

## Egyptian Influence in Ancient Israel

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The Book of Mormon mentions Egypt in its background. It's used in part of it's writing and forms a background in language. In the past, many people who have criticized this notion that ancient Israel was ever mixed up with the Egyptians. So I was going to talk about some of the evidence. I am going to start with the quotation from the massive 4000 page doctoral dissertation by Greg Mumford which he completed at the University of Toronto in 1998.

His dissertation, which for obvious logistical reasons has not been published, is entitled "International Relations between Egypt, Sinai, and Syria-Palestine during the late Bronze-age into Early Persian Periods Dynasties 18 to 26 about 1550 to 525 BC" and I'll leave out the sub-title.

He looked at about 34 different sites throughout Syria, Palestine and Sinai. He looked at all the Egyptian and Egyptianizing artifacts, dividing his time period into about 19 to 20 different time periods, different intervals roughly about every 50 years, and looked through archaeological reports and did extensive analysis. This is from his conclusions if you ever get a chance at the dissertation, it is on page 3986.

He says "Examination of the overall Egyptian/Egyptianizing artifact proportions from cultic mortuary occupation and combined the context at Syria-Palestine's sites yields clear peak in Egyptian activity during late-Bronze 1B 1450 to 1400 BC, late-Bronze 2B to Iron 1A, 1200 to 1150 BC, early-Iron 2B 925 to 850 BC, and late-Iron 2B-2C, 750 to 600 BC."

So that's precisely a peak during the time of Lehi. We actually have a certain chart showing you from selected sites where there are peaks and the percentage of Egyptian artifacts. Unfortunately these only a percentages and doesn't tell you the numbers so 3% may represent 8,000 artifacts in the site.

I would like to show you some iconographic evidence. I just brought some slides to show you, which show some of the Egyptian influence in Israel in the 7th and 8th centuries BC. So this is roughly from the time of Isaiah to Lehi. All of these artifacts are Israelite artifacts that come that time, so we will consider them one by one.

These are Israelite seals and we'll start of with the ones showing scarabs. First one here shows a very nice Egyptian scarab beetle with the wings out pushing the solar disc across the sky, with a nice Hebrew inscription saying "belonging to the ruler."

It was bought in the antiquities market in Jerusalem is supposed to be from the area of Hebron, and is currently in Tel Aviv. This is just the impression of it which lets Hebrew be read in the correct direction. These seals were designed to stamp on letters and let you owned them, or wrote them.

And the next one is currently in France, location is not known. It's a human-headed Egyptian scarab which means this actually represents the one of the 4 winds, and with a nice Hebrew inscription and saying "this belongs to Wilcah."

Next one is royal seal, and according to the inscription belonged to Manassah the son of the king and later became king himself. Again the Egyptian scarab beetle with the solar disc.

Our next one belongs to a man named Aukeymelek, and he was the son of the man named Samack. You notice on the slide that his fathers name is worked around the scarab on the top, his own name is on the bottom. Again, clear Egyptian influence, nice little ankh on your left.

This one is not a scarab but an actual seal impression. The back of this would actually be put on some papyrus. For whatever reason the papyrus, this is gone the lump of clay. From what we can read of it, this apparently belonged to a man by the name of something like Domlah. This was also found in the antiquities market around Hebron.

Next one is a fellow by the name of Kamenjahu, son of Amot, And this one is flanked by two birds. It's a little unusual in that way. It is late 8th century in date. And the next one have here this belongs to a man by the name of Sayid Yahu. This one is a very nice because we have a lion drawing beside it. As you can see this is a common motif during this time period. Same with the next one here this is a man by the name of Shaffat, son of Yennah Yakub and we have two bullae that has the same stamp on the impression. We are quite fortunate in that regard, in some cases we have as many as three.

The next one is actually comes from the royal steel of King Hezekiah with a beautiful scarab beetle and solar disc. And the last one we have is found on a jar handle. Somebody stamped it in while still making this clay pot and this belongs to Shemanjahu, son of a King. Unfortunately we don't know which king.

Now moving from the stamped seals depicting scarabs, we also have a whole whole series of them that show uraeus, or winged cobras, which are native to Egypt with. Shown in classic Egyptian style and the first one is the one of three bullae, which was found at Lachish. This one apparently got around because the next one here is the same seal impression made by the same seal but it was found in Jerusalem. The third one here is from Tele Judaida. We only have a drawing of this one. It was found in the Tele Judaida expeditions back in 1900, its present location is unknown.

