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Late Bronze II Ivory Work in Palestine: Evidence of a Cultural Highpoint

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The Palestinian Late Bronze II period has long been considered a period of decline. A fresh examination of the level of Palestinian material culture from the second half of the Late Bronze Age, however, suggests that the period was not one of decline but perhaps was the zenith of the Late Bronze Age. While the emphasis of this paper is on ivory work, the high level of achievement reflected by the ivories is not an isolated phenomenon, but correlates with achievements in other aspects of LB II material culture.

Methodologically, the conclusions are based on three premises: 1) the vast majority of ivories found in Palestinian Late Bronze Age sites date to the second half of that period; 2) many of the Egyptianizing ivories were indeed Levantine products rather than Egyptian imports; and 3) in all likelihood many of the Levantine ivories are Palestinian and not Syrian.

Introduction

It has become customary to view the Palestinian Late Bronze Age II as a period of decline (Kenyon 1960: 209–14; Albright 1960: 101; deVaux 1978: 122; Malamat 1979: 40; Aharoni 1982: 122, 150–51). A decline in the level of material culture at this time might be expected to have occurred in view of the heavy taxation (Albright 1975: 106; deVaux 1978: 123; Na^ʿaman 1981: 183) and local disturbances attested to by the Amarna Letters (Greenberg 1955: 32–50; Aldred 1975: 85; deVaux 1978: 99–105, and n. 73). However, such a conclusion must be reevaluated.

While taxation was heavy (contra Ahituv [1978: 104] who argued that Egypt had little, if any, economic interest in Canaan), there is no evidence that the country was thereby impoverished. The vast sums collected from the Palestinian princes (Na^ʿaman 1981: 183) may have represented only a portion of their wealth. Indeed, the period may be said to actually represent one of growth, rather than of decline. Gonen (1979: 224–26) noted a steady increase in the number of small, unfortified settlements throughout the 14th and 13th centuries

but recently emphasized that this increase did not significantly alter the picture of the breakup of urban life (Gonen 1984: 70). Na^ʿaman, however, who also noted that several sites began to flourish at the end of the Late Bronze Age—possibly as a result of increased Egyptian involvement in Palestine—suggested abandoning the view of “a collapse of the Canaanite culture in the 13th century B.C.” (Na^ʿaman 1981: 185). Moreover, reevaluation of the quality of the material culture of LB II through a fresh, unbiased look at repositories of pottery and objects of minor art at sites such as Hazor, Tel Yin^ʿam, Beth-shan, Megiddo, Tell Abu-Hawam, Lachish, Deir el-Balah and Timna leads one to appreciate the sophistication and elegance of the age, and to propose that Canaanite culture was interrupted at its zenith.

This article discusses Palestinian LB II ivories as evidence for a high level of artistic achievement in this period, which has heretofore been presumed one of cultural decline. Nor does the high level of achievement reflected by the ivories represent an isolated phenomenon. Rather, the achievements in ivory-working correlate with achievements evidenced in other LB II assemblages.

Attempts to classify the Megiddo ivories were undertaken by Kantor and Barnett. Kantor (1956: 160–68) divided them into five groups based on style; and Barnett (1982: 26–28) divided them into ten groups based on function.

The intention here is to discuss selected artistic ivory genres¹ to illustrate an emerging pattern, i.e., the burgeoning of Palestinian ivory working in the latter part of the Late Bronze Age,² and to adduce from this phenomenon evidence for the thesis that LB II was a high point in the material culture of Palestine.

From the standpoint of methodology, the following points are important for the discussion of the ivories: First, the stratigraphic context of an ivory is not necessarily an indication of its date of production. The provenience of a well-stratified ivory can only provide a reliable terminal date, since ivories may have been collected for their aesthetic value (Loud 1948: 9) or economic worth (Barnett 1957: 116, 123).³ Therefore, stylistic similarities to well-dated foreign works, perhaps Egyptian, Anatolian, or Mycenaean, are more crucial for establishing a date for an object than are stratigraphic contexts. Second, the Egyptianizing ivories adduced as evidence for a high level of material culture in LB II are assumed to have been made locally by Levantine craftsmen who appropriated or assimilated Egyptian motifs and stylistic features and thereby produced a hybrid repertory and style distinguishable from those native to Egypt. Third, a Palestinian origin is proposed for a substantial share of the local Syro-Palestinian ivories found at Palestinian sites.⁴ While a systematic analysis of Late Bronze Age Syro-Palestinian local ivories is required to firmly establish a case for regional differences, the ivories discussed here, with the exception of the duck-shaped cosmetic containers and the cosmetic bowls, have no stylistic counterparts in Syria and are apparently of Palestinian origin.

Ivory Working From the Chalcolithic to the Middle Bronze Age

Work in ivory reached a creative high point during the Chalcolithic period (Barnett 1982: 23–24). This manifestation of creative achievement, perhaps unparalleled in the art of Palestine, came to an abrupt end with the passing of the Chalcolithic culture. The ensuing Early Bronze Age is

singularly barren from an artistic perspective. The only well-represented art forms of this period consist of cylinder seals (Ben-Tor 1978). Isolated examples of art include an ox in linear relief on the base of a ceramic vessel from Khirbet Kerak (Sussman 1978: 16), a ceramic bull protome from Tel Yin^cam (Liebowitz 1979: 229, pl. 27A), an ivory carved knife-handle from ^cAi (Marquet-Krause 1949: pl. 54), and isolated examples of carved ivory bulls' heads from Jericho (Cleveland 1961: 31, fig. 1; 34, fig. 2), Khirbet Kerak (Bar-Adon 1964: 64), and ^cAi (Ben-Tor 1972: 47, figs. 1, 2) which, although they show strong Mesopotamian characteristics, may have been locally made (Liebowitz 1976: 89, 90, cf. Barnett 1982: 24).

With the exception of MB II ivory silhouettes and strips from el-Jisr (Ory 1946; Amiran 1977), no ivories were found in Middle Bronze Age contexts in Palestine.⁵ Instead, bone was widely used for decorative embellishments applied to wooden boxes. The genre, whose feeble beginning can be traced back to MB IIA (Liebowitz 1977: 94), was widespread throughout the remainder of the MB II period. Bone strips decorated with incised geometric patterns, occasionally with simple figurative motifs, and various types of silhouettes used as inlay or appliqué on wooden boxes, were found in almost every excavated MB II site (Liebowitz 1977: 90, n. 8). This genre persisted into the beginning of the Late Bronze Age at Megiddo (Guy and Engberg 1938: pls. 145:2, 152:14), Bethshan Tombs 42 and 27 (Oren 1973: figs. 34:1–3; 38:11), Tell Beit Mirsim D (Albright 1938: 49, 50, and pls. 35–37), and Lachish (Tufnell 1958: pl. 28:8, 10–12). However, by that period the repertory was more limited: silhouettes were rarely found, and the repertory of geometric designs on the bone strips was reduced.⁶

The Uses of Bone and Ivory in Late Bronze I

Although ivory essentially replaced bone for luxury items by LB II (below), the division is not razor sharp; bone was not used exclusively in LB I nor was ivory used exclusively in LB II. Such an abrupt, schematic shift is neither logical nor consistent with the data. There is evidence for both overlapping and transition. Indeed, incised bone may have survived in a few locales, as attested by discovery of bone strips incised with simple longitudinal lines as late as the mid-14th to mid-13th

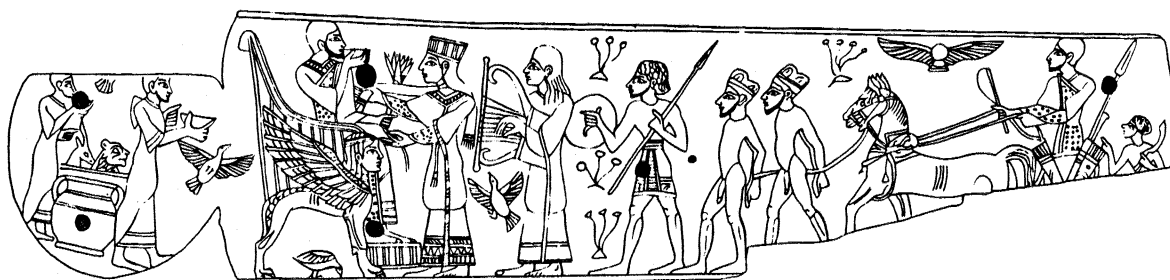


Fig. 1. Incised ivory plaque with military and feast scene from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy of The Israel Department of Antiquities).

century B.C., in a tomb with a charioteer vase at Tel Dan (Biran 1974: 34).⁷ Bone continued to be used for other objects in LB II: cushion-shaped bone pieces (some incised with geometric designs) were found in Megiddo Tomb 912B (Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 130:4–7),⁸ and Lachish Tomb 358 (Tufnell 1958: pl. 28:19–21); decorated bone spindles were found in Megiddo Tomb 31 (Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 156:13), Tomb 989 C1 (Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 100:29–30) and at Lachish (Tufnell 1958: pl. 28:7, 13–15); and bone whorls were discovered in Megiddo Tombs 877 B1, 911, 989C and 1122 (Guy and Engberg 1938: pls. 95:42–46; 119:6, 7, 12–14; 100:22–25, 27, 28; 84:5, 6).

