

The Exchange of Cultural Relations between Egypt and Hejaz Region during the Second and First Millennia B.C.

Sarah Sayed Omar Sultan¹

¹Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City

Abstract

The interaction between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula was primarily motivated by economic interests. Egyptian demand for incense and related commodities, which were essential in domestic as well as sacral contexts, was considerable. Egyptian impact on north-west Arabia especially Hejaz is only attested by a few archaeological remains, but among these, there are some characteristic items with significance for possible cultural contacts. A contemporary view would clearly prove continuous contacts. In Late Bronze and Early Iron Age (1500-500 BC.), Egyptians were more actively participating in cultural relations with the Arabian Peninsula. From this period, objects linked to Arabia have not yet been discovered in Egypt. In the second half of the first millennium, Arabia took an active part in cultural contact with Egypt and left several pieces of evidence in the Nile Valley. The Egyptian evidence in Hejaz will be discussed with reference to its archaeological and historical contexts.

Keywords: Hejaz, Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, first millennium, cultural

1. Introduction

Connectivity, mobility and communication are but a few key words for describing cross-cultural networks¹, which contributed to the formation of identities in ancient societies. Actually, intercultural contacts between two regions and the cultural impact of one civilization or society on the other are always dual phenomena, whether determined by economic interests, political domination, colonization, or peer polity interaction².

The Arabian Peninsula, and in particular Hejaz, is located on the outer edge of the Egyptian empire. Egyptian cultural impact can be observed within the material remains on various occasions. Object mobility not only reflects trade and exchange, but also interest in and curiosity about a foreign culture. Adoption of foreign elements, such as motifs and probably ideas, which could be used to improve culture and lifestyle³. This tendency is no less true for the Arabian Peninsula than for all other regions and societies in the Egyptian sphere of influence⁴. In this contribution, the Egyptian impact on the Arabian Peninsula is inspected during the Iron Age.

¹ Luciani M., in: *OREA*, Vol. 4, 2013, pp.21-56.

² van Dommelen, P. & A. B. Knapp (eds.), *Material Connections in the Ancient Mediterranean. Mobility, Materiality and Identity*, 2010.

³ Wengrow, D., *What Makes Civilization? The Ancient Near East and the Future of the West*, Oxford, 2010, p.88.

⁴ Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.303.

This period followed a dramatic decline of Egyptian political influence in the Levant and the abandonment of the Sinai copper mines. The sociopolitical situation in the ancient Near East had changed and the city-states, which were formerly dominated by the great powers of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent, had become independent nation states. The new conditions provided an excellent opportunity for the north Arabian Oasis settlements to establish themselves within international trade networks¹.

1.1. The Exchange of Religion Aspects

The information available about the religions of the Arabs during this period is primarily based on Arabic scriptures and archeological data. However, the materials within these documents, rather than providing explanations for basic religious issues, such as faith principles, worship and prayers, present information only about the names of the gods and the idols. In addition to the scriptures and archeological works concerned with pre-Islamic Arabian religions, it is also possible to make use of Assyrian, Hebrew, Greek and Latin sources, as well as the poetry from the Age of Ignorance and proverbs, which provide direct information about pre-Islamic Arabian society. Other than these varied, but limited sources, there is reliable and detailed information related to the religions of the polytheist Arabs in the Quran, and Quranic studies, such as tafsir, hadith, siyar and in Islamic historical sources². In particular, those, which are concerned with the time right before the advent of Islam and the first period after this are particularly helpful.

1.1.1. The Influence of Egyptian religion

Several of the gods of Egypt were worshipped as idols by the Arabs. The theory is of interest, but beyond a certain similarity between the Egyptian and Arabic names little proof has been brought forward in support of it. It is of course, quite possible that the knowledge of several of the gods and goddesses of Egypt should have found its way into Arabic in early times; indeed this is only what is to be expected. In the third Dynasty, the turquoise mines of Sinai were worked for the benefit of the kings of Egypt, and the goddess Hathor was especially worshipped in the Peninsula of Sinai long before the close of the fourth Dynasty. From Sinai the knowledge of Hathor, and Sept, and of other Egyptian gods worshipped at Serabit Al Khadim and other mining centers would spread to the north and south, and it is tolerably certain that it would reach every place where the caravans carried turquoises for barter³.

While the Ancient Egyptians, Romans, Arabs, and their descendants were eager to exploit the precious mineral, there were copper-mining sites located at Serabit al-Khadim in south Sinai and at Timna on eastern Sinai⁴. Timna was a point of contact between both areas of influence⁵.

¹ Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.304.

² Donner, F.M., in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, 2006, pp. 33–34.

