the region and period, the emergence of traditions with ties across the region did not occur solely through acculturation, elite-emulation, or the establishment of foreign hegemony. Instead, it appears clear that Canaanite society actively engaged in a process of cultural entanglement resulting at times in hybridization; sometimes borrowing from the past, the present and neighboring cultures, but always recontextualizing objects, ideas and practices into existing Canaanite systems of meaning and practice. It is this process of innovation, social maintenance, cultural resistance and local variation that accounts for the range of diversity, change and continuity in the archaeological record, an accurate reflection of the heterogeneous and dynamic nature of Canaanite society itself.

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Figures:



Figure 1. Map of LB IIB Locations Mentioned in the Text



Figure 2. Map of LB IIB Temple Locations

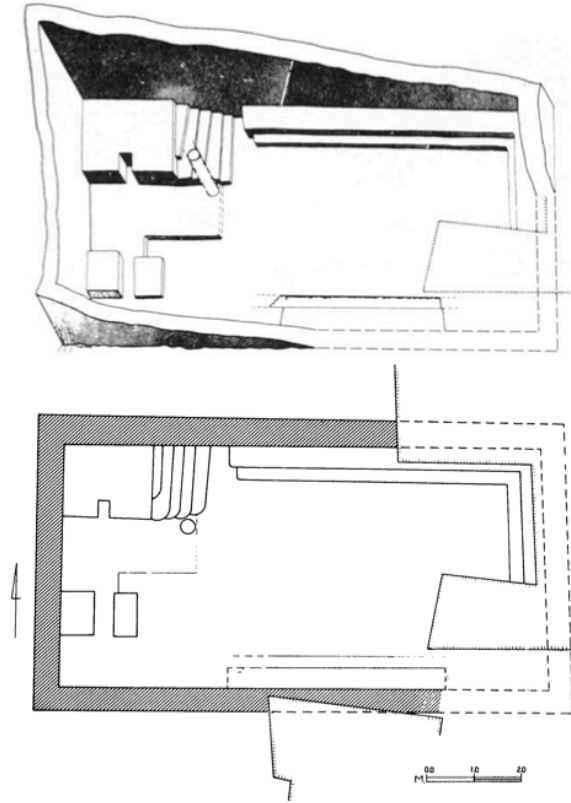


Figure 3. Tel Mevorakh Temple, Plan and Isometric Reconstruction
(Stern 1977, p. 90)

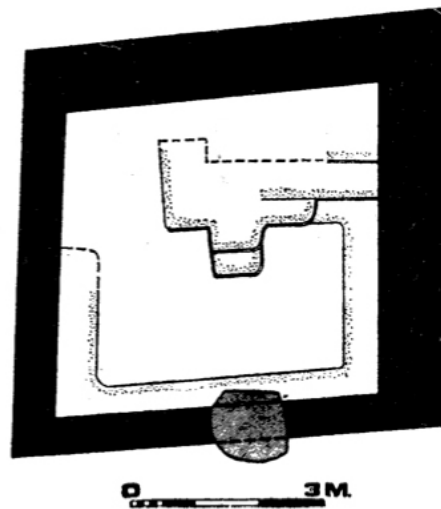


Figure 4. Temple 319 at Tell Qasile, Stratum XII
(after Mazar 1977, p. 83)

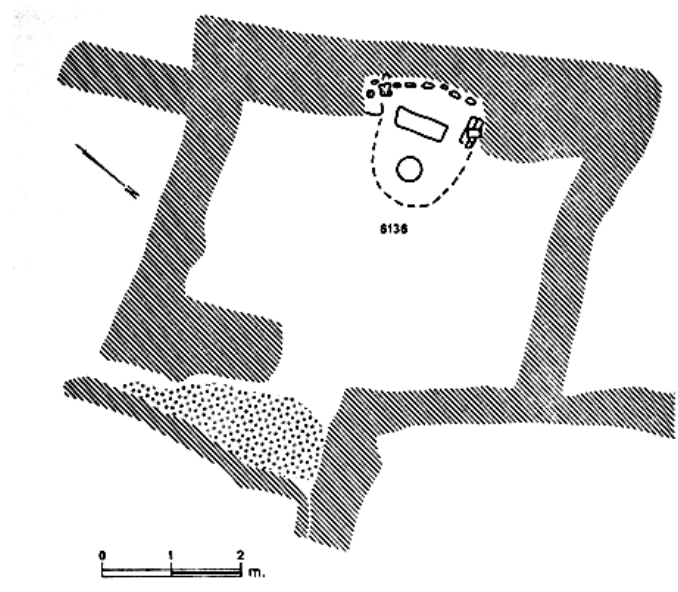


Figure 5. Hazor Area C Temple
(Yadin 1970, fig. 16)

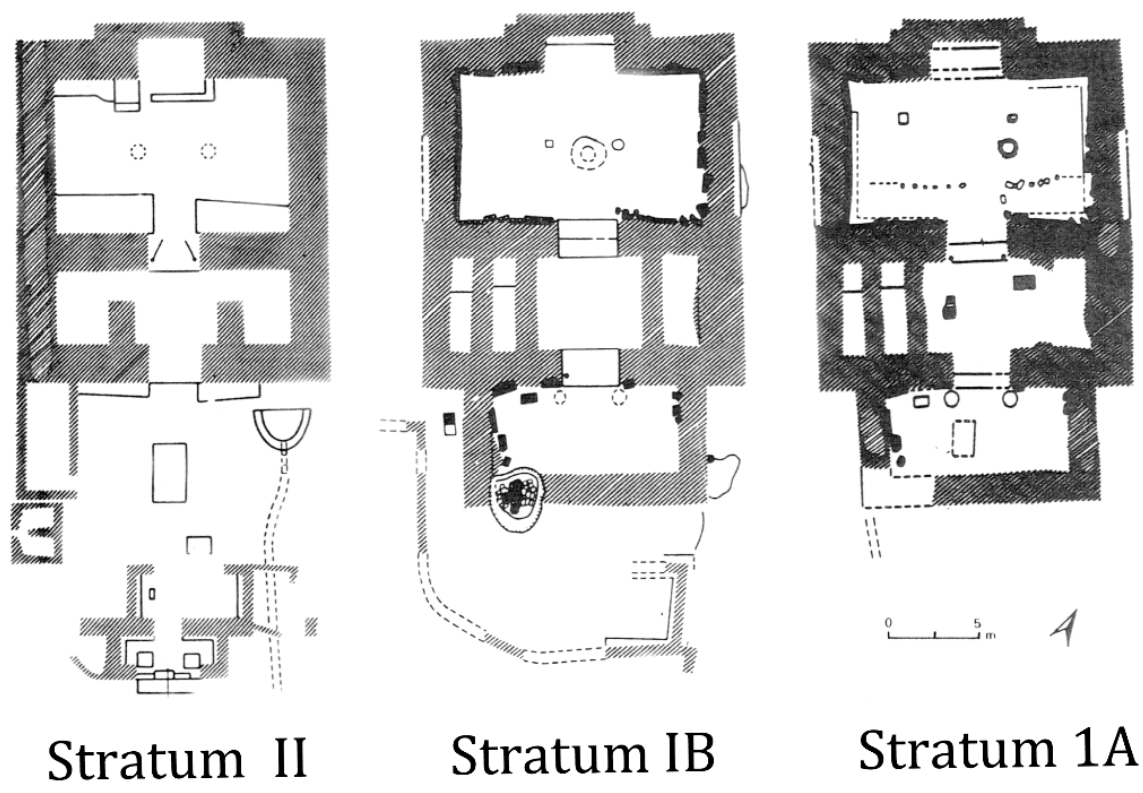


Figure 6. Hazor Area H Temple Sequence , Strata II-IA
(after Gonen 1992, fig. 7.5; Yadin 1970, figs. 20-21)

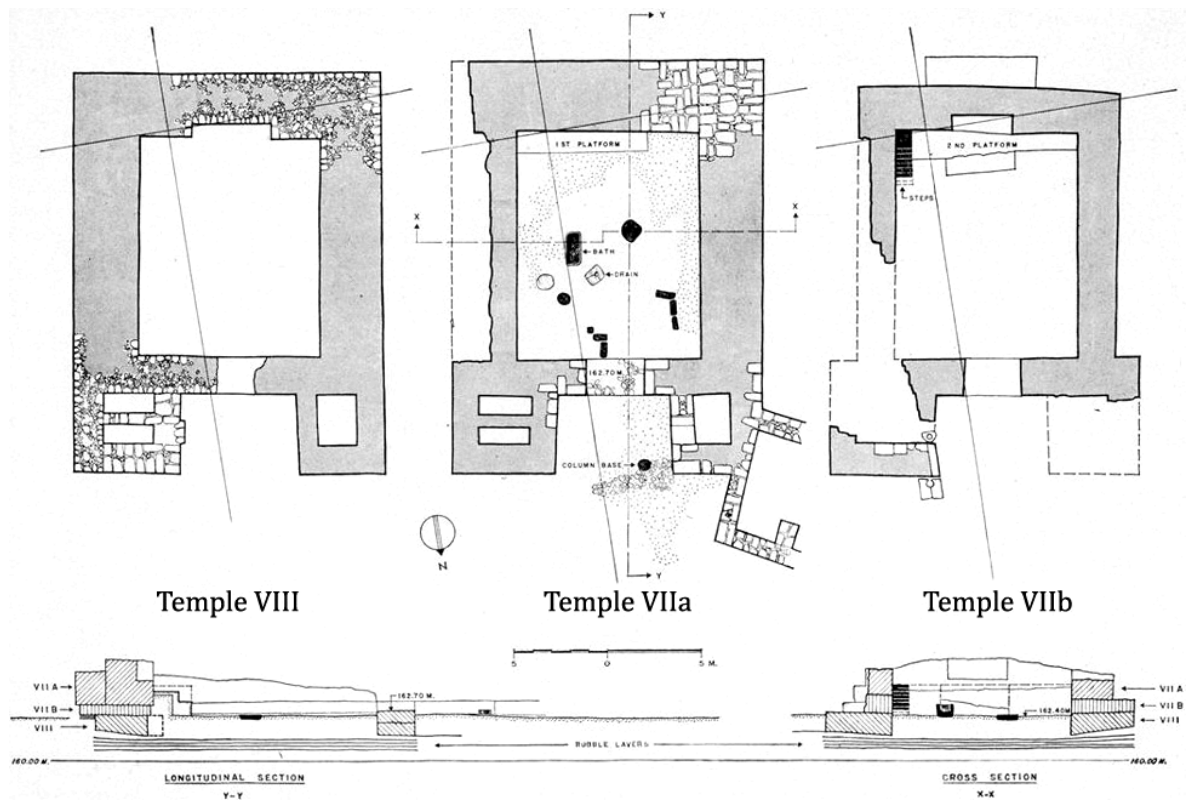


Figure 7. The Three Phases of Megiddo Temple 2048, Strata VIII-VIIA
(after Lamont, Shipton and Loud 1939, fig. 247)