On the other hand, a few, generally simple ivory objects are known from LB I contexts. These include ivory whorls from the LB I deposit in Tomb 42 at Beth-shan (Oren 1973: fig. 38:12–14) and the ivory cover of a cosmetic bowl incised with a simple six-petaled rosette within a single incised circle from Megiddo Stratum IX (Loud 1948: pl. 200:3). The bowl of an ivory duck-shaped cosmetic container found in Megiddo Tomb 855, a disturbed LB I burial in earth debris (Guy and Engberg 1938: 87; pl. 142:1), is either out of context and perhaps imported with the debris used for the foundation of the overlaying Middle Iron Wall 220, or it should be viewed as the earliest example of this type of bowl known from a Palestinian context.

While the transition from bone to ivory is not yet precisely understood, the following lines of development may be suggested. The zenith of bone inlay occurred in MB II. Bone inlay declined in popularity in LB I, but probably survived into the 14th century at Tel Dan—or whenever the Tel Dan box was made. On the other hand, ivory increased in popularity throughout the Late Bronze Age and reached the peak of its popularity in

LB II.⁹ While reasons for the shift from bone to ivory must be sought,¹⁰ the overwhelming majority of Late Bronze Age Palestinian ivories come from LB II contexts, precisely the period of the presumed decline. The new repertoire includes sculpture in the round; ivory boxes and panels decorated with complex compositions; openwork panels used in the interstices on furniture; a variety of cosmetic spoons and containers, including bowls, swimming girls, duck-shaped spoons, and spoons with duck-head handles; combs; gaming boards; and other miscellaneous genres. While a detailed study of each form is beyond the scope of this article, the major categories are summarized to illustrate the scope of ivory work in the LB II period.

Ivory Working in LB II Palestine

Incised and Carved Panels

Elsewhere (Liebowitz 1965: 32–70; 1967; 1978: 34–35; 1980), I have discussed at length the panels featuring military and feast scenes from Megiddo VIIA and from the Residency at Tell el-Far^{ah} (S). The four carved panels from Megiddo (Loud 1939: pls. 32, 33) and the incised panels from Tell el-Far^{ah} (S) (Petrie 1930: pl. 55) date to the mid-14th century, while the incised plaque from Megiddo (Loud 1939: pl. 4:2; fig. 1 here) clearly dates to the 13th century (Liebowitz 1980: 166–69) contra Frankfort (1963: 159) who dated it to the 14th century.

The dating of these ivories is based upon stylistic parallels to dated Egyptian wall reliefs and objects of minor art, although they are not Egyptian imports. As pointed out (n. 4), several of their iconographic and stylistic peculiarities identify them as products of a Levantine workshop. Moreover, they differ from the basic Egyptian conception of



Fig. 2. Openwork recumbent female winged sphinx from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy of the Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago).



Fig. 3. Recumbent female winged sphinx adorning the cartouche of Hatshepsut (cartouche not illustrated; drawing by Teddy Mazzola, from Montet 1937: fig. 201).

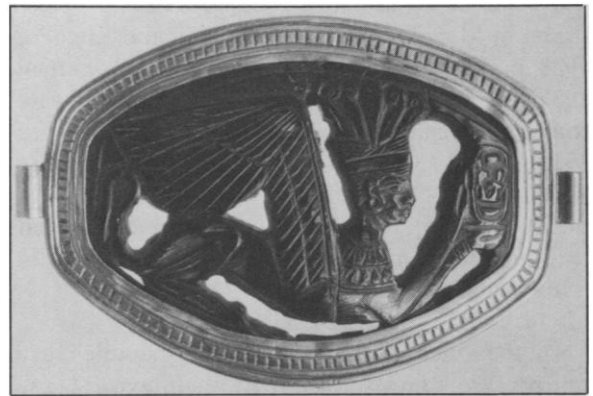


Fig. 4. Openwork sard bracelet plaque (photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art).

illustrating military expeditions. On the Palestinian ivories the narrative scenes include the battle, the victorious return of the army, preparations for and celebration of the victory feast (Liebowitz 1980). On Egyptian wall reliefs military campaigns, such as those mounted by Sety I and Rameses III, include "the issue of weapons and departure of the army . . . a great battle in open country . . . the siege and capture of the town; and the triumphal return (Montet 1981: 230). Thus in Egyptian art the military aspect is treated in greater detail, and a victory feast is not integral to the narrative.

Since no parallels for these plaques featuring military and feast scenes have been found in Syria, there is no *a priori* reason to attribute them to a Syrian workshop.

Openwork Plaques

The Megiddo VIIA hoard yielded a group of openwork plaques featuring recumbent female winged sphinxes, Bes images, and an Anubis image (Loud 1948: pls. 7, 8). In contrast to the complex compositions on the carved panels, the plaques feature isolated motifs. Nevertheless, like the panels, the plaques are carved in the new spirit of the age. Presented in bold relief, with a richness of surface texture and an attempt at naturalism, they are less stylized than ivories from earlier periods. The stylistic and technical features they have in common indicate that the plaques were all made in the same workshop, probably by the same hand, and may possibly come from the same piece of furni-

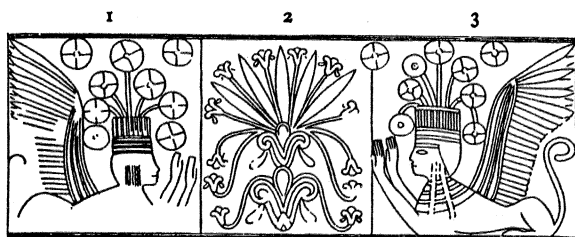


Fig. 5. Detail of tunic of Tutankhamun featuring a recumbent female winged sphinx (drawing from Crowfoot and Davies 1941: pl. 20 top).



Fig. 6. Recumbent female winged sphinx on the socle of a statue in the Turin Museum (drawing by Teddy Mazzola, from Leibovitch 1947: fig. 9).

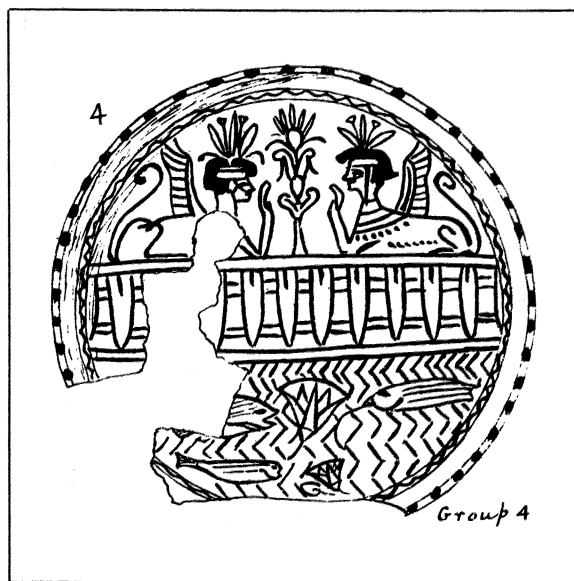


Fig. 7. Two recumbent, heraldic winged sphinxes on a faience bowl from Gurob (drawing from Petrie 1891: pl. 20:4).

ture. In spite of the obvious Egyptianizing features, these ivories are non-Egyptian and are probably Palestinian rather than Syrian.

Three plaques with recumbent, winged, female sphinxes resting on Egyptian-type mats were found in the hoard (fig. 2; Megiddo Nos. 21–23, Loud 1939: pl. 7). Sphinxes are traditionally male figures (Montet 1937: 173) but they are occasionally female (Dessenne 1957: 21). While they are generally not winged, five New Kingdom Egyptian recumbent female winged sphinxes are known. One example on a box in the Abbot Collection features a female sphinx adoring the cartouche of Hatshepsut (Montet 1937: 173, fig. 201; Leibovitch 1947: 8, fig. 8). While the cartouche does not appear in this illustration (fig. 3), Montet notes that the sphinx raises its hands in adoration before the cartouche of Queen Hatshepsut (Montet 1937: 173–74). A second recumbent female winged sphinx, featured on an openwork sard bracelet plaque (fig. 4) dated to the reign of Amenophis III (JEA 1916: pl. 21; Hayes 1959: 243, fig. 147) holds the cartouche of

Amenophis III in her left hand and supports it with her right. A third example, on the Tunic of Tutankhamun (fig. 5; Crowfoot and Davies 1941: pl. 20, top) features a recumbent female winged sphinx on either side of a palmette. While each sphinx's arms are raised in adoration, the palmette replaces the cartouche as the object of attention. A fourth example (fig. 6), featured on the socle of a statue in the Turin Museum (Leibovitch 1947: 9, fig. 9), depicts a female sphinx adoring the cartouche of Queen Moutnedjem, the wife of Horemheb. A fifth example (fig. 7), on a blue faience bowl from a Rameses II context at Gurob (Petrie 1891: 17, and pl. 20:4), also features two recumbent female sphinxes separated by a palmette, before which they raise their hands in adoration.

Except for the example from Gurob, whose floral decoration rises directly from the hair or wig, the Egyptian examples all have a headdress consisting of a sort of helmet or polos cap surmounted by a floral arrangement. With the exception of the sphinxes on the faience bowl from Gurob and on

Tutankhamun's tunic, the Egyptian examples either adore or hold a legible cartouche.

