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Luxurious Forms: Redefining a Mediterranean “International Style,” 1400–1200 B.C.E.

Marian H. Feldman

Scholars have postulated the existence of an international style for the arts of the eastern Mediterranean of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.E. because they exhibit shared formal features that cut across cultural and geopolitical boundaries. In particular, easily portable luxury objects made of ivory, gold, alabaster, and faience defy attribution to any one cultural region because of extensive hybridism in which motifs from multiple regions intermix with one another. The time period, known as the Late Bronze Age, witnessed intense interactions among the polities of Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Cyprus, and the Aegean (Fig. 1). These took place through a variety of means, including entrepreneurial and royal trade, diplomatic relations, and military conflict. The general international climate of the time has been considered, therefore, a primary agent for the artistic internationalism exhibited in the works. The category of “international style,” however, has remained ill-defined, obscuring nuances of form and meaning. This article reexamines the term *international style* based on an analysis and classification of a group of luxury goods from the ancient kingdom of Ugarit. In so doing, it fragments this corpus to reveal a multiplicity of coexistent artistic forms previously regarded as part of a single stylistic class. These reclassified representational elements are then explored in light of the objects on which they occur and the function of these objects within the dynamic relations of the period.

The kingdom of Ugarit on the Mediterranean coast of Syria (Fig. 2), which includes the sites of Ras Shamra and Minet el-Beida, presents, among its luxury arts, a microcosm of multiple artistic forms, making it a particularly informative case study of artistic internationalism. The formal evidence gains support from an analysis of the archaeological record and surviving texts, which makes it possible to reconstruct various sociopolitical factors. Instead of sequential chronological divisions and contiguous geographic zones, the analysis reveals superimposed spheres of interaction, including trade, diplomacy, and warfare; their coalescence underlies the divergent artistic expressions. Given that artistic expression is embedded in and embodies complex social, political, and economic structures, then the multiple forms and iconographies of the luxury goods from Ugarit signal a richly layered visual rhetoric.

This conclusion should come as little surprise considering that in 1953 Meyer Schapiro, in his highly influential discussion of artistic style, wrote that “the stratification of social classes often entails a variety of styles, not only with respect to the rural and urban, but within the same urban community.”¹ Yet the dominant approach in archaeology and ancient studies tends toward the one-to-one mapping of style to culture in a continuous and linear sequence. Often this arises from a paucity of material and information. In the case of the Late Bronze Age, however, we are fortunate to possess a consider-

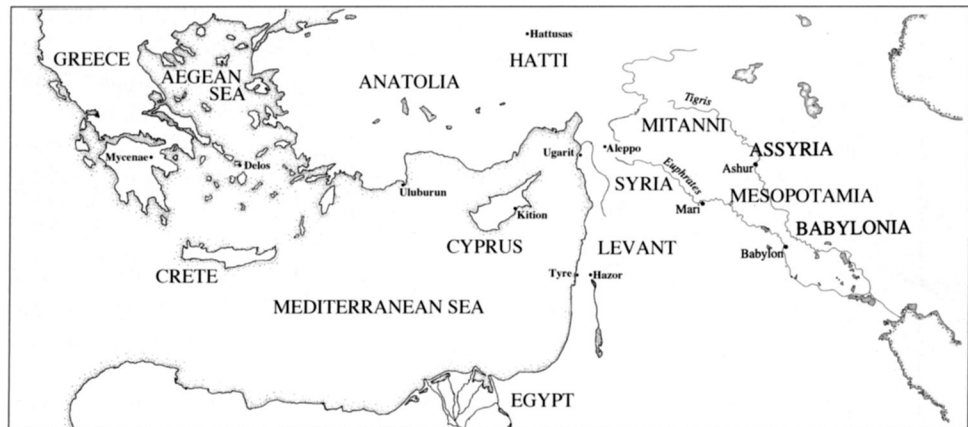
able diversity of documentary material: archaeological, epigraphic, and artistic. The broad range of evidence permits a multifaceted reconstruction of the social, political, and economic systems that overlapped and interconnected with one another during this period. Ugarit, in particular, offers a rich body of material by which to refine the application of the term *international style*.

Internal features of the luxury goods from Ugarit have led me to define at least two artistic traditions: an indigenous Levantine and a hybrid international. The Levantine tradition itself presents complexities of definition and is best comprehended in the small-scale arts excavated at sites along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Often viewed as merely derivative, in several instances it draws on the iconography of its neighbors, in particular Egypt, while creating a unique visual expression. I would argue, however, that products of the Levantine tradition that incorporate foreign elements should not be considered “international,” since their primary sphere of use and audience remained at the local or regional level. A truly international tradition can be seen in the small number of luxury works whose culturally hybrid motifs, shared compositional devices, and common repertoire of materials and object types conspire to elude attribution to any one particular region. Shifting the emphasis from artistic origination and authorship to the “social life” of objects leads to an examination of socially ascribed significance, which helps to illuminate the differing forms of artistic expression. I propose that each tradition manifests subtly idiosyncratic signification within the multidimensional social and political network of its use.

Defining an “International Style”

The concept of a commonly shared repertoire of motifs found throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East has long fascinated scholars, who began to conceive of this repertoire as an artistic phenomenon as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.² The Egyptologist William Stevenson Smith first applied the term *international style* to the arts of the Late Bronze Age in the 1960s.³ According to Smith, the unusual combination of multiple foreign or non-indigenous elements characterizes such an international style, causing confusion as to the place of manufacture. Smith further noted that the international style occurs most commonly on objects of a “small, costly, ornamental character” and attributed its emergence to the exchange of gifts between rulers of widely separated states.⁴ While most scholars accept the presence and general characteristics of an international style, few have considered in depth the composition of a unified corpus of objects in relation to such a style.⁵

Scholars tackling this phenomenon, most notably Helene Kantor, in a series of publications from the 1940s through the 1960s, have wrestled with the inability to determine a locus of



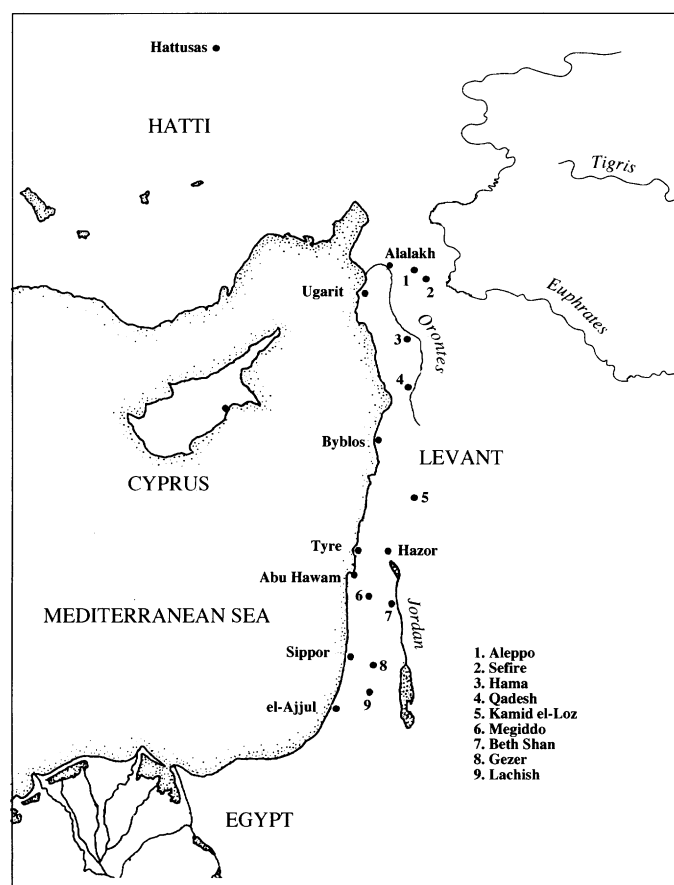
1 Map of eastern Mediterranean and the Near East

production for individual objects and sought to map directions of influence by tracking specific motifs back to their cultural origin.⁶ An interest in revealing the cultural-cum-ethnic identity of the individual maker is predicated on modern notions of nationalism and the dominant mode of the artist's biography, in which cultural and even racial traits stand as substitutes for personal characteristics. More recent research has turned to scientific material analysis in an attempt to determine origins.⁷ This approach, however, can demonstrate only the source of the material, not necessarily the location of manufacture or identity of the producer. Given the emphasis on the moment and place of creation, a tactic that meets with the objects' continued resistance, studies have, for the most part, overlooked distinctions among the individual works.⁸ Likewise, the hybrid nature of their imagery, such as winged composite animals and voluted palmettes, has been taken as a lack of originality, a view that tends to stifle interest in iconographic meaning.⁹ Recent work on material culture and social history offers new avenues for understanding this phenomenon of artistic hybridism. This paper moves from questions related to artists and production to address the issues of both internal formal differences and variation of meaning. In so doing, it redefines the "international style" as a more narrowly bounded visual expression of specific cultural circumstances that coexisted with other artistic modes.

In order to reevaluate the "international style" as a concept, I have constructed a classification scheme based on shared formal attributes, that is, those elements that can be considered "conventions of making" common to each classificatory group.¹⁰ I have defined attributes as conventional when they appear to be accepted by consensus on the basis of their repeated occurrence in the artistic oeuvre of a given time and place. The process is to some extent subjective and artificial in that I have laid a framework over the entire corpus according to features distinguished by modern scholarship. Nevertheless, restricting these features to formal attributes inherent in the works helps to anchor the classifications. For the purposes of this paper, *indigenous* refers to features found almost exclusively in a single, bounded geopolitical area. *Foreign* describes features known from one indigenous tradition but appearing outside their primary geopolitical center of greatest use. *International* denotes features that have been hybridized to the extent that they can no

longer be attributed to a single specific regional tradition, and they are found over several geopolitical entities. The application of the term *international* is, strictly speaking, anachronistic during the Bronze Age, since "nations" did not exist according to current definitions.¹¹ More properly, it might be called intercultural. Nevertheless, I have retained the term *international* in this paper because it best conveys what I see as the highly politicized use of visual hybridization.

In addition, I employ a hierarchy of terms to distinguish semantically among those formal traits ascribed to individual artists, those ascribed to cultural regions, and those ascribed to sociopolitical sectors that are within or stretch across cultural regions. The term *style* is restricted to the minutiae of formal details, such as line, volume, and form, that can cut across themes and compositions and that may be indicative of a single artist or workshop.¹² The term *tradition* is employed here as a synonym for "cultural style" so as to distinguish it clearly from personal/workshop style in the Morellian sense.¹³ Tradition encompasses the larger domain of clustered themes, compositions, material, and techniques that appear to correspond to a geographic or cultural area.¹⁴ Traditions, however, are not monolithic, and the term *idiom* refers to subsets within a tradition that are not specific or homogeneous enough to equate with a workshop or artist.¹⁵ *Artistic expression* serves as a generic term to refer to any level of style, idiom, or tradition. In this manner, the organic continuum of artistic production unifying the eastern Mediterranean and Near East is broken down into subsets according to clusters of attributes and degree of individuation.¹⁶ Nevertheless, boundaries delineating groups are often indistinct, and so I have focused attention on the core objects in each group. The distinction among tradition (cultural style), idiom (local style), and style (workshop/artist style) is important in the study of artistic internationalism because of the difficulties in locating place or person of production. The range of suggested terminology provides selective tools for analyzing hybrid forms that situate the art in the context of its use. While a piece is assigned to a tradition, idiom, or style based on its inherent features, attribution does not illuminate the identity or the location of the manufacturer. Because one must accept the element of artistic choice and manipulation on the part of the human agents, these stylistic divisions may appear mutable. The analytic framework is not, therefore, strictly linear; instead, boundaries (both vertical and horizon-



2 Map of the Levant

tal) are highly permeable, particularly so in the hybridism evident in an “international style.”

Classifying artistic expression according to formal attributes constitutes a static analysis of a bounded chronological and geographic extent. This approach is balanced by the use of models that propose an active role for objects as both reflective and constructive protagonists in the arena of social interactions.¹⁷ Meaning resides in the various components of the artistic expression but is not necessarily stable or unchanging. Material objects symbolize and give physical form to human relations.¹⁸ The process of human dynamics invests inanimate material goods with values perceived in human terms, and these animating qualities interweave with the identities of the possessors, each one contributing to the other in a continual dialectic.¹⁹ In other words, people/society and material objects validate each other through processes of exchange and possession. It is these processes that drive the negotiation of status and identity and that ensure that they remain relative and continuously shifting for both people and objects. Artistic expression mediates human relations by articulating specifics of meaning derived from the symbolic or cultural significance attributed to the works. In this manner, artistic expression becomes a critical vehicle in the fluid process of negotiation. The analysis of archaeology and texts helps to situate the separate subsets of artistic expression in their reconstructed realms of use. Moreover, it sheds light on their rhetorical, that is, their connotative and persuasive, functions. In the case of the luxury objects found

at Ugarit, variations in rhetorical function correlate with variations in “tradition” and “idiom,” suggesting that the deployment of specific “traditions” for prestige items was consciously chosen. The dissecting, then, of the “international style” based on formal features finds an explanation in the differing roles each subset played within the larger social sphere.

Luxury Goods from the Kingdom of Ugarit

The ancient kingdom of Ugarit, its capital city (also named Ugarit) located at the modern-day site of Ras Shamra near the Mediterranean coast of Syria, was an active player in the international arena (Fig. 2). The small kingdom flourished in the second half of the second millennium before being destroyed and abandoned about 1180.²⁰ Located in the north of the Levantine littoral, approximately sixty miles across the sea from the island of Cyprus, Ugarit owed much of its prosperity to its position at the crossroads of routes leading between the eastern Mediterranean and the interior of the Near East (Fig. 1). The flow of raw materials through its ports, especially metals (copper and tin, the basics needed to create bronze) and timber, generated enormous wealth, including luxury objects made of precious materials such as ivory, gold, alabaster, and faience. The excavators of the site of Ras Shamra, a French team since 1927, have revealed a massive palace built over the course of the final two centuries of the kingdom’s history that contained six different administrative archives.²¹ The palace was surrounded by residential areas, which cover much of the excavated extent of the mound. In addition, two main temples were constructed on the acropolis, and a thriving seaport at present-day Minet el-Beida was located about half a mile away. The cosmopolitan nature of the city is evident from the presence of documents written in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Hittite, Egyptian, Hurrian, and even Cypro-Minoan.²²

Among the wealth of objects excavated at Ugarit, nine made of ivory, gold, and alabaster stand apart as the highest level of luxury goods with regard to their materials, workmanship, and archaeological contexts.²³ Many of them were found in the royal palace, including a half-life-size ivory head carved in the round, an ivory tusk carved in relief, ivory inlays from a circular tabletop, carved ivory plaques forming a pair of furniture panels, a fragmentary ivory wing, and a fragmentary incised alabaster vase (Figs. 8, 12, 17, 13, 14, 21, 16).²⁴ A small, seated figurine of a female, also in ivory, turned up in a large neighboring residence (Fig. 9). An unfinished carved ivory pyxis rested in the vaulted tomb of a wealthy resident in nearby Minet el-Beida (Fig. 11), and a small hemispherical gold bowl was discovered in what appears to be a secondary context on the acropolis, interpreted by the excavator as part of a cache hastily buried just prior to the city’s final destruction (Figs. 18, 19).²⁵ The dates of the various find spots range from the end of the fifteenth century for the seated female figurine to the beginning of the twelfth for the gold vessel. The majority of the objects come from thirteenth-century contexts, although several of them may be dated stylistically to the fourteenth or late fifteenth century.