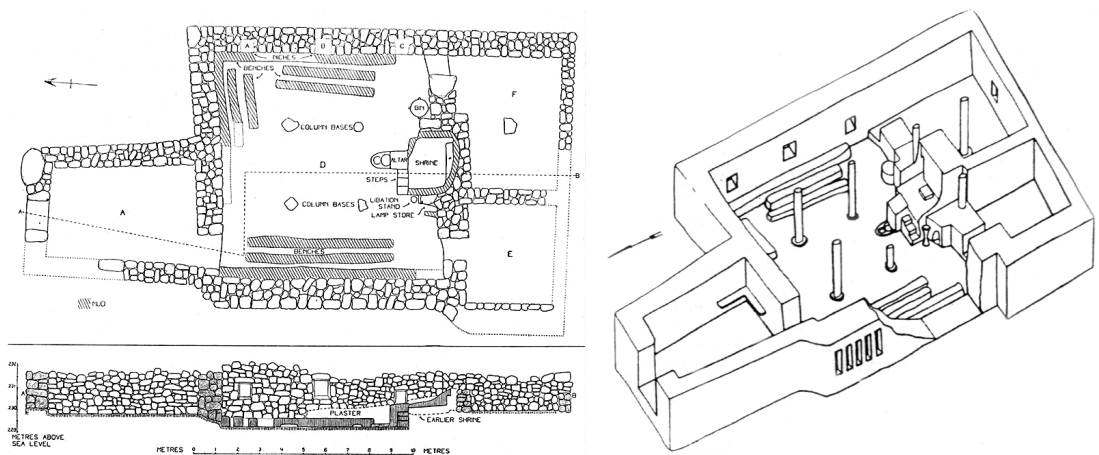


Figure 8. Lachish Fosse Temple III, Plan and Isometric Reconstruction
(Tufnell 1940, pl. LXVIII; Mazar 1990, fig. 7.11)

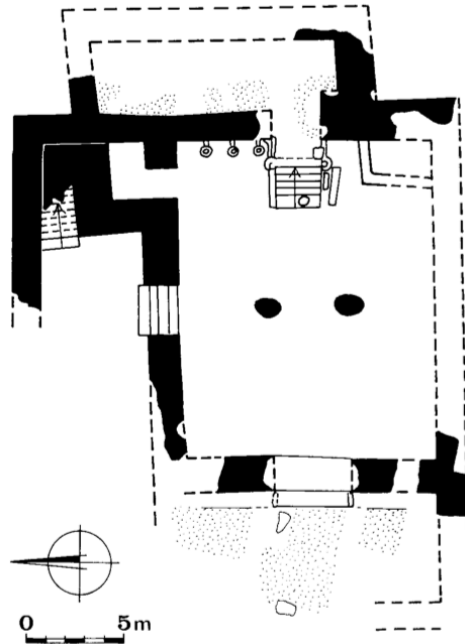


Figure 9. Lachish Area P Temple (Mazar 1992, fig. 29)

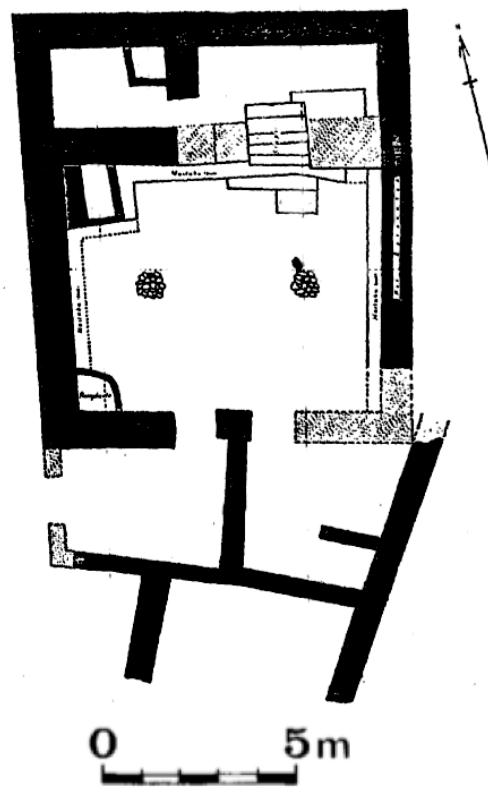


Figure 10. Beth Shean Stratum VII Temple (after Rowe 1940, fig. 7)

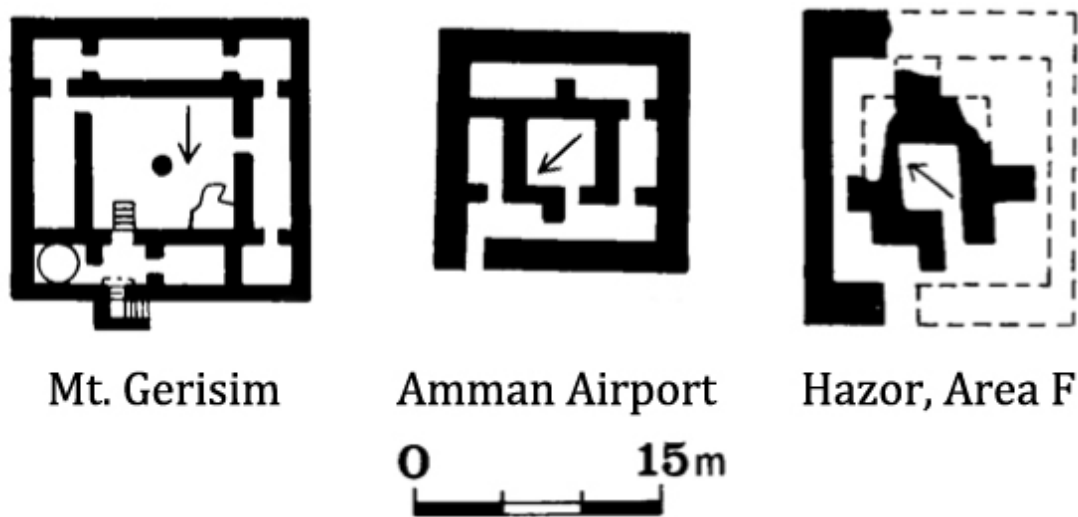


Figure 11. Examples of the "Square" Temple Type
 (after Mazar 1992, figs. 15-17)

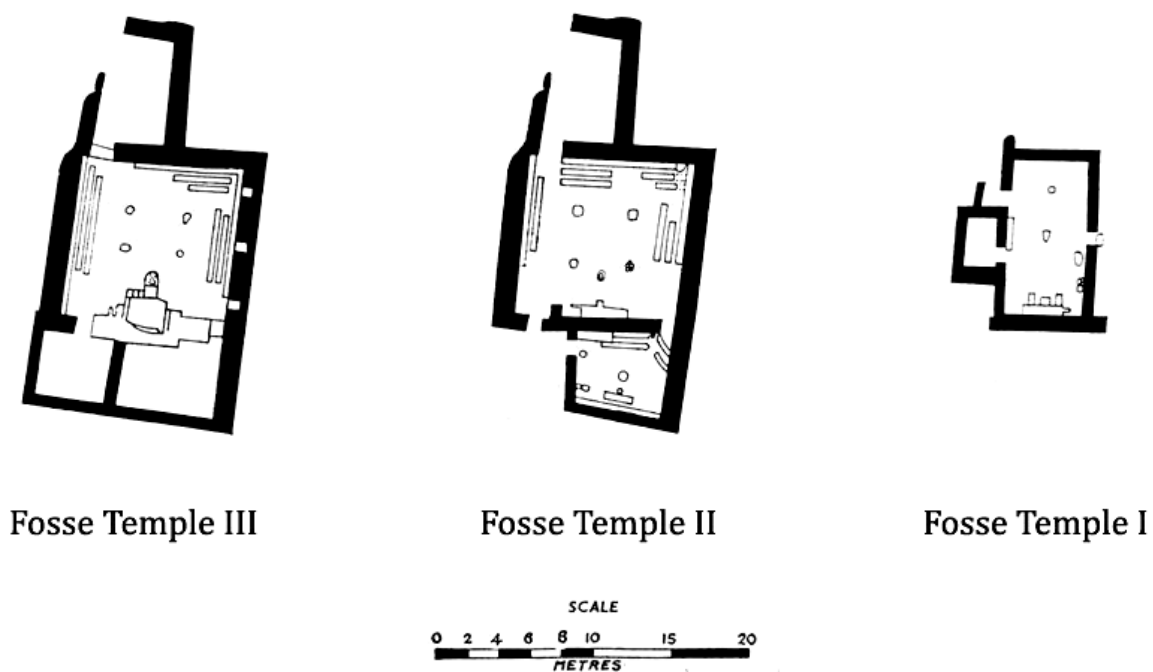


Figure 12. Lachish Fosse Temples I-III highlighting the introduction of the "Stepped Altar"
 (after Kenyon 1970, fig. 49)