The sphinxes dated to the reign of Hatshepsut and Horemheb are almost identical and represent one distinct tradition, which lasted at least from the reign of Hatshepsut to the reign of Horemheb. Of particular interest are the treatment of the headdress, the projection from the neck of the pendant with rosette decoration, and the treatment of the wings and tail. The sphinx on the bracelet plaque dated to the reign of Amenophis III also belongs to this type, although it differs in detail and stylistic treatment. It lacks the projecting pendant, it holds the cartouche in its left hand and supports it with its right hand, its helmet is lower and its flowery headdress simpler; it lacks breasts, and the point of attachment of the wings to the body is not sharply defined. Moreover, it is not as finely carved and its details are not as crisp as the others. The lines, particularly of the hind quarters, are gently rounded and lack the taut undulations of the Hatshepsut and Horemheb examples. Nevertheless, in spite of the variations, the Amenophis sphinx may not represent an otherwise unrepresented type, but a less carefully-carved variant of the type represented by the Hatshepsut and Horemheb sphinxes. The small feathers near the body on the Amenophis sphinx, like those on the Hatshepsut and Horemheb sphinxes, are rendered by transverse parallel lines bisected by a longitudinal line. Moreover, the upper part of the wing of the Amenophis sphinx is bent at an acute angle, bringing the knife-shaped feathers to the sphinx's haunches, reminiscent of the wings of the Hatshepsut and Horemheb sphinxes. While the far wing of the Amenophis sphinx is not raised as high as the far wings on the Hatshepsut and Horemheb sphinxes, it is probably because of lack of space due to the shape of the bracelet plaque.

On the other hand, the remaining two Egyptian winged sphinxes are rooted in a different tradition, as can be seen in the treatment of the wings and tail. Since the drawing on the faience bowl from Gurób is poorly rendered, details of this second sphinx type are better represented on the Tutankhamun Tunic. There is a single set of feathers including longer, knife-shaped feathers at the top and shorter rectangular feathers at the bottom, attached to a tapering vertical border that consists of concentric lines shaped like oleander leaves. The tail is also distinctive on these examples, erect but slightly coiled at the end, rather than bent in the middle.

In spite of the differences in treatment of the individual examples of these two basic types, they are all within a range of acceptable variation and are at home in the Egyptian world. On the other hand, the Megiddo sphinxes, though obviously rooted in an Egyptian prototype or prototypes, combining elements from both types (the tail recalls the Amenophis III type, while aspects of the simpler treatment of the wings recall somewhat the Tutankhamun type) go beyond the range of acceptable variation and should therefore not be considered Egyptian imports. The Megiddo examples differ significantly from the Egyptian in headdress, cartouche, and wings.

The headdress on each of the Megiddo examples consists of a flattened helmet surmounted by a Canaanite style coiffure, which in turn is surmounted by a bouquet of lotus blossoms and buds (Leibovitch 1947: 20). In its unusually large size, abstract quality, and flamboyant treatment, the headdress is distinctly non-Egyptian. Likewise, in place of the legible cartouche seen on the Egyptian examples, the Megiddo sphinxes hold an enigmatic object, which Leibovitch describes as a cup bearing a perfumed unguent (Leibovitch 1947: 20), and which Ventura (personal communication) provisionally identified as a flower.

The treatment of the wings also suggests that the Megiddo sphinx plaques are not Egyptian imports. While the plumage on the Megiddo sphinx recalls the Hatshepsut and Moutnedjem winged sphinxes, the wings of the Megiddo sphinx differ radically. On the latter there is an unusual upper border from which the feathers spring. This border extends from the attachment of the wings at the shoulder to just beyond the bend in the wing and is decoratively dotted. I know of no Egyptian parallel for such a dotted border.¹¹

Finally, the incised Canaanite *Tav* (X), rather than a hieroglyph, on the tenon further supports the thesis that the craftsman was Levantine and not Egyptian.

In spite of the differences distinguishing the Megiddo sphinxes from native Egyptian examples of the motif, stylistic peculiarities that recall similar Egyptian details help date the Megiddo sphinxes. The manner in which the Megiddo sphinx holds the enigmatic object in its forepaws recalls the way in which the sphinx on the sard bracelet plaque from the reign of Amenophis III holds the cartouche in its forepaws.¹² Nonetheless, our dating must be based on the latest "stylistic" features: the elongated neck, the oblong shape of the head, and



Fig. 8. Ivory openwork plaque featuring winged Bes, from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy Israel Department of Antiquities).



Fig. 9. Ivory openwork plaque featuring Bes, from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy of The Oriental Institute).

the thickened lips on the Megiddo sphinx accord with the Amarna style, suggesting a middle, rather than an early, 14th century date for the Megiddo sphinxes.

Two openwork plaques featuring the dwarf god Bes in a striding posture were found in the Megiddo VIIIA hoard. Megiddo No. 24 (fig. 8; Loud 1939: pl. 8) features Bes winged, facing right and wearing a feather headdress and a short kilt with a long sash that reaches the ground. On Megiddo No. 26 (fig. 9; Loud 1939: pl. 8) the dwarf god is wingless and his head is *en face*, but otherwise he is similar to Megiddo No. 24.

While the Bes motif is native to Egypt (Romano 1980: 40–42), these Megiddo Bes plaques are not Egyptian imports, but Asiatic adaptations. Egyp-

tian examples of clothed Bes images are found as early as the reign of Amenophis II (Romano 1980: 40, 45) but the Egyptian Bes figures rarely wear long sashes. Indeed, in the rare instances where the Bes image wears a long sash, it is assumed to be of foreign origin, as Smith assumes in his discussion of the Bes figures from Deir el-Medina (fig. 10; Smith 1965: 166, n. 14, fig. 57). Similarly, while parallels for Bes images with plumed headdresses

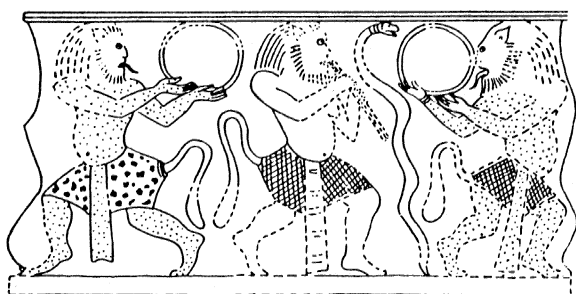
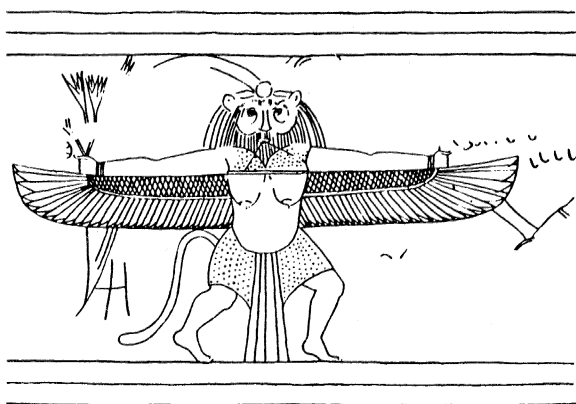


Fig. 10. Bes figurines with long sashes from Deir el Medina (drawing from Smith 1965: fig. 57).

datable to the reign of Amenophis III are known (Romano 1980: 55–56, figs. 9, 10) the headdress of the Egyptian Bes image is low and consists of four vertically-aligned feathers, while that of the Megiddo Bes images consists of three long, drooping feathers.

Moreover, while the separate elements (feathers, wings, and kilt with sash) are known from Egyptian New Kingdom contexts (Wilson 1975: 78–83), Bes does not appear in Egypt with the combination of attributes seen in either Megiddo No. 24 or 26 (figs. 8, 9). Furthermore, there are striking stylistic and technical similarities between the Megiddo Bes plaques and the Megiddo sphinx plaques, which have already been shown to be Egyptianizing but not Egyptian imports. The stylistic similarities are manifested primarily in the treatment of the wings. In both—Bes Megiddo No. 24 and Megiddo

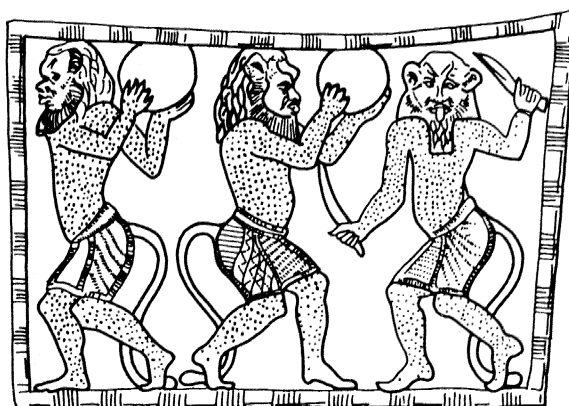


Fig. 11. Knife-wielding Bes on the right hand panel of the armchair of Sitamun (drawing from Davis 1907: fig. 3).

sphinxes Nos. 21–23—the overlapping feathers spring from a dotted upper border that extends from the attachment at the shoulder to only slightly beyond the bend in the wing. Not only does this treatment differ from typical Egyptian wings, but the peculiarity is practically identical on both the Bes and sphinx plaques. In addition, the Megiddo Bes and sphinx plaques are of identical thickness (8 mm) and the height of the figurative design in both (7.9 cm excluding the tenons), is identical.

