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"Levantine Thinking in Egypt" The Footprint of Intellectual Influence

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Abstract: Upon examination of material and textual remains, there is a great deal of evidence for more contact with the Levant than many have supposed. This contact took the form of both Egyptians in the Levant and Asiatics in Egypt. Furthermore, the Shipwrecked Sailor bears hallmarks of Levantine literature. This famous tale may thus say something significant about Egyptian/Levantine relations. It seems to attest to intellectual influence flowing into Egypt from the Levant.
The Footprint of Intellectual Influence

We are approaching a clearer understanding of Egypt’s relations with the Levant during the Middle Kingdom.1 Past ideas have ranged from the supposition of little contact to the notion of an Egyptian empire,2 and recently many scholars posit that while there was no empire there was an organic, healthy and lively exchange between the two areas,3 including eras and areas of Egyptian dominance.4 We can take our understanding of those relations one step further; we can look for intellectual exchange. While a strong case can be made for Egyptian influence among her northern neighbors, it is more difficult to determine if the impact also flowed the other way. If we want to know whether there was any kind of intellectual influence issuing into Egypt from the Levant, we must look for evidence of both opportunity and impact. Such an examination reveals that not only was the contact between the two areas substantial enough for a bi-directional intellectual influence to be possible, but even likely. Additionally, the Shipwrecked Sailor may exhibit marks of this influence.

While many have investigated Middle Kingdom influence in the Levant, to date no full compilation of evidences for Levantine contact during the Middle Kingdom exists. Such a compilation would not only be a useful tool for future scholarship (if a ‘complete’ compilation is even possible), but is necessary if we are to have a fully rounded-out picture of opportunity for intellectual exchange. Thus we will first examine indications of an Egyptian

1. By Middle Kingdom, I mean from the reigns of the Mentuhoteps until about Merneferalay. See Bietak, “The Center of Hyksos Rule: Avaris ‘Tel el-Dab’h,” 126; Quirke, “Identifying the Officials of the Fifteenth Dynasty,” 171.
2. For an insightful discussion on these opposing views, the assumptions which influence them, and ways to move forward, see Cohen, Canaanites, Chronologies, and Connections: the relationship of Middle Bronze II A Canaan to Middle Kingdom Egypt, 33.
3. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times, 81.
presence in the Levant, a contact which would make a cultural/intellectual exchange possible. Since much work has been done in this area, here I will present only a brief summary. Next, we will turn our attention to the mixed presence in the Sinai. We will then look at an Asiatic presence in Egypt, an element that enables, if not requires, an intellectual exchange to occur. Finally, we will investigate features present in the tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor, which carries a very visible footprint of Levantine intellectual influence.

**Manifestations of an Egyptian Presence in the Levant**

In many studies it would be most desirable to document evidence chronologically, and some of this has been done.\(^5\) I wish to be clear. As Daphna Ben-Tor’s piece in this volume demonstrates, interaction between Egypt and various portions of the Levant was anything but static. There was a waxing and waning of contact with both the northern and southern Levant, and differing portions of Egypt had differing degrees of such interaction over periods of time. While there was certainly an ebb and flow of contact during the long Middle Kingdom, we are attempting to examine the opportunities for exchange over just such a lengthy period of time, since intellectual influence does not happen suddenly. Moreover, the Shipwrecked Sailor is a piece of Middle Kingdom literature that has not been dated more precisely. For this paper, then, we will look at the large temporal picture, glossing over those chronological details that are so important for other subjects of study.

**Archeological Witnesses of Contact**

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When examining archeological evidence for Egyptian contact in the Levant, we must use special care. Many artifacts made during the Middle Kingdom probably traveled to the Syro-Canaanite area during the Hyksos era, after the end of the Middle Kingdom. Since the Hyksos occupation significantly changed the face of Egypt and its internationalization, we will only look at artifacts that were sealed in situ before the end of the Middle Kingdom, or that are reasonably sure to have arrived at their destination before the Second Intermediate Period.

Megiddo seems to have been a hot spot of Egyptian Middle Kingdom contact. Six percent of (page 192) the undisturbed tombs that were sealed before the end of the Middle Kingdom and left undisturbed contained Egyptian scarabs, demonstrating an Egyptian presence. Furthermore, in tombs which were sealed during the Middle Kingdom but were disturbed at some later time, but not re-used, various Middle Kingdom jars and scarabs were found. It is unlikely that tomb robbers or other invaders deposited goods in the tombs. Thus we may reasonably suppose that these items were placed there during the Middle Kingdom. While items such as scarabs are highly portable, even if the scarabs changed hands several times before arriving at their resting place, at some point they had to cross from Egypt to the Levant, and that is our connection point: it is inescapable that if these objects arrived in a foreign country, someone in Egypt had to have had some contact with a foreign element. Thus, if a Middle Kingdom scarab is found sealed in a Middle Bronze IIA context, it must represent some kind of Levantine-Egyptian contact during the era.

6. Weinstein, “Egyptian Relations With Palestine In the Middle Kingdom,” 1–2; Kenyon, “The Middle and Late Bronze Age Strata at Megiddo,” 25–60; and Loud, Megiddo II.
Additionally, a small statue of the Egyptian official Thuthotep was found ex-situ at Megiddo. While normally we would be unjustified in positing a Middle Kingdom contact here since it was discovered in an insecure context, in the current case this is mitigated by the fact that in his tomb Thuthotep is shown bringing cattle from the Levant. Coupling the statue with the tomb depiction leads us to conjecture that Thuthotep was involved with Megiddo as an Egyptian agent dealing with the shipment of cattle and other goods to Egypt. While this is only hypothetical, if correct not only was there ample opportunity for this official to be influenced by Asiatics, but also his household and staff as well. It is likely that he was not the only individual involved in this type of venture. Undoubtedly there was some form of an “intensive relationship” between Middle Kingdom Egypt and Megiddo, affording much opportunity for interaction and exchange. This may be representative of what we know from other evidence, namely that there were many officials and their staff located in the Levant who were in charge of sending levies to Egypt that included cattle, wine, vessels, oil, metals, food, weapons, semi-precious stones and people. This is corroborated by a literary text which speaks of an Egyptian treasurer returning from an expedition to Syria.

Nearby Tel el-Ifshar contains numerous Egyptian vessels in settlement layers dating to the middle of the 20th century. Middle Kingdom scarabs, seal impressions, Egyptianized ivory

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8. Weinstein, “Megiddo,” 368. Weinstein, for example, thinks the statue came to Megiddo as loot.  
inlays, carnelian beads, Egyptian jars, or statues of officials have been found at Neby Rubin,14 Dahrat el-Humraiya,15 El-Jisr,16 Tel Aviv,17 Tel el-Ajjul,18 Gezer,19 and Gerar,20 all from Middle Kingdom contexts.

An overwhelming amount of evidence demonstrates that Byblos, which was probably the cultural seat of Syria-Canaan at the time,21 was heavily influenced by Egypt.22 The rulers in Byblos were so substantially influenced by Egypt that they seem to have willingly adopted much of Egyptian culture and to have become, in the Egyptian mind, an extension of Egypt.23 It is highly unlikely that the exchange was completely one-sided. Even if Egypt was the ‘dominant culture’ in the cultural exchange, there was undoubtedly a Byblian influence (page 194) on Egypt, at least on the micro/individual level if not on the macro/societal level.

The newly published Dashur Khnumhotep inscription allows us to refine our understanding of the Middle Kingdom relation with Byblos.24 The story told in the inscription contains evidence that early Middle Kingdom Rulers had trade relations with both Byblos and Ullaza, a port north of Byblos. Such relations seem to have ebbed for a time, at least with

15. Weinstein, “Megiddo,” 4; and Mayer, “Bronze Age Deposit,” 2-7. The alabaster vessels were likely not true alabaster, but instead are what we call ‘Egyptian alabaster,’ or, more properly, travertine.
23. Kemp, “‘Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period,” 146.
Byblos, and then to have picked back up, likely in the time of Senusret III. Khnumhotep records that the Byblites attempted to interfere with Ullaza and Egypt’s relations there. Egypt intervened, gaining a decisive military victory, perhaps the same one spoken of by Khusobek. This may even have sparked the movement that would put Byblos under such direct control of Egypt. In any case, the inscription documents important contact with both Byblos and Ullaza.

Ebla is another site which experienced a significant amount of contact with Egypt. Within a Middle Kingdom context excavators have found an Egyptian gold ring with lily flowers, an Egyptian necklace, amethyst beads, Egyptian alabaster vessels, and a ceremonial – possibly royal – ivory mace head with silver inlay demonstrating Egyptian techniques and motifs. Additionally, many contemporary objects of fine Syrian craftsmanship from Ebla exhibit heavy Egyptian influence, including ivory inlays of a male head with what appears to be an atef crown, two figures wearing a šwty crown, a Horus figure, a female whose forehead is surmounted by two horns and a sun disk, and a male figure with a crocodile head – particularly fitting since Sobek became so important during Middle Kingdom Fayoum settlement efforts. Old Syrian glyphs bear an affinity for Egyptian iconography and hieroglyphs, implying a somewhat steady relationship between the two areas.

In Qatna, Ugarit, Ba’albek, and Beirut, small Egyptian statues – including those of officials – votive sphinxes, and Egyptian cylinder seals were uncovered in Middle Kingdom

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contexts. As far north (page 195) as Anatolia, in Alaça Hüyük, a *djed*-pillar plaque was discovered in an 18th century stratum, and a Bes figure from the earliest Hittite occupation level. Other Middle Kingdom items were found, but in an insecure context, making it difficult to know at what date they traveled there. Additionally, throughout all of the Levant, during the Middle Bronze Age (roughly equivalent with the Middle Kingdom) there was a great rise in imports of Egyptian stone vessels.