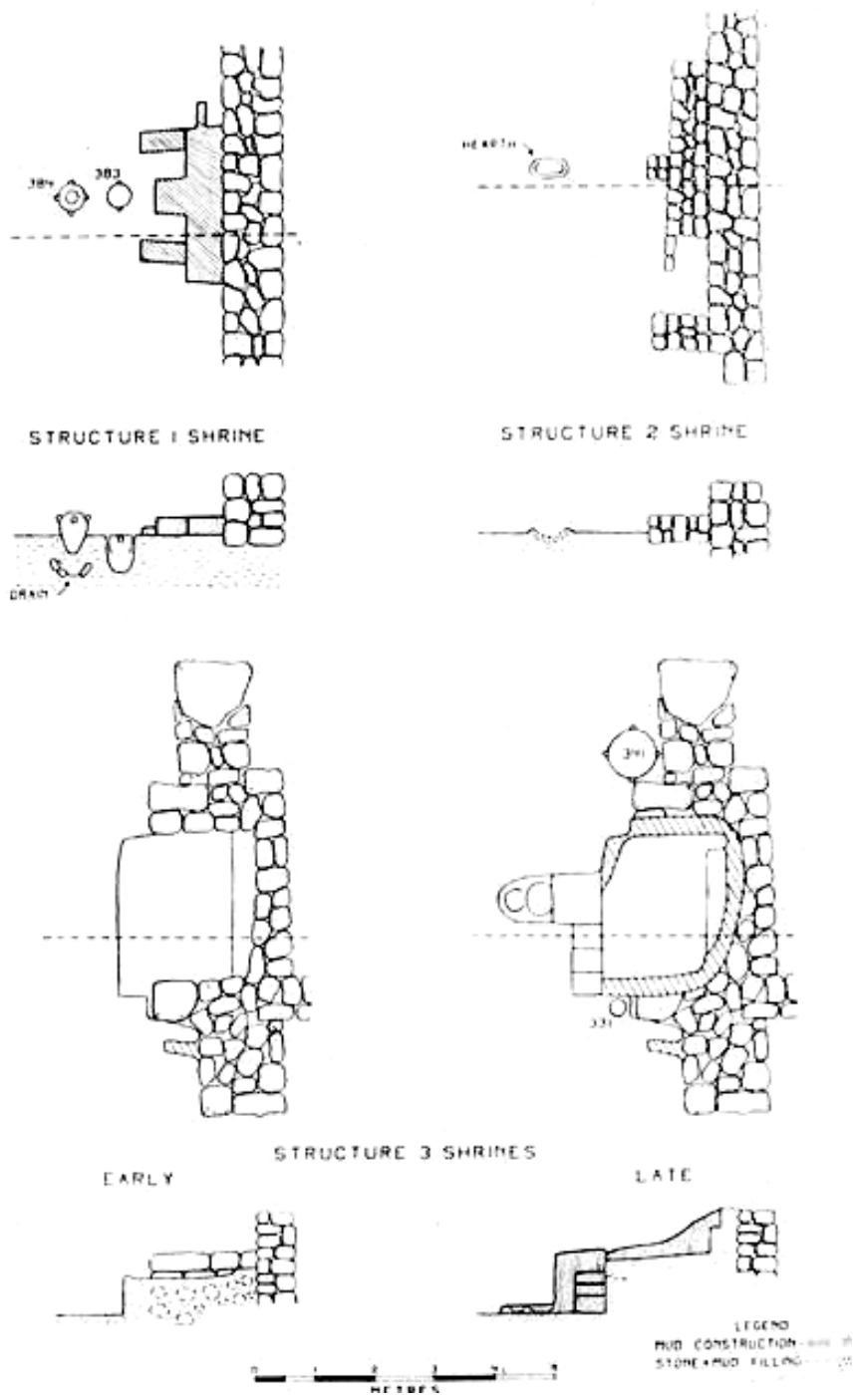


Figure 13. Progression of Altars from Lachish Fosse Temples I-III
(Tufnell 1940, pl. LXXI)



Figure 14. Central Hall, Lachish Area P Temple (view to the south)
(Clamer and Ussishkin 1977, p. 72)

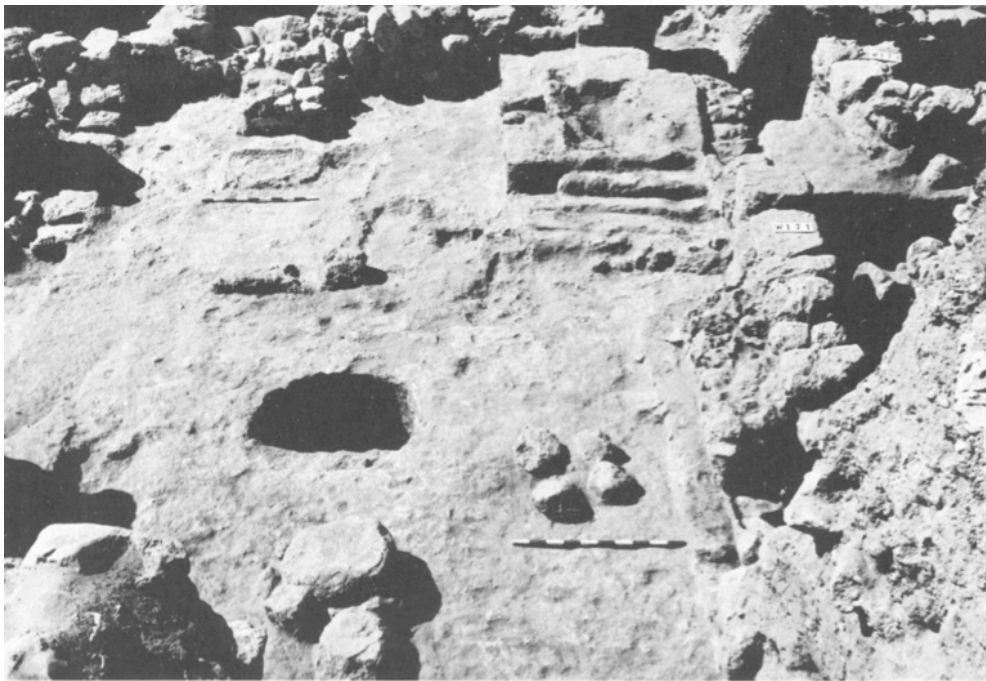


Figure 15. Central hall, Tel Mevorakh Temple (view to the west)
(Stern 1977, p. 91)



**Figure 16. Central Hall, Beth Shean Stratum VII Temple
(view to the north-east)**
(McGovern, Fleming and Swann 1993, pl. Ia)



Figure 17. Megiddo Temple Strata VIIB-VIIA (view to the south)
(Mazar 1992, p.164)



Figure 18. Hazor Area H Temple, Stratum IA-IB (view to the east)
(Yadin 1959, fig. 3)

