



CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPACTS OF LONG-TERM CROSS-CULTURAL MIGRATION BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE LEVANT

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ABSTRACT

An increase of cross-cultural learning as a consequence of increased travel and migration between Egypt and the Levant during the Iron Age occurred after millennia of migration in earlier times. The result was an Egyptian-Levantine koine, often not recognized as relevant by historians due to an uncritical reproduction of ancient myths of separation. However, the cultural exchange triggered by migration is attested in the language, in the iconography of the region, in the history of the alphabet, in literary motifs, in the characterization of central characters of the Hebrew Bible and, last but not least, in the rise of new religions, which integrated the experience of otherness in a new ethos.

“Egypt and the Levant: two areas that have continually shaped societies and the advancement of civilization in both the past and the present.”

—Anna-Latifa Mourad (2015, i)

1. INTRODUCTION¹

1.1. THE CHALLENGE: THE ESTABLISHED USE OF “EGYPT” AND “CANAAN” AS SEPARATE ENTITIES HINDERS THE RECOGNITION OF THE CREOLIZING EFFECTS OF MIGRATION AS HIGHLY RELEVANT FOR THE HISTORY OF CULTURES AND RELIGIONS IN THE REGION

The impact of migration on religious development both in Egypt and the Levant has, to date, hardly been investigated, and especially not in a long-term perspective. Wilde,² for instance, investigated the impact of migration on technology and communication in the Levant and northern Egypt for the time before, during, and after the “Hyksos” reign. In the important study on the relationship between Israel and Egypt during the era of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Schipper concentrated on political contacts, personal contacts, and trade relations. The reason for the oversight of religious development is that both Egyptologists and biblical scholars—those who are often responsible for the history of the Levant—focus much more on phenomena of war, ideologies of separation, and contrasts than on what the two regions have in common and how they are interdependent.³

Even the term “Egypt” is an inadequate simplification, which obscures the perception of the reality. The inhabitants of *Kemet*, however, were aware of this and characterized their own country as the connection of two

countries. In reality, the relations between the eastern Delta and the Levant were probably, for many centuries, more intense than the relations between the eastern delta and Thebes.

In other words, in order to deal seriously with the Levant and northern Egypt as an area of intensive migration over many millennia and with a focus of the effects of this migration on culture, and especially religion, the magic of the biblical Exodus paradigm and its counterpart, the Egyptian expulsion paradigm, must be removed. Modern research should disengage from the academic discourse that—banned by the separation rhetoric of ancient ideologists—uncritically reproduces or even exacerbates the ancient national-religious ideology and ignores the wealth of material that attests to the intensive exchange between the Levant and Egypt.⁴

Anyone who studies the material culture of northern Egypt and the Levant will agree that migration, trade, translation, and assimilation were common practice. This is not to deny the realities of conflict, suppression, flight, and expulsion, but these were rather the exception. These moments of conflict and shock triggered traumata between long periods of peaceful coexistence and mutual inspiration. This is the reason why the Exodus paradigm became such a powerful part of the cultural memory. Nevertheless, the overemphasis on the traumatic memory darkens the memory of the positive effects of cultural encounter in a unique region of long-lasting migration.

1.2. THE THESIS: LONG-LASTING MIGRATION SHAPED A LEVANTINE-EGYPTIAN KOINE WITH IMPORTANT CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS EFFECTS

The aim of this paper is to understand the impact of long-lasting cross-cultural travelling between the Levant and Egypt on culture and religion. The two regions are separated by the Sinai desert, which serves as a natural barrier. This geographical setting hindered the creation of a political entity, but could not totally prevent it. Connection of the two regions was accomplishable by ship on the Mediterranean and by foot or by transport animals along the sandy coast.

The two separated regions are very different in character. The Levant is a hilly region, fertilized by rain mainly from October until April and open to a long coast. Egypt is a valley in the desert, fertilized by the River Nile mainly from June until October, and only open to the sea in the delta region, while the access to the Red Sea was only possible via caravan routes. Traffic in Egypt was mainly based on shipping; in the Levant, it was primarily based on transport animals (donkeys, mules, horses, camels) and ship travel was limited to the coast.⁵ Politically, Egypt tended to be a centralized kingdom while Canaan was a complex conglomerate of small city-states and tribes. Subsequently, the cultural and religious symbol systems of the two regions were also quite different.

The different products, human resources, and human abilities of the two regions made exchange and trade attractive. At the same time, travelling and migration between the two regions brought about a strong experience of foreignness. The pervasive contact between the two cultures and the permanent challenge to adapt to the foreign nature of the “other” were constitutive for the development of the language (2.1.), the writing system of the alphabet (2.3.2; 3.1), the literature (3.5.4–5), the perception of “nations” (2.5.1; 3.5.1–3; 3.5.6–10; 4.2.–4), the shaping of signs of blessing (2.4.2) and images of gods (2.5.2.–3; 3.2–4; 4.1), theological concepts (2.4.1; 3.5.11–12), and new forms of universal secondary religions⁶ (4.3). This exchange was so long-lasting, intensive, and fruitful that it led to the formation of what can be termed an Egyptian-Levantine (or Egyptian-Canaanite) koine.⁷ This could be a common “*Lebensraum*” (e.g., the eastern delta during the Fifteenth Dynasty), or a common intellectual world, or both.

1.3. THE METHOD: PUZZLE OF LONGUE DURÉE

Sources for the southern Levant and northern Egypt during the 8th to 6th centuries BCE are vastly different from Mesopotamian sources. The former lacks larger state archives;⁸ rather, information stems from other material sources and from biblical literature (below, 3.5). Biblical literature is a form of tradition literature, which is a collection of texts that were written in a certain historical constellation and then appreciated by later generations who not only preserved them but also updated and commented on them. The reconstruction of this process is sometimes possible—for instance, by the comparison of

the Hebrew and the Greek texts of the Old Testament—but often extremely difficult, as demonstrated by the diverging interpretations on the part of exegetes. However, the texts can illustrate the effects of historical events in a perspective of *longue durée*. Thus, while the state archive’s letters, lists, bills, receipts, etc. can answer the precise questions of the who, where, when, why, and how of people on the move, these alternative sources reflect the impact of long-lasting migration processes on the formation of human concepts, cultural identities, and religious beliefs.

In addition to textual sources, a second type of source used in this article is images, mainly from stamp seals. Stamp seals were used for centuries as a form of mass media in the Levant and in Egypt, and came mainly in the shape of scarabs. The motifs on the reverse of the scarabs are an important source for the reconstruction of the symbol systems of the region and of the religious history.⁹ Like biblical texts, the iconography on scarabs does not document migration as such, but rather the effect of a long-lasting cultural exchange and mutual learning.

For an adequate understanding of the effects of migration in the 8th–7th centuries BCE (chap. 3), it is imperative to be familiar with the preconditions, that is, the developments of earlier periods relevant for the establishment of an Egyptian-Levantine koine (chap. 2). In an overview (chap. 4), some effects of the ongoing migration in this region in Hellenistic and Roman times are highlighted. Embedding it in the *histoire de longue durée*,¹⁰ it is hoped that the profile of the cultural and religious impact of migration of the relevant period in this volume will be clearer.

2. DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO THE 8TH–7TH CENTURIES BCE

It is fascinating to recognize that the earliest traces of the effect of migration between the Levant and Egypt are recorded in the language (2.1). The early archeological evidence is the subject of ongoing research in relevant regions (2.2). The main forming phase of the Egyptian-Levantine koine was the Middle Bronze Age. The synopsis of the currently available archeological material serves to correct the traditional image that the “Hyksos” were a temporally limited foreign intrusion in Egypt, in favor of the opinion that in the eastern delta and in parts of the southern Levant a creolized society had formed (2.3). In fact, the most important cultural and religious effects of this creolization appear only during the Nineteenth Dynasty—itsself a product of the creolization. At this time, Egypt’s neighbors may have been perceived as equals (2.5.1), the Levantine weather god Baal as Set (among many other Canaanite concepts) is very positively integrated into the Egyptian symbol system (2.5.2), and the Memphite god Ptah reaches the peak of popularity in the Levant (2.5.3). Still, between the period of the “Hyksos” and the Nineteenth Dynasty, the Theban Eighteenth Dynasty, was the catalyst for intercultural learning between Egypt and the Levant, especially during the Amarna period (2.4).

2.1. LANGUAGES AS TESTIMONIALS OF AN EARLY EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE

Orel and Stolbova collected material for a reconstruction of a Proto-Hamito-Semitic (Afro-Asiatic) language that was “spoken not later than 10,000–9,000 BCE. in the areas of the Levant and/or North Africa.”¹¹ Semitic, Berber, Egyptian, Chadic, and Cushitic are the main families belonging to the Hamito-Semitic phylum from which the language material of the reconstructed roots is taken.¹²

Although Berber and Cushitic are more closely related to Semitic than Egyptian, the language of the lower Nile Valley is nevertheless a Proto-Afro-Asiatic language as well.¹³ It is evidently linked with Semitic by lexical and morphological isoglosses. At the same time, Old Egyptian “has series of suffix-conjugations, which are peculiar to Egyptian and are not paralleled in the other Afro-Asiatic languages.”¹⁴ Therefore, it seems likely that an indigenous language of the lower Nile Valley intermingled at an early stage with the language of Levantine migrants.

2.2. SOME EARLY ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Archeologically, there is evidence for the migration of Levantines to Lower Egypt pointing to the 4th millennium BCE at Buto I,¹⁵ at Tell el-Farkha,¹⁶ and possibly at Tell el-Ginn.¹⁷ Thus, there was early exchange between Egypt and Levant on the “way of Horus”,¹⁸ but early seafaring was also likely due to abandonment of the “way of Horus.”¹⁹ Levantine presence in Egypt is mainly detectable thanks to the conservative burial customs among the immigrants, but there is also evidence of trade ware.²⁰

As Egyptian presence during the Late Chalcolithic at Tall Hujayrat al-Ghuzlan and Tall near Aqaba demonstrate, contacts between Egypt and the Levant flourished not only along the Mediterranean coast but also along the Red Sea and the Aravah.²¹ Recently, the first evidence of the early trade of animals during Bronze Age II from Egypt to Canaan at Tell es-Safi/Gath has been published.²²

2.3. THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE AS THE MAIN FORMING PERIOD OF THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE

Acculturation (a multi-faceted process through which individuals adopt cultural elements of their host country/ of the dominant group),²³ hybridization (a reflected and self-conscious mixture of individuals or groups),²⁴ and creolization (the social encounter, mutual influence, and cultural exchange between or among two or more groups resulting in a new “creole” culture)²⁵ are different models of cultural development as a consequence of migration. In the case of the Canaanite settlement in the eastern delta of Egypt, the term creolization seems to be more adequate than acculturation or hybridization to characterize the process, thoroughly reconstructed by Mourad.²⁶ Mourad explicitly refutes the invasion model: “There was no sudden or radical change in the material culture of the eastern Delta or the Memphite capital. [...] There is no evidence for an Egyptian antagonism against a foreign Levantine force that dates specifically to the early Fifteenth

Dynasty, and neither is there support for a Levantine antagonism against the Egyptian culture.”²⁷ The evidence collected by Mourad favors a gradual infiltration of Levantine people in Egypt.

2.3.1. Establishment of long-term trade between Egypt and the Levant (first half of the Twelfth Dynasty)

Mourad sees the Levantine warriors that helped to secure the Twelfth Dynasty against rebellious elements in Middle Egypt as the starting point of stronger interconnections, and cites the tombs of Baqet, Khety, and Khnumhotep I at Beni Hassan and the graffiti from the “alabaster” (travertine) quarry at Hatnub as evidence. These warriors facilitated intercultural exchange and stimulated diplomatic relations between the elites in Egypt and the Levant, especially with Byblos. Egyptian trade with the northern Levant flourished. *The Prophecy of Neferti* reflects the fear of the elite of the Twelfth Dynasty of facing the stronger physical presence of Levantines in the eastern delta.²⁸ The sinister xenophobic prophecy presented in the text, which claims the Asiatics would be excluded by a wall and by war, has been disproven by history. The Levantine presence in the delta and in other parts of the country became stronger during the two succeeding dynasties. Nevertheless, *The Prophecy of Neferti* continued to be copied and studied until the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty, an indication that the creolization of the delta continued for centuries. The Egyptian elite were not involved in this process but, on the contrary, were anxious to observe the ancient traditions and continued in their wishful thinking of an ethnically “clean” homeland. The exact same phenomenon can be seen in a later period in Israel and Judah (see below). A further famous literary document of the period, *The Tale of Sinuhe*, also contains xenophobic elements—in the letter of the Egyptian court, the promise that “the Asiatics will not enter you” is music to Sinuhe’s ears,²⁹ and the text also mentions a wall separating the Asiatics. On the contrary, the story also praises certain qualities of the Levant: the hospitality of its people and the richness of its soil. Sinuhe makes his career in the Levant and marries a daughter of a local sheikh.³⁰ What seemed to be a curse from the gods—to live in the country of the “foreigners,” the potential enemies—turned out to be a blessing. While on a royal level under Amenemhat I, the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty, and his son Senwosret I the military domination of the “dog-like” Asiatics and the rhetoric of dominion is prevalent, the findings of Levantine pottery on Tell el-Dab’a and the representation of Levantine pottery in the tombs of Sobeknakht and Rehuerdjersen in el-Lisht and of Amenemhat at Beni Hassan, as well as the carefully executed characterization of Asians in the tombs of Beni Hassan, document an emerging demographic change in northern and middle Egypt: Levantine people were living and working in Egypt as can be traced at Tell el-Dab’a, Dahshur, Beni Hassan, and Meir. Egyptians and Levantines were also exchanging gifts.³¹ The manifold Egyptian elements in ancient Syrian and glyptic art

presupposes strong Egyptian influence on local elites during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties, namely in Alalakh and Byblos.³²

2.3.2. Diffusion and growth of Canaanite presence in Egypt; invention of alphabet (second half of the Twelfth Dynasty)

The evidence of the second half of the Twelfth Dynasty demonstrates that the Levantine presence—not only in terms of ceramics but also in terms of citizens—in Egypt spread to the south and intensified all over the country. It is newly attested at el-Lahun, el-Lisht, Abydos, and Wadi el-Hol.³³ The famous tombs of Khnumhotep II and III at Beni Hassan in addition to other monuments document trade, diplomatic contact between Egypt and the Levant, and skilled Levantine people hired by Egyptians for special labors.³⁴ In temples, they are depicted as singers, dancers, retainers, and even as priests.³⁵ A military skirmish at *Skmm*, probably Shekhem in Palestine, under Senwosret II remains the last documented Egyptian military action in Palestine for a long period to follow, although we still find the pharaoh smiting Asiatics on a pectoral of Mereret and numerous groups of execration texts from the time of Amenemhat III.

The earliest known proto-alphabetic texts at Wadi el-Hol, along with the attestation of positions such as those of a “scribe of the Levantines” and of an “overseer of the expedition of the Levantines,” document the involvement of Levantines in administration and intercultural exchange. The proto-alphabet of Wadi el-Hol combines the Canaanite phonetic system with the Egyptian writing system and is therefore an intercultural product of extreme value. The starting point of the alphabetic script marks a major step in the development of intercultural intelligence as a base for global human development³⁶ (see also below 3.1).

Under Amenemhat III and IV trade in Sinai reaches its culmination. Only two hostile inscriptions have been found, in Wadi Hammamat. Otherwise, the relations between Egyptians and Canaanites in the southeastern desert and on the Sinai Peninsula are depicted as peaceful. Local Semitic sheikhs are “portrayed” with respect as riding on a donkey, led and followed by servants.³⁷ The Hathor Temple of Serabit el-Khadim was a unique place of intercultural exchange. Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions are located on a reclining sphinx, on a block statuette, on two busts of typical Egyptian design, and in combination with a standing Ptah in his shrine.³⁸ Hathor, the mistress of turquoise, the material dug in the mines of Serabit el-Khadem, is called Ba’alat in the Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions. Ptah and Hathor are the anthropomorphically represented deities, which are also found on the Canaanite scarabs of the period. It is evident that they are adapted in the Levantine cultic symbol system.

2.3.3. Establishment of the Canaanite presence in Egypt (Thirteenth Dynasty)

The urban centers in the eastern delta prospered and trade between the Levant and Egypt increased during the

Thirteenth Dynasty. The elites of Tell el-Dab’a, Tell el-Habwa I, and Tell Basta were not buried in Memphis, but followed Canaanite burial rites in their cities. Concurrently, they produced hybrid, Egyptian-Canaanite seals (see below) and even a statue. The latter, however, was intentionally destroyed during turmoil in the early Thirteenth Dynasty. After a famine or pestilence a large temple in northern Levantine style was built at Tell el-Dab’a (Avaris). While the material culture indicates a continuity of mixed Egyptian and Levantine elements, the burial rite customs are Canaanite and included infant burials.

Levantines were present all over Egypt up to Aswan in the south. Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 provides a lengthy list of Canaanites in Upper Egyptian households. Their status as slaves as suggested by Hayes³⁹ is justifiably questioned by Mourad.⁴⁰ She interprets the Canaanite burial customs, the Canaanite-style temple at Avaris, and some graffiti evidently made by Canaanites as evidence of “freedom to express ethnicity, wealth, status, and religion.”⁴¹ Many representations “suggest that the individuals were of mixed Egyptian-Asiatic ancestry.”⁴² While the connections with the northern Levant were previously dominant, ties with the southern Levant subsequently increased.

2.3.4. Scarabs as strong evidence for the Egyptian-Levantine koine⁴³

The evidence for the use of scarabs by non-Egyptian populations in the second millennium BCE in Nubia and the Levant shows that this practice was inspired by *close cultural interaction with Egyptians*. Yet, unlike in the case of Nubia, where no local scarab production is attested, *the nature of the relations between Egyptians and Canaanites in the first half of the second millennium BCE triggered the Canaanite production of scarabs, first at Tell el-Dab’a and later in Palestine.*⁴⁴ (Emphasis added.)

Ben-Tor differentiates between Egyptian “late Middle Kingdom scarabs” and “Intermediate Period scarabs” and the Canaanite “Early and Late Palestinian Series” (Table 1). The early scarabs from Tell el-Dab’a (Mlinar Type II and III) are a special case. These are a kind of prototype of the Early Palestinian Series produced and used only by the inhabitants of Avaris.