³ Budge, E., A., W., *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, pp.287-290.

⁴ Rothenberg B., *The Egyptian mining temple at Timna*, 1988, pp.92:94.

⁵ Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, p.375.

There was a site at Timna excavated and identified as a possible cult place, which is known today as the "Egyptian Temple" or the "Hathor Temple"¹. Some 11,000 artefacts were found at this small site, among them a number of Egyptian objects bearing cartouches of pharaohs from Seti I or Ramses II to Ramses V, 1280–1145 BC. And also, other offering objects were related to the Midianites, within the Egyptian sanctuary. These objects signified cooperation between the two peoples in the cult of Hathor as well as in copper production².

On the other hand, we have no proof that the Arabs adopted Egyptian gods, or that they even attempted to understand their attributes and cult. Before the theory already referred to can be accepted, it must be shown that the Egyptian and Arabian gods are really identical, and that it has more to rest upon than similarities of names³. In addition, the Arabs were worshippers of stocks and stones, and it is exceedingly doubtful if they were sufficiently developed, either mentally or spiritually, before the period of the 26th Dynasty to understand the gods of Egypt and their attributes, or to adopt their cult to their spiritual needs which, after all, can only have been those of nomadic desert tribes⁴.

1.1.2. The religious syncretism in Tayma

Some attention should be paid to the religious situation in Tayma during the time of Nabonidus (556–539 BC), the last king of an independent Babylonia⁵, sojourn there and in this context we find that the Tayma stele, written in Aramaic⁶ and discovered in 1884 by Huber and Euting at Tayma⁷, reflects the fact that a new deity named Šalm of Hagam was worshipped in Tayma. It was stated on the basis of the inscription that the god Šalm of Hagam was introduced into Tayma by a priest called Šalmshezab⁸ (ŠLMŠZB in Aramaic, Šalmu-ušēzib in Akkadian⁹), son of Petosiri¹⁰, who was descended from an Egyptian family, while the god Šalm was originally worshipped in Babylon, which indicates some kind of religious syncretism between Babylon and Egypt in Tayma at that time. And also, the cult center contained a ritual iconography that borrowed from south Arabian, Achaemenid, and possibly Egyptian art¹¹.

1.1.3. The influence of Egyptian religion practices

The frankincense and myrrh were Arabia's most famous export. Both substances are gum resins, which exude from trees and contain a small quantity of volatile oil, the reason for their fragrance. They were either used on their own – usually burned and, in the case of myrrh, applied as an unguent – or blended with a variety of other ingredients to make ointments, perfumes, oils

¹ Avner, U., "Egyptian Timna-Reconsidered", in: *ANES*, 45, Paris, 2014, p.104.

² Avner, U., in: *ANES*, 45, 2014, pp.106-107.

³ Budge, E., A., W., *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, pp.287-290.

⁴ Budge, E., A., W., *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, pp.287-290.

⁵ Dani, A.H., Mohen, J.-P., and et al., in: *UNESCO*, 1996, p.622.

⁶ Al Theeb, S.A., *Aramaic and Nabataean inscriptions from north-west Saudi Arabia*, 1993, p.36.

⁷ Hausleiter, A., in: *Roads to Arabia: Archaeology and History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 2010, p.222.

⁸ Abu Duruk, H.I., *Introduction to the archaeology of Tayma. Riyadh*, 1986, p.4.

⁹ Dalley, S., in: *Iraq*, 48, 1986, p.85.

¹⁰ Littmann, Enno, *Semitic inscriptions*, 1934, p.512.

¹¹ Abu Duruk, H.I., *Introduction to the archaeology of Tayma, Riyadh*, 1986, p.16-17.

for embalming, medicines for all manner of ailments and of course incense (a compound usually sprinkled on lighted charcoal to produce scented smoke)¹. Frankincense and myrrh were extremely efficacious in expelling bad smell and pestilential insects and so were much in demand in the home, about the person and in public places. From this function of physical purification, it was a small step towards ceremonial purification, and these two aromatics became an integral part of religious rituals throughout much of the old world. Thus, supplicants might beseech their deity. Moreover, as demand increased, their consumption became a way of demonstrating wealth, magnanimity and kingship, the most notorious example of this being the Roman emperor Nero's dissipation of tens of kilograms of incense at the funeral of his favorite consort Poppaea². Offerings also were frequently made to the gods in conjunction with requests for a good harvest, as was done in the Egyptian cult³.

1.2. The Exchange of Social Aspects

As far as the Arabs were keen to transport their commercial goods and marketing them in the old Egyptian commercial centers. They were interested in strengthening their social relations with the members of the Egyptian society. This is confirmed by the ancient Arabic inscriptions, which indicate the existence of family ties between members of Egyptian society and the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula.

