DJEHUTIHOTEP AND MEGIDDO IN THE EARLY MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

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ABSTRACT
The fragment of an Egyptian statue of Djehutihotep found at Megiddo by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (OI) has been long known. It was found with three uninscribed Egyptian statue fragments reused in the foundations of Temple 2048, attributed to Stratum VII, which was dated by them to the Late Bronze Age IIB, 13th–12th century BCE. A recent reevaluation of the stratigraphy of the cultic area of Megiddo (OI: Area BB; TAU: Area J) based on new excavations, however, demonstrates that the foundation of Temple 2048 should be assigned to Stratum XII dated to the early Middle Bronze Age II. The new dating of the findspot of the Djehutihotep statue fragment narrows the window of time for the arrival of the statue at Megiddo to the lifetime of Djehutihotep, supports a high chronology for the Middle Bronze Age, and demonstrates direct contact between Egypt and Megiddo in the Middle Bronze Age I. This paper reviews the new data on the archaeological context and reevaluates the implications of Djehutihotep at Megiddo.

INTRODUCTION
The fragment of an Egyptian statue of Djehutihotep found at Megiddo by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (OI) has been long known. It was found with three uninscribed Egyptian statue fragments reused in the foundations of Temple 2048, attributed by the excavators to Stratum VII, which was dated by them to the Late Bronze Age IIB, 13th–12th century BCE. The statue fragments are all Middle Kingdom in style, and that of Djehutihotep can be dated more precisely to the reigns of Amenhotep II, Senwosret II, and Senwosret III, on the basis of inscriptions from his tomb at el-Bersheh, Egypt. Since the fragments were found in a significantly later context, their value for the chronology and character of Egyptian and Levantine interactions in the Middle Bronze Age has been perceived of as having little or no value.

A recent reevaluation of the stratigraphy of the cultic area of Megiddo (OI: Area BB; TAU: Area J) by the author based on new excavations, however, demonstrates that the foundation of Temple 2048 should be assigned to Stratum XII, dated to the early Middle Bronze Age II. Consequently, the dating of the subsequent remodelings should be moved no later than the LB I. The new dating of the findspot of the Djehutihotep statue fragment narrows the window of time for the arrival of the statue at Megiddo to the lifetime of Djehutihotep, supporting the High Chronology for the Middle Bronze Age, and demonstrates direct contact between Egypt and Megiddo in the Middle Bronze Age I. This paper reviews the new data on the archaeological context and reevaluates the implications of Djehutihotep at Megiddo.

STRATIGRAPHY OF MEGIDDO AREA BB (AREA J) IN THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE
The stratigraphic sequence of the cultic area of Megiddo Area BB has been fairly well understood since the OI excavations (Table 1). As part of the renewed excavations by Tel Aviv University, several opportunities presented themselves to check and to refine the OI stratigraphy. Over three seasons (2006–2010), excavations were carried out in an annex to the main sector of Area J, known as Upper J, directly over the unexcavated portion of Stratum XV Temple 5269, where the entire sequence of Middle Bronze stratigraphy could be connected to the new Early Bronze Age sequence. Further, additional data...
collected during the excavation of Area J including new observations of existing sections provided support for the re-stratification of some Middle Bronze structures excavated by the OI. The current understanding of the Middle Bronze stratigraphy is presented in Table 1, and summarized here.

The earliest Middle Bronze I settlement at Megiddo was in Stratum XIV, with the establishment of a village upon the ruins of the abandoned Stratum XV triple temple complex (Temples 4040, 5192, and 5269) which dates to the Intermediate Bronze Age. Stratum XIV Area BB consisted primarily of structures, with part of Temple 4040 remodeled into a small shrine. Stratum XIII shows continuity with Stratum XIV, but increasing wealth, development in town planning, and larger construction efforts, including fortifications and a new cult space.

In Stratum XII, dated to the Middle Bronze II, a monumental palace was constructed in the western part of the area while well-organized elite houses were built in the east within the newly widened fortification wall. Between the two, was large blank space as presented by the OI, which remains an unknown through Stratum IX (Fig. 1). This is a curious phenomenon since for a millennium before this period, this was the precise location of the primary temples of Megiddo (Early Bronze I–Intermediate Bronze Age) and was, again, the location of the main cult in the Late Bronze Age. This gap has led some scholars to suggest that the Middle Bronze Age inhabitants of Megiddo had a decentralized cult focused on private religious ritual relating to death, without a public temple. Claire Epstein suggested that the Temple 2048, assigned by the excavators to the Late Bronze Age...
FIGURE 2: OI Stratum XII reconstructed with early phase of Temple 2048 showing the Middle Bronze II development of Area BB with palace (left), temple (center), elite houses and fortifications (right) (after Loud 1948, fig. 398 and Adams forthcoming).