Not all of the evidence presented above is of equal value. Contacts resulting from trade, or that demonstrated by the presence of scarabs or a few jars at some sites, are certainly of less import than the kind of influence we see in Byblos or even Megiddo; yet they still demonstrate that there was a steady flow of communication, exchange and travel between the two areas. Without this constant stream of interaction it would be unlikely that a cultural and intellectual exchange occurred; but with it we must posit that such an exchange is probable. When this stream of interaction is coupled with the more substantial sites, such as Byblos, it seems that an intellectual intercourse is unavoidable. Thus we see evidence for an Egyptian presence from the northern and southernmost parts of the Levant, with similar indices stemming from sites scattered in between. It becomes obvious that Egypt’s contacts with the Levant were substantial, and afforded many of her citizens the chance to partake of a foreign culture, sometimes on a protracted basis.

Textual Evidence

Execration texts also document various relations between Egypt and Syria-Palestine. Not all of these relations were continually peaceful, but the Egyptians viewed them as important relationships nonetheless. The texts with which we are concerned can be dated, with relative certainty, to the 19th and 18th centuries B.C. They display the names of cities and groups such as Jerusalem, Ashkelon, Rehob, Akko, Mishal, Achshaf, Valley of Akko, Rehob, Iyon, Laish, Hazor, Qedesh, Shechem, Ashtoroth, and Qanah. The execration texts reflect Egypt’s perception of rebellion or dissent in at least fifteen Levantine regions. This would imply that Egypt had been in regular contact and interaction with these foreign entities before, and likely after, the perceived rebellion. These interactions could not possibly exist in a culturally sterile environment. At the very least these texts indicate that Egypt possessed a detailed knowledge of Levantine polities and felt it had a permanent presence in the Levant.

This latter statement has been called into question. Amnon Ben-Tor has asked exactly the kind of question that should be asked when he examined how well contemporary archaeological evidence matched up with the names on the execration texts. In the cases outside of the Canaanite area archaeology seemed congruent with the names on the text, as it did with a number of settlements within Canaan. However, he identifies several listed locations that demonstrate sparse settlement during the time period. For many of these he demonstrates that

34. In addition to the citations listed above, see Ilan, “The Dawn of Internationalism – The Middle Bronze Age,” 308; Marcus, Tel Nami: A Study of a Middle Bronze Age IIA Period Coastal Settlement.
the identifications of modern day sites with the names in the Execration Texts may be incorrect. In such a case, we may not know exactly where the Execration Texts refer to, but they still refer to some area in the Levant. Ben-Tor also notes that several of these contested sites demonstrate settlement before the question in period and after, but contain no or sparse evidence during that period.  

38 He posits that the Middle Kingdom texts were copies of Old Kingdom texts, and thus reflect an Old Kingdom understanding of the Levant. Daphna Ben-Tor dovetails her scaraboid evidence with these findings, arguing that the scarcity of scarabs from this time period indicates a dip in international interaction between the two areas.  

39 While this is possible, as is the idea that these sites were occupied, abandoned just during the period in question and were then resettled, we should be cautious in disregarding textual evidence in such a way. This is true of Amnon Ben-Tor’s arguments about these specific sites, but is even more true of arguments about the Levant in general. In the face of a number of texts which mention contact with the Levant, it would seem that arguments from archaeological absence of evidence are trumped by arguments from textual presence of evidence.

While the execration texts may be copies, it is also quite likely that the ancient writers were more familiar with the sites of their day than we are. Amnon Ben-Tor’s arguments add a needed note of (page 197) caution in using these texts. Yet his own discourse demonstrates a great deal of validity to the texts.  

40 The argument really lies in the amount of contact they demonstrate, not in the fact of substantial contact itself. Ben-Tor’s archaeological survey seems...
to confirm Allen’s surmissions from the Khnumhotep inscription, namely that there was a rise in contact with the Levant an ebb, and then another rise. Both Gee and Allen posit this resurgence during the reign of Senusret III.\textsuperscript{41} Moreover, the evidence discussed thus far points towards the most substantial contact coming from the Syrian area, places named in both caches of Execration Texts and which demonstrate archaeological evidence for occupation. The sites Ben-Tor calls into question are from areas which already demonstrate less evidence for contact. However, this does not mean that they were fully unoccupied, nor that Egypt had no relations with these areas that had been important to her in the past. Thus our picture remains the same, of heavy contact with the largest population centers and less contact in the less settled areas.

As we look at other written evidences, we must ever keep in mind the idea that textual witnesses can be notoriously difficult to date, begging for caution in their use. However, many texts enjoy a wide acceptance as being Middle Kingdom texts and bear strong evidence upon our subject. For instance, the Tale of Sinuhe is generally accepted as being a Middle Kingdom composition.\textsuperscript{42} We are informed in this tale that gifts were regularly exchanged between Egypt and the Levant, and that Egyptians were living in Retjenu [the Levant]. Whether or not the text is historical, its author probably drew from the reality of his day.

Other texts mention ships being built of cedar wood,\textsuperscript{43} almost certainly obtained from the Syro-Phoenician area. One steward of (page 198) the late 11\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty bragged of bringing

\begin{footnotes}
\item Levantine Relations and Chronology in the Middle Bronze Age: Scarab Research,” 246.
\item Allen, “Inscription of Khnumhotep”; Gee “Sesostris III’s Foreign Policy.”
\item Parkinson, \textit{The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems}, 21.
\end{footnotes}
lumber from ‘the cedar slopes, ‘and collecting tribute from nomadic peoples.\textsuperscript{44} A steady and significant amount of coffins from across the chronological spectrum of the Middle Kingdom were made of cedar.\textsuperscript{45} Whether the wood was brought by Asiatics to Egypt, by Egyptians who went to Syria, or by a combination of both, which is most likely, we can be certain that the cedar for these coffins arrived in Egypt via some kind of foreign exchange. Similarly, both lapis lazuli\textsuperscript{46} and true, unalloyed silver\textsuperscript{47} are attested in significant amounts within Middle Kingdom Egypt. It is very likely that these elements came from Anatolia via some kind of foreign contact.

A 12\textsuperscript{th} dynasty official is described as having accompanied the king’s monuments to distant lands, indicating some kind of official connection.\textsuperscript{48} A late 11\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty overseer records having fought the Asiatics (\textit{\textit{amw}}) in their highlands.\textsuperscript{49} From the same time period a graffito notes the inscriber’s participation in fighting the Asiatics (\textit{\textit{amw}}).\textsuperscript{50} A fragment of Amenemhat II’s annals records at least two invasions of the Levant.\textsuperscript{51} A number of biographies describe military activities in the Levant.\textsuperscript{52} One text mentions that travelers into the Levant regularly made out wills before embarking on their journey because of the known dangers there.\textsuperscript{53} This would certainly suggest that travel through the Levant was a regular enough feature that many people had done it.

\textsuperscript{44} Mumford, “Syria/Palestine,” 337.
\textsuperscript{47} Ogden, “Metals,” 170–71.
\textsuperscript{48} Mumford, “Syria/Palestine,” 338.
\textsuperscript{50} Helck, \textit{Die Beziehungen}, 40; Ward, \textit{Egypt and the east Mediterranean}, 62.
\textsuperscript{51} Farag, “Un inscription memphite de la XIIe dynastie, ” 75–82, pls. 3–5; Shaw, “Egypt and the Outside World,” 325.
\textsuperscript{52} For a summary, see Redford, \textit{Egypt}, 82–90; Mumford, “Syria/Palestine,” 338.
\textsuperscript{53} Mumford, “Syria/Palestine,” 338.
There are textual witnesses of a monumental nature for Middle Kingdom military activity in the Levant. Mentuhotep II’s temple at Deir el Bahari depicts him fighting an Asiatic war. The stele of general Nesu-menthu, who served during the reign of Senusret I, refers to hostilities against Asiatics and the destruction of a fortress. Senusret III is memorialized for having expanded both the northern and southern border, or in other words, for having made more of the Levant (and Nubia) a part of Egypt. Sebek-khu (or Khu-Sebek) confirms this by recounting a campaign conducted under Senusret III to Skmm, which is probably Shechem. While military invasions do not constitute the most opportune avenue for a cultural exchange, they do demonstrate a kind of contact. At least in the Old Kingdom a military expedition to the Levant included priests, official functionaries, interpreters and bureaucrats. Furthermore, invasions usually entailed booty of both people and items.

We have reviewed evidence for contacts which vary across a spectrum of valuation. Certainly military contacts were of less intellectual value than trade contacts, and travels to the Levant were not as important as Egyptians actually living there. However, none of these points, whatever their position on our continuum, can be ignored. Instead, each one provides a small piece to a puzzle we are slowly fitting together. We are beginning to see that every type of imaginable contact and interaction between the two culturally distinct areas occurred. Taken together, we have a great deal of evidence for regular Egyptian dealings in the Levant. It is apparent that there were many Middle Kingdom trade and military expeditions to Syria-Canaan, and it even seems likely that some officials and merchants spent a great deal of time there.

significant number of Egyptians had the opportunity to learn of and be influenced by Asiatic culture. This impact is heightened when it is realized that most of the officials, tradesmen and military leaders were elite and semi-elite members of Egyptian society.