The *Egyptian scarabs of the late Middle Kingdom* are stylistically homogenous, thus reflecting a politically centralized and culturally unified country. The main theme of these scarabs is the arrangement of hieroglyphs (Fig. 1; design class 3) denoting light.⁴⁵ Outside Egypt, scarabs are found in Byblos while Egyptian Second Intermediate Period they are completely absent in Byblos.

The only exception to the homogeneity is Tell el-Dab’a, with its unique proto-Canaanite scarabs. Among the new features we find the gazelle (Fig. 2a), the weather god (Fig. 2b), the “sheikh” (Fig. 2c), and new variants of Hathor (Fig.

	c. 1850 BCE >	c. 1800 BCE >	c. 1750 BCE >	c. 1700 BCE >	c. 1650 BCE >	c. 1600 BCE >	c. 1550 BCE >	c. 1500 BCE >
Egypt	late Middle Kingdom scarabs			Second Intermediate Period scarabs			New Kingdom scarabs	
Tell el-Dab'a stratigraphy	H	G	F Establishment of Canaanites	E/3	E/2	E/1	D/3	D/2
	Mlinar Type II/III							
Palestine				Early Palestinian Series		Late Palestinian Series		

TABLE 1: Chronology-scheme of Egyptian and Palestinian scarabs prior to the Nineteenth Dynasty (based on Ben-Tor 2007).

2d). It should be noted, however, that these new designs are combined with Egyptian hieroglyphs such as the *nh* (Fig. 2a), the red crown (Fig. 2b), the *nfr* (Fig. 2c), or the *nb* sign (Fig. 2d). Thus, the pattern of scarab distribution clearly demonstrates that the palatial-controlled trade between Royal-Egypt and Byblos disappears in favor of a less hierarchically controlled commerce between (northern-) Egypt and the Levant, including Palestine, under the so-called Hyksos, with their center in Avaris. The scarab workshop of Avaris, most likely through means of kin relations, inspired local Canaanite scarab workshops.

As Ben-Tor identified, the *early Palestinian series* (Fig. 3), while locally produced, imitates late Middle Kingdom prototypes. Excavated exemplars stem mainly from early Middle Bronze IIB cemeteries, thus indicating their use as funerary amulets. Their funerary function corresponds with the light symbolism as the main motifs of the scarabs. They symbolize a last wish for light for the deceased. The arrangement of signs as pseudo-names in a cartouche (Fig. 3a and c) or in a palace (Fig. 3b) is a new element. Among the signs we find the alphabetic writing of Ptah's name (Fig. 3d), thus indicating that the seal carvers understood the meaning of the signs quite well and that the Canaanites had integrated the Memphite god in their symbol system.

The *late Palestinian series*—a much larger corpus than the early one—shows Egyptian and Levantine cultural features as well, sometimes even with blends of Syrian glyptic motifs. These are attested throughout the Nile Valley up to Kerma in the south. The majority have been found in tombs. Some impressions on local vessels are attested, but, in contrast to the late Middle Kingdom scarabs, they were used only as amulets and not for

administrative purposes. The pseudo-names are still prominent (Fig. 4a), as is the light-symbol arrangements (Fig. 4b). Hathor becomes even more popular (Fig. 4c–d).⁴⁶

While the scarab itself and most of the symbols engraved on it are of Egyptian origin, the use of these elements is often typically Canaanite. The same is true for the royal-name scarabs. More than 80% of them stem from Palestine and all names are of West Semitic origin. These facts, along with the two million amphorae found at Tell el-Dab'a, reflect the strong ties between the southern Levant and northern Egypt in terms of large-scale trade during this period. At the same time, there are marked differences in the motif repertoire on scarabs between Canaan and the eastern delta, where the toga wearer and the nude goddess are almost totally absent. On the other hand, Hathor and Ptah are adapted in Canaan's symbol system, although sometimes in a local variant.

A typical product of the Levantine-Egyptian interconnections is the falcon-headed god. The motif of the falcon, pushed as a royal symbol since the beginning of the Middle Kingdom,⁴⁷ was well known to the Canaanites from the Egyptian ideology of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasty, as objects with the falcon of Horus from Serabit⁴⁸ and from the necropolis of Byblos⁴⁹ demonstrate. In Canaan, the motif was combined with vegetal elements from the realm of the weather god, the local patron of the kings (Fig. 5a). Combined with a branch-scepter (Fig. 5b) or a flower-scepter (Fig. 5c) and as a dominator over chaos represented by crocodiles⁵⁰ (Fig. 5d), Horus returns in a Canaanized form to Egypt. There the "Hyksos" adapted the motif. It is interesting to recognize that the Nineteenth Dynasty did not follow the amalgamation of Horus and Baal, but preferred the amalgamation of Set and Baal (see

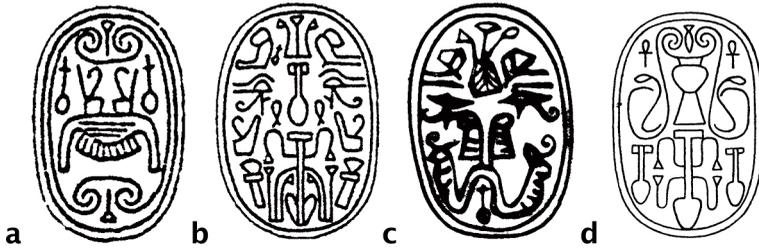


FIGURE 1: Early stamp seal amulets from Egypt: a: Uronarti (Tufnell 1975: 2,7) b: Uronarti (Tufnell 1975, 2,54) c: el-Lisht (Ben-Tor 2006, pl. 8,9) d: Mirgissa (Dunham 1967, fig. 12, 32.1.189).



FIGURE 2: Stamp seal amulets from Tell el-Dab'a: a: (Ben-Tor 2006: pl. 30,2) (Mlinar Type II); b: (Ben-Tor 2006, pl. 30,8) (Mlinar Type II); c: (Ben-Tor 2006, pl. 30,16) (Mlinar Type III); d: (Ben-Tor 2006, pl. 31,11) (Mlinar Type III).

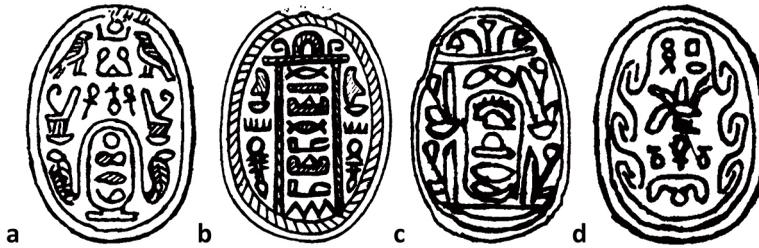


FIGURE 3: Stamp seal amulets of the early Palestinian series: a: Jericho (Kirkbridge 1965, fig. 282,8); b: Jericho (Kirkbridge 1965, fig. 286,12); c: Azor (Gorzalczany/Ben-Tor/Rand 2003, fig. 4); d: Jericho (Kirkbridge 1965, fig. 287,10).

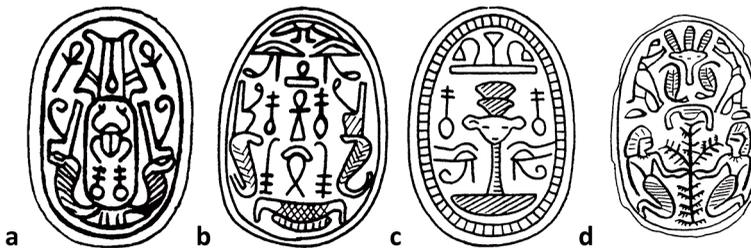


FIGURE 4: Stamp seal amulets of the late Palestinian series: a: Jericho (Kirkbridge 1965, fig. 297,13); b: Tell Fara South (Price 1977, fig. 5,5); c: Tell el-Adschul (CSAPI 1, Adschul Nr. 777); d: Levant (unprovenanced) (IPIAO 2, Nr. 418).

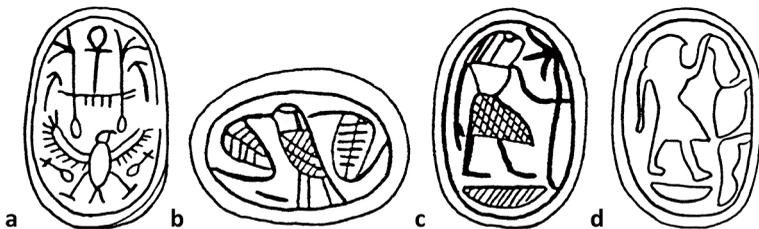


FIGURE 5: The falcon and the falcon-headed in Canaanite contexts: a: Megiddo (IPIAO 2, Nr. 315); b: Shilo (IPIAO 2, Nr. 316); c: Tell el-Far'a South (IPIAO 2, Nr. 329); d: Tell el-Yehudiye (Petrie 1906, pl. IX, 160 [drawing after Keel 1989a, 274, Nr. 101]).

below 2.5.2). Both gods, however, were already seen as partners in the early Middle Kingdom, visually represented as connectors of the two lands.⁵¹

Second Intermediate Period Egyptian design scarabs are inspired by late Middle Kingdom scarabs, but also by Canaanite prototypes. Compared with the Canaanite scarabs, the scarabs featuring Egyptian design are rare.

2.3.5. Avaris: center of the Egyptian-Levantine koine (Fifteenth Dynasty)

Under the Fifteenth Dynasty, Avaris was a growing commercial center of the eastern delta with a large palatial complex, a workshop quarter and magazines with imported goods, with a ritual hall and a cultic courtyard. The ceramic findings illustrate strong connections to the Levant alongside trade with Memphis and the Fayum, the Egyptian oases, Nubia, Mesopotamia, and Cyprus. It is evident that the strong and intensive commerce was the strength of the “Hyksos” dynasty. The temples of this period show elements of Egyptian and Canaanite traditions, while the burial customs remain traditionally Canaanite. Regional pottery and scarab workshops produced local products with mixed influences. According to Mourad, “a growing regionalization or ‘Nilotisation’ is discernible.”⁵² During this period, Tell el-Habwa I and Tell el-Maskhuta prosper as satellites of Avaris. Other sites of the eastern delta such as Tell Rarasha, Inshas, Tell el-Yahudiyah, El-Khata’na, and Tell el-Sahaba attest to Levantine presence by Levantine burials, while only two sites between Memphis and Upper Egypt, Deir Rifeh and Mostagedda, bear evidence of definite Levantine presence. All the more remarkable is an inscription of the Seventeenth Dynasty in Wadi Hammamat attesting to the inclusion of Asiatic-Egyptians in expeditions to the Eastern Desert, thus bearing evidence of an ongoing trade with Levantine people even in the time of a politically *de facto* divided Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period.

2.4. CANAANITE INFLUX UNDER EGYPTIAN SUPREMACY (EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY)

Even under the very self-confident Theban Eighteenth Dynasty and despite the expulsion of the Hyksos from the delta, the Canaanite-Egyptian koine was not annihilated.⁵³ From a long-term perspective, Egypt’s expansion to the north, far beyond the Nile Valley, favored the Canaanite-Egyptian symbiosis by the sheer fact that northern Egypt and the southern Levant now advanced geographically to the center of the empire. The impact of the ongoing cultural exchange may be illustrated with two salient points: the Canaanite presence in Amarna and the production of scarabs at Beth-Shean.

2.4.1. Amarna: an intercultural laboratory (Eighteenth Dynasty)

According to Hoffmeier,⁵⁴ Akhenaten’s aim was to revive the solar cult of the Fifth Dynasty—which represented a Golden Age in the history of Egypt in his opinion. This impetus was probably connected with a deep personal

religious experience of a solar theophany. Akhenaten’s uncle was high priest of Re at Heliopolis, and the Aten temples erected under Amenhotep IV early in his reign resemble solar sanctuaries of the Fifth Dynasty. These temples contain no mention of Amun, although they stood in the middle of his sanctuary. Nevertheless, Hoffmeier does not believe in a political, anti-Amunistic motivation for Akhenaten’s monotheistic revolution; rather, he thinks that Akhenaten experienced a kind of theophany. However, a theophany experience does not explain the monotheism of Akhenaten’s Aten-religion, as Kilchör⁵⁵ rightly notes.

Much more important in understanding the “enigma” of the Amarna monotheism is the unique cultural mix of Akhenaten’s entourage and city, as illustrated by a series of facts. A new type of spindle whorl of Levantine origin characterized by a hemispherical or conical body, together with an upright two-beamed loom for wider lengths of cloth than produced with the traditional Egyptian loom, and with “Levantine” Z-spun (clockwise) fibres of textiles in contrast to S-spun (anti-clockwise) “Egyptian” fibers,⁵⁶ and a Levantine weight,⁵⁷ are attested in Amarna. Furthermore, a stela of the Canaanite *Trr* and his wife *Irbr* drinking in an “Asiatic” manner with straw from an amphora,⁵⁸ strainer tips for these straws,⁵⁹ and crescent-shaped amulets of Levantine origin were also discovered at Amarna.⁶⁰

In addition to these objects from daily life illustrating the presence of Levantine manners and customs in Amarna, there is also direct evidence for intercultural exchange on the highest cultural level, namely the meeting of indigenous and Canaanite music bands, in the tomb of Huya (Fig. 6).⁶¹ The musicians from the Levant or Syria are clearly portrayed as foreigners by their costumes and music instruments, among them a typically Levantine lyre (Ugaritic *knr*; Hebrew *kinnōr*).⁶²

The foreign legionnaires, the foreign women in the textile production, the foreign musicians, singers and dancers, the foreign princesses in the royal harem, and the princes of vassal kings educated in Egypt⁶³ illustrate the multicultural atmosphere of Akhenaten’s city. In sharp contrast to the former periods when Levantines creolized at a relative distance from the Egyptian political center, they became a substantial part of the society in the otherwise almost hermetically isolated center of the empire. I believe that the international atmosphere of Amarna provides a crucial backdrop for the development of Akhenaten’s propaganda of one single and universal god. The experience of “the other” with a mixture of similarities and differences, the knowledge of foreign stories, hymns, and melodies, and the awareness of a world outside of Egypt blessed by light, rain, and life throughout Akenaten’s lifetime was constitutive for the development of a monotheistic belief system, much more so than inner-Egyptian rivalries or a private theophany.⁶⁴ Indeed, the factor that Aten is also a benefactor outside of Egypt is a constitutive element of the famous Amarna hymn from the tomb of Ai.⁶⁵

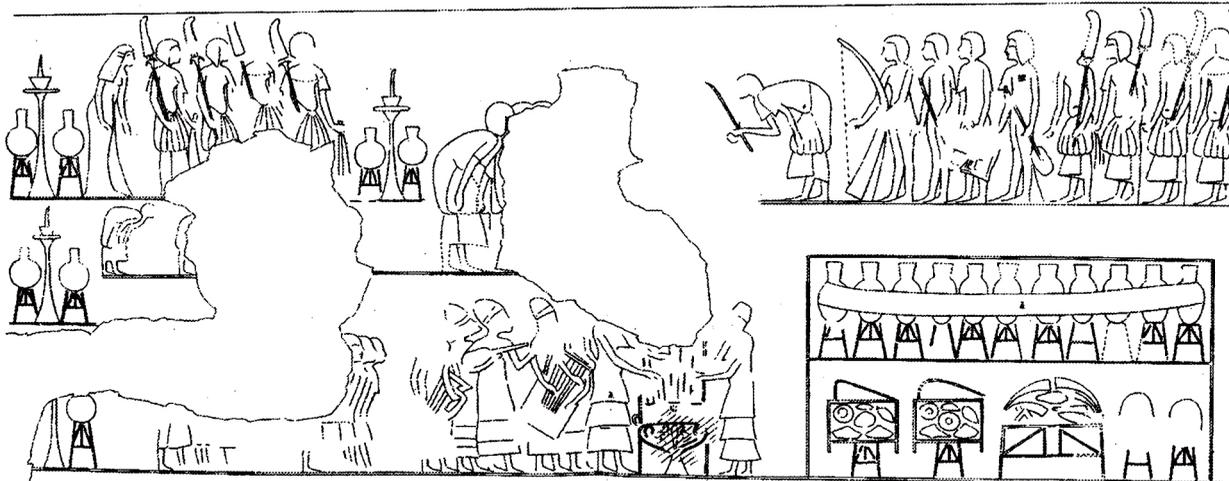


FIGURE 6: Stone relief; Amarna, Tomb of Huya; ca. 14th century BCE (Davies 1905, pl. VII).

In summary, the experience of plurality and diversity among human beings in Egypt, their cultural exchange and, as a consequence, the awareness of godly blessings outside of Egypt gave birth to the concept of a universal god. However, isolated from the rest of the society, the intellectual laboratory of Amarna remained an experiment very much limited in time and space.

2.4.2. *Local themes in the Egyptian scarab factory of Beth-Shean*
As the “Beth-Shean level IX group,”⁶⁶ a limited amount of locally produced silicate scarabs manufactured in molds as replicas (a legless beetle with a reversed image on the bottom side) of imported Egyptian scarabs, nicely illustrates, the development of Egyptian culture during the Late Bronze Age I (Eighteenth Dynasty) in Palestine was modest and highly dependent on the heartland of Egypt. For most of the motifs of this group⁶⁷ parallels are attested in Egypt. However, one of the most favored motifs of this group, a striding man holding a lotus flower (Fig. 7a) or a staff (Fig. 7b), and a cognate motif, an enthroned man with a lotus (Fig. 7c), are rather affiliated with the older local Middle Bronze Age motif of the god or man with the lotus

flower.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the motif of the caprid combined with a branch (Fig. 7d), also found in this group, is an adapted Egyptian icon of Canaanite origin. Thus, the “Beth-Shean level IX group” documents a certain sensibility for locally favored motifs and, taken together with the locally adapted Egyptian technique, argues for a syncretistic Egyptian and Canaanite cult at Beth-Shean.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Beth-Shean is a singular case. An autonomous local Levantine production of seals is missing during this era and probably also during the Ramesside period.⁷⁰ However, two motifs that were largely propagated by the Egyptians during the Eighteenth Dynasty, the image of Hathor and the name of the pharaoh, were integrated into the local symbol system as the shining face of the deity and the deity’s name installed in the temple.⁷¹

2.5. THE CANAANITE-EGYPTIAN KOINE AS AN INSPIRATION FOR EGYPT’S RELIGION (NINETEENTH–TWENTIETH DYNASTY)

The general situation, however, changed remarkably with the Egyptian military campaigns of the early Nineteenth Dynasty. These campaigns were not isolated actions but followed a Ramesside policy for the Levant. Pi-Ramesse (Qantir), the capital of the imperium, was built in the eastern delta, just north of Avaris. The creolized local people were thus controlled, but concurrently, the Egyptian elite were physically closer to them and their culture. The “way of Horus” was strengthened. The significant increase in Egyptian and Egyptian-type pottery in the southern Levant during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty is believed to indicate a much stronger physical presence of Egyptians in the region.⁷² The Egyptianization of the southern Levant

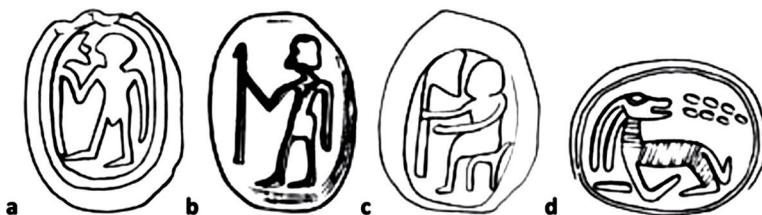


FIGURE 7: Egyptian silicate scarabs of the “Beth-Shean level IX group” with Canaanite motifs: a: Beth-Shean (Ben-Tor and Keel 2012, fig. 3); b: southern Levant (Ben-Tor and Keel 2012, fig. 23); c: Qubeibeh (Ben-Tor and Keel 2012, fig. 20); d: Beth-Shean (Ben-Tor and Keel 2012, fig. 5).

