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# Book Reviews

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## **Egypt and the Southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age**

Felix Höflmayer and Ricardo Eichmann (eds)

Orient-Archäologie 31, VML Verlag Marie Leidorf, Rahden/Westf, 2014; Hardcover; 328 pages; 124 illustrations; 12 tables; RRP €69.8; ISBN: 978-3-89-646661-7

This offering stems from the proceedings of an international symposium on the synchronisation of the relative-chronological systems of the Near East, held at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin from 14th to 16th September 2011. Organised and subsequently edited by Felix Höflmayer and Ricardo Eichmann, *Egypt and the Southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age* includes contributions covering research areas from Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Cyprus, and Egypt. The authors present results of recent excavations from Pella, Tell Fadous-Kfarabida, Tel Beth Yerah, Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan, Helwan, Tell Arqa, and Khirbet el-Batrawy. The synchronisation of Egyptian, northern and southern Levantine, Jordanian, and Caucasian connections is also discussed from evidence at specific sites such as Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Tel Beth Yerah, Umm el-Qaab, Helwan, and Tell Arqa, though also more holistically from evidence collated throughout the Nile Valley and the southern Levant region during the 4th and 3rd millenniums BCE. Trade routes, socio-economic networks and cultural connections are explored over the broad geographic regions, with fresh perspectives from a Jordanian point of view, an excellent summation of interconnections between the Nile Valley and the southern Levant, and a discussion of the problems and evidence for synchronisation from the Sinai, Levant, and Egypt. The book starts with a forward in German, which sets this section apart from the contributions in English, and the Arabic abstracts following each paper. The fourteen contributions combine academic investigations from internationally renowned researchers. Bourke presents an interesting discussion of EBA evidence of the settlement at Khirbet Fahl and nearby Tell Husn. Fischer demonstrates cultural contacts at Tell Abu al-Kharaz during the Naqada period with the Jordan Valley, probably indirectly via the southern Levant. Forstner-Müller and Raue show that rare Levantine imports found at Elephantine, from the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty may reflect the prestige nature of such goods during this period. The article by Genz presents the excavations at Tell Fadous-Kfarabida, identifying six phases with some similarities to Byblos just 12km to the south. The work of Greenberg at Tel Beth Yerah is critical in understanding the EB II connections with the southern Levant and Egypt, though the site also entered the orbit of people from the south Caucasian region.

While interconnections are a consistent theme throughout the volume, there are numerous contributions that directly deal with the central topic specifically. Hartung provides an excellent summation of the connections between the Nile Valley and the southern Levant during the fourth millennium BCE, with a good incorporation of data

available to date. This helps to show the importance of interconnections before the rise of the Egyptian state, and highlights the flux of different types of connections during the EBA. Klimscha, Notroff, and Siegel continue the same theme of connections between the Egypt and the southern Levant during the fourth millennium BCE, although they do so from a Jordanian perspective. This highlights possible sites involved in a broader trade network beyond the southern Levant, linking the site of Maadi and Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan, especially through evidence of metallurgy. Kafafi also attempts a brief summation of the archaeological evidence for this connection from a Jordanian perspective. This theme is also continued by Höflmayer's offering, with a shift to the late EBA, during the mid to late third millennium BC. This provides a focus on the contemporary textual and archaeological evidence, while also allowing a useful argument to note issues with the end of the EBA, suggesting a shift from 2300 to 2500 BC.

More archaeological contributions, such as the article by Müller, allow for a focus on the peak of Levantine imports into Egypt during the EBII with the reign of Den, with most imports attributable to this king. This helps to emphasise the focus and highpoint of foreign affairs during this part of the First Dynasty. Manning's discussion of radio-carbon dated material for Cyprus is useful in providing a chronology from the Chalcolithic to the MBA on the island, though its connection with the wider Near East is not as evident in the volume. The study by Sala makes a connection between the Khirbet el-Batrawy in Jordan, and the Levant during the EB II-III, especially with the ceramic analysis. The synchronisation of Egyptian and Levantine chronologies is a particular focus by Köhler and Thalmann, as well as Sowada. The former provides important and up-to-date comments on the beginning and end of the Early Dynastic Period in Egypt, while also providing a link between Helwan and Tell Arqa during this time. This highlights the chronological connections between the northern Levant and Egypt, at sites aside from Byblos. The article by Sowada outlines potential problems with evidence from Egypt, the Sinai, and the Levant when regarding the chronologies of each geographic region during the Early Bronze Age. This is perhaps a fitting manner in which to end the volume, noting that further work still remains in synchronising the chronologies of each region for this time period.