According to formal and iconographic connections among the objects found at Ugarit, I have discerned two separate artistic traditions: an indigenous Levantine one and a hybrid-

ized international tradition. Within the Levantine tradition, two idioms appear identifiable, distinguished by the degree of inclusion of indigenous and foreign features. At times the two idioms interconnect with one another and at other times remain forcefully distinct. Given a larger sample, individual idioms might be more precisely defined and differentiated from one another. The small size of the corpus at hand, however, makes the identification of specific idioms provisional. A predominately indigenous idiom includes the ivory head, seated female, ivory tusk, and unfinished ivory pyxis (Figs. 8, 9, 12, 11). The presence of such a clearly indigenous idiom reinforces the foreign and international character of the other pieces. Also associated with the Levantine tradition is an idiom that incorporates quotations of foreign traditions, here taken as a separate subgroup. The central plaques of the furniture panels and the fragmentary alabaster vase represent this idiom (Figs. 13, 14, 16). The internationalizing hybrid tradition, which highlights animal attack scenes set amid stylized vegetation, includes the ivory inlay tabletop elements, the gold bowl, the framing elements of the furniture panels, and the fragmentary ivory wing (Figs. 17, 18, 19, 13, 14, 20, 21).

The International World of the Late Bronze Age

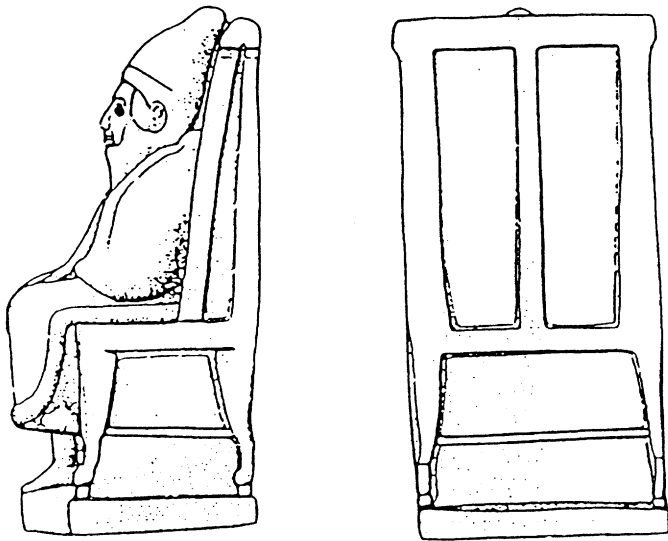
Numerous documents, of historical, administrative, legal, and mythological nature, found at the site and at other sites as well, record a multifaceted picture of the Ugaritic kingdom during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries. During this time, Ugarit was a wealthy player in the international spheres of the Late Bronze Age, aspiring to heights of power and prestige despite ultimately remaining a lesser-ranked polity. The luxury goods found at the site can be associated with various processes of change, exchange, and negotiation evident in the written and archaeological record. The different trajectories of their use suggest iconographic nuances, particularly within the international tradition. This, in turn, helps explain the variations of visual expression, making possible correlations between differing formal attributes and specific sociopolitical contexts of use.

A variety of intercultural contacts tightly bound together the world of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries (Fig. 1). This closely knit world extended from the Aegean (present-day Greece), to Egypt, Anatolia (Turkey), Cyprus, the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan), and Assyria and Babylonia in Mesopotamia (Iraq). The major political players in this arena were New Kingdom Egypt, the Hittite state in Anatolia, the Babylonians in southern Mesopotamia, and the Mitannian state in northern Mesopotamia in the fifteenth century, succeeded by Assyria in the mid-fourteenth century. Cypriot communities, either united or separately, participated, along with the Mycenaeans of mainland Greece, although the relative lack of epigraphic documentation for these regions leaves the specific political structures uncertain.²⁶ City-states of different sizes, including Ugarit, occupied the interstices, acting sometimes as buffer zones and sometimes as agitators. The archaeological remains indicate that polities were dominated by large palace complexes, seen in Egypt at Amarna and Malkata, in Anatolia at Hattusas, in Assyria at Ashur and Kar Tukulti Ninurta, in Babylonia at Dur Kurigalzu, and in

the Aegean at Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Thebes, and Athens.²⁷ Although differing in floor plans and decoration, these palatial complexes all served as central administrative quarters and often included extensive workshops for the manufacture of specialized products.²⁸ The palace at Ugarit fits in well with such architectural types.

The vast epigraphic evidence covers a wide array of genres, such as celebratory monumental inscriptions, dedications, administrative documents, letters, and literary texts, which are written in multiple languages: Akkadian, Egyptian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Elamite, Linear B, and Cyprio-Minoan.²⁹ The intended audiences and ultimate purposes of specific texts determined their form and content. International letters sent between rulers present a very different picture of Late Bronze Age relations than do celebratory inscriptions carved on the walls of temples and intended for an indigenous audience. For example, while Egyptian monumental inscriptions boast of impressive military victories over their fellow kings and of vast quantities of booty, letters sent to these same kings extol the unending supplies of gold and other luxury items that were given out as gifts of well-wishing.³⁰ Similarly, long preambles of diplomatic treaties presented the natural order of the world in pseudohistorical terms as an explanation for the unbalanced relations between the Hittite state and its smaller Levantine neighbors.³¹ While the disparity of languages and textual genres creates an initial obstacle for cross-cultural comparison, it also presents a richness that gives insight into the coexisting spheres of social interaction in which to situate the forms of artistic expression.

The archaeological and textual evidence documents a diversity of contacts among the polities of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, such as long-distance trade, diplomacy, and military strife. Extensive trade relations can be traced in the appearance of nonindigenous materials, textual references to merchants and mercantile activities, and the archaeological evidence of weights, balances, and storehouses.³² Two Late Bronze Age shipwrecks, one at Uluburun dating to the late fourteenth century and the other a twelfth-century wreck at Cape Gelidonya, both just off the southern coast of Turkey, attest to the movement of large cargoes for commercial transactions or diplomatic gift giving, as do the enormous quantities of Mycenaean and Cypriot pottery found throughout the eastern Mediterranean.³³ The palace courts, whose rulers were in close contact with one another, played a critical role in military and diplomatic interactions. Mention of military conflicts is widespread in certain genres of texts, most notably treaties between states, and also finds visual representation on a large scale in celebratory reliefs.³⁴ In addition, archaeologists have uncovered massive fortifications and possible military destructions at numerous sites, including Ugarit. A further dimension of international contacts is evident in the elaborate, hierarchical diplomatic relations, conducted on a number of status levels. These relations are revealed in letters between rulers and court officials, which indicate a high degree of formalized and sophisticated diplomatic protocol guiding the interactions.³⁵ Overall, a balance of power among great kings, lesser polities, and vassals was maintained through much of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries. Yet shifts in relations and mobility between ranks made the international system dynamic, as for



3 Stone statue from Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Latakia, Archaeological Museum (from Yon, "Stèles de pierre," 351, fig. 2a)

example when the king of Assyria rose from vassal status to a rank on a par with the kings of Egypt and Babylonia.³⁶ The evidence points to the active negotiation of status within these networks by all members, including Ugarit, and indicates that these processes were worked out in both the visual and textual realms. Thus, a complex, kaleidoscopic picture of the Late Bronze Age world takes shape from an examination and integration of the epigraphic and archaeological sources, and I propose that the differing manifestations of artistic expressions parallel this situation.

A word must be said about chronology, that is, the sequential ordering of historical events, of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries. The issue, taken for granted in so many later periods, has dominated the research agenda of this period for decades, and problems surrounding it are compounded by a number of separate but related concerns. A different terminology has evolved to describe the relative cultural sequence for each region, and these systems vary in the accuracy they achieve in assigning absolute dates to the sequence. The situation is complicated further by attempts to synchronize the relative and absolute chronologies of the different regions with one another based on fragmentary evidence.³⁷ In addition, many of the specific objects in question come from archaeologically ambiguous contexts or represent heirlooms deposited subsequent to their manufacture.³⁸ These can only be more precisely dated through stylistic comparison with more chronologically secure Egyptian works. Therefore, this study has not attempted a precise chronological ordering of events. Rather, it has sought to articulate patterns of interaction within a fairly well-contained span of time that corresponds to the period labeled LB II by Syro-Palestinian archaeologists, or in Egyptological terms, the reigns of Thutmose IV in the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty through the reign of Ramses III in the Twentieth Dynasty—a span that, based on the traditional Middle Chronology, falls between about 1419 and 1166 B.C.E.



4 Bronze statue from Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing (from Negbi, fig. 129)

The Indigenous Levantine Tradition

In order to evaluate manifestations of an "international style," it is necessary first to determine those properties that can be considered indigenous. The Levant, a region with ill-defined boundaries roughly corresponding to present-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan, sits at the junction of the eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds and, therefore, has been seen intuitively as the home of the international tradition while bereft of an indigenous tradition of its own (Figs. 1, 2). The arts of the Levant, though far from a precisely delineated group, have been characterized as generally imitative and decorative.³⁹ Difficulties in articulating a Levantine tradition are compounded by a lack of consensus about its geographic extent and borders. Throughout much of history, including the Late Bronze Age, a multitude of small city-states strung along the fertile crescent of the eastern Mediterranean coast, the plain of Aleppo, and the northern Euphrates shared attributes that created a cultural continuum between Egypt, Anatolia, and northern Mesopotamia (Fig. 1). Material artifacts found in these city-states indicate three basic cultural areas. First are the southern states in Palestine that border on Egypt. The second stretches northward along the littoral, fanning outward to the east in a broad arc encompassing the area around Aleppo. The last includes the banks of the northern Euphrates and its tributaries in northeastern Syria. Although discrete boundaries are elusive, several points of difference emerge. Most notable is the distinction between the Levantine coast and the inland region of Syria, which is marked just east of Aleppo where the agricultural plain meets the desert.⁴⁰ A less distinct separation is

found between the northern and the southern coast around the point of the ancient cities of Tyre in Lebanon and Hazor in northern Israel, the southern part being assigned to the cultural sphere of Palestine. Despite differences in the material culture of the northern and southern parts, their similarities with one another relative to other regions argue for their association in this paper for the purposes of determining an indigenous idiom. Therefore, the Levantine cultural region in the second millennium discussed here follows the immediate coastline and inland valleys of the Jordan and Orontes rivers, with an eastward spur into the plain of Aleppo. Inland Syria, which belongs to the northern Mesopotamian cultural sphere, lies outside this definition of the Levant.

A corpus of stone and metal sculpture in the round, relief stelae, metal plaques, ivories, and cylinder seals, all predominately small in size, establishes the parameters for an indigenous Levantine tradition. These works come from sites along the coast including, from north to south, Alalakh, Sefire, Ugarit, Minet el-Beida, Hama, Qadesh, Byblos, Kamid el-Loz, Hazor, Abu Hawam, Megiddo, Beth Shan, Gezer, Sippor, Lachish, and el-Ajjul (Fig. 2). The thematic repertoire focuses on isolated human figures, such as a seated figure alone or receiving homage; a standing figure brandishing an upheld weapon in a smiting position; and a standing frontal nude female figure. Extended narratives are rare. The theme of a seated figure in a high-backed chair receiving men occurs in several ivories, as well as on stelae such as one carved with a figure identified as the god El from Ugarit and one depicting the god Mekal from Beth Shan.⁴¹ Small stone statues, usually under eight inches in height, that show a single figure seated on a stool or high-backed chair are probably related to the more extensive scenes of "homage."⁴² Most of the seated figures wear a distinctive heavy robe with thick, rounded borders. As determined from the head-dresses, which range from snug caps to tall conical crowns with or without divine horns, the figures represent both gods and high-status human individuals. A recently excavated example from Ugarit, carved from basalt and wearing a conical crown resembling the Egyptian white crown, has been identified as the god El (Fig. 3).⁴³ Bronze seated figures parallel the stone examples (Fig. 4).⁴⁴

The image of a male figure, generally believed to be divine, standing with feet apart and one arm holding a weapon raised above the head in a smiting position is executed both in carved relief on stone stelae and in three-dimensional metal figurines. A short kilt secured by a belt, more appropriate to an active figure, replaces the heavy robes of the seated figures. A delicately modeled, shallow relief stela from Ugarit depicts a smiting god, probably equated with Baal, who holds a mace above his head and a down-turned spear from whose staff vegetation sprouts (Fig. 5).⁴⁵ His tall, funnel-shaped headdress has two horns of divinity at the front. A small figure, wrapped in a heavy, thick-bordered robe, stands on a platform in front of Baal, his head protected by the god's sheathed dagger. He most likely represents the king or crown prince of Ugarit. Bronze figurines in the smiting position discovered at Ugarit and Minet el-Beida, some retaining overlaid gold leaf, compose a common genre with numerous examples from elsewhere along the coastal Levant.⁴⁶

The nude females that figure on many metal plaques made



5 "Baal" stela from Ugarit (Ras Shamra). Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: © RMN)

from sheet gold divide into two broad subgroups.⁴⁷ One abbreviates the female form to depict only the head, breasts, navel, and pubic region within a pear- or violin-shaped piece of cut-sheet metal (Fig. 6). In some cases, the head and breasts are executed in repoussé, while incised lines delineate the navel and pubic region. The second type depicts the entire standing female form in repoussé with a full frontal face and torso; the pubic region is again emphasized by incision. In several of these examples, the figure stands on the back of a lion and/or holds vegetation or animals in either hand. The second type of metal pendant is rarer, although four examples were discovered at Minet el-Beida (Fig. 7).⁴⁸ Considerably more common are terra-cotta plaques of nude female figures, the vast majority of which depict the entire female body as in the second type of metal



6 Gold pendant from Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing (from Negbi, fig. 116)

pendant.⁴⁹ Female sexuality, embodied in the breasts and pubic area, constitutes the primary focus of these pieces, which is further emphasized by the body's frontal position.