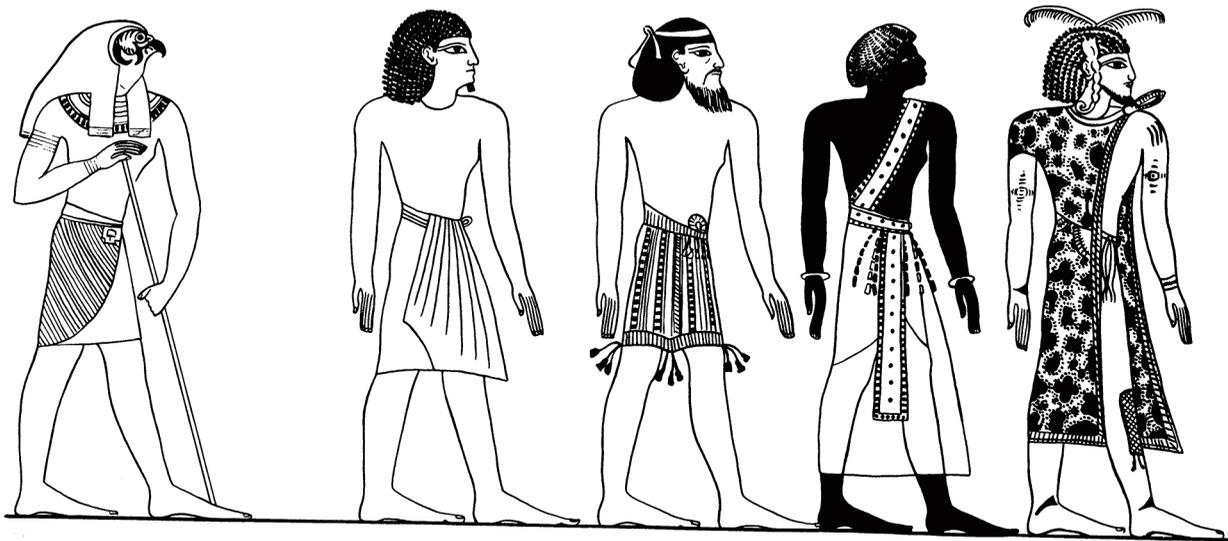


FIGURE 8: Re as pastor of the nations. Note that Egypt is the first after Re. There is no further hierarchy. The non-Egyptian nations from the Levant (northeast), Nubia (south), and Libya (northwest) are not depicted as bound and/or dominated enemies of Egypt (after Lepsius 1849–1858, Abth. III, Bd. VI, Bl. 136).

results in the emulation of Egyptian administration by the local notability.⁷³

2.5.1. Universalism, cosmotheism and intercultural gods

Peter J. Brand characterizes Seti I as a governor affected by the personal piety of his time,⁷⁴ expressed with statues of the king humbly kneeling and praying and the frequent use of the term “beneficial” (*3h*) in his inscriptions.⁷⁵ As a result, he was not only a successful commander during his campaigns to the Levant but also a restorer of the cult of divine kingship, similar to the times of Amenhotep III. A unique painting in his tomb shows Re as shepherd of all races, thus testifying to Seti’s universal understanding of God (Fig. 8) in great contrast to the traditional depiction of the foreign countries as enemies. Furthermore, we find a cosmotheistic view in the hymns of the time, as Assmann has demonstrated.⁷⁶ The mixture of personal piety, military royalism, and theological universalism enables an astonishing exchange of religious ideas in the Levantine-Egyptian realm of the *Pax Aegyptiaca*. The Canaanite gods Reshef, Qudshu, Anat/Astarte, and Hauron were venerated in Egypt⁷⁷ and in Beth-Shean the Egyptians venerated the local deities Mekal and Anat.⁷⁸

2.5.2. Baal-Set, the Canaanite-Egyptian god as god of the Dynasty

Politically most important was the veneration of Set as the Egyptianized version of the Canaanite god Baal. The cult of Baal was officially introduced in Egypt during the 5th year of Amenhotep II, when in *Prw-nfr*—the harbor of Memphis and the preferred residence of the pharaoh—the

Astarte temple was inaugurated. According to the fragmentary myth of “Astarte and the Sea,”⁷⁹ the title of the myth was “New Copy of What He (Baal-Set) Did for the Ennead (of Gods) by Defeating the Sea.” The distinct stamp-seal motif of Baal-Set’s battle against the Sea—already well known as a motif on Syrian cylinder-seals of the Middle Bronze Age—was broadly propagated and existed in an astonishing diversity of stylistic versions, sometimes tending to Egyptian and other times to Levantine features (Fig. 9a–d). The variants illustrate the intercultural mixture of the Levant and northern Egypt in all its dimensions. Othmar Keel mentions a Baal-Set ligature, which later on becomes a Baal-Set-Yahwe ligature in Israel/Judah.⁸⁰ As he demonstrates, both Baal-Set and Yahwe fight in favor of the sun. Thus, the maverick god (Set/Yahwe) becomes a prestigious leader.⁸¹

As the pharaonic names of Seti (I and II) and Setnakhte (“victorious is Set”)⁸² attest, Set, until then associated with bad events, had a programmatic, positive function for the Ramessides, as patron of the fight for justice and the country’s security. One should add that the name of the father of Ramesses I, an officer from the delta, was already Seti.⁸³ Thus, it is very probable that the Nineteenth Dynasty, founded by Ramesses I, also an officer who made his career under Horemheb, had Canaanite roots. On his 400-year stela Ramesses II celebrates his dynasty as the offspring of Set and not of Re, as would have been appropriate according to the royal Egyptian tradition. He called himself “Son of Set.”⁸⁴

Under Seti II the “Tale of the Two Brothers” was composed. This tale was a very complex and sophisticated

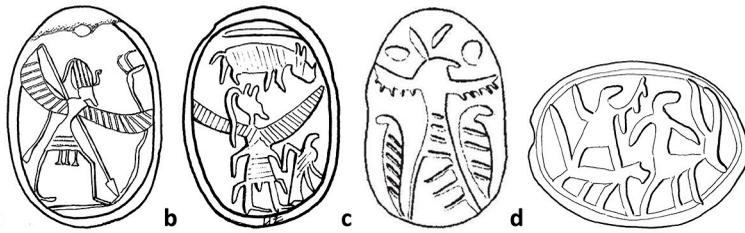


FIGURE 9: Baal-Set on scarabs from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-second Dynasty: **a:** Scarab; enstatite; Tell Far'a South; Nineteenth Dynasty; London, Institute of Archaeology EVI.24/29 (CSAPI 3, Tell Far'a Süd Nr. 138; BODO object no. 16707); **b:** Scarab; enstatite; Tell Far'a South; Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty; London, British Museum L.604 (CSAPI 3, Tell Far'a Süd Nr. 718; BODO object no. 18441); **c:** Scarab; enstatite; Jerusalem, Gihon; 10th century BCE; Reg. 16773; (Keel 2012: fig. 99); **d:** Scarab; enstatite; Dor; Twenty-first/Twenty-second Dynasty; Tel Dor Excavation storage (CSAPI 2, Dor Nr. 27; BODO object no. 18273).

literary product consisting of 24 chapters corresponding to the hours of a day. According to Wolfgang Wettengel,⁸⁵ the highly reflected and construed myth transforms the Canaanite myth concerning the procreative encounter between the weather god and the earth to a story that is compatible with the Re-Osiris cycle. In the myth, Baal-Set is encoded as Bata⁸⁶ and the animal of Set/Baal is the bull, a transcultural symbol. The text is full of motifs that inspired later literature, including the biblical story of Joseph (see below, 3.5.5). The “Tale of the Two Brothers” is an impressive product of creative power, of transformation, and translation in the creolized Egyptian-Canaanite milieu of the eastern delta, which under the Ramessides was at the forefront of Egyptian society.

The scarce information about chaos toward the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty suggests that other, perhaps less integrative, parts of this population with Levantine roots and high-ranking positions in the state were in conflict with the integrative Ramesside elite and had temporarily taken over the power in the delta.⁸⁷

2.5.3. Long-lasting Canaanite veneration of Ptah at its zenith

In addition to the reception of Canaanite gods in Egypt during the Ramesside period, there was also a climax of the veneration of the Memphite god Ptah in Canaan. As mentioned above, the earliest Canaanite Ptah seals on the early series of the Palestinian stamp seals during the Middle Bronze Age use the quasi-alphabetically written name of Ptah (see above, 2.3.4, with Figs. 3d and 10a). This feature is still to be found on a Beth-Shean level 9-group seal (Fig. 10b) and on a late Ramesside scarab (Fig. 10g) with the inscription *j Ptḥ nb mꜣt*, “O Ptah, Lord of truth.”⁸⁸ It is very telling for the Canaanite-Egyptian koine that on seals from Canaan Ptah is associated with Canaanite gods such as Set/Baal and Astarte (Fig. 10c) (called *tꜣ-šrj.t pth*, “daughter of Ptah” in the myth of “Astarte and the Sea”), but also with his Egyptian companion, the lion-headed Sekhmet (Fig. 10e) on a seal from Gezer. Sekhmet was very popular in the southern Levant as an amulet.⁸⁹ Note that on this rectangular plate from Gezer the Ptah scenery is combined with the sphinx and the typical Canaanite motif

of the suckling caprid on the other side. On the Ramesside glyptic the god’s presence in its cult image is favored. On Fig. 10d, for instance, Ptah blesses the pharaoh with life for his sacrifice of “humanity” (the lapwing in the pharaoh’s hand reads *rhjt*, “humanity”).⁹⁰

A hitherto neglected aspect of the Canaanite Ptah iconography is the strong connection with light symbols: on the Hyksos seal (Fig. 10a) the *ꜣh*-sign, on the Ramesside seals (Fig. 10e, g) the Shu/Maat-feather and the falcon-headed sun-god Re-Harakhte, on a seal from the 7th or 6th century (Fig. 10h) a figure of Harpocrates as sun-child (see also below, 4.1.) above the winged sun disk. According to the Berlin “Hymn to Ptah,” the Memphite creation god was praised with the following words:⁹¹ “The tree of life is growing on you (the god Ptah). You vegetate the earth so that the Gods have plenty, as well as the people and the cattle. Thanks to light they can see. If you go down, darkness arises. Either of your light eyes creates light.” The text perfectly expresses the strong connection between light and vegetation, felt and admired by the Egyptians and Canaanites and fashioned in manifold symbolic arrangements on their amulets.⁹² According to the so-called Memphite theology on the Shabaka Stone (Twenty-fifth Dynasty), Ptah creates the world by speaking out loud what he conceptualized in his heart. In Genesis 1, we find a god who first creates the world by speaking, then creates light with his word. The plants sprout on the third day after the separation of the upper and the lower waters. The Memphite cosmogony and the one from Genesis 1 seem to be cognate.

Thus, Ptah is not just any figure in a Canaanite context. The Memphite god—a god of creation—was venerated with his Egyptian name, socialized with Canaanite gods, and the creation theology associated with him was known and integrated in the Judean theology of Elohim.

3. DEVELOPMENTS DURING AND AROUND THE 8TH–7TH CENTURIES BCE (TWENTY-FIRST–TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTY)

Egypt’s weakness compared to earlier periods from the late Twentieth Dynasty onward does not mean that the contacts between Canaan and Egypt diminished, but that



FIGURE 10: Ptah through the ages on stamp-seal amulets from the Southern Levant: **a:** Scarab; enstatite; Atlit; late Thirteenth/Fifteenth Dynasty; Jerusalem IAA 96-1955; CSAPI 1, Atlit Nr. 38 (BODO object no. 22308); **b:** Scarab; composite material; Gat; early Eighteenth Dynasty; Bar-Ilan University; CSAPI 4, Gat Nr. 58 (BODO object no. 31380); **c:** Human-face scaraboid; black stone; Akko; Late Bronze II; Hazorea, Wilfried Israel Museum; CSAPI 1, Akko Nr. 457 (BODO object no. 4416); **d:** Scarab; enstatite; Gat; Ramses II; Bet Shemesh, Magazine IAA 1995.5574; CSAPI 4, Gat Nr. 34 (BODO object no. 18139); **e:** Rectangular plate; enstatite; Geser; Ramses III; Istanbul, Arkeoloji Müzeleri Müdürlüğü 92.476; CSAPI 4, Geser Nr. 100 (BODO object no. 2173); **f:** Scarab; enstatite; Dotan; Nineteenth/beginning of the Twentieth Dynasty; Rockefeller Museum; CSAPI 2, Dotan Nr. 30 (BODO object no. 18819); **g:** Scarab; enstatite; Tell Far'a South; Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty; London, Institute of Archaeology E.XIII.99/21; CSAPI 3, Tell Far'a Süd Nr. 624 (BODO object no. 30862); **h:** Scarab; enstatite; Akko; Twenty-sixth Dynasty; Jerusalem IAA 73-171; CSAPI 1, Akko Nr. 106 (BODO object no. 19441).

they changed, in that they were less one-sided. Sheshonq tried to safeguard the commercial routes to Megiddo and the Aravah with a military campaign.⁹³ Sheshonq's efforts to dominate the southern Levant are reflected in the Judean bone stamp seals,⁹⁴ which appear to confirm the successfulness of his endeavors. However, the new and indigenous form of the nearly quadratric stamp seals, which are used in place of scarabs, document a new self-confidence in the Levantine kingdoms and the birth of local styles. Nevertheless, the Egyptian culture remained important. This is illustrated by: the use of the Egyptian measure *hq3t* in the Judean fortress of Arad,⁹⁵ the use of Egyptian weights in Israel, Judah, Philistia, and Edom,⁹⁶ diplomatic gifts or merchandise from Egypt in the form of alabaster amphoras,⁹⁷ the presence of Judean and/or Israelite seafaring in the Red Sea,⁹⁸ political asylum of Canaanite kings in Egypt,⁹⁹ the Egyptian name "Pashur" in Judah,¹⁰⁰ a Kushite high official in Jerusalem,¹⁰¹ intermarriage,¹⁰² Canaanite foreign workers in Egypt as gardeners/vintners,¹⁰³ and the expression *rmꜥ-mḥtj* "man of the north" for Asian foreigners in Egypt,¹⁰⁴ to mention some examples.

After the achievements of the Ramesside period the Levantine-Egyptian koine was more certain than ever before, but during this period the Levantine side became the more active participant. In the northern Negev and in

the Syrian Desert we find the first proto-Bedouins—stock-breeders also engaged in long-distance trade with camels—demonstrating the rising power of international trade.¹⁰⁵ The use of writing for the purposes of administration, communication, law, and memory was widespread in local city-states of the Levant. The alphabet, based on Egyptian signs but developed as a writing system in the Levant and in Arabia, was used even in Egypt (3.1). While the powerful Ramesside culture adapted Canaanite deities in Egypt, Egyptian religious symbols featured prominently in the craftwork of political centers of the Omride Dynasty in Samaria (3.2) and the Davidic Dynasty in Jerusalem (3.3). Notably, the Egyptian iconography of light is integrated in the Levantine symbol system (3.4).

The Israelite and Judean geographical, ethnographical and theological concepts—transmitted in the Hebrew Bible—reveal the ongoing importance of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine for the identity and social memory of its authors. Canaan and Egypt are perceived as very cognate cultures (3.5.1). The biblical patriarchs and matriarchs are characterized as migrating in the Canaanite-Egyptian koine (3.5.2). Abraham's firstborn and representative of the Ishmaelites is seen as born by an Egyptian slave, thus incarnating the Canaanite-Egyptian koine (3.5.3). The story of Joseph mirrors in many ways the Egyptian story of

Sinuhe (3.5.4) and rewrites settings of the Ramesside “Tale of the Two Brothers” (3.5.5). The Egyptians are seen as mourning for Jacob (Israel; 3.5.6), and an Egyptian princess is depicted as saving and naming Moses (3.5.7). The figure of Moses is connected not only with the house of Pharaoh but also by marriage with the Midianites and Kushites, who at times played an important role in the Egyptian-Levantine koine (3.5.8–9). Eventually, the importance of the Egyptian proximity to Judah becomes apparent in the privileged acceptance in the Judean cult according to the Deuteronomic law (3.5.10). In Persian times, Egypt seems to be an important place for the shaping of a universalistic Judean religion on its way to Judaism and Christianity (3.5.11). In this context, the Egyptians can be seen as “people of YHWH” (3.5.12).

3.1. THE WRITING SYSTEM AS A PRODUCT OF THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE

Some Egyptian sources¹⁰⁶ deliver evidence that there was a defined series of one-consonant signs in use, a kind of alphabet, during the Late Period (7–4th centuries BCE). The series comprises 25 signs. The number fits with a note of Plutarch,¹⁰⁷ according to which the number of Egyptian characters corresponds to the square number of 5 and starts with the ibis. The order of the alphabet corresponds to the South Arabian alphabet. Some of the South Arabian characters are missing in the Egyptian alphabet, while other characters, not used in the South Arabian alphabet, are added at the end of the Egyptian alphabet. This points to the hypothesis that the South Arabian alphabet order was adapted in Egypt. As the South Arabian alphabet order is also attested in Bet Shemesh (Palestine) and Ugarit, there is some discussion of the possibility that the alphabet was conveyed to Egypt via the Levant.¹⁰⁸ Attention should be called to the fact that the liaison between the Levant, Arabia, and Egypt, found behind the history of the alphabet, is also expressed in terms of genealogy in the biblical narrative of Abraham (see below 3.5.3).

