Claroscuro 16 (2017)

Revista del Centro de Estudios sobre Diversidad Cultural
Facultad de Humanidades y Artes
Universidad Nacional de Rosario
Rosario – Argentina
E-mail: claroscuro.cedcu@gmail.com

Título: Egyptian-Levantine cultural contacts: considerations about the iconography of female deities on the sealings from Avaris and cultural diversities

Autor(es): Chiara Reali

Fuente: *Claroscuro*, Año 16, Vol. 16 (Diciembre 2017), pp. 1-51.

Publicado por: Portal de publicaciones científicas y técnicas (PPCT) - Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica (CAYCIT) - Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)

URL: http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/claroscuro/

Egyptian-Levantine cultural contacts: considerations about the iconography of female deities on the sealings from Avaris and cultural diversities[*]

Contactos culturales egipcio-levantinos: consideraciones sobre la iconografía de las deidades femeninas en los sellos de Avaris y las diversidades culturales

Chiara Reali[**]

Resumen

En los últimos años, ha habido un creciente interés dentro de la egiptología en cuestiones teóricas relacionadas con la cultura material y la identidad. Este interés contribuyó a revisar los enfoques previos sobre el estudio de los contactos culturales en el antiguo Egipto. Categorías específicas de objetos pueden resultar más ventajosas que otras para la investigación sobre contactos culturales en un período determinado. Este es el caso de los escarabajos durante el Segundo Período Intermedio, ya que muestran características relacionadas con las tradiciones egipcia y levantina. La investigación hasta la fecha ha tendido a recolectar escarabajos enfocándose en posibles lugares de origen según sus características iconográficas. Este documento revisará trece impresiones de escarabajos recientemente encontradas en Avaris, que datan del Segundo Período Intermedio y que muestran la representación de una deidad femenina. Estas iconografías generalmente se atribuyen a una manufactura palestina. Los sellos de Avaris representan el grupo glíptico más grande que muestra las iconografías de la diosa fuera del Levante y se analizarán resaltando su mezcla de rasgos egipcios y levantinos y los puntos de contacto entre ambas culturas. Este análisis muestra el alto grado de integración entre culturas en Avaris, lo que sugiere que los resultados de esta mezcla cultural no siempre se pueden clasificar o atribuir a una cultura específica o a un lugar de origen.

[*] PhD candidate at the Institute for Egyptology of the University of Vienna with a doctoral research about the iconography and function of Late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate seals and sealings from the area R/III of Tell el-Dab ʿa. E-mail: reali.chi@gmail.com

[**] The topic of this contribution was presented in a reduced and earlier version at the 2014 *International Meeting* of the Society of Biblical Literature, Vienna 6th-10th July 2014.

REALI, Chiara (2017) "Egyptian-Levantine cultural contacts: considerations about the iconography of female deities on the sealings from Avaris and cultural diversities", *Claroscuro. Revista del Centro de Estudios sobre Diversidad Cultural* 16: 1-51.

Recibido: 15 de Julio de 2017 Aceptado: 01 de Octubre de 2017

Palabras Clave
Avaris – sellos – diseño de diosa – mezcla cultural – diversidad cultural

Abstract
In recent years, there has been an increasing interest within Egyptology in theoretical issues concerning material culture and identity. This interest gave input to review previous approaches to the study of cultural contacts in ancient Egypt. Specific object categories may result more advantageous than others for the research on cultural contacts of a given period. This is the case of scarabs during the Second Intermediate Period since they show features related to both Egyptian and Levantine traditions. The research to date has tended to collect scarabs focusing on possible places of origin according to their iconographic features. This paper will review thirteen newly excavated scarab seal impressions from Avaris, dating to the Second Intermediate Period and bearing the representation of a female deity. To these iconographies is usually ascribed a Palestinian manufacture. The sealings from Avaris represent the largest glyptic group displaying goddess' iconographies outside the Levant and they will be analysed highlighting their mixture of Egyptian and Levantine features and the points of contacts between both cultures. This analysis shows the high degree of integration between cultures at Avaris suggesting that the outcomes of this cultural entanglement cannot always be classified or attributed to one specific culture or place of origin.

Keywords
Avaris – sealings – Goddess design – cultural mixing – cultural diversity

1. Introduction

The cultural diversity is an inborn feature of ancient Egypt, although one of the most common clichés about it is the ostensibly unchanged aspect of its artistic manifestations[1]. Ancient Egyptians often called their homeland using the expression *Sm3 t3wy* –Sema tawy[2] containing a dual substantive and meaning "Unification of the two lands"[3]. These *two lands* – today named in English *Upper* and *Lower Egypt* are perceived in modern Egypt as two different geographical and cultural entities. In the antiquity,

[1] Against the view considering ancient Egypt as completely separated from the rest of the ancient world, see the introduction to the contribution entitled *Foreign Egypt* by Schneider 2003, taking stock of the *critical voices* against this view and of the different perspectives in the study of ancient Egypt in the 19th and 20th century AD.
[2] A further denomination of Egypt is *Kmt* – Kemet meaning "The black land", referring to fertile soil of the Nile Valley.
[3] *Sm3* sign F36 of the Gardiner's sign-list meaning "unification" and *t3wy* dual of sign N16 meaning "land", hence "the two lands" (Gardiner 1957: 465, 487).

like at the present time in Arabic, they were otherwise marked by two completely different names: *Šmᶜw* for Upper Egypt and *T3-mḥw* for the Delta region (Gardiner 1957: sign M26, 483 and M16, 481). Furthermore, in the myth about the emergence of the Egyptian *state* these entities are embodied by two diametrically opposed divine brothers: Horus/order and Seth/chaos (Assmann 1997). The concept of *alterity*/otherness/difference seems to be already contained in this original duality[4]. However, such dichotomy subsuming the ancient *Egyptianity* does not seem to be particularly affected by the concept of complete *extraneity*[5]. On the contrary, as Assmann points out, the mythomoteur of the Horus and Seth mythicised allegory has the aim to increase the collective *Egyptian* identity "towards integration" (Assmann 1997: 169). No part of this top-down given unity seems to be effectively *foreign*[6] for the inhabitant of the *Sm3 t3wy*. For her/him, according to the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing system, the alterity/otherness begins literally *forīs* – "out of doors": almost where the sandy hill-country  [7] out of the cultivated land is visible. This comb-like shaped hieroglyph was used as an ideogram representing a "sandy hill-country over the edge of green cultivation" or as a *classifier*[8] for terms

[4] On the concept of "other" in ancient Egypt, O' Connor comments that Egyptians *saw themselves, at least potentially, as 'the other'*, meaning that they had an extremely nuanced view of the whole mankind (O' Connor 2016: 164).

[5] Under specific conditions however, as during periods of inland rebellions, Lower and Upper Egypt might also have been labelled similarly to foreign lands and they might have been listed as well among the so-called *Nine Bows*. The Nine Bows were a variable list of nine toponyms or ethnonyms, which were considered antagonistic by the inhabitants of the Nile Valley. For the various possibilities on this list, see Uphill 1965/1966: 393-420 and O' Connor 2016: 155-156.

[6] The English adjective *foreign* comes from Old French *forain* "strange, foreign; outer, external, outdoor; remote, out-of-the-way", in turn proceeding from the Medieval Latin adjective *foranus* "on the outside, exterior", which derives from the Latin adverb *forīs* "outside," literally "out of doors" related to the Latin substantive *foris* "door" (Harper 2001-2017: term "*foreign*"; La piccola Treccani (1997): term "*straniero*", 719-720).

[7] All icons of the hieroglyph signs used in this contribution were made available by Rosmorduc 2014.

[8] In ancient Egyptian texts, *classifiers* – in the standard grammars known as "determinatives" and often defined with this term in the scientific literature (Goldwasser and Grinevald 2012: 18) – are all those *extra* morphemes containing information at a non-phonetic but iconographic level, which have a classifying purpose (Lincke and Kammerzel 2012: 55, 58) and have to be interpreted in relation to the lexemes they classify (Goldwasser and Grinevald 2012: 19) also called hosts (Lincke and Kammerzel 2012: 56-57). For the re-definition/-evaluation of "determinatives" into *classifiers*, see Goldwasser 1995; Goldwasser

indicating alien places like the *desert*, the *necropolis*, the *east* as well as for determining the toponyms of various foreign countries (Gardiner 1957: sign N25, 488). As a reflection of the *monumental discourse* (Assmann 1997: 170), the hieroglyphic writing system has to complete the assignment of eternalising the collective identity (Assmann 1997: 171)[9]. Therefore in the *Sm3 t3wy*, the perception of *extraneity* should have officially begun where the feeling of order[10] or control over the land and its inhabitants[11] disappears: practically somewhere out there, beyond the hills, outside the Nile Valley (O' Connor 2016).

The Egyptian Nile Valley is considered the archetype of civilization by its inhabitants (O' Connor 2016: 155) and the official depiction of foreigners – in the ancient Egyptian literature particularly rendered by royal and didactic texts – is markedly negative (Loprieno 1988: 21-34; Smith 2009: 221-223). The Egyptian literary stereotype of the foreigner[12] describes her/him as a poor human being, emaciated and lacking resources of fundamental necessity as well as ethical values (Loprieno 1988: 22-24[13]), a person with no faith in god and having destructive intentions (Loprieno 1988: 25[14] and 28[15]). From the point of view of the officially imparted Egyptian culture, the features recognised in the non-Egyptian people summarise traits of what Gumbrecht (Gumbrecht, ed. 1980) called un-

and Grinevald 2012; Lincke and Kammerzel 2012. For the need of a *systemic attention* to their meaning and translation, see Schneider 2011: 176-178.

[9] For a critique to Assmann's concept of "cultural memory", see Schneider 2003: 156, quoting also Schmidt 1997. Schmidt suggests using Peter Hejl's concept of "memory of the society" (Hejl 1991) as a more reasonable substitute for "cultural memory", since the first takes into account the social differences, moreover it is based on individual rather than on a generical "culture" (Schmidt 1997: 36-37).

[10] For the perceived borders of identity in ancient Egypt, see Assmann 1997.

[11] Control, which can be variously obtained: for instance, through widespread military presence, canalisation works etc.

[12] What Loprieno calls *foreigner topos* as counterposed to *foreigner mimesis* (Loprieno 1988).

[13] Loprieno 1988, quoting *The Instruction of Merikare*, a didactic text referring to a First Intermediate Period king but of possible Middle Kingdom date (ca. 2050-1800 BC). For the text composition critique, see Burkard 1977.

[14] Loprieno 1988, referring to the Qadesh poem §97, an account of the achievements of Ramses II during the battle of Qadesh against the Hittites (ca. 1275 BC) inscribed on the walls of the mayor temples of Upper Egypt during the New Kingdom.

[15] Loprieno 1988, quoting the inscription of queen Hatshepsut in the Speos Artemidos (ca. 1478–1457 BC). For this inscription, see Sethe 1906 and Allen 2002.

culture[16] (Loprieno 1988: 23), since these features broadly negate many *Egyptian* values[17]. In the Egyptian literature, the culturally different/the other seems to be considered as a spokesperson of an anti-culture, which is perceived as a symmetrical[18] and potentially unrivalled culture (Schulz-Buschhaus 1984: 11; Loprieno 1988: 23).

Nevertheless, apart from the representative literary world[19], the Egyptian approach to the cultural diversity emerging from further sources – such as the archaeological, or the written and the iconographical ones – seems to be more flexible than what described thus far[20] (Loprieno 1988;Smith 2009; O' Connor 2016: 159). Contacts of a different nature between Egypt and the neighbouring lands always existed (O' Connor 2016: 165-167) and it is now broadly accepted that cultural influences from outside supplied Egypt with a particular elasticity (Ray 1998: 10) enabling its population to learn, *incorporate and adapt from abroad* (Schneider 2003: 157).

