Manfred Bietak and Silvia Prell (Eds.)

The Enigma of the Hyksos
VOLUME IV

Changing Clusters and Migration in the Near Eastern Bronze Age
The Enigma of the Hyksos
Volume IV
Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant

CAENL

Edited by
Manfred Bietak, Rahim Shayegan and Willeke Wendrich

Volume 12

2021
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden
The Enigma of the Hyksos
Volume IV

Changing Clusters and Migration
in the Near Eastern Bronze Age

Collected Papers of a Workshop held in Vienna
4th–6th of December 2019

Edited by
Manfred Bietak and Silvia Prell

2021
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden
In Memory of Jochen Holger Schutkowski
(1956–2020)
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Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a – an Example of Levantine/Egyptian Commercial and Cultural Relations: A Step Towards the Understanding of the Hyksos Phenomenon

by Claude Doumet-Serhal¹ and Vanessa Boschloos²

Abstract
From the exchange of artefacts uncovered in Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a respectively, the close ties that existed between these two ancient centres of civilization are irrefutably well established. This paper sums up the range of contacts between the two cities which encompassed commercial ties, transmission of ideas, beliefs and concepts as well as examining how the spatial organisation of each city compared to the other. In Sidon during the Middle Bronze Age, the evolution between the MB IIA and the MB IIB manifested itself in the arrangement of human internments and the architecture surrounding them. Two main units, each with a different function, were encountered at Sidon: one for cultic purposes and the other for housing the dead. This type of arrangement, with a separate special area for the dead, was also found in Tell el-Dab’a where it was known as “Totenhäuser”. A further link between the two was the fact that this practice ended in both cities during the same time period (Sidon str. 6, Tell el-Dab’a E/2–1.)

Introduction
Manfred Bietak has continuously argued that the so-called Hyksos in Egypt were not the result of a sudden invasion but should be recognised as the product of a repetitive pattern of attraction for Egypt dating to prehistoric times³ and common to Western Asiatic population groups that were in search of a living in the country, especially around the Delta. As a result, ancient Egypt should be understood as a civilization carried by a heterogenous population, including a strong influx of Near Easterners. Data identifying names of foreign origin in Egyptian texts show people bearing Western Asiatic names from the 12ᵗʰ Dynasty onwards, with Canaanites being identified in Egyptian texts as “the Asiatics”.⁴

The continuity in the presence of a Western Asiatic population group can be firmly established in the Eastern Delta more than 150 years before the beginning of the Hyksos rule in Tell el-Dab’a/Avaris.⁵ The most accepted scenario postulates a gradual infiltration and settlement of Canaanites in the Eastern Delta as of the Middle Kingdom, encouraged by Egypt’s demand for raw material. The Canaanites increasingly played a central role as traders, middlemen, artisans, mercenaries and workers and Avaris should be viewed as a cosmopolitan harbour town⁶ with a large Levantine community involved in trade, sea travel and boat production.⁷ This culminated in their take-over of government in the mid-17ᵗʰ century BCE.

The question of geographic origin plays out mainly between the areas of northern coastal Lebanon and southern Canaan.⁸ Evidence points more favourably toward a gradual Near East infiltration from the northern Levant, today the Syrian and Lebanese coast, rather than the south, based on its vantage as a hub for the exchange of goods.⁹ Furthermore, the Egyptian ruling class seems to have maintained¹⁰ cultural exchanges and commercial ties mainly with the northern Levant, from where it took its architectural concepts and burial customs.

The city of Sidon, 30 km south of Beirut, was well known for its harbour and its main network of maritime commercial traffic (Fig. 1) which developed as early as the 12ᵗʰ Dynasty with Egypt, the Aegean and Cyprus. If we consider more specifically Egypt’s relations with the Lebanese coast, evidence of Egyptian activity is known from the Mit Rahina inscription, the earliest “bill of lading” or “cargo manifest”¹¹ with its lists of tribute goods from Lebanon. This inscription provides us with a catalogue of merchandise brought back to