1.1.1. The inscription records

The ancient Egyptian documents, especially those dating back to the Ptolemaic and Roman times, confirm that there was a commercial activity between Arabs with Egyptians. On the other hand, they provide us with historical and important evidence that emphasizes social relations between the Arabs and Egypt. Moreover, Egypt's ancient documents revealed important historical evidence that deals with the settlement of the communities of the Arabian Peninsula in Egypt and their permanent presence in some areas in Egypt. It is noteworthy that these Arabs immigrated early to Egypt and over time merged into the Egyptian society and were influenced by its culture then their names changed as a result of influence⁴. However, a few indirect indications from Egypt proper do exist. Some hitherto unidentified Semitic toponyms and names of tribes possibly refer to north-west Arabia⁵. Another much more rewarding source is provided by personal names. From the New Kingdom, more than 500 personal names of Semitic origin are known. Although it is difficult to associate these names with specific attestations within Semitic onomastic, since similar names and roots can be found in several Semitic languages, some names are very probably derived from Early Arabian languages⁶.

¹ Hoyland, R., *Arabia and the Arabs*, 2001, p.103.

² Hoyland, R., *Arabia and the Arabs*, 2001, p.103.

³ Hoyland, R., *Arabia and the Arabs*, 2001, pp.87-88.

⁴ Al-said, S. F., *Al-'alāqāt al-ḥadāriyyah bayna 'l-ġazīrah al-'arabiyyah wa-Miṣr fi daw' an-nuqūš* *Al-nuqūš Al-'arabiyyah al-qadīmah*, Riyadh, 2003, pp.136-140.

⁵ Saleh, A.A., in: *Book of the 50th Anniversary of Archaeological Studies in Cairo University, Part III, Journal of the Faculty of Archaeology, Special Issue*, 1978, p.70.

⁶ Schneider, T., *Asiatische Personennamen in ägyptischen Quellen des Neuen Reiches* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 114), Fribourg-Göttingen, 1993, p.359.

In total, 46 personal names are almost certainly of Arabian origin and belong to the north Arabian dialects (Thamudic, Safaitic and Lihyanite language) rather than to ancient South Arabian dialects (Sabaeen, Minaean, Qatabanian and Hadramautic language), revealing a stronger connection to northern than to southern Arabia. If the identification of the names is correct, it can be concluded that several people of Arabian origin lived in the Nile Valley during the New Kingdom and, furthermore, that they were not all peasants nor labourers, since their names are recorded on stelae, belonging to higher social classes, and in administrative documents¹.

Then, if this was true in the Late Bronze Age, a similar state may well have obtained during the Iron Age, i.e. the Third Intermediate and the Late Period. Migration is one aspect of mobility in ancient societies and an indication of trade and communication networks. For the Ptolemaic and Roman period, Arabian communities are well attested in Egypt, especially in the Fayum region. Arabians constituted the fourth largest group of foreigners in Hellenistic Egypt, after Greeks, Persians and Jews². Also, the sarcophagus of Minaean Zayd'il, has to be taken in account; he supplied Egyptian temples with aromatics and when he died, he was buried at Saqqara. He adapted to Egyptian culture; the use of Egyptian loanwords in the sarcophagus inscription suggests that he probably spoke Egyptian, and certainly he made his home in Egypt. But Zayd'il is the only Arabian person of the Ptolemaic period attested in the archaeological record rather than exclusively by inscriptions and textual evidence. Nothing is known of the material culture of the Arabian community in the Fayum, although according to tax receipts, at least 800 Arabians lived there³. Arabic personal names in New Kingdom documents and large-scale Arabian communities in the Ptolemaic Period are no evidence for the Iron Age, but on analogy – as contacts are assured by evidence from the Arabian Peninsula – may give an impression of what might have been⁴.

The example of the Minaean Zayd'il shows that some Arabian merchants also became accepted members of Egyptian society, with an Egyptian burial after their death. The inscription on the coffin of Zayd'il shows the influence of the Egyptian language⁵, indicating that he was able to speak Egyptian. Another well-known person is Petosiris, father of the priest Šalmshezeb, attested on the famous Tayma Stele in the Louvre⁶. He bears an Egyptian name and might

¹ Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, pp.324-325.

² Clarysse, W. & Thompson D. J., *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt*, 2006, pp.159-160.

³ Clarysse, W. & Thompson D. J., *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt*, 2006, pp.159-160.

⁴ Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.324.