Egyptianizing elements of dress, such as the white (*atef*) crown and the *was* staff, appear in a number of the Levantine works. In addition to specific attributes of dress, the more elongated proportions of Egyptian art can be seen in these pieces. Less common is the occurrence of features from other foreign regions, such as Hittite Anatolia. In such instances, the foreign element remains clearly identifiable even within an overall Levantine setting. This use of foreign elements in fairly clear quotation of their original context constitutes a major idiom of the indigenous tradition at Ugarit and is discussed at greater length below in relation to the ivory furniture panels and alabaster vase fragments. These two works can be seen as occupying one end of a spectrum of the Levantine tradition, in which foreign quotations increasingly coexist with indigenous elements.⁵⁰

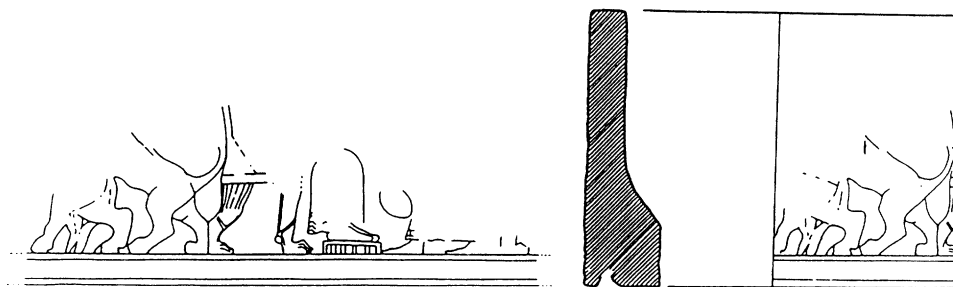
The site of Ugarit, having produced examples of all the discussed themes and object types, represents a microcosm of the Levantine tradition.⁵¹ Several of the luxury goods under consideration also fall into this classification. An ivory head in the round, which probably belonged to a composite statue and retains traces of inlay in its hair and eyes, was found in the northwest corner of court III of the palace, along with a number of other ivories (Fig. 8).⁵² It displays strong formal parallels with a stone head from an earlier Levantine context: an eighteenth-century shrine associated with the palace of Yarim-Lim in level VII at Alalakh.⁵³ Specifically, the two share the inlaid treatment of the eyes with raised rims; the heavy, arching eyebrows that do not meet in the center; the prominent nose; and the small closed lips no wider than the base of the nose. While the Alalakh head appears to depict a human entity, the ivory head has been convincingly associated with the depiction of the deity on the "Baal au foudre" stela from Ugarit (Fig. 5).⁵⁴ In addition, it shares an overall



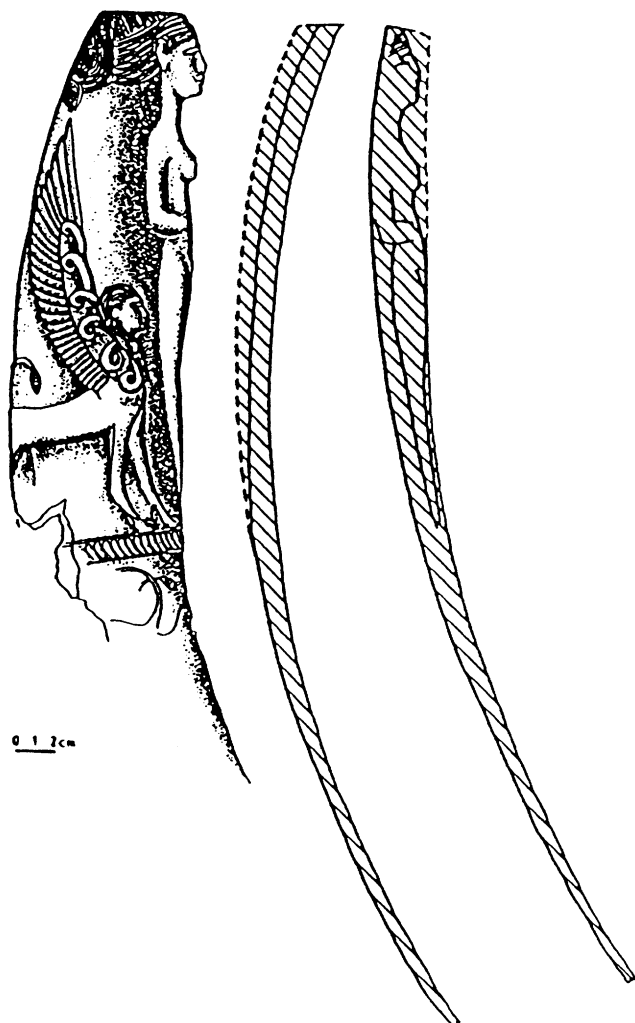
7 Gold pendant from Minet el-Beida, drawing (from Negbi, fig. 119)

similarity of proportions and physiognomic features with the unfortunately weathered statue of the seated god El, also from Ugarit (Fig. 3). Whether human or divine, the ivory head belongs to the Levantine tradition. Its fragmentary condition makes it difficult to situate within the idiomatic spectrum outlined above, yet in its current state it displays no foreign quotations.

Also carved in the round is a seated female figure just over one inch in height (Fig. 9).⁵⁵ The diminutive figurine is broken at the waist but preserves the torso and head of a lady and the high back of her elaborately decorated chair. She wears a mantel with a decorated border pulled over her head and enshrouding her folded arms. Her full, rounded forms, seated pose, and type of chair find parallels throughout the Levantine tradition, including an ivory figurine excavated at Kamid el-Loz in Israel and an unoccupied high-backed chair carved of stone found at Beth Shan, also in Israel.⁵⁶ Two small gold pendants from Ugarit made of sheet gold with incised imagery show highly Egyptianized females in long robes seated on high-backed chairs.⁵⁷ Scenes of a male figure, seated on a high-backed chair constructed out of zoomorphic elements and approached by standing figures, however, predominate in the Levantine tradition, seen for example on an ivory from Megiddo (Fig. 10) and a stone sarcophagus from Byblos.⁵⁸ The unfinished ivory pyxis discovered in Tomb III of the port city at the site of present-day Minet el-Beida exhibits the remains of such a scene, preserving the chair and



11 Ivory pyxis from Tomb III of Minet el-Beida, drawing. Paris, Musée du Louvre (from Gachet, "Objets en os et en ivoire," fig. 56)



12 Carved ivory tusk from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Damascus, National Museum (from Caubet and Poplin, "Les objets de matière dure animale," fig. 19)

of small scale and including elite luxury materials such as the four ivory pieces from Ugarit. The unfinished ivory pyxis suggests local production of these goods, while the find spots in the palace and wealthy residences indicate an elite, though not necessarily royal, context of use.⁶²

The complex nature of artistic expression in the Levant finds a parallel in the sociopolitical situation. The precise political configuration fluctuated more extensively here than in the neighboring regions, characterized by small city-states whose fortunes waxed and waned according to both internal and external stimuli. Historical sources indicate that while

they controlled their own hinterlands, the numerous kingdoms often came under varying degrees of external rule.⁶³ The area lay at the center of the international network and had access to critical long-distance routes in all directions. As such, it also represents the locale in which encounters between more far-flung regions took place. While the Levant has often been studied in terms of domination by one of the "superpowers" surrounding it, such as Egypt, Hatti, Mitanni, or Assyria, close examination of the material and textual evidence suggests that the individual states not only controlled certain aspects of their fate, they also actively engaged in tactics to better their positions vis-à-vis both one another and the great powers.⁶⁴ The lack of long-term political stability has generally been blamed for the perceived absence of a strongly defined artistic tradition.⁶⁵ This may indeed account for the concentration of small-scale finds and the paucity of "monumental" art, which requires a greater degree of centralized resources, as well as the incorporation of foreign elements. Nonetheless, political fragmentation does not exclude the formation of an indigenous tradition. It seems most judicious to understand the indigenous artistic traits described above in terms of a tension between seemingly contradictory factors. On the one hand, a multiplicity of separate sociopolitical entities helped forge diverse works while drawing on relatively limited resources. On the other hand, the jostling polities, by dint of their desirable geographic position, which enabled them a degree of self-determination and provided cohesion, were culturally linked. The corpus of small-scale objects reflects this in its shared themes, materials, and techniques and the range from completely indigenous to the incorporation of some foreign elements. Foreign elements appear to an even greater extent in other luxury works, such as the ivory furniture panels and alabaster vase fragments, which nevertheless maintain elements of the indigenous that place the pieces in a Levantine cultural sphere.

Quoting the Foreign as Indigenous

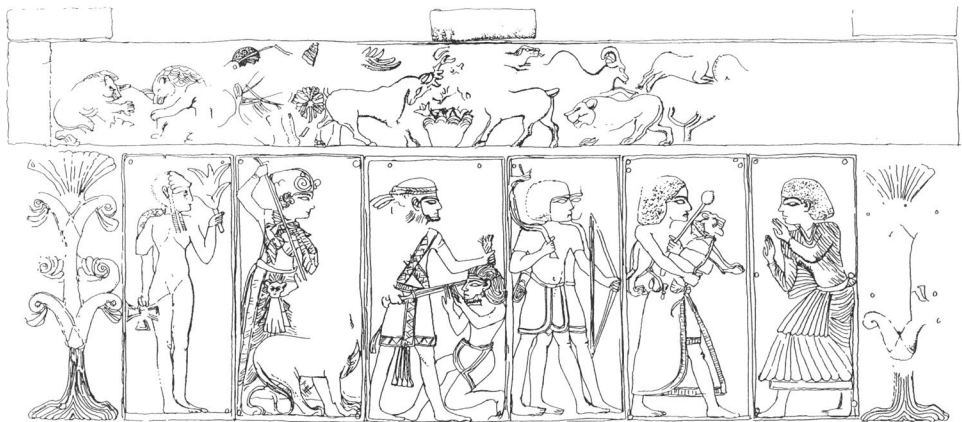
The ivory furniture panels and incised alabaster vase demonstrate a sophisticated borrowing or, more precisely, deployment of potent symbolic images, reinterpreted and reconfigured to suit the needs of a developing royal ideology (Figs. 13, 14, 16). They have been considered manifestations of artistic internationalism (that is, of the "international style") because certain elements are clearly derived from foreign traditions. The foreign elements, however, coexist with specifically indigenous features, suggesting their ultimate connection to the Levant. These foreign features, which comprise a select repertoire of self-contained motifs, can be seen

13 Ivory furniture panels from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), side A, drawing. Damascus, National Museum (drawing: Liz Lauter)



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14 Ivory furniture panels from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), side B, drawing. Damascus, National Museum (drawing: Liz Lauter)



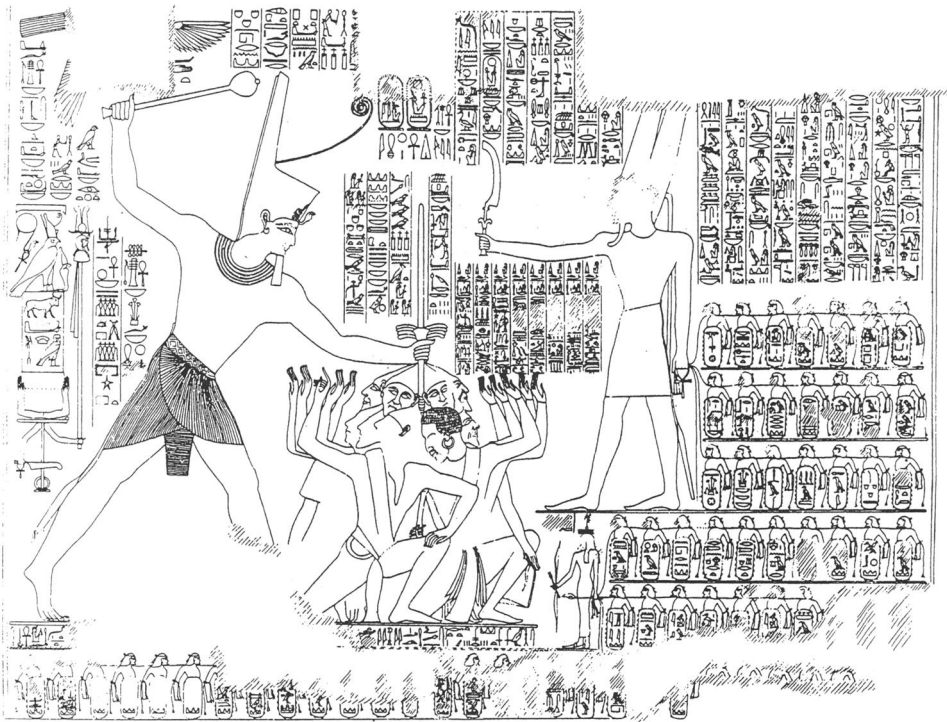
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to fall into specific patterns of adoption and, more importantly, adaptation within the Levant. Furthermore, the patterns can be associated with specific contexts of use and consumption that suggest the Levantines knew and understood what these elements signified. I argue that since the borrowed motific “vocabulary” is situated in a wholly Levantine composition, these pieces should be interpreted instead as indigenous, the foreign features redefined to address Ugaritic concerns.

The two ivory furniture panels, composed of numerous individual vertical and horizontal relief and cutout plaques, were found in situ, set back-to-back, to form a single object intended to be viewed from both sides (Figs. 13, 14).⁶⁶ They were originally affixed to a wooden frame, measuring approximately 40 by 20 inches, most likely as the head- or footboard of a bed or couch, similar to excavated examples from Egypt.⁶⁷ The ivories themselves are in varying states of preservation, with the horizontal plaques surviving only partially. Each of the twelve vertical plaques is carved in low relief and contains one or two human figures that stand the full height of the plaque with feet firmly planted on the ground line, leaving little background space around them. The horizontal plaques and cutout elements display compositional and thematic features that differ from the vertical plaques. Although the entire work shares stylistic traits, such as the rendering of caprine heads and lion’s paws, that indicate a probable com-

mon production, the maker(s) employed two separate artistic traditions. The one to which the horizontal plaques and cutout elements belong, as well as the coexistence of two traditions on a single work, is discussed in the following section.

On side A (Fig. 13), the six vertical plaques, from left to right, include a man carrying a live goat; a hunter with a slain deer slung around his shoulders leading a decoy stag; a woman in a long robe holding a vegetal staff in one hand and an unidentified object in the other; a frontal-facing horned and winged female with two identical adolescents at her breasts; an embracing couple; and finally an attendant holding weapons in both hands. The divine figure suckling adolescents, the widest plaque and situated almost in the center, dominates this side. The plaques on the opposite side (B, Fig. 14) show a nude female figure holding a vegetal staff and an *ankh*, the Egyptian symbol for life; a man in an Egyptian *khepresh* crown and pleated skirt spearing a lion; a bearded man grasping the hair of and pointing a sword at a collapsing victim; two armed men holding bows and axes; a man holding a scepter and a leashed lion; and an attendant bowing with arms raised before him. On side B, the victorious warrior appears in the centermost position, although the adjacent plaque of the lion spearing shares the spotlight. An opposition of seemingly domestic themes on side A and militaristic themes on side B has led scholars to postulate a comprehen-



15 Karnak, wall relief showing Seti I presenting war captives to Amun, drawing (from Walter Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, pt. 2 [1923–35; reprint, Paris: Slatkine Reprints, 1988], pl. 53a)

sive dichotomy between the two panels.⁶⁸ In fact, the associated plaques present a more complicated program, evidenced by the appearance of a nude female figure on the “war” panel (side B) and a hunter carrying a dead deer on the “domestic” side (side A). A comparison with Egyptian works, in particular the tomb of Ramose in Thebes, which was constructed over a period of time spanning the transition from the early Eighteenth Dynasty to the Amarna period (reign of Amenhotep III), dates the furniture panels to the early part of the fourteenth century.⁶⁹