3.2. SAMARIAN ICONOGRAPHY REFLECTING THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE

Most noteworthy on the level of religious symbols are the iconographic motifs on the Israelite ivories from Samaria. The dominant theme here is “light”¹⁰⁹ in its different aspects, lavishly designed with Egyptian iconography:

1. The striding light-god with the *k3*-like arm position of Shu, enabling the growth of plants.¹¹⁰ It is a main motif of the Iron Age Canaanite-Egyptian koine, often combined with other elements of the Shu-iconography such as the Shu/Maat-feather and the falcon-headed god (see above, Fig. 5), whereas the striding position continues the ancient imagery of the Levantine weather god (Figs. 2a and 9).
2. The sun-child in the opening flower (Fig. 12c),¹¹¹ an image for the morning light, the triumph of

light over darkness, also a favored motif of Phoenician stamp seals and a motif that remains connected with YHWH/IAO in northern Egypt into the Roman era (Fig. 12r).

3. A variant of the Shu iconography is the kneeling Heh, god of the endless time with the palm panicle (*rnpt*, “year”) in his hands under a sun disk, similar to the falcon-headed god.¹¹²
4. Isis and Nephthys flanking the djed-pillar under a sun disk, symbol of the enduring aspect of light from the Osiris complex.¹¹³

The ongoing Canaanite-Egyptian koine is now visible in the center of the Israelite kingdom as it was visible in the Egyptian kingdom of Akhenaten about 700 years before, in the zenith of Egypt’s power (see above, 2.4.1 with Fig. 6).

3.3. JUDEAN ICONOGRAPHY REFLECTING THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE

While no palatial equipment from Judah has been discovered, the iconography of the official seals are no less telling than the Egyptian forms and contents used: Judah was part of an Egyptian-Levantine koine. On amulets the *wedjat*-eye and Bes appear often, and the Memphite triad is present with Sekhmet, Nefertem, and Pataikos.¹¹⁴ A typical Judean product of the Egyptian-Levantine koine is the four-winged uraeus, locally known as *seraph*. The motif is found on inscribed stamp seals as a symbol of godly protection and blessing.¹¹⁵ The *seraphim* became part of the Judean religious symbol system as a marker of holiness (Isaiah 6:2, 6) and as a symbol of healing (Numbers 21:6–9). On stamps of the Judean administration the winged scarab and the winged sun disk appear in combination with paleo-Hebrew inscriptions.¹¹⁶ Toward the end of the Iron Age, the Egyptian forms diminish in favor of a local, partly aniconic art.¹¹⁷ The healing seraph symbol is even officially eliminated from the cult (2 Kings 14:4). Additionally, it is evident from the biblical record that local reform could not deny the strong ongoing impact of the Egyptian-Levantine koine (see below, 3.5.9–11).

3.4.1. A Canaanite-Egyptian character: the striding light-god

One of the most important anthropomorphic motifs on Levantine stamp seals of the 1st century BCE is the striding light-god with outstretched arms. The character is probably inspired by stamp seals of the Eighteenth Dynasty, depicting Shu—god of air and light—as *nb t3.wj*, carrying the sky (Fig. 11a), as suggested by Othmar Keel.¹¹⁸ It has been tentatively identified with Baal by Keel and Uehlinger, but, if this is indeed appropriate, then it is a “Baal of light” rather than a “Baal of weather and storm.” In addition to the fixed Shu-gesture, the figure can appear on the *nbw*-sign to emphasize his aspect as a god of “splendor” and “radiation” (Fig. 11b). The figure may bear the white crown (Fig. 11b), the red crown (Fig. 11c), or the double crown (Fig. 11d). The crowns underline the splendid and inapproachable character of the figure. The

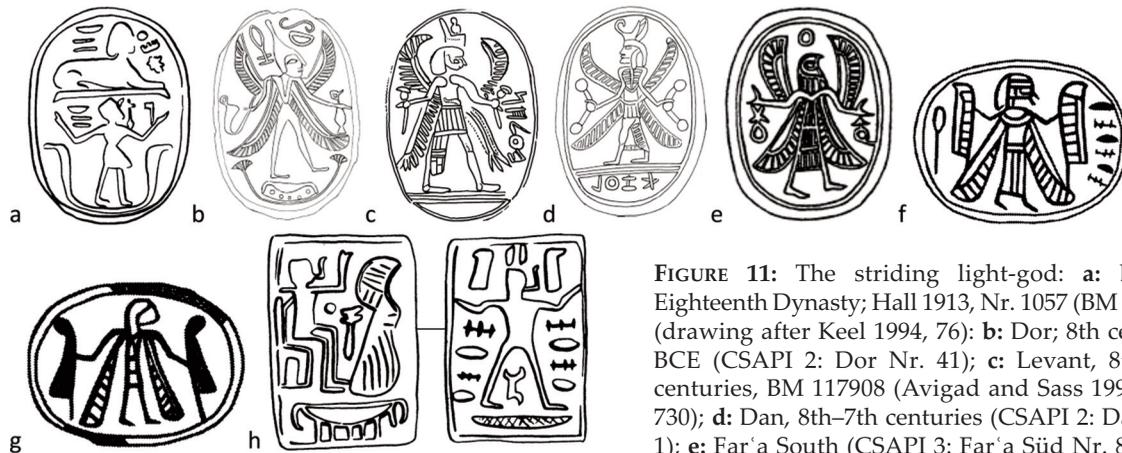


FIGURE 11: The striding light-god: **a**: Egypt, Eighteenth Dynasty; Hall 1913, Nr. 1057 (BM 16828) (drawing after Keel 1994, 76); **b**: Dor; 8th century BCE (CSAPI 2: Dor Nr. 41); **c**: Levant, 8th–7th centuries, BM 117908 (Avigad and Sass 1997, Nr. 730); **d**: Dan, 8th–7th centuries (CSAPI 2: Dan Nr. 1); **e**: Far'a South (CSAPI 3: Far'a Süd Nr. 878); **f**: Lebanon, 8–7th centuries (Boschloos 2014, 2.2); **g**: Achziv, 10th–9th centuries (Boschloos 2014, 10.5); **h**: southern Levant, 10th–9th centuries (Keel 1994, Abb. 13a).

same is true for the uraeus (Fig. 11a–b). The light characteristic of the deity is all the more clear when the figure is depicted with a falcon head and sun disk (Fig. 11e). The objects in the hands of the figure—*ankh*-signs (Fig. 11e),¹¹⁹ or plants such as lotus (Fig. 11c)¹²⁰ and bent papyrus stalks (Fig. 11d)¹²¹—mostly symbolize the effect of the deity as progenitor of life. A Phoenician Iron Age II scarab workshop¹²² preferred to render the type with only one pair of wings holding Shu/Maat-feathers (Fig. 11f–g), thus again emphasizing the light character of the figure, constitutive of the cosmos. This variant possibly developed from the striding Shu on rectangular plates of the 10th century BCE, where the character is combined with an enthroned light-deity on the other side (Fig. 11h).¹²³ Note that nearly the same kind of pseudo-scripture is found on Fig. 11f and h, whereas the shining face, indicated by the uraeus in front of it on Fig. 11h is now missing. Only on a scarab from Dor (Fig. 11b) the striding god still has a uraeus in his hand.

3.5. REFLEXES OF THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE IN THE PRE-EXILIC AND EARLY POST-EXILIC BIBLE

The biblical tradition literature is a unique source within the Levant of the 8–5th centuries BCE, especially for Israel, Judah, and the diaspora communities associated with these two “city-states.” For the first time, we learn from generically very different texts about the relationship with Egypt from a Levantine point of view. It is well recognized that the biblical wisdom literature arose in a milieu of international education. Excerpts from “The Book of Amenemope” were found in Proverbs 22:17–23:14,¹²⁴ parallels to motifs in Psalm 104 in Egyptian hymns,¹²⁵ and cognate motifs of the “Song of Songs” in Egyptian love poetry and in the craftwork of the Egyptian-Levantine koine.¹²⁶

In addition to this implicit presence of Egypt in Levantine literature, we find texts explicitly introducing the question of the relationship with Egypt. They testify to the huge impact of migration on the history of the Southern Levant.

3.5.1.

Closeness of Canaan and Egypt according to Israel's ethno-geography

In the so-called Table of Nations—a text compiled in Persian times,¹²⁷ which situates Israel in the context of all nations known to it—the nations Kush,¹²⁸ Mizraim,¹²⁹ Put,¹³⁰ and Canaan are listed as sons of Ham (Genesis 10:6). Thus, the three traditional neighbors and enemies of Egypt—Kush, Libya, and Canaan¹³¹—are closely linked with Egypt. This corresponds with the historical fact that Egypt was ruled by Canaanites or creolized Egyptians with Canaanite roots (Fifteenth–Sixteenth, Nineteenth–Twentieth Dynasties), Libyans (Twenty-second Dynasty), and Kushites (Twenty-fifth Dynasty). The biblical concept has an iconographic counterpart in the tomb of (the Egyptian-Canaanite) Seti I, where Re as shepherd of the Egyptian, the Canaanite, the Kushite, and the Libyan corresponds to “father” Ham in the biblical text (cf. Fig. 8).

3.5.2. *The patriarchs and matriarchs as part of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine*

The story of the patriarchs and matriarchs starts with the episode of a famine and the decision of Abraham to reside as an alien in Egypt. At customs he declares his wife to be his sister and his beautiful wife is taken into the house of the Pharaoh. Abraham benefits in two ways from this: firstly, he is not murdered, and, secondly, the Pharaoh “for her sake dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys, and camels” (Genesis 12:16). The short text condenses many elements, which were quite characteristic of the relations between the Levant and Egypt for centuries: refuge in hard times, human trafficking, trade, Egyptian border control, diplomatic relations between Canaanites and Egyptians, and stock-breeding of the Canaanites in the eastern delta. The episode is so central to the identity of

Canaanite people that the story is given in two more variants within Genesis (20:1–18; 26:1–11). The story of Joseph (see below, 3.5.4–5) may be seen as an enlarged fourth variant on the theme.

3.5.3. *Abraham as the prime father of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine*

Abraham's firstborn is the son of an Egyptian slave. If the story of the patriarchs and matriarchs are stories of people in the garment of family stories,¹³² and if the story of Abraham's firstborn is deliberately composed for its place in the larger context of Israel's pre-history,¹³³ then the mixed-blood is representative of the creolized Canaanite-Egyptian people. It should be noted that the story of the repudiation of Hagar and her son (Genesis 21:9–21) never mentions his name and that it is therefore quite possible that Hagar's stories are the product of a collage of originally independent stories.¹³⁴ The text, however, is closely related to Genesis 16, explaining the name Ishmael, "God listens," in the sense that God heard the cry of the son, while the first story emphasized that God heard the cry of Hagar (cf. Genesis 16:11 and 21:17). Both chapters emphasize the strong tensions between Sara, representative of the inland Canaanites, and Hagar, representative of the creolized Egyptian-Canaanites of the coast.

Sara and Hagar are representative of the regions farthest south in the Levant and northern Egypt, where the places mentioned in these stories are located. In this region, the inland Canaanites had contact with the Ishmaelites, Hagarites, and the proto-Bedouins who were engaged in long-distance trading.¹³⁵ This explains the non-Egyptian names of Hagar and her son Ishmael. Ishmael's mother, Hagar, is strongly connected with Egypt (Genesis 21:21b): "His mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt." Thus the names of persons and places and the relationship between the protagonists of these stories reflect the creolized milieu of the region between the southern Levant and Egypt from a Judean point of view during the late Iron Age, when the proto-Nabatean influence along the incense road became stronger. A similar reflex is given in the so-called Philisto-Arabian coinage, the earliest coinage of Palestine,¹³⁶ although here there is an additional strong Greek influence, not present in the biblical texts.

3.5.4. *Joseph as the Israelite Sinuhe, or the literary testaments of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine*

Joseph is a Levantine complement to the Egyptian Sinuhe. "The Story of Sinuhe" is a product of the Twelfth Dynasty. The author was very well informed about the circumstances in Canaan. However, during the 750 years in which his text was copied,¹³⁷ the local color of his original masterpiece was diminished in favor of a *lectio facillior*.¹³⁸ The Joseph story goes back to pre-exilic times (8–7th centuries BCE), but was probably rewritten until the Hellenistic era and is thus a typical product of tradition literature.¹³⁹ There are many parallels between Joseph and Sinuhe. However, a thorough comparison of the two

stories has not yet been formally drawn.¹⁴⁰ The list in Table 2 is only an attempt to collect some evidence and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Not only are there at least twelve cognate motifs in both works but the motifs also proceed in approximately the same order. Of course, there are also significant differences between the two works, although the differences as well as the similarities are part of the Canaanite-Egyptian symbiosis. For instance, it is not a coincidence that the career of Sinuhe culminates in the image of a warrior and in the pose of triumph over his enemy, while Joseph succeeds as an ingenious economist, quasi-Pharaoh of the country, and as an oneirocritic.¹⁴¹ The stories emblematically condense the characteristics and excellences of the Canaanites and the Egyptians that made their symbiosis so fruitful over centuries.

Sinuhe is written in the first person; as a result, the burial of the hero is not articulated, although the preparation of his burial in the necropolis is an important topic. The biblical redactors, meanwhile, used the motif of the interment in the homeland for another monumentalization of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine, as they placed it at the end of the so-called Hexateuch at the end of the book of Joshua (24:32). Thus, the Egyptian coffin with the embalmed body of Joseph must be imagined as present during all the years of the migration of the Hebrews between Egypt and the Promised Land.

The fact that Joseph succeeds in Egypt and not in Assyria or Babylonia is key to understanding the impact of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine for the fate of the Israelites. The figure of Akhikar, the successful Canaanite official in Mesopotamia, was not unknown in Israel (cf. Tobit 1:21f; 2:10; 11:19; 14:10; Akhikar manuscripts of Elephantine), but does not have the same importance, although Daniel shows traits of him. The migration of Canaanites to Egypt and of Egyptians to Canaan was an obvious option for centuries and, therefore, a central part of the collective memory on either side.

3.5.5. *Joseph in the role of Bata-Set-Baal: demythologization of Baal in the context of the Canaanite-Levantine koine*

The Joseph narrative uses some settings of the Ramesside "Tale of Two Brothers" very consciously, as is well known (Table 3).¹⁴²

Based on the blessing of Joseph by Jacob (Genesis 49:22–26) and Moses (Deuteronomy 33:13–17), Wettengel considers further parallels between the regeneration motifs connected with Bata and Joseph. Both are considered to be bulls, both are associated with the fertile earth. Joseph "resurrects" from a pit (37:24, 28)¹⁴³ and from the prison (39:20; 41:14), thus coming back to life from a death-like period in the earth as Baal and Osiris. Eventually, he interprets Pharaoh's dream as a cycle of fertility and drought, abundance and hunger. Wettengel believes that via the figure of Joseph and using the "Tale of Two Brothers" as a blueprint, qualities of Baal were assimilated and made fruitful for the YHWH religion.

	COGNATE MOTIF	SINUHE	JOSEPH
1.	Both leave their homeland because of troubles.	Flight due to his fear of a palace revolt (§§4–5)	He is sold by his envious brothers as a slave to traders on the way to Egypt (Genesis 37)
2.	Both have to endure many difficulties.	Dangerous journey from the western delta to the eastern delta; crossing of the Egyptian border; desert journey (§§5–7)	Working as a slave, sexually pressured and wrongly accused and imprisoned (Genesis 39–41:38)
3.	Both are saved by a man in the fields. (A proleptic saving of the hero in both narratives [Koenen 1997].)	A Bedouin finds him in a dehydrated state (§7)	A man finds him wandering in the fields in search of his brethren (Genesis 37:15–17)
4.	Both are saved by a very high-ranking member of the foreign society in which they live.	Saved by the governor of Upper Retjenu (§§7–8)	Saved by the Pharaoh (Genesis 41:37–40)
5.	Both marry the daughter of a high-ranking man.	Oldest daughter of Ammunesh (§15)	Asenath, daughter of Potipher, priest of On (Genesis 41:45)
6.	Both make a fantastic career.	Ruler of a tribe (§15:18); great land owner (§15); commander of the army (§17); smites the enemy (§§18–21); rich in cattle (21:18–19)	Set over all the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:41, 43, 45); bearer of the Pharaoh's signet ring (Genesis 41:42); reformer of the country's economy (Genesis 47:13–26)
7.	Both eat the food of the host country.	Many sweets things and milk in every dish (§16:6–7)	He eats separately with the Egyptians (Genesis 43:32)
8.	Both suffer homesickness.	Wants to see the residence in Egypt (§21:32–22:3)	Wants to know about his father and to see his brother Benjamin (Genesis 42:20; 43:27–30)
9.	Both want to be buried in their homeland.	Nothing is better than a burial in the homeland (§22:4–7)	He is embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt, but made the Israelites swear to carry him up to the land of his fathers (Genesis 50:24–26)
10.	Both are not immediately recognized by their relatives.	The royal wife and the king's children cry when they see Sinuhe as a Bedouin (§36)	The brethren do not recognize Joseph (Genesis 42:7) and when Joseph shows himself they are dismayed at his presence (Genesis 45:3)
11.	Both reconcile with the kinfolk of the homeland.	He is newly accepted by the pharaoh and his entourage: "He shall not fear" (§38)	The brethren ask Joseph to forgive and he reconciles with them: "Do not be afraid!" (Genesis 50:15–21)
12.	Both are buried in their homeland.	A pyramid is constructed and its cult established (40:9–24)	He is buried in Shekhem on a portion of ground bought from the sons of Hamor by his father Jacob (Joshua 24:32)

TABLE 2: Example cognate motifs in the stories of Sinuhe and Joseph.

3.5.6. *The encounter between Israel and the Pharaoh, and the mourning of the Egyptians for Israel*

When Jacob (an alias for Israel) came down to Egypt, his son Joseph arranged an encounter between him and the Pharaoh. The short and highly stylized episode in Genesis 47:7–10 consists of a short dialogue between the two men, framed by blessings of Israel to Pharaoh. Pharaoh asks Jacob for the number of years of his life and Jacob presents himself in a singular wording as a 130-year-old migrant. The episode of the peaceful encounter between the affable king and the forthright patriarch is an affecting image of

the Egyptian-Israelite koine as a showcase of the Egyptian-Levantine koine.

