

The volume is well-produced, with plenty of illustrative material, and with very few typographical errors. One useful addition would be an index, either of names or toponyms, but also of museums' objects, because many of the papers overlap in subject and their analysis and discussions cannot be easily compared.

Summing up, this is a very important collection of papers; many of them will be a starting point and inspiration for further research on the Late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.

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FISCHER, E. — Tell el-Far'ah (Süd). Ägyptisch-levantinische Beziehungen im späten 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 247). Universitätsverlag Freiburg / Éditions Universitaires Fribourg, Fribourg, 2011. (23.5 cm, XIX, 430, 1 fold. pl.). ISBN 978-3-7278-1691-8. ISSN 1015-1850. € 96,-.

The intensive contacts between Egypt and the Levant during the Late Bronze Age, as reflected by Levantine ivory carving, have been the subject of Erika Fischer's research and publications during the past decade. After her thorough study of the ivories from Megiddo and Lachish (Fischer, E., *Ägyptische und ägyptisierende Elfenbeine aus Megiddo und Lachish: Inschriftenfunden, Flaschen, Löffel (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 47)* Münster: Ugarit-Verlag 2007) – a revised version of her 2005 dissertation – Fischer now turns to the evidence from a site even further south, Tell el-Far'ah South (W. M. F. Petrie's Beth Pelet).

This publication is the outcome of a research conducted at the University of Mainz, in the framework of a project focusing on Late Bronze Age representations of kingship and ritual scenes. What was supposed to be a study of the ivory panels from the so-called Governor's Residence at Tell el-Far'ah South eventually became an in-depth revision of the ivories within their find context. Although the residence and its ivories have been subject to numerous publications discussing Egyptian-Levantine relations in the late 2nd millennium, a detailed analysis of the panels and their context remained wanting. In this volume, Fisher therefore examines the archaeological context, more precisely the building's history and function, the ivory panels' meaning and its implications for the building's identification. The first two chapters present the archaeological context, the third discusses the ivories and after a brief resume an elaborate catalogue of reference material is presented.

The first chapter (*Kapitel 2*, p. 5-19) offers a general introduction to the site and sets out with a very brief overview of the history of excavations and the ensuing problems for the site's stratigraphy. During his excavation campaigns in the late 1920s, W. M. F. Petrie unearthed a large number of finds, but a group of ivory panels with Egyptian scenes from a large building, House YR, gained special interest and encouraged him to identify the building as an Egyptian governor's residence. Moreover, the possibility that Tell el-Far'ah could be identified with the Hyksos'

legendary fortified town of Sharuhén, played an important role in the discussion of the Egyptian presence in the southern Levant. Erika Fischer reviews previous interpretations on the identification of the site as Sharuhén, but refrains from taking a position because of the uncertain stratigraphy. There are some indications as to the regional status of Tell el-Far'ah and she concludes that a function as an Egyptian stronghold is based solely on historical considerations and that the lack of military architecture does not support such a function.

The introduction is followed by a thorough and meticulous analysis of the archaeological context (*Kapitel 3*, p. 20-75), House YR, and its relation to the surrounding structures. Various publications dealing with the structure, its stratigraphy, building history, function and finds are reviewed. Despite of the problems concerning the building's stratigraphy (p. 21-25), this chapter provides a detailed yet to-the-point analysis of the house's building history and the different interpretations that have been put forward on this subject. Limited due to the flawed and incomplete excavation reports, Erika Fischer presents a selection of finds contributing to the dating of the house's construction (based mainly on the presence of two Ramesside ostraca in the lower levels) and destruction (based on Philistine pottery) (p. 28-33). Through a detailed analysis of the architecture, she elaborates on the conclusions of previous research, namely that the closest parallel for the building's lay-out is the so-called Amarna House, a type of dwelling consisting of a square plan with a central columned court (p. 34-50). Fischer compares each component of the Amarna House type with those of House YR and notices some minor deviations, for example in the building's surface (p. 46) and, more importantly, the construction technique (such as the thickness of outer walls, the depth of its foundations and the dimensions of the mud bricks) (p. 48-57), indicating local adaptations to the Egyptian model. Finally, House YR is assessed in its cultural and historical context, by discussing the issue of the so-called governor's residences in the southern Levant (p. 57-75). The author comments and elaborates on ideas and typologies developed by, amongst others, Lorenzo Nigro, James Weinstein, Eliezer Oren and Carolyn Higginbotham, emphasising that the term 'governor' is misleading and that too many buildings have been labelled 'Amarna House type' in the literature.

The third chapter (*Kapitel 4*, p. 76-205) presents the first exhaustive analysis of the ivories' various iconographic elements, more specifically their occurrence in the repertoire of Egyptian and ancient Near Eastern art and material culture. Each theme and motif is analysed in detail: the banquet scene, the dancer with musicians, the return from the hunt, the bird trapping and oxen in the marshes, the vegetation ... (p. 85-196). Erika Fischer notes that the composition of some scenes was erroneous and misunderstood in previous publications due to the lack of photographs of the panels in situ. She proposes a new composition but recognizes that it remains speculative to determine the nature of the wooden support to which the panels were attached (p. 76-78, 83-84). There are some indications for the dating of the ivories, as details in the depicted furniture, garments and hairdo are characteristic for the late 19th or even the 20th Dynasty, thus offering a more recent date than the one proposed by Petrie (p. 197). Wall decorations in 18th Dynasty private tombs and the vessels from the Bubastis/

Tell Basta Treasure are identified as models for the panels' themes and motifs (p. 199). The latter are considered purely Egyptian products that adapt foreign ideas and it is interesting to note in this respect the recently published article of Christine Lilyquist ("Treasures from Tell Basta: Goddesses, Officials, and Artists in an International Age", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 47-2012, p. 9-72) that presents an in-depth reassessment of the Treasure's vessels – including previously unpublished items – and arguing for the multicultural nature of their manufacturers and patrons. By assessing the Egyptian influence in the Tell el-Far'ah ivories' themes and motifs, Fischer joins the prevailing view that they are to a great extent indebted to Egyptian models and display some peculiarities in their details, pointing towards a Levantine craftsman who was familiar with Egyptian pictorial conventions (p. 197-198). Furthermore, the origin of the patron that commissioned the panels is postulated and the author argues for an Egyptian official – whether or not with Levantine roots –, adhering to Petrie's interpretation that House YR belonged to an Egyptian representative (p. 203-205).

