

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION OF IDENTITIES AND MATERIAL CULTURE

2.1. FORMATION OF THE ASPECTS OF IDENTITIES

“... while a rich Goth acted the Roman, the poor Roman aped the Goth ...”
(Halsall 2007, 335 ascribed to Theodoric)

Consideration of research literature dealing with medieval,⁵² historical,⁵³ classical⁵⁴ and pre-historic archaeology,⁵⁵ social anthropology,⁵⁶ ethnography⁵⁷ and sociology⁵⁸ widens a narrow understanding of the character of identity. Traditionally, the research focus in archaeology lies almost exclusively on ethnicity, which dominates the debate, although it is but one aspect of identity of a person.⁵⁹ Moreover, it is probably the aspect of least relevance for the lives of ancient people.⁶⁰ That this focus represents a drastic simplification of multiple and complex processes derived from complex cultural developments within groups that might frequently change has been one important outcome of long discussions and numerous case studies.⁶¹ Including and giving greater attention to the social nature and multiplicity of gender, age, status, class, sex, profession, region, religion as well as previous personal experiences in order to provide a more complete picture of identity, namely the sum of social experiences which moulds personal identity and keeps it fluid and temporarily changing, has frequently been proposed and sometimes appears in case studies.⁶² Personhood was the latest addition to these aspects.⁶³ These aspects can also be understood as forms of social division and, thus, confirm these phenomena as social.⁶⁴ Thus, they have to be considered within the context of social groupings. Moreover, the active role of the proponent(s) in construction and intermittent change of various aspects of identity has been put forward. These changes may very well overlap or occur concurrently due to concomitant memberships

⁵² Pohl 1998; Pohl 2010.

⁵³ Orser 1991; Jones 1999a.

⁵⁴ Jones 1997, 29–39, 131–135; Webster 2001; Fahlander 2007, 20–21; Halsall 2007; MacSweeney 2017; Van Oyen 2017.

⁵⁵ Veit 1989; Jones 1997; Jones 1998; Brather 2004; Gramsch 2015.

⁵⁶ Barth 1969; Bentley 1987; Barth 1996 [1969]; Jones 1999b, 152–157; Hahn 2005; Fahlander 2007, 20, and older references going back to the early 20th century.

⁵⁷ Jones 1997 for many examples with bibliography as well as Fahlander 2007, 20.

⁵⁸ E.g. Bourdieu 1977; Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Hirschauer 2014. More recently Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 14–19, critically review the heterogeneity of identity and its meaning and propose to replace it by identification and self-understanding. These, however, are unlikely to be isolated in archaeological sources. For the building of a national identity *inter alia* by means of constructed history see El-Haj 2002.

⁵⁹ Brather 2004, 616; see Brubaker and Cooper 2000 for the problematic side and use of this concept.

⁶⁰ Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Trigger 1977, 21–22; Jones 1997, 101–105; Johnson 1999; Schneider 2003a, 321–322, 334; Lucy 2005, 100, 109; Hakenbeck 2007; Liszka 2012, 239; Moers 2015. In contrast Halsall 2007, 38–39, thinks ethnic identity is more significant than other aspects of identity. Such a view depends certainly on the density and nature of the source material.

⁶¹ Shennan 1989, 20; MacSweeney 2009; Pohl 2010.

⁶² Daim 1998; Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Halsall 2007, 38–39.

⁶³ See Fowler 2010, 365–385, for an overview.

⁶⁴ DeMarrais 2004, 15.

in different social groups⁶⁵ or even be cultivated by the individuals themselves for reasons of status, individuality or social strategy.⁶⁶

Further, this process, or rather processes are firmly connected to human organisation into social groups – large or small – and their fluid idiosyncrasy of self-conscious identification with people belonging to one particular group and comparison with other groups. This constitutes a subjective and (self-) ascribed approach as described by Fredrik Barth.⁶⁷ Only in distinguishing the self-conscious group of members from the group of outsiders can an (ethnic) identity⁶⁸ be constructed, which is basically a testing of boundary against counter boundary by respective groups, thus constituting a mutual negotiation process. These “boundaries” should not be imagined as solid but rather as distinctiveness or differences.⁶⁹ Only this two- or multi-way process and the following recognition⁷⁰ of a group with different qualities provide differentiation of groups and the assignation of a range of qualities, which also differ between groups and which are usually chosen by the groups themselves.⁷¹ A good example for such a differentiation is language, not only through different languages, but also by different pronunciations, accents, choice of specific words or dialects within the same language referring to smaller regionally and sometimes socially defined differentiations.⁷² Egyptologists working in archaeology in Egypt, just as classicists working in Greece, may be described as a social group which is not influenced by language, social background, (modern) nationality or gender (at least in more recent years) but solely by a common interest cutting across nationalities as well as social classes. The behaviour connected to this identity includes travelling to Egypt regularly, visiting the same places and doing essentially the same things but perhaps differing in applications of archaeological methodology, according to which university the Egyptologists attended. According to social anthropological approaches this would constitute an equally viable identity to be constructed by members of such a group (not based on ethnic considerations).⁷³ It has to be borne in mind, though, that any boundaries mentioned are permeable and not completely fixed but fluid and dynamic, while individual group members are also part of multiple groups at the same time.⁷⁴

To complicate matters, not only individuals of homogenous origin and/or language may form groups, but also other individuals who find sufficient cultural or other similarities amongst themselves to create a common ‘myth of origin’ in the broadest sense to stress their real or conceived similarity either in terms

⁶⁵ Wiessner 1989, 56–57; Daim 1998, 76–79; Lucy 2005, 97.

⁶⁶ Barth 1969; Barth 1996 [1969]; Jones 1996, 67.

⁶⁷ Smith 2003, 16–17; Liszka 2012, 52–53.

⁶⁸ E.g. Barth 1996 [1969], especially for ethnic groups, 299–300. This also seems to be valid for other aspects of identity, Barth 1996 [1969], 302. See also Glazer and Moynihan (1975, 3–5) who wanted to define and illustrate the phenomenon “ethnicity”, which they conceived as new. But this is denied by Emberling 1997; Smith 2003, 11–12, 15, 20–22. See also Jones 1997, 95–96; Daim 1998; Brather 2004, 97, 100; Lucy 2005, 95; Antonaccio 2010, 46–47; Liszka 2012, 52.

⁶⁹ Emberling 1997, 300; Jones 1997, 74.

⁷⁰ “Identity is fundamentally a question of recognition” Graves-Brown 1996, 92.

⁷¹ E.g. Barth 1996 [1969], 296; Brather 2004; Lucy 2005, 95–96; Hirschauer 2014.

⁷² Good examples of these are to be found in Austria as well as in the United Kingdom with their many different dialects, and habitual uses of certain words in certain contexts. It even becomes immediately apparent if a person was socialised in a different region within Austria/UK at the first moment a person starts to speak. However, that says nothing about the ethnic background of an individual. This is the first step in being assessed by the opposite groups as a member or an outsider. But also note that it is possible to adapt to such language patterns more or less easily, depending on individual talent, in order to “fit into the group”. Again this is a conscious choice and strategy: see Brather 2004, 619–620, with similar thoughts; cf. Hall 2002, *passim* for the use of language in identifying ethnic identity in antiquity, totally denying that archaeology can add any knowledge. Cf. Barth 1996 [1969], 299 and 319. But also note that language alone is not equivalent to ethnicity, cf. Renfrew 1996, 128–129; Brather 2004, 90. At the same time, such features do not exist in order to express identity; they developed due to social and cultural conditions and, thus, may express identity: cf. Graves-Brown 1996, 90–91. See Fox 2004 for certain behaviours in modern English society.

⁷³ Cf. Daim 1998; specialists in Egyptian pottery studies might be recognised as a group by finding profile gauges among their material possessions, but plumbers and specialists in Roman pottery might also have examples of these. Only further equipment and the possession of certain books would provide a more detailed picture of the occupation held.

⁷⁴ Jones 1996, 66; Smith 2003, 4–6; Lucy 2005, 95.

of origin,⁷⁵ common fate or even a prolonged time of common experience (e.g. a prolonged migration of individuals of different cultural background, or working in Egypt). What is important is the *conceived* sameness of individuals and real or assumed cultural difference to others,⁷⁶ whether it is strictly speaking ‘true’ or not.⁷⁷

The most important aspect here is a multiplicity of aspects of identity that makes a description of individuals more difficult to contemplate and describe than “individual is A” or “individual is not A”. A shift away from binary constructions (e.g. Egyptian/non-Egyptian) to a more fluid and overlapping concept seems to be called for⁷⁸ and not only in terms of identity.⁷⁹ The introduction of more and more fluid categories solves this problem and gives justice to cultural contacts, which have an impact on both “parties” and leave behind two slightly changed entities,⁸⁰ whether this is in any way noticeable in everyday life, let alone in archaeology, or not, or if is only cognitive.

Using these observations for focussing on ethnic identity, it has been described as “[...] that aspect of a person’s self-conceptualisation, which results from identification with a broader group in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent”.⁸¹ But this is also true of some other aspects of identity. The distinction of, or the need to subscribe to ethnic identities is often brought about by conflicts – when it becomes necessary to define and delimit one’s social group from another in greater detail.⁸² This also stresses the arbitrary and socially induced nature of the phenomenon,⁸³ which is described as reactive by some,⁸⁴ and is often the product of (colonial) history and its identifications.⁸⁵

Finally, it needs to be stressed again that “biological ethnicity” or “descent” does not influence the social and cultural behaviour of a person much⁸⁶ because both can be changed e.g. if advantages within the social environments are desired.⁸⁷ In other words “One does not possess an ethnic identity but creates

⁷⁵ Emberling and Yoffee 1999, 274, for Mesopotamia; Brather 2004, 104–107 for prehistory; Halsall 2007, 458–459, for Late Antiquity; Antonaccio 2010, 33, for the descent from a common ancestry and identification of original home territory in a Greek context; see also Dietler 2010, 84; Riggs and Baines 2012; Sommer 2017.

⁷⁶ Jones 1996, 66–67; Renfrew 1996, 130; Emberling 1997, 302–303; Schneider 2003a, 317–318; Smith 2003, 6; Halsall 2007, 458; Smith 2007, 220–221; Antonaccio 2010, 33; Riggs and Baines 2012.

⁷⁷ Bentley 1987, 27, 45–46; Emberling 1997, 303; Halsall 2007, 45; Antonaccio 2010, 33, 38.

⁷⁸ Brace et al. 1993, 25–26, for a modern Egyptian example of identity; Halsall 2007; Pohl 2010, 10–11.

⁷⁹ Cf. Bader 2013a and below. See Lumsden 2008 for other binary categories such as subject/object; mind/body; material/social and Renfrew 2004, 23, and Dietler 2010, 20, 49, for literate/non-literate; colonisers/colonised; dynamic/static, etc.

⁸⁰ Cf. Lumsden 2008, 42, who also observed a transformation of all participants for Karum Kanesh in Anatolia.

⁸¹ Renfrew 1996, 130; Jones 1997, xiii, discussed in detail in 84–105.

⁸² Jones 1997; Smith 2003 also brought about by colonial situations externally; Smith 2007, 231; Dietler 2010, 84; Liszka 2012, 53–56.

⁸³ Jones 1997, 136–144; Emberling and Yoffee 1999, 274; Smith 2007, 339.

⁸⁴ Smith 2003, 20.

⁸⁵ Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 21–24.

⁸⁶ Barth 1969, 10–11; Hodder 1978, 12; Emberling 1997, 298, 302, with bibliography; Emberling and Yoffee 1999, 273–274; Jones 1999b; Schneider 2003a, 317–318; Brather 2004, 84–87; Lucy 2005, 93: “... unfounded assumption of a link between ‘ethnic’ or ‘racial’ groups and genetic variation”; Halsall 2007, 466; Smith 2007, 220–221; Fazioli 2014, 24, with bibliography; Welte 2016, 173–175, for a sceptical view on ethnic groups from a biological angle. Renfrew (1996) included genetic relationship in his definition, see 130. But there are also scholars relying on distinction of ethnic groups by means of skeletal remains, e.g. Buzon 2006. Such interpretations are contested by Graves-Brown 1996. Brace et al. (1993) argue with the similarity of craniofacial measurements representing spatial closeness and, thus, rejecting the concept of “race” as their Egyptian sample is very homogeneous compared to their other data from all over the world. However, the fact that one skull is different (21–22) they explain in a culture-historical way and ascribe a Germanic derivation to it. The basic interpretation of these measurements as a measure of similarity of people, who are indigenous Egyptians, remains the same as other methods of physical anthropology. See also Liszka 2012, 465–479, with bibliography, for problems arising from craniometric skeletal studies of supposed Nubian individuals.

⁸⁷ In the instrumental view of the concept which most scholars followed. Cf. Barth 1969, 15–16; Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Jones 1997, 72–79, for definition and critique of this approach; Jones 1998, 38; Schneider 2003a, 316–318; Smith 2003, 17, 204–205; Halsall 2007, 470–482.

one,”⁸⁸ comparable to a self performance.⁸⁹ Moreover, “an ethnic identity is not derived from a ‘natural order’”⁹⁰ but the result of historical processes.⁹¹ Halsall summarises it as a cognitive, performative, dynamic, situational⁹² and multi-layered⁹³ phenomenon.⁹⁴ This instrumentalist view stands in stark contrast to a essentialist/primordialist interpretation of ethnic identity, in which a person is born into an identity that can neither be changed nor changes of its own accord. This view has been largely abandoned in archaeological considerations⁹⁵ and has to be named for what it is: racism.