When Joseph went up to Canaan to bury his father, "with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt" (Genesis 50:7) and "when the Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, 'This is a grievous mourning on the part of the Egyptians'" and therefore the place was named Abel-mizraim (Genesis 50:11). Thus, the Canaanite-Egyptian koine in the Hebrew Bible is monumentalized in a place

	COGNATE MOTIF	TALE OF TWO BROTHERS	JOSEPH
1.	A young man living and working in the house of an older/superior man.	Bata, the younger, lives and works in the house of Anubis, the older (1:1–3).	Joseph, the Canaanite, lives in the house of the Egyptian Potiphar, captain of the guard (Genesis 39:1).
2.	The young man is successful.	The cattle prosper greatly (2:1–2)	House and field are blessed (Genesis 39:5)
3.	The young man is strong/beautiful.	Bata is beautiful and strong (1:4; 3:6)	Joseph is beautiful, blessed, and proficient (Genesis 39:3, 6)
4.	Seduction of the foreign young man by superior woman.	She wants to know Bata as a man (3:6f)	She wants to sleep with Joseph (Genesis 39:12).
5.	The woman wants to make clothing for the man./The man leaves his clothing to the woman.	She wants to make beautiful garments for Bata (3:7f)	He leaves the garment in the woman's hand (Genesis 39:12f)
6.	Defamation of the young man by the spurned woman.	The woman, draped as a beaten victim of rape, defames Bata (4:4–5:4).	The woman with the garment as <i>corpus delicti</i> defames Joseph (Genesis 39:14–18).

TABLE 3: Example cognate motifs in the “Tale of Two Brothers” and the story of Joseph.

name in Transjordanian Canaan that harks back to the Egyptian mourning of Israel. The Egyptian reference to the ancestor of Israel/Jacob as part of the Israelite collective memory clearly demonstrates the fundamental impact of the good relations with Egypt for the Israelite culture. A greater contrast to the Exodus tradition is not conceivable.

3.5.7. Moses, saved and named by an Egyptian princess

Another very emblematic monumentalization of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine is the naming of Moses by the daughter of Pharaoh (Exodus 2:10). However the name is interpreted,¹⁴⁴ the sheer fact that the princess saved the Hebrew boy and gave him a name is a deep sign of recognition of the humanitarian side of the Egyptian culture by the Hebrew writer and his audience. The episode is all the more touching if the name is understood as a Hebrew name, thus insinuating that the Egyptian princess knew some Hebrew and was a real mediator between cultures.¹⁴⁵

3.5.8. Moses and his god as incarnation of the Midianite-Egyptian-Levantine koine

Moses is not only saved and educated by Egyptians, according to the book of Exodus, but also related by marriage with the Midianites. The Biblical story (Exodus 2:15–22) recounts that Moses, on his flight from Egypt, was recognized as an Egyptian by the daughters of Reuel, who was a Midianite. Moses marries Zipporah, one of them. He calls his firstborn Gershom. The name is interpreted as an explanation for Moses' life as a foreigner among the Midianites. As the Midianites are portrayed as archenemies of Israel in most of the biblical texts (e.g., Numbers 10:29–32; 22–31; Judges 6–8), this seems to be an

old, inerasable social memory. According to 1 Kings 11:18, the only instance in the Bible where Midian denotes a county and not a people, it is said that the region is located south of Edom on the way to Egypt. In the land of Midian, the Hebrew Moses, who was married as an Egyptian foreigner with a Midianite woman, encounters the local god YHWH—another old memory¹⁴⁶—who will be the savior-god of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Thus, the Biblical memory delivers—again, in the mode of a folk tale—another important memory of the Egyptian-Levantine-Arab (Midianite) koine.

3.5.9. Moses' Kushite wife and the ruffraff among the Israelites and between Egypt, Canaan, and Arabia

According to the book of Numbers, Moses' wife was Kushite and thus a woman from the descendants of Ham. Moses' wife Zippora was a Midianite, as we have seen. Possibly northwestern Arabia, the land of the Midianites, and not Ethiopia, was associated with Kush from an Israelite point of view.¹⁴⁷ Miriam's and Aaron's criticism of Moses' racially mixed liaison is drastically echoed by the punishment of Miriam with leprosy (Numbers 12:1, 10) and by emphasizing the undisputable authority of Moses compared to (other) prophets. Along with the accentuation of Moses' authority that the episode holds, it also shows that opposition against mixed couples is to be sharply refuted. In the episode, Moses and his Kushite wife serve as a model for mixed couples of the highest social rank. It does not come as a surprise that this position was positively absorbed by the Hellenistic Jews, while it was relativized—not refuted—by Rabbinic traditions, who interpreted Kushite metaphorically as denoting “distinctive” or “beautiful.”¹⁴⁸

On a lower social level, the mixed population among the migrating Israelites is mentioned twice in the Torah: as a “mixed multitude” (*‘erāv rav*) in Exodus 12:38 and as “riffraff” (*‘asafsuf*) in Numbers 11:4.¹⁴⁹ In a list of (all) people, Jeremiah mentions twice a mixed population (*‘erāv*): once after the Pharaoh and his people (Jeremiah 25:20) and once after the kings of Arabia (Jeremiah 25:24). If we combine the two statements, we may conclude that for Jeremiah the region of northwestern Arabia and northeastern Egypt was characterized by a mixed population—probably the descendants of the creolized population of the times of the Fifteenth Dynasty and the Ramesside period and of the ongoing migration in this region. Similarly, but less precisely, Ezekiel mentions “all the mixed (people)” (*‘erāv*) in a prophesy for the nations after Kush, Put, and Lud (Ezekiel 30:5).

3.5.10. *“You shall not abhor any of the Egyptians” (Deuteronomy 23:7f)*

According to Nehemiah 13:1, “all mixed (people)” (*kol-‘erāv*) have been separated from “Israel.” The statement is found after a passage that harks back to a Torah lecture from the book of Deuteronomy (Nehemiah 13:1–2 = Deuteronomy 23:4–5):

On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, because they did not meet the Israelites with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them—yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.

Significantly, the following passage, which prohibits abhorring an Edomite “for they are your kin,” and any of the Egyptians, “because you were an alien residing in their land,” is not quoted in the book of Nehemiah. The reason that the book of Deuteronomy gives for the practice that an Egyptian of the third generation—the children of a second—shall be integrated to the assembly of YHWH follows, of course, the Exodus paradigm that is so important for the Deuteronomist, and thus a worldview that sees Israel and Egypt as sharply distinct ethnic groups. The historic truth, however, may have been different. Edomite and Egyptian blood was likely to be found among the mixed people living in the triangle where the Canaanite, the Arabian and the Egyptian cultures were in permanent contact. The Deuteronomic law is not a concession to the Egyptians and Edomites, but rather the legal ratification of the fact that migration and the mixture of these nations had, over centuries, become normal to a certain degree.¹⁵⁰

3.5.11. *Gender-mixed, inter-religious dispute of Judeans in Egypt*

The book of Jeremiah records in chapters 43–44 two episodes of civil disobedience by the Judean people confronted with words of YHWH as transmitted by

Jeremiah. The first episode recalls that Johanan, son of Kareh, led the rest of the Judeans, who were not deported, to Egypt despite YHWH’s warning to stay in the country and not to be afraid of the Babylonians. The second episode recalls the Judean women who, when confronted by Jeremiah, openly contradict YHWH’s word that Jerusalem’s destruction is the consequence of idolatry.

The women insist that the disaster is rather the consequence of the interruption of sacrifices for the queen of heaven (Jeremiah 44:18). The two episodes illustrate vividly that for the Judeans Egypt was still the first place to go in times of distress. Migdol,¹⁵¹ Tahpanhes,¹⁵² Memphis,¹⁵³ and the land of Pathros¹⁵⁴ are listed explicitly as places with Judean communities. That the dispute between Jeremiah and the Judean women is located here may indicate a less patriarchal and more liberal religious position on the part of the Egyptian Judeans in general.

3.5.12. *The Egyptians as “people of YHWH” (Isaiah 19)*

Isaiah 19:1–15, a poetic text, probably describes the political disaster in Egypt after about 715 BCE. The rulers of Tanis/Bubastis (Twenty-second Dynasty), Leontopolis (Twenty-third Dynasty), Sais (Twenty-fourth Dynasty), and Napata (Twenty-fifth Dynasty) were rivals, and the country suffered a deep crisis.¹⁵⁵ The following verses in prose (19:16–18) were added later on. The only question is *when* they were added. Niccacci recalls Sargon II: “I opened the sealed-off harbor of Egypt, mixed Assyrians with Egyptians, and let them trade with each other.”¹⁵⁶ The biblical text on its own promises the day when “there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians” (Isaiah 19:23). For Niccacci, the prose text might well be from Isaiah’s time, whereas Schipper¹⁵⁷ connects Isaiah 19 with much later Egyptian prophecies, the “Potter’s Oracle” (see below, 4.2) and the “Oracle of the Lamb.” However, these texts stem from the late 2nd century BCE and the early 1st century CE, whereas Isaiah 19 is attested in Qumran in the early 2nd century BCE. Similarities between the texts are relatively easy to explain if we assume that not only the Egyptian prophets knew the much older “Prophecy of Neferti,” after which they modelled their texts, but also biblical writers. Moreover, we should emphasize that the tone of the biblical text differs sharply from the assumed Egyptian “sources,” since the biblical text does not propagate a mentality of separation and isolation, but rather evokes a never seen partnership with Egypt. The fivefold oracle reads:

16 [1] **On that day** the Egyptians will be like women, and tremble with fear before the hand that YHWH Zebaoth raises against them. 17 And the land of Judah will become a terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom it is mentioned will fear because of the plan that YHWH Zebaoth is planning against them.

18 [2] **On that day** there will be five cities in the

land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to *YHWH Zebaoth*. One of these will be called the City of the Sun.¹⁵⁸

19 [3] **On that day** there will be an altar to *YHWH* in the center of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to *YHWH* at its border. 20 It will be a sign and a witness to *YHWH Zebaoth* in the land of Egypt; when they cry to *YHWH* because of oppressors, he will send them a savior, and will defend and deliver them. 21 *YHWH* will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know *YHWH* on that day, and will worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to *YHWH* and perform them. 22 *YHWH* will strike Egypt, striking and healing; they will return to *YHWH*, and he will listen to their supplications and heal them.

23 [4] **On that day** there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.

24 [5] **On that day** Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, 25 whom the *YHWH Zebaoth* has blessed, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage.”

The text is crammed with the ostinato-like mentioning of Egypt/Egyptians (14 times), and *YHWH* (13 times, 5 of them with the epithet *Zebaoth*). Furthermore, Assyria (6 times), Judah, Canaan, Israel, and the City of the Sun (1 time each) are mentioned. “Egypt” in its fear starts the sequence and delivers the theme. Judah (v.17) and Israel (v.24) form an inclusion of the rest: a promise. I hold, therefore, that the verses form a unit. The formula “on that day” (5 times) structures the text into five oracles with the longest and most important in the center, “naturally” speaking of the altar of *YHWH* and of the Egyptians worshipping *YHWH* in the center of Egypt. If “on that day” refers to Isaiah 19:1, then it means the day when *YHWH*, alias Baal, alias Set—God’s face of the Levant—travels swiftly on a cloud to Egypt.

The Septuagint renders the end of the oracle in a much more Judeo-centric version. Instead of the blessing over Assur and Egypt we find a blessing over the Judeans in these countries. Furthermore, the Egyptians are seen as slaves of the Assyrians. Thus the last two last oracles read:

23 [4] **On that day** there will be a *way* from Egypt to the Assyrians, and the Assyrians will enter into Egypt, and the Egyptians will go to the Assyrians, and the Egyptians *will serve* the Assyrians.

24 [5] **On that day** will Israel be third with the

Egyptians and the Assyrians, blessed in the land which the Lord Sabaoth has blessed, 25 saying, Blessed be *my people that is in Egypt*, and *that is among the Assyrians*, and Israel mine inheritance.

In fact, the Egyptians became vassals of the Assyrians under Esarhaddon, and the sorrow for the prosperity of Judean communities in Egypt is well attested by the Judean Elephantine archive of the Persian Period. Evidently, the Septuagint is closer to the historic reality (and therefore the Hebrew “Vorlage” of the Septuagint may well have been the original text) whereas the Masoretic text is more utopic and probably of a later date.¹⁵⁹ Most noteworthy however is the uncontroversial notion of a “language of Canaan” (*šfat kna’an; glōssa tē Chananitidi*; Isaiah 19:18) in both versions. Judeans and Egyptians are seen as part of an Egyptian-Canaanite koine. In any case, the sequence of oracles in Isaiah 19:16–24 is an impressive testimonial of this koine, and the different versions illustrate the very dynamic character of the fruitful but also highly vulnerable multi-ethnic relationships of the region.

4. EXEMPLARY OUTLOOKS TO THE FOLLOWING PERIODS

Trade on donkeys and camels (cf. Isaiah 30:6) between the Levant and Egypt was more important than ever before in Persian times and later on. The effect and importance of the alliance with a country such as Egypt, which had lost its former power, was, however, a subject of different opinions. While the Masoretic text of Isaiah 30:7 holds that Egypt is a sleeping dragon (“Rahab who sits still”), the account in the Septuagint version holds that any Egyptian help is consolation in vain. Despite this pessimistic view, commerce between the Levant and Egypt grew, and when the Romans invaded the Levant, they portrayed the Judeans on a coin (58 BCE) as camel riders, as they had previously done with the Nabateans.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, the Levant, with the northern end of the incense road, the coast road, the king’s road in Transjordan, and some important connecting roads in between these highways, continued to be a key region for international trade.¹⁶¹

The Hellenistic culture brought a new element into the puzzle. However, it is impressive to see how iconographic themes of Canaanite-Egyptian koine persist from the Late Bronze Age until the Roman period, as the example of Harpocrates demonstrates (4.1), thus attesting to the ongoing sharing of cultural concepts in the Levant and Egypt.¹⁶² Judeans in Egypt were variably integrated. In Edfu, Thebes, and Leontopolis we find Hebrew names among the military, administrative, and economic elite. The Jews of the *politeuma*¹⁶³ of Herakleopolis had their own Greek names. In the village of Trikomia in the Fayum they are seen as part of the tax-privileged “Greeks.” In the village of Boubastos in the division of Herakleides of the Arsinoite nomos we find a group of Judeans alongside a group of Persians and Arabs. In Alexandria they are gathered in a *politeuma* with their own *ethnarchês*.¹⁶⁴ The Hellenistic Judeans of Egypt or rather of the Levantine-

Egyptian koine had their lobby in Palestine. The story of Joseph the Tobiad can be read as a piece of propaganda, intended for Judeans and others, for life in Ptolemaic Egypt.¹⁶⁵ However, the vivid Hellenistic literary scene also enabled the propaganda of voices of demarcation and separation (4.2).¹⁶⁶ The Levantine-Egyptian koine was one of the environments that shaped the highly syncretistic new religion called Christianity. Egypt served as a background that could not be neglected, not only for the Hellenist Luke but also for the Jewish-Christian Matthew (4.3). The Levantine-Egyptian koine remained a cosmos of inspiration for the times of the Greek koine in the eastern Mediterranean (4.4).

4.1. HARPOCRATES

The motif of Harpocrates on objects from Egypt and the Levant illustrates the shared symbolic world as a consequence of ongoing migration. The often highlighted Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian imperialism did not erase Levantine-Egyptian trans-cultural traditions, nor did Hellenistic dominance. The young child with his finger in his mouth became one of the most important images of the rising sun, and of legitimate kingship, during the 1st century BCE in the Levant and Egypt, where, starting around the mid-11th century BCE,¹⁶⁷ the motif was called “Horus the child” (*Hor-pa-khered*; in Greek, Harpocrates). The oldest examples from the southern Levant are gold amulets of the Early Iron Age from Megiddo (Fig. 12a).¹⁶⁸ Gold was mainly used to symbolize light. Figurative amulets of the god remain popular in the Levant into the Hellenistic period (Fig. 12p). The Egyptian motif of Harpocrates on the lotus flower (Fig. 12b) was adapted by the Levantine ivory workshops, as attested in Samaria (Fig. 12c), in Nimrud, and elsewhere, and on Levantine and Egyptian seals (Fig. 12g, h, k, l, n, o). The simplest types on seals show only the crouching child with different crowns (Fig. 12d, f). The motif is well attested on name seals (Fig. 12e, m).¹⁶⁹ Sometimes venerator emphasizes the godly aspect of Harpocrates (Fig. 12l-m). Complex scenes associate Harpocrates with the papyrus thicket of the Nile (Fig. 12h), the Memphite gods Mut (Fig. 12h) and Ptah (Fig. 12i = fig. 10h), and the triad of Abydos (Osiris, Isis, Horus; Fig. 12j, n). The deity was propagated by the Lagides and remained popular into Roman times on gems (Fig. 12q-r). The connection of the image of the sun-child in the lotus flower with YHWH, which can only be assumed for Samaria (Fig. 12c), is made explicit on one of these Roman gems almost a thousand years later (Fig. 12q). The other side of the item has the word CABAW. Comparing it with Fig. 12c and q, we note that the flagellum of Osiris has been exchanged by the flagellum of Helios (in quadriga), often depicted in synagogues of the 4–5th centuries CE.

4.2. VOICES OF DEMARCATION AND SEPARATION

The Egyptian-Levantine koine is also attested indirectly by its opponents, those circles in Egypt and the Levant who characterized their neighbors as enemies or at least as

distant foreigners—a well-known strategy to deny the challenging multicultural reality.

The “Potter’s Oracle,” a Greek text, written by an Egyptian at the end of the 2nd century BCE, describes Egypt in distress and waiting for a legitimate king.¹⁷⁰ The “Prophecy of Neferti” (see above, 2.3.1) and other ancient texts are used as models. The setting is the court of a certain King Amenophis as known from the writings of Manetho (see below) and Chaeremon of Alexandria.¹⁷¹ Thus, the oracle updates the traditional setting to the new situation after the Macedonian invasion of the country. Alexandria, the “city by the sea,” is characterized as the city of the “Typhonians,” the followers of Set, a designation for foreigners of all sorts.¹⁷² The oracle foretells their expulsion from Egypt and the return of idols to Alexandria—a new motif compared to the older pattern of the prophecy. The oracle propagates an isolationist attitude in great contrast to the “Alexander romance” (3rd century CE), where Alexander is portrayed as a new Pharaoh.¹⁷³ Likewise, the Judeans saw Alexander as a redeemer (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* XI). Again, we find a Canaanite-Egyptian koine alongside or as a backdrop to an isolationist ideology.