An edited volume of multiple scholars, such as the *Egypt and the Southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age*, stems from a strong tradition of multi-authored collaborative volumes, such as Levy and van den Brink's *Egypt and the Levant* (2002), van den Brink's *The Nile Delta in Transition* (1992), as well as parts of the *Egypt at its Origins* series (2004, 2008, and 2011). Many of the articles within this volume make useful contributions to multiple fields. These embrace the synchronisation of cultural contacts between Egypt, the Levant, and Jordan, to the discussion of excavations and the results of this fieldwork within the broader framework of the historical setting in ancient Near East during the Early Bronze Age. As such, there are aspects of research which are beneficial for archaeologists, ceramicists, historians, and others both professional and

university students worldwide. A notable feature of those authors included in the proceedings is the international scope of scholars who have provided their analysis for the volume. This international scope represents and highlights the wide interest of the Early Bronze Age from various parts of the world, and also the need for multi-disciplinary collaboration to provide a deeper understanding of how Egypt, the southern and northern Levant, Jordan, and even Cyprus, and the Caucasus' are interconnected during this time period.

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**Elephantine XXXV: The Lithic Industries on Elephantine Island during the 3rd Millennium BC**

Thomas Hikade

Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014; Hardcover; 210 pages; RRP AUD\$256.99; ISBN: 978-3-44-710131-8

The latest contribution to the knowledge of Egyptian lithic industries from the University of Sydney's Thomas Hikade focuses on the site of Elephantine during the 3rd millennium BC, and is a culmination of over 20 archaeological campaigns by the German Archaeological Institute from 1984 to 2004. Covering a time period spanning the Early Dynastic Period through to the First Intermediate Period, a work of this magnitude will be definitively well received by analysts working in the field of Egyptian, African and Near Eastern lithic industries. Unlike a large majority of archaeological reports, Hikade presents the analytical data of primary and secondary lithic industries from all excavated areas covered during the aforementioned campaigns at Elephantine with an archaeological contextualisation and proceeding discussion that makes this book an essential contribution for anyone interested in Egyptian lithic studies and the associated broader themes. Sections within this volume include a history of lithic studies in Egypt (I), raw material and procurement (II), a discussion of the spatial and chronological evolution of the site of Elephantine (III), the stone tool assemblages and knapping strategies (IV, V), comparison to contemporaneous assemblages and connection to the broader themes of economic systems and craft specialisation of the Egyptian state (VI), and a comprehensive catalogue of artefacts (VII).

Hikade opens with a discussion of the origins of dynastic Egyptian lithic industries, a dialogue which incorporates both key pieces of literature and models of interregional contacts. By incorporating seminal works such as Holmes, Caton-Thompson and Gardner, and McDonald, Hikade traces identifiable elements found within the Elephantine assemblage such as the bifacial flaking technique and distinctive blade

technology to their Neolithic origins in the Western Desert and the Levant. The author pairs this with a thorough catalogue of the various major types of raw materials found across Egyptian lithic assemblages, a contribution that is arguably one of the more valuable sections of his work. The pages on various types of flint, the most common type of lithic raw material in Egyptian contexts, is based on personal observations by the author at sites including Tell Ibrahim Awad, Maadi, Helwan, Abydos, Thebes, Hierakonpolis, and Elephantine, and provides an important and fundamental starting point for comparative analyses usually reserved for those fortunate enough to spend season after season handling archaeological material.