From a post-structuralist viewpoint, identity is seen as continuously defined, inter-referential and contextual in a relational construction.⁹⁶ To close this section with Siân Jones’ words “ethnicity is a multidimensional phenomenon constituted in different ways in different social domains.”⁹⁷ Moreover, it is “rather a classification than a property inherent in a group.”⁹⁸

2.2. IDENTITY AND CULTURE CONCEPTS

A necessarily brief consideration of the understanding and definition of ‘culture’ deeply exemplifies how differences in this understanding impact the interpretation of the process of interaction, contacts and conflicts⁹⁹ between cultural groups and how acceptance, appropriation¹⁰⁰ and rejection¹⁰¹ of cultural traits are viewed to have functioned, namely whether cultures are homogeneous, impermeable, monolithic and isolated through the existence of a firm boundary and take on no influences or if they are open for inclusion of “external” cultural traits (Fig. 1).¹⁰² According to Michael Dietler’s definition, culture is also “the ceaseless process of construction through fusion”.¹⁰³ The development of the meaning of the term “culture” from its roots in the Latin concepts of *natio*, *gens* and *populus* up to the narrow meaning of “Kultur” in German philosophy plays a role in how the term is conceived in the modern world and continues to change within the contexts in which it is used.¹⁰⁴ In culture history a normative culture concept dominates which represents a set of shared ideas. Within the concept the material remains also express these norms (e.g. identical burial customs) and are thought of as quite unchanging with

⁸⁸ Jones 1997, 90; Smith 2003, 188; Lucy 2005, 95; Burmeister 2016, 48. See also Bentley 1987 for an example.

⁸⁹ Hicks 2010, 365.

⁹⁰ Jones 1997, 65–72; Jones 1999b, 152; Schneider 2003a, 316–318; Smith 2003, 11, 16, contra a primordialist understanding; Brather 2004, 110; Lucy 2005, 97; Liszka 2012, 46–57. Interestingly, Smith 2018, 116, states that “ethnicity is constructed as an essential category at birth” but is “still mutable and socially contingent”.

⁹¹ Brather 2004, 111.

⁹² Bentley 1987, 35; Emberling 1997, 307; Jones 1997, 91; Smith 2003, xv, 188; Brather 2004, 110, 290, 616; Liszka 2012, 50–51.

⁹³ Brather 2004, 110.

⁹⁴ Graves-Brown 1996, 91; Jones 1997, 100; Smith 2003, 6; Brather 2004, 110–111; Halsall 2007, 40, 42, 466; Smith 2007, 232.

⁹⁵ See Lumsden 2008, 29, and works there quoted; For Nubian-Egyptian relations, see Raue 2018, 10–11.

⁹⁶ Fowler 2010, 362.

⁹⁷ Jones 1997, 100.

⁹⁸ Dietler 2010, 81.

⁹⁹ Jones 1998, 48; Fahlander 2007; Lohwasser 2017, not in the sense of a violent event.

¹⁰⁰ This term is not used with its negative modern English connotation but as a technical term to describe the accepting of some cultural features as defined by Hahn 2005, 99–107.

¹⁰¹ Dietler 2010, 70, about rejection as an important part of (colonial) encounters.

¹⁰² Some aspects of this with regard to Egyptian cultural traditions and references are more extensively discussed in Bader 2012; Bader 2013a; Bader 2017b. For other areas and fields, see Bhabha 1994; Fahlander 2007; Gramsch 2015 and numerous others. But also see Sahlins (1999) highlighting a line of thought in the early 20th century which saw ‘culture’ neither as uniform nor unchangeable.

¹⁰³ Dietler 2010, 54–55, 57–59.

¹⁰⁴ Díaz-Andreu 1996; Brather 2004, 618–620; DeMarrais 2004, 12–14.

an expected outcome,¹⁰⁵ although Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* theory avoids such a view (see below for details).¹⁰⁶

After having described some of the pre-conditions and problems in researching ancient identities, it is worth looking at the (e)motion which initiated this research avenue towards post-colonial theory concepts, which attracted criticism.¹⁰⁷ One outcome is Homi Bhabha's view of culture as a specific temporal constellation, composed of various elements, many of which are shared with other such social collectives.¹⁰⁸

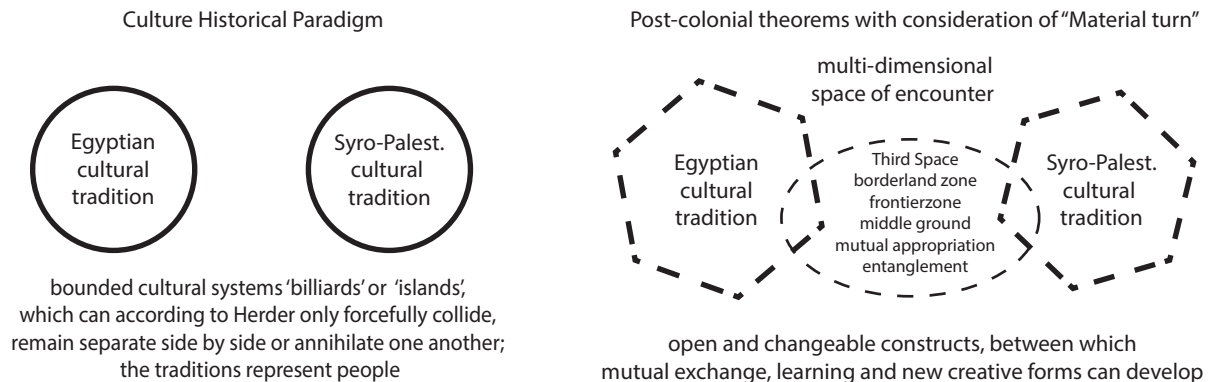


Fig. 1 Scheme of cultures in culture historical paradigm and post-colonial theory (B. Bader)

The trigger for this direction of research may be seen in various political developments such as the end of European colonial rule and conflicts evoked by “ethnic issues”,¹⁰⁹ ever more rapid globalisation, mass migration and cultural mixture, phenomena that increasingly influence the life of every single person on the planet and the question of who we ourselves are in contrast to individuals who arrived from elsewhere.¹¹⁰ Another side of the same question is as follows: in which ways do either the arrival of people from elsewhere, information about other regions of the world, or the use and consumption of objects and/or products¹¹¹ change us and our traditional ways of life? On the other hand, one must also ask, does it really always need an external impetus to change culture and the “way of doing things” or can change be the answer to local developments within a society as well? Bhabha also sees culture as something that can only be described by way of differentiation from others,¹¹² which is in fact very similar to the construction of identity (see above). For the younger generation a world in which one does not receive news or objects from the other side of the world or from even remote places in an instant seems unimaginable.¹¹³ With this development in mind, a search for diachronic and depoliticised examples and historical case studies, where external influences seem to change ‘the way of doing things’, is instructive. Also informative is studying how people coped with changes and what exactly provoked such changes.

¹⁰⁵ Jones 1997, 24–25, 84, 131; Jones 1999b, 161; Johnson 2010, 15–21; Liszka 2012, 42–46. Hicks 2010, 34: “... identification of particular artefact types with particular narrative ethnic/cultural groups in order to trace migration/diffusion ...”; Gramsch 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Bourdieu 1977; Jones 1997, 88–89.

¹⁰⁷ Sahlins 1999.

¹⁰⁸ Bhabha 1994, 35–37; Fahlander 2007, 22–26.

¹⁰⁹ Barth 1996 [1969], 318; Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 5–6; Bentley 1987, 47; Shennan 1989, 29–30; Veit 1989; Renfrew 1996, 125–127, 134–135; Chapman 1997; Jones 1997, 1–6, 102–105, 141–144; Jones 1999b, 163–164; For deconstructing previous racist use of archaeology see Jones 1999b, 155–156. See also Dittmann 2001, 291; Brather 2004, 615–616; Lucy 2005, 87, 98–99; Halsall 2007, 35–36; Antonaccio 2010, 35.

¹¹⁰ See Barth 1995 for highlighting the political use of culture and counter strategies.

¹¹¹ Miller 2002.

¹¹² Fahlander 2007, 25, explaining Bhabha.

¹¹³ There were times, not so long ago, when letters were the only reasonably cheap and quick means of communication.

Nevertheless, the nature of change often remains sketchy and not well enough described. However, the search for a development implies a teleological¹¹⁴ and/or even Darwinian train of thought,¹¹⁵ which is an imposition, as such processes cannot be directed towards a defined goal because such a goal would only be obvious in retrospect. Thus, this would imply the imagined development towards a preconceived goal cannot be intentional and therefore is not ancient at all. Therefore, theories using a predefined point of a development as ‘natural’ and inevitable result are almost certainly artificial constructs with little relation to the past. Of crucial importance for understanding cultural change is, in contrast, the way in which ‘culture’ is perceived as a concept and this is by no means a question on which scholars unanimously agree. In this chapter it is impossible to even sketch all the different opinions and definitions of what this term comprises today¹¹⁶ or to give an overview of how it was conceived by present and past philosophers or sociologists¹¹⁷ and early archaeologists, whose thinking implicitly persists until the present. It should also not be forgotten that the life experiences of researchers and scholars have an immediate impact on the nature of their interpretations.¹¹⁸ At an early stage, archaeology, originally conceived as an auxiliary science to ancient history, was used in a modernistic way to illustrate then current socio-economic processes such as migrations, general upheaval as well as territorial questions connected with the formation of nation states in the 19th century.¹¹⁹ Scholars of the humanities still struggle to break free from the inherent need to neatly classify correlates of human behaviour in an empiricist tradition derived from connections to early science.¹²⁰ However, it is notoriously difficult to avoid generalising the ‘untidy’ issues (such as variations in cultural practice, objects not fitting pre-conceived typologies derived from normative expectation), which would advance research into strict classifications where material is made to fit categories and then disappears from analysis. Such disappearance becomes greater, the more numerous an artefact type is.

Rather, the way forward would seem to be to consider ‘culture’ as an active and dynamic process, during which course numerous subtle and radical alterations, continuities and discontinuities happen due to different social actors in many different contexts. It is crucial to consider the active role of material culture beyond just being created and used as this is necessary to gain an understanding of the ancient world which has an active part in human relations and social and cultural structures.¹²¹

2.3. PAST IDENTITY AND MATERIAL CULTURE: HOW TO GET FROM AN IDEA TO ‘THINGS’

A longstanding tradition in ancient history is to investigate the identities of past peoples whom we look back upon. Whilst textual sources provide one type of evidence, material culture has been used to illustrate, and complement our understanding of history as correlates of social practices.¹²² In order to connect the identity debate with archaeology, it is necessary to discuss briefly the connection of identity with material culture and the problems in the interpretation derived from it.

¹¹⁴ Graves-Brown 1996; Jones 1996, 65.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Haaland 1977, 3; Graves-Brown 1996; Hicks 2010, 30–31.

¹¹⁶ E.g. Stefan Hirschauer, termed it “temporäre Stabilisierung von Hybridisierungserscheinungen” [temporary stabilisation of features of hybridisation] in his lecture ‘Un/doing Differences. Humandifferenzierung in der vergleichenden Forschung’ given at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, First Lecture on Gender & Diversity, 19th of October 2016.

¹¹⁷ For a necessarily selective overview see Bader 2017b. See also Hicks 2010 and Priglinger 2018, 22–24, for a historical overview of the concepts of cultural change and migration theory, and Sahlins 1999.

¹¹⁸ Chapman 1997; Breyer 2010, 494. On a meta-level, archaeological works tell us as much about the researchers and their life circumstances as about the researched subject.

¹¹⁹ Smith 2003; Lucy 2005, 88.

¹²⁰ Cf. Jones 1997, 110; Hicks 2010, 25–38.

¹²¹ Hicks 2010, 345–346; Gramsch 2015.

¹²² Jones 1998, 35; Smith 2003; Hicks 2010; Meskell 2002 for mentioning the problem but without going into detail. Bader 2017b for an Egyptian example.

Material culture encompasses all things individuals surround themselves with and it provides the framework that contains the actions undertaken by members of past social groups or societies.¹²³ As such it provides correlates left behind by a social group in their specific way of doing things, representing the complex clues to unravel the complementary picture not reflected by textual evidence. A personal connection to things exists at the earliest developmental stage of humans, before the ability to speak is learnt by infants. Material culture represents numerous relationships between people and things, as well as between things, and thus networks,¹²⁴ which means that there is no one-to-one relationship between culture and its material manifestations.¹²⁵ “Ethnic groups are not neatly packaged territorially bound culture bearing units in the present, nor are they likely to have been in the past.”¹²⁶

There are doubts that material culture can be utilised for explanatory models concerning (ethnic) identity because some scholars insist that written categorisation needs to have been used by an (ancient) administration in the form of lists of various peoples, for example, in order to ascertain the existence of an ethnic identity concept.¹²⁷ This, of course, would rule out purely archaeological finds, where textual evidence and prosopographic information or a “myth of common descent” cannot be obtained, but such restriction would severely neglect the traces of the lives of the non-élite and the illiterate¹²⁸ even if they cannot be taken as direct evidence.¹²⁹

The use of material culture as a passive interpretative tool for ethnic identity that can be read like a text began with a culture-historical approach. The culture-historical school of thought connected a set of recurring objects and/or archaeological traits with groups of people or societies in the broadest sense with the same identity, usually ethnic identity, and equated them with ‘archaeological cultures’. This means archaeological records and objects were equated with ethnic groups.¹³⁰ Taking this concept further, single objects have been used to assign individuals to ethnic groups on the grounds that the very visible and conscious use of said objects displays a belonging to a certain social (and ethnic) group. This approach was developed from the thought that manufacture of any object underlies the intrinsic rules of the social group to which the maker and the user belong¹³¹ and therefore ethnic connotations are subconsciously inherent in that object, and may thus be directly identified.¹³²

This concept continues to be used as a quite recent example shows. Fredrik Barth, who laid the foundations for instrumental identity research, was quoted by Henriette Hafsaas¹³³ to have written that “material culture”¹³⁴ would be an expression of ethnic identity. Henriette Hafsaas then used her interpretation

¹²³ For a more encompassing view including environment, animals, and other aspects, research moved to the concept of materiality. Cf. DeMarrais et al. 2004; Hicks 2010.