⁵ Vittmann G., "Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu Fremden und hellenisierten Ägyptern im Dienste Dienste einheimischer Kulte, Pages 1231–1250", in: *OLA*, 85, Leuven: Peeters, 1998, pp. 1241–1244.

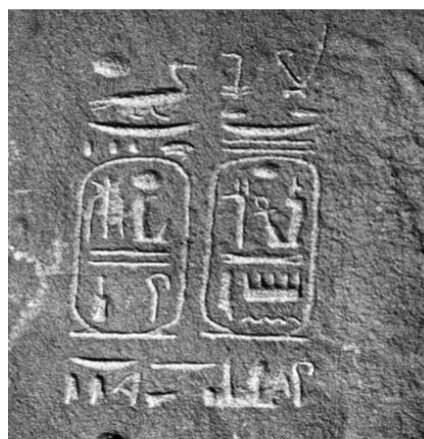
⁶ Briquel-Chatonnet F. & Robin C., "Objets d'Arabie du nord-ouest", Pages 260–269, in: *Arabie heureuse — Arabie déserte. Les antiquités arabiques du Musée du Louvre*, Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1997, pp. 261-262.

have had an Egyptian background, although names do not necessarily indicate ethnic origins¹.

1.1.2. The Role of Economic Interests

The interaction between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula was primarily motivated by economic interests. Egyptian demand for incense and related commodities, which were essential in domestic as well as sacral contexts, was considerable. They were used for fumigation in the cult and for rituals, when worshipping the gods and honouring the dead. Furthermore, they were ingredients in medication and unguents², but also to scent interiors and clothing. Since incense products were put to a variety of purposes, they can hardly be described as luxury goods. Rather, they were indispensable in everyday life; hence, much effort was expended to import these products. Expeditions to the mysterious land of Punt began during the Old Kingdom, and resins of lesser quality, such as obtained from terebinth trees, were introduced from the Levant. To meet demand, Egypt developed a strong economic interest in the Arabian Peninsula and its resources³.

The rock inscription of Ramesses III at Tayma (Fig.1) attests an Egyptian expedition to the region. The need for incense products and their high cost might well have inspired a wish to control the north Arabian routes and centers. A more powerful position of the Egyptian Empire during the Iron Age could have led to an attempt at military occupation to control the trading network. But due to the political situation, such efforts proved successful only for the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. In the other hand, the inhabitants of the Oasis settlements dominated the trading networks as active parties. Forming their own identities within the framework of these networks, they developed a taste for prestigious objects of the nearby high cultures, integrating foreign elements into new contexts. In this respect, Egyptian influence seems to have been a prevalent factor – among the elites, and probably also among people of lower social classes⁴.



¹ Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, p.378.

² Germer, R., "Handbuch der ägyptischen Heilpflanzen", in: *Philippika*, 21, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008, pp.117-122.

³ Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.324.

⁴ Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, pp.321-325.

Fig. 1: A rock inscription of Ramesses III at Tayma

After: Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, p.375.

1.3. The Egyptian Influence on Hejaz Artefacts

Evidence for an Egyptian presence has been found everywhere in the Levant and the ancient Near East¹. To the south, contacts reached into Nubia and at least as far as the Ethiopian highlands², which have been identified with the land of Punt³. All these distant contacts have long drawn scholarly attention to the Egyptian interregional contacts. Cultural contacts between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula in general are indicated by artefacts found in graves and settlement layers at different sites of the peninsula.

In particular, the excavations in the Oasis of Tayma have revealed a large amount of Egyptian and Egyptian-style artefacts. The purpose of the Egyptian presence in north-west Arabia is likely to be economically motivated, prospecting for mineral deposits and aromatics⁴. Also, as the high amount of Qurayyah Painted Ware indicates, there was generally untroubled cooperation between Egyptians and locals⁵. Egyptians mingled with local groups who are archaeologically characterized by Qurayyah Painted Ware. People representing the same cultural traditions have been in contact with Tayma, since the same pottery did not just occur there but was also locally produced in later times. Tayma is linked culturally to the Levant, and the Levant is closely linked to Egypt. This connection served as a conduit between these regions, through which Egyptian artefacts were brought to Tayma in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age⁶. So the Egyptian evidence in north-west Arabia is clear in the existence of the Egyptian artefacts on Tayma which will be discussed in this part to indicate the cultural exchange between the two regions.