The chapters dealing with analytical data are separated logically into a collection of different localities: Northeast Town (including Satet North and Northeast Town extension), Satet East, East Town, Central Town (including South Hill, South Town, Southeast Town, and Areas FZTO, CTV, XXIV, XXX, and XXXI) and Area XII (Localities 1-5). By doing this, Hikade separates a vast assemblage of over 10,000 pieces into manageable and chronologically related segments, which he discusses in a set structure of primary modification (debitage), secondary modification (tools), and summarisation discussion. This not only facilitates ease of accessibility to the data, but also provides a valuable chronological distinction for those seeking more specific information on analytical statistics. Significantly, Hikade does not neglect the large percentages of ad hoc flake and blade tools which constitute a large percentage of all assemblages, giving them equal status amongst the discussion of more formal tool categories such as bi-truncated, regular blade tools and sickle elements.

Hikade closes his book with a discussion on the broader economic themes related to any comprehensive study of lithic industries, including a consideration of all stages of the chaîne opératoire: raw material procurement, transport, knapping strategy, tool use, and discard. He traces the evolution of the small, local lithic industry of Early Dynastic Elephantine to one that becomes intimately connected to the standardised distribution networks of a burgeoning Egyptian state, a discussion which could be incorporated and applied more widely to other Egyptian industries of the 3rd millennium BC. Hikade concludes his inclusive discussion with a comparison to contemporary assemblages, among them Hierakonpolis, Abydos, Saqqara, Giza, 'Ain-Asil, Kom el-Hisn, Tell Ibrahim Awad, and Buto. Ultimately, the thirty-fifth volume in the archaeological series, Elephantine XXXV, presents a detailed analysis of the lithic industries from Elephantine, yet it also delivers a comprehensive and detailed discussion on the socio-economic context of Elephantine itself during the 3rd millennium BC. Complete with a thorough catalogue of artefacts, this English-language resource is an essential purchase for any lithic analyst that wishes to pursue Egyptian-based research.

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**What is Military History?**

Stephen Morillo with Michael Pavkovic

Polity, Cambridge: 2013; Second Edition; Paperback; 165 pages; ISBN: 978-0-7456-5979-4

Book-covers can be evocative or boring and the book-cover of the second edition of Morillo's classic text is a vast improvement over the first edition, and captures the historic breadth of this work. The earlier plastic soldier figure is replaced by three helmets from the Greek wars, medieval times, and modern conflict. This is an apt illustration as this book discusses the very political historiography of war through the ages culminating in the present. While being historically accurate, Morillo's work is also cutting and questioning and essential reading for anyone engaged in writing or reading war history.

This second edition updates the discussion of current controversies and notes the various ways that war history has been a critical tool in post-imperial engagements, as, for example, in the Middle-East. Chapter four may be indeed the most useful chapter in the book as it uncovers Western biases and the political use of war history texts. Morillo challenges ideas of U.S. exceptionalism, presenting both sides in the debates over the importance of new technology for war, and questions naïve notions of German blitzkrieg. His comments on Asian warfare and themes of continuity are also insightful.

Almost as useful are the two chapters on conceptual frameworks and the methods of writing military history. Chapter three introduces the frameworks of technological determinism and the role of the single military genius. There is good material on the assumptions that historians have about war, and useful ideas about epistemology, emotions and cultural factors. The social sciences, psychology and archaeology are all briefly introduced and how military historians use and interpret the findings from these fields.

Chapter five ably discusses the various forms of military research ranging from textual analysis through to the role of war simulations. This is refreshingly current and accessible and brings military history into the twenty-first century. Morillo also discusses social media as a means for disseminating research, a clear development since the first edition. No longer are academic journals sufficient: some aspects of medieval warfare can only be understood in a medieval re-enactment group using home-made armour and replicating as far as possible medieval circumstances. This content makes the book far more interesting than most.

The first chapter is a basic but good introduction to the whole area of military history, looking briefly at who studies and disseminates it and why. Chapter Two explores military historiography from ancient to modern times, noting some interesting trends and parallels. Almost every culture has embellished the stories of their wars and heroes for

political purposes. The last five decades have seen some significant shifts in writing war history and these are also discussed well.