TABLE 1: Middle Bronze Stratigraphy of Area J.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Chicago Stratum</th>
<th>TAU Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>J-7</td>
<td>Temples 4040, 5192, and 5269.</td>
<td>IB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIVB/A</td>
<td>J-8–9</td>
<td>Primarily domestic. Reuse of Temple 4040.</td>
<td>MB I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XHIB/A</td>
<td>J-10</td>
<td>Increasing prosperity. New cult space. Fortifications.</td>
<td>MB I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>J-11</td>
<td>Palace, Temple 2048, elite houses.</td>
<td>MB II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>J-12</td>
<td>Palace rebuilt and Temple 2048, elite houses.</td>
<td>MB II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>J-13</td>
<td>Palace rebuilt and Temple 2048, elite houses.</td>
<td>MB III–LB I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>J-14, 15, 16</td>
<td>Temple 2048.</td>
<td>LB I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td></td>
<td>Temple 2048.</td>
<td>LB II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td></td>
<td>Temple 2048.</td>
<td>LB II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Djehutihotep and His Statue

The Djehutihotep statue was found by the OI along with three other uninscribed fragments in the foundations of the Temple 2048 in Area BB.24 “Three of these pieces, including the one under discussion were incorporated into the rubble of which the temple platform was built.”25 The platform in question is part of Epstein’s Phase 2, which dates to Stratum IX (Late Bronze I) or earlier.26 The statue, therefore, must have arrived at Megiddo sometime in the Middle Bronze Age.27

The owner of the statue is Djehutihotep, son of Kai (Fig. 6, ln. 4) and Sat[kheperka] (Fig. 4, ln. 4), whose tomb at Deir el-Bersheh in Middle Egypt is well known.28 The tomb has been known since the 1817 but was published only in 1894, having been exposed to visitors and the elements for nearly a century.29 A few key inscriptions from the tomb provide a timeframe for Djehutihotep’s life and career.

The jambs on the façade of his tomb contain four vertical inscriptions each headed by the Horus name of a king under whom Djehutihotep lived (Fig. 3): Hekenma’at (Amenemhet II), Seshentawy (Senwosret II),30 and Netjerkheperw (Senwosret III).31 The inside of the right jamb further indicates that he was a Royal Child (ḥrd nswt)32 under [Nebkau]re (Amenemhet II),33 and the exterior of the same jamb indicates that he was a Sole Friend (smr w’t) of Haikheperre (Senwosret II). Djehutihotep, therefore, was born and educated as a child in the court of Amenemhet II, perhaps very roughly the same age as Senwosret II, and died sometime in the reign of Senwosret III.

Several of Djehutihotep’s titles from his tomb indicate that he was a close confidant of the king, performing functions in the upper echelons of the court while also being the Nomarch of the 15th Nome (the “Hare” Nome; centered on Hermopolis), which he inherited from his grandfather (Neheri II).34 While most of the references to titles in the tomb relate to his esteemed role as Nomarch, one title appears only once (at least that is preserved), “Gate/Door of Every Foreign Land” (Ḥ: n hšt nb)35 (or, perhaps “Gatekeeper,” [šrt])36 and is, as far as I can judge, unique.

As expected, several of the titles on the Megiddo statue are the same those from the Djehutihotep’s tomb. On the left side, he is the “Nomarch, Controller of the Two Thrones, Overseer of Priests, Chief of Five, Royal Intimate, He Who Sees the Secrets of the King’s [House(?)] and Sanctifies the Courtiers, The Great One of [the Hare Nome], […]”37 Djehutihotep born of Sat[kheperka].” On the right, he is the “Nomarch, Controller of the Two Thrones, Overseer of Priests, Magistrate and Administrator at
Buto, […], 37 High Priest of Djehuti, […] Kai’s son, Djehutihotep.”

There are titles attested in his tomb that are not on the statue, which is not surprising. However, several titles on the statue do not appear in the tomb at all. These include most of titles that are in partial lacunae (above), but they also include the curious title on the back pillar of the statue (Figs. 5, 7). The sign after wr almost certainly has to be the qn-bird, as suggested by Wilson. What follows is a tall sign with a bulbous top, which seems most likely to be the hq-staff. This is followed by two clear fh-strings. The fh-string is used as a determinative in words associated with string or binding. It is also used as a determinative in the ethnynm, Fnjw, “Fenkhew,” referring to the people of the Phoenician coast. If the Fenkhew are meant, one potential translation of the title might be, “Great One Who Finds the Ruler/Scepter of the two(?) Fenkhu in the temple of Khnum.”