Next one here belongs to a man by the name of Yakamoh Yajuh son of Mosseh Yajuh. You will see a nice Egyptian uraeus. The next one belongs to a man by the name of Saadha, and I noticed a little ankh sign over here. Somebody punched a hole and drew a little "T" shape under it making the ankh sign. And this one also has nice winged solar discs at the bottom.

The next one belongs to Elishama who is son of a king. This fellow is known from the Book of Jeremiah. So here we are in Lehi's day, with a good Egyptian uraeus sporting the crown of upper and lower regions. This is sporting royal Egyptian crown as well.

Well the next one was found in the antiquities market in Beirut, it is now on Oxford. They took this scarab, this most of the seals actually shaped by Egyptians scarab the following Egyptian prototypes. Some of them carved out the bottoms of it. So we get the nice letters here "belonging to the son of" and someone carved out the rest of it and it is probably in some rubbish heap somewhere.

Next one here belongs to a fellow by the name of Eljahu son of Geljahu. This also should remind you of the Exodus account of those fiery flying serpents. This one belongs to a man by the name of Jeremiah. It's not the one in the Bible this is the son of Asah. These things are also quite small. This one for example, which is typical, is 19 millimeters in height. So just about 2 centimeters long.

The next one here belongs to the man by the name of Shaufat, and has this Queen uraeus sitting on a lotus flower. We have another one with the ankh sign put on it's side, and was found in Jerusalem. This one is two sided. So this one has the inscription on the one side and the other is this is very interesting one. It belongs to the man by the name of Sadok, and he is the son of Lechad. Then it was re-used by a man by the name of Zacharyu. It says that he is the Priest of Dor. So here we have a man with a clear Yaju name, and at least his parents worshipped Jehovah, and he seems to have as well. But he is a Priest at Dor, which there is no biblical record or archaeological record of a sanctuary to the Lord ever being there, but there was apparently one there at this is time. Dor was conquered by the Assyrians in 733 BC, we can gauge this one clearly to the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

This is Shecenyaju son of Elasa, and another winged scarab belonging Yedayaju. Now in some cases we don't get the nice winged scarabs, instead we get the side view as in this one. You get the scarab with the scarab with a solar disc on his head, and an ankh sign with an extra bar on it. This one belongs to Cheppetyaju son of Osayaju. Most of what we get out of these are the names.

This one here is another unusual one because the uraeus is looped over the solar disc, the solar disc is winged. There is another solar disc on the serpents head, there is an ankh sign with a fish. There are number of these scarabs with fish.

This motif with the winged scarab becomes very common much later in Egyptian history, but it is a testament of their presence at this time. This one here shows no wings whatsoever on the snake, although this one does. What would really be interesting is to have the papyrus to which these seals attached. If we had two or three of these instead of just the bullae, it would probably rewrite our history of Israel.

The next type we have has Egyptians sphinx's on it. So the first one here, there are only a couple of these, belongs to a man by the name of Sholomet. If you notice the carving style, the lines are much thicker and deeper than they are on most of these other scarabs

and this has led some people to wonder if this one is actually authentic. While that one may not be authentic but this one belonging to Hannah, is.

Now here again we have the Egyptian crown on the sphinx. What is unclear on this particular seal is Hannah is usually a women's name although most of these seal impressions belong to men. And Egypt not only has human sphinx's, but also what are called cryo sphinx's sometimes called griffins. They have a falcons head rather than human head on them. First one here belongs to a man and by the name of Giki, strangely enough it sounds similar to a name of a Bishop I've been working with recently.

This next one was found at Ashkelan. A lot of these were found during illicit digs, when there were only about 2 centimeters left. One could easily skip over them. They are also easily secreted off a dig. This one is a very nice one with a nice double Egyptian crown with the white crown of upper Egypt and the red crown of lower Egypt. We also have an almost identical one here belonging to Yohokim, and another one here belonging to Hosea. We are not sure if it is the same Hosea of the Bible

This one is really unusual because it has a cricket at the bottom, and is attested in other seals. This one belonged to Asaf, and has the ankh sign, while this one here belonged to someone possibly named Pechab. Oddly enough there is a was-scepter staff sticking up out of the griffins head. At least, that is what I take it as. It might be a representation of the double crown but it looks much more like a jackal-headed was-scepter.