Since the sphinx and Bes plaques are of non-Egyptian origin and were apparently made in the same workshop probably by the same artisan, it follows that they date to the 14th century. However, the Bes plaques can be dated also on independent grounds. The kilts and muscular legs of the Megiddo Bes images suggest a date at least as late as Amenophis II, during whose reign these characteristics first appear (Romano 1980: 44–46). Although Romano considers the possibility that the inspiration for a headdress on Bes may hark back to Amenophis II, there is no actual evidence for such an image prior to the reigns of Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III (Romano 1980: 47). In the absence of earlier examples, a date coinciding with the reigns of Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III may be more secure, and so a date before the reign of Tuthmosis IV is unlikely for the Megiddo Bes plaques. Moreover a 14th century date is suggested by the similarity between the Bes figure on Megiddo No. 26 (fig. 9), whose head is drawn frontally, and the posture of the knife-wielding Bes on the right-hand panel of the armchair of Sitamun, the daughter of Amenophis III (fig. 11; Davis 1907: 40, fig. 3). While the upper part of Megiddo

No. 26 (fig. 8) is not well-preserved, this figure, like that on the armchair, probably also held a knife.

On the basis of the stylistic similarities between the Anubis plaque (fig. 12), Megiddo No. 25 (Loud 1939: pl. 8:25a, b), and the Bes plaques, a 14th century date can also be proposed for the Anubis plaque. While this plaque is poorly preserved, it is remarkably similar in detail to the Bes openwork plaque, Megiddo No. 24 (fig. 8). In both, the figures wear identical headdress of three drooping feathers; in both, a peculiar, meaningless piece of ivory extends in identical fashion from the mouth to the junction between the right-hand feather and the top of the *sa* sign (which symbolizes protection);¹³ on both, the figures wear a similar kilt with a sash that reaches the floor; and on both, the figures assume identical poses, each resting its left hand on a *sa* in hieroglyphic and holding another *sa* in its raised right hand. Finally, the Anubis and Bes plaques are of equal dimensions.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the sphinx, Bes, and Anubis plaques comprise a homogeneous group of Egyptianizing ivories of non-Egyptian origin; that they were made in the same workshop, probably by the same artisan; that they were made sometime in the mid- to late 14th century; and that they may even have come from the same piece of furniture.

Though the argument here is for a non-Egyptian origin for these openwork plaques, one may still argue that they were of Syrian rather than Palestinian origin. Provenience aside, there are neither iconographic nor stylistic Late Bronze Syrian parallels to the sphinx, Bes, or Anubis plaques from Megiddo VIIA. Therefore, no *a priori* reason exists to attribute these plaques to a Syrian workshop, such as one that must have existed at Ras Shamra/Minet el-Beida. Even though openwork plaques were found at Tell Fakhariyah, the Tell Fakhariyah plaques are clearly examples of crude, provincial workmanship (Kantor 1958: 57). The presumed local workshop at which the Fakhariyah ivories were carved and incised certainly did not produce the exquisitely carved and incised sphinx, Bes, and Anubis plaques from Megiddo.

Sculpture in the Round

Several examples of ivory figurines carved in the round of humans and animals, and figures carved in high relief, but intended as attachments to furniture, were found. A finely carved, yet fre-



Fig. 12. Ivory openwork plaque featuring Anubis, from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy of The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago).

quently overlooked statuette of an enthroned figure from the Megiddo VIIA hoard, Megiddo No. 2 (fig. 13; Loud 1939: pl. 4) may represent an entire class of lost ivory figurines that thematically parallel the enthroned stone statuettes from Hazor and Tell Zippor. Although most of the figure—dressed in a long cloak—is missing, the throne with flanking cherubs closely parallels the 13th century ivory panel featuring military and feast scenes such as those in fig. 1. This statuette probably also dates to the 13th century.

The exquisitely carved standing nude female figurine wearing a flat polos-like cap, Megiddo No. 175 (fig. 14; Loud 1939: pl. 39) has no close parallels in either the Egyptian or Syrian repertoires. The front of the figurine is broken away, but the quality of carving is apparent in the modeling and the finish of the torso, in the intricately plated coiffure, and the polos cap skillfully decorated with alternating lotus blossoms and buds.

The stance of the figurine is reminiscent of Egyptian standing nude female figurines with their arms at their sides, a motif introduced in the early



Fig. 13. Ivory enthroned figure from Megiddo VIIA (drawing courtesy of The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago).

Middle Kingdom (Hayes 1953: 220–21, fig. 137) and continuing into New Kingdom times (Bruyère 1939: 139, fig. 58). Yet the Megiddo example differs significantly, particularly in the coiffure and the polos-like cap, absent on the Egyptian examples.

Wigs on three Egyptian statuettes may establish the prevailing character of wigs worn by New Kingdom Egyptian women, and may illustrate how this type of wig differs from the coiffure on the Megiddo ivory statuette. The first example is on the beautifully carved ebony funerary statuette of a young lady, found with objects dated to Amenophis III and Amenophis IV in a tomb in the Fayum (Hayes 1959: 267, fig. 161). The second is a wig on the cartonnage mummy mask from an 18th Dynasty tomb in western Thebes. The third is the wig worn by the wife of Yuny on the 19th Dynasty double statuette of Yuny and his wife (Hayes 1959: 353, fig. 220). While these examples vary in quality and somewhat in style, they depict masses of tightly-packed, vertically-aligned ringlets represented by closely-packed rows of chevrons. On the other hand, the coiffure of the Megiddo ivory statuette depicts a large braid represented by intersecting groups of parallel incisions.

The polos cap is rarely featured in Egyptian art. The only Egyptian example I know occurs on a winged sphinx on Tutankhamun's tunic (Crowfoot

and Davies 1941: pl. 20, top). But the flat polos-like cap is featured on two additional ivories from Megiddo VIIA: a horn-shaped object ending in a female head, Megiddo No. 186 (Loud 1939: pl. 43) and the 13th century incised panel, Megiddo No. 2 (fig. 1; Loud 1939: pl. 4:2). Because of the distinctly non-Egyptian treatment of the coiffure and the rarity of polos caps in Egyptian art, the ivory is apparently of Levantine origin.

While the polos-like cap appears frequently on standing nude female figurines in North Syrian art in the first millennium (Barnett 1957: pls. 70:S. 183; 72:S. 196, S. 200, S. 195; 73:S. 204, S. 206), Syrian Late Bronze examples seem to be absent. Though the Megiddo ivory figurine may be a Syrian import, there is no compelling argument that it must be one, particularly since no Late Bronze Age examples of the type have been found in Syria.

With regard to date, a polos-like cap, similar to the one worn by the clothed female attendant on Megiddo No. 2, appears on a winged sphinx on a Cypriot vase of the Pastoral Style (Vermeule and Karageorghis 1982: 43 and pl. 6:16) dated to the third quarter of the 13th century B.C. Since no earlier use of the polos-like cap is attested, and since Megiddo No. 175 is a masterpiece of ivory carving apparently dated to the period of the floruit of ivory-carving, a 14th, or more likely a 13th, century date is suggested for this ivory.

Fragments of human hands and feet from Megiddo VIIA, Megiddo Nos. 275, 276 (Loud 1939: pl. 54), and the right hand, broken below the wrist, from the Rameses III temple at Beth-shan (Rowe 1940: pl. 30:6), attest to the existence of additional ivory figurines in the round. A large, half-life-sized, ivory right hand, which formerly held some object in its closed fist, and a two-thirds-life-sized open hand of an apparently composite statue probably made mostly of wood (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940: 61, pl. 16), found at Lachish, attest to the use of ivory in large-scale sculpture. Thus far it is not possible to specify stylistic criteria for a precise dating of these objects.

Swimming Girls

Ivory cosmetic spoons in the shape of swimming girls holding bowls in their extended hands were found at Megiddo, Beth-shan, and Tell es-Sa^cidi-yeh. Three examples from the Megiddo VIIA treasury room, Megiddo Nos. 177–79, and a fragmentary fourth, No. 180 (Loud 1939: pls. 40–42),

feature swimming girls holding round bowls, while Megiddo No. 176 (Loud 1939: pl. 39) features a swimming girl holding a rectangular bowl. The heads, which were consistently made from separate pieces of ivory, are missing in each case. Nevertheless, a relatively well-carved head, Megiddo No. 194 (Loud 1939: pl. 44), may have belonged to one of these girls or to a yet unrecovered example. A poorly preserved headless swimming girl was found in Grave 105 at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, dated by Pritchard (1969, fig. 2:9) to the 12th century B.C., but redated by Oren (1973: 21) to the 13th century.