1.3.1. Egyptian Artefacts on Tayma

The Oasis of Tayma constitutes one of the most prominent cities on the ancient frankincense route. The prosperity of the Oasis is a result of topography and the natural resources of the region. Archaeological excavations in the Oasis revealed arrangement from the second and first millennia BC until the Islamic period at a site marked by its specific environmental setting. Political and cultural contacts of regional and supra-regional scale are attested by archaeological and epigraphic sources from the center of the city and its surrounding walls: pottery and sculpture as well as Aramaic and Taymanitic inscriptions⁷. In the Middle Bronze Age, a substantial wall system, surrounding

¹ Sowada, K.N., *Egypt in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Old Kingdom*, p.22.

² Török, L., *Between Two Worlds: The Frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC–500 AD*, p.15.

³ Bard, K.A. & Fatovich, R. (eds.), *Harbor of the Pharaohs to the Land of Punt*, 2007.

⁴ Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, pp.371-384.

⁵ Parr 1988; 1989; 1996; Rothenberg 1998.

⁶ Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann, R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, p.378.

⁷ Eichmann, R., Schaudig, H. & Hausleiter, A., *Archaeology and epigraphy at Tayma (Saudi Arabia)*, 2006, p.163.

surrounding the palm grooves and parts of the sabkha, was built with a total length of 18.2 km. Despite of the wall system, however, only minimal evidence can be ascribed to a Middle or Late Bronze Age settlement so far. The earliest excavated remains belong to the Early Iron Age and are dated to the 12th–9th centuries BC by radiocarbon. The characteristic architecture, as well as a substantial amount of finds which can be described as prestigious objects, and the absence of artefacts related to a domestic setting are suggestive of a temple or sanctuary. The building was destroyed by fire, while still in use, as carbonised plant remains were found in the debris¹.

Countless numbers of these objects of artefacts at Tayma provided first evidence of the presence of the connection with Egypt². Egyptian gods/goddesses and scarabs made of faience, faience vessels with the representation of lotus flowers, mask pendants of faience, reed baskets, wooden boxes, inlays of bone and wood, ‘tokens’ made of ivory. The pertaining pottery decorated with bichrome representations of birds framed by geometric motifs and of hundreds of unpainted small beakers, probably used for consumption during ritual ceremonies. All of the Egyptian objects belong to the same occupational period that is dated to the twelfth to ninth centuries BC³. Among the finds were painted ceramics and elaborate artefacts made of wood decorated with intarsia of bone and ivory, as well as wooden boxes and figural items⁴. Some artefacts have close parallels in the Levant and hence reveal contacts to and influences from the northern regions. Even more distinctive are the connections to Egypt, which are reflected by several Egyptian faience objects, which will be listed as following:

A- Amulets depicting Egyptian gods such as Isis and Sekhmet/Bastet have been recovered, as well as protective figurines such as a nude female with a guenon resting on her arm (Fig.2), and fragments of a crocodile and a bull figurine. Other tiny fragments of faience probably also derive from figurines. Furthermore, sherds and fragments of more than a dozen different faience vessels, some with black painted decoration, were found. Among them are fragments of a compartmentalized box with a rounded base and of a bowl with lotus ornament (Fig.3).

¹ Lora, S., Petiti, E. & Hausleiter, A., in: *Death and Burial in Arabia and Beyond*, 2010, pp.238-239.

² Hausleiter A., in: *Routes d'Arabie. Archéologie et histoire du Royaume d'Arabie Saoudite*, 2010, pp.230-231.

³ Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, pp. 372-373.

⁴ Hausleiter, A., in: *Routes d'Arabie: Archéologie et histoire du Royaume d'Arabie Saoudite*, 2010, pp.230-231.



Fig.2: Faience figurine of a naked woman with a guenon resting on her arm
After: Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.317.



Fig.3: Fragment of a faience vessel with lotus ornament
After: Sperveslage, G., in: *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.317.

B- Other Egyptian finds are either small figurines or pendants, probably used as amulets in magical and religious contexts, such as a female figurine with a monkey resting on her arm and another figurine representing a monkey playing a harp (Fig.4) served — in their Egyptian context — as amulets to protect pregnant women and newborn children¹.



Fig.4: Faience figurine of a monkey playing a harp
After: Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann, R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, p.373.

C-A statuette of a crocodile, while presents more general supernatural protection as in the form of pendants in the shape of Egyptian goddesses such as Bastet/Sekhmet or Isis (Fig.5). Although the general character of the

¹ Bulté, J., *Talismans Égyptiens d'heureuse maternité. 'Faïence' bleu vert à pois foncés*, 1991.

items is clear, it is uncertain whether the original Egyptian meaning continued in the new contexts in the environment of Tayma. At least, according to their association with many other prestige items, the pendants do not seem to have been used simply as body ornaments¹.



Fig.5: A statuette of a crocodile

After: Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann, R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, p.373.