An elaborate descriptive catalogue of reference material from Egypt, the ancient Near East and the eastern Mediterranean (p. 209-268) is followed by an up-to-date bibliography (p. 275-330) and over 200 illustrations. There are hardly any photographs but all images are good quality line drawings, including a new composition for the ivory panels by the hand of Dirk Wicke (Abbildung 22). The latter is also attached on a larger scale as a fold-out drawing (Tafel 1), facilitating to some extent the reading of the iconographical analyses as one already needs to browse back and forth between the text and the images of the reference material.

This book offers a wealth of assembled information and numerous insights into the interpretation of the ivories and their archaeological context. Erika Fischer investigates the ivories and their archaeological context thoroughly, adding more evidence for the Egyptian influence in the building's construction and lay-out as well as in the ivory panels' iconography, as demonstrated by previous research. However, she does not place her results in the broader cultural and historical context, wetting the reader's appetite for a discussion that relates the study's results to the issues raised in the first chapter, such as the nature of the Egyptian (Ramesside) presence in the southern Levant.

Throughout the volume, the author repeatedly reminds of the lack of information and the stratigraphical problems, which impede taking positions or drawing conclusions regarding the identification (p. 13) or the status and function of the site (p. 17, 19), the relation between House YR and the surrounding structures (p. 24), the totality of finds (p. 26), the nationality of the building's resident (p. 75), and the identification of the ivories' wooden support (p. 83-84). This can give the impression that Erika Fischer is cautious and sometimes even hesitant in her phrasing, particularly in the first two chapters on the archaeological context, although she does draw significant broader conclusions, for example regarding the building history of House YR (p. 21) and the contradictory nature of previous interpretations of its function (p. 65-67, 75) as well as of the ivory panels found inside (p. 202-204). Taking into account the many obstacles the author had to overcome when dealing with deficient excavation reports and stratigraphical

problems, she successfully addressed the challenge and succeeded in presenting a comprehensive study of the House YR ivory panels.

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MIEROOP, M. Van De — A History of Ancient Egypt.
Wiley-Blackwell, West Sussex, 2010. (24,5 cm, XV, 400). ISBN 978-1-4051-6071-1. € 27,60; £22,99; \$ 44,95.

Dans la série de manuels introductifs «Blackwell History of the Ancient World» en cours d'édition, Marc Van De Mieroop, professeur d'histoire du Proche-Orient Ancien à l'université de Columbia, publie cet exposé chronologique de l'histoire de l'Égypte du début du IV^{ème} millénaire à 395 ap. J.-C. L'audience explicitement visée est néophyte, tant le grand public que les étudiants. Il s'agit d'un manuel d'étude qui retrace l'histoire, la politique intérieure et extérieure, les structures sociales et les relations commerciales. Dans la ligne de l'historicisme de Leopold von Ranke, Van De Mieroop conçoit le récit historique "*wie es wirklich gewesen war*". Il privilégie donc les acquis qu'il estime personnellement «sûrs» dans le fil de son exposé *ex cathedra*, tout en fournissant en annexe un guide de lectures plus avancées incluant des adresses de sites web, un glossaire, une liste chronologique des rois, une abondante bibliographie récente et un index. Ce manuel ne privilégie aucune époque au détriment d'une autre. L'A. a enrichi la trame du récit de trois catégories d'échappées sous forme de cadres imprimés en grisaille: des petits développements généraux (les 5 noms royaux, les toponymes, les canons artistiques etc.), un petit choix de 19 documents traduits et enfin 12 «key debates» faisant le point sur des sujets de controverses de l'historiographie actuelle en laissant les réponses à ces questions ouvertes. L'exposé général est pourvu de tableaux généalogiques simplifiés, de cartes fournissant l'essentiel à la compréhension des faits relatés et des synthèses chronologiques bien conçues encadrées en grisaille.

Cette entreprise, valeureuse étant donné les dimensions limitées imparties au livre, est de l'aveu de l'auteur une véritable gageure pour satisfaire tous les lecteurs. Malgré la préface justificative à cet égard (le lecteur est averti clairement dès la p. 4 du cadre très strict adopté), je formulerai tout de même quelques suggestions de compléments – quitte à sortir de ce cadre, je le reconnais – et des propositions de nature pédagogique, puisque telle est précisément l'originalité de l'ouvrage, en espérant qu'elles puissent être éventuellement de quelque utilité pour une prochaine édition qui, au vu du développement de la série, ne tardera pas à voir le jour.

Tout d'abord, comme c'est le cas de beaucoup de manuels d'histoire pour des raisons de limitation du coût évidentes, la qualité des illustrations laisse souvent à désirer. Elle comporte principalement 68 photos noir et blanc de documents d'intérêt historique, ainsi qu'un cahier de 12 belles planches en couleur pour la prise de vue desquelles l'esthétique a, semble-t-il, primé. La sélection des clichés est certes largement judicieuse, mais les reproductions sont malheureusement peu