The final chapter is an all-too-brief summary of future trends and, again, raises good questions about the political agendas attached to military history. There are good suggestions for further reading and useful endnotes. This work would serve as a good text for any course on military history or historiography in general. It is fresh and engaging, and Morillo is progressive in both his ideas and the way presents them. The book is solid yet provocative and raises many questions about military history and its uses and misuses.

*John D'Alton*

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### **White Magic: The Age of Paper**

Lothar Müller, trans. By Jessica Spengler

Cambridge: Polity, 2014; hardcover; 311 pages; RRP \$25; ISBN 978-0-7456-7253-3

Paper has had an important place in shaping cultures but its history and significance has been understudied, so Müller's book fills a gap that we hardly knew existed. Paper's commonplace nature today makes it almost invisible, despite a deep entrenchment in almost every aspect of life. Müller surveys paper and life across the centuries and collects a large number of disparate uses of paper which he then weaves into a mostly fitting garment that shows just how significant paper has been and continues to be.

The thought experiment introduced in the prologue is truly provoking: what if some virus ate all paper, how would we survive? Paper has become a staple of modern life from court documents to books and even playing cards, and the author explores these and many other ways that we depend on paper. The author of this thought experiment considered paper's role a century ago, long before the modern technological boom, and even then he revealed just how dependent society was on paper. This reliance is a recurring motif in the book and is one of the threads that holds together the many sub-sections of chapters.

In his opening chapter, Müller traces the history of the development of various paper-making techniques, from papyrus in Egypt and rags and fishing nets in China, to wood-pulp-based production in Europe. Of particular significance is the role of Muslims in transferring the Chinese rag-based paper technology into Europe, supplanting the papyrus-based approach in just a few centuries. Müller notes the political ramifications of the Europeans glossing over this transfer, and shows just how much more invasive the new kind of paper was in contrast to the papyrus sheet.

Decentralisation of the production of paper liberated it into the hands of the masses, especially after the development of the printing press. But while other books concentrate on Gutenberg, Müller explores other aspects of printing such as the role of mill

technology and metal screens in large-scale paper production. He notes that paper production was, in contrast to papyrus, not reliant on seasons nor geographically limited. This meant that writing surfaces could reach a wide area and a large number of people, making, for example, the modern university that much more writing material-centric. Monks began copying all year round, Europeans started enjoying playing cards, and even produce was wrapped in paper.

The ubiquitous nature of paper is revealed in story after story by the author, in loosely related chapters. Some of the connections between groups of ideas, however, seem tenuous at best, and it may have been better to simply say, for example, that these next four topics relate to uses of paper in the nineteenth century. Overall, though, this grouping of ideas does provide some continuity in a work that could have seemed very disjointed.

Another recurring theme in the book is the impact of new technologies on cultures, specifically the uses of paper, and Müller discusses several intriguing cases of how paper transformed a process or institution. His material on file-based leadership, art, watermarks, modern print media, social media, the whiteness of paper, and the electronic revolution is absorbing and relevant. Paper is revealed as a fascinating source of much historic change.

In noting recent issues relating to paper usage, Müller foreshadows some future uses, but this is the thinnest part of the book. There is room to also discuss recent history which points to some of the future uses of paper, for example, paper-based sensing and medicine delivery. Mass-producible amounts of specialised paper senses allow for inexpensive diagnostics accessible by anyone, anywhere. This will revolutionise the medical industry in drug-delivery, disease-tracking, and in research. Müller does, insightfully, note that while computer-based techniques may appear to be increasingly replacing paper, the expanding uses of paper in emergent technologies makes us reliant on it in new ways.

This is an interesting book that reads somewhat as a historical novel rather than as a dry encyclopaedia of paper technologies, and, thus, it provides an accessible foundation for an appreciation of the historical role of paper. Müller's book offers many starting points for further research and is well worth a read for anyone interested in the impact of new technologies.

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