These objects have been associated with a class of swimming girls frequently found in Egyptian New Kingdom contexts (Oren 1973: 121; Dothan 1979: 61). While the Palestinian ivory versions of the genre were undeniably inspired by Egyptian prototypes,¹⁴ they are neither Egyptian imports nor objects made by itinerant Egyptian craftsmen, but local imitations of Egyptian prototypes. Egyptian swimming girls have a broader repertory than the Palestinian examples. While the Palestinian swimming girls hold round (and in one instance, rectangular) bowls, the Egyptian examples also hold lotus-shaped bowls (Wallert 1967: pls. 12:N22, 13:P35, K17), duck-shaped bowls (Smith 1960: 136, fig. 88; Wallert 1967: 5, pls. 12, 14:B13; Barnett 1982: 21:fig. 8), and gazelles (Hayes 1959: 268, fig. 162, Wallert 1967: pl. 15:N12). The Egyptian examples are more intricately carved than the Palestinian examples. Moreover, the choice of materials also differs. Wood and ivory carving are not mutually exclusive, and Palestinian craftsmen may also have carved wooden swimming girls which because of the moister Palestinian climate were not preserved; but the dearth of ivory swimming girls from Egyptian sites and the exclusive find of ivory examples from Palestinian sites is noteworthy. Egyptian examples are made of wood, stone (alabaster or serpentine), or faience rather than ivory (Phillips 1941: 173). Indeed, the overwhelming majority of examples cited by Wallert (1967: 18–23) were made of wood.¹⁵ Therefore, a non-Egyptian origin for the Megiddo swimming girls is likely (cf. Barnett 1982: 26). However, the center of production of these swimming girls is unknown. While they may have been produced in workshops attached to the Megiddo Palace, some of them may have been produced elsewhere in Palestine or somewhere in coastal Syria.

Regarding the date of the Palestinian swimming girls, the genre makes its appearance in the first half of the 18th Dynasty,¹⁶ and most of the Egyp-

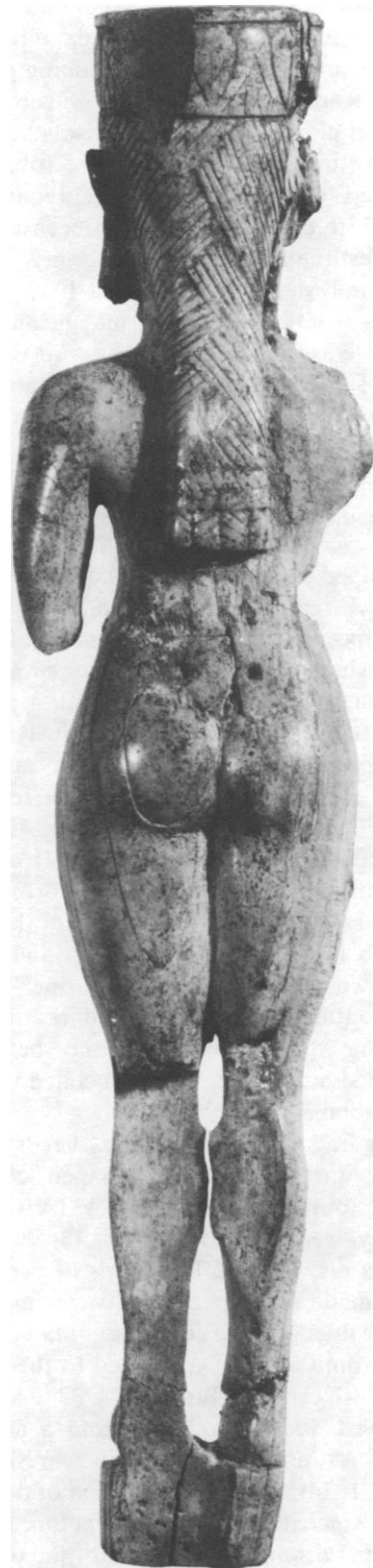


Fig. 14. Ivory nude female figurine in polos cap, from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy of The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago).

tian examples cited by Wallert (1967) date to the mid-14th century. However, one example of a headless, apparently alabaster, swimming girl was found in a Rameses II context at Gurob (Petrie 1891: 18, and pl. 18:28). Since only isolated examples of Egyptian swimming girls are found that antedate the 14th century, and the genre may be as rare in the 13th century, a 14th–13th century date for the Palestinian ivory swimming girls may be suggested, and Megiddo 176 (Loud 1939: pl. 39), which holds a rectangular basin, may be one of the earliest in the assemblage since the rare Egyptian examples of swimming girls holding rectangular basins seem to occur only in the early phase (Hayes 1959: 191, fig. 106).

Duck-Shaped Cosmetic Containers

Duck-shaped ivory containers consisting of an oblong bowl representing the body of a duck (forming a receptacle for cosmetic material), movable, wing-shaped plaques with incised feathers (serving as a cover for the receptacle), a piece of ivory representing the neck, and a finely carved head are found with some frequency at LB II Palestinian sites. A complete example found in Megiddo Tomb 24 (Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 104) was said to come from an MB II context. However, since: 1) there is no Middle Bronze Age parallel for ivory cosmetic containers of this type, 2) the tomb also had LB II pottery, and 3) the earliest known Egyptian examples of duck-shaped cosmetic containers do not antedate the 18th Dynasty, the Megiddo example may be out of context and should perhaps be associated with the LB II assemblage from the tomb.

Nine wing fragments and four duck heads, apparently from unrecovered duck-shaped cosmetic bowls, were found in the Megiddo VIIA Treasure Room; they were Megiddo Nos. 45–53, 206–9 (Loud 1939: pls. 12, 45). The bowls of two duck-shaped cosmetic containers and two wings from two separate duck-shaped cosmetic containers were found in a tomb at Tel Dan, dated to the second half of the 14th century (Biran 1974: 33–34, fig. 7). A well-carved duck head, also from a cosmetic container, was found in a large tomb near Shechem (Klamer 1981: 34). The precise context of this head is unknown since it was discovered before Klamer assumed supervision of excavation of the tomb. A fine duck head in the Rockefeller Museum was found in another tomb near Shechem dated from

the 17th to the 14th century. In the absence of a secure date for this example, it cannot contribute to a date for the genre. Additional finely carved duck heads were found at Lachish, Locus 1003 (Tufnell 1958: pl. 48:6), dated to ca. 1400 by Tufnell (1958: 88), and in Structure III (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940: 61; pl. 17:10). Two bowls of duck-shaped cosmetic containers were found in Structure III at Lachish (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940: pl. 20:21, 22). The bowl of an additional duck-shaped cosmetic container was found in Tomb 984 at Tell el Far'ah (Starkey and Harding 1932: pl. 57).

In spite of Tufnell's undocumented reference (1940: 61) to this type of cosmetic spoon on Egyptian wall paintings, the type does not appear to have been typical of Egypt. Other types of cosmetic vessels were fashionable in Egypt, however, including a cartouche-shaped bowl emerging from a lotus, a dog with a fish in its mouth, a young woman standing in a boat gathering lotus blossoms, and a kneeling man carrying a pot (which served as a cosmetic container). Two examples from Minet el-Beida dated by Schaeffer (1939: fig. 23, A34) to 1400–1200 B.C. may be compared, along with additional examples from Alalakh, which range in date from Alalakh IV to Alalakh II (Woolley 1955: 289–90, and pl. 75). Thus a range from ca. 1400 to 1200 B.C. is likely for this genre. However, the reported find of such a vessel from Tomb 855 (Guy and Engberg 1938: 87, pl. 142:1) suggests that the genre may have originated in the LB I (above).

Cosmetic Spoons Ending in Duck Heads

A relatively rare form of ivory cosmetic container with a duck's head for the handle is represented by three examples in the Megiddo ivory hoard: Megiddo Nos. 202–4 (Loud 1939: pl. 45). The duck's head is turned back on itself and lowered so that the lower surface of the duck's bill is parallel, and sometimes tangent, to the neck. The far end of the neck is hollowed out for attachment either to the cosmetic spoon itself or to an extension of a separate handle possibly made of another material. These Megiddo duck heads recall a class of cosmetic spoons, usually of wood, that are known from 18th Dynasty contexts in Egypt (Wallert 1967: 7, pls. 9, 139).

While an early form of this cosmetic spoon is dated to the 17th Dynasty (Wallert 1967: pl. 9:N13),

the more developed forms date to mid-18th Dynasty (Wallert 1967: pl. 10:26) during the reign of Tuthmosis IV.

Cosmetic Bowls

Ivory cosmetic bowls with decorated lids or bases featuring variations on the rosette motif were found at several Palestinian sites, but the genre is best represented at Megiddo (Loud 1939: pls. 27–30). A decorated lid, found in Tell Abu Hawam V, has a simple, incised six-petaled rosette framed within two concentric circles (Hamilton 1935: pl. 32:381), and is a parallel to Megiddo No. 58 (Loud 1939: pl. 13). Other finds include a miniature bowl and lid, and the lid of a larger bowl, found in a tomb at Tell Dan and dated from the mid-14th to the mid-13th century; and fragments of two lids discovered in LB II contexts in Beth-shan (Rowe 1940: pl. 30:24). Another lid featuring a procession of horned animals each down on one foreleg recalls a similar motif on a gold bowl from Ugarit (Schaeffer 1949: pl. 8). The motif and manner of treatment of the gazelles here is paralleled by that of gazelles on the side panels of the 14th century chair of Princess Sitamun, daughter of Amenophis III (Smith 1965: pl. 123), suggesting a mid-14th century date for the ivory. Since none of the examples cited were found in contexts antedating the 14th century there are no stylistic grounds for dating any of the Palestinian ivory cosmetic bowls earlier than the 14th century.