¹²⁴ Halsall 2007, 30–31; Antonaccio 2010, 38–39, 46; Hicks 2010.

¹²⁵ Haaland 1977, 27; Liszka 2012, 58.

¹²⁶ Jones 1997, 104.

¹²⁷ Emberling and Yoffee 1999; Johnson 1999; Brather 2004, 231, 326–328: to a certain extent.

¹²⁸ Jones 1999a, 229–230; Smith 2003, 5; Antonaccio 2010, 37.

¹²⁹ See Bader 2011a; Bader 2015b; Bader 2020; Bader forthcoming-d for primary data of such a community.

¹³⁰ Veit 1989 on the historical development of this school of thought since Gustaf Kossinna established it in the early 20th century and before. Haaland 1977, 2–3; Anthony 1990, 896–897; Jones 1996, 63–64; Jones 1997, 2–8, 15–26, 45–51, 106–108; Smith 2003, 14–15, 31–33; Brather 2004; Halsall 2007, 25–26; see also Hakenbeck 2008; Van Oyen 2017. For Egypt see, e.g., Baines 1996, 376. See also a recent historiographic treatise by Rebay-Salisbury (2011). I would like to thank the author for pointing this work out to me (K. Rebay-Salisbury, pers. comm. 19 March 2018) and providing a copy of her article. See Hicks 2010; Gramsch 2015; more general and based on British archaeology.

¹³¹ Note that the maker and the user of an object do not have to belong to the same social group.

¹³² Brather 2004, 283–290, for criticism and a fibulae example, also 299, 359–369. Wobst 1977; Sackett 1986; Sackett 1990; Fazioli 2014, 22. Similar concepts were still used 2016 in Egyptology: Bietak 2016, 270–272, although many of the objects he discusses were not even found in primary archaeological contexts, see below. Cf. Haaland 1977, 14, which utters criticism and thinks that lithics, amongst others, are unsuitable for ethnic identification because they lack decoration; Jones 1999b, 162–163; Lucy 2005, 91, for criticism. Liszka 2012, 64–65, 417–512, uses part of this concept, namely ‘emblemic’ markers in order to get to the *habitus* of the Medjay.

¹³³ Hafsaas 2006–2007, 170.

¹³⁴ Barth 1996 [1969] did not use this term in 1969, because the concept had not yet been developed to the meaning that it has now.

of Barth's idea for a culture-historical pots = people approach, largely neglecting context. In contrast, the actual citation from Fredrik Barth's publication maintains that there is "no simple one to one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences." He continues that only some cultural features are used by the actors whilst others are ignored, the choice of which are up to the group members. As "overt signals or signs", which might be used, Barth mentioned "dress, language, house forms or general style of life", but he did not use the collective notion of general "material culture" – this collective term was not yet used in its current form when Barth formulated his thoughts in 1969. Moreover, he did not mention pottery,¹³⁵ which is the main object type group Henriette Hafsaas solely concentrates upon.¹³⁶ Objects belonging to ethnic groups might have been used in the sense Fredrik Barth proposed but not necessarily in every case, nor necessarily in a regular manner, or over time always in the same way. This means that Barth was one of the first to establish ethnicity as a social category, which therefore can only indirectly be connected with any material interpretation and its archaeological correlates. Janet Johnson argues similarly and divides the social aspect from the cultural because "not all cultural traits are relevant" and, moreover, they may change.¹³⁷ Some commentators used decoration on pottery for this purpose,¹³⁸ but it proved to be more complicated than a one-to-one correlation between ethnicity and certain types of material culture.¹³⁹

This example shows that criticism of the use of the archaeological record and objects for identification of ethnic groups since the 1960s¹⁴⁰ has not filtered through to all fields of archaeology but is still implicitly used even if in a more theoretically embedded way. In the end, the assumed presence of certain groups of people is still tied to the appearance of certain types of objects and among these, often pottery¹⁴¹ without enough attention being given to either the objects or to specific contexts in which this material appears. This dilemma arises because in "archaeological cultures" without writing or ethnoarchaeological parallels, no distinct self-designation is known, and cannot be known from an emic point of view.¹⁴² Thus, only material culture is available to describe the identities of past individuals and their social behaviour – perhaps we just have to abandon the illusion of being able to reach an individual level of detail since we are only able to reconstruct a group of people living together using a range of objects in conjunction with one another, but we cannot know (from this method of research without further sources) whether their geographic and ethnic origin was homogeneous. While Alice Stevenson proposed looking at differences in the use of material culture rather than at differential typology in order to discern ethnic differences in multiple categories,¹⁴³ some scholars go even further suggesting that the choice of

¹³⁵ Barth [1969], 299; Jones 1997, 62–63. Also criticised by Liszka 2012, 84–85.

¹³⁶ See Bader 2011b; Bader 2013a for arguing that pottery does not automatically represent ethnic identity.

¹³⁷ Johnson 1999, 211–222; see also below for foodways.

¹³⁸ Haaland 1977, 14; Sackett 1977, 377–379; Fazioli 2014, 26.

¹³⁹ E.g. Hodder 1978; Jones 1997, 110–126, for critique and bibliography; Dietler and Herbich 1998, 548–550; Gosselain 2000; Smith 2003, 31; Brather 2004; Halsall 2007, 466–468; Stevenson 2008; Liszka 2012, 58; Fazioli 2014, 28–29.

¹⁴⁰ For modification by Childe and critical discussion since, see Hodder 1978; Shennan 1989, esp. 11–14; Veit 1989; Jones 1998, n. 30, for more in-depth bibliography; Jones 1999b; Brather 2004; Hahn 2005, 152–157; Lucy 2005, 88.

¹⁴¹ E.g. Redmount 1995; Killebrew 2005, 2–15; Hafsaas 2006–2007, 163–171. See critique in Bader 2012; Bader 2013a. For a very much more theoretically embedded opinion, see Antonaccio 2010, 46, 50: "not all material culture expresses necessarily ethnicity," while certain forms of pottery for example may be demonstrated as indigenous and reflective of original ethnicity [or other traits of identity?] as Antonaccio shows on p. 49–50, but the ethnicity of the user cannot be pinned down easily if at all, especially in a settlement. Also Emberling 1997, 320–324; Emberling and Yoffee 1999, 275–276: "it seems most closely connected with ethnic identity" because the political context makes it likely. Liszka 2012, 81–88: "we must take a leap of faith" because in effect there is no positive proof that certain people used certain pots without ethnography. Even with the aid of ethnography this would provide only an analogy but no proof. Raue 2018, 26–30, 214, 252–257, uses Nubian pottery as an intentional way of differentiating Nubians from Egyptians. Burke 2019, 79, uses similar arguments, concentrating on a minor component within cooking pottery. Also cf. Lumsden 2008, 37.

¹⁴² This is the main point of Brather 2004, 579–580, who argues that the lack of written sources in prehistory does not allow ethnic identification but see Curta 2006 for a critique of this point because often written sources if not written in demonstrable congruence with archaeological sources do not solve any problems either. Cf. also Liszka 2012, 51–58, 96, 104; Moers 2013a.

¹⁴³ Lucy 2005, 88; Hakenbeck 2007; Stevenson 2008.

archaeological traits used for ethnic identification depends largely on the personal view of the respective researchers¹⁴⁴ by overly generalising object types and type catalogues or by omitting traits that are not always present in all contexts.¹⁴⁵ At least part of the solution lies in observing minute details of objects as proposed by Paul Graves-Brown.¹⁴⁶ Objects may resemble each other superficially in shape, perhaps, and even material, but only scrutiny of the *chaîne opératoire* (see below) will provide firmer evidence about the context of manufacture and therefore a possible common origin of objects.¹⁴⁷ Such an approach may also be of use in other research areas.¹⁴⁸

These thoughts developed in areas where archaeological cultures were situated in close proximity to one another. It is perhaps due to Egypt's previously perceived 'insular' geographical situation that such observations only touched upon Egyptian material culture peripherally.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the culture-historical concept (simplified pots = people approach)¹⁵⁰ with or without theoretical modifications has to maintain a concept of very impermeable and fixed boundaries because otherwise it would not be possible to identify the user/maker of the object in terms of ethnic identity. This view precludes the appreciation of liminal spaces, contact zones and contact situations, where various social groups might meet due to topographical or social overlaps and encounter influences in some kind of give and take which may lead to material culture becoming the manifestation of cultural mixture,¹⁵¹ in 'in-between' situations that may be described as cultural entanglements, meeting grounds, virtual spaces of encounter or interstitial spaces (see below). Bernhard Knapp's brief treatise on the material culture of Cyprus at the end of the Late Bronze Age shows very well the differences in theoretical approach to the same data, where the introduction of such a virtual space would be advantageous for the interpretation.¹⁵²

Following the static concept of firmly bounded cultural entities and a normative culture, the contact between two such constructs would have to be imagined as a "clash" without any ability to accommodate flexibility or human creativity.¹⁵³ Moreover, culture and also material culture would and could not change without a forceful external influence to cause it as the boundaries are inflexible and firm. Accordingly, gradual change would be ascribed to slight adaptations to, e.g., environmental changes by a social group whilst more drastic changes would be brought about through (often violent) external

¹⁴⁴ Mitchell 1974, 24–25, for ethnic construct by ethnographers; Haaland 1977, 3, 27, for examples; Brather 2004, 75, 206, 304–305, 331, 579–580, 618–620, 623. Cf. Hicks 2010, 69–71, for positionality.

¹⁴⁵ Jones 1997, 108–109, 130–131, with examples.

¹⁴⁶ 1996, 91. This is in contrast to the oft-criticised "fetishism of the object" which is studied for its own sake rather than as a means to a reconstruction/explanation, cf. Hicks 2010, 59–64. Nevertheless, researchers of material culture must also know their study objects intimately and have all the details of the objects they study literally at their fingertips. This is time-consuming, sometimes boring, but necessary to be able to discuss material culture.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Bader 2011b; Bader 2013b; Bader forthcoming-b for a more general view regarding purely Egyptian contexts. Cf. also Gosselain 2000.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Knapp 2009 for a treatise of the situation in Cyprus at the end of the Late Bronze Age. The necessary detail for such a generalisation does not seem to be available.

¹⁴⁹ Bader 2015a, 1–3.

¹⁵⁰ Hodder 1978, 20–21, warns by means of ethnographic examples; Jones 1996, 74; criticised by Fazioli 2014, 38; Van Oyen 2017. See Gosselain 2000 for possible strategies to prevent this. Gramsch 2015, 343: "Rather than pots and people, today, haplo-groups are migrating through Europe, supposedly related to Neolithization or the expansion of cultures, such as the Bell Beaker culture." Dietler 2010, 97, uses Etruscan cooking pottery and disposition of house layout as evidence for an Etruscan presence; see also 81.

¹⁵¹ Bader 2012; Bader 2013a; Bader 2017b, for a description of the underlying concept and discussion to use it on a settlement in Egypt. See Naum (2010) for an appreciation of special conditions in borderlands in the widest sense.

¹⁵² Knapp (2009) uses hybridity to explain certain features in material culture. However, it does not allow for the "in-between" situation described, nor does it really explain why the concept of cultural hybridity is advantageous and what it really means to him.

¹⁵³ Lucy 2005, 88, which is a connection to the concept of a culture. This step had not yet been completed by Lucy. Cf. also Schiestl 2009, 200.

influences such as conquest and mass migration (see below).¹⁵⁴ According to this rigid model, no other cultural interaction (external environmental changes excepted) would influence the appearance of material culture and thus change for other reasons is impossible. One of the major problems in abandoning the culture-historical pots = people approach is that moving objects are no longer equated with moving people;¹⁵⁵ thus, commodity exchange may also have increasing importance as a conceptual model.¹⁵⁶ Applying a more permeable view that no culture is an inaccessible island,¹⁵⁷ there are plentiful examples where such influences are quite clear and lead to a variety of creative features in material culture, which may be described as “imitations”, “copies” or other types of appropriation.¹⁵⁸ Their meaning depends on contextual circumstances (manufacture/use) and may not always be the same in each case. To view these products as derived from the desire to simply pass them off as being second best, is certainly falling short.¹⁵⁹ These terms remain largely undertheorised and are used with great carelessness. Moreover, the active role of material culture remains entirely neglected (see above), which had been explored since the ‘material’¹⁶⁰ or ‘material-cultural’ turn, which highlight event and effect in ‘things’.¹⁶¹

2.3.1. Practice Theory

“... people make themselves in making things ...” (Lumsden 2008, 22)
 “... things ... can be understood ... as effects of material practice ...” (Hicks 2010, 87)

In order to give material culture its rightful place in the interpretation of the past it must be considered as an active agent connected to past social actions¹⁶² (“way of doing things”) as only events and effects can be connected to the social actors who left them behind.¹⁶³ Pierre Bourdieu formulated, in his *habitus* theory that “durable, often subliminal dispositions¹⁶⁴ towards certain perceptions and practices such as those relating to the sexual division of labour, tastes etc.” lead to “an individual’s sense of self at an early age,” which is influenced “by the conditions making up particular social environments, such as modes of production or access to certain resources”.¹⁶⁵ In this way “culture” is not ruled by abstract norms but rather by dispositions, which are “structuring structures and structured structures”, shaped by social practice. These dispositions also often form unconscious constraints within which people act,¹⁶⁶ and, moreover, they pass them on unconsciously to later generations.¹⁶⁷ Crucial for such considerations is the inclusion of the contexts of use and manufacture.¹⁶⁸ It is clear that such an approach cannot be achieved by looking at distributions of certain fibulae or pot types in isolation from their contexts and the way they were used, but that the manifestations of ethnic and other identities in material culture “involves the objectification of cultural differences and the embodiment of those differences within the shared

¹⁵⁴ Cf. as an example for application Jones 1996, 63–65; Parzinger 2001; Dergachev 2002. Definitions and case studies are not very specific in their definition of gradual and drastic change, except for the introduction of the wheel in western Europe, for example. See Burmeister (2000) for a critical assessment and Burmeister (2004) on the spread of carts and the wheel. Cf. also Jones 1999b, 159, going back to Gordon V. Childe; Burmeister 2013; Gramsch 2015.