Manetho tells the story of a people suffering from leprosy. They were first assigned to toil in the stone quarries by a certain king Amenophis and then were settled in Avaris, the city of the god Set (Typhon). There Osarseph, a priest from Heliopolis (an alias for Moses), initiated a revolution, prohibited the exercise of Egyptian religion, and allied with the Hyksos in Jerusalem, who had been previously expelled from Egypt. Egypt experienced a time of disaster. After 13 years, Amenophis, who lived in exile according to an oracle, returned from Ethiopia, defeated the Hyksos (Judeans), killed many, and threw the remainder out of the country.¹⁷⁴ Interestingly enough, even in this proto-anti-Judean account the enemies are not pure foreigners but a mixture of Egyptian lepers and Hyksos, thus still illustrating the Levantine-Egyptian koine.

To express and probably also to encourage distance from Egypt in Israel and Judah, Egypt was labeled a “slave-house” (*be’it ‘avādīm*; Exodus 13:3, 14; 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5, 10; Joshua 24:17; Judges 6:8; Jeremiah 34:13; Micah 6:4) by the Deuteronomist in the 7th century BCE. The miraculous exodus of Hebrew emigrants from Egypt was the Israelite founding myth of this national-religious party in Jerusalem. However, the label “Egyptians” could also hint to an exploitative elite in their own country (cf. Deuteronomy 17:16).¹⁷⁵

In Persian times, in the so-called Table of Nations (Genesis 10),¹⁷⁶ “Egypt is perceived as close geographically or spatially, but distant in terms of kinship.”¹⁷⁷ Despite the fact that the Israelite and Judean language were dialectal variants of the Canaanite language, as is the case of the Philistine, Tyrian, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, and other languages, the fictional genealogy construes the largest distance possible to separate Israel, son of Sem, from Canaan, son of Ham and brother of Mizraim (Genesis



FIGURE 12: Sun-child/Harpocrates: **a:** gold amulet, Megiddo, ca. 12th century BCE (Herrmann 1994, Nr. 7); **b:** gold bracelet, Sais (?), ca. 9th–8th centuries BCE (Meeks 2010, Nr. 194); **c:** ivory, Samaria, ca. 8th century BCE (Keel 1997, fig. 58); **d:** Dan, ca. 9th–6th centuries BCE (CSAPI 2, Dan Nr. 21); **e:** Israel/Juda, 8th century BCE, Israel Museum 68.35.197 (Avigad and Sass 1997, Nr. 126); **f:** Acco, 8th–6th centuries BCE (CSAPI 1, Akko Nr. 197); **g:** Acco, 8th–6th centuries BCE (CSAPI 1, Akko Nr. 105); **h:** Acco, 664–525 BCE (CSAPI 1, Akko Nr. 71); **i:** Acco, 664–525 BCE (CSAPI 1, Akko Nr. 106); **j:** Amrit; 664–525 BCE; British Museum E48235; **k:** Amrit; 664–525 BCE; British Museum E48227; **l:** Amrit; 664–525 BCE; British Museum E48218; **m:** steatite scaraboid, Revadim, 7th century BCE (Giveon 1961, pl. III A); **n:** Levant; 664–525 BCE; private collection; **o:** scarab, Naukratis, 600–570 BCE, British Museum EA66500; **p:** Atlit, 3rd–1st century BCE (Herrmann 1994, Nr. 15); **q:** hematite scarab, eastern Mediterranean, 1st century BCE–1st century CE; British Museum OA.9562; **r:** heliotrope gem, eastern Mediterranean, 2nd–3rd centuries CE; Gerhard Hirsch Nachfolger, Auktion 292, lot 1527, <http://www.coinhirsch.de/index.php?p=auktion&sub=292>, accessed 10 November 2016 (j–l, o, q, from the British Museum Collection online, https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx, © Trustees of the British Museum).

10:6), while the brotherhood of Canaan and Ham attests to the awareness of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine (see above, 3.5.1).

In the “Priestly Code” in the introduction of a list of sexual taboos the people of Israel are taught (Leviticus 18:3): “You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you.” This racist teaching¹⁷⁸ was generalized and humanized by the allegorical exegesis of the exegetes of Alexandria, who explained that Egypt is a symbol for debauchment or the world, and Canaan for vice or illusion.¹⁷⁹

A certain ambivalence between feelings of attraction and disgust still applies to Hellenistic and Roman times. In the “Book of Wisdom” (early 1st century BCE) the “people of

God” are contrasted to “those people” who deserved punishment because “they worship even the most hateful animals, which are worse than all others when judged by their lack of intelligence” (Wisdom 15:18–16:1).¹⁸⁰ At the same time the “Book of Wisdom” adapts certain theological concepts from the Egyptian Isis cult¹⁸¹ and from Maat¹⁸² to express the relation between God and wisdom.

4.3. PERSISTENCE OF THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE REFLECTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

One of the speeches of the Hellenistic Jewish-Christian proto-martyr Stephen¹⁸³—the first of seven prototypes of Hellenists introduced in Acts 6:1–6—recapitulates the main events of salvation history from his point of view.

Regarding Moses, he says (Acts 7:21–22): “Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. So Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds.” The adoption by Pharaoh’s daughter emphasizes Moses’ status among gentiles. The “wisdom of Egypt” parallels the wisdom of Joseph (Acts 7:10), another famous Hebrew who lived in Egypt, and that of Stephen and his Hellenistic colleagues (Acts 6:3, 10). Stephen (in Luke’s words) underlines here diaspora education and learning from the gentiles. To what degree, however, Moses learned from the Egyptians was debated among Jewish writers in antiquity. Jubilee 47:9 holds that Moses’ father Amram taught him to write. Philo, on the other hand, emphasizes the (Hellenistic!) Egyptian education of Moses.¹⁸⁴ For Josephus, Moses’ learning from the Egyptians was not a problem because he believed that Abraham had taught the Egyptians everything they knew about arithmetic and astronomy.¹⁸⁵

According to the Gospel of Matthew 3:14, Joseph, after the magicians’ visit in Bethlehem, “got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt” to escape the persecution of Herod. To Jewish-Christian ears, the episode evokes Egypt as a country of shelter in times of persecution. For Matthew, it is important to depict Jesus as the new son of God (cf. Exodus 4:22) coming out of Egypt: “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”¹⁸⁶ Celsus was aware of a tradition that the adult Jesus worked as a day laborer in Egypt.¹⁸⁷ Is this a hint that the Egypt episode is founded on a historical truth?¹⁸⁸ However, for Hellenistic Christians the flight to Egypt was proof that the gentile

neighborhood of Judah was a place of hospitality for the savior. At the same time, the story was an obligation to continue in the path of “Egyptian” philanthropy. The icon of the “Holy Family’s flight into Egypt” in the Coptic Church carries still today this exact same message.¹⁸⁹ Given the fact that the episode was stylized as an icon, it is quite possible that the iconography of Horus, persecuted by Set, sheltered in the papyrus thicket of the Nile delta together with his nursing mother, is the motivation behind the episode in the Gospel. A fixed iconem of the Coptic icon, not mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, is the donkey. The reverse side of a Horus stela shows Horus as a falcon on a donkey¹⁹⁰ in front of a shrine protected by a snake and guided by a fighter—evidently in the tradition of Baal-Set fighting for the sun (cf. Fig. 9)—and driven by a god with the *was* scepter (Fig. 13). Above this scene is Isis in the papyrus thicket, protected by a snake. The constellation of a donkey, supporting a prince, with a guide and a driver, well known in the iconography of Serabit el-Khadem and in the biblical literature (Genesis 22:3; Numbers 22:22),¹⁹¹ is a Levantine concept. The stela with its pseudo-hieroglyphs on the front side seems to be a product of the Egyptian-Levantine koine and possibly connected to a mythological story, which is a precursor to Matthew’s episode of the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt.

4.4. TWO TESTIMONIALS FOR THE EGYPTIAN-LEVANTINE KOINE
According to Josephus, the Philistines were part of the Egyptians and they possessed the country from Gaza to Egypt. Furthermore, he quotes Strabo:

There were four classes of men among those of Cyrene; that of citizens, that of husbandmen, the third of strangers, and the fourth of Jews. Now these Jews are already gotten into all cities; and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted this tribe of men, and is not possessed by them; and it hath come to pass that Egypt and Cyrene, as having the same governors, and a great number of other nations, imitate their way of living, and maintain great bodies of these Jews in a peculiar manner, and grow up to greater prosperity with them, and make use of the same laws with that nation also. Accordingly, the Jews have places assigned them in Egypt, wherein they inhabit, besides what is peculiarly allotted to this nation at Alexandria, which is a large part of that city. There is also an ethnarch allowed them, who governs the nation, and distributes justice to them, and takes care of their contracts, and of the laws to them belonging, as if he were the ruler of a free republic. *In Egypt, therefore, this nation is powerful, because the Jews were originally Egyptians, and because the land wherein they inhabit, since they went thence, is near to Egypt.* They also removed into Cyrene, because that this land adjoined to the government of

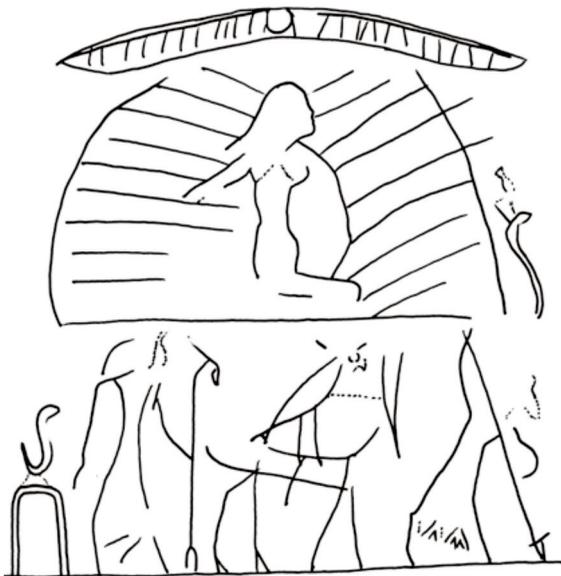


FIGURE 13: Detail from the verso of a Horus stela, 2nd to 1st centuries BCE; Fribourg, Bible + Orient Museum, ÄFig 2001.12 (drawing by the author).

Egypt, as well as does Judea, or rather was formerly under the same government.¹⁹²

A quotation from Lucian (ca. 120–180 CE), who was a living example of the Levantine-Egyptian koine, will conclude the overview. Offspring of a Hellenistic family of Syrian origin, he was born in Samosata and died probably in Alexandria. In his description of the Syrian goddess, he testifies to the consciousness of the Egyptian-Levantine koine for his class, time and region.¹⁹³

Of alle peoples whereof wee knowen, Egyptyens weren firste, as men seyn, for to taken conceyte of Goddes, and to stablisschen holy places and closes, and to apoynten feste dayes. And thei firste knewen holy names and maden holy tales. *But no long tyme after, Assuryens¹⁹⁴ herden rumour and speche of Egyptyens as touching to goddess, and rereden seyntuaries and temples, in the whiche thei lette putten ymages and setten symulacres.*

SUMMARY

The increase of cross-cultural learning as a consequence of intensified travelling and migration between Egypt and the Levant during the Iron Age was a result of millennia of migration in earlier periods. The Proto-Hamito-Semitic language is reconstructed proof of early migration. Levantine burial customs among immigrants in northern Egypt during the Chalcolithic era illustrate, at an early stage, the migration of ideas, mentalities, and customs along with people. Triggered by the first, proto-colonial expansion of Egypt to the Levant during the Twelfth Dynasty, Semitic-speaking immigrants in Egypt developed the alphabetic script on the base of the Egyptian characters, an invention with tremendous effect on the development of the civilizations of the ancient Near East. During the Fifteenth Dynasty, the intensive migration in the regions caused a creolization of the population in the eastern delta and in parts of the Levant. Avaris was the center of this creolization. The Amarna experiment and the cosmotheism of the Eighteenth Dynasty presuppose a multicultural society due to migration, mainly from the Levant. The Ramessides built their own capital, Pi-Ramesses, near Avaris. They venerated Set, the Egyptian adaptation of the Canaanite Baal, as dynastic god, as well as other Canaanite gods.

The material culture of the centers of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the 8th–6th centuries BCE still reflects the long, quasi-natural affiliation with Egypt. Under the pressure of the Mesopotamian aggressors, the exchange with and migration to Egypt is stronger than ever before. The stories of the patriarchs also reflect the Levantine-Egyptian koine. Abraham figures as progenitor of the Canaanite-Egyptian koine, Jacob is mourned and honored by the Egyptians, Joseph rules in Egypt as a Pharaoh, the Hebrew Moses is educated by Egyptians, married to a Midianite, and saves his people with a Midianite god. Thus, the Egyptian-Levantine koine is incorporated in the

migrating founding fathers of the Israelite narratives. Furthermore, the Joseph story processes Egyptian literature: “The Tale of Sinuhe” and the Bata story, both of which take place partly in the Levant. On a legal level, the Egyptians are a privileged group in Israel, and on a theological level they are even seen as a “people of YHWH.”

Even more explicit than in the texts, the imprint of migration and mutual cultural appreciation is evident in the imagery of the stamp seals, the local mass medium, as has been demonstrated exemplarily for the early and late Palestinian series of the Middle Bronze age, for the falcon-headed god, Baal-Set, Ptah, the striding light-god, and Harpocrates. From the iconography it becomes apparent that the themes of the epoch under research, the 8th–7th centuries BCE, are connected with earlier periods and with later periods as well. The Levantine-Egyptian koine was a phenomenon of *histoire de longue durée*.

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Migration in the Levant was often triggered by hunger (“Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt...,” Genesis 12:10a), persecution (“Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam; but Jeroboam promptly fled to Egypt, to King Shishak of Egypt, and remained in Egypt until the death of Solomon,” 1 Kings 11:40), and slavery (“When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt,” Genesis 37:28). However, the effects of migration were mainly positive. The foreign became a homeland, migration became trade and welfare, the language, the writing, and the religion of the host country generated new insight, new literature, and new religions.

During the Persian era Judean soldiers built a Yahu-Anat-temple on the island of Elephantine. Long-distance trade, and therefore also exchange between Egypt and the Levant, was intensified thanks to new developments in the riding technology by means of camels. However, this does not mean that there were not also tensions. The Judean temple of Elephantine was destroyed by enemies. But the immigration of Judeans increases under the Lagides, who thus requested a translation of the Hebrew Torah to Greek. The result is a unique product of cultural transmission and an important base for the future development of the Hebrew religion(s) in a Hellenistic context. Even more so, for the development of the pagans in the cities of the Near East, who were fascinated by the biblical way of thinking. According to Philo this achievement was celebrated year by year by a public picnic of Jews and Gentiles at the seashore of Alexandria.¹⁹⁵

Subsequently, cultural exchange and cultural borders were a theme of religious self-reflection and self-criticism more than ever before. Jesus and to a greater extent Paul are restless travelers, networkers, and translators of ideas of human solidarity beyond traditional borderlines.

This sketch of the cultural-religious *histoire de longue durée* of the Levantine-Egyptian relationship offers a

different view of the genesis of the so called “Abrahamite,” “monotheistic” secondary religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They are not found to be the result of: a global transformation, called “Achszeit” (Jaspers),¹⁹⁶ a mental revolution (Freud),¹⁹⁷ a genius intuition of a single man (Kaufmann), a Mosaic difference (Assmann), a revolutionary YHWH-only movement (Smith, Lang),¹⁹⁸ or the outcome of the temple theology of the city-state of Jerusalem (Keel);¹⁹⁹ rather, these new, universal religions are the multiform results of deeply deliberated transformational processes in two or (if we include northwestern Arabia) three regions with a very different physical nature, but at the same time a long-lasting, intense exchange on all levels of human life. More and more people in the region understood that the feelings of justice and the experiences of love and forgiveness here or there are similar and more important than local manifestations of gods and their animosities. As a result, in these new religions the communities and their solidarity became more important than the country, and as a consequence the local temple cults were replaced by communitarian houses of prayer, study, and care.

It should be noted that despite the strong relations between Canaan and Egypt, based on migration, the two regions never fused into a political entity with one identity. It was in all periods the koine of two different cultures that was so fruitful.

The downside of the long-lasting process of cross-cultural learning and reciprocal acculturation in the southern Levant and northern Egypt is the production of negative images on both sides as a result of cultural conflicts and traumata.

The *Deuteronomistic* view of Egypt as a place of slavery and oppression has been generalized as Egypt’s image in the Bible, even by scholars who have remarked the very different view of the Joseph story and the circles behind it.²⁰⁰ Wettengel, along with Görg,²⁰¹ regards the Joseph narrative as literary fiction, which at the same time evokes the memory of formerly Canaanite migrants in Egypt. As we have seen, the Joseph narrative is, of course, literature with fictional elements based on older literature. Literature is born of literature, as art is born of art, and the allusions to older literature are constitutive for the value of a literary text. However, the sheer fact that the allusions to Sinuhe and the “Tale of Two Brothers” presuppose a strong exchange between Canaan and Egypt, demonstrates that migration between the two countries was not an exception or fiction, but rather the expression of an existing Canaanite-Egyptian symbiotic culture. This literature, with all its fictional elements, was not a work of fantasy, but was indeed plausible—and therefore copied for centuries—based on the reality of a very long-lasting exchange between two regions with very different character. The exchange between the two discrete and strong cultures facilitated incredible innovations such as the alphabet and universalistic monotheism. However, at any given moment it was easy to emphasize the

differences in order to separate, demonize, and/or annihilate the other in order to stabilize one’s own weak identity. Of course, situations of flight and expulsion may have occurred over these thousands of years. However, I have tried to demonstrate in this article that there are good reasons to assume that migration, acculturation, creolization, and reciprocal learning, as well as understanding and appreciation, were much more characteristic realities of daily life in the region of northern Egypt and the Levant.