Strips Featuring Plant Forms

Kantor (1956: 166) noted that Megiddo Nos. 27–29 were Egyptianizing. (Although Megiddo No. 30 is less well preserved, it was probably made by the same artisan as Megiddo Nos. 27–29.) Indeed the bouquets featured on the ivories recall 18th Dynasty bouquets on Egyptian wall paintings (Davies 1918: pls. 8, 13), and the bouquet motif on a class of 18th Dynasty cosmetic spoons whose handles consist of openwork renderings of elaborate bouquets (Wallert 1967: 31–34, and pls. 26–31). Nevertheless, while the Palestinian examples faithfully duplicate many details of the Egyptian, they also differ in some details and in the overall arrangement of the bouquets, which is far more fanciful on the Palestinian examples. In the Egyptian prototypes both buds and flowers are usually featured, while buds are less prominent in the Palestinian

examples. Moreover, less of the stalks is visible in the Egyptian examples (Davies 1933: pl. 3) than on those from Palestine. In the Palestinian examples, fanciful two-tiered bouquets, separated by what appears to be a broad collar, are characteristic of Megiddo Nos. 27–29; this arrangement is rarely found on Egyptian prototypes. One Egyptian example of the type appears on an 18th Dynasty wooden cosmetic spoon from an unknown provenience (now in Zagreb; Wallert 1967: 33, 149, and pl. 30:Z1 907), and on an example featuring a complete ring collar found on the floral decoration on the back of Tutankhamun's gilded throne (Lange and Hirmer 1968: pl. 35). In absolute terms three examples from Megiddo as against two examples from Egyptian contexts may not appear to be convincing evidence that the two-tiered type was common in Palestine and not in Egypt. Nonetheless, statistically the three examples from Megiddo represent 100 percent of the strongly Egyptianizing Megiddo bouquets while the two Egyptian examples represent an extremely small fraction of Egyptian bouquets. While it could be argued that Megiddo Nos. 27–29 (and we should add Megiddo No. 30, whose bottom half is poorly preserved) were made by the same hand and should therefore be counted as one example, the fragmentary Megiddo No. 31, though larger and less fully carved, also features a two-tiered bouquet.

Although these are more obviously Egyptianizing, Megiddo Nos. 13, 14, 116, 165–67, 223—which Kantor (1956: 167) identified as Canaanite proper—also recall Egyptian prototypes, since elements in the drooping frond motif in the Palestinian examples also occur in the fantastic plant forms supporting the simulated stela in the tomb of Neferhotep dated to the mid-14th century (Davies 1933: pl. 30), and in the tomb of Ken-Amun (Davies 1930: pls. 24, 26). Thus, while these strips featuring plant forms show Egyptian influence they are apparently of Levantine and quite possibly Palestinian origin.

Gaming Boards

Fiddle-shaped and rectangular ivory gaming boards have been found in Palestinian LB II contexts. The finest and best preserved, which correspond with Ellis' Group III (Ellis and Buchanan 1966: 196, 197), were found in the Megiddo VIIA hoard, Megiddo Nos. 220–23 (fig. 15; Loud 1939: pls. 48–50). Because of the pinnate foliage on the

upper corners of Megiddo 220 (fig. 16; Loud 1939: pl. 47), Kantor (1956: 167) ascribed that gameboard to her Hybrid Canaanite–Mycenaean class. Megiddo Nos. 221–23, lacking decorated upper corners, are without this Mycenaean feature and thus may be classified as Canaanite proper. The pinnate foliage may recall one type of Mycenaean foliage, but the shape and other aspects of the gameboard are alien to the Aegean world. Indeed, gameboards are surprisingly rare at all in the Aegean, and none parallel the Palestinian gameboards.¹⁷ The gameboards from Knossos (Evans 1964: 472–83; pl. 5), and the faience medallion inlays from a gameboard from the Fourth Shaft Grave at Mycenae (Evans 1964: 483, fig. 346), represent a tradition totally different from that represented by the Palestinian examples.

The Late Bronze Age rectangular ivory gameboard from Enkomi in the British Museum (Ridgeway 1896: 290, fig. 5) and two additional examples from Enkomi Level IIB, excavated by Dikaos (1969: I, 255; IIIa: pl. 128: 65, 66), recall a second class of gameboard from Palestine: those designed for the Egyptian game of *Tjau* (below). Two fragmentary examples of fiddle-shaped ivory gamingboards were also found in tombs belonging to Oren's "Coffin Group" in the Northern Cemetery at Beth-shan (Oren 1973: figs. 41:37; 45:23) and probably date to the 13th century (cf. Oren 1973: 117). Another ivory gameboard was found in a late 18th Dynasty context at Tell Jemmeh (Petrie 1928: 18, and pl. 39:22).¹⁸ The poor man's version of the game is represented by a small terracotta gameboard from Macalister's Third Semitic Period at Gezer (Macalister 1912: 16; 416, fig. 501).

The game corresponds to an Egyptian version that Petrie (1927: 55) called "fifty-eight holes." The game is described by several authorities (Petrie 1927: 55; Petrie and Brunton 1924: 7; Hoerth 1961). However, the typical Egyptian gameboards for playing "fifty-eight holes" are roughly rectangular, with concave sides (Petrie and Brunton 1924: pl. 22:8, 10–12). This form of the Egyptian gameboard may not have survived into the 18th Dynasty since the examples cited by Petrie antedate that period. While the fiddle-shaped gameboard for "fifty-eight holes" may have replaced the roughly rectangular type in the 18th Dynasty, the type is exceptionally rare in Egypt. There it is represented by only one example, an ivory board from an unknown provenience (Petrie and Brunton 1924: 8; pl. 22:13). To my knowledge this ivory

gameboard, now in the Egyptian Museum, is the only one of its kind found in Egypt, and it may actually be a Palestinian import, not an Egyptian type at all. The game may have lost its popularity in Egypt and boards for it were no longer locally made. Be that as it may, in the absence of an archaeological context for the example in Cairo, and in the absence of additional Egyptian examples of the type, we must rely on the archaeological contexts of the Megiddo, Beth-shan, and Tell Jemmeh examples, which suggest an LB II date.

Two rectangular gaming boards were found in the Megiddo VIIA hoard, Megiddo Nos. 224, 225 (Loud 1939: pls. 50, 51). Megiddo No. 225, which features an olive tree with pinnate leaves, was also identified by Kantor (1956: 167) as Hybrid Canaanite–Mycenaean. This gameboard, like Megiddo No. 224, was apparently of Levantine origin.

The gameboards were used for playing the game known in Egypt as *Tjau* or "Twenty Robbers," introduced into Egypt from Asia in Late Hyksos times (Hayes 1959: 26). The layout of the gameboard is securely dated to the 18th Dynasty as it frequently appears on the underside of dated Senet game boxes. Examples are known from the tomb of the 15th century Mery Ma'et (Hayes 1959: 198–99, and fig. 113) and continued into Ramesside times (Hayes 1959: 404). Since the style of the foliage recalls that on Megiddo No. 220, and since the provenience suggests an LB II context, it is unlikely that these rectangular boards antedate the 14th century.

Conclusions

In the foregoing survey of ivory working in the Late Bronze Age, we noted that, while a few simple Palestinian objects date to LB I, numerous sophisticated ivory objects in a variety of genres (cosmetic items, furniture fittings, and miscellaneous types) date to LB II, the period heretofore assumed to be one of decline. The ivories suggest, to the contrary, that the LB II was characterized by elegance and sophistication.

While several ivories in the assemblage are imports from the Aegean, Anatolia, Egypt, and Assyria, most are indigenous to the Levant, and are likely to have been made in Palestine. My attribution of the ivories with Egyptianizing traits to the Levant is not based on provenience alone,

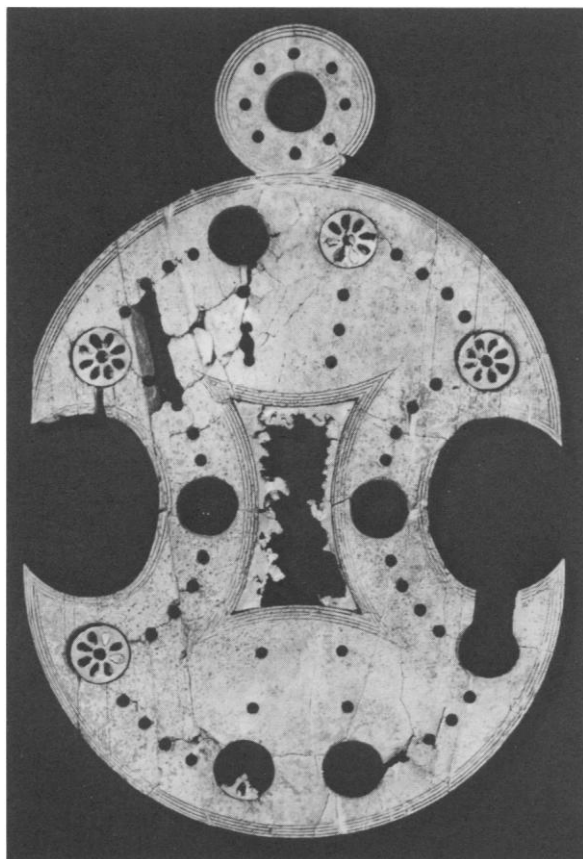


Fig. 15. Ivory gaming board, from Megiddo VIIA (photo courtesy of The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago).