¹⁵⁵ Van Oyen 2017.

¹⁵⁶ Dietler 2010, 131–156.

¹⁵⁷ Bhabha 1994; Sahlin 1999, 411; Schortman and Urban 1998, 109; Bader 2013a.

¹⁵⁸ Bader forthcoming-b for a definition and discussion of these often synonymously used terms.

¹⁵⁹ Dietler 2010, 221, for a cross-cultural product in France and the motivation of its creation.

¹⁶⁰ Bräunlein 2014; Van Oyen 2017.

¹⁶¹ Hicks 2010, 25–98.

¹⁶² In the post-processual view, material culture in social relationships is meaningfully and deliberately constituted, cf. Halsall 2007. Hicks 2010, 64, designated it as material-cultural turn; see also Van Oyen 2017.

¹⁶³ Hicks 2010.

¹⁶⁴ Einteilung, Naturell, Anordnung, Geistesart as German equivalents [arrangement, temperament, order, mentality].

¹⁶⁵ Bourdieu 1977, 78–93; Jones 1996, 68; Jones 1997, 87–92.

¹⁶⁶ Bourdieu 1977, 72; Jones 1997, 88–89.

¹⁶⁷ Bentley 1987; Shennan 1989, 15–16; Jones 1998, 42; Schortman and Urban 1998, 109; Jones 1999a, 226.

¹⁶⁸ Emberling 1997, 311–312, thinks this is possible; Lucy 2005, 102–105; Halsall 2007, 394–399; Liszka 2012, 62–64.

dispositions of the *habitus*. They are more or less clear and they are more or less variable”.¹⁶⁹ Bourdieu’s theory is now implicitly used by most recent studies devoted to material culture.¹⁷⁰

Leaving aside the new scientific methodology for the moment (see below), theorists¹⁷¹ agreed that they were unlikely to find a one-to-one relationship between expressions of a particular ethnic group and a certain assemblage of material culture because such groups are not formed in social and physical isolation but include a ‘consciousness of difference’ remodelled in continuous interaction. Thus, the configuration of the assemblage of material culture might differ between various social contexts (tomb/settlement/temple).¹⁷² Also, there is certainly no direct congruence between Bourdieu’s *habitus* and ethnicity¹⁷³ because there are multiple overlapping boundaries constructed by representations of cultural differences. Such a correlate may perhaps be visible in the archaeological record and material culture, but it does not have to be.¹⁷⁴ Complex patterns of material culture distributions overlap, so that frequently occurring and widely distributed objects may mean different things in variable social contexts.¹⁷⁵ The inclusion of materiality of artefacts (and objects, which have not been worked or manipulated but collected for their very materiality) into an interdisciplinary framework of explanation also has an input into the potential meaning of an object, quite independent from other factors.¹⁷⁶ The fact is, we cannot expect any underlying universal rules across global archaeology and therefore all existing societies¹⁷⁷ but have to judge each case study separately by building a multitude of models based on a multitude of data.

While some archaeologists negate the possibility of getting closer to the ethnic identity of people¹⁷⁸ or question the existence of ethnic groups as entities producing a unified and homogenous culture,¹⁷⁹ others concentrate on those social practices that determine the shared “ways of doing things”¹⁸⁰ created by “symbolic resources” such as language, beliefs (including ritual) and material culture,¹⁸¹ e.g. the material remains of certain cooking or food habits, but also of cosmetic items. This includes specific pottery used for cooking and serving food as well as types of foods that were consumed.¹⁸² A key point for such recognition is the “context of social interaction between people of differing cultural traditions.”¹⁸³ Stuart Smith insists that evidence for ethnic identity must be present in all archaeological categories: household (ritual installations and assemblages, e.g. ancestor cult), temple (religious architecture associated with ritual assemblages) and tombs (architecture and burial practices, e.g. burial position and grave goods), in order to argue possible differences in ethnic identity reasonably.¹⁸⁴

¹⁶⁹ Jones 1997, 97.

¹⁷⁰ Giddens’ theory of practice focusing on structuration, which proposes constitutive relationships between ‘agency’ and ‘structure’ was not as widely applied in archaeology. Cf. Giddens 1979; Giddens 1984.

¹⁷¹ Shennan 1989; Jones 1996; Jones 1997; Jones 1998, esp. 38–40; Johnson 1999; Hakenbeck 2007; Liszka 2012, 58.

¹⁷² Jones 1997, 123–124; Jones 1998, 40–41.

¹⁷³ Sackett’s style has some similar traits it seems, although the direct connection of an object’s style with ethnic identity is, of course, incompatible with Bourdieu’s concept. See Bentley 1987 for the connection of ethnicity and Bourdieu’s theory of practice. See also Jones 1997, 122; Jones 1998, 43; Jones 1999a, 226; Smith 2003, 18–19; Liszka 2012, 60–65.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Lumsden 2008, 37, “... shared material culture does not necessarily reflect a shared identity” is the reverse view.

¹⁷⁵ Jones 1996, 67, 71–72; Jones 1997, 123–124.

¹⁷⁶ Malafouris 2008; Hicks 2010, 73–79; Fazioli 2014, 26, with bibliography.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Hicks 2010, 44–46.

¹⁷⁸ Jones 1997, 124, with examples; Smith 2003, 30, with examples; Brather 2004, 317–318.

¹⁷⁹ Jones 1997, 126.

¹⁸⁰ Jones 1998, 42; Smith 2003, 30–32; Antonaccio 2010, 34 and n. 10.

¹⁸¹ Jones 1997, 124–126; Jones 1998, 42–43; Jones 1999a, 226; Halsall 2007, 60–62, includes ceramic coarse wares because they do not transport well and are not widely distributed and, thus, are local; for other object classes such as weapons and fine wares he is much more careful; Curta 2014.

¹⁸² Smith 2003, 7–8, 113–118; Brather 2004, 428–431; Lucy 2005, 105; Smith 2007, 233–234; Burmeister 2017a. But see Berry 2005, 699–700, for (modern) acculturation models, which also adapt food preferences.

¹⁸³ Jones 1998, 43.

¹⁸⁴ Smith 2003, 8, 36, 167–187, also keeping foodways as passive resistance against colonisers in colonial situations. Liszka 2012, 76–90 uses “ethnic markers” in a similar definition. NB. in very few cases are all these spheres represented contemporaneously at one and the same site.

Furthermore, closer scrutiny of technological choices as a means of construction and reproduction of social relationships with the help of the *chaîne opératoire*¹⁸⁵ concept has also been proposed, e.g. for pottery¹⁸⁶ and other object types and, to a certain extent, already applied on Egyptian material.¹⁸⁷ This proposal includes craft learning from an early age onwards as part of *habitus* as well as the acquisition of psychomotor skills that are deeply embedded in, and motivated by complicated cognitive processes.¹⁸⁸ These processes may influence features during the making of objects, which are correlated to social groupings, but still that does not mean such a possible “social” identity would have to be an ethnic one. There are many possibilities, which need to be carefully weighed against one another.

Modern examples spectacularly show that groups of people will willingly change their ethnic identification if it is favourable to their socio-economic circumstances,¹⁸⁹ thus, a restricted viewpoint is reflected in following this complex process in archaeology – usually – using the burial as a fossilised expression of social relationships of the living, which has many other implications.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, we must bear in mind that from such (staged) evidence it is highly unlikely that we see the complete picture, but rather one that was arranged in order to be seen in a certain way as regards social standing, affiliation and other aspects. This partial picture is all we have at our disposal.

Whilst these are some of the latest positions in research concerning this particular topic, the improvement of scientific methods (stable isotope analysis, ancient DNA analysis) means that some of the previously out-dated theories have come back into fashion in current research agendas.¹⁹¹

2.3.2. Modern Analytical Methods and Culture

“Genes provide the code for cell surface proteins ... but not stiff upper lips”
(Evison 2000, 280)

Modern analytical methods for tracing mobility comprise various stable isotope studies which may be powerful enough to shed light on the first-generation movements of individuals, without the possibility of unequivocally pinpointing origin.¹⁹² This promising research avenue has not been tapped sufficiently for ancient Egypt to provide good results as yet, although a start has been made in Nubia.¹⁹³ However, a lot of basic research for using any of these trace element analysis methods needs to be undertaken for Egypt, while a good start has been made in the Nile Delta.¹⁹⁴ However, natural strontium levels for the Egyptian Nile Valley are still not available. Analyses located in a European context showed that the debated opinion of certain objects as ‘ethnic markers’ cannot be uncritically maintained. In the past, certain objects with high visibility were interpreted as conscious expressions of various aspects of identity and, among them, also ethnic identity. Personal adornments and dress provided examples of single objects regarded as ‘ethnic markers’,¹⁹⁵ although they may also signify other aspects of identity such as gender

¹⁸⁵ Graves-Brown 1996, 91; Gosselain 2000.

¹⁸⁶ Budden and Sofaer 2009; Gosselain 2000; Fazioli 2014, 27–29, 29–32.

¹⁸⁷ Bader 2011b; Bader forthcoming-b.

¹⁸⁸ Malafouris 2008; Budden and Sofaer 2009. See also the ethno-archaeological study by Calvo Trias et al. 2015 which discusses early childhood learning through the repetition of psychomotor routines, as well as adult learning and the reasons for changing such habits.

¹⁸⁹ Barth 1969; Emberling and Yoffee 1999, 229–230; Smith 2003, 17; Lucy 2005, 97–98.

¹⁹⁰ Parker Pearson 1999 for a convenient and fairly recent treatise.

¹⁹¹ Gramsch 2015, 342–343 migrationism; see also Burmeister 2013 with an underlying culture-historical paradigm.

¹⁹² Price et al. 2002. Taken up by Halsall 2007, 450, for individually interesting results. Candelora 2018, 60–62.

¹⁹³ Buzon et al. 2007; Buzon and Bowen 2010. See Zakrzewski et al. 2016, 179–181, 202–203, 208, for an overview of a limited amount of work in Egypt, referring to Nubia and Roman Egypt.

¹⁹⁴ Welte 2016, 39. Maaranen et al. 2019a for surveys of methods and possibilities to be followed; Maaranen et al. 2019b; Stantis and Schutkowski 2019. Stantis et al. 2020a and Stantis et al. 2020b for first results of stable strontium isotope analysis.

¹⁹⁵ Bietak (2016) propagates such ethnic markers in an Egyptian example; see fn. 132. Such practices are criticised by Parker Pearson 1999, 7–10. For a group choosing their own ethnic markers see Brather 2004, 616–617, 621; Lucy 2005, 97. Liszka 2012, 58–62, employs ethnic markers but in a more cautious way than Mourad 2015, 15.

and status.¹⁹⁶ Importantly, the inclusion of the physical human body in the scientific analyses in recent research led to differential results which require attention. According to isotope analyses, the origin of some of these human bodies did not fit the origin ascribed to certain ‘ethnic markers’ found with these bodies, although such markers were hitherto thought to securely indicate the ethnic identity of the owners.¹⁹⁷ Thus, several scenarios are possible: (1) the origin of an individual is congruent with that of the object considered to mark this same origin (2) the origin of the person wearing a certain object does not overlap with that indicated by the isotopic (or aDNA) analyses or (3) the scientific result remains inconclusive. The result is that social reasons to wear such objects must be more diverse than hitherto thought and that ‘ethnic markers’ therefore lose their signalling effect, at least to a certain extent. Again, this example amply demonstrates that the unequivocal interpretation as a one-to-one correlation between individual persons and certain objects is not tenable but ambiguous at best and probably unlikely to have ever existed.

Recent prehistoric¹⁹⁸ and historic¹⁹⁹ research in Europe has concentrated on probabilistic analyses of ancient DNA²⁰⁰ in order to find evidence of whether people sharing the same material culture have the same composition of ancient DNA. Whether such congruence or co-incidence can be proven in detail remains to be demonstrated on a larger scale.²⁰¹ Preliminary results show a highly ambivalent picture that does not allow for sweeping generalisations either.²⁰² As always, the archaeological context is crucial for the interpretation of the finds, but, unfortunately, amongst other problems archaeological “data will always support more than one interpretation, so the choice of one rather than another will also be based on other factors”²⁰³.

Only the combination of stable isotopic analyses (first generation immigrants without knowing from where exactly), archaeo-genetics (proof of mobility without exact dating possibility) and archaeology (explanatory models) with their differential foci will enable a thorough understanding of ancient mobility and further clarify possible correlations between social groups and material culture.²⁰⁴ At the same time, it is unlikely that all evidence types will be available for many case studies in order to bring light onto that issue, so that the heuristic nature of case studies will prevail. However, before putting too much hope on aDNA analysis for distinguishing ethnic or national groups in this way, it must be clear that “... the range of genetic variation within an ethnic group is larger than the net genetic difference between

¹⁹⁶ Parker Pearson 1999, 72–94, 95–123; Hakenbeck 2007.