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- 1 Many thanks to Sterling Ellsworth, Tori Finlayson, and Pearce Paul Creasman for editorial support. All remaining mistakes are mine.
- 2 Wilde 2013.
- 3 See the influential works of Jan Assmann. He emphasizes the radical difference between the religion of Egypt and the Mosaic religion in the cultural memory. By doing so, he reproduces and reinforces the categories of cultural separation. Recently published: Jan Assmann, *From Akhenaten to Moses: Ancient Egypt and Religious Change* (Cairo/New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2016).
- 4 For instance, the mass of Egyptianizing, non-epigraphic material (e.g., amulets) is often underrepresented with selected examples (if ever), whereas singular objects of Mesopotamian origin appear as illustrations of an important impact of the Assyrian and Babylonian culture in the Levant. Thus, the Mesopotamian influence is overestimated in a statistically biased presentation of the archaeological material of the Levant (e.g., Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, vol. II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods [732–332 BCE]* [New York: Doubleday, 2001]).
- 5 The time of a trip from Gaza to Avaris (= ca. 160 km) is 6 days at a daily distance of at most 30 km, probably the maximum for a donkey caravan. The average speed of a 19th century CE camel caravan was 4,772 km/hr. The average time of a daily journey of a camel caravan was 7.45 hr/day which corresponds to about 35 km/day (Staubli 2013). Thus a trip from Jerusalem to Avaris was about 8 days, a trip from Jerusalem to Memphis about 10 days. A ship with an average speed of 3 knots could cope with the route in one and a half days. But this was only possible with favorable weather.
- 6 The distinction between primary and secondary religions was introduced by Theo Sundermeier 1987 and 1999. See also the discussion of the categories in Wagner 2006.
- 7 The Greek word *koinê* for "common" was applied already in antiquity to the common Greek dialect of the eastern Mediterranean that developed in Hellenistic times and was used until the start of the Middle Ages.
- 8 For the little information on riding and caravan trade in the Levant see Staubli 2010 and 2013.
- 9 On the relevance of iconography for the reconstruction of religious history see Christoph Uehlinger, "Neither Eyewitnesses, nor Windows to the Past, but Valuable Testimony in its Own Right: Remarks on Iconography, Source Criticism, and Ancient Data Processing," in H. G. M. Williamson (ed.), *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel*, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 143 (Oxford—New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 173–228; Christoph Uehlinger, "Approaches to Visual Culture and Religion: Disciplinary Trajectories, Interdisciplinary Connections, and Some Conditions for Further Progress: Method and Theory," *Study of Religion* 27.4–5 (2015): 384–422.
- 10 Cf. Fernand Braudel, "Histoire et Sciences sociales: La longue durée," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 13 (1958): 725–753.
- 11 Orel and Stolbova 1995, IX.
- 12 As an example: From Agaw **sil-*, reconstructed from Xamir *sil* ("knife") and Central Chadic **sil-*, reconstructed from Gulfey *sīl* ("arrow") and West Chadic **sil-*, reconstructed from Paa šila ("axe") and Egyptian *s³h.t* ("knife") and Semitic *šilāḥ-* ("weapon," "javelin"), reconstructed from Ugaritic *šlh*, Hebrew *šelaḥ*, Aramaic *šilhā* and Arabic *silāḥ*, the Proto-Hamito-Semitic root **silah-* ("sharp weapon") is reconstructed (Orel/Stobova 1995, 473), with another word: a "silex."
- 13 Lipiński 2001, 42.
- 14 Lipiński 2001, 25.
- 15 Watrin 2000 and 2003a.
- 16 Czarnovizc 2011.
- 17 Watrin 2003b.
- 18 Van den Brink/Levy 2001.

- ¹⁹ Beck 1995; Marcus 2002.
- ²⁰ For Levantine combed ware at Lisht, Gizeh, and Heit el-Ghurab see Arnold et al. 1995, Wodzińska and Ownby 2011, Sowada 2011.
- ²¹ Klimscha 2011.
- ²² Arnold et al. 2016.
- ²³ Schneider 2010, 144–145; Mourad 2015, 16.
- ²⁴ Bader 2013, 261; Mourad 2015, 16.
- ²⁵ Eriksen 2007, 172–175; Mourad 2015, 16.
- ²⁶ Mourad 2015 replaces older synopses of the material on the illustration of the relation between Egypt and the Levant in this period, such as Posener 1957, Ward, 1961, Helck 1962, and Wastlhuber 2010.
- ²⁷ Mourad 2015, 215.
- ²⁸ (17ff) “He gathered his thoughts on the events in the land, he recalled the turmoil of the East, the rampage of Asiatics with their forces, disrupting the hearts of those at harvest, seizing those yoked in ploughing.” [...] (30ff) “Utterly destroyed are those (times) of happiness at those basin lakes, with men set to slitting fish, overflowing with fish and fowl. All happiness has departed, flung down in the land of hardship, from those (weights) of supplies of the Asiatics who are throughout the land. Men of violence have emerged in the East, Asiatics are coming down into Egypt, the confines are lost, another is beside, who will not be heard. The ladder will be blocked in the night, the camps will be entered, the bleary-eyed will be overpowered, as the sleeper says ‘I am awake’.” (35f) “The herds of foreign lands will drink from the rivers of Egypt. They will be refreshed on their shores, for want of any to drive them back.” [...] (63f) “The Asiatics will fall at his (the king’s) slaughter, the Libyans will fall at his fire” [...] (65ff) They will build the Walls of the Ruler may he live, prosper, and be well, to prevent the Asiatics from coming down into Egypt if they request water in the proper manner, to let their flocks drink” (University College London, “Prophecy of Neferty,” *Digital Egypt for Universities*, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/literature/nefertytransl.html>, accessed 10 November 2016.
- ²⁹ The same is true for Jacob. He wants to be interred in his family grave in Hebron (Genesis 49:29–33), and Joseph fulfills the last wish of his father (Genesis 50:3–9)—moreover Jacob is mummified, mourned by the Egyptians for forty days, and the servants of Pharaoh and the elders of Egypt even pay their last respects to Joseph’s father by accompanying the funeral procession in Palestine.
- ³⁰ Again, there is a parallel in the biblical tale of Joseph: He makes an excellent career in Egypt and marries an Egyptian wife (Genesis 41:38–45).
- ³¹ The most important sources for this are the daybooks of Mit Rahina and the findings of the temple from el-Tod, both from the reign of Amenemhet II. According to Wastlhuber 2010 (183f), the exchange of diplomatic gifts (not to be confused with personal legacy and trade objects) was the normal form of intercultural contact at that time flanked by the magical power of the execration texts. Only in emergency cases did the Egyptians use military force to secure the trade routes to the north.
- ³² Eder 1995, 194f. Egyptian motifs on Syrian and Levantine glyptic: (royal scenes) purification of the king, *smꜛ tꜛwj*, smiting of the enemy; (gods) Horus, Hathor, Montu, Sobek, and Osiris, Amun-Re and Re-Harakhte, Ptah, leonine gods (Sekhmet?, Bastet?, Mahes?), Set, Isis and Nephthys, Bes and Aha.
- ³³ Wimmer et al. 2001.
- ³⁴ Stelae from Abydos from the reign of Amenemhat III mention Asiatics in the positions of: overseer of a storehouse, hall-keeper, butler, brewer, cook, agricultural worker. Levantines are attested in cultic contexts and associated with the titles: overseer of a storehouse, overseer of the law-court, sealer of the king of Lower Egypt, and majordomo of the great house. Less precisely dated stelae of the period still mention a carrier of provisions, a steward, a retainer, an overseer of the military, an overseer of craftsmen and ladies of the house (Mourad 2015, 100).
- ³⁵ Cf. Mourad 2015, 70f with the evaluation of unpublished papyri from Berlin.
- ³⁶ The alphabet will spread all over the globe with a few exceptions (the most important being China) and modify human processes of documentation, learning, and remembering.
- ³⁷ The motif of honor is also attested in Byblos and in the Bible (Genesis 22:3 and Numbers 22:22), where women of the elite are also riding on a donkey (cf. Judges 1:12–15; 5:10; 10:4; 1 Samuel 25:20, 42; 2 Samuel 16:2; 2 Kings 4:22ff). For an iconographic list of evidence see Staubli 1991, 100–106, Staubli 2001, and IPIAO 2, 38 and 57f.
- ³⁸ Mourad 2015, 140–141 with fig. 5.14–17.
- ³⁹ Hayes 1972, 99.
- ⁴⁰ Mourad 2015, 117.
- ⁴¹ Mourad 2015, 128.
- ⁴² Mourad 2015, 128.
- ⁴³ Mourad is right to insist on the critique of the so-called “pots equal people” theory. Indeed, traded objects are not necessarily a proof of the presence of people from the place of origin of imported ware in the place of its destination. But there are differences between different merchandise. While the importation and exportation of pots, which function

everywhere in the same way, may simply be the result of supply and demand, this is not the case for amulets. The exchange of amulets presupposes the intellectual understanding of the symbolical world of the amulet. Therefore, the widespread attestation of Egyptian amulet forms in the Levant implicates strong cultural contacts and exchange of ideas and, therefore, implicates migration of people.

⁴⁴ Ben-Tor 2007, 186.

⁴⁵ According to the book of Shu from the Coffin Texts (CT 75–83; Jürgens 1988) of the 20th and 19th centuries BCE, light was understood to be a pair of gods, namely, Shu (air) and Tefnut (brightness). The sibilings represent not only the spatial concept of light but also its timeline as endless, fulfilled respectively circular time (*nḥḥ*-eternity/Neheh, evoked by the *h*-sign [V28, two of which frame the sun disk in the standard writing for *nḥḥ*]) and incommutable, incalculable or linear time (*ḏt*-eternity/Djet; often symbolized by the Djed-pillar [Gardiner sign list R11, *ḏd* = “to be stable, enduring”). Shu gets the name “life” (*ḥnḥ*/Ankh, S34). and Tefnut the name “truth” (*mꜣt*/Maat; CT 80 II 35f–h = Bickel 1994, text 155; cf. ÄHG 75,23f.). The *šw*-feather (Shu, H6), a symbol to visualize invisible air, is an element of the writing for Shu and Maat. Atum’s watching eye (*wḏꜣt*/Udjat-eye, D10) in search of his children Tefnut and Shu finds its place occupied by a new eye when it returns. It becomes very angry, wherefore Atum places the angry eye as *ꜣḥt*-/Akhet-eye (also written with and symbolized by D10) on his forehead. In its most frequent manifestation as a uraeus, it is personified as the snake-goddess Nesret (*nsrt*, I12). Hathor can appear in the role of the Horus eye and in the role of Tefnut as well. The awe-inspiring aspect of the king is also expressed by the bright red crown (*ḏšrt*, S4; which via the color evokes danger [*ḏšrt* = “red,” “fire,” “desert”]) and by the pectoral on the breast of the queen or the king, condensed in the hieroglyph *nḃw* (“gold,” S12). The overwhelming brightness of the cosmic light rising behind the eastern mountains in the morning is meant by in the *h*-hieroglyph (N28).

Furthermore, Ptah and the plants also belong to the realm of light-symbols. According to the Berlin “Hymn to Ptah,” the Memphite creation god was praised with the following words (English text based on ÄHG Nr. 143, 112–118): “The tree of life is growing on you (the god Ptah). You vegetate the earth so that the Gods have plenty, as well as the people and the cattle. Thanks to light they can see. If you go down, darkness arises. Either of your light eyes creates light.” The text expresses perfectly the strong connection of light and vegetation, felt and admired by the Egyptians and Canaanites and fashioned in manifold symbolic arrangements on their amulets (For the relation between Ptah and vegetation see also Keel 1995, Abb. 566 and Keel 1989b, Abb. 25 and 29;

for the relation between Ptah and light/air see Keel 1989b, Abb. 97–102, 117, 122–126). That is why we find the light symbols very often combined with vegetal iconems (iconic elements) such as the sedge plant (*swt*/Sut, M23), the papyrus column (*wꜣd*/Wadj, M13), the papyrus-bush (*ḥꜣ*/Ha, M16), or the Levantine tree of life.

In summary, light and air as the primordial cosmos-constituting elements between earth and heaven are in my opinion the cardinal themes of the hieroglyphs used for the design class 3 (“Egyptian signs and symbols”; Tufnell 1984, 117–124 with pl. 7–20 and Keel 1995, 165–181) of the Egyptian and Levantine stamp-seal amulets. Keel recognizes that many of the symbols used for the arrangements were used as amulets in earlier periods (Keel 1995, 167), but he does not interpret the arrangements as such, thus insinuating that they constitute an arbitrary accumulation of signs for good luck. I will develop these arguments in a publications that is in preparation. For the hieroglyphic signs behind the alphanumeric references see the hieroglyphic sign-list in Gardiner 1957, 438–548.

⁴⁶ For a commented introduction to the themes on the seals see IPIAO 2, although the selection there underrepresents the more abstract design classes in favor of the figural motifs.

⁴⁷ Cf. a temple relief from Tod from the time of Mentuhotep III (IPAO 2, Nr. 321).

⁴⁸ IPIAO 2, Nr. 309–310.

⁴⁹ IPIAO 2, Nr. 311–312.

⁵⁰ The crocodile, the Sea, and the chaos are associated with the godly monster Leviathan; cf. DDD, 511–515.

⁵¹ IPIAO 2, Nr. 317–318.

⁵² Mourad 2015, 129.

⁵³ The story of the “Siege of Yafo” (ANET 22f; HTAT Nr. 35) demonstrates the colonial attitude of the Egyptians toward the Canaanites. But the plot of the story—the cunning ruse of soldiers clandestinely brought into the city in sealed baskets for trade—at the same time presumes ongoing friendly contacts and trade between Egypt and the Levant.

⁵⁴ Hoffmeier 2015.

⁵⁵ Kilchör 2016.

⁵⁶ B. J. Kemp and G. Vogelsang-Eastwood, *The Ancient Textile Industry at Amarna* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2001).

⁵⁷ Sparks 2004, with fig. 3.4d.

⁵⁸ Sparks 2004, with fig. 3.4a. Indicated by a spear on the stela *Trr* was most likely one of the Levantine warriors, attested in the army of Akhenaten (Staubli 1991, Abb. 25a–28).

⁵⁹ Sparks 2004, with fig. 3.4c; Griffith, F. Ll. 1926, “A

- Drinking Siphon from Tell el-'Amarnah," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 12: 22–23.
- ⁶⁰ Sparks 2004, with fig. 3.6a–b.
- ⁶¹ N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna, Part III: The Tombs of Huy and Ahmes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), pl. VII; Staubli 2007, 20 with Abb. 37.
- ⁶² Braun 1999, 77–83; Staubli 2007, 19–22.
- ⁶³ Cf. for instance EA 296:23–29.
- ⁶⁴ A personal mystical, godly experience is, however, not separable from the totality of exoteric experiences in a life.
- ⁶⁵ "One God, like whom there is no other. Thou didst create the earth by thy heart (or will), thou alone existing, men and women, cattle, beasts of every kind that are upon the earth, and that move upon feet (or legs), all the creatures that are in the sky and that fly with their wings, [and] *the deserts of Syria and Kesh (Nubia), and the Land of Egypt. [...] O thou Lord of every land, thou shinest upon them, O ATEN of the day, thou great one of majesty. Thou makest the life of all remote lands. Thou settest a Nile in heaven, which cometh down to them. It maketh a flood on the mountains like the Great Green Sea, it maketh to be watered their fields in their villages. How beneficent are thy plans, O Lord of Eternity! A Nile in heaven art thou for the dwellers in the foreign lands (or deserts), and for all the beasts of the desert that go upon feet (or legs).*" My emphasis; from the translation of, "A Hymn to Aten by Ai, Overseer of the House" by Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge (*Tutankhamen: Amenism, Atenism and Egyptian Monotheism* [London: Hopkinson, 1923], 122–135).
- ⁶⁶ Keel 2004a, 52; 2004b, 1549; Ben-Tor and Keel 2012.
- ⁶⁷ Cross pattern; lion with *nh* or other signs; inscription: *s nh Jmn* or *nh.s n Jmn: m³t* feather and uraeus above nb; Hathor symbol flanked by uraei; falcon standing on uraeus, with *mr* behind; name of Amun-Re; Thoeris; Ptah with *nh* and *dd*; inscription: *Jmn-htp*; Anubis as a reclining jackal with *nh* or *nfr*; kneeling fecundity figure (*h³py*) holding a *hs* vase.
- ⁶⁸ Cf. IPIAO 2, Nr. 2.9.
- ⁶⁹ The religious sensibility of the Egyptians is also documented by two letters of an Egyptian official to Talwišar, in which the prince of Taanach is greeted with blessings of the weather god (TUAT 3, 233f).
- ⁷⁰ Possibly there was still a seal workshop at Qantir, producing archaizing scarabs of the MB-style (Ben-Tor 2011, 36 n. 83).
- ⁷¹ Staubli 2009.
- ⁷² Martin 2011.
- ⁷³ Higginbotham 2000.
- ⁷⁴ "Perhaps this king, who had lived most of his life as a non-royal during the turbulent end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, felt it was necessary to show the same pious humility towards the gods as private individuals did" (Brand 2005, 26).
- ⁷⁵ Brand 2005, 25.
- ⁷⁶ Assmann 1983.
- ⁷⁷ Stadelmann 1967; van Dijk 1989; Cornelius 1994; Cornelius 2004; Lahn 2004; Tazawa 2009; Münnich 2013; IPIAO 2, 2.4–9.
- ⁷⁸ Keel and Uehlinger 1998, §§50, 52.
- ⁷⁹ Cf. Papyrus Amherst IX and Papyrus BN 202; Collombert and Coulon, 2000.
- ⁸⁰ Cf. Psalm 18:8–16 par. 2; Samuel 22:8–16 (Keel 2009, 103 with Klingbeil 282–285); cf. also Psalms 21:9–13; 29:3–9; 46:7–12; 68:15–22; 83:14–18 (Klingbeil 1999, 285–301).
- ⁸¹ Keel 2007, 267–286, 302–305 and Keel 2009b resuming and enriching an ancient thesis of Te Velde 1977.
- ⁸² In his military actions in order to create a new order Setnakhte is called "Khepre Set" (Papyrus Harris I. 75: 8) or "Set" (Elephantine stela, line 7).
- ⁸³ Cruz-Uribe 1978.
- ⁸⁴ Stadelmann 1965; Bietak 1995.
- ⁸⁵ Wettengel 2006.
- ⁸⁶ Schneider 2003, 626.
- ⁸⁷ According to Papyrus Harris I, at the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty a certain "Iarsu" ("self-made man") of Syrian/Levantine origin reigned in the delta region, much like his predecessors during the "Hyksos" period. Perhaps he is identical with Bay, who was a scribe in the staff of Seti II.
- ⁸⁸ CSAPI 3, 294.
- ⁸⁹ Herrmann and Staubli 2010, 21 and 39.
- ⁹⁰ CSAPI 4, 110.
- ⁹¹ English text based on ÄHG Nr. 143, 112–118
- ⁹² For the relation between Ptah and vegetation see also Keel 1995, Abb. 566 and Keel 1989, Abb. 25 and 29; for the relation between Ptah and light/air/Maat see Keel 1989, Abb. 97–102.
- ⁹³ Cf. 1 Kings 14:25–28, parallel 2 Chronicles 12:2–13; the Sheshonq list from the Bubastite Portal at Karnak (Epigraphic Survey, *The Bubastite Portal, Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak Vol III*, Oriental Institute Press 74 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1954); the fragment of a stela of Sheshonq from Megiddo (Lamon and Shipton 1939, 60); a statue base from Byblos (Matthiae 2000, 192).
- ⁹⁴ Keel and Uehlinger, 1998, §§112, 157.
- ⁹⁵ Cf., for instance, HTAT Nr. 213.
- ⁹⁶ Weippert 1977.