2. What happens if what is "out of doors" is not so foreign anymore?

Foreigners in Egypt were considered part of the (to be) ordered cosmos (O' Connor 2016: 164[21]). According to some Middle Kingdom wisdom texts, the belonging to *mankind* was only assured by the fact of being Egyptian (Loprieno 1988: 29-30[22]). This belief seems to exclude from

[16] *Un-culture* and *anti-culture* traduce the German terms "Unkultur" and "Antikultur", which were used by Gumbrecht 1980 while examining the literature and society of a hardly comprehensible epoch: the Late Middle Ages (Schulz-Buschhaus 1984: 11).
[17] Or better said: negate those values, which were officially recognised to be distinctive for the Egyptian culture.
[18] Differently from what happens with the concept of un-culture. For the definition of *Unkultur* und *Antikultur*, see generally Gumbrecht 1980.
[19] According to some authors, the literary sources may also preserve traces of a less critical and negative view of foreigners (O' Connor 2016: 169).
[20] This more flexible view is what Loprieno defines *foreigner mimesis* (Loprieno 1988: 60-72): a fairer depiction of foreigners beyond the one of the official world (Smith 2009: 230).
[21] The myth of Maat-order and Isfet-chaos, which are the two original forces that originated the created world, comprehends in itself both positive and negative features of the world. For the relationship between this myth and the Egyptian vision of foreigners, see Loprieno 1988; Smith 2009; O' Connor 2016.
[22] For further comments to this assumption, see also Smith 2009: 224.

mankind what does not fall within the perceived identity boundaries of the Sema tawy (Assmann 1997:169). However, thanks to its cultural self-confidence (Ray 1998:10), Egypt appears to have succeeded in merging the incoming foreigners into its cultural dynamics (O' Connor 2016: 179). Attestations of foreign names as well as archaeological evidences, show that – mostly in the Late Period but in earlier stages as well[23] – communities of settlers flourished in Egypt and that the presence of foreigners along the Nile was a constant (Ray 1998: 10; O' Connor 2016: 179-180). Egyptians were used to foreign soldiers, emissaries, traders, settlers and they perceived the need of integration of this outlandish presence in their own culture. Foreigners were supposed to know Egyptian customs in order to share mankind with the rest of the population of the Sema tawy (Loprieno 1988: 30[24]), they obeyed the Egyptian pharaoh (Ray 1998: 10) and in some cases – such as in the city of Avaris – they reached such a high degree of integration that they were able to take over as a ruling force in part of Egypt (O' Connor 2016: 180). This phenomenon should not be seen unilaterally: these contacts did not merely result in the adoption by representatives of the foreign cultures gravitating around/in Egypt of the dominant host culture – a process known as *assimilation*[25]. In fact, even though official Egyptian texts flaunted the *Egyptianisation* of foreigners[26] never mentioning such a process the other way around, it is clear from other sources that also the native inhabitants of the Sema tawy underwent transformation phenomena, which have been often defined throughout older theoretical literature as *acculturation*[27]. The postcolonial approaches

[23] Before the Late Period, the presence of foreign settlers is indeed evident at Avaris, both during the Middle and the Late Bronze Age.
[24] As Loprieno states while analysing the semantic value of the Egyptian term for "man/human being", *rmṯ*, the human being is the one who knows Egyptian customs (Loprieno 1988: 30).
[25] For the concept of assimilation, see generally Gordon 1964; Johnston Ruth 1976; Stephenson 2000. For a critique, see Sanchez et al. 2014.
[26] Describing the Egyptian literary *topoi* for the representation of the assimilation phenomenon, Loprieno reports the hyperbolic and meaningful Egyptian statement: "sogar den Nubiern kann man ägyptisch beibringen…" (Loprieno 1988: 30).
[27] The concept of acculturation summarises the results of the contact between two cultures, which would consist in the change in one or in both cultures and in an increased similarity between them. The analysis and the definition of this process took place within North American anthropology in the first half of the 20th century (see, for instance, Redfield et al.

to cultural contacts have tried to go beyond the process-related diffusion model of *acculturation* referring to transfer models or to results-related terms (syncretism, creolization, pidginization, hybridity, etc.)[28] borrowed from diverse fields of study and referring to cultural mixture models[29]. This tendency in replacing terminologies gradually led to an increasing arbitrary use of those terms (Bader 2013: 258-259) and highlighted difficulties in the applicability of those concepts within archaeology (Schreiber 2013: 62). According to Schreiber, the acculturation concept is not acceptable mostly because the notion of *culture* behind it (i.e. homogeneous and consisting of cultural blocks related to a determined territory) is misleading (Schreiber 2013: 57). Culture is heterogeneous and *in fieri*, an open process continuously requiring compromises (Schreiber 2013: 54[30]). The acknowledgment of such compromises does not allow us to mirror one-to-one in our research the *bipolar model*" Egyptian/non-Egyptian" transmitted by the official ancient Egyptian texts and by the figurative art examples. The investigations taking place in Egyptology have indeed frequently been directed towards these two opposed dimensions (Loprieno 1988: 3-4)[31]. Recent works about archaeology and cultural contacts also started reviewing in the – longer reticent – field of Egyptology (Schneider 2003; Smith 2009[32]) notions like *acculturation*[33], *hybridity*[34] and *ethnic*

1936 and Kroeber 1948). For an historical research about this concept, see Schreiber 2013: 56 footnote 20 quoting, among others: Cusick 1998 and Gotter 2000.

[28] For a recent critical review of the concepts related to cultural contact theories, see Schreiber 2013. For an evaluation of the applicability of these concepts to ancient Egypt, see Bader 2013.

[29] For a recent review of the concepts related to cultural contacts and for the creation of specific models relevant to the study of material culture, see Schreiber 2013: 55-62.

[30] Schreiber defines his notion of culture (Schreiber 2013:51–52) adopting Andreas Wimmer's concept of *Kultur als Kompromiss* (Wimmer 1996: 413).

[31] There is a tendency within Egyptology to base many scientific debates on pairs of opposite concepts that Loprieno defines as a *bipolar model* (Loprieno 1988: 3).

[32] Expressing clear critical assessments about the holistic way of interpreting ancient Egypt and about the relationship between culture and ethnicity.

[33] For the concept of *acculturation*, see above and footnote 27.

[34] *Hybridity* is a recently widespread term, which is used to define those objects/phenomena, which cannot be easily attributed to one specific culture. For the debate about this term, see Bahbha 1994 and Stockhammer, ed. 2012. For the interpretation of *hybridity* as an artificial though necessary category and proposals for substitutive notions, see Stockhammer 2012 and Stockhammer 2013.

identity[35] introducing as less biased alternatives for these terms the ones of *cultural mixture*[36], *entanglement*[37] and *multiple identities*[38]. Latest researches (Bader 2013; Matić 2014; Matić 2015; Mourad 2015) have shown an increased interest in the theoretical and methodological issues concerning both material culture and group identity[39]. These studies are particularly meaningful to the present contribution, because they were addressed to the investigation of cultural aspects and features connected to the city of Avaris.

3. Avaris and cultural diversities in the Middle Bronze Age

The ancient city of Avaris – the remains of which are nowadays scattered around the site of Tell el-Dabʿa and the neighbouring villages – is situated in the eastern Nile Delta along the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. Avaris is well-known for having been the capital city of the Hyksos during the late Middle Bronze Age. The designation of Hyksos – *ḥḳ3-ḫ3swt* – contains the sign  for "sandy hill-country"[40]. It means "Rulers of the foreign countries" and it expressly indicates a line of rulers, which

[35] The idea of *ethnic identity* is mainly based on the presumption that an ethnic group is homogeneous and that the individuals, who recognise themselves in it share a set of beliefs supported by common traditions. For the discourse about archaeology, culture and ethnicity and for its critique, see respectively Jones 1997 and Smith 2009.
[36] The *cultural mixture* models highlight the heterogeneity underlying every culture (van Pelt 2013), having the advantage of overcoming dichotomic perspectives like the Egyptian/non-Egyptian one (Schreiber 2013: 59-61). For the difficulties connected to the application of these models within archaeology, see Schreiber 2013.
[37] The term *entanglement* has been proposed as a substitute for the one of hybridity to describe phenomena resulting from the prolific processes caused by *intercultural encounters* (Stockhammer 2013: 16). Stockhammer distinguished two different stages of entanglement between a given individual and a foreign object (Stockhammer 2013: 16-17), the *relational entanglement* (the object is integrated into local habits) and the *material entanglement* (the object is changed to be "adapted" to the local practices). For the entanglement between humans and things, see also Hodder 2012.
[38] The concept of *multiple identities* substitutes the one of single ethnic identity and reflects the dynamic and fluid individual identification process to one or more culture/s (MacSweeney 2009: 103; Sanchez et al. 2014: 143-144). This process is indeed situational and context-dependent and its results cannot be given or presumed *a priori* (Smith 2009: 230; Bader 2013: 259-260 also quoting Daim 1998; MacSweeney 2009 and Pohl 2010).
[39] Following the idea that identity is not purely *given*, but it is dynamically built starting from premises, which are mainly other than descent (MacSweeney 2009: 102-106), I avoid the term "ethnicity", considering it only as one of the many factors leading to group identity (MacSweeney 2009: 104).
[40] See above.

originated from population groups coming from the Levant who settled in the eastern Nile Delta in the late Middle Kingdom. These people started to proclaim their own rulers and the highly fragmented political situation of the period following the Middle Kingdom – known as the Second Intermediate Period – allowed them to establish an independent "kingdom" (Ryholt 1997[41]) quartered in the city of Avaris. The long-standing excavations of the Austrian Archaeological Institute[42] – Cairo Branch at Tell el-Dab ʿa[43] have revealed traces of settlement from the early Middle Kingdom when the site shared its material culture with other coeval sites in Egypt. By the layers corresponding to the late Middle Kingdom, the material culture of the site started showing elements, which had their origin both in Egypt and in the northern/southern Levant[44]. Bader has recently highlighted the problems connected to the interpretation of the material culture originating from the high degree of cultural mixing that is noticeable at Avaris during the Hyksos period[45] (Bader 2013). She underlines the difficulty of applying concepts like *hybridity* and *creolization* (Bader 2013: 277-280) to these objects and phenomena, which do not fall within already established categorisations (Bader 2013: 274) as *Egyptian* or *Levantine*. For describing the material products of cultural contacts at Avaris, she prefers concepts like *relational* and *material entanglement* (Stockhammer 2012; Stockhammer 2013[46]), proposing for the site of Tell el-Dab ʿa a *comprehensive material entanglement* involving many object classes (Bader 2013: 278).

[41] Ryholt analyses the political situation of the whole Second Intermediate Period (from the later 13th until the 17th dynasty) examining the available historical sources. He also proposes a chronology for this period and for the dynasties, which alternate along its approximate length of 250 years. His views are not uncontested and the debate about this historical period is still rather heated. For more recent discussions, see the contributions in Marée 2010 and Forstner-Müller and Moeller forthcoming.

[42] Hereinafter abbreviated as ÖAI.

[43] For a general overview of the excavated areas of the site until 1996, see Bietak 1996, for further bibliography *post* 1996 and updates until 2013, see http://www.auaris.at/html/index_en.html 2013.

[44] For a recent reassessment of the Hyksos, the origin of their power in the Delta and the relationships between Egypt and the Levant during the Second Intermediate Period, see Mourad 2015

[45] Corresponding to what is otherwise historically defined as the 15th dynasty.

[46] For the concept of *entanglement* between people and objects, Bader also quotes Antonaccio 2010: 39.

3.1. Scarabs and sealings from Avaris: entangled object categories

As Bader states, the object categories of scarabs and pottery are the classes of object, which are mostly affected by this entanglement at Avaris (Bader 2013: 277). Scarab production flourished in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom (Keel 1995a: 24). At this time the first exports of Egyptian scarabs to the Levant begin[47]. Scarabs became so popular on the other shore of the Mediterranean, that the manufacture of scarabs was apparently rapidly introduced into the Levant too (Ben-Tor 2007: 2). Between the end of the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period, numerous scarabs *from* the Levant – or at least scarabs showing iconographical details, which might have had their origin in Levantine traditions[48] – arrived in Egypt. During the Hyksos period, the local production of scarabs at Avaris showed characteristics, which were ascribable both to the Egyptian and to the Levantine iconography (Mlinar 2004: 122;Ben-Tor 2007: 186; Bader 2013: 273). The presence of scarabs (Mlinar 2001b; Mlinar 2004) and of their impressions on clay sealings at Tell el-Dab ʿa (Bietak 2004; Reali 2013;

[47] The Montet Jar group of 67 scarabs, which was uncovered by P. Montet at Byblos in 1922 is the earliest attestation of exported Egyptian scarabs in the Levant (Keel 1995a: 24-25; Ben-Tor 2003: 240).

[48] The actual provenience of the so-called *early* and *late Palestinian Series* of scarabs (denomination after Ben-Tor 2007) remains difficult to determine. Although the iconography of these scarabs speaks for Levantine influences (for this specific aspect of the topic, see references in Ben-Tor 2007: 2) and the early Palestinian Series examples are almost completely absent in Egypt (Ben-Tor 2007: 119), no Middle Bronze Age workshop has been found so far in the southern Levant (Keel 1995b: 102-103) and only a relatively reduced number of contextualised unfinished scarabs from this area is known (Keel 1995a: §58; Keel 1995b: 103). However, a similarly poor documentary situation about scarab production can be observed in Egypt from the Middle Kingdom until the New Kingdom (Keel 1995a: §60; Keel 1995b: 103-104; Ben-Tor 2007 : 5, 113;Mlinar 2004), although there is no doubt that scarabs were produced in Egypt in these periods. The only ascertained workshop in Egypt is the Late Period one found in Naukratis (Petrie 1886: Pl. XXXVII-XXXVIII), which was clearly devoted to mass-production and export (Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006: 5, 145). The question about the production of scarabs in the Levantine regions during this period is more complicated than it seems and the local or imported nature of the Middle Bronze Age scarabs found in Palestine has been object of discussions for almost a century (for a comprehensive evaluation of this debate, see Keel 1995a: §47-52; Keel 1995b: 101-102; Keel 2004: 75-77). It is possible that the currently available data are not enough to allow reliable conclusions on this theme, however more precise answers shall come from future analysis based not only on iconographical assessments but also on archaeological data hinting to the presence of workshops, i.e. workpieces, row materials, production wastes (Boschloos 2012: 181), as it was achieved by Boschloos for the Egyptian and Egyptianising scarabs uncovered in the northern Levant (Boschloos 2011-2012; Boschloos 2012).

Sartori 2009; Forstner-Müller and Reali forthcoming) shows both stages of the entanglement process proposed by Stockhammer (Stockhammer 2012; Stockhammer 2013) since it attests the use of *imported* scarabs within the local administration (relational entanglement) and the manufacture of scarabs *in loco* displaying a mixture of Egyptian and Levantine features (material entanglement).