¹⁹⁷ Burmeister 2016, 51. Such studies are not rare; cf. O’Sullivan et al. 2018, 3: “previous studies have shown that the genetic affiliation of ancient people often do not match putative geographic origins of their culture.” The recent comparative study of DNA of Vikings also yielded unexpected results, namely a much greater genetic heterogeneity than expected, cf. Margaryan et al. 2020. But there are studies attesting to the contrary as well, for example, in two cemeteries used by the Langobards. These seem to be constituted from at least two genetically different groups, one of which had specific connections to certain items of material culture (certain brooches, specific pottery). Cf. Amorim et al. 2018.

¹⁹⁸ The recent aDNA study of finds related to the “bell beaker culture” sheds new light on the distribution of this archaeological assemblage. The results suggest migration in some instances but a different kind of transfer of knowledge in others, cf. Olalde et al. 2018. Halsall 2007, 451–452, expresses a very critical view of such analyses in Late Antiquity and doubts they can answer historical questions: “ethnicity is a matter of belief”. Burmeister 2019 provides a well formulated critique on inferences based on very small sample sizes of aDNA and unscrupulous connections of biology and culture (e.g. Indo-European language and its distribution via archaeology).

¹⁹⁹ O’Sullivan et al. 2018, esp. 3, for a study of objects ascribed to ‘external cultural traditions’ buried with a group of local people at Niederstotzingen. Cf. also the results of the Viking study, Margaryan et al. 2020.

²⁰⁰ Rutherford 2016, 108–109, 155.

²⁰¹ Amorim et al. 2018 tested cemeteries in their entirety to gain a fuller picture. The large scale project coordinated by W. Pohl entitled ‘HistoGenes – Integrating genetic, archaeological and historical perspectives on Eastern Central Europe, 400–900AD’ begun in 2019 will provide more information on the relationship between genetic diversity and material culture in general.

²⁰² Amorim et al. 2018; O’Sullivan et al. 2018.

²⁰³ Shennan 1989, 2.

²⁰⁴ Jones 1997, 136–144; Burmeister 2017a, 63–68. Amorim et al. 2018 is following such a research path for the Langobards.

ethnic groups. There are no genetic variants which are exclusive to any ethnic group and possessed by all members of that group.”²⁰⁵

The complicated nature of the data set derived from DNA can be exemplified by the deconstruction of an explanatory example frequently offered by DNA specialists for the interested lay public. As an example one could quote Adam Rutherford’s study that indicates that the DNA of modern Cornish people is different to that of people from Scotland, thus proving that certain subgroups of modern DNA cluster according to modern language borders. This is illustrated with a distribution map. The following step is to ascertain that in this way every person can be grouped according to their DNA into the ‘correct’ area of origin.²⁰⁶ And then the same is assumed for the past. The problem of this approach, of course, lies in the unique history of the British Isles, where for a long time people were not so mobile, so that the neat grouping of the DNA with the language areas is a result of less mobility and therefore the distribution of certain elements of the DNA groups accordingly. But such an approach cannot be used in reverse as Adam Rutherford also acknowledges.²⁰⁷ Much care must be taken not to be trapped in a racial construct, which remains the result of a purely social process.²⁰⁸

In summary, it can be said that also isotopic and genetic data may be congruent with certain uses of material culture but they do not have to be. While a larger amount of more diverse types of data are surely moving research on, the solution cannot be expected to come from scientific analyses alone.

2.4. ETHNIC IDENTITY AND THE MIGRATION CONCEPT IN ARCHAEOLOGY

The stress on ethnic identity and the suggested ability to tie in certain traits of material culture with a given ethnic group are necessary pre-requisites to propose and prove migrations in the first place and, thus, this led to a close connection of the two²⁰⁹ and to a severe neglect of other aspects of identity (gender, status, etc., see above).

In the course of research into culture change, two major ideas of diffusionism (1 and 2) and one of evolutionism (3) were brought forward: (1) this was caused by migrating or perhaps, more rarely, ‘colonising’ people bringing their ideas with them and spreading them in various ways; (2) ideas travelled without the necessity of large numbers of people actually transporting them, e.g. via trade or transfer of knowledge, and (3) ideas developed independently in various areas.²¹⁰

The first possibility found overwhelming support in early archaeology and is still a key concept in archaeological work today.²¹¹ Taken as support for this model are distribution patterns of certain objects and object types,²¹² “sudden” changes of local objects in archaeological terms as well as the sudden appearance of non-local architecture, burial customs, conceptual layouts of, e.g., religious buildings and similar features.²¹³ The search, however, for a true proof of migration was made more difficult by the conceptual change from the culture-historical paradigm to a more dynamic model. If the connection between ethnic identity and certain types of material culture as ‘ethnic markers’ cannot be made from an etic perspective with certainty or is broken, migration could not be proven from the archaeological

²⁰⁵ Evison 2000, 280; Evison 2014.

²⁰⁶ Rutherford 2016, 109–117. Unsurprisingly he follows a culture-historical paradigm.

²⁰⁷ Rutherford 2016, 113–114.

²⁰⁸ See above, fn. 14.

²⁰⁹ Jones 1998; also Smith 2003, 31–32, gives a history of ethnicity research and stresses the close ties between the concept and migration theories; Burmeister 2016, 46–48.

²¹⁰ For a concise overview with older bibliography see Haaland 1977, 2. Lucy 2005, 87–91; Hakenbeck 2008; Gramsch 2015.

²¹¹ Examples in Haaland 1977, 2–3; Anthony 1990, 896–897; Jones 1997, 15–26; Smith 2003, 13–15; Brather 2004, 205, 239–249, 551–559; Halsall 2007, 386–387; Fahlander 2007, 35–37; Gramsch 2015 on European prehistory; Burmeister 2016, 42; Priglinger 2018, 26–28.

²¹² Halsall 2007, 394–397, with more circumspect consideration of other factors.

²¹³ For Cyprus, Knapp 2009 contrasts very aptly the colonisation narrative with the post-colonial concept of hybridisation.

record without additional evidence.²¹⁴ Whilst it becomes clear that such connections cannot be used uncritically in the proposed manner²¹⁵ and, thus, not for proving migrations, this approach is nevertheless enduring in areas where historiographic traditions also exist in addition to archaeology,²¹⁶ such as in biblical narratives²¹⁷ or in Egypt. All too easily, peoples known from texts are identified with archaeological remains, which do not provide independent means for such connections.²¹⁸

In Egypt the concept of migrations or “races” coming into the Nile Valley and causing cultural change also has a long tradition (e.g. Petrie²¹⁹), which implicitly still influences research.²²⁰ Either more integrated frameworks and interdisciplinary approaches need to be developed,²²¹ or research has to totally rely on scientific analyses without the critical cross-check of interpretation of the context within the framework of the humanities.²²²

In general it is very difficult to abandon totally the culture-historical concept in the verbal expression and discussion of archaeological records even in places with comparatively dense historical information.²²³ The difficulties become more apparent in attempts to make the academic research accessible to non-academics and better understood by a wider audience, where language has to be simplified to be understood. How to relate in simple language that ‘Egyptian’ actually does not signify a nationalistic construct but rather someone who lived in the area of modern Egypt and may be the recipient of a multitude of cultural influences, which do not reflect an ethnic identity?

Only if the structure and process of migration itself were visible, quite apart from the culture-historical interpretations of material culture, could it be used as a viable concept in archaeology.²²⁴ But so far this approach also suffers from insufficient archaeological proof.

In the 19th and early 20th century, sudden and radical innovations found in archaeology were almost exclusively explained by migrations of skilled people;²²⁵ it appears that the abandonment of the migration concept as an explanatory model is unlikely as mobility seems to be an inherent trait in humankind.²²⁶ A more balanced view is necessary including more theoretical work on definitions of different forms of migration and mobility, not least the view of migration as a large-scale phenomenon.²²⁷

The visibility of migrants in the archaeological record also depends on the number of people on the move. The larger the group, the more likely it is to be able to find evidence for differential use of material culture that may be connected to migration.²²⁸ In this respect it is important to know how high the

²¹⁴ Burmeister 2000; Dittmann 2001; Burmeister 2013, 292, expresses this opinion; Halsall 2007, 387, for examples of migrations from textual sources without archaeological traces.

²¹⁵ Burmeister 2016, 48, 53–54, illustrates this with examples, where certain objects and the origin attested by isotope analysis or aDNA do not coincide with the current academic opinion, e.g. certain brooch types. See also Jones 1999a, esp. 220–221; Halsall 2007, 392–395.

²¹⁶ Jones 1999a; Halsall 2007.

²¹⁷ The archaeological record connected with the Philistines may serve as an example, e.g. Jones 1998 for a critical review of Jewish identity; Lehmann 2001; Rahmstorf 2017.

²¹⁸ For a critique see Liszka 2015.

²¹⁹ See Matić 2018; Priglinger 2018, 28–29, with references.

²²⁰ See Trigger 1977, 21; Emberling and Yoffee 1999, 273, for this tradition in Mesopotamia; Jones 1999b, 159; Smith 2003, 14, with bibliography.

²²¹ E.g. Yasur-Landau 2010; Yasur-Landau 2017 is making a start. For him migrations must be followed by an acculturation strategy. This, in turn, only works with ‘natives’ present to provide behavioural role models as well as a normative culture concept.

²²² See Burmeister 2019 for the dangers and pitfalls.

²²³ Cf. Smith 2003, who has to stick to ‘Nubian’ and ‘Egyptian’ traditions for a lack of better stylistic solutions. See Bader 2012; Bader 2017b for the same difficulty.

²²⁴ Anthony 1990; note that on p. 904 he also follows the pots = people approach. Halsall 2007, 419, bemoans the fact that ‘migration theory’ has not been proven and he therefore seems to doubt its viability. Gramsch 2015, 343, sees migration as “... not a ‘prime mover’ but [it] is one part of a web of changes of processes resulting from changes within groups in their relationships to other groups and resulting in new dynamics.”

²²⁵ Cf. the articles of Lightfoot 2008, for illustrating this trend and criticising it.

²²⁶ Halsall 2007, 455; Stevenson 2008, 551; Hahn 2015; Burmeister 2016, 43–44; Burmeister 2017b, 3–18; Lohwasser 2017.

²²⁷ Hakenbeck 2008, 17–18; Lightfoot 2008, 1–2.

²²⁸ Bader 2013a, 275, for a discussion of this topic. Not necessarily so, see Burmeister 2013, 44.

proportion of the phenomena (unusual non-local features in a place) encountered is: the amount of imports, ‘imitations’ and locally produced copies, for example, in order to weight the spread and therefore the importance of that particular feature.²²⁹

The combination of various factors besides culture change brought the migration concept back into discussion, as a change in demography, namely a diminishing number of people’s burials from the area where people migrated from and an increasing number of people in the area where people migrated to, as well as a number of other factors should also be taken into consideration in addition to unusual cultural features.²³⁰ Whilst scrutiny of demographic changes in the past is a valid point, it has become increasingly clear that not everyone in the past had a visible burial from a diachronic point of view and precise dating is often difficult²³¹ so that this line of argument is not always very strong.

In another archaeological approach, Stefan Burmeister proposed looking very closely at two different spheres of people’s lives, preferably in a settlement where no posthumous ideological or status-related problems were inherent and could not be ruled out. He sketched the internal sphere as opposed to the external sphere taking care of the thought that immigrants were perhaps strictly controlled in their way of living, at least in that part that is visible to the host community of a social unit. Thus, the internal or intimate sphere is more likely to show differences to the local *habitus*, if any. This approach, based on historical archaeological case studies,²³² was used in the project “Foreigners in ancient Egypt – Culture contact in a late Middle Kingdom settlement”²³³ which looked at the three earliest settlement layers in Area A/II at Tell el-Dab’a to determine whether any archaeological traits unequivocally traceable to the physical presence of social groups from the Syro-Palestinian cultural sphere within this area might be detected. The material evidence was evaluated to see whether migration of people with a non-Egyptian cultural background in the archaeological record of this earlier settlement in Area A/II can be proposed as opposed to trade relations or other types of cultural contacts, for instance colonialism.²³⁴ To this end a concept of a ‘secondary culture’ that may be visible in the ‘internal’ or ‘private’ domain of migrants was adopted. Manifestations may include objects of daily use, not available or generally used in the host-culture, traces of religious rites or habits, arrangements of spaces such as kitchens, fireplaces or workshops. Also the use of a vernacular (mixed?) language would belong here, but the wet soil conditions of the delta preclude finds of written documents of a temporary nature on organic media. Beside the eight burials in Area A/II, only three of which contained features of the Middle Bronze Age culture (weapons, toggle pins, body position), little hard evidence can be cited for the presence of non-Egyptians at this time in Area A/II. Very small percentages of Syro-Palestinian cooking pottery and imitations of previously imported ceramic material provide the only clues as no kitchens or workshops were unearthed in Area A/II (or elsewhere at the site) that would hint at a different way of cooking or different working materials or manufacturing techniques. The overall evidence for farming or other labour intensive activities is scarce, and so are finds of tools other than grinders and querns.²³⁵ The imitations or copies of previously imported material with local materials seem to follow very exactly the original *chaîne opératoire* and current opinion maintains that such precision can only be reached by transfer of knowledge on a first hand basis, i.e. by potters from Syria-Palestine or people trained by them.²³⁶ Research revealed that the definition and application of terminology such as ‘imitation’ or ‘copy’ is often too imprecise and cursory

²²⁹ Cf. Bader 2010; Bader 2016.