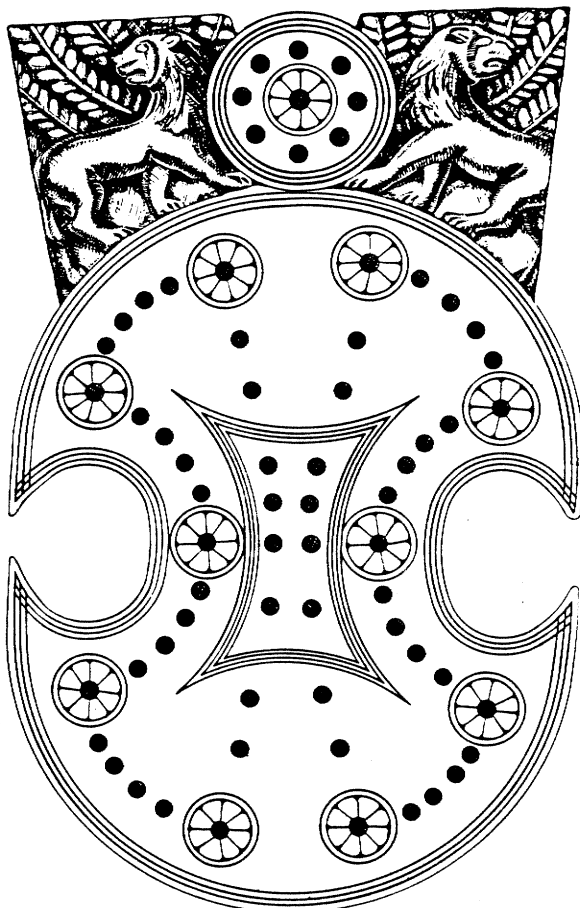


Fig. 16. Ivory gaming board, from Megiddo VIIA (drawing courtesy of the Israel Department of Antiquities).

since provenience is obviously not proof of origin. It is rather based on considerations of motif, style, and occasionally on choice of material. Though motifs and stylistic elements of the Egyptianizing ivories reflect intimate knowledge of Egyptian art, subtle differences in motif and style support the contention that these Egyptianizing ivories are not Egyptian imports, but locally-crafted pieces made by ivory workers familiar with Egyptian art. This familiarity can be accounted for on the basis of strong commercial and political ties between Palestine and Egypt throughout the 18th and 19th Dynasties. Egyptians were posted in Palestine (Wilson 1963: 183), and communications and contacts were improved; ships sailed the Mediterranean more often and roads may have been improved. A greater number of Egyptians traveled abroad and many foreigners visited Egypt (Wilson 1963: 183, 188). Palestinian ivory workers might

have learned their trade in Egypt (Helck 1962: 608) or they might have been inspired by the small objects that made their way to Palestine and Syria (Kantor 1956: 168).

While there is a tendency in the literature to attribute the Palestinian ivories to Syrian workshops, there is no cogent evidence for an automatic attribution. The relative homogeneity of the Palestinian ivories (except for the Aegean, Anatolian, Egyptian, and Middle Assyrian imports) and the way in which the carved and incised panels from Palestine in particular differ from ivories from Syrian sites (e.g., Ugarit), suggest that one must not *a priori* attribute the Palestinian ivories of Levantine style to north Syria. Sufficient evidence exists to support the thesis of an indigenous Palestinian school of ivory working that flourished during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age.

The floruit of ivory working in LB II is not an isolated manifestation of cultural sophistication; it is but one expression of broader developments in Late Bronze Age culture which can be only briefly alluded to here.

Stone sculpture in the round, until recently not considered characteristic of Palestinian art, was found in LB II levels at Hazor (Yadin *et al.* 1960: pl. 117; 1961: pls. 324–30) and Tel Sippor (Biran and Negbi 1966: pl. 23). Metal figurines of seated gods apparently also made their debut in Palestine during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age. Examples of these seated figurines are found at Tel Sippor Stratum III (Biran and Negbi 1966: pl. 22A), Megiddo (Loud 1948: pl. 236:24); and Hazor (Yadin *et al.* 1961: pl. 340:1–4).

Mold-made terracotta figurines, which made their first appearance in Palestine toward the end of the Middle Bronze Age, are not well represented during the LB I period. However, many examples, in a variety of types, are found in LB II strata. At this time four major types of nude female figurines are found: three are Canaanite proper and one is Egyptianizing. While the Egyptian prototype for this figure type has been demonstrated by Tadmor (1982: 3–5), it is not yet clear whether figurines of this type are Egyptianizing or actual Egyptian imports. A fifth, rare type, recently discussed by Mazar (1982: 113–15), consists of figurines placed in a shrine.

While relatively few cylinder seals have been found in 16th and 15th century Palestinian contexts (Parker 1949: 3), there was a proliferation of Palestinian seals, particularly of the Mitannian Common or Depleted style, in the 14th and 13th centuries. The relative popularity of cylinder seals during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age, is seen also at more recently excavated northern sites such as Hazor, which yielded 1 cylinder seal from Hazor IB (Yadin *et al.* 1961: pl. 319:1), 19 cylinder seals from Hazor IA (LB IIB)¹⁹ (Yadin *et al.* 1961:

pls. 319:2–4; 321:1–7; 322:1–5) and at Tel Yin^cam which yielded five unpublished LB IIB cylinder seals.

Cultural sophistication is also manifested, for example, in the repertory of painted pottery. While Bichrome Ware and Chocolate-on-White Ware, which characterize LB I assemblages, reflect a rich ceramic tradition, these classes of pottery are not indigenous to Palestine. Bichrome Ware was imported from Cyprus (Artzy, Asaro, and Perlman 1973),²⁰ and Chocolate-on-White Ware, which is restricted primarily to northern and Jordan Valley sites, and has nontypical Palestinian features, may have been imported, perhaps from Transjordan, where this material is also known (cf. Amiran 1970: 158, 159).

If one disregards the imported wares and compares the indigenous Palestinian LB I and LB II painted assemblages, the LB II repertories of painted pottery are apparently broader and their designs are more complex. This development is perhaps best seen in the palm-tree and ibex motif that flourished in LB IIA (Amiran 1973: 161).

Finally, it can be pointed out that architecture also supports the notion of a relatively high level of cultural sophistication during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age. While LB II temples in the lower city at Hazor show continuous development from MB II and LB I, the LB II temple is the most elaborate. Likewise, one can trace development from Fosse Temple I (LB I) at Lachish to Fosse Temples II and III (LB II) which are considerably larger than Temple I (Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940: 19). Similar development is seen in LB II palaces, and examples of relatively large palaces are found at Megiddo, Tel Aphek, and Lachish.

All of which suggests, then, that the period between 1400 and 1200 B.C. should not be viewed as a period of cultural decline, but rather a high point in the material culture of Palestine.²¹

NOTES

¹While each of the ivories discussed in this paper merits fuller study, and many Late Bronze ivories from the Megiddo hoard and elsewhere are not discussed, my intent is to illustrate with selective pieces rather than to present a comprehensive analysis of the ivories.

²Other researchers (Barnett 1982: 25; Kantor 1956: 160; Ussishkin 1969: 2) independently noted the popu-

larity of ivory working in the second half of the Late Bronze Age. Being concerned with other issues, however, they neither provided detailed evidence for the dating of the ivory assemblages to this period, nor discussed the implications of the burgeoning of ivory working in LB II for the question of the level of material culture in this period.

³Even if we sought to date an ivory to the locus in which it was found, in many instances the dates for a given locus are either imprecise or extend over too long a period. The ivories from the Megiddo VIIA treasury rooms are a case in point. On the basis of architectural remains, the level in which the ivories were found was divided into Strata VIIA and VIIB. The palace in which the ivories were discovered was assigned to Stratum VIIA. Pottery finds, LB II examples of both indigenous Palestinian ware and Cypriot Mycenaean imports, led Loud provisionally to date Stratum VII to ca. 1350–1200 B.C. However, the discovery of an ivory model pen case with the cartouche of Rameses III necessitated the lowering of the terminal date for the stratum. Loud chose a date about 1150 B.C. because the destruction of the palace probably occurred during or after the reign of Rameses III (Loud 1939: 9–10). The bronze base of a statue of Rameses VI, found in 1934 under a wall of Room 1832 in Megiddo Stratum VIIB, was believed to be intrusive and did not therefore necessitate any further lowering of the terminal date for Stratum VII (Loud 1948: 135, n. 1). Kenyon (1960: 215) was also of the opinion that Stratum VII was destroyed ca. 1150 B.C. Aharoni, on the other hand, did not apparently consider the bronze base of the statue of Rameses VI intrusive and dated the destruction of Stratum VII to the last third of the 12th century (Aharoni 1961: 624). Wright, without referring to the bronze statue base, asserted that at Megiddo Late Bronze culture “continued well into the 12th century,” and suggested that Stratum VII may have been destroyed as late as 1125 B.C. (Wright 1965: 116, 119). Yadin suggested that though discovery of the ivory pen case with the cartouche of Rameses III proved that the Stratum VII treasury was intact during the reign of that Pharaoh, it is likely that a portion of the ivory hoard belonged to the Stratum VIIB palace (Yadin 1970: 308; cf. the discussion by Loud 1939: 9). However, others, such as Ussishkin, tend to date most of the ivory hoard to the 12th century, when the Stratum VIIA palace was destroyed, and doubt that any of the hoard belongs to the VIIB palace since the VIIB and VIIA palaces were separated by a destruction layer. Therefore, Ussishkin would *a priori* reject a 14th century date for any of the ivories (personal communication). Nevertheless, stylistic analysis cannot be disregarded, and it is ultimately more significant than archaeological contexts for ascribing precise dates to objects of art, which were likely to have been kept for many years.