3.2. Sealings from the area R/III: a source for the evaluation of cultural mixing at Avaris during the 15th dynasty

During the Tell el-Dab ʿa excavation seasons, which took place between 2010 and 2012[49], a large amount of sealings (approximately 1200[50]) was uncovered in area R/III close to the modern village of ʿEzbet Rushdi (Forstner-Müller, Jeuthe et al. 2015; Forstner-Müller and Rose 2013). The archaeological activities in this area brought to light a possible administrative complex situated in a settlement area with dwelling units, the establishment of which could be dated to the beginning of the 15th dynasty and its abandonment in the late Second Intermediate Period[51] (Forstner-Müller, Jeuthe et al. 2015).

The corpus of sealings uncovered in this area displays a broad spectrum of motifs and iconographies covering the entire time span of the settlement (end of the 13th/beginning of the 15th dynasty–end of the 15th dynasty). These sealings may show "pure"[52] Egyptian or Levantine designs but also heterogeneous solutions (Reali 2013). Beside the iconographical and decorative motifs, the sealings from R/III are also stamped using private-names seals of Egyptian officials of the 13thdynasty (Marée 2013) as

[49] During this period, three excavation campaigns took place in the area R/III under the direction of Irene Forstner-Müller (Head of the ÖAI – Cairo Branch).
[50] 470 of the 1200 sealings constitute the object of study of my doctoral research at the University of Vienna. These 470 sealings were uncovered in the western sector of the area and I analyse them both from an iconographical and from a functional point of view. Of the remaining 730 sealings proceeding from the eastern excavated sector of R/III, about 250 were already documented, while approximately 480 pieces remain to be studied. The material presented in this contribution hails from the whole of the documented sealings material of R/III.
[51] Approximately 1640-1530 BC.
[52] I refer to "purity" as an artificial analytical category serving for the definition of what falls between the "pure" taxonomic classificatory units (Stockhammer 2013: 12-13, 23), hence for the identification of phenomena of entanglement.

well as royal-name scarabs of Hyksos rulers (Forstner-Müller and Reali forthcoming; Reali 2013). In the process of searching and mapping iconographical parallels for the seal impressions left on the sealings found in R/III, similar motifs were found from the Egyptian fortresses in Nubia to the area north of Mount Carmel. Contrarily to the heterogeneity of these designs, the corpus of sealings from R/III shows a high degree of homogeneity concerning the clay used, which appears to be exclusively local Nile clay.

4. Representations of female deities on the sealings from R/III

Beyond the extraordinary potential of the net of cultural contacts highlighted by the sealings from R/III, a further intriguing feature of the material is the presence of seal impressions with the symbolic or iconic representation of female deities. These iconographies display variations in the appearances of goddess(es), which can be attributed both to the Egyptian or to the Levantine culture. The goddesses' ensemble from R/III can be divided into two main groups. This subdivision reflects the scarab seals background for this period (Ben-Tor 2007: 101) and corresponds to Tufnell's subclasses of the so-called *Goddess design* (Tufnell 1984), which are **a.** the "Hathor" symbol[53] and **b.** the nude standing goddess[54]. The first (**a.**) is a symbol having its origin in the Egyptian iconography (Ben-Tor 2007: 150) and being influenced by the representations of the Egyptian goddess Hathor[55]. It consists of a cow-eared female face[56] generally supplied with a set of two/three rounded features on the head, which is

[53] Other definitions alternatively used for this motif are *Hathor fetish*, *Hathor head*, *Hathor sistrum*. All these terms, together with the one of *Hathor symbol*, imply the identification of the represented female deity with Hathor. Against the use of these terms and for a more cautious and less prejudiced denomination (as Goddess head/symbol) see Schroer 1989: 139. In this contribution, I will follow the denomination used by Tufnell and Ben-Tor (Tufnell 1984; Ben-Tor 2007), hence referring to the motif as *"Hathor" head* with the name Hathor in quotes, hinting to the speculative character of the attribution.
[54] Respectively called Design Class 10D2 and 10D1 (Ben-Tor 2007: 101).
[55] The iconography of which was strongly influenced by the one of the earlier venerated goddess Bat (Pinch 1993: 135).
[56] For a typology of the different appearances of the "Hathor" symbol see, Schroer 1989; Keel 1995a; and Staubli 2007.

supported by a vertical element – possibly a neck[57]. The design class of the nude standing goddess (**b.**) is constituted by the frontal image of a nude female figure, the iconography of which is rooted in the Levant and has its sources of inspiration in the northern Levantine (Syrian) cylinder seals glyptic (Tufnell 1984: 138; Schroer 1989: 92-138; Ben-Tor 2007: 101, 149).Tell el-Dab ʿa and Tell el-Yahudiyeh – both located the Nile Delta – are so far the only two sites in Egypt/Nubia, in which examples of both subclasses have been uncovered (Ben-Tor 2007: 101)[58]. The divine beings *embodied* by these two iconographies were originally two separate goddesses, who were part of the religious background of two distinct group identities. However, the intense cultural contacts taking place during the Middle Bronze Age between the inhabitants of Egypt and the Levant, moved closer to each other not only people, but also their beliefs and their ways of translating them into a tangible form. At a certain stage, the worshippers of these two goddesses as well as the beliefs connected to them became so entangled that they influenced each other, melting the representations of their own goddess into the ones of the *others*. Therefore, a *Canaanite* derivation has been suggested for a particular variety of the "Hathor" symbol, which originated by the end of the late Middle Kingdom (Ben-Tor 2007: 102). This *modernised* version of the "Hathor" symbol is the most widespread iconography for this design class and it has been categorised in the specialised literature under the so-called *Palestinian Series* scarabs[59] (Ben-Tor 2007: 150). This updated variety of the "Hathor" symbol and the related interpretations will be discussed below.

[57] This vertical element has been variously defined: pole, beard, column, handle. Pinch, who wrote the first standard work about "Hathor" masks, defines it as "pole neck", interpreting the horizontal lines that in some cases fill its surface as necklaces (Pinch 1993: 138).
[58] Scarabs with the "Hathor" symbol have been also found in Upper Egyptian sites (see below footnote 69), however those sites have not supplied so far any example of nude standing goddess design.
[59] The Palestinian Series group together scarabs from Middle Bronze Age deposits in Palestine and are divided into early and late series, corresponding respectively to the early and late Middle Bronze Age. For a chronological frame of the Palestinian Series, see Ben-Tor 2007: 2, 19, 155.

Tell el-Dab ʿa is the site boasting the largest number of examples of the "Goddess" design classes in Egypt/Nubia[60]. To the five scarabs with a female deity found at Tell el-Dab ʿa and listed by Ben-Tor in 2007 (Ben-Tor 2007: 101) – four scarabs bearing the "Hathor" symbol (Mlinar 2001b: 198-199) and a single example (Mlinar 2001b: 200) attributable to the nude standing goddess category – we can now add more excavated examples from Avaris connected to these iconographies[61]. For area R/III, we are now able to enumerate sixteen additional examples of the "Hathor" symbol and five with the nude standing goddess, which are all attested on clay sealings[62]. After reviewing the main *behavioural* and iconographic features of the goddesses behind these two design classes, in the pages that follow I will present some of the newly excavated sealings from R/III with goddess designs, focusing attention on the points of cultural contacts and on the knots of the entanglement between design classes, goddesses and cultures.

5. Hathor and her representations

The earliest iconographical evidence connected to Hathor dates back to the Predynastic period (Allam 1963: 1; Tower Hollis 2015: 1145). Main centres consecrated to this goddess until the Middle Kingdom were located in Memphis, Cusae, Dendera, West-Thebes and in the Sinai[63]. Already in the Second Intermediate Period but mostly during the New Kingdom, votive offerings to Hathor were distributed over a vast area, which stretched itself from Nubia to the Levant (Pinch 1993)[64] and the advent of the New

[60] This is possibly also due to a prolonged excavation activity at Tell el-Dab ʿa in comparison to the one conducted at Tell el-Yahudiyeh.
[61] Since 2007, excavation campaigns in each of the following areas have been undertaken at Tell el-Dab ʿa: F/II, R/II, R/III, R/IV. Except in area R/II, a single season rescue excavation, all other areas have seen at least two excavation seasons. In each of these areas, were uncovered scarabs and large amounts of sealings, among which may be found further examples belonging to the "Goddess" design classes. For the excavation reports of the latest seasons in each area and for further references, see: Bietak et al. 2013; Müller 2013; Forstner-Müller, Jeuthe et al. 2015; Forstner-Müller, Hassler et al. 2015.
[62] No scarab engraved with these motifs was found in R/III.
[63] For the reconstruction on the base of funerary texts of the extension of Hathor's cult in Egypt until the end of the Middle Kingdom, see Allam 1963. Further cult places have been identified on the base of written and archaeological sources in Kom el-Hisn, Bubastis, Atfih, Tehne-Akoris, close to Assiut, Abydos, Gebelein and Assuan (Allam 1963: 90-99).
[64] Among the most famous sites, Timna, Serabit el-Khadim, Dendera, Deir el-Bahri, Gebel Zeit, Faras and Mirgissa (Pinch 1993).

Kingdom seems to have intensified the cult of this Egyptian goddess (Roberts 1995). The goddess Hathor, whose pretentious name *Ḥwt-Ḥr* – Hut-Hor "The House of Horus", is connected to one of the most important deities of the Egyptian *pantheon* – the sky and sun-god Horus – can be also considered a sky-goddess (Bleeker 1973: 25). This goddess can be portrayed in many dissimilar ways, which share a common basis: the relation to her main cosmic aspect. This aspect of the goddess is connected to the myth of the Divine Cow, who carries the god Re/Atum over the sky into the heaven, protecting him in the netherworld (Pinch 1993: 158). Hathor is frequently represented as a *cow goddess* with a sun disk between the horns and the *menat* necklace (Vischak 2001). A second representation of this goddess depicts her as a female figure with a headdress consisting of two cows' horns enclosing a sun disk with a hanging uraeus. The last and most widespread iconography of Hathor consists of a female face with cow's ears (Vischak 2001) and in some cases a scroll or a tripartite wig (Pinch 1993: 135-136). The last iconography distinguishes itself from the other two because of its frontality, which is uncommon for divine representations in Egypt (Schroer 1989: 197) and it is frequently adopted for the manufacture of votive objects related to Hathor – for instance the so-called *Hathor masks* (Pinch 1993: 135) – or for chiseling the capitals of columns (Phillips 2002).

5.1. The origin and the developments of the "Hathor" symbol

This third representation of the goddess inspired the iconography of the Middle and Late Bronze Age "Hathor" symbol appearing on scarabs and sealings (Pinch 1993: 151)[65]. Although the relationship between Hathor and the schematic cow-eared faces on pre-Middle Kingdom seals[66] and amulets seems to be acknowledged (Ben-Tor 2007: 33) it is reasonable to believe

[65] The Hathor masks, which consisted of the flattened representation of a cow-eared feminine face, were made of stone, clay or faience and were deposited as offerings in cult places dedicated to Hathor (Pinch 1993: 135-136) are conceivably directly connected to the iconography of the "Hathor" symbol.

[66] For a survey of the oldest attestations of the "Hathor" symbol in the Egyptian glyptic, see Schroer 1989: 146-153.

that the cow symbol represented on the First Intermediate Period stamp seals was connected to the earlier cow goddess Bat (Fischer 1962: 12-14; Schroer 1989: 139) and influenced the iconography of Hathor (Pinch 1993: 135), which adopted the symbol from the 12th dynasty – Middle Kingdom onwards (Ward 1978: 63, footnote 277; Wiese 1996: 107-111 and Pl. 1, 1-18; Ben-Tor 2007: 33, footnote 106). The cow-eared face representation of the First Intermediate Period[67] turned gradually more elaborate (Mlinar 2004: 119; Ben-Tor 2007: 33) on the early (Ward 1978:Pl. XI, 284-291) and late Middle Kingdom scarabs, when it was associated with multiple filling motifs (Mlinar 2004: 119; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 19, 19-27)[68]. As noticed above, an *updated* version of the "Hathor" symbol was introduced in the scarab repertoire at the end of the late Middle Kingdom/beginning of the Second Intermediate Period. According to two sets of data, this re-elaborated version of the "Hathor" symbol has been considered *non*-Egyptian (Schroer 1989: 197; Ben-Tor 2007: 102): firstly, because of the distribution of this motif, which is larger in the Levant than in Egypt/Nubia[69] (Ben-Tor 2007: 181) and secondarily, because of the variations undertaken on the late Middle Kingdom motif[70] (Ben-Tor 2007: 150), which show many similarities with the iconography of the Levant (Schroer 1989: 197).