²³⁰ Anthony 1990, 899–905, 908. The examples Anthony gives still suggest he predominantly uses material culture as proof, whilst the materials he refers to might be equally derived from trade, although he does not really want to identify normative culture with peoples.

²³¹ E.g. Parker Pearson 1999, 5; Graham Philip’s project ‘The invisible dead’, Bradbury and Philip 2016, 315–316.

²³² Burmeister 2000; Burmeister 2013.

²³³ Led by Bader and funded by the Austrian Science Fund, Elise Richter Programme, project number V147-G21.

²³⁴ Van Dommelen 1997.

²³⁵ For results, see Chapter 4 and Bader 2013a.

²³⁶ Gosselain 2000; Calvo Trias et al. 2015. See Dietler 2010, 221, for a possible counter example.

to be useful. More rigour is needed here also in descriptive approaches as researchers base far-reaching conclusions on their observations.²³⁷

In recent studies the use of migration as a sole explanatory model for culture change is still considered as axiomatic and the process in itself understudied.²³⁸ While the often repeated opinion that an actual influx of physical individuals is necessary to initiate culture change either by an overwhelming conquest (a common model in prehistory²³⁹), infiltration, colonisation²⁴⁰ or another conceptual model,²⁴¹ it stands against the notion that culture change may have been a strategy to cope with changes in socio-economic circumstances in whichever way induced.²⁴² Again, such views are inextricably intertwined with a static normative culture concept. Susanne Hakenbeck's proposal to use the more open concept of mobility in order to gain a more diverse picture of possibilities in a bottom-up approach appears to be the way forward especially when combined with the aid of ancient DNA and stable isotope analyses.²⁴³

Whilst, *inter alia*, migration is used as an explanatory model for culture change in continental Europe, the change in the material culture at Tell el-Dab'a/Avaris was used to argue for the immigration of social groups from Syria-Palestine.²⁴⁴ It does not seem to be generally understood in this enormously complex archaeological data set that at the beginning of the archaeological history of the site exclusively "Egyptian" objects and material culture existed. Only later did "Syro-Palestinian" material culture start to co-occur, mainly due to trade but also due to other cultural contacts. This leads very slowly to the development of entangled material culture (relational and material) and also only in some cases. Nevertheless, even after those materially entangled objects began to emerge (see Chapter 3.6, Tab. 1), objects clearly recognisable as belonging to either the "Egyptian" or the "Syro-Palestinian" cultural tradition continued to be produced and used. Neither of those traditions disappeared completely; they continued alongside the occurrence of materially entangled objects. It is much harder to ascertain, whether those 'things' were used differently than before.

In summary, it needs to be stressed again that singular "ethnic markers" identified by modern archaeologists are almost always ambiguous²⁴⁵ and that pottery by itself is never enough to suggest the physical presence of an immigrant because other cultural exchange processes such as commodity exchange or other forms of culture contacts may have taken place and are not easy to distinguish in the archaeological record. Consideration of the complete context and the several types of evidence²⁴⁶ of these finds and the way they are used are crucial for a reasonable interpretation. In addition, scientific methods might help to build a multi-tiered model in the future.

The considerations described above are not practical and perhaps not even logical beyond the culture-historical paradigm for a liminal area such as the north-eastern delta/Sinai/southern Levant region,

²³⁷ Bader forthcoming-b.

²³⁸ E.g. Hakenbeck 2008, 21; Burmeister 2013; Gramsch 2015; Burmeister 2016.

²³⁹ See fn. 127; Lucy 2005, 88.

²⁴⁰ Van Dommelen 1997; Dietler 2010.

²⁴¹ Levy and Van den Brink 2002; Gramsch 2015, 343–344.

²⁴² Jones 1997, 139–142, criticises the functionalist approach advocated for example by Haaland 1977; See also Hakenbeck 2008; Burmeister 2016, 42–64.

²⁴³ Hakenbeck 2008, 19. For a cursory overview of mobility in ancient Egypt, mostly based on textual evidence, see Koepp-Junk 2016. NB, as usual Heidi Koepp-Junk refers to the "delta Asiatics" in one sentence as if they belonged to one monolithic block and were not a feature of the long development of cultural interaction that passed before. For definitions see Burmeister 2013. For mobility and the use of a dynamic view of material culture see Van Oyen 2017.

²⁴⁴ Schneider 2010, 147, 152–153. Similarly, Thomas Schneider reconstructs the presence of Nubians in Memphis based on the presence of ceramic sherds in Nubian style. Also John Baines takes the foreign culture existing in the Delta for granted. Baines 1996, 376; Lucy 2005, 86.

²⁴⁵ Indeed, especially if ethnic identity/ethnicity is a quite modern construct, the conceived correlation between certain artefact types and the origin of an individual would only be subliminal and indirect, cf. Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 18. Smith 2003, 5–6, argues with Herodotus' writings and the origin of ethos for an early appearance of the phenomenon. Halsall 2007, 60–62, contemplates handmade coarse wares for that purpose but admits that "basic types of pottery or ceramic decoration do not differ enormously from one Kulturgruppe to another." Brather 2004, 302–304; Schiestl 2009, 200; Liszka 2012, 58–42.

²⁴⁶ Jones 1997; Smith 2003; Lucy 2005, 87; Stevenson 2008, 552; Liszka 2012, 83.

which serves as the main example in this current study. The manifold results of contacts between people with different cultural expressions of identity and changes and interconnecting influences are noticeable in material culture and have been observed in that area since predynastic times.²⁴⁷ The spatial closeness of different social groupings and their own traditions seems to have led to a cultural ‘atmosphere’ or ‘milieu’, where individuals were able to choose from a range of cultural traits to tackle their everyday chores, be they developed within an ‘Egyptian’ or ‘Syro-Palestinian’ context/environment. This cultural atmosphere does not necessarily reflect any biological background, but a *habitus* structuring and being structured by closely interwoven cultural traits from both traditions, which over time also underwent multiple and complicated developments. Short-lived objects of local manufacture, such as pottery, are a good indicator for such developments, although it must be kept in mind that no meaningful one-to-one-correlation between the ethnic identity of the maker and the ceramic product can be construed. What can be demonstrated is a creative environment through interaction using some, at first, non-local traditions and influences; however, as to who was the creator from an ethnic point of view remains in darkness. Something similar, but in a different way and frequency, might have happened in the colonial contexts bordering ancient Nubian territory, where Egyptian and Nubian spheres overlapped and a larger cultural repertoire was available and where, moreover, the situational character of identity is very present.²⁴⁸

2.5. CULTURES IN CONTACT

Intercultural contacts can be described as an encounter between two or more social groups of people of different identity which are negotiated in a mutual dynamic process.²⁴⁹ However, negotiation on and between fundamental concepts of culture and their conceptualisation within cultural studies is likely to continue for much longer so that no final résumé can or should be attempted within this framework.²⁵⁰ Due to the fact that some aspects of the study of cultural contacts pertinent to the current discussion were repeatedly connected with the identity of people forming social groups, they must be briefly mentioned.²⁵¹

Intermittently, and not always explicitly, a hierarchical view divided ‘cultures’²⁵² into ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ ones²⁵³ or ‘non-dominant’ and ‘dominant’ ones. Usually the former was shown to completely submit to the latter either actively, giving up all individualities and idiosyncrasies, or somehow losing them and, importantly, without having any influence on the ‘dominant’ culture. Such dominance may be based on possession of (colonial) power, writing systems, military might, a higher number of people or superiority in achievements. The lower/simpler/non-dominant culture is thought to have disappeared without a trace in a development of certain stages, to which a wide range of research literature testifies²⁵⁴ (see Chapter 2.5.1).

In the course of post-colonial cultural studies such concepts were deconstructed and the result was that the existence of ‘pure’ culture as a primordial stage was refuted.²⁵⁵ This development is again

²⁴⁷ Bader 2015a for an overview with specialised bibliography. Some of the case studies suffer from a lack of illustration and demonstration of these similarities, especially in the Early Bronze Age.

²⁴⁸ Smith 2003, esp. xv, 188–206. Cf. especially the formation of culturally mixed material culture at Elephantine: Raue 2012, 54; Raue 2018.

²⁴⁹ Lohwasser 2017.

²⁵⁰ But see Bader 2012; Bader 2017b with bibliography.

²⁵¹ Schortman and Urban 1998, 102.

²⁵² Better terms would be ‘societies’ or ‘social units’, in order to avoid a subjectification similar to archaeological culture and its baggage.

²⁵³ E.g. Assmann 1992 on the grounds of possessing the ability to record cultural memory through writing.

²⁵⁴ Cusick 1998; Schortman and Urban 1998; Schneider 2003a, 318–321, with many more references; Berry 2005; Riggs and Baines 2012. Also in Middle Nubian material culture: cf. De Souza 2019. For a colonial angle see Van Dommelen 1997, 306–308.

²⁵⁵ Bhabha 1994; Fahlander 2007, 19–20; Stockhammer 2012, 48; Bader 2013a; Stockhammer 2013. For Egypt, but largely ignored: Baines 1996, 362–363; Schneider 2003b, 158.

closely connected to how the permeability and structure of culture opposite other cultures is perceived (see Chapter 2.2). The most important result of this research is the realisation that “no culture can exist in isolation”.²⁵⁶ As a result, different concepts of inter- or transcultural “mixing” or “blending”²⁵⁷ were proposed and consequently explored in modern and ancient case studies (see Chapter 2.5.2).

For both strands of research any modernistic expectations have proven to be of disadvantage.²⁵⁸ The material outcome of cultural contacts within material culture in archaeology is more often discussed rather theoretically than explained in detail, and, in practice, what exactly constitutes the similarities/differences and changes is not illustrated. Here the current practice of line of argumentation should change in order to provide criteria that can be rationally retraced rather than a model that is based on subjective criteria.²⁵⁹ One of the major drawbacks in the archaeology of cultural encounters is the inability to measure in some objective way the degrees of difference of objects belonging to different cultural traditions and, in consequence, to trace objects with traits of more than one such tradition. Descriptions of influences on objects are necessarily very subjective and vary from one student of material culture to the next. This makes consideration of degrees of external influences the weakest point in the study of material culture.²⁶⁰ In some ways this problem can be compared to the practical work of a ceramicist: with increasing experience of various bodies of material the possibilities of identification of incomplete sherds is greatly enhanced. Similarly, the ability to identify pots from sherdage differs between ceramicists with differential work experience.

2.5.1. Acculturation Theories

Because identity and self-definition are involved in contact situations with the abstract ‘the other’ and often happen because of migration processes, another branch of research connected to cultural contacts needs to be mentioned here, at least briefly. The closely related concept of ‘Egyptianisation’ is overwhelmingly present in research literature mostly without proper theoretical underpinning.²⁶¹ Some 50 years ago Barth used the terms ‘adaptation’, ‘assimilation’, and ‘adoption’ as stages of the acculturation process in order to describe individuals consciously changing from one social (ethnic) group to another, if such a change was advantageous in any way.²⁶² While he did not explain his specific use of those terms as many scholars still do not, research at this point had already undergone several decades of development. So, no uniform field of culture contact research developed but rather a disparate collection of different far from unified acculturation theories proliferated.²⁶³ It would take too long to go into

²⁵⁶ Schortman and Urban 1998, 109.

²⁵⁷ Smith 2003, 165–166; Lohwasser 2017. Note that a different view on the culture concept makes a transculturation model impossible, cf. Fowler 2010.

²⁵⁸ Schortman and Urban 1998; Sahlin 1999, 411.

²⁵⁹ See Bader 2011a; Bader 2015a; Bader 2020.

²⁶⁰ This paragraph owes much to conversations on this topic with A. de Souza (pers. comm. 12 June 2019) and H. Feiglstorfer (pers. comm. 12 June 2019). See also Jung 2009.

²⁶¹ E. S. Cohen 1992: I would like to thank Elisa Priglinger for drawing my attention to this work and providing a copy of it (pers. comm. 15 July 2018). “Egyptianisation refers to a change among non-Egyptian archaeological remains in which ancient Egyptian goods, styles and traditions are added to or replace non-Egyptian objects and practices.” (E. S. Cohen 1992, 1). See there for a history of the term and the concept. Although the author is following a culture-historical view of Egyptian and Nubian cultures, he criticises much of this tradition and reasonably argues that Egyptian burials with Kerma objects rather belong to Egyptians, who were given Nubian objects, rather than to Egyptianised people with Kerma identity (cf. E. S. Cohen 1992, 54, also 58). He also draws a very detailed picture of acculturation in Nubia in the Second Intermediate Period. See also Liszka 2012; De Souza 2013; Van Pelt 2013 for criticism of the concept of Egyptianisation as colonial. Ultimately the interesting part in such situations is the appropriation of the other and why, and not who ‘Egyptianised’ and who ‘Nubianised’. Interestingly scholars, whose research focus is Egypt, tend to support the former because they believe Egyptian culture is somehow superior, while Nubian archaeologists think the ‘Nubian’ achievements are underestimated and should be stressed more. This is a direct result of the colonial research history of Nubia since George A. Reisner, cf. Reisner 1923; Trigger 1989; Schiestl 2009, 202–203; cf. Hicks 2010, 69–71 for positionality.

²⁶² Barth 1969; Barth 1996 [1969].

