



McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

Fierce lions, angry mice and fat-tailed sheep

Animal encounters
in the ancient Near East

Edited by Laerke Recht & Christina Tsouparopoulou



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& Christina Tsouparopoulou

with contributions from

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CONTENTS

Contributors	vii
Figures	ix
Tables	xi
Abbreviations and sigla	xiii
Preface by Augusta McMahon	xvii
<i>Chapter 1</i> Introduction: encountering animals in the ancient Near East	1
LAERKE RECHT & CHRISTINA TSOUPAROPOULOU	
Animal agency and human-animal interactions	2
Animals in ritual and cult	3
Blurred lines: humans as animal, animals as humans	4
Managing animals	5
Animals in society and as a resource	5
Symbols of power: birds	7
Companions and working animals: equids and dogs	8
Avenues for future research	9
Part I Animal agency and human–animal interactions	
<i>Chapter 2</i> Animal agents in Sumerian literature	15
LORENZO VERDERAME	
The Fox in <i>Enki and Ninhursag</i>	15
Dumuzi and the Fly	16
Lugalbanda and Anzu	17
Ninurta and the Anzu’s chick	18
Inanna, Šukaletuda, and the Raven	18
Conclusions: magical helpers and the metamorphosis human-animal	19
<i>Chapter 3</i> Canines from inside and outside the city: of dogs, foxes and wolves in conceptual spaces in Sumero-Akkadian texts	23
ANDRÉA VILELA	
Canines from the ‘inside’: dogs	23
Canines from the ‘in-between’: stray dogs	25
Canines from the outside: wolves and foxes	26
Conclusion	28
<i>Chapter 4</i> A human–animal studies approach to cats and dogs in ancient Egypt: evidence from mummies, iconography and epigraphy	31
MARINA FADUM & CARINA GRUBER	
Human–cat relationships in ancient Egypt: the cat as an animal mummy	31
Human–canine relationships in ancient Egypt: the dog as companion animal	33
Conclusion	34
Part II Animals in ritual and cult	
<i>Chapter 5</i> Encountered animals and embedded meaning: the ritual and roadside fauna of second millennium Anatolia	39
NEIL ERSKINE	
Deleuze, Guattari, and reconstructing ancient understanding	39
Landscape, religion, and putting meaning in place	40
Creatures, cult, and creating meaning	41
Folding animals in ritual	41
Bulls, boars, birds	42
Folding animals on the road	44
Human–animal interactions	46
Conclusion	49

<i>Chapter 6</i>	The dogs of the healing goddess Gula in the archaeological and textual record of ancient Mesopotamia	55
	SERAINA NETT	
	The dogs of Gula in Mesopotamian art	55
	The Isin dog cemetery	56
	The dogs of Gula in Ur III documentary sources	59
	Conclusion	60
<i>Chapter 7</i>	Between sacred and profane: human–animal relationships at Abu Tbeirah (southern Iraq) in the third millennium BC	63
	FRANCESCA ALHAIQUE, LICIA ROMANO & FRANCO D’AGOSTINO	
	Materials and methods	63
	Faunal assemblage from Area 1	63
	The faunal assemblage from Grave 100 Area 2	66
	Discussion on dog findings	68
	Discussion on equid findings	69
	Discussion on aquatic taxa	70
	General conclusions	72
Part III	Blurred lines: humans as animals, animals as humans	
<i>Chapter 8</i>	Dog-men, bear-men, and the others: men acting as animals in Hittite festival texts	79
	ALICE MOUTON	
	What did the animal-men look like?	79
	The social status of the animal-men	81
	The animal-men’s actions	83
	Men impersonating animals in rituals	87
	Conclusions	87
<i>Chapter 9</i>	The fox in ancient Mesopotamia: from physical characteristics to anthropomorphized literary figure	95
	SZILVIA SÖVEGJÁRTÓ	
	Descriptions of physical and behavioural characteristics of the fox	95
	The fox as anthropomorphized literary figure	97
	The fox in the animal world	97
	The fox and the divine sphere	99
	The character of the fox as a reflection of human nature	100
<i>Chapter 10</i>	Animal names in Semitic toponyms	103
	HEKMAT DIRBAS	
	Cuneiform sources	103
	Ugaritic	105
	Biblical Hebrew	105
	Arabic	106
	Concluding remarks	109
<i>Chapter 11</i>	The king as a fierce lion and a lion hunter: the ambivalent relationship between the king and the lion in Mesopotamia	113
	CHIKAKO E. WATANABE	
	The association between the king and the lion	113
	Royal lion hunt	115
	Symbolic mechanism	118

Part IV Managing animals

Chapter 12	An abstract Agent-Based Model (ABM) for herd movement in the Khabur Basin, the Jazira	125
	TUNA KALAYCI & JOHN WAINWRIGHT	
	Herd animals as geo-agents of landscape transformation	128
	Methodology	130
	Results	134
	Conclusions	135
Chapter 13	An ox by any other name: castration, control, and male cattle terminology in the Neo-Babylonian period	139
	MICHAEL KOZUH	
	Anthropology and terminology	139
	Cattle castration and Babylonian terminology	140
	An ox by any other name	141
	Terminology and ritual purity	142
Chapter 14	What was eating the harvest? Ancient Egyptian crop pests and their control	147
	MALWINA BRACHMAŃSKA	
	Ancient Egyptian crop pests	147
	Ancient Egyptian pest control	151

Part V Animals in society and as a resource

Chapter 15	Stews, ewes, and social cues: commoner diets at Neo-Assyrian Tušhan	161
	TINA L. GREENFIELD & TIMOTHY MATNEY	
	Background	161
	Textual sources of evidence for peasant household economy and diet	163
	Zooarchaeological data on commoner households from Tušhan	164
	Model building: assumptions about the status of food sources	166
	Datasets: faunal consumption and disposal patterns	167
	Body portions of domesticated sheep/goat (<i>Ovis/Capra</i>) and status	171
	The distribution of wild resources	172
	Discussion: elite and commoner diets	174
Chapter 16	A new look at eels and their use in Mesopotamian medicine	179
	TROELS PANK ARBØLL	
	<i>Kuppû</i> in cuneiform sources	179
	Medical uses of the <i>kuppû</i> -eel	180
	Identifying the <i>kuppû</i> -eel	182
	Conclusion	184
	Appendix 1: Editions of prescriptions utilizing the <i>kuppû</i> -eel	184
Chapter 17	Wild fauna in Upper Mesopotamia in the fourth and third millennia BC	193
	ANNE DEVILLERS	
	Introduction	193
	The iconographic corpus	193
	The archaeozoological record	199
	A hypothetical potential fauna constructed through predictive niche evaluation	200
	Conclusions	201

Part VI Symbols of power: birds

Chapter 18	Waterfowl imagery in the material culture of the late second millennium BC Southern Levant	207
	BEN GREET	
	The material	207
	Religious symbols	214
	Elite markers	216
	Conclusion	217

<i>Chapter 19</i>	Ducks, geese and swans: <i>Anatidae</i> in Mesopotamian iconography and texts	221
	LAURA BATTINI	
	Difficulties of the research	221
	<i>Anatidae</i> in the natural world	224
	<i>Anatidae</i> in the human world	226
	<i>Anatidae</i> in the divine world	228
	Conclusions	229
<i>Chapter 20</i>	Wild ostriches: a valuable animal in ancient Mesopotamia	235
	OLGA V. POPOVA & LOUISE QUILLIEN	
	Ostriches and royal ideology	236
	The use of the animal and its by-products at royal courts	241
	Conclusion	243
Part VII	Companions and working animals: equids and dogs	
<i>Chapter 21</i>	Face to face with working donkeys in Mesopotamia: insights from modern development studies	249
	JILL GOULDER	
	Donkey-mindedness	249
	Modern studies	250
	Breeding and supply	252
	Hiring and lending	253
	The role of person-to-person dissemination	254
	Short-distance transportation	254
	Transforming women's lives?	257
	And finally, ploughing	258
	Summing up	259
<i>Chapter 22</i>	Sacred and the profane: donkey burial and consumption at Early Bronze Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath	263
	HASKEL J. GREENFIELD, JON ROSS, TINA L. GREENFIELD & AREN M. MAEIR	
	Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath	263
	The Early Bronze occupation at Area E	264
	The sacred asses of Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath	267
	The profane asses of Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath	269
	Conclusions	274
<i>Chapter 23</i>	Dogs and equids in war in third millennium BC Mesopotamia	279
	CHRISTINA TSOUPAROPOULOU & LAERKE RECHT	
	Symmetrical relation: companionship	279
	Asymmetrical relation: dog eat equid	284
	Conclusion	287

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Figures

1.1	<i>Fat-tailed sheep at the site of Niğde-Kınık Höyük, Niğde Province, Turkey.</i>	2
1.2	<i>Carved ivory lion (probably furniture element) from Nimrud, 9th–8th centuries BC.</i>	5
1.3	<i>Two faience jerboa figurines, Egypt, possibly from the Memphite Region (c. 1850–1640 BC).</i>	6
1.4	<i>Ivory blinker carved with a sphinx. From Nimrud, 8th century BC.</i>	7
1.5	<i>Ostrich eggshell converted to vessel. From Ur, Mesopotamia, Early Dynastic III (c. 2550–2400 BC).</i>	8
5.1	<i>Animal-shaped vessels from Kültepe.</i>	42
5.2	<i>Bull- and boar-vessels from Kültepe.</i>	43
5.3	<i>Eagle-shaped vessel from Kültepe.</i>	43
5.4	<i>Animal vessels rhizome.</i>	44
5.5	<i>Hypothesized early second millennium Assyrian trade networks.</i>	45
5.6	<i>Hypothesized early second millennium routes between Kültepe and the Lower Euphrates.</i>	45
5.7	<i>Likely animal presence within the corridor of hypothesized routes.</i>	47
5.8	<i>Landscape rhizome.</i>	48
6.1	<i>Middle Babylonian kudurru showing the dog as a symbol for the goddess Gula.</i>	56
6.2	<i>Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal: Gula seated on a throne with a dog at her feet.</i>	57
6.3	<i>Impression of a Late Babylonian stamp seal: Gula seated on her throne with a dog at her feet.</i>	57
6.4	<i>The overall height distribution of the dog skeletons from the Isin dog cemetery.</i>	58
6.5	<i>The mastiffs of Ashurbanipal. Relief from the North Palace in Nineveh.</i>	59
7.1	<i>Plan of the site with excavation areas and canals.</i>	64
7.2	<i>Plan of Area 1 Cemetery and latest activities.</i>	65
7.3	<i>Plan of Area 1 Building A with location of sub-pavement graves.</i>	66
7.4	<i>Plan of Area 2 with location of Grave 100, the equid burial, the dog burial, and other graves.</i>	67
7.5	<i>Dog burial in Room 22 – Building A (Area 1).</i>	68
7.6	<i>Equid burial in Area 2.</i>	70
7.7	<i>Fish specimens.</i>	71
11.1	<i>Metaphor explained by the ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ subjects.</i>	114
11.2	<i>Lion with flashing eyes.</i>	114
11.3	<i>Lion-hunt stele from Uruk, Eanna III.</i>	115
11.4	<i>Lion-hunt relief of Ashurnasirpal II, from Room B, Northwest Palace, Nimrud, c. 865 BC.</i>	115
11.5	<i>Narrative scheme of the lion-hunt reliefs of Ashurbanipal in Room C, North Palace at Nineveh.</i>	116
11.6	<i>Drawing of relief representing the god Ninurta pursuing Anzû, entrance to the Ninurta Temple, Nimrud.</i>	117
11.7	<i>Clay sealing bearing the stamp of the Assyrian royal seal, Nineveh, 715 BC.</i>	118
11.8	<i>Assyrian royal seal.</i>	119
12.1	<i>Upper Mesopotamia and the Khabur Basin.</i>	126
12.2	<i>The Khabur Basin with a dense network of hollow ways, location of Tell Brak marked.</i>	128
12.3	<i>A CORONA historical satellite image preserves details of the radial route system around Tell Brak.</i>	129
12.4	<i>Variable herd movement strategies differentially alter landscapes.</i>	129
12.5	<i>Hollow ways visible on the TanDEM-X Digital Elevation Model.</i>	132
12.6	<i>Variations in profiles may indicate differential traffic, hydrological systems, and/or preservation conditions.</i>	132
12.7	<i>TanDEM-X DEM around Tell Brak; the DEM after Gaussian Filtering and Sink Filling.</i>	133
12.8	<i>The ABM gives herd animals an equal chance of picking any given hollow way.</i>	133
12.9	<i>The results of the ABM from four main scenarios.</i>	135
12.10	<i>Close-up views of one of the hollow ways around Tell Brak.</i>	136
14.1	<i>Capturing common quails, Tomb of Mereruka, Saqqara, VI dynasty.</i>	151
14.2	<i>Ostrakon from Deir el-Medina, Ramesside period.</i>	153
14.3	<i>Mouse trap, el-Lahun, XII dynasty.</i>	154
15.1	<i>Location of Ziyaret Tepe.</i>	162
15.2	<i>Topographic plan of Ziyaret Tepe.</i>	162
15.3	<i>Photograph of the obverse of cuneiform text ZTT14, docket for receipt of grain by bakers.</i>	163
15.4	<i>Plan of the Late Assyrian architectural remains from Operation K, later level of occupation.</i>	165
15.5	<i>Histograms of relative percentage frequencies of wild taxa.</i>	168
15.6	<i>Relative frequencies of domestic and wild taxa from individual buildings.</i>	169