5.2. The "Hathor" symbol and Avaris

After Schroer's research on the goddess representations on stamp seals from Palestine/Israel (1989) the evidence produced within the scarab research carried out thanks to the archaeological discoveries at Tell el-Dab ʿa (Mlinar 2001b; Mlinar 2004) led to the suggestion that the earliest example of the *modernised* iconography of the "Hathor" symbol was

[67] The examples presented by Wiese are mainly dated to the 6th dynasty and a couple of them date to the 7th-9th dynasties (Wiese 1996: motif group A. 1. *Hathor symbol* and A. 8. *Tanzende Götter und Hathor symbol*: Pl. 1, 7.
[68] For more elaborate examples of the late Middle Kingdom see, for instance, Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 19, 24-27.
[69] Beside the examples found at Tell el-Dab ʿa and at Tell el-Yahudiyeh, only very few scarabs displaying the "Hathor" symbol were uncovered in the rest of Egypt/Nubia, i.e. at Tell el-Maskhuta, Qau, Esna, Dakka, Semna and Ukma. For further bibliographical references, see Ben-Tor 2007: 33, 101.
[70] Introduction of vegetal elements, re-interpretation of the horns into leaves, adoption of the scroll hairstyle of Syrian/Levantine origin.

produced in the late Middle Kingdom scarab workshop of Avaris (Mlinar 2004: 119; Ben-Tor 2007: 101-102). A scarab showing a "Hathor" symbol was indeed found in a *Stratum E/3* tomb[71] at Tell el-Dab ʿa (early Middle Bronze IIB)[72]. The symbol represented on this scarab displayed an iconography, which was completely different from the late Middle Kingdom one (Mlinar 2001b: 199, TD no. 304; Mlinar 2001a: 217-225) and the manufacturing of the back and the legs of this scarab displayed features, which were ascribed by Mlinar to the early local scarab workshop identified by her at Avaris (Mlinar 2004: 117-118, Mlinar Type IIIa[73]). In the Palestinian Series the "Hathor" symbol is almost completely absent in the period corresponding to the Tell el-Dab ʿa *Stratum E/3* (early Second Intermediate Period) and it occurs only within the Group III of the Jericho tombs (Ben-Tor 2007: 101-102[74]), usually chronologically compared to *Stratum E/2* at Tell el-Dab ʿa (beginning of the 15th Dynasty). Consequently, it is possible that the new *look* of the "Hathor" symbol attributed to the scarab group of the Palestinian Series was first fashioned at Tell el-Dab ʿa, in *Egypt* (Ben-Tor 2007: 101-102).

The iconographic features of the Middle Kingdom series (Schroer 1989: 139-145; Ben-Tor 2007: 150) are missing on the sixteen "Hathor" symbol seal impressions from R/III[75] (**Fig. 1-8**) and in their place appear

[71] Area A/II, Square q/20, Tomb 1 (Mlinar 2004: 119). Referring to the yet unpublished dissertation of Forstner-Müller (2002) – which will be published in 2008 (see following footnote) – Mlinar writes: „On the basis of new investigations about the tombs of Area A/II Irene Forstner-Müller 2002 assigns this tomb to Str. E/2 at the earliest" (Mlinar 2004: 119, footnote 66).

[72] Forstner-Müller's published evaluation of the tombs of the area A/II (Forstner-Müller 2008) does not suggest a conclusive dating for this tomb, attributing it either to *Stratum E/3* or to *Stratum E/2* of Tell el-Dab ʿa, tending however rather to ascribe it to *Stratum E/3* than to *E/2* (Forstner-Müller 2008: 220).

[73] The first examples attributed to the Type IIIa first occur in Tell el-Dab ʿa *Stratum G* – two phases earlier than *Stratum E/3* – and are mostly widespread among Tell el-Dab ʿa *Stratum G* and *F* (Mlinar 2004: 116-120). Therefore, despite the slight uncertainty about the chronological attribution (see previous footnote) of the tomb in which it was found (Mlinar 2001a: 217-225; Forstner-Müller 2008: 220), the "Hathor" symbol scarab (TD no. 304) might be residual, i.e. earlier both than *Stratum E/3* and *E/2* (see also Ben-Tor 2007: 150 and footnote 720).

[74] For the lack of this motif prior to Group III/IV of the Jericho tombs, see Tufnell 1984: 138.

[75] Unfortunately, some sealings with the "Hathor" symbol found in R/III are extremely fragmentary and poorly readable. The eight examples presented here have been chosen because of their better state of preservation and for the presence of significant iconographic features.

characteristics, which are attributed to the late Palestinian Series (late Middle Bronze Age). The "Hathor" sealings from R/III show the central symbol – with almost rounded features on the head, interpreted as leaves/feathers – alternatively flanked by geometric patterns, floral elements, more or less accurately rendered hieroglyphs and *formulae* (Ben-Tor 2007: 181). Nevertheless, several of these new details/flanking elements can be expressions of the attributes of the Egyptian goddess "Hathor".

5.3. The "Hathor" symbol sealings from R/III and their connection to the character of Hathor

From the earliest stages of Hathor's *career*, her character showed many facets and contradictory aspects correlated to the spheres of love, hate and rage (Bleeker 1973[76]; Quirke 1992: 27-31). Her aspects include animals[77], vegetation[78], cosmic elements[79] and she is the patron goddess of minerals[80] and exotic goods from foreign lands[81]. In many cities of Egypt, she was entitled *nbt* – nebet (+Toponym), meaning "Mistress/Lady of (…)"[82]. In the course of time, her popularity extended outside Egypt also in connection to imported precious goods and she was worshipped in the Levant, in Nubia and in Punt[83].

5.3.1. The aspect of fertility

[76] Indeed Bleeker proposes to interpret the bifrontal mask representing this goddess as expression of this dual benevolent and destructive nature (Bleeker 1973: 61-62). This contradictory aspect of Hathor is particularly evident in the first part of the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*, known as myth of the "The destruction of Mankind". In this myth, the solar aspect of the goddess comes up beside the violent and furious ones. For the myth of the Heavenly Cow see, Hornung 1982.
[77] For instance, she was venerated in the form of cow and snake (Bleeker 1973: 30; Roberts 1995; Vischak 2001).
[78] She was represented as a sycamore tree (Quirke 1992: 50).
[79] Such as the sky and the sun (Bleeker 1973: 46-48).
[80] She was worshipped as the "Mistress of turquoise" in the turquoise quarry temple of Serabit el-Khadim, but also in the temple of the copper quarry of Timna and in the Sinai region (Valbelle and Bonnet 1996; Rothenberg and Bachmann 1988).
[81] Beyond the turquoise and the copper from Sinai, Hathor was indeed related to the cedar from Byblos as well as to the myrrh and incense from Punt (Ben-Tor et al. 2016).
[82] As, for instance, at Dendera, Cuasae, Faras, Djeser (Allam 1963; Pinch 1993: 29, 141, 148).
[83] In Byblos, she was worshipped as the "Mistress of Byblos" – the Ba'alat Gebal and in relationship to Punt she was entitled with the appellation of "Mistress of the incense" and "Mistress of Punt" (Bleeker 1973: 72-73).

Hathor governs the realms of love, sex and fertility: she is worshipped with the appellation of "Hand of Atum" – hinting to her sexual union with the demiurge god (Pinch 1993: 155[84]) – as well as "Nebet-Hetepet", which may mean "Lady of the Vulva" or "Lady of the Uterus" (Vandier 1966). This epithet is usually depicted as a naos in the shape of a sistrum – together with the *menat* necklace, a well-known sacred object to the goddess (Vischak 2001: 85)[85] – and this association recalls her tight relationship to the sphere of sensuality and to the world of dance and music (Pinch 1993: 155-158). Closely connected to the previous aspects, are the ones of fertility and birth. During the New Kingdom, when the offering of fertility figurines in community shrines became a popular custom[86], almost all of them were deposited in shrines dedicated to Hathor (Pinch 1993: 221-223). Hathor displays features connected to a sort of mother goddess (Pinch 1993: 216). She is in charge of the vegetal and animal realm but also of the mankind's procreation (Bleeker 1973: 40-42). In a later hymn recorded in the Temple of Medinet Habu she is said to be "the one who makes the plants germinate" (Bleeker 1973: 40). Her most famous hierophany in the vegetative world represents her as a tree goddess and in Memphis she received the epithet of "Lady of the southern Sycamore" (Allam 1963: 3; Quirke 1992: 50).

Some of the sealings from R/III show the association of the "Hathor" symbol with elements of the vegetal world. Although the introduction of vegetation in this motif is usually considered to be a Levantine *contribution* connected to the iconography of the nude goddess (Schroer 1989: 196; Keel 1995a: §579; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 28; Ben-Tor 2007: 150), plants are not completely unfamiliar to more archaic "Hathor" symbol representations[87]. Furthermore, the most typical vegetal element represented in association with the nude goddess – the branch (Schroer

[84]Pinch 1993 quoting Vandier 1966: 76-82.
[85] Both objects might have been used as rattles and were shaken by Hathor's priestesses during festivals and rituals (Vischak 2001: 85).
[86] However, already for the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period, fertility figurines, amulets and plaques have been found close to the shrine dedicated to Hathor for the mines of Gebel Zeit on the Red Sea (Pinch 1993: 71-77).
[87] See below.

1989: 97-100) is absent within the "Hathor"-related iconography from R/III and it appears on a single scarab with the "Hathor" symbol iconography from the southern Levant (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 105, 33). As usual for the *post* Middle Kingdom version of the "Hathor" symbol[88], generally rounded (Inv. Nrs. 9455N, 9457D[89], 9458S: **Fig. 1-3**) but also slightly edged (Inv. Nrs. 9448Q, 9448U[90], 9456F: **Fig. 4-6**) floral elements replace the previous cows' horns in all R/III examples preserving the upper part of the symbol. The recourse of leaves for the representation of the cow's head of the "Hathor" symbol is not completely new: the ears of the two horned human faces engraved on the upper part of the Narmer palette[91] are hatched as they were meant to recall the surface of leaves. Similarly, cow's ears in the form of vegetal elements are already visible on the earliest stamp seals[92] dated to the 6th dynasty (Schroer 1989: 147, 148, Abb. 061; Wiese 1996: 108; Pl. 1, 1). Vegetal elements flanking both sides of the "Hathor" symbol and departing from the central vertical element – the pole neck[93] –appear on two examples from R/III: in the form of a hatched leaf on Inv. Nr. 9445K (**Fig. 7**)[94] and as recurved elements on Inv. Nr. 9455N (**Fig. 1**). Similarly as for the floral elements on the head of the symbol, plants/leaves flanking the central motif are present already on some 6th dynasty examples (Schroer 1989: 148, Abb. 060-061; Wiese 1996: Pl. 1, 1-3). Papyrus stem/s appear also in the "Hathor's" compositions from R/III. Inv. Nrs. 9445K and 9455N show a papyrus plant on the top of the head: in the first case (Inv. Nr.

[88] For parallels see, Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 63, 29-31; Pl. 105, 30-45.
[89] The only example of "Hathor" symbol from R/III displaying two hatched floral elements on the head, the other examples show all plain elements.
[90] According to the slightly edged contour of the impressed seal, this impression seems to be the one of a cowroid rather than the one of a scarab.
[91]The interpretation of the Hathor-heads on the Narmer palette is controversial since, already in the Sixties, Fischer suggested that they might have represented the goddess Bat (Fischer 1962: 13; Tower Hollis 2015: 1145).
[92] Examples, which are still possibly more tightly connected to the goddess Bat than to Hathor (Wiese 1996: 107).
[93] To use the terminology adopted by the "Hathor" masks (Pinch 1993).
[94] Although the arrangement of the different iconographic elements on this sealing suggests a proximity to the "Hathor" symbol, the extreme schematic output of the details might hint at a pure decorative design with floral elements instead of a "Goddess" design for Inv. Nr. 9445K. Therefore, although with reservations, I will consider it within the "Hathor" symbol group. Similarly does Schroer with a not very different piece with schematic characteristics from Jericho (Schroer 1989: 142, no. 86) and Keel with a comparable example from Beit She'an (Keel 2010a: 132, no. 80).

9445K) the umbel is closed and the papyrus is set between two further stems[95]; on the second sealing (Inv. Nr. 9455N) the papyrus umbel has been schematically left open[96]. A third sealing from R/III (Inv. Nr. 9448U: **Fig. 5**) shows the papyrus plant on the side of the "Hathor" symbol together with other elements[97]. The papyrus plant is the symbol of the marshy Delta region and of Lower Egypt and Hathor, as a cow-goddess, represented the wild cows grazing in the marshes of the Delta (Bleeker 1973: 30-31). The images of Hathor masks columns or sistra reproduced on numerous votive stelae dedicated to Hathor, are frequently flanked by papyrus plants (Pinch 1993: 156)[98]. Furthermore, the zigzagging linear element below the composition of Inv. Nr. 9448U (unfortunately not wholly preserved[99]) might not be a mere filling motif but the hieroglyph (Gardiner 1957: sign N35) phoneme *n*, the meaning of which in its plural form is "water" and hinting here to the marshes of the Delta.

5.3.2. The funerary aspect

As a contradictory divine figure, Hathor was not only linked to the concept of birth, but also to its opposite: the one of death (Bleeker 1973: 42-45). Already from the Old Kingdom she received in Thebes the epithet of "Mistress of the West" or "Mistress of the Western Mountain" – the realm of death (Bleeker 1973: 43). There the sun god Re died every night and Hathor as a cow-goddess protected him in his journey beyond the western horizon to let him be reborn the day after (Bleeker 1973: 30; Quirke 1992:

95 The shape of the left stem – wholly preserved – seems to be different from the one of the central one. However, instead of representing two different plant species, the three stems might be a very schematic representation of a papyrus plant with three umbels.
96 As in one example from Tell el-Ajjul (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 106, 2).
97 Two examples from Jericho and Tell el-Ajjul show "Hathor" symbols composition with a papyrus plant with three umbels (respectively Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 105, 29 and 46).
98 For the combination of papyrus plant and Hathor masks on architectural elements and votive/everyday life objects, see Pinch 1993: 136-137, 156.
99 The first seal impression left on Inv. Nr. 9448U was over stamped by a second impression left by the same cowroid. The right part or the motif is over stamped in the case of the first impression, while it is lost because of the fragmentary nature of the sealing by the second impression.