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² The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; v.boschloos@gmail.com.
⁴ Sparks 2004, 30.
⁵ Bietak 2006, 285.
⁸ Bietak 2010, 150–151; Bietak argues for the northern Levant, discrediting the theory that the majority of the inhabitants of Avaris originated from southern Canaan; Mourad 2015, 11 and 217, “Nevertheless, the assertion that the Hyksos and their people are of sole Southern Levantine ethnicity is not supported by the evidence”. On the subject, see also the contribution by Ben-Tor in this volume.
⁹ Forstner-Müller and Kopetzky 2009, 150–154; Cohen Weinberger and Goren 2004, 81, the northern Levant had a pivotal role in the commerce layout of Tell el-Dab’a.
¹⁰ Mourad 2015, 217, “on the whole, the examined evidence suggests the Hyksos Dynasty was a result of the Egyptian ruler’s own persistent relations with the Levant from the very beginning of Dynasty 12 to the Second Intermediate Period”.
¹¹ Marcus 2007, 137, 145.
Egypt from Amenemhet II’s maritime expedition to the Lebanon and itemises several precious metals with a particular emphasis on silver, which was often found in Sidon’s burials.\textsuperscript{12}

The Sidon excavation, which began in 1998 on Sidon’s ‘College site’ and which is still ongoing, is a vivid Tell el-Dab’a counterpart with its similarities in burial customs, material culture, circulation of pottery and architectural concepts. Traditionally, funeral practices are deeply ingrained in a society’s culture and reflect that society’s beliefs, traditions and values and therefore any correlation in these practices between one people and another is usually a powerful indicator of association. In 2011–2012, an article titled “Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a: Two Cities – One Story” was published highlighting the similarity in burial customs and funerary material in the Middle Bronze Age graves in both Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a. Early Canaanites who settled in Tell el-Dab’a adapted and assimilated the customs and styles of Egyptians whilst also retaining their own burial customs which reflected their Canaanite origins\textsuperscript{13}. Moreover, although ‘specific warrior burials’ from the early MB IIA are found all over the Levant, the burials of Tell el-Dab’a and Sidon share with each other more than the usual markers found in Levantine Middle Bronze Age sites.\textsuperscript{14}

The Sidon excavation established a sustained practice of commercial relations with Egypt from the 12\textsuperscript{th} to the first half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty. Three of the excavated phases in the sand level belong to a sequence of burials which were deposited from the beginning of Middle Bronze Age IIA until the intermediate Middle Bronze Age IIA–IIB (stratum 4). Essentially, the cultural identity of the Sidonians at the beginning of the second millennium can chiefly be deduced from mortuary remains and burial offerings. The site was re-occupied from stratum 4 on top of the sand until stratum 8, with burials still present at each stratum together with architectural features.

\textsuperscript{12} DOUMET-SERHAL et al. 2007, 29–46.

\textsuperscript{13} PRELL 2019, 125–126, on the funerary customs that are definitely of non-Egyptian origin.

\textsuperscript{14} DOUMET-SERHAL and KOPETZKY 2011/2012, 9–10.
Trade Connections

Egyptian and Egyptian Style Pottery

Sidon’s College site yielded the largest collection so far of imported Egyptian pottery to the Levantine region during the Middle Bronze Age. While studies and percentages are still being assessed, it is clear that the corpus relates mostly to pottery of an average capacity of 10 to 45 litres but also includes some of over 100 litres as well as smaller jugs of 5 litres capacity. It is important to note at this stage that in Sidon, the increase of the Egyptian ceramic corpus from the early 12th Dynasty onwards involved mainly vessels which were highly suitable for the transport of commodities. The imports are solely represented by storage jars of various types and sizes produced in Marl clays. This means that trade with Egypt was the cornerstone of a market for comestible goods that were needed by the Levantine population and in the same way this trade was reciprocal and equally essential.

Per year, an estimated average of 8000 Canaanite jars containing olive oil and wine were shipped from the coast of Lebanon to Tell el-Dab‘a in the Delta.

One Marl A jar, found on top of a warrior burial, was imported from Upper Egypt and is dated to Senwosret I and pre-dating Senwosret III. Vessels made of Marl C were very popular: one Egyptian import from Sidon’s phase 1 (Tell el-Dab‘a stratum H or earlier) was found in burial 13. It consisted of a handmade Marl C-jar typical of the Egyptian 12th Dynasty. In Sidon phase 2 (Tell el-Dab‘a stratum H) a zîr, dated to between the reign of Amenemhat III and the beginning of the 13th Dynasty, reached Sidon and was reused as a burial container. In addition to the Egyptian pottery already published by Karin Kopetzky and Irene Forstner-Müller, along with some also listed in Mourad’s volume, further new vessels were discovered in the more recently uncovered graves.