15.7	<i>Stacked histogram of the combined domestic taxonomic frequencies for each Operation.</i>	170
15.8	<i>Stacked bar graph of portions for Ovis/Capra by building.</i>	171
15.9	<i>Relative percentage frequencies of wild taxa within corrected wild populations of each building.</i>	173
15.10	<i>Stacked histogram of percentage frequencies of good, bad, and ugly wild species within each Operation.</i>	174
16.1	<i>A Mesopotamian spiny eel.</i>	182
16.2	<i>Neo-Assyrian relief displaying an eel.</i>	183
17.1	<i>Sites of provenance of the iconographic material and regional clusters.</i>	194
17.2	<i>Localization of the sites in relation to potential vegetation zones.</i>	195
17.3	<i>Wild ungulates appearing most frequently in early Near Eastern glyptic.</i>	196
17.4	<i>Relative frequency of wild ungulates representations by region.</i>	197
17.5	<i>Number of lion representations in each region.</i>	198
17.6	<i>Absolute number of representations of carnivores other than the lion.</i>	199
17.7	<i>Historic range of the cheetah.</i>	201
18.1	<i>Scarab/Plaque No. 8. Enstatite scarab seal from Hebron.</i>	210
18.2	<i>Waterfowl-shaped scaraboid No. 7. Found at Gezer.</i>	210
18.3	<i>Painted ceramic duck head found at Beth Shean.</i>	211
18.4	<i>Three waterfowl-shaped ceramic bowls atop perforated cylindrical stands found at Tell Qasile.</i>	212
18.5	<i>Ivory cosmetic box in the form of a waterfowl found at Megiddo.</i>	213
18.6	<i>Drawings of two of the ivory panels found at Megiddo.</i>	214
18.7	<i>Ivory panels found at Tell el-Far'a (South).</i>	215
19.1	<i>Modern birds.</i>	222
19.2	<i>Different breeds of birds represented on different media.</i>	223
19.3	<i>A miniature chair representing geese in natural 'milieu'. Old Babylonian period, from Diqdiqqah.</i>	225
19.4	<i>Cylinder seals with geese.</i>	226
19.5	<i>Toys in the shape of a goose.</i>	227
19.6	<i>Personal ornaments from Ur.</i>	227
19.7	<i>Culinary text.</i>	228
19.8	<i>The Goose Goddess.</i>	229
19.9	<i>Incised and painted vase from Larsa.</i>	230
20.1	<i>Modern impression of a cylinder seal, Tello, Early Dynastic period.</i>	236
20.2	<i>Modern impression of a cylinder seal, Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period.</i>	237
20.3	<i>Cylinder seal and its modern impression, Mesopotamia, Neo-Assyrian period.</i>	238
20.4	<i>Cylinder seal and its modern impression, Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period.</i>	239
20.5	<i>Cylinder seal and its modern impression, Mesopotamia, Neo-Babylonian period, 1000–539 BC.</i>	239
20.6	<i>Cylinder seal, Northern Mesopotamia, c. 1600–1000 BC.</i>	240
21.1	<i>Interviewing farmers in western Ethiopia.</i>	251
21.2	<i>Thrice-weekly donkey market in western Ethiopia.</i>	253
21.3	<i>Carrying bricks in India.</i>	255
21.4	<i>Donkeys with 100 kg grain-sacks at Yehil Berenda market, Addis Ababa.</i>	256
21.5	<i>Kenyan woman with seven children carrying food home from market.</i>	257
21.6	<i>Woman ploughing with a donkey in central Burkina Faso.</i>	258
22.1	<i>Map showing location of Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath.</i>	264
22.2	<i>Map of Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath archaeological site with the location of the various excavation areas.</i>	265
22.3	<i>Plan of the E5c Stratum, Area E, Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath, with location of donkey burial pits.</i>	266
22.4	<i>Photograph of sacrificial donkey.</i>	267
22.5	<i>Photographs of the three donkey burials beneath Building 17E82D09.</i>	268
22.6	<i>Histogram of Equus asinus osteological element frequency.</i>	272
22.7	<i>Plantar face of Equus asinus third phalange bone with butchery slicing marks.</i>	272
22.8	<i>SEM photograph of butchery slicing marks on the donkey (Equus asinus) first phalange.</i>	273
23.1	<i>Detail of the War side of the Standard of Ur.</i>	280
23.2	<i>Clay door peg sealing.</i>	280
23.3	<i>Digital reproduction of cylinder seal VA 2952.</i>	281
23.4	<i>Seal impression from Tell Mozan.</i>	282
23.5	<i>Sites with equid, dog and equid-dog depositions in the third millennium BC.</i>	282

23.6	<i>Tell Madhhur Tomb 5G plan.</i>	283
23.7	<i>Tell Brak Area FS 'Caravanserai', Akkadian period, Level 5.</i>	284
23.8	<i>Sargon stele.</i>	285

Tables

5.1	<i>Anatolian Middle Bronze Age chronology.</i>	41
7.1	<i>Faunal remains from relevant contexts in Abu Tbeirah.</i>	67
8.1	<i>Chart summarizing the textual data about these characters interacting with animal-men.</i>	83
8.2	<i>Chart summarizing the textual data presented in the chapter.</i>	88
15.1	<i>Model of expectations for typical patterns of faunal distributions within elite and commoner residences.</i>	166
15.2	<i>Utility index of combined body portions and associated element categories.</i>	167
15.3	<i>Relative percentage frequencies of wild taxa.</i>	168
15.4	<i>Relative percentage frequency of domestic versus wild taxa, buildings A/N, G, K, M and U.</i>	169
15.5	<i>Relative frequency distributions for domestic taxa.</i>	170
15.6	<i>Percentage frequencies of body portion categories of good, bad, and ugly for Ovis/Capra.</i>	171
15.7	<i>Relative frequency distributions for wild taxa in commoner buildings and elite buildings.</i>	173
17.1	<i>Predicted presence of large mammals in the different vegetation belts.</i>	200
18.1	<i>Scarabs and plaques with waterfowl iconography.</i>	208
18.2	<i>Waterfowl-shaped scaraboids.</i>	211
18.3	<i>Fragmentary ceramic waterfowl heads.</i>	212
18.4	<i>Waterfowl-shaped ivory cosmetic boxes.</i>	213
22.1	<i>Frequency distribution of non-articulated Equus asinus bone elements.</i>	270
22.2	<i>Frequency distribution of non-articulated Equus asinus bone elements by age groups.</i>	271
22.3	<i>Frequency (NISP) of Stratum E5c Equus asinus osteological elements by depositional context.</i>	271
23.1	<i>Calculation of meat weight.</i>	287

Abbreviations and sigla

ABL	Harper, R.F., 1892–1914. <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum</i> , 14 volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.	ARM 30	Durand, J.-M., 2009. <i>La nomenclature des habits et des textiles dans les textes de Mari</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 30.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.
AHw	von Soden, W., 1959-1981. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . Wiesbaden.	AUCT 1	Sigrist, M., 1984. <i>Neo-Sumerian Account Texts in the Horn Archaeological Museum</i> . (Andrews University Cuneiform Texts 1.) Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press.
AKA I	Wallis Budge, E.A. & L.W. King, 1902. <i>Annals of the Kings of Assyria: The Cuneiform Texts with Translations and Transliterations from the Original Documents in the British Museum</i> . Vol. I. London: The Trustees of the British Museum.	BabMed	Babylonian Medicine online [no year]: ‘Corpora’, https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/index.html
AMT	Campbell Thompson, R., 1923. <i>Assyrian Medical Texts</i> . Milford, Oxford: Oxford University Press.	BAM	Köcher, F., 1963–1980. <i>Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen</i> , 6 Vols. Berlin: De Gruyter.
AnOr 8	Pohl, A., 1933. <i>Neubabylonische Rechtsurkunden aus den Berliner staatlichen Museen</i> . (Analecta Orientalia 8.) Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum.	BCT 1	Watson, P.J., 1986. <i>Neo-Sumerian Texts from Drehem</i> . (Catalogue of Cuneiform Tablets in Birmingham City Museum I.) Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
AO	Siglum of objects in the Louvre Museum, Paris (Archéologie Orientale).	BIN 1	Keiser, C.E., 1917. <i>Letters and Contracts from Erech Written in the Neo-Babylonian Period</i> . (Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies, vol. 1.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
ARM 2	Jean, Ch.-F., 1950. <i>Lettres diverses</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 2.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BIN 3	Keiser, C.E., 1971. <i>Neo-Sumerian Account Texts from Drehem</i> . (Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of B.J. Nies, vol. 3.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
ARM 9	Biro, M., 1958. <i>Textes administratifs de la Salle 5 du Palais</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 9.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BM	Siglum for objects in the British Museum, London.
ARM 10	Dossin, G., 1978. <i>Correspondance feminine</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 10.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BPOA	Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006ff.)
ARM 14	Biro, M., 1974. <i>Lettres de Yaqqim-Addu, gouverneur de Sagarâtum</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 14.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BPOA 6	Sigrist, M., & T. Ozaki, 2009a. <i>Neo-Sumerian Administrative Tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection. Part One</i> (Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo 6.) Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
ARM 15	Bottero, J. & A. Finet, 1954. <i>Repertoire analytique des tomes I à V</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 15.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BPOA 7	Sigrist, M., & T. Ozaki, 2009b. <i>Neo-Sumerian Administrative Tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection. Part Two</i> (Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo 7.) Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
ARM 26	Durand, J.-M. et al., 1988. <i>Archives épistolaires de Mari</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 26.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.	BRM 1	Clay, A.T., 1912. <i>Babylonian Business Transactions of the First Millennium B.C.</i> (Babylonian Records
ARM 27	Biro, M., 1993. <i>Correspondance des gouverneurs de Qatṭunân</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 27.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.		
ARM 28	Kupper, J.-R., 1998. <i>Lettres royales du temps de Zimri-Lim</i> . (Archives royales de Mari 28.) Paris: Lib. Paul Geuthner.		