107; Pinch 1993: 156-157; Vischak 2001:82). The connection to the underworld and to the concept of rebirth might be suggested by the flanking elements of three seal impressions from R/III. The first sealing (Inv. Nr. 9456F: **Fig. 6**) – preserving only the upper part of the "Hathor" symbol– shows the  *ḏd* – Djed-column (Gardiner 1957: sign R11, 502) between the floral motifs of the head. The Djed-column is a well-known hieroglyph in ancient Egypt connected to the realm of death (Gardiner 1957: 502). Its sphere of significance concerns "stability" and "endurance (of power)" (Gardiner 1957: 502) and the Book of the Dead refers to a golden Djed-column as the backbone of Osiris – the Egyptian god of the netherworld (Hart 1986: 161). This symbol played an important role during the *ḥb-sd* –"Sed festivals", the rituals through which the pharaoh celebrated its royal jubilee (Uphill 1965: 380). The neat contour lines of the "Hathor" symbol represented on Inv. Nr. 9456F, the schematic composition, the unusual way of rendering the facial features (big and rounded eyes instead of the commonly used little dashes for the indicating eyes and mouth[100]) and especially the lack of parallels for this iconography, might advocate for a local product of the later workshop of Avaris (corresponding to the examples listed under Mlinar's TD-Type VI[101]). A second "Hathor" symbol with a Djed-column appears on Inv. Nr. 9448Q (**Fig. 4**). The seal impression of Inv. Nr. 9448Q is very damaged, preserving exclusively part of the upper half of the motif, where is possible to recognise only the floral elements of the head framing the Djed-column[102]. The different shape of the floral elements of the head for Inv. Nrs. 9448Q and 9456F advocates for the use of two different scarabs: hence for the existence at R/III of two different examples of an otherwise unparalleled iconography of the "Hathor" symbol[103]. This detail might support the speculation concerning the creation of this iconography in a local workshop. A second though weaker

[100] Schroer 1989, 140. See, for instance, Schroer 1989: 141-143.
[101] For a detailed analysis of the scarabs ascribed by Mlinar to this type, see Mlinar 2004: 129-134.
[102] The Djed-column is missing its uppermost part, however the lowest of the horizontal elements constituting its upper part is still partly identifiable.
[103] "Hathor" symbol associated with the Djed column.

connection of the "Hathor" symbols from R/III to the realm of death and rebirth might be the presence on Inv. Nr. 9457D (**Fig. 2**) of  *ʿnḫ* (Gardiner 1957: sign S34, 508): used as a phoneme or in combination with other signs for the word "life". The *ʿnḫ* sign on Inv. Nr. 9457D is not one of these misrendered hieroglyphics, which often occur on Palestinian Series scarabs (Ben-Tor 2007: 78, 122) – however the presence of a  phoneme *ʿ* (Gardiner 1957: sign D36, 454), frequently used as a filling element on many iconographies of the Palestinian Series[104], might question the real meaning of these two flanking elements.

5.3.3. Hathor as "House of Horus"

Hathor's name *Ḥwt-Ḥr*, literally meaning "House of Horus", might be broadly interpreted as "Womb of Horus"(Sethe 1930: 67; Bleeker 1973: 25; Troy 1986: 21, 55). By virtue of this connection with Horus, she fulfills not only the role of mother-daughter but also the one of consort of the sky-god (Troy 1986: 53-54). This aspect of the goddess, links her directly to the person of the pharaoh (Bleeker 1973: 51) – personification on earth of the god Horus – setting Hathor in a central position in the royal Egyptian ideology (Troy 1986: 53). The connection of Hathor to the Egyptian kingship seems to have been already established in the earliest stages of the Egyptian history, when two horned feminine cow's heads appear on the Narmer palette enclosing the name of the king (Troy 1986: 54)[105]. The king participates actively in Hathor's cult (Troy 1986: 56-57) and *vice versa* Hathor supports him during important rituals and celebrations like the *ḥb-sd* (Bleeker 1973: 53). Three sealings from R/III possibly hint to the connection between this goddess and the kingship. The first (Inv. Nr. 9447D: **Fig. 8**) preserves only the lower part, its surface is corrupted from

[104] See, for instance, an example from Tell el-Far ʾah North, where the "Hathor" symbol is flanked by *ʿnḫ, rʿ* and *nrʿ* signs (Keel 2010b: 8-9, no. 14).
[105] Beyond the controversial interpretation of the horned and cow-eared (see above footnote 91), if the goddess involved in these early stage representations of cow-eared beings was Bat (see intra and Fischer 1962), Hathor seems to have inherited from her not only her iconography but also her connection to royalty.

the ears of the "Hathor" symbol upwards and it displays only a striped trapezoidal pole neck with the insert of the head and the left cow's ear. The left side of the sealing shows the shape of an addorsed hatched uraeus wearing a red crown. The tail of the cobra slips below the neck pole to build a symmetric uraeus figure on the other side of the "Hathor" symbol, unfortunately lost. A similar iconography has been identified on a coeval scarab found at Tell el-Ajjul (Schroer 1989: 142, no. 82; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 105, 46). The uraeus is tightly connected to the Egyptian royalty since it was considered to be protecting the kingship (Hansen 2001). Beside two addorsed and linked cobras[106], a further connection to royalty on this sealing is offered by the red crowns on the head of the uraei, symbols of the kingship of Lower Egypt. An example from the University College collection shows a close composition with two similarly crowned uraei (Schroer 1989: 149-150, 151, Abb. 086). The association of the "Hathor" symbol with both uraei and red crowns is already visible on earlier examples of the Egyptian glyptic. Addorsed uraei flank the goddess symbol on a cylinder seal dated to the 6th or 7th dynasty and on several stamp seals of the 6th dynasty (Schroer 1989, 147-148, Abb. 059-062, 068; Wiese 1996, 107-111; Pl. 1, 1-6, 12-14). However, the connection between the uraeus and the "Hathor" symbol does not seem to enjoy widespread appeal during the Middle Bronze Age, re-emerging only by the goddess' scarab production of the Late Bronze Age (Schroer 1989: 143-144, no. 97-110, 121). On the other side, red crowns associated with the "Hathor" symbol are represented on a pre 12th dynasty scarab seal from Harageh (Schroer 1989: 147–149, Abb. 070; Wiese 1996:56, Pl. XI, 285). The flanking motif of two further examples from R/III (Inv. Nrs. 9448U and 9458S: **Fig. 3** and **5**) refers possibly to the royal aspect of the goddess. This motif consists of a single vertical element with a curved upper extremity that might be interpreted as a mere plant stem. However it seems to differ from other floral flanking elements associated to the "Hathor" symbol and I would like to speculate about the possibility that

[106] Design class 3B1b. This motif occurs mainly on scarabs of the Palestinian Series however it was very likely inspired by late Middle Kingdom prototypes (Ben-Tor 2007: 128).

this element represents the crook displayed by the hieroglyph  for indicating the *ḥḳ(3)t* sceptre (Gardiner 1957: sign S38, 508). The verb *ḥḳ(3)* means "rule" (Gardiner 1957: 508) and the correspondent sign is part of the Egyptian royal insignia (Frankfort 1948: 87-89). The *ḥḳ(3)t* scepter is also closely related to the main titulary chosen by the *ḥḳ3-ḫ3swt* – "Rulers of the foreign countries" settled at Avaris. In connection to royalty, the presence of papyrus plants beside the "Hathor" symbol might also symbolise the relationship between the goddess and the king. The custom of offering papyrus plants and sistra to Hathor is indeed related to the myth of Chemmis, where she protects Horus in the papyrus thicket of Chemmis (Pinch 1993: 156[107]).

6. The nude standing goddess

The numerous appearances of the nude goddess in the glyptic of the ancient Near East from the 3rd to the 1st millennium BC were thoroughly studied by Winter (Winter 1983). A section of his work was dedicated to the presence of the nude goddess on *Hyksos scarabs* (Winter 1983: 176-181). In 1989 Schroer published her comprehensive study about the goddess represented on the stamp seals from Palestine/Israel, to which I abundantly referred above (Schroer 1989). Thanks to these studies, by the end of the Eighties three important facts about this topic were clear. Firstly, that the *nude woman*, who frequently made her appearance in Near Eastern art during the Bronze and Iron Age was a goddess rather than a musician or a priestess[108] (Winter 1983: 193), secondly that she had a western or – more precisely – a Syrian, origin (Winter 1983: 193) and finally that the iconography of the Syrian nude goddess was the main source of inspiration for the nude goddess appearing on the stamp seals of the Middle and Late

[107] For the myth of Chemmis see Gutbub 1962: 54-55 and Giveon 1978: 108-109.
[108] As suggested by Frankfort 1939: 160. For the debate about mortality or immortality of this figure, see also Budin 2015.

Bronze Age found in the Levant and in Egypt (Schroer 1989: 93, 11; Ben-Tor 2007: 101).

6.1. Representations and character of the Syriannude standing goddess

The nude standing goddess makes her first appearance among cylinder seal impressions on the clay tablets of Kanesh in Cappadocia: her earliest attestations are dated to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC and they belong to the so-called *Syro-Cappadocian* glyptic group (Winter 1983: 142-143). This motif – initially isolated within the composition – develops extensively in the Syrian glyptic spreading also to Mesopotamia (Winter 1983: Abb. 68), where it received its main acceptance in the marginal zones of Babylonia (Winter 1983: 93-94). In the old-Syrian glyptic composition the nude goddess may appear both as a secondary or as a main subject (Winter 1983: 194). Her body is generally represented frontally while her head from a side perspective, showing an elaborated hairstyle. Her feet are directed towards the same direction of the head and the goddess may alternatively keep her arms on her breast, along her body, raise them or hold with them an object (Schroer 1989: 94). The nude goddess was not among the principal deities of the Near Eastern[109] *pantheon*. Certainly also because of her subordinate role, no exact identification with a specific deity has been possible (Winter 1983: 194-195). Winter suggests that the main aspect of the Syrian nude goddess was the one of mediation and that this is mainly true for the iconographies representing the goddess unaccompanied, like the ones on the scarab seals in the southern Levant[110] (Winter 1983: 197). Despite her modern anonymity, the nude goddess appears to have been a powerful divine being, who interceded for her believers in the presence of more prominent goddess/es (Winter 1983: 197).

[109] Both Levantine and Mesopotamian (Winter 1983: 195).
[110] To which Winter dedicates a brief section in his Chapter II B (Winter 1983: 176-181).

6.2. The nude standing goddess in the southern Levant

During the Middle Bronze Age, the nude standing goddess becomes a very popular motif within the scarab seal glyptic of the southern Levant (Keel 1995a: §574; Ben-Tor 2007: 149, 181). The earliest example is preserved on a cowroid from an early Middle Bronze Age tomb in the south-western cemetery[111] of Beit Shemesh (Keel 2010a: 252-253, no. 81). According to the material, the engraving technique and the style, Keel ascribed the cowroid to an early group of Palestinian Series scarabs, the so-called *Omega-group*[112] (Keel et al. 1989: 39-87). The figure represented on it shows many similarities with the Syrian nude goddess and it attests the entrance of this motif in the iconography of the southern Levant (Schroer 1989: 96). There, the incidence of the nude standing goddess motive increases after the early Middle Bronze Age, becoming one of the most characteristic feature of the later Palestinian scarab series (Ben-Tor 2007: 149).

6.3. The nude standing goddess at Avaris

At the time of Schroer's publication, not a single example[113] of the nude standing goddess had then been found at Tell el-Dab ʿa. In 1989, the only scarabs with this motif, which had been found in Egypt were two pieces (Schroer 1989: 108, 111 and 99, no. 33, 39) uncovered by Petrie in his excavations at the beginning of the 20th century at Tell el-Yahudiyeh (Petrie 1906: Pl. IX, 137-138). In 2007 Ben-Tor mentions in her corpus a further scarab uncovered in the meantime at Tell el-Dab ʿa (Ben-Tor 2007: 101; Mlinar 2001b: 200, TD no. 1073). Compared to the larger amount of parallels bearing this motif in the Levant – over forty scarabs[114] (Schroer 1989: 97-100) – such a reduced number of examples from Egypt, as well as their exclusive distribution in the Delta region suggested its scarce relevance in Egypt and the Levantine manufacture of all uncovered

[111] Tomb 13, situated in the western sector of the city (Keel 2010a: 252, no. 81).
[112] This group shows pieces, which were made exclusively of faience and worked in raised relief (Keel 1995a: §55).
[113] Neither on scarabs nor on sealings.
[114] Both from excavations and from the antiquities market (Ben-Tor 2007: 181).

examples (Ben-Tor 2007: 101, 181). In contrast to the "Hathor" symbol, the single scarab with a nude standing goddess found at Tell el-Dab ʿa in an unclear context[115] did not allow one to speculate about a possible local production for this motif.

6.4. The nude standing goddess sealings from R/III

The sealing material from area R/III raises to seven the number of the nude goddess examples found on Egyptian ground and confirms the distribution of this design in the Delta. Five newly excavated examples were identified among the sealings from R/III (**Fig. 9-13**), showing further variations on the nude goddess iconography. Winter has already acknowledged the impossibility of identifying the Syrian nude goddess with a specific divinity (Winter 1983: 194-195). This must be true also for her southern Levantine *sister*. Nevertheless, her iconography may help highlighting some of the aspects attributed to this deity. The nude standing goddess examples from R/III may be divided into three different groups, which fit only partially into the systematisation of this design class as defined by Schroer, allowing one to suggest further manifestations of cultural mixing at Avaris.