²⁶³ Cusick 1998; Schneider 2003a, 318–322.

detail here and to present and discuss the vast amount of research literature and case studies, many of which are set in a European colonial context and are not directly applicable to ancient Egypt. Initially, the ‘Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation’²⁶⁴ did not judge on direction or superiority of given social groups in contact and culture change and scholars still use these definitions,²⁶⁵ although many models involve ‘dominance due to complexity, military power or number of people’. Over time, several directions of theory developed, many of which were distinctly colonial, centred on western thinking and philosophy, and included asymmetrical power relations and conflicts.²⁶⁶ They draw on the reactions of people, often in inferior social positions and/or smaller social groups, who were ‘swallowed’ by larger ones.²⁶⁷ Much of this research, derived from anthropology and sociology, could not be directly applied to archaeological contact situations as only the material outcome would be visible in material culture, but not immaterial contacts and consequences (such as linguistic features or behaviours leaving no material traces) or the motivation behind it. Often indirectly connected, e.g. textual, sources are used in a culture-historical way.²⁶⁸ There is a big difference between (prestige) objects obtained via élite exchange networks, which were then appropriated or emulated, and material culture used and distributed in power structured contacts with certain aims in mind such as cultural colonisation. Either new items are used in a traditional way taken over by individuals who were labelled as socially inferior as a way to cope with the situation or new meanings were assigned to non-local or ‘foreign’ objects.²⁶⁹

The ‘trait list approach’ derived from such considerations, detailing which material items represent the cultural essence of certain social groups²⁷⁰ raises the same problems of assuming a direct connection between certain object types and the identity of certain individuals.²⁷¹ After prolonged research such a connection between certain objects and certain social groups cannot be maintained (see Chapter 2.3). Nevertheless, the observation of culture contacts in archaeology is important because it may be possible to observe the role of the contact in socio-cultural change. Moreover, there are positive and negative sides to contacts as well as to the question of culture contact and hierarchical power. James Cusick stresses the location of culture contact in liminal situations, namely in areas of ‘borders’ and ‘frontiers’ in the widest sense, where interactions and ‘blending’ are almost bound to happen.²⁷² Such a situation can be paralleled in the close proximity of the Egyptian delta, the Sinai and the southern Levant, but it remains doubtful whether the acculturation model is the best one for this case for the following reasons (see also Chapter 4 for a more thorough discussion). Although the psychological process is now much better researched and the once proposed and quite fixed linearity of acculturation, the gradual process of social and cultural change and adaptation of, and to, another culture, by means of objects, successfully refuted, some aspects remain problematic. This is because the prerogative is a dominant element in this relationship. The possibility that the non-dominant group may change the dominant group as well is often neglected, and especially acculturation in Egypt is seen as a fast process that implicitly leaves no trace of the ‘original’ culture,²⁷³ which would be equivalent to total assimilation of the ‘newcomers’. According to Kate Liszka this does not apply to the Hyksos²⁷⁴ (seemingly used as an ethnic term in

²⁶⁴ Based on ethnographic studies: Redfield et al. 1936. Cited, e.g., by Berry 2005, 701, and by Schiestl 2009, 202–203.

²⁶⁵ E.g. Berry 2005.

²⁶⁶ See Bader 2013a; Bader forthcoming-c for a discussion of some of these concepts from an Egyptological viewpoint.

²⁶⁷ Cusick 1998, 132–136. See Schiestl 2009, 202–203, for a critique.

²⁶⁸ See Bader 2017b for an attempt to sketch possible approaches. See Dietler 2010, 45–47, deconstructing Hellenisation as implicitly present in most interpretations of colonialism due to a conceived natural superiority of Greek culture.

²⁶⁹ E.g. Liszka 2012, 78.

²⁷⁰ See Liszka 2012, 89–90, with a position against it and replacing it conceptually with an “ethnic marker” list, which is not per se an advance. The table of developmental stages below is intended to provide an overview for quick reference rather than a trait list.

²⁷¹ Cusick 1998, 135–136. See Burke 2019 for a recent application of a similar concept on the Tell el-Dab’a case study stressing certain traits hidden in the overwhelming amount of data but neglecting other equally important ones. Cf. also Naum 2010 but in a post-colonial conceptual framework.

²⁷² Cusick 1998, 137, mentions them as not per se directed in contrast to conquest and invasion.

²⁷³ Berry 2005; Liszka 2012, 103–114.

²⁷⁴ Liszka 2012, 109–110: “The Hyksos is one of the only groups of non-Egyptians in Egypt who take longer to acculturate, but that is probably due to the fact that they were the dominant group in the delta during the SIP.”

this context) because their material culture does not ‘acculturate’ until after a very long development. Moreover, detailed study of the material culture at Tell el-Dab^a has shown that something new is created drawing from both Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian cultural traditions,²⁷⁵ whether this outcome is called ‘hybrid’, ‘creole’ or ‘entangled’ or ‘appropriated’ culture or something else. This outcome, that is quite visible but incommensurable,²⁷⁶ especially within the material culture, does not seem to be given any ‘space’ in the acculturation schemes as proposed, since the ‘different’ material culture is supposed to disappear (more or less quickly) so that it is not noticeable any more. However, such a process also suggests a cultural homogeneity (Fig. 2), which is in general disputed. It has to be said, though, that any assessment of homo- or heterogeneity of material culture is derived from subjective points of view and normative expectations, and depends on the level of detail with which such assessments are made. For example, the form of an object may be very similar and even identical but the technologies to achieve this form may differ, quite radically. Such considerations depend, moreover, on how ‘differences’ are conceived and defined in particular cases as well as knowledge of the extent of variety within artefact types.²⁷⁷

The use of concepts such as acculturation²⁷⁸ and assimilation²⁷⁹ allows too much implicit (colonial) baggage in describing the outcomes of contact situations. Again *culture change* remains vague and is often assigned to external influences. For example, assimilation was often falsely assumed due to changes in cultural assemblages.²⁸⁰ Equally mistaken was the assumption that multi-culturalism must lead to an inevitable assimilation and homogenisation of culture, which did not happen, but a number of variations were observed instead.²⁸¹ Such perceived homogeneity of culture cannot be observed in antiquity either.²⁸² The same train of thought was followed with regard to the disappearance of material culture previously identified as marking the ‘Kerma’, ‘Pan-Grave’ and ‘C-group’ cultures in Nubia in the New

²⁷⁵ See Bader 2011a; Bader 2013a; Bader 2015a; Bader 2017b; Bader 2020 for raw data and discussions of various aspects of such studies.

²⁷⁶ This is the major point of critique by H. Feiglstorfer (pers. comm. 12 June 2019).

²⁷⁷ Observation of the development of material culture in the First Intermediate Period, the Middle Kingdom, the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom in my studies over the years suggests that homogeneity of material culture throughout Egypt is rather an exception than the norm. Cf. lecture at the Annual Meeting of American Schools for Oriental Studies in Boston 2017: Bader, ‘Technological and Morphological Differences in Pottery Production in Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period (1700–1550 BC): Signs of Changing Regional Connectivity?’ Session: Connectivities in the Near East: Social Impact of Shifting Networks, 16 November 2017. Nevertheless, the material culture of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt (esp. pottery) is in many general works referred to as homogeneous from north to south. Cf. Arnold 1988; Bourriau 1991, 7–9; Schiestl 2009, 173–174, and many others. While Robert Schiestl and Anne Seiler (2012) attempt to give a coherent overview of the pottery production in the Middle Kingdom, in my view it becomes clear that the material is not as uniform as previously suggested. However, detailed studies of singular pottery types as well as the shape repertoires across Egypt are needed in order to obtain more stringent evidence.

²⁷⁸ “Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members.” Berry 2005, 698.

²⁷⁹ Schneider 2006, 206, “vollständige Akkulturation” [completed acculturation]; Berry 2005, 701, “maybe at times a phase of acculturation.” Definitions for this important term are not unified. Often acculturation is meant to mark the total disappearance of the cultural tradition of the minority group or the group considered of lower standing aka inferior culture. Schiestl 2009, 214, suggests a desire to assimilate ‘Asiatics’ by the Egyptian administration to exploit economic opportunities for stratum d/1 (~general Phase G/4). This also suggests that he works on the assumption that everyone living there in this period is an ethnic ‘Asiatic’. But who would then be their Egyptian role model?

²⁸⁰ Jones 1999a, 221, example; Breyer 2010, 496–497: we need to abandon the rigid normative culture concept for a more fluid and receptive model as proposed by Schneider 2003b; Breyer 2010, 496–497; Bader 2015a. Breyer (2010) follows the concept of *Kulturelle Aneignung/appropriation* after Paul Ricoeur and Michel de Certeau, but see also Hahn 2005.

²⁸¹ Jones 1997, 53–55.

²⁸² For example, considerable variety in Pan-Grave vessel types and assemblages is ascribed to the fact that they were hand-made, but this heterogeneity makes categorisation difficult, Liszka 2012, 393–394. See De Souza 2019. Particularly in the Second Intermediate Period, the material culture of the various Egyptian regions is not as homogeneous as previously conceived. The development and materiality of these differences and possible reasons are currently the subject of a comprehensive material culture project in Egyptian archaeology: ‘Beyond Politics: Material Culture in Second Intermediate Period Egypt and Nubia’, funded by the Austrian Science Fund, Y754–G19 and led by the author.

Overview of the development of the shapes of pottery vessels from the First Intermediate Period to the early New Kingdom

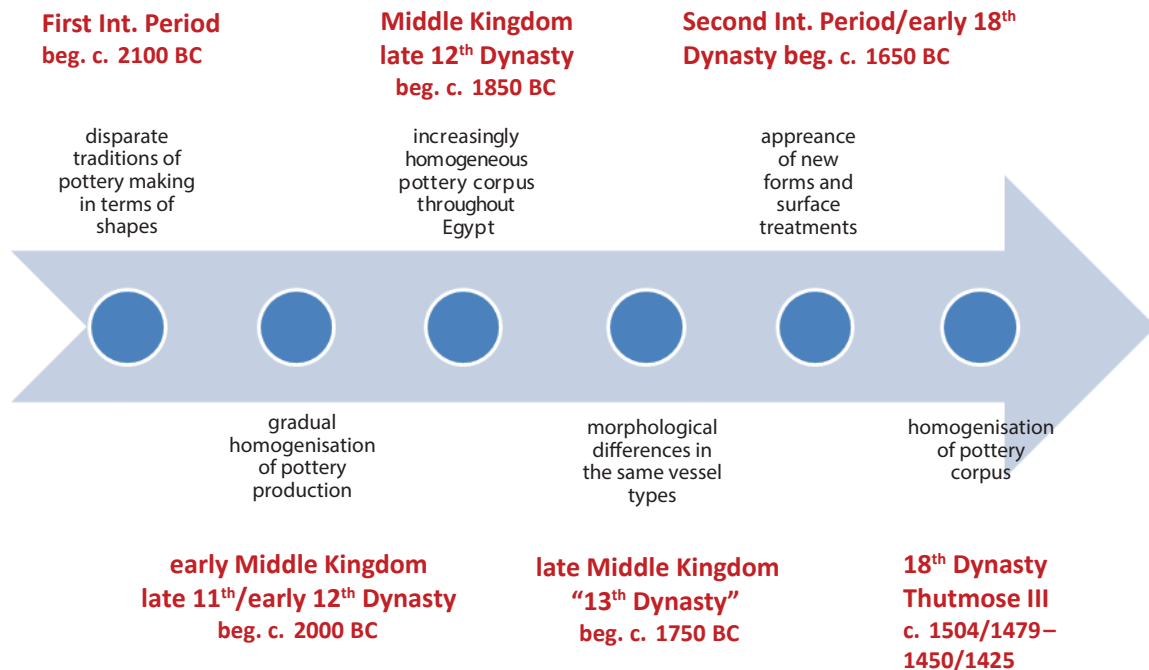


Fig. 2 Overview of the development of pottery morphology (B. Bader)

Kingdom, which was seen as a direct consequence of acculturation.²⁸³ Such thoughts are again based on an understanding of culture and material culture as bounded units produced by a certain circumscribed and unequivocal group of people, very similar to concepts discussed before.²⁸⁴

The outcome of the contact was predicted on the grounds of inflexible models, which saw it as a reaction to circumstances forced on groups by social elements considered superior. Material culture as such was never considered to have anything to contribute to the discussion other than passively proving such models.²⁸⁵ The development of theory moves towards types of interaction systems also on a macroscale²⁸⁶ and mutual change of both participants in the contact situation through the active choice of acculturation strategy.²⁸⁷ The extent of individual choice in ancient social contexts, however, remains very hard to estimate.

²⁸³ E.g. Riggs and Baines 2012, 3; Liszka 2012, 239–240; but see Cohen 1992, 182, seeing the disappearance rather in the military action of Egyptian and Kerma rulers than acculturation towards Egyptian culture. A new project is devoted to the problem that homogeneity seems to be rather the exception than the norm: 'InBetween', IEF grant no. 796050 is conducted by Aaron de Souza and co-ordinated by Bettina Bader.

²⁸⁴ Cf. billiard ball model – Cusick 1998, 131, with further bibliography.

²⁸⁵ Claudia Theune's work on material culture expressing life situations of victims in Nazi concentration camps provides an impressive example of how careful analysis provides an additional source hitherto entirely neglected directly relating to the hardships of life situations and how individuals coped with them, e.g. personalised cutlery made with the very simplest of means. Cf. Lecture 'Welche Aussage hat materielle Kultur in zeitgeschichtlichen Kontexten?' [Which information does material culture provide in modern history?] 23rd May 2017, as part of the Forschungsschwerpunkt Materielle Kultur of Vienna University.

²⁸⁶ Schortman and Urban 1998.

²⁸⁷ Berry 2005.