	in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan, Part 1.) New York: Privately printed.	HSS 14	Lacheman, E.R., 1950. <i>Excavations at Nuzi V. Miscellaneous Texts from Nuzi, Part 2, The Palace and Temple Archives.</i> (Harvard Semitic Studies 14.) Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard Univ. Press.
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.</i> Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–2010.	HW ²	Friedrich, J. & A. Kammenhuber (eds.), 1975–. <i>Hethitisches Wörterbuch. Zweite, völlig neubearbeitete Auflage auf der Grundlage der edierten hethitischen Texte.</i> Heidelberg: Winter.
CBS	Siglum for objects in the University Museum in Philadelphia (Catalogue of the Babylonian Section).	IB	Siglum for finds from Isin (Isan Bahriyat).
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, https://cdli.ucla.edu	IM	Siglum for objects in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad.
CHD	Goedegebuure, P.M., H.G. Güterbock, H.A. Hoffner & T.P.J. van den Hout (eds.), 1980–. <i>The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.</i> Chicago: The Oriental Institute.	ITT 5	de Genouillac, H., 1921. <i>Inventaire des Tablettes de Tello conservées au Musée Imperial Ottoman. Tome V. Époque présargonique, Époque d'Agadé, Époque d'Ur III.</i> Paris: Édition Ernest Leroux.
CM 26	Sharlach, T.M., 2004. <i>Provincial Taxation and the Ur III State.</i> (Cuneiform Monographs 26.) Leiden: Brill.	KAH 2	Schroeder, O. 1922. <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts, Heft II.</i> (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 37.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
CT 22	Campbell Thompson, R., 1906. <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in British Museum</i> , vol. 22. London: British Museum.	KBo	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi</i> (Bd. 1-22 in Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft) Leipzig/Berlin, 1916 ff.
CT 32	King, L.W., 1912. <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in British Museum</i> , vol. 32. London: British Museum.	KRI	Kitchen, K.A., 1969–1990. <i>Ramesside Inscriptions. Historical and Biographical</i> , 8 vols. Oxford: Blackwell.
CT 55	Pinches, T.G. 1982. <i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum Part 55. Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Economic Texts.</i> London: British Museum Publications.	KUB	<i>Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi</i> , Berlin 1921 ff.
CTH	Laroche, E. 1971. <i>Catalogue des Textes Hittites.</i> Paris: Klincksieck.	LAPO 16	Durand, J.-M., 1997. <i>Les Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari, tome I.</i> (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 16.) Paris: Éditions du cerf.
DAS	Lafont, B., 1985. <i>Documents Administratifs Sumériens, provenant du site de Tello et conservés au Musée du Louvre.</i> Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.	LAPO 18	Durand, J.-M., 2000. <i>Les Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari, tome III.</i> (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 18.) Paris: Éditions du cerf.
DMMA	Siglum for objects in the Département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France.	LD	Lepsius, C.R., 1849–59. <i>Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien</i> (plates), 6 vols. Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung.
DUL	Del Olmo Lete, G. & J. Sanmartín, 2015. <i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition.</i> Translated and edited by W.G.E. Watson. Third revised edition. 2 vols. (Handbuch der Orientalistik 112.) Leiden: Brill.	LKU	Falkenstein, A., 1931. <i>Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk.</i> Berlin: Berlin Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Vorderasiatische Abteilung.
EA	Siglum for the Tell El-Amarna Letters, following the edition of Knudtzon, J. A., 1915. <i>Die El-Amarna-Tafeln.</i> Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.	M	Siglum for texts from Mari.
ePSD	Electronic version of <i>The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary</i> , http://psd.museum.upenn.edu	Moore, Mich. Coll.	Moore, E., 1939. <i>Neo-Babylonian Documents in the University of Michigan Collection.</i> Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
ETCSL	Black, J.A., G. Cunningham, J. Ebeling, E. Flückiger-Hawker, E. Robson, J. Taylor & G. Zólyomi (eds.), 1998–2006. <i>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature.</i> Oxford, http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/	MSL VIII/I	Landsberger, B., 1960. <i>The Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia. First Part: Tablet XIII.</i> (Materialien zum Sumerischen Lexikon VIII/1.) Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum. [with the assistance of A. Draffkorn Kilmer & E.I. Gordon].
FM 2	Charpin, D. & J.-M. Durand (ed.), 1994. <i>Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Maurice Birot.</i> (Florilegium Marianum II.) Paris: Société pour l'étude du Proche-Orient ancien.	MVN 8	Calvot, D., G. Pettinato, S.A. Picchioni & F. Reschid, 1979. <i>Textes économiques du Selluš-Dagan du Musée du Louvre et du Collège de France (D. Calvot). Testi economici dell'Iraq Museum Baghdad.</i> (Materiali per il Vocabolario Neosumerico 8.) Rome: Multigrafica Editrice.
Hh	<i>The Series HAR-ra='hubullu'</i> , Materials for the Sumerian lexicon (MSL), 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 11. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1957–.	MVN 11	Owen, D.I., 1982. <i>Selected Ur III Texts from the Harvard Semitic Museum.</i> (Materiali per il Vocabolario Neosumerico 11.) Rome: Multigrafica Editrice.
		MZ	Siglum for finds from Tell Mozan.
		NBC	Siglum for tablets in the Nies Babylonian Collection of the Yale Babylonian Collection.

NCBT	Siglum for tablets in the Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets, now Yale University, New Haven.	SAA 11	Fales, F.M. & J.N. Postgate, 1995. <i>Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 11.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
OIP 99	Biggs, R.D., 1974. <i>Inscriptions from Tell Abu Salabikh</i> . (Oriental Institute Publications 99.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.	SAA 12	Kataja, K. & R. Whiting, 1995. <i>Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 12.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
OIP 115	Hilgert, M., 1998. <i>Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, Vol. 1: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Šulgi</i> . (Oriental Institute Publications 115.) Chicago: The Oriental Institute.	SAA 13	Cole, S.W. & P. Machinist, 1998. <i>Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Priests to Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 13.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
OIP 121	Hilgert, M., 1998. <i>Cuneiform Texts from the Ur III Period in the Oriental Institute, Volume 2: Drehem Administrative Documents from the Reign of Amar-Suena</i> . (Oriental Institute Publications 121.) Chicago: The Oriental Institute.	SAA 17	Dietrich, M., 2003. <i>The Neo-Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 17.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
P	CDLI (Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative) number.	SAA 19	Luukko, M. 2012. <i>The Correspondence of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 19.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
PDT 1	Çig, M., H. Kizilyay & A. Salonen, 1956. <i>Die Puzris-Dagan-Texte der Istanbul Archäologischen Museen Teil 1: Texts Nrr. 1-725</i> . (Academia Scientiarum Fennica Annales, série B, tome 92.) Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.	SAA 20	Parpola, S. 2017. <i>Assyrian Royal Rituals and Cultic Texts</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 20.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
PKG 18	Orthmann, W., 1985. <i>Der alte Orient</i> . (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 18.) Berlin: Propyläen Verlag.	SAT 2	Sigrist, M., 2000. <i>Sumerian Archival Texts. Texts from the Yale Babylonian Collection 2</i> . Bethesda: CDL Press.
PTS	Siglum for unpublished texts in the Princeton Theological Seminary.	SF	Deimel, A., 1923. <i>Schultexte aus Fara</i> . (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft 43.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
RGTC	<i>Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes</i> . (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B.) Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1974–.	SP	Alster, B., 1997. <i>Proverbs of Ancient Sumer</i> . Bethesda: CDL Press.
RIMA 2	Grayson, A.K., 1991. <i>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114–859 BC)</i> . (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods Vol. 2.) Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press.	TCL 12	Conteneau, G., 1927. <i>Contrats Néo-Babyloniens I, de Téglaṭh-Phalasar III à Nabonide</i> . (Textes cunéiformes, Musées du Louvre 12.) Paris: P. Geuthner.
RIME 1	Frayne, D., 2008. <i>Presargonic Period (2700–2350 BC)</i> . (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods Vol. 1.) Toronto: University of Toronto Press.	TCL 13	Contenau, G., 1929. <i>Contrats néo-babyloniens II. Achéménides et Séleucides</i> . (Textes cunéiformes, Musées du Louvre 13.) Paris: P. Geuthner.
RIME 4	Frayne, D., 1990. <i>Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)</i> . (The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods Vol. 4.) Toronto: University of Toronto Press.	TRU	Legrain, L., 1912. <i>Le temps des rois d'Ur: recherches sur la société antique d'après des textes nouveaux</i> . (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 199.) Paris: H. Champion.
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period; Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus, available at http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/index.html	TU	Thureau-Dangin, F., 1922. <i>Tablettes d'Uruk à l'usage des prêtres du Temple d'Anu au temps des Séleucides</i> . (Musée du Louvre. Département des antiquités orientales. Textes cunéiformes.) Paris: P. Geuthner.
RLA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> .	U.	Siglum for finds from Ur.
RS	Siglum for documents from Ras Shamra (Ugarit).	UCP 9/1,I	Lutz, H.F., 1927. <i>Neo-Babylonian Administrative Documents from Erech: Part I</i> . (University of California Publications in Semitic Philology Vol. 9 no. 1/I.) Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
SAA 2	Parpola, S. & K. Watanabe, 1988. <i>Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 2.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.	UCP 9/1,II	Lutz, H.F., 1927. <i>Neo-Babylonian Administrative Documents from Erech: Part II</i> . (University of California Publications in Semitic Philology Vol. 9 no. 1/II.) Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
SAA 7	Fales, F.M. & J.N. Postgate, 1992. <i>Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 7.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.	UDT	Nies, J.B., 1920. <i>Ur Dynasty Tablets: Texts Chiefly from Tello and Drehem Written during the Reigns of Dungi, Bur-Sin, Gimil-Sin and Ibi-Sin</i> . Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
SAA 10	Parpola, S. 1993. <i>Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars</i> . (State Archives of Assyria 10.) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.		

VA	Siglum for objects in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung).		<i>et d'Histoire in Genf</i> . Naples: Istituto orientale di Napoli.
VAT	Siglum for objects/tablets in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung. Tontafeln).	YBC	Siglum for tablets in the Yale Babylonian Collection.
VS 1	Ungnad, A. & L. Messerschmidt, 1907. <i>Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin</i> . Vol. 1, Texts 1–115, Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Sammlung der Vorderasiatischen Altertümer. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.	YOS 7	Tremayne, A., 1925. <i>Records from Erech, Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538-521 B.C.)</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 7.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
VS 16	Schröder, O., 1917. <i>Altbabylonische Briefe</i> . (Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der königlichen Museen zu Berlin 16.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.	YOS 8	Faust, D.E., 1941. <i>Contracts from Larsa, dated in the Reign of Rim-Sin</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 8.) New Haven: Yale University Press & London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press.
VS 17	van Dijk, J. 1971. <i>Nicht-kanonische Beschwörungen und sonstige literarische Texte</i> . (Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin 17.) Berlin: Akademie Verlag.	YOS 11	van Dijk, J., A. Goetze & M.I. Hussey, 1985. <i>Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 11.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
WB	Erman, A. & H. Grapow (eds.), 1971. <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> , 5 vols. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.	YOS 17	Weisberg, D.B., 1980. <i>Texts from the Time of Nebuchadnezzar</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 17.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
WMAH	Sauren, H., 1969. <i>Wirtschaftsurkunden aus der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur im Besitz des Musée d'Art</i>	YOS 19	Beaulieu, P.-A., 2000. <i>Legal and Administrative Texts from the Reign of Nabonidus</i> . (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts, vol. 19.) New Haven: Yale University Press.