6.4.1. The nude standing goddess with branches, long hair and flanking elements

This motif appears on a single sealing from R/III (Inv. Nr. 9453J: **Fig. 9**). It consists of the frontal representation of a nude goddess looking left and showing her head from a side perspective. She stands with joined legs and open feet on a 𓊨 *nb* symbol (Gardiner 1957: sign V30, 525) and her pubic region is outlined by a triangle. The goddess has long hair descending to her shoulders, her eyes are indicated by a horizontal line and

[115] The scarab was found by the local farmers while excavating a canal not far from the dig house (Mlinar 2001a: 617).

she holds a branch in each hand[116]. She is flanked on her right side by a  *nfr* (Gardiner 1957: sign F35, 465) and on her left side by a further rounded sign, which might be interpreted as a ⊙ *rᶜ* sun disk (Gardiner 1957: sign N5, 485). No perfect matches for this composition exist, the most similar parallel is a scarab from Tell el-Ajjul (Schroer 1989: 101, 97, no. 2; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 105, 8) where a standing goddess with the same hairstyle is framed by a cobra, a *nfr* and a possible *rᶜ* (Schroer 1989: 101)[117]. The presence of flanking elements with clear Egyptian origin and the *look* of the goddess of Inv. Nr. 9453J are perfectly comparable to the scarab from Tell el-Ajjul, however the sealing from R/III shows the divine figure not simply standing but in the act of holding branches[118], recalling the so-called *goddess holding the branches* (Schroer 1989: 102-103, 97, no. 6). Inv. Nr. 9453J seems therefore to result from a cultural mixture. The posture of the legs and the presence of a pedestal recall the old-Babylonian and provincial Babylonian representations of the nude goddess[119] (Schroer 1989: 94). The presence of movement – i.e. arms stretched holding a branch – recalls the more interactive attitudes of the nude goddess from the old-Syrian glyptic (Winter 1983: 194; Schroer 1989: 94). The representation of the branches constitutes a link to the nude goddess examples from the scarabs of the Middle Bronze Age southern Levant, where the majority displays the goddess in association with branches[120]. Finally, the pedestal in the shape of

[116]However, the presence of a branch in her left hand is only detectable in the lower part of the impression, where the transversal segments are still partly preserved. The upper part of the impression of the left branch has been indeed heavily altered as the clay was still moist, possibly while removing the scarab base from the surface of the sealed clay lump.
[117] Schroer, compares this composition with the earliest southern Levantine example of the nude goddess, the one from Beit Shemesh discussed above (Schroer 1989: 101).
[118] Cornelius (Cornelius 2004) suggests that the Middle Kingdom nude goddess holding plants might be the ancestor of the goddess Qadesh, who was venerated in Egypt in the Ramesside period and was represented as standing on animals and holding objects (Cornelius 2004). However, there is no scholarly consensus about Cornelius' suggestion: Keel and Uehlinger, for instance, consider this iconography within the variation of the group of the Middle Bronze Age plant goddesses (Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 30; Cornelius 2004: 57 quoting Keel and Uehlinger 1998).
[119] See, for instance the representations of the nude goddess in Winter 1983: Abb. 83, 85, 87, 90, 94 and 95.
[120] See, for instance, the nude goddess iconographies in Schroer 1989: 97-99.

a *nb* sign (hieroglyphic meaning "lord" in its masculine form[121]) might be an Egyptian way of defining the goddess as *nbt* "Mistress/lady (of…)"[122]. Similarly, the two hieroglyphs used as flanking elements, might hint to the beauty (*nfr*)[123] of the goddess and to her cosmic aspect, subsumed by her relationship with *rᶜ*, the sun god. Despite the non-exclusive use of these three hieroglyphs in association with the representation of female deities, they might have been chosen to express specific features[124], which appear to be meaningful in relation to both goddesses[125].

6.4.2. The nude standing Syrian goddess between branches

Similarly to the previous one, the second nude goddess motif from R/III appears on a single sealing (Inv. Nr. 9461D: **Fig. 10**). The nude standing *Syrian* goddess between branches is a widespread goddess iconography in the southern Levant (Schroer 1989: 97-98, no. 9-16). In it, the inheritance of the Syrian glyptic can be seen by the frontal pose of the body and the side perspective of the head (Schroer 1989: 109). The goddess is sometimes placed on a *nb*-sign pedestal[126] and she is always represented standing with joined legs and open feet between two branches (Schroer

[121] Gardiner 1957: 525.
[122] For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that, on figurative design scarabs of the late Palestinian Series, the *nb* sign is also set below standing or kneeling masculine figures as well as below pairs of (masculine/feminine) figures (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 102-105) and – although extremely rarely – below specific animals as cobras (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 97, 12-13, 19, 24, 26-30; Pl. 98, 30), hawks (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 98, 11-12, 21) and lions (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 100, 2, 28; Pl. 101, 3). Furthermore, in the Palestinian Series, the *nb* sign appears below symmetric designs of hieroglyphs of the Design Class 3B2 (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 78, 9,13, 20-23, 26-27, 29) and it might have been simply inspired by the lower border of similar Middle Kingdom Egyptian Design Class 3 examples (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 7, 42-43, 46-54). Nevertheless, the human figures above the *nb* sign as well as the selection of represented animals (see, for instance, Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 99, 17-18, 31; Pl. 103, 14-16, 26-28, 30-34, 42-43; Pl. 104, 5-8, 28 for the human figures and Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 97, 12-13, 28-29; Pl. 98, 11-12; Pl. 110, 28 for the animals) seem to recall the spheres of royalty and victory and similarly do the *nsw-bit* "King of Upper and Lower Egypt" hieroglyphs along with the so-called *neferzeichen* – blessing hieroglyphs connected to the royal power (Stock 1942: 15-17; Ben-Tor 2007: 14), which appear in association with the *nb* sign in the Design Class 3B2.
[123] The *nfr* sign is however commonly used also in association with further figurative design scarabs of the late Palestinian Series (see, for instance, Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 102, 10, 13, 15, 18-19, 31, 38) similarly to other hieroglyphs (as the *ʿnḫ*, for example: Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 102: 29, 39, 42, 44).
[124] "Mistress/Lady (of…)", beauty and cosmic aspect.
[125] For the relationship between Hathor and the nude goddess, see also Budin 2015: 332.
[126] For the origin of the pedestal, see *infra*.

1989: 109-110). The connection ascertained by Keel (Keel 1992: 156-173; Schroer 1989: 104) between these branches – or other vegetal elements in use – and the woman genitalia suggests that the branches express the fertility aspect of the goddess and her vital power**.** This motif is attested once at R/III and it is displayed by two fragmentary impressions left by the same scarab on a single sealing (Inv. Nr. 9461D). Despite the fragmentary nature of the sealing, the nude standing goddess can be recognised standing on a *nb*-sign pedestal, with both arms along the body and flanked by two branches. Her pubic region is outlined by a triangle and her head is lost, but the asymmetrical lines departing from the chin hint at the profile. The best parallel for Inv. Nr. 9461D from the excavated series is a scarab from Tell el-Far ʾah South (Schroer 1989: 97, no. 11)[127]. Beyond the *nb*-sign pedestal, the modest attitude of the goddess, whose arms peacefully flank her body in a sort of unworldly immobility, might constitute a further reference to the Egyptian iconography, as suggested by Winter (Winter 1983: 122)[128]. He defines this posture of the arms as *neutral* attitude[129] and he additionally hypothesis that the diffusion of this gesture in the iconography of the Near East might have received a stimulus during the Hyksos period (Winter 1983: 122, 168 footnote 404).

6.4.3. The minimalist nude standing goddess with large ears

This variation on the theme is the numerically best represented one in R/III with three examples[130]. However, against all expectations, it does not seem to have been a particularly fashionable motif in the southern Levant[131]. In comparison to the very similar *branch goddess with large ears*

[127] Two further parallels are unfortunately unprovenanced and come from museum collections (Schroer 1989: 97, no.12-13).
[128] Mainly on the base of comparisons with the Egyptian woman clay figurines produced from the 11th until the 18th dynasty (Winter 1983: 122) but also referring to bronze plastic art (Schroer 1989: 97 quoting Winter 1983).
[129] Attitude that appeared rather late in the Mesopotamian area (Winter 1983: 122).
[130] Inv. Nrs. 9452H, 9456C, L928.
[131] Only five out of the approximately forty nude goddess examples presented by Schroer for the Middle Bronze Age (Schroer 1989, 99, no. 36, 39) are comparable to this group from Avaris. Schroer discusses these five scarabs within the group of the branch goddess with large ears, defining them as simplified and stylised versions of that category (Schroer 1989: 111).

(Schroer 1989: 110), which is the most represented one among the goddesses from the scarab corpus of the southern Levant, the iconography of the goddess with large ears encountered in R/III appears poorer. Here indeed, the *nb*-sign pedestal as well as the branches on the sides of the goddess disappear. Hence the attribute *minimalist*. The three sealings belonging to this group (Inv. Nrs. 9452H, 9456C, L928: **Fig. 11-13**) are all fragmentary[132], yet the preserved portions suggest that they share the same iconography and they were stamped using three different scarabs. The nude standing goddess is depicted on these sealings in her most frequent pose – with joint legs and open feet. Both the body and the head are represented frontally. The elements of the face are outlined by little horizontal dashes (Inv. Nrs. 9452H and 9456C: **Fig. 11-12**), like the ones of the "Hathor" symbols[133], and a triangle outlines her pelvic region. The arms show a relaxed attitude, though different from the *neutral* one noticed by Inv. Nr. 9461D (**Fig. 10**). In fact, at least by Inv. Nrs. 9452H and 9456C[134], the arms do not hang parallel to the body but they sketch bowed lines framing the waist[135]. Furthermore, a broad hip and a very thin waist bestow a gentle moulded shape to the figure (Inv. Nrs. 9452H and 9456C). Finally, the ears of the goddess appear somehow disproportioned and display – at least on Inv. Nr. 9456C – a triangular shape[136].

The southern Levantine representation of the goddess inherits from her northern Levantine ancestor the peculiarity of nudity. The southern Levantine iconography seems to stress this aspect of nudity, emphasising it to such an extent that – in some cases[137] – it turns into the only subject of the composition (Schroer 1989: 133). Winter observes that the nude

[132] Inv. Nrs. 9452H and 9456C preserve only the upper half of the sealing while the lower half is exclusively attested on Inv. Nr. L928.
[133] See *intra*.
[134] The arms are almost completely lost on the third sealing.
[135] As it happens by many examples of the branch goddess with large ears from the southern Levant. See, for instance, Schroer 1989: 98, Abb. 21, 23-24.
[136] Considering the extension and the shape of the damaged surface in the area corresponding to the right ear of the goddess, the triangular outline of the ears might tentatively be supposed also for Inv. Nr 9452H.
[137] As it happens, for instance, on a scarab from Tell el-Ajjul reproducing only the genital zone (Schroer 1989: 97, no. 10) and further examples from Tell el-Far ʾah North and South (Schroer 1989: 106, Abb. 017-021).

goddess "is not only nude, she has *sex-appeal*" (Winter 1983: 198) and that her power consists exactly of this *sex-appeal*. The concept of eroticism is inextricably connected to the one of fecundity (Winter 1983: 193), so that they both play a primary role within the southern Levantine *interpretations* of the nude standing goddess (Schroer 1989: 133). Hence, the creation of such sensual representations, through an accentuated contrast between the dimensions of the hip and the waist (Schroer 1989: 101). The ears of the branch goddess with large ears from the southern Levant are not conventionally interpreted as cow's ears (Schroer 1989: 110, 132). However, such an interpretation does not seem to be completely ventured by the Inv. Nr. 9456C (**Fig. 12**) and by the best existing parallel for it outside R/III: a scarab from the collection of the Fribourg Bibel und Orient Museum – unfortunately unprovenanced (Schroer 1989: 111, 99, no. 36). Even though the over dimensioned ears should eventually not be connected to the ears of the cow goddess *par excellence* – Hathor, they might have appeared in the Levantine goddess representations by means of other Egyptian influences. Indeed Schroer suggests a relationship between the large ears and the aspect of the *Andachtsgöttin* (Schroer 1989: 132), a goddess often depicted on Middle Bronze Age Egyptian stelae dedicated by worshippers who were longing to be heard (Schroer 1989: 132-133)[138]. Such a connection would also confirm the interceding aspect suggested by Winter as main feature of the goddess' character (Winter 1983: 197;Schroer 1989: 133).

The best parallel for the *minimalist* nude goddess represented in R/III from a known context is a scarab coming from the site of Tell el-Yahudiyeh in the eastern Nile Delta: (Schroer 1989: 99, no. 39) and it is one of only two existing examples for the nude goddess found in Egypt outside Avaris (Schroer 1989: 99, no. 33, 39)[139]. The presence of elements like the rendering of the facial features with little dashes or large ears, which are

[138] In the New Kingdom, these stelae evolved into the so-called *ear stelae* and they were used to indicate the name of the worshipped deity as well as the one of the person who commissioned them (Schroer 1989: 132).
[139] See *intra* and Schroer 1989: 111.

likely due to an Egyptian influence[140]; the absence of a pedestal[141] and of branches, which are both uncommon elements in the Egyptian representations and, finally, the relatively scarce distribution of the *minimalist* goddess within the scarabs found in the Levant[142] in comparison to the distribution attested in the smaller area of the Delta[143] might suggest the possibility that this motif was locally manufactured – at Avaris or at least in the Delta region.