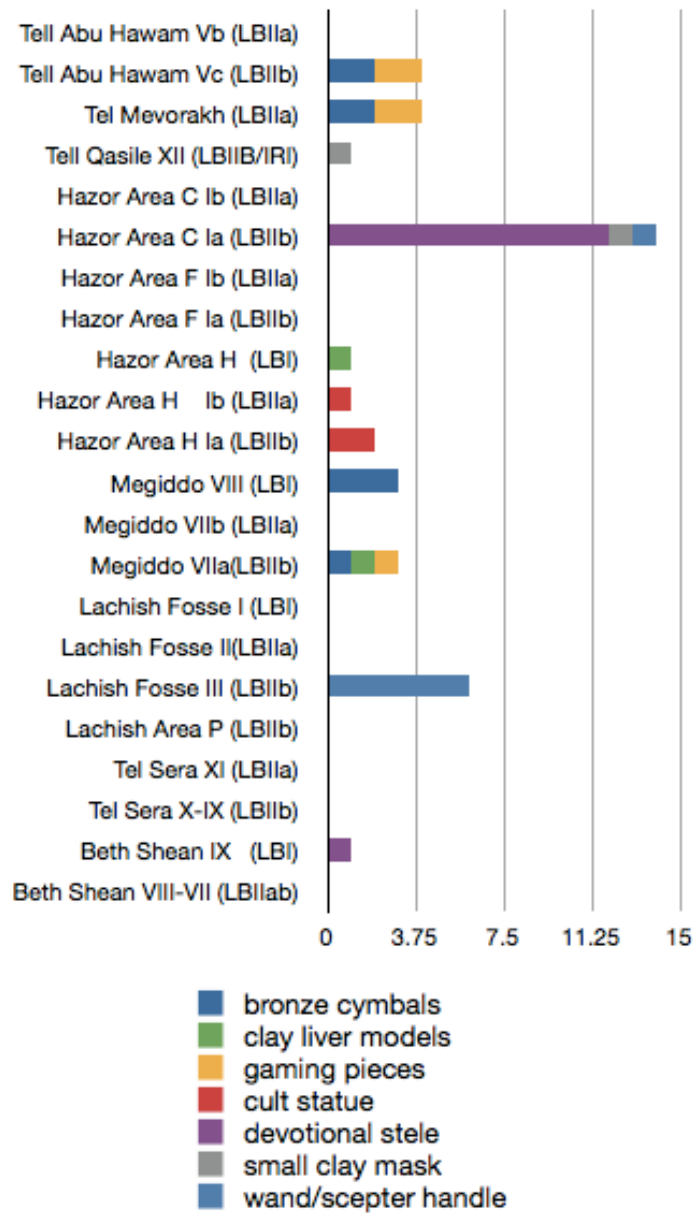


Figure 19. Distribution of Cultic Items by Temple

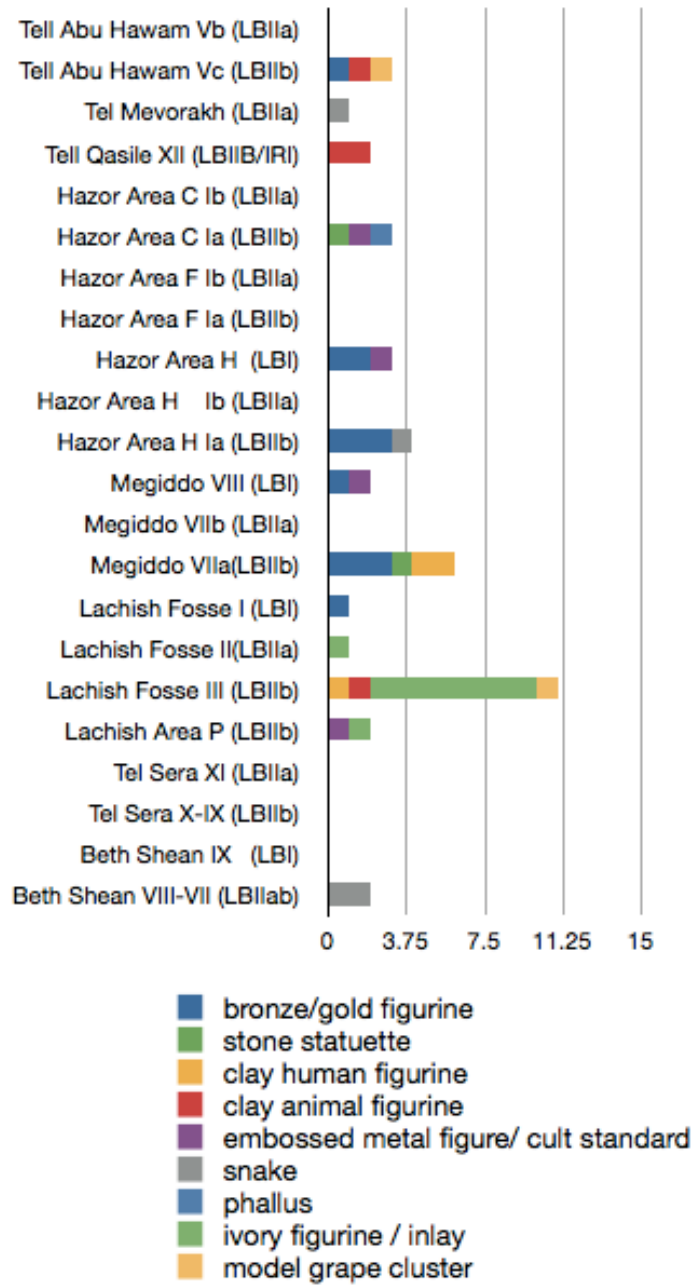


Figure 20. Distribution of Statues, Figurines, and Cult Images by Temple

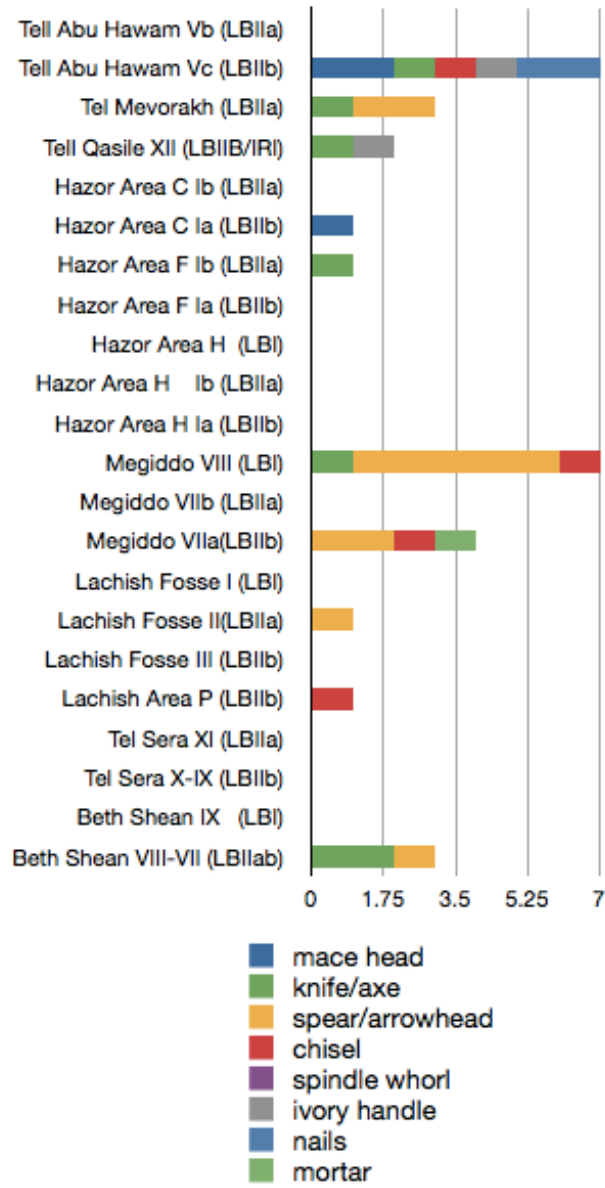


Figure 21. Distribution of Tools and Weapons by Temple

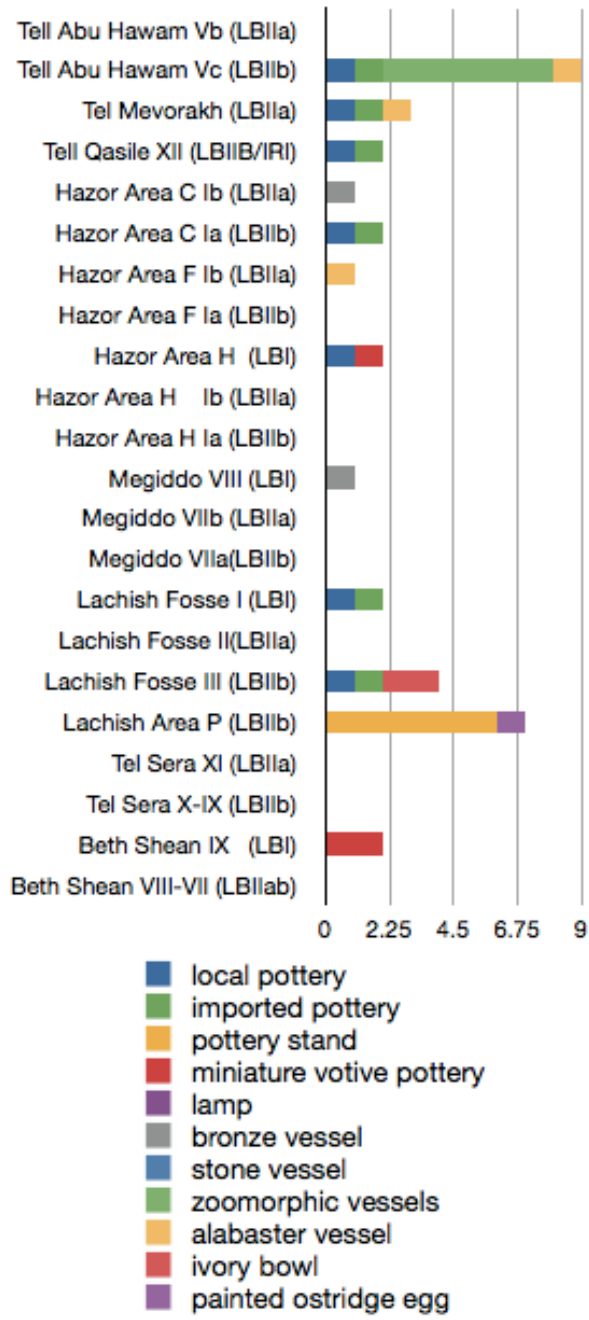


Figure 22. Distribution of Vessels and Containers by Temple

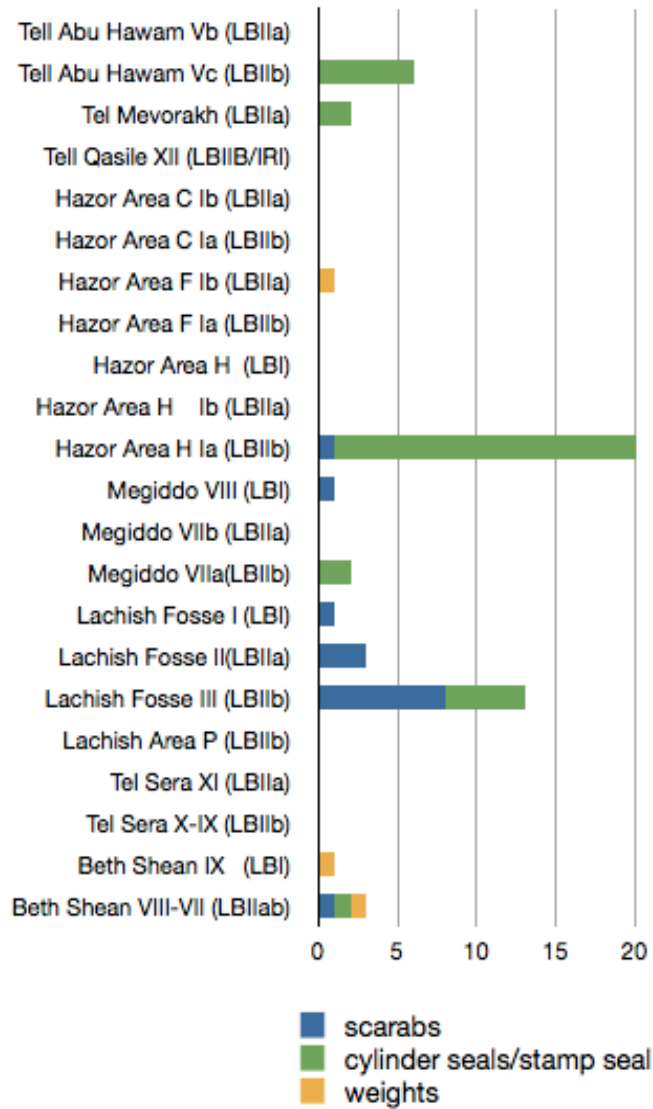