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15 Kopetzky 2011/2012, 163–164.
16 The final publication will be undertaken by Karin Kopetzky.
17 Forstner-Müller, Kopetzky and Doumet-Serhal 2006, 55; Bader 2011, 143–144, 150.
18 Marcus 2006, 188.
19 Cateloy 2019, 298, during the Hyksos period capacity ranged between 25–38 litres whilst in the MB IIA capacity did not exceed 25 litres.
21 Bader 2003, 31–32.
Two Egyptian imports from burials 134 (Fig. 2) and 142, found in Sidon phase 3 (Tell el-Dab’a stratum G 4–1) and also of Marl C, fall into the period between the second half of the 12th Dynasty (probably from Senwosret III or Amenemhat III) and the first half of the 13th Dynasty. During the middle of the 13th Dynasty, namely the height of the trade imports, in Sidon’s stratum 4, a small Marl C-1 jar with a shaped rim was discovered in burial 131 (Fig. 3) while in stratum 5, a Marl C-1 cup from burial 133 (Fig. 4) is contemporary with its last appearance in phase E/3 in Tell el-Dab’a.

Nile clay vessels do not appear in Sidon before the very late MB IIC period and are very scarce as only two bowls and one jar were found, the latter also reused as a burial container. During the 18th Dynasty, contacts between the Hyksos kingdom and the Lebanese coast continued although on a much smaller scale than before.

A Tell-el-Yahudiye juglet (S/2170-3940/1379) from a bone layer (burial 7) (Fig. 5–5a) was found in Sidon decorated with a pattern of lotus blossoms flaring out from the top of a stem and tied together with hanging garlands and a standing bird facing six horizontal lines. According to M. Bietak, most of these juglets were produced shortly before the Hyksos period, are of Egyptian manufacture and were found on northern Lebanese sites as diverse as Tell Arqa, Tell el-Ghassil and Byblos.

The ‘Sidon jar’ (S/1785/1379) (Fig. 6) with its depiction of a sequence of leaping dolphins placed on a pattern of waves is an Aegean influenced production manufactured in Lebanon and is comparable to the incised dolphins on the Tell-el-Yahudiye dolphin vase found in Egypt. This jug is assigned a date no earlier than Tell el-Dab’a phase F and no later than phase E/3, a transitional period when the last types of the classical Middle Kingdom pottery vanish and a local development of vessels, later known as ‘classical Hyksos pottery’ begins. According to Bietak and Kopetzky, in historical terms, phases F and E/3 should be equated with the period of an independent kingdom at Avaris during the time of the 14th Dynasty.

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27 Kopetzky 2011/2012, 163.
30 Doumet-Serhal 2011/2012, 140, 141.
32 Mommsen 2006, 49.
33 Bietak and Kopetzky 2009, 31–32.
Textiles

In Sidon, over 30 small fragments of textile remain, preserved through the process of mineralisation into calcium carbonate, were found underneath the body of an adolescent in burial 102 belonging to stratum 5. The textile fragments, analysed at the UCL Institute of Archaeology, were found to probably belong to a single fabric woven in a slightly unbalanced tabby weave. The most remarkable aspect of this Sidon linen textile is the use of splicing which, while attested at Jericho, is generally associated with Egyptian textile technology. However, it remains difficult to ascertain if the fragments found in burial 102 represent an import from Egypt or if the textile was made locally using techniques associated with Egypt.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34} Gleba and Griffiths 2011/2012, 289, 294.
Fig. 6 Dolphin vessel S/1785/1379 (44 x 53.5 x 1 cm)
Images as Meaningful Media: Seal Impressions and Scarabs

Pottery, imported as receptacles of commodities, is not the only potential genus marker between Sidon and Tell el-Dab'a. A selection of artefacts such as seals and scarabs along with the interpretation of images also indicate religious and cultural connections between the two port cities. This article will not detail every locally made imitation and adaptation of Egyptian style seals in the Sidon iconography but will instead focus on the shared symbolic association which expressed a particular belief system.