⁴The existence of distinct Palestinian vs. Syrian Late Bronze Age ivory workshops may be hypothesized on the basis of: 1) the existence of regional differences in the art of Syria and Palestine in the Middle Bronze Age (Liebowitz 1972); and 2) the existence of linguistic, political, ethnic, and religious differences between the culture of Syria and Palestine in the Late Bronze Age (Rainey 1965, personal communication).

While a full discussion of regional differences between Palestinian and Syrian art is beyond the scope of this

article, and thus far I cannot identify consistent distinctions between Syrian and Palestinian art, the evidence seems to support the existence of independent Palestinian ivory workshops.

This view runs counter to the prevailing opinion that ivories found at Palestinian sites were *a priori* produced in Syrian workshops in spite of the fact that the genre is better represented in Palestine than in Syria. Only two Syrian sites yielded significant Late Bronze Age ivory assemblages: Ras Shamra and Tell Fakhariyah. The celebrated examples from Minet el-Beida consist of relief panels from a royal bedstead. These panels feature finely carved figures, far richer in surface details than any found in Palestine. Note particularly the detailed rendering of the eyes, hair, sashes, and clothing.

There are also differences in the figure style. Note how the backs of the legs on the Ugaritic examples, particularly those of the central panel featuring the winged and horned goddess and the royal sucklings, form an arc reminiscent of Hittite art. This feature is not found on ivories from Palestine.

The Minet el-Beidha ivories are carved in low raised relief. There are neither incised ivories nor openwork. In short, no Palestinian examples parallel the Minet el-Beidha examples either iconographically, stylistically, or technically. The Minet el-Beidha examples differ from and excel the Palestinian examples. On the other hand, the assemblage from Tell Fakhariyah constitutes a homogeneous group of crudely incised human and animal figures which Kantor (1958: 57) ascribed to a provincial workshop. In spite of some parallels in motif to ivories from Megiddo, the ivories in the Palestinian assemblage are far more sophisticated than those from Tell Fakhariyah.

⁵A carved ivory decorated with a lion in relief was found in Locus T 5158 at Megiddo. This locus, which yielded no other objects, was assigned by the excavators to Stratum XIV (MB II A; Loud 1948: pl. 204). While Kantor (1956: 155) noted that the fragment is an isolated find, I suggest that the ivory is out of context and dates to the Late Bronze Age since the naturalistic rendering of the subject is not characteristic of the Middle Bronze Age.

⁶While the bone strips from Beth-shan Tomb 42 still have a relatively rich repertoire of geometric designs, and even incised figurative designs, no silhouettes were discovered. Moreover, this tomb assemblage dates to an early phase in LB I (Oren 1973: 7), perhaps at a point when silhouettes had already disappeared from the scene before the geometric repertoire became impoverished. Note, however, that the repertoire of unpublished bone inlays from Sedment in the University Museum, London, has bone strips with a rich repertoire of geometric motifs and silhouettes, suggesting either that the Egyptian example is an heirloom, or that it is from a very early phase in the New Kingdom (Liebowitz 1965: 395).

⁷A bone strip decorated with a guilloche between longitudinal lines, some strips decorated with rosettes,

and bone squares, were discovered in Megiddo Tomb 39, which had both MB I and Early Iron I pottery (Guy and Engberg 1938: pl. 166:20, 21). These were attributed to Iron I, and may represent a rare carryover of the genre.

⁸An ivory object identified as a gaming piece, almost identical to the object illustrated in Guy and Engberg 1938, pl. 130:7, came from Megiddo Stratum IX (Loud 1948: pl. 201:12).

⁹In the initial stages, ivory may have been conservatively used as inlay on wooden boxes, as an expensive substitute for bone. Ivory strips from the Megiddo Stratum VIIA treasure room (Loud 1939: pls. 58:321–24; 59:327–38, 60, 61) are incised with simple geometric patterns such as longitudinal lines similar to the simple patterns on the LB I bone strips from Megiddo and Tell Beit Mirsim, and the 14th century bone strips from Tel Dan.

¹⁰Barnett's attribution of the proliferation of ivory-working in LB II to the breakdown of the Egyptian ivory monopoly (Barnett 1982: 25) is not convincing. There is evidence neither for such a presumed Egyptian monopoly nor for the breakdown of the monopoly.

¹¹While a somewhat similar border extending from the attachment of the wings at the shoulder to just beyond the bend in the wing is found on kneeling figures at Medinet Habu (Nims *et al.* 1970: pls. 603, 617), the borders on these figures lack punctate dots.

¹²Both the Megiddo sphinxes and the sphinx on the Amenophis III sard bracelet plaque hold the cartouches in their left hands and support them with their right hands; cf. the representation of Akhenaten in the form of a sphinx holding a seated goddess Maat with an ankh sign (Leibovitch 1947: 14, fig. 17). Here, since the right hand is elevated at a distinct distance from the seated goddess, it is raised in adoration and not support.

¹³I wish to thank Rafi Ventura for identifying the *sa* hieroglyph for me.

¹⁴The Egyptian swimming girls sometimes also hold duck-shaped bowls (Wallert 1967: 5, pls. 12; 14:B13) or gazelle-shaped bowls (Wallert 1967: pl. 15:N12). The containers of the Palestinian examples are always bowl-shaped, although the fine ivory gazelle heads from Lachish (Tufnell 1940: pl. 17:12–14) may have come from swimming girl cosmetic containers (with gazelle-shaped endings).

¹⁵Contra Dothan (1979: 61), who asserted that Egyptian swimming girls were made of ivory or wood.

¹⁶Hayes (1959: 190) suggested that the earliest known Egyptian examples dated to the reign of Tuthmosis III. Wallert (1967: 18) cited an example of a wooden swimming girl dated to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty.

¹⁷The shape of these Megiddo gameboards, reminiscent of figure-8 shields, actually parallels designs on European razors featuring the representation of what has been termed a double axe (Bouzek 1985: fig. 103:11, 13, 14, 16). These are characterized by the double-axe shape associated with the Aegean (cf. Mavriyannaki 1983) and the long curving edges reminiscent of the bilobal Aegean shield (Bouzek 1985: 217).

¹⁸I wish to thank Michal Diyagi for bringing this reference to my attention.

¹⁹Though Hazor 1A, which succeeded Hazor 1B, extends into the 13th century, it apparently does not extend into the second half of that century as assumed by Yadin (cf. Kenyon 1973: 538; Beck and Kochavi 1983: 50).

²⁰Local copies of Cypriot Bichrome Ware exist. However, they are not as fine as the Cypriot prototypes. For discussions concerning the relative dates of the prototypes and the copies, see Artzy, Perlman, and Asaro 1978, and Wood 1982.

²¹The cultural sophistication of the latter half of the Late Bronze Age, manifested by examples of ivory working, is not restricted to Palestine. The resurgence and apogee of ivory working in the Late Bronze Age occurred elsewhere in the Near East at this time. For example, note the 14th and 13th century ivories from Ras Shamra in Coastal Syria (Barnett 1982: 29), the 13th century Syrian ivories from Tell Fakhariyah (Kantor 1958) and the 14th to 13th century Middle Assyrian ivories from northern Mesopotamia (Barnett 1982: 40). The same picture also emerges in the Aegean world. Although ivory carving was known from the 16th century shaft graves at Mycenae, ivory carving reached its apogee and became truly popular in the 13th century (Barnett 1982: 36). Kantor (1960: 14) noted that while many Mycenaean ivories date to 1350–1200 B.C. and few are from the preceding 250 years, she assumed that this was to be explained as an accident of discovery. However, on the basis of the resurgence of ivory carving all over the Near East between 1400 and 1200 B.C., the increase in popularity of ivory in the Mycenaean world is not likely to have been a function of the accident of find, but part of an overall pattern. Even in Egypt where ivory carving was well-represented during the early part of the 18th Dynasty, when Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis imported tusks, ivory carving was perhaps best represented from the reigns of Amenophis III and Tutankhamun to the end of the 18th Dynasty. However, the fact that ivory carving in Palestine was part of a widespread international resurgence of ivory working does not detract from the significance of the Palestinian phenomenon.

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