Preface

Augusta McMahon

The chapters in this volume invert traditional approaches to past human-animal relationships, placing animals at the forefront of these interactions and celebrating the many ways in which animals enriched or complicated the lives of the inhabitants of the ancient Near East. The authors embrace insights from text, archaeology, art and landscape studies. The volume offers rich evidence for the concept that ‘animals are good to think’ (Levi-Strauss 1963), enabling humans in categorizing the world around us, evaluating our own behaviours, and providing analogies for supernatural powers that are beyond humans’ control. However, totemism has never fit the ancient Near East well, because most animals had varied and endlessly complicated relationships with their human associates, as these chapters vividly describe. Taboos on eating or handling animals ebbed and flowed, and the same animal could have both positive and negative associations in omen texts. Animals were good (or bad) to eat, good (or bad) to think, good (or bad) to live with (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010) and good (or bad) to be. Through detailed, theoretically informed and well-supported case studies, this volume moves the study of human-animal-environment interactions forward, presenting animals as embedded actors in culture rather than simply objectified as human resources or symbols.

The chapters in the first section emphasize the agency of animals via their abilities to resolve crises for humans and deities and to shift between animal and human worlds. Animals have paradoxical affects: as metaphors for wilderness and chaos, or as valued companions, helpers, or votive sacrifices. The variety of interactions and assumptions cautions us to treat animals, as we do humans, as individuals. Reconstruction of animals in past rituals has a long history, usually focused on animals associated with the gods and/or animals used in formal religious sacrifice. But the chapters in the second section also examine

the impact of lesser-known animals and less formal encounters, e.g., in the landscape or in funeral contexts within the home. The value and meanings of animals could vary with context.

The fascination engendered by hybrid or composite figures is also well represented. The persistence of composite figures in the Near East, from fourth millennium BC human-ibex ‘shamans’ on northern Mesopotamian Late Chalcolithic seals to *lamassu* and *mušhuššu* of the first millennium BC, suggests that the division and recombination of animal body elements fulfilled a human need to categorize powerful forces and create a cosmological structure. The anthropomorphizing of animals is another facet of the flexibility of animal identifications in the past. The authors here also grapple with the question of whether composite images represent ideas or costumed ritual participants.

The chapters also cover the most basic of animal-human relations, that of herd management, use in labour, and consumption, digging deeply into details of mobility, breeding and emic classifications. Economic aspects of the human-animal relationship are currently being rejuvenated through archaeological science techniques (e.g., isotopes, ZooMS), which give us unparalleled levels of detail on diet, mobility, herd management, and species. Matching these insights from science, the issues raised here include the value of individual animals versus that assigned to species, the challenges of pests, the status ascribed to and reflected by different meat cuts, animals as status and religious symbols, and animals’ tertiary products or uses (e.g., transport versus traction, bile). These studies allow a more detailed reconstruction of Near Eastern economy and society, as well as emphasizing the flexibility of the relationships between animals, as well as between human and animal.

The authors implicitly advocate for a posthumanist multispecies ethnography, which incorporates

nonhumans and argues for equal care to be given to nonhumans in the realms of shared landscapes, violence, labour and especially ecology (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010; Kopnina 2017; Parathian *et al.* 2018). This approach advocates for nonhumans' agency in creating shared worlds, in contrast to the traditional approach to animals as symbols or resources in the service of humans. Going forward, the challenge will be to convert the acknowledgement of equal cultural contribution into support for nonhuman species to speak for themselves; this shift from passive subject of research inquiry to genuine active agency in academic writing does not have an easy or obvious path, and many nonhuman animals may be overlooked. Indeed, multispecies ethnography ideally seeks to incorporate plants, microbes, stones and more (Ogden *et al.* 2013; Smart 2014), many of which are ephemeral in the archaeological record and all but omitted in ancient texts. However, ancient texts do support a new approach which questions our modern boundaries between species. Our perpetual struggle to translate terms for different species of equids, to distinguish whether a word refers to rats or mice, or to link zooarchaeological remains to lexical lists, reinforces the complexity and flexibility of these concepts, and the futility of attempts at absolute categorization.

The chapters in this volume should inspire colleagues to grapple with animals, nonhumans and contexts that could not be included here. For instance, the snake has as lengthy a history of human engagement in the Near East as does the lion and had similarly unusual powers. While the lion was an icon of strength, the perfect symbol for the proximity of the emotions of awe and fear, the snake has the sneaky ability to slither

between worlds, to avoid capture, and to deliver an almost imperceptible lethal injury. Fear of the snake conquers awe. Like the fox, the presence or actions of the snake, as listed in *Šumma ālu*, may be positive or negative omens. The snake was present at key moments in both Mesopotamian and Biblical literature; its actions (stealing the plant of immortality, offering the fruit of the tree of knowledge) changed the fate of humans forever. Whether represented coiled and copulating on Late Chalcolithic seals, grasped by Late Uruk 'Masters of Animals' or first millennium BC *lamaštu*, snakes and their paradoxical nature deserve deep scrutiny. There are many other nonhuman animals deserving of similar problematization and integration, and the eclectic and exciting research stream represented by this volume shows us the way.

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Chapter 18

Waterfowl imagery in the material culture of the late second millennium BC Southern Levant

Ben Greet

Throughout the history of the Southern Levant, waterfowl have provided a fascination for the cultures that have inhabited the region, which is why images of waterfowl are often found within the region's material culture in a variety of periods. Waterfowl iconography appears on strainer handles in the Persian period; reliefs of the Roman period; church mosaics of the Byzantine period; and in the bathhouses of caliphs in the Early Islamic period. But the first instance of this fascination began in the late second millennium BC (from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I), when waterfowl iconography started to occur more frequently on stamp seals, ceramic vessels, and ivory objects across the region.

Whilst this material has previously been examined in excavation reports or other thematic studies of specific materials (e.g. ivory), the aim of this study is to examine this material as a group to determine what symbolic meaning the image of the waterfowl had within the societies of the Southern Levant during the late second millennium BC. To achieve this, each category of material culture (seals, ceramic vessels, and ivory objects) will be analysed to determine the interrelation between the specific waterfowl iconography displayed on these objects and both their contexts and possible function. Two conclusions about the meaning of this waterfowl iconography are then explored: (1) that they served as religious symbols and were connected to the spread of Egyptian religious beliefs within the region; and (2) that this imagery served as a marker of elite status through the material chosen (e.g. ivory), the position of waterfowl as an elite foodstuff, and its close relationship to Egyptian power.

The material

Seals

During the late second millennium BC, waterfowl imagery is found on three categories of seals: scarabs,

plaques, and waterfowl-scaraboids. These seals performed two simultaneous functions: (1) they were magico-religious objects, serving simultaneously as magical amulets and focuses of religious worship; (2) they were attached to personal identity, with each seal's iconography used to symbolize an individual in legal and economic transactions (Keel 1995, 266, § 703ff; Ameri *et al.* 2018, 4–6). Table 18.1 details the waterfowl iconography from the first two categories of seals: scarabs and plaques. Before discussing this iconography, it is worth detailing the inherent symbolism present in scarab seals. Whilst scarabs were not the only animal chosen for this type of seal, they were the most popular. This popularity may stem from the symbolism of the dung beetle within Egyptian society, where it represented the concepts of death and rebirth. This association was likely based on the behaviours of the dung beetle (Baker 2012, 28–9 with references). These beetles often feign death and could therefore be seen miraculously 'returning' to life. We can reasonably assume that this symbolism followed the image of the scarab from Egypt into the Southern Levant. For one, dung beetles are found outside of Egypt and therefore their behaviour, including their ability to 'regenerate', would also be known outside of Egypt. Additionally, this connection to death and rebirth explains the inclusion of scarab seals within the standard 'funeral kit' of the Southern Levant (Baker 2012, 28–30).

The data in Table 18.1 shows that the waterfowl iconography of these seals almost always represented a waterfowl as part of two hieroglyphic formulae: (1) 'Son of Ra' or (2) 'Son of Amun' (Fig. 18.1; see Hölbl 1979 for an expanded examination of this formula on seals in Egypt and the Southern Levant). Both these formulae had political and religious connections with Egypt by referencing the Egyptian pharaoh through his divine lineage (either Ra or Amun), with some examples mentioning specific pharaohs (Table 18.1:

Table 18.1. *Scarabs and plaques with waterfowl iconography.*

No.	Site	Type	Context	Date – Production / Context (Absolute Range)	Iconography	Translation	References ²¹⁴
1	Tell el-'Ajjul	Plaque	Grave	18th Dynasty / LB IIA (c. 1550–1300 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Sun, Nefer / Side 2: Uraeus, Maat feather	Side 1: 'Perfect is the Son of Ra' / Side 2: Divine authority & Justice	Petrie 1931, 7, pl.14.128; Keel 1997, 146, Tell el-'Ağul No. 122
2	Tell el-Ḥesi	Scarab	Street	18th Dynasty / LB I–IIA (c. 1550–1300 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	'Perfect is the son of Amun'	Bliss 1898, 79, fig. 117; Keel 2013, 650, Tell el-Ḥesi No. 3
3	'Ara	Scarab	Tomb	18th Dynasty (c. 1550–1292 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	'Perfect is the son of Amun'	Ben-Tor & Keel 2014, 202, fig. 8.24; Keel 2017, 568, Kefar Ara No. 24
4	Tell el-'Ajjul	Plaque	Palace	18th Dynasty / unclear (c. 1550–1292 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Men, Nefer / Side 2: Lying caprid	Side 1: 'Perfect is the son of Amun'	Petrie 1932, 9, 55, pl. 8.111; Rowe 1936, No. S. 26; Keel 1997, 208, Tell el-'Ağul No. 314
5	Deir el-Balaḥ	Plaque	Unknown	18th Dynasty / unclear (c. 1550–1292 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Men, Nefer / Side 2: Rosette	'Perfect is the son of Amun'	Keel 2010a, 430, Der el-Balaḥ No. 70
6	Tell el-'Ajjul	Scarab	Grave	18th Dynasty / LB II (c. 1550–1200 BC)	Goose, Sun, Blossom/Lotus(?)	'Son of Ra' <i>or</i> Encoded name of Amun	Petrie 1932, 56, pl. 7.11; Keel 1997, 176, Tell el-'Ağul No. 214
7	Tell el-'Ajjul	Plaque	Grave	18th Dynasty / LB II (c. 1550–1200 BC)	Side 1: Hieroglyphic formula / Side 2: Goose, Amun, Nfr	Side 1: 'There is no refuge for the heart except Amun-Re' / Side 2: 'Perfect is the Son of Amun'	Keel 1997: Tell el-'Ağul No. 274
8	Lachish	Scarab	Street	18th–19th Dynasties / LB IIB (c. 1550–1200 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	'Perfect is the son of Amun'	Tufnell 1958, No. 266, pl. 37:266, 38:266
9	Megiddo	Scarab	Tomb	18th–19th Dynasties / LB IIB (c. 1550–1200 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	'Perfect is the son of Amun'	Guy 1938, pl. 131:10
10	Tell el-'Ajjul	Plaque	Grave	18th Dynasty / LB IIA (c. 1540–1300 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Men, Cartouche of Thutmose IV	Side 1: 'Thutmose IV, son of Amun-Ra' / Side 2: 'There is no sanctuary for the heart except Amun-Ra'	Petrie 1932, 56, pl. 7.21; Rowe 1936, no. S. 40; Keel 1997, 178, Tell el-'Ağul No. 224
11	Hebron	Scarab	Tomb	18th Dynasty / Late Bronze Age (c. 1540–1130 BC)	Goose, Men, Cartouche of Thutmose IV	'Thutmose IV, son of Amun'	Keel & Münger 2004, 240, 255, pl. 8.16; Keel 2013, 638, Hebron No. 4
12	Tell el-Far'a (South)	Scarab	Grave	18th–19th Dynasties / LB IIB–Iron IA (c. 1479–1070 BC)	Goose, Sun, Nefer	'Perfect is the son of Ra'	Petrie 1930, pl. 22.181; Keel 2010b, 90, Tell el-Far'a-Süd No. 148
13	Tell Beit Mirsim	Plaque	Tomb	18th Dynasty / LB II (c. 1450–1200 BC)	Both sides: Goose, Sun, Nefer	'Perfect is the Son of Ra'	Brandl 2004, 132, No. 14, 170, fig. 3.14; Keel 2010a, 74, Bet-Mirsim No. 70
14	Tell Beit Mirsim	Plaque	Tomb	18th Dynasty / LB I–Iron I (c. 1427–1000 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Men, Cartouche of Amenophis II / Side 2: Nefer	Side 1: 'Amenhotep II, son of Amun' / Side 2: 'Perfect'	Brandl 2004, 142, No. 38, 182, fig. 3.38; Keel 2010a, 84, Bet-Mirsim No. 93

Table 18.1 (cont.).