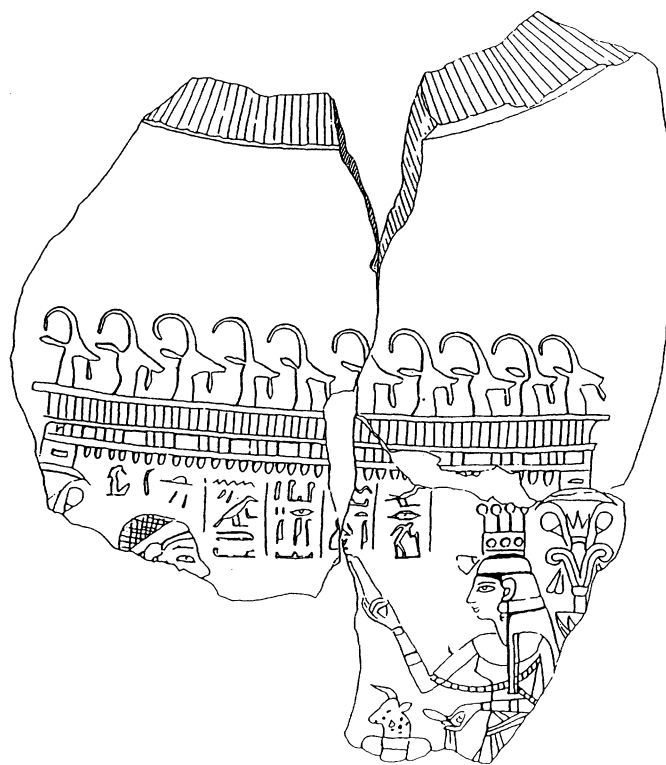
The individual plaques reveal a number of foreign elements that are combined with elements of the Levantine tradition. Most notable among the foreign borrowings are those from Egypt and Hittite Anatolia. Egyptian royal iconography plays a major role; however, the refashioning of many Egyptian features into coherent indigenous forms indicates an awareness of their original meaning rather than an ignorant attempt at imitation. The already ancient scene of a victorious king smiting his enemy, which dates back to the predynastic period in Egypt (on the Narmer Palette, ca. 3200) and remains popular throughout the New Kingdom (ca. 1570–1076), provides the inspiration for the plaque of the victorious warrior (Fig. 15). In the plaque, though, instead of wielding a weapon high above his head, as in the Egyptian examples, the victor holds his sword at waist level. Any dynamic action implied in the diagonal thrust of the body and raised heel in Egyptian examples is completely absent. Furthermore, the victor is dressed as a Levantine in a short kilt with tassels falling between the legs and a headband that binds up his long hair. The short sword with gently curving pommel represents a type found along the southern coast of Anatolia and the Levant, including an example excavated at Ugarit.⁷⁰ The scene, clearly drawing on the Egyptian iconography of royal victory, has altered the specifics

within the parameters of the Levantine tradition. Its neighboring scene also borrows from the same thematic realm, that of the king and high court officials spearing hippos on the Nile. Here, the scene has been transformed into a land-bound figure and a leonine prey, both of whom stand passively despite the presumably violent action, with Egyptian attributes such as the blue (*khepresh*) crown and pleated skirt retained. The message of the scene—of domination over the natural world—remains, even as the culturally specific references to Egyptian royal ideology and religion are removed through a change of scenery and animal type.⁷¹

Similarly, the suckling goddess on the opposite side combines elements of Egyptian iconography (the duplicated boys nursing from divine breasts) with those of Hatti (the “signe royal” inscribed in the disk between her horns) in a traditional Levantine format of the frontal female.⁷² While in Egypt this scene is reserved for showing the divine royal child being suckled by a maternal goddess such as Hathor in human or cow shape, the plaque appears to offer a reinterpretation within the Ugaritic context of the kingdom’s collective population nourished by the goddess. This encompasses the “men of the king” (*bnš mlk*), who are dependents of the palace, on the one hand and the “sons of Ugarit,” who hold land in the countryside, on the other, both known from the texts to constitute the dual demographic makeup of the palace-centered realm.⁷³ With great complexity and sophistication, the ivory panels operate on several levels as the foreign elements, in conjunction with the indigenous, are assimilated to create a nuanced iconographic and compositional work related to the royal ideology of Ugarit. The two panels appear to represent critical components and concerns of kingship specific to Ugarit, which was undergoing a process of definition and refinement during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries.⁷⁴

A second luxury item from the palace exhibits a related adaptation of foreign elements for the purpose of creating an indigenous Ugaritic royal tradition. Three fragments of an incised alabaster vase were recovered from among many others in the central archives area of the palace (Fig. 16).⁷⁵ The three fragments fit cleanly together and probably belonged to a large amphora-type vessel.⁷⁶ The incised design preserves the upper part of a representational scene that takes place beneath a pillared portico supported on either side by ornate lotus, papyrus, and volute capitals. It appears to have been self-contained because the cornice edges on both sides, as well as the two capitals, are completely preserved. Five columns of Egyptian hieroglyphs run below the cornice and read from right to left, "the great one [ruler] of the land of Ugarit, Niqma'd." Below the inscription survives the upper part of a man's head wearing a net cap (or hatching to indicate hair). Facing him to the right stands a woman in Egyptian dress. She holds a vessel in one hand and a cloth in another as she pours a libation before him. Directly in front of her is a profile rendering of a spotted cow's head that resembles rhytons of Aegean type known from examples found on Crete in the Late Minoan I period (sixteenth-fifteenth centuries) and pictured as tribute in early Eighteenth Dynasty tombs of private officials.⁷⁷ Because of the ruler's name, identified as Niqmaddu II (d. ca. 1315), the proportions of the woman's body, and the detailing of the canopy and columns vis-à-vis dated Egyptian examples, the vase fragments have been dated to the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt, approximately the middle to late fourteenth century.⁷⁸

The Egyptian elements, while clearly recognizable, are integrated into an Ugaritic context, evident not only from the reference to Niqmaddu in the inscription but also from the reinterpretation of the elements themselves. For example, the portico's cornice, which in Egypt would exhibit cobra head *uraei*, is surmounted instead by a row of bearded caprine heads. In addition, the male head with net cap and thick band belongs to the Levantine tradition. To judge from his larger size relative to the standing female, the man probably was seated, and probably belongs to a scene of a seated figure receiving an audience. The scene, based on comparisons with Egyptian examples, has been interpreted as depicting a marriage between King Niqmaddu and an Egyptian princess or court lady.⁷⁹ Although there is no other evidence for an alliance with an Egyptian woman, which would have been extremely unusual,⁸⁰ the Ugaritic king would certainly have desired such a match. The vase fragments, even if not representative of fact, clearly indicate the aspiration. A similar image appears among a group of ivories found at Megiddo in Israel in a stratum dated to the early twelfth century.⁸¹ An ivory box fragment combines an Egyptian inscription with a scene of a standing woman presenting a papyrus flower to a seated individual whose upper body is broken away. The lengthy inscription refers to a prince of Ashkelon, a city on the coast of the southern Levant in modern-day Israel. The Megiddo ivory differs from the Ugarit alabaster fragments in that it contains only Egyptian elements, including the seated figure of the Levantine prince, and a much longer inscription.⁸² It too, however, demonstrates the use of Egyptian iconography by Levantine elites.⁸³



16 Alabaster vase fragments from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Damascus, National Museum (from Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, vol. 3, fig. 118)

Like the ivory furniture panels, though on a less complex level, the vase fragments exhibit elements that can be clearly identified with a foreign culture, and again, these elements are related primarily to the royal sphere. These foreign motifs have not been slavishly copied but instead reinvented with indigenous features to create unique representations. The hieroglyphic inscription, although carved with hesitancy, is grammatically proper Egyptian.⁸⁴ The use of the foreign language may be compared to the adoption of Egyptian artistic iconography: the vocabulary and even the grammar are borrowed, but the meaning relates to indigenous concerns. These two pieces are, therefore, "international" only in their use of foreign elements; the written reference to Niqmaddu, king of Ugarit, and the uniquely Levantine details link them to the indigenous Ugaritic sphere. This fits well with the picture of the Ugaritic kingdom as an aspiring power during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, a status that required an internally directed artistic expression at the royal level. The adaptation of foreign iconography associated with strong, centralized kingship, especially the long tradition of nearby Egypt, provided a foundation on which to build a specifically Ugaritic royal representational idiom. This artistic expression, I would suggest, was consciously directed inward at the indigenous population rather than outward to an international audience.

The International Koine

While the ivory plaques from the bed panel and the incised vessel fragments selectively quote foreign elements, several other luxury pieces from Ugarit display hybridized elements that cannot be associated with any one culture (foreign or



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17 Ivory tabletop inlays from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Damascus, National Museum (drawing: Liz Lauter)

indigenous) and therefore argue to be classified as truly international. The ivory inlays from a tabletop, the gold hemispherical bowl, the framing elements of the ivory furniture panels, and a fragmentary wing share formal attributes with one another and with a number of objects from around the eastern Mediterranean, in particular Egypt, Cyprus, and the Aegean (Figs. 17–19, 13, 14, 20, 21).⁸⁵ Their closest comparanda are to grave goods from the tomb of Tutankhamun and a silver treasure hoard from Tell Basta in Egypt, three polychrome faience vessels and a number of ivories from Cyprus, in addition to several ivories from the Greek island of Delos (Figs. 22–25).⁸⁶ The Ugarit pieces share with such works from elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean an internationally based repertoire of themes that consistently combine in nonnarrative arrangements. Object type, material, technique, iconography, and composition link these pieces together. On them, animal attack and hunt scenes amid lush, stylized vegetation are hybridized to such a degree that discerning individual cultural identities becomes extremely difficult. The combined repertoire of themes and motif elements derived from numerous traditions warrants using the term *international*, while the extensive sharing of these motifs suggests a visual koine.⁸⁷

Hundreds of ivory inlays from a tabletop were found face down in the ground of court III in the palace, partly retaining their original composition despite the complete disintegration of their wooden armature (Fig. 17).⁸⁸ An ivory lotus capital and several furniture feet in the shape of lion's paws were found mixed among the cutout elements, suggesting

their reconstruction as a pedestal table similar to one depicted on a stone stela also found at Ugarit.⁸⁹ The excavator, Claude Schaeffer, records small pieces of lapis lazuli or glass paste intermixed with the ivory.⁹⁰ The inlay elements are symmetrically organized into three concentric bands of antithetical animal groups surrounding a central rosette. Lightly incised with no surface modeling, the inlays may have been covered originally with gold leaf. Groups of winged sphinxes and griffins trampling fallen goats alternate with rampant goats and seated griffins. Ornate voluted palmettes separate the groups, while tendrils of vegetation fill the space around the animals, creating the impression of lace.

The gold bowl from the acropolis is also arranged around a central rosette in three concentric bands of figural representations separated by three ornamental bands (Figs. 18, 19).⁹¹ Only seven inches in diameter, the small bowl was formed by beating red-gold foil over a core of bitumen. The gold foil is chased from the inside with details incised on the exterior. Five horned goats, four arranged in pairs, confront voluted palmettes in the innermost band. The middle band displays two bulls head-to-head followed by two lions arranged in mirror position around four voluted palmettes. Seven groups of animals and composite creatures encircle the outermost band, which also contains the only two human protagonists. A sphinx and a winged lion with bull's horns flanking a voluted palmette form a central focus, while the remaining groups proceed more or less in linear fashion toward them, starting at the opposite point on the bowl's circumference. One group includes two hunters who, in



18 Gold bowl from the acropolis of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Aleppo, National Museum (from Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, vol. 2, pl. VIII)

protection of a collapsing stag, attack a rearing lion with a spear and dagger. Three other groups depict lions as predators, flying onto the backs of their herbivorous victims, while scavenging birds, awaiting their meal, fly above. A fifth lion, rearing up on its hind legs, prepares to attack an unsuspecting but seemingly ill-natured winged griffin seated stiffly on its haunches. Two rampant gazelles, whose addorsed bodies cross at the hindquarters, complete the tableau. The vignettes of the upper band are surrounded by dense vegetation that fills the space below and above the figures, as well as by almond-shaped elements and encircled stars. Sporadic vegetation and disks appear in the other two bands as well as a band of pomegranates that hang into the middle band. Two bands of shakily incised running spirals frame the outermost figural band. The variety of poses creates a sense of liveliness enhanced by the exuberance of the vegetation and the sharp yet sketchy quality of the incision.

The pair of ivory furniture panels was introduced earlier because their twelve vertical plaques exhibit a tendency to transform foreign elements into an indigenous idiom. These plaques, however, are framed by horizontal strips that border the top edge, four cutout voluted palmettes at the ends, and cutout elements from the bottom that closely relate to the tabletop inlays and the gold bowl (Figs. 13, 14, 20).⁹² Across the horizontal plaque on side A (Fig. 13), two striding winged lions with bull's horns flank a bird of prey perched atop a volute in the center. To either side, animal attack scenes unfold, with two pairs of lions confronting bulls. A sole human individual thrusts his spear into the haunches of one of the lions, while a griffin attacks a hoofed herbivore. On the horizontal plaque of the opposing panel (side B, Fig. 14), two stags lock antlers across a clump of vegetation. A kneeling

archer to the left aims his bow, behind which a pair of lions mauls a bull. To the right of the stags, two addorsed lions crouch in pursuit of their prey, while a single feline chases after fleeing goats whose extended bodies undulate across the upper zone of the plaque. At either end of each panel, the cutout voluted palmettes assume a simplified form of interlaced upward- and downward-turning volutes surmounted by a fan-shaped palmette. A single set of cutout elements can be securely identified as belonging to a band bordering the bottom edge (Fig. 20).⁹³ Executed like the voluted palmettes and tabletop inlays with incised details but no surface modeling, it represents the forepart of two winged lions with bull's horns flanking a voluted palmette.

Several compositional, thematic, and motif features unite the ivory tabletop inlays, the gold repoussé bowl, and the ivory furniture panels. Extended narrow friezes, either horizontal or circular, predominate, while figural groups appear associative in nature, eschewing any marked narrative sequence. All use vegetal elements, especially the voluted palmette, to structure the composition, serving at once to separate and unite the various motif elements and figural groups. A general thematic connection of animal attacks and antithetical arrangements around voluted palmettes also links the three pieces. On the tabletop inlays and the ivory panels, the predators include griffins and sphinxes, composite creatures based on the leonine form, while the bowl depicts lions in positions of attack. The posture of the two bulls in the middle band of the gold bowl resembles that of the attacked bulls on the ivory panels. The right-hand hunter on the gold bowl assumes a stance, with feet spread apart and a bent arm thrusting the spear, similar to that of the hunter on the horizontal plaque of side A of the panels. The form



19 Gold bowl from the acropolis of Ugarit (Ras Shamra). Aleppo, National Museum (photo: Jacques Lessard, from *Syria, Land of Civilizations*, exh. cat., Musée de la Civilisation, Quebec, Canada, 1999, cat. no. 24)



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20 Ivory inlay belonging to furniture panels from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Damascus, National Museum (drawing: Liz Lauter)

and composition of the voluted palmettes, in particular, those from the lower border of the panels and the outer band on the gold bowl, share specific features, such as the sharply pointed fronds marked by parallel hatching, pendants that hang from the volutes, and sinuous stalks of flowers growing out of the volutes.