Figure 23. Distribution of Scarabs, Seals and Weights by Temple

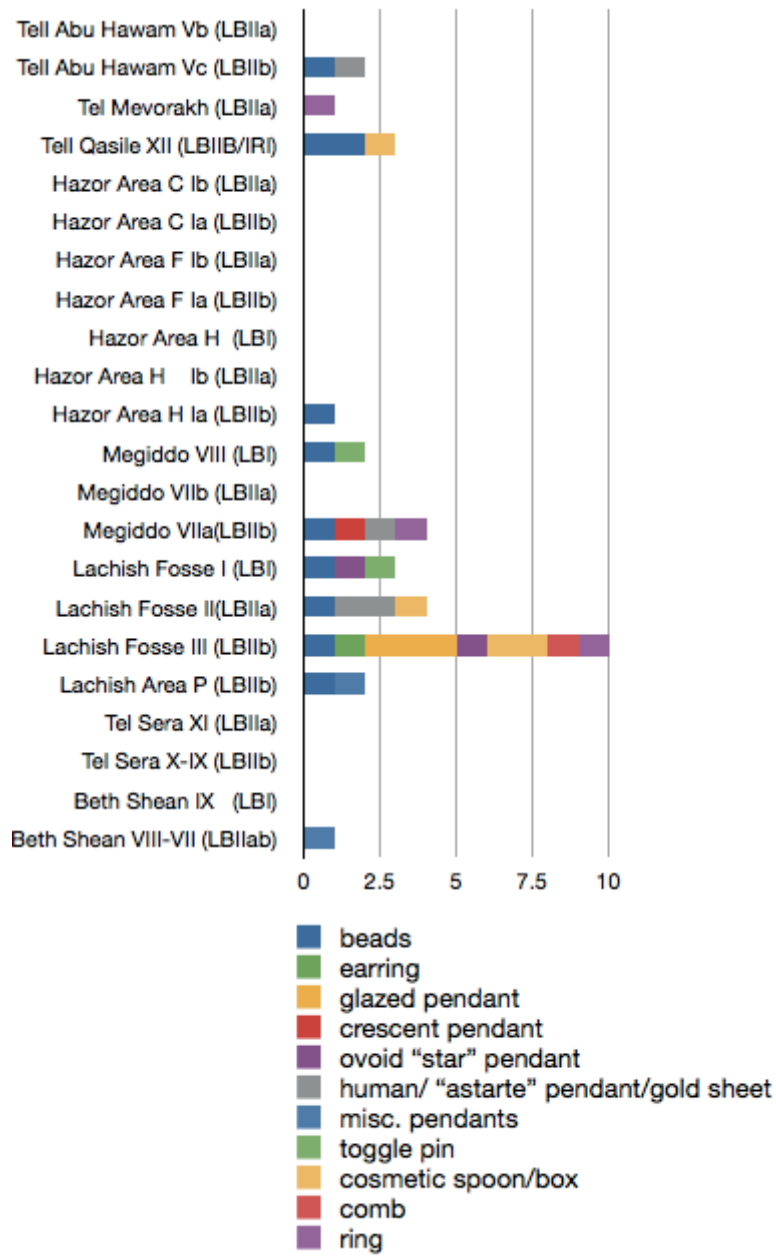


Figure 24. Distribution of Jewelry and Ornaments by Temple

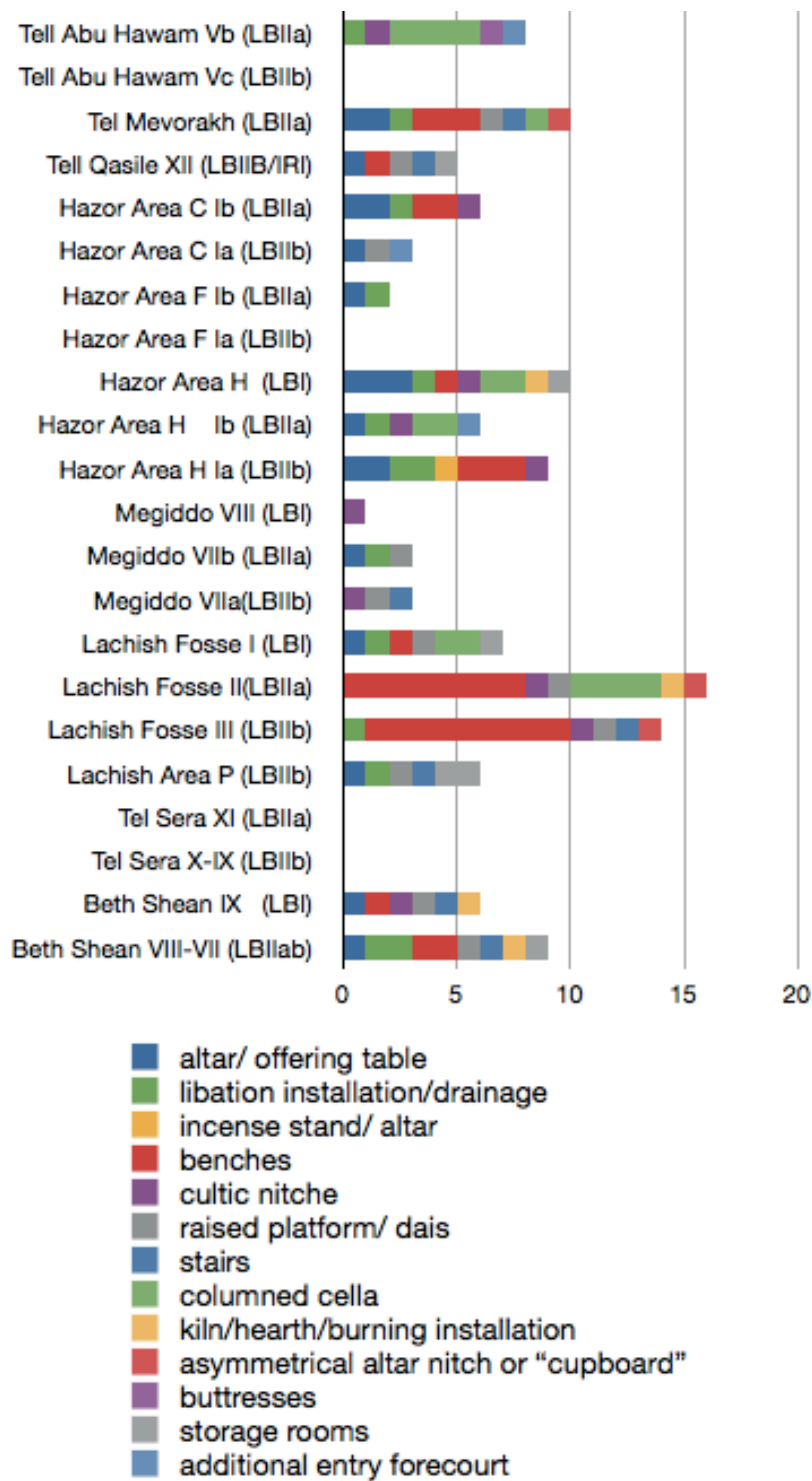


Figure 25. Distribution of Structural Elements by Temple



Figure 26. Jar and Double-Pithos Burials, Azor
(Buchennino 2006, fig. 2)



Figure 27. Double-Pithos burial, Grave 45 Tell es-Saidiyeh
(Leonard 1989, p. 34)

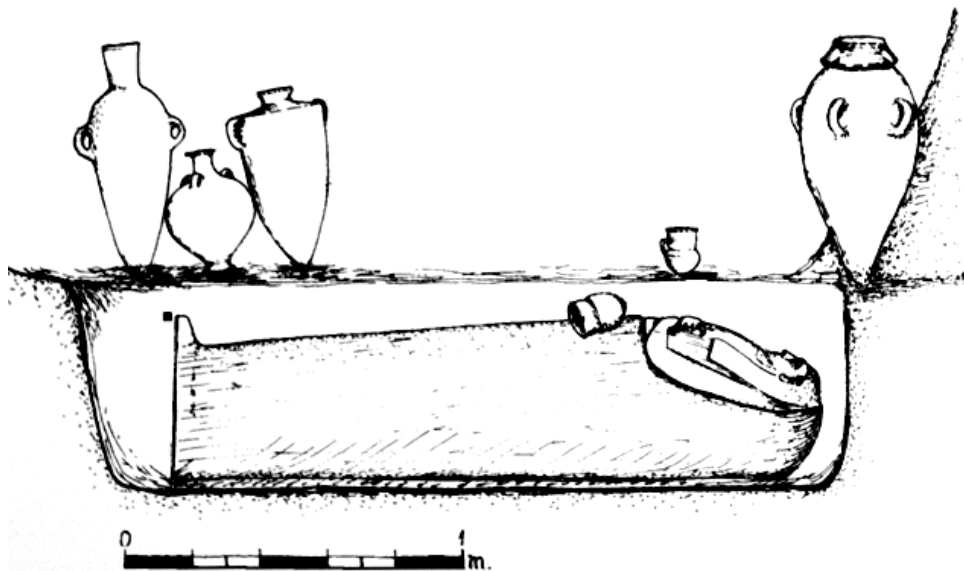
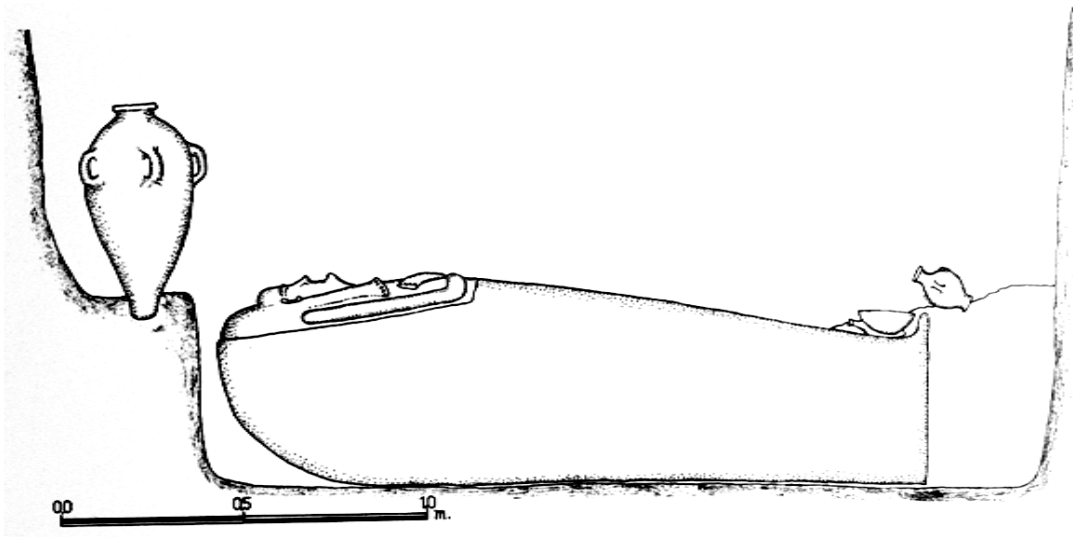