2.5.2. Cultural Mixing

Scholars of post-colonial studies engaged deeply with the nature of culture and how the encounter of different cultures would have to be conceptualised and developed, especially from a linguistic point of view.²⁸⁸ Other scholars have equated some of these concepts with previous ones, which was not always helpful.²⁸⁹ Again, this is a very active and changing field of research, some aspects of which have reached global archaeology in general and Mediterranean archaeology in particular.²⁹⁰ In this case, the impact on material culture was discussed in a variety of concepts appropriated from other fields (often biology), such as hybridity,²⁹¹ creolisation,²⁹² syncretism,²⁹³ rhizome, etc.²⁹⁴ Even in the use of general concepts of cultural mixing, where the relationship of two or more cultural traditions in various contact situations is analysed, culture-historical thought models were not totally excluded,²⁹⁵ as there is an immediate need to label social groups in some way for a better understanding. Of course, this makes the debate more complicated. A more individualistic view of social groups reflected in the language describing them is of advantage in order to prevent a subconscious relapse into culture-historical paradigms. An alternative may be to use regional/geographical terms instead of looking, e.g., for the Pan-grave people. In a very similar way the ‘Hyksos’ may only be used for members of the ruling élite because ‘Hyksos’ is the Greek rendering of the Egyptian title *ḥkꜣw ḥꜣswt*. This latter term should not be applied to all inhabitants of Tell el-Dabʿa as if they belonged to an *ethnikon* [demonym], which they do not. The homogeneity of the inhabitants over the history of the site has not so far been proven. Thus, it is only a title but not an ethnic

²⁸⁸ E.g. Bhabha 1994; Weißköppel 1995.

²⁸⁹ Sahlins 1999, 411, equates hybridity (“Bhabha’s idea as de-constructed in-betweenness”) with acculturation, which has so many different meanings and connotations itself as to be unusable as an analytical term.

²⁹⁰ Knapp (2009) contrasts the concept of hybridity with the common interpretation of colonisation of Cyprus at the end of the Late Bronze Age but does not explain the advantages of the model he chose.

²⁹¹ Fahlander 2007; Silliman 2015 for a recent critique on delimiting and ‘measuring’ hybridity. In conversations with H. Feiglstorfer (pers. comm. 12 June 2019) and A. de Souza (pers. comm. 12 June 2019), the difficulty of how to measure hybridity, how to ascertain where exactly it starts and how much of each trait has to be present to make any object hybrid also arises. A similar argument has been made in Jung 2009, 82, and refuted in Stockhammer 2012, 54. However, the lack of ability to measure this phenomenon makes it an ill-suited concept to use (Bader 2013a, 261). Cf. Insoll 2007, 9, quoting Cashmore 1994, 69: “nobody is quite sure where whiteness ends and blackness begins”. Cf. Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 29, for an American example. This difficulty is prevalent in one way or another in several concepts derived from biology. Bhabha 1994, 89: “almost the same but not white”; Ingold’s direct critique of hybridisation concentrates on the existence of the presupposition of two previously existing and distinct forms prior to mixing, cf. Ingold 2008, 211. Further criticised by Dietler 2010, 51–53: “If every colonial situation can be reduced to a process of hybridity then the term loses its specific analytical content and ceases to explain anything. It loses its power to inform us about the diversity of the processes clustered under the rubric of colonialism [...]”; Smith 2015, 774–777; Smith argues for the use of cultural entanglement as a concept but also retains Egyptianisation (775) and seemingly equates hybridity with a truly entangled practice (775–776). In my view, they should be kept separate; otherwise a differentiation between the various concepts becomes blurred and meaningless to the point of mere synonyms.

²⁹² Bader 2010; Staubli 2016 attempts the use of this concept with a view to Egyptian long-term developments of material culture. One trait he neglects is the asymmetrical power balance, quoted frequently in other examples using that concept: Bader 2013a, 262; Bader forthcoming-c. Staubli also makes the common mistake of inferring from the presence of Levantine Painted Ware, a sought-after exchange commodity, the presence of foreign people. It has to be stressed yet again that this is not necessarily the case.

²⁹³ Stewart 2011.

²⁹⁴ Bader 2013a for definitions, and application and modification of some of these concepts to Egyptian data and references. Cf. also Fahlander 2007. The concept of ‘interference’ derived from literary translation studies/linguistics was considered for a storm god at Tell el-Dabʿa as case study but did not lead to a better explanation of the circumstances. Also, Egyptians would have necessarily to be present at that site which is disputed by some, cf. Mourad 2019.

²⁹⁵ Antonaccio 2010, 47–48, advocates a hybridity concept, but then assigns the culture-historical Sikels in eastern Sicily to a certain type of cultural expression, lacking contemporary textual evidence, which would identify this social group without doubt. She then assigned material culture to a certain culture without the possibility of cross-checking.

affiliation.²⁹⁶ But, of course, I appreciate it is difficult to change the language of discourse used for such descriptions quickly and sustainably.

The use of post-colonial theory with regard to the features of material culture found at Tell el-Dab'a has briefly been discussed in as far as the archaeological record was detailed enough (see below for details) to isolate evidence for the application of those concepts, whether the evidence fitted the frameworks of those models or not, or whether the concepts were problematic in other ways or not.²⁹⁷ Using yet another post-colonial model, it is noteworthy that Uroš Matić²⁹⁸ applies post-colonial terminology such as mimicry²⁹⁹ combined with that known from acculturation theories ('assimilation').³⁰⁰ Further, in the wider field of theories of cultural encounters, this concept – mimicry – is equally problematic because there is a certain subversive resistance against the coloniser intrinsic to it ('mockery'); moreover, again no space is left for the 'in-between' material objects that fit neither one nor the other but are the result of a creative process. Whether any resistance against colonisers intrinsic in material culture is easily recognisable also remains debatable, as well as an opinion when an object is just enough (dis)similar to constitute an incidence of mimicry.³⁰¹ Such a position denies the individual creator of material objects the creativity to make something that is influenced by other traditions/ideas but is not the same, and was, perhaps, not meant to be the same. Here again the scrutiny of the objects in terms of manufacture, use and deposition is vital in order to interpret whether they are just of the same shape or if they were really made in exactly the same way (*chaîne opératoire*). It is also implicitly suggested that mimicry is somehow qualitatively less attractive,³⁰² which seems to be a problematic point of view to take for material culture or behaviours in retrospect, as who is the judge of this – a modern scholar from an etic perspective?

A possible alternative can be seen in the post-colonial concept of the "Third Space"³⁰³ (also called "in-between", interstices, interstitial passage or intersubjective realms) as a virtual location for a multi-dimensional and ambivalent place of encounter that seems to be largely free of ideological baggage.³⁰⁴ The same holds true for the concepts of the "middle ground",³⁰⁵ cultural (relational and material)

²⁹⁶ Van Seters 1966, 3, 191; Candelora 2018. Unfortunately, the conceptual difference between the Egyptian title and an ethnic group remains muddled even in 2019; cf. Ksiazek 2019, a study with many problems, and by physical anthropologists: cf. Maaranen et al. (2019b) who also disregard the fact that the title Hekau Chasut [*ḥkꜣw ḥꜣswt*] for rulers of Egypt only existed in the 15th Dynasty.

²⁹⁷ Cf. Bader 2013a.

²⁹⁸ Matić 2017, 99–100.

²⁹⁹ Definition of mimicry: Jiménez 2010, 38–40: a (more or less superficial) similarity of objects (or organisms) that are not necessarily related. As many of these concepts adopted from biology, so is this one. Bhabha (1994) and Fahlander (2007), among others, developed this concept further to include subversive strategies in using similarities tactically. Fahlander 2007, 26–29, concentrates on subversive mockery, also mentioned in Dietler 2010, 64–65. In the current case study, it is hard to see how such a proposition could be supported by real evidence.

³⁰⁰ Also Dietler (2010) combines post-colonial terms with those from acculturation theories, e.g. 53.

³⁰¹ Naum 2010, 124–125 for an example.

³⁰² Fahlander 2007, 27; Matić 2017.

³⁰³ Gramsch 2015, 346–347, uses Bhabha's concept including hybridity as a general concept in the sense that no pure culture exists. He also asks different questions in his quest to view material culture as a process, namely, who benefits from a change?

³⁰⁴ Bhabha 1994; Matić 2017, 104–105.

³⁰⁵ The basic text book for this concept is White 1991; White 2011. In White 1991, 50, Indian women, who married French men, and their children are crucial for the formation of a social group, literate in both manners and customs and languages, to form a link between the two groups and negotiate their behaviour. This could be a metaphor for life at Tell el-Dab'a at least in some Phases, where a similar situation in terms of marriage has been suspected due to sexual dimorphism: Bietak 1996a, 35–36; Maaranen et al. 2019a, 346. But in contrast to Canada, no textual evidence documents the daily relationships between locals and incomers. Moreover, in the edition of 2011, xiii, White states "the creation, in part through creative misunderstanding of a set of practices, rituals, offices, beliefs that although comprised of elements of the group in contact is as a whole separate from the practices and beliefs of all these groups." White 2006, 10, asserts that very specific preconditions are necessary for the application of his concept which include a rough power balance, a mutual need for what the other group possesses, mobility to compel the other side to change in a process of mutual invention. These preconditions are not proved at Tell el-Dab'a. Lumsden 2008, 29–32 adapted both aspects to material culture, namely the Old Assyrian Period seals. See also Fahlander 2007, 31–35.

entanglement,³⁰⁶ and cultural appropriation.³⁰⁷ All of those concepts retain elements of eclectic choice and self-determination as well as creativity and are therefore very attractive alternatives to the concepts mentioned above (see Chapter 4 for final remarks). The materialisation of the ‘Third Space’ as a concept was formulated in areas close to borders/frontiers, where “two or more groups come into contact [...], where people of different cultural backgrounds occupy the same territory and where the space between them grows intimate.”³⁰⁸ There develops a physical “place ‘in-between’, [which] enforces dialogue and translation not only to facilitate communication but also to allow negotiation, making individual agency and corporate acting clearly visible” (Fig. 1).³⁰⁹ This description both fits uncannily the situation in the north-eastern Nile Delta as well as within Naum’s rendering of the concept; whether colonial settings can be proven or not does not deter from its applicability.³¹⁰

2.6. WHICH KIND OF IDENTITIES CAN BE GLEANED FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD?

A question of major importance is how closely we can expect to be able to research the identities of an individual from archaeological evidence and, more precisely in this case, in a settlement? The degree and precision of information relating to individuals in a settlement are certainly less direct than in the case of a tomb, where the remains of the actual individual are – theoretically – available to conduct scientific analysis in terms of physical anthropology, stable isotope analyses and, if available, genetic information. These analyses clarify the biological sex, the approximate age as well as family relationships in the broader sense and certain pathologies visible in the skeleton. This type of information is missing in a settlement without tombs. The remains of nine individuals buried in the latest Phase G/3–1 in Area A/II have only been partly available for scientific study up to now (see below). Thus, mainly the objects buried with the individuals are able to inform us about the social circumstances of inhumations but also not directly because there is the fact to consider that “[...] The dead do not bury themselves but are treated and disposed of by the living. [...]”³¹¹ As stressed many times before, there is no one-to-one correlation between objects and individuals, but archaeology retrieves fragments of the media which were manipulated in the course of conveying certain aspects of their identity or rather personhood.³¹²

Thus, where the analysis of identities is carried out in a settlement, it cannot be expected to achieve a very intimate personal level. In certain areas, complex contextual information concerning objects and/or installations may provide evidence of work/life environments with gender and/or age connotation as well as ideas about professional tasks conducted in certain places. Anyone who expects to know the ethnic identity of those who used a cooking installation discovered in the liminal area of the Egyptian Nile Delta which contained fragments of locally made ‘Egyptian’ style and locally produced ‘Syro-Palestinian’ style cooking pots must be disappointed: from such a context neither the ethnic identity of the maker of the pots nor of their users can be ascertained to any degree of certainty,³¹³ even more so

³⁰⁶ Stockhammer 2012; Stockhammer 2013; Van Pelt 2013. Silliman 2015, 291, criticised Stockhammer’s entanglement as still being heuristic and a metaphor but a more suitable one than hybridity. Budka (2018) subscribes to the term material entanglement without considering any of the other theoretical basics for getting closer to the identity of people, namely *habitus* to avoid a one-to-one correlation of objects and identity. Furthermore, the scrutiny of chaînes opératoires could be used as a tool to detect similarities and differences in the production of certain types of pottery, for example. Thus, the culture-historical paradigm is still in action as well as the term ‘hybrid’ without definition. See Bader 2013a for consideration of this concept with a view to the settlement remains of Area A/II.

³⁰⁷ Schneider 2003b; Hahn 2005, 100–107, called “Aneignung” in German. Without the negative connotation of its meaning in the modern English language used in the modern UK, (pers. comm. Pamela Rose, September 2019).

³⁰⁸ Naum 2010, 101.

³⁰⁹ Naum 2010, 124.

³¹⁰ Naum 2010, 126.

³¹¹ Parker Pearson 1999, 3. Moreover, not everyone may have been buried properly or in a way that archaeology may trace remains.

³¹² Fowler 2010, 362.

³¹³ Contra Burke 2019, 79.

when the quantitative consideration is much in favour of the ‘Egyptian’ style type. The only certainty is that a local potter somewhere in Egypt (perhaps at the site: no pottery workshop has been found at Tell el-Dab^a) knew how to make Syro-Palestinian style cooking pots (if the locally produced pot is in every respect (e.g. *chaîne opératoire*) like those made in Syria-Palestine³¹⁴). Whether the user knew what exactly to cook in that pot and how, or not, remains unknown as well as whether the user (group) was the same as for the ‘Egyptian’ style cooking pots.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Bader forthcoming-a for a detailed analysis of this question.

³¹⁵ See Bader forthcoming-a.