A final piece provisionally included with these pieces is a fragmentary wing that may have belonged to a larger piece of furniture (Fig. 21).⁹⁴ Two rows of sharply delineated feathers are finely executed in low relief with deep, precise incisions marking the details. The feathers fan out from the forewing into a gently rounded profile, while the forewing itself rises

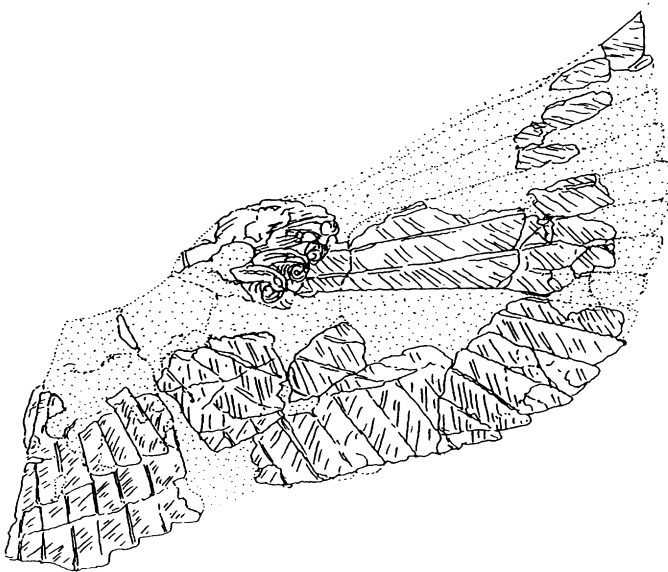
into an arching swell. A row of striated, overlapping locks, curling to the left, conceals the juncture of the marginal covert and the covert. The wing resembles that of an actual bird of prey, and its rendering closely parallels that of wings on the ivory panels and gold bowl.

These four works have their closest parallels with items found in Egypt, Cyprus, and the Aegean, showing more elusive associations with Anatolian and Mesopotamian pieces.⁹⁵ While the interior Near East has preserved fewer comparanda, giving the koine a more westerly, Mediterranean orientation, this geographic skew may be more apparent than actual. The sample of small, precious objects of any type

excavated at inland Near Eastern palatial sites remains minimal. From Egypt, a number of exquisite objects recovered from the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings display scenes of leonine predators attacking herbivores in lush vegetation, such as an alabaster jar stained blue and two beaten gold-foil chariot ornaments (Figs. 22, 23).⁹⁶ In the case of the alabaster ointment jar, the juxtaposing of the international attributes on the container's body with the Egyptian tradition on the top and bottom, including the cartouche of the young Pharaoh, recalls the coexistence of indigenous and international features on the ivory furniture panels.⁹⁷ Such pairings are also seen on several silver vessels found at Tell Basta (Bubastis) in the Egyptian Delta, probably dating to the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty.⁹⁸

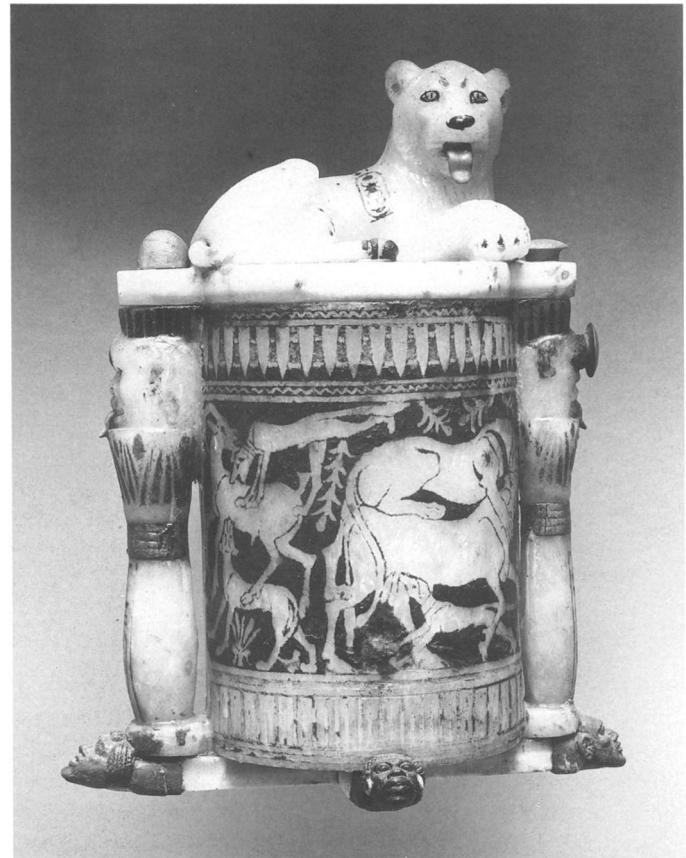
On Cyprus, ivories and elaborate faience pieces partake of the koine themes and compositions. A polychrome faience vase excavated at the site of Kition-Bamboula in the present-day port city of Larnaca shows hunt scenes on the shoulder and goats flanking voluted palmettes on the body (Fig. 24).⁹⁹ The flying gallop poses of the animals and the scattered vegetation further link it to the corpus. Attack scenes between lions, griffins, and bulls, executed in cutout ivory inlays and bands, have also been found in the Aegean, most notably on the island of Delos (Fig. 25).¹⁰⁰ The finely incised Delos inlays, with their exaggerated flying gallop positions, are so closely related to ivories found at Mycenae on the Greek mainland, on Cyprus, and at Megiddo in the southern Levant that it has been suggested that a single workshop produced them.¹⁰¹

All these luxurious objects have in common a restricted repertoire of motific elements and themes, consistently combined to create vignettes that, while related, are nonnarrative. The themes center on predatory animal attacks, foot hunts, and herbivores flanking stylized vegetation. The most char-



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21 Ivory wing fragment from the palace of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), drawing. Damascus, National Museum (drawing: Liz Lauter)



22 Alabaster container from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

acteristic motific element is the voluted palmette, which joins upward- and downward-turning volutes with leafy fronds and sinuous tendrils. These serve both as the vegetal focal point for the flanking animals and also as compositional organizers for the structure of the piece. The animal attack scenes include a predator springing onto or perched on the back of its victim. A second predator often lunges from the opposite direction. Animals in motion generally assume a flying gallop position with legs extended and above the ground line. Composite creatures based on the lion—for example, sphinxes, griffins, or horned and winged lions—place the imagery in the realm of the supernatural. Human figures, when they occur, are small relative to the piece as a whole, merging into the surrounding elements. They represent hunters who converge on foot, wielding bows, spears, daggers, and other weapons. A common compositional device employs extended bands of associated vignettes that wrap around the surface or edges of an object. Each vignette is self-contained and consists of a single thematic group or motific element.

Because of the hybrid nature of the elements, the imagery on these pieces has often been characterized as decorative and dismissed as lacking substantive meaning.¹⁰² Many of the motific elements and themes have connections with specific regional traditions. Even though these elements retain links to the traditions from which they are derived, they have been blended to the extent that the imagery as a whole cannot be identified with any particular culture. Tracing links to better



23 Gold-foil chariot attachments from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

understood and longer established traditions, in particular those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, helps elucidate the iconography of these pieces. Two primary thematic categories can be discerned, the first revolving around combative subjects in states of extreme motion and the second associated with orderly renderings of vegetation and herbivores. Both these themes have long and rich histories related to kingship in Egypt and Mesopotamia and translate into complementary meanings. The combative themes, with an emphasis on leonine creatures, refer to martial prowess, while the heraldic scenes imply fertility and prosperity under the auspices of the divine. Nevertheless, the imagery of these pieces avoids any specific cultural references in the form of dress or symbols, eschewing particularizing ties with any one region. I would argue that the intermingling of various traditions produces a consciously constructed, universalizing message, devoid of overtly ritual or religious imagery that might associate it with an established culture. The iconography, therefore, can be understood as a generic reference to kingship in both its military and providential aspects. The use of high-value materials further enhances this connection to the courts.

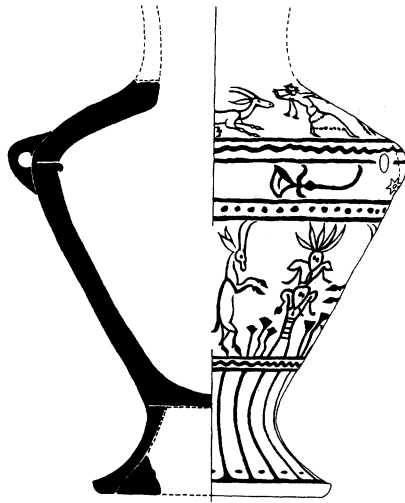
The group, however, shows significant stylistic variation (using style in its restrictive, formalist sense), even among the pieces from Ugarit. This is most evident in the execution of wings on the composite creatures, which display variations such as pointed or rounded feathers, interior parallel lines or herringbone patterns, curling locks or dotted scale patterns, as well as differences in the midsection angle. The deviation of details at the workshop or artist level indicates that production was probably not centralized or monopolized within the eastern Mediterranean and Near East as a whole. Nevertheless, consistency in the motific and compositional repertoire suggests a commonly shared pool of features accepted at the highest status level in every geopolitical area.

Specific, shared stylistic traits can be seen on a subgroup of ivories spread over a wide geographic range from Mycenae and Delos (Fig. 25) in the Aegean world to the island of Cyprus as well as Megiddo in the Levant.¹⁰³ The pieces, which depict attack scenes between lions, bulls, and griffins, are

distinguished by the trefoil rendering of the ears and the braided pattern of the hair along the body contours of the lions. The possibility that this small subset of ivories was produced in a single workshop contrasts with their broad distribution, highlighting the extent to which these portable items may have traveled.

A close stylistic analysis of the execution of details and the distribution patterns of excavated works reveals two aspects of production and consumption. First, it appears that over a span of approximately two hundred years and a wide geographic range they had no single time or center of production, although their final resting places in elite or royal contexts associates them with palace workshops. Second, at least one subgroup of ivories shares specific stylistic traits, implying that their creation in a single location was followed by their distribution over a wide area. These patterns suggest, then, that there were a number of manufacturing locales, perhaps tied to individual palaces, that worked with a single shared repertoire of iconography and composition but retained some degree of stylistic individuality, and that the products of these workshops circulated well beyond their place of manufacture. If the corpus were larger, more stylistic groups might be identified; yet, due to their dissemination, the exact geographic location of production would still prove quite elusive. The very real possibility of itinerant craftsmen further complicates issues of manufacture.¹⁰⁴ Thus, while it might be tempting to seek the identity of the artists producing these works, the very nature of the objects' stylistic and iconographic properties inhibits such an inquiry. Much of the frustration apparent in the scholarship of these luxury objects may be attributed to a lack of success in determining their authorship.

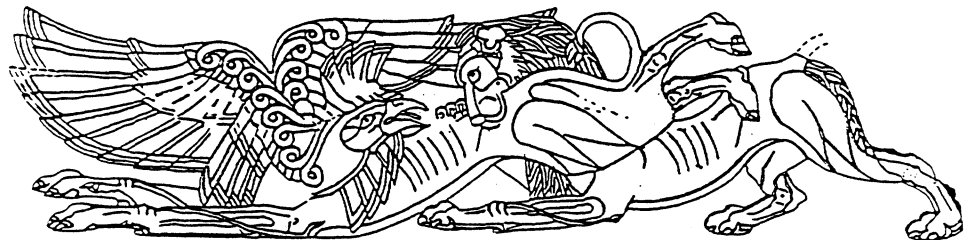
Not only do these objects from Ugarit and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean share formal and thematic features, they also use common materials and techniques and are associated with elite contexts. The object types encompass a variety of small-scale, easily portable items. They range from military accoutrements, such as daggers, bows, and chariots, to furnishings, including vessels, furniture, and even in one



24 Faience vase from Kition-Bamboula, Cyprus, drawing. Larnaca, Archaeological Museum (from Yon and Caubet, *Le Sondage L-N 13*, figs. 33, 35)



25 Ivory inlay from Delos, drawing. Delos, Archaeological Museum (from Kantor, "Syro-Palestinian Ivories," fig. 2B, courtesy of the University of Chicago Press)



exceptional case an embroidered garment.¹⁰⁵ In most instances, they are courtly rather than ritual or everyday objects. The pieces from Ugarit fall into the category of furnishings, including several ivory items that belonged to wooden furniture and two vessels. Similarly, the materials are rare and precious, restricted to a small group of elites. These include elephant ivory, gold and other metals, faience, and alabaster.¹⁰⁶ The techniques—repoussé, incision, inlay, and carving—favor surface decoration over three-dimensional forms and evoke an exuberance through the interior detailing.

The luxury goods found in the palace and the gold bowl from the acropolis have an archaeologically determined terminus ante quem of 1200–1180, the final destruction of the city. Comparanda from around the eastern Mediterranean and Near East place them between this date and the late fifteenth century. Evidence of earlier pieces, such as those from the Shaft Graves at Mycenae (dated to between 1600 and 1500) or those from the tomb of Kamose and Ahmose's mother in Egypt (ca. 1600), highlights the artistic foundations of these luxury goods, yet specific stylistic details distinguish the fourteenth- and thirteenth-century works as a group.¹⁰⁷

Because the themes and motif elements of different regional traditions are so fully intermixed in this group of objects so as to create a new and distinct hybrid expression, it can be seen as representative of an international koine. The iconography and formal features of this group clearly situate it within the highest ruling level of society, which is confirmed by the archaeological context of the objects. Many of the Ugarit pieces come from the palace, and likewise many of the related works, most notably the large number of objects found in the royal burial of King Tutankhamun, have royal

contexts. Associated with the courtly sphere, yet remaining aloof from any specific regional affiliation, this group of luxury goods becomes understandable when assessed within the larger picture of Late Bronze Age interrelations.

Royal Diplomacy and the International Concept of Kingship

An extensive corpus of international letters between rulers and palace officials in the eastern Mediterranean illuminates one distinct facet of diplomatic relations during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁰⁸ The largest and best-preserved assemblages are from the capital cities of Akhetaten (present-day Amarna) in Egypt and Hattusas (present-day Boghazköy) in Anatolia, although isolated examples elsewhere are known.¹⁰⁹ The regions from which correspondence survives include Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Mitanni, Hatti, Cyprus, and the Levantine kingdoms. As recorded in a subset of these letters, a select group of rulers, the self-proclaimed "Great Kings," participated in a sophisticated political system based on reciprocal exchange and the metaphor of brotherhood. Written according to a formulaic structure, the correspondence emphasizes maintaining contact through the intermediary of messengers who traveled between royal courts, bearing information, salutations, and gifts. These letters, called greeting letters, describe a "supra-regional" sphere of royal interaction that bound the rulers together despite potentially divisive cultural loyalties.

The international greeting letters dwell on issues of marriage alliances, exchanged gifts of costly materials, and diplomatic etiquette, with few references to historical events such as military affairs and only occasional mention of trade-related issues. Paramount among the concerns is the contin-

uous exchange of salutations by means of the dispatch of messengers and accompanying “greeting gifts” (Akkadian *šulmānu*, from the root ŠLM, meaning “well-being/well-wishing”).¹¹⁰ The giving and receiving of such greeting gifts identified the participants as belonging to the highest level of rulership. Within this circle, rulers called one another “brother,” expressing political alliances through the metaphor of blood ties that were realized through interdynastic marriages. A passage from a letter sent by the Egyptian king Ramses II (ca. 1304–1237) to the Hittite queen Puduhepa succinctly captures the important elements in these diplomatic relations:

[when] I heard of the health of my brother and of the health of my sister—“They are well, [safe], and healthy.” And when I saw the tablet which [my sister] sent to me, when I heard all the matters which my sister wrote me about, when I received the gift which my sister sent to me, and when I saw that it was secure and in good condition, I was indeed overjoyed. The Sun-god and the Storm-god will give us brotherhood and peace, even in this good relationship in which we find ourselves forever. And our messengers will travel continuously between us forever, fostering brotherhood and peace.¹¹¹

From details available concerning the objects sent as *šulmānus*, they appear to be prestige items similar to those found among the international koine, although stylistic and formal features are almost entirely absent in the written descriptions. While it is not suggested that the objects belonging to the international koine should be equated one-to-one with *šulmānus*, it is likely that these luxurious works operated in the same network of diplomacy and perhaps on occasion served as objects of gift exchange. This shared social context finds further affirmation from a number of structural, formal, and iconographic similarities between koine luxury goods and greeting letters. Both use culturally nonspecific motifs (on the objects) and vocabulary (in the letters) to express a restricted repertoire of themes or topics, which are drawn from the constituent cultures but combined so as to create a hybrid.¹¹² These themes or topics are narrowly defined and relate to generic attributes of kingship. Compositionally, a nonnarrative arrangement of associated elements predominates. Both letters and objects required specialized knowledge and costly resources to produce. And finally, in each case, the physical substance embodied a critical aspect: that of the tangible proof of well-wishing for the letters and that of high-value materials for the objects.