Figure 28. Anthropoid Coffin Burial with Store-Jar Installation, Deir el-Balah (tomb 114)
(Dothan 2008, p. 30, 31)



**Figure 29. Anthropoid Coffin Burial with Store-Jar Installation,
Deir el-Balah (tomb 116)**
(Dothan 2008, p. 37,40)

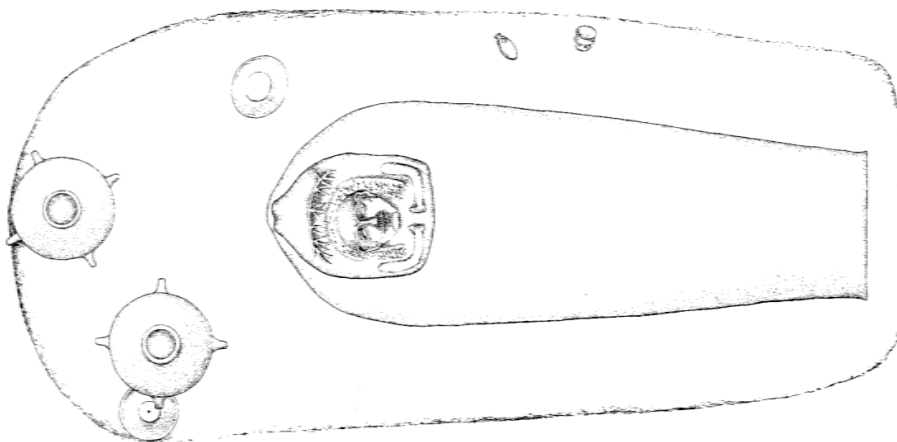
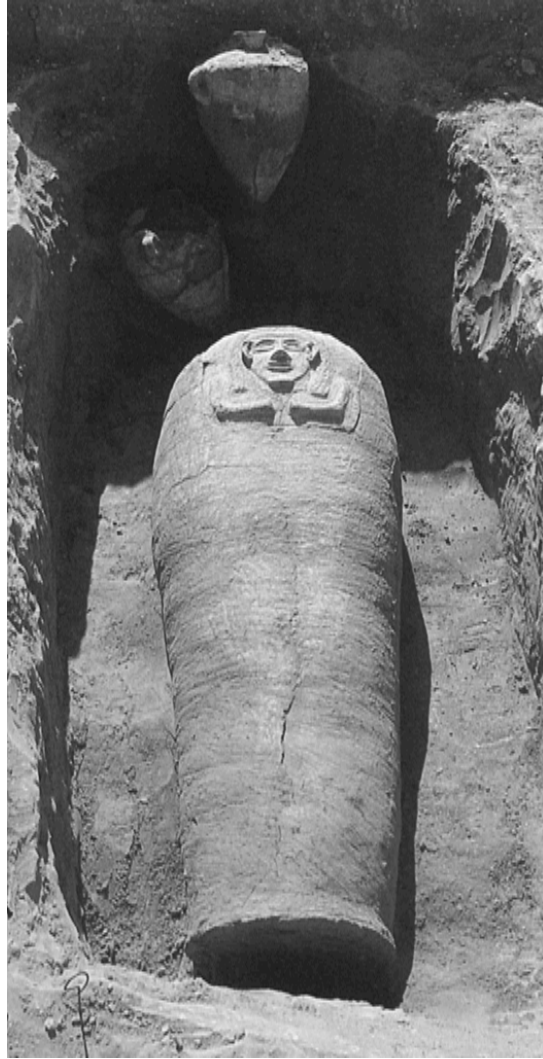


Figure 30. Anthropoid Coffin Burial with Store-Jar Installation, Deir el-Balah (tomb 118)
(Dothan 2008, p.42)

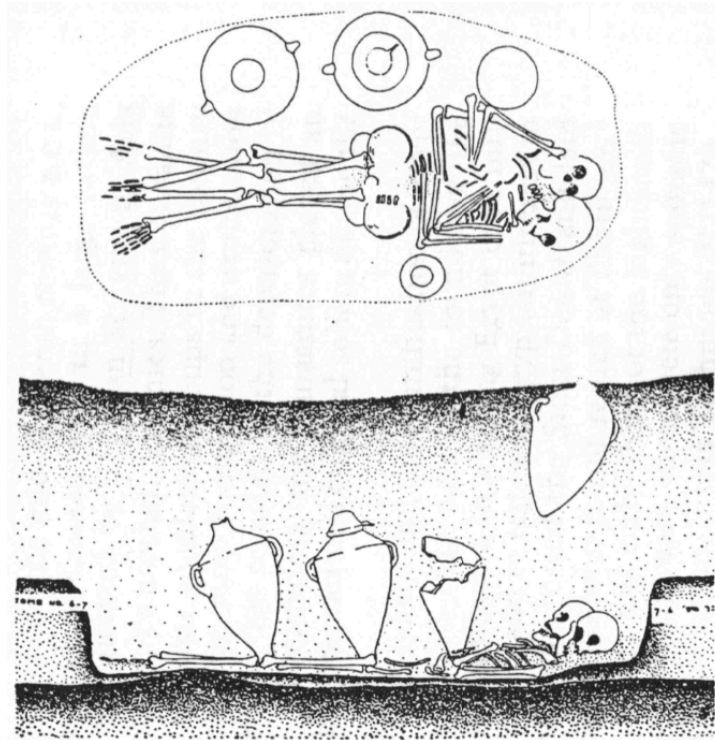


Figure 31. Pit Burial with Store-Jar Installations, Tell Abu Hawam
(Bunimovitz 1995, fig. 2.1)



Figure 32. Store-Jar Installations, Tell Abu Hawam
(Artzy 2001, fig. 1)



Figure 33. Mudbrick Cist Burial with Store-Jar Installation, Tell Fekheriye
(Bartl 2010, fig. 3)



Figure 34. Store-Jar Installations, Tell Fekheriye
(Bartl 2010, fig. 4)

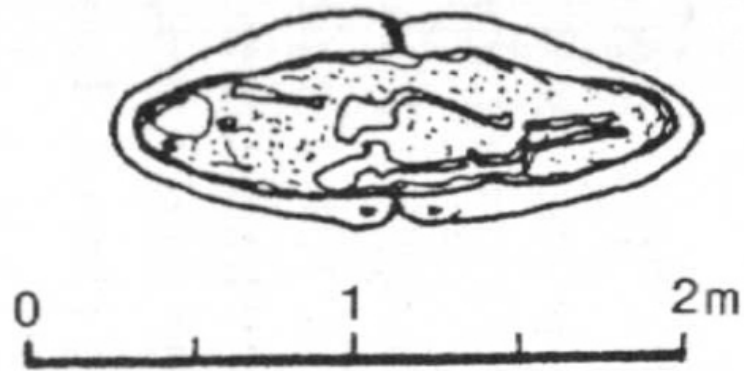


Figure 35. Double-Jar Burial, Kfar Yehoshua
(Gonen 1992, fig. 20.e)

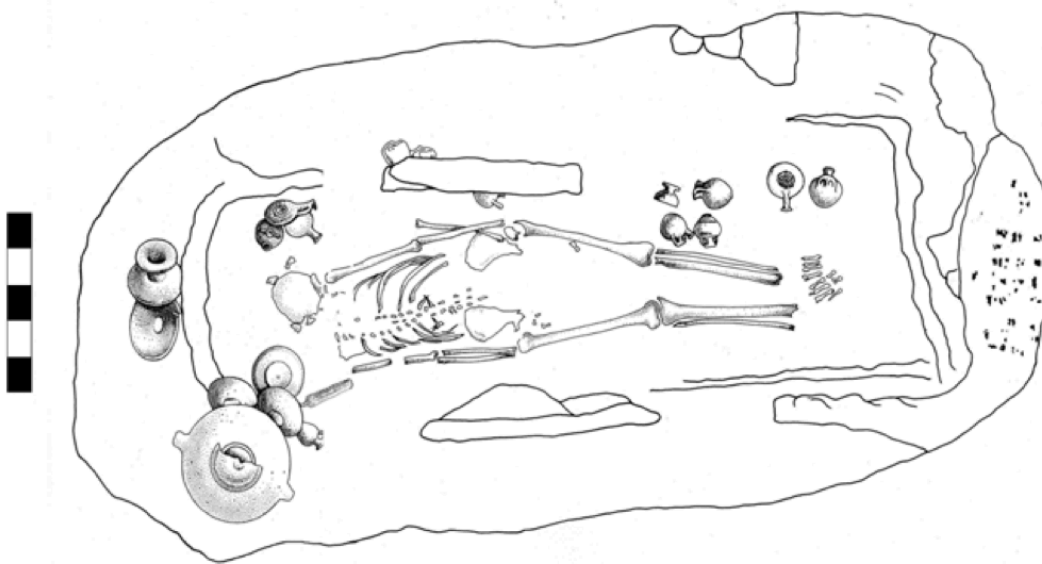


Figure 36. Clay Lined Pit Burial with Store-Jar Installation,
(Green 2006, fig. 4.4)