A Mixed Presence in the Sinai

We also find strong evidence for an Egyptian presence in the Sinai. Janine Bourriau paints a convincing picture, demonstrating that Egyptian style pottery was made in the Sinai, at Serabit El-Khadim, during the Middle Kingdom.\(^59\) The pottery is a mix of Egyptian-made pottery from Egypt and Egyptian-made pottery from the Sinai, suggesting that Egyptian potters accompanied the expedition.\(^60\) This indicates that the encampments at Serabit el-Khadim were huge undertakings, involving a large number of Egyptians. Such an idea is augmented by the fact that a 12\(^{th}\) Dynasty Egyptian temple was built at Serabit el-Khadim.\(^61\) The (page 200) temple must have been attended to by Egyptian priests, and at least one expedition leader was a ‘controller of priests,’ signifying that a number of the elite were involved in these expeditions.\(^62\) Egyptians were present at Serabit el-Khadim expeditions under the rule of seven 12\(^{th}\) Dynasty rulers, with Amenemhet III sending at least 18.\(^63\) Large expeditions went to other Sinai mines as well, such as those at Wadi Maghara, Wadi Nasb, and Wadi Kharit.\(^64\) At Wadi Maghara, we know of at

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61. Beit-Arieh, “Canaanites and Egyptians at Serabit el-Khadim,” 57; Arnold, Die Tempel Ägypten, 222.
62. Sinai Inscription 90. See Cerny, et al, The Inscriptions at Sinai, 97–99. Line one of the inscription contains the individual’s titles, including being ‘controller of priests.’ See the textual emendation.
64. We know of at least one Middle Kingdom expedition to each of the latter two sites. See Mumford, “Serabit El-Khadim.” See also Seyfried, Beiträge zu den Expeditionen des Mittleren Reiches in die Ost-Wüste, 1–10, 41–55, 155–76.
least six expeditions sent during the reign of Amenemhet III alone, one of which comprised 734 men.\textsuperscript{65} We are certain of several more expeditions sent by following Middle Kingdom rulers.

Monuments at both Serabit el-Khadim and Wadi Maghara mention Asiatics laboring in Egyptian mining camps in the Western Sinai in the late Twelfth Dynasty.\textsuperscript{66} Additionally, a Proto-Sinaitic inscription, indicating a Semitic presence, has been found in the temple of Serabit el-Khadim and elsewhere in the camp.\textsuperscript{67} Since large numbers of Egyptians were involved in these expeditions, it is important to note that working along side them was a sizable host of Asiatics – there is even some evidence which suggests that Asiatic royalty was present\textsuperscript{68} – seemingly in a peaceful and prosperous cooperation. It is inevitable that there was a significant amount of cross cultural contact in such expeditions.\textsuperscript{69} The Sinai was an area where expedition leaders, priests, workers and craftsmen had prolonged and substantial interaction with Asiatics.

The Levantine contact we have evaluated stems from fringe areas (e.g. Sinai), through the heartland (e.g. Jerusalem, Hazo, Megiddo, Ebla, etc.), to the coastal plains (e.g. Byblos, Ugarit, etc.) of the Levant. To be sure this does not represent a homogenous culture, but it does represent substantial contact with Semitic groups sustained over an extensive period of time (page 201).

**Evidence for a Semitic Presence in Egypt**

As crucial as an Egyptian presence in the Levant is to our topic, it is even more important to examine the possibility of a Semitic presence in Egypt. If there were many Levantine peoples

\begin{footnotes}
\item 66. Weinstein, 11.
\item 67. Beit-Arieh, 57.
\item 68. Hallo, *et al*, *The Ancient Near East, a History*, 248.
\end{footnotes}
living within Egypt itself, the number of people who could be influenced by them increases exponentially. As we shall see, there is solid evidence for the presence of Asiatics within Egypt and a great deal of interaction with them.

**Archeological Witnesses of Contact**

Undoubtedly, the most preponderant archaeological testimony of Levantine influence in Egypt comes from Tell el-Dab\textsuperscript{c}a, or ancient Avaris. The Asiatic population and influence there was large enough that it is worthy of greater consideration than can be presented in this context. Nevertheless, here we must come to some understanding of what happened at Avaris.

The town began as a Herakleopolitan settlement in the 10\textsuperscript{th} dynasty.\textsuperscript{70} Real expansion began early in the 12\textsuperscript{th} dynasty, when various features arose which indicate that the growth came from people of urban northern Levantine origin, specifically the Phoenician-Syrian area.\textsuperscript{71} Moreover, it is clear that these inhabitants of Levantine origin maintained a great deal of contact with their homeland, probably via trade. Further light is shed when it is realized that the lower class graves of the site are Egyptian, while the upper class graves are Levantine.\textsuperscript{72} Many of the Asiatic inhabitants were the educated elite, and would certainly carry with them a cultural weight and influence. Eventually this weight and influence made them the ruling class.

By the mid 12\textsuperscript{th} dynasty there was a huge influx of people. The town began to be covered by so called ‘middle-hall’ houses, typical of northeast Syria.\textsuperscript{73} 50% of the males received

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\textsuperscript{69} A conclusion independently reached by Oren, \textit{et al}, “The ‘Kingdom of Sharuhen,’ and the Hyksos Kingdom,” 275.
\textsuperscript{70} Bietak, \textit{et al}, “The Center of Hyksos Rule: Avaris (Tell el-Dab\textsuperscript{c}a),” 90.
\textsuperscript{72} Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” 50.
\textsuperscript{73} Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” 97.
warrior burials, and 80% of the weapons within these burials were of Asiatic origin.\footnote{Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” 99.} This suggests that a mercenary presence was a significant part of Avaris. Such an idea matches well with inscriptions presented below that describe an Asiatic presence in the Egyptian king’s army. Certainly some amount of shoulder rubbing occurred in this context. A limited amount of evidence also exists for (page 202) some kind of contact, most likely a trading connection, with Ebla.\footnote{Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” 100. This evidence consists of statues of the last queen of the 12\textsuperscript{th} dynasty found next to a statue of an Eblaite king, and a statue found with a composition unknown in Egypt, but attested in Ebla.}

During the early 13\textsuperscript{th} dynasty Avaris tripled in size. The remains point towards this growth being predominantly Levantine, though not exclusively. The evidence comes from household styles, wares, and burial customs, such as two donkey burials.\footnote{Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” 103.} This is certainly not an Egyptian practice, nor is it a custom of the southern Levant. It seems to stem from the northern Levant, and has Mesopotamian connections,\footnote{Bietak, “Canaanites in the Eastern Nile Delta,” 103} though almost certainly indirectly.\footnote{Leemans, “The Trade Relations of Babylonia and the Question of Relations with Egypt in the Old Babylonian Period,” 21–37.}

During this period metalworking in Avaris reached a high point, both technologically and quantitatively, not matched elsewhere in Egypt.\footnote{Bietak, “Center of Hyksos,” 105.} Much of the metalworking was associated with shipbuilding, attesting to the great amount of shipping and trading which subjected this area to unprecedented amounts of international contact. Prestige would have accompanied this development.
Evidence points to a growing significant contact with Cyprus, and even with Minoan settlements, extending a greater opportunity for a foreign influence. While Avaris seems to have been most heavily populated by Asiatics, there undoubtedly was a significant number of Egyptians in the city as well. The cultural influence presumably flowed both ways. The Asiatics of Avaris were becoming more and more Egyptianized, and the Egyptians who lived with them were experiencing a great deal of Levantine culture. At one point an Egyptian and a Levantine temple operated in the same neighborhood simultaneously.

A good deal of contact also occurred at Tell el-Maskhuta, a strategic site that guarded the land trade routes into the Delta, leading to Avaris. Late 12\textsuperscript{th} and early 13\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty Asiatic cooking pots were found at the site. Like (page 203) Avaris, the site contained mud-brick tombs with donkey burials and ceramics. One of these tombs contained a scarab heirloom bearing the name of a 13\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty monarch, Sobek-hotep IV, ca. 1740-1730 B.C. Holladay labeled these inhabitants “Egyptian based ‘Asiatics.’” The Maskhuta material demonstrates a steady movement of Asiatics into Egypt during the end of the Twelfth Dynasty and early into the Thirteenth. During the 13\textsuperscript{th} dynasty, the number of Asiatics in the settlement swelled. The donor culture was undoubtedly Northern or Central Syria, as opposed to Canaanite. Egyptians from all over Egypt who wanted access to trading via land routes or the Red Sea would have

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80. Bietak, “Center of Hyksos,” 94. Also, Walberg, “A Gold Pendant from Tel el-Dab’a;” Walberg, “The finds at Tel el-Dab’a and Middle Minoan Chronology;” Walberg, “The Date and Origin of the Kamares Cup from Tel el-Dab’a;” and Marinatos, “The Tel el-Dab’a paintings: A Study in Pictorial Tradition.”
83. Hoffmeier, Israel in Egypt, 66.
86. Hoffmeier, Israel in Egypt, 66.
associated with Asiatic counterparts in Tel el-Maskhuta. For those involved in trade, Maskhuta and Avaris were an ancient melting pot. As Daphna Ben-Tor demonstrates in this volume, the inhabitants of Avaris had a large impact on the amount of contact with the Levant, both in and out of Egypt.

A similarly mixed Semitic and Egyptian culture, most likely closely linked with Avaris, has left archeological evidence in Tell Hanun, Tel el-Habwe, Farasha, Tell Ku’a, Ghita, Inshas and Tell el-Yahudiya, all in the eastern Delta. While none of these sites were as big as Tell el-Dabca, the sheer number indicates that there was a substantial enough presence of Asiatics in the eastern Delta that a cross cultural exchange was inevitable. It has been convincingly demonstrated that Tell el-Dabca was a port of trade in the 12th dynasty and later. As such, it, and its sister cities from around the area, would have certainly brought in a substantial amount of contact with other trading areas, especially the coastal cities of the Levantine seaboard.