No.	Site	Type	Context	Date – Production / Context (Absolute Range)	Iconography	Translation	References ²¹⁴
15	Tell el-‘Ajjul	Scarab	Tomb	18th Dynasty / LB I–IIA (c. 1426–1300 BC)	Goose, Winged uraeus	Son, Justice	Petrie 1932, pl. 7.60, 57; Rowe 1936, no. 576; Keel 1997, 190, Tell el-‘Ağul No. 263
16	Tell el-‘Ajjul	Scarab	Grave	Mid-18th Dynasty / LB IIA (c. 1400–1300 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	‘Perfect is the son of Amun’	Petrie 1932, 57, pl. 7.48; Keel 1997, 186, Tell el-‘Ağul No. 251
17	Deir el-Balah	Scarab	Unknown	Mid-18th–19th Dynasties / unclear (c. 1400–1190 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	‘Perfect is the son of Amun’	Keel 2010b, 424, Der el-Balah No. 54
18	Bethany	Scarab	Unknown	Mid-18th–19th Dynasties / unclear (c. 1400–1190 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	‘Perfect is the Son of Amun’	Keel 2010b, 18, Betaniën No. 9
19	Beth Shean	Scarab	Surface	Mid-18th–19th Dynasties / unclear (c. 1400–1190 BC)	Goose, Men, Nefer	‘Perfect is the Son of Amun’	Keel 2010b, 180, Bet-Schean No. 189
20	Tell Jemmeh	Scarab	Unknown	Mid-18th–20th Dynasties / unclear (c. 1400–1150 BC)	Goose, Men, Uraeus, Nefer	‘Perfect is the [royal] son of Amun’	Rowe 1936, No. 648; Keel 2013, 16, Tell Jemmeh No. 37
21	Beth Shean	Plaque	Temple	Mid-18th–19th Dynasties / LB IIB–Iron IA (c. 1400–1070 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Mn, bird / Side 2: Two scorpions	Side 1: ‘Amun’	Rowe 1940, 19, 21, 85, pl. 38.6; Keel 2010a, 108, Bet-Schean No. 28
22	Gezer	Plaque	Unknown	Amenophis III / unclear (c. 1390–1353 BC)	Side 1: Goose, Sun, Cartouche of Amenophis III / Side B: Hieroglyphic script, Cartouche	Side 1: ‘Amenhotep III, son of Ra’ / Side 2: ‘Amenhotep, beloved of Ptah, Lord of Truth’	Keel 1995, 90, fig. 153; Keel 2013, 456, Gezer No. 676
23	Gezer	Scarab	Grave	Amenophis III / LB I–II (c. 1390–1200 BC)	Goose, Men, Cartouche of Amenophis III	‘Amenhotep III, son of Amun’	Macalister 1912 I, 320; II, 319, No. 175; III, pl. 80.21; Keel 2013, 200, Gezer No. 76
24	Gezer	Scarab	Street	19th–20th Dynasties (c. 1292–1075 BC)	Goose, Sun, Figure	‘Son of Ra’	Macalister 1912 II, 327, No. 341; III, pl. 208.27; Keel 2013, 352, Gezer No. 424
25	Beth Shean	Scarab	Street	19th–20th Dynasties / Iron IA (c. 1292–1070 BC)	Goose, Sun, Maat feather	‘Perfect is the Son of Ra’	Keel 2010a, 204, Bet-Schean No. 238
26	Tell el-Far’a (South)	Scarab	Grave	19th–20th Dynasties / LB IIB–Iron IA (c. 1292–1070 BC)	Goose, Sun, Nefer	‘Perfect is the son of Ra’	Starkey & Harding 1932, 24, pl. 52.178; Keel 2010b, 288, Tell el-Far’a-Süd No. 608
27	Tell el-Far’a (South)	Scarab	Grave	19th–20th Dynasties / LB IIB–Iron IA (c. 1292–1070 BC)	Goose, Sun, Maat feather	‘Perfect is the Son of Ra’	Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far’a-Süd No. 812
28	Tell el-Far’a (South)	Scarab	Room	19th–22nd Dynasties / Iron IIB–IIC (c. 1292–1070 BC)	Goose, Sun, Vertical line, Nfr	‘Perfect is the Son of Ra’	Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far’a-Süd No. 411
29	Ashkelon	Scarab	Surface	20th–22nd Dynasties (c. 1190–713 BC)	Goose, Sun, Milk jug	‘Loved by the Son of Ra’	Keel 1997, 692, No. 10, Ashkelon No. 10
30	Beth Shean	Scarab	Open Area	Iron I (c. 1130–980 BC)	Goose, Sun, Plant	‘Son of Ra’	Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean No. 65

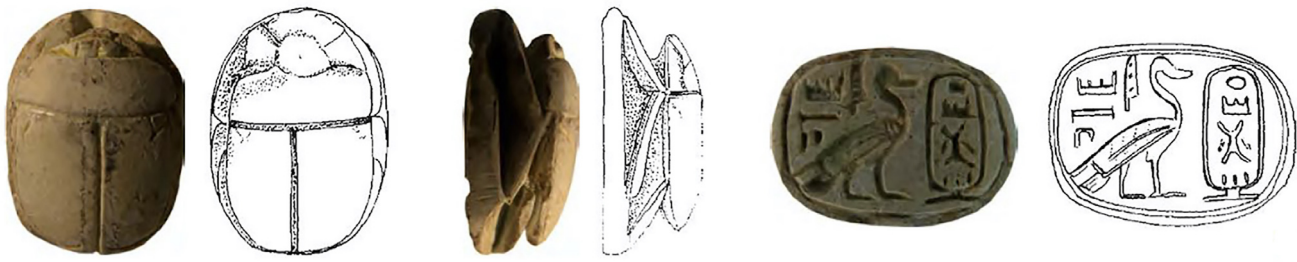


Figure 18.1. Scarab/Plaque No. 8. Enstatite scarab seal from Hebron. On the left side of the sealing surface is the epithet 'Son of Amun(-Re)', featuring a waterfowl hieroglyph. On the right side of the sealing surface is a cartouche with the throne name of Thutmose IV inside. Image from Keel 2013, 638, Hebron No. 4. Image reproduced with permission.

Nos. 10–11, 14, 22–23). Simultaneously, invoking Ra/Amun links the waterfowl image with these gods. This is especially the case with Amun, as he was directly associated with the goose, with some Egyptian traditions naming him in goose-like terms like 'the Great Cackler' or as the god who laid the egg that birthed the cosmos (Houlihan 1986, 64–5; Koch 2014, 164). Furthermore, a plaque from Beth Shean (Table 18.1: No. 21) uses the image of the goose within a phonetic spelling of Amun's name (this may also be the case on a seal from Tell el- 'Ajjul [Table 18.1: No. 6]).

Table 18.2 details the waterfowl-scaraboids uncovered across the Southern Levant (Fig. 18.2). The majority are carved to resemble a sleeping waterfowl with its head turned backwards, resting on its body. It is possible that carving a waterfowl in the same manner as a dung beetle on these seals indicates that waterfowl iconography had a similar meaning to that of the scarab, i.e. of death and rebirth. However, waterfowl were not the only other animals to be portrayed. Keel (1995, 67–72, § 146–60) lists the other species that were popular animal-scaraboids in the late second millennium BC, which included apes, caprids, fish, frogs, hedgehogs, cats, and lions. Clearly, not all these animals (e.g. apes, caprids, lions, cats, fish) can be associated with the concepts of death and rebirth like the scarab. However, only a limited number of species

were chosen for representation in this manner, which implies they had some type of symbolic significance for the individuals who used them. Considering the known religious symbolism of some of these species in Egypt (e.g. the cat) and the inherent amuletic nature of stamp seals, we can posit that these species still performed a similar magico-religious function that the scarab did on other seals. Additionally, whilst not the majority, some of these other species were also connected to the concepts of death and rebirth (e.g. the frog through its metamorphosis and the hedgehog through annual hibernation). Thus, as stated above, it is still plausible that the waterfowl imagery on these scaraboids was being used in the same manner as the scarab, i.e. to symbolize death and rebirth. Alternatively, Keel (1995, 71, § 158) posits a link between the waterfowl-, frog-, and cat-scaraboids and the worship of Hathor. Some evidence for this connection could be provided by the waterfowl-scaraboid with a Hathor fetish on its base found at Gezer (Fig. 18.2; Table 18.2: No. 7). Finally, the majority of these waterfowl-scaraboids date to the Eighteenth Dynasty (c. 1550–1292 BC), the same date as the increased frequency of the goose hieroglyphs in the region. This possible link between the Eighteenth Dynasty and waterfowl iconography is increased through the position of Amun as the dynasty's patron deity and Amun's strong association with the goose.

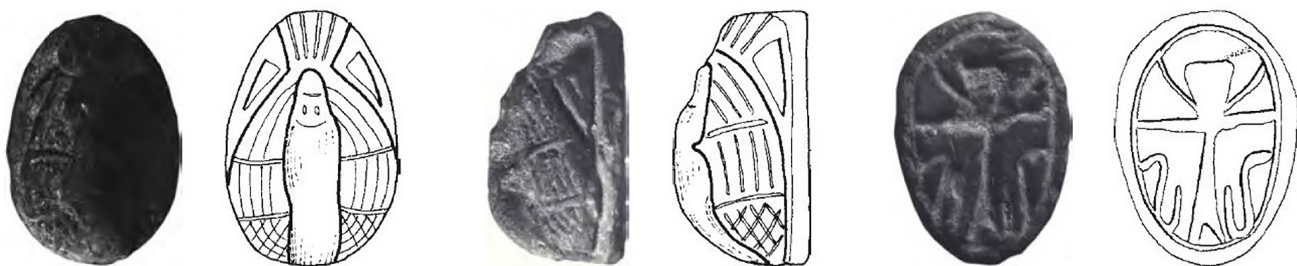


Figure 18.2. Waterfowl-shaped scaraboid No. 7. Found at Gezer and has a Hathor fetish inscribed on the sealing surface. Image from Keel 2013, 286, Gezer No. 272. Image reproduced with permission.