7. Conclusions

The representations of female deities on the sealings from R/III give us not only the possibility to broaden our perspective on the iconography of goddesses on Middle Bronze Age scarabs but also to explore the tangible results of the coexistence and the interaction of different group identities at Avaris in the same period (Bader 2013: 259). The impressions of female deities from R/III do not simply supply us with additional knowledge about iconographic solutions adopted by the representation of female deities in Middle Bronze Age scarab production, but also enable us to have more play in shifting this perspective between the southern Levant-based point of view (since the southern Levant supplied and still supplies most of the existing goddess representations on scarabs, Ben-Tor 2007: 101) and the – yet uncomfortable[144] – Egypt-based one. The culturally mixed features of the goddesses' iconographies from R/III constitute only one of the various aspects of the puzzling integration degree between the *delegations* of the different cultures living in the city of Avaris. The mixed Egyptian and Levantine features attested in the representations of the female deities has been considered as evidence for the non-Egyptian origin of their iconographies (Schroer 1989: 197-199; Ben-Tor 2007: 182). Advocating a

[140] Large ears appear in Egypt on the representations of Middle Kingdom kings, hinting to the affability of the king and his predisposition to listening (Russmann 2001: 30).
[141] Supposed for Inv. Nrs. 9452H and 9456C based on the iconography of Inv. Nr. L928.
[142] Two examples: Schroer 1989: 111 and 99, no. 34-35. Two further examples of *minimalist* goddess included by Schroer belong to museum collections and they are unprovenanced (Schroer 1989: 99, no. 36 and 37).
[143] A scarab from Tell el-Yahudiyeh (Schroer 1989: 99, no. 39) and these three sealings from Tell el-Dab῾a.
[144] Because of the still scarce number of examples in comparison to the southern Levant.

Levantine origin for these scarabs/motifs, the results of the Middle Bronze Age cultural entanglement, which are visible on the iconography of the goddess designs, have been interpreted as the consequence of the *assimilation* of the Egyptian culture into the Levantine cultural sphere (Ben-Tor 2007: 182). Previously, the scarab and sealing material from Tell el-Dab ʿa already hinted to the production and possible conception of an *updated* – Middle Bronze Age – version of the "Hathor" symbol in the local workshops of Avaris before the diffusion of the motif in the Palestinian Series (Mlinar 2004: 119; Ben-Tor 2007: 101-102). Furthermore, the peculiar mixture of elements shown by some of the unparalleled sealings – or with parallels only in the Delta region – presented in this contribution suggests that more female deities scarab designs might have been produced at Avaris. The *assimilation* of the Egyptian cultural elements in the Levantine world, which has been suggested as a result of the contacts between the two cultures in the Middle Bronze Age (Ben-Tor 2007: 182), does not do justice to the receptiveness of the Egyptian culture and to the symmetrical relationships which were established between the two cultures, both giving and both receiving.

I am not suggesting that the Palestinian Series were all produced in Egypt, or that the impressions of the female deities stamped on the sealings from R/III were all left by locally manufactured scarabs, but the possibility that part of this *Palestinian* scarab production might have taken place at Avaris should be considered[145]. The presence of the here presented goddess iconographies at Avaris means that the correspondent scarabs were distributed in the city and that they were used for everyday administrative activities by at least a segment of the population living there. It is then licit to imagine that these people should have identified themselves in what was engraved on the bases of the scarab they carried with them, even though today these mixed designs appear *odd* to us, because they are too difficult to

[145] About the imported or local nature of the Middle Bronze Age scarabs found in the southern Levant, Keel stresses that the possibility of both imports and exports between the eastern Nile Delta and the southern Levant should be taken into account for the period between the 13th and the 15th dynasty (Keel 1995a: §57).

classify. This is even more true in places like Avaris, which was situated in the *liminal space* of the eastern Delta (Bietak 2009; Bader 2013) where no exact geographical boundary between Egypt and the Levant can be traced. The functional shift between an Egypt-based and a Levant-based point of view and the consideration of the existence of multiple identities (Mac Sweeney 2009; Smith 2009; Bader 2013) might be valuable interpretative tools for an impartial evaluation of this archaeological material[146].

Fig. 1 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9455N
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

[146] Noteworthy, in this regard, is the range of plausible scenarios presented by Keel (Keel 1995a) for the interpretation of the *local* production of scarabs in the Levant. Keel suggests indeed that they might have been produced by *a)* itinerant Egyptian artisans, who worked in the Egyptian way; *b)* Egyptian artisans who adapted their way of working to the local request; *c) Canaanites* who were formed as artisans in Egypt; *d) Canaanites* who were formed in the southern Levant by Egyptian artisans or by already qualified *Canaanite* artisans (Keel 1995a: §57). These proposed scenarios would be equally credible if applied to the *Egyptian* production of scarabs in the same period and their consideration may probably result into a more realistic interpretation of this archaeological material.

Fig. 2 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9457D
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 3 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9458S
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 4 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9448Q
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 5 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9448U

(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 6 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9456F
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 7 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9445K
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 8 "Hathor" symbol on Inv. Nr. 9447D
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 9 Nude standing goddess on Inv. Nr. 9453J
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 10 Nude standing goddess on Inv. Nr. 9461D
(Foto Chiara Reali – scale 2:1)

Fig. 11 Nude standing goddess on Inv. Nr. 9452H
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 12 Nude standing goddess on Inv. Nr. 9456C
(Foto Axel Krause, © ÖAI – scale 2:1)

Fig. 13 Nude standing goddess on Inv. Nr. L928
(Foto Chiara Reali – scale 2:1)

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Irene Forstner-Müller for the opportunity to study this fascinating material from Tell el-Dab ʿa and to David Aston for editing my English and for commenting on the first draft of this paper. I am finally extremely grateful to Leticia Rovira and Ianir Milevski, the editor and the

coordinator of this dossier, for inviting me to contribute with an article, to Daphna Ben-Tor and to the two anonymous reviewers for their stimulating comments, which were causes for further reflections and for their more than useful suggestions.

Bibliography

ALLEN, James P. (2002) "The Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut", *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar,* 16:1–17.

ANTONACCIO, Carla (2010) "(Re)defining Ethnicity. Culture, Material Culture, and Identity", in: HALES, Shelley and HODOS, Tamar (Eds.), *Material Culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 32–53.

ASSMANN, Jan (1997) *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*. Munich: Beck'sche Reihe

BADER, Bettina (2013) "Cultural Mixing in Egyptian Archaeology. The 'Hyksos' as a Case Study", in: VAN PELT, W. P. (Ed.), *Archaeology and Cultural Mixture*. Archaeological Review from Cambridge, pp. 257–286.

BAHBHA, Homi K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

BEN-TOR, Daphna (2003) "Egyptian-Levantine Relations and Chronology in the Middle Bronze Age: Scarab Research", in: BIETAK, Manfred (Ed.) *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second millennium B.C. II*. Proceedings of the SCIEM 2000-EuroConference, Haindorf, 2nd of May – 7th of May 2001. Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 239–248.

BEN-TOR, Daphna (2007) *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections,* Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis: Series Archaeologica *Vol. 27.* Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen.

BEN-TOR, Daphna; ARIE, Eran; BENOVITZ, Nancy (2016) *Pharaoh in Canaan*. Catalog no. 637. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum.

BIETAK, Manfred (1996) "Avaris"*, Raymond and Beverly Sackler Foundation distinguished lecture in Egyptology Vol. 1*. London: British Museum Press for the Trustees of the British Museum.

BIETAK, Manfred (2004) "Seal Impressions from the Middle till the New Kingdom. A Problem for Chronological Research", in: BIETAK, Manfred and CZERNY, Ernst (Ed.), *Scarabs of the second millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant*. Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, pp. 43–55.

BIETAK, Manfred (2009) "Egypt and the Levant", in: *The Egyptian World*. Routledge, London and New York, pp. 417–448.

BIETAK, Manfred; MATH, Nicola; MÜLLER, Vera (2013) "Report on the Excavations of a Hyksos Palace at Tell el-Dabʿa/Avaris (23rd August-15th November 2011)", *Egypt and the Levant* 22/23:17–53.

BLEEKER, C. Jouco (1973) "Hathor and Thoth*", Studies in the history of religions*, Brill, Leiden.

BOSCHLOOS, Vanessa (2011-2012) "The Geochronological Distribution of Egyptian Scarab-shaped Seals in the Northern Levant (Syria and Lebanon). From the Late 3rd Millennium to the Late Iron Age". Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Vrije Universiteit, Brussel.

BOSCHLOOS, Vanessa (2012) "Egyptian and Egyptianising Scarab-shaped Seals in Syria and Lebanon", *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 69 (3-4):175–181.

BUDIN, Stephanie L. (2015) "The Nude Female in the Southern Levant: a mixing of Syro-Mesopotamian and Egyptian Iconographies", in: MAILA-AFEICHE, Anne-Marie (Ed.), *Cult and Ritual on the Levantine Coast and its impact on the Eastern Mediterranean Realm*. Proceedings of the International Symposium Beirut 2012, BAAL Hors-Série. Ministere de la Culture - Direction generale des Antiquités, Beyrouth, pp. 315–335.

BURKARD, Günter (1977) *Textkritische Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Weisheitslehren des alten und mittleren Reiches,* Ägyptologische Abhandlungen Bd 34. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.

CORNELIUS, Izak (2004) *The Many Faces of the Goddess*, Orbis biblicus et Orientalis Vol. 204. Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen.

CUSICK, James G. (1998) "Historiography of Acculturation: An Evaluation of Concepts and Their Application in Archaeology", in: CUSICK, James G. (Ed.) *Studies in Culture Contact. Interaction, Culture*

Change, and Archaeology. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, pp. 126–145.

DAIM, Falko (1998) "Archaeology, Ethnicity and the Structures of Identification. The example of the Avars, Carantanians and Moravians in the Eighth century", in: POHL, Walter and REIMITZ, Helmut (Eds.), *Strategies of Distinction*. Brill: Leiden - Boston - Köln, pp. 71–93.

FISCHER, Henry G. (1962) "The Cult and Nome of the Goddess Bat", *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 1:7–23.

FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene (2008) *Tell el-Dabʿa XVI*. Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes Bd. 1. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.

FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene; HASSLER, Astrid; MATIĆ, Uroš; ROSE, Pamela (2015) "Grabungen des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo in Tell el-Dab´a/Avaris. B. Der Hafen von Avaris - Das Areal R/IV, Erster Vorbericht", *Egypt and the Levant* 25:73–88.

FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene; JEUTHE, Clara; MICHEL, Vera; PRELL, Silvia (2015) "Grabungen des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo in Tell el-Dab´a/Avaris. A. Das Areal R/III, zweiter Vorbericht", *Egypt and the Levant* 25:17–71.

FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene and MOELLER, Nadine (Eds) (2014) *The Hyksos Ruler Khyan and the Early Second Intermediate Period in Egypt: Problems and Priorities of Current Research*. Proceedings of the Workshop of the Austrian Archaeological Institute and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Vienna, July 4–5.

FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene, and REALI, Chiara (2014) "King Khyan and Avaris. Some Considerations concerning Khyan Seal Impressions from Area R/III at Tell el-Dabʿa", in: FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene, and MOELLER, Nadine (Eds), *The Hyksos Ruler Khyan and the Early Second Intermediate Period in Egypt: Problems and Priorities of Current Research*. Proceedings of the Workshop of the Austrian Archaeological Institute and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Vienna, July 4–5.

FORSTNER-MÜLLER, Irene and ROSE, Pamela (2013) "Grabungen des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo in Tell el-Dab´a/Avaris: Das Areal R/III. 1. Vorbericht (Herbst 2010 bis Frühjahr 2011)", *Egypt and the Levant* 22/23:55–66.

FRANKFORT, Henri (1939) *Cylinder Seals,* London: Macmillan and Co.

FRANKFORT, Henri (1948) *Kingship and the Gods*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

GARDINER, Alan (1957) *Egyptian Grammar*. Oxford: Griffith Institute.

GIVEON, Raphael (1978) *The stones of Sinai speak*. Gakuseisha, Tokyo.

GOLDWASSER, Orly (1995) From Icon to Metaphor, Orbis biblicus et Orientalis Vol. 142. Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen.

GOLDWASSER, Orly, and GRINEVALD, Colette (2012) "What are "Determinatives" good for?" in: GROSSMAN, Eitan; POLIS, Stéphane; WINAND, Jean (Eds.), *Lexical Semantics in Ancient Egyptian*. Lingua aegyptia. Studia monographica. Widmaier, Hamburg, pp. 17–53.

GORDON, Milton M. (1964) *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

GOTTER, Ulrich (2000) "Akkulturation als Methodenproblem der historischen Wissenschaften", in: Wolfgang, EßBACH (Ed.) *Wir / ihr / sie*. Ergon, Würzburg: Identitäten und Alteritäten, pp. 373–406.

Gumbrecht, Hans U. (1980) "Literarische Gegenwelten, Karnevalkultur und die Epochenschwelle von Spätmittelalter zu Renaissance", in: GUMBRECHT, Hans U. (Ed.), *Literatur in der Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters*. Heidelberg: Begleitreihe/1, pp. 95–144.

GUMBRECHT, Hans U. (1980) *Literatur in der Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters,* Heidelberg.