Additionally, signs of a substantial Levantine trade presence in Egypt comes from Lahun. There Asiatic weights actually outnumber Egyptian ones. Also, a large and rich collection of Asiatic gold and silver material has been found in caskets underneath the temple of Montu at Tod. These two sites, in central and far southern Egypt respectively, indicate that the Levantine presence was not wholly confined to the Delta. Finds of Levantine influence in metalworking and Levantine style toggle pins, textiles, and spindles in both foreign

88. Bietak, “Middle Bronze Age,” 29.
91. Callender, “Middle Kingdom,” 178.
and Egyptian contexts within Egypt attest to the presence and adoption of Levantine cultural elements within Egypt.\(^{93}\)

Thus we see that the archeological evidence points towards a strong presence of Levantine people in the Delta, with some contact penetrating further into Egypt. The negative impression of the Hyksos which prevailed in later times does not seem to exist during the Middle Kingdom. Instead, it appears that there were positive relations between the Residence and the useful trading class of Avaris and her sister cities. Surely this strong and positive Levantine presence in the Delta afforded the opportunity for much contact and cultural flow.

**Monumental Inscriptions**

The texts on monuments dated to the Middle Kingdom also inform of features of an Asiatic presence in Egypt. The Hatnub quarry inscriptions retell how Nehry and his two sons, Kay and Thutnakht, who probably lived during the transition from the 11\(^{th}\) to the 12\(^{th}\) Dynasty, were fighting the king in some kind of revolt or civil war. For our purposes, the important reference comes from Kay’s inscription, in which he describes fighting a coalition that included both the king’s forces and Asiatics.\(^{94}\) This indicates that there was an alliance between Egypt and some Asiatics at this time, including an Asiatic military or mercenary presence in Egypt. The idea should be coupled with the high number of warrior graves at Avaris as outlined above.

Undoubtedly there was a strong mercenary corps formed of Asiatics. The importance of this contact is enhanced when we remember that during the Middle Kingdom the military leaders were not career military men. The elite at this time served as military, bureaucratic, scribal, and

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93. Sparks, “Canaan in Egypt: archaeological evidence for a social phenomenon,” 32, 41, 43–44.
religious leaders. Thus, contact with military leaders was contact with people of political and social influence.

A monumentalization of the day book of Amenemhet II reports of a campaign into the Levant that brought back 1,554 prisoners of war. Such booty evokes images of a kingdom exerting a powerful presence in the Levant, though perhaps only sporadically. Moreover, this (page 205) large number of people afterwards resided in Egypt and afforded the opportunity for some type of cultural exchange. The same text also records Canaanite rulers providing individuals (1,002 of them) and substantial other goods as tribute to the Egyptian court. It further lists goods that came from Asia as a result of commercial enterprise, including 65 Asiatics. Further, the well known Beni Hassan tomb of Knumhotep II not only shows pictures of Semitic tradesmen in Egypt, but has an accompanying text that tells us of 37 Asiatics coming to Egypt for trade, under the leadership of Abi-sha, an obviously Semitic name. All of these events point towards both formal relations with Asiatic states and the presence of individuals in Egypt who brought a foreign culture with them.

A recent discovery casts further light on an Asiatic presence in Egypt. Two inscriptions have been found in Wadi el-Hol, deep in southern Egypt, which are described as the earliest Semitic alphabetic inscriptions (at this stage they cannot be classified as proto-Canaanite or proto-Sinaitic, we do not know how they fit into other language branches). This indicates a

96. Farag, “Une inscription memphite de la XIIe dynastie, “ 75–82; Cohen, Canaanites, Chronologies, and Connections, 42.
100. Newberry, Beni Hasan, 185–86; Goedicke, “Abi-Sha(i)’s Representation in Beni Hasan,” 203–210; Helck, Beziehungen Ägyptens, 41–42; Hoffmeier, 61; and Mazar, Archaeology, 187.
literate Asiatic presence in the area. In the same wadi another inscription has been found which refers to a certain general Bebi, ‘general of the Asiatics.’ John Darnell has identified the determinative accompanying this inscription as indicating the presence of families. These inscriptions are likely the result of a substantial group of literate traders and/or guards/mercenaries who traversed this southern Wadi during their journeys. This surprising new evidence leads us to conclude that within the confines of her boundaries, Egypt’s wealthy citizens were welcoming and interacting with a group of literate and wealthy Asiatics. These foreigners understood (page 206) Egyptian writing well enough to use it and adapt it to their own language. This erudition would have been impressive to literate Egyptians.

Other Textual Evidence

We have several bits of textual testimony that help us understand the larger picture of Asiatics in Egypt. One of these is the Prophecy of Neferti. This prophecy refers to Asiatics traveling in Egypt with their swords, going about terrorizing and plundering the local population. While the propagandist nature of this document demands that we view such statements with a grain of salt, the kernel of truth upon which they were probably based was the presence of Asiatics. Later, the prophecy speaks again of Asiatics, saying that they have come down to Egypt and that fortifications had failed to keep them out. Whatever the ideology behind the text, it provides at least a partial view of events of the day.

103. Presentation by Bruce Zuckerman at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA on October 18, 2000.
104. Independently concluded by Hoffmeier, 58–59.
Both the teachings of Amenemhet and the Prophecies of Neferti make reference to Amenemhet having to deal with a large Asiatic (-padua) population within Egypt. However, it is unlikely that the entire population was expelled, leading to the conclusion that from its beginnings the Middle Kingdom contained a Asiatic population.

Papyrus Brooklyn (P. Brooklyn 35.1446) contains crucial information for understanding the number of Semitic people in Egypt during the 13th dynasty. This document, probably coming from Thebes, contains a ledger listing all the names of the servants on a particular Egyptian estate. Over forty (56%) are labeled as Asiatics and carry Northwest Semitic names. One of these was a tutor, a situation which demands a certain amount of intellectual influence. With over forty Semitic slaves on an estate in Upper Egypt, the number of slaves throughout the country, especially in the Delta area, must have been high indeed.

Hayes believes that there was a considerable number of Syro-Canaanites in the service of Egyptian nobility throughout Egypt. While more evidence of Egyptian campaigns entailing prisoners of war has come to light since Hayes published his conclusions, it is still difficult to account for the amount of Asiatic slaves in Egypt suggested by Papyrus Brooklyn. Hayes has suggested, echoed by Hornung, that there was ‘a brisk trade in Asiatic slaves carried on by the Asiatics themselves, with Egypt.’ This rings an according note with the

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105. Instruction of Amenemhet col. 3, lines 1–5, as in Volten, Zwei altägyptische politische Schriften. Die Lehre für König Merikare; and P. Leningrad 1116B, lines 33, 61–63, as in Helck, Die Prophezeihung des Nfr.tj.
106. P. Leningrad 1116B, line 33, 61.
108. Through an independent assessment Hoffmeir came to this same conclusion. See Hoffmeier, 61.
109. Hayes, A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom, 99.
110. Hornung, et al, History of Ancient Egypt, an Introduction, 61, writes ‘we can distinguish a brisk trade in slaves in this period; there were not enough military undertakings to explain the ever-growing number of Asiatic slaves in Egypt.’
111. Hayes, A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom, 99.
Joseph story in Genesis. Of course there is a great amount of disagreement upon this point. Whether or not there was a slave trade outside of prisoners of war, undoubtedly there were a large number of Levantine slaves within Egypt, some of them in a position to impart intellectual influence.

Documents from Kahun mention a military officer ‘in charge of the Asiatic troops,’ and a ‘scribe of the Asiatics.’ This description matches well with the information gained from the Wadi el-Hol inscription. From other sources we know of Semites achieving roles such as craftsmen, butler, or even chancellor. Among these slaves we know of one cheiftan.

There is a significant number of other papyri that bear upon the subject. Of these Hoffmeier writes:

Other papyri – such as Papyrus London UC XL.1 and the Papyrus Berol 10002, 10004, 10021, 10034, 10047, 10050, 10055, 10066, 10111, 10228, and 10323 – point to a significant number of Asiatics (‘3m[w]). While these remain largely unpublished, Ulrich Luft has begun a thorough investigation of these sources. Some of the professions associated with these Asiatics are singers, dancers, temple workers and doorkeepers, couriers, corvee laborers, and mining-expedition workers. While most of them bore Semitic names, others had good Egyptian names like Senusert, but were prefixed by ‘3m, indicating their foreign origin despite the Egyptian name.

To summarize, there is a considerable amount of evidence for a substantial Asiatic presence within Egypt. Traders and commercial enterprisers were present, slaves seem to have existed in large numbers, and there was a large group who had taken up residence in the Delta. While we would be wrong to (page 208) assume that many of these Asiatics were considered elite, we would also be wrong to believe that they could not have influenced the upper class in

112. For summaries, see Bakir, Slavery in Pharaonic Egypt; and Loprieno, “Slaves.”
115. Wreszinski, Aegyptische Inschriften aus dem Königliche Hofmuseum in Wein, 27.
Egypt. Certainly many of the commercial ventures involved Egyptian elite. As suggested by the tutor mentioned in the Brooklyn Papyrus, some Egyptian elite may even have been educated by Semitic slaves. Furthermore, as some Asiatics were working in the temple, they undoubtedly had regular contact with literate priests. Hence, there was more than ample opportunity for a cultural influence on an intellectual level to have taken place. This idea is strengthened when we realize that among the Asiatics, “certain strong personalities had already ascended to the office of kingship by early Dynasty 13.”

117. This idea is augmented when it is realized that Hetepibra, a king of the early 13th dynasty, carried the epithet ‘Son of the Asiatic.’

None of this is to suggest that Egypt was not the dominant culture in her contact with the Levant. There can be little doubt that her northern neighbors adopted far more of Egyptian culture than Egypt did of theirs. Further, it is equally certain that the Asiatics within Egypt were more heavily influenced by Egyptian culture than Egyptians were by Levantine culture. Such a dominant position does not, however, mean that Egypt was immune to cultural influence. This is never the case. Culture is a diffusive element. It is inevitable that as the Egyptians were affecting those around them, they were in turn influenced to some degree. Likewise, it is inescapable that as the opportunity for contacts increased, the influence also increased. The survey presented above clearly illustrates that the contact between these two peoples was more substantial than we have generally thought. It follows, then, that the cultural diffusion was also greater than we have heretofore surmised.