Seal Impressions

It is not by chance that the topic of maritime religion in both Middle Bronze Age Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a, two close partners in the maritime trade and both deeply committed to the sacral protection of their seafaring citizens, was expressed in the same way and using the same motifs.

A jar handle with a seal impression was found in Sidon (SME/1089/1169) (Fig. 7) displaying a unique imprint of a ship with next to it the leonine dragon Ušumgal, the attendant of the storm god Adad. The similarities between the seal from Tell el-Dab’a (Fig. 8) and the Sidon seal is striking, with both more or less depicting the same ship design and the same theme of the weather god located adjacent to the ship.

Instead of a striding storm god, the Sidonians chose a non-human form of the god to epitomize this most fundamental ancient mythical perception of the Mesopotamian weather god which, on cuneiform sources of the Late Bronze Age, was the most important god in Sidon. Both seals from Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a belong to about the same period, namely G/4–1 context from the 13th Dynasty and stratum 4 in Sidon, and both illustrate the close links between northern, north-western and western Syria during the 18th century BCE as Syrian seals of these groups have been found all along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.

Scarabs (by Vanessa Boschloos)

The scarabs are one of the prime categories of material culture that shed light on the interface between Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a, particularly those assigned to the so-called “early Tell el-Dab’a workshop” (Fig. 9). In her study of scarabs from Tell el-Dab’a, Christa Mlinar classified the scarabs in six major groups, of which late Middle Kingdom types II (TD strata G/1–3–F) and III (TD strata G/1–3–E/3, with isolated survivals into E/2–1), dating from mid to late 13th Dynasty, are of interest here. Type II is relatively rare and has a semi-circular head with a fan-shaped clypeus and a lined back, whereas type III is more prevalent and shows an open hourglass-shaped head flanked by small, often round eyes. Its back can be plain or has lines indicating the wings, and the legs are usually incised with parallel lines indicating fore and mid-legs.

The use of Canaanite motifs on scarabs of these types makes it highly unlikely that they were manufactured anywhere else than in the Nile Delta. Mlinar argued that Tell el-Dab’a is the most likely place where these workshops would be located, because of its geographical position. She also noted their almost complete absence outside of Tell el-Dab’a, but this conclusion must be adjusted. Since her study, more attention has been paid to these scarabs and “early Tell el-Dab’a workshop” types have now been identified from other sites in Egypt, Nubia and the Levant, where at least a dozen type II and more than 50 type III scarabs have surfaced.

In this regard, the region of Sidon is one of the areas that stands out, for two reasons. Firstly, it is where nearly half of the hitherto identified type II scarabs were found. These were deposited in transitional MB IIA/IIB and early MB IIB burials in the region, i.e. shortly after their production period, which was limited to the middle of the 13th Dynasty. Secondly, together with Byblos and Beirut, Sidon is one of the sites with the largest amount of “early Tell el-Dab’a workshop” scarabs in the entire Levant. More importantly, Sidon is one of the few sites where they

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45 E.g. Mlinar 2004, fig. 4, no. 5, fig. 6a, no. 7.
46 Mlinar 2004, 113, 133.
47 For example, in addition to the 25 scarabs reported from Tell el-Dab’a by Mlinar, at least 30 were found during the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s excavations in Lisht (identified by Vanessa Boschloos in New York) and examples surfaced as far south as Ukma (Vila 1987, pl. VIII, nos. 170/2 and 170/4) and Sai (Graffin 1986, fig. 286, nos. Ib, Iib, IIb).
48 Catalogued by James M. Weinstein and Vanessa Boschloos, who presented this data at the ASOR meetings of 2018 and 2019 in preview of forthcoming papers.
49 From Ruweise tomb 66 (Turnell 1975/1976, fig. 1, no. 5, which is almost identical to Mlinar 2004, fig. 4, no. 1) and from College Site (S/4601/6037, S/4602/6037 and S/4604/6037 from burial 100 (Lofti 2011/2012, 116–119, nos. B.15–B.17) and S/1138/1191 from burial 139 (Boschloos 2018, no. 5).
50 The earliest occurrence seems to be at late MB IIA Tel Burga (D. Ben-Tor in: Golani 2011, 93–96). See below for attestations in late MB IIA strata at Sidon.
Fig. 7  Seal impression from Sidon on handle (SME/1089/1169); phase 3
are encountered in archaeological contexts that are contemporary with their production period in Egypt.