D- Udjat-amulet² has parallel dating to Dynasty 26 (Fig.6)³. This Egyptian artefact from the cemetery of Sana'iyeh is an import from the Nile Valley⁴.

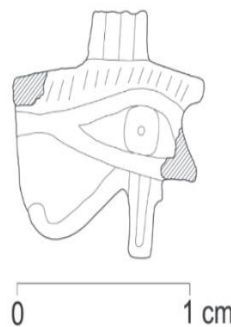


Fig.6: Udjat amulet from Sana'iyeh cemetery

After: Sperveslage, G., in: Garcia, J. (ed.), *Dynamics of production in the Ancient Near East 1300-500 BC*, 2016, p.317.

Until now, no occupational level within the ancient settlement of Tayma has been found that correlates with the Sana'iyeh cemetery. Thus no further archaeological evidence for the quality of contacts to Egypt in this period can be cited, but support for direct connections derives from a rock inscription in the environment of the Oasis⁵, this inscription is found:

¹ Sperveslage, G. & Eichmann R., in: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 42, 2012, pp.373-374.

² Abu Duruk, H. I., in: *ATLAL*, 12, 1989, p.15, pl.9.

³ The context of the Early Iron Age Egyptian finds is a temple, but in later times, Egyptian amulets have also been found in tombs. In the late 1980s, a team of Saudi Arabian archaeologists conducted excavations on the so-called "Industrial Site", a large cemetery area at Sana'iyeh directly south of the settlement of Tayma. The tombs date to the first half or the middle of the first millennium BC; the dead were provided with painted pottery vessels, beads and amulets as grave goods, Abu Duruk, H. I., in: *ATLAL*, 12, 1989, pp.9-19.

⁴ Hausleiter, A., in: *Routes d'Arabie: Archéologie et histoire du Royaume d'Arabie Saoudite*, 2010, p.231.

⁵ Müller, W.W., in: *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, 1985, p.666.

E- At Gebel Ghuneim, the highest peak of a mountain ridge about 10 km south-west of Tayma, an inscription in Thamudic script mentions an Egyptian woman¹. Gebel Ghuneim was sacred to the god Şalm; inscriptions and graffiti which mainly date to the mid-6th century BC are frequent there².

The reading of the inscription naming the Egyptian woman, however, is controversial. It is translated into “lay with an Egyptian woman³”, whereas it is supposed instead that a personal name is mentioned and reads “Bi, the Egyptian woman⁴”. Regardless, the inscription clearly documents an Egyptian woman in the region of Tayma. It is tempting to suggest that this woman was brought to Tayma as the wife of an Arabian tradesman after an expedition to Egypt. In South Arabia, the marriage of Minaeans with foreign women is documented in the so called “*Hierodulenlisten*”⁵, epigraphic texts from the temple of Ma’in, dating to the 5th or 4th century BC⁶. In these lists eight women from Egypt are recorded⁷, as well as several others from elsewhere – such as Gaza or Dedan. Some scholars propose that Minaean merchants met these women on their journeys and took them home to Ma’in⁸.

F- In addition, the discovery of scarab (Fig.7) and a series of figurines of Egyptian deities would indicate close relations between Tayma and Egypt at the Early Iron Age⁹.



Fig.7: Egyptian scarab in glazed stone, 1.8 cm. Tayma Museum, TA 7536
After: Al-Ghabban, et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.231.

1.3.2. Egyptianized Hejaz Sculptures

There are three colossal statues, discovered very recently, belong to an important ensemble of male statues unearthed in the Kuraybah Sanctuary. These statues, placed on terraces, under porticoes, were backed up to the wall; on one of them, the name of a Lihyanite king was inscribed and the three giants

¹ Winnett, F.V., and Reed, W.L., *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, 1970, p.106, no.37.

² Müller, W.W., in: *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, 1985, p.666.

³ Winnett, F.V., and Reed, W.L., *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, 1970, p.106, no.37.

⁴ Al-Said, S. F., *Al- 'alāqāt al-ḥadāriyyah*, 2003, pp.59-60.

⁵ Robin, C., in: *Hommages à Jean Leclant. IV. Varia*, BiEtud, 104/4, Cairo: IFAO, 1994, pp. 297-301.

⁶ Bron, F., *Inventaire des inscriptions sudarabiques 3: Ma'in*, Paris-Rome, 1998, pp. 102-121.

⁷ Müller, W. W. & Vittmann, G., in: *Orientalia*, 62, 1993, pp.1–10.

⁸ Robin, C., in: *Hommages à Jean Leclant. IV. Varia*, BiEtud, 104/4, Cairo: IFAO, 1994, p.297.