Table 18.2. *Waterfowl-shaped scaraboids.*

No.	Site	Context	Date – Production / Context (Absolute Range)	Iconography	Translation	Notes	Reference
1	Acco	Unknown	18th Dynasty / LB I (c. 1550–1400 BC)	Nfr and C-spirals			Keel 1997, 628, Akko No. 272
2	Tell el-‘Ajjul	Street	18th Dynasty / LB I (c. 1550–1400 BC)	Red crown, Z-spiral	Red crown of Lower Egypt	Waterfowl carved in relief profile, rather than in-the-round	Keel 1997, 246, Tell el-‘Ağul No. 425
3	Tell el-‘Ajjul	Grave	18th Dynasty / LB IIA (c. 1550–1300 BC)	Lotus bud(?)			Keel 1997, 514, Tell el-‘Ağul No. 1212
4	Beth Shemesh	Grave	18th Dynasty / LB IIB–Iron IB (c. 1550–980 BC)	Red crowns, Djed pillar	Red crown of Lower Egypt, Stability		Keel 2010a, 298, Bet-Schemesch No. 187
5	Tell Abu Hawam	Street	18th Dynasty / Iron I–IIA (c. 1550–900 BC)	N/A	‘Great Royal Wife’	Found in an Iron Age strata	Keel 1997, 8, Tell Abu Hawam No. 11
6	Beth Shean	Temple	18th Dynasty / LB IIB (c. 1479–1200 BC)	Rosette			Keel 2010a, 106, Bet-Shean No. 25
7	Gezer	Street	18th Dynasty / Third Semitic (c. 1479–980 BC)	Hathor fetish			Keel 2013, 286, Gezer No. 272

Although much of this waterfowl iconography originated in Egypt, some of these seals suggest a local adaptation of this symbolism in the Southern Levant. Whilst many of these seals may have been imported from Egypt, some are produced within the Southern Levant itself and either reproduce this Egyptian iconography for local use or adapt this Egyptian iconography for their own purposes. Evidence of this adaptation can be seen in the production of scarabs made from composite material, rather than imported Egyptian enstatite (Keel 1995, 147 § 386), and with less technically proficient engravings, which may indicate production outside of large workshops (Table 1: Nos. 1, 6, 13, & 25). Perhaps the best example of this local adaptation is one of the waterfowl-scaraboids from Tell el-‘Ajjul (Table 2: No. 2) that is carved in relief profile rather than in-the-round. This style of waterfowl-scaraboid has no known comparandum within Egypt and seems to be a specifically Southern Levantine adapted style of this type of figure-scaraboid. The examples of, not just the adoption, but the adaption of Egyptian waterfowl iconography in these seals demonstrate that the societies of the Southern Levant were not simply borrowing an Egyptian symbol, or that these images were stripped of their meaning in the Southern Levant, but, instead, that these Southern Levantine societies were using and adapting these images for their own purposes.

Ceramic vessels

Numerous fragmentary ceramic bird heads that date to the late second millennium BC have been found

across the Southern Levant (Table 18.3). The flat beaks of most of these heads point towards their identification as waterfowl, but a painted example from Beth Shean that strongly resembles a mallard is perhaps the best evidence for this identification (Fig. 18.3; Mazar 2006, photo 9.15b). The scholarly consensus is that these fragmentary heads are linked to the bird-shaped bowls that were found at Tell Qasile, dated between c. 1200–1000 BC (Iron Age IB, Fig. 18.4; Mazar 1980, 98–9; 113; James & McGovern 1993, 173; Dothan & Ben-Schlomo 2005, 123; Yahalom-Mack & Mazar 2006, 158–9; Gadot & Yadin 2009, 398; Mazar 2009, 547–50). These bowls have the head of a waterfowl attached to their rim, as well as wings and a tail, and were associated with tall perforated cylindrical stands



Figure 18.3. *Painted ceramic duck head found at Beth Shean. Image from Mazar 2009, XXXIII. Courtesy of A. Mazar.*

Table 18.3. *Fragmentary ceramic waterfowl heads.*

Site	Amount	Context	Date – Period (Absolute Range)	Reference
Tell el-‘Ajjul	1 head	Unknown	Undated, likely Bronze Age	Petrie 1933, 9, pl. XVII
Ashdod	2 heads	Pottery Kiln	Late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1200 BC)	Dothan 1971, 131, figs. 66:7–8, 92:7
Beth Shean	1 head	Brick Debris	LB I–IIA (c. 1450–1400 BC)	Mazar 2007, 573, fig. 7.2:5
Beth Shean	6 heads	Temple	LB IIA (c. 1391–1351 BC)	Rowe 1940, 8–10, pl. XX:13–18
Beth Shean	13 heads	Temple, Domestic	LB IIB (c. 1300–1200 BC)	James & McGovern 1993, 172, figs. 86:2–4, 87:1–5, 88:1–4, 89:1–2
Beth Shean	1 head	Domestic	LB IIB (c. 1300–1200 BC)	Yahalom-Mack & Mazar 2006, 158–9, fig. 6.1:2
Gezer	1 head	Domestic	LB IIB–III (c. 1300–1100 BC)	Dever <i>et al.</i> 1986, pls. 61:10, 62:16
Beth Shean	7 heads	Domestic, Street	LB IIB–Iron I (c. 1300–1000 BC)	Mazar 2009, 547, fig. 9.17:1–10, photos 9.15a–g
Ashdod	2 heads	Pit	LB IIB–Iron I (c. 1300–1000 BC)	Dothan & Freedman 1967, 110, fig. 35:1–2, pl. XVII:11
Ashdod	2 heads	Domestic(?)	LB IIB–Iron I (c. 1300–1000 BC)	Dothan & Ben-Schlomo 2005, 123, fig. 3.36:5
Apek-Antipatris	1 head	Mudbrick collapse	LB IIB–Iron I (c. 1300–1000 BC)	Gadot & Yadin 2009, 398, No. 4, fig. 12.4
Tell Qasile	1 head	Temple	Iron IA (c. 1150–1050 BC)	Mazar 1980, 113, fig. 42:b, pl. 39:6

(Mazar 1980, 99). A similar bowl was recovered from Megiddo and also dates to the last two centuries of the second millennium BC (Iron Age I; Loud 1948, pl. 85.7; Mazar 1980, 96).

These bowls seem to originate from Egyptian prototypes, as similar examples have been found at Deir el-Medina in Egypt, dating to the same period as those from Tell Qasile (Nagel 1938, 172–6; figs. 141–4; Pl. IX). Furthermore, similar fragmentary heads have

been recovered from Kom Rabi’a, also in Egypt, which date to the Eighteenth Dynasty, earlier than both the Tell Qasile and Deir el-Medina examples (Giddy 1999, 308–12; Pls. 69.799; 920; 70.1565; 1721; 86.499; 555).¹ The similarity of these Kom Rabi’a examples to those found in the Southern Levant and at Deir el-Medina, plus its earlier date, makes it likely that both the Tell Qasile bowls, and the fragmentary waterfowl heads associated with them, stemmed from Egyptian prototypes.

Various contextual elements suggest these bowls were used in ritual activity. First, the examples from Tell Qasile were recovered from a temple and a shrine. Additionally, the perforations in the associated cylindrical stands could indicate the release of smoke/incense, possibly used to enhance the ritual experience or heat up the bowls. Finally, the Deir el-Medina examples were also recovered from a ritual context and showed blackening on their interiors, suggesting the burning of offerings (Nagel 1938, 175; James & McGovern 1993, 173). Thus, as the other fragmentary heads from Table 3 were likely affixed to similar bowls (Mazar 2009, 550), it is probable these also served a ritual function, which explains their appearance within ritual contexts (e.g. at Beth Shean, etc.). Even the fragmentary heads discovered in domestic contexts were likely used in domestic rituals, considering: (1) the rarity of this form of bowl; (2) that later Biblical sources demonstrating evidence of domestic ritual (*Jeremiah* 19:13; 32:29; 44:15–17; *1 Samuel* 23:16; *2 Samuel* 23:16); and (3) that in the previous period (c. 2100–1550 BC) the religious life of the Southern Levant was focused on the domestic sphere (Hallote 2002).



Figure 18.4. *Three waterfowl-shaped ceramic bowls atop perforated cylindrical stands found at Tell Qasile. Image from Mazar 1980, pl. 33:1. Courtesy of A. Mazar.*

Ivory cosmetic boxes

Both complete and fragmentary ivory boxes shaped like waterfowl have been found across the Near East and in the Aegean, with many of these found in the Southern Levant (Fig. 18.5; Table 18.4). These boxes have been identified either as ducks or geese (Ducks:

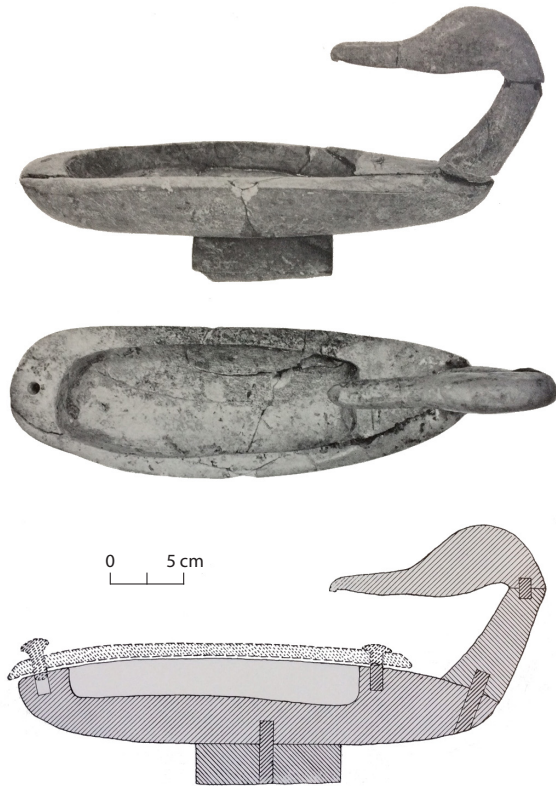


Figure 18.5. *Ivory cosmetic box in the form of a waterfowl found at Megiddo (Guy 1938, pl. 104). Image courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.*

Hayes 1940, 92; Barnett 1982, 20–1; Liebowitz 1987, 14; Lilyquist 1998, 27; Biran & Ben-Dov 2002, 141–2; Ben-Schlomo 2010, 141; Geese: Bryan 1996, 50–2). However, their morphology is too generic to make a certain identification either way.

Whilst ivory boxes originated in Egypt, there are several factors that point towards the origination of this specific style in the Levant: (1) a higher frequency of this style has been found within the Levant (Ben-Schlomo 2010, 141); (2) none of the ‘head backward’ waterfowl-shaped boxes within Egypt can be dated earlier than those found in the Levant (Lilyquist 1998); (3) ivory did not need to be imported from Egypt for the construction of these boxes, as the Levantine population had access to both hippopotami and elephants locally (Haas 1953; Cakilar & Ikram 2016; Bar-Oz & Weissbrod 2017); (4) the popularity of the alternate ‘swimming girl’ style of ivory cosmetic box within Egypt suggests that this was the ‘standard’ style of the box and that the waterfowl-shaped style was introduced later. This all suggests that this style was developed as a local Levantine adaptation of an Egyptian cultural item.