The oldest stratum in which they occur at College Site is Sidon phase 3 (burial 42) but they are also present in graves of stratum 4 (burials 93, 139, and 167) and stratum 5 (burials 67 and 100). The attestation in phase 3’s burial 42 (S/2657/2150) is however problematic: the oldest burial phase (phase 3, late MB IIA) is contemporary with the scarab’s production period but the grave was re-opened in Sidon phase 6 (MB IIB) so it is possible that the seal-amulet may have arrived in Sidon during the Second Intermediate Period. The scarabs in burial 93 (S/4511/6015), 139 (S/1138/1191) and 167 (S/8797/3433) were deposited in a period that overlaps with their production period (phase 4 corresponding to Tell el-Dab’a stratum F). Finally, with regard to those from burial 67 (S/2711/1906 and S/2716/1888), which belongs to Sidon phase 5 (early MB IIB, corresponding to Tell el-Dab’a stratum E3–E2), the possibility that they were deposited shortly after their production period in Egypt cannot be dismissed.

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51 Loffet 2008, 21, no. 23.
53 The scarab from burial 139 is a type II scarab (Boschloos 2018, no. 5).
54 Boschloos forthcoming report on scarabs from the 2018 excavation campaign.
56 The three scarabs in burial 100, which also belongs to Sidon’s phase 5, are type II and therefore older than the grave in which they were deposited.
Hieroglyphic Writing

A scaraboid (S/3487/583) (Fig. 10) found in the Middle Bronze Age IIB context stratum 6 and belonging to a Sidonian high ranking individual inscribed with the name ‘Beloved of Seth’ (Ba’al)\(^{57}\), Lord of the Land of Iay, confirms the existence in the Levant and outside of Byblos of a scribal tradition using Egyptian hieroglyphs.\(^{58}\) The fact that it takes the form of a scaraboid together with the form of the hieroglyphs, themselves somewhat hesitant when compared to Pharaonic documents of the same period, corroborates a Levantine rather than an Egyptian origin\(^{59}\) to the seal. What is also important is the epithet of the ruler, “beloved of Seth” (the interpretation aegyptiaca of Ba’al\(^{60}\) which can be considered as parallel to the epithet of king Nehesy of the 14\(^{th}\) Dynasty, who was referred to as “beloved by Seth, the Lord of Avaris”\(^{61}\).

A House for the Dead and a House for Funeral Rituals

The exchange of artefacts between Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a, these two ancient centres of civilization, is well and truly established. What is less well known is how the spatial organisation of each city compared to the other. In Sidon during the Middle Bronze Age, the evolution between the MB IIA, the MB IIB through to the LB I manifested itself in the arrangement of human interments and the architecture surrounding them. The use of funerary space in Sidon was clear from the beginning and did not alter according to need, even over time. Installations such as tannour, pits and basins were of course in constant adaptation and improvement whilst any enlargement was undertaken in an arbitrary manner.

Most of the burials in the sand, from phases 1 to 3 were not associated with any clearly defined architectural features except for two large pits containing the remains of feasting activity along with a large quantity of animal bones.

In stratum 4 (Fig. 11) on top of the sand, which corresponds to the transitional MB IIA/MB IIB period, a total of 33 burials were found consisting of simple inhumation in the ground, including jar burials of children as well as constructed graves. While most of the burials were found outside, only two were found for the first time inside a structure. These were burial 93, which contained the remains of what might have been a subadult early to late childhood\(^{62}\) and burial 113, which consisted merely of the remains of flexed legs. Sidon’s earliest Middle Bronze Age structure, Room 1, appears in this level. This very basic architectural unit consisted of a single rectangular room covering an area of 11.78 x 6.17 m.

Outside the room to the west, a ground surface was found in the NE corner of a multiple burial (103-104-107-109) with a deposit (7360) composed of a quantity of smashed pots, three astragali bones mixed with the pottery, a piece of human bone and animal. This deposit corresponds directly to material removed from a burial and dumped in this location. The suggestion is based on the presence of two large limestone slab stones (7350) located just SE of the dump, which may have been used as capping for the disturbed burial.

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\(^{57}\) Mourad 2019, 227, by the 19\(^{th}\) Dynasty, the names Baal and Seth were used interchangeably... 229 the majority of the data from this period appears to stem from elite and/or sacred contexts...

\(^{58}\) Gubel and Loffet 2011/2012, 79.

\(^{59}\) Ibidem.

\(^{60}\) Allon 2007, 20–21.

\(^{61}\) Bietak 2018, 247.

\(^{62}\) Following on the study of human bones undertaken by the team from the University of Bournemouth a category system will apply for both sex and age description:

- Prenate (unborn)
- Perinate (around birth)
- Infant (birth to 1 year)
- Early childhood (1–5 year)
- Late childhood (6–12 year)
- Adolescent (13–17 year)
- Young adult (18–35 year)
- Middle-aged adult (36–49 year)
- Old adult (50 + year)
Sidon and Tell el-Dab'a – an Example of Levantine/Egyptian Commercial and Cultural Relations

Fig. 11 Plan Sidon stratum 4
Fig. 12 Plan Sidon stratum 5
Stratum 5 (Fig. 12) is subdivided into two phases, a and b, both of which have the same basic architectural plan. Evidence of continuity between stratum 4 and stratum 5 is indicated by the reuse of two walls, namely 6005 and 1386/3153. A total of 34 burials were found. While some burials were found outside an architectural structure, ten were found inside Room 2.

Two main units, each with a different function, were encountered at Sidon in this MB IIB stratum for the first time. Room 1, where cult features were found, was the sacred area devoted to the ritual and Room 2 was a room housing the dead. According to Karin Kopetzky, this type of organisation, with the special area for the dead named “Totenhäuser”, started in Tell el-Dab’a at the end of phase G1–3, and similarly to Sidon, becomes more evident in phase F, the transitional MB II A/B period.

Room 1: For the Ritual

It is important to note that no burials were encountered at all in this chamber. However, features related to cult and ritual were found, namely:

- Mud brick square platform 3307 (71 x 60 cm) was found on top of a floor surface and was composed of two distinctive coloured mud bricks encased in a thick white plaster frame. An L-shaped arrangement of small nodules (6077) (1.26 x 1.04 x 0.3 m) was also found. It had a squared flat stone placed in the corner on top of which was placed a jar containing eight astragali aligned inside around the base. These objects were used in the ancient Near East for gaming, but in Sidon they also seem to have had a special ritual function.

- In the SE part of the room, benches, a basin and two ovens constructed of mud brick were all part of a feasting activity taking place in the room on a clay flooring (3226) which sloped downward towards the north and which had sustained several repair events. Another bench was found further east and might have been part of the ritual apparatus in another room further east which could not be excavated in full as it disappeared under a street leading to modern day Sidon’s souk.

Room 2: House for the Dead (Totenhäuser)

In the NE corner inside this unit, an assemblage (1945–1967) was found mainly consisting of a single-edged tannour (1947) as well as a double-edged one (1948) with an opening on its northern side (fig. 13). A small piece of walling, one course high and consisting of three stones (1950) was running NS east of burial 84. This burial consisted of an unlined grave pit containing two adult individuals, one on top of the other. Burial 84a was that of a middle-aged/old adult, oriented along a NS axis with the head to the north, the feet to the south with the knees towards the east. The body was in a flexed position. Burial 84b contained a flexed old female adult individual in a position almost identical to that of burial 84a except that the individual had been rotated 180° with the head to the south facing east and the feet and hips facing north. Both individuals were interred very near a small portion of a cobble floor running 96 cm NS and 95 cm EW. Six jar burials were also found in this room including: one infant burial (burial 86), two perinates (burials 81 and 89) and three subadults (early childhood). In addition, a large stone-lined walled grave (burials 67, 69, 74 and 75) contained respectively a middle-aged/old adult female, a subadult (late childhood), a middle-aged adult probably male and one subadult (early childhood) with further adult remains. The connections between burials and domestic activities in this unit such as the tannours will develop even further in stratum 6.

In stratum 5b, the doorway of the unit between walls 7362 and 7370 was blocked. An assemblage was found in phase B consisting of a large circular pit (7342), a stone bowl and a small piece of walling. A small rectangular basin-like cut (7357) (54 x 40 x 8 cm) with steep sloping sides and a flat base was added in Room 1, when the obstructing of the doorway took place.

Stratum 6 is notable for a conspicuous growth in the scale of the Totenhäuser. This stratum marked a new era of development as architectural units were consistently been enlarged in areas to the EW and S along with the construction of a temple. The degree of development concerning the intensity of space usage, compact layout and segmentation into juxtaposed quarters is an indication of the social development of the city with the density of the settlement peaking in this period (Fig. 13).

In this stratum, the space where Room 1 of stratum 5 was devoted to cult and ritual was reused to build a monumental temple with superimposed floor layers (area 1). This long monumental building, only excavated up to 7.94 m EW, continues on its eastern side under a modern street leading to modern day Sidon’s souk.

A total of 28 burials were found on this stratum. These graves were located both inside and outside the architectural units but none were found inside the temple. These units were connected to specific burial rituals based on domestic activities. They contained a hearth, pestles, mortars and animal bones. The configuration of the sites of the dead as well as the burials was imbued with the same symbolism that was active in the contemporary society of the day.

In order to facilitate the description, the ground plan was divided into houses/enclosures and numbered 2 to 6. Units 2 and 5 were similarly constructed as they both consisted respectively of a larger square (4.06 x 4.07 m) or rectangular room (6.84 x 4.23 m) in the north with a smaller adjacent one in the south, respectively unit 2a (5.36 x 1.51 m) and 5a (2.16 x 4.13 m).

Unit 2

This space was accessible through three entranceways, two in the east the third in the north. The two eastern entrances were later blocked in phase 6b when burial 63 was placed inside this room leaving only the northern door open. Two clay ovens (1848) were found in this space, the larger one to the south, the smaller one (42 x 38 x 25 cm) in the north together with a large pit (6047). The ash from within these ovens had slipped down the sides into a large subcircular cut. This had vertical flat sides and a concave base in which a large jar for burial 63 (phase 6b) was sunk. The jar contained the remains of a disarticulated adolescent of indeterminate sex and a middle-aged adult female.

In unit 2a, four burials (62, 73, 79, 80), were found belonging to two perinates/perinates, both within the same jar burial (burial 79a was 34–39 weeks old while burial 79b was 36–40 weeks old), one highly fragmented and disarticulated burial of an infant in a jar (burial 73) and two adolescents (burials 62 and 80) buried on the floor, burial 80 consisting only of a pair of articulated legs.

Unit 3

A 4 m long building situated NS/EW and very probably robbed in antiquity, was found south of the burial area. At the southern end of the easternmost room was burial 120, cut into the floor. The grave, placed within the floor, held the articulated remains of a subadult (early childhood) in a supine position, oriented NS, with the head to the south.

Unit 4

Another unit measuring 5.59 x 2.40 m was divided into two rooms by wall 1865/1033 running EW. The floor (1870=1045) of this room, disturbed by the construction of stone-lined pit 1050, was equipped with an EW mud brick bench (1873) consisting of rectangular blocks of dark and pale grey mud bricks lined with red and white plaster and placed against wall 1866.

It is not clear in this case if access to a courtyard or a room further west was made through a doorway in the NS running wall 1008 because no other walls were found. Burial 128, consisting of the burial of two subadults (early childhood and early/late childhood), was found in this area together with a rectangular stone-
Fig. 14  Sidon stratum 6
lined feature (65 x 64 x 45–55 cm) (1028) filled with fish bones, ash and charcoal. In this instance, the room was used for the ritual and the adjacent area for the burial.

**Unit 5**
In the large rectangular room (6. 96 m x 4.17 m), accessed through the west, an assemblage consisting of a wall, a clay oven, burials (40 and 41) and post holes was found in the north (Fig. 14). It consisted, from east to west, of the remains of a narrow NS running wall the purpose which is unknown but it was closely associated with and at the same level as jar burial 40 of a subadult of late childhood to the east and a clay oven (3523) to the west. Burial 41 consisted of a middle-aged to old adult of undetermined sex buried on the ground in a flexed position very near a post hole (1214) situated a little further to the NW. A small circular arrangement of mostly rounded pebbles (36 x 36 x16 cm) might have supported a wooden post. A small chalk-lined pit (1238) most probably related to the ritual was also found.

In burial 32, a very large limestone slab (1100) was found covering a rectangular stone feature located up against the western wall of the room. Slab 1100 was broken in the middle and both halves sloped towards the break. The burial was positioned over an empty pit with vertical sides. No purpose could be established for this pit which was located about 45 cm below the burial. Interestingly, the skeleton’s feet extended beyond the pit. The subcircular ovoid grave cut contained the single crouched inhumation of a middle-aged/old adult female. In the room further south, jar burial 97 belonged to a subadult (early childhood). The interment of a simple unlined burial of a single female subadult individual (late childhood) was also found further south in this room.

**Unit 6**
An L-shaped structure with a buttress was constructed with two adjacent benches.

A channel built along a fairly high-grade constructed wall and used in a ritual involving offerings went out of use at the end of stratum 6. The channel was adjacent to the burial area and it is believed that it was used for funerary cult rituals.

Sidon’s stratum 6 illustrates the end of the Totenhäuser tradition, a phenomenon also encountered in Tel el-Dab’a stratum E/2–1.

The most interesting aspect in the evolution of the funerary ritual in Sidon is that these various phases sustain an evolution from funerary-feasts-around-the-grave which shift to small architectural units before the final replacement of this feast by commemorative practices mainly inside the temple.

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It has become clear that remembrance and the worship of the dead were the most important aspect of Sidon’s College site excavations. The concept that there was a close connection between the social world of the living and the organisation of the space for the departed is irrefutable. This parallelism between the world of the living and that of the dead was articulated by the general organisation as to how respective places were practically expressed in the landscape over a long time period from stratum 4 to 8. The organisation of the sites of the dead as well as the burial rituals were both imbued with the same symbolism that was active in the living social world.

Parallels between the sites of the living and those of the dead can be found in rooms which were primarily connected to specific burial rituals inspired by domestic activities and hence the fact that they contained household paraphernalia such as the *tannour* and the grinding apparatus as well as food offerings which accompanied the burial process. These highlighted not only the ancestor cult but also the ‘house symbolism in death rituals’. The act of placing departed relatives in houses, most of them children buried with one or two adults of which most were female, was probably related to households, families or clans while other individuals, some belonging to the upper class, were buried outside. As a rule, upper class burials (burial 100–102 in stratum 5 for example), evident from the quality of their furnishings, were not interred in a room. In stratum 4 one room was reserved to bury the dead. This increased to two rooms in stratum 5 but in stratum 6 there is a surge in this practice resulting in a cluster of several houses reserved to bury the dead before disappearing in stratum 7.

**Conclusion**

Through the wide range of evidence which has emerged from the Sidon excavation, it is now acknowledged that the material uncovered and the inhumation traditions carried out shed a new light on the homeland of the people who were responsible for the establishment of the so-called Hyksos rule in Egypt. Whilst traded commercial goods between Sidon and Tell el-Dab’a were very popular, as were Egyptian luxury items, what is more important are the common cultural elements that emerged and established the strong impact of the Sidonian way of life in Tell el-Dab’a where these religious and funerary customs were performed and preserved over time. The strong impact of a maritime religion in both cities as early as MB IIA is embodied in the figure of the weather god. To what degree the worship of this god was confined to those of Canaanite descent is not clear and how familiar were the Tell el-
Dab'a inhabitants with Levantine gods in uncertain but what is important is the later evolution in MB IIB of deity syncretism involving gods such as Seth/Ba'al in a wide territorial region that spanned the distance between Tell el-Dab'a, Sidon and beyond. For example, the Sidon seal informs us that local inhabitants as far away as Iay in the Akkar plain, a few days march along the coast from Sidon, also revered Seth.

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69 MOURAD 2015, 28. PORADA 1984, 485–488 identifies the seal as locally-made.

70 GUCEL and LOFFET 2011/2012, 87.

71 MOURAD 2019, 231... the representation or adoption of this cult’s beliefs or practices would have also been advantageous for the maintenance or development of trade connections with the Near East.
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