Like the greeting letters, the international artistic tradition, manifest in easily portable luxury items that could have circulated as gifts, provided a shared code that helped to reinforce a collective identity of ruling elites. The luxury goods bearing universalized themes of rulership perfectly expressed an ideal communality of royal elites who formed themselves into an exclusive extended family. Rhetorically, these rulers considered each other as equals, although they came from culturally disparate and potentially conflicting regional traditions and often engaged in military actions against one another. The international koine bound this group together through visual channels; its lack of cultural

affiliation and emphasis on hybrid royal iconography made it the logical expression of a brotherhood of kings. The lack of regional affiliation for the iconography was motivated by its conceptual origin from within the international community itself, while its close connection with the royal elite was reinforced by its derivation from long-standing, constituent royal traditions. The two dominant themes of attack and vegetation had long and rich histories related to kingship in these areas, and they translated into two complementary yet generic attributes of rulership.

According to this scenario, the appearance of such objects at Ugarit signals a complex form of emulation of and aspiration to the status of “Great Kingdom” that is borne out by the textual and archaeological evidence from the site. Although the kingdom of Ugarit never reached the status of “great,” as explicitly acknowledged in the correspondence, that it should so aspire with some reasonable hope for success is not an implausible proposition. First, the small city-state of Assyria, after emerging from the shadow of the Mitannian “Great King,” ascended to just such an exalted rank and participated as an equal in the exchange of messengers and greeting gifts.¹¹³ Second, Ugarit occupied a strategic location in a border zone between several competing powers that provided it with potential bargaining power. Last, evidence from the texts and archaeological finds points to the active manipulation and negotiation of political rank by the Ugaritic kings, effectively playing its neighbors and the various “Great Kings” off one another.¹¹⁴ The deployment of visual material associated with the highest sphere of political status thus represents a further means by which to ascend in the hierarchical ranks. In such a way, luxury goods executed in the international koine but consumed by lower-status rulers could effectively serve to instigate or bolster status negotiation.

Artistic Expression at Ugarit

The preceding analysis has shown that at least two different artistic traditions existed simultaneously within the Ugaritic kingdom during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries. One can be considered an indigenous trend distinct from, although incorporating, to varying degrees, other foreign traditions. The indigenous tradition, as might be expected, appears well distributed archaeologically within the Ugaritic realm. Examples of indigenous high-level luxury arts have been found within the palace, in a neighboring residence, and in the tomb of a port-side residence at Minet el-Beida. An extension of the indigenous tradition is the idiom evident in the furniture panels and alabaster fragments that reshaped the foreign in order to address local Ugaritic and specifically royal concerns.¹¹⁵ The cultural inspiration for the foreign motifs found in these pieces can be clearly identified, while the selection and inclusion of them alongside the Levantine tradition removes them from their original cultural environment. What has been called “internationalism” in these pieces can be seen as foreign quotations that were directed internally (that is, locally) and were intentionally chosen for their symbolic potential; thus, their cultural origin served an important function in contributing to the reading of the imagery within its new context.

A second artistic tradition falls outside the Levantine tra-

dition, yet specific channels of foreign inspiration cannot be clearly traced. Instead, the completely hybridized tradition creates a "supraregional" koine connected to an idealized kinship network of palaces throughout the eastern Mediterranean. The complementary themes of rulership, domination, and fecundity draw on the long-standing traditions of the network's constituent participants, blended so that no one tradition predominates. In this way, the luxury goods, which may have circulated as greeting gifts, served as a vehicle for identity formation and maintenance within a community of royal elites who bound themselves into an exclusive extended family. The presence of such items at Ugarit, a lesser but aspiring kingdom, marks the deployment of a potent rhetorical expression in an effort to increase its own status. Furthermore, the use of an international tradition as a framing device on the ivory furniture panels that display strong ties to indigenous Levantine works indicates both the ability of the artists to move between visual idioms (between the Levantine and the international) as well as the intentionality that led to such movement. In this case, as in some Egyptian examples, there appears to have been a conscious decision to relate the indigenous elements to an internationally situated tradition. For the crafting of such luxury works, found mainly in court environments, one might postulate a network of palace workshops that featured both mobility of artists and flexibility in training. The evidence for production, however, remains elusive and requires further research.

These two traditions were not the only ones present at Ugarit, as witnessed by objects like the carved ivory pyxis lid from Tomb III at Minet el-Beida and the second gold vessel from the acropolis.¹¹⁶ They are, however, the most clearly articulated among the small sample of the luxury goods found there and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East. Multiplicity of artistic expression at Ugarit should not come as a surprise, considering the sophisticated international world in which it participated; it is to be expected that social complexity would be mirrored in cultural expressions. The desire to attribute works of art to a single individual or, that failing, to a single group (usually ethnically, linguistically, or nationally identified) has in fact served to direct inquiries regarding these luxury goods away from their culturally situated contexts. Questions concerning consumption, use, and social history, on the other hand, focus on artistic forms as expressions of multidimensional social systems. Objects, particularly those that were invested with exceptional value, as evident from the amount of resources, energy, and time allocated to luxury production, can act as participants in the definition of relations by means of the symbolic encoding ascribed to them by their human counterparts.

The combined written and material evidence adduced in the present study indicates that the kingdom of Ugarit participated in several different spheres of domestic and international interactions, by which and for which it engaged in complex identity formation and negotiation. In such a case, I have suggested that visual representation on a prestige level served as a major vehicle for rhetorical expression. Specifically, it is argued that the diversity of artistic traditions seen in the luxury goods from Ugarit played an intrinsic role in the promotion of status and identity at a variety of levels.

The luxurious forms of the "international style," when dissected, thus reveal a complicated and sophisticated anatomy that encompasses the indigenous, the foreign, and the truly hybrid.

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Notes

This article develops issues concerning style and meaning that arose from my research into the artistic interconnections of the Late Bronze Age, initially explored in my doctoral dissertation. In the pursuit of these studies, I am indebted to numerous individuals and institutions, in particular, Dr. Sultan Muhesin, Dr. Abdal Razzaq Moaz, and Dr. Michel al-Maqdissi of the Antiquities Department of the Ministry of Culture, Syria; Dr. Yves Calvet, Dr. Marguerite Yon, and the other members of the Mission de Ras Shamra, France; and Dr. Annie Caubet of the Musée du Louvre. For their comments on earlier drafts of the article, I would like to thank Guitty Azarpay, H. Perry Chapman, Kenneth Lapatin, Greg Levine, Anne McClanan, Holly Pittman, Andrew Stewart, and Irene Winter.

1. Meyer Schapiro, "Style," in *Anthropology Today*, ed. A. L. Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 294, reprinted in Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society*, Selected Papers, vol. 4 (New York: George Braziller, 1994), 51–102.
2. See for example Frederik Poulsen, *Der Orient und die frühgriechische Kunst* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1912).
3. William Stevenson Smith, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).
4. *Ibid.*, 35, 97.
5. In many instances, individual pieces or small groups, such as ivories, have received treatment on their own, yet without further analysis of their relationship to a larger corpus—for example, studies on ivories by Helene Kantor (see n. 6 below) and Jean-Claude Poursat (see n. 102 below). Janice Crowley, like Smith, examines all types of artistic production throughout the Bronze Age (3000–1100 B.C.E.) in her study on motif transference; she explicitly states, however, that she is not pursuing issues of meaning or social context. Crowley, 5–6.
6. Helene Kantor, *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium B.C.*, Archaeological Institute of America Monograph, no. 1 (1947; reprint, Boston: Archaeological Institute of America, 1997); Kantor, 153–74; and Helene J. Kantor, "Ivory Carving in the Mycenaean Period," *Archaeology* 13 (1960): 14–25.
7. See for example Annie Caubet, "The International Style: A Point of View from the Levant and Syria," in *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium, Proceedings of the 50th Anniversary Symposium, Cincinnati, 18–20 April 1997*, ed. Eric H. Cline and Diane Harris-Cline, *Aegaeum*, 18 (Liège: Université de Liège, 1998), 105–13.
8. An attempt to distinguish two internal formal groups was made, although without extension into the realm of meaning and rhetorical significance, by Crowley, 221–29. Like me, she notes the haphazard use of the term *international style* and calls for a more precise definition. Her main criterion for inclusion is an inability to locate place of manufacture. With this in mind, she designates several Late Bronze Age pieces as part of the "international style" yet recognizes that they do not form a single, coherent stylistic group. Thus,

she postulates two styles—an ornate and a severe—which she attributes to Syria and Mycenaean Greece, respectively. Her ornate style corresponds for the most part to my restricted grouping (confirming our independent formal analyses). I, however, feel less persuaded as to its Syrian origin, a conclusion based more on intuition than actual evidence. Moreover, Crowley's explicit disavowal of any attempt at interpreting the imagery and her ahistorical and acontextual treatment of motifs denies any possibility of active signification or use value that may have preconditioned the production of specific artistic forms.

9. Several studies make use of the term *iconography* but do not pursue issues of meaning. For example, Crowley, 5–6; and Janice L. Crowley, "Iconography and Interconnections," in Cline and Harris-Cline (as in n. 7), 171–82.

10. The terminology is borrowed from James S. Ackerman, "Western Art History," in *Art and Archaeology*, ed. Ackerman and Rhys Carpenter (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 152.

11. See for example Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

12. If Schapiro was trying to enlarge the definition of style in 1953 (as argues Alan Wallach, "Meyer Schapiro's Essay on Style: Falling into the Void," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 [1997]: 11–12), I am trying to restrict it to a narrowly formalist sense, while providing alternative terms (*tradition* and *idiom*) to address his "enlarged" issues of cultural and social expression. In this way, I hope to establish a more precise terminology when referring to the different artistic forms of the Late Bronze Age. For some pertinent discussions on "style" in art history and archaeology (encompassing what I call tradition and idiom), see Schapiro (as in n. 1); and, more recently, reassessments of Schapiro's work in a series of short articles by Barry Schwabasky, Michael Ann Holly, Alan Wallach, and Paul Matlack, in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997): 1–18; Willibald Sauerländer, "From Stilus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion," *Art History* 6 (1983): 253–70; Margaret W. Conkey and Christine A. Hastorf, introduction to *The Uses of Style in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 1–4; and Whitney Davis, "Style and History in Art History," in *ibid.*, 18–31.

13. The difficulties of distinguishing among individual artists and workshops in the ancient Near East has been addressed by Irene Winter, review of *Ivories from Room 37 Fort Shalmaneser*, by G. Herrmann, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51 (1992): 136–38.

14. The use of the term *tradition* takes into account the element of continuity inherent in any attempt to classify artistic groups. For a related use of the term *artistic tradition* in which it "implies a blend of geographical, chronological and cultural connotations," see Crowley, 1–2.

15. Used in the linguistic sense of a dialect, *idiom* implies a relationship among dialects to a "mother tongue," that is, an overarching artistic tradition. Compare to Michael W. Meister's similar use of the term to mean "local style" as a subset of political/cultural style; Meister, "Style and Idiom in the Art of Upamala," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 344–54.

16. Winter (as in n. 13), 136, notes, "Presumably, as one proceeds from the first to the last category [that is, from artist's style to local style to regional style], the shared properties become grosser and fewer, while the distinctions of individuation become more apparent."

17. For the active qualities of style in the ancient Near East (for example, *affective* referring more to emotive qualities, and *constructive* implying the social-relational qualities), see Irene Winter, "The Affective Properties of Styles: An Inquiry into Analytical Process and the Inscription of Meaning in Art History," in *Picturing Science Producing Art*, ed. Caroline A. Jones and Peter Galison (New York: Routledge, 1998), 55–77. The present study emphasizes the more reflective aspect, only touching on the constructive, which will be the focus of a future full-length monograph (and see Marian Helen Feldman, "Luxury Goods from Ras Shamra-Ugarit and Their Role in the International Relations of the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East during the Late Bronze Age," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1998, esp. chap. 5).

18. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (1950; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1990); Karl Polanyi, "The Economy as Instituted Process," in *Trade and Markets in the Ancient Empires*, ed. Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, and Harry W. Pearson (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press and Falcon's Wing Press, 1957), 243–70; Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. R. Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993); Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–63; Ian Hodder, *The Meaning of Things* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Chris A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (London: Academic Press, 1982); Andrew Sherratt and Susan Sherratt, "From Luxuries to Commodities: The Nature of Mediterranean Bronze Age Trading Systems," *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* 90 (1991): 351–84; and Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

19. Appadurai (as in n. 18), 3–5; and Thomas (as in n. 18), chap. 1.

20. Note that all dates from here on are B.C.E. Marguerite Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, in press).

21. Clay tablets, written with a stylus in various cuneiform scripts, are virtually indestructible once baked (either intentionally or during a conflagration). Administrative and diplomatic tablets were stored in special rooms throughout the palace, organized according to document type (see also n. 29 below). The most comprehensive survey of the palace excavations and archives can be found in Jacques-Claude Courtois, "Ras Shamra (Ugarit): Archéologie du site," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible, supplément* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1926–), cols. 1126–295, esp. 1217–35.

22. Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, *La trouvaille épigraphique de l'Ougarit*, Ras Shamra–Ugarit, V (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1989–90); for a brief overview of Late Bronze Age languages, see n. 29 below.

23. Luxury is determined by a combination of relative scarcity, status of find spots, textual references, and degree of workmanship invested in the pieces. Although ivory is, in general, relatively abundant at Ras Shamra and Minet el-Beida, elephant ivory, found in smaller quantities and more elite contexts, appears to carry a higher level of status than hippopotamus ivory, which has a more widespread distribution. Elephant tusks permit much larger pieces of workable ivory, and thus grander finished products, than hippopotamus incisors. Annie Caubet and François Poplin, "Les objets de matière dure animale, étude du matériau," in *Le centre de la ville, 38e–44e campagnes (1978–1984)*, éd. Marguerite Yon, Ras Shamra–Ugarit, 3 (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1987), 299.