117. Hornung, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 71. He believes that these rulers, such as Khendjer and another actually called Asiatic, were probably able to ‘wrest the kingship for themselves as military leaders.’
Now that we have seen that Egyptians, both at home and abroad, had ample opportunity to partake of a cultural exchange with Levantine peoples, we examine a specific piece of literature for just that type of influence. One of the Middle Kingdom’s most famous tales, The Shipwrecked Sailor, bears what may be the footprint of a Levantine influence while it simultaneously represents what may be the highest literary achievement of the Middle Kingdom.¹¹⁹ This tale exhibits a number of elements that are unusual for Middle Kingdom Egyptian Literature. While it is possible that there are a dozen oddities in the tale for a dozen different reasons, it is more likely that one or two concepts would cause all of these oddities. I suggest that Levantine influence could account for many of the unusual features we find in The Shipwrecked Sailor, and thus such posited influence becomes a most likely scenario.

Repetition

Perhaps the most salient foreign feature is the use of repetition. While the ‘frame story’ nature of the narrative may influence the use of repetition, it cannot explain its pervasiveness. As the sailor recounts his tale he informs his lord that he had gone to sea ‘in a ship of a hundred and twenty cubits in length and forty cubits in width. One hundred and twenty sailors were in it from the pick of Egypt. They looked at the sky, they looked at the land, their hearts were stouter than lions. They could foretell a storm before it came, a tempest before it broke.’¹²⁰ Later in the

story, when recounting his conversation with the fabulous snake, he repeats word for word his
description of the ship and crew.\textsuperscript{121} Such repetition is used frequently in the tale, in lengthy
passages such as this, or in small ways, such as when the sailor tells his officer of the bounty of
the land, replicating the exact words and signs used when the snake described to him the
abundance of the island ($nn\ ntt\ nn\ st\ m\ hnw=f$),\textsuperscript{122} or in the question the snake asks the Sailor
twice ($n-m\ in\ tw\ n-m\ in\ tw\ nd$s).\textsuperscript{123}

While this type of word-for-word narrative repetition is not typically used in Egyptian
literature, it is a mainstay of Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian writings. Not only did these
writings contain such precise repetitions, but they also usually included small variations in the
first or last sections of (page 210) the repetitions.\textsuperscript{124} This is also mirrored in the Shipwrecked
Sailor, where we find that the lines before and after lengthy identical repetitions are similar, yet
contain some small variations, such as the sailor telling the snake he sailed forth on a mission
($wpwt$),\textsuperscript{125} something he did not tell the officer when he began the story.\textsuperscript{126}

Comparing the tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor to any other piece of literature is difficult,
because there is very little in the way of contemporary literature. Outside of Egypt there are only
a few pieces of true literature\textsuperscript{127} from this time period, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh,\textsuperscript{128} a Atra-

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\textit{Readingbook, Exercises and Middle Egyptian Texts}, 100–105. All of the author’s translations are taken from these
sources.

\textsuperscript{121} “The Shipwrecked Sailor,” lines 90–100.
\textsuperscript{122} “The Shipwrecked Sailor,” lines 52 and repeated in line 115.
\textsuperscript{123} “The Shipwrecked Sailor,” line 70 and repeated in line 84.
\textsuperscript{124} Rendsburg, “Literary Devices,” 14–18, especially 14 and 16.
\textsuperscript{125} “The Shipwrecked Sailor,” line 90.
\textsuperscript{128} Tigay, \textit{The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic}, 42–47, argues that it is during the Old Babylonian Period
(roughly contemporary with the Middle Kingdom) that the Epic of Gilgamesh becomes an integrated whole. This
epic may actually also represent borrowing from the Levant via Amorites. See Lambert, \textit{et al}, “A New Babylonian
‘Genesis’ Story,” 96–113.
Hasis, the Theogony of Dunnu and probably the mythic cycle of Baal and Anat.\textsuperscript{129} While this presents a handicap for understanding foreign influence, it is a handicap with which we must live until more texts come to light. One manner in which we can deal with this dilemma is by examining when the type of repetition we are investigating surfaces in Egyptian texts. It is not fully realized until the Late Period. We do have a large corpus of texts to use as comparison that were created long before the Late Period. These can be found in Levantine literature, from a short time after the composition of the Shipwrecked Sailor, and from Hebrew sources, which are composed quite some time after our tale, but significantly before Egypt adopts the mechanism. Some of the Levantine literature we will be examining was likely composed during the Middle Kingdom or earlier, but the earliest copies come from the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries. While, because of the time gap, these sources do not provide perfect comparisons, they do contain typical Semitic literary forms. Because the repetition in these Semitic cultures is so similar (page 211) to that of the Semitic Baal Cycle and Epic of Gilgamesh, we stand on fairly firm ground as we make our comparisons.

Robert Alter writes of word-for-word narrative repetition in Semitic sources that ‘every instruction, every prediction, every reported action had to be repeated word for word in an inexorable literalism as it was obeyed, fulfilled , or reported to another party.’\textsuperscript{130} This repetition almost always took place in a command/fulfillment, prophecy/fulfillment, or command/report

\textsuperscript{129} Views of the date of the composition of the cycle range from the third millennium down to mid-second millenium B.C., with the balance perhaps tilting a little to the earlier side. For a summary see Smith, The Ugaritic Ba’al Cycle, 29–31; Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic; Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel, 113, believes that the epic “dates in terms of its earliest oral forms no later than the Middle Bronze Age (1800–1500 B.C.).” See also Levine, \textit{et al}, “Dead Kings and Rephaim: the Patrons of the Ugaritic Dynasty,” 349–59; Wyatt, Religious Texts From Ugarit, 35; and Albright, “Specimens of Late Ugaritic Prose,” 36 and n. 3. For a view that the origins are later, see M.D. Coogan, Stories from Ancient Canaan, 81; Gibson, “The Mythological Texts,” 193–99, completely avoids the subject of dating the text.
formula. These formats consisted of a prophecy of an event, or a command to execute an event, and then the narrative telling of the fulfillment of the command or prophecy couched in very similar, largely identical language. Canaanite, Mesopotamian and Biblical literature abound with examples of this device (see below). As common as this literary device was with her Near Eastern neighbors, Egyptian literature from this era is largely bereft of the technique.

In the ten years I have been researching the topic and discussing it with my Egyptology colleagues, I often find Egyptologists insisting that Egyptians of the time used repetition. Those with extensive background in Semitic literature claim this less. It is not that Egyptian literature never repeats things, the point is that \textit{the style/form} of repetition present in the Shipwrecked Sailor is unusual in Egypt but not among her Levantine neighbors. \textit{It is not repetition itself that is the issue here, but the form of that repetition.}\n
There \textit{is} a kind of repetition employed in Egyptian sources, but it \textit{is not} the type of which we are speaking. The repetition found in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts could be termed a type of \textquote{liturgical (or litanical) repetition}, though the difference is as much one of form as genre. For example, in (page 212) Utterance 35 of the Pyramid Texts, we read \textquote{Your purification is the purification of Horus. Your purification is the purification of Seth. Your purification is the purification of Thoth.}\textsuperscript{134} This has more of an air of parallelism about it than narrative

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Alter, \textit{The Art of Biblical Narrative}, 88–113. He discusses in detail the device of repetition. Also see Long, \textquote{Framing Repetitions in Biblical Historiography}, 385–99; and Muhlestein, \textit{The Use of the Palm of the Hand in the Rituals of the Tabernacle and Temple of Solomon}, 67–68.
  \item \textsuperscript{131} See the command of \textit{Yam} to his messengers and its fulfillment in \textquote{Baal and Yam}, a Ugaritic myth in Gibson, \textit{Canaanite Myths and Legends}, 40–42, and the commands of \textit{El} to Keret and Keret’s fulfillment of those commands, 83–89. There are many other examples available in Canaanite literature.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} For one of many examples of this type of literature in Mesopotamian sources, see the twice commanded instructions of how to snare Enkidu by use of a harlot, and the fulfillment of this command in \textquote{The Epic of Gilgamesh}, tablet I, columns iii–iv.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} See Joshua 3:13–15; Exodus 25:10–20, Exodus 37:1–9. These are only two of many examples.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} PT 35.
\end{itemize}
repetition. Likewise, a phrase such as ‘recite four times,’ does not constitute true repetition, but instead is a marker of ritual or litany.

The other type of repetition from the Pyramid and Coffin Texts also comes closer to being parallelism than true repetition. We can see this type in Utterance 217: ‘O Seth and Nephthys, go and proclaim to the gods of Upper Egypt and their akhs . . .’ A few stanzas later we read ‘O Osiris and Isis, go and proclaim to the gods of Lower Egypt and their akhs . . .’ Again, in another few stanzas: ‘O Thoth, go and proclaim to the western gods and their akhs . . .’ and so on throughout this and other utterances. This is not a word-for-word repetition in the tradition of Canaanite and Mesopotamian literature, but instead a parallelistic address to different gods.

Egyptian literature also invokes a formulaic repetition, such as when Weni often notes that he had found a favorable place in the king’s heart “above any of his officials, above any of his nobles, above any of his servants.” This is not a narrative repetition, but rather a formula repeatedly used to indicate the same kind of thing.

The Prophecies of Neferti repeats the phrase “I show you the land in turmoil,” a few times. The repetition serves as an introductory or formulaic phrase. Since it also appears in the Complaints of Khakhepereseneb, it may also be a common idiomatic expression.