Figure 37. Map of the Distribution of Bowl-Lamp Deposits in the LB IIB



Figure 38. Bowl-Lamp Deposits, Ashkelon Grid 38
(Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon)

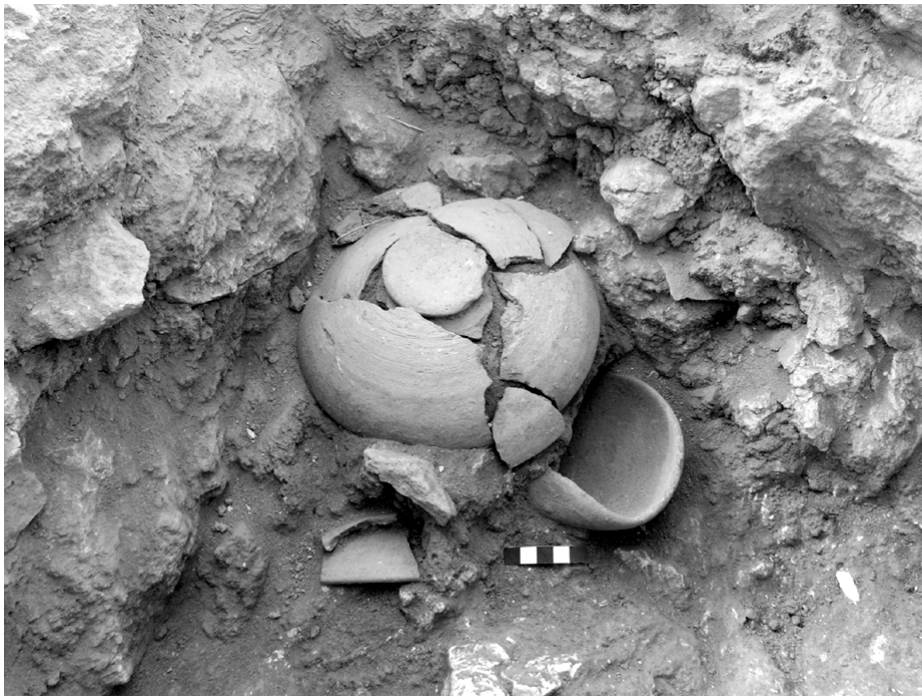


Figure 39. Bowl-Lamp Deposit, Tel es-Safi Area E
(Courtesy of Aren Maeir and the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project)

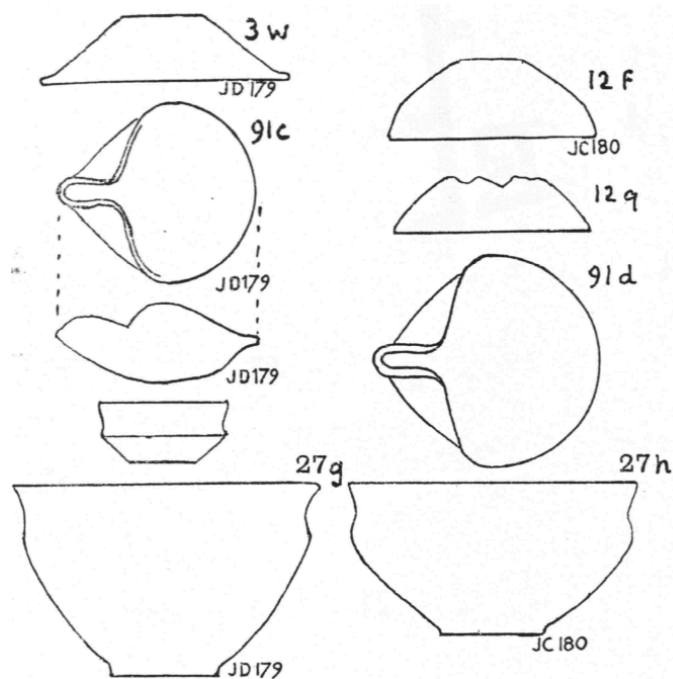


Figure 40. Two Bowl-Lamp Deposits, Tell Jemmeh
(Petrie 1928, pl. LI)

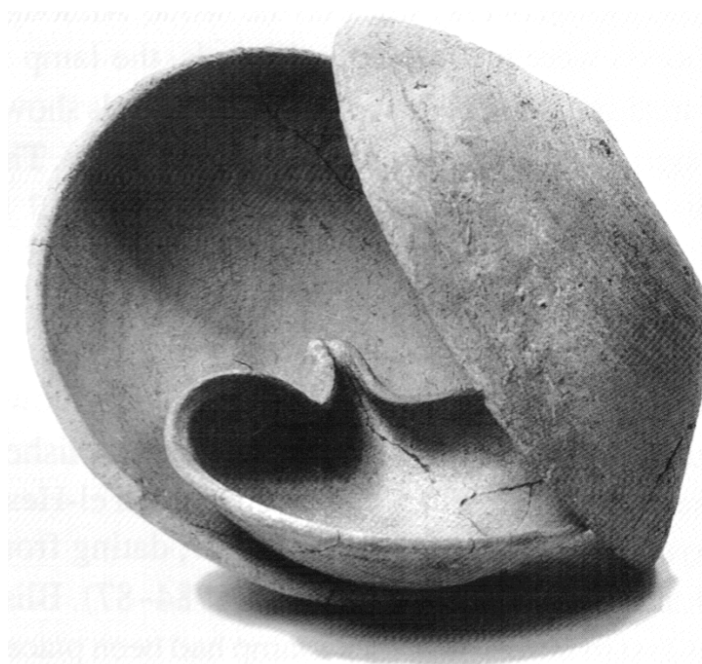


Figure 41. Bowl-Lamp Deposit, Deir el-Balah
(Dothan and Nahmias-Lotan 2010, photo 5.2)

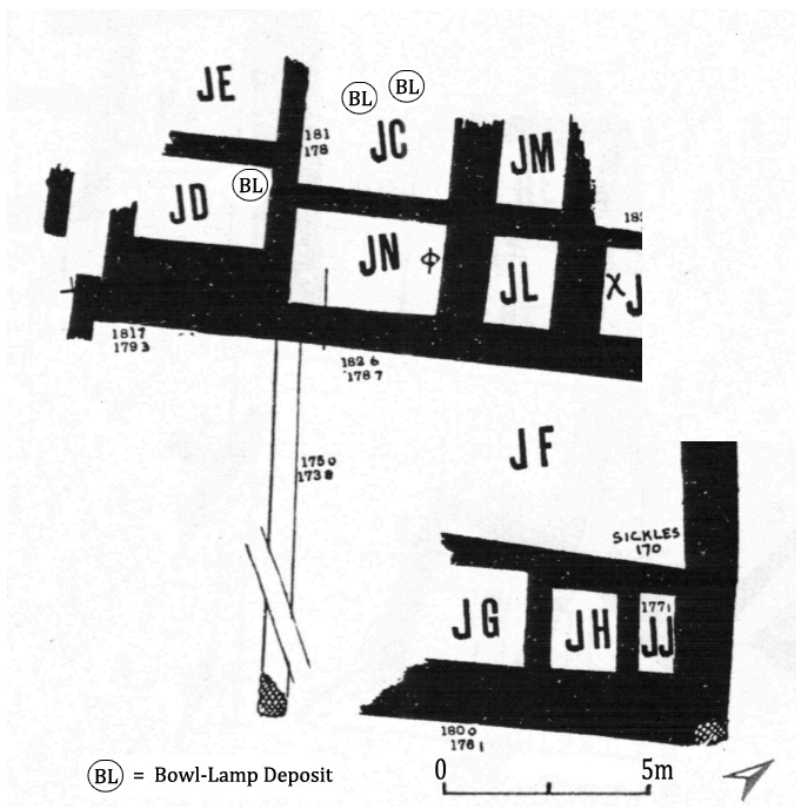


Figure 42. Distribution of Bowl-Lamp Deposits at Tell Jemneh
(After Petrie 1928, pl. VI)