- ⁹⁷ Schipper 1999, 173–180.
- ⁹⁸ 1 Kings 22:49f, parallel 2 Chronicles 20:35–37; Schipper 1999, 181–185.
- ⁹⁹ Jeroboam from Israel (1 Kings 11:40; 12:2f), Hadad from Edom (1 Kings 11:14–25), Chanunu from Gaza (HTAT Nr. 142), Jamani from Ashdod (HTAT Nr. 160), Uriya from Jerusalem (Jeremiah 26:20–23); cf. Schipper 1999, 186–191.
- ¹⁰⁰ P³-šrj-(n)-hr = “Son of Horus”: Arad Ostrakon 8:54 (Renz and Röllig 1995, 162f); Jeremiah 20:1–6; 21:1; 38:1.
- ¹⁰¹ Jeremiah 38:7–13.
- ¹⁰² 1 Chronicles 2:34f; 1 Chronicles 4:18.
- ¹⁰³ Helck 1962, 360.
- ¹⁰⁴ Schipper 1999, 278.
- ¹⁰⁵ Staubli 1991, 184–202.
- ¹⁰⁶ Sign-papyrus from Tanis; Papyri Carlsberg 7 and 43; Papyrus Saqqara 27; Papyrus Carlsberg 425+ Papyrus BM 10852+10856; Papyrus Berlin 15709 vs.; Papyrus Berlin 23861 (Quack 2003, 164–166)
- ¹⁰⁷ *De Iside et Osiride* 56; *Quaestiones Convonivales* IX, III, §11 (Quack 2003, 169 and 182).
- ¹⁰⁸ See the discussion of Tropper’s arguments for a Levantine impact (Josef Tropper, “Ägyptisches, nordwestsemitisches und altsüdarabisches Alphabet,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 28 [1996], 619–632) in Quack 2003, 173–177. The theory of Kammerzell that the Egyptian alphabet is an Egyptian invention is refuted by Quack because of chronological and structural reasons (Quack 2003, 178f).
- ¹⁰⁹ A publication is in preparation.
- ¹¹⁰ Keel and Uehlinger 1998, § 121.
- ¹¹¹ Keel and Uehlinger 1998, § 148.
- ¹¹² Cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1998, illus. 242.
- ¹¹³ Keel and Uehlinger 1998, illus. 243.
- ¹¹⁴ Herrmann 1994, 147f, 240, 406–408.
- ¹¹⁵ Keel and Uehlinger 1998, § 149.
- ¹¹⁶ Keel and Uehlinger, 1998, §§ 151, 155.
- ¹¹⁷ Keel and Uehlinger 1998, §§ 205–206.
- ¹¹⁸ Keel 1994b, 120f with fig. 76–78.
- ¹¹⁹ For parallels on West-Semite name seals see Avigad and Sass 1997, Nr. 715, 1087, 1092.
- ¹²⁰ See also Avigad and Sass 1997, Nr. 1020 (lotus) and for branches instead of lotus ibid. Nr. 1036.
- ¹²¹ For further parallels on West-Semite name seals see Avigad and Sass 1997, Nr. 1147, 1154–1155.
- ¹²² “Provisionally named ‘Tyrian Group,’” while “archeological evidence is in favour of a workshop in Achziv” (Boschloos 2014, 20).
- ¹²³ Othmar Keel identified the enthroned character as “Pharaoh as sun-god.” For a critique see Staubli, forthcoming.
- ¹²⁴ Schipper 2005; Shupak 2005.
- ¹²⁵ Knigge 2000.
- ¹²⁶ Keel 1994a.
- ¹²⁷ Witte 2011.
- ¹²⁸ Cf. Isaiah 11:11; Jeremiah 13:23; corresponds with Egyptian *k3š*. The kingdom ruled Egypt as the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.
- ¹²⁹ The designation of Mizraim (= Egypt) as “land of Ham” is to be found in Psalms 78:51; 105:23, 27; 106:21–22.
- ¹³⁰ Libya (cf. Ezekiel 27:10LXX and 38:5LXX and Josephus Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews* I,132). Nahum 3:9 puts Put and Lubim in a parallelism (Simons 1954).
- ¹³¹ The three neighbours in the south, in the northeast (Canaan), and in the northwest (Libya) squared constitute the nine traditional enemies (or “bows”) of Egypt.
- ¹³² Wellhausen 1981, 318: “ethnographische Genealogie”; Blum, 1984, 484: “erzählte Genealogie.”
- ¹³³ Knauf 1985, 33.
- ¹³⁴ Teubal 1990 and 1993 reconstructs the story of a “Desert Matriarch” in Genesis 16 and 21. Only Genesis 16:7–15 and 21:14–21 apply to Hagar, according to her. Following Skinner 1969, 285, she points out that as a consequence of the early Egyptian occupation of the Sinai Peninsula the Hagarites and Ishmaelites were predominantly Egyptian (Teubal 1990, 168).
- ¹³⁵ Staubli 1991, 240f; cf. 1 Samuel 27:8.
- ¹³⁶ Mildenberg 1998; Gitler and Tal 2006.
- ¹³⁷ Currently, about 36 copies of Sinuhe’s tale are known (Moers 2008).
- ¹³⁸ Morenz 1997.
- ¹³⁹ Still, the most recent exegetical analysis of the story remains very vague about its dating: “Das Märchen, dessen Motive in Gen 39; 40–41 durchaus auf älteren Traditionsstoff zurückgehen könnte, setzt mit der Verortung Josefs im ägyptischen Exil den Verlust der Staatlichkeit wohl zumindest für das Nordreich voraus [...] Die Komposition Gen 37*; 39–41* beschäftigt sich demnach primär mit einer ‘Darstellung und Deutung der israelitisch-jüdischen Diasporaexistenz’” (Ede 2016, 514). Given the background of the long-lasting tradition of migration between the Levant and Egypt, the connection of Joseph’s time in Egypt with the exile of the Israelite upper-class after 722 BCE or with the Judean elite after 586 BCE is not at all compulsory, although there is no doubt that the story was quite relevant for the

- displaced Judeans in Egypt.
- ¹⁴⁰ Despite its promising title, M. Bárta's study *Sinuhe, the Bible, and the Patriarchs* (Praha: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2003) does not offer a close reading of the relevant biblical texts, nor does Moers 2008.
- ¹⁴¹ Von Rabenau 1997, 47 parallels Sinuhe's duel with the envious enemy with Joseph's imprisonment. By doing so, he implicitly emphasizes Joseph's abilities as dream reader.
- ¹⁴² This paragraph is mainly based on Ringgren 1989 and Wettengel 2003, 228–233. Cf. also von Rabenau 1997.
- ¹⁴³ A motif also found in Egypt (Hellmut Brunner, "Die Strafgrube" *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 80, 1955, 73f; Fieger 67f.).
- ¹⁴⁴ Hebrew *mošæh* can be interpreted as an Egyptian name ("born" from *mš/mšj*, "to bear") normally used with a theophoric element (Ramoses, Ptahmoses, etc.) that is missing, or as a Hebrew name ("pulled" [out of the water] from *mšh*) as explained by the biblical text (Exekiel 2:10).
- ¹⁴⁵ This monumentalization has been seen very clearly by Benno Jacob and the Midrash. Jacob (1997, 31) writes: "Freudig hat sein Volk zugestimmt (dass der von den Familienangehörigen gegebene Name des Kindes durch den der Königstochter verdrängt wurde), dass Niemand (sic!) hebräischer sprechen, israelitischer denken und seinen größten Mann prophetischer kennzeichnen konnte als diese Ägypterin. Einen nobleren Ausdruck der Dankbarkeit kann es nicht geben, und dauernder konnte kein Denkmal sein."
- ¹⁴⁶ Cf. Deuteronomy 33:2; Judges 5:4; Habbakuk 3:3; DDD, 911f.
- ¹⁴⁷ Cf. "the tents of Kushan... the dwellings of Midian" in Habbakuk 3:7.
- ¹⁴⁸ For the relevant sources and a differentiated view see Goldenberg 2003, 52–59.
- ¹⁴⁹ Following the translations of Milgrom 1990, 83.
- ¹⁵⁰ The sharp borderline between Judeans and Moabites has found an inner-biblical critique in the book of Ruth. Although the amalgamation of people in the region where the southern Levant, northern Egypt, and northwestern Arabia meet reached a much higher level than the rather casual intermarriage of Judeans and Moabites.
- ¹⁵¹ Cf. Numbers 33:7; Jeremiah 46:14; Ezekiel 29:10, 30:6. The most northern place with Judeans in Egypt. Probably located 1 km north of Tell el-Ḥēr (20 km northeast of Qantir); mentioned in the Amarna Letters (234:29f) and in texts of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasty (Manfred Görg, "Migdol," in NBL 2, 805).
- ¹⁵² According to prophecies of Jeremiah (43:8–9) and Ezekiel (30:18), the place where Egypt has to surrender its power to Babylon. May be identical to Tell Defenne (Egyptian *Tbn*, Greek Daphnai), where Greek mercenaries are attested at an early stage (Manfred Görg, "Tachpanhes," in NBL 3, 767).
- ¹⁵³ Cf. Isaiah 19:13; Jeremiah 46:14; Ezekiel 30:13, 16. Memphis (from *mn nfr*, "remaining and beautiful") was one of the biggest centers of Egypt, with the famous sanctuary of Ptah. The scarabs of the sanctuary were well known in the Levant (see above 2.5.3; Manfred Görg, "Memfis," in NBL 2, 757f).
- ¹⁵⁴ Cf. Genesis 10:14; Isaiah 11:11; 1 Chronicles 1:12; Ezekiel 29:14 and 30:14. The land between Egypt and Kush. From Egyptian *p³ t³ ršj*, "the land of the south" (Manfred Görg, "Patros/Patrositer," in NBL 2, 87).
- ¹⁵⁵ According to Wildberger 1978, 704ff an original prophecy of Isaiah (v.1–5.11–15) has been "filled" with a very general description of Egypt's suffering, using motifs of Egyptian prophecies and even Egyptian vocabulary (Wildberger 1978, 701, 714: Hebrew *y'wr*, Egyptian *Jrw*, "Nile"; Hebrew *swf*, Egyptian *twf*, "reed"; Hebrew *'rwṭ*, Egyptian *'ri*; "stipe (of lotus)"; Hebrew *štyh*, cf. Coptic *štyt*, "weaver" (?) and Hebrew *znh*, Egyptian *hñš*, "to stink").
- ¹⁵⁶ Kahn 2001, 9.
- ¹⁵⁷ Schipper 2013, 14f.
- ¹⁵⁸ Heliopolis, Greek designation of the Egyptian city named Iunu, mostly rendered phonetically simplified with On in Hebrew (Genesis 41:45, 50; 46:20; Ezekiel 30:17), but also translated with regards to content as *beit šæmæš* (LXX *Hēliou polis*; Jeremiah 43:13). The designation as *'ir hahæræs* "city of ruins" is either a malapropism or an update from an original *'ir hahæræs* "city of the (rising) sun" (cf. Job 9:7), rendered as *polis-asedek*, "city of Justice" in the Septuagint, thus assigning a theological attribute of the city of Jerusalem (cf. *'ir hahædæq* LXX *Pólis dikaiosynēs* in Isaiah 1:26) to Heliopolis (Keel 2007, 273), at least for Semitic ears.
- ¹⁵⁹ Niccacci 1998, 234f holds with Hayes and Irvine 1987, 266 that the oracle goes back to the days of Sargon II and reflects the ecumenical euphoria of that time. This may be true for the Hebrew Vorlage of LXX, but not for the utopian eschatological perspectives of the Masoretic text. Rather, this text reflects the ecumenical euphoria of the post-Alexander times (cf. Deissler 1993; Schenker 1994).
- ¹⁶⁰ Théodore Reinach, *Jewish Coins* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1966), 29.
- ¹⁶¹ For details and maps, see Staubli 2013.
- ¹⁶² For another example, the gazelle feeding among lotus, attested in Hebrew love poetry and in the Egyptian Hathor temple of Koptos, see Staubli 2016.
- ¹⁶³ A structure "that guaranteed internal legal autonomy to homogenous ethnic groups in Ptolemaic Egypt"

- (Honigmann 2009, 125).
- ¹⁶⁴ Honigmann 2003 and 2009; Sanger 2014; Moore 2015.
- ¹⁶⁵ Gera 1998, 52–58.
- ¹⁶⁶ It is irritating that even the contemporary academic reconstruction of the social history of religions at times uncritically follows the patterns of ancient ideologies of separation. See my critique of Civie-Coche and Dunand on this point (Staubli 2015).
- ¹⁶⁷ Meeks 2010, 1.
- ¹⁶⁸ For a parallel see Oriental Institute A21133.5, BODO object no. 31513
- ¹⁶⁹ For parallels on name seals see Avigad and Sass 1997, Nr. 175, 316, 712, 733, 1121.
- ¹⁷⁰ English text by Kerkeslager 1998.
- ¹⁷¹ Stern, 1974, 417–421.
- ¹⁷² Cf. Commentary of Koenen 2002.
- ¹⁷³ Pseuo-Callisthenes, Manuscript A: I, 4.5, 34.5; Alexander as “Sesonchosis”; cf. Ladynin 2007.
- ¹⁷⁴ Stern 1974, 62–86.
- ¹⁷⁵ (The king) “must not cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire more horses...” Due to the open formulation in Hebrew it is debated if that means to return to Egypt to purchase horses from there or to bring people as slaves to Egypt in exchange for horses or to return to an Egyptian political system of exploitation in favor of an elite with horses and chariots.
- ¹⁷⁶ See above, 3.5.1.
- ¹⁷⁷ Greifenhagen 2002, 27f.
- ¹⁷⁸ As far as we know the sexual taboos of ancient Egypt were similar to those in ancient Israel (cf. Book of the Dead Spell 125). Therefore the undifferentiated disqualification of the Egyptians as people without sexual moral in Leviticus 18:3 must be labeled racist.
- ¹⁷⁹ Philo, *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia*, 83; Clemens, *Stromateis*, X, 47,1.
- ¹⁸⁰ Note that the opinion that animals are less intelligent than human beings is of Greek origin (esp. to be found in stoic thinking; cf. Sorabji 1995, Chap. 9). The Bible emphasizes the unique qualities of animals. That is why many animal names are used to name a person. Otherwise, demonized animals such as the donkey (in Egypt) or the snake (in parts of Europe) are seen to be gifted with knowledge that human beings lack (cf. Genesis 3:1; Numbers 22:33).
- ¹⁸¹ John S. Kloppenborg, “Isis and Sophia in the Book of Wisdom,” *Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982): 57–84.
- ¹⁸² Silvia Schroer, “Die Gerechtigkeit der Sophia,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 57 (2001): 281–290.
- ¹⁸³ The comments to this instance are inspired by Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 1384–1389.
- ¹⁸⁴ *De Vita Mosis* 1.5.20–24.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Antiquities of the Jews* 1.168; cf. Artapanus frg. 3 (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.4). Artapanus identified Moses with Mousa, the teacher of Pythagoras. Thus, the line of teaching would have gone from Abraham via the Egyptians and Moses to the Greeks.
- ¹⁸⁶ The quotation from Hosea 11:1 does not follow the Masoretic text or the Septuagint precisely. Therefore Luz (2002, 181) thinks that Matthew follows a story of Jesus’ childhood known in his community.
- ¹⁸⁷ Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 1:28, 38.
- ¹⁸⁸ Luz 2002, 183.
- ¹⁸⁹ For an icon of the 17th centuries CE with this motif from the church of Sergius and Bacchus in Cairo see: Anonymous, “File:Flight into Egypt (coptic icon).jpg,” Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flight_into_Egypt_\(coptic_icon\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flight_into_Egypt_(coptic_icon).jpg), accessed 10 November 2016.
- ¹⁹⁰ According to Bickel 2004, 75, it is Horus of Hebenu on a gazelle. This *interpretatio Aegyptica* is not self-evident from the sketchy relief. According to the myth, Hebenu is the place of encounter between Horus and Set.
- ¹⁹¹ Staubli 1991, 100–106; Staubli 2010; the constellation is also to be found in the realm of gods. Habbakuk 3:4–5 describes a procession of a shining god (like Horus on the stelae!), guided by Deber and followed by Reshef.
- ¹⁹² Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 14,110 (transl. by W. Whiston).
- ¹⁹³ Lucian, *De Dea Syria* 2, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961]) in the style of Sir John Mandeville, to give an idea of the archaic Ionic dialect in which Lukian wrote.
- ¹⁹⁴ This means Syrians/Levantines in this context.
- ¹⁹⁵ Philo, *Vita Mosis* 2:42.
- ¹⁹⁶ Cf. Hans Joas, *Was ist die Achsenzeit? Eine wissenschaftliche Debatte als Diskurs uber Transzendenz* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2014).
- ¹⁹⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*, 16th ed. (Frankfurt am Main Fischer, 2013).
- ¹⁹⁸ Bernhard Lang (ed.), *Der einzige Gott. Die Geburt des biblischen Monotheismus*, mit Beitragen von B. Lang, M. Smith und H. Vorlander (Munchen: Kosel-Verlag, 1981).
- ¹⁹⁹ Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

- ²⁰⁰ As, for instance, Wettengel 2003, 229: “Das Ägyptenbild, das uns die Josefsgeschichte vermittelt, ist im Gegensatz zum Ägyptenbild des Alten Testaments (sic!) ein positives. Hier gilt Ägypten
- ²⁰¹ gemeinhin als Ort der Knechtschaft und der Sklaverei.”
Görg 1993.