135. Of course parallelism includes an element of repetition, but not what is meant by the near-technical-term ‘repetition’ as employed in Semitic studies. It is a different form, within the same and different genres. See Berlin, The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism.
136. As in PT 46.
137. Bell, Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice, 69; Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 51–56; Turner, From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play, 82.
139. P.Leningrad 1116B, as in Helck, Die Prophezeihung des Nfr. tj.
In the Admonitions of Ipuwer the phrase “It is, however, good . . .” appears several times. This repetition is employed as an antithetical parallel pair, and thus serves a poetic function. Again it is very different from that found in the Shipwrecked Sailor and Levantine sources.

Indeed, contrasting these kinds of typical Egyptian ‘repetitions’ with Semitic sources will clearly demonstrate the differences. We read in the story of Keret (page 213)\textsuperscript{140}

Pour wine [into] a vessel of silver, honey into a vessel of gold. Go up on to the tower and mount the shoulder of the wall; lift up your hands (to) heaven (and) sacrifice to the bull El your father, make Baal to come down with your sacrifice, the son of Dagon with your game. Then let Keret come down from the roof; let him make ready corn for the city . . . he did pour wine into a vessel of silver, honey into a vessel of gold, and he did go up on to the tower, did mount the shoulder of the wall; he did lift up his hands to heaven (and) did sacrifice to the bull El his father, he did make [Baal] to come down with his sacrifice, the son of Dagon [with] his game. Keret did come down [from] the roof; he did make ready corn for the city . . .’\textsuperscript{141}

One more example, this one from Mesopotamia, will suffice for our purposes:

Let him [Gilgamesh] give thee a harlot-lass. Take (her) with thee; . . . when he waters the beasts at the watering-place, she shall pull off her clothing, laying bare her ripeness. As soon as he sees her, he will draw near to her. Reject him will his beasts that grew up on the steppe! . . . Gilgamesh says to him, to the hunter: ‘Go, my hunter, take with thee a harlot-lass. When he waters the beasts at the watering-place, she shall pull off her clothing, laying bare her ripeness. As soon as he sees her, he will draw near to her. Reject him will his beasts that grew up on his steppe!’\textsuperscript{142}

Even a precursory reading reveals the difference between the two types of repetitions. One entails the repetition of ideas and phrases, the other an exact or near-exact repetition of an extended action. Both types may stem from an oral tradition (Semitic sources possess both types of repetition in markedly oral compositions), but the orality is manifest in two different forms,

\textsuperscript{140} The setting of the text seems to be mid-second millenium B.C., the written version was probably first recorded in the fifteenth century B.C. See Greenstein, “Kirta,” 9.
\textsuperscript{141} ‘Baal and Yam,’ a Ugaritic myth in Gibson, \textit{Canaanite Myths and Legends}, 84–87.
forms which are a matter of tradition. Contrastingly, there is nothing in the Shipwrecked Sailor that would mark it as more of an oral composition than its contemporary pieces of Egyptian literature. While it is possible that the repetitive elements of the Shipwrecked Sailor are elements of an oral tradition, we must then ask why are these elements so lacking in comparative Middle Kingdom literature?

Intense studies of the texts reveal the contrast between the literature of Egypt and that of her neighbors. A careful reading, with the specific intent of studying the phenomenon of repetition, of many (page 214) Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, the Book of the Dead, wisdom texts, hymns, autobiographies, and fictive pieces of literature from the Middle and New Kingdoms, including over 690 compositions, reveals no examples of the type of repetition which we are discussing, except in one case (0.1%), namely the Shipwrecked Sailor. If we were to limit the search to only the fictive tales, only one out of ten (or 10%) exhibit the investigated feature.

In fully preserved Egyptian tales, there is a striking lack of repetition. For example, when in ‘the Contendings of Horus and Seth,’ Seth reports a conversation with Isis that has already been presented to the reader, illustratively he does not use the type of phrasing or repetition that fits with the Semitic model. Were this a Semitic tale, it undoubtedly would have employed word-for-word narrative repetition.

Similarly, Papyrus Westcar, roughly contemporary with the Shipwrecked Sailor, offers several pregnant opportunities for repetition. In the tale of Ubainer, the twice prepared pavilion and the frequent retelling of episodes, would, in a Semitic source, certainly contain examples of word-for-word repetition. Instead we see the Egyptian author retell the events with a modern

142. Kovacs, tablet I. The Epic of Gilgamesh has fragments which have been dated to mid or early second millenium, the same time period as the Shipwrecked Sailor. See “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” 40.
Western-like affinity for using different language to recount the same incident. Likewise, in the tale of Sneferu’s rowing party, we are first presented with an account of Sneferu’s interaction with a lead rower, and then his retelling of that interaction. Again, in a Semitic tale we would expect the entire episode to be repeated in a near-exact fashion, but instead, the only exact repetition is in direct quotes, and not even all of those are precise in their repetition. The story of the birth of the soon-to-be-royal triplets employs some repetition. In each birth the goddesses position themselves similarly, the children are described as having the same appearance, the same prophecy is made of each, and they receive the same blessing of health from Khnum. This very well may be an example of the kind of repetition we are discussing. However, it seems to be more of a case of the same event happening three different times to three different people who will all fill the same office. Rather than a retelling of the same event, which is what we witness in the Shipwrecked Sailor and Levantine literature, we here encounter the same thing happening three separate times. Additionally, word-for-word repetitions are also exhibited in the offerings which Khufu presents to the gallant heroes of each tale. These offerings are presented in formulaic fashion, again as a litanical instead of a literary repetition.

It is difficult to know how to classify the repetition demonstrated in the birth of the triplets. We can judge it best in the context of the rest of the same tale. This repetition is not a retelling of one even, as it typical of Levantine literature, but the telling of three similar events three different times, representing something slightly different. The Westcar text repeatedly retells events or conversations, occasions that would undoubtedly use repetition were it a Semitic tale. However, as noted above, these opportunities are passed up again and again. Such a precise avoidance of repetition throughout the tale suggests that the repetition

employed in regards to the birth of the triplets is used to indicate the similarity of their birth and the roles they will fulfill, not as the kind of story telling device we encounter in the Levant. This is a tentative conclusion and must be used with caution.

Convincingly, in the Eloquent Peasant the peasant makes continual references to plumb lines, boats, and scales in his speeches. Yet these references are always phrased differently, never employing exact and extended repetition. On the contrary, the glory of the Peasant seems to be that he can draw from these wonderful images in so many varied ways. This highlights the value the Egyptians put on a style that is the opposite of the type of repetition the Shipwrecked Sailor exhibits. Khakhepereseneb demonstrates this mindset when he complains about repetition. This value has also been noted by Sweeney, who speaks of the tendency of letters from the Ramesside era avoiding even quoting other letters word for word. Instead they sought to employ lexical variety when referencing that which had already been written.145 Seemingly then, Egyptian literature preferred lexical variety over repetition, both as stated by Egyptian authors and demonstrated in their texts.

There is one other piece of Middle Kingdom literature that seems to demonstrate repetition, from the fragmentary tale of Neferkara and General Sasenet. The possible repetition is problematic due to breaks in the text. Because the passage of interest concerns reconstructions, I will quote the translation and reconstruction of Stephen Quirke. ‘. . . of him by the singing of the singer[s, by the chanting] of the chanters, by the clapping of the percussionists, by the flute-playing of the flautists until the departure of the petitioner of Mennefer [. . .] them [. . .] finishing off.’ This passage is followed shortly by ‘[. . .] of him, the

singing of the singer[s, by the chanting] of the chanters, by the clapping of the percussionists, by the flute-playing of the flautists until the departure of the petitioner of Mennefer without (page 216) them hearing, finish off . . .”146 The tale is so fragmentary it is impossible to understand the nature of this repetition, and part of the repetition is based on a reconstruction that assumes there is a repetition, thus introducing circular evidence. Because the tale is so fragmentary, we cannot determine the extent to which this tale represents Egyptian literature, and thus it is difficult to know how this tale reflects on the topic of our study. Even if it is another example of narrative repetition in Egyptian Literature, it is somewhat anomalous. If we expand the scope of our study to include fragmentary texts such as this one, our corpus grows to about forty texts. Of these, only two exhibit such repetitions, comprising five percent of the corpus. Clearly the use of the feature is anomalous, especially when compared with its consistent, unrelenting usage in Levantine literature. In this literary technique the Shipwrecked Sailor is much more in harmony with the Levantine tradition than the Egyptian.

Nearly a thousand years later the feature finally appears in Egypt. While there are glimpses of its use in “The Report of Wenamun”, it is really in Demotic literature that we find it coming into its own in Egyptian texts. The tales of Setne Khamwas are heavily laden with the device. But until this period of internationalization, the form remains anomalous to Egyptian literature. There is a direct correlation between the amount of known international influence found within Egypt and the amount the device of repetition is employed in Egyptian literature. The correspondence is too perfect to be coincidence, and must be accounted for when we examine the first use of the device: the Shipwrecked Sailor.

146. Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC. questions and readings*, 168–69.
Conversely, I have studied the ten Semitic tales that were either contemporary or near contemporary with the Middle Kingdom, and found examples of repetition in all ten (100%). The balance of the extant evidence is extremely supportive of repetition being a foreign element in Egyptian literature during the era of the Shipwrecked Sailor.

It is highly likely that the author of the Shipwrecked Sailor was influenced by Levantine literature. The imitation is imperfect, for it is unusual to read of the event first and then of its recounting later, but it does seem to be intentional imitation. The foreign device may have been employed only as a natural outcome of Asiatic influence on the scribe, or it may have been intended to further veil the underlying theme of the text, and thus further protect its author.

Gnirs has pointed out other repetitive elements that seem to come from West Semitic influence, such as the doubling of action description (‘he opened his mouth to me . . . and said to me’), the rephrasing of terms (‘fear not, little one, be without fear’), and repeated phrases (‘who brought you, who brought you, small one, who brought you’). Additionally she has noted the un-Egyptian, but extremely West Semitic feature of raising numbers in parallel sentence constructions, such as ‘see, you will spend month after month, until you have completed four months on this island.