Another part of the statue inscription, also mentioning Khnum, has a difficult group. The invocation of Khnum on the left side inscription: “An offering which the king gives (to) Khnum, Lord of …” (Fig. 4). Once again, the signs are legible, but the untranslatable toponym is nowhere else attested. The group is composed of three signs: what appears to be a nTr, followed by the ideogram hList, and the city determinative. Wilson translated, “Lord of the Foreign-Country-of-the-God,” which was otherwise unknown to him and remains unknown outside this inscription. He hesitatingly suggested that this may be a reference to the town of Megiddo. If this is the case, it would suggest that the statue was inscribed with the intention of depositing the statue in the temple at Megiddo, and that the Egyptians had assimilated the deity of Megiddo to Khnum.

Private statues set up in temples is a known phenomenon in Egypt from the Middle Kingdom onwards, and allowed for the deceased individual to witness and participate in temple cult. The two well-known 18th Dynasty sculptures of Amenhotep son of Hapu illustrate well this phenomenon, and the more than 700 stone sculptures from the “Karnak
Cachette,” which represent a Ptolemaic-era cleanup of the temple, attest to similar private statuary as far back as the Middle Kingdom. 48

In addition to the unique “Gatekeeper of Every Foreign Land” title attested in his tomb, there are other possible allusions to Djehutihotep’s experience in foreign lands. A unique hunting scene from Djehutihotep’s tomb shows him in a unique fully wrapped robe, “observing the trapping of the wild game (aw t xAzt).” 49 The latter phrase is known also from Sinuhe for the wild game brought regularly to him as a guest and son-in-law of Ammunenshi in Upper Retenu. 50 In the accompanying hunting scene, his sons and assistants, including an Asiatic individual ensnare an assortment of wild animals. Tree-topped hills that abound in the background of all registers exclude the likelihood of an Egyptian locale for the scene. While it is tempting to see an Asiatic locale, particularly with many of these animals, the diversity of game might indicate a more idealized scene of game from the known world.

Another scene shows an accounting of various types cattle. 51 Over one section of cattle is a caption that Aylward Blackman has taken as kAw R Tnw, “the
cattle of Retjenu." Retjenu, however, lacks the foreign-land determinative, which allows for the understanding 𓊋𓊓𓊔𓊡𓊍𓊍𓊌𓊍𓊡𓊔 𓊒𓊊𓊍𓊍𓊌𓊍𓊡𓊔, “cattle for the purpose of counting.” Considering the fragmentary text, it remains difficult to choose one interpretation over another.

In sum, Djehutihotep, Nomarch of the 15th Nome of Upper Egypt appears to have had some experience with foreign lands. He held a unique title, “Gatekeeper of Every Foreign Land,” and there are some vague allusions to foreign themes in his tomb. His statue bears additional titles not attested in his tomb, all of which are challenging to decipher. While the statue is, by all measures, of Egyptian make, one cannot help but wonder if the scribe was challenged to translate foreign titles into Egyptian. The unattested toponym related to Khnum also suggests a foreign place with either the ideogram or determinative x่าง, whether the place is a reference to Megiddo or not. Finally, the title on the back of the statue may refer to the Fenkhew, a regional ethnonym that is used in conjunction with Megiddo later in the Karnak Room III annals inscription of Thutmose III.

The Djehutihotep statue at Megiddo was found reused in the fill of the platform at the back of the second phase of the temple. The date for this phase of the temple is Stratum IX, Late Bronze I at the latest. Considering the unique titles and the reference to foreign lands in various ways on the statute, it is most likely that the statue was created specifically for use abroad during the lifetime of Djehutihotep and not robbed from his tomb in el-Bersheh after his death to be given as a prestige item to a royal of Megiddo. The function of the statue, as paralleled elsewhere, therefore, would have been to give Djehutihotep a permanent presence in the temple of Megiddo. Finally, that the reuse of the statue was in the Stratum IX, Late Bronze I, indicates that its original arrival of the statute at Megiddo must have been during the Middle Bronze Age, and that it was most likely deposited in the first phase of the temple, which was built in Stratum XII, the early Middle Bronze II.

**DJEHUTIHOTEP AND THE HIGH AND LOW CHRONOLOGIES OF THE MB IN THE SOUTHERN LEVANT**

Djehutihotep was active during the reigns of Amenemhet II, Senwosret II, and Senwosret III. Since no earlier king than Amenemhet II and no later king than Senwosret III is attested in his tomb, it is safe to conclude that his life is wholly contained in these reigns. Considering that Amenemhet II had an approximately 3-year co-regency with his predecessor, Senwosret I, we can suppose that Djehutihotep was born no earlier than Amenemhet II’s Year 4. Amenemhet II had about 30 years of sole rule before his co-regency with Senwosret II. Senwosret II ruled 8 years. Senwosret III had 19 years of sole rule before his coregency with Amenemhet III. According to the latest radiocarbon...
assessment of Egyptian chronology, the accession date of Amenemhet II is between 1928 and 1878 BCE, Senwosret II is between 1895 and 1844 BCE, and Senwosret III is between 1889 and 1836 BCE (95% Modeled hpd ranges). Djehutihotep’s life must be contained within the 57 years between the beginning of Amenemhet’s 3rd year and Senwosret III’s 20th year; using the maximum ranges of the accession dates, between 1925 BCE and 1817 BCE.