GUTBUB, Adolphe (1962) "Remarques sur les Dieux du Nome Tanitique à la Basse Epoque", *Kêmi. Revue de philologie et d'archéologie égytiennes et coptes* 16:42–75.

HANSEN, Nicole (2001) "Snakes", in: REDFORD, Donald B. (Ed.), *The Oxford encyclopedia of ancient Egypt*. Volume 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 296–299.

HARPER, Douglas (2001-2017) *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Electronic document. Available in http://www.etymonline.com/index.php (Consulted: 01/10/2017)

HART, George (1986) *A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

HEJL, Peter M. (1991) "Wie Gesellschaften Erfahrungen Machen oder: Was Gesellschaftstheorie zum Verständnis des Gedächtnisproblems beitragen kann", in: SCHMIDT, Siegdried J. (Ed.), *Gedächtnis*. Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, pp. 293-336.

HODDER, Ian (2012) *Entangled*. Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA.

HORNUNG, Erik (1982) *Ägyptische Mythos von der HImmelskuh,* Orbis biblicus et Orientalis, 46. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

Austrian Archaeological Institute Cairo Branch. Tell el-Dab'a site. Available in: http://www.auaris.at/html/index_en.html (Consulted: 01/10/2017)

JOHNSTON, Ruth (1976) "The Concept of the Marginal Man: a Refinement of the Term", *Australian and New England Journal of Science* 12: 145–147.

JONES, Siân (1997) *The archaeology of ethnicity*. Routledge, London.

KEEL, Othmar (1992 [1986]) *Das Hohelied*. Zürcher Bibelkommentare. Altes Testament Vol. 18. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag.

KEEL, Othmar (1995a) *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina,* Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis: *Series Archaeologica*, 10. Fribourg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

KEEL, Othmar (1995b) "Stamp Seals - The Problem of Palestinian Workshops in the Second Millennium and Some Remarks on the Preceding and Succeeding Periods", in: WESTENHOLZ, Joan G. (Ed.) *Seals and Sealings in the Ancient Near East*. Proceedings of the Symposium held on September 2, 1993. Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem Publications, pp. 93–142.

KEEL, Othmar (2004) "Some of the Earliest Groups of Locally Produced Scarabs from Palestine", in: BIETAK, Mandred and CZERNY, Ernst (Eds.) *Scarabs of the second millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 73–101.

KEEL, Othmar (2010a) *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Israel-Palästina,* Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis: Series Archaeologica, 29. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

KEEL, Othmar (2010b) *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Israel-Palästina*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis: Series Archaeologica, 31. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

KEEL, Othmar; KEEL-LEU, Hildi; SCHROER, Silvia (Eds.) (1989) *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina,* Orbis biblicus et Orientalis, 88. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

KEEL, Othmar and UEHLINGER, Christoph (1992) *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole,* Quaestiones Disputatae 134. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau.

KEEL, Othmar and UEHLINGER, Christoph (1998) *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press.

KROEBER, Alfred L. (1948) *Anthropology: Race, Language, Culture, Psychology, Prehistory*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

LA PICCOLA TRECCANI (Ed.) (1997) XI *Dizionario enciclopedico*. Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, Roma.

LINCKE, Eliese-Sophia and KAMMERZEL, Frank (2012) "Egyptian Classifiers at the Interface of Lexical Semantics and Pragmatics", in: GROSSMAN, Eitan; POLIS, Stéphane; WINAND, Jean (Eds) *Lexical Semantics in Ancient Egyptian*. Widmaier, Hamburg, pp. 55–112.

LOPRIENO, Antonio (1988) *Topos und Mimesis,* Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, 48. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.

MACSWEENEY, Naoíse (2009) "Beyond Ethnicity. The Overlooked Diversity of Group Identities", *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology,* 22(1):101–126.

MARÉE, Marcel (Ed.) (2010) *The Second intermediate period Thirteenth-Seventeenth Dynasties,* Orientalia lovaniensia analecta, 192. Peeters, Leuven, Walpole, MA.

MARÉE, Marcel (2013) "Comments on two Tell el-Dab`a sealings", *Egypt and the Levant* 22/23:75–78.

MATIĆ, Uroš (2014) "„Nubian“ Archers in Avaris. A Study of Culture-historical Reasoning in Archaeology of Egypt", *Etnoantropološki Problemi* 9(3):697–721.

MATIĆ, Uroš (2015) "Was there ever a “Minoan” Princess on the Egyptian Court?", in: TOMORAD, Mladen (Ed.) *A History of Research into*

Ancient Egyptian Culture Conducted in Southeast Europe. Archaeopress Egyptology. Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, pp.145-156.

MLINAR, Christa (2001a) *Die Skarabäen von Tell el-Dabʿa. Eine Chronologische und Typologische Untersuchung der Skarabäen von Tell el-Dabʿa aus der 13.-15. Dynastie. Katalog, Volume 2*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Institute for Egyptology, University of Vienna, Vienna.

MLINAR, Christa (2001b) *Die Skarabäen von Tell el-Dabʿa. Eine Chronologische und Typologische Untersuchung der Skarabäen von Tell el-Dabʿa aus der 13.–15. Dynastie. Ausarbeitung*, Volume 1. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Institute for Egyptology, University of Vienna, Vienna.

MLINAR, Christa (2004) "The Scarab Workshops of Tell el-Dab'a", in: BIETAK, Manfred and CZERNY, Ernst (Eds.) *Scarabs of the second millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 107–140.

MOURAD, Anna-Latifa (2015) "Rise of the Hyksos*", Archaeopress Egyptology*, 11. Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd.

MÜLLER, Sandra E. (2013) "Rettungsgrabung `Ezbet Ruschdi/Tell el-Dab`a (Areal R/II), Vorbericht über die Grabungskampagnen 2008/2009", *Egypt and the Levant* 22/23:109–130.

O' CONNOR, David (2016) "Egypt's View of "Others", in: TAIT, W. John (Ed) *Never had the like occurred*. Encounters with ancient Egypt. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, New York, NY, pp. 155-185.

PETRIE, William M. F. (1886) *Naukratis Vol.* 3. London: The Egypt Exploration Fund.

PETRIE, William M. F. (1906) *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*. London: School of Archaeology

PHILLIPS, J. P. (2002) *The columns of Egypt*. Manchester: Peartree Publishing.

PINCH, Geraldine (1993) *Votive Offerings to Hathor*. Oxford*:* Griffith Institute.

POHL, Walter (2010) "Archaeology of Identity: Introduction", in: POHL, Walter and MEHOFER, Mathias (Eds.) *Archaeology of identity*.

Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 9–23.

QUIRKE, Stephen (1992) *Ancient Egyptian Religion*. New York: Dover Publications.

RAY, John. D. (1998) "The Marquis, the Urchin, and the Labyrinth: Egyptology and the University of Cambridge. The Steven Glanville Lecture for 1995", in: Eyre, Christopher J. (Ed.) *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995. Orientalia lovaniensia analecta. Peeters, Leuven: Peerers, pp. 1-17.

REALI, Chiara (2013) "The Seal Impressions from ʿEzbet Rushdi, Area R/III of Tell el-Dabʿa: Preliminary Report", *Egypt and the Levant* 22/23:67–73.

REDFIELD, Robert; LINTON, Ralph; HERSKOVITS, Melville J. (1936) "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation", *American Anthropologist,* 38(1):149–152.

ROBERTS, Alison (1995) *Hathor rising*. Northgate: Totnes.

ROSMORDUC, Serge (2014) JSesh Documentation. Electronic document. Available in: http://jseshdoc.qenherkhopeshef.org (Consulted: 01/10/2017).

ROTHENBERG, Benno, and BACHMANN, H. G. (1988) *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*. Metal in history, 2. Institute for Archaeo-Metallurgical Studies, London.

RUSSMANN, Edna R. (2001) *Eternal Egypt*. American Federation of Arts, Berkeley, Calif., New York: University of California Press.

RYHOLT, Kim S. B. (1997) *The Political Situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period c. 1800-1550 B.C.,* Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications, 20. The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern studies, Copenhagen.

SANCHEZ, Diana T.; SHIH, Margaret J.; WILTON, Leigh S. (2014) "Exploring the Identity Autonomy Perspective (IAP): An Integrative Theoretical Approach to Multicultural and Multiracial Identity", in: BENET-MARTÍNEZ, Veronica and HONG, Ying-yi (Eds) *The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity*. Oxford library of psychology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 139-159.

SARTORI, Nicolas (2009) "Die Siegel aus Areal F/II in Tell el-Dabʿa. Erster Vorbericht", *Egypt and the Levant* 19: 281–292.

SCHAFIK, Allam (1963) *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)*. Münchner ägyptologische Studien, 4. Hessling, Berlin.

SCHMIDT, Siegfried J. (1997) "Geschichte Beobachten. Geschichte und Geschichtswissenschaft aus konstruktivistischer Sicht", *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 8(1): 19-44.

SCHNEIDER, Thomas (2003) "Foreign Egypt: Egyptology and the concept of cultural appropriation", *Egypt and the Levant* 13:155–161.

SCHNEIDER, Thomas (2011) "Three Histories of Translation: Translating in Egypt, Translating Egypt, Translating Egyptian", in: MCELDUFF, Siobhán and SCIARRINO, Enrica (Eds.) *Complicating the History of Western Translation*. St. Jerome Pub, Manchester UK, Kinderhook NY, pp. 176–189.

SCHREIBER, Stefan (2013) "Archäologie der Aneignung. Zum Umgang mit Dingen aus kulturfremden Kontexten", *Forum Kritische Archäologie* 2:48–123.

SCHROER, Silvia (1989) "Die Göttin auf den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel", in: KEEL, Othman; KEEL-LEU, Hildi; SCHROER, Silvia (Eds.) *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina*. Orbis biblicus et Orientalis. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, pp. 89–207.

SCHULZ-BUSCHHAUS, Ulrich (1984) "Das Aufsatzwerk. Überlegungen zur literarhistorischen Epochenschwelle zwischen Mittelalter und Renaissance", *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie,* 100(1-2).

SETHE, Kurt (1906) *Urkunden der 18 Dynastie*. Leipzip: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlun.

SETHE, Kurt (1930) *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter,* Abhandlungen zur Kunde des Morgenlandes, 18, Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft

SMITH, Stuart T. (2009) "Ethnicity and Culture", in: Wilkinson, Toby A. H. (Ed.) *The Egyptian World*. Routledge, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 218–241.

STAUBLI, Thomas (2007) "Sammlung Liebefeld: 60 Siegelamulette aus der Südlevante", in: BICKEL, Susanne; SCHROER, Silvia; SCHURTE, René; UEHLINGER, Christoph (Eds.) *Bilder als Quellen, Images as sources*.

Orbis biblicus et orientalis. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

STEPHENSON, Margaret (2000) "Development and Validation of the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS)", *Psychological Assessment* 12(12):77–88.

STOCK, Hanns (1942) *Studien zur Geschichte und Archäologie der 13. bis 17. Dynastie Ägyptens,* Ägyptologische Forschungen, 12. Augustin, Glückstadt.

STOCKHAMMER, Philipp W. (2012) "Questioning Hybridity", in: Stockhammer, Philipp W. (Ed.) *Transcultural Research*. Berlin & Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, pp. 1–3.

STOCKHAMMER, Philipp W. (2013) "From Hybridity to Entanglement, from Essentialism to Practise", in: VAN PELT, Willem Paul (Ed.) *Archaeology and Cultural Mixture*, Archaeological Review from Cambridge, pp. 11–28.

STOCKHAMMER, Philipp W. (ed.) (2012) *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization*. Papers of the Conference. Berlin & Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.

TOWER HOLLIS, Susan (2015) "Hathor, Mistress of Byblos", in: KOUSOULIS, P. and LAZARIDIS, N. (Ed.) *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists*. University of the Aegean, Rhodes, 22-29 May 2008, 2. Peeters, Louvain: Peeters, pp. 1143–1152.

TROY, Lana (1986) *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Uppsala.

TUFNELL, Olga (1984) *Studies on Scarab Seals*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

UPHILL, Eric P. (1965) "The Egyptian Sed-Festival Rites", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24:365–383.

UPHILL, Eric P. (1965/1966) "The Nine Bows", *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux* 19:393–420.

VALBELLE, Dominique and BONNET, Charles (1996) *Le Sanctuaire d'Hathor, Maîtresse de la Turquoise*. Paris: Picard.

VAN PELT, Willem Paul (Ed.) (2013) "Archaeology and Cultural Mixture". *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 28 (1).

VANDIER, Jaques (1966) "Iousaas et (Hathor)-Nébet-Hétépet", *Revue d'Egyptologie* 18:67–142.

VILLING, Alexandra and SCHLOTZHAUER, Udo (Eds.) (2006) *Naukratis*. The British Museum research publication no. 162. London: British Museum.

VISCHAK, Deborah (2001) "Hathor", in: REDFORD, Donald B. (Ed.) *The Oxford encyclopedia of ancient Egypt*, Vol 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 82-85.

WARD, William A. (1978) *Studies on Scarab Seals*. Warminster*:* Aris & Philips Ltd, S.l.

WIESE, André (1996) *Die Anfänge der ägyptischen Stempelsiegel-Amulette*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis: Series Archaeologica, 12. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.

WIMMER, Andreas (1996) "Kultur. Zur Reformulierung eines sozialanthropologischen Grundbegriffs", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 48(3):401–425.

WINTER, Urs (1983) *Frau und Göttin*. Orbis biblicus et Orientalis, 53. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz.