

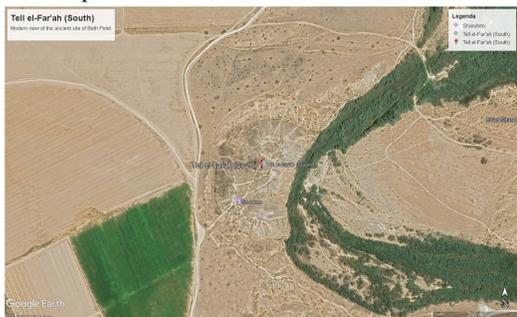
# Burial Traditions in Transitions: Exploring Egyptian Imprints in Late Bronze Age Levantine Tombs. The Case-Study of Tell el-Far'ah (South)



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## INTRODUCTION

- **Research Aim:** To develop a detailed database of funerary contexts from key Late Bronze Age sites in the southern Levant that show evidence of Egyptian imprint and are well-documented.
- **Methodology:** Collation of excavation data, burial inventories, and associated material culture. Focus on well-preserved contexts to ensure reliability and comparability
- **Why Funerary Contexts Matter:** Reflect core societal values, religious beliefs, and political affiliations. Serve as strong indicators of cultural contact and exchange
- **Egyptian Elements in the Levant:** Anthropoid coffins, specific grave goods, and tomb architecture
- **These may reflect:** Direct Egyptian control. Local elite adoption of foreign customs. Hybridization of Egyptian and Levantine practices



Google Earth-based map of the modern site of Tell el-Far'ah

## CEMETERY 900

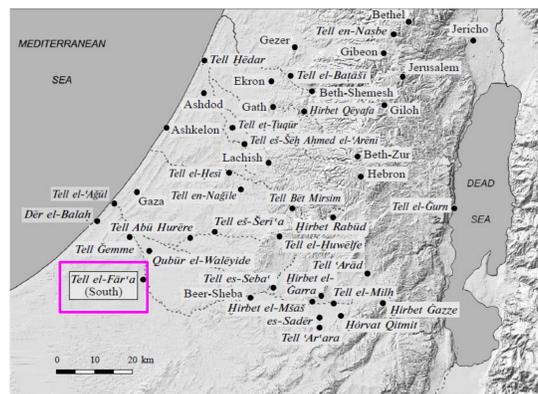
- Tell el-Far'ah (South) **Cemetery 900** is located in the southern sector of the site, where dozens of burials without coffins were found alongside a few containing anthropoid clay sarcophagi.
- The cemetery features a mix of **pit graves** and **shallow depressions**, often re-used or clustered.
- Most of the graves were **disturbed** in antiquity, and skeletal remains are often fragmentary and disassociated from grave goods.
- The **anthropoid coffins** were found only in a few tombs, including **Tomb 935**, which is among the best documented.
- The **spatial distribution** of these graves suggests a degree of organization, possibly reflecting status, cultural background, or ritual practices.



Fragment of a clay lid from one of the anthropoid coffins. ©Petrie, 1930

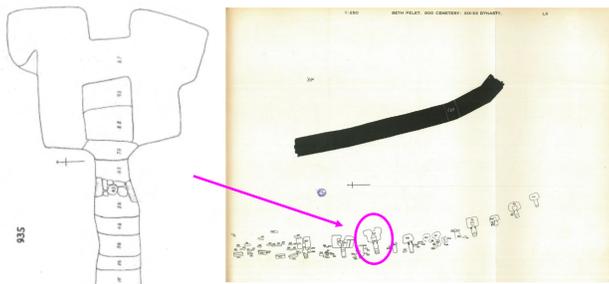
## TELL EL-FAR'AH (SOUTH)

- **Key Site:** Strategic location on the Philistine plain; part of Egypt's imperial system.
- **Occupation:** Settled from Early Bronze Age to Hellenistic times, but modest in early phases.
- **Egyptian Phase:** Likely Hyksos site; becomes important under Egyptian rule (18th Dynasty).
- **Historical Role:** Possibly Sharuhen; integrated post-Megiddo Battle (Thutmose III).
- **Decline:** Like many Levantine cities, it collapsed at the end of the Late Bronze Age.



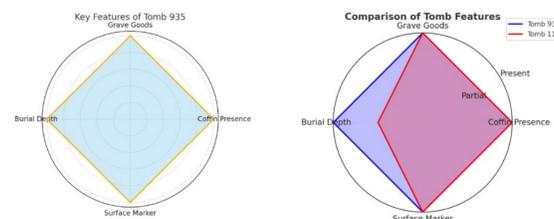
Tell el-Far'ah (South) in context with other important cities. ©Lehman, 2018

## TOMB 935



Tomb 935 and Cemetery 900 overview. ©Starkey&Harding, 1932

- Simple **pit burial** containing an **anthropoid clay coffin**.
- **Coffin lid** found in fragments; features a stylized human face with **exaggerated traits**.
- Likely belongs to the "**grotesque**" coffin type, known from other tombs at the site.
- Limited grave goods suggest **modest burial** but symbolic use of **Egyptian-style elements**.
- Indicates adoption of **Egyptian funerary forms** by local elites during the **Late Bronze Age**.



## CONCLUSIONS

- **Tell el-Far'ah (South)** offers key data on Egyptian-Levantine cultural entanglements.
- **Anthropoid coffins** signal Egyptian imprint, possibly elite emulation.
- **Poor preservation and looting** limit full contextual analysis.
- **Future research** needed to clarify burial assemblages and site chronology.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

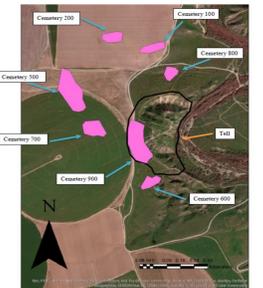
- **Sample:** 129 tombs excavated; most poorly preserved or looted.
- **Types:** Mainly pit burials and simple shaft graves; no built chambers.
- **Coffins:** Anthropoid clay coffins found in 8 tombs, mostly in Cemetery 900.
- **Distribution:** Coffins often found without lids; scattered body parts.
- **Grave Goods:** Scarce—mainly Cypriot pottery, a few Egyptian-style amulets, and bronze items.
- **Significance:** Finds suggest elite burials with Egyptian influence, despite looting and erosion.



Tombs of Cemetery 900. ©Petrie, 1930



Skull found in one of the tombs. ©Petrie, 1930



Cemeteries relations. ©Reeves, 2018

## BURIAL CUSTOMS

- **Funerary Practices:**
  - Flexed burials with pottery, weapons, ornaments
  - Variability suggests social or cultural differences
- **Anthropoid Coffins:**
  - Locally-made, clay versions of Egyptian types
  - Likely used by a local elite adopting Egyptian customs
- **Cultural Blending:**
  - Canaanite and Egyptian elements co-exist
  - Reflects hybrid identities under Egyptian rule
- **Symbolism:**
  - Coffins echo Egyptian afterlife beliefs
  - Scarabs and amulets imply spiritual protection



Tell el-Far'ah (South) tomb. ©Israel Antiquities Authority, 1929



Tell el-Far'ah (South) site. ©Israel Antiquities Authority, 1929

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