Rendsburg has noted parallels to Biblical features, which, for the purposes of this article, are limited in comparative use because of the temporal gap, but informative nonetheless. He has

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149. Gnirs, “Die levantinische Herkunft,” 204. This repetitive influence would become more apparent in the New Kingdom. Schniedewind, Society and the Promise to David. The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1–17, 42–43, who notes this type of three fold repetition in the Amarna Letters and ties it into a Canaanite/Israelite scribal tradition.
recognized the tendency to use exact repetitions in parallel phrases until the last repetition, when a slight variation is introduced. This seemingly Semitic trait is perfectly exhibited in the Shipwrecked Sailor when we read ‘taken is the mallet, struck is the mooring-post, the prow-rope is put on land’ (šsp ḫrw ḫwi mnīt ḫt rdi.ti ḫr tš).151 wherein the last verb is a-typically fronted by the subject.152 This same device is repeated immediately, ‘given is praise, adored is god, every man embraces his companion’ (rdi ḫkmw ḫw nṯr si ḫb ḫr ḫpt snwy=f).153 Another Biblical trait is evidenced during the almost unintelligible line that describes how the mast, wave, and sailor were all somehow striking each other (in ḫw nš=i š).154 As Rendsburg illustrates, this fits well within the Biblical tradition of writing about confusing moments with confusing syntax, a type of syntactical onomatopoeia.155 These parallels with the later Biblical literature are not conclusive by themselves, but they heighten the impression that a Semitic influence is at work in the tale.

Taken together, the different repetitive elements employed in (page 218) this story which are so unusual in Egypt at that time, yet so prevalent in Canaan, form a strong argument for a Levantine influence in the story.

**Imaginary Elements**

Another aspect of the story that seems to be an Egyptian oddity (for the Middle Kingdom) but is familiar to her Near Eastern neighbors is the amount of imaginary elements in the story. The
sailor is washed up on a magical island which does not exist anywhere within the experience of any Egyptian. This contrasts sharply with tales like that of Sinuhe, in which the locations used represent reality. It is similar to the writing of other Near Eastern cultures, such as the residence of Utnapishtim in the Epic of Gilgamesh, which can only be reached after wandering over all lands, crossing difficult mountains and all seas, and then is still not representative of any place in the real world. Additionally, the magical island turned into water when the sailor left. It also possessed Edenic qualities: it was so full of edible vegetation and game that both the sailor and the snake purport that ‘there is nothing that is not in it.’ It was a true paradise, something unlike anything found in the earthly realm.

Again, islands are not unheard of in Egyptian literature, and indeed the use of such a magical place here may be the result of the mythical allusions the tale employs. For example, the Coffin Texts abound with the need to successfully navigate waters and their attendant land formations while constantly avoiding all sorts of unearthly dangerous beings. Thus we can either posit that the Shipwrecked Sailor has uniquely taken elements of religious texts and enhanced them in the story – something quite plausible due to the allusions to the divine within the tale – or we can see here another manifestation of the same possible phenomenon of foreign influence. We must also admit that both could be at work here. There is nothing to push us towards either conclusion when we consider this element alone, yet the aggregate proves to be more informative. Only the assumption of foreign influence can account for both of the oddities discussed thus far (page 219).

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156. Wainwright, “Zeberged: the Shipwrecked Sailor’s Island,” 31–38, believes that the island of St. John’s was the sailor’s island. Of course it may only have served as an inspiration for this island, since St. Johns, or Zeberged, does not disappear once one has left it.

157. See “The Epic of Gilgamesh” tablets X–XI.
Further imaginary elements are introduced in the presence of the snake. The snake is clearly an unbelievable figure, unlike the common monsters of Egyptian tales, or even the myriad of dangerous snakes in the funerary literature. He is no ordinary or even overly large crocodile or hippo,\textsuperscript{159} but a creature of both gigantic dimensions and unbelievable composition. In this way he is more similar to the Mesopotamian Humbaba\textsuperscript{160} monster, the Ugaritic Yam monster, or to the many monsters of later Greek creation. Additionally, his approach is accompanied by thunder, wood splintering and earth tremors. This seems reminiscent of a typical show of power by Ba’al/Hadad/Teschup.\textsuperscript{161} This type of fantastic creature would become more common in the New Kingdom – again, after much more substantial foreign contact – but is unknown in the (admittedly small) corpus of literary texts of the Middle Kingdom.

The composition and manner of approach of the snake may have been so crafted to invoke images of deity. Indeed, there is no doubt that the snake was divine, and that these elements – such as the gold and lapis lazuli and the manner of approach – are part of the identification process. Nevertheless, contemporary Egyptian writers found ways to identify deity without these fantastic descriptions of animals. An example is the strange description of the appearance of the goddess figure in the Tale of the Herdsman. Here the divine is portrayed as a human-like figure with unusual characteristics (such as the appearance of her skin and hair). The

\textsuperscript{158} Gnirs, “Die levantinishce Herkunft,” 202, writes “Nicht nur liegt die Insel inmitten des meeres, sie is sogar Teil des Ozeans selbst: Auch über und unter ihr ist Wasser (85–86), und sie wird selbst wieder zu Wasser, nachdem der Held die Insel verlassen hat (153–154).”

\textsuperscript{159} While the Pyramid Texts do sometimes envisage a giant hippopotamus or lion, or the very large crocodile in Papyrus Westcar, they are always the actual creature in a large size, not one with supernatural powers and non-fleshy composition.

\textsuperscript{160} Epic of Gilgamesh, tablet III.

\textsuperscript{161} My conclusions, independently reached, parallel those of Gnirs, “Die levantinische Herkunft,” 203. It should be noted that Egyptian gods are sometimes described as approaching men in this manner in the Pyramid Texts. While the author of the tale may have used this as a further element in identifying the Snake with deity, the duplicitous nature of almost every element in the tale does not make the two connections mutually exclusive.
tale does not introduce a fantastic monster like the snake the sailor encounters. While the imaginary elements of the snake are indicative of a divine presence, his appearance is not less anomalous in a belles lettres corpus that contained divine manifestations. Funerary literature presents some similarities, yet there is no escaping the fact that the descriptions of such a creature (page 220) are far outside of the Egyptian norm in this genre. Our ability to find some Egyptian similarity, as stated by Schneider when he convincingly argued for a Levantine origin of the Tale of the Two Brothers, “is the outcome of a chain of sophisticated associations offered by our encyclopedic knowledge about Ancient Egypt, on the assumption that the background of the tale is indeed Egyptian.” Again, we must ask if this is another example of an unrelated oddity—an element of Egyptian writing applied in an extreme way in another genre—or if it might find its explanation in foreign influence.

Connections with Levantine Figures

The idea of the surreal snake as an example of foreign influence provides a segue into another possibility of a foreign connection. The case has been made that the snake may have been a representation of the Near Eastern sea/chaos monster represented as an aspect of the Canaanite Yam, or the Biblical Leviathan. This is especially likely since there is a well established parallel between Apophis, an Egyptian chaos creature, and Leviathan, an Israelite/Canaanite chaos creature. While there have been some attempts to associate Leviathan with a crocodile or hippopotamus, these have proved to be untenable, and Leviathan has been firmly established as

Indeed, with such a consistent employment of duplicitous elements, we should almost expect that an unusual feature would serve two purposes.

some kind of twisting snake representing chaos. Likewise, Apophis is represented as a snake. Izak Cornelius has demonstrated that stone reliefs found in both Egypt and the Levant depict a god figure that seems to be a combination of Seth and Ba’al fighting a large serpent. Pictured is a Sethian god slaying a serpent, but the garb is that of the Asiatic Ba’al. Both Seth and Ba’al were believed to have carried out the duty of killing the chaos serpent, known as Apophis in Egypt, and Leviathan, or ln in the Levant. Apparently the motif of slaying the chaos serpent was enough of a commonality between the two cultures that at some point a ‘spilling over’ of identity occurred. This syncretistic feature may also have been influenced by Seth’s association with foreigners, something that may have led to the establishment of a Seth cult in the eastern Delta which was populated by Asiatics. At times there was undoubtedly an element of syncretistic mythology between the Egyptian Pantheon and the Semitic (page 221) in the areas where there was a heavy Semitic population. It was sometime during the Middle Kingdom that Seth became the interpretation aegyptiaca of Ba’al and his various versions. The Shipwrecked Sailor may represent one of the early manifestations of this.

Further evidence occurs on cylinder seals and scarabs found in both Egypt and Israel-Palestine with similar depictions. Some of the depictions are clearly of Seth, some clearly of Ba’al, and some are combinations of the two. These iconographic sources confirm that there was indeed a diffusion of ideas between Egypt and the Syro-Palestinian area associated with a snake.

While this diffusion is only certain in a later time period, it is likely to have existed for some

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165. Day, God’s Conflict With the Dragon and the Sea, 62–75.
time before the iconography of the idea was created in significant enough numbers for us to find such remains. It surely existed before the creation of the artifacts we are discussing.  

Strikingly, in an Avaris Egyptian palace a cylinder seal has been found in which Ba’al Zephon is shown as Yam (the great snake of the sea) in the role of protecting sailors – exactly the same function that the snake of our tale seems to perform as he protects the shipwrecked sailor. This not only demonstrates a possible connection between the two figures, but it also shows that this Semitic idea was present in Egypt in the same time period that the Shipwrecked Sailor was composed. Since Asiatics were commonly employed as sailors at this time period their mythology could have easily been tied up with stories of sailing. This very well may explain why a Leviathan/Yam connection may have such a positive counterpart in the Shipwrecked Sailor: at least some Semitic people within Egypt identified Yam with protecting sailors just as the snake ended up caring for the sailor.

