

annotation with grammatical information for each morpheme. This has been done in some articles in this encyclopedia, which constitutes a step forward.

To illustrate my point here one may mention the entry “possession”. It has a rather short section on the semantics of this grammatical feature. However, the treatment would probably have gained by recourse to works written within the communication-and-cognition perspective just mentioned, such as *Possessives in English: An Exploration in Cognitive Grammar*, by John R. Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), and the chapter “Reference point constructions”, in *Grammar and Conceptualization* by Ronald W. Langacker (pp 171–202; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999). The same could be said of the entry “Mood”; it would quite likely have received a more interesting treatment if books such as *Mood and Modality* by F. R. Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) had been consulted.

Lutz Edzard (University of Oslo) treats the relatively new Optimality theory, with connections to generative grammar, in connection to Arabic phonology—a laudable example of building bridges to other disciplines and enriching Arabic linguistics.

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Daphna Ben-Tor: *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections – Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period.* Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 27. Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007. 211 pp., 109 plates c. 12,7 x 9,4” / 32.3 x 24 cm. ISBN: 978-3-7278-1593-5.

Scarabs in this context are amulets in the shape of a dung beetle by the same name. Such amulets were manufactured in great numbers throughout the history of Ancient Egypt, and were produced in a wide range of sizes, shapes and materials. The scarab was a powerful symbol of rebirth and resurrection connected to the myths surrounding the rising of the sun at dawn, and occurs frequently in funerary contexts. The flat underside of the scarab was usually decorated with

individual designs, religious icons, and/or textual phrases, notably religious formula and names of kings or private individuals. Scarabs were therefore suitable as seals, and were in fact used as such by the state administration in the Middle Kingdom (c. 2040–1640 BCE, following conventional chronology). The double purpose of the scarab as religious charm and administrative tool makes perfect sense in the theocratic state of Egypt, where the affairs of the state were regarded as part of the divine mandate of the pharaoh, the son and earthly manifestation of the sun-god himself.

Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections by Daphna Ben-Tor is the latest contribution to the field of scarab typology, and is based on her doctoral dissertation, which she defended in 2006. Her source material consists of series of excavated and already published scarabs from Egyptian and Levantine deposits. The primary aim of the book is to establish “a reliable scarab typology of the first half of the second millennium BCE” (p. 2), as a much-needed tool for scholars working on the historic reconstruction of the Second Intermediate Period. In other words, neither the purpose nor the source material used in the book is new. Many attempts to make use of the scarabs of this period for dating purposes have been made, since other textual and archaeological sources are scarce. The time period in question is of particular interest since it coincides with era of the Hyksos, an enigmatic people of Levantine origin who migrated into Egypt during the late Middle Kingdom and assumed power in Lower Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period.

After much debate, these early scarab typologies were deemed inadequate for dating purposes in the 1990’s. A chronologic typology depends on a sequence of safely datable specimens to which others can be compared, and such a corpus proved impossible to establish due to the problematic nature of the source material. Due to its handy size and frequent use as seal in trade transactions, the scarab could travel great distances, and end up miles away from its place of origin. Furthermore, scarabs were often heirlooms passed on through generations, so even excavated scarabs could be difficult to date precisely.

The new typology offered by Ben-Tor is based on two important results of recent research, the first being the realization that the bulk of scarabs found in Levantine deposits were produced locally and

therefore should be considered apart from the Egyptian types. Secondly, recent pottery studies have resulted in typologies that make it possible to date the strata of a number of archaeological excavations in Egypt and the Levant precisely, thus giving an indication of the sequence of scarab series originating from the same sites.

An informative and well-written introduction places the book in its historical and academic context, and introduces the reader to the field of scarab research. Most importantly, the author describes the benefits of this research, especially its contribution to the study of chronology, history and culture in the Second Intermediate Period, and, as the title suggests, the interconnections between Egypt and Palestine in this period.

The four chapters are based on chronology and location. Chapters 1 and 2 are devoted to scarabs found in Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period respectively. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with scarabs found in early and late Middle Bronze Age deposits in Palestine. Each chapter is divided into two sections: introductory remarks regarding the various archaeological sites and problems connected to the dating of the various strata and finds, followed by the typology. A large part of the introduction is devoted to critique and discussion of the earlier typologies, and references to such and other relevant studies are frequent and numerous.

The typology sections are further divided in two. The first part gives the typology of the designs on the underside of the scarabs, the second the features of the scarab itself. In the typologies of designs all the types are listed, explained and supplied with frequent references to the numerous and well organized plates. In the typologies of features, however, the types are given primarily by reference to earlier works. This is in my mind a weakness of the typology that complicates its usage to non-experts.

The user-friendliness of the book is further diminished by the graphic design. The large format is well suited for the plates, but is not utilized well in the design of the text. The lines spread out across the broad pages, and are too long for comfortable reading. This problem could easily have been solved by the use of double text columns. The long strings of literature references bracketed within the text further complicate in-depth reading. Although this method of reference is true to form (Harvard), an alternative solution should be considered when

the disturbance of the text is as significant as it is here.

In the concluding chapter the author specifies the implications of her study to the understanding of the Hyksos culture and politics in the Second Intermediate Period. Most importantly, her study tips the scales in favour of a southern, Palestinian origin of the Hyksos centred on Tell el-'Ajjul, as opposed to a northern Levantine origin centred on Byblos. The latter view has been advocated among others by Manfred Bietak (pp. 187–189), who has spent several years excavating the Hyksos capital at Tell el-Dab' in the eastern delta. Another interesting observation made by Ben-Tor, is that her material seems to contradict the assumption that the Hyksos rulers also yielded power in Palestine.

My overall impression of the book is that it is very well researched, and an important contribution to the discussion of chronology and history in the Hyksos period. However, I am not so certain that it fulfils the author's primary aim of establishing a "reliable scarab typology" for the period in question. I do not question the reliability of the research, but rather the usability of the book to non-experts.

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Lidia Bettini: *Contes féminins de la Haute Jézireh syrienne. Matériaux ethno-linguistiques d'un parler nomade oriental.* Firenze: Dipartimento di Linguistica, Università di Firenze, 2006. (Quaderni di Semitistica, 26). X + 409 + 39 pp. ISBN 88-901340-7-0. ISSN 1724-8213.

This collection of Bedouin texts consists of 50 narratives recorded between 1982 and 2003 in the northeastern corner of Syria. Among all the major collections of Bedouin narratives, this work is unique in that the narrators are women. Up to the present, only a few narrative prose texts spoken by Bedouin women have been published; now for the first time we have a comprehensive corpus of them. It is a well-known fact that there are great differences between men's and women's stories as far as performance, motifs, and themes are concerned. As pointed out by H.M. El-Shamy