The scholarly consensus is that these objects served as cosmetic boxes (Guy 1938, 188; Hayes 1940, 82; Barnett 1982, 20–1; Liebowitz 1987, 14; Bryan 1996, 50–2; Lilyquist 1998, 27; Biran & Ben-Dov 2002, 141–2; Ben-Schlomo 2010, 141). In order to determine their function and since this form of box originated in Egypt, we can turn to the Egyptian cosmetic tradition of the period. From this, it seems likely that these boxes contained perfumed oils, which were used to distribute a scent around the room (Forman & Manniche 1999, 64). The cosmetic boxes in Table 4 are mostly confined to religious, palatial, and funerary contexts and this function of scent distribution fits with each of these contexts. In Egypt, perfumed oils were used within temple and funerary rituals, even being placed as gifts

Table 18.4. *Waterfowl-shaped ivory cosmetic boxes.*

Site	Context	Date – Period (Absolute Range)	Fragments	Reference
Tall Dayr ‘Alla	Temple	Late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1130 BC)	1 head	Van der Kooij & Ibrahim 1989, 92, fig.12
Lachish	Temple	LB IIA (c. 1400–1325 BC)	2 bases, 1 head, 1 lid	Tufnell <i>et al.</i> 1940, 61–2, nos.10, 19, 21–2, pls. XVII, XIX–XX
Beth Shean	Temple	LB IIA (c. 1400–1300 BC)	1 head	Rowe 1940, pl. LIIA:2
Megiddo	Tomb	LB IIA–IIB (c. 1400–1200 BC)	Whole box	Guy 1938, 188, pl.104, 142:1
Lachish	Tomb	LB IIA–IIB (c. 1400–1200 BC)	1 head	Tufnell 1958, No.6, pl.48:6
Dan	Tomb	LB IIA–IIB (c. 1350–1250 BC)	2 bases, 2 wings	Biran & Ben-Dov 2002, 141, nos. 200–5, 207, fig. 1:101, pl. IIIa
Megiddo	Palace	LB IIA–III (c. 1380–1140 BC)	1 base, 8 heads, 9 wings	Loud 1939, pls. 12:45–53, 30:157, 45:202–9
Tell el-Far’a (South)	Tomb	LB III–Iron IA (c. 1292–1077 BC)	2 bases	Starkey & Harding 1932, pl. LVII
Tell Qasile	Temple	Iron I (c. 1150–1050 BC)	1 base	Mazar 1985, 10–2, fig. 3.1, photo 6

for the dead on their journey to the afterlife (Forman & Manniche 1999, 33–4, 36, 109). Finally, both the contexts of these boxes and their construction from ivory identifies them as luxury products of the elite.

Carved ivory scenes

Two sets of late second-millennium BC carved ivory panels featuring waterfowl were found at Megiddo (Fig. 18.6) and Tell el-Far'a (South) (Fig. 18.7). They both seem to have been manufactured locally (Bodenheimer 1960, 188; Bryan 1996, 77; Lilyquist 1998; James 2015, 244), possibly from locally sourced ivory. Both panels were likely decorative elements within furniture, such as a chair or bed (Walsh 2016, 198). Some other ivory-inlaid furniture has been found at Ugarit and is dated to a similar period (Feldman 2009, 184). Both were found in elite contexts. The Megiddo panels were found amongst a large deposit of luxury items in the palace structure (Loud 1939, 17, pl. 33.162; Feldman 2009, 177–9) and the Tell el-Far'a (South) examples were found within an elite 'residency' (Petrie 1930, 19, pl. IV). Both consist of a hybrid of Egyptianizing and Levantine iconography (Bodenheimer 1960, 188; Bryan 1996, 77; Lilyquist 1998; James 2015, 244), with the iconography of both scenes sharing commonalities such as a processional scene with offerings, including captives, leading towards an enthroned figure; attendants accompanying the ruler; birds and other

symbols in the interstitial spaces; and the inclusion of waterfowl. However, each group of panels depicts these waterfowl in a different context. Whilst the Megiddo panel shows a procession of waterfowl with attendants, the Tell el-Far'a (South) panels depict the capture of waterfowl in clap-nets and the transport of trussed birds to the enthroned ruler.

Religious symbols

Several aspects of this material demonstrate that this waterfowl iconography was connected to the religious life of the Southern Levant in the late second millennium BC. The goose hieroglyphs seen on stamp seals, whilst referencing pharaonic power, were simultaneously associated with Ra or Amun. The connection to Amun seems particularly strong, due to the links between the goose and Amun in Egyptian mythology and the inclusion of the goose in the phonetic spelling of the god's name. These goose hieroglyphs also formed part of the magico-religious purpose of these stamp seals, as did the shape of the waterfowl scaraboids.² The waterfowl-shaped bowls found at Tell Qasile, and the fragmentary waterfowl heads associated with them, were likely used for ritual activity, both in religious and domestic spaces. Similarly, the waterfowl-shaped cosmetic boxes were seemingly used to provide scents in both religious and funerary rituals. These extensive

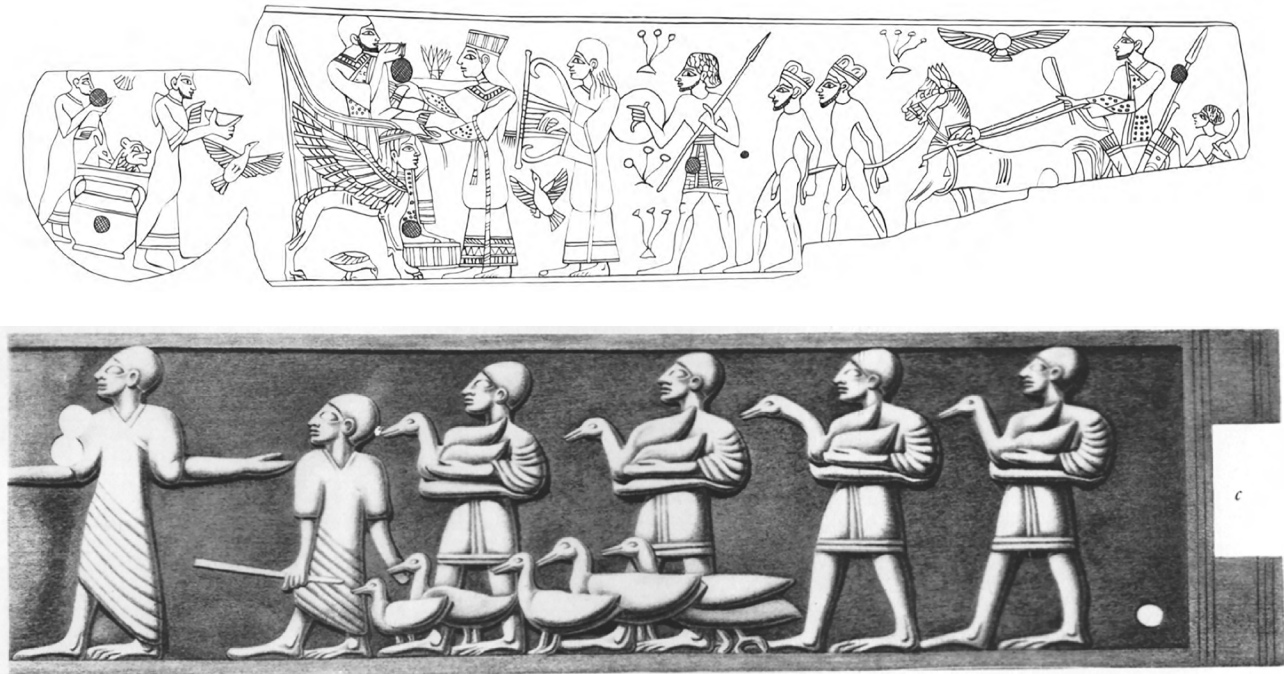


Figure 18.6. Drawings of two of the ivory panels found at Megiddo (Loud 1939, pls. 4:2, 33:2). Image courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

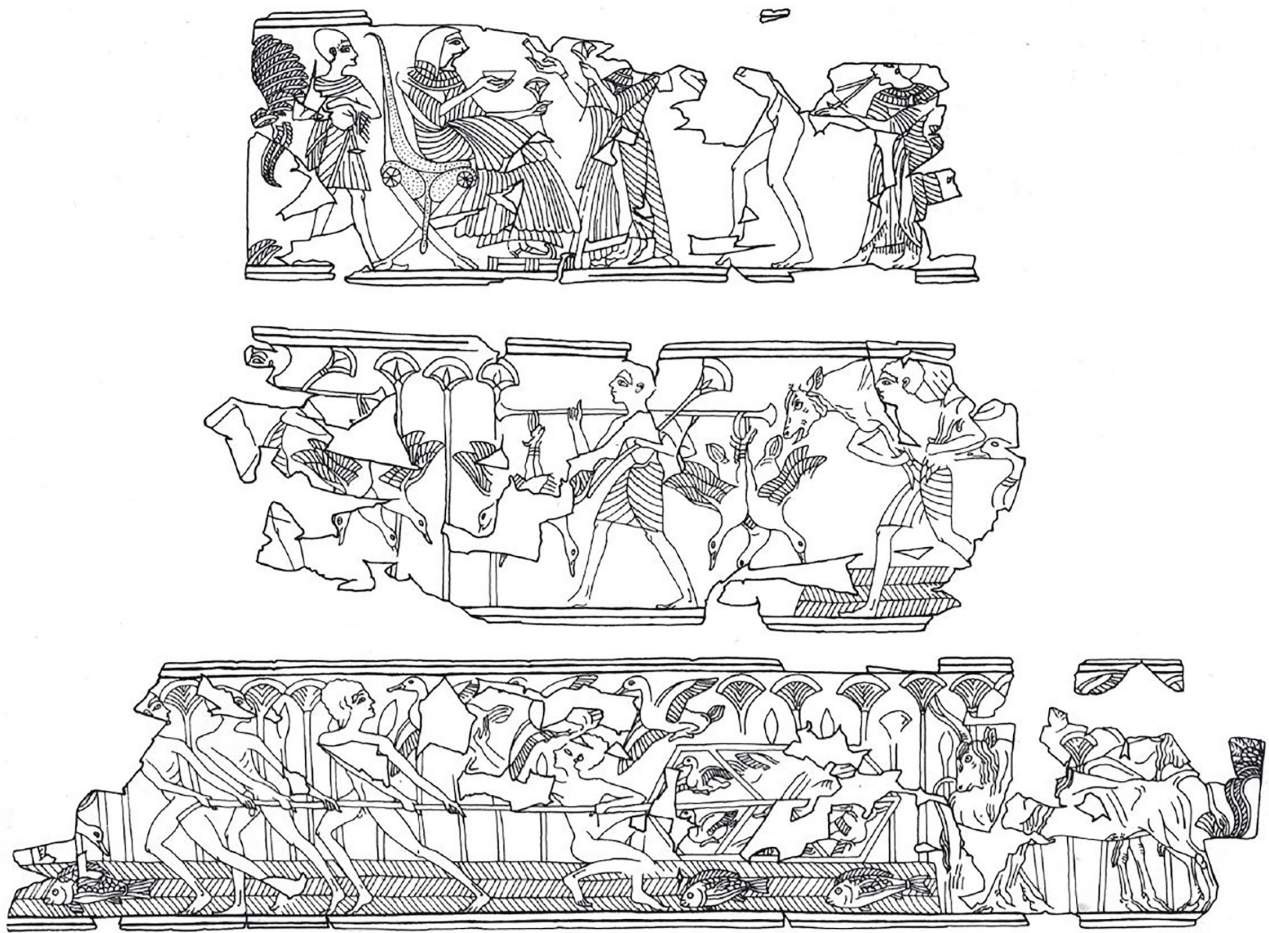


Figure 18.7. Ivory panels found at Tell el-Far'a (South) (Petrie 1930, pl. LV). Images courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL.

ritual/religious connections demonstrate that this waterfowl iconography had some type of symbolism within the religious life of the Southern Levant.

To explore the meaning of the waterfowl in this religious context, we can turn to Nataf's interpretation of the Megiddo and Tell el-Far'a (South) panels. Nataf sees these scenes as reflective of an Egyptian mortuary cult within the Southern Levant (Nataf 2011). Partly following Markoe (1990), she emphasizes that both the choice of scenes and symbols within these scenes are taken directly from Egyptian mortuary traditions (Nataf 2011, 54–5, 58). Specifically, she sees the banquet scenes as representing a feast for the deceased and the swamp scene as representing the transition to the afterlife, both of which were prominent in Egyptian tombs of this period. The trio of birds in the Megiddo scene, and specifically the placing of a bird beneath the chair of the enthroned figure, are also connected to depictions of the deceased in Egyptian tombs. Furthermore, both the lotus flower and the papyrus

plants are connected to concepts of death and rebirth that are prominent themes in Egyptian mortuary rituals. Lotus flowers are held by the enthroned figures in both scenes and by a processional figure in the Tell el-Far'a (South) scene. The papyrus plants form the background of the Tell el-Far'a (South) scenes and can be seen in their hieroglyphic form in the interstitial spaces of the Megiddo scenes. Nataf also suggests that one of the figures in the Megiddo scene is the goddess Hathor, who is also connected to death and rebirth. This identification is based on the figure's headdress. Finally, she notes that the rooms in which these panels were discovered share features with the mortuary cult chapels found elsewhere in the Levant, specifically the Syrian *hmn* chapels in Ugarit (Niehr 2006; Nataf 2011, 62).