⁹ Al-Ghabban, et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.231.

shown here were probably Lihyanite sovereigns as well. All are standing full-face, arms hanging down, closed fists, legs on the same line and are consolidated by a dorsal pillar to below the waist. While one of the statues (Fig.8) is very huge and quite roughly cut, the treatment of the other two (Fig.8 and 9) is very naturalistic and attests to the sculptor's remarkable skill.

The style of these colossi appears to have been deeply influenced by Egyptian sculpture: this is confirmed by the remaining traces of colour, which the restorations at the Musée du Louvre have highlighted. All the nude parts of the two statues (Fig.9 and 10) were illustrated with dark red paint whereas the loincloths were coated with white plaster. One statue (Fig.8) appears to have been entirely covered with a bitumen-based coat colouring it black; the two heads (Fig.11 and 12) were also treated with a bituminous coating which now forms a sort of thick crackled crust. The layers of coatings indicate that these sculptures were repainted. The restoration at the Musée du Louvre also provided the opportunity of returning the head to one statue (Fig.9) and to another its sandalled feet (Fig.8)¹.



Fig.8: Statue of a man 4th–3rd centuries BC Red sandstone 256 x 80 cm
(Department of Archaeology Museum, King Saud University, Riyadh, 134D)
After: Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.276.

A sandstone human figure, larger than life and headless. The torso and feet were coated with fine particles of grey tar, colouring it pitch-black. The figure wears a waist-to-knee tunic, covered with a white coating and held at the waist by a double belt. The arms are gathered close to the body, the fists closed. The artist created a three dimensional work, carefully highlighting the anatomical details of the muscles of the torso, abdomen, arms and legs. He carved a deep hollow in the back representing the spinal column. The legs are parallel and slightly parted. They are connected by a fully visible pillar in the back part of the statue to give it a solid support and protect it from eventual breakage due to the space between the legs. The feet of the statue were found separated from

¹ Al-Ghabban, A., Andre-Salvini, B. et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.276.

the legs. The artistic characteristics of this statue lead to believe it belongs to the Lihyanite School of sculpture with influences from Syria and Ancient Egypt¹.

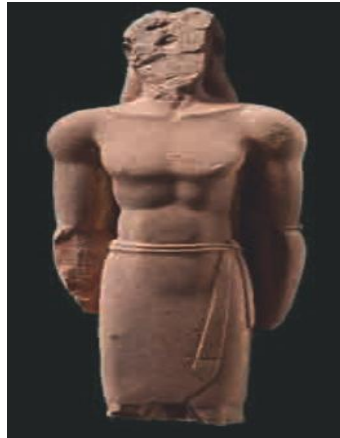


Fig.9: Statue of a man, broken at knee height 4th–3rd centuries BC- Red sandstone- 230 x 83 cm (Department of Archaeology Museum, King Saud University, Riyadh, 137D4 and 136D4)
After: Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.278.

Fragmentary sandstone statue, larger than life, probably representing a king of Lihyan, standing straight-legged. The face is missing and the lower part of the legs is lost. The arms are gathered close to the body and are joined to it. The left hand is closed and the right hand is broken off above the wrist. A jewel with a round-shaped bead adorns the left arm. A deep hollow in the back recalls the spinal column. The figure is wearing a tunic showing the extremity of the knot. The garment is held at the top by a double belt around the waist. The surface of the statue is smooth. The artist accentuated the muscles of the arms, the knees, the torso and the abdomen. The head of the statue was found separated from the body. The face was hammered and all that remains is the ears and part of the turban covering the head. The sculpture style is similar to that of a series of large and small statues also found in the temple of Dedan. It belongs to the Lihyanite sculpture school, with a very distinct local character but having received early artistic influences from Ancient Egypt or Syria².

¹ Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.276.

² Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.278.

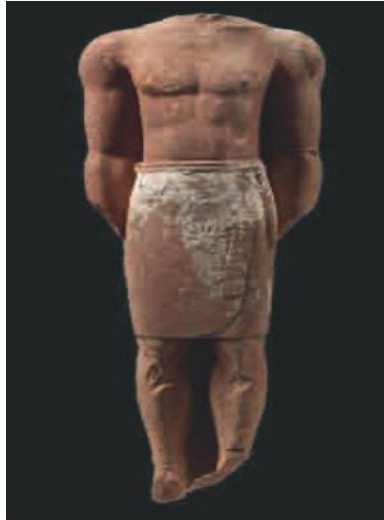


Fig.10: Statue of a man - 4th–3rd centuries BC - Red sandstone - 230 x 80 cm
(Department of Archaeology Museum, King Saud, University, Riyadh, 140D4)

After: Al-Ghabban, et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.279.