24. See below for complete bibliographies for each piece.

25. Two additional objects belong to the group of highest-order luxury goods: a carved pyxis lid of elephant ivory from the same tomb as the pyxis body at Minet el-Beida and a flat-bottomed gold dish. The pyxis lid, which depicts an Aegeanizing bare-breasted female flanked by two rampant goats, is often cited as emblematic of the "international style"; Kantor, 1997 (as in n. 6), 86–89; Marie-Henriette Gates, "Mycenaean Art for a Levantine Market? The Ivory Lid from Minet el-Beida," in *Eikon: Aegean Bronze Age Iconography, Shaping a Methodology, Proceedings of the Fourth International Aegean Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia, 6–9 April 1992*, ed. Robert Laffineur and Janice Crowley, *Aegaeum*, 8 (Liège: Université de Liège, 1992), 77–84; Paul Rehak and John Younger, "International Styles in Ivory Carving in the Bronze Age," in Cline and Harris-Cline (as in n. 7), 229–56; and Jean-Claude Poursat, "Ivoires Chypro-Égéens: De Chypre à Minet-el-Beida et Mycènes," in *Meletemata: Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as He Enters His 65th Year*, ed. Philip P. Betancourt et al., *Aegaeum*, 20 (Liège: Université de Liège, 1999), 683–87. Its only close parallel is an ivory from Mycenae. Because it falls so far outside the classificatory scope of this paper, without good formal comparisons at Ugarit, it will not be included here but will be addressed on its own in a future publication. The gold dish has two concentric bands of raised imagery on the bottom of its interior (Louvre, inv. no. AO 17208; C.F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, vol. 2, Mission de Ras Shamra, 5 [Paris: P. Guethner, 1939], pls. i, vii). The larger outer band depicts a wild bull hunt from a chariot. Although found alongside the hemispherical bowl, composed of red gold, the dish is made of yellow gold. The two also exhibit different techniques of execution and dates of manufacture; the four-spoked wheel and design of the dish are similar to a hunting scene in the Theban tomb of Userhet (TT 56) from the reign of Amenhotep II at the end of the 15th century, whereas the bowl has formal relations to material from the tomb of Tutankhamun in the middle of the 14th century (Betsy M. Bryan, "Art, Empire, and the End of the Late Bronze Age," in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, ed. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996], 60 n. 120). Thus, the two do not represent a pair. Images of hunting from a chariot pervade Late Bronze Age artistic production throughout the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, thereby arguing for a classification of the gold dish as an "international style" object. Its formal elements, however, distinguish it from the other objects considered in the present study: the figures are larger relative to the piece as a whole, and the outer band presents a unified scene (compare with the description of the international koine below and in n. 87 below). I consider, therefore, that the piece, along with the many other chariot hunt scenes, belongs to a separate international tradition, and I have reserved discussion of it for a future publication.

26. All or part of the island of Cyprus is generally identified as the kingdom of Alashiya, whose king is known to have corresponded as an equal with the king of Egypt in the mid-14th century (Amarna letters EA 33–40; see nn. 108, 109 below). For a review of the Alashiya issue, see most recently A. Bernard Knapp, ed., *Near Eastern and Aegean Texts from the Third to the First Millennia B.C.*, Sources for the History of Cyprus, 2 (Altamont, N.Y.: Greece and Cyprus Research Center, 1996); also Lennart Hellberg, *Alasia Problems*, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, 57 (Göteborg: P. Åströms, 1979). The Mycenaean world of the Aegean is often identified, not without controversy, with the political entity known from Hittite texts as Ahhiyawa (in turn equated with Homeric Achaeans), located somewhere to the west of central Anatolia and a partner in diplomatic exchanges during this period. For a review of the Hittite texts mentioning Ahhiyawa, see Trevor Bryce, "Ahhiyawans and Mycenaeans—an Anatolian Viewpoint," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 8 (1989): 297–310; and Hans Güterbock, "The Hittites and the Aegean World," pt. 1, "The Ahhiyawa Problem Reconsidered," *American Journal of Archaeology* 87 (1983): 133–38. By the 14th century, the Minoan culture of Crete appears to have come under the influence of the Mycenaean mainland, either culturally or politically, and as an entity with a distinct material culture, it played little or

no role in the international world of the 14th and 13th centuries. For a recent review of Minoan scholarship, see Paul Rehak and John G. Younger, "Review of Aegean Prehistory VII: Neopalatial, Final Palatial, and Postpalatial Crete," *American Journal of Archaeology* 102 (1998): 91–173.

27. For Egypt: Manfred Bietak, ed., *Haus und Palast im alten Ägypten*, Denkschriften des Gesamtakademie: Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes, 14 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996). For Anatolia: Kurt Bittel, *Hattusa: The Capital of the Hittites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), esp. 63–90; and Peter Neve, *Hattuscha: Information* (Istanbul: Archaeology and Art Publications, 1987). For the Near East: Jean Claude Margueron, *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'âge du bronze* (Paris: Guenther, 1982); Ernst Heinrich, *Die Paläste im alten Mesopotamien*, Denkmaler Antiker Architektur, 15 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984); and Jean Claude Margueron, "Les palais syriens à l'âge du bronze," in *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 19–22 juin 1985*, ed. E. Lévy (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 127–58. For the Aegean: Oliver Dickinson, *The Aegean Bronze Age*, Cambridge World Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 153–57. Cyprus boasts well-built administrative structures at sites such as Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios and Maroni but at present has not produced evidence of any large-scale "palatial" complexes. Alison K. South, "Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios 1992–1996," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1997): 151–75, esp. 152–56; and G. Cadogan, "Maroni III," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1987): 81–84.

28. For some evidence for palace workshops, see Courtois (as in n. 21), cols. 1233–34; Jean Claude Margueron, who suggests that the actual workshops were not physically located inside the palace structure, "Existe-t-il des ateliers dans les palais orientaux de l'âge du Bronze?" *Ktéma* 4 (1979): 3–25; Christine Shelmerdine, "Workshops and Record Keeping in the Mycenaean World," in *TEXNH: Craftsmen, Craftswomen, and Craftsmanship in the Aegean Bronze Age, Proceedings of the 6th International Aegean Conference, Philadelphia, Temple University, 18–21 April 1996*, ed. Robert Laffineur and Philip P. Betancourt, *Aegaeum*, 16 (Liège: Université de Liège, 1997), 387–96; Thomas G. Palaima, "Potter and Fuller: The Royal Craftsmen," in *ibid.*, 407–12; O. H. Krzyszkowska, "Aegean Ivory Carving: Towards an Evaluation of Late Bronze Age Workshop Material," in *Ivory in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period*, ed. J. Lesley Fitton, British Museum Occasional Paper, 85 (London: British Museum, 1992), 25–35; and R.D.G. Evelyn, "The Ivory Workshop on the Royal Road, Knossos," abstract in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (University of London) 32 (1985): 156.

29. During the Late Bronze Age, Akkadian, in a variety of regional dialects, served as the lingua franca of international discourse; William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), xviii–xxii. It was used to write interstate letters and treaties, thus serving as the communication form for both equal and unequal international relationships. No cuneiform documents have been discovered on Cyprus or in the Aegean, perhaps indicating a different type of interaction between these regions and those of the so-called cuneiform culture of Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Anatolia. It is, however, important to remember the serendipity of archaeological discovery, poignantly illustrated by the single find of international letters at Amarna, which provides our sole evidence for the use of Akkadian in Egypt. All the polities were literate, to varying degrees, and had indigenous languages and writing systems. For a general introduction to these languages and scripts, see the collected articles in J. T. Hooker, ed., *Reading the Past: Ancient Writing from Cuneiform to the Alphabet* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1990).

30. Mario Liverani, *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600–1100 B.C.* (Padua: Sargon, 1990), 255–66.

31. Carlo Zaccagnini, "The Forms of Alliance and Subjugation in the Near East of the Late Bronze Age," in *I trattati nel mondo antico forma ideologia funzione*, ed. Luciano Canfora, Mario Liverani, and Zaccagnini (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1990), 67–71; and Garry Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, SBL Writings from the Ancient World Series, 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 2–3.

32. For a general review of merchants and trade, see Alfonso Archi, ed., *Circulation of Goods in Non-Palatial Contexts in the Ancient Near East* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984); Michael Hudson and Baruch A. Levine, eds., *Privatization in the Ancient Near East and Classical World*, Peabody Museum Bulletin, 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1996); and Daniel C. Snell, "Methods of Exchange and Coinage in Ancient Western Asia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack Sasson (New York: Scribners, 1995), 1487–97.

33. For the most recent review of the Late Bronze Age shipwrecks and their relation to trade, see George F. Bass, "Sailing between the Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium BC," in Cline and Harris-Cline (as in n. 7), 183–91; and Cemal Pulak, "The Uluburun Shipwreck: An Overview," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 27, no. 3 (1998): 188–224. For Mycenaean pottery in the eastern Mediterranean, see Vronwy Hankey, "Mycenaean Pottery in the Middle East: Notes on Some Finds since 1951," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 62 (1967): 107–47; Albert Leonard Jr., *An Index to the Late Bronze Age Pottery from Syria-Palestine*, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology 114 (Jönköping, Sweden: P. Åströms, 1994); and Frank H. Stubbings, *Mycenaean Pottery from the Levant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

34. The most famous of these conflicts is the Battle of Qadesh, vividly

recorded in image and text by Seti I (1321–1304) and Ramses II (1304–1237) on the walls of their constructions throughout Egypt. For Seti I reliefs, see William J. Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Seti I at Karnak*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 42 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1985); for Ramses II, see Hans Goedicke, ed., *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

35. As noted above, these letters were written in Akkadian, although it was not the first language for many of the participants. Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, *Royal Gifts in the Late Bronze Age, Fourteenth to Thirteenth Centuries B.C.E.: Selected Texts Recording Gifts to Royal Personages*, Beer-Sheva Studies by the Department of Bible and Ancient Near East, 13 (Israel: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1999); Moran (as in n. 29); and Carlo Zaccagnini, *Lo scambio dei doni nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV–XIII* (Rome: Centro per la Antichità e la Storia dell'Arte del Vicino Oriente, 1973), which he has updated and expanded in several articles, including "Aspects of Ceremonial Exchange in the Near East during the Late Second Millennium BC," in *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, and Kristian Kristiansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 57–65.

36. See Liverani (as in n. 30), esp. 13–29. On Assyria's rise in international status, see n. 113 below.

37. The bibliography is too extensive to list in its entirety. See most recently Stuart W. Manning, *A Test of Time: The Volcano of Thera and the Chronology and History of the Aegean and East Mediterranean in the Mid Second Millennium BC* (Oakville, Conn.: Oxbow Books, 1999). For collected articles, see the issue devoted to Levantine and Egyptian chronology in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 288 (1992); Manfred Bietak, ed., *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.: Proceedings of an International Symposium at Schloss Haindorf, 15th–17th of November 1996 and at the Austrian Academy, Vienna, 11th–12th of May 1998* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000); Paul Åström, ed., *High, Middle or Low? Acts of an International Colloquium on Absolute Chronology Held at the University of Gothenburg 20th–22nd August 1987*, pt. 1, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology Literature, Pocket-book, 56 (Göteborg: P. Åströms, 1987); pt. 2, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology Literature. Pocket-book, 57 (1987); and pt. 3, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology Literature. Pocket-book, 80 (1989); and *idem*, "High, Middle or Low? Acts of the Second International Colloquium on Absolute Chronology (The Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean)," *Ägypten und Levante* 3 (1992).

38. For related criticisms, see Christine Lilyquist, "The Use of Ivories as Interpreters of Political History," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 310 (1998): 25–33.

39. For example, in the standard textbook on Near Eastern Art, Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (1956), Pelican History of Art, 5th rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 243–44. More recent scholarship has attempted a less evaluative approach; Annie Caubet, "Art and Architecture in Canaan and Ancient Israel," in Sasson (as in n. 32), 2671–91.

40. The ivories from Tell Fakhariyah in northeastern Syria exemplify this division, showing strong connections to northern Mesopotamian arts of Nuzi and Middle Assyria in contrast to the ivories of the Levantine coast. Helene J. Kantor, "The Ivories from Floor 6 of Sounding IX," in *The Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah*, ed. Calvin Wells McEwan, Oriental Institute Publications, 79 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 57–68.

41. For the Ras Shamra stela, see Marguerite Yon, "Stèles de pierre," in *Arts et industries de la pierre*, Ras Shamra-Ougarit, 6 (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1991), cat. no. 10; for the Beth Shan stela, see Alan Rowe, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth Shan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1940), frontispiece, pls. XLIXA:1, LXVA:1.

42. Stone examples have been found at Ras Shamra (*Syrie, mémoire et civilisation*, exh. cat., Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 1993, cat. no. 173); Hazor (Yigael Yadin, *Hazor*, vol. 1 [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1958], pl. xxxi:1; vol. 2 [1960], pl. cxcvii; vols. 3–4 [1961], pls. cxxiii:2, cccxxvi, cccxxvii, cccxxx); and Sippor (Avraham Biran and Ora Negbi, "The Stratigraphical Sequence at Tel Sippor," *Israel Exploration Journal* 16 [1966]: pl. 23).

43. *Syrie* (as in n. 42), cat. no. 173.

44. Metal examples occur throughout the Levant, including Ras Shamra; see Negbi, 46–58.

45. This is the so-called Baal au foudre discovered on the acropolis, now in the Musée du Louvre, inv. no. AO 15775; Yon (as in n. 41), 294–99, cat. no. 5.

46. Helga Seeden, *Standing Armed Figurines in the Levant* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1980); Negbi, 29–41; and Dominique Collon, "The Smiting God," *Levant* 4 (1972): 11–134.

47. Patrick E. McGovern, *Late Bronze Palestinian Pendants: Innovation in a Cosmopolitan Age*, JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series, 1 (Sheffield, Eng.: JSOT Press, 1985); Negbi, 95–102; and K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery c. 3000–612 B.C.* (London: Methuen, 1971), 138–40.

48. Only two other gold pendants are known, one found on the Uluburun shipwreck, the other at Zincirli, which may be of a later date. For the Uluburun pendant, see George F. Bass et al., "The Bronze Age Shipwreck at Ulu Burun: 1986 Campaign," *American Journal of Archaeology* 93 (1989): 2–4, fig. 3; for the Zincirli pendant, see Negbi, 99.

49. James B. Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known through Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1943).

50. Kantor, 166, proposes a similar schema of classifying "Canaanite" ivories based on the degree of foreign elements present.

51. This includes the cylinder seal corpus from Ugarit, which encompasses all three thematic types as well as additional motifs. Pierre Amiet, *Sceaux-cylindres en hématite et pierres diverses*, Ras Shamra-Ugarit, 9 (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1992); C.F.-A. Schaeffer-Forrer, *Corpus des cylindres-sceaux de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d'Enkomi-Aslasi*, vol. 1 (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1983).

52. Damascus Museum, inv. no. 3601 (RS 18.221), elephant ivory, height 6 in. (15 cm), greatest width 3 3/4 in. (9.5 cm); dimensions taken from H. Safadi, "Zur Identifizierung des Elfenbeinkopfes aus Ras Shamra," *Annales Archéologiques de Syrie* 13 (1963): 98. C.F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, vol. 6, Mission de Ras Shamra, 15 (Paris, 1962), 25–27, figs. 24–26; and Gachet, 71.

53. The stone head is often called a portrait of Yarim-Lim, although no textual evidence exists to support this identification. Leonard Woolley, *Alalakh: An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay*, Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 18 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1955), pls. xli, xlii.