With regard to the Levantine chronology, the key date is the transition from the Middle Bronze I to the Middle Bronze II. According to the Traditional Chronology the transition occurred within the 18th century BCE, tied particularly with the transition from the 12th to the 13th Dynasty. The Low Chronology would put this transition right around 1700 BCE. The High Radiocarbon Chronology puts this transition at approximately in the second half of the 19th century BCE—1850/1800 BCE.

Considering that the statue was most likely placed in the Stratum XII temple, which is early Middle Bronze II, during his lifetime, only the High Radiocarbon Chronology transition date of 1850/1800 BCE fits this scenario—i.e., the Middle Bronze II must have started during his lifetime, the reigns of Amenemhet II, Senwosret II, Senwosret III, and within the maximal radiocarbon range for his life limited by the inscriptionsal evidence from his tomb, between 1925 BCE and 1817 BCE.

In addition to the chronological implications of this discussion, the statue of Djehutihotep emerges as a concrete example from southern Levantine contexts of direct Egyptian and Canaanite interaction during the 12th Dynasty.


6 Loud 1948, 78–102.

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Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, forthcoming).

Adams forthcoming a.

8 Adams forthcoming a.


10 Loud 1948, 84; Adams and Bos 2013, 120–125.

11 Loud 1948, 84–87; Adams and Bos 2013, 125–128; Adams forthcoming a.


13 Loud 1948, figs. 397–400.


18 Loud 1948, 102; Epstein 1965, 217.

19 Epstein 1965, 205.

20 Adams forthcoming a.

21 Adams forthcoming a. See also the similar phenomenon at Pella.

22 Loud 1948, fig. 247; Epstein 1965, 215.


24 Field No. A 1199; OI Registration Number: A 18622; Wilson 1941; Loud 1948, pl. 265; The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago collections, https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/#D/MC/54561/H/1485957288045.

25 Wilson 1941, 226, citing Field Director, Gordon Loud.


27 The original excavator’s stratification of the middle phase of the temple to Stratum VIIB allowed for a Late Bronze Age date for the arrival of the statue. Interpretations of this statues as well as other Middle Kingdom material in the Levant have been understood as exports from Egypt by Hyksos rulers as exotic items or as gift exchange between New Kingdom pharaohs and their imperial subjects, the Middle Kingdom objects having been robbed from tombs in Egypt; Alexander Ahrens, “Strangers in a Strange Land? The Function and Social Significance of Egyptian Imports in the Northern Levant During the 2nd Millennium BC,” in Kim Duistermaat (ed.), Intercultural Contacts in the Ancient Mediterranean: Proceedings of the International Conference at the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, 25th to 29th October 2008, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 202 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 285–307.

28 Newberry 1894.

29 Newberry 1894, 3.

30 Senwosret II heads two of the four columns, presumably since most of Djehutihotep’s career was spent under his reign.
Newberry 1894, pl. V.

That is, educated in the Royal Harem.

Newberry 1894, pl. V. For traces of and reconstruction of the royal name, see Newberry 1894, 12.

Newberry 1894, 6–8.

Newberry 1894, pl. X.

See various notes by Wilson 1941, 228–229.

See various notes by Wilson 1941, 228–229.

See notes by Wilson 1941 who was unable to reconstruct these based on titles from the tomb.

A reference to the temple of Djehuti at Hermopolis—or to Hermopolis itself.

See suggestions by Wilson 1941, 230.


Wilson 1941, 227.

Wilson 1941, 227–228.


See the online database of the cachette:Karnak Cachette and G. Legrain’s “K” Numbers, http://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/cachette/. It is noteworthy that the excavation was never completed, and it remains unknown how much more is buried at Karnak. A similar but smaller cache was found in the late 1980s at the Luxor Temple.


Roland Koch, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 17 (Bruxelles: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1990), B89.

Newberry 1894, pl. XVIII.


See similar observation by Mourad 2015, 93.

Redford 2003, 207. However, it should be kept in mind that the reference to the Fenkhew here is part of a later development of and embellishment on the Battle of Megiddo tradition.

In theory, the statue’s original placement could have been in a pre-Stratum XII context, i.e., Middle Bronze I. However, this would be most unlikely, since, by the time it was reused in the second phase of the temple by Stratum IX, Stratum XIV/XIII material will have been well-buried beneath the stratigraphic buildup of Stratum XII, XI, and X. Further, no other residual Middle Bronze I material of notable size appears to have come from the location of the statue’s discovery, as one would expect if the builders of Phase II plundered some exposed Middle Bronze I context to find fill for the platform.

57 Schneider 2006.