A standing statue, larger than life, probably representing a Lihyanite king. Carved out of sandstone it no longer has its head, neck, hands, or feet. The arms are close to each side. A striped jewel with a sort of rounded bead adorns the left arm. The figure wears a short tunic. The garment is held at the waist by a double belt with two knots on the sides. The end of one of them protrudes showing the extremity of the knot. Under the foot, part of the sole is still visible. The surface of the statue is smooth. The artist was able to highlight the anatomical details, clearly visible in the muscles of the torso, the abdomen and what remains of the muscles of the arms and legs. A layer of plaster covers the garment. All these features lead to the belief that this statue belongs to the Lihyanite sculpture school, which has a very distinct local character but received early artistic influences from Ancient Egypt or Syria¹.



Fig.11: Head of a statue - 4th–3rd centuries BC

Fig.12: Head of a statue - 4th–3rd centuries BC²

After: Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.280.

¹ Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.279.

² Fig.11: Red sandstone - 50 x 32 cm (Department of Archaeology Museum, King Saud University, Riyadh, 285D2), Fig.12: Red sandstone- 55 x 30 x 28 cm (Department of Archaeology Museum, King Saud University, Riyadh, 275D2) After: Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.280.

A man's head carved out of sandstone. The head has kept the remains of a veil, a band surrounds the brow with a clearly visible line; the lower part of the veil resembles a braid. The forehead is wide, the arched well-outlined eyebrows meet. A vertical incision marks the forehead, its lower end perpendicular to the point where the eyebrows meet; the chin is wide and straight and cleft in the middle. The neck bulges at the throat. The back part of the head is broken; the face is coated with a layer of tar, which has crumbled in various places.

Sandstone head of a man, larger than life. We notice the remains of a veil, the lower part of which forms two clearly visible parallel lines in the form of a band. The brow is wide, eyebrows well delineated, the almond-shaped eyes are hollow, the tip of the nose is broken. The cheeks are round, the mouth small, the lips full, the chin jutting and rounded; the right ear sticks out and its auricle is long and arched, a fragment of the left ear and a small fragment of the neck are preserved. The back part of the head is broken. The face is coated various places. With a layer of black tar which has crumbled in several places.

It is worthwhile pointing out that this head was re-utilized in the construction of a wall. All these features lead to the belief that it belongs to the Lihyanite sculpture school, which has a very distinct local character but received early artistic influences from Ancient Egypt or Syria¹.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evidence presented here shows that Hejaz in the north-west Arabia was part of a widespread economic network with Egypt and there were strong connections to ancient Egypt. Connections between Egypt and this region in north-west Arabia were established by land and sea routes. In addition, more Egyptian artefacts, which were discovered during recent excavations at different sites belonging to various occupational periods, provide insights into the intercultural contacts between Egypt and Arabia. Egyptian impact on Hejaz is only attested by a few archaeological remains, but among these, there are some characteristic items with significance for possible interregional contacts. A historical view would clearly prove continuous contacts. In Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, Egyptians were more actively participating in cultural relations with the Arabian Peninsula. From this period, objects linked to Arabia have not yet been discovered in Egypt. In the second half of the first millennium, Arabia took an active part in cultural contact with Egypt and left several pieces of evidence in the Nile Valley.

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¹ Al-Ghabban, A., et al., *Roads of Arabia Archaeology*, 2010, p.280.

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تبادل العلاقات الثقافية بين مصر ومنطقة الحجاز خلال الألفية الأولى والثانية قبل الميلاد

سارة سيد عمر¹

كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة مدينة السادات

الملخص العربي

أدت طرق التجارة البرية والبحرية دوراً مهماً في ازدهار العلاقات التجارية بين مصر وإقليم الحجاز. حيث اشتغل أهل الجزيرة العربية بتجارة البخور والتوابل واللؤلؤ، وظلت التجارة تلعب دوراً رئيسياً في أو وسطاء تجاريين أو ناقلين للتجارة أو حماة لطرق حياة العرب بالجزيرة العربية فقد كانوا إما تجاراً سيرها ومن ثم قامت عدة مراكز تجارية. أيضاً كان لتلك العلاقات التجارية تأثير ودور كبير في تبادل العلاقات الحضارية بين الجانبين والتي تمثلت في عدة جوانب حضارية منها العلاقات الاجتماعية والدينية والتي كانت واضحة في الاكتشافات الأثرية والنقوش.

الكلمات الدالة: العلاقات الثقافية، مصر، الحجاز، قبل الميلاد.