54. Safadi (as in n. 52), 97–106.

55. Louvre, inv. no. AO 19930, elephant ivory. Jacqueline Gachet, "Ivoires et os gravés de la côte syrienne au II^e millénaire—Ras Shamra," mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Lyon, 1984, cat. no. 257; C.F.-A. Schaeffer, "Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit, neuvième campagne (printemps 1937), rapport sommaire," *Syria* 19 (1938): 319; and idem, *Ugaritica*, vol. 1, Mission de Ras Shamra, 3 (Paris: P. Guethner, 1939), 131, fig. 115.

56. For illustration and bibliography of the Kamid el-Loz ivory, see Richard D. Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East*, Qedem, 14 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1982), 30, pl. 23a. For the Beth Shan chair, see Rowe (as in n. 41), pls. xix, xlviii.

57. Negbi, cat. nos. 1703, 1704.

58. Gordon Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, Oriental Institute Publications, 52 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), pl. 4; and Edith Porada, "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973): 354–72. There is some debate over whether to date the Ahiram sarcophagus to the 13th or 10th century.

59. Louvre, inv. no. AO 11602b, elephant ivory, height 4 in. (9.8 cm), diameter 5 in. (13 cm), thickness at top 1/2 in. (1.4 cm), at bottom 3/4 in. (1.8 cm). René Dussaud and C.F.-A. Schaeffer, "Ivoires d'époque mycénienne trouvés dans la nécropole de Ras Shamra (Syrie)," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 4 (1930): 3–4, fig. 7; Jacqueline Gachet, "Objets en os et en ivoire," in Yon (as in n. 23), 257, 264, cat. no. 56, pls. 6, 7; and Gachet, 69, fig. 3d.

60. Damascus Museum, inv. no. RS 16.404, elephant ivory. Schaeffer (as in n. 52), 17; Gachet, 73.

61. Caubet and Poplin (as in n. 23), 284–86.

62. The Minet el-Beida Tomb III represents an elite, but not necessarily royal, type of vaulted chamber tomb built under large residences. See Marguerite Yon, "Ougarit et le port de Mahadou/Minet el-Beida," in *Res Maritimae: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean from Prehistory to Late Antiquity, Proceedings of the Second International Symposium "Cities on the Sea," Nicosia, Cyprus, October 18–22, 1994*, ed. Stuart Swiny, Robert L. Hohlfelder, and Helena Wylde Swiny, Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute Monograph Series, 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 365.

63. Giorgio Buccellati, *Cities and Nations of Ancient Syria*, Studi Semitici, 26 (Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1967), 13, 28–29; and Horst Klengel, *Syria, 3000 to 300 B.C.: A Handbook of Political History* (Berlin: Akademie, 1992), 84–180.

64. Samuel D. Waterhouse, "Syria in the Amarna Age: A Borderland between Conflicting Empires," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1965; and for a specific situation concerning Ugarit's neighbor Amurru, see Itamar Singer, "A Concise History of Amurru," in *Amurru Akkadian: A Linguistic Study*, Shlomo Izre'el, Harvard Semitic Studies, 41 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 164; and Mario Liverani, "Aziru, servitore di due padroni," in *Studi orientalistici in ricordo di Franco Pintore*, ed. Onofrio Carruba, Liverani, and Carlo Zaccagnini (Pavia: G. Jes, 1983), 93–121.

65. Kantor, 1997 (as in n. 6), 76; and Crowley, 2–3. This view, however, has begun to change over the last few years; for example, see Caubet (as in n. 39). For the Middle Bronze Age, see Beatrice Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 11 (Fribourg: University of Fribourg Press, 1996), esp. chap. 4.

66. Damascus Museum, inv. no. RS 16.56 (upper frieze, RS 28 31/3599). Schaeffer (as in n. 52), 17–23; Gachet, 72.

67. For examples of comparable Egyptian beds, see James E. Quibell, *Tomb of Yuua and Thuiu*, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, vol. 43 (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1908), 50–51, pls. xxviii–xxxi; and Geoffrey Killen, *Ancient Egyptian Furniture*, vol. 1 (Warminster, Eng.: Aris and Phillips, 1980), 31–34, pls. 39–42.

68. C.F.-A. Schaeffer, "Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit, quinzième, seizième et dix-septième campagnes (1951, 1952, et 1953), rapport sommaire," *Syria* 31 (1954): 51–59. E. Lagarce takes a more nuanced approach to the iconography and arrives at conclusions similar to mine regarding the selective use of foreign motifs for specifically Ugaritic concerns; Lagarce, "Le rôle d'Ugarit dans l'élaboration du répertoire iconographique syro-phénicien du

premier millénaire avant J.C.," in *Atti del I Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici*, vol. 2 (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1983), 548–53.

69. This is the general consensus of scholars. See for example Kantor, 168; and Paolo Matthiae, *Ars Syria* (Rome: Centro di Studi Semitici, Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, 1962); although Betsy Bryan believes they date to the reign of Merneptah in the 13th century (personal communication) and Lilyquist (as in n. 38), 27, notes the range of proposed dates, including that of Annie Caubet (late 13th or early 12th century). Schaeffer dates the panels to the time of Amenhotep III, citing the presence nearby of the marriage scarab of Amenhotep III and Tiye. The distinction between the rendering of the inside and outside of feet, with all five toes depicted on outward-facing feet of important figures, may indicate a date in the Amarna period or later, when this convention first appeared in Egypt; Rita E. Freed, Yvonne J. Markowitz, and Sue H. D'Auria, eds., *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1999, 222–23, cat. no. 59.

70. N. K. Sandars, "Later Aegean Bronze Age Swords," *American Journal of Archaeology* 67 (1963): 140–42, and C.F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, vol. 3, Mission de Ras Shamra, 8 (Paris: P. Guethner, 1956), 276, pl. x.

71. In Egypt, the king spearing a hippopotamus represented the god Horus, who killed Seth in the form of a hippopotamus.

72. For the iconography of suckling in the Ugarit panel, see William A. Ward, "La déesse nourricière d'Ugarit," *Syria* 46 (1969): 225–39. For the "signe royal," see Kantor, 186; and idem (as in n. 40), 60–61.

73. Mario Liverani, "Ras Shamra (Ugarit): Histoire politique et sociale de cette cité," in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (as in n. 21), col. 1333.

74. See for example John Gray, "Sacral Kingship in Ugarit," in *Ugaritica*, vol. 6, ed. C.F.-A. Schaeffer (Paris: P. Guethner, 1969), 289–302; and K. A. Kitchen, "The King List of Ugarit," *Ugarit Forschungen* 9 (1977): 131–42.

75. Damascus Museum, inv. no. RS 15.239, height 5 1/4 in. (13.5 cm), length 5 1/2 in. (14 cm). Annie Caubet, "Répertoire de la vaisselle de pierre, Ougarit 1929–1988," in Yon (as in n. 41), 230; Schaeffer (as in n. 70), 164–68; and Christine Desroches-Noblecourt, "Interprétation et datation d'une scène gravée sur deux fragments de récipient en albâtre provenant des fouilles du palais d'Ugarit," in *ibid.*, 179–220.

76. Caubet (as in n. 75), 213.

77. For examples of stone rhytons found on Crete, including one in the shape of a bull's head from Knossos, see Sinclair Hood, *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece*, Pelican History of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 142, fig. 135. For representations in Egyptian tomb paintings, see Smith (as in n. 3), fig. 92.

78. Desroches-Noblecourt (as in n. 75), 209.

79. *Ibid.*, 204.

80. A general assumption that Egypt did not marry its princesses to foreign kings is based on correspondence between the Egyptian and Babylonian kings (Alan R. Schulman, "Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38 [1979]: 177–93). The Babylonian king Kaddashman-Enlil, responding to Egypt's assertion that no Egyptian princesses are ever exchanged, tellingly suggests that any Egyptian woman who looks like a princess will do (Moran [as in n. 29], EA 4: 4–13). One might interpret the Ugarit vase fragment as a similar "substitution" in order to convey the appearance of having acquired an Egyptian lady.

81. For image and discussion, see Bryan (as in n. 25), 58–59.

82. It is of course possible that a longer inscription once existed lower on the Ugarit fragments, the short inscription before Niqmaddu's face corresponding to a similar short identifying label "Chief of [. . .]" before that of the Ashkelon prince.

83. Carolyn Higginbotham, "Elite Emulation and Egyptian Governance in Ramesside Canaan," *Tel Aviv* 23 (1996): 155–56. And see her recent book, *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine: Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000).

84. Cathleen A. Keller, personal communication.

85. The ivory furniture panels juxtapose two separate artistic traditions, highlighting the ability to move between artistic idioms. The more indigenous tradition has already been addressed.

86. Suzanne Herbordt notes many of these comparisons; Herbordt, "Die Goldschale aus Ras Šamra im Museum Aleppo: ein Beitrag zu den Beziehungen zwischen Ägypten, der Ägäis und Vorderasien," *Acta praehistorica et archaeologica* 18 (1986): 91–116.

87. From the Greek "shared in common." The term *koine* was used early on, for example, by Kantor, 171, to denote the repertoire of motifs shared between the Aegean and the East.

88. Damascus Museum, inv. nos. RS 17.418, RS 28.44, elephant ivory. Schaeffer (as in n. 52), 23–25, fig. 22; and Gachet, 72. As reconstructed in the National Museum in Damascus, the tabletop measures approximately 60 in. in diameter.

89. For an illustration of this stela, see Yon (as in n. 41), cat. no. 9.

90. The reconstruction of the tabletop remains incomplete. Gachet, 73, records boxes of fragments belonging to it that have not yet been published. 91. Aleppo Museum, inv. no. 5472. Herbordt (as in n. 86).

92. It should be noted that after an examination of the panels' stylistic elements in the Damascus Museum, I have concluded that the entire piece was carved by a single artist or workshop.

93. Schaeffer (as in n. 68), 52, figs. 1, 2, mentions a lower horizontal frieze

and cutout elements said to include "sacred trees and apotropaic eyes," one of which is discernible in the published photographs of the ivories in situ but which otherwise have not been published. Gachet, 72, reports that a cutout voluted palmette and several possible "eyes" on display in the Damascus Museum in a neighboring vitrine belong to this lower frieze. The upper part of a voluted palmette, visible in the excavation photograph just below the last relief plaque on side B (Schaeffer, fig. 2), appears to match an ivory displayed in Damascus and is therefore included in this discussion. It is hoped that this matter will be resolved in Gachet's forthcoming publication of all the ivories from Ugarit.

94. Damascus Museum, inv. no. 4070 (RS 15.283). C.F.-A. Schaeffer, "Nouvelles fouilles et découvertes de la mission archéologique de Ras Shamra dans le palais d'Ugarit (campagne 1951)," *Annales Archéologiques de Syrie* 2 (1952): pl. iv:1; and Gachet, 73. It measures approximately 8½ in. (22 cm) in length and 3½ in. (8 cm) in height.

95. The Anatolian connections are seen through indirect evidence, for example, carved stone reliefs from the site of Alaca Hüyük that depict animal attacks and hunt scenes alongside voluted palmettes (Machteld Mellink, "Observations on the Sculptures of Alaca Hüyük," *Anadolu* 14 [1970]: 15–27). From Mesopotamia, the best comparanda come from the Assyrian capital of Ashur, best seen in an incised ivory pyxis with lid (Prudence O. Harper et al., *Assyrian Origins, Discoveries at Ashur on the Tigris, Antiquities in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin* [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995], cat. no. 45).

96. Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-amen*, 3 vols. (London: Cassell, 1923, 1927, 1933), vol. 2, pls. xvii, xxxvii, l, li, lxxxviii, vol. 3, pls. xxviii, xxix, xxxix; Grace Mary Crowfoot and Norman de Garis Davies, "The Tunic of Tut'ankhamun," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 27 (1941): 113–30; *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1976, cat. nos. 16, 20, 51, 55; and M. A. Littauer and J. H. Crouwel, *Chariots and Related Equipment from the Tomb of Tut'ankhamun*, Tut'ankhamun's Tomb Series, 8 (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1985), pls. xli, xlii, xlvi–xlvi.

97. The arrangement, however, is reversed, so that the indigenous frames the international on the alabaster jar, while the international frames the indigenous on the furniture panels.

98. William Kelly Simpson, "The Vessels with Engraved Designs and the Repoussé Bowl from the Tell Basta Treasure," *American Journal of Archaeology* 63 (1959): 29–45; and Gaston Maspero, "Le trésor de Zagazig," pts. 1 and 2, *Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne* 23 (1908): 401–12, and 24 (1908): 29–38, reprinted together in English in Gaston Maspero, *Egyptian Art* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1913), 154–71.

99. For the Cypriot faïences, see Vassos Karageorghis, *Excavations at Kition*, vol. 1, *The Tombs* (Nicosia, Cyprus: Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, 1974), 16, 105–43, esp. 116–26; and Marguerite Yon and Annie Caubet, *Le Sondage L-N 13, bronze récent et géométrique*, vol. 1, Kition-Bamboula, 3 (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985), 61–82.

100. From a deposit in the Geometric period temple; see Hubert Gallet de Santerre and Jacques Tréheux, "Rapport sur le dépôt égéen et géométrique

de l'Artémision à Délos," *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 71–72 (1947–48): 148–254.

101. See discussion below.

102. Smith (as in n. 3), 113: "... what we have been calling an 'International Style' of decorative ornament."

103. Jean-Claude Poursat, "Ivoires de l'Artémision: Chypre et Délos," *Études Déliennes, Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*, suppl. 1 (1973): 415–25; and Kantor, 1960 (as in n. 6), 18–22.

104. Carlo Zaccagnini, "Patterns of Mobility among Ancient Near Eastern Craftsmen," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 42 (1983): 245–64.

105. Crowfoot and Davies (as in n. 96).

106. Metals are most susceptible to reuse and thus have a lower survival rate. In addition, they tend to be found in secondary contexts, such as graves or buried hoards.

107. For the works from the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, see Georg Karo, *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1930–33). For the objects from the tomb of Kamose and Ahmose's mother, Ah-hotep, see Émile Vernier, *Catalogue général du Musée du Caire*, vol. 84, *Bijoux et orfèvreries* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1927).

108. The international letters can be divided into two broad categories: those between equals, called here greeting letters, and those between vassals and higher-ranking rulers.

109. Moran (as in n. 29); Albertine Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1989); Elmar Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 77, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994); idem, *Der Vertrag zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattusili III. von Hatti*, Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 95 (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1997); and Oliver R. Gurney, "Texts from Dur-Kurigalzu," *Iraq* 11 (1949): 141, no. 12.

110. Zaccagnini, 1973 (as in n. 35), 202–3.

111. KBo 28.23: 19–29; translation by Beckman (as in n. 31), no. 22F.

112. Samuel Meier, discussing the language of the letters, comments, "these words and rituals associated with royalty are being used in a cosmopolitan environment that strips words of their cultural moorings in order to attain a more generic utility, transcending specific cultures and inevitably weakening the semantic content." Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 166.

113. Pinhas Artzi, "The Rise of the Middle-Assyrian Kingdom, according to El-Amarna Letters 15 and 16," in *Bar-Ilan Studies in History* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1978), 25–41; and idem, "EA 16," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 24 (1997): 320–36.

114. Feldman (as in n. 17), esp. chap. 5.

115. That the two examples were found in the palace accords well with their royal iconography.

116. See n. 25 above.