In addition, there are textual similarities between the Leviathan/Yam monster and the snake of our tale. Both snakes are of gigantic proportions. Also, the snake of The Shipwrecked Sailor apparently has the ability to breath out fire since he threatens the sailor with being reduced to ashes. The later Biblical Leviathan is described thus: ‘out of his mouth

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170. Familiarity with the gods of Byblos came as early as the Old Kingdom. See Siegfried H. Horn, “Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt,” 37. Horn believes that the Seth/Ba’al connection began with the Hyksos. As we have already seen, the Hyksos contact in the Delta area was firm quite some time before the end of the Middle Kingdom.
172. Bietak, “Center of Hyksos Rule,” Bietak examines iconography from the Old Kingdom on which shows Asiatic sailors and Asiatic crews.
173. The Ureaus serpent is reported to be able to breath out fire, along with other gods, and even the king. Again this element may have been employed in order to identify the snake with deity. But again, this does not preclude the idea that it is also similar to the Leviathan/Yam monster upon which the creature seems to have been based. In fact, all the more reason for the author to adopt this monster as his model, if it included an aspect which would help in an identification he was trying to create, an identification which he may have wanted to keep behind a thick veil. See Muhlestein, “The Shipwrecked Sailor.”
proceed flaming torches, sparks of fire escape. Out of his nostrils comes forth smoke, as from a heated and boiling cauldron. His breath kindles coals, and a flame comes forth from his mouth’ (Job 41:12-13). Another similarity is their association with the sea. The snake of the tale under study is connected to the sea via his dwelling on an island surrounded by water which will later turn into water. Furthermore, when the sailor met the snake he recounted ‘I heard a thundering noise and thought ‘It is a wave of the sea.’’ 174 Moreover, while the sailor was brought to the island by a wave of the sea, the snake informs him he was brought there by god, intimating that it was he, the god of the story, via his Yām-like control of the sea, that brought him there. 175 Leviathan is primarily a sea monster, and is associated with the great deep and rivers. The Yām version of this monster is obviously connected with the sea. 176 Likewise, Apophis is often found in the watery chaos during the journey of the sun barque. 177

These three similarities, size, sea and fire, lend some credence to a connection between the serpent of the Shipwrecked Sailor and the motif of Leviathan and Apophis. Furthermore, Gnirs believes that there are many elements of the Snake’s story which are similar to the Ba’al cycle. 178

Owing to the differing essence of their natures – the Snake of our tale representing order and the creator, and the Canaanite creatures representing chaos – the snakes do not seem to play the same role, though this is not true of the version of Yām that protected sailors.

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174. As noted above, thundering and shaking were associated with the approach of Egyptian deities in the Pyramid Texts, but the idea of it sounding like a wave of the sea is unique to our tale, thus enhancing the possibility of a connection with other sea creatures. If the identification with deity was the only desire behind such an approach, then the author would not have introduced this element which is clearly not associated with Egyptian deity, but clearly is with Yām and Leviathan.


176. Yām is, after all, the god of the Sea.


While as early as The Instructions For Merikare we find manifestations of Egyptian belief in a water monster, we also find images which suggest that the creator god could be associated with a great sea creature, and this association seems to most commonly manifest itself when combined with elements of Semitic culture. Even the antithetical associations may still be based on the same image of a gigantic, fantastic snake. This would make the snake a product of foreign influence. Redford has speculated that the snake sounds like serpents from the literature of India, or maybe even Arabic or Greek sources. While this literature is not contemporary, and its authors had less contact with Egypt, the Middle Kingdom author of our tale could easily have encountered fantastic serpents in literature from his contemporary Asiatic neighbors and incorporated the idea of a huge creature into his tale without accompanying that idea with the contextual images the snakes carried in the lending foreign cultures.

These connections with Levantine figures are not enough in themselves to even cause one to speculate about foreign influence, much less to drive one to a conclusion. Yet in the wake of other elements that tend towards Levantine practices, these connections fit further into the puzzle.

_Personal Relationships With Deity_

Another unusual trait of the story is the personal relationship the Sailor develops with the deity-like snake. The snake’s question ‘Who brought you?’, implies that the sailor could only have arrived with some kind of supernatural help. The sailor’s answer, ‘I was brought (ini.kwi) 

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to this island by a wave of the sea,’ indicates that, at least when he answers the snake, he felt he had been ‘brought’ to the island, as opposed to ending up there accidentally. The snake reinforces this by saying the sailor was brought there by a god. The snake cared for the sailor, as if he were one of his lost children. He comforted him, provided for him, and taught (page 224) him. He presented him with gifts, and refused gifts offered in return. All that he asked in return was that the sailor spread his name abroad, something that a personal devotee should do. The $p\text{-}h\text{-}n\text{tr}$ formula – perhaps the phrase which best encapsulates the personal relationship with deity of the New Kingdom, as one can summon deity in some way – is actually represented in The Shipwrecked Sailor, when the snake tells the sailor not to fear, since he had summoned ($p\text{-}h$) him. The textual presentation of personal relationships with deities of the type portrayed in the Shipwrecked Sailor would not appear for hundreds of years in Egypt, but were alive and thriving among her contemporary Asiatic neighbors, such as the relationship which Keret developed with El, or that shown in the Tale of Aqhat, both of which seem to have been composed not long after the Shipwrecked Sailor. For example, upon seeing Keret cry, El descends and asks him what is wrong and how he can help. He then provides that which Keret needs. Danel has a similar experience in the Tale of Aqhat.

Certainly many inhabitants of Egypt felt some type of a personal relationship with deity. But the decorum of presentation of relationships with deity during the Middle Kingdom seems

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183. He tells the officer that he was placed ($rdi.k\text{wi}$) on the island, and his wording when answering the snake may have been only to satisfy the snake’s question, though it may also be that the snake’s question itself taught him something of the nature of his arrival.
184. Gee, “The Earliest Example of the $p\text{-}h\text{-}n\text{tr}$?” 25–27.
185. ‘Baal and Yam,’ a Ugaritic myth in Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 83–89.
to shun this idea.\textsuperscript{188} Decorum dictated that in texts it was the king who had a relationship with deity; all others had a relationship through him. “Direct personal experience of deities is seldom a religious norm”\textsuperscript{189} in Middle Kingdom Egypt.

Ankhtifi displays a minimal amount of personal relationship with Horus in claiming he had led him to conquer Edfu, though this was probably inserted as a replacement for a royal decree in the justification of his actions.\textsuperscript{190} Even in the Tale of Sinuhe, when Sinuhe feels he has been directed by god, he has no direct relationship with him, he is not even sure which god he refers to. The herdsman in the Tale of the Herdsman has a very non-personal relationship with the (semi?) divine being he encounters, or at least in the portion of the tale we have. As Assmann has written, recognized personal relationships with deity ‘emerged,’ in the New Kingdom, and it was during this (page 225) time period that ‘the human ‘heart’ and individual history now made their appearance as a new dimension of experiencing divine presence . . . The divine was at work in the life of the individual, and the individual lived in direct contact with the divine.’\textsuperscript{191} Assmann may be simplifying the textual evidence, for we may be witnessing a change in decorum as much as anything.\textsuperscript{192} Yet we are discussing a literary text, and this text is unusual among its contemporaries in displaying a personal relationship with a divine being. The Shipwrecked Sailor may simply be displaying an extreme lurch in the same direction that Ankhtifi, Sinuhe, and the Herdsman were already going. Yet, the relationship portrayed in this tale demonstrates an affinity for literary traits similar to the Levant, and we must at least consider this possible explanation for this particular literary characteristic. As Baines has said, a literary

\textsuperscript{188} Baines, “Practical Religion and Piety,” 80.
\textsuperscript{189} Baines, “Society, Morality, and Religious Practice,” 172.
\textsuperscript{190} Baines, “Practical Religion and Piety,” 89.
novelty is either pure innovation, or is a departure from an already existing model. In the case of the Shipwrecked Sailor there are either several pure innovations, or they are (nearly?) all attributable to an existing model, in this case a model that existed in the Levant.

**Conclusion**

When examining the evidence for foreign influence, only the idea of repetition stands alone as very strong evidence for foreign influence within the tale. Taken together the elements of repetition, imaginary settings, Semitic iconographic connections, and personal relationships with deity form a strong argument for Asiatic influence. There is no other reasonable explanation that can account for the presence of all these elements in this story. As stated at the outset of this study, perhaps we are witnessing several unrelated literary aberrations in The Shipwrecked Sailor. Perhaps the author of the tale has merely taken several infantile literary movements from his culture and pushed them to an extreme that had not yet been seen nor would be seen again for a long time to come. Yet, when the hypothesis of foreign influence can account for all of these things in a unified explanation, that hypothesis seems more compelling than the idea of so many unrelated oddities.

Clearly we can see both opportunity for and evidence of Egyptians being intellectually influenced by the Levant. It seems that in the case (page 226) of The Shipwrecked Sailor, Asiatic elements may have been intentionally employed by the author. For many years the Tale of Sinuhe has been the only ‘literary’ evidence used to help us understand Egypt’s foreign

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191. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, 168. Baines, “Society, Morality, and Religious Practice,” 158, writes that in the case of personal piety ‘we are not dealing with a basic structure, but rather with a later development that intervened and altered the traditional structure.’


relations during the Middle Kingdom. We can now posit that the tale of The Shipwrecked Sailor may contribute equally. We do not learn of gift exchanges or political fugitives, but we learn of a potential Egyptian embrace of a foreign intellectual effort. If this hypothesis is correct, the Shipwrecked Sailor has shed a little more light through our portal of understanding Middle Kingdom foreign relations, and thus allows us to pilot our course of research just a little more accurately.

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194. It is impossible to determine the scale of this embrace, but the fact that just one of the elite was so influenced tells us something.
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