This one provides an example of the certain bakeries of pre-Israelite script something that may not have appreciated. The Book of Mormon talks about difficulty of writing in Hebrew. Those two letters look like they might have a tick or might not. If they don't have a tick they're read as "p" if they do that the tick they are read as "n".

This one, his name is Jonathan. It's a little bit late to be the prince with that name. This one belongs to the son of Hosea. I don't know if that is the prophet, it's probably just a common name.

Then we come to seals that have human figures emerging out of a lotus. In an Egyptian motif, there is a wonderful example of this from the tomb of Tutankhamun where Tutankhamun head is seen coming out of a lotus blossom. This is equated with the Egyptian God Nepertune, as well as the god Horus. So this is a nice one here belonging to Abigow, servant of Uzziah.

We have others that are just Egyptians solar discs, you've already seen a couple of these. This one is one of those inspired by two sides except this one does not two different names, it is not re-used. It is the same name on both, he just flips it over. This is a nice Egyptian figure standing and his name is Shebanjayu and the bottom is identified as Shebanjayu, servant of Uzziah.

This one has a wonderful elaborate Egyptian crown with the solar disc and uraeus hanging off of it, a wonderful late period motif.

This one here is a combination of motifs. You see two uraeus hanging off an ankh sign, with a winged solar disc at the top. A scarab pushing the sun on the one side and a fish on the other, with a very odd mask in the middle.

Now in some these cases they decided to go for a very elaborate type of seals. These are based on earlier second intermediate period scarabs that were used by Egyptian officials and often contained cartouches of kings. This one which belongs to Sheperya, has initially lower cartouches as an imitation of the cartouche of Tutnoses III. I am not quite sure how do read the cartouche on the top. Sheperya actually stuck his name on the top, which is a little unusual because cartouches are reserved for the names of kings. Everyone else isn't allowed to cartouche. There is this other one belonging to Palty. He doesn't bother to put his name in a cartouche, but a rather garbled version of the name of Tutnoses the III on the bottom. This is actually much later than Tutnoses the III.

We had one miscellaneous one. You can tell it is Egyptian by the ankh sign, but it had to be reconstructed from two different seals from the same person. You can see in this one you get the legs, and this one you get the ankh sign. If you get a little bit of the inscription on the second one over, you are able to come up with a composite line drawing.

And finally, I thought I'd just go over some of these seals that are connected with royalty because these have a secure date, and from them we can get a feel for the time period when this was used. So the first one of these belongs to a servant of Uzziah, and he reigns from 783-742 BC.

The next one belongs to the servant of Ahaz, who is Uzziahs grandson. This one belongs to Ahaz's son, Hezzekiah. And this one to Hezzekiahs son, Manassah. Note the similarity in the motifs. This one here belongs to a son of the king during Jeremiahs time period I am not sure exactly which king it is. And finally this one just tacked on the end of a jar handle tells us he is the son of a king, but does not tell us which one. So if you look at the time periods this is covering, we Uzziah 783-742 BC. Ahaz 735-715 BC, Hezzekiah 715-687 BC, Manassah 687-643 BC, and then the time period of Jeremiah around 600 BC. This period of using the royal seals with Egyptian iconography happens to match the time period where there is a peak in Egyptianizing materials in Israelite settings. This helps form some of the backdrop for Lehi's time in Jerusalem. It gives us some background which Lehi came out, that we also read in The Book of Mormon about having Egyptian influence there, which is repeated again in the end of The Book of Mormon.

All of this doesn't necessarily prove anything about The Book of Mormon. It is not one of those things sufficient for proof but provides backdrop for Lehi's day, and a background from which The Book of Mormon comes.

You can watch this lecture on our Youtube site at:

Pt 1- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt2Vxw1bQdw&feature=watch\\_response](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt2Vxw1bQdw&feature=watch_response)

Pt 2- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7yZnKFizLU&feature=watch\\_response](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7yZnKFizLU&feature=watch_response)

Pt. 3- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w2xRP8TZJ4&feature=watch\\_response](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w2xRP8TZJ4&feature=watch_response)