The waterfowl in both these sets of scenes may have also contributed to this theme of death and rebirth. Geese were magical and apotropaic symbols within the Egyptian religious tradition, but they were also

connected to mortuary rituals through their appearance on funerary Papyri, like the Book of the Dead, and votive stelae to the deceased (Houlihan 1986, 64). Furthermore, it is possible that the waterfowl-shaped scaraboids not only replaced the image of the scarab on these seals, but were chosen because they served the same symbolic function of the scarabs, which, as discussed above, was associated with the themes of death and rebirth. The fact that some of these waterfowl-scaraboids were found in funerary contexts (Table 2: Nos. 3–4); that they repeat similar motifs such as the lotus (Table 2: No. 3) and Hathor (Table 2: No. 7);³ and that geese appear in funerary art in Egypt all reinforce this interpretation of these seals.

Additionally, the ecology of waterfowl within the Southern Levant reinforces this interpretation of their religious symbolism. The Levantine corridor is on the edges of two of the major avian migratory flyways: the eastern edge of the Black Sea/Mediterranean fly way and the western edge of the East Asia/East Africa fly way (Boere & Stroud 2006). Due to this location on the fringe of two fly ways, around 500 million birds from *c.* 550 species migrate through the region each year (Frumkin *et al.* 1995; Sales 2016). This annual migratory cycle of appearance and disappearance provides an excellent metaphor for the cycle of death and rebirth. Furthermore, waterfowl have a high degree of liminal symbolism. In many cultures, birds have often been used to represent the crossing of the boundary between the divine and mortal realms or between life and death, due to their ability to transverse the earth and the sky (e.g. Furst 1991; Riley 2001; Gear & Gear 1991). Waterfowl take this avian liminality further through their ability to transverse three realms – earth, sky, and water – which makes them excellent symbols for the crossing of supernatural boundaries. This innate symbolism of waterfowl, combined with the contextual evidence of this material culture and its interrelation with Egyptian religious beliefs, makes a strong argument for this waterfowl iconography having a prominent religious symbolism within the Southern Levant in the late second millennium BC, closely tied to the concepts of death and rebirth.

Elite markers

Simultaneously, this waterfowl iconography acted as a marker of elite status. This partly stems from the luxury status of some of these items (e.g. ivory panels and boxes). But, more substantially, it arises from two aspects of the waterfowl's symbolism within the Southern Levant of this period: (1) its close connection to Egyptian culture and pharaonic power; and (2) its status as an elite foodstuff.

The Egyptian empire was the dominant cultural force in this region during the late second millennium BC and, while the process of 'Egyptianization' is more complex than simply elite emulation of a dominant culture, we do see an increase in Egyptian style objects across the region from the middle of the second millennium BC (Koch 2014, 166–8 with references). The Egyptian origins of the waterfowl-shaped ceramic bowls and ivory boxes show that waterfowl iconography was involved in this process, but perhaps the clearest example comes from the seals. The appearance of a waterfowl in hieroglyphic form creates a direct connection with Egyptian culture, reinforced by its use within the standard formulae of 'Son of Ra/Amun', which are tied directly to pharaonic power. One waterfowl-scaraboid even refers to Egyptian royal power through the inscription reading 'Great Royal Wife' (Table 18.2: No. 5). Since these seals were used as expressions of personal identity, this use of the waterfowl as a reference to Egyptian power can be read as an individual's attempt to connect their own identity to the preeminent political power in the region. In this way, the image of waterfowl acted as an elite marker, as it distinguished those with a greater connection to the dominant, and presumably elite, culture in the region.

Second, waterfowl acted as an elite marker through their position as an elite foodstuff, evidenced through the zooarchaeological record (Croft 2004) and the Megiddo and Tell el-Far'a (South) ivory panels (Loud 1939, pls. 4:2, 33:2; Petrie 1930, pl. LV). Liebowitz (Liebowitz 1980; Lilyquist 1998) argues that these panels represent victory feasts of the Southern Levantine elite. He bases this interpretation on (1) the clear military themes such as chariots, soldiers, and captives; (2) the gathering of large amounts of provisions; and (3) the presenting offerings to the ruler. This theory may even complement Nataf's interpretation, who suggests the scenes represent feasts for deceased rulers. Whether the iconography of these panels was religious or secular in nature, Liebowitz's point, that these scenes reflect actual feasting practices during this period, is valid. This supposition is confirmed by the large amount of late-second-millennium BC goose remains that were found in elite contexts at Lachish (Croft 2004). Since waterfowl feature heavily in both feasting scenes and in the remains at Lachish, we can presume they formed a central part of some elite feasts of the late second millennium BC and, thus, were an elite foodstuff in the region. Koch (2014) even argues that both this feasting tradition and the involvement of waterfowl within it was an avenue of elite emulation of the dominant Egyptian culture during this period.

The procurement of waterfowl for these feasts adds to their position as an elite foodstuff. The Megiddo

panel, through the inclusion of smaller sized geese and a figure with a rod, seems to depict domestic geese, and the large amount of goose remains from Lachish may also suggest the presence of domestic geese. Geese were regular domestic animals in Egypt by the Eighteenth Dynasty, as is shown by the depictions of large amounts of geese alongside administrators and attendants within the artwork of this period (Boessneck 1962; Zeuner 1963, 468; Houlihan 1986, 56; Koch 2014). Yet, the Megiddo panel and Lachish remains are the first evidence for domestic geese within the Southern Levant. Thus, if these are domestic geese, not only were they recently introduced to the region, and therefore likely confined to the elite, they were yet another example of the close association between geese and the dominant Egyptian culture, as domestic geese would have originated in Egypt.

Alternatively, the Tell el-Far'a (South) panel depicts the hunting of geese for elite feasts. Since it is difficult to osteologically distinguish between domestic and wild geese, it is also possible that the goose remains at Lachish come from hunted wild geese rather than domestic geese (Barnes *et al.* 2000; Koch 2014, 165). Throughout the second millennium BC, we see a decline of wild animals in favour of domesticated animals across the Southern Levant (Clason & Buitenhuis 1988, 237; Marom & Bar-Oz 2013, 234), a trend repeated at Lachish (Croft 2004). This lack of wild game in the zooarchaeological record implies a shift from hunting as a subsistence activity to a leisure activity. This decline, coupled with Genz' identification of bird hunting bolts in Egyptian and Southern Levantine tombs of this period (Genz 2007) and the slightly higher percentage of wild game in the zooarchaeological record of urban centres (Marom & Bar-Oz 2013, 234), suggests that hunting was becoming an elite leisure activity during this period. Whilst this does not discount the existence of small-scale hunting activities by those in lower social stratas,⁴ or the existence of professional fowling (as may be depicted in the Tell el-Far'a [South] panels), even on this scale the pragmatic realities of agricultural life would make hunting waterfowl a leisure activity and, thus, would make eating waterfowl a luxury. Thus, whether this imagery was representing domestic or wild geese, both were intimately connected with elite culture in the region and, again, with the dominant Egyptian culture.

Conclusion

This study aimed to discover the meaning that was created when an inhabitant of the Southern Levant in the late second millennium BC looked upon the waterfowl iconography that had become more frequent in the

region during this period. As the previous discussion has shown, for these inhabitants, this waterfowl iconography served simultaneously as a religious symbol and as a marker of elite status. Its religious dimensions included direct connections with Egyptian religion, through associations with Egyptian gods, especially Amun, and through its inclusion as an Egyptian mortuary symbol. Beyond this, though, it also seemed to be acting as a symbol for the concepts of death and rebirth, reinforced by the transitional nature of waterfowl in the region and the general liminal symbolism inherent in these birds. Alongside this religious meaning, waterfowl iconography symbolized an elite status through its connection to Egyptian power. This association was expressed in various ways: (1) they were directly connected to the pharaoh on seals; (2) they were included in elite feasting activity, which itself was drawn from Egyptian cultural norms; (3) they were possibly a domestic animal confined to the elite; and (4) the hunting of waterfowl was becoming confined to an elite leisure activity.

Overwhelmingly, this symbolism was strongly associated with Egyptian culture. In fact, the increased frequency of waterfowl iconography, as well as its political and religious dimensions, may stem purely from a shift in Egyptian culture. During the Eighteenth Dynasty, Amun became the patron god of the pharaohs, and, as we have discussed, the goose was closely associated with Amun and, therefore, likely became a prominent religious and political symbol within Egyptian culture from the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards. This mirrors the growing frequency of waterfowl iconography in the Southern Levant, alongside the growing political influence this Egyptian dynasty had in the region. But this is not to say that this waterfowl iconography is merely an Egyptian symbol that has been transplanted into the Southern Levant. The local production (e.g. plaques, ivory panels) or local adaptation (e.g. ivory boxes, stamp seals) of these objects suggests a similar modification of the traditional Egyptian meaning to suit the societies of the Southern Levant. In fact, the apparent absence of any erotic or fertility symbolism connected with these images demonstrates that not all of Egypt's symbolism was transferred into this region. Instead, this combination of religious symbolism, centred on death and rebirth, and strong associations with Egyptian power and elite status, was the Southern Levantine reading of a previously Egyptian symbol.

Notes

- 1 Giddy (1999) believes these heads to be fragments of children's toys, but their striking similarity to these bowls makes this unlikely.

- 2 It has been suggested that waterfowl had an erotic or fertility significance in New Kingdom art (Hermann 1932; Derchain 1976; Pinch 1993; Koch 2014, 164). However, there is currently no evidence for this interpretation within the Southern Levant.
- 3 A seal from Tell el-'Ajjul may also depict a goose with a lotus (Table 1: No. 6).
- 4 A fairly substantial amount of avian remains was found at Tell Halif (Seger *et al.* 1990) and some water bird remains were found at Tel Jemmeh (Wapnish 1993), which may be indicative of these small-scale bird hunting activities still occurred.

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Fierce lions, angry mice and fat-tailed sheep

Animals have always been an integral part of human existence. In the ancient Near East, this is evident in the record of excavated assemblages of faunal remains, iconography and – for the later historical periods – texts. Animals have predominantly been examined as part of consumption and economy, and while these are important aspects of society in the ancient Near East, the relationships between humans and animals were extremely varied and complex.

Domesticated animals had great impact on social, political and economic structures – for example cattle in agriculture and diet, or donkeys and horses in transport, trade and war. Fantastic mythological beasts such as lion-headed eagles or Anzu-birds in Mesopotamia or Egyptian deities such as the falcon-headed god Horus were part of religious beliefs and myths, while exotic creatures such as lions were part of elite symbolising from the fourth millennium BC onward. In some cases, animals also intruded on human lives in unwanted ways by scavenging or entering the household; this especially applies to small or wild animals. But animals were also attributed agency with the ability to solve problems; the distinction between humans and other animals often blurs in ritual, personal and place names, fables and royal ideology. They were helpers, pets and companions in life and death, peace and war. An association with cult and mortuary practices involves sacrifice and feasting, while some animals held special symbolic significance.

This volume is a tribute to the animals of the ancient Near East (including Mesopotamia, Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt), from the fourth through first millennia BC, and their complex relationship with the environment and other human and nonhuman animals. Offering faunal, textual and iconographic studies, the contributions present a fascinating array of the many ways in which animals influence human life and death, and explore new perspectives in the exciting field of human-animal studies as applied to this part of the world.

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