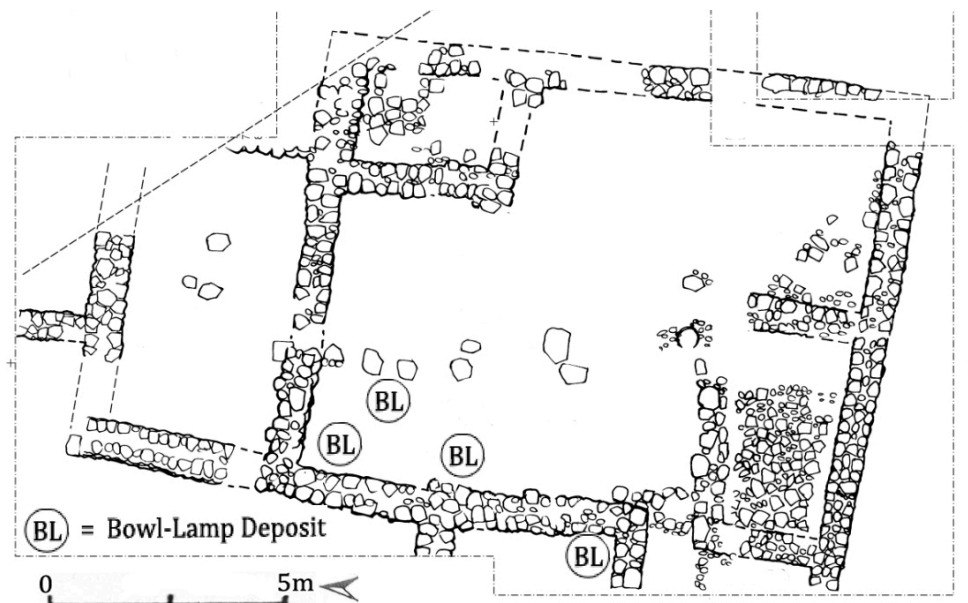


Figure 43. Distribution of Bowl-Lamp Deposits at Tel es-Safi, Grid 224
(After Maier and Uziel 2012, Courtesy of the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project)

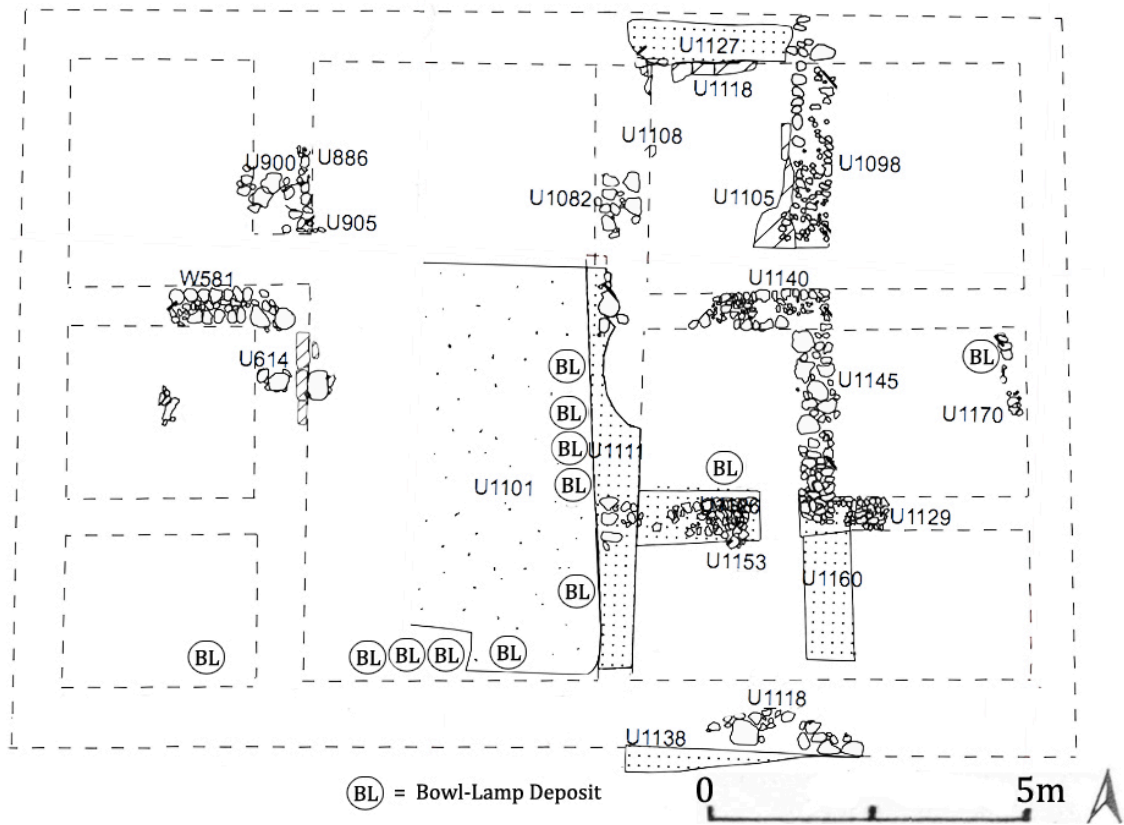


Figure 44. Distribution of Bowl-Lamp Deposits at Ashkelon, Grid 38
 (After Aja 2008, Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon)

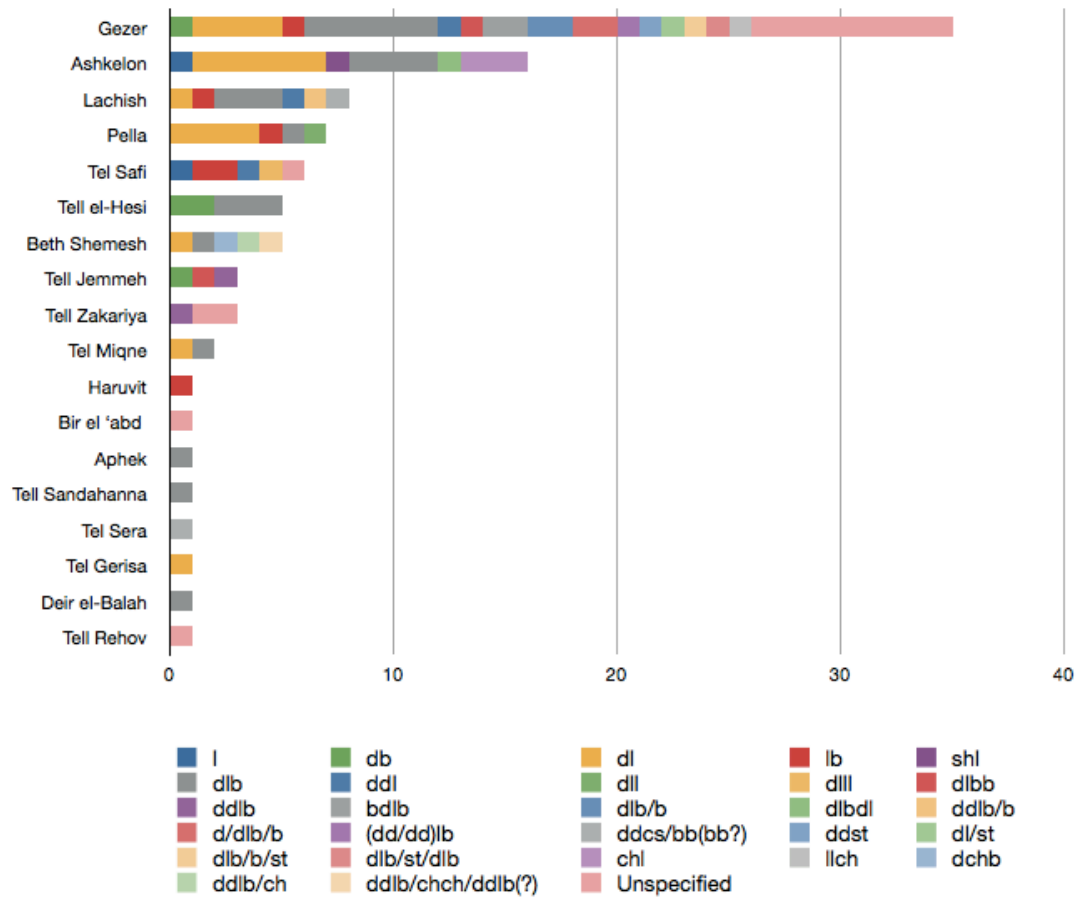


Figure 45. Distribution of Bowl-Lamp Deposits by Site

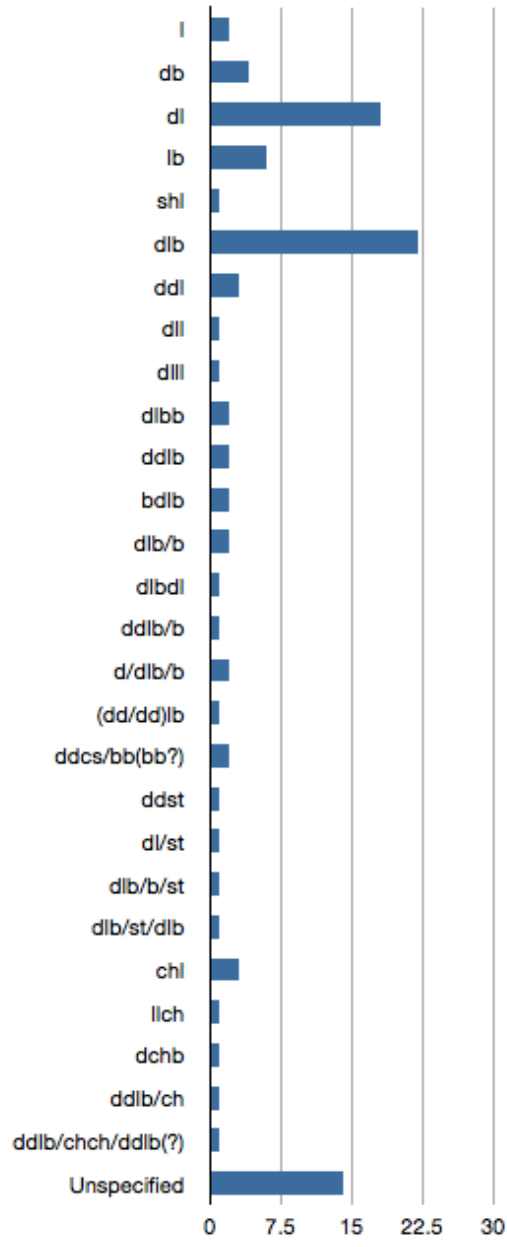


Figure 46. Frequency of Bowl-Lamp Deposits by Type